

2016
SHASTA COUNTY
COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

FRENCH GULCH
(UPPER CLEAR CREEK)
PLANNING AREA



Covering the community of:

- French Gulch

**FRENCH GULCH (UPPER CLEAR CREEK)
PLANNING AREA
(2016)**

I. PROPOSED PROJECTS

A. THE PLANNING AREA

The French Gulch (Upper Clear Creek) planning area includes the watershed of Upper Clear Creek, the community of French Gulch and surrounding rural residential areas occupying about 800 acres between French Gulch and Big Gulch. French Gulch is the only ‘town’ in the watershed and is a historic mining area with approximately 650 residents. Land ownership is approximately 67% public and 33% private, including Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) lands and other private land ownership..

The Upper Clear Creek/French Gulch Watershed is located approximately 16 miles west of the City of Redding, California and 235 miles north of San Francisco. Upper Clear Creek is component of the Upper Sacramento River Basin (Hydrologic Unit Code 18020112) and is an important tributary of the Sacramento River. It flows into Whiskeytown Reservoir and then ultimately into the Sacramento River. The watershed is about 35 miles long, ranges from five to 12 miles wide, and covers a total area of about 249 square miles or approximately 127,916 acres. The watershed can be reached from the east and west, along State Highway 299, the major two-lane highway connecting Weaverville and Redding.

The topography of this watershed is steep, with elevations from 976 to 6,209 feet, draining into Upper Clear Creek and flowing into Whiskeytown Reservoir, from which Lower Clear Creek flows to the Sacramento River. The watershed has remained relatively undeveloped over time and is a high quality water supply for the Central Valley Project, which supplies water throughout the state. Vegetative communities include grasslands, chaparral, mixed conifer-hardwood, mixed fir, mixed oak woodland, mixed pine, and wet meadow/marsh. Two sensitive plant species have been found in the planning area: Howell’s alkali grass (*Puccinellia howellii*) and Canyon Creek stonecrop (*Sedum paradisum*).

B. PROJECT PRIORITIES

FRENCH GULCH (UPPER CLEAR CREEK) PLANNING AREA FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS				
PROPOSED PROJECT	MAP NUMBER¹	TYPE	AREA (acres)	ESTIMATED COST²
Niagra Street	1	Fuelbreak	18	\$132,909
Lower Trinity Mtn. Road	2	Fuelbreak	87	\$637,964
Middle Trinity Mtn. Road	3	Fuelbreak	70	\$513,915
East Fork Road	4	Fuelbreak	85	\$620,242
French Gulch School	5	Fuelbreak	12	\$88,606
Highland Ridge Road	6	Fuelbreak	15	\$106,327
Upper-Middle Trinity Mountain Road	7	Fuelbreak	53	\$389,867
Dutch Gulch	8	Fuelbreak	22	\$159,491
Summit Gulch	9	Fuelbreak	56	\$407,588
Upper Trinity Mtn. Road	10	Fuelbreak	48	\$354,424
Trinity Mtn. Road (West)	11	Maintenance	124	\$903,782
Meisner Ranch	12	Maintenance	15	\$106,327
Drunken Gulch	13	Maintenance	17	\$124,048
Cline Gulch Road	14	Maintenance	51	\$372,145

The identified fuel reduction projects fall into two categories:

1. defensible space for homes and structures, and
2. roadside and ridgeline shaded fuelbreaks intended to create safe ingress and egress for fire personnel and escape routes for residents.

Projects were prioritized based on need and factors such as the following:

- Protection of private residences and properties;
- Access or escape route for the public and fire suppression forces;
- Identification of staging areas in conjunction with the fuelbreak development to provide fire suppression forces strategic locations for planning fire management and suppression actions.
- Connections to other fuelbreaks or areas of lower risk.

Landowners and residents are strongly encouraged to develop defensible space or maintain the fuels reduction projects on their properties to keep the integrity of the work done and to show project sustainability which could lead to additional future projects.

¹ Proposed projects are numbered on the map according to priority.

² Estimated costs of the projects are for planning purposes only. More accurate costs will be determined for the preparation of project proposals.

