

Applying Organization

Eel River Recovery Project

Project Title

Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project

Brief Project Description

Implement forest health treatments on 818 acres of non-industrial private and tribal forestland in the Tenmile Creek watershed near Laytonville, CA. Objectives include reducing fuel loading, oak woodland restoration, enhancing soil moisture and fertility, restoring native grasses and plants, restoring hydrologic function and job creation. Thinning, and prescribed fire will promote ecosystem health and carbon storage while protecting rural communities.

Project Desired Start Date

07/01/2023

Estimated Project Completion Date

03/31/2028

Grant Funding Requested

\$5,908,568.00

Total Project Cost

\$5,908,568.00

Please describe project background and statement of need

The Eel River Recovery Project has been funded to work with Tenmile Creek watershed residents by various grants since 2018 on erosion control, water conservation, riparian restoration and forest health. Studies have shown that over-stocked forests are increasing risk of high intensity fire, decreased biodiversity, and decreased stream base flows. Without active stewardship, conditions will not improve. The Laytonville area within this basin is designated as low income and forest health jobs could provide a much needed source of employment and promote community prosperity. Cessation of Native American use of controlled burns has led to over-stocking and unacceptable fire risk and use of low intensity fire needs to be re-introduced after fuel loads are reduced. We will be drawing on the TEK of the Cahto Tribe to restore forest and landscape health on 818 acres, including the Laytonville Rancheria. ERRP is pursuing this grant with the local workforce that is helping diagnose forest health problems, craft the prescriptions, and deploy personnel to implement the project we are proposing. The benefits of the project include improved community fire and water security, climate change resilience, increased flows for salmon and steelhead, and sequestration of carbon to help offset climate change. Additional landowners will be covered under CalVTP Phase II planning.

Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project - Scope of Work

There are two main categories of work to be performed because of ownership: Plan A (private non-industrial lands) composed of 13 cooperating landowners and Plan B comprised of the Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria because the latter is designated federal land (FRA) and subject to different environmental regulations. Projects span landowner and boundaries to optimize landscape scale forest health restoration effectiveness. We have a strong focus on local workforce development and utilization to enhance local socio-economic benefits and reinforce community involvement in restoration while focusing on forest health techniques to optimize efficiency and ecological benefits.

Environmental Permitting: We will use the CalVTP PEIR for the Project because most acres to be treated fall within the previously defined Treatable Landscape areas and within the SRA. We are also proposing to expand the CalVTP coverage to include additional areas that may be part of a Phase II implementation for permitting only. There may be need for a PSA addendum or supplemental to include the 205 acres of Tribal lands that are FRA (not fee land). While the SRA Treatable Landscape needs to be a substantial part of the Project LRA, Tribal land can be added with a PSA addendum. The consulting team tasked with permitting will be led by BBW and Associates (BBWA) and include Stillwater Sciences and Anchor QEA. All permitting will be completed by the end of Year-1.

Locations to Be Treated: Areas to be treated are spread throughout the Tenmile Creek watershed as shown on maps uploaded with this application. The Cahto Tribe Rancheria encompasses 205 acres and has significant number of dead and dying trees on a densely forested landscape, ERRP is also binding together numerous small land owners into joint planning units because it is difficult for these owners to access forest health grants individually. Two 10-acre parcels comprise the Cahto Trail project area, which is very near Laytonville. Just north and west of Laytonville is the West Tenmile project area, where 10 Tenmile Creek riparian landowners are collaborating to make their community fire safe. The Triple Creek Ranch on the east side of the watershed is 160 acres, but 120 is grassland and 20 acres treated prior, so work on the remaining 20 acres will complete needed work. The Vassar property has high value for creation of a shaded fuel break that could help stop the spread of fire into the lower Tenmile Creek watershed from Highway 101 below Rattlesnake grade. A shaded fuel break will also extend from the southwestern part of the Vassar property to the Lower Tenmile Creek project area, where another shaded fuel break will follow lines of defense set up by CAL FIRE during the Wilderness Lodge Fire. Many of the project areas have mature white and black oak stands that may be covered by Oak Woodland Exemptions we will apply for so that will allow work to proceed in Year-1.

Treatment Methods: To achieve desired landscape conditions, we will utilize a diverse mix of management actions that follow CAL FIRE standards that include the following. 1) Thinning high density forest stands thus creating shaded fuel breaks in strategic locations. Shaded fuel breaks will increase canopy height from the forest floor to the base of tree crowns by pruning branches, reduce the amount of woody debris directly below trees, and remove small trees and brush that could act as ladder fuels. 2) Prescribed fire use will include pile burning implemented cooperatively by multiple landowners, the Cahto Tribe and local organizations through the use of cooperative agreements and contracts. Controlled fire will be applied for primary fuels reduction and as a maintenance tool. 3) Oak woodlands restoration is a major Project emphasis to protect and enhance black oak and white oak stands that are currently being overtopped and crowded out by young conifers, and also stressed by the dense growth of shrubs and small bay trees. 4) Expanding meadow openings at the interface between grasslands and forest lands to improve wildlife habitat and decrease ladder fuels

to prevent grass fires from spreading into the forest. 5). Biomass material generated from the Project will be used in headwater swales to slow, spread and sink water, and along slope contours to enhance soil moisture and fertility.

