



Sequoia Lake VTP



CAL FIRE FORESTER I
JERROLD SHARP

&

CAL FIRE BIOLOGIST
NICOLAS MEYER



Slide 1

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Meyer, Nicolas@CALFIRE, 6/29/2022

Agenda

Context of the Sequoia Lake VTP

Putting the PSA Together

Agency Notification

PSA Challenges and Resolutions

Other CEQA Pathways





Sequoia Lake VTP

Background



Summary

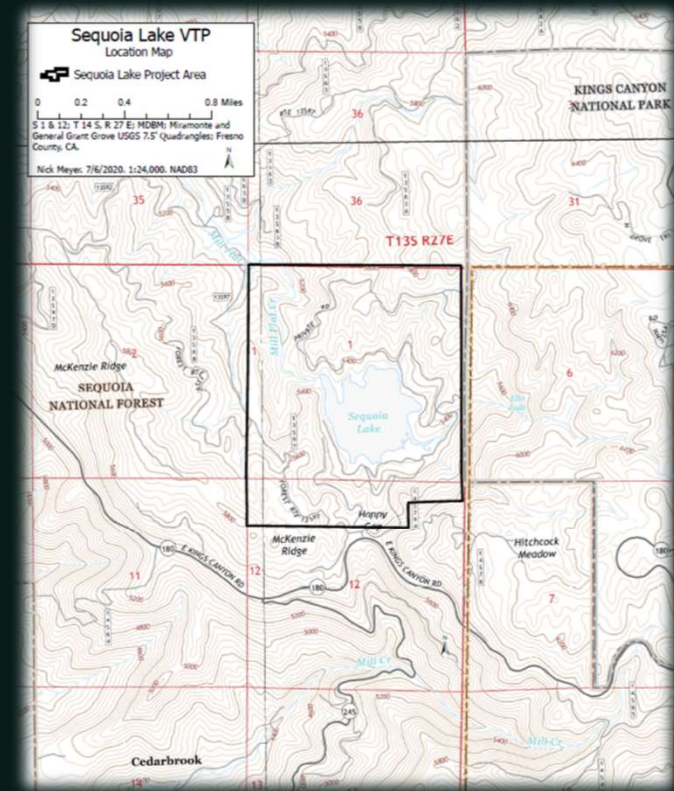
- Location of the Sequoia Lake project
- History of the Sequoia Lake project
- Land use of the Sequoia Lake Property
- Fire History
- Land Managment



Location of the Sequoia Lake Project

Located in the southern Sierra Nevada mountain range

- Approx. 1 ½ hours East of Fresno
- Adjacent to Kings Canyon National Park
- Bowl around a lake
- Elevation/slope/etc.
 - 5,120-5,840'
 - Slopes 0-75%, 40% on average
 - All aspects present
 - Generally steep and variable, many ridges and draws oriented towards the lake



The History of the Sequoia Lake Project Area

History

- Native Americans
 - *Western Mono*
 - *Evidence of seasonal use—fishing, hunting, food processing*
 - *Significant site—pictographs, bedrock mortars,*
- Millwood boomtown
 - *Logging/milling begins 1850s*
 - *Serious commercial logging begins 1889*
 - Large sawmill, lake constructed
 - Sanger flume-54 miles
 - Resort town
 - Abandoned by 1909
- Vacation Destination



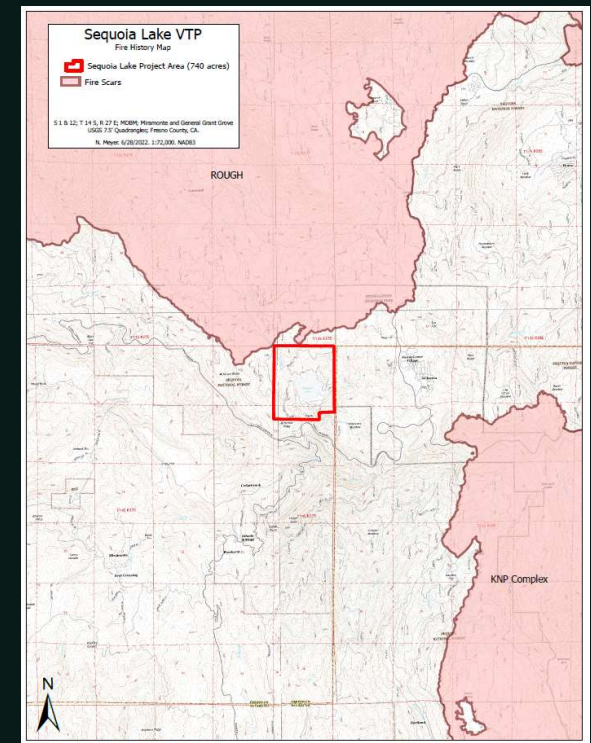
Land use of the Sequoia Lake Property

- YMCA summer camps
 - *Camp has been in use by YMCA since 1914, owned since 1922*



