



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Headquarters

Annual Report 2022-2023:

National Programmatic Agreement among the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers for Phasing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Large-Scale Multi-Year Undertakings (Phasing NPA)

**Report of the Phasing NPA's use during Dec. 6, 2022 – Dec. 6, 2023, pursuant to Section XI.
June 2024**



Introduction

On December 6, 2021, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO), and the Forest Service (Signatories) executed the *National Programmatic Agreement among the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers for Phasing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Large-Scale Multi-Year Undertakings* (Phasing NPA). This report represents the annual report for the Phasing NPA’s second reporting cycle.

During the first reporting period, the Forest Service applied the Phasing NPA to 10 different projects. During the second reporting period, three consultations discontinued the Phasing NPA process and the Forest Service initiated the Phasing NPA for three new projects. For this reporting cycle, signatories agreed to include a narrative section to highlight each project and its consultation status, in addition to the tabular form required by the Phasing NPA. The Phasing NPA requires a table of the names, location (State and Forest), types of projects reviewed under the NPA, corresponding number of dispute, CRSOs adopted, and the number of HIP commitments completed and/or initiated.

A summary of the Phasing NPA’s tailored Section 106 process is available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/heritage/npa>.

Acronyms

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
CRSOs	Cultural Resource Stewardship Opportunities
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Action
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
Section 106	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
HIP	Heritage Implementation Plan
Project	Defined in the Phasing NPA as an undertaking per 54 U.S.C. 300320 “a project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; and those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal Agency.”
Phasing NPA	National Programmatic Agreement among the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers for Phasing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Large-Scale Multi-Year Undertakings
WO	Washington Office, Forest Service Headquarters
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface



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Required Report Table

*The following table provides an overview of some of the information required by the Phasing NPA.
[Access the comprehensive table required by the Phasing NPA.](#)*



	Project Name	Forest	State	Project Type	CRSOs adopted	Disputes	HIP issuance/ implementation status
1	Adin Pass Vegetation Project	Modoc National Forest	California	Aims to improve the ecological resilience of stands to natural disturbances, to reduce the chance of severe wildfire and to increase the ability to control wildfires within the wildland urban interface (WUI) through standard forest harvesting operations, mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire activities. The proposed project may include up to 4,847 acres.	0	0	HIP issued + began initial implementation of HIP
2	Bitterroot Front Project	Bitterroot National Forest	Montana	Aims to reduce the threat of large-scale fires within the WUI, improve forest conditions, and to provide commercial timber products through a variety of fuel reduction treatment options including but not limited to: prescribed burning; non-commercial and commercial thinning. Additionally, the project will include transportation management and recreation improvement activities. The project will include approximately 150,000 acres of forest lands within the WUI.	0	0	HIP not issued
3	Calloway Project	Willamette National Forest	Oregon	Aims to 1) provide a sustainable supply of timber products; (2) improve stand conditions in terms of, density, diversity, and structure; (3) manage Riparian Reserves to acquire desired vegetation characteristics to attain Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives, (4) sustainably manage the road systems in the project area, and (5) strategically reduce hazardous fuels to assist future wildfire management. The proposed project is 57,832 acres. The forest discontinued use of the Phasing NPA for this project due to change in scope.	NA	0	NA- Discontinued HIP development
4	Castle Fire Ecological Restoration Project	Sequoia National Forest	California	Aims to promote forest resilience and ecological integrity by reducing fuel loads, reforestation, wildlife habitat improvement and hydrologic improvement activities, addressing the effects of the 2020 Castle Fire. The Sequoia National Forest proposes to use a combination of mechanical and hand treatments to remove fuels. The project will also include prescribed burns and reforestation. The project will treat approximately 39,335 acres.	4	0	HIP issued and began initial implementation of HIP



