Project Scoping

PINE NUT LAND HEALTH EA

GETTING STARTED

On March 25, 2013 an interdisciplinary team met to discuss the project.

Sixteen resource programs were identified that may be adversely or beneficially affected by the project, from air quality, wildlife to visual resources.

On April 2, 2013 a letter was sent to 96 individuals, organizations or agencies notifying them of the project.

WHY SCOPE?

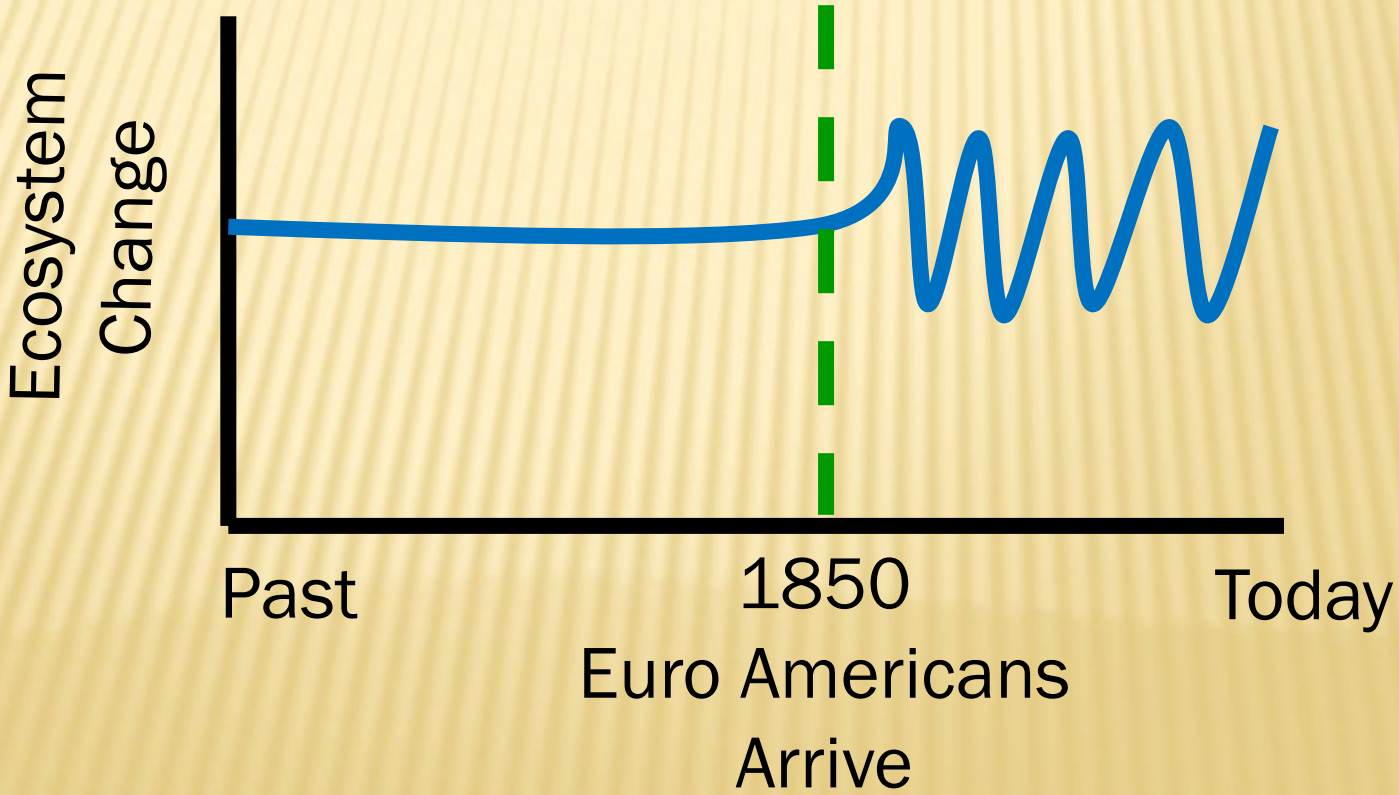
- To provide the public, organizations, agencies and tribes early information on the project.
- To gather input early on as the project is developed.
- To gather input on resource conflicts or issues so that these impacts can be avoided or reduced.

PURPOSE AND NEED

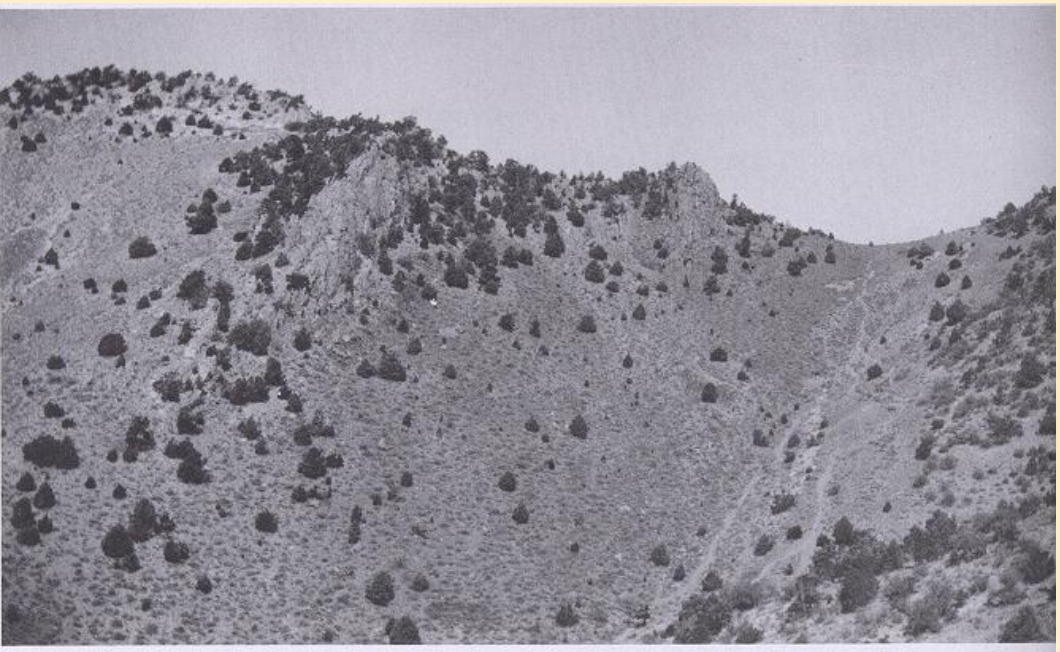
- Restore and maintain sagebrush habitat;
- Restore and maintain riparian plant communities;
- Restore and maintain wet meadows and springs;
- Protect and enhance historic pinyon-juniper woodland habitat;
- Reduce the potential of large-scale high severity wildland fire;
- Provide for public and firefighter safety and protection of property and infrastructure; and
- Provide woodland products to the public, Tribes and commercial entities.

Ecosystem Dynamics

- Ecosystems have always been dynamic.
- Euro American settlement brought with it new causes of change.



