PART A: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Initiation Form	
Proposed Project Name	Mvs-yee-se'-ne & Cedar Rustic Restoration and Stewardship Project
Date Initiated:	Public Meeting 6/24/2024
Project Point of Contact	Brandy Hurtado, brandy.hurtado@usda.gov
Partner(s)	Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation, Elk Valley Rancheria, Smith River Alliance
Objective(s)	Restore the ecocultural role of fire to lower wildfire risk, protect communities, foster native plant diversity, and reduce invasive species spread.
Location	Gasquet, CA. Legal Location of the Project (HBM): Township 17 N, Range 1E, Sections 13, 24; Township 17 N, Range 2E, Sections 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Township 17 N, Range 3E, Section 9

PART B: PROJECT DETAILS

Purpose and Need:

The proposed project, as implemented under the *Six Rivers Hazardous Fuels and Fire Management Project Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)*, is intended to provide the WUI surrounding the community of Gasquet, California, protection from wildfire. County infrastructure, personal property, economic forest products, and values associated with natural, cultural, and recreational uses within the project footprint are currently at-risk of catastrophic loss from wildfire; the 2023 Smith River Complex reemphasized these concerns. This implementation project responds to the following needs identified in the *Six Rivers Hazardous Fuels and Fire Management Project Environmental Assessment (EA)*:

- Restore the ecological role of native plant communities, including socio-cultural uses and sustained yield of forest products, in particular 250 acres of Jeffrey pine savannah and 15 acres of Oregon white oak woodland.
- Reduce fuel concentrations—scatter, fragment, and/or consume vegetative surface and ladder fuels—to alter fire behavior.
- Eradicate, control, or manage terrestrial invasive species to reduce impacts to native plant communities and alter fire behavior.
- Establish and maintain strategic potential control locations (PCL) and establish new handlines to contain prescribed fire.

In addition, this project focuses on returning cultural fire to a significant ecocultural landscape and incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into management frameworks, specifically a Biophysical Settings (BpS) model. Within the project footprint, the three dominant BpS

vegetation types are serpentine mixed conifer, moist mixed conifer, and mixed evergreen. Partnering with the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation and Elk Valley Rancheria in the spirit of co-stewardship, species of cultural interest within those BpS types provide analogous means to interpret desired conditions through a lens of active use and cultural agency. Multiple aspects of the project will occur with Tribal resources.

Proposed Action:

Starting in FY26, the Forest proposes treating dead and live understory forest vegetation up to 8-inches dbh across 1,505-acres separated into four primary blocks of land: Block A (826 acres), Block B (243-acres), Block C (413-acres), and Block D (23-acres). Manual treatments (hand thinning and pile creation) are the primary method by which fuels will be treated; however, limited mechanical treatments (roadside chipping, invasive plant species grapple pile-and-pull in Block B and along the powerline corridor) may occur where initial hand treatments prove ineffective and slope is less than 35%. Slope is less than 35% for approximately 697 acres within the project footprint; however, not all areas of gentle incline are easily accessible. Riparian reserves intersect approximately 413-acres but will be treated under a connected action (see Comments: Connected Actions).

Initial entry may take up to four years of intensive phased thinning. Subsequent treatment will occur over a 15-year project life to achieve desired conditions through a process of repeated thinning, piling and/or chipping thinned materials, burning constructed piles, and ultimately prescribed understory burns; the project may be extended beyond 15 years if necessary for maintenance purposes. The general schedule of treatments will use manual thinning and pile burn construction in years one/two, pile burning in year three/four, followed by an adaptive schedule of maintenance treatments – including understory burning - in out-years (see Table 1). Invasive weed treatments will precede fuels treatment where feasible when planning implementation activities to control further spread and shall be coordinated with the District Botanist. Given chipping is a rearrangement of fuels rather than a removal of fuels, activity chips need to be spread throughout the project area and decompose prior to any prescribed fire being initiated. Contracting for initial entry treatments is anticipated to occur in Spring 2026.

To successfully hold understory ignitions, approximately 4.8 miles of handline will be constructed and maintained. Additionally, 3.2 miles of user-created routes will be maintained as “other holding” features. User-created routes include former mining roads and dozer lines not captured in the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS). Handline and other holding features will be treated using manual methods to remove vegetation down to mineral soil within an 18”-48” wide footprint. Other holding features may be used for access, egress, and/or emergency extraction, but they will not be maintained for motorized use. Route maintenance on FSR 17N49, FSR 17N69, and Motorized Trail 17N49.4 may be required during and after operations to transport equipment and field crews while maintaining native surfacing and minimizing erosion.

