



**Wildfire Recovery & Forest Resilience Grant Program  
September 2022  
PROPOSAL**



<b>SNC Project #</b>	1513
<b>Project Title</b> <i>60-character limit</i>	Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project
<b>Project Category</b> <i>Select one</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation
<b>Funding Amount Requested</b>	\$ 750,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b> <i>SNC request plus funding or in-kind from other sources</i>	\$ 1,500,000

<b>Applicant Organization</b>	County of Nevada
<b>Applicant Authorized Representative</b> <i>Person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement</i>	Craig Griesbach Director, Office of Emergency Services 1-530-265-1583 <a href="mailto:craig.griesbach@nevadacounty.ca.gov">craig.griesbach@nevadacounty.ca.gov</a> 950 Maidu Avenue Suite 130 Nevada City, CA 95959
<b>Applicant Day-to-Day Contact</b> <i>Person who manages the project</i>	Alex Keeble-Toll Senior Administrative Analyst, Office of Emergency Services 1-530-557-5118 <a href="mailto:alex.keeble-toll@co.nevada.ca.us">alex.keeble-toll@co.nevada.ca.us</a> 950 Maidu Avenue Suite 130 Nevada City, CA 95959

<b>Subregion(s)</b>	Central Sierra
<b>County(ies)</b>	Nevada County

<b>SNC Project Lead</b>	Chris Dallas
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A note on using the fillable answer fields in this document:

All of the fillable form fields in this document allow you to vary the text format as needed, using font sizes, bold, italics, underlines, tables, and lists. Bullet and numbered lists work in the form fields except on the first and last line of each field; you may use enter/return to add an extra line before and after a list as needed. You may also compose answers in a separate document, then cut and paste into the answer fields and adjust formatting as needed.

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Please be concise when answering the narrative questions below.  
The Proposal should not exceed 26 pages.

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## Concise Project Summary

Provide a Project Summary, including purpose, location, landownership, acreage, partners, and estimated cost.

*Please limit the response to six BRIEF sentences or bullet points. This should be a list of the six characteristics requested.*

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to leverage and extend the \$3.5M spent to implement the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project by conducting timely maintenance of the project area which in 2019 was identified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and California Governor Newsom as one of the State's highest priority fuels reduction projects.

**Location:** The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project shaded fuel break, located in a high fire severity area adjacent to the City of Grass Valley between two important ingress/egress routes (McCourtney Road Rough and Ready Highway), directly protects nearly 3,000 improved parcels within 1.5 miles of the project boundary and indirectly provides protection to a thriving rural community of over 100,000 people in a County widely recognized for its historic Gold Rush significance and home to two of California's 14 Cultural Districts.

**Landownership:** This project is located on both private and Nevada County-maintained lands; for the original implementation project 96 private landowners provided Right of Entry and agreed to be supportive of maintaining project outcomes for a minimum of 10 years.



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**Acreage:** This project will complete maintenance activities within the original project footprint of 1,037 acres. (See Location Maps 1-3).

**Partners:** Continued partnership with Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, CAL FIRE, Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, the Coalition of Firewise Communities, and the individual property owners within the project footprint will support reduced catastrophic wildfire risk and promote forest health while creating safer public evacuation and wildfire suppression routes.

**Estimated Cost:** The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project comes at a cost of \$1.5M which will be shared equally by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds).

## Project Location, Maps, and Photographs

### Location Description

**Describe the project location, including the county, nearby communities and public lands, the watershed in which the project is located, nearby forest health projects, and project acreage.**

***Please limit the response to one paragraph.***

The 1,037-acre Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project is located in western Nevada County just below Rough and Ready Highway and above McCourtney Road, in an area rated as a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by Cal Fire. (See Location Maps 1-3). Sited in the Bear River watershed, the Project is comprised of private and Nevada County-maintained lands and is in close proximity to nearly 400 acres owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Directly above the Phase 1 project area for which maintenance is proposed under SNC#1513 is the Ponderosa Phase 2 Extension Project which will extend the original project footprint across 300 acres of additional privately owned land. This work is being funded by a combination of Congressionally Directed Spending (FY22 Earmarked Funds) and Nevada County General Funds. Both projects are part of a larger strategic plan on behalf of the County of Nevada to systematically ensure that priority shaded fuel break and roadside vegetation abatement projects are supported and implemented. (See Location Map 4). Like the Ponderosa Phase 1 and Phase 2 Extension Projects, these projects involve working with private property owners to conduct hazardous fuels mitigation work on their land.



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## PDF Location Maps to be included with Proposal

**Include the following project maps, in PDF format.**

**1) Project within the Landscape.**

The map(s) should display the project location as part of the larger landscape in relation to communities, infrastructure, water sources, or complementary projects.

**2) Project Boundaries.**

The map(s) should clearly delineate where SNC funds will be used and, if the proposed SNC activities are part of a larger project, boundaries of that larger project. For planning projects, the map should identify where the pre-project activities will be focused and the potential location of the future implementation project, if applicable.

**3) Project Site Plan for implementation projects. Planning projects may include a Site Plan, if applicable.**

A map or diagram identifying types and locations of vegetation treatments or activities and/or other project details.

**In the space below, confirm the number of maps submitted. If the project does not have a Site Plan, briefly state why.**

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A total of five maps have been submitted with this project as follows: Map 1: Project Treatment Area with Phase 2 Extension and Key Evacuation Arteries Denoted; Map 2: Parcels Treated During Phase 1 Proposed for Maintenance under Project #1513; Map 3: Treatment Plan for Maintenance Based on Phase 1 Treatment; Map 4: Project Location in Relation to Other Priority Projects in Western Nevada County; Map 5: Fire Hazard Severity Zones and Critical Infrastructure Nevada County.

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## GIS Shapefiles to be included with Proposal

**Include a GIS polygon shapefile delineating the area where SNC funds will be expended. Fields in the shapefile data should include:**

- 1) SNCGrant (Integer) the grant number you have been assigned by your SNC Area Rep.**
- 2) OrgName (Text) the name of the applicant organization.**
- 3) ProjName (Text) the project name as it is on the Proposal**



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If the applicant organization has challenges developing this information, SNC will assist with the development of GIS files. This request for assistance must be made as early as possible

All GIS files should be compiled into one folder before uploading into the Submission Folder

In the space below, briefly confirm if GIS files are included with submission, or if they were developed separately with SNC.

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GIS Files for the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project are included with this Full Proposal submission.

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## Photographs to be included with Proposal

Provide no more than 6 photographs of the project area, highlighting important aspects of the project. Photographs of the project area are required.

Additionally, no more than 4 photographs of resources that will be protected by the project may be included. For example: a community, waterway, public infrastructure, or recreation site. These photographs are optional but may illustrate the importance of the project.

All photographs should be submitted as one pdf file, with two or more photographs on each page. At a later time SNC may request original digital copies of photographs for informational purposes.

In the space below, please provide a brief description of each photograph submitted.

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Included with this Full Proposal are six photographs of the Project Area and four photographs of Resources to be Protected as follows:

### Photographs of Project Area

#### **Figure 1: Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Prior to Original Implementation:**

Prior to implementation of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project parts of Ponderosa Road had such dense roadside vegetation that it was difficult to get a standard vehicle through. This vegetation was abated in 2019-2021. According to CAL FIRE, if maintenance on shaded fuel break projects does not occur in 2-3 years, within 5 years all wildfire mitigation benefit is lost.



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**Figure 2: Predominant Vegetation, Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone:** Much of the vegetation indicative of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone is fuel that burns hot and fast like dense manzanita. Removal of the overstocked fuels leaves a landscape that is aesthetically appealing (see Figure 4) and safer zone for first responders to make a stand against wildfire

**Figure 3: Treatment Prescription:** Due to vegetation density, slope, and landowner preference, much of the treatment prescription for the original implementation of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project was hand crews and pile-and-chip. The treatment prescription for maintenance will use the same methods in the same areas, minimizing the work required by a Registered Professional Forester and ensuring that the #1513 maintenance project remains in alignment with the Protective Measures stipulated in the original CEQA for this project.

**Figure 4: Shaded Fuel Break Aesthetics:** A key component of bringing private landowners on-board with vegetation mitigation and maintenance on their own properties is demonstrating to them that a shaded fuel break does not mean that all vegetation is removed down to bare mineral soil (like a firebreak). Community members want to be assured that their properties will maintain the rural quality they desire.

**Figure 5: A State and Federal Priority Project:** SNC #1513 is proposed as local match funds for a Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds) request that was put forth to Senator Feinstein in Spring of 2022. In August staff of County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services organized a site tour for Senator Feinstein's staff to help them better understand the project and hear from CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit leadership about why Ponderosa West is a priority project.

**Figure 6: Maintaining Wildfire Mitigation Benefit:** The intent of Project #1513 is to conduct maintenance within the footprint of the original Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project at a timely point (within 2-3 years of initial implementation) so that the vegetation has been "knocked down" enough that it is reasonable and feasible to maintain the mitigation benefit with minimal annual investment and time into the future.

## Photographs of Resources that will be Protected

**Figure 7: Downtown Grass Valley:** Hwy-20 bisects the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone area from east to west and in case of emergency would be a critical artery for evacuation from nearby communities including Grass Valley, a major tourist destination during the summer months that constitute critical wildfire season. Maintaining access to critical roadways in the vicinity would ensure that both residents and visitors would be able to safely evacuate, and that fire suppression equipment and personnel would have access to safely combat wildfire.



**Figure 8: Historic Downtown Nevada City:** The 16-acre Nevada City Downtown Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, is one of California's 14 cultural districts. Just across Highway 49, The Nevada County Administrative Center is a hub for social services, employment services, environmental health services, and emergency services for a county-wide rural population of nearly 100,000 people. The Madelynn Helling Library, which is the main branch for the County and includes a 5,000 square foot Collaborative Technology Center that is a vital resource for under-resourced community members lacking access to technology at home, is next door.

**Figure 9: Significant Critical Infrastructure is in the Project Vicinity:** Project #1513 protects critical infrastructure for state commerce, such as State Highway 20, power and water infrastructure, and Nevada County facilities. Within one mile of the project, there are seven churches, 12 bridges, six schools, three fire stations, two government buildings, and four emergency shelter sites including the county fairgrounds (pictured).

**Figure 10: The Bear River Watershed:** This project mitigates the risk that catastrophic wildfire would break out and make its way east into the Bear River canyon. Bear River is a popular recreation area, provides important riverine habitat, and is associated with significant local water infrastructure including two water storage facilities owned and operated by Nevada Irrigation District – Rollins Reservoir and Combie Lake.

## Background & Need

**Concisely describe the background and need for the project. Why is this project a priority? Why is it important that the project happen now? What risk will be mitigated or recovery reached by implementing this project? Is it part of a larger plan? How is this project a strategic approach to address local or landscape-scale priorities?**

***Please limit the response to one page or less.***

**This Project is a Top Priority:** In 2019, the Ponderosa Project was identified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and California Governor Newsom as one of the State's **highest priority** fuels reduction projects. By conducting critical maintenance, the project proposed here leverages and extends millions of dollars in investment by state, federal, and local partners to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire in a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone



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Maintenance Project provides protection to a thriving rural community of over 100,000 people in a County widely recognized for its historic Gold Rush significance. (See Photographs of Resources that will be Protected Figures 7-8).

**Maintenance is Economically Sustainable:** On-going maintenance of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone area is a critical need. Maintenance is far less expensive than implementation, averaging approximately \$1,000 per acre versus the \$4,000 per acre cost associated with initial implementation. With each maintenance cycle completed (on a 3-year basis) the effort required to maintain the wildfire mitigation benefit becomes less demanding and less costly. Often after a single round of post-implementation maintenance the landscape fuels have been sufficiently reduced to the point where prescribed fire can be used as the primary maintenance tool. Fire is by far the least expensive (less than \$500 per acre) and the most effective maintenance tool. The economics of maintenance versus re-implementation cannot be overstated. If maintenance does not occur, implementation must be repeated every 5 years. The price difference over a 20-year period roughly equates to \$20,000 per acre for a project that does not receive maintenance and \$8,000 per acre for a project that does receive maintenance. The economic reality is that ongoing re-implementation is not fiscally sustainable – yet if projects are not maintained all benefits are lost. Maintenance makes sense from a financial and risk management perspective.

This project directly protects life and property by reducing wildfire risk and improving evacuation routes via timely maintenance of a shaded fuel break project that was initially completed in late 2021. In total, 2,988 improved parcels valued at more than \$10,000 are located within 1.5 miles of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project area; in total the combined value of these homes equals \$591,438,842. In other words, nearly \$600M is the potential avoided loss if the wildfire mitigation actions are successful in preventing structure loss. Furthermore, all hazardous fuels reduction maintenance serves to harden vital ingress/egress infrastructure by decreasing continuity of fuels, reducing fuels loading and diminishing the intensity of the fire, thus safeguarding against loss of life by allowing for safe and timely evacuation.

**There is Alignment with Plan Priorities & Strategic Approaches:** The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project directly aligns with stated goals and objectives listed in the California Strategic Fire Plan, the CAL FIRE Unit Ignition Fire Plan for Nevada-Yuba-Placer, the Nevada County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the 2018-2019 Nevada County Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Preparedness Plan, and the 2017 Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

## Project Description



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- 1) Clearly explain the project purpose, goals, and expected outcomes.
- 2) Explain the methodology to be used and why this approach was chosen.
- 3) Describe in detail the specific work to be completed with SNC grant funds.
- 4) Clearly identify specific deliverables (e.g., planning or environmental compliance documents, types of treatment by acre) resulting from this project.

*Please limit the response to two pages or less.*

The overarching anticipated **outcome** of this project is that the wildfire mitigation benefit conveyed by the implementation of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project is maintained and by conducting maintenance the economic sustainability of ongoing project maintenance is fostered. The **purpose** of the project is to reduce the likelihood of wildfire from places where fire is not tolerable on the landscape – in this case, the communities, homes, infrastructure, and other highly valued resources in and around the project area. These objectives are achieved most directly through avoided wildfire emissions. The **goal** is for this project to eliminate wildfire starts, make it easier to catch wildfires before they propel into wildland areas, facilitate firefighting efforts and safety, and contribute to reduced wildfire emissions over time.

Specific **outcomes** of the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project include: continued disruption of contiguous fuel arrangements and removal of ladder fuels on 1,037 acres; maintenance of thinned fuel loads to reduce wildfire intensity; and maintained defense zone for fire suppression personnel to safely combat fire. Maintenance of the shaded fuel break defense zone will not remove all vegetation and is not intended to halt the spread of wildfire entirely. Rather, the defense zone is designed to slow the spread of fire and provide a safe and effective location for fire suppression activities including the staging of ground resources for direct fire attack. (See Photographs of Project Area Figures 1-6).

All work associated with this project is to be accomplished with a 1:1 split between **Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant funds** and Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds). (See Photographs of Project Area Figure 5). In the event that either source of funds not be awarded, the project scope would be reduced by exactly half – either half of the acreage would be treated with a focus on the most egregious properties or for each property only priority maintenance (of half of the level of effort) would be dedicated per property. Should the Wildfire Safety and Disaster Mitigation Measure (Measure V) placed on the November Ballot be passed by voters, the County of Nevada would commit to fill any gap left by incomplete funding award for this project.

This project is anticipated to begin August 2023 and be completed by June 2025. Specific **deliverables** by Task include:



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## **Task 1: Landowner Outreach: August 2023-October 2023**

Right of Access, Land Tenure, and Maintenance Agreements were provided by landowners within the project footprint as part of the original Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone implementation project. It is anticipated that securing permissions to conduct maintenance will be swift and well-received.

**Task 1 Deliverables:** List of Landowners, Right of Access, Land Tenure, and Maintenance Agreements for maintenance project #1513.

## **Task 2: Treatment Design: August 2023-December 2023**

This timeframe will provide sufficient time to conduct a competitive bid process to hire a Registered Professional Forester to develop treatment prescriptions for maintenance and to meet with landowners to discuss and get buy-in of the treatment. The maintenance treatment developed by the Registered Professional Forester will be designed to provide a direct benefit to State Responsibility Area lands through the reduction of fire hazards in and near communities and essential infrastructure. This treatment will also increase carbon sequestration through improved forest health and resilience. Treatment prescription will adhere to the overarching design developed for the original implementation as CEQA is already complete for this project.

