

Implementing Large-Scale Multi-Stakeholder Fuel Breaks

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Allison Erny, Conservation Project Manager, RPF #3081
Placer County Resource Conservation District



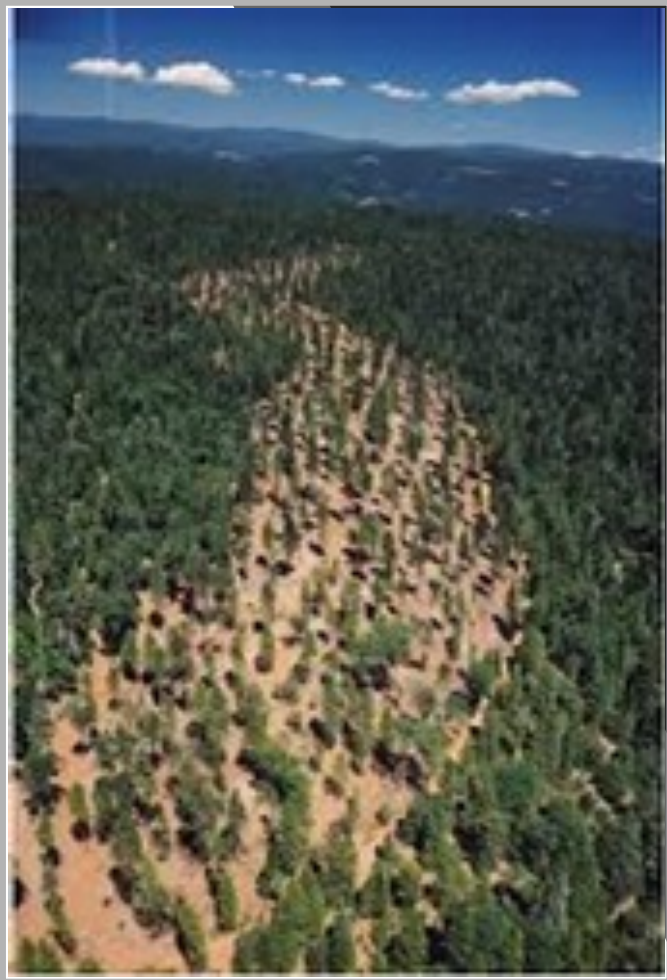
What is a shaded fuel break?

*“Shaded fuelbreaks are strips of land in which vegetation has been modified rather than removed. The purpose is to reduce the amount of combustible material so that when a fire hits the shaded fuelbreak it will decrease in intensity, cool down, and drop from the canopy to the ground.”**

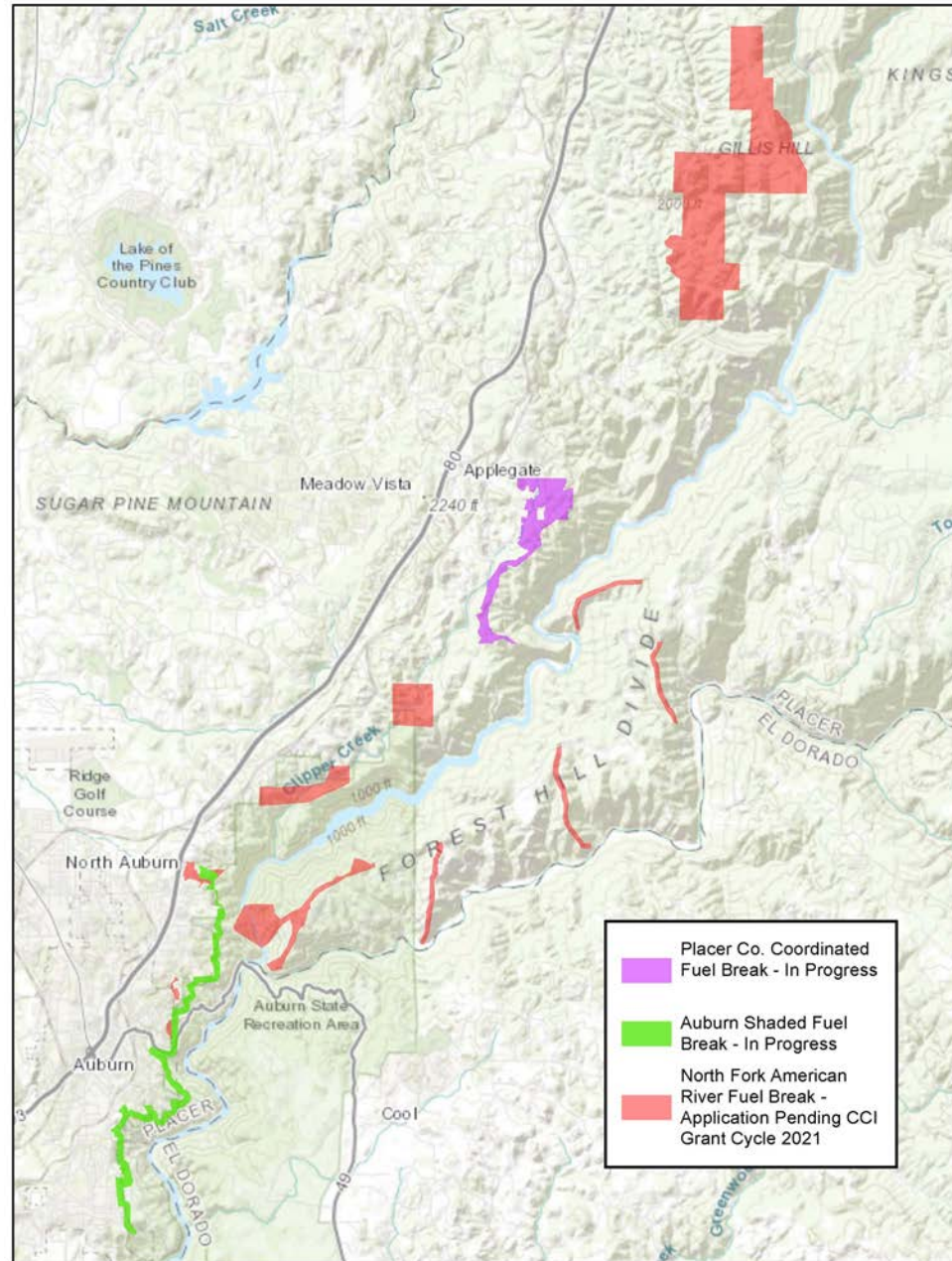
Goals include:

