



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**
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MEMORANDUM

July 25, 2023

To: Nancy Ward, Director
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
3650 Schriever Avenue
Mather, CA 95655

From: Lake County Board of Supervisors
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

Subject: Request for CDAA funding and Initial Damage Assessment in Lake County

On October 30, 2015, Governor Brown proclaimed a State of Emergency and included provisions to expedite the removal and disposal of dead and dying hazardous trees (CDAA 2015-5). Lake County experienced tree mortality at that time, but it had not reached a level beyond the capacity of local resources and funding.

The County of Lake proclaimed a Local State of Emergency due to Pervasive Tree Mortality on May 3, 2022, after decades of extreme drought and groundwater depletion that led to widespread tree mortality across the county. It is estimated that 39.6 million trees died in California and this number continues to grow. In 2022, tree mortality was particularly severe and widespread in the northern interior counties where drought conditions were most exceptional, including Lake County. While the unprecedented storms of 2023 have reduced the drought conditions, the US Forest Service's Aerial Detection Survey program identified over 590,000 dead trees in Lake County. The removal of over 22,000 hazard trees that threaten public infrastructure and public safety is now far beyond the capacity of the County to fund through local resources. The County of Lake has continued to coordinate with Cal OES after the Local State of Emergency to evaluate the magnitude of the situation and potential for local funding.

Removal of hazard trees which threaten public infrastructure and public safety would have additional benefits:

- Reduce the threat from catastrophic wildfire
- Reduce adverse effects to the public water supply

- Improve biodiversity and reduce expansion of invasive species
- Improve defensible space
- Improve open access of emergency evacuation routes
- Improve safety for all County infrastructure including roads, buildings, parks, and trails
- Cultivate diversity, equity, and leadership for disadvantaged communities
- Promote forest management, maintenance, and stewardship
- Increase public awareness

The objective of the County of Lake's Tree Mortality Program is to identify and mitigate dead and dying trees that pose hazards to county roads and county facilities (e.g., parks, buildings, and corporation yards) and to develop the essential tools for wildfire risk assessment modeling. All County-owned and maintained infrastructure will be inspected to identify dead and/or dying trees located at a distance such that a failed tree would reach that infrastructure. The project will also use imagery, new 2023 LIDAR data, stakeholder input, existing data layers, and field reconnaissance to create the suite of wildfire hazard and risk landscape data layers.

In cases where dead and dying trees are located on privately-owned properties that may impact County responsibility roadways and evacuation routes, the County will obtain permission to enter the properties to mitigate those trees. No actions can be taken on private property without the consent of the property owner. The County cannot commit public resources to the identification and mitigation of dead and dying trees on private property where those trees do not pose a hazard to public infrastructure. The County will however, advise private property owners on their options for abating hazards affecting their assets.

The County will coordinate its efforts to abate hazards and assess risks with the efforts of other entities conducting similar actions. Project areas will be prioritized based on addressing multiple benefits (e.g., hazard tree removal, reduction of hazardous fuels, ensuring traffic safety, forest health, environmental resiliency, etc.) wherever possible. Leveraging and coordinating joint activities with member agencies will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible through the County of Lake's Tree Mortality and Forest Health Task Force. Implementation entails securing access to properties, conducting surveys of dead and dying trees, vegetation mapping, marking and documenting trees to be removed or otherwise mitigated (e.g., steep terrain may require that dead trees be felled and left on site), engaging one or more contractors to perform the work, monitoring the performance of contractors, and ultimately obtaining reimbursement for the completed work.

Preliminary Survey of County Infrastructure and Vegetation Mapping - Existing information from the US Forest Service's Aerial Detection Survey program identified over 22,000 dead and dying trees located along County roads. Based on the preliminary GIS data from the survey, parcels with trees that are candidates for removal will be identified and the names and addresses of their owners will be obtained.

Obtaining Access to Private Properties - The preliminary reconnaissance will yield a list of properties to which a right of entry agreement will either be mailed or otherwise made available. In addition to permitting access to properties, the form contains language releasing the County from liability. The form also contains specific information on the expected post-implementation conditions on the property including the disposition of trees and slash created by tree mitigation, and site restoration requirements (if any). The form permits the property owner to specifically request that logs and/or slash be left on site (and not removed). When right of entry forms are returned, the salient data will be recorded by the County. In cases where forms are not returned, a second direct mailing may be conducted. In the case of

refusals, offers to discuss the project may be made to try and gain acceptance. A final list of participating property owners will be used by field teams to conduct on-the-ground surveys and marking of dead and dying Hazard Trees.

