REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Qualified Biologist Services

South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project — Phase 2

Organization	Yuba Watershed Institute (YWI)
Project Title	South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project — Phase 2
Grant Agreement	CAL FIRE Grant No. 5GG25128 (California Climate Investments / GGRF)
Project Location	San Juan Ridge, Nevada County, California
Treatment Acreage	232 acres total: 97 acres mechanical mastication + 135 acres hand thinning, piling & pile burning
Performance Period	Through July 1, 2028
CEQA Framework	Project-Specific Analysis / Addendum to CalVTP Program EIR (May 2025; Nevada County, CEQA lead)
RFP Issue Date	May 2026
Proposals Due	July 1, 2026, 5:00 PM Pacific Time
Questions Deadline	June 15, 2026 — submit by email to chris@yubawatershedinstitute.org

1. Project Background

Yuba Watershed Institute (YWI) is implementing Phase 2 of the South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project on approximately 232 acres on San Juan Ridge, Nevada County, California, under CAL FIRE Grant Agreement 5GG25128. The project is funded through the California Climate Investments program (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund).

Treatment activities consist of:

- Mechanical Mastication (97 acres): Tracked and wheeled masticators targeting dense shrub and understory tree fuels, primarily ladder fuels and trees less than 12 inches DBH.
- Hand Thinning, Piling, and Pile Burning (135 acres): Manual crews using chainsaws and hand tools to thin understory vegetation; cut material is hand-piled and burned in accordance with local air quality regulations.

The project's environmental review was conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) through a Project-Specific Analysis and Addendum to the CalVTP Program EIR (PSA/Addendum, May 2025, prepared by Ascent Environmental, Inc. for Nevada County and YWI). The PSA/Addendum identifies Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) and Mitigation Measures (MMs) that YWI must implement as the designated implementing entity.

As part of the PSA/Addendum process, Ascent Environmental completed the initial biological reconnaissance required under SPR BIO-1, confirming the presence of suitable habitat for special-status species within and adjacent to the treatment area. That reconnaissance is documented in the PSA/Addendum (Section 4.5) and the associated MMRP (Attachment A). The focused pre-treatment surveys and ongoing biological monitoring described in this Scope of Work are the follow-on obligations triggered by that completed reconnaissance.

YWI is seeking a qualified biologist or ecological consulting firm to conduct the focused species surveys, compliance monitoring, and reporting services described in this Scope of Work. Certain survey obligations (nesting bird nest searches) will be handled directly by YWI staff and are not part of this procurement; see Section 2 for details.

2. Survey Requirement Overview

The PSA/Addendum establishes different levels of survey obligation depending on the species and how treatment is scheduled. This SOW organizes those obligations into three categories:

Required Surveys	Optional Add-On Services	Reference-Only LOPs
Surveys required prior to treatment regardless of season. No scheduling window avoids the obligation. **Species:** • Coast horned lizard (with soils/habitat analysis, ~39 ac shrubland) • NW pond turtle (with stream suitability assessment) • American badger (habitat confirmation only) • Crotch's bumble bee • Monarch butterfly / milkweed surveys • Wildlife nursery sites (ongoing)	Activated by task order only if treatment scheduling or project siting makes avoidance infeasible. **Services:** • Special-status bat roost surveys (if work in LOP: Apr 1–Aug 31) • Northern CA ringtail den surveys (if work in LOP: Apr 15–Jun 30) • Foothill yellow-legged frog VES (if 200-ft stream buffer infeasible)	LOPs tracked for scheduling reference. Surveys/oversight are excluded from this SOW or handled by YWI. **LOPs:** • Nesting birds: Feb 1–Aug 31 (YWI handles if work in LOP) • CA spotted owl: Mar 1–Aug 15 (0.25-mi buffer) • CA red-legged frog: Oct 15–Apr 15 wet season (200-ft buffer from streams, permanent ponds, wetlands)

Note on Reference-Only LOPs: YWI intends to schedule all treatment activities outside the nesting bird season (February 1–August 31). If scheduling within the LOP becomes necessary, YWI's project coordinator (who has professional nesting bird survey experience) will conduct nest searches per SPR BIO-12. For CA spotted owl and CA red-legged frog, YWI will track these LOPs internally for scheduling decisions; no biologist survey task is contemplated for these species under this SOW.

2.1 Limited Operating Periods and Survey Triggers — Visual Summary

The chart below shows the timing of all LOPs and identifies the survey/service category for each resource. Required surveys apply regardless of season. Add-on services are activated only by task order if scheduling or buffer constraints cannot be met.

