

Responses to Pre-Proposal Field Meeting and Written Questions

Round Mountain Landscape Resilience Project – Phase 1, Fuels Reduction Contractor Services |
RFP No. YWI-RFP-2026-03

Posted September 25, 2026

About this document

The non-mandatory pre-proposal field meeting was held September 14, 2026. The questions raised at that meeting, and the written questions received through the question period, are answered below. Questions have been consolidated and reworded for clarity where several proposers asked the same thing.

Several of the answers change the work or correct the RFP. Those changes are made by **Addendum No. 1**, issued with this document, which attaches revised copies of the RFP body and of Exhibits B and C with the changes marked. Where an answer describes a change, the Addendum is the operative instrument. Proposers must acknowledge Addendum No. 1 and these responses on the Cost Proposal Form at Exhibit E.

The schedule is unchanged. Proposals remain due October 2, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time, by email to Theo Fitanides, Project Manager, theo@yubawatershedinstitute.org.

A. Scope and prescription

1. How many hazard trees will be felled by the separate contractor, and will the fuels contractor have to limb and process them?

Hazard trees along the corridor will be felled by a separate contractor under a separate agreement; felling is not part of this RFP. Up to 50 dead hazard trees will be felled and left in place, distributed approximately 60 percent within Bid Item 2, 30 percent within Bid Item 3, and 10 percent within Bid Item 1. About two-thirds of these snags have significant limbs remaining. Addendum No. 1 adds this information to Exhibit B, Section 2.

The fuels reduction contractor is responsible for limbing the felled trees and processing the tops, limbs, and trunk sections up to 10 inches in diameter, in the manner required for the Bid Item in which the tree lies: piled under Bid Item 1; moved to roadside, chipped, and hauled under Bid Item 2; and, under Bid Item 3, either masticated or hand cut and chipped with the tracked chipper, at the contractor's option, with the material left on site. Addendum No. 1 states this in Exhibit C, Section 2, and strikes the "(Optional add-on) Cut hazard trees" bullet, since felling is not this contractor's work. The cost of processing is included in the per-acre unit price for each Bid Item; there is no separate line item.

The Project Manager will coordinate the timing of the hazard tree felling with each contractor's work sequence under Exhibit B, Section 7.

2. Do the felled hazard tree logs need to be bucked?

Only as needed to lay flat on the ground. Exhibit C, Section 2 requires that downed wood greater than 10 inches in diameter be bucked to lay flat; that bullet is unchanged and applies to felled hazard tree boles. A bole that is already on the ground is left where it lies. A bole that is suspended is bucked only enough to bring it to the ground. Tops, limbs, and trunk sections up to 10 inches in diameter are processed as described in the preceding answer.

3. Pruning is required in the first 100 feet from the road. Is it also required in the second 100 feet?

Yes. Pruning of residual trees to 8 feet above the ground (or one-third of tree height, whichever is lower, and never below a 50 percent live crown ratio) is required under all three Bid Items. Exhibit C, Section 2 already applies this to all residual trees, but the Bid Item 1 and Bid Item 3 paragraphs of Exhibit B were silent on it. Addendum No. 1 adds the pruning requirement to Exhibit B, Sections 3 and 5 so that all three Bid Items read the same way.

4. When following the prescription, should the crew err toward cutting less or cutting more?

Neither. Follow Exhibit C as closely as possible. The prescription is a set of cut criteria and retention criteria applied tree by tree and patch by patch, not a general instruction to lean one way. Two patterns YWI has seen on past projects, and wants to avoid here, run in opposite directions:

- Leaving conifers at the top of the cut class. Conifers 10 inches DBH and under are to be cut unless they meet a retention criterion in Exhibit C, Section 3 (sugar pine, occasional thrifty young ponderosa pine in openings). A 9.5-inch incense-cedar is a cut tree. Crews have tended to leave these.
- Over-cutting in openings. Shrubs and small trees in openings that are not ladder fuels are to be left in irregular patches. From 15 to 200 feet of centerline the prescription calls for horizontal discontinuity in continuous shrub stands, not removal, and for retaining occasional young ponderosa pine and hardwoods in open areas. Crews have tended to strip these.

Within 15 feet of road centerline, all shrubs are cut except those meeting the retention criteria. The sample mark will be reviewed at the Worker Environmental Awareness Training, the Project Manager will inspect the first units closely, and the crew lead should ask the Project Manager when a situation is unclear rather than defaulting either way. Note that Addendum No. 1 revises several Exhibit C thresholds: the shrub band is now 15 feet from centerline (not 25), oaks and madrones are cut at 7 inches DBH and under (not 10), and retained hardwoods are spaced at about 15 feet (not 25).