- “Thin from below” to create canopy spacing and slow fire spread
- Remove/rearrange ladder fuels to reduce risk of crown fire
- Improve firefighting conditions in the Wildland Urban Interface for the protection of life and property
- Improve ingress/egress routes for evacuation and fire personnel

* From CAL FIRE’s webpage on Fire and Fuels Management:
<https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/resource-management/resource-protection-improvement/wildfire-resilience/forest-stewardship/fire-and-fuels-treatment/>



Placer RCD Project Summary



Auburn Shaded Fuel Break

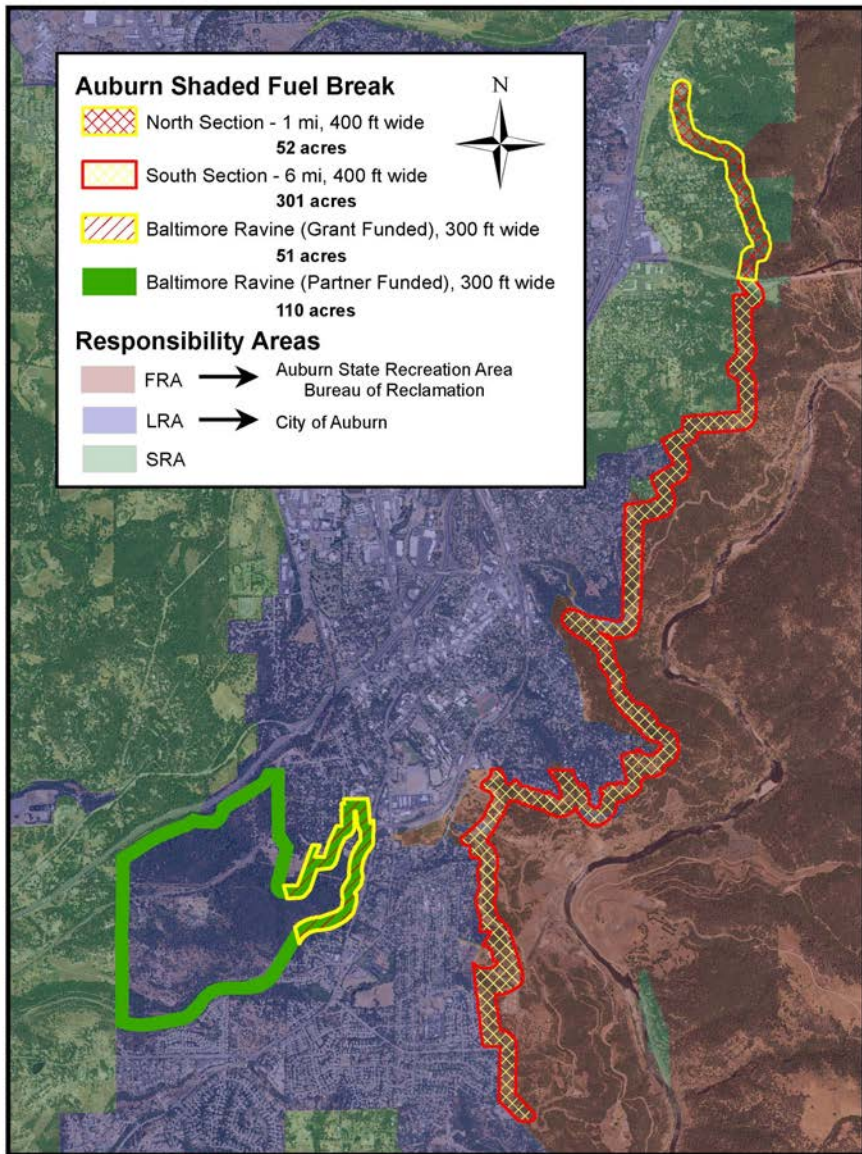
- Funded by CAL FIRE – CCI Grant Awarded in 2018



- Collaborative project – Placer RCD, USDA Bureau of Reclamation, CAL FIRE, Auburn Fire Department, CA State Parks, various private landowners
- Designed as part of the larger North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break
- Environmental Compliance
 - NEPA Categorical Exclusion Checklist
 - CEQA Notice of Exemption under Sec. 15304 – “Minor Alterations to Land”

