



## SoCal Forest Health Protection and California Indian Manpower Team-up

Almost one third of the nation's population—those who live in Southern California—access natural beauty and recreational opportunities in the shelter and shade of SoCal forests. Recently, SoCal Forest Health Protection (FHP) joined with the California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC) to improve forest health. This is the second year a crew of Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, trained last year in state-of-the-art climbing techniques, is climbing trees and pruning out parasitic mistletoe plants to improve tree health and reduce hazards in public recreation areas.



Mistletoes are parasitic flowering plants that receive water and nutrients from their tree hosts - dwarf mistletoes on conifers, and leafy mistletoes on conifers and hardwoods. Trees heavily laden with mistletoe grow slowly, become weak, and sometimes die. Infested branches often break and fall, causing a hazard to people and property. Infected conifers can have "witches brooms"—dense branch clumps that provide fuel for wildfires and promote fire severity.



On the San Bernardino National Forest, SoCal FHP funded training in tree climbing and pruning for the CIMC crew to remove hazards and sanitize infested trees. Following last year's summer season, they were immediately hired to "climb for cones", collecting seed for future forests. Improving tree health, reducing hazards in campgrounds and providing jobs – a win-win for SoCal FHP and CIMC!

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