

Board Meeting AGENDA

December 7 – 8, 2016

Placer County – Central Subregion



DECEMBER 7, 2016

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Boardmembers may tour the SNC office at 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn, CA 95603 from 11:30 – 1:00. Members of the public are welcome.

Board Tour

1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Members of the Board and staff will participate in a field trip to explore issues and activities related to forest and watershed health in the Central Subregion. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field tour but are responsible for their own transportation and lunch. The tour will start in the parking lot of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy located at 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn, CA 95603.

Reception

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Following the Board tour, Boardmembers and staff will attend a reception open to the public. The reception will be held at the General Gomez ARTS & Events Center located at 808 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA 95603.

DECEMBER 8, 2016

Board Meeting

*General Gomez ARTS & Events Center
808 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603*

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
(End time is approximate)

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of September 8, 2016, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**
- IV. Public Comments**
Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.
- V. Board Chair's Report**
- VI. Election of Chair and Vice Chair (ACTION)**
The Board will elect a Chair and Vice Chair for 2017.
- VII. 2017 Board Meeting Schedule (ACTION)**
The Board will review and approve a schedule for Board meetings for calendar year 2017.

VIII. 2015-17 Proposition 1 Grant Awards (ACTION)

The Board may take action to adopt CEQA findings and award grants under the 2015-17 Proposition 1 Grant Program for the following projects:

Mt Lassen Area:

- Project #853 – Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project, with Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency.
- Project #879 – Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.
- Project #899 – Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.
- Project #901– Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project, with Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency, based on review of the Hulsman Ranch and Nagel Family Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans that were approved by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and treated as the functional equivalent to a Negative Declaration.
- Project #903 – Rice’s Crossing Preserve Nonindustrial Timber Management Planning Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.
- Project #908 – Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.
- Project #909 – Forest Health and Watershed Improvement through Noxious Weed Management, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.

Mt Whitney Area:

- Project #880 – Eastern Madera Wildfire Restoration Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.
- Project #897 – The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.
- Project #911 – Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA.

IX. Executive Officer’s Report (INFORMATIONAL)

- a. Administrative Update
- b. Policy and Outreach Update
- c. Tribal Forum Discussion Report
- d. Tree Mortality Task Force Update
- e. New Boardmember Orientation
- f. Lake Almanor Water Trail Project Update
- g. Miscellaneous Updates

X. Deputy Attorney General’s Report (INFORMATIONAL)

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XI. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Staff will provide the Board with an update on the WIP, including identification of a Pilot Landscape Initiative.

XII. Expenditure of Remaining Proposition 84 Funds (ACTION)

Staff will recommend a process for expending the remainder of Proposition 84 funds, including delegating authority to the Executive Officer to enter into agreements to expend, consistent with the recommended process. The Board may act upon the staff recommendation.

XIII. Discussion on Key Issues for the 2017-18/2018-19 Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines (INFORMATIONAL)

Staff will provide the Board with an overview of key issues to be considered in the development of Proposition 1 Guidelines for the 2017-18/18-19 grant program.

XIV. Discussion of Placer County Community Choice Aggregation (INFORMATIONAL)

Placer County Treasurer-Tax Collector Jenine Windeshausen will provide the Board of an overview of Placer County's effort to establish a Community Choice Aggregation. Staff will discuss potential opportunities for SNC to assist in this effort and the potential benefits that could result from the effort.

XV. 2015-16 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Annual Report (ACTION)

Staff will recommend format and content for the Fiscal Year 2015-16 Annual Report and the Board may act to approve the recommendation.

XVI. Boardmembers' Comments

Provide an opportunity for members of the Board to make comments on items not on the agenda.

XVII. Public Comments

Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.

Adjournment

Meeting Materials are available on the SNC Web site at www.sierranevada.ca.gov. For additional information, or to submit written comment on any agenda item, please contact Ms. Armstrong at (530) 823-4700, toll free at (877) 257-1212; via email to tristyn.armstrong@sierranevada.ca.gov; in person or by mail at: 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn CA 95603. For reasonable accommodations, including documents in alternative formats, please contact Ms. Armstrong at least **five (5)** working days in advance.

Closed Session: Following, or at any time during, the meeting, the Board may recess or adjourn to closed session to consider pending or potential litigation, property negotiations, or personnel-related matters. Authority: Government Code Section 11126, subdivision (e)(2)(B)(i).

Board Meeting MINUTES

September 8, 2016

Turtle Rock Park Community Center
17300 State Route 89
Markleeville, CA 96120



I. Call to Order

Board Chair BJ Kirwan called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: BJ Kirwan, John Brissenden, Pam Giacomini, Bob Johnston, Bob Kirkwood, John Laird, Ron Hames, Jennifer Montgomery, Burt Bundy, John Exline, Terrence O'Brien, Este Stifel, and Christopher Wright

Absent: Allen Ishida, Eraina Ortega, and Woody Smeck

III. Approval of June 2, 2016, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

ACTION: Boardmember John Laird moved, and Boardmember John Brissenden seconded, a motion to approve the June 2, 2016, meeting minutes. The minutes were approved with 10 aye votes, with Boardmember Jennifer Montgomery abstaining.

IV. Public Comments

David Griffith, Alpine Biomass Committee, addressed the Board. He took the opportunity to thank the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), and in particular, two individuals, Danna Stroud and Jim Branham. Both were instrumental in assisting with the startup and support of the Alpine Biomass Committee.

V. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair BJ Kirwan welcomed Boardmember Secretary John Laird to the December meeting and invited him to say a few words to the Board. Laird started by acknowledging his regular alternate, Todd Ferrara, for the outstanding job he does representing the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to the SNC and the SNC to CNRA. Laird took a few minutes to identify Agenda Items upon which he felt he would add perspective and additional detail as the meeting progressed. Among these, he called out biomass and the final greenhouse gas reduction fund legislation as important opportunities for the SNC to engage more deeply with members of the Legislature. Laird described the Governor's aversion to debt as one of the reasons he believed the Park Bond didn't get passed by the Legislature this year and encouraged the Board to talk through a new idea to try to shift funding natural resource and parks-related activities from bond indebtedness to more ongoing stable funding sources.

Board Chair Kirwan announced that she will be retiring from the Board following the December 2016 Board meeting. She thanked fellow Boardmembers and SNC staff and indicated she will have more to say in December.

VI. 2015-16 Proposition 1 Grant Awards (ACTION)

Assistant Executive Officer Bob Kingman provided a brief update on the Prop. 84 Grant Program sharing that the SNC has received approximately \$175,000 in returned grant funding for which staff would develop a spending plan and recommendation for Board consideration at the December meeting.

Boardmember Bob Kirkwood inquired as to whether the returned money might have fewer limitations than originally required, based on his experience on the Coastal Conservancy. Kingman agreed to look into the matter.

Kingman described the current status of the Proposition 1 Grant Program, summarizing applications received and funded to date. He noted that the next application deadline of September 1 has passed and that staff anticipates bringing recommendations for Board grant awards to the December 2016 and March 2017 meetings, which will conclude this round of Proposition 1 grants.

Mt. Lassen Area Manager Andy Fristensky provided some background on the SNC Proposition 1 Grant program stating that, in total, the SNC has received 49 applications, of which 17 have been awarded for a total of \$4.7 million.

Fristensky then gave an overview of three projects from the Mt. Lassen Area being recommended to the Board for approval: Webber Lake/Little Truckee River Headwaters Timber Management Plan (#852); Bucks Lake Project (#857); and Butte Forest Thin – Doe Mill Ridge Watershed Project (#882).

There were discussion and questions from Boardmembers that ranged from other funding contributions to additional details on project locations. Boardmember Burt Bundy inquired as to PG&E's involvement in the Bucks Lake Project and Fristensky confirmed PG&E's participation. Boardmember Jennifer Montgomery provided the Board additional information on the Webber Lake/Little Truckee River Headwaters Timber Management Plan stating that this project is really a watershed project and an example of a project that will benefit so many of our downstream neighbors. Montgomery also stated that, for full disclosure and transparency, she is a member of the Truckee Donner Land Trust.

Mt. Whitney Area Manager Randi Jorgensen then gave an overview of the two projects from the Mt. Whitney Area being recommended for funding: Pumpkin Hollow Restoration Project (#851) and Beaver Creek Watershed Improvement Project (#884).

The Board engaged in a detailed conversation concerning work being done on private and public lands surrounding the Pumpkin Hollow Restoration Project

area. Kirkwood reiterated his desire that the grant evaluation should consider, and accompanying material clearly identify, what is occurring on adjacent lands. He inquired as to the activities occurring adjacent to the Pumpkin Hollow project. Boardmember Christopher Wright provided an overview of the project location for clarification stating that this project is located in a rural, wildlands area and is not considered residential.

Kirkwood requested a separate motion to approve the Pumpkin Hollow Restoration Project.

Public Comment:

Katherine Evatt, Board President of the Foothill Conservancy and 37 year resident of Amador County, addressed the Board to provide support for the Pumpkin Hollow Project, emphasizing its importance in the Mokelumne Watershed which provides 90 percent of the water for the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Evatt urged the Board to approve this project.

Steve Wilensky, Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) program, provided the Board with detailed background information for the Pumpkin Hollow project which addressed the specific concerns that Boardmembers expressed regarding activities on private lands surrounding the project area.

Boardmembers engaged in further conversation about private landowner participation, and the importance of including collaborative efforts in project documents provided by the SNC.

Karen Quidachay, Upper Mokelumne River Water Authority, provided thanks to the Board and acknowledged water agencies for stepping up and setting an example to other agencies in the Sierra.

Anthony Castanos, Save the Redwoods League, expressed his appreciation for consideration of Project 884 and other projects of this type in the Sierra.

Rachel Norton, Plumas County Fire Safe Council, addressed the Board in support of the Bucks Lake Project. Norton shared the support of this project by the Plumas County Fire Safe Council, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors, and multiple other groups. Norton also noted that the project area is the main hub for tourism in the area.

Ray Comblin, United States Forest Service, spoke to the Board on behalf of the Pumpkin Hollow project and expressed support for this project on behalf of USFS.

ACTION: Boardmember Bob Kirkwood moved, and Boardmember John Brissenden seconded, a motion that the Board (a) authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the Webber Lake Little Truckee River Headwaters Timber Management Plan

(SNC #852), the Bucks Lake Project (SNC #857), the Butte Forest Thin – Doe Mill Ridge Watershed Project (SNC #882), and the Beaver Creek Watershed Improvement Project (SNC #884); and (b) authorize a grant award to each of the above listed projects for the amounts recommended by staff, and further authorize the staff to enter into the necessary agreements for the recommended projects. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION: Boardmember John Laird moved, and Boardmember Pam Giacomini seconded, a motion to approve findings in the Negative Declaration, and authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency for the Pumpkin Hollow Restoration Project (SNC #851), and authorize a grant award for the amount recommended by staff, and further authorize the staff to enter into the necessary agreement for the recommended project. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Executive Officer Jim Branham started his report with an update about ongoing Department of General Service (DGS) Contracted Fiscal Services (CFS) issues and costs for services. He noted that the SNC and several other state conservancies are working with the Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Finance to find a permanent solution to the problem.

a. Administrative Update

Administrative Division Chief Amy Lussier updated the Board on the status of the SNC budgeting process and informed them that we closed out our 2015-16 fiscal year having spent 99.7% of our total allocation. Lussier reiterated some of Branham's points confirming that the SNC is receiving non-payment complaints from vendors and grantees and that CFS informed SNC that they will be raising their fees next fiscal year by another \$29,000 – an astounding 200% increase over two years in fees for their services. Lussier assured the Board that the Administrative Division would work with CNRA and other State Conservancies to find a solution as quickly as possible.

Boardmember John Laird added that DGS has experienced a change in leadership and has started working through some of the problems that have plagued the organization.

Lussier informed the Board that the SNC Procurement and Contracts Analyst, Donna Martinez, is retiring and SNC has advertised a position to fill behind her. The vacancy will be filled over the next two weeks. An update on the position will be provided at the December Board meeting.

b. Policy and Outreach Update

Branham engaged the Board in a discussion about biomass, highlighting the legislative success of Assembly Member Brian Dahle in getting legislative language passed that will create an opportunity for existing biomass energy facilities to operate for another five years. The legislation was awaiting signature by the Governor.

The Board engaged in conversation related to newly proposed legislation, the broader issues relating to biomass utilization tree mortality issues.

Branham provided an update on the development of the Forest Carbon Plan stating that the Plan is in the review stages and the team will have a final public review draft out prior to the December Board meeting.

Angela Avery, Policy and Outreach Division Chief, provided updates on several legislative bills that may have relevance for the SNC.

- AB2444 – Parks Bond – Expends \$3.12 billion for natural resources and parks throughout California. The bill did not make it out of the legislature, though the staff feels that is the last version is a good starting point for new Park Bond discussions in the future.
- AB2029 – Timber Harvest Plan Bill – Expands an exemption already in place, effectively dismissing the need for a timber harvest plan under certain scenarios, and increasing the diameter of trees eligible for harvest by two inches (to 26 inches) under the exemption. The bill passed through the legislature, though, at the time, it was unclear what the Governor's position would be.
- AB2480 (Bloom) – Source Watershed Bill – Identifies source watersheds as integral components of California's water infrastructure system. The bill passed and is awaiting action from the Governor.
- SB32 (Pavley) – Would require the State Air Resources Board to set a statewide limit of greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 40 percent below 1990 levels. Avery reminded the Board that Senator Pavley confirmed that the Governor would sign the bill at yesterday's reception.

Avery informed the Board that staff is developing a Policy Agenda, which will outline all of the issues that SNC is actively tracking or interested in and will be shared at the December meeting. She also reminded the Board that Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection week would be kicked off by the Great Sierra River Cleanup on Saturday, September 17. She announced that Ali Sambucetti, who was working as an SNC Student Assistant, has joined the Communications Team as an employee. Finally, she shared a communications video developed to provide a status update from the communications team.

c. NDRC HUD Grant Update

Avery provided the Board with an update for the National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant and said SNC currently does not have a signed agreement but has been working very hard to move this project forward. Avery stated that the team continues to refine metrics for the forest and biomass health and biomass utilization pillars. HUD is looking for something that is considered shorter term and is “defensible” to Congress. Avery continued by saying that there is a lot of interest in the grant itself but until there is a signed agreement no work can be completed.

Boardmember John Brissenden and Avery engaged in brief conversation discussing up front cost reimbursement and messaging associated with the NDRC HUD grant.

d. Tribal Forum Discussion Report

The SNC’s tribal liaison, Julie Griffith-Flatter, provided the Board with a summary of the tribal meeting held the previous day. Griffith-Flatter stated that Boardmembers Ron Hames, Terrence O’Brien, and SNC staff were joined by the Bridgeport Paiute and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California including the Hung-A-Lel-Ti community representatives. Griffith-Flatter stated that items of discussion consisted of the state, the watershed, areas where forest restoration work is taking place, abandoned mine lands, and policy. The group also discussed the need to establish planning processes that include cultural practices that will work for all groups involved.

O’Brien found this forum to be a positive meeting and he found it to be more informative than the previous one. O’Brien feels that this is an excellent idea and will be looking forward to these moving forward.

Branham indicated that O’Brien will be the consistent Board representative and with each Subregion meeting the local Board representative will be asked to attend.

The Board engaged in brief conversation with Griffith-Flatter to review factors that contributed to increased participation at this meeting.

e. Tree Mortality Task Force Update

Mt. Whitney Area Manager Randi Jorgensen provided the Board with updated data shared at the Governor’s Tree Mortality Task Force workgroups, stating that an additional 28,551,517 trees have died from drought and bark beetle infestation since October 2015. This brings the statewide mortality level to over 66,000,000 since 2010. Jorgensen provided an overview and several maps which were used to illustrate the severity of the issue, the progression

of tree mortality, and the need to build resilience in those forests not yet overwhelmed by the drought and beetle.

Jorgensen provided a video with tree mortality and carbon storage issue highlights.

f. Miscellaneous Updates

Branham reported that he presented at a special meeting of the Tree Mortality Task Force in South Lake Tahoe the day before the Tahoe summit. He mentioned that Netflix is doing a six-part series on climate change and tree mortality and that the Tahoe meeting will be featured. Branham also informed the Board that the December Board in Placer County will honor Board Chair BJ Kirwan's service.

VIII. Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul reported that the legislative session ended without the adoption of any major bills to reform the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, Senate Bill 122 (Jackson) (Chapter 476) was enacted, and provides for the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to establish and maintain an electronic, publicly available database of CEQA documents, and provides in some circumstances for the concurrent preparation of an administrative record of proceedings while a lead agency is preparing a CEQA document.

IX. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Executive Officer Jim Branham provided the Board with an overall status update, advising the Board that SNC is not where they would like to be with the WIP program. Branham stated that the tree mortality issue in the Southern Sierra has become an overwhelming issue, and we are currently working to identify how the WIP needs to be adapted in light of that.

The WIP Program Coordinator, Mandy Vance, advised the Board that work has continued toward the formation of a WIP Steering Committee with members that will strengthen the working relationships and develop formal engagement between partners. Vance said SNC will hold the 2nd annual WIP Summit in March of 2017. Vance provided the Board with activities that have taken place since the Board last convened, such as the June Teakettle Tour. Vance also stated that the communications team, which is made up of SNC and USFS staff, is continuing to work to develop messaging and informational materials.

The Board engaged in brief conversation to discuss the status of WIP pilot projects including the Tahoe National Forest watershed assessment. Boardmember Bob Kirkwood inquired as to the status of additional USFS assessments and Branham indicated no other assessments had been completed and were long overdue.

The SNC Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyst, Liz VanWagtendonk, provided the Board with an introduction to the SNC ARC GIS online account which contains critical mapping information related to WIP. VanWagtendonk demonstrated the newly developed GIS tool that will assist in the planning for WIP pilot watersheds, and a WIP external investment tracker that will address questions related to natural resource questions and project needs. The Board engaged in brief conversation with several follow-up questions. VanWagtendonk was able to show the Boardmembers an example of a project area with various layer options. VanWagtendonk will provide the Board the access link, user id, and password information to access the tools she demonstrated.

X. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmembers engaged in conversation regarding the outstanding work of staff at the SNC and particularly those staff at Sorensen's who assisted in putting together this meeting.

Boardmembers also expressed special appreciation for the GIS presentation and the quality of the maps generated by the program.

XI. Public Comments

David Griffith, Alpine Biomass Committee, provided an update on the Alpine Biomass project. Mr. Griffith shared the concern that there are no investor-owned utilities in Alpine County and on the east slope. Even if they have biomass to sell, they have no one to buy it. He would like to see support from the Natural Resources Agency in addressing this concern and Secretary Laird invited follow-up communication.

XII. Adjournment

Board Chair BJ Kirwan adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m.

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has met quarterly throughout the Region since June 2006. In 2012, the Governing Board approved an ongoing schedule that provides for the March meetings to be held in Sacramento annually. The other three quarterly Board meetings are held in the Region, rotating between Subregions. The SNC Board meetings in the Region include a field tour on Wednesday afternoon and the Board meeting on Thursday.

Current Status

The SNC will continue to hold its March Board meetings in Sacramento. The SNC will hold the 3rd Annual Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Summit in conjunction with the March meeting.

Staff has reviewed the date proposed below and has not found any major conflicts that might impact the ability of Boardmembers to attend.

Next Steps

The following schedule is proposed for 2017:

- March 1 & 2, Sacramento
- June 7 & 8, South Subregion
- September 6 & 7, North Central Subregion
- December 6 & 7, South Central Subregion

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed schedule for 2017.

Background

California voters passed Proposition 1, The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Bond Act of 2014, on November 4, 2014. Proposition 1 added Section 79731 to the California Water Code, authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state. The bond measure included an allocation of \$25 million for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC).

The 2015-16 state budget included an appropriation of \$10 million, which is intended to be awarded over two fiscal years. At the June 2015 Board meeting, the Board approved the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 1 Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16/16-17 Grant Guidelines. The SNC released a request for proposals on July 1, 2015, with the first application deadline of September 1, 2015. The SNC continues to consult with other Proposition 1 funding agencies to maximize the investment of bond funds in the Region.

For the September 1, 2015, deadline, the SNC received 20 applications requesting a total of \$5,516,649.87. To date, the Board has authorized nine grants from that application round totaling \$2,428,498.

For the March 1, 2016, deadline, the SNC received 29 applications requesting a total of \$9,027,618.26. To date, the Board has authorized 13 grants from that application round totaling \$4,298,504. Three additional Category 1 applications totaling \$1,324,867 scored above the 85-point threshold, have finished CEQA review, and are now being recommending for funding.

For the September 1, 2016, deadline, the SNC received 20 applications totaling \$4,741,704.20. The applications included ten Category 1 (site improvement) projects and ten Category 2 (planning) projects. Prior to scoring, three applications were determined to be ineligible/incomplete and ten applications scored below 85 points. Staff is recommending seven projects totaling \$1,829,961 for authorization at this meeting.

In summary, the total value of grant requests received was \$19,285,972.33 for the \$10,000,000 in available funding. If the Board authorizes the grants being recommended at this meeting, a total of 32 Proposition 1 grants for \$9,881,830 will have been authorized as follows:

- 21 projects are in the Mt Lassen Area
 - 9 are located in the North Central Subregion
 - 7 are located in the Central Subregion
 - 5 are located in the North Subregion
- 11 projects are in the Mt Whitney Area
 - 8 are located in the South Central Subregion
 - 2 are located in the East Subregion
 - 1 is located in the South Subregion
- 22 are Category 1 Implementation Projects, 10 are Category 2 Planning Projects

Current Status

Staff is recommending a total of ten grants worth \$3,154,828.00 for applications received in March 2016 and September 2016.

For the March 2016 applications, staff is recommending adoption of necessary CEQA findings and authorization of three grants worth \$1,324,867.00.

For the September 2016 applications, evaluation has been completed for all 17 applications that were determined to be complete and eligible. Ten projects scored below the 85-point threshold and will have the opportunity to consult with SNC staff regarding possible reapplication in a future round. Staff is recommending that the Board make the necessary CEQA findings and authorize seven grants worth \$1,829,961.00

Two of the projects recommended for funding (Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project (SNC897) and the Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project (SNC911) totaling \$994,985.00, directly address needs identified in the Governor's Emergency Proclamation about Tree Mortality and will be considered part of the \$1 million Tree Mortality apportionment that was approved by the SNC Board at the March 2016 Board Meeting. If approved, the total amount of grants authorized to address impacts from Tree Mortality will be \$1,563,429.00.

Please see [Table 1](#) for details on remaining March 2016 and all September 2016 applications, including links to the complete application packages and CEQA documentation.

Mt. Lassen Area Projects Recommended for Funding

- [Project #853](#) proposed by the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) – Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project, with Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency, based on review of the Negative Declaration approved by the EID as Lead Agency. The project will be implemented in partnership with the USFS, Eldorado National Forest over a four-year period and includes forest management and restoration activities on 6,800 acres. Treatments include prescribed fire, meadow restoration, and aspen enhancement activities. The Caples Creek Watershed is part of the larger South Fork American River Watershed, which is the primary water supply for more than 110,000 people and businesses served by the EID.

To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

To access the Negative Declaration, [click here](#).

Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$476,709

- [Project #879](#) proposed by the Placer County Resource Conservation District – Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. Located in Placer County within the boundary of the 2014 King Fire, the project will

restore key areas of the 13-mile length of the Rubicon River Drainage that runs southwest from the Hell Hole Reservoir. Treatments include mastication of submerchantable burned timber and brush on 125 acres of USFS-managed land; hand treatment of submerchantable burned timber and brush on 30 acres of steep, USFS-managed land designated as “watershed sensitive areas;” revegetation within a 100-foot buffer on both sides of two miles of stream on private and USFS-managed lands; and erosion control and revegetation on five acres of previously used timber operation landings. The Rubicon River drainage is a major tributary that stores and transports water through Placer County and to the American River, which drains into the Sacramento River, an important and significant water source for California.

To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$359,838

- [Project #899](#) proposed by the Plumas Audubon Society – Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. The Genesee Valley is located in the Upper Feather River watershed at the headwaters of the State Water Project. This project will complete wildlife and botanical surveys, a cultural resource inventory, and soils and hydrological analyses that will support the completion of CEQA and NEPA for 618 acres on the Plumas National Forest and CEQA for 221 acres on the privately-owned Heart K Ranch identified as priority project areas in the recently completed Genesee Valley Wildfire Restoration Plan. The next phase implementation project will include forest thinning and underburning, which will incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge recommendations from the local Maidu people.

To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

Category 2 Planning Project - \$74,576

- [Project #901](#) proposed by the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District – Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project, with Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency, based on review of the Hulsman Ranch and Nagel Family Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans that were approved by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and treated as the functional equivalent to a Negative Declaration. Located just north of the Lassen National Forest and within the Wildland-Urban Interface zone for the City of Susanville, this project will treat 325 acres on two privately owned properties. The treatment approach includes mechanical harvesting of conifers under 12” in diameter, hand thinning, pruning, mastication, and slash disposal. This work is strategically located to increase the benefit of past Honey Lake Valley RCD projects and projects that are planned or underway by the Lassen National Forest and Lassen County Fire Safe Council. Lassen Creek, the main drainage within this watershed and located within the project boundary, is a tributary to the Susan River, an important supply of agricultural water that drains into the 7,667-acre Honey Lake Wildlife Area wetland.

To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$250,000

- [Project #903](#) proposed by the Bear Yuba Land Trust – Rice’s Crossing Preserve Nonindustrial Timber Management Planning Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. Rice’s Crossing Preserve, acquired by the Bear Yuba Land Trust in 2014 with assistance from an SNC Prop 84 grant, comprises 2,706 acres along a six-mile span of the Yuba River in Yuba and Nevada Counties. This project will prepare a Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan that will serve as the functional equivalent to CEQA for a 2,000-acre portion of the Preserve, with the goals of guiding future management actions that will reduce the threat of high-intensity wildfires, promote resilient and growing stand structures, and reduce the threat of watershed damage from erosion and large-scale tree mortality. The Preserve is located within both the North and Middle Yuba River watersheds, which eventually feed into the Feather River and eventually the Sacramento River to the Delta. To access the complete application package, [click here](#).
Category 2 Planning Project - \$74,550
- [Project #908](#) proposed by Maidu Summit Consortium and Conservancy – Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. Tásmam Kojóm, a 2,326-acre parcel that includes a meadow, streams, springs, and overstocked mixed conifer forest, is a culturally important place to the Mountain Maidu. Currently owned by PG&E, the property will be transferred to the Maidu Summit Conservancy and Consortium as part of the Stewardship Council’s Land Conservation and Conveyance Program. This project will entail environmental review work to support future implementation of the Tásmam Kojóm Land Management Plan. SNC funds will be focused on completing the portions of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) related to forest and watershed health. To access the complete application package, [click here](#).
Category 2 Planning Project - \$73,312
- [Project #909](#) proposed by the Truckee River Watershed Council – Forest Health and Watershed Improvement through Noxious Weed Management, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. This project will survey 18,000 acres, remove new and established infestations of high-priority noxious weeds on 1,500 acres, and revegetate native grasses, forbs, and shrubs on 450 acres on USFS- and CDFW-managed lands in Sierra and Nevada counties. The treatments are intended to improve forest and watershed health, with particular focus on high-risk growth areas in proximity to transportation corridors and recent burn areas. The project area was designated as high-priority due to the habitat values and threat from potential wildfire to the municipal water supply at Prosser, Boca, and Stampede Reservoirs. To access the complete application package, [click here](#).
Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$362,538

Mt. Whitney Area Projects Recommended for Funding

- [Project #880](#) proposed by the Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council – Eastern Madera Wildfire Restoration Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. The 2014 French Fire burned over 14,000 acres of public lands on the Sierra National Forest and within the headwaters for the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta. This project will complete 350 acres of high-priority conifer reforestation in Madera County, including removal of fire-killed trees, grapple piling or burning of slash, herbicide treatments, and replanting following USFS Region 5 guidelines. Reforestation will improve watershed conditions by restoring severely burned areas to forested conditions, thereby reducing sedimentation and turbidity and improving water quality for downstream users.

To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$488,320

- [Project #897](#) proposed by the Tuolumne Utilities District – The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. Located on USFS-managed lands in Tuolumne County, this 202-acre project will increase forest health and resiliency by removing surface and ladder fuels and reducing upper crown cover to 50 percent. Additionally, drought- and beetle-killed trees will be removed. In addition to the forest health benefits, this project will protect the Tuolumne Main Canal, a historic wooden flume and connected canals that are the primary drinking water conveyance system for 90 percent of the residents of Tuolumne County, including the nearby communities of Twain Harte and Mi-Wuk. Watershed benefits include protection for critical sections of the South Fork Stanislaus River, which flows into the New Melones Reservoir and ultimately to the Sacramento Delta. To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$496,000

- [Project #911](#) proposed by the Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council – Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project, with Notice of Exemption from CEQA. This project will treat approximately 300 acres of mixed-conifer timberland that includes 23 separate property owners. The project area, which is completely surrounded by USFS and BLM-managed lands, has suffered 80 percent visible bark beetle mortality, a figure that is expected to rise to 90 percent by 2017. The project will fall and remove all dead trees in accordance with California Forest Practice Rules and recommendations from the Stanislaus National Forest. Remaining slash will be masticated and spread on the forest floor. Projects goals include returning the project area, which serves as the headwaters for Gentry Creek, a major tributary of the North Fork of the Merced River, to functional forest land that will aid in the protection of the downstream water supply.

To access the complete application package, [click here](#).

Category 1 Site Improvement Project - \$498,985

Attachments

[Table 1](#), [Project Maps](#), Project Descriptions, and CEQA Documentation

Next Steps

Staff will file all necessary adopted CEQA documentation and prepare agreements for each authorized grant. The remainder amount of \$118,170 of appropriated Proposition 1 funds will return to the fund and be available to the SNC for in future rounds.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board (a) authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed Project (SNC879), the Eastern Madera Wildfire Restoration Project (SNC880), the Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project (SNC897), the Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project (SNC899), the Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning Project (SNC903), the Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan (SNC908), the Forest Health and Watershed Improvement through Noxious Weed Management Project (SNC909), and the Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project (SNC911); and (b) approve findings concurring in the Negative Declaration and Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans, and authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Determination as a Responsible Agency for the Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project (SNC853), and the Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project (SNC901); and (c) authorize a grant award to each of the above listed projects for the amounts recommended by staff, and further authorize the staff to enter into the necessary agreements to move forward with these projects.

Agenda Item VII
2015-17 Proposition 1 Grant
Awards
Table 1

Score	SNC ID#	Organization	Project Title	Amount Requested	County	Subregion
-------	---------	--------------	---------------	------------------	--------	-----------

*Applications Submitted **March 1, 2016** Recommended for Authorization:*

88.00	853	El Dorado Irrigation District	Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project	\$ 476,709.00	El Dorado	Central
85.50	879	Placer County Resource Conservation District	Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed	\$ 499,903.00	Placer	Central
85.00	880	Yosemite-Sequoia RC&DC	Eastern Madera Wildfire Restoration	\$ 488,320.00	Madera	South

Subtotal: \$ 1,464,932.00

Amount Being Recommended for Authorization: \$ 1,324,867.00

#879 recommended amount was reduced to \$359,838 after removing ineligible costs and adjusting admin.

*Applications Submitted **September 1, 2016** Recommended for Authorization:*

93.75	899	Plumas Audubon Society	Genessee Valley Watershed Improvement Project	\$ 74,576.25	Plumas	North Central
92.00	897	Tuolumne Utilities District	The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project	\$ 496,000.00	Tuolumne	South Central
90.00	903	Bear Yuba Land Trust	Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning Project	\$ 74,550.00	Nevada / Yuba	Central
88.50	901	Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District	Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project	\$ 250,000.00	Lassen	North
88.00	908	Maidu Summit Consortium and Conservancy	Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan	\$ 75,000.00	Plumas	North Central
86.50	909	Truckee River Watershed Council	Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management	\$ 362,538.00	Nevada / Sierra	Central
85.00	911	Yosemite-Sequoia RC & DC	Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project	\$498,985.00	Mariposa	South Central

Subtotal: \$ 1,831,649.25

Amount Being Recommended for Authorization: \$ 1,829,961.00

#899 was rounded down to the nearest whole dollar. #908 administrative costs were reduced to comply with 15% cap.

Score	SNC ID#	Organization	Project Title	Amount Requested	County	Subregion
-------	---------	--------------	---------------	------------------	--------	-----------

*Applications Submitted **September 1, 2016** Not Recommended for Authorization:*

82.50	895	Nevada Land Trust	Jobs Peak Ranch Health and Fuels Management Plan	\$ 74,476.05	Alpine	East
82.25	905	South Yuba River Citizens League	Inimim Forest Restoration Project	\$ 75,000.00	Nevada	Central
81.75	912	California Trout	June Mountain Ski Area Whitebark Pine Restoration Project	\$ 474,517.90	Mono	East
81.25	890	American Rivers	McKenzie Ridge Fuel Treatment and Prescribed Fire Project	\$ 394,116.00	Fresno	South
80.75	910	Truckee Donner Land Trust	Headwaters Basin of the North Fork American River	\$ 500,000.00	Placer	Central
80.75	898	Mariposa County Fire Safe Council	Wagner Ridge Watershed Protection Plan	\$ 75,000.00	Mariposa	South Central
78.00	913	Sierra Streams Institute	Lowell Fire Watershed Restoration	\$ 75,000.00	Nevada	Central
74.25	900	Alpine Fire Safe Council	Markleeville Forest Fuels Project	\$ 39,050.00	Alpine	East
73.50	902	Mariposa County Resource Conservation District	WUI Fuels Reduction Mariposa County	\$ 495,000.00	Mariposa	South Central
66.25	891	Sacramento River Watershed Program	North Shingletown Landscape Scale Fuels Reduction	\$ 74,895.00	Shasta	North

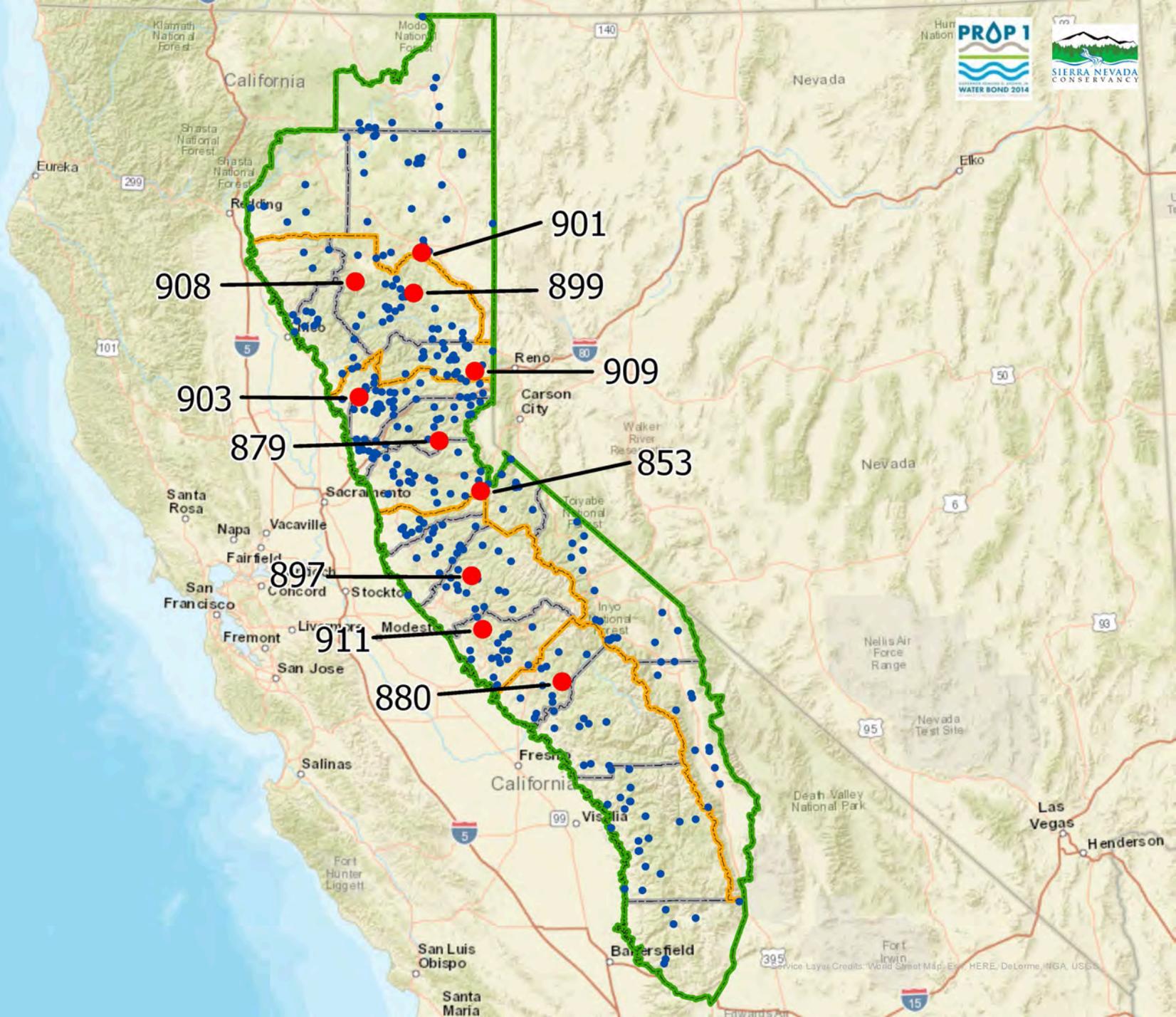
Subtotal: \$ 2,277,054.95

*Applications Submitted **September 1, 2016** Determined to be Incomplete/Ineligible*

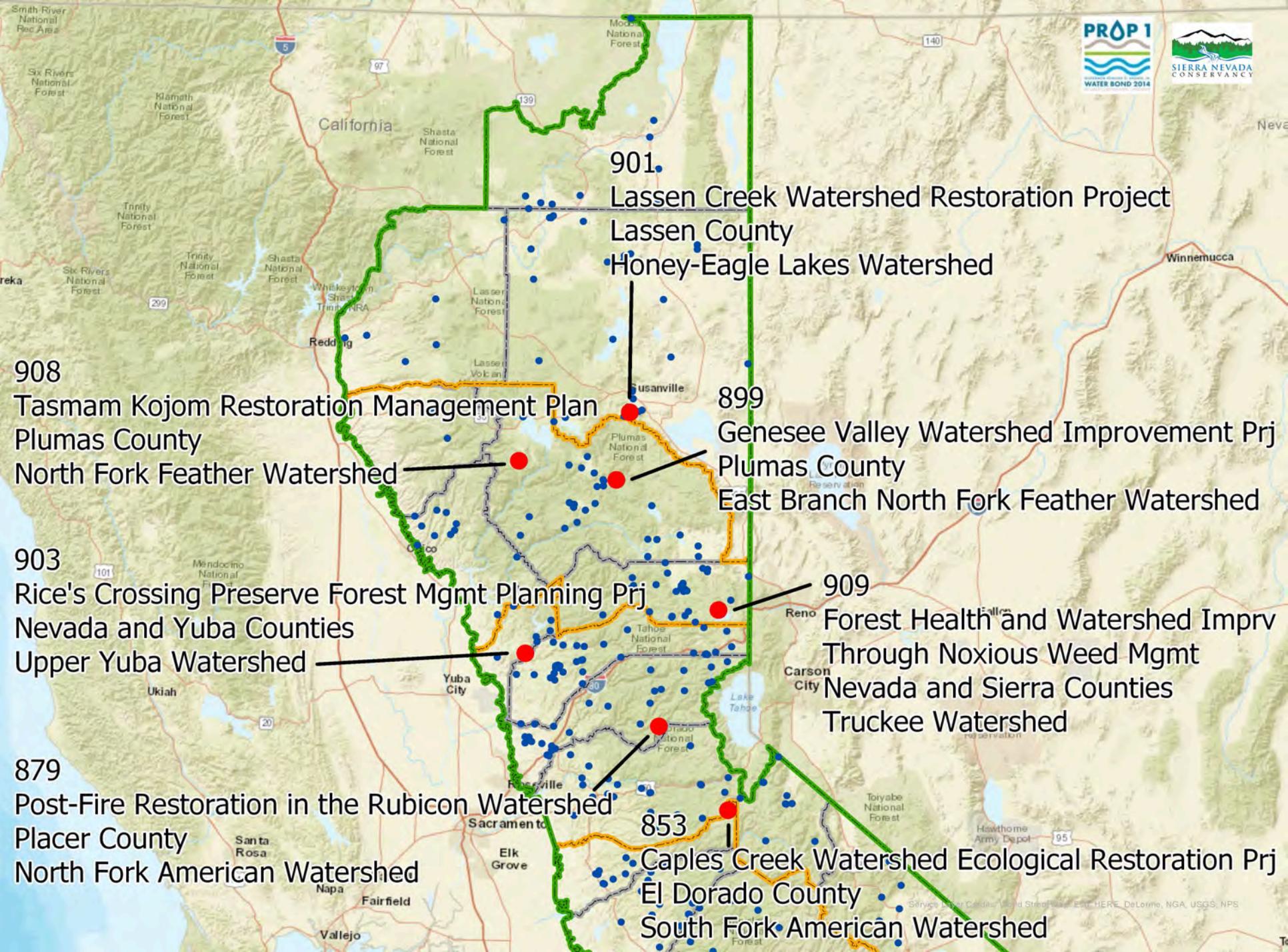
N/A	893	Desert Mountain RC&DC	Alta Sierra Fuels Reduction - Removal of Dead and Dying Trees	\$ 500,000.00	Kern	South
N/A	904	Truckee Fire Protection District	Glenshire Ridge Wildfire Reduction Project	\$ 58,000.00	Nevada	Central
N/A	907	Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians of California	Cold Springs Tribe: Nutmeg Fire Hazard Removal Plan	\$ 75,000.00	Fresno	South

Subtotal: \$ 633,000.00

Agenda Item VII
2015-17 Proposition 1 Grant
Awards
Project Maps



- 901
- 908
- 903
- 879
- 897
- 911
- 880
- 899
- 909
- 853



901
 Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project
 Lassen County
 Honey-Eagle Lakes Watershed

908
 Tasmam Kojom Restoration Management Plan
 Plumas County
 North Fork Feather Watershed

899
 Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Prj
 Plumas County
 East Branch North Fork Feather Watershed

903
 Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Mgmt Planning Prj
 Nevada and Yuba Counties
 Upper Yuba Watershed

909
 Forest Health and Watershed Imprv
 Through Noxious Weed Mgmt
 Nevada and Sierra Counties
 Truckee Watershed

879
 Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed
 Placer County
 North Fork American Watershed

853
 Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Prj
 El Dorado County
 South Fork American Watershed



897
 The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project
 Tuolumne County
 Upper Stanislaus Watershed

880
 Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation
 Madera County
 Upper San Joaquin Watershed

911
 Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project
 Mariposa County
 Upper Merced Watershed

Source: Layer Credits: World Street Map, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, NGA, USGS, NPS

Agenda Item VIII

2015-16 Proposition 1 Grant Awards

Presented by:

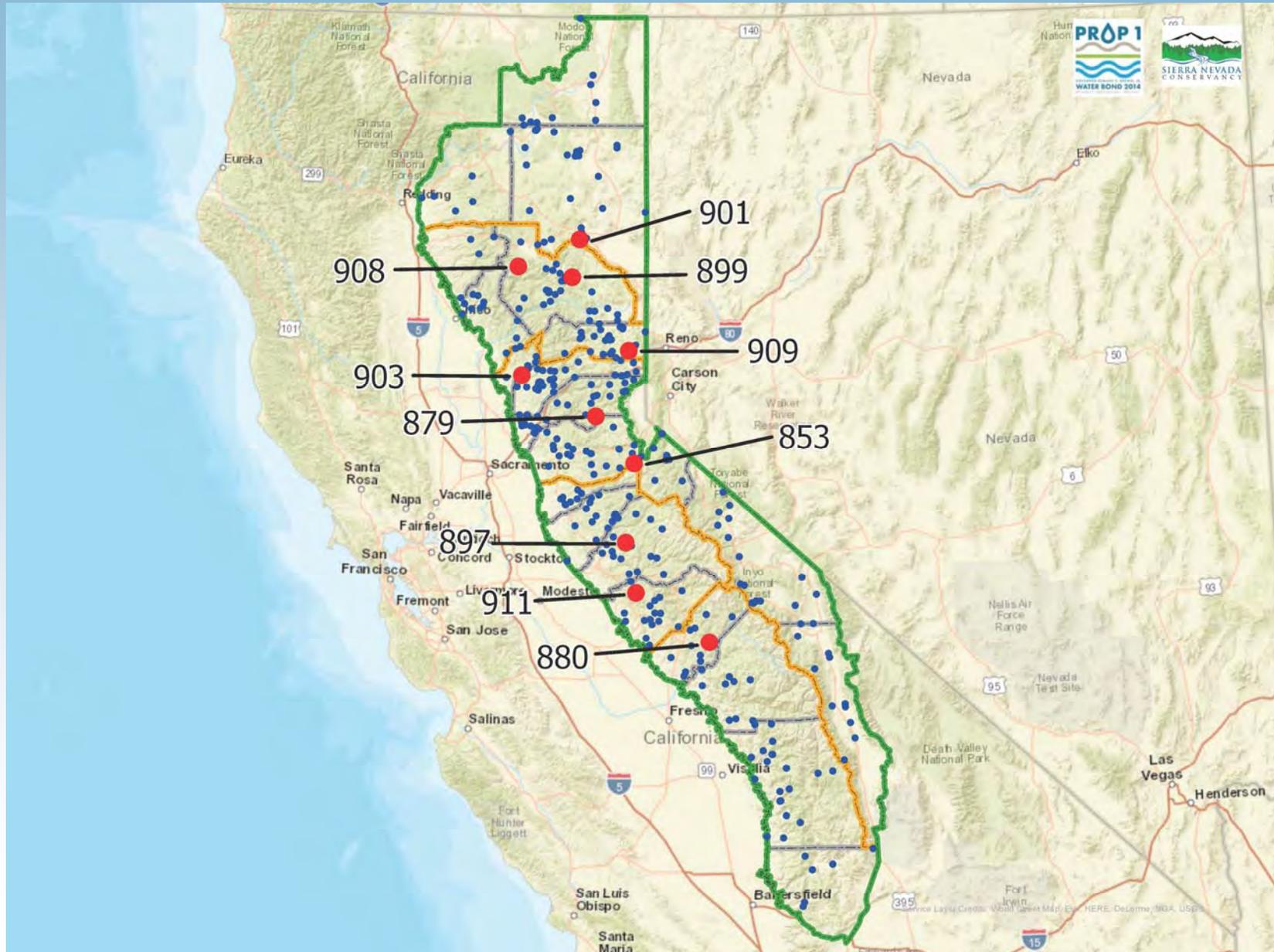
Andy Fristensky
Mt. Lassen Area Manager
and
Randi Jorgensen
Mt. Whitney Area Manager

Background

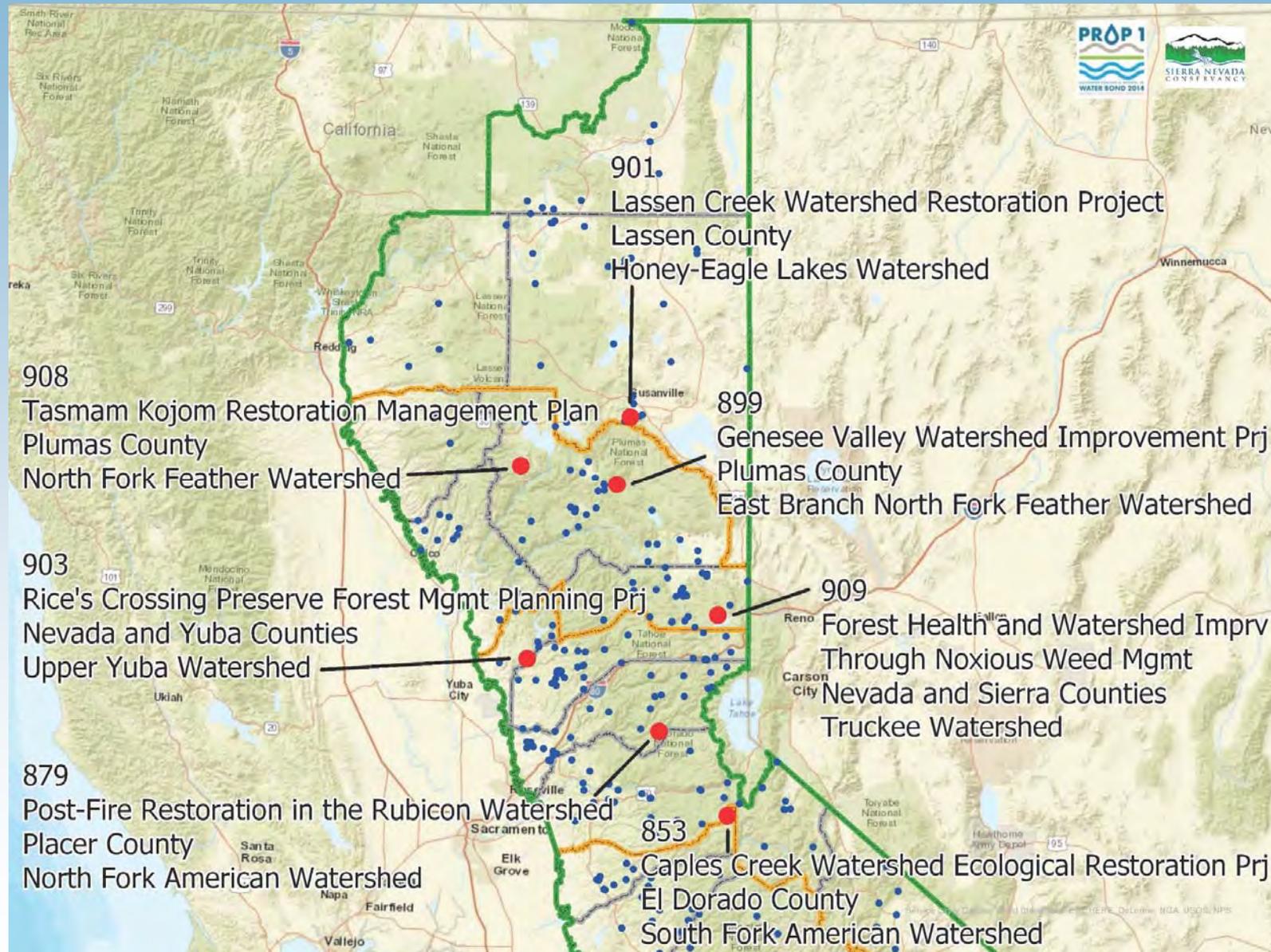
Proposition 1 applications to date:

- 69 applications received
- 22 grants have been awarded, totaling \$6,727,002.
- 37 applications were either withdrawn, ineligible, or not recommended for award.
- 10 applications totaling \$3,154,828 are being recommended for award at this meeting.

