



## Community Assistance Program Overview and Guidance

In California as across much of the West, increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration faces two key challenges. First, most products resulting from treatments are largely non-merchantable; and second, where markets exist for that material, the economic haul distance is short (typically less than 30 miles one way of the end user), greatly restricting the land base where projects are affordable to the landowner.

Through the [My Sierra Woods](#) (MSW) program in northern California, the [American Forest Foundation](#) (AFF) seeks to address these barriers by launching the Community Assistance Program (CAP) – a financial incentive that will reimburse multiple private landowners *working in concert* for a portion of their out-of-pocket expense in conducting needed fuels reduction work. Through thinning, chipping, mastication, grazing, or other fuels reduction activity, AFF, through the CAP, seeks to increase the scope and scale of fuels reduction projects that are economically feasible to private landowners. In so doing, AFF hopes to reduce the likelihood of unnaturally large and severe wildfires, thus protecting working forests, rural communities, and critical upland watersheds, while improving carbon storage.

**IMPORTANT PROGRAM NOTE:** The CAP may be combined with other MSW financial assistance programs like the FBTI. Please note that separate applications for each program are required and must be submitted concurrently.

### The CAP Process: Step-by-Step

- A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or other Resource Professional, working on behalf of a single or group of landowners, secures appropriate CEQA compliance documentation for fuels reduction work.
- The resource professional completes and submits a CAP application on behalf of the project with signatures from each individual landowner. Note that multiple landowners participating in the CAP may choose to work with a single (shared) resource professional or retain the services of one individually.
- Each participating landowner may designate a fiscal agent (RPF, LTO, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party) to direct subsequent reimbursements.
- If the project is to be combined with the FBTI, the applicant works with an RPF to complete and submit an FBTI application on behalf of the landowner and concurrent with the CAP application.
- AFF will approve or deny the applications and notify applicant. If denied, the cause will be identified and if remediable the applicant will be invited to re-apply.
- As work is on-going or at the completion of a fuels-reduction project, applicant completes and submits a request for reimbursement with required documentation.
- AFF reviews and confirms accuracy and completeness of request and issues payment according to the schedule noted below.

### Program Eligibility

The CAP program is deliberately weighted to incentivize appropriate active forest management on non-industrial forest lands.

- Projects must span more than one ownership.
- Projects need to total at least 10 acres of treatment.
- Projects must be within the twelve-county project area (Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Butte, Yuba, Plumas, Nevada, Sierra, and Placer).

### Resource Professionals

Resource Professionals are critical to the near and long-term success of the CAP and as such are responsible for 1) understanding and agreeing to comply with the rules and protocols of the program, and 2) representing landowner information truthfully and accurately on all program documents.

- Multiple landowners may choose to work with a single (shared) resource professional or retain the services of one individually.
- The CAP does not assume any oversight of silvicultural prescriptions. However, projects must promote stand heterogeneity.
- Resource Professionals will be required to document pre and post treatment data for GHG reduction reporting to CAL FIRE.

### CEQA Compliance

Only projects that have demonstrated CEQA compliance are eligible to participate.

- Resource Professionals are solely responsible for ensuring and documenting project CEQA compliance.
- Reimbursements under the CAP will **not** be made if the request for reimbursement occurs after CEQA expiration has occurred.
- Applications to participate in the program may be rejected if project CEQA documentation is set to expire within 45 days of project application.

### Reimbursement

The CAP is meant to act as an incentive to private landowners to undertake risk reduction/forest restoration projects that otherwise may be uneconomical. The CAP is not intended to enable landowners to significantly profit from those projects.

- Reimbursement is based on the number of acres treated and the number of landowners participating in a project.

Total Project Acres	2 Landowners	3 Landowners	4 Landowners	5+ Landowners
10-30	\$500	\$600	N/A	N/A
31-60	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700
61-100	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$600
101+	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500

- Applicants may request reimbursements up to two times per month. Reimbursement requests need to be made formally through submission of the CAP Payment Request form to AFF.
- AFF guarantees reimbursement payment within 20 days of receipt of correctly submitted CAP Payment Request forms.

### Oversight

- AFF may, at its sole discretion, conduct randomized audits of program participants to ensure program integrity. By willingly participating in the CAP, applicants agree to provide such information as may be necessary to evaluate that integrity.
- Program rules and protocols may change to improve project performance. All changes will be documented on the My Sierra Woods website ([www.mysierrawoods.org](http://www.mysierrawoods.org))

**Questions?** Contact Chantz Joyce, AFF California Conservation Manager:  
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Additional information regarding the CAP can also be found on the My Sierra Woods website:  
[www.mysierrawoods.org/programs](http://www.mysierrawoods.org/programs)



*“My Sierra Woods – Capturing Carbon on California’s Family Forest Lands” project is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing GHG emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment– particularly in disadvantaged communities.*

*The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefiting residents of disadvantaged communities, low income communities, and low-income households across California.*

For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at:  
[www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov](http://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov).