

Request for Proposals

Mill Creek Riparian Restoration Hand Treatment Project

Project Proponent: California Deer Association (CDA)

Location: Slinkard/Little Antelope Wildlife Area, 11 miles (~25-minute drive) from Walker, CA

Project treatment will occur on up to 60 acres within the Mill Creek Riparian Corridor on the Slinkard and Little Antelope Valley Wildlife Area. The project is located in Mono County approximately 11 miles southwest of Walker, California.

The Project Area is located in Township 07 North, Range 23E West, Sections 29, 30; Mount Diablo Meridian. Elevation ranges from 7,600 feet to 8,200 feet.

Project Deliverables

- Up to 60 acres of hand cut & pile

Project Timeline

The timeline for this treatment would begin upon execution of the contract (estimated early October 2026) to May 30th, 2027.

Contractor Minimum Qualifications

- Contractor, Contractor's principal, or Contractors' staff shall have been regularly engaged in the business of operations such as hand cutting, thinning, piling, etc., within forest environments for at least 3 years.
- Contractor shall possess all permits, licenses, and professional credentials necessary to perform services as specified under a CDA contract.
- Contractor shall take out and maintain during the life of the Contract all the insurance required and, if requested, shall submit certificates for review and approval by CDA. Acceptance of the certificates shall not relieve the Contractor of any of the insurance requirements nor decrease the liability of the Contractor. CDA reserves the right to require Contractor to provide insurance policies for review by CDA.

Contractor Quality Assurance

The Contractor will perform quality auditing in the form of visual inspections across each unit to evaluate that the silvicultural prescriptions are being met. Furthermore, Contractor will inspect all cutting and piling to ensure that all items meet the listed specifications below. If the Contractor determines that the silvicultural prescriptions, cutting and piling are not met in an area of any unit, the Contractor will be obligated to make the necessary adjustments. Measures taken to correct the treatment in an area of the unit will be communicated to the CDA project manager.

Each treated unit will also be evaluated by the CDA project manager to ensure that all of the project activities meet the listed specifications. If it is determined by CDA staff that the treatment does not comply with the listed specifications in any area of any unit, the Contractor will be obligated to make the necessary adjustments.

Description of Work

This project will entail hand cutting and piling of vegetation across up to 60 acres within the Mill Creek riparian corridor. The purpose of this project is to reduce hazardous fuel loading, address conifer encroachment on aspen stands and riparian vegetation, improve forest and riparian habitat conditions, and reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire impacts within and adjacent to the Mill Creek corridor.

Treatment will be conducted using hand crews and will focus on reducing understory vegetation, small-diameter trees, and encroaching conifers in accordance with the project-specific treatment prescriptions. Priority will be given to maintaining and enhancing existing riparian vegetation and desirable tree and shrub species while reducing competing vegetation and hazardous fuel concentrations. No treatment will occur within designated no-cut areas or on vegetation identified for retention under the project prescription.

Virtual unit boundaries will be used for all treatment units. The contractor may use flagging to supplement virtual boundaries if desired. A detailed layout map will be provided for use with Avenza Maps or a similar GPS-enabled mapping program to delineate virtual treatment boundaries and identify resource protection areas. Global positioning system devices used by the contractor must have an accuracy of at least 15 feet to ensure compliance with the allowable treatment tolerance.

The hand treatment will generally consist of cutting and piling designated vegetation within the project area. Cut material will be hand-piled in accordance with the project specifications, with pile locations selected to minimize impacts to riparian resources, waterways, roads, and retained vegetation. Specific treatment requirements, including vegetation to be retained or removed, allowable tree sizes, spacing requirements, pile specifications, and resource protection measures, will be identified in the project prescription and unit-specific layout materials.

Task	Treatment	Prescription	Acres
1	Hand Cut & Pile	Treat all material <14" DBH to an average of 20'x20' spacing, prune trees, pile existing and activity generated fuels	60.0

A portion of the treatment for this project will occur along a publicly accessible trail system. When working within 200-ft of the trail, contract crew will be required to display signage to indicate to oncoming traffic from both directions that work is ongoing. If any of the treatment activities demonstrate a risk of debris falling into the trail, the contract crew will be required to perform traffic control to promote public safety. The contract crew will provide all the necessary signage.

