

Minutes of the Calaveras Resource Conservation District (RCD)

Board Meeting

September 3, 2020

RCD Conference Room

423 Saint Charles St, San Andreas, CA

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by S. Beckman-President @ 6:00 pm

Board Members & Staff Present: IN-PERSON - S. Beckman-President; R. Dean-Sec'y/Treas; F. Schabram; G. Long-Executive Director; Dana Simpson-Staff Accountant; Mary Cole-Admin
CALL-IN - B. Dubois

Board Members & Staff Absent: K. Hafley; M. Robie; N. Valente-VP

Others Present: None

Public Comment: None

Partners: Bobette Parsons' report was in the Board Packet.

Consent Agenda Items:

1. Approval of 8/6/20 Minutes. Board Action –**B. Dean made motion to approve, F. Schabram second. On a 4-0-3 vote, minutes were approved.**
2. Approval of August 2020 Finance Reports – **B. Dean made motion to approve, F. Schabram second. On a 4-0-3 vote, reports were approved.**

Old Business:

1. Approve 2020-21 Budget – Resolution 2020-09 – **B. Dean made motion to approve, F. Schabram second. On a 4-0-3 vote, Budget was approved.**
2. CalFire Grant Update – G. Long reported he, S. Beckman and J. Micheau attended a meeting with CalFire to discuss changing the footprint of the Forest Meadows to Murphys project permission was given to make the appropriate changes The east end of the project near Forest Meadows is flagged and mapped. Remainder of flagging is due to be completed by Nov. 15.
3. ACT Projects Update – G. Long reported current project is the Carbon Hub for Butterflies. Looking to do more workshops in Tuolumne County for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) which provides funding for forest management and dead tree removal.
4. Board Terms Ending Dec. 2020 – B. Dean reminded those board members who are coming to term to apply, or if they are not planning to return suggestions of who they may recommend as replacements. He further noted if we are left without enough people to fill the board before new appointments are made, we have approval to keep existing board until seats are filled.

New Business:

5. None

Reports:

6. Committee Reports – None.
7. Other Items for Consideration – Start talking about the next round of CalFire grants.

- 8. **Board Member announcements** – S. Beckman is going to meet with Blue Lake Springs Fire Prevention staff to discuss improving a previous grant application so it can be resubmitted.
- 9. **Staff announcements** – None.

Adjournment of meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 6:15 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for **Thursday, October 1, 2020** via in-person and GoToMeeting.com.

Attest:
President, Sid Beckman _____

Date _____

Secretary, Bob Dean _____

Date _____

DRAFT



CALAVERAS COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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**RESOLUTION OF THE CALAVERAS COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (CCRCD)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Resolution Number: **2020-09 DRAFT by Pat McGreevy**

WHEREAS, Federal Financial Assistance Cooperative Agreement 20-CA-11052012-140 between the Calaveras Foothills Fire Safe Council (CFFSC) and the USDA, Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, Fire & Aviation Management was executed on September 24, 2020 to fund construction of the 'Last Chance Fuel Break/Davies Ranch South and East Units' (Last Chance), in the amount of \$424,000;

WHEREAS, said Agreement is made under the authority of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-313 as amended, 16 USC 2101 et seq., it requires a match of 1:1, which is described in the attached financial plan and narrative;

WHEREAS, said Agreement will be matched in the amount of \$424,000 in state funds awarded by CAL FIRE to the Calaveras County Resource Conservation District (CCRCD) to construct the 'Murphys-to-Forest Meadows WUI Fuel Break' (Murphys) project (CCI grant 19-FP-TCU-2018);

WHEREAS, no dollars will be exchanged between the CFFSC and the CCRCD;

WHEREAS, the CCRCD certifies that it will expend the matched amount, \$424,000, from 19-FP-TCU-2018 between October 1st 2020 and prior and prior to March 31st 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Calaveras County Resource Conservation District:

1. Certifies that it has or will have sufficient funds to meet the match and,
2. Certifies that it will expend grant funds prior to March 31st 2022 and,
3. Appoints Gordon Long, Executive Director or a designee, to provide the CFFSC with copies of their progress reports to CAL FIRE on the Murphys project.

