

# NRCS Fuels Reduction Opportunities on Grasslands and Forests

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# Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Program Opportunities

## Environmental Quality Assurance Program (EQIP)

- ▶ Financial and technical assistance for conservation work for identified resource concerns
- ▶ Improve soil, water, plant, air, animal and related resource concerns.
- ▶ Agricultural and Forest lands.
- ▶ Competitively ranked projects.
- ▶ Multiple Fund Pool opportunities
- ▶ Management, vegetative and structural practices

## Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- ▶ Maintain and improve existing conservation work.
- ▶ Willing to adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns.
- ▶ The higher the performance, the higher the payment opportunity.
- ▶ Management driven.
- ▶ Enhancements vs Practices.
- ▶ Focus on management and vegetative practices/enhancements.



# Program Timeline/Deadlines – Remainder 2022

## EQIP

- ▶ Sign Up - 4/1/22
- ▶ Ranking – 5/27/22
- ▶ Funding – 6/15/22
- ▶ Obligation – 9/2/22

## CSP

- ▶ Sign Up - 4/1/22
- ▶ Ranking – 5/27/22
- ▶ Funding – 6/1/22
- ▶ Obligation – 8/5/22



# EQIP vs CSP – Which Way to Go?

## EQIP

- ▶ New to conservation planning
- ▶ New to working with NRCS
- ▶ Just in need of some structural help, and or management.

## CSP

- ▶ Has been working with NRCS/EQIP already
- ▶ Ready to take current conservation planning to another level
- ▶ Must include all eligible land that is under applicant's control
- ▶ Must meet or exceed two resource concerns on all land uses at time of contract
- ▶ Must agree to meet or exceed stewardship threshold for at least one additional resource concern by end of contract.

# EQIP

- Multiple Ranking Pools (These are just a few)
  - Regional – includes Grazing lands and Forest Health
  - CAPS – Conservation Activity Plan **vs** Design and Implementation Activity
    - Utilize Technical Service Providers (TSP)
    - Examples:
      - 106 Forest Management Plan
      - 165 Forest Management Design and Implementation Activity
      - 159 Grazing Management Design and Implementation Activity
      - 160 Prescribed Burning Design and Implementation Activity
  - Catastrophic Fire
  - Wildlife Friendly Livestock Pond
  - Tribal
  - Historically Underserved
    - Beginning Farmer/Rancher
    - Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

# More on EQIP

- Voluntary Conservation Program for technical and financial assistance
- Purpose is to address natural resource concerns
- Under the main categories of soil, water, air, plants, animals and energy, there are 47 resource concerns.
- Competitively Ranked
- Not all proposed projects get funded
- Payment rates are incentive payments based on specific practice scenarios.
- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program | NRCS California \(usda.gov\)](#)

# Fuel Load Management

## Plants

### Degraded Plant Condition

Plant productivity and health  
Plant structure and composition

### Plant Pressure

Plant pest pressure

### Fire Management

Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation



# Grassland Practices

## Primary Practices

- ▶ 314 - Brush Management
- ▶ 315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment
- ▶ 528 - Prescribed Grazing
- ▶ 338 - Prescribed Burning

## Supporting Practices

- ▶ 382 - Fence
- ▶ 614 - Watering Facility (tank or trough)
- ▶ 516 - Livestock Pipeline
- ▶ 533 - Pumping Plant
- ▶ 642 - Well
- ▶ 574 - Spring Development





## 314 Brush Management Scenarios

Hand Tools – lop and scatter

Mechanical-masticate

Chemical – spot treatment

# Typical Brush Management Multi Approach

- Masticate brush 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Follow up with 1 to 2 years chemical spot treatment for re-sprout control
- Approach and payment scenario is based on infestation level and size of woody species
- \*Not to facilitate a land use change



**315**

**Herbaceous  
Weed  
Treatment  
Scenarios**

Hand Tools – Weed  
Wrench, Hoe

Mechanical – Timed  
Mowing

Chemical – Boom, spot  
or aerial spray

# Typical Herbaceous Weed Treatment

- ▶ Chemical application up to 3 years for specific species
- ▶ Timed mowing or hand pulling first year, followed by spot chemical treatment for 1 or 2 years.
- ▶ Each approach is species specific and can be a multi-approach path.



