



SOUTH LASSEN WATERSHEDS GROUP COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION PLANNING PROJECT

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Executive Summary

Date: January 15, 2021

Applicant Name: Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

City: Taylorsville

County: Plumas County

State: California

Project Summary: The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (Sierra Institute), on behalf of the South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG), will build on three years of [BOR supported?] collaborative work, including the group's establishment and the finalization of the Strategic Plan in 2021, to advance project-specific restoration design and planning and stakeholder outreach and engagement in the Upper North Fork of the Feather River, Upper Mill, Upper Battle, and Upper Deer Creek watersheds. The SLWG includes a powerfully diverse mix of local partners interested in pursuing high priority, large-scale, multi-jurisdictional projects to improve forest and watershed health, reduce wildfire risk, protect critical habitat, and support local contractors, industry, and communities. In order to transition from the SLWG's establishment, evolution of the collaborative boundary area to more than 850,000-acres, and development of the Strategic Plan to focus on project-specific watershed restoration planning, the SLWG requests \$99,893.74 over two years to: advance targeted outreach and stakeholder analysis, facilitate and coordinate adaptive strategic planning efforts, and coordinate and implement specific restoration design and planning efforts in the high-priority West Lassen Headwaters Project (WLHP) -- a 150,000 acre, multi-jurisdictional priority landscape encompassing anadromous headwaters, productive range and timberland, and National Park Service protected lands. The WLHP represents a pilot effort to conduct large-scale environmental analysis and implementation program that weaves together existing and future work on private and public land with a comprehensive wildland-urban interface and forest health strategy. The proposed project directly responds to the goals of this Funding Opportunity by advancing critical landscape action, inclusively designed by affected stakeholders, addressing water availability and quality through integrated forest and watershed management projects in the Upper North Fork of the Feather River, Upper Mill, and Upper Deer Creek watersheds. These watersheds are classified as the highest priority for protection and restoration due to their ability to support anadromous fish populations during periods of unfavorable climatic conditions and instability.¹ Empowered by the SLWG's Memorandum of Understanding, established bylaws, and agreed upon collaborative processes, the Sierra Institute will build upon the past three years of work to broaden stakeholder outreach and engagement of non-industrial private landowners, bring together new stakeholders with existing partners in watershed restoration planning through focused subcommittees to advance resource area analysis, and, using the 2021 Strategic Plan as a foundation, to design and implement on-the-ground projects in the WLHP.

Milestones and Deadlines: The Sierra Institute requests \$99,893.74 to coordinate and facilitate ongoing strategic planning, utilize previously-funded BOR spatial analysis to inform project prioritization and design, increase stakeholder outreach and partnership development, and lead efforts for project planning, analyses, and implementation in the high-priority WLHP. In the first year of funding, Sierra Institute will convene a Landowner Engagement Subcommittee

¹ National Marine Fisheries, Service, 2014

(September 2021) to engage private landowners across different ownership size-classes within the WLHP, identify effective strategies for private-lands fuel reductions that integrate priority restoration activities on private lands into landscape-scale restoration efforts. In this first year, Sierra Institute will also complete a baseline assessment defining the existing and desired condition in the WLHP consistent with the fire-shed and watershed restoration goals of the entire SLWG (December 2021). In the second year of funding, Sierra Institute will complete: initiation of collaboratively-supported restoration implementation with a Proposed Action, Purpose and Need (April 2022), Activity Cards describing each proposed action considered within the project area, specific resource considerations, and implementation guidelines or constraints (October 2022), an Implementation Plan documenting the process for implementation activities, including process steps and public involvement (December 2022), and initiate on-the-ground project work .

At the conclusion of the funding period, Sierra Institute will produce: 1) a report detailing the processes and accomplishments of the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee; 2) a Landscape Assessment including baseline assessment explicating existing and desired conditions as well as clear goals and objectives for the WLHP 3) a Proposed Action, Purpose and Need for the landscape-scale WLHP; 4) Activity Cards outlining implementation steps, including identification of steps to protect resources; 5) an Implementation Plan documenting the process for future implementation activities; and 6) building on 5, initial project implementation activities completed with timelines for sub-project completion and opportunities for public involvement. Full-group SLWG meetings, subcommittee meetings and field visits will facilitate and inform this process, and will continue through (September 2023). Additional reporting or outcomes related to outreach and engagement efforts will be completed by the end of the first and second year of the project.

Federal facility: The project is not located on a federal facility.

Background

The North Fork of the Feather River (NFFR) is a subwatershed of the Upper Feather River (UFR) Watershed. The SLWG operates within the upper reaches of the NFFR watershed. The NFFR is headwaters of the California State Water Project (SWP), serving over 25 million Californians and providing water to 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland. A number of reservoirs, owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), the State Water Project, and the South Feather Water and Power Agency, are located throughout the NFFR and managed both for recreation and hydropower. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages the majority of land within the watershed. Other interests are industrial (hydropower and timber production), recreational, agricultural, and rural residential.² Water quantity is a pressing issue for the NFFR and downstream interests, and over the past 60 years PG&E has reported an annual decline of 400,000 acre-feet measured at Lake Oroville. PG&E hydrologists attributed the decline to climate change, prolonged drought, and increases in forest density. Water quality issues broadly relate to flooding and erosion, especially in the aftermath of severe wildfires and as the result of rain-on-snow events, declining forest health in the upper watershed, roads, and development of

² Sacramento River Watershed Program, "Upper Feather River Watershed," 2018.

rural residential areas.³ Acute issues within smaller subwatersheds also exist, such as elevated mercury levels and declining aquatic habitat within Lake Almanor and some of its tributaries.

The SLWG area encompasses the upper, undammed reach; critical for anadromous fish populations. Spring- and fall-run Chinook salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey consistently run up Deer Creek, which originates within the mountains of eastern Tehama County. Rainbow trout are also common in the upper reaches of Deer Creek. Spring-run Chinook populations have been declining since the 1980s, from historical averages near 3,000 to numbers in the low hundreds. Public and private owners hold significant acreage, with the Upper Deer Creek watershed embedded in the Lassen National Forest and private timberlands. Water quality concerns primarily focus on higher temperatures during low flows. Key issues within the Upper Deer Creek watershed include fish habitat and forest management.⁴ The Mill Creek watershed originates as glacial melt on Lassen Peak, part of Lassen Volcanic National Park, draining primarily steep and undeveloped canyons. The SLWG area encompasses the upper reaches of the Mill Creek watershed where the highest elevation of spawning spring-run Chinook salmon in the state are found. Fall-run Chinook salmon and winter-run steelhead trout are also found within the watershed. Mill and Deer creeks represent two of only four remaining Sacramento Valley streams supporting spring-run salmon. Battle Creek is another key salmonid stream within the SLWG boundary, though it exists outside of the WLHP. Within the lower Mill Creek watershed, irrigation diversions have the capacity to completely eliminate stream flow. As such, instream uses for salmon are provided, when possible, during peak migration and spawning periods. Silt loading and turbidity peak during snowmelt, partially as the result of volcanic ash and glacial till within the headwaters region. Private timberlands, ranching, and recreational lands occur in the upper reaches of Mill Creek.⁵

Project Location

The project area is located in northeastern California, encompassing portions of Butte, Lassen, Plumas, Shasta, and Tehama Counties. The towns of Chester and Westwood are located within the SLWG boundaries. The SLWG operates within a portion of three separate but adjoining watersheds: The North Fork of the Feather River (HUC 18020121), the Deer Creek (HUC 1802015702) and the Mill Creek (HUC 1802015603) watersheds. The SLWG operates within portions of these three watersheds.

³ Uma Hinman Consulting, "Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Update 2016," November 2016.

⁴ Sacramento River Watershed Program, "Deer Creek Watershed," 2018.

⁵ Sacramento River Watershed Program, "Mill Creek Watershed," 2018.

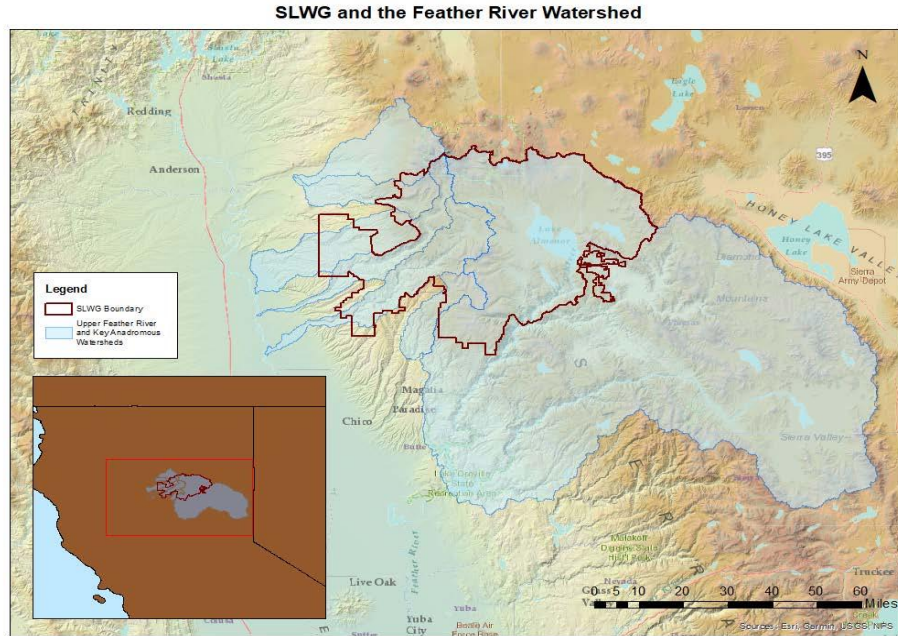


Figure 1. Map displaying SLWG project boundaries and the Feather River Watershed in the context of northern California.

