

# Staff Report

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager  
Neysa King, Environmental Resources Administrator

**DATE:** April 22, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Workshop – District Owned Watershed Property Management

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## ***ADMINISTRATION***

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Participate in a discussion pertaining to District-owned “watershed” property.

**BACKGROUND:**

On the Board Meeting of December 10, 2025, Directors requested NID staff bring forth a discussion and overview for a broader conversation regarding forest management, meadow restoration and grazing opportunities on NID lands.

**BUDGET IMPACT:**

None – Discussion only

Attachments (1)

- NID Land Stewardship Presentation



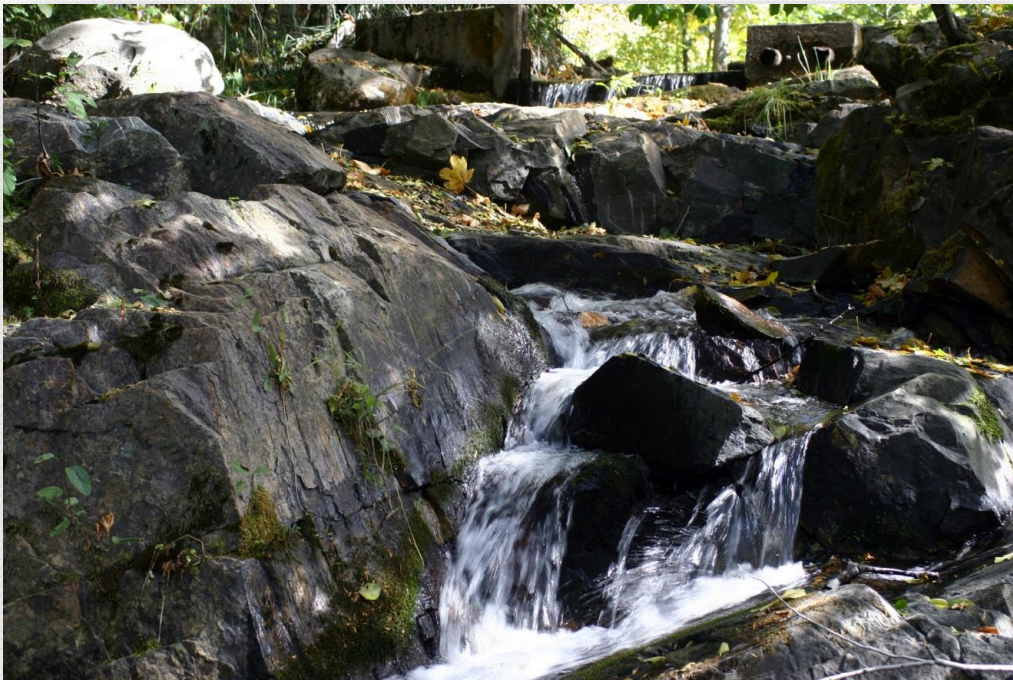
# NID Land Stewardship

BOD 4.22.26



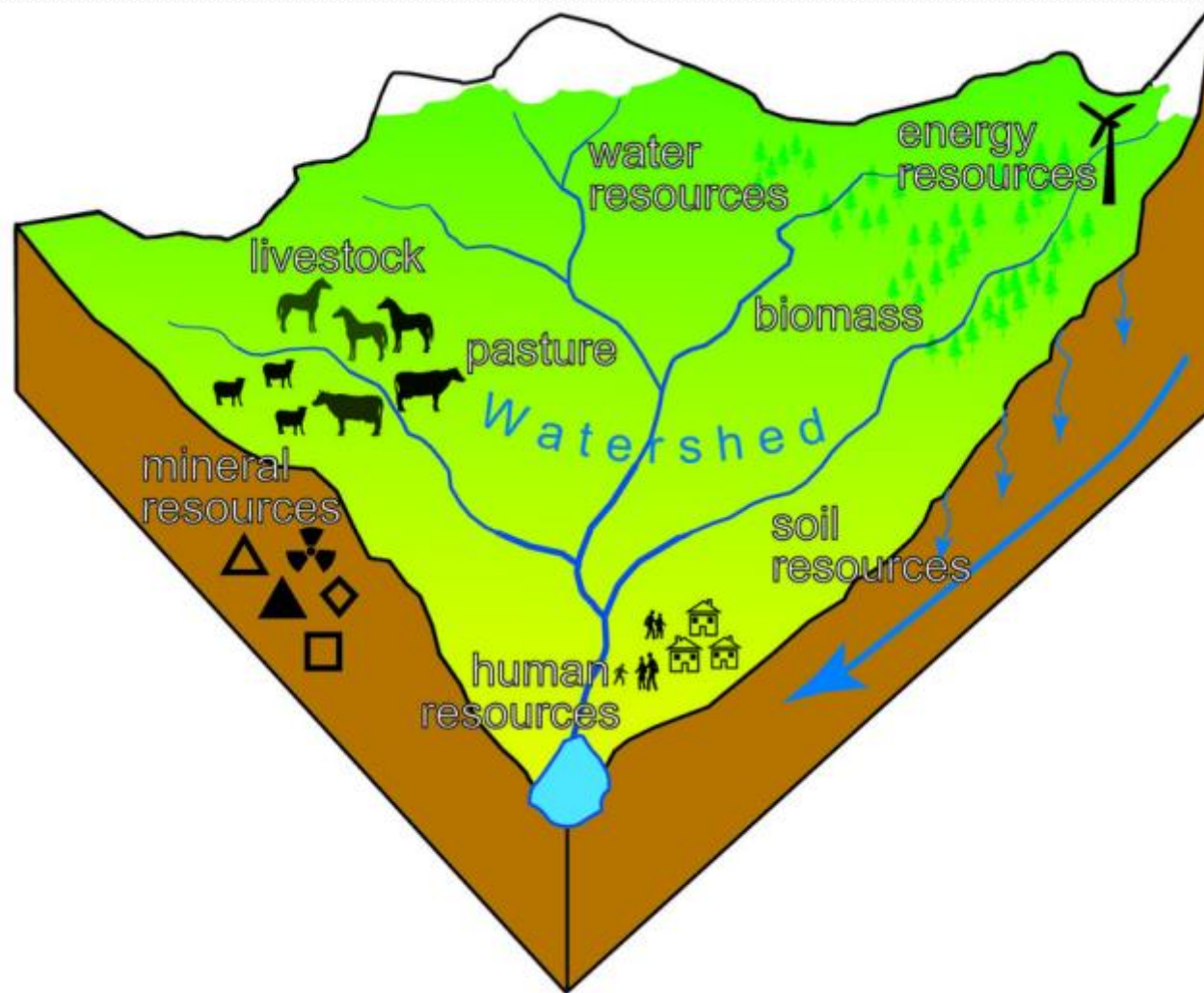
# Why land stewardship?

Water comes from watersheds



# INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT:

BALANCES THE USE, MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF A WATERSHED



# NID's Forest Management Plan

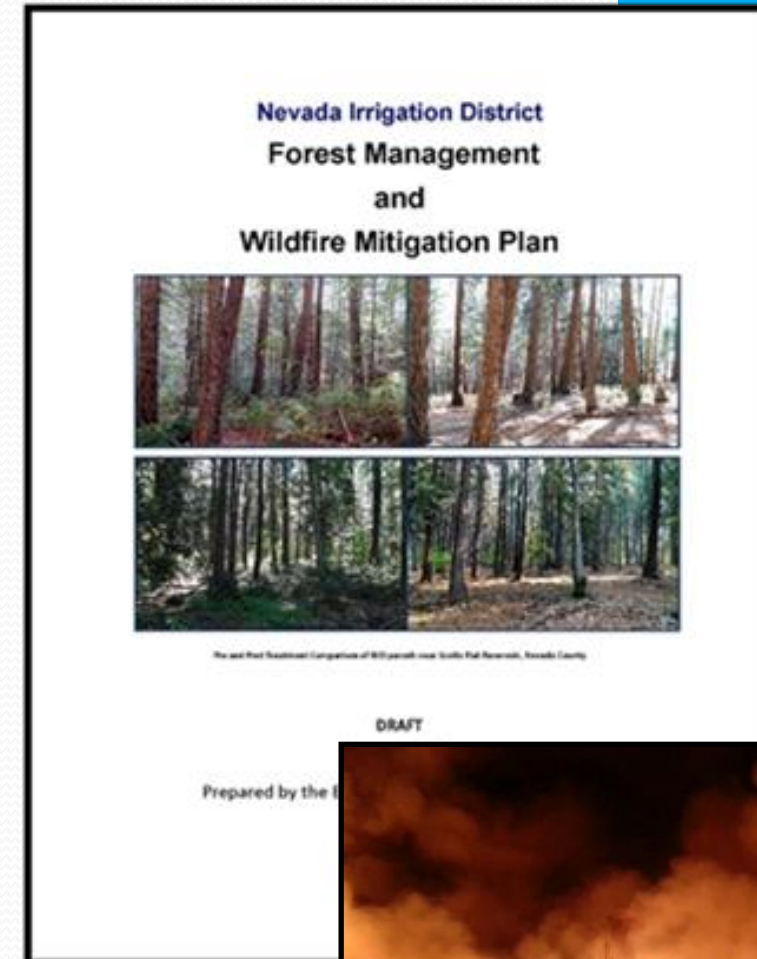
- To protect residents, visitors, and District infrastructure from wildfire and hazardous trees.
- To protect and improve District forestland for the health of the watershed and associated ecosystem services, including water supply, recreation, soil retention, and carbon sequestration.