5	Community Protection & Forest Recovery Project	Plumas National Forest	California	Aims to use prescribed fire, manual and mechanized treatments to maintain or reduce fuel loads, modify future fire behavior, and reduce future impacts of wildfire. The project will address approximately one million acres within the forest administrative boundaries	NA	0	HIP issued + began initial implementation of HIP
6	Coyote Divide Vegetation Project	Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest	Montana	Aims to reduce hazardous fuels and fire threat within the WUI and to enhance associated forest and rangeland ecosystems across the project area. The project includes forest vegetation treatments such as timber harvests and prescribed fire on about 37,000 acres near several local communities. The forest discontinued use of the Phasing NPA for this project due to change in project timeline.	NA	0	NA- Discontinued HIP development
7	Deschutes National Forest Fuels Maintenance Treatment Project	Deschutes National Forest	Oregon	This project will implement fire and non-fire treatments including mechanized and non-mechanized thinning, prescribed fire, and necessary associated fireline construction and road maintenance to bring previously treated areas to the Forest's desired condition. The project's initial estimated acreage extends across 275,000 acres.	0	0	HIP under development
8	Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project	Inyo National Forest	California	Encompasses 56,000 acres of non-Wilderness lands administered by the Inyo National Forest surrounding the town of Mammoth Lakes, California. Restoration work proposed to occur over the next decade includes targeted removal of live and dead trees and undesirable fuels in mixed conifer forests, aspen stands, sagebrush steppe habitats, and meadows through a combination of hand labor and/or mechanical methods, burning, and timber sales. The forest discontinued use of the Phasing NPA for this project due to consulting party concerns.	0	0	NA- Discontinued HIP development
9	Forest-wide Prescribed Fire	Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest	Montana	Fuels reduction undertaking for the entire Forest.	0	0	HIP under development



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10	Hazardous Fuels & Fuels Management	Six Rivers National Forest	California	Aims to achieve fire and vegetation resiliency across the Six Rivers National Forest. The forest will use a series of low intensity tools to prepare for prescribed burning, apply beneficial prescribed fire and associated fuels-reduction management tools on up to 20,000 acres per year. The treatments will focus on understory forest vegetation and dead and down debris on the forest floor. The Project's area of potential effect includes the 1,272,952 acres administered by the forest. The project will last approximately 10 years.	3	0	HIP issued + began initial implementation of HIP
11	Mendocino Fire & Fuels Management Strategy Project	Mendocino National Forest	California	Aims to use prescribed fire, manual and mechanized treatments to maintain or reduce fuel loads, modify future fire behavior, and reduce future impacts of wildfire within and adjacent to the Mendocino National Forest lands. This forest-wide project covers about 688,700 acres within the forest administrative boundaries, except for designated wilderness areas and the Chico Seed Orchard.	11	0	HIP issued + began initial implementation of HIP.
12	Mendocino Forest Wide Invasive Plant Species Project	Mendocino National Forest	California	Aims to reduce the extent and spread of invasive plant infestations that threaten wildland values in a timely and cost-effective manner, while protecting human health and ecosystem functions. The total acres of the forest-wide project are expected to cover approximately 974,260 acres (including areas located out of the forest's boundary) and the project is expected to last at least 20 years.	4	0	HIP under development
13	Windy Fire Ecological Restoration Project	Sequoia National Forest	California	Aims to promote forest resilience and ecological integrity through fuels reduction, reforestation, wildlife habitat improvement and hydrologic improvement activities, addressing the effects of the 2021 Windy Fire through a combination of mechanical and hand treatments to remove fuels. The project will also include prescribed burns and reforestation. The project encompasses 16,977-acres of lands administered by the forest adjacent to the Tule River Indian Tribe of California reservation.	4	0	HIP issued + began initial implementation of HIP



Phasing NPA Project Summaries

Adin Pass Vegetation Project

Modoc National Forest, California

The Project

The Adin Pass Vegetation Project aims to improve the ecological resilience of stands to natural disturbances, to reduce the chance of severe wildfire and to increase the ability to control wildfires within the wildland urban interface. The Modoc National Forest proposes to use standard forest harvesting operations, mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire activities. The proposed project may include up to 4,847 acres and is not expected to continue past 2027.

