

PC FSC - Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance**5. Narrative Descriptions****a. Detailed Project Description****• Project Description**

Plumas FSC is requesting funding for this project so we can continue to provide senior and disabled citizens with defensible space around their residences in Plumas County. The goal of this project is to continue making residences in Plumas County safer from the impacts of wildfire. The project objective is to provide at an estimated 50+ qualifying senior or disabled County residents, who lack the fiscal or physical capacity to accomplish it, themselves, with the necessary defensible space for their homes to conform to California Public Resource Code 4291. California's 100-foot Defensible Space Law.

PC FSC's Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Program has provided an average of 35 residences per year, countywide, with some form of assistance since 2004. Defensible space is a key mitigation factors identified in our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), approved by the County Board of Supervisors and Cal Fire in 2005.

• Project Summary

This Defensible Space Assistance Project will provide compliance for an estimated 50+ residences with California's 100-foot Defensible Space Law.

PC FSC's Senior/Defensible Space Assistance Program Coordinator, a teacher and Registered Professional Forester (RPF), conducts outreach through a variety of methods. When interested citizens contact us and the Program Coordinator visits the property, completes a Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessment to identify the work needed, retains qualified contractors for services in order to accomplish the defensible space and follows up to inspect the work. PC FSC has an established cost share formula based on annual earnings and the co-pay ranges from 0 to 100%. Past co-pays have exceeded 10% of the actual operating costs and constitute our in-kind cash match.

Defensible Space treatments will include hand cutting and pruning of trees and brush, chipping, weed eating, raking and removal of needles from roofs and gutters. The initial establishment of the necessary defensible space may take a day or more for a small crew. Annual follow-up treatment is necessary to maintain defensible space, though it doesn't usually require as much effort and in many cases the property owner is then able to maintain their property on a fire safe condition. Project costs for each parcel vary due to parcel size and existing vegetation condition.

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- **Environmental Setting**

Wildland fire is considered a threat to almost every community in Plumas County. Two-thirds of the land base in Plumas County is public land with the majority managed by the US Forest Service. Most Plumas County communities are adjacent to or surrounded by these public lands. In 2001 the federal government, working with states, identified communities that were at risk from wildfire originating on public lands. The initial listing of “Communities at Risk”, in the Federal Register, for Plumas County was 22. Through a collaborative planning effort, almost every community in the County is now identified and mapped as a “community-at-risk” in our CWPP.

Plumas County averages the highest incidence of lightning fires in California and the Plumas National Forest, which includes most of Plumas County, averages third for acres burned in California National Forest’s. The majority of the communities-at-risk” where work will be performed are ranked Very High according to Cal Fire’s latest Fire Hazard Severity Zoning Map.

There is overwhelming data that supports that the presence of defensible space plays a key role in determining whether or not a structure will survive the passing of a wildfire. Defensible space also affects the safety of firefighters and thus their decision on whether or not to commit resources to protect a structure. Research shows that homes, with non-flammable roofs and defensible space have an 85-95% survival rate.

b. Workplan and Schedule

Within 90 days of funding PC FSC, the current Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Program Coordinator and Plumas Corporation, our fiscal sponsor, will proceed to accomplish the following steps.

- Seek clients in collaboration with Plumas Rural Services, Senior Connections and the Plumas County Community Development Commission, with newspaper ads in visits to senior centers and churches.
- Obtain Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Applications from interested citizens. This form initiates the process and outlines what the co-pay formula is.
- Conduct visit the home site of participating residents by the Program Coordinator to provide a Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessment, discuss treatments and verify annual income.
- Program Coordinator will solicit qualified contractors by prospectuses that outline specified work and solicits bids. Prospectuses are posted on our website and contractors who have expressed interest in bidding on our projects are notified in mailings.

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- Award contracts for treatment, from experienced fuel reduction contractors, under the terms of a signed contract, which has been approved by Plumas County’s Counsel. All contractors retained have experience in creating Defensible Space activities as well as the appropriate insurance overages.
- Provide follow-up visits to insure treatment compliance.
- Provide photo Monitoring by the Program Coordinator.
- Provide project fiscal accountability is maintained by Plumas Corporation (our fiscal sponsor and a 501 (c) (3) organization), by an MoU which completes quarterly and final reports, signs contracts, makes payments, collects landowner co-pays, provides complete monthly financial records for each project and an annual independent audit provided by a CPA.