Technical Project Description

Applicant Category

The Sierra Institute submits this proposal on behalf of the SLWG as an Existing Watershed Group. The SLWG, established in 2017, qualifies as a Existing Watershed Group due to its length of existence and consistency in meeting six times annually, establishment of agreed upon bylaws and a formalized Memorandum of Understanding, finalization of a SLWG Strategic Plan (2021), and demonstrated success in completed environmental compliance on the CalFire California Climate Investment-funded Robbers Creek Watershed Restoration Project and West Shore Community Wildfire Protection Project. BOR support will allow the group to build upon the last three years of group establishment and partnership building to develop a Landowner Engagement Subcommittee, engage collaborative partners in necessary watershed restoration planning and analysis, and utilize previously funded geographic analysis and the 2021 Strategic Plan to design and prioritize site-specific work in the high-priority WLHP.

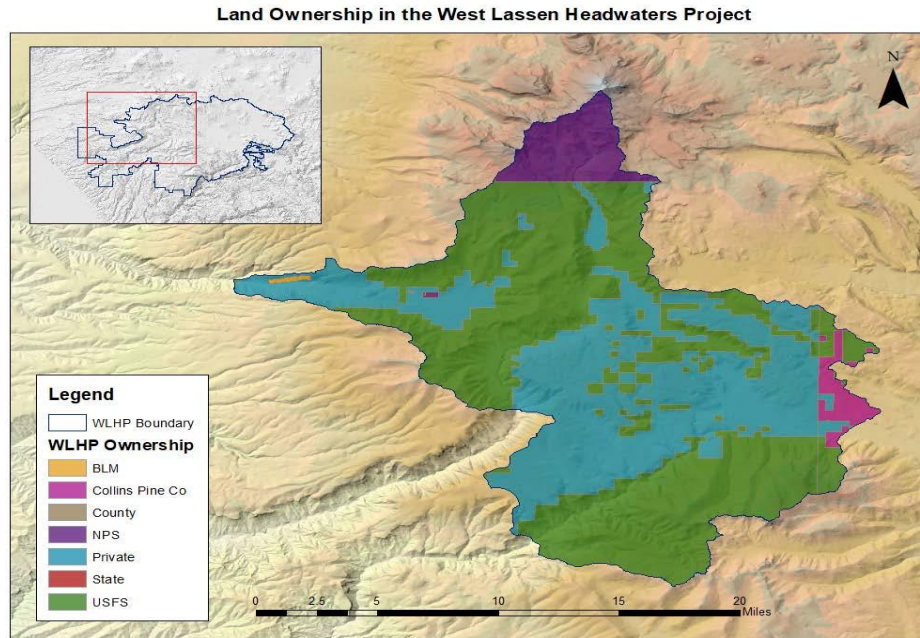


Figure 2. Public and private land ownership within the West Lassen Headwaters Project.

The SLWG was launched in 2017 as an outgrowth of strategic planning efforts of the Lake Almanor Watershed Group (LAWG). The SLWG was established to expand the focus area, the issues covered, and the work of LAWG, which since 2005 has focused primarily on water quality in the Lake Almanor basin. LAWG, established as an advisory committee to Plumas County Board of Supervisors, developed a Watershed Management Plan for the Almanor Basin in 2011, that was updated in December 2020.

Sierra Institute has been coordinating, facilitating and advancing on-the-ground projects for SLWG since early 2017. Initially voluntary to help launch the group, Sierra Institute has received funding through PG&E’s Better Together Resilient Communities grant program in late 2017 and Department of Conservation Forest Health Watershed Coordinator Program in 2019 to support group coordination and meeting facilitation, stakeholder outreach and engagement, strategic planning, native plant horticulture, and integration of Maidu TEK into SLWG landscape-scale projects. In 2019, Sierra Institute received a BOR WaterSMART CWMP grant to develop outreach strategies and engage new stakeholders, establish bylaws and a Memorandum of Understanding, contract services for advanced spatial analysis of critical firesheds, and collaboratively develop a watershed restoration plan (2021 SLWG Strategic Plan). Strategic Planning Subcommittee and collaborative members have indicated their strong support for pursuit of additional grant funding to advance project planning, environmental analysis, and implementation of on-the-ground forest and meadow restoration projects on public and private lands. Group members and specifically federal agencies have strongly supported the move to scale with the WLHP. The Sierra Institute seeks to harness the group’s collective ability to plan and implement projects while simultaneously formalizing group processes for engaging non-industrial private landowners and completing necessary pre-planning tasks to streamline project design and implementation efforts for landscape-scale forest restoration efforts.

The SLWG is attempting to increase pace, scale, and efficacy of watershed restoration through an all lands multi-benefit approach. First-generation SLWG projects are highlighted by two collaboratively-planned pilot projects, the West Shore Community Wildfire Protection Project and Robbers Creek Watershed Project. The West Shore Project will restore conifer forests, aspen and meadow areas to improve resilience to drought, disease, and insect infestation, as well as reduce the future risk of catastrophic wildfire to forest stands and communities along the west shore of Lake Almanor. The Robbers Creek Project will promote resilient forests and restore meadow systems and aspen stands to enhance landscape function and fire resilience on the LNF. In addition to restoring approximately 10,000 acres of public lands, these projects allowed the SLWG and project partners to successfully pilot collaborative project planning and development. Implementation of the West Shore and Robbers Creek projects will begin in 2021. Lessons from this work are building trust and already advancing more efficient implementation and scaling up to the WLHP.

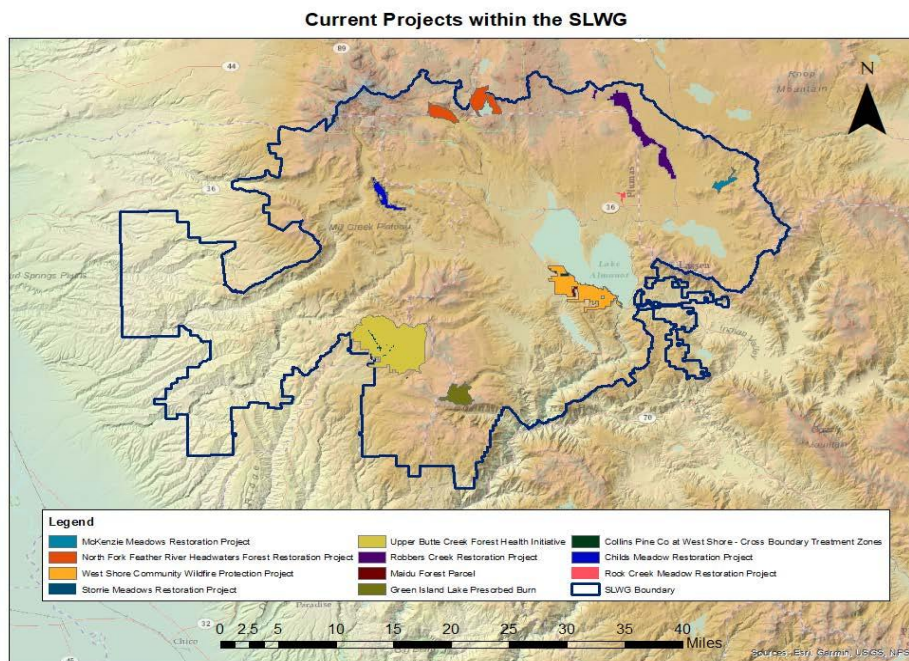


Figure 3. Map of the South Lassen Watersheds Group’s flagship projects.

Eligibility of Applicant

The Sierra Institute submits this proposal on the behalf of the SLWG as the group’s facilitator and coordinator. The Sierra Institute was invited to facilitate the group from its inception. WaterSMART CWMP funding from the Bureau of Reclamation, awarded in September 2019, allowing the Sierra Institute to continue facilitation and coordination, advance vital group processes, and collaboratively develop the SLWG Strategic Plan. BOR funding has also supported increased stakeholder outreach and engagement, collaborative engagement in watershed restoration planning with new and existing partners, and advance the 2021 Strategic Plan to enable its use to help design and develop the WLHP.

The SLWG is composed of over 25 groups encompassing diverse stakeholders, affected by both water quality and quantity and forest condition. Members include some of the area’s largest

landowners (USFS, NPS, and private timberland owners including Collins Pine Company and Sierra Pacific Industries) whose management activities must account for downstream water quality, and whose interest as forest managers is in mitigating ecosystem water shortage and catastrophic wildfire risk. Other stakeholders include Tribal entities (Maidu Summit Consortium, Roundhouse Council, Maidu Culture and Development Group) utilizing Maidu Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) on properties within the SLWG focus area to improve environmental conditions and build Maidu cultural capacity; local government (Plumas County Board of Supervisors); environmental nonprofit organizations (Point Blue Conservation Science, Feather River Trout Unlimited, Mountain Meadows Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy) engaged in research and ecosystem restoration efforts; local non-regulatory natural resource management bodies (Feather River Resource Conservation District, Tehama County Resource Conservation District); and state (Sierra Nevada Conservancy) and federal agencies (Natural Resource Conservation Service), among others. All have committed to collaboratively advance sustainable use of water and forest resources across the multi-jurisdictional landscape.

Goals

The SLWG's Memorandum, of Understanding (MOU), collaboratively developed by all members of the SLWG with support from the BOR WaterSMART CWMP funding in 2019, states:

The SLWG works collaboratively to identify, advance, support and enable projects on public and private land in the North Fork Feather River/Upper Deer Creek/Upper Mill Creek watersheds to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, and improve ecological resilience, watershed condition and function, and local community health and socioeconomic conditions.

