

February 13 2025 Meeting

## Welcome!

Laura Beardsley, Whitebark Institute

## Introductions

- Facilitation and planning team:
- Please introduce yourself: name, agency/organization

# EASTERN SIERRA WILDFIRE ALLIANCE



*Funding for this project has been provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, an agency of the State of California, and Inyo National Forest, US Department of Agriculture.*

# Attendee List

<b>Aaron Wilcher</b>	UCANR	<b>Kimra McAfee</b>	<b>Alpine Watershed Group</b>
<b>Ales Tomaier</b>	Mammoth Lakes Fire	<b>Kristen Pfeiler</b>	Inyo County
<b>Angel Avila</b>	Department	<b>Laura Beardsley</b>	Whitebark Institute
<b>Beau Tindall</b>	BLM	<b>Lawson Reif</b>	Town of Mammoth Lakes
<b>Beth Burnan</b>		<b>Lynda Salcido</b>	Mono County
<b>Bill Michael</b>	Independence Fire Safe Council	<b>Maeve McAllister</b>	UC Irvine
<b>Carol Blanchette</b>	Valentine Reserve	<b>Mandi Grisham</b>	Bishop Fire Department
<b>Carol Snow</b>	CALFIRE	<b>Marcella Rose</b>	Mono County Recreation
<b>Chance Traub</b>	Inyo National Forest	<b>Mark Drew</b>	Eastern Sierra Land Trust
<b>Chris Bubser</b>	Mammoth Lakes Town Council	<b>Matt Paruolo</b>	Southern California Edison
<b>Cindy Duriscoe</b>	Big Pine Paiute Tribe	<b>Mel Joseph</b>	Lone Pine Shoshone
<b>Claire Galaway</b>	Whitebark Institute	<b>Mike McCarthy</b>	Mammoth Lakes Fire
<b>Clint Celio</b>	Alpine County	<b>Mono City Fire District</b>	Department
<b>Danny Gallagher</b>		<b>Nathan Sill</b>	Inyo National Forest
<b>David Haas</b>	CALFIRE	<b>Noah Williams</b>	Eastern Sierra Land Trust
<b>Elaine Kabala</b>	ESCOG	<b>Pat Cates</b>	Twin Lakes Property Owner
<b>Frederick Tornatore</b>	TSS Consultants	<b>Paul McFarland</b>	Association
<b>Heather Stone</b>	BLM	<b>Rick Kattelman</b>	Mono County
<b>Janet Hatfield</b>	Whitebark Institute	<b>Rick Napoles</b>	Whitebark Institute
<b>Jen Roeser</b>	Inyo County	<b>Robbie Di Paolo</b>	
<b>Jennifer Martin</b>	Inyo National Forest	<b>Ron Tucker</b>	Mono Basin Firesafe Council
<b>Jessica Roberts</b>		<b>Sandra Moberly</b>	LADWP
<b>Jessie O'Dell</b>	Whitebark Institute	<b>Spencer Ostergaard</b>	Mono County CAO
<b>John Hays</b>	LADWP	<b>Stacy Corless</b>	NRCS
<b>Justine Kokx</b>		<b>Stephen Pfeiler</b>	Meeting Facilitator
		<b>Steven Nelson</b>	Caltrans
		<b>Ted Mason</b>	
		<b>Wendilyn Grasseschi</b>	TSS Consultants
		<b>Wilfred Nabahe</b>	Mono County
		<b>Joshua Williams</b>	Inyo National Forest
			CAL FIRE

# Meeting Summary

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to partner updates, which are shared in the following slides that include notes from the meeting.

Some reflections on the updates: there were several instances in which ESWA partners are seeking regional collaboration (such as Mammoth Lakes Fire seeking to partner on planning) and offers of support, such as CAL FIRE, in response to current federal funding uncertainties, noting availability of funding for work on federal lands and a statutory CEQA exemption where NEPA has been completed.

