

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Manual Fuels Reduction Services in the Greater Willow Creek Area

Date Released: Monday, April 29, 2024

Statement of Qualifications Due: Monday, May 27, 2024

PURPOSE

The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD), in partnership with the Willow Creek Fire Safe Council (WCFSC), Lower Trinity River Prescribed Burn Association (LTRPBA), Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), Willow Creek Volunteer Fire Department (WCVFD), and Willow Creek Community Services District (WCCSD) (“Partners”), has prepared this Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) to identify a pool of experienced and qualified contractors (“Pool”) to perform a range of fuel treatment services on privately owned lands in and around the unincorporated communities of Willow Creek, Salyer, and Hawkins Bar, collectively known as the Greater Willow Creek Area and often considered a distinct region for fire prevention and prescribed fire planning. The proposed activities are part of a grant-funded program to advance the goals of both the 2019 Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (“CWPP”), relevant to Willow Creek, and the 2020 Trinity County CWPP, relevant to Salyer and Hawkins Bar. The proposed activities are also consistent with actions outlined in documents within the Humboldt County CWPP, including the Countywide Action Plan and Willow Creek Area Planning Unit Action Plan. The HCRCD expects to retain the services of qualified contractors within the Pool over a three-and-a-half-year period and to reissue this Request for Qualifications periodically to add additional qualified contractors to the Pool as local workforce capacity increases. Selection for the Pool does not guarantee a professional services agreement.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Approximately \$534,000 in grant funding is currently available over a three-and-a-half-year period. Professional services agreements will be negotiated and executed over the life of the project, on an as-needed basis. Contractor selection for any given body of work will be based on a combination of associated qualifications and experience, availability when services are required, and cost control measures. Extended and/or expanded agreements may be possible.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The types of services that may be required to complete this project include the following, with the bulk of the activity falling under the defensible space assistance and roadside fuels reduction treatment type:

1. **Roadside Fuels Reduction:** Establish roadside shaded fuel breaks along evacuation routes and provide traffic safety services as necessary. For more details see Attachment A: General Description of Roadside Fuels Reduction.
2. **Defensible Space Assistance:**
 - Direct Defensible Space Assistance: Establish defensible space for homes that meets standards as described in Attachment B: General Description of Defensible Space

Assistance Services.

- Chipping Services: Provide chipping services only, where materials have been generated by residents creating and maintaining their own defensible space. This may include neighborhood curbside chipping services in densely populated areas and/or rural residential chipping services for homesteads in more remote areas.
3. **Pile Building**: Build burn piles generated from Defensible Space Assistance or Roadside Fuels Reduction in areas safe for future burning by landowner or other contractors. This will be employed in areas where conditions make pile burning the most efficient means of disposing of woody material and where there are no reasonably feasible alternatives. For more details see Attachment C: Best Management Practices (BMP) for Pile Burning of Cut Debris.
 4. **Pile Burning**: Burn piles generated from Defensible Space Assistance or Roadside Fuels Reduction as described in Attachment C: Best Management Practices (BMP) for Pile Burning of Cut Debris. If you are applying for pile burning, please ensure your insurance covers pile burning under either Commercial General Liability or Loggers Broad Form. Please see Attachment D: Insurance Requirements.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The following is a list of the desired qualifications and experience for contractors responding to this RFQ:

- Experience with and ability to successfully complete one or more of the treatment types and/or activities described in the Scope of Services above.
- Own or have access to the appropriate equipment to provide the selected service(s) (e.g., a chipper of an adequate size to chip material generated from fuels reduction services).
- Experience with and ability to operate all necessary equipment safely, effectively, and efficiently.
- Ability to understand and comply with environmental compliance and other permitting requirements.
- Experience with and ability to work respectfully and cooperatively with community members and liaisons.
- Experience with and ability to work collaboratively with HCRC and Partner representatives on project design, coordination, photo documentation, reporting and invoicing.
- Experience with and ability to work cooperatively with County Road Maintenance staff on coordinating the implementation of work taking place along County maintained roads, as applicable.
- Knowledge of methods to reduce the spread of invasive species associated with fuels reduction activities.
- Knowledge and understanding of project budgeting and cost controls, particularly for grant funded projects.
- Ability and willingness to be flexible and responsive to evolving project needs.
- Possession of, or ability to secure and provide to HCRC, the required insurance

certificates (See Attachment D for the detailed list of insurance requirements).

- Crew is ideally no fewer than four personnel.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please use Attachment E: Proposal Template to prepare the submission. Complete submissions shall be emailed to Katrina Henderson, Forest Health Program Manager, HCRCD, at: foresthealth@hcr.cd.org. Hard copies will be accepted by appointment. Submissions must be received no later than 5pm, Monday, May 27, 2024.

Receipt of the submission will be acknowledged via email. No submittals will be accepted after this deadline. The following items may be submitted as a PDF file or hard copy containing all required content. Hard copy responses may be submitted by appointment only to either HCRCD's Eureka or McKinleyville offices:

1. Cover Page:
 - Contractor name and contact details
 - Statement describing availability (i.e., How long in advance does work need to be scheduled? Can you be available on short notice for batches of work as needed? Do you already know your windows of availability over the next three and a half years? Are you more or less available during any given season?)
 - Confirmation that the required insurance detailed in Attachment D is in place or can be secured and certificates furnished to the HCRCD in a timely manner. Contractors should not purchase additional insurance intended to comply with these requirements until directed by the HCRCD as part of a final professional services agreement negotiation. HCRCD and its partners are not responsible for any contractor decisions to obtain additional insurance in anticipation of a potential contract under this RFQ.
2. Statement of Qualifications for **one or more** of the services described in the Scope of Services section:
 - Submit a separate "Statement of Qualifications" form provided in Attachment E for **EACH** of the service types offered.
 - Qualifications for each service type offered, including licenses applicable to the service.
 - Detailed descriptions and cost estimates for each service type offered, including:
 - General approach to providing the service (crew type and number of workers, equipment used, specific methods employed, average acres treated per day, etc.)
 - Hourly rate (fully burdened rate) for each personnel role and expected daily hours
 - Daily rate for each piece of necessary equipment
 - Expected travel expenses including mileage per trip from base of operations to Willow Creek at current federal rate of .67/mi and number of vehicles necessary for the given service as well as expected per diem expenses, if necessary
 - Explanation of other expected expenses