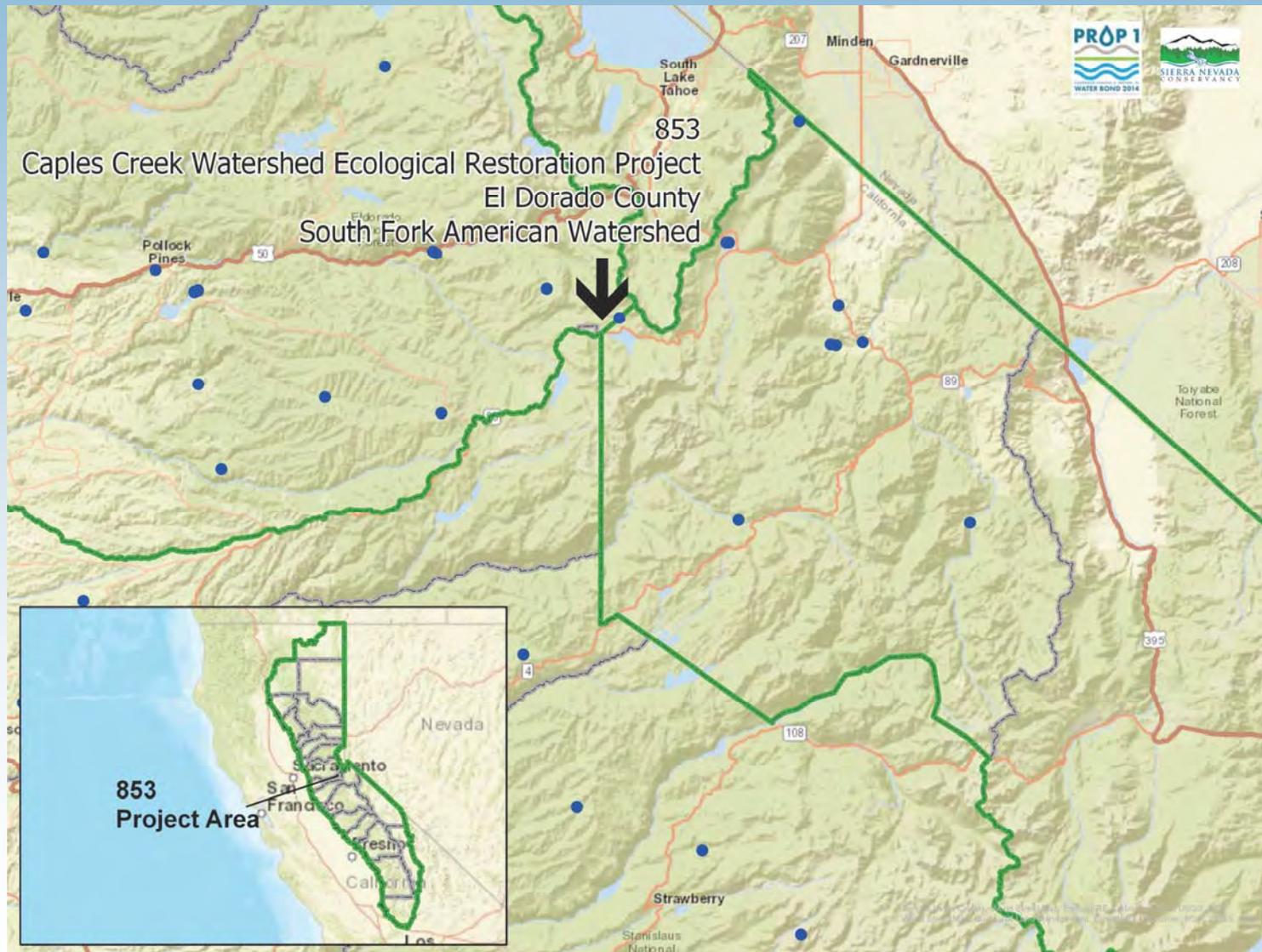
Ten projects are being recommended for award, totaling \$3,154,828.00.



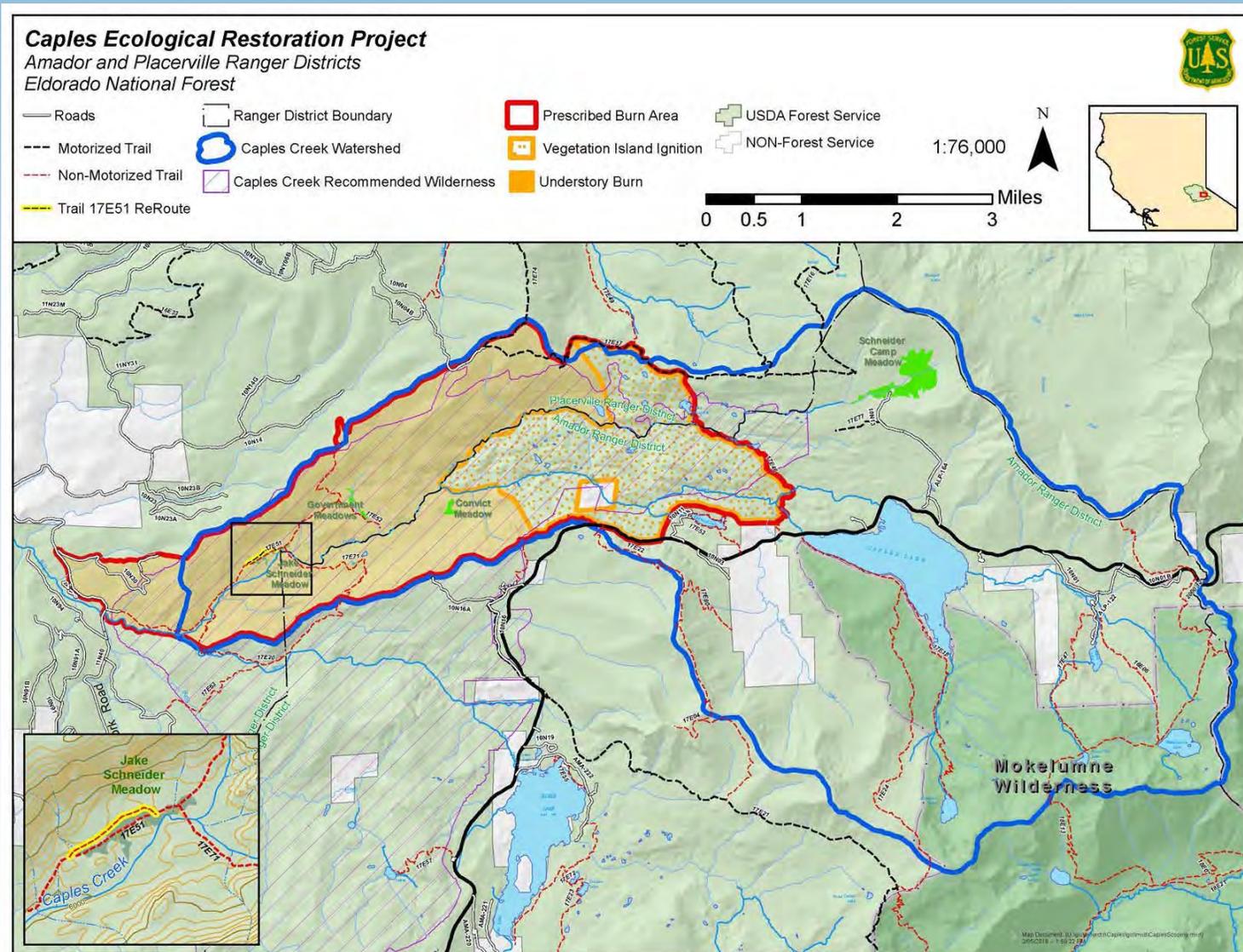
Mt. Lassen Area



Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project



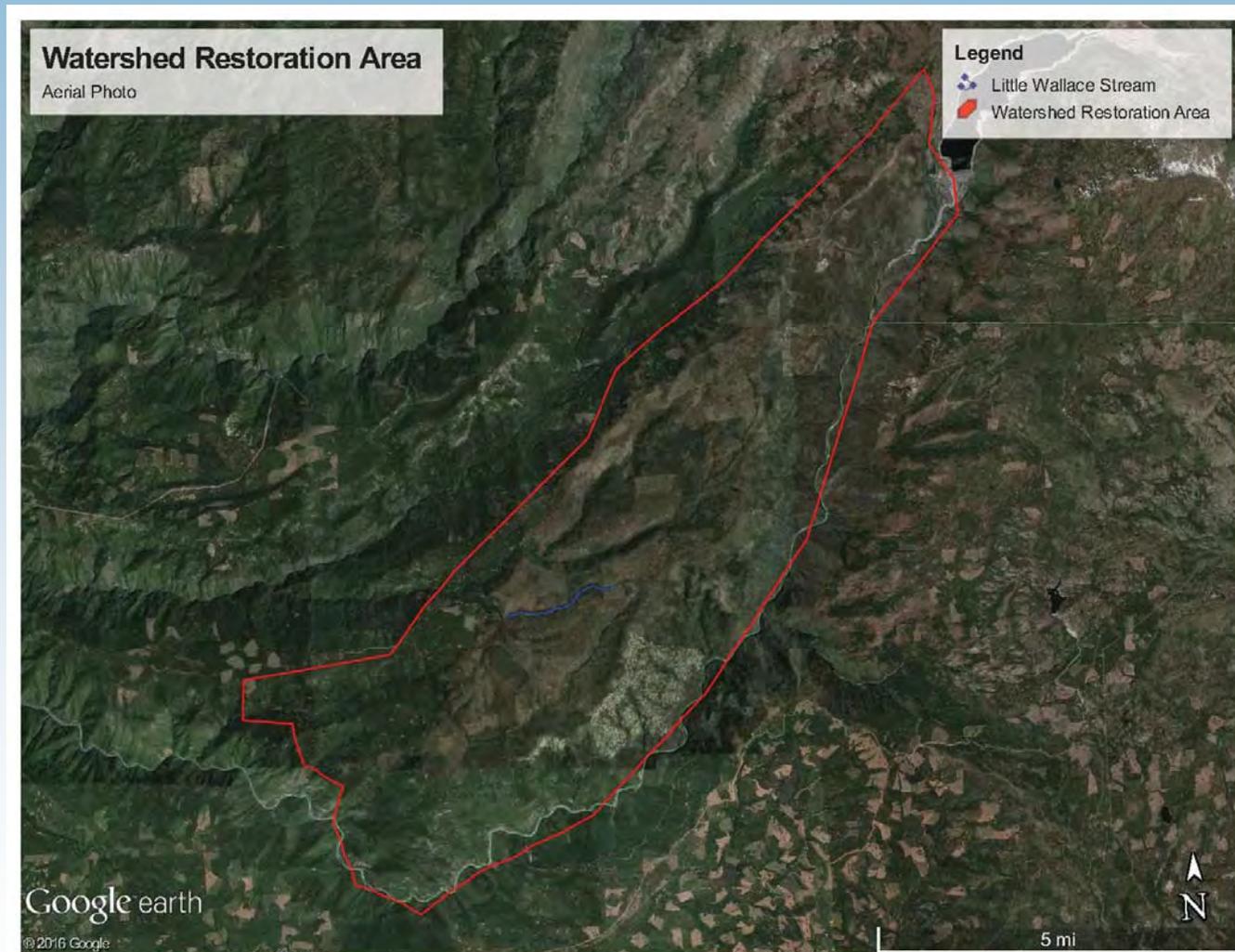
Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project



Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project



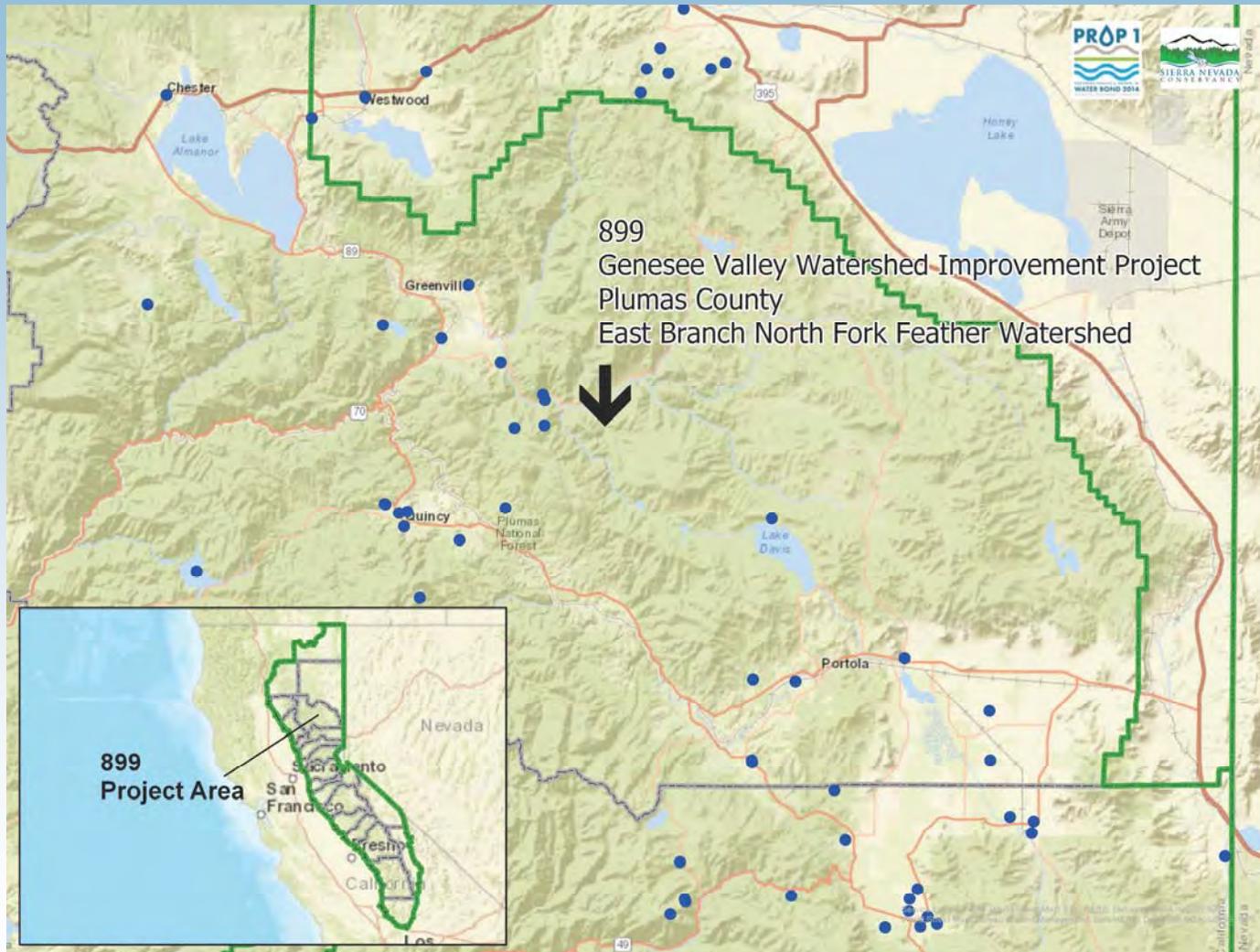
Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed



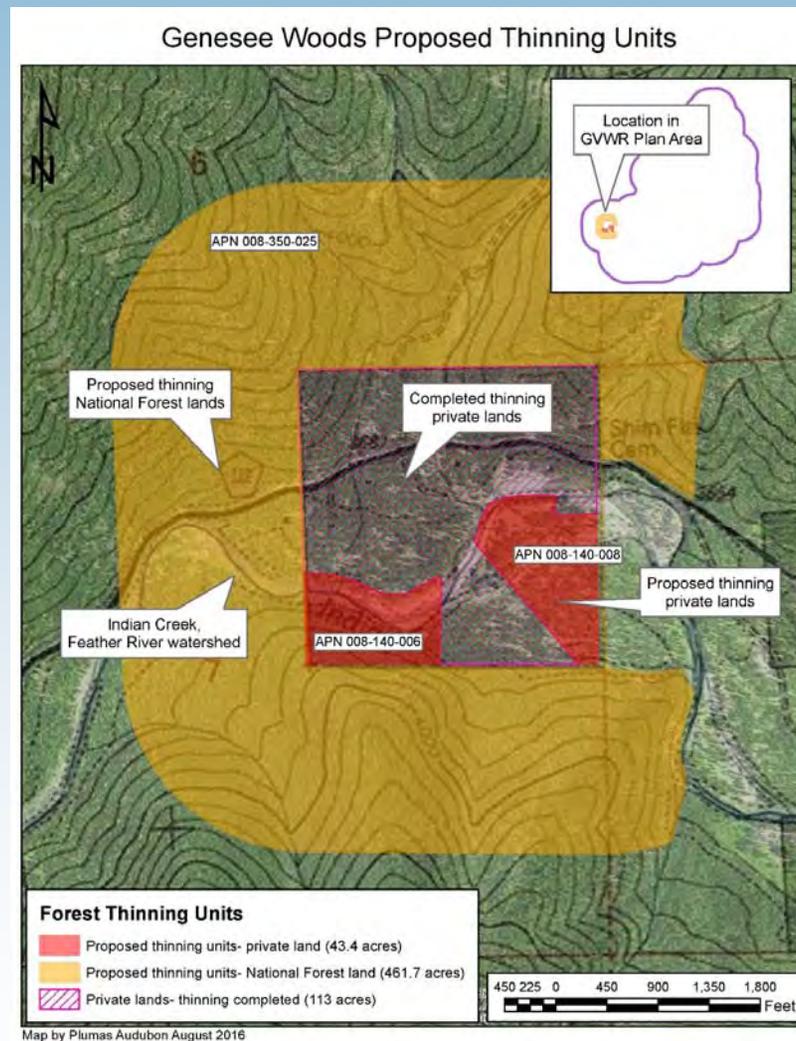
Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed



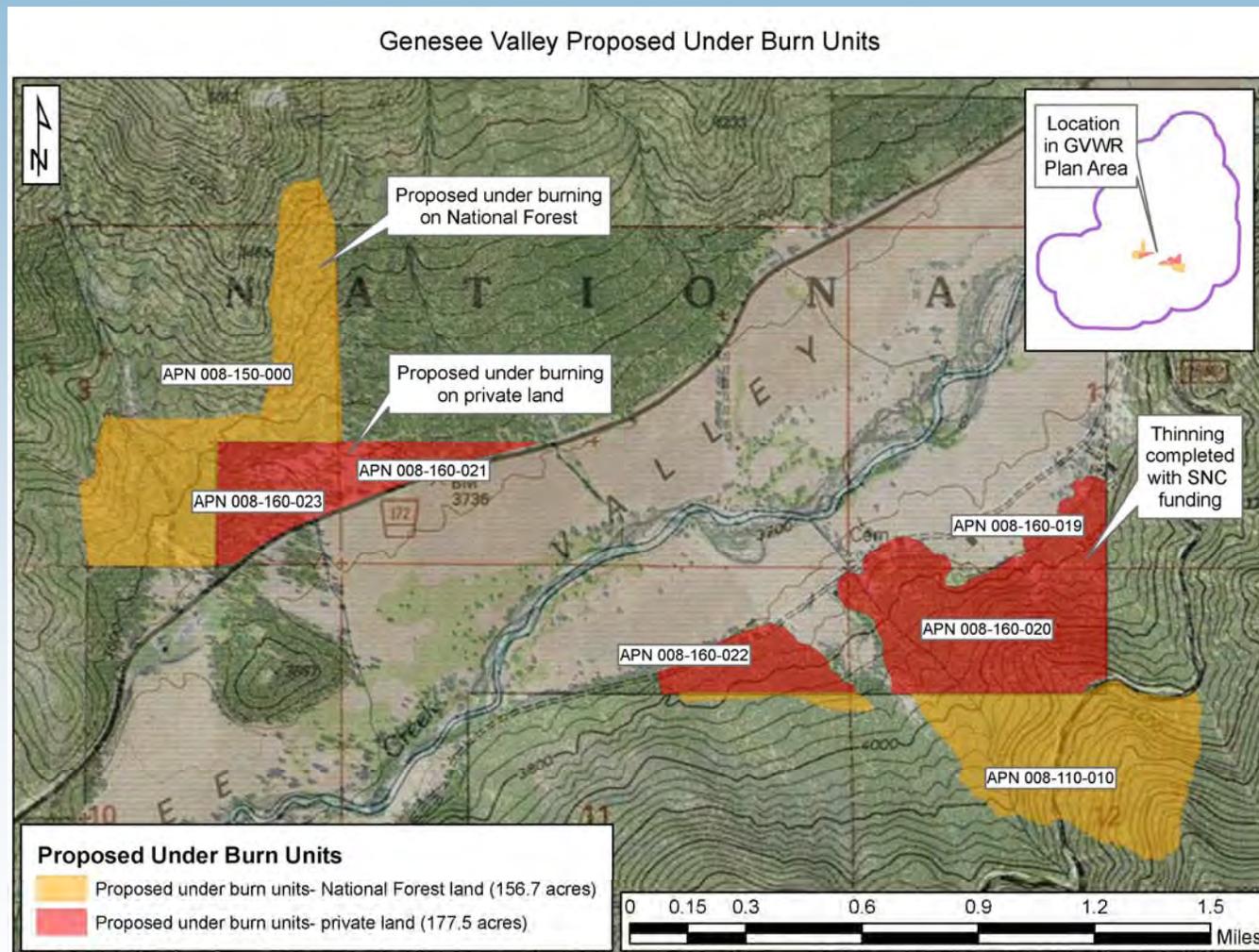
Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project



Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project



Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project

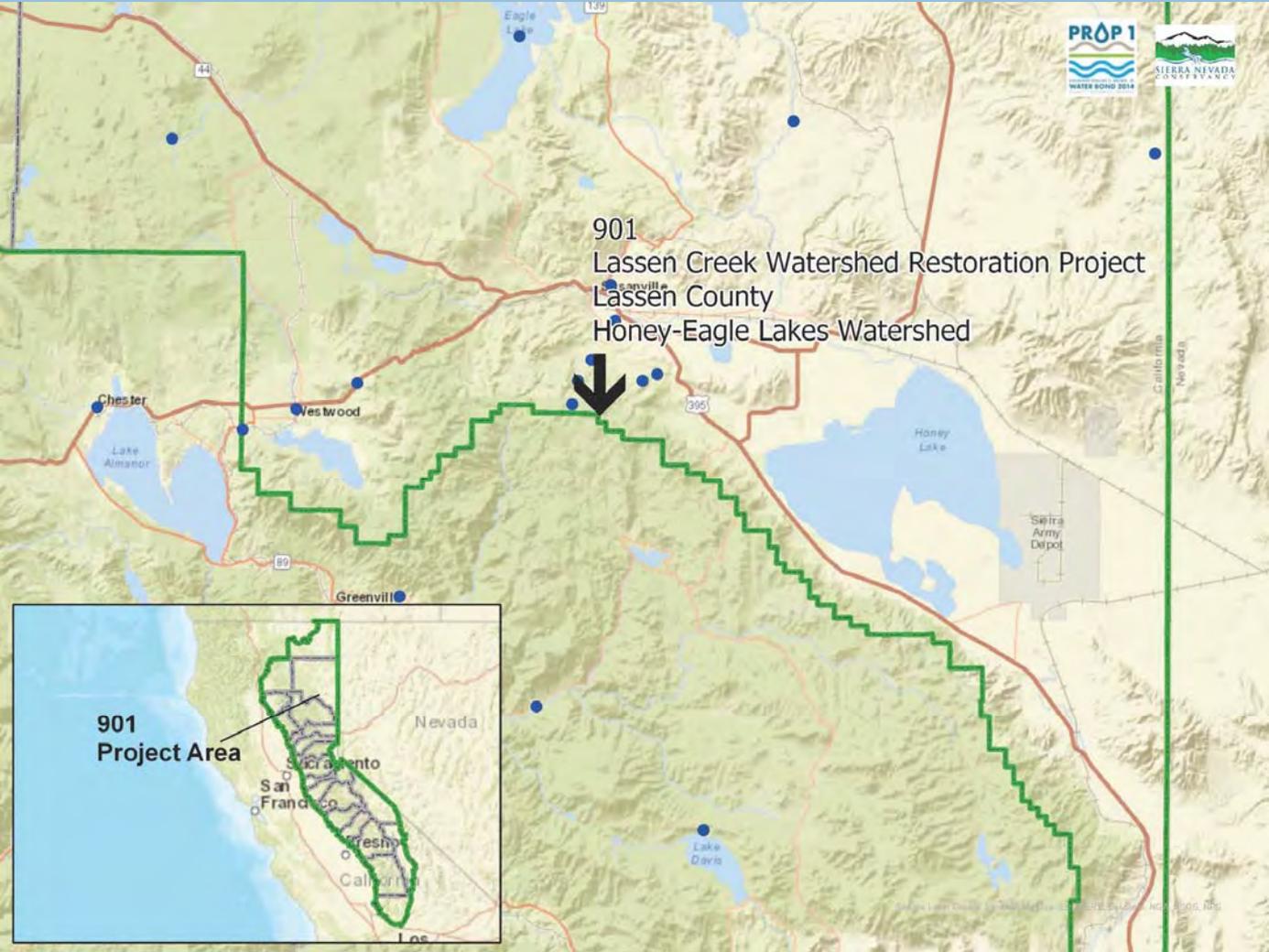


Map by Plumas Audubon August 2016

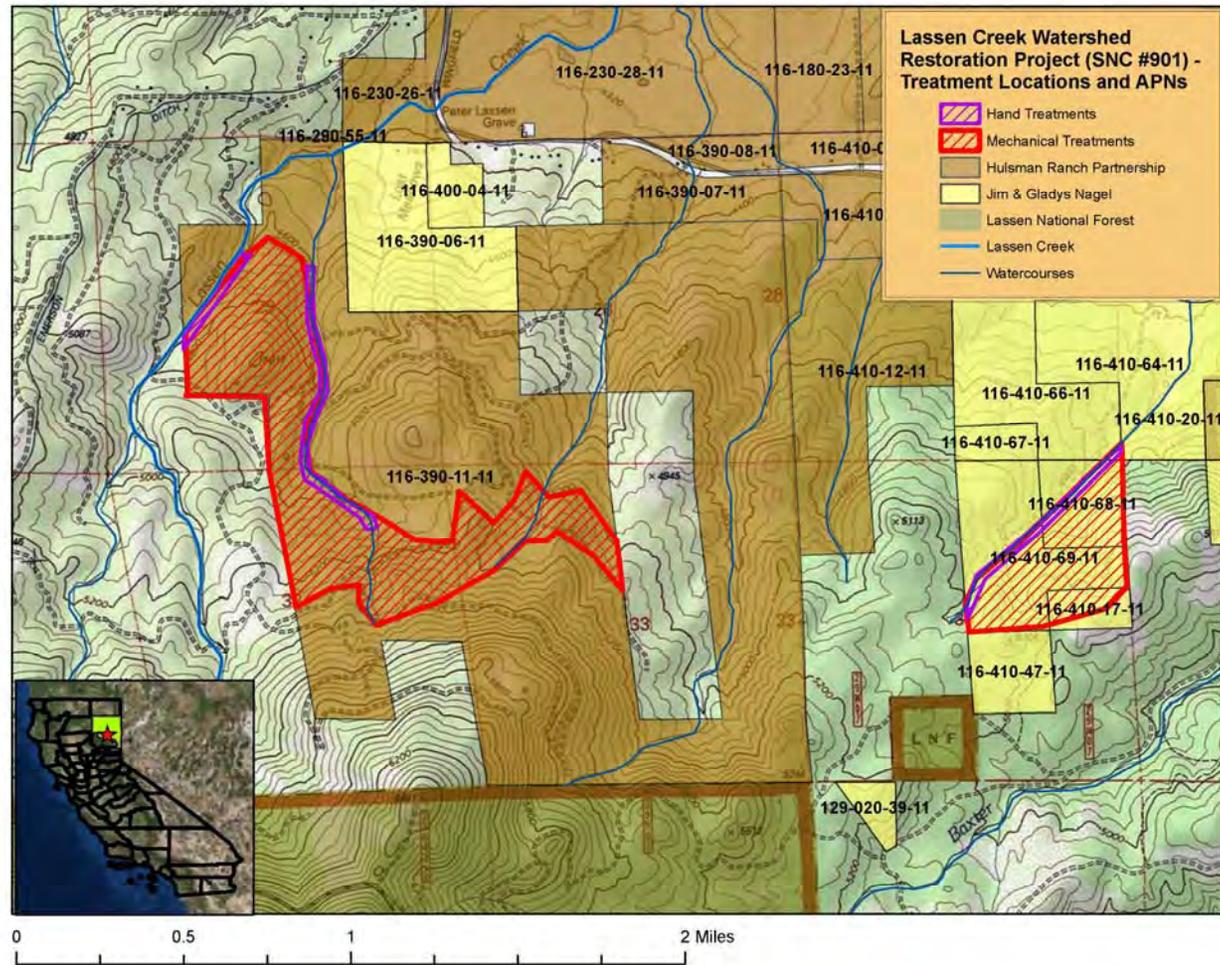
Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project



Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project



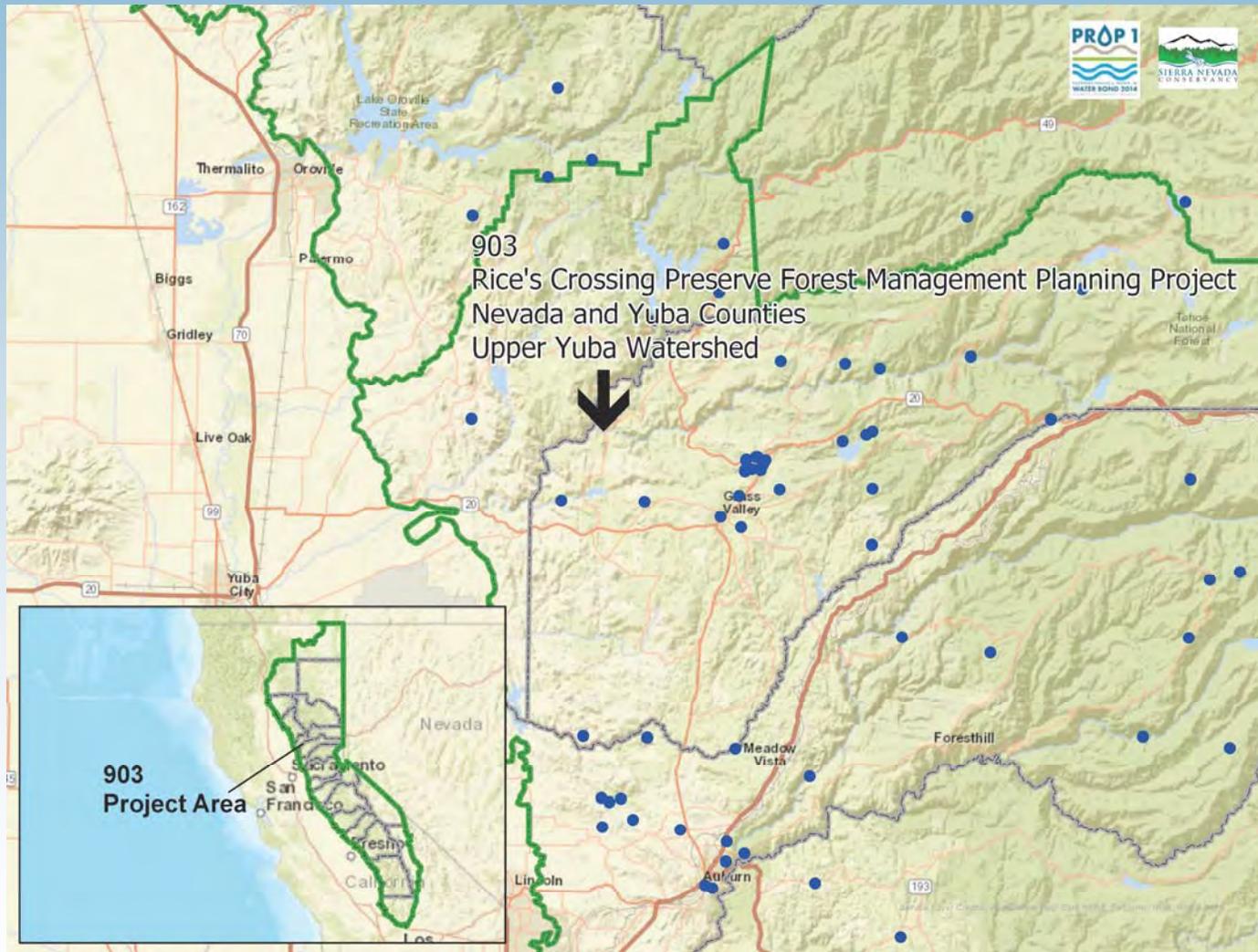
Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project



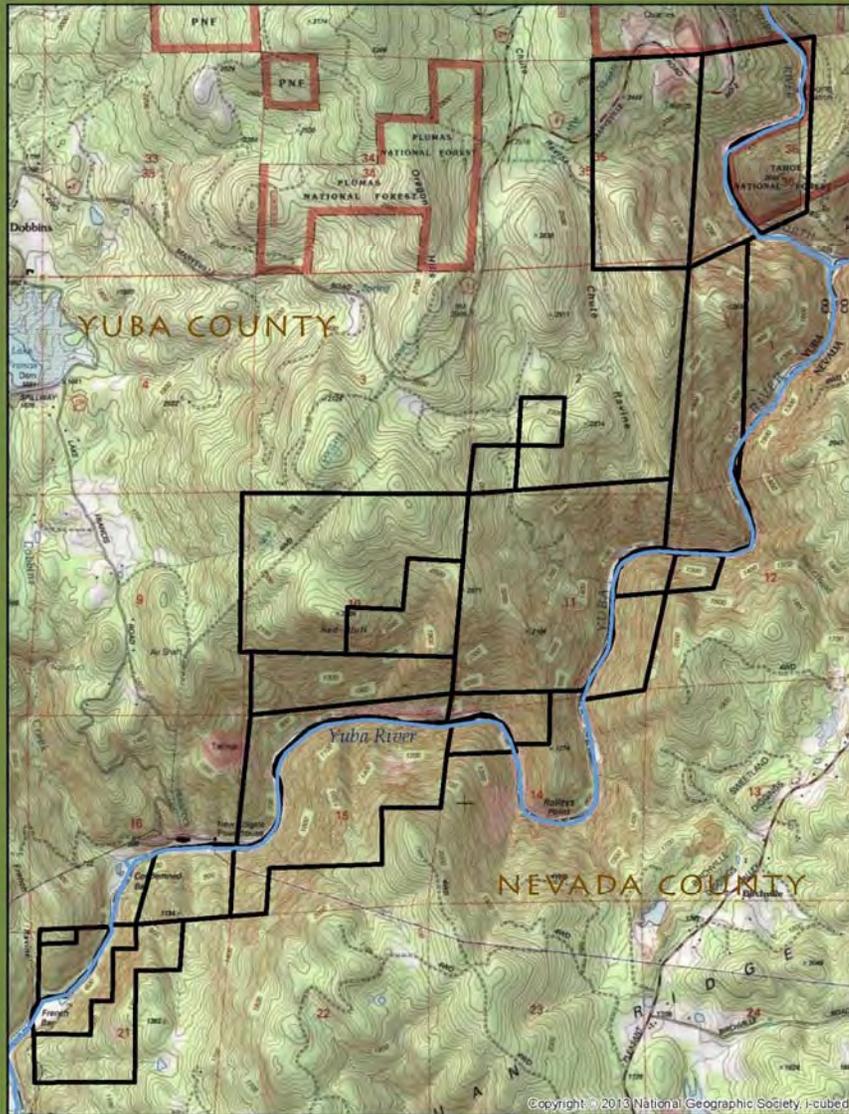
Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project



Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning Project



TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

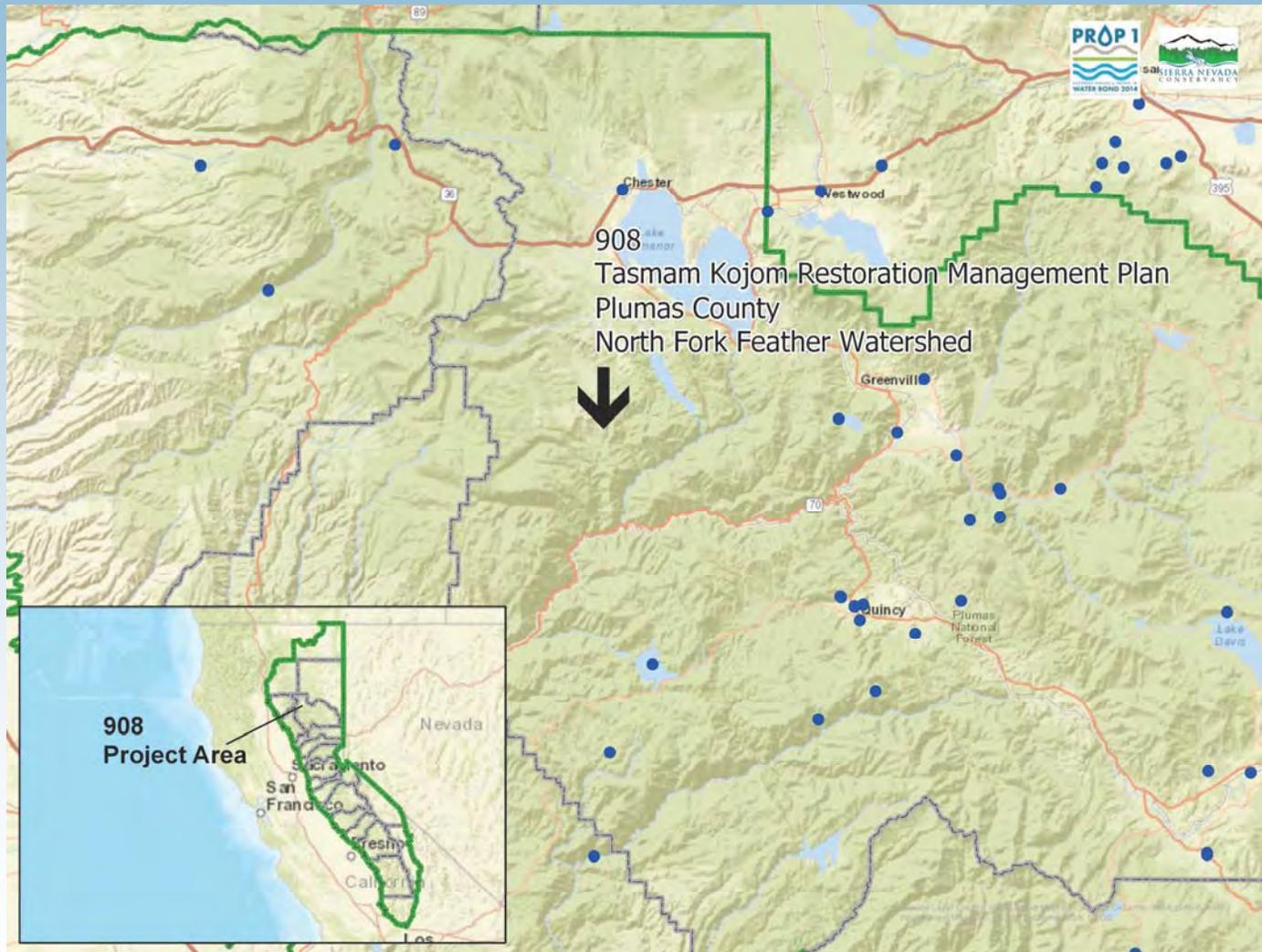


Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning Project

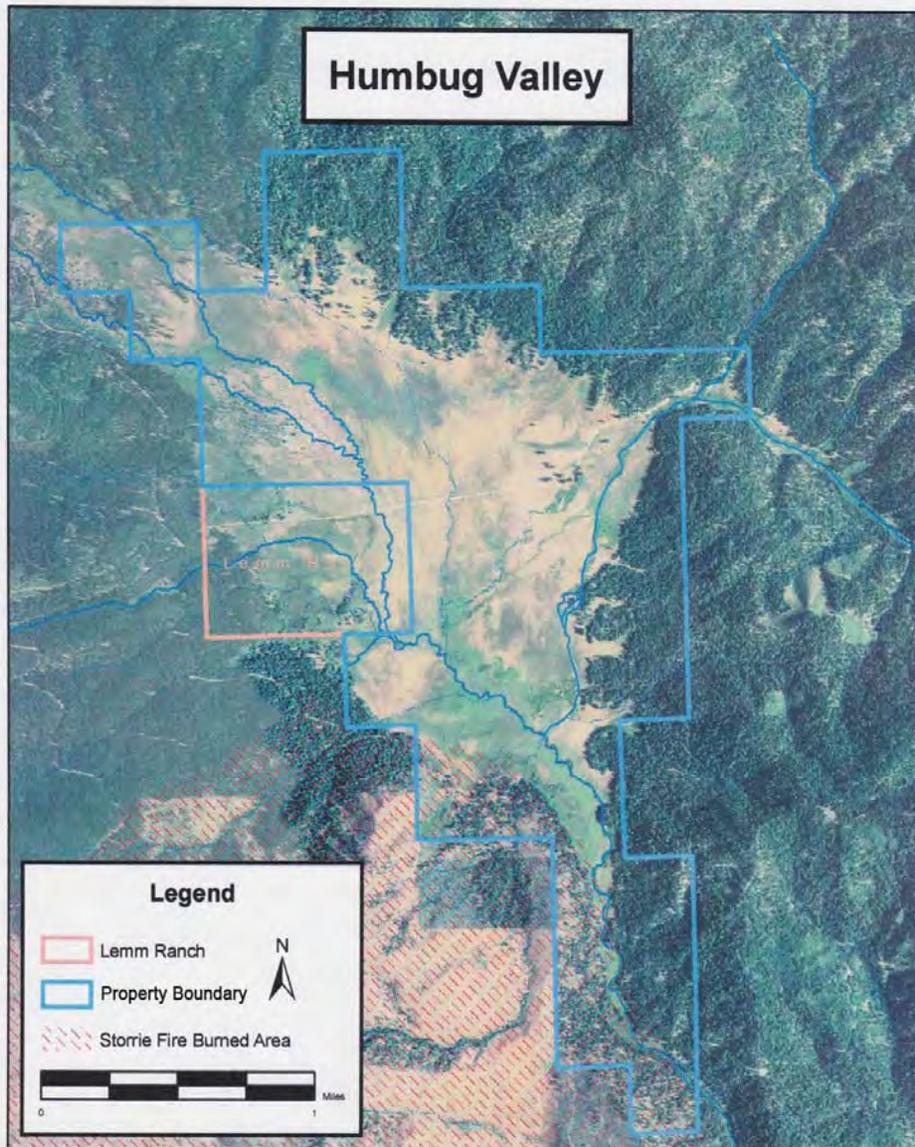
Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning Project



Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan



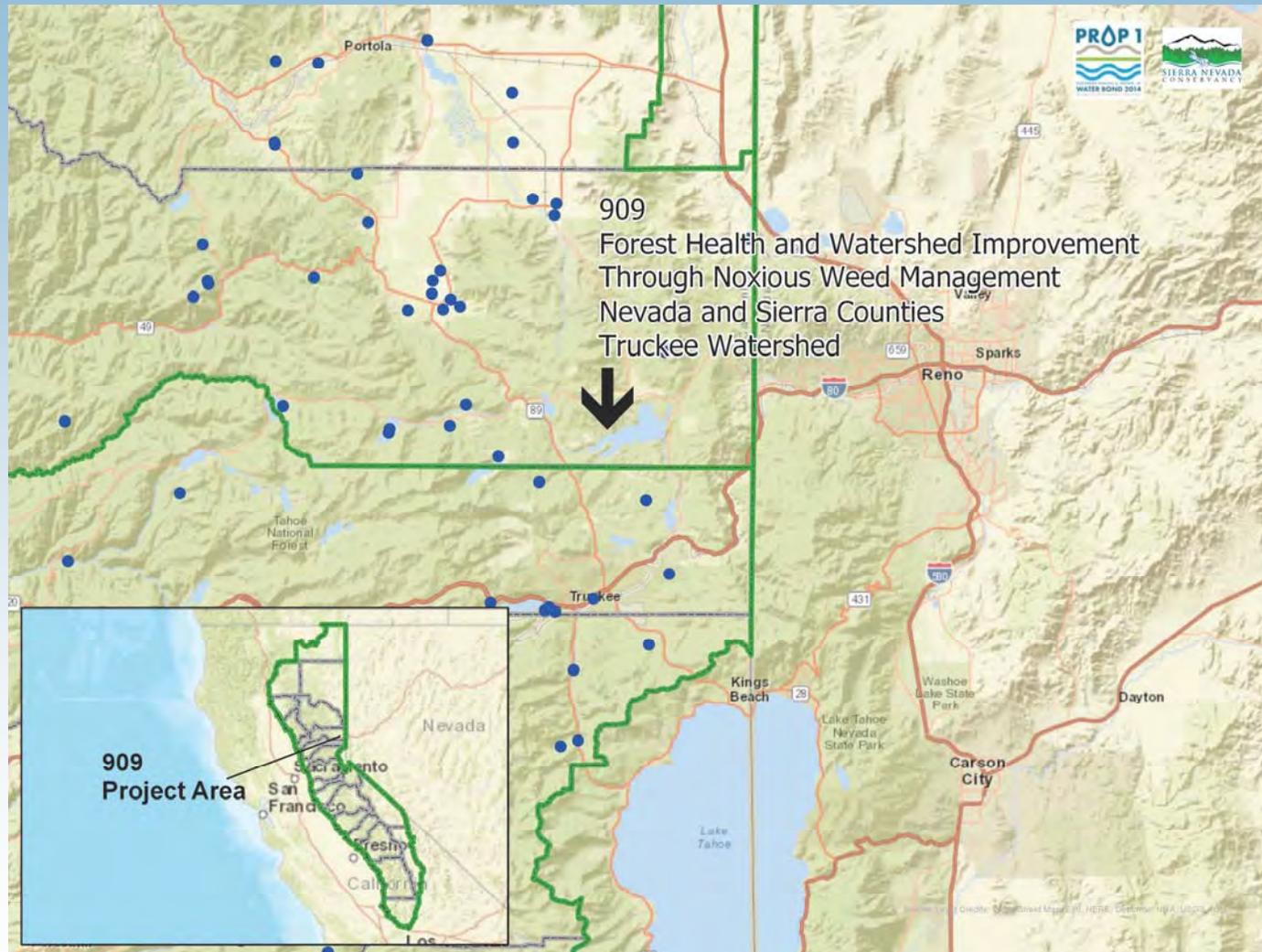
Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan

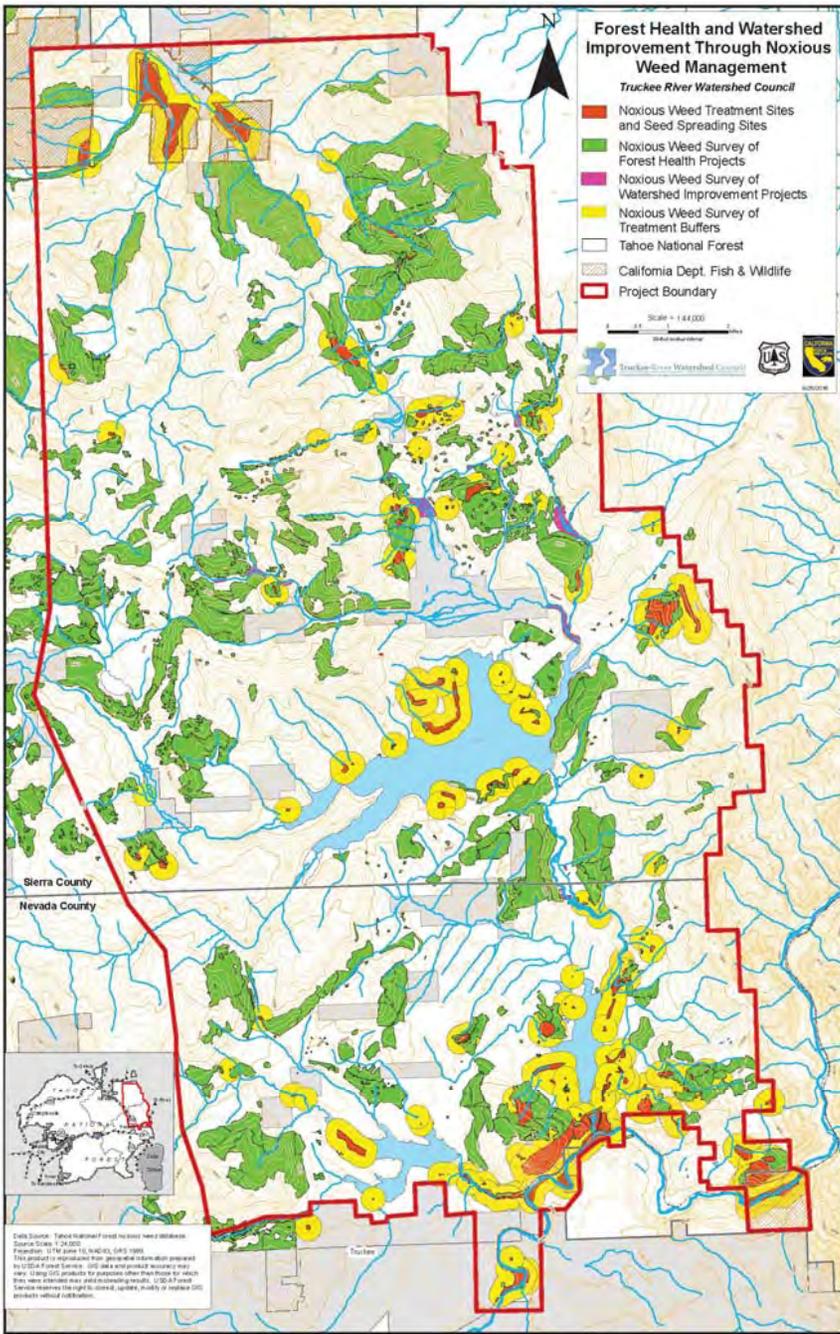


Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan



Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management





Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management

Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management

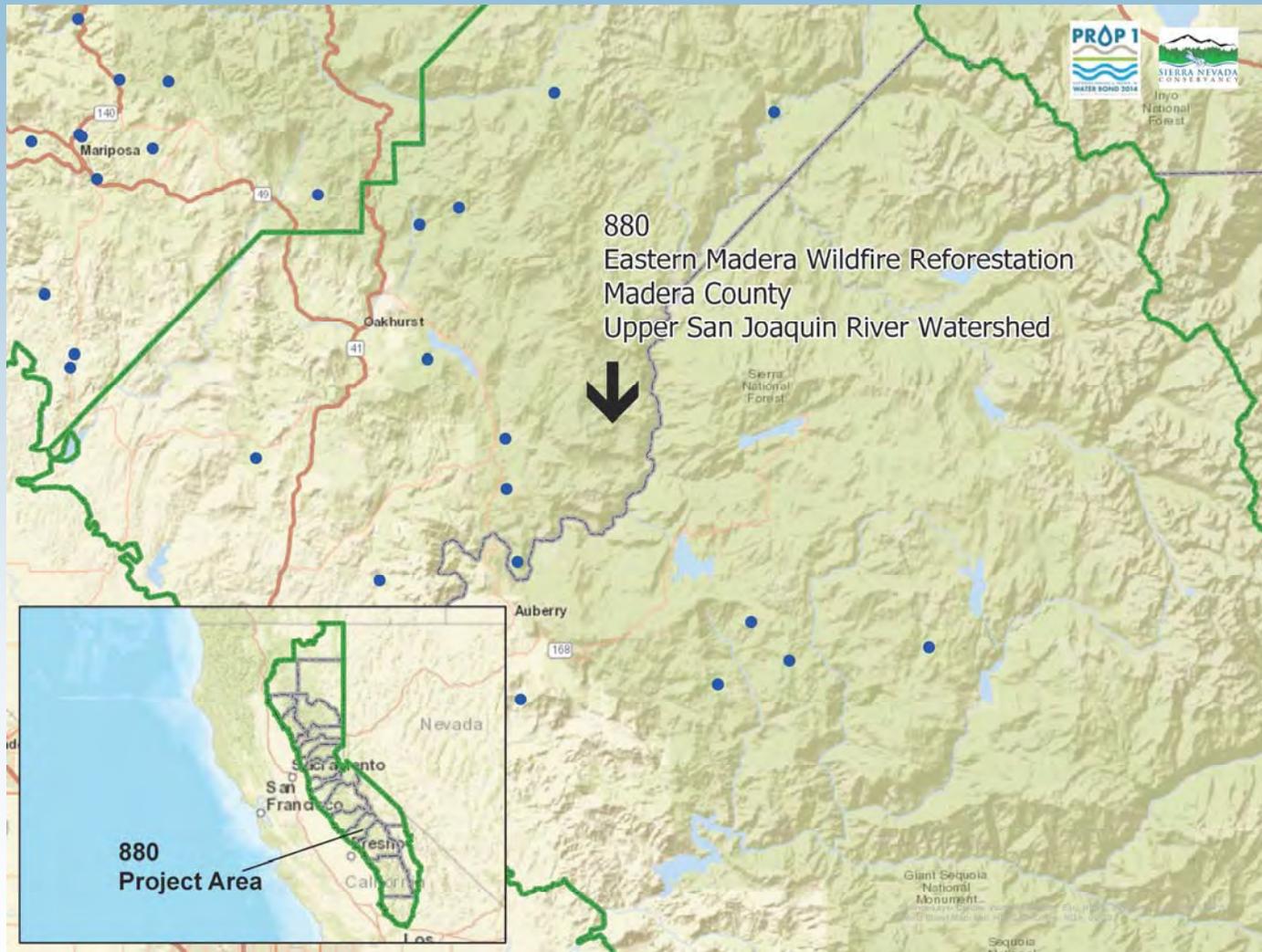


Questions about Mt. Lassen Projects?