Fire History

- 2015 Rough Fire
- 2021 KNP complex came close, didn't enter property
- CAL FIRE prescribed broadcast burns



Past and Present Land Management of Sequoia Lake

- Management
 - NTMP
 - *Selection/salvage*
 - Mostly salvage around camp infrastructure
 - VMP
 - Reedley College



Sequoia Lake VTP

Putting the PSA
Together



Summary

- Context behind VTP in FKU
- Project Description
- Treatable Landscape
- CEQA Checklist



Context behind VTPs in CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit

- Context
 - Our 2nd VTP
 - Shaver Ranch prepared 1st, approved 2nd due to Creek Fire
 - Had NTMP and VMP to draw from very early on in the VTP



Project Description

- As detailed but permissive as possible

8. Description of Project:

An active timber management program has kept this property relatively green during the drought and ensuing beetle epidemic. Despite these efforts, overstory mortality has left an abundance of snags, down large woody fuels, and brush patches within the project area.

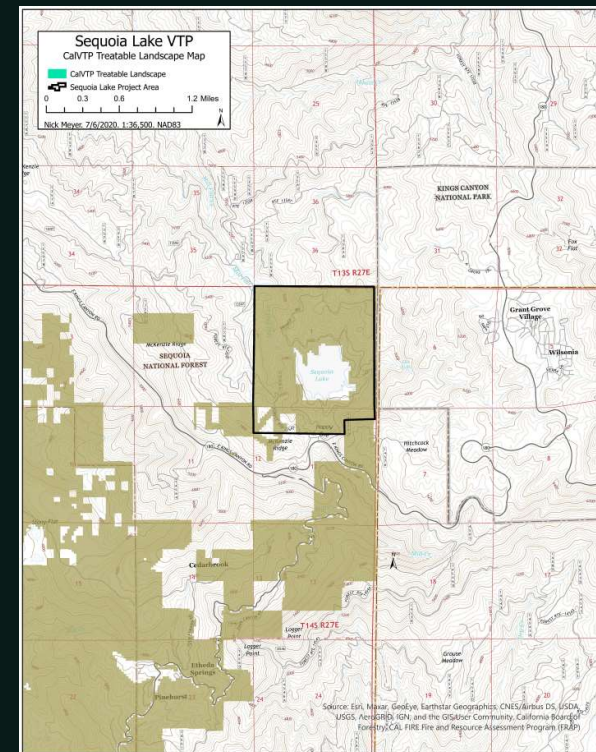
Broadcast burning is planned to occur throughout the project area. An understory burn of low intensity is expected to accomplish the following:

- Consume surface fuels in the form of slash, litter, duff, and low vegetation.
- Thin understory vegetation.
- Create heterogenous structure by leaving patches of unburned vegetation throughout the burn area.

Manual treatments are expected to occur over the entire project area at varying levels of intensity. Manual treatments will be used both as a stand-alone treatment and as an accompaniment to

Treatable Landscape

- How we determine if a project is going to require a VTP or other CEQA level document
- Justified use of VTP despite appearing non-treatable in viewer
 - *Mapping error—conditions substantially similar...*



CEQA Checklist

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

- More necessary than appears
 - State Scenic Highway
- SPR NOI-1—FCO ordinances
- FCO land use ordinances & zoning

READ PEIR CLOSLEY

- Air quality—CAAQS/NAAQS thresholds, toxic air contaminants/smoke
 - Will result in these adverse effects, but those have been analyzed in the PEIR and are permissible.
 - I had no idea what the hell until I read the PEIR.
- Ditto for Impact NOI-2. SENLs? Doesn't matter.
- Transportaion—Increase in VMTs inevitable but examined in PEIR

CEQA Checklist Cont...

DRAWING ON PREVIOUS WORK

- Archaeology
 - NTMP Arch Report
- Geology/hydrology
 - SPR HYD-4—Watercourse classification from NTMP
- Department/company policy
 - Hazardous materials, APCD communication, SPR AQ-6
 - HAZ SPRs—Department policy and PRC
- Biology
 - Past VMP and NTMP

FPRS AS BMPS

- SPR HAZ-4
- SPR HYD-4
 - Testing the waters—Can I cross a creek with equipment?
- SPR GEO-7

CEQA Checklist Cont...

