

# Town of Paradise

*Taylor Nilsson, Executive Director, BCFSC*

**Butte County Fire Safe Council**  
**Serving Butte County since 1998**



# A Brief History – The Forest

## Our Forests

- California Wildlands are adapted to disturbances such as fire, grazing and flood.
- Northern California pine forests were once primarily made up of open stands - "A forest you could ride a horse through at a gallop with your arms out and eyes closed – Dave Derby, CAL FIRE Forester"
- Native practices that used fire for many purposes contributed to a healthy fire return interval
- The result is that over 50% of forests in California are dangerously overstocked

**This was the condition of the forest in the Town of Paradise and surrounding areas prior to the Camp Fire.**







# A Brief History – What Changed?

## **Overstocked Forests – Hazardous Fuel Loading**

- Early Industrial logging
- Fire exclusion policies after the Big Burn of 1910
- The loss of major grazers, deer, elk and antelope
- Policies that restrict the use of the appropriate tools and methods
- Not recognizing the scope and scale of the problem
- Climate and weather patterns

**The result is dangerously overstocked forest and wildlands that produce biomass at a much faster rate than it can decompose with longer and drier fire seasons**



# What Needs to Change?

Planning and implementation of forest health at a landscape level

Return fire and grazing animals to the landscape

Eliminate or reduce policies that restrict the use of the appropriate tools and methods

Provide incentives to property owners to maintain a healthier relationship to with the land we live on

Deliberate and thoughtful reduction of fuels that result in forest and human environments that are resilient to wildfire



# New Conditions – New Challenges, New Opportunities

Only 20% of the original tree stand remains

Thousands of vacant lots pose opportunity and challenges

Surrounding fuel beds are 6 years post fire

Fuel treatments in many areas of the Town and adjacent lands have already begun

Fuel treatment planning for approximately 5000 acres in CAL FIRE's South Paradise Vegetative Management Program (VMP) is in development

New grant opportunities resulting from Proposition #4 are forthcoming

Nature Based Resiliency Project with PRPD

# Better Burning

**The environment we live in will burn one way or another – We can impact how!**

Prescribed fire in all forms and methods will help achieve the scope and scale necessary to return healthy forests and wildlands

Better burning will allow for better smoke management.

Methods include pile burning, prescribed burning and biochar.

