

# **Smith River National Recreation Area Pre-Season Wildland Fire Meeting**



## 2026 Smith River NRA Pre-Season Wildland Fire Meeting AGENDA

**Meeting Date/Time:** May 13, 2026, 11:00AM-13:00PM

**Meeting Location:** Gasquet Ranger Station

**Meeting Purpose:** The pre-season meeting provides an opportunity for us to share our wildfire preparedness and planning efforts for the 2026 fire season.

**Hosted by:** USFS District Ranger Kathy Allen and Del Norte County District 3 Supervisor Chris Howard

**Welcome/USFS Leaders Intent-** (11:00-11:15)-*Kathy Allen, District Ranger*

**Del Norte County District Supervisor** (11:15-11:25)-*Chris Howard, District 3 Supervisor*

**National Weather Service** (11:25-11:40)-*James White*

**USFS Fire Response** (11:40-11:50)-*Fire Management Officer, Arturo Gasdik*

**Fuel Treatments** (11:50-12:05)-

*Sheila Balent—FS-District Fuels Planner and Brandy Hurtado-District Archeologist, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation-Cynthia Ford, Rachel McCain, and Elena Sisneros*

**Partner Report Out** (12:05-12:35)

**Questions and Answers** (12:35-12:50)

**Close out** (12:50-13:00)- *Chris Howard/Kathy Allen*

**\*\*\* a light buffet lunch to follow**

# District Ranger-Kathy Allen



# 2026 FS Fire Season Priorities

- Protecting lives, communities, infrastructure, and Natural Resources
- Supporting firefighters
- Reducing wildfire risk, and
- Working together across all boundaries

# Local Operational Focus

First and foremost, safety drives every decision we make.

Second, we are also continuing an aggressive initial attack strategy where conditions allow and where it can be done safely.

Third, we are continuing active fuels management across the district.

# Partnerships/Preparedness

- Cross Boundary Response
- Relationships
- Coordination
- Shared Preparedness

# Leadership Intent

- Protect lives
- Support our firefighters
- Strengthen partnerships
- Reduce wildfire risk
- Make risk-informed decisions

# District 3 Supervisor-Chris Howard



**National Weather Service**

**James White**

**District Fire  
Management Officer  
Arturo Gasdik**

# Fire Suppression Program

- 3-Engine Modules
- 1-Water Tender
- 3-Fire Prevention Patrols
- 1- Fire Lookout
- 1-25 Person Interagency Hot Shot Crew
- 1-10 Wildland Fire Module (WFM)



# SRNRA Type 3 Engines



# Fire Prevention



# Smith River IHC





NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

Central Field Station

STESE National Conservation Area

Man in dark jacket and cap, standing on the far left.

Man in tan shirt and cap, standing in the back row.

Man in dark jacket and cap, kneeling in the front row.

Man in dark jacket and cap, kneeling in the front row.

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Man in dark jacket and cap, kneeling in the front row.

Man in dark jacket and cap, standing on the far right.

# Ship Mountain Fire Lookout



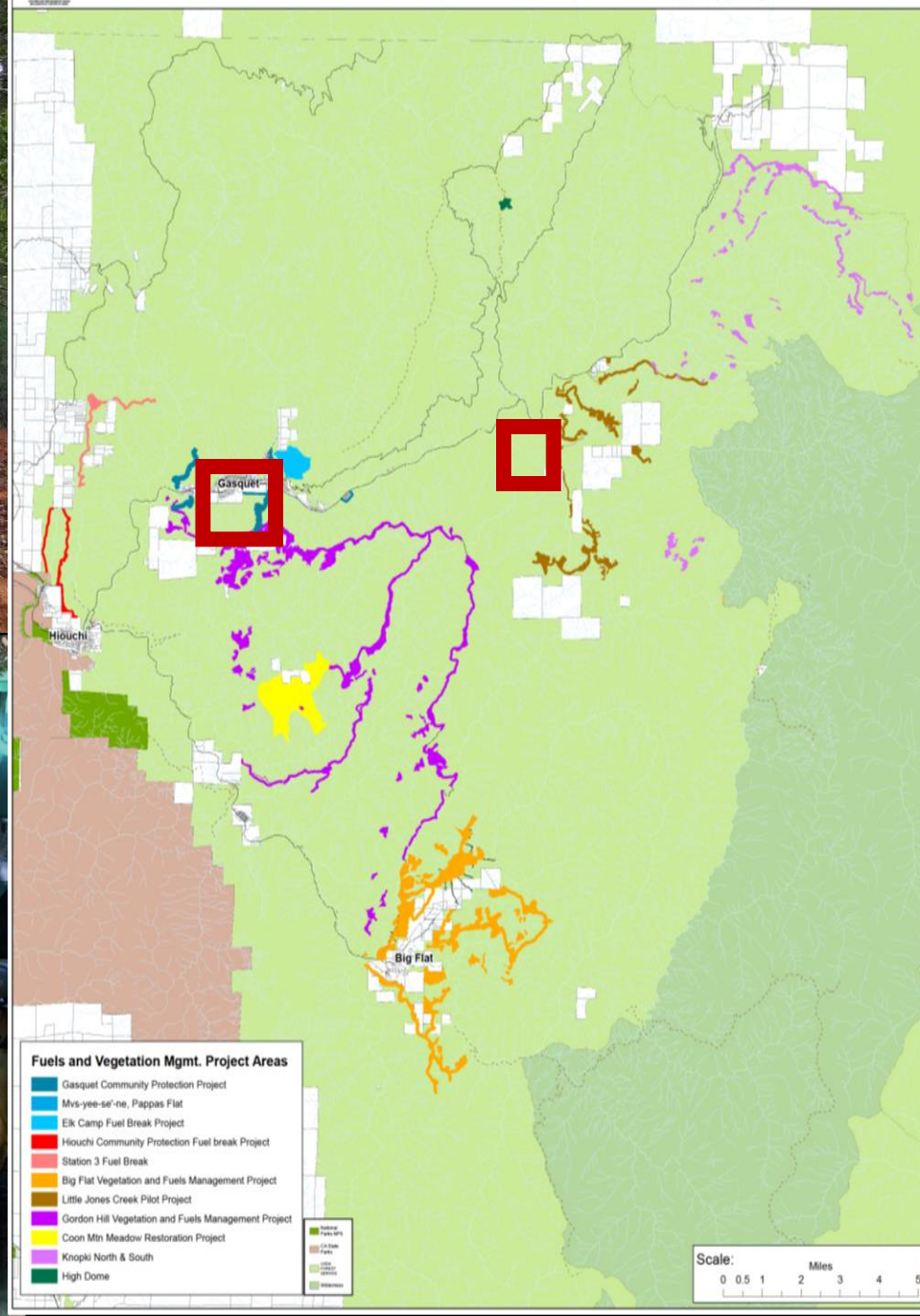
**Sheila Balent**  
*District Fuels Planner &*  
**Brandy Hurtado**  
**District Archeologist**  
*Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation*  
*Cynthia Ford*  
**&**  
**Rachel McCain**



