

2020-2021 Yuba County RCD Financial Assistance Program – 2nd Quarter Update

May 7, 2021

Grant Agreement #: 3020-606

Overview of Progress: The Yuba County RCD has made good progress towards completing tasks outlined in the work plan. The table below shows the current status of each task and 1st quarter hours worked:

TASK	STATUS
TASK 1: Annual Work Plan & Budget	2021 Work Plan and Budget complete
TASK 2: Write Annual Report	Due to a need for an audit as well as current project and program status being incomplete, the annual report will be postponed until summer.
TASK 3: Apply for Grants	Will be coordinating another round of CalRecycle grant program this summer, partnering with Sutter RCD once again. Applied for several new grants in partnership with Sutter RCD and also Colusa RCD (see quarterly summary below).
TASK 4: Develop Fundraising Strategy	The Board has been having discussions with Yuba County Supervisors about ability for County to provide funding. Discussions with Yuba Water Agency to fund programs and staff.
TASK 5: Develop Partnerships	We co-hosted our first Working Group Meeting with NRCS and invited all our local partners to attend. There have also been a lot of conversations between Yuba RCD and Sierra Nevada Alliance, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Association of RCDs, Fire Safe Council, Natural Resources Conservation Services, and Yuba Water Agency to develop partnerships, programs, capacity, and funding.
TASK 6: Training Opportunities	None this quarter
TASK 7: Improve Community Visibility	Sutter RCD has been promoting Yuba RCD on their Facebook page in conjunction with the CalRecycle grant.
TASK 8: Update & Improve Website	Grant awarded with California Association of Special Districts to re-do website. Board is completing training and will launch new website in the next few months.
TASK 9: CalRecycle Grant	We had a successful cleanup of 3 sites. Invoices and final report have been submitted to CalRecycle.
TASK 10: AB38 Fee-for-Service Program	Concept plan has been developed. Board discussions, speaking to local realtors, and research on the new law have concluded that we may be too early trying to develop a program as the law doesn't go into effect until June 2021 and the state have not developed any way of tracking or enforcing the new law. If it's not being enforced then people aren't going to comply, which means the program would not be utilized.
TASK 11: Foothill Cleanup Program	Program summary, maps, fee schedule, photo documentation are complete. Just waiting on finalizing the budget for the pilot clean-up sites. We missed the Yuba Water Agency April grant deadline and are aiming for the October grant deadline.
Insurance Coverage	Board had to complete some additional research to find a reasonable insurance premium for our current capacity. We ended up finding one for half the cost of Special District Risk Management Association. Board reviewed Golden State Risk Management Authority application package in April and had questions but we hope to submit an application this month (May) and approve our coverage and premium next month.

Detailed Timecard for February 2021 – April 2021

Name: Alyssa Lindman – Board President (unpaid volunteer)

Date	Task/Description	Hours
2/9/21	Phone call with Joanna Lessard, Project Manager for Yuba Water Agency. Discuss IRWM grant program and Foothill Cleanup Program	1
2/17/21	Attend Yuba Water Agency IRWM Regular Meeting	2
2/22/21	Co-host NRCS-RCD Working Group Meeting	2
3/10/21	Meeting with Yuba Water Agency to recap working group feedback, questions, and concerns	1
3/17/21	Phone call with Tony Sunseri, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist. Discuss RCD and NRCS partnership and how RCD works with NRCS	1.5
3/18/21	Phone call with Yuba County Supervisor Randy Fletcher to discuss RCD capacity concerns, budget, and additional board members	1
3/18/21	Work on draft PowerPoint presentation for IRWM group in May	1
3/24/21	Phone call with Pa Yang, NRCS District Conservationist, to discuss feedback from Yuba Water Agency on working group and providing follow-up presentation to IRWM group. Review PowerPoint presentation	2
4/8/21	Phone call with Board member Kelli Evans at Sutter RCD to discuss new grants, finalizing CalRecycle cleanup report, and merger of RCDs	1.5
4/9/21	Draft overview of current status of RCD projects, grants, and programs	2
4/12/21	Attend Regional Forest and Fire Capacity meeting with SNC Chris Dallas and CARCD staff, Max Odland and Karen Buhr. Discuss forest needs and building RCD capacity to do more forest work.	1
4/14/21	Phone call with Nicole Lutkemuller at Sierra Nevada Alliance to discuss Sierra Corps Forest Fellowship Program and ability for RCD to host a fellow in 2022.	1.5
4/16/21	Phone call with Creighton Avila at Yuba Water Agency. Discussed grant opportunity to fund an SNC forest fellow. Discussed RCD capacity.	1
4/19/21	Phone call with Fire Safe Council Executive Director Steve Andrews to discuss partnering on SNA Forest Fellow.	.5
4/27/21	Meeting with Department of Conservation Grant Manager Jenny Di Stefano and CARCD's Executive Director, Karen Buhr. Discuss RCD merger between Sutter and Yuba Counties. Send summary to Sutter RCD	1
5/5/21	Email to SNA regarding fellow needs and potential inclusion in CalFire grant to host a fellow in 2022	1
TOTAL HOURS		21