5. Scotch broom: treat it or leave it?

Treat it. Scotch broom is handled as any other brush species under Exhibit C: cut it within 15 feet of road centerline, and cut it in the 15 to 200 foot band where it is a ladder fuel or forms a

continuous stand. Under Bid Items 1 and 2 it is piled or chipped with the other cut material. Under Bid Item 3 it may be masticated, provided the mastication head does not contact the soil or disturb the seedbed.

Dense infestations are a special case. Exhibit D, BIO-4 provides that weed-infested areas are flagged, that only hand tools (chainsaws, weed-eaters, weed wrenches, and similar) may be used within them, and that mechanical equipment stays 25 feet outside the flagged area. YWI will flag the dense broom infestations before work begins; the known ones are along the north section of Rock Creek Road, around the gated road on the north side, and at the Coyote Overlook Trail parking area. Elsewhere broom is lightly scattered and is treated with the surrounding brush. Clean equipment and hand tools of plant material and soil before leaving broom-infested areas and before moving to other parts of the project (Exhibit B, Section 5; Exhibit D, BIO-4).

6. Is poison oak a shrub that must be treated?

Treating poison oak is not required, and there are no restrictions on cutting it. If the Contractor chooses to cut poison oak, that is allowed.

7. What is the mastication specification?

The specification is the set of requirements in Exhibit B, Section 5 and Exhibit D, as amended by Addendum No. 1. In summary: average depth of chipped or masticated material not more than 4 inches, averaged over the unit; piece length less than 30 inches (added by Addendum No. 1); material not concentrated at the base of retained trees; a patchy mosaic that retains existing herbaceous and native grass cover (BIO-2); no material in aquatic buffers or on cultural resource sites; root mass and ground surface left intact (SW-2); and, as a YWI operating requirement, the mastication head is not to contact mineral soil. Bid Item 3 is “mastication and/or hand thinning with tracked chipping,” so the contractor may use either method as it sees fit: standing stems the head cannot handle may be hand felled and chipped, and downed material, including the felled hazard trees described above, may be hand cut and chipped with the tracked chipper or masticated.

Also by Addendum No. 1: under Bid Item 3, trees larger than 10 inches DBH are retained without exception, and residual trees are pruned to 8 feet as in the other Bid Items.

8. Can equipment be used to move cut material to the roadside within the first 100 feet?

Yes. Under Bid Item 2 the contractor may use equipment (for example, a tracked skid steer or mini-forwarder with a grapple) to move cut material to the roadside for chipping. Addendum No. 1 revises Exhibit B, Section 4 to read “moved (by hand and/or equipment) to roadside.” The equipment requirements in Exhibits B and D apply:

- Off-road equipment travel limited to slopes under 40 percent.
- No heavy equipment within the 100-foot buffer around perennial and intermittent watercourses or the 50-foot buffer around ephemeral streams, other than dry ephemeral crossings as allowed by SW-1.
- No operation on saturated soils (SW-2).

- No ground disturbance within flagged cultural resource areas, flagged weed-infested areas, or special-status plant buffers.
- Equipment cleaned before entry and inspected by the Project Manager; tracked, low-ground-pressure equipment preferred.
- Avoid damage to retained trees, blue oak seedlings and saplings, and large woody debris.

Proposals must identify the equipment to be used (make, model, tracked or wheeled, size) in the approach section (RFP Section III.E.2). Equipment identified in the successful proposal becomes binding under the Contract.

9. Is a water tender, water trailer, or tank required to be on site while mechanical equipment is operating, and if so, at what fire-danger level does that requirement take effect? If required, is its cost included in the Bid Item 3 unit price or compensated separately?

A water tender is not required during mechanized work. Water will be applied to dirt and gravel roads as needed to control dust, as provided in Exhibit D, AIR-1. Because the mechanized work is off-road and occurs during the wetter season, YWI does not expect these operations to produce dust at a level that would call for a water tender. If the contractor is running equipment on the road in a way that produces excessive dust, the Project Manager will request modifications. Work shall not occur on red flag days (Exhibit F, Section 2.16).

Although it is not expected to be necessary, if BLM's seasonal fire restrictions continue into an unseasonably dry fall or winter, YWI may request a variance from the BLM Mother Lode Field Office to perform project work under additional fire control restrictions stipulated by the Field Office. Such variances sometimes require backpack water pumps within 50 feet of chainsaw operations and no mechanized equipment; at other times they allow heavy equipment with a water tender on site. If a variance requires backpack pumps, there is no change in the contract price. If a variance requires a water tender for mechanized work, YWI and the Contractor would agree on a change order to the per-acre price for the acres worked under the variance.

