

Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break CEQA Environmental Analysis Project

Narrative Description

Detailed Project Description

In 2008, the Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) in cooperation with the Tehama-Glenn Fire Safe Council prepared the Tehama East Community Wildfire Protection Plan utilizing significant input from public and private stakeholders. Through that planning process, implementation measures were developed to improve fire management and fuels conditions as well as to restore natural fire regiments within the watersheds of eastern Tehama County. Among the efforts that developed out of that planning process was the installation of a shaded fuel break along the County maintained Tramway Road and various private timberland roads (See Project Location Map).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of these fuel breaks and increase cost efficiency in their development, participants in the planning process recommended that fuel breaks along various roads be developed so that they link together in order to form a systems of fire management infrastructure. As a result, the Tramway Road/A Line Road Shaded Fuel break project was developed so that fuel treatments along a 10 mile segment of Tramway Road and Sierra Pacific Industries' A-Line Road tie into the soon to be completed C-Line Shaded Fuel Break being developed cooperatively between Cal Fire and Sierra Pacific Industries. Combined, the two ridge top fuel breaks will be approximately 22 miles long and will protect the watersheds of Antelope Creek and Battle Creek. Both creeks have been identified as a significant fishery for Anadromous species including Spring Run Chinook Salmon. Communities protected by this fuel break include Manton, Forward Mill, Paynes Creek and Ponderosa Sky Ranch.

Fuel treatments to be completed during the project's future implementation will consist of cutting and chipping or cutting, piling and burning mixed conifer species 8" dbh and under along with oaks 6" dbh and under within 100' on both sides of the roadway. Related understory vegetation including Manzanita and cenothus will also be treated. With the small size of vegetation being processed, it is anticipated that the growth rate of large trees will be increased and provide significant shade to treatment areas. As a result, the regrowth of brush and shade tolerant seedlings will be reduced. In order to maximize the length of time between fuel break treatments and thus reduce future maintenance costs, licensed herbicides appropriate for forested landscapes will be applied to treatment areas unless directed otherwise by landowners. It is anticipated that owners of large working parcels will allow herbicide applications given their value to long term vegetation management.

Based upon the nature of project work, the TCRCD has determined that environmental analysis of impacts related to the proposed Tramway Road/A Line Road Fuel Break project need to be conducted in the form a CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND). As proposed, the Tehama County RCD would prepare the IS/MND and act as the CEQA Lead Agency in the development and processing of the document. The specific work scope and deliverables include:

1) Consulting with various State and Federal resource agencies along with members of the local community in developing CEQA scoping issues.

2) Prepare notices as required by CEQA regulations

3) Contract with required specialists (biology and archeology) in order to complete studies that would be incorporated into the Biological and Cultural Resources sections of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

4) Prepare CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document which incorporates information and data from contracted specialist's studies along with that developed by TCRCD personnel watershed stakeholders and citizens of Tehama County.

5) Prepare adoption resolution to be ratified by the Tehama County RCD Board of Directors.

6) Make findings and determination regarding the project's potential impacts on environmental resources.

7) Prepare and post Notice of Determination.

The impacts of the proposed Tramway Road/A-Line Shaded Fuel Break and the already in place Cal Fire C-Line Fuel Break will be analyzed together in order to thoroughly assess the cumulative impacts that would result from these combined efforts. It is anticipated that with environmental analysis completed, the potential for funding to implement the Tramway Road/A-Line Shaded Fuel Break will increase as potential environmental impacts related to its development will have been identified and either designed out of the project work scope or reduced to a less than significant level through development of mitigation measures.

Project Summary

The Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break CEQA Environmental Analysis project entails the TCRCD's conducting environmental analysis of impacts related to the proposed Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break. This analysis will be described and discussed in a CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document (IS/MND) prepared by the TCRCD who will act as the project's lead agency. Project work to be analyzed in the IS/MND will entail cutting and chipping or piling and burning mixed confer species 8"dbh and under along with related understory vegetation to 100' on both sides of the roadway along a 10 mile segment of County and private timberland roads. The vegetation treatments conducted during initial project work will be maintained through the use of an appropriate herbicide licensed for use within forested landscapes.