Table 1. General Schedule of Treatments.

Treatment Focus	Year		
	Initial Entry	Maintenance	Maintenance

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Fuels / Fire	CHP/ HCP	WO/ HCP	PB	PB	Low-Load Shrub										
					UB	UB / X	X	X	UB	UB / X	X	X	UB	UB / X	X
					Moderate-High Load Shrub										
					UB	X	HCP	HCP/ PB	PB	UB	X	HCP	HCP/ PB	PB	UB

Treatment Type Key: CHP (Chipping); HCP (Thin, Hand Cut & Pile), PB (Pile Burn), UB (Understory Burn), X (No Treatment), WO (White Oak Understory burn)

Approved Treatment Suite

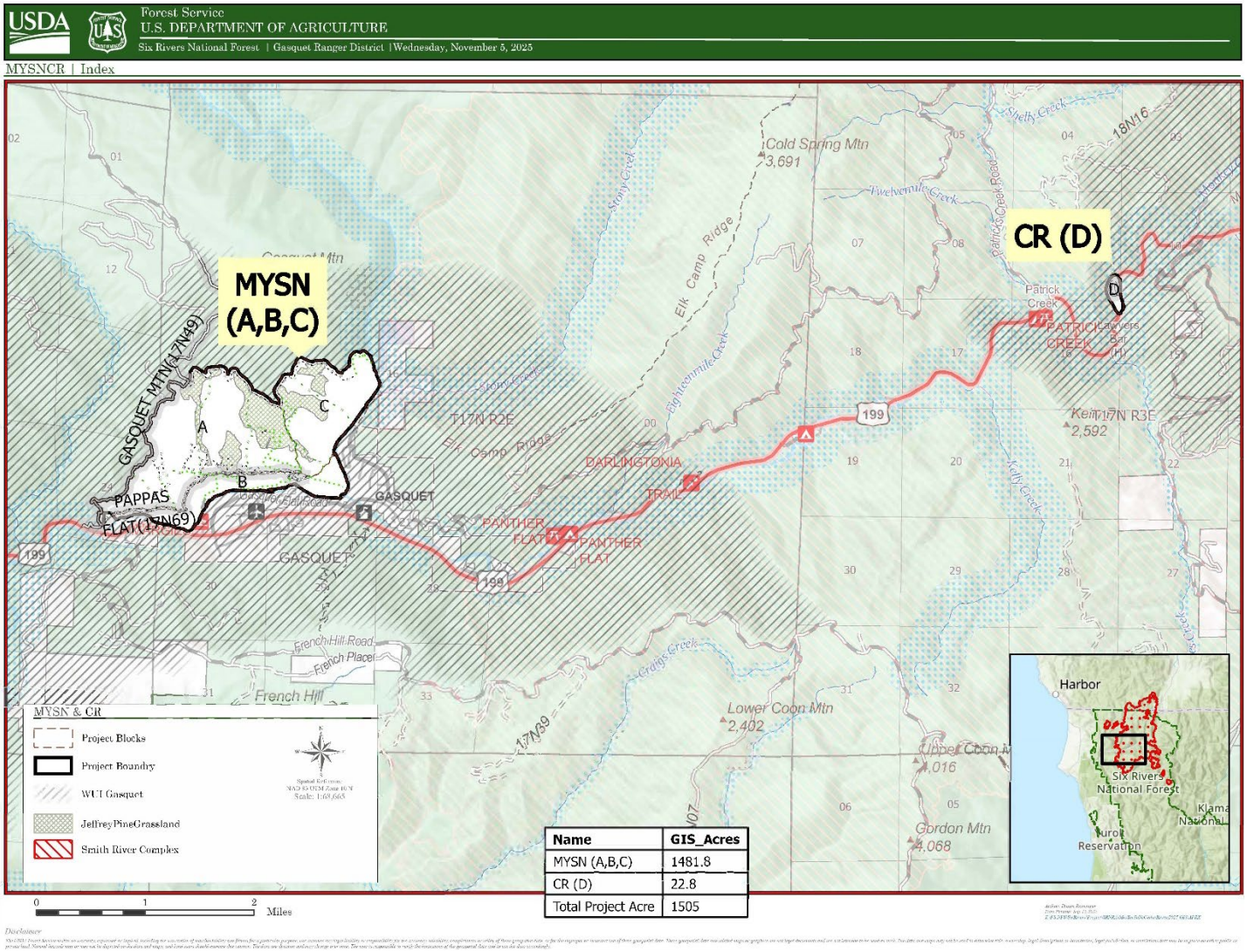
The treatment suite includes a combination of manual, mechanical, and prescribed fire treatment methods. Mechanical methods are limited to chipping, grapple pull-and-pile, and road maintenance. Manual treatments include thinning, piling, and fireline construction or maintenance. Manual treatments usually occur during dry weather windows but can happen during wet periods as well. Burning occurs during the appropriate weather window in spring, fall, or winter when antecedent soil and vegetation moisture conditions ensure a low to moderate burn.

