



## NEVADA YUBA PLACER UNIT 2014 PRE-FIRE ACTIVITY REPORT



***“The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California.”***

### **Nevada Yuba Placer Unit Pre-Fire Planning**

The Nevada Yuba Placer Unit (NEU) has undergone a comprehensive five-year planning effort to develop a Fire Management Plan. The Fire Management Plan provides background environmental information, Unit-wide vegetative fuels and fire history data, fuel reduction project details, evacuation planning efforts and individual Battalion level plans that define mitigation activities to be completed each year. The Fire Management Plan is NEU’s local road map to create and maintain defensible landscapes in order to protect structures and other assets at risk which are vital to the State. The NEU priorities provide the foundation upon which our local goals and objects are built. The NEU Priorities and Goals are as follows:

#### Priorities:

1. To Reduce the Risks to Citizens and emergency responders from Wildland Fire.
2. Develop a “land stewardship” ethic in the residents of the Unit

#### Goals:

1. Demonstrate methods that individuals and the community can use to properly manage their lands to improve forest health, and reduce the ignitability of structures in the Wildland Urban Interface.
2. Raise citizen and stakeholder awareness of fire risks and enlist their help and participation in risk reduction.
3. Assist local government in developing standards, policies, and plans, which will result in local, and landscape level fuel modifications.
4. Implement local and landscape level projects and programs that decrease fire risk and increase the potential for success on initial attack.

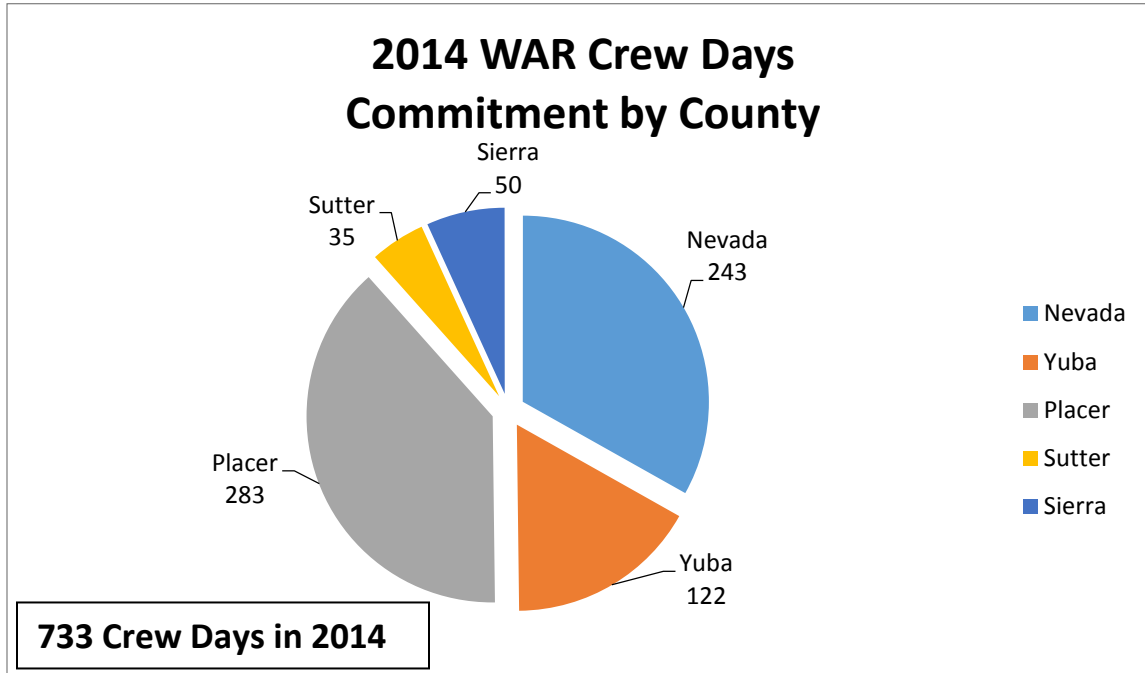
### **Fuel Management Activities**

#### **Washington Ridge Conservation Camp – 2014**

CAL FIRE and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) inmate crews stationed at Washington Ridge (WAR) provide fuel reduction labor within NEU. WAR Camp staffs up to 5 inmate crews each day excluding weekends and holidays. With 200 working days per year, up

to 1000 crew days are possible for fuel reduction efforts, depending on the commitment of crews for wild land firefighting and other emergency response.