ITEMS THAT TOOK THE MOST WORK

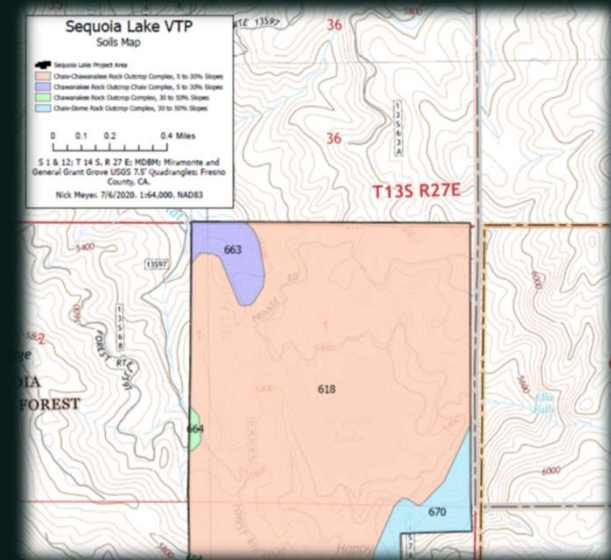
- Cultural resources
 - CAL FIRE arch report
 - Helpful information in NTMP arch, additional surveys required
 - Standards change
 - Records Check, notification letters, etc.
 - Dealing with archaeologist (?)
 - Looking up regulations (listed in PEIR?)
 - Not all info goes into PSA—confidentiality



CEQA Checklist Cont...

ITEMS THAT TOOK THE MOST WORK

- *Hydro & Geology*
 - Even though mostly covered under previous documents, still took field time to ground-truth



CEQA Checklist Cont...

ITEMS THAT TOOK THE MOST WORK

- Biological Analysis
 - Desktop Scoping
 - Utilize Databases
 - CNDDDB ArcGIS Layer
 - Rarefind 5 – 9 quad search
 - Ecos
 - Sierra Nevada Ecoregion Species List

Summary Table Report
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Natural Diversity Database

Query Criteria: Quad=IS Miramonte (3611961)OR General Grant Grove (3611888)OR Shadequarter Mtn. (3611858)OR Giant Forest (3611857)OR Auckland (3611951)OR Verplank Ridge (3611971)OR Hume (3611878)OR Wren Peak (3611877)OR Muir Grove (3611867)

Name (Scientific/Common)	CNDDB Ranks	Listing Status (Fed/State)	Other Lists	Elev. Range (ft.)	Total EO's	Element Occ. Ranks						Population Status		Presence		
						A	B	C	D	X	U	Historic > 20 yr	Recent <= 20 yr	Extant	Poss. Extrap.	Extirp.
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i> Cooper's hawk	G5 S4	None None	CDFW_WL-Watch List IUCN_LC-Least Concern	4,400 4,400	118 S:1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i> northern goshawk	G5 S3	None None	BLM_S-Sensitive CDFW_S-Sensitive CDFW_SSC-Species of Special Concern IUCN_LC-Least Concern USFS_S-Sensitive	5,400 6,800	433 S:6	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	6	0	0
<i>Allium abramsii</i> Abrams' onion	G3 S3	None None	Rare Plant Rank - 1B.2	3,200 3,200	22 S:3	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	3	0	0
<i>Ammonitella yatesii</i> tight coin (=Yates' snail)	G1 S1	None None	IUCN_VU-Vulnerable	3,062 3,650	6 S:2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0
<i>Anniella pulchra</i> northern California legless lizard	G3 S3	None None	CDFW_SSC-Species of Special Concern USFS_S-Sensitive	6,400 6,400	375 S:1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
<i>Apodonta rufa californica</i> Sierra Nevada mountain beaver	G5T3T4 S2S3	None None	CDFW_SSC-Species of Special Concern	7,000 8,400	131 S:2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0

Biological Analysis Cont...

PLAN AND CONDUCT SURVEYS

- Ground Truth Desktop Analysis
- Plan Surveys around individual Species seasonality's
 - Map out habitat for targeted species surveys
 - Cluster surveys for species with the same seasonality to be more efficient
 - Always have binoculars and a camera if possible
- Write up Biological Analysis with findings and Avoidance / Mitigation Measures.