Fuel Reduction Treatments: 1) Saplings and seedlings should be removed adjacent to co-dominant and dominant trees to allow for additional growing space. 2) Trees with the most desirable phenotypes will be retained, i.e. full crowns, fast growing, and disease-free. 3) Trees preferred for removal will be those exhibiting signs of poor growth or containing disease. 4) Dense shrub cover will be broken up for purposes of removing fuel continuity. 5) In open areas, residual trees will be left for stocking, with a preference for retaining oak species. 6) Residual trees will be pruned by lopping low branches up to a minimum height of 8' (above the level of slash on the uphill side of the tree). 7) All slash produced (branches, limbs, and treatment debris less than four inches in diameter) will be treated with the following methods. A) Chip or masticate adjacent to roads and other accessible portions of the treatment areas. Equipment includes power chippers whereby material would be hand fed and chips would be blown into the forest understory. Chippers have little or no potential to impact cultural resources. Mastication involves reducing the size of forest vegetation and downed material by grinding shredding or chopping material and leaving it on-site as mulch. B) Pile and burn: slash piles for burning should be located away from residual trees and structures. C) Pile and burn operations would occur where vehicle access is available along existing ranch roads utilizing existing openings and compacted ground as feasible. D) Piles may be created by mechanized equipment such as crawler tractors equipped with a brush rake, or excavators equipped with a grapple or by hand. E) Lop and scatter: lopping is the severing and spreading of slash so that no part of it remains more than 18 inches above the ground. Lop and scatter will be implemented by hand crews on steeper slopes and areas with limited access where chipping, mastication, and burning piles is not feasible.

Prescribed Fire: This tool will be applied across stands to reduce ladder fuels and enhance individual stem and stand resilience. All prescribed burning will be completed under prescribed fire burn plans with a Smoke Management Plan for the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District and local CAL FIRE unit permits. Burn units are to be subdivided by natural features on the landscape (roads, watercourses, etc.) to facilitate control efforts and manage smoke impacts based on burn day smoke dispersion. Broadcast burning and pile burning will be implemented during appropriate environmental conditions that will allow us to meet our resource objectives as per the burn plan. Burn prescriptions aim to reduce surface fuel loading 25-85% and understory woody vegetative cover by 15-65% from pre-burn levels.

Project Deliverables and Timeline: The Project deliverables and time line are included in the Work Plan and Project Workbook, but in sum, 818 acres of private and tribal land will be treated improve forest health and to maximize ecological benefits by the end of the contract in March 2028. Work will proceed in phases, starting with fuels reduction where wood waste would be lopped and scattered or piled for burning or preparation for later use such as soil amendment. A second entry would be to burn piles and/or use wood waste in headwater swales and/or on-contour wood compost "key-line" structures. Larger diameter conifers competing with oak trees will be removed in the third and fourth years. Throughout the Project and at the end, controlled fire will be utilized, and its use will continue after the grant through landowner stewardship.

Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project (47453003) Map Guide

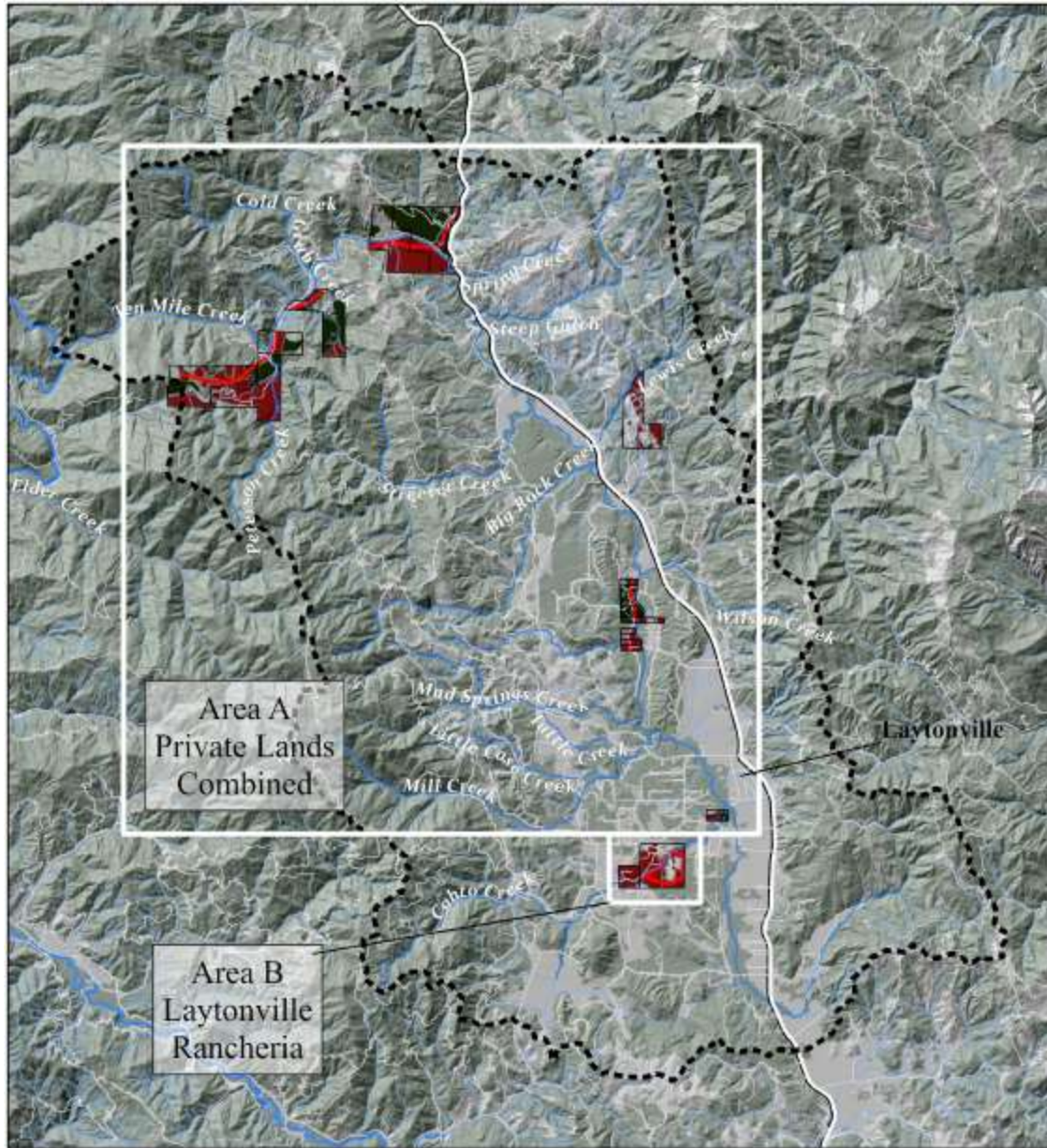
Map 1: Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project Implementation Parcels with Treatments.