In 2014, a total of **733 crew days** were accrued directly implementing fuels reduction work or other projects directly related to fire prevention throughout NEU. Each County within NEU received some crew work; the totals by County provided below.



**Fuels Reduction by Other NEU Resources - 2014**

Fuel Reduction work requires significant commitment of personnel time for planning, research, CEQA preparation, management, and finance. One unique project implemented in 2014 involved the renting of a brush mowing masticator operated by Cal Fire Heavy Fire Equipment Operators (HFEO) for installation of a shaded fuel break on a site critical for protection of habitable structures, UP Railroad (2 lines), and Interstate 80. The completed fuel treatment was utilized as a containment line and ingress / egress for firefighting personnel during the 2014 Applegate Fire, contributing directly to the protection of structures along the fire’s right flank. This project involved 55 personnel days from planning to completion. A total of **138 personnel days** were accrued in 2014 on fuel treatment projects. NEU’s 2014 unique fuel treatment projects included:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Personnel Days</u>
• Applegate Mastication	55
• Barrister Fuel Reduction	15
• Mount Howell Fuel Reduction	30
• Disking Program, Battalion 10	12
• McElroy Road Fuelbreak	14

- Comm. Towers Defensible Space

12

**138 Personnel Days in 2014**

**Vegetation Management Program (VMP)**

The Nevada Yuba Placer Unit has an active vegetation management program developing landowner partnerships for fuel reduction and prescribed fire and working with cooperators to acquire and implement grant funding opportunities for fuel reduction, management and strategic planning. Within NEU, the Pre-Fire Planning Program is embedded within the VMP structure allowing a nexus between the planning and implementation aspects of project work. All effort is focused around the Unit Fire Management plan and its goals and strategies. Notable projects for 2014 under the VMP program include:

<u>Project</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Status</u>
• UC Field Station	Yuba	6,231	Approved
• Waddle Ranch	Placer	68	In Process
• Reader Ranch	Nevada	1,090	In Process
• Bunker Hill	Nevada	1,530	In Process
• Bear Yuba Land Trust	Nevada	700	In Process

**9,619 Acres**

CAL FIRE is actively engaged with cooperators through Firesafe Councils and other Inter-agency relationships to strategically identify and develop feasible projects that protect communities at risk within the wildland urban interface (WUI). Recent grant opportunities support this effort and highlight the need for broad California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance before work may commence. CEQA approval has been identified as a high priority within the unit to ensure grant opportunities can be maximized.

**Defensible Space / Public Education / Volunteers in Prevention**

**Defensible Space Inspection Program**

NEU provided **6929 defensible space inspections** to residents in 2014. NEU personnel, including CAL FIRE engine companies, CAL FIRE Defensible Space Inspectors and Nevada County Defensible Space Inspectors under CAL FIRE supervision, conducted the inspections throughout the unit. SRA fees funded 5 full time inspector positions for the unit and Nevada County funded 2 additional full time inspectors for the summer. Totals by county are:

- Nevada – 3,478 inspections
- Yuba – 1,001 inspections
- Placer – 2,450 inspections

Of the total 6929 inspections conducted, 4,429 were initial inspections and 2,500 were re-inspections. Violations were found to be present in 2,602 of the inspections conducted.

**Public Education**

The influx of SRA fees in 2014 allowed for some long neglected programs to be rejuvenated. One of the most basic is the Smokey Bear Program. In 2014, the unit purchased new Smokey and Sparky costumes to be used for public and school programs. In conjunction the fire danger rating signs featuring Smokey were all refreshed and put back into service across the unit.

The most complex project in NEU for 2014 was the construction of a Wildland Urban Interface Demonstration Site at the Gold Country Fairgrounds in Auburn. Through partnership with the Gold Country Fairgrounds, Placer County Contractors Association, and local suppliers of fire rated materials, the structure became a living display of current WUI building standards with actual approved fire rated building materials. The site is used to demonstrate proper building materials, PRC 4291 clearance, fire safe landscaping and to educate the public on fire safe practices and fire prevention. The project required 80 crew days and **126 personnel days** to complete. The site attracts up to **40,000 visitors per year** during four primary events, the fair in September, Spring Home Show, Fall Home Show, and Mandarin Festival in December.

### **Volunteers in Prevention**

CAL FIRE personnel and CAL FIRE Volunteers in Prevention (VIPs) assisted with providing fire prevention and public education activities across the unit. These included school programs, fairs and festivals, developing educational materials, and responding to public inquiries. CAL FIRE VIPs dedicated hundreds of hours of volunteer time both staffing and maintaining fire lookout towers, assisting station personnel with office and administrative duties, issuing burn permits and staffing the Fire Information Center during times of major fires and emergencies.