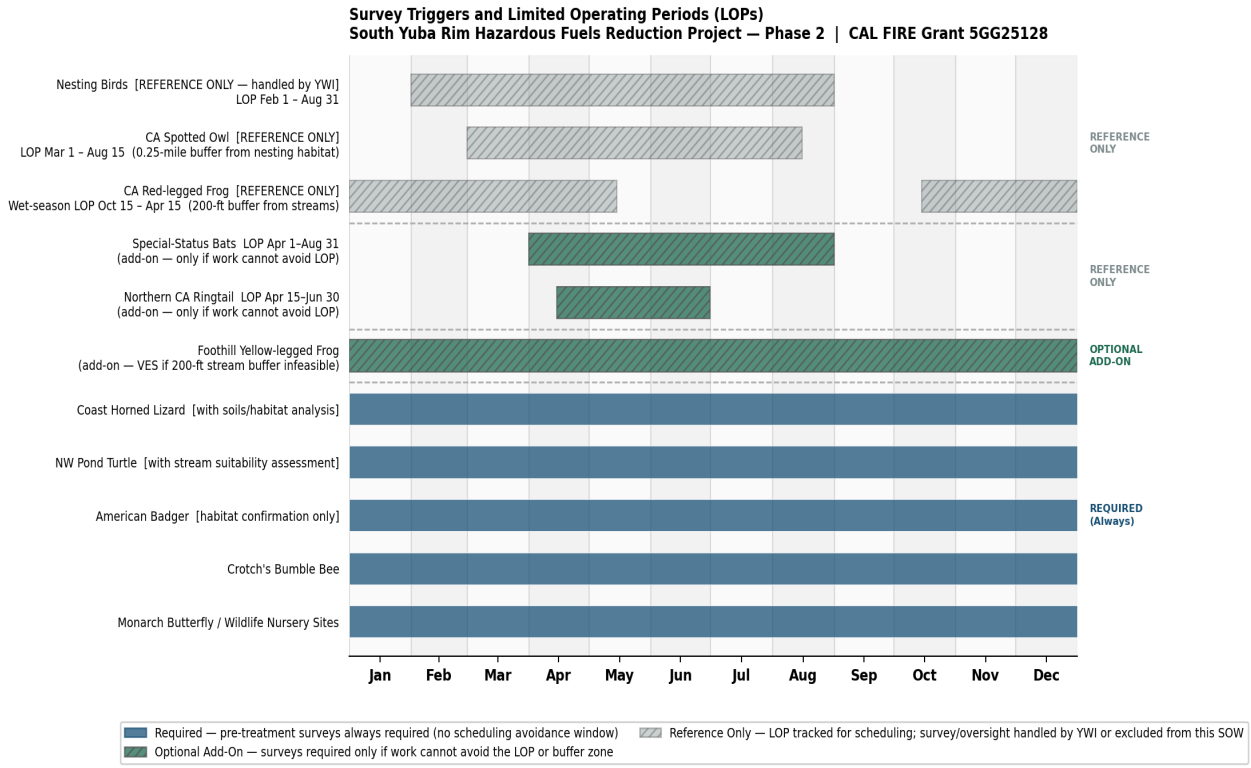

Figure 1. Survey triggers and Limited Operating Periods (LOPs), South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Phase 2. Blue bars: Required pre-treatment surveys (always required, no scheduling avoidance). Teal hatched bars: Optional add-on services triggered only if scheduling or siting constraints cannot be met. Gray hatched bars: Reference-only LOPs tracked for scheduling; surveys/oversight excluded from this SOW or handled by YWI.

3. Scope of Services

The selected biologist or firm shall provide the following services. All surveys must be conducted by, or under the direct supervision of, a qualified biologist with demonstrated experience in the relevant taxa. Where protocol-level surveys are required, the biologist must hold all applicable state and federal permits.

3.1 Required Pre-Treatment Surveys

The following surveys are required based on the habitat reconnaissance completed by Ascent Environmental (SPR BIO-1, May 2025). Suitable habitat for each species listed was confirmed within or adjacent to the treatment area. Surveys must be completed and results submitted to YWI prior to treatment in each affected unit. Because YWI intends to schedule all treatment outside the nesting bird LOP, the bat, ringtail, and nesting bird LOP-based surveys are not included as required services; they appear as optional add-ons in Section 3.3.