The meeting also covered some of the findings from the November 2024 meeting regarding the future development and governance of the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance. Participants recognize the need for a regional wildfire collaborative and defined leadership of such an entity, but there is no clear consensus around how it should be structure and what roles should be. There is agreement on the challenges of working at scale across administrative boundaries, and of limited capacity, as well as a need to improve communication among wildfire partners and with communities and visitors. Tribal partnership is also a priority for ESWA.

Based on that feedback, the proposed path forward is to conduct a 4-6 month collaborative planning process for ESWA while also continuing with partner updates and regional project list development and other near-term activities such as policy and funding updates. Development of Prop 4 grant guidelines and funding allocation plans will be a key place for ESWA to engage this year—one opportunity is through a [feedback request form](#) from CA Natural Resources Agency on grant programs.

# Meeting Goals

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- Share agency/organizational project updates for 2025
- Share findings from November meeting and ESWA assessment recommendations
- Introduce and confirm support for 4-6 month collaborative planning process
- Discuss other short-term wildfire resilience opportunities

# Meeting Agreements

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- Raise your hand/wait to be called on before speaking and state your name
- Be mindful of virtual format (stay muted when not speaking, use chat, etc)
- Treat people with respect
- All ideas are valuable
- Actively participate
- Be willing to reach consensus
- Avoid/explain acronyms



Bishop Fire  
BLM  
CAL FIRE  
Firewise USA  
Inyo County  
Inyo National Forest  
HT National Forest  
LADWP  
Mammoth Lakes FPD  
Mono County  
Mono Basin FSC  
Town of Mammoth Lakes  
Whitebark Institute

# **EASTERN SIERRA WILDFIRE ALLIANCE**

## **Partner Updates**

# ESWA Partner Updates

## Bishop Fire

Updates Presenty by Kristen Pfeiler

- Station upgrades (ventilation, new station)
- New station in Wilkerson
- Possible new station in Rovana
- Updating PPE for all firefighters
- Replacing older apparatus (type 1 and ladder truck, type 3 or type 6)
- Hiring captains
- Starting a wildland program



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## BLM

Heather Stone, BLM Bishop Field Office

- Uncertainty for BLM and other federal land management agencies with new administration's policy
- Planning on continuing fuel break maintenance
- Potential projects in Mono Basin



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# CAL FIRE BDU Batt 4 Updates

Presented by David Haas

## Overall Goals:

- ▶ More prescribed burning
- ▶ Treatment of riparian areas
- ▶ Tribal engagement
- ▶ Landscape-scale projects
- ▶ Support regional capacity building
- ▶ Fund grant projects



# CAL FIRE BDU Batt 4 Updates

## Existing Projects

- ▶ Prescribed Burns
  - ▶ Artesian Vegetation Mgt Program (VMP)
  - ▶ Dearborn Springs VMP
  - ▶ Calvert VMP
  - ▶ Center VMP
- ▶ Fuel Reduction
  - ▶ Lone Pine
  - ▶ Onion Valley

## Planned Projects

- ▶ Prescribed Burns
  - ▶ Numu Tuna'e (Mono Basin/Rush Creek)
  - ▶ Bishop VMP
  - ▶ Crowley VMP
- ▶ Fuel Reduction
  - ▶ Big Pine
  - ▶ Wilkerson (update)



# CAL FIRE BDU Batt 4 Updates

## Grant Opportunities

- ▶ Forest Health: just closed
- ▶ Tribal Wildfire Resilience: currently open, closes March 28, 2025
- ▶ Wildfire Prevention: tentatively opening Spring 2025
- ▶ Additional:  
<https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants>

## Contact Us!

- ▶ David Haas, Unit Forester
  - ▶ [david.haas@fire.ca.gov](mailto:david.haas@fire.ca.gov)
- ▶ Carol Snow, Unit Environmental Scientist
  - ▶ [carol.snow@fire.ca.gov](mailto:carol.snow@fire.ca.gov)

# ESWA Partner Updates

## Firewise

Presented by Beth Burnham, Firewise USA

7 recognized Firewise Communities (Mustang Mesa, Swall Meadows, Sunny Slopes, Aspen Springs, Juniper Springs Lodge/Mammoth Lakes, Mono City and Twin Lakes)