The foregoing resolution was approved and adopted the first (1) day of October 2020 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENTS:

Signature

Title

-----CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION-----

I Mary Cole, Administrator of the Calaveras County Resource Conservation District, witness my hand or the seal of the Calaveras County Resource Conservation District on the 1st day of October, 2020.

Signature

Title

Last Chance Fuel Break Narrative

Project Title: Last Chance Fuel Break (23-Sep-20)

Lead Organization: Calaveras Foothills Fire Safe Council

Contact Information: Pat McGreevy, Office (209)293-2191, Mobile (209)273-8638, Email mcgreevp.95232@gmail.com

Project Summary

Provide background information and a short summary of the project. Describe how the funds will be used: purchase/develop materials/supplies, training, salaries, travel, etc. Will funds be used to initiate a new project or continue/enhance an existing one? Name other major players (funders, collaborators, tech support, etc.).

Background and Matching Project [Maps and images are appended]

The Last Chance Fuel Break (FB) is located on the north rim of the North Fork Stanislaus River Canyon (Canyon). It is part of a series of WUI fuel breaks (aka Hwy 4 Fire Defense System) designed to defend a heavily populated zone along the 40-mile Hwy 4 Corridor from Murphys to Camp Connell (Regional Map). According to the 2010 census, the corridor is home to 8,560 residents and includes 9,075 homes of which 4,500 are 'second homes' populated only part of the year. During a busy tourist season, Ebbetts Pass Fire District statistics show that its population swells to more than 15,000 people. These communities have escaped multiple fires emanating from the Canyon including the 2001 Darby Fire that burned 14,280 acres.

While there were always isolated fire breaks along the Hwy 4 corridor, they were never coordinated as they are today. The current Fire Defense System started in earnest after the 2015 Butte Fire and the recent tree mortality epidemic when the major landowners coordinated plans, secured funding, and implemented projects in forest restoration and fuels reduction. These stakeholders include the Stanislaus National Forest (STF), Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), Calaveras Big Trees State Park, CAL FIRE, Calaveras Foothill Fire Safe Council, Calaveras County Water District, Ranchers and Homeowners Associations. The Regional Map shows that fuel breaks have been built or are under construction on most of the WUI from Murphys to Camp Connell. There are plans to fill the gaps in the WUI and move the system into the maintenance phase in perpetuity. The developing Hwy 4 Fire Defense System is a model for increased 'Pace and Scale' to prevent catastrophic wildfire.

The Last Chance Fuel Break FB is a discontinuous line of 11 treatment units that run along the eastern flank of Hathaway Pines, Avery, and Arnold on STF land (Vicinity Map). The unit areas range 3-75 acres on gentle slopes for a total of 433 acres. The STF masticated 9 of the 11 units in 2018. The two untreated units, 705A (71.6 acres) and 708 (43.2 acres) (Purple polygons on map), border the east side of the Davies Ranch and adjacent to the proposed Davies fuel breaks (Green polygons).

The Davies Ranch covers 873 acres in Avery located between the Canyon Rim and Hwy 4 (Vicinity Map). From a fire protection viewpoint, the Ranch is important because it connects the Last Chance FB on the east with the major fuel breaks on the west including the Arnold Wastewater Treatment Plant and the STF's Arnold-Avery Fuels Reduction project. To their credit, the Davies Ranch has an aggressive program to control hazardous fuels and has recently treated 71 acres and planted 17,000 pine seedlings

under CAL FIRE's 'California Forest Improvement Program' (CFIP). A second CFIP project is in the planning phase. Funds from 'Cooperative Forestry Assistance Program' will remove flammable brush and ladder fuels on 182 acres on the Davies Ranch in addition to the CFIP projects (Site Map). This acreage is contiguous with the two STF units cited above that remain to be treated. The Davies units will enhance the STF Last Chance FB system by providing strategic continuity.