3.1.1 Coast Horned Lizard Habitat Analysis and Focused Surveys

Coast Horned Lizard (Phrynosoma blainvillii)	
SPR / MM Reference	SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2b

Survey Trigger	REQUIRED — GIS analysis by YWI confirmed approximately 39 acres of shrubland habitat suitable for coast horned lizard within the treatment area. However, coast horned lizards in the South Yuba River watershed and San Juan Ridge vicinity are strongly associated with serpentine or gabbro-derived soils. A preliminary habitat analysis is required before field surveys to identify which portions of the shrubland overlie potentially suitable substrates, which may significantly reduce the survey footprint.
Survey Method	Phase 1 — Soils and Habitat Analysis (desk-based, prior to field surveys): Using USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, USGS geological maps, and aerial imagery, identify areas within the ~39 acres of shrubland habitat that overlie serpentinite or gabbro-derived soils. Prepare a map of the potential survey area with estimated acreage. Discuss findings with YWI project manager before mobilizing for field surveys. If no serpentinite or gabbro soils are identified, document the analysis and consult with YWI on whether field verification is warranted. Phase 2 — Focused Field Surveys (if Phase 1 identifies potential habitat): Focused visual surveys by a qualified biologist in areas identified in Phase 1 as containing suitable substrate. Surveys should include systematic walking transects through shrubland habitat during optimal weather and activity conditions (daytime air temperature >60°F, warm and sunny). Document all observations with GPS coordinates and photographs.
Timing	Phase 1 (soils analysis): Prior to field survey mobilization; deliver a brief written summary and map to YWI. Phase 2 (field surveys): Close to treatment initiation to be representative of current conditions; coordinate timing with YWI.
If Species Detected	If coast horned lizard detected: Flag and mark avoidance areas around occupied microsites. Relocate individual animals by a qualified biologist holding a valid CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit. Implement any additional measures recommended by the biologist to avoid injury or mortality (Mitigation BIO-2b).
Additional Notes	Biologist must hold or be able to obtain a CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit authorizing relocation of coast horned lizard. Document all detections with photographs and GPS coordinates. If Phase 1 soils analysis indicates no suitable substrate, the biologist should document the analysis and note that field surveys are not warranted; YWI will review and confirm before proceeding.

3.1.2 Northwestern Pond Turtle — Stream Suitability Assessment and Focused Surveys

Northwestern Pond Turtle (Actinemys marmorata)	
SPR / MM Reference	SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2b
Survey Trigger	REQUIRED — Ascent Environmental's SPR BIO-1 reconnaissance (PSA/Addendum, May 2025) confirmed suitable pond turtle habitat associated with streams and riparian areas within and adjacent to the treatment area. The standard 1,500-foot survey buffer applied to all streams and water bodies would encompass an estimated 100+ acres of the treatment area, which is impractical for systematic focused surveys. This SOW therefore requires a structured two-phase approach: first, a rapid suitability assessment of all streams and water features to identify segments with genuine pond turtle habitat; second, focused surveys limited to those confirmed suitable areas. CDFW consultation may be used to refine the appropriate buffer distance.

Survey Method	Phase 1 — Stream Suitability Assessment (field reconnaissance): Qualified biologist surveys all streams, ponds, and other water features within and adjacent to the treatment area. For each water feature, document: flow regime (perennial, intermittent, or ephemeral), presence of suitable basking sites, bank characteristics, depth, cover, and any evidence of pond turtle use (basking individuals, tracks, nesting sites). Prepare a map of features assessed and a brief written summary identifying which segments/features constitute "suitable habitat" per CDFW criteria. Consult with CDFW if needed to confirm habitat determinations and appropriate buffer distances. Phase 2 — Focused Visual Encounter Surveys: Conduct focused VES for individual turtles and potentially suitable upland burrows (overwintering and nesting sites) within and adjacent to confirmed suitable habitat areas. Use buffer distances confirmed through the Phase 1 assessment and any CDFW consultation. Reference CDFW survey protocols at https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols.
Timing	Phase 1 (suitability assessment): Prior to Phase 2 surveys; ideally during spring or early summer when flow regime and bank condition are most informative. Phase 2 (focused surveys): Prior to mechanical treatments, manual tree/snag removal, and pile burning in units adjacent to confirmed suitable habitat; coordinate with YWI on timing.
If Species Detected	If northwestern pond turtle detected: Flag and mark avoidance areas. Relocate individual animals using a qualified biologist holding a valid CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit. Implement additional protective measures as recommended by the biologist (Mitigation BIO-2b).
Additional Notes	Biologist must hold or be able to obtain a CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit for relocation activities. Map locations of all water features assessed during Phase 1; provide to YWI as a deliverable. CDFW consultation regarding appropriate buffers should occur early in the project, and the outcome should be documented in the Phase 1 summary report.

