



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Special Meeting Agenda**

Friday, April 21, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes

Members of the Board

Inyo County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths - Chair, Mono County Supervisor Bob Gardner - Vice Chair,
Inyo County Supervisor Trina Orrill, Mono County Supervisor Lynda Salcido,
Town of Mammoth Lakes Mayor John Wentworth,
Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember Chris Bubser,
City of Bishop Councilmember Karen Schwartz, City of Bishop Councilmember Stephen Muchovej

NOTE: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Assistant Clerk at (760) 965-3615. Notification prior to the meeting will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 13.102-35.104 ADA Title II)

NOTE: Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Town Offices located at 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite 230 during normal business hours. Such documents are also available on the ESCOG website at www.escog.ca.gov subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the meeting.

NOTE: You watch this meeting on the Town of Mammoth Lakes' (TOML) website at www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov, via Zoom or on TOML's local government cable channel 18. Public comments may be submitted to the ESCOG Clerk at clerk@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov before and during the meeting or may be made via Zoom or in person.

ZOOM INFORMATION

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

Please click this URL to join. <https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/92421427651>

Or join by phone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 646 876 9923 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 ***To raise your hand press *9, To Unmute/Mute press *6**

Webinar ID: 924 2142 7651

International numbers available: <https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/92421427651>

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Notice to the Public: This time is set aside to receive public comment on matters not calendared on the agenda. When recognized by the Chair, please state your name and address for the record and please limit your comments to three minutes. Under California law the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board is prohibited from generally discussing or taking action on items not included in the agenda; however, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board may briefly respond to comments or questions from members of the public. Therefore, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board will listen to all public comment but will not generally discuss the matter or take action on it.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting February 10, 2023

4.2 Approve Amendment No. 1 to Professional Services Agreement with Alta Planning and Design for Towns to Trails Plan

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Introduce Inyo Mono Broadband Coalition (IMBC) Regional Broadband Coordinator Scott Armstrong and Receive a Report on IMBC Activities

5.2 Receive a Presentation from Kristen Pfeiler, Inyo County Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator Regarding Regional Wildfire Resiliency Planning

5.3 Mono Inyo Airport Working Group Committee Report on Meeting Held April 7, 2023

5.4 Discuss Regional Parks and Recreation Collaboration

5.5 Approve Modified ESCOG Schedule

5.6 Approve Memorandum of Understanding with the Sierra Business Council for the Purpose of the Community Economic Resiliency Fund (CERF)

5.7 Discussion Submission of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

5.8 Discuss Expanding ESCOG JPA to Include Alpine County

5.9 Discussion regarding ESCOG Administration of Sierra Nevada Conservancy Landscape Investment Pilot Project

5.10 Executive Director Update Report

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Informational report from Member Agency representatives on committees, commissions, and organizations; general reports on Board Member activities

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. ADJOURNMENT

The ESCOG will adjourn to the next regular meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday, June 8, 2023



Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) - Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

Minutes of Regular Meeting

February 10, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes

Members Present: Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, Councilmember Chris Bubser

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair John Wentworth called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. in the Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes. The members of the Board introduced themselves.

1.1 **Request to approve Supervisor Griffiths' Remote Participation in the February 10, 2023 ESCOG Meeting Pursuant to AB 2449.**

Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Ms. Chuchla and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member Bob Gardner

Seconded by Councilmember Stephen Muchovej

Approve Supervisor Jeff Griffiths' request to appear remotely at the February 10, 2023 ESCOG meeting.

For (7): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Abstain (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Daniel Holler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Caltrans Staff Services Manager Carolyn Plummer announced that Caltrans would start a pilot test in March related to a potential replacement for the gas tax. Ms. Plummer said that they would test a Road Charge on mileage using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, and said that they were seeking drivers from rural communities to participate in the study, in which they could earn up to \$250. She outlined the information in the Caltrans Road Charge presentation.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Councilmember Stephen Muchovej
Seconded by Board Member Bob Gardner

Approve the Consent Agenda.

For (7): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, and Councilmember Stephen Muchovej

Abstain (1): Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (7 to 0)

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting October 14, 2022

4.2 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2022

4.3 Approve the 2023 ESCOG Meeting Calendar

4.4 File the 2021-2022 Financial Report

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Receive a presentation from Sandra Moberly, Town of Mammoth Lakes Community and Economic Development Director Regarding the Town's "Housing Now!" Initiative

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Community and Economic Development Director Sandra Moberly and TOML Senior Planner/Housing

Coordinator Nolan Bobroff outlined the information in the TOML Housing Now! presentation.

There was discussion between Ms. Moberly, Mr. Bobroff, and members of the Board.

5.2 Approve Staffing Contract with Inyo County for Executive Director of Regional Coordination Position

This item was taken out of order.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala, TOML Town Manager Dan Holler, and Inyo County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between members of the Board, Ms. Kabala, Mr. Holler and Mr. Greenberg.

Moved by Board Member Bob Gardner
Seconded by Councilmember Chris Bubser

Authorize the Chair to execute the Agreement Regarding Executive Director Services to be provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority, with a not to exceed amount of \$150,000.

For (8): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (8 to 0)

5.3 Approve Contract Amendment with Eastern Sierra Planning, LLC to extend until April 15, 2023

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths
Seconded by Councilmember Stephen Muchovej

Approve Amendment Number 5 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and Eastern Sierra Planning for the Provision of Administrative Services.

For (8): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (8 to 0)

5.4 Approve California Advanced Services Fund Grant Disbursement Schedule and Consent Forms and Approve Agreement Between Inyo County and the ESCOG JPA as the Board of the Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium regarding the Processing of Reimbursement Request under

This item was taken out of order.

Inyo County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg, Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla, and Inyo County Director of Information Services Scott Armstrong outlined the information in the staff report.

Mono County Director of Finance and ESCOG Fiscal Agent Janet Dutcher provided additional information regarding the grant and said that its revenues and expenditures should be added to the ESCOG's budget and financial report. Ms. Dutcher said that she would work with Inyo County to make sure that she received transactional reports to ensure that the grant activity was recorded in the ESCOG's financial records.

There was discussion between members of the Board, Mr. Greenberg, Mr. Armstrong, Executive Director Elaine Kabala, and Ms. Dutcher.

Moved by Chair John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Lynda Salcido

Accept the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) grant, sign the Appendix B Consortia Grant Forms, and authorize the Chair to execute the Agreement Between Inyo County and the ESCOG JPA as the Board of the Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium Regarding the Processing of Reimbursement Requested Under the California Advance Services Fund Grant.

For (8): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (8 to 0)

5.5 Appoint ESCOG Members to the Mono Inyo Working Air Group

This item was taken out of order.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler and Inyo County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion among members of the Board, Mr. Holler, and Mr. Greenberg.

Moved by Chair John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Trina Orrill

Appoint Chair John Wentworth, and Board Members Bob Gardner, Karen Schwartz, and Trina Orrill to the Mono Inyo Working Air Group (MIWAG).

For (8): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (8 to 0)

Moved by Chair John Wentworth

Seconded by Councilmember Stephen Muchovej

Appoint Board Members Chris Bubser, Lynda Salcido, Jeff Griffiths and Steve Muchovej as alternates to the Mono Inyo Working Air Group (MIWAG).

For (8): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (8 to 0)

5.6 Award Contract for Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative

Chair Wentworth recused himself due to his service on the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) Board and left the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion among members of the Board and Ms. Kabala.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

U.S. Forest Service, Inyo National Forest Public Services Staff Officer Adam Barnett noted that although the funding for this project runs through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the actual monies for it would come from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. (LADWP) as a pilot program.

Chair Wentworth returned to the meeting at 10:21 a.m.

Moved by Councilmember Stephen Muchovej

Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Award the project to Alta Planning + Design, Inc and authorize staff to negotiate and execute a Professional Services Agreement between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and Alta Planning + Design, Inc. for the provision of recreation planning services for the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative for an amount not-to-exceed \$127,411.

For (7): Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Absent (1): Chair John Wentworth

Carried (7 to 0)

5.7 Consideration of Master Challenge Cost Share Agreement with U.S. Forest Service – Inyo National Forest

Executive Director Elaine Kabala, U.S. Forest Service, Inyo National Forest Resources/Planning Officer Nathan Sill, and Public Services Staff Officer Adam Barnett outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion among members of the Board, Ms. Kabala, Mr. Sill, and Mr. Barnett.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths left the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Moved by Board Member Bob Gardner

Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Authorize staff to execute the Master Challenge Cost Share Agreement between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the USDA, Forest Service Inyo National Forest.

For (8): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Carried (8 to 0)

5.8 Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding Between the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership and ESCOG

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between members of the Board and Ms. Kabala.

Staff was given direction to bring the Memorandum of Understanding back, with modifications as discussed, at the April meeting.

5.9 Discussion on Community Economic Development Strategy Submittal by ESCOG and California Economic Resiliency Fund Update

Executive Director Elaine Kabala gave a presentation regarding the Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot (CERF) Program Update.

There was discussion between members of the Board and Ms. Kabala.

5.10 Executive Director Update Report

Executive Director Elaine Kabala provided updates on the Eastern Sierra Towns to Trails project and the Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project a.k.a. The Donut Project.

5.11 Call for Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

This item was taken out of order.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

Moved by Chair John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Trina Orrill

Appoint Board Member Jeff Griffiths the Chair of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments.

For (7): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Absent (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

Moved by Board Member Lynda Salcido

Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Appoint Board Member Bob Gardner as the Vice the Chair of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments.

For (7): Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Trina Orrill, Councilmember Stephen Muchovej, and Councilmember Chris Bubser

Absent (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Karen Schwartz reported there had been some Emergency Medical Services (EMS) disruption issues in Northern Bishop and said that they

were and actively seeking solutions. Ms. Schwartz said that the Silver Peaks low-income housing project did not get funded.

Board Member John Wentworth said that it had been a pleasure to serve as the Chair of the ESCOG over the past year.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Vice Chair Bob Gardener requested that a discussion around inviting representatives from Alpine County to join the ESCOG be added to the next agenda.

Board Member Stephen Muchovej reported that Inyo and Mono County had both recently hired Fire Deputies and requested that they be invited to a future meeting to discuss solutions for the region.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority

From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Staff

Subject: Amendment Number 1 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and Alta Planning and Design, Inc. for the Provision of Trails Planning Services for the Eastern Sierra Towns-to-Trails Plan

Meeting date: April 21, 2023

Prepared on: April 13, 2023

Attachments: A) Amendment Number 1 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and Alta Planning and Design, Inc. for the Provision of Trails Planning Services for the Eastern Sierra Towns-to-Trails Plan

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

Staff is requesting the Board approve Amendment Number 1 to Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and Alta Planning and Design, Inc. to allow for the contractor to be reimbursed for travel costs consistent with the approved scope of work and fee schedule.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board approve Amendment Number 1 to Agreement between the Eastern Sierra Council Of Governments and Alta Planning and Design, Inc. and authorize the Board Chair to execute the amendment.

**AMENDMENT NUMBER 1 TO THE
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND
ALTA PLANNING AND DESIGN, INC. FOR THE PROVISION OF TRAILS PLANNING SERVICES FOR
THE EASTERN SIERRA TOWNS-TO-TRAILS PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (hereinafter referred to as "ESCOG") and Alta Planning and Design, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "Contractor"), have entered into an Agreement for the Provision of Trails Planning Services, dated October 26, 2023, for the term from November 1, 2022 to December 31, 2026.

WHEREAS, ESCOG and Contractor desire and consent to amend such Agreement as set forth below;

WHEREAS, such Agreement provides that it may be modified, amended, changed, added to, or subtracted from, by the mutual consent of the parties thereto, if such amendment or change is in written form, and executed with the same formalities as such Agreement, and attached to the original Agreement to maintain continuity.

ESCOG and Contractor hereby amend such Agreement as follows:

1. Paragraph 3(b) of the contract shall be deleted. ESCOG shall reimburse Contractor for travel expenses and per diem incurred while engaged in the work described in Attachment A (Scope of Work), per the rates set forth in Attachment B (Schedule of Fees).

All the other terms and conditions of the Agreement are unchanged and remain the same.

ESCOG

By: _____
Signature

Print or Type Name

Dated: _____

CONTRACTOR

Emily Duchon
By: Emily Duchon (Apr 13, 2023 15:01 PDT) _____
Signature

Emily Duchon Vice President, as duly authorized

Print or Type Name

Dated: Apr 13, 2023

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

ESCOG Counsel

APPROVED AS TO ACCOUNTING FORM:

ESCOG Fiscal Services


00-2022-228 Alta Amendment No 1_Towns to Trails_travel costs

Final Audit Report

2023-04-13

Created:	2023-04-13
By:	Alta Planning + Design, Inc. Contracts Department (contracts@altaplanning.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAujdK7w7VUXLaZMR_-J0OblezXhRaEVP_


"00-2022-228 Alta Amendment No 1_Towns to Trails_travel costs" History

 Document created by Alta Planning + Design, Inc. Contracts Department (contracts@altaplanning.com)
2023-04-13 - 9:44:10 PM GMT - IP address: 67.171.206.245

 Document emailed to Emily Duchon (emilyduchon@altaplanning.com) for signature
2023-04-13 - 9:51:57 PM GMT

 Email viewed by Emily Duchon (emilyduchon@altaplanning.com)
2023-04-13 - 10:01:15 PM GMT - IP address: 74.125.209.33

 Document e-signed by Emily Duchon (emilyduchon@altaplanning.com)
Signature Date: 2023-04-13 - 10:01:25 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 76.174.33.201

 Agreement completed.
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STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director
Subject: Regional Wildfire Resiliency Planning
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 16, 2023
Attachments: A) Eastern Sierra Nevada Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Subregional Plan

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

Inyo County and Mono County were both recipients of a CalFire County Wildfire Coordinator grant and have hired full-time, temporary wildfire prevention county coordinators to assist in county-wide education and coordination efforts regarding prevention and protection from wildfire.

Per your Board's request for information on broader wildfire planning across the Eastern Sierra region, Ms. Pfeiler will provide an overview of Inyo County specific and regional efforts for wildfire resiliency efforts.

In addition, the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (<https://www.eswildfirealliance.org/>) is an informal group of stakeholders from Alpine, Mono and Inyo counties representing non-profit organizations, Fire Safe Councils, federal, state and local government agencies, and California Native American Tribes, which engages with the following activities:

- Assist with efforts dedicated to ecosystem health management (fuels reduction, restoration, biomass removal etc.)
- Develop more community-based involvement through a collaborative
- Assist in the pursuit of grant funds
- Explore green waste disposal options and community chipping options
- Implement and amend as necessary Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)

- Provide capacity building programs (grant writing workshop, home hardening seminar, CEQA/NEPA workshop)
- Increase education and outreach efforts

The Whitebark Institute is a local non-profit based in Bishop and Mammoth Lakes that received Sierra Nevada Conservancy funding to work on the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (Attachment A) in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. The RFFCP evaluates the capacity of various entities in the three counties to plan, develop, and implement programs and projects to reduce the risk of wildfire in communities and ecosystems; builds an informal stakeholder group; established a website for regional wildfire mitigation information and resources; supports a major program to reduce fuels around Mammoth Lakes in collaboration with the ESCOG; and serves as a vehicle to for grant funding for project implementation. Current projects being implemented through

The Whitebark Institute’s Community Resiliency Program work includes:

- Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (funded by Sierra Nevada Conservancy), which works with regional agencies to identify and implement wildfire mitigation projects through the region.
- Development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) for Independence and 40 Acres (funded by CAL FIRE).
- Providing planning and environmental work to implement a fuel break around 40 Acres (funded by CAL FIRE, administered by 40 Acres Fire Safe Council).
- Development of a Visitor Education and Outreach Campaign (funded by CAL FIRE), which seeks to coordinate, amplify, & enhance messages about wildfire safety to area visitors.
- Tribal Lands Environmental Analyses of Fuel Reduction Projects (invited & funded by CAL FIRE), which is assisting tribes of the Owens Valley with fuels reduction projects.
- Working from the Home Outwards (funded by Southern California Edison), which provides education and resources for home hardening and defensible space.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board direct staff receive a presentation from Kristen Pfeiler, Inyo County Wildfire Preparedness Coordination regarding regional wildfire resiliency planning.

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program - East Subregion Capacity Assessment



Eastern California Water Association

Sierra Corps

April 30, 2020

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	4
Introduction	5
Capacity Building	6
Organizations and Capacity.....	6
Capacity Assessment.....	6
Planning	9
Overview of past planning processes.....	9
Current and future planning processes	16
Collaboratives and Partnerships.....	17
Pilot/Demonstration Projects	20
Home hardening.....	20
Visitor education and outreach	21
Planning for What's Next	22
Recommendations	23
Conclusion	25
References.....	25



List of Acronyms

CCC:	California Conservation Corps
CEQA:	California Environmental Quality Act
CHIPS:	Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions
CWPP:	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
ECWA:	Eastern California Water Association
ESCCRP:	Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project
ESCOG:	Eastern California Council of Government
ESSRP:	Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Program
FSC:	Fire Safe Council
INF:	Inyo National Forest
IRWMP:	Integrated Regional Water Management Program
LADWP:	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
MJHMP:	Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
NEPA:	National Environmental Policy Act
OES:	Office of Emergency Services
RFFCP:	Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program
RPAC:	Regional Planning Advisory Committee (Mono County)
SNC:	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
WUI:	Wildland Urban Interface

Introduction

The *Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program: Initial Capacity Assessment on Forest Health and Fire Risk Reduction* (SNC, 2020) noted that the eastern region (Alpine, Mono, and Inyo counties) “has the least amount of collaborative activity and organizational capacity. Resources are needed at a basic level to promote collaboration and partnership development and to build capacity to design, fund, and implement projects. Many tribal organizations in this geography have a difficult time engaging with planning processes and public land management efforts.” It was with this evaluation that the East subregion Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) team began its work in January 2020. The results of the initial assessment process detailed in this report demonstrate that while there are capacity and funding needs, there is also much strength and resilience in local organizations and their partnerships with other entities.

Our first step was to develop a list of stakeholders interested in ecosystem health and fire resilience issues with whom we wanted to conduct interviews. This list grew as we learned about more stakeholders in the region. Through other efforts such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP), as well as personal knowledge, we already had a substantial network from which to contact people. Then, once we started conducting interviews, interviewees were able to help us make contact with stakeholders we did not already know.



As of the writing of this report, we interviewed 47 people representing 31 agencies and organizations through 28 interviews. Stakeholders came from all three counties in the East subregion and represented all types of organizations, including federal, state, and local agencies; fire safe councils; small non-profits; Tribes; and water suppliers. Interviewees were both paid staff members and volunteers. All gave generously of their time and knowledge.

Up until mid-March 2020, all interviews were conducted in person unless the interviewee was not physically located in the region (such as a couple of second homeowners and California Fire Safe Council). During the week of March 16, 2020, California began shutting down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our last in-person interview was conducted March 20, 2020. While initially we thought we might be able to wait it out and conduct the rest of our interviews in person before the deadline for this assessment, it quickly became apparent that we would all be staying separate for a while. Thus, we created a Zoom account and started

asking stakeholders if they would be willing to meet with us virtually. Fortunately, most stakeholders were very obliging, and we conducted eight interviews this way. However, the stay-at-home order did prevent us from completing a small handful of interviews, and we intend to continue conducting some interviews after this assessment report is submitted.

Capacity Building

Organizations and Capacity

The following organizations were interviewed as a part of this capacity assessment exercise:

Alpine County

- Alpine Biomass Collective
- Alpine Fire Safe Council
- Alpine Watershed Group
- Washoe Tribe

Mono County

- Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (Bridgeport and Carson Ranger Districts)
- Inyo National Forest – Mammoth Ranger District
- June Lake Fire Safe Council
- Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District
- Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council
- Mono Basin Fire Safe Council
- Mono Basin Historical Society
- Mono County (Supervisor Stacy Corless)
- Mono County (Supervisor Bob Gardner)
- Plumas Corporation
- Swauger Creek
- Twin Lakes Fire Safe Council
- Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council

Inyo County

- Big Pine Paiute Tribe
- Big Pine Volunteer Fire Department
- Bishop Fire Department
- Bishop Paiute Tribe
- Fort Independence Tribe
- Friends of the Inyo
- Inyo County

Regionwide

- Bureau Land Management – Bishop Field Office
- CAL FIRE
- California Fire Safe Council
- California Trout
- Inyo National Forest – Supervisors Office
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
- Sierra Institute

Capacity Assessment

The great strength of virtually all the organizations we interviewed, from small community fire safe councils to Tribes to large federal land management agencies, is the commitment and dedication of community members and employees. Because the Eastern Sierra region is isolated from other parts of California in many ways, organizations are accustomed to building

partnerships and finding resources locally. The other side of this coin, of course, is that given the small population, community members wear many hats, often volunteer their time, and are subject to burnout.

A surprising finding was the large amount of capacity in the smaller organizations, particularly volunteer-run organizations such as the fire safe councils, to take on tasks like grant writing, project planning, and grant administration. That being said, most of these organizations also cited these tasks as areas of need and opportunity to build more capacity. The non-profits and local, state, and federal agencies have more capacity in this respect as they have paid staff to fill these roles. These organizations, however, have their own challenges around staffing and funding, largely as a result of the rural and remote nature of the region.

A particular challenge of fire safe councils in the region is that they are all run by volunteers, and the success of the organization lives and dies by the willingness of community members to contribute their time, and in some cases money, to the work of the fire safe council. We heard multiple times that when a particular active volunteer leaves the fire safe council (or community altogether), the work of the organization falters until someone else is willing to take on the mantle of the group. Thus, succession planning is extremely important, and those fire safe councils that have been able to maintain consistency in active volunteers seem to be more successful in their continuity of work and projects.

Because of the variety of organizations and agencies working on issues of fire and ecosystem health in the Eastern Sierra, it is ***difficult to generalize overall as to whether capacity is sufficient***. In all cases, there is opportunity to increase capacity. Different organizations need different kinds of capacity. Some needs can be addressed at the local or regional level (addressed in this section); others require changes to state or federal policy (addressed in Recommendations section). The desired end result is that agencies, organizations, and communities in the Eastern Sierra are able to adequately focus on and fulfill their needs, whether they do it alone or in partnership with others. Such an outcome will also result in safer communities and more naturally-functioning ecosystems.

Capacity-building assistance could take a number of formats in the East subregion.

The ability to provide one-on-one assistance on an ongoing basis would be helpful. Tasks that are addressed through such assistance might include organizational development, finding appropriate grants, grant administration, or project planning. In addition, group trainings covering specific topics are needed.



We are fortunate to be working with American Forests (AF) and Great Basin Institute (GBI). It is anticipated that these two organizations will be able to provide capacity building assistance and technical assistance. The East subregion RFFCP team will also be a capacity building assistance provider.

The table below presents planned capacity building activities as they have been identified so far. It is expected that further capacity building needs will be uncovered as we continue through the assessment and planning processes and that the number of activities will be expanded.

Capacity Building Plan

Program or Assistance	Recipient(s)	Assistance Provider(s)	Timeline	Estimated Cost
List of contractors	All	ECWA/Sierra Corps, GBI, AF	Ongoing, with final product by Dec. 2021	Part of RFFCP grant
Organizational development	Primarily fire safe councils	ECWA/Sierra Corps, CA Fire Safe Council	As needed, by Dec. 2021	Part of RFFCP grant
Grant-finding training	Any interested & relevant stakeholder	SNC and AF	April 2021	SNC would cover, AF is contracted
Grant writing training	Any interested & relevant stakeholder	ECWA, SNC	January 2021	Part of RFFCP grant
Introduction to CAL FIRE grants	Any interested & relevant stakeholder	CAL FIRE	December 2020 – March 2021	CAL FIRE would cover
Meeting facilitation training	Any interested & relevant stakeholder	American Forests	April 2021	Contracted through RFFCP grant
Working towards centralized staffing	Fire safe councils, local agencies	ECWA/SierraCorps with help from FSCs & local agencies, AF, SNC	Ongoing	Unknown
Developing stakeholder network	All relevant & interested stakeholders	ECWA/SierraCorps	Ongoing through Dec. 2021	Part of RFFCP grant
CEQA/NEPA workshops	All relevant & interested stakeholders	AF with help from GBI, SNC	June 2021	AF and GBI are contracted, SNC would cover

Planning

Overview of past planning processes

We thought it would be useful to document the planning processes in the region over the past two decades, rather than only the most recent five years. Many of the older plans in this list are still active and in need of updating.

The limits of planning are well illustrated by the first Mono County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A collaborative process with the usual stakeholders began in 2005, and the CWPP document was finalized in 2009. The consultant and team produced a sound document that would still seem appropriate today. However, there appears to have been very little action on the plan and its recommendations in the decade since it was written. For example, one of the “very high priority” recommendations was to create a position for a “countywide wildfire coordinator”. That need remains unfulfilled and was independently identified throughout our recent interviews.

Each known (and relevant) plan is described very briefly below using the topics suggested in the assessment report guidelines. Plans are roughly organized by level of jurisdiction (county, local, federal, etc.) with headings for each.

County Plans

Name of Process	Alpine County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
Timeline	2015-2018
Convenor	Alpine County
Entities involved	Alpine County, RO Anderson Engineering, Inc. (consulting firm that prepared plan), Alpine County School District, Bear Valley Water District, California Office of Emergency Services, Carson Water Subconservancy District, Eastern Alpine Fire & Rescue, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District, Lake Alpine Water Company, Markleeville Water Company, Markleeville Public Utility District, NOAA-National Weather Service, South Tahoe Public Utility District, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
Geographic area	Alpine County
Strengths	Appropriate perspective of hazards relative to small population at risk; important reminder of indirect impacts of fire; sections on capability assessment and plan maintenance were instructive; Table 9.1 – Previous Plan Action Review and Evaluation was a great idea, although one might question the “complete” status of some actions.
Weaknesses	Vulnerability analysis seemed too brief
Online source	http://alpinecountyca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2372

Name of Process	Inyo County / City of Bishop Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
Timeline	Completed in 2017
Convenor	Inyo County and City of Bishop
Entities involved	Inyo County, City of Bishop, Aaron Pfannenstiel (consultant that prepared much of the plan), California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection,

	California Department of Transportation, California Highway Patrol, California Office of Emergency Services, Cerro Coso Community College, Death Valley National Park, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority, Inyo National Forest, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Manzanar National Historic Site, Northern Inyo Hospital, Sierra Highlands Community Services District, SuddenLink, Sierra Tactical Training and Active Response Resources, US Geological Survey
Geographic area	Inyo County
Strengths	Overview of all hazards; comprehensive; not surprisingly, wildfire was ranked as the highest priority
Weaknesses	Given the priority of wildfire, the associated mitigation actions for fire could have given emphasis or greater visibility
Online source	https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2019-07/12292017_InyoCountyMJHMP_FEMA_wAppendices.pdf

Name of Process	Inyo County Emergency Operations Plan
Timeline	Last updated in 2016
Convenor	Inyo County
Entities involved	Inyo County and an extensive list of emergency responders
Geographic area	Inyo County
Strengths	Seemingly well-designed clear emergency response plan
Weaknesses	No obvious deficiencies
Online source	https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2019-07/INYO%20COUNTY%202016%20EOP-FINAL.pdf

Name of Process	Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
Timeline	2017-2019 (updated MJHMP of 2006)
Convenor	Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes
Entities involved	Mono County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Michael Baker International (consulting firm that prepared plan), Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, Antelope Valley Fire District, Inyo National Forest, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority Care Flight, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Fire Department and Police Department, Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council, Antelope Valley Community Emergency Response Team, Mammoth Community Water District, California Department of Transportation District 9, California Highway Patrol, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Pine Glade Association, Inc., Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Southern California Edison
Geographic area	Mono County
Strengths	Overview of all hazards; comprehensive; dual treatment of county and town was quite well done, despite expecting it to be awkward;
Weaknesses	Separation of wildfire hazard into CWPP (Chapter 7) only weakened the multi-hazard context and perspective of the overall plan, although wildfire is

	incorporated in the Plan Hazard Measures (Table 5.1); maintenance section not as good as in Alpine County's plan
Online source	https://monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/9617/mono_county_mjtmp_final_052919_w-appdx.pdf

Name of Process	Alpine County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Timeline	2017-2018
Convenor	Alpine Fire Safe Council
Entities involved	Alpine Fire Safe Council, Alpine County, Alpine Watershed Group, Eastern Alpine Fire/Rescue, Alpine County Disaster Council, Woodfords Community, homeowner associations, Bear Valley, Kirkwood, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, CAL FIRE, California State Parks, South Tahoe Public Utilities District, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, Liberty Utilities, Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Geographic area	Alpine County
Strengths	Organization of action items and projects by responsible party and by topic throughout plan, inclusion of home hardening info from Calaveras County CWPP as appendix 7
Weaknesses	A few minor structural inconsistencies in the document
Online source	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12KJhwZWmHaZ-ma5K2qsYT5NLqg8JWwCn via http://www.alpinefiresafecouncil.org/

Name of Process	Inyo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Timeline	2005-2009
Convenor	Inyo County
Entities involved	Inyo County, Anchor Point (consulting firm that prepared plan), City of Bishop, Bishop Fire Dept., Mammoth Lakes Fire Dept., Eastern Sierra Region Fire Safe Council, South Fork Bishop Creek Fire Safe Council, Inyo National Forest, Bureau of Land Management
Geographic area	Inyo County
Strengths	"Recommended solutions" section (more than half of the plan) is well done and well organized; the "neighborhood ignitability analysis and recommendations" section (appendix B) also appears to be well considered
Weaknesses	Needs to be updated
Online source	https://www.inyocounty.us/sites/default/files/2019-07/Inyo%20County%20CWPP%20with%20Appendices.pdf