**Task 2 Deliverables:** Maintenance Treatment; Landowner Sign-Offs on Maintenance Treatment.

## **Task 3: Treatment Implementation: January 2024-June 2025**

At the lower elevations of Nevada County, work may be implemented during dry days throughout the year. However, fire conditions may limit the number of days that is safe to work, thus this task has been scoped with sufficient time to get the job done. To ensure safe operations, weather forecasts will be monitored so work does not coincide with Red Flag weather conditions.

**Task 3 Deliverables:** 1,037-acres of Shaded Fuel Break Treatment; Before-After Photo Points for Each Property; Map of Completed Treatment Actions.

**Project Administration Deliverables:** Contract(s) and Scope of Work for Contractors; Board Resolutions Accepting Funds and Authorizing Contract(s); 6 Month Progress Reports; Quarterly Invoices and Back-Up Documentation; Final Report; Final Invoice.

## Program Priorities and Public Benefits



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**Explain how this project addresses wildfire recovery and forest resilience and supports the goals of [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) and the [SNC Watershed Improvement Program](#).**

**What public benefits – including natural resource benefits – will be realized through this public investment? Please be specific and quantify benefits, if known. For example: community / critical infrastructure / special habitat / cultural resources / recreation resources protected from wildfire, acres restored from the impacts of wildfire, GHG reduction or carbon stabilized, reintroduction of natural fire regimes, growth or stabilization of ecologically-sound forest-based economies.**

***Please limit the response to one page or less.***

This project is fundamentally in alignment with the goals of both California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (WFRAP) and the Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP) because it serves to increase the pace and scale at which healthy forest ecosystems are restored in a county renown for outdoor recreation and tourism, and it does so while simultaneously reducing wildfire risk and improving community resilience. The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project represents deployment of regionally developed strategies – notably CAL FIRE's NEU Strategic Plan which identifies the project as a priority. Specifics of alignment with the WFRAP include:

**Goal 1:** The project will increase the pace and scale of forest/chapparral and shrubland health projects in an area with an unhealthy accumulation of fuels (see Photographs of Project Area Figures 1-3 and 6), reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire and safeguarding water quality for the Bear River.

**Goal 2:** The project will strengthen protection of Grass Valley and adjacent communities by supporting the development of fire adapted communities through broad engagement of local residents, involvement of Firewise Communities in resident and community mitigation, and the implementation of landscape treatments responsive to safety and evacuation needs. (See Photographs of Resources that will be Protected Figures 7-8).

**Goal 3:** The project will provide protection to the Nevada County Fairgrounds and Bear River, recreation hubs of Nevada County and thus serves to sustain outdoor recreation on forestland. (See Photographs of Resources that will be Protected Figures 9-10).

**Public benefits are realized through this project via the protection of critical infrastructure and key assets.** Critical infrastructure and key assets that are directly at-risk if the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project is not maintained include power, hydro-electric, water, communications, sewer, and waste utilities. In addition, Nevada County's only animal shelter, Sammie's Friends, and the McCourtney Road Transfer Station are located



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within the project footprint. Within a mile of the project boundary there are 7 churches, 12 bridges, 6 schools, 3 fire stations, 2 government buildings, and 4 shelters including the Nevada County Fairgrounds. (See Photographs of Resources that will be Protected Figure 9). In addition to the known structures listed above there are proprietary private energy and telecommunication utility infrastructure, productive farmland and a number of local businesses. Additionally, the historic City of Grass Valley is located directly east of the defense zone. With a population of nearly 13,000 people, the City of Grass Valley is a Gold Rush town and tourist destination with dozens of historic landmarks, rich recreational opportunities, and is one of 14 California Cultural Districts. (See Location Maps, page 3 and Photographs of Resources that will be Protected Figures 7-8).

**Vital ingress and egress routes are addressed through this project.** Highway 20, which bisects the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone area from east to west, is considered by the Circulation Element of the Nevada County General Plan to be a principal artery for evacuation. It serves as a main transportation route for goods and services as well as emergency equipment and first responders. It is a critical to the safety of nearby communities including Grass Valley, Rough and Ready, Penn Valley, and Lake Wildwood. Within the 1.5 miles of the Project boundary there are more than 3,000 improved parcels in these communities and surrounding areas. Maintaining access to key roadways in the vicinity will ensure that if a wildfire occurs people are able to safely evacuate, and that fire suppression equipment and personnel have access to safely combat wildfire in the vicinity or other nearby populated areas.

## Landscape-Level Context

**Describe this project in the context of the larger landscape. Is the project proximate to essential community services, public lands, or recreational amenities? Is it part of a larger plan and/or does it complement and support nearby efforts? If so, please describe the plan and this project's role. How does the proposed project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore and/or protect forest health or wildfire resilience?**

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less.***

The forest ecosystems in and around the County of Nevada are predominately early to-mid seral stage, less fire tolerant species (often in monocultures), with tree stand densities that far exceed historic circumstances. Unlike the majority of urban cities, where the built environment has created a hardscape around areas of commerce and public activity, community centers in Nevada County sit within a west-side Sierran mixed-conifer forest (Sierra Nevada Foothills Ecoregion, M261F) where 92% of residents live in a High or Very High Fire Severity Zones.



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Nevada County has 43 communities considered at-risk for catastrophic wildfire. Located in western Nevada County just below Rough and Ready Highway and above McCourtney Road, the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project area offers vital protection to the densely populated communities of Lake Wildwood, Penn Valley and Rough and Ready to the west, as well as the highly developed City of Grass Valley to the east. This region not only contains essential egress/ingress routes, but includes a high concentration of homes, as well as a senior mobile home park. Per state agency standards several disadvantaged communities are nearby that would directly benefit from reduced wildfire risk.

