

National Disaster Resilience Grant Community and Watershed Resilience Program Status Report

June 1, 2021





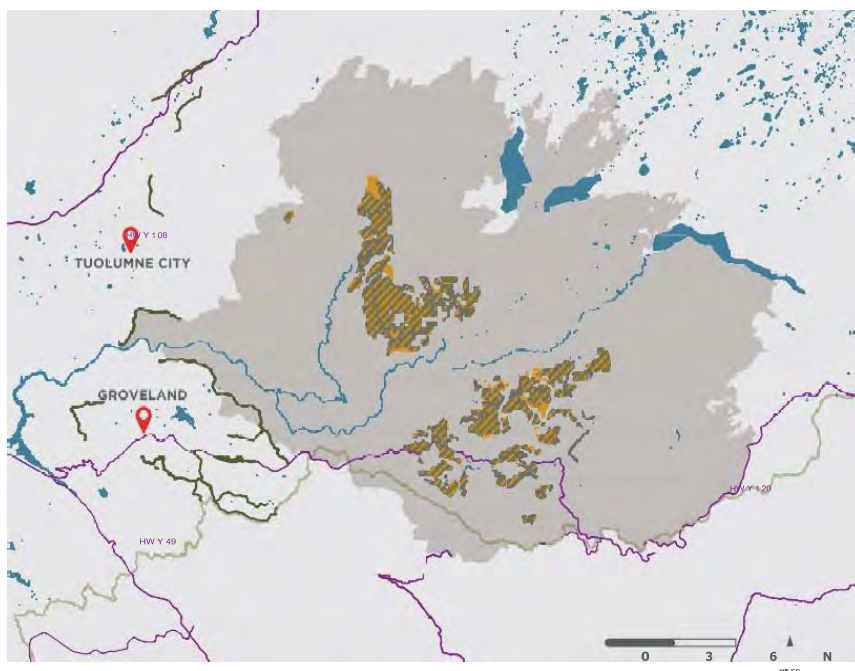
THE COMMUNITY AND WATERSHED RESILIENCE PROGRAM (CWRP)

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY AND WATERSHED RESILIENCE PROGRAM?

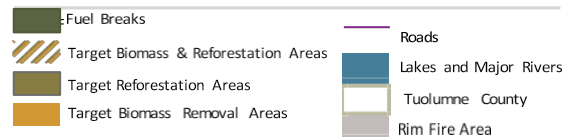
In 2017, \$70 million in Community Development Block Grant-National Disaster Resilience (CDBG-NDR) funding was granted for CWRP implementation by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CWRP will restore and mitigate impacts of 2013 Rim Fire federally declared disaster by improving forest watersheds and increasing community resilience. HUD granted California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) CWRP funding and HCD is working with seven Partners (Core Team) made up of local, state, and federal agencies, see logos below, on CWRP projects. All CWRP project activities will be completed by HUD grant expenditure deadline September 30, 2023. Note: The original deadline of September 30, 2022 was extended for one year by Congress due to impacts from the COVID -19 pandemic.

WHY IS CWRP NEEDED?

The 2013 Rim Fire burned more than 257,000 acres, devastating forest watersheds, local economies as well as threatening access to clean drinking water and damaging air quality. Initial estimates indicate that the Rim Fire released 11 million metric tons of greenhouse gasses (GHGs), or roughly equivalent to the annual GHG emissions from 2.3 million cars. The Rim Fire disaster area needs CWRP to address unmet forest recovery work, increase community protections and resilience. Successes of CWRP will be replicated in other areas of California.



CWRP PROJECT MAP - December 2017



HOW WILL CWRP WORK?

Resilient watersheds and communities are better prepared for the next intense fire. The CWRP will create resilience by implementing three (3) project activities: 1) Community Resilience Centers (CRCs) will provide ongoing community resources and protection during future fires; 2) the Forest and Watershed Health Project (FWHP) will restore forests and watersheds to reduce damage from future fires; 3) Biomass Utilization Fund (BUF) will finance businesses to utilize biomass and reduce fuels in the forest and increase the area's forest products industry.



THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





OVERVIEW OF THREE CWRP PROJECTS

Forest and Watershed Health Project (FWHP)

HCD provided CDBG-NDR funding to Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), United States Forest Service (USFS), California Conservation Corps (CCC) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for implementation of FWHP activities. There are five (5) activities associated with FWHP: 1) Noxious Weed Abatement; 2) Biomass Removal and Fuels Reduction; 3) Rangeland Reconstruction; 4) Fuel Break Expansions; and 5) Reforestation. USFS is the agency responsible for implementation of all these activities. SNC is HCD’s project coordinator for FWHP activities. USFS is being supported by CAL FIRE on the fuel break activity and by CCC for Rangeland activity.

Implementing all five FWHP activities will restore and protect the health of forests and vital watersheds in Tuolumne County and provide local communities protections from future wildfires.