Landscape Level Fuels Reduction / Partnerships




Smith River National Recreation Area Landscape Level Ongoing Projects



# Gasquet Community Protection Project Close Out Field Trip-March 2025





# Prescribed Burning Accomplishments- After Fire Season 25/Current 26

## 386 acres

### Gordon Hill Project

- 170 acres on French Hill and Hurdygurdy Roads- Past Hurdygurdy Bridge.

### Big Flat Project

- 216 acres on Fox Ridge, Hurdygurdy, and Indian Bar Roads- Up the GO Road.



# Cooperative Stewardship of Mvs-yee-se'-ne & Cedar Rustic

Tiered to Six Rivers Hazardous Fuels and Fire Management Project (Fire and Fuels Project)

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/sixrivers/projects/archive/57348>

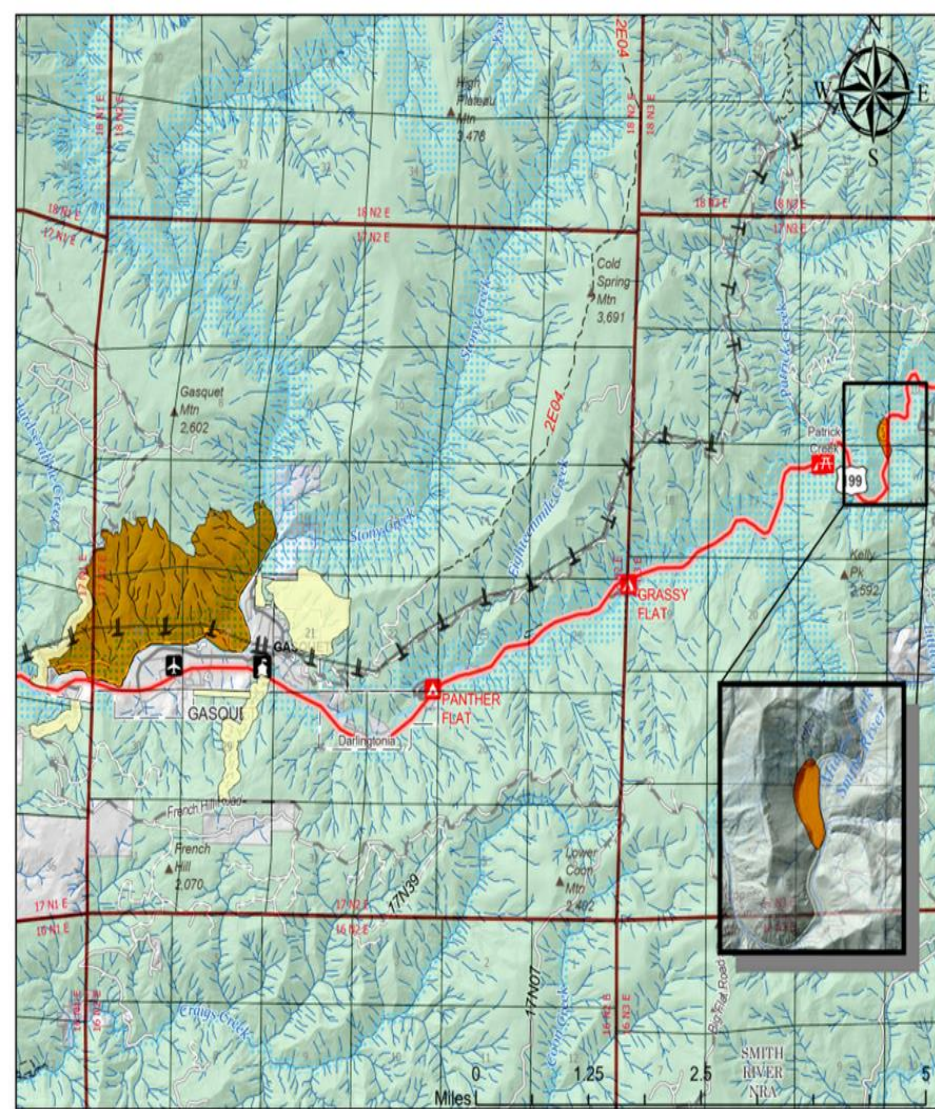
# Objectives and Outcomes

Reduce wildfire risk to natural and cultural resources, county-dependent utility infrastructure, and Gasquet residential areas

**Total Project Acres:  
1505**

Continued Tribal crew workforce development and funding, ecocultural restoration, co-management principles