SLWG members also agree to the following goals, with the understanding that this list is adaptive. In pursuit of the following, participating members will consider the consequences of climate change and its effects on achieving stated goals through the 21st century. In project planning and implementation, participating members agree both to seek integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge of the Maidu people, and to work with other stakeholder groups. Finally, in enacting management, participating members agree to apply specific strategies listed below as appropriate and feasible based on their respective jurisdictions and legal requirements.

Forests, fuels, and fire

1. Strategically locate fuel breaks to reduce the risk of high severity fire;
2. Implement fuel reductions that increase the potential to use managed wildfire to achieve forest and watershed restoration;
3. Reduce fuel loading in the wildland-urban interface, and manage risks to life and property;
4. Manage fuels and fire to enhance watershed health; and,
5. Manage carbon storage, maximizing sequestration and mitigating large-scale emission events.

Hydrology and water resources

1. Manage project area watersheds, including meadows and wetlands, to sustain/enhance native species and their habitat;
2. Manage community recharge areas to protect water sources from the effects of damaging wildfire and from reduced groundwater infiltration or excessive siltation;

3. Support and advance the efforts of existing area watershed groups and conservancies to monitor water quality and aquatic habitat, including the development of long-term data sets to evaluate project and climate change impacts.

Local benefits

1. Utilize biomass at multiple scales - including community and tribal biomass projects - to benefit communities and advance landscape-scale forest and fuels management;
2. Enhance economies within these watersheds by promoting nature-based sustainable jobs, recreation, and through youth education and career learning opportunities;
3. Enhance public access to open space by selecting projects with multiple benefits where possible;
4. Promote conservation of, and enhance interpretive opportunities for, historic and cultural sites and landscapes, as appropriate; and,
5. Increase public awareness of collaborative activities through highly visible projects and interpretive materials.

Approach

For 25 years Sierra Institute has successfully advanced a number of collaborative forestry projects, including the SLWG and the Burney Hat Creek Community Forest and Watersheds Group, which were founded on the triple bottom line objectives of advancing environmental, economic, and social benefits simultaneously. Over the past several years we have applied lessons from this extensive experience to accelerate the planning and implementation of local forest restoration. Through a signed Master Stewardship Agreement with the Lassen, Modoc, and Plumas National Forests and a General Cooperative Agreement with LVNP, the Sierra Institute has built capacity to accomplish restoration faster and with greater local benefit. Sierra Institute manages the previously mentioned West Shore Community Wildfire Protection Project and Robbers Creek Watershed Project with an existing CalFire CCI Forest Health Grant (\$3million), and over the last four years, 75% of SI's finances have been reimbursable grants from state and federal agencies, many of which involve collaboration with multiple partners and subcontractors. Sierra Institute has substantial experience managing grants such as this one and is skilled at leveraging funding and staffing capacity to expedite the planning and implementation of projects, including collaborating with multiple partners.

Sierra Institute will build upon the previous WaterSMART CWMP Phase I Grant that supported group establishment, outreach and stakeholder outreach efforts, the development of the 2021 SLWG Strategic Plan, and the utilization of advanced spatial analysis. The following sections detail Sierra Institute's approach to increase stakeholder outreach and engagement of non-industrial private landowners; collaboratively engage in watershed restoration planning with existing and new partners; establish focused subcommittees for both landowner engagement and specific resource area analysis; and use the 2021 Strategic Plan to design and develop project-specific activities toward project implementation in the WLHP.

Task A - Watershed Group Development

"Hiring a facilitator to assist with outreach to stakeholders and coordination of subcommittee and stakeholder meetings."

Sierra Institute will lead stakeholder outreach, development, and facilitation of the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee (quarterly), and ongoing meetings with the Strategic Planning

Subcommittee (six annually) to support SLWG development activities and specific watershed restoration planning and design in the WLHP area.

“Conducting outreach activities, such as the creation of an outreach plan and informational materials and conducting stakeholder meetings to establish broad-based, diverse membership.”

Sierra Institute plans to conduct targeted outreach to identify members for the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee and facilitate quarterly meetings (eight total). Sierra Institute will facilitate conversations toward developing the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee as a part of the SLWG to support identification and prioritization of treatments on non-industrial private lands based on need and importance for cross-boundary, large landscape work. Development of this subcommittee creates a sustainable collaborative engagement component and facilitates resource sharing to complete cross-boundary planning and implementation in current and future project areas within the SLWG boundary. Sierra Institute will support the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee to develop a Statement of Purpose and goals, an inventory of landowner assistance plans, and a process for identification of non-industrial private landowners by size class (<10 acres, 10-100 acres, and > 100 acres) within the WLHP area.

Using processes developed with the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee, Sierra Institute will implement an outreach plan and develop public information materials to engage non-industrial private landowners with opportunities for collaboration with agencies and land managers specific to resource priorities identified in the SLWG Strategic Plan (2021). Sierra Institute will work with the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee to coordinate with additional landowner assistance programs such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Firesafe Council, American Forest Foundation, and Resource Conservation District of Tehama County to avoid duplication and to support ongoing efforts on industrial private lands and public lands within the WLHP area.

“Gathering information about issues and needs related to water quality and quantity within the watershed (e.g. through research, talking to government agencies and local universities).”

Sierra Institute will conduct meetings with members of the Mill Creek Conservancy (MCC), Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy (DCWC), Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, and organized Firewise groups within the WLHP area and coordinate one meeting with each group (first quarter 2022) to gather information about issues and needs related to water quality and quantity within each subwatershed, along with strategies for effective landowner engagement.

Sierra Institute will work with the Landowner Engagement Subcommittee during quarterly meetings to develop an inventory of landowner assistance programs as part of the SLWG Community Forest and Fuels Management Program. Sierra Institute will coordinate the implementation of this program, which will a) provide collaborative members with a clarified understanding of challenges impacting rural landowners and the landscape; b) develop and strengthen a peer-to-peer landowner network to foster landowner participation and learning focused on action-oriented outcomes involving management planning, accessing available resources, joint project work, and implementing and monitoring integrated fuel reductions; and c) increase access to coordinated landowner assistance programs from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Firesafe Council, American Forest Foundation, and Resource Conservation District of Tehama County. Sierra Institute has also initiated work with University

of Washington and their LiDAR laboratory for area work and look forward to hosting a Ph.D. student to work in the SLWG area.

“Conducting Pre-planning activities, including outlining a watershed restoration plan, researching plans related to the watershed, collecting baseline information, and identifying restoration needs for the watershed.”

As part of the pre-planning process for the WLHP, Sierra Institute and Lassen National Forest will develop “NEPA-101” training opportunities for the SLWG in an effort to boost the capacity of the SLWG and allow group members to more meaningfully engage in landscape-scale restoration project planning processes. These training sessions will occur outside of the regularly scheduled SLWG meetings and will include reviews and explanations of recent NEPA updates and discussions about strategies for scaling up environmental compliance efforts to a larger landscape.

Sierra Institute will coordinate two meetings (October 2021 and January 2022) with the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County to identify opportunities to complement and leverage the defensible space work of the RCD Tehama County and their Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Sierra Institute will use this information in coordination with the Strategic Planning Subcommittee to identify opportunities to implement contiguous fuel reduction on non-industrial private lands in order to create a more fire-resilient landscape.

Task B - Watershed Restoration Planning

“Conducting technical analyses, including obtaining data and developing goals and benchmarks for the restoration plan.”

As part of the planning process for the WLHP, SLWG will work with Lassen National Forest specialists and collaborative partners to identify project priorities and needs for baseline surveys. The first step in this process will be finalizing the WLHP boundary with the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, which meets six times annually and will be formally voted on at a regularly-scheduled SLWG meeting by September 2021. As the Lassen National Forest is the largest federal landowner in the project area, the Sierra Institute will coordinate with Forest Service staff to collect and aggregate data within the WLHP landscape and develop a process for compiling multi-jurisdictional baseline data. Sierra Institute will make this information available to the SLWG and will integrate existing data via a shared platform including ArcGIS, technical reports, and survey findings. The outcome of this process will be a cross-agency data management system that will allow landowners and SLWG members share information and engage in the development of the WLHP and future SLWG project developments.

The aggregation of baseline data will allow Sierra Institute and the SLWG Strategic Planning Subcommittee to work with private and public landowners to further develop the project process and identify priorities and benchmarks within the WLHP. Facilitated by the Sierra Institute, the SWLG will develop resource-specific subcommittees and conduct quarterly meetings (eight total) to identify resource-specific survey needs, resource threats, priority management areas, restoration targets and develop management strategies for the landscape. Sierra Institute will coordinate with these Resource Subcommittees to develop resource surveys with participant roles designated and timelines for survey completion.

“Completing a watershed restoration plan, improving on existing restoration plans, or conducting water quality or quantity studies needed to provide baseline information about the watershed.”

In addition to the development of a comprehensive data management system, Sierra Institute will work with Resource Subcommittees and, as needed, the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, to complete a Landscape Assessment by December 2021 that defines existing and desired conditions and agreed-upon forest and watershed health goals and objectives for the WLHP. Sierra Institute, the Lassen National Forest, and other partners will work as an Interdisciplinary Team to structure this in a “Proposed Action, Purpose and Need (PAPN) - ready” format, in order to emphasize the collaborative’s priorities for the landscape and expedite the Lassen National Forest’s environmental compliance work. Baseline information will include but will not be limited to: ownerships, fire history, forest health data, transportation routes, watershed data, culturally-significant plants, areas of high recreational use, and wildlife data.

Task C - Watershed Management Plan Project Design

“Developing project timelines and milestones.”