The Process

The forest sent an official project initiation letter in March 2022 and initiated Section 106 consultation under the Phasing NPA on June 6, 2022. Consulting parties included the California SHPO, the Pit River Tribe, and the ACHP. The ACHP declined to participate further. The kickoff meeting was held via Teams on July 25, 2022, with representatives from SHPO and the Pit River Tribe in attendance. During the meeting, CRSOs were discussed; the Pit River THPO expressed interest in coordinating with the Tribal Council to identify potential CRSOs. The forest chose to utilize the Phasing NPA for the project due to the multi-year nature of the undertaking. During the consultation period, one disagreement arose regarding the amount of time parties had to review intermediate drafts of the HIP. The forest resolved the disagreement by providing parties 30-days for review.

Status as of December 6, 2023

After consulting and providing two drafts of the HIP since June 2022 with HIP consulting parties, the forest finalized and signed the HIP in June 2023. No CRSOs have been identified or incorporated into the HIP to date. The forest has begun implementing the project, with 658 acres having been cut, skidded and decked thus far.



View of Adin Pass Project Area.
(USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

- Project type:
Restoration
- Acreage:
4,847 acres
- Consultation initiated:
6 June 2022
- Consultation status:
HIP issued 6/27/2023
- Number of CRSOs:
0 proposed
0 adopted
- Number of disputes:
0

Bitterroot Front Project

Bitterroot National Forest, Montana and Idaho

The Project

The Bitterroot Front Project aims to reduce the threat of large-scale fires within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), improve forest conditions, and to provide commercial timber products for the American people. The project will include a variety of fuel reduction treatment options including but not limited to prescribed burning; non-commercial and commercial thinning. Additionally, the project will include transportation management and recreation improvement activities. The project will include approximately acres of Bitterroot National Forest lands within the WUI.

The Process

The Bitterroot Front Project has been in consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act following the Phasing NPA. The Forest Service offered an opportunity to review a draft HIP in April and the final draft in September. A Heritage Implementation Plan was completed in consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, ACHP, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Nez Perce Tribe. The Bitterroot Front Heritage Implementation Plan (HIP) will go into effect once the Environmental Assessment is signed in 2024.

Status as of December 6, 2023

The Bitterroot National Forest has completed the Bitterroot Front HIP following consultation with the Montana SHPO, ACHP, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Nez Perce Tribe. The Bitterroot Front HIP will go into effect once the Environmental Assessment is signed in 2024.



Segment of the proposed project area near Blodgett Canyon, known as the Bitterroot Front, circa 1930s. (Kenneth E. Carpenter Photograph Collection, Bitterroot National Forest Archives)

At a Glance

Project type:

Fuels Reduction

Acreage:

150,000 acres

Consultation initiated:

06/30/2020

Consultation status:

HIP finalized but not issued.

Number of CRSOs:

0 proposed
0 adopted

Number of disputes:

0

Calloway Project

Willamette National Forest, Oregon

The Project

The Calloway Project aims to 1) provide a sustainable supply of timber products; (2) improve stand conditions in terms of, density, diversity, and structure; (3) manage Riparian Reserves to acquire desired vegetation characteristics to attain Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives, (4) sustainably manage the road systems in the project area, and (5) strategically reduce hazardous fuels to assist future wildfire management. The proposed project is 57,832 acres. The project will be phased and is expected to take at least ten (10) years to complete.

The Process

On September 25, 2022, the Willamette National Forest invited the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, ACHP, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer to be consulting parties for the development of the Heritage Implementation Plan (HIP). Due to unforeseen changes in capacity due to wildfires and general vacancies, the forest did not host a kick-off meeting as originally anticipated. Throughout this time and because of the wildfire, the forest decreased the project size to a scope where the forest could complete Section 106 prior to the decision on the undertaking.

Status as of December 6, 2023

The forest has discontinued use of the Phasing NPA as they are able to consider the effects of the undertaking prior to a decision on the undertaking utilizing the 2004 Programmatic Agreement Among the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Oregon State Historical Preservation Officer Regarding Cultural Resource Management in the State of Oregon by the USA Forest Service.



