

Record Title Format: [Jurisdiction Name] - [Program Name] - [Project Number]

Ex: Sacramento County - DR-Infrastructure - 1

*Project Numbers are based on the number of projects you are submitting for the grants.

Record Title

County of Nevada - MIT RIP – 2

What Grant Program are you submitting for?

MIT-Resilient Infrastructure Program

Does the jurisdiction have existing capacity to manage the solicitation, selection, monitoring, environmental review compliance, and oversight of the program?

Yes

If Yes, please describe the capacity and staffing in detail.

County of Nevada has existing capacity to manage the solicitation, selection, monitoring, environmental review compliance, and oversight of the Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project. The County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services is in the Information and General Services Agency. Within the agency lies several departments with a wealth of expertise and capacity as it relates to grant management and oversight, as well as Request for Proposal solicitation and selection. The Office of Emergency Services currently manages a number of federal and state issued grants including annual Homeland Security and Emergency Management Performance Grants, as well as a \$3.5 million-dollar contract and grant combination from the California Governor’s Office and Department of Forestry, CAL FIRE, for the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone. The Office of Emergency Services is experienced in securing required state and federal environmental compliance. Transparency and accountability are baked into the County of Nevada’s Purchasing Policy, and are included in our competitive procurement, contractor oversight, expense tracking, public notification, grant reporting, and thorough Auditor review.

What is the Project Type?

Stand-alone Infrastructure

Choose the Eligible Applicant. Eligible Applicants are those cities and counties identified in Section 2.2.3 of the DR-Infrastructure Policies and Procedures.

Eligible Applicant (City/County)

Nevada County

Please Type Jurisdiction Name

County of Nevada

Special districts can include water districts, fire districts, school districts, etc.

Is this a project on behalf of another government entity or special district other than the Eligible Applicant?

No

Project Title

Yuba Narrows Fuels Reduction

A description or scope of work for stand-alone infrastructure projects is required. For FEMA PA and HMGP input N/A, we will look at your worksheet for the scope of work.

Project Description and/or Scope of Work

The key objectives of the proposed Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project are to mitigate the threat of wildfire, as well as improve forest and watershed health. This project will increase fire resiliency to several communities in both Yuba and Nevada Counties by treating hazardous fuels in a region prone to recurring fire starts and high winds. Annually, fire weather conditions become critical in late July through October. Red Flag warnings are common throughout the summer and largely attributed to low relative humidity and strong north winds. Under these common conditions the ignition potential and likelihood of a fire growing into a significant event is high. Situated in the Yuba River canyon, this land is located in a river drainage with limited access. It will provide an area of reduced fuels to the communities of Mooney Flat to the south, Sucker Flat and Smartsville to the west, and Lake Wildwood to the east.

This project involves clearing vegetation that is no greater than eight inches in diameter at breast height along the property boundaries, including the removal of grey pines and invasive species like tree of heaven. The cleared vegetation may be masticated, or hand piled, and either chipped or burned. As the clearing is completed, CDF&W will install fences and lease the property for grazing. This large-scale grazing will help to remove the fine fuels that encourage rapid fire ignition and spread. The use of cattle and other livestock for grazing will provide mutual benefits. In addition to reducing the threat of wildfire for nearby communities, fuels reduction will provide protection to a key drinking water and irrigation source for the downstream communities of Yuba City and Marysville, as well as critical hydropower infrastructure like the Narrows 2 Hydropower Plant. Ongoing grazing will secure this public investment into perpetuity, reduce the threat of wildfire, and protect valuable assets including ecological resources, water quality and quantity, roads, energy infrastructure, and nearby homes.

The Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update states that wildland fire is the most significant natural hazard. Wildfires are an annual occurrence in Nevada County and typically appear toward the end of the long, dry summers. In 2017, Nevada County experienced a highly active fire season with the most significant being the Wind Complex which burned 17,037 acres destroying 398 structures. One person suffered injuries, and tragically four people perished. More than 1,200 fire personnel were dedicated to this fire including 104 engines, 19 water tenders, 3 helicopters, 26 hand crews and 4 dozers. The Wind Complex event included both the Lobo and McCourtney Fires. The Lobo Fire burned 821 acres, destroyed 47 and damaged 2 structures; while the McCourtney fire burned 76 acres and destroyed 13 and damaged 2 structures.

Just three months ago, the County experienced a lightning induced wildfire called the Jones Fire. This fire started in the Wild and Scenic South Yuba River canyon and threatened to burn historic Nevada City. While this fire was fortunately contained at 705 acres, fire suppression costs alone totaled more than \$4.5 million dollars. Not captured in this amount is the economic, social, and emotional disruption the fire had on the lives of thousands of residents whose lives, workdays and school days were impacted by evacuation orders and warnings. Nevada County understands the value in reducing risks to people and property from natural hazards through thoughtful planning and project implementation. Mitigation planning has the potential to produce long-term and recurring benefits by breaking the repetitive cycle of disaster loss. County of Nevada operates with a knowledge that current dollars invested in mitigation practices will significantly reduce the demand for future dollars by lessening the amount needed for emergency recovery, repair and reconstruction. In fact, FEMA states that a dollar spent on mitigation saves society an average of four dollars, with positive benefit cost ratios for all hazard types studied. The Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project is a sound investment of public funds offering not only wildfire mitigation, but positive ecological and agricultural co-benefits.