Pacific Fisher



Great Grey Owl



Northern Goshawk



Bald eagle



Sequoia Lake VTP

Agency Notification



Summary

- Solicit input from the agencies
- Share Biological Analysis
- Early and Often



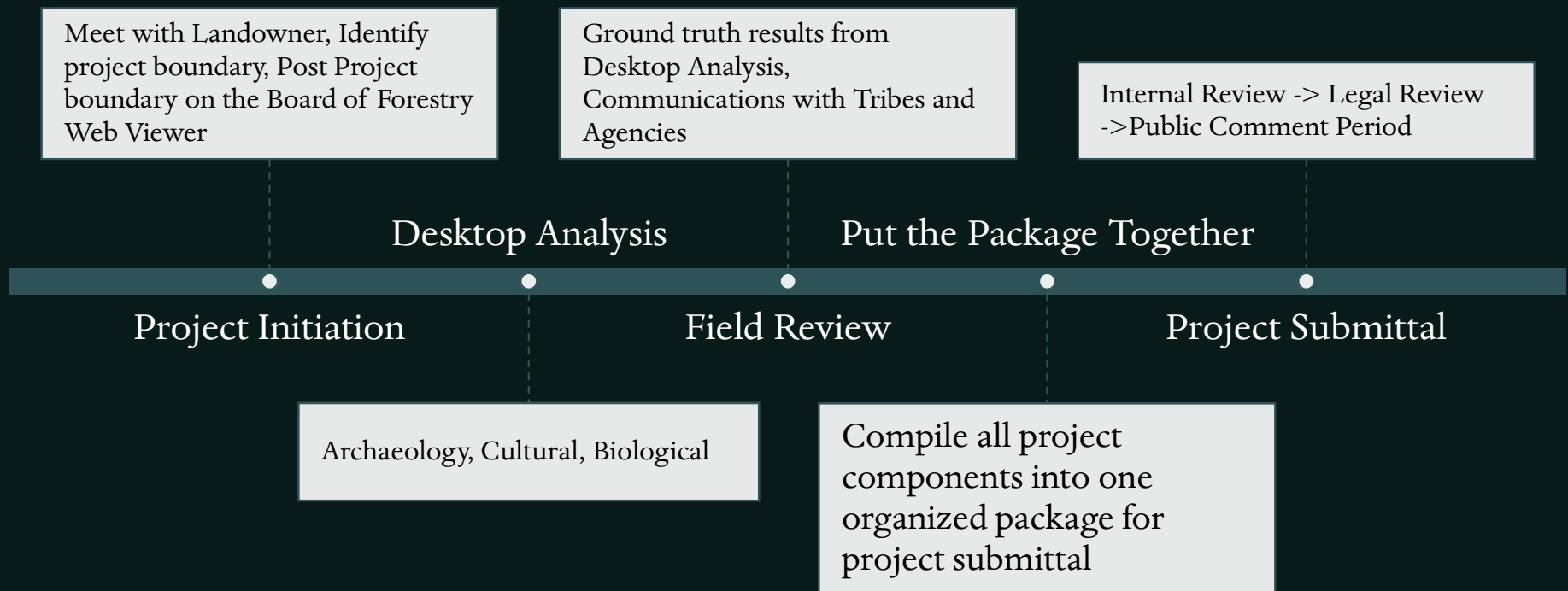
Agency Notification

COMMUNICATE WITH CDFW,
USFWS, USFS, AND RWQCB

- Early and Often...
- Share Biological Analysis
- Share the species lists generated during desktop analysis



Timeline for Project Approval





Sequoia Lake VTP

PSA

Challenges and Resolutions



Summary

This section will highlight some of the new challenges and resolutions to those challenges that were presented during the process of writing the PSA.



Challenges and Resolutions

- **Sacramento Feedback**

- Treatable Landscape error—can't just say “modeling error,” state explicitly that a site visit confirmed
- Highway 180 designated scenic highway—didn't know that, there's always something
- Attempted to be too broad in selection of heavy equipment to use
- Sac is learning too—some corrections ended up being unnecessary upon further examination
 - *Speaks to sheer volume of information in the PEIR and PSA*





Sequoia Lake VTP

Other CEQA Pathways



Summary

This section will Compare and Contrast CAL FIRE's additional CEQA pathways for habitat restoration and fuel reduction projects;

- VMP (Vegetation Management Plan)
- CEQA NOE (Notice of Exemption)
- Exemptions/Emergencies
- Timber Harvest Plan



Vegetation Management Program (VMP) vs. CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE)

V M P

- Valid for 10 Years.
- For large areas which have not experienced heavy disturbance.
- Used when a project is not within the CalVTP Treatable Landscape
 - Grassland
 - Oak woodland

N O E

- Do not Expire.
- For small projects
- Can be used for larger areas already disturbed

Timber Harvest Documents

EXEMPTIONS / EMERGENCIES

- Simpler, narrower in scope
- Requires removal of overstory commercial species
- Permits broadcast burning as a form of slash disposal (?)

Timber Harvest Documents Cont...

TIMBER HARVEST PLAN

- Requires slightly more time and effort
 - Similar, but more background info required since THP has no program element
 - Analysis of alternatives, cumulative effects, etc.
- Operational document (logging plan)
 - RPF's word is literally law

Thank you