Item 1. Hand Cut & Pile – 60.0 Acres

Crews will perform hand cutting and piling following the prescription described below. The prescription entails selectively cutting conifers to achieve an average bole spacing of approximately 20x20 feet while creating a healthy, discontinuous canopy. Spacing may vary to accommodate riparian conditions, hardwood retention, fisheries objectives, archaeological resources, or other site-specific considerations. Treatments will generally include conifer trees up to 14-inches in diameter. Conifer trees greater than 14 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH)

may be cut to achieve the spacing objective. Conifer trees greater than 16" DBH shall not be cut unless specifically authorized by CDA following a field review and approval to meet desired conditions.

Cut trees will be selected to thin the stand from below, with an emphasis on reducing ladder fuels, improving spacing, reducing canopy continuity, and removing conifer trees with poor form, low vigor, and crowding from existing aspen stems. Spacing may be varied to retain the best quality leave trees and to maintain desired riparian and habitat conditions.

When selecting trees to thin, generally retain the largest, healthiest, best formed trees. Leave trees shall exhibit vigorous crowns, possess greater than 40% live crown ratio, be free of defect, represent the highest quality trees within the stand, and maintain overall stand diversity. Visible wildlife cavity trees and active nesting trees will be retained for wildlife habitat objectives, as long as a hazard is not posed. All snags greater than 14" DBH shall remain unless determined to present a safety hazard by CDA. Leave tree preferences are incense cedar, ponderosa/Jeffrey pine, lodgepole pine, and white fir. No pinyon pine will be cut. The leave tree preference favors the healthiest and best formed trees over species.

No hardwood species shall be cut unless specifically approved by CDA. To the best of contractor ability, retain and protect existing healthy hardwoods such as aspen, willow, cottonwood, dogwood, and other desirable hardwood and riparian vegetation.

Retained trees will be pruned up to 7 feet from the ground or one-third of the bole, whichever is less, to reduce ladder fuels and improve stand resilience. All residual trees within the project area trail shall be pruned, provided pruning does not exceed one-third of the live crown. Pruning shall be conducted in a manner that maintains tree vigor and avoids unnecessary stress or damage to residual trees. Pruned branches shall be flush cut without damaging the bole or leaving branch stubs.

All activity-generated fuels and pre-existing downed fuels between 1 and 12 inches in diameter shall be bucked into segments no greater than 4 feet in length, with limbs removed from stems. Material shall be incorporated into hand piles in accordance with the project specifications. Slash shorter than 2 feet in length may be scattered to a depth not exceeding 8 inches where piling is not necessary or appropriate. Naturally occurring downed logs exhibiting advanced decay shall remain in place onsite.

Hand piles shall be constructed in accordance with the specifications provided in Appendix A. Pile locations shall be selected to minimize impacts to retained trees and vegetation, riparian areas, streams, fisheries resources, archaeological sites, wildlife habitat, and other designated resource protection areas.

All treatment activities shall be conducted in accordance with the project maps, resource protection measures, and avoidance areas provided by CDA. Any proposed deviation from the prescription shall require prior authorization from CDA.

Appendix A – Hand Pile Construction Specifications

Appendix A establishes the minimum standards for hand pile construction for the Mill Creek Riparian Restoration Hand Treatment Project. Proper pile construction is essential to ensure safe and efficient prescribed burning, minimize impacts to residual vegetation, and facilitate project inspection and acceptance.

All hand piles shall be constructed in accordance with these specifications unless otherwise directed by the CDA Project Manager. Hand piles shall be constructed using activity-generated slash produced during thinning and pruning operations.

The Contractor shall continuously evaluate pile placement to ensure piles can be safely burned in the future while minimizing impacts to residual vegetation, riparian resources, and other sensitive features.

Completed piles shall be subject to inspection and approval by the CDA Project Manager prior to project acceptance.