Name of Process	Mono County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Timeline	2017-2019 (previous plan in 2009)
Convenor	Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes
Entities involved	Mono County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Michael Baker International (consulting firm that prepared plan), Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, Inyo National Forest, California Dept. of Forestry and Fire

	Protection, Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council, [other partners not named, but may include most, if not all, participating in MJHMP effort]
Geographic area	Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes
Strengths	Description of recent fuels modification projects
Weaknesses	Although not explicitly stated, the 2019 CWPP must be read along with the 2009 CWPP to be an adequate plan; the Plan Hazard Measures (Table 5.1) of the MJHMP should have been repeated within the CWPP (otherwise the recommendations of the CWPP alone are rather weak); appendix 6 (Mono County CWPP Collaborative Effort) is identical with Appendix F of the 2009 CWPP with no attempt at updating – calls into question how much other material was not updated
Online source	Chapter 7 within https://monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/9617/mono_county_mjhmp_final_052919_w-appdx.pdf

Local Plans

Name of Process	Mammoth Lakes Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update
Timeline	Completed in 2019
Convenor	Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District
Entities involved	Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, Inyo National Forest, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council, Anchor Point Wildland Fire Solutions
Geographic area	Town of Mammoth Lakes
Strengths	Done in response to Mammoth Lakes CPAW of 2018; more detailed study of the Town of Mammoth Lakes than was done for the 2009 Mono County CWPP
Weaknesses	Hazard zones seem like a good start, but will need more spatial detail in next iteration of CWPP; more local knowledge could have been employed, e.g., a news story found on the internet about the Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council was used instead of speaking to a representative of the FSC
Online source	http://mammothlakesfd.homestead.com/~local/~Preview/Mammoth_Lakes_CWPP_Update_DRAFT_2019.pdf

Name of Process	Wheeler Crest Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Timeline	2017-2019
Convenor	Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council
Entities involved	Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council, Wheeler Crest Fire Dept., Paradise Fire Dept., Mono County, Inyo National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, CAL FIRE, Eastern Sierra Land Trust, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Wildland Rx, Inc., and Deer Creek Resources
Geographic area	Swall Meadows and Paradise (Mono County)
Strengths	Widely regarded as a model CWPP, solid lists of recommended projects for each community

Weaknesses	Inadequately funded effort, community members had to perform some of the work of the consultants
Online source	https://drive.google.com/file/d/14FyD3e0wkUIkjK-ngzJMh1PZYawDhmX1/view Also Appendix I within https://monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/9617/mono_county_mihmp_final_052919_w-appdx.pdf

Name of Process	Wheeler Crest Wildfire Hazard Assessment
Timeline	2017-2019
Convenor	Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council
Entities involved	Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council, Deer Creek Resources, Swall Meadows and Paradise residents
Geographic area	Swall Meadows (Mono County)
Strengths	Parcel-specific fire hazard risk from surveys of fuel loading, defensible space, and home construction
Weaknesses	Impression that the assessment was rushed; for example, parcels with conservation easements are discussed, but Dept. of Fish and Wildlife parcels are not mentioned
Online source	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xjh0mL96CfWcB9J21I57-ZURvPKQTz0R/view

Name of Process	Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire – Final Recommendations for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, CA
Timeline	Completed in 2018
Convenor	Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District
Entities involved	Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, Inyo National Forest, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council, Mono County, Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire program, Wildfire Planning International, Wildfire Professional Solutions, and PlaceWorks
Geographic area	Town of Mammoth Lakes
Strengths	Solid planning perspective and recommendations
Weaknesses	Somewhat generic (using much material from CPAW efforts in other communities)
Online source	https://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8843/Final-Recommendations-for-the-Town-of-Mammoth-Lakes-CA

Federal Plans

Name of Process	Bishop Resource Management Plan
Timeline	1993
Convenor	Bureau of Land Management
Entities involved	Bureau of Land Management
Geographic area	Mono County and Owens Valley portion of Inyo County

Strengths	Overall management direction and policies for Bishop Resource Area of BLM
Weaknesses	Needs to be updated; remarkably little explicitly about wildfire
Online source	Only the Record of Decision seems to be available online: https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/70447/92777/111784/Bishop_RMP_ROD_1993_w_app_glossary_508.pdf

Name of Process	Draft Programmatic EIS for Fuels Reduction and Rangeland Restoration in the Great Basin
Timeline	2020
Convenor	Bureau of Land Management
Entities involved	Bureau of Land Management and numerous stakeholders and interested parties
Geographic area	BLM lands in the Great Basin (about 223 million acres)
Strengths	Guiding documents for massive program of fuels treatments in Great Basin
Weaknesses	Little specific to the Bishop Resource Area
Online source	https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/nepa/122968/20015528/250020679/FRRR_DraftPEIS_Volumel.pdf

Name of Process	Fire Management Plan
Timeline	Completed in 2004
Convenor	Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office
Entities involved	Bureau of Land Management
Geographic area	Mono County and Owens Valley portion of Inyo County
Strengths	N/A
Weaknesses	N/A
Online source	Document not found online; only citation in LADWP 2010: Bureau of Land Management. 2004. Fire Management Plan. Bishop Field Office, Bishop, California.

Name of Process	Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest
Timeline	Multi-year process completed in 2019
Convenor	Inyo National Forest
Entities involved	Inyo National Forest and numerous stakeholders and interested parties
Geographic area	Inyo National Forest
Strengths	The “strategic fire management zones” section of chapter 3 and the fire-related actions in appendix B are most relevant
Weaknesses	The partnership approach of appendix C would have been stronger with more specifics and some actual examples
Online source	https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd664404.pdf

Name of Process	Reds Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project
Timeline	2018-2019
Convenor	Inyo National Forest
Entities involved	Inyo National Forest and long list agencies and interested parties (see pg. 39-40 in EA)
Geographic area	About 2,100 acres just west of Minaret Summit and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area
Strengths	A large-scale fuel reduction project for the Inyo NF
Weaknesses	Documents could have provided a more thorough rationale for the project to persuade more skeptical members of the public
Online source	https://www.fs.usda.gov/nfs/11558/www/nepa/109635_FSPLT3_5252697.pdf

Name of Process	Land and Resource Management Plan for Toiyabe National Forest
Timeline	1986
Convenor	Toiyabe National Forest
Entities involved	Toiyabe National Forest and numerous stakeholders and interested parties
Geographic area	Part of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Strengths	Still the guiding document for the western portion of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Weaknesses	Seriously outdated; plan has not been updated since merger with Humboldt National Forest
Online source	https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5143054.pdf

Utilities

Name of Process	Owens Valley Land Management Plan
Timeline	1997-2010
Convenor	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Entities involved	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Inyo County Water Department, California Dept. of Fish and Game
Geographic area	Owens Valley (City of Los Angeles owned lands)
Strengths	Overview of LADWP's policies regarding fire; other chapters (such as cultural resources and adaptive mgmt.) have valuable material related to vegetation mgmt.
Weaknesses	Fire management chapter is quite short (7 pages) and the section on controlled burns is very limited in scope
Online source	https://www.inyowater.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Owens-Valley-Land-Management-Plan-Final.pdf Chapter 7 on Fire Management

Name of Process	Wildfire Mitigation Plan
Timeline	2018-2020
Convenor	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Entities involved	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, CAL FIRE, California Public Utilities Commission
Geographic area	City of Los Angeles, Owens Valley, power line corridors
Strengths	Presumably consistent with the requirements of SB901; data mgmt. tools under development may have application beyond utility service area
Weaknesses	Vegetation management section (4.3) lacks detail
Online source	https://ladwp.com/ladwp/faces/ladwp/aboutus/a-power/AboutUs-Power-Wildfire

Name of Process	2020-2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plan, Revision 2
Timeline	2018-2020
Convenor	Southern California Edison
Entities involved	Southern California Edison, CAL FIRE, California Public Utilities Commission
Geographic area	SCE service area including most of Inyo and Mono counties, power line corridors
Strengths	Seemingly comprehensive for the utility's overall approach to wildfire hazard reduction; data mgmt. tools under development may have application beyond utility service area
Weaknesses	Sections on vegetation management (5.1.5 & 5.3.5) a bit thin
Online source	https://www.sce.com/sites/default/files/AEM/SCE 2020-2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plan.pdf

Current and future planning processes

There are several current and future planning processes happening in the region. Some are routine systematic project plans such as vegetation management plans of CAL FIRE (some of which are coordinated with LADWP), hazardous fuel reduction by the Bishop Paiute Tribe, and power line corridor work by LADWP and Southern California Edison. Other agency planning processes of 2020 that cover larger areas are briefly described below.

Alpine County is working on a Wildfire Risk Mitigation Plan during 2020 and 2021 to build upon existing plans. The goal of this effort is to “enable the County to implement activities that address the risk of wildfire and that can reduce wildfires that could impact communities” (<http://alpinecountyca.gov/index.aspx?nid=504>). The anticipated result will be prioritization of fuel reduction projects throughout Alpine County and planning and CEQA/NEPA analysis of three specific projects. The first workshop on the plan was held in February 2020 and the next is scheduled for April 28, 2020. The planning was funded by CAL FIRE through a Fire Prevention Grant. The consultants working on the plan are Panorama Environmental, Inc. and Spatial Informatics Group. Alpine County is also proceeding with its annual biomass (burn) pile event during selected days in late April and May 2020.

The Inyo National Forest is continuing to work on its Eastern Sierra Fire Restoration and Maintenance Project (Inyo National Forest, 2020). This INF-wide effort seeks to increase the scale and rate of prescribed burning to reduce the impact of wildfires and maintain desired ecological conditions where fire naturally occurred at much greater frequencies than over the past century. The non-wilderness areas of the INF that could potentially be treated under this program cover about 200,000 acres. The public scoping process concluded in January 2020, and the INF is currently working with the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District to

determine effective practices and acceptable impacts with respect to smoke from prescribed fires.

Another large-scale planning process for part of the Inyo National Forest will begin later this year. In early March, the board of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy approved funding for the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP, locally to be known as the “donut” project). This effort will have a planning area of about 55,000 acres surrounding the town of Mammoth Lakes. This ring around the town is covered with decadent red fir and Jeffrey pine stands where fires have been thoroughly suppressed for decades. The current fuel loads surrounding the town could support a high-severity wildfire, which could destroy much of the town. This project seeks to create a path to implement one of the boldest fuels-reduction projects yet proposed in the Sierra Nevada, anticipate potential barriers and means to overcome such obstacles, build public support, identify the resources and financial support necessary for implementation, and establish a basis for subsequent detailed and site-specific planning and initial implementation actions. The project should formally begin in early summer.

After reading or skimming the various plans for the eastern Sierra Nevada region and interviewing many of the people active in fire mitigation efforts in the region, we believe the region is well served by broad general-purpose plans (e.g., county-wide hazard mitigation plans, county-wide community wildfire protection plans, Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan). Now, most importantly, the region needs prioritized actions and projects based on and recommended by the existing plans.

With respect to planning, there are still needs to update, fine-tune, and improve existing plans as well as narrow the geographic scope of CWPP efforts down to individual communities as exemplified by the Mammoth Lakes and Wheeler Crest CWPPs. To maximize the utility of the next generation of plans as well as be fiscally conservative, we suggest a hybrid model for preparing future plans and updates. This framework for future plans should include the following: the project should be directed by an employee of a county, town, fire district, local agency, or non-profit organization, such as a fire safe council; a local committee of 3 to 5 people including elected officials and citizens should oversee the process to ensure it is meeting the pre-determined goals; one or more consultants should be hired to perform the specialty services the particular plan may require; local people with local knowledge should write the sections about local geography and conditions (ideally under simple contracts for modest amounts of time and compensation administered by a non-profit). Well-compensated consultants should not be hired to do the simple work (e.g., cut-and-paste from other reports, grab defensible-space handouts from the internet, etc.). There is a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience available within the eastern Sierra Nevada region that can be readily tapped to help prepare future plans and updates.

Collaboratives and Partnerships

There are several formal multi-stakeholder collaboratives or collaborative efforts that currently exist in the East subregion, though most of the examples of stakeholders working together are formal and informal one-on-one partnerships.

Alpine Biomass Collaborative (ABC): This 501(c)(3) organization is focused on improving forest and watershed health while developing the local economy. ABC received a capacity building grant in 2016 from the National Forest Foundation. The Collaborative is comprised of

local, state, and federal agencies and organizations as well as the Washoe Tribe. The group meets monthly, and meetings usually include a presentation by a guest speaker. The scope of the group's efforts at this time is limited to Alpine County. It appears that the organizational tasks of the collaborative fall to volunteer board members who are willing to commit time and energy, and the future of the group is dependent on these volunteers and champions. The board member we interviewed expressed a desire to have some minimal/baseline funding to pay for a part-time staff member. Alpine Biomass Collaborative recently completed a scoping study that examines increasing economic development through biomass utilization (<https://alpinebiomasscommittee.wordpress.com/downloads/>).

Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP): We have not yet formally interacted with this group, though we are tracking its activities and progress. This collaborative has seven signatories. At this stage, the ESSRP is conducting outreach and stakeholder meetings to gather input and ideas at a very broad level. As we understand it, there will likely be a nexus opportunity with RFFCP down the road, at which time we can discuss shared interests around ecosystem health and ecosystem services. The public workshops have been postponed at this time because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we will attend some of the workshops once they re-start later this year.

Alpine County Wildfire Risk Mitigation Plan: Alpine County recently received a fire mitigation planning grant from CAL FIRE. The work of this grant is supposed to result in 3-4 shovel ready projects. We include this effort in this discussion of collaboratives because the grant includes a steering committee comprised of all pertinent stakeholders in Alpine County. The steering committee has approved the hiring of a consultant. The grant term is through the end of 2020, by which time projects will be identified.



Mono County Solid Waste Task Force (SWTF): As described on its website, the Mono County Solid Waste Task Force is a

“diverse group of citizens with a stake in the operations of the Solid Waste Program in Mono County. The group is governed by a set of bylaws that were adopted in May 2015 by both the Mono County Board of Supervisors as well as the Town of Mammoth Lakes Town Council. Members include waste haulers and

recyclers, representatives from the construction and lodging industries, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Mammoth Community Water District, and members at large. The primary purpose of the group is to advise elected officials on matters relating to the Solid Waste Program.”

Meetings are held at least semi-annually and more frequently if necessary. Among the topics

currently being discussed by the task force are a composting facility and a biomass facility. The Mono County Solid Waste Superintendent leads the task force and convenes and facilitates meetings.

Mammoth Lakes Basin Project: Though not a formal collaborative, three entities came together to plan, apply for, and implement a 630-acre fuels treatment project in the Lakes Basin adjacent to Mammoth Lakes. The three partners – Inyo National Forest, Mammoth Community Water District, and Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council – all have defined responsibilities within the project. The Inyo National Forest provided the NEPA analysis and is overseeing the on-the-ground work. The INF has also done some outreach to Lakes Basin property owners. Mammoth Community Water District is providing assistance with grant administration and leads the community outreach efforts. Mammoth Fire Safe Council is the grantee for the project. Other entities, such as Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Mono County, and Southern California Edison, have contributed various resources (direct funding, lodging, etc.) but are not part of the core group implementing the grant.

Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP): Also known as the “donut” project, this initiative is just getting off the ground through an SNC grant to Plumas Corporation. The initial effort will be to develop a stakeholder collaborative, which is expected to be extensive, to move forward to planning and implementation of the project. The introductory meetings will likely be delayed due to COVID-19. It is expected that the East subregion RFFCP grant staff will be an integral part of the development of this project.

Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP): Although this collaborative effort is focused on water and watershed health, it is an example of a truly region-wide (minus Alpine County but including all of Inyo County and parts of Kern and San Bernardino Counties) multi-stakeholder effort that has been functional for over a decade and gets work done on the ground, including capacity building, technical assistance, project development, and project implementation.

Analysis: Most of these collaborative efforts are local – focusing on a watershed or a community. Two efforts are county-wide. The ESSRP and IRWMP are the two region-wide efforts and are also the only collaborative efforts that include Inyo County. The California Fire Safe Council and Inyo County Office of Emergency Services (OES) are working with some Inyo County stakeholders with the idea of forming (or in some cases, re-forming) fire safe councils. Inyo County OES hopes that some coordination and collaboration could happen among these councils.

Given that most of these collaboratives have been formed in response to particular efforts or projects, they seem to already have the stakeholder participation that they require. A more proactive effort, such as starting new fire safe councils or a stakeholder process formed through this program, would require more deliberative outreach and inclusion of multiple types of stakeholders.

Although the number of multi-stakeholder collaboratives in the East subregion is fairly small, this belies the fact that numerous one-on-one formal and informal partnerships exist, largely between federal land management agencies (such as the Forest Service and BLM) and local

stakeholders (fire safe councils, counties, fire departments). CAL FIRE and LADWP also play large roles in the region and interact with virtually every type of stakeholder.

The Owens Valley Tribes are very much a part of these one-on-one partnerships. They work with non-Tribal local agencies, CAL FIRE, LADWP, and the federal land management agencies. They are not part of any of the multi-stakeholder collaboratives listed above (although their participation in the ESSRP is unknown) with the exception of the IRWMP, in which they have been integral participants from the beginning.

The existing collaboratives and partnerships already have *modi operandi* for meeting and carrying out business. However, trainings aimed at improving skills around running meetings and finding, applying for, and administering grants would likely be welcomed.

Pilot/Demonstration Projects

Based on our interviews, there was no obvious candidate project that was underway (or about to get underway) that could serve as a demonstration project for the region. Through our interviews, we were able to develop an initial list of potential projects that could be implemented in the region. This working list can be found in Appendix B. No doubt many more project ideas will be uncovered through the process of this grant, and we will pursue all project ideas as best we can. However, ***two projects stood out above the rest in terms of importance to the region as expressed by multiple stakeholders, readiness, and ability to be implemented on a fairly short time scale: home hardening and visitor education and outreach.***

Home hardening

Many of the people interviewed mentioned “home hardening” as a necessary but underappreciated step in improving community resilience to wildfire. As an example of the low-profile nature of home hardening, one volunteer fire fighter we spoke with was unaware of the concept. Several people described home hardening as the most cost-effective measure for reducing wildfire damage and as “low-hanging fruit” in the spectrum of defensive preparations for wildfire.

As one pilot/demonstration project for the East geography, we propose to build awareness of the benefits and techniques of home hardening and promote implementation on residential and commercial structures throughout the region.

This project would consist of several components:

- Utilize (and modify for local conditions) existing resources and information
- Public education via content on existing websites of the three counties and local media
- Public education via community workshops after public meetings are deemed safe
- Educational workshops for Fire Safe Councils, Mono County RPACs, and other groups
- Policy workshops for elected officials and others on fairness and equity issues
- Involvement of local contractors and related businesses
- Engagement of insurance industry to provide incentives
- Investigation of opportunities for grants, loans, and subsidies
- Explore role of Inyo-Mono Advocates for Community Action to help low-income people
- Explore opportunities for demonstration / interpretive sites at public buildings

Scope: entire East geography

Potential Partnerships: Alpine, Mono, and Inyo Counties, Town of Mammoth Lakes, City of Bishop, Tribes, Fire Safe Councils, fire departments, Mono County Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPAC), businesses, insurance industry

Community and Tribal Involvement: hopefully all communities and Tribes in the geography will be involved

Although education will be a long-term effort (it is never done), the basic work establishing the programs can be accomplished by December 2021.

Innovation: Home hardening as a major strategy for community wildfire preparedness has not been promoted in the East geography. We are not aware of active participation of insurance industry and business community in home hardening programs in other areas. Equity and fairness issues of subsidies for home hardening have had little discussion.

Evaluation and reporting: None yet; project is just being proposed.

Visitor education and outreach

One of the most common themes we heard from stakeholders of all types is the need for education and outreach, particularly to visitors to the region, to improve awareness of activities that exacerbate fire risk and threats to ecosystem health. While most people agreed that education is also necessary for local residents, the lack of knowledge and awareness among visitors (including second homeowners) seemed to be of primary concern.

As a second pilot/demonstration project for the East geography, we propose to develop an outreach and education campaign around fire awareness and ecosystem health aimed at visitors and second homeowners. We have already identified a possible funding source through the California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearinghouse.

Although not fully developed, this project might include the following components:

- Creation of signage and materials promoting fire awareness at campgrounds and trailheads
- Development of a marketing campaign with a consistent look across the region that targets visitors at such locations as restaurants, coffee shops, and hotels
- Providing support to the large land management agencies (Forest Service, BLM, LADWP) in their efforts to do outreach and



education

- Hold “fire-side chats” at recreation locations (such as campgrounds) and in towns to provide information and education about fire and the region’s ecosystems
 - Some of these events could be targeted to children

Scope: Entire East subregion

Potential Partnerships: ESSRP, Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests, BLM, LADWP, CAL FIRE, Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Fire Safe Councils in areas with recreation (such as Twin Lakes, June Lake, Mammoth Lakes), Tribes, fire departments, businesses

Community or Tribal involvement: We would intend to seek out and encourage involvement from all interested East subregion communities and Tribes.

Although education will be a long-term effort (it is never done), the basic work establishing the programs can be accomplished by December 2021.

Innovation: Currently, there is no consistent, focused effort on visitor education around fire awareness and ecosystem health in the East subregion. We will of course look for examples in other geographies, but not having heard of such a program before, this effort could create a model to be followed by other Sierra Nevada regions.

Evaluation and reporting: No evaluation or reporting metrics have been developed yet as this project is just being created.

Planning for What’s Next

Phase II of the East subregion RFFCP involves creating a planning process to identify and prioritize ecosystem health and fire prevention projects, as well as build capacity, for the East Geography. Our initial work during the assessment phase suggests a few paths forward: (1) formation of a collaborative group modeled roughly on the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program, (2) providing capacity building opportunities to local stakeholders (see Capacity Building Plan), (3) developing the two pilot/demonstration projects discussed in the previous section, and (4) promoting and assisting where possible the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) to create a position of “wildfire mitigation coordinator” or something fulfilling that general concept (see Recommendations section).

Formation of a collaborative process for Alpine, Mono, and Inyo Counties would be a preferred means of identifying and prioritizing projects. The Inyo-Mono IRWMP may offer some useful experience and lessons learned for regional collaborative approaches to reducing risks from wildfire. The project submittal and ranking process used by the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program appears to have potential for adaptation to prioritizing wildfire mitigation projects. The experience of the Lahontan Funding Area of the state’s IRWM Program may provide an example of transforming a highly competitive grant process into an equitable means of distributing limited state funds.

During our interviews, almost everyone expressed an interest in a regional collaborative process to help with wildfire issues. Despite near-universal support for such a concept and recognition

that a regional approach will be valuable, there were personal reservations about yet another task by overworked agency personnel and over-committed community volunteers. When a collaborative is launched, it must offer clear value and not be just another meeting to attend.

Although a region-wide stakeholder collaborative process is desired for the East subregion, we discovered through our interviews that there are some significant differences in how the three counties approach wildfire mitigation. We think that, using the two pilot/demonstration projects as an initial effort, we will be able to convene stakeholders at a regional scale but that some activities of this program may need to be operated at the county (or smaller) level.



The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments was formed in 1995, but only became a Joint Powers Authority in January 2020. As such, the ESCOG is now an independent legal entity that can operate separately from its four members (Inyo County, Mono County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, and City of Bishop) although presumably in ways to benefit the citizens of the entire region. The ESCOG has been proposed as the ideal entity to employ one or more people to oversee, plan, coordinate, work with local fire safe councils, and administer programs and projects to reduce wildfire hazards and improve ecosystem health throughout the two counties. Although Alpine County would not benefit directly from such an arrangement, we believe that creating at least one wildfire-mitigation staff position within ESCOG would provide coordination benefits to a large fraction of the East geography.

Recommendations

As we conducted interviews and reviewed plans, many ideas were revealed or created that seemed to be useful in the broad realm of wildfire mitigation. This list of recommendations is merely an initial attempt to record many of the good ideas that surfaced. As we proceed, this list will be refined and organized to target different audiences for different types of recommendations. This list is *not* intended as a “to-do” list for the East subregion RFFCP team; it would not be possible to address all these items within the current grant. At a later time, we plan to excerpt the dozens (perhaps hundreds) of recommendations found within the many

plans for the region and organize them in one or more logical arrangements (geography, priority, governmental responsibility, scale, etc.).

- Implement the recommendations of the many existing plans, especially those of the CWPPs
- Create at least one position for a wildfire mitigation specialist or coordinator (or similar title) in the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
 - This concept is not new; the generation of CWPPs created a decade ago, as well as agency staff, cited this need
 - Possible responsibilities: development of annual operating plans, coordinating with community groups, providing public information and education, increasing volunteer firefighters, and grant writing and management
- Provide baseline funding for fire safe councils, perhaps including for county- (or larger) level coordinators
- Strongly encourage the U.S. Forest Service, at the regional or national level, to address the lack of staffing in individual National Forests that hamstrings existing personnel from adequately and proactively addressing fire and ecosystem health concerns
- When plans regarding wildfire mitigation are prepared in the future, the agencies involved need to utilize local expertise and not just consulting firms from outside the region
 - Local people with local knowledge should write the sections about local geography and conditions
 - Such work could be conducted under simple contracts for modest amounts of time and compensation administered by a non-profit organization
- Perform needs assessments for each fire district
- Investigate potential roles of insurance industry
 - Learn more about how the insurance industry and CAL FIRE identify and map fire risk
 - Learn about the barriers to changing risk designations (e.g., even after fuel has burned)
- Explore incentives for investment in biomass energy facilities
- Explore potential role for venture capital in biomass facilities and fuel reduction projects
 - Alpine County could host a large facility to handle material exported from Tahoe basin
- Explore solutions to barriers to building biomass energy facilities
- Explore incentives for creation of more local businesses to perform fuels treatments
 - County economic development staff could help in this effort
- Develop functional business model for distributing home-heating firewood to low-income residents
- Explore potential for creation of one or more tribal-based businesses modeled after the Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) corporation
- Establish a California Conservation Corps “base” in the eastern Sierra Nevada
- Compare approaches to neighborhood/community woody-debris disposal
- Develop semi-generic CEQA and NEPA documents for fuels treatments that need only some site-specific additions; alternatively, prepare programmatic environmental documents that can be applied to individual fuels treatment projects with some site-specific additions

- Increase the training capacity for archaeological surveyors – apparently the week-long training courses are in high demand with long waiting lists
- Streamline the processes for archaeological and cultural-resources surveys beginning with the records request
- Compile approaches (local ordinances [e.g., El Dorado County], peer pressure, CWPPs, etc.) for dealing with fuel loads on unoccupied lots and analyze effectiveness, costs, trade-offs, etc.
- Form a “task force” of representatives of granting agencies and some recipients (perhaps similar to the California Financing Coordinating Committee model) to thoroughly examine current processes for funding fuels mitigation work and develop new approaches
 - If starting fresh, how could funding mechanisms work with a minimum of “busy work” for applicants, while selecting the “best” (using clear criteria) projects, and ensuring financial efficiency and accountability?
- Support research on management of cheatgrass and other invasive species
- Explore mechanisms for insuring fuels-reduction workers and contractors at lower cost
 - Can federal government indemnify contractors against liability on federal land?
- Learn the legal requirements about “prevailing wage” issues in different types of fuels work
- Look into existing educational materials and curricula about wildfire suitable for area schools
- Help Bodie State Historic Park develop and implement a wildfire mitigation plan
- Are there ways to streamline financial management for multiple entities involved in fuels mitigation projects (e.g., county role, special foundation with low overhead)?

Conclusion

As is often the case, the capacity of Eastern Sierra stakeholders has been underestimated by outside entities with limited knowledge of the geography, culture, and priorities of the region. Our local and regional agencies and organizations perform an impressive amount of work given the limited resources available to them. There is also room for building their capacity so that they can better meet their own needs. Having some kind of centralized structure for fire safe councils, local agencies, and fire departments would go a long way to increasing the capacity of the entire region to address fire-related issues. Increasing staffing at the federal agencies is another main concern and would need to be addressed at the national level. The RFFCP team in the East subregion (ECWA and Sierra Corps) is committed to working on these issues, and others, to help move the region forward in its thinking about and action toward creating more fire-aware and fire-resilient human and natural communities.

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Eastern Sierra Nevada Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Subregional Plan

Table of Contents

Background.....	2
Purpose.....	2
Impetus for regional plans	2
Relationship to other plans and state policies/priorities	3
Existing plans and assessments.....	4
County Plans	5
Local Plans	5
Federal Plans.....	5
Utilities.....	5
Recent fire history.....	5
Map of projects and activities.....	6
Collaborative Planning Process	7
Accomplishments.....	8
Capacity Building.....	8
Process for community involvement in plan’s creation	9
Process for coordinating with CNRA, DOC, and WRTC on this plan	9
How this process has increased the capacity of partners to:	9
Identify, prioritize, and plan for wildfire and forest health needs within the region	9
Coordinate fire planning and management efforts across land ownerships.....	10
Develop and manage a broad, collaborative structure and effective networks of partners and stakeholders.....	10
Attain strong regional support for the Regional Priority Plan and identified projects through broad inclusion of tribes, partners, and stakeholders	10
Project Prioritization	10
Box 1. RFFCP East Subregion Project Priorities (in alphabetical order)	14
How does the Plan reduce risk to priority populations from wildfire and other climate-related disasters?	15
Measuring and monitoring progress toward desired outcomes	15

Potential Future Activities and Recommendations..... 15
Literature Cited 18
Appendix A: Fire history of the SNC East Subregion 21

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy recognized the need to build capacity for wildfire mitigation efforts in Alpine, Mono, and Inyo counties by initiating the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) for the Eastern Sierra Nevada region in January 2020. Since then, the RFFCP evaluated the capacity of various entities in the three counties to plan, develop, and implement programs and projects to reduce the risk of wildfire in communities and ecosystems; built an informal stakeholder group; created a website for regional wildfire mitigation information and resources; supported a major program to reduce fuels around Mammoth Lakes; and obtained grant funding for several projects.