Unit 144 above road. (USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

Project type:

Restoration

Acreage:

53,454 acres

Consultation initiated:

9/25/2022

Consultation status:

Discontinued

Number of CRSOs:

TBD

Number of disputes:

0

Castle Fire Restoration Project

Sequoia National Forest, California

The Project

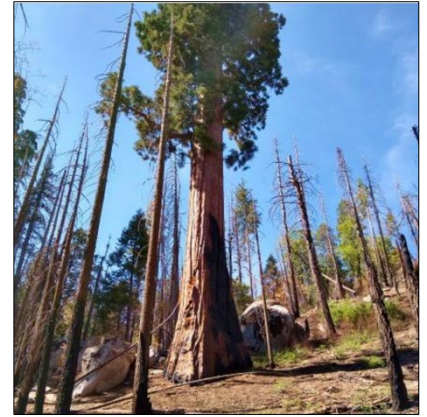
The Castle Fire Restoration Project aims to promote forest resilience and ecological integrity by reducing fuel loads, reforestation, wildlife habitat improvement and hydrologic improvement activities, addressing the effects of the 2020 Castle Fire. The Sequoia National Forest proposes to use a combination of mechanical and hand treatments to remove fuels. The project will also include prescribed burns and reforestation. The project will treat approximately 39,335 acres over a span of 10 to 15 years.

The Process

The forest notified the public of the project in late January 2021 and initiated Section 106 consultation under the Phasing NPA in late June 2022. The California SHPO, the Tule River Indian Tribe of California and the ACHP indicated their participation. The forest chose to utilize the Phasing NPA given the multi-year and large scale of the project. The first kick-off meeting was combined with the consultation for another HIP development. The CRSOs proposed include erosion protection & risk assessment after prescribed fires; fuel reduction around historic properties; and inclusion of traditional ecological knowledge.

Status as of December 6, 2023

On August 19, 2022, the forest held a hybrid kick-off meeting. In October, the Tule River Indian Tribe signed the Phasing NPA. On November 23, the forest circulated the first draft of the HIP for a 30-day review period. On February 27, 2023, the forest circulated the final draft HIP for a 30-day review period. On April 3, the HIP was finalized and signed by Forest Supervisor Teresa Benson.



Sequoia National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

Project type:

Fuels Reduction & Restoration

Acreage:

~39k acres

Consultation initiated:

June 2022

Consultation status:

HIP issued

Number of CRSOs:

4 proposed

4 adopted

Number of disputes:

0

Community Protection & Forest Recovery Project

Plumas National Forest, California

The Project

The Community Protection & Forest Recovery Project aims to use prescribed fire, manual and mechanized treatments to maintain or reduce fuel loads, modify future fire behavior, and reduce future impacts of wildfire within the Plumas National Forest. The project will address approximately one million acres within the forest administrative boundaries. The project will be phased and is expected to take approximately 10 years to complete.



Plumas National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

The Process

The forest invited parties to participate in Section 106 consultation under NPA sent to consulting parties in June 2022. The forest hosted a kick-off meeting via TEAMS on September 20, 2022, and sent an initial draft HIP sent to consulting parties on November 3, 2022. The forest sent an updated draft on 1/11/2023. While neither SHPO nor the Tribes provided input on any draft of the HIP, communication with individual Tribal members indicated they were satisfied with the HIP drafts. Drafts were changed based on internal comments received. The final HIP was signed on April 17, 2023.

Status as of December 6, 2023

In 2023, the forest began implementing the PNF Protection and Recovery HIP process for 13 project activities. As of September 30, 2023, identification of historic properties for three project activities have been completed. Identification is ongoing in the remaining ten activities, most of which are expected to continue with the 2024 field season. Implementation has not started on any of the 13 activities. No CRSOs have been proposed, however, the Tribes remain active in monitoring where necessary.

