

Purpose

Due to the sensitivity around the allocation of State-funded Fire Projects, the Yolo Office of Emergency Services (YOES) was asked to provide a staff recommendation to the Yolo Board of Supervisors for the expenditure of the 2022 received funding.

Overview

As fires in California continue to grow larger every year, there is a heightened attention to fire mitigation project completion to enhance the resiliency to future wildfires in area. The LNU Fire in 2020 was the 6th major fire along the western border of Yolo County in 6 years and was the first in those six years to destroy primary residences in Yolo County. Post LNU Fire, the Board of Supervisor for District 2 in Yolo County and District 4 in Solano County held public listening sessions with residents from the affected area to better understand actions that could be taken to improve mitigation and response actions for the area. These public listening sessions led to a partnership between the Supervisors and Senator Dodd's office to request additional funding be set aside in the State budget to begin to address the area.

In August of 2021, the Yolo County Fire Safe Council (YCFSC) was established. The mission of YCFSC is to provide support for wildfire prevention, wildfire response, and post-fire recovery efforts by implementing priority projects identified in the Yolo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). In 2021, the YCFSC also established an oversight structure that includes members from across Yolo County. They completed a Wildfire Risk Assessment for the County and began drafting the CWPP. A CWPP includes projects that are pre-identified as being beneficial for the mission of the YCFSC. Due to funding streams being available for Wildfire mitigation projects prior to the completion of the CWPP, the YCFSC focused on creating an initial project list, with ratings of importance, to be able to apply for funding even prior to the completion of the CWPP. The CWPP will continue to grow with additional projects as the fire landscape changes within Yolo County.

In addition to the CWPP process, Fire mitigation and response information is also included in the local Urban Forestry plans of cities throughout Yolo County. This information focuses more on the urban conflagration risk of fire and less on wildfire preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery..

It is important to note that whether the fire risk is due to Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) or Urban Conflagration, both sources are considered a risk to Public Life Safety by YOES. It is the viewpoint of YOES that all projects (regardless of origin) will need to have funding sources identified for completion. In future years, State budget, State grant sources, and Federal grant sources should all be maximized to fund all projects listed as a protection from any type of fire source to protect the residents of our County.

This paper explains the process YOES used to create their staff recommendation for the first State budget funding source allocated to Yolo County for these purposes. The work completed on this recommendation includes:

1. Analysis of previous plans and risk assessments done by YOES prior to the 2020 fire season
2. Information provided to the County Board members through listening sessions
3. The incredible work of the YCFSC and its members

This approach was taken to balance the interests of multiple parties involved in planning efforts that may have been started prior to the establishment of the YCFSC and their current work product. In future years, YOES will only provide funding recommendations based on the projects overseen by the YCFSC and/or the local Fire Departments and Fire Protection Districts within Yolo County. There will be a direct correlation between these projects and the projects list in the Yolo Operational Area Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) to maximize Federal Mitigation funding sources.

Rating System

YOES created a rating system for the 2022 State budget funds to balance the multiple interests mentioned in the previous section. This section explains the rating system used by YOES for the recommendation.

Consideration	Scale	Logic
Which Fire Season will a project be completed by?	2022 = 3 pts 2023 = 2 pts 2024 = 1 pt 2025 and past = 0 pts	There are additional funding sources in the future that can be leveraged for projects that affect future fire seasons. These projects may be prioritized lower than those that could benefit an immediately approaching fire season.
Is the area the project is in considered a repetitive burn area?	Yes = 1 pt No = 0 pts	Areas that burn year after year are prioritized higher than those that have never burned.
Is the area the project is in within the State Fire severity zone(s)?	Yes = 1 pt No = 0 pts	These are areas that are pre-identified, by the state, to be of special consideration during response operations.
Does the project submitter have the right to work on the project directly?	Yes = 1 pt No = 0 pts	For projects that include infrastructure additions and/or use of private property, projects may take longer. Easements and our legal agreements for these projects may make them span multiple years. A less immediate funding source could be used for these projects.
Was the project “voiced” in the LNU public listening forum(s) (pre-FSC)?	Yes = 1 pt No = 0 pts	Since this first funding source was obtained prior to the establishment of the YCFSC, consideration is given to whether the project had already been brought up during previous years.
What is the YCFSC’s rating of a project		Projects that have gone through the entire YCFSC process will be given points for that effort. These ratings are decided on by the YCFSC.

Consideration	Scale	Logic
Can the project be directly related to the 2018 MJHMP?	Yes = 0 pts No = 1 pt	Projects relating to this plan are eligible for the Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and therefore have funding opportunities released each year. Projects that cannot related to this grant will NEED to be funded through sources like the state budget funds.

In addition to the quantitative ratings above, YOES staff have interviewed local fire personnel, project sponsors, and held internal discussions among YOES staff to consider any additional information that should be reviewed about each project. In cases where the qualitative analysis affects the consideration of a project, YOES will summarize the qualitative analysis for the project.

Project Recommendations

Based on the quantitative analysis and qualitative considerations of YOES, the following projects are being recommended for State Budget funding:

Project Name	Amount	Quantitative Rating	Qualitative Analysis
Siren System Design	\$800,000	7	The Design of an audible siren system to alert the Greater Winters Area residents was a project submitted for consideration in the State budget as a direct reflection of the LNU listening sessions. Yolo OES estimated the amount shown for the design of a system to enhance the Alert and Warning ability of Yolo and Solano OES and thereby increase the Mass Notification reach to residents in the Greater Winters Area during an emergency.
Chipper Program	\$120,000	10	YOES is recommending the use of state budget monies to pay for a chipping company to work in fire prone areas to prepare for the 2022 season. A full chipper program for \$600,000 will still need full development to be able to operate year after year.
Grantline Rd. Fire Access	\$175,000	8	It is recommended to fund the establishment of a fuel reduction line at the base of the foothills encapsulating the largest portion of the Blue Ridge North from County Road 40 to the South near Winters as a protective measure for the Winters and Capay areas.

Address Signage	\$55,000	9	In submissions to the FireSafe Council, two independent address signage projects were proposed for a relatively small number of rural properties for a cost of \$11,000. YOES recommends granting additional funding to this project to encompass more addresses and increase the visibility of addresses to all first responders as this will benefit all hazards (including fire). YOES also feels that a larger project will provide “buying power” with the vendor to purchase more signs at a cheaper price.
Fuel Reduction	\$350,000	Various: 1. 9.5 2. 9 3. 9 4. 8 5. 6 6. 5	YOES recommends using this dollar amount to fund at least 6 fuel reduction projects on the current FireSafe council list. This amount is suggested and is above the amount of the six projects that were reviewed since YOES feels that the amounts were underestimated, and one submission was part of a larger project. Any un-used monies will be re-allocated to other Fuel Management projects along the Western Yolo County border. The projects included are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brush and Tree trimming along County and Community roads in Winters 2. Fuel reduction along County Road 41A 3. State Hwy 16 fuel abatement and fire prevention 4. Fuel reduction along Rumsey Canyon Road 5. Guinda Wildfire Protection Project 6. Capay Valley Capacity Building Project (fuel reduction portion only)