Auburn Shaded Fuel Break

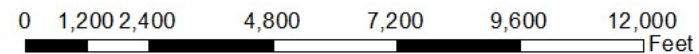
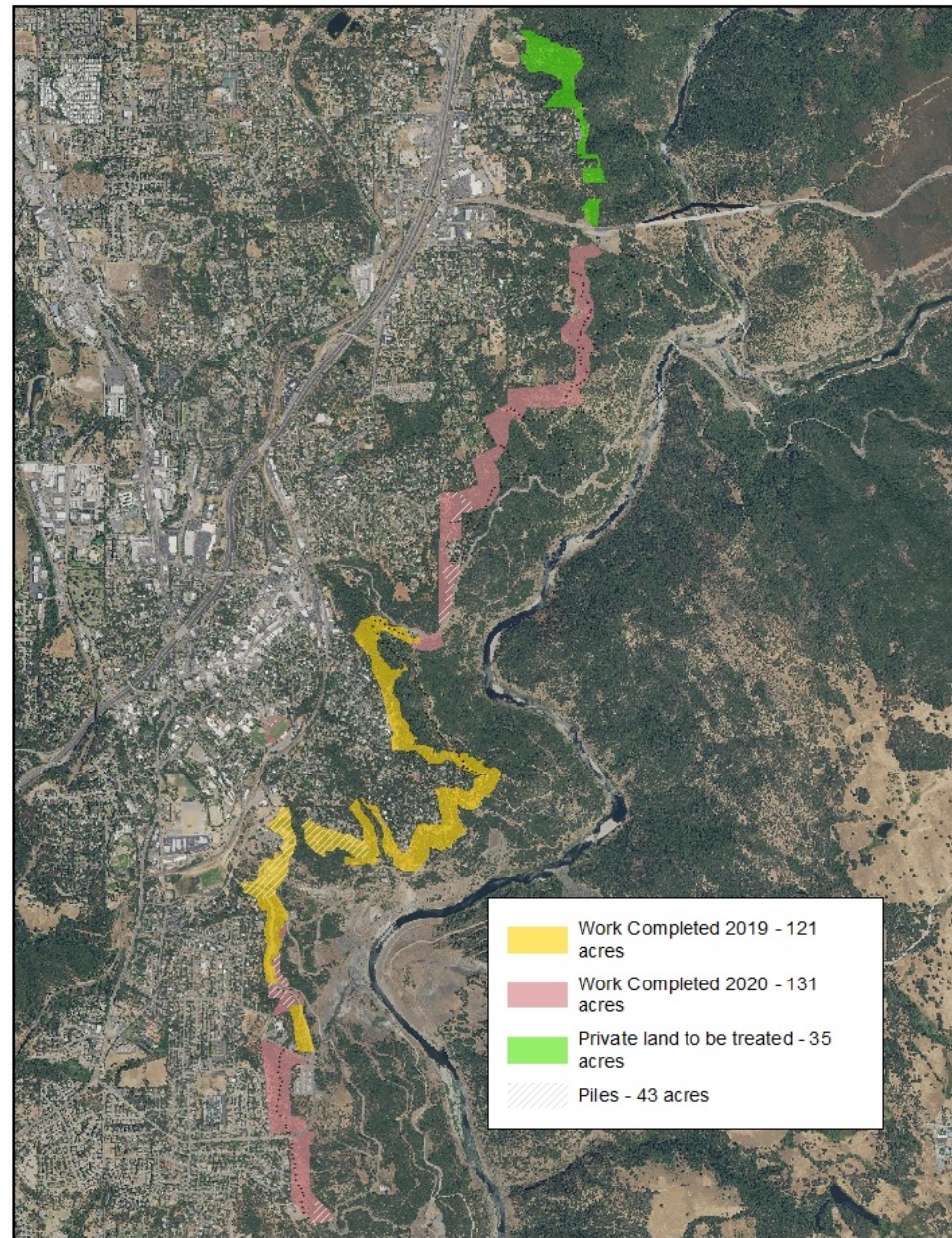
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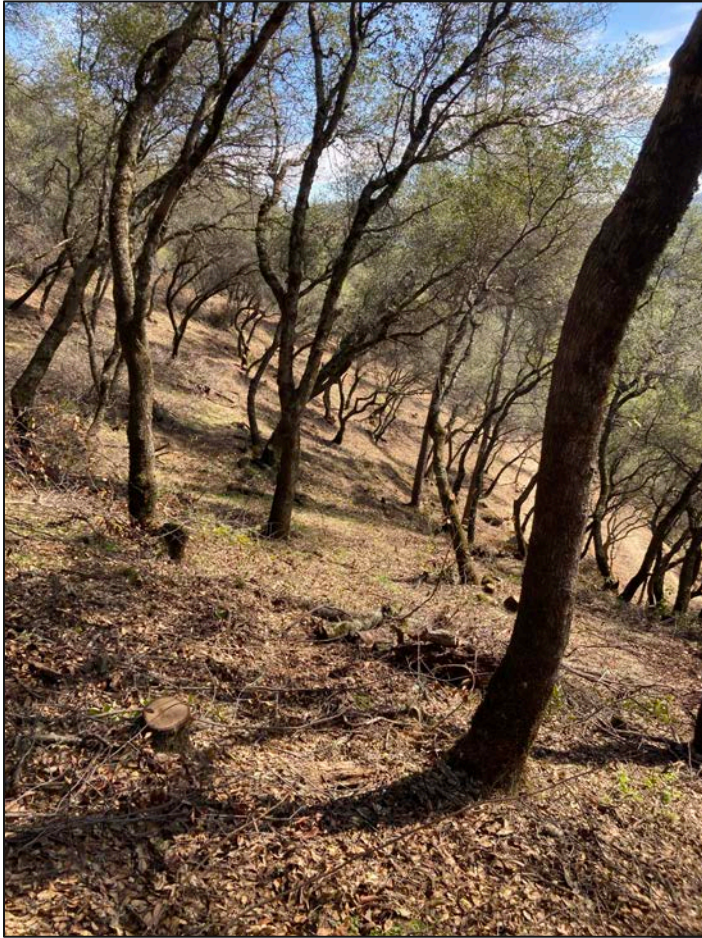
Submitted by:  Placer Resource Conservation District
www.placerri.org