- 1 community submitting their application this week (Aspendell South Fork)
- 4 communities actively working on their applications (Alabama Hills, Starlite, Bridgeport and in Mammoth Lakes, the neighborhood of Hidden Valley)
- 13 communities that are in the formation stage
- 26 communities total



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# Inyo County Goals

1. Grow Regional Capacity and Collaboration for Climate & Recreation
2. Develop Climate Resilience for Community & Economic Sustainability
3. Evaluate Water Infrastructure Needs – Develop Upgrade Plans
4. Evaluate and Support First Responder Capacity Challenges
5. Improve Emergency Communication and Wireless Emergency Alert Systems
6. Expand Community Outreach and Education Programs
7. Improve Access, Egress, and Emergency Preparedness



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# Inyo County Existing Projects

Goal	Key Projects
Infrastructure	Southern Inyo Fire Station Construction, Lone Pine Water System Replacement, Emergency Generators for heating/cooling centers
Fuels Reduction/Fire Prevention	Parks and Rec Sites: Pleasant Valley, Diaz Lake, Independence Creek Campground, Taboose Campground, Tinnemaha Campground, community clean ups, Green Waste Days
Strategic Plans	Safety Element Update and Ingress/Egress Survey, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Drought Task Force, CWPP implementation
Emergency Notifications and Public Communication	Genasys/Alert Rollout (Emergency Alerts), Ready Inyo Website (Broad Communication Platform)
Community Engagement	Special Education/AFN Outreach, Ready Inyo/IMAH Workshop, Wildfire Resilience Week, Last Chance Survival Simulation Workshop, Ready Inyo Outreach Schedule, Lone Pine FSC & Wilkerson FSC
Capacity and Collaboration	Cohesive strategy development in ESCOG, Regional FSC Collaborative, Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance, Explore opportunities to strengthen countywide fire/EMS capacity
Access, Egress, and Emergency Preparedness	Community resource mapping, evacuation planning, and emergency access improvements, airport exercise, shelter trainings, FEMA courses, CERT,



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# Inyo County CWPP Check-in

**CWPP Top 10 Priorities** - *Based on collaboratively started projects and input on feasibility and value*

## **Promote and Support Firewise Communities\***

- Encourage the formation and growth of Firewise communities to strengthen neighborhood-level wildfire preparedness.

## **Implement a Countywide Defensible Space and Home Hardening Support Program\***

- Aid property owners in defensible space, home assessments, green waste disposal, and improving addressing and signage.

## **Enhance Green Waste Disposal Capacity\***

- Acquire additional chipping equipment and explore the use of curtain burners for efficient green waste management.

## **Support Tribal Communities in Wildfire Preparedness and Capacity Building\***

- Collaborate with tribal governments to enhance resilience and capacity for fire response.

## **Create Countywide Wildfire Preparedness Positions\***

- Establish roles for a wildfire preparedness coordinator and a fire marshal to improve coordination and readiness.

## **Develop a Comprehensive Public Education and Engagement Program\***

- Focus on wildfire preparedness, community involvement, and emergency awareness.

## **Raise Awareness of the Emergency Notification System**

- Continue efforts to ensure community members are informed and subscribed.

## **Improve Communications Systems in Remote Communities**

- Resolve connectivity issues to enhance emergency response and community communication.

## **Maintain and Expand Fuel Breaks**

- Sustain maintenance of existing fuel breaks and continue implementing planned projects.

## **Collaborate with Tribal Governments on Wildfire Resilience Projects**

- Align efforts with tribal land management and ecosystem restoration objectives.



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# Inyo County CWPP Check-in

**CWPP Priority Fuel Treatments:** *The goal is to look at these on a landscape-level scale*

## Tribal Nations

1. Lone Pine reservation - LPPST, NRCS, Whitebark, LADWP, USFS, BLM, LP FSC
2. Fort Independence & Oak Creek – Whitebark, Fort Independence
3. Bishop reservation projects

## Upslope elevations

## Riparians

1. Big Pine Community Association riparian project – CAL FIRE
2. Numu Tuna'e - CAL FIRE

*Located in the Mono Basin area – burning willows in riparian for basket weaving*

## Population density/critical infrastructure density

1. Bishop bagel project – so many partners



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# Inyo County Additional Notes

- End of May, Inyo EMS hosting an animals and disaster planning workshop – May 19, 9am



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## Inyo NF

Presented by Nathan Sill and Chance Traub, Inyo NF

- USFS in period of constant change
- USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins confirmed
- Grant/Fund Freeze for all new grants and agreements and for funds tied to Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act or the Inflation Reduction Act
- Hiring on hold, reductions in force anticipated
- Budget uncertainty
- Still, able to move ahead with priority unit fuels reduction work implementation around Mammoth, with Whitebark, June Mtn,
- National Forest Foundation, Cal Deer in progress
- Ppile burning will continue in Inyo/Mono despite staffing shortages; have completed 375 acres this winter, including Reds Meadow; looking at Crestview, Sherwin Creek area now that snow is on the ground, also South Fork/Bishop Creek;
- Prescribed burning: working on planning for broadcast burning; unit in Lone Pine being prepped, as well as Toms Place/Sunny Slopes, Town of Mammoth as units are thinned, following up with Rx burns
- Preparedness side: Bringing on permanent season workforce as usual, in process; crews will be fully staffed but likely to be down 4 engines
- Question about staffing issues for resources – lost 4 people in resources, haven't backfilled
- Lidar data for Inyo: should be delived in Feb but Whitebark is lead on that



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Presented by Danny Gallagher, Bridgeport Ranger District

- Echoed federal agency uncertainty, staffing issues, hiring freeze on top of existing vacancies in fire
- Returning staff coming on mid-March,
- Two new private presentation positions
  
- Planning to do pile burning at Twin Lakes, treat understory units in Mill Canyon



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## Los Angeles Dept of Water and Power (LADWP)

- Continue implementation of the Artesian Rx east of Ft Independence impacted by mild winter/unfavorable burning conditions and LA Fire devastation/resources
- Deerborn and Parker Rx fires (sponsored by local tribes, working with CAL FIRE).
- Lone Pine fuels project is still being coordinated with Whitebark, Bishop Paiute crew
- New brush and weed permit process for private property owners to request to do brush and weed removal on LADWP land adjacent to their property. These projects will be assessed by LADWP Watershed group to determine if the project aligns with the intent of the permit, identify resource management concerns, and to impose any special conditions if needed. Property owners will be able to request permit at Bishop office, pretty straightforward, empowering for adjacent landowners.
- Comment from Inyo County Supervisor Jen Roeser regarding new brush removal permitting: Thanks for your work on this Ron and the [DWP} Real Estate group. 40 Acres has been a beneficiary of this work and very grateful for the effort, and now the work is getting done!



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# ESWA Partner Updates

Presented by Ales Tomaier and Mike McCarthy

Mammoth Lakes Fire

## Wildland Program:

- Moving into 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a summer seasonal crew, funded by CAL FIRE, to carry out fuels reduction projects in town. Crew has been expanding in size and scope of work they are qualified to do.

## Planned 2025+ projects:

- Large parcel fuels reduction work: Work with Whitebark as lead to remove fuel on large parcels such as Camp High Sierra, Valentine,
- Fire Breaks: continue fuels reduction around community tied to town multi-use path/bike trail to create a fire break
- Private/individually-owned parcel fuels reduction work: Continue chipping work in town, may expand into doing limited fuels reduction/defensible space on individual residences in coordination with neighborhood events.
- Education/awareness of defensible space and home hardening through evaluations and inspections: May ramp up individual residence evaluations (recommendations) to educate homeowners on actions they can take to increase wildfire resiliency.
- **Project Identification/Collaboration**
- Looking for more robust wildfire risk assessment model – interested in collaborating with other ESWA participants,
- Interest in working through CWPP process with county, regionally (Mammoth FPD had done its own CWPP)



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## Mono County

**Presented by Wendi Grasseschi and Marcella Rose**

### **Ongoing Projects**

- Firewise Communities
  - Expand network
- Support for Community Projects
- Developing regional hazardous fuels reduction program with Inyo County
- Bio-energy/ Wood Innovations Grant

