



Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)  
Joint Powers Authority Agenda

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority  
From: Kristen Pfeiler, ESCOG staff  
Subject: Wildfire Coordinator Report  
Meeting date: April 22, 2026  
Attachments: A) CAL FIRE Directed Grant Proposal for Riparian Projects  
B) Community Chipping/Dumpster/Voucher Request Form

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

EASTERN SIERRA PACE & SCALE ACCELERATOR UPDATE

Staff continues to build regional wildfire resilience capacity through Inyo National Forest Liaison and CAL FIRE County Coordinator funding in support of the Eastern Sierra Pace & Scale Accelerator. Current work remains focused on regional coordination, implementation readiness, and alignment of funding, staffing, and project development efforts.

1. Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA)

Staff continued development of ESWA as the region's coordinating structure for wildfire resilience planning, project development, communications, and partner alignment.

Activities completed during this reporting period:

- Continued development and testing of the ESWA project list and database attributes.
- Planned and co-hosted the ESWA Projects Committee meeting (3/24/26).
- Attended the ESWA Governance Committee meeting (3/23/26).
- Attended the ESWA Communications Committee meeting (4/2/26).
- Planned the next quarterly ESWA convening (5/6/26, Inyo County Consolidated Office Building).
- Met with regional partners to align projects with future funding opportunities, including Bishop Fire Department/CAL FIRE (3/26/26), Inyo-Mono RCD (3/10/26), and Whitebark Institute and Owens Valley Career Development Center (4/2/26), with discussion focused on wildfire prevention, workforce and business development, and biomass utilization.
- Attended the Inyo-Mono Workforce Coalition session (3/26/26).

- Drafted a letter to the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation requesting funding to advance regional biomass utilization efforts and met with core partners to inform that request.
- Attended the ESCOG Collaborative Implementation Planning Steering Committee kickoff (3/27/26) and subsequent core team meetings with consultant Agnew Beck (3/31/26 and 4/17/26).
- Attended the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force convening in Jamestown (3/19/26–3/20/26), including tours of two biomass utilization facilities: Heartwood and Tuolumne BioEnergy.

Status:

The ESWA Memorandum of Understanding has been refined and is ready for signature. Governance Committee discussion also advanced membership and key roles for the forthcoming ESWA Steering Committee. The Projects Committee refined the regional project list and developed a partner intake form for implementation-ready projects, available here:

<https://airtable.com/appIdQ00XqOePRqNT/pagid0am8hlwvJrUl/form>

The Communications Committee refined the standing agenda for ESWA meetings and discussed ESWA branding, including alignment with related efforts such as the Mammoth Lakes Wildfire Task Force and the Fire-Adapted Communities Working Group.

## 2. CEQA Streamlining – Riparian Resilience Working Group

Staff continued coordination with implementation partners to move riparian resilience projects through the CEQA streamlining pathway and into implementation readiness.

Activities completed during this reporting period:

- Continued regular coordination among the core implementation team, including CAL FIRE, Whitebark Institute, and ESCOG, to prepare for project rollout.
- Attended the Eastside Riparian Resilience Working Group meeting (3/3/26).
- Made state-requested edits to the applications for Bishop, Sunny Slopes, SNARL, and Walker in coordination with Inyo County GIS, CAL FIRE, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Whitebark Institute.

Status:

As of 4/16/26, the following projects had been approved: Lone Pine (CAL FIRE), Independence (LADWP), Three Creeks (CAL FIRE), Bishop (ESCOG), Pine Creek (SCE), Sunny Slopes/Tom’s Place (ESCOG), SNARL (ESCOG), Mammoth Hospital/School District (Mammoth Fire Department), Silver Lake (SCE), Lee Vining (SCE), and Walker (Mono County).

For ESCOG-led projects, Whitebark Institute has partnered with staff to conduct required environmental surveys. Whitebark Institute has also worked with staff to draft a CAL FIRE Directed Grant proposal to support implementation of the Bishop, Fort Independence, and SNARL projects.