3. Two references and brief explanation of relationship to contractor.
4. If proposing fuels reduction services, provide three examples of before/after photos for other similar types of projects completed by the contractor.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

HCRCDC will evaluate each proposal to determine the proposer's qualifications. For this project the following evaluation criteria will be considered:

1. Budget (40%)
2. Prior experience and past performance (35%)
3. Social, environmental, and community benefit (25%)

Budget (40%)

HCRCDC seeks the lowest responsible proposal that implies a realistic and achievable budget without burden to either party.

Prior Experience and Past Performance (35%)

HCRCDC requires evidence that the contractor has the ability and capacity to successfully perform the Scope of Services. HCRCDC will examine whether the firms have done similar work before, and how well they have performed that work. HCRCDC considers each firm's performance records to help ensure that project dollars go to reliable and capable contractors.

Social, environmental, and community benefit (25%)

The funding for this project comes in part from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program, which is intended to help at-risk local communities and Tribes plan for and reduce the risk of wildfire. This program prioritizes communities in an area that has been identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential, are low-income, or have been impacted by a severe disaster that affects the risk of wildfire. The Greater Willow Creek Area meets all three of these criteria, having endured the Knob and Monument Fires in summer of 2021, a Snowdown event in late December of 2021, and the Six Rivers Lightning Complex fires in 2022 and 2023. An awareness of what residents have experienced in the past few years is imperative to the successful completion of this project. Proposals that include local contractors and who employ or are willing to employ local residents is an important consideration for this work. HCRCDC will provide a list of local residents available for employment to contractors submitting a Statement of Qualifications or for those selected for inclusion in the Pool. In addition, the HCRCDC and Partners highly value sustainable environmental practices, so a consideration of the contractor's impact throughout this project is important, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by not traveling long distances or carpooling when possible. Preferably the contractor resides within 30 miles of downtown Willow Creek, however contractors traveling for further distances will be considered.

Submissions will be ranked based on the specific criteria in the table below (maximum of 100 points). The precise scope of services and the associated cost of those services will be incorporated into

professional services agreements which will be the subject of negotiation between the HCRCD and the successful respondent(s) on an as-needed basis.

SCORING/SELECTION CRITERIA

Criteria	Points
Budget (40%)	
Reasonable contractor rate and expenses	30
Meaningful cost control measures	10
Prior Experience and Past Performance (35%)	
Demonstrated competence in the desired qualifications and experience outlined in this RFQ (relative to each service type offered)	20
Thoroughness, quality, and responsiveness of submission	10
Quality and relevance of references	5
Social, Environmental, and Community Benefit (25%)	
Distance to Willow Creek (higher ranking for closer proximity)	10
Willingness/ability to hire local crew members (<20mi from project area)	10
Employee Compensation Rate	5

SCHEDULE

The following schedule of events represents the HCRCD's best estimate of the schedule that will be followed with regard to this RFQ process. HCRCD reserves the right to modify this tentative schedule as it deems necessary, including extending the deadline for submission of Statements of Qualifications.

Date	Event
Monday, April 29, 2024	RFQ Issued
5 days before due date	Addendums issued, if necessary, to address contractor questions or provide clarity
Monday, May 27, 2024 (by 5:00 PM)	Completed submissions due to HCRCD: submitted to Katrina Henderson, Program Manager, foresthealth@hcr cd.org
May 28-30, 2024	Evaluation Process (interviews may be conducted as needed)

Friday, May 31, 2024	Completion of the evaluation process and successful respondents notified of their inclusion in the Pool.
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NOTE: Professional services agreements will be negotiated with contractors from the Pool on an as-needed basis over the three-and-a-half-year term of this project. Selection for the Pool does not guarantee a professional services agreement.

QUESTIONS?

For questions about this RFQ, contact:

Katrina Henderson, Program Manager, foresthealth@hcrcc.org, 707-496-4849

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: General Description of Roadside Fuels Reduction
- Attachment B: General Description of Defensible Space Assistance Services
- Attachment C: Best Management Practices (BMP) for Pile Burning of Cut Debris.
- Attachment D: Insurance Requirements
- Attachment E: Proposal Template (Download Microsoft Word template)

ATTACHMENT A: GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ROADSIDE FUELS REDUCTION

Goal: The goal of this project is to reduce wildfire hazards along roadways.

Objective: The objective of this work is to create conditions along roads that will help:

- a. Reduce the likelihood of and/or contain the spread of a fire ignited by vehicles, trailers, passengers, or others using the roadway.
- b. Enhance firefighter safety and the safety of emergency ingress and egress.
- c. Otherwise reduce the rate of spread and intensity of a wildfire.

For the most part, these conditions will be achieved along public and other important access roadways, by creating shaded fuel breaks. Shaded fuel breaks will be designed to reduce the ability of fire to easily move from the ground into the forest canopy by eliminating the horizontal and vertical continuity of fuels in the forest understory. In addition, vigorous regrowth will be deterred by promoting a closed canopy of healthy overstory trees.

Overview: Under this prescription, 200-foot wide shaded fuel breaks will be created along designated roads, where conditions allow. This will generally be achieved by treating vegetation within a 100-foot buffer on each side of the road. However, the width of the buffer may be influenced by roadside fuel conditions, slope or other topographical features, permanent structures, unsafe working conditions, or landowner specifications. Therefore, with the objective of creating a 200-foot fuel break, there may be locations where the width of the treated area from the side of the road is more or less than 100 feet. To facilitate mapping and project tracking, contractor should note the width of the fuel break implemented on each stretch treated. HCRCD will work with contractor to determine final width of the fuel break.

