



California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
(CAL FIRE) California Climate Investments
Fire Prevention Grants Program
Project Scope of Work



Project Name: North Santa Clara RCD Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

Project Tracking Number: 21-CNR-SCU-043

Project Description Summary:

Guadalupe-Coyote RCD (soon to be the North Santa Clara RCD) will create a hazardous fuel reduction project to help reduce fuel loads and increase ecosystem services on a minimum of 800 acres in the foothills of northeast Santa Clara County. An important component of the project will be to conduct community outreach to historically underserved populations living in and adjacent to the proposed treatment areas.

A. Scope of Work

The primary activity type for this project is hazardous fuels reduction, so these answers relate to:

Section 1: Hazardous Fuels Reduction

1. Describe the geographic scope of the project, including an estimate of the number of habitable structures and the names of the general communities that will benefit.
The RCD is proposing to conduct activities at a minimum of two sites consisting of a minimum of 800 acres, which will directly benefit the rural area surrounding the sites, and indirectly benefit at least three adjacent communities: San Jose, Milpitas and East Foothills.
2. Describe the goals, objectives, and expected outcomes of the project.
The primary goals of the project are to:
 - *reduce fuel loads and increase ecosystem services on working lands adjacent to urban areas.*
 - *increase public awareness of the importance and effectiveness of hazardous fuel reduction to reduce impacts of wildfire.*
3. Provide a clear rationale for how the proposed project will reduce the risks associated with wildfire to habitable structures.
The use of prescribed fire and expanded fire lines within the project area will reduce fuel loads so that in the event of wildland fire, there is less likelihood of catastrophic losses.
4. Identify any additional assets at risk to wildfire that will benefit from the proposed project. These may include, but are not tied to, domestic and municipal water supplies, power lines, communication facilities and community centers.
 - *Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton*
 - *Joseph D. Grant Park*

- CalFire Sweetwater Fire Station
 - Copernicus Peak with CalFire lookout (and state, regional, local government and private sector telecommunications equipment).
5. How will the project/activity utilize the left-over woody biomass? Will the project/activity use a biomass facility to reduce greater greenhouse gas emissions?
n/a

B. Degree of Risk

1. Discuss the location of the project in relation to areas of moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity zone as identified by the latest Fire and Resource Assessment Program maps. Fire hazard severity zone maps by county can be accessed at: http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland_zones_maps.php

The entirety of the planned prescribed burn areas are in very high hazard severity zones.

2. Describe the geographic proximity of the project to structures at risk to damage from wildfire. (Please type in blank space below. Please note there is no space limitations).

Isabel Ranch has several large residential structures within approximately ½ mile of burn area. Lick Observatory and its outbuildings are within 2 miles of burn area. There are scattered residences throughout the foothills within a 10 mile range, and highly urbanized areas of Milpitas and San Jose located outside of a 20-mile radius of the burn area.

C. Community Support

1. Does the project include any matching funds from other funding sources or any in-kind contributions that are expected to extend the impact of the proposed project?
No
2. Describe plans for external communications during the life of the project to keep the effected community informed about the goals, objectives, and progress of the project. Activities such as planned press releases, project signage, community meetings, and field tours are encouraged.

The RCD will work with CAL FIRE SCU to disseminate press releases, social media posts, attend community meetings and provide updates on project progress. Additionally, handouts will be prepared for use during community outreach efforts.

3. Describe any plans to maintain the project after the grant period has ended.
The RCD will maintain contact with the landowners to address any concerns and potentially offer additional services, including future maintenance burns.

4. Does the proposed project work with other organizations or agencies to address fire hazard reduction at the landscape level?

The RCD works with the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council as a member of its Advisory Committee for the CWPP and will reach out to the Mount Hamilton Range Improvement Association.

D. Project Implementation

1. Discuss the anticipated timeline for the project. Make sure to take seasonal restrictions into account.

The intention is to complete planning so that at least one prescribed burn can be completed by the fall of FY23-24. The second prescribed burn will likely be completed by the fall of FY24-25.

2. Verify the expected time frames to complete the project will fall under the required completion dates depending on the source of the funds awarded.

All activities will be completed by March 15, 2025.

