



Vegetation Management in Sensitive areas of the Lake Tahoe Basin: A Workshop to Evaluate Risks and Advance Existing Strategies and Practices

Technical Review Panel

Wally Miller, Chair

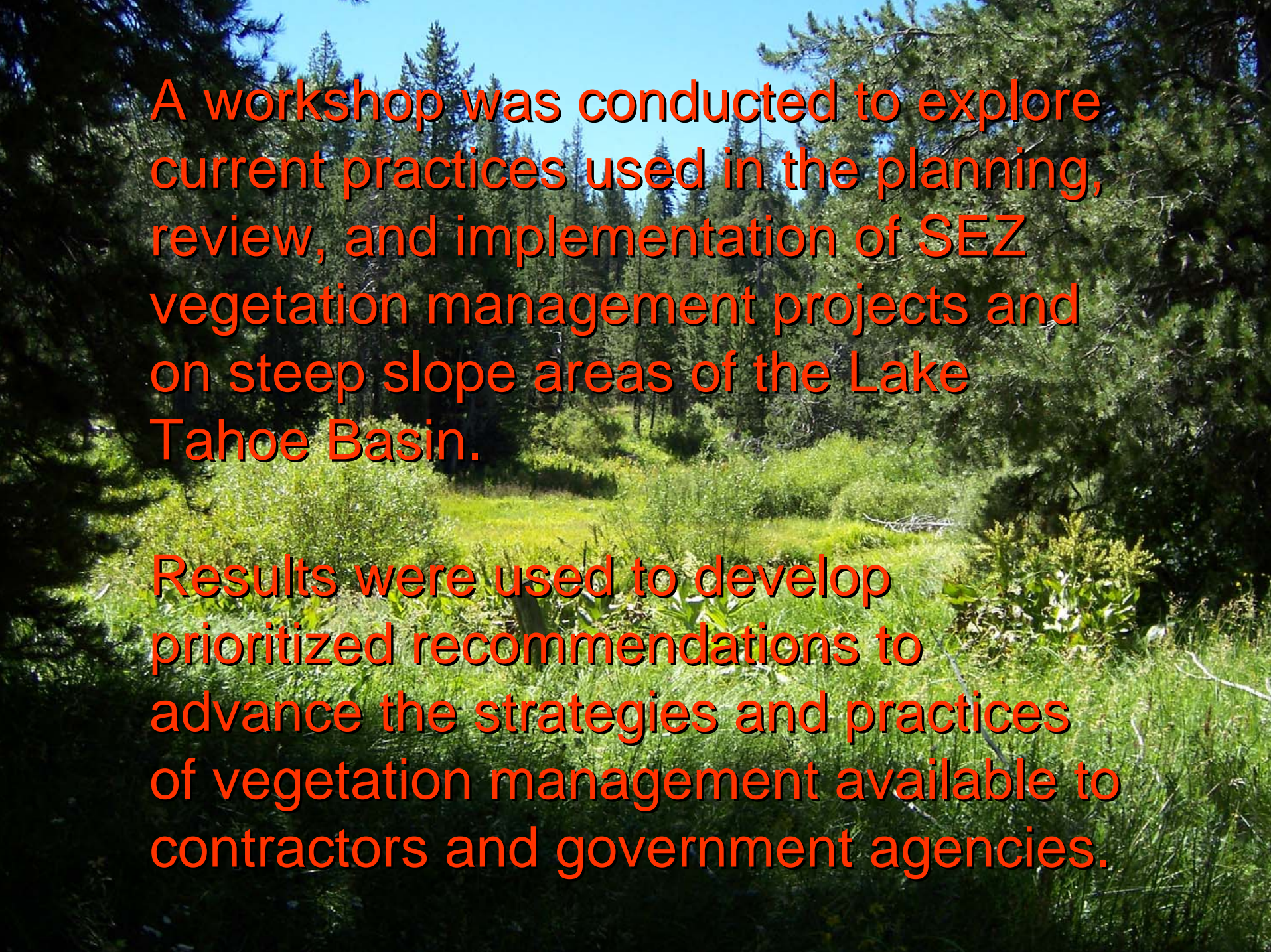
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ISSUE

The Lake Tahoe Basin constituency has expressed concerns over limited progress in reducing the fire hazard from excess vegetation biomass in Stream Environment Zones (SEZ) and on steep slopes; collectively referred to as Sensitive Areas.



A workshop was conducted to explore current practices used in the planning, review, and implementation of SEZ vegetation management projects and on steep slope areas of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Results were used to develop prioritized recommendations to advance the strategies and practices of vegetation management available to contractors and government agencies.