As part of the WLHP design process, Sierra Institute will facilitate alignment among SLWG stakeholders on desired restoration activities and resource considerations and project work. Participants will work in resource-specific SLWG workshops to develop and prioritize condition-based treatments. A key outcome of this process will be collaboratively designed Activity Cards, a condition-based-management tool detailing each proposed action considered within the project area, specific resource considerations, and implementation guidelines or constraints (October 2022). Activity Cards will be designed to aid in the comparison of action alternatives in the environmental analysis and will include identification of measures to protect resources, allowing for coordination and accountability in both the project planning and implementation processes.

“Researching what type of site-specific environmental compliance will be necessary to implement a project.”

In the project design portion of the planning process, Sierra Institute will work with SLWG stakeholders to finalize project goals and priorities and collaboratively develop a draft Proposed Action, Purpose and Need (PAPN), to be reviewed by the Lassen National Forest. These goals and priorities will be informed by local knowledge and expertise of SLWG stakeholders, research on landscape-scale NEPA methodologies, and lessons learned from completed projects, both locally and nationally.

“Completing an analysis in order to prioritize watershed management projects and identify specific project locations.”

By the conclusion of the funding period, SLWG will work to institutionalize the implementation process through the development of an Implementation Plan documenting future, agreed-upon processes for implementation activities—critical preparatory work leading to the initiation of on-the-ground work. The Implementation Plan will outline the alignment of project activities with collaboratively-supported goals and objectives and include opportunities for public involvement in pre-implementation activities. Sierra Institute will facilitate this as a living document developed in conjunction with the Activity Cards in order to link environmental compliance and analysis processes to the project-specific work in the WLHP. Engaging the SLWG in the full

scope of the WLHP landscape-scale project design from the aggregation of baseline data for a Landscape Assessment to the prioritization and development of project goals and implementation activities, will 1) strengthen the capacity of the group, 2) allow diverse perspectives to inform the planning process, and 3) increase the pace and scale of important watershed restoration work.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criterion A - Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope

Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity

SLWG stakeholders involve over 25 groups representing a diversity of interests including a variety of landowners, industrial timber companies, state and federal agencies, and a diversity of community-based and environmental groups. They have come together to improve ecological and socioeconomic conditions across the 850,000-acre landscape. A primary concern is wildfire—both frequency and severity. The 52,000-acre Storrie Fire burned in the SLWG project footprint in the year 2000, and was partially re-burned by the 75,000-acre Chips fire in 2012. Both fires contained areas of high severity burning. The 320,000-acre North Complex burned just south of the SLWG area in 2020, much of it at high severity. Approximately 57% of the WLHP is considered to be part of the Wildland-Urban-Interface. In the face of climate change and prolonged drought conditions, catastrophic wildfire threatens human and natural resources. SLWG members and stakeholders identified in the outreach-oriented activities within Task A of this proposal whose collective efforts have the potential to address some of the WLHP's most pressing issues.

Maidu Tribes and Tribal Groups are interested not only in being involved in the management of ancestral Tribal lands within the project area but practicing Maidu Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) to reduce fire impacts and strengthen cultural ties and understanding. The Maidu Summit Consortium (MSC), a non-profit that includes but is not limited to the Susanville Rancheria, Greenville Rancheria, Roundhouse Council, and Maidu Culture and Development Group, owns and manages timberland and meadow complexes within the SLWG boundary area. MSC staff and Board Members have been strong supporters of the SLWG from its inception, with representatives regularly participating in collaborative meetings and the Strategic Planning Subcommittee. They have demonstrated deep commitment to reducing fire risk, mitigating water shortages, and improving environmental health through the practice of TEK in the project area.

The federal government is a major landowner within the project area. Both the National Park Service (NPS) and United States Forest Service (USFS) are mandated to preserve and protect the natural resources under their stewardship. Both agencies manage lands within the Wildland-Urban Interface and are engaged in project planning and fire risk mitigation these high priority areas. Representatives from the Lassen Volcanic National Park and Lassen National Forest have been integral in SLWG's development and strategic planning processes. Both entities have been consulted and are supportive of the activities detailed in this proposal. The USFS provided a letter of support for this funding proposal, included in Appendix B.

Industrial interests manage private timberlands (The Collins Pine Company and Sierra Pacific Industries) and must mitigate water quality impacts and fire risk as part of their resource

management obligations. The Collins Pine Company and Sierra Pacific Industries have submitted a letter of support for this proposal, included in Appendix B.

CAL FIRE is legally responsible for providing fire protection upon State Responsibility Areas (SRA). The project area contains significant SRA acreage as well as lands beyond the project area due to potential fire spread (Figure 4).

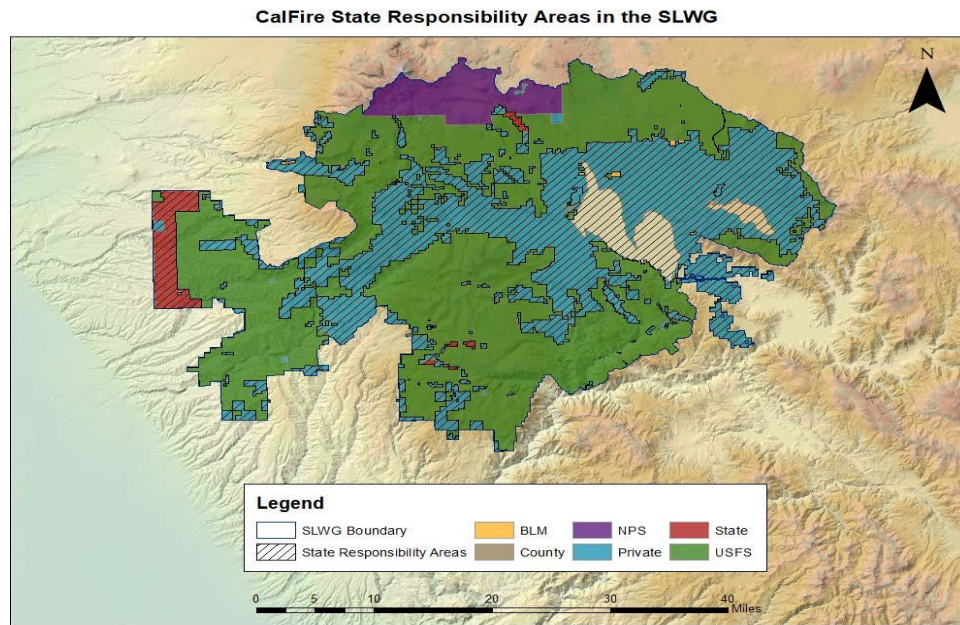


Figure 4. State Responsibility Areas within and surrounding the SLWG project boundary.

County governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and Tehama County and Feather River Resource Conservation Districts have a vested interest in improving natural resource management, water security, and fire risk reduction in their communities.

Environmental nonprofits including Point Blue Conservation Science, Trout Unlimited, Mountain Meadows Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and Feather River Land Trust are involved in ecosystem management and restoration, and ecological research in the region. These groups are affected by issues pertaining to water quality and quantity as well as fire risk.

LAWG has been operating since 2005. The group is focused on watershed management and water quality issues within the Almanor Basin, where temperature, dissolved oxygen, nutrient loading, and elevated mercury levels have all been top issues of concern.

SLWG finalized a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018. Sierra Institute facilitated subcommittee discussions and workshops to finalize the SLWG Strategic Plan in 2021.

Affected stakeholders whose involvement the Sierra Institute proposes to cultivate include members of the Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy, Mill Creek Watershed Conservancy, and

Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy. For over 20 years, these conservancies have been working collaboratively with other stakeholders to develop watershed management plans and strategies, and been involved in ensuring instream flows necessary for anadromous fish passage.

The SLWG improves dialogues and relationships with entities neighboring federal lands.

Aided by USFS personnel who have committed to working cooperatively with adjacent landowners, Sierra Institute and SLWG are working to improve relationships with neighboring landowners. One specific avenue for cooperation involves cross-jurisdictional landscape project planning. Sierra Institute partnered with USFS and Collins Pine Co. to develop a proposal that received \$3-million for landscape scale planning from CalFire’s Climate Change Investments (CCI) Forest Health grant program. The grant supports joint planning and implementation of fuels reduction and meadow restoration projects. The Sierra Institute facilitates these dialogues, relationships, and project planning and implementation. Funding the BOR will advance these efforts by providing funding to formalize and document group priorities for the WLHP.

The SLWG will improve and advance communication between federal, state, and local governments; tribes; and local communities through project planning and implementation, and outreach and education. The USFS participated in the development of the CCI grant, the implementation of which involved use of Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). GNA allows the state to act as an agent of the federal government on federal land; use of the tool on the landscape will represent a meaningful and even innovative use of this relatively new authority. The SLWG Strategic Plan includes continued outreach to the Maidu Summit Consortium and other Tribal groups to further integrate their engagement in project planning and implementation as well as identify uses of TEK in project planning and design.

Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope

The project area contains a portion of the NFFR watershed (18020121), a HUC 8 subwatershed of the Upper Feather River watershed. The project area also contains a portion of the Mill Creek (1802015603) and Deer Creek (1802015702) watersheds, both HUC 10 watersheds. The Mill Creek watershed is a subwatershed of the Thomas Creek-Sacramento River watershed. The Deer Creek watershed is a subwatershed of the Big Chico Creek-Sacramento River watershed.