Mt. Whitney Area



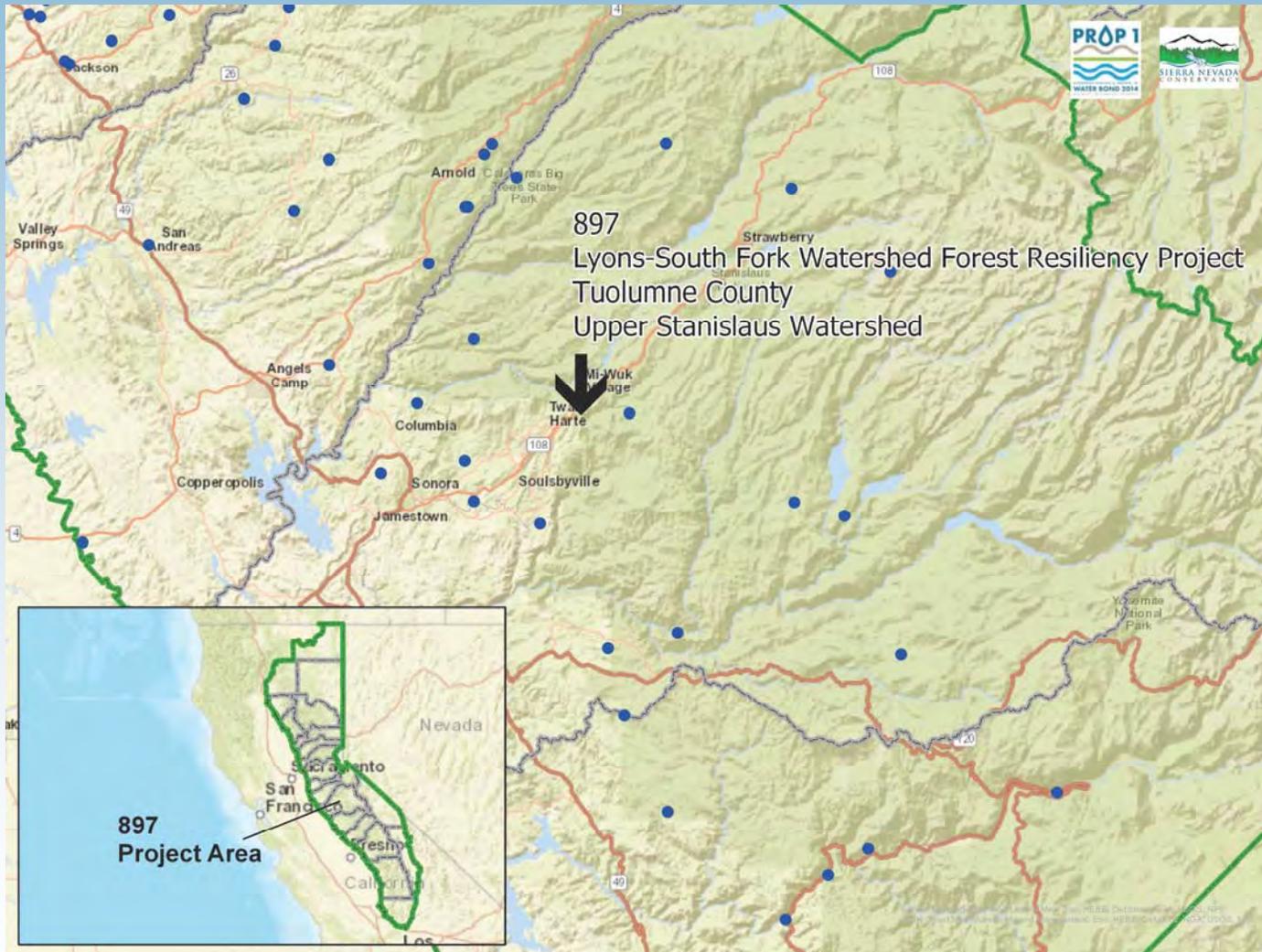
Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation



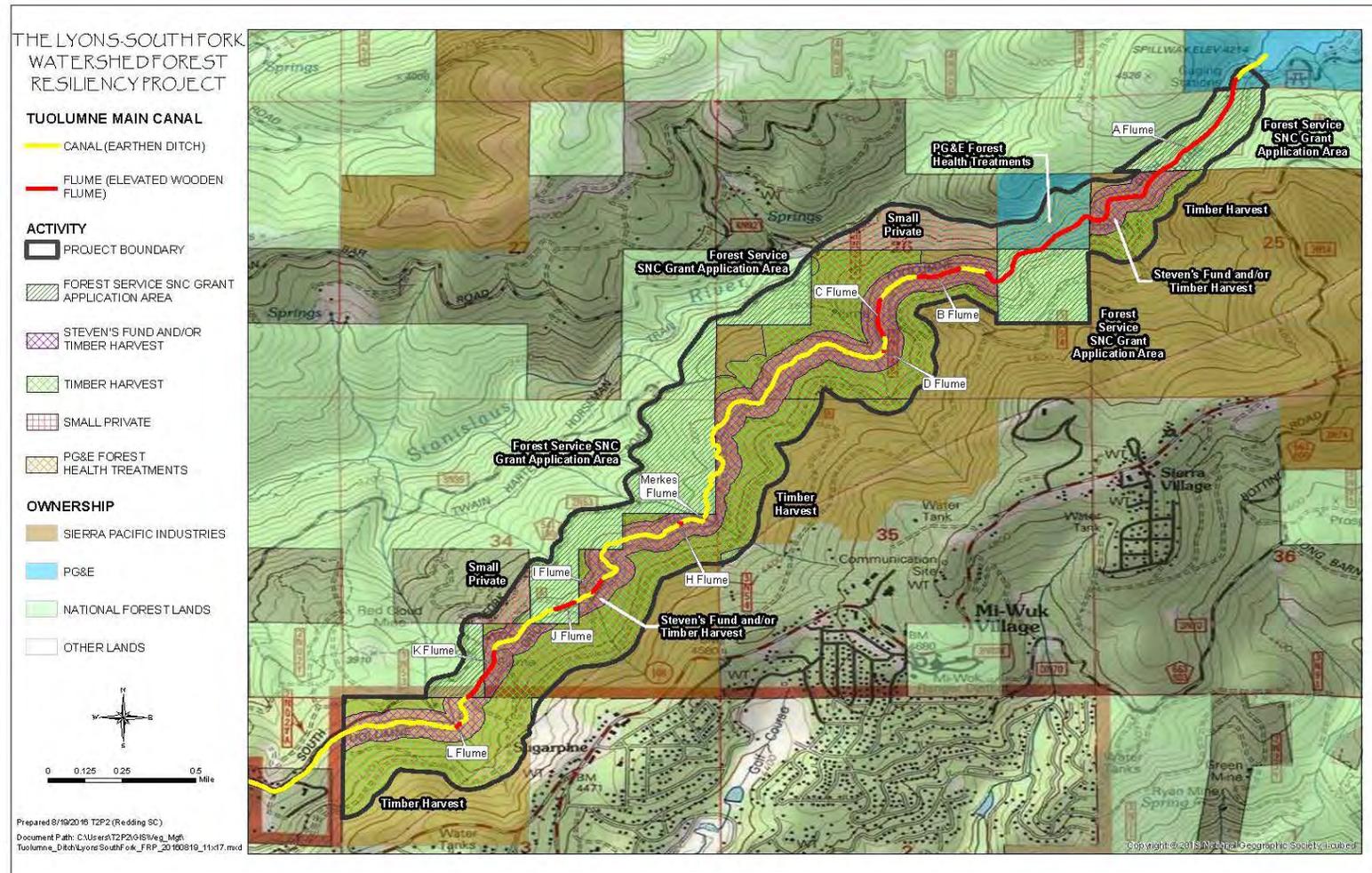
Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation



The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project



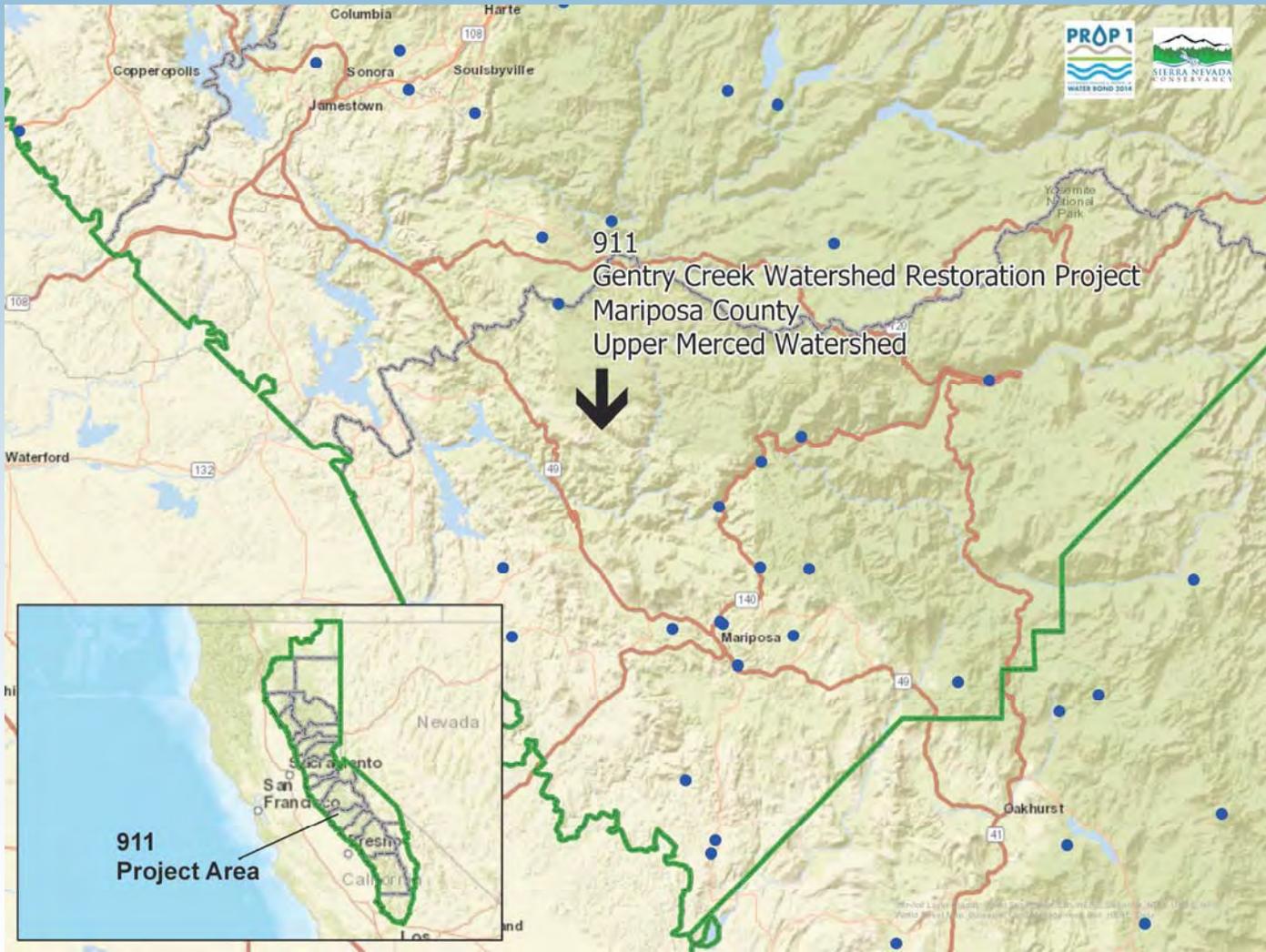
The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project

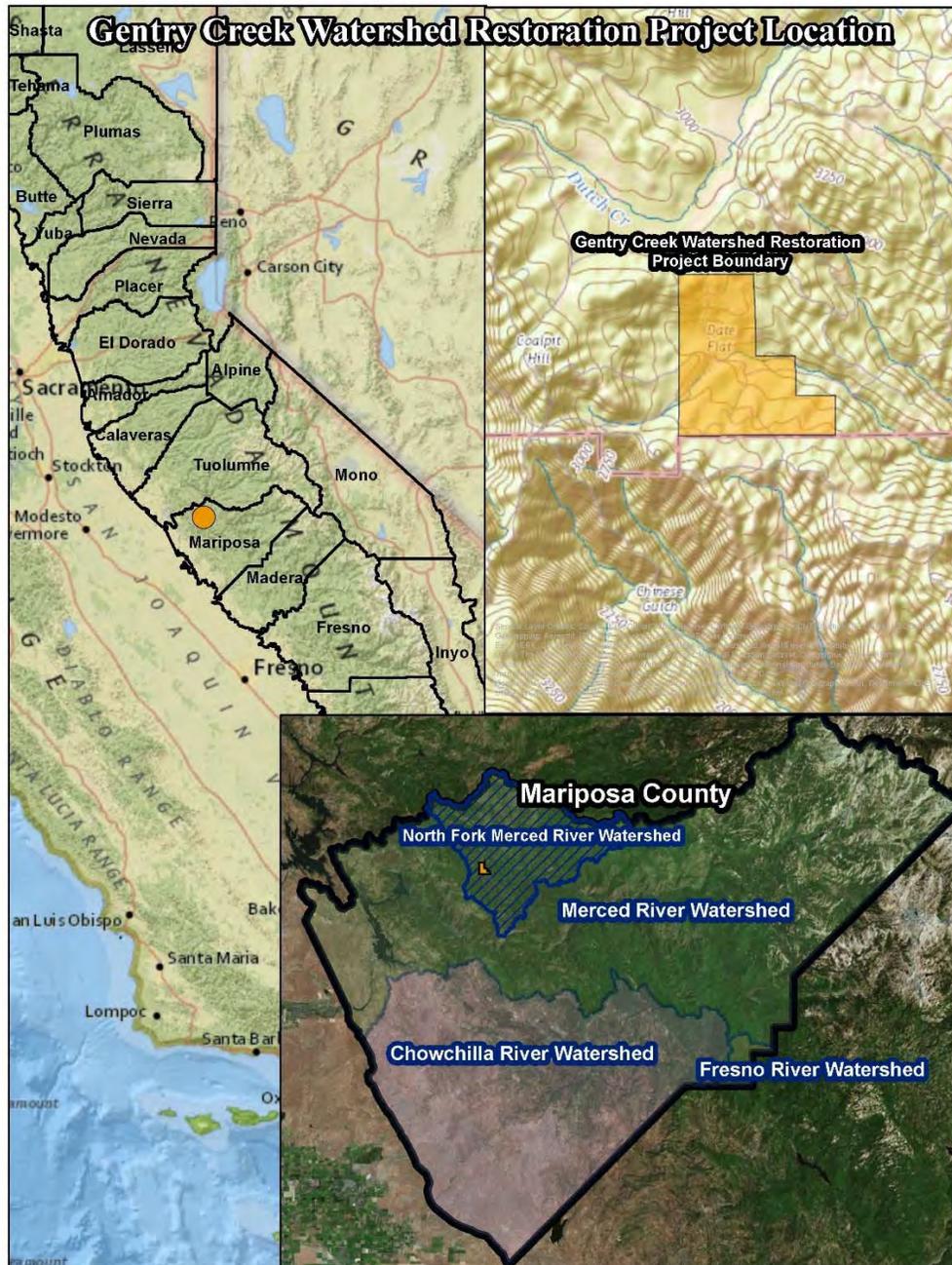


The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project



Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project





Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project

Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project



Questions about Mt. Whitney Projects?

(Before we state the staff recommendation)

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board (a) authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed Project (SNC879), the Eastern Madera Wildfire Restoration Project (SNC880), the Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project (SNC897),

Recommendation

**the Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project (SNC899),
the Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning
Project (SNC903), the Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management
Plan (SNC908), the Forest Health and Watershed Improvement
through Noxious Weed Management Project (SNC909), and the
Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project (SNC911);**

Recommendation

and (b) approve findings concurring in the Negative Declaration and Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans, and authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Determination as a Responsible Agency for the Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project (SNC853), and the Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project (SNC901);

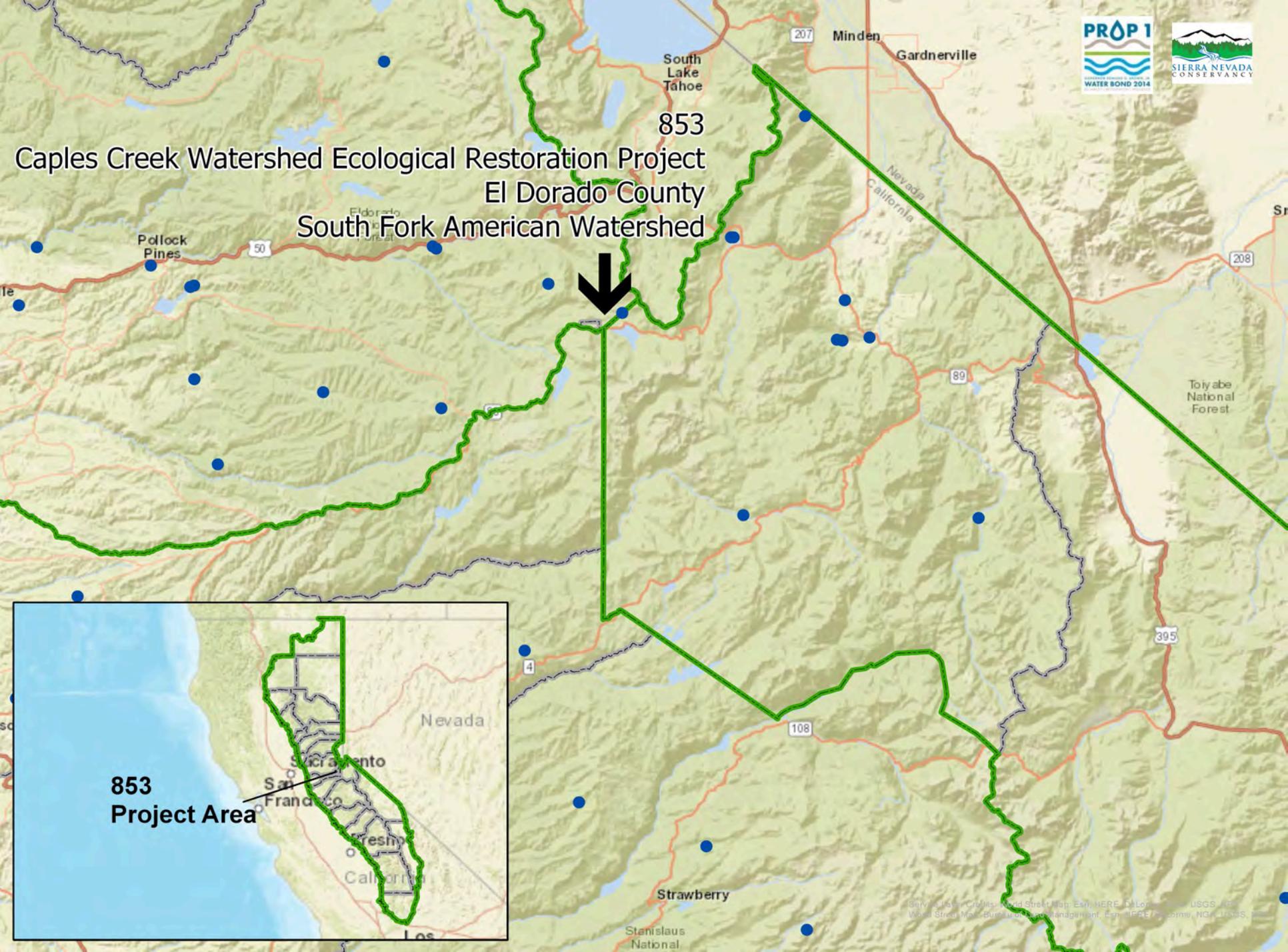
Recommendation

and (c) authorize a grant award to each of the above listed projects for the amounts recommended by staff, and further authorize the staff to enter into the necessary agreements to move forward with these projects.



Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project
El Dorado County
South Fork American Watershed

853



Service Map Credits: World Street Map, Esri; HERE, DeLorme, GeoEye, USGS, Aero
World Street Map, Bing, Swire, Geo Management, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, NGA, USGS, Swi

Caples Ecological Restoration Project

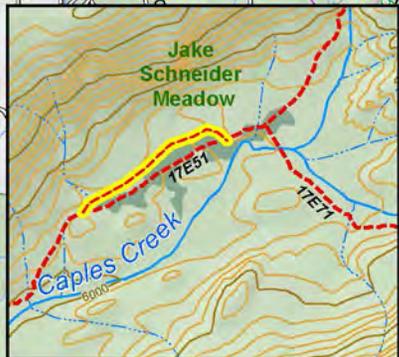
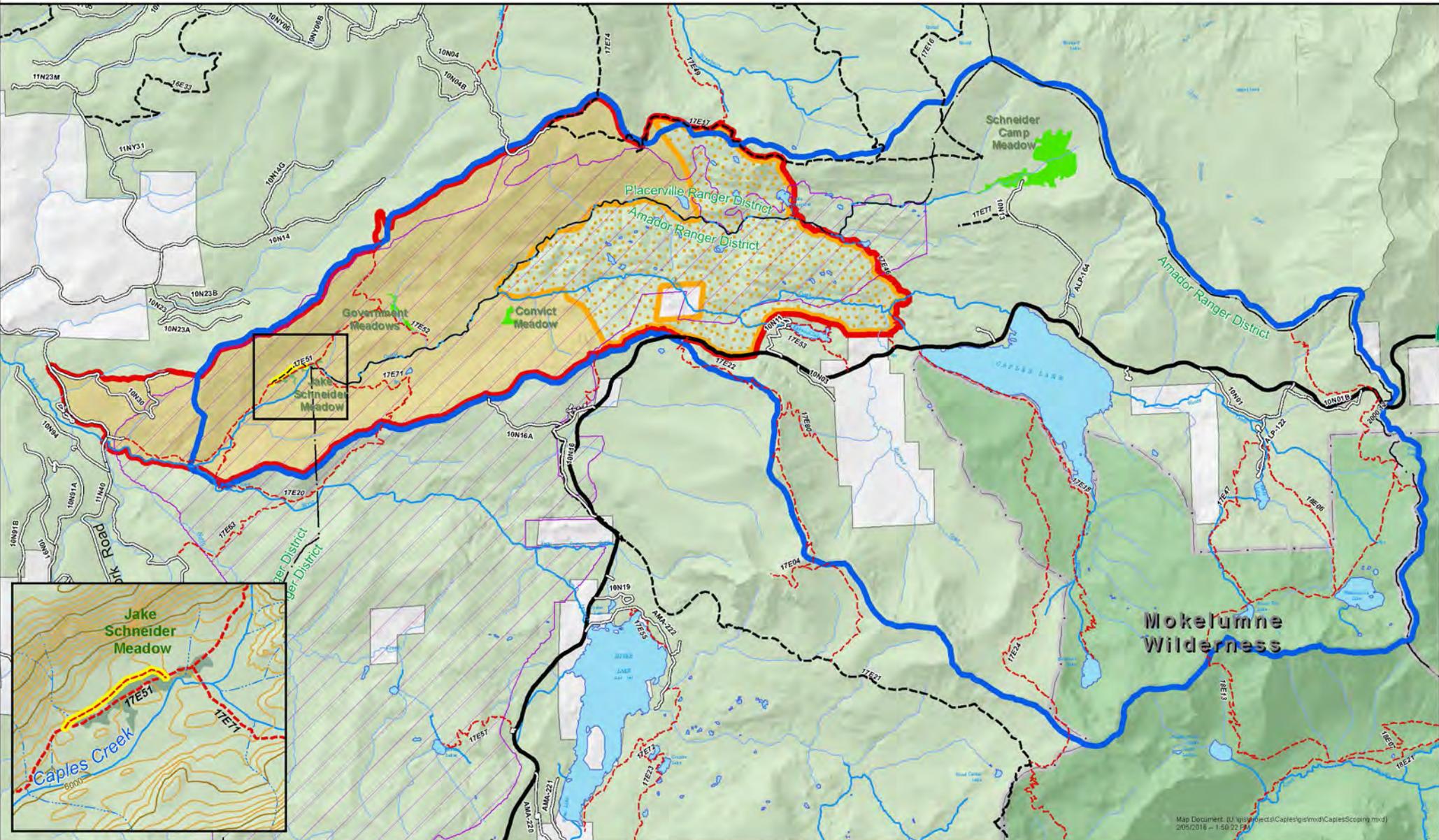
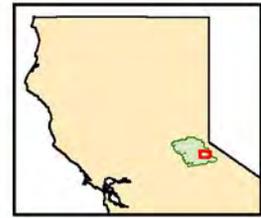
Amador and Placerville Ranger Districts

Eldorado National Forest



- Roads
- Motorized Trail
- - - Non-Motorized Trail
- - - Trail 17E51 ReRoute
- Ranger District Boundary
- Caples Creek Watershed
- Caples Creek Recommended Wilderness
- Prescribed Burn Area
- Vegetation Island Ignition
- Understory Burn
- USDA Forest Service
- NON-Forest Service

1:76,000



STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 853

Applicant: El Dorado Irrigation District

Project Title: Caples Creek Watershed Ecological
Restoration Project

SNC Subregion: Central

County: El Dorado

Funding Amount Requested: \$476,709

Funding Amount Recommended: \$476,709

Total Project Cost: \$1,065,757

Final Score: 88.0

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project is a Category 1 project that will utilize prescribed fire to improve forest conditions within a 20,236 acre watershed in the Eldorado National Forest (ENF). The grantee is the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), working in partnership with the ENF. Caples Creek is located in the upper elevations of the western slope of El Dorado County, about 30 miles east of Placerville, and drains from just below Caples Lake into the South Fork of the American River.

This project will treat with prescribed fire forest lands that have become overly dense due to a century of fire suppression and lack of management. Elements of the work include: 1) laying and constructing 25 miles of perimeter fire control lines, utilizing existing trails and natural and human-made barriers as much as possible; 2) cutting, piling, and burning heavy accumulation of fuels to reduce the risk from the understory burning operations; 3) raking away the thick accumulations of duff from around selected old-growth trees so that roots will not be damaged from prolonged heat; 4) protection measures for cultural resource sites and 'at risk' historic sites and other infrastructure; and 5) approximately 4,400 acres of prescribed understory burning through handheld ignition over a period of several years. Work to prepare for burning will also include removing small encroaching conifers from 25 acres of interspersed aspen groves and meadows.

This work will comprehensively treat an entire watershed to improve forest health and water quality, and reduce wildfire risk. This is the first project of its type in the Region. The success of this project will potentially lead to similar treatments in adjacent areas. The SNC funded the development of NEPA and CEQA for this project.

El Dorado Irrigation District is a major water purveyor in El Dorado County. EID has successfully completed several SNC grant projects, including grant #564 which funded the development of the NEPA for this project. EID is applying on behalf of Eldorado National Forest; all work will be performed by the ENF with assistance from the California Conservation Corps and Local Conservation Corps where appropriate.

This project is a demonstration of how water purveyors can work with the US Forest Service (USFS) on fuels treatment and forest restoration on federal lands to improve water quality and increase available water quantity. SNC funding to El Dorado Irrigation District will leverage \$589,048 of Forest Service money to implement the entire project.

This project aligns with Proposition 1 goals and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program by providing watershed-scale treatments to reduce wildfire risk and improve water quality and delivery through a partnership between a major water purveyor and the USFS. Caples Creek delivers a large amount of water to the South Fork American River which supplies domestic and agricultural water for a large portion of the county.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Construct 25 miles of fire line/trail improvements for fire containment	Feb. 2017 – Oct. 2019
Old growth tree raking	Feb. 2017 – Oct. 2019
Pre-burn preparation to protect historical infrastructure	Feb. 2017 – Oct. 2019
Cut and pile ladder fuels and heavy fuel accumulations along containment lines	Oct. 2017 – Oct. 2019
Understory/pile burning	Oct. 2017 – Nov. 2019
Aspen and meadow restoration	June 2017 – Sep. 2018
Aerial recon/understory burn monitoring	Oct. 2017 – Nov. 2019
Cultural resource monitoring	Feb. 2017 – Nov. 2019
Treatment effects monitoring	Oct. 2017 – Nov. 2019
Progress Reports	Every 6 months from execution of grant agreement
Estimated Project Completion Date - Final Report	December 31, 2019

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Construction of fire line/trail improvements; cut/pile ladder fuels and heavy fuel accumulation; old growth tree raking; protection of historic structures	\$185,295
Understory/pile burning	\$134,440
Aspen and meadow restoration	\$57,300
Project materials and supplies	\$20,000
Fire line patrol and burn monitoring; treatment effects monitoring; reporting	\$79,674
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$0
TOTAL:	\$476,709

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- El Dorado County Resource Conservation District
- El Dorado County Water agency
- El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Sierra Forest Legacy
- California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored

Notice of Determination**Appendix D****To:**

Office of Planning and Research
 U.S. Mail: _____ Street Address: _____
 P.O. Box 3044 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113
 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 Sacramento, CA 95814



County Clerk
 County of: _____
 Address: _____

From:

Public Agency: _____
 Address: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603
 Contact: Patrick Eidman
 Phone: (530) 823-4689

Lead Agency (if different from above): _____

El Dorado Irrigation District
 Address: 2890 Mosquito Road
Placerville, CA 95667
 Contact: Dan Corcoran
 Phone: (530) 642-0482

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): 2016092044

Project Title: Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project

Project Applicant: El Dorado Irrigation District

Project Location (include county): El Dorado County and Amador County, CA; centered at 38°43'4.43"N, 120°7'41.77"W.

Project Description:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide \$476,709 in funding to El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) to implement the Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project (proposed project). The proposed project involves prescribed fire activities on approximately 6,800 acres, and meadow restoration and aspen enhancement activities on approximately 25 acres in the Caples Creek watershed in the Eldorado National Forest. The proposed project would reintroduce fire as an ecosystem process to reduce fuel accumulation, reduce the risk of high intensity wildfire, and restore a diverse forest composition and structure over multiple years. Prescribed understory fires (both hand and aerial ignitions) within 25 miles of containment lines would be implemented under carefully monitored conditions favoring low to moderate intensity understory fires that would consume surface fuels, thin out small trees, and create openings with conditions favorable for shrubs and larger deciduous hardwood trees (aspen, oak, and cottonwood) contributing to a more diverse forest structure and composition. As part of restoration efforts in Jake Schneider Meadow, the proposed project would remove the competing conifers from aspen groves and reroute a hiking trail around the meadow. The project includes design criteria and best management practices adopted by the USFS for project activities to protect aquatic, terrestrial, and botanical special-status species, waterways and riparian areas, cultural resources, and aesthetic/visual resources. Impacts from smoke emissions would be minimized by complying with smoke management plans that will be approved by the El Dorado County Air Quality Management District. SNC has reviewed the Initial Study and negative declaration prepared by EID, and has independently determined that the Project would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

This is to advise that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has approved the above
 (Lead Agency or Responsible Agency)

described project on _____ and has made the following determinations regarding the above
 (date)
 described project.

1. The project **will not** have a significant effect on the environment
2. A Negative Declaration **was** prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA
3. Mitigation measures **were not** a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan **was not** adopted for this project
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations **was not** adopted for this project.
6. Findings **were not** made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Negative Declaration and record of project approval is available to the General Public at:

Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 11521 Blocker Dr #205, Auburn, CA 95603

Signature (Public Agency): _____ Title: _____

Date: _____ Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code.
Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code.

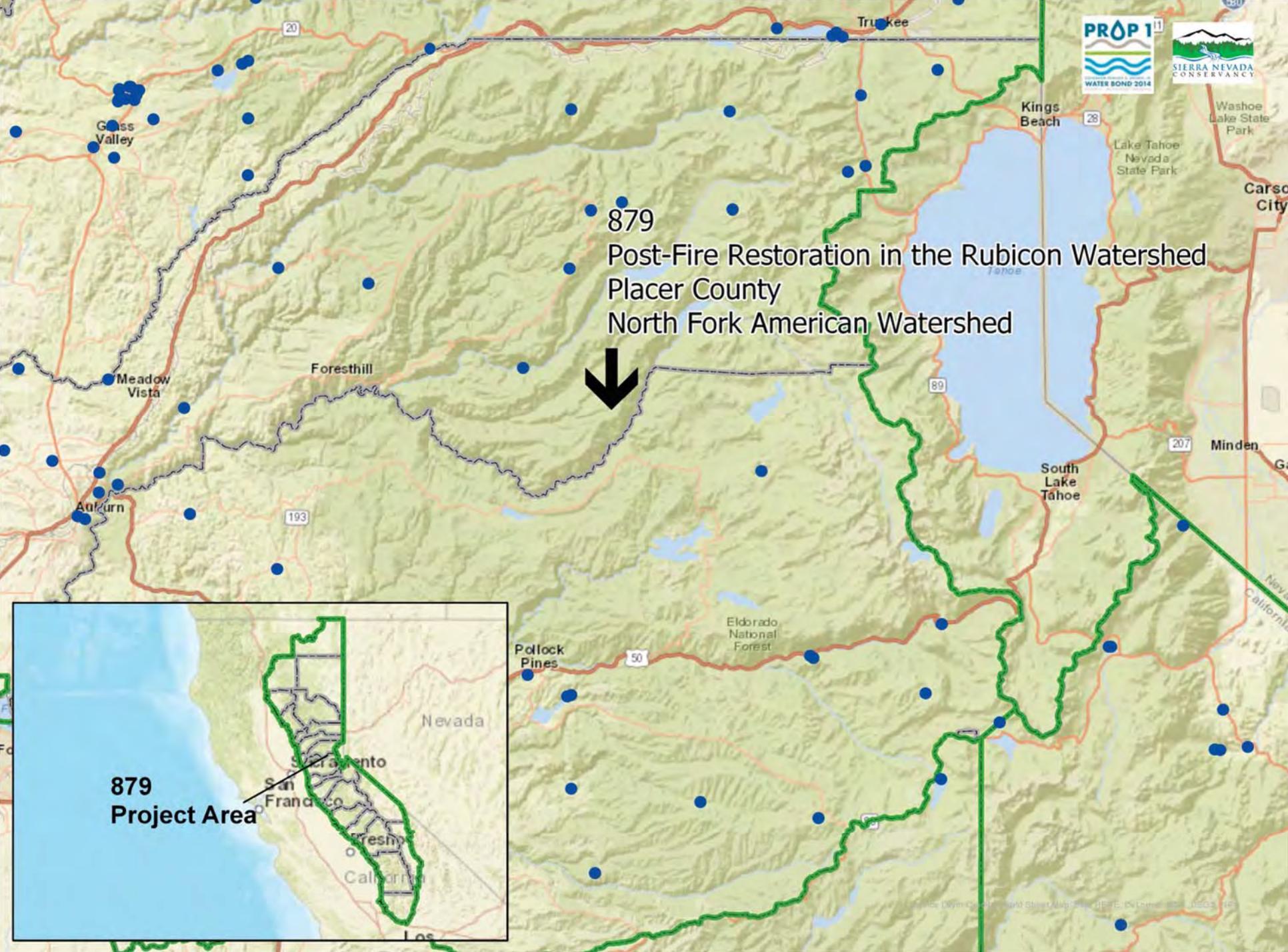
Revised 2011



879
Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed
Placer County
North Fork American Watershed



879
Project Area



Watershed Restoration Area

Aerial Photo

Legend

-  Little Wallace Stream
-  Watershed Restoration Area

Google earth

© 2016 Google

5 mi



STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 879

Applicant: Placer County Resource Conservation
District

Project Title: Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon
Watershed

SNC Subregion: Central

County: Placer

Funding Amount Requested: \$499,903

Funding Amount Recommended: \$359,838

Total Project Cost: \$572,000

Final Score: 85.5

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Post-Fire Restoration of the Rubicon Watershed project targets key areas along a 13-mile stretch of the Rubicon River drainage between Hell Hole Reservoir and the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) facilities at Ralston Afterbay. The entire project area burned at high severity in the 2014 King Fire. Placer County Resource Conservation District (RCD) is partnering with the Forest Service and a private landowner to treat 208.5 acres to remove burned debris and stabilize watershed slopes to prevent sediment erosion.

There are two primary treatment components: 1) the project will treat multiple scattered areas of Forest Service land that have been identified as priority “watershed sensitive areas” totaling 155 acres. Mastication will be utilized on 125 acres of sub-merchantable burned timber and brush. On 30 acres that are too steep for equipment mastication, hand treatment (lop and scatter) will be utilized. 2) A 100’ buffer on both sides of a two-mile stretch of Little Wallace Creek will be treated. This is mostly private land with a small amount of Forest Service ownership. Treatment along this buffer will total 48.5 acres. Treatment will consist of hand work to slash and fell small trees perpendicular to the stream course to act as erosion control. Native grass seeds will be broadcast and covered with mulch to reestablish groundcover on the barren soil. In addition, five acres of previous timber operation landings will be rehabilitated with revegetation and erosion control; and about one acre of select areas within the 53.5 acres will be replanted with trees.

This project compliments a CAL FIRE reforestation grant received by Placer RCD to reforest 1,537 acres of private timberland burned in the upper watersheds of the American River and its tributaries.

The applicant, Placer County Resource Conservation District, is partnering with Eldorado National Forest (ENF), PCWA, and a private landowner, Simorg West Forest LLC. The majority of the work will take place on the Eldorado National Forest; most of the work along Little Wallace Creek is owned by Simorg. The watershed condition is critical to downstream PCWA facilities and water delivery.

Placer RCD is contributing at least \$17,000 in staff time for CEQA and project management. PCWA is contributing \$6,000 of staff time toward the project. The ENF is investing approximately \$49,000 for NEPA, culvert and road design/engineering, and other project-related activities. Road maintenance work (rock treatment) and a culvert replacement were included in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) application, but will not be funded by SNC. Eldorado National Forest has since secured funding to replace the culvert (about \$40,000) from a private company in lieu of road use fees.

Sediment from the project area flows into PCWA's Ralston Afterbay reservoir, which feeds into the American River, Folsom Reservoir, and to large numbers of urban and agricultural water users. The project meets Proposition 1 and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) objectives to sustainably manage water resources, maintain a reliable water supply, and restore critical habitat. The project aligns with the WIP by collaborating with the US Forest Service along with other partners to restore watershed and forest health on public lands.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Mastication of sub-merchantable burned timber and brush on 125 acres of Forest Service Land	June 2017 – Nov. 2019
Hand treatment (lop and scatter) of burned timber and brush on 30 acres of steep Forest Service land	June 2017 – Nov. 2019
Slash treatment, native seed broadcast, and mulching of 53.5 acres of private and Forest Service land, plus one acre of tree planting	June 2017 – Nov. 2019
Six-month Progress Reports	Every six months from execution of grant agreement
Estimated Project Completion Date – Final Report	December 31, 2019

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Site Restoration – 155 acres of mastication / hand crews	\$172,500
Site Restoration – 53.5 acres slash treatment, seeding, mulch, 1 acre tree planting	\$128,703
Reporting, invoicing, Performance Measures	\$11,700
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$46,935
TOTAL:	\$359,838

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Placer County, Office of County Executive
- Placer County Water Agency

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored
- Linear Feet of Streambank Restored

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Placer
2954 Richardson Drive
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed (SNC #879)

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located four miles east-northeast of the unincorporated community of Ramsay Crossing in Placer County; centered at approximately 39.017456°N and 120.483902°W

Project Location – City: Ramsay Crossing Project Location – County: Placer

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide the Placer County Resource Conservation District with \$359,838 to fund restoration of 208.5 acres of Eldorado National Forest and private lands, within the area devastated by the 2014 King Fire. The project goals are to reduce sedimentation and erosion in the watershed, improve forest health and water quality, restore wildlife habitat, reduce GHG emissions, increase carbon storage, and improve biodiversity and overall watershed health. Project activities include hand felling small diameter (<12 inches DBH) dead, dying or damaged timber; mastication; broadcast seeding of native grasses; mulch application; and planting riparian hardwoods.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Placer County Resource Conservation District

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15304 Class 4, "Minor Alterations to Land"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

This is a forest management project involving minor alterations to land and vegetation. These alterations will not involve removal of mature trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The project includes standard operating procedures and other Best Management Practices adopted by the Forest Service in the King Fire Restoration Project EIS that will avoid significant adverse effects on the environment.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency
 - Signed by Applicant
- Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2005

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 879
Post-Fire Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed

Description of Activities

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide the Placer County Resource Conservation District with \$359,838 to fund restoration of 208.5 acres devastated by the 2014 King Fire. The project goals are to reduce sedimentation and erosion in the watershed, improve forest health and water quality, restore wildlife habitat, reduce GHG emissions, increase carbon storage, and improve biodiversity and overall watershed health. Project activities include hand felling small diameter (<12 inches DBH) dead, dying and damaged timber, mastication, revegetation and erosion control near streams, and restoration of existing timber landings.

Specific project activities include:

1) mastication of submerchantable burned timber and brush on 125 acres of U.S. Forest Service land in the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) designated as priority “watershed sensitive areas”;

2) hand treatment (lop and scatter) of submerchantable burned timber and brush on 30 acres of steep U.S. Forest Service land designated as priority “watershed sensitive areas”;

3) erosion control and revegetation practices along 100-foot buffer on both sides of 2 miles of stream (53.5 acres total, 32.5 acres of private lands and 26 acres of ENF lands)

- Hand crews fall submerchantable burned timber horizontally (side-slope) to act as erosion control and allow material to break down
- Broadcast seed native grass species
- Cover seeding with straw mulch to protect from wildlife and weather, and to increase the germination success rate
- Plant riparian hardwoods and shrubs at an average rate of 15/acre throughout the 100-foot buffers; and
- Decompaction and revegetation of existing timber landings (approximately 5 acres of private land).

The ENF reviewed the 155 acres of the project area that include forestry treatments (project activities 1 and 2, above) as part of the King Fire Restoration Project EIS. The EIS evaluated these treatments as part of a larger 15,739-acre project, and found that implementation of the project would not result in significant adverse effects on the environment.

Reasons Why the Project is Exempt

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land

The Post-Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor land alterations for forest habitat restoration include mastication and hand treatment of burned woody biomass, revegetation, and restoration of timber landings. None of the proposed activities will result in significant adverse impacts.

No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and includes a brief rationale as to why each exception does not apply to the Post-Restoration in the Rubicon Watershed project.

Table 1 Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)	
Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The goals of this approximately 208.5-acre restoration project are to restore health to the portions of the Rubicon River watershed affected by the 2014 King Fire.</p> <p>The project consists of minor land alterations involving mastication and hand treatment of woody debris, and erosion control and revegetation in riparian areas and timber landings.</p> <p>The project work would not involve activities in streams or waterbodies, nor will project work occur on areas know to contain hazardous substances. Mechanical treatments would avoid steep slopes and the project activities would not occur in locations that contain known significant cultural or biological resources</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The project activities will not adversely affect environmental resources, and will therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to restoration and other projects in the region. The project will result in beneficial effects to the region’s forests, creeks, watersheds, associated lands, and adjacent neighborhoods by providing natural resource management and protection. In addition, 155 acres of the project area was evaluated by the U.S. Forest Service ENF as part of the King Fire Restoration Project EIS, which evaluated a larger management program that would treat 15,739 acres. This analyses found that the project, in combination with other nearby forest management treatments would not result in significant cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due</p>	<p>The restoration project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Specific environmental topics are addressed below:</p> <p>Aesthetics. The project will cause minimal change to</p>

to unusual circumstances.

the appearance of treatment areas. It will involve the felling of some small trees, but such felling will be extremely difficult to discern on a landscape level. Additionally, the project area is extremely remote and will be viewed by very few people. The establishment of hardwoods in riparian areas will likely increase the aesthetic qualities of the site over time by returning them to a condition that was common prior to the fire.

Agriculture/ Forestry. The project does not propose to remove commercial sized trees. The project does not constitute “timber operations” under the CA Forest Practice Act because no commercialization of forest products will occur associated with this project, and timberland will not be converted to other uses.

Air Quality/GHGs. The project does not involve the removal of live vegetation, and will involve the establishment of some vegetation which will sequester carbon. Because of the lack of heavy equipment usage, the project will not create fugitive dust or any other air pollutant in significant amounts; however, the project will involve some use of petroleum powered equipment such as chainsaws and pickup trucks, but such emissions related to this use are too small to be considered significant.

Biologic Resources. The project would not adversely affect sensitive biological resources. The USFS ENF reviewed 155 acres of the project area for effects on biological resources as part of the King Fire Restoration Project EIS. The entire project area, including areas not evaluated in the EIS, was evaluated through a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB).

The EIS identified 23 species of sensitive plant species that are either known or have the potential to occur within the surrounding 15,739 acres of ENF lands that were affected by the King Fire and evaluated in the EIS. Sources consulted included: US Fish and Wildlife List for ENF, USDA Forest Service Region 5 Sensitive Species List, Invasive Plant List for the Eldorado National Forest, ENF rare and invasive plant records, and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). These sensitive botanical resources could be affected by activities associated with the project; however, adverse direct and indirect effects to sensitive plant occurrences would be minimized or avoided through implementation of best management practices (BMPs) and design criteria that are included in the project in accordance with the USFS King Fire Restoration Project EIS and decision.

The EIS also evaluated effects to sensitive species from

the spread of invasive plants, and found that the spread of invasive plants may occur with or without implementation of the project, and that BMPs and design criteria incorporated into the project would minimize or avoid risks associated with invasive species. Based on these findings of the EIS, the project would not result in a significant impact on botanical resources.

A Biological Assessment, an Aquatic Wildlife Biological Evaluation, and a Terrestrial Wildlife Biological Evaluation were prepared for the USFS EIS. These identified a number of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; however, the project has been designed to avoid habitat where these species could occur. In addition, the EIS determined that implementation of design criteria and BMPs for aquatics that are incorporated into this project would avoid effects to the species listed above. Because the project would avoid impacts to habitat for special status aquatic species and based on these findings of the EIS, there would be no significant direct or indirect effects to aquatic biological resources.

A field inspection of the reforestation area was conducted during field layout on July 25th 2016. During the field inspection vegetation and soil types were noted to determine if habitat for sensitive species is present in the project area. A subsequent CNDDDB search was also conducted by Placer County Resource Conservation District for the entire project area (including areas evaluated in the ENF EIS and areas not evaluated in the EIS), and for the USGS 7.5" quadrangles that contain the project area to determine if there are any documented special status species present in the project area. The field inspection and CNDDDB database search identified no additional special status species that would be adversely affected by the project.

Cultural Resources. See (f).

Geology/Soils. A project goal is to reduce erosion that is currently occurring. The project will include the application of mulch, contour logs, and revegetation to reduce erosion. No excavation, road construction, or work within a stream channel would occur as part of the project. Long-term erosion and sedimentation to waterways would be greatly reduced because of project activities, resulting in a beneficial impact to water quality in the long term.

Hazards/Hazardous Materials. See (e).

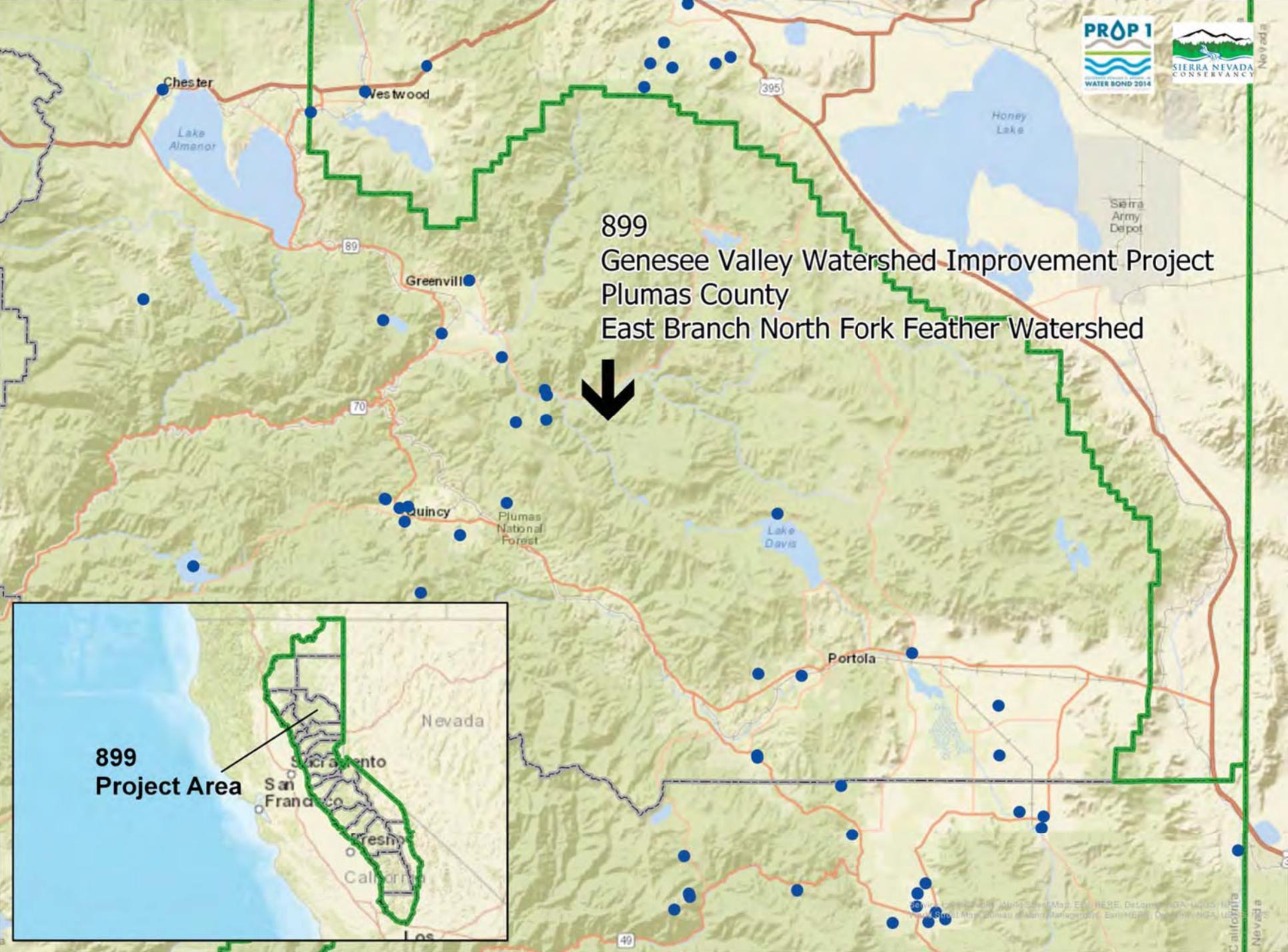
Hydrology/Water Quality. The project treatments are

	<p>focused on restoring a fire-impacted watershed and improving water quality. The project includes Best Management Practices to ensure that the project does not result in a short term or long term negative effect on water quality. The project will involve hand operations in a watercourse protection zone as defined in the California forest practice rules, but such operations (i.e., seeding, mulching, and replanting) will decrease sediment transport to the watercourse and increase canopy cover.</p> <p>Noise. The project area is in a very remote location with no sites of human habitation within ¼ mile; therefore, noise impact will not be significant.</p> <p>Other CEQA Issues. The project will have no effect on hazards and hazardous materials, land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>The project area is not visible from a designated scenic highway; therefore, it would not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The project is not located on a hazardous waste site contained on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>No prehistoric or historic resources will be affected by the project. A cultural survey was carried out for the USFS EIS (King Fire Restoration Project EIS Cultural Resource Management) to inventory cultural resources on all USFS lands within the project area. This EIS analysis found that the project would not result in significant adverse effects to cultural resources.</p> <p>Approximately 32.5 acres of the project site are on private land and an additional 26 acres are on ENF lands that were not evaluated in the King Fire EIS. A separate search of the California Historic Resource Information System (CHRIS) database was conducted for the private land and the portion of the project area on ENF land that was not evaluated in the EIS. This database search determined that there were no known</p>

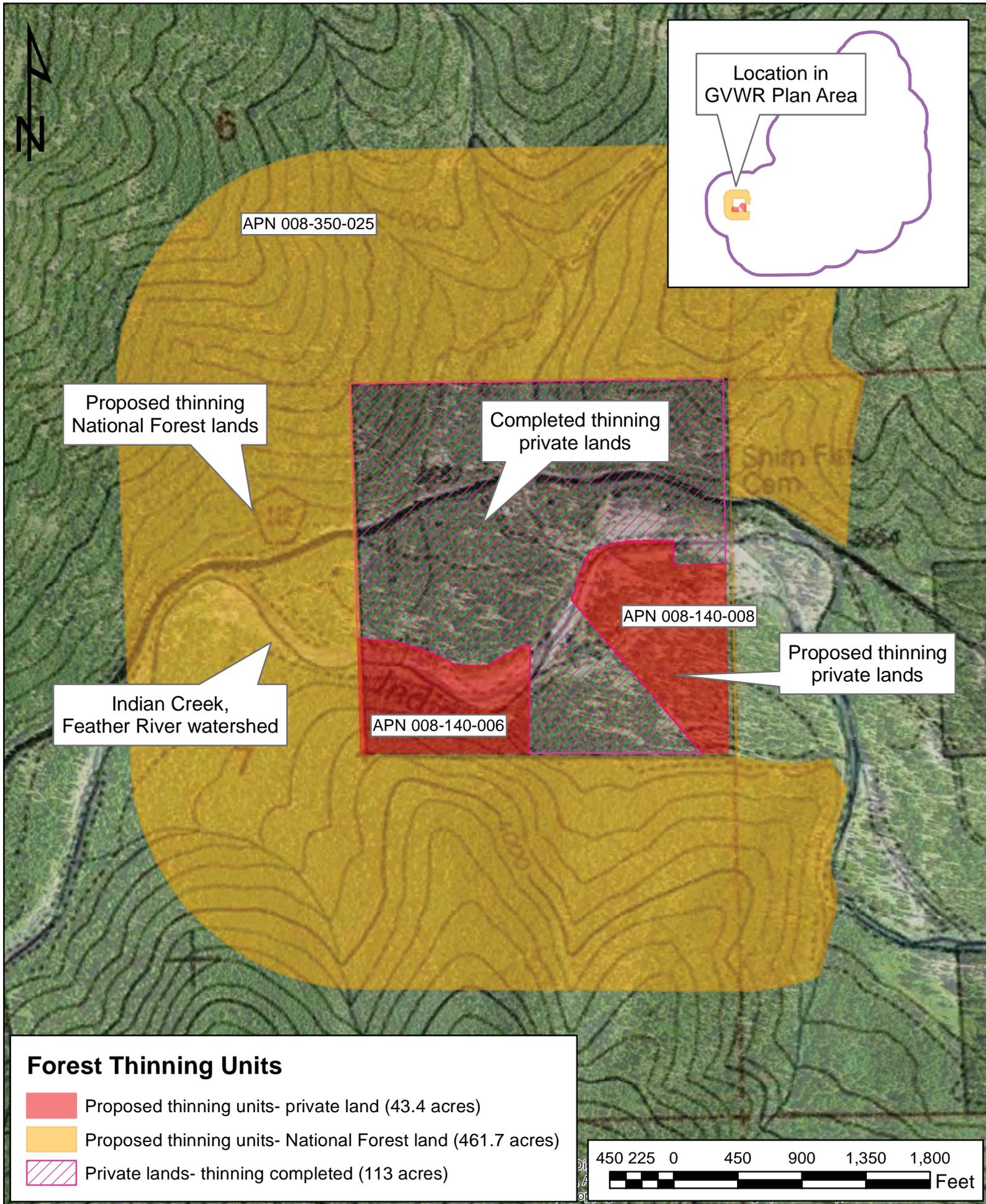
	<p>cultural resources within this portion of the project area.</p> <p>Consultation with Native American Tribes, and other interested members of the public, took place as a part of the NEPA process. In addition, Placer RCD contacted Marcos Guerrero of the United Auburn Indian Community, and Shanti Parks with the Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe (Maidu and Miwok), and provided information on the proposed project. Placer RCD will remain in contact with both tribal contacts throughout the project to solicit any feedback and address any concerns the tribal communities may have.</p> <p>If previously undiscovered resources are encountered or suspected during project implementation, work would be halted immediately and would not resume until the area is cleared by qualified individuals. No work would occur near sensitive cultural resources. The project would not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and will not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>
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899
Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project
Plumas County
East Branch North Fork Feather Watershed



Genesee Woods Proposed Thinning Units



STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 899

Applicant: Plumas Audubon Society

Project Title: Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement
Project – CEQA/NEPA Compliance

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Plumas

Funding Amount Requested: \$74,576.25

Funding Amount Recommended: \$74,576.00

Total Project Cost: \$84,771.00

Final Score: 93.75

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project (GVWMP) is a Category 2 planning project of Plumas Audubon Society, a nonprofit corporation located in Quincy, CA. The project location is within Genesee Valley, east of the town of Crescent Mills, on Indian Creek, a significant tributary to the north fork of the Feather River. The landscape of the valley is comprised of a mix of public/private ownerships including Plumas National Forest (PNF), the Feather River Land Trust, individual homeowners, and a Homeowners Association/subdivision. The entire 33,000-acre valley is included in the collaboratively developed Genesee Valley Wildfire Restoration Plan (GVWRP).