10. Is there field information by road segment, such as stems per acre, brush height and density, diameter distribution, or the share of each segment that is light, moderate, or dense?

No. YWI does not have measurements or density estimates for this project beyond what is shown on the Project Map (Exhibit A) and what can be seen on the ground. Georeferenced versions of the project map and a slope map are posted with these responses at www.yubawatershedinstitute.org/rfps for use in the field. Proposers are encouraged to view the site; the roads are open to the public.

11. For proposers who missed the September 14 field meeting, will YWI release field meeting notes, the sample mark criteria, or a marking guide?

This document is the record of the questions raised at the field meeting. There is no separate marking guide. The sample mark in the field is a physical interpretation of what is written in Exhibit C, Prescription and Operation Specifications. Proposers who visit the site will find a small section directly east of the Coyote Overlook Trail parking area where "leave trees" under 10 inches DBH are marked with orange flagging. Most of what the sample mark shows is not

likely to affect implementation cost; its purpose is to demonstrate which small trees are to be left in open areas to regenerate a future shade canopy. Addendum No. 1 also adds a flagging chart to Exhibit C.

12. Before a contractor enters a treatment area, will treatment boundaries, retention trees, resource buffers, and any trees over 10 inches DBH approved for removal be flagged? How is crew downtime handled if flagging or a monitor is not ready?

Treatment boundaries and resource buffers will be flagged before the contractor works in a unit. A YWI biologist is on call for the one area within Bid Item 1 that requires a biological monitor and is available with five days' notice. Retention trees are handled by the prescription as written in Exhibit C, supplemented by trees the Project Manager flags as special or important, and by rolling field meetings and inspections between the Project Manager and the crew lead. The three days' notice the crew lead gives before moving to a new treatment area (Exhibit B, Section 7) is how YWI keeps flagging and monitor scheduling ahead of the crew. The Contract has no standby or downtime payment provision; payment is at the unit prices for completed work.

B. Chip disposal, roads, and access

13. Is there a preference for how chips are disposed of when hauled off-site?

No. YWI has no preference among lawful destinations. Chips hauled off-site under Bid Item 2 must go to a lawful outlet for beneficial reuse or disposal, such as landscaping mulch, a greenwaste facility, or a biomass facility. The contractor is responsible for arranging the destination and for all hauling and tipping or disposal costs, which must be included in the Bid Item 2 unit price. The destination and approximate volume of chips hauled must be reported in the weekly progress report (Exhibit B, Section 4; Exhibit F, Section 2.10), because YWI reports this to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. See also the following two questions.

14. Can chips be taken to a co-generation (biomass) plant?

Yes. Delivery to a biomass or co-generation facility is an acceptable outlet, and Exhibit B, Section 4 already lists it. Because the material comes from federal land, its sale requires a permit from BLM for the removal and sale of biomass. YWI is coordinating that permit with BLM and will finalize the arrangement, including who holds the permit and how any revenue is handled, with the successful Bid Item 2 contractor before Notice to Proceed. Proposers who intend to use this outlet should say so in their approach and describe the arrangement. The grant agreement requires that any revenue from project material be reinvested in the project.

15. Does YWI or BLM have an estimate of chip volume per acre or total for the 75 acres of Bid Item 2? Are there known nearby beneficial-use, green-waste, biomass, or staging locations, or does each contractor secure its own destination?

No. YWI does not have an estimate of chip volume, and does not have a list of disposal options to offer. YWI relies on its contractors to propose a workable solution, and a plan for chip disposal should be part of any Bid Item 2 proposal. For context, on past projects contractors have disposed of chips to local property owners who wanted the material, to a hydraulic mine

property that used it for mud and slope stability, and to a biomass pilot project in Grass Valley that is no longer available.

16. Are there truck or trailer size or weight restrictions, narrow sections, turnaround limitations, or other access constraints on Rock Creek Road, Hudson Way, Merrimas Way, or Moonlight Trail? Are temporary lane closures permitted, or should bidders assume flagger-controlled traffic only?

Temporary road closures will not be permitted; Rock Creek Road is the primary access for many residents. All of the roads are dirt-surfaced rural roads. YWI knows of no truck or trailer size limits on them, but YWI does not operate heavy equipment and cannot say which vehicles can use which turnarounds; proposers should judge that for themselves. There is a turnaround at the end of Moonlight Trail, pull-offs along Rock Creek Road, a turnaround at the Coyote Overlook Trail parking area, and three crossroads along Hudson Way that may serve as turnarounds. Moonlight Trail will have limited access during saturated soil conditions because it is not a well-compacted or rocked roadway.