Detailed Timecard for February 2021 – April 2021

Name: Gary Fildes – Board Director, Treasurer (unpaid volunteer)

Date	Task/Description	Hours
2/3/21 3/2/21 3/5/21 4/9/21 4/20/21 4/22/21	Task 5: Develop partnerships and projects. Conducted Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Reviews while training additional reviewers for the Yuba Watershed Protection & Fire Safe Council (YWP&FSC). Trainees may be used to help conduct future defensible space and home hardening inspections for homes being sold in high and very high fire hazard areas per AB38. Developing a coordinated effort with YWP&FSC to reduce structure loses in the Yuba Co. foothill region from wildland fires. Conducted 9 Reviews that last approx. 2 hrs each. Also, also time coordinating trainees' program & scheduling reviews	20
2/10/21 4/14/21	Task 5: Develop partnerships and projects. Attend monthly Yuba Watershed Protection & Fire Safe Council meetings. Report on YC RCD projects and pertinent information	5
4/17/21	Task 5: Develop partnerships and projects. Help put on and attend annual local Volunteers in Prevention lunch to kick off the upcoming fire season work as lookouts and helping Cal Fire issue burn permits. Short presentation on the Wildland Mitigation Advisory Reviews and YC RCD	4
TOTAL HOURS		29

Summary of Quarterly Activity, Goals, and Needs:

1. Yuba County RCD Long Range Goals

- Goal 1: Reduce Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution, Reduction of Fire Risk
- Goal 2: Provide forum and facilitation for the resolution of conservation issues
- Goal 3: Assist with Wildlife Protection & Enhancement, Wildfire Hazard Mitigation
- Goal 4: Promote Recreation & Tourism
- Goal 5: Increase Farm, Range and Forest Sustainability
- Goal 6: Improve YCRCD Viability

2. Forest Management & Fire Planning Needs

- Mechanical Thinning/Mastication Crews
- Outreach on home hardening
- Cost of home hardening for those who can't afford it (i.e. siding and vents)
- Training for staff (CEQA, Vegetation Management Plan, Harvest Treatment Plan)
- Resource Team → Having access to qualified professionals with proper experience and expertise would be. A team of people with experience ranging from CEQA to Registered Professional Forester (RPF).
- Participate in the interview/hiring process to ensure the right people are selected.
- Concerns about sharing → potential need for an agreement or letter of understanding to make sure every RCD has an opportunity to utilize the resources.
- Ability to coordinate with CALFIRE

3. General Needs & Considerations

- Additional board members
- Potential merge with Sutter County RCD
- Funds for overhead and staff – build capacity to take on more projects
- Determine priority resource concerns for Yuba County (“Needs Assessment”)
- Develop projects that address priority resource concerns

4. Active/Key Partners

- Sutter County RCD
- Colusa County RCD
- Yuba Water Agency (YWA)
- Yuba County Board of Supervisors (BOS)
- Yuba Watershed Protection & Fire Safe Council (YWPFC)
- Camptonville Community Partnership (CCP)
- Yuba Sutter Farm Bureau
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- California Department of Conservation (DOC)