In collaboration with PNF and private landholders, Plumas Audubon will conduct all due diligence work necessary to inform PNF's NEPA analysis and complete CEQA in partnership with the Feather River Resource Conservation District (FRRCD) as the lead agency. GVWRP prescriptions totaling 839 acres total, (505 acres of forest thinning and 334 acres of underburning) on 221 acres of private land and 618 acres of National Forest will be analyzed for potential environmental impacts under this grant.

The Plumas Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation with a history of completing successful conservation and forest and watershed health improvement projects over the past 30 years. They have a good relationship with Plumas National Forest and the landowners in Genesee Valley, with whom they collaboratively worked to

develop the Genesee Valley Wildfire Restoration Plan. PNF will incorporate the GVWMP into long-term management of the Genesee Valley area. Homeowners in the valley actively support the GVWRP and plan to volunteer assistance during implementation phases.

Partner contributions to the proposed project include US Forest Service (USFS), PNF Mt. Hough Ranger District, the Genesee Woods Recreation Commission (homeowners organization), and volunteers through Plumas Audubon. In-kind contribution totals are anticipated to total approximately \$10,000.00. PNF will complete a categorical exclusion for NEPA, and the FRRCD will do all necessary work to complete a CEQA mitigated negative declaration if required.

Forest and watershed restoration efforts in the Feather River watershed, the largest watershed in the Sierra Nevada, are critical to improving water quantity and quality in California. The proposed project will contribute to forest and watershed management strategies outlined in Proposition 1 and will improve the health of riparian vegetation along Indian Creek. The proposed project also meets the objectives of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program by mitigating the impacts of ongoing drought, fire exclusion, and widespread tree mortality.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Coordination, planning with FS resource personnel and other contractors for survey work/Survey Plan	March – May 2017
Complete resource surveys/Surveys	May – August 2017
PNF and FRRCD complete review of draft survey reports/Draft Survey Reports	Sep. – Dec. 2017
Draft Environmental Assessment (NEPA), CEQA checklist, Mitigated Negative Declaration (CEQA)/ Drafts	December 2017
Draft EA and MND review by USFS and FRRCD	Jan. – Feb. 2018
Six-month progress reports	Every six months from execution of grant agreement
Estimated Project Completion Date – Final Report	August 1, 2018

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$4,500
Survey Contracts:	\$48,350
Coordination: PNF	\$3,525
CEQA/NEPA document preparation	\$13,600
Printing and public relations	\$425
Invoicing, Performance Measures	\$625
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$3,551
TOTAL:	\$74,576

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Jonathan Kusel, Director - Sierra Institute for the Community and Environment
- Gordon R Kellor - Geotechnical Engineer, Genesee landowner
- Greenville Rancheria - Michael Savala, tribal partner
- Norma Burchard - President of Genesee Woods Recreation Association
- Paul Hardy - ED of the Feather River Land Trust, landholder and former SNC grantee for Genesee fuel reduction projects
- Nils Lunder - President of the Feather River Resource Management District (CEQA lead agency)
- Micki D. Smith - District Ranger of the Mt. Hough Ranger District, Plumas National Forest (NEPA lead agency)

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Percent of Pre-project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Plumas
520 Main Street Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project - CEQA/NEPA Compliance

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Plumas County; centered at approximately 40.04867, -120.78507

Project Location – City: Genesee Project Location – County: Plumas

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding in the amount of \$74,576 to the Plumas Audubon Society to conduct the necessary NEPA and CEQA analyses to assess proposed forest and watershed management activities on 839 acres (221 private; 618 in Plumas National Forest) in Genesee Valley to address the impacts of ongoing drought, fire suppression, and widespread tree mortality, and to incorporate design criteria, water quality measures, and best management practices to protect water quality and natural resources in the area.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Plumas Audubon Society

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15262, "Feasibility and Planning Studies"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

This is a planning project involving the preparation of environmental analysis and CEQA and NEPA review for forest management strategies for 839 acres in Genesee Valley. The planning project does not involve physical alterations to the environment. The proposed Genesee Valley Watershed Improvement Project - CEQA/NEPA Compliance is categorically exempt from the CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, which applies to feasibility and planning studies for future actions that have not yet been approved. The project would involve preparation of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for adoption by the Mt. Hough Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest and a Mitigated Negative Declaration for adoption by the Feather River Resource Conservation District to be followed by implementation actions by these agencies.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

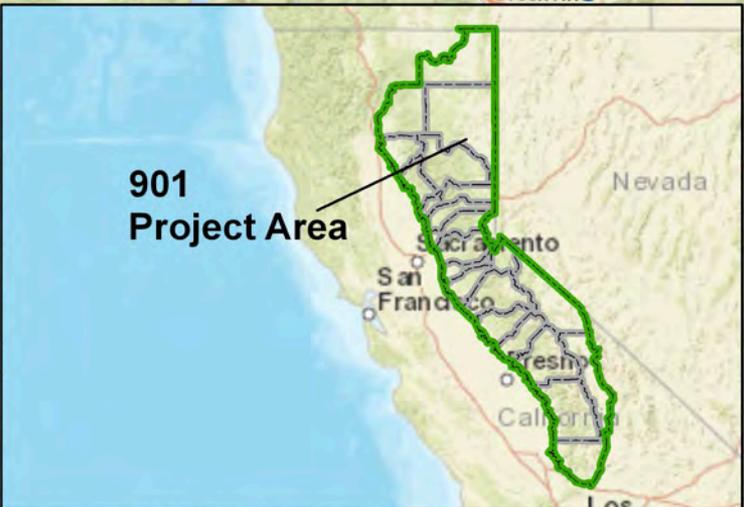
Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

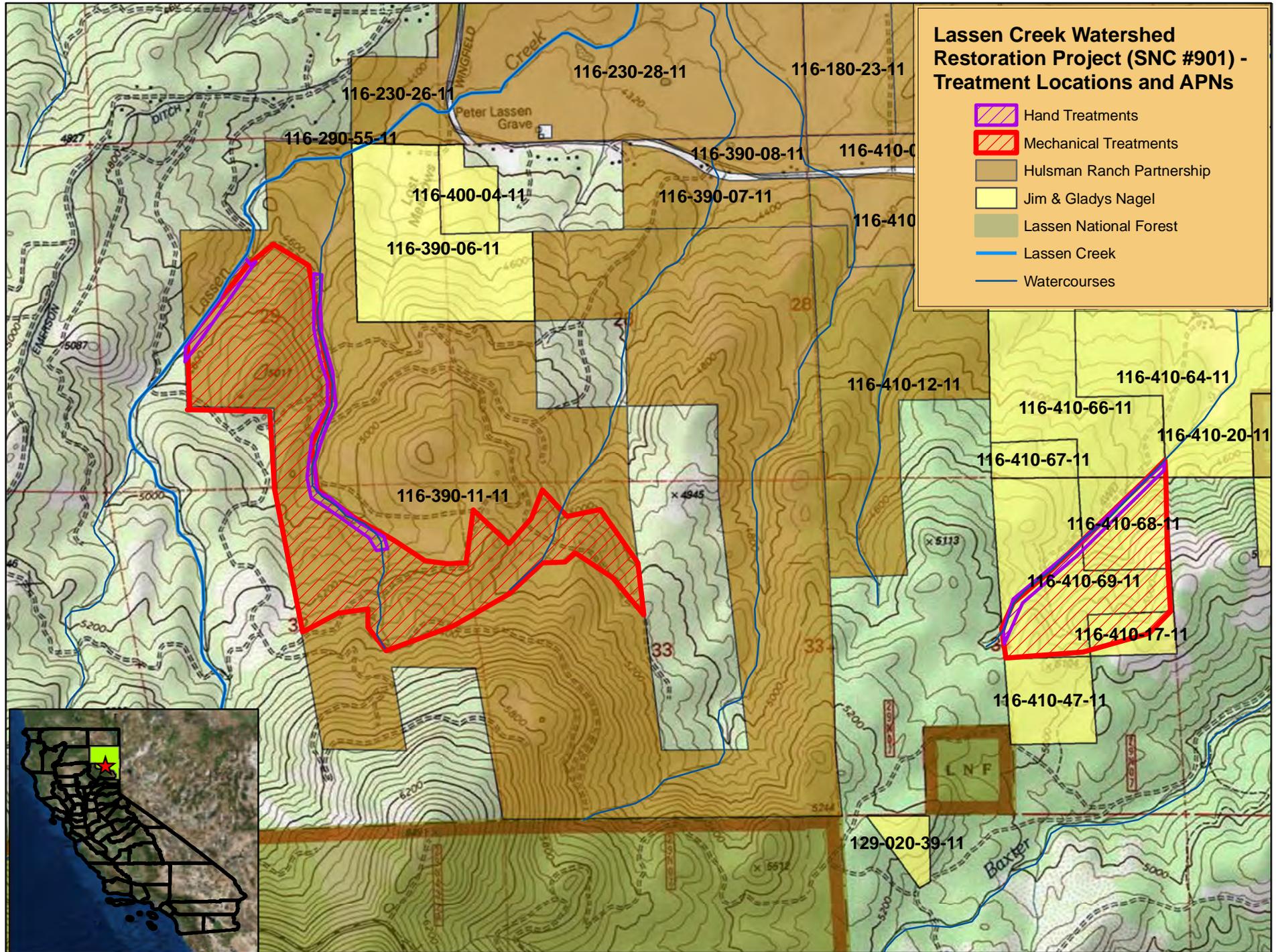
- Signed by Lead Agency
 - Signed by Applicant
- Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2005



901
Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project
Lassen County
Honey-Eagle Lakes Watershed





Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project (SNC #901) - Treatment Locations and APNs

-  Hand Treatments
-  Mechanical Treatments
-  Hulsman Ranch Partnership
-  Jim & Gladys Nagel
-  Lassen National Forest
-  Lassen Creek
-  Watercourses



STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 901

Applicant: Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation
District

Project Title: Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project

SNC Subregion: North

County: Lassen

Funding Amount Requested: \$250,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$250,000

Total Project Cost: \$375,000

Final Score: 88.5

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration project is located in Lassen County at the base of the Diamond Mountains approximately 4 miles south of Susanville and immediately north of the Lassen National Forest boundary in northeastern California. Submitted by the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (HVRCD), this Category 1 project will improve forest health on 250 acres that feature Lassen Creek and three additional small creeks, which are all tributaries to the Susan River. The project will occur on private lands owned by Hulsman Ranch Partnership and Nagle Property.

This project will implement forest management treatments including mechanical harvesting on 225 acres of conifers under 12" diameter and hand-thinning, pruning, mastication, and slash disposal near residential areas, along access corridors and sensitive watercourses on 25 acres. Tree thinning will be designed to reduce crown bulk density and increase the spacing between leave trees so that tree crowns are not touching with 6 to 20 feet of variable spacing between tree boles. Individual prescriptions will be designed on a stand-by-stand basis. Woody material from mechanical operation will be converted to chips and delivered to a local power plant with the intention of leveraging revenue and mechanically treat an additional 75 acres in the project area. This project is within the Diamond Mountain area which has been identified as the top priority in the Lassen County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and falls within the Susanville Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

The HVRCD has implemented 800 acres of fuels reduction within the larger project area over the last five years (with funding from Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and California Fire Safe Council). Another grantee, Lassen Land and Trails Trust, conducted a pre-project due diligence project on an adjacent portion of the Hulsman Ranch with SNC funds. This project also ties into work that is being conducted by Lassen National Forest (LNF) and Lassen County Fire Safe Council (FSC). The Lassen County FSC was recently awarded two SNC grants for fuels reduction in the Diamond Mountain area, one for planning on LNF land and the other for site restoration work on private land. Altogether, these projects create an area that significantly addresses landscape-level wildfire threat within the WUI.

The HVRCD has received two SNC grants in the past; one for fuels reduction near this current project and another for pre-project due diligence on a site near Eagle Lake.

The project intends to leverage approximately \$118,800 in biomass sold to Honey Lake Power and \$6,200 of in-kind match from landowner contributions.

The project supports Proposition 1 and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program by improving and protecting the quantity and quality of water available year-round by reducing the demand for water in the project area. It will reduce the risk and consequences of large, damaging wildfires by reducing fuels in a strategic location within the Susanville WUI and thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions and stabilize carbon storage. Additionally, it will improve local socioeconomic conditions and public safety by creating jobs and improving access for fire personnel within the Susanville WUI.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Pre-Treatment Project Layout and Photo Points	April 30, 2017
Complete mechanical operations	October 31, 2017
Complete pile burning and post-treatment photos	November 30, 2017
Photo Monitoring Report	December 31, 2017
Progress Reports	Every six months from execution of grant agreement
Estimated Project Completion Date – Final Report	February 28, 2018

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$21,100
Site Restoration Work	\$211,000
Monitoring	\$2,775
Publications, Printing, Public Relations	\$450
Reporting, Performance Measures, Invoice Billing	\$2,775
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$11,900
TOTAL:	\$250,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Susanville Indian Rancheria Tribal Chairman
- Lassen National Forest, Eagle Lake District Ranger
- Lassen County Board of Supervisors
- CAL FIRE Lassen-Modoc Unit Division Chief
- Lassen County Fire Safe Council
- Honey Lake Power Company LP

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of People Reached
- Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- Number and Type of Jobs Created
- Number of New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities
- Acres of Land Improved or Restored

Notice of Determination

Appendix D

To:

Office of Planning and Research
U.S. Mail: _____ Street Address: _____
P.O. Box 3044 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 Sacramento, CA 95814

County Clerk
County of: _____
Address: _____

From:

Public Agency: _____
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Address: 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603
Contact: Patrick Eidman
Phone: (530) 823-4689

Lead Agency (if different from above):

CAL FIRE
Address: 6105 Airport Road
Redding, CA 96002
Contact: Scott Upton
Phone: (530) 224 - 2489

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): N/A, NTMP No. 2-01NTMP-4 LAS(2) & No. N-2-95-012-LAS (2)

Project Title: Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project

Project Applicant: Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District

Project Location (include county): Plumas County, CA; centered at 40.333651, -120.649915.

Project Description:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide \$250,000 in funding to the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (RCD) for the Lassen Creek Watershed Restoration Project (Project). The Project involves forest management activities on 250 acres of within the 325-acre private property project area to reduce wildfire risk, prevent catastrophic wildfire, improve forest and watershed resiliency, maintain habitat values, and improve water quality and availability. Project activities would include hand and mechanical forest treatments for forest restoration, piling and burning, and restoration. The project includes a comprehensive suite of Best Management Practices to protect water quality and other environmental resources. During tree marking and other project activities, sensitive resources and species will be identified and protection measures implemented.

All work will be performed in compliance with the California Forest Practices Act and the adopted Non-industrial Timber Management Plans (NTMPs) for the property [NTMP No. 2-01NTMP-4 LAS(2) & No. N-2-95-012-LAS (2)], approved by the California Department of Forestry. SNC has reviewed the NTMPs, a CEQA-equivalent document, which were prepared by a Registered Professional Forester. SNC has independently determined that the Project would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

This is to advise that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has approved the above
(Lead Agency or Responsible Agency)

described project on _____ and has made the following determinations regarding the above
(date)
described project.

1. The project **will not** have a significant effect on the environment
2. Two Non-industrial Timber Management Plans were adopted by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection pursuant to Chapter 8, commencing with section 4511 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code. The Non-industrial Timber Management Plans meet the requirements of a Substitute Document pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15252. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is using the substitute documents in its approval of the project as a Responsible Agency, consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15253 (a) and (b).
3. Mitigation measures **were not** a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan **was not** adopted for this project
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations **was not** adopted for this project.
6. Findings **were not** made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Negative Declaration and record of project approval is available to the General Public at:

Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 11521 Blocker Dr #205, Auburn, CA 95603

Signature (Public Agency): _____ Title: _____

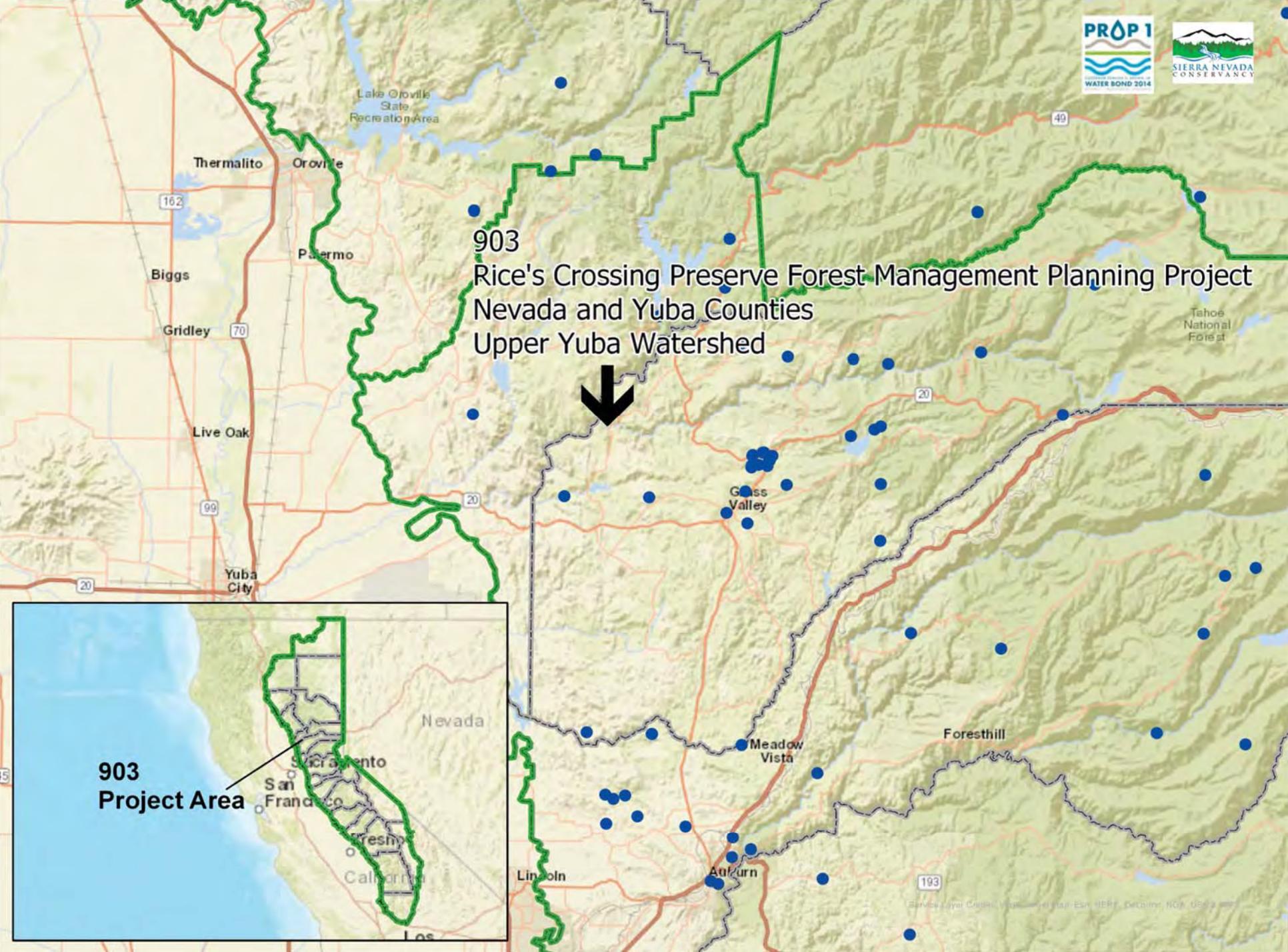
Date: _____ Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code.
Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code.

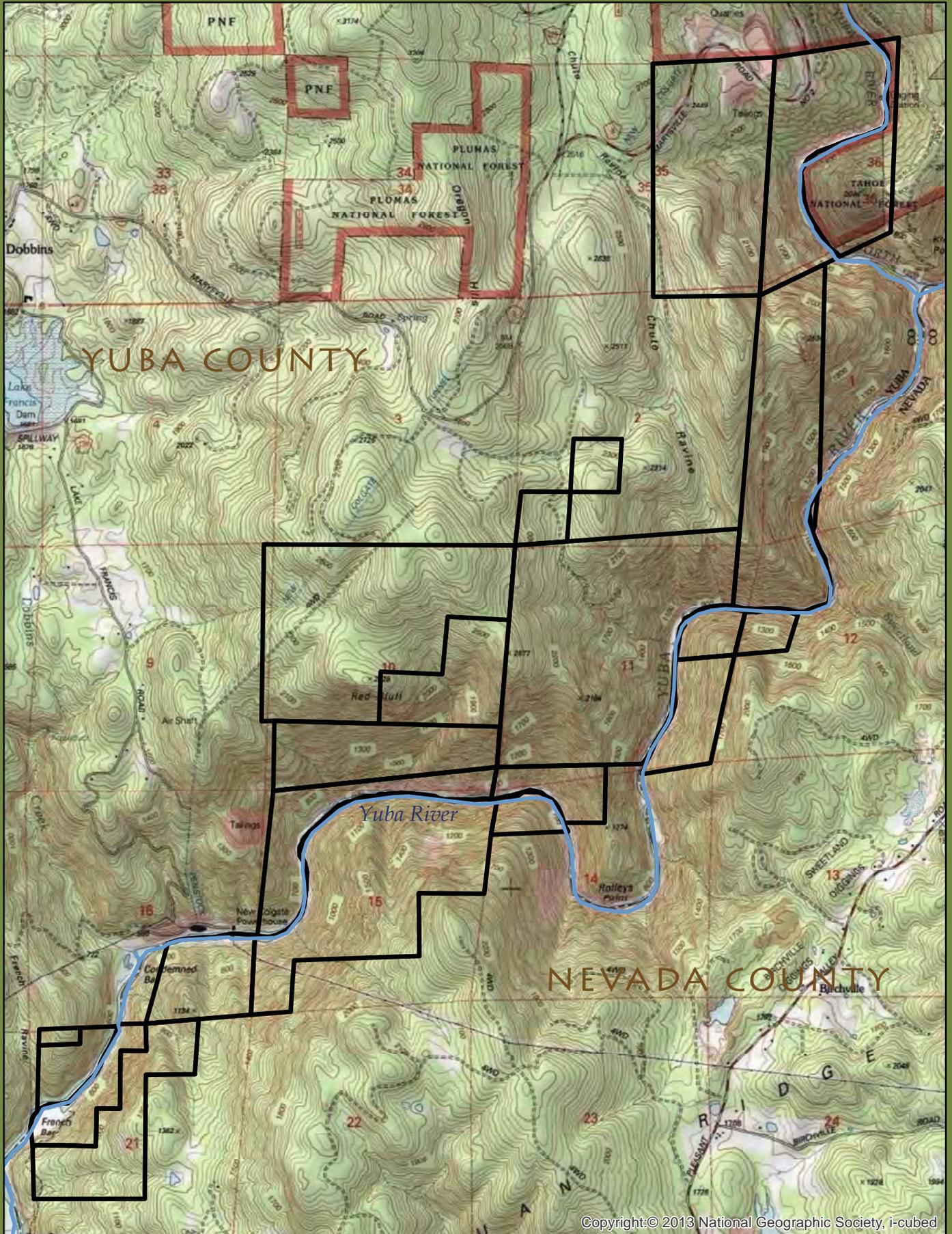
Revised 2011



903 Rice's Crossing Preserve Forest Management Planning Project Nevada and Yuba Counties Upper Yuba Watershed



TOPOGRAPHIC MAP



Copyright © 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed



Rice's Crossing Preserve

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 903

Applicant: Bear Yuba Land Trust

Project Title: Rice's Crossing Preserve Nonindustrial
Timber Management Planning Project

SNC Subregion: Central

Counties: Yuba and Nevada

Funding Amount Requested: \$74,550

Funding Amount Recommended: \$74,550

Total Project Cost: \$79,550

Final Score: 90

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

This planning grant will complete a Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) for about 2,000 acres of the 2,706-acre Rice's Crossing Preserve, owned by the Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT). The NTMP will guide the Land Trust's management of the Preserve to reduce heavy fuel loading and so reduce wildfire threat, and generally improve forest and watershed health through uneven-age forest management. Rice's Crossing Preserve encompasses land on both sides of the middle fork of the Yuba River, and in both Yuba and Nevada Counties, between Bullards Bar and Englebright Reservoirs.

For this project, a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) will be contracted to develop the Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan. Creation of an NTMP will allow Bear Yuba Land Trust to manage the Preserve forest along the Yuba River using uneven-age management and long-term sustained yield methods in order to decrease the risk of high-severity fire, protect critical wildlife habitat, protect the water supply, and provide a source of income to continue management of the forest. The NTMP serves as the functional equivalent of CEQA for implementation of forest treatments.

Bear Yuba Land Trust's mission is to promote conservation of land in the Bear and Yuba Rivers watershed. Since 1991, they have protected over 10,000 acres. BYLT acquired the Rice's Crossing Preserve property in 2014 with funding that included a \$1 million Prop 84 grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC). BYLT has

successfully completed two other SNC Prop 84 grants – one for riparian restoration design and management, and one for forest fuels reduction and restoration.

The BYLT staff and volunteers will contribute \$5,000 worth of time to this project.

The site area covered by the NTMP encompasses the North Yuba River from just below Bullards Bar Reservoir to where it joins the Middle Yuba River and then several miles of the Middle Yuba River. This project supports the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program and Proposition 1 by planning for the restoration of forestland and protecting water that flows into Englebright Reservoir and then joins the Sacramento River in Marysville-Yuba City on its way to the Delta. The steepness of the canyon through Rice’s Crossing Preserve could lead to significant erosion in the case of a high-severity fire in the canyon.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Forester’s (RPF) initial work: NDDDB and CHRIS reports ordered and GIS analysis/maps	March – Aug. 2017
Biological/Botanical surveys	Oct. 2017 – June 2018
First Draft NTMP	July 2018
CAL FIRE initial review	Aug. – Sep. 2018
File Second Draft NTMP with CAL FIRE	October 2018
Pre-Harvest Inspection	November 2018
CAL FIRE review of Pre-Harvest Inspection	December 2018
RPF revises NTMP per review	January 2019
30-day public review of NTMP	Jan. – Feb. 2019
Final NTMP	March 2019
Six-month Progress Reports	Every six months from execution of grant agreement
Estimated Project Completion Date – Final Report	June 30, 2019

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Preparation of NTMP (Registered Professional Forester, technical consultants, surveys)	\$56,500
Project Management, supplies, reporting, invoicing, monitoring, Performance Measures	\$12,050
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$6,000
TOTAL:	\$74,550

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Bureau of Land Management, Mother Lode Field Manager
- Yuba County Water Agency
- South Yuba River Citizens League
- Sierra Streams Institute

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments
- Percent of Pre-Project Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Yuba
915 8th Street, Suite 107
Marysville, CA 95901

Project Title: Rice's Crossing Preserve Non-Industrial Timber Management Planning Project

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Yuba County, centered at 39.376023, -121.153521, and Nevada County, centered at 39.318890, -121.198083.

Project Location – City: Dobbins Project Location – County: Yuba and Nevada

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding of \$74,550 to the Bear Yuba Land Trust to prepare a Non-industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP), which will serve as the functional equivalent CEQA document. Once it is adopted and approved by the Ca. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection, the NTMP would guide potential management actions on 2,000 acres in the Preserve to reduce the threat of high intensity wildfires, promote resilient stand structures, protect nature's resources, and reduce the threat of watershed damage from erosion related to wildfire, other sources, or large scale mortality.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Bear Yuba Land Trust

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15262, "Feasibility and Planning Studies"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

This is a planning project involving the preparation of a Non-industrial Timber Management Plan, which will review and identify forest management strategies for Rice's Crossing Preserve. This planning project does not involve physical alterations to the environment. The proposed Rice's Crossing Preserve Non-Industrial Timber Management Planning Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, which applies to feasibility and planning studies for future actions that have not yet been approved. Upon approval in the future, the NTMP would guide management actions to protect water quality and natural resources and reduce wildfire threats within the Preserve.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

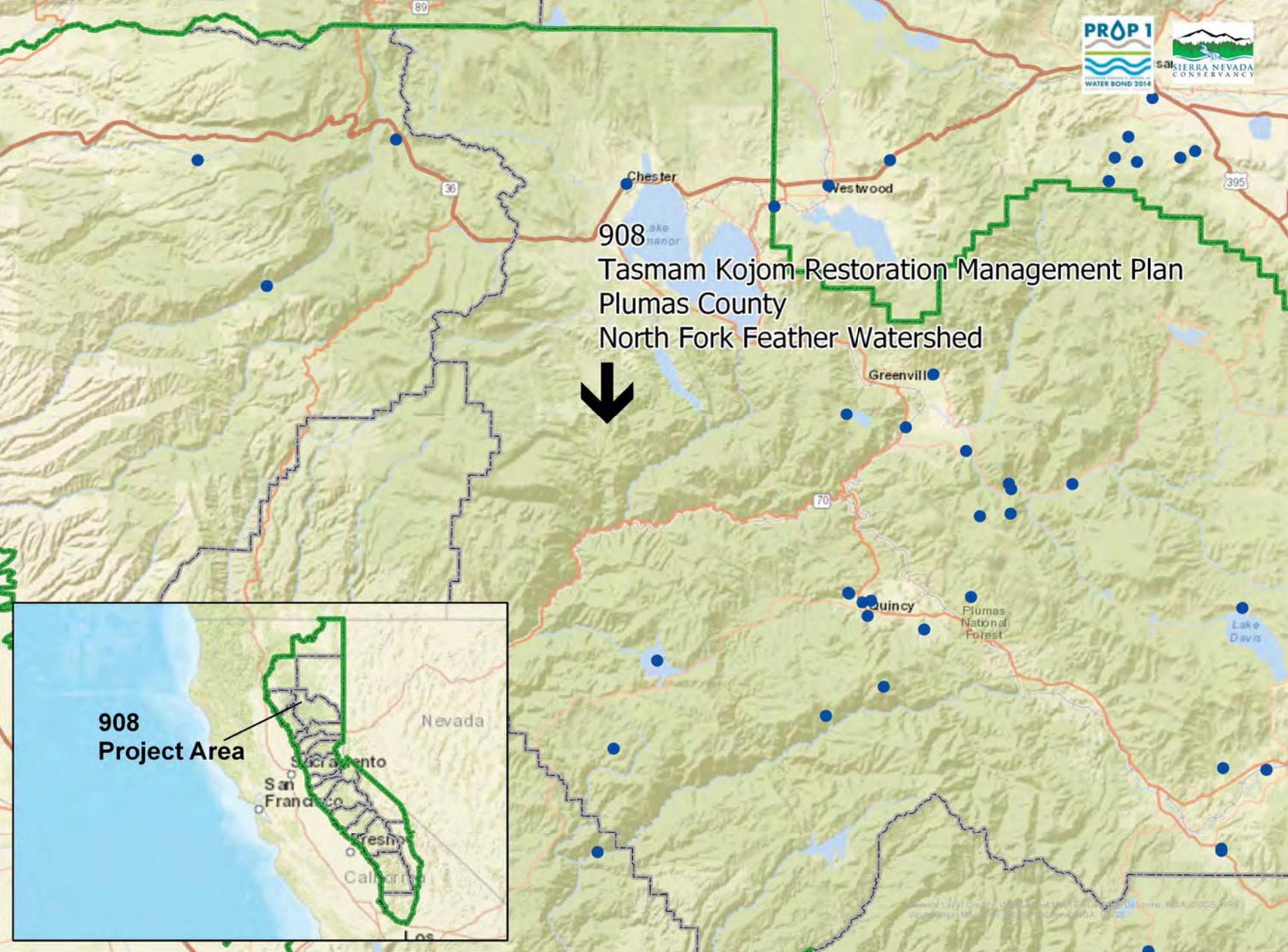
1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

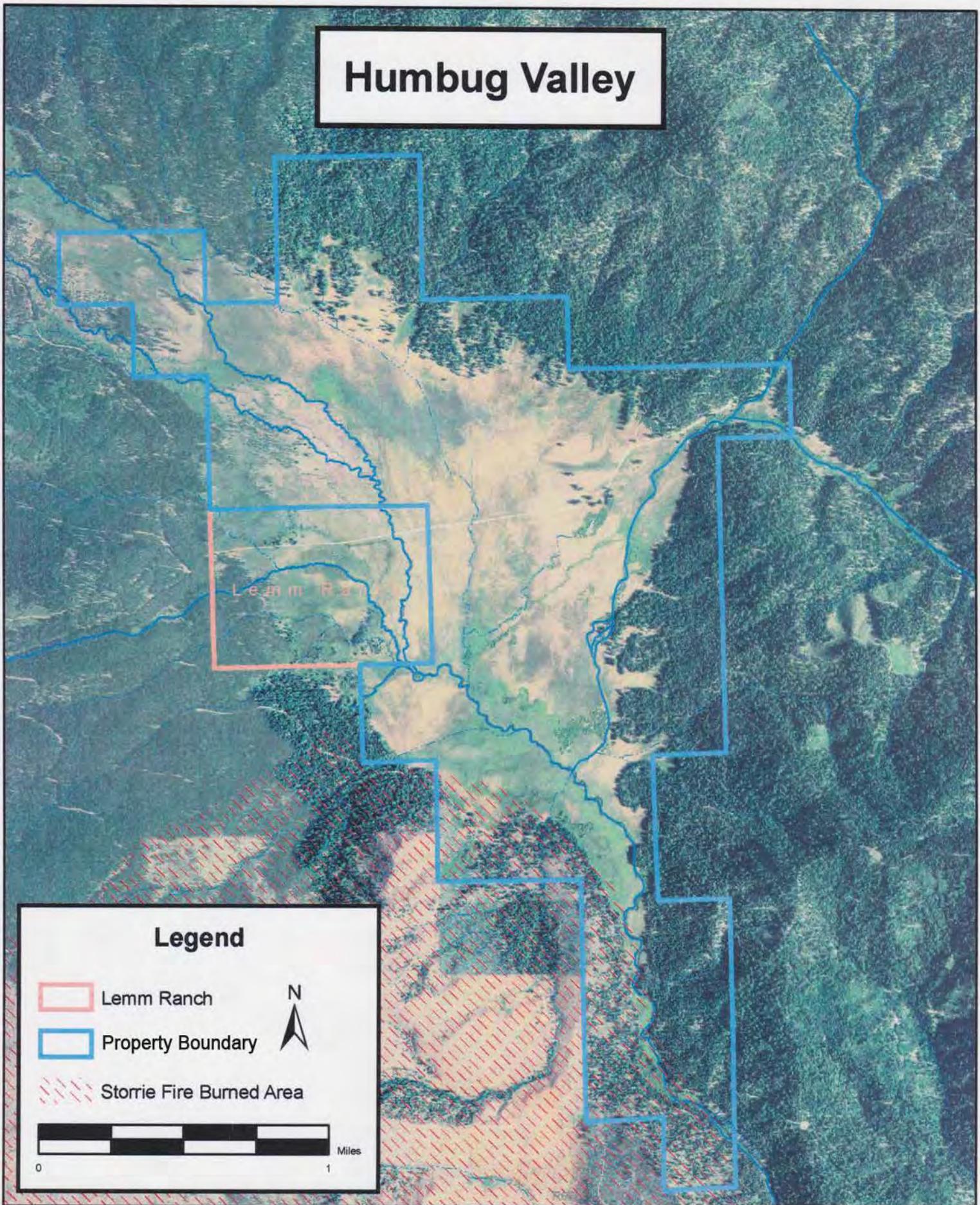
- Signed by Lead Agency
 - Signed by Applicant
- Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2005

908
Tasmam Kojom Restoration Management Plan
Plumas County
North Fork Feather Watershed



Humbug Valley



Legend

-  Lemm Ranch
-  Property Boundary
-  Storrie Fire Burned Area



0

1

Miles

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number : 908

Applicant: Maidu Summit Consortium

Project Title: Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Plumas

Funding Amount Requested: \$75,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$73,312

Total Project Cost: \$73,312

Final Score: 88

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Tásmam Kojóm Restoration Management Plan is a Category 2 environmental review project by the Maidu Summit Consortium (Consortium). Located in northern Plumas County, southwest of the town of Chester and Lake Almanor, the culturally-significant Tásmam Kojóm watershed is a 2,326 acre PG&E Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council) divestment to the Maidu people. The Tásmam Kojóm valley is adjacent to Lassen National Forest and a few private parcels.

The landscape consists of forested slopes, source springs, and a riparian/meadow complex that sustains a diversity of life, and the Maidu people. This project area includes 1,011 acres of second-growth mixed conifer and pine forest stands that are overgrown and in need of thinning to improve forest and ecosystem health.

This project funding supports environmental review and permitting of the Tásmam Kojóm Land Management Plan (LMP). Preparation of the LMP was funded by the Stewardship Council and is expected to be completed in early 2017. Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funds will focus on completing portions of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and project design related to forest resilience and watershed health. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is the lead agency for the EIR. This environmental compliance and design will enable future on-the-ground work for long-term protection and enhancement of the forest and watershed.

The Consortium is a collection of nine Mountain Maidu groups, including recognized and petitioning tribes, nonprofit organizations, and grassroots groups. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Project partners include the Stewardship Council, PG&E, Lassen National Forest, CDFW, the Feather River Land Trust, Plumas Corporation, Plumas County, UC Davis, local stakeholders, and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Numerous planning meetings have taken place to solicit input from stakeholders regarding the LMP components. The Stewardship Council has contributed \$150,000 towards the LMP, preparation of an EIR, and future site improvements.

The proposed project supports the goals of Proposition 1 and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program by contributing to the protection and restoration of forested areas in one of California’s largest watersheds. The Tásmam Kojóm valley and adjoining US Forest Service lands contain the headwaters of Yellow Creek, a significant high-volume, year-round tributary to the North Fork of the Feather River. The Feather River is the principal contributor to the Sacramento River, the largest river in California, and is the main source of water for the California State Water Project.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Contract: Environmental Review	April 2017
Environmental Analysis- CDFW	April – May 2017
Environmental Review Documents/start public comment	June – August 2017
Public Meeting- Draft EIR	September 2017
Review/address public comments	October 2017
Final EIR	November 2017
Design forest prescriptions	Nov. 2017 – Jan. 2018
Secure permitting	Dec. 2017 – Feb. 2018
Six Month Progress Reports	Every six months from execution of grant agreement
Estimated Project Completion Date – Final Report	February 2018

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$3,820
Environmental Compliance (prepare/complete EIR)	\$51,545
Mitigation/Monitoring Program	\$1,885
Reporting, Invoicing, PMs	\$4,500
Public Relations	\$2,000
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$9,562
TOTAL:	\$73,312

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Plumas County Board of Supervisors
- USFS, Lassen National Forest

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Plumas
520 Main Street, Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: Tasmam Kojom Restoration Management Plan

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Plumas County, California, centered at approximately 40.125861, -121.246

Project Location – City: Longville Project Location – County: Plumas

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide \$73,312 in funding to the Maidu Summit Consortium and Conservancy to conduct public hearings and complete environmental analysis that will be utilized to develop project design and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that addresses forest and watershed health activities in the 2,326 acre Tasmam Kojom watershed. Project design and the EIR will include Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) to guide management and possible, future restoration, enhancement, and habitat protection projects.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Maidu Summit Consortium and Conservancy

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
 Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
 Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
 Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, Information Collection
 Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is a planning project that involves environmental analysis and the preparation of an EIR to guide future forest management actions to protect water quality and forest resources. The planning project would not involve ground disturbance or physical alterations to the environment. The proposed planning project qualifies for exemption from CEQA pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15306, which applies to basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to any environmental resource.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

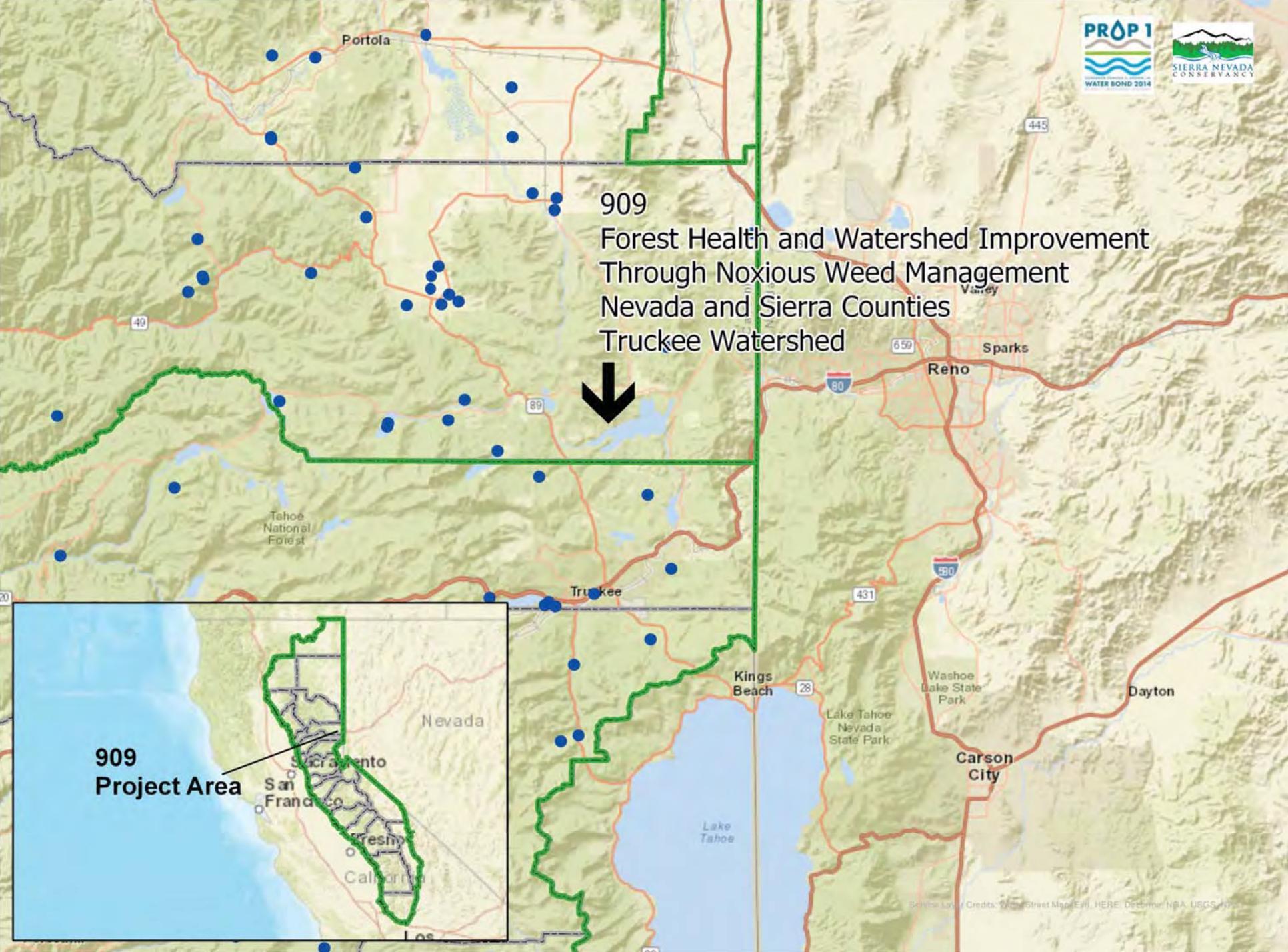
1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: _____
 Signed by Applicant

Revised 2005

909
Forest Health and Watershed Improvement
Through Noxious Weed Management
Nevada and Sierra Counties
Truckee Watershed



Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management

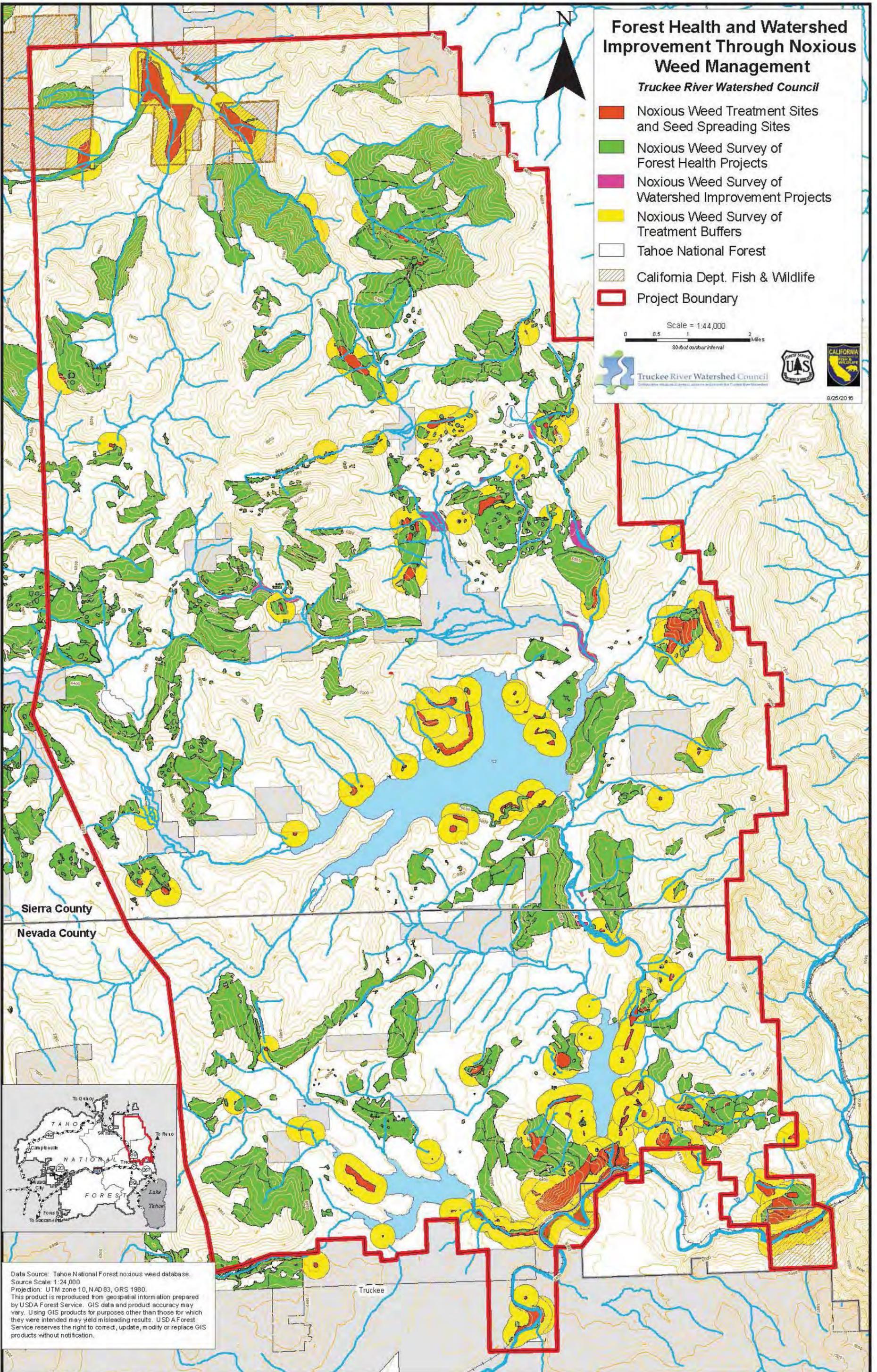
Truckee River Watershed Council

-  Noxious Weed Treatment Sites and Seed Spreading Sites
-  Noxious Weed Survey of Forest Health Projects
-  Noxious Weed Survey of Watershed Improvement Projects
-  Noxious Weed Survey of Treatment Buffers
-  Tahoe National Forest
-  California Dept. Fish & Wildlife
-  Project Boundary

Scale = 1:44,000
 0 0.5 1 2 Miles
 80-foot contour interval



8/25/2016



Data Source: Tahoe National Forest noxious weed database.
 Source Scale: 1:24,000
 Projection: UTM zone 10, NAD83, GRS 1980.
 This product is reproduced from geospatial information prepared by USDA Forest Service. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were intended may yield misleading results. USDA Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify or replace GIS products without notification.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 909

Applicant: Truckee River Watershed Council

Project Title: Forest Health and Watershed Improvement
through Noxious Weed Management

SNC Subregion: Central and North Central Subregions

Counties: Nevada and Sierra

Funding Amount Requested: \$362,538

Funding Amount Recommended: \$362,538

Total Project Cost: \$479,188

Final Score: 86.5

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) is partnering with Tahoe National Forest (TNF) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to manage and prevent the spread of noxious weeds as part of a large-scale forest health improvement project. The Forest Health and Watershed Improvement through Noxious Weed Management project will complete surveys and noxious weed removal efforts in an 18,000-acre area of the Tahoe National Forest and CDFW land north of Truckee. The project is in the eastern portion of both Nevada and Sierra Counties in the area of Prosser, Boca, and Stampede Reservoirs as well as drainages to the north.

