

**CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant Application - Application Number: 25-WP-MEU-7950744**

**APPLICATION -- PROJECT INFORMATION**

**1. Project Name/Title:** Hopland Shaded Fuel Break

**2. In which county is the majority of your project located?** Mendocino County = MEU

**3. Are there additional counties?** No

**4. In which California State Assembly district(s) is your project located?** 2nd - Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Trinity

**5. In which California State Senate district(s) is your project located?** 2nd - Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, San Francisco, Sonoma, Trinity

**6. Project Description Summary (598 characters):** The Hopland Shaded Fuel Break Project creates a 63.14-acre, 1.72-mile shaded fuel break along ridgelines west of Hopland, plus 10 community chipper days serving 82 homes across 16.4 acres. Located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, within the footprint of the 2018 Mendocino Complex fire, the project protects over 100 downtown Hopland structures and the Highway 101 evacuation corridor through strategic vegetation thinning and defensible space treatments.

**7. Award Request Amount:** \$939,159

**8. What Funding source is your project applying for?** Both (California Climate Investments-CCI and Proposition 4)

**9. Total Amount of Award Request:** \$939,159

**10. Sponsoring Organization:** Mendocino County

**11. Project Manager Name:** Executive Division Manager

**12-14. Project Manager Address:** 501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010, Ukiah, CA 95482

**Project Activities**

**15. For which primary activity is funding being requested?** Hazardous Fuels Reduction

**Primary Vegetation Treatment Type:** Shaded fuelbreak/Understory clearing, Chipping, Roadside Clearance.

**16. Does the project include Grazing as a component?** No

**17. Does the project include maintenance as a component?** Yes

**18. Does the project include transportation and/or disposal of woody biomass?** Yes

**Project Treatment Area**

**19. Primary Land Cover Type:** Woodland/Shrubland

**20. Primary Land Ownership Class:** Private

**21. Does your project include work on Tribal Lands?** Yes

**22. Limiting Factors:** Yes - Right of Entry Agreements pending for multiple parcels within the shaded fuel break area as shown on project maps.

**23. Timber Harvest Plans (THP):** No active THPs identified

**24. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance:**

- Will utilize Notice of Exemption under Class 4 for minor alterations to land

**25. Federal Responsibility Area:** No

**26. California Conservation Corps usage:** Other Contractor (Local contractors and MCFSC crews).

**27. Does your project leverage funding or produce public benefit?**

- Project is leveraging Federal funds (UVFA fire crew – USFS CWDG)
- Project is leveraging in-kind contributions (Local Fire Safe Councils – chipper day assistance)
- Will produce the greatest public benefit.

**28. Eligible local governmental entity qualified for Section 4291.5:** Yes

**29. Is the Sponsoring Organization a local agency?** Yes

**29a. FRRC List status:** Sponsoring Organization is on the FRRC List

**30. Reporting defensible space data to CAL FIRE?**

**31. Community at Risk:** Yes

**32. Number of Risk Communities:** 1 Hopland (532)

**33. Disadvantaged/Low-Income Community:** Yes

**34. Select all that applies:** Both

**35. Severely Disadvantaged/Low Income Community (Prop 4):** Yes

**36. Select all that applies:** Both

### **Project Area Statistics**

**37. Treatment Influence Zone (TIZ) acres:**

- Local Responsibility Area (LRA) TIZ acres: 0
- Federal Responsibility Area (FRA) TIZ acres: 0
- State Responsibility Area (SRA) TIZ acres: 79.54 (63.14 acres shaded fuel break + 16.4 acres chipper days)
- Total TIZ Acres: 79.54

**38. Fire Hazard Severity Zones:**

- Number of Acres in the Very High SRA FHSZ: 79.54 (63.14 acres shaded fuel break + 16.4 acres chipper days)
- FHSZ Total Acres: 79.54

---

## **APPLICATION -- SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Comprehensive Project Description**

The Hopland Shaded Fuel Break (SFB) Project is a wildfire prevention initiative to reduce hazardous fuels and protect the rural community of Hopland in southern Mendocino County. The 63.14-acre, 1.72-mile shaded fuel break will be constructed along ridgelines west of Hopland, extending from Feliz Creek Road to Hewlitt Sturtevant Road. Hopland is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and bordered by Highway 101, a critical evacuation and emergency access corridor. The project will remove ladder fuels, enhance community protection for over 100 structures in downtown Hopland, and preserve vital transportation routes through targeted vegetation thinning.

