

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

Fire Settlement Funds – Plumas National Forest Good Neighbor Agreement

SNC ID Number: FPNFMFSF001

Applicant: Feather River Resource Conservation District

Project Title: Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project

SNC Subregion: North Central

County(ies): Plumas

Funding Amount Requested: \$6,097,370

Funding Amount Recommended: \$6,097,370

Total Project Cost: \$7,200,000

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project will restore approximately 12,703 acres in the Moonlight Fire area located on National Forest System lands on the Plumas National Forest (PNF), Mt. Hough Ranger District. The Project is located approximately 5 to 15 miles north and east of Taylorsville and 20 to 30 miles northeast of Quincy in Plumas County. The project area ranges from 2,560 to 7,800 feet in elevation and is within and northwest of Antelope Lake Recreation Area. Other notable features within the project area include: Taylor Lake, Diamond Mountain, and Wilcox Valley.

In 2007, the Moonlight Fire burned 65,000 acres of the Plumas National Forest, 37,000 of which burned at stand-replacing high severity converting forests dominated by long-lived conifers to shrublands dominated by montane chaparral species. The Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project will complete watershed and forest health restoration activities in areas where high severity fire occurred. Activities will include site preparation (hazard tree removal, mechanical and hand thinning brush, piling, pile burning), planting suitable conifer species, and plant release (manual, mechanical, and/or herbicide brush suppression). Other actions include aspen stand restoration, pre-commercial thinning, mechanical thinning, hazardous fuels reduction, and wildlife habitat improvement in areas within the Moonlight Fire footprint that did not burn at high severity. The treatment activities will include hand and mechanical thinning, hand and mechanical piling, pile burning, and prescribed burning, as well as fencing aspen stands. The Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project CEQA compliance utilized existing federally approved National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliant environmental resource analysis to inform the CEQA analysis and documentation, completing the State environmental compliance process.

Restoring the Moonlight Fire area has been a collaborative effort. To date, some of the partnerships, contracts, and agreements with county, state, and other federal agencies include Plumas County, California Community Colleges, Feather River Resource Conservation District (Feather River RCD), SNC, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. In March 2017, PNF staff started coordinating with SNC on the proposal to obligate several million dollars of Fire Settlement Funds (FSF) to implement needed restoration activities in the Moonlight Fire area. In August 2018, the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) between PNF and SNC was executed for \$7.2 million dollars for environmental review, restoration work, and administrative costs.

The GNA covers the entire PNF to allow for the possible addition of more restoration funds in the future if the arrangement proves to be efficient and beneficial to all parties. Successful expenditure of these funds on restoration projects demonstrates an innovative approach to restoring capacity of the PNF, allowing them to complete more pro-active forest health work and increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. Establishing a new model to help administer FSF is beneficial to all forests in the Sierra Nevada Region and will build capacity of local organizations to restore impacted landscapes.

Staff communication with the Feather River RCD's Board and Director indicate that there is a strong desire to establish longer-term contracts to complete the restoration work, helping to build capacity and sustain staff. The Feather River RCD's mission is to advocate resource conservation through education and collaborative efforts with willing landowners and organizations that promote economic and ecological sustainability. This implementation agreement with Feather River RCD will provide the necessary funding to complete the watershed and forest health restoration activities as described in the Moonlight Fire approved CEQA document.

The reforestation activities are designed to dramatically reduce the timeline of post-fire forest succession restoring mid- to late-seral forest vegetation, which is important to landscape diversity. Restoring this forest type replaces lost habitat, recreates high carbon storage capacity on the landscape, and creates a seed source for natural forest succession. These treatments are designed to restore and conserve habitat, watershed health, and forest health as well as increase the resiliency of these forested stands when future wildfires occur. This project aligns with the California Water Action Plan, Proposition 1, and Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) goals to manage headwaters for multiple benefits, working within lands that were prioritized during the WIP process with the Plumas National Forest.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Implementation Grant Agreement Executed	April 2019
Hiring of Field Inspectors & Necessary Staff	Seasonal April 2019 – June 2022
Solicitation of qualified contractors and contracts awarded	Seasonal April 2019 – June 2022
Project Implementation by contractors: Reforestation and release (4062 acres)	Seasonal April 2019 – June 2022
Project Implementation by contractors: Hazardous fuel Reduction (230 acres)	Seasonal April 2019 – June 2022
Project Implementation by contractors: Wildlife habitat improvement (1950 acres)	Seasonal April 2019 – June 2022
Project Implementation by contractors: Aspen restoration (1928 acres)	April 2020 – October 2020
Project Implementation by contractors: Mechanical thinning (3765 acres)	April 2020/21 – October 2020/21
Project Implementation by contractors: Precommercial thinning (768 acres)	April 2021-October 2021
SNC Progress Reports, including Project Photos	Every six months
SNC Final Report	August 2028
Estimated Project Completion Date	August 2028

