



Is a PWP right for me?

The Public Works Plan Journey

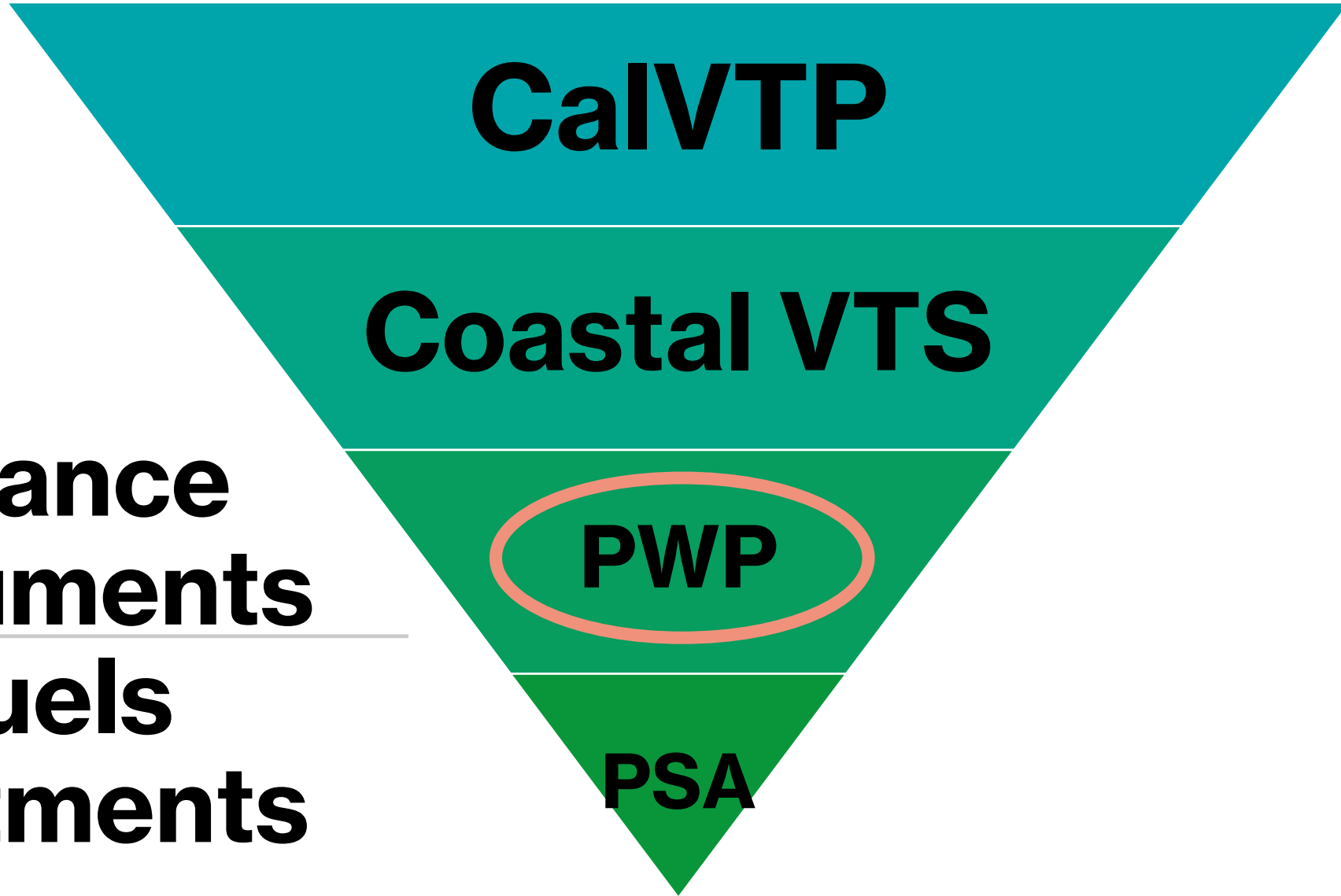
What is a Public Works Plan (PWP)?

Does my area require one?

How do I develop one?