Decrease risk to habitat and water quality from wildfire impacts, pathogens, and invasives; establish additional strategic control feature for Gasquet



## Mvs-yee-se'-ne & Cedar Rustic Restoration Project Overview

- MYSNCR Project Boundary
- PPL Transmission Line
- Existing Fuel Break
- GCPP
- Elk Camp

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This map is intended to depict physical features as they generally appear on the ground and may not be used to determine title, ownership, legal descriptions, legal jurisdiction, including restrictions over water or trails, or access restrictions that may be in place on other public or private land. Obtain permission before entering private lands, and check with appropriate government officials for restrictions that may apply to public lands. Lanes, roads and trails within the boundaries of the National Forest may be added to restrictions on motor vehicle use. Obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map or similar of the local Forest Service Office for motor vehicle access information. Natural hazards may or may not be depicted on the map, and land users should exercise due caution. This map may not be suitable for navigation.





## Current Conditions and Management-Timeline

**1989-1991:** Land exchange, National Register nomination and listing, Passport in Time project

**1995:** DM Signed, *Mvs-yee-se'-ne Understory Burn*. First entry (timber sale, handpiling and 5-acre perimeter burn)

**1996:** Ten (10)-acre understory burn in the Oregon White Oak stand takes place.

**2001:** Maintenance burning of fifteen (15) acres

**2006:** LTF signed to continue management

**2008:** Maintenance burning of fifteen (15) acres

**2010:** Five (5) acres burned outside the oak stand; Culture Camp

**2011:** Maintenance burning of fifteen (15) acres; LTF signed to continue management

**2014:** Four and one half (4.5) acres burned outside the Oak stand

**2017:** First Annual Tolowa Summer Youth Day at *Mvs-yee-se'-ne* (every year since except 2020, 2021), NWYC Invasive weed treatment

**2018:** Maintenance burning of fifteen (15) acres

**2020:** Thesis "*Dendroanthropological Applications in Adaptive Management: A Multi-Methodological Approach for Interpreting Cultural Landscape Change at Mvs-yee-se'-ne*"

**2021:** Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Funding received: \$67,253

**2022:** Forest and Nation lop and scatter five (5) acres of invasive weeds

**2023:** Five (5) acres burned outside the oak stand; GNA executed; FWF HIP executed

**2024:** *Mvs-yee-se'-ne* & Cedar Rustic project proposal, public engagement

**2026:** *Mvs-yee-se'-ne* & Cedar Rustic Checklist signed, begin implementation

# Mvs-yee-se'-ne: Implementation Strategy

Treatment Focus	Year														
	Initial Entry				Maintenance					Maintenance					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
NNIP	Initial				NNIP Maintenance, Native Planting and Monitoring										
Fuels / Fire	Low-Load Shrub														
					UB /					UB /					UB /
	CHP/ WO/ HCP	WO/ HCP	PB	PB	UB	X	X	X	UB	X	X	X	UB	X	X
	Moderate-High Load Shrub														
HCP															
					HCP / PB					HCP / PB					UB



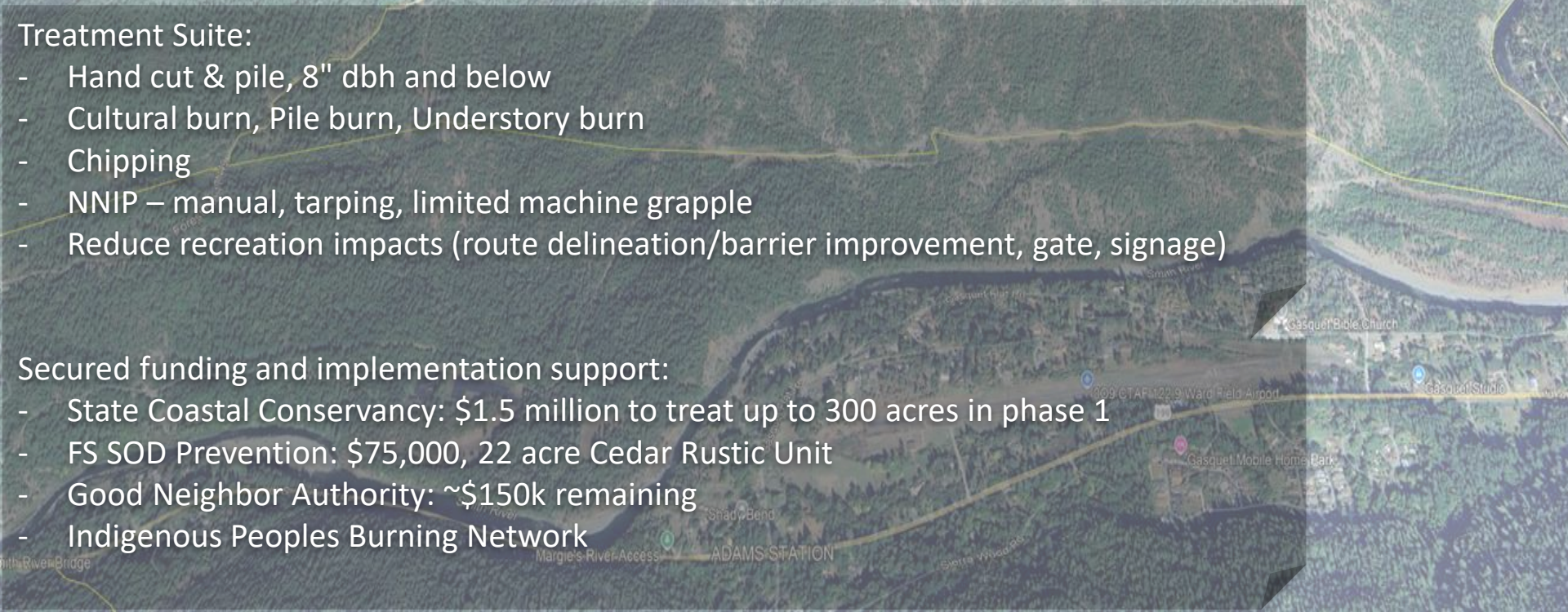
Treatment Type Key: CHP (Chipping); HCP (Thin, Hand Cut & Pile), PB (Pile Burn), UB (Understory Burn), X (No Treatment), WO (White Oak Understory burn)