Fire is acknowledged to be a natural and necessary process in eastern California. Our challenge is to minimize adverse consequences of fire on people, structures, and human-desired attributes of the environment. This challenge has been made more difficult from the direct consequence of active suppression of most fires over several decades: accumulation of fuels to very dangerous levels. Reducing the risk of damage from fires involves reducing potential for accidental ignitions, creating safe shelter or escape routes from wildfires, reducing possibilities for igniting structures, dramatically reducing fuel loads and continuity near structures and **within** communities, creating areas adjacent to communities that are conducive to fire suppression activities, and reducing forest density and fuel loads **surrounding** communities. Our proposed approaches incorporate many concepts that are used throughout the West and becoming better known through evolving terminology: “working from the home outward”, “living with fire”, “fire-adapted communities and landscapes”, “fire-wise communities”, “communities permeable to fire”, etc.

Purpose

The purpose of this RFFCP subregional plan is to describe a path forward for reducing risk of damage from wildfires to communities and ecosystems in Alpine, Mono, and Inyo counties. The initial capacity assessment of the Sierra Nevada East subregion RFFCP (Alpert, et al., 2020) suggested a planning process to identify and prioritize ecosystem health and fire prevention projects, as well as build capacity, for the East Geography. Initial planning ideas included: (1) formation of a collaborative group modeled roughly on the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program, (2) providing capacity-building opportunities to local stakeholders (see Capacity Building Plan in Alpert, et al., 2020), (3) developing two pilot/demonstration projects, and (4) promoting and assisting where possible the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) to create a position of “wildfire mitigation coordinator” or something fulfilling that general concept.

Impetus for regional plans

The RFFCP is funded by California Climate Investments and administered by the Department of Conservation within the California Natural Resources Agency. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is one of

the regional entities that are tasked with developing regional priority plans under the RFFCP. These regional entities must “develop a Regional Priority Plan that identifies and prioritizes projects at the landscape or watershed-level to address forest health and wildfire risks within their region... Each Regional Priority Plan must be developed in coordination with efforts to identify forest and fire prevention priorities of Governor Newsom’s Administration” (California Natural Resources Agency, 2019; Davis, et al., 2020).

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s RFFC program has extended the broad regional approach and plan development to each of the seven subregions (aka geographies; Figure 1).



Figure 1. Sierra Nevada Conservancy sub-regions

Relationship to other plans and state policies/priorities

The state’s Forest Management Task Force (now known as Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force)

issued its *California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan* in January 2021. This plan recognizes many benefits of a regional approach, including that of the RFFCP, because of the “unique risks and wildfire resilience priorities of each region” (pg. 21). The plan’s recommended action 1.29 states “**Develop Network of Regional Forest and Community Fire Resilience Plans:** As part of its updated guidelines, the RFFC Program will seek to provide a common but highly flexible framework for the development of Regional Forest and Community Fire Resilience Plans that can be tailored to a variety of regional governance structures and risks and priorities” (Forest Management Task Force, 2021: 23).

On September 23, 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law AB 9 (*Fire safety and prevention: wildfires: fire adapted communities: Office of the State Fire Marshal: community wildfire preparedness and mitigation*). This legislation codifies the RFFCP into law and prioritizes community safety. AB 9 establishes within the Department of Conservation “the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program to support regional leadership to build local and regional capacity and develop, prioritize, and implement strategies and projects that create fire adapted communities and landscapes by improving ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and fire resilience. For strategies and projects that seek to create fire adapted communities, regional entities shall maximize risk reductions to people and property, especially in the most vulnerable communities” (Section 4208.1[a]).

Section 4208.1 of AB 9 further provides that regional entities and/or local partners:

- (A) Develop regional priority strategies that develop and support fire adapted communities and landscapes by improving forest health, watershed health, fire risk reduction, or fire resilience needed to achieve local, regional, or statewide public safety, climate resiliency, and ecosystem goals included in the “Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California’s Forest and Rangelands” and “California’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.”
- (B) Complete project development and permitting to generate implementation-ready projects that address regional landscape resilience and community fire protection priorities for funding consideration.
- (C) Implement forest management demonstration projects that showcase scalable models for management, funding, and achieving and quantifying multiple benefits.
- (D) Implement community fire preparedness demonstration projects that create durable risk reduction for structures and critical community infrastructure.
- (E) Develop outreach, education, and training as needed to facilitate and build capacity to implement this section.
- (F) Collect and assess data and information as needed to identify and map communities, infrastructure, forests, and watersheds at risk of, and vulnerable to, wildfire, in collaboration with appropriate state agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Existing plans and assessments

The Sierra Nevada East subregion RFFCP completed its assigned capacity assessment in April 2020 (Alpert, et al., 2020). This document describes the status of various wildfire mitigation efforts and evaluates the capacity of most of the active agencies and groups to continue these efforts in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. The assessment lists the known plans relating to wildfire mitigation within

the three-county subregion and briefly describes their strengths and weaknesses. Those plans are listed below. Complete references and internet links (where available) are found in the Literature Cited section.

County Plans

- ❖ Alpine County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2018
- ❖ Alpine County Wildfire Risk Mitigation Plan 2021
- ❖ Inyo County / City of Bishop Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017
- ❖ Inyo County Emergency Operations Plan 2017
- ❖ Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2019
- ❖ Alpine County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2018
- ❖ Inyo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2009
- ❖ Mono County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2019

Local Plans

- ❖ Mammoth Lakes Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update 2019
- ❖ Wheeler Crest Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2019
- ❖ Wheeler Crest Wildfire Hazard Assessment 2019
- ❖ Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire – Final Recommendations for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, CA 2018

Federal Plans

- ❖ BLM Bishop Resource Management Plan 1993
- ❖ BLM Draft Programmatic EIS for Fuels Reduction and Rangeland Restoration in the Great Basin 2020
- ❖ BLM Fire Management Plan 2004
- ❖ Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest 2019
- ❖ Reds Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project (Inyo National Forest) 2019
- ❖ Land and Resource Management Plan for Toiyabe National Forest 1986

Utilities

- ❖ Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power Owens Valley Land Management Plan 2010
- ❖ Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power Wildfire Mitigation Plan 2020
- ❖ Southern California Edison 2020-2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plan, Revision 2 2020

Recent fire history

Wildfires within the Sierra Nevada East subregion that have dominated the attention of residents in the three counties in recent years are the Tamarack Fire (Alpine County) of 2021, Caldor Fire (Alpine County) of 2021, Mountain View Fire (Mono County) of 2020, and Round Fire (Mono County) of 2015. The Creek Fire of 2020, which burned much of the Sierra National Forest west of the subregion, delivered massive amounts of smoke into Mono and Inyo counties, impacting health and the recreation-based economy.

We have compiled a history of the major fires known to have occurred in the subregion (Appendix A; Figure 2). Most of the records are after 1950 and were mainly derived from CAL FIRE's California Wildfire Perimeter GIS layer. The fires are tabulated separately for Alpine County (65 fires), Walker River basin

(58 fires), Mono basin and Adobe Valley (33 fires), Upper Owens River basin (29 fires), and Owens Valley (58 fires) and are arranged from north to south in each of these regions. There are a total of 243 fires in these lists. Lightning was the most common known cause of these fires. Other known causes included smoking, playing with fire, campfires, arson, debris disposal, equipment use, firearm discharge, escaped prescribed burn, and crash of an Air Force drone.

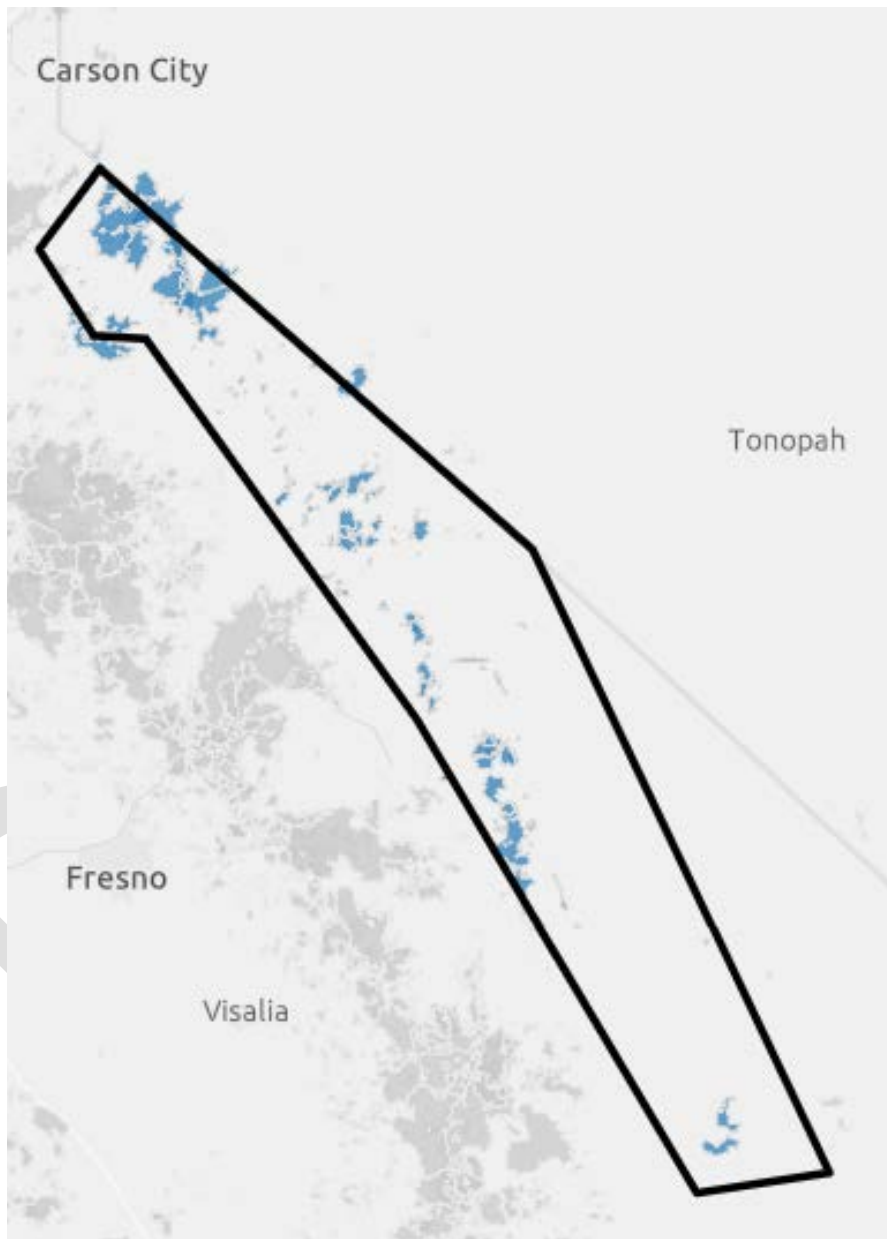


Figure 2. Fire perimeters in SNC East subregion (All-2021)

Map of projects and activities

Forthcoming

Collaborative Planning Process

The development of the RFFCP planning process began during the capacity assessment described earlier in this report. The capacity assessment entailed interviewing relevant stakeholders about their wildfire-related activities and concerns and understanding their capacity to undertake such activities. At the same time, the interviews afforded the RFFCP team an opportunity to provide information about the nascent RFFC Program and the intention for building a planning process. These interviews spanned all levels of government, included private and public entities, and provided us with an initial contact list.

Soon after the capacity assessment was completed, we began organizing our first RFFCP subregional stakeholder meeting. The purposes of the meeting were to introduce stakeholders to the RFFCP concept and players in the East subregion; report of the results of the capacity assessment; and discuss the timeline and deliverables of the SNC planning grant. All stakeholders participating in the capacity assessment were invited to the initial meeting, as well as some other interested entities. Since that first meeting, our stakeholder list has grown as we continue to do outreach and become aware of more entities working on wildfire issues.

The stakeholder group has met several times since the first meeting and has discussed a number of issues, but most of the time has been dedicated to discussing projects, funding, and a project prioritization process. We began by soliciting project needs from the stakeholder group and housing them in a spreadsheet. Project status was characterized as conceptual, planning stage, or shovel-ready. Categorizing projects in this way allowed us to assess what resources are needed to move each project forward. For example, it became clear that most projects on the list are in the planning stage but need funding or other assistance to get through project design, environmental compliance, and/or permitting. This knowledge is useful when searching for funding sources. The project database is a working document, and projects can be added at any time.

Simultaneous with the initial development of the project database, the stakeholder group began the design of a project prioritization process. A subcommittee of the stakeholder group was recruited to work on this effort in a focused way and met on a monthly basis for about a year. After several wide-ranging discussions, subcommittee members brainstormed and then narrowed a list of indicators that would inform eventual prioritization criteria. Once this list was honed, it was brought to the full stakeholder group. Stakeholders were asked to review and prioritize the criteria using different filters, such as priority in time and priority for funding dollars. More information about the project prioritization process, along with the results of the process, is presented in the Project Prioritization section below.

While the project prioritization process was being developed, the stakeholder group was able to opportunistically prioritize some activities. When a CAL FIRE funding round was made available, the RFFCP team worked with stakeholders to identify shovel-ready activities, and the stakeholder group approved these funding proposals in the absence of a formal prioritization process. Similarly, the program was given the opportunity to work with Great Basin Institute on a project planning effort, and building on initial brainstorming by the project prioritization subcommittee, the stakeholder group approved moving forward with a project concept to develop an environmental analysis template for low-elevation riparian areas in the region.

Accomplishments

There have been two main outcomes of the RFFCP pre-planning process. The first is a process, described later in this plan, that governs the identification and prioritization of projects, complete with 12 prioritization criteria. The second outcome is the successful award of several grants. Prior to the prioritization process being designed, projects were identified for individual funding sources opportunistically. In other words, for any given funding opportunity, stakeholders were encouraged to put forward project ideas. In the first two years of RFFCP, several funding opportunities were pursued, particularly through the CAL FIRE fire prevention program. As of the writing of this plan, seven successful funding applications have been awarded, totaling about \$8.5 million. In addition, individual stakeholders have pursued their own funding opportunities outside the RFFC Program and have realized their own successful projects.

Beyond the tangible work on project identification and prioritization, the formation of the stakeholder group has resulted in benefits that are harder to define but are present nonetheless. Similar to what we experienced with the IRWM Program, the RFFC Program has resulted in varied stakeholders sitting in the same room that might not otherwise meet or interact. As a result, stakeholders have forged relationships with one another and shared information and best practices. This coordination has been particularly helpful for the region's fire safe councils. Before the RFFC Program, it seems the 8-10 fire safe councils in the three counties had little communication or interaction. Now, the fire safe councils interact both through the RFFCP stakeholder meetings and through fire safe council-specific meetings facilitated by the RFFCP team.

Though we have made much progress in 2.5 years and realized early successes, the work is really just getting started. The goal of the program is to minimize the impact of wildland fire on communities and ecosystems, and we will do this by organizing fire-resilient communities, reducing fuel loading, and promoting healthy ecosystems.

Progress reports/accomplishments

Capacity Building

Beyond the development of this RFFC Plan and project prioritization process, a primary focus of the planning process has been to build capacity in local and regional organizations to prepare for and respond to wildfire in and around their communities. Capacity building efforts have been aimed at organizations across the board, from large federal agencies such as the Inyo National Forest to small volunteer fire departments and fire safe councils. The RFFC Program has helped these and other entities plan projects, identify relevant funding opportunities, develop grant applications, and coordinate with other interested parties, such as county boards of supervisors.

Yet capacity needs remain, especially with respect to staffing. Two examples highlight this need. First, the Inyo National Forest has little experience and capability in managing outside grant funding and does not have enough specialists on staff to conduct environmental analyses of fuel reduction / forest health projects. Yet decisions about budgets and staffing levels for the forest are well outside the control of most of the people in the East subregion, so we are finding other ways to bring capacity to the forest, such as outside organizations acting as grant applicants for projects on the forest.

A second example is the constant need for the Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District to be ready to respond to emergencies and other incidents uses almost all the personnel and fiscal resources of the department. In 2020, a ballot measure to increase funding for the department via a parcel tax of \$85 per year failed to receive a two-thirds super-majority. Only 28 additional yes votes (of 1978 cast) would have been needed for approval. These staffing pressures limit the ability of the District to proactively work in and with the community to mitigate wildfire risk. A new fire chief hired from within the department in July 2022 has expressed interest in working with the RFFCP team.

The continuation of the RFFC Program will be key in helping to address these capacity needs. Together with the new county wildfire coordinators, RFFCP staff can help to organize stakeholders and collaborations, find funding opportunities, and plan projects. Although it is ideal to build capacity within organizations, some activities, such as grant writing and grant administration, are sometimes better performed by outside, centralized entities.

Process for community involvement in plan's creation

RFFCP stakeholders contributed to this subregional plan through myriad meetings and one-on-one discussions. Indeed, every RFFCP activity in which stakeholders were involved contributed to this plan. It is expected that RFFCP stakeholders adequately represented their communities of interest, and thus communities were indirectly involved in the plan's creation. Stakeholders reviewed a draft of the plan, and the finished product will be made available to the public on the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance website.

Stakeholders were involved in every step of the development of the project prioritization process. Volunteers from the full stakeholder group were recruited to serve on a subcommittee focused on the project prioritization process. Six stakeholders, in addition to RFFCP staff and technical assistance providers American Forests, comprised the subcommittee. This group participated in the full development of the project prioritization process, from initial brainstorming of important topics to eventual creation and narrowing of indicators. The full stakeholder group then ranked the narrowed set of indicators to reflect its priorities.

Process for coordinating with CNRA, DOC, and WRTC on this plan

The RFFCP East geography team has not had any formal process for coordinating with state agencies on this plan. However, we did take thorough advantage of the SNC board meeting and field tour in June 2022 at Mammoth Lakes to discuss "big-picture" policy matters with SNC board members and staff. At that time, we were also fortunate to have a long private discussion with Patrick Wright, Director of the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force. In July 2022, we had an opportunistic discussion with Jenny Di Stefano of the Department of Conservation.

How this process has increased the capacity of partners to:

Identify, prioritize, and plan for wildfire and forest health needs within the region

Prior to the development of the RFFC Program, there was no regional effort for proactively developing

and prioritizing projects. Each stakeholder went about planning its own projects, and there was no coordinated effort. Furthermore, some stakeholders did not apply for grant funding because of capacity issues. The RFFCP effort brings stakeholders together to discuss project priorities and funding opportunities in a more deliberative, proactive manner. In addition, the RFFCP planning grant allowed for the writing of additional grants. For example, in the 2021 CAL FIRE fire prevention grant cycle, the RFFCP team submitted five grant applications on behalf of a dozen stakeholders, significantly increasing the capacity to look for and apply for funding.

Coordinate fire planning and management efforts across land ownerships

The act of gathering stakeholders to the same table on a regular basis has increased coordination and collaboration among agencies and organizations that might not otherwise communicate regularly. These periodic meetings have allowed stakeholders to build relationships with one another and begin to coordinate fire planning and management efforts. Because of the mosaic of land ownership in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties, such coordination is critical. Discussions of project ideas have led to collaboration outside of RFFCP meetings. For example, the 40 Acres neighborhood is bordered by Bureau of Land Management and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power land. Although the 40 Acres Fire Safe Council works on a regular basis with both agencies, the development of a CAL FIRE fire prevention grant application through the RFFC Program facilitated formalizing the coordination among these entities.

Develop and manage a broad, collaborative structure and effective networks of partners and stakeholders

The development of the RFFC Program in the East geography has largely been about relationship-building. Stakeholders that would not otherwise interact are now sitting at the same table and discussing concerns and projects of high priority. The information sharing that happens among stakeholders is one of the more valuable outcomes of this program. In addition, convening stakeholders in the spirit of collaboration has improved relationships among some. Stakeholders are committed to working together and finding ways to maximize benefits to as many communities and ecosystems as possible. Indeed, the project prioritization criteria detailed below reflect these priorities.

Attain strong regional support for the Regional Priority Plan and identified projects through broad inclusion of tribes, partners, and stakeholders

Similar to the commitment of stakeholders to maintaining a collaborative process, stakeholders support the development of a regional plan and the prioritization of projects using locally-developed criteria.

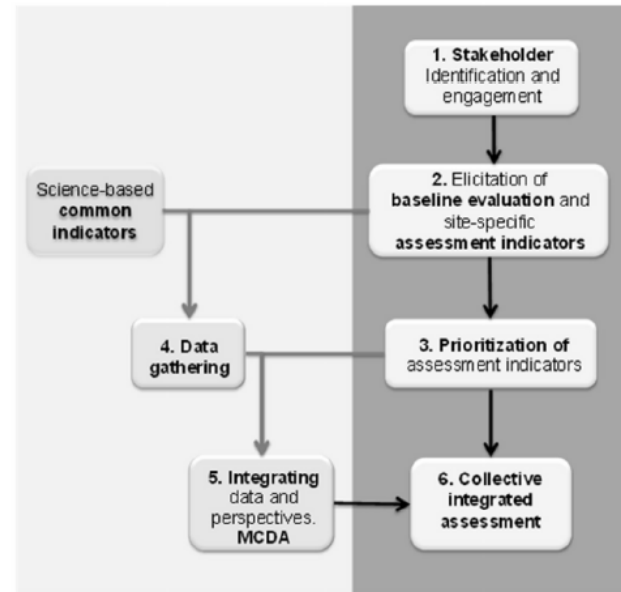
Project Prioritization

American Forests lead a stakeholder-driven effort to develop a project prioritization process for the East RFFCP subregion. The Project Prioritization process was designed to develop a list of regional priorities to be used to prioritize projects submitted to the East subregion project list. These priorities were developed by the RFFCP East subregions stakeholder group, with the process being developed and organized by the group's Project Prioritization Subcommittee (PPS). This group met between February and December 2021, with the majority of the prioritization taking place July – December. This committee was made up of a diverse group, representing the various interests of the region.

The protocol used was an adapted version of the PRACTICE protocol developed by Bautista et al. 2017, which promotes a participatory and learning-based approach to stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders develop indicators from issues of concern, which can be weighted and ranked to create priorities. These priorities can then be either applied to projects, or to a landscape as part of a Multi-Criteria Analysis.

Steps

1. Convene stakeholders
2. Identify issues of concern
3. Review draft issues of concern and create a list of criteria/indicators
4. Ranking criteria/indicators with larger stakeholder group
5. Data discussion – add data to support indicators?
6. Optional: Map update with prioritization – incorporation of Multi-Criteria Data Analysis using weighting from concerns/indicators
7. Evaluation/review of results
8. Prioritization of projects using weighted criteria



Step 1: Convene stakeholders

A stakeholder group was convened based on interest and experience. Participants committed to meeting once per month for one year to work on deliverables, including the prioritization.

Step 2: Identify issues of concern

Using the online tool Mentimeter, Step 2 was completed through a brainstorming session with the stakeholder group. The following questions were used to generate specific responses:

- What are your primary natural resources concerns?
- What are issues of concern related to ecosystem health? What are you concerned about conserving or protecting in our region's ecosystem?
- What are your issues of concern for Wildfire Resilience or Fire Risk?
- What are your Socioeconomic and/or cultural issues of concern?

What are your primary natural resources concerns?

Mentimeter



Step 3: Criteria/Indicators list

In this step, the list of issues of concern was reviewed and refined by American Forests into a shorter list of 23 indicators, combining them with common scientific indicators whenever possible. The resulting list was reviewed and discussed by the PPS members, and five criteria were eliminated, resulting in 18 criteria/indicators for prioritization.

East Criteria/Indicators

- Watershed function
- Water quantity and quality
- Erosion – flood or post-fire
- Critical wildlife habitat
- Riparian restoration
- Protecting mature ecosystems
- Fuel loading and excess biomass
- Returning fire to ecosystem
- Forest structure and density
- High severity wildfire
- Wind-prone landscape
- Carbon loss
- Lack of workforce
- Fire and smoke public education
- WUI community protection – internal and external
- Tribal lands
- Disadvantaged communities
- Access/egress limitations

3.

Criteria eliminated through initial prioritization by subcommittee:

- Insect mortality
- Ecosystem diversity
 - Low economic diversity/tourism dependence
 - Air quality
- Human ignition

Step 4: Prioritization

The prioritization of indicators took place with the full subcommittee on September 8, 2021. Ranking of indicators was conducted using a variety of methodologies to mitigate any inherent bias or preference

from any one method. These methodologies were:

- **Prioritization by timescale:** Evaluation of criteria/indicators by the time scale at which the issue should be addressed. As soon as possible? Or could it wait until 10 years from now? Consider each indicator separately.
- **Point buy ranking:** Given 100 points, how would you distribute those among the criteria listed. How would you budget how funding might be allocated to the following priorities?
- **Straight rank of criteria:** Lastly, we will rank criteria by 1, 2, 3,4 etc. Of the criteria listed, identify your highest priority vs your lowest priority.

The results were then adjusted to appropriate scale and ranked based on score. Definitions were also developed for the 10 indicators selected.

Step 5 & 6: Data Integration option

In October 2021, the PPS met to discuss if data should be integrated into the process at this time, or simply applied to projects in the list for prioritization. The consensus of the group was that data should not be integrated at this time, as there was concern that existing data would not be available across the region in sufficient quality to support decision-making. Some initial work at data collection and assessment has been initiated, including Great Basin Institute's riparian assessment.

Step 7: Evaluation of results

Results were evaluated by the PPS in December and by the full Stakeholder group in January 2022. These priorities were accepted by the full group. At a subsequent meeting, the stakeholder group identified an additional two criteria. The full 12 criteria, along with definitions, can be found in Box 1.

Step 8: Prioritization of projects using weighted criteria

Initially, all criteria were weighted equally. However, stakeholders were unanimous in wanting to prioritize efforts to make communities in the region more resilient to wildland fire; therefore, the criterion focusing on WUI community protection received a higher weight than the other criteria.

Once the criteria were identified and weighted, they were applied to the project list using the project descriptions provided by project proponents. A score was calculated for each project. Although the scoring process did not result in a sequentially ranked list of projects, it did result in priority "bins" of projects; in other words, groups of projects that all had the same score but that were scored higher or lower than other groups of projects. The prioritized list of projects, along with their scores, can be found in Appendix B.

None of the priority projects resulting from Executive Order N-05-19 are located in the East subregion.

No explicit coordination with Forest Management Task Force Regional Prioritization Group or Science Advisory Panel took place, although American Forests is closely tied in with both the Task Force and the East subregion RFFC Program.

Box 1. RFFCP East Subregion Project Priorities (in alphabetical order)

Access/egress limitations

Barriers to safe access to and egress from rural communities, for instance road condition, brush encroachment, and gating.

Critical wildlife habitat

Specific areas within a given geographic area, occupied by a species at the time it was listed, that contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species and that may need special management or protection.

Disadvantaged rural communities

Areas in foothill and mountain communities that most suffer from a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens.

Fire and smoke public education

Outreach and communication that promotes managed and prescribed fire, smoke management, and the ecological benefit of fire.

Fire ignition risk

Risk of communities and structures to ignite from wildland fire or other structure fire

Fire return interval

The average period between fires under the presumed historical fire regime.¹

Fuel loading and biomass

High amounts of live and/or dead woody material that exceed historical range and/or desired conditions.

High severity wildfire

High heat intensity fire resulting in greater than 75% tree mortality. Also referred to as upper story replacing wildfire.

Resilient ecosystems

Returning forests and other ecosystems to a resilient state

Water quality and quantity

Timing and total yield of water from a watershed; suitability of water for drinking, recreation, and wildlife.

Watershed function

The biotic and abiotic factors that ensure watershed processes (water capture, water storage, and water release) are preserved.

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) community protection

Treatments and actions conducted to modify or suppress fire behavior outside or around communities, and actions and treatments promoting home hardening, defensible space, and road clearance within communities.

How does the Plan reduce risk to priority populations from wildfire and other climate-related disasters?

The RFFCP process has helped to bring awareness of fire issues to stakeholders and, by extension, the public. Conversations among stakeholders about their concerns have resulted in several successfully-funded projects that will help to reduce wildfire risk to the region's communities as well as a prioritized list of projects that will be implemented over time. The process of collaboration and information sharing will help to ensure that resources are going where they are most needed and that stakeholders are assisting each other. The project priorities developed through this planning process will direct funding to the areas of highest concern and risk in the region.

Measuring and monitoring progress toward desired outcomes

The success of the RFFC Program will be measured quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, success will be measured by:

- Number of relationships forged among tribes, fire safe councils, fire departments, federal agencies, local governments, and more
- Number of fire safe councils functioning sustainably
- Number of activities undertaken to implement community wildfire protection plan projects
- Amount of funding obtained for projects
- Number of projects successfully implemented

Qualitatively, success will be measured in the ability of the subregion to be better prepared for wildfire, including promoting ways to prevent it. We will know we have achieved success when another wildfire hits the subregion and does less damage because of the preparation undertaken through the RFFC Program.

Potential Future Activities and Recommendations

In addition to the suggested outline for this plan, we thought it useful to include some of the recommendations from the 2020 Assessment (Alpert, et al., 2020) and document other ideas and suggestions that have developed during the past two years. As was mentioned in the Assessment, this list is not intended as a "to-do" list for the East subregion RFFCP team, but it is an attempt to document some of the possibilities that could contribute to reducing the risk of damage from wildfires in the East subregion.