Environmental Setting

The Antelope Creek and Battle Creek watersheds are located within the southernmost extension of the Cascade Range. These watersheds are all relatively long and narrow, with moderate to steep slopes which serve as barriers to development within the area's riparian zone. Elevations within the project area range from 3,700' to 4,400'. Vegetation consists of a continuum from Chaparral and low elevation Ponderosa Pine dominated ecosystems to Mixed Confer. Species supported by these habitats include State and Federally listed (threatened) Spring Run Chinook Salmon. All of the land within the proposed project area are private holdings of productive ranch and timber land.

Workplan and Schedule

This environmental analysis project will require consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game, Cal Fire, the Water Quality Control Board, and the Tehama County Road Department in order to ascertain concerns with regards to the fuel break's work scope and tentative mitigation measures. Local residents will be canvassed through the use of a community meeting and newspaper requests for comments. These comments will be considered and incorporated into the analysis conducted in connection with development of the IS/MND. Archeological and biological services will be procured in order to adequately address these resource issues.

Other resource issues will be analyzed by TCRCD personnel. The draft document will be reviewed by responsible agencies and posted on the TCRCD web site, available for public review. Once comments have been reviewed, a final draft of the document will be prepared by TCRCD personnel along with a CEQA findings and determination statement. The final draft IS/MND will be presented to the TCRCD Board of Directors for ratification and a Notice of Determination will be prepared and posted as required under CEQA.

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
<p>Consultation with responsible and trustee agencies in order to develop CEQA scoping issues. Project deliverables include agency input and response into the proposed work scope which will be incorporated into the draft and final IS/MND</p>	<p>September 2012-October 2012</p>
<p>A community meeting and newspaper requests for comments will be prepared in order to introduce the Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break project and its environmental analysis to watershed stakeholders. These community outreach techniques will also be used in order to ascertain community concerns regarding the fuel break's work scope and tentative mitigation measures. Comments received at the community meeting and in response to the newspaper request will be considered and incorporated into the analysis conducted in connection with development of the IS/MND. Deliverables include a community meeting and newspaper ads.</p>	<p>October 2012</p>
<p>Contracts with required specialists (biology and archeology) will be prepared in order to complete studies that would be incorporated into the Biological and Cultural Resources sections of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Deliverables include Request for Proposal and contract documents prepared in order to procure professional services as well as initial and final draft reports from specialists related to resource findings.</p>	<p>October 2012</p>
<p>Obtain access agreements from those landowners along the project route who have not already signed the agreement form. Deliverables include signed access agreements from landowners or documentation as to their non-participation.</p>	<p>October 2012-December 2012</p>
<p>Prepare six month progress report</p>	<p>February 2013</p>
<p>Prepare CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document which incorporates information and data from agency personnel, contracted specialist's studies as well as that developed by TCRCD staff and offered by local stakeholders and residents. Deliverables include an initial and final draft IS/MND document.</p>	<p>October 2012 through April 2013</p>
<p>Make findings and determination regarding the project's potential impacts on environmental resources. Deliverables include preparation of an adoption resolution to be ratified by the Tehama County RCD Board of Directors.</p>	<p>April 2013</p>

Present contents of IS/MND along with adoption resolution to the Tehama County RCD's Board of Directors. Obtain ratified adoption resolution.	April 2013
Prepare and post Notice of Determination.	May 2013
Prepare final progress report	May 2013

Restrictions, Technical/Environmental Documents and Agreements

Restrictions/Agreements

Property Restrictions

In addition to CEQA analysis, another pre-project implementation activity to be completed in connection with the Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break CEQA Environmental Analysis Project is obtaining access agreements from all landowners along the project route. Shortly after initiating the process of developing the IS/MND document, TCRCD personnel will contact all landowners within the project area in order to explain the project and obtain access agreements needed in order to proceed with project implementation. The majority of the project area is owned by several large landowners and their permission has already been assured. Access agreements would need to be obtained from the owners of several small parcels. If any landowner refuse to sign access agreements or is unresponsive after two contact attempts, these properties will be skipped thus changing the size of the project area. It is anticipated that the number of parcels needing to be left untreated will be minimal.