FRENCH GULCH PLANNING AREA BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ³	
Estimated cost of fuelbreak (roadside)	\$5,220 per acre
Estimated cost of fuelbreak (ridgetop or off-road)	\$7,310 per acre
Estimated cost of defensible space (hand labor)	\$600 per dwelling (<1 acre)
Standard fuelbreak width	200 feet
Population	2.6 per dwelling
Property Value (~ \$201,250 - \$475,000 per dwelling)	\$260,000
Schools	\$145,000,000
Commercial Structures Value ⁴	\$415,500 – \$23,900,000
Power line	\$250,000/mile

#1 – Niagra Street

- Threat of wildfire moving from the west into the town of French Gulch;
- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, dense fuels, and steep terrain;
- Protects residential property, Main Street, and a water tower; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks from French Gulch Road north behind the cemetery to Niagra Street.

0.8 miles long x 200 feet across = 18 acres



Niagra Street Fuelbreak: Looking south from Niagra Street.

³ Estimated costs of the projects are for planning purposes only. More accurate costs will be determined for the preparation of project proposals.

⁴ County assessed values, 2010

#2 – Lower Trinity Mountain Road

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks near Lower Trinity Mountain Road from Highway 299 to County Park.

3.6 miles long x 200 feet across = 87 acres



Lower Trinity Mtn. Rd.: Looking north. Note dead and down fuel from 2004 French Fire

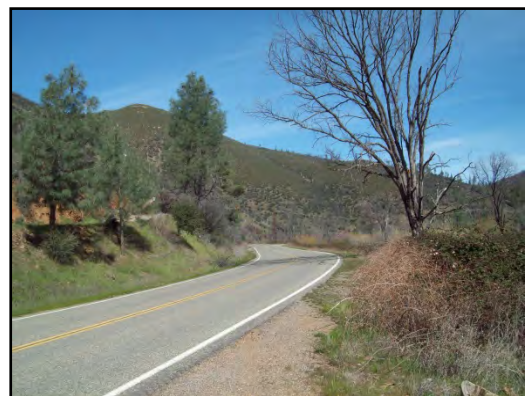
#3 – Middle Trinity Mountain Road

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks along Middle Trinity Mountain Road from County Park to Trinity Mountain Road # 2 fuelbreak.

2.9 miles long x 200 feet across = 70 acres.



Middle Trinity Mountain Road

#4 – East Fork Road

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Maintain shaded fuelbreaks on the BLM lands along East Fork Road
3.5 miles long x 200 feet across = 85 acres



*East Fork Road.
BLM land between two private parcels.*

#5 – French Gulch School

- Threat of wildfire to the French Gulch School and nearby residences
- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks across the road from the French Gulch Elementary School.
0.5 miles long x 200 feet across = 12 acres.



French Gulch School Fuelbreak

#6 – Highland Ridge Road

- Poor fire ingress and the threat of wildfire to residences along Highland Ridge Road;
- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks east of Highland Ridge Road.
0.6 miles long x 200 feet wide = 15 acres.



Highland Ridge Fuelbreak: Note extremely dense chaparral and conifers

#7 – Upper-Middle Trinity Mountain Road

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Maintain shaded fuelbreak near Trinity Mountain Road and north of French Gulch.
2.2 miles long x 200 feet across = 53 acres

#8 – Dutch Gulch Ridge

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks along the east ridge of Dutch Gulch Ridge.
0.9 miles long x 200 feet = 22 acres



*Dutch Gulch Ridgetop Fuelbreak.
Note the extensive chaparral.*

#9 – Summit Gulch

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks along the top of the east ridge of Summit Gulch.
2.3 miles long x 200 feet = 56 acres



Summit Gulch, Northwest end



*Summit Gulch. Ridgetop along which
fuelbreak would be constructed*

#10 – Upper Trinity Mountain Road

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects residential subdivisions and mobile home park; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks near the upper part of Trinity Mountain Road. 2.0 miles long x 200 feet = 48 acres



*Upper Trinity Mountain Road.
Note the brush and trees to edge of road*

#11 – Trinity Mountain Road West

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks near the upper reaches of Trinity Mountain Road . 5.1 miles long x 200 feet across = 124 acres.



