
Replanting Post Fire: A Story of Partnership and Recovery

After the smoke cleared from 2021's Bootleg Fire and Cougar Peak Fire, what remained across much of the Fremont-Winema National Forest was nearly 500,000 acres of ash, blackened hillsides, and a lingering sense of loss. For those who live and work in Klamath and Lake County, the impacts were personal. The fire didn't just scar the land, it disrupted lives, threatened homes, and shook the foundations of a forested landscape the community depends on.

Last month, something quieter, and more hopeful, took root.

Through an innovative partnership between Collins Pine Company and the Fremont-Winema National Forest, over 428,000 seedlings were planted across 2,140 acres in the Jump Project Area, a high-priority restoration zone on the Bly Ranger District. The action is just part of 11,000 acres currently undergoing rehabilitation through a Master Stewardship Agreement, an agreement that allows the Forest Service and private partners to work together on landscape-scale restoration. For Collins, whose operations are based in Lakeview, this was about more than fulfilling a contract, it was about helping bring life back to a forest that the Lakeview community loves and relies on.

"This project is important to the Fremont-Winema because it highlights the successful collaboration between the Forest Service and Collins Pine to re-establish forests after wildfire, work that is also important to our local community," said Holly Smith, a forester with the Fremont-Winema.

When a tree is planted, it contributes to stabilizing soils, restoring habitat, and rebuilding a landscape that once teemed with life. And in the long term, it supports the broader goals of reforestation, carbon capture, and community recovery.

For the people of Lakeview, the forest is not just a backdrop, it is part of the community's identity. It supports jobs, provides recreation, and shapes the rhythm of our seasons. To see restoration take hold here, on the heels of such devastation, is a reminder that recovery is possible, and that collaboration works.

"Collins Company has been a fantastic partner to Lake County. We are grateful to have an outstanding partner who cares about the future of natural resources on public and private lands to support the local wood industry for future years to come". Barry Shullanberger, Lake County Commissioner

Collins is proud to be part of this effort, and even more proud to call this place home.

"The steps we and the Fremont-Winema have taken together over the last two years are remarkable and are just the beginning of what we are going to accomplish. With continued funding and support, we will see hundreds of thousands of burned acres returned to green forestland in Klamath and Lake County." Galen Smith, VP Resources, Collins Pine Company