To establish shaded fuel breaks, contractors will remove or prune trees, shrubs, brush, and other vegetation to create horizontal spacing between individual plants or groups of plants as well as a vertical separation between understory and overstory vegetation.

Activities implemented under the project's CEQA exemption will be light touch vegetation treatment. The guidance provided below is intended to strike a balance between achieving project objectives and avoiding significant impact to natural resources. It is understood that additional site-specific decisions will be made by contractors using independent professional judgment or in consultation with HCRCD and Partners and, in some cases, forestry consultants.

Safety: Contractor must have adequate traffic safety training and be able to produce a certificate of completion.

This is one option: <https://www.onlinesafetraining.com/store/safe-training-online-ltd-store/productdetails/traffic-control-persons-for-construction>

Contractor ensures good communication between crew members regarding traffic activity at all times. Vehicles or pedestrians should never be allowed access to the project area without communication to

the contractor. Appropriate safety measures should be utilized, which may include road signage, safety cones, 2-way radios, traffic paddles, high visibility vests, and traffic flaggers.

Tools: Tools used to implement the treatment may include hand tools including axes, Pulaskis, McLeods, weed wrenches, shovels, loppers, and hand and pole saws; and power tools including chainsaws, pole saws, and weed eaters (string and blade trimmers). In order to avoid soil disturbance, no heavy equipment or machinery will be used. Chippers will be operated from the roadside unless private driveways or roads are designated as acceptable locations by HCRCD.

1. Understory Fuels

Contractors will create vertical separation and disrupt the horizontal continuity of understory fuels through removal, treatment, or chipping of both live and downed trees and brush. Remove or chip woody debris up to 8 inches DBH (see Alternative Disposal Methods for exceptions); do not remove existing debris if rotten or embedded in the soil. Logs above 8 inches DBH may be left on site if they are arranged in one layer on the ground (not crisscrossed) and have all limbs removed in order to maximize contact with the ground. If they are left on site, ensure that logs and stumps are oriented to avoid rolling towards the downhill.

It is desirable to remove as much brush as possible within the shaded fuel break area. However, in more open grassland and brush areas, individual plants or pairs of plants may be retained, provided there is a horizontal separation between plants of 3 to 5 times the height of the residual plants and the residual plants are not within the drip lines of an overstory tree. Non-native species, such as but not limited to broom species, pampas grass, English ivy, holly, Himalayan blackberry, Tree of Heaven, and cotoneaster species, should not be retained unless requested by landowner; if they are too difficult to remove efficiently, they should be treated in a manner that reduces their potential for carrying fire from the ground up into the canopy. Broom species, holly, cotoneaster and tree of heaven should be pulled by the roots if possible.

2. Mid-Story Fuels

Remove smaller diameter trees (up to 8 inches DBH) in the mid-story to create horizontal distance between residual trees while at the same time maintaining healthy overstory trees and a closed canopy. To achieve project objectives, it may be necessary to remove an occasional tree with a DBH larger than 8 inches. Conversely, individual trees under 8-inches DBH may be retained for a variety of reasons, if they don't disrupt project objectives (see smaller leave-tree discussion below).

Cut trees or brush so that stumps do not exceed 3 inches above the ground (provided no fencing or other metal or rocks are embedded); no branches should be left on stumps. To disrupt ladder fuels, prune branches off all residual trees 10 feet off the forest floor as measured from the uphill side. Prune to a lower level if removing limbs to a height of 10 feet might impact the health and growth rate of smaller leave-trees; for conifer species it is recommended not to reduce the live crown ratio below $\frac{1}{2}$ the height of the tree.

Leave Trees: Larger trees (> 8-inches DBH) will be retained, including live defective trees providing obvious cavities for wildlife use. In order to reduce ladder fuels, woody vegetation within their drip lines shall be removed to the greatest extent feasible and in a manner consistent with the guidance provided in the preceding section on Understory Fuels.

When selecting smaller leave-trees (< 8-inches DBH) in the mid-story or in a stand of smaller trees, consider their health and chance of contributing to the desired conditions of a shaded canopy and/or increasing wildlife habitat value. Retain trees that do not contribute to ladder fuel conditions and that have the most potential to promote to the overstory thereby providing shade and inhibiting vigorous growth of brush and seedlings. In general, select trees of tallest height and straightest boles, and that are free from damage due to insects, disease, physical and mechanical causes. When deciding which tree to retain, consider the following general species retention hierarchy recommendations (these may vary depending on forest types, management objectives, landowner preferences, and contractor discretion):

- Conifers: Leave trees that have single leaders and thrifty crowns with at least 1/3 live crown ratio. Typical species include: Douglas fir, Jeffrey Pine, Cedar species.
- Hardwood trees: Leave trees that have vertical leaders and thrifty crowns with at least 1/3 live crown ratio. Typical species include: true Oak species, Madrone, Big Leaf Maple, Pacific Dogwood, pepperwood/bay laurel, tanoak

3. Disposal

Preferred Disposal Method: The primary means of slash disposal will be chipping. Contractor will stage existing ground fuels and pruned material off the road edge for chipping. Chipped material may be distributed back into the unit; avoid watercourses or any areas where chips may be transported to watercourses by heavy rains (i.e. road ditches). Where feasible, direct chips downhill to avoid chips washing into ditches unless there is known watercourse downslope. Chips do not need to be distributed uniformly (patchwork mosaic is OK at a depth no greater than 3”), but should not be left in piles unless the landowner states they will utilize them. Otherwise, chips may be transported to a biomass facility or other disposal site, where feasible, and in coordination with HCRCD. Chips may not be transported off-site without explicit permission of HCRCD.

Alternative Disposal Methods: In certain circumstances approved by HCRCD, where material generated will be limited and non-continuous, the “lop and scatter” method may be used. Slash must be cut into pieces small enough to maintain a depth less than 18 inches. Avoid accumulation of debris at the base of trees. Tree trunks must be limbed and cut into sections and all cut material should be arranged to maximize contact with the ground to encourage decomposition. This “lop and scatter” method must not be used within 100 feet of structures such as critical facilities, homes, or outbuildings.