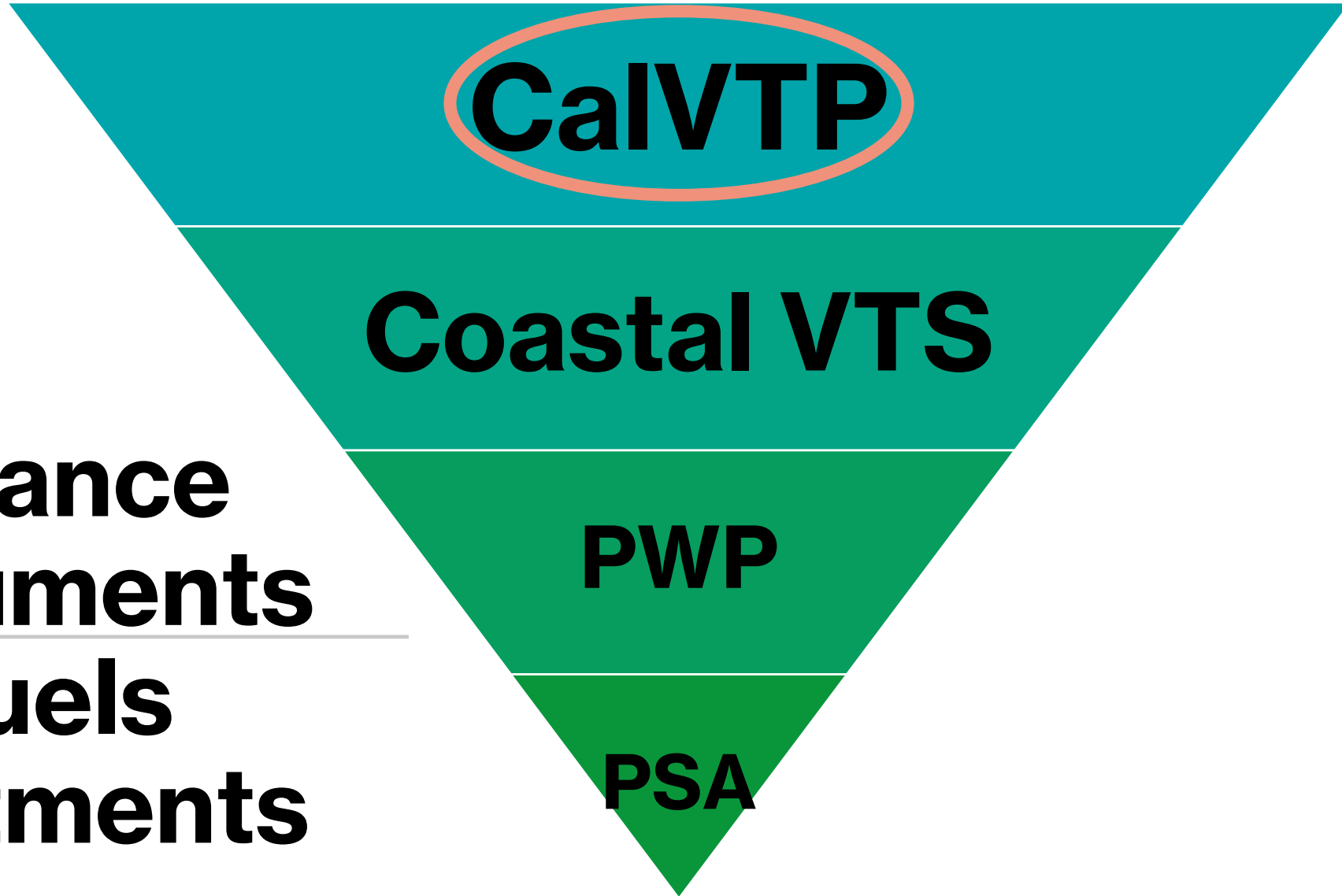


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Why the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP)?

- CalVTP is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report developed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection for vegetation treatment activities and associated environmental protections to reduce the risk of loss of lives and property, reduce fire suppression costs, restore ecosystems, and protect natural resources as well as other assets at risk from wildfire.



CalVTP Treatment Types

- **Ecological Restoration:** Focus on restoring ecosystem processes, conditions, and resiliency by moderating uncharacteristic wildland fuel conditions to reflect historic vegetative composition, structure, and habitat value.
- **WUI Fuel Reduction:** Located in WUI-designated areas, fuel reduction would generally consist of strategic vegetation removal to prevent or slow the spread of non-wind-driven wildfire between structures and wildlands.
- **Fire Prevention/Fuel Breaks:** In strategic locations, fuel breaks remove flammable vegetation to slow wildfire spread, create a staging area for safe firefighting efforts, and provide ingress and egress during a wildfire incident. Fuel breaks result in zones of significantly less-dense vegetation.