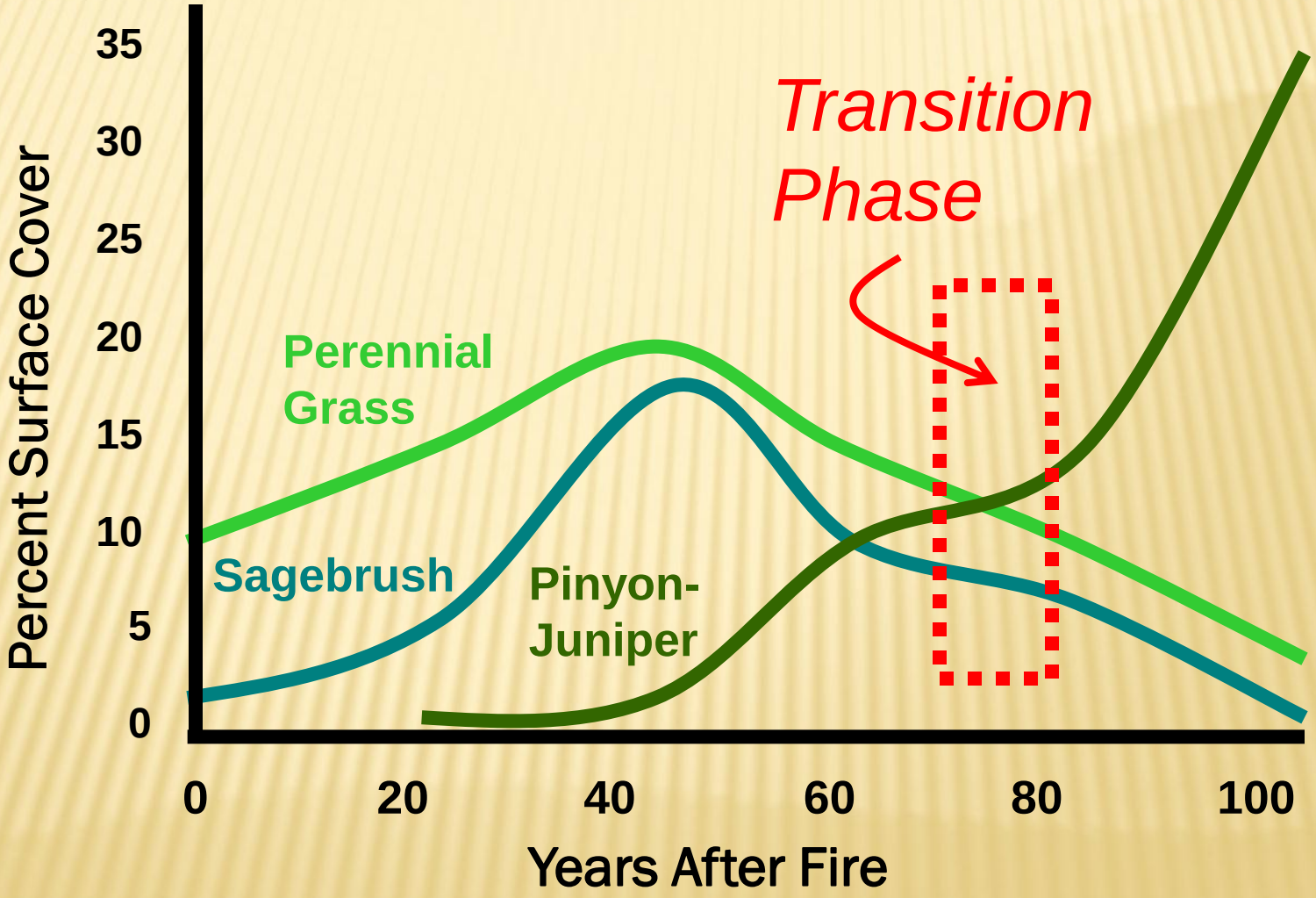
Sometimes ecosystem
changes occur overnight...
Ray May Fire (2011)



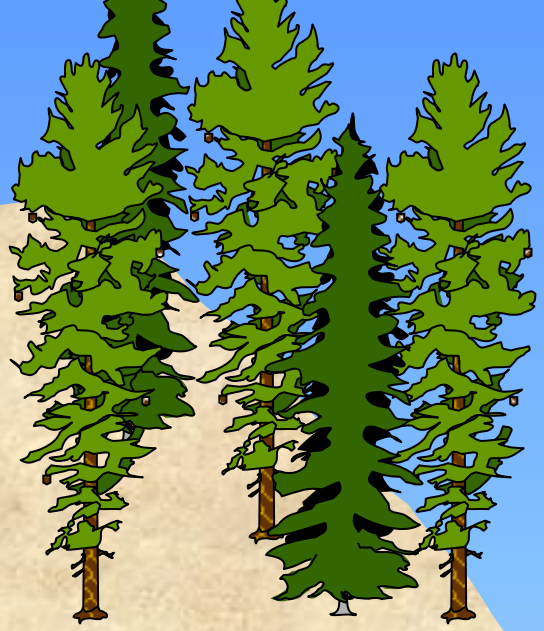
Sometimes they are subtle, taking many years to detect …

Same scene, 100 years apart

VEGETATION RESPONSE FOLLOWING FIRE



Adapted from Barney and Frischknecht 1974



Jeffrey Pine - White Fir Forest

7 to 17 years

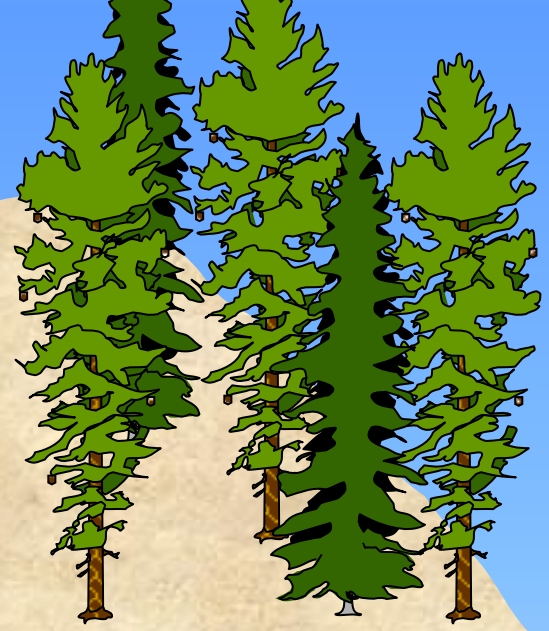
Pinyon - Juniper Woodland / Mtn Big Sage

12 to 25 years

Wyoming Big Sagebrush

+50 years

Presettlement Mean Fire Intervals



Jeffrey Pine - White Fir Forest

7 to 17 years

No Fire Since 1870

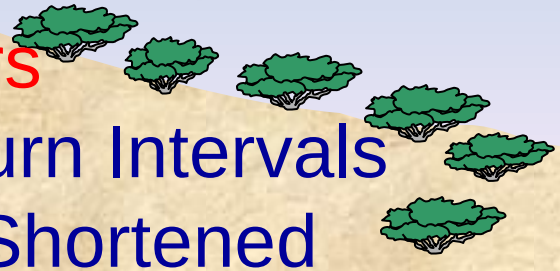
Pinyon - Juniper Woodland / Mtn Big Sage