**Allow prescribed fire to include broadcast burning!**

**Prescribed Burn Association  
BCFSC / CAL FIRE Project burns**

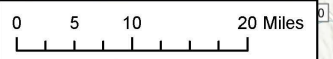
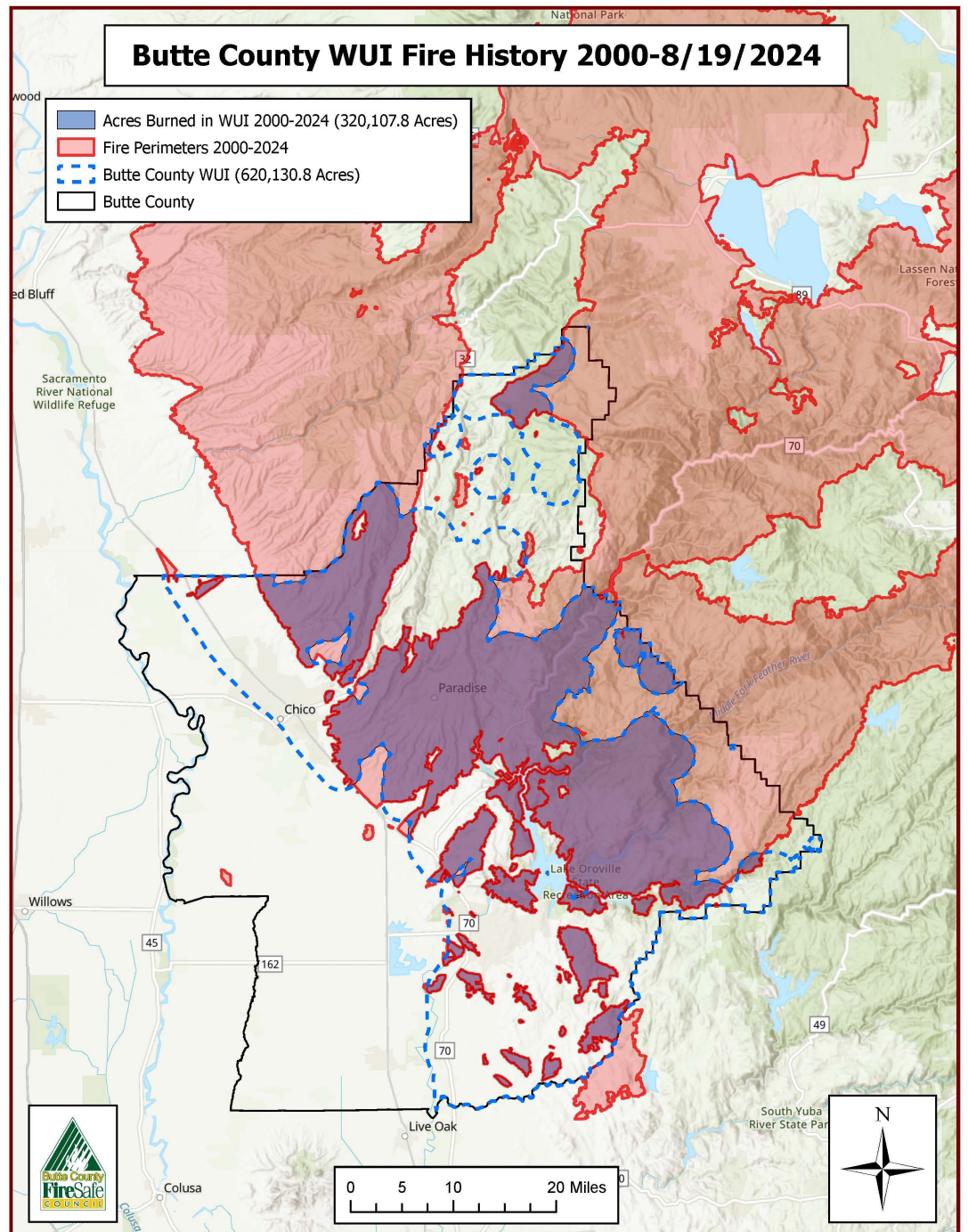


