



SIERRA NEVADA
CONSERVANCY

SNC Governing Board Meeting

December 9, 2021

This meeting will be
held online.

BOARD MEETING



Board Meeting Agenda

December 9, 2021 – Virtual

Board Meeting

December 9, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (End time is approximate)

Government Code 11133, (Stats. of 2021, Chapter 165, AB 361) effective September 16, 2021, suspends under specified conditions certain provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act regarding the conduct of meetings, and authorizes state bodies to conduct telephonic or electronic meetings through January 31, 2022. Consistent with Section 11133, the December 2021 Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board Meeting will be conducted virtually through the Zoom Webinar Platform. Members of the public may join the meeting using either of the following steps:

[Join the webinar](#)

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89929030764>)

Or

Dial either of these numbers and enter the conference code to join the meeting by telephone:

Dial:

USA 636 651 3142 US Toll

USA 877 402 9757 US Toll-free

Conference code: 347291

Meeting materials are available on the [SNC Board Meetings page](#) (<https://sierranevada.ca.gov/our-board/board-meetings/>). Members of the public can make comments on agenda items during the meeting by using either method of joining the meeting – virtually or telephonically – and by following the moderator's directions on how to indicate their interest in speaking. Public comment will be taken at the appropriate time during each agenda item and during the Public Comment agenda item at the end of the meeting for non-agenda items. Additional information on ways to provide public comments on agenda items is available on the [SNC Board Meetings page](#).

For additional information, please contact Ms. Armstrong at (530) 721-0018 or (530) 823-4670, via email to tristyn.armstrong@sierranevada.ca.gov, or by mail at: 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn CA 95603.

For assistance with joining the meeting by telephone or the Zoom meeting link, please contact SNC Technical Support (ITSupport@sierranevada.ca.gov). Any person who has a disability and requires reasonable accommodation to participate in this public meeting should contact Ms. Armstrong no later than five (5) working days prior to meeting.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of September 2, 2021, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**
4. **Board Chair's Report**
5. **Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

- a. Executive Officer Update
- b. Administrative Update
- c. Policy & Outreach Update
 - Attachment A – SNC Policy Platform for 2022
- d. Field Operations & Grants Update

6. **Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair (ACTION)**

The Board will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the calendar year 2022.

7. **2022 Board Meeting Schedule (ACTION)**

The Board will review and approve a schedule for Board meetings for the calendar year 2022.

8. **Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program Grant Award Recommendations (ACTION)**

The Board may take action to file a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption and award a grant to the following project.

- a. #1282

The Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project, Phase Two submitted by the Great Basin Institute in the amount of \$1,105,278 with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

9. **Grant # 1061 Tramway Road Fuel Break Network Project CEQA Addendum (ACTION)**

The Board will consider and may take action to approve as a Responsible Agency the addendum to the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel

Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration filed by the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County for a revision to the project design.

- [Addendum I: Tramway Road/South Component to the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)

10. 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Guidelines (ACTION)

- [Draft 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Guidelines](#)

The Board will consider and may take action to approve the 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Guidelines and direct staff to implement the program.

11. Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Update and Executive Officer Authorization (ACTION)

Staff will provide an update on the partnership between the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Council). The Board may take action to authorize the staff to finalize a grant agreement from the Council to SNC and authorize the Executive Officer to enter into the agreement.

12. 2021 Fire Season Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Provide Boardmembers with an update on the 2021 Fire Season.

13. Boardmembers' Comments

Provide an opportunity for members of the Board to make comments on items not on the agenda.

14. Public Comments

Provide an opportunity for members of the public who have not previously addressed the Board to comment on non-agenda items. The Board Chair reserves the right to limit the time allocated for each person providing public comment.

15. Adjournment

Additional Board Materials

- [Key Meetings and Presentations](#)
- [Letters of Support](#)
- [News Articles](#)

Closed Session

Following, or at any time during, the meeting, the Board may recess or adjourn to closed session to consider pending or potential litigation, property negotiations, or personnel-related matters. Authority: Government Code Section 11126.



Board Meeting Minutes September 2, 2021 – Virtual Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Present:

- Terry O'Brien
- Aaron Albaugh
- Heather Bernikoff
- John Brissenden
- Richard Gillihan
- Ron Hames
- Bob Johnston
- Nathan Magsig
- Jessica Morse
- Lori Parlin
- Susana Reyes
- Paul Roen
- Rosemarie Smallcombe
- Elizabeth Berger
- Christopher Heppe
- Jim Richardson

Absent:

No Boardmembers were absent.

3. Approval of June 3, 2021, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Boardmember Rosemarie Smallcombe noted, June 3, 2021, Meeting Minutes, Page 8 of the complete package, the last sentence in paragraph 3 should read, "Covich said that there are multiple upcoming opportunities to weigh in on state policy as it relates to natural and working lands."

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff requested that the Boardmember comments noted in June 3, 2021, Agenda Item 11, reflect her comments thanking the Board and staff for welcoming her and that she is looking forward to working with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) in the future.

Action

Boardmember Rosemarie Smallcombe moved, and Boardmember Heather Bernikoff seconded, a motion to approve the June 3, 2021, Meeting Minutes, as amended.

After a roll call vote the results were: Aye – 12, Nay – 0, Abstain – 1. The motion passed.

4. Approval of July 15, 2021, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Action

Boardmember Lori Parlin moved, and Boardmember Rosemarie Smallcombe seconded, a motion to approve the July 15, 2021, Meeting Minutes.

After a roll call vote the results were: Aye – 12, Nay – 0, Abstain – 1. The motion passed.

5. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Terry O'Brien provided a thank you to all the first responders who are helping to fight the current fires. O'Brien continued by stating that California is facing a huge crisis which needs to be addressed at all levels, local, state, and federal.

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer Angela Avery presented a 2021 fire season update. The presentation highlighted projects and work done in the Sierra Nevada within fire boundaries. Avery said that two to three of the Early Action funding projects that were awarded in July have been impacted by fire and 11 previously funded SNC projects have also been affected.

Avery also provided an opportunity for SNC Boardmembers to discuss the impacts of the 2021 fire season within their counties. Boardmembers shared fire activity updates relevant to their county and engaged in conversation around fire suppression, project work within fire boundaries and the benefits that it provided, and next steps for the Region.

Boardmember Bob Johnston recommended that the Conservancy host a Forest Workshop following the fire season. Johnston also suggested that the SNC provide an economic analysis that looks at the cost of fire suppression and the effects of fire

on tourism. Johnston also felt that it was important for the SNC to get people out on educational tours in the fire-affected areas in the Region.

Avery told the Board that as soon as the conditions are safe for SNC staff to get out on the ground they will. Avery also told the Board that SNC will be gathering data and will report to the Board the impacts the fires this season had on the current grants.

Avery provided the Board with an update on Senate Bill (SB) 208 saying that the bill is moving through the legislative process. Avery said, if enacted, the bill will expand the SNC boundary to add portions of Siskiyou and Shasta counties, which were intended to be included in the original SNC legislation but were not. This expansion will also include a portion of Trinity County, which means that all the watersheds that feed the State and Central Valley water projects would be included in SNC's Region. This bill, once signed, would be effective January 1, 2022, and recommended changes would need to be presented to the Legislature as part of the SNC's Annual Report, by the end of 2022. Avery said the SNC has formed a "strike team" in response to this bill. This team will address the potential impacts of the boundary expansion to the SNC.

Avery also discussed the logistics and ability to have the December Board meeting in person. Avery informed the Board of the restrictions in place for state agencies and the many requirements SNC must abide by to keep staff and members of the public safe.

Avery shared a frequently asked questions state guidance document with the Board that provided clarity on the requirement for Boardmembers to provide vaccination verification or submit to COVID-19 testing. Avery said that as Boardmembers to a State board, they are required to show proof of vaccination, or a negative COVID-19 test prior to participating in person at SNC-related activities. Avery also shared the current issues with the Executive Order (EO) allowing government agencies to legally hold virtual Board meetings and said that the EO will expire at the end of September. Once expired, the existing law would govern, which would make it very difficult to hold virtual meetings and comply with Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act without having to publicly notice each of the Boardmembers' locations. Avery said that, given the logistical uncertainties and participation requirements, she is leaning towards holding the December meeting as a virtual meeting.

Deputy Executive Officer, Administration, Amy Lussier provided further clarification and told the Board that SNC would aid Boardmembers in finding central locations for purposes of public notification.

Avery also provided a National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) Grant project and lawsuit update. Avery stated that SNC is not a party in this lawsuit and

has been advised that a decision on this lawsuit will not be provided until October or November. Avery told the Board that they will be providing an update to the Board in December if things progress.

Avery continued to update the Board on the project work completed as part of the Forest and Watershed Health pillar of the NDRC project by saying that over 6,500 acres of fuel reduction work, with about 800 more acres under contract to be complete by September. To date, over 1900 acres have been replanted and an additional 2,600 new acres of forest will be replanted by 2022. Under the Biomass Utilization pillar of the contract, a Biomass Utilization Fund was created, and two projects have been tentatively approved. Overall, Avery said that this project work is ongoing and exceeding expectations.

Avery wrapped up her presentation by stating that SNC is constantly reviewing where it is and how to move forward to continue to make a difference across the Region. Avery encouraged staff and Boardmembers to bring forth “big ideas.”

Boardmember Jessica Morse said that this upcoming budget builds on past successes. Morse stated to expect to see \$1.5 billion this year to assist with projects that will make a huge impact in the Region.

Public Comment:

Lindsay Wood, Executive Director of the Plumas County Audubon Society – Wood addressed the Board to share a previous benefit and potentially negative outcomes from the inability to use prescribed fire on the ground. Wood said that they have a current project within the Dixie fire area and is asking the Board for consideration of an extension for this current project to allow work to continue in the area. Wood said that at this time they would like to redirect the funding to ensure that the maximum amount of funding is applied.

Wood also requested that a new grant fund be created that supports post-fire recovery and that it be designed in a way that does not create competition among partners. Wood also asked the Board to provide Executive Authority that would allow the SNC Executive Officer to approve funding for post-fire activities. Wood suggested that this would allow partners to be empowered to do the necessary work on the ground.

Both Board Chair O'Brien and Executive Officer Avery encouraged Wood to reach out to her local area representative, Kristy Hoffman. Avery followed up these comments by saying that SNC encourages partners to continue to come forward with this sort of input.

Administrative Update

Deputy Executive Officer, Administration, Amy Lussier provided the Board with a brief Administration Division update.

Lussier announced the recent hire of Emily Blackmer who will be working in the Policy & Outreach Division.

Lussier provided the Board with updated COVID-19 Cal/OSHA guidelines and state recommendations for masking and other safety protocols related to the pandemic. Amy provided a quick overview on the vaccine verification and testing policy.

Lussier gave a budget update and reviewed the Board packet budget information. Lussier also told the Board that the state Personal Leave Program ended June 30.

Policy & Outreach Update

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich shared a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted current legislation that the SNC is tracking. This legislation includes SB 208 (boundary expansion), Assembly Bill (AB) 9 (codify Regional Fire and Forest Conservation Program), AB 642 (prescribed fire and proposal for a prescribed fire training center), and SB 624 (establish the Environmental Equity and Outdoor Recreation Act).

Covich also updated the Board on state policy activities, noting two current areas of focus: Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, and the Pathways to 30x30 strategy. The SNC has been tracking and participating in state workshops and are contributing to the State's Adaptation Climate Strategy.

Boardmember Susana Reyes asked about the current federal infrastructure bill and asked if the SNC is anticipating funding from this bill. Boardmember Elizabeth Berger said that the United States Forest Service is currently looking at how these infrastructure funds would be disbursed and at a plan to work with SNC to get this money on the ground. Berger said she will send out funding information as it is received.

Covich shared an update on SNC Communications activities. Covich said that the development and utilization of the Sierra Spotlight has provided an excellent outlet for SNC to disburse information and has created a great resource for others to gather information. Covich shared a short SNC video that was produced to help promote the work of the partners and the projects that SNC has funded with the "Early Action" dollars. This video, and others like it, will be released when the fire season comes to an end or as projects hit various milestones.

Public Comment:

Laurel Harkness, Board President, Siskiyou Outdoor Recreational Alliance (SORA) – Harkness addressed the Board regarding the SB 208 legislation that would expand the SNC boundary. Harkness provided background on the legislation saying that SORA developed this legislation with unanimous support from the Siskiyou Board of Supervisors and Senator Dahle. Harkness said that plans are already underway in Siskiyou and Trinity counties to begin community outreach and education workshops once the legislation has passed. Harkness also provided thanks to the SNC staff for the support and coordination on this boundary expansion.

Siskiyou County Supervisor Edward Valenzuela – Valenzuela addressed the Board and stated that he looks forward to working with SNC in the future.

7. Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program Grant Award Recommendations (ACTION)

Field Operations Manager Luke Hunt provided a PowerPoint presentation with a brief program background followed by a review of the project summary and staff recommendation. Staff recommended one Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grant Award for a total of \$282,380.

a. Grant #1278

#1278, the Sierra-Sequoia Burn Cooperative Prescribed Fire Training Exchange project submitted by the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West in the amount of \$282,380 with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Public Comment

William Deverell from Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West – Deverell addressed the Board to acknowledge the hard work of the SNC staff. Deverell also shared his support for this project and stated that the process to develop this grant has been “delightful” which he attributed, in part, to the SNC staff.

Boardmember Bernikoff asked Deverell to elaborate on tribal engagement, specifically, the leadership structure and how they involved the tribal leaders to provide direction, insight, and leadership decisions on how to allocate dollars. Deverell responded that the group works very closely with the tribal partners in both the land choices and training locations.

Action

Boardmember John Brissenden moved, and Boardmember Nathan Magsig seconded, a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Sierra-Sequoia Burn Cooperative Prescribed Fire Training Exchange project (#1278), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$282,380 to the Huntington-USC

Institute on California and the West, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a roll call vote the results were: Aye – 11, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

8. Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Partnerships & Community Support Manager Alex Vance provided the Board with a Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) update. Vance provided a brief background of the RFFCP and a status update that highlighted just a few of the many collaborative efforts that are working under the RFFCP.

Highlights from this presentation included a chart of Early Impacts of Funding summary and lessons learned. Vance also acknowledged the Department of Conservation and California Natural Resources Agency for their investment and commitment to this program. Vance also called out the Partnerships & Community Program support team and all the partners and organizations that have worked so hard to make this program successful.

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff acknowledged the amazing work and many benefits of this capacity-building program. Bernikoff encouraged SNC to follow up with partners and ask grantees to provide the actual dollar amounts that have been awarded beyond SNC funding as a result of this work. Bernikoff also thanked SNC staff working on this program.

9. Science Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Regional Scientist Nic Enstice updated the Board on the latest science related to changes in the Sierra Nevada Region, how these changes may be affecting key species, and how treatments may also affect them. Enstice stated that the best available science suggests recent trends are putting important species at risk noting that there are ways to approach proactive management that can mitigate impacts to species.

Enstice shared photos and drone footage along with informational graphics to demonstrate the impacts climate and fire are having on species in the Region. Enstice summarized his presentation by stating, "...it is clear that the status quo is negatively impacting native species in ways that have long-term consequences we cannot quickly undo. No one-size-fits-all approach for treatments will work either. We will need robust communication and coordination across the scientific community, land managers and planners, to help us understand the short- and long-term implications of how we manage, where we treat, the time of year we treat, and how much we treat. If we are successful with that, we will be successful in protecting our native species and our forests and watersheds."

10. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Nathan Magsig told the Board that several of his district's Local Conservation Corps have contacted his office and, as a result, a meeting to discuss funding opportunities with SNC has been scheduled.

Boardmember Susana Reyes emphasized the opportunities that exist with the Sierra Corps for cost-share funding and asked staff to explore these options when moving forward with capacity-building activities.

11. Public Comments

Kimra McAfee, Executive Director of the Alpine Watershed Group – McAfee addressed the Board to express the concerns that she and her board have regarding securing the resources her county needs to recover from the Tamarack Fire. McAfee told the Board that the Alpine Watershed Group will need to expand their capacity to obtain these funds for recovery.

Board Chair Terry O'Brien encouraged McAfee to consider different project ideas and contact the SNC for application process.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

Additional Board Materials

- Key Meetings and Presentations
- Letters of Support
- News Articles

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 5b: Administrative Update

Current Status

COVID

In compliance with CalOSHA requirements, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) COVID-19 Prevention Program (CPP) plan was updated and released in September 2021. A companion training document was also developed, and all SNC employees were required to validate their understanding of critical health and safety information and procedures. New signage was placed in offices and vehicles and employees were provided with N95 respirators for their voluntary use as part of this update. Fully vaccinated employees are allowed to work with others without masking, but SNC continues to request that employees who are approved to work in the office or with others on travel continue to wear masks and physically distance when possible.

Since the last Board meeting, the SNC Vaccine Verification and Testing (HR-13) policy was also released and implemented. This program was announced by Governor Newsom and requirements for compliance were provided by the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) in late July. With fewer than 20 employees requiring testing, SNC qualified to participate in the home testing program. Unvaccinated employees receive home test kits and must provide a negative test result each week before being allowed to work in the office or travel. All testing materials are free of charge to employees and SNC and are provided by the California Department of Public Health.

Telework

The SNC developed its new Telework Program policy (HR-02), to be implemented in compliance with the Department of General Services (DGS) requirements and under the direction of the governor. This new policy was developed from the [Statewide Telework Policy](#) provided by DGS and takes the place of the emergency telework policy all state departments operated under during the state of emergency declared on March 19, 2020 ([EO N-33-20](#)), due to the emergence of COVID-19, which is expected to be lifted in January 2022. The new Telework Policy encourages ongoing telework up to full time for all employees whose duties allow for remote work.

Employees have been surveyed regarding their commute distance and time, so SNC can populate the Statewide Telework Dashboard as required by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). Employees are asked to report the number of days they telework weekly in order to calculate the benefits that increased telework has on carbon emissions and the costs of commuting and doing business in general. The draft policy will be submitted to the unions representing SNC employees on December 1, 2021, with the intent to implement it no later than January 31, 2022.

Budgets and Accounting

On September 23, 2021, the governor approved an addendum of the 2021-22 budget which included additional General Fund appropriations for the SNC in the amounts of \$50 million for Wildfire Resilience and \$11.1 million for Climate Resilience and three new positions. Most of these funds will be used for local assistance, and up to 5 percent can be used for support.

The Administrative staff has been busy preparing reports and responding to drills from the Department Finance (DOF) to build the 2022-23 budget. The DOF has requested details about adjustments for the retirement rate, health benefits, and the staff salary increases that went into effect July 1, 2021. This information will be added to SNC's budget which is scheduled to be released by the governor on January 10, 2022.

Human Resources

Two of the three new positions received with the General Fund have been advertised. Staff will provide a verbal update on the status of these recruitments at the December Board Meeting.

Health and Safety

The following health and safety actions have been taken this quarter:

- As directed by the CPP, a review was conducted of the Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) for any changes resulting from testing, telework policy updates, and other safety-based requirements. Because these issues were addressed in the June 2020 IIPP update, no additional changes were required.
- The annual Auburn safety inspection was conducted including a new focus on potential hazards due to communicable diseases. This inspection found minor issues for clean-up since staff has been out of the office for a long time. All issues will be addressed prior to returning to the office on a more regular schedule.
- The department participated in the Great California Shake Out, reminding employees to be prepared for emergencies. This drill also tested the SNC emergency text messaging system.
- Staff is undertaking a third ergonomics check on all employees to ensure their health and safety given the new telework program arrangements, that their work-from-home sites are ergonomically sound, and that they have the appropriate workstations.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

2021-22 SNC Budget (as of September 2021)

Support & Local Assistance (Non-Reimbursable)

Environmental License Plate Fund Support	Budget	Expenditures
Personal Services	\$3,573,288	\$1,040,476
Operating Expenses & Equipment (OE&E)	\$1,125,712	\$113,480
Total ELPF (Personal Services + OE&E)	\$4,699,000	\$1,153,956

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Fund Support	Budget	Expenditures
Personal Services	\$135,633	\$46,994
Operating Expenses & Equipment (OE&E)	\$3,881,367	\$0
Total SNC Fund (Personal Services + OE&E)	\$4,017,000	\$46,994

General Fund Support (Personal Services only)	Budget	Expenditures
ENY 2020-21 Early Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience	\$904,300	\$131,853
ENY 2021-22 Wildfire and Forest Resilience	\$2,500,000	\$0
ENY 2021-22 Climate Resilience	\$555,000	\$0
Total General Fund (Personal Services)	\$3,959,300	\$131,853

General Fund Local Assistance	Budget	Expenditures
ENY 2020-21 Early Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience	\$19,095,700	\$19,095,700
ENY 2021-22 Wildfire and Forest Resilience	\$47,500,000	\$0
ENY 2021-22 Climate Resilience	\$11,044,500	\$0
Total General Fund Local Assistance	\$77,640,200	\$19,095,700

Reimbursements

SNC Fund Reimbursements – Projected	Projected	Received
CAL FIRE	\$3,602,031	\$0
CNRA/Department of Conservation	\$1,010,030	\$5,479
CHIPs	\$349,591	\$0
HCD/NDRC	\$93,441	\$0
Stewardship Council	\$23,441	\$0
Total Projected Reimbursements	\$5,078,534	\$5,479

Federal Funding – Total Projected	Projected	Received
USFS – Plumas National Forest	\$2,514,38	\$0

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 5c: Policy & Outreach Update

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Policy & Outreach Division tracks and engages in the latest science, policy, legislation, and funding programs impacting natural resources management and its connection with vibrant recreation and tourism and community resilience in the Sierra Nevada Region. Staff develops and maintains relationships with legislators and their staff, tribes, state and federal agencies, local governments, Regional partners, the research community, and traditional and non-traditional media contacts and, through those networks, shares information on the Region's needs, challenges, and opportunities. The SNC Policy & Outreach activities support sound, science-based agency action and educate key decision makers about the statewide importance of the Sierra Nevada to encourage the appropriate investment or resources in the Region.

Current Status

State Budget Update

In late September, Governor Newsom signed the final budget bill and budget trailer bills, finalizing the \$1.5 billion investment in forest health and fire resilience, \$3.6 billion investment in climate resilience, and \$4.6 billion investment in drought relief and water resilience.

The SNC received \$61 million, including \$50 million in the wildfire and forest resilience budget package and an additional \$11.1 million for climate resilience, wildfire prevention, community access, and natural resources protection.

Updated revenue projections for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 suggest that California's surplus may be even greater than previously expected. The state may have an additional \$5 to \$25 billion in revenue this year, setting the stage for another round of significant investment in the next budget process.

State Legislative Update

Governor Newsom's deadline to sign or veto bills was October 10, 2021. Many of the bills SNC was tracking fared well in the legislature and were subsequently signed by the governor. The bills highlighted below will go into effect on January 1, 2022.

Assembly Bill 9

Assembly Bill (AB) 9 by Assemblymember Jim Wood (D-Santa Rosa) codifies the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) within the California Department

of Conservation (DOC). The SNC is a block grant recipient of RFFCP funds from DOC and administers RFFCP subgrants for local and Regional capacity-building in support of fire-adapted communities and ecosystem health.

Assembly Bill 322

Assembly Bill 322 by Assemblymember Rudy Salas (D-Bakersfield) requires the California Energy Commission to consider eligible biomass to energy projects as recipients of Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) funds, while also considering California Air Resources Board (CARB) and Board of Forestry (BOF) recommendations and coordinating with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). The EPIC funds have provided important support for biomass energy projects in the Sierra Nevada Region.

Assembly Bill 642

Assembly Bill 642 by Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) supports cultural and prescribed fire in a variety of ways, including by creating a Cultural Burning Liaison at the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and requiring a proposal for the creation of a prescribed fire training center in California. The SNC is called out as one of the entities that will consult on the proposal development. This bill will support the implementation of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, which calls for increasing the use of prescribed and cultural burning, among other actions.

Assembly Bill 697

Assembly Bill 697 by Assemblymember Ed Chau (D-Monterey Park) establishes the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Program within CNRA to support ecological restoration and fire resilience projects on National Forest lands. The GNA is a key tool enabling California to support the stewardship of National Forest lands. Expanding and formalizing its use will help accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration and fire resilience projects. The SNC currently has a GNA agreement with Plumas National Forest.

Assembly Bill 843

Assembly Bill 843 by Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters) allows Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) to access the California Public Utilities Commission's Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff (BioMAT) program. Several jurisdictions in the Sierra Nevada Region have or are pursuing CCAs and can now seek BioMAT funding for eligible bioenergy projects.

Assembly Bill 1346

Assembly Bill 1346 by Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park) requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to adopt cost-effective and technologically feasible regulations to prohibit engine exhaust and evaporative emissions from new "small off-road engines" (SORE), which includes chainsaws. These regulations will apply to SORE produced on or after January 1, 2024, or as soon as the state board

determines it is feasible, whichever is later. The regulations do not apply to existing SORE and will not regulate the use of SORE, but rather will set emissions standards for new products. CARB has broad discretion to determine technological feasibility.

Senate Bill 208

Senate Bill (SB) 208 by Senator Brian Dahle (R-Bieber) expands SNC's boundary, adding a portion of Siskiyou County and Trinity County to the Region and increasing the area of Shasta County within the Region.

Senate Bill 332

Senate Bill 332 by Senator Bill Dodd (D-Napa) reduces the liability of certified burn bosses, certified cultural burners, and private landowners for damages and injuries resulting from a prescribed burn, unless the burn was conducted in a grossly negligent manner. Under the existing liability standard, insurance for prescribed burning has been prohibitively expensive. This law maintains the legal requirements for prescribed burning while removing a liability impediment to getting "good fire" on the ground. Of note, this year's budget also establishes a \$20 million prescribed fire liability pilot program within CAL FIRE to pay for damages should they occur.

Senate Bill 456

Senate Bill 456 by Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz) codifies the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, requiring the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force to also develop an implementation strategy for the Action Plan's goals and key actions. The Task Force is required to provide annual updates to the Legislature and to update the Action Plan every five years. The SNC was engaged in the development of the Action Plan, which reflects many of SNC's Regional goals and strategies.

Several other bills that SNC was tracking did not make it through the legislature this year but may be reconsidered in 2022. The so-called two-year bills include:

Assembly Bill 11

Assembly Bill 11 by Assemblymember Christopher Ward (D-San Diego) would require the Strategic Growth Council to establish up to 12 regional climate change authorities that would coordinate climate adaptation and mitigation activities for their region by January 2023. The FY 2021-22 budget allocated \$250 million for regional climate resilience planning and implementation; AB 11 may be used to shape that program and the expenditure of those funds.

Assembly Bill 30

Assembly Bill 30 by Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) would establish as a state policy that safe and accessible access to nature is a human right. The bill would require that the CNRA and its subagencies reflect this new policy in their own policies, regulations, grant criteria, and expenditures related to outdoor access. This policy could

impact SNC's recreation programming and its Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work.

Assembly Bill 284

Assembly Bill 284 by Assemblymember Robert Rivas (D-Salinas) would require CARB and CNRA to collaboratively identify a 2045 climate goal for the state's natural and working lands, and to integrate the steps needed to achieve that goal into the state's Scoping Plan for climate change mitigation.

Assembly Bill 267

Assembly Bill 267 by Assemblymember Suzette Valladares (R-Santa Clarita) would extend the SB 901 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption to January 1, 2026. A critical tool for increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire, thinning, and fuel reduction projects to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, SB 901 exempts state and local agencies, when acting as a funding or staffing partner or under the GNA or a stewardship agreement, from completing CEQA analysis for prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction projects on federal lands that have already been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The SNC has utilized this tool to expedite implementation of projects on federal lands, including 12 of the 15 early-action projects approved by the SNC Board in July.

The legislature reconvenes on January 3, 2022, and the end of the two-year session will be August 31, 2022. To help describe the various policy areas SNC will look to engage in, staff has developed a policy platform document ([Attachment A](#)) which is intended to be used as a guide when evaluating 2022 policy proposals and initiatives. It can also be used as a communication tool to help staff, leadership, and the public understand the relationship between state policy issues and the Sierra Nevada Region.

State Policy Update

In October, CNRA released the Draft Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, which lays out the state's proposed strategy to manage lands and waters to further the state's climate action goals and reduce climate impacts to landscapes and communities. The SNC engaged in its development, working with California agency partners to draft the chapters on Forests and Shrublands/Chaparral. The draft strategy includes many of SNC's forest and watershed health priorities and strategies, while also highlighting the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative as a successful example of collaboration for large-landscape forest restoration and calling out Conservancies as key entities for informing regional climate-smart actions. The SNC will continue to engage with CNRA to ensure that the strategy's final draft fully reflects the Region's values, especially the importance of protecting Sierra Nevada forests as a significant carbon sink.

In October, the Draft California Climate Adaptation Strategy was also released for public comment. The SNC staff provided input to earlier versions of the strategy, and SNC's work is called out several times among the strategies recommended to accelerate

climate adaptation, including increasing the pace and scale of collaborative forest restoration; implementing the Shared Stewardship Agreement to restore federal forestland; investing in upper watershed health and landscape-scale projects, in the model of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program; and supporting forest biomass utilization, including the Tuolumne County Biomass Utilization Fund project. Staff will continue to work with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and CNRA to represent the Region in these statewide plans.

Federal Policy Update

Staff is tracking two federal bills, the infrastructure and reconciliation bills, which could lead to landmark federal investments in fire resilience, ecological restoration, and the National Forest System. The first version of the infrastructure bill included \$3.3 billion for wildfire risk reduction and \$2.1 billion for ecosystem restoration, while the reconciliation package contained up to \$14 billion for hazardous fuels reduction, \$2 billion for vegetation management, and significant additional investment in the National Forest System for ecological assessments, capital improvements, trail maintenance, and more efficient environmental review. The future of this legislation is uncertain and cuts to the reconciliation package are likely, but staff will continue to track these bills closely.

In addition to the two bills mentioned above, Congress has passed both a Continuing Resolution and a debt limit increase to fund the government and meet its obligations through early December. The Continuing Resolution includes an emergency provision with \$28.6 billion for disaster relief, including for wildfire prevention and response and drought relief, which could benefit partners in the Region.

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Update

Staff continues to administer the \$1.9 million block grant received from CNRA's RFFCP to support forest health by increasing Regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement landscape-level forest health and wildfire resiliency. Since the last Board meeting, SNC's Regional subgrantees have reached various milestones in their capacity building work, including the following highlights:

- The Modoc Resource Conservation District (RCD) has used RFFCP funding to collaborate with local groups, including county government, the Modoc Fire Safe Council, and tribal community members. The Modoc RCD has become a 'go to' organization in the area, developing partnerships, coordinating mapping and prioritization activities, and applying for project funding. It has also started a local workforce training program in conjunction with Modoc County that undertakes roadside fuel reduction projects. This popular program is helping to mitigate the closure of a nearby Conservation Camp and the loss of its forestry crew.
- The Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD) has been a highly effective subgrantee for the Sac-Feather RFFCP area, coordinating among the numerous stakeholders, helping to plan projects, and obtaining funding. This summer, the Dixie Fire burned over 60 percent of their District and caused

personal and professional disruption for the staff. The Feather River RCD rose to the challenge – working directly with fire response teams and pulling together a large-scale vision and proposal to complete a programmatic Environmental Impact Review for the District that will cover fire-affected areas, Wildland Urban Interface and other fuel reduction projects, and prescribed burning.

Staff has been encouraging peer-learning through monthly subgrantee workshops. Recent workshops have focused on effective organizational expansion, creative NEPA strategies, reforestation planning, and incorporation of workforce development in forest activities.

Staff is currently working with the DOC to develop an interagency agreement that will provide the SNC an additional \$7.77 million RFFCP block grant of Early Action funding to build on the work being done through its original \$1.9 million RFFCP block grant.

Communications Update

Staff continues to support Policy & Outreach activities, utilize digital publishing tools to inform and educate state policymakers regarding the impact of Regional fires on statewide goals and priorities, and get out into the Region to document impacts of fires and SNC project work.

As of the drafting of this report, staff has published multiple digital news articles to the Sierra Spotlight, including stories about [SNC funding for the Southern Sierra Burn Cooperative](#) and how [SNC-funded work helped to protect Lassen National Park during the Dixie Fire](#).

The SNC's social media efforts were highlighted by [the publication of the animation depicting the fire history of the Feather River Watershed](#) first presented to the Board at the September 2021 Board meeting. That animation was shared broadly on twitter (295 times) in California natural resources circles and has accumulated over 25,000 views. Although the impact of these kinds of communications efforts are often hard to pin down, specific outcomes linked to this animation include (ongoing) productive conversations with the Department of Water Resources regarding the impact upper watershed fires may have on State Water Project operations and an inquiry from a Los Angeles Times reporter. Staff also published [an updated Sierra Nevada fire history animation](#) and a [short video on 2021 Sierra Nevada fire season impacts](#) via SNC's social media platforms.

Traditional media highlights included extensive coverage of the positive impact that the Caples Creek Watershed Ecological Restoration Project played during the Caldor Fire in California's major newspapers. The [San Francisco Chronicle's story map about areas that had experienced beneficial fire prior to Caldor Fire](#) is a particularly well done example.

The SNC staff also made multiple trips into the field to visit Dixie Fire and Caldor Fire burn areas and collect still and video footage for future educational materials about Regional fires and SNC projects.