## EQIP Prescribed Grazing Payment Scenario Options

- Basic Range \$2.90/acre
- Intensive Range \$3.94/acre
- Basic Pasture \$12.80/acre
- Intensive Pasture \$20.93/acre
- Range Deferment \$9.47/acre
- Habitat Management \$4.49/acre
  
- **What's missing.....Targeted Grazing!**
- **\*\*\*528 Targeted Grazing scenario not available under FY22 EQIP 528 practice.**





# Forestry Practices

(not a complete list)

- ▶ Forest Management Plan – 106
- ▶ Forest Stand Improvement - 666
- ▶ Prescribed Burn Plan – 160
- ▶ Prescribed Burning – 338
- ▶ Woody Residue Treatment – 384
- ▶ Tree/Shrub Pruning - 660
- ▶ Fuel Break - - 383
- ▶ Fire Break - 394
- ▶ Mulching – 490
- ▶ Brush Management – 314
- ▶ Herbaceous Weed Treatment – 315
- ▶ Tree and Shrub Planting – 612
- ▶ Silvopasture – 381
- ▶ Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment/Renovation - 380



# Core Forestry Practice Timeline Example

- ▶ CAP 106 -- Planning
  - ▶ 666 -- Thinning or masticating
    - ▶ 384 -- Slash cleanup
      - ▶ 660 -- Limbing
        - ▶ 490 -- Grub/hand chem planting spot
          - ▶ 612 -- Planting
            - ▶ 314 (or 490) – Resprout control



# CSP Program Eligibility

## Client Eligibility

- ▶ Must be owner or other tenant per the Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- ▶ Can be persons, tribes, entities, LLCs, etc
- ▶ Meet adjusted Gross Income Limit
- ▶ Have effective control of land offered for CSP.
  - ▶ Ownership, written lease or other means of documented land control for duration of 5- year contract.

## Land Eligibility


- ▶ Private Agricultural lands
  - ▶ Pasture
  - ▶ Range
  - ▶ Crop
- ▶ Associate Ag Lands (new)
- ▶ Farmstead (new)
- ▶ Non-Industrial Private Forestlands (NIPF)
- ▶ Agricultural Indian Lands
- ▶ Public land associated with above with effective control and working part of operation
- ▶ All eligible land must be enrolled



# CSP Contract Information

- 5 Year contract length
- Meet or exceed threshold: Must have at least two resource concerns addressed already on all land uses and be willing to address one additional resource concern by end of contract on one land use.
- Existing Activity payments:
  - EAP1 is based on land use. Example: Rangeland gets \$1/acre
  - EAP2 is based on number of resource concerns met at time of application submittal : \$300 per Resource Concern
- Conservation Activities:
  - Enhancements
  - Bundles
  - Practices
- [Conservation Stewardship Program | NRCS California \(usda.gov\)](#)

# CSP Enhancements



There are a total of 174 national enhancements available in FY22  
They are derived from 45 conservation practices (out of 168):

**7 Structural Practices**

**18 Vegetative Practices**

**20 Management Practices**

# CSP Enhancement Grazing Options for Fuel Load Reduction

- E528A – Maintaining Quality and Quantity of Forage for Animal Health and Productivity
- E528T – Grazing to Reduce Wildfire Risk on Forests
- E314A – Brush Management to Improve Structure and Composition Wildlife Habitat
- E315A – Herbaceous Weed Treatment to Create Desirable Plant Communities Consistent with Ecological Site
- E383A – Grazing Maintained Fuel Break to Reduce the Risk of Fire