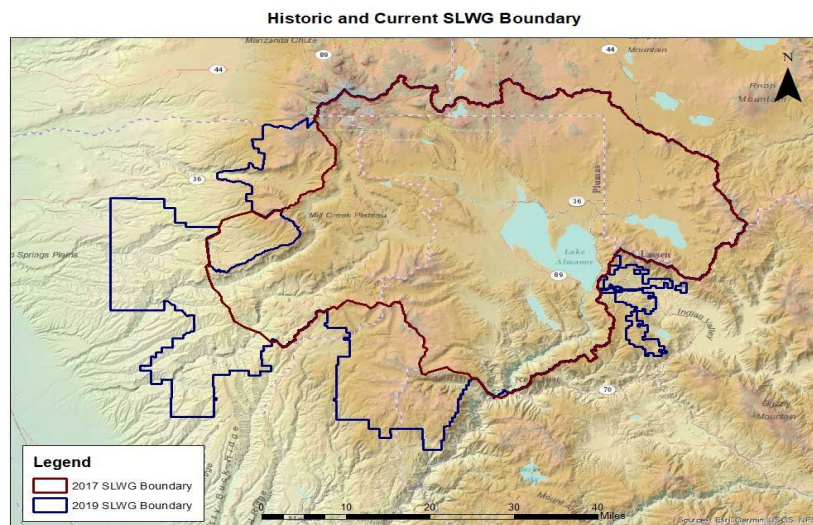


Figure 5. Historic and current SLWG boundary.

The location of major public and private land ownership groups in the SLWG is indicated on the following map (Figure 5).

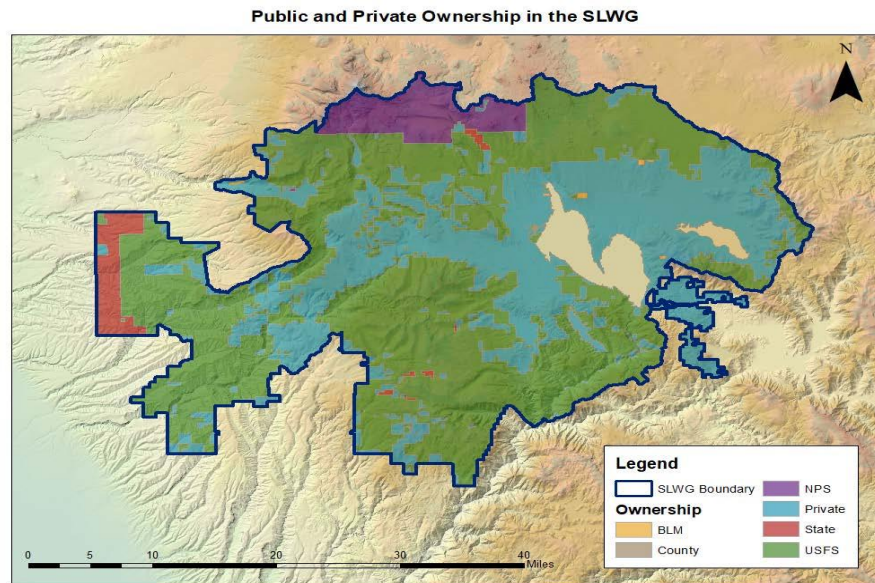


Figure 6. Public and private land ownership within and surrounding the SLWG project boundary.

SLWG stakeholders currently represent almost all major landholders and stakeholder interests in the area in which the group intends to work with regard to land ownership and land management patterns. Sierra Institute will lead outreach efforts to include important stakeholder groups such as the Deer Creek Conservancy, Mill Creek Conservancy, Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, and Firewise communities within the WLHP.

Evaluation Criterion B - Addressing Critical Watershed Needs

Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watersheds Needs or Issues

Past management and the exclusion of fire as an ecological process have altered forest structure and successional processes throughout the Upper Feather River (UFR) Watershed. Fire suppression across the landscape has caused an increase in forest density, a compositional shift to more shade-tolerant tree species, an accumulation of fuels and dramatically increased fire risk. Projected changes in the amount, timing, and kind of precipitation are expected to impact annual runoff, storage capacity and extend the length of the fire season. Flooding and erosion typically follow fire incidents, endangering human life, property, and water quality. Stressed surface water resources could lead to higher rates of groundwater withdrawal, with potentially adverse impacts to rural residents, many of whom rely entirely on private wells. Past drought events in the UFR have resulted in dry wells, especially in low-income areas, requiring well drilling and water deliveries. Water shortage also impacts downstream users, resulting in significantly reduced water levels in Lake Oroville and subsequent water storage facilities.

Watersheds within the WLHP have been classified as the highest priority for protection and restoration due to their ability to support anadromous fish populations during periods of unfavorable climatic conditions and instability. Issues of concern in the Deer Creek watershed

are focused on maintaining quality habitat for anadromous fish. Extensive unpaved road networks within the watershed are susceptible to erosion, contributing to stream sedimentation and increases in water temperature. Channelization and decreases in vegetative cover also reduce floodplain inundation, aquatic habitat, and water quality. Issues within the Mill Creek watershed are similarly focused on maintaining the quality of habitat for salmonids and other anadromous fish. In the lower reaches of the watershed, limited flow volumes and increases in stream temperature have been of primary concern.⁶ Due to their proximity to one another, a single wildfire could simultaneously burn the headwaters of all these creeks, which would severely degrade water and habitat quality in this critical refugia for Central Valley Chinook Salmon and Steelhead. These are some of the last streams supporting anadromous fish in California.

Nearly 57% of the WLHP is within the WUI; terrain and dominant weather patterns within these three drainages create the potential for fast-moving wildfires to affect the communities of Gurnsey, Mill Creek, and Mineral. The WLHP represents an innovative approach by conducting an environmental analysis across a 150,000-acre landscape, and weaving together work on private forest land and community defensible space with wildland-urban interface and forest wildland areas.

Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

The group plans to contribute to the management of these issues by continuing to collaboratively identify and prioritize the interests and priorities of diverse stakeholders, and leveraging their knowledge and expertise to strategically plan restoration and management projects throughout the WLHP. By conducting these planning activities within a collaborative framework, the Sierra Institute will constructively engage and facilitate diverse perspectives to improve working partnerships and watershed and forest health. Current efforts address the risk of wildfire and subsequent erosion, as well as meadow habitat restoration with positive benefits for downstream water quantity and quality. Development of the WLHP will build on the initial success of the SLWG by scaling up established collaborative processes to address critical watershed needs identified at a more comprehensive and appropriate scale.

Water Group Development

Stakeholder outreach and partnership building are core tenets of the proposed work. Through both direct landowner engagement and building partnerships with additional citizen-led community groups, the SLWG will expand the diversity and strength of partnerships while scaling up on-the-ground work to address critical watershed needs at a landscape scale.

If the watershed group will build on previous partnership building efforts, describe these efforts and how the watershed group will expand upon them through this grant.

This effort builds on past work that has enabled the SLWG partners to leverage the capacity of individual organizations. For example, Sierra Institute staff are collaborating with the Lassen National Forest (LNF) to complete environmental compliance for two projects, West Shore and Robbers Creek, and have previously partnered with Lassen Volcanic National Park (LVNP) to prepare compliance and implement fuels reduction projects. Point Blue and Collins Pine bring

⁶ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Deer Creek Study (Tehama County)," 2017; California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Mill Creek Study (Tehama County)," 2017.

expertise in biological data collection. LVNP and LNF are high-capacity federal agencies that will contribute staff time to support this landscape-scale effort. MSC has provided TEK consultation to other SLWG projects. This group of partners brings the necessary experience and capacity to successfully complete environmental compliance work and initiate projects in a large, multi-jurisdictional landscape. WLHP positions partners to collaboratively implement treatments across boundaries as dictated by resource conditions and community needs. This work builds on existing partnerships and includes targeted stakeholder outreach to elevate the involvement of mid-scale private landowners in the SLWG, and a renewed emphasis on bringing community interests in the Mineral, Gurnsey, and Tehama County areas of the WLHP into the SLWG. Existing partnerships will be strengthened and new relationships built through establishment of a replicable and inclusive process for engaging diverse stakeholders and landowners.

Will the group establish relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands, or advocating for increased access to the Department lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreation? If so, how?

The SLWG has established relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands. Current representatives include Trout Unlimited and Point Blue serving as key members of the strategic planning subcommittee, with The Nature Conservancy regularly participating in SLWG. Encouraging public recreational access to Department lands is a key SLWG goal. SLWG continues to strengthen relationships with local organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and recreational access, and collaborates with two major efforts to promote access and recreation locally -- the Almanor Basin Trails Coalition and the Connected Communities effort led by Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship.

Watershed Restoration Planning

Watershed restoration planning within the SLWG focal area, will utilize the group's established Strategic Plan (funded through a prior Bureau of Reclamation award) to facilitate alignment among SLWG stakeholders on desired restoration activities and resource considerations within the WLHP. Applying the principles of the Strategic Plan to guide the development of a landscape-scale restoration project is a critical next step in developing the group's capacity, and will lead to improved processes that can be applied to other areas within the SLWG boundary.

Will the group complete an analysis to prioritize issues within the restoration plan?

The SLWG will complete an analysis and prioritize issues within the WLHP through the collaborative creation of a Landscape Assessment. The Landscape Assessment will include existing baseline data, identification of survey needs and identification of agreed-upon project priorities and initial pilot project implementation. SLWG proposes to initiate project planning in August 2021, and work towards completion of a Landscape Assessment, a shared database, condition-based treatments (Activity Cards), and an Implementation Plan with initial steps launched by the close of the funding period. Planning efforts will occur in Strategic Planning meetings (6 annually) and Resource-specific Subcommittee meetings (8 total). Planning meetings that incorporate goals and priorities from the Strategic Plan and associated will increase partnership within the group, as work groups will be formed centered on specific resources and management areas. This approach will bring together diverse interests in the early stages leading to an intimate research and planning context, and increasing trust and cooperation.