3.1.3 American Badger — Habitat Confirmation

American Badger (Taxidea taxus)	
SPR / MM Reference	SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2b
Survey Trigger	REQUIRED (confirmation assessment) — Ascent Environmental's SPR BIO-1 reconnaissance (PSA/Addendum, May 2025) identified American badger as a species of concern, triggering the survey obligation under SPR BIO-10. However, American badgers are strongly associated with open grasslands, annual grasslands, and open oak woodlands for foraging and den site construction. The treatment area consists primarily of shrubland and mixed conifer forest with no documented grasslands or open oak woodlands; this habitat composition is inconsistent with American badger use for denning. A brief habitat confirmation assessment by the qualified biologist is required to formally document the absence of suitable badger habitat before the survey obligation is formally discharged.
Survey Method	Desktop review: Using aerial imagery (Google Earth, NAIP), land cover data (CALVEG, NLCD), and any project-specific vegetation mapping available, confirm presence or absence of grassland or open oak woodland land cover types within and immediately adjacent to the treatment area. Field verification: Brief field assessment (may be combined with other survey mobilizations) to confirm the desktop determination. Walk representative transects through

	areas identified as potential edge habitat (e.g., any openings, old road clearings, or disturbed areas). Document land cover and habitat conditions with photographs. If habitat is confirmed absent: Document findings in the Pre-Treatment Survey Report and note that focused den surveys are not warranted. No further badger-related survey work is required.
Timing	Combined with initial field mobilization for other pre-treatment surveys. No special seasonal timing required for habitat confirmation.
If Species Detected	If suitable badger habitat (grassland, open oak woodland) is identified during the assessment: Conduct focused surveys for den sites in the identified habitat area. If an active den is found: Establish a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer; no mechanical treatment or burning within buffer until den is confirmed unoccupied. Notify YWI immediately (Mitigation BIO-2b).
Additional Notes	This assessment should be delivered as a brief standalone section within the Pre-Treatment Survey Report. If the desktop review and field confirmation both confirm absence of suitable habitat, the biologist's documentation of that finding fulfills the SPR BIO-10 survey obligation for American badger.

3.1.4 Crotch's Bumble Bee Habitat Assessment and Focused Surveys

Crotch's Bumble Bee (Bombus crotchii) — CESA Endangered	
SPR / MM Reference	SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2g
Survey Trigger	REQUIRED — Crotch's bumble bee is a CESA-listed endangered species. The PSA/Addendum requires habitat assessment prior to treatment and, if suitable habitat is confirmed, focused surveys during the active season. Per CDFW 2023 Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species, a habitat assessment must be completed to evaluate whether the project area contains suitable foraging or nesting resources before treatment activities begin.
Survey Method	Phase 1 — Habitat Assessment: Qualified biologist documents presence/absence and extent of: (a) flowering native plants and wildflowers that support bumble bee foraging (Asclepias, Lupinus, Castilleja, Phacelia, Eriodictyon, and other native flowering plants); (b) soil features suitable for ground-nesting; (c) woody debris, rodent burrows, or other cavity nesting sites. Complete a site-level habitat assessment using the CDFW 2023 Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species framework. Phase 2 — Focused Surveys (if suitable habitat confirmed): If Phase 1 confirms suitable foraging or nesting habitat, conduct focused bumble bee surveys by walking transects through suitable habitat during peak bloom and bee activity. Surveys must occur during warm, sunny conditions (air temp >55°F, low wind). Document all bumble bee detections to genus level where possible; photograph individuals for species verification. At minimum three survey visits during the active season (April–September) are recommended.
Timing	Habitat assessment: Prior to any treatment activities, ideally during spring-early summer when foraging plants are in bloom (April–July). Focused surveys (if triggered): April through September, during suitable weather conditions.
If Species Detected	If Crotch's bumble bee detected or if habitat is suitable and presence is assumed: Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-2g — avoid activities that cause direct mortality; retain all flowering native plants within and adjacent to the treatment area where feasible; retain snags, downed wood, and soil features used for nesting. Notify YWI project manager immediately.

Additional Notes	Biologist should be familiar with CDFW 2023 Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species. Where Crotch's bumble bee presence cannot be confirmed but cannot be ruled out, apply precautionary MM BIO-2g measures. Retain native flowering plants to the maximum extent feasible regardless of detection outcome.