Regulatory Requirements/Permits

It is anticipated that permits will be required from the following agencies.

Tehama County Road Department (encroachment permit for fuel treatments within the Tramway Road right-of-way)

Tehama County Air Pollution Control District (A non-discretionary burn permit to burn piles)

State Office of Historic Preservation (Cultural Resources Submission of Findings to State Historic Preservation Officer per National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106)

California Environmental Quality Act

It is anticipated that the Tramway Road/A- Line Road Fuel Break Project is subject to CEQA analysis and is thus the subject this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Organizational Capacity

The TCRCD has completed 6 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration documents for fuel break projects. TCRCD staff to be involved in this effort include the District's Manager who will provide budget and organizational management of the project work scope and manage contracts with consultants. The RCD's Watershed Coordinator will conduct the community meeting and prepare IS/MND document sections along with various required notices. The Watershed Coordinator will also coordinate with consultants, review their reports and incorporate that content into the IS/MND along with the comments of community members. In addition he will prepare a draft and final version of the IS/MND and submit the final document to the TCRCD Board of Directors for review and adoption. The Tehama County RCD's GIS Coordinator will provide spatial analysis of project area resources and prepare maps for the IS/MND document. The District accountant will track and monitor all project costs, develop accounting information incorporated into project billings as well as update scheduling and budget information. It is anticipated that archeological services will be provided by the Western Shasta RCD's archeologist. A biological consultant has yet to be identified. Cal Fire foresters will provide input into fuel break design and the Sierra Pacific Industries forestry department will supply archeological and biological resource information. Reviewing agencies and members of the public will provide input as to changes in the fuel break project's work scope and mitigation measures.

Cooperation and Community Support

The Tramway Road/A-Line Road Fuel Break was one of the projects identified by the Tehama-Glenn Fire Safe Council through that organization's development of the Tehama East Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This consortium of wildfire experts, resource managers, watershed community groups and private range and timberland owners includes staff from State and Federal resource management agencies, watershed conservancies, community Fire Safe Councils and individual land owners. Through this collaboration, a strategically designed grid of fuel breaks and fuel reductions projects was developed that link together in order to leverage efforts by various stakeholders. Letters of support for this CEQA analysis and future construction of the Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuelbreak have been provided by Sierra Pacific Industries, Richard O'Sullivan owner and manager of the O'Sullivan Cattle Company/Turner Ranch, Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, Cal Fire, and the California Department of Fish and Game

Long Term Management and Sustainability

This CEQA environmental analysis project will be completed in approximately nine months. The project will not require future management other than assuring that the work scope is executed in the manner describe in the final CEQA IS/MND and that the Mitigation Measures developed in that document are adhered to. Formal adherence to Mitigation Measures will be developed in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan of the IS/MND. The Tramway Road/A Line Shaded Fuel Break project, to be analyzed in the proposed CEQA IS/MND will require maintenance in order to maintain its viability as fire management infrastructure. This will be provided using the Tehama County Resource Conservation District's Chipper. The TCRCD chipper program generates excess funds from its fee-for-service operations. These dollars are then utilized to operate the chipper on fuel break maintenance projects throughout the Tehama County area which would include the Tramway Road/A Line Shaded Fuel Break.

