

# RÍM Fíre Recovery



begins...

- ❖ **The Stanislaus National Forest**, with substantial ongoing collaboration, is proceeding on a staged decision effort to accomplish NEPA for the salvage of hazard trees and burned timber, and restoration.
- ❖ **The Stanislaus National Forest** has formed two interdisciplinary teams to produce:
  - A focused environmental assessment (EA) for proposed hazard tree removal along 194 miles of Forest Service roads.
  - Maintenance Level 3/4/5 roads, county roads, Highway 120, administrative, and recreation facilities, and areas adjacent to private infrastructure.
  - The proposed action for this EA includes 10,315 acres of NFS lands, of which 8,986 acres are along roads.

**❖ Environmental impact statement (EIS) for initial recovery:**

- The Rim Recovery project includes: salvage of dead trees; removal of dead trees along roads open to the public; fuel reduction for future forest resiliency to fire; and road improvements for proper hydrologic functions.
- A total of 29,301 acres of NFS lands (all outside of inventoried roadless areas) are included in this project.

## Presidential Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) – *Alternate Arrangements*

### **WHAT ARE THE NEPA ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS?**

CEQ granted alternative arrangements to expedite the EIS NEPA process:

- Shorten comment period for the draft EIS from 45 to 30 days;
- Eliminate the minimum 90-day requirement between the Notice of Availability of the draft EIS and the publication of the Record of Decision (ROD); and
- Eliminate the 30-day waiting period between publication of the final EIS and the ROD.

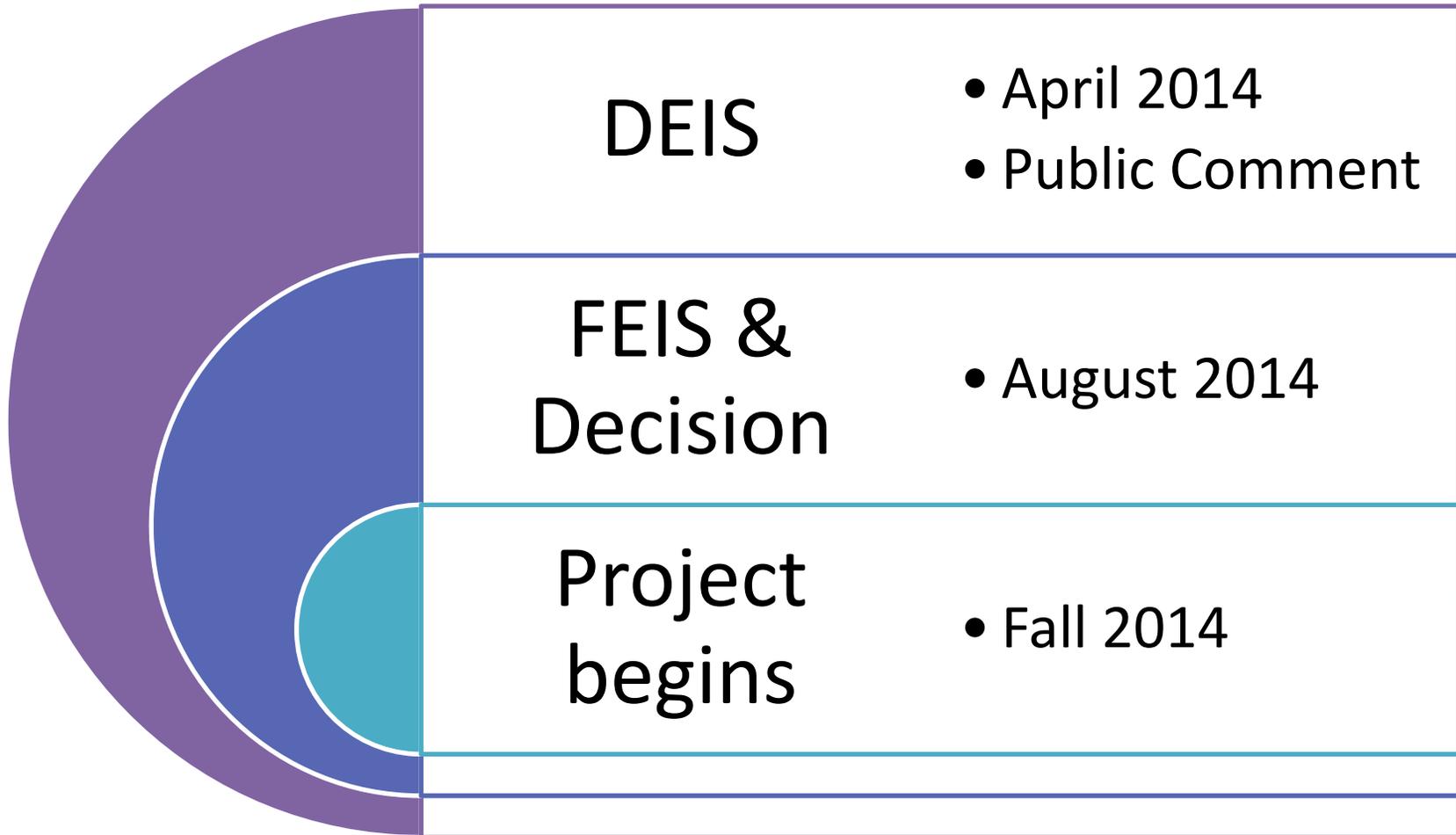
# Presidential Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) (continued)