Auburn Shaded Fuel Break - Work Completed Through 6/7/2021

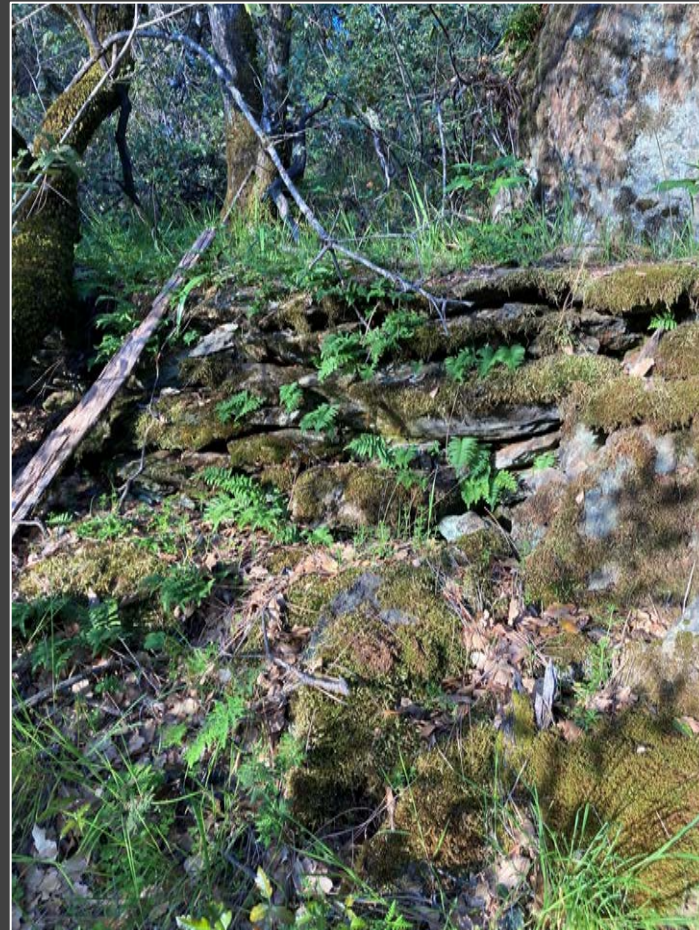


Project Specifications



- Federal - target width of 400 feet, with NEPA coverage to eventually widen to 600+ feet
- Private – Strategic location based on topography and access
- Specifications
 - Thin from below to disrupt fuel continuity – hand cut and chip
 - Piling of invasives and steep slopes
 - Maximum DBH cut of 6 inches on federal, 10 inches on private
 - Retain at least 40% canopy
 - Prune residual trees to 10'
 - Snags over 18" retained if not capable of reaching road or structure
 - Standard BMP and watercourse protections
 - Biological and cultural review

Cultural Resources



Challenges



1. Multi-Agency Collaboration and Coordination
2. Hiring contractor and fine tuning project specs
3. Access and Slope issues
4. Pile burning
5. Public Perception
6. Maintenance

Multi-Agency Collaboration



Auburn



California



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION



Contractor and Project Specifications/BMPs



Access and Slope/Pile Burning



Public Perception

Fire Hazard. I live in the Flood and Russell Road neighborhood. Approximately in late October going through November of 2020, the Placer County Resource Conservation District hired an Idaho-based contractor, Red Mountain Resource (which used workers from the California Conservation Corps) to slash miles and miles of vegetation that border the Stagecoach, Manzanita and other Trails that border neighborhoods, stretching from the Confluence to the Auburn Recreational Park ranger station. Both live and dead vegetation was cut. Mostly living green vegetation, including native Manzanita trees along with low-lying shrubs.

At that time, a friend and I approached a female supervisor who has identified herself Allison Erny. We asked her when this would be cleaned up as it looked like they were creating a fire-hazard more than cleaning up dead-fall. She assured us it would be chipped and cleaned up within two weeks. The majority of the slash has not, to date, been chipped or "cleaned" up. Particularly the Upper Stagecoach leading to the Flood Road trail and the Foresthill Bridge trails are a disaster. While I appreciate efforts to prevent forest fire, this District has created a potential disaster in the waiting. I am extremely concerned about the fire hazard their crews have created that could potentially burn down my neighborhood if left unaddressed. Hot, dry weather hits in May, with record temps reaching into the high 90's and 100's last year. I have seen these types of projects lie dormant for years.

To get this cleaned up in a timely manner, we all need to be watchful and put the pressure on come spring. I urge the residents living adjacent to these areas to take pictures and document the what is going. We cannot trust governmental entities to look after us and given the devastating fires in other areas of California, I hope you can appreciate my apprehension and legitimate fears.

Here is where you can reach the person supervising this project:

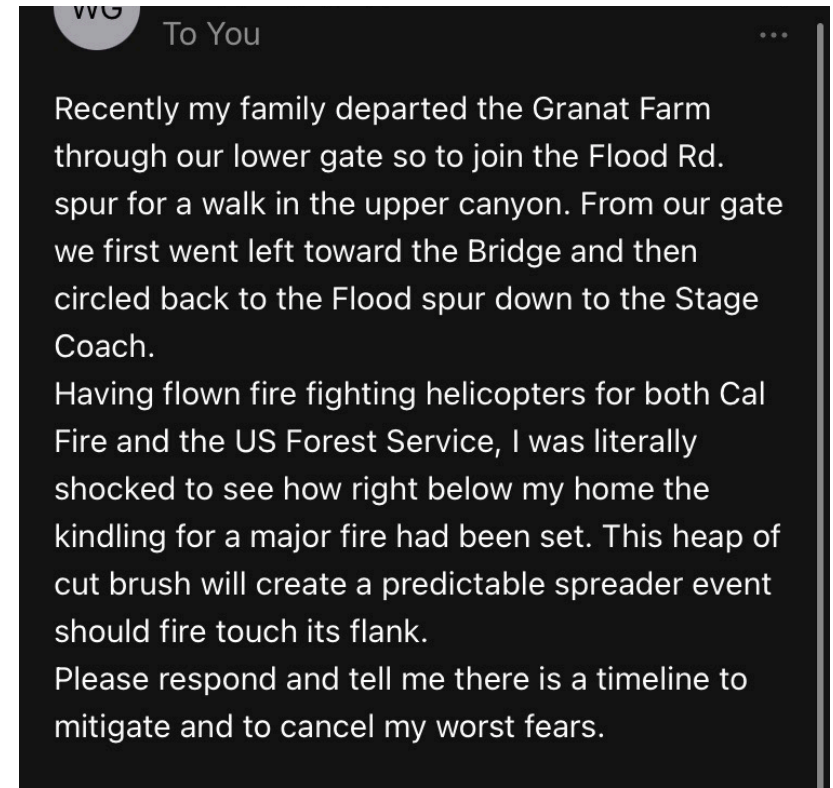
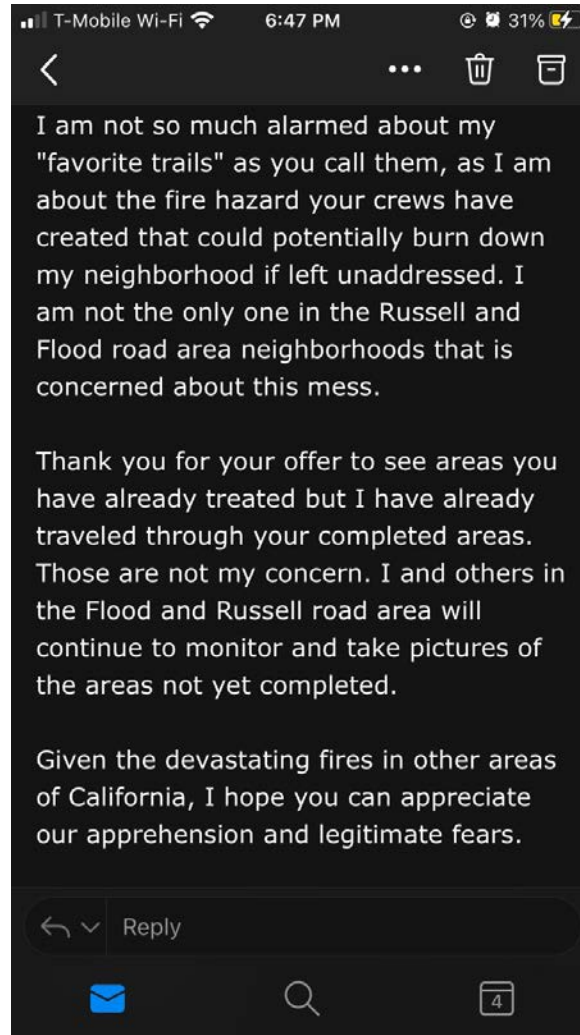
Allison Erny
707-318-0900
allison@placerrcd.org
Conservation Project Manager, RPF #3081
Placer County Resource Conservation District