**Critical Fire History Context:** Hopland's documented fire risk includes multiple major wildfire events that demonstrate the critical need for proactive fuel reduction. The 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire's River Fire component started just 6 miles north of Hopland on Old River Road, forcing mandatory evacuations of both Hopland and the Hopland Rancheria. This massive complex burned 459,123 acres over 160 days, causing \$257 million in damages, including threats to the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center. The 2017 Redwood Complex Fire burned 36,500 acres in Mendocino County, resulting in 9 fatalities and 545 destroyed structures. Even the smaller 2020 Hopland Fire (34 acres southwest of Hopland) demonstrates ongoing ignition risk in the immediate project vicinity.

Hopland is highly vulnerable to wildfire due to steep terrain, dense brush, and limited evacuation routes. It is located in CAL FIRE Battalion 3 and lies entirely within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Historical fire activity in Mendocino County, including the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire, underscores the urgency of proactive vegetation management. Hopland's status as a low-income, unincorporated community further exacerbates the risk. Local CWPPs and CAL FIRE's Unit Fire Plan all identify this shaded fuel break corridor as a top priority for wildfire mitigation.

Mendocino County, with MCFSC, local Fire Safe Councils and Hopland Band of Pomo Indians, will also implement hazardous fuel reduction including a minimum of 10 community chipper days in the wider Hopland areas with the partnership of the Feliz Creek FSC, McNab Ranch FSC, and Hopland Band of Pomo Indians. The project will create defensible space around approximately 82 homes (16.4 acres treated through 10 chipper days, \$25,000 budget allocation) and complement the expanded West Hopland Shaded Fuel Break.

## **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.**

**For Shaded Fuel Break:** The aim of this project is to create a shaded fuel break, reduce wildfire risk and aid in fire suppression activities through fuel reduction treatment in proximity to the over 100 residences and commercial properties of downtown Hopland. The project is approximately 63.14 acres and consists primarily of oak woodland and madrone forest with large patches of mature French broom, and a swath of urban development on the lower slope. The project is bound to the east by State Highway 101 and consists of undeveloped and developed parcels with residential and commercial buildings, and upslope from the Hopland municipal water supply tank. A shaded fuel break will be implemented along an existing non-contiguous ridgeline jeep trail and its adjacent forested areas. The north end of the jeep trail is approximately 0.45 mi (horizontal distance) and is accessed via Hewlitt Sturtevant Road off Highway 101. The south end is roughly 0.40 mi (horizontal distance) and is accessed via Feliz Creek Road. The shaded fuel break will extend approximately 150 feet on either side of the ridgeline jeep trails (300ft width total). Understory thinning and pruning is proposed throughout the project area. Fuel reduction activities will consist of thinning the understory (i.e., dead ground fuels and brush) and removing dead and hazard tree material in such a way that the infestation of French broom is not exacerbated increasing the project area's fire hazard.

**For Chipper Days:** The project will serve the greater Hopland area of Mendocino County, focusing on the Feliz Creek FSC, McNab Ranch FSC, and Hopland Band of Pomo Indians. Approximately 82 habitable structures (16.4 acres) will directly benefit, with defensible space treatments around homes and along access routes.

As an extension of an existing MCFSC program, these chipper days support the maintenance or establishment of defensible space around homes by providing free chipping of slash and brush. With most of Mendocino County's population living in WUI areas, establishing defensible space is one of the most important and achievable activities a homeowner can undertake to protect

habitable structures. In calendar year 2021, MCFSC's Community Chipper Day events served nearly 1,500 residents, of which approximately 70% reported they would not have completed the brush clearing work without the free and convenient chipper service. Program participants generated over 21,000 hours of volunteer time in clearing their properties to participate in the program, and 85% of participants indicated that using the chipper program inspired them to take additional steps to reduce wildfire risk. By participating in the program, landowners also are connected to the MCFSC and added to mailing lists where they receive useful information about living safely in a fire adapted environment and notifications about new services or similar grant programs in the community.