Community Resilience Center (CRC) Project

HCD provided CDBG-NDR funding to Tuolumne County (County) to conduct feasibility work on possible CRC projects, one in Tuolumne City and one in Groveland, which were most impacted by the Rim Fire. Based on proven feasibility the county is developing two CRC projects. The CRC projects will increase community cohesion and resilience by providing a public facility for local residents to receive eligible year-round public services and act as a central gathering point. Proposed public services include: 1) adult educational programs; 2) job training; 3) senior meals programs; and others. The CRC facilities will also act as an emergency evacuation center during future disasters. The County will own and operate the CRC facilities, lease space to service providers, ensure the year-round services are provided to local residents and ensure that emergency functions will take place at the CRC during future disasters.

Biomass Utilization Fund (BUF) Project

HCD provided CDBG-NDR funding for initial feasibility studies to document BUF project viability. Based on proven viability, HCD entered into an agreement with Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), who is Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) on development of a BUF financial assistance program. SNC is HCD’s project coordinator for the BUF. RCAC will market the BUF project financing to developers wishing to create new BUF businesses in Tuolumne County or to expand existing local wood products businesses. To be eligible, BUF applicants must document their project will reduce Forest biomass, meet CDBG-NDR economic development underwriting standards, and document public benefit / national objective via new job creation with over half of the jobs to low and moderate county residents. Successful businesses will utilize biomass from local forests, thus reducing the fuel loads in the forests.

	2017		2018		2019		2020				2021				2022				2023			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Funding Obligations	CRC	FWHP							BUF													
CRC			Feasibility Studies						Complete Two CRCs													
FWHP			Environmentals				Complete Five Activities															
BUF			Feasibility Studies				Program and Development Projects															
Public Meetings*	■		■		■		■		■		■		■		■		■		■			

*Quarterly Board meetings to provide an update on the overall CWRP Program progress. Individual projects will hold meetings focused on specific activities. Timing on the project meetings varies depending on public development stage.



FOREST AND WATERSHED HEALTH PROGRAM

Approximate funding: \$26 million

Current Status

The USFS has received release of funds from HCD for all five FWHP activities. At the close of 2020, 14.2 million dollars in FWHP work has been initiated or finished. Most noxious weed abatement force account work has been completed. Some Reforestation preparation and planting has been completed and more is planned through 2022. Most of the Rangeland fence project is completed. All biomass removal activities are under contract, finished, or in process. Most fuels reduction work is completed. Fuel break work is expected to be completed in 2021 and 2022.



Budget and Expenditure Chart

Activities	Budgeted	Awarded and Expended	Remaining
Fuel Reduction/Biomass Removal	\$11,549,026	\$10,702,631	\$846,395
Noxious Weed Abatement	\$1,630,450	\$574,826	\$1,055,624
Rangeland Improvements	\$1,290,773	\$525,902	\$764,871
Reforestation	\$9,171,285	\$2,424,993	\$6,746,292
Fuel Break Expansions	\$2,590,129	\$35,186	\$2,554,943

Implementation Timeline

	2017		2018		2019		2020				2021				2022				2023				
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3		
Fuel Reduction/ Biomass Removal			NEPA / Planning																				
Noxious Weed Abatement			NEPA Review																				
Rangeland Improvements					NEPA Review																		
Reforestation			NEPA Review																				
Fuel Break Expansions					NEPA Review																		
Public Meetings	[Blue bar indicating quarterly meetings]																						

* Quarterly Meetings: SNC & USFS attends County Natural Resources Council and YSS.





FOREST AND WATERSHED HEALTH PROJECT



FWHP Accomplishments



Acres of fuel reduction/biomass removed	6,183	
Acres of Noxious Weeds Treated	2,703	
Acres Prepared for Reforestation Acres	3,254	New seedlings 500,000 planted
of Fuel Break Expanded	0	

Range Infrastructure Completed

Fencing (In Miles)	16.5
Corrals	1
Troughs	0
Cattleguards	3





BIOMASS UTILIZATION FUND

Approximate funding: \$22 million

Current Status

HCD hired Beck Group Inc. to complete a feed stock study and a biomass business feasibility study. At the completion of these two studies, in February 2019, it was concluded that development of multiple small to medium sized BUF projects was possible. SNC released a Request for Information (RFI) to study the level of interest of local developers in BUF projects and got back a number of project proposals. Based on two positive feasibility studies and interested RFI responses, HCD and SNC began developing a scope of work and budget for a CDFI to use in a CDBG-NDR agreement. HCD will use the agreement with the CDFI to fund developers with eligible BUF projects. In addition, SNC and HCD staff are working on specific CDBG-NDR financial assistance guidelines that will be used for processing BUF project funding applications. See data below for status of BUF activities and accomplishments.