This Project is part of a larger strategic plan on behalf of the County of Nevada to systematically ensure that priority shaded fuel break and roadside vegetation abatement projects are supported and implemented. (See Location Maps 4). Like the Ponderosa Project, these projects involve working with private property owners to conduct hazardous fuels mitigation work on their land. Directly adjacent to the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project is the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Extension Project that was recently awarded FY22 Congressionally Directed Community Project Funding. This project will leverage and extend the original 1,200-acre Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project by conducting fuels reduction activities on 300 additional acres of private lands. Other shaded fuel break projects in the vicinity include the 410-acre Woodpecker Ravine Project and the South County Shaded Fuel Break Project. The Woodpecker Ravine Project is roughly bounded by Rattlesnake, Lower Colfax, and Mount Olive Roads. The project will focus on primary and secondary evacuation routes in the area, in addition to select strategic ridgelines in order to tie road system arteries into a wildfire defense zone. The South County Shaded Fuel Break Project will treat 339-acres on 226 parcels, which will serve as a vital wildfire holding point and key evacuation route for residents. Funding will support removal of hazardous fuels 75 feet on either side of the roadway resulting in a 150-foot-wide shaded fuel break along 9-miles on Buck Mountain Road, Lodestar Drive, and Brewer Road in the community of Alta Sierra.

## Project Partners

**Identify other partners involved in the project. Describe who is/was engaged in project planning and who will be responsible for implementation. Identify if the project is part of a larger plan, collaborative group, or process that included public input. Highlight local agencies, citizen groups, or tribal organizations engaged with the project. Identify what other partners are contributing in-kind or financial resources to the project, and if that funding has been secured.**

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less.***



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Participating landowners will be among the primary partners for this project. These community members have already engaged on this project as part of the initial implementation. For this project they will be consenting to have maintenance activities take place, something that has been repeatedly requested by the community. These residents will volunteer their time to assist in flagging property boundaries, meet the Registered Professional Forester to verify treatment prescriptions and help monitor the Licensed Timber Operator conducting the maintenance. CAL FIRE will partner to continue to provide technical insight to this project and will additionally be involved in the adjacent Ponderosa West Grass Valley Extension Project (see Project Location for details on this project). Firesafe Council of Nevada County will act as the liaison with the Firewise Communities in the vicinity of this project. Finally, the granting agency associated with the Congressionally Directed Funding that will serve as match for this project will be a partner. The Office of Emergency Services learned this week that this \$750,000 funding request for the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project has successfully made it into the interior subcommittee budget.

## Organizational Capacity

**Describe the applicant's ability to complete the project as proposed. Identify the resources (staff, project partners, or contractors) intended to complete the tasks described in the work plan and explain the applicant's expertise or experience completing similar projects.**

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less.***

The County of Nevada has extensive experience in applying for and successfully managing grants, including private, state, and federal grants, maintaining a stellar track record of successful outcomes, completion, and compliance. The Nevada County Office of Emergency Services (OES) specifically secures and manages major state and federal grants and prides itself on the timely completion of grant funded projects while reaching desirable milestones. Nevada County OES regularly applies for, receives, and manages the Emergency Management Performance Grant and the Homeland Security Grant. Other recent large grants OES has secured include:

Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone: CAL FIRE #5GG18114: \$2,536,477 + \$1,000,000 in a separate contract; South County Shaded Fuel Break: CAL FIRE #5GG20116: \$952,610; Access and Functional Needs – 4353: FEMA HMGP #DR-4353-0230033R: \$516,273.75; Access and Functional Needs – 4344: FEMA HMGP #DR-4353-0230033R: \$498,167.29; Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Extension: FY22 Federal Earmark: \$750,000; Woodpecker Ravine Shaded Fuel Break: CAL FIRE#5GG1227: \$2,178,004 Nevada County Evacuation Route Planning: California Firesafe Council #5GG21105: \$135,422.



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All grant applications countywide are approved by the CEO's office, and fiscal alignment monitored and supported by the Auditor/Controller.

## Community Support

**SNC strongly encourages engagement with communities and local government during project planning and implementation. Describe community support for the project, as well as any known opposition to the project. Explain any concerns and efforts to address those concerns.**

**In addition to the narrative, SNC recommends providing evidence of community support for this project, in the form of a letter(s) of support. Please provide a list of all letters included in the narrative below.**

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less, plus the list of supporting letters.***

The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Maintenance Project has broad-based support in the community. The proposal for the original implementation project, which included stipulations that the outcomes be maintained for a minimum of 10 years, was accompanied by nine letters of support from entities including the Fire Safe Council, Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, Nevada County Superintendent of Schools, Sierra Business Council, The Sierra Fund, Nevada Irrigation District, Sherwood Forest Firewise Community, Coalition of Firewise Communities, YubaNet, Nevada County Digital Media Center, and the City of Grass Valley. These same entities are invested in the ongoing maintenance of this important project (LOS that accompanied the original implementation proposal are included with this submission as well as an LOS from City of Grass Valley explicitly supporting project maintenance). The project was highly visible in the community throughout the initial implementation and received numerous community accolades. This project has built the trust of individual landowners within the ~1,200-acre treatment area, all of whom were grateful to be the beneficiaries of reduced wildfire risk. A recent article in The Union Newspaper underscored the sentiment around this project in the western Nevada County community. Visit [A fighting chance: Shaded fuel break helps in fight against wildfire in Grass Valley | TheUnion.com](#) to read the story.

