

CAL FIRE Business and Workforce Development Grant Awards -- 2022 Q2

Business Development

Awardee	Project Name	County	Award Amount	Project Description
Auberry Sawmill, Inc.	Auberry Sawmill Project	Fresno	\$ 499,000	Auberry Sawmill Inc. will procure, transport, refurbish, and install a used quad re-saw, combination edger with in-feed and out-feed, and trimmer with stacker, which will increase manufacturing efficiencies and production yield of its mill. Production will increase from 7.8 million board to 14 million board feet per year. Grant funds will also be used to purchase spare re-saw and saw parts to avoid manufacturing disruptions. The requested equipment will significantly expand the local wood product market capacity, making possible Creek Fire recovery and forest health activities that would otherwise not be feasible. The proposed project will increase log-to-lumber recovery from 125% to 135% and improve production yield. Expanding production will facilitate forest health, hazard fuel reduction and fire recovery treatments on an additional 1,900 acres of forest lands per year. Operations and maintenance of the requested equipment will create two new direct jobs.
West Forest, LLC	California Oriented Strand Board Manufacturing- Initial Planning Efforts	Butte Humboldt San Francisco Shasta Siskiyou Tehama	\$ 480,000	West Forest, LLC will seed the development of an oriented strand board (OSB) mill in Northern California. Grant funds will be used to validate the opportunity, identify a site and a manufacturing partner, outline the support needed, and prepare the development effort over the next 24 months.
Del Logging, Inc.	Del Logging Biomass Equipment for Increased Productivity and Expansion	Lassen Modoc Shasta Siskiyou	\$ 1,334,509	Del Logging will add a biomass side to their current operations. Funds from the grant will be used to purchase a Bandit whole tree drum chipper and a Link-Belt log loader to incorporate with their existing equipment. The equipment will be utilized on hazardous fuels and forest health projects. Grant funds will cover approximately 16% of the total cost. Del Logging has been a reputable business in Northern California for nearly 60 years and the addition of this equipment is a key opportunity for Del Logging to expand. The additional equipment will increase the amount of biomass acres treated from 2,500 to 6,500; number of bone dry tons removed from 29,000 to 89,000; number of people employed from 35 to 50; and, assist with fuels reduction and fire prevention projects within the Shasta-Trinity, Lassen, and Modoc National Forests, and private timberlands in Shasta, Siskiyou, Lassen, and Modoc Counties. Del Logging has successfully completed contracts with the Pit Resource Conservation District and plans to continue work on Forest Health and Fire Prevention Projects within the Pit River Watershed and surrounding areas. Del Logging also works with private landowners and will continue to provide fuel reduction services. The selected chipper is portable and will be mobilized to various locations. It has the capability to handle a 30" diameter tree and fill a 45-foot trailer in 12 minutes. This model is known for its reliability and greater fuel economy.
Kodama Systems, Inc.	21st-Century Forest Thinning: Site Connectivity and Machine Teleoperation	Tuolumne	\$ 299,898	Kodama Systems will deploy and fully demonstrate technologies that improve forest thinning productivity and expand access to labor. Leveraging technology originally developed for the construction and mining industries, Kodama will establish internet access at the landing, equip machines with sensors to measure uptime and productivity, and implement a skidder teleoperation proof-of-concept from the landing. The projected impact of Kodama's technology-powered forest thinning service is 25,000 acres per year by 2025, enabling California forests to store an additional 150,000 tons of CO2e.

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Research & Development - Business

Awardee	Project Name	County	Award Amount	Project Description
Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc.	California Fire Impacts Study, 2018-2021	Statewide	\$ 95,000	<p>MB&G will estimate economic impacts to California's forest sector from major wildfires in California from 2018 through 2021. Specifically, the study will quantify the acres, volume, and value of timber burned in 2018 through 2021 fires and impacts of these losses on future timber harvest volume and industry processing and biomass needs and capacity. The study will also include a section quantifying carbon emissions. This is a two-phase project and this grant funds phase 2. Phase 1 is development of inventory data and analysis of the immediate fire damage from the 2018 through 2021 fires. Phase 2 will assess future impacts. MB&G will compile data from multiple sources to assess fire impacts. CAL FIRE will convene a Technical Advisory Committee of experts in fire impacts and carbon, and to review the methods and results.</p>
California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt and Schatz Energy Research Center	Creating markets for forest residues to meet California's climate and air quality goals	Humboldt	\$ 500,000	<p>California faces crisis conditions on its forested landscapes. Weather conditions brought on by climate change have created increasingly severe wildfires in forests already overstocked with biomass. In light of this ongoing ecological, climate, economic, and public health emergency, the state has prioritized funding for forest management with the goal of thinning one million acres of forest per year. This aggressive management activity generates millions of tons per year of woody residues that are typically left or burned in the field, impacting air quality, creating wildfire hazard and leading to further ecosystem disruption. The California Biomass Residue Emissions Characterization (C-BREC) model offers a spatially-explicit Life Cycle Assessment framework to establish the climate and air pollution impacts of putting these residues to use rather than burning or leaving them on site. This project will support the application of C-BREC to three targeted policy-relevant use cases for woody biomass.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Calculation and assignment of carbon intensity scores for transportation fuels made from woody biomass under the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, facilitating the development of a forest biofuels industry 2) Adapt the C-BREC webtool for use as a project-level GHG accounting tool under the Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff (BioMAT) program managed by the CA Public Utilities Commission 3) Rigorously establish the climate benefit of biochar production in support of carbon offset protocol development. <p>These developments will help build a robust market for woody residues in California, bringing needed revenue in support of increased management for forest health, wildfire risk reduction, and carbon sequestration.</p>