Depending on future direction from the State of California, we will probably need to address the "entity" creation called out in AB 9: "Ensure, to the extent feasible, there are regional entities to cover every part of the state that contains or is adjacent to a very high or high fire hazard severity zone identified by the State Fire Marshal". Possibilities include, but are not limited to: maintain the current informal RFFCP stakeholder group and perhaps call it the "Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance", form a loose coalition of local Fire Safe Councils, and/or create some sort of program housed within ESCOG plus Alpine County.

This list is organized according to what entity is the most likely lead for each recommendation.

RFFC East Geography Team

- Work with the new wildfire mitigation coordinators of Alpine, Inyo, and Mono counties

- Excerpt the dozens (perhaps hundreds) of recommendations found within the many plans for the region and organize them in one or more logical arrangements (geography, priority, governmental responsibility, scale, etc.)
- Investigate potential roles of insurance industry
 - Learn more about how the insurance industry and CAL FIRE identify and map fire risk
 - Learn about the barriers to changing risk designations (e.g., even after fuel has burned)
- Explore potential role for venture capital in biomass facilities and fuel reduction projects
 - Alpine County could host a large facility to handle material exported from Tahoe basin
- Explore potential for creation of one or more tribal-based businesses modeled after the Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) corporation
- Compare approaches to neighborhood/community woody-debris disposal
- Compile approaches (local ordinances [e.g., El Dorado County], peer pressure, CWPPs, etc.) for dealing with fuel loads on unoccupied lots and analyze effectiveness, costs, trade-offs, etc.
- Learn the legal requirements about “prevailing wage” issues in different types of fuels work
- Look into existing educational materials and curricula about wildfire suitable for area schools
- Are there ways to streamline financial management for multiple entities involved in fuels mitigation projects (e.g., county role, special foundation with low overhead)?

Counties and Local Government Agencies

- Determine whether there is a role for a position similar to the county wildfire mitigation coordinators in the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
- Implement the recommendations of the many existing plans, especially those of the CWPPs
- When plans regarding wildfire mitigation are prepared in the future, the agencies involved need to utilize local expertise and not just consulting firms from outside the region
 - Local people with local knowledge should write the sections about local geography and conditions
 - Such work could be conducted under simple contracts for modest amounts of time and compensation administered by a non-profit organization
- Perform needs assessments for each fire district
- Explore incentives for creation of more local businesses to perform fuels treatments
 - County economic development staff could help in this effort
- Develop functional business model for distributing home-heating firewood to low-income residents
- Learn the legal requirements about “prevailing wage” issues in different types of fuels work
- Help Bodie State Historic Park develop and implement a wildfire mitigation plan
- Are there ways to streamline financial management for multiple entities involved in fuels mitigation projects (e.g., county role, special foundation with low overhead)?

State Agencies

- Provide baseline funding for fire safe councils, perhaps including for county- (or larger) level coordinators
- Explore incentives for investment in biomass energy facilities
- Explore solutions to barriers to building biomass energy facilities
- Establish a California Conservation Corps “base” in the eastern Sierra Nevada

- Develop semi-generic CEQA and NEPA documents for fuels treatments that need only some site-specific additions; alternatively, prepare programmatic environmental documents that can be applied to individual fuels treatment projects with some site-specific additions
- Increase the training capacity for archaeological surveyors – apparently the week-long training courses are in high demand with long waiting lists
- Streamline the processes for archaeological and cultural-resources surveys beginning with the records request
- Form a “task force” of representatives of granting agencies and some recipients (perhaps similar to the California Financing Coordinating Committee model) to thoroughly examine current processes for funding fuels mitigation work and develop new approaches
 - If starting fresh, how could funding mechanisms work with a minimum of “busy work” for applicants, while selecting the “best” (using clear criteria) projects, and ensuring financial efficiency and accountability?
- Explore mechanisms for insuring fuels-reduction workers and contractors at lower cost
- Help Bodie State Historic Park develop and implement a wildfire mitigation plan

Federal Agencies

- U.S. Forest Service, at the regional or national level, needs to address the lack of staffing in individual National Forests that hampers existing personnel from adequately and proactively addressing fire and ecosystem health concerns
- When plans regarding wildfire mitigation are prepared in the future, the agencies involved need to utilize local expertise and not just consulting firms from outside the region
 - Local people with local knowledge should write the sections about local geography and conditions
 - Such work could be conducted under simple contracts for modest amounts of time and compensation administered by a non-profit organization
- Develop semi-generic CEQA and NEPA documents for fuels treatments that need only some site-specific additions; alternatively, prepare programmatic environmental documents that can be applied to individual fuels treatment projects with some site-specific additions
- Streamline the processes for archaeological and cultural-resources surveys beginning with the records request
- Support research on management of cheatgrass and other invasive species
- Explore mechanisms for insuring fuels-reduction workers and contractors at lower cost
 - Can federal government indemnify contractors against liability on federal land?

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Appendix A: Fire history of the SNC East Subregion

(Organized north to south within each area)

Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
Alpine County			
10860	19960622	3802	playing with fire
3909	1947xxxx	293	unknown
8866	19860715	3381	equipment
9910	19650809	61	lightning
7502	20000802	19	lightning
4103	1948xxxx	934	unknown
11501	19870728	6350	misc
8174	19880626	495	equipment
3910	1947xxxx	158	unknown
Payne	20170605	67	suspect target shooting
6846	19990806	28	lightning
12861	19840627	16668	arson
12862	19840623	805	arson
East Fork	20210630	1136	lightning
Tamarack	20210703	68637	lightning
6802	19810705	15	playing with fire
9389	19590710	53	lightning
7856	19831007	7	playing with fire
7323	19640720	37	playing with fire
Dutch	20180801	198	unknown
7267	19730712	19	lightning
526	1941xxxx	415	unknown
6211	19741016	29	misc
1269	19680722	39	playing with fire
3911	1947xxxx	14395	unknown
7484	19600820	33	smoking
14608	1985xxxx	740	unknown
5477	1949xxxx	8817	unknown
13549	19890815	115	lightning
1325	19740828	488	lightning
4104	1948xxxx	302	unknown
Caldor	20210814	~1500 in Alpine Co	arson
8778	19700621	8	lightning
11502	19871111	28	debris

Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
6829	19710617	97	smoking
Washington	20150718	17780	lightning
14609	1996xxxx	156	unknown
Slinkard	20170828	8923	lightning
6765	1943xxxx	633	unknown
Gates Complex	2004xxxx	8905	
8742	19530823	336	unknown
7324	19640919	269	equipment
13717	19920906	117	lightning
2414	1946xxxx	205	unknown
3912	1947xxxx	308	unknown
2447	1941xxxx	229	unknown
9108	19540706	254	unknown
Irene	20140913	94	lightning
15873	1939xxxx	193	misc
Meadow Lake	19291005	186	lightning
Clover 2	20070827	20	lightning
Mokelumne	20160818	650	lightning
Deer	19990805	325	lightning
Slink	20200828	26752	
Mudd	20030830	4337	lightning
Hiram	19990809	2750	lightning
Donnell	20180731	36501	unknown
Bear Hole	19550807	29	lightning
Arnot	20000627	222	lightning
Spicer	19850711	31	smoking
Wheats	20120803	180	lightning
McCormick	20170817	4423	lightning
Cotton	20080714	29	lightning
Clarks Fork	19510609	330	campfire
Fence Creek	19551003	293	lightning
<u>Walker River basin</u>			
Slinkard	19170828	8923	lightning
6765	19430000	633	unknown
Gates Complex	20040000	8905	unknown
8791	19720813	156	misc
2138	19550000	206	smoking
8609	19510703	165	unknown

Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
8608	19510805	115	unknown
Dana	20040624	2164	lightning
7325	19641003	368	smoking
Coleville	19960000	2581	unknown
7326	19640000	682	debris
Larson	20070531	1076	lightning
Slink	20200903	26752+	
7501	20000731	1527	lightning
Larsen	19950818	75	arson
7268	19730717	376	unknown
8779	19700703	63	lightning
2737	19460000	227	unknown
1327	19740725	662	lightning
Mountain View	20201116		
Cannon	20020614	26684	campfire
1328	19740706	2112	smoking
7269	19730726	213	lightning
1598	19470000	146	unknown
1599	19470000	537	unknown
8175	19880809	57	lightning
7707	19771117	277	debris
11284	19940726	67	lightning
Boot	20180913	6972	unknown
13379	19900804	382	lightning
6846	19990716	246	smoking
10493	19850623	88	playing with fire
7327	19640920	27	smoking
9595	19610802	44	lightning
Murphy	20200622	12	
Mt. Jackson	19960811	857	lightning
9966	19660525	19	lightning
10494	19850815	15	lightning
10495	19850706	117	lightning
8867	19860801	11	lightning
1330	19740828	108	lightning
7542	1948	515	unknown
Aurora	20200628	238	
Buckeye	20110924	1046	lightning
8398	19770802	352	lightning

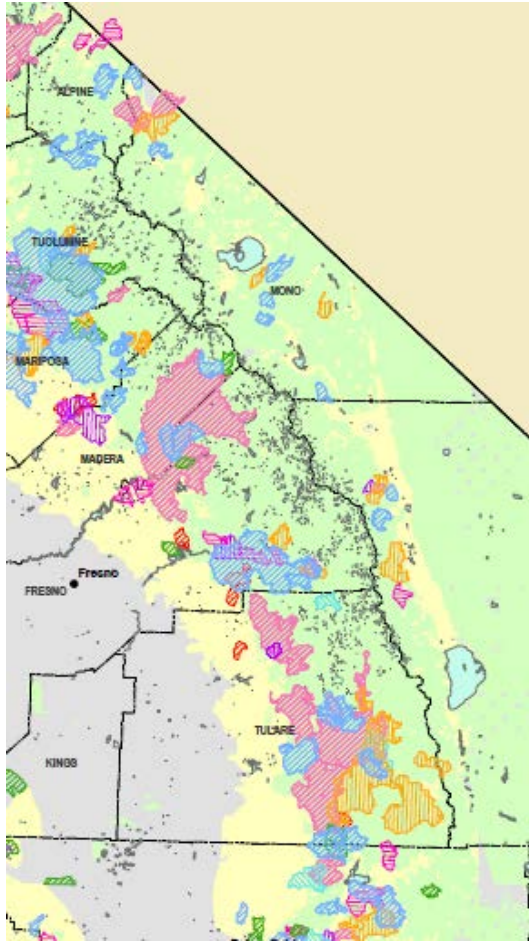
Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
Van Dyke	20150205	512	unknown
Spring Peak	20130817		lightning
7329	19640628	362	misc
7270	19731031	189	misc
Potato	20100723	632	lightning
7328	19640901	100	campfire
9390	19590718	101	lightning
Green Creek	20150911	27	vehicle
8743	19530719	122	unknown
Conway	20070714	89	lightning
2139	19550823	71	lightning
Biederman	20120721	20	lightning
Bodie	20140717	93	lightning
<u>Mono Basin & Adobe Valley</u>			
Biederman	20120721	20	lightning
Bodie	20140717	93	lightning
Summit	19600511	611	unknown
Conway	20140915	46	vehicle
Lundy	20030423	740	unknown
Wilson	20160802	16	misc
Dechambeau 14452	19991204	11	debris
Dechambeau 10341	20040622	27	lightning
Dechambeau 10392	19970514	42	lightning
Marina	20160623	641	misc
Azusa	20000528	700	campfire
Beach	20200819	3668	lightning ?
Crater	20010810	5590	lightning
Indian	20120807	12575	lightning
Walker	20150813	3815	misc
Mono	20100725	1205	lightning
Cow	19840928	3087	unknown
6000	19860812	538	lightning
12143	19850000	798	unknown
Crater Mountain	20040524	190	lightning
9344	19720809	150	lightning
June	20070709	680	lightning
Sage Hen	20120803	12	lightning

Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
Dexter	20030901	2460	lightning
Grant	20170730	395	lightning
Clark	20160803	2822	lightning
McGee	20050702	34	arson
15130	19770721	74	lightning
15254	19870829	179	lightning
Sawmill	20060913	7434	debris
15131	19770721	102	lightning
N. Glass	20090717	91	lightning
<u>Upper Owens</u>			
Clark	20160803	2819	lightning
9345	19720704	1458	playing with fire
McLaughlin	20010701	2714	lightning
Owens	19850806	3750	misc
Oharel	20071028	560	lightning
13633	19901025	55	lightning
Glass	20050901	20	arson
Owens	20180730	312	lightning
7016	1986xxxx	20	misc
Hot Creek	20180730	436	lightning
Mammoth	19870821	640	unknown
15255	19870821	521	misc
2907	1966xxxx	326	misc
Shooting	20060714	18	misc
9346	19720722	110	equipment use
Laurel	19870829	1465	arson
Sherwin	20080802	300	lightning
9347	19720715	800	lightning
9348	19720724	12	misc
Rock	2005	11	misc
Birch	20020630	2624	lightning
9441	1984xxxx	27	misc
12144	19850807	277	misc
Rock Creek	20160804	122	equipment use
Swall	19810808	3159	misc
Round	20150206	7000	misc
Swall	19740227	666	misc
Paradise #2	19580727	351	unknown

Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
11328	1983xxxx	265	misc
<u>Owens Valley</u>			
Rovana	19830630	317	misc
Pleasant	20180217	2077	arson
Bluff	20080315	680	campfire
Bridges	20140418	113	unknown
Pole	19950613	5550	misc
River	20050329	86	unknown
Cashbaugh	19870303	600	unknown
Mudd	20050922	32	unknown
Horton	19910414	193	campfire
Springs	19810223	1266	misc
9350	19720722	560	campfire
Tom	19980829	3420	misc
Buttermilk	19960728	59	lightning
Buttermilk	20110524	206	campfire
Airport	220216	4136	?
Warm Springs	20050406	250	arson
Buckley	20090320	26	arson
Forks	20090717	3268	lightning
Warm Springs #3	19720317	294	unknown
Springs	20080301	84	unknown
Spring	20130126	13	unknown
2908	1966	81	unknown
Big Trees	20080804	125	lightning
Keough	20140808	17	unknown
475	1960	2423	misc
12637	19720717	50	lightning
Sage	20070705	6460	lightning
9607	1962xxxx	6497	misc
8933	19861128	45	misc
Fuller	20020711	6400	lightning
John	20110912	5799	unknown
Fish	20120706	1103	unknown
Crater Mountain	19600707	1580	unknown
3811	1992xxxx	247	lightning
Goodale	20060625	3750	lightning
6975	1988xxxx	614	misc

Name	Start Date	Area (ac)	Cause
Division	19990328	2450	misc
Oak	20070705	12051	lightning
Fort	20090204	945	escaped prescribed burn
Winterton	20110301	283 or 908	escaped prescribed burn
Hogback	20050721	743	lightning
Sawmill	20000802	322	lightning
Fort	19800319	314	unknown
9442	1984xxxx	199	misc
Onion	19850705	9084	lightning
1523	1977xxxx	164	misc
Manzanar	1998	340	unknown
10530	19750612	200	lightning
Moffat	20180418	1265	campfire
Georges	20180707	2941	lightning
15164	19790518	450	campfire
Portal	20050720	62	lightning
Lone Pine	20160630	104	unknown
River	20130223	406	unknown
13816	19710322	84	misc
Diaz	20170620	75	USAF drone crash
Horseshoe	20160808	379	misc
Ash	20160611	110	lightning
Olancha	20030903	271	lightning

Extra Stuff:



Current and incoming projects on the East Subregion project list will be prioritized using a weighted matrix of the indicators. The result is that high priority projects will meet most or all of the indicators. However, sufficient project information is required in order to prioritize these projects accurately.

A subcommittee of RFFCP stakeholders was identified to work on this effort. After several wide-ranging conversations about priorities that are important to the stakeholders, American Forests staff presented the stakeholders with a comprehensive list of possible criteria and asked the stakeholders to go through a process to roughly rank or weight the criteria. From the initial list of 20, a subset of 10 criteria was easily identified and became the criteria that were presented to the full RFFCP stakeholder group. The RFFCP group reviewed and approved the 10 criteria, which can be found in Box 1.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director
Mono Inyo Airport Working Group (MIAWG) Committee
Subject: MIAWG Committee Meeting Report
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 13, 2023
Attachments: A) MIAWG Committee April 7, 2023 Meeting Staff Report

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

On April 7, 2023, the MIAWG Committee held a meeting to initiate policy discussions between each of the regional governmental agencies and other key partners regarding air service.

The discussion between public and private partners was facilitated through the MIAWG as a first step in looking to the future of have successful, reliable, regional air service. The discussion was framed around three considerations to achieve reliable, regional air service, with each topic having its own set of policy questions:

1. Determining the governance and funding structure for air service subsidies
2. Defining the goal of current and future air service
3. Airport infrastructure and operations – Required to support any level of air service

Staff did not expect final answers for each of the questions, rather the policy questions served as prompts for the initial discussion between partners.

In addition to the members of the MIAWG committee and regional management staff, the meeting was attended by representatives from the Bishop Chamber of Commerce, Mammoth Lakes Tourism, and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

A summary of the policy questions and discussion of the committee members is provided below.

Policy Questions Set 1. The question of governance or public oversight of Air Service which is directly tied to the supporting infrastructure is a question directed at the regional nature of air service. Currently only two of the MIAWG members provide direct funding for air service and provide the existing infrastructure. While air service provides a regional service, the financial and infrastructure support is tied to Mammoth Lakes and Inyo County, as governmental agencies. Additional direct and indirect support is provided by private sector partners. Initial set of questions:

- a. Is the MIAWG (ESCOG) the proper forum for a regional air service discussion?
- b. Should the governance model be structured to reflect financial partners only?
- c. Is a different governance model preferred – i.e., a public/private entity?
- d. What is the mechanism for general public discussion?
- e. Is the current funding structure sustainable for partners and air service?
- f. What other options are available for funding air service?

Discussion: There was consensus the MIAWG serves as the only forum for regional discussion and public visibility currently and there needs to be regional representation for the public for decision making. In time, the governance structure should evolve to include public funding partners and/or have two levels of governance to allow for public transparency and representation. It was agreed that the MIAWG is not the right entity for determining service economics and infrastructure needs, and that the public-private entity needs to be agile in getting work accomplished but should have a forum to report out to the public. It was recommended Eastern Sierra Transit Authority be party to conversations regarding airport planning. It was discussed if there should be a regular MIAWG schedule established depending on staff capacity. The staff entity working on logistics, service, and infrastructure solutions needs to be formalized and a common definition of success developed. Staff was directed to investigate governance models in other regions and develop recommendations appropriate to the Eastern Sierra.

Policy Questions Set 2. In working with partners do we need a clear definition of what is meant by the statement: Successful, Reliable, Regional Air Service? This definition will drive the level of financial support needed to achieve the articulated goal over time. Initial set of questions:

- a. How is successful, reliable, regional air service defined?
- b. Has the region achieved successful, reliable, regional air service?
- c. Is region based simply on airport location and/or markets served?

- d. Is success measured by passenger numbers, markets serviced or subsidy level?
- e. Is success defined by having some level of year-round air service or just seasonal?
- f. What is missing to achieve the original articulated goal?

Discussion: The committee discussed metrics of successful and reliable air service, including safety, successful landing, sustainable costs, customer satisfaction, increased enplanements, and connectivity to other markets. There was agreement the Bishop airport has demonstrated success in reliability and increased enplanements. It was discussed whether the current level of service is sufficient or needs to be increased. It was expressed that residents want to see year-round service, even if that means reducing mid-week flights, but that may not be financially viable because it would require an increase in subsidy for the partners. Additionally, increasing to other airports or carriers would increase the need for separate terminal spaces, etc and would be more costly than redundant flights with United.

Policy Question Set 3. The success of commercial air service and other airport related benefits depends on the ability of the Airport operators (Mammoth Lakes and Inyo County) to maintain and operate the physical airport. Initial set of questions: Are there deficiencies in the operations and maintenance of airports to meet goals?

- a. Is there awareness that the capital planning process is driven in part by air service?
- b. Is capital investment funding the sole responsibility of the Airport owner?
- c. How to address the shift in funding from air services to infrastructure?

Discussion: Expanding services also has direct impacts on planning for infrastructure and operational projects, such as a new terminal. Inyo County cannot plan for infrastructure projects, which will take years to implement, until there is consensus on the number of flights and who will pay for subsidized commercial service. Staff was directed to develop a plan that identifies short-term and long-term shared goals, funding strategies, and infrastructure needs and options.

The following questions were provided to staff as direction for additional information:

1. What will be the expectation of each entity for subsidy, service and operations?
2. What is the difference in subsidy required for status quo service vs year-round service?
3. What are the expectations for subsidy from each entity?
4. Who will expand marketing regionally if other agencies are contributing besides Mammoth?

5. There needs to be a formalization of a governance structure. It is recommended it be a tow-tier structure, with good interface and opportunities for public engagement.
6. There needs to be a strategy document developed to guide the discussion between partners.
7. It needs to be determined if additional capacity is needed to focus on regional air service.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board receive a report on the April 7, 2023 MIAWG Committee meeting from committee members and staff.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Deston Dishion, Bishop City Administrator
Nate Greenberg, Inyo County Administrator
Subject: Discuss Regional Parks and Recreation Collaboration
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 13, 2023

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The Bishop City Park provides facilities for youth, high school, and adult sports leagues throughout the region. In particular, the Bishop City Park welcomes youth and high school sports team (soccer and baseball) to use its facilities during the winter when Mono County athletic fields are inaccessible.

The Bishop City Park is at capacity to accommodate the demand for using the athletic fields, particularly the baseball fields. Inyo County and the City have had discussions on how to work together to restore and maintain the fields at the Mill Pond Recreation Center to a level that would meet high school sports needs.

Staff requests the ESCOG Board discuss opportunities for regional participation to expand recreation facilities serving all regional sports leagues.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the ESCOG Board discuss opportunities for regional participation to expand recreation facilities serving all regional sports leagues.



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, Executive Director
Subject: Discussion and approval of revised 2023 ESCOG JPA Meeting Schedule
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 13, 2023
Attachments: A) Revised ESCOG JPA 2023 Meeting Schedule

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The two Inyo County representatives of the ESCOG Board have conflicting meetings on the previously adopted ESCOG 2023 meeting calendar due to their commitments on the California State Association of Counties. It is not possible to convene a quorum without at least one representative from each member agency available. Staff is proposing the dates below to accommodate their travel to Sacramento.

Typically, the ESCOG calendar aligns with the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Board (ESTA) calendar. ESTA declined to modify their schedule.

Friday, June 9	8:30 AM	Mammoth Lakes Town Council Chamber	Cancelled
Thursday, June 15	8:30 AM	Mammoth Lake Town Council Chamber	Proposed
Friday, August 11	8:30 AM	Bishop City Council Chamber	Cancelled
Thursday, August 17	8:30 AM	Bishop City Council Chamber	Proposed
Friday, October 13	8:30 AM	Mammoth Lakes Town Council Chamber	Cancelled

Thursday, October 19	8:30 AM	Mammoth Lakes Town Council Chamber	Proposed
Friday, December 8	8:30 AM	Bishop City Council Chamber	Cancelled
Thursday, December 14	8:30 AM	Bishop City Council Chamber	Proposed

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the ESCOG Board discuss the proposed modifications to the 2023 meeting schedule, make modifications as needed, and approve.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director
Subject: Approve Memorandum of Understanding with the Sierra Business Council for the Purpose of the Community Economic Resiliency Fund
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 13, 2023
Attachments: A) Memorandum of Understanding with the Sierra Business Council for the Purpose of the Community Economic Resiliency Fund

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

CERF is a new state initiative supporting innovative plans and strategies to diversify local economies and develop sustainable industries that create good-paying, broadly-accessible jobs for all Californians.

SBC's goal for the Eastern Sierra CERF Region is to develop a regional economic recovery plan and prioritized investment schedule that will generate sustainable high-road jobs. SBC will build upon the skills and knowledge of local organizations such as ESCOG and on-going regional processes through an inclusive, equitable, transparent, multi-lingual, data-informed planning process. The planning process will advance equity in the region by focusing on regional stakeholders, with special emphasis on historically marginalized groups in disinvested communities.

Sierra Business Council will be partnering on the implementation of CERF program priorities with the Central Sierra Economic Development District, Mother Lode Job Training Center, Eastern Sierra Council of Governments, and Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center.

ANALYSIS:

The purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding are:

- To establish a collaborative working relationship with ESCOG focused on achieving the goals outlined in the CERF Scope of Work (below)
- To engage in a process for community outreach in Inyo county, Mono county, City of Bishop and Town of Mammoth Lakes to conduct joint data aggregation, fact

finding, policy analysis and public education, in order to increase agency and public understanding about economic development issues;

- To explore potential investment projects consistent with CERF guidelines and explore opportunities for obtaining funding from public and private sources, including state and federal programs and granting agencies, to implement projects.
- To communicate project updates to the public and invite real time feedback.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

The SBC has allocated \$250,000 to the ESCOG to complete this work.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Sierra Business Council for the Purpose of the Community Economic Resiliency Fund and authorize the Board Chair to sign.

**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority**

Executive Director: Elaine Kabala

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum) is entered into by and between Sierra Business Council (SBC) and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) for the purposes of the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF).

Commencement Date: April 21, 2023

A. Purpose

CERF is a new state initiative supporting innovative plans and strategies to diversify local economies and develop sustainable industries that create good-paying, broadly-accessible jobs for all Californians.

SBC's goal for the Eastern Sierra CERF Region is to develop a regional economic recovery plan and prioritized investment schedule that will generate sustainable high-road jobs. SBC will build upon the skills and knowledge of local organizations such as ESCOG and on-going regional processes through an inclusive, equitable, transparent, multi-lingual, data-informed planning process. The planning process will advance equity in the region by focusing on regional stakeholders, with special emphasis on historically marginalized groups in disinvested communities.

Sierra Business Council will be partnering on the implementation of CERF program priorities with the Central Sierra Economic Development District, Mother Lode Job Training Center, Eastern Sierra Council of Governments, and Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center.

The purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding are:

- To establish a collaborative working relationship with ESCOG focused on achieving the goals outlined in the CERF Scope of Work (below)
- To engage in a process for community outreach in Inyo county, Mono county, City of Bishop and Town of Mammoth Lakes to conduct joint data aggregation, fact finding, policy analysis and public education, in order to increase agency and public understanding about economic development issues;
- To explore potential investment projects consistent with CERF guidelines and explore opportunities for obtaining funding from public and private sources, including state and federal programs and granting agencies, to implement projects.
- To communicate project updates to the public and invite real time feedback.

B. Authority

Participants and agencies are not bound by any decisions made as a result of this Memorandum. By signing this agreement, the participants recognize that each is first bound to their agency or entity, and operates within their organization or entity's constraints, bringing what resources they can to the effort. Signatories do not assume

liability for any other member's actions, obligations, or liabilities, or any third- party claims that arise out of this initiative.

C. Timeframe

This Memorandum is intended to be in effect from the final date of approval by both parties and to be in effect for a term of 18 months thereafter.

Timeline – First Deliverable is due Aug 31

Additional timing to be determined

D. Fee and Payment – Not to exceed \$250,000 by July 2024

- Fee. Consultant shall be paid a sum not to exceed Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) for services rendered under this Agreement. Consultant shall invoice SBC at a customary rate of \$75 per hour.
- Payment. Consultant shall submit an invoice to SBC within seven (7) days of completing the Services in full, or within seven (7) days of the end of each month, or per the payment schedule described in Exhibit A (if applicable) itemizing the dates, number of hours, services performed, costs associated with the services rendered, and percentage of completion for each task. Invoices may not be submitted more frequently than once per month. Any invoice submitted without the required itemization will not be authorized for payment. SBC shall submit payment to Consultant within thirty (30) days after receipt of invoice provided that (i) Services rendered are reasonably acceptable to SBC; (ii) Services rendered are in compliance with requested Services and deliverables as described in Exhibit A; and (iii) SBC has received payment from the Project Funder for the service month payment is being requested. However, SBC shall not unreasonably withhold payment and, if a dispute exists, the withheld payment shall be proportional only to the item in dispute. SBC is not obligated to pay for any costs incurred by Consultant prior to the Commencement Date of this Agreement.

Scope of Work - Roles and Responsibilities

1. ESCOG will act as a community engagement partner and assist with providing a snapshot of the historically active stakeholders and historically disinvested or marginalized groups that can influence creating a High Road economy in the CERF Region and/or benefit from it.
 - Participate in HRTC meetings and subcommittee meetings.
 - Identify community stakeholders and provide necessary data to support CERF efforts.
 - Create and show a network of existing partners and their existing regional and subregional plans, strategies, and related reports to demonstrate synergies, potentials, and challenges.
 - Clarify opportunities for collaborations and partnerships.