Focusing on recent forest health work, watershed improvement, and known infestations in this mixed-conifer forest, Forest Service and CDFW personnel will survey 6,000 acres per year for three years. Under the direction of TNF and CDFW staff, California Conservation Corps (CCC) crews will remove new and established weed infestations, treating 500 acres per year for three years (1,500 acres total). Forest Service land will be hand treated, and state land will be treated with a combination of hand and/or chemical methods. Following TNF and CDFW guidelines and direction, CCC crews will spread native grass, forb, and shrub seeds on bare soils created by weed removal, seeding 150 acres per year for a total of 450 acres. Seeds will be provided by a seed collection contractor. All work will be monitored with a goal of 80% control of the project site.

This grant will utilize Proposition 1 state funding to assist the Forest Service to expand their efforts to reduce the extent and spread of noxious weeds into areas of recent forest restoration treatments. This includes reimbursement of TNF staff and equipment costs, as well as funding the CCC to do work on Forest Service and CDFW land. CDFW is contributing \$16,650 of their staff and transportation efforts. The Martis Fund awarded TRWC a \$150,000 grant in 2015 to coordinate increasing management and treatment of invasive weeds in the middle Truckee River watershed.

There have been numerous Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)-funded forest and watershed projects in this eastern portion of Nevada and Sierra Counties that indirectly support each other and this project. Included in these was the TRWC Merrill Davies stream restoration project upstream of Stampede Reservoir, funded by the SNC. Treatment of noxious weeds compliments forest thinning efforts of Tahoe National Forest that encompass this project site.

Truckee River Watershed Council is the applicant, on behalf of Tahoe National Forest and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to treat federal and state lands, respectively. TRWC's mission is to protect and enhance the Truckee River watershed. TRWC has successfully completed three stream and floodplain restoration projects for SNC in the past, and have been working closely with Tahoe National Forest to develop this forest treatment project.

This project supports Proposition 1 and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program by improving watershed health of tributaries and water infrastructure into several major reservoirs and the Truckee River, in partnership with the Forest Service and other partners. The project addresses the State Water Plan 2013 Objective 5, Related Action 5.6: "Federal, tribal, State, and local agencies should provide greater resources and coordinate efforts to control invasive species and prevent their introduction."

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Weed Surveys	May 2017 – Nov. 2019
Weed Treatment	May 2017 – Nov. 2019
Native Seeding	May 2017 – Nov. 2019
Monitoring	May 2017 – Nov. 2019
six-month Progress Reports	July 2017 – Dec. 2019
Estimated Project Completion Date – Final Report	January 31, 2020

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$19,500
US Forest Service (survey costs, direct weed removal and seeding)	\$144,000
CA Conservation Corp (weed removal, seeding)	\$144,000
Seed Collection Contractor	\$7,500
Supplies, Reporting, Outreach	\$14,580
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$32,958
TOTAL:	\$362,538

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Placer County Agriculture Department
- The Martis Fund
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored
- Acres of Land Surveyed

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Nevada
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 210
Nevada City, CA 95959

Project Title: Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Nevada and Sierra Counties; centered at approximately 39.506, -120.169

Project Location – City: North of Truckee, east of Sierraville, south of Loyalton Project Location – County: Nevada and Sierra

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding in the amount of \$362,538 to the non-profit Truckee River Watershed Council for forest management and restoration activities on approximately 18,000 acres of the Tahoe National Forest and on Cal. Department of Fish and Wildlife lands. (see attached)

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Truckee River Watershed Council

Exempt Status: **(check one)**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304: Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project would result in minor alterations to the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation associated with noxious weed management activities on 18,000 acres, including surveying noxious weed concentrations (6,000 acres each year for 3 years), removal of noxious weeds on 1,500 acres (500 acres each year for 3 years), and planting native plants in areas of recently completed forest health and watershed improvement sites. The project includes Integrated Management Practices that would avoid significant impacts on the environment.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: _____
- Signed by Applicant

Revised 2005

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 909
Forest Health and Watershed Improvement Through Noxious Weed Management

Description of Activities

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding to the Truckee River Watershed Council to implement a comprehensive invasive weed control program, which would treat 1,500 acres within an 18,000-acre project site to remove noxious weeds, improve and protect wildlife habitat and native plant populations, improve watershed and forest health, and reduce the risk of wildfire. The project is located on recently completed forest health and watershed improvement sites in Sierra and Nevada Counties, north of the Town of Truckee, east of Sierraville, south of Loyalton, and west of the California-Nevada border. The treatments proposed are intended to improve the long-term health of recently completed forest health and watershed improvement sites. The project is on Tahoe National Forest and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) land in mixed-conifer forests. The project area includes Stampede Reservoir, Prosser Creek Reservoir, Boca Reservoir, Truckee River, Little Truckee River, Prosser Creek, and other creeks in the northeast portion of Tahoe National Forest. Manual treatment activities could occur adjacent to waterways throughout the project site, and chemical treatment activities could occur on state lands within the project site.

Weed treatment activities would include:

- Surveying recent forest health, watershed improvement, and known weed infestation areas to identify weed populations and prioritize treatment.
- Removing new and established weed infestations in areas identified in surveys. Manual or chemical treatment would be used in weed removal on state land. Weed removal on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands would be limited to manual treatment.
- Reseeding bare soils created by weed treatment with native grass, forb, and shrub seeds per Tahoe National Forest and California Department of Fish and Wildlife guidelines.
- Monitoring and tracking native revegetation success.

Reasons Why the Project is Exempt

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land

The noxious weed management project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor land alterations proposed by the project involve the removal of noxious weeds and promoting the establishment of native vegetation, which improves soil, water, and vegetation in support of a diverse community of native plants and improves resilience against fire, drought, and flooding. The activities would complement other long-term forest and watershed health restoration projects by managing noxious weeds, thereby resulting in reduced fire risk, reduced erosion risk and protection of water quality. The weed management work would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental

impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and includes a brief rationale as to why each exception does not apply to the noxious weed management project.

Table 1	
Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)	
Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The goals of treating 1,500 acres of the 18,000-acre project site are to remove noxious weeds and promote the establishment of native vegetation. The project would improve soil, water, and vegetation; and improve resilience against catastrophic wildfire, drought, and flooding.</p> <p>The project work consists of minor land alterations involving surveys of known weed infestation areas to identify weed populations and prioritize treatment, manual and chemical treatment to remove noxious weeds, and reseeding treated areas with native plants. The project work would occur in forested areas that have not been previously developed, and would not occur on areas known to contain hazardous substances. The project activities could occur in locations that contain cultural or archaeological resources; however, the nature of the project activities would not involve substantial ground-disturbing activities that would affect the integrity of any such resources present in the project sites, as indicated in decision memorandum and categorical exclusions adopted by the USFS for these areas. No herbicides would be used on USFS property. Additionally, CDFW has determined that the herbicides used for mechanical treatment would be selective and any potential risk to native plants would be minimized by strict adherence to the herbicide product label restrictions.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The noxious weed treatment activities would not adversely affect environmental resources, and would therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to other restoration projects in the region. In fact, the</p>

	<p>project would result in beneficial effects to the project area forest, creeks, watersheds, associated lands, and adjacent forested areas through the removal of invasive weeds and reseeding with seeds of native plants on sites containing recently completed forest health and watershed improvement activities.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>The noxious weed management project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Specific environmental topics are addressed below:</p> <p>Aesthetics. The noxious weed treatments could result in a minor change in the appearance of areas adjacent to waterways, including Stampede, Prosser Creek, and Boca Reservoirs and the Truckee River, (primarily visible to recreation users) due to the removal of concentrated weed populations that would result in some areas of bare soil. However, the project would reseed those areas of bare soil to reestablish populations of native plants. The project would have beneficial long-term effects on the project area’s visual character. All proposed weed surveys and treatment can be conducted with limited visibility or detection from adjacent areas. In addition, the goal of this project is to improve the long-term health of recently completed forest health and watershed improvement sites by managing and preventing the spread of noxious weeds, which would help to ensure the success of these forest management projects in reducing catastrophic wildfires that could otherwise occur and result in severe aesthetic impacts.</p> <p>Agriculture/ Forestry. The project site does not contain any agricultural resources, but portions of the 18,000-acre project site may be used for grazing. The project would improve the success of recently completed forest health and watershed improvement sites in reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire on approximately 1,500 acres by removing noxious weeds, thereby helping to protect these forest resources from catastrophic wildfire. The project would have no impact on agricultural resources, including grazing activities.</p> <p>Air Quality/GHGs. The project activities would result in nominal fugitive dust, particulate, and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions would be limited to those associated</p>

with vehicle trips to/from the project sites. Activities that emit fugitive dust and particulate (i.e., smoke) would not be conducted. Nearby sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region's applicable air quality plan and would not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.

Biological Resources. The project is a comprehensive invasive weed control program that seeks to improve and protect wildlife habitat and native plant populations on public lands, including within the Tahoe National Forest and lands managed by CDFW. The project is designed to selectively remove noxious weeds, including musk thistle, spotted and diffuse knapweeds, perennial pepperweed, and Canada thistle. Work crews would use hand-held equipment and the treatment activities would occur in a manner or in time frames that would avoid disturbance impacts to sensitive species and their habitats. The project has been reviewed by CDFW and they concluded there would be no significant impact on sensitive species and non-target species, and filed a Notice of Exemption for the project on May 9, 2016.

In a Decision Memo for activities that include the project, the USFS concluded that there are no Federally listed threatened and endangered species or their critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing, or proposed critical habitat that would be adversely affected by this project. The project would not result in any effects to USFS sensitive plant or animal (terrestrial or aquatic) species. The project would also not cause adverse effects to management indicator species habitats. The USFS determined that the project qualified for a categorical exclusion from the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Overall there would be a net improvement in the condition of the forest relative to invasive species as a result of project activities.

Cultural Resources. See (f).

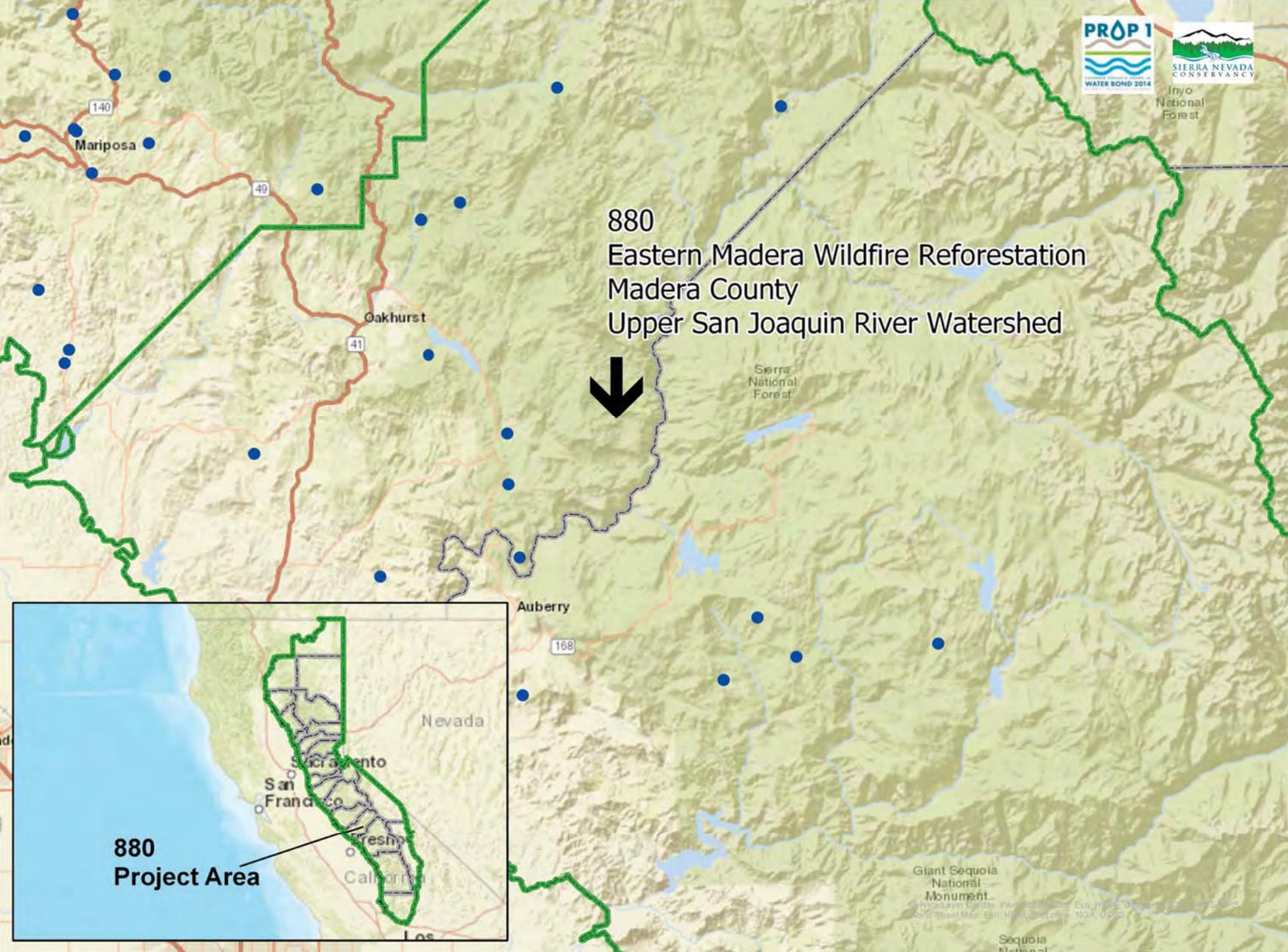
Geology/Soils. The noxious weed treatment activities would not expose people or structures

	<p>to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils.</p> <p>The work planned as part of the project could occur in meadows and riparian areas where infestations occur. Integrated Management Practices would be employed to limit or prevent soil erosion. No new roads would be created as part of the project and vehicular access would be limited to existing roadways. Seeding and mulching treated areas would help with recovery by establishing plants with fibrous roots to hold the soil spread native grass, forb and shrub seeds on bare soils created by weed treatment.</p> <p>Hazards/Hazardous Materials. See (e).</p> <p>Hydrology/Water Quality. The project could include project activities in proximity to waterways. However, these activities would be limited to hand pulling weeds and spot treatment in some areas with herbicides. The project would not adversely affect water quality because treatment activities would be implemented by hand and herbicide use would be in strict adherence to herbicide product label restrictions and by the use of selective spot spraying for target plants.</p> <p>Mineral Resources. Not applicable.</p> <p>Noise. Project activities would be completed by hand crews that would generate minimal noise during daytime business hours (the least sensitive hours of the day). Thus, the project would not cause significant noise effects.</p> <p>Population/Housing. Not applicable.</p> <p>Public Services/Utilities. Not applicable.</p> <p>Recreation. No specific recreational developments or improvements are proposed as part of the forest management activities. The weed treatment activities would not interfere with existing recreation uses in the project site. Because the treatment activities would finish other long-term forest and watershed health restoration projects by managing noxious weeds, thereby resulting in reduced risk of catastrophic fire that would interfere with recreation activities.</p> <p>Transportation. There would be limited</p>
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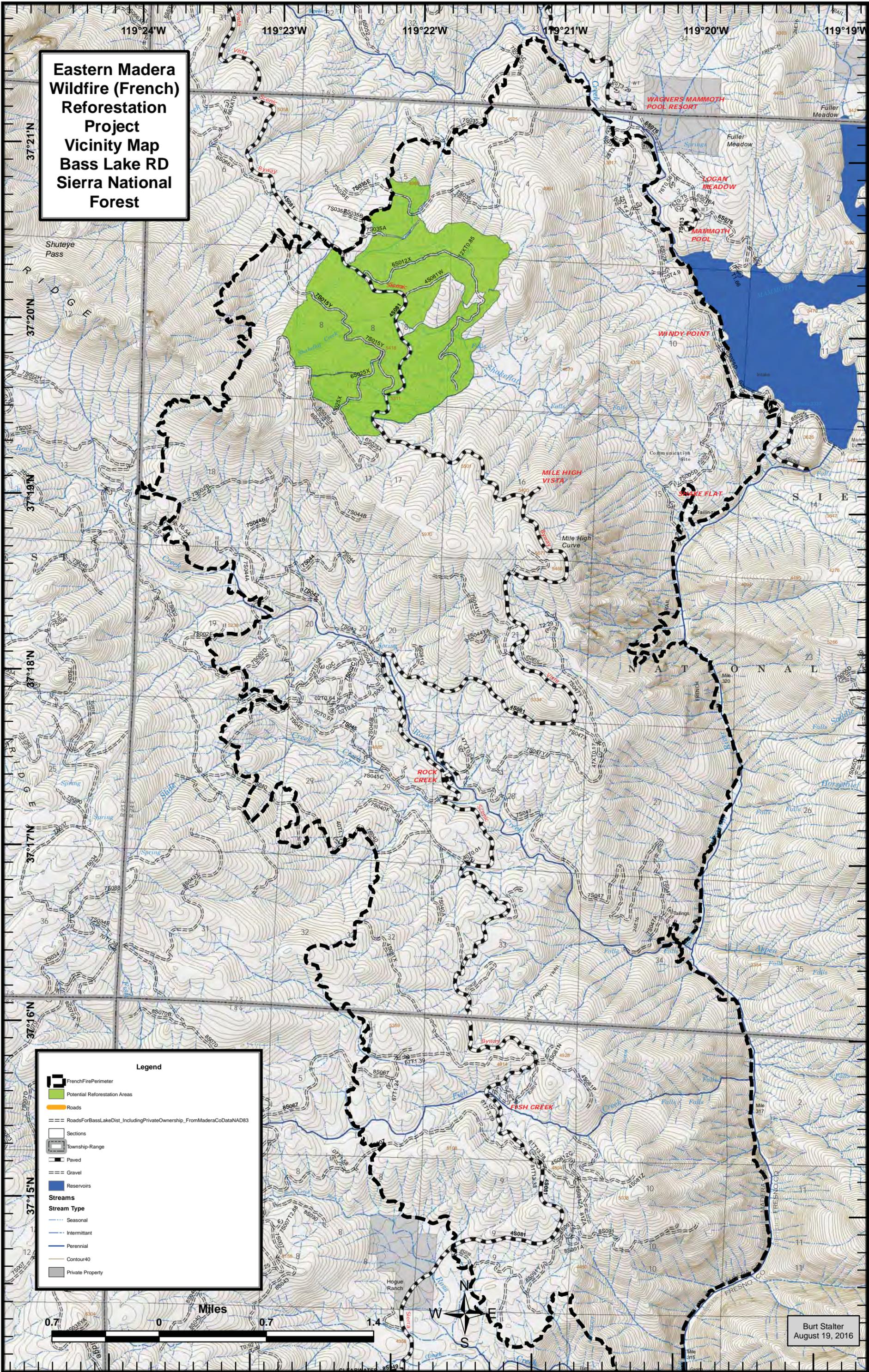
	<p>additional trips on local roadways during project implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat would occur, and only pre-existing access roads would be used. Vehicles would not block traffic and no traffic delays would occur due to treatment activities.</p> <p>Other CEQA Issues. As identified above, the project would have no effect on land use, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>Interstate 80 (I-80) extends through the southern portion of the project site and State Route (SR) 89 passes through the southwestern portion of the project site. Both of these highways are eligible for designation as a state scenic highway. The project site does not contain any officially designated state scenic highways and the proposed project would not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of either of these highways.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The project is not located on a site which is included on a hazardous waste site contained on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>The nature of the project as a noxious weed management project would not result in substantial ground-disturbing activities that would affect the integrity of any historical resources. No prehistoric or historic resources would be affected by the project.</p> <p>If previously undiscovered resources are encountered or suspected during project implementation, work would be halted immediately and would not resume until the area is cleared by qualified individuals. The project would not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and would not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>



880
Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation
Madera County
Upper San Joaquin River Watershed



Eastern Madera Wildfire (French) Reforestation Project Vicinity Map Bass Lake RD Sierra National Forest



Burt Stalter
August 19, 2016

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 880

Applicant: Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation
and Development Council

Project Title: Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation
Project

SNC Subregion: South

County: Madera

Funding Amount Requested: \$488,320.00

Funding Amount Recommended: \$488,320.00

Total Project Cost: \$4.5 - \$5 Million

Final Score: 85

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation Project is a Category 1 joint project between the Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (YSRC&D) and the Sierra National Forest Bass Lake Ranger District (BLRD). The project is located on the Sierra National Forest in the upper San Joaquin Watershed of Madera County.

The project will fell, pile, and burn dead standing trees, and then apply herbicide treatments on 225 acres in a severely burned portion of the 2014 French Fire. Following completion of this work, 350 acres (including the 225 acres treated by this project and 125 acres treated by the USFS) will be replanted in accordance with US Forest Service Region 5 guidelines. An outreach and education effort highlighting success stories and the importance of post-fire reforestation will include community meetings, field trips, social media, and press releases. This project is associated with a number of collaborative efforts including the Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative and Willow Creek Landscape Assessment, efforts that SNC has supported. This project has also been identified as a Sierra National Forest priority.

The Sierra National Forest has completed an environmental assessment (NEPA) for restoration work following the French Fire, which includes the project area that is the focus of this grant. This document proposes to remove fire-killed trees from about 5,700 acres within the French Fire burn scar and reforest up to 3,000 acres using a combination of Forest Service appropriated funds and grant money. Non-SNC funding of \$108,000 has already been secured. SNC funds will supplement limited USFS

reforestation funds by covering the costs of reforesting 350 acres of the 3,000 reforestation acres planned.

The YSRC&D is a regional nonprofit organization dedicated to natural resource conservation and economic development. It serves the rural and foothill communities of Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, and Tulare Counties. Its Council members include representatives from local Tribal Governments, Resource Conservation Districts, Boards of Supervisors, Fire Safe Councils, Community Development Councils, Economic Development Councils, educational institutions, and other community groups. YSRC&D has a long history with both the Sierra National Forest BLRD and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy: it has managed several other SNC-funded projects in partnership with the USFS, including the Willow Creek Planning Project (SNC 317), the Long Meadow Restoration Project (SNC 705), and the Upper Chiquito Creek Meadow Restoration Project (SNC 608).

This project is located in the upper watershed of the San Joaquin River, a major water source for agricultural and municipal use in the San Joaquin Valley. This project meets the call of the California Water Plan and Proposition 1 for restoration of forest health through ecologically sound forest management. This project specifically targets the area most severely burned in the French Fire for reforestation, thereby reducing sedimentation and turbidity, improving water quality for downstream users, and providing bank stabilization along local tributaries. This project also addresses several objectives of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program as co-benefits: The reforested conifers will contribute to carbon sequestration and ultimately provide habitat for wildlife species such as Pacific Fisher and Spotted Owl. Burn area restoration also provides benefits to the surrounding local communities in terms of scenic value, restored and improved recreation, and supports economic benefits through tourism and local contracting.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
225 acres of tree felling	December 31, 2018
225 acres piled and burned	December 31, 2018
225 acres herbicide treatments	June 30, 2019
350 acres planted	June 30, 2019
Monitoring Surveys and Stocking reports	Annually 2018-2019
Outreach presentation posted on-line	November 30, 2017
Three community meetings and/or field trips	November 30, 2019
Press Release completed for posting and distribution	Annually 2017-2019
Progress reports	Biannually, December 2016 – June 2019
Estimated Project Completion Date –Final Report	February 15, 2020

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management – USFS	\$48,000
Site Preparation and Planting	\$364,225.00
Project Materials and Supplies	\$7,775.00
Outreach Materials	\$5,000.00
Outreach Coordination – YSRC&D Council	\$11,000.00
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$52,320.00
TOTAL:	\$488,320.00

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Supervisor Tom Wheeler, Madera County District 5

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored
- Tons of Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Madera
200 W. 4th Street
Madera CA 93637

Project Title: Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation Project

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Madera County; in the Sierra National Forest centered at approximately 37.275, -119.375

Project Location – City: 85 miles northeast of Fresno Project Location – County: Madera

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide \$488,320 in funding to the Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council for post-fire restoration and reforestation activities on approximately 350 acres of a 700-acre project area of the Sierra National Forest (see attached).

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304: Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project would result in minor alterations to the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation associated with post-fire forest restoration activities on 350 acres of a 700-acre project area, including removal and burning of dead trees and trees damaged by fire, beetles and drought, selective herbicide application, and replanting of native forest species. The project incorporates project design criteria and best management practices adopted by the U.S. Forest Service to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency
 - Signed by Applicant
- Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2005

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 880
Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation Project

Description of Activities

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide \$488,320 in funding to the Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council for post-fire restoration and reforestation activities on approximately 350 acres of a 700-acre project site within the Sierra National Forest. Project activities would include removal of fire killed trees, site preparation, and reforestation, which would be implemented by U.S. Forest Service (USFS) crews and contractors. The project includes design criteria and best management practices adopted by the Forest Service as effective in reducing or avoiding adverse environmental effects on natural and cultural resources.

Removal of hazard trees damaged primarily by fire, but also beetles and drought, and slash treatments would reduce surface and ladder fuels. Concentrations of small diameter dead trees in harvest areas would be felled. Scattered individual small dead trees would be left standing. Down logs, as well as some snags larger than 16 inches dbh, would be retained within or adjacent to treatment units as specified in the Sierra National Forest land management plan. In some areas, logs would be skidded to landings and decked for potential removal.

Following removal of fire killed trees, site preparation would begin. Slash concentrations in harvested areas would be burned. Slash would be scattered and left in place for soil stabilization in areas with light slash concentrations. Jack pot burning would be conducted in areas where the hydrologist requested minimal ground disruption, on steeper slopes, or in areas with insufficient scattered slash concentrations to warrant using a tractor. Fifty percent or greater ground cover would remain in place to protect the site from erosion when tractor or grapple piling. One blade width fire lines to mineral soil would be created around piles. Tractors would not pile on slopes exceeding 35 percent.

Areas with dense bear clover would be treated with herbicide the year prior to planting, to improve conifer seedling survival. Herbicide treatments would apply, by hand, a mixture of Glyphosate, surfactant, colored dye, and water. Application would take place during the spring when bear clover is actively growing. The primary target species would be bear clover, but brush would be treated at the same time, where needed.

Planting would be accomplished in accordance with USFS region 5 guidelines. Follow up replanting would be accomplished in those areas where stocking surveys indicated survival was poor. Stocking at year five would meet USFS R-5 standards. A mix of conifer seedlings, with Ponderosa or Jeffrey pine comprising the majority, would be planted to stocking levels that meet USFS stocking standards for the site class of the area.

Reasons Why the Project is Exempt

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land

The Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of

CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor land alterations proposed by the project involve the removal of dead and downed trees for forestry purposes, and replanting activities that would restore a conifer forest that was impacted by wildfire. This forestry work would not result in significant adverse impacts.

No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and includes a brief rationale as to why each exception does not apply to the Eastern Madera Wildfire Reforestation Project.

Table 1 Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)	
Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The goals of this 350-acre post fire restoration project are to prepare and replant conifer forests on National Forest lands that were burned in the 2014 French Fire. Reforestation will improve watershed conditions by restoring severely burned areas to forested conditions, reducing sedimentation and turbidity, and improving water quality for downstream users. It will also improve habitat by providing stabilization that reduces erosion of streambanks and meadows. Additionally, reforestation of landscapes will provide canopy cover which is beneficial for wildlife species such as Pacific Fisher and Spotted Owl.</p> <p>The project work consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of dead trees, site preparation, and replanting. The project work would not occur on areas know to contain hazardous substances, nor would project activities occur in locations that contain known significant cultural or biological resources.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The forest restoration activities would not adversely affect environmental resources, and would therefore not contribute to a cumulative environmental impact in relation to other restoration projects in the region. In fact, the project would result in beneficial effects to the project area forest, creeks, watersheds, associated lands, and adjacent forested areas by reducing erosion and restoring conifer forest habitat. Consequently, the proposed project, in combination with other nearby forest management treatments, would not result in significant cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an</p>	<p>The forest restoration project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>

activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Specific environmental topics are addressed below:

Aesthetics. See Recreation and Scenic Resources.

Agriculture/ Forestry. The project area does not contain any agricultural or grazing resources. The project would actively restore forest resources degraded by the 2014 French Fire.

Air Quality/GHGs. The project activities would result in nominal fugitive dust, particulate, and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions would be limited to those associated with vehicle trips to/from the project area, and the use of forestry equipment (e.g., skidders and tractors). Activities that emit fugitive dust and particulate (i.e., smoke from pile burning) would be conducted in accordance with requirements of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, which would minimize environmental effects.

Nearby sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region's applicable air quality plan and would not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.

Biological Resources. The project area was evaluated for sensitive biological resources through a review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and by a NEPA review conducted by the USFS.

Based on the NEPA EA and supporting technical reports, threatened, endangered, and sensitive aquatic species either known to occur, or that have critical habitat in the project area include the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Yosemite toad, California red-legged frog, Foothill yellow-legged frog, and the Western pond turtle. The project activities would occur in upland areas and would include limited operating periods, project design criteria and Best Management Practices in accordance with the 2015 Forest Service Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact on the French Fire Recovery and Reforestation Project. As a result, the project would not significantly affect these species. No additional special status aquatic species were identified during review for CEQA compliance.

No federally-listed threatened or endangered plants species are known to occur within the project area. The NEPA analysis determined that the project would not adversely affect Forest Service Sensitive (FSS) species. The project area was also evaluated for the presence of state-designated sensitive plants. In addition to the FSS species, one incident of Abram's onion (*Allium abramsii*), a 1-B ranked plant, was identified within the project area. This species, and other

sensitive plants would be surveyed for, flagged, and avoided during treatments.

The project would result in a low risk of noxious weed introduction and spread due to implementation of standard management practices and monitoring.

No federally-listed threatened or endangered animal species are known to occur within the project area. The potential presence of FSS wildlife species was evaluated for the project area. Spotted owl, northern goshawk, and pacific fisher habitat was heavily damaged because of the fire. Impacts to FSS wildlife species are expected to be minimal and beneficial in the long term, based on snag retention and preservation of sufficient habitat. No sensitive wildlife species that were not already considered in the NEPA review were identified through the CNDDDB search.

Cultural Resources. See (f).

Geology/Soils. The forest restoration activities would not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils. The work planned as part of the project would not occur in wetlands or stream courses. Slash would be masticated and spread to prevent soil erosion and add nutrient value back into the forest floor. The Project is not expected to affect channel stability. Direct impacts to channels would be avoided or minimized with design measures including delineation of SMZs, designation of stream crossings, and other BMPs. Indirect effects that could occur in the case of increased flow or sediment delivery from adjacent hillslopes are also not expected, since hillslope effects have also been minimized. Moreover, the replanting of heavily burned areas would reduce the potential for erosion and sedimentation.

Hazards/Hazardous Materials. See (e).

Hydrology/Water Quality. See Geology/Soils.

Noise. Forest restoration activities would generate temporary noise. However, given that project activities would be limited to daytime (the least sensitive hours of the day), and the limited extent to which these activities could expose sensitive receptors to increased noise levels, the project would not cause significant noise effects.

Recreation and Scenic Resources. No specific recreational developments or improvements are proposed as part of the forest restoration activities. The project area is currently heavily burned with little tree cover, which reduces recreational and scenic values. The reforestation project would result in long-term beneficial effects to recreational and

	<p>scenic resources.</p> <p>Transportation. There would be limited additional trips on local roadways during project implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat would occur. The vehicles would not block traffic and no traffic delays would occur due to project activities.</p> <p>Other CEQA Issues. The project would have no effect on land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>The project area is not visible from a scenic highway, and would not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The project is not located on a site which is included on a hazardous waste site contained on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>No prehistoric or historic resources would be affected by the project.</p> <p>The USFS prepared a cultural resource report for this Project which documents the identification and management of historic resources in the project area. The EA prepared by the USFS for this project determined that the project would have no adverse effects on cultural resources because the project includes design criteria that would avoid effects on cultural resources.</p> <p>The USFS engaged in a series of consultations with tribes and local Native American communities during the development and NEPA review of this project. Groups consulted include the North Fork Mono Tribe, Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians of California and the Picayune Rancheria Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California, the Big Sandy Rancheria Band of Western Mono Indians. Input from these tribes and Native American communities was incorporated into the project design and development of design criteria.</p> <p>If previously undiscovered resources are encountered or</p>

	<p>suspected during project implementation, work would be halted immediately and would not resume until the area is cleared by qualified individuals. No work would occur in the vicinity of sensitive cultural resources. The project would not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and would not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>
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THE LYONS-SOUTH FORK WATERSHED FOREST RESILIENCY PROJECT

TUOLUMNE MAIN CANAL

— CANAL (EARTHEN DITCH)

— FLUME (ELEVATED WOODEN FLUME)

ACTIVITY

▭ PROJECT BOUNDARY

▨ FOREST SERVICE SNC GRANT APPLICATION AREA

▨ STEVEN'S FUND AND/OR TIMBER HARVEST

▨ TIMBER HARVEST

▨ SMALL PRIVATE

▨ PG&E FOREST HEALTH TREATMENTS

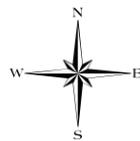
OWNERSHIP

■ SIERRA PACIFIC INDUSTRIES

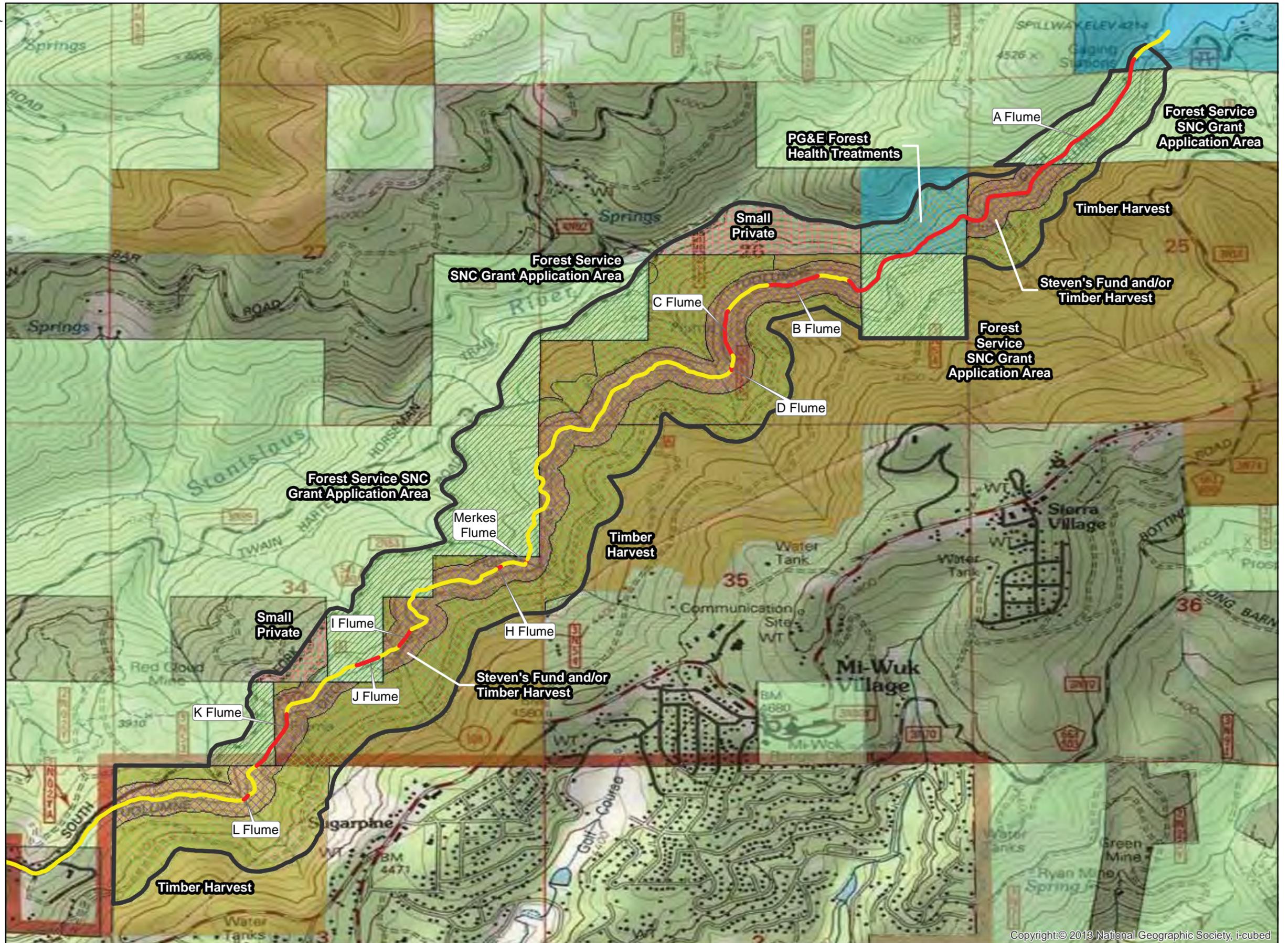
■ PG&E

■ NATIONAL FOREST LANDS

■ OTHER LANDS



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Mile



STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 897

Applicant: Tuolumne Utilities District

Project Title: Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest
Resiliency Project

SNC Subregion: South Central

County: Tuolumne

Funding Amount Requested: \$496,000.00

Funding Amount Recommended: \$496,000.00

Total Project Cost: \$1,121,350.00

Final Score: 92

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project (LSFWFRP) is a Category 1 forest thinning and fuel reduction project that encompasses 733 acres of forestland across multiple landowners within the South Fork of the Stanislaus River watershed. Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) will use grant funds from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to administer thinning and fuel reduction treatments on 200 acres of the project area within the Stanislaus National Forest in Tuolumne County. This project is designed to enhance forest health and resiliency within the South Fork of the Stanislaus River as well as protect local mountain communities and critical water infrastructure.

The forestlands within the project site are overstocked and have been designated as a high priority for fuels reduction by the local Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The overall goal is to reduce ladder fuels and reduce canopy cover to approximately 50 percent, as well as remove dead/dying trees. These treatments will reduce fire hazards and allow for this forest to better withstand ongoing drought and bark beetle attacks, and protect critical ditch and flume infrastructure that serves the region.

The majority of the neighboring lands within the project boundary belong to Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). Both are dedicated to reducing fuel loading, improving forest health, and protecting nearby infrastructure to create one cohesive forest treatment within the South Fork of the Stanislaus River Watershed. PG&E is currently performing similar treatments to reduce fuel loading and increase forest health on their parcels within the project boundary under their Vegetation

Management Plan. SPI will be completing work on their properties with a combination of timber harvest plans, emergency exemption, and funds from a USFS Stevens Grant. All of these treatments fit into the larger mosaic of forest treatments already conducted by the USFS and SPI that aid in protecting the larger watershed.

Tuolumne Utilities District’s mission is to provide their community with reliable, high-quality water, wastewater, and other utility services. They are a member of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association and have successfully managed the SNC-funded Tuolumne Ditch System Sustainability Project in the past.

Many partners were involved in the planning of the LSFWFRP, including SPI, PG&E, and the Highway 108 FireSafe Council. All of these organizations have contributed resources, both monetarily and in-kind, to ensure the success of the project. Both SPI and PG&E have already begun treatments on their lands, and the FireSafe Council is pursuing additional funding options to create a cohesive and resilient forest stand structure across all 733 acres within the project.

This project aligns with the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program by focusing on applying forest restoration practices strategically to help protect the larger watershed, nearby communities, and critical water infrastructure. The Tuolumne Main Canal system provides drinking water to 90 percent of the residents within Tuolumne County and also provides water to the nearby CAL FIRE air attack base which provides fire protection to the region. This project protects the Stanislaus River watershed which drains into New Melones Reservoir, providing drinking and irrigation water to many foothill and Central Valley communities and farms. This project aligns with the goals of Proposition 1 by aiding in the prevention of natural disasters that would negatively affect California Water Resources.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Six-month Progress Report	June, Dec. 2017 June, Dec. 2018 June, Dec. 2019
Hand Thinning of	June – Dec. 2017 June – Dec. 2018 June – Dec. 2019
Mechanical/Mastication	Oct. 2017 – Apr. 2018 Oct. 2018 – Apr. 2019 Oct. – Nov. 2019
Public Outreach/ Tours	March 2017 March – June 2018 March 2019
Estimated Project Completion Date	Jan 1, 2020

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Hand Thinning	\$255,000.00
Mechanical Thinning/Mastication	\$172,500.00
Project Management	\$26,000.00
Reporting/Invoicing/Monitoring	\$15,000.00
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$27,500.00
TOTAL:	\$496,000.00

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
- Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority
- Assemblyman Frank Bigelow, Fifth Assembly District
- Tuolumne County Farm Bureau
- Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
- Twain Harte Community Services District
- Senator Tom Berryhill, Eighth Senate District
- Sonora Chamber of Commerce
- City of Sonora
- Stanislaus National Forest
- Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce
- Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors
- Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
- Mi-Wuk Sugar Pine Fire Protection District
- Tuolumne-Stanislaus Integrated Regional Water Management Authority
- Twain Harte Homeowners
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- CAL FIRE

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored
- Number of Significant Sites Protected

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Tuolumne
2 South Green Street
Sonora, CA 95370-4618

Project Title: Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Tuolumne County; centered at approximately 38.074729, -120.193986

Project Location – City: Mi-Wuk Village Project Location – County: Tuolumne

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide approximately \$496,000 funding to the Tuolumne Utility District to remove dead and dying conifers and ladder fuels in order to reduce wildfire risk on 202 acres of U.S. Forest Service lands in the Stanislaus National Forest, and protect water quality and the water supply for 90 percent of Tuolumne County residents. (see attached)

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Tuolumne Utility District

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304: Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project would result in minor alterations to the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation associated with forest management and restoration activities on 202 acres, including removal of dying and dead trees and ladder fuels through a combination of hand thinning, mechanical thinning, mastication of slash, and pile-and-burn that would improve forest health and fire resistance and protect water quality. The project includes USFS management requirements and protection measures that would avoid significant impacts on the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: _____
- Signed by Applicant

Revised 2005

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 897
Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project

Description of Activities

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide \$496,000 in funding to the Tuolumne Utility District for site improvement/restoration activities on 202 acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land. The proposed project would remove surface and ladder fuels and reduce upper crown cover to approximately 50 percent. Forest stand densities would be reduced, where necessary, to increase the resiliency of residual trees to disturbance and promote healthy forests during drought conditions by reducing competition for water, nutrients, and light. USFS management requirements and protection measures would be followed to protect the remaining forest, riparian areas, nearby communities, and critical infrastructure. Treatments would include a combination of mastication and hand thinning/brushing. All slopes greater than 35 percent would be treated by hand to remove trees less than 12 inches diameter at breast height (dbh). Slash would either be piled-and-burned or lopped and scattered. Mechanical thinning, chipping/mastication, or pile-and-burn would take place on slopes less than 35 percent. Timber harvesting may be done to reach desired canopy cover and/or combat ongoing bark beetle infestation.

The South Fork Stanislaus River passes through the project site and flows into the New Melones Reservoir, then into the San Joaquin Valley, and ultimately the Sacramento Delta. Restoration in this watershed would contribute to greater water security and protection of water quality for downstream users. The project encompasses a local historic feature, the Tuolumne Main Canal (TMC), which remains the primary drinking water conveyance system to 90 percent of Tuolumne County residents. By increasing forest health and providing critical watershed protection, the project would help to protect the TMC and secure its survival and the local water supply should a wildfire occur in this area.

The project also ties into similar projects to remove dead and dying conifers and ladder fuels on adjacent lands within a 733-acre area owned by Sierra Pacific Industries, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and USFS. The project would also enhance carbon storage and rate of sequestration as this area would be less prone to catastrophic wildfire and improve function of forestland.

Reasons Why the Project is Exempt

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land

The Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor land alterations proposed by the project involve the removal of dead and dying trees and ladder fuels using hand and mechanical thinning, mastication of slash, and pile-and-burn. This forestry work would not result in significant adverse impacts.

No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines

Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and includes a brief rationale as to why each exception does not apply to the Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project.

Table 1	
Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)	
Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The goals of this 202-acre forestry project are to restore health to the forested area between Lyons Reservoir and the communities of Twain Harte and Mi-Wuk Village, preventing catastrophic wildfires, protecting drinking water supplies, and improving downstream aquatic resources.</p> <p>The project work consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of dead and dying trees and ladder fuels. The project would not occur on areas known to contain hazardous substances. The project activities could occur in locations that contain cultural or biological resources; however, the project activities would implement standard management requirements and protection methods such that there would not be an adverse effect on cultural and biological resources, as indicated in the Decision Memo and categorical exclusion adopted by the USFS for this project.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The forest management activities would not adversely affect environmental resources, and would therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to other restoration projects in the region. In fact, the project would result in beneficial effects to the project area forest, creeks, watersheds, associated lands, and adjacent forested areas by providing wildfire risk reduction, and natural resource management and protection. Consequently, the proposed project, in combination with other nearby forest management treatments, would not result in significant cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>The site improvement/restoration project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Specific environmental topics are addressed below:</p> <p>Aesthetics. See Recreation and Scenic</p>

	<p>Resources.</p> <p>Agriculture/Forestry. The project area does not contain any agricultural or grazing resources. The project operations would be short-term, temporary and would not affect the land’s ability to support grazing. The project would reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on 202 acres by removing dead and dying trees and ladder fuels, thereby helping to protect these forest resources from catastrophic wildfire. The project would have no permanent impact on agricultural resources, including grazing activities.</p> <p>Air Quality/GHGs. The project activities would result in nominal fugitive dust, particulate, and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions would be limited to those associated with vehicle trips to/from the project area. All burning would be conducted in compliance with a permit issued by the Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District. Nearby sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region’s applicable air quality plan and would not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.</p> <p>Biological Resources. The project would not have a significant effect on special-status species.</p> <p>In a Decision Memo for the project, the USFS concluded that there are no Federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing, or proposed critical habitat that would be adversely affected by this project. The project would not result in detrimental effects to USFS sensitive plant or animal (terrestrial or aquatic) species. No special status species were observed in the project area during field reconnaissance. Project activities would implement management requirements to avoid and minimize effects on sensitive plant or animal species in the project area. The project would also not cause adverse effects to management indicator species habitats. The USFS determined that the project qualified for a categorical exclusion from the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).</p>
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The project area was also evaluated for sensitive biological resources through a subsequent review of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database. No additional special-status species were identified beyond those included in the Decision Memo.

The project activities could slightly increase the risk of noxious weed introduction by creating conditions that favor noxious weed establishment; however, implementation of USFS management requirements would result in a low risk of introduction and spread.

Cultural Resources. See (f).

Geology/Soils. The forestry activities would not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils. Heavy equipment would be confined to operating on slopes that do not exceed 35 percent. The project would also implement standards to minimize erosion and other soil impacts as required by the USFS. The work planned as part of the project would not occur in wetlands or stream courses. Operations within Class I and II Watercourse and Lake Protection Zones (WLPZ) and Class III Equipment Limitation Zones (ELZ) would conform to the Stanislaus National Forest Best Management Practices (BMPs). Moreover, removal of dead and dying trees and ladder fuels would reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire that would otherwise threaten water quality and aquatic habitat.

Hazards/Hazardous Materials. See (e).

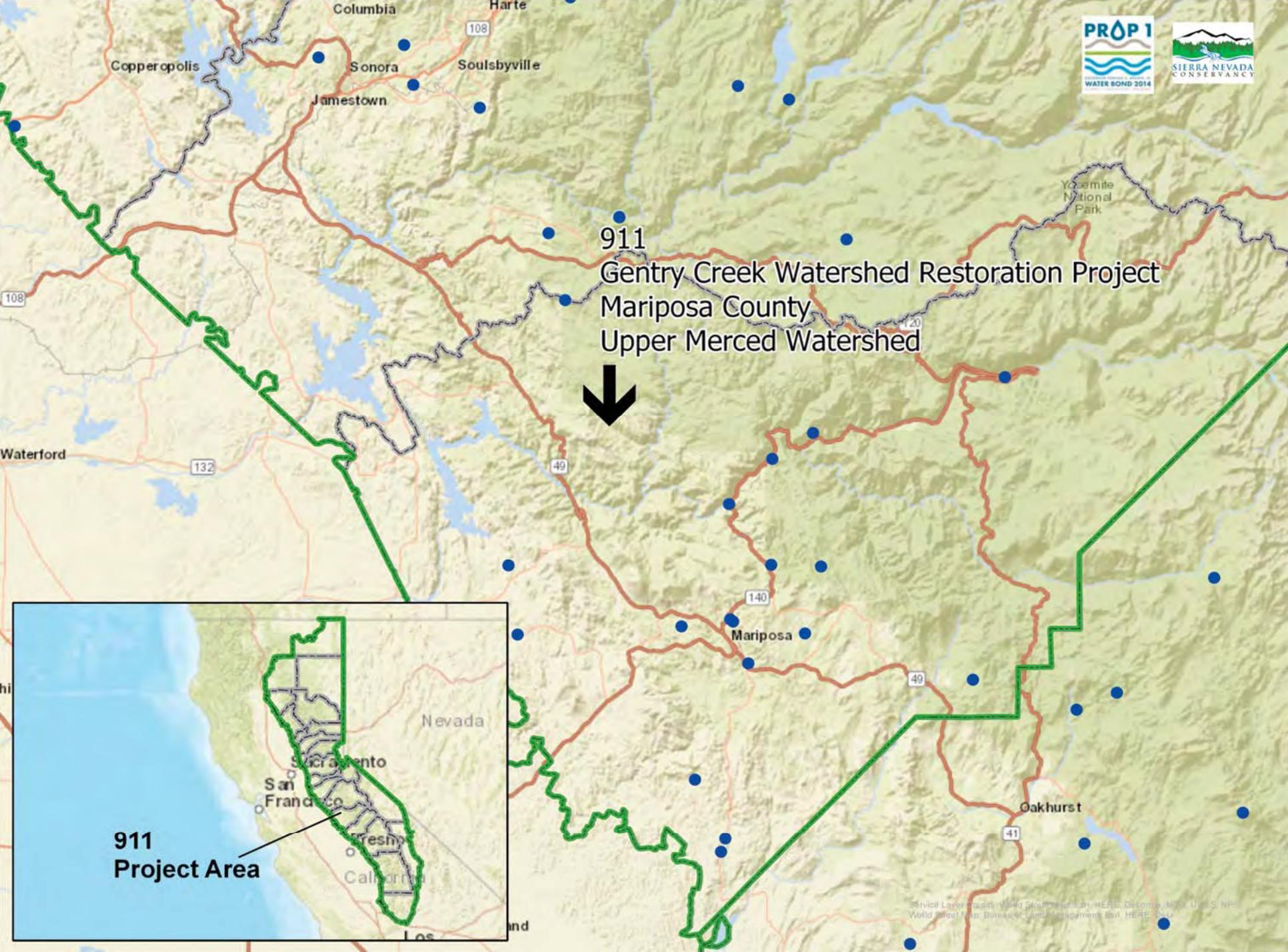
Hydrology/Water Quality. See Geology/Soils.

Noise. Forestry activities would generate temporary noise. However, given that project activities would be limited to daytime (the least sensitive hours of the day), and the limited extent to which these activities could expose sensitive receptors to increased noise levels, the project would not cause significant noise effects.

