

5. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

a. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Description

Big Sandy Rancheria (BSR) is in need of continual maintenance and reduction of fire hazard fuels within the Rancheria and surrounding area. The clearing of hazardous fuels from 2 fuel breaks and clearance within a 30ft to 100ft radius of residences and community building by a local fire crew, consisting of Tribal members, using hand tools, weed eaters, chainsaws and mowers. We do not currently have an emergency water storage system, prevention measures are essential to the safety of the community. Dense, flashy fuels and brush along roadways/steeper mountainous areas needs to be thinned. The land is crowded by dense brush species such as manzanita, buck brush, poison oak, and live oak. By thinning the brush deer habitat would be enhanced. In addition, there is solid waste; scrap lumber, old furniture and construction debris.

Location

BSR is 300 acres±, is located approximately 3 mi. NE of Auberry, in Fresno County, California. The Rancheria is in Section 9, T10S, R23E, MDM, California.

The occupied portion of the land is situated in a small valley with a gently sloping floor and a small seasonal creek, Backbone Creek. About 180 acres are steep, mountainous and brush-laden. The land has a mixture of federal trust and fee simple land holdings within the exterior boundaries of the Rancheria.

The main road into BSR, Auberry Mission Rd, splits from Auberry Rd then splits at Jose Basin Rd. Auberry Mission Rd is the only road leading in and out of BSR. This road serves the Tribe's business enterprises, Mono Wind Casino and BSR Distributing, and the residents. Auberry Mission Rd, from the top intersection at Auberry Rd down to Jose Basin Rd, the road is overgrown with brush. Continuing onto the Rancheria past the administrative building, dense brush is on both sides of the road and surrounding the cemetery. Jose Basin Rd, on the north end of the Rancheria, serves the Head Start/Child Care Center, the TANF Building, and the remainder of our homes.

Although a paved county road crosses the northerly side of the Rancheria and provides access to part of the residential area, most homes must be reached over narrow dirt roads. A highway parallels the westerly and southerly portion of the Rancheria, but because of the highway's elevation, direct access to the individual home sites is not available. In general, the roads crossing the Rancheria are not designed to serve the home sites and access is difficult.

Scope of Work

- Provide 100 ft clearances around tribal housing, government buildings, business enterprises, Head Start/Child Care facility, TANF building, Gym. A weed eater/mower will be used on grass areas. For brush/trees, chainsaws/pole saws will be used.
- Clear 15 ft areas from roadways and driveways of tribal housing and cemetery area using a weed eater on grasses and chainsaw/pole saws on trees/brush.

- Provide outreach and education regarding fire prevention activities.
- A chipper will be utilized for smaller branches and the resulting mulch will be stockpiled for later use for erosion control and landscaping.
- Trim low hanging branches using extending pole saws and chip small branches.
- Brush will be piled and burned. Large pieces of wood will be cut and given to Elders.

Purpose

To prevent the loss of property and life in the event of a wildfire and to preserve and protect our cultural resources on the Rancheria and on lands adjacent to the Rancheria. The proposal is to assist the community with fire safety, protection and education.

Big Sandy Rancheria is cognizant of rare and endangered plant species and will not remove or damage these species while clearing areas. Culturally sensitive archaeological sites will be protected as well.

Summary

The proposed project will remove or reduce flashy fuels around 46± residences, outbuildings and community buildings. 2 fuel breaks cleared and new fuel breaks established.

These activities will help protect our natural and cultural resources as well as provide jobs for local Tribal members.

Hand-work will ensure that culturally significant sites are not disturbed and the soil will remain stable. This will also inhibit erosion problems after the project duration. The crew will also be able to leave any endangered or protected plant species standing.

Tribal citizens still harvest/gather plants and materials on the Rancheria and are in favor of this method versus application of chemicals. The repeated use of herbicides could be detrimental to the environment of the Rancheria.

Environmental Setting

The present environmental setting on BSR is water related. Uranium is present in several of the wells. BSR is working with the Indian Health Service and various contractors and subcontractors to address problem areas. A water treatment facility is up and running and infrastructure has been completed. The Tribe is pursuing funding from EPA and BIA to address Environmental/water issues on the Rancheria.

b. WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Advertise in local newspapers, Big Sandy website, and bulletin boards for fire crew positions

September 5-14, 2012

Interview, select and hire crew members (drug testing required)

September 20 & 21, 2012

Orientation and Safety Meeting	September 26, 2012
Begin first phase, clearing around child care center and elder housing	October 3, 2012
Second phase, clear around residences that are In close proximity to high density areas	November 5, 2012
Clear around remainder of residences, out buildings and business enterprises	November 26, 2012
Work on eliminating/clearing brush, etc. on old fuel breaks and begin on new fuel break (weather permitting)	December 3-17, 2012

c. RESTRICTIONS, TECHNICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS AND AGREEMENTS

Cal Fire is creating a fuel break called the Comstock Fuel Break that will reduce the amount of fuel on the north end of the Rancheria. This fuel break will come up behind the Child Care Center on the Rancheria. Big Sandy Rancheria is presently cooperating with California Division of Forestry on a Prescribed Burning Project; The Comstock Fuel Break, Project No. RxSouth-018FKU. (See Exhibit 1).

d. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Big Sandy Rancheria is governed by a democratically elected, five-person Tribal Council. The Tribe owns and operates Mono Wind Casino, the Broken Arrow Restaurant ,BSR Distributing, and the Big Sandy Rancheria Head Start and Child Care Center.

The present Tribal Administrator has working knowledge of fire principles, previous fire management, and financial management. She worked for the US Forest Service for 12 years and had been active in fire camp assignments.

The Crew Leader has worked in this capacity in previous years, supervising fire crew members and has a working knowledge of fire management and safety guidelines. The fire team will be comprised of 4-5 Big Sandy Rancheria tribal citizens who have previous experience in fire and worked prior years on the old fuel breaks.

The Tribe is working cooperatively with the Josh Simmons, Regional Fuels Management Specialist, Pacific Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Sacramento, CA.

e. COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Not Applicable. Big Sandy Rancheria is governed by a Tribal Council, consisting of a five member board over 21 years of age. These five members represent the community and when the Resolution was signed in favor of pursuing this funding, this is the Cooperation and Community Support component.

f. LONG TERM MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Big Sandy Rancheria is pursuing various grants through Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Sierra Nevada Conservancy to fund project management and sustainability. Funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs is being utilized annually for fuels reduction and training. A Fire Management Plan is in the development stages for Big Sandy as well as an Emergency Plan.

g. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Big Sandy Rancheria will use the following performance measures during the project duration and completion.

- Number of people reached
- Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- Number and Type of Jobs Created
- Number of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities
- Number of Special Significance Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Improved or Restored