## Treatment Suite:

- Hand cut & pile, 8" dbh and below
- Cultural burn, Pile burn, Understory burn
- Chipping
- NNIP – manual, tarping, limited machine grapple
- Reduce recreation impacts (route delineation/barrier improvement, gate, signage)

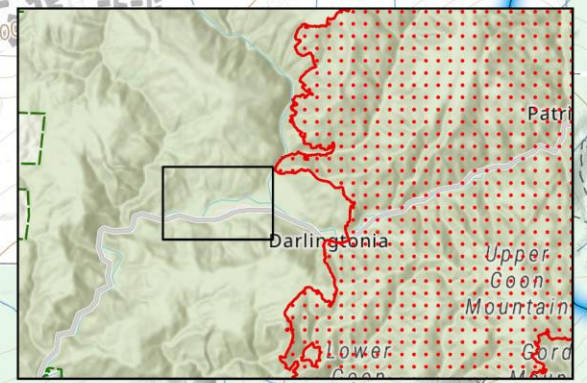
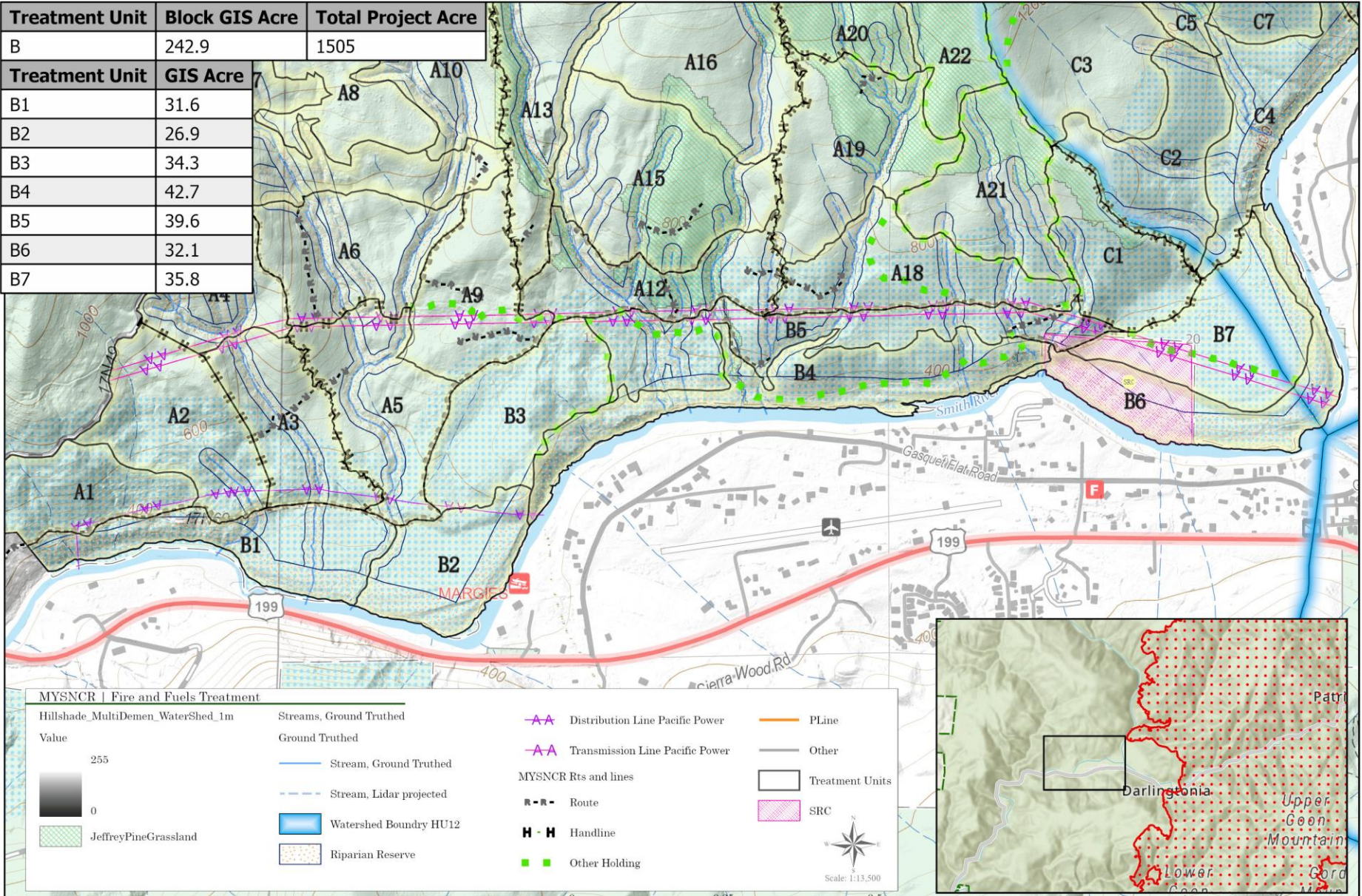
## Secured funding and implementation support:

- State Coastal Conservancy: \$1.5 million to treat up to 300 acres in phase 1
- FS SOD Prevention: \$75,000, 22 acre Cedar Rustic Unit
- Good Neighbor Authority: ~\$150k remaining
- Indigenous Peoples Burning Network





