



# **National Whitebark Pine Restoration Plan**

## **Rationale and Scope of Work**

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# Rationale

- Whitebark pine health is deteriorating rapidly across its U.S. range.
- The widespread decline in whitebark pine from an unprecedented combination of threats requires timely management intervention.
- In 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated whitebark pine as a candidate species under the U.S Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- The agency will reach a decision in early 2019.
- Restoration of whitebark pine poses logistical and fiscal challenges, given the magnitude of its distribution and budgetary constraints.
- These constraints argue for a strategic approach to restoration, emphasizing designated “core” areas, which will have the highest priority for restoration activities.

## Objective

- American Forests and the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation are partnering with the U.S. Forest Service to develop a core area restoration plan for the U.S. distribution of whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*).
- Collaboration will also include other federal agencies and tribes.
- This strategic plan will identify selected areas within the U.S. range of whitebark pine for priority restoration, focusing resources.

## Anticipated products

- Nominated core areas for each administrative unit within different agencies, based on independent criteria.
- Priority designations (e.g., 1 through 3).
- All nominated core areas combined will represent a target proportion (e.g., 20% to 30%) of whitebark pine's distribution in any administrative unit.
- Map of core restoration areas designated by priority; GIS layers.
- Narrative by agency and geographic unit within the agency.
- Specific restoration protocols assigned to nominated core areas.
- Estimated implementation costs for these restoration protocols.
- Monitoring and adaptive management substrategy.

## Scope of work: Phase I

**Collaborative engagement.** This effort began with outreach by letter by the Washington Office of the US Forest Service to the NPS, BLM, US F&WS, tribal governments, describing process and timetable.

### **Survey, workshop, and discussion groups.**

- Online survey. This survey will help determine gaps in information on whitebark pine distribution and health status and the resources needed to fill gaps. **In progress.**
- Best-practices workshop: group (10-15) of experts in rust resistance, seed orchard development, climate change modelling, silvicultural restoration, and proactive restoration approaches, providing their view on implementation of these practices. **Completed.**
- Regional discussion groups (Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6): Convene in regional offices. Present a series of questions to ascertain current projects, plans, and thinking about whitebark pine. For each region, discuss restoration options in the context of whitebark pine communities. **Next week.**

## Scope of work: Phase II

**National Summit**, November 7-9, 2017, Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula, MT.  
**Organization in progress**

- Will bring together high level representatives and regional resource managers from the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service, tribal governments, and interested NGO partners.
- The major emphasis will be on the rationale and conceptual basis for the proposed strategic plan and the development of selection criteria for core areas, as well as a description of the process.
- A half-day fieldtrip will showcase whitebark pine communities and their decline.
- This summit initiates a formal request for nominated core areas from all jurisdictions with whitebark pine resources.

## Scope of work: Phase III

**Tele-conference core area workshop.** late January/early February, 2018.

- Provide opportunity for units to respond with questions, concerns, and feedback.
- Provide an informal format for responding to questions and discussing issues from personnel from regional and field management administrative units concerning criteria for nominating core areas, restoration tools and protocols, and information gaps.

## Scope of work: Phase IV

### **Compile National Restoration Plan**

- The Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation in consultation with American Forests will integrate core area information as it is received, as well as other important information into the range-wide (national) restoration plan.
- The final plan will be reviewed by all partners.
- Comments will be integrated as the final plan is drafted.

# Scope of work: Phase V

## **Present Plan to Leadership, December 2018**

- Present final plan and begin discussions of implementation strategies.
- US Forest Service, American Forests, and the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation will reconvene participants from the 2017 Whitebark Pine Leadership Summit to present the final restoration plan.
- We will begin conversations about funding and devising an implementation plan.

## Final products

- Best Management Practices summary-WPEF
- General Technical Report-WPEF
- Summary for public outreach-AF

>>These should provide the basis for a strategic prioritized approach for each federal agency and tribal jurisdiction.

>>Restoration funding will still require collaboration and partnerships.

**Thank you. Questions?**