**Project Name:**  Butte County CWPP Funding and Implementation Project

Project Tracking Number: 17-FP-BTU-0044

**Project Description Summary:** Please provide a paragraph summarizing proposed project including the location, habitable structures, acres treated, etc.

The *Butte County CWPP Funding and Implementation Project* will further accelerate improvements to fire prevention efforts in Butte County by strategically addressing the pre-fire strategies identified in the CAL FIRE Butte Unit Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The project planning area is scattered with homes and communities intermixed amongst woodland fuels resulting in a serious Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Problem. This project will facilitate the development of a collaborative planning process, implement an extensive local and watershed scale data program, develop interactive maps, and decision support tools and workspaces to enhance stakeholder engagement, tactically implement fire prevention efforts, and provide data, information, and tools to build capacity, secure and leverage funding, and develop a strategic planning process to fund and implement the Butte County CWPP.

# Scope of Work

**Section 2: Planning Projects**

1. **Describe the geographic scope of the project, including the communities that will benefit, and an estimate of the number of structures within the project area.**

Butte County is located on the eastern side of the Sacramento River Watershed, encompasses over 1.1 million acres, and is home to more than 220,000 people. The foothills and mountainous region of the County are scattered with homes and communities intermixed amongst woodland fuels creating a serious WUI problem. In these areas, wildland fire once burned only vegetation but now burns homes as well. This planning effort will provide a practical and flexible approach to help communities improve their resilience by setting priorities and allocating resources to implement the recommendations identified by the CWPP. The Butte County CWPP Funding and Implementation project will advance a countywide community effort to develop a strategic planning process for 11 planning areas, implement an extensive data program, interactive maps, and decision support tools to enhance collaborative engagement, strategically implement fuels reduction and fire management projects, and provide data, information, and tools to inform landscape level planning and fire prevention efforts throughout Butte County.

1. **Describe how the project will assess the risks to residents and structures in the WUI and prioritize projects to reduce this risk over time.**

Understanding what is happening in our forests is fundamental to responsibly managing them. The management of wildfire risks begins with an assessment of the probability of a wildfire event and the susceptibility of highly valued resources and assets to wildfire. Strategic risk management in the wildfire context involves identifying and assessing many complicating factors including WUI conditions, access, management, land ownership, economics, treatment types, sociopolitical expectations, etc. Collectively, these factors present challenges to wildfire risk mitigation. This project will support, build capacity and advance the capability of Butte County stakeholders to routinely access these factors and utilize data and information for operational and institutional decision-making. The project will provide stakeholders with a prioritization framework developed collaboratively by the CWPP, a comprehensive data program, a ‘Common Operating Picture’ and web based decision support tool with critical data as well as fire prevention activities including risk mitigation options like wildfire management objectives, cost, effectiveness, and the appropriate identification of roles and responsibility. These activities combined will uniquely identify risk to residents and structures at the county scale.

I would add something here about how to interface and plan with the WUI community… i.e. The CWPP and local stakeholder groups have established communication channels to interface and communicate with WUI affected areas. The program plans to invest in significant outreach and education to affected stakeholders that will have the opportunity to learn about the project areas through interactive maps (risk assessment, planning areas, treatment types etc), in local meetings and …

(\*\*\* I would move this out of here and focus on prioritization and WUI)Deciding where to spend limited resources is a major challenge for forest managers. According to a recent report by the Legislative Analyst’s Office on Improving California Forest and Watershed Management, the extent of degraded forest conditions and the costs associated with making improvements is so massive and expensive that the state will have to undertake projects on an incremental basis. This means that the state will need to develop a clear plan for prioritizing uses of funding to maximize benefits. Integrated planning is necessary to leverage limited resources and maximize results. This project will help forest managers collect, organize and understand data, make data and information available for collaborative planning activity, develop goals, assess current and future conditions, produce sustainable management plans for forest properties, and develop a decision support tool that can be used throughout the County to streamline the planning process and increase the pace and scale of fire prevention efforts. The development and use of the decision support tool will improve collaboration, data accessibility and assessment, and project ranking and prioritization that are key elements of landscape level fire prevention planning and implementation.

