

### **Project Summary**

This grant will involve planning and environmental review for fuels and meadow restoration work within the Caples Creek watershed, which was identified as a restoration priority by previous Forest Service analyses. The project outcome will be a NEPA document and decision including measures needed to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire and restore ecosystem function to 4,000 acres of forest land and multiple meadows. Deliverables include specialist reports, proposed action, NEPA document, and decision.

### **Environmental Setting**

The watershed is 30 miles east of Placerville and contains 92% Forest land. It is a primary water supply for 110,000 people & businesses who rely upon EID for water; and provides high quality back country recreation and fisheries in an area recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Goals**

This project will demonstrate how a water purveyor, such as EID, can develop partnerships with land managers, such as the Forest Service, to guide and implement activities that will ensure high quality water and desired site conditions for the foreseeable future.

### **Scope**

The project will conduct planning needed for projects in the Caples Creek Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) developed as part of the Forest Service's nationwide Watershed Condition Framework (described in the project pre-application). Efforts will focus on two issues: (1) reintroduction of fire and management of fire-adapted ecosystems, and (2) meadow restoration. EID and the Forest Service will refine areas of the watershed for restoration, develop appropriate restoration actions for each area, identify an implementation schedule, and conduct appropriate environmental review for the actions to be conducted. Planning for fire activities will be focused on the western approximately 4,000 acres of the watershed. Meadows targeted include: Schneider Camp Meadow, Jake Schneider Meadow, Government Meadows, Convict Meadow, and multiple unnamed meadows.

### **Project Description**

Fire suppression over the past century has resulted in decreased forest health and resilience in the Caples Creek watershed. Heavy fuel loading is a concern where pre-settlement fire return intervals were 5 and 35 years, with generally low to mixed severity, and have now lengthened to 35 to 100 years. Lengthened fire return intervals have allowed for accumulations of dead woody materials and a dense understory of brush and/or saplings; and have influenced stand structure, density, and distribution. These conditions have greatly increased the risk of catastrophic fire within the watershed.

The project will manage for desired fuels conditions by establishing/maintaining treatments that are effective in modifying fire behavior; culturing stand structure and composition to resemble desired conditions; and reducing susceptibility to insect/pathogen and drought-related tree mortality. Desired conditions for the watershed generally resemble pre-settlement conditions with high levels of horizontal and vertical diversity at the landscape scale; species composition that varies by elevation, site productivity, and related environmental factors; and fuel treatments that provide for successful establishment of early seral stage vegetation. Proposed activities will focus on prescribed fire and management of natural ignitions.

Ground disturbance, soil compaction, vegetation loss, and altered hydrology, have occurred to varying degrees in meadows within the watershed; and at some sites have led to streambed incision, lowering

of the groundwater table, and changes in vegetation composition. At Schneider Camp Meadow, for example, impacts (impaired function, hydrologic disruption, vegetation loss, reduced soil productivity) occur from road and trail erosion, vehicle use on the meadow and in the stream channel, and dispersed recreation. Dispersed recreation has also led to impacts to riparian areas and meadows in the vicinity of road segments identified on the included map.

Meadows in desired condition generally have species composition and structural diversity of plant and animal communities that provide desired habitat conditions and ecological functions; ecological status of vegetation that is late seral with a diversity of age classes of hardwood shrubs present and regeneration occurring; and are hydrologically functional with sites of accelerated erosion stabilized or recovering and vegetation roots occurring throughout the soil profile. The WRAP indicates that activities that may help achieve these conditions include: aspen enhancement, trail rerouting, stabilization of eroded areas, limiting access to sensitive areas, and developing recreation opportunities away from sensitive areas.

Historical fire data, Proper Functioning Condition Assessments, long-term range condition and monitoring plots, and collected survey data will be considered in project development. An interdisciplinary team will develop appropriate BMP applications for maintaining/improving water quality.