***APPROXIMATELY 6,000 ACRES OF FORESTED LAND OWNED BY NID***

***\$8.4M Expensed SINCE 2016***

***\$6.4M of which from Grants***

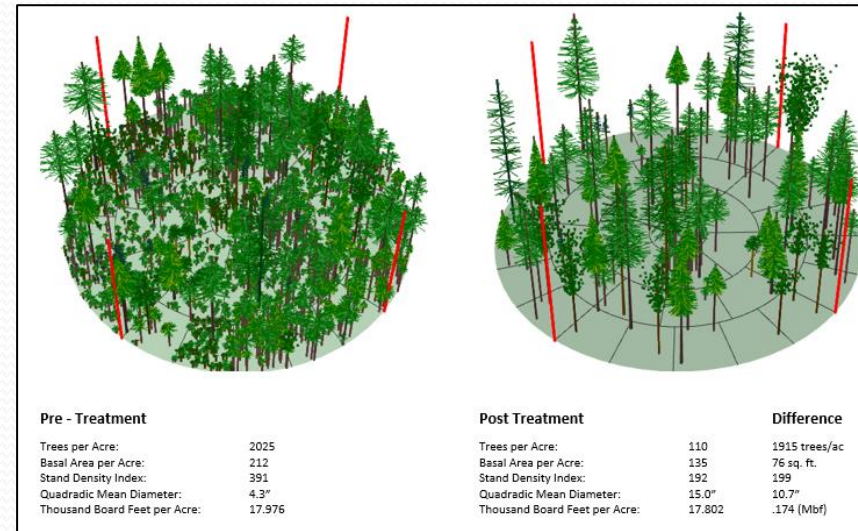
***>2,000 ACRES Treated***



# Forest Assessment and Forest Plots



- Record sample plots of tree quantity, size, height, and species.
  - Know pre-treatment conditions and predict post-treatment based on prescription
  - Analyze results of treatments and reassess retreatment options
  
- Continued photo monitoring points
  - Used to assess for retreatment
  - River Fire burn scar reforestation and fuels reduction within photo monitoring points.



# 5-Year Watershed Budget Overview



*Land stewardship takes us further into the watershed and beyond our built infrastructure to do projects that help the overall health and functionality of these forested ecosystems.*

Project Title	Treatment Type	Grant Funding	Project Cost	NID Funds	Grant Funds (reimbursement)	# of Acres	Project end	
SNC Scotts Flat Phase 3	Mastication and Hand Crew	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	\$201,500.00		\$201,500.00	56	2018	C O M P L E T E
SNC Scotts Flat Phase 4	Mastication and Hand Crew	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	\$981,000.00		\$981,000.00	305	2022	
Phase 4 NID Funded	Mastication and Hand Crew		\$127,442.00	\$127,442.00		57		
Scotts Flat THP	Selective Thinning		\$658,270.00	\$658,270.00	\$753,335.00	123	2020	
CFIP Scotts Flat	Mastication	CAL FIRE CFIP	\$47,250.00	\$11,812.50	\$35,437.50	27	2019	
CFIP Peninsula Campground	Mastication and Hand Crew	CAL FIRE CFIP	\$245,000.00	\$61,250.00	\$183,750.00	108	2019	
CFIP Long Ravine / Orchard Springs	Mastication and Hand Crew	CAL FIRE CFIP	\$194,000.00	\$48,500.00	\$145,500.00	103	2021	
Magnolia Fuel Break	Selective Thinning		\$75,500.00		\$14,400.00	25	2019	
Emergency River Fire Remediation Actions	Mastication, Hand Crew, Lop and Scatter, Erosion Control		\$300,000.00	\$300,000.00		85	2021	
CFIP Magnolia	Mastication Hand Crew	CAL FIRE CFIP	\$456,000.00	\$240,000.00	\$216,000.00	151	2024	
SNC Bear River Wildfire Recovery	Mastication and Hand Crew	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	\$720,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$570,000.00	181	2024	
English Meadow Floodplain Enhancement and Restoration	Mastication, Hand Crew, Heavy Equipment construction	Wildlife Conservationn Board	\$1,594,000.00	\$343,000.00	\$1,251,000.00	325	2026	I n P r o g r e s s
Upper Yuba Headwaters Forest Restoration	Mastication, Hand Crew	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	\$1,815,000.00	\$541,000.00	\$1,274,000.00	400	2026	
South Yuba Canal Wildfire Defense Project	Understory thinning, selective harvest, hazard tree removal	CAL FIRE	\$847,000.00	\$232,000.00	\$615,000.00	58	2026	S c h e d u l e d
Cascade Shores Timber Harvest	Selective Thinning		\$181,500.00	\$181,500.00	\$181,500.00	55	2026	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$8,443,462.00</b>	<b>\$2,894,774.50</b>	<b>\$6,422,422.50</b>	<b>2059</b>		<b>7</b>