Material Specifications:

- All utilization material as described above shall be placed in piles and shall be cut to lengths of 4 feet or less.
- The base of each pile, where in contact with the forest floor, shall consist of material less than 4 inches in diameter.
- Smaller material shall be aligned in a consistent direction, with heavier material placed on top.
- At least 50 percent of the material in the lower one-third of each pile shall consist of small-diameter material and fine fuels to promote ignition.
- All woody material between 1 and 14 inches in diameter generated during thinning operations shall be bucked to lengths of 4 feet or less and incorporated into hand piles.
- Pre-existing woody fuels between 1 and 12 inches in diameter shall be bucked to lengths of 4 feet or less and incorporated into hand piles.
- Individual logs exhibiting 50 percent or greater decomposition are exempt from this requirement.
- Piles shall be free of mineral soil, rocks, trash or litter, metal, plastic, wire, or other non-combustible material. Excessive dirt or non-combustible material may result in rejection of the pile.

Pile Construction and Stability:

- Piles shall be constructed in such a manner that promotes complete combustion and minimizes pile collapse.
- Piles shall be compact. Material shall be diced with a chainsaw as needed to achieve compaction and eliminate voids. Piles shall be constructed so that material will not roll or shift downhill when burned.
- Material shall be arranged to minimize air gaps. Voids greater than 8 inches in any dimension are not acceptable and shall be filled with smaller material.

- Material shall be oriented generally parallel to slope to reduce rolling potential and promote structural integrity during burning.
- All slash extending beyond the pile footprint shall be trimmed flush.
- Piles shall be constructed to shed precipitation.

Pile Dimensions and Separation:

- Piles shall be a minimum of 6 feet in diameter and height.
- Piles shall be a maximum of 8 feet in diameter and height. Piles shall not exceed 8 feet in height unless:
 - Available pile locations are limited
 - Additional height is necessary to accommodate treatment material while avoiding impacts to residual vegetation
 - Prior approval is obtained from the CDA Project Manager
- Piles shall be distinct and separated from one another by a minimum of 8 feet.

Pile Placement:

- Piles shall not be constructed within 10 feet of any leave tree.
- Piles shall be located to minimize scorch potential to leave trees. Where site conditions allow, piles shall be placed on the uphill side of leave trees.
- Piles shall not be located within 20 feet of any stream channel.
- Specific placement restrictions may apply within designated units to protect sensitive resources. These areas will be identified on contract maps and marked in the field prior to operations. Piles constructed within restricted areas shall be relocated by the Contractor at no additional cost.
- Piles shall NOT be located:
 - Within 50 feet of Mill Creek
 - Within 10 feet of the trail
 - On stumps
 - On rotten or decayed logs
 - Within stream channels or drainage features
 - On large rocks or other non-burnable surfaces
 - Beneath low tree canopies where excessive scorching may occur
 - Within designated archaeological avoidance areas
 - Adjacent to fences, signs, or other infrastructure

Appendix B – General Prescription Guidelines

The following guidelines summarize the treatment prescription for the Mill Creek Riparian Forest Health Project. These guidelines are intended as a field reference and do not replace the contract specifications contained within this Request for Proposals.

General Thinning Prescription

- Conduct selective hand thinning using **Designation by Prescription**. Trees are not individually marked unless identified by the CDA Project Manager.
- Remove conifer trees from **1 inch DBH up to 14 inches DBH**. Trees between **14- and 16-inches DBH** may be approved for removal by the CDA Project Manager and CDFW on a case-by-case basis. Trees greater than **16 inches DBH** shall remain unless specifically designated for removal.
- Thin from below by targeting suppressed, intermediate, poorly formed, diseased, declining, or ladder fuel trees while retaining the healthiest and most vigorous residual stand.
- Maintain generally **20 feet** between residual tree boles where practical. Spacing may be adjusted to accommodate riparian conditions, existing hardwoods, stream shading objectives, wildlife habitat, archaeological avoidance areas, or other site-specific considerations.

Leave Tree Selection

Retain the healthiest, best-formed trees capable of responding to increased growing space.

Preferred leave trees should:

- Be free of disease or significant defects.
- Exhibit good crown color and vigor.
- Maintain a minimum **40 percent live crown ratio**.
- Have straight stems with well-developed crowns.
- Contribute to overall stand diversity and long-term forest health.

When multiple acceptable leave trees exist, use the following species preference:

1. Incense Cedar
2. Pine species
3. Lodgepole Pine
4. White Fir

Tree health and form shall take precedence over species preference.

Trees to Remove

Priority should be given to removing:

- White fir competing beneath dominant trees.
- Suppressed and intermediate conifers.
- Poorly formed trees.
- Trees exhibiting insect damage or decline.
- Trees functioning as ladder fuels.