CONCERNS

- A complex regulatory environment
- The lack of acceptable fuel reduction tools
- Limitations associated with knowledge gaps in management and monitoring
- Difficulties associated with maintaining an adequate fuel reduction workforce
- High costs of operation and implementation.





**The issues identified were broadly
grouped into 4 basic categories.**

**Regulatory Policy
Socio-Economic Responses
Implementation Challenges
Opportunities for
Advancement**

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, 20 findings and recommendations were identified by the Review Panel:

5 under Regulatory Policy

4 under Socio-Economic Response

7 under Implementation Challenges

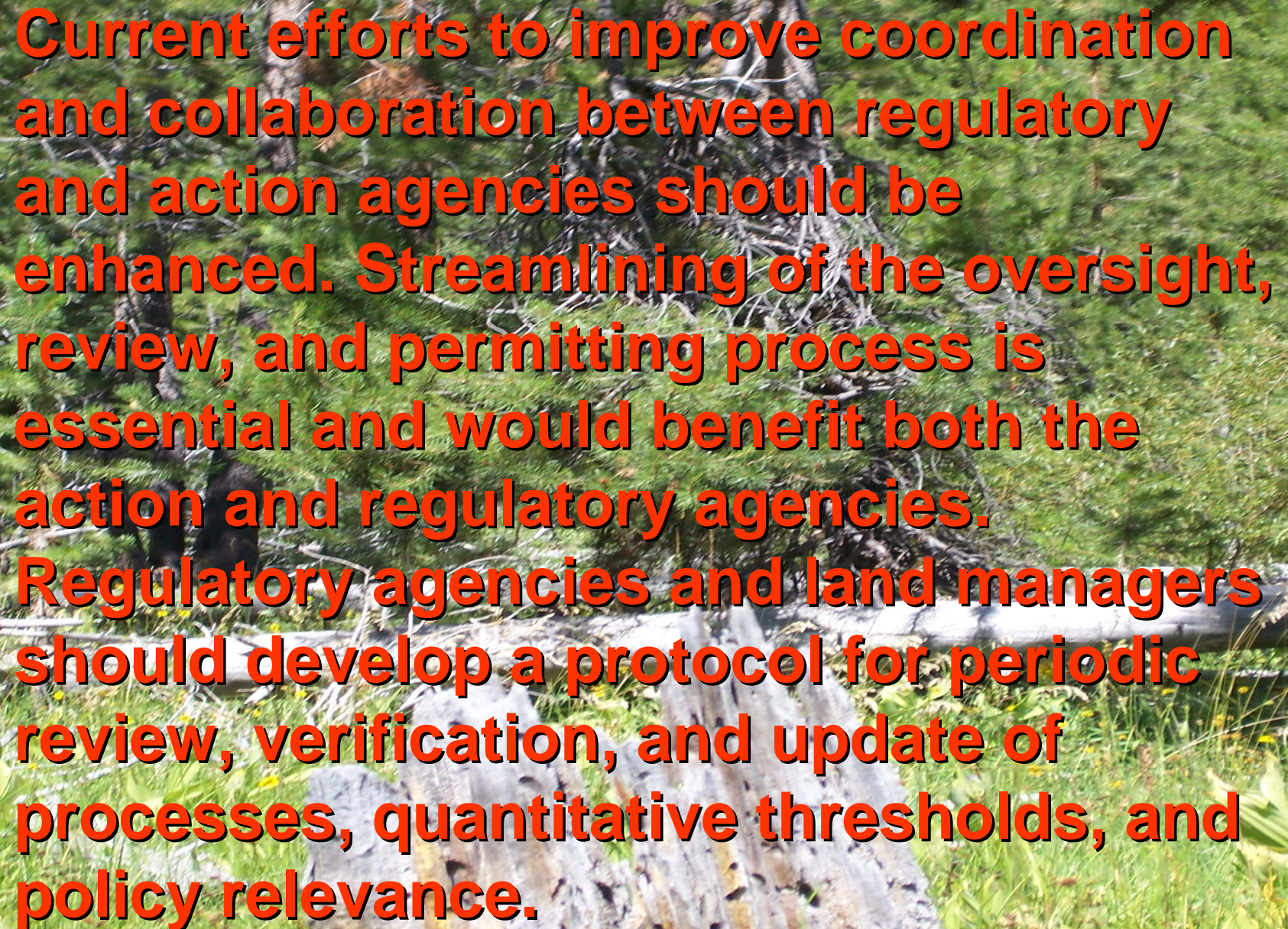
4 under Opportunities for Advancement




A person wearing a yellow shirt and a green helmet is walking through a forest. In the foreground, there is a large, dark, charred log lying on the ground. The background shows several tall, thin tree trunks and a rocky, uneven ground surface.