Please provide a brief description of the location of the project.

Project Location Description

This project area straddles Nevada and Yuba County below Englebright Reservoir in the area known as the Narrows along the Yuba River. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDF&W) owns the nearly 1,200 acres which make up the Yuba Narrows and Black Swan Ranches.

Project City

Unincorporated Nevada and Yuba Counties

Project Zip Code(s)

95901, 95918, 95977, 95946

Format the Latitude and Longitude of the project in decimal form (e.g. 39.332962, -123.22534)

Project Latitude and Longitude

39.270199904426576, -121.39°13'16.9"N 121°16'28.4"W

Does the project service area benefit an LMI population or area?

Yes

If yes, describe how the project service area benefits an LMI population or area

The Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project provides benefits to several LMI populations in Nevada and Yuba Counties. This large fuel reduction effort will mitigate the threat of wildfire by reducing fuel loads on nearly 1,200 acres of land in the Yuba River canyon. If a fire were to start in this region, it could easily travel up the drainage putting the LMI community of Block Group 2, Census Tract 9 on the North San Juan Ridge in jeopardy.

Alternatively, a fire moving westward could move across county lines into Yuba County and put the LMI Census Designated Place of Smartsville and the MID zip code 95901 at risk. As evidenced by the mega fires that ravaged across California this past year, fire does not heed political boundaries. Fires can move swiftly across several county lines from the point of ignition. The hazard mitigation work completed by the Yuba Narrow's Fuel Reduction project will increase fire resiliency for the LMI communities adjacent to and nearby the project area.

Fuels reduction in the Yuba River canyon will also benefit the MID and LMI communities downstream of the project area by increasing the resiliency of property in the watershed above these areas. Fires that happen in riparian zones can have a detrimental impact on water quality and quantity. Expensive post-fire recovery watershed protection measures are often required to address the threats of sedimentation, erosion, and debris flow as a result of future rain events.

Upload document that support the LMI service area (Optional)

County of Nevada MIT RIP 2 Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction (1).pdf

Does the project service area benefit the MID?

No

Provide the Census Tract/Block Group of the project service area, for example, Block 3001, 3002, 3003, etc.

What Census Tracts/Block Groups are served by this project?

Block Group 1, Census Tract 409.01, Yuba County, Block Group 1, Census Tract 410, Yuba County, Block Group 4, Census Tract 4.02, Nevada County, Block Group 2, Census Tract 9, Nevada County and Block Group 1, Census Tract 4.01, Nevada County, Smartsville Census Designated Place

Service Map (Optional)

County of Nevada MIT RIP 2 Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction (1).pdf

Provide the current Project Status of the project.

Project Status

Project Identified

Round 1 MIT Infrastructure Projects should be "Shovel Ready". Are project plans complete?

No

If no, describe status of plan development

County of Nevada is working in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and CAL FIRE's Nevada-Yuba-Placer to treat the 1,200 acres in the Yuba River canyon. CDFW will complete the environmental analysis (CEQA/ NEPA) for this project and coordinate with CAL FIRE's Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit to assist with the fuels reduction work. When available, CAL FIRE will provide their National Guard and Washington Ridge Conservation Crew resources to supplement the majority of the work which will be completed by fuels reduction sub-contractors. All three entities are coordinating closely to achieve this priority project.

Has a NEPA Environmental Review been completed?

No

Provide the Total Project Cost amount in dollars, including hard project costs and Activity Delivery Costs (ADCs).

Total Project Cost (\$ amount)

\$3,452,537

Total unmet need for the project.

Project Unmet Need

\$3,452,537

The total amount that is needed from CDBG-Mitigation funding.

Anticipated CDBG funding need (\$ amount)

\$3,452,537

Have you applied for other sources of funds for this project?

No

Provide a description of the basis for the cost estimate and/or unmet need of the project.

Basis for Cost Estimate / CDBG Funding Need

Nevada County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan classifies wildfire as having a highly likely probability of future occurrences, which means there is a 100% chance of occurrence in next year, or it happens every year. The plan also designates that the geographic extent of the threat of wildfire is extensive, which means that it has the capacity to impact 50-100% of the planning area. Lastly, the plan concludes wildfire has a magnitude severity of Catastrophic. In other words, the plan has identified that wildfire has the potential to result in more than 50% of property severely damaged, facilities being shut down for more than 30 days, as well as multiple deaths and injuries. Wildfire has received the highest priority designation in the hazard mitigation plan of High Significance. However, securing funds for important fuels reduction work identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Ignition Plan is often challenging without a dedicated funding stream. Grant opportunities are ephemeral, impacted by economic booms and busts. Most notably, formerly reliable grant opportunities such as the Green House Gas Reduction Fund have dried up as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fuels reduction work in this region is a critical unmet need. The full cost of the Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project is \$3,318,100. Based on past expenses incurred for similar projects, we estimate that it will cost on average \$2,500/acre to treat the project area, including expenses to cover environmental analysis, fencing, the help of a Registered Professional Forester, as well as grant and project management.

