

Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District Post Fire Recovery Assistance Program User's Guide

Created by the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District



Project Objectives:

The project provides an important means for landowners, who otherwise could not afford site preparation and reforestation treatments, to rehabilitate their lands in the wake of the Dixie (2021), Beckwourth Complex (2021), Hog and Sheep Fires (2020). Our goals are to remove standing dead forest fuels, restore forest health and resilience, stabilize soil and reduce erosion from the burned landscape, restore wildlife habitat for forest-dwelling species, and promote landscape-level carbon storage in trees. *This program will not require any cost to landowners* but will require some preparation and post-activity work as well as collaboration with the Honey Lake Valley RCD (HLVRCD), Lassen Fire Safe Council, and selected contractors. Our goal is to improve approximately 1500 acres of private lands in the district. These projects are grant funded through the United States Forest Service until 2024.

Step by Step Process

- 1. Fill out the interest form on our website**
<https://forms.gle/K7o6rcDR4fn79P2D6>
- 2. Selection for enrollment**, Criteria for selection will be based on a scoring scale. See Eligibility and Selection Process.
- 3. Enter into an agreement Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (HLVRCD)** This agreement will allow our team access to the property to begin planning the project. Agreements will stipulate terms and conditions, landowner responsibilities, direct responsibilities, and insurance requirements. Agreement will not be considered valid until all supplemental material such as restoration plans and CEQA compliance have been completed and attached. *No ground disturbing activities can be initiated until a site-specific Restoration Scope of Work and CEQA compliance environmental review are completed.*
- 4. We will contact you if you are selected for a cost-free site assessment with a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or their designee** - An initial visit with an RPF and/or RCD employee will help determine the complexity of the needs for you and the project

5. Work with RPF to develop a site-specific restoration plan- RPF's will work with you to create scope of work that helps achieve California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/Forest Practice Act compliance. These work plans may span several years depending on the restoration activities employed.

6. Restoration plan Incorporated into Landowner Agreement- The restoration plan will be incorporated into the landowner agreement approved by landowner, RPF, and HLVRCD.

7. HLVRCD and the Lassen Fire Safe Council will implement the landowner agreement and restoration plan utilizing licensed operators, contractors, subcontractors, and or staff.

Implementation may involve marking cutting boundaries and leave trees, procuring contractors, removing dead trees, ordering seedlings, herbicide manual application and coordinating with LFSC partners to increase efficiency. Fully implementing a restoration plan may take several years, depending on the desired activities and conditions.

8. Landowners execute Right of Entry (ROE) agreement with HLVRCD to allow access to the project site for monitoring purposes for up to 5 years. Once the project is closed, HLVRCD will need access to the property for monitoring. Requests to access the site will be given at least 72 hours in advance. Property visits will not be scheduled without written consent from the Landowner. No ground disturbing activities will occur after a project is closed.

Eligibility and Selection:

Requirements for Landowners

- *Nonindustrial private forest landowner (NIPF)*
- *Property fully or partially within the footprint of 2020 or 2021 wildfires.*
- *Forested areas only (Land with at least 10% tree canopy cover that is at least a half-acre in size)*
- *Land must be within the bounds of Lassen County*
- *Not enrolled in other sources of state, federal or grant funding from another organization for similar scopes of work (EQIP, FEMA, CFIP, fuel reduction or forest health grants with another organization)*
- *LFSC agreements require that landowners agree to use herbicides for emergent brush treatments to help seedlings survive.*

Priorities for Landowner Selection

- *Areas that are shovel ready and have a plan will be prioritized*

- *Areas with accessible properties to operators will be prioritized*
- *For the purposes of logistics and maximizing fire recovery, landowner/neighbors in proximity to each other will be prioritized. We encourage you to reach out to your neighbors and apply together to increase your chances of receiving funding.*
- *Landowners in the Janesville to Doyle area will be prioritized. This should not discourage you from applying, if we have a lack of interest we will extend to other areas.*
- *Non-industrial private landowners (NIPF) with moderate to high severity impacts are the highest priority.*
- *Selection will also be based on benefits to the public interest including a priority for properties that aim to remove standing dead forest fuels, restore forest health and resilience, stabilize soil and reduce erosion from the burned landscape, restore wildlife habitat for forest-dwelling species, and promote landscape-level carbon storage in trees.*

Criteria for Scope of Work

YES

- 1) *Removal of dead and dying trees with either heavy equipment*
- 2) *Site prep, biomass clearing and herbicide treatment*
- 3) *Tree planting*
- 4) *Tree survival surveys*

NO

- 1) *Removal of trees within the 100 defensible space zone*
- 2) *Removal of green trees*
- 2) *Forest thinning*
- 3) *Work on a slope of 40% or over.*
- 4) *Build, reconstruct, or repair preexisting damaged roads.*

Application of interest for post fire recovery funds does not guarantee funding or recovery work. We will contact you for further information if you are selected with the possibility of having a site visit. Submitting this application does not constitute any sort of obligation for participation.