How does the group plan to gather information regarding the critical issues and needs of the watershed? Will the group use science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment? If so, how?

Sierra Institute and SLWG will gather information regarding critical issues and needs in the watershed by collecting baseline data for all jurisdictions of the WLHP and compiling it in a shared data platform accessible to all stakeholders. Baseline data with spatial maps will help establish a common framework, inform identification of future survey work and data collection, and enable SLWG members to identify and prioritize key restoration actions. Additional information on landscape-scale environmental compliance processes will be provided by USFS-led environmental compliance training sessions, and a review of existing landscape-scale NEPA projects (including best available science related to landscape-scale forested watershed management, best management practices, and existing management plans) to be completed and summarized by the Sierra Institute. Advanced LiDAR-based analyses from the University of Washington's Forest Resilience Lab are forthcoming and will better-inform project design when incorporated into SLWG's strategic processes. Incorporating results from the landscape-scale NEPA research, existing multijurisdictional baseline data on the landscape, and the scientific expertise of individual members and their host organizations will ensure that the group utilizes the best available science to identify best practices in the WLHP planning processes.

Will the group identify opportunities to resolve conflicts? If so, how?

Yes. Decades of Sierra Institute experience with conflict resolution and collaborative processes will be employed to facilitate conflict resolution with the end goal of improving group functioning and ensuring critical differences are constructively addressed. By its nature, collaborative planning involves differences and occasionally conflict; successful planning at landscape scale necessitates the identification and resolution of conflict. Collaborative agreement will empower the group to make a real difference on the critical issues in the SLWG area, and this has driven meeting participation and powered the SLWG to its many successes to date.

If the watershed group will build on previous efforts, describe these efforts and how the watershed group will expand upon them through the proposed work.

This project builds on 15 years of LAWG collaborative work and over three years of SLWG collaboration. There is a general consensus among participants that "going to scale" with the WLHP is the next step, building directly on the work completed by the Sierra Institute, Point Blue, LNF and other partners under the SLWG MOU and environmental analysis completed on two pilot projects in the SLWG area: the West Shore Project and the Robbers Creek Project, and implementation of the Rock Creek project. These first-generation collaborative planning projects piloted a collaborative approach to jointly complete project planning and environmental compliance across nearly 11,000 acres. Scaling up these efforts to the WLHP will directly build on existing partnerships and lessons learned from the collaborative environmental compliance and planning processes that have been documented through the completion of a "360-evaluation" project review. Critical lessons from initial efforts will be applied to the WLHP, including a focus on continuing to build relationships among partner and agency staff, creation of a common set of expectations, a common framework for collaborative planning processes, and a commitment from key leaders to organizational change in processes and operations to enable SLWG to transition from a transactional partnership to a transformational collaboration with

shared purpose and action. Proposed activities are designed to directly address these key factors for success.

Watershed Management Project Design

The group will develop a replicable process for designing landscape-scale projects through collaborative development of project boundaries, core project priorities, and restoration actions to achieve desired conditions. This process will accelerate the implementation of projects that address critical watershed needs, including restoring resilient forest structure and reducing the likelihood of adverse wildfire impacts to critical anadromous watersheds. Following completion of project planning, the SLWG will be poised to implement restoration across the 150,000-acre project with support from CA's recent commitment of more than \$1 billion to improve the health of forests and natural landscapes.

Describe the project for which the watershed group will complete a design

The SLWG will design and formalize planning and implementation processes for the WLHP, a 150,000-acre landscape-scale, multi-jurisdictional project prioritized by the SLWG Strategic Planning committee encompassing a suite of potential restoration actions to address forest and watershed resilience and ensure sustainable use of natural resources to benefit local communities. SLWG prioritization and design processes will take place in both Strategic Planning meetings and resource-specific subcommittees facilitated by the Sierra Institute.

Will the group complete an analysis to prioritize watershed management projects and identify specific project locations? If yes, describe the analysis.

In Strategic Planning Subcommittee meetings held in 2020, collaborative members agreed to begin project planning, environmental analysis, and implementation of forest and meadow restoration on public and private lands within the WLHP. Sierra Institute helped develop a Resource Assessment for Subwatershed Conditions for the SLWG area that contributed to the collaborative's prioritization of the WLHP. Project boundaries will be finalized at SLWG meetings by summer of 2021 -- drawing from geospatial analysis of watershed and watershed needs funded through a prior BOR award. Sierra Institute and project partners will complete a Landscape Assessment, analyzing existing and desired conditions within the WLHP, to prioritize watershed management actions. The Landscape Assessment will be informed by SLWG meetings and resource-specific subcommittees relying on the best available science and collaborative support to advance environmental compliance work.

What type of site-specific project design and engineering will the watershed group complete?

The SLWG will complete Activity Cards that outline application site-specific restoration actions within a condition-based management framework, in alignment with goals and priorities outlined in the 2021 SLWG Strategic Plan. Each Activity Card will include a description of the restoration action, objectives to be achieved, methods and equipment used, relationship to guiding land management policies, resource specific guidelines, and a description of site-specific conditions that indicate a need to implement the action. Card development will occur through SLWG resource-specific subcommittees, and implementation will occur based on the requirements defined therein and in conjunction with a defined process for public involvement outlined in the Implementation Plan.

How will the watershed group develop a project timeline and milestones for the project?

The SLWG Strategic Planning Subcommittee, with Sierra Institute and federal agency involvement, will establish timelines and milestones in cooperation with affected landowners. The timeline and milestones will be informed by eight SLWG resource subcommittee meetings.

Will the group work with Reclamation’s environmental and cultural resource staff to determine what type of site-specific environmental compliance will be necessary for the project(s).

SLWG will work with all relevant federal agencies, including BOR, to determine the type of site-specific environmental compliance necessary for project implementation. Previous environmental compliance work in the SLWG planning area, completed under the MOU between the LNF and Sierra Institute, will also inform this work.

If the watershed group will build on previous efforts, describe these efforts and how the watershed group will expand upon them through the proposed work.

WLHP activities will leverage existing funds awarded by the CAL FIRE California Climate Investment, and will build on the completion of successful environmental compliance in the SLWG planning area, as well as Sierra Institute-led research on landscape scale strategies to address high density, fire risk, and hydrological functioning within the project area. The SLWG 2021 Strategic Plan is a critical first step to prioritize issues within the context of the SLWG landscape. This process facilitated alignment among SLWG stakeholders and development of this consensus reduces the potential for conflict.

Evaluation Criterion C - Implementation and Results

Sub-criterion No. C1. Understanding of and ability to meet program requirements

Table 1. Summary of major tasks, outcomes, and projected costs. Matching funds as specified include fringe benefits for full-time employees.

Task A	Description	Staff Costs	Travel	Contractual	Cost Share	Outcomes
Conducting outreach activities	Stakeholder Meetings (4), meeting writing	\$9,989.37	\$152.32			Outreach Plan, Inventory of stakeholders and their capacities
Coordination and Facilitation of Strategic Planning Subcommittee Meetings	Subcommittee Meetings (6), meeting writing	\$4,994.69	\$228.48			
Conducting pre-planning activities	Meetings with RCDC (2), meeting writing	\$2,497.34	\$132.16			
NEPA Training	Develop and coordinate training	\$2,497.34				NEPA Training, boosted capacity of SLWG members, increased engagement in SLWG project development
Development of Landowner Engagement Subcommittee	Quarterly Meetings (8), written report	\$18,700.75	\$528.64			Inventory of private landowners by size class, Outline of CFFMP
Task B						
Finalize WLH project boundary with SLWG	SLWG meeting priority	\$2,497.34				Final map of WLHP area
Compile baseline info on the landscape	Data aggregation and management	\$4,994.69				Cross-agency data management system, Baseline Assessment defining the existing and desired condition on the WLH project area
Work with SLWG/landowners to develop project process/priorities/benchmarks	Resource subcommittee meetings (12)	\$7,492.03	\$456.96			Landscape Assessment with list of "PAPN-ready" WLHP priorities
Identify survey needs	Coordination between stakeholders, written report	\$2,497.34				Survey plan, roles, timelines
Task C						
Facilitate alignment among SLWG stakeholders on desired restoration activities and resource considerations	Subcommittee workshop	\$7,664.87				Condition-based Activity Cards
Finalize project goals and priorities	Written report	\$9,989.37				Baseline Assessment defining existing and desired conditions as well as goals and objectives for the WLH project area, Draft PAPN
Institutionalize implementation process	Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting	\$9,889.37				Implementation Plan
Travel			\$1,498.56			
Materials Supplies			\$550			
Total Direct Costs Requested			\$85,753.06			
Total Indirect Costs	0.1649		\$14,140.68			
Total BOR Funds Requested			\$99,893.74			

Sub-criterion No. C2. Building on relevant federal, state, or regional planning efforts

The SLWG builds on regional planning efforts begun by LAWG in 2005 and three strategic visioning meetings of this group in early 2017, which led to an expanded vision and the creation of SLWG. Annual water quality monitoring results, as well as the 2020 Lake Almanor Management Plan are also instrumental in the establishment of the SLWG group and have informed landscape goals and priorities. NPS fire planning, other LVNP planning, and USFS

LNF plan also inform this work. Additional planning efforts build upon include SLWG's 2021 Strategic Plan and the RCD of Tehama County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the local UFR Watershed group, an outgrowth of the state's Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program, a collaborative water management group that published a regional water management plan in 2016. There is some overlap in membership between SLWG and the IRWM group. Sierra Institute has also completed a socioeconomic analysis of the IRWM region. The project supports objectives identified in California's Assembly Bill 2551, which identified drainages that supply the Oroville, Shasta, and Trinity Reservoirs as a priority landscape. The WLHP addresses that priority landscape within the SLWG boundary, including the North Fork Feather River drainage - the primary watershed for Lake Oroville, the largest water storage facility in the CA State Water Project. The activities outlined in this proposal will also adhere to guidance in pertinent state plans such as the California Water Action Plan (CWAP), the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), and state's Carbon Plan. WLHP planning processes will manage the landscape for multiple benefits and advance key objectives of the CWAP, namely restoring important species and habitat and creating a more resilient sustainable water resources system. Environmental compliance and analysis will follow a multi-species, ecosystem approach to conserve ecological integrity and biological diversity at a landscape-scale, as directed in the SWAP.