- Engage with groups on the Eastside including but not limited to local governments and special districts.
 - Provide an overview of the state of disinvested communities in the region. Discuss how and in which areas these communities face economic barriers. Include a snapshot of the plan to outreach to organizations that represent these communities and how the HRTC intends to ensure their active participation.
 - Provide a list of organizations, entities and key contacts and discuss their potential role in developing the plan and engaging in the Implementation Phase.
 - These stakeholders may include but are not limited to employers, businesses, community-based organizations, community members and residents, government and economic development agencies, labor organizations, philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, education and training providers, workforce entities, and industries.
2. ESCOG will assist with capturing snapshots of labor and workforce dynamics in the region, including an overview of major employers, occupations, and wages, the impacts of the recent trends, changes, and forces on the labor market, and projected labor trends in existing key industries.
- The analysis must also identify the following:
- Industry-specific labor standards that meet high-road priorities.
 - Barriers that limit access to high-quality jobs.
 - Relevant training programs, apprenticeships, or high road training partnerships in the region
3. ESCOG will assist the SBC team with capturing snapshots of current major industries as well as industry trends and projections.
- The data capture and analysis must also:
- Include an in-depth analysis of potential growth clusters based on the Eastside's comparative advantages, market trends, workforce, infrastructure assets, policy trends, aligned state/federal investments, supply chain, and innovation ecosystem.
 - Conduct measurements of potential for job growth within industries.
 - Identify workers and sectors at risk of displacement due to identified trends and analyses.
4. ESCOG will assist with the in-depth analysis of Eastside's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (i.e., SWOT), especially as it relates to equitable economic resilience and growth of sustainable industry clusters. The SWOT analysis will draw from data and components through conducting the above analyses.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority

From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director

Subject: Regional Submittal of the Alpine, Inyo and Mono Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) through the ESCOG

Meeting date: April 21, 2023

Prepared on: April 16, 2023

Attachments: A) Butte, Glenn, Tehama County CEDS
B) Example Annual Reporting Compliance Template

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The Eastern Sierra, including Alpine, Inyo and Mono Counties, is currently engaged in the development of a regional economic development strategy required to access federal funding opportunities known as a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The project is funded by a grant provided by the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and is being prepared by Thomas P. Miller and Associates.

At the completion of the plan (expected in Summer 2023), the CEDS will require approval by the Boards of Supervisors of the subject counties and then will need to be submitted to the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) for approval by a central regional entity on behalf of the counties. The ESCOG has been engaged with the development of the regional plan and has emerged as the logical entity to submit the CEDS for EDA approval. The ESCOG's submission of the CEDS will not limit any jurisdiction's opportunities to leverage the strategy to independently pursue and implement economic development projects. The submitting entity would also assume responsibility to provide annual progress reports to the EDA and coordinate the required 5-year CEDS update. An example template for the annual update is provided as Attachment B for the Board's consideration relative to organizational capacity.

ANALYSIS:

Per the Economic Development Administration: “A CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region...The CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve economic development in the region. The CEDS should take into account and, where appropriate, integrate or leverage other regional planning efforts, including the use of other available federal funds, private sector resources, and state support which can advance a region’s CEDS goals and objectives. Regions must update their CEDS at least every five years to qualify for EDA assistance under its Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. In addition, a CEDS is a prerequisite for designation by EDA as an Economic Development District (EDD).”

The planning process has included economic development staff from each jurisdiction in the region, and each has indicated support that the ESCOG is logical entity to submit the CEDS as the only regional planning and economic development organization. If there is agreement between the ESCOG Board and the other County Boards to have the ESCOG submit the document, the authority can be incorporated into the resolution approving the CEDS and is within the authorities provided by the Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program already authorized by each Member Agency.

The CEDS planning process is beginning the public outreach phase of the project, with stakeholder meetings scheduled for the week of April 24:

- April 24 – 9:00 am Board of Supervisors Chambers, Independence
- April 24 – 1:30 pm Inyo County Consolidated Office Building, Bishop
- April 25 – 9:00 am Mammoth Council Chambers, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes
- April 25 – 1:30 pm Memorial Hall, Bridgeport
- April 26 – 9:00 am Alpine County Board of Supervisors Chambers, Markleeville and zoom

On May 8, the consulting team will publish a survey for broader public input. It’s expected the CEDS will be completed in June with a 30-day public comment period prior to adoption by each of the County Boards of Supervisors.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board direct staff to coordinate with each County to prepare a resolution authorizing the ESCOG to submit the CEDS on behalf of the Eastern Sierra region.



2022-2027 3CORE CEDS

Regional Collaboration
for Collective Impact



INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022-27 presents a plan for regional recovery in Butte, Glenn, and Tehama counties.

The CEDS provides guidance to regional leaders across industry, government, nonprofits, and educational institutions in framing actions that have strategic economic value for the region. It was developed with broad stakeholder participation, which was essential for developing a shared vision and goals for the region.

3CORE, the designated Economic Development District, has taken the leadership in advancing the 2022-27 strategy, but its implementation requires a shared, coordinated effort across the region's jurisdictions, organizations, agencies, and institutions. The premise of the strategy is regional collaboration for collective impact. The strategy addresses the region's unique regional and resilient economic context while following EDA guidelines for a CEDS.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	ii
1.0 THE DISTRICT (3CORE)	1
2.0 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS	2
3.0 SWOT ANALYSIS	4
4.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION	5
Vision	5
Goals	5
5.0 INITIATIVES IN BRIEF	6
5.1 Foundational Initiatives	7
5.2 Industry Sector Initiatives	11
5.3 Transformative Initiatives	19
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION	26
7.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: CEDS COMMITTEE	27
APPENDIX	29

1.0 THE DISTRICT (3CORE)

In 1986 the Butte, Glenn, Tehama County region was designated as an Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

Developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), updated annually, is needed to maintain that status, and position the region for grant funding and technical assistance from EDA. The CEDS is data-driven and is the product of a participatory process that includes the diverse leadership of a Steering Committee, community outreach and partnerships built through 3CORE's network. The CEDS is set apart from other regional plans as it is focused on unique and opportunistic economic conditions of the three-county region. Plans and feasibility studies are part of the CEDS research and planning process included in **Appendix I, Reference Documents**.

3CORE, since 1986, has coordinated planning efforts impacting economic development activities that involve interactions crossing jurisdictional boundaries. The region encompasses 5,957 square miles (3.8 million acres) and sits at the northern end of the Sacramento Valley along Interstate 5 (I-5) running north/south through Tehama and Glenn counties. California State Highways 99 & 70 are major corridors through Butte County and Highways 32, 36 and 162

provide transportation access east and west. There are ten incorporated jurisdictions within the three-county region. There are also multiple national and state forests and parks in the region.

The region has been primarily a natural resource-based economy – wood products, ag production, food, and beverage processing. The region has robust and growing education (Chico State, two community colleges, K-12) and medical sectors. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and back-to-back mega fires, hospitality and retail markets were also significant employment sectors. City of Chico, the region's largest city, is considered the region's economic hub – home to Chico State and several large employers. Ag tech, information and digital technology, advanced manufacturing and transportation are emerging growth sectors for the region.



2.0 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

Over the past three years, the region has experienced several economic disruptions including three of California's most destructive wildfires – 2018 Camp Fire, 2020 North Complex and August Complex fires, and, in 2021, the Dixie Fire that has covered over 960,000 acres.

The devastating Camp Fire and North Complex fires destroyed 25,000+ structures, including more than 15,000 homes, and displaced many more residents causing a net out-migration of population (est. 10,000).

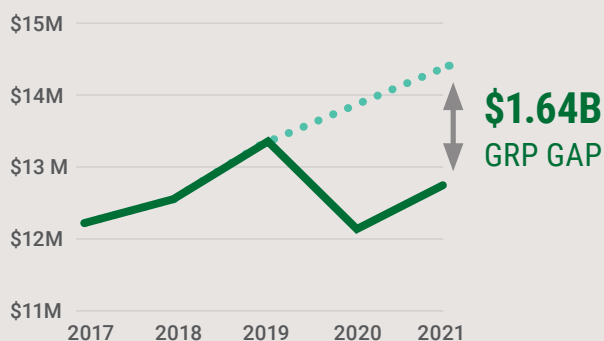
In February 2017, Oroville Dam, an important part of the California State Water Project and the tallest dam in the US, experienced a spillway (main and emergency) collapse, prompting the evacuation of more than 180,000 people living downstream along the Feather River. 2021 has seen the worst drought conditions in history, dry residential wells, and the surface water level of Lake Oroville is predicted to reach an all-time low of 625 feet above sea level by October or November. The low lake level caused the first ever closure of the Edward Hyatt Powerplant which, along with wildfires, results in more Public Safety

Power Shutoffs (PSPS). The impacts to environment and health are worsening as the region experiences longer and more frequent droughts and devastating wildfires.

The impact of COVID only exacerbated an already fragile economy, taking the region back to 2017 levels. As of July 2021, the region faces a loss of 4,280 jobs and \$1.64 billion in Gross Regional Product, according to economist, Robert Eyler, PhD. Dr. Eyler conducted the CEDS economic assessment and recovery projections. Factors affecting recovery are highlighted by Dr. Eyler on the following page, *Economic Impacts*.

Appendix A, Economic Conditions, provides a full overview of the region's economic conditions as it continues to battle un- and under-employment, labor force shortages, high and persistent poverty rates, high rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences and suicide attempts, food deserts and affordable housing availability.

Appendix C, Industry Sectors, overviews the state of the key regional industry sectors.



Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis and EFA



4,280
Jobs needed
to return to
Pre-COVID
status

Sources: California EDD, Bureau of Economic Analysis and EFA

Economic Impacts

Economist **Robert Eyer, PhD.** highlighted factors affecting hiring and GRP in the 3CORE region (Aug. 2021).

Current Labor Force. “We’re still down 7 or 8 percent in terms of the number of people that live in the three counties and are available for work or are working.”

Labor Force That is Gone. “There could be what economists call scarring, meaning in specific industries, local employers will be unable to fully employ the same number of workers they had pre-pandemic because those workers are gone. ‘Gone’ in the sense that they’re gone to another locale, they’re gone to another career, or there’s some structural reason – continued childcare issues, for example, or the debilitating effects of COVID for some who got sick.”

Industry Mix. “It might look like leisure/hospitality and retail are going to be hot spots in terms of a drag on the economy, but you may not achieve what you could have achieved in industries like construction and manufacturing if there is not a local labor force. I personally believe that the biggest challenge is attracting a labor force that’s willing to come and stay and is trained to fit relatively high multiplier effect industries that drive a lot of those other pieces.”

Attracting Workers. “It ties back to housing. If you can’t find new entrants into the labor force regionally, can you attract workers, and how does housing interplay into decision-making for those workers?”

Watch Who Fills the Houses. “The three counties did not start young. Are you seeing an aging population coming to these three counties more and more? How does that affect the workforce vis-a-vis the housing

“The assumption that you’re just going to put jobs out like you used to 15 or 17 months ago may not work because there are all kinds of conflicting forces: augmented unemployment benefits, career change thoughts at home, and continuing childcare issues.”

ROBERT EYLER, PH.D.
ECONOMIC FORENSICS AND ANALYTICS (EFA)



units? If a retiree moves to Red Bluff and they eat up a housing unit, what does that do to matching the expansion of workers with the expansion of housing?”

Unique Potential of Paradise. “What I’m hoping to see in Paradise as they start to rebuild is this new resilient, energy independent, forward looking place that’s going to attract people that are intellectuals, have that same ethos and bring jobs with them.”

Educational Asset. “One unique characteristic of the three counties is that in Chico State you have an attractant, a physical asset that can be used as a lever for economic development and workforce development, especially on the more professional side.”

Future Unknowns. Dr. Eyer listed several factors that could impact regional economic conditions: 1) Water utilization could affect ag values, 2) drought could lead to tough conversations about housing units, 3) the fires could be seen as a negative in marketing to potential residents/workers, and 4) insurance costs and availability.

3.0 SWOT ANALYSIS

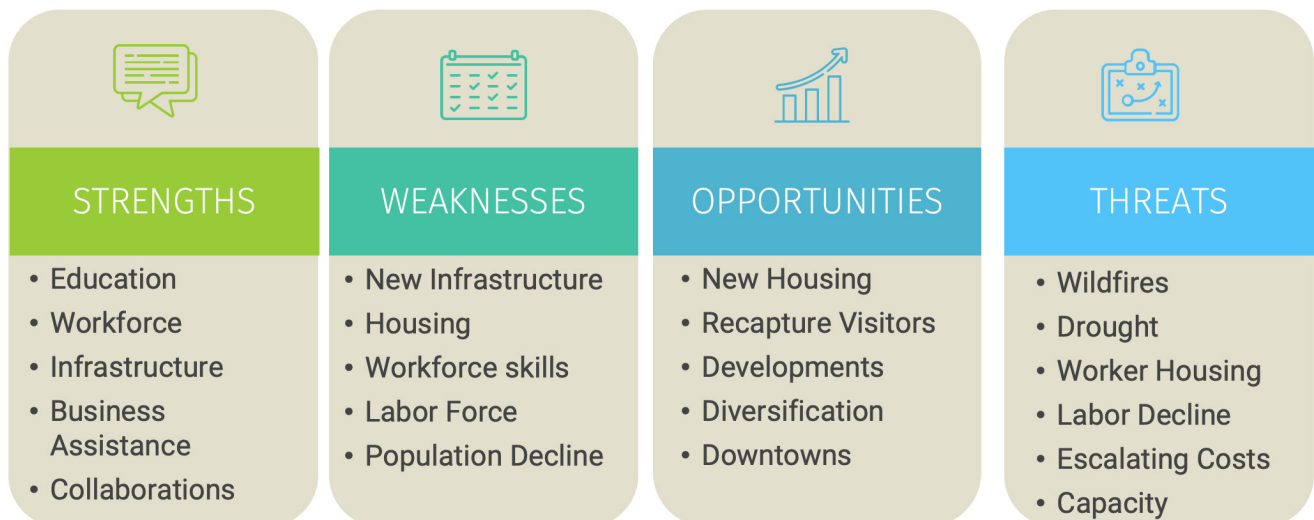
An important component of the CEDS and the engagement process is identifying the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The recent disasters and economic disruptions over the past three years, has led to many studies outlining these characteristics.

The region faces complex regional challenges to the economic base and quality of life. Camp Fire and North Complex settlement funds for environmental and economic damages are starting to come forward in phases. Several communities have had an opportunity to plan for projects and investments that will make a difference for their future as well as the region. The region, like other California regions, had a housing shortage before the 2018 Camp Fire, and with more recent fires, has lost 25,000+ structures, according to the Butte County Fire Safe Council. The region also lost population and estimates indicate nearly 5,000 have "quit" the regional labor force for one reason or another from the pandemic. It will be a major challenge to replace nearly 4,500 jobs needed to reach recovery to pre-pandemic levels.

"One of the biggest labor force challenges for the region is going to be how do they bring workers back? Where are they going to come from and where are they going to live?"

**ROBERT EYLER, PH.D.
ECONOMIC FORENSICS AND ANALYTICS (EFA)**

The new federal and state funding allocations for economic development offer immense opportunity while the challenge of coming together, being prepared, and quickly mobilizing bold ideas into action plans is daunting. The region's stakeholders have made much progress collaborating on crosscutting complex challenges.



4.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Extensive engagement with the CEDS Committee and stakeholders has guided the Vision, Goals and Guiding Principles of this CEDS.

The CEDS distills a range of community and economic development actions to achieve post-pandemic recovery – workforce and business development, quality of life, connectivity, transportation, technology, and resiliency.

Vision

The Butte-Glenn-Tehama region will be recognized for its unique rural character, strength, and resiliency during regional recovery, adapting to new norms while supporting businesses, communities, and ecosystems in building a healthy and sustainable economy.

Through our network of coalitions, the region will be recognized for innovative and collaborative projects that maximize the regional assets and opportunities in achieving our goals.

Goals

Based on the previous economic reports, economic analysis, research, existing assets and work efforts, and stakeholders interviews, three goals are proposed for the CEDS:



GOAL 1: Focus on Economic Recovery to pre-pandemic levels (January 2020, by January 2024).

Objective: Replace 4,280 jobs and \$1.64 billion in Gross Regional Product and support businesses impacted by the pandemic.



GOAL 2: Strengthen key sectors that drive the economy.

Objective: Address pressing needs of construction, manufacturing, agriculture, forest products, education, healthcare and hospitality sectors.



GOAL 3: Catalyze opportunities to maximize assets.

Objective: Collaborate on moving forward projects that have significant and long term economic growth, resiliency and stability for the region.

5.0 INITIATIVES IN BRIEF

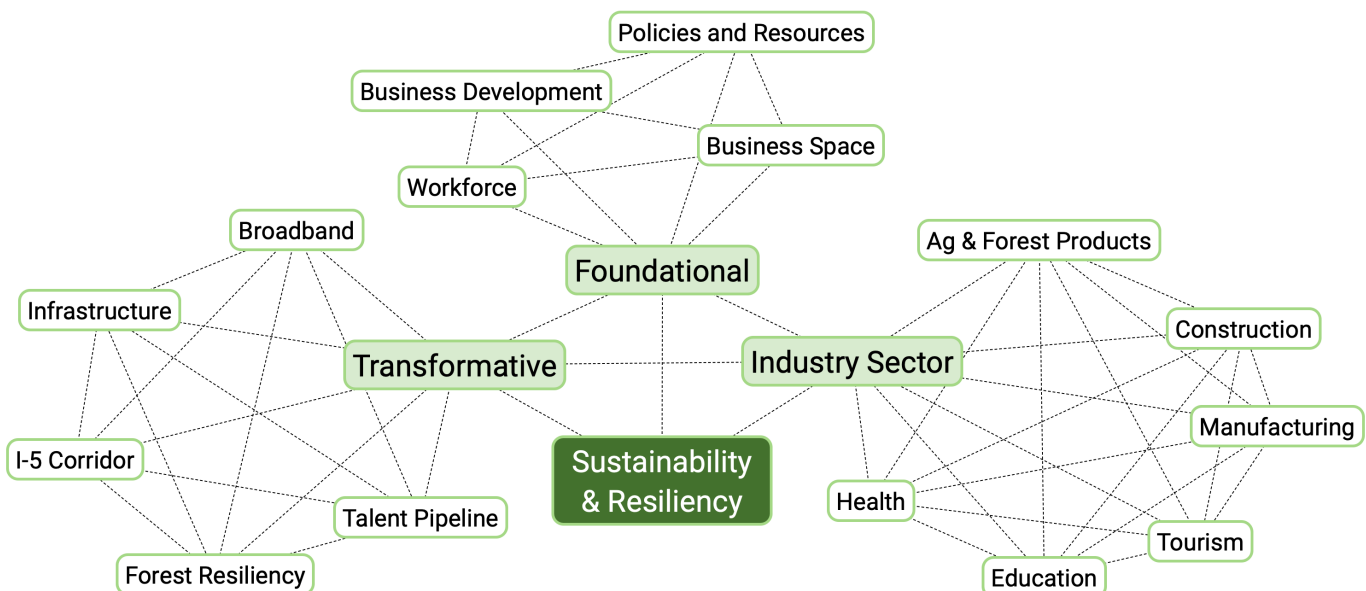
To achieve recovery, address the region’s complex challenges and enhance collective impact, collaborative actionable strategies are included in three initiatives:

- ◆ **FOUNDATIONAL INITIATIVES** focus on those actions that need to occur daily to facilitate recovery – Workforce Development; Business Development; Business Space and Economic Centers; Policies and Resources.
- ◆ **INDUSTRY SECTOR INITIATIVES** focus on key sectors of the economy with the opportunity to build back better – Agriculture; Forestry; Construction; Manufacturing; Education; Health & Wellness; Hospitality & Recreation (Tourism).
- ◆ **TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVES** concentrate collaboration leading to collective impact – Broadband; Infrastructure/Housing; I-5 Corridor; Education, Training & Talent Development Pipeline; Forest Resiliency & Innovation.

The critical goal of resiliency is underscored in all initiatives. 3CORE and partners will continually work on areas where mutual regional actions can occur through collaboration – workforce and economic development, place-based projects, programs, policies, and projects aimed at mitigating both the risks and consequences of disruptions.

Coordinating implementation of the CEDS will be a critical element of recovery given the complex challenges and the multi-sector partnerships. No one organization currently has the capacity or resources to be the “backbone” organization for managing collaboration, coordinating actions and reporting to the CEDS Committee. Consideration should be given to seeding a position within 3CORE.

Note: *Initiative Planning Maps, Appendix D*, map stakeholder program and project input for each initiative and *Appendix C* provides overview of industry sectors.



5.1 Foundational Initiatives

“Foundational Initiatives” focus on actions that need to occur daily to facilitate recovery.

Situation

One of the biggest challenges for regional recovery as the pandemic life recedes and businesses reopen is getting people back to work. Currently, there is more demand than supply in filling job openings. Although many of the job openings are in the hospitality industry (hotels, bars, restaurants, fast foods), openings are across the board in critical industry sectors – construction, manufacturing, agriculture, health care and education. It is too early to determine if the current “labor shortage” is temporary and will wane as subsidies are removed or if there is a cultural shift on employees returning to work and the way

they work. Current indicators point to a deeper and more complex mix of factors requiring collaborative actions to assist businesses with work models, such as a hybrid modified model of returning to work 2-3 days a week and working from home, job openings, placements and training, as well as workforce, education and human resources working together to build talent pipelines.

The loss of jobs also means loss of businesses. Several regional entities provide direct business and technical assistance to existing and new businesses supported by chambers of commerce and local jurisdictions promoting these resources.

Entities Providing Direct Business Support and Technical Assistance

3CORE

Business Resource Liaison
Capital Access
CEDS
Business & Infrastructure
Development

NSPDC

Broadband Master Plans
Supply Chain Analysis
Disaster Recovery Projects
Industry Occupation Analysis
Feasibility Studies

CHICOSTART

Growtech, AgTech, Blue
Valley Tech, Center for
Entrepreneurship
Entrepreneur Ecosystem
iHub

BUTTE COLLEGE EWD

The Training Place

SHASTA COLLEGE EWD (TEHAMA CAMPUS)

Specialized Training

NORTEC

Industry sector partnerships
Grow Manufacturing (GMI)
Business Outreach

BUTTE COLLEGE SBDC

Business Consulting/
Coaching
Outreach
Bootcamps, Business
Trainings & Pop-Ups

NSPDC: North State Planning and Development Collective • NORTEC: Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium
BUTTE COLLEGE SBDC: Butte College Small Business Development Center

During the pandemic, as relief programs were being made available to businesses (PPP, EIDL, California Relief Grant, local grants) all service providers accelerated efforts to direct businesses to resources. Even with the accelerated effort to get the word out, there were still small and very small¹ businesses not finding where or how to access resources. Maximizing output was the goal of all service providers to reach and help as many regional businesses as possible access relief programs (see *next page*).

In addition to direct business assistance, ensuring there is an inventory of “ready” sites and buildings is critical for expanding and new businesses. Also, the

central business districts (downtowns) in each of the region’s jurisdictions are typically economic centers which have been significantly impacted, losing businesses and in some cases physically deteriorating. Unfortunately, downtown associations are underfunded, as most rely on event revenue to implement revitalization strategies that identify potential reuse and building repurposing opportunities.

The pandemic reconfirmed the importance of collaboration, coordination, sharing and promoting widely and jointly all service providers and the need for boots on the ground meeting one-on-one with businesses.

¹ 92% of regional businesses <20 employees, 84% <10 employees, 72% <5 employees

Guiding Principles

1.

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Implement workforce and economic strategies that rebuild jobs and businesses, diversification, and economic stability, encourage innovation while protecting and enhancing our legacy industries and social and environmental landscape.

2.

WORK THROUGH NETWORKS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Create a common agenda with shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities for action, working together across boundaries and building on good work already in place.

3.

THINK AND ACT AS A REGION

Distinguish the region and solve challenges locally by increasing the region’s collective financial, political, and institutional capacity.

ACTIONS / FOUNDATIONAL

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Convene roundtables to further discuss barriers to “return-to-work” and solutions.
2. Strengthen wrap-around services for underserved and non-traditional workers to replenish the labor pool; particularly for in-demand trades.
3. Employ new programs to assist businesses with establishing a strategic workforce plan addressing the new dynamics and business consequences of labor shortage.
4. Increase short-term training and earn-and-learn models for new workers.
5. Align vocational training with regional workforce demands and offer flexible mechanisms to gain new skills and credentials.
6. Support higher education efforts for seamless delivery of reskilling-upskilling in critical industry sectors.
7. Convene education-industry-workforce working group to explore creative work-based learning, earn-and-learn, and OJT options as well as

methods to introduce middle school, high school youth and disconnected young adults (ages 16-26) to industry pathways.

8. Support application for proposed Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) high road transition collaborative and Economic Diversification Pilot implementation funding proposed in AB 162.
9. Include as an offering to small businesses, assistance and best practices on implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. Coordinate outreach efforts among all business development stakeholders to ensure seamless and leveraged contact with all businesses.
2. Continue direct outreach efforts by District Business Resource Liaison to help small businesses connect with resources. Explore and discuss a collaborative social media campaign.
3. Support the growth of microenterprises, small businesses, and underserved businesses through Butte College SBDC’s outreach and coaching program.



Replicable Program

WASHINGTON STREET PRODUCTIONS

>> Welfare-to-Work clients with barriers to employment can earn a wage and learn transferable skills by building crafts that are sold locally in Tehama County. Clients in the 30-day program learn technical skills and soft skills in tandem. Raw materials are sourced through donations and waste products where possible. A supervisor skilled in behavioral modification and coaching oversees the program, supported by an assistant with manufacturing, supply chain development and retail expertise.

see: washingtonstreetproductions.org

4. Host quarterly economic development roundtables to share information and best practices as well as challenges, opportunities, and successes.
5. Proactively market capital access to microloans and tailored loan products to small businesses and microenterprises and secure new capital sources as opportunities arise.
6. Support Chicostart/GrowTech in enabling an entrepreneurship ecosystem. Investigate opportunity to apply for State of California new iHUB2 Innovation Hubs.
7. Leverage the existing local online marketplaces and promote shop local activities throughout the region to encourage residents to shop local vs. out-of-area online.
8. Support an application by NSPDC to analyze supply chain issues and opportunities for the region's key industry sectors.

BUSINESS SPACE

1. Encourage revitalization to create vibrant and safe downtowns, form a regional collaborative to work together on improvement strategies and share best practices, access funding for main street revitalization.
2. Research potential funding for downtown improvements, ready spaces, and promotional activities.
3. Support Town of Paradise on rebuilding downtown.
4. Implement strategies to enhance resident/visitor presence in cities' retail areas.
5. Inventory shovel-ready industrial and business park sites and address site development to accommodate business expansions and relocations.
6. Collaborate with jurisdictions to coordinate business development execution.

Measurable Outcomes

- ◆ Jobs Created
- ◆ Annual Gross Regional Product
- ◆ Employee Retention – Upskilling
- ◆ On-the-Job Training – OJT
- ◆ Businesses Visited/Served
- ◆ Business Loans
- ◆ Training Program Attendees
- ◆ Implementation Funding

Foundational Partners

- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ 3CORE
- ◆ Butte College EWD, The Training Place
- ◆ Butte College Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- ◆ Chambers of Commerce
- ◆ Chicostart, GrowTech
- ◆ County Offices of Education
- ◆ Downtown Business Association
- ◆ NCCC - Glenn County HHS
- ◆ NoRTEC – AFWD, Job Training Center, GMI
- ◆ North Far North – ICT-DM
- ◆ North State Planning & Development Collective (NSPDC)
- ◆ Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
- ◆ Shasta College EWD (Tehama Campus)
- ◆ Valley Contractor's Exchange

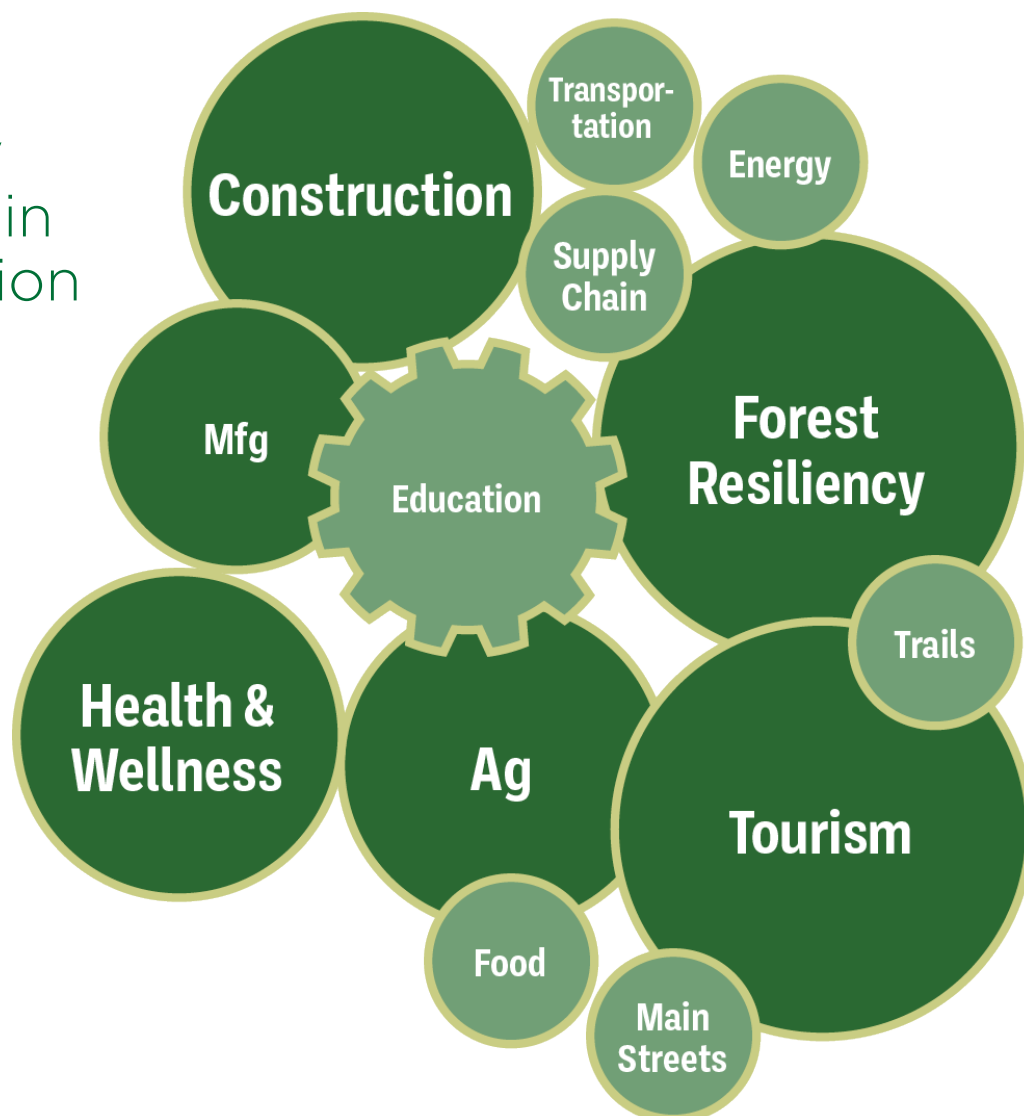
5.2 Industry Sector Initiatives

Starting with the industries and assets that are already in the region, stakeholders can collaboratively pursue initiatives to improve the sectors, as well as the economy and environment, by encouraging business-informed sector collaboration, applying for funding to launch projects, upgrading skills, enhancing access to finance and infrastructure, supporting local demand, understanding, and actively addressing barriers and regionally supporting specific sector initiatives.