## **2. Describe the goals, objectives, and expected outcomes of the project.**

### **Goal 1: Reduce wildfire risk and improve community safety through strategic fuel reduction**

Based on lessons learned from the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire (which resulted in evacuations in the Hopland area and burned for 160 days), this project will:

- Implement comprehensive shaded fuel break west of Hopland with 300-foot treatment zones along the demonstrated fire approach corridor
- Create critical defensive barrier protecting Highway 101, Highway 175 and downtown Hopland from westerly fire approaches
- Treat multiple high-risk vegetation communities (Blue Oak Woodland, Madrone Forest, Mixed Oak Woodland) that showed extreme fire behavior during the Mendocino Complex.

### **Goal 2: Protect vulnerable households based on documented risk & evacuation history**

Recognizing that the Hopland Rancheria and parts of greater Hopland required evacuations during the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire and the project area lies entirely within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), this project will:

- Continue landowner outreach and education to publicize the program and inform residents about the importance of defensible space.
- Conduct ten community chipper days serving approximately 82 homes (averaging 8.2 homes per day) with defensible space treatments
- Treat 16.4 acres total through chipper days, with 0.2 acres treated per property
- Establish Zone 1 defensible space compliance (30 feet around each home) plus driveway, property line, and roadside clearance for households in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones
- Prioritize services for low-income, disadvantaged and Tribal community members, including the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians who were evacuated in 2018.

### **Goal 3: Enhance evacuation safety based on demonstrated need**

The 2018 Mendocino Complex required evacuations of greater Hopland, Hopland Rancheria, and surrounding communities, demonstrating critical evacuation route vulnerability. This project will:

- Clear vegetation along private paved roads, unsurfaced roads, and historic jeep trails within project boundaries.
- Improve evacuation routes and emergency vehicle access throughout project area
- Reduce fire entrapment risk along critical ingress and egress corridors, addressing lessons learned from the 160-day firefighting effort.

**Goal 4: Address access challenges while respecting private property rights**

- Secure Right of Entry Agreements for parcels currently without access (as mapped).
- Expand treatment coverage through successful landowner engagement and community outreach.
- Ensure fuel break continuity across property boundaries.

**Goal 5: Build long-term resilience through planning, community engagement and fuels maintenance**

- Secure maintenance commitment from Ukiah Valley Fire Authority.
- Develop and implement a fuels reduction operations & maintenance plan to guide ongoing shaded fuel break upkeep, retreatment cycles, and establish ongoing invasive species management protocols.
- Establish a reoccurring community chipper day program for the life of the grant using a rotating annual calendar aligned with fire risk seasons to support defensible space compliance.

**Goal 6: Complete all project activities within the three-year CalFire grant cycle**

- Finalize procurement, contracting, fuel reduction, inspections, and reporting within the grant term.

**3. Provide a clear rationale for how the proposed project will reduce the risks associated with wildfire to habitable structures.**

This project will reduce risks associated with habitable structures via on-the-ground implementation of fuels reduction projects targeted in elevated fire hazard severity zones while also conducting activities which will facilitate continuing local fuels reduction activities into the future.

This project directly addresses the documented wildfire threat to Hopland, as evidenced by recent major fire events:

**Proven Fire Risk:** The 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire's River Fire component started just 6 miles north of Hopland on Old River Road, forcing evacuations of both greater Hopland and the

Hopland Rancheria. Within hours of ignition, the fire had burned 4,000 acres and destroyed buildings, including homes. The fire threatened critical infrastructure including the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center and required 160 days to fully extinguish, demonstrating the persistence and severity of fire risk in this Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

**Evacuation Pattern:** Hopland has repeatedly faced wildfire threats, including during the 2018 Mendocino Complex (\$257 million in damages) and earlier incidents. The 2020 Hopland Fire, burning 34 acres southwest of town, shows continued ignition risk in the immediate project vicinity.

**Strategic Protection Value:** This project creates a critical defensive barrier along ridgelines west of Hopland between the documented fire approach corridors and downtown Hopland's 100+ structures. This project is directly aligned with the 2025 Mendocino County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and 2020 Hopland CWPP, which emphasizes shaded fuel breaks, ingress/egress safety, and community chipper programs as priority strategies for reducing wildfire risk, incorporating lessons learned from the Mendocino Complex and Redwood Complex fires.