At a Glance

Project type:

Restoration

Acreage:

~1 million acres

Consultation initiated:

6/3/2022

Consultation status:

HIP issued 4/17/2023

Number of CRSOs:

0 proposed

0 adopted

Number of disputes:

0

Coyote-Divide Vegetation Project

Helena-Lewis & Clark NF, Montana

The Project

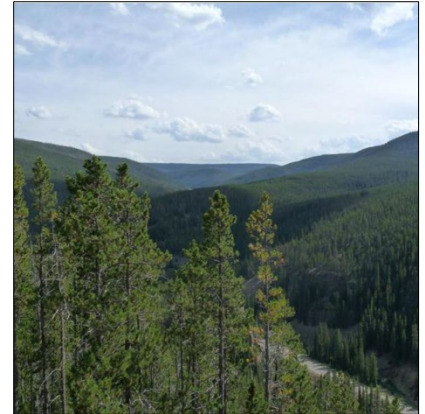
The Coyote-Divide Vegetation Project aims to reduce hazardous fuels and fire threat within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and to enhance associated forest and rangeland ecosystems across the project area. The project includes forest vegetation treatments such as timber harvests and prescribed fire on about 37,000 acres near several local communities. Project implementation will likely take 5-10 years to complete.

The Process

During project scoping in August of 2022, the forest invited the ACHP, SHPO, Tribes, and local governments and historical society to consult on the development of the HIP under the Phasing NPA. The forest chose to use the Phasing NPA to allow for two years of Section 106 surveys during and post NEPA analysis and decision. Only the ACHP and SHPO responded with interest and the Forest held the first consulting party meeting on October 20, 2022. After receiving comments from parties on the first draft in January 2023, the forest determined that Section 106 could be completed prior to the decision on the undertaking.

Status as of December 6, 2023

The forest has discontinued use of the Phasing NPA as they are able to consider the effects of the undertaking prior to a decision on the undertaking. The date for the final decision was moved and not set to be completed until March of 2024. This change allowed the forest to complete NHPA Section 106 inventories and consultation. In December 2023, the forest reached a finding of no adverse effect and officially discontinued the Phasing NPA consultation process.



Little Belt Mountains, Lewis & Clark National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

Project type:

Fuels Reduction & Restoration

Acreage:

37k acres

Consultation initiated:

8/19/22

Consultation status:

Discontinued

Number of CRSOs:

15 proposed

1 adopted

Number of disputes: None

Deschutes Fuels Maintenance Project

Deschutes National Forest, Oregon

The Project

Since 2000, the Deschutes National Forest has planned and implemented hazardous fuels reduction projects aimed at reducing risk of undesirable wildfire impacts to the communities and infrastructure of Central Oregon. There is a need to maintain and improve the conditions in these treated areas to ensure long term effectiveness in risk reduction. Over the next twenty (20) years, this project will implement fire and non-fire treatments including mechanized and non-mechanized thinning, prescribed fire, and necessary associated fireline construction and road maintenance to bring previously treated areas to the forest’s desired condition. The project’s initial estimated acreage extends across 275,000 acres.



Deschutes National Forest (USDA Forest Service photo)

The Process

The forest developed a HIP due to the project’s large extent and accelerated NEPA timeline. The forest initiated project planning in February 2023 and began consultation for use of the Phasing NPA in March 2023, extending an invitation to participate in development of this HIP to 14 potential consulting parties, including Tribes, local governments, and historical societies. The Oregon SHPO and Lake County Board of Commissioners joined as consulting parties. The initial meeting with consulting parties was held in April. Two meetings were held in August to discuss the first draft HIP. A separate meeting with the Klamath Tribes took place in September. One CRSO was identified and discussed. Through discussion with consulting parties, the forest clarified expectations for identification strategies, site documentation, and reporting, and added a structured post-implementation HIP Review meeting process. The second draft HIP was delivered to consulting parties for review on September 1, 2023.

Status as of December 6, 2023

HIP development and consultation are ongoing. The forest produced an informational package and two HIP drafts, held an initial meeting, two HIP discussion meeting with consulting parties, and a discussion meeting with the Klamath Tribes between March and September 2023. The forest proposed development of a historic context on railroad logging as a potential CRSO.