# Land Stewardship Toolbox

- **Forest Management**
  - Hazard tree removal
  - Fire fuels treatment
  - Timber and vegetation management & disposal
  - River Fire Remediation
- **Meadow Restoration**
  - English Meadow
  - Austin, Shotgun & Middle Meadow to come
- **Grazing – Cattle / Goats / Sheep**
  - For fuels management, reduce regrowth
- **Prescribed Fire**
  - Prescribed fire as best long-term maintenance practice



# Forest Management

- **Wildfire Risk Reduction - Fire Fuels Reduction / Removal**
  - Strategic removal of overstocked, understory vegetation
  - Utilizing mechanical treatment which includes mastication, hand-crews, chipping, etc.
  - Selective harvest (logging) to thin forest communities and improve resilience, create canopy separation, etc.



# Meadow Restoration

- English, Austin, Shotgun, and Middle Meadows
- Restoration and enhancement of hydrologic function of rare montane meadow environments - effective and important
- Act as natural water storage - late season cold water supply
  - Rare habitat
  - Natural sediment attenuation
  - Natural wildfire buffers
- Increase resiliency of these key watershed features to effects of wildfire and climate change - drought and decreasing snowpack





**Pre-treatment  
(above) and post-  
treatment (below)  
encroaching  
conifer removed  
from river bank**

# Meadow Restoration

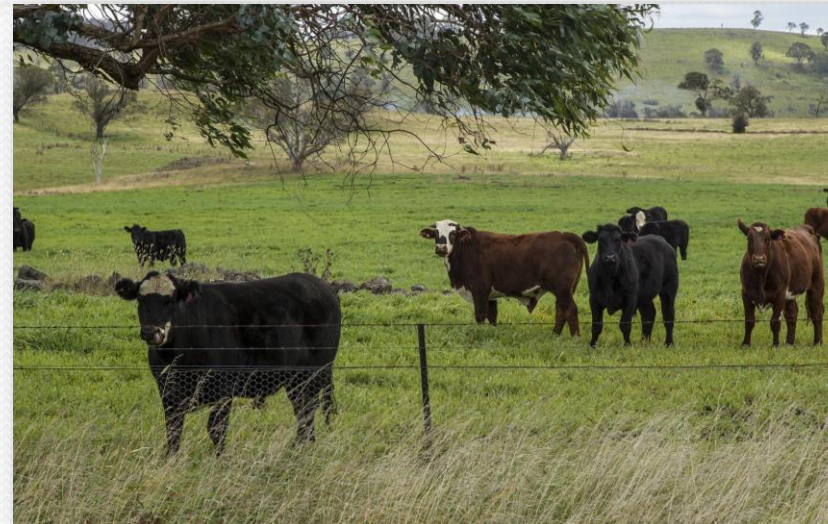
## Best Available Science

- Slow it, Sink it, Spread it
- Process-based techniques: minimal or less intervention, natural recovery
- Beaver reintroduction- long-term maintenance
  - Ecosystem engineers will capitalize upon NID investment



# Grazing for Fuels Management

- Upper Division Grazing – 2 Leases
  - English and Canyon Creek Grazing Allotments in the headwaters
  - Traditionally administered by USFS
  - USFS Cattle Range includes NID property
    - NID decides on timing and location
- Lower Division Grazing – 1 Lease
  - Grazing on some District parcels to manage grass and reduce wildfire risk
  - Magnolia - Parker Ranch
    - Potentially other District properties (Orr Creek Res., Snow Mtn. Res., etc.)



# Prescribed or Good Fire

## CALFIRE definition:

The planned and controlled application of fire to the land under specified conditions, to reduce vegetation and risk from wildfire.

- The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force issued a *Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire* to expand the use of prescribed fire and cultural burning to build forest and community resilience statewide
- NID has been working with CAL FIRE's Washington Ridge Conservation Crews for over 10 years to pile and burn woody debris - growing interest and momentum to apply prescribed burning
- As sites show benefits of debris maintenance, opportunities to bring prescribed fire to long-term land stewardship



April 2025 a prescribed fire demonstration at the Nevada City School of the Arts, with the Newtown Canal visible adjacent to, and on the uphill side of the fire, behind the sandbags.

# QUESTIONS?