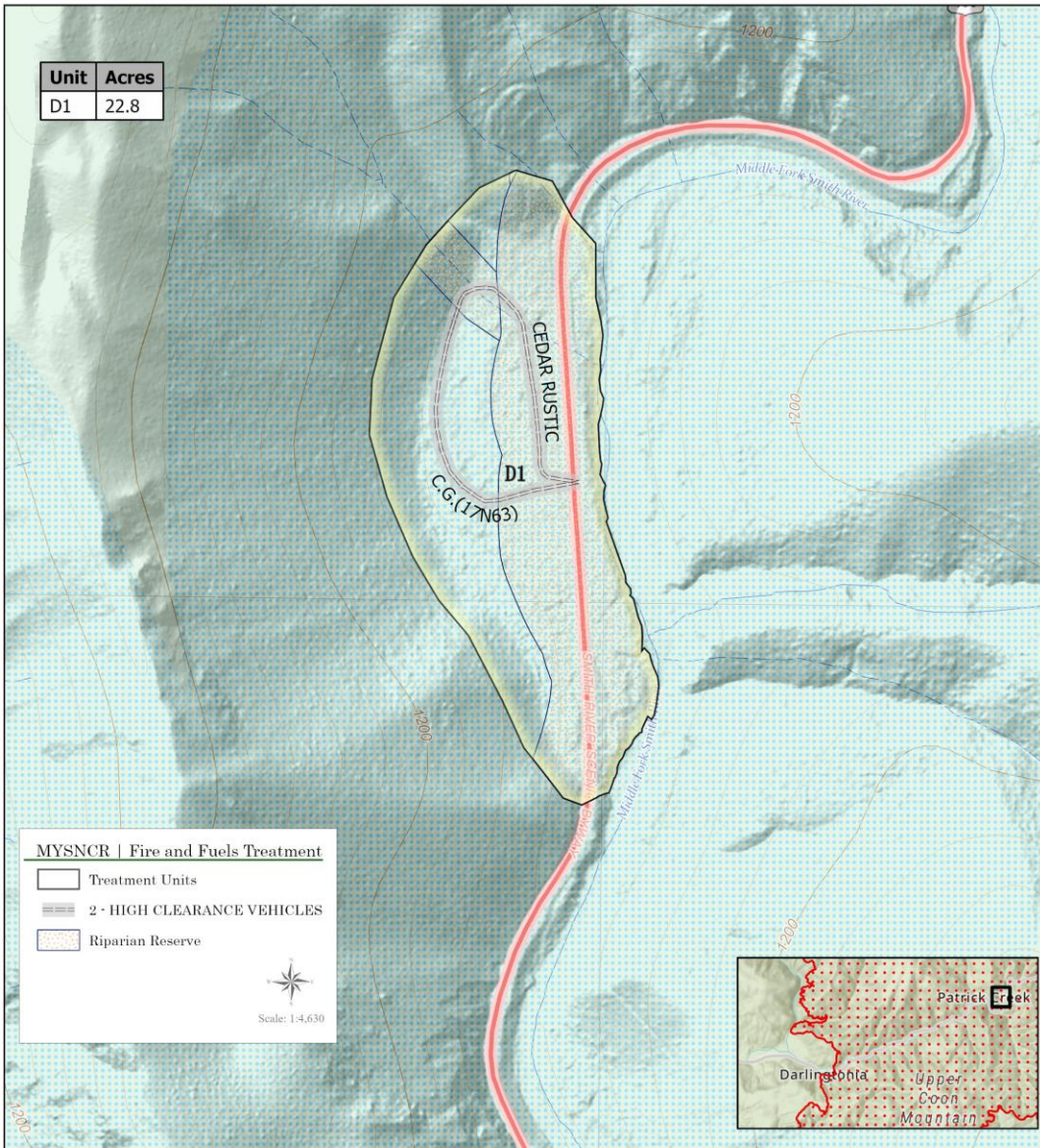
Treatment Unit	Block GIS Acre	Total Project Acre
B	242.9	1505
Treatment Unit	GIS Acre	
B1	31.6	
B2	26.9	
B3	34.3	
B4	42.7	
B5	39.6	
B6	32.1	
B7	35.8	





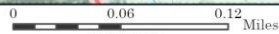
MYSNCR | Cider Rustic

Unit	Acres
D1	22.8



**MYSNCR | Fire and Fuels Treatment**

- Treatment Units
- 2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES
- Riparian Reserve



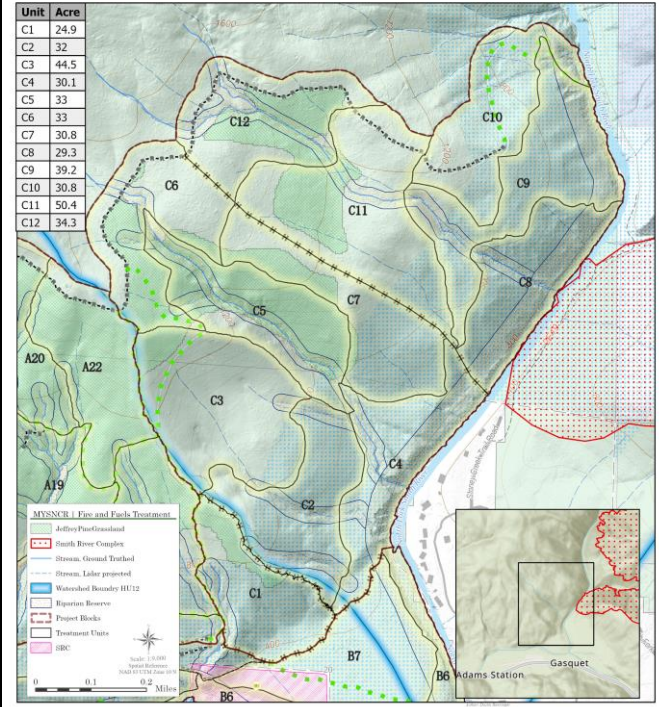
Author: Dustin Benninger  
Date Printed: Sep 12, 2023  
F:\FS\FS Six Rivers Project\SRNCR\Map\Gasquet\Water\Units\101-025-APX

