



**NORTH COAST RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP (NCRP)
TECHNICAL PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE (TPRC) MEETING:
NCRP CAL FIRE FOREST HEALTH PILOT GRANT PROJECT PROPOSAL REVIEW MEETING
SUMMARY
AUGUST 28 & 29, 2024**

Date/Time: August 28 10:00 am - 5:00 pm & August 29 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Location: Wharfinger Building, Bay Room, 1 Marina Way, Eureka, CA 95501

Facilitators: TPRC Co-Chairs Sandra Perez and Dale Roberts

AUGUST 28, DAY 1

I WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Welcome: Co-Chair Dale Roberts welcomed TPRC Members, Staff and Public
- Introductions of TPRC Members, Staff and Public

II REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA/PUBLIC COMMENT/DECISION

Public Comment for items on the agenda: none

Motion to approve agenda: Elizabeth Salomone

Second: Dale Roberts

Vote: passed unanimously

III REVIEW [NCRP CAL FIRE Forest Health Pilot Grant Project Review Process Guidelines](#)

- Co-chair Sandra Perez led review of Project Proposal Review & Selection Process Overview, (see Appendix A, page 21), Procedures for public input during the project review process (see Appendix A, page 23), Conflict of interest guidelines (see Appendix A, page 24) and Scoring criteria (see page 6).

IV TECHNICAL PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE PROPOSAL REVIEW

- NCRP CAL FIRE Forest Health Pilot Project Proposal Review Summary

V PUBLIC COMMENT, PERIOD 1

Emily Afriat, North Coast Regional Director of The Wildlands Conservancy, spoke in support of the East Fork Scott River Forest Health Implementation Project. TWC acquired the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve in 2021 with state funding, which is a 6,000-acre property in Callahan on the East Fork. Their goals and roles throughout their organization and on this preserve as well is to be a willing and activity engaged landowner allowing wonderful partners across numerous state and federal agencies and other

non-profit organizations to do this important work with the help of these essential funding sources and programs like the NCRP. They are grateful for this opportunity and hope the committee will consider this project. The long-term vision for the property is to have the entire preserve in a CAL VTP. It is a lengthy process and they are doing it in stages and they have a project with the USFS doing oak restoration. The Watershed Council has also implemented a drought exemption project that recently finished. These are all steps in getting them to the larger goal of having the entire preserve helped.

Judy Rosales, Coast Ridge Forest Council Executive Director, spoke on behalf of the Coast Ridge Forest Council, Pathway Fire Resilient Landscapes on the Sonoma Coast: The cost of doing work in Sonoma County is very high. They are currently working on a project that costs about \$8,000 per acre which is just a one-mile shaded fuel break, and they can't get away from that. The nearest facility for the THP is a 6-hour drive, so the costs are high, and it is one of the biggest challenges of getting the project done. The Pines that were planted are nonnative and susceptible to disease and they have been growing for about 50 years. Judy was living there during the 1978 Creighton Ridge Fire and saw what happened, and it is now a dense forest and they've been trying to find a way to manage it. They have been applying for wildfire prevention grants from CAL FIRE (can be seen in their budget) that focuses on evacuation routes of hundreds and hundreds of people who live in those back hills. The pines are really the problem. The footprint of this project is not that big but getting the work done is expensive. They are looking for the best way to make that area safe. The project is scalable. They don't know how they can reduce their costs. They heard feedback that they could reduce costs by chipping and they are using chipping for a lot of their work right now. They got a grant from the County of Sonoma so they have that resource. They have a small business that they are trying to do work with right now. They are looking for ways to manage this forest that continues to grow and continues to create hazardous fuel. The cost is high. The only way they could bring the cost down is to reduce the acreage and she doesn't know that amount. She was also present to learn from the committee and see how this process works. Judy thanked the committee for their time and effort.