Finally, staff has begun updating print communication materials, which will include the 2021 Annual Report, to prepare the SNC for the anticipated resumption of in-person meetings and events in the next calendar year.

Next Steps

Over the next quarter, staff will be gearing up for the seventh annual Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program Summit which will likely be held in Sacramento in conjunction with the March Board Meeting. Staff will be producing the SNC's 2021 Annual Report which will highlight work done over the last calendar year and describe the local and statewide impacts of the 2021 fire season. In addition, staff will be preparing for the expansion of SNC's service area, the 2022 legislative session, and the upcoming release of state policies and budget proposals. Staff will continue to track state policy priorities such as California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and will continue engagement on ongoing technical and policy workgroups established to support the state's forest health and climate goals. Staff will track and respond to requests for information on legislation and will work closely with Field Operations staff to describe the policy and funding needs being expressed by partners in the Region, including those identified through SNC's capacity building work funded by the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Policy Platform for 2022

Purpose

This document describes a suite of state policies necessary to achieve long-term resilience in Sierra Nevada forests, watersheds, and communities. It represents the current key policy priorities and activities of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), as well as the complementary work carried out by the partner agencies and organizations. These priorities are consistent with the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program and the five goals of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and Action Plan. While this list is not exhaustive, it represents a set of state policy considerations that impact the ability of SNC staff and the partners to support landscapes and communities within the **Region**.

The SNC works to increase understanding of these issues among state policymakers and to inform state strategies, policies, investments, and implementation plans. This document is **intended to be used as a guide when evaluating 2022 policy proposals and initiatives. It can also be used as a communication tool to help staff, leadership, and the public understand the relationship between state policy and the Sierra Nevada Region.**

Strategic Goal: Healthy Watersheds and Forests

Watershed and forest restoration is imperative to preserve the health and integrity of Sierra Nevada ecosystems and the services those ecosystems provide to Regional communities and the state at large. The SNC recognizes that responding to historical forest management practices, recent high-severity fires, and the compounding impacts of drought and climate change necessitates a swift, significant, and comprehensive response by state, federal, and non-governmental partners. The SNC supports significant investment and supportive policies to increase the pace and scale of ecologically sound forest management and to build resilience for the forests and communities.

SNC Supports Ecological Forest and Watershed Stewardship

- The SNC supports ecologically-sound forest restoration and management practices to increase the resilience of the landscapes to fire, drought, and climate change. Green forest stewardship emphasizing prescribed fire; post-fire restoration and management oriented to future resilience; biodiversity and habitat conservation; and watershed restoration can promote healthy landscapes and mitigate the impact of natural and human stressors.

- The SNC supports tracking and accountability measures for the forest and watershed management goals laid out in state planning documents, including the Forest Carbon Plan, the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, and the Shared Stewardship Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service.

SNC Supports Sustained Public Investment

- The SNC supports sustained state and federal investment to build fire and climate resilience through ecological restoration and management, wildfire fuel breaks, and community protection. Modeled on California's Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 wildfire and forest resilience budget package, this funding structure could provide significant support for Regional needs if sustained into the future.
- The SNC supports using state investment to leverage federal investment to increase the pace and scale of ecological forest restoration across the Sierra Nevada, in accordance with the Shared Stewardship Agreement between California and the U.S. Forest Service. As the manager of approximately 70 percent of Sierra Nevada forests, the federal government is a critical partner to achieve landscape and community resilience goals.
- The SNC supports long-term state and federal funding structures to reflect the dynamic, multi-year nature of restoration projects. Extended appropriations timeframes can accommodate the longer timescales of natural landscapes and project implementation impacted by wildfire, extreme weather events, and the unpredictability of weather windows for key activities such as prescribed burning and replanting. Extended timeframes can also improve project efficacy, create financial stability for implementing organizations and their workers, and ensure workforce retention.
- The SNC supports recognizing and communicating the benefits and cost savings from sustained investment in the Region, including forest restoration treatments and proactive upper watershed management.

SNC Supports Fostering Investment and Developing Forest Products Markets

- The SNC supports fostering private sector and appropriate public investment in forest biomass utilization to offset the costs of forest restoration and increase woody biomass processing capacity. Incentives such as low-cost capital, targeted subsidies, and financial backstops can mitigate barriers for both existing and new technologies.

SNC Supports Expanding Restoration Capacity

- The SNC supports expanding the use of programs, authorities, agreements, and funding mechanisms to build and sustain the capacity of partners that plan and

implement restoration projects, such as the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, the Good Neighbor Authority program, and local-benefit state and federal contracting structures that can help maintain a local workforce.

SNC Supports Elevating Natural & Working Lands in California's Climate Strategy

- The SNC supports accelerating nature-based solutions in the Sierra Nevada as a key part of the state's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. Actions such as ecological forest restoration to reduce the risk of severe wildfire and reforestation to promote post-fire regeneration and future fire resilience can help protect climate-vulnerable communities, achieve carbon neutrality, improve public health and safety, and expand economic opportunity.
- The SNC supports tracking, quantifying, and accounting for forest-related carbon storage, carbon emissions, and air pollution to improve understanding of how forested landscapes contribute to the state's climate change mitigation efforts, as part of the Assembly Bill (AB) 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan.
- The SNC supports establishing climate mitigation goals for California's natural and working lands, in alignment with the state's other climate goals and as part of the AB 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan. Such goals can help ensure that California's nature-based climate solutions stay on track.

SNC Supports Cutting Green Tape

- The SNC supports targeted regulatory changes to reduce barriers to science-based forest health and fire resilience projects, including fuels reduction treatments, post-fire restoration and reforestation, and prescribed and cultural fire.

Strategic Goal: Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities

Predominantly small, rural, and mountainous, with incredible natural landscapes and limited economic diversity, Sierra Nevada communities often face unique circumstances relative to many other parts of California. In partnership with appropriate state and regional organizations, SNC supports initiatives that will increase the resilience of the communities to both natural and economic risks, by expanding access to financial and technical resources, by investing in both people and infrastructure, and by empowering historically underserved communities.

SNC Supports Economic Opportunity and Community Vitality

- The SNC supports workforce education, training, placement, and succession planning in key job markets to support forest and watershed restoration, community protection, and outdoor recreation. State funding for these kinds of programs, kickstarted by the allocations in the FY 2021-22 budget and in the

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, can catalyze the restoration economy in the Sierra Nevada.

- The SNC supports using state and federal contracting procedures to increase financial stability and enable capacity investments for partner organizations, while also improving job stability for workers. These procedures can include extended contracting periods, prompt reimbursement, and local preference contracting.
- The SNC supports investment and initiatives that foster desirable social infrastructure and community services in the Sierra Nevada. High-quality public education, accessible health care, broadband internet, available and affordable housing, and available and affordable insurance support the community and workforce capacity required to plan and implement forest restoration projects, foster economic diversification, and maintain community vitality. While SNC recognizes that developing these social services and infrastructure requires wide-ranging action and may be beyond the jurisdiction, their absence may constrain the impact of resilience-building efforts.

SNC Supports Resilience and Recovery

- The SNC supports sustained investment in community protection against wildfire threat, including landscape-level thinning and prescribed fire to reduce fire intensity, the creation and maintenance of strategic fuel breaks to protect critical infrastructure and provide safety for fire managers, and defensible space and home hardening activities to protect individual structures.
- The SNC supports sustained investment in regional planning and implementation to increase climate resilience, including funding for capital improvements and capacity for local planning, collaboration, and implementation.
- The SNC supports investment in rural water infrastructure to support fire suppression, increase fire resilience, and protect water supply in the face of drought, climate change, and other stressors.
- The SNC supports investment to mitigate the economic and public health impacts of wildfire smoke.
- The SNC supports financial and technical recovery assistance to communities significantly impacted by wildfire and smoke. Post-fire recovery activities include hazard tree removal, erosion control and sediment reduction, culvert replacement, reseeding and reforestation, invasive weed control, fire line restoration in sensitive habitat areas, and post-fire forest restoration and resilience planning. Community recovery needs include housing for displaced forest and restoration workers, replacement of community centers, new and improved evacuation centers, support for business redevelopment and community planning, and cultural resource protection. Some of these activities begin immediately post-fire and continue for many years.

SNC Supports Empowerment and Representation

- The SNC supports empowerment of tribes and Indigenous people in the Region to employ traditional ecological knowledge, steward lands, and practice cultural and spiritual traditions.
- The SNC supports improved metrics and data collection for rural, low-income, and low-population density communities in statewide assessments and funding allocations. Due to a lack of data, geographic isolation, and limited capacity, such communities may not be adequately represented, potentially cutting them off from funding opportunities.

Strategic Goal: Vibrant Tourism and Recreation

The Sierra Nevada Region is home to world-class opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation. Beloved by local community members, urban visitors, and international travelers, outdoor recreation in the Sierra also generates significant economic value in the Region. The SNC recognizes the value of these opportunities and supports leadership and investment for coordinated, collaborative recreation management and increased access for underserved communities.

- The SNC supports state investment in Sierra Nevada recreation access and infrastructure. Tourism and recreation generate critical economic opportunities in the Region while also providing significant value to the whole state. Recent years have made clearer than ever the importance of the open space, clean air, and extreme heat refuges provided by the Region.
- The SNC supports implementation of the sustainable recreation provisions of California's Shared Stewardship Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service.
- The SNC supports funding for capacity-building initiatives for land managers and partners to develop and maintain recreation assets in a coordinated, equitable, and sustainable fashion.
- The SNC supports identification and implementation of measures that reduce barriers to outdoor recreation opportunities, especially for communities and people that have historically lacked safe and equitable access.

Strategic Goal: Strategic Lands Conserved

Conserving lands and waters in the Sierra Nevada is a key strategy to protect forest and watershed health, build community resilience, and expand recreation access.

Conservation can also help protect biodiversity, maintain carbon storage, build climate resilience for landscapes and communities, protect water resources, ensure access to cultural sites, and support working landscapes. The SNC supports voluntary conservation to sustain this suite of public benefits for current and future generations.

- The SNC supports investing in land trusts to fund voluntary land conservation acquisitions and strategic planning, capacity-building, partnership and project development, and ongoing land stewardship and management.
- The SNC supports increasing direct land stewardship and conservation by tribes and Indigenous people to preserve cultural and ecological values and practices.
- The SNC supports regional conservation strategies and collaborative, community-based conservation decision-making to align conservation decisions with community goals and interests.

Strategic Goal: Impactful Regional Identity

The Sierra Nevada provides value to the entire state, serving as the headwaters region that supplies water to 75 percent of California's people and agriculture, a vital carbon sink, and the home of fabulous recreation opportunities. The SNC supports recognition of and support for the Region's value in statewide strategies, policies, investments, and implementation plans.

- The SNC supports a regional approach to statewide policies, strategies, and funding that enables regional and local entities to identify and respond to their own needs and opportunities while supporting state goals and objectives.
- The SNC supports strategically coordinating policy, investments, planning, and implementation in the Sierra Nevada Region to foster healthy forests and resilient communities.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 5d: Field Operations & Grants Update

Background

The primary function of Field Operations & Grants is to serve the needs of the Sierra Nevada Region. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) area representatives engage in local collaboratives and develop a deep understanding of the needs and opportunities where they live and work. Grants & Reimbursements staff develops and administers grant programs focused on achieving SNC's goals. Field Operations staff manages grants to Regional partners funded by SNC's primary grant programs or by SNC's reimbursement agreements. Reimbursement grants are grants that SNC receives from other agencies and then regrants to partners, such as through California Climate Investments and the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.

Since its inception, the SNC has effectively and efficiently funded nearly 500 grants totaling over \$125 million. Funding for SNC grants has been provided through a variety of sources including the General Fund, Proposition 84, Proposition 1, Proposition 68, Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund, California Climate Investment grants (through the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)), Moonlight Fire Restoration Fund (through a Good Neighbor Agreement with Plumas National Forest), and the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program grant (through California Natural Resources Agency).

The SNC Board approved the 2021 Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Guidelines at the March 2021 Board meeting. In July 2021, the SNC Board approved 15 projects totaling \$19,095,700 for treatment on 11,669 acres across the Sierra Nevada. The program focus was to implement forest health projects that address wildfire recovery and resilience and result in a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits.

Current Status

Proposition 1

There are eight Proposition 1 grants in which project work is scheduled to expire at the end of this calendar year. The grantees are requesting more time to complete their respective projects. The most common reason for a time extension request is because of wildfire impacts specific to a location or organization.

2021 Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grants

Three out of the fifteen projects awarded in the 2021 Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant program have been directly affected by the 2021 wildfire season:

- Project #1327 – The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is the grantee on the Trestle Mastication located in Eldorado National Forest. The original grant award was in the amount of \$370,300. The NWTF has declined the grant award due to the Caldor Fire burning through the planned treatment area.
- Project #1325 – Twofer Pillikin Fuels Reduction Project was an area burned by the Caldor Fire. The grant award for this project was \$1,255,225. The grantee is now looking at other areas in the Eldorado National Forest to submit an amendment to the grant.
- Project #1305 – Thompson Peak Initiative Bootsole Forest and Watershed Restoration Project saw approximately 50 percent of its project area burned in the Dixie Fire. Lassen Fire Safe Council, Inc., the grantee, is identifying next steps necessary to continue treatment on the unburned portions and redesign the project on burned portions.

Reimbursement Grants

- The SNC is working with CAL FIRE to amend and extend 8GG18601. A portion of this California Climate Investment grant is to provide fuel treatments in Eldorado National Forest. The need for a time extension until 2025 is due to a severe mill capacity issue as well as delays related to the Caldor Fire and Covid-19 impacts.
- The SNC is working with CAL FIRE to amend and extend 8CA04991-IA. The SNC has been diligently working alongside Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) to implement the Intertribal Stewardship Workforce Development Project. However, due to multiple Covid-19 outbreaks and long-lasting wildfire seasons in 2020 and 2021, an amendment is needed to better assist CHIPS in developing stable tribal work crews throughout the Sierra Nevada Region.

Next Steps

Staff will work with grantees to further identify any needs for other changes in scope. Once formal amendment requests are submitted to SNC, staff will follow established procedures to execute grant amendments including bringing significant scope changes back to the Board for consideration. Staff will continue to ensure grants are on time and on track, which includes overseeing progress reports, processing invoices and change requests, conducting site visits, and monitoring projects after completion.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 6: Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair

Background

By statute, the Governing Board is to elect a Chair of the Board annually. By tradition, this election has also included a Vice-Chair of the Board. Likewise, by tradition, the Chair has been selected from the seven statewide members, and the Vice-Chair has come from one of the six county supervisor representatives.

Current Status

The current terms for Chair Terry O'Brien and Vice-Chair Rosemarie Smallcombe end with the calendar year.

Next Steps

The Board will elect new officers for the calendar year 2022.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board elect new officers for the calendar year 2022.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021

Agenda Item 7: 2022 Board Meeting Schedule

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has met quarterly throughout the Region since June 2006. In 2012, the Governing Board approved an ongoing schedule that provides for the annual March meeting to be held in Sacramento. The other three quarterly Board meetings are held in the Region, rotating between Subregions. In-Region Board meetings include a field tour on Wednesday afternoon and the Board meeting on Thursday.

As a result of the threat of COVID-19, on March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency in the State of California due to COVID-19. On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-25-20](#) which waived certain provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and authorized state and local legislative bodies to hold public meetings via teleconferencing, to make meetings publicly accessible telephonically or by other electronic means, and allowed individual members to attend via teleconference as long as there was one physical location at which members of the public could address the body. On March 17, 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-29-20](#) which rescinded and superseded the March 12 executive order and expanded the waiver of Bagley-Keene provisions to authorize entire meetings to be held virtually.

On June 11, 2021, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-8-21](#), which extended the provisions of N-29-20 pertaining to Bagley-Keene through September 30, 2021. Government Code 11133, which was added by AB 361, (Stats. of 2021, Chapter 165) effective September 16, 2021, suspends under specified conditions certain provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act regarding the conduct of meetings, and authorizes state bodies to conduct telephonic or electronic meetings through January 31, 2022. Therefore, consistent with the State of Emergency Proclamation, Section 11133, and all previous Executive Orders, the March, June, September, and December 2021 SNC Governing Board Meetings were conducted virtually through the Zoom Webinar Platform.

Current Status

With the reduction of COVID-19 cases and high vaccination rates throughout the state, SNC is expecting the statewide state of emergency to be lifted in January 2022. In response, the SNC plans to resume in-Region meetings in the first quarter of 2022. The proposed schedule for 2022 uses the 2020 approved Subregion rotation meeting schedule which includes the March meeting to be held in Sacramento. The meeting will be planned with protocols to protect the health of all participants as guided by the SNC COVID-19 Prevention Program or updated guidance provided by CalOSHA. All applicable health guidelines will be posted publicly prior to the meeting.

Next Steps

The following schedule is proposed for 2022:

- March 2 – 3, 2022, Sacramento
- June 1 – 2, 2022, East Subregion (Mono County)
- September 7 – 8, 2022, North Subregion (Shasta County)
- December 8 – 9, 2022, South-Central Subregion (Mariposa County)

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve the 2022 Board Meeting Schedule and direct staff to take the necessary actions for its successful implementation.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 08: Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program Grant Award Recommendations

Background

California voters passed Proposition 68, the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for all Act of 2018, on June 5, 2018.

Proposition 68 includes two allocations of funding for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC):

- Section 80135(c) allocates \$25 million for competitive grants towards implementation of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) for projects related to forest health and climate resiliency, and
- Section 80110(b)(9) allocates \$30 million for purposes consistent with SNC's governing statute.

The Budget Act of 2020 appropriated \$5 million to SNC for local assistance from Section 80110(b)(9) dedicated to conservancy purposes. In June 2020, the Board authorized grant guidelines for the following programs with the associated funding distribution:

- \$3 million for Forest and Watershed Health
- \$1 million for Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities
- \$1 million for Vibrant Recreation and Tourism

Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grant Program

The current Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grant Program includes four focus areas. Projects must fall within one of these focus areas to be considered for funding.

1. **Implementation of prescribed fire** to improve watershed health.
2. **Large-landscape planning** projects for forest health that demonstrate multiple watershed and ecosystem benefits. These projects must complete project planning on a minimum of 10,000 acres.
3. **Implementation of forest health planning projects** for which SNC previously funded the planning phase.
4. Projects that connect and serve **underserved partners**. Strategic partners that have received no more than one SNC grant since the start of the WIP Forest Health Program (in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 – 16 with funding from Proposition 1)

will be eligible for grants to support planning or implementation of multi-benefit forest and watershed health projects.

Designed as a directed grant program, SNC staff works closely with local partners to identify and develop projects. Concept proposals and subsequent full proposals are evaluated on a quarterly basis.

Previous Awards

Earlier in 2021, the Board awarded the five Forest and Watershed Health grants below:

- Project #1275 the Thompson Peak Initiative Planning project in Lassen and Susanville counties, in the amount of \$250,000 to the Lassen Fire Safe Council
- Project #1276 the Fandango Planning Project to Restore over 20,000 Acres in Modoc National Forest in Modoc County, in the amount of \$120,000 to the California Deer Association
- Project #1277 the Camp Hi-Sierra Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan project in Tuolumne County, in the amount of \$70,581 to the Silicon Valley Monterey Bay Council, Boy Scouts of America
- Project #1280 the Forest Projects Plan project in Amador and Calaveras counties, in the amount of \$200,000 to the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
- Project #1278 the Sierra-Sequoia Burn Cooperative Prescribed Fire Training Exchange project in Fresno County, in the amount of \$282,380 to the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West.

After these awards, there is \$2,077,039 remaining for Forest and Watershed Health Grant awards, planned for distribution through FY 2021-22.

Current Status

The SNC staff is working closely with local partners to develop Forest and Watershed Health projects. The project below has been evaluated through SNC's directed grants process and is now recommended for Board approval.

Project #1282

Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project, Phase Two

Great Basin Institute
\$1,105,278

The Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project Phase Two (Big Stump II) introduces prescribed fire on approximately 2,034 acres within and around Giant Sequoia groves and visitor infrastructure within Sequoia and Kings Canyon national

parks in Tulare and Fresno counties. The SNC funds will be used to treat these acres as part of a shaded fuel buffer east of the Big Stump Entrance Station and south of the Big Stump day use area in Kings Canyon National Park. Once site preparation is complete, units will be treated with broadcast burn-prescribed fire. This project is part of a larger program of work on a multi-jurisdictional landscape identified as a priority by the Sequoia Regional Partnership, a coalition of agency representatives, nonprofit partners, and local tribes. The area was identified as a high priority due to high public use, National Park Service and privately-held infrastructure, and the need to protect the iconic sequoia groves surrounding this visitor center. Big Stump II is the second phase of the Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project. Phase One, funded by SNC, included fuel-reduction treatments on Forest Service, Park Service, and privately owned lands in the Grant Grove-Hume Lake region. Partners on this project include the Great Basin Institute, Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks and the Sequoia National Forest, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Save the Redwoods League, the Dunlap Band of Mono Indians, Tulare Resource Conservation District, and Oaks to Timberline Fire Safe Council.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance: The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1) which states that CEQA does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects.

- [Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1282\)](#)

Next Steps

Upon authorization by the Board, staff will file all adopted CEQA documentation and prepare agreements for the authorized grant.

Staff will continue to work with partners to develop additional Forest and Watershed Health projects and anticipates recommending projects at future Board meetings to award the full amount of funds available. If the recommended grant presented in this report is authorized, a minimum of \$971,761 is available for future awards under the current appropriation.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project, Phase Two (#1282), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,105,278 to the Great Basin Institute, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1282

SNC ID Number: 1282

Applicant: Great Basin Institute

Project Title: Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project, Phase Two

SNC Subregion: South

Counties: Tulare, Fresno

Funding Amount Requested: \$1,105,278

Funding Amount Recommended: \$1,105,278

Total Project Cost: \$1,105,278

Funding Authority: Proposition 68, Chapter 8, Section 80110(b)(9)

Project Scope / Description

The Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project Phase Two (Big Stump II) introduces prescribed fire on approximately 2,034 acres within and around Giant Sequoia groves and visitor infrastructure within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in Tulare and Fresno counties.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funds will be used to treat 2,034 acres as part of a shaded fuel buffer east of the Big Stump Entrance Station and south of the Big Stump day use area in Kings Canyon National Park. Units will be thinned and cleared for hazardous fuels reduction and to improve forest and watershed health. Once site preparation is complete, units will be treated with prescribed fire using broadcast burns. This project is part of a larger program of work on a multi-jurisdictional landscape identified as a priority by the Sequoia Regional Partnership, a coalition of agency representatives, nonprofit partners, and local tribes. These projects are a critical step in cooperative stewardship to protect rural communities, watersheds, and southern Sierra forests.

The project is located near the Big Stump entrance station, which is the main entrance to Kings Canyon National Park and is bordered by the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Over 600,000 visitors pass through these gates annually. The area was identified by the Sequoia Regional Partnership as a top priority due to high public use, National Park Service and privately held infrastructure, and the need to protect the iconic sequoia groves surrounding the visitor center. Moreover, these units provide connectivity to adjacent fuels treatments within the Monument and at Sequoia Lake. Big

Stump II is the second phase of the Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project, Phase One, funded by SNC for fuel-reduction treatments on Forest Service, Park Service, and privately owned lands in the Grant Grove-Hume Lake region.

Great Basin Institute (GBI) is an interdisciplinary field studies organization that promotes environmental research, education, and conservation throughout the West. Founded in 1998 at the University of Nevada, GBI advances applied research to support science-based adaptive management of public lands. The GBI employs over 600 researchers and field technicians, has successfully managed over \$135 million dollars in grants and contracts and has a history of working across lands with diverse constituents and stakeholders. The GBI collaborates with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station using Joint Venture Agreements, manages forestry partnerships in California using Master Participating and Stewardship agreements, and partners with the National Park Service throughout the western U.S. through national and regional Cooperative Agreements.

Partners on this project include Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and the USDA Sequoia National Forest (Giant Sequoia National Monument), Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Save the Redwoods League, the Dunlap Band of Mono Indians, Tulare County Resource Conservation District, and Oaks to Timberline Fire Safe Council.

Big Stump II is designed to support healthy hydrologic and ecosystem function through regional forest stewardship. The scope of work seeks to retain characteristics of a healthy watershed, which in turn offers a wide array of downstream services and benefits. Through the improvement of forest conditions, these lands will be more resistant to high-intensity wildfire, will better absorb rainfall and snowmelt and slow storm runoff, and will protect critical habitat for fish and wildlife. The project is located in the Kings and Kaweah watersheds, which provide the source water for some of the most productive agricultural land in California.

Project Schedule

Project Tasks and Deliverables	Timeline
Project Layout and Media Outreach	January 2022 – December 2024
Site Prep and Project Implementation	January 2022 – December 2024
Project Monitoring and Evaluation	January 2022 – March 2025
Estimated Project Completion Date	June 2025

Project Costs

Project Costs	SNC Funding
Project Management	\$67,320
Project Implementation	\$889,500
Travel and Housing	\$3792
Signage	\$500
Administrative Costs	\$144,166
Total	\$1,105,278

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Dunlap Band of Mono Indians
- University of Nevada
- Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

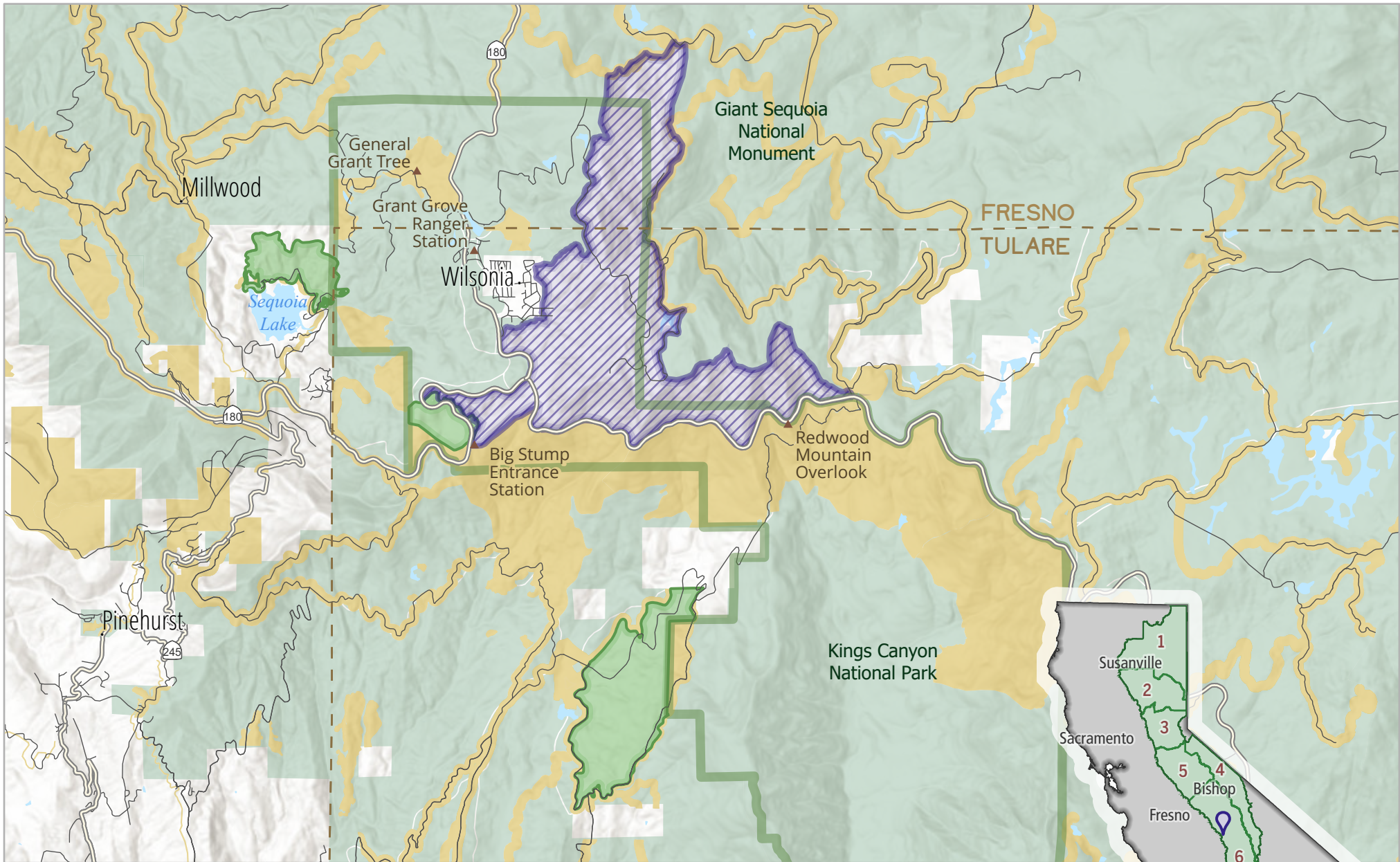
Opposition:

- None received

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



1282 Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project Phase 2

Great Basin Institute

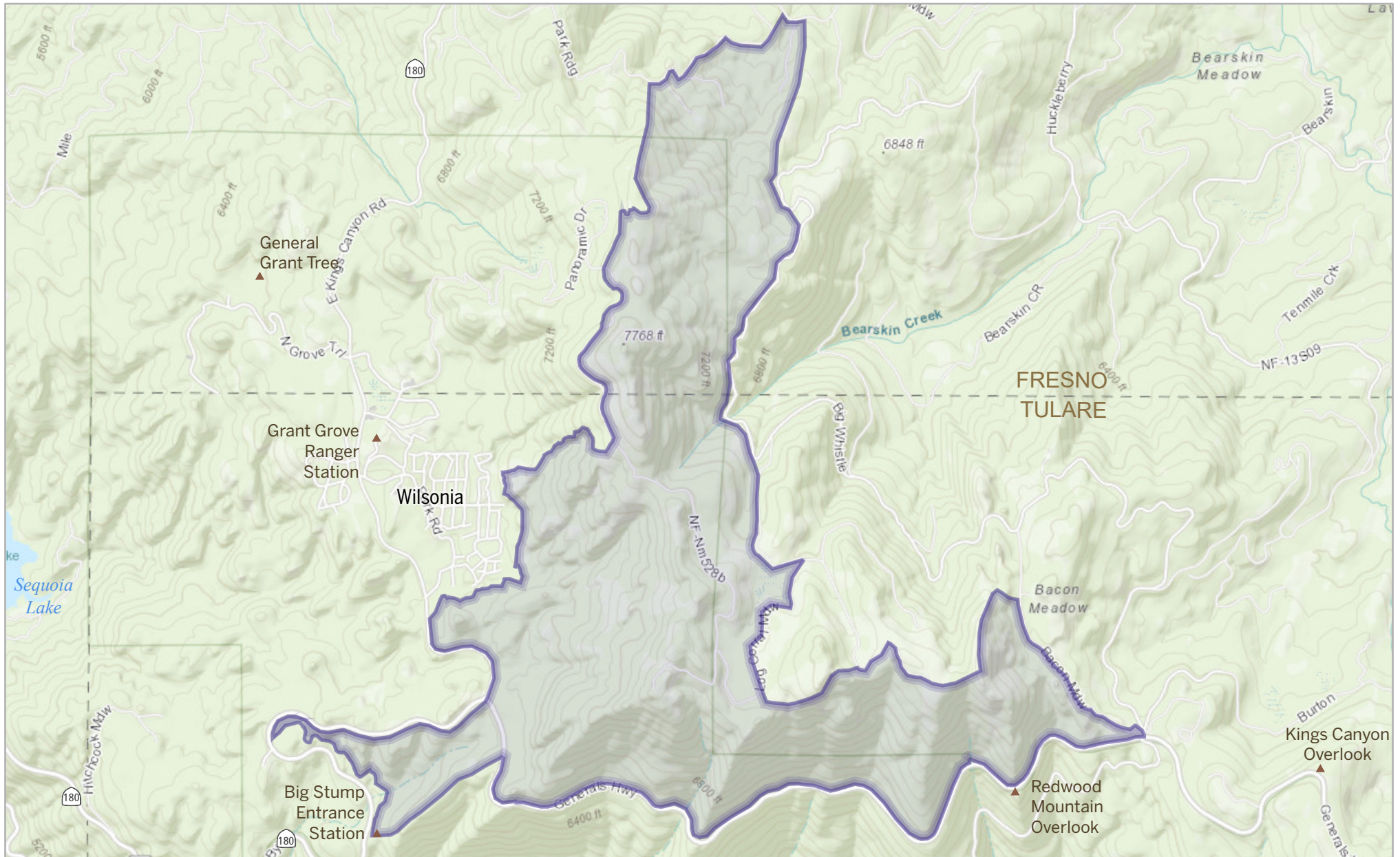
-  Project Area
-  Other Projects
-  SNC Grants
-  Protected Land

1 inch = 1.05 miles

0 0.5 1 Miles

- 1 North Subregion
- 2 North Central Subregion
- 3 Central Subregion
- 4 East Subregion
- 5 South Central Subregion
- 6 South Subregion



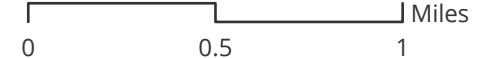


1282 Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project Phase 2

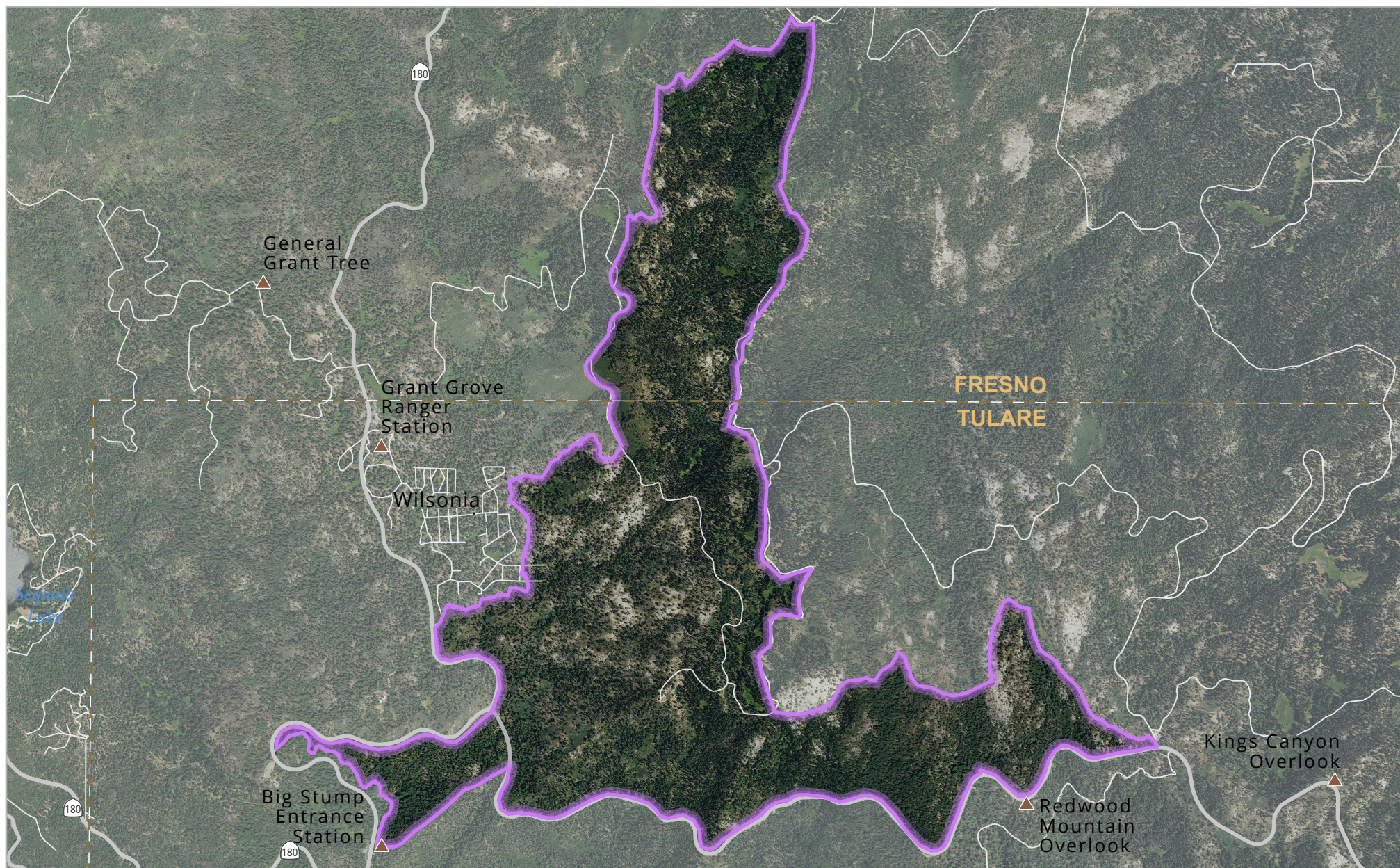
Great Basin Institute

 Project Area

1 inch = 0.5 miles



0 0.5 1 Miles



1282 Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project Phase 2

Great Basin Institute

 Project Area

1 inch = 0.5 miles
0 0.5 1 Miles

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

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: Tulare
221 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, California 93291
Fresno
2220 Tulare St
Fresno, CA 93721

Project Title: Grant Grove Big Stump Ecological Restoration Project, Phase Two

Project Location – Specific:

Four treatment areas centered at approximately 36°43'9.18"N and 118°57'35.55"W; 36°43'14.95"N and 118°55'49.85"W; 36°43'45.84"N and 118°56'49.47"W; and 36°45'7.16"N and 118°56'25.51"W.