### **Resource Management / Forest Practice Enforcement**

NEU Foresters enforce California Forestry and Fire Laws on private lands within the Unit. A primary focus is supporting grant programs provided by the State. They also provide critical support for Fire Prevention, Pre-Fire Planning, GIS support, state facility maintenance and construction, hired equipment coordination, environmental regulation for County project review as a Responsible Agency and California Environmental Quality Act compliance for internal projects. Forest Practice funding is separate from SRAFPF funding drawing from either the General Fund or Lumber Tax.

In 2014, NEU Forest Practice Staff performed **253 inspections** totaling **1,518 personnel hours**. The staff was responsible for 19 new timber harvest plans (THP's), 18 emergencies following large damaging wild land fire, and 385 new exemptions. Carry over workload from the previous year is 24 THP's, 27 emergencies, and 374 exemption documents. A reflection of total staff workload requires consideration of all THP's for a five year period prior to reporting and all other documents for 2 years prior to reporting. This allows documents to cycle through their completion and follow-up maintenance inspections. Summary statistics for 2014 workload are provided below:

Document	Numbers	Acres
• THP's	93	48,583
• Emergencies	45	7,413
• Exemptions	<u>759</u>	<u>210,796*</u>
	897	266,792^

\*Includes Industrial ownership wide exemptions, a more realistic number for actual work required is 16,190 acres requiring work by staff. ^With a reduction of industrial ownership wide exemptions, a total of 72,186 acres requires work by staff.

One potentially contentious forest practice issue is a proposed development involving Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) and East West Partners in Eastern Placer County. The project is between Truckee and Lake Tahoe near the Northstar Ski Area. The project proposes a conservation easement on approximately 6,000 acres of SPI land on the east side of Highway 267 (which had development rights on approx. 1200 acres) in exchange for development rights on approximately 500 acres on the west side of Highway 267. The land on the west side of Highway 267 will need to be taken out of Timberland Production Zone status to allow the development of possibly 700 individual residential properties. There have been multiple meetings between the proponents, Placer County staff and CAL FIRE to address forest practice issues. The EIR is currently being written. There is both positive and negative public sentiment associated with the proposal. The project is near the Tahoe Basin. Land being proposed for development within the Tahoe Basin has been removed from the proposal.

## **State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fee**

The State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Prevention Fee was enacted following the signing of Assembly Bill X1 29 in July 2011. The law approved the new annual Fire Prevention Fee to pay for fire prevention services within the SRA. The fee is applied to all habitable structures within the SRA.

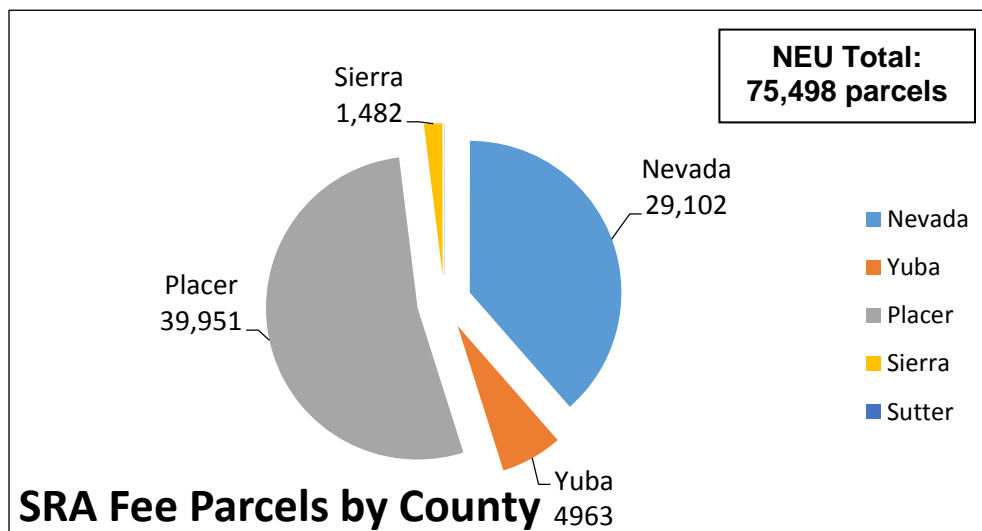
Effective July 1, 2014, the fee is levied at the rate of \$152.33 per habitable structure, which is defined as a building that can be occupied for residential use. Owners of habitable structures who are also within the boundaries of a local fire protection agency will receive a reduction of \$35 per habitable structure.