Walker Wise, Sanctuary Forest, thanked the committee for reviewing their proposal and for all the feedback. He helped the Executive Director, April, work on the Sanctuary Forest proposal. He acknowledged the high cost per acre and shared that scalability and cost are interrelated. They have a really dense 700 stems per acre Tan Oak forest, especially in the midslopes of the project, that are very expensive, (reflected in their cost breakdown), but if they scaled their project down to just include the riparian areas and the mechanical thinning up on the ridgelines and omitted the dense Tan Oak areas, the cost per acres of treatment would go down. The riparian thinning is expensive but high priority both for restoration objectives for the stream flow benefits they were looking for and because it runs along Briceland Thorn Road which is the evacuation route for all of Shelter Cove and Whitethorn so it has a lot of wildfire safety goals too. If they need to make their project scalable (they discuss that in the proposal) they would like to do the mechanical areas and riparian areas, making the high cost per acre to come down (also notice that in the budget) because they would omit the steeper areas that are all-hand thinning because they are so dense that they can't be lop and scatter so they anticipated high cost trying to reduce those fuels without equipment access. They appreciate the committee's time and consideration.

VI PUBLIC COMMENT, PERIOD 2

Jessica Clayborne: Yurok Tribe Watershed Restoration and Roads Program, in support of the Stoo-Wen Ridge Healthy Forest Fuels Reduction Project: This is an invaluable project to their community and Tribe, they are stewards of the land and always have been. They were placed there by the creator in order to care for the land and that was taken from them for a long time. It's projects like these that give them back the ability to care for what they're meant to care for. There is a high cost per acre but that is for training Tribal members, like her, who will be working to implement the project. The crew is entirely Tribal members and they just hired 12 additional 18-24 year-old Tribal members to operate heavy equipment. This would be a project that could potentially fund them to continue to work if they chose a career in the Forestry industry. The project has a lot of benefits. Being managed solely for commercial timber purposes for 150 years, it is all even aged timber stands that are ready to go, and they've been lucky that it hasn't happened yet. This ridgeline restoration project will ensure that they can stop a fire if it comes from the Forest Service side or if it comes from the river side. There have been a ton of agencies that have put a lot of money into this area. To lose that would be devastating as an individual and as a community that live there and work there. She is really in support of this as a Tribal member and a member of the Klamath community. To address the maintenance question: Since time immemorial they were able to burn their lands to take care of them as stewards in that area. They are not today. They can't just go and do their thing in the hills, light the fire, leave and return home to their villages. That's a learning curve and they are going to have to learn how to do that and it's projects like these that are going to implement natural boundaries. This ridgeline will run down the main line that goes into the Blue Creek Salmon Sanctuary and will eventually encompass a large area. As far as maintenance, they are working on it. They wanted to include fire in the proposal but it's hard to know how they could deliver on that.

Judy Rosales, Coast Ridge Forest Council Executive Director, on behalf of the Coast Ridge Forest Council, Pathway Fire Resilient Landscapes on the Sonoma Coast: It is unclear if they listed the Kashia Tribe as a partner, although their proposal did say that they were part of the consultation. Because they partner with the Kashia, they have consulted with them and they will consult with them in the future. She can see how a letter is important.

Matt Greene, RFP Forestry and Biological Consulting, commenting on the Coast Ridge Forest Council, Pathway to Fire Resilient Landscapes on the Sonoma Coast: The idea that there is a commercial way to offset the cost is not likely. Revenue generated from selling the logs is less than the actual cost to transport them to the facilities. Getting materials off-site is very expensive. They've been doing chipping and burning projects there for about 5 years. Without having some ability to break even on the trucking, these projects have just sat. Pines are non-native so closer lumber mills for Fir and Redwood cannot be used. Transportation is a huge cost. They chose to go with the THP because they are dealing with a commercial sized tree that they are trying to remove and re-establish a native forest. The pine trees are 16-22 inches in diameter, so they cannot chip those at an efficient rate. They could chip some and pile and burn, but in trying to meet the objective of carbon sequestration they chose to try and store the carbon in lumber. Because it's an actual Timber Harvest Plan, the Kashia get notified before the project is ever submitted, and through that process there will be a full disclosure of the project, full comments allowed, and the Kashia will be on site to review the project through the Timber Harvest Review Program. They

have an agreement that the Kashia will be on site at the beginning. The project has identified about 175 acres and from there they will downscale based on the Kashia's input of where things can't happen.

Chris Lossi, Flowra, provided clarification on the Shasta Valley RCD Siskiyou Juniper Treatment and Landscape Restoration project: The native vegetation is a sage steppe, so in that context there would not be any reforestation because the native vegetation is brush dominant. The question is: If this a CAL FIRE grant, is the restoration of a non-forest dominated ecosystem eligible? The application states that the prescribed fire will be applied in the area that has been previously treated. It's a follow-up prescribed fire. Climate change is addressed by reducing GHG by removing and utilizing Juniper in a way that avoids releasing the carbon in the atmosphere.