In coordination with HCRCD and Partners, a plan may be made to employ several different methods of disposal for one project area. This may include areas where steep conditions hinder efficient dragging of

material for chipping. In this case, “lop and scatter” may be used beyond 25 feet from the road on the downhill side; vegetation and woody debris in the first 25 feet must be chipped or removed.

In rare instances where other methods are infeasible, contractor may—with explicit permission from HCRCDC—be permitted to hand pile slash for burning in a manner consistent with agreed upon Best Management Practices (Attachment C). It is the responsibility of the landowner to burn piles left by contractors unless explicitly stated otherwise.

4. Biological and Natural Resources:

The HCRCDC will require that all contractors take an environmental awareness training provided by HCRCDC or subcontractors prior to the commencement of implementation. HCRCDC will provide more in-depth information regarding biological and natural resources avoidance measures during that training; general measures are below to aid in contractor response to RFQ.

Water Resources

Streamside Management Area / Ordinance of Humboldt County (SMAO)

Treatment in riparian areas within Streamside Management Areas (SMAs) as defined in the SMAO (generally 100 feet from top of bank for perennial streams, 50 feet from intermittent streams) will be planned with HCRCDC staff or Partners on a case-by-case basis.

Plants & Wildlife: Avoid areas identified by HCRCDC or Partners as likely occupied by threatened and endangered plant and animal species, and other sensitive species. These species shall not be removed, or otherwise adversely affected, within any shaded fuel break. No cutting or piling will occur within occupied sensitive plant substrate.

Birds: Contractor will diligently scan the area for any obvious nests/nesting birds prior to beginning work during the critical period (March 1st- August 1th). If an active nest is identified, work will stop within 100 feet and contractor will notify HCRCDC of the nest’s location and species (if easily identifiable). HCRCDC will have a qualified biologist assess the nest and provide guidance.

Cultural Resources: Cultural resources are a major resource and will be protected. HCRCDC may direct contractor to avoid certain areas in order to protect these resources. Work will stop immediately if any human artifacts or remains are encountered and the contractor will notify HCRCDC.

Fueling: Fueling of chainsaws or refilling fuel containers must be done in a manner that prevents fuel from being dumped on roadways, in the forest, or within 100 feet of watercourses.

Waste: Temporary flagging and trash generated by contractor shall be removed from project site and disposed of properly. No trash will be placed in piles or left at the job site (this includes old chainsaw parts).

Invasive Species and Disease: To minimize the risk of introducing or spreading invasive species, sudden oak death, or other invasive soilborne pathogens employ the following practices:

- If feasible, avoid operations during the time of year when transportation of seeds and pathogens is most likely (e.g. when ground is wet and seeds and spores can be picked up in the mud).
 - For more information about invasive plant species visit: <https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profiles/>
 - For more information on prevention of sudden oak death visit: <http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/diagnosis-and-management/best-management-practices/>
 - For more information on Port-Orford-cedar root disease review: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5332563.pdf
- Inspect and clean equipment and vehicles prior to entry or leaving the project site if the site is known to have sudden oak death.
 - Equipment inspection and cleaning should take place on a hard-paved or rocked surface as much as is feasible.
 - Avoid the transport of plant parts, e.g., weed seeds or parts of bay laurel and tanoak to prevent sudden oak death spread.
 - Use of an air compressor has been shown to be an effective means of cleaning equipment (chainsaws, tracked equipment, chippers, shovels, etc.).
 - Remove soil and plant debris from boots, clothes, and gloves.
 - If the site is known to have sudden oak death, consider treating equipment surfaces with sanitizers such as Lysol, 10% bleach solution, 70% isopropyl alcohol solution, or peracetic acid (H₂O₂).
 - Pruned branches or chips generated from bay or tanoak trees shall not be removed from the area.

Noise: Hours of operation will be limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., unless specified by HCRCD, to minimize the potential for noise impacts on residences near and within the project area. All equipment used in site preparation will meet or exceed State standards for noise control.

Exposure to Smoke, Dust and Fumes: All equipment will conform to California emission standards.

Fire Prevention: HCRCD will coordinate with the contractor to stop or reduce work hours during periods of increased predicted fire risk based on local fuel and weather data. Contractor should anticipate work stoppage to occur during Red Flag Warnings or days with Adjective Ratings of Very High or Above.

ATTACHMENT B: GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Goal

Provide services to landowners to modify the condition of flammable vegetation (wildfire fuels) with the intention of reducing the likelihood of a wildfire igniting structures or structure fires spreading into the wildlands and to provide firefighters with a safe area from which to defend the property.

Overview

Desired conditions will be achieved within the 100-foot defensible space zone of structures and, in some cases, along access routes, through the treatment of hazardous vegetation. Depending on initial conditions, this may include weed whipping/whacking, limbing/pruning, and/or thinning, using hand tools and power tools. Brush and small-diameter trees (up to 8" DBH) may be removed to disrupt horizontal and vertical continuity of live and dead fuels.

Activities implemented under CEQA exemptions will be light touch vegetation treatment. The guidance provided below is intended to strike a balance between achieving project objectives and avoiding significant impact to natural resources.



Figure 1. Vertically continuous fuels are also referred to as 'ladder' fuels because they can create a ladder for fire to climb.

Important Notes

Defensible space fuels reduction activities are categorically exempt from CEQA for the majority of the project areas; HCRCD will file a CEQA Notice of Exemption, however, under some circumstances other environmental compliance pathways will be utilized. The following services are not provided under current HCRCD defensible space assistance projects: removal of trees over 8" diameter unless designated a hazard tree by HCRCD; trash removal; moving wood piles; landscaping; removal of large root systems or other ground-disturbing work. While these activities may be recommended to comply with defensible space standards, these activities may require a more complex CEQA process or a different set of worker skills, safety requirements, and/or associated pay scales than those authorized as part of current HCRCD defensible space projects.