3. Using bullets, list the milestones that will be used to measure the progress of the project.

- *Prepare and issue RFPs to solicit qualified consulting firms to conduct the PSAs, burn plans and other activities for the individual sites (45 days after execution of agreement).*
- *Prepare handouts for community outreach (45 days after execution of agreement).*
- *Develop on-call list for equipment operators for fire line expansion.*
- *Coordinate site visits and pre-fire technical assistance with landowners of working lands scheduled for prescribed fire activities in 2023 (Summer 2023).*
- *Conduct community outreach within neighboring communities (ongoing from Summer 2023 through Fall 2024).*
- *Complete all plans and arrangements necessary to proceed with prescribed fire activities for first site (Fall 2023).*
- *Coordinate debriefing after first prescribed fire burn (Spring 2024).*
- *Coordinate site visits and pre-fire technical assistance with landowners of working lands scheduled for prescribed fire activities in 2024 (Winter 2024).*
- *Complete all plans necessary to proceed with prescribed fire activities for second site (Fall 2024).*
- *Coordinate debriefing after second prescribed fire burn (Winter 2025).*
- *Grant administration (ongoing throughout grant).*
- *Project management (ongoing throughout grant).*

4. Using bullets, list the measurable outcomes (i.e., project deliverables) that will be used to measure the project's success.

- *Estimation of reduced fuel load attributed to prescribed fire activities.*
- *Estimation of enhanced fire-fighting capacity provided by extended fire lines.*

- *Estimation of increased grazing capacity as a result of prescribed fire activities.*

5. If applicable, how will the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) be met?

By completing a PSA under the CAL VTP.

6. Are there any existing forest or land management plans; Conservation Easements; Covenant, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&R's); matters related to zoning; use restrictions, or other factors that can or will limit the wildfire prevention proposed activity?

Not to the best of our knowledge, but will confirm by surveying landowners and County Planning staff as part of the pre-fire coordination activities.

E. Administration

1. Describe any previous experience the project proponent has with similar projects. Include a list of recent past projects the proponent has successfully completed if applicable. Project proponents having no previous experience with similar projects should discuss any past experiences that may help show a capacity to successfully complete the project being proposed. This may include partnering with a more experienced organization that can provide project support.

The RCD was initially formed in the early 1940's and has a rich history of working to protect natural resources within its watersheds. The RCD's current Executive Director, who will be project manager for this project, has been with the RCD since 2014, and has over 29 years of management experience in the public sector, including extensive experience developing and implementing local government projects and programs. Among the most recent natural resource grants she has implemented are projects funded by CDFW, CDFA and USDA.

2. Identify who will be responsible for tracking project expenses and maintaining project records in a manner that allows for a full audit trail of any awarded grant funds.

The Executive Director, with assistance from the RCD grant administrator, will be responsible for tracking project expenses and maintaining project records. The Board of Directors has overall fiduciary responsibility for the District.

F. Budget

A detailed project budget should be provided in an Excel spreadsheet attached to this grant application. The space provided here is to allow for a narrative description to further explain the proposed budget.

A. *Salary and Wages:*

Executive Director (ED): The Executive Director will serve as the project manager for this project. Estimated hours include those needed to manage records; provide progress reports to the Board of Directors and CAL FIRE;

prepare RFPs; award and manage consulting contracts; review draft documents; liaison with landowners; liaison with County Planning; liaison with CAL FIRE prescribed burn staff; coordinate meetings; and close out the grant.

Conservation Program Coordinator (CPC): The CPC will be responsible for community outreach efforts; development of handouts; and presentations at community meetings.

B. Employee Benefits:

Executive Director (ED): Benefit rates include dental insurance; vision insurance; deferred compensation; employer payroll taxes; unemployment and workers compensation insurance.

Conservation Program Coordinator (CPC): Benefit rate includes health insurance; dental insurance; vision insurance; employer payroll taxes; unemployment and workers compensation insurance.

C. Contractual:

Environmental Contractor(s): Estimated costs to engage one or more qualified contractors for two burn sites to prepare PSAs under the Cal VTP in order to meet CEQA requirements.

Equipment Operator(s): Estimated costs to engage one or more qualified equipment operators to perform pre-fire fire line work.