Mark Andre, Baldwin, Blomstrom, Wilkinson and Associates, Inc., provided a response to Chris Lossi's comments to NCRP staff via email during the meeting:

- *Forest land is defined by Section 12220(g) of the California Public Resources Code (PRC) as "land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, ...*
- Western juniper habitat types stands can be classified as forestland.
- *"Timberland" means privately owned land, or land acquired for state forest purposes, which is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, and which is capable of growing an average annual volume of wood fiber of at least 15 cubic feet per acre.*
- Pure juniper stands are not timberland unless they meet the definition and have other commercial conifers in the mix.
- Western juniper can occur with White Fir (WFR), Jeffrey Pine (JPN), Ponderosa Pine (PPN), Sierran Mixed Conifer (SMC), Montane Hardwood Conifer (MHC), and Sagebrush (SGB) habitats.
- Western juniper must also have other native trees mixed in such as Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, white fir etc. to qualify as timberland for the purposes of the Forest Practice Rules. A CAL FIRE permit such as Forst Fire Prevention Exemption would not be feasible. In a pure juniper woodland as western juniper are not classified as commercial species. At least in pure juniper woodlands the difficult issue of timberland conversion is not an issue for removal or reduction.
- Western juniper is a native conifer in Siskiyou County.
- The CalVTP PEIR included juniper woodlands and pinyon- juniper in the treatable landscape .
- Also, western juniper reduction using the CalVTP would almost certainly fall under the Ecosystem Restoration category of treatment type.
- **Ecological Restoration:** Generally, outside of the WUI in areas that have departed from the natural fire regime as a result of fire exclusion, ecological restoration would focus on restoring ecosystem processes, conditions, and resiliency by moderating uncharacteristic wildland fuel conditions to reflect historic vegetative composition, structure, and habitat values.
- For CAL FIRE prevention and forest health treatments, I believe that juniper woodlands qualify. Although where western juniper trees are encroaching on non-tree habitat types like

shrublands, grasslands and savannahs and they are removed because they are only there due to fire suppression it is difficult to make a positive GHG calculation for the treatment.

- Easier to make a case for thinning western juniper and reducing trees per acre only if the goal is to grow larger trees as part of the overall goal.

VI ADJOURN

AUGUST 29, DAY 2

Since the TPRC Committee completed the proposal review process by the end of the Day 1, the agenda was altered for Day 2 to begin with the preliminary selection of draft suite of NCRP CAL FIRE Forest Health Pilot Implementation Grant Projects and a contingency approach to be presented to the Leadership Council for review during the NCRP Quarterly Meeting, October 18, 2024.

I WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Welcome: Co-Chair Dale Roberts welcomed TPRC Members, Staff and Public
- Introductions of TPRC Members, Staff and Public

II REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA/PUBLIC COMMENT/DECISION

Public Comment for items on the agenda: none

Motion to approve altered agenda described above: Jonathan Olson

Second: Joe Scriven

Vote: passed unanimously

III PRELIMINARY SELECTION GUIDELINES DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF PROJECTS

- Questions were raised about discrepancies in budget presented in Project Tracker narrative versus Workbook.
- Budget narratives included unexplained and indirect costs.
- A motion was requested to accept a consistent approach for each project and to use the amount requested in the Workbook.

Motion to approve approach: Andrew Leighton

Second: Sandra Perez

Vote: 5 aye, 1 no (Jonathan Olson wanted to explore and gain insight for discrepancies)

public comments: none

- This motion was partially rescinded by Andrew Leighton – Redwood Valley Rancheria should be considered by the amount requested in the Workbook.

Second: Jonathan Olson

- Motion made by Elizabeth Salomone that Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, Siskiyou Juniper Treatment and Landscape Restoration) be considered at the lower amount, \$1,906,642 and Redwood Valley Rancheria Little River Band of Pomo Indians, Redwood Valley Rancheria (RVR) Fuel Reduction Project) be considered at the higher amount, \$1,364,782.