5. Yuba County RCD Grants, Projects & Programs in Development

- **Foothill Cleanup Program** – program summary, project maps, fee schedule, and photo documentation are complete. Board is finalizing the budget for the pilot clean-up sites and then we can submit a “Project Short Form” to the Yuba Water Agency. We missed the Yuba Water Agency April grant deadline and are aiming for the October grant deadline. Once the IRWM group has all the project information, they will provide feedback and support for funding (if YWA can’t fund the program, they will help find another source).
- **California Special Districts Association Website Grant** – current website found to be not in compliance with state requirements and our board found out that CSDA had a grant we could apply for to get a completely new website and easy to use template so we applied in February. The grant was awarded in March to fund website redesign to meet state requirements.
- **Department of Conservation Financial Assistance Program** – grant award to help develop programs mentioned above and website. We have been unable to invoice for time as we have not been able to keep staff and when we had staff there was significant direction and help needed so it was more efficient for the board to complete tasks. DOC has agreed to let us reallocate the funds for other purposes, once we get staff back on board and determine what our future needs are.
- **Sierra Nevada Alliance Forest Fellowship Program** – currently working with SNA staff and key partners, SNC, YWA and FSC to find funding for the RCD and possibly FSC to co-host a fellow in January 2022. Annual cost is \$25,000 and covers full time staff benefits, reimbursements, and training. The Board hopes this will help us build our capacity to do more forest work.

Request sent to Nicole Lutkemuller to include Yuba RCD as a "soft agreement" partner in the CalFire grant she's working on. Spoke to partners, Yuba Water Agency and Fire Safe Council about getting a Sierra Corps Fellow for the RCD and FSC. They are both very supportive and advised they will try to do what they can. Grant application will need to be submitted to YWA to see if they can help fund the fellow and the grant window isn't open until October so we have to wait on that. FSC is in the middle of a changing of the guards, with the current Executive Director leaving and a new person coming on sometime this month. Current ED, Steve Andrews, said they would absolutely be interested in partnering with us on this and utilizing a fellow (50/50).

<https://sierranevadaalliance.org/sierra-corps-forestry-fellowship-program/>

6. Joint Projects/Programs with Sutter County RCD and Colusa County RCD

- **CARCD Specialty Crop Technical Assistance Hub** - Sutter County & Yuba County RCD grant through CDFA's Specialty Crop Block Grant program. This is part of the larger California Farm Demonstration Network dedicated to outreach and education on climate smart practices in specialty crops. This provides a great opportunity for overlapping outreach and education for monarch habitat and how it can be incorporated into specialty crop agriculture.

- **CalRecycle Farm and Ranch Cleanup Program** - Sutter County & Yuba County RCDs currently have separate CalRecycle grant awards but Yuba County relies on Sutter County to provide support on our behalf. Invoicing and final report have been submitted. Awaiting grant payment in the amount of \$134,420. Contractor payment \$126,972, providing \$7,448 unrestricted funds to the Yuba County RCD for staff time and overhead (staff time was volunteered by our contractor, who completed all the paperwork on our behalf). We will be pursuing another round this summer or fall.
- **GrizzlyCorps Partner Program** - this past January, the Yuba County RCD submitted a joint application with Sutter County RCD to the GrizzlyCorps Partner Program, to host a fellow between our two districts, for 11 months. In doing so we have split the \$20,000 annual cost share between our two districts and will each share a fellow part-time. Fellows work on projects that range from community outreach, education, and research, to conservation, farmland restoration, carbon farming plans, and wildfire resilience plans, as well as a variety of other fieldwork or administrative projects. This is really the type of experienced staff person we need to help drive grant based projects and programs. Unfortunately we were not selected but there is still a chance we might get someone. Our application was accepted but they just didn't have enough fellows. We will know in September if they will be able to provide a fellow. If we don't make it this year we will reapply next year.
- **CARCD Monarch Technical Assistance on Working Lands** - Colusa County, Sutter County and Yuba County Resource Conservation Districts submitted a grant in April 2021 to CARCDs. The RCDs will partner to provide farmers and ranchers with resources to support existing and new monarch habitats within the tri-county area covering rangeland along the foothills of the Coastal and Sierra Ranges and the cropland in the Sacramento Valley.
- **NRCS Healthy Soils Program** & Colusa County, Sutter County and Yuba County Resource Conservation Districts will work beside the NRCS to assist growers in applying for funding through EQIP programming and/or a CSA TA for CDFA programs such as Healthy Soils Programs for implementation funding.