



Yuba Roadside Fuel Treatment Project: Phase 1

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the purpose of this project?

A: Many roadsides in the Yuba Foothills are lined with thick brush and small trees that could fuel a large wildfire and make evacuation for residents and access for first responders very challenging in potential wildfire conditions. This project will reduce hazardous fuels within a **150-foot buffer along County-maintained roads** and within a **30-foot buffer along private and County Service Area (CSA)-maintained roads** to increase the safety of emergency access and evacuation routes and establish fuel breaks along roadways.

The primary objective of this project is to improve evacuation routes for residents in case of wildfire. The project will also allow for better access by emergency personnel, reduce fuel within areas at high risk of wildfire ignition (i.e., roadside vegetation), and reduce the risk of lateral wildfire spread to natural resources and/or structures. Roads are a common source of wildfire ignitions and can become extremely dangerous in a wildfire if roadside vegetation is not maintained. Reducing fuels along roads will reduce the radiant heat impacting vehicles on the road during a wildfire.

For more information, please see the following resources:

- [The basic principles of forest fuel reduction treatments \(Agee and Skinner 2005\)](#)
- [Effect of fuel treatments on fuels and potential fire behavior in California, USA, National Forests \(Vaillant et al 2009\)](#)

Q: What does this project involve?

A: The project will entail the removal of smaller, connected ladder fuels and flammable vegetation such as dense limbs, branches, and interconnected thickets of trees less than 12-inches diameter. The cutting and mulching or chipping of this material greatly reduces flammability and flame length in the event of a wildfire and improves public safety along the thoroughfares. The cutting, mulching, and chipping will be completed with small to mid-size mechanical mastication tractors, chain saw cutting and pull-behind chippers, and in some cases a tracked chipper.

Following thinning treatments, there will be focused applications of herbicide on sprouting brush species to minimize resprouting and maintain project effectiveness only where landowners are favorable to that approach. Herbicides are not a requirement as part of this project.

For more information, please see the following resources:

- [Perspectives from a Long-Term Study of Fuel Reduction and Forest Restoration in the Sierra Nevada \(Collins, Stephens, York; Tree Rings Fall 2019, pg.7-9\)](#)
- [How big is enough? Vegetation structure impacts effective fuel treatment width and forest resiliency \(Kennedy et al 2019\)](#)

Q: Why was 150' / 30' selected as the treatment area?

A: The 150' & 30' buffers were determined based on scientific findings that wider fuelbreaks better protect communities. Although 400m – 800m (1,312 – 2,624 ft) or larger fuelbreaks are often recommended for effective treatments, we balanced these findings with the high density of landowners in the area and their privacy and aesthetic needs to develop a feasible yet effective project. The concern with projects that only treat the right-of-way strip along a road is that “if the fuel treatment buffer around a community is too narrow, then it may not be possible to actively protect human lives and property” (Kennedy et al 2019). See resources listed above for more information.

Q: Where is this project located?

A: Generally north of Marysville Road, East of Frenchtown Road, and West of Fountain House Road, and areas surrounding Collins Lake.

Project map: <https://yubafiresafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/21-FP-NEU-0132-MAP-update.pdf>

Q: What does “backup area” mean on the project map?

A: There are additional areas that may be treated as grant funds allow, and depending on the response levels for Right of Entry agreements. Roads with very low participation rates may not be treated in favor of a backup area.

Q: When will the work be conducted?

A: The project team is acquiring property access agreements now. Biological and cultural surveys will begin this spring. Fuel reduction work will begin in late spring 2023, pending weather conditions. Certain treatment types (e.g. mastication) will not be conducted during high fire danger periods. The project will be carried out through fall and winter of 2023-2024.

Q: Why is herbicide application part of the project?

