



TAHOE WOOD

Wildfire resilience in Tahoe is impeded by limited wood processing capacity

Tahoe's forests are severely overcrowded. Due to decades of clearcutting and fire suppression, our forests are two to four times denser than they should be. This threatens forest health – and also exacerbates risks of catastrophic wildfire, as dense forests make for hotter, faster burning, more unpredictable, more dangerous, more ecologically damaging, and more toxic wildfires.

To mitigate this risk, **hundreds of thousands of acres across the Tahoe region need to be thinned**. As local forest and fire agencies lead this restoration work, they are encountering a critical obstacle: **managing thinned wood byproducts is time intensive and expensive**, as materials currently have to be trucked over 70 to 100 miles away to the nearest facilities.

Despite a number of new wood facilities being developed around the Tahoe region – such as industrial sawmills and wood energy plants – the volume of excess wood waste continues to **significantly exceed processing capacity**. Developing additional large-scale facilities, while important, comes with a number of challenges: multi-million-dollar costs, years-long timelines, and coordinating high-volume wood logistics.

**Read more in [Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy](#).*

Tahoe suffers from a lack of economic diversification and resilience

Tahoe faces a number of economic challenges. Over 60 percent of the regional economy is related to tourism, up from 40 percent 15 years ago – a sector that can mean volatility, low wages, and limited upward mobility. Full-time residency has been declining for over 20 years as **disparities between wages and increasingly high costs of living** have continued to grow.

Local partners have researched these challenges and identified a set of key recommendations for Tahoe's future, which include **strengthening entrepreneurship and environmental innovation that leverage the region's unique assets**.

**Read more in the [Envision Tahoe Prosperity Playbook](#), [Envision Tahoe Community Report](#)*

KEY FACTS

100k+ acres

of Tahoe forests are prioritized for thinning for wildfire resilience

2-4x denser

forests today compared to historically healthy conditions

Over 60%

of the regional Tahoe economy is reliant on tourism

50% increase

in tourism's share of the regional economy in 15 years hinders resilience

Can wood entrepreneurship help close some of these gaps?



This project is supported by TOT-TBID Dollars at Work, which funds programs/projects that promote community vitality, environmental stewardship and economic health in North Lake Tahoe.

Berkeley Wood Lab





Can excess wood help create local economic opportunity while mitigating wildfire risk?

Tahoe Wood – a collaboration between the Tahoe Prosperity Center, Tahoe Earth Institute, and Berkeley Wood Lab supported by the North Tahoe Community Alliance's TOT-TBID Dollars at Work program – is mapping **opportunities for regional small-scale, wood-based businesses that generate economic benefits while utilizing excess biomass thinned in local forest restoration initiatives across the Tahoe region.** As small-scale wood enterprises can operate with lower capital costs, shorter timelines, and more flexible logistics, they are uniquely positioned to respond to Tahoe's needs – while also providing opportunities for local entrepreneurship.

Tahoe Wood aims to **catalyze multiple viable wood enterprises** that collectively increase local processing capacity, reduce restoration costs, and create year-round jobs. Through advancing wood entrepreneurship, we are working to support a Tahoe economy that promotes forest health, wildfire resistance, and local community resilience.

We are supporting local wood entrepreneurship through:



RESEARCHING VIABLE
WOOD PRODUCTS



STRENGTHENING LOCAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP PIPELINES



DEVELOPING OPEN-
ACCESS **BUSINESS
PLANS**



PROVIDING CONNECTIONS TO
**START-UP CAPITAL AND
SUPPORT NETWORKS**



ORGANIZING FREE
COMMUNITY TRAININGS

Contact: Erika Veidis, erikaveidis@gmail.com



Berkeley Wood Lab