12 to 25 years

Fire Return Intervals

Greatly Increased

Wyoming Big Sagebrush



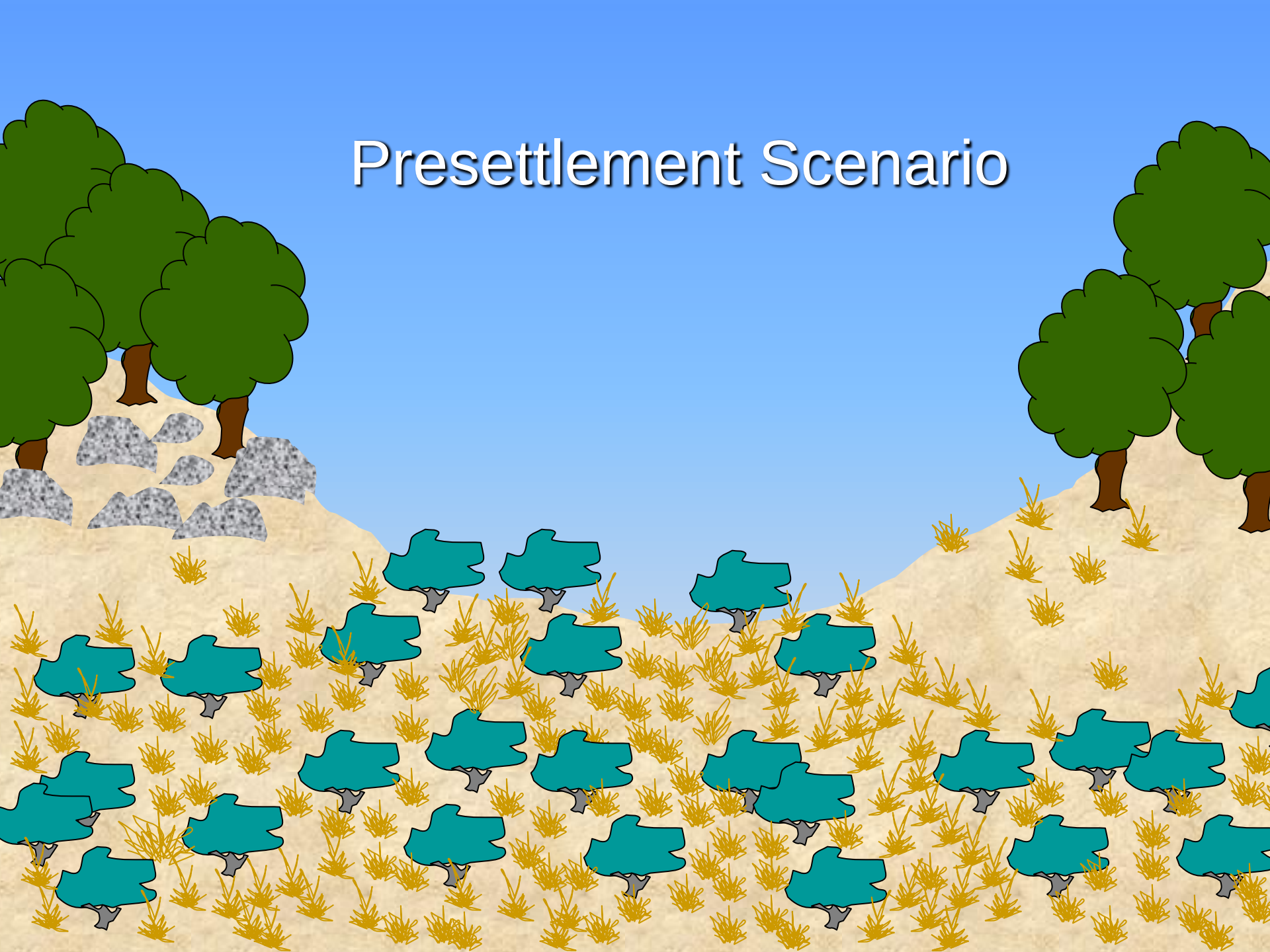
+50 years

Fire Return Intervals

Greatly Shortened

Contemporary Mean Fire Intervals

Presettlement Scenario



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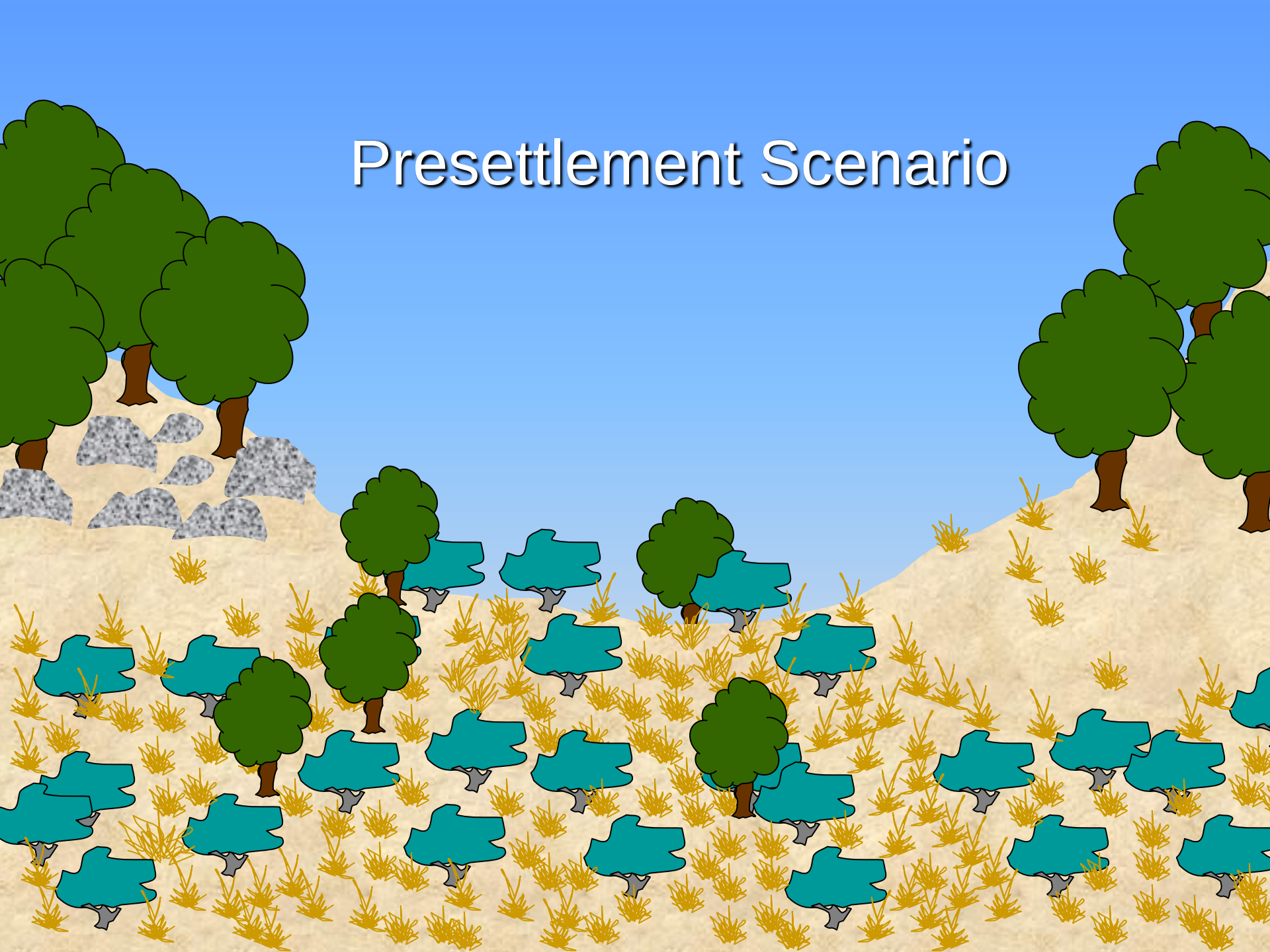