17. Is there a specific traffic control standard or plan for Bid Item 2, and will any road or encroachment permits be required from the contractor beyond the signage and flaggers described in the RFP?

Rock Creek Road is the one County-maintained road. YWI will obtain a Nevada County encroachment permit for the work along Rock Creek Road. Under that permit, traffic control on Rock Creek Road must conform to the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and the Bid Item 2 contractor must have a certificate of insurance on file with the County. Hudson Way and Merrimas Way are private roads; traffic control (signage and/or flaggers) is still required there for public safety, but the County requirements do not apply. Moonlight Trail is closed to public vehicle traffic and requires no traffic control beyond work warning and trail closure signs for hikers and cyclists. Addendum No. 1 revises the Traffic Control bullet in Exhibit B, Section 4 to state this.

C. Contract and commercial terms

18. Can YWI release the budget (maximum award amount) so contractors do not spend time on proposals YWI cannot afford?

No. YWI will not publish a maximum award amount for this solicitation. Proposals are evaluated separately for each Bid Item on a best-value basis (RFP Section IV), and YWI may award any combination of Bid Items to one or more contractors. Proposers should price the work as specified in Exhibits B and C. The estimated acreages in Exhibit B are YWI's best current information and give proposers the scale of the work.

19. Will separate contracts be awarded? If so, do those contractors need to coordinate their work?

Yes, YWI may award Bid Items to different contractors (RFP Sections I and IV.C). Each contractor is responsible only for the Bid Item(s) awarded to it. Where Bid Items 2 and 3 are awarded to different contractors, YWI's Project Manager will coordinate the sequence and

timing of work through the work sequence and schedule that each contractor must submit before mobilization (Exhibit F, Section 2.10) and the three days' notice required before moving into a new treatment area (Exhibit B, Section 7). Contractors are expected to cooperate with the Project Manager and with any other contractor on the project, including the hazard tree contractor, so that work in adjacent bands does not interfere.

YWI's expectation is that within a given road segment the Bid Item 2 roadside work will generally be completed before Bid Item 3 work begins in the outer band, so that where material in the outer part of the 0 to 100 foot band cannot practically be hauled to the road it can be handled by the Bid Item 3 equipment without the Bid Item 2 crew returning. Bid Items 2 and 3 may nonetheless start at the same time in different road segments, and YWI expects to have Bid Item 3 begin along Hudson Way, since seasonal conditions will constrain Bid Item 3 more than the other Bid Items.

20. May a Bid Item be divided into smaller payment units so that completed and inspected sub-units can be invoiced monthly as they are finished? Who defines the unit boundaries, and is there a minimum acreage per unit?

Yes. The RFP provides for monthly invoicing of completed, inspected, and approved treatment units with no retention, and a Bid Item need not be complete before its finished units are invoiced (RFP Section I, Payment; Exhibit F, Section 2.05). Treatment units are defined by agreement between the Project Manager and the contractor; there is reasonable flexibility, and a phased, road-segment-by-road-segment sequence is acceptable for payment purposes. There is no stated minimum acreage, but units should be large enough to inspect and measure by GPS efficiently. Unit prices are firm regardless of how the work is divided into units.

21. Can the contract include rider language allowing prices to increase if fuel costs go up?

No. Unit prices are firm for the term of the Contract, including any second-season resumption under Exhibit F, Section 2.23 (RFP Section III.E.1; Exhibit F, Section 1.04). Proposers should account for fuel price risk in their unit prices. Escalation language proposed as a contract exception under RFP Section V will not be accepted, because cost scoring under Section IV.B requires every price to be on the same basis.

22. Will prevailing wage be required?

No. YWI has determined that this project is not subject to California prevailing wage requirements (RFP Section I). Assembly Bill 338 extended prevailing wage requirements to publicly funded fuel reduction work, effective July 1, 2027. Under the Department of Industrial Relations' guidance on AB 338 (February 19, 2026), those requirements do not apply to work funded under a grant agreement between a nonprofit and the State that was fully executed before July 1, 2027, unless the agreement is renewed after that date. Sierra Nevada Conservancy Agreement No. 1817, which funds this work, was fully executed before July 1, 2027. The July 1, 2027 date therefore attaches to the grant agreement, not to the contractor's contract: an implementation contract signed after that date under Agreement 1817 is not subject to prevailing wage, and a second-season resumption under Exhibit F, Section 2.23 is a suspension and resumption of the existing Contract and does not change this. The one circumstance in which it could change is remote: if Agreement 1817 were renewed or amended on or after July 1,

2027 in a way that made prevailing wage apply, YWI reserves the right to negotiate a pricing adjustment. Addendum No. 1 corrects the sentence in RFP Section I accordingly.