Project Location - City: Wilsonia, CA

Project Location - County: Tulare, Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding for hazardous fuels reduction treatments on at least 2,034 acres of National Park land within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, 60 miles east of Fresno. The goal of the project is to implement fuel reduction treatments to protect special-status species including giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) groves, enhance forest habitat resiliency, improve visitor and employee safety, and protect cultural resource values. The fuel reduction treatments would involve site preparation and thinning/clearing followed by broadcast burning. Thinning and clearing activities would be implemented by piling dead and downed woody material and clearing of 20-foot-wide paths to facilitate fire line construction. Following thinning and clearing, National Parks and U.S. Forest Service fire crews would implement broadcast burn treatments.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Great Basin Institute

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

CEQA does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the NEPA if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding for fuel reduction treatments on approximately 2,034 acres of National Park land. The proposed activities were reviewed in their entirety under NEPA in the Park Ridge Prescribed Burn Categorical Exclusion (CE), Tower Prescribed Burn CE, Big Stump East Fire Restoration CE, and the Pan Point Prescribed Burn CE, all of which were signed in September 2021.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Shannon Ciotti

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 906-7345

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: **Yes**

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 09: Grant #1061 Tramway Road Fuel Break Network Project CEQA Addendum

Background

In March 2019, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Board authorized a grant to the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) in the amount of \$235,858 for the Tramway Road Fuel Break Network project. The project is located on private lands along the unpaved county-maintained Tramway Road in eastern Tehama County. The 290-acre strategic fuel break lies close to many small communities including Lyman Springs, Manton, and Mineral, and is adjacent to Battle Creek, a major anadromous fish-bearing stream that delivers flows to the Sacramento River. The Tramway Road Fuel Break Network project will result in a 300-foot-wide, 7-mile-long shaded fuel break. The high-priority need for the project was identified in the Tehama East Community Wildfire Protection Plan as prepared by the Resource Conservation District in 2017 and is aligned with the Tehama East Watershed Assessment and Management Plan. The project is scheduled for completion by January 2023.

The RCDTC prepared the *Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration* (IS/MND) in 2014 (SCH No.2014112036) and filed a Notice of Determination as Lead Agency. As part of the grant authorization in March 2019, the SNC Board approved and filed a Notice of Determination on the IS/MND as a Responsible Agency.

Current Status

While project preparation tasks have been ongoing, implementation of the primary treatments have been delayed due to availability of Conservation (Fire) Camp crews and proposed changes to the project design to improve effectiveness and adapt to labor limitations.

Based upon discussions with Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) forestry staff, several proposed changes to the project area and fuels treatments are recommended in order to improve the protective capability of the original scope of work. This will be achieved through better use of the project area's terrain and present conditions.

The originally proposed project work entailed hand cutting, chipping, and masticating overgrown vegetation and dead/downed ground fuels to develop a 300-foot-wide, 7-mile-long (290 acre) roadside shaded fuel break, including a spur road treatment of 36 acres. Subsequent application of state and county approved herbicides will help extend the life of vegetation treatments. These treatments were analyzed under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in the 2014 IS/MND.

Proposed changes to the original project include the removal of a 1.5-mile-long portion of the north east end of the project along Tramway Road; the addition of a 1-mile-long spur route that connects State Route 36E to Lassen Lodge; the addition of a 1.7-mile-long ridgeline route south of Chapman Gulch between Tramway Road and Little Giant Mill Road; and an adjustment of the southern boundary of the Tramway Road project area to connect fuel treatments along the 0.5-mile segment of the SPI maintained N-line Road. Please refer to [Map A](#) in the attached Addendum. The project will deliver the originally proposed 300 foot or greater treatment width and 290-acre treatment area. Dead and green fuels would be treated using machine cutting and biomass chipping of high-hazard conifers and understory material. This material would then be transported off-site to a power generation operation provided there is a receptive facility. If there are no power generation facilities accepting forest biomass material or transport cost is prohibitive, mechanical mastication treatment will leave biomass on the soil surface. The revised treatment area will be a more effective fuel break, considering topography, recently completed even-aged harvest units, adjacent fuel breaks and other treatment sites located on SPI and Turner Ranch timberlands.

Tramway Road Fuel Break Network Addendum to the IS/MND

While the redesigned project still falls within the overall project area analyzed in the 2014 IS/MND, the shift in the treatment footprint required additional review. The RCDTC conducted a new environmental review to determine if the change in treatment location would have any additional impacts to cultural or natural resources or would require the preparation of a subsequent Environmental Impact Report or Negative Declaration.

The RCDTC conducted this review using existing environmental documents. Although the revised project did shift some treatment locations, approximately 80 percent of the project treatment area was analyzed in the original 2014 IS/MND. Other portions of the revised project area, including proposed non-roadside treatment areas, were analyzed for impacts in the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Exemption held by Sierra Pacific Industries (2-21EX-01225-TEH) for 10 percent Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not Located Within a Watercourse and Lake Protection Zone. Environmental analysis of specific project impact sites, the overall project area, and surrounding lands was also completed in connection with the development of various SPI-prepared Timber Harvest Plans (THP). Combined, the original IS/MND, CAL FIRE exemption, and THPs analyzed project related impacts within the entire project area and surrounding lands as originally described and as currently proposed.

As a result of this analysis, the RCDTC determined that all project actions have been analyzed under CEQA, and there will be no new significant impacts to any cultural or natural resources within the project area or surrounding lands that have not already been described within this array of environmental analysis. The RCDTC has also determined that the Mitigation Measures shown in the original 2014 IS/MND are sufficient to protect project and surrounding area resources.

The RCDTC prepared the attached *Addendum I Tramway Road/South Component to the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration* documenting this determination and the environmental documents used to reach the determination. The RCDTC Board of Directors considered and approved the Addendum at the October 20, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors.

As a CEQA Responsible Agency, this project requires the SNC to consider the addendum approved by the RCDTC, as Lead Agency, with the adopted IS/MND prior to deciding on the project. The RCDTC has concluded that, under the current environmental analysis and with associated mitigation measures, the minor technical changes to the projects would not result in any of the conditions described in California Code of Regulations (CCR) §15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent Environmental Impact Review or negative declaration to occur. Therefore, this addendum has been created for the purpose of making technical changes known pursuant to CCR §15164. The proposed changes would not create impacts outside of those addressed in the IS/MND.

Please refer to the documents mentioned in this report.

- [Addendum I: Tramway Road/South Component to the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)
- [2014 Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration.](#)
- [RCDTC 2014 Notice of Determination](#)
- [SNC 2019 Notice of Determination](#)

Next Steps

Upon approval of the Addendum by the Board, SNC staff will work with the RCDTC and partners to update the project workplan in the SNC grant agreement and move forward to continue implementing the project.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve as a Responsible Agency the *Addendum I: Tramway Road/South Component to the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration* approved at the October 20, 2021, Resource Conservation District of Tehama County Board Meeting, and direct SNC staff to take the necessary actions for successful project implementation.



RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT of TEHAMA COUNTY

2 Sutter Street, Suite D ♦ Red Bluff, California 96080

MEMORANDUM

Addendum I Tramway Road/South Component to the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

Date: October 8, 2021

Project Name: Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break

Lead Agency: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
2 Sutter Street, Suite D
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Contact Person: Tom McCubbins CEQA Project Manager 530-200-1231

Project Location: The Project Area for the **Tramway Road/South Unit component** of the **Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break** is approximately 4 miles east of the Ponderosa Sky Ranch, one mile east of Lyman Springs, 8 miles southeast of the Manton community and six miles west of Mineral.

Responsible Agency: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
555 Main Street, Quincy, CA 95971

Project Sponsor: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
555 Main Street, Quincy, CA 95971

General Plan Designation:
Foothill Residential/Timber Mountain

Zoning: Agriculture, Rural Residential, Timber Preserve Zone

Reason for Addendum: This CEQA addendum has been prepared to describe and discuss the array of pre-Project implementation environmental analysis used by the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) in determining that recently proposed changes to the original **Tramway Road/South Unit component** of the **Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break** Project Area will have no additional impact on Project Area resources. These changes include those related to the original Project Area footprint and set of fuels treatment. The addendum has also been prepared to demonstrate that the set of Mitigation Measures developed and described in the original CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) prepared by the RCDTC in 2014 will protect the natural and cultural resources found within the original and newly proposed Project Areas.

Background:

As originally proposed, the **Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Project** area was divided into two units (North Unit and South Unit) and four road segments as described in the original Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for this effort and approved by the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County Board of Directors. **Map A Tramway Road Detailed Project Area Overview Map** shows the South Unit (highlighted in Pink) which traverse Tramway Road along with other previously completed fuels projects within the surrounding area (highlighted in blue). The two units of the **Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break Project** were developed and analyzed separately as each have different proposed fuels treatments and different sources of funding. Project work within the North Unit entailed mechanical treatments of dead and live fuels and was completed in 2016 utilizing U.S. Forest Service project dollars (See maps and Project description in the original 2014 IS/MND).

The proposed **Tramway Road/South Unit** is located along Tramway Road south of State Route 36E. The originally proposed Project work within the South Unit entailed hand cutting and chipping live and dead fuel along a 6 mile portion of this unpaved secondary Tehama County maintained route between its southerly junction with Sierra Pacific Industries N-Line Road near Lyman Springs to its northerly junction with State 36E and SPI Road 90A located approximately 2 miles east of Lassen Lodge and five miles west of the Mineral community (See **Map A and Map B Detailed Project Area Maps Created From Those Found in Attachment A Sierra Pacific Industries Prepared Cal Fire Treatment Exemption 10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not located Within a WLPZ Exemption**). Currently proposed work to be completed within the South Unit is anticipated to be completed in early 2022, entailing a combination of mechanical treatments along with follow up herbicide applications by landowner. The completion date is dependent upon approval of proposed changes to the Project Area, Project treatments and this CEQA addendum document by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Board as well as weather conditions during Project implementation.

Based upon discussions with Sierra Pacific Industries forestry staff, several proposed changes to the Project Area and fuels treatments were recommended in order to improve the protective capability of the original scope of work. This will be achieved through better use of the Project Area's terrain and present conditions as described in the November 2014 IS/MND. Proposed changes are displayed and referenced by number on **Map A**. **Map B** provides detailed maps of the revised Project Area (highlighted in green) that were included in the Sierra Pacific Industries prepared Cal Fire Exemption document **10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not located Within a WLPZ Exemption (Cal Fire document #2-21EX-01225-TEH)** shown as **Attachment A**. As currently proposed, dead and green fuels would be treated using machine cutting and biomass chipping of high hazard conifers and understory material under 10 inches dbh (oaks 6" and under dbh). This material would then be transported off-site to a power generation operation provided there is a receptive facility. If there are no power generation facilities accepting forest biomass material or transport cost is prohibitive, mechanical mastication treatment will leave biomass on soil surface. The revised treatment area dovetails with recently completed even-aged harvest units along with adjacent fuel breaks and other treatment sites located on SPI and Turner Ranch timberlands that are shown in blue on **Map A**. Proposed changes in the Project Area treatment types also preserve the originally proposed 300 foot or greater treatment width and 290-acre treatment area.

Project Area Change A (1) and Project Area Change B (2)

An approximately 1.5-mile long portion of the original **Tramway Road/South Unit** Project Area that connected with State Route 36 E and SPI's A-Line (along with the rest of this Project's overall North Unit) is located on a slope above the highway right-of-way. This portion of the original Project Area was removed as a treatment site after it was determined too steep for mechanical treatments and unsafe for use by firefighting equipment and fire suppression personnel once Project work was completed. The deleted Tramway Road segment is displayed on **Map A** with red cross hatches under **reference number 1**. A 1-mile long spur route to the northwest off of Tramway Road traverses a relatively gentle slope that connects with State Route 36E at Lassen Lodge. This road segment has been added as a treatment site in order to improve protection to forest stands and provide defensible space to structures at the Lassen Lodge site. This change in treatment area will also improve ingress and egress by firefighting personnel to the Tramway Road/South Unit (**See pink line under reference number 2 as well as Map B**).

Project Area Change C (3)

Treatment of green and dead fuels would be completed along an east-west trending cross county (non-roadside) ridgeline route located immediately south of Chapman Gulch between Tramway Road and Little Giant Mill Road. The non-roadside overland distance of this newly proposed treatment area is approximately 1.7 miles. These ridgetop treatments are expected to provide superior protection to developed sites in and around the Lyonville and Lyman Springs areas as well forest lands in the event of north-south trending wildfires. (**See pink line under reference number 3 on Map as well as MAP B**).

Project Area Change D (4)

As proposed, the southern boundary of the Tramway Road/South Unit Project Area has been adjusted so that fuel treatments would continue along a .5-mile segment of the SPI maintained N-Line Road just east of its junction with Tramway Road near Lyonsville. (**See pink east trending line under reference number 4 on Map A as well as MAP B**)

Analysis of Current and Proposed Project Areas

Although this Project's overall footprint would be changed, approximately 80% of the currently proposed modified Project Area was analyzed in the original **Tramway Road/A-Line /F-Line Road 90 A Shaded Fuel Break Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration** funded by the SNC. Other portions of the revised Project Area including proposed non-roadside treatment areas were analyzed for impacts in the Sierra Pacific Industries prepared Cal Fire treatment exemption document **10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not located Within a WLPZ Exemption shown as Attachment A**. The exemption document is renewed annually and has a current expiration date of September 20, 2022. Environmental analysis of specific Project impact sites, the overall Project Area and surrounding lands was also completed in connection with the development of various SPI prepared Timber Harvest Plans (THP). Combined, the original CEQA IS/MND, Exemption document and THPs analyze Project related impacts within the entire Project Area and surrounding lands as originally described in the 2014 IS/MND and as currently proposed. As a result, the RCD of Tehama County has made a determination

that there will be no impacts to any cultural or natural resources within the Project Area or surrounding lands that have not already been described within this array of environmental analysis. The RCDTC has also determined that the set of Mitigation Measures shown in the original 2014 IS/MND are sufficient to protect Project Area and local area resources.

Biological Resource Impacts of Project Work Related to Revised Project Areas and Newly Proposed Treatments:

In preparing the Biological Resources component of this Project's original IS/MND, the RCD of Tehama County utilized State, Federal and SPI provided information. Initially, RCDTC personnel conducted a 9-quadrangle query of the California Natural Diversity Database which was completed in order to identify listed species which might be found within Project impact sites and a significant portion of the surrounding area. The Cal Fish database, State of California Wildlife Habitat Relationship System and other references were also reviewed in order to determine the possible occurrence of special status species. Input from a federal perspective was provided by Lassen National Forest and the US Fish and Wildlife Service through federal database searches along with telephone conversations, emails and other correspondence with agency staff.

Related to field surveys for biological resources, SPI has completed timber harvest operations on portions of their lands immediately adjacent to or surrounding the current and proposed Project Area. Implementing these harvest operations required research and field surveys that were conducted in order to identify the potential occurrence of listed species. The results of these efforts were reported in Timber Harvest Plans that were prepared under requirements established in the California Forest Practices Act. The Registered Professional Foresters preparing these THP analyses conducted scoping for listed, threatened, endangered, sensitive and some non-listed plant and wildlife species that occur within portions of the watersheds surrounding the THP analysis area. The analysis process utilized by SPI foresters included a search of the California Natural Diversity Database, the SPI in-house botany/wildlife database, a review of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Biogeographic Information and Observation System, consultation with individuals having specialized training and experience in the area along with the SPI forester's personal training and fieldwork. Similar resources and field efforts were utilized by SPI forestry personnel in developing the Cal Fire treatment exemption document *10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not located Within a WLPZ Exemption shown as Attachment A*. Importantly, no additional concerns related to biological resources were identified during preparation of the exemption document or THPs. Based upon a thorough review of these environmental analysis documents, the RCDTC has determined that the biological resources found within the original and newly established **Tramway Road/South Unit** Project Area will be protected by the original set of Mitigation Measures developed and described in the existing **Tramway Road/A Line Road/F Line Road/Road 90-A Shaded Fuel Break Project IS/MND** prepared in 2014.

Cultural Resource Impacts Related to Revised Project Area and Newly Proposed Treatments:

In surveying for cultural resources related to preparation of the original 2014 IS/MND, the RCD of Tehama County procured the services of a professional archeologist who gathered field data and cultural resource

information. Survey areas and data collected included those related to the original Project Area and immediately surrounding lands. Most of the surrounding area including those newly proposed Project sites have been harvested under California Forest Practices Act Timber Harvest Regulations which require at a minimum, cultural resource surveys conducted by a Registered Professional Forester. In addition, treatments to be completed under SPI's **10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not located Within a WLPZ Exemption (Attachment A)** will not be completed within the vicinity of sensitive cultural resource sites. If unidentified cultural resources were found within proposed treatment areas however, these would be protected from impact and discovery by the provisions of the Cal Fire exemption document (**see item 6 on page 3 of Attachment A**). Based upon a review of the environmental documents described above, the RCDTC has determined that the Cultural Resources found within the original and newly established Project Areas will be protected by the original set of Mitigation Measures developed and described in the existing **Tramway Road A Line F Line Road 90 A Shaded Fuel Break Project IS/MND** prepared in 2014. This analysis also revealed no unaddressed issue related to Cultural Resources.

Discussion of Potential Impacts Related to Other Resource Issues Analyzed in the Original Tramway Road A Line F Line Road 90 A Shaded Fuel Break Project IS/MND.

Aesthetics:

Like those within the original Project Area, newly proposed treatment sites are located within a remote area of Tehama County. The proposed Project segment connecting the original Project Area to State Route 36E will be screened from public view with a buffer strip along the Cal Trans right-of-way (**Refer to Project Area Change A (1) on Map A**). Once Project work is completed, treatment areas along Tramway Road will have an appearance similar to other public roads in the area that have had roadside vegetation treatments completed. (**Refer to the blue line on Map A which traverses Little Giant Mill Road and several SPI maintained routes**). Like roadside areas along Tramway Road, the cross country non-roadside treatments south of Chapman Gulch will result in forest stands that have a lower and thus more natural stem count of trees per acre resulting in improving forest health (**Refer to Project Area Change C (3) on Map A**). These cross-country treatments are also expected to provide superior protection to developed sites and forest stands in the event of north-south trending wildfires.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources:

Land uses within both the original and newly proposed treatment areas are similar thus no impacts to these resources will occur that are attributable to the revised Project Area or fuels treatments.

Air Quality:

The environmental analysis and conclusions developed for Air Quality as found in the original IS/MND, THP and Exemption documents identified no additional issues. Consequently, no impacts to these resources will occur attributable to the revised Project Area or fuels treatments. The RCDTC has also determined that air resources as found within the original and newly proposed Project Areas will be protected by the set of Mitigation Measures described in the 2014 IS/MND.

Geology / Soils:

The geologic structure and soils within the revised Project Area are the same as those found within the originally proposed Project sites. Consequently, the environmental analysis and conclusions developed for Geology and Soils as found in the original IS/MND, THP and Exemption documents identified no additional issues. The RCDTC has also determined that these resources as found within the original and newly proposed Project Areas will be protected by the set of Mitigation Measures described in the 2014 IS/MND.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

Chipped live and dead vegetative fuels removed from the Project Area will be hauled to a biomass cogeneration energy plant to be used as fuel. The pollution control equipment at such facilities will remove a significant portion of the GHGs generated by the combustion of this material. The planned small amount of forest fuels left on site in the form of chips will generate GHGs through decomposition. Improved growing conditions for large trees left on site however will sequester most of this GHG production. As a result, no increase in greenhouse gas emissions is anticipated that are attributable to the revised Project Area and proposed treatments. In the event that local cogeneration facilities are unable to take a significant amount of chipped material, the analysis of GHG impacts related to leaving a larger amount of this material on site as shown in the Project's 2014 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration still apply.

Hazards & Hazardous Materials:

The environmental analysis and conclusions related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials found in the original 2014 IS/MND, Project Area THPs and the Cal Fire Exemption document identified no additional issues. The RCDTC has also determined that the entire Project Area including both the original and newly developed Project sites will be protected from Hazards and Hazardous Materials by the set of Mitigation Measures described in the original IS/MND which will be fully adhered to.

Hydrology / Water Quality:

The environmental analysis and conclusions developed for Hydrology and Water Quality as found in the original IS/MND, THP and Exemption documents identified no additional issues. The RCDTC has also determined that all Mitigation Measures related to Hydrology and Water Quality developed in the original CEQA document will apply to both the original and revised Project Area and will be adhered to during all Project implementation efforts.

Land Use/Planning:

No additional impacts to land use and planning are anticipated in the completion of green and dead fuel treatments within the revised Project Area.

Mineral Resources:

No additional impacts to mineral resources are anticipated in the completion of Project work within the revised Project Area.

Noise:

No increase in total noise related impacts is anticipated in completing Project work within newly developed Project impact areas as similar amounts of noise will occur within both the original and newly proposed Project sites. The environmental analysis and conclusions related to noise as found in the original IS/MND, THP and Exemption documents identified no additional noise issues.

Population / Housing:

Public Services:

Recreation:

Utilities / Service Systems:

The environmental analysis and conclusions developed for these four resource categories as found in the original IS/MND, THP and Exemption documents identified no additional issues.

Transportation / Traffic:

In order to complete treatments along Tramway Road, the RCD of Tehama County will obtain an Encroachment Permit from the Tehama County Road Department. In the event Project work requires access to the State Route 36E highway right-of-way, an Encroachment Permit will be obtained from Cal Trans District 2 personnel. Based upon the analysis processes described above, no additional concerns related to Transportation or Traffic were identified within the original and newly established Project Areas. The Mitigation Measures described in the original IS/MND dated 2014 will prevent impacts to the Project Area's Transportation system and related traffic.

Determination of the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Based upon the analysis processes completed in connection with development of the current (2014) IS/MND, prepared for the **Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded Fuel Break**, Timber Harvest Plans prepared for lands within and adjacent to the proposed Project Area and Sierra Pacific **Industries'10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash & Woody Debris Not located Within a WLPZ Exemption** shown in **Attachment A** along with associated Mitigation Measures described in the original IS/MND; changes to the original Project Area footprint and modified treatments are considered minor technical changes to the Project and would not result in any of the conditions described in CCR§ 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration to

Addendum I Tramway Road/South Component to the
Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line/Road 90A Shaded
Fuel Break Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

occur and therefore this addendum has been created for the purpose of making technical changes known pursuant to CCR§ 15164.

Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Approved By:



Jon Barrett
District Manager
RCD of Tehama County



Michael Vasey
President
RCD of Tehama County Board of Directors

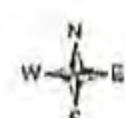
Map A
Tramway Road
Detailed Project Area Overview Map

SPI Ownership

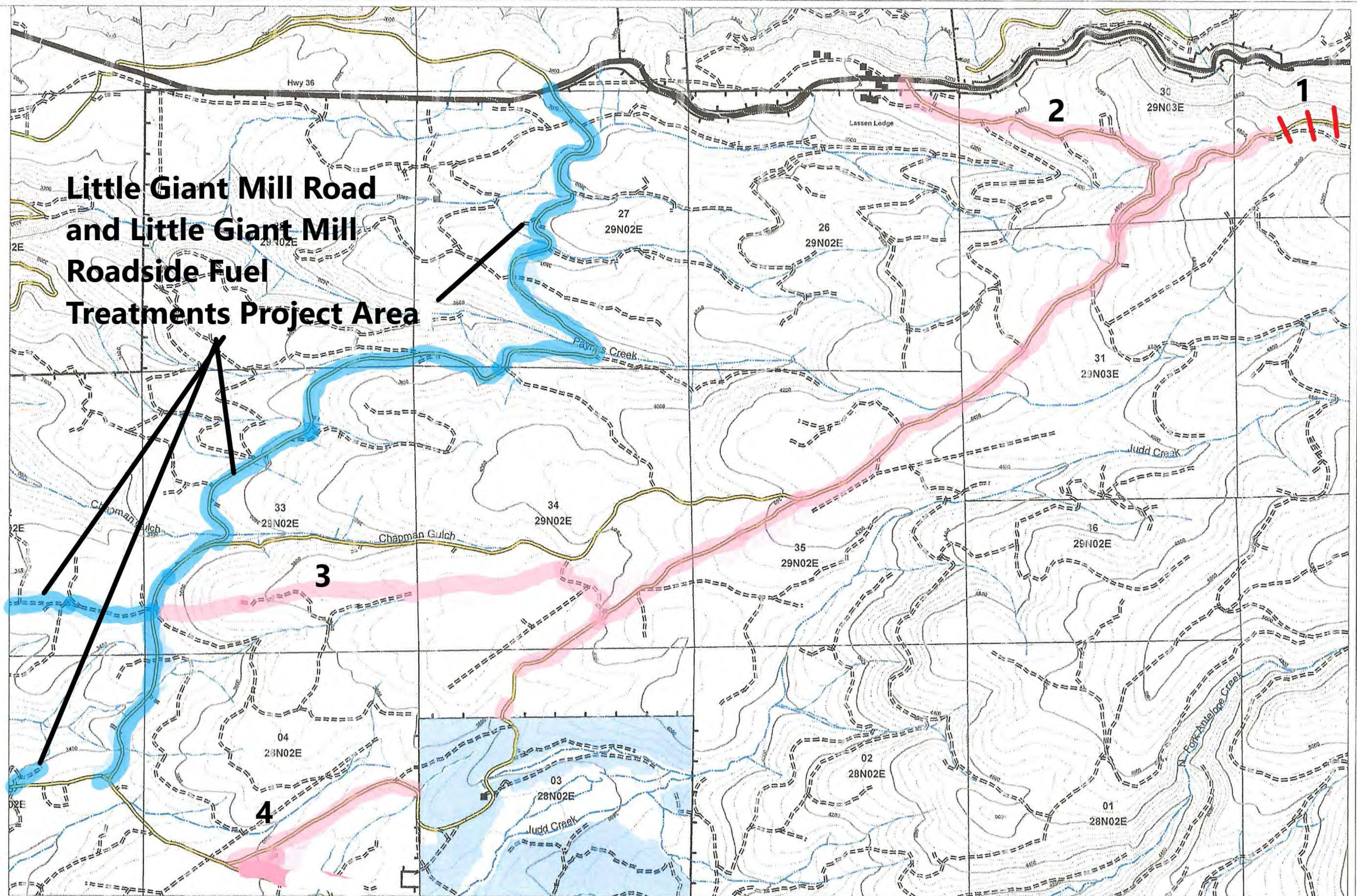
Tramway
Fuelbreak (290
300'

Previously
completed

Structure



1,000 ft.



This map is a copyrighted document; it may not
be copied, republished or used in any other work
without the express written permission of
Sierra Pacific Industries (the copyright holder).