Contractor may be requested to modify treatments based on landowner requests, special conditions or other CEQA processes or Forest Practice Rules. Landowner requests will be provided to the contractor in writing from the HCRCD or Partners. HCRCD will obtain written landowner permission prior to work, which may include special conditions to be followed so long as they are approved. No landowner requested work should conflict with guidance in this document. Contractor should discuss any potential conflict with HCRCD or Partners. Contractor is not requested to complete work outside of their skill sets or qualifications.

Approach

Managing Grass and Flashy Fuels

This treatment may be used to manage grass and flashy fuels along access routes and near homes and other values at risk to wildfire to reduce the potential for fast-moving surface fires.

- Weed whipping/whacking grass and other light vegetation.
- In strategic areas that impact wildfire safety (e.g., along access roads), remove brush (such as Scotch/French broom, coyote brush, blackberry brambles) and small trees invading grasslands (up to 8" DBH). Some brush removal may involve using a weed wrench to remove the entire root system. Limb trees up to 10' around grassland edges.

Thinning and Limbing/Pruning Trees and Shrubs

This treatment may be used to disrupt the continuity of fuels within forested and brushy areas. It is highly recommended that all flammable plants, shrubs, mulch, and trees be removed from within the first 5 feet of structures and attached decks (referred to as Zone 0), as this location can receive embers and lead to fire exposures directly to the home or buildings.

Shrubs:

- Remove all dead shrubs; prune dead branches of live shrubs; and strategically remove shrubs to create adequate horizontal spacing (see Figure 3 below for spacing recommendations).

Trees:

- Thin and limb trees to disrupt the horizontal continuity of fuels (see Figure 3 below for spacing recommendations). Note: removal of trees over 8" (measured at 4 ½' from the ground) is not an authorized treatment.
- Prune the limbs of all retained trees to create at least 6 feet of clearance from the ground to the first live branch. To maintain the health of smaller trees (<15 feet tall), prune only the lower 1/3 of the tree's height.
- Remove all shrubs from around the base of trees. If not possible, ensure the vertical space between the lowest branches of the tree and the top of an underlying shrub is at least three-times the height of the shrub (Figure 2).
- Remove branches overhanging the roof if possible without the need for climbing or use of a lift.
- Contractor is not to prune fruit trees unless explicit permission is given by landowner.

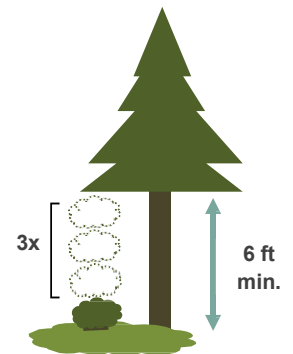


Figure 2. Eliminate ladder fuels by creating vertical clearance.

Thinning and Limbing/Pruning on a Slope

The steeper the slope, the faster fire can climb uphill, especially if the wind is moving upslope. To mitigate this risk, create horizontal space between shrubs and trees appropriate to the slope. The rule of thumb for spacing is:

Slopes

Flat to Mild – 0-20%

Tree Spacing

10 ft.

Shrub Spacing

2x the height of the shrub

Mild to Moderate – 20-40%	20 ft.	4x the height of the shrub
Steep - >40%	30 ft.	6x the height of the shrub

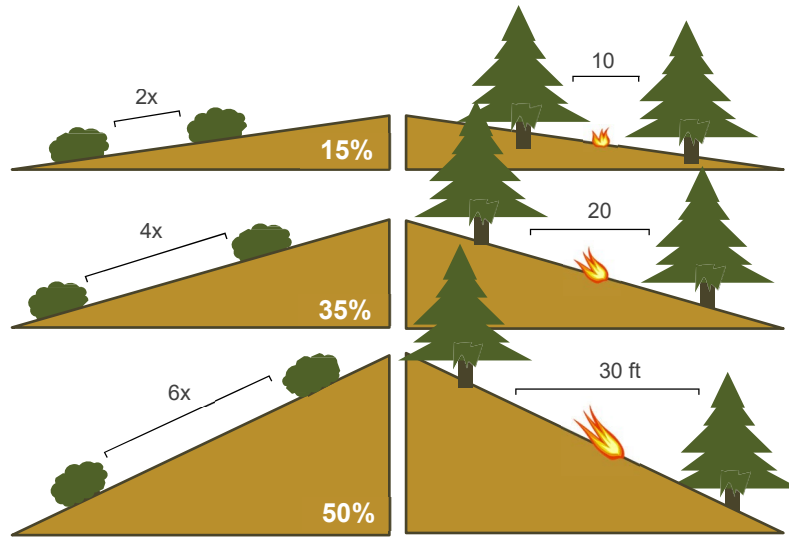


Figure 3. Slow the spread of fire by creating horizontal clearance. More space is needed for steeper slopes.

Disposal of Cut Materials

The preferred disposal method for slash will be chipping. Chips will be left on site unless other arrangements have been made, and may be piled at least 30 ft from structures or, if contractor has the capacity to broadcast chips, they may be distributed at a depth no greater than 3". Avoid watercourses or any areas where chips may be transported to watercourses by heavy rains.

If chipping is not feasible due to steep conditions where dragging material is a hindrance to efficiency, alternative disposal methods may be employed, and a plan may be made to utilize several disposal methods in one project area. In some instances, contractor may, with explicit permission from HCRCD, may be permitted to hand pile slash for burning in a manner consistent with agreed upon Best Management Practices (Attachment C). It is the responsibility of the landowner to burn piles left by contractors unless explicitly stated otherwise. The "lop and scatter" method must not be used within 100 feet of structures such as critical facilities, homes, or outbuildings.

Safety & Responsible Fueling and Equipment Cleaning

Safe Operations: Prioritize personal safety and follow all relevant Cal/OSHA rules for safety of operations including the use of personal protective equipment.