3.1.5 Monarch Butterfly Milkweed / Host Plant Surveys

Monarch Butterfly (Danaus plexippus) — CDFW Species of Special Concern	
SPR / MM Reference	Mitigation Measure BIO-2e
Survey Trigger	REQUIRED — The PSA/Addendum requires retention of monarch host plants (milkweed, Asclepias spp.) within and adjacent to the treatment area. Milkweed surveys must be conducted prior to treatment activities to identify host plant locations.
Survey Method	Focused botanical survey for milkweed (Asclepias spp.) within the entire treatment area and within 10 feet of treatment area boundaries. Map all milkweed occurrences with GPS coordinates. Additionally, inspect mature trees for monarch overwintering clusters during surveys occurring between October and February.
Timing	Prior to any treatment activities in a given unit; repeat at the start of each treatment season. Milkweed surveys most effective during the growing season (April–October) when plants are visible, but must be conducted before any treatment regardless of season.
If Species Detected	If milkweed (Asclepias spp.) detected: Mark all milkweed plants with flagging and GPS coordinates. Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-2e — retain all milkweed plants; do not cut, treat with herbicide, or otherwise disturb milkweed within or adjacent to the treatment area. If monarch overwintering cluster detected: establish avoidance buffer per CDFW guidance; consult with YWI and CDFW.
Additional Notes	Milkweed surveys may be combined efficiently with other pre-treatment botanical or species surveys. All milkweed occurrences must be recorded regardless of size or phenological condition. Biologist should be able to identify all California Asclepias species likely in the Sierra Nevada foothills (A. californica, A. cordifolia, A. fascicularis).

3.2 Additional Required Services

3.2.1 Wildlife Nursery Site Identification and Protection (MM BIO-5)

Mitigation Measure BIO-5 requires that wildlife nursery sites identified during any project-related survey or field activity be documented, marked, and protected with an appropriate no-disturbance buffer for the duration of nursery site activity. The biologist shall:

- During all pre-treatment surveys and compliance monitoring, actively identify and document any wildlife nursery sites within or adjacent to the treatment area. Nursery sites include: deer fawning areas, raptor or colonial waterbird nesting colonies, active raptor nests not addressed elsewhere, monarch butterfly overwintering clusters, and any other concentrations of young-of-year wildlife or breeding aggregations.
- Establish GPS-referenced boundaries of all identified nursery sites. Mark ground boundaries with flagging or stakes visible to equipment operators.

- Notify YWI project manager immediately upon identification of any nursery site. Work with YWI to establish an appropriate no-disturbance buffer; no treatment activities shall occur within the buffer while the nursery site is active.
- Monitor nursery sites that fall within or adjacent to active treatment units to determine when the site is no longer active. Document deactivation date and coordinate with YWI before resuming treatment within the former buffer.
- Report all nursery site identifications, buffer areas, and deactivation dates in the Compliance Monitoring Field Log and Pre-Treatment Survey Report.

3.2.2 Compliance Monitoring During Treatment

Day-to-day compliance monitoring during treatment is the responsibility of the YWI project manager (PM). The biologist is not required to be on-site during routine treatment operations but shall remain available on-call throughout all active treatment periods. Prior to each treatment phase, the biologist shall brief the PM on required buffers, flagging locations, and species-specific avoidance protocols.

Project Manager Responsibilities (day-to-day):

- Prior to each treatment day, confirm that all buffers and flagging established during pre-treatment surveys are in place and being observed by contractors, consistent with the biologist's direction.
- Document all biological resource incidents, wildlife observations, and contractor communications in the Compliance Monitoring Field Log.
- If any unexpected encounter with a special-status species, active wildlife nursery site, or other sensitive biological resource occurs during treatment, immediately halt work in the immediate vicinity and notify the biologist.

Biologist Responsibilities (on-call):

- Remain available by phone during all active treatment days to advise the PM on biological resource questions and provide real-time guidance.
- Respond in person or by phone when notified of an unexpected wildlife encounter; determine whether stop-work is necessary to prevent take of special-status species and direct protective measures accordingly.
- Conduct or directly oversee any required animal relocation activities; biologist must hold a valid CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit.
- If an on-site response is required, document the incident, actions taken, and outcome, and provide a brief written summary to YWI.

3.2.3 Biological Resource Training (SPR BIO-2)

Prior to each treatment season, the biologist shall provide mandatory biological resource training to all crew members and contractors, covering:

- Identification and relevant life history of all special-status species with potential to occur in the treatment area.
- Identification and avoidance of sensitive natural communities and habitats.
- Impact minimization procedures and reporting requirements.
- Appropriate work practices for implementing SPRs and mitigation measures.
- Stop-work authority and reporting procedures.

3.2.4 Inadvertent Archaeological Discovery Protocol (SPR CUL-2)

While not the primary role of the biologist, if the biologist is present on-site and witnesses an inadvertent discovery of archaeological materials, they shall immediately halt ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity and notify YWI's project manager. YWI will engage the project archaeologist to assess the discovery per SPR CUL-2 / Mitigation Measure CUL-4.

3.3 Optional Add-On Services (Task Order Basis)

The following services are not anticipated to be needed, based on YWI's plan to schedule all treatment activities outside the applicable Limited Operating Periods and to maintain required setbacks from perennial streams. Each add-on service will be authorized by written task order only if treatment scheduling or project siting makes avoidance infeasible. Proposers must include separate not-to-exceed estimates for each add-on service (see Section 8).