Budget and Expenditure Chart

Activities	Budgeted	Contracted	Expended
Feasibility Studies	\$172,755	\$172,755	\$172,755
BUF Tool kit and Planning	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$60,616
Project Financial Assistance	\$19,016,911	\$0	\$0

Implementation Timeline

	2017	2018	2019	2020				2021				2022				2023		
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Feasibility Studies																		
Partnerships																		
Projects								Environmental				Project Funding						





BIOMASS UTILIZATION FACILITY

BUF Accomplishments



Feasibility Studies Completed	3
Project Environmental Analysis Underway	3
Partnerships Developed	3
Projects Scheduled for Funding Assistance	2
Tons of biomass processed for repurposed to merchantable wood products	0





COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CENTERS

Approximate funding: \$ 23 million

Current Status

The County of Tuolumne worked with HCD and the Core Team on documenting CRC facility feasible. The county has hired multiple consultants to conduct studies needed for the feasibility analysis. In 2017 the county completed the CRC programming document which outlined service and uses of the proposed facilities. A solicitation for real property was conducted in 2018 and two possible sites were identified, one in Groveland and one in Tuolumne. In March of 2019, schematic designs and environmental reviews were completed. The county submitted a formal CRC development proposal for review and approval by the Board of Supervisors and CDBG-NDR Partners. Funding gap was identified. HCD approved the use of HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to fill financing gap for county. See data below for status of CRC activities and accomplishments.



Budget and Expenditure Chart

Activities	Budgeted	Contracted	Expended
Feasibility Studies	\$566,239	\$566,239	\$566,239
Phase II Soft Cost, Land Acquisition and Construction	\$23,944,885	\$23,312,723	\$2,243,850

Implementation Timeline

	2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	
Feasibility Studies			Phase 1																					
CRC Development													Phase 2											
Public Services																								
Public Meetings			3	2					2				2											





COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CENTERS

Accomplishments



Feasibility Contracts Completed	5
Public Facilities Built	0
Public Services Provided	0

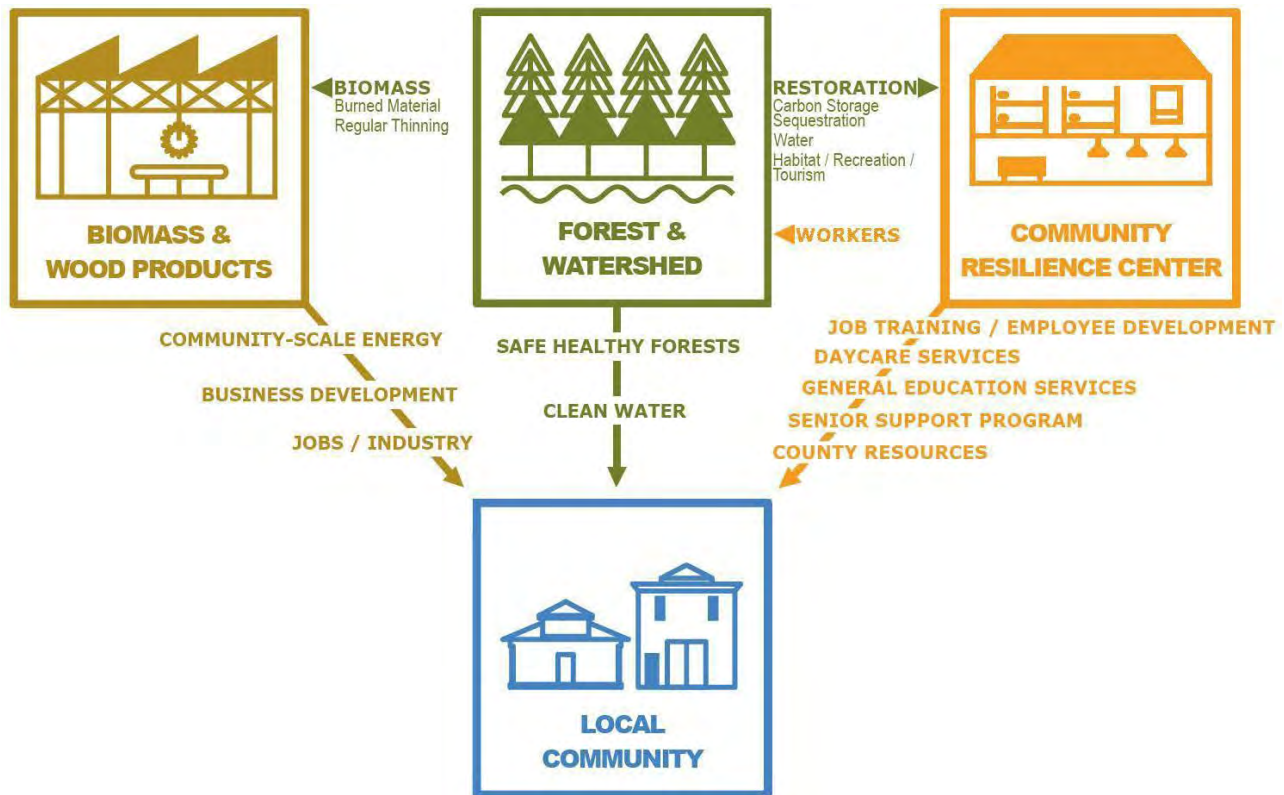




RESILIENCE AND REPLICABILITY

CWRP Replicability and Increased Community Resilience

The graphic below describes how the three pillars will support the communities in Tuolumne County in becoming more resilient and provide a template for other communities to use as they recover from disasters and prepare for future ones.



To find out more about the CWRP, visit:
www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/disaster-recovery-programs/nrc.shtml