The documentation should clearly demonstrate the reasoning of the cost estimate and support the description of the cost estimate and/or unmet need.

Provide cost estimate documentation (from a professional engineer, etc.) (Optional)

Provide cost estimate documentation_Optional.pdf

Was the project denied by FEMA for PA or HMGP funds?

No

For FEMA PA and HMGP Projects input N/A for how this is an Eligible CDBG activity.

Explain how this is an eligible CDGB activity.

This project is an eligible expense as it has a tie-back to the Wind Complex fire. It is nearly equidistant, 5-6 miles as the crow flies to the burn scars of both the Lobo and Cascade/La Porte Fires which made up the 2017 Wind Complex Fire (DR-4344).

Describe prior experience in implementing risk reduction projects of scale and scope similar to project being proposed

The Office of Emergency Services has implemented risk reduction projects of a similar scale and scope to the project being proposed. Most recently, County of Nevada was awarded a \$3.5 million grant and contract via CAL FIRE's Fire Prevention Grant program to complete a 1,200-acre shaded fuel break project to mitigate the threat of wildfire and protect the historic City of Grass Valley.

Like the proposed Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project, the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone project required robust collaboration with project partners, who in this case were CAL FIRE, the Native Plant Society, and the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County. The project required solicitation and selection, stakeholder engagement, environmental review, contract management, expense tracking, invoicing, and project management. The County of Nevada has extensive experience managing projects of this size and complexity and is able to draw on the support of a network of departments with unique skillsets, capacities, and expertise. For example, the Purchasing Department is available to assist with publishing Requests for Proposals, solicitation and the vendor selection process. The Auditor's Office serves the County by offering oversight and accountability. The Community Development Agency is available to provide guidance on environmental review and required permitting. County of Nevada has experience overseeing grants and managing project implementation; our track record demonstrates a long history of prompt, on-budget, and successful projects.

Is the proposed project identified as a priority project in your hazard mitigation plan?

No

More than one Community Lifeline can be selected.

What community lifeline will this project protect?

Safety and Security, Food, Water, Sheltering, Energy (Power and Fuel)

How will this project reduce risk to community lifeline(s)?

A lifeline enables the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health, safety, or economic security. Lifelines are the most fundamental services in the community that, when stabilized, enable all other aspects of society to function. This project will bolster the Community Lifelines of Safety and Security by enabling law enforcement and fire personnel better access to the property to help contain a wildfire should it start in this region.

Removing invasive species, thinning the forest, and maintaining this investment with grazing will keep hazardous fuel levels low. By reducing the fuel load, this increases the chances that fire fighters will have the opportunity to contain the fire to a smaller size and intensity, thereby maintaining the spread, saving suppression resources, as well as protecting Community Lifelines of food, water, and shelter.

How will this project improve resilience for underserved communities and vulnerable populations?

The Yuba Narrows Fuel Reduction project helps improve resiliency for rural underserved communities and vulnerable populations living in Nevada and Yuba Counties adjacent to and near the project area. We know that for every dollar spent on hazard mitigation, 4 dollars are saved on suppression and post-disaster recovery costs. This project aims to reduce the negative impact to the surrounding underserved and vulnerable populations who would be impacted by a fire in this area. LMI and vulnerable populations are often disproportionately impacted by disasters for several reasons including fewer resources to prepare, isolation, disconnection from safety networks, lack of access to transportation, to name a few. Others require more time to evacuate due to mobility limitations. In Nevada County, 28.4% of the population is over the age of 65. Many folks have been drawn to this area to retire for its rural quality of life and relatively lower cost of living. In Yuba County, 15.2% of the population is living in poverty which is 3.4% higher than the state average.

Can this project be replicated in other communities?

Yes

If yes, provide a description

This project may be replicated in any community seeking to reduce fuel loads on public lands to mitigate wildfire. Opportunities for collaborative efforts between agencies and organizations may be identified through hazard mitigation planning such as the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, of CAL FIRE Unit Ignition Plan.

Has CAL FIRE identified this project as a priority project?

Yes

Upload backup documentation for CAL FIRE priority project

Attach confirmation from CAL FIRE.

2019 NEU Fire Plan_optimized.pdf

Will you be able to quantitatively measure the impact the proposed project will have on current and future risk?

Yes

Eligible projects must be able to show anticipated impact on current and future risks.

Upload quantitative data showing a project's anticipated impact on current and future risks

MITRIP2CurrentFutureRisk_QuantitativeData.pdf

Has an operations and maintenance plan been established for the project?

No

Assuming Spring 2021 start date, what is your expected period of performance? (anticipated start date and completion date)

Assuming a Spring 2021 start date, we anticipate this period of performance to be April 2021 through April 2024.

If available, please provide a timeline of the submitted project.

Project Timeline (Optional)