Federal funding from the 'Cooperative Forestry Assistance Program' is **matched** dollar-for-dollar with \$424,000 in state funds awarded by CAL FIRE to the Calaveras County Resource Conservation District for its 'Murphys-to-Forest Meadows WUI Fuel Break' project (CCI grant 19-FP-TCU-2018). This match makes sense because both projects, Last Chance and Murphys, are designed to protect the eastern flank of the Hwy 4 Fire Defense System (Regional Map). Both of these projects are key to the Hwy 4 Fire Defense System and the landscape scale integrated approach to be prepared for wildfires near towns or spreading upcanyon towards the towns. The risk of destructive wildfires damaging the WUI and the surrounding ecosystems will be reduced by this integrated landscape approach of completing both of these projects and others listed on the maps.

Project Justification

Explain why the project is important. Identify the project objective, why it should be addressed and describe what condition will be changed as a result of the project. Explain why the project should be accomplished through the collaboration of the parties involved.

The Davies units and adjacent untreated STF units in the Last Chance System follow USFS Road 4N06 on the ridge above the Canyon at an elevation of 3,320 – 3,960 feet . It was on this ridge that suppression resources stopped the Darby Fire in 2001 (Regional Map). After the fire, the Davies Ranch built contingency lines using a caterpillar and hand tools on the ridge. Today, these contingency lines are choked with brush (See images). Constructing the Davies and STF units will complete the Last Chance System and provide a substantial anchor from which to defend the Hwy 4 communities against wildfire from the Canyon using both ground and the air attacks. Construction of the Last Chance Units on the Davies side of the WUI provides a strong incentive to the STF to build its two remaining units as this collaborative effort would provide a synergistic outcome.

Scope of Work (Project Description)

- a) Identify Project goals and objectives. Be as specific as possible.
- b) Identify the specific objective(s)
- c) Describe the major tasks that must be accomplished to meet project goals and objectives. Identify responsible personnel/organization for tasks, and time frame (you may use a timeline).

Goals

The regional goal is to defend the WUI communities along the Hwy 4 corridor from Murphys to Camp Connell against catastrophic fire.

Specific Objectives

The specific objective of this project is to fill the gap in the Last Chance Fuel Break on the WUI between the Davies Ranch and STF land on the northern rim of the steep Stanislaus River Canyon that is choked with hazardous fuel. Fixing this gap will reduce the risk of fire ignition and spread and provide suppression forces with an anchor to attack fire from the air and the ground in the defense of Arnold, Avery and Hathaway Pines. Removing dense brush will release the remaining saplings and large trees and support the growth of a healthy shaded fuel break.

Timeline

The timeline with tasks and responsibilities is presented in the application package as '3 ProjectTimeline.doc'.

CEQA

The Davies Ranch manages its land under a NTMP (Non-industrial Timber Management Plan) that is a CEQA document. An NTMP is an intensive resource planning document for landowners with less than 2,500 acres that gives them a high level of knowledge, flexibility, and freedom in the management of their properties. Its objective is the creation of an uneven-aged managed timber stand and sustained yield for each parcel or group of contiguous parcels meeting the requirements. Typically, an NTMP includes an inventory and stocking cruise of the property, plan preparation, applications for State and Federal cost-share programs, selection of logger assistance, assessment of current timber markets, and preparation of correspondence to secure right-of-way agreements. The NTMP assesses and includes information on such subjects as wildlife habitat, archeology, water quality, botany, soil protection/erosion prevention, and more. The plan allows the landowner flexibility in the timing of harvests. NTMPs are crafted to fit the objectives of the landowner, the resources on the property, and the laws and rules of the government.

Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans are also sustainable harvesting permits in perpetuity. They are heavily reviewed by multi-disciplinary state agencies. Like Timber Harvesting Plans, these management plans must fully comply with the California Environmental Quality Act prior to approval and continue compliance during their existence.

Project Methodology

Describe the methodology to be used to complete project tasks. Include an explanation of how you will monitor progress made toward project goals and objectives. Provide a project timeline for completing project tasks.

The Davies Ranch land is relatively flat with grades between 0 – 30% where project activities would occur. Several dirt roads provide access to all areas making this landscape fuels reduction/fuel break construction suitable for mastication.

Dead trees and many of the smaller trees (between 8-12 inch diameter at breast height or "DBH") will be cut in place where needed for fire fuel reduction leaving an average distance of 30 feet between healthy stems or clumps of healthy trees. Stump heights will not exceed 6 inches on the high side. Residual trees will be limbed along the main bole for a minimum of 10-foot height or 1/3 the height of the tree. All pruning cuts will be outside of the branch collar.

All slash will be masticated on site to reduce erosion and provide a mulch layer to discourage manzanita regrowth from seeds.

The dense understory of woody debris, brush and some trees <8" DBH will be masticated, leaving a layer of mulch intended to suppress brush regeneration. The average distance between healthy residual small stems will be 30 feet.

Since this is a strategic fuel break where active suppression resources with the State funded Murphys project will be staged and/or aerial attacks deployed, dead conifers (snags) shall be felled to minimize the risk of firebrand (ember) dispersion when burning.

All residue from mastication operations shall be arranged so that it does not exceed 12 inches in height above the ground in any area.

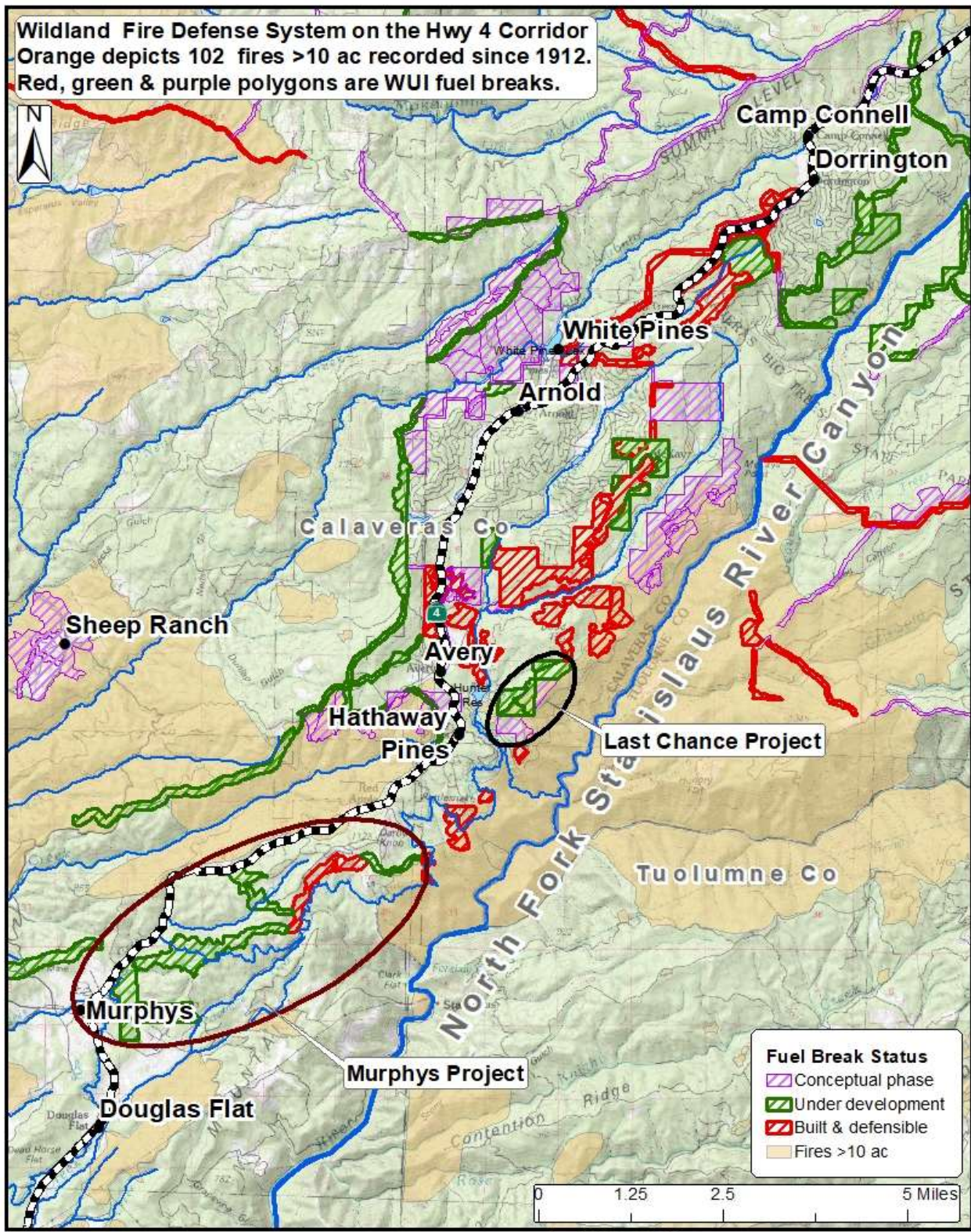
Expanded Project Budget (Financial Planning)