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MYSNCR | Mys-Yee-Sit-No | C Block

Unit	Acres
C1	24.9
C2	32
C3	44.5
C4	30.1
C5	33
C6	33
C7	30.8
C8	29.3
C9	39.2
C10	30.8
C11	50.4
C12	34.3



- MYSNCR | Fire and Fuels Treatment**
- Jeffrey/Panofrontal
  - Smith River Complex
  - Stream, Stream Treatment
  - Stream, Lateral Treatment
  - Watershed Boundary HU12
  - Riparian Reserve
  - Project Blocks
  - Treatment Units
  - SBC



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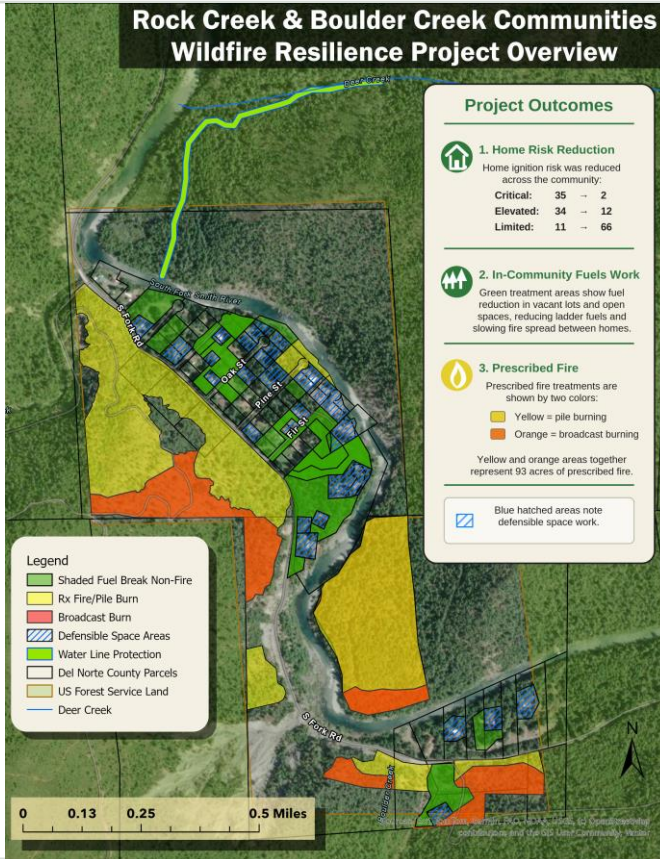
# Partner Report Out

- Smith River Alliance
- Del Norte Fire Safe Council
- Caltrans
- Pacific Power
- CAL FIRE
- Other

# Rock Creek & Boulder Creek

Partner report with Grant Werschull • Smith River Alliance

## Rock Creek & Boulder Creek Communities Wildfire Resilience Project Overview



## Key takeaways

### Private Parcel Ignition Risk Reduction

<b>Reduce Critical</b>	<b>35 → 2</b>
<b>Reduce Elevated</b>	<b>34 → 12</b>
<b>Increase Low</b>	<b>11 → 66</b>