At a Glance

Project type:

Fuels reduction /
Maintenance

Acreage:

275k acres

Consultation initiated:

3/01/2023

Consultation status:

HIP development

Number of CRSOs:

1 proposed

0 adopted

Number of disputes:

0

Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project

Inyo National Forest, California

The Project

The Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) encompasses 56,000 acres of non-Wilderness lands administered by the Inyo National Forest. Restoration work proposed to occur over the next decade includes targeted removal of live and dead trees and undesirable fuels in mixed conifer forests, aspen stands, sagebrush steppe habitats, and meadows through a combination of hand labor and/or mechanical methods, burning, and timber sales.

The Process

Seven consultation meetings and one Tribal field tour helped inform the development of the ESCCRP HIP which was released for the first formal 30-day comment period on May 17, 2023. The forest received a letter from a coalition of nine local Tribes previously engaged in the HIP development objecting to the application of the NPA on July 3, 2023. Four additional HIP-specific meetings, numerous individual government-to-government consultation meetings, and two field tours were conducted to address concerns raised by the coalition. After reaching agreement with consulting parties and tribal coalition representatives during a September 2023 meeting to apply the HIP process to gain a better understanding of the proposed process through its application (e.g., “a HIP test drive”), the coalition sent a second letter to the Forest Supervisor objecting to use of the NPA on November 14, 2023. The Inyo Forest Supervisor responded to let the coalition Tribes know phased Section 106 compliance for the project was no longer being considered. Instead, the Region 5 Section 106 Programmatic Agreement would be applied to a reduced project area with completed archaeological survey to fulfill compliance responsibilities per the recommendation of the coalition.

Status As of December 6, 2023

The Inyo Forest Supervisor has elected not to use the NPA to phase compliance for the project. Tribal consultation is ongoing pursuant to the Region 5 Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, National Environmental Policy Act and other statutes. Select CRSOs will be retained in the environmental assessment as proposed actions, design criteria and implementation strategies.



Inyo National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

- Project type:
Fuels Reduction and Restoration
- Acreage:
56,000 acres
- Consultation initiated:
5/05/2022
- Consultation status:
Discontinued
- Number of CRSOs:
7 proposed
3-4 adopted
- Number of disputes:
0 (Applicability of Phasing NPA- disagreement)

Hazardous Fuels and Fire Project

Six Rivers National Forest, California

The Project

The Six Rivers Hazardous Fire & Fuels Project aims to achieve fire and vegetation resiliency across the Six Rivers National Forest. The forest will use a series of low intensity tools to prepare for prescribed burning, apply beneficial prescribed fire and associated fuels-reduction management tools on up to 20,000 acres per year. The treatments will focus on understory forest vegetation and dead and down debris on the forest floor. The project’s area of potential effect includes the 1,272,952 acres administered by the forest. The project will last approximately 10 years.



Six Rivers National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

The Process

The forest initiated consultation for the NPA and Section 106 in April 2022. The forest invited 16 Tribes the forest consults with, three collaboratives on the forest, SHPO and ACHP to participate. The forest worked with respondent HIP consulting parties through the duration of the development process. The forest proposed to use the NPA because of the scale of the project’s APE and the ability to phase prescribed fuels work across the forest. Informal consultation regarding the project started 2019. Four CRSOs have been proposed during HIP development and were integrated to the final HIP. The four CRSOs include: Use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) survey protocols in conjunction with traditional inventory techniques, Tribal Archaeological data sharing, and Nomination of TCPs, and opportunities to develop site specific stewardship opportunities as the needs arise. No disputes were raised.

Status as of December 6, 2023

The final HIP was signed on July 28, 2023. The forest is preparing the first project activity overview for review by HIP consulting parties. This activity area of potential effects (APE) includes approximately 11,000 acres of fuels reduction and prescribed fire preparation on the Lower Trinity Ranger District. This project targets WUI protection and is part of the Trinity Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS) landscape. Tribal HIP consulting parties and CA SHPO will participate in the Trinity WCS HIP process.

