

Alpine Meadows Consolidated Fuels Reduction Project  
Final Report

- 1a.    – \$5000 by the Alpine Springs County Water District  
      – \$2500 by each of three HOA's (total of \$7500)  
      – \$1250 by Bear Creek Association  
      – Several residents spent time spreading the word regarding the project and its benefits. This involvement helped in the success of the overall success of the project. In addition to this commitment, many residents spent time working on their own properties, utilizing the grant to take care of the residual slash through the chipper program.  
      – North Tahoe Fire donated some time (a couple of days) chipping a small amount of the slash generated by the project. This work was done in addition to the work supported by the grant.

1b. Individuals, agencies, and others listed below in 2a were all leveraged as a result of this project. This project is the result of the involvement of everyone involved.

2a. This project is the result of the cooperation of many organizations and individuals. In no way could this work have been completed without the help of all of those that participated and supported the project. Collaboration was essential from the very beginning of the project. From walking the project area with the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Sierra Forest Legacy, Lahonton Regional Water Quality Control Board and other interested parties, the vision of the work to be completed and the importance of transparency were apparent. Without the input of each individual, including those not listed below, this work could not have been completed. The many dedicated organizations include:

Whole Earth Forestry

North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District

North Tahoe Fire Protection District

Integrated Environmental Restoration Services

Alpine Springs County Water District

Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council

Bear Creek HOA

Juniper Mountain HOA

Alpine Meadows Estates Association HOA

Alpine Meadows Ski Resort

Sierra Forest Legacy

League To Save Lake Tahoe

Lahonton Regional Water Quality Control Board

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Place County Air Quality Control District

North Central Information Center  
Individual homeowners

2b. The thinning project associated with this grant is the result of many years of preparation within the Alpine Meadows community. This preparation was critical in the success of the overall grant project. Prior to the grant, thoughts about forest thinning were mixed among the Alpine Meadows community. With the help of community leaders, the Alpine Springs County Water District, North Tahoe Fire, Sierra Forest Legacy, and more, the sentiment of forest thinning for the overall health of the forest and the fire safety of the community became much more supported. As a result of this collaboration and understanding of forest health, fire safety, and homeowner responsibility, community leaders rallied behind the grant process and excelled at demonstrating modern fire preparedness techniques. This initial cooperation made moving forward with the project a natural transition for the community as a whole.

As the project moved forward, cooperation among the stakeholders increased as important information regarding project specifics emerged. This included giving the community chances to participate and give their thoughts and comment regarding the project, providing newsletters, sending mass e-mails, placing signage regarding the project, neighbors talking with neighbors, community events, and more.

Smoke was a primary concern for many residence. Through communication these issues were resolved as residence were given as much notice as possible prior to burning. No complaints were made during the burning of the material generated from the project. As a whole, the community agreed with the project and its outcomes and were very thankful to have the opportunity to treat a portion of the watershed that they hold with high regard.

3. The entire grant process helped to build capacity for all of those involved. The process required cooperation and understanding among a variety of stakeholders with varying levels of capacity and understanding of ecosystem services and function. By working together, relationships developed that will improve the capabilities among all of those involved. The community, the fire safe council, HOA's, North Tahoe Fire, and most notably the Alpine Springs County Water District now have the tools, understanding and relationships to move forward with these types of projects in the future, grant funded or other.

4a. By thinning the acres selected for the Alpine Meadows Consolidated Fuels Reduction project we greatly reduced the chances of a catastrophic fire occurring in the general project area. The prescriptions selected for the project help to maintain wildlife habitat, reduce fuels, enhance habitat (such as the thinning around the aspen grove), allow for privacy, and more, while still maintaining the goal of fuels reduction and watershed protection. Most of the fuels treated during the project were directly adjacent to Bear Creek, which is a main tributary to the

Truckee River. By removing a portion of the fuels directly adjacent to Bear Creek it is less likely for an intense fire to wick up the portions of Bear Creek that were treated. This will directly impact Bear Creek as well as any potential negative impacts to the Truckee River that could result from a high intensity fire moving up the watershed.

In addition to the fuel reduction aspect of the project, the demonstration and monitoring project will help to give important in-site regarding forest treatment methods within watercourse areas. The methods and procedures for the monitoring were collaboratively created with the intent of coming up with information somewhat lacking in the natural resources community. This information may help guide regulations and help land stewards make critical decisions regarding forest stewardship within similar forest types.

The knowledge and capacity gained by the community is a major indirect benefit generated by the project. Involving the community, water district, and other interested parties was critical in formulating the understanding and capacity of all those who participated. The individuals, groups, and organizations will have the ability to talk about the project, including the process and benefits to the environment, to countless visitors - visitors from all over the world. This type of knowledge transfer is an important component of formulating ideas and mindsets for stewardship of our natural resources.

This project received overall community support. From the very beginning until the last tree was cut, community members shared their thankfulness of the project. In addition to community members, as the Forester, I was able to talk with visitors from all over the place - near and far. Most of the conversations started out with me asking if they lived there or where they were visiting from. Eventually the topic of the project and why I was there would come up. I was so excited to hear all of the positive wishes for the project and the appreciation for what we were trying to accomplish. Topic of forest health and ecosystem restoration generally occurred during these interactions. This will help to spread the message of community collaboration and environmental stewardship from this project and beyond.

One of the major lessons learned from the project was the importance of a transparent collaborative process. The project could have been a nightmare if the community was shut out and collaboration with the regulatory agencies and interested parties was not sought out. By planning with others and allowing for a little bit of give and take, the project was able to move forward with cooperation and acceptance.

5. Approximately 50 acres were treated throughout the project. Of that 50 acres, approximately 4000-4500 linear feet adjacent to Bear Creek were treated. Treatment

directly adjacent to Bear Creek all took place on the North side of the creek. Treatment next to the creek extended up to edge of Alpine Meadows Rd and/or up to private property lines (ranging from a minimum of about 30 to 150+ feet from the creeks edge).

Approximately 23,000 ft<sup>3</sup> (cubic foot volume) of material were removed as a result of the project. Upwards of 10 - 20 tons/acre treated on the 50 acres.

6. There are 650 homes (conservative value of 260 million dollars), the Alpine Meadows Ski Resort, Fire House, Water District Offices and a variety of additional infrastructure in Alpine Meadows. All of this infrastructure has been protected (to some extent) by this fuels reduction project. Although the fuels reduction project did not occur directly adjacent to most of the infrastructure within the valley, the work completed helps to minimize the risk to the entire valley. The work completed by landowners around their homes (much of it supported by the help of the grant - chipping) in addition to the fuels reduction in the treated areas helps to minimize the threat to the whole ecosystem.

Alpine Meadows is visited by people from all around the world. All of these visitors, as well as full and part-time residents, have helped to create a significant economic impact to the region. This project has helped to ensure the recreational qualities of visitors and residents by helping to reduce the threat of catastrophic fire. A catastrophic fire could have a negative impact on the amount of recreation that the valley receives. By reducing the threat of a catastrophic fire, this project also helps (although not significantly) to protect the recreational qualities of the Truckee River and its hundreds of thousands of annual visitors.

In addition to the recreational values, this project also helps to protect the wildlife and fisheries values of the valley.