The region's key industry sectors have diverse businesses within each sector and are linked by markets, labor pools and supply chains. Industry sector initiatives provide the opportunity to facilitate public-private partnerships involving university research, education and workforce training, economic and entrepreneurship development, and industry experts.

Full industry sector profiles are included in **Appendix C, Regional Industry Sector**, including jobs, gross regional product value, state of the industry as well as challenges and opportunities for the sector.

Industry Sectors in the Region



SECTOR: Agriculture & Forest Products

Natural resource materials, agriculture, and forestry have been the mainstay economic base for the region for decades. The sector is the region's 5th largest employment sector with a \$1.8B crop value in 2019.

As a natural resource-based economy, agricultural and forest production both are extremely sensitive to changes in climate, temperature and precipitation, frequent and severe weather events, fires and drought, and increased stress from pests and diseases. Both also provide opportunities to reduce future climate change by capturing and storing carbon, and by providing resources for bioenergy production.

Chico State, Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems, and the Ecological Reserves are key stakeholders in this sector along with many local, state, federal public agencies and private farmers, landowners, and businesses. See *Transformative Initiatives*.

"Scientists tell us that our powerful nature-based carbon sink—our farms and forests—could begin to degrade if we do not take action.

With the right tools and partnerships, American agriculture and forestry can lead the world in solutions that will increase climate resilience, sequester carbon, enhance agricultural productivity, and maintain critical environmental benefits."

USDA SECRETARY TOM VILSACK ON
PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 14008, MAY
2021



Sustainable Ag

NORTH STATE HULLING COOPERATIVE >>

Serving 130 farming families, this state-of-the-art 477-acre almond hulling/shelling plant in Orland is set to become the first net carbon negative, zero-waste facility of its kind. The plant's two cogeneration plants, which produce heat to fuel their dryers, also produce biochar, a charcoal byproduct. North State Hulling is partnering with Chico State to study the application of biochar in almond orchards.

see: <https://www.e-digitaleditions.com/i/1286027-2020-sept-oct-how-we-grow/0?>

ACTIONS / AGRICULTURE & FOREST PRODUCTS

1. Support existing efforts with Chicostart, Chico State Regenerative Ag and Butte College Ag programs in moving forward an AgTech Innovation Initiative, creating an AgCenter for ag, water and energy technologies.
2. Convene working group to further discuss colocation of county ag services coupled with food security programs, such as food hubs, mobile farmers' markets and other services with local USDA office.
3. Track Rep. Harder's Future of Agricultural Resiliency and Modernization (FARM) Act for 10 pilot projects to convert waste into biocarbon products; submit an application as a pilot.
4. Track California Sen. Feinstein's legislation for Wildfire Emergency Act including establishing training centers for foresters, forest managers and new workforce development programs to advance career training.
5. Identify gaps and funding options in the local supply chain to increase the number of value-added food business start-ups and expansions (feasibility studies completed for cold storage, copacking and meat processing).
6. Identify opportunities to assist businesses with drought-related impacts. All counties completing Groundwater Sustainability Plans.
7. Support applications and development of ag and forest/wildfire waste biomass utilization facilities. Ag feasibility study is completed. Forest waste conversion to hydrogen (new innovative technology) applications are being submitted. Work with stakeholder leads on supply chain; particularly logistics of removing waste from forest and fast-tracking facility locations. Investigate opportunity to expand RCAC Biomass Utilization Loan Fund.
8. Support sustainable management of forest resources and watersheds and Rural County Representatives of California's (RCRC) 20-year Master Stewardship Agreement with US Forestry to remove forest biomass to facilities for value-add products.
9. Continue to support increasing key occupations needed in the forest health, management, and restoration efforts.
10. See *Transformative Initiatives* (pg. 21).

Partners

AGRICULTURE & FOREST PRODUCTS

- ◆ Butte College Agriculture Program
- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ Chico State Regenerative Agriculture
- ◆ Chicostart
- ◆ Community Foundations
- ◆ County Ag Commissioners
- ◆ County Farm Bureaus
- ◆ Drought Task Force(s)
- ◆ Forest Stakeholders
- ◆ Local Ag, Farm & Industries
- ◆ NSPDC



- ◆ RCRC
- ◆ Resource Conservation Centers
- ◆ UC Cooperative Extension

SECTOR: Construction

Construction is the sixth largest employment sector in the region with a \$679.6M Gross Regional Product (GRP). The housing crisis before and after the 2018 Camp Fire, and more recent fires, adds a layer of urgency for workers in the construction field. Over 25,000 housing units were damaged and/or destroyed. The challenge is complex and not only affects housing but other construction projects. The market demand is here; the need is to build at a faster and more affordable rate. There is a lack of skilled and unskilled labor due to an aging construction workforce and career pipeline opportunities in the K through 12 public school system. A lack of workers will slow any progress for economic recovery for the region.

ACTIONS / CONSTRUCTION

1. Support a collaborative application for CDBG-DR Economic Revitalization workforce development funding to increase training.
2. Support trades training at all levels and increase career awareness starting at the middle school level.
3. Invest in innovative models such as concrete housing construction printer to be used in the field to train students and workforce.
4. Support VCE application for a mobile training unit to travel to schools and communities to teach basic construction skills and promote careers in the trades and construction program courses offered by Butte and Shasta colleges.
5. Recruit candidates from non-traditional sources, Prison to Employment, BCOE's Back-to-Work for justice involved youth.
6. Support regional efforts to expand, accelerate, identify new technologies, new practices and models, and advocate for reducing cost of housing.
7. Promote housing development opportunities in smaller communities with shovel-ready sites.



Concrete printed home by Virginia Tech. Chico State NSPDC is proposing acquisition of similar 3D printer.

Partners

CONSTRUCTION

- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ Butte-Glenn Community College District
- ◆ Chico Builders Association
- ◆ CHIP
- ◆ County Offices of Education
- ◆ NoRTEC & NCCC Workforce Development
- ◆ NSPDC
- ◆ Shasta College (Tehama Campus)
- ◆ Tri Counties Community Action Partnership
- ◆ Valley Contractor's Exchange

SECTOR: Health & Wellness

The pandemic and the back-to-back disasters in the region have had a significant impact on the region's health service delivery system with the loss of one hospital and multiple clinics. The increased burden of the pandemic has overwhelmed the capacity of health care facilities and staff. Statewide the estimate is a current shortage of 40,567 full-time equivalent RNs, a 13.6 percent gap, that is projected to persist until 2026. Health care is the region's second largest employment sector, with over 22,000 jobs and a \$1.5B GRP. Post-pandemic, an 8-10% jobs loss has occurred. There are major shortages in all health, mental health, and social service occupations.

Nearly all the hospitals in the region are planning expansions over the next five years with some already in construction, which will result in hundreds of job openings. A multi-year effort of north state counties, including Butte, Glenn and Tehama, advocating for improved managed care service in rural counties will come to fruition in late 2022 with Partnership Health Plan of California. Area stakeholders are working toward establishing the region's first physician residency program in Psychiatry and pursuing a Primary

Care residency program. Key stakeholders have also been studying the feasibility of constructing a Health Technology & Education Center to serve as the hub for tele-health/tele-medicine training, the North State Rural Simulation Center, physician residency administration and other health and wellness programs.

From a workforce standpoint, even with the associate degree nursing program at Butte and Shasta colleges and the baccalaureate nursing program at Chico State, the demand far outreaches the current graduate supply.

ACTIONS / HEALTH & WELLNESS

1. Support the efforts of current work groups to review existing programs and trainings for technicians (short-term training) to nursing (long-term training) and methods to expand those offerings to fill growing demand. Investigate expanding or creating a Health & Technology Education Center to support nursing workforce training in the rural areas adjacent to the region.
2. Consider expanding NoRTEC's successful Healthcare Industry Sector Partnership to Tehama, Butte and Glenn counties.

Partners

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- ◆ Adventist Blue Zones
- ◆ Alliance for Workforce Development
- ◆ Butte College – EWD
- ◆ Butte College Nursing & Allied Health Programs
- ◆ Butte County Local Food Network
- ◆ Butte Glenn Medical Society
- ◆ County Ag Commissioners
- ◆ Chico State
- ◆ Everybody, Healthy Body
- ◆ Feather River Community Foundation
- ◆ Healthy Rural California, Inc.
- ◆ Hospitals, Clinics, Tribes
- ◆ NoRTEC Industry Sector Partnership
- ◆ North Valley Community Foundation
- ◆ Parks & Recreation Districts
- ◆ Project Restore
- ◆ Public Health Departments
- ◆ Tehama JTC
- ◆ Thrive
- ◆ TriCounty Community Action Partnership

3. Support Butte-Glenn Medical Society in assisting Tehama physicians in the absence of medical society in Shasta with potential for integrating Tehama in the future to Butte-Glenn Medical Society.
4. Support existing initiatives and potential future projects directly addressing food security (food deserts) and the high rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in burn scar and underserved populations:
 - Support access to healthy foods and expand the grassroots Mobile Farmers' Markets to all counties. Support California's Healthy Food Financing Initiative Council (California Treasurer's Office).
 - Support and share youth-focused programs (Thrive and Project Restore) addressing ACEs, support forming Youth Coalitions engaging youth as active leaders and resources (ex: *Solano Youth Coalition*).
5. Support initiatives focused on wellness, such as Blue Zones, a successful model operated by Adventist Health Community Well-Being Team, and Everybody, Healthy Body advocating for the support of health, wellness, education and physical activity/recreation space and facilities.

SECTOR: Manufacturing

There is a robust and diverse manufacturing sector in the region, including food processing, building materials, packaging, value-add metal fabrication and high-tech productions. The sector is the seventh largest employer but the fourth largest in Gross Regional Product, providing a high economic ripple effective to the region. There is a strong Industry Sector Partnership, Grow Manufacturing, hosted by NoRTEC and supported by Butte and Shasta colleges. Similar to construction, there is a major shortage of workers in the field.

ACTIONS / MANUFACTURING

1. Work with all organizations, including personnel agencies, to identify candidates that can be trained in the various fields of manufacturing and processing; consider new models that may fit employers' production schedule, e.g., temporary workers.
2. Continue focusing basic skills training and direct company upskilling for employers in the manufacturing field.

Partners

MANUFACTURING

- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ Alliance for Workforce Development
- ◆ Butte College – The Training Center, Upskilling and Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Programs
- ◆ Butte County Office of Education
- ◆ Chicostart
- ◆ Chico State – College of Engineering
- ◆ Grow Manufacturing Initiative (NoRTEC)
- ◆ Industry Employers
- ◆ NCCC – Glenn County
- ◆ NSPDC
- ◆ Shasta College – Manufacturing Apprenticeship Initiative
- ◆ Tehama Job Training Center
- ◆ USDA

3. Support manufacturing earn-and-learn programs, including new models such as student sponsorship by industry.
4. Support development of new sites in all counties for value-add processing, manufacturing, logistics and distribution.
5. Support and expand the annual manufacturing expos to more events through the year, focused on K-16 education.
6. Support manufacturing apprenticeship collaboration with Sacramento Valley Manufacturer Initiative and Apprenticeship Works, Robert C. Byrd Institute with NoRTEC.

SECTOR: Hospitality, Recreation & Tourism

There are many national, state, and local treasures in the region – lakes, waterfalls, historic sites, natural bird sanctuaries and hundreds of miles of outdoor trails. The industry employs 9-10,000 workers per year with the region’s tenth largest Gross Regional Product at \$370.7M. This industry, more than any other, was significantly impacted by COVID as well as effects and perceptions from the fires. Fortunately, the hit was not as bad as it could have been as hotels and food accommodations that were open filled with first responders and rebuild crews. However, downtowns, which are a big part of the visitor attraction market, suffered – both businesses and associations serving the businesses and downtowns.



Gray Lodge, Gridley. (Explore Butte County: Ashley Baer)

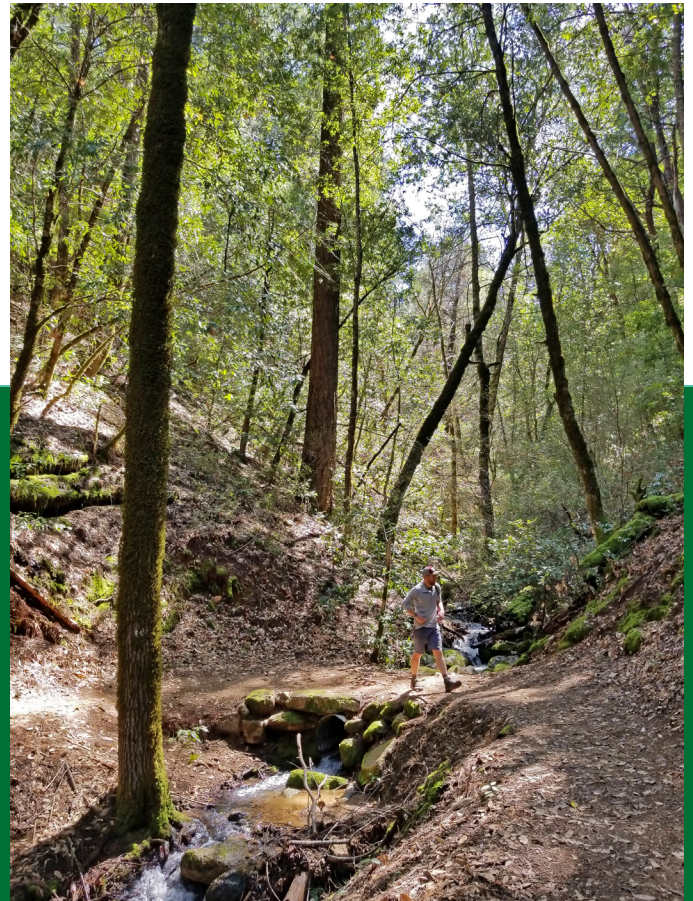
Butte County is the only county to have a formal Visitor & Conventions Bureau, *Explore Butte County*, which is supported by a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID). Both Glenn and Tehama counties are actively working through chambers and other entities promoting visitor attraction. Tehama County has recently formed an independent film commission. There are enough unique venues and events to draw visitors for day- or multiple-day visits. All counties are looking at trails and sports venues as destinations. Chico State has one of the oldest and most respected programs in recreation, hospitality, and parks management.

ACTIONS / HOSPITALITY, RECREATION & TOURISM

1. Support the tourism market and brand the region as a tourism destination, a working group, or an Industry Sector Partnership (NoRTEC) of all three counties should be formed as a network, share opportunities and best practices.
2. Advocate for a Regional Tourism Master Plan, including trails development to expand the hundreds of miles of trails (ex: *Colby Mountain*), and arts promotion touting the thriving art communities. Include downtowns in the master

plan, revitalization plans and resource development to manage vibrant and safe downtowns. Noted in *Foundational Initiatives*, all downtowns should form a working group to link and leverage resources and best practices.

3. Continue to support and find funding for outdoor trails and sports venues.
4. Increase exposure and use of outdoor recreation and environmental education.
5. Establish with the Industry Sector Partnership a Customer Service Academy, Certificate Program Butte College and Explore Butte.
6. Encourage increasing and focusing on the Arts as an economic development tourism strategy.
7. Prepare and develop more land for destination development and increase zoning for recreational, sports and education venues.



Partners

HOSPITALITY

- ◆ Butte College – EWD
- ◆ Chambers of Commerce
- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ Downtown Business Associations
- ◆ Explore Butte County
- ◆ NoRTEC
- ◆ Parks & Recreation Departments
- ◆ Recreation Associations
- ◆ Regional Destinations

5.3 Transformative Initiatives

Transformative initiatives concentrate on collaboration, leading to collective impact – Broadband; Infrastructure/Housing; I-5 Corridor; Education, Training & Talent Development Pipeline; and Forest Resiliency & Innovation.

Broadband

Broadband is essential infrastructure for cities and communities. Having high-speed internet connectivity has a major effect on business growth, retention, and attraction. Taking the leadership on broadband are Chico State North State Planning Collective's Broadband Consortia² and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC).

Some key activities have already occurred in several of the region's communities, including broadband infrastructure assessment, outreach, and stakeholder awareness of the need for investment in fiber resources. California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) has approved some broadband infrastructure and the Phase I Auction of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund

² Northeastern California Connect Consortium and Upstate California Connect Consortium

funded some bidders (private providers) in Butte, Glenn, and Tehama counties.

Additional resources are needed to fully expand and improve broadband in the region.

ACTIONS / BROADBAND

1. Continue to identify gaps in service, solutions for closing them and completing community master plans.
2. Support efforts related to the adoption of local policies that facilitate broadband deployment.
3. Support applications for broadband funding.
4. Support RCRC's initiative to pursue critical partnerships to develop financing opportunities for counties to bring robust, ubiquitous service that provides adequate capacity for residents, industry, educational partners, and health providers.

Partners

BROADBAND

- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ Northeastern California Connect Consortium
- ◆ NSPDC
- ◆ Private Providers
- ◆ RCRC
- ◆ Upstate California Connect Consortium



Remote rural areas and rugged mountainous terrain contribute to broadband challenges.

Infrastructure/Housing

Critical infrastructure and housing are needed for the region to recover from the pandemic and other disasters. Many of the communities are in need of infrastructure rehabilitation, upgrades, or new construction, such as the Town of Paradise's need for sewer and water after the Camp Fire.

ACTIONS / INFRASTRUCTURE/ HOUSING

HOUSING

1. Apply for CDBG-DR Economic Revitalization funding for workforce development to support reconstruction from disasters.
2. Support North State Planning and Development Collective's effort to acquire 3-D concrete house printer and training curriculum.
3. Support all regional efforts to increase housing supply at all levels.

TRANSPORTATION

4. Support transportation enhancements and connectivity along all major corridors in the region – I-5, highways 99, 70, 32, Skyway & 99.

5. Assist in applying for infrastructure improvements at key freeway exchanges along I-5 to open lands (non-ag) to the west of I-5 for business development.
6. Track California's \$11B allocation for road improvements, along with smaller bills on beautification and litter abatement.
7. Work with RCRC on applications and deployment of EV Stations in the region.

AIRPORTS

8. Support efforts to restore commercial air service to the Chico Municipal Airport.
9. Support improvements at the Orland Airport and Oroville Airport to continue to expand business locations.

SEWER & WATER

10. Support sewer and water improvements and new construction throughout the region.

I-5 CORRIDOR

11. Two Opportunity Zones are located along I-5 in Orland and Corning. The time is opportune to conduct a Distribution/Logistics feasibility study for sites along I-5 in Glenn and Tehama counties (see **Appendix H**).

Partners

INFRASTRUCTURE/HOUSING

- ◆ 3CORE
- ◆ Butte College – EWD
- ◆ Butte County Association of Governments
- ◆ CHIP
- ◆ Chico Builders Association
- ◆ Chico State, College of Engineering
- ◆ Construction Trades
- ◆ Counties, Cities, Town
- ◆ Glenn County Local Transportation Commission
- ◆ NSPDC
- ◆ Shasta College (Tehama Campus)
- ◆ Valley Contractor's Exchange

Forest Management & Restoration, Workforce Development and Wildfire Mitigation

Wildfire, drought, insects, and disease epidemics—pressures that are amplified by climate change—threaten our forests, watersheds, and communities. Since 2018 the region has had back-to-back mega-fires that have burned more than 23% of the area, destroyed over 25,000 structures, and displaced over 20,000 people.



In January the State of California released The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan to:

- ◆ Restore the health and resilience of California forests, grasslands, and natural places.
- ◆ Improve the fire safety of our communities.
- ◆ Sustain the economic vitality of rural forested areas.

However, these efforts will not succeed unless the hardest-hit subregions have the capacity to implement them. In the Butte-Glenn-Tehama region, multiple agencies currently work together on many projects, from prescribed burns and defensible space management to biomass utilization and stewardship, as well as the Butte College Utility Line Clearance

Unique Asset

BIG CHICO CREEK ECOLOGICAL RESERVE (BCCER) >>

For higher education and public policy, BCCER is a laboratory for best practices in forest management and fire prevention. As California faces new drought and climate driven challenges BCCER has the potential to be an **Innovation Hub in Forest Health**, training forest management professionals to meet the ecological and conservation challenges of the 21st century.

The 7,835-acre reserve of diverse canyon and ridge habitats is the CSU system's largest contiguous ecological reserve — an outdoor laboratory. Working with state and local agencies, BCCER offers a natural area for environmental research and education, collaboration on forest mitigation and best practices. Over 2,000 acres has CEQA compliance approval for vegetation management and is the only such reserve in California located next to a community burn scar (Camp Fire, Town of Paradise, 2018).

BCCER provides experiential learning for elementary through graduate students; delivering planning, compliance, monitoring, and Wild and Firefighter II certifications to undergraduates; and supporting an interdisciplinary master's degree in Wildland Management.

see: www.csuchico.edu/bccer/

Arborist and Pre-Inspector programs. However, the area still needs additional capacity for geospatial information sharing, formal chartered collaboration, and exponentially scaling up its forest health workforce. The region also needs to develop biomass utilization capacity and, until it does, it will continue to be constrained by one of the highest per-acre costs for forest thinning in the West.

Catastrophic fires will continue to devastate our communities, harm the environment, and destroy critical wildlife habitat and economies until the region can aggressively build capacity and programs to create jobs and reduce the cost of forest health treatments.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Despite not having a formal chartered collaborative, the partners have created a new Butte

County-specific Data Portal for collaborative mapping and tracking of projects which is to be continuously updated. Also nearing completion is a watersheds plan (“Butte Forests Plan”) compiled from the past two years of collaboration. The Butte Forests Plan integrates by design with the Butte County Data Portal and Butte Fire Safe Council WUI Action Plan.

The ingredients for a chartered collaborative are already in place. The need is significant, particularly to remove bottlenecks and increase workforce training. A resource unique to this region is the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve managed by Chico State. Nearly 8,000 acres of preserve forms an unparalleled outdoor laboratory utilized by students and faculty to perform cutting-edge research and receive hands-on experience in regenerative agriculture, habitat restoration and stewardship, as well as carbon sequestration and wildfire mitigation.



Forest health workforce.

The reserve could be a Wildlands Management Innovation Hub for Northern California creating the next generation of fire professionals, land managers and foresters with boots on the ground. Such a hub would add efficiency and build capacity, with the vision of a collaborative that is allocated consistent baseline funding each year to meet forest stewardship goals and entrusted by the state to implement the statewide Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan goals.

ACTIONS / FOREST MANAGEMENT & RESTORATION, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION

1. Encourage the formation of a chartered collaborative with all agencies and organizations participating.
2. Collaboratively fund a consultant or full-time position to lead and manage the collaborative and regularly update the existing Butte Forests Plan and master projects geospatial layer. This position could fall under the fiscal and HR oversight of a single entity but would need to report to the collaborative and not a single entity to ensure it is collaborative in its implementation.
3. Support applications for project and program funding, expand capacity and resources for workforce development, education and career pathway development, biomass development, wildfire mitigation and forest health management.
4. Glenn Resource Conservation District work with Butte College on possible education and training courses in the field of forestry.
5. Encourage regional efforts to pursue short-term and long-term landscape scale objectives around forest health, workforce development, and wildfire mitigation while positioning the region as a leader in ecological and conservation challenges of the 21st century.
6. Continue efforts with North State Forestry Collaborative, California Stewardship Council and Morgan Foundation on forest industry career pathways.

Partners

FOREST MANAGEMENT & RESTORATION, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION

- ◆ Butte County Fire Safe Council
- ◆ Butte County Resource Conservation District/ Butte Prescribed Burn Assoc.
- ◆ Butte County Air Quality Management District
- ◆ Butte, Shasta, Feather River Colleges
- ◆ California Conservation Corps
- ◆ CalFire
- ◆ City of Chico
- ◆ County of Butte
- ◆ Chico State
- ◆ Feather River Ranger District
- ◆ Glenn County RCD
- ◆ County Offices of Education
- ◆ Mechoopda Indian Tribe
- ◆ Maidu Summit Consortium
- ◆ National Wildfire Coordination Group
- ◆ Paradise Recreation & Parks District
- ◆ Plumas Underburn Cooperative
- ◆ RCRC
- ◆ River Partners
- ◆ Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- ◆ Sierra Pacific Industries
- ◆ Tehama County RCD
- ◆ US Department of Agriculture
- ◆ US Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

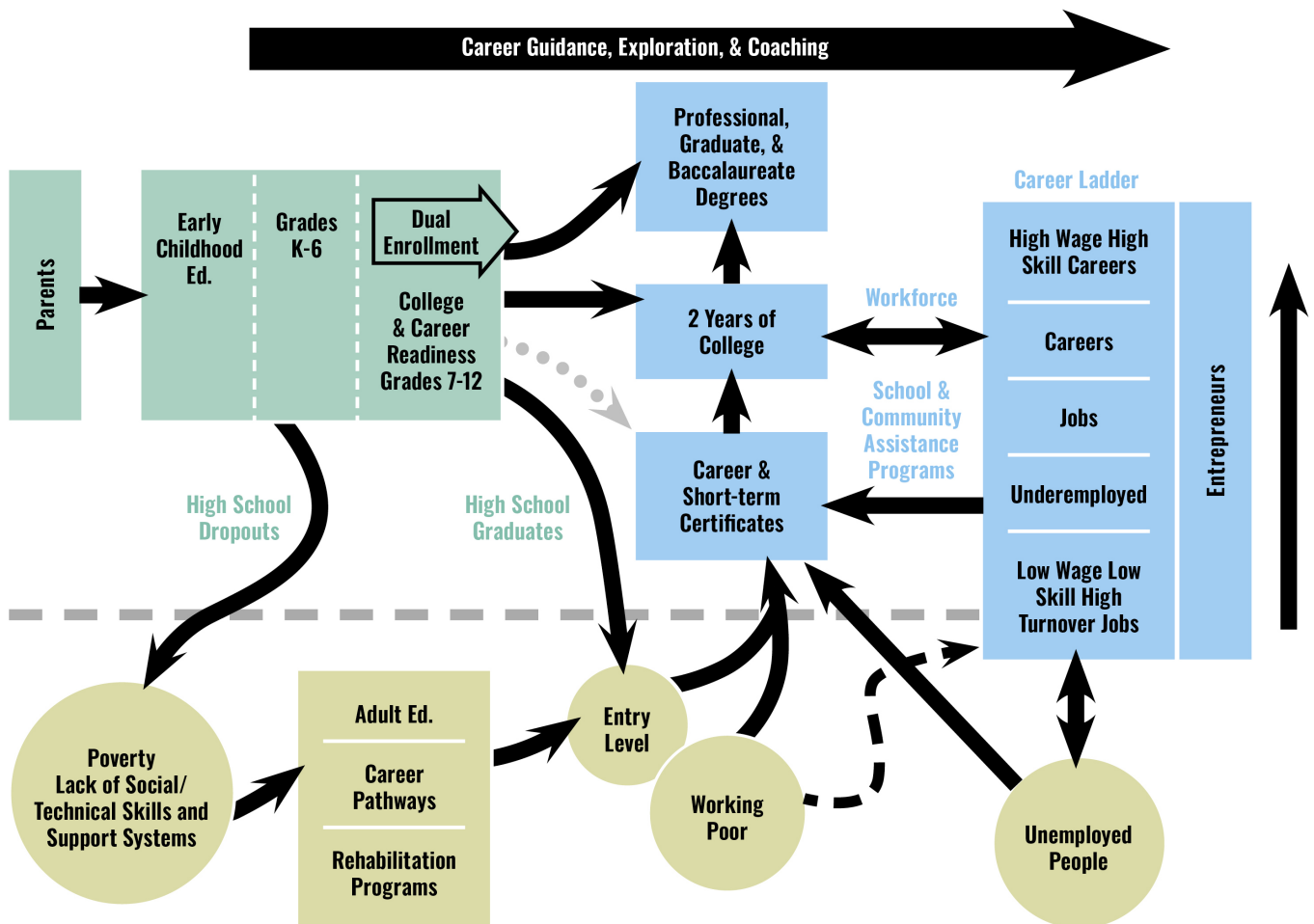
Education, Training & Talent Development Pipeline

Creating jobs is not the constraint; employers in the three counties cannot fill current open job requisitions or find the skill levels in candidates to hire in all sectors, including education and government. Inability to fill these jobs will have dramatic consequences for economic output, and ability to capitalize

on the region’s recovery. At the heart of recovery will be the ability to create a talent pipeline into the future.