## 3. Community Wildfire Defense Program (CWDG) and Related Community Prevention Work

Staff continued preparing for implementation of the Community Wildfire Defense Grant while using existing funding to begin building and testing the operational systems needed for regional rollout.

Activities completed during this reporting period:

- Planned community cleanups and educational events for Independence, Alabama Hills, Starlite, 40 Acres, Big Pine, and Bishop.
- Met weekly with Mono County and Whitebark Institute to plan Wildfire Resilience Month, including the headline event Sierra Spark on 5/3/26 at Bishop City Park.
- Assisted Firewise communities and Fire Safe Councils with applications for the SCE/Whitebark Community Directed Grants.
- Coordinated with Inyo and Mono County Public Works to operationalize the program regionally.
- Advanced Inyo seasonal job descriptions and aligned recruitment with the Cerro Coso workforce development program.
- Continued development of an integrated regional staffing plan through ESCOG.
- Coordinated with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mammoth Fire Department to align Fire Aside software, crews, dumpsters, chipping and hauling systems, and community engagement, with the goal of scaling Mammoth's existing mitigation model region wide.
- Met with Inyo County and Mono County to identify parcel counts needed to inform contracting.
- Participated in the Sierra Compost Eastside collaborative meeting (3/11/26) to help align Community Wildfire Defense Grant composting investments with the regional business planning effort under Sierra Jobs First.

#### Composting and biomass utilization:

Through Sierra Jobs First, the California Alliance of Community Composting is working with Inyo and Mono Counties through an initiative called Sierra Compost. This effort includes funding for a business plan led by the Bishop Paiute Tribe to develop a tailored regional strategy for composting infrastructure and operations. The business plan is expected to be completed by September 2026 and will help inform where and how Community Wildfire Defense Grant site development funds are used.

#### Status:

Grant paperwork has been approved by the Regional USFS Grant Specialist and advanced to the USFS Grants and Agreements Department for final review. The implementation timeline remains uncertain. Budget amendments are not anticipated at this time, although equipment costs have increased since the original budget paperwork was submitted.

In the meantime, staff has launched community green waste events this spring in Inyo County using other funding sources, including the CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant, CAL FIRE County Coordinator Grant, and California Fire Safe Council Capacity Grant. This early work is helping test the regional system ahead of full CWDG implementation.

At this time, green waste collected through dumpsters is going to local landfills. Chipping events supported by CAL FIRE in Wilkerson and Starlite are designed to keep wood chips on site for beneficial reuse at Blue Heron Farm and the Starlite orchard. The community request form for dumpsters, chippers, and vouchers is available here:

<https://airtable.com/apphwvR4IU1nHoDmV/pagXX8KetIR4KftF8/form>

## Spring 2026 Inyo County Community Green Waste Events

Event	Sponsor	Dates
Independence Green Waste Cleanup – Spring 2026	Independence FSC	Apr 11–12, 2026
Big Pine Saddle Club Cleanup – Spring 2026	Big Pine Saddle Club	Apr 17–24, 2026
Blue Heron Community Chipping – Spring 2026	Blue Heron Farm	Apr 17–19, 2026
Alabama Hills Firewise Community Green Waste Cleanup – Spring 2026	Alabama Hills Firewise USA	Apr 25–26, 2026
Sierra Spark – Wildfire Resilience Month 206	Inyo County Public Works	May 3, 2026
40 Acres Green Dumpster Day – Spring 2026	40 Acres FSC	May 15–Jun 1, 2026
Starlite Green Waste Community Chipping – Spring 2026	Starlite Firewise USA	May 11, 2026

## Inyo/Mono County Riparian Resilience Project Portfolio CAL FIRE Directed Grant Opportunity

**Projects:** Bishop Riparian Resilience Project, Fort Independence Riparian Resilience Project, SNARL Riparian Resilience Project

**Total Acres: 160**

**Total Estimated Cost: \$640,000** (4K per acre and includes required wildlife surveys/monitoring, project management and implementation and all other costs)

**Fund Recipient:** Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

**Brief Description:** Riparian areas are a primary carrier of wildfire in Inyo and Mono Counties and have historically been excluded from fuel reduction efforts due to their environmental sensitivity and associated regulatory hurdles. The projects included here have been identified in the Mono and Inyo County's CWPPs as critical work to reduce extreme wildfire risk to local communities, infrastructure, and other values.