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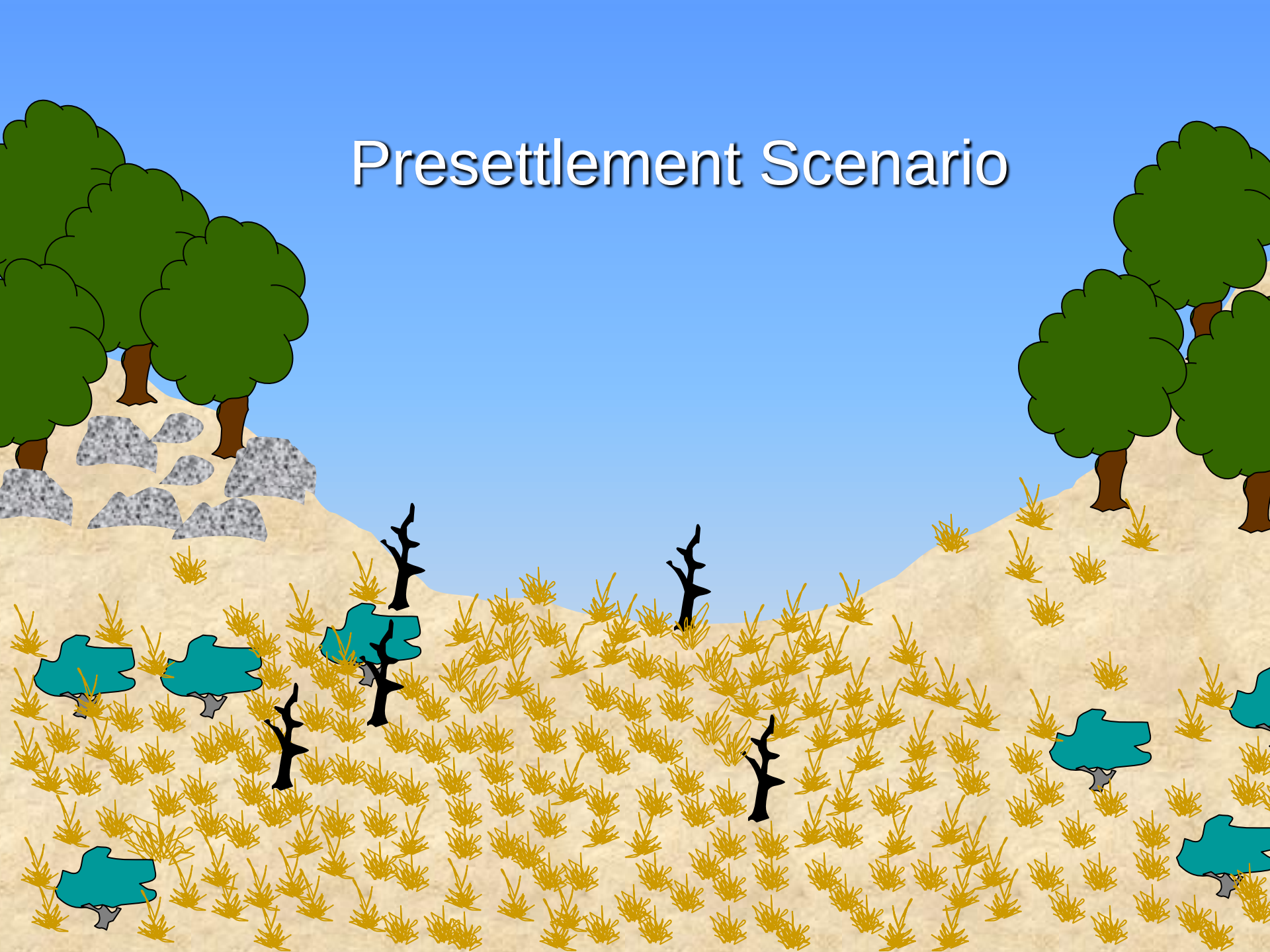

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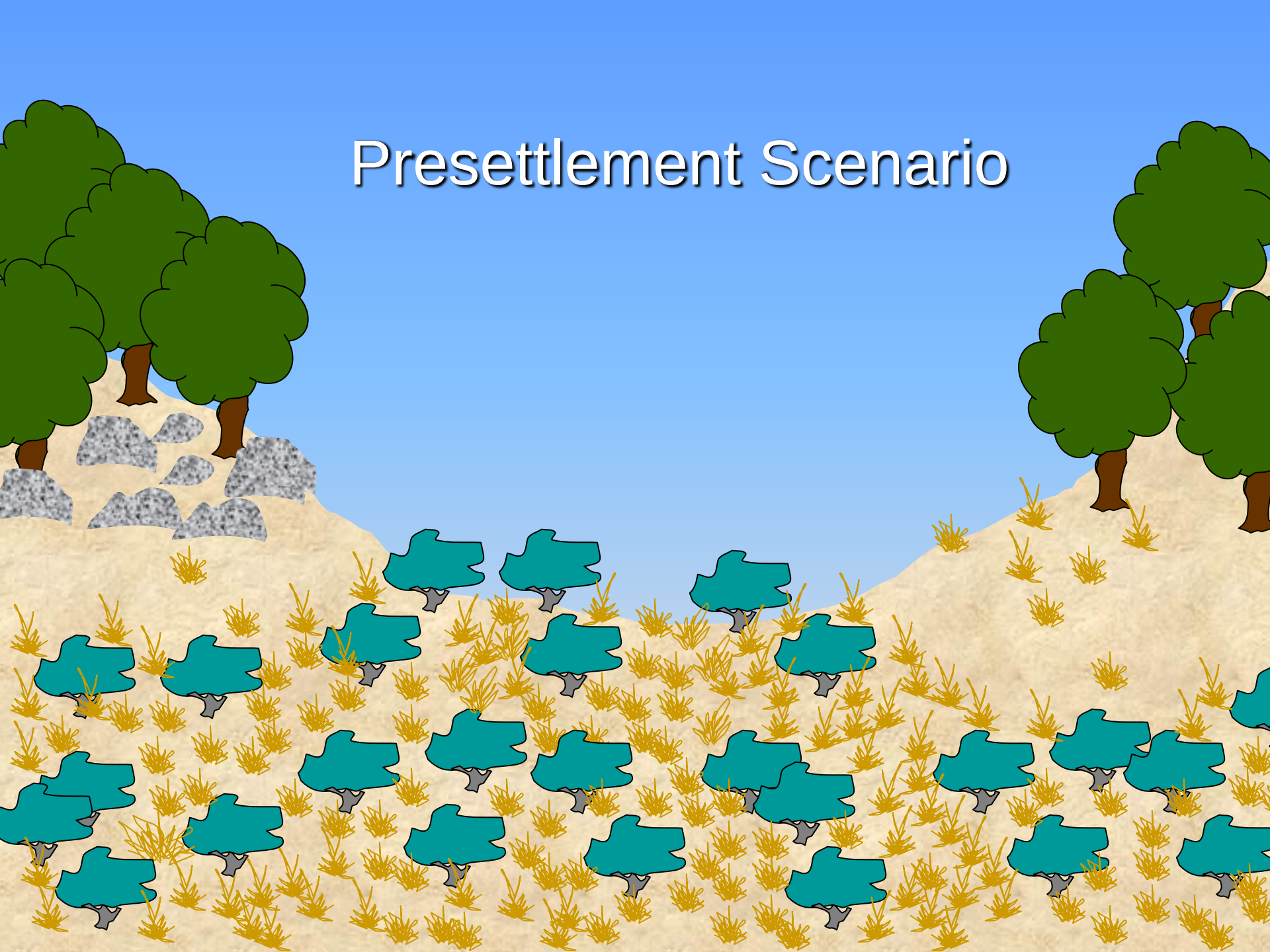
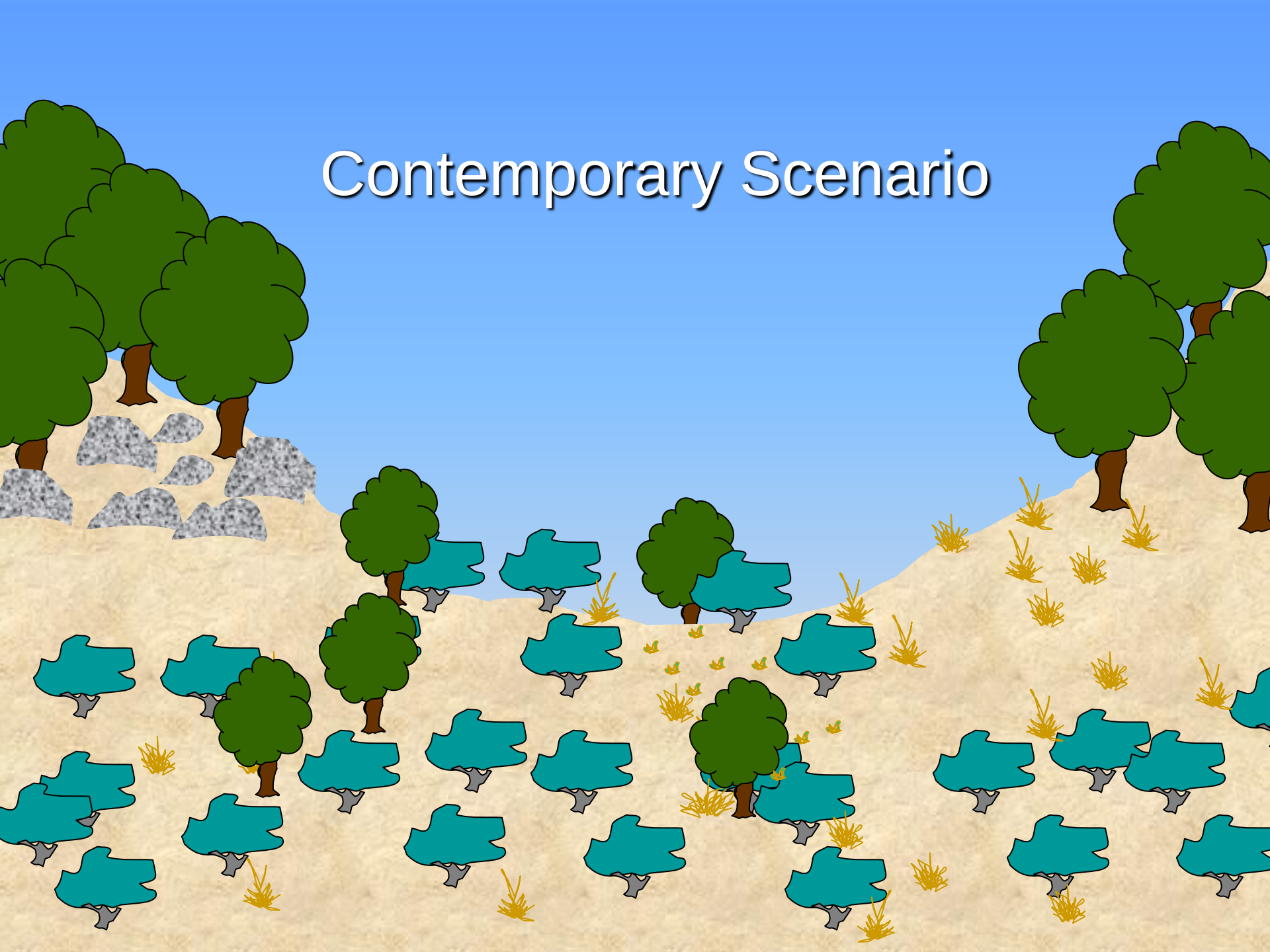