This fee funds a variety of important fire prevention services in the SRA. Such activities include fuel reduction activities that lessen risk of wildfire to communities and evacuation routes. Other activities include defensible space inspections, fire prevention engineering, emergency evacuation planning, fire prevention education, fire hazard severity mapping, implementation of the State and local Fire Plans and fire-related law enforcement activities such as arson investigation.

## **Number of Habitable Structures in the State Responsibility Area (SRA)**

NEU is composed of 5 Counties, Nevada, Yuba, Placer, Sutter and Sierra. Only four Counties are classified as SRA with Sutter County not meeting the definition as State Responsibility Area. In total, approximately 75,500 SRA fee parcels lie within the unit. The pie chart below shows the approximate number of SRA parcels by County with a Unit distribution of 53% in Placer County, 39% in Nevada County, 7% in Yuba County and 1% in Sierra County.

The current structure makeup reflects past development within the Wildland Urban Interface. Generally, population growth in the region has constantly increased since the 1960's, following a period of post-depression malaise. The proximity to the Sacramento metropolitan area and improvements to highway infrastructure, coupled with decreased costs for developable lands in Nevada, Yuba, and Placer Counties, dictates that growth will continue. In many instances, projections of growth have not met expectations, possibly due to the recent economic downturn, but the population growth rates in the region remain noteworthy compared to other regions of the State.



**SRAFPF Funding Allocation by PCA, Nevada Yuba Placer Unit (FY 14/15)**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>OE</b>
01041	SRA – VIP (P2322)	\$88,606	\$25,536
01042	SRA - Pre-Fire Engineer (P2325)	\$128,048	\$5,675
01046	<i>SRA – Defensible Space Inspectors (Spring)</i>	<i>\$59,329</i>	<i>\$13,628</i>
01047	<i>SRA – Defensible Space Inspectors (Fall)</i>	<i>\$61,002</i>	<i>\$5,669</i>
01048	SRA – Fire Captain Specialist (P2323)	\$127,484	\$36,330
01142	SRA – Battalion Chief (B2320)	\$322,412	\$3,941
03040	<i>SRA – Washington Ridge Camp (JV)</i>	<i>\$89,351</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
06240	SRA – VMP Coordinator	\$251,192	\$89,634
<b>TOTAL SRA PS</b>		<b>\$1,127,424</b>	
<b>TOTAL SRA OE</b>			<b>\$180,413</b>
<b>TOTAL COMBINTED NEU SRA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$1,307,837</b>

**Description of CAL FIRE Personnel Services (PS) and Operating Expenditure (OE) Costs**

<b>Personnel Services costs encompass the following elements based on classification and civil service status:</b>
• Salaries and Wages
• *LUMP SUM* Retirement
• Salary Differential – ERB
• Unplanned Overtime
• Planned Overtime
• IMT – Incident Management Team
• Staff Benefits
• Salary Savings
• Temp Help (Blanket 901)
• Temp Help (All other)
• Temp Help (Disability Blanket 995)
• Temp Help (Safety Retirement)
<b>Operating Expenditures encompass the following elements:</b>
• Operating Expense and Equipment (PPE, Vehicle, Fuel, Etc)
• Printing
• Communications
• Postage
• Travel: In State
• Facilities Operation
• Utilities
• Data Processing
• Other Items of Expenditure

## **Fuel Reduction Grant Opportunities**

Several forms of grants are available to agencies and private landowners to assist in fuels management, reforestation and forest improvement. NEU personnel actively advise and assist agencies and owners in navigating the grant process and implementing projects in support of Fire Management Plan goals and objectives.

## **State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fee (SRAFPF) CAL FIRE Project Funding**

The Nevada Yuba Placer Unit has been authorized approximately \$100,000 for the completion of fuels reduction and public education/outreach. This allocation is based on approximately 75,000 parcels within the Unit assessed for the SRAFPF. Compared to the other Units of CAL FIRE, the Nevada Yuba Placer Unit has the highest distribution of SRAFPF project funding. Projects proposed by the Unit were reviewed and ultimately approved at the Region and Sacramento levels of CAL FIRE with Unit input. The following is the distribution of the projects throughout the Unit:

<b><i>Project</i></b>	<b><i>County</i></b>	<b><i>Project Type</i></b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
NEU Reader Ranch VMP Mastication	Nevada	Fuel Reduction	\$6,525
NEU Bunker Hill VMP Mastication	Nevada	Fuel Reduction	\$6,525
<b><i>Nevada County Total</i></b>			<b>\$13,050</b>
NEU Bug Killed Tree Removal West	Placer	Fuel Reduction	\$10,005
NEU Bug Killed Tree Removal East	Placer	Fuel Reduction	\$10,005
Gold Country Fairgrounds	Placer	Pub Ed/Outreach	\$9,300
NEU Long Point Mastication	Placer	Fuel Reduction	\$12,324
NEU Loyalton Mastication	Placer	Fuel Reduction	\$6,974
<b><i>Placer County Total</i></b>			<b>\$48,608</b>
NEU Bug Killed Tree Removal Nevada/Yuba	Nevada-Yuba-Placer-Sierra	Fuel Reduction	\$9,332
New Fire Prevention Education Publications	Nevada-Yuba-Placer-Sierra	Pub Ed/Outreach	\$3,500
NEU PSA/SRA	Nevada-Yuba-Placer-Sierra	Pub Ed/Outreach	\$20,000
Fire Prevention Road Sign Holders	Nevada-Yuba-Placer-Sierra	Pub Ed/Outreach	\$5,615
<b><i>Multi-County Total</i></b>			<b>\$38,447</b>
<b><i>Unit Total</i></b>			<b>\$100,105</b>



## State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fee (SRAFPF) Grants

Proposals for 35 separate projects in NEU were submitted to the State for consideration under the SRA Grants program. Approximately 27 made it through the proposal phase and have been offered to apply. Priorities for ranking projects, in order of importance is (1) fuel reduction and community chipping type programs, (2) CEQA and planning for future fuel reduction work, and (3) public outreach and education. Cooperators include fire districts, fire-safe councils, resource conservation districts and other local government agencies. These grants are critical to supporting local efforts for creating a fire safe environment.

The 27 applications were in competition with the remaining 20 CAL FIRE Unit submissions. Funds requested from the SRAFPF Grants totaled approximately 14 million dollars, 40% over the \$9,524,583.00 allocated for the grant program. Projects submitted by the applicants within the Nevada Yuba Placer Unit totaled \$4,357,536. The total amount of grant funding awarded Unit-wide was \$1,808,657.00, approximately 19% of the entire SRAFPF Grant program.

### NEU SRAFPF Grants Submitted

<i>County</i>	<i>Project Applicant</i>	<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Nevada	Nevada County Fire Safe Council	Nevada County Chipping Program	\$158,000.00
Nevada	Truckee Fire Department	Truckee Fire Protection District Community Wildfire	\$27,000.00
Nevada	Bear Yuba Land Trust	Bear River Pines Fuel Reduction Project	\$263,500.00
Nevada	Placer County RCD	Nevada County Landfill Site Fuel Modification	\$31,050.00
Nevada	Nevada County Fire Safe Council	Special Needs Assistance Program	\$219,000.00
Nevada	Nevada County Fire Safe Council	Hazard Tree Removal Assistance	\$83,680.00
Nevada	Nevada County Fire Safe Council	Community Green Waste Drops	\$60,950.00
Placer	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency	Lake Tahoe Wildfire Hazard Awareness Campaign	\$77,250.00
Placer	Tahoe Resource Conservation District	Lake Tahoe Defensible Space Inspections	\$84,018.00
Placer	Tahoe Resource Conservation District	Lake Tahoe Community Chipping Project	\$125,380.00
Placer	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency	Development of Fire Adapted Communities	\$200,000.00
Placer	Placer County Fire	Reflective Addressing	\$26,162.50
Placer	Placer County RCD	Placer County Residential Chipper Program	\$400,000.00
Placer	North Tahoe Fire Protection District	North Tahoe Evacuation Planning	\$39,745.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	North Fork American River Fuelbreak CEQA	\$46,000.00
Placer	Placer County Fire Alliance	Placer County Fire Prevention	\$36,500.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	Placer County Chipper Program - Track Chipper	\$200,000.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	Alpine Meadow Subdivision RCD	\$77,500.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	Placer County SRA Bug Kill Tree Mitigation	\$183,000.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	Defensible Space Assistance Program	\$44,000.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	Placer County Masticator Rental	\$165,000.00
Placer	Walden Woods Home Owners Association	Walden Woods Oak Woodland Restoration	\$54,000.00
Placer	Placer County RCD	Clark Tunnel Shaded Fuel Break	\$350,000.00
Placer	Iowa Hill Community Club	Monte Verde Shaded Fuelbreak Extension	\$300,000.00
Placer	Northstar Fire Department	2015 Northstar Fuels Reduction SRA Projects	\$86,800.00
Placer	Northstar Corporation	Northstar - WUI Improvement	\$50,000.00
Placer	Placer Land Trust	Canyon View Preserve Fuel Reduction	\$219,000.00
Sierra	Sierra County Fire Safe and Watershed Council	Sierra County Residential Chipping Program	\$46,000.00
Sierra	Sierra County Fire Safe and Watershed Council	Sierra City SC1 SC3 Fuels Reduction	\$48,500.00
Yuba	Camptonville Community Partnership	Yuba County Service Area 2 Shaded Fuel Break	\$29,750.00
Yuba	Camptonville Community Partnership	Soper Company Shakespear Mastication	\$121,750.00
Yuba	Camptonville Community Partnership	Special Needs Defensible Space Assistance	\$140,000.00
Yuba	Yuba County Public Works	County Roads Fuel Reduction	\$134,000.00
Yuba	Camptonville Community Partnership	Yuba County Foothills Fire Education Project	\$130,000.00
Yuba	Yuba County Public Works	Yuba County Residential Chipping Program	\$100,000.00
<b>Total Submitted</b>			<b>\$4,357,535.50</b>