**Vegetation Communities at Risk:** Blue Oak Woodland (QD), Madrone Forest (PM), Mixed Oak Woodland (MO), and Broad-Leafed Upland (BLU) vegetation types are highly susceptible to rapid fire spread and present significant ladder fuel concerns, as demonstrated during the Mendocino Complex Fire.

**Strategic Location Benefits:** The shaded fuel break's position west of Hopland provides critical protection for Highway 101, the primary evacuation corridor, while creating defensible space for both rural residences and the urban core.

**Topographic Advantages:** By selectively thinning to reduce wildfire intensity and slow the spread of fire from the west, this project is designed to slow the spread of fire across the landscape. Removing ladder fuels and reducing surface fuels while retaining an overstory canopy disrupts the continuity of flammable vegetation, helping to convert fast-moving crown fires into lower-intensity surface fires. When placed along ridgelines and community boundaries, like this project, shaded fuel breaks improve access for firefighting operations, protect critical infrastructure, and create defensible space that enhances community safety.

**Water Resources Protection:** Mapped ponds and intermittent streams (Class 2 and Class 3 watercourses) provide firefighting water sources that will be protected through strategic fuel reduction.

#### **4. Identify any additional assets at risk from wildfire that will benefit from the proposed project.**

Based on documented threats from recent fire history:

- **Highway 101 corridor, Highway 175 and critical evacuation routes** - Protected from fire approaches that could threaten these vital transportation corridors.



- **Tribal community infrastructure and cultural resources** - The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians required evacuation during the 2018 fire, highlighting the importance of protecting tribal assets.
- **Local water infrastructure** near mapped ponds and streams - Critical for firefighting operations, as demonstrated during the 160-day suppression effort of the Mendocino Complex.
- **Municipal water infrastructure** – There is one supply tank located uphill from downtown Hopland, another tank positioned above Highway 175 east of Hopland, and two wells with pumphouses near the Russian River, just south of the Highway 175 bridge. These are all essential pieces of infrastructure that could be at risk from fires, similar to the rapid spread seen in 2018 when 4,000 acres burned within hours of ignition.

## **5. How will the project/activity utilize the left-over woody biomass?**

Proactive fuel management preserves mature trees and maintains a healthy forest structure, enabling continued carbon sequestration while avoiding the significant emissions associated with uncontrolled wildfires. Woody biomass will be chipped on-site for mulch application ( $\leq 6$ " depth outside buffer zones) or transported to approved disposal facilities, preventing greenhouse gas emissions from pile burning.

## **6. Does the project include grazing as a component of the hazardous fuels reduction project? No**

## **9. Does the project include maintenance as a component of the hazardous fuel's reduction project? Yes**

## **10. If applying for Prop 4 funding, is your project leverage private, federal, and local funding or produce the greatest public benefit? Yes**

---

## **Section II - 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.**

The project encompasses areas mapped as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone within the State Responsibility Area. All 79.54 acres of treatment areas are strategically located within these high-risk zones to provide maximum protection for both individual structures and community-wide evacuation corridors.

**Documented Fire History Validation:** The Very High FHSZ designation has been validated by actual fire events, most notably the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire's River Fire, which ignited just 6 miles north of Hopland and forced mandatory evacuations of parts of the community within 24 hours. The fire's rapid initial spread (4,000 acres and destroyed structures within hours



of ignition) demonstrates the extreme fire behavior potential in this zone. The broader Mendocino Complex ultimately burned 459,123 acres over 160 days, causing \$257 million in damages and requiring the largest firefighting response in California history at that time.

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

The shaded fuel break will create a critical defensive barrier between wildland fuels and Hopland's developed areas.

The project protects both scattered rural residences (~82 homes in chipper day areas) and the broader Hopland community core (100+ structures) through defensive positioning and evacuation route enhancement. Historical fire behavior shows that without fuel breaks, fires can rapidly overwhelm communities—as evidenced by the 545 structures destroyed in the 2017 Redwood Complex Fire in similar Mendocino County terrain and vegetation types.

---

## **Section III - 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?**

The in-kind volunteer labor provided through Fire Safe Councils, along with the maintenance commitment from the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority, offers significant cost-sharing value for the project.