Burn Plan Preparation/Burn Boss: Estimated costs to engage one or more qualified burn plan preparers/burn bosses to complete the burn plan, weather analysis, smoke management plan and other components needed to conduct safe prescribed burn activities.

GCRCD Grant Administrator: The RCD has a current grant administrator under contract who will provide grant management and record-keeping services for this grant.

GCRCD Plan Reviewer: The RCD will engage a plan reviewer who has fire service experience to provide additional expertise to the ED for reviewing draft PSAs and burn plans.

D. Travel and Per Diem:

Site visits: Estimated costs for mileage reimbursement for site visits before, during and after prescribed fire and fire line activities, and for outreach presentations at community meetings.

E. Supplies:

Community outreach (hand-outs): Supplies to provide handouts at community outreach events.

1. Explain how the grant funds, if awarded, will be spent to support the goals and objectives of the project. If equipment grant funds are requested, explain how the equipment will be utilized and maintained beyond the life of the grant.

All funds will be used solely for grant activities related to plan development and review; fire line expansion; and community outreach. No equipment funds have been requested.

2. Are the costs for each proposed activity reasonable for the geographic area where they are to be performed? Identify any costs that are higher than usual and explain any special circumstances within the project that makes these increased costs necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

Although PSA development is a new activity for the RCD, our understanding is that the estimates we have provided are in line with other similar activities being conducted outside of our area. If the bids come in lower than estimated, the RCD will seek to determine if it's feasible to identify and plan for prescribed fire activities on a third site.

3. Is the total project cost appropriate for the size, scope, and anticipated benefit of the project?

Based on our knowledge of USDA-FSA reimbursements to ranchers who suffered losses as a result of the SCU Lightning Complex Fire, we believe the total project cost of \$300,000 for prevention activities at the two proposed locations is appropriate to perform activities that will mitigate the effects of future wildfire.

4. Using bullets please list each object category amount that you are requesting and the detail of how that would support meeting the grant objectives.

- A. Salary and Wages
- B. Employee Benefits

Assigning an executive level manager as project manager provides a higher level of assurance that the District will maintain focus on objectives and complete the project successfully. Assigning the Conservation Program Coordinator to conduct outreach activities allows for dedicated engagement with the community.

- C. Contractual:

The amount of funding budgeted for each PSA and burn plan to be developed allows the District to engage highly qualified and reliable contractors who can help ensure quality and timely completion of the project, and allow CAL FIRE to proceed with planned prescribe burn activities as currently scheduled. Funding for equipment operators will increase firefighting capacity while managing the burns by expanding fire lines. Supplementing District staff with dedicated grant administration and plan review will help ensure quality

reports, compliance with grant reporting requirements and timely completion of milestones. All of these items will increase the capacity of the District to complete a high-quality project successfully and on time.

D. Travel and Per Diem:

Providing reimbursement for travel to site visits will allow the District to perform more pre-fire visits to conduct due diligence; allow for post-fire site visits for outcome measurement; provide additional landowner technical assistance if needed; and increase the number of community engagements.

E. Supplies:

This budget item will allow the District to provide hand-outs at community events, which increases awareness and reinforces educational outcomes for the community.

G. California Climate Investments

The space provided here is to allow for a narrative description to further explain how the project/activity will reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions. (Please type in blank space below. Please note there is no space limitations).

1. How will the project/activity reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions?

Fire management is considered a cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from wildfires. Catastrophic wildfires – particularly those exacerbated by extreme weather conditions – can release huge amounts of carbon dioxide within a short amount of time. Alternatively, without fire organic matter from plants is consumed by microbes and also released as carbon dioxide or methane. Infrequent, cooler fires – such as provided through a prescribed fire program – “can increase the retention of soil carbon through the formation of charcoal and soil aggregates that protect from decomposition.”¹

¹ Adam F. A. Pellegrini, Jennifer Harden, Katerina Georgiou, Kyle S. Hemes, Avni Malhotra, Connor J. Nolan, Robert B. Jackson. **Fire effects on the persistence of soil organic matter and long-term carbon storage.** *Nature Geoscience*, 2021; DOI: [10.1038/s41561-021-00867-1](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-021-00867-1)