



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Courthouse - 255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
TELEPHONE (707) 263-2368
FAX (707) 263-2207

Helen Owen – District 1

Bruno Sabatier – District 2

Eddie Crandell – District 3

Brad Rasmussen – District 4

Jessica Pyska – District 5

February 4, 2025

CAL FIRE Climate Investments Program
Forest Health Grants Program
Via ForestHealth@fire.ca.gov

**RE: Lake-Napa Private, Public, CBO, and Tribal Collaborative Forest Health Project, #
24-FH-LNU-71704542**

Dear Forest Health Grant Review Team,

The Lake County Board of Supervisors is pleased to express our support for CAL FIRE funding of the Lake-Napa Forest Health Project as described in the grant proposal from the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation.

This project would restore forests and increase wildfire resiliency/community safety on approximately 3,000 acres of private and public forests along the Lake-Napa County border in a region that roughly follows the Hwy 29 corridor. Napa Firewise will oversee the project, which includes cultural fire, fuels reduction via very small diameter thinning, piling, and burning, invasive plant control, and native conifer seed collection and planting to restore forest health, increase climate resiliency, and better protect communities from wildfire. I am inspired to see how this project is deepening collaborative forest health planning and improvement between private, Tribal, federal, and eventually State land managers in this area that encompasses two County jurisdictions. Project partners include Middletown Rancheria, Montesol Ranch, Bureau of Land Management, Clear Lake Environmental Research Center, and Lake County Resource Conservation District.

Priority treatments include:

- Repair and rehabilitate the forested areas affected by the Valley (2015) and LNU (2020) fires. This includes removing an abundance of dead material on the forest floor and dead and weakened trees. The type of trees that comprise the forest will be shifted to a more ‘natural’ mixed of species, similar to those found prior to European settlement;
- Remove excessive dead material and numbers of small trees will also reduce potential fire intensity, and thereby the chance a wildfire will damage the forest health. This in turn makes the carbon on the site more stable, and less likely to be emitted via smoke into the atmosphere;
- Conduct seed collection from local conifers (sugar pine, ponderosa pine and Douglas fir) and planting in denuded areas. Surprisingly, Napa and Lake Counties have a limited local seed supply. Creating a seed bank allows for genetic consistency and likely increased resilience of future trees. In addition, these seeds can support re-planting efforts after future fires since they can be stored for decades, creating another long-lasting and regional benefit of this grant;

- Support previous post-fire reforestation efforts with removal of competitive vegetation to accelerate reforestation;
- Support Middletown Rancheria's cultural burning of all the forest and wildlands on their Rancheria, including newly acquired trust lands;
- Improve forest health and wildfire resilience in some of the remaining pockets of mixed conifer-hardwood stands at the Montesol Ranch, directly adjacent to Robert Louis Stevenson State Park; and
- Restore unique habitat on BLM lands containing Sergeant Cypress and serpentine soils with post-fire restoration.

Additionally, we believe in Napa Firewise's ability to bring together and coordinate these communities for an effective project. We appreciate and enthusiastically support their willingness to serve as the lead organization for this collaborative project to protect and restore the forests and communities of both Lake and Napa Counties. Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.

Respectfully,
COUNTY OF LAKE

Chair, Lake County Board of Supervisors