

Sierra Nevada Conservancy WIP Capacity Program Subgrant Three-Month Progress Report

Grantee Name: Eastern California Water Association

Project title: WIP Capacity Program Subgrant – East Geography

SNC Grant Agreement Number: 940-RFFCP

Submittal Date: May 7, 2021 **Reporting Period:** February 1 – April 30, 2021

Report Preparer: Holly Alpert **Phone #:** 760-709-2212

Progress Reports are a required deliverable of your grant and must be completed whether or not work has occurred on your project in the last three months. Not submitting a complete progress report by the deadline defined in your grant agreement will result in any subsequent requests for payment being delayed or denied. Progress Reports should reflect implementation activities for the project over the last three months. Upon completion of the project, a Progress Report that covers the last three months of the project must accompany the Final Report.

Progress Report Summary

Please provide a summary narrative of work completed during this reporting period in the following categories. This report should include work completed by any organization for which you are a fiscal agent or subgrantor under your SNC Subgrant.

1. Capacity Building
 - a. Capacity building need assessment

We submitted our capacity assessment on April 30, 2020.

- b. Capacity building program design

We continue to hone the planning and design of the individual capacity building program elements as the program evolves and we learn new information.

- c. Capacity building program delivery

Website: We continue to dial in the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance website. Chance Callahan, our new Sierra Corps fellow, is learning the Wix platform and will take over the job of maintaining and adding to the website. Both Chance and Holly met with the Mono Basin Fire Safe Council to receive feedback on the webpages we host for them and to discuss content to add and enhance. In addition, we are in early discussions with Independence FSC to build a webpage for them. We also intend to create a new webpage focused on prescribed fire in the Eastern Sierra that will provide education on the topic as well as planned/current prescribed fire events.

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Grants Workshops: In early February, Elissa Brown taught a grant writing workshop targeted to Eastern Sierra stakeholders. About 12 people attended the whole workshop, and very positive feedback was received.

In March, just after the CAL FIRE CCI grant solicitations were announced, we hosted a workshop delivered by David Haas and two other CAL FIRE staff members. The initial intention of this workshop was to be a CAL FIRE “grants 101” training to introduce participants to CAL FIRE funding in general, but since the fire prevention and forest health grant solicitations had just been announced, CAL FIRE staff focused on the current solicitations.

2. Collaboration and Partnership Development

a. Stakeholder and partner outreach

Partnership development is taking place through one-on-one discussions and meetings with a number of organizations, often focusing on a particular topic (such as projects, grant opportunities, or the website). We are finding that, similar to what happened with the IRWM Program some time after it was developed, the RFFC Program is becoming a go-to resource for different types of community organizations and agencies. Meetings held are enumerated in 2.c. below.

b. Development of agreements (MOUs, MSA, GNAs, other agreements or foundational documents.)

No new agreements

c. Meetings with partners/collaborative members

The following meetings occurred during the reporting period:

- Monthly projects subcommittee meetings to make progress on an overall concept for project prioritization
- One RFFCP Stakeholder meeting focused on the current CAL FIRE grant opportunities
- Two ESCCRP meetings, which we helped to host and facilitate
- One-on-one meetings:
 - Alpine Biomass Collaborative
 - Mono Basin Fire Safe Council
 - Independence Fire Safe Council
 - 40 Acres Fire Safe Council
 - Alpine Fire Safe Council
 - Mammoth Lakes Fire Department
 - Inyo County Office of Environmental Services
 - SmokeD
 - Inyo National Forest

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- National Forest Foundation
- ESCCRP

d. Collaborative activities

Our collaboration with Plumas Corp./ESCCRP grew through the development of a CDFW Prop. 1 proposal to develop NEPA for the project. Rick and Holly assisted with the writing of the proposal and advised in the structuring of the project.

Chance and Holly attended the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Reservation Earth Day event in April. Though not heavily attended, we had opportunity to interact with Tribal members and other members of the community, as well as other key organizational stakeholders.

We are starting to work more closely with the Inyo National Forest to develop project ideas and possible collaborations on grants.

3. Forest Health and Fire Protection Project Planning

a. Collecting existing plans and project information

We continue to solicit and add projects to the database. Now that multiple grant opportunities are available, stakeholders are communicating more and more project needs. Adding projects will be an ongoing process.

b. Designing the planning process

Great Basin Institute continues its work on the standardized riparian environmental assessment. We received one update from them during the reporting period.

We are learning more and more that project planning is badly needed in the region – and more specifically, funding for project planning. As these grant opportunities continue to become available for shovel-ready projects, we are having to pass them up because we do not have enough projects shovel-ready.

c. Outreach and involvement of stakeholders and the public

Grant development became a primary focus during the reporting period, and we worked with many different stakeholders (such as those listed above in 2.c.) to assess project readiness and decide which projects would go forward into various grant applications.

d. Application of scientific methodologies or best practices

N/A at this point.

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e. Project prioritization

American Forests is continuing to facilitate our project prioritization process. We held monthly meetings of the project prioritization subcommittee over the reporting period. The meetings partly focused on projects to put forth for the current grant opportunities, but they mostly focused on the overall prioritization process. American Forests put forth some criteria ideas that were discussed by the subcommittee. In the coming months, it is expected we will choose draft criteria to bring to the full RFFCP stakeholder group before beginning to use them for prioritization purposes.

f. Other planning activities

N/A at this point.

4. Forest Health and Fire Protection Project Development

a. Completing design of projects

N/A at this point.

b. Obtaining funding for projects

Rick and Holly assisted Janet Hatfield of the ESCCRP in the development of a CDFW Prop. 1 grant, with ESCOG as the applicant. This grant would fund the environmental review of ESCCRP and would include other elements such as education/outreach and biomass solutions.