Fueling: Fueling of chainsaws or refilling fuel containers should be done with the use of a spill kit and away from watercourses, to prevent damage to sensitive areas.

Equipment Cleaning: To prevent the spread of noxious weeds and sudden oak death, all equipment should be free of organic materials and soils. An air compressor or water wash may be necessary to

remove these organics. Equipment should be cleaned prior to entry into the project area and upon final exit if in a site location with known sudden oak death.

Environmental Compliance Considerations

The treatments conducted under the guidance provided in this document are categorically or statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This determination was made given that these treatments will not result in significant or permanent effects on the landscape or in the taking of rare, endangered, or threatened species of plants or animals. Treatments conducted under this exemption do not trigger the requirement for a permit under the County Streamside Management Areas and Wetlands Ordinance when they are routine maintenance activities intended to support, keep, and continue defensible space. Site-specific precautions may be necessary for work within Streamside Management Areas (generally 100 feet from top of bank for perennial streams, 50 feet from intermittent streams) to avoid unintended significant environmental impacts.

The guidance in this document calls for a light-touch approach that balances project objectives related to wildfire preparedness with avoiding significant impacts to natural resources. Treatments are intended to create defensible space around homes and outbuildings and along access routes on private property. Consider your surroundings! Nesting season for many species occurs between February and August. If contractor encounters a nest during these months, they must protect these species (and comply with the law) by not disturbing them. Stop work in the area, mark the area, and contact HCRCD.

See humboldt.gov/FireSafetyResources for links to more resources. “Preparing Your Home for Wildfire” is a highly recommended guide for preparing a structure and property.

ATTACHMENT C: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP) FOR PILE BURNING OF CUT DEBRIS

Purpose

This document provides Best Management Practices (BMPs) for pile burning of cut debris to be disposed of while implementing the project. The contractor will be required to comply with these BMPs under any contract for the project.

Debris Disposal

For fuel reduction to be effective, the vegetation or debris that is cut must be modified or disposed of. In certain circumstances, HCRCD will determine to use pile burning to dispose of such vegetation. In some circumstances, pile burning will increase the efficiency of the debris removal, though compliance with BMPs is required to reduce potential risks and impacts.

Permitting and Smoke Management Plans

All burn permit requirements for the State of California and County of Humboldt will be followed before any pile burning is implemented. These include a North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) burn permit and if required, a CAL FIRE burn permit. Required permits and Smoke Management Plans will be obtained, managed, and followed by the contractor prior to and during any pile burning, for all parcels in which the pile burning will take place.

North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District

Currently, the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District has two types of pertinent burn permits: a Standard Burn Permit authorizes an individual to burn a maximum of one pile (4' in diameter) at a time of approved materials and a Non-Standard Burn Permit allows the burning of one (1) 10-foot diameter burn pile at a time on a 1-acre property, unless otherwise approved for larger burns (1-10 acres+), multiple piles, or other types of burning such as property development, hazard reduction, prescribed burns, etc. If the pile burning is part of a larger project with multiple piles, parcels or landowners, a Non-Standard Burn Permit is required. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District mandates that burned vegetation must be sufficiently dried that it will not negatively impact air quality. For more information on obtaining a Non-Standard Burn Permit, visit: www.ncuaqmd.org/non-standard-burn-permits

A Smoke Management Plan (SMP) may be required depending upon the type, size, or location of the pile burning. SMPs are always required when a burn has the potential to impact nearby sensitive receptors (homes, schools, businesses, roads, etc.). Generally, an SMP is required if the quantity of material to be burned equals or exceeds one acre of material per calendar day. For more information on Smoke Management Plans visit: www.ncuaqmd.org/smoke-management-plans

If required, an SMP Application must be completed for the entire project scope and must include supporting mapping and the NCUAQMD SMP spreadsheet. SMP's must be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to burning, to allow for review and approval by the District, which may take longer during the peak prescribed burning periods of the year (September - November and April - June).

Non-Standard Burn Permits should be filled out for each landowner and parcel and submitted with an SMP that accounts for all parcels associated with the project. The requirements and guidelines identified within the approved North Coast Air Quality Management District burn permit must be followed. Please note that requirements may change between issuance of this RFQ and project implementation; contractor is required to follow all then-current laws, policies, and NCUAQMD requirements.

CAL FIRE Burn Permits

If the project is located in a State Responsibility Area (SRA), a CAL FIRE Burn Permit may be required. These permits are required from May 1st until the end of Fire Season is declared by CAL FIRE (after sufficient rainfall has ended significant risk). CAL FIRE has the following burn permit options:

- LE-6a is required for small residential projects with piles less than 4x4. These can be issued at the time of application (no site visit).
- LE-5 is required for all 'large or hazardous' burn projects. This means projects with piles larger than 4x4 .

LE 5 permits may require a site visit from your local CAL FIRE Battalion Chief to evaluate your project for safety, and set 'precautionary requirements' such as control line specifications and minimum resources. These permits can take up to 10 days to process, and CAL FIRE Staff become less available as fire season progresses. As of 2023, the permitting process has moved online: burnpermit.fire.ca.gov. The local Battalion Chief or CAL FIRE Station can also be contacted for assistance with these permits. Please note that requirements may change between issuance of this RFQ and project implementation; contractor is required to follow all then-current laws, policies, and CAL FIRE requirements.

If the project is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) or Federal Responsibility Area (FRA), alternate regulatory requirements may be imposed. Contractor is required to follow all applicable laws and requirements.

Project Burn Permit and SMP Management and Implementation

Contractor is responsible for ensuring that the required permits and plans have been obtained before commencing any pile burning. Digitized copies of the pertinent permits and Smoke Management Plans must be submitted to HCRCD.