Performance Measures

Quantitative Performance Measures

Number and Diversity of People Reached

Providing significant information to the public about the environmental impacts of a project as well as allowing significant public input into the process of identifying and analyzing such impacts is a major goal and requirement of the CEQA process. In fulfilling these requirements, the TCRCD will maximize the number and diversity of people informed and involved with the process of preparing the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Tramway Road/A-Line Shaded Fuel Break project. To accomplish this, the RCD will conduct a stakeholder meeting in the community of Paynes Creek which is near the project's impact area. This will allow those residents most directly impacted by project work to express their concerns regarding project work. It will also be held to fully develop issues that need to be addressed in the IS/MND document. Similarly, a project description will be announced in local newspapers and posted to the RCD website. There, a request will be made for comments by County residents regarding possible impacts of project work on the ecosystems of eastern Tehama County. Through this process it is anticipated that a wider range of stakeholders will become aware of the project and involved in the analysis of potential impacts caused by its development.

Dollar Value of Resources Leverage for the Sierra Nevadas

(No matching funds will be contributed to the completion of this project)

Number and Type of Jobs Created

(The work involved in this pre-project implementation effort will utilize a number of TCRCD personnel along with staff from TNC and reviewing agencies who will be involved in this effort on an intermittent basis. It is estimated that

approximately one ¾ Full Time Equivalent position will be created utilizing all the man hours expended during the life of this project.)

Number of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities

(This Performance Measure is not applicable as this project entails pre-implementation efforts that will lead to the development of a fuel break. With the development of the Tramway Road/A Line Road Shaded Fuel Break, forest and range resources will be protected and thus the fuel break project will help to maintain economic activity within Eastern Tehama County)

Project-Specific Performance Measures

Percent of Pre-Project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation

It is anticipated that the Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break CEQA Environmental Analysis project will lead directly to implementation of fuel break work once environmental impacts related to project work have been analyzed and protection measures incorporated into the work scope. It is also expected that once implementation of fuel break work begins it will be completed within four to five months. Consequently this performance measure will be determined by establishing that all fuel break project work analyzed in the CEQA document has been completed on time, as described in the IS/MND and that all Mitigation Measures developed in the CEQA IS/MND have been adhered to.

Appendix B3

SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY PROPOSITION 84 - DETAILED BUDGET FORM

Project Name: Tramway Road A Line Shaded Fuel Break CEQA Environmental Analysis Project

Applicant: Tehama County Resource Conservation District

SECTION ONE DIRECT COSTS	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Total
Project Management Costs	\$1,518.00					\$1,518.00
Project Accounting	\$1,157.00					\$1,157.00
Environmental Analysis IS/MND Prep	\$8,362.00					\$8,362.00
CEQA Filing Fees	\$2,102.00					\$2,102.00
Archeological Consultant	\$4,000.00					\$4,000.00
Biological Survey	\$1,500.00					\$1,500.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
DIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:	\$18,639.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,639.00

SECTION TWO INDIRECT COSTS	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Total
Monitoring	\$500.00					\$500.00
Environmental Database/Information Fees	\$850.00					\$850.00
Project materials & supplies purchased	\$490.00					\$490.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
INDIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:	\$1,840.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,840.00
PROJECT TOTAL:	\$20,479.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20,479.00

SECTION THREE Administrative Costs (Costs may not to exceed 15% of total Project Cost) :						Total
*Organization operating/overhead costs	\$3,071.00					\$3,071.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:	\$3,071.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,071.00
SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:	\$23,550.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$23,550.00

SECTION FOUR OTHER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Total
<i>List other funding or in-kind contributors to project (i.e. Sierra Business Council, Department of Water Resources, etc.)</i>						
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
						\$0.00
Total Other Contributions:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

NOTE: The categories listed on this form are examples and may or may not be an expense related to the project. Rows may be added or deleted on the form as needed. Applicants should contact the SNC if questions arise.

* Operating Costs should be allocated to the percentage that is applicable to the grant based on your cost allocation methodology and cannot exceed 15% of your total project costs.