## Engagement with California Native American Tribes

**Recognizing that Native Americans have inhabited and cared for the land of present-day California since time immemorial, the SNC strongly encourages engagement with Native American tribes as early as possible in the development, planning, and implementation of projects. SNC staff can assist with identifying Native American tribes whose**



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ancestral homelands may be in the project area and help provide contact information for those tribes.

In the space below, identify Native American tribes (other than the applicant, if the applicant is a tribal entity), that may have an interest in the project. Describe any current or anticipated role for local tribes in the project, including if funding is requested to provide support for tribal participation.

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less.***

The following Native American Tribes may have an interest in this project:

The Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe are the original indigenous people of Nevada County. They are a traditional Tribe that has mounted a considerable effort to obtain federal recognition. Nevada County has supported them in this effort and the Nevada County Board of Supervisors has passed a formal resolution to this effect.

United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) is the federally recognized tribe who may have interest in this project based on a potential for this project to encompass ancestral homelands.

## Long-Term Management and Monitoring

How will the public benefits of the project be sustained? Describe plans and/or planning for the long-term management, monitoring, and sustainability of the project. If long-term management and monitoring are part of an existing plan, identify the plan and cite the applicable section. Identify known or anticipated funding sources to support long-term management and monitoring.

For planning projects, please describe the anticipated approach for long-term management and monitoring of the future project.

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less.***

Firewise Communities, individual residents, and community leaders have expressed their support for this project and their willingness to leverage and extend the sustainability of this project by maintaining the fuels reduction actions. Fuels reduction will provide a safer area, cleared of hazardous fuels (see Photographs of Project Area Figure 1-3), from which fire personnel can attempt suppression activities during such fires. The removal of hazardous vegetation will also act to slow or reduce fire behavior by reducing overall fuel levels and continuity between surface, ladder, and crown fuels. (See Photographs of Project Area Figure 4 for an example of treated land). This will increase safety for fire personnel and the public during a wildland fire and reduce the risk of damage to the numerous habitable structures in



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the Project Influence Zone. This project directly benefits the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities of Lake Wildwood, Penn Valley, Rough and Ready, and the City of Grass Valley. Furthermore, as the project protects the County seat (Nevada City) it is in the interest of all County residents.

A reduction of fuels along primary evacuation routes for residents will provide safer ingress and egress pathways for multiple communities. County of Nevada has a vested interest in prioritizing locations for roadside vegetation maintenance in the vicinity of this project as that allows for leverage and extension of the shaded fuel break benefit. The outcomes of this project will be enduring because participating landowners will be educated on the value of maintaining the fuels reduction treatment with maintenance every 2-3 years to ensure that the wildfire mitigation outcome remains intact. Landowners will commit to 10 years of maintenance at a minimum as part of ensuring the durability of investment associated with this project.

### Project Workplan and Schedule

**List the anticipated start and completion dates of planning or implementation conducted under this grant. No grant awards will be made before March 2023. Dependent on funding source, some projects will need to be complete by January 1, 2027, although select projects may continue until January 1, 2028. Please be clear in the schedule below if the project will be complete by January 2027, or if project work is expected to continue into 2027.**

<b>Anticipated start date</b>	August 2023
<b>Anticipated completion date</b>	June 2025

**Complete the chart below. Please include all tasks and deliverables, including SNC reporting requirements.**

<b>Project Tasks and Deliverables</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Task 1: Landowner Outreach</b>	<b>August 2023-October 2023</b>
List of Landowners	August 2023
Right of Access, Land Tenure, and Maintenance Agreements	August-October 2023
<b>Task 2: Treatment Design</b>	<b>August 2023-December 2023</b>
Maintenance Treatment	September 2023-November 2023
Landowner Sign-Offs on Maintenance Treatment	November 2023-December 2023



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<b>Task 3: Treatment Implementation</b>	<b>January 2024-June 2025</b>
1,037-acres of Shaded Fuel Break Treatment	January 2024-June 2025
Before-After Photo Points of Each Property	January 2024-June 2025
Map of Completed Treatment Actions	May 2025-June 2025
<b>Project Administration:</b> Contract(s) and Scope of Work for Contractors; Board Resolutions Accepting Funds and Authorizing Contract(s); 6 Month Progress Reports; Quarterly Invoices and Back-Up Documentation; Final Report; Final Invoice	August 2023-June 2025
SNC 6-month Progress Reports	Ongoing: January 2024; July 2024; January 2025; July 2025
SNC Final Report with Performance Measures Reporting	July 2025
<b>Estimated Project Completion Date:</b>	June 2025

## Project Costs

### Project Budget

Complete the charts below.

The charts do not automatically calculate totals and percentages.

- In the Tribal Participation line, include all funds anticipated to be used to directly fund costs incurred by tribes for project participation. If there are no funds to be directly used by tribes, please enter \$0.
- In the Equipment line, include all equipment anticipated to cost more than \$5,000 per item. If there is no equipment to be purchased, please leave blank.
- Administrative Costs must not exceed 15% of Direct Project costs. Administrative costs, also referred to as overhead or indirect costs, refer to organizational overhead expenses. A typical method for documentation of administrative overhead expenses is a Cost Allocation Plan which determines the general percentage of an organization's overhead expenses. All costs related to administration and management of this specific project should be listed as direct project costs.
- For Additional Project Costs, include in-kind or funding from sources other than SNC used within the scope and timeline of the project described here.

