

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program

SNC ID Number: 1126

Applicant: Butte County Fire Safe Council

Project Title: Big Chico Creek Forest Health Management Plan

Project Category: Two

SNC Subregion: North Central

County(ies): Butte

Funding Amount Requested: \$100,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$114,503

Final Score: 88.75

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

Big Chico Creek Forest Health Management Plan (BCCFHP) is a 7,939-acre, Category 2 project that will be implemented by the Butte County Fire Safe Council located in Butte County, upstream from the town of Chico and adjacent to the community of Forest Ranch. The project area is in the Big Chico Creek watershed which feeds the Sacramento River and encompasses CSU Chico's Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER). The watershed is vegetated with dense, fire-prone forest. The project area also includes private properties and is bordered by BLM parcels.

The project will develop a Forest Health Management Plan on 7,939 acres of mixed conifer forests within the Big Chico Creek Watershed draft CEQA documentation for future thinning of overgrown fuels and 1,500 acres of prescribed burning.

The project is part of a larger plan of the CAL FIRE Butte Unit Plan/Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP Work Group began developing a Landscape Level Framework (LLF) in the fall of 2015. The LLF provides a framework for coordinated planning for various scales of project, from 1,000 to 10,000 acres.

BCFSC has extensive experience managing grants, including the management of eight Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) grants over the past ten years. The proposed project will be completed by BCFSC staff and will include participation of volunteers and partner organizations. Private landowners throughout the watershed have provided letters of support.

The Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) will manage the project, complete the Forest Management Plan, and prepare draft CEQA documentation in partnership with BCCER, Consultants, Tribal partners, and the Butte County Resource Conservation District. BCCER will assist in facilitating communication between consultants hired to gather information for document development. BCCER will involve CSU Chico undergraduate and graduate students in this project and assist project landowners with review, approval, and maintenance of the Forest Health Management Plan over the next ten years. Landowners have pledged up to \$5,600 for the project; other partners are pledging up to \$6,900.

Consistent with the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program and Propositions 1 and 68, the BCCFHP and draft CEQA document will facilitate implementation of projects that: protect water quality and improve water quantity in Big Chico Creek and for downstream users; prevent catastrophic wildfire; restore forest ecosystems from overstocked conditions with forest thinning and prescribed fire; improve air Quality and carbon storage; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This project will lead to improvements for the watershed and Big Chico Creek which provides drinking water for the City of Chico. A healthy forest watershed system improves and supports water quality of the Big Chico Creek and protects important habitat for anadromous fall and spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
CEQA Surveys	October 2019
Draft CEQA document	December 2019
Final Forest Management Plan	February 2020
Forest Health Education-Outreach	March 2019- June 2020
SNC Progress Reports	Every 6 months
SNC Final Report	July 2020
Estimated Project Completion Date	July 2020

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$5,000
Forest Management Plan and CEQA	\$84,450
Materials and Supplies	\$750
Publications, Printing and Public Relations	\$800
Reporting, Performance Measures	\$1,000
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$8,000
TOTAL:	\$100,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