Second: Sandra Perez

Vote: 5 aye, Joe Scriven abstained

Public Comments: none

- Numbers were adjusted to reflect highest amount request of \$2 million and lowest amount of \$500,000.
- In scaled scenario, if everyone got their low amount requested, they could fund everyone, however, if they fund on biggest ask, they would only fund about 7 projects.
- Yurok tribe request that Stoo-Wen Ridge project take precedence over the McKinney Project was noted, and identified as not necessary in current funding scenario.
- A question was raised if Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District made a similar request between their projects, however the situation is different because the Siskiyou Prescribed Burn Association is fiscally sponsored by the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District.
- It was noted that project 2 (Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, Forest Health and Resilience - Broadcast Burning - Siskiyou Prescribed Burn Association) and project 7 (Yurok Tribe, McKinney Post-Fire Initial Reforestation & Recovery Implementation) were the most cost effective.
- Suggestion made to fully fund the top three that scored above 80 and then from there start scaling back.
- Due to Shasta Valley Juniper treatment employing unproven technology, a scale back of funding was suggested. Another member disagreed that the project used tried and true methodology but that the project was indeed scalable by nature. The high number of acreage and uncertainty about eligibility provided other arguments for reducing funding.
- One member was not comfortable recommending funding for project 3 (Lake Earl Grange, Lake Earl (Del Norte) Forest Health Implementation Project) over reducing funding for other projects.
- One member was not comfortable fully funding Scott River Watershed Council's project because they are a non-profit with a healthy budget and lacked any funding match.
- One member proposed to fully fund the Yurok Tribe McKinney project based on low cost per acre and project merits, even though it was one of the lower ranked projects, but this project ended up being scaled back which opened up funding for a different project, ultimately Redwood Valley Rancheria, although one member questioned the quantity of work that would be accomplished being awarded with the lower scaled budget (as the project had a high cost per acre).
- Regarding when to consider regional representation, the Co-Chairs suggested that the committee consider rank first and then regional representation.
- After scoring, the TPRC recommended budget appeared to be concentrated in the northern region of the state which is more densely forested. Sonoma and Del Norte counties were the only counties that issued proposals but were not included in the TPRC recommended budget.
- The Mendocino County RCD project budget was reduced because it had the highest total project cost.

IV FINAL SELECTION OF DRAFT SUITE OF PROJECTS

FINAL SCORE	ORGANIZATION NAME, PROJECT NAME	LOCATION/AREA SERVED	TOTAL PROJECT COST	FUNDING REQUEST	TPRC RECOMMENDED BUDGET
81.83	Yurok Tribe, Stoo-Wen Ridge Healthy Forest Fuels Reduction Project	Northern Tribal Region	\$1,615,227	\$1,615,227	\$1,615,227
80.16	Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, Leggett Area Forest Health Project	Mendocino County	\$1,998,805	\$1,998,805	\$1,989,355
80.08	Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, Mail Ridge Wildfire Resilience Project, Phase 1	Humboldt County	\$933,880	\$833,880	\$833,880
78.75	Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, Siskiyou Juniper Treatment and Landscape Restoration	Siskiyou County	\$1,905,492	\$1,905,492	\$1,429,119
77.64	Scott River Watershed Council, East Fork Scott River Forest Health Implementation Project	Siskiyou County	\$1,293,493	\$1,293,493	\$970,119
77.50	Yurok Tribe, McKinney Post-Fire Initial Reforestation & Recovery Implementation	Northern Tribal Region	\$1,528,281	\$1,528,281	\$1,137,074
76.52	Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, Forest Health and Resilience - Broadcast Burning - Siskiyou Prescribed Burn Association	Siskiyou County	\$542,835	\$542,835	\$542,835
72.75	Redwood Valley Rancheria Little River Band of Pomo Indians, Redwood Valley Rancheria (RVR) Fuel Reduction Project	Southern Tribal Region	\$1,364,782	\$1,364,782	\$682,391
69.18	Sanctuary Forest, McKee Creek Forest Health Project	Humboldt County	\$2,628,087	\$2,000,000	\$0
64.41	Coast Ridge Forest Council, Pathway to Fire Resilient Landscapes on the Sonoma Coast	Sonoma County	\$3,664,405	\$1,524,665	\$0
54.92	Lake Earl Grange, Lake Earl (Del Norte) Forest Health Implementation Project	Del Norte County	\$901,049	\$901,049	\$0
		TOTALS	\$18,376,335	\$15,508,507	\$9,200,000