## NEU SRAFPF Grants Allocated

Project Number	Project Name	Amount Funded	County	TOTAL	Proportion
14-SRA-HF-01-0186	Truckee Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan	\$ 27,000.00	Nevada	\$512,076.00	28%
14-SRA-HF-01-0269	Nevada County Chipping Program	\$ 159,478.00	Nevada		
14-SRA-HF-01-0304	Bear River Pines Fuels Reduction	\$ 294,578.00	Nevada		
14-SRA-HF-01-0345	Nevada County Landfill Site Fuel Modification	\$ 31,020.00	Nevada		
14-SRA-HF-01-0112	North Tahoe Multi-Jurisdictional Request for Emergency Evacuation Planning	\$ 43,617.00	Placer	\$795,769.00	44%
14-SRA-HF-01-0156	Alpine Meadows Subdivision Roadside Clearing	\$ 76,880.00	Placer		
14-SRA-HF-01-0340	Placer County Chipper Program - Track Chipper Acquisition	\$ 200,000.00	Placer		
14-SRA-HF-01-0344	North Fork American River Fuelbreak - CEQA	\$ 46,063.00	Placer		
14-SRA-HF-01-0346	Placer County Residential Chipper Program	\$ 429,209.00	Placer		
14-SRA-HF-01-0137	Sierra County Residential Chipping Program	\$ 53,200.00	Sierra		
14-SRA-HF-01-0139	Sierra City SC1 SC3 Fuels reduction	\$ 53,725.00	Sierra	\$106,925.00	6%
14-SRA-HF-01-0188	Yuba County Service Area 2 Shaded Fuel Breaks	\$ 29,750.00	Yuba	\$393,887.00	22%
14-SRA-HF-01-0268	Special Needs Defensible Space Assistance Program	\$ 142,366.00	Yuba		
14-SRA-HF-01-0273	Soper Company Shakespeare Mastication	\$ 121,771.00	Yuba		
14-SRA-HF-01-0277	Yuba County Residential Chipping Program	\$ 100,000.00	Yuba		
<b>NEU TOTAL</b>				<b>\$1,808,657.00</b>	

## Green House Gas (GHG) Cap and Trade Grants

There are several proposals that have been submitted by either agencies or local government fire departments. The focus of these proposals is fuels management with a benefit to carbon sequestration. One proposal by the California Tahoe Conservancy, US Forest Service and California State Parks will treat multiple parcels administered by each agency. This is a unique attempt by land managers to obtain fuel reduction/forest health benefits for constituents in the Tahoe Basin.

## Limitations to Fuel Management

The most cost effective method for disposal of biomass generated from a fuel reduction project is through open burning. This method is clearly not as beneficial as burning in a cogeneration facility for electricity generation. To effectively dispose of the mass quantities of fuel produced naturally every year, more biomass facilities are needed. Placer County, near Truckee, has one medium sized facility that may start construction in 2015. This single facility will handle material currently received as residential green waste and will not offset sufficient quantities of biomass to justify alternatives to open burning. Many more of these facilities are needed to create a larger market and decrease transportation costs to existing facilities many miles away.