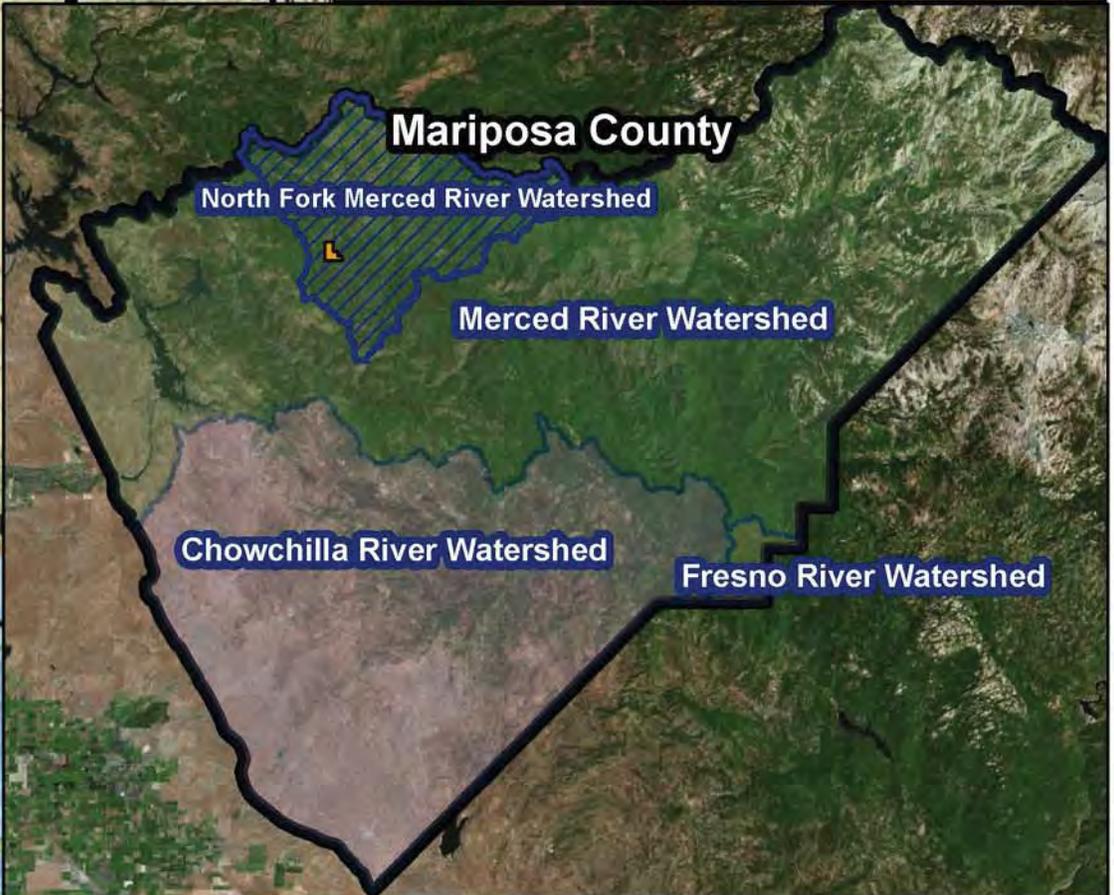
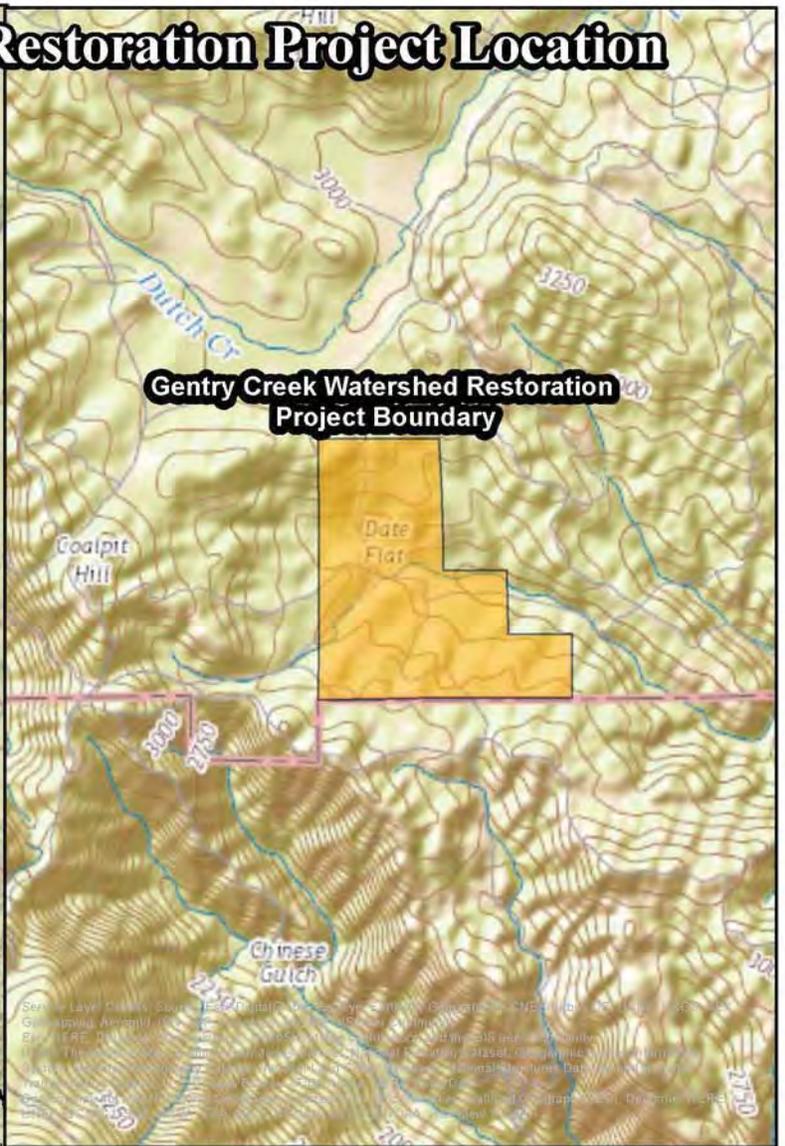
Recreation and Scenic Resources. No specific recreational developments or improvements are proposed as part of the forest management activities. An unsurfaced railroad grade runs

	<p>through the project area and is used by the public for hiking. Operations signs would be placed along the grade to alert the public during project activities. The project would have some temporary negative effects on visual quality during implementation of project activities. The project would have long-term benefits to recreational and scenic resources by creating open park-like conditions and as a result of fuels reduction and therefore a reduced risk of catastrophic wildfire.</p> <p>Transportation. There would be limited additional trips on local roadways during project implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat would occur. The vehicles would not block traffic and no traffic delays would occur due to project activities.</p> <p>Other CEQA Issues. The project would have no effect on land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>State Route 108, approximately 0.5 miles from the project area, is eligible for designation as a state scenic highway. However, project activities would be screened from views on SR 108, and would not damage scenic resources visible from this highway. The project area is not visible from a designated scenic highway, and would not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The project is not located on a site which is included on a hazardous waste site contained on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>No prehistoric or historic resources would be affected by the project.</p> <p>To support the development of the project, the USFS prepared a Cultural Resource Management Report (CRMR). Cultural resources of interest are located within the project area would be protected using a variety of protection measures identified in the CRMR and in the management requirements included in the Decision Memo prepared by the USFS. Compliance with these management requirements and protection methods, including</p>

	<p>avoidance of sensitive resources, would prevent substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource in the project area.</p> <p>If previously undiscovered resources are encountered or suspected during project implementation, work would be halted immediately and would not resume until the area is cleared by qualified individuals. No work would occur in the vicinity of sensitive cultural resources. The project would not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and would not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>
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Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project Location



STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1)*

SNC ID Number: 911

Applicant: Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation
and Development Council

Project Title: Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration
Project

SNC Subregion: South Central

County: Mariposa

Funding Amount Requested: \$498,985.00

Funding Amount Recommended: \$498,985.00

Total Project Cost: \$512,909.00

Final Score: 85

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Gentry Creek Watershed Improvement Project is a Category 1 Project located in northern Mariposa County, near the community of Greely Hill and within the North Fork of the Merced River Watershed. The Project is surrounded on all sides by the Stanislaus National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management. The Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (YSRC&DC) is looking to reduce fuel loading and increase wildfire resiliency by felling and removing beetle-killed pine trees on 300 acres of privately owned forestland split between 24 different landowners.

The Project is located in an area that has been hit hard the drought and is suffering extreme bark beetle infestation with approximately 75-80 percent pine mortality. This high fuel loading has left the landscape dangerously prone to catastrophic wildfires that could ultimately move onto neighboring public lands and damage the upper watershed. Pacific Gas and Electric has already felled trees that are adjacent to power lines, however, there still remains a staggering amount of dead/dying trees within the project site. The Project will be completed under a Drought Mortality Exemption (1038K) and has been reviewed for archeological and sensitive species habitat to ensure that there will be no unnecessary environmental damage. Treatments include felling and removal of dead/dying pines and mastication of all slash within the project site. Replanting is

being planned to follow with potential funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Similar conditions exist on the neighboring national forestland and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) properties, and high mortality levels have left the landscape susceptible to catastrophic wildfire. Both the US Forest Service and BLM are working to save their forestlands and protect public infrastructure. Other groups such as the Mariposa County Firesafe Council and the Southwest Interface Team are actively working in the region creating and maintaining strategic fuelbreaks and running fuel reduction programs. The Project adds to the effectiveness of the Stanislaus National Forest's Red Tsunami Project which connects with the Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project (GCWRP) on multiple sides. Additionally the Project ties into the Mariposa County Firesafe Council's nearby Texas Hill wildfire mitigation projects.

The Project takes place on private properties, with assistance from YSRC&DC. This local nonprofit is dedicated to natural resource conservation and economic development in the rural and foothill communities of Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Mariposa Counties. The Council has extensive experience managing and administering grants and watershed programs and works with a wide variety of partners. The YSRC&DC is currently managing a project funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and has successfully completed two projects all funded by SNC's Proposition 84 Grant Program.

The GCWRP leverages investments made by the group of participating landowners who have collectively hired a Registered Professional Forester to write the prescription.

This project supports both Proposition 1 and the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. The GCWRP helps protect upper watershed stream courses and springs that flow into Lake McClure. This water is used for water supply for multiple communities and irrigation in the Central Valley and flows into the San Joaquin River, a tributary to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Site Preparation and Layout	Jan. – June 2017
Timber Felling and Removal	Apr. – Sep. 2017
Slash Mastication	Apr. – Nov. 2017
Site Review	November 2017
Six-Month Progress Reports	June, Dec. 2017
Final Report	December 2017
Estimated Project Completion Date	January 1, 2018

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Timber Felling	\$180,000.00
Log Removal	\$112,500.00
Slash Mastication	\$157,500.00
Project Management	\$16,276.00
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$32,709.00
TOTAL:	\$498,985.00

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
- Stanislaus National Forest
- Mother Lode Field Office, Bureau of Land Management
- CAL FIRE
- Southwest Interface Team
- Mariposa County Firesafe Council
- Mariposa County Fire Department
- John Gray, District 4 Supervisor, Tuolumne County
- Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council

OPPOSITION:

- None

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

(Address)

County Clerk
County of Mariposa
PO Box 247
Mariposa, CA 95338

Project Title: Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located in Mariposa County; centered at approximately 37.700079, -120.096645

Project Location – City: Approximately 6 miles east of Coulterville Project Location – County: Mariposa

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide approximately \$499,000 funding to the non-profit Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council to fall and remove dead timber affected by bark beetle infestations, sustained drought, and higher than normal temperatures in order to reduce wildfire risk and protect water quality on 296 acres of private property. (see attached)

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
 Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
 Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
 Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304: Minor Alterations to Land
 Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project would result in minor alterations to the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation associated with forest management and restoration activities on 296 acres, including removal of dead trees and mastication of slash that would improve forest health and fire resistance and protect water quality. The project includes best management practices that would avoid significant impacts on the environment and would conform with forestry regulations for emergency timber operations.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Patrick Eidman Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency
 Signed by Applicant
- Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2005

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 911
Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project

Description of Activities

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding to the Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council for site improvement/restoration activities on 296 acres. The proposed project would fall and remove dead timber, and transport it to either a decking facility or commercial sawmills. The project would also remove timber previously downed by PG&E. All slash would be masticated and spread to prevent soil erosion and add nutrient value back into the forest floor. The project site contains numerous springs and tributaries and is considered the headwaters of Gentry Creek, a major branch of the North Fork of the Merced River. The project area contains 75 – 80 percent visible bark beetle mortality. The State Tree Mortality Task Force has deemed the area immediately around the project as a Tier 1 hazard, which makes this project area a Tier 2 watershed and therefore a priority for treatment by the State of California. The proposed project also ties into similar projects on adjacent lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to increase forest and watershed resiliency as well as provide safe ingress and egress.

The project would aid in the protection of existing water storage capacity through reduced erosion and ultimately affect the downstream water supply to the communities of Don Pedro, La Grange, Snelling, and the Central Valley areas served by the Merced River. The project would also enhance carbon storage and rate of sequestration as this area would be less prone to catastrophic wildfire and would eventually return to functional forestland. The project would provide added protection to its USFS and BLM neighbors.

Reasons Why the Project is Exempt

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land

The Gentry Creek Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor land alterations proposed by the project involve the removal of dead and downed trees for forestry purposes, and mastication of slash that would be spread to prevent soil-erosion. This forestry work would not result in significant adverse impacts.

No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and includes a brief rationale as to why each exception does not apply to the Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project.

**Table 1
Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)**

Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The goals of this 296-acre forestry project are to restore health to the forested areas east of the community of Coulterville, preventing catastrophic wildfires and protecting drinking water supplies, and improving downstream aquatic resources.</p> <p>The project work consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of dead and downed trees. The project work would not occur on areas know to contain hazardous substances, nor would project activities occur in locations that contain known significant cultural or biological resources.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The forest management activities would not adversely affect environmental resources, and would therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to other restoration projects in the region. In fact, the project would result in beneficial effects to the project area forest, creeks, watersheds, associated lands, and adjacent forested areas by providing wildfire risk reduction, and natural resource management and protection. Consequently, the proposed project, in combination with other nearby forest management treatments, would not result in significant cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>The site improvement/restoration project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Specific environmental topics are addressed below:</p> <p>Aesthetics. See Recreation and Scenic Resources.</p> <p>Agriculture/ Forestry. The project area does not contain any agricultural resources. The project operations would be short-term, temporary and would not affect the land’s ability to support grazing. The project would reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on 296 acres by removing dead trees and thinning dense conifer stands, thereby helping to protect these forest resources from catastrophic wildfire. The project would have no permanent impact on agricultural resources.</p> <p>Air Quality/GHGs. The project activities would</p>

result in nominal fugitive dust, particulate, and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions would be limited to those associated with vehicle trips to/from the project area. Activities that emit fugitive dust and particulate (i.e., smoke) would not be conducted. Nearby sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region's applicable air quality plan and would not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.

Biological Resources. No sensitive biological resources would be affected by the project.

The project area was evaluated for sensitive biological resources through a review of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database.

The western red bat is a species of special concern that may be present in the project area. This species roosts primarily in trees in edge habitats adjacent to streams, fields, or urban areas. Due to extensive tree mortality, much of the potential habitat is severely limited. Timber operations would not occur during wet conditions, and would not occur within flagged Watercourse and Lake Protection Zones that exclude heavy equipment.

The western pond turtle is a species of special concern that may be present in the project area. The project area does contain a pond, but without abundant vegetation. No turtles have been observed in the pond. However, the flagged Watercourse and Lake Protection Zone would exclude heavy equipment in case turtles are utilizing the pond.

No listed or sensitive species were observed in the project area during field reconnaissance or by landowners. However, the Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and Licensed Timber Operator (LTO) would be alert for their presence during pre-operations and active timber operations.

If evidence of these species is detected during project operations, work would be suspended until a CDFW Biologist is consulted.

The proposed action alternatives would slightly increase the risk of noxious weed introduction by creating conditions that favor noxious weed establishment; however, implementation of standard management practices and monitoring would result in a low risk of introduction and spread.

Cultural Resources. See (f).

Geology/Soils. The forestry activities would not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils, and would conform with forest practice regulations in accordance with the approval of emergency timber harvest operations issued by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in August 2016. The work planned as part of the project would not occur in wetlands or stream courses. Slash would be masticated and spread to prevent soil erosion and add nutrient value back into the forest floor. Project best management practices and design features would assure that significant impacts to water quality and beneficial uses would not occur. The watercourses and springs within the project area would, at a minimum, be provided a 50-foot protection zone surrounding the feature. Moreover, removal of dead trees would reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire that would otherwise threaten water quality and aquatic habitat.

Hazards/Hazardous Materials. See (e).

Hydrology/Water Quality. See Geology/Soils.

Noise. Forestry activities would generate temporary noise. However, given that project activities would be limited to daytime (the least sensitive hours of the day), and the limited extent to which these activities could expose sensitive receptors to increased noise levels, the project would not cause significant noise effects.

Recreation and Scenic Resources. No specific recreational developments or improvements are proposed as part of the forest management activities. The property is currently under private ownership and so public access is restricted. The project would have some temporary negative effects on visual quality resulting from

	<p>project activities. The project would have long-term benefits to the forest as a result of fuels reduction and therefore a reduced risk of catastrophic wildfire.</p> <p>Transportation. There would be limited additional trips on local roadways during project implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat would occur. The vehicles would not block traffic and no traffic delays would occur due to project activities.</p> <p>Other CEQA Issues. The project would have no effect on land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>The project area is not visible from a scenic highway, and would not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The project is not located on a site which is included on a hazardous waste site contained on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>No prehistoric or historic resources would be affected by the project.</p> <p>A literature review, records search, and information requests of Native American Tribes and the Native American Heritage Commission were conducted for the Gentry Creek Watershed Restoration Project. Based on this review, two historic sites and one prehistoric site were identified within the project area. These sites are protected by an equipment exclusion zone that would be flagged prior to operations. The RPF would also conduct a pre-operations meeting on site with the LTO prior to operations to assure these sites as well as other natural resource attributes would be afforded adequate protection. For these reasons, there would be no effects to any historic or prehistoric resources in this project area.</p> <p>If previously undiscovered resources are encountered or suspected during project implementation, work would be halted</p>

	<p>immediately and would not resume until the area is cleared by qualified individuals. No work would occur in the vicinity of sensitive cultural resources. The project would not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and would not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>
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Current Status – Budget

The status of SNC's 2016-17 budget can be viewed on page three of this report. We are on track to spend the current year budget as allotted.

Staff has been busy preparing reports and responding to drills from the Department of Finance (DOF) to build the 2017-18 budget expected to be released by the Governor on January 10.

Current Status – Accounting

Since our last Board meeting, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) pitched an idea to DOF to consolidate the accounting and budgeting services for SNC and five other conservancies and create an accounting unit at SNC. Unfortunately, DOF does not want to make any changes until all state entities are on the Financial Information System (FI\$Cal). DOF has committed to cover the Department of General Services Contracted Fiscal Services (CFS) cost increase to SNC of \$29,000 in 2017-18. This is in addition to the \$79,000 augmentation they gave us this year to cover previous cost increases.

Although, we appreciate DOF's decision to cover the additional cost increase for CFS, the level of service provided by CFS continues to be an issue. Over the last two months we have seen a marginal improvement in the processing time for invoices. We continue to struggle with CFS's response time in answering general questions and making corrections when they miss key items. We are regularly communicating with FI\$Cal and the State Controller's Office (SCO) directly to resolve issues because CFS does not have the knowledge or time to make our issues a priority. When we question CFS as to why something hasn't been done, they respond that they are busy juggling many departments and general fund departments are their priority. We continue to do our own tracking of all accounting functions - this duplication of duties between SNC and CFS is not efficient.

At the September Board meeting, we informed you that CFS missed the August 22 deadline to close our 2015-16 books. At the time of this current report, SNC's 2015-16 books were still not closed. We will provide a verbal update on the status of our 2015-16 books at the meeting. Since the books have not been closed, SNC also missed the October deadline for reporting to CNRA on the condition of the ELPF fund.

We will continue to work with the Natural Resources Agency to address these and find a suitable long-term solution.

Current Status – Human Resources

Elliott Vander Kolk joined the Policy and Outreach team on October 12 as the National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) Project Coordinator. This is the first of two positions SNC will hire that are fully funded through the NDRC grant. Elliott comes to us by way of Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies where he earned a Master of Forestry degree earlier this year. He also recently completed an Independent Study with Sierra Business Council in which he co-authored a report for

Sierra CAMP that recommends policy updates *to Safeguarding California* that encourage investment in forest and watershed restoration.

Amanda Grant joined the Administrative Services Division on October 24 as SNC's new Contract and Procurement Analyst. Amanda filled Donna Martinez's position when she retired on November 17. Amanda comes to us from the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) where she worked as a Contract and Procurement Specialist. Prior to working at CalSTRS, Amanda worked at the State Controller's Office as a Contract and Procurement Analyst. During her seven-plus years working for the state, Amanda has become very proficient in procurement methods. She has also gained valuable experience using SharePoint and FI\$Cal.

The current SNC organizational chart can be viewed on page four of this report.

Current Status – Business Services

The SNC recognized October as Safety and Emergency Preparedness month. SNC's safety committee met and discussed safety issues and solutions for SNC facilities and reminded staff about the process for evacuating SNC buildings. We had a successful evacuation drill at the Auburn and Mariposa facilities.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

**2016-17 SNC BUDGET
 as of Sept 2016**

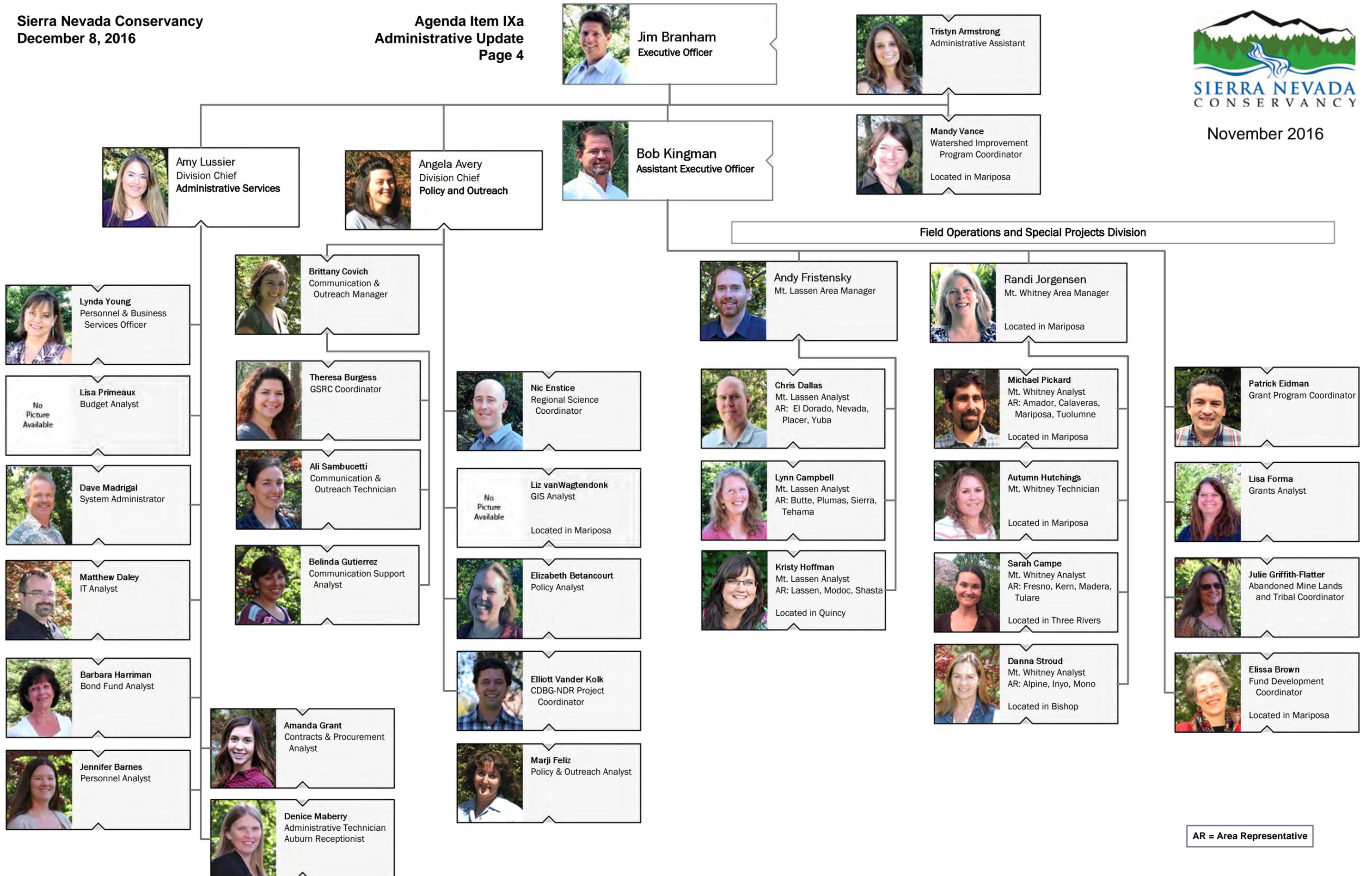
Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) Support Budget			
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expended thru Sept</i>	<i>%</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	\$ 2,077,849	\$ 461,662	22%
STAFF BENEFITS	\$ 1,053,825	\$ 227,897	22%
Total Personal Services	\$ 3,131,674	\$ 689,559	22%
<i>Operating Expenses & Equipment</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expended thru Sept</i>	<i>%</i>
GENERAL EXPENSE (includes printing, communications & postage)	\$ 101,396	\$ 23,564	23%
TRAVEL	\$ 91,000	\$ 24,033	26%
TRAINING	\$ 16,772	\$ 5,195	31%
FACILITIES	\$ 291,358	\$ 68,865	24%
UTILITIES	\$ 23,300	\$ 2,165	9%
CONTRACTS - INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT (includes CFS \$177,000, Prop 1 CEQA/NEPA Reviews \$60,000, DGS \$6,000, Legal Svcs \$25,000, SPB \$4,600, CalHR \$9,667)	\$ 406,299	\$ 17,258	4%
CONTRACTS - EXTERNAL (includes UEI Student Contract \$15,000 & Propoint \$65,000)	\$ 174,442	\$ -	0%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	\$ 61,428	\$ 15,616	25%
PRO RATA (control agency costs)	\$ 270,615	\$ -	0%
OTHER ITEMS OF EXPENSE	\$ 93	\$ -	0%
VEHICLE OPERATIONS (includes vehicle insurance)	\$ 27,624	\$ 6,535	24%
Total Operating Expenses & Equipment	\$ 1,464,326	\$ 163,231	11%
Total Personal Services & OE&E Expenditures	\$ 4,596,000	\$ 852,790	19%

Prop 1 Support Budget			
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expended thru Sept</i>	<i>%</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	\$ 133,000	\$ 33,387	25%
STAFF BENEFITS	\$ 67,000	\$ 16,346	24%
Total Prop 1 Support Budget & Expenditures	\$ 200,000	\$ 49,733	25%

Prop 84 Support Budget			
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expended thru Sept</i>	<i>%</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	\$ 83,000	\$ 19,710	24%
STAFF BENEFITS	\$ 41,000	\$ 9,516	23%
Total Prop 84 Support Budget & Expenditures	\$ 124,000	\$ 29,226	24%



November 2016



AR = Area Representative

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is always on the lookout for ways to better address Sierra Nevada Regional challenges and educate decision and policy makers about the value, importance, and needs of the Region. To achieve these goals, staff regularly identifies new and interesting ways to engage our target audiences by investigating policy opportunities, engaging in legislative activities and state planning efforts, developing outreach/communications campaigns, and staying abreast of current science as it relates to complex Regional issues.

Current Status

SNC Policy Agenda

Staff has developed an SNC Policy Guidance document ([Attachment A](#)) which identifies and describes the suite of issues in which SNC staff is interested and active. For each issue included, the SNC worked with partners to identify meaningful objectives and the policy changes that achieve those objectives in the most efficient and economical way.

Policy Investigation

Watershed Restoration Investment Models

In association with our March Board meeting, staff is considering options for hosting an investment policy discussion to explore potential long-term funding sources for watershed restoration work. Earlier this year, SNC Boardmembers requested additional information about the history and mechanisms utilized to emplace a public goods charge for electricity in the late 1990s. As a result, staff began researching the beneficiary pays concept, opportunities for private investment capital to be utilized, and other potential models. This includes looking at both existing models as well as new concepts and alternatives to pay for ecosystem benefits that result from science-based restoration. Despite years of discussion around many of these ideas, very little progress had been made. The Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit provides an opportunity for a substantive discussion that has the potential to result in concrete next steps. An agenda and list of potential speakers are being developed.

Legislation

[AB 2087](#) (Levine) passed both houses and was signed by the Governor at the end of session. The bill authorizes the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), or any other public agency, to propose a regional conservation investment strategy for the purpose of informing science-based nonbinding and voluntary conservation actions and habitat enhancement. The bill also creates a pilot program, expiring in 2020, with an allowance for eight regional conservation investment strategies to be implemented in that time frame. While this bill was written for mitigation projects, it may create an opportunity to assist the SNC in WIP implementation efforts.

[Proposition 64](#) (Marijuana legalization) which proposes legalization of the currently controlled substance, provides for two state taxes and permission for local taxes to be assessed, will be in front of California voters on November 8. If it passes, the Legislative Analyst's Office projects potential tax revenue over \$1 billion. The initiative allows for

approximately 20 percent of that revenue (after initial dedications) to be spent on environmental damage remediation and protection meaning that upwards of \$180 million could be dedicated to environmental work. Funds received if this initiative passes will be spent between the CDFW and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), with a heavy emphasis on cleanup in the first five years.

Based on the initiative language, abused sites in Sierra Nevada watersheds could be addressed through remediation funding in the next five years. And, though there doesn't look to be a clear role for the SNC, initiative text may present opportunities for the SNC to work with CDFW and DPR to identify project opportunities where remediation is needed; coordinate grant efforts to enable a more significant impact in affected sites; and/or work with the CNRA Secretary, CDFW, and DPR to advise regarding Sierra needs.

State Planning Efforts

The SNC continues to play an active role in finalizing the draft Forest Carbon Plan (FCP) which is, at the time of this writing, still expected to be released for public comment before the end of 2016. The Forest Carbon Plan is being developed by the Forest Carbon Action Team (FCAT) which is composed of executive-level members from many of the state's natural resources agencies, state and federal forest land managers, and others. The FCP is intended to provide forest carbon targets and strategies to promote healthy forests that protect and enhance forest carbon.

Connecting with Urban Audiences

The SNC has been an active participant in the Sierra Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Partnership (Sierra CAMP) and its umbrella group, the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA). Staff participation in these efforts is resulting in opportunities to share messaging regarding the importance of watersheds and forests to the adaptive capacity of the entire state with urban audiences. SNC staff member Elizabeth Betancourt participated as a panel member in the Climate Adaptation Forum which took place in Long Beach, CA, in early September. The Forum was attended by a diverse audience of local, regional, and state leaders committed to addressing California's climate adaptation needs. Additionally, staff is working with a set of downstream urban partners including Sacramento Municipal Utility District, City of Sacramento, Sacramento Air Quality Management District, and Regional Water Authority to organize a meeting in mid-November, to develop partnerships and opportunities to reinforce messaging regarding the value of upper watersheds to the customer bases of participating agencies.

National Disaster Resilience Competition Grant

At the time of this writing, nearly ten full months after the announcement of the \$70,359,459 National Disaster Resilience Competition grant award, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is still waiting to sign their grant agreement with The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Knowing that projects will need to be ready to hit the ground as soon as that grant agreement is signed, the SNC worked with HCD to confirm that time and expenses incurred before our interagency agreement is finalized are reimbursable under federal grant guidelines. As a result of this effort, the SNC was able to hire Elliott Vander Kolk (see SNC Administrative Update, Agenda Item IXa) in early October. In addition to understanding the detail of the application and meeting the core planning team, Elliott's initial focus will include working with the SNC Admin team to get the SNC-HCD, SNC-CAL FIRE, and SNC-USFS interagency agreements drafted and approved. He will also be assisting in the development of a stakeholder outreach plan.

Protecting California's Watersheds Video Production

Staff worked with the video production crew from the Department of Water Resources to develop a short video on the effectiveness of forest thinning treatments. The video features fuels treatment work in Calaveras County that helped to protect communities during the 2015 Butte Fire, and forest thinning work supported by SNC that has reduced tree mortality on Bureau of Land Management lands. The final video is available on the [SNC YouTube site](#) and is being shared with partners, legislators, key decisions makers, the media, and the public through events, social media shares, and meetings.

Great Sierra River Cleanup and Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week

The 8th Annual Great Sierra River Cleanup (GSRC) was held on Saturday, September 17, in conjunction with California Coastal Cleanup Day. More than 1,400 volunteers cleaned up 106 miles of rivers and streams throughout the Region and removed seventeen tons of trash and recyclables! Some of the unusual items found during this year's cleanup include dentures, bowling pins, and a cappuccino machine. The event was supported by the California Coastal Commission, the California Conservation Corps, Sierra Pacific Industries, and Pacific Gas & Electric.

This year's Great Sierra River Cleanup also kicked off the week-long [Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week](#). Last year, Assembly Member Brian Dahle authored Assembly Concurrent Resolution 22 which established the third week of September as "Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week" to highlight the benefits the Sierra provides to the state and to create awareness around the issues the Region is facing. In alignment with the goals of Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week, staff developed a graphics campaign for social media that highlighted the importance of Sierra watersheds to the state. The graphics developed for this campaign were shared by a number of partners and members of our target audience, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Rural County Representatives of California, California Water Commission, California Tree Mortality Task Force, American Rivers, Sierra Business Council, California Energy Commission, and the Association of California Water Agencies.

As part of Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week, SNC also co-hosted a tour with Placer County Water Agency and took high-level state agency administrators,

legislators, and legislative staff into the upper American River watershed to learn about the importance of restoring forests to protect water supply.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to identify and track items and opportunities of importance to the SNC as well as to implement outreach and communications activities in support of SNC programs and activities.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy • Policy Guidance

This Policy Guidance document identifies and describes the suite of issues in which Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) staff is active. These issues are consistent with the SNC Strategic and Action Plans and the SNC has worked with our partners to identify objectives that would be most meaningful in the Region. We have further analyzed the challenge to identify policy changes that would achieve these objectives in the most efficient and economical way. As the policy landscape of the nation and state change, it is possible that new opportunities might come forward; staff is always looking for ways to better address Regional challenges. Through this list, the hope is that synergies and connections between issue areas, and with our partners and outreach targets, are better identified. This document is informational in nature and not intended to reflect official policy positions of the SNC Governing Board.

ECOLOGICAL WATERSHED RESTORATION

Watershed restoration is paramount to, and at the core of, meeting the SNC's policy objectives, and is embodied in the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) objectives and implementation. Diverse watersheds, managed for multiple benefits and resilient to climatic change, are necessary to move California into a future with climate change.

1. The services provided by the Sierra, depended on by Regional inhabitants and the state as a whole, demand that the pace and scale of restoration activity increase at least two to three times current levels.
2. Source watersheds, and the streams, meadows, and forests making them up, are of multi-benefit to California and the nation; they should be managed on a large-landscape scale, in consideration of all of these benefits.
3. Current forest policy is not working; effective watershed management must innovate through legal, environmental, and collaborative ways, taking advantage of in-place mechanisms, such as existing contracting templates, and conceptual models, such as partnering opportunities.
4. A unified approach to forest management, including all affected parties to minimizing legal issues and environmental harm, is necessary to avoid issues of delay and backlog.
5. Previously-neglected areas, such as steep slopes and Protected Activity Centers, should be addressed by using environmentally sound, existing, innovative mechanisms as a model.
6. Local communities are essential partners in effective watershed management.
7. Both costs and benefits of watershed management should be integrated into the cost of providing services to "downstream beneficiaries" (water, air, recreation, etc.).
8. As funding is available, the SNC will fund projects identified as meeting WIP goals, in alignment with organizational values as well as funding requirements.
9. Abandoned mine lands are a serious issue for habitat, water quality, and recreation uses, and affect downstream users and environments throughout California. Addressing these lands at the source through cleanup and restoration is more effective than addressing the downstream pollution issues alone.

TREE MORTALITY

The tree mortality issues besetting the southern Sierra over the last three years is moving north. The extent of this issue has already impacted the ability of affected forests to act as a carbon sink. The condition of these forests will alter California's fiscal, health, and environmental future in terms of increased wildfire and corresponding carbon emissions, as well as decreased carbon storage capacity, habitat diversity, and recreation opportunities. Forest restoration is imperative to preserve the services provided by Sierra forests, to Sierra communities and to the state at large.

10. Green forests must be managed to prevent the spread of bark beetle infestations northward.
11. All state agencies are essential in developing a better understanding of how future forests might look, act, and be managed to preserve their statewide benefits.

PRESCRIBED AND MANAGED FIRE

Prescribed and managed fire is an important element on the landscape, providing land managers with a cost-effective and, if managed properly, low-risk management tool. For this reason, the SNC recently signed the Fire Memorandum of Understanding, finalized in November 2015, to increase the use of fire to meet ecological and other management objectives.

12. Prescribed fire is an important tool and there should be more opportunities to make use of it, where feasible and appropriate. Managed fire is likewise an important restoration tool that can be utilized at a much larger scale, in areas and conditions where appropriate.
13. Barriers to implementing fire use should be minimized, such as by improving smoke management coordination and engaging in public education and outreach.
14. Expand the training opportunities and resource/expertise sharing in order to more effectively and efficiently increase capacity to use wildland fire in the Sierra.

WILDFIRE

Research tells us that not all wildfire is bad. In fact, it is a required element in a healthy, balanced ecosystem. However, as climate change affects precipitation and temperature patterns, burn patterns suggest that more intense fires, with greater severity, are becoming the norm. Protecting ecosystems from devastating wildfires is part of preserving the state's adaptive capacity.

15. Wildland firefighting costs have been growing annually. Federal payment of these costs has historically come out of US Forest Service programmatic funding, decreasing funding dedicated to on-the-ground prevention treatments. Firefighting costs should come from an emergency fund, managed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) per proposed federal legislation.
16. Increased funding for fuels treatment from a variety of sources, such as the State Responsibility Area fees collected by CAL FIRE, will be an essential part of meeting this need.
17. Wildfire is the result of decades of counter-productive forest and watershed management policies. Thus, these events should be seen as human-caused.
18. Fire events in source watersheds affect California as a whole; managing the forest to avoid these impacts is a public benefit and should be funded as such.

CARBON AND CLIMATE CHANGE

California's forests represent significant carbon storage capacity, benefitting both the state and the nation through emissions mitigation. Responsible and responsive forest and watershed management will ensure that these benefits continue into the future, adding resilience and adaptive capacity to California's response to climate change.

19. Carbon capture is a benefit accruing to all Californians. Based on the huge benefit of the Sierra in terms of carbon sequestration, the investment of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds into forest management is a critical use of that resource.
20. The changing hydrologic and temperature regime suggests that forest management, including post-fire restoration, should be implemented with this future in mind.

WATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY

The Sierra is the source of more than 60 percent of California's developed water supply and is used by millions of people, hundreds of thousands of agricultural acres, and a multitude of wildlife species throughout California. Healthy watersheds provide cool, clean water more consistently, benefitting instream flow, downstream users, groundwater basins, and the ecosystem as a whole.

21. Benefits accruing to "downstream users" should be identified, quantified, and valued financially. Investment mechanisms with the intent of preserving those benefits should be identified and implemented.
22. In addition to cleaning up the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and its tributaries, investment in addressing the source and mobilization mechanisms of mercury and other heavy-metal pollution, especially related to abandoned mine lands, is imperative to avoiding continued degradation.
23. Sediment is the nation's primary water pollutant; upper watersheds need to be managed so that shedding sediment is minimized, preserving reservoir capacity, riverine habitat, and water quality.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Sierra Nevada's diverse human communities, environments, and economies add to the Region's strength and adaptive capacity. Statewide education regarding the benefits of a healthy Sierra is essential in meeting the expectations of communities, counties, the state, and the nation as far as what the Sierra can deliver.

24. Native American tribes are sovereign nations and are important partners in caring for California's watersheds. Their legal rights and legacy of continuous habitation make them unique and exceptional partners in developing strategies for long-term investment.
25. Forest restoration efforts should incorporate local capacity building and local-preference contracting.
26. Rural challenges are amplified when they are not recognized; disparities in resources, access, and opportunities should be recognized as a disadvantaged status and addressed through strategic state investment.

FOREST PRODUCTS AND BIOMASS UTILIZATION

Finding viable markets for small-diameter trees and other logging slash, as well as expanding markets for traditional wood products, are important components in making forest and watershed management economically feasible. Innovative uses are welcomed, and added investment is likely necessary.

27. Finding markets for forest biomass, especially making use of small-diameter trees and logging “slash,” is a priority issue for economical and sustainable forest management, as well as for rural job development.
28. Bioenergy is a viable, reliable energy source, providing jobs to low-income communities. It should be incentivized as such until such time as it is again economically viable, and the legal and policy impediments, except those addressing human and ecological health and safety, should be abolished.

RECREATION

The continued success of recreation as an economic driver in the Sierra depends on a resilient landscape, inclusive and broad marketing, and the availability of safe and modernized recreation opportunities. The rural and generally disadvantaged nature of the Sierra demands outside investment. This investment can come from external recreation/visitor dollars, but also must come from in-state sources in order to shore up a continued statewide benefit.

29. Recreation is an important contributor to rural communities' economies and should be planned for at the executive level with an eye to the future.
30. Developed recreation opportunities, in addition to extensive federal lands, is important to balancing use and access, as well as attracting diverse populations to recreation opportunities.

Agenda Item IXb

Policy & Outreach Update

Presented by:
Angela Avery

Great Sierra River Cleanup 2016

The Numbers



- **1,498** volunteers
- **35,119** pounds of trash
- **106.5** river miles

Great Sierra River Cleanup 2016

The Volunteers

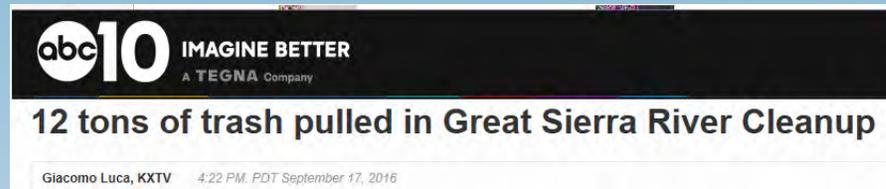


Great Sierra River Cleanup 2016

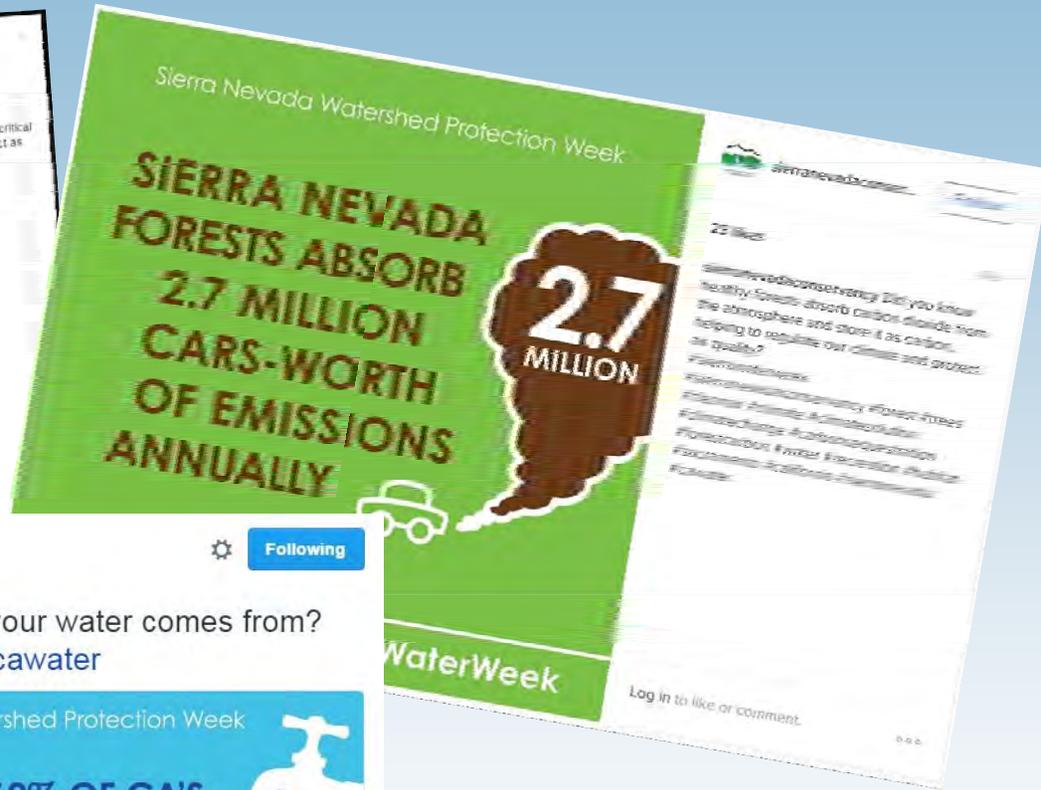
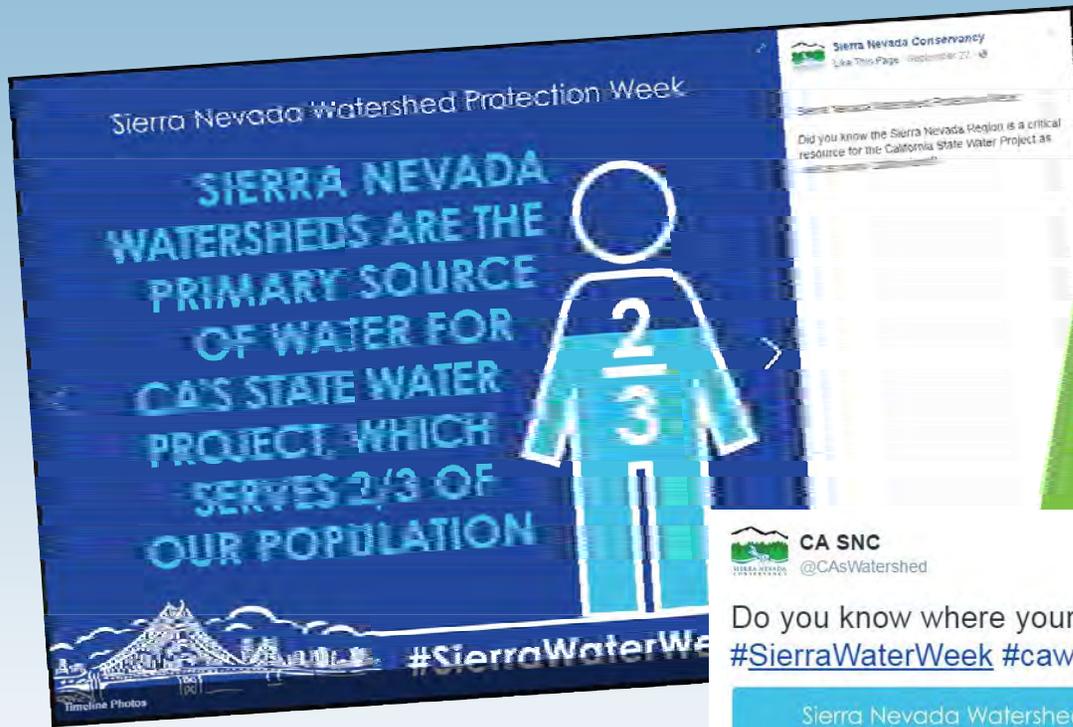
The Trash



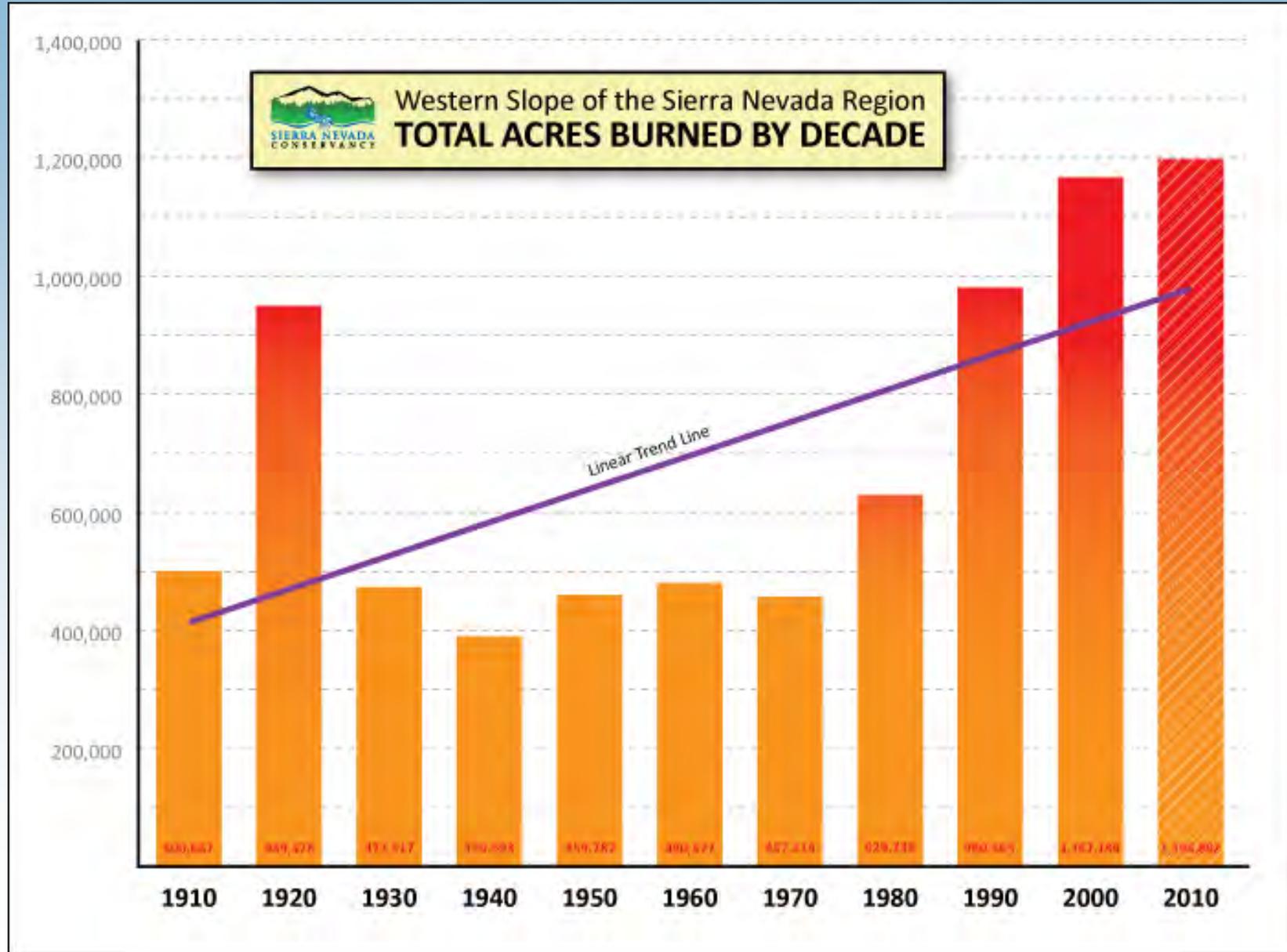
Great Sierra River Cleanup 2016 In the News



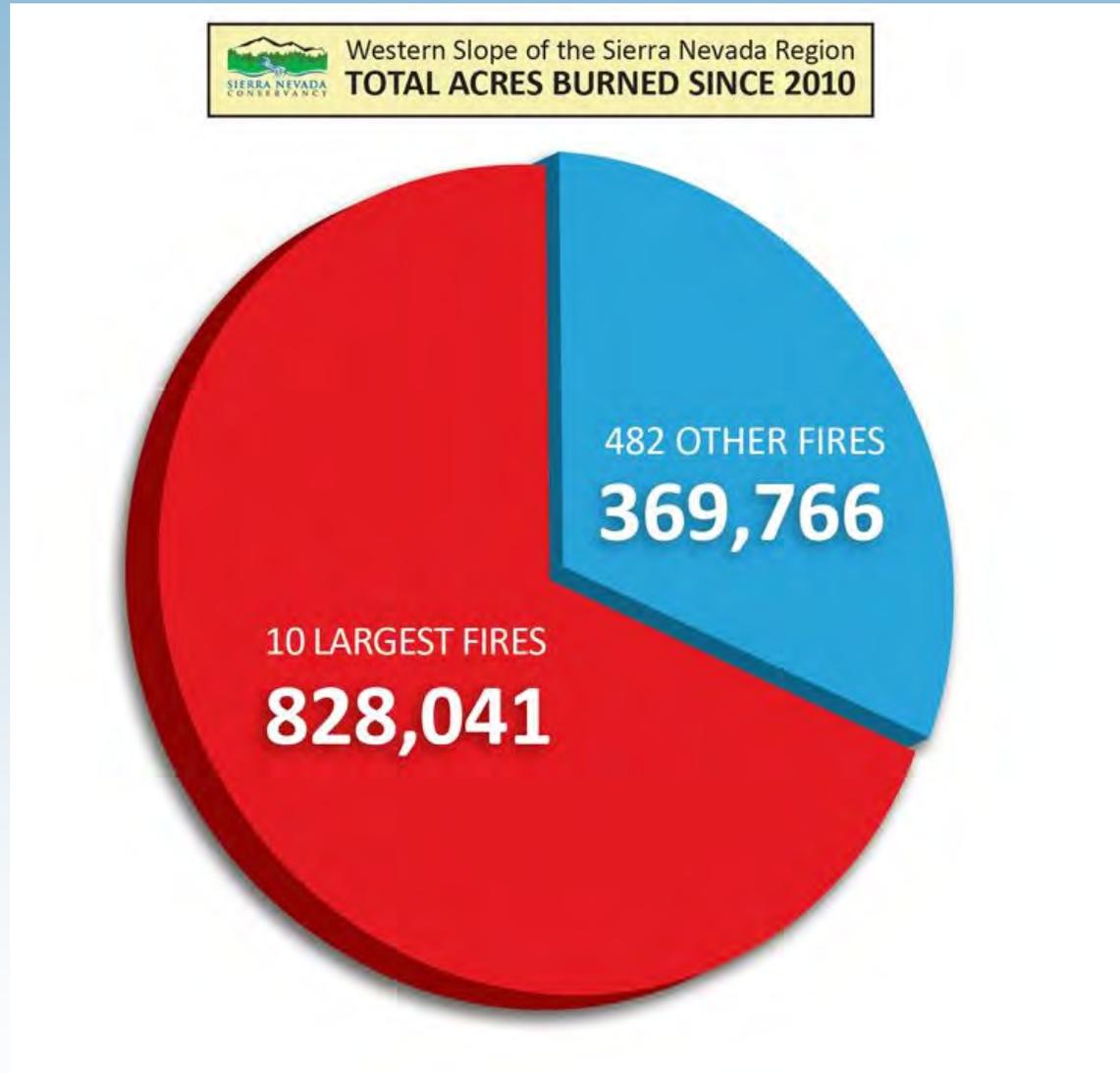
Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week



Tracking the 2016 Fire Season



Tracking the 2016 Fire Season



Wildfires & GHGs

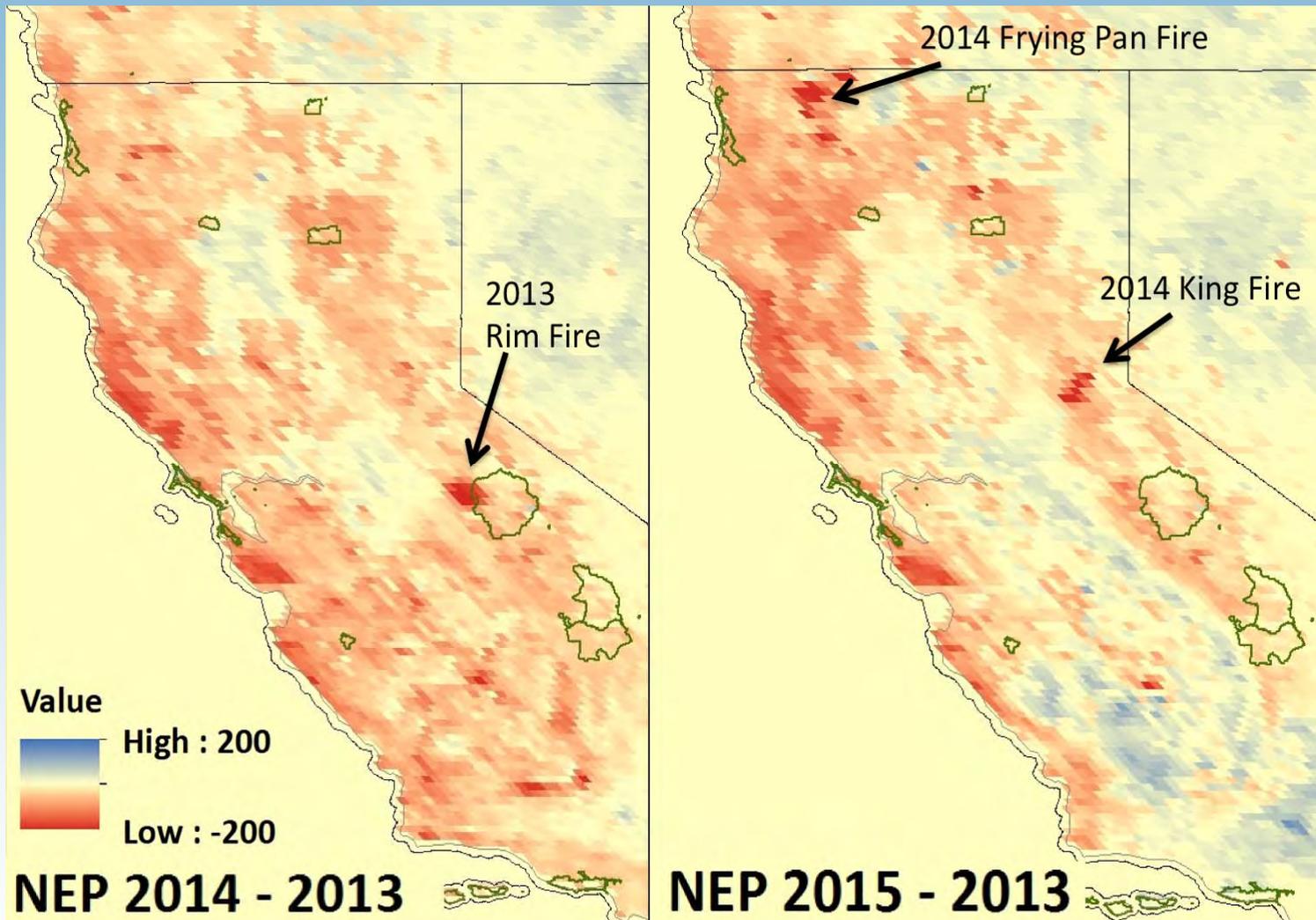


Figure 2. Satellite-derived Net Ecosystem Productivity (NEP)², showing intense areas of progressive net carbon gain (blue) or loss (red, grams of carbon per square meter) from burned areas after 2013 and 2014 fires. Specifically, the above figures depict the differences between 2013 NEP and 2014 NEP (left panel) and the difference between 2013 and 2015 NEP (right panel). Larger areas of progressive net loss compared to this 2013 baseline year, likely due to drought and insect mortality, are also apparent throughout the CA forests (green outlines are National Park borders for orientation).