- Manual hazardous fuels/stem density reduction – small trees: Field crews would use chainsaws to manually cut trees up to 8-inches dbh, targeting either those growing underneath larger trees and other high tree density patches to increase the spacing between their crowns.
- Manual hand cut, hand pile, and cover: Field crews would use chainsaws to cut and hand pile forest litter accumulations, tree thinning and pruning residue, brush, trees, and post-fire fuels up to 8-inches dbh. Where prioritized for restoration, invasive shrubs would be removed using hand tools, such as weed wrenches or Pulaskis (species dependent). Plant residue would be piled where removed for subsequent burning. Piles will be covered with non-permeable materials (6 mil plastic) to keep debris dry.
    - Pruning residual trees: Field crews would use chainsaws or long-handled pole saws to cut branches from residual trees or mature shrubs. Branches on large trees would be pruned 8 feet above ground level as measured from the uphill side without reducing the live crown to less than 50% of the overall tree height. The pruning height may be less than 6 feet for branches of small trees or mature shrubs. Limbs are to be cut in such a manner so as to not cause damage to the bole of the tree, generally leaving about a 1-inch stub. Pruned material would be cut and placed on piles for future burning.
    - Prescribed pile burning: Field crews would ignite and burn hand and/or machine piles. Pile burning would only take place when permits/plans and burn-day authorizations are secured by the appropriate Unified Air Quality Management District (UAQMD) and a burn plan and Agency Administrator procedures are followed.
- Machine/grapple pull and pile: Tracked or rubber-tired heavy machinery equipped with a brush rake or grapples would be used to uproot concentrations of undesirable vegetation, such as large invasive plant accumulations of certain species like Himalayan blackberry, English ivy and broom, where hand methods are considered ineffective for restoration. Heavy equipment may also be used to move and pile

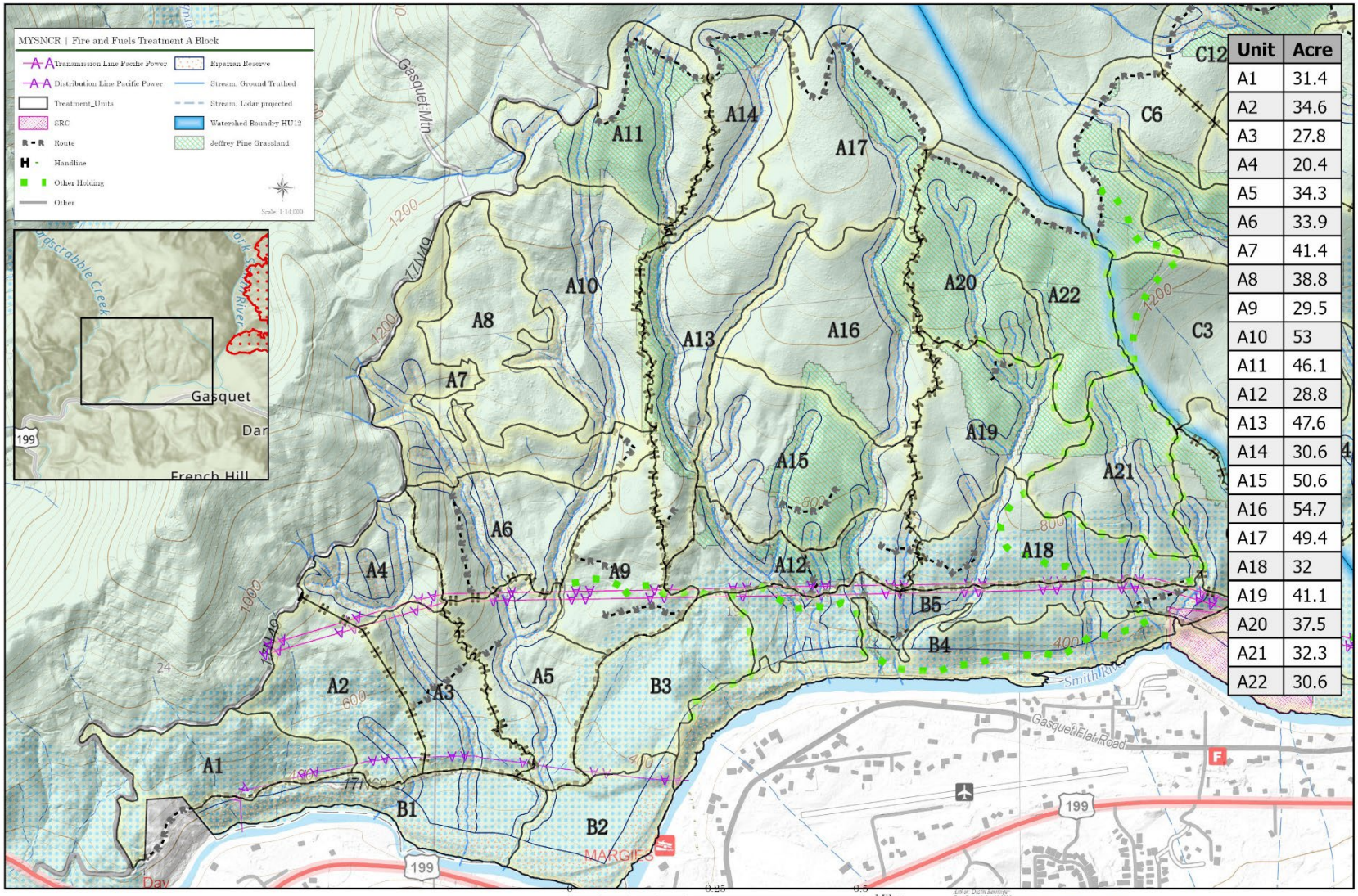
concentrations of forest litter, pruned tree branches, cut brush, felled trees and post-wildfire fuels. Equipment and pile size may be restricted as necessary to minimize damage to the residual stand. Piles may be covered with non-permeable materials. Construction of landings is not authorized, and piles must be placed in accordance with PDFs.