### **Upcoming Work**

- Update to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan starting spring 2025
- Outdoor Recreation: Camp Like A Pro program continues, working on dispersed camping safety, responsibility; Marcella invited ESWA members to participate in vetting information



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## Mono Basin FSC

- Home Hardening in Mono City and Lee Vining

## Town of Mammoth Lakes

- Prioritizing wildfire resilience in strategic plan, with a renewed focus on projects in the TOML
- Standing up Town Wildfire Team in light of urgency after LA Fires: working toward home hardening assessments of each property in town
- Adopted CA Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience



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# ESWA Partner Updates

## Alpine County

Presented by Clint Celio and Kimra McAfee

- Alpine Watershed Group, in partnership with Alpine County, plans to move forward on a stakeholder analysis conducted by Sierra Institute. -
- The Forest Health Community Working Group, bring all partners in the county to the table, is continuing to meet monthly and planning to host various events, including public meetings with presentations by existing Firewise Communities (to help inform others who might want to start a Firewise Community) and an Arbor Day volunteer tree planting event.
- AWG is providing administrative support for the group, including helping with event planning. -
- The Forest Health Community Working Group, with support from AWG, is working with the Washoe Tribe of NV and CA to develop a tribal engagement plan. -
- AWG and Alpine County are working on a GIS database for all forest health projects in Alpine County.

## GC Forest Products

Presented by Tad Mason, TSS Consultants

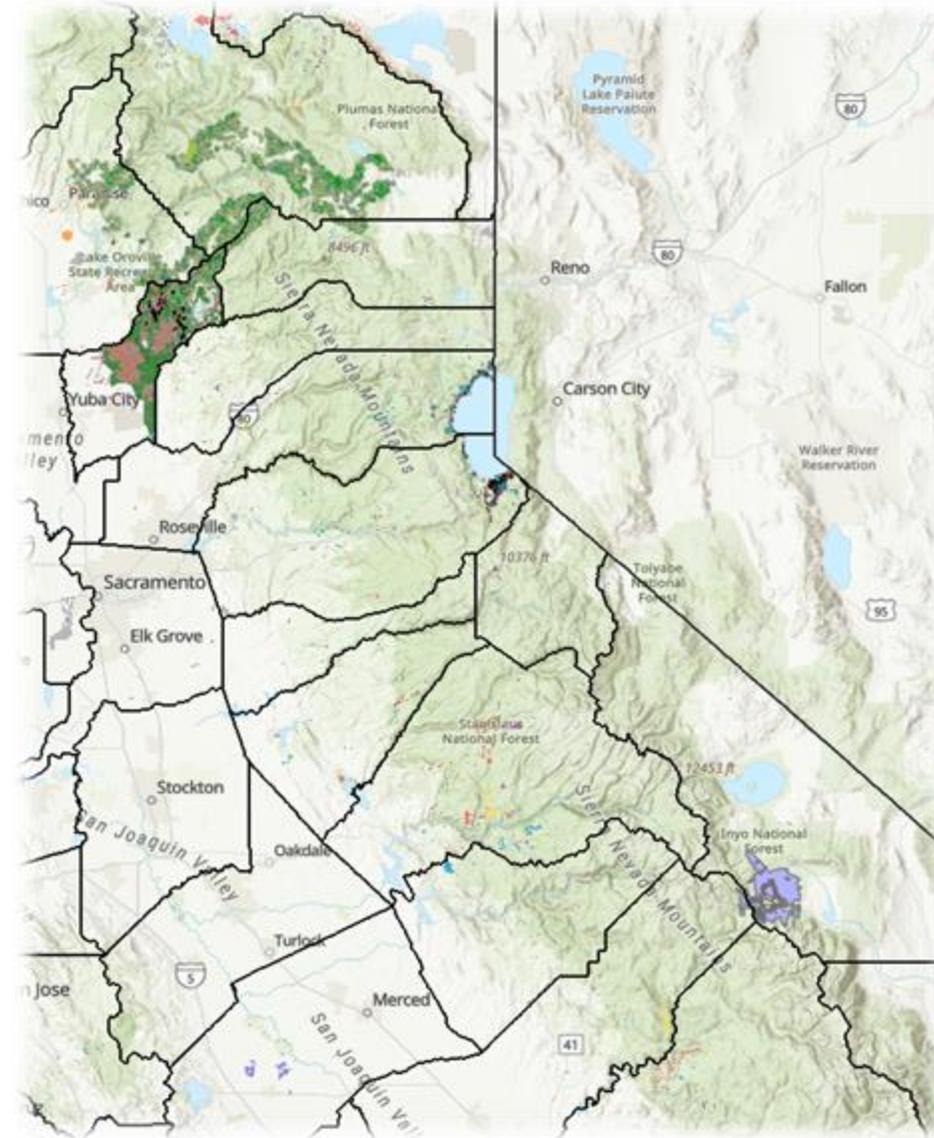
- GC is part of forest biomass utilization solution with proposed community scale pellet production facility (outside Mammoth), material needed would be btw 600-750 acres of fuel treatment per year in chip material and small logs
- TSS assisting with community outreach, permitting, contracts and agreements
- Looking at Q3 2026 for startup/commissioning of facility