**Workplan and Schedule**

**ENF’s role:**

- Provide interdisciplinary team (IDT)
- Survey/inventory
- NEPA
- Performance data collection/analysis
- Provide information for progress & final reports
- Establish/maintain financial records

**EID’s role:**

- Grant management
- Document review and stakeholder input
- Progress & final report submissions
- Grant contract/invoicing

**WORK SCHEDULE\***

<b>DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
Work begins	August 2012
Survey/inventory	9/30/14
Progress reports	2/28/13, 8/31/13, 2/28/14, 8/31/14
Start NEPA. Proposed Action/Purpose & Need.	10/31/14
Public Involvement Plan & Scoping	1/31/15
Progress report	2/28/15
Issues & Alternatives	3/31/15
Specialist reports	5/31/15
Progress report	8/31/15
NEPA document written	8/31/15
Comment period & analysis	11/30/15
Write decision document	3/31/16
Project Completed	4/30/16
Final report	4/30/16
Performance Measure Reporting	4/30/17, 4/30/19

\*Resources needed: IDT, vehicle costs/mileage, administrative costs.

### **Restrictions, Technical/Environmental Documents and Agreements**

A Memorandum of Understanding between the USFS and EID will be developed prior to beginning SNC funded work.

### **Permits Potentially Needed for Implementation**

<b>Permitting Agency</b>	<b>Type of Requirement</b>
Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act, Section 404 Permit <sup>1</sup>
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	401 Water Quality Certification <sup>1</sup> Waste Discharge Requirement <sup>1</sup> NPDES Permit <sup>1</sup> Construction General Permit <sup>1</sup>
State Office of Historic Preservation	National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 <sup>2</sup>
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation <sup>3</sup>
Alpine, Eldorado, and Great Basin Air Districts	Smoke Permit

<sup>1</sup>To be obtained if needed

<sup>2</sup>Compliance prior to decision

<sup>3</sup>Signed BA/BE prior to decision

The project will produce a NEPA document & decision and is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15262 of the CEQA Guidelines as a planning study. The NEPA document could be used to satisfy CEQA requirements (Guidelines Section 15221) when implementing the project.

### **Organizational Capacity:**

#### **ELDORADO IRRIGATION DISTRICT:**

Dan Corcoran, Environmental Manager

#### **ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Degree(s)</b>	<b>Years Relevant Experience</b>
Duane Nelson	Placerville District Ranger	B.S.	32
Rick Hopson	Amador District Ranger	B.S., M.S.	17
Kim Morales	Hydrologist (IDT Leader)	B.S., M.S.	14
Sue Rodman	Forest Planner (Writer-Editor)	B.S.	32
Eric Whiteman	Archaeologist	B.A., M.A.	18
Matt Brown	Botanist	B.S., M.S.	8
Teresa Riesenhuber	District Fuels Officer	A.A.	20
Robyn Woods	District Fuels Officer	B.S.	15
Steve Markman	Hydrologist	B.S., M.S.	23
Chuck Loffland	Wildlife Biologist	A.S, B.S.	22
Beck Estes	Research Ecologist	B.S., M.S., Ph.D.	7
Jim Koltun	Transportation Planner	B.S.	30
Jann Williams	Fisheries Biologist	B.S.	18
Tina Garcia	Rangeland Specialist	B.S.	18
Cathy Bounds	Special Uses	B.S.	12
Eric Nicita	Soil Scientist	B.S.	17
Deb Tatman	GIS Program Manager	B.A.	33

### **Cooperation and Community Support**

Letters of support are included in this grant from the following sources:

- El Dorado County & Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
- Sierra Forest Legacy

EID and the Forest Service have also reached out to the following additional stakeholders who have exhibited support for the project: Sue Britting (California Native Plant Society), Rich Platt (El Dorado County Fish and Game Commission), Rich Wade (Sierra Pacific Industries), Peter Maurer (El Dorado County Planning Department), and Roger Bloom (California Department of Fish and Game Heritage and Wild Trout Program).

Scoping is performed for all Forest Service proposals and analysis of scoping comments received will be used to identify issues. Dependent upon interest, the Eldorado National Forest and EID webpages, informational discussions, and field trips may be used to further engage the public.

### **Long-Term Management and Sustainability**

Once fuel loadings are restored to a more natural condition through use of prescribed fire, the Forest Service intends to manage natural fire ignitions at this elevation and allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem. Consistent with the Region 5 Forest Service Handbook 2509.22 (Soil and Water Conservation, Chapter 10, Water Quality Handbook), Best Management Practices implementation checklists will be used following fuels and meadow project implementation to document whether, and when, the site-specific BMPs specified in the NEPA analysis were implemented and to identify and correct any deficiencies. This should help to ensure long-term maintenance of water quality.

### **Performance Measures**

The following quantitative performance measures that all grantees are asked to consider are applicable to the proposed project: Number of People Reached, Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged, and Number & Type of Jobs Created. New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities may be difficult to estimate given the nature of the project and the spectrum of benefits anticipated.