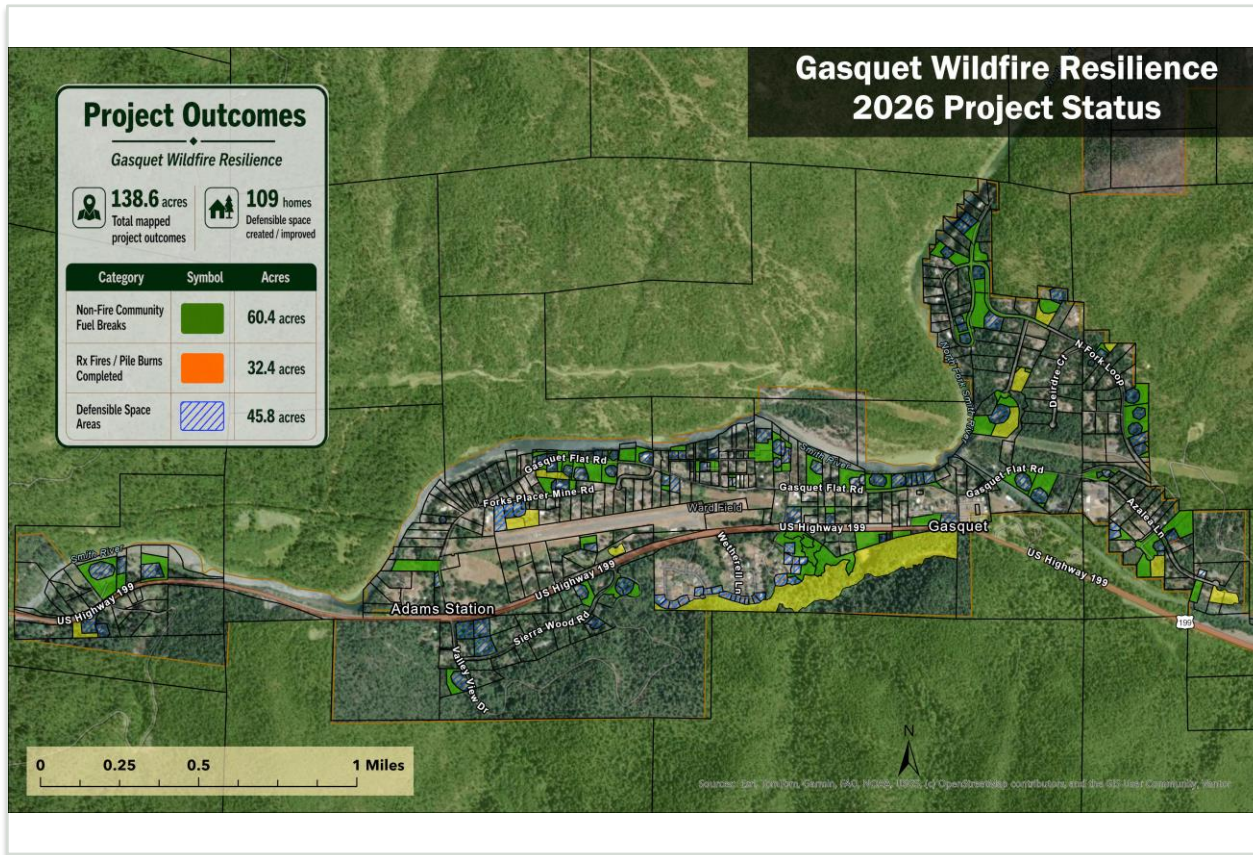
### Fuel Reduction

Defensible Space (17.4 acres)	<b>33 homes</b>
Community Fuel Breaks	<b>24.0 acres</b>
Prescribed Fire / Pile Burn	<b>92.9 acres</b>

- In-community fuels work and open-space treatments
- Water line protection integrated into the project footprint
- Strong collaboration among SRA, NRCS, Lomakatsi, USFS, CALFIRE, and DNFSC

# Gasquet Wildfire Resilience

Current work underway along the Hwy 199 corridor under a Community Wildfire Defense Grant



## Key takeaways

**109 Homes** with defensible space created or improved

### Fuel Reduction within Gasquet

Defensible Space **45.8 acres**

Community Fuel Breaks **60.4 acres**

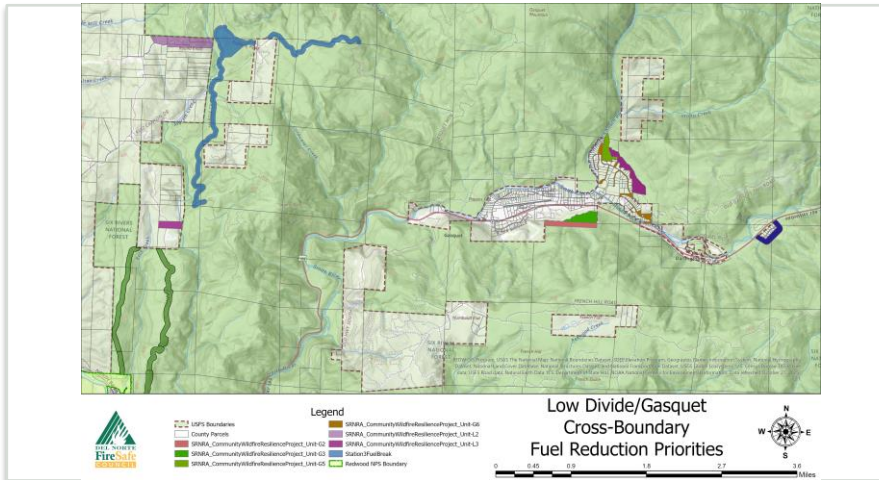
Prescribed Fire / Pile Burn **32.4 acres**

- Defensible space, non-fire fuel reduction, and pile burn / prescribed fire work distributed through Gasquet and surrounding private lands.
- Community-scale protection along a critical Hwy 199 corridor community
- Current implementation connects directly to broader cross-boundary priorities

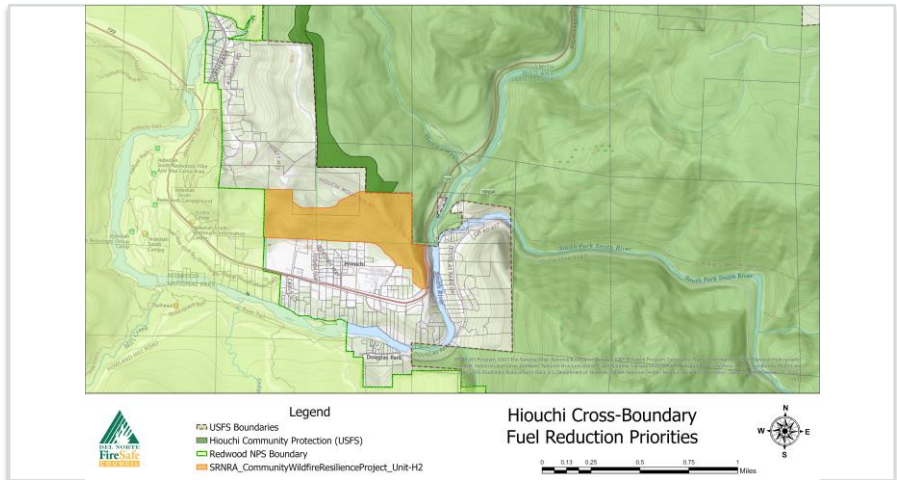
# 2026 Priorities & What's Next

Where we are pushing implementation next

## Near-term Gasquet/Low Divide Community Wildfire Resilience Project



## Hiouchi Community Fuel Reduction Priorities



1

### Six Rivers Community Wildfire Resilience

Advance major community fuel reduction within and surrounding Hiouchi, Low Divide, and Gasquet.