Forest Thinning & Carbon



Original photo courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station.

Background

The second of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) regional Tribal Forums was held in September at the Sorenson's Resort in Alpine County. The location and setting were conducive to a very informative two-way discussion. Many of the topics covered were similar to the issues discussed at the first Tribal Forum held in Susanville underlining mutual concerns and efforts of the tribes, the SNC, and others in the Region. Topics of discussion included forest and watershed health and the need for fuel reduction work and resource protection, working together to establish adaptive management plans in light of the changing environment, abandoned mine land impacts on water and other resources, and the need for tribal input in landscape management planning efforts and cultural monitoring during and after project implementation. The Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) was introduced and obtaining tribal representation on the WIP Steering Committee was explored. Follow-up actions from the meeting were:

- Communicate with tribal organizations such as Inter-Tribal Council of California about WIP Steering Committee representation
- Research California Native American Tribe's ability to participate in the youth program – Forestry Challenge
- Consider tribal opportunities during Proposition 1 grant proposal development

There were three follow-up action items identified following the first Tribal Forum held in Susanville in June. Below is a brief update of where we are with each of those items.

- Exploration of tribal representation on the SNC Board – SNC Staff is continuing conversations with the California Native American Heritage Commission, Governor's Tribal Advisor, and other tribal organizations in California to determine interest and process.
- Tribal review of the WIP watershed assessments in the Northern Subregion – The WIP watershed assessments are still under development under the contract with the Sierra Coordinated Resource Management Council.
- Exploration of grant application development under the SNC Proposition 1 grant program – SNC Area Representatives and the SNC Tribal Liaison will continue to work with tribes to develop project applications under Proposition 1.

Current Status

At this writing, the third of the series of Tribal Forums is scheduled to take place Wednesday, December 7, prior to the Board at SNC headquarters prior to the Board tour (Information from the Tribal Forum will be provided to the Board during the meeting).

Next Steps

SNC staff will continue working to build relationships with the California Native American Tribes within our Region. The next Tribal Forum will be held in March.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Background

On October 29, 2015, Governor Brown issued an Emergency Proclamation ([Attachment A](#)) in response to the dramatic and extensive die-off of trees in the state. With this proclamation, the Governor established the Tree Mortality Task Force (TMTF or Task Force). The Governor's Task Force convenes the second Monday of every month to meet with the various agencies and organizations to coordinate activities which successfully achieve Task Force goals.

Information on current activities of the TMFT can be found on the Tree Mortality Website, maintained by CAL FIRE, at <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/>

Current Status

Deputy Cabinet Secretary Saul Gomez has replaced Wade Crowfoot as the Governor's Representative on the Task Force.

The Task Force continues to meet monthly, with updates from each working group and those counties affected by Tree Mortality. Though the numbers of dead conifers are not exact, it's most probable that the stated 66 million dead trees amount has increased significantly since that figure was announced. Workgroups within the Task Force are pursuing a variety of different processes to achieve the goals of removal, restoration, and building resilience.

The Public Outreach Workgroup continues to promote funding opportunities for tree removal and share messaging across networks. The Task Force's [Twitter account](#) continues to be very active, sharing news generated by Workgroup members, relevant research, and information about Task Force-related events. Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is working closely with CAL FIRE's account managers to amplify messages through the Task Force's 400+ followers. The group is developing a Fact Sheet identifying the accomplishments of the Task Force in the year since the Governor's proclamation.

The Forest Health and Resilience Working Group have two primary products that are being developed: 1) a Sierra Nevada Forest Health Report which will identify current conditions, desired future conditions and the actions necessary to achieve resiliency; and 2) a strategy to guide reforestation decisions in areas deforested by bark beetles. Both products are expected to be completed by the end of 2016. Additionally, a draft white paper titled "Sierra Forest Health Report" authored by John Amodio and Larry Camp is under review by the working group. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy supports the recommendations put forth in the white paper, which is largely recommending the implementation of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

The Mapping and Monitoring Working Group has received a list of active wood storage and processing facilities and created a map of these locations. Additionally, the workgroup responded to a request to analyze potential locations for log storage and processing facilities in Mariposa County. These locations are under evaluation by the local CAL FIRE unit and county personnel. The group is working with the Forest Health

and Resiliency Workgroup to develop a map that overlays high mortality areas with seed zones to help with cone collection and reforestation planning.

The Resource Allocation Working Group

Equipment has been distributed to various counties but has been idle due in part to unavailable trained personnel and forest condition concerns during this past fire season.

Regulations Working Group has submitted a letter to the Governor's office requesting USEPA to authorize emergency use of air curtain incinerators without a Title VI permit. Because of fire season, none of the air curtain burners have been used beyond testing, but CAL FIRE hopes to begin use soon. CAL FIRE has developed a draft document titled "Issues with the Movement of Wood Material from the Drought Induces the Bark Beetle Epidemic," developed in response to concerns surrounding debris removal.

Bioenergy Working Group reported that the three investor-owned utilities are to purchase a minimum of 50 MW of power from facilities using feedstock primarily from the high hazard zones. Bidders submitted offers to the utilities last month and the utility companies are reviewing those bids. The contract-awarded facilities are slated to be announced in November. Senate Bill 859 requires an additional 125 MW of power to be procured from existing power plants.

The Utilization and Market Development Working Group continues to explore emerging technologies that utilize dead trees for a broad range of uses. Additionally, the group has contracted with the Beck Group to identify the most feasible technologies and business opportunities suitable for private investment using dead tree material from the TMTF-designated area. A final report is expected in May 2017 and will likely add information to SB 859 report being prepared for legislature in June

High Hazard Counties

All ten (Kern, Fresno, Tulare, Madera, Mariposa, Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador, El Dorado, and Placer) counties have established task forces and are coordinating with the Governor's Task Force. Many share the same basic concerns of finding ways to assist private landowners: identifying available funds to match other grant opportunities, ensuring ingress and egress along roads for escape routes from potential wildfire, identifying funding to support tree removal on private lands, and mobilizing equipment delivered to counties. Many pieces are not in use due to lack of trained personnel and fire conditions.

Tuolumne County has launched a fundraising effort to support removing dead and dying trees on private property owned by seniors over 60 and disabled adults.

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts submitted a Regional Conservation Partnership program application focused on the restoration of forests in response to the tree mortality crisis. If the grant is awarded, it will provide \$10 million for removal of trees for biomass on private property through the EQIP program.

Legislation and Funding

Governor Brown and legislators reached a deal to spend \$900 million in revenue from cap and trade revenue for climate programs in SB 859. The Governor had proposed \$150 million to CAL FIRE for forest health projects in his budget, however, the legislature reduced that amount to \$25 million. The legislation included a section requiring the utilities to enter into five-year contracts for 125 MW of biomass power from facilities that generate energy from wood harvested from high-fire hazard zones. This language was orchestrated by Assembly Member Brian Dahle and will likely save a number of plants from closing (due to expiration of contracts and the utilities unwillingness to offer economically viable contract extensions). These plants are important in the efforts to dispose of materials resulting from tree mortality, as well as restoration efforts in green forests.

Senate Bill 859 also includes a directive to establish a working group on expanding wood products markets. Several members of the Governor's Task Force Marketing and Utilization working group have been tapped to participate in the recently passed legislative mandate included in SB 859 to prepare a report to the legislature by June 1, 2017, outlining opportunities and strategies to support utilization of dead trees from tree mortality areas in the state.

Next Steps

To date, the SNC has expended \$568,444 on Tree-Mortality focused grants out of the at least \$1 million allocated. The staff is recommending an additional \$994,985 at this meeting for projects addressing tree mortality. If approved by the Board, SNC will have expended in excess of \$1.5 million for these type of projects.

The collaboration between governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, local government, local landowners, local businesses, community residents, and other stakeholders has been unprecedented and is key to the accomplishments of the Tree Mortality effort. SNC continues to provide grants, as well as coordination and facilitation, to assist numerous groups to identify other grant opportunities, leverage efforts, and improve collaboration.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Board members are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Agenda Item IXd
Tree Mortality Task Force
Update
Attachment A

Executive Department
State of California

PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS the State of California is experiencing record drought conditions, which have persisted for the last four years; and

WHEREAS on January 17, 2014, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist throughout the State of California due to severe drought conditions; and

WHEREAS a lack of precipitation over the last four years has made trees in many regions of California susceptible to epidemic infestations of native bark beetles, which are constrained under normal circumstances by the defense mechanisms of healthy trees; and

WHEREAS these drought conditions and resulting bark beetle infestations across broad areas have caused vast tree mortality in several regions of the state, with the United States Forest Service estimating that over 22 million trees are dead and that tens of millions more are likely to die by the end of this year; and

WHEREAS recent scientific measurements suggest that the scale of this tree die-off is unprecedented in modern history; and

WHEREAS this die-off is of such scale that it worsens wildfire risk across large regions of the State, presents life safety risks from falling trees to Californians living in impacted rural, forested communities, and worsens the threat of erosion across watersheds; and

WHEREAS such wildfires will release thousands of tons of greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollutants; and

WHEREAS the circumstances of the tree die-off, by reason of its magnitude, is or is likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of any single county, city and county, or city and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of section 8558(b) of the California Government Code, I find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist within the State of California due to these events; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of section 8571 of the California Government Code, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this order would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the drought.



NOW, THEREFORE, I, EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes, including the California Emergency Services Act, and in particular, section 8625 of the California Government Code, **HEREBY PROCLAIM A STATE OF EMERGENCY** to exist within the State of California.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Department of Transportation, and the California Energy Commission shall immediately identify areas of the State that represent high hazard zones for wildfire and falling trees using best available science and geospatial data.
2. State agencies, utilities, and local governments to the extent required by their existing responsibilities to protect the public health and safety, shall undertake efforts to remove dead or dying trees in these high hazard zones that threaten power lines, roads and other evacuation corridors, critical community infrastructure, and other existing structures. Incidental vegetation such as shrubs that restrict access for safe and efficient removal of the dead and dying trees also may be removed. The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection shall issue emergency guidelines setting forth the relevant criteria, and the California Conservation Corps shall assist government entities in implementing this directive to the extent feasible.
3. The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection shall identify potential storage locations for removed trees across impacted areas in partnership with federal agencies and local jurisdictions.
4. The California Department of Transportation shall formally request immediate assistance through the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program, Title 23, United States Code section 125, in order to obtain federal assistance for removal of dead and dying trees that are adjacent to highways.
5. The Department of General Services will identify state facilities, and the California Department of Transportation shall identify highway and road corridors, where woodchips produced from dead trees can be used as mulch.
6. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection shall work with impacted counties to distribute portable equipment across high hazard zones so that isolated communities can remove and process wood waste locally where appropriate.
7. The California Air Resources Board and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection shall work together and with federal land managers and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to expand the practice of prescribed burns, which reduce fire risk and avoid significant pollution from major wildfires, and increase the number of allowable days on a temporary basis to burn tree waste that has been removed in high hazard areas.

8. The California Public Utilities Commission shall utilize its authority to extend contracts on existing forest bioenergy facilities receiving feedstock from high hazard zones.
9. The California Public Utilities Commission shall take expedited action to ensure that contracts for new forest bioenergy facilities that receive feedstock from high hazard zones can be executed within six months, including initiation of a targeted renewable auction mechanism and consideration of adjustments to the BioMat Program defined pursuant to Public Utilities Code section 399.20. No later than six months after the BioMat program begins, the California Public Utilities Commission shall evaluate the need for revisions to the program to facilitate contracts for forest bioenergy facilities.
10. The California Public Utilities Commission shall prioritize facilitation of interconnection agreements for forest bioenergy facilities in high hazard zones, and shall order the use of expedited mediation or other alternative dispute resolution processes when conflicts delay development of projects.
11. The California Energy Commission shall prioritize grant funding from the Electric Program Investment Charge for woody biomass-to-energy technology development and deployment, consistent with direction from the California Public Utilities Commission.
12. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the California Energy Commission, and other appropriate agencies shall work with land managers to estimate biomass feedstock availability, storage locations, and volumes that may be available for use as bioenergy feedstock at existing and new facilities.
13. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Energy Commission shall work with bioenergy facilities that accept forest biomass from high hazards zones to identify potential funds to help offset higher feedstock costs.
14. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will work with affected counties and existing wood product markets to determine the feasibility for expanded wood product markets in California.
15. For purposes of carrying out directives 1, 2, and 5 through 8, Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) of the Public Resources Code and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division are hereby suspended. This suspension applies to any actions taken by state agencies, and for actions taken by local agencies where the state agency with primary responsibility for implementing the directive concurs that local action is required, as well as for any necessary permits or approvals required to complete these actions.

16. In order to ensure that equipment and services necessary for emergency response can be procured quickly, the provisions of the Government Code and the Public Contract Code applicable to state contracts, including, but not limited to, advertising and competitive bidding requirements, are hereby suspended as necessary to carry out this Proclamation. Approval by the Department of Finance is required prior to the execution of any contract entered into pursuant to these directives.

17. For purposes of this Proclamation, Chapter 3.5 (commencing with section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of the Government Code is suspended for the development and adoption of regulations or guidelines needed to carry out the provisions in this Order. Any entity issuing regulations or guidelines pursuant to this directive shall conduct a public meeting on the regulations and guidelines prior to adopting them.

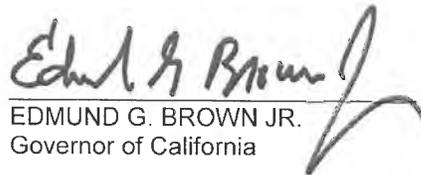
18. The Office of Emergency Services shall provide local government assistance as appropriate under the authority of the California Disaster Assistance Act, California Government Code section 8680 et seq. and California Code of Regulations, title 19, section 2900 et seq.

19. State agencies shall actively monitor tree removal efforts directed by this Proclamation to assess their effectiveness in protecting forest health and strengthening forest resilience.

This Proclamation is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this proclamation be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this proclamation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 30th day of October 2015.


EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State



Agenda Item IXd

Tree Mortality Task Force Update

Presented by:
Randi Jorgensen



Bass Lake area of Sierra NF (Steve Dunsky USDA Forest Service)





Cedar Fire – August 2016 (Casey Christie / The Californian)





Questions or
Comments?

Background

For more than six years, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has been actively involved in issues relating to forest and community health. The Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI) was adopted by the Board in 2011 and was endorsed by all 22 Sierra counties, as well as numerous other groups and organizations. It called for parties to work together in a collaborative manner with the objectives of restoring forests to ecological health and improving local communities' social and economic wellbeing.

As a part of SNFCI's ongoing work, the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council (Coordinating Council) continues to represent a wide range of diverse perspectives unified by the common goals of increasing the pace and scale of restoration of the Sierra Nevada's forests and building healthier ecosystems, economies, and communities in the Sierra Nevada. Various forest collaboratives also continue their work to carry out this same mission on the ground in specific watersheds and communities.

In March 2015, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) was launched, following close coordination of SNC staff with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Region 5. The WIP is a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program to restore the health of California's primary watershed through increased investment and needed policy changes. The USFS is actively engaged in all aspects of the WIP, including general coordination, communications, funding development, policy, and project identification and implementation. In July 2015, SNC staff and representatives from USFS Region 5 met with Secretary John Laird and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) staff, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that commits the CNRA and USFS Region 5 to a cooperative state/federal collaboration to support the WIP. The SNC is designated as the lead state agency for coordination and implementation of the WIP.

Boardmembers Bob Kirkwood and Pam Giacomini continue to serve as the Board committee providing oversight and guidance for the WIP effort.

Current Status

WIP Pilot Watersheds

The WIP Regional Strategy (Strategy) completed earlier this year guides WIP efforts. The Strategy focuses on the need for increased investment, policy and process improvements, and increased wood/biomass infrastructure in order to achieve desired outcomes. The Strategy also calls for the establishment of "watershed pilots." These are not pilots in the traditional sense of the word. Many pilot projects already exist that focus on the testing of specific, on-the-ground restoration practices. There are also a large number of large landscape pilots, in which the focus is on expanding the scale of restoration work beyond traditional boundaries. The WIP pilots are designed to explore innovative utilization of existing tools and/or development of new approaches to significantly increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration – new ways of doing

business. The pilots will focus on opportunities in the area of investment, governance, and policy/process improvement.

Working closely with Boardmembers Bob Kirkwood and Pam Giacomini, SNC staff has continued to further refine the concept of WIP Pilot Watersheds. As we've considered the question of pilot locations over the last six months, the number of innovative efforts underway in the central Sierra/Tahoe region have come to the SNC's attention. In addition to a number of existing large landscapes efforts, the area includes the Tahoe National Forest, which was the first forest in USFS Region 5 to complete its WIP assessment.

The attached Tahoe-Central Sierra Forest Resilience Initiative white paper ([Attachment A](#)) describes the opportunities present in that landscape to both increase pace and scale of restoration and test new approaches that could prove to be "game changers." This landscape also likely presents our best opportunity to try to make a stand against northward creeping tree mortality by increasing resiliency in the forests and watersheds in this area.

On October 13, the SNC and the California Tahoe Conservancy co-hosted a meeting of a small group of agency and organization partners actively involved in the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative landscape to determine whether or not to pursue this opportunity to leverage the individual efforts into the greater success of the whole. The group included the Nature Conservancy, the National Forest Foundation, Sagehen Experimental Forest, CAL FIRE, USFS Region 5, the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests, and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (USFS). There was strong interest in collaborating and identifying a process for determining next steps and leveraging our collective efforts. The SNC and the Tahoe Conservancy have agreed to provide leadership and coordination of the effort. The SNC is particularly interested in identifying specific pilot opportunities within this landscape to test game-changing approaches to investment, process, or governance.

While the pilot will receive staff and financial support from SNC, we will continue efforts at the regional level to pursue WIP objectives that will benefit the entire Region. This includes increased investment, policy, and process improvements and increased infrastructure. The SNC will continue to fund projects and work with partners throughout the Region to further the purposes of WIP.

Communications

After a rich public comment period and additional feedback from our agency partners, the WIP Regional Strategy has been finalized and posted to www.restorethesierra.org. Our partners from the Communications Team at USFS Region 5 have worked with SNC staff to develop a more engaging visual representation of the WIP and the Regional Strategy in the form of a video animation project. This video has been posted on the WIP website to launch the Regional Strategy to a wider audience. We are also utilizing this video for a range of other opportunities to promote better understanding of, and

engagement in, the WIP and encourage our Board and partners to do the same. The video is available on www.restorethesierra.org and on the [SNC's YouTube channel](#).

The SNC and USFS Region 5 communications teams have also been working together to jointly announce the results of a new study on greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from federal lands. The study, authored by USFS scientist Leland Tarnay and NASA scientist Christopher Potter, tracked emissions from wildfires on federal lands between 2013 and 2015. The results of the study indicate that, while the initial pulse of greenhouse gas emissions from large, high-severity wildfires is significant, the emissions released over decades from a burn footprint as fire-killed trees decay may actually dwarf those initial emissions. These results, combined with the trend of larger and more severe wildfires across the Sierra suggests that some forests may have transitioned from net GHG sequesters to net GHG emitters. This trend has obvious and potentially significant adverse impacts on California's effort to reduce overall GHG emissions. The WIP was highlighted in the announcement of the results of this study as a landscape-scale effort focused on reducing emissions from large, damaging wildfires. The study's summary is available in this board packet ([Attachment B](#)).

WIP Watershed Rapid Assessments

The USFS has delivered their Region 5 Assessment in its raw form (GIS, with accompanying tables) to their individual forests, and is working through the data with them to ensure its accuracy. A briefing that explains the changes that have occurred in the assessment approach between the Tahoe National Forest's initial attempt and now, as well as a copy of the original pilot WIP assessment the Tahoe National Forest completed, are included in your board materials ([Attachment C](#)). The Forest Service is now aiming for most of the forest-specific assessments to be completed by the end of January 2017.

Work with the National Park Service assessments is proceeding. SNC staff is making use of what they already have in terms of tools and also helping them to build capacity from a GIS/database standpoint. Sequoia & Kings Canyon, Yosemite, and Lassen national parks will be complete by the end of the calendar year, if not sooner.

The Bureau of Land Management completed their first "template" assessment on the Mokelumne watershed in June. They don't expect to be able to do all areas by the end of this year, but SNC staff has helped them to prioritize specific regions of the Sierra for first, second, and third "rounds" of assessment work. They will complete the American River and the Yuba-Bear watersheds by the end of this year, and the Tuolumne, Merced, Stanislaus, and Cosumnes watersheds will be completed by the end of January.

At the time of the writing of this report, our partners at the Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council (SCRMC) had provided almost a third of their WIP assessments, which include more general issues and opportunities assessments in

each WIP Watershed Assessment Area. They should provide the bulk of the assessments by the end of the calendar year. The initial assessments we received are currently being reviewed and vetted for accuracy and gaps, and to develop the best format and platform for sharing with our partners.

Southern Sierra Conservation Cooperative

The Southern Sierra Conservation Cooperative (SSCC) was formed in 2009, moved by a recognition that climate-driven changes threatened to alter key ecosystem functions of the Southern Sierra Nevada ecoregion. This includes the provision of clean air and water, biodiversity, maintenance of soil fertility, flood attenuation, and sustainable provision of amenities and commodities valued by humans. Although the SSCC ceased formal meetings in 2013, and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expired in 2015, the drivers that originally inspired the SSCC continue to hold true.

In the past few years, the southern Sierra Nevada Ecoregion has been disproportionately impacted by “agents of change” in the form of insect- and drought-induced tree mortality and wildfire of an unprecedented scale and frequency. Catalyzed by these events, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy re-convened the SSCC in April 2016 to address the implications for land management, both in terms of immediate response and long-term strategies for ecosystem resiliency under a changing climate. Participants, primarily composed of representatives from the MOU signatory agencies, agreed that there is a need for the SSCC to exist to advance science-based novel thinking and creative management strategies necessary to preserving southern Sierra Nevada ecosystems and associated benefits.

Next Steps

The SNC staff will continue to work with the California Tahoe Conservancy, USFS Region 5 and other partners to further refine the goals, structure, and next steps for the planning and implementation of the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative as the landscape for the initial WIP Pilot Watershed efforts.

Staff will work with the USFS and other partners to implement the WIP Regional Strategy, utilizing the new animated video version to increase understanding and commitment. Staff will continue to refine the list of potential WIP metrics to an initial set of high-level, Regional metrics with which we'll gauge the effectiveness of the WIP over time.

Once SNC receives the majority of the components of WIP Watershed Rapid Assessments, SNC, USFS, and other WIP partners will start reviewing and ground-truthing the findings, followed by an analysis to determine the dominant storylines that emerge about the conditions, restoration needs, and opportunities in these Watershed Assessment Areas. Once we get a better idea of what the completed assessments look like, we'll identify the best mechanism for sharing them, and other information and resources, with our partners.

The SNC has indicated our willingness to commit staff resources to coordinating a second phase of the Southern Sierra Conservation Cooperative, and we are currently in discussions with USFS Region 5 regarding agency leadership support, ideally under a renewed MOU, to reinvigorate the SSCC in a way that would best serve land management agencies in the Southern Sierra Ecoregion. At this time, both Sierra National Forest and Sequoia National Forest have indicated that they are fully supportive of signing a new MOU to move this work forward.

The SNC staff will continue to meet with USFS Region 5 staff to identify topics that will provide the most beneficial overlap between the WIP and the Sierra Cascade Dialog (Dialog). Established in November 2010, the Dialog was established by USFS Region 5 to hold regular conversations among engaged stakeholders on a range of issues across the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades, with a specific focus on the national forests in these regions.

The SNC staff also continues to work in a variety of active roles in several task forces and teams to move WIP objectives forward, including but not limited to the Governor's Tree Mortality Task Force and Forest Climate Action Team, a team working on the implementation of the Prescribed Fire Memorandum of Understanding, and the Sierra LiDAR Cooperative Discussion Group. Staff will also further its work in the four key areas of Policy, Funding, Communications, and Restoration Implementation. Staff will provide regular updates to the Board as to progress in the development and implementation of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

The Tahoe – Central Sierra Resilient Forest Initiative

Summary

Several years of drought, increased temperatures, and overgrown forests present an unprecedented threat of massive bark beetle infestations and highly destructive wildfires to the iconic forest landscapes and local communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin and central Sierra. Although tree mortality and other drought impacts have been much more severe to date in the southern Sierra, the central Sierra and the Lake Tahoe Basin are also likely to face devastating impacts without an aggressive coordinated effort among the Region's public agencies, the private sector, and key stakeholder groups.

Building upon the activities of the California Governor's Tree Mortality Task Force and several large-scale regional efforts, the Sierra Nevada and Tahoe Conservancies, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), are proposing a Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative. The Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (Initiative) will seek to accelerate implementation of large-landscape forest health projects and the development of biomass utilization infrastructure, while providing the opportunity to explore innovative process, investment, and governance tools. The landscape is comprised of the Lake Tahoe Basin and the American, Bear, Carson, Truckee, and Yuba watersheds.

Why Here? Why Now?

There are a wide variety of local, state, and federal partners investing significant resources into this landscape. Many of the innovative projects underway in this landscape are designed to overcome obstacles to increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration but face a variety of challenges to get to scale. This location offers a sweet spot where the combination of partners, capacity, and appropriate scale could be used to actually increase the pace and scale of restoration in a real, demonstrable way. Breakthroughs are possible here that may not be in other locations, including establishing economic value for long-term carbon and water benefits, private sector investment to build infrastructure for biomass utilization, larger scale use of managed fire for ecological restoration, impacting ecological values at a meaningful scale, and establishing and implementing large-landscape cross-boundary strategies.

These watersheds are crucial for downstream communities, agricultural interests, and the environment. They provide flows critical to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California's water hub. The forests here contain large amounts of carbon, provide significant fish and wildlife habitat, and are a recreational playground for visitors year round. This location's proximity to urban areas provides the opportunity to demonstrate clear links between upstream and downstream watershed health, and also allows ease of access for key stakeholders and decision makers to see the impacts of restoration firsthand. It provides the opportunity to create a communication network of how to share successes, needs, and lessons learned across collaboratives, the rest of the Sierra Nevada Region, the State of California, and beyond.

Key Goals and Activities

The major goal of the Initiative is to improve the health and resiliency of the forest ecosystems and communities in the central Sierra and Lake Tahoe Basin by:

- Supporting, developing and implementing science-based large-landscape projects with integrated design, implementation, and monitoring
- Accelerating planning, permitting, and implementing high-priority projects
- Increasing and leveraging federal, state, local, and private funding
- Integrating research and monitoring into activities to guide creation of fire and climate resilient forests and fire-adapted communities across ownerships
- Developing a regional biomass utilization strategy, including the establishment of new wood and biomass processing facilities, to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and offset forest restoration costs
- In concert with existing efforts, establishing a regional, science-based, conservation planning and implementation framework to improve forest health; protect/increase carbon storage; conserve biodiversity; address the major threats to the region's forests and watersheds, including drought, climate change, catastrophic fire, and invasive pests; and protect the drinking water supplies of millions of downstream users
- Developing a collaborative communications network which will share and amplify messages about successes, needs, lessons learned, and opportunities to duplicate innovative pilot approaches in other locations
- Developing a strong relationship between this landscape and nearby urban areas, especially Sacramento, so that downstream legislators and stakeholders can see firsthand the impact of restoration activities in their upstream headwaters
- Exploring a pilot to demonstrate the possibility of successful private investment in headwaters restoration to yield an improvement in ecological services for investors

Related Efforts

The Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative will seek to address and help coordinate implementation of several state and federal planning priorities in the central Sierra, including the California Governor's state of emergency proclamation on tree mortality, the California Water Action Plan, the forthcoming California Forest Carbon Plan, and the USFS's National Cohesive Strategy and Region 5 Leadership Intent.

Consistent with the framework developed by the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP), a collaborative effort of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, USFS, California Tahoe Conservancy and other partners, the Initiative will build upon and integrate several large-scale forest and watershed restoration efforts now underway in the central Sierra, examples of which include:

- The South Fork American River (SOFAR) Cohesive Strategy, which covers over 400,000 acres and seeks to establish resilient landscapes, fire-adapted communities, and safe and effective wildfire response

- The Fire Adapted 50 Project, led by CAL FIRE and the USFS, to create a series of fuel breaks using an all-lands approach to treat fuel across multiple jurisdictions in the Highway 50 corridor in the South Fork American River for community protection, emergency access and egress
- The French Meadows Project, led by Placer County Water Agency, the Nature Conservancy, American River Conservancy, Tahoe National Forest, University of California, and Sierra Nevada Conservancy, to restore the headwaters of the middle fork of the American River
- The Truckee River Watershed Restoration Project led by the National Forest Foundation as part of its Treasured Landscapes Program
- The Sagehen Experimental Forest, managed by the University of California, Berkeley, which is implementing collaboratively designed forest health projects and facilitating research to better understand the spectrum of opportunities and effects of innovative approaches to forest management
- Lake Tahoe West, a partnership between the National Forest Foundation, the California Tahoe Conservancy, CA State Parks, and the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Pacific Southwest Research Station to develop an all-lands, landscape-scale strategy to restore and protect more than 80,000 acres on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe
- The West Carson Project, a large-scale forest health and habitat restoration project to improve aspen stands, reduce fuel loading, and restore functionality to the West Carson Watershed
- U.S. Forest Service's Landscape Management Demonstration Areas (LMDA) initiative, which was launched in 2013 to fast-track the development of effective planning and implementation of restoration projects through integrated science and management across large landscapes and diverse ownerships to enhance climate adaptation and ecosystem resilience. The SOFAR landscape is one of two LMDA project areas in California.

Key Elements

The Tahoe-Sierra Initiative will include six major elements:

1. Early detection/monitoring: Identify areas with the highest tree mortality and greatest potential for additional mortality, in coordination with the Tree Mortality Task Force.
2. Planning and regulatory: Identify shovel-ready projects where environmental processes are complete, as well as high-priority projects in the planning process. Pursue opportunities to expedite the planning and review process.
3. Implementation: Secure additional investments necessary to accelerate implementation of shovel-ready projects and large-landscape projects to improve forest health and resiliency. This includes mechanical thinning and harvest of forests, the use of prescribed and managed fire as appropriate and the restoration of meadows and streams, with integrated research and monitoring

efforts intended to test and validate effectiveness and to serve as an information feedback for project design and implementation.

4. Public information/outreach: Disseminate information to the public, key stakeholders, and decision makers as to the need to act now and the consequences of failing to do so.
5. Infrastructure/utilization: Develop a regional strategy to expand markets and create infrastructure for forest restoration byproducts, including bioenergy and wood product facilities.
6. Science-based conservation planning framework: Develop a comprehensive planning and evaluation framework to assess the condition of the central Sierra's forested landscapes; identify priority treatment areas and approaches through modeling, mapping, and decision-support tools; guide restoration projects; establish performance measures and evaluate their effectiveness; and pursue opportunities for adaptive management.

The Process

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the California Tahoe Conservancy, and US Forest Service Region 5 have agreed to provide the leadership and coordination of this Initiative. Local agencies, conservation organizations, the wood products industry, recreational organizations, and other partners will be key to successful implementation. The effort is intended to work with various existing efforts, support additional activity and explore creative and innovative ways to increase the pace and scale of restoration. The Initiative is collaborative in nature, but is not a formal "collaborative." As such, the structure will remain flexible and the effort is designed to be opportunistic in order to explore "new ways of doing business."

Conclusion

While it is impossible to predict exactly what will happen in this landscape in coming years and decades, the science is clear that without a significant effort to restore the health and resilience of these watersheds they remain at severe risk of large, severe wildfire and increased tree mortality. Taking the necessary actions now gives us the best opportunity to reduce the impact of such events and protect the many benefits that come from this area.

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Direct Greenhouse Gas Emissions From Megafires Are Only One Piece of the Forest Carbon Emission Story

Leland Tarnay (USFS) and Christopher Potter (NASA-Ames)

Background And Purpose

GHG emissions caused by wildfire do not necessarily end when the fire is put out, especially when megafires burn at uncharacteristically high severity and kill the trees that comprise the canopy. This brief summarizes what we know about the relative importance of direct fire emissions, post-fire mortality-driven emissions, and drought-related emissions for the last three years on federal lands.

GHG Emissions Direct From Fire Combustion:

In 2013, the Rim fire, fueled by accumulated, dry biomass, burned over 250,000 acres and emitted 10-15 MMTCO₂e (million metric tons of CO₂ equivalents), ushering in a 3-year period of unprecedented fire activity in California, corresponding with unprecedented drought. Here is what we know about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and National Park Service (NPS) forests in CA during that timeframe:

- Methods for estimating wildfire emissions are an area of active research, but our best estimates of

total emissions in 2013-2015 for GHGs from CA wildfires on federal lands alone have consistently amounted to around 20-25 Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MMTCO₂e) each year.

- Each year, one or two large megafires generated somewhere around half the total wildfire emissions from federal lands in CA, and 4 large fires accounted for around half of the total emissions over that 3 year period (Figure 1)

2013-2015 Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions from California Wildfires

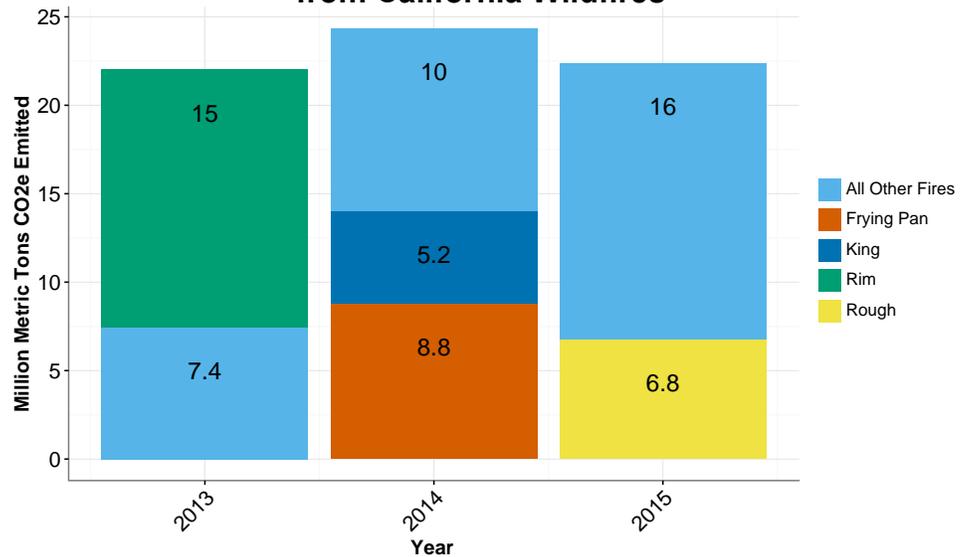


Figure 1. Active wildfire greenhouse gas emissions¹ from National Park Service and National Forest lands in CA, 2013-2015. Emissions from the 2015 Valley and Butte fire (CA State lands) were not available at the time of analysis.

¹ Wildfire emissions estimated using FOFEM 6.1, with a geospatial preprocessor developed for the California Air Resources Board.

Post-Fire and Mortality-Induced GHG Emissions

Models based on satellite data show that in many places the amount of carbon soaked up by green, photosynthesizing (healthy) plants exceeds the amount of carbon released as CO₂ by plant and microbial respiration (net absorption of GHGs, as new biomass, to the landscape from the atmosphere), at least in years with normal precipitation. This balance between respiration and photosynthesis is called Net Ecosystem Productivity, or NEP. In drought years and in places where forests are unhealthy and tree death (mortality) is high, this balance can change to a negative value, meaning that the landscape is losing carbon to the atmosphere in the form of CO₂ and other GHGs (net GHG emissions).

- Figure 2 shows evidence that the post-fire mortality from the 2013 Rim fire and the 2014 King and Frying Pan fires has caused hotspots of negative NEP values in subsequent years, indicating substantial post-fire losses of GHGs to the atmosphere due to these fires.
- Figure 2 also shows widespread, but less intense losses, likely due to drought and insect mortality.
- Neither the precise size of these annual emissions, nor how much is due to drought versus fire mortality in these post-fire hotspots is yet precisely known,

but recent research suggests that the magnitude of these post-fire emissions in subsequent years could rival or even exceed the direct emissions of the initial wildfire event (Matchett, J.M. et al. 2015, Battles, J. et al. 2015).

- Over decades, this progressive loss due to drought and wildfire-caused mortality could tip the scales so that some forests may release more carbon (as GHGs) than they absorb (Gonzalez et al., 2015).
- Other recent research has found that low and moderate severity fires (e.g., prescribed fire) reduce mortality due to fire and drought (van Mantgem, P., et al. 2016; Hurteau, M. D., et al. 2015; Hood, S. M., et al. 2015), which may help minimize the subsequent GHG emissions.

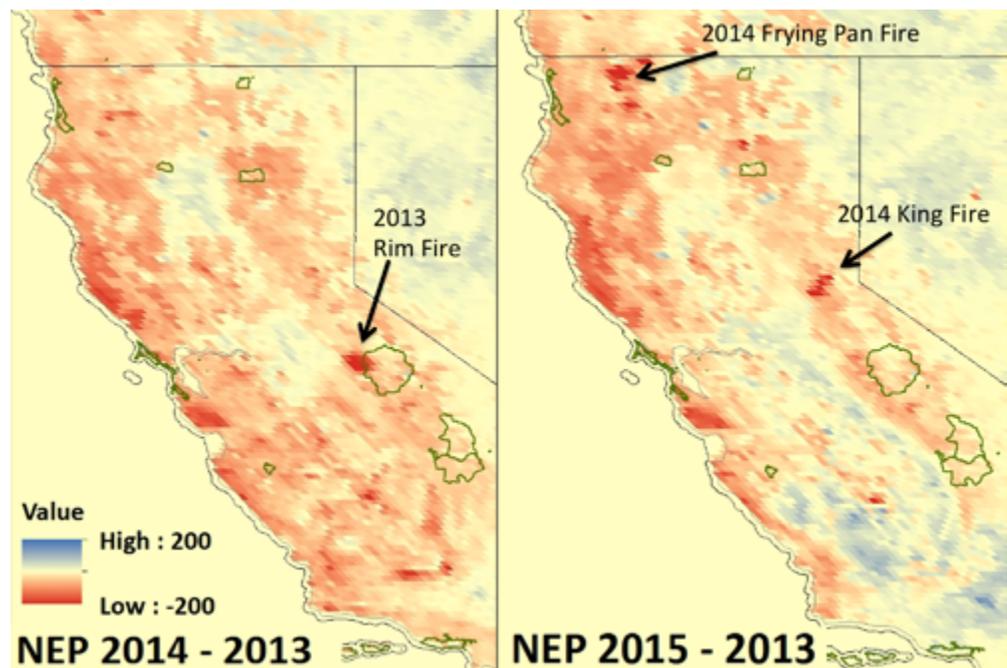


Figure 2. Satellite-derived Net Ecosystem Productivity (NEP)¹, showing intense areas of progressive net carbon gain (blue) or loss (red, grams of carbon per square meter) from burned areas after 2013 and 2014 fires. Specifically, the above figures depict the differences between 2013 NEP and 2014 NEP (left panel) and the difference between 2013 and 2015 NEP (right panel). Larger areas of progressive net loss compared to this 2013 baseline year, likely due to drought and insect mortality, are also apparent throughout the CA forests (green outlines are National Park borders for orientation).

¹ Net Ecosystem Productivity (NEP) is the amount of carbon gained on a landscape from plant growth minus the amount lost from plant and microbial respiration: a negative value indicates carbon lost to the atmosphere as GHGs. Estimates are based on: Potter, C., S. Klooster, A. Huete, and V. Genovese, 2007, Terrestrial carbon sinks for the United States predicted from MODIS satellite data and ecosystem modeling, *Earth Interactions*, 11: 1-2

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U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Briefing Paper

Date: October 31, 2016

Topic: Forest Service (FS) and Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Forest Assessments.

Background: In September 2015, Region 5 Forest Service (FS) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Natural Resources Agency to work in partnership to develop the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). The WIP was initiated to aid in restoring the health of California's primary watersheds through increased investment, needed policy changes and implementation of increased ecological restoration. This has a direct tie to the Regional Forester's Leadership Intent which emphasizes increasing the pace and scale of ecological restoration.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is the lead State Agency and has been working with the FS and other partners to specifically identify the ecological restoration needs on National Forests and adjacent lands. To accomplish this, the FS and SNC agreed to complete a pilot forest assessment for the Tahoe National Forest (TNF). The TNF assessment was completed in August 2015 and it identified needs for meadow restoration, road treatments, aquatic organism passage improvements, mine restoration, invasive plant treatments and forest health and fuels treatments. The process relied on existing data, but required months of time from local natural resource managers to discuss potential scenarios, estimate costs and refine the assessment. The TNF assessment ran two scenarios summarizing ecological restoration in areas that 1) are not constrained by current land management plan and congressional designated lands and 2) only summarized opportunities as permitted under their current plan, policy and law. Both scenarios did not consider funding as a limitation. The TNF assessment tabulated data by watershed and did not have a spatial component (i.e. was not mapable).

The TNF assessment took a number of months to complete. Upon completion of the TNF pilot assessment, SNC and FS staff met to review the assessment and refine a process for the other National Forests in the SNC Region to complete assessments with less time and investment. The FS Regional information management staff developed a computer driven project tool to complete a quick assessment from existing FS data. Data were summarized for each Forest to serve as the baseline assessment. Data such as vegetation types, constrained areas such as wilderness and spotted owl nest areas, stream courses, roads, etc. were tabulated. These assessments summarized the opportunities by ecological restoration category for each Forest in the Sierra Nevada's and within the constraints of current land management plans, policy and law. Identified opportunities included meadows restoration, road treatments, aquatic organisms passage improvements, abandoned mine restoration, invasive plants and forest health and fuels treatments. The assessments also include a spatial component so maps can be generated, something that was added after the TNF pilot assessment.

These data were made available to each National Forest in February 2016. The task for each forest is to verify and make adjustments to their forest assessment based on their professional and local knowledge. The forest assessments are now summarized in a report prepared by regional staff. We continue to work with the forest staffs to update the data including the cost estimates that were made for each restoration activity. Forests were encouraged to review past planning documents to ensure they captured any potential opportunities that were not listed in the databases queried.

These forest assessments are repeatable at any time and can easily be shared with partners as a planning tool or to identify funding opportunities. They also can be used in the Forest plan revision process to look at the need for treatment and changing landscapes.

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Watershed Assessment Tahoe National Forest

August 10, 2015

This is a broad scale assessment to estimate the amount of watershed improvement activities possible over a 10 year period under the two different scenarios described below.

Scenario 1: Constrained by Forest Plan Standards, unconstrained by funding.

Constrained areas include: Wilderness, Protected Activity Centers (PACs), Wild and Scenic Corridors, Critical Aquatic Refuges (CARs), Research Natural Areas.

Scenario 2: Only constraint is no mechanical treatments in wilderness areas.

Assumes treatment areas will have unlimited funding, and there will be no constraints by Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines. Only prescribed fire would be used in Wilderness areas.

Watershed Assessment Unit:

This assessment used watersheds at the Hydrologic Unit 10 (HU10) scale (Table 1). Watersheds ranged in size from 1 sq. miles to 198 sq. miles.

Proposed Treatments:

This Watershed Improvement Plan includes the following treatments and their objectives to restore these watersheds:

- Meadow Restoration: Improves habitat, restores late season flows and reduces effects of damaging floods. Increases resilience to climate change.
- Road Sediment Reduction Treatments: Reduces downstream sedimentation and reduces risk of landslides following intense fires.
- Aquatic Organism Passage: Increases available aquatic habitat through improving aquatic organism passage through road crossings
- Invasive Species Removal: Reduces fire risk from invasive plant species (such as scotch broom), reduces or prevents further spread of the species, and improves wildlife habitats.
- Hydraulic Mining Restoration: Reduces sediment and toxins from past hydraulic mining operations in the Yuba and American River Watersheds.
- Forest Health / Fuels Reduction Treatments: Reduces risk of high intensity wildfire outside the range of natural variability, and improves forest resilience to climate change.

Assumptions:

- Funding is unconstrained: As there are no funding constraints, it is assumed it will be possible to obtain the workforce and other resources necessary to complete this program of work.
- A WRAP will be developed for each watershed: Included in the cost is the development of a Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) which is a component of the USFS Watershed Condition Framework. This plan would provide detailed information about what projects are necessary to improve the watershed, including fuels treatments, meadow restoration, road improvements, etc.

Table 1: Analysis Watersheds and Ownership Patterns.

Watershed Name	Private Land (sq. mi)	Tahoe NF (sq. mi)	Total Watershed Area (Sq. mi)	Tahoe NF (% of Watershed)
City of Reno-Truckee River	11	4	15	27
Deer Creek	2	9	12	80
Downie River	4	69	73	95
Little Truckee River	16	142	158	90
Lower Middle Fork American River	1	6	8	84
Lower North Fork American River	6	19	24	76
Lower North Yuba River	12	60	72	83
Lower South Yuba River	24	37	61	60
Middle North Yuba River	8	65	73	89
Middle Yuba River	89	108	197	55
North Fork Middle Fork American River	15	76	91	84
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	101	73	174	42
Rubicon River	5	50	54	91
Sierra Valley	20	100	120	84
Smithneck Creek	9	49	58	84
Upper Bear River	13	20	32	62
Upper Long Valley Creek	1	1	1	54
Upper Middle Fork American River	12	75	87	87
Upper North Fork American River	53	142	196	73
Upper North Yuba River	47	95	141	67
Upper South Yuba River	84	114	198	58

Meadow Restoration

All meadows over 15 acres will be evaluated for treatment and 80% of meadows will require some treatment. The goal would be to restore the natural flow paths and water table. Treatments of this type typically include removing ditches, diversions, railroad grades, or rehabilitating gullies and other similar actions.

Treatment costs are estimated at \$150,000 per meadow, including the planning and design costs. The constraints in Scenario 1 generally do not constrain meadow restoration, so the two scenarios are assumed to be the same. Acres of meadow restoration by watershed are displayed in the table below:

Table 2. Watershed Meadows Restoration Area and Costs by Watershed.

Watershed Name	Meadows (acres)	Meadows (No.)	Meadow Restoration Cost (K)
City of Reno-Truckee River			
Deer Creek	-	-	-
Downie River	205	7	840
Little Truckee River	2,298	26	3,120
Lower Middle Fork American River	16	1	150
Lower North Fork American River	15	1	150
Lower North Yuba River	15	1	150
Lower South Yuba River	15	1	150
Middle North Yuba River	67	2	200
Middle Yuba River	-	-	-
North Fork Middle Fork American River	-	-	-
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	251	3	360
Rubicon River	137	3	360
Sierra Valley	609	10	1,200
Smithneck Creek	223	4	480
Upper Bear River	-	-	-
Upper Middle Fork American River	-	-	-
Upper North Fork American River	17	1	150
Upper North Yuba River	583	15	1,800
Upper South Yuba River	361	13	1,560

Road Improvement Treatments

Roads produce over 90% of sediment in forested watersheds, and unsurfaced or native surface roads produce 25x more sediment than graveled or paved roads. Additionally, roads extend the stream network, increasing peak flows from rainstorm events by 50%. For example, a 25 year rainstorm event can produce a peak flow similar to a 100 year flood event due to road hydrologic connectivity. Costs were estimated based on the costs of recent similar projects.