*Trinity Mountain Road West.
Note the thick brush and trees to road edge.*

#12 – Meisner Ranch

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks near Highland Ridge, off of Highland Ridge Road. 0.6 miles long x 200 feet across = 15 acres.

#13 – Drunken Gulch

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks near Drunken Gulch and Clear Creek. 0.7 miles long x 200 feet across = 17 acres.

#14 – Cline Gulch Road

- Vulnerable to wind-driven wildfires, fuels accumulation, and steep terrain;
- Protects rural residences; and
- Provides emergency ingress/egress.

Proposed Solution:

Construct shaded fuelbreaks near Cline Gulch Road.

2.1 miles long x 200 feet across = 51 acres.

II. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

A. OVERALL COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

FRENCH GULCH PLANNING AREA OVERALL COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT													
Community, structure or area at risk	Map Number	Fuel Hazard	Wildfire Occurrence Risk	Structural Ignitability	Preparedness Capability	Overall Risk	Fire Hazard Severity Zone Rating	WUI					
Niagra Street	1	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Lower-Trinity Mountain Road	2	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Middle-Trinity Mountain Road	3	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
East Fork Road	4	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
French Gulch School	5	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Highland Ridge Road	6	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Upper-Middle Trinity Mountain Road	7	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Dutch Gulch	8	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Summit Gulch	9	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Upper-Trinity Mountain Road	10	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Trinity Mountain Road (west)	11	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Meisner Ranch	12	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Drunken Gulch	13	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					
Cline Gulch Road	14	High	High	High	Low	High	Very High	Yes					

B. OVERALL COMMUNITY HAZARD REDUCTION ASSESSMENT

FRENCH GULCH PLANNING AREA OVERALL COMMUNITY HAZARD REDUCTION ASSESSMENT					
Community, structure or area at risk	Map Number	Overall Risk	Cultural Value	Treatment Type	Treatment Method
Niagra Street	1	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Lower-Trinity Mountain Road	2	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Middle-Trinity Mountain Road	3	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
East Fork Road	4	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
French Gulch School	5	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Highland Ridge Road	6	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Upper-Middle Trinity Mountain Road	7	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Dutch Gulch	8	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Summit Gulch	9	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Upper-Trinity Mountain Road	10	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Trinity Mountain Road (west)	11	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Meisner Ranch	12	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Drunken Gulch	13	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning
Cline Gulch Road	14	High	Low	Fuelbreak	Brush and tree removal, pruning

III. COMMUNITY VALUES

RESIDENCES AND MAJOR STRUCTURES

French Gulch is nestled in the valley of the Upper Clear Creek Watershed. About 250 homes and 650 people make up the community of French Gulch and the surrounding area. Major structures include the store, post office, hotel, school, and bar.



The French Gulch General Store is next to the post office. The general store was the only retail outlet in the village but is now closed.



Modern day French Gulch is home to the historic French Gulch Hotel, established in 1885. The hotel has seven rooms and functions as a bed and breakfast.



Directly across the street from the hotel is a bar called E. Franck & Co., known to the locals as Johnnie's. Like the hotel, this is one of the remaining historical buildings in French Gulch.



MAPS OF FRENCH GULCH PLANNING AREA

1. FRENCH GULCH PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PLANNING AREA
2. FIRE SEVERITY RATING
3. VEGETATION
4. SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES AND HABITAT