1. **Does the proposed plan add or build upon previous wildfire prevention planning efforts in the general project area?**

In August 2017, the Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) to work together to improve the health and safety of Butte County’s forested watersheds through the development and implementation of a collaborative landscape level planning and restoration effort.The BCFSC recognized that forest restoration and management should be implemented comprehensively at the landscape scale to be effective. The CWPP establishes a framework for reducing the risks associated with wildfire but the County does not have the organizational capacity to implement fire prevention efforts at the pace and scale necessary to achieve local, state, and federal targets. Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive planning effort, the BCFSC established a CWPP Workgroup and began developing a landscape level planning and prioritization effort in the fall of 2015. This effort builds on the CWPP to create a more robust collaborative planning process to address the urgency and challenges facing our forests.

(\*\* Is this referring to this grant?) This landscape scale fire prevention planning effort will integrate other planning and assessment documents and align community priorities and resources with resiliency goals. SRWP will work closely with the BCFSC, CWPP Workgroup and key stakeholders to establish a comprehensive and open data program that will gather and digitize data and information including plans, projects, programs, assessments, CEQA, GIS layers, Monitoring data, remote sensing data and maps and combine them with tools to integrate the findings and recommendations of the CWPP prioritization framework with other plans, programs and projects including:

* Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
* County and City general and master plans
* County and City emergency operations plans
* County and City ordinances
* Integrated Regional Water Management Plans
* Flood/stormwater management/master plans
* Capital improvement plans and budgets
* Other plans, regulations, and practices with a fire prevention focus

This strategic planning effort and decision support tool will build upon the existing efforts of the Sacramento River Watershed Data Portal (SRW Data Portal) to create collaborative web based workspaces[[1]](#footnote-1) (one for each of the 11 planning areas, county view and watershed view) and implement a decision framework that is needed to support and implement hazardous fuels reduction projects across the County. The SRW Data Portal is the current data clearing house for extensive data and information in the SRW. The project has widespread support from a long list of stakeholders in the Sacramento River Watershed. The SRW Data Portal contains features and tools to encourage collaboration and communication, solicitation of public comments and review of documents, catalogs for data and document management, map tools for GIS analysis, and comprehensive reporting dashboard capabilities to combine data and documents into living fire management plans.

1. Identify a diverse group of key stakeholders, including local, state, and federal officials where appropriate, to collaborate with during the planning process. Discuss how the project proponent plans to engage with these targeted stakeholders.

The successful implementation of the Butte County CWPP requires the cooperation and coordination of various agencies, community groups, and individual landowners. The CWPP Workgroup represents a diverse group of local stakeholders represented by timber industry, conservation groups, tribal government, elected officials, and local, state and federal land managers working together to strategically accelerate landscape-level forest restoration in Butte County. CWPP meetings provide a forum for landowners and managers to come together to discuss current and proposed forest management efforts in the region.

A key element in the process of prioritizing projects for landscape-level planning is gathering information from stakeholders not available as datasets or GIS and ground-truthing geospatial analysis. We are already working and will continue to work closely with the CWPP Workgroup and other key stakeholders to gather and digitize key information and data including GIS layers and maps, assessment data, plans, projects, and programs and combine them with tools for stakeholders to aggregate, contribute, store, analyze, share and communicate important information about their region. The interactive Decision Support Tool provides a unique approach to fire prevention planning and implementation and a new test case for bringing together fire prevention planning and landscape level management and restoration for efficiency, collaboration and prioritization.

SRWP’s enduring relationships are essential for project success. SRWP has a successful history of building and sustaining collaborative watershed management efforts. SRWP will work closely with the BCFSC to present information and updates to the CWPP Workgroup and key stakeholders via face-to-face meetings, presentations, conference calls, and email correspondence and collect feedback for iterative development.