A challenge heard often during the CEDS process, as it relates to existing and talent pipeline, was the bridge to continue school to a university or community college was well embedded into the system; however, the bridge from high school to employment or skills-based employment had a major gap for youth.

Education and Workforce Pipeline



Adapted from Ed Morrison, Purdue University; Mark Peterson, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.

ACTIONS / EDUCATION, TRAINING & TALENT DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

1. Encourage the convening of stakeholders to address the challenge(s) of both workforce shortages, employment pathways and the long-term talent pipeline.
2. Support development of an Upskilling Academy, serving multiple industry sectors, focused on creating pathways to employment for youth as well as advancement opportunities for incumbent workers. Industry needs will drive the Upskill Academy. Programs such as work-based learning and earn-and-learn will be implemented to meet industry needs.
3. Promote incumbent worker training programs as a key component of employee retention.
4. Support and collaborate on application to CDBG-DR for construction workforce funding programs including upskilling in known construction bottleneck trades – concrete finishing, mechanical, electrical and plumbing.
5. Support Chico State’s new emphasis on recruiting youth from local communities as teachers, introducing a new teaching model and the new Teacher Residency Program, which is proving to retain teachers in the region.
6. Support a public-private makerspace and a Makerspace Credential Program to work with youth; offer camp makerspace exploration (ex: *Sonoma State*).



Students from three Tehama County high schools tour Sierra Pacific Industries, 2020.

Partners

EDUCATION, TRAINING & TALENT DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

- ◆ Alliance for Workforce Development
- ◆ Butte College – EWD
- ◆ Chico State – College of Communication & Education
- ◆ Counties
- ◆ County Offices of Education
- ◆ NCCC
- ◆ NoRTEC
- ◆ Private Employment Agencies
- ◆ Tehama Job Training Center
- ◆ Shasta College (Tehama Center)
- ◆ Valley Contractor’s Exchange

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

3CORE CEDS Role

3CORE is the officially designated EDA District responsible for coordinating and convening stakeholders for updating, preserving, and reporting on the CEDS progress. As noted throughout the CEDS, there are complex regional challenges with multiple sectors and organization partnerships which will require regional collaboration for collective impact.

3CORE's main role is to convene stakeholders through the CEDS Committee to move multi-sector initiatives forward, support grant applications for viable programs and projects aligned with initiatives, promote resilience planning in each initiative, advance policy where possible and assist to mobilize and leverage resources among stakeholders.

CEDS Committee Role

The CEDS Committee, with support of 3CORE, is responsible for leading or identifying key leaders (champions), to convene initiative stakeholders to organize working groups around implementing actions.

Recommendations

1. Seed a “backbone” position within 3CORE for collaboration, coordination and assisting the CEDS Committee.
2. Form a “grant collaborative” to create a mechanism for joint/collaborative grant writing to maximize bringing resources and funding to the district for projects and programs.

Evaluation

The evaluation framework measures how we are doing and what can we do better. 3CORE established a comprehensive regional dashboard³ to track progress and measure outcomes on critical metrics. The dashboard is updated as new data is available.

The CEDS implementation will also be evaluated on an annual basis, culminating in an annual report. Annual evaluation would happen at three levels:

- ◆ Evaluating the region's progress toward goals and changes in the baseline metrics.
- ◆ Evaluating regional collaboration on Foundational and Industry Sector Initiatives.
- ◆ Evaluating progress on Transformative Initiatives.

The annual evaluation process will involve the CEDS Committee, and the key stakeholders involved in the CEDS planning and implementation. Quantitative and qualitative measures will be used to measure progress toward overall goals and toward specific projects and initiatives. Involving the CEDS Committee and the key stakeholders in the evaluation framework will assist in guiding adjustments as needed and continue to encourage collaboration for collective impact.

³ 3coreedc.org/regional-snapshot/

7.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: CEDS COMMITTEE

The 2022-27 3CORE CEDS was developed with engagement and input facilitated through Zoom meetings with groups, individuals and the CEDS Committee.

Over the course of the four-month process, a team conducted a comprehensive review of the regional economy, workforce, and labor markets, collected input from more than 100 stakeholders and employers, and prepared Stakeholder Profiles for over 30 stakeholders actively working on projects aligned with vision and goals. Based on the stakeholder input and their existing work efforts aligned with regional goals, the three strategic initiatives were drafted for further review with stakeholders: *Foundational Initiatives, Industry Sector Initiatives and Transformative Initiatives.*

The three initiatives were reviewed with stakeholders for final input and the draft CEDS was reviewed by the CEDS Committee for approval. The region's ten jurisdictions provided priority capital improvements projects. The CEDS Committee met via Zoom and in-person meetings to review and comment on the CEDS vision, goals, guiding principles, action plan framework, working papers (which were all distributed through a web-shared workspace) and the final CEDS draft. Final draft CEDS was posted for public review and transmitted to all jurisdictions in the region.

3CORE will continue to coordinate CEDS Steering Committee meetings, convene stakeholders around initiatives and assist members with implementation of local economic development projects.

2022-27 3CORE District CEDS Committee

- ◆ James Brock, Farmelot
- ◆ Andrea Campos, NoRTEC
- ◆ Candy Carlson, County of Tehama
- ◆ Pete Carr, City of Orland
- ◆ Andrew Christ, Insurance
- ◆ Courtney Farrell, North State Collective
- ◆ Sierra Grossman, Sierra Nevada Brewery
- ◆ Dennis Ivey, Private Consultant
- ◆ Sandy Linville, Stratti
- ◆ Jennifer Macarthy, City of Chico
- ◆ Kristina Miller, City of Corning
- ◆ Mark Orme, City of Chico
- ◆ Seana O'Shaughnessy, CHIP
- ◆ Don Rust, County of Glenn
- ◆ Mayo Ryan, North State Hulling
- ◆ Toni Scott, Morrison Company
- ◆ Katie Simmons, County of Butte
- ◆ Eric Smith, Oroville Chamber
- ◆ Audrey Taylor, Chabin Concepts
- ◆ Katy Thoma, Chico Chamber
- ◆ Jovanni Tricerri, North Valley Community Foundation
- ◆ Linda Zorn, Butte-Glenn Community College

Stakeholders and Contributors

County, Cities, State, Federal

- **Butte County**, Supv Kimmelshue
- **Butte County**, Katie Simmons, Casey Hatcher
- **Butte County Ag Commissioner & UC Cooperative Extension**
- **City of Chico**, Jennifer Macarthy
- **City of Corning**, Kristina Miller
- **City of Oroville, Oroville Economic Development Team**
- **Glenn County**, Don Rust
- **Town of Paradise**, Kevin Phillips, Colette Curtis
- **Tehama County**, Supv. Carlson and Williams
- **RCAC**, Juanita Hallstrom, Robert Longman
- **RCRC**, Barbara Hayes
- **USDA, Business & Cooperative Programs**, Dan Johnson

Workforce & Training

- **AFWD**, Amy Velazquez, Traci Holt
- **Glenn County**, Christine Zoppi
- **GMI**, Liz Pankhurst
- **NCCC**, Cindy Newton
- **NoRTEC**, Andrea Campos
- **Tehama Job Training Center**, Kathy Schmitz, Carrie Ferchaud, Kathy Garcia

Education

- **Butte-Glenn CCD**, Linda Zorn
- **Butte County Office of Education**, Mary Sakuma
- **CSU Chico**, President Gayle Hutchinson
- **CSU Chico**, Megan Kurtz
- **CSU Chico, Ecological Reserve**, Eli Goodsell
- **CSU Chico, Communication & Education**, Dr. Angela Trethewey Shasta College, Becky Roe, Angela Cordell, Dr. Fields
- **North Far North**, ICT-DM, Wendy Porter
- **North State Planning & Development Collective**, Courtney Farrell

Business/Economic Development

- **3CORE**, Patty Hess, Marc Nemanic, Luis Moreno, Brett Sanders
- **Butte College Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**, Sophie Konuwa
- **DCBA**, Melanie Bassett
- **Chicostart**, Growtech, Center for Entrepreneurship, Eva Shepherd
- **North State Hispanic Chamber**, Benito Abarca-Sanchez
- **Chambers of Commerce**, Katy Thoma, Monica Nolan, Dave Gowan

Businesses

- **Butte Construction Company**, Nick Starnes
- **Butte-Glenn Medical Society**, Kristy Bird MaKieve
- **Cal Plant 1**, Jerry Uhland
- **Chico News & Review**, Evan Tuchinsky
- **Enloe Hospital**, Jolene Frances, Mike Wiltermood
- **Farmers Brewing**, Bill Weller
- **Graphic Packaging**, Wade Meith
- **Guillon Inc.**, Bill Brouhard
- **Healthy Rural California**, Gretchen Bender
- **North State Hulling**, Mayo Ryan
- **North Valley Ag Services**, Barry Powell, Mark Pierce
- **Northern California National Bank**, Todd Lewis
- **Partnership Health Plan of California**
- **RGA**, Matt Gallaway
- **Safepath Products**, Tim VanDerheiden
- **Sierra Nevada**, Sierra Grossman
- **Stoble Coffee Roasters**, Matt and Melissa Thiede
- **Transfer Flow**, Bill Gaines
- **Urban Builders**, Tom DiGiovanni

Housing

- **Butte County Housing Authority**, Ed Mayer
- **Chico Builders**, Kate Leyden

- **Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)**, Seana O'Shaughnessy
- **Glenn and Tehama counties and cities**
- **Valley Contractor's Exchange**, Amy Rohrer, Chelsea Irvine

Community Organizations

- **Butte County Local Food Network**, Pamm Larry
- **Butte County Continuum of Care**, Don Taylor
- **Boys & Girls Club**, Rashell Brobst
- **Community Foundation of North State**, Kerry Caranci
- **Everybody, Healthy Body**, Kathy Carpenter, Linda Zorn
- **Explore Butte County**, Caroly Denero
- **Feather River Recreation District**, Shawn Rohrbacker
- **Jesus Center**, Laura Cootsona
- **North Valley Community Foundation**, Giovanni Tricerri
- **Paradise Art Theater Cultural Hub**
- **Paradise Parks & Recreation District**, Dan Efseaff
- **Rebuild Paradise Foundation**, Charles Brooks
- **Regenerating Paradise**, David Zink
- **TriCounty Community Action Partnership**, Jody Samons
- **Upper Ridge Community Council**, Chris Rauen

Environment & Resiliency

- **Butte County Fire Safe Council**, Jim Houtman
- **Butte County Resource Conservation District**, Wolfgang Rougle
- **Glenn County Resource Conservation District**, Kandi Manhart-Belding
- **Tehama County Resource Conservation District**, John Barrett
- **Toulumne County**, Cole Przybyla

Tribes

- **Mechoopda Tribe**, Patrick Spilman
- **Paskenta Tribe**, Damon Safranek
- **Tyme Maidu Tribe Berry Creek**, Jennifer Santos

APPENDIX

- A.** Economic Conditions
- B.** SWOT Analysis
- C.** Industry Sectors
- D.** Initiative Planning Maps
- E.** Stakeholder Profiles
- F.** Dr. Eyler: “State of the Recovery”
- G.** Capital Projects
- H.** Opportunity Zone Prospectus
- I.** Reference Documents



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Consultant:
Chabin Concepts, Inc.
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West Piedmont Planning District Commission

Year 1 Progress Report

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy | 2022 - 2026 Plan

Planning Grant Award No.

ANNUAL CEDS PROGRESS REPORT



WHAT IS A CEDS?

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a unified, regionally focused action plan that provides a framework for an area's economic growth and community development. The CEDS serves as an economic blueprint for the region and establishes a process that will help create jobs, foster more stable and diversified economies, and improve living conditions. This West Piedmont Economic Development District CEDS 5-Year Update will guide the direction of the region from 2022-2026.

PERFORMANCE PROGRESS

Grantee: West Piedmont Economic Development District

Project Title:

Project Number:

CEDS Performance Year:

Report Prepared by:

Five-year CEDS Time Period: 2022-2026

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report analyzes the economic conditions of the West Piedmont region and serves as an update on its progress toward the goals outlined in the 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The report contains the region's implementation plan is with actions taken to date, key performance indicator updates, timelines, and next steps. In addition, the report contains a current list of regional projects that meet EDA investment priorities and pertain to various funding sources.

Table of Contents

Introduction

WPPDC and CEDS Committee Update

Strategy and Key Data Updates

Regional EDA Investments

Economic Development Activity

Alignment

Focus Areas and Goals

Implementation Progress

- Action (Year 1)
- Timeline
- Key Performance Indicators

Schedule of Year 2 Strategies

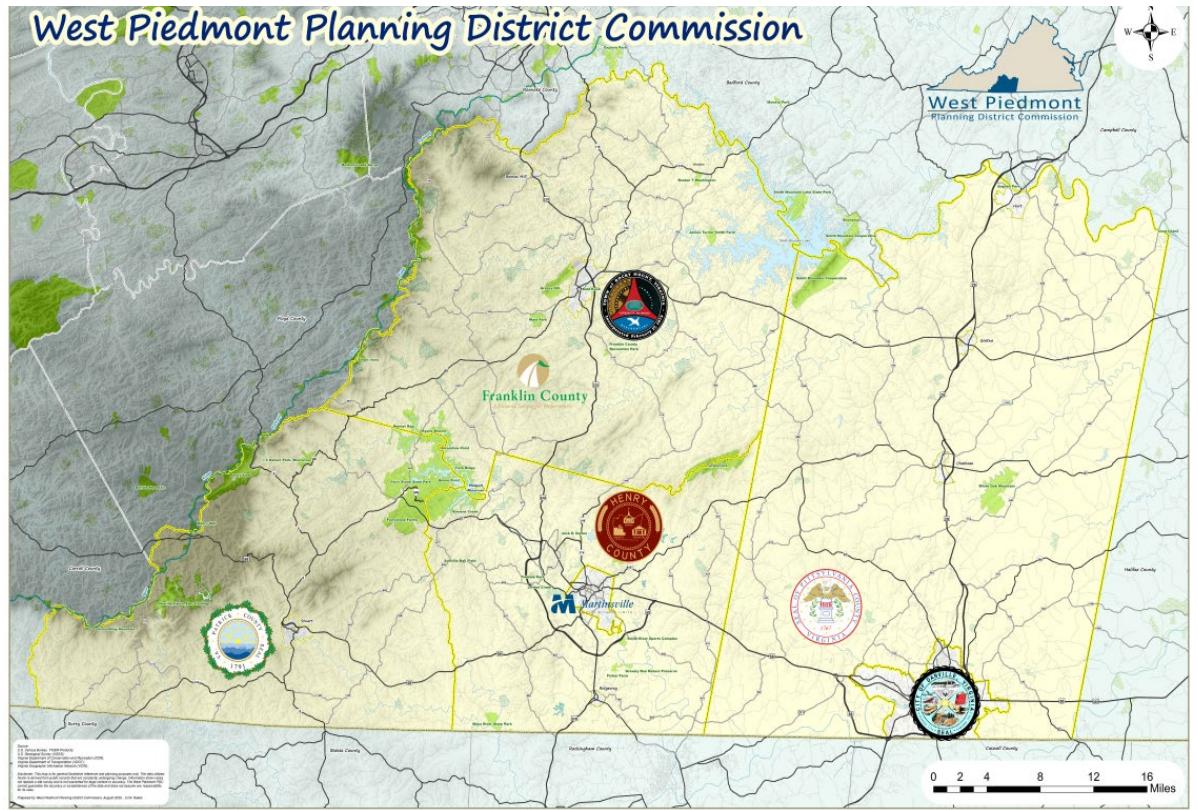
Inventory of Projects

Appendix

Introduction

ABOUT THE REGION

In accordance with Section 403 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-136), the Economic Development Administration designated Planning District 12 as an Economic Development District on June 24, 1992. Planning District 12--the West Piedmont Planning District (WPPDC)--is comprised of the cities of Danville and Martinsville; the counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania; and the Town of Rocky Mount.



Each member jurisdiction has three representatives on the Planning District Commission Board--two elected officials and one appointed citizen representative. This designation represents a partnership among the West Piedmont Planning District Commission, its member local governments, and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) and assists with establishing regional priorities for projects and investments through the annual development of a Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document.

As the West Piedmont Economic Development District, staff has established a process for annual updates to its CEDS document. The plan development is ongoing, with document updates beginning as soon as submission to EDA occurs each year.

Member Localities



WPPDC & CEDS Committee

UPDATES TO WPPDC

Describe the governing structure of the organization and any changes that have been made. Include a list of current staff with titles

CEDS COMMITTEE

Describe the CEDS Committee and any changes that have been made. Include a list of current committee members.

Member Localities



Strategy & Data Updates

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STRATEGY

Describe key changes in the region and any adjustments to the strategy. If no adjustments, just state that there was a lack of significant change and no adjustments were necessary.

DATA UPDATES

Include any significant changes in data (ex: labor force, unemployment, per capita income, etc).

Regional EDA Investments

EDA INVESTMENTS IN THE REGION

Express appreciation and impact of EDA Investments in the region.

Year	Recipient	County	Project Description	Program	EDA Funding
					\$0
					\$0
					\$0
					\$0

Economic Development Activity

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

Describe the activities the WPPDC engages in to serve the region

Provide key updates on economic development activities (like project highlights).

Alignment

REGIONAL VISION

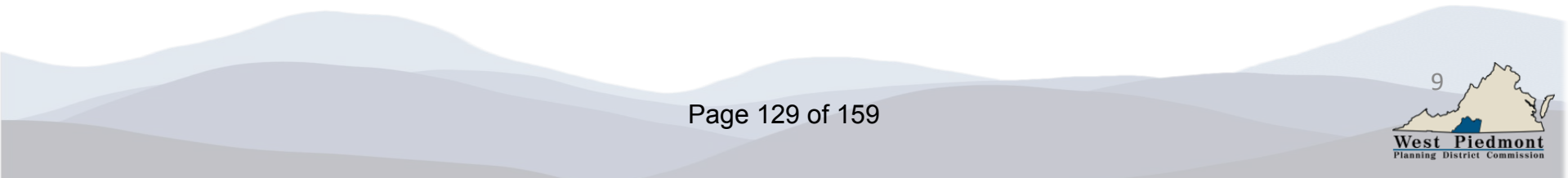
Describe the importance of a cohesive regional vision.

“The West Piedmont region is a vibrant and collaborative community dedicated to supporting and expanding business, prioritizing economic mobility, and creating an environment that enhances both quality of life and visitor experiences.”

ALIGNMENT WITH STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Express importance of collaboration and coordination

Location	Organization



Focus Areas and Goals

Economy and Innovation

- Goal 1:** Improve the Small Business Culture Across the Region
- Goal 2:** Improve Collaboration and Coordination Around Regional Economic Development Efforts
- Goal 3:** Expand Opportunities for Growth Within Target Industries
- Goal 4:** Cultivate an Innovative Culture and Ecosystem to Compete in the New Economy

Education and Workforce

- Goal 1:** Increase the Pipeline of Talent for Regional Employers
- Goal 2:** Enhance Coordination and Collaboration with Local School Systems at all Levels
- Goal 3:** Stabilize and Grow the Population, Specifically in Younger Demographic Segments
- Goal 4:** Identify and Promote Innovative Opportunities to Increase Childcare Accessibility

Housing, Livability, and Equity

- Goal 1:** Increase Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Available Housing
- Goal 2:** Develop a Sense of Place that Unites the Region
- Goal 3:** Increase Destination-Quality Outdoor Recreation
- Goal 4:** Promote Programs and Resources which Advocate Healthy Lifestyles
- Goal 5:** Commit to an Inclusive Approach to Increasing Digital and Financial Literacy

Infrastructure

- Goal 1:** Increase broadband access and reliability, particularly in rural, commercial, and industrial areas
- Goal 2:** Improve infrastructure needed to grow existing and future industrial/business parks in the region
- Goal 3:** Promote redevelopment of Commercial/Central Business Districts and revitalization of small towns in the region
- Goal 4:** Improve regional multimodal transportation infrastructure
- Goal 5:** Address Region-wide infrastructure needs

Implementation Progress

PROGRESS SUMMARY

Provide an overall summary of progress toward regional strategies, and add foreshadowing of what is to come in Years 2-3.

Economy and Innovation

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success
Goal 1.1 Improve the Small Business Culture Across the Regio			
Foster an environment that supports and advocates for small businesses across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop and promote a regional small business support campaign •Identify supply chain opportunities and gaps within target industry sectors and promote buy local campaigns •Engage anchor institutions to purchase goods and services from local businesses •Celebrate National Small Business Week across the region 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Demonstrated support for National Small Business Week •Documented participation in regional Buy Local Campaigns
Goal 1.4 Cultivate an innovation culture and ecosystem to compete in the new economy			
Enhance the regional innovation ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate current regional innovation ecosystem; develop plan to address gaps in the system • Develop integrated marketing strategy to promote innovation ecosystem resources, programs, and assets 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of innovation ecosystem asset map • Marketing campaign engagement
<i>Champions: Local Employers, Local Chambers, Local Schools, Community-based Organizations, The Launch Place, SBDC, & WPPDC</i>			

SUMMARY

Include any narrative that should accompany the chart above. Make sure to note any actions completed, progress made, target completion date if not complete, and an update/explanation of metrics/outcomes to date. These can be done within the chart itself or separate. Update champions to include those that were involved in progress.

Also include any significant progress toward goals/actions scheduled for later timelines in the action plan.

Education and Workforce

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success
Goal 2.3 Stabilize and grow the population, specifically in younger demographic segments			
Cultivate the next generation of community leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support young professional groups across the region Develop and support civic leadership programs 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated support for regional young professional and leadership groups

Champions: WPPDC, Local Chambers, and Local Governments

SUMMARY

Include any narrative that should accompany the chart above. Make sure to note any actions completed, progress made, target completion date if not complete, and an update/explanation of metrics/outcomes to date. These can be done within the chart itself or separate. Update champions to include those that were involved in progress.

Also include any significant progress toward goals/actions scheduled for later timelines in the action plan.

Housing, Livability, and Equity

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success
Goal 3.3 Increase destination-quality outdoor recreation			
Develop and maintain a database of existing and potential funding sources for recreation improvements, maintenance, and new asset development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a funding scan of potential funding sources Develop a plan for database maintenance including responsibilities and scheduling of regular updates Work with partners to make the database available to local governments and recreation-related business owners. 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding sources identified Database maintenance plan established Number of partners engaged
Goal 3.4 Promote programs and resources which advocate healthy lifestyles.			
Advocate for access and expansion of the region's healthcare system to serve its residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and address common needs starting with an evaluation of Health Evaluation Shortage Scores (HPSA) Create and maintain an asset map with locations and services available to residents and visitors Increase participation in healthcare-related educational pathways 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial HPSA score evaluated/gaps identified Asset map created Demonstrated support for increased student enrollment
<i>Champions: Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Municipal and County governments, Local farmers</i>			

SUMMARY

Include any narrative that should accompany the chart above. Make sure to note any actions completed, progress made, target completion date if not complete, and an update/explanation of metrics/outcomes to date. These can be done within the chart itself or separate. Update champions to include those that were involved in progress.

Also include any significant progress toward goals/actions scheduled for later timelines in the action plan.

Infrastructure

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success
Goal 4.1 Increase broadband access and reliability, particularly in rural, commercial, and industrial areas			
Organize Broadband Task force with leaders from around the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage economic development directors, service providers, local government officials, and other key stakeholders to form a regional broadband task force or steering committee Create a clear and consistent connectivity vision for the region Align future policies and investments with regional vision 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of regional connectivity vision Number of partners engaged
Support federal, state, local, and private-sector investments expanding broadband access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in any project management, administrative, or technical roles needed for the recent broadband awards (ARPA) to the region totaling over \$120M Continue to leverage public assets and investments 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated support for implementation of ARPA awards
Goal 4.3 Promote redevelopment of Commercial/Central Business Districts and revitalization of small towns in the region			
Promote and educate the use of available development incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile list of all development incentives available throughout the region Develop comprehensive educational guide or "toolkit" on development incentives and their appropriate uses Promote the use of incentives through websites and social media 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of incentive toolkit Applications/awards for development incentives (historic tax credits, rebates, exemptions, planning grants, etc.)
Goal 4.5 Address Region-wide infrastructure needs			
Facilitate connections with regional communities to understand infrastructure development needs and identify grant opportunities to assist with these needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide bi-annual updates on Regional Project Priority List Assess funding strategies for projects and evaluate other funding sources Help localities apply and find infrastructure development grants and funding 	Short (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Bi-Annual update on Priority Project list
Champions: WPPDC, RiverStreet Networks, ISPs, Regional Communities, & Department of Housing & Community Development (VDHCD) - Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)			

SUMMARY

Include any narrative that should accompany the chart above. Make sure to note any actions completed, progress made, target completion date if not complete, and an update/explanation of metrics/outcomes to date. These can be done within the chart itself or separate. Update champions to include those that were involved in progress.

Also include any significant progress toward goals/actions scheduled for later timelines in the action plan.

Schedule of Year 2 Strategies

Economy and Innovation

- 1.1:** Improve the Small Business Culture Across the Region
 - Allocate resources to support business owners from historically underrepresented populations, including women, minorities, veterans, individuals with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community
- 1.2:** Improve Collaboration and Coordination Around Regional Economic Development Efforts
 - Build stronger relationships with state and federal economic development organizations and agencies
- 1.3:** Expand Opportunities for Growth Within Target Industries
 - Create a business attraction strategy around identified target industries
 - Develop regional capacities around research and development to support regional target industries
- 1.4:** Cultivate an Innovative Culture and Ecosystem to Compete in the New Economy
 - Build a network of physical assets for innovation-based entrepreneurs
 - Improve education around innovation-based entrepreneurship

Education and Workforce

- 2.1:** Increase the Pipeline of Talent for Regional Employers
- 2.2:** Enhance Coordination and Collaboration with Local School Systems at all Levels
- 2.3:** Stabilize and Grow the Population, Specifically in Younger Demographic Segments
- 2.4:** Identify and Promote Innovative Opportunities to Increase Childcare Accessibility

Schedule of Year 2 Strategies

Housing, Livability, and Equity

- 3.1:** Increase Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Available Housing
- 3.2:** Develop a Sense of Place that Unites the Region
- 3.3:** Increase Destination-Quality Outdoor Recreation
- 3.4:** Promote Programs and Resources which Advocate Healthy Lifestyles
- 3.5:** Commit to an Inclusive Approach to Increasing Digital and Financial Literacy

Infrastructure

- 4.1:** Increase broadband access and reliability, particularly in rural, commercial, and industrial areas
- 4.2:** Improve infrastructure needed to grow existing and future industrial/business parks in the region
- 4.3:** Promote redevelopment of Commercial/Central Business Districts and revitalization of small towns in the region
- 4.4:** Improve regional multimodal transportation infrastructure
- 4.5:** Address Region-wide infrastructure needs

TOP PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR WPPDC

Project & Location	Description	Priority & Status	Cost
Site improvements at Cane Creek Industrial Park - <i>Pittsylvania County</i>	Site Improvements to include grading and sanitary sewer.	Urgent - Funding Phase	\$4,900,000
Graded Industrial Park Pad Site - <i>Pittsylvania County</i>	Create graded pad sites at existing industrial park sites in Gretna and Hurt.	Urgent - Funding Phase	\$3,000,000
Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre Road Access Project - <i>Regional</i>	Improve portions of U.S. 220 (in Virginia and NC) and access road to improve ingress and egress to regional industrial park	Urgent - Planning Phase	\$9,000,000
Revitalization of Uptown Business District - <i>City of Martinsville</i>	Incentivize small businesses (exterior and interior makeover/elevator)	Urgent - Planning Phase	\$900,000
Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre - <i>Regional</i>	Phase II Development / Additional expansion of regional industrial park, including environmental measures, grading, utility installations, and roadways	Level 1 - In Progress	\$26,000,000
Riverview Industrial Park - <i>Danville</i>	Grade a 25 +/- acre pad on Lot FF	Level 1 - Funding Phase	\$1,000,000
Industrial Park improvements - <i>Rocky Mount</i>	Rocky Mount and Franklin County Industrial Park Improvements	Level 1 - Planning Phase	\$2,000,000
Patrick County Business Development Center - <i>Patrick County</i>	Development & Renovation of former Hardware Store into 16,000 sq foot Business Development & Incubator Center	Level 2 - Planning Phase	2,400,000
Economic Development Strategic Plan - <i>Rocky Mount</i>	For the areas of Rocky Mount/Franklin County/Boones Mill	Level 1 - Idea	\$60,000
Workforce Development Enhancement Program - <i>Franklin County</i>	Comprehensive youth and adult workforce training	Level 1 - In Progress	\$40,000,000
Southside Community Park Upgrading - <i>City of Martinsville</i>	Upgrade existing four (4) fields to accommodate youth and collegiate softball and baseball tournaments. This would include new lighting where necessary, upgrade concession stand and new sports surfaces. New bathrooms at Southside Community Park.	Urgent - Planning Phase	\$3,000,000
US 58 Expansion - <i>Patrick County</i>	Upgrade US 58 to four lanes from Stuart to I-77	Level 1 - Shovel Ready	\$556,000,000
Summit View Business Park Land and Utility Development - <i>Franklin County</i>	\$300 million private investment	Level 1 - In Progress	\$36,000,000
White Mill Redevelopment - <i>Danville</i>	Electric transmission lines and substation to accommodate redevelopment of the White Mill, formerly served by Dan River and AEP.	Level 1 - Funding Phase	\$6,000,000



West Piedmont Planning District Commission
2023



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director
Subject: Discuss Expanding ESCOG JPA to Include Alpine County
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 16, 2023
Attachments: A) None

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

Per your Board's request, staff has explored expanding the ESCOG Joint Powers Authority to include Alpine County.