A: Following mechanical treatment, it is anticipated that brush and hardwoods will re-sprout. This resprouting will reduce the effectiveness of the treatment over time. The use of herbicides will control resprouting vegetation, and thus increase the effectiveness of the treatment over time. It is possible for resprouting vegetation to be controlled through manual cutting, but this option carries a much higher cost and must be repeated annually, and for several years past the duration of the grant.

Q: What type of herbicide will you be using and how will it be applied?

A: The specific herbicides to be used are unknown at this time. Per California law, a licensed Pest Control Advisor (PCA) will be consulted to prescribe specific herbicides to be used, application timing and application rates. The application of herbicide is highly regulated in the state of California. More information about herbicide regulation can be found at <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov>

Q: Can I opt out of herbicide application, but participate in the rest of the project?

A: Yes! A landowner can choose to participate in the rest of the project and still opt out of herbicide use. Yuba Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council encourages participating landowners who opt out of

herbicide application to complete manual cutting of re-sprouting vegetation on portions of land that they own within the project in order to maintain project effectiveness.

Q: Where has similar work been successfully completed?

A: Yuba County Public Works conducts similar work along roadsides in Yuba County every year, however they are limited to working solely in the right-of-way along County roads. Similar projects implementing wider fuelbreaks and landscape-scale fuel reduction treatments have occurred and are continually being developed throughout the state. Locations of these projects and statewide statistics can be viewed at: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/dfb8672f201145a4a8bf04cd9d3e37c1/page/Overview/>

Q: Can I see a demo of this work before I agree to the work being conducted on my property?

A: We are planning to treat high priority and high participation roads this spring. Landowners who are undecided about participation in the project can enroll their property after this initial treatment has occurred. Note that once a road has been completed, contractors will not return to this road to do late enrolling properties.

Q: How is this project any different than PG&E's vegetation management work?

A: PG&E is mandated by the CPUC to maintain their utility easements. With this project, the landowner is not mandated to participate, but can benefit from the grant funding the Yuba Fire Safe Council (YWPFSC) secured from CAL FIRE and take action to reduce vegetation fuel loading on portions of their property adjacent to the roadways. This project is subject to specific environmental requirements under the Cal VTP (see below) which are different than those mandated by the CPUC for utility work.

Q: How can I request you don't remove specific plants?

A: Email yubahfr@masonbruce.com to schedule a time to meet with a project forester on your property and to identify specific vegetation to be retained. If the requested vegetation retention is at a level that treatment would not be effective, your property may be excluded from treatment.

Q: Who will be completing the work on my property?

A: A team of natural resource consultants and professional foresters (RPFs and Arborists) were hired to plan and implement the project, and will procure a licensed, bonded, and insured timber operator (LTO) or tree service company to implement the on-the-ground fuel reduction work. These entities are contracted under the YWPFSC and are separately insured and licensed entities. The implementation contractors will be closely supervised by the forestry team to ensure project goals are being met. The forestry team will ensure that work occurs under appropriate weather conditions and per notification requirements in Right of Entry agreements.

Q: What environmental protections will be in place to protect my property?

A: This project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Project compliance with CEQA has been obtained through the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) developed by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. The project was assessed and found to be within the scope of the CalVTP, verified by a Project Specific

Analysis (PSA) prepared for county roadways. The CalVTP incorporates both standard protection requirements and mitigation measures designed to minimize effects to the environment. These include protections related to wildlife, rare plants, watercourses and water quality and soils. These documents can be viewed on the California Board of Forestry's website at:

- [California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection](#)
- [Yuba Roadside Fuel Treatment Project Project-Specific Analysis and Addendum](#)
- [Yuba Roadside Fuel Treatment Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program](#)
- [Yuba Roadside Fuel Treatment Project Biological Resources](#)

Q: I have more questions. Who can I talk to?

A: Please reach out to our project team lead at yubahfr@masonbruce.com or 530-786-0650.

The Fire Safe Council can also be reached at info@yubafiresafe.org or 530-645-2236. Our staff and volunteer capacity is limited, but we will respond as quickly as possible.