3.3.1 Special-Status Bat Roost Surveys

Special-Status Bats — Pallid Bat, Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, Western Mastiff Bat, Western Red Bat [OPTIONAL ADD-ON]	
Limited Operating Period	April 1 – August 31 (maternity season)
Activation Trigger	This add-on is activated by task order only if mechanical, manual, burning, or herbivory activities cannot be scheduled outside the bat maternity season (April 1–August 31). If all applicable treatments occur September 1–March 31, this add-on is not required.
Survey Method	Focused surveys for maternity roosts by a qualified biologist within suitable habitat (large trees, snags, rock outcrops) in and adjacent to treatment units. Surveys must follow CDFW survey protocols or other methodology approved by CDFW. Herbicide-only activities are exempted.
Timing	No more than 14 days prior to initiation of treatment activities during the maternity season.
If Species Detected	If active special-status bat roost detected: establish 250-foot no-disturbance buffer; no mechanical, manual, herbivory, or burning within buffer (Mitigation BIO-2b). Notify YWI project manager immediately.
Additional Notes	SPR BIO-1 / SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2b. Consult with CDFW regarding appropriate protocol-level survey methodology if protocol surveys are determined to be necessary.

3.3.2 Northern California Ringtail Den Site Surveys and Daily Sweeps

Northern California Ringtail (Bassariscus astutus) [OPTIONAL ADD-ON]	
Limited Operating Period	April 15 – June 30 (maternity season)
Activation Trigger	This add-on is activated by task order only if mechanical treatments, prescribed burning, or manual treatments removing trees/snags >12" DBH cannot be scheduled outside the ringtail maternity season (April 15–June 30).

	Year-round take avoidance measures (masticator head pause in brush) apply during all mechanical work and do not require this add-on.
Survey Method	Phase 1 – Non-invasive focused surveys (SPR BIO-10): Trail cameras, track plates, and hair snares deployed prior to treatment during maternity season. Phase 2 – Den surveys (Mitigation BIO-2a): Within 7 days prior to start of each week's work during maternity season. Search all trees >12" DBH for cavities (holes >3" diameter, ~12" depth); inspect with cell phone flash or borescope. Search dense brush and note any fleeing adults. Mark all suitable cavity trees and brush piles. Phase 3 – Daily sweeps: On first morning of each work day during maternity season, qualified biologist sweeps treatment area and checks marked features. On subsequent days, a trained contractor conducts sweeps and reports to biologist.
Timing	Non-invasive surveys: Prior to treatment during maternity season. Den surveys: Within 7 days prior to start of work each week during maternity season. Daily sweeps: Each morning of applicable work during maternity season.
If Species Detected	If active den detected: Establish 0.25-mile no-disturbance buffer; no mechanical, burning, or manual work removing trees >12" DBH until end of maternity season (June 30). Confirm den is unoccupied before resuming. Notify CDFW at R2Timber@wildlife.ca.gov and provide den location.
Additional Notes	SPR BIO-1 / SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2a. Year-round take avoidance: masticator head pauses above brush patch before removing. Provide ringtail identification training to contractors at the start of each mechanical treatment period.

3.3.3 Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog Focused Visual Encounter Surveys

Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog (Rana boylii) — CESA Threatened [OPTIONAL ADD-ON]	
Limited Operating Period	Year-round (surveys triggered by proximity to streams, not season)
Activation Trigger	This add-on is activated by task order only if any treatment activity (mechanical, manual, burning, or herbicide) is proposed within 200 feet of a Class I or Class II perennial stream and the 200-foot no-disturbance buffer cannot be maintained. If the 200-ft buffer can be maintained for all treatment activities, this add-on is not required. The biologist should identify all Class I/II perennial streams within and adjacent to the treatment area during early project planning to assess whether any activities fall within the 200-ft zone.
Survey Method	Focused Visual Encounter Surveys (VES) for individual frogs and egg masses along and within 200 feet of Class I/II perennial streams, including in-stream and upland refugia. Reference CDFW survey protocols for Rana boylii at https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols. Multiple survey visits may be required. Night surveys and egg mass searches during early spring breeding season (March–May) are particularly informative.
Timing	Within 14 days prior to any treatment activities in the affected area, during conditions suitable for amphibian detection (air temp 50–85°F, following precipitation).
If Species Detected	If foothill yellow-legged frog individuals or egg masses detected: immediately halt all work within 200 feet of the detection and notify YWI and CDFW.

	Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-2a (listed species — strict avoidance). Establish avoidance buffer per CDFW guidance.
Additional Notes	SPR BIO-10 / Mitigation Measure BIO-2a. Biologist must be familiar with CESA requirements for threatened amphibians and hold appropriate permits. Document all survey effort with GPS coordinates and field notes.

4. Deliverables

The qualified biologist shall provide the following deliverables to YWI:

Deliverable	Content	Due
Soils/Habitat Analysis Summary (horned lizard)	Desktop soils analysis results, map of potential survey area, estimated survey acreage; recommendation on whether field surveys are warranted	Prior to field survey mobilization
Stream Suitability Assessment Report (pond turtle)	Field assessment of all water features, suitability determinations, map, recommended buffer distances, summary of any CDFW consultation	Prior to Phase 2 VES; early in project planning
Pre-Treatment Survey Report (per species/unit)	Survey methods, dates, effort, GPS detections, triggered mitigation measures; includes badger habitat confirmation; covers all §3.1 species	Prior to treatment initiation for each unit
Milkweed / Host Plant Map	GPS map and table of all Asclepias spp. occurrences flagged within and adjacent to treatment area	Prior to treatment in each unit; update if new areas surveyed
Bumble Bee Habitat Assessment Summary	Crotch's bumble bee habitat assessment results per CDFW 2023 Survey Considerations; all bee detections; Phase 2 survey results if triggered	Prior to treatment; April–Sept survey window
Nursery Site Log	GPS locations, species, buffer distances, activation/deactivation dates for all wildlife nursery sites identified	Ongoing; include in compliance field log
Biological Resource Training Records	Attendee list, training date, topics covered, signatures	Prior to treatment, each season
Compliance Monitoring Field Log	PM maintains daily log of field observations, incidents, and contractor communications; biologist submits on-call response notes (encounters addressed, relocations performed, stop-work events initiated) with each invoice	Ongoing; submit with invoices
MMRP Compliance Documentation	Completed MMRP tracker entries for all BIO-category SPRs and MMs	Quarterly and at project completion

Final Biological Monitoring Report	Summary of all survey efforts, species detections, mitigation outcomes, effectiveness	30 days after final treatment activities

5. Minimum Qualifications

Respondents must demonstrate the following:

- California Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or qualified biologist with demonstrated experience conducting biological surveys in the Sierra Nevada foothills / mixed conifer forest environment.
- Familiarity with the CalVTP program, PSA/Addendum process, and associated MMRP compliance requirements.
- Experience surveying for: coast horned lizard, Northwestern pond turtle, and bumble bee species; and conducting botanical surveys for Asclepias spp. in a habitat management context.
- Valid CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit (or ability to obtain prior to treatment) authorizing survey and relocation activities for coast horned lizard and Northwestern pond turtle.
- Familiarity with CDFW 2023 Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species.
- Availability to respond to the project area in Nevada County, California within 48 hours for triggered stop-work events or unexpected species encounters.
- Liability insurance and ability to meet YWI contracting requirements (independent contractor or firm).

The following are preferred but not required:

- Experience with CalVTP or similar large-scale fuels reduction project monitoring.
- Previous work on projects in the South Yuba River watershed or Nevada County foothills.
- Experience with special-status bat surveys and/or ringtail den surveys (relevant if add-on services are activated).
- Experience with acoustic bat monitoring methods (Anabat or equivalent).

6. Contract Period and Compensation

The contract period shall align with the CAL FIRE Grant 5GG25128 performance period through July 1, 2028. All work shall be authorized by written task orders issued by the YWI Project Manager prior to each mobilization.

Fixed-Price Task Orders (required services)

Required services (Sections 3.1 and 3.2) shall be priced as fixed-price task orders, one per deliverable listed in Section 4. Each fixed price must be all-inclusive — labor, travel, and direct expenses — based on the scope described in this RFP. Proposers should state any scope assumptions underlying their fixed prices (e.g., number of field days assumed, number of treatment units).

Time-and-Materials Rate (on-call and triggered work)

The following work is not amenable to fixed pricing and will be compensated on a time-and-materials basis at the proposer's stated hourly rate:

- On-call biologist responses to unexpected wildlife encounters during treatment (Section 3.2.2)

- Animal relocation activities triggered by species detections
- Additional CDFW consultation required beyond what is described in the survey methods

Time-and-Materials with Proposer-Stated NTE Cap (optional add-on services)

Optional add-on services (Section 3.3) will be compensated on a time-and-materials basis at the proposer's stated hourly rate, subject to a not-to-exceed cap proposed by the respondent. Proposers shall state both their hourly rate and a maximum not-to-exceed amount for each add-on service; the proposed NTE will be incorporated as the budget ceiling in the task order if the add-on is activated. If actual hours come in below the NTE, YWI pays only actual T&M costs. Add-ons will not be authorized unless triggering conditions in Section 3.3 are confirmed in writing by the YWI Project Manager.