Steps have been taken to alert residents to upcoming tree mortality mitigation actions by the County and these efforts will continue. In future project areas, these steps will include informational public meetings, distribution of flyers to property owners with candidate trees for removal, media releases, and outreach through the County tree mortality webpage. The purpose of this outreach is to encourage County residents to allow the County and its consultants access to private properties to verify the locations of hazard trees and ultimately to mitigate them. An open dialog on the importance of forest health on both human health and the environment will be utilized to facilitate discussions on the project.

Surveys of Hazard Trees - The County, through County tree mortality contractor, is equipped with the best available technology to identify and geo-reference locations of trees and will ensure that applications are compatible with County GIS systems. We anticipate that the County's contractor will create and/or utilize a mobile platform for data collection. Surveys of dead and dying trees will be completed for all potentially affected County infrastructure. Teams of field technicians will conduct the surveys with training and supervision provided by Registered Professional Foresters and Certified Arborists. All trees to be removed or otherwise mitigated will be clearly marked with distinctively colored paint at mid-bole and base. Data collected during the field surveys will be used to produce tree lists and maps that will be included with invitations to bid or requests for proposals for tree removal.

Contracting for Tree Mitigation - It is anticipated that multiple contracts will be issued for the work but the option of hiring one or multiple contractors to do the work will be available by issuing an invitation to bid (ITB) or request for proposals (RFP). Upon release of the ITB or RFP, pre-bid meetings will be held at areas proposed for treatment. A formal process for asking and responding to questions will be conducted through the County's procurement process. Contracts will be issued based on defined treatment areas, rather than per-tree costs (to meet the requirements of the grant). Costs must include tree mitigation through cutting or other means, disposal of trees and slash (if applicable), and resource/asset protection and/or remediation of any incidental damage to private property. Contractors will be selected based on experience, safety record, and production rates. Contractors will be required to comply with all state, federal and local laws and regulations.

Implementation of Tree Mitigation - Contractors retained to perform mitigation services will be supervised in the field by the County tree mortality contractor. All aspects of contract compliance will be monitored. It is anticipated that tree mitigation projects will be subject to permitting requirements of the California Forest Practice Act. Exemptions from preparing a full Timber Harvest Plan will be prepared by a Registered Professional Forester and submitted to CAL FIRE for approval. Securing an exemption allows the County to transfer ownership of logs to contractors who may in turn sell the logs to sawmills, biomass plants or other commercial enterprises.

Environmental Compliance - The County will comply with all State and Federal Environmental Requirements.

Implementation Schedule and Outcomes - All preparations for conducting the preliminary reconnaissance survey, permissions to enter, and initiation of hazard tree surveys will be completed in FY23/24. It is anticipated that contracts for tree removal will be advertised and awarded in 2024 with implementation soon after. Additional project areas will be defined through the continuation of the hazard tree surveys. Project milestones will be reported at County Tree Mortality and Forest Health Task Force meetings and Board of Supervisors' meetings. The County Wide Hazard Tree Inventory Survey and Vegetation Mapping are anticipated to be completed by October 2025, with annual assessments to tree mortality based on the USFS's Aerial Detection Survey. Tree Removal is anticipated to extend through

July 2028. The County expects to remove approximately 2,200 trees per year (11,000 total) through the program which will result in nearly a 40% reduction in Hazard Trees adjacent to public infrastructure.

	Budget	
	CDA	COUNTY OF LAKE
Personnel	\$0.00	\$262,815.00
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$65,703.00
Travel	\$12,500.00	\$8,000.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies		
Printing Costs	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Tree Marking Supplies	\$6,250.00	\$6,250.00
Contractual		
Website Development	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
Public Outreach	\$50,000.00	\$25,000.00
Hazard Tree Management	\$3,000,000.00	\$1,750,000.00
Public Infrastructure Hazard Tree Removal	\$12,700,000.00	\$3,100,000.00
Subtotal Direct Costs:	\$15,793,750.00	\$5,267,768.00
Total Project Cost:	\$21,061,518.00	