French Gulch CWPP Fuels Projects

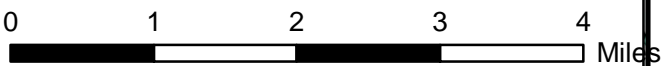
Legend

Projects

-  Proposed
-  Complete

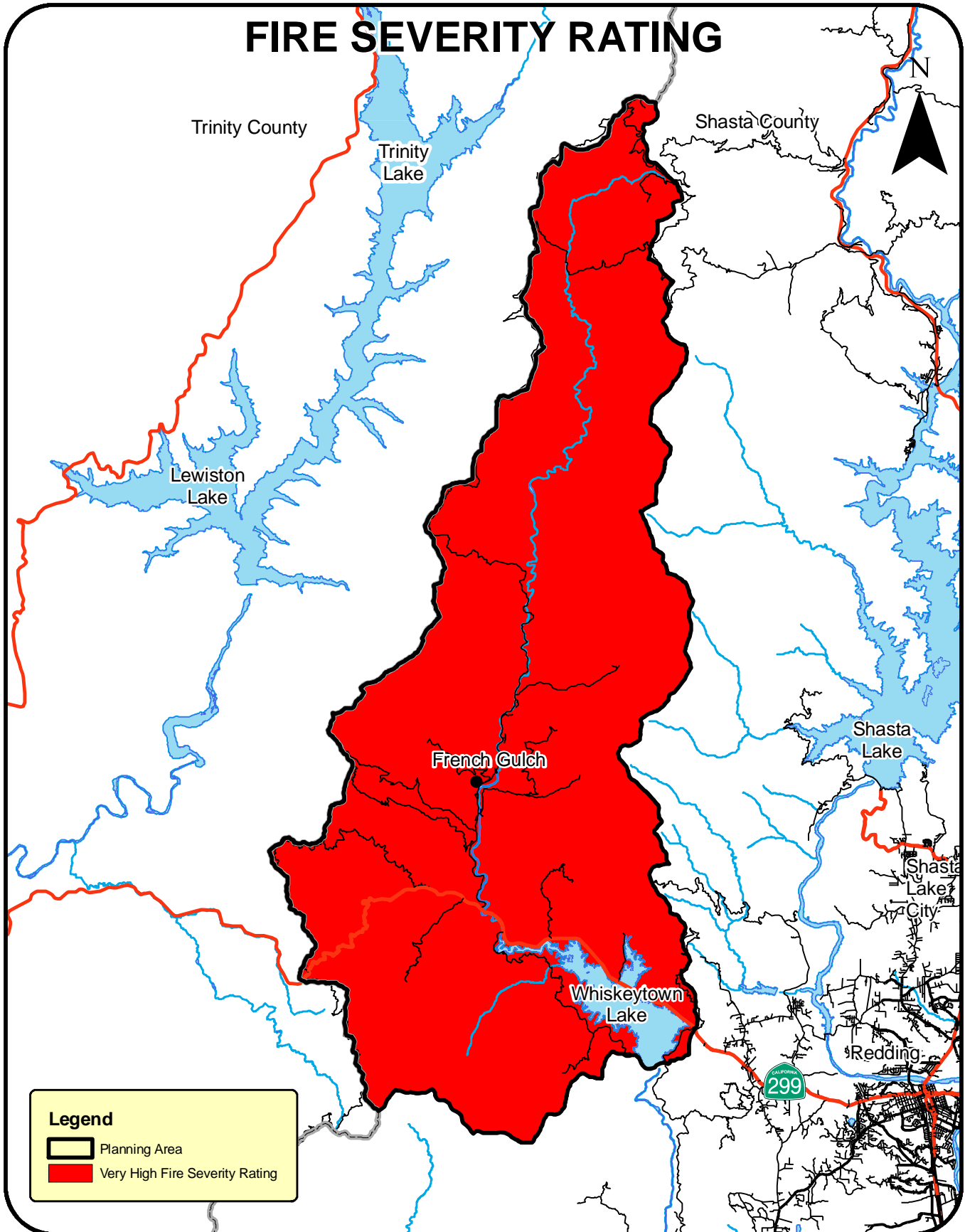


Priority	Project Name
1	Niagra Street
2	Lower Trinity Mtn Rd
3	Middle Trinity Mtn Rd
4	East Fork Rd
5	French Gulch School
6	Highland Ridge Rd
7	Upper-Middle Trinity Mtn Rd
8	Dutch Gulch
9	Summit Gulch
10	Upper Trinity Mt Rd
11	Trinity Mt Road West
12	Meisner Ranch FB
13	Drunken Gulch
14	Cline Gulch Rd FB