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
PC FSC, Program Coordinator & Plumas Corporation – Conduct outreach, perform HIZ Assessments, and prepare requests for contractors, follow-up to insure completed treatments.	8/2012 - 12/2014
PC FSC & Plumas Corporation. - Provide quarterly and final reports, sign contracts, collect landowner co-pays, and provides complete monthly financial records for each project and an annual, independent audit provided by a CPA.	8/2012 - 12/2014
PC FSC, Program Coordinator, Plumas Corporation & qualified contractors – Perform required work on each individual property.	8/2012 - 12/2014
PC FSC, Program Coordinator & Plumas Corporation – Performs photo monitoring of treatment areas before and after treatment; prepare appropriate monitoring packages.	8/2012 - 12/2014

c. Restrictions, Technical/Environmental Documents and Agreements

Agreements

- 1) Project participants submit a Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Application, requesting assistance from PC FSC to participate in the program, have permission to be on the property and have their properties treated. (Copy included in Tenure Section)
- 2) Prior to implementing treatments the Program Coordinator visits with the landowner to discuss treatment activities. The Landowner Application serves as the landowner’s agreement for treatment to occur.
- 3) Plumas Corporation, by agreement with PC FSC, conducts our financial and contractual business. (Copy of MoU included in Agreements)

Permits/Coordination

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- **Plumas County** – No permits required- Planning Director & Environmental Health Service director regularly attend PC FSC meetings and support the project.
- **Northern Sierra AQMD** – No Burning is planned for this project. Materials are chipped on site or hauled to a disposal site.
- **Cal Fire** – Cal Fire requires this, PRC 4291; there is no permit necessary.
- **CA Fish & Game** – Not Applicable
- **State Office of Historic Preservation** – Not Applicable

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

This Project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA.

Title 14. CCR, Chapter 3. Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19. Categorical Exemptions, Section 15403 (i)

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Not Applicable – All Private Lands.

d. Organizational Capacity

PC FSC started in 1998 and incorporated as a non-profit organization in 2002. The County Board of Supervisors and Cal Fire approved PC FSC's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in 2005. In 2002 the Council began employing a wildfire planning professional (with 30 years experience) in early 2002 as the PCFSC coordinator, to coordinate council activities, perform community education in wildfire planning, develop a CWPP, provide community assistance in developing wildfire mitigation projects and grant funding requests. In 2004 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Plumas Corporation, a non-profit economic development organization, to be the Council's fiscal sponsor.

PC FSC and Plumas Corporation has managed 80 different grants since 2002, 5 have been specifically for Defensible Space Assistance and 27 have been for community hazardous fuel reduction projects. Funding sources have included National Fire Plan Funds through BLM, US Forest Service and the CFSC Clearinghouse; Secure Rural Schools HR2389 Title II; Plumas County Board of Supervisors Secure Rural Schools HR2389 Title III; Prop 84 funds through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy California and Prop 40 funds through Cal Fire. Cash contributions and receipts from forest products have also been managed in each of the projects.

This project will follow the same project implementation template that PC FSC used since 2004 to successfully carry out our Defensible Space Assistance Program, using a mix of funding sources. The Program Coordinator was retained in 2004 and is a local teacher who is also a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and volunteer firefighter. The program has accomplished creating defensible space for about 35 properties per year.

PC FSC - Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance**e. Cooperation and Community Support**

This project was developed as a direct result of community interest, involvement and support. Each year we get new interest from residents wishing to make their homes more fire safe. References have come from community service organizations, volunteer fire departments, county agencies and other outreach sources.

As defensible space treatments are accomplished additional eligible landowners, seeing the benefits and outcomes, request assistance and inclusion by approaching PC FSC.

Letters of Support

Plumas County Board of Supervisors passed a Resolution Supporting this project.

Plumas Corporation provided a Letter of Support for this project.

Plumas County OES provided a Letter of Support for this project.

City of Portola provided a Letter of Support for this project.

Gold Mountain CSD provided a Letter of Support for this project.

f. Long-Term Management and Sustainability Narrative

Not Applicable as maintaining of Defensible Space requires at least annual attention.

g. Performance Measures

The following performance measure for this project will be:

- 1) **Number of jobs created-** This project will directly generate 1.7 FTE's (\$20hr*2,080 hours) and indirectly assist the local economy by providing jobs for the local mill processing sawlogs and biomass, as well as support services for the equipment and laborers performing the treatment.
- 2) **Acres of Land Improved** – This project phase will create an additional 25-50 acres of treated lands (depending on parcel size) and at least 50 structures protected.