### Bishop Riparian Resilience Project

**Estimated Cost: \$368,000**

**Total Acres: 92**

Mechanical Treatment Acres: 54

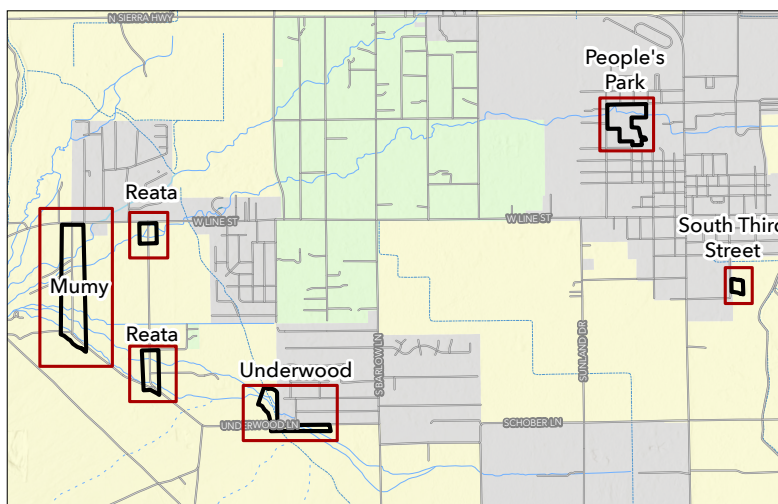
Manual Treatment Acres: 38

Herbicide Application Acres: 72

Pile Burning Acres: 54

Other Treatment Acres (curtain burning): 54

**Description of Project:** This project's objective is to reduce extreme wildfire risk to the community of Bishop and improve riparian ecosystem health on LADWP-owned property along Mumy Ln, Reata Rd, Underwood Ln, S 3rd St, and People's Park.



Bishop Riparian Resilience Project

Operations Area  
Local Responsibility Area (LRA)  
State Responsibility Area (SRA)  
Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)  
Inyo County Roads

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



## Fort Independence Riparian Resilience Project

**Estimated Cost: \$132,000**

**Total Acres: 33**

Mechanical Treatment Acres: 21

Manual Treatment Acres: 12

Herbicide Application Acres: 27

Pile Burning Acres: 21

Other Treatment Acres (curtain burning): 21

**Description of Project:** This project’s objective is to reduce extreme wildfire risk to the community of Fort Independence and local businesses and improve riparian ecosystem health on Tribal lands along water diversions from Oak Creek.



### Fort Independence Riparian Resilience Project

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| --- Ephemeral Stream      | ▨ 50 ft Intermittent Watercourse Protection                    |
| — Perennial Stream        | ■ Riparian Treatment: Manual                                   |
| ··· Intermittent Stream   | ■ Upland Treatment: Mechanical/Chipping/Pile & Curtain Burning |
| ▭ Operations Area         | ▨ 100 ft Perennial Watercourse Protection                      |
| — Permanent Project Roads |  |
| ▭ 25 ft Herbicide Buffer  |  |