TOP PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

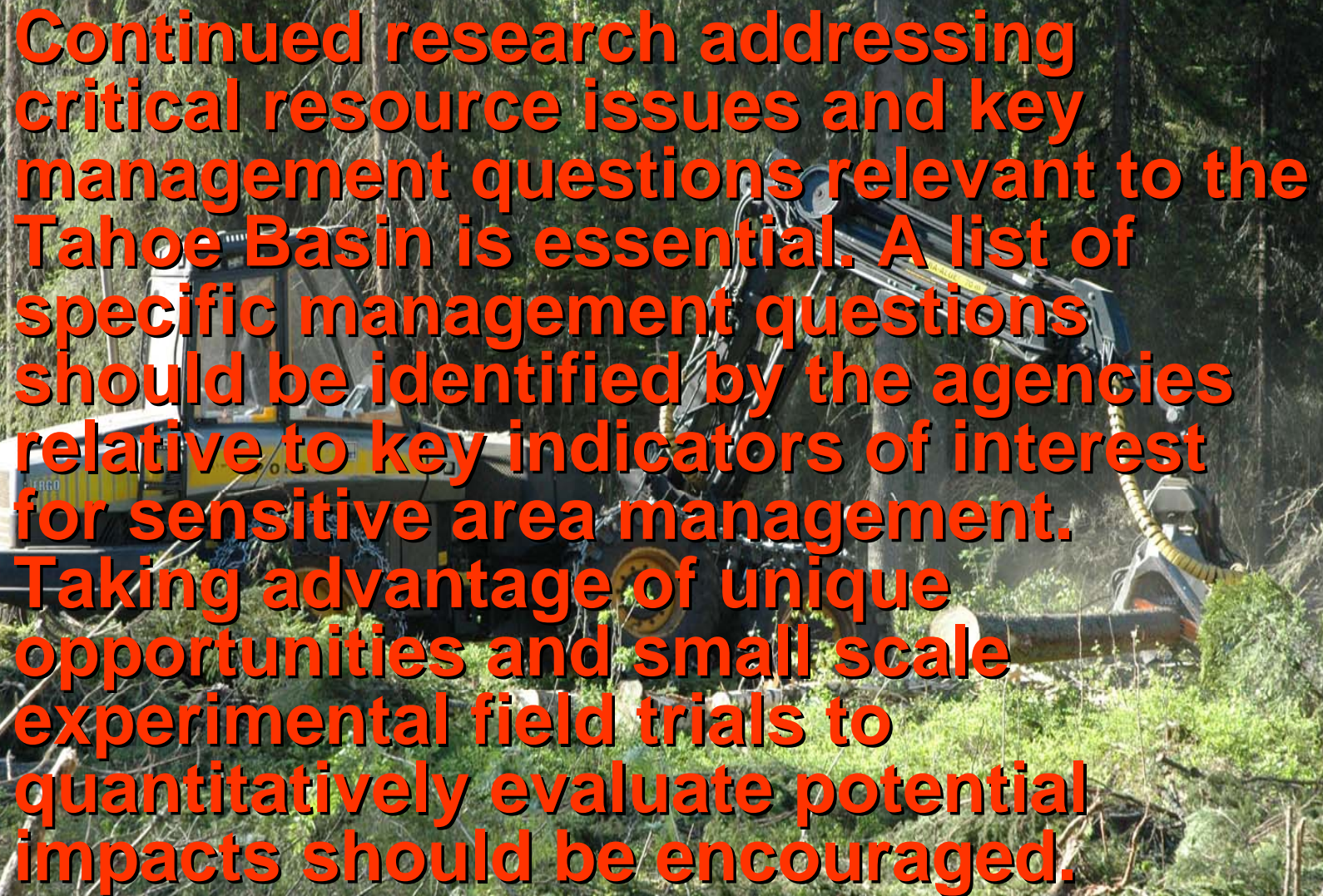
There is an immediate need to conduct a Basin-wide planning exercise to optimize the use of limited resources available for fire hazard reduction projects.