- Mechanical chipping: Tracked, mounted, or portable tree chippers and woodchippers would mechanically cut and shred fuels (e.g., live and dead tree limbs or trunks) into small woodchips alongside ingresses where slopes are less than 35%. Units may be towed behind a vehicle, remotely operated, or self-propelled.
- Pull Back: Large predominant diameter trees (e.g., tanoak, madrone, and Jeffrey pines) may have debris raked back from the base of the tree, to protect the trees during burning.
- Prescribed understory burning: Following pre-treatment (hand-pile thin and invasive remediation) in outgoing years, low-intensity fire will be used to further reduce ground and surface fuels.
- Potential control locations for temporary and permanent fireline construction and maintenance. A fireline is any cleared strip or portion of a control line where flammable material has been removed by scraping or digging down to mineral soil. Crews may use chainsaws to cut shrubs and trees less than 8-inches dbh, and hand tools to scrape needle duff and litter to expose bare mineral soil to create an 18”-48”wide footprint depending on fuel types. Where deemed a threat to safety or operations, individual hazard trees above 8-inches dbh may be felled and left alongside firelines. Project design features (PDFs) may be necessary to prevent erosion within riparian reserves, excessive slopes, or on ultramafic soils, including but not limited to measures such as waterbar installation, fireline reclamation after burning activities, or use of alternate control measures like wet line, hoselay, leaf-blowing, or mowing.
- Maintenance treatments: All treatments in the proposed action may be maintained as needed on a cycle throughout the course of the project to retain desired conditions while minimizing environmental impacts. Fire and fuels management will evaluate the need and type of maintenance treatments necessary to keep fuels manageable.
- Route maintenance: Maintenance of NFTS routes may be subject to grading/reshaping/blading, dust abatement, ditch maintenance, drainage dip maintenance, and hazard removal or cleanup as defined in the EA.

Maps:


USDA
Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Six Rivers National Forest | Gasquet Ranger District | Wednesday, November 5, 2025
MYSNCR | Index
MYSN (A,B,C)
CR (D)
GASQUET MTN (17N49)
PAPPAS FLAT (17N69)
A
B
C
D
Cold Spring Mtn 3,691
Elk Camp Ridge
Twelvemile Creek
Patrick Creek
PATRICK CREEK
Lawyers Bar (H)
Shelly Creek
18N16
T17N R2E
T17N R3E
Kelly Creek
2,592
DARLINGTONIA TRAIL
PANTHER FLAT
GASQUET
199
Eighteenmile Creek
Stony Creek
Grigs Creek
French Hill Road
French Placer
French Hill
Lower Coon Mtn 2,402
Upper Coon Mtn 4,016
Gordon Mtn 4,068
17N39
MYSN & CR
Project Blocks
Project Boundry
WUI Gasquet
Jeffrey Pine Grassland
Smith River Complex
Miles
Harbor
Six Rivers National Forest
Klamath National
Reservation
Name | GIS_Acres
MYSN (A,B,C) | 1481.8
CR (D) | 22.8
Total Project Acre | 1505