- Trees contributing to excessive canopy continuity.

Where multiple trees compete for growing space, retain the healthiest, most vigorous individual.

Hardwood Protection

Retain all native hardwood species unless specifically designated for removal by the CDA Project Manager.

Protected hardwoods include:

- Aspen
- Willow
- Cottonwood
- Dogwood

Protect existing hardwood regeneration during all treatment activities.

Down Woody Material

Leave naturally occurring down logs that exhibit advanced decay (rotting) undisturbed.

Decayed woody material provides valuable wildlife habitat, nutrient cycling, and soil moisture retention.

Only activity-generated slash and sound woody material designated by CDA shall be incorporated into hand piles.

Tree Pruning

Prune designated leave trees to reduce ladder fuels.

- Remove all dead branches where practical.
- Remove material on the tree bole up to 7 feet from the ground, or 1/3 of the bole. Whichever is less.
- Do not remove more than **1/3 of the bole of the live crown.**

Avoid damage to the bole or live crown during pruning operations.

Slash Treatment

Treat all activity-generated slash in accordance with the designated treatment method.

- Construct hand piles in accordance with **Appendix A – Hand Pile Construction Specifications.**
- Incorporate designated existing slash where directed by the CDA Project Manager.
- Leave work areas clean and free of untreated slash upon completion.

Riparian Protection

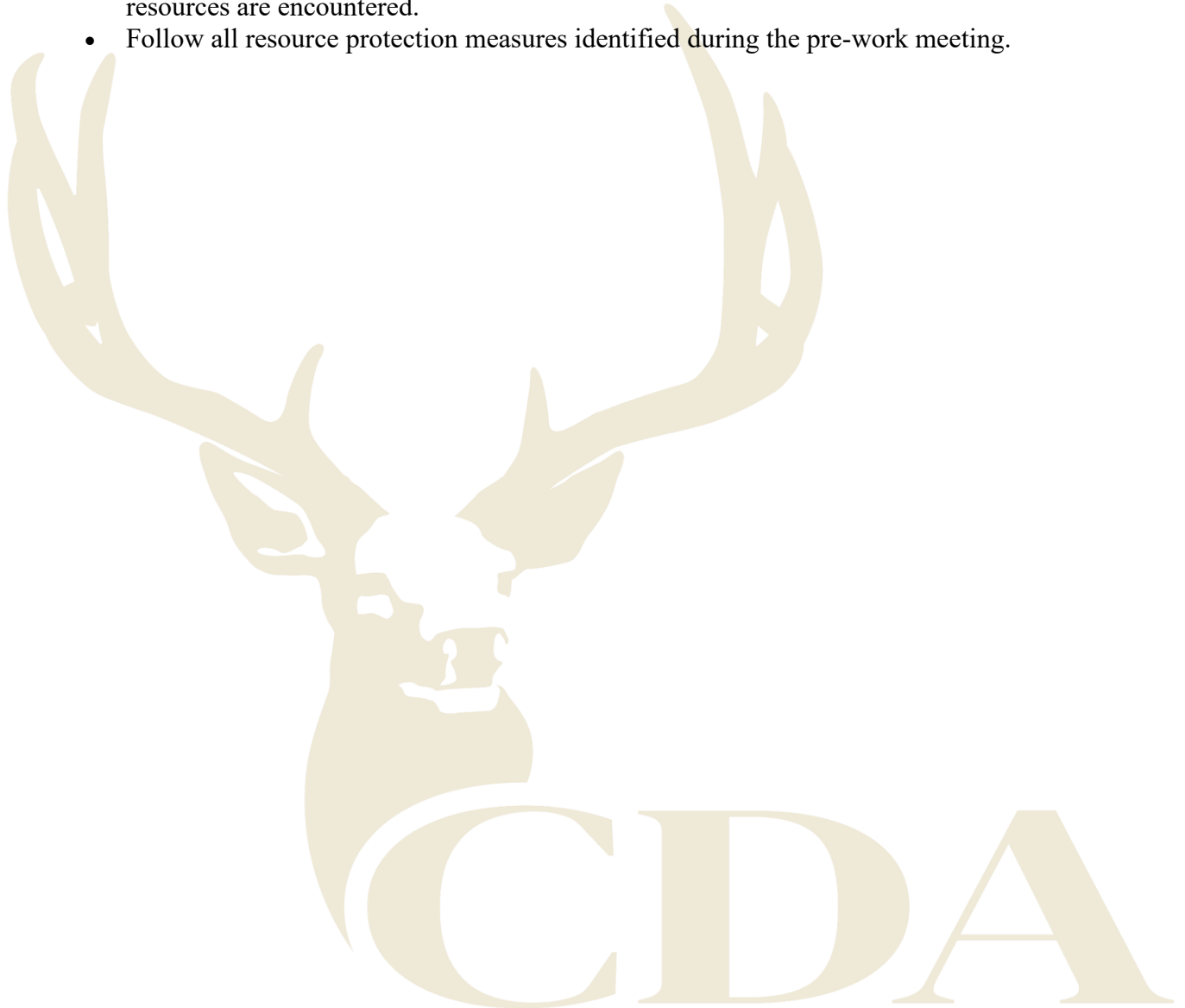
Protect the ecological function of the Mill Creek riparian corridor throughout all operations.