After obtaining the required permits and approval of the project SMP, pile burning may commence during Permissive Burn Days only. To determine Burn Day status, call 866-287-6329 (1-866-BURNDAY). Burn hours are from 6:00 a.m. until one hour before sunset. Some Non-Standard permits may also require the responsible party to obtain a Burn Authorization Number from the District prior to ignition. The Burn Authorization Number must be obtained by calling the NCUAQMD the morning that pile burning will be conducted. It is also important to notify the nearest Local Government Fire Agency and CAL FIRE. The Humboldt County Fire Services Web Map can be used to reference the pertinent Local Government Fire Agency. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) requires a minimum of 15 days for piles to dry to reduce the toxic smoke associated with burning green materials.

Environmental Compliance Considerations

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a requirement of funding and is provided via a Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the program filed by the HCRCD. The NOE exempts the project from the requirement for a full CEQA analysis provided the provisions spelled out in the program description are followed. The project proposed in this RFQ is categorically exempt from CEQA. This determination was made given that these treatments will not result in significant or permanent effects on the landscape or in the taking of rare, endangered, or threatened species of plants or animals. Treatments conducted under this exemption do not trigger the requirement for a permit under the County Streamside Management Areas and Wetlands Ordinance when they are routine maintenance activities intended to support, keep, and continue defensible space. Site-specific precautions may be necessary for work within Streamside Management Areas (generally 100 feet from top of bank for perennial streams, 50 feet from intermittent streams) to avoid unintended significant environmental impacts. The project involves a light-touch approach that balances project objectives related to wildfire preparedness with avoiding significant impacts to natural resources.

Nesting season for many species occurs between March 1 and August 1. If you encounter a nest during these months, protect these species (and comply with the law) by not disturbing them. Stop work in the area, mark the area, and contact the HCRCD.

Pile Burn Location

Burn piles must be located on previously disturbed ground, primarily residential home sites, and road cuts created during the initial logging of the area but may include ground disturbed more recently. Road cuts and other disturbed ground will be identified based on the presence of a linear escarpment with no apparent natural cause on the uphill edge, usually with a fill slope on the downhill edge. Trees on the old driving surface will be younger than the age of last disturbance, generally less than 30" dbh, and stumps of old-growth trees will be absent. Centers of burn piles will be located as near the base of the cut bank as practicable. HCRCD may provide additional pile placement requirements or recommendations.

Site Preparation

Burn piles will be located in advance as crews are working through an area and will be placed so as to minimize damage to retained trees. Pile locations will be inspected for lithic scatter, chips, points, bone or similar resources that may have been washed down onto the disturbed area over the years. If any such material is found, HCRCD will be notified immediately and burn pile preparation will cease. Piles will be ringed and scraped to bare earth to eliminate pile escapes. On slopes, a trench will be installed below the pile to catch potential roll out.

Debris Piles

The objective of pile burning of debris is to reduce the fuels that contribute most to fire spread rate: the smaller, flashier fuels that consist mostly of leaves, twigs and stems less than 1" diameter. Debris should be cut for efficient handling, with large end diameter generally 1 to 3 inches. Larger pieces can be limbed and bucked to maximize ground contact, and oriented parallel to the fall line where feasible or made available for firewood. From Roadside Guide: Check first to see if the landowner

will use removed material as firewood, if directed by HCRCD. Piles should be no larger than 10 ft x 10 ft for Non-Standard Burn Permits or 4 ft in diameter for Standard Burn Permits.

Burning

Before vegetation is lit, fire control mitigation must be prepared. This must include either a charged water hose that has the capacity to spray the surrounding area, or handtools and a cut line down to mineral soil around the fire area. The personnel that are starting the ignition must have communication ability to contact the local fire agency, CAL FIRE, or call 9-1-1 if they are unable to control the fire and it threatens to become a structure fire or wildfire. Ignition accelerants including fuel, oil or other flammables may only be used with explicit permission from HCRCD. With the approval of all of the previous authorities and the explicit permission from the landowner and resident, burning may commence.

Piles are to be hand-fed at a rate that avoids detrimental scorching of the crowns of retained trees. Fuel should not include noxious or poisonous vegetation that could potentially make residents sick. Note that the objective is to reduce fuels to reduce fire hazard and rate of spread. It is not necessary to leave behind a ground surface that is 100% free of flammable debris. Fuel must be strategically loaded to account for the timing necessary to burn down and be able to be extinguished before the end of the work day, or one hour before sunset. The resident/landowner must be given notice of the situation and instruction on how to monitor for unexpected flare-ups and what to do in the case of an escape, or problematic smoke. Consideration should be given to the final condition of the resident's home site and when necessary, ash and charcoal may need to be moved out of the immediate area or spread out.

ATTACHMENT D: INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

HCRCD INDEMNIFICATION AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENTS

INDEMNIFICATION:

- A. Hold Harmless, Defense and Indemnification. CONTRACTOR shall hold harmless, defend and indemnify HCRCD, its Partners, the Landowner, and their agents, officers, officials, employees and volunteers from and against any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, liabilities, expenses and costs of any kind or nature, including, without limitation, attorney's fees and other costs of litigation, arising out of, or in connection with, CONTRACTOR's performance of, or failure to comply with, any of the duties and/or obligations contained herein, including the performance or nonperformance of any of CONTRACTOR's agents, officers, directors, employees, assignees, or subcontractors.
- B. Effect of Insurance. Acceptance of the insurance required by this Agreement shall not relieve CONTRACTOR from liability under this provision. This provision shall apply to all claims for damages related to CONTRACTOR's performance hereunder regardless of whether any insurance is applicable or not. The insurance policy limits set forth herein shall not act as a limitation upon the amount of indemnification or defense to be provided hereunder.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

This Agreement shall not be executed by HCRCD, and CONTRACTOR shall not be entitled to any rights hereunder, unless certificates of insurance, or other proof that the following provisions have been complied with, are filed with the HCRCD.