0 145 290 580 Feet

SCALE: 1:3,270



SECTION 1, TOWNSHIP 13 SOUTH  
RANGE 34 EAST, MOUNT DIABLO  
BASELINE AND MERIDIAN

Data Sources: USGS 3DHP, BLM CA PLSS, Inyo County, ESRI

## SNARL Riparian Resilience Project

**Estimated Cost: \$140,000**

**Total Acres: 35**

Mechanical Treatment Acres: 15

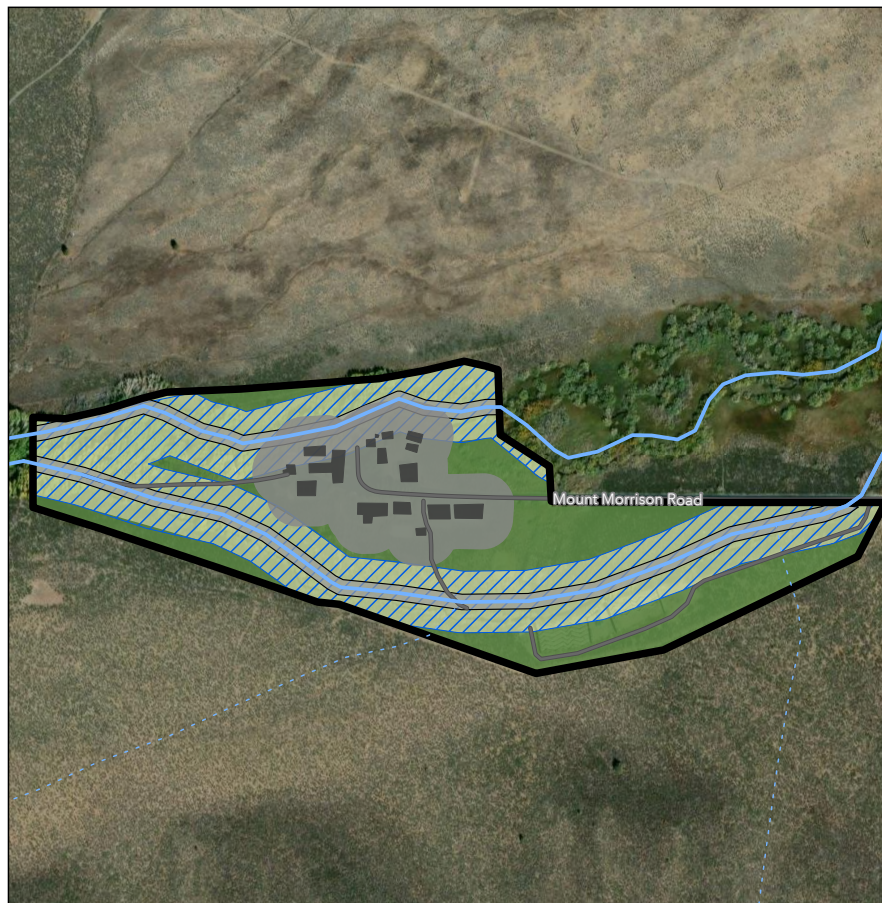
Manual Treatment Acres: 20

Herbicide Application Acres: 29

Pile Burning Acres: 15

Other Treatment Acres (curtain burning): 15

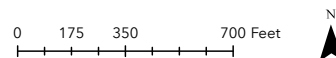
**Project Description:** This project's objective is to reduce extreme wildfire risk to the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory and improve riparian ecosystem health on LADWP- owned property along Convict Creek.



### Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) Riparian Resilience Project

- Ephemeral Stream
- Perennial Stream
- Operations Area
- Permanent Project Roads
- Building Footprints
- 100 ft Defensible Space
- 25 ft Herbicide Buffer
- 100 ft Perennial Watercourse Protection
- Riparian Treatment: Manual Vegetation Removal/Herbicide Application/Outside 25 ft Herbicide Buffer
- Upland Treatment: Mechanical Vegetation Removal/Chipping/Herbicide Application/Pile & Curtain Burning

