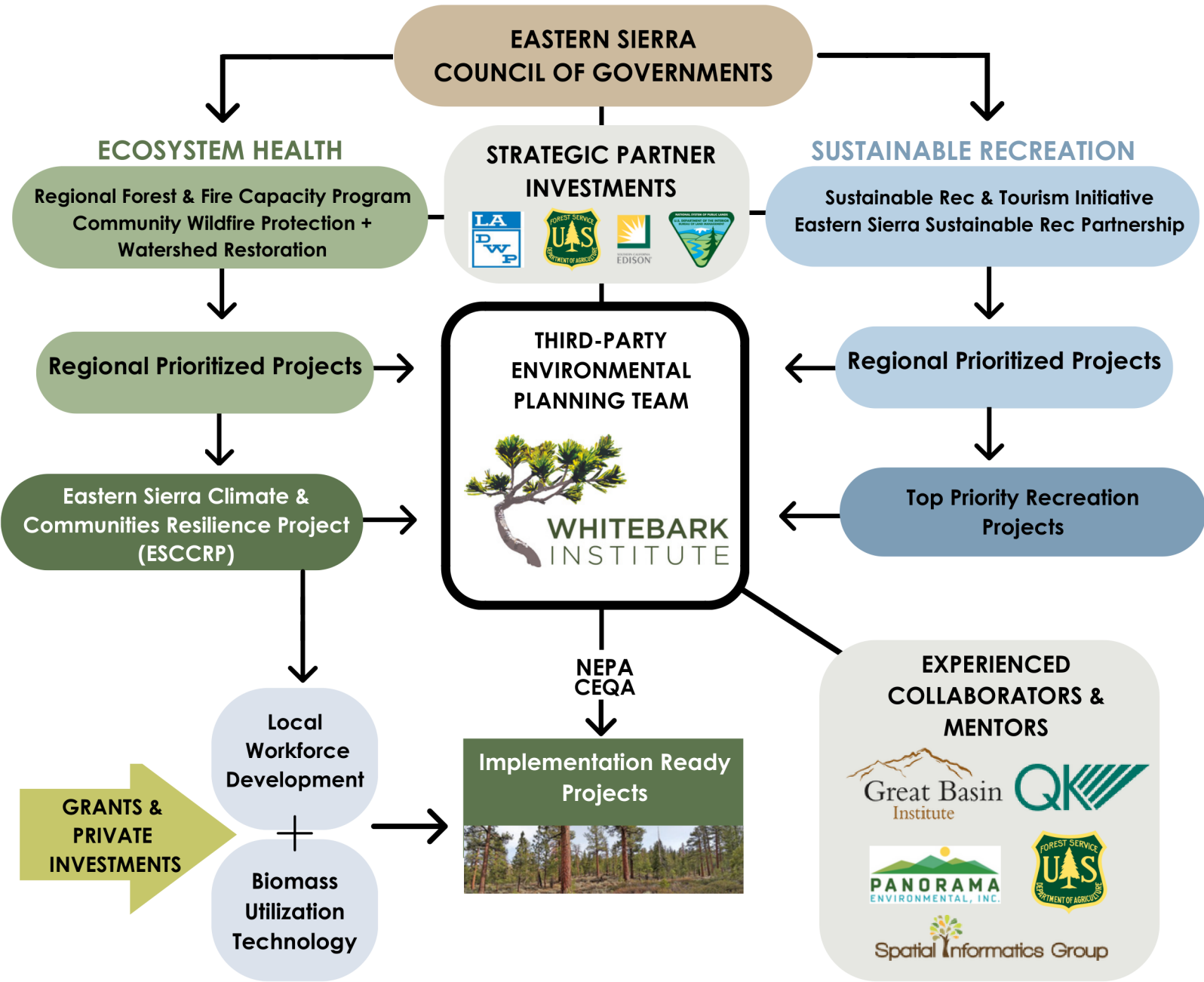


Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator



The Whitebark Institute has hired core IDT personnel from local talent and partnered with senior consulting firms and retired USFS staff to begin NEPA planning for the ESCCRP, the ESCOG's top priority Ecosystem Health project. By investing in local workforce and relationships, the accelerator hopes to align early with INF ID Team to deliver a NEPA document that works well for the agency and establishes trust for future environmental planning needs on other important projects.



GENESIS OF THE ACCELERATOR

Present pace and scale needs related to fire resilience and ecosystem health far outweighed the capacity of any single entity in the Eastern Sierra

- Four non-profit organizations joined forces to request the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments support a program of work to enhance forest health and recreation in the Eastern Sierra.
- Dubbed the Sustainable Recreation & Ecosystem Management Program, the resolution combines two funded programs in the eastern Sierra, the Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative and the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.
- Both programs are positioned to yield project pipelines specific to their cause, all in need of environmental compliance work.

The Accelerator was conceived as a means of addressing the growing need for important regional projects and the Agency's inability to keep pace while overcoming conventional issues with third party lead environmental planning efforts.

- The Forest Service has not had and did not anticipate having adequate personnel to complete environmental review for the growing number of projects needed to ensure regional resilience.
- Contracting with large out-of-area environmental consulting firms is prohibitively expensive, puts additional burdens on the agency, and further slows the pace of projects due to exhaustive fundraising required.
- By investing in local workforce capable of environmental planning, the Accelerator is addressing a well know bottleneck in getting important projects completed in the Eastern Sierra.



PRIMARY GOALS OF THE ACCELERATOR

Goal 1: Complete NEPA for the Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project

Goal 2: Build regional capacity to support pace & scale environmental planning needs of ESCCRP and subsequent projects of regional importance