**Magalia Pile Burn  
01/02/25  
FHUW**



# Butte County WUI Fire History 2000-8/19/2024

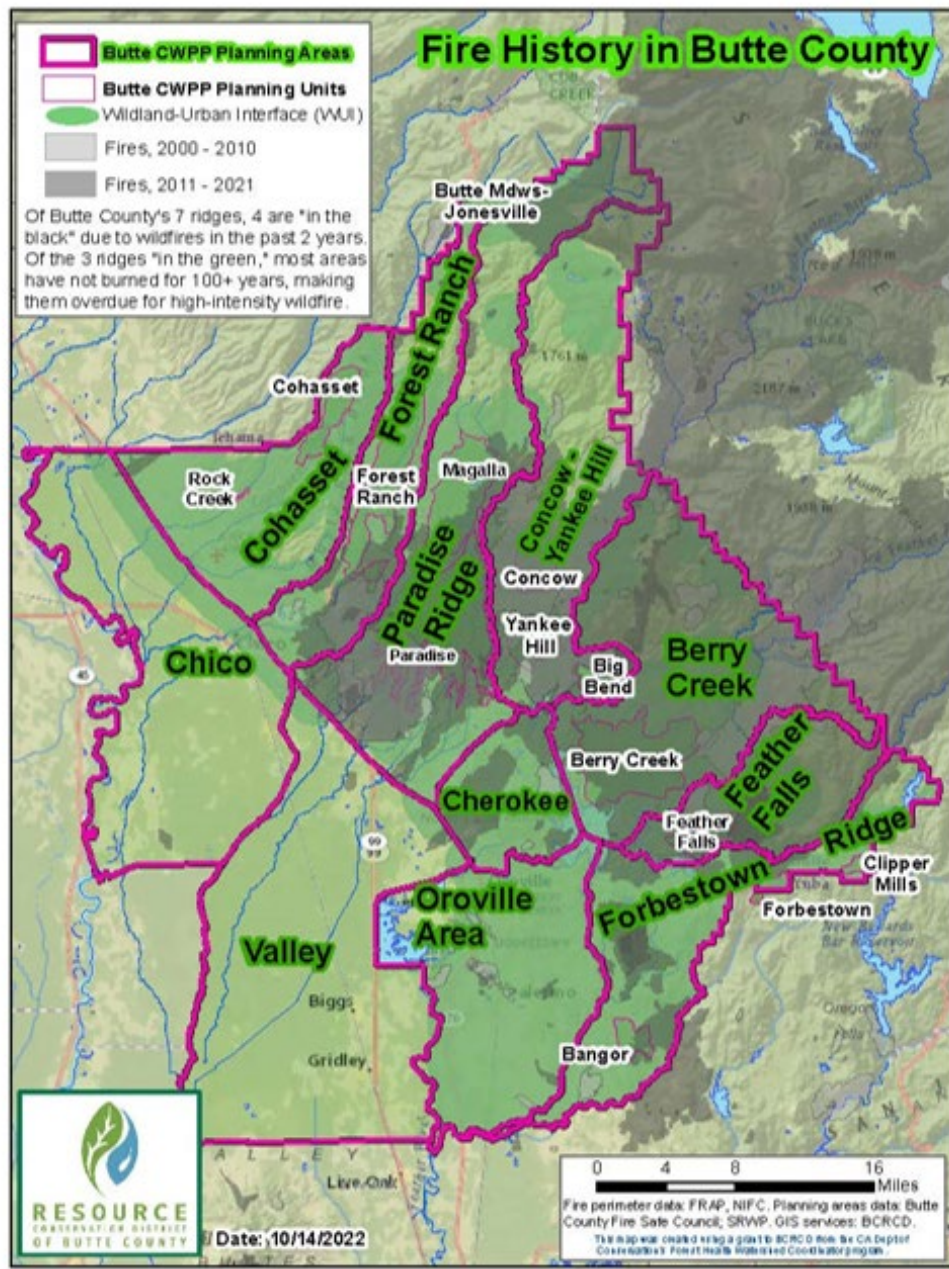
- Acres Burned in WUI 2000-2024 (320,107.8 Acres)
- Fire Perimeters 2000-2024
- Butte County WUI (620,130.8 Acres)
- Butte County



# Fire History in Butte County

- Butte CWPP Planning Areas
- Butte CWPP Planning Units
- Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)
- Fires, 2000 - 2010
- Fires, 2011 - 2021

Of Butte County's 7 ridges, 4 are "in the black" due to wildfires in the past 2 years. Of the 3 ridges "in the green," most areas have not burned for 100+ years, making them overdue for high-intensity wildfire.



Date: 10/14/2022

0 4 8 16 Miles  
 Fire perimeter data: FRAP, NIFC. Planning areas data: Butte County Fire Safe Council, SRWP. GIS services: BCRCD.  
 The map was created using a grant to BCRCD from the CA Dept of Conservation Forest Health Initiative Coordination grant.

# Various Treatments and Methods

- Hand Cutting and Chipping
- Mastication
- Prescribed Fire
- Grazing
- Mowing/Cutting
- Pile Burning (Biochar)
- Herbicide – Invasive Species Removal
  - BCFSC's "West Branch" Project
- Alternative examples for managing vegetation
  - Scraping,



**Magalia Pile Burn - FHUW**  
**01/02/25**

# Community Involvement

BUTTE  
PBA



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS PUT GOOD FIRE ON THE GROUND