V CONTINGENCY PLAN DISCUSSION & STATEMENT

- Contingency plan for 8 out of 11 projects approved.
- Contingency plan could inform TPRC Ad hoc committee how to be guided.
- \$1,882,795 was reduced from project funding total because it was over the \$9.2 million grant. After CAL FIRE's review, if a project is deemed ineligible, then the priority would be to fully fund the TPRC approved suite of projects according to rank.
- Current policy dictates that if more project funding becomes available, the first \$50,000 would be at the County of Humboldt's discretion, anything beyond that goes back to TPRC discretion.
- Contingency plan could apply to projects that do not meet the required completion of environmental compliance within one-year, as this is a new requirement.

CONTINGENCY PROCESS FOR BUDGET AUGMENTATIONS STATEMENT:

The NCRP Technical Peer Review Committee recommends that the NCRP Leadership Council approve the following contingency process should a project drop out of the suite of projects or additional funding becomes available for any reason prior to the Leadership Council approval of the project suite.

Should additional funding become available for any reason prior to the NCRP Leadership Council Priority Project approval for inclusion in the NCRP CAL FIRE Forest Health Pilot Regional Grant (presumably on October 18, 2024), reallocation of funding will augment the priority project budgets, up to the full funding request, in order of score rank. This reallocation would be made to those project budgets that are recommended for funding award, but had their budgets reduced.

After the NCRP Leadership Council approval, the reallocation of funding process will adhere to the Project Budget Under-Runs and Funding Reallocation Process Policy described in the [NCRP Policies and Procedures Handbook, 2024](#) (see page 19, APPENDIX A: NCRP POLICIES).

Motion to approve suite of projects and contingency process: Jonathan Olson

Second: Joe Scriven

Vote: passed unanimously

Public Comment: Judy Rosales from Coast Ridge Forest Council thanked the committee and acknowledged that a big reason for not funding their project was the THP. She explained that their project went to their CAL FIRE unit who are involved in all of their projects. A THP and NTMP Forest fire prevention exemptions are allowable for Forest Health. They submitted a Forest Health Project in the last round that didn't get funded and this was part of that project. During the debrief, the main thing brought up was project readiness (they didn't have CEQA). If they did a non-commercial project, her forester brought up that most of the trees are 14-22 inches in 5-7 foot spacing. If they did not do a THP, and they did a fuel reduction project where they chipped, they would have over a foot of chip on the ground which would not allow for any reforestation, any planting, and it would add another \$2000/acre to their project. Judy also had a comment regarding the Contingency Plan: if funding becomes available later in the process, she would like to see some money go to eligible projects that were not funded. It would be more equitable to spread money around.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS:

North Coast Resource Partnership Technical Peer Review Committee Members:

Tribal Central District

Joseph Parker, Round Valley Indian Tribe

Del Norte County

Jonathan Olson, County Engineer

Andrew Leighton, Crescent City Engineering Project Manager

Humboldt County

Hank Seemann, Deputy Director, Environmental Services, Public Works Department

Mendocino County

Joe Scriven, Assistant Executive Director/Fisheries Biologist, Mendocino Resource Conservation District

Elizabeth Salomone, General Manager, Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation Improvement District

Sonoma County

Co-Chair: Dale Roberts, Engineer, Sonoma County Water Agency

Trinity County

Co-Chair: Sandra Perez

North Coast Resource Partnership Staff:

Katherine Gledhill, NCRP Director of Project Development, West Coast Watershed

Cybelle Immitt, NCRP Director of Administration and Contracting (Humboldt County)

Sherri Norris, NCRP Director of Tribal Engagement, California Indian Environmental Alliance

Javier Silva, California Indian Environmental Alliance

Shelly Hughes, NCRP Technical Consultant

Public (in-person and via zoom):

Jessica Clayborne, Yurok Tribe Watershed Restoration and Roads Program

Matt Greene, RFP Forestry and Biological Consulting

Chris Lossi, Flowra

Walker Wise, Sanctuary Forest

Judy Rosales, Coast Ridge Forest Council Executive Director

Mark Andre, BBWA

Emily Afriat, North Coast Regional Director of The Wildlands Conservancy

Rod Dowse, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District

Anna Froelich, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District

Patty Grantham, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District and Siskiyou Prescribed Burn Association

April Newlander, Sanctuary Forest