The project builds on years of work by both the MCFSC and County of Mendocino to build capacity for fuels reduction and fire education activities throughout the community. The MCFSC has already developed the necessary infrastructure to accept, review, and approve applications for Community Chipper Days, and those systems will be leveraged to efficiently focus the funding provided for this project on direct implementation activities. The MCFSC is also in contact and coordinating with all neighborhood-level fire safe councils in Mendocino County, providing a robust network of volunteers to help advertise and solicit applications for the programs proposed.

### **2. Describe plans for external communications during the life of the project to keep the affected community informed about the goals, objectives and progress of the project.**

- Project kickoff meeting with project partners and stakeholders.
- Fire Safe Council outreach and flyers promoting chipper days and benefits of defensible space.
- Local media press releases and other community outreach will be conducted to inform affected stakeholders and landowners about project goals and benefits.
- End-of-project tour to review, share and document progress.

### **3. Describe any plans to maintain the project after the grant period has ended.**

Ukiah Valley Fire Authority fuels crew will maintain shaded fuel break treated areas post-completion per the fuels reduction operations & maintenance plan as their funding allows. Professional maintenance will address ongoing invasive species management (French broom, and other identified invasive species), fuel load monitoring, and coordination with local fire agencies.

The Mendocino County Community Chipper Days program is a grant-funded program administered by the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council which has been in operation since 2019 and will continue as funding allows. The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council and the County of Mendocino have been successful at securing allocations of funding for the program which allows for multiple years of operations. By funding this program for three additional years, CAL Fire funds will be used to support residents and allow the MCFSC and County to pursue additional grant funding for subsequent program years. In addition, for many landowners, an initial effort to establish or re-establish defensible space can result in significant amounts of brush clearing requiring additional resources to adequately dispose of the material. However, after this initial push, it becomes much easier to maintain defensible space, rather than establish it, and the initial support provided by Community Chipper Days makes the ongoing maintenance of defensible space more likely.

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

Yes. Strong partnerships with MCFSC, local Fire Safe Councils, and Hopland Band of Pomo Indians ensure landscape-level coordination for chipper days.

Work with the Hopland Fire Protection District on Right of Entry Agreement acquisition remains a priority focus area, with significant landowner outreach planned to expand treatment coverage and ensure fuel break continuity.

---

## **Section IV - Project Implementation**

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

- Fall 2025: CEQA finalization
- Spring 2026: Complete RFPs and contracting
- Spring 2026 - Fall 2028: Organize & conduct 10 community chipper days
- Summer & Fall 2026: Develop Fuels Reduction Project Operations & Maintenance Plan, Community outreach, ROE completion
- Spring -Fall 2027-2028: Shaded fuel break implementation
- Late 2028: Final inspections, reporting, and maintenance transition.

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

Yes. All activities will be completed within the required grant term and seasonal restrictions will be observed.

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

**Fall 2025: CEQA Finalization**

- Complete CEQA documentation under a Class 4 Notice of Exemption.
- Conduct required biological surveys to ensure compliance with nesting season protections (Feb 1–Aug 31).
- Secure CAL FIRE approval before implementation begins.

**Spring 2026: Procurement and Contracting**

- Issue RFPs for fuel reduction contractors, cultural monitors, and labor compliance services (ongoing throughout grant cycle).
- Review bids, conduct evaluations, and execute contracts.
- Initiate community outreach and finalize Right of Entry (ROE) Agreements for parcels needing access.

**Spring 2026 – Fall 2028: Community Chipper Days**

- Organize 10 community chipper days across Feliz Creek and McNab Ranch Fire Safe Councils, and the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians tribal lands.
- Provide defensible space treatments around approximately 82 homes (~16.4 acres treated).
- Prioritize services for low-income, disadvantaged and Tribal households.

**Summer & Fall 2026: Operations & Maintenance Planning**

- Develop Fuels Reduction Project Operations & Maintenance Plan with input from a Registered Professional Forester.
- Establish invasive species management protocols (e.g., French broom removal) and retreatment schedules.
- Align community chipper calendar with high-risk fire seasons.

**Spring & Summer 2027–2028: Shaded Fuel Break Implementation**

- Implement 63.14-acre shaded fuel break along ridgelines west of Hopland.
- Conduct vegetation thinning, ladder fuel removal, and surface fuel reduction while preserving canopy.
- Monitor compliance with CEQA and cultural protection protocols throughout treatments.