Map 2: Lower Tenmile and Vassar Project Area Controlled Burn Map and Oak Woodlands Restoration Map.

Map 4: Project Implementation Parcels and for Planning-Only Parcels Included for the Purpose of VTP CEQA coverage and Phase II



Forest Health Field Trip at Cahto Creek project area on 1/14/23 with the Mueller Family at right, who own one of the parcels, and the ERRP forest health team. The Mueller's have expressed interest in volunteering to participate in stewardship after Project completion.



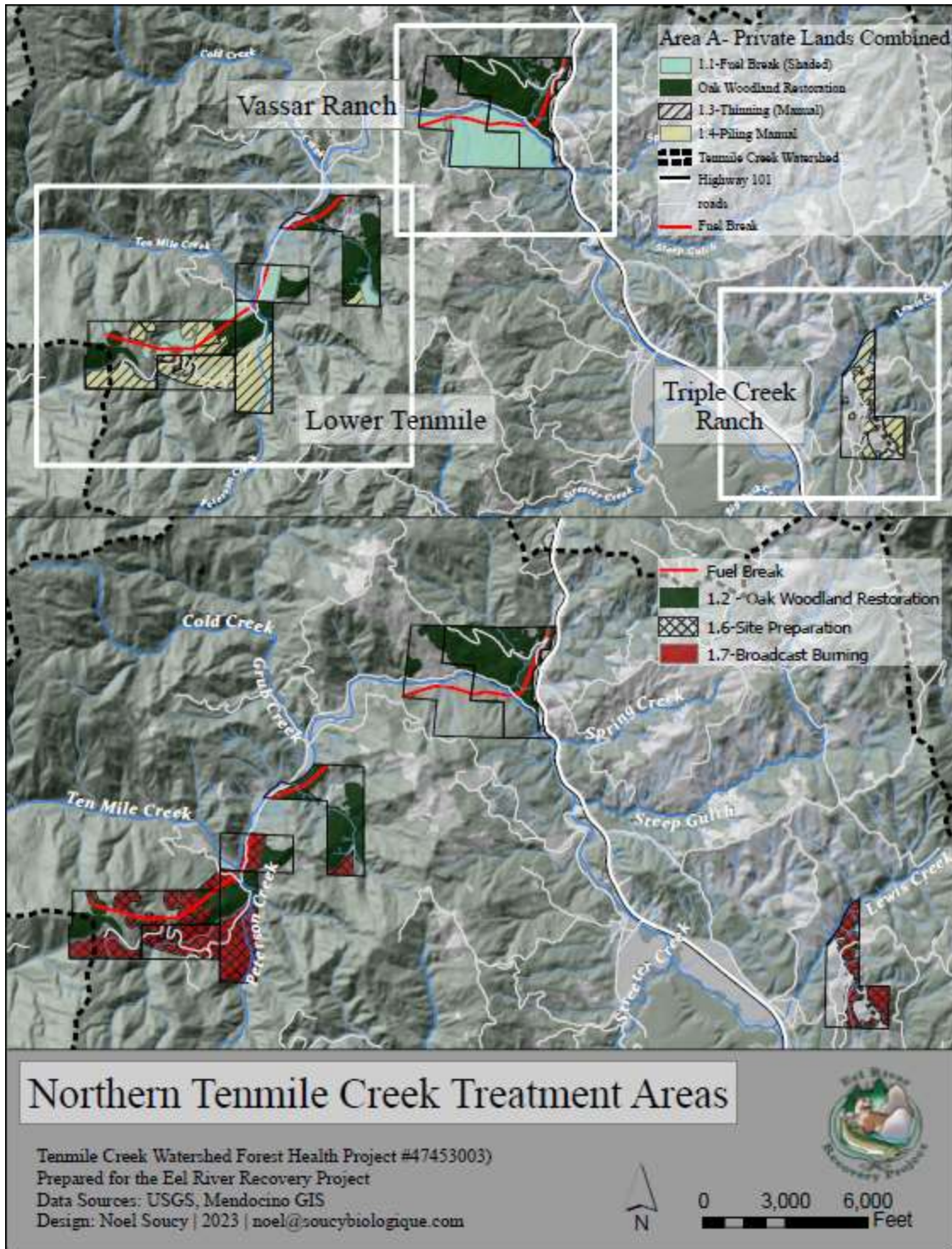
Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project (#47453003)