Tramway Fuelbreak

300' Width



August 14 2020

Jeff Caster

Map B

**Detailed Project Area Maps Created From
Those Found in
Attachment A**

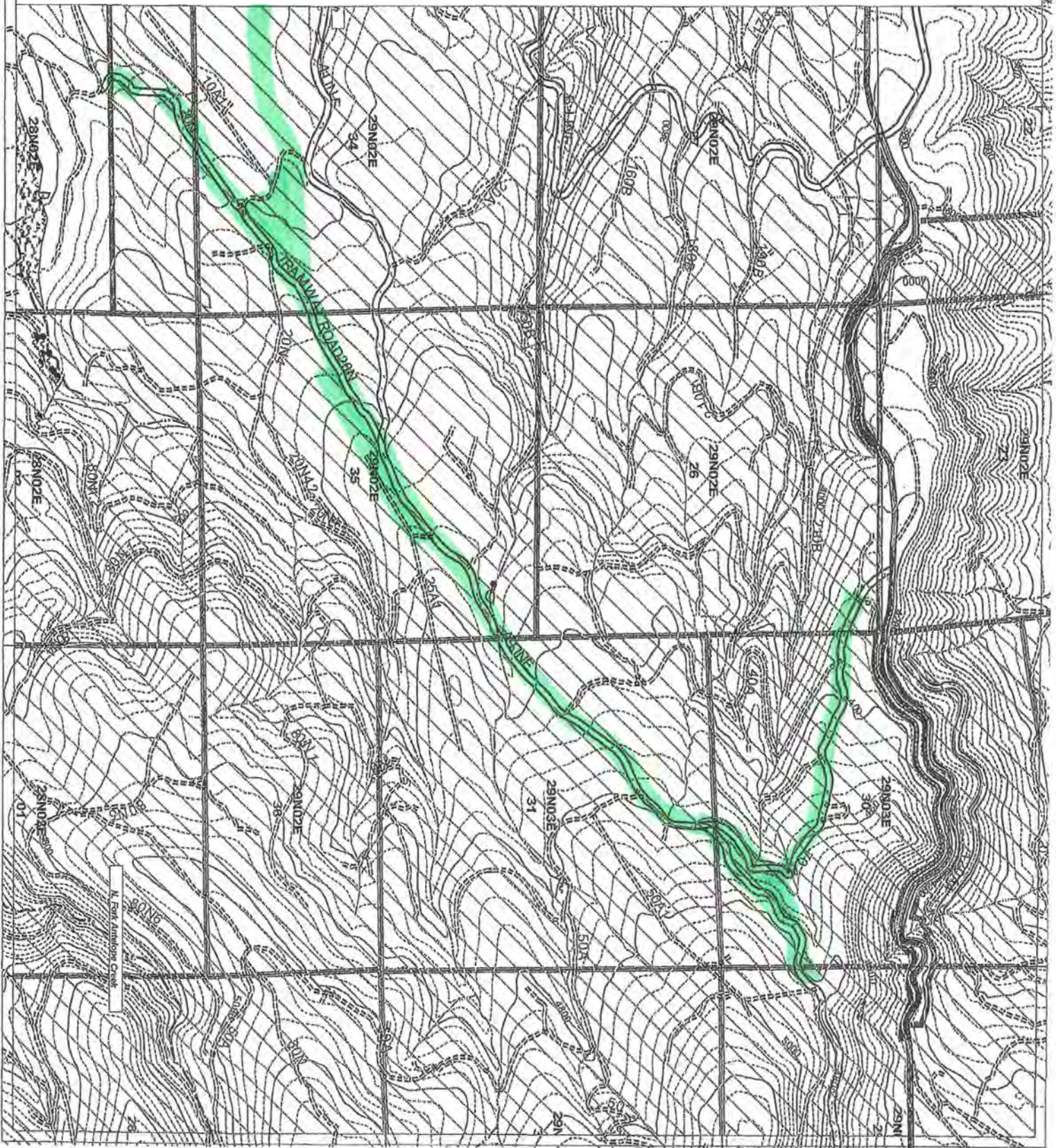
**Sierra Pacific Industries Prepared
Cal Fire Treatment Exemption
10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees
Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of
Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash
& Woody Debris Not located Within a
WLPZ Exemption**

- Exemption
- Atva
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse

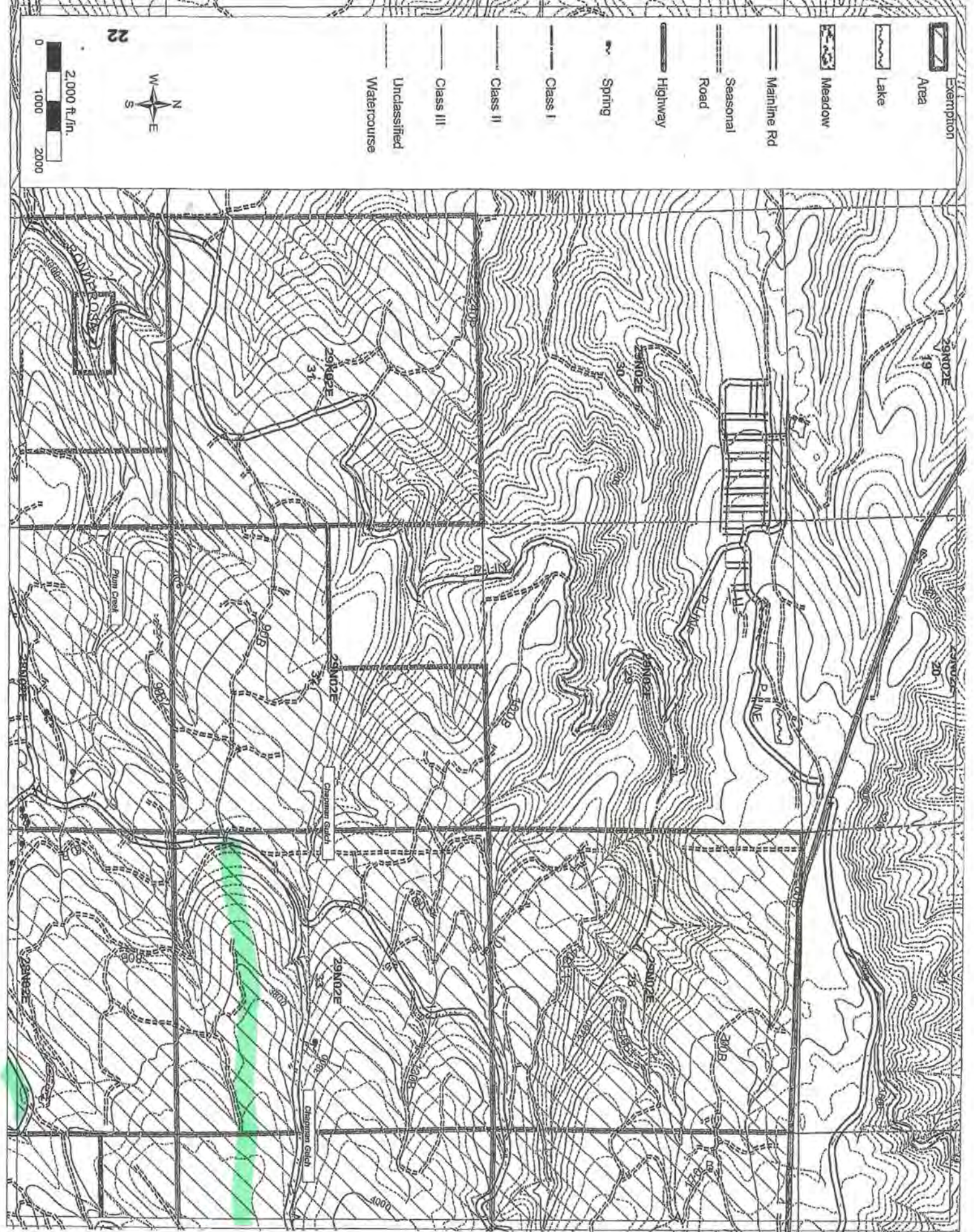


0 1000 2000
2,000 ft./in.

21



N. Fork Antelope Creek



Exemption
Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

Class I

Class II

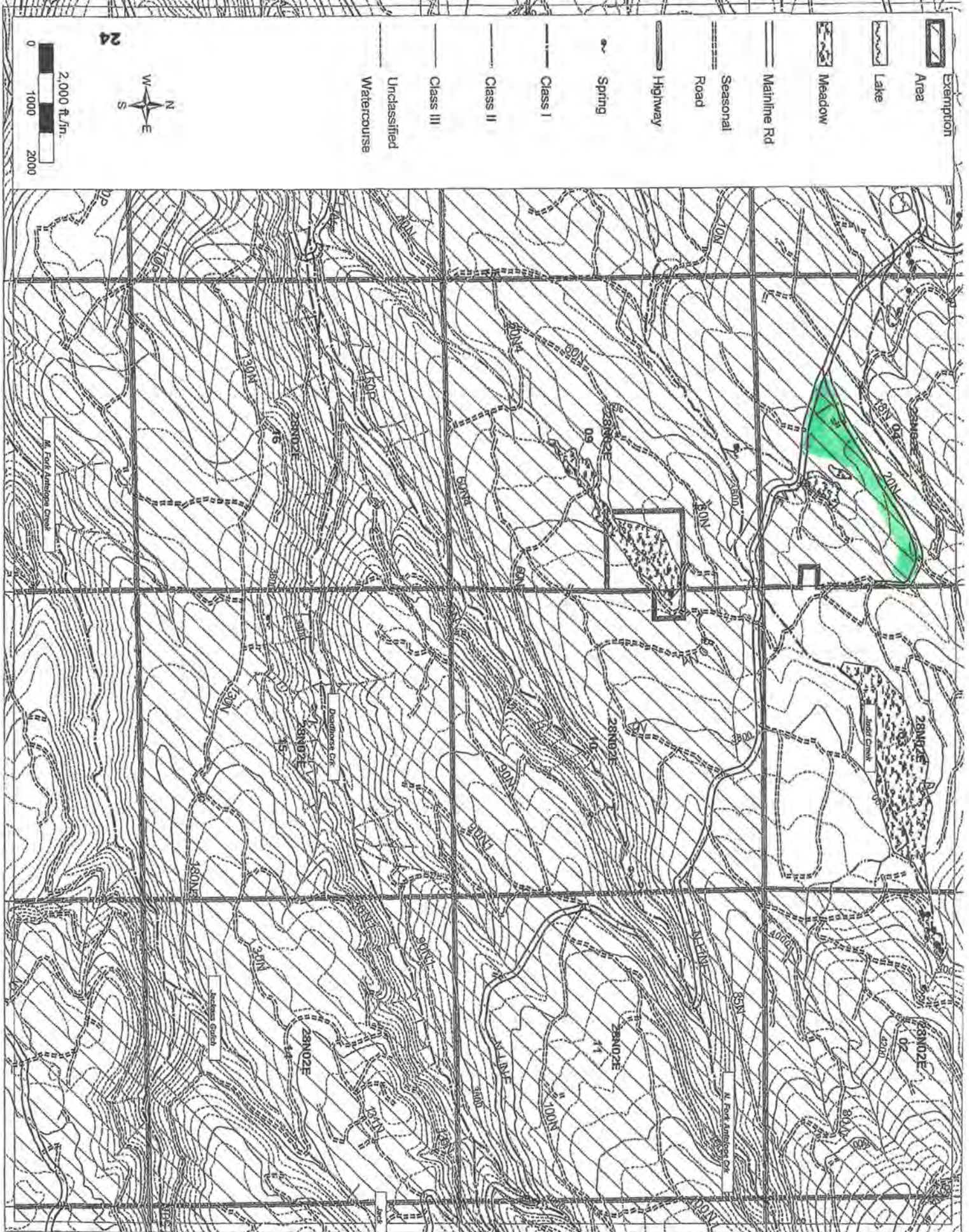
Class III

Unclassified

Watercourse



2,000 ft/in.
0 1000 2000



Attachment A

Sierra Pacific Industries Prepared

Cal Fire Treatment Exemption

10% Dead, Dying, or Diseased Trees

Fuelwood or Split Products or Removal of

Slash & Woody Debris or Removal of Slash

& Woody Debris Not located Within a

WLPZ Exemption

**10% DEAD, DYING OR DISEASED TREES
FUELWOOD OR SPLIT PRODUCTS or REMOVAL OF SLASH
& WOODY DEBRIS NOT LOCATED WITHIN A WLPZ
EXEMPTION**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
NOTICE OF TIMBER OPERATIONS THAT ARE EXEMPT
FROM TIMBER HARVESTING PLAN REQUIREMENTS RM-73 (1038b) (03/2019)

FOR ADMIN. USE ONLY

EX. # 2-21EX-01225-TEH

Date of Receipt 9-21-2021

Date Validation by CAL FIRE 9-21-2021

Date Expires 9-20-2022

VALID FOR ONE YEAR FROM DATE RECEIPT BY CAL FIRE.

The Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is hereby notified of timber operations under the requirements of 14 CCR § 1038(b) to cut or remove trees that are dead, dying, or diseased, fuelwood or split products in amounts less than 10% of the average volume per acre or remove slash and woody debris not located within a WLPZ.

Timber Operations pursuant to the notice of exemption may not commence for five (5) working days from the date of the Directors receipt of the notice unless this delay is waived by the director. If the Director does not act within five (5) days working days of receipt of the notice of exemption, Timber Operations may commence. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(13)

Type of timber operations to be conducted:

(If more than one type is selected please indicate approximate acreage. Please verify the total is consistent with total acres listed in Item #9)

- ☒ 71,233_AC: Harvesting dead, dying or diseased trees of any size in amounts less than 10 percent of the average volume per acre, where timber operations will meet the conditions listed in 14 CCR § 1038(b).
- ☒ 71,233_AC: Harvesting fuelwood or split products in amounts less than 10 percent of the average volume per acre, where timber operations will meet the conditions listed in 14 CCR § 1038(b)
- Note: for Santa Cruz County harvesting for fuelwood purposes **greater than three acres are limited to 45 days** (14 CCR § 926.8(j))
 - Note: If you are harvesting fuelwood or split products, please be aware that cut wood can be infested with harmful forest pests. Long distance transport of infested firewood can result in the unintentional spread of these pests. Please see www.firewood.ca.gov for more formation.
- ☒ ______AC: Removal of Slash and Woody Debris not located within a WLPZ

RECEIVED
SEP 21 2021
REDDING
FOREST PRACTICE

1. LICENSED TIMBER OPERATOR(S): Name: Peterson Timber Lic #: A-011987 Date _____

Address P.O. Box 77

City Cottonwood State CA Zip 96022 Phone 530.524.5901

EMAIL: (optional) _____

1. LICENSED TIMBER OPERATOR(S): Name: Creekside Logging Lic #: A-10693 Date _____

Address 8670 Old Oregon Trail

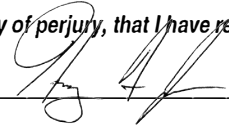
City Redding State CA Zip 96002 Phone 530.223.1292

EMAIL: (optional) _____

1. LICENSED TIMBER OPERATOR(S): Name: John Wheeler Logging Lic #: A-1026 Date _____

Address P.O. Box 339
City Red Bluff State CA Zip 96080 Phone 530.527.2993
EMAIL: (optional) _____

2. TIMBERLAND OWNER(S) OF RECORD: Name: Sierra Pacific Land and Timber Company
Address P.O. Box 496014
City Redding State CA Zip 96049 Phone 530.378.8000
EMAIL: (optional) _____

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that I have read and understand the information on this form and that I am the Timberland Owner of record.
Signature:  Date: 9-15-2021

3. TIMBER OWNER(S) OF RECORD: Name Sierra Pacific Land and Timber Company
Address P.O. Box 496014
City Redding State CA Zip 96049 Phone 530.378.8000
EMAIL: (optional) _____

TIMBER TAX NOTICE: The TIMBER OWNER is responsible for payment of a yield tax.

For timber yield tax information or for assistance with these questions call 1-800-400-7115, or write: Timber Tax Section, MIC: 60, California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, P.O. Box 942879, Sacramento, CA 94279-0060; or see the CDTFA Web Page on the Internet <http://www.cdtfa.ca.gov>.

TIMBER TAX INFORMATION: Some small or low value harvests may be exempt from the timber yield tax (Revenue and Taxation Code sec. 38116)

Timber Owners may be considered exempt if the value of the harvesting operations does not exceed \$3,000 dollars within a quarter, according to CDTFA Harvest Value Schedules, Rule 1024.

IF THE TIMBER OWNER BELIEVES HARVESTING MAY BE EXEMPT (see timber tax exemption language above for low value harvests) PLEASE CHECK BELOW:

FINAL DETERMINATION of tax exempt status will be made by the Timber Tax Section of the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. If you think you are exempt based on the directions above please complete the below information so the Timber Tax Section can make the final determination.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE CDTFA TIMBER TAX SECTION TO CONSIDER A TAX EXEMPTION BASED ON PROJECTED HARVEST PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW.

- A. Circle/Check the option that most closely estimates the total volume for this harvest, in thousands of board feet (mbf - Net Scribner short log):

Under 8 mbf _____ 8-15 mbf _____ 16-25 mbf _____ Over 25 mbf X

- B. Estimate what percentage of timber will be removed during this harvest: (percentages provided should equal 100%)

	%	%	%	%			
Redwood	_____	Ponderosa/Sugar Pine	<u>20</u>	Douglas-Fir	<u>10</u>	Fir	<u>70</u>
Cedar	_____	Port-Orford Cedar	_____	Other Conifer	_____	Other Hardwoods	_____

- C. Fuelwood over 150 cords? Yes ☒ No ☐ D. Christmas trees over 3,000 lineal feet? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(15) - Is it anticipated that a tree existing before 1800 A.D. greater than 60 inches' diameter at stump height for Sierra or Coastal Redwoods or 48 inches in diameter at stump height for all other tree species will be harvested? ☐ YES ☒ NO (required)

NOTE: If "YES" please refer to 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(15)(A-C). Have a RPF attach to the submitted notice of exemption a written explanation and justification for the harvest of these trees, refer to 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(15)(B)(1-3)

5. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(12) NO timber harvesting is permitted within the standard width of a Watercourse or Lake Protection Zone (WLPZ) per 14 CCR § 916.4 [936.4, 956.4](b) (exceptions do apply see below) or within a WLPZ of a watershed identified as Anadromous Salmonids Planning watersheds (ASP) per 14 CCR § 916.9 [936.9, 956.9](s), unless the harvesting in an ASP WLPZ is recommended in writing by CDFW to address specifically identified forest conditions, 14 CCR § 916.9(s)(6) (optional)

Two exceptions permitted in WLPZs outside of an ASP watershed:

(Please indicate below if trees meeting the exception identified below are anticipated to be harvested. (If not then leave blank)

- SANITATION-SALVAGE harvesting per 14 CCR § 913.3 [933.3, 953.3] or ☐
- for the removal of DEAD or DYING trees per 14 CCR § 916.4 [936.4, 956.4](b) ☒

Exception in WLPZ of ASP Watersheds

- Will harvesting occur within a WLPZ of an ASP watershed based on written recommendation from CDFW? ☐

If YES then provide a copy of the written recommendation from CDFW identifying the specific reason for the recommended harvesting.

NOTE: Trees to be harvested shall be marked by an RPF or a supervised designee of the RPF PRIOR TO TIMBER OPERATIONS.

6. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(3)(A-C) No Timber Operations on any site that satisfies the criteria listed in 14 CCR § 895.1 for a Significant Archaeological or Historical Site (information on some of these sites may be available from the Information Centers of the California Historical Resources Information System within the Department of Parks and Recreation), except under the following conditions:

Have significant archaeological sites been identified within the project area? (required) ☒ YES ☐ NO

- Will operations occur within these identified archaeological sites? ☐ YES ☒ NO

If YES Sites must be preserved in place by capping or covering with a layer of soil. Please include a written concurrence from the Departments Archaeologist at the time of submission. ☐

7. TENTATIVE COMMENCEMENT DATE OF TIMBER OPERATIONS: (required) upon exemption submission 14 CCR § 1038.1(a)(5)
Before beginning Timber Operations, the Timber Operator shall notify the Department of the actual commencement date of operations. The notification, by telephone, mail, or email, shall be directed to the appropriate CAL FIRE Unit Headquarters, Forest Practice Inspector or other designated personnel. If the notification is provided by mail, Timber Operations may not commence until three (3) days after the postmark date of notification. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(14)
8. 14 CCR 1038.2 - The submitted notice of exemption shall indicate if more than one Yarding system is to be used and identify the systems. CHECK EACH Yarding method to be utilized: **If more than one method is selected these methods must be identified on the accompanying maps.** (required)

YARDING SYSTEMS					
GROUND BASED		CABLE		OTHER	
x	Tractor, including end/long lining		Cable, Ground lead	x	Hand thinning and removing
x	Rubber tired skidder, Forwarder		Cable, High Lead		Other:
x	Feller Buncher		Cable, Skyline		
x	Shovel yarding				

9. 14 CCR § 1038.1(a)(4) – Designate the legal land description of the location of the Timber Operation. 14 CCR § 1038.2(a) attach a USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle map or equivalent map showing the location of:
- Boundaries of the Logging Area. 14 CCR § 1038.2(b)
 - Location of all Roads to be used for, or potentially impacted by, timber operations. 14 CCR § 1038.2(c) **(Appurtenant Roads included within the logging area pursuant to (b) may be shown on a map which may be planimetric with a scale as small as one-half inch equals one mile)**
 - Location of any Special Treatment Areas. 14 CCR § 1038.2(k)
 - Location of all Watercourses and Lakes with Class I, II, III, or IV waters. 14 CCR § 1038.2(i)

Additional maps, which may be topographic or planimetric, may be used to provide additional information, to show details, and improve map clarity. **A legend shall be included indicating the meaning of the symbols used.** It will be helpful to describe the access route to the timber operation so that it can be easily located, and/or include an assessor's parcel map for small areas. (required)

See following pages for legal description

Base Meridian	Township/Range	Section	Acres
Mount Diablo	27N02E	1	655
		2	656
		3	644
		4	485
		5	41
		10	620
		11	654
		12	160
	27N03E	3	477
		4	267
		5	580
		6	538
		7	303
		9	184
		17	53
	28N01E	1	163
	28N02E	1	632
		2	635
		3	159
		4	630
		5	587
		6	522
		7	412
		8	571
		9	608
		10	629
		11	645
		12	632
		13	639
		14	645
		15	648
		16	647
		17	636
		18	159
		21	363
		22	161
		23	642
		24	642
		25	640
		26	637
		27	320
		29	241
		31	483
		32	82
		33	637
		34	477
		35	633
		36	636
	28N03E	6	971
		7	630
		17	159

Base Meridian	Township/Range	Section	Acres
		18	642
		19	643
		20	640
		21	620
		22	640
		23	259
		26	263
		27	643
		28	616
		29	638
		30	638
		31	634
		32	641
		33	639
		34	319
		35	31
	29N02E	2	926
		3	895
		4	876
		5	899
		6	403
		7	641
		8	634
		9	621
		10	632
		11	651
		14	489
		15	564
		16	628
		17	628
		22	139
		26	631
		27	625
		28	628
		31	641
		32	499
		33	651
		34	650
		35	631
		36	327
	29N03E	2	75
		3	75
		4	264
		5	575
		6	660
		7	751
		8	611
		9	573
		10	304
		11	38
		15	192

Base Meridian	Township/Range	Section	Acres
		16	626
		17	667
		18	734
		19	484
		20	561
		21	605
		22	81
		26	82
		27	653
		28	651
		29	651
		30	603
		31	633
		32	647
		35	81
	30N02E	19	223
		20	232
		21	25
		23	7
		24	102
		25	626
		26	555
		27	390
		28	239
		29	600
		30	79
		31	308
		32	658
		33	645
		34	635
		35	633
		36	633
	30N03E	19	112
		20	29
		27	118
		28	375
		29	629
		30	641
		31	642
		32	634
		33	635
		34	507
		35	159
Tehama County Total			71233

The following are limitations or requirements for timber operations conducted under a Notice of Exemption for Dead, Dying or Diseased, Trees of any size, Fuelwood or Split products in amounts less than 10% of the average volume per acre, or the removal of Slash and Woody Debris that is not located within a WLPZ:

1. This notice must be submitted to and received by CAL FIRE at the appropriate office listed below prior to the commencement of timber operations.
 - **Coastal Special Treatment areas and Marin County** the Director shall have ten calendar days from date of receipt to accept or reject the notice of timber operations.
2. Timber Operations may not be conducted without a copy of the Directors notice of acceptance of the notice of exemption at the operating site, except where the Director has failed to act within the five (5) working day review period. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(13)(A)
3. 14 CCR § 1038(b) places certain limits on the harvesting of Dead, Dying or Diseased, Trees of any size, Fuelwood or Split products in amounts less than 10% of the average volume per acre, or the removal of Slash and Woody Debris that is not located within a WLPZ. These limits need to be examined to assure compliance.
4. 14 CCR § 1038 Timber operations conducted under this notice shall comply with all operational provisions of the Forest Practice Act and District Forest Practice Rules applicable to "Timber Harvest Plan," "THP," and "plan." The requirements to submit a completion and stocking report normally do not apply. The requirements for environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (See 14 CCR § 15300.1) also do not apply.
5. There are special requirements for timber operations conducted in Coastal Commission Special Treatment Areas and in counties with special rules. adopted by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. Timber Operations shall comply with the rules associated with the specific Special Treatment Area timber operations are within. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(6). These rules should be reviewed prior to submitting this notice to CAL FIRE.
6. All timber operations conducted in the Lake Tahoe Region must have a valid Tahoe Basin Tree Removal Permit, as defined by TRPA, or shall be conducted under a valid TRPA memorandum of understanding, when such a permit is required by TRPA, 14 CCR § 1038.1(b)(1)
7. No helicopter yarding shall be allowed. 14 CCR § 1038.1(b)(3)
8. In-lieu practices within WLPZs as specified under Article 6 of these rules, exception to the rules, and alternative practices are not allowed. 14 CCR § 1038.1
9. No Tractor or heavy equipment operations on slopes greater than 50%. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(5)
10. No construction of new tractor roads on slopes greater than 40%. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(5)
11. No Tractor or heavy equipment operations on known Unstable Areas. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(7)
12. No NEW road construction or reconstruction, as defined by 14 CCR § 895.1. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(8)
13. No heavy equipment operations within the standard width of a WLPZ, as defined in 14 CCR § 916.4[936.4, 956.4](b). 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(9)
14. **No timber harvesting within the standard width of a watercourse or lake protection zone**, as defined in 14 CCR § 916.4 [936.4, 956.4](b), except sanitation-salvage harvesting, as defined in 14 CCR § 913.3 [933.3, 953.3], where immediately after completion of operations, the area shall meet the stocking standards of 14 CCR § 912.7 [932.7, 952.7](b)(2), or, except the removal of dead or dying trees where consistent with 14 CCR § 916.4 [936.4, 956.4] (b). **Trees to be harvested within a WLPZ shall be marked by, or under the supervision of, an RPF prior to timber operations.** 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(12)
15. **ASP watersheds** – No timber operations are allowed in a WLPZ, or within any ELZ or EEZ designated for watercourse or lake protection, under exemption notices except **(1)** Hauling on existing roads **(2)** Road maintenance **(3)** Operations conducted for public safety **(4)** Construction or reconstruction of approved watercourse crossings **(5)** Temporary crossings of dry Class III watercourses that do not require notification under Fish and Game Code §1600 et seq. **(6) Harvesting recommended in writing by CDFW to address specifically identified forest conditions.**

16. Operations conducted under a Notice of Exemption are NOT permitted in known sites of rare, candidate, threatened or endangered plants and animals if the sites will be disturbed or damaged. NO timber operations may occur within a buffer zone of a listed, or sensitive species defined by 14CCR § 895.1. 14 CCR § 1038.1(c)(10)(11)
17. If any activities related to timber operations, as defined by PRC 4527, are to include any of the following activities in any river, stream or lake, including episodic and perennial waterways, a notification to the California Department Fish and Wildlife is required pursuant to Fish and Game Code §1602: 1) A substantial alteration of the bed, bank, or channel; 2) A substantial diversion (i.e. water drafting) or obstruction of the natural flow; or 3) use of material from or deposit of material into the watercourse. Information on the Lake and Streambed Alteration Program, as well as notification forms, may be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/lisa>.
18. The requirements to submit a completion and stocking report do not normally apply. **However, Completion and Stocking reports are required for areas when operations occur within COAST, SPECIAL TREATMENT AREAS and / or MARIN COUNTY.** The landowner shall submit to CAL FIRE a RM-71 Completion and Stocking report. Per PRC 4585 and PRC 4587.
19. This Notice of Exemption is valid for one year from the date of receipt by CAL FIRE.
 - **Santa Cruz County** the exemption is valid for 45 days if over 3 acres.
 - **Marin County** the exemption is valid for the calendar year of acceptance.
20. A Timber Operator with a valid state license must be designated upon submission of this notice.

The following suggestions may help ensure your compliance with the Forest Practice Rules:

1. Timber Owners, Timberland owners and Timber Operators should obtain and review copies of the Forest Practice Rules pertaining to the Notice of Exemption. Copies may be obtained from BARCLAYS LAW PUBLISHERS, P.O. BOX 3066, SO. SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94080. or from CAL FIRE, Forest Practice Section, P.O. BOX 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244-2460; or from CAL FIRE's Web Page on the Internet at <http://www.fire.ca.gov>.
2. Contact the CAL FIRE office listed below for questions regarding the use of this notice.

FILE THIS NOTICE WITH THE CAL FIRE OFFICE BELOW FOR THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE OPERATION WILL OCCUR:

Alameda, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, western Trinity and Yolo Counties.	=> =>	Forest Practice Program Manager CAL FIRE 135 Ridgway Avenue Santa Rosa, CA 95401
Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, eastern Trinity and Yuba Counties.	=> =>	Forest Practice Program Manager CAL FIRE 6105 Airport Road Redding, CA 96002
Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Tulare, and Ventura Counties.	=> => =>	Forest Practice Program Manager CAL FIRE 1234 East Shaw Avenue Fresno, CA 93710

SIGNATURE OF THE TIMBER OWNER OR AGENT THEREOF:

Printed Name: **Henry T. James**

Address **P.O. Box 496014**

City: **Redding**

EMAIL: (optional) **tjames@spi-ind.com**



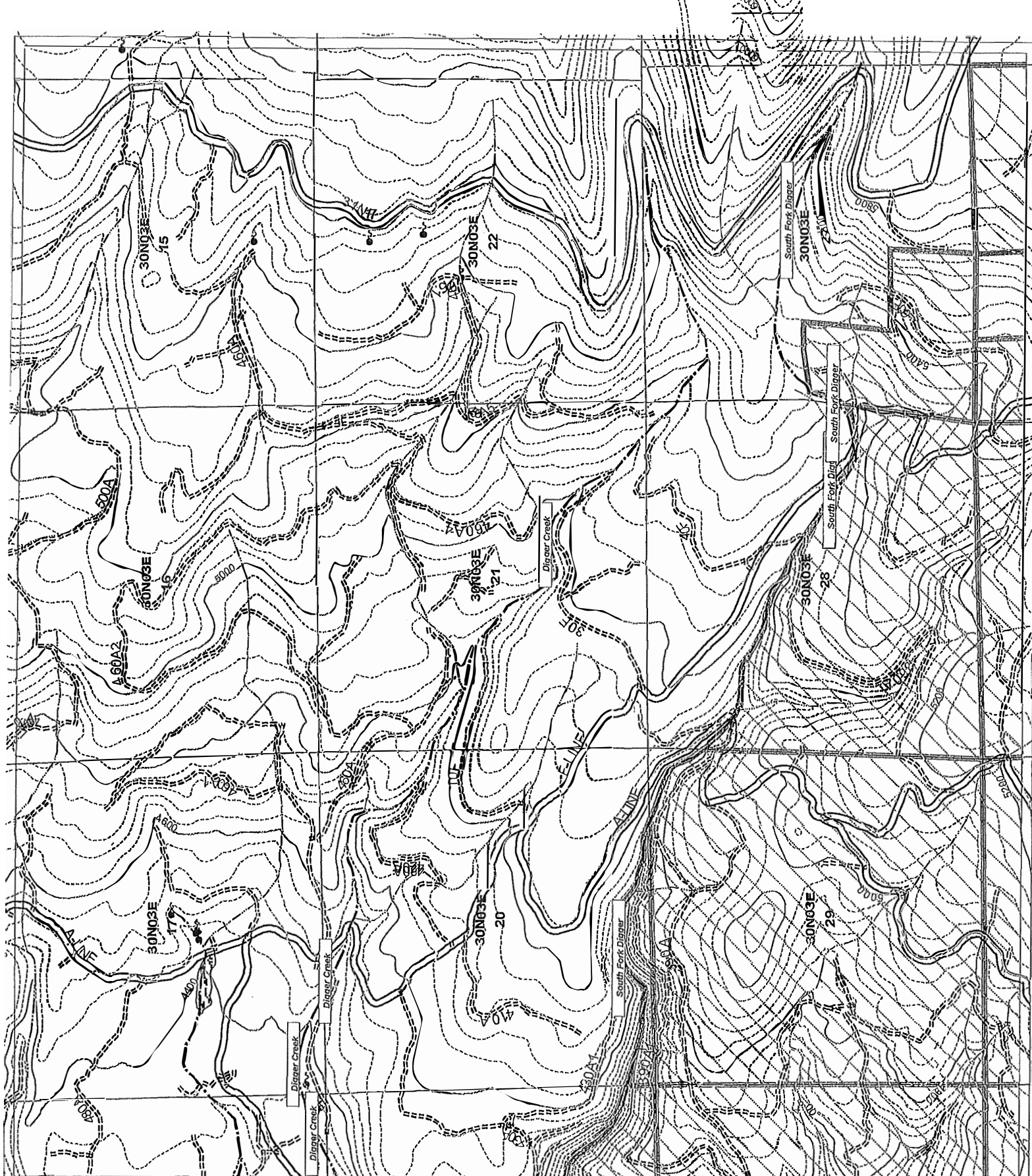
Date: **9-15-2021**

Title: **Lassen District Manager**

State **CA**

Zip **96049**

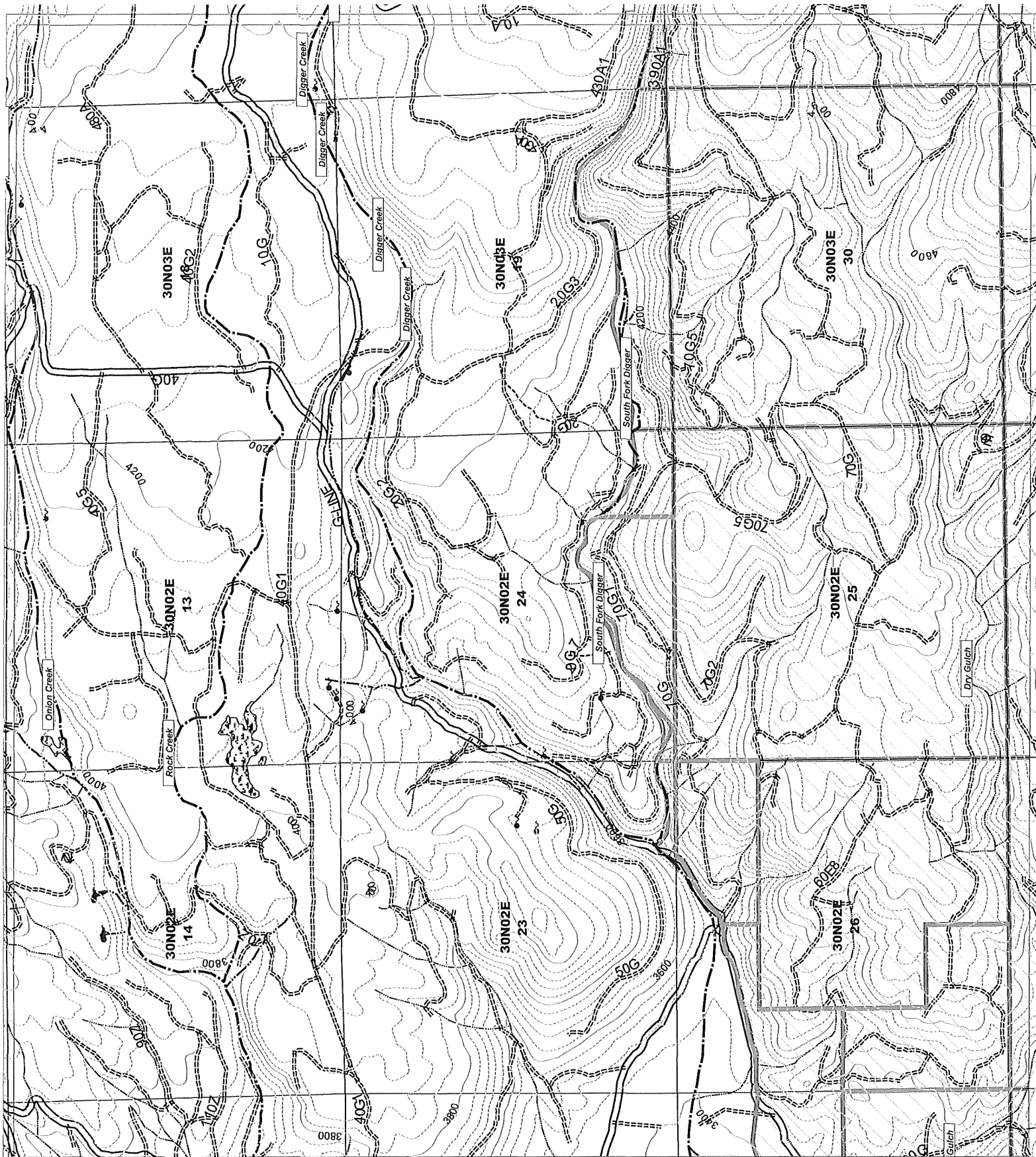
Phone **(530) 378-8141**

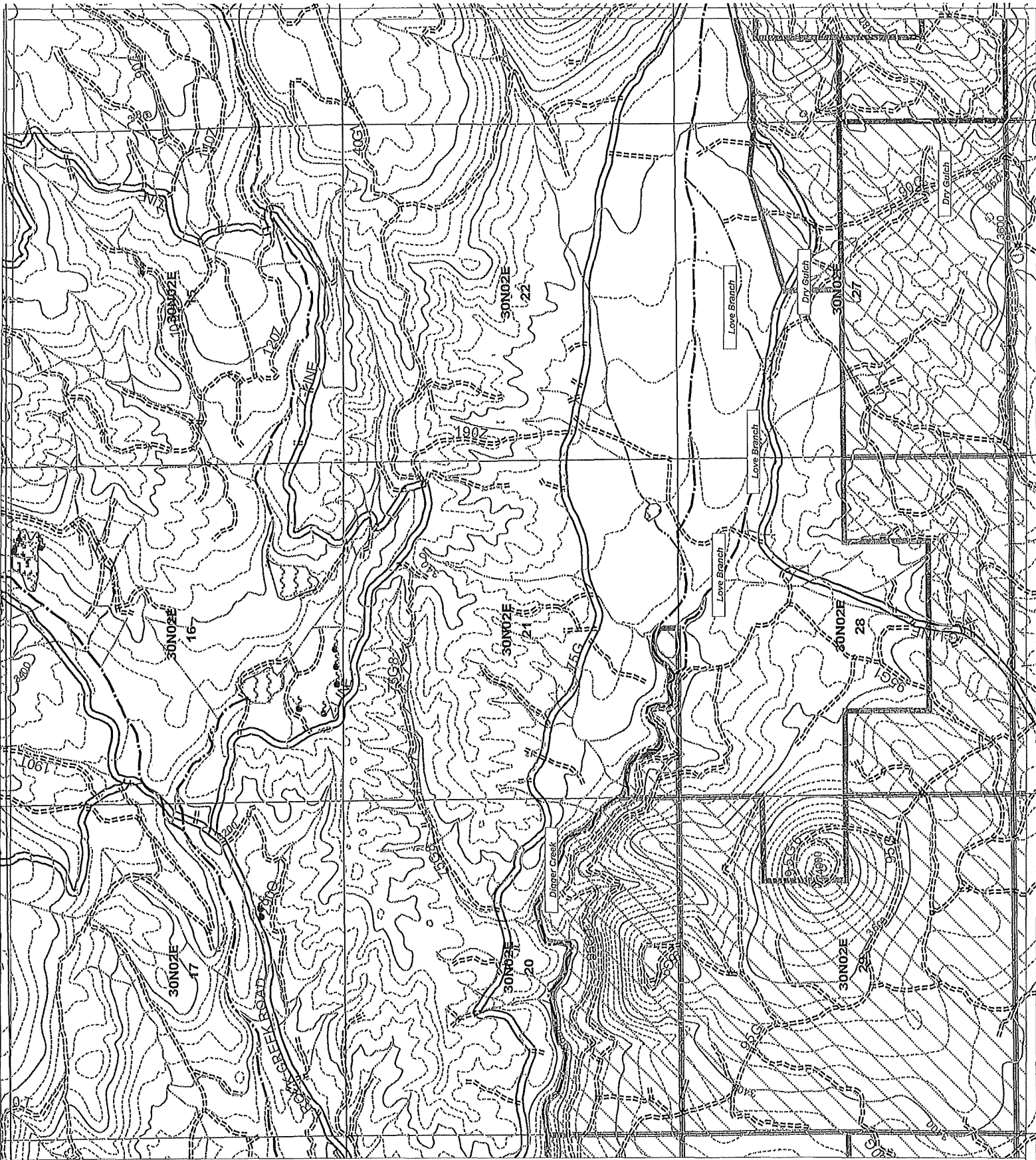


Exemption

- Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse

2,000 ft./in.
0 1000 2000





Exemption



Area

Lake



Meadow



Mainline Rd



Seasonal



Road



Highway



Spring



Class I



Class II



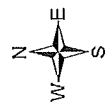
Class III



Unclassified

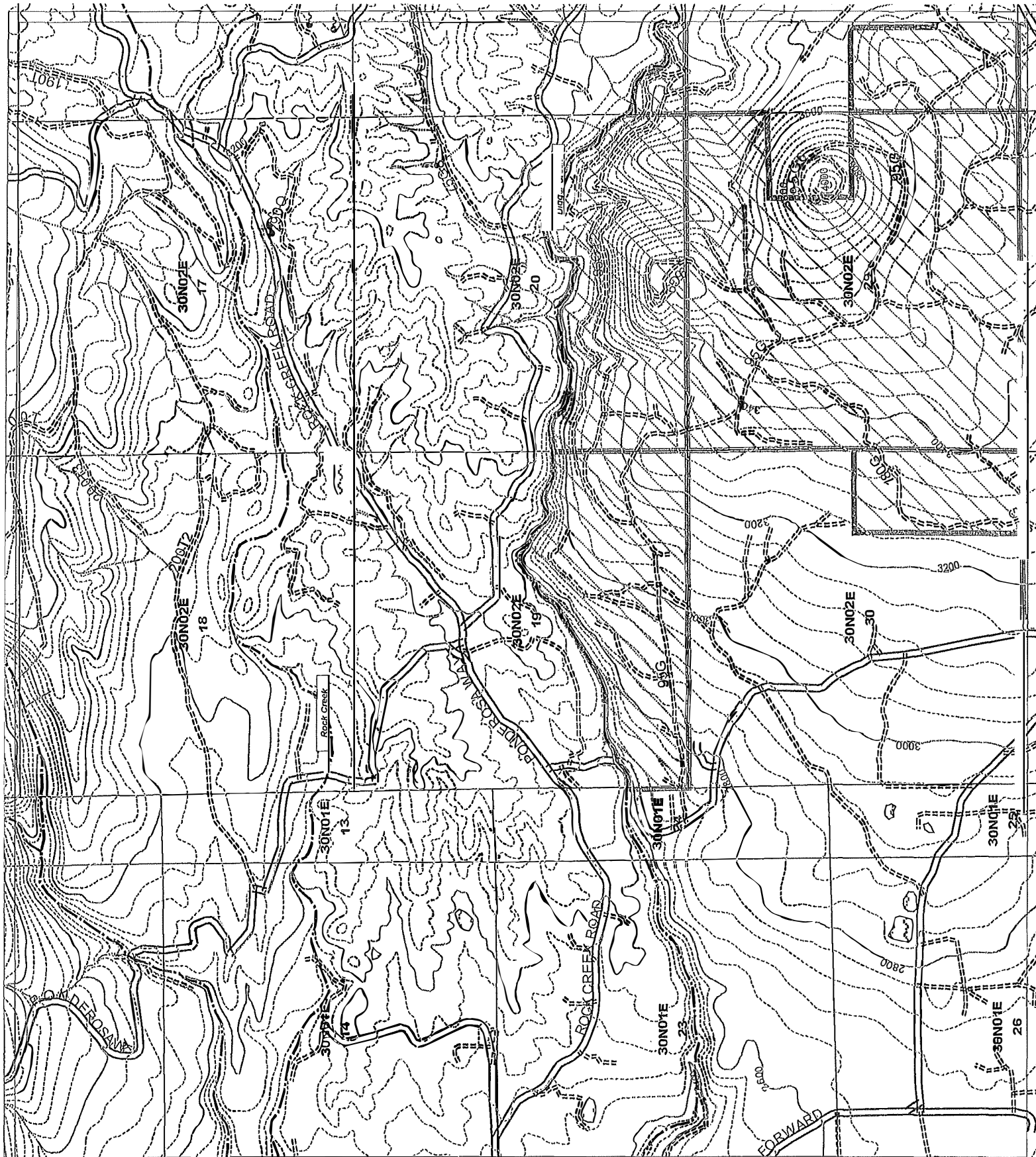


Watercourse



2,000 ft./in.





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

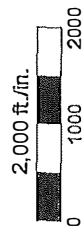
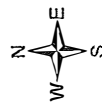
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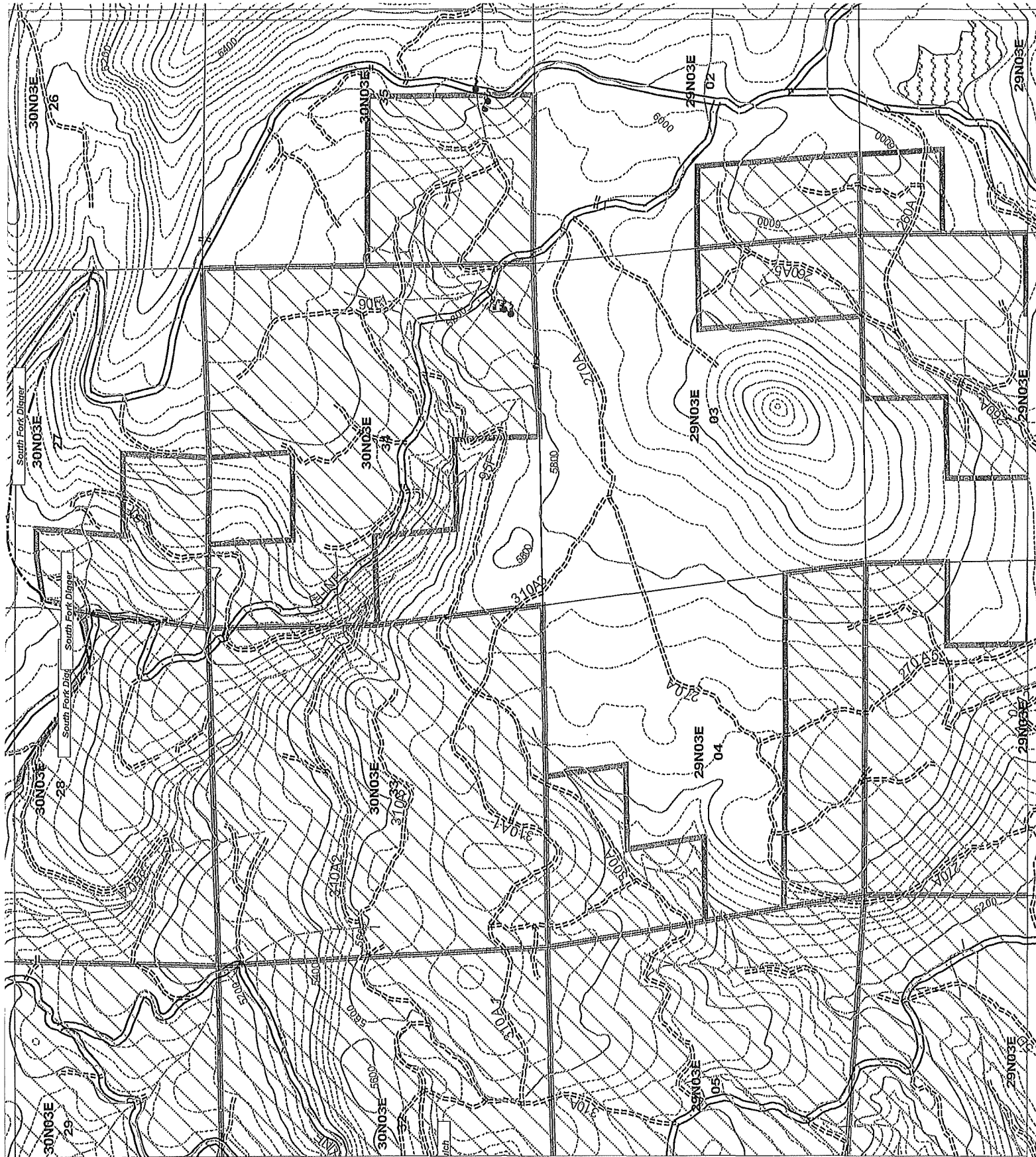
Class II

Class III

Unclassified

Watercourse

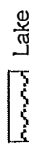




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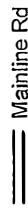
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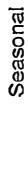
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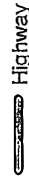
Meadow



Mainline Rd



Seasonal Road



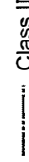
Highway



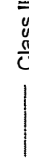
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Class I



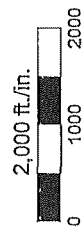
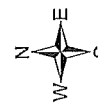
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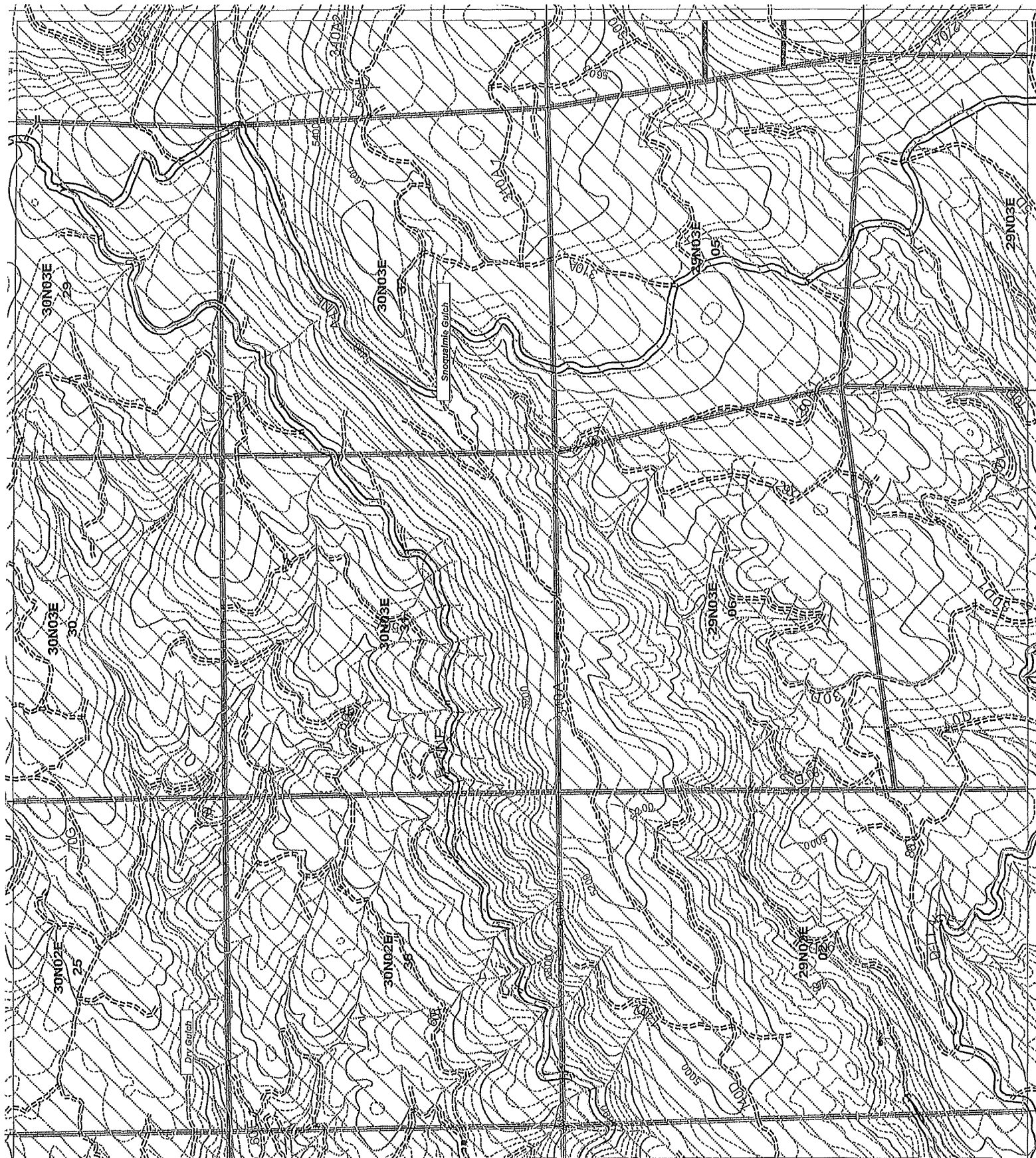













Class III

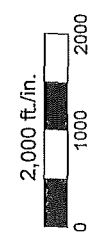
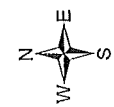
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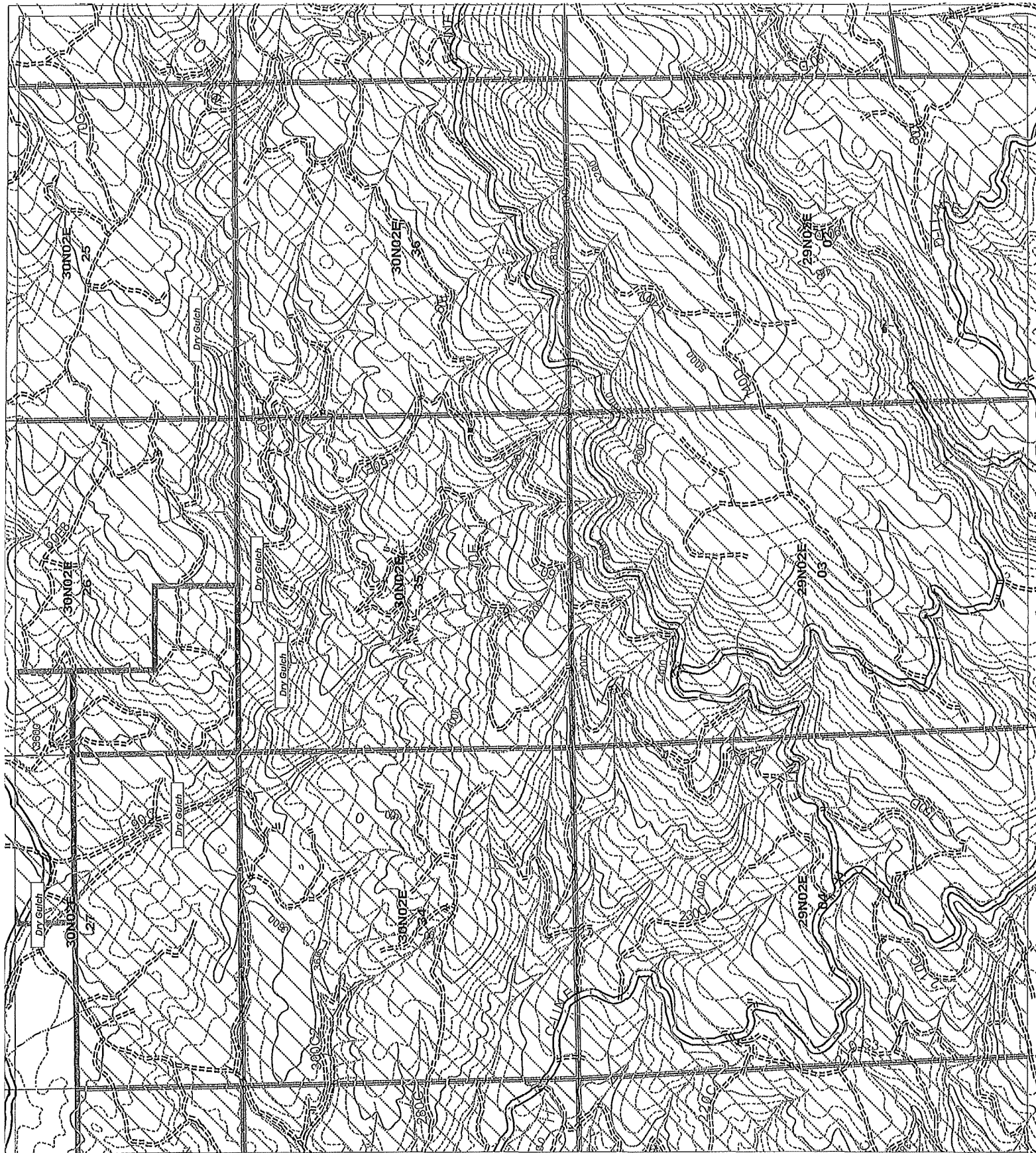
Watercourse





-  Exemption Area
-  Lake
-  Meadow
-  Mainline Rd
-  Seasonal Road
-  Highway
-  Spring
-  Class I
-  Class II
-  Class III
-  Unclassified Watercourse





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

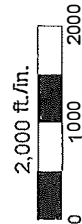
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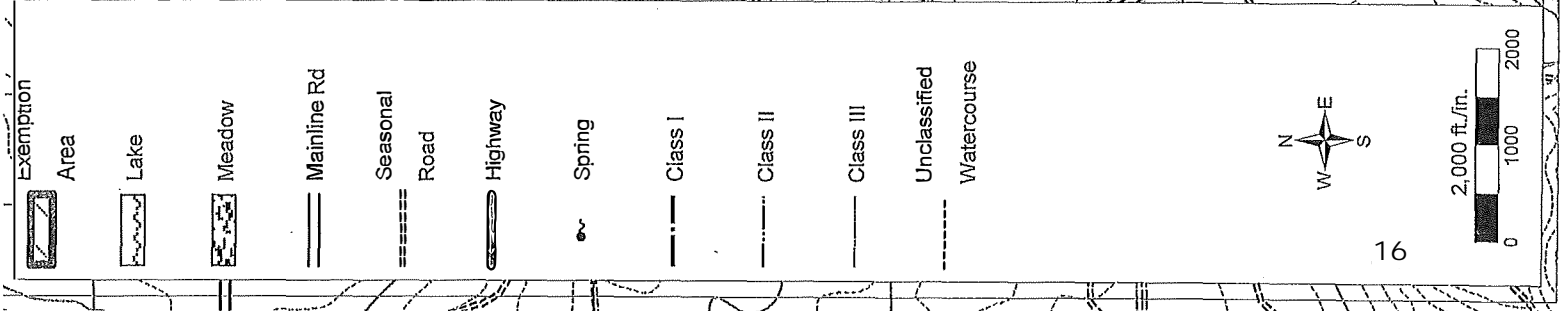
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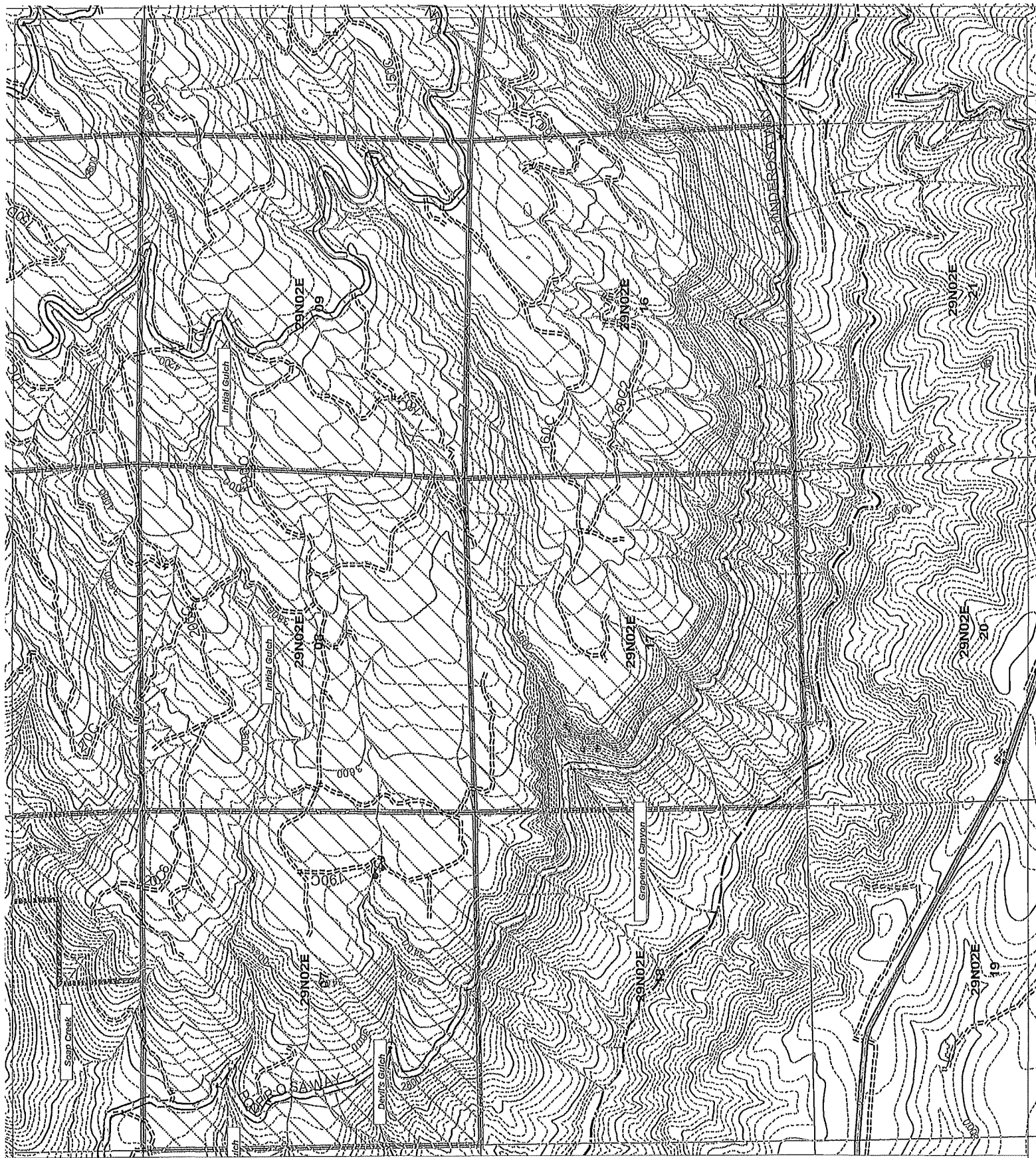
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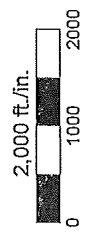
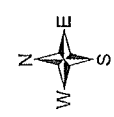
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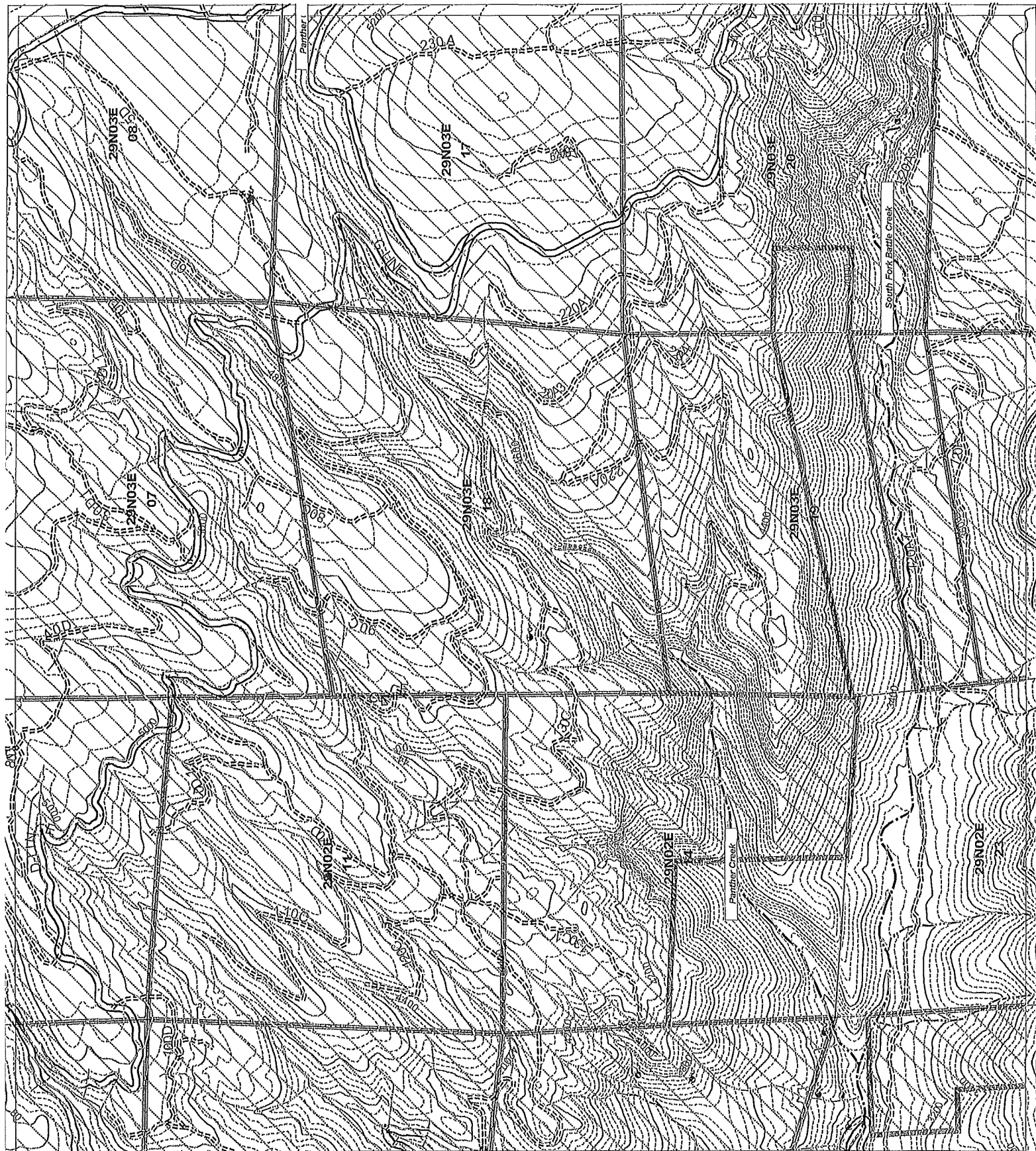