YWI anticipates treatment to be implemented in multiple seasons across the performance period. The exact schedule will depend on contractor procurement, permitting, and weather.

7. Regulatory and Protocol References

All survey activities shall be conducted in conformance with the following references:

- CalVTP Program EIR (California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, December 2019) and associated SPRs and Mitigation Measures.
- South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project PSA/Addendum to CalVTP Program EIR (Ascent Environmental, Inc., May 2025). CEQA Lead: Nevada County. Implementing Entity: Yuba Watershed Institute. Contains the completed SPR BIO-1 habitat reconnaissance findings (Section 4.5) and the triggered survey requirements this SOW implements.
- South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project MMRP — Attachment A to PSA/Addendum (May 2025). Primary compliance document governing all SPR and MM implementation.
- CDFW Survey Protocols: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols
- CDFW 2023 Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Bee Species.
- CAL FIRE Grant Agreement 5GG25128 (YWI, signed January 2026; CAL FIRE, signed February 2026).

8. Proposal Content Requirements

Proposals shall address each of the following components, presented in the order listed. There is no page limit, but concise proposals are preferred.

8.1 Cover Letter

A brief letter of interest signed by an authorized representative confirming the proposer's interest in the project and availability for the performance period (through July 1, 2028).

8.2 Statement of Qualifications and Experience

Describe the qualifications of the individual or firm and all key personnel who would perform the work, including:

- Names, credentials, and roles of key personnel
- Relevant survey experience: coast horned lizard, Northwestern pond turtle, Crotch's bumble bee, Asclepias / botanical surveys, and wildlife nursery site monitoring
- Familiarity with the CalVTP program, CEQA SPR/MMRP compliance processes, and Sierra Nevada foothill ecosystems
- Any prior work in the South Yuba River watershed or Nevada County

8.3 References

Contact information for at least two recent clients for comparable biological survey or monitoring projects. References may be contacted during evaluation.

8.4 Permits and Credentials

Copies of any applicable CDFW Scientific Collecting Permits, California RPF license, or a written statement describing the proposer's plan to obtain required permits prior to treatment initiation.

8.5 Technical Approach

A brief narrative (no more than two pages) describing the proposer's approach to the required services, including any preliminary considerations regarding survey timing, soil/habitat analysis methodology, CDFW consultation strategy, or coordination with YWI.

8.6 Fee Schedule

Fee proposals shall be organized into three parts:

- Fixed price per deliverable — one line item for each deliverable listed in Section 4; price must be all-inclusive (labor, travel, direct expenses); state any scope assumptions (e.g., assumed number of field days or treatment units)
- Time-and-materials rate for on-call and triggered work — a single all-in hourly rate for on-call biologist responses, animal relocation, and unplanned CDFW consultation (Section 3.2.2); include a separate mileage rate for unplanned field responses
- T&M rate and proposer-stated NTE cap for each optional add-on service — one line item each for Sections 3.3.1 (bat roost surveys), 3.3.2 (ringtail den surveys and daily sweeps), and 3.3.3 (foothill yellow-legged frog VES); state hourly rate and maximum NTE separately for each add-on; YWI pays actual T&M hours up to the NTE if the add-on is activated

9. Evaluation and Selection

YWI will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria. Award is not guaranteed to the lowest-cost proposer; YWI will select the proposal offering the best overall value.

- Qualifications and experience — Relevant survey experience for target species; credentials and permit status of key personnel; familiarity with CalVTP and MMRP compliance
- Technical approach — Demonstrated understanding of the project's survey obligations and CEQA compliance context; practicality of the proposed approach
- Cost and value — Reasonableness of proposed rates and budget estimates relative to the scope of services
- References and past performance — Quality of references and demonstrated reliability on comparable projects

YWI reserves the right to conduct interviews with shortlisted proposers, to request clarifications, to negotiate contract terms with the selected proposer, and to reject any or all proposals.

10. Submittal Instructions

Submit a complete proposal addressing all components in Section 8 to the contact below. Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to YWI by the questions deadline listed on page 1; responses to questions of general applicability will be shared with all parties who have expressed interest.

Chris Friedel, Executive Director

Yuba Watershed Institute

P.O. Box 2198, Nevada City, CA 95959

Email: chris@yubawatershedinstitute.org

Submit proposals as a single PDF to chris@yubawatershedinstitute.org with subject line: “RFP Response — South Yuba Rim Biological Monitoring.” Proposals must be received by the deadline in the table on page 1. Late submissions will not be considered.