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FACT SHEET – PACIFIC FISHER

Where is the remaining habitat for the Southern Sierra Nevada Pacific fisher?

The remaining habitat is mostly on the forested western side of the southern Sierra Nevada, from Yosemite to the Kern River Valley.

What National Forests will likely be affected by the lawsuit? How big are they?

The Sierra National Forest and the Sequoia National Forest. Together, about 3 million acres.

How will this affect National Parks' Management?

The fisher has been detected in Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, where preservation and protection are key aspects of parks' management. No significant impacts are expected. The parks are not named in the lawsuit.

How will this affect Forest Service Management?

Forest Service lands are managed for resource extraction, including logging, old-growth tree removal, road-building, vegetation management, herbicide application, and bull-dozing. Significant changes in management will likely occur.

Why are large and frequent fires correlated with heavily managed and logged landscapes?

There are three elements required for fire: ignition, oxygen and fuels. It is likely that a combination of these factors influences fire behavior. The matter needs further study.

Why did big fires happen in National Forests and not our National Parks in 2020?

Forests with the highest levels of protection (wilderness, parks, and roadless areas) have the lowest fire severities overall, while forests with the fewest environmental protections have the highest fire severity levels (Bradley et al. 2016). In 2020, fires burned more than half a million acres in the southern Sierra Nevada's National Forests. No such fires occurred in the adjacent National Parks, which are mostly wilderness preserves.

Notably, 84% of fires are human-caused, and the 5000 miles of USFS roads may make the landscape difficult to manage for fire prevention. The nearby parks have 211 miles (Yosemite) and 154 miles (Sequoia-Kings) of paved and dirt roads.

What does the fisher listing mean to local communities? Will they become more fire-safe?

Yes. Communities that are adjacent to unprotected federal land will likely become more fire-safe, as roads are closed, old-growth trees are preserved, and better protections are put in place.

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