Contemporary Scenario



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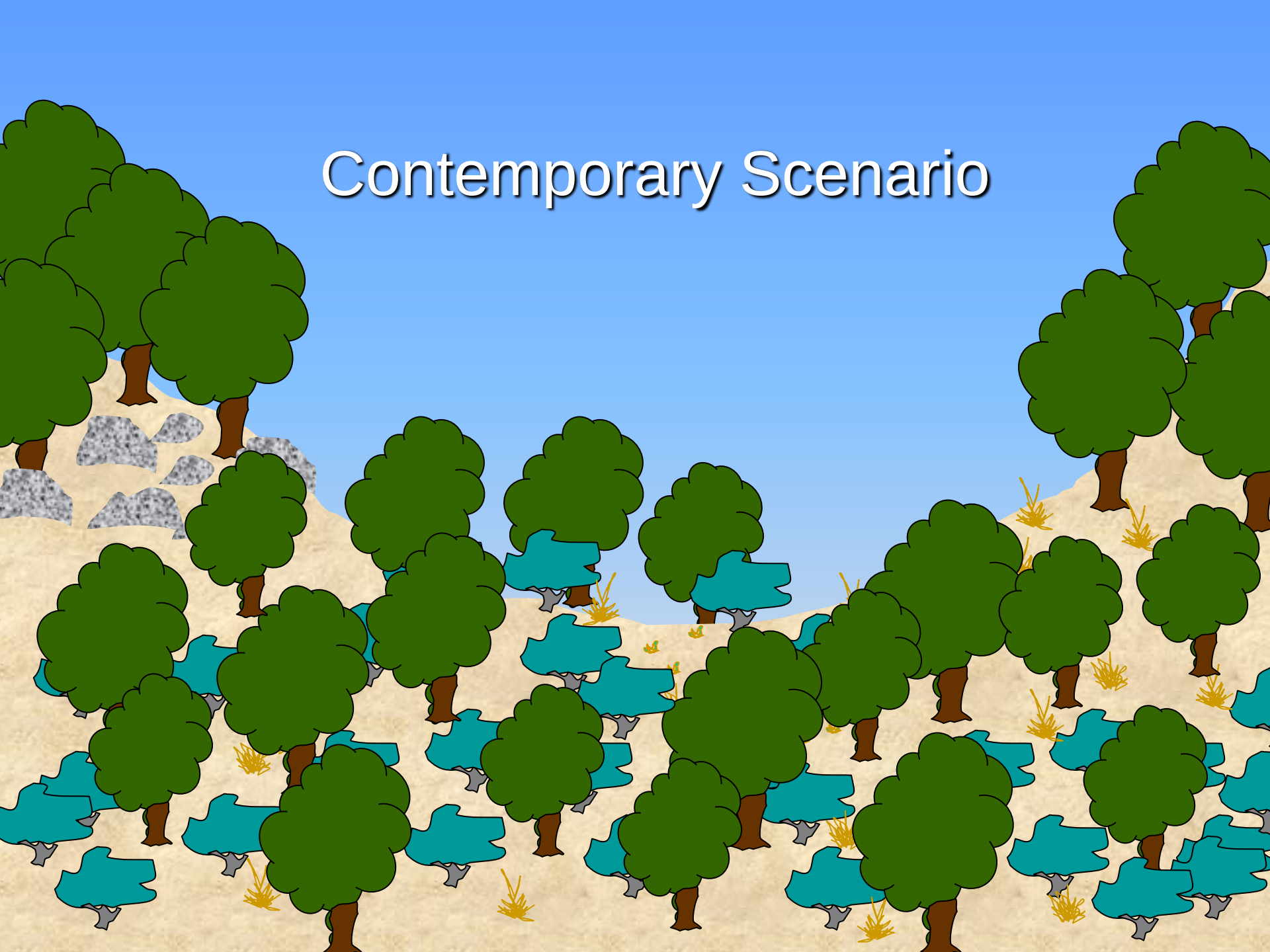