Approved Activities under CalVTP PEIR/PWP



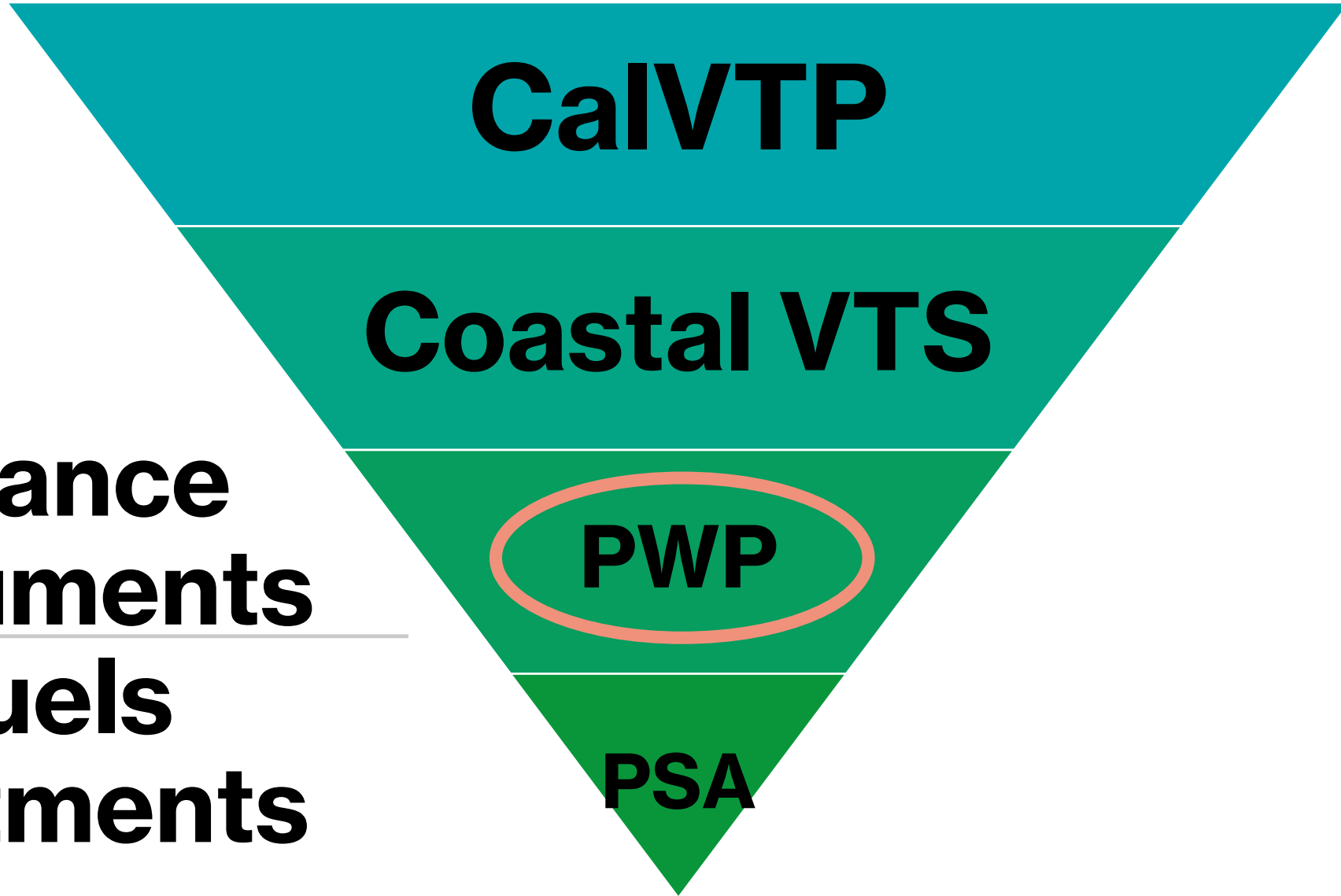
Manual Treatment:	This treatment focuses on the use of hand tools and hand-held power tools to remove target vegetation.
Mechanical Treatment:	This treatment type focuses on the use of motorized equipment to cut, uproot, crush/compact, or chop existing vegetation.
Prescribed Burning:	The application of low-intensity fire onto target vegetation for purposes of ecological restoration and fuel reduction.
Prescribed Herbivory:	This treatment utilizes domestic livestock such as goats, cattle, or sheep to reduce height and density of vegetation.
Herbicide Application:	Herbicides are applied through ground application methods and used to target specific invasive species.