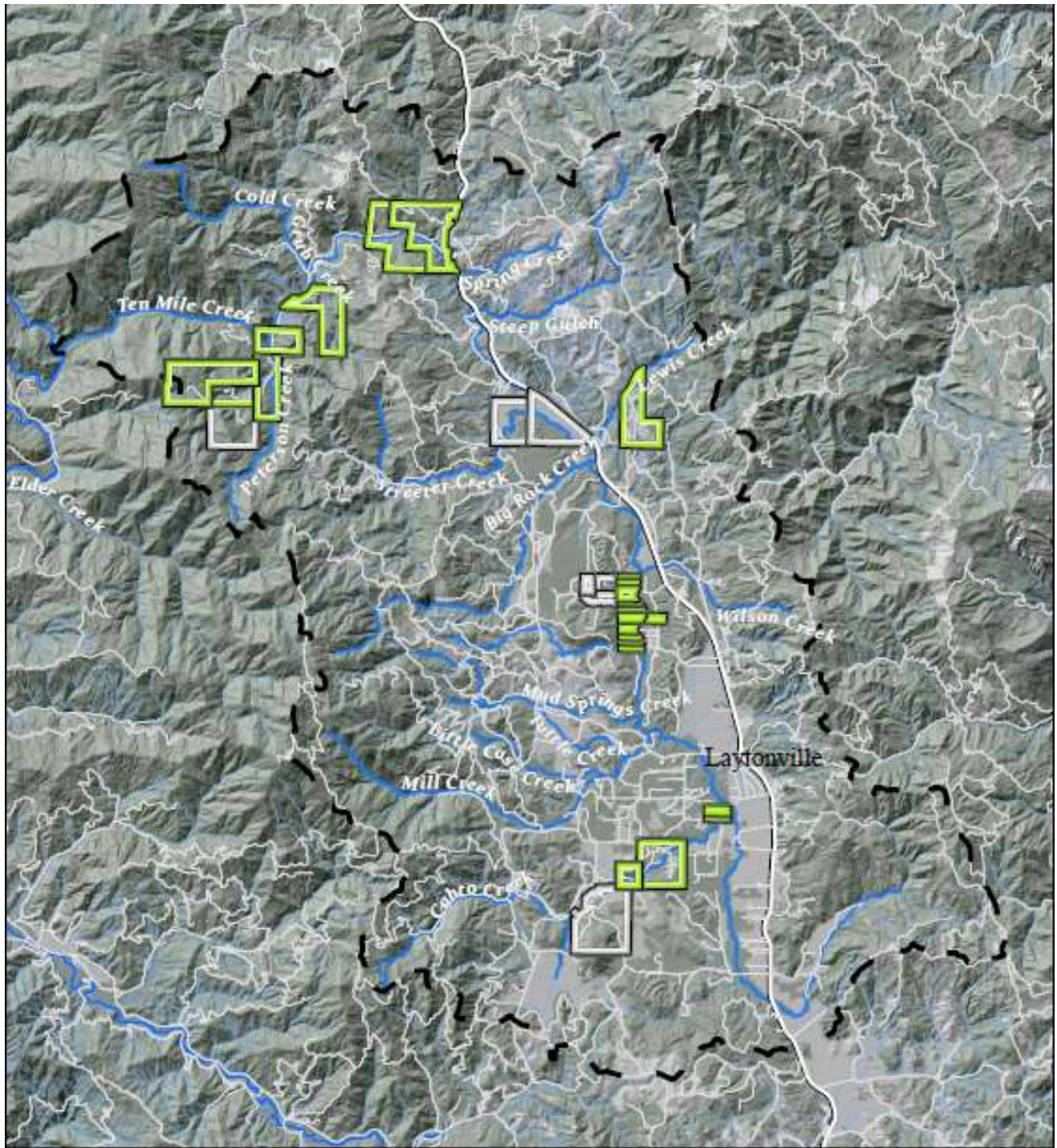
Phase I- Forest Health Implementation Areas 2023-2029
 Prepared for the Eel River Recovery Project
 Data Sources: USGS, FRAP, Mendocino GIS
 Design: Noel Soucy | 2023 | noel@soucybiogeospice.com

Scale: 1:95,000

-  Tenmile Creek Watershed
-  Oak Woodland Restoration
-  All other treatments combined
-  Fuel Break
-  Highway 101
-  roads












Tennile FHMP Planning and Implementation Parcels

Project ID: 47453063
 Phase I- Forest Health Implementation Areas 2023-2029
 Phase II- Expanded Cal VTP Planning CEQA Analysis Areas
 Prepared for the Eel River Recovery Project
 Data Sources: USGS, Mendocino GIS
 Design: Noel Souzy | 2023

Scale: 1:95,000

-  Tennile Creek Watershed Boundary
-  Phase I Implementation parcels
-  Phase II Planning parcels
-  Highway 101
-  roads



Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project Budget Narrative

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) has managed numerous grants and contracts, and services for project management and oversight are in our administrative budget, but there is also a substantial amount being paid to the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) as a subcontractor for administration and fiscal services. Given the MCRCD's previous experience managing large CAL FIRE budgets of similar size to that being requested, they will act as the fiscal agent in charge of the account specifically set up to receive CAL FIRE advance payments and will be disbursing payments to contractors. ERRP will screen all invoices from sub-contractors, check for accuracy and to make sure that work has been performed. Contractor Will Emerson will similarly check private contractor invoices and with the MCRCD forestry staff to make sure that work has been performed. Thus, we have established fiscal controls to make sure that performance is insured.

The majority of the budget is allocated for forest health workers who will be recruited from northern Mendocino County and trained and equipped to perform the work, including ecological restoration. Those helping put the prescriptions and budget estimates together for this project demonstrated their capacity to perform through similar work in 2022 for the Redwood Forest Foundation on the Usal Forest under a MCRCD CAL FIRE CCI grant. They arrived at the prescriptions and cost based on field experience and through consultation with numerous other parties involved in successful forest health projects in the region. All areas to be treated were visited and forest stand conditions recorded in the Avenza field mapping application and used to create maps to generate treatment acres and costs. The cost per acre have some additions based on contingencies, such as inflation, and unknowns such as permitting and weather windows that allow use of controlled fire. The labor force was organized under the Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance (NEMERA) Workforce Committee and utilized the private firm Elk Ridge Landscaping, which will also be employing the labor force for this project.