- Do not place slash or burn piles within **50 feet of Mill Creek.**
- Protect riparian hardwoods and streamside vegetation.
- Avoid disturbance to streambanks and aquatic habitat.

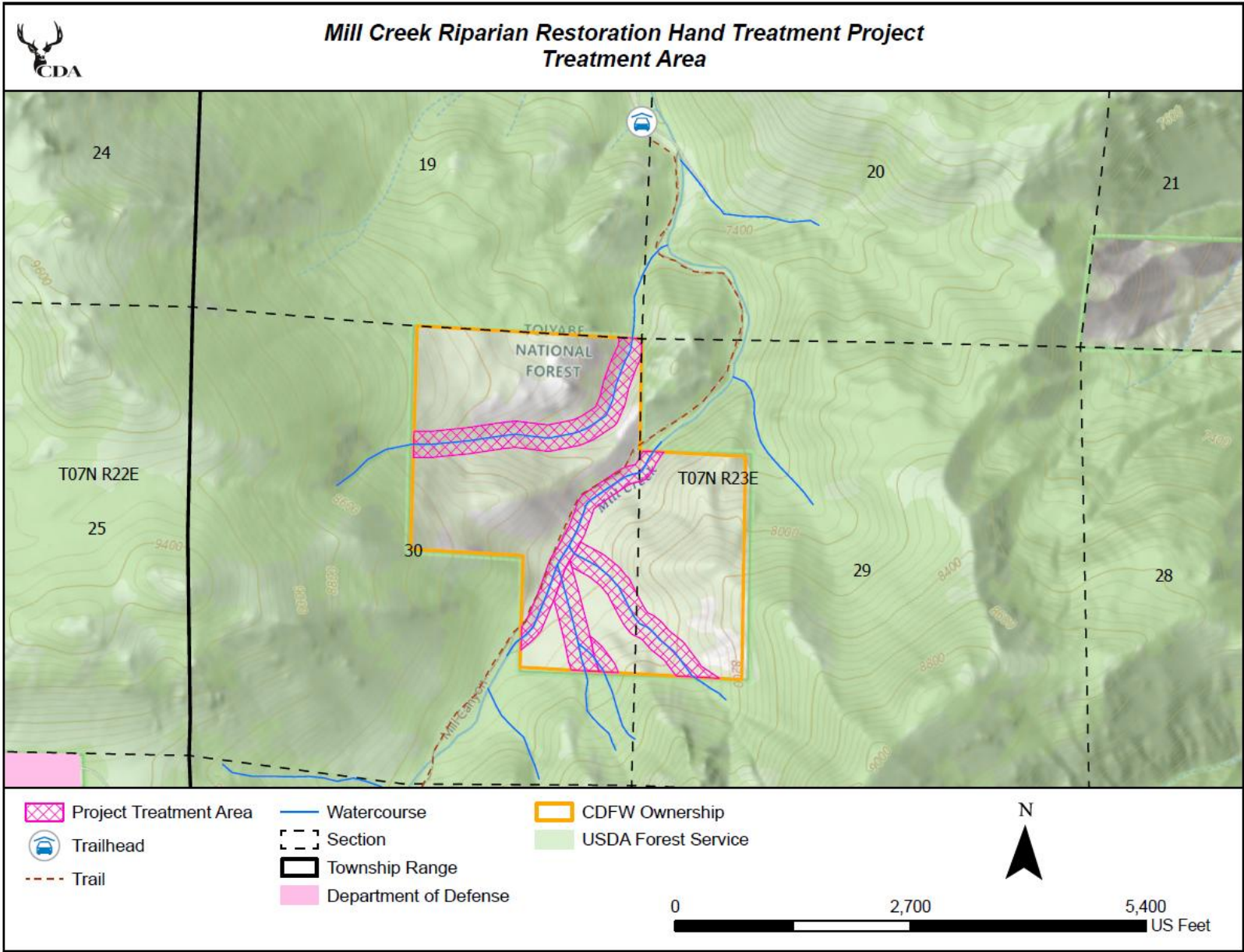
- Follow all flagged resource protection areas and project boundaries.