- **Who are we?** A co-op of landowners, students of fire, neighbors and others who help each other put good fire on the ground.
- **Community-Based Learning:** Our trainings teach ordinary people (ages 9-92!) to read fire weather, understand burn planning/permitting process, gain proficiency in smoke management, monitor different types of fuel moisture, and understand wind patterns at their microsite and how to use them to disperse smoke from forest health burns.
- **Our vision:** A rural culture where using fire to tend our land and foster community is commonplace and familiar. Neighbors helping neighbors put good fire on the ground.
- **Getting good fire on your land is easier when you have help!**



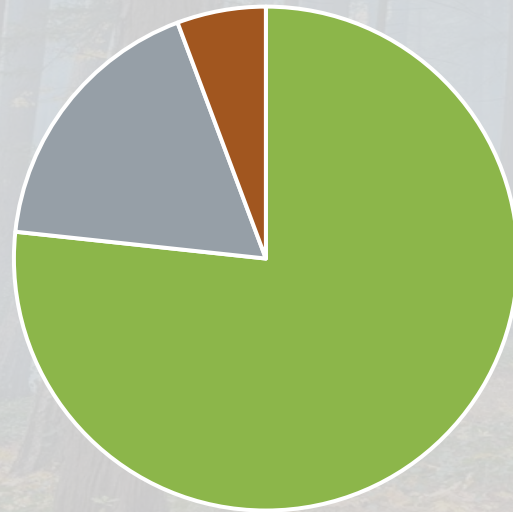
# What have we done?!

- 153 different volunteers – 2034 volunteer hours in 2024
- TREX – 212 people trained, 17 different organizations
- 284.5 acres burned since 2021
- 199.5 acres since January 2024
- 0 bonus acres – 0 accidents

# Town of Paradise Reseeding Survey (2021)

***“Would you support low-intensity prescribed burns conducted by fire professionals for the management of invasive plants and to reduce hazardous fire fuels?”***

**159 Responses**



**■ Yes ■ Not Sure ■ No**

# Grazing & Community Involvement

- ***Annual Grazing for fuels reduction and invasive species removal***
  - ***PUSD***
  - ***PPPOA***
- **Grazing Cooperatives – Sonoma County**
- **Supporting capacity for local grazers**