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## 2025 Projects\*

- **Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities**
  - Lakes Basin/ Adjacent Communities
  - Sustainable Funding Solutions
  - Home hardening & Defensible Space Resources
  - Incorporating Tech
- **Beyond Mammoth**
  - Shaping Approach to ID & Support Community Needs
  - Swall Meadows/ June Lake/ Mono Basin
  - Owens Valley/ Bishop Concept
- **Community Engagement**
  - New Website!
  - Visitor & Resident Outreach
  - Summer Events & Speaker Series



# Regional Capacity & Policy Efforts

- **Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance**

- Enhance Partnerships & Resource Collaboration
- Maintain & Improve [eswildfirealliance.org](http://eswildfirealliance.org)
- Host process for collaboration

- Improve Inclusion & Cultural Competency

- Identify & Develop Community Projects

- **Biomass**

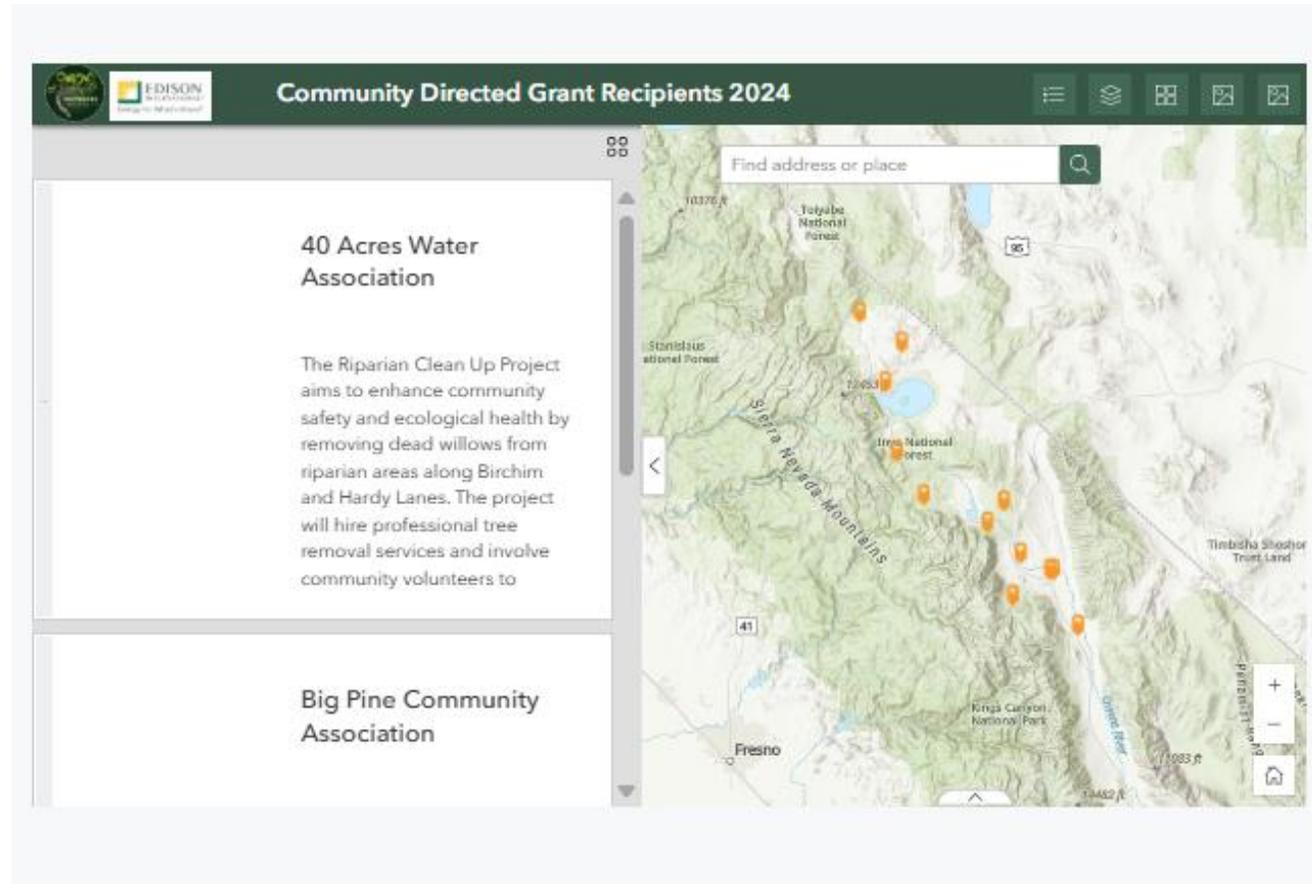
- Sustainable Solutions in Eastern Sierra