At a Glance

- Project type:
Fuels Reduction/ Rx Fire
- Acreage:
~1.2 million acres
- Consultation initiated:
April 2022
- Consultation status:
HIP signed 7/28/2023
- Number of CRSOs:
4 proposed
4 adopted
- Number of disputes:
0

Forest-wide Prescribed Fire

Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest, Montana

The Project

The Forest-wide Prescribed Fire project includes the 2.9 million acres of National Forest System lands managed by the Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest. Project activities will focus on fuels reduction across the forest. The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire and change how wildfire and other disturbances will shape the landscape. Project activities would include prescribed burning, fire line construction, and vegetation treatments using chainsaws and hand tools as well as mechanical equipment. The amount of acres treated annually will depend on a variety of factors, including funding, weather conditions, resource protection measures, and resources available to accomplish treatments.

The Process

The Forest Supervisor sent the official project initiation letter on January 5, 2023, and invited parties to participate in the development of the Heritage Implementation Plan on March 1, 2023. The forest chose to use the Phasing NPA for the project because of the multi-year nature of the undertaking. The Forest invited the ACHP, Montana SHPO, and the following THPOs: Blackfeet, Chippewa Creek, Crow, Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Eastern Shoshone, Fort Belknap, Fort Hall, Little Shell of Montana, Nez Perce, Northern Arapaho, and Northern Cheyenne. The ACHP and Montana SHPO chose to participate. The Crow Tribe declined to participate. The Blackfeet Tribe and Northern Cheyenne Tribe responded with interest to participate. No other THPO responded. A kick-off meeting was held through Teams on June 1, 2023, with ACHP, SHPO attending. The Blackfeet and Northern Cheyenne could no longer attend the selected meeting date and time after it was set. The project background, survey status, timeline for HIP development, evaluation and inventory strategy, assessment of effects approach and cultural resource stewardship opportunities were all discussed. Meeting notes, general heritage design features, and the project Scoping letter were sent to meeting attendees and all THPO invited to participate.

Status as of December 6, 2023

As of September 30, 2023, the forest drafted a HIP and discussed CRSOs, and sent it out for HIP consulting party review on November 30, 2023.



Archaeologist recording artifacts found after the Alice Creek Wildfire. (USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

Project type:

Fuels Reduction

Acreage:

2.6 million

Consultation initiated:

3/1/2023

Consultation status:

HIP under development

Number of CRSOs:

TBD

Number of disputes:

0

Mendocino Fire & Fuels Management Strategy Project

Mendocino National Forest, California

The Project

The Mendocino Fire & Fuels Management Strategy Project aims to use prescribed fire, manual and mechanized treatments to maintain or reduce fuel loads, modify future fire behavior, and reduce future impacts of wildfire within and adjacent to the Mendocino National Forest lands. This forest-wide project covers about 688,700 acres within the forest administrative boundaries, except for designated wilderness areas and the Chico Seed Orchard. The project will be phased and is expected to take at least 20 years to complete.



Mendocino National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

The Process

The Mendocino National Forest initiated public notice on October 22, 2021, and initiated Section 106 consultation under the Phasing NPA in April 2022. The forest invited all Tribes with known interest in the Forest, the California SHPO, and the ACHP. The forest chose to use the Phasing NPA for the project due to the multi-year and large scale of the proposed project. Between April 2022 and December 2022, the forest met twice virtually with consulting parties to discuss the initial draft and the project’s area of potential effects. An additional meeting was held for a Tribe which joined in the consultation after the initial meetings took place. The first draft was completed in December of 2022 and distributed to the consulting parties.

Status as of December 6, 2023

Since April 2022, the forest sent multiple draft HIPs to the consulting parties. Comments were received by the ACHP, the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, and the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians and incorporated into the final version of the HIP. After incorporating all the comments received from consulting parties the Forest Supervisor signed the HIP on July 28, 2023. Heritage surveys for a portion of the forest began in June of 2023 through September, resulting in 1042 acres surveyed. with the forest updated records of 28 known sites and found two additional sites. The forest will protect them all from project activities’ effects.