# FIREWISE USA - 2024

**31 Firewise USA Communities**

**19 New Communities**

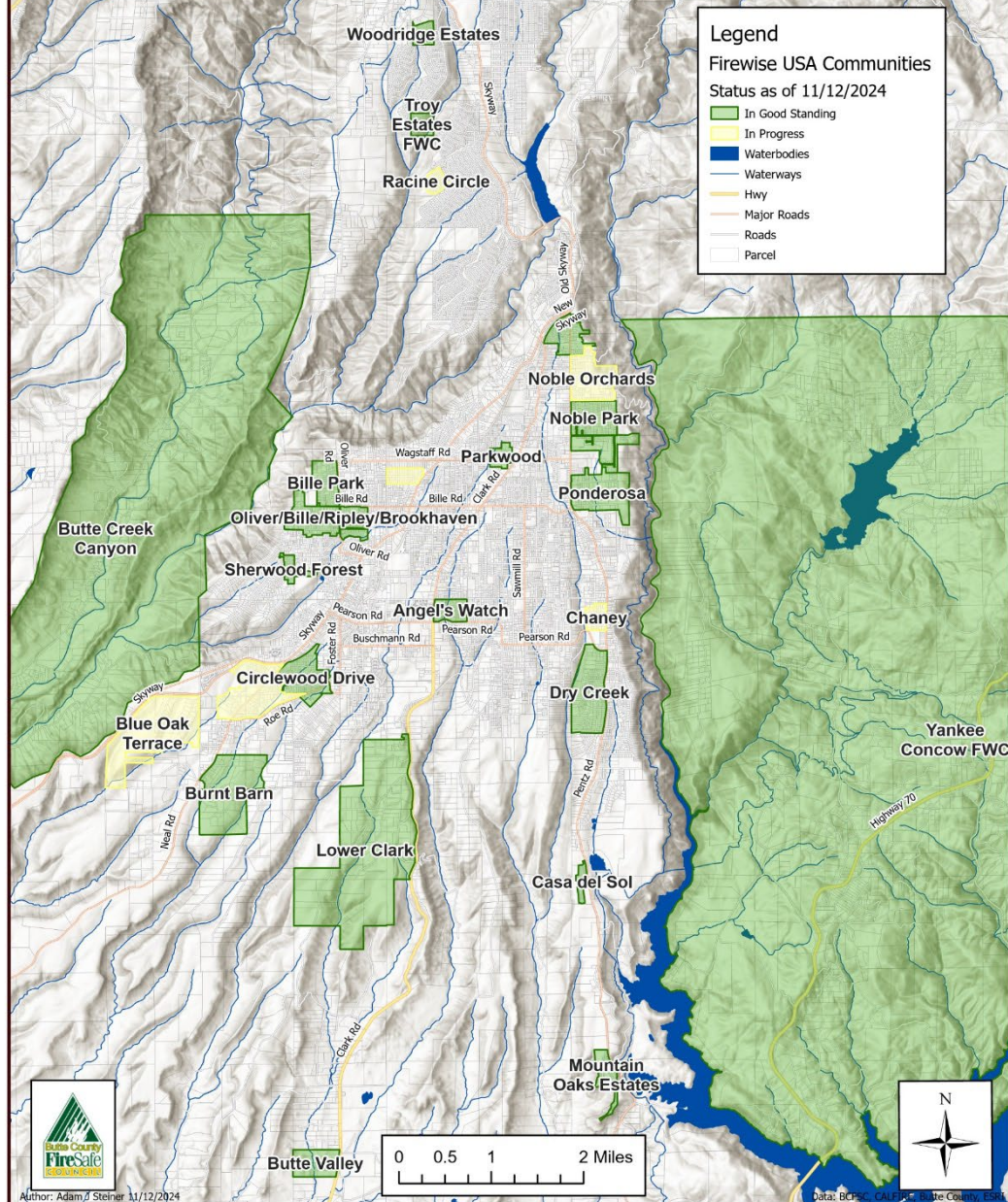


**Merry Mountain Village  
Firewise USA Leaders**



**Butte Creek Canyon  
Firewise USA certified November '24!**

# Paradise Ridge Firewise USA Communities



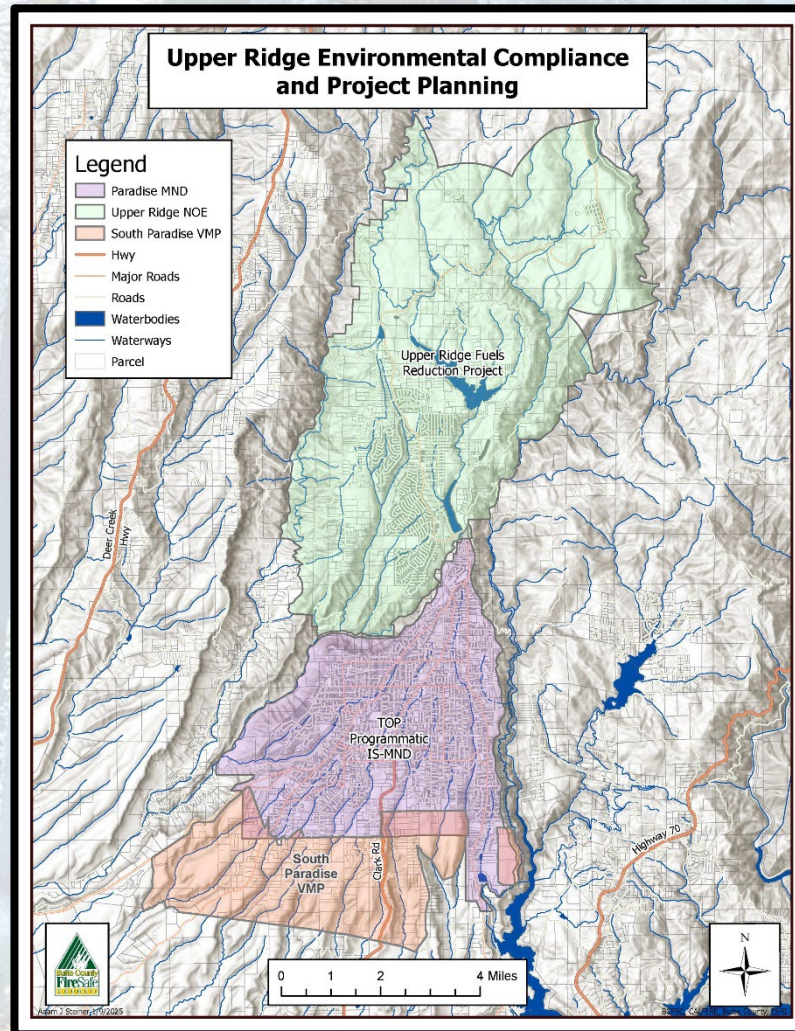
**FIREWISE USA™**  
 Residents reducing wildfire risks