# CSP Rangeland Financials Example

5000 ac livestock grazing operation

Existing Stewardship (**EAP1**) = 5000 X \$1.00 = \$5000/year

National resource concerns met at time of application = 5

Existing stewardship (**EAP2**) = \$300 X 5 + \$1500/year

Total existing activity payment = \$5000 + \$1500 = **\$6500/yr.**

528 Prescribed Grazing – year 1 - Range Basic @ \$0.45/acre = **\$2,250**

E528A – Maintaining Quantity and Quality Forage – years 2-5 @ \$4.58/ac = **\$22,900**

E315A – Herbaceous Weed Treatment – year 5 @ \$14.48/ac X 100 ac/yr. = **\$1,448**

EAP1&2 = \$6500/year	= \$ 32,500
528 = \$2250 for 1 year	= \$ 2,250
E528A = \$22,900 X 4	= \$ 91,600
E315A = \$1,448 for 1 year	= \$ 1,448
<hr/> Contract Total	<hr/> = <b>\$127,798</b>

# CSP Enhancements on Non-Industrial Private Forestlands (Not complete list)

- E338A – Strategically Planned Patch Burning for Grazing Distribution and Wildlife Habitat
- E338B – Short Interval Burns to Promote a Healthy Herbaceous Plant Community
- E381A – Silvopasture to Improve Wildlife Habitat
- E383A – Grazing Maintained Fuel break to Reduce Risk of Wildfire
- E384A – Biochar Production for Woody Residue
- E612B – Planting for High Carbon Sequestration Rate
- E612C – Establishing Tree/Shrub Species to Restore Native Plant Communities
- E666D – Forest Management to Enhance Understory Vegetation
- E666E – Reduce Height of the Forest Understory to Reduce Wildfire Risk
- E666G – Reduce Forest Density and Manage Understory Along Roads to limit Wildfire Risk

# CSP Non-Industrial Private Forestland Financials Example

1000 ac Non-Industrial Private Forestland Operation:

Existing Stewardship (**EAP1**) =  $1000 \times \$0.50 = \$500/\text{year}$

National resource concerns met at time of application = 5

Existing stewardship (**EAP2**) =  $\$300 \times 5 + \$1500/\text{year}$

Total existing activity payment =  $\$500 + \$1500 = \mathbf{\$2000/\text{yr.}}$

E666F – Reduce Forest Stand Density and Manage Understory Along Roads to limit Wildfire Risk and Improve Habitat - year 3 @  $\$334.28/\text{ac} \times 50 \text{ acres} = \mathbf{\$16,714}$

E314A – Brush Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat  
year 1 @  $\$21.50/\text{ac} \times 200 \text{ ac/yr.} = \mathbf{\$4,300}$

EAP1&2 = \$2,000/year	= \$ 10,000
E666F = \$16,714 for 1 year	= \$ 16,714
E314A = \$4,300 for 1 year	= \$ 4,300
<hr/>	
Contract Total	= <b>\$31,014</b>

# Prescribed Burning

(Policy GM\_190\_413-Part 113)

- NRCS supports, has authority, and funds prescribed burning on non-Federal lands.
- Focus on conifer, oak woodland and rangeland settings.
- Burn Plans are required for planning prescribed burning under EQIP.
- Burn plans are developed by CalFire or qualified NWCG Fire Boss. (New policy under development to expand pool of burn plan writers)
- NRCS Staff may participate in prescribed burning planning, and on the ground implementation.
  - **\*NRCS staff must have job approval authority(JAA) to participate in any level of prescribed burning.**



# Core Prescribe Burn Practices

- ▶ 160 – Prescribed Burn Plan
- ▶ 338 – Prescribed Burn
- ▶ 394 – Firebreak – (for perimeter control)
- ▶ 660 – Pruning – (pre-fire treatment)
- ▶ 384 – Residue Treatment – (pre-fire brush crush)
- ▶ \*\*\*Incentive payments are based on size and complexity for many practices.