1. Describe the **pathways for community involvement that will be incorporated in the planning process**.

Community engaged learning and research is one of the main pathways for community involvement encompassed in the project’s planning process. This project will connect data and information to community identified concerns to enrich knowledge and inform responses to issues. The project will organize and involve communities in fire prevention efforts via workshops, social media, \*\*, \*\* and other forms of targeted education and outreach to influence and support collective action. The SRWP and BCFSC will work closely with the CWPP and key stakeholders to identify, solicit and secure funding and other resources to contribute to \*\*

# Relationship to Strategic Plans

Does the proposed project support the goals and objectives of the California Strategic Fire Plan, the local CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plan, a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), County Fire Plan, or other long term planning document?

In addition to the Butte County CWPP, the proposed project is in conformance with the Butte County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The LHMP identifies wildfires as being of high significance with critical magnitude and severity. The County has had three disaster declarations related to wildfire. The LHMP further describes the wildfire risks to the County as having a likelihood of frequency occurrence as highly likely and states that “high fuel loads in the planning area, along with geographical and topographical features, create the potential for both natural and human-caused fires that can result in loss of life and property.” The mitigation strategy for wildfires is the first goal of the LHMP and states that “minimizing risk and vulnerability of the community to hazards and reduced damages and protect lives, properties and public health in Butte County” is a priority.

This project advances numerous goals and objectives identified in the North Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NSV IRWMP) by implementing healthy forest/foothill management activities that improve forested watersheds, enhancing communication and coordination among federal, state, Tribal, and local governments, and other stakeholders, and by pursuing funding opportunities to implement fire prevention programs and projects consistent with the NSV IRWMP. The project also advances numerous goals and objectives identified in the Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (UFR IRWMP) by reducing potential for catastrophic wildland fires in the Region, working to balance the needs of forest health, habitat preservation, fuels reduction, forest fire prevention, and economic activity in the Upper Feather River Region, building communication and collaboration among water resources stakeholders in the Region, improving coordination of land use and water resources planning, and enhancing public awareness and understanding of fire management issues and needs.

# 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>
2. Describe the geographic proximity of the project to structures at risk to damage from wildfire in the WUI.

The risk to human life and structures throughout the County is significant, as evident by the recent Ponderosa Fire in January of 2018 that burned approximately 4,000 acres and destroyed 54 structures. The threat from wildfires has grown in recent years due to overcrowded, unmanaged forests and widespread tree mortality. This has created an abundance of hazardous fuels in the form of flammable vegetation and dead woody materials. There is an urgent need to increase the number of hazardous fuels reduction programs within these communities, especially given the buildup of dead woody materials. Thirty-one communities within Butte County have been recognized as communities at risk. The project will benefit the at-risk communities within the Wildland Urban Interface areas of eastern Butte County by strategically planning and implementing fire prevention programs and projects including fuel breaks, defensible space, evacuation plans, and education and outreach efforts.

# 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?

This project will engage key watershed stakeholders as a vehicle to design, create, advertise and maintain the web portal. The collective knowledge of the CWPP and other key stakeholders will be applied to articulate management questions, access relevant information, and develop a web portal that provides the best available insight about conditions in the Sacramento River Watershed. Each of the individuals listed here will participate in the project by contributing knowledge and information to assist in the development of the planning process and tool to inform fire prevention planning and project implementation throughout Butte County and will provide letters of support upon request. The estimated match provided by the participants below is $\*\*.