In addition to submitting an SF424A, and expanded project budget spreadsheet – Budget Information, expanded details are required to support your costs:

- a) Personnel – list all staff positions by title. Provide annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the grant period. **There are no salaried positions.**
- b) Fringe Benefits – Identify the percentage used, the bases for computation, and the types of benefits included. **N/A**
- c) Travel – Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel. **N/A**
- d) Equipment – Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as Supplies. **N/A**
- e) Supplies – all tangible personal property other than equipment. The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g. laboratory supplies or office supplies). **N/A**
- f) Contractual – identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose, nature and estimated cost.
 - Registered Professional Forester: Write the final prescription in the Request for Proposals and the LTO contract assuring that it complies to the Davies NTMP. Participate in the contractor selection process and pre-operations tour. Assure contractor compliance to the prescription and California Code relating to forest practices. Monitor the project at frequent intervals during the initial stages of the project to assure the contractor understands the treatment goals and is following the prescription.
 - Field Manager: Serve as the RPF Designee in preparing the project site and monitoring work progress. Prepare georeferenced PDF maps for the Avenza application and load them onto the operator’s smartphones. Validate the areas treated by GPS for use in contractor invoices. Serve as the liaison between all stakeholders. Support the CFFSC Coordinator by submitting reports and invoices for submission to the STF.
 - Fuels Reduction Contractor. A Licensed Timber Operator will thin crowded saplings, prune trees and masticate brush and slash as detailed in the prescription above. Based on recent bids on other fuel reduction projects, the cost for these services is estimated at \$2,000/acre. To assure adequate funds, the budget line item is set at \$2,100/acre and the estimated total for the 143 treatment acres is \$300,300. Should bids be lower, additional acreage will be treated.
- g) Other – List each item in sufficient detail for Forest Service to determine the reasonableness and allow-ability of the cost. **N/A**
- h) Indirect – Indirect costs must be supported by including a copy of the current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, approved by the Cognizant Federal Agency.