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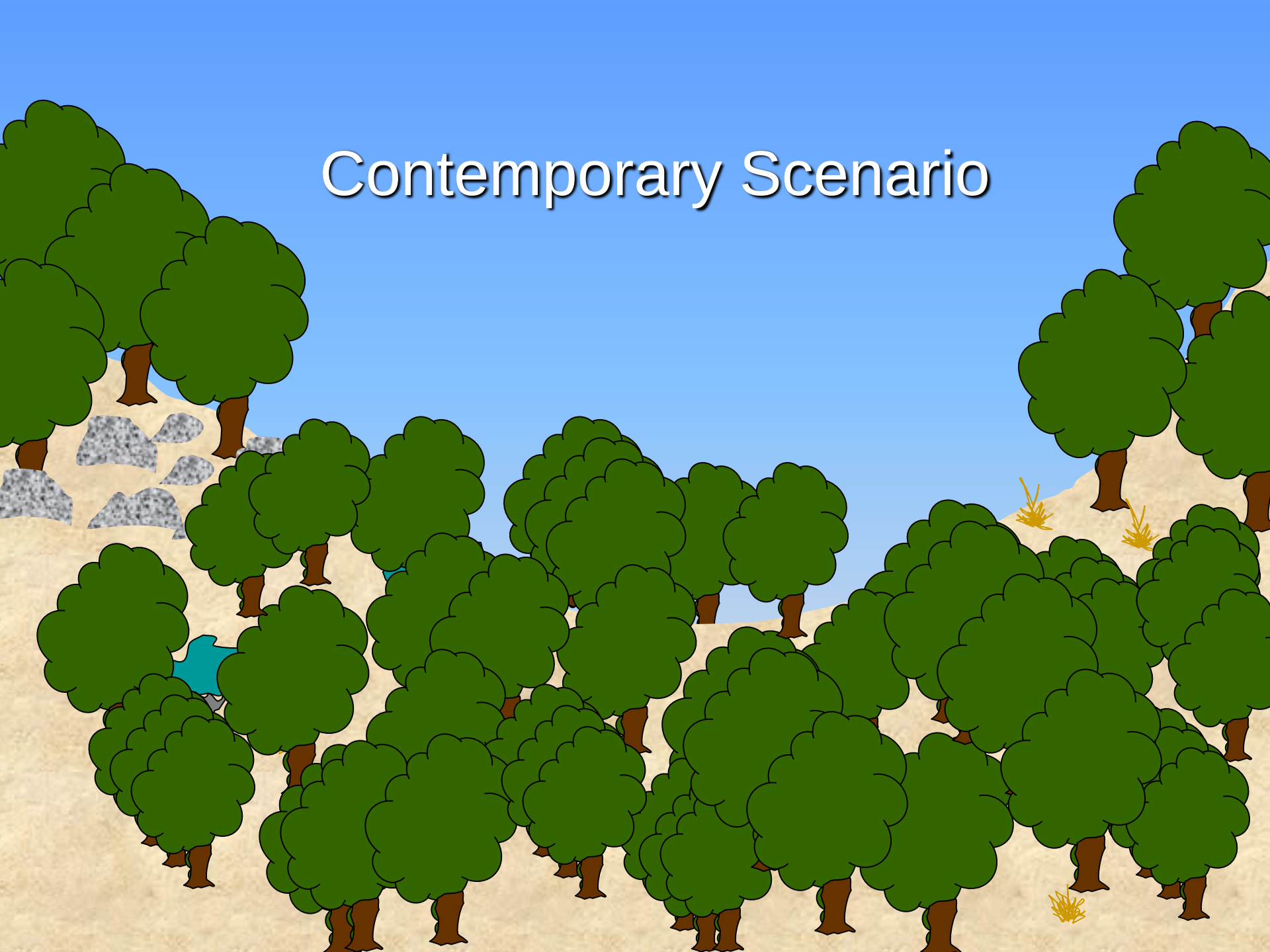

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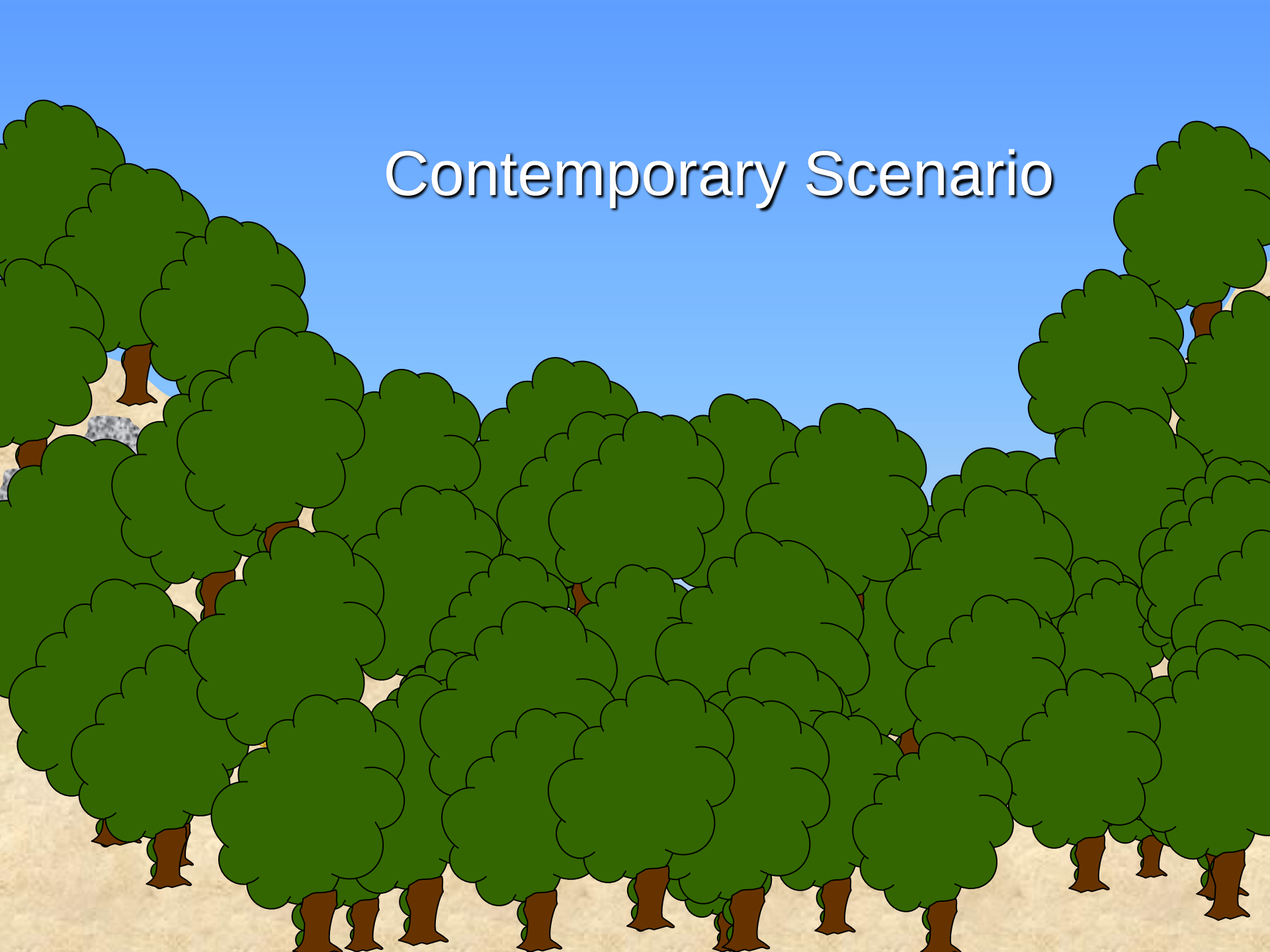