We will be initially accepting applications until October 31st, 2023.

What	Timeframe
Landowner outreach, sign ups, site assessments, execute landowner agreements	Summer/Fall 2022
CEQA clearance completed	Summer 2022 – Winter 2022/23
Bidder outreach & contracting for recovery treatments	Summer 2022 – Summer 2023

Dead tree and accumulated debris removal, site preparation	Fall 2022 – Winter 2023
Seed sowing order for spring 2024 planting	December 2022
Pre- and post-emergent manual brush treatment with herbicide	2023 – 2024
Tree planting	Spring 2024 & 2025
1st year seedling survival monitoring	Spring/summer 2025
1 st & 2 nd yr seedling survival monitoring	Spring/summer 2026
Technical assistance and monitoring	Ongoing
Progress reporting	Jan. 1 – June 30; July 1 – Dec. 31 annually
Grant close out	March 31, 2027
Wildfires and equipment/operator availability may alter the dates listed above.	

For any further questions or potential issues regarding this interest form, please contact us at postfire@honeylakevalleyrcd.us

If you do not meet these criteria there are other federal programs that could fit your circumstances.

California Forest Improvement Program

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/california-forest-improvement-program-cfip/>

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

Emergency Forest Restoration Program

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/emergency-forest-restoration/index>

Lassen County Fire Safe Council

<https://www.lassenfiresafecouncil.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does this process take?

Timing depends on the complexity of the project (acreage, size of trees, environmental concerns) as well as the proximity to other landowners enrolled in the program. Each property will need a complete environmental review. Once this review is complete HLVRCD will procure licensed operators to implement projects.

The timeline for implementation will depend on operator/contractor availability and grant funding. The HLVRCD will make every effort to coordinate with landowners and operators to ensure timely production.

What costs are covered by the program?

If the landowner decides to enroll in the program HLVRCD will coordinate approved projects.

Removal of dead and dying trees with either heavy equipment or hand piling

2) Site prep, biomass clearing and herbicide treatment

3) Tree planting

4) Tree survival surveys

I have a licensed timber operator that I am already working with and would prefer to hire. Can I use them?

No. Funds through this program can only be used to pay contractors that have gone through a bidding and procurement process.

I believe there is commercial value in the burnt material on my property, can I sell wood products (logs, chips poles etc.)?

The HLVRCD program is a noncommercial wildfire recovery program. Any material sold, bartered or traded must be used to defray the costs of the operation or otherwise be returned to the program. By participating in our fire recovery program, you are transferring the title & ownership of the material as it gets cut to the Licensed Timber Operator working on your property. If there is value to any wood products it must be reflected via lower operating costs per acre. If you are interested in selling your dead trees yourself, you are not eligible to participate in our program

If trees are felled on my property, can I keep those for personal use? (ie. firewood, milling, building)

Yes. Any material left on site is yours. It must be clearly indicated in the scope of work what material will be left and where.

I have state defined “hazard trees” and structures on my property that were damaged or destroyed by the wildfire but have not been cleaned up yet. Will this program help with this?

No. In order to be eligible for this program, all hazard trees and hazardous material resulting from the wildfire must be cleared from the property. PFRAP is only available for “non hazard” trees or trees outside of the state and county right of ways. Further PFRAP will not work within 100’ foot defensible space zone as defined in California Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 4291.

Will I be able to choose what species are planted?

HLVRCD cannot guarantee a Landowner will receive any specific species beyond those that are suitable for the native conifer seed zone. While certain species might be desirable to landowner, our orders are based on availability. When ordering seeds, we aim for an even breakdown of the primary species that grew in the location in pre-fire conditions. The majority of the seedlings will be Ponderosa and Jeffery Pine.

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