Other contract services in the budget involve professionals in various fields who will help carry out tasks. The BBW and Associates (BBWA) led team that includes Stillwater Sciences and Anchor QEA, will assist with CEQA (CalVTP), permitting, and recruitment of project sub-contractors that will assist in procuring permits (botanical, archaeological and biological surveys). RPF Heather Morrison of Salix Associates will be retained as a sub-contractor to secure CAL FIRE Oak Woodland Exemptions or other types of exemptions in Year-1 of the Project to allow work to begin in some areas before CEQA completion. She will perform other services that require an RPF as necessary. GIS Specialist Noel Soucy of Soucy Biologique created the maps being submitted with this application and will continue to provide mapping services throughout the CAL FIRE contract. Steve Brown has been doing forest health work on his land in the lower Tenmile Creek watershed for over 30 years and he knows all the landowners involved in the Project and can be a liaison; can also assist with field checks on forest health work quality, and also assist with coordination of burning activities. Burn boss Scott Steinbring of Torchbearr will help create the burn plan for the Project and train folks to continue local burning into the future. Because of his extensive experience in guiding forest and grassland health in the Mattole River watershed, Hugh McGee of Native Ecosystems will be retained to assist with oversight and Phase II planning for properties included in this Project for VTP CEQA coverage only. Eric Lassotovich has experience in using forest health derived woody material for rebuilding soil moisture and fertility and will advise crews of opportunities at various locations. There is a line item in the budget for coordination with the Cahto Tribe,

including on cultural issues. This is needed because forest health work that will be conducted on their Rancheria, and to communicate with the Tribe in the event that we discover artifacts during the Project to understand their wishes for protection of sites.

Outreach is an important part of the Project and is justified in order to keep the public informed about our progress and activities such as controlled burns, and to widen support for forest health in the Tenmile Creek watershed. Similar to forest health workers, local workers will be hired for outreach jobs. Outreach involves being in constant touch with participating landowners about work schedules, especially when crews are about to be deployed. It is anticipated that outreach contractors can also assist with publicizing the notices about opportunities for forest health jobs, serving as a point of contact for potential workers, keeping a database that includes those interested and contact information, and scheduling appointments for interviews by Elk Ridge Landscaping.

Please describe how the project will utilize a diverse mix of management actions that follow industry standards, are appropriate activities for the project landscape, and how they combine or connect to promote forest health at a landscape scale.

This project will utilize forest improvement treatment actions appropriate to the region that achieve multiple objectives including reduced wildfire risk and improved ecosystem function. Tree thinning will reduce the fuel load and enhance the quality of trees and their ability to sequester and store greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The project is of a sufficient landscape-scale approach to have lasting benefits. Management actions using industry standards for forest thinning, oak woodland restoration, prescribed fire, cultural fire and ecosystem restoration use specifications developed for North Coast forest lands and common to CFIP, EQIP, VMP, CalVTP forest improvement. Practices will adhere to permit and Standard Protection Measures appropriate to this eco-region. As the project area borders BLM lands, tribal lands and is situated in a watershed that has had significant investments in fish and wildlife habitat improvement, it is complementary to those previous actions. The result of the project implementation will be increased protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system for the benefit of present and future generations.

Please describe the proposed measures to avoid adverse impacts to soil health and fish, wildlife and native plant resources in project design and development.

The forest workers on this project will not just be clearing fuels, but also working on promoting multiple ecological benefits. A key element is not introducing any non-native species or pathogens to the properties where implementation will take place and a protocol for washing vehicles, equipment and clothing will be established to obtain that objective. Past land use activities have had the unintended consequence of compacting soils, which can cripple soil moisture holding capacity and site productivity. In releasing oak woodlands through conifer thinning and other competing vegetation, food resources for wildlife will greatly increase as oaks recover and put out more acorns. Forest health crews will also increase soil moisture through use of woody materials in headwater swales with no bed or banks to slow the flow of water off the land and promote infiltration. As the wood breaks down, it will be colonized by mushroom mycelia that will spread into adjacent forest soils helping plants by supplying moisture and nutrients in a symbiotic relationship. Similarly, slash and wood chips will be used in some project areas to create woody compost piles on that follow hillslope contours and also enhance soil moisture and nutrients and provide a seed bed for native plants. trees from the projects will

be donated for use in in local fish habitat enhancement projects that would also improve stream covered by articulated separate grant(s). Native grass restoration, at the grassland oak woodland interface will be promoted by using jackpots of fuels thinned from the forest floor and edge to create favorable conditions for native grass seed success.

Please describe the landowner's commitment to develop or maintain a resilient forest of diverse age, size, and species class within the boundaries of the project.

All participating landowners in this project for both implementation and CEQA planning have restoring the health of their forests, grasslands and watershed as their prime motivation for participation. None have any plans for conversion, subdivision or even age mgmt. in the future, which improves long-term chances of project success. All landowners have expressed receptivity to participating in long-term cooperative stewardship activities with their neighbors, including collaboration through the Mendocino Prescribed Burn Association. The three largest parcels included in our proposal are the Vassar Property (650 acres), Black Oak Ranch (650 ac) and Cahto Creek Ranch (1400 ac), with the latter two only included for CEQA permitting. All three are committed to long term stewardship, including no grazing on the former two properties and light grazing to meet Williamson Act requirements on the Cahto Creek Ranch. Landowners of the Cahto Trail (20 acres), West Tenmile (60 ac), and the Triple Creek Ranch (162 ac) have already begun forest health implementation through initiative, private investment and small grants and all are willing to open up their lands as demonstration sites for public education to help us win further cooperation from their neighbors. The same is true of Lower Tenmile Creek parcel owners, some of whom have decades long forest health projects. They are organizing cooperative long-term stewardship, including setting up rotations of use of low intensity fire to maintain landscape health. Among landowners in Lower Tenmile Creek project area is Vernon "Woods" Wilson, who is the Cahto Tribe cultural officer, forest health practitioner and worker organizer in this project. He has inspired his neighbors with his multi-generational stewardship objectives. This project will also treat land within the Cahto Tribe Reservation (205 ac) and their wish is to restore Harmony in their forest and to maintain it using traditional methods in perpetuity.