Evaluation Criterion D - Nexus to Department of Interior Initiatives

The SLWG utilizes the best available science from federal agencies including LVNP and their Landscape Management and Fire Plans. The Park Service has been directly involved in development of SLWG Landscape Assessment and watershed management projects to assure consistency with their work. Collaborative partners utilize Sierra Institute-led research, in partnership with agency leadership, land management agencies, private industrial timberland companies, and NGOs to increase the pace and scale of restoration, to pilot an efficient approach to large landscape environmental compliance, while maintaining environmental standards to ensure durable of outcomes. The SLWG is also committed to the utilization of natural resources, including small-diameter wood, at the community-scale to benefit communities and advance forest health and fuels management objectives; proposed work will provide a steady supply of biomass and sawlogs to feed local mills and wood utilization facilities; some of this material will come from LVNP land. The work will reduce the threat of wildfire across critical headwaters and LVNP land -- ensuring reliable, clean water is available for fish and wildlife, as well as for rural communities.

Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

Environmental and cultural resources compliance will not be included as the proposal does not include monitoring, measurement, or other field work activities.

Required Permits or Approvals

No permits or approvals are required for activities included within this proposal.

Budget Proposal

Table 2. Proposed budget (overview) for two years' requested funding, including total requested costs as well as proposed cost-sharing utilizing funds from an awarded PG&E grant program.

Request for Federal Funding				Total Request	Non-Federal Cost Share	Total Project Cost
Budget Item Descriptions	\$/Unit	Computation	Quantity Type		Applicant Match	
Salaries and Wages						
Jonathan Kusel - Executive Director		75	150 hours	\$11,250.00		
Kyle Rodgers - Program Manager		40	100 hours	\$4,000.00		
Dov Weinman - Project Coordinator		35	1040 hours	\$36,400.00		
Project Assistant		30	200 hours	\$6,000.00		\$57,650.00
Fringe Benefits						
Jonathan Kusel - Executive Director		45%	salary	\$5,062.50		
Kyle Rodgers - Program Manager		45%	salary	\$1,800.00		
Dov Weinman - Project Coordinator		45%	salary	\$16,380.00		
Project Assistant		45%	salary	\$2,700.00		\$25,942.50
Travel						
Strategic Planning Meetings (6)	\$0.56		64 miles	\$228.48		
Landowner Engagement Subcommittee Meetings (8)	\$0.56		118 miles	\$528.64		
Resource Subcommittee Meetings (12)	\$0.56		118 miles	\$456.96		
Meetings with RCDTC (2)	\$0.56		64 miles	\$132.16		
Stakeholder Outreach Meetings (4)	\$0.56		118 miles	\$264.32		\$1,610.56
Materials/Supplies						
Printing				\$250.00		
Software				\$300.00		
Total Direct Costs Requested				\$85,753.06		
Indirect Costs		0.1649		\$14,140.68		
Total BOR Funds Requested				\$99,893.74		

Budget Narrative

Salaries and Wages

Dov Weinman, Project Coordinator with the Sierra Institute, will act as project lead. In the first funding year, activities proposed here will account for approximately 850 hours of full-time work. In the second year, activities covered under this proposal will account 640 hours of full-time work. This includes 15 hours under the project lead allocated to the production of quarterly reports, a nine-month sufficiency report, an interim report, and a final performance report. Mr. Weinman is salaried at \$72,800/year. Jonathan Kusel, Executive Director of the Sierra Institute, and Kyle Rodgers, Program Manager, will oversee key elements of the proposal. Mr. Kusel is salaried at \$156,000/year. See Evaluation Criterion C, Sub-Criterion No. C1. for a detailed allocation of time, associated costs, and projected outcomes for each proposed activity.

Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits are calculated as 45% of salaries and wages for full-time employees, and help to cover the costs of health and dental insurance, as well as retirement funds.

Travel

All proposed travel is local and not to exceed one day (i.e., will not require a per diem, lodging, etc.). All meetings will be attended by the Executive Director and project coordinator. The table below indicates the detailed travel budget for two years funding and includes: six Strategic Planning Subcommittee meetings in Chester, CA; eight Landowner Engagement Subcommittee meetings in Mineral, CA; twelve Resource Subcommittee meetings in Mineral, CA, two meetings with the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County in Chester, CA; and four stakeholder outreach meetings with watershed conservancies and other WLHP-non-profit entities in Mineral, CA. All field visits will be attended by the Executive Director and program manager.

Table 3. Detailed travel budget for two years' funding.

Travel				
Description	\$/Unit	Quantity	Quantity Type	Cost
Strategic Planning Meetings (6)	0.56	64	miles	\$228.48
Landowner Engagement Subcommittee Meetings (8)	0.56	118	miles	\$528.64
Resource Subcommittee Meetings (12)	0.56	118	miles	\$456.96

Meetings with RCDTC (2)	0.56	64	miles	\$132.16
Stakeholder Outreach Meetings (4)	0.56	118	miles	\$264.32

Equipment

Equipment will not be purchased with funding from this FOA.

Materials and Supplies

Materials and supplies will not be purchased with funding from this FOA.

Contractual

Contractual work will not be completed with funding from this FOA.

Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs

Environmental and regulatory compliance will not be funded from this FOA.

Other Expenses

There are no additional expenses.

Indirect Costs

The Sierra Institute includes indirect costs at a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate of 16.49%. This rate will be applied to a base of \$85,753.06. The allowable indirect costs are **\$14,140.68**.

Letters of Support

Letters of support were written by personnel from The Collins Pine Company, Sierra Pacific Industries, the Maidu Summit Consortium, the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County, Lassen National Forest. These organizations are all members of SLWG and supportive of continued development of the collaborative group. Letters are attached in the Appendix B.

Official Resolution

An official resolution has been submitted to the Sierra Institute's Board of Directors (see Appendix A). An executive meeting will take place on (1/8.2021) and the Sierra Institute expects to receive a signed copy of the official resolution on (1/13/2021). This document will then be provided to the BOR.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management

The Sierra Institute is currently registered in the System for Award Management. The Sierra Institute's unique entity identifier is 012742289.

Appendix A

Letters of Support

Lassen National Forest
Maidu Summit Consortium
Sierra Pacific Industries
Collins Pine Company
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
South Lassen Watersheds Group

File Code: 1500
Date: January 15, 2021

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office

To whom this may concern:

The Lassen National Forest (LNF) hereby confirms our participation in, and commitment to, the forest health activities as detailed in the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute's) proposal to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grants program. The LNF looks to the Sierra Institute and other partners to advance the collaborative planning and implementation of forest and watershed restoration activities throughout the forested landscape of one of California's most critical headwaters to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire and increase overall forest and watershed health.

Through the existing Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) between LNF and Sierra Institute, we have collaboratively worked toward completing environmental compliance on the CALFIRE CCI funded West Shore Community Wildfire Protection Project and Robbers Creek Watershed Projects, respectively. The activities outlined in this proposal will scale up our collaborative environmental compliance and restoration planning efforts to the West Lassen Headwaters Project area. This will lead to planning and implementation that will enable the establishment of a sustainable feedback cycle to reinvest the value of material removed into stewardship activities on the landscape. As part of the pre-planning process, LNF will coordinate with Sierra Institute to identify resources and capacity across agencies, ownerships, and other entities within the West Lassen Headwaters project boundary. LNF will work with SLWG partners to build the capacity of the group, identify project priorities, and develop a cross-agency data management system in order to compile the information necessary to plan for survey work and the development of landscape-scale restoration treatments.

As the federal landowner for the majority of the multi-jurisdictional West Lassen Headwaters Project, the LNF intends to serve as the lead agency for environmental compliance and commits to cooperating in the SLWG's collaborative project by providing personnel and resources for completing environmental analysis on National Forest Service lands. Completing the planning and baseline surveys necessary for state and federal environmental compliance processes will enable timely implementation of treatments and restoration activities in the project area. We look forward to future participation with the SLWG and the critical on-the-groundwork this funding will enable.

Sincerely,



DEB BUMPUS
Forest Supervisor





MAIDU SUMMIT CONSORTIUM

P.O. Box 682, Chester, CA 96020

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January 7th, 2021

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office

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Shannon Williams
Office Manager

Misty Salem
Administrative Assistant

To whom this may concern:

The Maidu Summit Consortium (MSC) hereby indicates our support of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute's) proposal to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grants program. The MSC is committed to actively participating in the South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG) to improve forest and watershed health, provide positive benefits for our local communities, conserve regional wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and mitigate the risks of large-scale wildfire.

The MSC collaboratively approaches restoration activities at a landscape scale and has provided hundreds of hours of consultation services to SLWG strategic planning and prioritization. We look forward to participating in the South Lassen Watersheds Group Collaborative Restoration Planning Project, and highly recommend your support. This project will implement work from the previous Bureau of Reclamation-funded New Watershed Group phase of this project, as well as expand the scope of impact through restoration planning efforts of the landscape-scale West Lassen Headwaters Project area.