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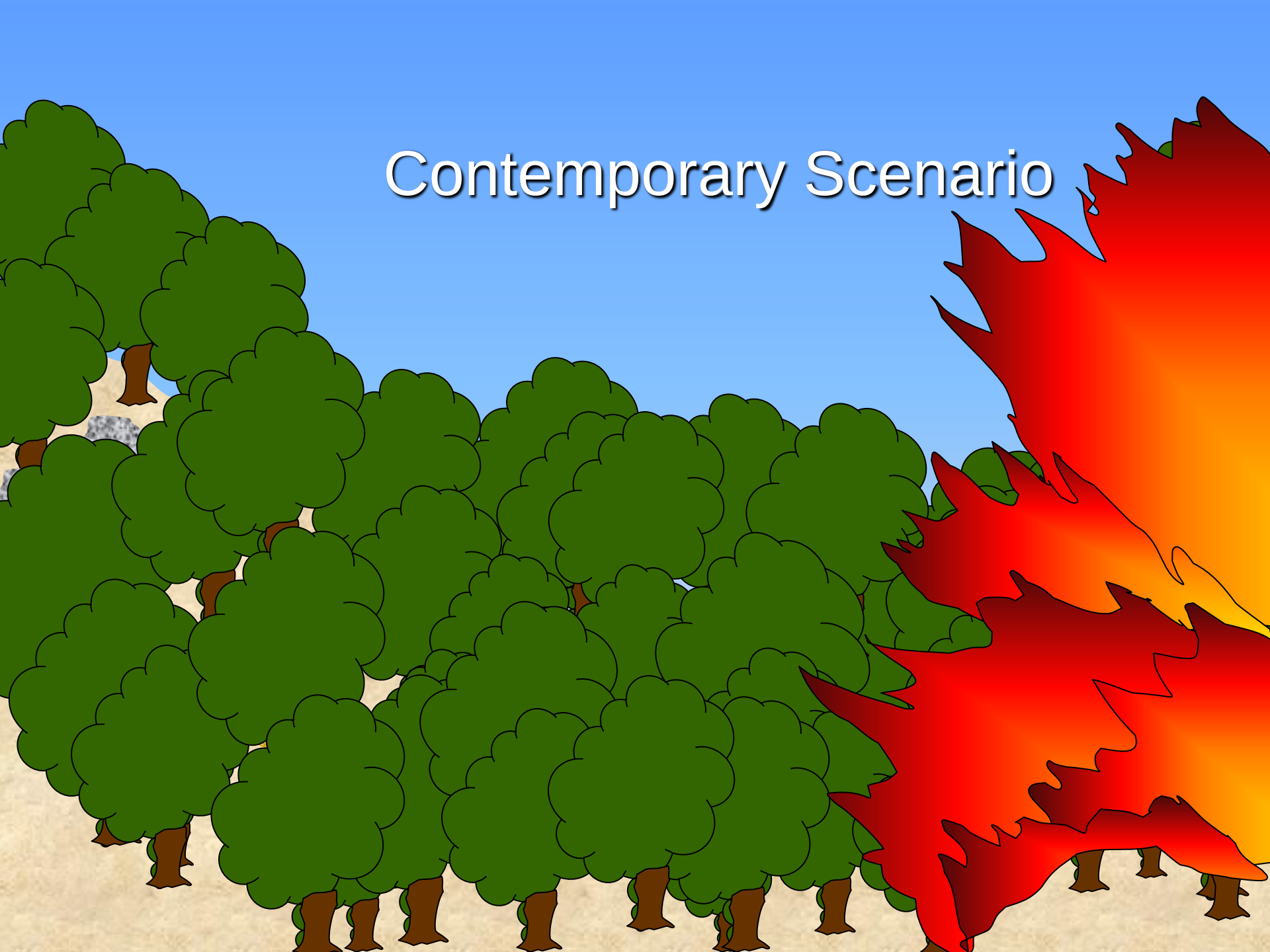

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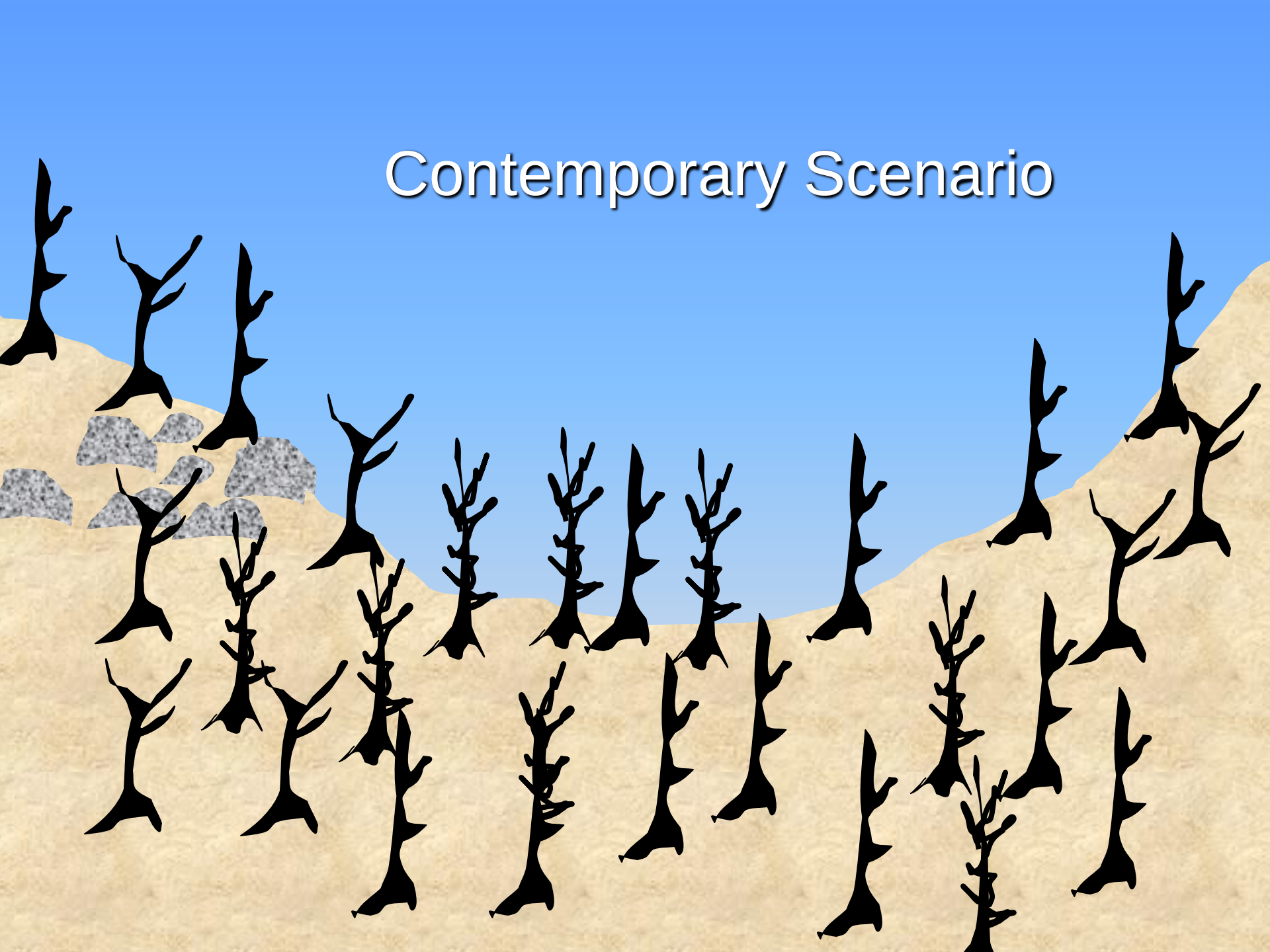
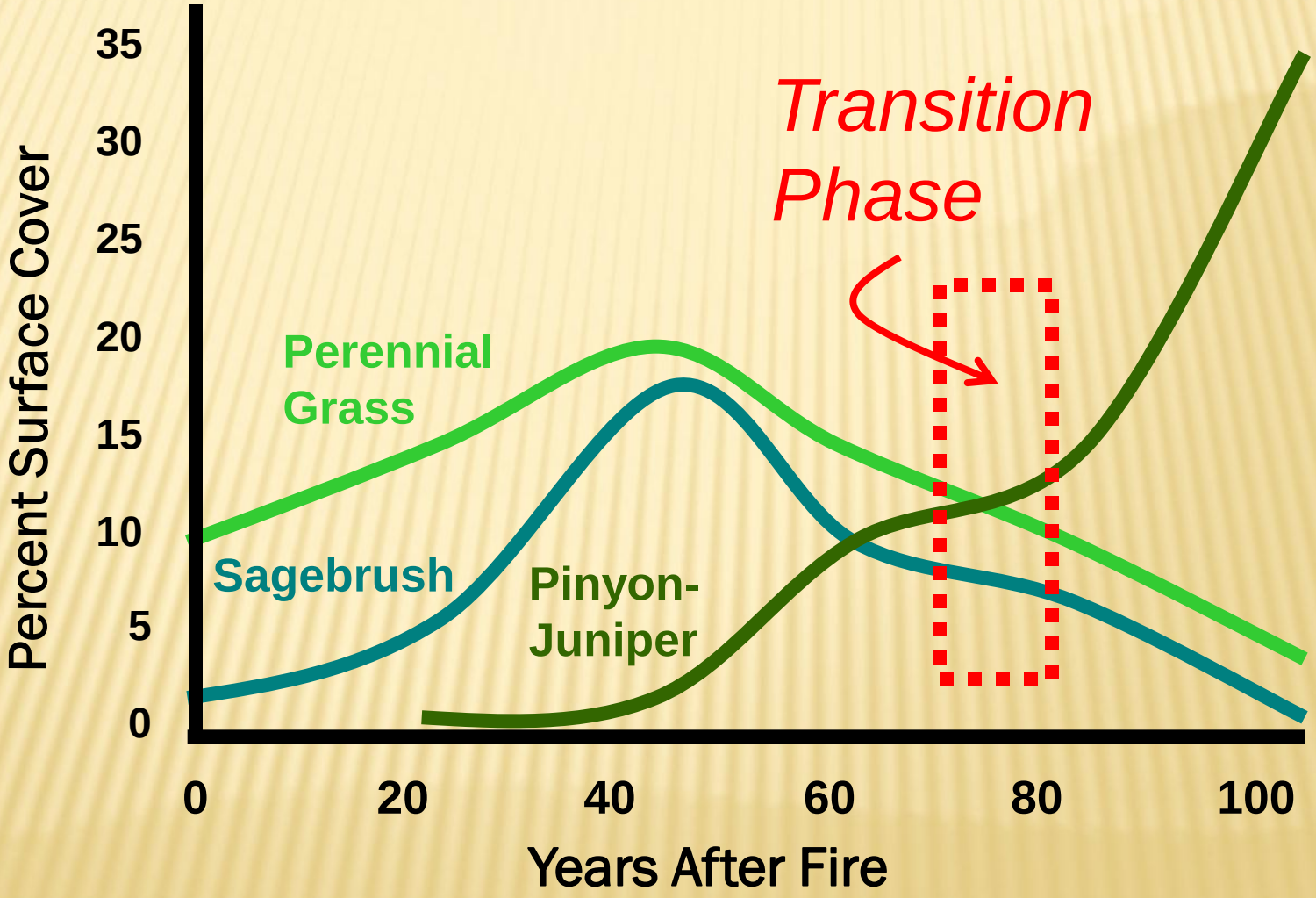