- Exemption Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

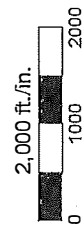
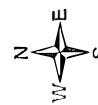
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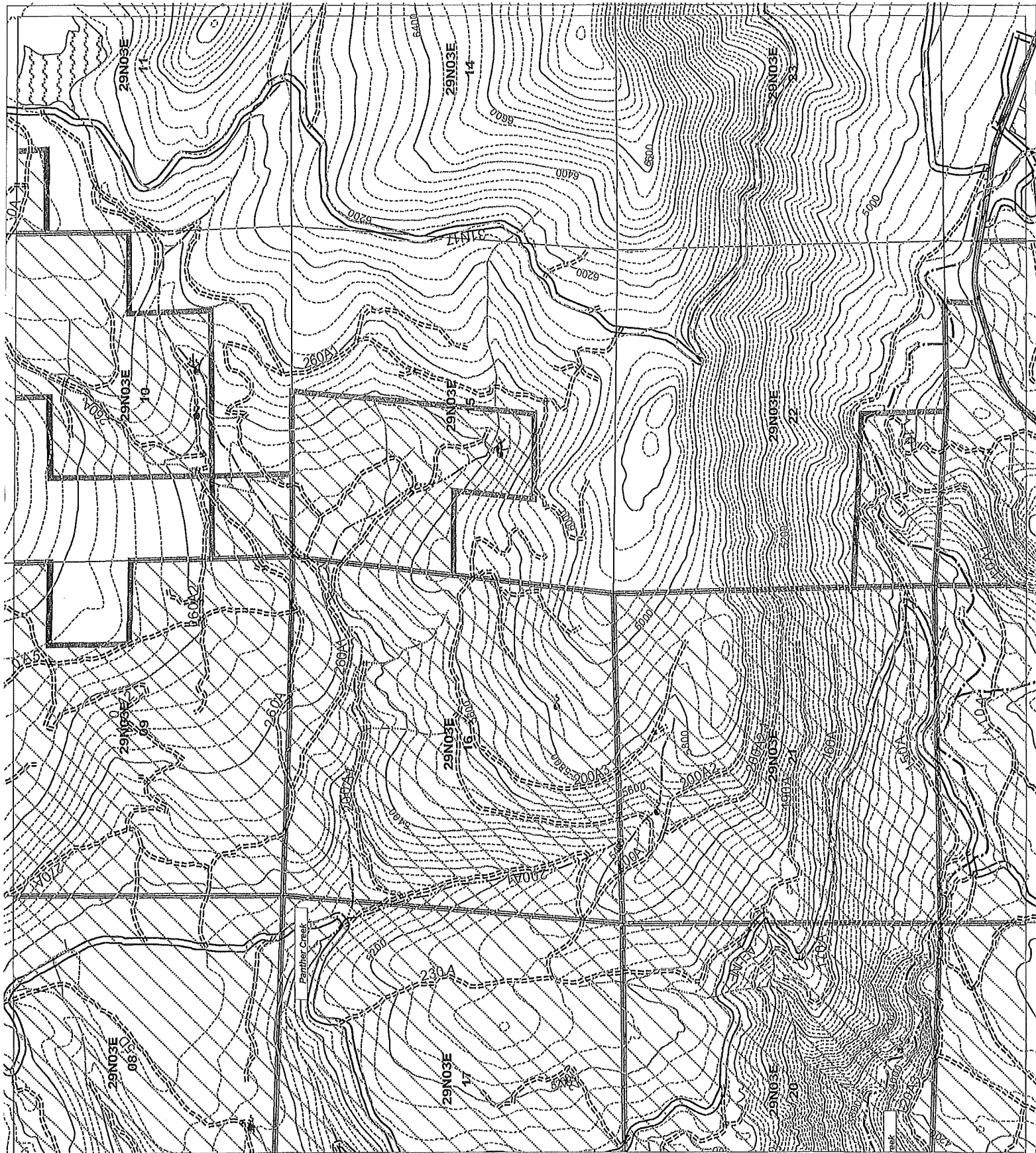
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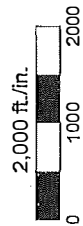
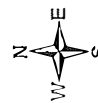
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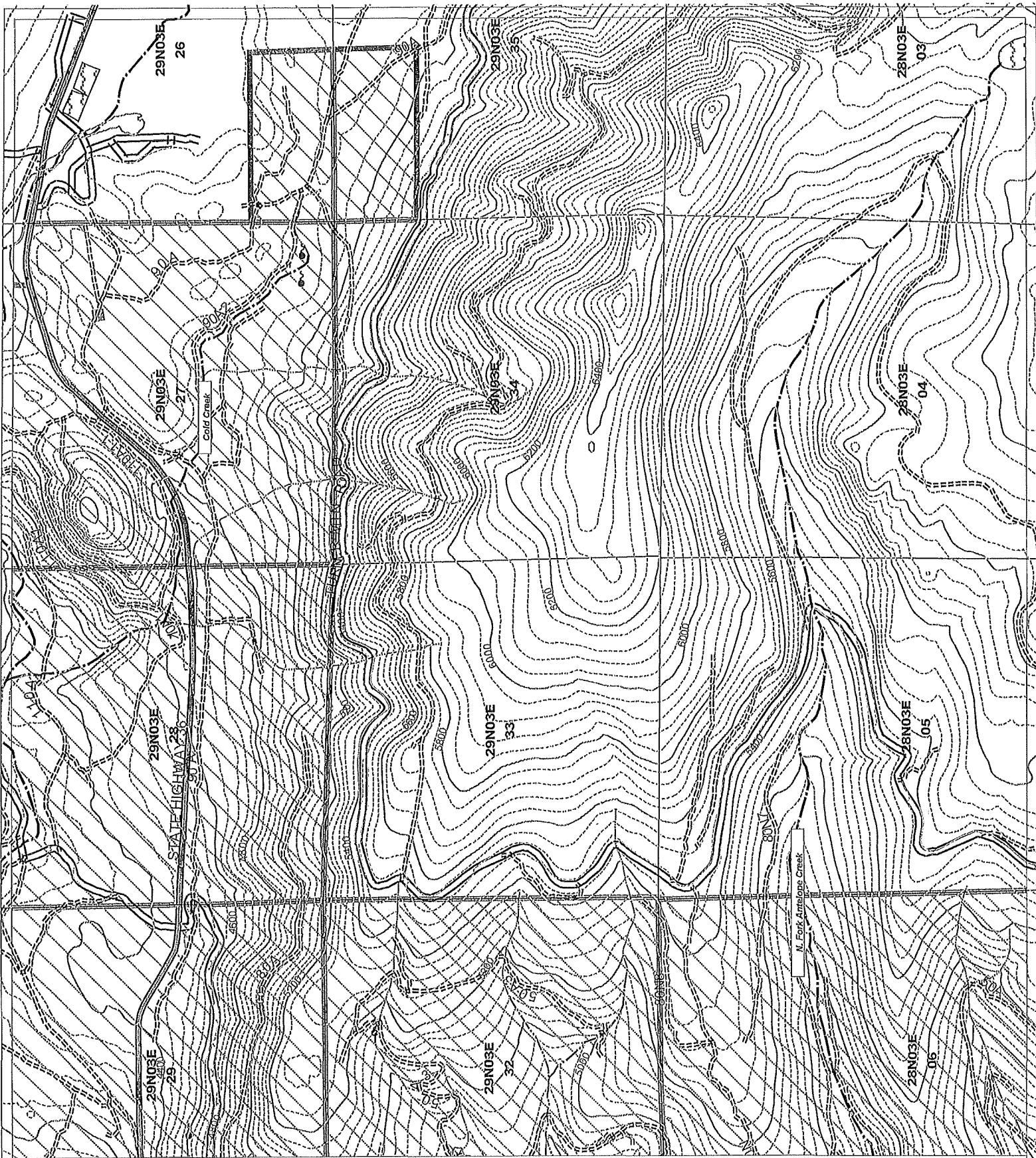
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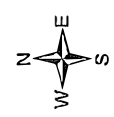


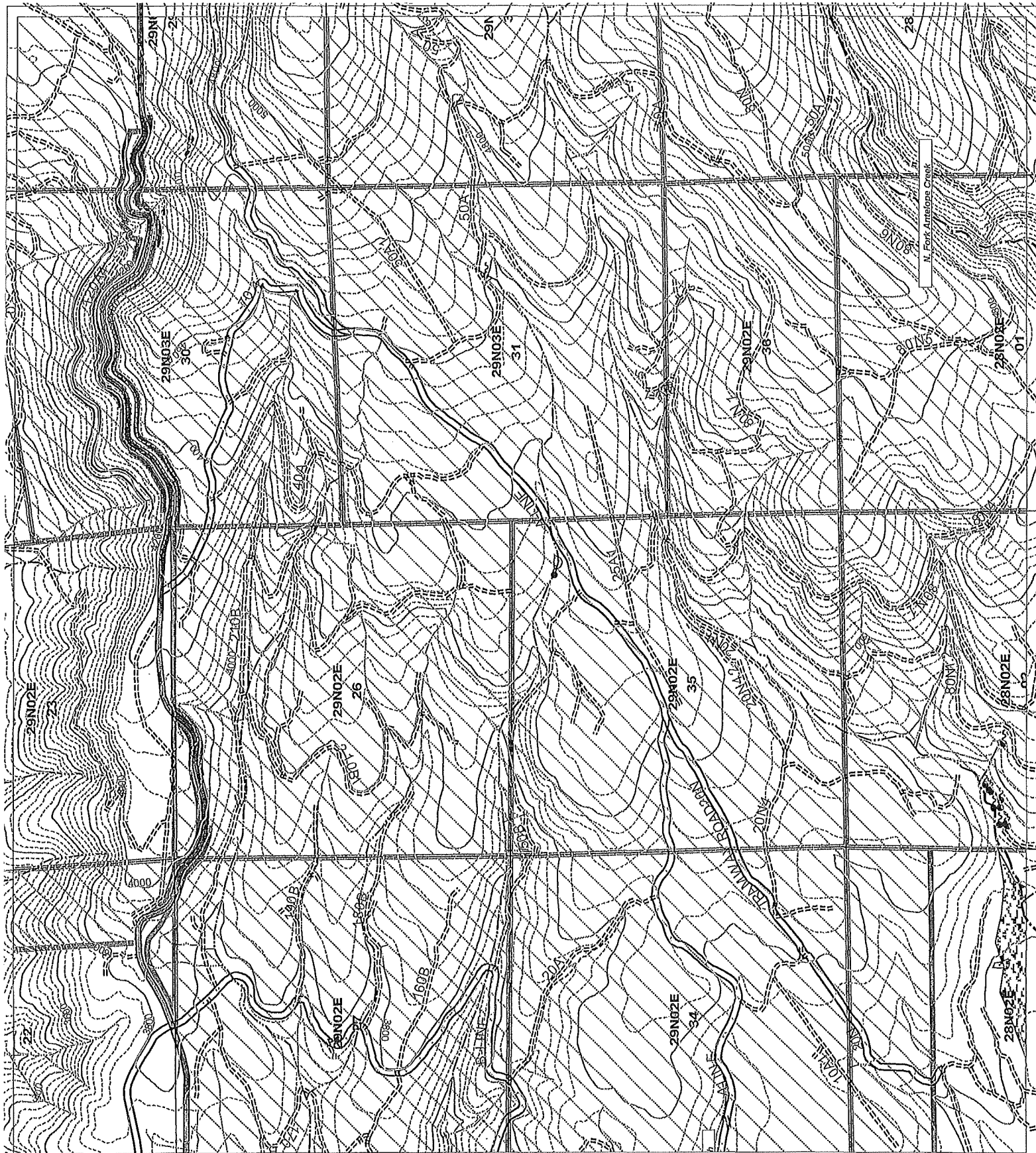
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Area
Lake
Meadow
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Seasonal Road
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Spring
Class I
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Class III
Unclassified
Watercourse





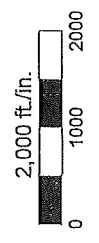
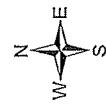
- Exemption
- Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse

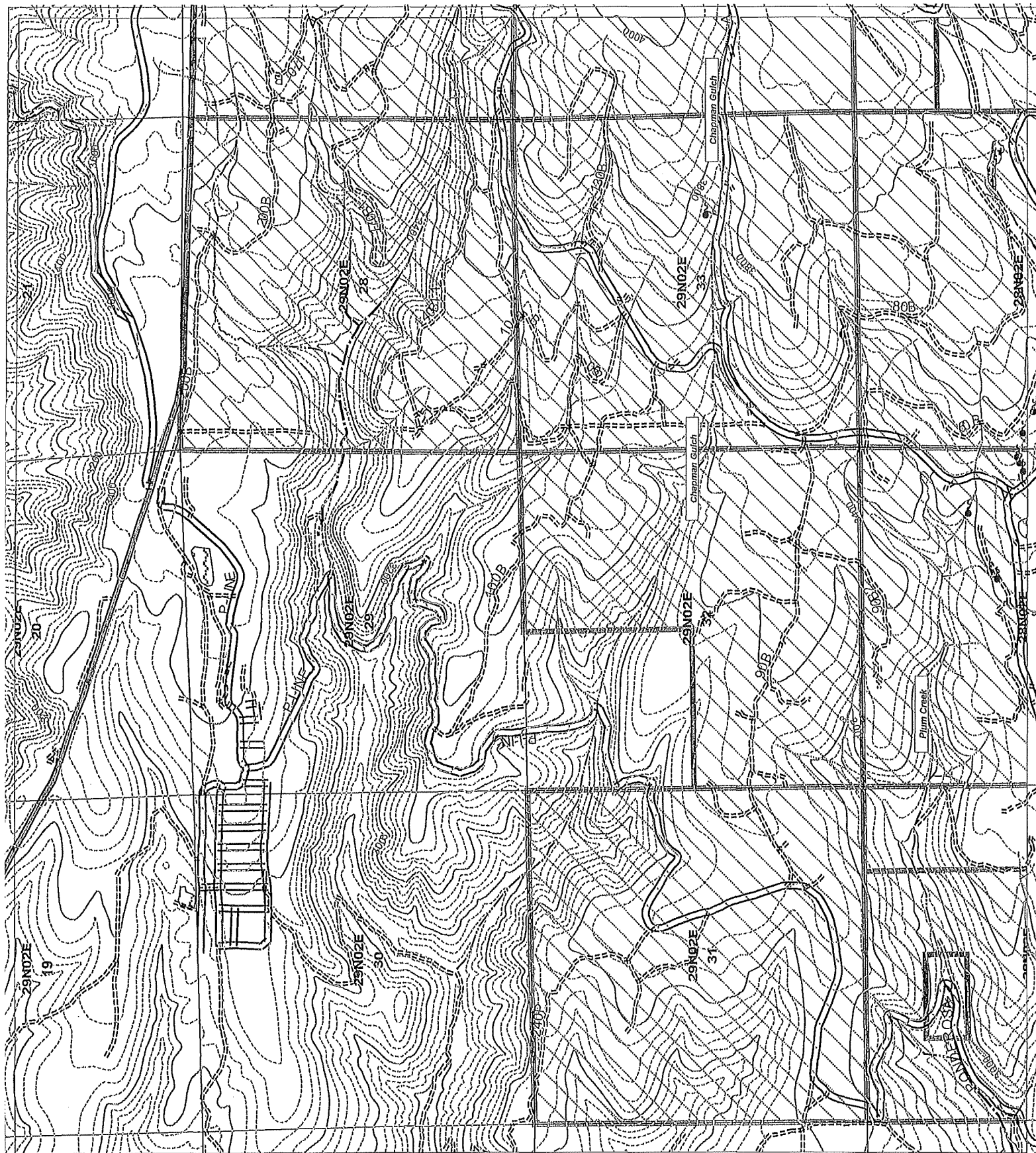




N. Fork Antelope Creek

- Exemption Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

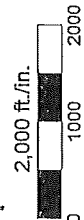
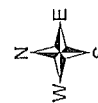
Class I

Class II

Class III

Unclassified

Watercourse





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

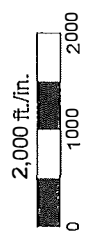
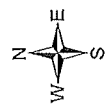
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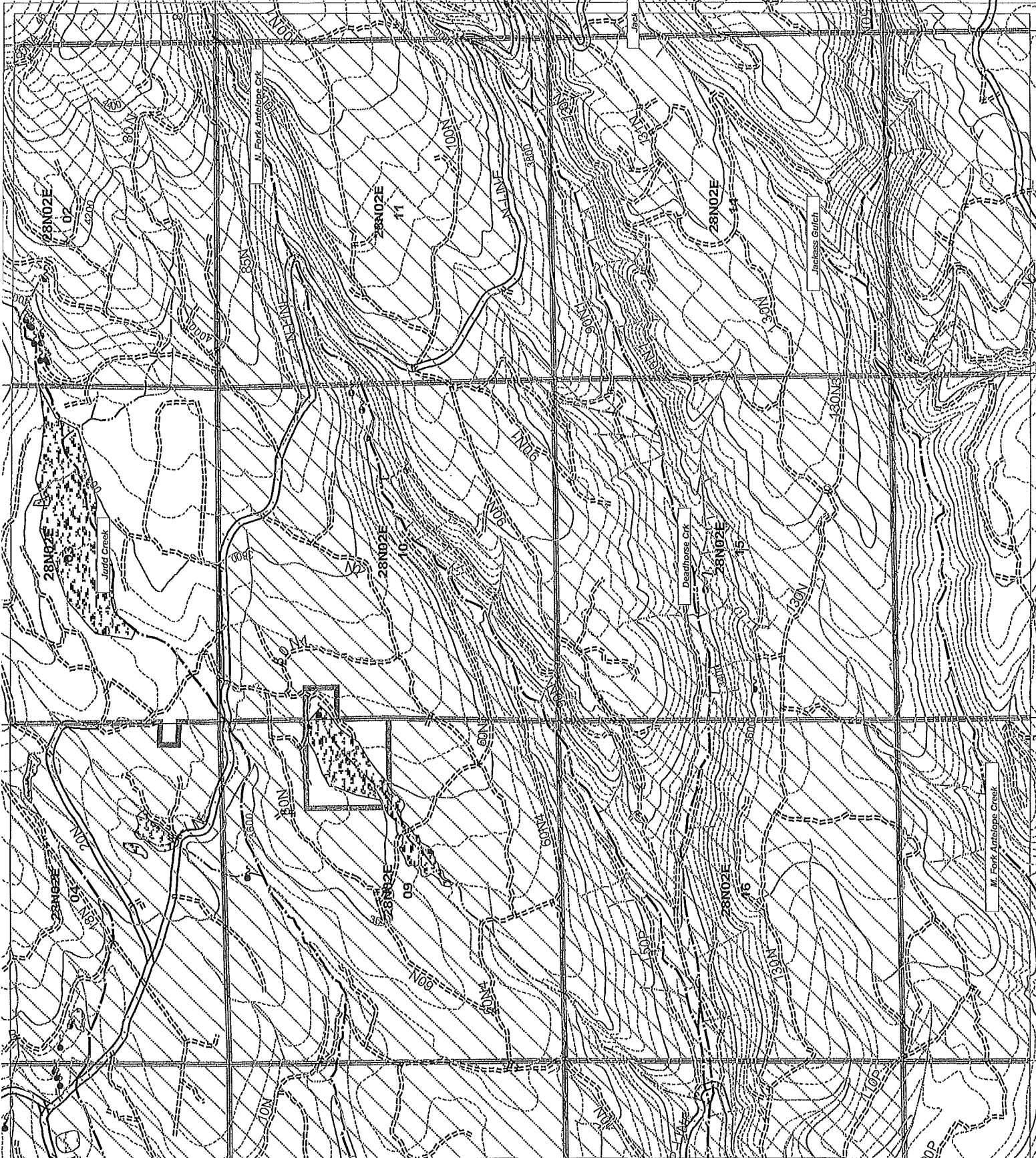
Class II

Class III

Unclassified

Watercourse

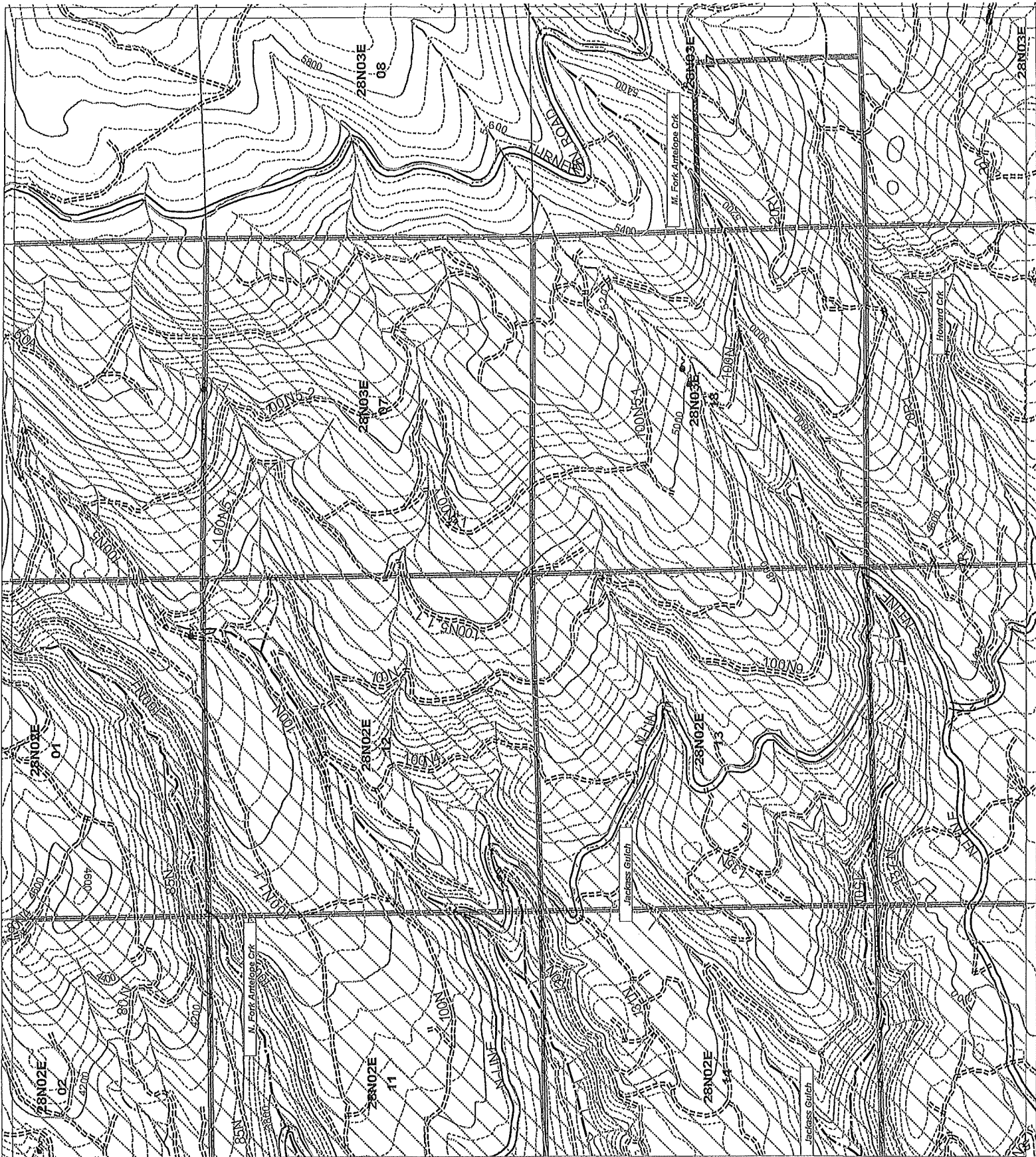




Exemption

- Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse

2,000 ft./in.
0 1000 2000



Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

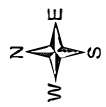
Class I

Class II

Class III

Unclassified

Watercourse





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal Road

Highway

Spring

Class I

Class II

Class III

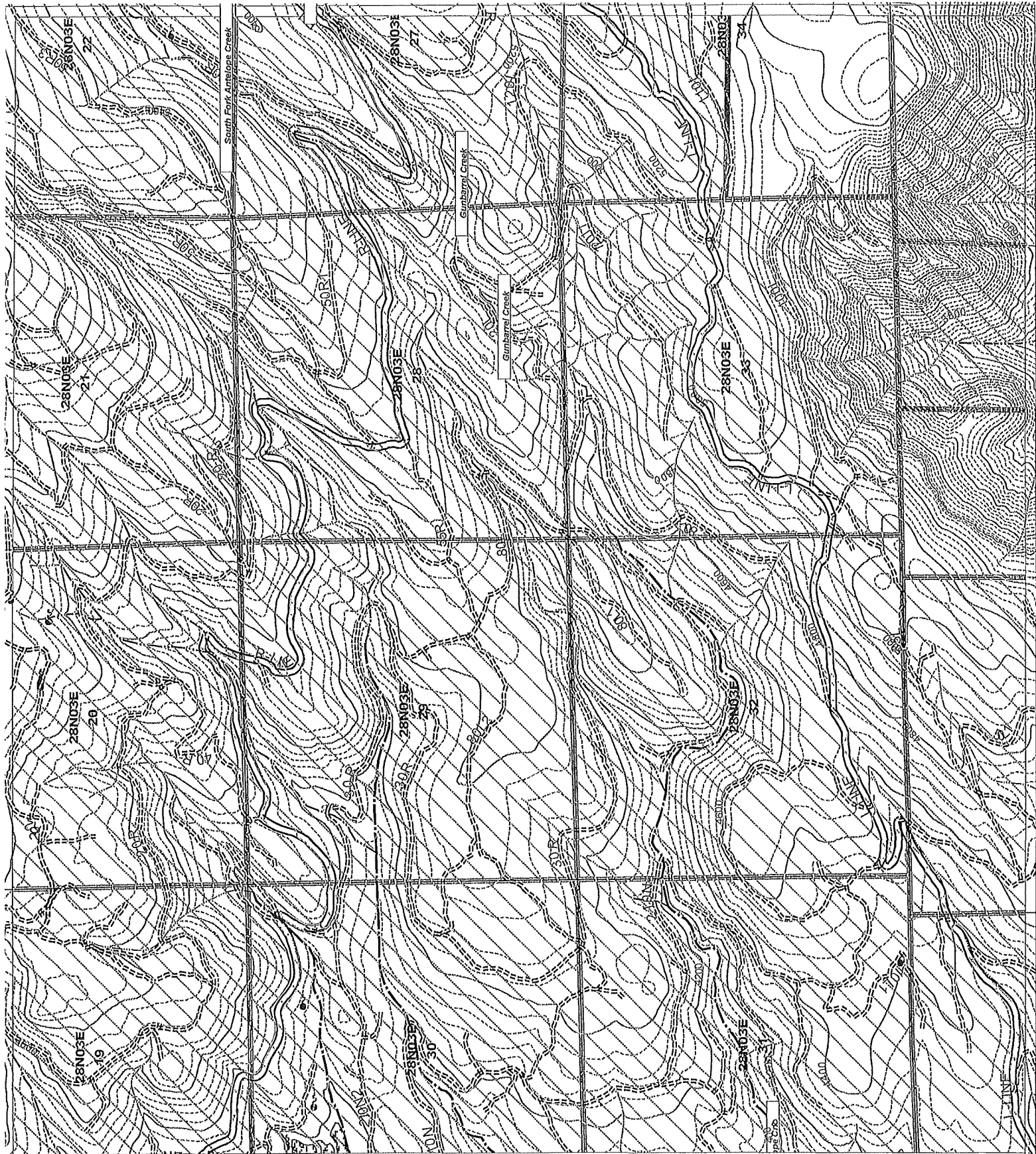
Unclassified

Watercourse

N
W E S

26

2,000 ft./in.
0 1000 2000



Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal Road

Highway

Spring

Class I

Class II

Class III

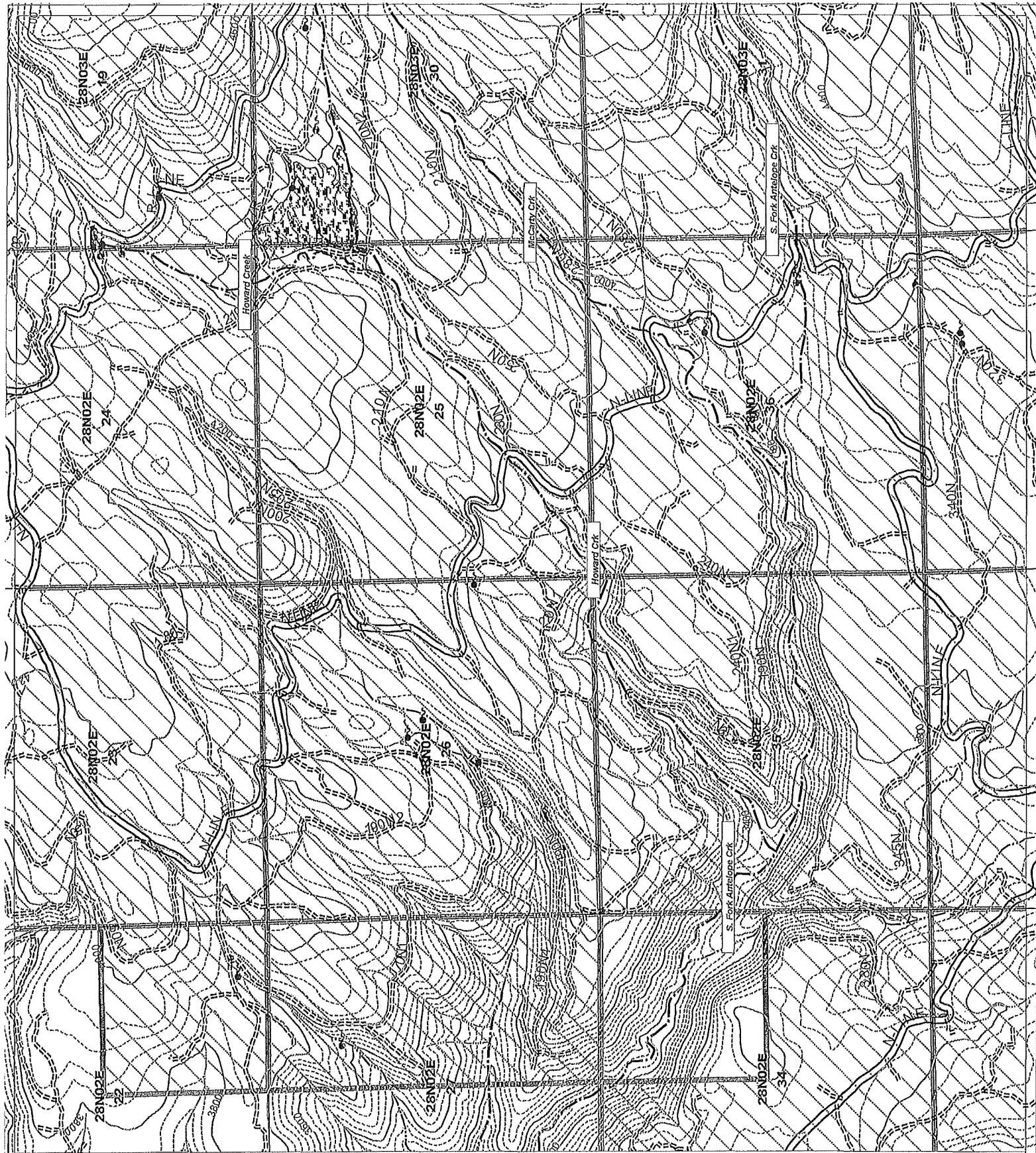
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Watercourse

27

North Arrow

Scale: 2,000 ft./in. (0 to 2000 feet)



Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal

Road

Highway

Spring

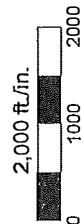
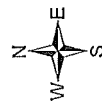
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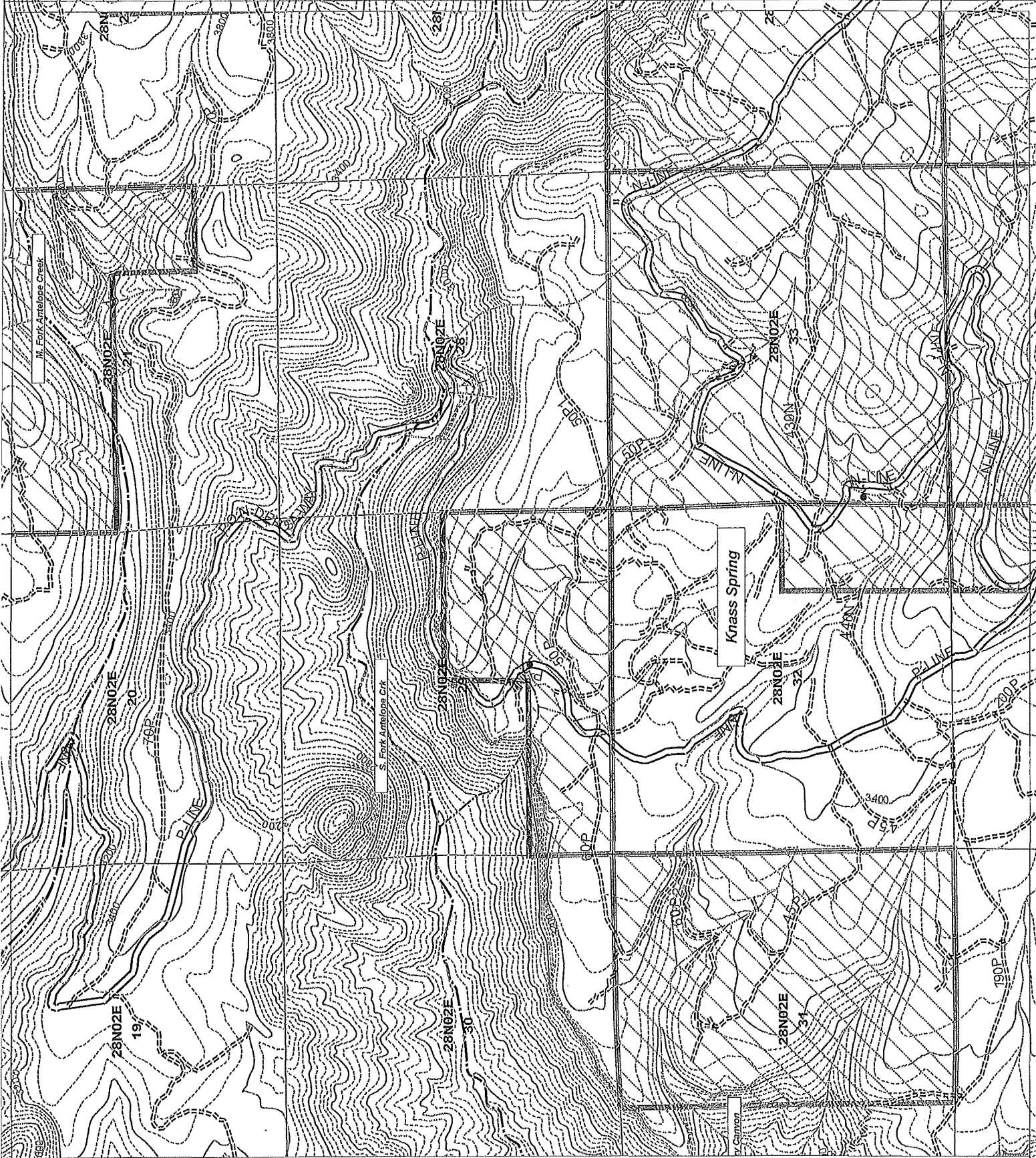
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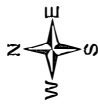
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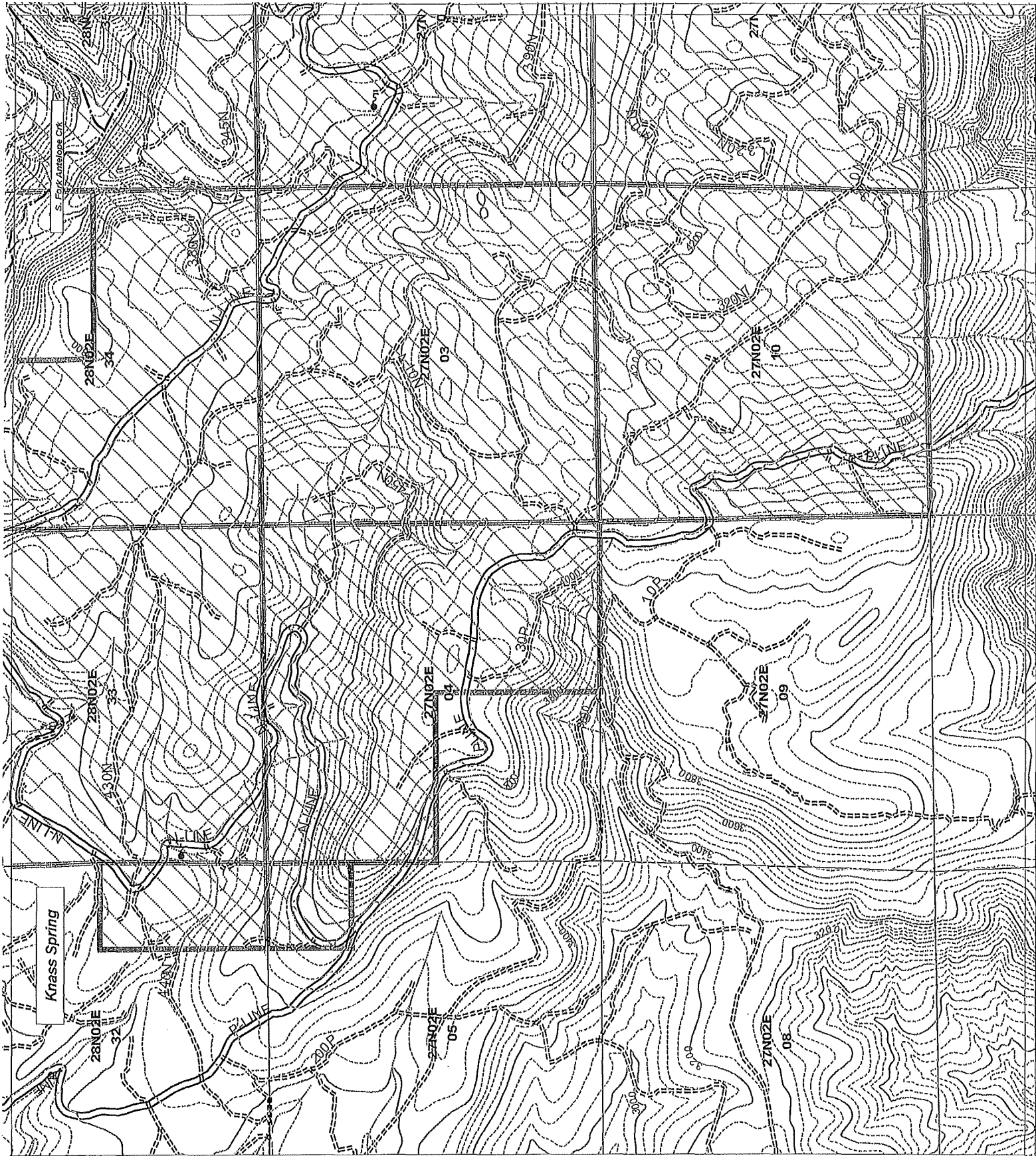
Watercourse



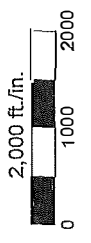
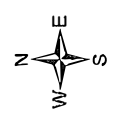


- Exemption
- Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse





- Exemption
- Area
- Lake
- Meadow
- Mainline Rd
- Seasonal Road
- Highway
- Spring
- Class I
- Class II
- Class III
- Unclassified
- Watercourse





Exemption

Area

Lake

Meadow

Mainline Rd

Seasonal Road

Highway

Spring

Class I

Class II

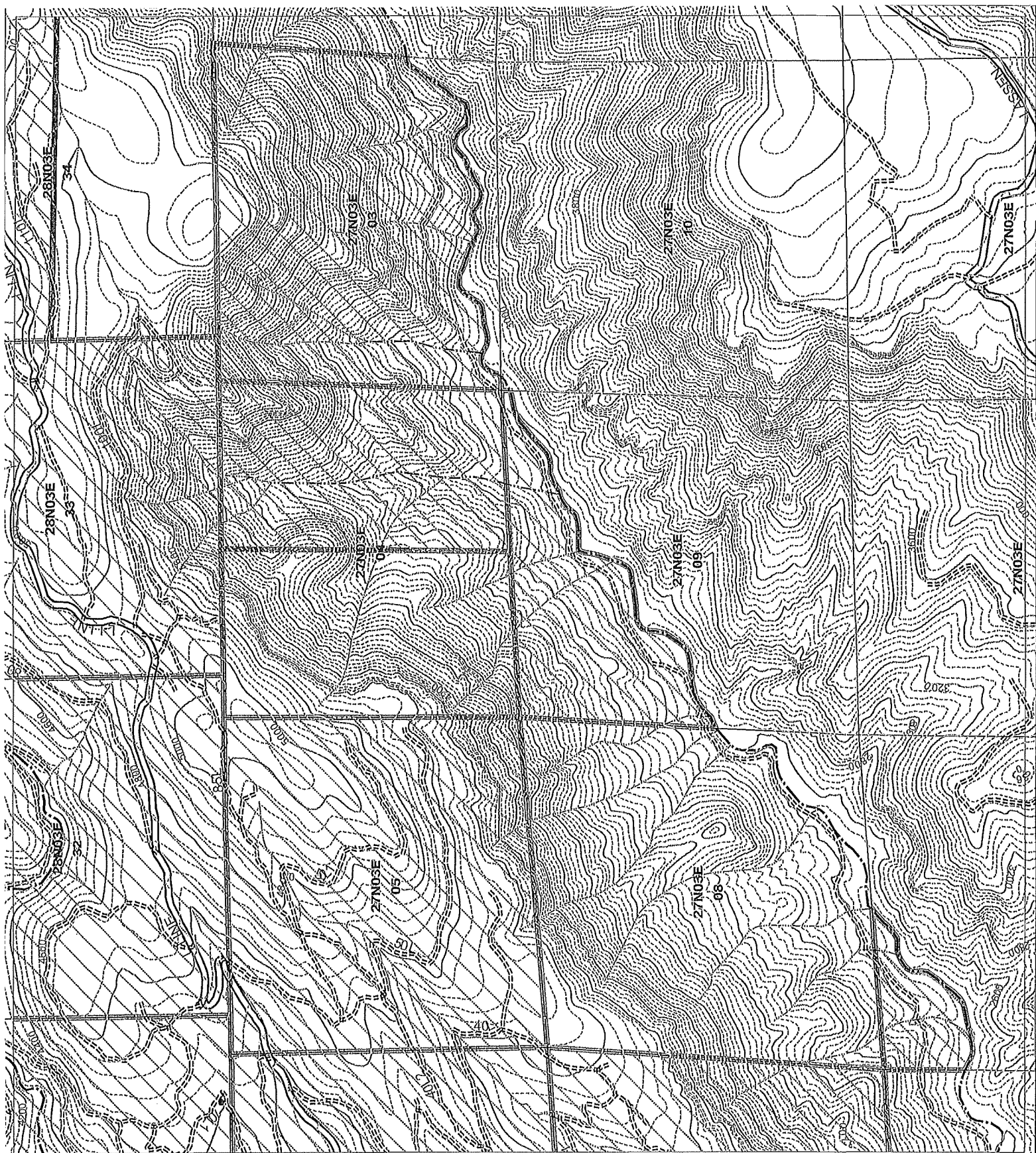
Class III

Unclassified

Watercourse

N
W
E
S

2,000 ft./in.
0 1000 2000



**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 10: 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Guidelines

Background

In May 2021, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was appropriated \$20 million in General Fund from the California Budget Act of 2020 to administer implementation-ready local assistance grants that address wildfire and forest resilience priorities. In March 2021, anticipating the forthcoming appropriation, the SNC Board approved grant guidelines for the 2021 Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience program. Upon appropriation, the SNC launched the program, and at a specially scheduled Board meeting in July 2021, the Board awarded all of the local assistance funding available to 15 projects throughout the Region.

In September 2021, the SNC was appropriated \$50 million in General Fund from the California Budget Act of 2021 for wildfire and forest resilience priorities. The governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force identifies these priorities in [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan: A Comprehensive Strategy](#).

The SNC is recognized as a key organization to implement these funds as part of a broader state strategy. The SNC's approach to guiding investments to high-priority projects that support science-based management and local collaboration will deliver critical forest health and wildfire recovery projects that build resilience and strengthen protections for communities, habitat, and water supply, and other natural and regional values.

Current Status

The SNC staff has developed the 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Guidelines (Guidelines) for Board consideration. Staff proposes up to \$25 million of the \$50 million appropriation be made available under these Guidelines.

This program seeks to create more-resilient forest landscapes, reduce wildfire risk, and accelerate recovery from recent wildfires. The climate and ecological benefits of forest restoration treatments are well known. Ecologically sound forest management that includes prescribed fire and community protection are critical to securing the overall well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region. The SNC seeks projects that will help secure carbon stability in the Sierra Nevada by reducing the risk for large, damaging wildfires. Landscape-scale forest health treatments reduce the intensity of wildland fires, and the reduced intensity of wildland fire also makes it safer for firefighting resources to utilize fuel breaks to protect structures if a fire enters the wildland urban interface.

Program Priorities

The 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program will prioritize planning and implementation of forest health projects that promote wildfire recovery and forest resilience, that support the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (CWFRAP), and that support the goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP).

The CWFRAP identifies three goals that are strongly aligned with the WIP: healthy and resilient natural places, safe communities, and sustainable economies. Both plans also stress the importance of climate resiliency, regionally-tailored solutions, the linkages between ecological and economic health, the importance of low-intensity fire, and the need to work strategically across land ownership boundaries. The CWFRAP also emphasizes the need to scale-up forest management to meet the state and federal 1-million-acre annual restoration target by 2025. Projects that address planning or implementation at a landscape scale are necessary to reach this goal.

Additional focus areas include:

- Multi-benefit projects
 - This grant program aims to support forest health projects that result in a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits. Examples of such benefits include reduced likelihood of and/or recovery from high-intensity fire and the negative consequences of such fires, protection and enhancement of natural resources including habitat and recreation, improved air and water quality, increased carbon sequestration and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and stronger regional economies.
- Landscape-scale projects
 - This grant program aims to support forest health projects that promote resilient and healthy forests at a landscape scale. The CWFRAP identifies the need to scale-up forest management to meet the state and federal 1-million-acre annual restoration target by 2025. Projects which address planning or implementation at a landscape scale are necessary to reach this goal.
- High-impact projects
 - This grant program will also support forest health projects that will result in an especially strong, direct benefit to communities, critical infrastructure, or high-value resources or assets. This includes singular natural resources and community assets.
- Wildfire recovery
 - This grant program will also support forest and watershed health projects that address recovery needs resulting from recent years of record-breaking wildfire. These may include the assessment, planning, or implementation of identified recovery needs, and must be focused on forest-health-related recovery needs.

- Regional Forest and Fire Capacity projects
 - This grant program aims to support forest health projects that were developed under the California Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). The purpose of the RFFCP is to increase regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement projects that improve forest health and fire resilience and increase carbon sequestration in forests throughout California. Over the past few years, the RFFCP has funded local partners to conduct regional planning, develop projects, conduct outreach, and implement landscape-level forest health projects.

Program Implementation

To be eligible to receive a grant award from the SNC under this program, projects must meet all of the following criteria:

- 1) Be located within or provide services to the Sierra Nevada Region as defined by SNC governing legislation.
- 2) Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the SNC Strategic Plan.
- 3) Be consistent with the requirements of the funding source and budget provisions.
- 4) Be complete by January 1, 2028.
- 5) Result in a clear, demonstrable, and enduring public benefit.
- 6) Meet all California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, as applicable.

Examples of potential planning projects include, but are not limited to:

- Acquiring permits for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s)
- Analyses required to support CEQA, and/or NEPA documentation for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s).
- Performing necessary cultural resources, biological, botanical, aquatic, soil, hydrologic, wildlife, timber, or other studies/surveys and/or developing necessary project designs related to a specific site or physical project(s)
- Preparing final project plans or supplementing existing plans that will result in a specific project(s)
- Planning for large-landscape fuel reduction or prescribed fire
- Planning for post-fire restoration and/or post-fire fuel management across a large landscape.

Examples of potential implementation projects include, but are not limited to:

- Reforestation and implementation of suitable stand-improvement activities after wildfire or tree mortality

- Implementation of strategic forest management projects (including mechanical treatments, hand treatments, and/or prescribed fire) that will reduce wildfire risks, promote watershed health, improve habitat conditions, or protect biodiversity
- Hazard tree removal along trails, roads or to protect resources
- Post-fire recovery from firefighting efforts in sensitive natural environments
- Projects that protect water resources by reducing post-fire sedimentation
- Forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization projects that increase capacity to accelerate fire recovery or improve forest and watershed health
- Creation and/or maintenance of fuel breaks
- Fuel reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface
- Strategically located fuel reduction projects that protect critical infrastructure or other valued resources and assets
- Forestry work that benefits fire evacuation routes

As the 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience program is a directed grant program, proposals are developed in conjunction with SNC. To initiate consideration of a project, an applicant must contact the appropriate SNC Area Representative. The Area Representative will assist the applicant to determine if the project meets SNC criteria, share the SNC proposal form with the applicant, and assist in developing the project.

Please refer to the [Draft 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Guidelines](#).

Next Steps

Dependent upon Board approval, SNC staff will develop announcement, proposal, and evaluation materials for the program. The SNC anticipates announcing the program on January 3, 2022, and collaborating with partners to develop projects. Staff anticipates recommending projects to the Board at the June 2022 and potentially September 2022 Board meetings.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve the Sierra Nevada Conservancy 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Guidelines and authorize staff to implement the program.



2022

WILDFIRE RECOVERY AND FOREST RESILIENCE

Directed Grant Program



Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the people of California.

sierranevada.ca.gov

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 the California State Budget appropriated \$50 million to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to address wildfire and forest resilience priorities. The governor's Forest Management Task Force identified these priorities in [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan: A Comprehensive Strategy](#).

The SNC's role in the Region is to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada, its communities, and the people of California. The SNC's primary initiative, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP), is a large-scale, holistic effort to restore resilience to the forested landscapes and communities of the Sierra Nevada. It is recognized by state policy and planning documents as a model program for addressing the growing challenges facing the Sierra Nevada Region in a changing climate. The SNC's Strategic Plan identifies Healthy Watersheds and Forests as a Regional Goal. This goal continues the SNC's focus on healthy forests and broadens efforts to better integrate watershed elements into its programs, reinforcing the SNC's commitment to preserve, protect, and restore the health of the Region's watersheds, regardless of the threats they face.

Fires are becoming larger and more damaging, and the 2020 and 2021 fire seasons were among the most severe in the state's history. The SNC is taking significant steps to fund projects that can reduce wildfire risks and respond to recent wildfire damage. According to the California Public Utilities Commission fire risk map, 44 percent of the state's overall elevated or extreme fire risk falls within the SNC's Region. The Sierra Nevada Region is home to roughly 900,000 residents and attracts more than 50 million visitors every year. The Region is the source of more than 80 percent of the state's developed water supply, stores half of California's carbon in its forests, and supports a wide variety of wildlife species. Investing in the Sierra Nevada provides benefits to all Californians.

This program seeks to create more-resilient forest landscapes, reduce wildfire risk, and accelerate recovery from recent wildfires. The climate and ecological benefits of forest restoration treatments are well known. Ecologically sound forest management, including prescribed fire, and community protection are critical in securing the overall well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region. The SNC seeks projects that will help secure carbon stability in the Sierra Nevada by reducing the risk for large, damaging wildfires. Landscape-scale forest health treatments reduce the intensity of wildland fires. Reduced intensity of wildland fire also makes it safer for firefighting resources to utilize fuel breaks to protect structures if a fire enters the wildland urban interface (WUI).

Program Funding

Up to \$25 million may be available for this program round, with a second round anticipated in June 2022. All projects funded under the 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program must be complete by January 1, 2028.

Program Priorities

The primary priority of the 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program is the planning and implementation of **forest health projects that promote wildfire recovery and forest resilience** and support the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and the WIP.

[California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) identifies three goals that are strongly aligned with the WIP: healthy and resilient natural places, safe communities, and sustainable economies. Both plans also stress the importance of climate resiliency, regionally tailored solutions, the linkages between ecological and economic health, the importance of low-intensity fire, and the need to work strategically across land ownership boundaries.

Additional focal areas include:

Multi-Benefit Projects

This grant program aims to support forest health projects that result in a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits. Examples of such benefits include reduced likelihood of and/or recovery from high-intensity fire and the negative consequences of such fires, protection and enhancement of natural resources including habitat and recreation, improved air and water quality, increased carbon sequestration and reduced GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions, and stronger regional economies.

Landscape-Scale Projects

This grant program will support forest health projects that promote resilient and healthy forests at a landscape scale. The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan identifies the need to scale-up forest management to meet the state and federal 1-million-acre annual restoration target by 2025. Projects which address planning or implementation at a landscape scale are necessary to reach this goal.

High-Impact Projects

This grant program will also support forest health projects that will result in an especially strong, direct benefit to communities, critical infrastructure, or high-value resources or assets. This includes singular natural resources and community assets.

Wildfire Recovery

This grant program will also support forest and watershed health projects that address recovery needs resulting from recent record-breaking wildfire years. These may include the assessment, planning, or implementation of identified recovery needs. Please note that the projects must be focused on forest-health-related recovery needs.

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Projects

This grant program will also support forest health projects which were developed under the California Department of Conservation Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). The purpose of the RFFCP is to increase regional capacity to prioritize, develop,

and implement projects that improve forest health and fire resilience and increase carbon sequestration in forests throughout California. Over the past few years, the program has funded local partners to conduct regional planning, develop projects, conduct outreach, and implement landscape-level forest health projects.

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II. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Applicant Eligibility

Grant funds may be authorized for:

- Public agencies: any city, county, special district, joint powers authority, state agency, or federal agency
- Qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations: "Nonprofit Organization" means a private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and whose charitable purposes are consistent with the purposes of the SNC
- Eligible Tribal Entities: an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is one or both of the following: (1) Recognized by the United States and identified within the most current Federal Register; (2) Listed on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission as a California Native American tribe

Eligible tribal entities are encouraged to apply. On September 25, 2020, the governor released a [Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands](#) to encourage every state agency, department, board, and commission subject to his executive control to seek opportunities to support California tribes' co-management of and access to natural lands that are within a California tribe's ancestral land and under the ownership or control of the State of California. The SNC may give favorable consideration to projects which "assist California tribes with procurement, protection or management of natural lands located within their ancestral territories, subject to available resources."

NOTE: SNC does not allow grants to mutual water companies.

Project Eligibility

To be **eligible** to receive a grant award from the SNC under this program, projects must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located within or provide services to the Sierra Nevada Region as defined by SNC governing legislation.
- Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the [SNC Strategic Plan](#).
- Be consistent with the requirements of the funding source and budget provisions.
- Be complete by January 1, 2028.
- Result in a clear, demonstrable, and enduring public benefit.
- Meet all California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, as applicable.

Project Categories

Planning Projects

Planning projects include project development and other pre-implementation activities that will result in future on-the-ground project(s). Future actions resulting from the planning activities should be described in the proposal. Lead agencies for CEQA/NEPA compliance for future actions should be identified, if applicable.

Examples of potential planning projects include, but are not limited to:

- Acquiring permits for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s)
- Analyses required to support CEQA and/or NEPA documentation for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s)
- Performing necessary cultural resources, biological, botanical, aquatic, soil, hydrologic, wildlife, timber, or other studies/surveys and/or developing necessary project designs related to a specific site or physical project(s)
- Preparing final project plans or supplementing existing plans that will result in a specific project(s)
- Planning for large-landscape fuel reduction or prescribed fire
- Planning for post-fire restoration and/or post-fire fuel management across a large landscape

Implementation Projects

Implementation projects are the execution of on-the-ground projects.

Examples of potential implementation projects include, but are not limited to:

- Reforestation and implementation of suitable stand-improvement activities after wildfire or tree mortality
- Implementation of strategic forest management projects (including mechanical treatments, hand treatments, and/or prescribed fire) that will reduce wildfire risks, protect communities, promote watershed health, improve habitat conditions, and/or protect biodiversity
- Hazard tree removal along trails, roads, or to protect resources
- Post-fire recovery from firefighting efforts in sensitive natural environments
- Projects that protect water resources by reducing post-fire sedimentation
- Forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization projects that increase capacity to accelerate fire recovery or improve forest and watershed health
- Creation and/or maintenance of fuel breaks
- Fuel reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface

- Strategically located fuel reduction projects that protect critical infrastructure or other valued resources and assets
- Forestry work that benefits fire evacuation routes

Ineligible Projects

Examples of ineligible projects include:

- Grants to service or repay loans
- Projects dictated by a legal settlement or mandated to address a violation of, or an order (citation) to comply with, a law or regulation
- Research, education, outreach, or event-related projects, although these types of activities may be included as a small part of the overall implementation of a project eligible for SNC grant funds
- Culverts and road building, although these types of activities may be included as a small part of the overall implementation of a project eligible for SNC grant funds
- Fee title/easement acquisitions
- Any projects that do not meet the program priorities described in these guidelines

This list is not exhaustive and is offered only as guidance to potential applicants. The SNC will make determinations of eligibility on a project-by-project basis. If an applicant has questions about the eligibility of their project, they should consult with their [SNC Area Representatives](#).

Eligible Costs

Direct Project Costs

For project costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the costs must be within the scope of the project, supported by appropriate documentation, and completed by the required deadline as identified in the grant agreement. Costs related to project-specific performance measures, project reporting, and required signage are eligible costs; they must be included in the project budget if being requested by the applicant.

Expenses for California Native American tribes and tribal entities to support their leadership of and participation in local and regional planning, project development, and implementation activities, including cultural burning programs, and projects that include monetary compensation for consultation, project planning and implementation activities, cultural monitoring, and other activities are eligible costs.

Costs for travel and lodging directly related to the project are eligible but may not exceed the current state lodging and mileage reimbursement rates. Food and entertainment are not eligible expenses under this program. Please note that travel and related costs as part of a subcontract for project implementation are not subject to these limitations.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are shared overhead expenses rather than direct costs. Administrative costs may not exceed 15 percent of the SNC-funded direct project costs. In the event of an audit, projects with budgets that include administrative costs must be able to document the appropriateness of these expenses. A typical method for documentation of administrative overhead expenses is a Cost Allocation Plan (CAP). A CAP is a formal accounting plan used to calculate and document the method for recovering overhead costs. The SNC strongly recommends that grantees consult with an accounting professional to develop an appropriate method for calculating overhead rate and prepare a CAP.

Ineligible Costs

Examples of ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing or increasing a legal defense fund or endowment
- Monetary donations to other organizations
- Food or refreshments not part of a negotiated subcontract related to project implementation
- Costs associated with fundraising
- Grant writing expenses
- Any expenses incurred before a grant agreement is executed or after the project completion deadline, as identified in the grant agreement

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Right of Access for Implementation Projects

If the applicant does not own the property on which the project is implemented, proposals must include letters from all property owners/managers indicating their awareness of and willingness to implement the project. If the project is awarded, the grantee must enter into a land tenure agreement with the landowner(s) assuring ten years of access for project implementation and maintenance before execution of the SNC grant agreement. For select projects, SNC may consider executing a grant agreement before land tenure is in place, but the grantee must provide proof of land tenure before work begins on the pertinent property.

Environmental Compliance Documents

The SNC requires all projects comply with CEQA at the time the Board authorizes a grant. Since the complexity of CEQA compliance will vary depending on the proposed project activities and the type of applicant, it is very important that applicants consult with SNC staff as early as possible to discuss which CEQA documents will be required. If CEQA is not complete at the time of proposal, the lead agency for CEQA must be identified in the proposal, with a letter of support or other documentation from the agency stating that they are eligible and willing to serve as lead. In cases where a project is not exempt from CEQA and the partners do not have standing to act as lead agency, the SNC will consider acting as lead agency.

If the project is subject to NEPA, a NEPA decision must be in effect at the time of Board approval of grant award.

NOTE: When projects have previously completed CEQA or NEPA documentation and the baseline environmental conditions of the project area have significantly changed (due to fire, tree mortality, etc.), applicants must provide confirmation from the agency responsible for preparing the original environmental compliance documents that the analysis and determinations remain valid.

Long-Term Management

Projects receiving support through this program must demonstrate a clear and enduring public benefit. This includes long-term viability of any programs developed through the project as well as on-the-ground site improvement components of a project. All site improvement project sites shall be maintained, operated, and used in a manner consistent with the purposes of the project. Additionally, the grantee and/or property owner shall not use any portion of the project site for mitigation or as security for any debt. The long-term management plan for site improvement or program development projects must include a description of how project deliverables will be managed and maintained over time, by whom, and how funding will be provided for such work.

Performance Measures and Reporting

Performance measures are used to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes. They provide a means of reliably measuring and reporting the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and how it contributes to the SNC achieving its programmatic goals. Detailed information and recommended performance measures can be found on the [SNC Performance Measures](#) webpage.

SNC requires all grantees consider four specific quantitative performance measures:

- 1) Number and type of jobs created
- 2) Number and value of new, improved, or preserved economic activities
- 3) Resources leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- 4) Number of people reached

In addition, each grantee will be required to report on one to three additional project-specific performance measures that will help describe project outcomes in a measurable way. Examples of additional performance measures can be found on the [SNC Performance Measures](#) webpage.

Applicants may also propose alternative performance measures, which will be subject to the approval of SNC staff if the grant is authorized. The proposed measures will be finalized in consultation with SNC staff prior to grant agreement approval.

All grantees will be required to provide progress reports and a final report for the entire project timeline. The final report must include data associated with the project performance measures.

The SNC may request reporting on additional metrics.

Engagement with California Native American Tribes

Recognizing that Native Americans have inhabited and cared for the land of present-day California since time immemorial, the SNC strongly encourages engagement with Native American tribes as early as possible in the development, planning, and implementation of projects. The SNC staff can assist project proponents with identifying Native American tribes whose ancestral homelands may be in the project area and provide contact information for those tribes. The SNC will notify the appropriate tribal contacts regarding all eligible grant projects being considered for funding in their area. The SNC may prioritize projects in which tribal representatives or communities are actively involved in project development.

Cooperation with Local Agencies

In compliance with the SNC's governing statute, local government agencies, such as counties, cities, and local water districts, are notified of eligible grant projects being considered for funding in their area.

For all proposals under consideration, SNC staff will notify the county and/or city and public water agency affected (when appropriate), and request comments within 15 business days following notification.

The SNC may also provide a list of project proposals to the California Conservation Corps.

If there are privacy concerns related to information contained in a proposal, please notify SNC staff before submission.

Registered Professional Foresters

In compliance with the [Professional Foresters Law](#) (PRC Sections 750-753, et seq.), projects that directly impact the management and treatment of the forest resources and timberlands of this state are required to use Registered Professional Foresters. Projects implemented on federally managed lands will be permitted to use “qualified but exempt” federal staff to satisfy this requirement.

Additional Requirements

Any additional requirements or restrictions, including those specific to state budget requirements, will be included in updated program guidance documents.

IV. PROGRAM PROCESS

Proposal Development

As the 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience program is a directed grant program, proposals are developed in conjunction with SNC. To initiate consideration of a project, an applicant must contact the appropriate SNC Area Representative. The Area Representative will assist the applicant to determine if the project meets SNC criteria. If it is determined that SNC will consider the project, the Area Representative will share the SNC proposal form with the applicant and assist in developing the project.

The development of a proposal includes the following:

- Applicants must [contact the SNC Area Representative assigned to their county](#) to determine whether a potential project meets the intent of the guidelines and is eligible for consideration.
- Proposals will be accepted until January 31, 2022.
- A site visit may be conducted.
- All project proposals are required to identify projected dates of completion for all environmental compliance and permits necessary to implement the project.
- Grants will not be awarded before June 2022.
- All project activities must be complete by January 1, 2028.

Evaluation Process

The SNC will work closely with applicants in the development of the project and project proposal.

- 1) The project proposal will be reviewed by an environmental compliance expert.
- 2) Proposals will be shared with appropriate county/city planning, water agency, tribal representatives, and SNC Board Subregional representatives. If there are any privacy concerns related to information in a proposal, please discuss them with SNC staff before submission.
- 3) An SNC Evaluation Team will independently review and meet to discuss the proposals based on the evaluation criteria described in the following section.
- 4) The Evaluation Team will prepare a recommendation for SNC's Executive Team.
- 5) After the evaluation process is complete, including all due diligence and analysis by SNC, funding recommendations will be placed on the June 2022 or later Board meeting agenda at the discretion of SNC's Executive Officer.

Special Considerations

Consistent with provisions of the program funding and objectives of the proposed project, the SNC may give favorable consideration to projects which:

- Involve California Native American tribes.
- Were developed under the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity program.
- Address fire recovery objectives.
- Directly benefit severely disadvantaged (SDAC) or disadvantaged (DAC) communities.
- Engage a workforce development effort, including but not limited to tribal workforce programs, California Conservation Corps, or other training programs.
- Employ a collaborative approach in project development or implementation.
- Leverage private, federal, or local resources.
- Enable the equitable geographic distribution of SNC resources.

Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Team will score the proposals based on the evaluation criteria described below. Proposals scoring 80 or more points may be eligible for a recommendation for award:

#1 Natural Resource and Public Benefits, and Alignment with Funding and Program Goals (25)

The degree to which the project aligns with funding program goals, improves forest and watershed health, and results in multiple, tangible public benefits. How strong is the need for the specific project? How critical are the natural resource and public benefits outcomes?

#2 Project Design and Budget (20)

Clarity on the project purpose, goals, deliverables, treatment approach, schedule, and budget. Is the project design supported by science and proven methodologies or the use of new or innovative technology or practices? If it is a planning project, does it prepare all needed elements for the future implementation the project, or address needs on a larger landscape scale? Are the proposed deliverables appropriate for the project? Is the budget adequate and reasonable to complete the project, with costs clearly defined and supported?

#3 Project Readiness (10)

The degree to which the project is ready to proceed promptly and can meet funding expenditure requirements, if funded. Are property owners supportive of the project? In addition, for Implementation Projects: Is project planning and coordination complete? Is access secured, environmental compliance, permitting, or other necessary preparations complete, as appropriate? Is all funding identified or secured?

#4 Long-Term Management (10)

Is a plan, funding, and the responsible entity in place to carry out long-term management? How will public benefits be sustained?

#5 Likelihood of Success (10)

Does the project organizer and any identified project partner(s) have the necessary experience and sufficient capacity to implement the project as described? Has the project team successfully completed projects of similar complexity, scale, and budget?

#6 Community and Tribal Support and Collaboration (10)

The degree to which the project has public and institutional support at the local, Regional, or larger scale and the local community or other stakeholders are engaged in project planning or delivery. Was the project developed as part of collaborative? Is there clear and demonstrable community outreach and support for the project? Is there tribal support for, or tribal participation in, the project?

#7 Landscape-Level Context (10)

The degree to which the proposed project is part of a larger plan, coordinated effort or is proximate to essential community services, public lands, or recreational amenities. Does the project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore/protect strategic goals? Is the project itself landscape-level in size and/or scope, spanning a large geographic area that will provide benefits at a significant scale?