* *Calli-Jane DeAnda, Butte County Fire Safe Council*
* *Chip Fowler, CAL FIRE*
* *Gus Boston, CAL FIRE*
* *David Hawks, CAL FIRE*
* *Jason Miller, USFS*
* *Kathy Martinez, PG&E*
* *Don Hankins, California Indian Water Commission*
* *Eli Goodsell, CSU, Chico Ecological Reserves*
* *Cindi Dunsmoor, Butte County Office of Emergency Management*
* *Claudia Stuart, Butte County Department of Development Services*
* *Paul Gosselin, North Sacramento Valley IRWMP*
* *Uma Hinman, Upper Feather River IRWMP*
* *Robin Lee, Forbestown Ridge Fire Safe Council*
* *Marlene Funes, Forest Ranch Fire Safe Council*
* *Phil John, Paradise Ridge Fire Safe Council*
* *Ruben Mora, State Water Resources Control Board*
* *Steve Roberts, Sierra Pacific Industries*
* *Tim Keesey, Butte County Resource Conservation District*

1. 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.

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1. Describe any plans to maintain the project after the grant period has ended.

The SRWP in cooperation with the CWPP workgroup and the BCFSC will maintain and manage the Decision Support Tool to ensure its accurateness and usefulness. The Decision Support Tool will be developed within the SRW Data Portal that is sanctioned and supported by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the California Water Quality Monitoring Council (CWQMC). SB 1070 established the California Water Quality Monitoring Council within the State Water Resources Control Board and charged it with improving the coordination, integration, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of watershed health monitoring and assessment. The CWQMC sanctions the creation and utilization of regional portals to aggregate, display and share data and information. The SRW Data Portal builds on the portal platform developed for managing data and information throughout California and is an essential part of the state’s data infrastructure, safeguarding its long-term relevance.

This project is designed to support the long-term implementation of strategic landscape scale fuels reduction projects and programs. In addition to strategically planning and implementing programs and projects, the CWPP Workgroup will utilize the process and decision support tool to identify, develop and secure funding opportunities and resources to sustain the collaborative, decision support tool, and fire prevention efforts. The Decision Support Tool is built on the flexible and highly adaptable OPENNRM framework, which allows for customizable data dashboards and project workspaces. As the Decision Support Tool is further developed, specialized dashboards and tools will be developed to address specific fire prevention and forest health restoration planning needs. The flexibility of the SRW Data Portal ensures that the Decision Support Tool can be regularly adapted to improve its usefulness and meet the demands of the users. This project will help to identify opportunities for investment and develop funding mechanisms to continue and maintain the work over time.

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

Thanks to efforts by CAL FIRE, the USFS and Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), there is a renewed awareness of the need for more efficient and larger landscape planning processes and increased support for the development of coordinated, integrated, collaborative efforts to improve fire prevention planning an implementation. Strategically planning and implementing restoration efforts across the landscape can significantly reduce the spread rate of a large fire and increase the range of community benefits. Numerous assessments of the challenges, needs, and opportunities for advancing strategically planned landscape level fire prevention efforts identify accessible data and information as a dominant need. The project \*\*

# Project Implementation

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

January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2020

1. Verify the expected timeframes to complete the project will fall under the

March 15, 2022 deadline.

The project will be completed no later than December 31, 2020.

1. Describe the milestones that will be used to measure the progress of the project.

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1. Describe measurable outcomes (i.e. project deliverables) that will be used to measure the project’s success.

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

The Planning Tool will further support project development and permitting by providing a CEQA Assist workspace. This workspace will host all GIS and environmental data necessary for filing a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration (e.g. USFWS critical habitat, CDFW special status species critical habitat, protected wetlands, FMMP important farmland, FEMA 100 year flooding, CalFish anadromous fish habitat, etc. This aggregation of data will simplify the CEQA process, allowing users to increase organizational capacity. The Planning Tool will support compliance with the Butte County Oak Woodland Mitigation Ordinance, by providing high-resolution oak woodland vegetation layers and accurate canopy cover estimates using remotely sensed imagery. Users will be able to create their own project tracking workspace. This workspace will serve as a repository for relevant planning and environmental assessment documents, host interactive maps with project specific GIS layers, and provide a public outreach page with information on project status and success.