The MSC supports project efforts through identification of priority areas for the use of Maidu Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for both project design and pre-planning within the West Lassen Headwaters Project area. These actions are crucial to building ecosystem resilience, sustaining biodiversity, and to providing water supplies necessary to sustain a variety of habitat types. As an active member of the SLWG and a partner on grant-funded projects, the MSC will dedicate the time of staff and community members to perform consultation, inform strategic planning efforts, and produce guiding documents for the group related to Maidu TEK.

The MSC has been a years-long partner of the Sierra Institute and is an active participant in both SLWG and LAWG and has been funded, via a separate Sierra Institute grant award, to provide 400 hours of consultation services to the SLWG. Said consultation will result in identification of priority areas for the use of TEK within the planning boundary, as well as various means of including TEK into both project design and implementation. In continuing and expanding the work of the SLWG, the Sierra Institute will ensure that management activities, reflective of the priorities of diverse stakeholders, are pursued in critical areas. We strongly recommend your support for this effort.

Sincerely,

Alisha Wilson
Interim MSC Coordinator
Maidu Summit Consortium



Sierra Pacific Industries

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Phone (530) 378-8000 • FAX (530) 378-8139

January 8, 2021

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office

To whom this may concern:

Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) hereby expresses our support and ongoing involvement in the forest health activities as detailed in the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute's) proposal to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grants program. SPI is eager to continue our partnership with the Sierra Institute and South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG) to advance collaborative planning and implementation of forest and watershed restoration activities, especially in the critical landscape designated as the West Lassen Headwaters Project area.

SPI commits to actively collaborate with other landholders working toward forest restoration at pace and scale within this multi-jurisdictional area at the headwaters of the State Water Project. We will contribute to achieving forest health goals identified in this application by planning and implementing fuels reduction and biomass utilization within, and adjacent to, priority areas within the West Lassen Headwaters Project area. SPI has regularly developed California Environmental Quality Act-compliant Timber Harvest Plans for our lands included within SLWG project areas in order to contribute to cross-jurisdictional coordination in fuels reduction and the mitigation of high-severity wildfire.

As an active member of the SLWG, SPI recognizes the proposed projects have potential to advance landscape-scale restoration activities and provide multiple environmental benefits. We also anticipate important social benefits will result from the development of local infrastructure and workforce capacity needed to fulfil the project implementation that the activities detailed in this proposal will enable. We look forward to committing our expertise and experience to this project, and strongly urge your support.

Sincerely,

Mike Mitzel

Northern Sierra Area Manager
Sierra Pacific Industries



January 14, 2021

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office

To whom it may concern:

The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) supports the activities as detailed in the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute's) proposal to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grants program. RCDTC advances implementation and planning of forest and watershed restoration activities and works with partners such as the Sierra Institute to assist citizens in the management, conservation, and improvement of the natural resources of Tehama County, facilitating land use decisions that are socially acceptable, environmentally sound, and economically feasible.

Through the South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG) we collaboratively approach restoration activities at a landscape scale. We are enthusiastic about the South Lassen Watersheds Group Collaborative Restoration Planning Project, which compliments the ongoing work of the RCDTC as well as the initial and recently updated Tehama East Community Wildfire Protection Plan along with the Mineral/Mill Creek/Childs Meadows CWPP. The RCDTC shares goals for forest health and fire ecology with the SLWG's Strategic Plan, which the RCDTC has reviewed in depth. We are committed to participating in the SLWG in order to expand the scale of impact in the West Lassen Headwaters Project area and actively work with Sierra Institute in order to avoid the duplication of similar efforts within our respective boundary areas.

The activities detailed in this project will allow for the efficient development of project priorities, completion of baseline surveys, and development of condition-based treatments necessary to complete environmental compliance at a large scale. We look forward to partnering with Sierra Institute on the work proposed in this application to advance the important work of the SLWG and complete activities leading to environmental compliance as outlined in the proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vicky Dawley".

Vicky Dawley
District Manager
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County



Collins Pine Company

PO Box 796

Chester, CA 96020-0796 USA

530.258.2111

CollinsWood.com

January 8, 2021

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office

To whom this may concern:

Collins Pine Company (Collins Pine) is committed active involvement in the forest health activities described in the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute's) proposal for the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant.

Collins Pine looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the Sierra Institute through the South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG) to advance planning and implementation of forest and watershed restoration activities within critical landscapes that include the headwaters of the State Water Project.

This proposed project will leverage the large amount of work the SLWG Strategic Planning Subcommittee has completed so far and accelerate the necessary analyses and pre-planning activities for the West Lassen Headwaters Project.

The West Lassen Headwaters Project area includes approximately 37,900-acres of Collins Pine land. With completed Timber Harvest Plans for 17,710-acres in the last decade and timber plans for 12,990-acres during 2020-2022, Collins Pine intends to continue actively engaging with the patchwork of landholders working toward forest restoration within the multijurisdictional West Lassen Headwaters Project area that will both build ecosystem resilience and reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire.

Collins Pine recognizes these proposed activities have the potential to advance critical landscape-scale restoration work; we also anticipate important social benefits through the development of local infrastructure and workforce. For all these reasons, we urge your support.

Sincerely,

Niel Fischer, RPF 2448 & Esq.

Western Resource Manager

Collins Pine Company

South Lassen Watersheds Group

January 8, 2021


Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office

To whom this may concern:

The South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG) began meeting in 2017 and includes a powerfully diverse mix of local partners interested pursuing high priority, large-scale, multi-jurisdictional projects to improve forest and watershed health, reduce wildfire risk, protect critical habitat, and support local contractors and industry. Members of the SLWG Strategic Planning Subcommittee support the development of forest health activities as detailed in the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's (Sierra Institute's) proposal to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grants program. The Strategic Planning Subcommittee is committed to advancing the planning and implementation of forest and watershed restoration activities at a landscape-scale throughout one of California's most critical headwaters to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and increase overall forest and watershed health.

We have collaboratively worked toward establishing the SLWG, developing the SLWG Strategic Plan, and completing environmental compliance on the CALFIRE California Climate Investments-funded West Shore Community Wildfire Protection Project and Robbers Creek Watershed Projects, respectively. We are enthusiastic about the South Lassen Watersheds Group Collaborative Restoration Planning Project, and believe this support will allow for the efficient development of project priorities, completion of baseline surveys, and development of condition-based treatments necessary to complete environmental compliance and the timely implementation of restoration activities at a large-scale. These activities were prioritized by the SLWG Strategic Planning Subcommittee through the initial support of a Bureau of Reclamation CWMP Phase 1 Grant. The activities detailed in this proposal will directly build off of previous funding that established the watershed group and allowed the SLWG to realize the need for project-specific analysis and increased outreach and engagement necessary to scale up to the larger West Lassen Headwaters Project area.

Member organizations of the SLWG include: the Lassen National Forest, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Point Blue Conservation Science, the Maidu Summit Consortium, Collins Pine Company, Sierra Pacific Industries, Mountain Meadows Conservancy, AWCC Firewise Communities, Lassen Forest Preservation Group, RCD Tehama County, Lake Almanor Watershed Group, Feather River Trout Unlimited, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. These groups commit to cooperating on this collaborative project by providing personnel and resources to complete environmental analysis, participate in ongoing collaborative meetings and planning processes, and provide the necessary knowledge and expertise to see the continuation of successful projects. These actions are imperative to building ecosystem resilience in the headwaters of the State Water Project, which provides water to millions of downstream beneficiaries and sustains a variety of biodiverse habitats. We look forward to the important work this support will enable.



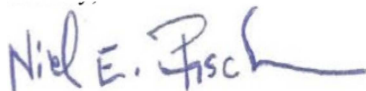
Mike Mitzel
Northern Sierra Area Manager
Sierra Pacific Industries



Ryan Burnett
Director, Sierra Nevada Group
Point Blue Conservation Science



Ken Roby
Board Member
Feather River Chapter – Trout Unlimited



Niel Fischer
Forest Manager
Collins Pine Company



Jim Richardson
Superintendent
Lassen Volcanic National Park



Russel Nickerson
District Ranger
Lassen National Forest

Appendix B
Official Resolutions



RESOLUTION FOR THE SOUTH LASSEN WATERSHEDS GROUP COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION PLANNING PROJECT

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2021-01

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SIERRA INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION FOR SOUTH LASSEN WATERSHEDS GROUP COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION PLANNING PROJECT

WHEREAS funds were made available previously by the **BUREAU OF RECLAMATION** for development activities of the South Lassen Watersheds Group including facilitation and coordination, stakeholder outreach, conducting watershed planning activities, and site-specific project design for the West Lassen Headwaters Project area; and

WHEREAS **SIERRA INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT** intends to address forest and watershed health in the headwaters of the State Water Project, restore meadows, enhance aspen stands, and reduce hazardous fuels in the watersheds meadow, riparian and upland habitats by: (a) facilitating and coordinating collaborative meetings to develop general watershed management project concepts; (b) conducting necessary stakeholder outreach and engagement; (c) completing site-specific project designs, timelines, and milestones through facilitated strategic planning discussions; and (d) researching what type of site-specific environmental compliance will be necessary to implement the project/s prioritized by the collaborative;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SIERRA INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT** hereby:

1. Approves the filing of an application for funding from the Bureau of Reclamation;
2. Certifies that the organization will comply with all federal, state and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project and will obtain or will ensure that the other project partners obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project;
3. Further commits to the terms and conditions specified in the grant agreement; and
4. **Appoints Executive Director Jonathan Kusel** to conduct negotiations, execute, submit and sign all documents including but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED the 13th day of January, 2021.

I hereby certify that Resolution Number 2021-01 was unanimously adopted by the **Board of Directors of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment**

Jonathan Kusel, Ph.D, Executive Director and Board Member