#8 Leveraging (5)

The degree to which a project provides in-kind services and/or secured federal, state, private, or local cost share funding. Have non-monetary and/or funding resources of agencies and organizations other than SNC been identified and secured?

Grant Awards and Agreements

For each awarded grant, the SNC develops an individual grant agreement with detailed provisions and requirements specific to that project. Please be aware that if an entity is awarded a grant from the SNC, the provisions listed below will apply.

- Administrative costs are limited to no more than 15 percent of the actual direct project costs.
- Grant-eligible costs may be incurred by the grantee only after the grantee has entered into a fully executed agreement with the SNC.
- All grantees will be required to provide regular progress reports and a final report for the entire project timeline.
- To the extent practicable, site improvement projects will be required to include onsite signage indicating that the project was funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. The required acknowledgement language is included in the grant agreement. Reasonable costs associated with creation and installation of the sign are eligible expenses and should be included in the project budget.

The SNC will assist the grantee to ensure the grantee's clear understanding and interpretation of the terms and conditions of the grant.

V. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Cost Allocation Plan
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
DAC	Disadvantaged Community
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
Plan	Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan
PRC	Public Resources Code
SDAC	Severely Disadvantaged Community
SNC	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
WIP	Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

VI. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Unless otherwise stated, the terms used in these grant guidelines shall have the following meanings:

Acquisition – To obtain fee title ownership of real property. Leaseholds and rentals do not constitute acquisition.

Administrative Costs – Administrative costs include any expense which is not directly related to project implementation. Similar to the traditional definition of ‘overhead,’ administrative costs include shared costs, such as rent, utilities, travel, per diem, office equipment, services such as internet and phone, shared bookkeeping costs, etc.

Applicant – The entity applying for an SNC grant pursuant to these guidelines.

Board – The governing body of the SNC as established by PRC Section 33321.

CEQA – The California Environmental Quality Act as set forth in the PRC Section 21000 et seq. CEQA is a law establishing policies and procedures that require agencies to identify, disclose to decision makers and the public, and attempt to lessen significant impacts to environmental and historical resources that may occur as a result of a proposed project to be undertaken, funded, or approved by a local or state agency.

CEQA/NEPA Compliance – Activities an entity performs to meet the requirements of CEQA and/or NEPA.

Collaborative– Cooperation between stakeholders with different interests to solve a problem or make decisions that cut across jurisdictional or other boundaries; often used when information is widely dispersed, and no single individual, agency, or group has sufficient resources to address the issue alone.

Conservancy – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy as defined in PRC Section 33302 (b).

Data – A body or collection of facts, statistics, or other items of information from which conclusions can be drawn.

Design – Preliminary project planning or identification of methodologies or processes to achieve project goals.

Disadvantaged Community (DAC) – A community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average. [View maps of DAC areas](http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

Eligible Costs – Expenses incurred by the grantee during the performance period of an approved agreement, which may be reimbursed by the SNC.

Enhancement – Modification of a site to increase/improve the condition of streams, forests, habitat, and other resources.

Executive Officer – Executive Officer of the SNC appointed by the Governing Board, pursuant to PRC Section 33328, to manage the SNC.

Fee Title – The primary interest in land ownership that entitles the owner to use the property subject to any lesser interests in the land and consistent with applicable laws and ordinances.

Forest Health – A healthy forest is a forest that possesses the ability to sustain the unique species composition and processes that exist within it. Forest health occurs when resilience, recurrence, persistence, and biophysical processes lead to sustainable ecological conditions.

Grant – Funds made available to a grantee for eligible costs during an agreement term.

Grant Agreement – An agreement between the SNC and the grantee specifying the payment of funds by the SNC for the performance of the project scope according to the terms of the agreement by the grantee.

Grantee – An entity that has an agreement with the SNC for grant funds.

Grant Scope – Description of the items of work to be completed with grant funds as described in the application form and cost estimate.

In-kind Contributions – Non-monetary donations that are utilized on the project, within the project scope and timeframe, including materials and services. These donations shall be eligible as “other sources of funds” when providing budgetary information for application purposes.

Land Tenure – Legal ownership or other rights in land, sufficient to allow a grantee to conduct activities that are necessary for completion of the project consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. Examples include fee title ownership, an easement for completion of the project consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, or agreements or a clearly defined process where the applicant has adequate site control for the purposes of the project.

NEPA – [The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969](https://ceq.doe.gov/), as amended. NEPA (<https://ceq.doe.gov/>) is a federal law requiring consideration of the potential environmental effects of a proposed project whenever a federal agency has discretionary jurisdiction over some aspect of that project.

Nonprofit Organization – A private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and whose charitable purposes are consistent with the purposes of the SNC as set forth in PRC Section 33300 et seq.

Other Sources of Funds – Cash or in-kind contributions necessary or used to complete the site improvement/restoration project beyond the grant funds provided by this program.

Performance Measure – A quantitative measure used by the SNC to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes.

Permitting – The process of obtaining any necessary regulatory approvals from appropriate governmental agencies to implement the project.

Pre-Project Due Diligence – The analysis necessary to prepare a future on-the-ground project for implementation.

Project – The work to be accomplished with grant funds.

Proposal – The individual grant application form and its required attachments pursuant to the SNC Grant Program.

Public Agencies – Any city, county, district, joint powers authority, or state agency.

Region – The Sierra Nevada Region as defined in PRC Section 33302 (f).

Resilience – The ability of an ecosystem to regain structural and functional attributes that have suffered harm from stress or disturbance.

Region-wide – The overall breadth of the SNC Region or multiple Subregions within the Region.

Restoration – Activities that initiate, accelerate, or return the components and processes of a damaged site to previous historical ecological site conditions.

Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) – A community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average. [View maps of SDAC areas](http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

Tribal Entities – Includes any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is one or both of the following: (1) Recognized by the United States and identified within the most current Federal Register. (2) Listed on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission as a California Native American tribe.

Agenda Item 11: Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Update

Background

The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Council) and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) have shared a close partnership for over a decade, which includes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and multiple grant agreements through which the Council has provided grant funds to SNC and SNC has undertaken select responsibilities. The SNC and the Council now plan to enter into a new grant agreement that combines the activities previously funded under individual grants, adds an additional activity, and provides funding to SNC to carry out those activities. The selected activities advance SNC's statutory mission and identified goals and further the Council's goals, including after its planned dissolution.

The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council

The Council is a private, nonprofit organization established in 2004 as part of the 2003 Settlement Agreement and Stipulation with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The Council's mission is to protect and enhance watershed lands and uses, and to invest in efforts to improve the lives of young Californians through connections with the outdoors. The Settlement Agreement and Stipulation established PG&E's Land Conservation Commitment, by which 140,000 acres of PG&E's watershed lands located across 21 counties in the Sierra Nevada Range and Eel River Watershed would be conserved in perpetuity for outdoor recreation, sustainable forestry, agriculture, natural resource protection, open space preservation, and protection of historic and cultural resources. Consistent with PG&E's Land Conservation Commitment, the Council developed and implemented a watershed lands conservation program through which conservation easements and conservation covenants are placed on PG&E-donated and -retained lands. The Council grants awards to the entities holding the easements to fund environmental enhancement activities on the conserved properties to complete conservation, restoration, and access projects. Please refer to [Map 1](#) of the PG&E watershed lands planning areas at the end of this report.

The permanent protection, preservation, and enhancement of the beneficial public values on these lands are achieved in two ways:

- 1) PG&E donates property to a qualified entity, such as a public agency or land trust, and a conservation easement (or conservation covenant in the case of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)) held by the qualified entity is established, or
- 2) PG&E retains the property, but the public values are protected through a conservation easement held by a qualified entity.

In addition to overseeing the conservation of these watershed lands, the Stewardship Council was charged with creating a Youth Investment Program, which provided \$30 million in funding over ten years to programs that provide outdoor opportunities for underserved youth or enhance parks and recreation areas.

When the Council was created, it was the intent that the Council would dissolve upon completion of its specific goals and that other appropriate organizations would be identified to carry on any remaining activities moving forward. The Foundation for Youth Investment, a private nonprofit organization, is continuing the Youth Investment Program. The SNC may continue the watershed land conservation program, as described below, as long as funding provided by the Council remains available.

Existing Relationship between SNC and the Stewardship Council

In 2012, with approval from both Governing Boards, SNC and the Council entered into an MOU. The MOU provided a context for the subsequent development and execution of various grant agreements between the SNC and the Council under which the SNC would support the Council's efforts to preserve the beneficial values on watershed lands consistent with the Council's Land Conservation Plan for the benefit of all Californians. The MOU was designed to meet the goals of the Council and the statutory mission identified goals of the SNC.

The PG&E watershed lands, except for the Eel River planning unit, are located within the geographic jurisdiction of the SNC. In 2015, SNC entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with the California Coastal Conservancy to authorize SNC and the Coastal Conservancy to jointly exercise their common powers to protect beneficial public values and accept grants with respect to the Eel River property. The MOU identified distinct categories of roles that the SNC might undertake and that would be separately funded by the Council.

Consistent with the MOU, the Council awarded separate grants to SNC for the following activities:

- 1) The SNC would participate on the grant review committee for the Council's Enhancement Grant program. All program funds have been obligated, and all activity under this grant agreement has been completed.
- 2) The SNC would assist in the development of Baseline Data Reports and Conservation Covenants on the PG&E properties transferred to the USFS, would act as covenantee, and would undertake regular monitoring of those properties. The SNC continues to perform activities under this grant.
- 3) The SNC would oversee successor conservation easement holders, if necessary, on PG&E properties donated to public agencies and PG&E retained properties in accordance with the PG&E Land Conservation Commitment. This agreement is currently active.

Current Status

Development of a Single Grant Agreement

The SNC and the Council, including attorneys for both organizations, are developing a single grant agreement that combines the activities SNC currently performs under the existing separate agreements, adds other specified activities that SNC would perform, and extends the performance of those activities upon and after dissolution of the Council. The additional activities will be undertaken at different times according to a flexible timeline, and transfers of funds to the SNC will coincide with the SNC's undertaking of new activities. The Council will provide funds to SNC to account for all costs related to SNC's ongoing activities. The SNC would only be obligated to undertake these activities while funds provided by the Council remain available. The current goal is to have an agreement in place by July 1, 2022.

The Council and SNC have identified four responsibilities that SNC might undertake, both before and after dissolution of the Council.

1. Serve as Holder of Conservation Covenants over Forest Service Lands in perpetuity.
 - The Council has transferred ownership of ten PG&E properties to the USFS, each of which has a conservation covenant attached, with SNC acting as covenantee, to ensure permanent protection of the property's natural resources and the retention of the property predominantly in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, and/or open space condition.
 - Pursuant to the MOU and a 2015 grant agreement, the SNC is the covenantee on each of these conservation covenants in perpetuity and is charged with regular monitoring of the properties (as long as Council funding remains available) to ensure compliance with the Covenants.
 - SNC previously agreed to adopt this responsibility, and the existing 2015 grant agreement would be superseded by the new single agreement that is under development.
2. Oversee Conservation Easements held by qualified entities and attached to other PG&E-donated (to other than the USFS) and PG&E-retained properties.
 - Upon dissolution, the Council anticipates 86 conservation easements in place, plus the ten conservation covenants on the USFS properties.
 - The SNC does not hold these easements but is now and would continue to be responsible for identifying and/or approving successor conservation easement holders, if necessary.
 - The SNC may serve as temporary holder of conservation easements, on an as-needed, case-by-case basis, solely at SNC's election and subject to the availability of funds provided by the Council.

- The SNC previously agreed to adopt this responsibility, and the existing 2015 grant agreement would be superseded by the new single agreement that is under development
3. Administer the Enhancement Grant Program.
 - As part of the land conservation program, the Council awards Enhancement Grants to qualified entities to complete conservation, restoration, and access projects on the conserved properties.
 - The SNC may assume administration of grants awarded by the Council under this program until all projects are complete and all grant agreements are closed.
 - After the Council's dissolution, the SNC may award grants to grantees selected by the Council before its dissolution according to a priority list provided to SNC, subject to funds being provided to SNC by the Council for those grants.
 - The Council anticipates all projects completed and grant agreements closed by 2025.
 4. Provide one 5-year update to the Council's report to the CPUC on the impacts of the PG&E Land Conservation Commitment.
 - Before or upon dissolution, the Council will submit a report to the CPUC detailing the status and impacts of the PG&E Land Conservation Commitment.
 - An update to that report is required approximately five years after the first report is submitted by the Council.
 - As the Council will be dissolved before the report update is to be submitted to the CPUC, SNC may assume the task of collecting the required information and developing and submitting the 5-year report update.

Financial Structure

To facilitate the acceptance, holding, and expenditure of funds, SNC plans to establish an account within the Special Deposit Fund (SDF Account) which is a trust fund in the State Treasury for deposit of funds received outside the state budget process. The SNC will accept transfers of funds to the account before the Council dissolves. The SNC expects that the total amount transferred will be between \$1 million and \$3 million.

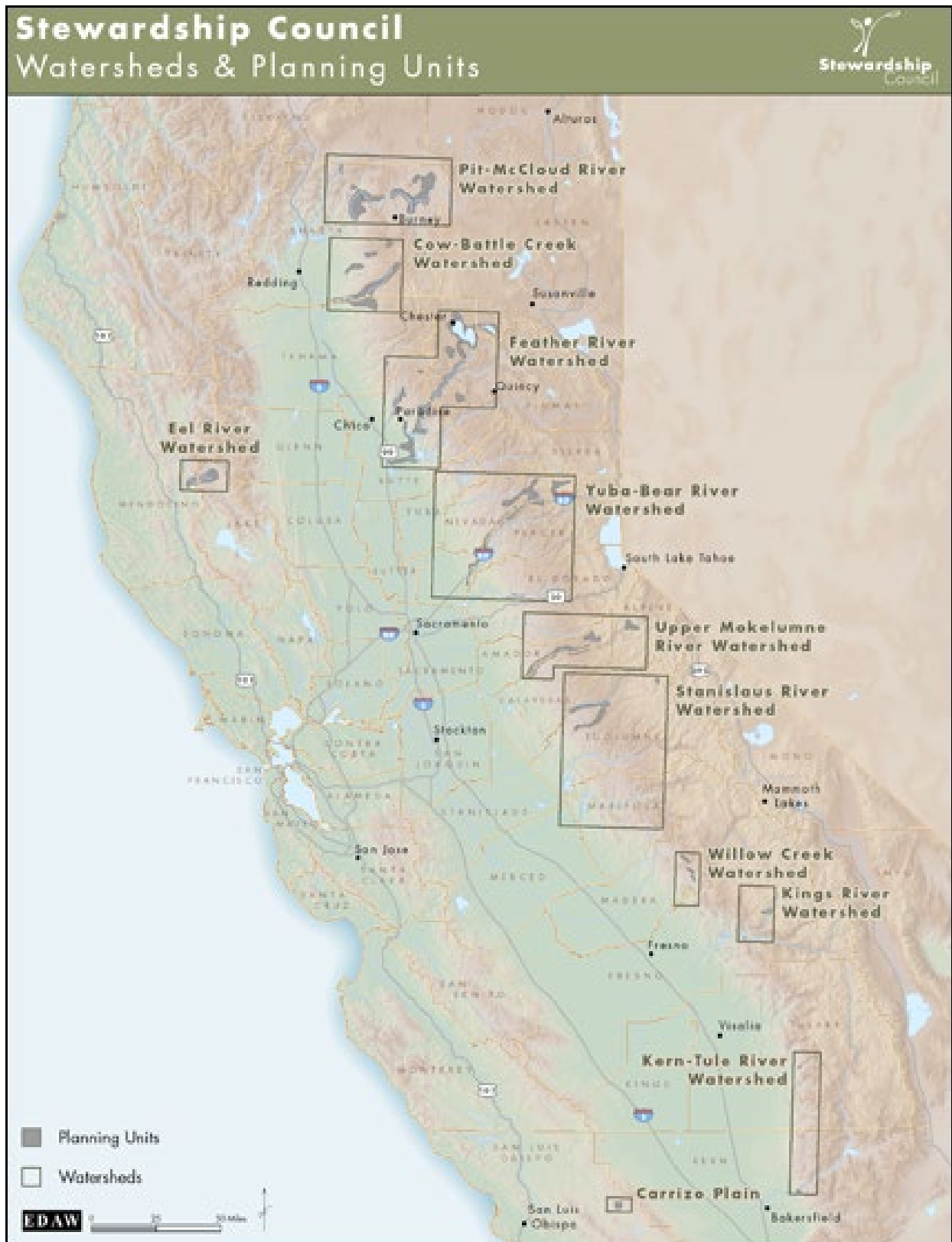
Next Steps

The Council and SNC will complete a full analysis and develop a single agreement. The analysis will include a clear plan for SNC integration of all responsibilities into the organizational structure. The SNC and the Council will enter into the single agreement, SNC will establish an SDF Account within the Special Deposit Fund, and the appropriate funds will be transferred from the Council to SNC. The SNC staff will provide regular updates to the Board on activities under the agreement and the status of the SDF Account.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board authorize the Executive Officer to finalize and execute a new single agreement between the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council and SNC and to take all steps necessary to implement the activities to fulfill SNC's responsibilities as set forth in the agreement.

Map 1



**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Agenda Item 12: 2021 Fire Season Update

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Region is experiencing unprecedented wildfire events that are pushing scientists, managers, and policy makers to understand the consequences of these events on the Region and to the ecosystem services the Region delivers to the rest of the state. Fire, through lightning ignition or cultural burning, has been a critical part of the Sierra Nevada ecosystem for centuries, until it was suppressed starting in the early 1900s. The removal of fire, logging of the largest, most resilient trees, and a warmer, dryer climate are challenging expectations and fire behavior predictions. This report summarizes some of the key statistics currently available for this fire season putting them in context with past recorded fire seasons and shares staff observations garnered through site visits to some of the fires.

Current Status

At the time of this report, 1.5 million acres have burned across the Sierra Nevada Region during the 2021 fire season. According to existing records, from 1910-2009, no other decade has reached that number over its 10-year total. Of the 11 past decades for which data exists, not including this one, seven had *decade* totals lower than the total acres burned in the 2021 Dixie Fire. The 2010-2019 decade saw significant, record-breaking fires across the Sierra, including the Rim, Camp, King, and Chips fires. With a total of 2.4 million acres burned, this decade surpassed any previously recorded decade by over 1 million acres. Only two years in to the 2020 fire decade, the Region has already gone beyond the total for 2010-2019.

Given the history of fire in the Sierra Nevada, and its importance to sustaining forest health and ecosystem services, acres burned as a standalone metric do not imply positive or negative outcomes to the natural systems. In California, resource benefit and prescribed fires are typically kept to less than a few thousand acres. This means that fires that escape initial suppression attack dominate reported acres burned during fire season. More than 90 percent of fire starts are contained before they grow to a significant size. Fires that escape initial attack usually do so under the most extreme conditions, and fires burning under extreme conditions do not generally confer resilience to the forests they burn. Five fires: the Dixie, Caldor, Beckwourth, KNP Complex, and Windy fires, are responsible for 1.4 of the 1.5 million acres burned in the Sierra Nevada this year. It is likely that significant portions of these fires burned at high severity, though, this cannot be fully assessed until vegetation burn severity maps are released.

In October, staff visited three of the five fires identified above with partners and observed impacts on the locations they were able to visit:

- Caldor Fire – With most of the fire perimeter closed, staff was only able to visit some of the Sly Park treatment units and a few plots near the western edge of

the fire perimeter. Treated areas served as sites for backfires to aid fire suppression efforts. Unfortunately, staff has not yet been able to access the Caples prescribed burn area which sits within the Caldor Fire perimeter, but its positive impact on fire suppression efforts and in protecting Kirkwood has been widely shared in the media.

- Dixie Fire – With over 900,000 acres burned, staff was able to see only a fraction of the burned area. Some of these areas reflected a mosaic burn pattern, with understory burn, some canopy mortality, and smaller patches of high severity (a few acres in size). Along the Highway 70 corridor in the Feather River canyon, however, that was the exception, not the rule. In this area, substantial sections of significant high-intensity fire were apparent where the fire made canopy runs. In other parts of the Dixie Fire, high-severity fire burned through overgrown meadows, killing encroaching conifers and giving space for the willows and aspens to potentially regenerate and restore meadow function. Partners on the tour talked about ways they might leverage where fire burned in a healthier manner to reinforce resilience in those areas and use the burned areas to help get more work done on adjacent unburned, but less resilient, areas.
- Tamarack Fire – The severity of the Tamarack Fire was apparent across the three sites staff visited, highlighting the fact that fuel treatment can, in practice, refer to a wide range of activities and can take place at a wide range of scales. An investigation into the effectiveness of different treatments within the fire perimeter is currently underway, though, it was clear that at least some of the pre-fire treatments moderated fire behavior and made it safer for fire personnel to enter some areas for structure protection. Future challenges for local land managers will include balancing public perception of what current and future forests look like (higher vs. lower densities) if fires like Tamarack become more common. Partners on the tour identified the difficulty of moving felled hazard trees offsite to help recuperate post-fire management costs as a clear concern, as well as questions about the potential success of any reforestation projects.

Next Steps

Staff will track post-fire reports and maps, including burn severity, to evaluate impacts, risks, and potential needs. Staff will engage with local and regional partners to determine best next steps and lessons learned and explore ways for SNC to best support post-fire recovery efforts moving forward.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021**

Key Meetings and Presentations

September 2021 – November 2021

October 7, 2021 – 4th National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop - Hard Truths of Risk Inherent in Cross-boundary, Large Landscape, and Community-wide Implementation: Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich participated in a panel on implementing a regional approach towards resilient landscapes and fire adapted communities in California at this virtual event. The panel also included representatives from the Department of Conversation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program and CAL FIRE. The 4th National Cohesive Strategy Workshop focused on understanding, co-managing, transferring, and accepting risk at federal, state, tribal and local stakeholder levels to prioritize and invest in decisions, projects and other efforts that result in widespread reduction in risk across landscapes, and communities, the public and firefighters collectively.

October 22, 2021 – Tamarack Fire Tour: Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis attended a tour of the Tamarack Fire. The goal of the tour was to learn as much as possible about fuels treatment effectiveness and fire behavior in the Tamarack Fire, as well as recovery and restoration needs post-fire, and how SNC and other organizations can help in that capacity. Three stops were planned: Turtle Rock Park area, Markleevillage, and Poor Boy Ridge.

October 27, 2021 – Mountain Counties Water Resources Association – Drought, Fire and a Changing Climate: Where Do We Go from Here?: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy sponsored and Executive Officer Angie Avery and Chief Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis attended this event that included a discussion on the various data driven efforts underway by water agencies assessing the challenges they face serving their communities and customers and a discussion describing the efforts underway in California to address the unsustainable state of our forested watersheds. Speakers included Willie Whittlesey, General Manager, Yuba Water Agency, Andy Fecko, General Manager, Placer County Water Agency, Patrick Wright, Director of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and Dan Porter, Forest Program Director, The Nature Conservancy.

October 28, 2021 – All Conservancies – Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy hosted this virtual event. The first part of the day included Secretary Crowfoot and Jennifer Eberlien, the new USFS Region 5 Regional Forester, who talked about Shared Stewardship. Select CNRA Deputies joined to talk about policy efforts with a focus on the ways state conservancies and the WCB can help them achieve their goals. There was open discussion after the presentations. The second part of the meeting focused on Conservancies and WCB business.

November 19, 2021 – Caldor Fire Tour: Chief Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis and Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich joined the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force on a tour of the Caldor Fire. The tour stopped in South Lake Tahoe and near Kirkwood to assess the effectiveness of pre-treatments and fire suppression activities. Discussion topics included: Local government and partner roles in coordination and forest management, regional approaches to forest management, fuels treatment effectiveness, state and federal coordination on fire suppression and air and land management, the role of large-scale prescribed fire, e.g., the Caples prescribed fire, and local government leadership on defensible space and home hardening.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
December 9, 2021

September 2021
through
November 2021

Letters of Support



AUBURN OFFICE
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September 16, 2021

Mr. Alfred Watson, District Ranger
Sequoia National Forest
P.O. Box 9
11380 Kernville Road
Kernville, CA 93238

Dear Mr. Watson:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) supports the Sequoia National Forest's request for Fiscal Year 2023 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding for their acquisition of Fay Creek Ranch.

The SNC is a California state agency with a mission to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region and its rural communities. One of the five Regional Goals for the SNC is "Strategic Lands Conserved," which aims to support the permanent protection of high-benefit lands that are threatened by conversion, possess unique natural characteristics, or provide critical resilience to climate change. The expansion of the Sequoia National Forest via the acquisition of the Fay Creek property meets all three objectives of this goal. The 2,300-acre property, which is surrounded by thousands of acres of public and conservation lands, will be sold for development if this acquisition effort is unsuccessful. This ranch is in a critical location: it is surrounded by public and protected lands – including the now-protected Hanning Flat property, which SNC helped conserve. The acquisition of Fay Creek Ranch by the Sequoia National Forest will close the "hole in the doughnut" of protected lands in this Kern River watershed. Moreover, conservation of this ranch, which has numerous springs and is transected by the perennial Fay Creek, will play a critical role in connecting the lower Kern River watershed with the higher-elevation National Forest lands, ensuring that wildlife and riparian-dependent species can travel, unimpeded, throughout this watershed.

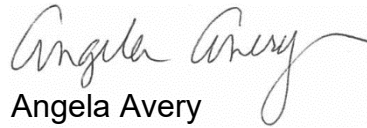
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Mr. Alfred Watson
September 16, 2021
Page 2 of 2

Just as importantly, Fay Creek Ranch is a high priority for local tribes: The ranch contains two trails leading from the south fork of the lower Kern to the Kern Plateau. These trails were used by the local Tubatulabal for centuries. In 2000, public access to this ranch was cut off. The acquisition of this land by the Sequoia National Forest will re-open access to this property and re-establish the role of the Fay Creek Ranch as a public and tribal asset. The SNC therefore recommends LWCF funding for the acquisition of Fay Creek Ranch by the Sequoia National Forest.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





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October 7, 2021

Mr. Michael Maguire
California Office of Planning & Research
Michael.Maguire@opr.ca.gov
(via email)

Dear Mr. Maguire:

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE FALL RIVER RESOURCE CONSERVATION
DISTRICT CalFRAME PROJECT**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) supports the Fall River Resource Conservation District's California Forest Residual Aggregation for Market Enhancement (CalFRAME) Project (Project). The SNC works closely with the Fall River Resource Conservation District (District) to implement large scale wildfire, forest, and watershed health activities in the Northern Sierra Nevada. This collaborative Project strategically builds on federal- and state-funded activities to improve forest health, fire recovery, and economic vitality efforts by improving biomass feedstock supply chain logistics within the Northern Sierra Nevada.

The CalFRAME project is the result of concerted efforts from multiple partners to meet collective goals. The proposed Project advances regional priorities identified in the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program planning process using criteria that include current conditions, proximity to communities and critical infrastructure, and project readiness. The health of forests, watersheds, and economies across the Modoc, Lassen, and Shasta-Trinity national forests and associated private lands is of critical importance to the SNC. The activities proposed in this Project are part of a larger effort to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire, support forest restoration, and support the economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region.

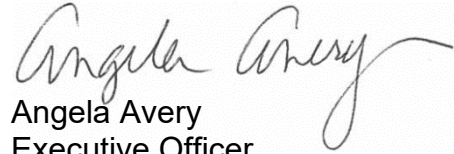
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Mr. Maguire
October 7, 2021
Page 2 of 2

The District has proven to be an effective partner in the region and has demonstrated the ability to successfully manage state funds and projects on both federal and private lands. The SNC has partnered successfully with the Fall River Resource Conservation District and fully supports this project. The SNC encourages the California Office of Planning & Research to consider supporting this Project.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer

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October 13, 2021

Economic Development Administration American Rescue Plan
Build Back Better Regional Challenge

To Whom It May Concern:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is very pleased to provide this letter in support of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute) application to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) American Rescue Plan Build Back Better Regional Challenge. The subject of this grant is the promotion of a forest industry regional growth cluster focusing on wood utilization.

The SNC is a state department in the California Natural Resources Agency and SNC's region covers all or part of 24 counties, and approximately 25 percent of California's land mass. The SNC has worked for many years to promote the wood-products industry, seeing it as an essential element of the restoration of both forests and rural communities. The SNC's many contributions include policy and funding support for innovative biomass business and workforce development projects, coordination and facilitation of industry groups and activities related to economic development in this sector, and staff work promoting biomass-business funding and related workforce development issues. Although SNC does not have any EDA-eligible projects, which would allow the SNC to be a full coalition member, it considers itself a strong partner in this application and plans to play an active role in promoting the implementation of any funding obtained.

The SNC has provided several grants to the Sierra Institute and has engaged in many of its projects. It is an amazing organization with highly effective staff, and it has SNC's full confidence. The Sierra Institute's background includes workforce development, entrepreneurial development, and collaborative facilitation activities. In the last four months, this outstanding organization has managed to coordinate collaborative applications for two major federal grants, initiate a new entrepreneurial support program, and work on its own biomass business campus projects. The staff members managed to do all this, while also being in the midst of the catastrophic Dixie Fire, which burned almost half of their county and left many of them homeless. In addition to this experience and dedication, the Sierra Institute has an impressive network of relationships with other organizations, businesses, policymakers, and funding agencies

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throughout the state. These are the necessary components of successful program implementation.

There is no doubt that you are receiving numerous applications that argue the regional industrial development they propose is critical to their economies and communities, and this application makes the same argument. However, it is unlikely that other application activities will have such a large positive impact on the challenges of climate change and ecosystem resilience. The development of wood-utilization industries also provides a critical economic component to fuel-reduction efforts that are needed to prevent catastrophic wildfires. The SNC has heard many forest managers say that they cannot implement forest-thinning projects because there is no place to take the wood waste (biomass). If forest-restoration and fire-mitigation activities cannot take place, millions of acres will continue to burn every year. Wood-products manufacturing is critical in California for the communities, the ecosystems, and the climate. The SNC hopes you will give this application your full consideration for funding.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





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October 21, 2021

Ms. Susan Buto
3D Elevation Program
USGS National Geospatial Program
12201 Sunrise Valley Dr.
Reston, VA 20192

Neal Driscoll, Ph.D.
University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Dr #0244
La Jolla, CA 92093

Dear Ms. Buto and Dr. Driscoll:

I am writing in support of the University of California, San Diego's application to the FY22 USGS Broad Agency Announcement. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) offers its commitment of \$100,000 toward the project, titled "South Sierra California – QL1 LiDAR to Characterize Fuel Loads and Topography." This effort will provide essential data for the Sierra Nevada region, critical for deepening the understanding of our landscapes in order to manage for restoration, ecosystem function, and resilience. This work aligns with the SNC's regional goals and our primary initiative, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

As a state department within the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), the SNC regularly engages with CNRA and other partner agencies on work related to forest analytics and metrics. Therefore, along with our commitment, the SNC also supports the requests shared by CNRA specific to the submitted project to access, analyze, and use preliminary copies of the data and derived products; and for CNRA to partner closely with UCSD in the development and distribution of these data and derived products to ensure the broadest possible use by all stakeholders.

The SNC truly appreciates the vision for this project, and I look forward to its selection by the 3D Elevation Program and its subsequent implementation.

Sincerely,

Angela Avery
Executive Officer

Enclosed: Attachment D - Validation of Proposed Funding Partners, SNC





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October 27, 2021

Mr. Brad Worster, Commission Agreement Officer
California Energy Commission
715 P Street, MS-18
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Worster:

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT TO T2M GLOBAL AND WEST BIOFUELS PROPOSAL:
PRODUCTION OF LOW-COST GREEN HYDROGEN FROM FOREST BIOMASS
RESIDUALS**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is pleased to support the T2M Global application to the California Energy Commission for a grant under the California Energy Commission's Natural Gas R&D Program, GFO-21-502: Advancing Cost and Efficiency Improvements for Low Carbon Hydrogen Production.

The proposed project at the Woodland Biomass Research Center in Woodland, California will use an existing pilot-scale gasification system to convert forest biomass to syngas from the gasification of high hazard zone fuels. A novel biomass to hydrogen reactor supplied by T2M Global will upgrade the biogas to pure renewable hydrogen and carbon dioxide that can be used for sequestration. The Project Team is a partnership between T2M, West Biofuels, and PowerTap. Together, they plan to offer commercial systems for carbon negative hydrogen production from biomass.

Dead and dying trees can elevate the risk of catastrophic wildfires, which pose a significant threat to human safety, human health, and the environment. Sustainable forest management practices – in this case, the removal of dead and dying trees – can help reduce the chances of catastrophic wildfires while also promoting forest health, reducing environmental impact, and contributing to habitat protection.

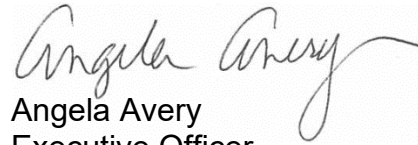
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Mr. Brad Worster
October 27, 2021
Page 2 of 2

The SNC is excited about the technology proposed in the project and is eager to see the results of further development and commercialization. California and all other western states will be more able to sustainably manage their forest lands when additional commercially viable options for biomass utilization are available.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer



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