SECTION 12, TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH RANGE 28 EAST  
MOUNT DIABLO BASELINE AND MERIDIAN



Data Sources: USGS 3DHP, BLM CA PLSS, Mono County, ESRI

**TREATMENT DESCRIPTION: ALL PROJECTS**

**Overall Treatment Description:** Treatments will include manual and mechanical vegetation removal and subsequent herbicide application if necessary. Riparian treatments will maintain riparian function consistent with the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan (EPP) and will avoid heavy equipment on banks or channels, retain large woody debris where feasible, and retain at least 75% native overstory and 50% native understory within 100 ft of the channel. Adjacent upland areas will be treated to increase effectiveness. Work could occur in dry channels and immediately adjacent to wetted channels, but no material will be removed from the wetted portion of a channel. Retained large, downed material may be redistributed across the site to reduce fuel densities.

**Fuels Management:** Removal of non-native ladder fuels, dead/down material, and dead/dying/diseased/otherwise hazardous trees of all sizes will be prioritized. Removal of non-listed native understory species, upland species, and live native trees ( $\leq 24$ " DBH) may be needed to meet spacing objectives. Retained trees will be limbed up to 6 ft. except where emergency vehicle access requires additional clearance. Average percent cover of native riparian species required by EPP 3.f. will be maintained and an average of 25% upland vegetation will be left in a mosaic spacing of 2x shrub height.

**Ground Based Equipment:** Ground-based equipment will include chippers, masticator, curtain burners, and hauling trucks/trailers for treatment of cut material, as well as vehicles and fire apparatus to support crews and burning operations. Ground-based equipment will remain on existing disturbed or improved surfaces such as roads, parking areas, turnouts, and driveways to the extent feasible and will not enter the standard widths of any watercourses, as defined in the EPP, except at existing crossings or disturbed areas such as those listed above. The projects will not include new roads or watercourse crossings.

**Woody Debris:** Depending on site-specific conditions and implementation timing, cut material will be lopped and scattered, chipped, burned via pile or curtain burning, or hauled away. Treatments for material such as curtain burning, pile burning, and/or chipping will only occur in upland areas, and vegetation cut from riparian areas will be hauled to uplands for disposal. Perennial streams will receive a 100-ft exclusion buffer and intermittent streams will receive a 50ft exclusion buffer for all woody debris. Chips or other spread material will not exceed an average of 2" in depth with a maximum of 4".

**Burn Management:** A Smoke Management Plan will be completed and approved by Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District prior to any burning operations and will identify appropriate weather conditions for burning such as temp, wind speed and direction, mixing height, etc. Qualified CAL FIRE or other partner agency implementors will conduct all burning operations. Piles will be ringed with handline and hose, and material from adjacent piles may be fed into an appropriately prepared pile. The area around curtain burners will similarly be cleared. Existing roads and wet areas will serve as breaks.

## Attachment B: Community Chipping/Dumpster/Voucher Request Form

### New Chipping - Dumpster - Voucher requests Form

Planning a community green waste cleanup event?

Fill out this form to request dumpsters, chippers, or green waste vouchers. Our staff reviews requests on Mondays and will contact you the following Monday to confirm your request and gather any additional details.

**Event Name \***

For example: Independence Green Waste Cleanup Spring 2026; Blue Heron Chipper Day 2026; Aspendell Vouchers Spring 2026

**Type of request \***

Select all that apply.

**Associated Group \***

If you are not requesting these resources on behalf of a community group, tribe, or organization, please reach out [kristen.pfeiler@inyocounty.us](mailto:kristen.pfeiler@inyocounty.us)

**Primary Contact \***

**Phone or email \***

What's the best way to contact you?

For phone numbers, use format: XXX-XXX-XXXX

**Starting date of event: \***

**Ending date of event: \***

**Collection Site: Latitude \***

**Collection Site: Longitude \***

**Operational details: \***

How do you want to run your event - describe it to me in as much detail as possible. Do you want one dumpster in a single location for a week, two weeks, etc? Or do you want multiple dumpsters at different locations for a day or weekend?

**Other locations if needing multiple dumpsters:**

Use format: (Latitude, Longitude)