Please describe plans for long-term maintenance of forest management goals including the responsible parties, funding, and partner assistance.

Much of the project area to be treated had management intent captured in forest health management plans (FHMP's) developed under a Northcoast Resource Partnership pilot grant. The FHMP's were developed using the CFIP-NRCS template and can be viewed at: <https://www.eelriverrecovery.org/>. A Storymap of the Tenmile Creek Forest Health Pilot can be found at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4006d856bec743e99889d6bf5c039891>. Long-term maintenance and follow up treatments are the responsibility of the individual landowners who have joined together for this project. Follow up work may be funded by cost share grants, forest product revenue, and/or landowner stewardship activities. Cooperation at the neighborhood level may allow coordinated volunteer follow up work, such as the West Tenmile parcels. The desired future condition on all ownerships as stated in the FHMPs and affirmed by all participating landowners includes an uneven aged stand structure favoring larger trees; resilience to wildfire; enhancing carbon stocks; increasing fire protection by reducing fuels; Improving forest health by conducting stand improvement work on oak woodlands; and improving stand conditions by releasing trees from encroachment by brush and small trees to also promote the re-establishment of diverse native plant species. The Tenmile Creek watershed has vast areas of grasslands, including on some of the parcels slated for treatment,

such as the Vassar and Triple Creek Ranch. While grasslands aren't treated under this grant, future resources will be sought dedicated to native grass restoration. The community desires to set up a native grass nursery and to try to bring back native grass species to reduce fire risk, to increase water storage in meadows and grasslands, and to sequester carbon with their deep root systems. Cooperative burning through the Mendocino County Prescribed Burn Association is also envisioned, as long-term management will include periodic low intensity fire.

If applicable, list the project treatment areas that remain buffered from the effects of climate change. Describe the source of climate refugia identification and how proposed treatments will enhance refugia characteristics.

Consensus vegetation refugia are areas retaining suitable climates under both wetter and drier future projections, but they represent only 14.6% of California's natural vegetation. Forest types occupying consensus refugia across large parts of Northern California include 1) Klamath mixed conifer, 2) Sierra mixed conifer and Douglas fir, and 3) grasslands and coastal sage scrub. According to Thorne et al., the project area appears to be within the 80% frequency cutoff under CNRM-CM5 (ie. the warmer and wetter future). Post-treatment, rejuvenated oak woodlands without significant encroaching vegetation or over-topping firs are fire adapted and should serve as refugia for co-evolved wildlife. The oaks are adapted to do well under drought conditions because of their efficient use of water, which will help them be maintained in the face of climate change. The old growth Douglas fir in the BLM Cahto Peak Wilderness and UC Angelo Reserve that abut the Lower Tenmile project area constitute refugia for wildlife. Thinning of fir forests in Lower Tenmile will reduce stand-replacing fire risk and accelerate succession towards late seral conditions, thus, expanding refugia. Grassland restoration envisioned, but beyond our present scope, includes treating gully erosion that will also raise the water table and promote native grass and plant recovery. Increase soil moisture in meadows will help reduce fire risk, as lush native grasses replace flammable non-native species, and provide improved forage for wildlife. The increased soil moisture holding will make these areas more fire resistant, and expanded native grasslands could function as another form of refugia. Improved hydrologic conditions in meadows may also allow restoration of other wetland adapted plants that are culturally important to Native Americans. Thinning forests will also reduce evapotranspiration and help revive stream base flow, which increases carrying capacity in aquatic refugia.

Please describe the extent to which the project will deliver enduring and sustainable benefits and co-benefits.

Numerous co-benefits will be derived from this project. Workforce development and economic development will accrue as local workers are trained and employed in forest health restoration and jobs should last at least a decade given the demand for service from private landowners and available funding. Forest health will be planned and implemented on the Cahto Tribe Reservation, and there will be opportunities for Tribal members to become forest health workers, serving the cause of social and environmental justice. Woody material from thinning will be used to slow, spread and sink water and to rebuild soil fertility. Under VTP CEQA permitting, we hope to acquire a State Restoration General Order permit from the NCRWQCB to fix gullies as part of future projects funded from other sources. Similarly, we envision use of larger diameter trees to build fish habitat improvement structures and improve hydrologic function in projects funded separately that will enhance stream flow and increase carrying capacity in important salmonid refugia like Peterson Creek. The forest thinning we carry out will reduce evapotranspiration and help revive stream flow, especially in Peterson Creek. Logs and

poles of larger diameter trees could be used as a source of building materials, and we are exploring whether these could be donated to the non-profit Forest Reciprocity Group for use in manufacture of log homes. Harvest of trees of appropriate size would be deferred to year 2 or 3 of the project to allow time for development of capacity of FRG to take advantage of raw materials. Oak woodland restoration will lead to a major increase in production of acorns that in turn would provide food for wildlife and stimulate increased biodiversity. Douglas fir forests on north facing slopes in Lower Tenmile Creek will be thinned to promote tree health and speed succession towards old growth conditions adjacent to BLM old growth stands and the Angelo Reserve to expand a wildlife refugia.