Direct Project Costs	SNC Funding
Contractual: Project Management, Fire Safe Council Salaries	\$ 40,425
Contractual: Project Management, Fire Safe Council Benefits	\$ 12,075



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Contractual: Registered Professional Forester	\$ 7,500
Contractual: Hazardous Vegetation Removal	\$ 615,000
enter text.	\$ enter text.
<b>Tribal Participation:</b>	\$ enter text.
<b>Equipment:</b> enter text.	\$ enter text.
<b>Total Direct Project Costs</b>	<b>\$ 675,000</b>

<b>Administrative Cost</b> (not to exceed 15% of the Direct Project Costs)	<b>\$ 75,000</b>
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<b>TOTAL SNC REQUEST</b> (Total Direct plus Administrative Costs)	<b>\$ 750,000</b>
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<b>Additional Project Costs</b>	<b>In-Kind or Funding from Other Sources</b>
Contractual: Project Management, Fire Safe Council Salaries	\$ 40,425
Contractual: Project Management, Fire Safe Council Benefits	\$ 12,075
Contractual: Registered Professional Forester	\$ 7,500
Contractor: Hazardous Vegetation Removal	\$ 615,000
Indirect @ 15%	\$ 75,000
<b>Total Additional Project Costs</b>	<b>\$ 750,000</b>

<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b> (SNC Request plus Additional Project Costs)	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>
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## Project Budget Narrative

**Describe the budget in additional detail. This should include a description of unit costs used to calculate the line item totals, justification for activity and treatment costs, reasoning behind the estimated expenses, and other information as needed. Identify the source, type, and status of non-SNC funds involved in the project. Applicants may submit a separate, more detailed budget spreadsheet if they wish, but this is not required.**

***Please limit the response to one page or less.***

As noted in the Project Description section of this proposal, all work associated with this project is to be accomplished with a 1:1 split between Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant funds and Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds). In the event that either source of funds not be awarded, the project scope would be reduced by exactly half – either half of the acreage would be treated with a focus on the most egregious properties or for each property only priority maintenance (of half of the level of effort) would be dedicated per property. Should the Wildfire Safety and Disaster Mitigation Measure (Measure V) placed on the November Ballot be passed by voters, the County of Nevada would commit to fill any gap left by incomplete funding award for this project.

The budget breakdown by line item for this project is as follows:

### **Contractual, Fire Safe Council Project Management Salaries and Wages**

Senior Staff salary and benefits (including health, dental, vision, life, and retirement) for landowner outreach, project scheduling and coordination, project meetings, subcontractor oversight, and fuels reduction actions (Tasks 1-3). These costs are based on actual costs for salaries and wages and benefits; hours are based on similar projects completed. 1,400 hours @ \$75 per hour. Total: \$105,000.

### **Project Total: \$105,000**

Sierra Nevada Conservancy: \$52,500

Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds): \$52,500

### **Contractual, Registered Professional Forester**

Flat rate to review treatment prescription for 1,037-acre project area and to meet with private landowners as needed to discuss. Total: \$15,000.

### **Project Total: \$15,000**

Sierra Nevada Conservancy: \$7,500

Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds): \$7,500



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## **Contractual, Hazardous Vegetation Removal**

Cost of hazardous vegetation removal maintenance including hand cut with pile-and-chip, pile and burn, or mastication as appropriate based on treatment prescription for 1,037 acres. Cost per acre ranges from \$500 to \$2,500, with average cost per acre of \$1,186. Total: \$1,230,000.

## **Project Total: \$1,230,000**

Sierra Nevada Conservancy: \$615,000

Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds): \$615,000

## **Administrative Cost**

Administrative Cost @15% of Direct Project Costs

## **Project Total: \$150,000**

Sierra Nevada Conservancy: \$75,000

Congressionally Directed Spending (FY23 Earmarked Funds): \$75,000

## Land Ownership and Restrictions on Land Use

The SNC cannot consider a project unless landowners of the project site have provided adequate permission. Recruiting additional landowners to give permission and participate in a project may occur after grant award. However, evaluation of the proposed project includes consideration of the number of confirmed landowners and acres at the time of proposal.

In the space below, identify all legal property owners for the land on which the project is to occur, as well as any property easements or other restrictions that may impact the project. Describe the current status of any land tenure agreements. Identify if the project includes recruiting additional landowners after proposal submission. Include a list of landowner tenure agreements / intent to enter into tenure agreements (for implementation projects) or letters of support (for planning projects) included with the proposal.

***For implementation projects:*** If the applicant does not hold legal ownership of the project site, documentation assuring ten years of access for project implementation and maintenance is required. Proof of adequate land tenure includes, but is not limited to:

- Fee title ownership
- An easement or license agreement
- A formal agreement between the applicant and all fee title or easement owners sufficient to give the applicant adequate site control for purposes of the project.



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If the project proponent does not have tenure at the time of proposal, submit a letter from all property owners/managers indicating their intent to meet tenure requirements if the grant is awarded.

***For planning projects:*** Letters of support from all landowners, granting permission for the project, are required.

***Please limit the response to two paragraphs or less.***

For the Phase 1 Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project 96 individual landowners agreed to participate in the project and signed Right of Entry Forms, consulted with the Registered Professional Forester and Fire Safe Council of Nevada County on preferred treatment, and, at project completion, agreed to maintain the outcomes of the project for a minimum of 10 years. The original Right of Entry (ROE) forms are provided with this proposal submission as a demonstration that landowners are aware of and supportive toward this project. New ROE will be obtained in advance of entering any private property as part of project #1513, however, this is not anticipated to be difficult as landowners have already bought into the project and the wildfire mitigation benefit it provides.

## Environmental Compliance

All projects must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) at the time the SNC Governing Board authorizes a grant. Since the complexity of CEQA compliance will vary depending on project activities and type of grantee, it is important to consult with SNC staff regarding which documents may be required in what timeframe. In addition to CEQA compliance, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance is required for all projects proposed on federal land and a NEPA decision must be in place at the time of application.