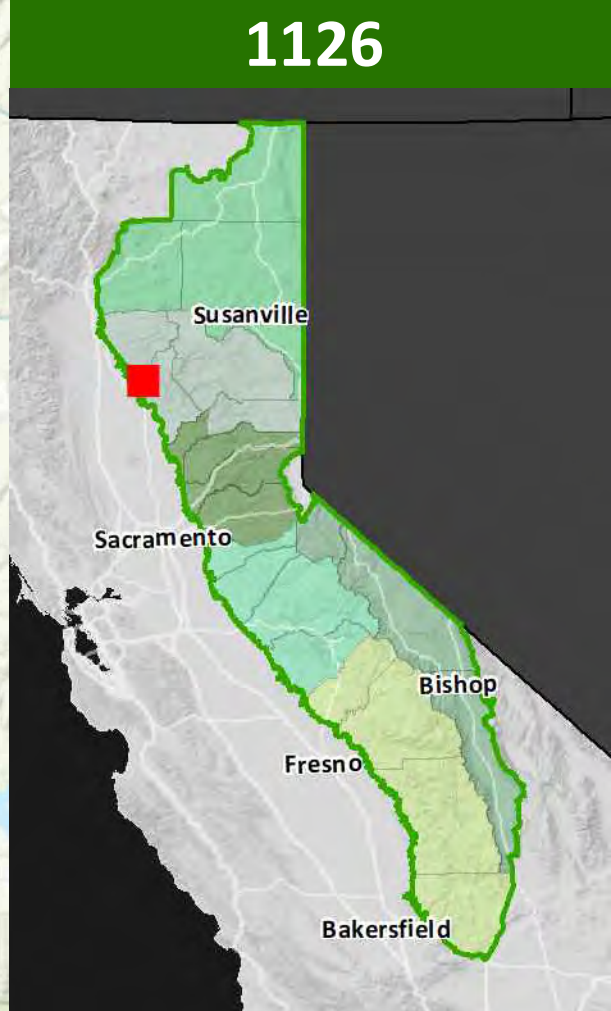
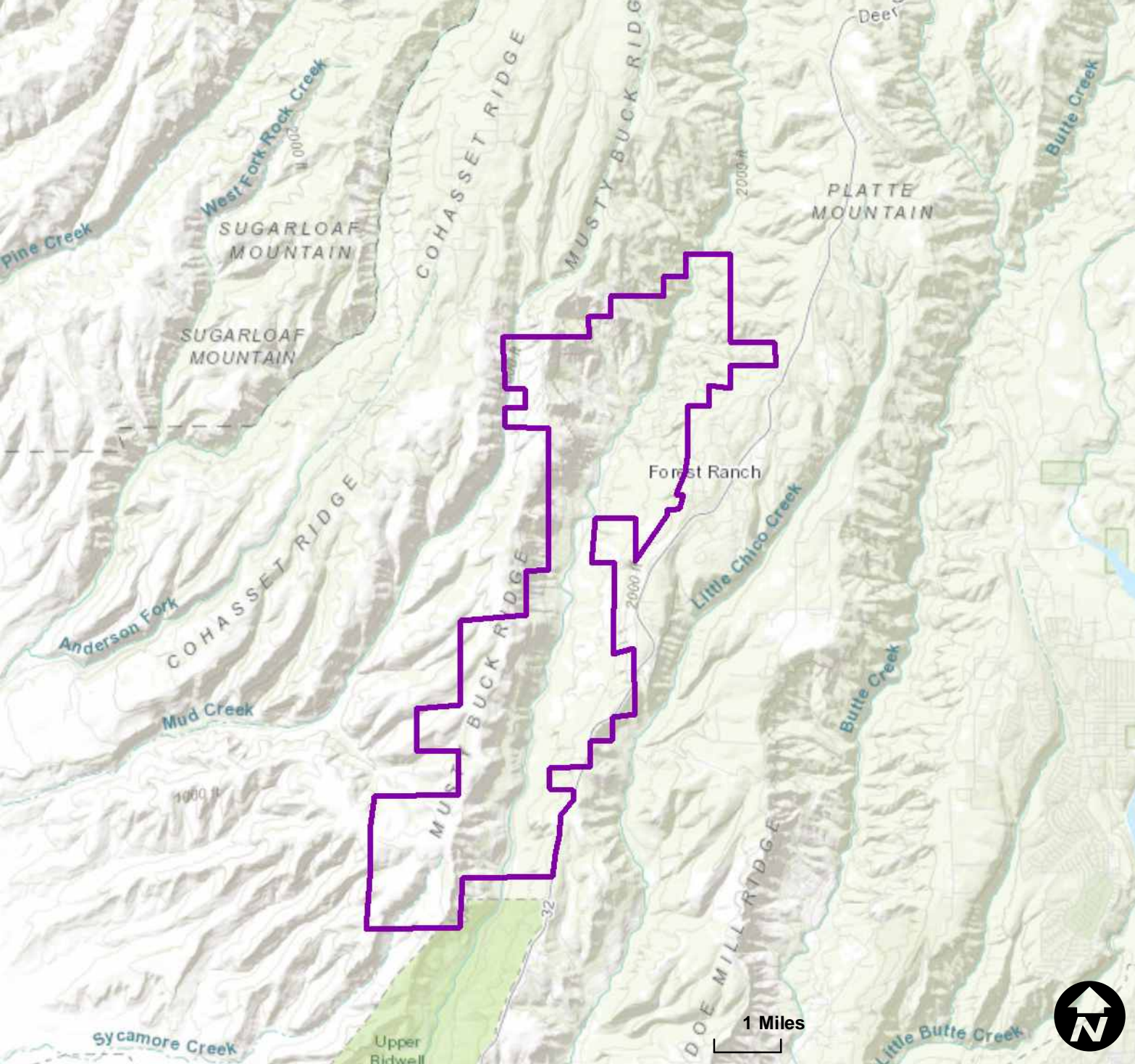
SUPPORT:









- Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria
- California Indian Water Commission
- California Water Service
- Butte County Department of Development Services
- Forest Ranch Fire Safe Council
- Forest Ranch Community Association
- Butte County Federal/State Land-Use Coordinating Committee
- Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve
- California Deer Association
- City of Chico
- Butte Environmental Council
- Butte County Fire Department
- Bureau of Land Management
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Sacramento River Watershed Program
- U.S. Forest Service – Plumas National Forest
- Butte County Office of Emergency Management
- Butte County Resource Conservation District
- Butte County Air Quality Management District

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

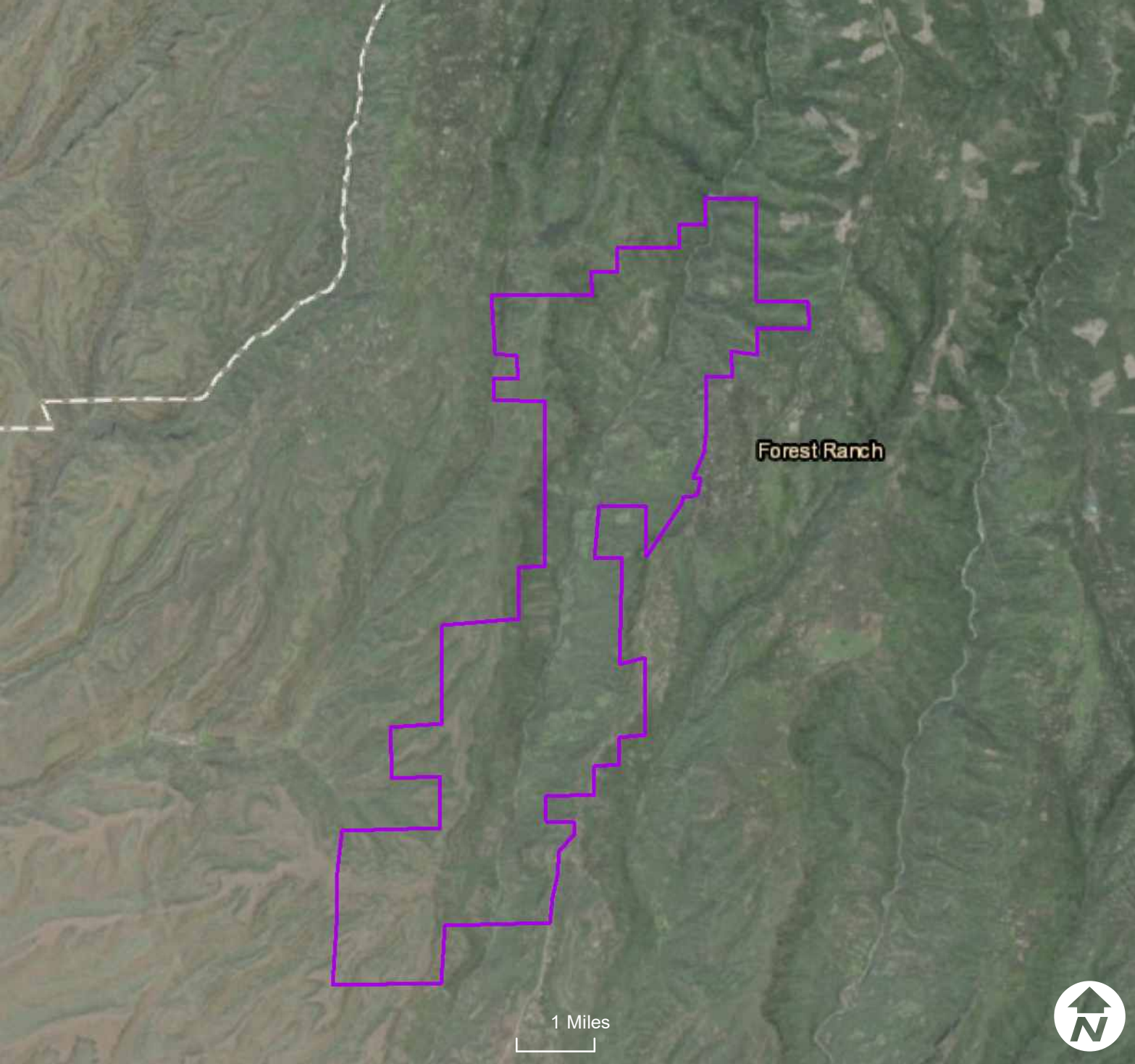
- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments











-  Project Location
-  Project Boundary
-  North Subregion
-  North Central Subregion
-  Central Subregion
-  East Subregion
-  South Central Subregion
-  South Subregion

Big Chico Creek Forest Health Management Plan

Butte County FSC



-  Project Location
-  Project Boundary
-  North Subregion
-  North Central Subregion
-  Central Subregion
-  East Subregion
-  South Central Subregion
-  South Subregion

CEQA Documentation

SNC #: 1126

Project Title: Big Chico Creek Forest Health Management Plan

Applicant: Butte County Fire Safe Council

CEQA:

The project is Statutorily Exempt under Section 15262. Feasibility and Planning Studies and Categorically Exempt under Class 6 Section 15306. Information Collection.

- **Notice of Exemption:** See Below

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

County Clerk
County of Butte
155 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, CA 95965

(Address)

Project Title: Big Chico Creek Forest Management Plan (SNC #1126)

Project Location - Specific:

The project includes 7,939 acres of forested lands in the Big Chico Creek Watershed, located between three communities: Forest Ranch to the east, Cohasset to the west, and the City of Chico to the southwest. Land within the project area includes Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, Bureau of Land Management lands, and private lands.

Project Location - City: Northeast of Chico Project Location - County: Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding in the amount of \$100,000 to the Butte County Fire Safe Council for development of a Forest Health Management Plan and CEQA document for 1,500 acres of mixed conifer forests in the Big Chico Creek Watershed. Project planning work will include development of a forest management plan, archaeological surveys, traditional ecological knowledge review and input into the plan, and completion of a CEQA document.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Butte County Fire Safe Council

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Section 15262, "Feasibility and Planning Studies"

Reasons why project is exempt:

This is a planning project involving the preparation of environmental compliance documents; it does not involve physical alterations to the environment. Specific actions include development of a Forest Management Plan, archaeological surveys, traditional ecological knowledge input into the plan, and completion of a CEQA document. However, those actions have not been approved, and the completion of these environmental documents will not have a legally binding effect on future activities.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Shannon Ciotti Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Date: Title:

- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR:
Signed by Applicant

Revised 2005