2

### Hiouchi-Smith River Forest Resilience

North of Smith to Klamath Fuel Breaks in partnership with Del Norte RCD, Green Diamond, Del Norte County, USFS, and CALFIRE.

3

### South Canyon Understory Burns

Introducing prescribed fire on about 140 acres of private land treated previously with NRCS funds.

4

### Trail Restoration

Restore approximately 25 miles of community trail systems utilized by firefighters, residents, and visitors before fall 2026.

These next steps continue building treatment continuity from community protection work into larger cross-boundary implementation.

# Community Readiness & Stewardship

Programs that build local ownership of wildfire resilience

## DSI Program

- Free home assessments and defensible space inspections
- Actionable recommendations for residents and property owners
- Creates a pathway into on-the-ground mitigation work

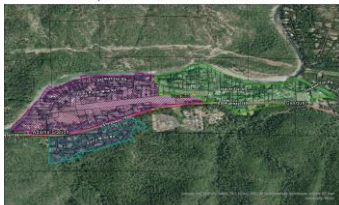
## Firewise Coordinator

- Supports Firewise communities, action plans, and outreach
- Helps organize residents around shared neighborhood risk
- Builds local capacity for long-term community engagement

## Prescribed Burn Association

- Builds community participation in fire management
- Creates opportunities for burn-to-learn events and training
- Helps grow local prescribed fire culture and stewardship

Gasquet FireWise Communities



## Creating Firewise Communities

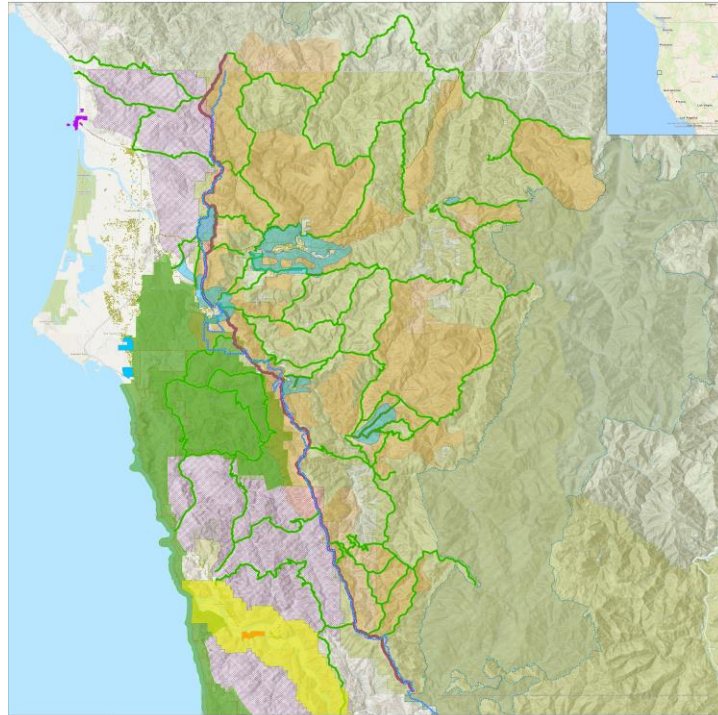
- How neighborhood organization can support wildfire preparedness.
- These programs connect household-level action, community leadership, and broader fire stewardship.

**Goal: increase public participation and ownership in fire management.**

# Smith to Klamath Initiative

Landscape-scale wildfire resilience strategy

## Smith To Klamath Initiative



Legend	
Community Protection Fuel Breaks	Elk Valley Rancheria
Priority Fuel Breaks	Fulda Tribe
Kc - Cultural Fire	Yurok Reservation
CALFIRE-USFS Cross-Boundary Fuel Break	CALFIRE DPA Line
Tulsa Deer-Vel Nation	Power Line
Siskiyou Wilderness	Ruddard National & State Parks
Six Rivers National Forest Boundary	Timberland



0 5 10 20 30 40 Miles

## A Countywide Resilience Strategy

Crossing jurisdictional boundaries to achieve true landscape-scale wildfire resilience across Del Norte County.

**6,000 ac**

**Cross-Boundary Fuel Break**  
north-south strategic alignment

**20,000 ac**

**Shaded Fuel Breaks**  
strategically placed across the landscape

**11,500 ac**

**Community Protection Zones**  
community-focused risk reduction

**10,000 ac**

**Forest Health Thinning**  
plantation / stand improvement

**150,000+ ac**

**Prescribed & Cultural Fire**  
over time, as fuel reduction implementation occurs

**This Initiative is utilizing currently implemented and planned projects and connecting gaps to create a unified landscape scale wildfire resilience strategy.**

# Thank You to Our Lunch Supporters

Lunch made possible by generous community contributors and partners

## Thank you

With appreciation to:

- **Hiouchi Cafe**
- **Los Bagels**
- **Rumiano Cheese**
- **Gasquet Neighbors Helping Neighbors**
- **Smith River Alliance**
- **Smith River NRA / USFS**

# Caltrans

- As you may already be aware, construction has begun on U.S. 199. The following information was taken from our [Road Information Bulletin](#) site.
  - **U.S. 199 (20.1/20.7) – Highway construction is scheduled near Middle Fork Smith River Bridge beginning Monday, May 11. One-way traffic control will be in effect. Travelers should expect 10-minute delays.**
  - **U.S. 199 (23.9/24.2)- Highway construction is scheduled near Blue Slide and Middle Fork Smith River Bridge beginning Monday, May 11. One-way traffic control will be in effect. Travelers should expect 10-minute delays.**
- At both of these locations, temporary traffic signals are being installed and will operate 24/7.

Estimated time for the 4-hour closures to begin is late July/early August, and we'll be reaching out several weeks prior. For updates you can also check our [Project Website](#) as well as our Facebook and Instagram accounts.

# Questions/Answers?



**THANK YOU!**