MYSNCR | Mvs-Yee-Se'-Ne | A Block



Unit	Acre
A1	31.4
A2	34.6
A3	27.8
A4	20.4
A5	34.3
A6	33.9
A7	41.4
A8	38.8
A9	29.5
A10	53
A11	46.1
A12	28.8
A13	47.6
A14	30.6
A15	50.6
A16	54.7
A17	49.4
A18	32
A19	41.1
A20	37.5
A21	32.3
A22	30.6

Spatial Reference
NAD 83 UTM Zone 10 N

Disclaimer
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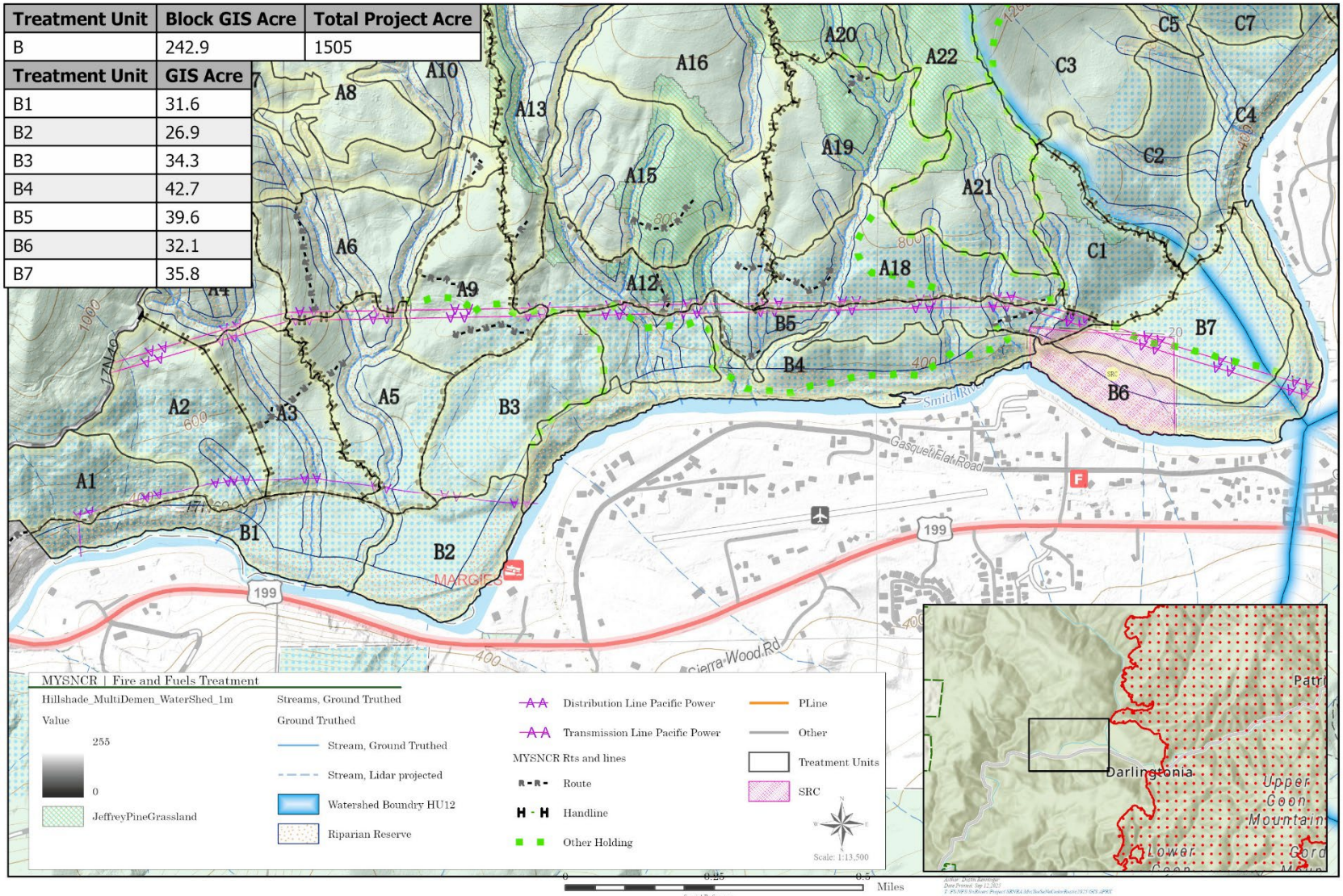
MYSNCR | Mvs-Yee-Se'-Ne | B Block