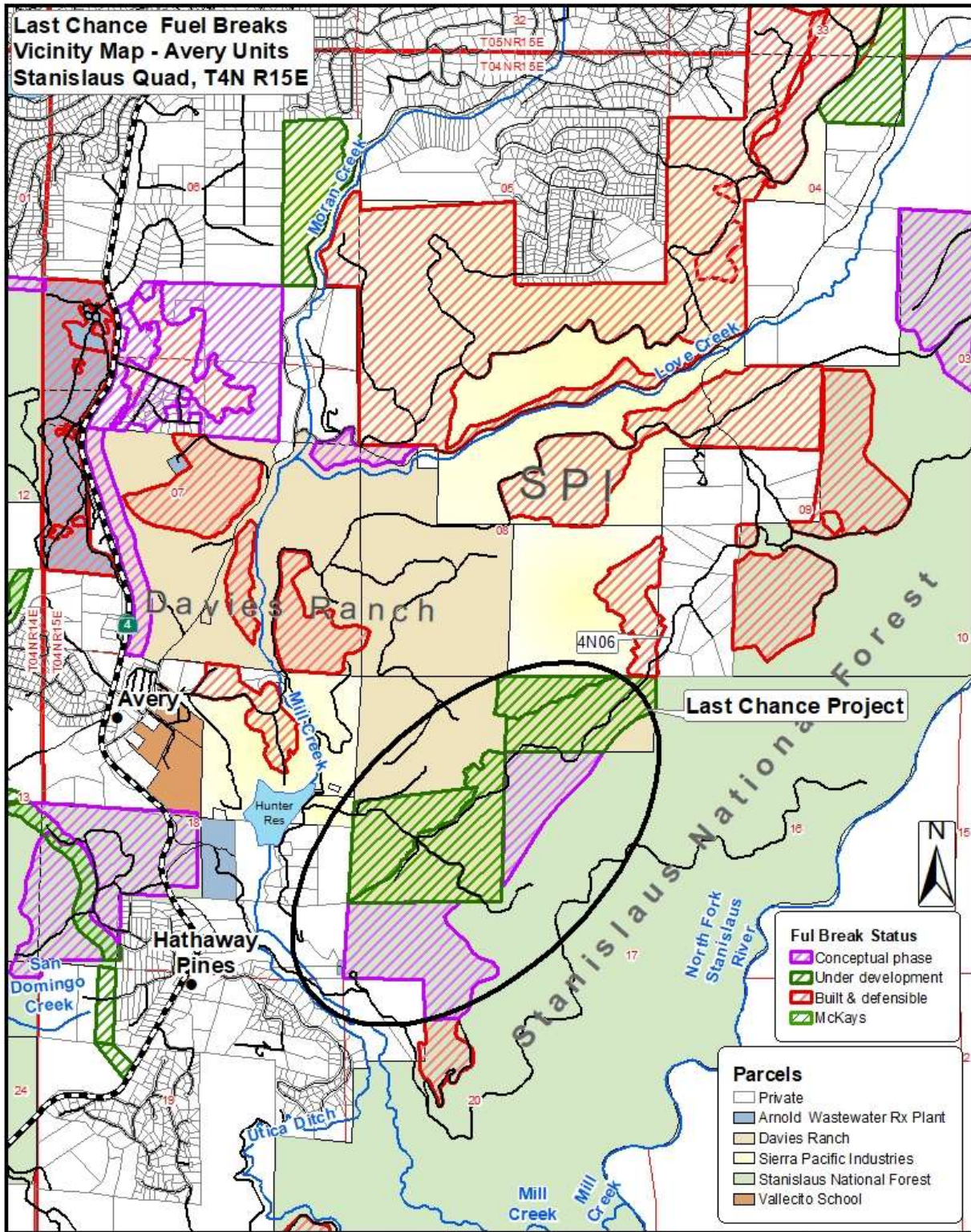
Indirect charges for the federally funded Last Chance project is 3.3% of the federal total and is well under the De Minimis rate of 10%. Indirect charges for the State funded Murphys project is 10% of the State matching total per CAL FIRE guideline and a portion of the federal indirect charges.