CaIVTP PEIR: SPRs and PSA Checklist

- Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) have the same legal weight as traditional mitigation measures spanning CEQA resource categories including visual, biological, hydrology, etc.
- Function as a “menu” of protection measures and mitigation measures to ensure impacts from projects implemented under the PEIR are reduced to a less than significant level.
- Each singular project developed under the PEIR will have a Project Specific Analysis (PSA)
- PSA checklist is a modified CEQA Initial Study



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California's Coastal Zone





Coastal Zone Compliance

Problem

- Barriers to implementing forest health and fuels management projects in the Coastal Zone while protecting and enhancing coastal resources. Key barriers are cost, labor/equipment, and compliance/permits.

Solution

- While efforts are underway to address all these barriers at the state level, Resource Conservation Districts have worked with partners to develop Public Works Plans to pilot a local solution to meet the immediate need for compliance with the Coastal Act and LCP.

Public Works Plan – What is it?

Alternative to Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) for programmatic approval of large or phased public works projects

Alternative to project-by-project review of public works that would otherwise require multiple coastal development permits (CDP) for different components

More efficient, saving time and money (*no fees and expedited, 30-day approval*)

Voluntary, an alternative to individual project Coastal Development Permit when they are otherwise required

An **immediate** opportunity to enable increased pace and scale of project implementation within the existing legal framework.



Public Works Plan – What it is NOT

- **NOT** a new legal mandate or new regulation
- **DOES NOT** affect existing exemptions (*If the project does not trigger a CDP, it is still exempt*)
- **NOT** a new requirement, applicants can still choose to utilize traditional CDP process or Timber Harvest Plan for LCP/Coastal Act Compliance.
- **NOT** an exemption from Coastal Act or LCP





CalVTP

Coastal VTS

PWP

PSA

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Coastal Vegetation Treatment Standards (CVTS)

- Developed collaboratively with the California Coastal Commission, Santa Cruz and San Mateo RCDs, State Parks, CalFire, County Planning, SLO Fire Safe Council, and ARC.
- Purpose: provide additional guidance within the CalVTP
- PEIR PSA process to enable Commission staff to “approve” the project as **consistent with LCPs and compliant with the Coastal Act.**
- Require project designer to develop and articulate vegetation treatment activities through an ecological lens (goals, trajectory, natural associations, hierarchy, etc.)
Ecologically Restorative treatments.

Coastal VTS: Vegetation Removal Hierarchy

- Thinning and removal of dead, dying and diseased foliage, shrubs (except that some snags should be retained to provide wildlife shelter, dens, etc.);
- Removal of invasive species; and
- Removal of native species that are not listed as endangered, threatened, rare, or otherwise especially valuable,

*End goal is to have projects designed and implemented, when and where it is possible, to result in an **appropriate species composition** with a mix of vegetation age classes, heights and densities.*



Why the Resource Conservation District?

- RCD's have experienced the barriers to permitting in the coastal zone
- The RCD, as a special district, is considered by the state a “**public works entity**”, CAL FIRE and local FireSafe Councils do not have this designation and therefore are currently not eligible to apply for a PWP.
- Grantors, partner agencies, and landowners have also identified this need
- Decades of experience in permit coordination/streamlining
- Any Special District is eligible to apply for a PWP.