Posted in **Safety** to **31 neighborhoods**

Like 11 Comments Share



13



Maintenance



Placeholder slide for spray/lop photos

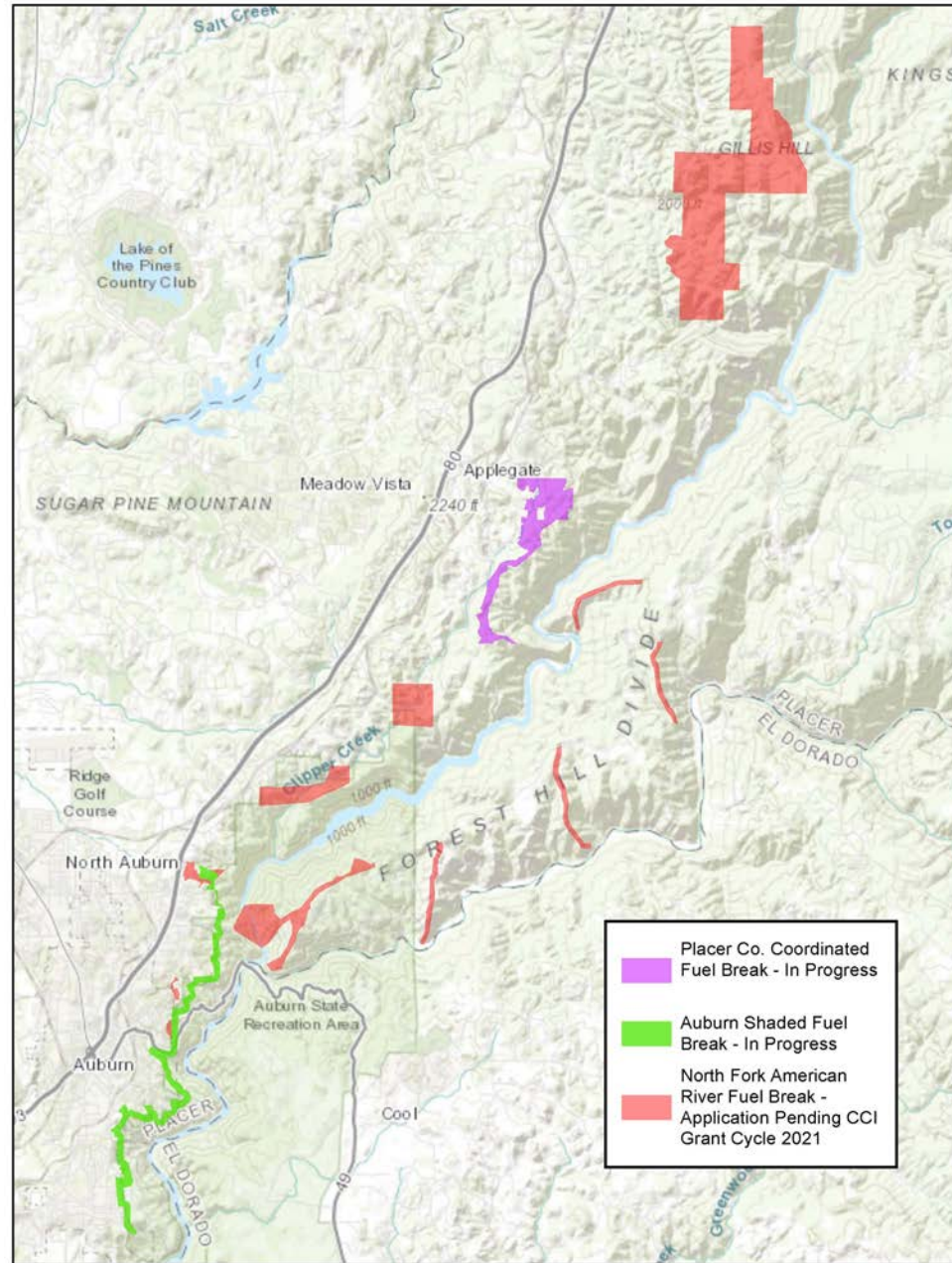
Placer County Coordinated Fuel Break

- Funded by CAL FIRE – CCI Grant Awarded in 2018

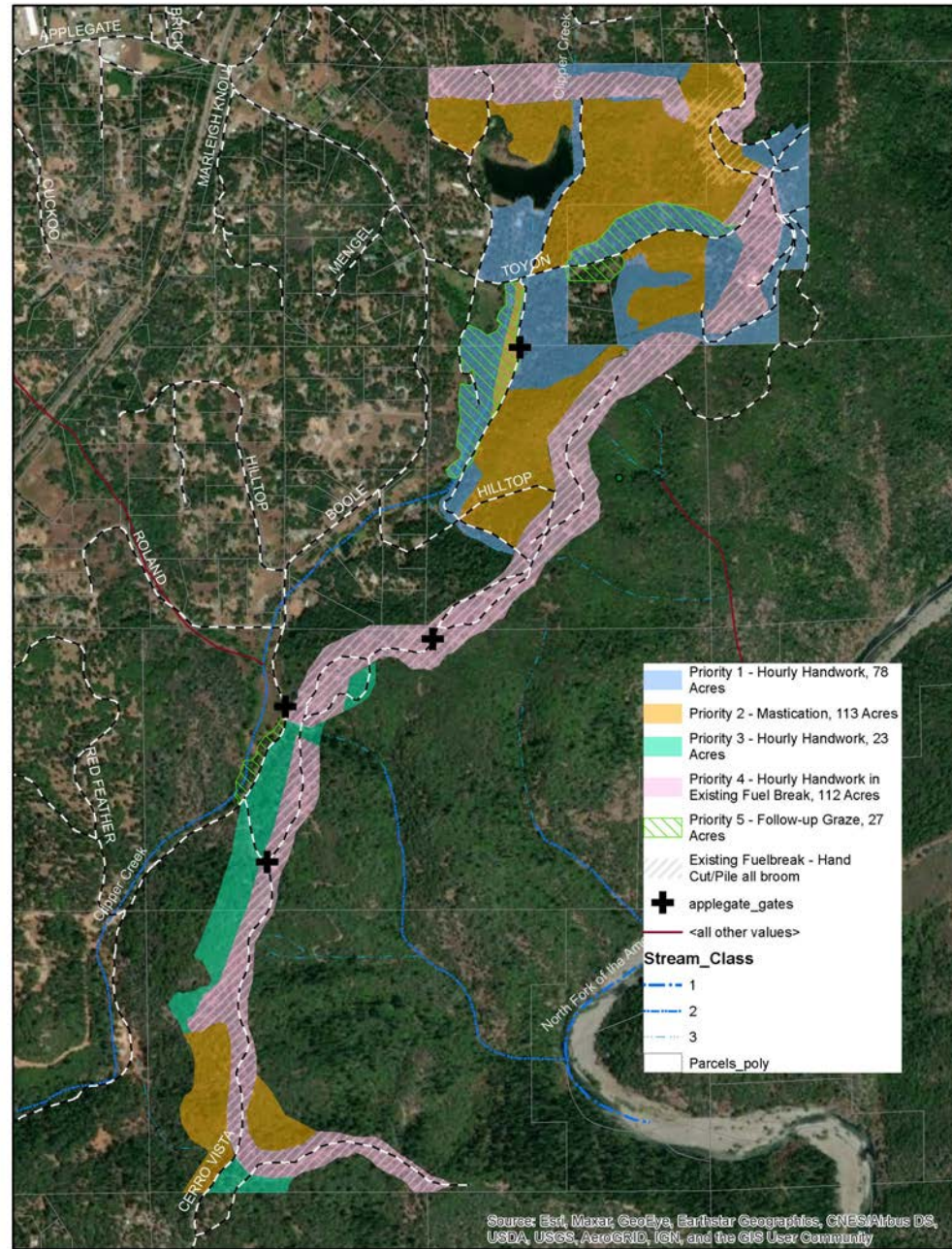


- In Applegate, CA
- Designed as part of the larger North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break
- Environmental Compliance
 - CEQA Notice of Exemption under Sec. 15304 – “Minor Alterations to Land”
 - Private Land

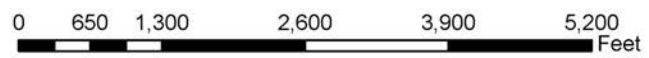
Placer RCD Project Summary



Applegate RFP Treatments



Sources: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



Project Specifications

- No target width – designed strategically for resource protection, ingress/egress, defensibility
- Currently working on Phase I of handwork, some grazing

Specifications



- Thin from below up to 10 inches DBH – hand cut and chip, mastication
- Piling of French/Scotch broom for burning
- Retain at least 40% canopy
- Prune residual trees to 10'
- Snags over 18" retained if not capable of reaching road or structure
- Standard BMP and WLPZ protections
- Biological and cultural review
- Follow up graze/herbicide

Environmental Compliance

Placer County Resource Conservation District Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report form is intended for use by Placer County Resource Conservation District (Placer RCD) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a Notice of Exemption (NOE) document for a proposed project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable Categorical Exemptions, this report presents Placer RCD's review for possible "Exceptions" that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the RCD.

Author: Allison Emy
Title: Conservation Project Manager, Placer RCD
Address: 281 Nevada St. Auburn, Ca 95603
Phone: (707) 318-0900
Email: allison@placerrcd.org

Project Name: Placer County Coordinated Fuelbreak, Phase I (Applegate Fuelbreak)
Project Number: 5GG18115
Program Type: Shaded Fuel break / fuels reduction
County: Placer
Acres: 340
Legal Location: T13NR9E Sections 9, 10, 16
USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s): Greenwood and Colfax

Project Vicinity Map Attached Project Location Map Attached Photos Attached

Other Public Agency Review/Permit Required:

Would the project result in:

	YES	NO
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:

Project Description and Environmental Setting (Describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):
See attached supporting documentation

Environmental Impact Analysis

1. Aesthetics

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
See attached supporting documentation

2. Agriculture and Forest Resources

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 Yes No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds and compliance with FPRs.
 Yes No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?
 Yes No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

See attached supporting documentation

3. Air Quality

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 Yes No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
See attached supporting documentation

4. Biological Resources

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 Yes No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
 Yes No Was a current NDDB review completed? Results discussed below:
 Yes No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
See attached supporting documentation

5. Cultural Resources

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 Yes No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
 Yes No Was a Contract Archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
 Yes No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
 Yes No Will the project effect any historic buildings or archaeological sites?
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
See the attached supporting documentation

6. Geology and Soils

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
See attached supporting documentation

7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 Yes No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
 Yes No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
 Yes No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:
See attached supporting documentation

8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

9. Hydrology and Water Quality

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 Yes No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
See attached supporting documentation