Note: The budget and project goals, objectives and tasks to determine if proposed expenditures are reasonable, allowable, and allocable. Please provide clear linkages between the project description (goals, objectives, and tasks) and budget. Additional information will be requested if detail is insufficient to do a cost analysis.



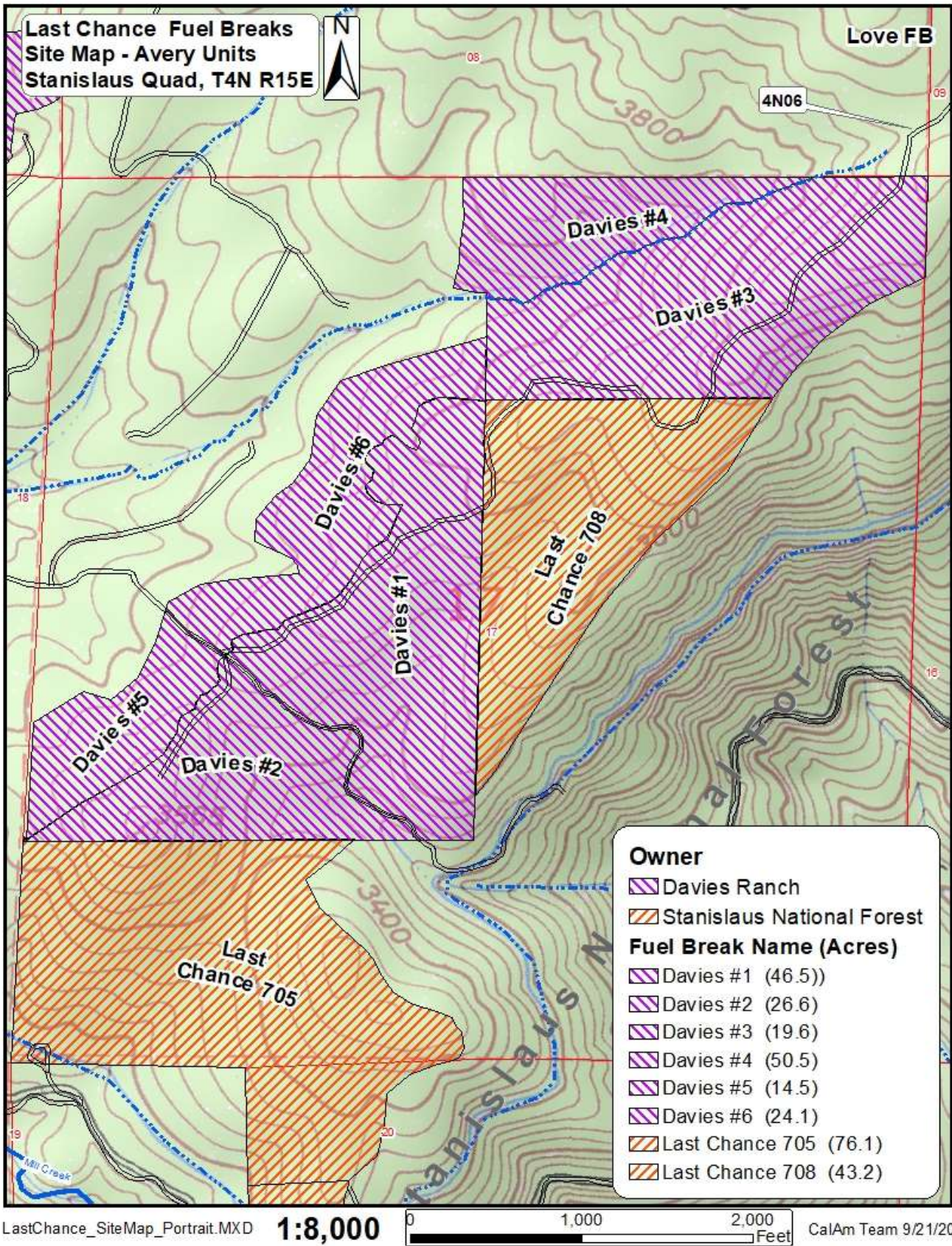
REGIONAL MAP. Orange areas depict 102 historic fires over 10 acres recorded since 1912. The red polygons are built, functional fuel breaks, the green are under construction and the purple are concepts. Most fuel breaks have been built after the Butte Fire in 2015 and the pine beetle drought/beetle epidemic that followed. Note that

the fuel breaks on the east flank of the WUI follow the canyon rim where wildfires have been stopped in the past. The location of the current Last Chance FB is shown in relation to its match, the Murphys project.