Treatment Unit	Block GIS Acre	Total Project Acre
B	242.9	1505

Treatment Unit	GIS Acre
B1	31.6
B2	26.9
B3	34.3
B4	42.7
B5	39.6
B6	32.1
B7	35.8



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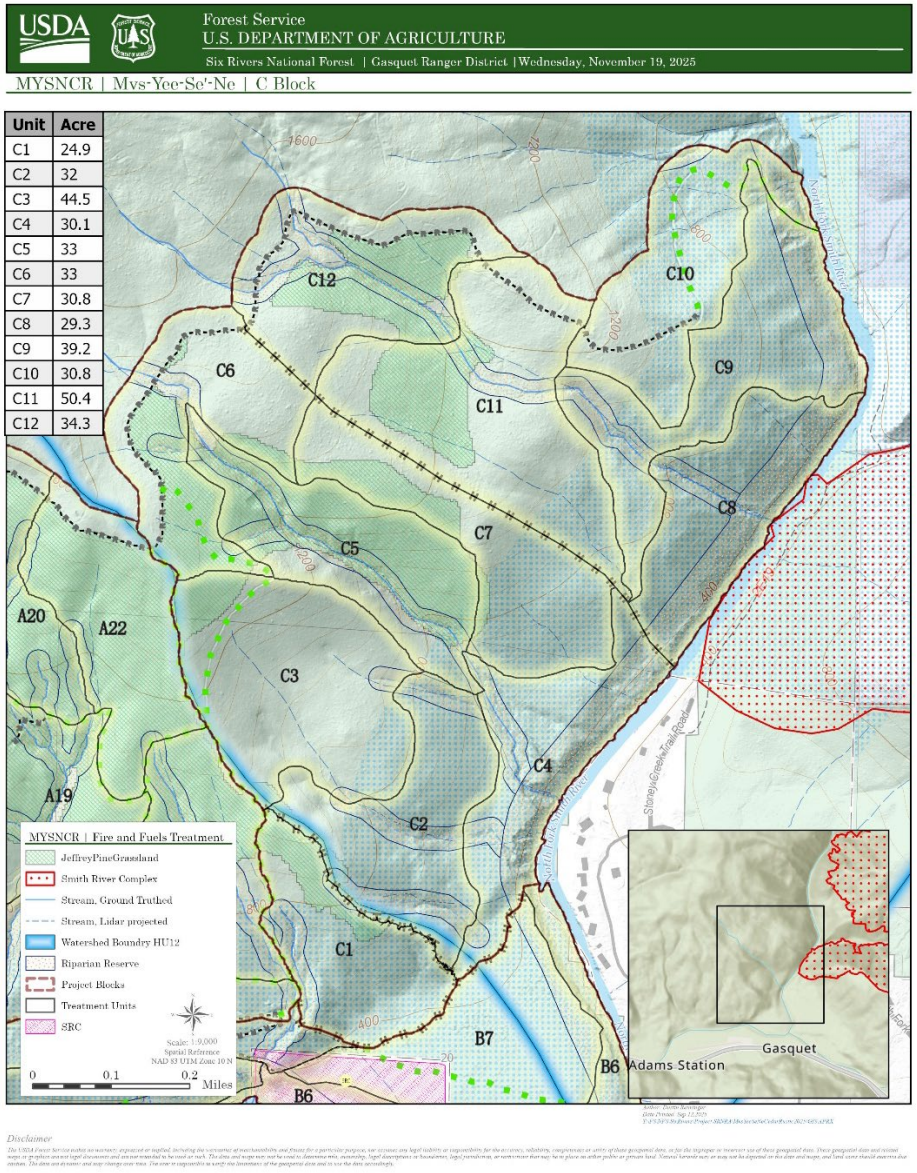
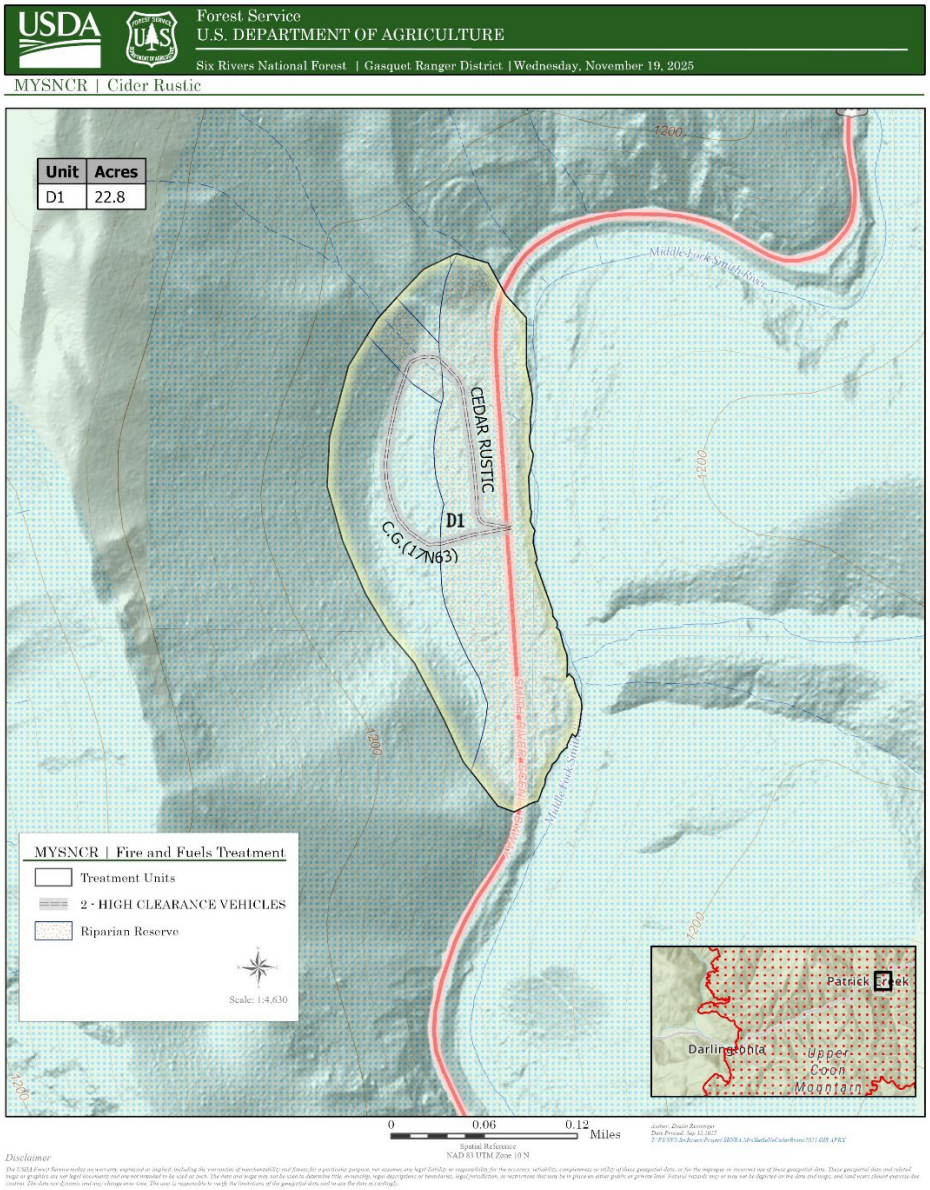