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Workforce Development

Awardee	Project Name	County	Award Amount	Project Description
The Watershed Research and Training Center	Equitable Workforce Development Project	Statewide	\$ 1,251,159	<p>The Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC) will offer forestry and fire training to seven Local Conservation Corps (LCCs) across the state that will: 1. Advance individual LCC Corps Members' (CMs) career development in the forestry and fire workforce, and 2. Increase the likelihood that the CMs will remain in the sector long term, building diversity in the workforce.</p> <p>Through the already-piloted program, over 200 CMs will receive 12 additional days of fire and forest training. The training curriculum consists of National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and FEMA-equivalent certificate courses, paired with two WRTC-developed trainings, Forest and Fire Workforce Development, and Navigating Barriers to Employment. With assistance from contracted specialists, WRTC will offer the trainings 10 times between the seven LCCs. The participating LCCs were selected based on their response to an RFP WRTC issued this spring. After the trainings, participants can apply to WRTC's mentorship program offering 10 additional training days focused on forest and fire field subsectors such as prescribed fire, community engagement, and restoration forestry. Mentees will also receive professional development coaching and job application assistance specific to forestry and fire job opportunities. The forest and fire resiliency workforce is currently challenging for underrepresented individuals to enter and have long-term job success; most CM's careers in fire and forestry end once they leave their LCC position. The WRTC's program offers training and mentorship to builds pathways for CMs toward gainful employment in the sector, which will both increase California's forestry and fire workforce, and its diversity.</p>
Headlands Environmental	Forest Business Alliance: Capacity & Peer-learning for California Forest Health	Statewide	\$ 499,854	<p>Forest Business Alliance: Capacity & Peer-learning for California Forest Health will advance CAL FIRE's goal of supporting healthy, resilient forests and the people and ecosystems that depend on them. Although fragmented, one-off projects can provide benefits, long-term positive impacts are more likely to be achieved through strategic endeavors that build broad capacity and promote collaboration toward a shared purpose. The project will help to establish and maintain a steady stream of high-quality proposals to forest-sector grant programs and effective, multi-stakeholder projects, leading to the implementation of quality endeavors involving underserved communities, populations, and cultures to address forest health challenges. The proposed project includes three pillars that will build the capacity of 1) organizations through technical assistance, 2) individuals and organizations through training, and 3) regions through peer learning. This project will focus on professional training and skills development that meaningfully contributes to improving forest management across a large landscape. The project will catalyze both short and long-term capacity. In the short term, we will provide technical assistance to entities using a triage approach (identifying and then assisting those most in need first). The long-term strategy will create and sustain regional expertise and collaboration through trainings and peer-learning. The Forest Business Alliance project was designed and will be implemented by a team of experts in critical fields such as forestry, business development, and grant writing.</p>
Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance	Lake Intertribal Workforce Development Project	Lake	\$ 1,386,777	<p>The Lake Intertribal Workforce Development Project (LIWDP) builds on the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA's) successful training and employment programs. The project will build capacity to scale up fuels management and land stewardship workforce development for tribal members in Lake County and surrounding communities.</p> <p>Founded in 2019 as an intertribal nonprofit, TERA seeks to build capacity for tribal members to play a leadership role in stewarding their ancestral lands. Founding partners include Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians of California, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and the United States Forest Service. Since 2019 we have developed and piloted a 140-hour Native Stewards Fellowship workforce development program that brings together traditional knowledge with vocational skills and fuels management to prepare tribal members for careers in land stewardship.</p> <p>The three-year LIWDP builds off of the successful NSF and other TERA programs and includes several components. 1) Graduate two cohorts of the Native Stewards Fellowship (28 people total) and provide 12 graduates with 5 months of in-depth on-the-job training. 2) Train a Good Fire On-Call Crew with comprehensive prescribed and cultural fire training as part of the Lake County Cal-TREX 3) Develop a Soft Skills Curriculum & Job Placement component to support existing programming 4) Offer six standalone fuels management trainings to partnering tribes in the Lake and Mendocino County areas 5) Offer on-the-job and professional development to TERA's permanent six-person intertribal hand crew 6) Conduct program evaluation and strategic planning to continue building capacity for tribal workforce development in fuels management.</p>