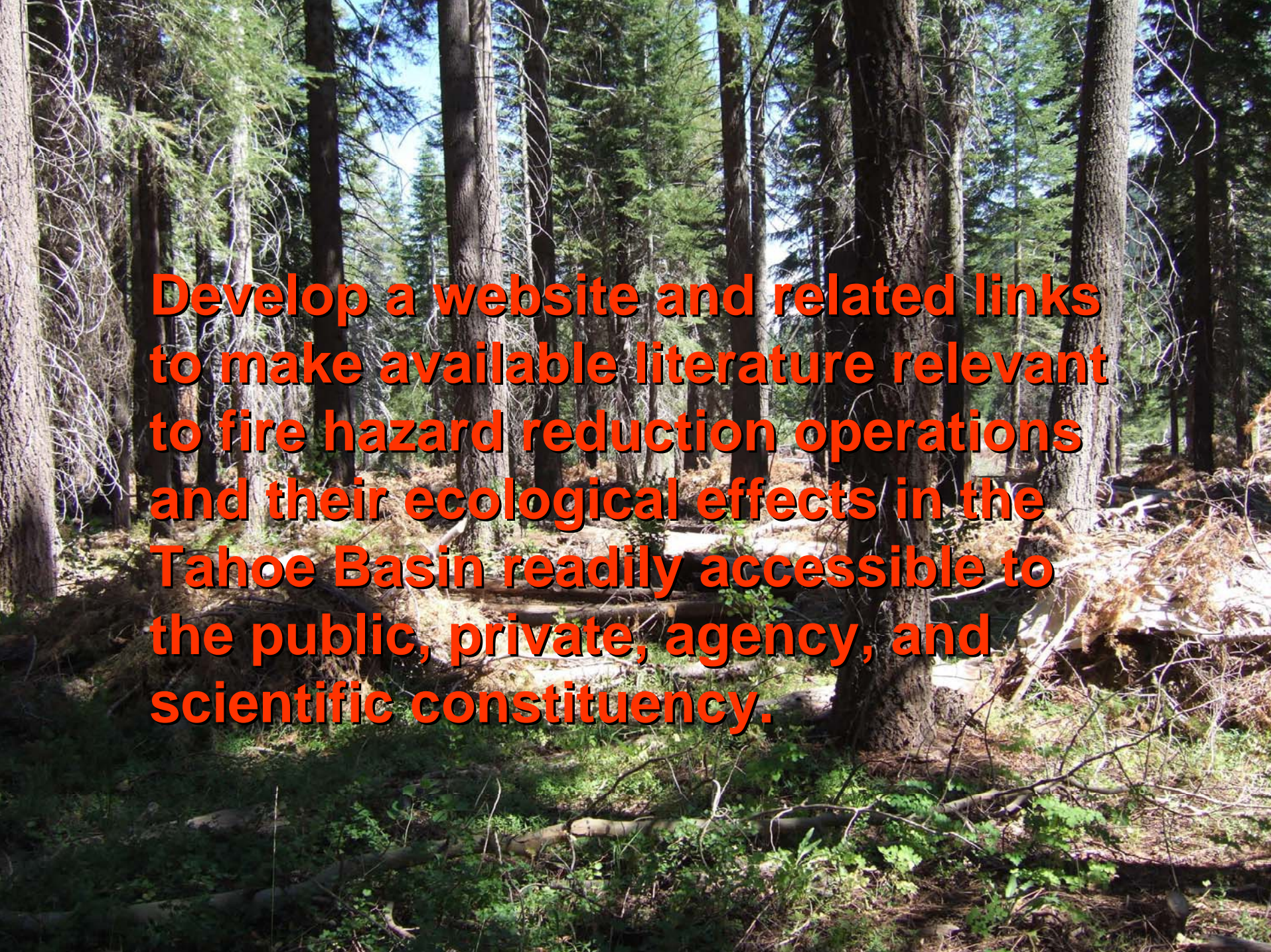
Current efforts to improve coordination and collaboration between regulatory and action agencies should be enhanced. Streamlining of the oversight, review, and permitting process is essential and would benefit both the action and regulatory agencies. Regulatory agencies and land managers should develop a protocol for periodic review, verification, and update of processes, quantitative thresholds, and policy relevance.