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$231,456
Project Implementation: District Manager Field Inspection	\$93,989
Staff (e.g. Field Inspectors, Administrative Assistant)	\$728,378
Contracts	\$4,849,530
Travel: Vehicle Lease & Mileage	\$194,017
TOTAL:	\$6,097,370

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION

SUPPORT:

- None

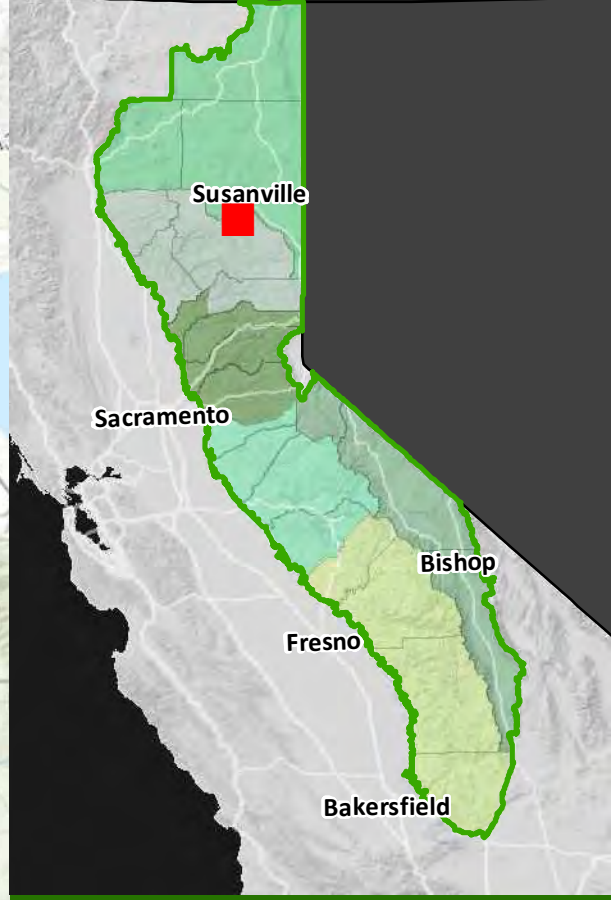
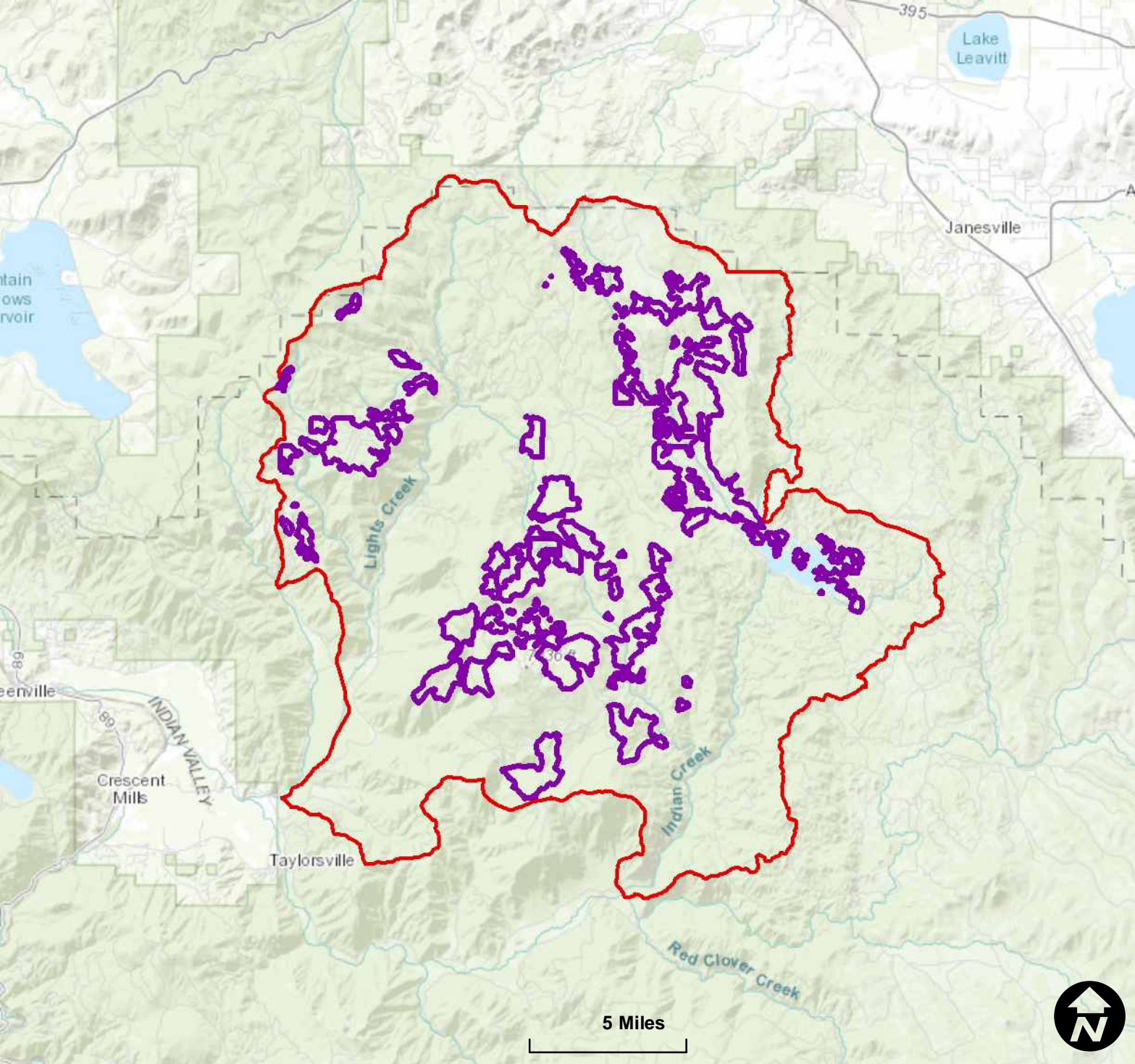
OPPOSITION:










- None

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.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored



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

Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project
Feather River RCD

CEQA Documentation

SNC #: FPNFMFSF001

Project Title: Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project

Applicant: Feather River Resource Conservation District

CEQA Compliance:

The Feather River Resource Conservation District is Lead Agency on an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration. The SNC may file a Notice of Determination on the IS/MND as a Responsible Agency.

- **Notice of Determination:** See Below
- **Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration:** [Click Here](#)

Notice of Determination

Appendix D

To:

Office of Planning and Research
U.S. Mail: Street Address:
P.O. Box 3044 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 Sacramento, CA 95814

County Clerk
County of: Plumas
Address: 520 Main St, Room 102,
Quincy, CA 95971

From:

Public Agency:
Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)
Address: 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603
Contact: Andrea Williams
Phone: (530) 823-4682

Lead Agency (if different from above):
Feather River Resource Conservation District
Address: P.O. Box 3562
Quincy, CA 95971
Contact: Brad Graevs
Phone: (530) 283-7513

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): 2019012010

Project Title: Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project (SNC #FPNFMFSF001)

Project Applicant: Feather River Resource Conservation District

Project Location (include county) Plumas National Forest, Plumas County

Project Description:

The Feather River Resource Conservation District (FRRCD) and Plumas National Forest will implement vegetation treatment activities to restore forested areas impacted by the Moonlight Fire, which burned 65,000 acres in 2007, including 37,000 burned at high severity. Treatments planned within a 12,703-acre project area include reforestation and release, pre-commercial thinning of plantations, mechanical thinning of mature stands, aspen restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, wildlife habitat improvement, road improvement, and road decommissioning. Primary goals of the treatments include restoring the long-term viability of appropriate forest types and reduce the potential for vegetation type conversion; the landscape diversity in species, seral stage, and structure; the forest landscape to one that is well-adapted to natural disturbance regimes and can respond to changes in climate and disturbance regimes; and watershed health to desired hydrologic characteristics and water quality conditions.

The entire project area and all proposed activities were evaluated in the Moonlight Fire Area Restoration Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (SCH# 2019012010). All mitigation measures specified in the IS/MND to minimize impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, and transportation and traffic will be implemented by the FRRCD and Plumas National Forest and through contractual obligations with any contractors. SNC has reviewed the IS/MND prepared by FRRCD and has independently determined that the project would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

This is to advise that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has approved the above
(Lead Agency or Responsible Agency)
described project on March 7, 2019 and has made the following determinations regarding the
above (date)
described project.

1. The project **will not** have a significant effect on the environment
2. A Negative Declaration **was** prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA
3. Mitigation measures **were** a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan **was** adopted for this project
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations **was not** adopted for this project.
6. Findings **were** made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Negative Declaration and record of project approval is available to the General Public at:

Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 11521 Blocker Drive Suite 205, Auburn, CA 95603

Signature (Public Agency): _____ Title: _____

Date: _____ Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code.
Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code.

Revised 2011