For projects not exempt from CEQA, if CEQA is not complete at the time of proposal the Lead Agency for CEQA must be identified in the proposal. Please include a letter or other documentation from the Lead Agency stating they are eligible and willing to serve as Lead and the expected timeline for completing CEQA. If SNC has agreed to serve as Lead Agency, please note this in the narrative below.

Please provide a brief description of CEQA and NEPA status below, including if the project is exempt, Lead Agency, expected timeline if CEQA is not yet complete, and links to existing environmental documents. If links are not available, the documents must be submitted to SNC. Examples of such documents include but are not limited to Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration, Timber Harvest Plan, CA FIRE 1038 exemption, Environmental Assessment, and Decision Notice.



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## Brief Description of CEQA Status

***Please limit the response to one paragraph or less.***

This project is shovel ready. For the original implementation CAL FIRE requested suspension of Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) of the Public Resources Code and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division, commonly known as the California Environmental Quality Act, for the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone – Fuel Break Project, which is one of the thirty-five priority projects identified in the Community Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Report (February 22, 2019). This maintenance project will adhere to all stipulations set forth in the Protective Measures. See CEQA Documentation.

## Brief Description of NEPA Status, if applicable.

***Please limit the response to one paragraph or less.***

The applicability of NEPA status is contingent upon the award of Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) which could include federal compliance as a requirement associated with the funds. If this were the case it is anticipated that the CA FIRE exemption associated with the original implementation could be used to swiftly render a NEPA Decision Memo if so needed.

## Resolution or Authorization to Apply

**Applicants are required to provide a copy of documentation authorizing them to apply for grant funding to the SNC. A project-specific governing board resolution is required for nonprofit organizations, tribes, and local government agencies. However, if the organization's governing board has delegated authority to a specific officer to act on behalf of that organization, the officer may, in lieu of a resolution, submit a letter of authorization along with documentation of delegated authority. The documentation of delegated authority must include the language granting such authority and the date of the delegation.**

**In the space below, briefly describe the authorization to apply and if it has been authorized or is scheduled for future consideration. Please include documentation with proposal submission.**

***Please limit the response to one paragraph or less.***

Authorization to apply for grant funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has been provided by Director of the Office of Emergency Services and the Chief Executive Officer of the County of Nevada. This grant application will go before the Board of Supervisors of the



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County of Nevada for ratification at their next scheduled meeting on December 7, 2022. Please see the attached Authorization to Apply.



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## Proposal Form Checklist

Included	Not Applicable	Documentation
<b>Project Description</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Proposal Form – please confirm all sections are complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Landscape Map(s) with approximate locations of larger project and/or nearby complementary activities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Project Map(s) in pdf format with boundaries of activities to be supported by SNC</b></li> <li>• <b>Site Plan(s) identifying types and locations of treatments and activities within project area, if applicable.</b></li> </ul>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		GIS files of project location, compiled into one folder
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		6 photographs of the project site, plus up to 4 photographs of resources protected, compiled into in one PDF document.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter(s) of Support, compiled into one PDF document.
<b>Land Tenure</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed Land Tenure Agreement(s), compiled into one PDF document. OR
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter(s) from Landowner(s) stating intent to enter into tenure agreement for an implementation project, or permission for a planning project, compiled into one PDF document.
<b>Environmental Compliance</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEPA documents <b>OR</b> online links included. For projects on federal land.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CEQA documents <b>OR</b> online links included Required if CEQA is complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter from CEQA Lead Agency confirming intent to serve as Lead and expected timeline for completion. Required if CEQA is not yet complete
<b>Submission Information</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Authorization to Apply Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Certification of Submission (on the following page) Required

**Other** (please list below)

enter text.



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## Certification of Submission

<b>SNC Project #</b>	1513
<b>Project Name</b>	Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project
<b>Applicant Organization</b>	County of Nevada

Please complete the checklist on the previous page to confirm a complete application packet before signing the Certification below.

CERTIFICATION OF SUBMISSION	
By entering my name below, I certify that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge and I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of this organization.	
<b>Name</b>	Craig Griesbach
<b>Title</b>	Director, Office of Emergency Services
<b>Organization</b>	County of Nevada
<b>Date</b>	October 28, 2022



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## Submission Instructions

- 1) Upload the Proposal Form and Supporting Documentation to your Project Submission Folder using the link in your Welcome email.**
  - a. Name all documents with the project number and document type.  
For example: #####\_maps, #####\_photos, #####\_letters
  - b. Compile all GIS files into one folder before uploading to submission folder.
  - c. If you cannot find or have difficulty accessing the link, please contact the SNC Grants Team at [grants.snc@sierranevada.ca.gov](mailto:grants.snc@sierranevada.ca.gov), 530-906-4771 or 530-906-7345.
  - d. SNC recommends that applicants only upload files to the Project Submission Folder once they are final, to avoid potential issues related to editing files in a protected folder.
  - e. SNC recommends that applicants maintain a complete record of all documents submitted.
  
- 2) Send an email to the SNC Grants Team when all final documents are in the Project Submission folder.**
  - a. Use the project number as the subject of the email, and state that all documents are in the Submission Folder.
  - b. Send to: [grants.snc@sierranevada.ca.gov](mailto:grants.snc@sierranevada.ca.gov)
  - c. DO NOT attach the Project Submission Folder to the email.

This email will serve as the official submission of your Proposal Form. The SNC Grants Team will confirm receipt and initiate the review process.