At a Glance

- Project type:
Restoration
- Acreage:
688,700 acres
- Consultation initiated:
4/6/2022
- Consultation status:
HIP issued July 28, 2023
- Number of CRSOs:
11 proposed
1 adopted
- Number of disputes:
0

Mendocino Forest Wide Fire Invasive Plant Species Project

Mendocino National Forest, California

The Project

The Mendocino National Forest’s “Forest Wide Fire Invasive Plant Species Project” aims to reduce the extent and spread of invasive plant infestations that threaten wildland values in a timely and cost-effective manner, while protecting human health and ecosystem functions. The project would allow the treatment of current and future infestations of non-native invasive plant species using an Integrated Pest Management approach, combining manual, mechanical, herbicide, grazing, prescribed fire, and biological control methods. The project is forest-wide, and includes parts of Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Mendocino, Tehama, and Trinity counties. The APE for this proposed project will encompass the entire boundary (including a .25 mile buffer) around the Mendocino National Forest’s boundary, the Red Bluff Recreation Area, the Chico Seed Orchard, and includes wilderness areas. The total acres of the forest-wide project are expected to cover approximately 974,260 acres and the project is expected to last at least 20 years.

The Process

The Mendocino National Forest initiated public notice on September 29, 2023, and initiated Section 106 consultation under the Phasing NPA on September 19, 2023. The forest invited all 22 federally recognized Tribes with known interest in the forest, the California SHPO, and the ACHP. The forest chose to use the Phasing NPA for the project due to the multi-year and large scale of the proposed project. The ACHP accepted the invitation. The forest is preparing for the initial kick-off meeting in Spring 2024

Status as of December 6, 2023

The forest invited consulting parties to begin the development of the HIP and is preparing for the initial kick-off meeting. The forest had one Tribe respond to the invitations/consultation and will resend additional invitations to the Tribes in 2024.



Mendocino National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

At a Glance

Project type:

Restoration

Acres:

974,260 acres

Consultation initiated:

9/29/2023

Consultation status:

Initiated

Number of CRSOs:

0 proposed

0 adopted

Number of disputes: N/A

Windy Fire Restoration Project

Sequoia National Forest, California

The Project

The Windy Fire Restoration Project aims to promote forest resilience and ecological integrity by reducing fuel loads, reforestation, wildlife habitat improvement and hydrologic improvement activities, addressing the effects of the 2021 Windy Fire. The Sequoia National Forest proposes to use a combination of mechanical and hand treatments to remove fuels. The project will also include prescribed burns and reforestation. The project encompasses 16,977-acres of lands administered by the forest adjacent to the Tule River Indian Tribe of California reservation.



Sequoia National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)

The Process

The forest notified the public of the project in early September 2022 and initiated Section 106 consultation under the Phasing NPA in late June 2022. The California SHPO, the Tule River Indian Tribe and the ACHP indicated their participation. The forest chose to utilize the Phasing NPA given the multi-year and large scale of the project. The first kick-off meeting was combined with the consultation for another HIP development. Through consultation, it was determined that the project activities, while not occurring within the boundaries of the Tule River Indian Tribe’s reservation, had the potential to affect historic properties on Tribal lands. As a result, the Tule River Tribe was invited to be a Tribal Signatory to the Phasing NPA. The CRSOs proposed erosion protection & risk assessment after prescribed fires; fuel reduction around historic properties; and inclusion of traditional ecological knowledge.

Status as of December 6, 2023

On August 19, 2022, the forest held a hybrid kick-off meeting. In October, the Tule River Indian Tribe signed the Phasing NPA. On November 23, the forest circulated the first draft of the HIP for 30-day review period. On April 24, 2023, the forest circulated the final draft of the HIP for a 30-day review period. On August 8, the HIP was finalized and signed by the Forest Supervisor.

At a Glance

- Project type:
Fuels Reduction & Restoration
- Acreage:
~17k acres
- Consultation initiated:
June 2022
- Consultation status:
HIP issued August 2023
- Number of CRSOs:
4 proposed
4 adopted
- Number of disputes:
0