- A. General Insurance Requirements. Without limiting CONTRACTOR's indemnification obligations set forth herein, CONTRACTOR, and its subcontractors hereunder, shall take out and maintain, throughout the term of this Agreement, and any extensions thereof, the following policies of insurance, placed with insurers authorized to do business in the State of California with a current A.M. Bests rating of no less than A: VII or its equivalent against personal injury, death and property damage which may arise from, or in connection with, all of the activities of CONTRACTOR and its agents, officers, directors, employees, assignees or subcontractors:
 - 1. Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability Insurance at least as broad as Insurance Services Office Commercial General Liability Coverage (occurrence form CG 0001), in an amount of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) per occurrence for any one (1) incident, including, without limitation, personal injury, death and property damage. If a general aggregate limit is used, such limit shall apply separately hereto or shall be twice the required occurrence limit.
 - a. If you are applying for pile burning, please ensure your insurance covers pile burning under either Commercial General Liability or Loggers Broad Form.
 - 2. Automobile/Motor Liability Insurance with a limit of liability not less than One Million

Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) combined single limit coverage. Such insurance shall include coverage of all owned, hired and non-owned vehicles and be at least as broad as Insurance Service Offices Form Code 1 (any auto).

3. Workers' Compensation Insurance, as required by the California Labor Code, with statutory limits, and Employers Liability Insurance with a limit of no less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) per accident for bodily injury or disease.

B. Special Insurance Requirements. Said policies shall, unless otherwise specified herein, be endorsed with the following provisions:

1. The Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability Policy shall provide that HCRCD, Partners, and their agents, officers, officials, employees and volunteers, are covered as additional insured for liability arising out of the operations performed by, or on behalf of, CONTRACTOR. The coverage shall contain no special limitations on the scope of protection afforded to HCRCD, Partners, or their agents, officers, officials, employees and volunteers. Said policy shall also contain a provision stating that such coverage:
 - a. Includes contractual liability.
 - b. Does not contain exclusions as to property damage caused by explosion or collapse of structures or underground damage, commonly referred to as "XCU Hazards."
 - c. Is the primary insurance with regard to HCRCD and Partners.
 - d. Does not contain a pro-rata, excess only and/or escape clause.
 - e. Contains a cross liability, severability of interest or separation of insureds clause.
2. The above-referenced policies shall not be canceled, non-renewed or materially reduced in coverage without thirty (30) days prior written notice being provided to HCRCD in accordance with the notice requirements set forth herein. It is further understood that CONTRACTOR shall not terminate such coverage until HCRCD receives adequate proof that equal or better insurance has been secured.
3. The inclusion of more than one (1) insured shall not operate to impair the rights of one (1) insured against another insured, and the coverage afforded shall apply as though separate policies had been issued to each insured, but the inclusion of more than one (1) insured shall not operate to increase the limits of the insurer's liability.
4. For claims related to this Agreement, CONTRACTOR's insurance is the primary coverage to HCRCD and Partners, and any insurance or self-insurance programs maintained thereby are excess to CONTRACTOR's insurance and will not be used to contribute therewith.
5. Any failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this Agreement shall not affect the coverage provided to HCRCD, Partners or their agents, officers, officials, employees and volunteers.
6. CONTRACTOR shall furnish HCRCD with certificates and original endorsements affecting the required coverage prior to execution of this Agreement. The endorsements shall be on forms approved by the HCRCD. Any deductible or self-

insured retention over Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) shall be disclosed to, and approved by, HCRCD. If CONTRACTOR does not keep all required policies in full force and effect, HCRCD may, in addition to any other available remedies, take out the necessary insurance and deduct the cost of said insurance from the monies owed to CONTRACTOR under this Agreement.

7. HCRCD is to be notified immediately if twenty-five percent (25%) or more of any required insurance aggregate limit is encumbered, and CONTRACTOR shall be required to purchase additional coverage to meet the above-referenced aggregate limits.

- C. Insurance Notices. Any and all insurance notices required thereunder shall be sent to the addresses set forth below in accordance with the notice requirements contained herein.

HCRCD: Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
Attention: Jill Demers, Executive Director
5630 S Broadway St.
Eureka, CA 95503

Contractor: (Name of Contractor)
Attention: (Name of Contact Person), (Job Title)
(Street Address)
(City), (State) (Zip Code)

ATTACHMENT E: PROPOSAL TEMPLATE
COVER SHEET

RFQ Name: Manual Fuels Reduction Services in the Greater Willow Creek Area

Submission Deadline: Monday, May 27, 2024 (by 5:00 PM)

Email submission as a PDF or submit hardcopy: Katrina Henderson (foresthealth@hcrsd.org)

Contractor Name:

Contractor Address:

Contact Person:

Contact Phone Number:

Contact Email Address:

Statement of Availability:

Certification:

I/We have reviewed the Request for Qualifications, and I/We can provide insurance certificates that meet the requirements listed in Attachment C prior to execution of a professional services agreement.

Signature: _____

Printed Name & Title: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT E: PROPOSAL TEMPLATE STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Submit a separate form for EACH service type offered. Attachment continuation sheets as needed. Reference the RFQ for details to include.

Select **one** service type:

- Roadside Fuels Reduction
- Direct Defensible Space Assistance
- Chipping Services
- Pile Building
- Pile Burning

1. Qualifications for selected service type:

2. Description of general approach:

3. Daily cost estimate (add rows as needed). The costs provided should reflect the best available information at the time of the RFQ and will be the basis of negotiation if a professional services agreement is offered.:

Cost estimate is based on _____ operating hours per day.

Daily Cost Estimate			
<i>Personnel roles:</i>	Quantity	Daily Rate	Cost
<i>Equipment:</i>	Quantity	Daily Rate	Cost
<i>Other Expenses:</i>	Quantity	Rate	Cost
Mileage		.67	
		Grand Total:	\$

**ATTACHMENT E: PROPOSAL TEMPLATE
REFERENCES & PHOTO ATTACHMENTS**

Reference 1	
Name, Title & Affiliation	
Contact Phone	
Contact Email	
Brief explanation of relationship	
Reference 2	
Name, Title & Affiliation	
Contact Phone	
Contact Email	
Brief explanation of relationship	

Fuels Reduction Photos

If proposing fuels reduction services, provide three examples of before/after photos.

Before	After
Before	After

Before

After