## **Late 2028: Final Inspections, Reporting, and Maintenance Transition**

- Perform post-treatment inspections to ensure effectiveness.
- Submit close-out documentation, financials, and compliance reports to CAL FIRE.
- Transition ongoing maintenance responsibilities to Ukiah Valley Fire Authority per Operations & Maintenance Plan.

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

- **79.54 acres treated total** (63.14 acres shaded fuel break + 16.4 acres chipper days)
- **100+ residences/businesses in Hopland protected** by fuel break + 82 households served by chipper days
- **10 community chipper days completed** across 2 Fire Safe Councils and tribal lands (averaging 8.2 homes per day)
- **3 Communities engaged** (Feliz Creek & McNab Ranch FSC, and Hopland Band of Pomo Indians)
- **Multiple vegetation communities protected** (Blue Oak Woodland, Madrone Forest, Mixed Oak Woodland)
- **Enhanced emergency access** via multiple route types (Highway 101, Highway 175 & private roadways)
- **1 comprehensive Operations & Maintenance Plan** developed with Registered Professional Forester
- **Cultural resource protection protocols** implemented with tribal monitoring

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

For the Hopland Shaded Fuel Break, a Notice of Exemption is anticipated under Class 4 for minor alterations to land, with biological surveys prior to vegetation removal during nesting season (Feb 1–Aug 31). CEQA review incorporates vegetation and hydrology mapping to ensure protection of sensitive ecosystems, with mitigation measures for invasive species and erosion control near ponds and intermittent streams.

In coordination with a Registered Professional Forester, a comprehensive fuel reduction operations and maintenance plan will be developed for the shaded fuel break which will address treatment prescriptions (including invasive species), ecological considerations, and long-term maintenance needs. The plan will incorporate an inadvertent discovery protocol with budgeted resources to deploy a cultural monitor as needed during implementation. A Registered Professional Forester and professional ecologists will oversee treatments to ensure compliance with environmental safeguards. This aligns with the 2025 Mendocino CWPP's explicit recommendation to launch invasive species management programs and to incorporate cultural burning and Tribal ecological practices into long-term stewardship.

**6. List 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?**

Right of Entry Agreements pending for multiple parcels within the shaded fuel break area as shown on project maps. No other zoning, easement, or land management plan conflicts anticipated.

---

**Section V - Administration**

**1. Describe any previous experience the project proponent has with similar projects.**

The County of Mendocino has a track record of successfully administering and implementing grant-funded projects across a variety of disciplines, including detailed financial and performance tracking. Mendocino County has successfully delivered CAL FIRE-funded projects including the Mendocino County Fuels Reduction and Community Preparedness Project, Redwood Complex Fire: Hazardous Tree Removal Project and West Hills Ukiah Fuels and Fire Break Project, both in full compliance with grant requirements and providing measurable fire risk reduction.

Mendocino County has implemented projects funded during both the 17-18 FPGP cycle (Redwood Complex Fire: Hazardous Tree Removal Project, Agreement No. 5GG17168) and the 18-19 FPGP cycle (West Hills Ukiah Fuels and Fire Break Project, Agreement No. 5GG18110). The County has entered into a grant agreement for the 20-21 FPGP cycle (Mendocino County Fuels Reduction and Community Preparedness), Project Tracking # 21-FP-MEU-0292 and project implementation is in progress.

**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 Mendocino County Auditor-Controller's Office, in coordination with the Project Manager, will maintain all project records to ensure a complete audit trail of expenditures. This system supports accurate, transparent financial tracking and compliance with CAL FIRE reporting requirements. The County of Mendocino cumulatively administers millions of dollars in grant funds annually, both state and federal, and has adequate tracking and reporting procedures in place for complying with all local, state, federal, and grant-specific financial tracking requirements, as demonstrated by the County's successful performance in administering the CAL Fire grants referenced earlier in this response.