MAP 2

FIRE SEVERITY RATING

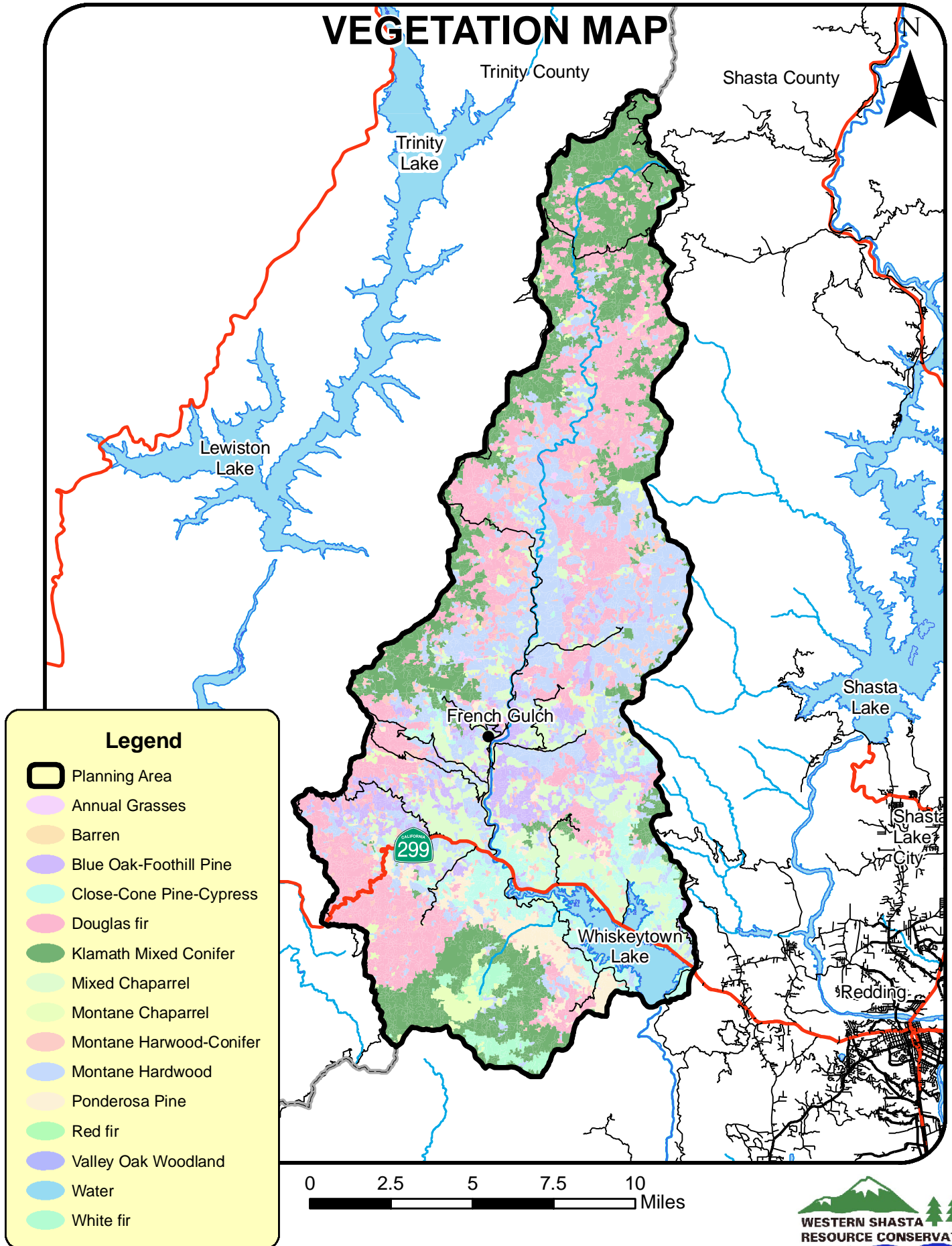


VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE
as Recommended by CAL FIRE