Please describe plans for long-term maintenance of project benefits including the responsible parties, funding, and partner assistance.

Much of the project area to be treated had management intent captured in forest health management plans (FHMP's) developed under a Northcoast Resource Partnership pilot grant. The FHMP's were developed using the CFIP-NRCS template and can be viewed at: <https://www.eelriverrecovery.org/>. A Storymap of the Tenmile Creek Forest Health Pilot can be found at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4006d856bec743e99889d6bf5c039891>. Long-term maintenance and follow up treatments are the responsibility of the individual landowners who have joined together for this project. Follow up work may be funded by cost share grants, forest product revenue, and/or landowner stewardship activities. Cooperation at the neighborhood level, such as the West Tenmile parcels, may allow coordinated volunteer follow up work. The desired future condition on all ownerships as stated in the FHMPs and affirmed by all participating landowners includes an uneven aged stand structure favoring larger trees; resilience to wildfire; enhancing carbon stocks; increasing fire protection by reducing fuels; Improving forest health by conducting stand improvement work on oak woodlands; and improving stand conditions by releasing trees from encroachment by brush and small trees to also promote the re-establishment of diverse native plant species. The Tenmile Creek watershed has vast areas of grasslands, including on some of the parcels slated for treatment, such as the Vassar and Triple Creek Ranch. While these are not to be treated under this grant, future resources will be sought dedicated to native grass restoration. The community desires to set up a native grass nursery and to try to bring back native grass species to reduce fire risk, to increase water storage in meadows and grasslands, and to sequester carbon with their deep root systems. Cooperative burning through the Mendocino County Prescribed Burn Assoc. is also envisioned as long term management will include periodic low intensity fire.

To support CAL FIRE's reporting to CARB on CCI expenditures, please check the box for any co-benefits the project will provide:

reduced fire risk and/or facilitated fire suppression, improved watershed health, protected water supplies, improved wildlife, fish, or native plant habitat, increased recreation, education, or outreach opportunities, workforce development of populations historically marginalized in forestry, protected cultural resources, traditional ecological knowledge engaged, improved soil health, benefits to local economy, benefits to local culture, climate adaptation, jobs created and/or supported

If any boxes are checked above, please list the co-benefit and write one to two sentences on how the project will deliver the benefit.

- Reduced fire risk and/or facilitated fire suppression - Removal of fuels, thinning from below and use of controlled fire will all help achieve this benefit.
- Improved watershed health - Thinning the forest will prevent catastrophic fire that is damaging to watersheds and other activities will promote hydrologic restoration and fish habitat improvement.
- Protected water supplies - Thinning will increase stream base flow and prevent catastrophic fire that can damage watersheds and create erosion and water pollution.
- Improved wildlife, fish, or native plant habitat - More oaks equals more animals, more water means more fish, and promoting a healthy forest understory and restoring meadow hydrology will allow restoration of native grasses and plants.
- Workforce development of populations historically marginalized in forestry - This project will employ displaced workers from other industries to be retrained and the youth to be trained to carry out forest health, but job opportunities for Cahto Tribe members open opportunities not formerly available.
- Protected cultural resources - Working closely with Cahto Tribe to ensure protection of cultural resources and Tribe participation in prioritizing avoidance and protection of sacred site.
- Traditional ecological knowledge engaged - Woods Wilson who is embedded in this project is familiar with Cahto TEK and we are integrating their knowledge into our forest and grassland health strategy
- Improved soil health - The project will avoid soil compaction and will take a number of steps to enhance soil moisture and fertility using woody material.
- Benefits to local economy - This should be only the first of many forest health projects leading to a long term source of jobs.
- Benefits to local culture - Economic deprivation causes a cultural collapse, as no one can afford to go anywhere or participate in social activities. Reviving the economy revives the culture.
- Climate adaptation - Reduce high intensity fire and promote C sequestration.

Describe identified community or household need(s) identified using the approach above.

ERRP co-sponsored several forest health meetings to scope the community on forest health needs and receptivity to participating in grants for planning and implementation. People were concerned about fuels build up and catastrophic fire, possible negative side effects from widespread forest thinning and the need for jobs. We met potential clients through the meeting and other outreach, got an NCRP pilot grant, and developed Forest Health Management Plans we now want to implement as an example.

Describe the Benefit. Include a qualitative description of any benefits the project provides to priority populations

Several of the parcels to be treated under our proposed grant are near the community of Laytonville, which is economically disadvantaged and will reduce fire risk for low-income households. One of the greatest benefits accrued is the work to be performed on the Cahto Laytonville Reservation where forest health is poor, fire risk substantial, and need for job opportunities (35% unemployment) great. Many jobs will also be created for other community members, many of whom qualify as low income.

Identify which planning document that this project would support if implemented.

Local Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Local CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plan, Safeguarding California Plan, Strategic Fire Plan for California, California Forest Carbon Plan, CA Natural & Working Lands Implementation Plan, California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan

Please elaborate how this project would support the above checked planning documents. Be specific.