USDA
Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Six Rivers National Forest | Gasquet Ranger District | Wednesday, November 19, 2025
MYSNCR | Mys-Yee-Se'-Ne | C Block
Unit | Acre
C1 | 24.9
C2 | 32
C3 | 44.5
C4 | 30.1
C5 | 33
C6 | 33
C7 | 30.8
C8 | 29.3
C9 | 39.2
C10 | 30.8
C11 | 50.4
C12 | 34.3
C12
C10
C6
C11
C9
C8
C7
C5
A20
A22
C3
C4
A19
C2
C1
B7
B6
B6
Adams Station
Gasquet
Stoney Creek Trail Road
MYSNCR | Fire and Fuels Treatment
JeffreyPineGrassland
Smith River Complex
Stream, Ground Truthed
Stream, Lidar projected
Watershed Boundry HU12
Riparian Reserve
Project Blocks
Treatment Units
SRC
Scale: 1:9,000
Spatial Reference
NAD 83 UTM Zone 10 N
0
0.1
0.2
Miles
Disclaimer


USDA
Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Six Rivers National Forest | Gasquet Ranger District | Wednesday, November 19, 2025
MYSNCR | Cider Rustic
Unit
Acres
D1
22.8
CEDAR RUSTIC
D1
C.G.(17N63)
Middle Fork Smith River
1200
MYSNCR | Fire and Fuels Treatment
Treatment Units
2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES
Riparian Reserve
Scale: 1:4,630
Patrick Creek
Darlingtonia
Upper Coon Mountain
0
0.06
0.12
Miles
Spatial Reference
NAD 83 UTM Zone 10 N
Disclaimer

PART C: Compliance with Law, Regulation, Policy, and Operational Feasibility

Project Design Features: The EA found no significant impacts when project design features are implemented accordingly. The following PDFs shall be incorporated into all phases of operational work.