23. The pass or fail section asks for proof of a “California business license.” Will an active CSLB contractor’s license (for example, C-61/D-49 Tree Service) satisfy that requirement, or is a separate state or local business license document required?

An active CSLB license satisfies the requirement. California issues no general statewide business license; business licensing is administered locally, and Nevada County does not issue business licenses for unincorporated areas, so the requirement as written could not be met by every proposer. Addendum No. 1 revises RFP Section III.E.6 to accept, at the proposer’s option, any one of: an active license issued by the Contractors State License Board; a current business license or business tax certificate from the city or county of the proposer’s principal place of business; a certificate of status or current Statement of Information from the California Secretary of State; a filed Fictitious Business Name statement; or, if none of those is available, a signed statement to that effect identifying the proposer’s jurisdiction. The Addendum also removes business status documentation from the pass or fail list in Section IV.A and adds a three business day cure period where it is missing or incomplete. Proof of insurance remains a pass or fail condition. No contractor’s license classification is required to propose; the Contractor remains responsible under Exhibit F for holding whatever licenses its operation requires.

24. For the 10-point local workforce criterion, which counties count as “Nevada County and adjacent counties,” and can locally hired employees or subcontractors assigned to this project be counted?

The RFP does not define the term beyond its plain meaning: Nevada County and the counties that share a border with it. Several evaluators will score this criterion, and there is no formula. Employees and subcontractors who live in the area, including those hired locally for this project, count toward it; proposers should describe them in Section III.E.4 of the proposal. A crew drawn substantially from the local area will score higher than one that is not.

25. Which is the controlling copy of the full RFP packet, including Exhibits A through F?

The packet posted at www.yubawatershedinstitute.org/rfps on September 3, 2026, as amended by Addendum No. 1 posted September 25, 2026. Addendum No. 1 attaches revised copies of the RFP body and of Exhibits B and C with the changes marked; the revised exhibits replace the September 3 versions for all purposes. Proposers must acknowledge Addendum No. 1 and these question responses in their proposals (RFP Section III.B).

D. Schedule

26. When does YWI expect BLM’s seasonal fire restrictions to end?

YWI does not control this and cannot give a date. BLM’s seasonal fire restrictions are typically lifted after season-ending precipitation in the fall. YWI expects that to happen before the target Notice to Proceed of about November 1, 2026, but it may not, and proposers should plan for the possibility that the start is later. Work cannot begin until the restrictions are lifted and the

Project Manager confirms in writing that operations are authorized (Exhibit F, Section 2.23); YWI will notify the successful contractor(s) promptly when that occurs. No additional compensation or delay claim arises from a later start. If restrictions or weather prevent completion by February 28, 2027, the remaining work is suspended for the limited operating period and resumes in fall 2027 under Section 2.23, with unit prices unchanged.

27. If the Notice to Proceed is materially delayed, or weather restrictions reduce the operating window, would the February 28, 2027 completion date be adjusted, or would the second season (October 2027 to February 2028) be available without the contractor being considered behind schedule?

This is answered in the RFP. The February 28, 2027 completion date is not extended into the limited operating period (March 1 through August 31). If a suspension for weather, saturated soils, Red Flag Warnings, fire restrictions, or other circumstances beyond the contractor's control prevents completion by that date, the remaining work is suspended and resumes in the following season once the limited operating period ends and BLM restrictions are lifted, with the completion date reset by YWI in writing to no later than February 28, 2028. Unit prices remain firm, and remobilization is included in the unit prices. A contractor in that position is not in default. See Exhibit F, Section 2.23, and Exhibit B, Section 6.

E. Crew requirements

28. What trainings are required for the crew?

The only training the RFP requires is the Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT), which YWI will provide on site before work begins (Exhibit B, Section 8; Exhibit D, BIO-1; Exhibit F, Section 2.08). All crew members must attend before they begin work, including anyone who joins the crew later; the contractor must give the Project Manager advance notice so a session can be scheduled. The WEAT covers the prescription and sample mark, flagging colors, and the biological and cultural resource protections. Beyond that, the contractor is responsible for meeting Cal/OSHA requirements for its own operation, including an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (Exhibit F, Section 2.18), and for whatever training its crew needs to do the work safely (chainsaw, chipper, equipment operation, first aid, and traffic control on Rock Creek Road to MUTCD standards under the County encroachment permit). No certifications other than the business status documentation described in the licensing answer above and the required insurance certificates must be submitted with the proposal (RFP Section III.E.5 and E.6).