# 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.

SRWP has a proven history of building successful partnerships to address watershed issues and we are consistently building and expanding our working relationships to promote investment in the Watershed. SRWP has a successful track record of managing projects and developing effective efforts to improve the health of the watershed since 1996, including:

* $95K awarded by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to develop an interactive presentation and display of landscape level forest health and water quality assessment/planning for protection of the Battle Creek Watershed in the Sacramento River Watershed Data Portal.
* $685K Prop 1 funded project awarded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to use forest thinning and low intensity prescribed fire to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, control invasive species, and restore habitat in Butte and Chico Creek Watersheds;
* $846K Prop 50 funded project awarded by the State Water Resources Control Board to provide technical assistance to support community-based watershed management.
* $246K Statewide Watershed Program Watershed Coordinator Grant funded project awarded by the Department of Conservation to \*\*.

We coordinate events, workshops, and meetings featuring updates on statewide and regional topics and continue to maintain, redesign, and update the SRWP website that includes information and resources on current issues and topics, a Watershed News-Twitter and Facebook feed, and A Roadmap to Watershed Management. SRWP has been monitoring water quality and coordinating monitoring efforts in the Sacramento River and its major tributaries since 1998. We support research and facilitate information exchange to address water quality issues in the watershed and in 2015 we partnered with the SWRCB and 34 North to develop a web-based portal customized for the Sacramento River Watershed. The Sacramento River Watershed Data Portal (SRW Data Portal) serves an information hub and a foundation for collaborative efforts connecting our partners to data, funding, and projects.

In 2014, state and federal agencies and officials formally acknowledged the need to increase the use of prescribed fire and the pace and scale of science-based ecological restoration. This led to the development of programs and initiatives focused on forest health and enhanced watershed funding and opened the door for SRWP to focus on fuels and fire management as a nexus to watershed health. We are currently working with stakeholders throughout the watershed to \*\*. This project and planning effort are part of SRWP’s long-term goal to improve watershed health by developing cooperative, cross-boundary projects in the Sacramento River Watershed that are compatible with larger collaborative watershed management efforts.

1. 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 SRWP Executive Director, Holly Jorgensen, will lead the project and provide administrative and fiscal oversight including managing the grant and contracts, tracking budgets, coordinating and communicating with the project team and subcontractors, and reporting and invoicing and will facilitate stakeholder involvement including education and outreach activities. Holly joined SRWP in November 2011 and has managed the organization’s programs, projects, and activities. Holly has more than 15 years of project management experience and works closely with the organization’s bookkeeper to ensure fiscal responsibility and compliance.

# 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.

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.
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.
3. Is the total project cost appropriate for the size, scope, and anticipated benefit of the project?
4. Identify all Indirect Costs and describe why they are necessary for a successful project implementation. Administrative expenses to be paid by the Fire Prevention Grants must be less than 12% of the total grant request (excluding equipment).
5. Explain each object category in detail and how that would support meeting the grant objectives.

# 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.

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

Managing forests in California to be healthy, resilient net sinks of carbon is a vital part of California’s climate change policy. The project will enhance the resilience of and potential for carbon sequestration on lands by strategically planning management and restoration, and reduce GHG and black carbon emissions from wildfire and management activities.

1. Is the project located in a Low-Income or Disadvantaged Community? If not, does the project benefit those communities. Please explain.
2. What are the expected co-benefits of the project/activity (i.e. environmental, public health and safety, and climate resiliency)?
3. When are the Greenhouse Gas emissions and/or co-benefits expected to occur and how will they be maintained?

1. A workspace is defined as a digital web-based chapters that partitions data and information based on the planning needs of a project area, planning area or region. The data is portable and can be moved around. Chapters contain GIS, maps, articles, resource materials, related documents, images, data, education and outreach. Users access through and interactive map of planning areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)