---

**Section VI - Budget**

**1. Explain how the grant funds, if awarded, will be spent to support the goals and objectives of the project.**

CAL FIRE funds totaling \$939,159 will support comprehensive hazardous fuel reduction through: staff time for project management, travel and oversight (\$103,565), specialized contractors for fuel reduction implementation (\$734,970), operations and maintenance planning with a Registered Professional Forester (\$55,500), cultural monitoring protocols (\$25,000), community chipper days (\$25,000), and administrative compliance including labor monitoring, permitting, mapping, and reporting (\$100,216 indirect costs). The budget maximizes acres treated and households served while ensuring regulatory compliance and strong community engagement.

**2. Are the costs for each proposed activity reasonable for the geographic area where they are to be performed?**

The proposed costs for each proposed activity and the total project cost are consistent with prevailing wages and regional rates for Mendocino County and is appropriate for the size, scope, and anticipated benefit of the project. Project costs were estimated using a combination of actual costs for recent, comparable activities including those completed by the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council for fuels reduction and community chipper days activities.

The budget reflects:

- **Enhanced Fuel Reduction Scope:** \$505,120 for comprehensive shaded fuel break implementation across 63.14 acres at \$8,000 per acre. The County utilized a higher per-acre estimate due to the presence of invasive species, specifically French Broom. Effective removal demands more labor, specialized equipment, and often repeated treatments, increasing both initial and repeat treatment costs compared to standard fuel reduction in native vegetation areas.
- **Professional Operations Planning:** \$55,500 for Registered Professional Forester-developed maintenance plan (300 hours at \$185/hour). This estimate is based on hourly rates from a recent RFP held by the County, reflecting the necessary expertise for invasive species management protocols.
- **Comprehensive Cultural Protections:** \$25,000 cultural monitor will be on-call or on-site as needed to ensure compliance with cultural resource protection, based on a 2024 quote received from a local tribal monitor. (184 hours at \$120/hour & travel)
- **Right of Entry:** \$22,200 for extensive landowner outreach and ROE completion (120 hours at \$185/hour)
- **Advanced Mapping, Monitoring and Compliance:** \$72,150 total for GIS mapping (\$27,750), permits/compliance (\$22,200), and project monitoring (120 hours at \$185/hour)

In addition, the County will procure the above listed consultants on a time-and-materials, not to exceed basis and any savings within the budget will be rerouted to other project activities such as additional fuels reduction or community chipper days.

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

The total cost of **\$939,159** is appropriate for treating **79.54 acres total** (63.14-acre shaded fuel break + 16.4 acres through chipper days), serving **82 homes** through chipper days, protecting **100+ downtown Hopland structures**, developing CEQA-aligned maintenance plans, and providing comprehensive cultural monitoring protocols.

**Cost-Effectiveness Analysis:** This investment represents approximately \$5,110 per structure protected—significantly less than the average structure loss costs demonstrated in recent Mendocino County fires (\$257 million in damages for the 2018 Mendocino Complex, with 280 structures destroyed). The project's cost per acre (\$11,760) reflects the enhanced treatment requirements for invasive species management and steep terrain conditions that proved challenging during the 160-day suppression effort of the Mendocino Complex Fire.

### **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.**

Salaries and Wages (\$61,600): Project management, contractor oversight, compliance, and reporting for project staff.

- Procure contractors & contracting: 162 hours
- Project delivery execution: 612 hours
- Monitoring, training & reporting: 280 hours
  
- **Employee Benefits (\$38,565):** Standard County employee benefits for project staff.
  
- **Contractual (\$734,970):**
  - Labor Compliance Contractor: \$30,000 (prevailing wage compliance, certified payroll review) (\$1,000/mo. For 30 months)
  - Develop Operations & Maintenance Plan: \$55,500 (with Registered Professional Forester - 300 hours at \$185/hour)
  - Project Mapping & Planning: \$27,750 (GIS-based treatment area mapping - 150 hours at \$185/hour)
  - Community Outreach & ROE Agreements: \$22,200 (landowner & stakeholder engagement - 120 hours at \$185/hour)
  - Permits & Compliance: \$22,200 (CEQA documentation, mitigation monitoring - 120 hours at \$185/hour)
  - Fuel Reduction Activities & Site Clean-Up: \$505,120 (63.14 acres at \$8,000/acre, accounting for invasive French broom removal requiring repeated treatments).
  - Project Monitoring & Reporting: \$22,200 (compliance monitoring, progress reports - 120 hours at \$185/hour)
  - Cultural Monitoring: \$25,000 (on-call tribal/archaeological monitors)
  - Chipper Days: \$25,000 (equipment and crews for 10 community chipper days) (\$2,500/chipper day)