MAP 3

VEGETATION MAP



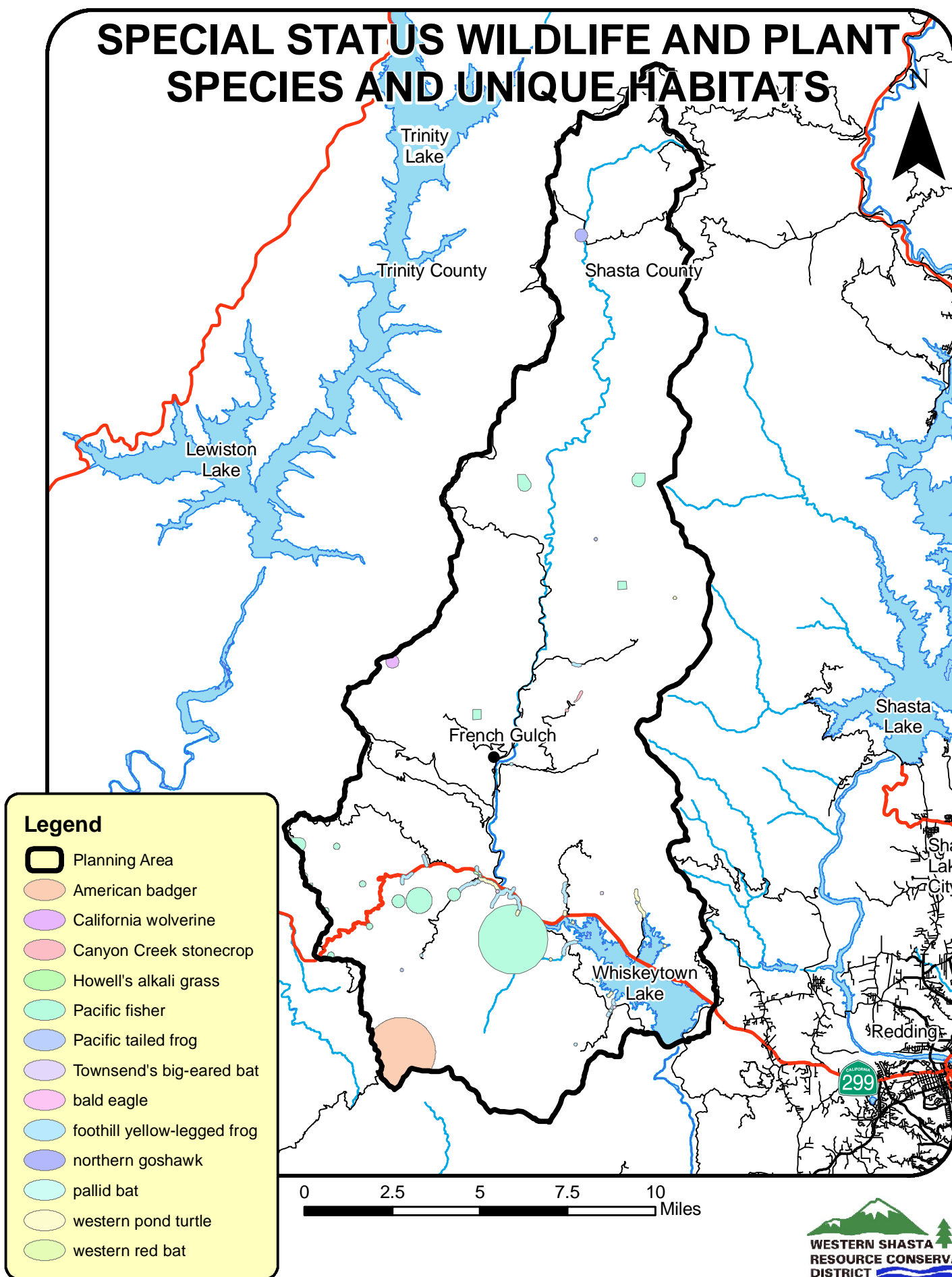
Legend

- Planning Area
- Annual Grasses
- Barren
- Blue Oak-Foothill Pine
- Close-Cone Pine-Cypress
- Douglas fir
- Klamath Mixed Conifer
- Mixed Chaparral
- Montane Chaparral
- Montane Harwood-Conifer
- Montane Hardwood
- Ponderosa Pine
- Red fir
- Valley Oak Woodland
- Water
- White fir

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles

MAP 4

SPECIAL STATUS WILDLIFE AND PLANT SPECIES AND UNIQUE HABITATS



Department Name: Shasta County Board of Supervisors
Agreement Number: FAF-040020
Dollar Amount: \$53,500