During the reporting period, the CAL FIRE CCI funding opportunities became available. In the latter half of the reporting period, this became the main focus of our work. We worked with individual stakeholders, small groups, and the full RFFCP stakeholder group to (1) identify needed projects and activities and (2) agree upon a process for proposal development. As of the writing of this report, 3-4 fire prevention proposals will be submitted through the Whitebark Institute to fund education, planning, and fuels reduction projects.

There are multiple other funding opportunities currently available, including SNC and CA Fire Safe Council. We are assessing whether we can identify projects to fit these opportunities and/or if we have the capacity to develop applications by the deadlines.

c. Completing environmental or other permitting for projects

N/A at this time.

d. Other project development activities

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Great Basin Institute's work is the primary project development activity currently underway.

5. Demonstration Project Implementation

- a. Project implementation activities

N/A

- b. Project evaluation activities

N/A

6. Subgrant Administration

- a. Project Reporting

The fourth quarterly report was submitted on January 31, 2021.

Invoice #5, covering the period January 1 – March 31, 2021, has been submitted.

- b. Administration and/or oversight of subgrants or fiscal agency recipients

ECWA is administering and overseeing this subgrant. ECWA does not oversee any other entities as related to this subgrant.

- c. Other

N/A

7. Regional Communication and Collaboration

- a. Communication or collaboration with other Geographies

Other than participating in the SNC-hosted subgrantee workshops, we did not have any communications with other geographies during the reporting period.

- b. Participation in any multi-regional conferences, workshops, and webinars

The full RFFCP east team participated in the SNC-hosted subgrantee workshops during the reporting period, including the interesting session on resource conservation districts.

Status of Specific Deliverables to Date

In addition to the above, please report on any specific deliverables included in Exhibit A of your grant agreement.

Deliverable 1: Capacity assessment/capacity building work plan

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This deliverable was completed and submitted on April 30, 2020.

Deliverable 2: Grant application for demonstration project

A specific demonstration project has not yet been identified, but with the momentum being gained in the project prioritization process, along with the project development work being done by GBI, we expect a project opportunity to become apparent. We have begun to brainstorm some possibilities, such as a project to harden public buildings in the subregion to use for educational/demonstration purposes.

Deliverable 3: Outreach/educational materials

This deliverable is being fulfilled in a piecemeal fashion. We have already provided many educational materials about personal safety and evacuation, defensible space, and home hardening on our website and plan to expand that to prescribed fire. We are applying for a CAL FIRE fire prevention grant aimed at visitor education and outreach, through which a series of printed materials will be developed.

Deliverable 4: Develop sub-regional plan

The progress towards this deliverable is the project prioritization process that is now in place and progressing. While there will be no static end point of this process (meaning the project list will always be in flux, and thus the prioritization process too), it will yield a working list of prioritized projects that can be added to or subtracted from as needed.

Challenges Encountered

Have you completed the 'Next Steps' work as stated in your last Progress Report? If not, please describe any issues that have made or will make completing the project on time difficult; include solutions you initiated to resolve problems. If your project is not on schedule, please explain why here.

We have achieved some of the next steps from our previous progress report:

- Our project prioritization process is firmly in place
- Capacity building was not as much of a focus, though the grant writing and CAL FIRE grants trainings were big steps forward for several stakeholders
- We have not yet begun drafting our regional plan, but our timeline allows for its completion
- We continue to provide support to ESCCRP

At this time, our project is on schedule.

Successes Achieved

Please describe any successes or opportunities that have emerged during this reporting period.

Successes

- Grant writing training

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- CAL FIRE grants 101 training
- Solid outreach and relationship building
- Implementation of project prioritization process, including a draft mapping tool
- Identification of projects and activities for CAL FIRE fire prevention grant
- Welcoming our new Sierra Corps fellow, Chance Callahan

Opportunities

- Offering more capacity building opportunities
- Obtaining grant funding, particularly for project planning/development
- Begin drafting subregional plan
- More outreach

Media

Please provide a description along with copies or links of any coverage including social media posts, print, video, press release, or webpages.

N/A at this time

Compare Actual Costs to Budgeted Costs

Please refer to your grant agreement for the budget categories and budgeted costs.

These numbers are current as of March 31, 2021. That date is the end date of our fifth invoicing period.

Project Budget Categories	Budgeted Subgrant Dollars	Total Expenditures to date
Staff	\$145,000	\$87,141.87
Materials/Supplies	\$10,000	\$403.91
Travel	\$8,000	\$867.39
Indirect Costs	\$16,300	\$5,475.32
GRAND TOTAL	\$179,300	\$93,888.49

Please provide additional budget details as needed

Provide an explanation for any categories that are over budget. If you are on an advance payment schedule, list interest earned on advanced funds.

N/A

Do you anticipate any challenges to completing the project within established budget category amounts?

If so, please list the budget categories in question and describe the potential issues.

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Not at this time.

Next Steps

Work anticipated in the next three months, including location and timing of any scheduled events related to the project.

We anticipate that our work will largely be focused on project prioritization over the next three months. We will also continue matching projects to funding opportunities and writing proposals as appropriate. This might include the CA Fire Safe Council grant.

At this time, no other events are scheduled.

Comments

Please list any other important items/issues pertaining to the project which have not been addressed elsewhere.

N/A

Additional Requirements

If you have been requested to provide information on other issues (such as employment benefits, benefits to priority populations, greenhouse gas reductions, etc.), please provide the response below:

N/A