- The CEQ worked with the Forest Service to develop alternative arrangements that take into account the time available, need for action, Forest Service mission, potential adverse and beneficial environmental effects of taking proposed recovery actions, opportunity for informed and sustained public engagement, and transparency in planning the recovery project. CEQ agreed to the proposed alternative arrangements:

# Presidential Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) (continued)

- Continue to enhance public and stakeholder engagement through extra outreach during the scoping initiated by the Dec 6 Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS;
- Continue active engagement of interested parties throughout the preparation of the EIS;
- Attend and continue communication with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and parties participating in the Rim Fire Landscape Restoration Technical Workshop on December 18, 2013; and
- Post the Final EIS and proposed ROD on the FS website for public review for 5-10 business days prior to publishing the official Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

# Estimated Timelines for EIS



# Emergency Situation Determination (ESD)

## **WHAT DOES AN EMERGENCY SITUATION DETERMINATION (ESD) DO AND ALLOW FOR?**

- ESDs may be made by the Chief of the Forest Service when immediate implementation is necessary to protect human health and safety, mitigate threats to natural resources or avoid loss of commodity values related to resource protection or restoration. ESDs exempt a proposal from the pre-decisional objection process and allow for immediate implementation of projects once decisions are made via the EA and EIS.

# Emergency Situation Determination (ESD)(continued)

- Because there is no objection not subject to administrative review (36 CFR process, no appeals process, and no waiting period prior to project implementation, an ESD determination potentially expedites project implementation up to 90 days from projects without such determinations.
- 1 Emergency Situation Determination (36 CFR 218.21 (78 Federal Register 59, March 27, 2013; p. 18481-18504)). An emergency situation is a situation on National Forest System (NFS) lands for which immediate implementation of a decision is necessary to achieve one or more of the following: relief from hazards threatening human health and safety; mitigation of threats to natural resources on NFS or adjacent lands; avoiding a loss of commodity value sufficient to jeopardize the agency's ability to accomplish project objectives directly related to resource protection or restoration" (36 CFR 218.21(b)). The determination that an emergency situation exists is not subject to administrative review (36 CFR 218.21(c)). If an ESD is granted, the project will not be subject to the pre-decisional objection process (36 CFR 218.21(d))".

# Long Term Recovery

❖ NEPA initiated later in 2014.