- **\*Shifting Landscape/  
Current Context\***

- Governor's Executive Order [[East Bay Times](#)]
- Federal Administration & Funding Implications

# Community Directed Grant Program

- Through grant from Southern California Edison & a private donor
- Awarded \$65,000 in grants in 2024 to community members and organizations across Inyo and Mono Counties
- 2025 Grant Opportunity open this week. More information available at [whitebarkinstitute.org](http://whitebarkinstitute.org)





Other Updates?

Reflections?

Inspiration?

Coordination?

# **EASTERN SIERRA WILDFIRE ALLIANCE**

## **Partner Updates**

# ESWA Recommendations

## Collaborative Planning Process

- Determine how we leverage our skills and strengths to bring support/capacity to do more good work on the ground
- Time commitment: 4-5 meetings over next 6 months, 2-3 hours of homework, optional subcommittee participation between meetings

## Models in California

- Government (special district, local, state, federal, Tribal) and Non-Government/Community Organization active participation and commitment
- Varying levels of formality
- Health El Dorado Landscape Partnership, Yosemite Stanislas Solutions, Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group, Santa Barbara Wildfire Resilience Collaborative, Inland Empire RCD, Sierra Institute and SCALE

# ESWA Recommendations

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## Local Considerations, Models and Roles

- Existing Programs and Agencies
  - Integrated Regional Water Management Program
  - County Wildfire Coordinators
  - Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
  - Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District
  - Alpine County
- Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project offers model for planning, implementation and lessons learned
- The Eastern Sierra collaborative universe: coordinate, communicate, think big?
- Whitebark Institute's key role: funder, collaborator, project planner and implementer

# Near-Term Opportunities

- Continued Information Sharing & Updates
- Project List Maintenance (Whitebark)
- Policy & Funding
  - Prop 4 implementation: CA Natural Resources Agency [Feedback Request Form](#): Answer as ESWA?
  - State budget and legislative updates and engagement
  - Funding opportunities
- Other ideas?

# THANK YOU!

## Next Steps:

- Meeting scheduling, feedback survey
- Materials posted at [eswildfirealliance.org](http://eswildfirealliance.org)
- Next ESWA meeting date