The proposed project closely aligns with regional and State plans and will help California deliver on its climate and forest health resiliency goals. At the local level, the Mendocino Co. Wildfire Protection Plan and the CAL FIRE 2021 Mendocino Unit Strategic Fire Plan have identified the need for fire road access clearance and fuel reduction/shaded fuel breaks. The West Tenmile Creek project will clear fuels along Tenmile Creek Road that will allow safer access for fire suppression equipment. This community has 200 residents according to the MCWPP. The access road to the Lower Tenmile Creek parcels was used for access in fighting the 2014 Lodge Fire and fuels along this road will be reduce to improve safe access for fire fighters. Shaded fuel breaks will be created along fire breaks established during the Lodge Fire, and one will extend from the south side of Tenmile Creek to the north side at the Vassar Property. Probably the most important shaded fuel break would be on the Vassar property and serve a line of defense from a fire spreading from Hwy 101. The Safeguarding California Plan goal F-1.1 is met as it will "increase the pace and scale of management activities such as prescribed and managed fire, fuels reduction, working forests, and thinning." The NCRP Regional Priority Plan also has similar objectives that we meet. We will also "promote forest and rangeland health and resilience through fuels reduction, and sustainable commercial forest management" in accord with the Strategic Fire Plan for California. We meet the California Forest Carbon Plan criteria 3.11, which is to Improve Health and Resilience on Private and State/Local Public Forestland, because we address the forest management deficit in California among private smaller forest ownerships. Our work also helps implement goals of the CA Natural & Working Lands Implementation Plan by "improving forest health, reducing wildfire severity, and increasing biomass utilization.

Please describe how multiple, experienced partners representing all key stakeholders will collaborate throughout the project, including: planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring.

Mendocino RCD will assist as CEQA Lead Agency and serve as fiscal agent. RCD staff will also provide technical forestry personnel onsite for QA QC. The Cahto Tribe (Laytonville Rancheria) will collaborate on treatment work on the tribal portion of the project as well advise on TEK for work on the private lands portion of the project. ERRP has worked closely with the BLM Arcata Office on recreational access and forest health on Cahto Peak in the past, and hopes that BLM commits to forest health NEPA studies and implementation on Black Oak Mountain adjacent to our Lower Tenmile Creek project area. We also work closely with the UC Angelo Reserve, which abuts the Lower Tenmile Creek project area, and we hope to solicit their ideas on monitoring and their help in pursuing additional funding for monitoring our forest health work for the purpose of adaptive management. In this grant, we will be working in close coordination with the Laytonville Volunteer Fire Department and the CAL FIRE Mendocino unit as we implement this Project, including coordination of use of prescribed fire. We hope to join the latter two organizations in sponsoring a meeting on PODs so people understand fire connectivity and what roles their parcels can play. We helped a new non-profit group to form, the Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance, and they are actively organizing their neighbors to

participate in forest health projects and some of their members are embedded in our Project. They hope to take lessons learned and implement forest health with subsequent grants in the Piercy, Bell Springs and Leggett area.

Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Project Statement of Qualifications

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) has a proven track record and the necessary staff, partners, and local contractors to complete the project as proposed. The organization is currently administering a \$574,000 contract with the State Coastal Conservancy for planning and permitting of water conservation and erosion control in the Tenmile Creek watershed, and some parcels in that project are also forest health clients in this proposal. We are also administering a \$475,000 grant from the State Water Resources Control Board 319h fund to restore the riparian zone and abate sediment pollution at four sites in the same watershed. The *Town Creek Restoration and Education Project* (\$226,000) is centered in Covelo and funded through a Department of Water Resources Urban Stream Restoration Program grant. These projects involve numerous highly skilled contractors, similar to the current proposal. ERRP has been extremely successful in outreach in the Tenmile Creek watershed and has lined up additional interested landowners, who want to be included in the CalTP PEIR CEQA and in a subsequent Phase II opportunity,. ERRP also fosters partnerships with agencies, Tribes and local non-profit organizations to coordinate at the watershed and regional scale.

The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) has been carrying out important restoration projects for more than 40 years, and they are currently administering a \$5.5 M CAL FIRE CCI grant (8GG20632) that covers BLM acreage adjacent to the Red Mountain Wilderness and Usal Forest land owned by the Redwood Forest Foundation. The MCRCD has agreed to be the Lead Agency for this Project, and their highly capable staff will be interbedded and provide administrative and fiscal support as core tasks. Trained MCRCD forest staff will also to help with field checking on work progress, provide advice on how to increase productivity, and train local contractors to also conduct field checks.

Salix Natural Resource Management's (Salix) RPF, Heather Morrison, coordinated the pilot project and helped produce the Forest Health Management Plans associated with the proposed project. Salix will complete CAL FIRE notifications and secure exemptions so that forest health improvement work can occur before CEQA . Salix will accomplish other tasks requiring an RPF throughout the Project. Torchbear's Burn Boss (Scott Steinbring) will direct the controlled fire aspect of this project, and will train those in attendance to ensure successful burns.

BBW & Associates (BBWA) (Arcata, CA) will assist ERRP to address all aspect of CEQA compliance associated with this project. BBWA specializes in conservation-based forestry to improve ecological conditions and economic viability of forests (<https://bbwassociates.com/>). They have extensive experience with CEQA/NEPA, forest practice rules, and compliance and monitoring. Anchor QEA (<https://www.anchorqea.com/>) is well-versed in preparing CEQA / NEPA documentation and compliance documents, most recently for the Redwoods Rising Ecosystem Restoration Project. Stillwater Sciences (<https://www.stillwatersci.com/>) specializes in aquatic and terrestrial biology, restoration ecology, geology and geomorphology, hydrology and hydraulics, water quality, and spatial analysis and they will help with various aspects of permitting.

Local contractors that ERRP will engage are too numerous to describe here, but they are the core of the Project. Many have expertise born of on-the-ground forest health implementation

spanning decades, one is a local Fire Chief, two have extensive experience as professional fire fighters, and one is former Chair of the Cahto Tribe and a specialist on forest health and cultural issues. The labor force will be organized through the cooperating private contract firm, Elk Ridge Landscaping. Sub-contractors to ERRP will also be recruited from the local labor force to help perform essential functions from oversight to outreach.