Original PWP development process/timeline

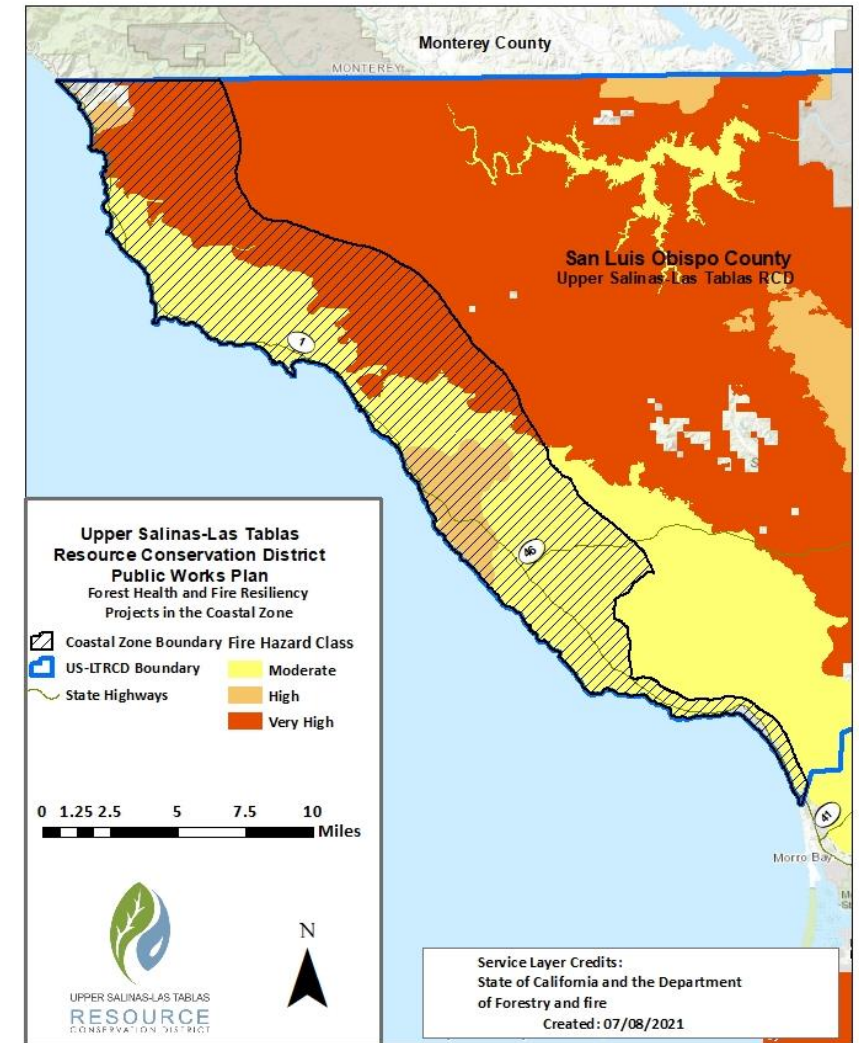
- October 2020 – April 2021 (8+) Advisory Group Meetings (to leverage the Cal VTP and develop a programmatic companion to enable streamlined compliance with the CA Coastal Act - develop **Coastal Vegetation Treatment Standards**, advise on PWP)
 - Santa Cruz County and San Mateo RCDs, Coastal Commission, Cal Fire, State Parks, County Planning Departments (Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties), Technical advisors (Alnus Ecological, consulting forester, others)
- Santa Cruz and San Mateo RCDs Adopt PWP June 2021
- California Coastal Commission (CCC) Accepts PWPs for both counties July 2021
- Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD PWP approved and adopted by the CCC Oct 2021

PWP Program Area

Area where projects/activities would be eligible to utilize the PWP.

Project/activities in the Program Area are NOT required to use the PWP for LCP compliance (i.e. if exempt, if under a THP, or other).

Only applies to this specific District, not County-wide.
Approx. 93,000 ac.



Potential Project Types: Forest Health

- Forest Health projects to restore and enhance ecosystems, including preventing fire behavior to which the ecosystem is not adapted. Forest Health projects provide ecological benefits and improve the habitat's fire resiliency, including within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs).
- Can include projects that are categorized through the CalVTP as Ecological Restoration, Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), and in some cases, Fuel Break activities (for shaded fuel breaks).



Potential Project Types: Fire Prevention

- Fire Prevention projects while designed to protect ecosystems as much as feasible, include a level of vegetation removal that may adversely impact ESHAs to assure protection of existing structures or infrastructure including roads.
- Fire Prevention projects include CalVTP WUI Fuel Reduction and Fuel Break activities that could have adverse impacts on ESHAs but are designed to reduce the likelihood of significant and long-term impacts from catastrophic wildfire.





Writing and Approval

- PWP should be developed with extensive input from county planning staff, Local Coastal Program (LCP) Staff if applicable, local CAL FIRE staff, State Parks, other local interested parties, and the California Coastal Commission
- Adoption of a PWP requires RCD board approval followed by CCC approval. Both must occur during public meetings with significant prior public notification completed under strict timelines.
- Detailed procedures for filing of the PWP and certification are specific and clear. Collaboration with CCC planning staff will facilitate this process. Use the guidelines employed by previously successful RCDs which have been detailed in their PWPs.



You're approved! On to projects

- The PWP details the process for developing a Project Specific Analysis (PSA) for individual projects under the PWP
- Monitoring for each PWP project shall occur consistent with all specified CalVTP monitoring requirements.
- 10-year lifespan
- 5 year programmatic review
- Details roles and responsibilities for monitoring and oversight

Have questions? Contact me.

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