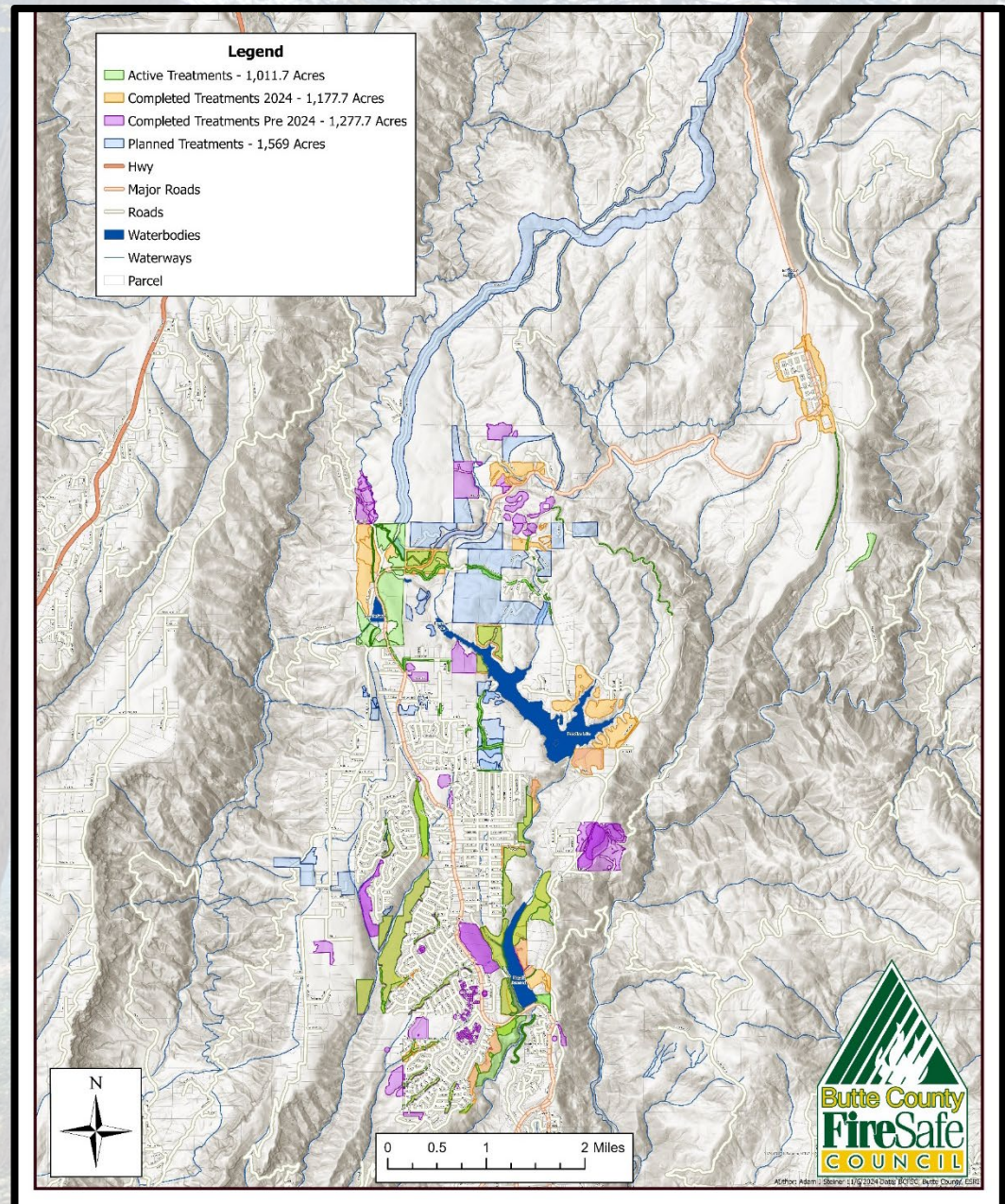
**Paradise, CA**

**April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

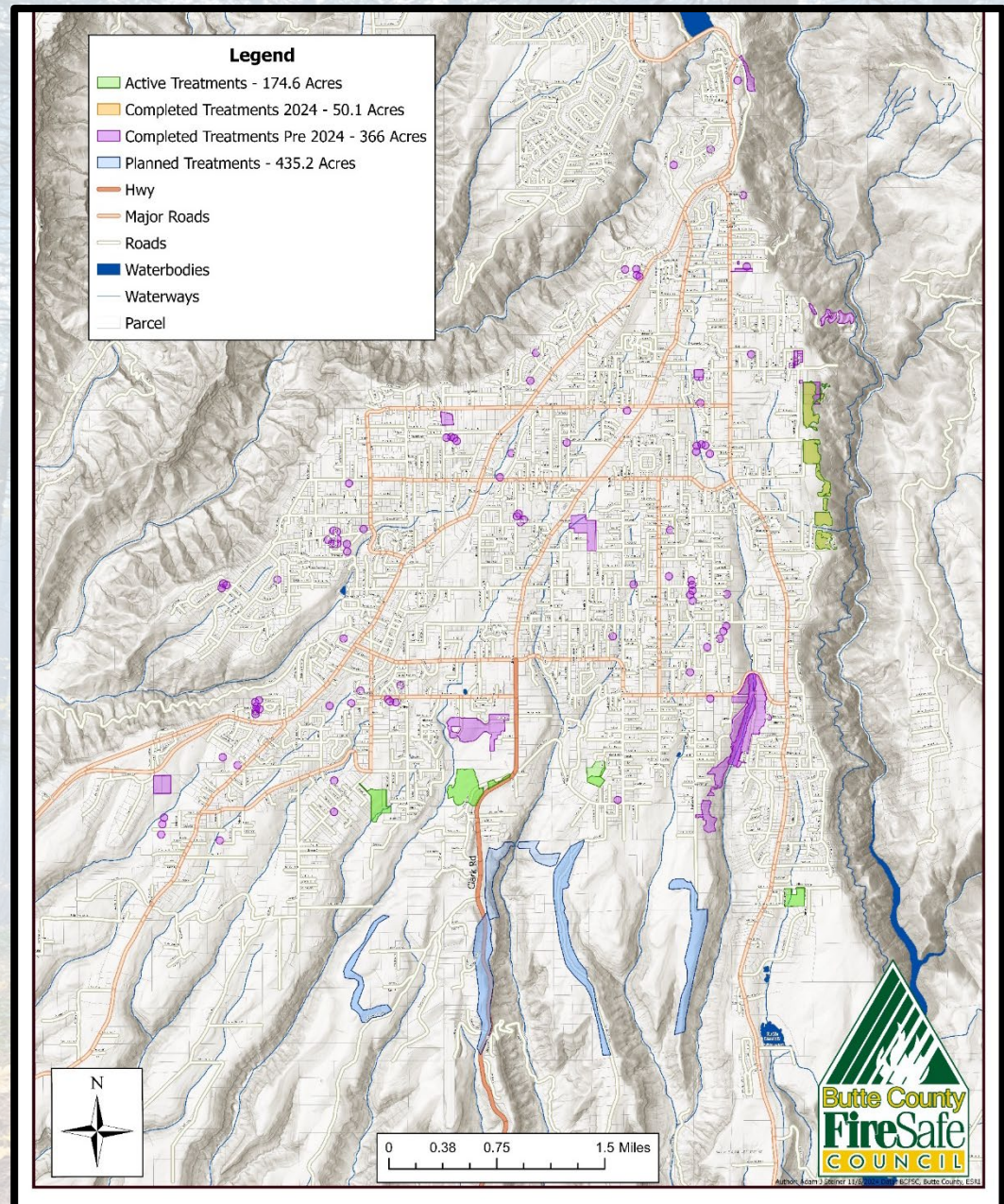
# Landscape Scale Projects



# BCFSC Projects: Magalia / Stirling