VEGETATION RESPONSE FOLLOWING FIRE



Adapted from Barney and Frischknecht 1974

SAGE-GROUSE

- The Project occurs in the Pine Nut Population Management Unit (PMU)
- One known active lek, average male attendance is 14
- Population size unknown, current data set insufficient for estimating population trend
- USGS and Carson BLM recently initiated a telemetry study in the PMU to learn more about the population
- The Project addresses high-level threats identified in the Bi-State Action Plan http://www.ndow.org/Nevada_Wildlife/Sage_Grouse/
  - Wildfire
  - Pinyon-juniper encroachment
  - Invasive species - cheatgrass

SAGE-GROUSE – USGS TELEMETRY STUDY

- In 2011-2012 captured 31 and 45 grouse
- Marked grouse with radio and GPS transmitters
- Nest survival (13%) is lower than populations range-wide, brood survival (65%) is higher
- Identified spring and summer utilization distributions
- Identified a movement corridor between seasonal habitat
- Suspect a new lek near Mount Siegel
- Grouse avoided areas with trees (176 m versus 38)
- Raptor/raven surveys suggest high numbers of ravens

SAGE-GROUSE - TREATMENT UNITS

- Four large treatment units totaling over 16,000 acres
- All four units are in priority habitat
- **Mill Canyon** (5,676 acres) – Near the only known active lek. Includes as much of the spring (March–May) utilization distribution (UD) as feasible.
- **Crest** (4,752 acres) – Runs north from the lek (breeding/nesting habitat) south to brood-rearing/summer habitat in the Mount Siegel and Bald Mountain areas. Unit captures crucial habitat serving as a seasonal movement corridor. Grouse move in a southerly direction after the breeding period; in May, grouse are 9 mi from the lek and in July, they're 25 mi away.
- **Mount Siegel** (2,569 acres) and **Bald Mountain** (3,599) – In brood-rearing/summer habitat. Includes as much of the summer (June–July) UD as feasible.

TREATMENT TYPES

- Hand Thinning (Selective Cutting)
- Hand Cutting (Non-Selective Cutting)
- Mechanical Mastication
- Mechanical Thinning/Removal
- Prescribed Fire (Pile Burning)
- Seeding (Aerial and Ground Based Broadcast)

Tree Thinning (Selective)

Pre-Treatment (2004)
Pine Nut Road
Douglas County

Post-Treatment (2009)
Pine Nut Road
Douglas County

Tree Thinning (Selective)

Pre-Treatment (2004)
Brunswick
Carson City

Post-Treatment (2010)
Brunswick
Carson City

Tree Thinning (Selective)

Pre-Treatment (2008)
Bluebird
Douglas County

Post-Treatment (2010)
Bluebird
Douglas County

Tree Cutting (Non-Selective)

Pre-Treatment (2008)
Mill Canyon
Lyon County

Post-Treatment (2010)
Mill Canyon
Lyon County

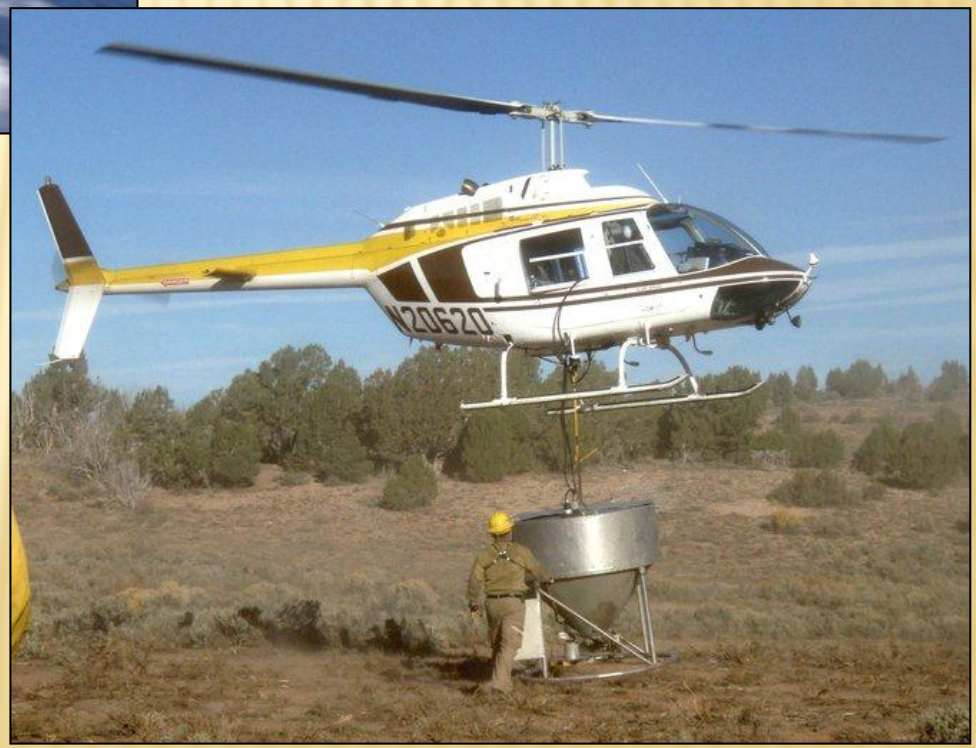
Tree Cutting (Non-Selective)

Pre-Treatment (2008)
Mill Canyon
Lyon County

Post-Treatment (2010)
Mill Canyon
Lyon County

Prescribed Fire - Seeding

Prescribed Fire
(Pile Burning)



Seeding

PROVIDING INPUT

Substantive comments are due May 2, 2013.

Comments can be sent to:

Brian Buttazoni, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

BLM-Sierra Front Field Office

5665 Morgan Mill Road

Carson City, Nevada 89701