There are short-term and long-term logistical considerations associated with expanding ESCOG to include Alpine County in the ESCOG. In the near-term, the Board would need to consider whether Alpine County should join ESCOG as a full member of the JPA or only as a member of the Board. Currently, ESCOG is set up such that all of the members of the JPA are also members of the Board. However, it does not have to be this way; it is possible to set up a JPA such that there is a "first tier" of entities that are members of both the JPA and the Board and a "second tier" of entities that are members of only the Board. The "first tier" members get to set the overall rules of JPA, as laid out in the JPA Agreement, *and* vote on items that come before the Board. The "second tier" members only get to vote on items that come before the Board but have no say on the JPA Agreement. Alpine County could be added to ESCOG as either type of member, based on the preferences of both Alpine County and the current member entities. Either way, including Alpine County as a voting member of the ESCOG would require modifications to the JPA Agreement through each member agency and the California Secretary of State. It is important to consider how effective the Joint Powers Authority can be across the three counties relative to the benefit provided by the addition of Alpine County's voting authority on the Board.

Long-term considerations include the additional capacity requirements needed to support coordination with an additional county and the time commitment of the Board to accommodate travel to meet Brown Act requirements.

The feedback received from Alpine County staff was that there has been continued and increased engagement with the ESCOG on regional planning efforts, including the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP), the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Community Economic Resiliency Fund (CERF), and joining the ESCOG seems a logical progression; however, it would be most efficient to demonstrate proof-of-concept through the CEDS and CERF as established regional strategic efforts before committing additional capacity and funding to the ESCOG at this time. Alpine County staff requested to be invited to future ESCOG meetings to help build relationships and provide regional context.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board discuss the merits of inviting Alpine County to join the Board.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director
Subject: Sierra Nevada Conservancy Landscape Investment Strategy
Meeting date: April 21, 2023
Prepared on: April 16, 2023
Attachments: A) Sierra Nevada Landscape Investment Strategy

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is seeking to establish a new methodology for grant distribution to accomplish landscape scale investment within the Sierra Nevada known as the Landscape Investment Strategy (LIS), consistent with the goals of the governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force. In particular, the LIS seeks to direct significant, multi-agency, state, and federal funding to collaborative land management partnerships that develop, plan, and implement portfolios of projects across a landscape. This strategy can enable project proponents to efficiently fund and administer project portfolios, realize economies of scale for project implementation, and achieve resilience outcomes at landscape-scale.

The SNC is offering a directed Pilot Program for this opportunity. The Landscape Grant Pilot Program will seek to align funding from multiple entities to provide one or two large landscape grants that support strategic portfolios of projects across large landscapes over a 5- to 10-year timeframe. In so doing, it seeks to test whether this approach can reduce administrative time and costs for funders and implementing partners alike and how brand-new datasets and decision-support tools developed by the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, can help land managers meet shared goals.

The SNC has tentatively identified the Eastern Sierra Community and Climate Resiliency Program (ESCCRP or "donut project") as a potential candidate to receive funding. Consistent with program goals, the project would also serve as

a model for “multi-benefit” projects, providing approximately \$10 million for wildfire resiliency and \$2 million for recreation project implementation. The pilot projects identified would include the ESCCRP as well as implementation of trailhead and parking improvements in the Mammoth Lakes Basin.

Proponents of the pilot project are seeking a qualified agency to administer the project if awarded and are requesting the ESCOG Board’s feedback in serving in that capacity.

If the ESCOG provided administrative project oversight for the LIS Pilot Project, it would: 1) provide regional project benefits; 2) demonstrate regional partnership in support of this and future landscape investment, multi-benefit projects, and 3) provide on-going organizational revenue.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board discuss providing administrative services for the SNC LIS Pilot Project for the ESCCRP and recreation improvements in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, if awarded.



SIERRA NEVADA
C O N S E R V A N C Y

Sierra Nevada Landscape Investment Strategy

September 2022

CONTENTS

1. Background & Goals	2
Responding to Challenges & Realizing Opportunities	2
Aligning State and Federal Initiatives	3
2. Proposed Landscape Grant Pilot Program	6
Identifying Shared Priorities for Landscape Investments	6
Grant Process	8
Eligibility and Evaluation	8
Grant Reporting and Monitoring	10
3. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Role	11
About Sierra Nevada Conservancy	11
Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program	12
The Landscape Grant Pilot Program as part of the WIP	13

1. BACKGROUND & GOALS

The governor's [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force](#) (Task Force), established in 2021 to establish a more holistic and integrated approach to building forest health and community resilience, has catalyzed the development of a Landscape Investment Strategy (LIS) in the Sierra Nevada Region. As part of the state's comprehensive strategy to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk by treating one million acres annually by 2025, the goal of the Sierra Nevada LIS is to coordinate, leverage, and scale state and federal investment across the region to accelerate the development and implementation of landscape-scale restoration initiatives.

The Sierra Nevada LIS seeks to direct significant, multi-agency, state, and federal funding to collaborative land management partnerships that develop, plan, and implement portfolios of projects across a landscape. This strategy can enable project proponents to efficiently fund and administer project portfolios, realize economies of scale for project implementation, and achieve resilience outcomes at landscape-scale.

On behalf of the Task Force and state and federal partners, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will implement the Sierra Nevada LIS through a new landscape grant pilot program. Section 2 of this document describes how this pilot program will coordinate and direct investment to partnerships that can demonstrate readiness for funding and project implementation at the landscape scale. Section 3 describes how the Landscape Investment Strategy and the pilot program will help SNC advance the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program, complementing SNC's longstanding commitment to capacity building, technical assistance, project development, and project implementation.

Responding to Challenges & Realizing Opportunities

The Sierra Nevada LIS is designed to respond to several challenges currently hindering forest restoration and wildfire resilience at a landscape scale.

- High-severity wildfire, tree mortality, and other major forest disturbances increasingly occur across large landscapes (tens to hundreds of thousands of acres). However, funding levels primarily remain scaled to and directed at the project level (thousands of acres maximum).
- State and federal funding for forest restoration and wildfire resilience and recovery is spread across multiple agencies, departments, and programs that target similar outcomes. This fragmentation means the partnerships must spend significant time and resources chasing multiple funding opportunities to implement even a single project or project component – effectively redirecting resources away from on-the-ground efforts.

The Sierra Nevada LIS intends to respond to these challenges by enabling regional partnerships that have met certain readiness criteria to access multi-year, directed funding to implement landscape-scale forest restoration and wildfire resilience initiatives. This strategy can incentivize partnerships to target their solutions to the scale of the problem by assessing and planning portfolios of work across a landscape.

The Sierra Nevada LIS offers a vehicle for state and federal agencies and departments to coordinate their efforts and leverage each other's investments to achieve wildfire resilience and forest health goals. This funding model supports the state's efforts to track outcomes and streamline reporting in a shared language and format.

Coordinating investments through SNC can also simplify administrative processes for both partnerships and funders, while enabling all involved to benefit from SNC's grantmaking and grants management experience, regional expertise, and deep partner relationships.

Over the long term, the LIS can empower partnerships to achieve landscape resilience, using a process that is informed by local needs, coordinated by regional experts, aligned with state and federal priorities, and vetted through assessments and tracking to ensure accountability.

Aligning State and Federal Initiatives

The Sierra Nevada LIS aims to connect and align multiple state and federal initiatives investing in collaboration, capacity, science and data, and project planning and implementation in the Sierra Nevada Region. With forest health as the foundation, the LIS will support multi-benefit projects that restore ecosystems, improve community resilience, support sustainable recreation and tourism, and conserve natural and working lands.

- To implement the [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), the Task Force is developing a set of resources that will help operationalize statewide interagency strategies while also aligning with regional goals and priorities. These new resources will include a tracking system to measure progress toward the million-acre target, landscape assessments and metrics to understand forest conditions and monitor resilience outcomes, access to decision-support tools to support project prioritization, and resource kits to increase partner capacity and accelerate project development and planning. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (USFS) is also currently working with the Task Force to develop joint state-federal landscape priorities. The Sierra Nevada LIS is designed to put all these efforts into action (see Figure 1).

Attachment A

- The Sierra Nevada LIS contributes to the execution of the [Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California's Forest and Rangelands between California and the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region](#) and advances many of the principles included in that agreement, including to utilize science, improve efficiency, scale up ecologically based forestry, and collaborate and innovate with all stakeholders.
- The USFS has supported the [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program](#) for the past ten years, with multiple awards to collaborative groups in the Sierra Nevada Region. As the first phase of the agency's new 10-year Confronting the Wildfire Crisis strategy, the Forest Service recently announced initial landscape investments that will bring approximately \$80 million to the Tahoe and Stanislaus national forests.
- The [California Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program \(RFFCP\)](#) is working with regional block grantees, including SNC, to build capacity, develop project pipelines, and coordinate landscape planning and prioritization for forest restoration and wildfire resilience projects. The RFFCP aims to prepare partnerships for landscape grants.
- A constellation of state and federal funders – including [Sierra Nevada Conservancy](#), [California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#), the [Wildlife Conservation Board](#), the [Department of Water Resources](#), the [Office of Planning and Research](#), [USDA Forest Service](#), [National Resource Conservation Service](#), and the [U.S. Department of the Interior](#) – fund wildfire and forest resilience efforts on private and public lands across the Sierra Nevada.
- The state has recently finalized several policy documents that articulate the importance of forest health and wildfire resilience in achieving multiple state goals. These documents include the [Natural & Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#), the [Pathways to 30x30 strategy](#), the [Climate Adaption Strategy](#), and the 2022 draft [Scoping Plan](#) to achieve California's Assembly Bill 32 climate change target and carbon neutrality commitment under Executive Order N-79-20.

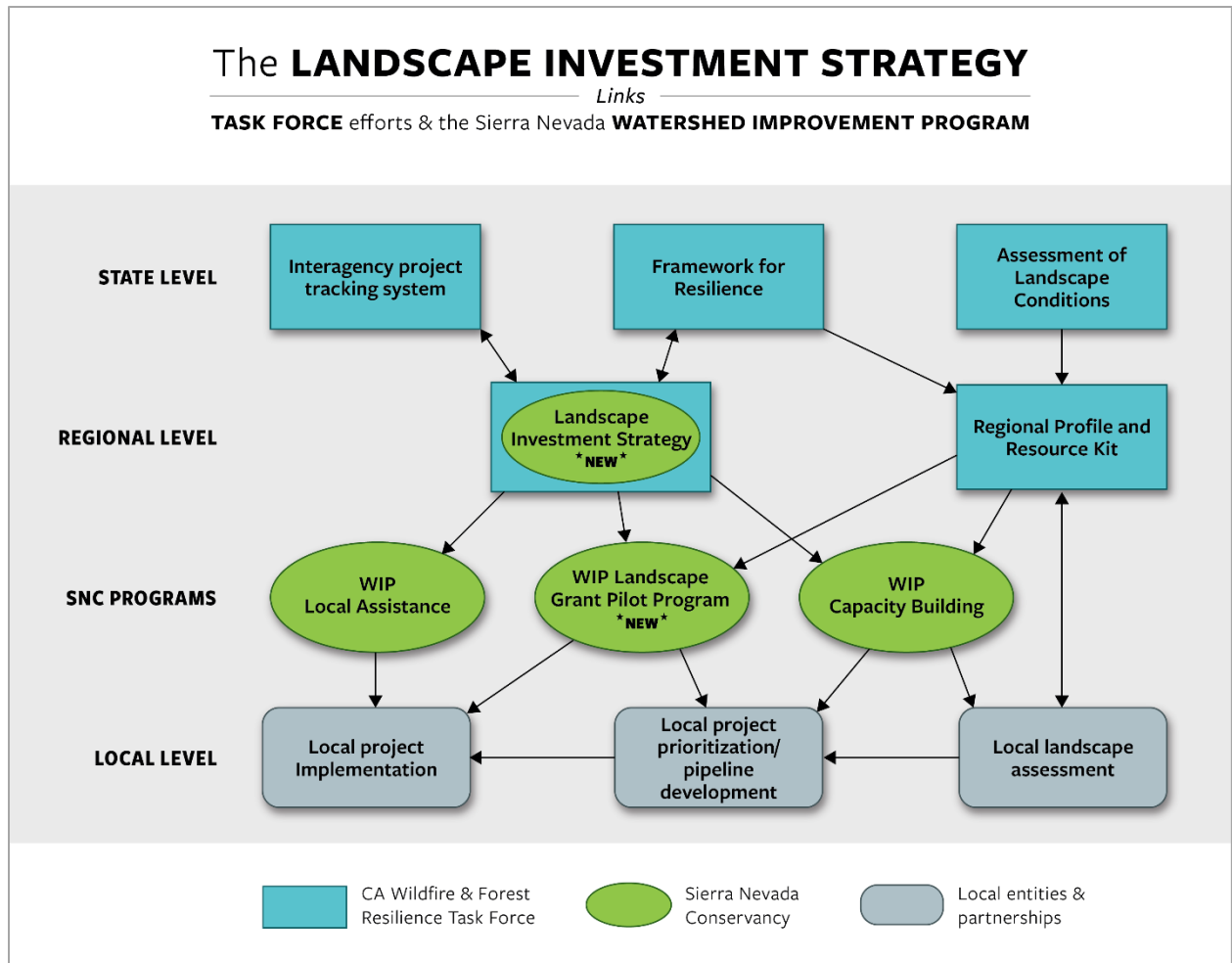


Figure 1. The Sierra Nevada LIS will help make progress towards Task Force goals in the Sierra Nevada Region while complementing SNC’s existing grant programs under the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. This graphic depicts the relationship between the Task Force’s efforts, this Landscape Investment Strategy, and partnership-driven efforts to advance restoration projects. These initiatives are interconnected and mutually informed by one another. The Task Force resources referenced here are currently under development.

2. PROPOSED LANDSCAPE GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

To implement the Sierra Nevada LIS on behalf of the Task Force and state and federal partners, SNC proposes a new Landscape Grant Pilot Program (LGPP). The LGPP will integrate federal- and state-level strategies, data, and tools with landscape-level prioritization, planning, and expertise to accelerate high-impact forest restoration and wildfire resilience initiatives. Contingent on funding received, SNC will award landscape grants to fund partnerships serving large, ecologically defined landscapes to implement landscape-scale project portfolios over 5–10 years.

The LGPP is a pilot program. As a pilot, it aims to respond to the challenges identified above by testing the following approaches:

- Pooling funding from multiple sources, including state and federal agencies, in large grants to eligible partnerships to support implementation of strategic project portfolios across a landscape over a 5- to 10-year timeframe
- Reducing administrative time and realizing efficiencies for both partnerships and state and federal funders with shared objectives
- Applying data and assessment resources, like those under development by the Task Force, to match funding sources with project portfolios and anticipated outcomes to measure impact at a landscape scale

The LGPP will be a directed grant program. The process for evaluating and selecting partnerships will respond to the requirements and priorities of the funding agencies and funding sources, landscape need, and partnership readiness to accept and implement a landscape grant. The SNC will work collaboratively with Task Force leaders and funding partners to determine final funding amounts, criteria, and processes.

The funding for this pilot will focus on forest health and wildfire risk reduction activities. While no funding is guaranteed beyond the pilot phase, SNC will seek other funding partners to augment this program and to expand the scope of eligible activities to include workforce development and biomass infrastructure.

Identifying Shared Priorities for Landscape Investments

In developing the Landscape Grant Pilot Program, the SNC will work with the Task Force, USFS leaders, and land managers to identify landscapes and affiliated partnerships that may be good candidates for landscape grants (see Figure 2 below). The SNC will also work directly with funders to identify investment opportunities that can either flow through SNC as part of the LGPP, or alongside a landscape grant to increase impact. Local partnerships will lead the identification, development, and implementation of landscape-level priorities and project portfolios.

In addition to investments in project implementation, SNC and USFS may mutually agree to hire dedicated staff to support landscape projects that deliver on state, federal, regional, and local priorities. To date, USFS has already provided financial support for one position at the SNC to support the development of strategic partnerships and this investment strategy.

Landscape Grants Connect Priorities



Figure 2. The SNC and Task Force partners will tailor the Landscape Grant Pilot Program to align priorities across partners. The Task Force Regional Kit, Landscape Assessment, Resilience Framework, and funder priorities are in the process of being developed.

Pending direction from SNC’s Governing Board, SNC will enter into agreements with funding agencies to implement the LGPP. The SNC is actively seeking funding contributions from federal and state agencies.

The multi-agency funding structure of a landscape grant is designed to incentivize regional partnerships to broaden the scope of their plans and include multi-benefit projects related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, recreation and access, and community resilience.

Grant Process

The SNC will work with Task Force leadership and funding partners to develop eligibility and evaluation criteria and a selection process for awarding the grant(s). This will ensure that Task Force priorities, funding restrictions, and funder priorities are reflected in the pilot program.

To be eligible for a landscape grant, potential grantees must meet the eligibility criteria. Activities funded by the grant must also meet the requirements tied to each source of funding. Draft eligibility criteria are listed below, but additional requirements may vary depending on the funding sources for the LGPP.

Once potential grantees are identified, SNC will work with Task Force leadership and the funding organization(s) to evaluate eligible partnerships and project portfolios and recommend awards. Draft evaluation criteria are listed below and are subject to change pending direction from funding agencies. Both the evaluation criteria and the amount of funding available will guide SNC in selecting partnerships for award.

Following award selection, awardees and the SNC will negotiate and execute a grant agreement(s) with the SNC.

Eligibility and Evaluation

In making awards under the LGPP, the SNC will consider both the strength of the partnership and the anticipated outcomes from implementing the portfolio of projects. Although the LGPP will be a directed grant program, specific eligibility and evaluation criteria will guide the grantmaking process. The SNC will work with the Task Force and funding agencies to finalize all criteria for this pilot phase.

Should the program be expanded beyond the pilot phase, these criteria may be adjusted according to varying funding sources, state and federal priorities, and regional needs.

Eligibility Criteria

Only partnerships satisfying the following criteria will be considered eligible for funding under the LGPP. Because funding for the pilot is limited at this time, meeting these eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding. The SNC will work directly with partnerships to determine eligibility.

These criteria are intended to align with the principles for regional priority plans established by the California Department Of Conservation's [RFFCP 2022 Final Grant Guidelines](#) to ensure partnerships meet common core elements.

To be eligible for funding, partnerships must demonstrate the following:

- Landscape scale
- Governance, prioritization, decision making, and participation
- Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
- Project portfolio
- Implementation and administrative capacity

Landscape Scale

The partnership and project portfolio must operate at the landscape level. Applicants must present clear and defensible logic in defining the landscape of interest based on ecological considerations (e.g., watershed, fireshed). The landscape should not be so large that the outcomes of the grant are diffuse due to scattered projects. While there is no strict acreage minimum, landscapes are generally expected to be at least the size of Hydrologic Unit Code 10 watershed.

Governance, Prioritization, Decision Making, and Participation

The partnership must have a clearly defined governance, prioritization, and decision-making process that can effectively develop and implement projects over time. Partnerships are expected to have broad-based stakeholder and tribal involvement and support and include entities capable of serving as lead agency under both National Environmental Policy Act and California Environmental Quality Act.

Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The partnership must have a clear and defensible methodology for assessing landscape conditions to support project prioritization, monitoring, and evaluation of activities over time.

Project Portfolio

The partnership must have a list of collaboratively developed, prioritized projects that respond to needs identified in a landscape assessment. Project portfolios may include a mix of projects in various stages of readiness. Specific grant deliverables will be negotiated in the grant agreement, but implementation of the project portfolio is expected to make a significant, positive impact on landscape resilience in the course of a 5–10 year grant period. Not all projects that will be implemented over the grant period are expected to be shovel-ready at the time of the award.

Implementation and Administrative Capacity

Partnerships must demonstrate that they can administer the funds and complete agreed-upon deliverables over the course of the grant period. Grantees will need to demonstrate strong administrative and implementation experience. The SNC will evaluate past grantee and partner performance with similar grant programs.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of the project portfolios will consider the following elements. Additional evaluation criteria may be developed in collaboration with the Task Force and funding agencies.

- Link to assessment and prioritization process – The project portfolio should respond to the risks and opportunities identified through the partnership’s landscape assessment and reflect the partnership’s prioritization process.
- Project feasibility – The portfolio can include projects in various stages of readiness; however, applicants will need to demonstrate a clear pathway to complete agreed-upon deliverables in the grant period. The SNC will evaluate the applicant’s staff and/or contractor capacity to complete environmental compliance and project preparation activities.
- Tie back to funding agency priorities – Activities and outcomes from the portfolio must be eligible under and respond to the priorities of the funding sources.
- Opportunity for multiple benefits – The SNC will prioritize project portfolios that are likely to yield multiple, beneficial outcomes in addition to the primary priorities of funding agencies.
- High impact – The program will support project portfolios that deliver meaningful impact at the landscape scale. Priority will be given to projects that are cohesive and sufficient in scale to respond to landscape-scale wildfire, watershed, and ecosystem health priorities.

Grant Reporting and Monitoring

In developing the Landscape Grant Pilot Program, the SNC seeks to build efficiency for grantees in grant management and reporting. The SNC will work with the Task Force, funding agencies, and grantees to utilize standardized reporting systems and integrate reporting and monitoring requirements. The grant agreement(s) will identify all necessary reporting measures, and SNC will consolidate grant reporting and monitoring requirements to the greatest extent possible.

3. THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY'S ROLE

As a trusted regional leader, SNC is well-positioned to implement the Sierra Nevada LIS on behalf of the Task Force. Located throughout the Region, the SNC staff is closely connected to local partners, tribes, and federal and private land managers. As a department, SNC frequently acts as an intermediary between local, state, and federal entities – helping on-the-ground partners advance their projects in alignment with state goals, elevating needs and best practices that emerge at a local level, and linking community and state efforts to federal priorities and opportunities.

The SNC also has the administrative experience and mechanisms to act as a fiscal sponsor for projects with multiple funding sources. The SNC grants its own state-appropriated funds, has partnered with other state agencies to subgrant funding to the Sierra Nevada Region, and has multiple Good Neighbor Authority agreements with USFS.

About Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Sierra Nevada Conservancy's goal is to protect, conserve, and enhance the unique resources of the Sierra Nevada. The SNC focuses on local solutions, enhancing and adding value to community and regional efforts. Using the newest science and information, SNC finds integrated solutions that serve environmental, social, and economic needs, while also providing information on Sierra Nevada issues, opportunities, and the value of this Region to California.

The SNC is guided by five Regional Goals, described in its [Strategic Plan](#):

- Healthy Watersheds and Forests
- Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities
- Vibrant Recreation and Tourism
- Strategic Lands Conserved
- Impactful Regional identity

These goals complement the pillars guiding the [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), positioning SNC to connect community-driven actions to improve forest health and resilience with state and federal priorities. Forest health is the foundation of these five goals, and it remains the primary focus of the Sierra Nevada LIS.

Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

By innovating new ways to coordinate, leverage, and scale investment, the Sierra Nevada LIS can meaningfully increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration and advance the goals of the Sierra Nevada [Watershed Improvement Program](#) (WIP), SNC's keystone initiative.

The SNC developed the WIP as a large-scale, holistic effort to restore resilience to the forested landscapes and communities of the Sierra Nevada. The WIP both weaves together the goals articulated in SNC's strategic plan and supports partners through every stage in the life of a project, from convening partnerships and identifying landscape needs through project implementation.

These efforts are advanced through SNC's two primary grant programs: WIP Capacity Building and WIP Local Assistance Grants.

WIP Capacity Building

This program, implemented primarily by the SNC's Partnerships & Community Support unit, blends staff support and direct funding to build workforce and organizational capacity to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. Aligned with and funded by the [Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program](#), SNC's capacity-building efforts are designed to help local partnerships and collaborative groups increase their ability to plan and prioritize landscape-scale forest health and fire protection activities, engage tribal partners and diverse stakeholders, build project pipelines, obtain long-term funding, provide workforce training, and develop functional partnerships and the associated infrastructure to implement landscape-scale programs of work over many years.

WIP Local Assistance Grants

The SNC's [Local Assistance Program](#), implemented primarily by SNC's Field Operations & Grants team, directly funds partners to plan and implement specific projects that advance SNC's Regional Goals and Task Force Action Plan objectives. Proposal scoring criteria are used to prioritize projects that are developed with input from diverse stakeholders and local tribes, are relevant in the context of other landscape treatments, have significant public benefit, and are aligned with federal, state and SNC policy and restoration objectives. This funding is complemented by hands-on staff support in helping local organizations build key partnerships, develop, plan, and implement projects, and manage grants. The SNC Area Staff tracks priorities and trends in the Region to inform state policy as well as identify and share best practices and local needs and opportunities.

The Landscape Grant Pilot Program as part of the WIP

The LGPP will complement SNC's existing grant programs under the WIP to create a holistic set of opportunities and resources for partnerships at every stage. The SNC's long-term goal is for all Sierra watersheds and communities to be able to engage in a large-landscape restoration strategy to protect homes and assets, restore the resilience of forests and watersheds, and advance community resilience. However, SNC recognizes that every partnership has different needs, and that resources must be simultaneously available for capacity-building, project development and planning, project implementation, and landscape-scale initiatives.

A sample decision tree (below) illustrates how SNC will support capacity building, immediate action, and landscape-scale initiatives. Local partners can use the decision tree to understand which of SNC's grant programs are best suited to their priorities and projects and how they can progress toward readiness for a landscape grant.

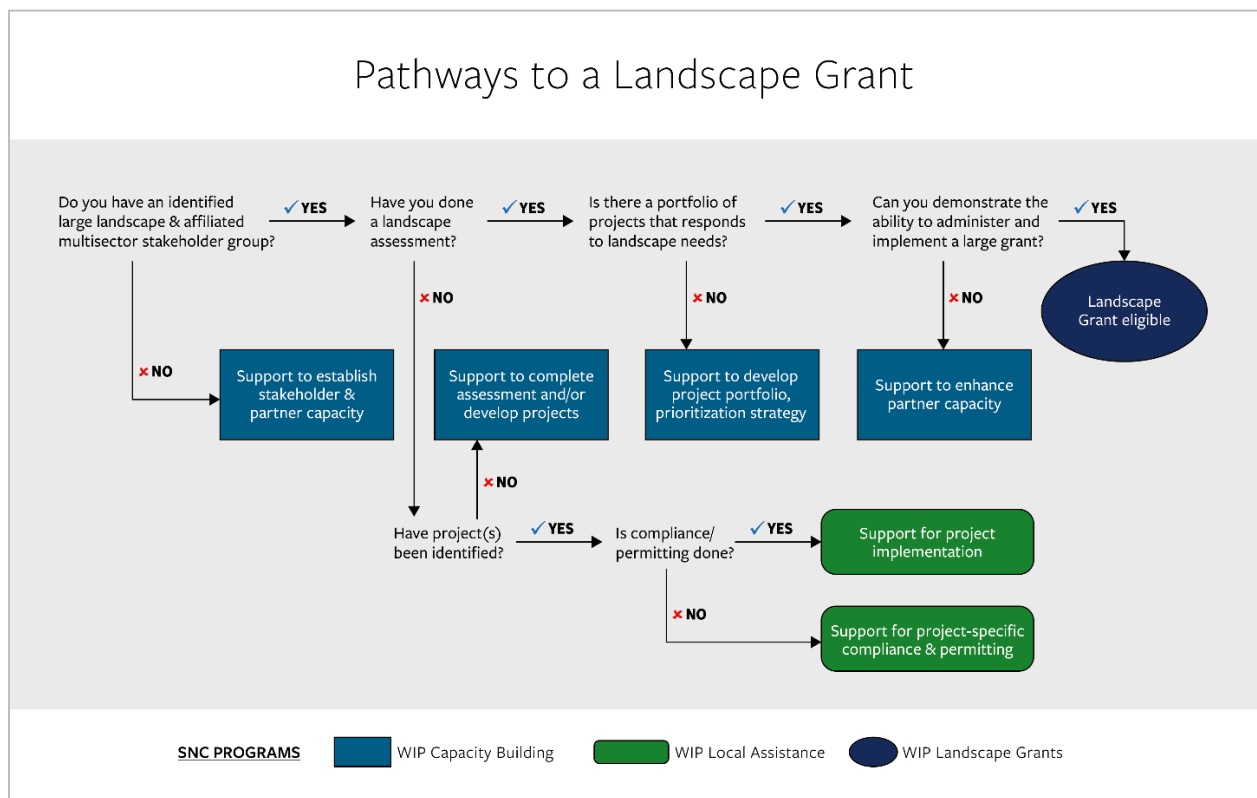


Figure 3. This decision tree illustrates how local partners can access SNC staff and funding resources to move toward readiness for a landscape grant while also building capacity and taking immediate action. See Section 2 for a detailed list of eligibility criteria.

Attachment A

The SNC's capacity-building initiatives will continue to provide staff assistance, technical expertise, and financial resources to help local partnerships develop governance structures and decision-making processes, conduct permitting and compliance activities, and identify a landscape portfolio of projects. Recognizing that action to protect our communities and forests must also be taken immediately, and that many valuable projects are not part of a landscape-scale initiative, SNC will also continue to assist local partners to design, plan, and implement priority wildfire restoration and forest health projects via WIP Local Assistance Grants and staff support.