City



# BCFSC Projects: Town of Paradise



# BCFSC: Active & Completed Projects

**20 Active Grants**

**50+ Active Projects**

**Total Acres Treated:**

**±3,500**

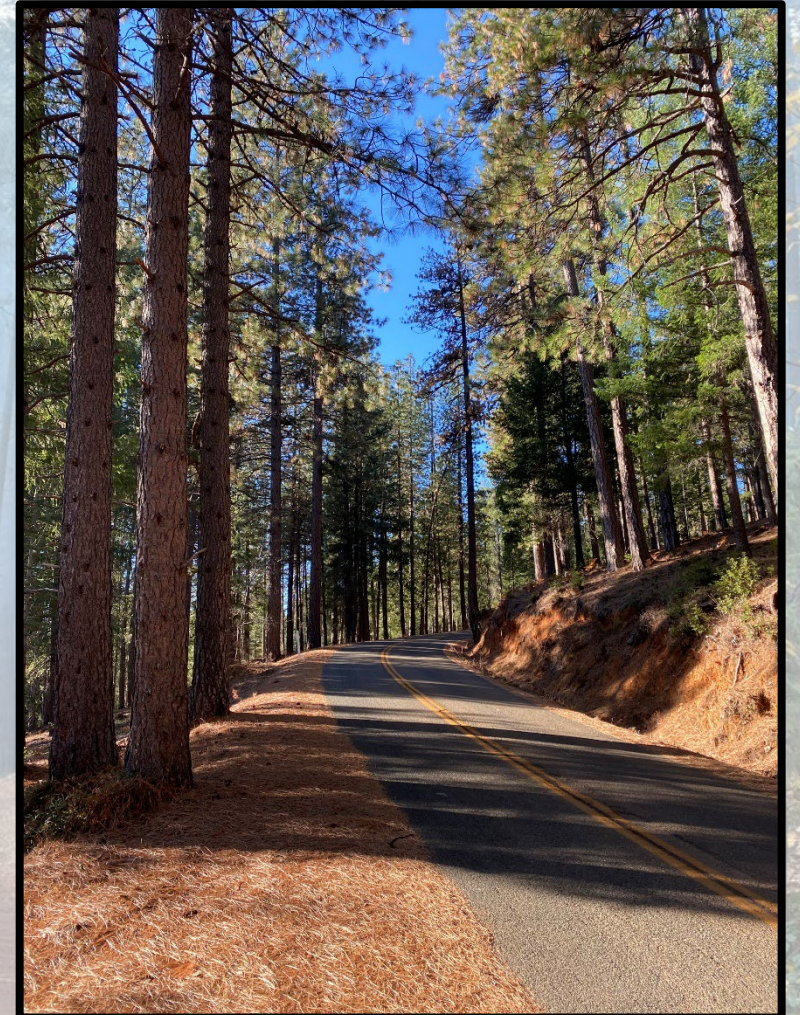


# How do we solve the problem?

**Utilize every tool in the toolbox**

**Back to average fire return interval of 10 years**

**Support landowners and collaboration for large, strategic fuel breaks – encourage land managers**





**Thank You!**