The following SNC-suggested performance measures for pre-project planning are applicable to the proposed project: Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments, and Percent of Pre-project and Planning Efforts Implemented. Measurable Change in Knowledge or Behavior may be difficult to estimate. While evaluation of increased public acceptance of prescribed fire or meadow restoration may be possible, specialized expertise beyond that needed to implement the project itself may be required to design, implement, or analyze results of related questionnaires/focus groups/activities.

## Appendix B3

### SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY PROPOSITION 84 - DETAILED BUDGET FORM

**Project Name:** Caples Creek Watershed Fuels Reduction and Meadow Restoration: A Sierra Nevada water purveyor and federal land manager working together to protect water supplies within the Sierra Nevada.

**Applicant:** El Dorado Irrigation District & Eldorado National Forest

<b>SECTION ONE DIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>CY2012 Year One</b>	<b>CY2013 Year Two</b>	<b>CY2014 Year Three</b>	<b>CY2015 Year Four</b>	<b>CY2016 Year Five</b>	<b>Total</b>
Team Leader	\$273.56	\$494.87				\$768.43
Writer-Editor						\$0.00
Archaeologist		\$3,703.49				\$3,703.49
Botanist		\$3,394.23				\$3,394.23
Hydrologist	\$4,811.76					\$4,811.76
District Fuels Officer	\$1,353.63					\$1,353.63
District Fuels Officer	\$1,867.08					\$1,867.08
Wildlife Biologist		\$3,483.17				\$3,483.17
Research Ecologist		\$2,670.62				\$2,670.62
Transportation Planner		\$1,786.83				\$1,786.83
Fisheries Biologist	\$1,419.74	\$2,568.37				\$3,988.11
Rangeland Specialist		\$511.00				\$511.00
Special Uses		\$440.79				\$440.79
Soil Scientist		\$2,574.44				\$2,574.44
Archaeology Crew		\$4,784.64				\$4,784.64
Archaeology Crew		\$9,663.66				\$9,663.66
Botany Crew		\$2,706.93				\$2,706.93
Botany Crew		\$3,354.25				\$3,354.25
Fisheries Crew	\$441.36	\$798.44				\$1,239.80
Fisheries Crew	\$686.72	\$1,242.43				\$1,929.15
Fuels Crew	\$1,147.51					\$1,147.51
Fuels Crew	\$1,407.76					\$1,407.76
Wildlife Crew		\$4,877.35				\$4,877.35
Wildlife Crew		\$4,877.35				\$4,877.35
GIS Staff	\$515.31					\$515.31
Vehicle expenses (mileage)	\$1,315.96	\$5,141.87				\$6,457.83
<b>DIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$15,240.39</b>	<b>\$59,074.73</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$74,315.12</b>

<b>SECTION TWO INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>CY2012 Year One</b>	<b>CY2013 Year Two</b>	<b>CY2014 Year Three</b>	<b>CY2015 Year Four</b>	<b>CY2016 Year Five</b>	<b>Total</b>
Progress & Performance Reports	342.44	342.44				684.88
<b>INDIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$342.44</b>	<b>\$342.44</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$684.88</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$15,582.83</b>	<b>\$59,417.17</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$75,000.00</b>

<b>SECTION THREE</b>						<b>Total</b>
<b>Administrative Costs (Costs may not to exceed 15% of total Project Cost) :</b>						
Overhead Costs - Not requested	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:</b>	<b>\$15,582.83</b>	<b>\$59,417.17</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$75,000.00</b>

<b>SECTION FOUR</b>	<b>CY2012</b>	<b>CY2013</b>	<b>CY2014</b>	<b>CY2015</b>	<b>CY2016</b>	
<b>OTHER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS*</b>						
	<b>Year One</b>	<b>Year Two</b>	<b>Year Three</b>	<b>Year Four</b>	<b>Year Five</b>	<b>Total</b>
USFS Appropriated Funds	\$23,773.00	\$23,155.45	\$18,825.88	\$110,548.29	\$1,104.72	\$177,407.34
<b>Total Other Contributions:</b>	<b>\$23,773.00</b>	<b>\$23,155.45</b>	<b>\$18,825.88</b>	<b>\$110,548.29</b>	<b>\$1,104.72</b>	<b>\$177,407.34</b>