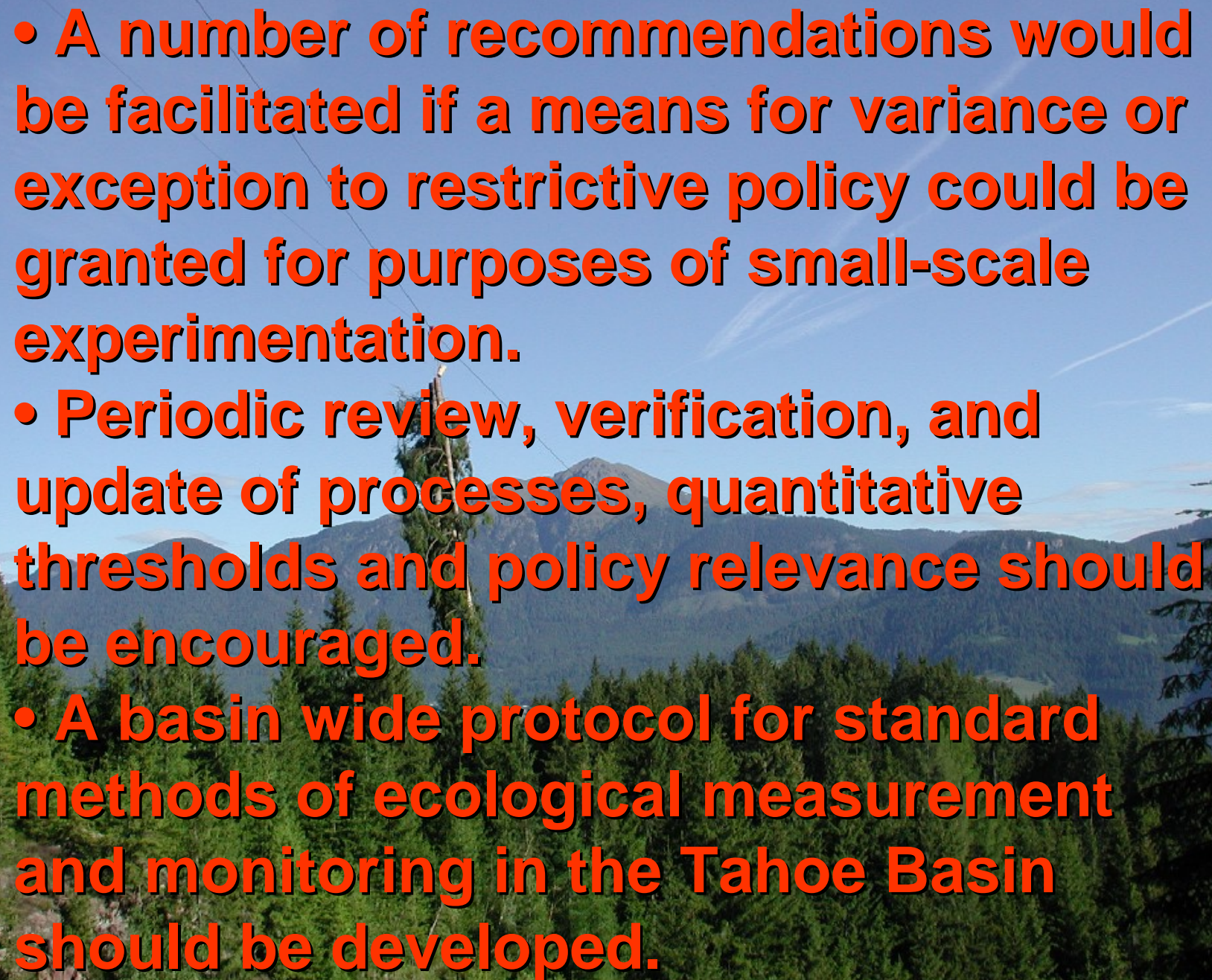
There is a critical need to develop a Basin-wide protocol for “Standard Methods of Ecological Measurement and Monitoring in the Tahoe Basin”. Concurrently, a website should be constructed where real-time information from standard protocols is immediately available to all interested parties.



Continued research addressing critical resource issues and key management questions relevant to the Tahoe Basin is essential. A list of specific management questions should be identified by the agencies relative to key indicators of interest for sensitive area management. Taking advantage of unique opportunities and small scale experimental field trials to quantitatively evaluate potential impacts should be encouraged.



Develop a website and related links to make available literature relevant to fire hazard reduction operations and their ecological effects in the Tahoe Basin readily accessible to the public, private, agency, and scientific constituency.

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- A number of recommendations would be facilitated if a means for variance or exception to restrictive policy could be granted for purposes of small-scale experimentation.
 - Periodic review, verification, and update of processes, quantitative thresholds and policy relevance should be encouraged.
 - A basin wide protocol for standard methods of ecological measurement and monitoring in the Tahoe Basin should be developed.