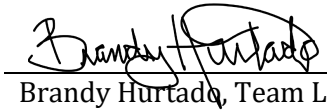
- No new landings, roads, or temp roads will be constructed to implement fuel reduction. Use of existing user-created routes acceptable for foot traffic, prescribed fire holding operations, and limited UTV use by fire personnel during implementation.
- Understory burning will be conducted when weather and fuel moisture conditions are appropriate to achieve a low intensity underburn with the objective to keep flame lengths and scorch heights low to minimize sapling mortality, effects to larger trees, and reduce the risk of an escape during the implementation.
- No trees removed over 8" dbh unless determined to be a hazard to operations or prescribed fire containment.
- No ignitions within 25' of a fish-bearing stream, but fire may back down. Pile burning is not expected to result in measurable effects to fish and their habitat because activities will not occur within 25' of a stream.
- Fuels reduction within 160' of an ESA-bearing waterbody would be limited to the use of hand treatment/tools and low-intensity prescribed fire only.
- Fireline construction will range from 12" wide (within riparian reserves) to 48" wide (outside riparian reserves). If firelines are determined to be contributing to erosion at more than a low level, subsequent rehabilitation may be needed between maintenance treatments.
- Riparian reserve mitigation measures shall follow the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) adapted for the *Six Rivers Aquatic Restoration Project* to maintain habitat for riparian dependent species (see Attachment A for specific design features). Adherence to riparian reserve PDF's would minimize short- and long-term impacts to water quality to avoid significant effects to watershed resources.
- Mechanical activities within ESA fish-bearing stream buffers are limited to NNIP treatments authorized under the *Six Rivers Aquatic Restoration Project* connected action (see Attachment A).
- Heavy equipment use excluded on slopes exceeding 35%, except for short turn around distances (de minimis).
- Straw bales, rock, and containment dikes may be used as needed at water drafting sites to capture spilled water and prevent runoff.
- The project will not remove potential threatened, endangered, and sensitive species nest trees (classified predominant) or affect the canopy around potential nest trees in suitable habitat.
- Canopy closure in TEPS nesting habitat will be maintained at 60% or greater. Canopy closure in all forested stands will be maintained at 40% or greater.
- All piles generated by treatments will be placed in locations that will minimize damage to potential nest trees and other residual vegetation or moved to designated areas.

- If possible, in early seral-stage stands lacking downed woody debris (shrub and pole seral stages), 2-4 piles per acre would be left unburned to provide cover for small mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. The size of the piles would vary depending on the availability of slash; however, the preferred size is at least 6 ft. in diameter and 4-6 feet tall. The number of piles per acre would be dependent on the location and potential fire risk. No piles would be left within 100 feet of roads.
- Portions of units A7, A8, and A10 are within a 0.25 miles buffer from a site of concern and will require LOPs. LOP descriptions can be found in the "Limited Operating Periods Required" of the associated Six Rivers National Forest Thinning and Fuels Hazard Reduction Project Documentation Form (FF Tier Form) completed for this project (see project record). Wildlife LOPs for calendar periods and types of restricted activities are determined by SRF LRMP (p.98, 1995) for locations of active and known nests, dens, and breeding activity sites. Detections of new breeding activity centers for FWS listed or FS sensitive species will be surveyed if discovered during implementation and properly protected.

PART D: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The Line Officer is responsible for ensuring environmental compliance and tribal, cooperator, collaborative, and public outreach during all stages of implementation. Implementation is contingent upon an annual monitoring plan utilizing Stage 5 monitoring indicators to report on the following:

- Acres of implemented activities where unburned for 7-plus years, and their location by land allocation, watershed and WUI designations.
- Acres of implemented activities occurring in post-fire landscapes, and their location by land allocation, watershed and WUI designations.

Prepared by:		26Jan26
	Brandy Hurtado, Team Leader Signature	Date
Reviewed by:		26Jan26
	Justin Spedding, NEPA Coordinator Signature	Date
Approved by:		26Jan26
	Donna Peppin, Acting District Ranger	Date