VICINITY MAP showing a segment of the Hwy 4 WUI. The densely populated areas are separated from the steep Stanislaus River Canyon by industrial timberland managed by SPI, the Davies Ranch managed under a Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan, and the STF with its forest management program. The ‘Cooperative

Forestry Assistance Program' will fund construction of the hazardous fuel reduction units on the Davies Ranch that are depicted in green. The adjoining purple units are on federal land and part of the Last Chance Fuel Break yet to be built.



SITE MAP shows the location of the proposed fuel breaks on the NF Stanislaus River Canyon rim. Funds from the current grant will be used to construct the Davies Units on the Davies Ranch . When the STF Units, Last Chance 705 and 708, are built, the Last Chance Fuel Break will be complete and move to the maintenance phase.



DAVIES SOUTHERN UNITS facing southwest showing the perimeter of the 2001 Darby Fire. Brush will be masticated, and the clumps of overcrowded conifers thinned to grow a shaded fuel break.



DAVIES EASTERN UNITS facing southwest from the SPI fuel break shown in the next image.



The **DAVIES** units on the east connect with the Love Fuel Break, an SPI pine plantation, that extends the fuel break system to Arnold on the north.

Expanded Project Budget					
Cost Category Description	Federal Agency (FS)	Applicant	Calaveras Co RCD (CCI grant)	Partner 2	Total
A) Personnel (position*rate*time)					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
B) Fringe Benefits - % Personnel					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
C) Travel #people*#trips*perdiem/mileage					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
D) Equipment[1]>\$5000 (inventory list)					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
E) Supplies (type*qty*cost)					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
F) Contractual (Unit, Acres, Rate)					-
Davies #1 Rx 46.5 ac X \$2100/ac	97,650.00				97,650.00
Davies #2 Rx 26.6 ac X \$2100/ac	55,860.00				55,860.00
Davies #3 Rx 19.6 ac X \$2100/ac	41,160.00				41,160.00
Davies #4 Rx 50.5 ac X \$2100/ac	106,050.00				106,050.00
Davies #5 Rx 14.5 ac X \$2100/ac	30,450.00				30,450.00
Davies #6 Rx 24.1 ac X \$2100/ac	50,610.00				50,610.00
Registered Professional Forester	14,100.00				14,100.00
Project Manager	14,020.00				14,020.00
Murphys Fuel Break Match			381,600.00		
Subtotal	409,900.00		-	-	409,900.00
G) Construction detail					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
H) Other (specify) detail					-
					-
					-
Subtotal	-	-	-	-	-
Total Direct Costs	409,900.00		381,600.00	-	791,500.00
I) Indirect Charges - include federally approved cost agreement (NICRA)	14,100.00		42,400.00		56,500.00
Project Total	424,000.00		424,000.00	-	848,000.00
J) Program Income (using Deductive Alternative)					

[1] Equipment is single unit values of \$5,000 or greater with a useful life of more than 1 year. Please itemize equipment/costs.

[2] Program income is the gross revenue generated by a grant or cooperative agreement supported activity during the life of the grant. Program income can be earned from fees charged for conference or workshop attendance, from rental fees earned from renting out real property or equipment acquired with grant or cooperative agreement funds, or from the sale of commodities or items developed under the grant or cooperative agreement. The use of Program Income during the project period may require prior approval by the granting agency.