Road Treatments and costs include the following:

- Decommission unauthorized roads (10k/mi)
- Stormproof level 1 (closed) roads (10k/mi)
- Increase drainage on Level 2 roads (5k/mi)

The following estimated sediment reduction from these road treatments were used in calculating effectiveness. These figures were obtained from research on roads, some of which was local to the Sierra Nevada.

- Road treatments will reduce sediment by 90% from unauthorized roads, 75% from level 1 roads and 50% from level 2 roads.
- Road hydrologic connectivity will decrease by 70%

Miles of roads treated by watershed, and estimated sediment reductions are given in the table below. As with meadow restoration, the constraints in Scenario 1 generally do not constrain work on roads, so the scenarios are assumed to be the same.

Table 3. Watershed Road Treatment Costs and % Decrease in Road Sediment Production.

Watershed Name	FS Roads Treated (miles)	Decrease in Road Sediment Production (%)	Road Treatment Costs (\$K)
City of Reno-Truckee River	1	29	10
Deer Creek	51	70	392
Downie River	70	70	546
Little Truckee River	452	60	3,686
Lower Middle Fork American River	24	61	173
Lower North Fork American River	89	64	669
Lower North Yuba River	198	53	1,500
Lower South Yuba River	143	57	1,095
Middle North Yuba River	227	51	1,753
Middle Yuba River	273	64	2,239
North Fork Middle Fork American River	276	51	1,959
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	216	72	1,771
Rubicon River	43	54	368
Sierra Valley	300	60	2,396
Smithneck Creek	121	61	986
Upper Bear River	72	68	566
Upper Middle Fork American River	215	49	1,464
Upper North Fork American River	193	57	1,603
Upper North Yuba River	248	57	1,793
Upper South Yuba River	194	64	1,517

Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP): Available aquatic habitat would be increased through replacing road stream crossings with structures that allow aquatic organism passage, where such replacement work would increase available habitat by at least 1 mile. Increased habitat was calculated based on recent surveys. An average cost of \$750k per AOP project was estimated based on recent similar projects. AOP projects by watershed are displayed in the table below:

Table 4. Aquatic Organism Passage Projects and Costs by Watershed.

Watershed Name	No. of AOP Projects Identified	Habitat Increased (miles)	AOP Costs (K\$)
City of Reno-Truckee River	0		
Deer Creek	1	3	750
Downie River		0	0
Little Truckee River	4	10	3,000
Lower Middle Fork American River	0		0
Lower North Fork American River	2	2	1,500
Lower North Yuba River	6	14	4,500
Lower South Yuba River	1	2	750
Middle North Yuba River	6	10	4,500
Middle Yuba River	1	1	750
North Fork Middle Fork American River	1	2	1,500
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	1	1	1,500
Rubicon River	0	0	0
Sierra Valley	1	1	750
Smithneck Creek	1	2	750
Upper Bear River	1	2	750
Upper Middle Fork American River	2	3	1,500
Upper North Fork American River	1	2	750
Upper North Yuba River	4	9	3,000
Upper South Yuba River	1	1	750

As with meadow restoration, the constraints in Scenario 1 generally do not constrain AOP projects, so the scenarios are assumed to be the same.

Hydraulic Mining Restoration

Past hydraulic mining areas are contributing large amounts of sediment and toxins, such as mercury, into rivers and reservoirs. These areas would be treated to reduce sedimentation largely through establishing vegetative cover on the disturbed areas. Cost per acre, including planning and implementation was estimated at \$750/acre. As with other activities, this is not affected by the constraints in Scenario 1, so costs would be the same for both scenarios.

The acres and costs for surface soil restoration by watershed are displayed in the table below:

Table 5. Hydraulic Mine Restoration Area and Restoration Costs.

Watershed Name	Hydraulic Mining (Acres)	Hydraulic Mining Restoration Costs (K\$)
City of Reno-Truckee River		0
Deer Creek	8	6
Downie River	41	31
Little Truckee River	0	0
Lower Middle Fork American River	0	0
Lower North Fork American River	6	5
Lower North Yuba River	411	308
Lower South Yuba River	204	153
Middle North Yuba River	501	376
Middle Yuba River	293	220
North Fork Middle Fork American River	256	192
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	0	0
Rubicon River	0	0
Sierra Valley	0	0
Smithneck Creek	0	0
Upper Bear River	139	104
Upper Middle Fork American River	0	0
Upper North Fork American River	22	16
Upper North Yuba River	118	88
Upper South Yuba River	0	0

Invasive Plant Species Treatments

Known occurrences of invasive plant species were mapped. It was assumed that weed treatments would continue for 5 years minimum per site (\$2,200/ acre total). These costs assume hand removal. It was assumed no herbicides would be used in this scenario. Acres of invasive species treatment by watershed are given in the table below:

Table 6. Invasive Plant Species Acres and Removal Costs.

Watershed Name	Invasive Plant Species Removal (Acres)	Invasive Plant Species Removal (K\$)
City of Reno-Truckee River	233	582.5
Deer Creek	42	104
Downie River	1	2
Little Truckee River	3100	7749
Lower Middle Fork American River	580	1449
Lower North Fork American River	34	86
Lower North Yuba River	744	1859
Lower South Yuba River	174	435
Middle North Yuba River	100	249
Middle Yuba River	252	629
North Fork Middle Fork American River	443	1108
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	685	1712
Rubicon River	1	1
Sierra Valley	8	21
Smithneck Creek	219	547
Upper Bear River	47	117
Upper Middle Fork American River	142	355
Upper North Fork American River	18	45
Upper North Yuba River	13	33
Upper South Yuba River	5	14

Forest Health / Restoration and Fuels Treatments:

Project Areas: The forest developed project areas to be treated over the next 10 years, which are displayed on the accompanying Map “Fuels and Forest Health Restoration.” Project areas were developed considering a variety of parameters, including ecosystem type (i.e. Red Fir Zone, Eastside Pine Zone, Aspen, etc.), values at risk, (i.e. WUI, high value wildlife habitat, late seral forests, etc.) departure from normal fire return interval and fire regime condition class. Assumed costs by acre for these treatments were based on current costs, including planning costs, and are given in Table 7.

Assumptions:

- Mill Capacity exists to handle MMBF and biomass.
- Planning costs are included in the treatment costs at \$50/acres. This is based on current costs to complete NEPA, surveys, contract preparation and surveys.
- Timber Harvest treatments would produce 7 MBF per acres of which 2 MBF would be biomass. Following logging, fuels treatments are completed within the same footprint. These acres are NOT included in the additional fuels reduction treatment acres.
- Fuels reduction treatments outside the timber harvest units include machine or hand thin, pile and burn, mastication, prescribed burning, or other methods needed to reduce fuels after forest restoration.
- All plantations will be treated for fuels reduction and thinning as needed.
- Thinning/fuels treatments will occur within a buffer zone 1.5 miles wide around all campgrounds to help prevent fire from leaving or entering and destroying infrastructure.

Table 7. Logging costs plus residual fuel treatments.

Treatment	Costs per Acre
Ground based (≤30% slope)	\$1,500
Skyline (>30% and ≤50% slope)	\$2,700
Helicopter (>50% slope)	\$4,500
Fuels Treatments only	\$1,200

The amount of area treated within each project area was estimated for different slope classes. The percent of area treated differs between the scenarios and is given in Table 8.

Table 8. Forest Health/Restoration Treatment Assumptions by Scenario.

Treatment	Percent of Project Area Treated	
	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Ground based (≤30% slope)	30	45
Skyline (>30% and ≤50% slope)	20	30
helicopter (>50% slope)	5	10
Fuels Treatments	75% of remaining area.	100% of area remaining area

Restoration of forest health may consist of a variety of treatments, including thinning from below, density reduction, creating clumps and gaps, etc. Following such treatments, whatever fuels that were created or that still need to be treated would be accomplished by mastication, removal of biomass, lop and scatter followed by crushing or burning, etc., depending on the sites. The costs are shown in the table below by watershed.

Table 9. Forest Health/Restoration plus Fuels Treatment Areas and MMBF Produced by Watershed.

Watershed	Scenario 1				Scenario 2			
	Timber Harvest (Acres)	Saw MMBF	Biomass MMBF	Cost (K)	Timber Harvest (Acres)	Saw MMBF	Biomass MMBF	Cost (K)
City of Reno-Truckee River	304	2	1	\$529	456	2	1	\$794
Deer Creek	1,478	7	3	\$2,757	2,217	11	4	\$4,136
Downie River	6,559	33	13	\$16,416	9,839	49	20	\$24,625
Little Truckee River	9,486	47	19	\$15,371	14,230	71	28	\$23,056
Lower Middle Fork American River	526	3	1	\$1,340	789	4	2	\$2,010
Lower North Fork American River	2,490	12	5	\$4,060	3,735	19	7	\$6,090
Lower North Yuba River	8,392	42	17	\$16,757	12,587	63	25	\$25,136
Lower South Yuba River	3,526	18	7	\$7,828	5,289	26	11	\$11,742
Middle North Yuba River	7,709	39	15	\$16,812	11,563	58	23	\$25,217
Middle Yuba River	13,630	68	27	\$28,290	20,445	102	41	\$42,435
North Fork Middle Fork American River	8,024	40	16	\$16,846	12,036	60	24	\$25,269
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	3,937	20	8	\$7,673	5,906	30	12	\$11,510
Rubicon River	7,180	36	14	\$14,676	10,770	54	22	\$22,013
Sierra Valley	8,869	44	18	\$15,778	13,304	67	27	\$23,667
Smithneck Creek	3,924	20	8	\$7,325	5,887	29	12	\$10,987
Upper Bear River	2,070	10	4	\$4,219	3,105	16	6	\$6,328
Upper Middle Fork American River	7,105	36	14	\$14,298	10,657	53	21	\$21,446
Upper North Fork American River	11,670	58	23	\$25,626	17,505	88	35	\$38,440
Upper North Yuba River	10,196	51	20	\$21,725	15,293	76	31	\$32,588
Upper South Yuba River	9,671	48	19	\$18,343	14,506	73	29	\$27,515

Table 10. Forest Health/Restoration and Fuels Treatment Area with MMBF Produced by Year.

Year Treated	Scenario 1				Scenario 2			
	Timber Harvest (Acres)	Saw MMBF	Biomass MMBF	Cost (K\$)	Timber Harvest (Acres)	Saw MMBF	Biomass MMBF	Cost (K\$)
2015 Planned	4,982	25	0	\$7,474	NA	NA	NA	NA
2016 Planned	5,163	21	0	\$7,745	5,163	21	0	\$19,421
2017	11,240	56	22	\$20,327	16,860	84	43	\$30,491
2018	14,299	71	29	\$28,725	21,448	107	26	\$43,088
2019	8,522	43	17	\$16,519	12,783	64	65	\$24,779
2020	21,577	108	43	\$49,789	32,366	162	45	\$74,684
2021	15,012	75	30	\$31,804	22,518	113	47	\$47,706
2022	15,704	79	31	\$29,200	23,556	118	47	\$43,801
2023	15,524	78	31	\$33,645	23,286	116	63	\$50,467
2024	20,990	105	42	\$42,952	31,484	157	9	\$64,428
2025	2,867	14	6	\$6,154	4,301	22	34	\$9,231

Areas outside those treated by timber harvest would be treated after the initial restoration treatments are completed and are displayed below.

Table 11. Fuels Treatment Only Areas (Acres) and Costs by Scenario within each Watershed.

	Scenario 1 Acres Fuels treatments outside of logged areas	Cost (K\$)	Scenario 2 Acres Fuels Treatments outside of logged areas	Cost (K\$)
City of Reno-Truckee River	621	\$745	676	\$811
Deer Creek	3,260	\$3,911	3,607	\$4,329
Downie River	23,815	\$28,578	28,473	\$34,168
Little Truckee River	17,630	\$21,155	18,763	\$22,515
Lower Middle Fork American River	2,151	\$2,581	2,605	\$3,126
Lower North Fork American River	4,739	\$5,686	5,073	\$6,088
Lower North Yuba River	20,790	\$24,948	23,525	\$28,230
Lower South Yuba River	10,934	\$13,121	12,816	\$15,379
Middle North Yuba River	23,228	\$27,873	27,116	\$32,539
Middle Yuba River	37,117	\$44,540	42,674	\$51,209
North Fork Middle Fork American River	22,959	\$27,551	26,600	\$31,920
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	8,987	\$10,785	10,015	\$12,018
Rubicon River	17,670	\$21,204	19,970	\$23,965
Sierra Valley	17,773	\$21,328	19,263	\$23,116
Smithneck Creek	8,167	\$9,800	8,927	\$10,712
Upper Bear River	5,010	\$6,012	5,645	\$6,774
Upper Middle Fork American River	18,011	\$21,613	20,462	\$24,554
Upper North Fork American River	35,573	\$42,688	41,596	\$49,915
Upper North Yuba River	28,877	\$34,653	33,405	\$40,087
Upper South Yuba River	22,852	\$27,422	25,633	\$30,760
Grand Totals	330,163	\$396,195	376,844	\$452,213

Summary

The acres potentially treated by scenario by watershed over the next ten years are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Total Area Treated by Watershed by Scenario.

Watershed	Scenario 1 (Acres)	Scenario 2 (Acres)
City of Reno-Truckee River	925	1,076
Deer Creek	4,737	5,533
Downie River	30,374	36,397
Little Truckee River	27,116	31,343
Lower Middle Fork American River	2,677	3,224
Lower North Fork American River	7,228	8,368
Lower North Yuba River	29,182	34,306
Lower South Yuba River	14,460	17,199
Middle North Yuba River	30,937	36,745
Middle Yuba River	50,747	59,964
North Fork Middle Fork American River	30,983	36,704
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	12,924	15,124
Rubicon River	24,850	29,203
Sierra Valley	26,643	30,939
Smithneck Creek	12,091	14,073
Upper Bear River	7,080	8,312
Upper Middle Fork American River	25,115	29,563
Upper North Fork American River	47,244	56,146
Upper North Yuba River	39,073	46,264
Upper South Yuba River	32,522	38,133
Grand Total	456,909	538,615

Table 13 displays the potential cost of increasing pace and scale as analyzed and displayed for the Tahoe National Forest (TNF).

Table 13. Summary of Total Costs of Restoration Treatments by Year

Year	Scenario 1 Costs (MM\$)	Scenario 2 Costs (MM\$)
2016	201	201
2017	244	236
2018	284	291
2019	562	569
2020	565	569
2020	585	594
2021	619	627
2022	336	346
2023	286	293
2024	204	214
2025	147	149
Total	\$4,033	\$4,089

Historic Perspective:

To give an historical perspective about what the TNF has been producing in the recent past under the current budget and Forest Land Management Plan, **Table 14** displays recent averages (last 5 years) for the various programs compared with the two potential scenarios analyzed. By the end of the 10 years, it is hoped that much of the forest would be restored to within the natural range of variability. At that time, prescribed burning may be enough treatment to help maintain the forests in a more naturally resilient state. If that is the case, costs for future management could then be significantly reduced.

Table 14. Comparison of Existing Annual Rate of Treatments to Scenarios 1 and 2.

	Timber Harvest (acres)	MMBF produced	Fuels (acres)	Meadows (acres)	Roads (miles)	Invasive species (acres)	Hydraulic Mine Restoration (acres)
Current Average Treatment / year	2,973	31	8,500	20	20	400	0
Scenario 1	13,090	92	16,508	400	400	1000	300
Scenario 2	20,956	147	18,884				

Total Costs of the WIP are shown below.

Table 15 . Watershed Improvement Program Costs (Millions)

Watershed	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
City of Reno-Truckee River	1.3	1.6
Deer Creek	8.8	10.8
Downie River	46.3	60.1
Little Truckee River	43.7	52.8
Lower Middle Fork American River	4.2	5.5
Lower North Fork American River	11.1	13.5
Lower North Yuba River	47.2	58.8
Lower South Yuba River	23.3	29.5
Middle North Yuba River	71.5	90.7
Middle Yuba River	75.5	96.4
North Fork Middle Fork American River	47.0	59.8
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	21.0	26.1
Rubicon River	36.6	46.6
Sierra Valley	40.5	50.2
Smithneck Creek	18.8	23.3
Upper Bear River	11.4	14.3
Upper Middle Fork American River	38.6	48.7
Upper North Fork American River	70.5	90.6
Upper North Yuba River	79.7	100.9
Upper South Yuba River	48.8	61.3
Grand Total	745.8	941.5

Agenda Item XI
Sierra Nevada Watershed
Improvement Program (WIP)
Update

Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative

Presented by
Jim Branham

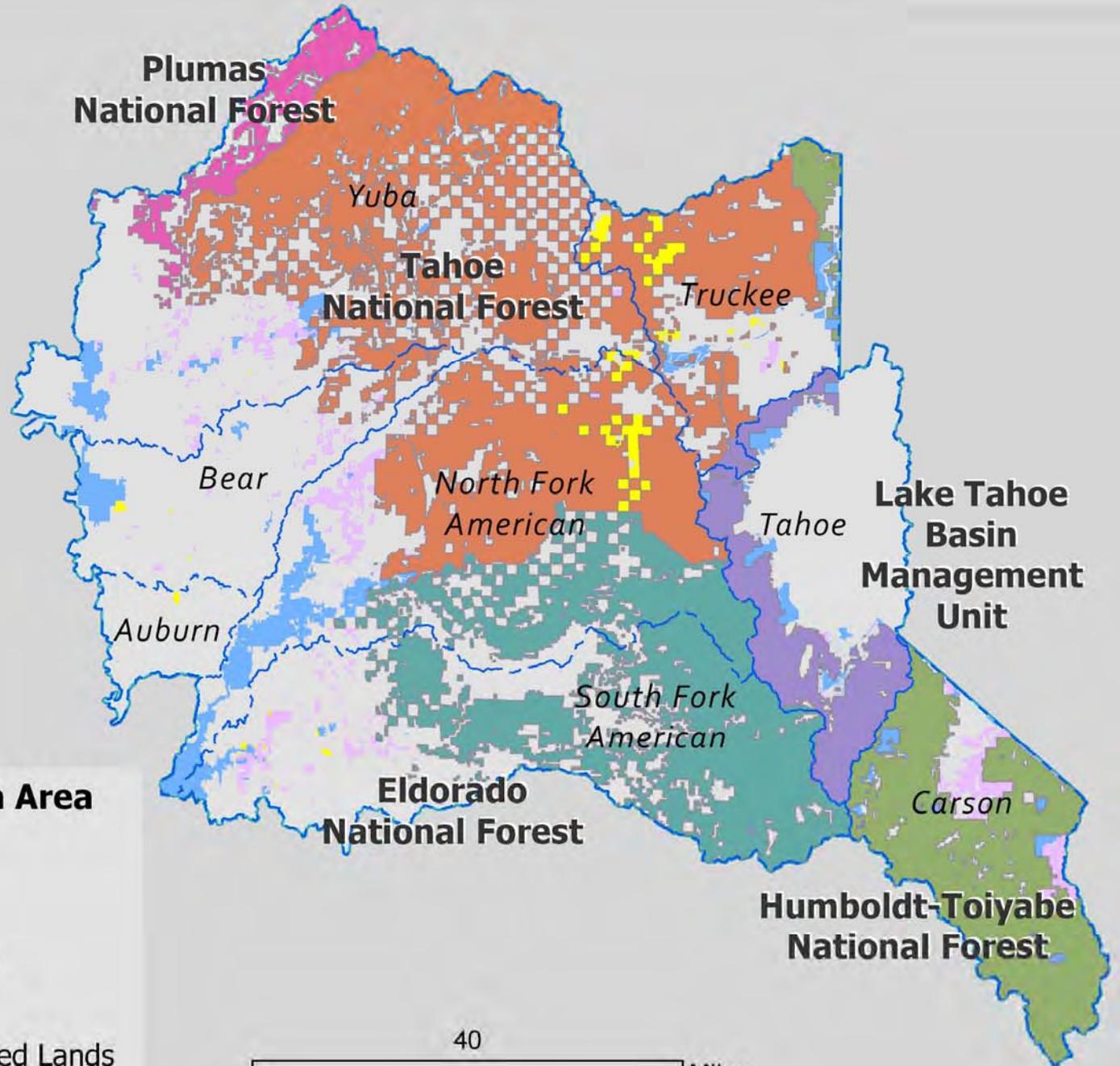
WIP Regional Strategy Calls for Pilots to explore “Doing Business Differently”

- Achieving adequate pace and scale of restoration activities requires developing new ways of doing business
- Includes considering innovative approaches to governance, investment and policy/process

Creating a Resilient Landscape

Why Here?

- Tahoe-Central Sierra area is expecting to witness increased mortality in coming years.
- The area has already suffered a mega fire – 2014 King Fire.
- Significant activities are underway and provide opportunities to increase pace and scale and test new ways of doing business.



Tahoe-Central Sierra Area

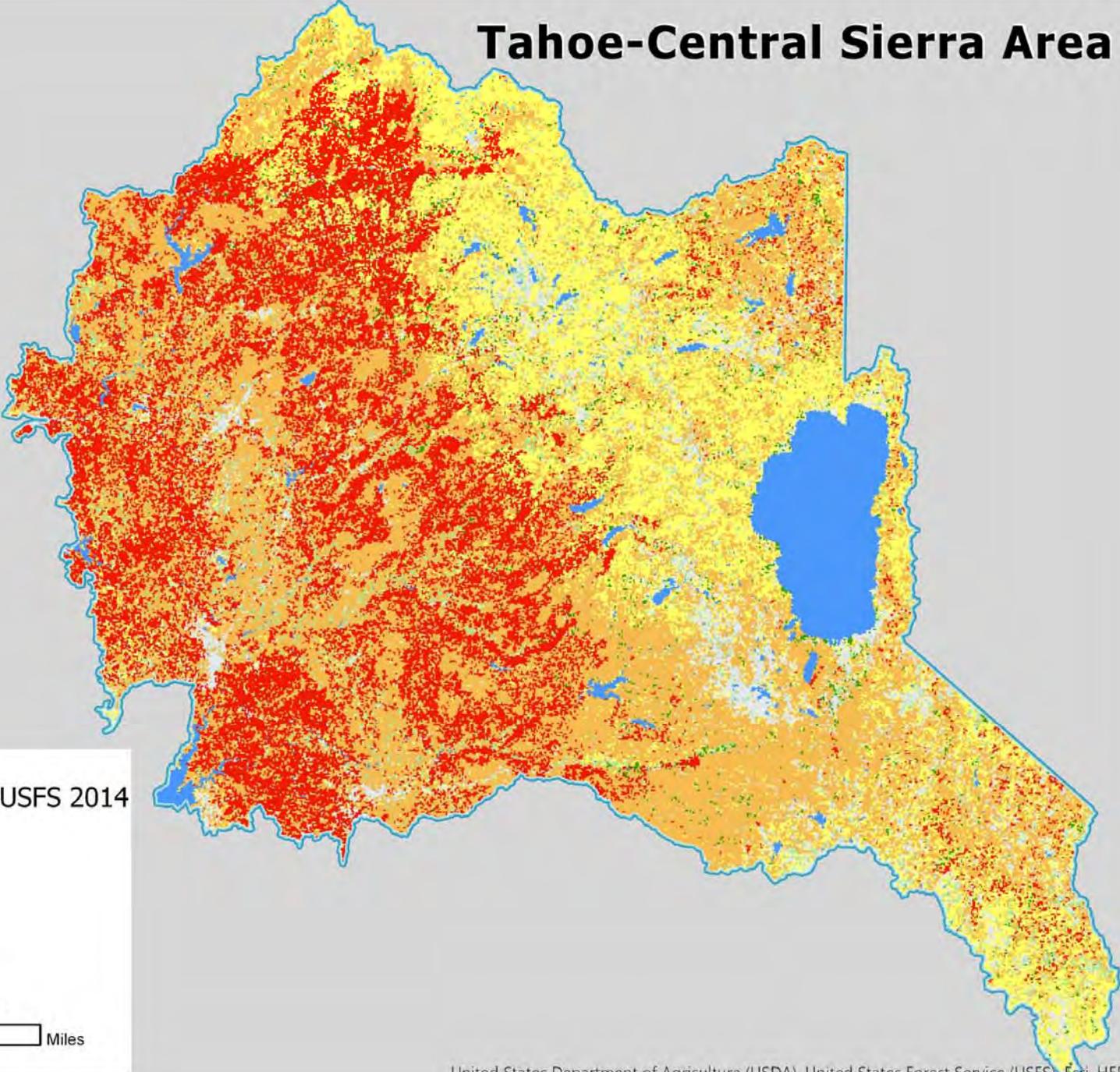
- Watersheds
- Land Management
 - Non-Profit -Land Trust
 - State Managed Lands
 - Other Federally Managed Lands

40

Miles

Esri, HERE

Tahoe-Central Sierra Area



Wildfire Hazard Potential, USFS 2014

- Very Low
- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Very High
- Non-burnable
- Water

10 Miles

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Forest Service (USFS), Esri, HERE



**Plumas
National Forest**

**Tahoe
National Forest**

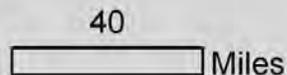
**Lake Tahoe
Basin
Management
Unit**

**Eldorado
National Forest**

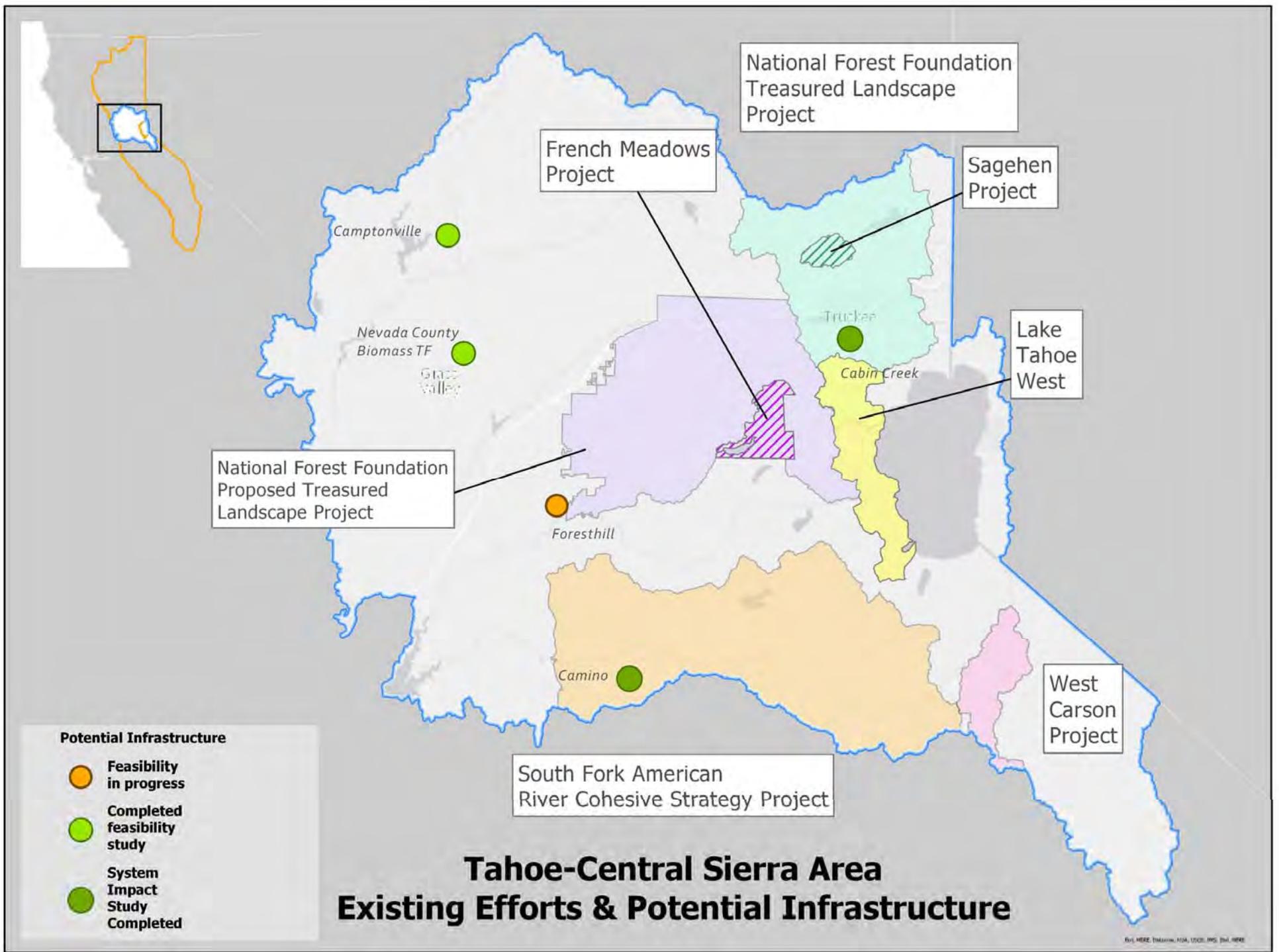
**Humboldt-Toiyabe
National Forest**

Tahoe-Central Sierra Area

-  2015 Farm Bill Designations
-  2014 Farm Bill Designations



Esri, HERE, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS



Tahoe-Central Sierra Area Existing Efforts & Potential Infrastructure

Potential Infrastructure

- Feasibility in progress
- Completed feasibility study
- System Impact Study Completed

By: HERE. Edited: NCA, 1/2018. IMG, JPL, HERE

Putting the Pilot Landscape in Context

- SNC will identify specific pilot opportunities within this landscape, expending staff and financial resources and using the cumulative activity in the area to leverage opportunities.
- SNC will continue to support WIP efforts at a Regional level that will benefit the entire Region.
- SNC will continue to fund projects and assist partners throughout the Region.

Questions/Comments

??????????

Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement
Program
Forest Assessments

PROGRAM UPDATE
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER
2016

What is the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program?



(Play Video; double click on picture)

Review List

- Formulated a partnership to increase the pace and scale of Forest restoration to leverage partnerships, funding, innovative ideas, needed policy changes and improved communication.
- California Natural Resource Agency (with Sierra Nevada Conservancy as the lead State Agency) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Region 5; U.S. Forest Service
- Regional Forester committed to complete similar assessments for each Forest in the Sierra Nevada. August 2015 Tahoe National Forest completed a Pilot Watershed Assessment to estimate the amount of watershed improvement activities possible over a 10 year period.

This presentation will focus on Forest “Watershed” Assessments. The Forest Service has also been working on many other efforts to support the Watershed Improvement Program.

Tahoe Forest Assessment:

Compared two scenarios

Assumption for both Scenarios:

No limitations on funding.

Scenario 1: Constrained potential restoration activities by current Forest Plan Standards, Law, Regulation and Policy.

Scenario 2: Only constraint on potential future restoration was; no use of mechanical equipment in wilderness areas.

Major Restoration Activities Assessed:

- Abandoned Mine Lands Remediation/Restoration (AML)
- Aquatic Organism Passage Improvement (AOP)
- Meadow Restoration
- Road Sedimentation Reduction Treatments
- Invasive Species Removal (plants)
- Fuels Reduction Treatments/Forest Health

Tahoe Results (Average Annual)

Restoration Activities	Current Rate Acres	Current Costs	Scenario 1 Acres	Scenario 1 Costs	Scenario 2 Acres	Scenario 2 Costs
Forest (timber, thinning)	2,973	\$6,115,461	13,090	\$26,928,130	20,956	\$43,106,492*
Fuels outside timber, thinning stands	8,500	\$10,200,000	16,508	\$19,809,600	18,884	\$22,660,800*
Meadows	20	\$3,000,000	400	\$60,000,000	400	\$60,000,000
Roads	20	\$155,520	400	\$3,110,400	400	\$3,110,400
Invasive Species	400	\$880,000	1000	\$2,200,000	1000	\$2,200,000
Hydraulic Mine Restoration	0	0	300	\$225,000	300	\$225,000
Aquatic Organism Passageway	n/a	n/a	35**	\$26,250,000	35**	\$26,250,000
Total Annually	11,913	\$20,350,981	31,698	\$138,523,130	41,940	\$157,552,692

*Assumption was that costs would go down over time as stands are treated and need for mechanical treatment goes down and Rx fire becomes more prevalent.

** Not included in total acres

Lessons Learned from the Tahoe Assessment

- No difference between scenarios for 5 of the restoration activities.
- Biggest difference in out year restoration activities is in constrained areas (steeper slopes, wilderness, owl, goshawk and stream zones); approximately 7,000 acres/year.
- Tahoe assessment did not include a spatial layer which would be very useful in working with the local units, partners and others to see where the treatments fall on the landscape.
- Tahoe assessment basically showed that going out 10 years was largely unpredictable with the number of assumptions that were made. We could get the same level of estimate from applying their cost estimates over a percent of the unconstrained land base and focus our efforts on identifying a more defined program the next 2-3 years.
- Program costs for forest restoration and fuels treatments flatten over time as we move from initial treatments (mostly mechanical) to more forest maintenance (allowing more Rx fire).

Adjustments made for the rest of the Sierra Nevada Forests.

- GIS scripts were developed at the Regional Office and data runs were completed for each Forest and distributed to each Forest for review
- The GIS assessment data packages for each forest include: spatial data, summary tables and maps.
- This work was completed in February 2016.

Sierra Nevada Acreages by National Forest:

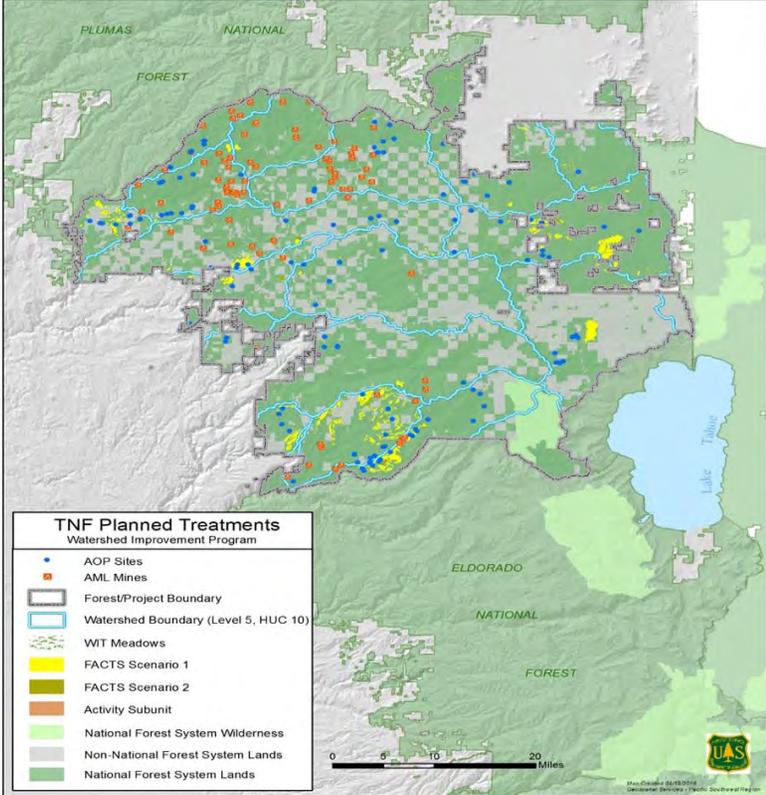
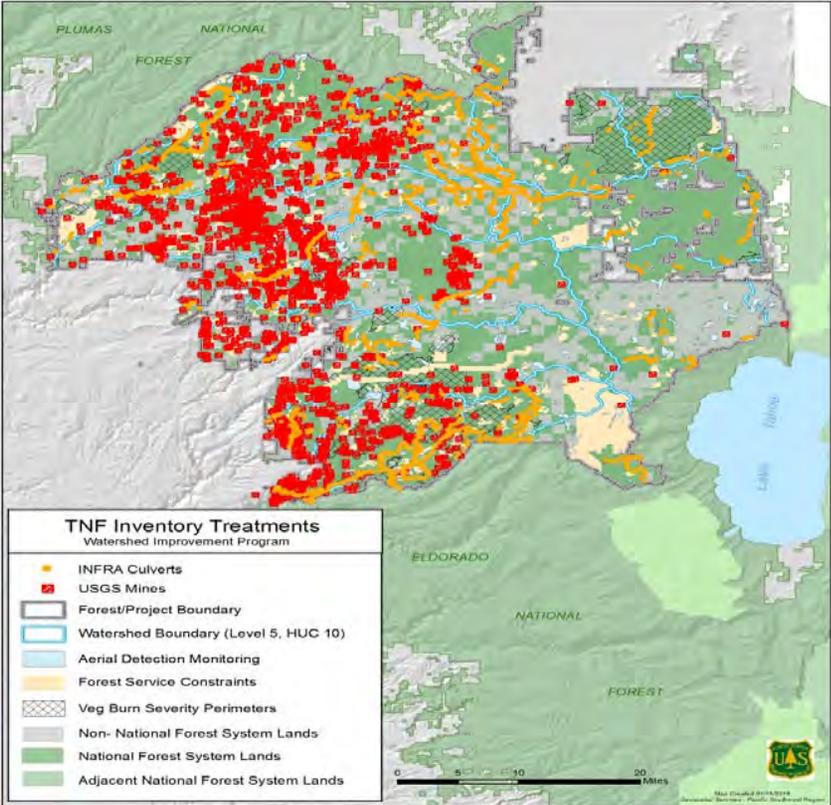
National Forest	# of Acres of N.F	Other Ownership	Total Acres	Constrained Acres
Tahoe	840,745	339,036	1,179,781	141,265
Sierra	1,316,334	102,622	1,418,956	726,640
Plumas	1,205,125	227,467	1,432,592	451,757
Lassen	1,153,454	336,030	1,489,484	143,061
Eldorado	607,437	186,204	793,641	219,575
Sequoia	1,114,763	46,892	1,161,655	571,362
Inyo	1,983,974	112,097	2,096,071	1,183,606
Stanislaus	898,352	192,609	1,090,961	396,929
Modoc	1,679,152	344,078	2,023,230	252,744
Shasta-Trinity	2,128,290	586,844	2,715,134	748,794
Lake Tahoe Basin MU	152,008	179,748	331,756	57,575
Total Acres	13,079,634	2,653,627	15,733,261	4,893,307

Unconstrained Acres = 8,186,327

\$16,372,654,000

North (et al) 2014 estimated that if 30% of the land base/watershed could be treated might lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfire: 3,923,890 acres x \$2,000 per acre = \$7,847,780,000

Example of map products:



Example of an output table:

WATERSHED	DESCRIPTION	STRUCTURE	BARRIER COUNT	TOTAL COST
Little Truckee River	Inadequate	Culvert	12	\$1,200,000
Lower North Fork American River	Inadequate	Culvert	4	\$400,000
Lower North Yuba River	Inadequate	Culvert	17	\$1,700,000
Lower South Yuba River	Inadequate	Culvert	4	\$400,000
Middle North Yuba River	Inadequate	Culvert	12	\$1,200,000
Middle Yuba River	Inadequate	Culvert	11	\$1,100,000
North Fork Middle Fork American River	Inadequate	Culvert	12	\$1,200,000
Prosser Creek-Truckee River	Inadequate	Culvert	8	\$800,000
Sierra Valley	Inadequate	Culvert	6	\$600,000
Smithneck Creek	Inadequate	Culvert	1	\$100,000
Upper Bear River	Inadequate	Culvert	2	\$200,000
Upper Middle Fork American River	Inadequate	Culvert	17	\$1,700,000
Upper North Fork American River	Inadequate	Culvert	5	\$500,000
Upper North Yuba River	Inadequate	Culvert	10	\$1,000,000
Upper South Yuba River	Inadequate	Culvert	5	\$500,000
Total Cost			126	\$12,600,000

FOREST	MEADOWS	AOP	ROADS/SEDIMENT	ABANDONED MINES	FUELS/VEGETATION	TOTAL COST
TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST	1,990,000	12,600,000	2,798,770	30,000,000	56,140,618	\$103,529,388
SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST	3,600,000	9,200,000	2,346,820	2,250,000	N/A	\$17,396,820
PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST	4,000,000	3,300,000	3,280,560	5,750,000	22,972,606	\$39,303,166
LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST	5,180,000	6,900,000	2,801,720	0	7,132,120	\$22,013,840
ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST	2,276,870	6,800,000	2,700,070	2,500,000	4,531,555	\$18,808,495
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST	20,500,000	N/A	1,291,650	1,250,000	5,084,367	\$28,126,017
INYO NATIONAL FOREST	18,025,000	N/A	1,863,540	10,500,000	N/A	\$30,388,540
STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST	N/A	N/A	2,845,040	2,500,000	5,305,247	\$10,650,287
MODOC NATIONAL FOREST	N/A	N/A	2,850,740	500,000	6,034,447	\$9,385,187
SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST	15,004,600	N/A	6,349,880	10,250,000	499,060	\$32,103,540
LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT	26,367,200	15,500,000	227,680	0	N/A	\$42,094,880
TOTAL COST	96,943,670	54,300,000	29,356,470	65,500,000	107,700,020	353,800,160

Next Steps and Adjustments

- Fine tuning of the GIS scripts as time goes by and as more people we review our assumptions and provide input.
- The Regional Forester has tasked staff to complete follow up assessment updates by January 2017. This will require some staff time for each Forest; we estimate 3 people for 5 days for each Forest.
- This effort can serve as a multi-agency tool in working with other partners on forest restoration (CalFire (GGRF), Cal Fish & Wildlife (Prop 1 and GGRF)).

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was allocated \$54 million in bond funds through Proposition 84, passed by the voters in 2006. Approximately \$50 million of this amount was available for grant awards to eligible nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and federally recognized tribal organizations. Since 2007, the SNC has conducted multiple Prop 84 grant rounds and funded 309 successful projects throughout the Sierra Nevada Region.

Current Status

Occasionally, grant-funded projects do not come to fruition or are completed under-budget and grant funds are returned to the SNC. The SNC rolls any returned bond funds back into the grant program to be re-authorized for new grants. The SNC now has approximately \$175,000 of recovered grant funds available for re-granting. There are currently 23 active Proposition 84 grants in the process of spending-down approximately \$2.4 million. It is possible that some additional funds could be returned as these remaining grants close-out, but staff has no indication of pending returns at this time.

Staff believes that \$175,000 of recovered funds is not enough to warrant administering a full solicitation for applications, and instead, is requesting the Board to modify and update previous grant making authority delegated to the Executive Officer for awarding the remaining Proposition 84 Program funds. Staff is further requesting that the Board authorize expenditure of those funds in the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Pilot Landscape area described in [Agenda Item XI](#).

Staff is recommending that all grants authorized under this delegated authority meet the following criteria: 1) Align with all Proposition 84 requirements. 2) Meet the goals and objectives of the WIP. 3) Contribute to innovative development and planning of projects that increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration or use of forest products in the Tahoe-Sierra Initiative Area. 4) Be reported at regularly scheduled Board meetings.

The SNC staff will also consult with the Board's WIP committee, and fulfill mandated outreach and communication requirements for tribes, local governments, and water agencies prior to executing grants under this authority. Any grants requiring CEQA environmental review and documentation beyond a Categorical Exemption, would be brought to the Board for authorization.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to analyze potential grant opportunities that address the criteria listed above and prepare recommendations for consideration by the Executive Officer.

Recommendation

Staff is recommending the Board delegate authority to the Executive Officer to approve and execute grants consistent with the above stated criteria for remaining Proposition 84 Bond funds and to report all new grants approved to the Board.

Background

California voters passed Proposition 1, The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Bond Act of 2014, on November 4, 2014. Proposition 1 added Section 79731 to the California Water Code, authorizing the state to issue bonds and the legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state. The bond measure included an allocation of \$25 million for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC).

The 2015-16 state budget included an appropriation of \$10 million, which was intended to be awarded over two fiscal years. At the June 2015 Board meeting, the Board approved the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 1 Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16/16-17 Grant Guidelines.

The SNC has since accepted 69 applications requesting \$19,286,000 over three submittal deadlines (September 1, 2015; March 1, 2016; and September 1, 2016). As of today, the Board has authorized 22 grants for a total of \$6,727,000. If the Board authorizes all grants recommended at this meeting under Agenda Item VIII, a total of \$9,881,830 will have been authorized, leaving \$118,170 from the initial \$10 million allocation to be rolled into the next grant cycle.

SNC is anticipating approximately \$8 Million to be appropriated in the 2017-18 state budget for continued support of the Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Proposition 1 grant program. Before requesting proposals from this new appropriation, staff believes it is necessary to make some modifications to the existing grant guidelines.

Current Status

After processing three rounds of grant applications and accumulating feedback and suggestions from applicants and SNC area staff, the following topics have been identified as benefiting from Board consideration, discussion, and direction:

- **Acquisitions**
The current guidelines allow for requests for fee-title acquisition of property to support forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization facilities that increase capacity to improve forest and watershed health. The current guidelines do not allow for applications to fund fee title acquisitions for other purposes or conservation easements. At its June 2016 meeting, the Board participated in a discussion about the fundamentals of conservation easements. While strongly supportive of the value of conservation easements, because of the limited amount of funding available to SNC and the presence of other state programs to support this type of activity, staff is proposing that there be no change to the guidelines in this areas.

- **Tree Mortality**
Much of the SNC Region has experienced the devastating effects of drought- and insect infestation-related tree mortality. In response to the Governor's Emergency Proclamation issued last October, the Board apportioned \$1 million from its existing appropriation to help address the needs associated with tree mortality. Several other funding sources are now available for fund work related to tree mortality, including funds administered by CAL FIRE and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Staff recognizes the importance of continued support to mitigate tree mortality and is recommending that such projects remain eligible for funding, but without a specific apportionment for projects that address post-tree mortality issues. Staff further recommends that projects on lands heavily impacted by mortality include a component of restoration in addition to tree removal in order to be eligible.

- **Private Timberlands**
While private citizens or companies that own forestland are not eligible applicants under existing guidelines (and statute), there are no restrictions related to work being implemented on private lands, provided there is a public benefit. Based on our experience with grants for such lands, staff suggests using the parameters similar to those set forth by CAL FIRE in their California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP). This would mean that revised guidelines would prohibit applicants from seeking grants to fund work on land held or owned by a private entity with combined ownership of 5,000 acres or more in California.

- **Meadow Restoration**
Existing SNC grant guidelines do not allow for projects with the primary purpose of meadow restoration. This decision was made based on a prioritization of forest health projects and a reasonable amount of funding available to support these types of projects from other Proposition I grant programs and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). The GGRF funds expected to be allocated to CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) for continued support of meadow restoration was not included in this year's budget, however these projects are eligible under DFW's Proposition 1 Program. The SNC recognizes the importance of these projects to restore watershed health and staff is proposing to clarify that meadow restoration included as part of a broader forest health project is allowable.

- **Application and Award Schedule**
Considering the volume of potential high-quality projects and the expected demand for funding, staff is recommending soliciting proposals one round at a time instead of the current six-month schedule. If there are funds remaining after the initial applications have been evaluated, subsequent solicitations would be advertised and grants awarded until the total amount is expended.

Staff would, of course, welcome other thoughts from Boardmembers as to issues to be considered by staff in developing draft guidelines.

Next Steps

Staff will consider guidance received from the Board and public at this meeting to prepare draft guidelines for review at its March 2017 Board meeting. Any additional direction received in March will be incorporated into a final set of guidelines to be considered for approval by the Board in June 2017. The staff will provide a proposed schedule for implementation of the grant program at that time.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Agenda Item XIII Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines Discussion

Presented by:
Bob Kingman

2017-18 / 2018 -19

Prop 1 Bond Allocation

- Successfully funded \$10 Million and 32 grants in 2015-16 / 2016-17
- Anticipating approximately \$8 Million to be appropriated in the 2017-18 state budget
- Now gathering comments for preparation of revised Prop 1 Grant Guidelines

Acquisitions

While strongly supportive of the value of conservation easements, because of the limited amount of funding available to SNC and the presence of other state programs to support this type of activity, staff is proposing that there be no change to the Guidelines in this area.

Tree Mortality

Staff is recommending that Tree Mortality related projects remain eligible for funding without any specific apportionment. Staff further recommends that projects on lands heavily impacted by tree mortality include a component of restoration in addition to tree removal in order to be eligible.

Private Timberlands

Staff suggests using parameters similar to those set forth by CAL FIRE in their California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP). This would mean that revised guidelines would prohibit applicants from seeking grants to fund work on land held or owned by a private entity with combined ownership of 5,000 acres or more in California.

Meadow Restoration

The SNC recognizes the importance of these projects to restore watershed health and is proposing to clarify that meadow restoration included as part of a broader forest health project is allowable.

Application and Award Schedule

Staff is recommending soliciting proposals one round at a time. If there are funds remaining after the initial applications have been evaluated, subsequent solicitations would be advertised and grants awarded until the total amount is expended.

Next Steps

- Other Issues Boardmembers would like addressed?
- Draft guidelines for Board review in March 2017
- Final guidelines for Board approval in June 2017
- Application submittal schedule to be announced in June

Background

In 2002, AB117 was enacted authorizing cities and counties to aggregate electrical loads through community choice aggregation (CCA) programs. AB117 gave cities and counties the ability to establish programs to purchase and/or generate electricity and manage power supply portfolios to meet the load (energy demand) requirements of ratepayers in their jurisdictions. A city, a county, or a joint powers authority (JPA) comprised of cities and counties may establish a CCA program. CCAs are now more commonly called Community Choice Energy (CCE), in an effort to be more explanatory.

The primary benefits of a CCE program are local control over rates and incentives, local control over energy sources, and local economic benefits. A CCE program establishes rate structures and, through data exchange with the local investor owned utility (IOU), passes on the economic and environmental benefits of managing the energy portfolio to serve the energy load of its ratepayers. Ratepayers continue to receive a utility bill from the IOU.

Overall, CCE energy rates are expected to be competitive when compared to the IOU rate. The CCE program can purchase power, develop, and own and operate energy generation projects, including solar, biomass, land-fill gas, and waste-to-energy. Through development of its own rate structure, a CCE can provide rebates, performance based incentives and economic development incentive rate structures.

A CCE program purchases and manages an energy portfolio based on its ratepayer load. The IOU remains responsible for the transmission, distribution, metering, billing, and most customer services. CCEs provide power by managing an energy portfolio consisting of purchase contracts, spot market purchases, and ownership and operation of generating plants and projects.

Current Status

Currently, there are three CCE programs operating in California, and over twenty under consideration or in the development process. The CCEs currently operational in California are the Marin Energy Authority, Sonoma Clean Power, and the City of Lancaster's Lancaster Choice Energy. Some analysts suggest that, within the next five years, 60 percent of California electricity ratepayers will be covered by a CCE program.

Placer County is currently in the process of developing a CCE which could help promote the use of energy produced using biomass and facilitate an innovative approach to support long-term forest management. SNC staff has been monitoring the development of the Placer County CCE effort with hopes that it could be replicated in other parts of the region to further promote biomass utilization.

Next Steps

The Board will receive a presentation from Placer County Treasurer/Tax collector, Jenine Wendeshausen, about the process, progress to date, and future plans for the Placer County CCE.

SNC staff will continue to monitor this process and provide assistance as requested and appropriate.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is required by statute, Public Resource Code Section 33350, to “make an annual report to the Legislature and to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency regarding expenditures, land management costs, and administrative costs.”

In the early years, the SNC produced Annual Reports (Report(s) that served as expanded outreach and education tools. Increasingly, however, over the last few years, budget and operational constraints forced the SNC to bring production of the Report in-house thereby minimizing the scope and content of the final document.

Current Status

This year, in alignment with the SNC’s commitments to sharing messaging in a more dynamic, interactive, and visual way with the goal of better connecting with a broader audience, staff will develop, design, and distribute an electronic Annual Report and online story that will also include required year-end information. The story component of the Report will identify accomplishments in the 2015-16 fiscal year and will look at the challenges the Region continues to face. It will emphasize the partnerships SNC is forging and the importance of the work that SNC is involved in. Themes throughout the FY15-16 Annual Report will include the following three key messages:

- The role SNC plays in addressing critical issues to the Sierra Nevada Region
- The many benefits the Sierra Nevada provides to the state
- The benefits at serious risk due to existing conditions and an inadequate response

In addition to the electronic Report, staff will create a letter and a one-page handout that includes a URL to the electronic report as well as highlights the required reporting items for the legislature and California Natural Resources Agency Secretary.

Report Highlights

- Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program and California Headwaters Partnership
- Great Sierra River Cleanup and Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week
- Budget and Fiscal information
- Close out of Proposition 84 Grants and the current status of the Proposition 1 Program
- Tree Mortality Task Force
- Tourism and Recreation

Next Steps

Staff will draft the Annual Report as described above and will complete design, layout, and illustrations in-house. With Board concurrence, staff will prepare the Annual Report and distribute it appropriately. Staff will complete distribution of the report by December 30, 2016.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed approach for completing the 2015-16 Annual Report and direct staff to develop and distribute the Report.