**Travel and Per Diem:** \$3,400 (staff travel & mileage).

- **Supplies (\$0.00):** No supplies costs anticipated for this project
- **Equipment (\$0.00):** No equipment purchases anticipated for this project
- **Other Costs (\$0.00):** No other costs anticipated for this project
- **Indirect Costs (12%):** \$100,624 for administrative services including grant management, financial tracking, and reporting

**5. Does your project include the purchase of capital equipment (more than \$5,000 per item)?** No

---

## **Section VII - California Climate Investments**

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

Strategic fuel reduction decreases catastrophic wildfire potential, protecting carbon storage in larger fire-resilient trees.

By chipping and mulching biomass instead of burning, the project also avoids significant CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with open pile burning. The project will reduce potential emissions related to slash treatment by chipping woody residue. California wildfires in 2020 released over 91 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, 30 million metric tons more emissions than California produces annually from power generation. Through implementing this project community members in Mendocino County will be better prepared for fire events. This preparedness will increase the chances of slowing wildfires before they become catastrophic. To the degree this project is successful, it will help to prevent a catastrophic wildfire which results in significant greenhouse gas emissions from wildland fuels as well as homes, businesses, and other infrastructure in the community.

**Historical Emissions Context:** The 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire burned 459,123 acres over 160 days, releasing massive amounts of stored carbon into the atmosphere—demonstrating the critical climate benefit of preventing such large-scale fires through proactive fuel management. Invasive species removal (French broom) reduces future high-severity fire risk and supports sustained greenhouse gas reduction by maintaining forest carbon storage capacity that would otherwise be lost to wildfire.

**Long-term Carbon Protection:** This project protects the carbon sequestration potential of mature oak and madrone trees that would be vulnerable to crown fire behavior similar to that observed during the Mendocino Complex Fire. Maintaining these established forests provides ongoing climate benefits while reducing the risk of large carbon releases from catastrophic wildfire.

---

## Staff Resource Allocation Summary

### Key Personnel and Time Allocation:

- Chief Recovery & Resiliency Officer: 194 hours
- Administrative Analyst II: 376 hours
- Administrative Analyst II: 110 hours
- Executive Division Manager: 110 hours
- Sr Administrative Analyst: 190 hours
- OES Coordinator: 74 hours

Total Staff Hours: 1,054 hours over 3-year grant period

---

## Budget Summary

This budget is carefully designed to maximize impact while ensuring accountability. Salaries and benefits fund essential project management, oversight, and reporting, guaranteeing compliance with CAL FIRE standards. The contractual category covers specialized services critical for success, including fuels reduction contractors, labor compliance monitoring, a Registered Professional Forester, cultural resource protections, and 10 community chipper days to directly support local households. Indirect costs are kept to a standard 12% to provide necessary administrative capacity without reducing funds available for on-the-ground work. Together, these allocations ensure that project activities are delivered effectively, sustainably, and in full compliance with grant requirements.

### Final Budget Breakdown:

- **Salaries and Wages** (\$61,600): Project management, contractor oversight, compliance, and reporting for project staff: Procure contractors (162 hrs), Project delivery (612 hrs), Monitoring/Reporting (280 hrs).
  - **Employee Benefits:** \$38,565
  - **Contractual:** \$734,970
  - **Travel and Per Diem:** \$3,400 (staff travel & mileage).
  - **Supplies:** \$0.00
  - **Equipment:** \$0.00
  - **Other Costs:** \$0.00
  - **Indirect Costs (12%):** \$100,624
  - **TOTAL PROJECT COST:** \$ 939,159
- 

## Appendix G: Project Maps

Figure G-1. Hopland Shaded Fuel Break – Project Overview Map Figure G-2. Restricted Landowner Access & Roads Figure G-3. Vegetation Types & Hydrology – Hopland Shaded Fuel Break Figure G-4. Community Chipper Days Project Area – Feliz Creek FSC Figure G-5. Community Chipper Days Project Area – Hopland Band of Pomo Indians FSC Figure G-6. Community Chipper Days Project Area – McNab Ranch FSC