10. Land Use and Planning

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Cultural/Biological Review



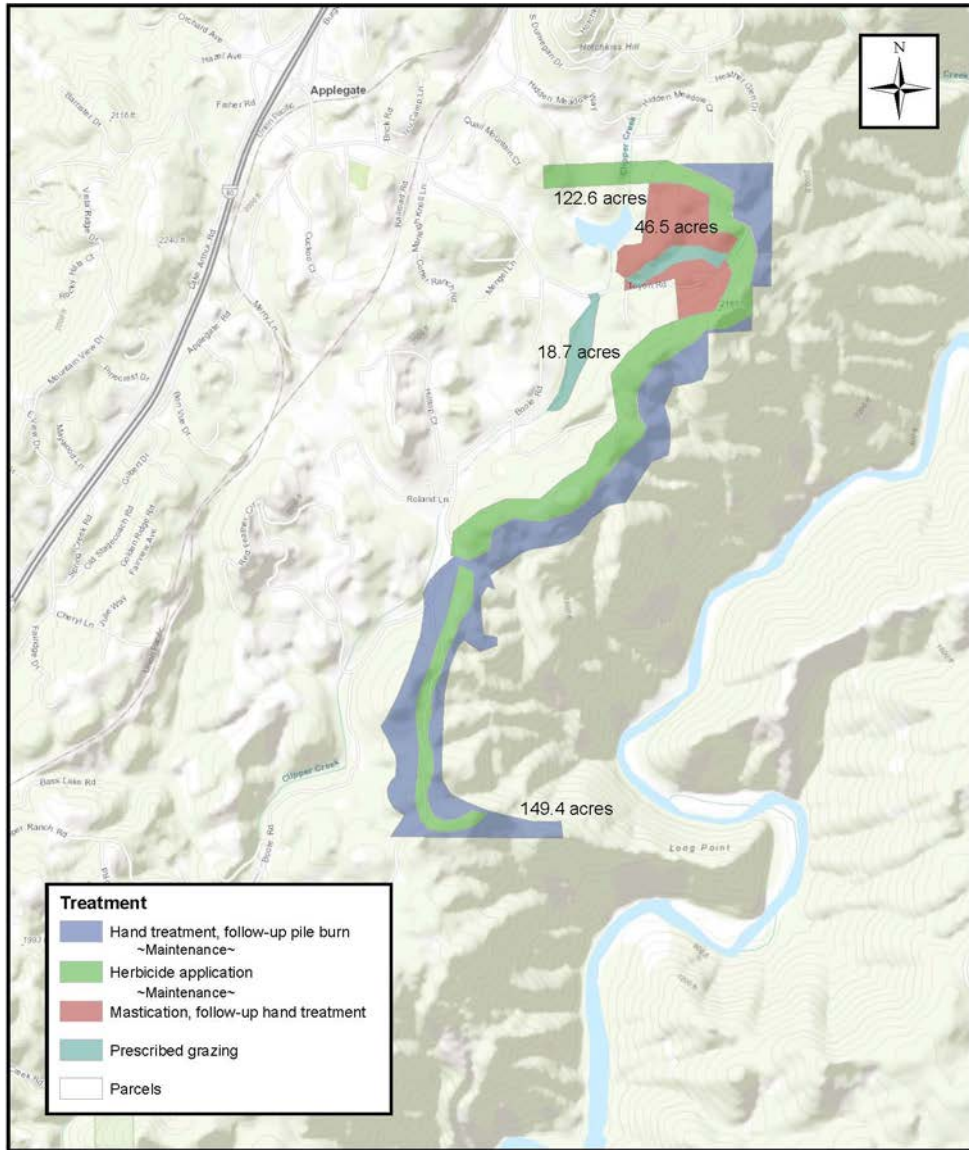


Challenges

1. Landowner sign-on, release forms and insurance
2. Amending layout and budget
3. Hiring contractor and fine tuning project specs
4. Funding and timeline
5. Maintenance and invasive species management



Placer County Coordinated Fuelbreak - Phase 1 18-FP-NEU-1216



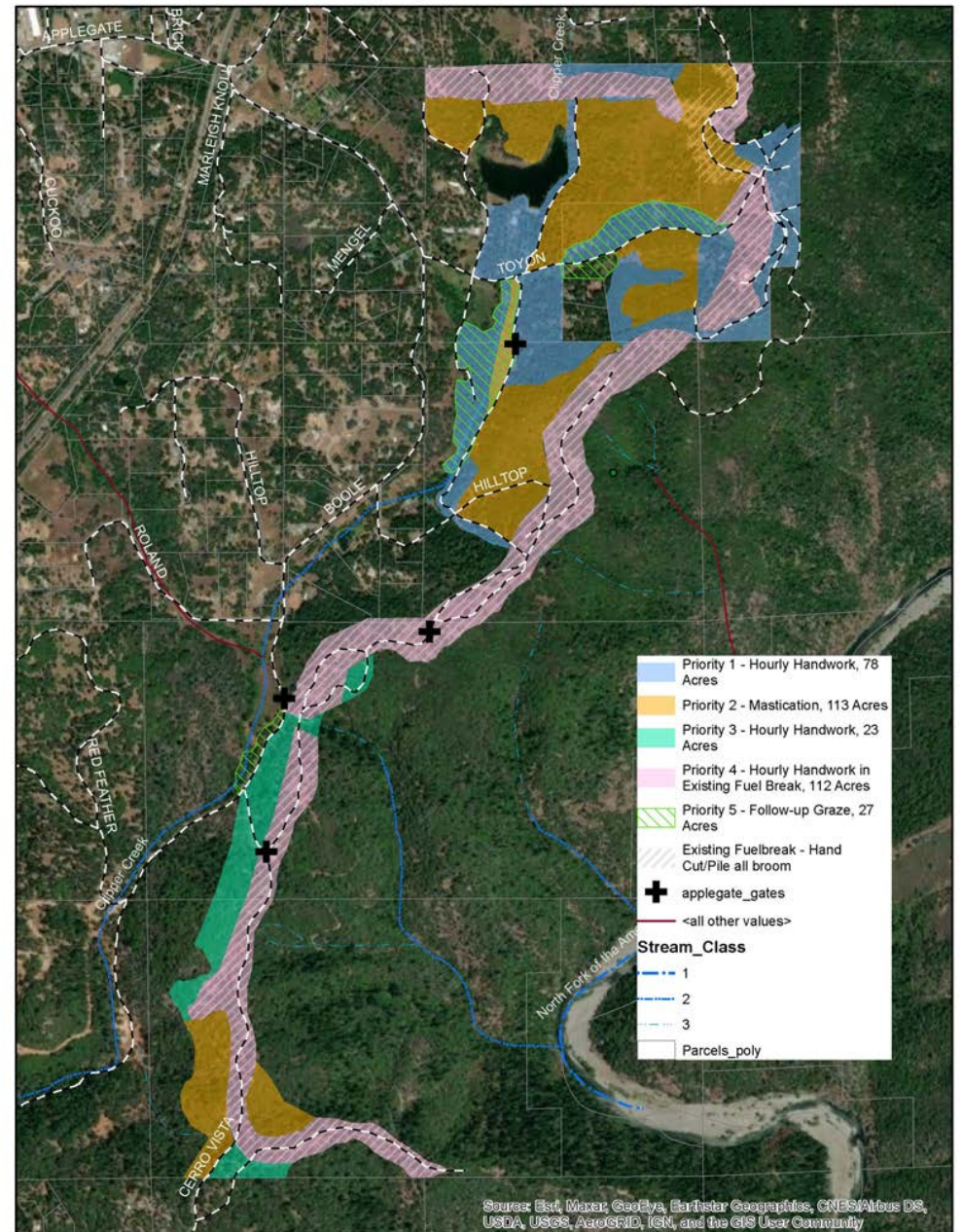
Treatment	
	Hand treatment, follow-up pile burn ~Maintenance~
	Herbicide application ~Maintenance~
	Mastication, follow-up hand treatment
	Prescribed grazing
	Parcels



The proposed project area is located solely on SRA lands. The closest incorporated communities include Applegate, Meadow Vista and Auburn.

Map date: 12/17/18
Prepared by: M. Easley

Applegate RFP Treatments



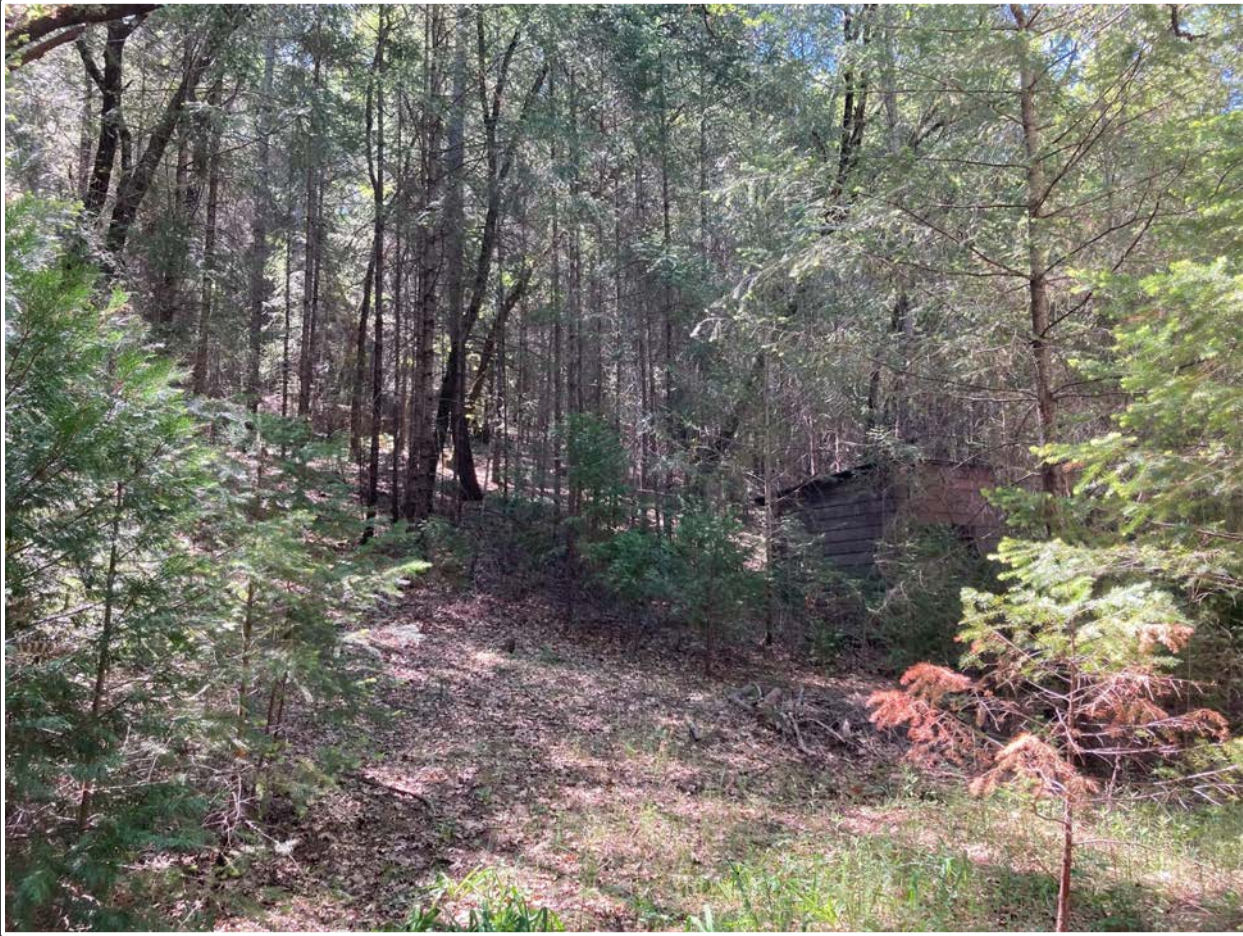
	Priority 1 - Hourly Handwork, 78 Acres
	Priority 2 - Mastication, 113 Acres
	Priority 3 - Hourly Handwork, 23 Acres
	Priority 4 - Hourly Handwork in Existing Fuel Break, 112 Acres
	Priority 5 - Follow-up Graze, 27 Acres
	Existing Fuelbreak - Hand Cut/Pile all broom
	applegate_gates
	<all other values>
Stream_Class	
	1
	2
	3
	Parcels_poly

Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



0 650 1,300 2,600 3,900 5,200 Feet









Fuel Break Maintenance



Lessons Learned

1. Engage partners, including private landowners, early and often!
2. Ground truth prior to grant writing, if possible
3. Budget adequately for CEQA
4. Outreach and public engagement are crucial
5. Environmental protection as a primary goal



Questions?



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District

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