Resource Protection

- Stay outside all flagged avoidance areas.
- Immediately notify the CDA Project Manager if previously unidentified cultural resources are encountered.
- Follow all resource protection measures identified during the pre-work meeting.



Appendix C – Project Area Map (s)



Appendix D – Technical Proposal Guidelines

The California Deer Association (CDA) has prepared this guidance for the development and submittal of technical proposals for this project. Please review the guidelines for instructions on how to prepare and submit a bid for this project. Refer above for project treatments and specifications.

I. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

A. BIDDER'S QUALIFICATIONS

Before an offer is considered for award, the Bidder may be required to submit a technical and price proposal, as described in item C (1), and comply with all other provisions stated herein. The proposal should be practical and be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise delineation of what the Bidder will do to satisfy the requirements of the contract.

B. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Technical Proposal: The technical proposal will be used to make an evaluation and arrive at a determination as to whether the proposal will meet the requirements of CDA. Therefore, the technical proposal must present sufficient information to reflect a thorough understanding of the requirements and a detailed description of the techniques, procedures, and/or program for achieving the objectives of the specifications/statement of work.

- a) Technical proposals will be evaluated and ranked on the basis of the following criteria. As a minimum, the proposal must clearly provide the following:

i. Technical Approach

1. Describe your plan of operations. Include a timeline and the rationale for the work activities identified to ensure all contractual requirements will be completed by the termination date.
2. Describe your quality control plan for work performed.

ii. Capability and Past Performance

1. Provide a list of the experience of your key personnel who will be working on this contract.
2. Identify subcontractors you propose to use for this contract and the work activities planned for subcontracting. Describe subcontractor's past performance as able. If any subcontractors are certified in their area of expertise, provide information as to when, what, and by whom they are certified.
3. Submit a list of similar or related contracts that your firm has completed in the past 3 years. This listing must include the contract type; contract amount or contract size; location, the year completed, the Agency, company or individual contracted with, and a current telephone number.

iii. Utilization of Local Work Force

1. Local labor is defined as local and regional communities. Identify how you intend to utilize labor, subcontractors, and other workforce from the local area. Additional evaluation preferences will be given for the use of labor or subcontractors located closest to the contract area.

- 2) Price Proposal: All bidders shall provide a total proposed cost for completion of the listed project work. **CDA encourages bidders to submit a cost estimate based on price per acre.** Compensation shall be issued upon CDA's receipt and acceptance of each completed

deliverable, with payment tied to the submission of each individual report and its associated work products.

II. RFP RESPONSE SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

A. CDA CONTACTS

All contact during the competitive process is to be through the CDA contact person: Lauren Archer – larcher@caldeer.org

B. SUBMITTAL OF RFP RESPONSE

- 1) Late responses will not be accepted.
- 2) RFP responses must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday October 2nd, 2026. Any RFP response received after that time or date cannot be considered and will be returned to the Bidder.
- 3) RFP responses are to be submitted on the CDA webpage platform.
- 4) Please include “**Mill Creek Riparian Restoration Hand Treatment Project**” in the Subject Line for bids.
- 5) All costs required for the preparation and submission of an RFP response shall be borne by the Bidder.
- 6) Bidder expressly acknowledges that it is aware that if a false claim is knowingly submitted (as the terms “claim” and “knowingly” are defined in the California False Claims Act, Cal. Gov. Code, §12650 et seq.), CDA will be entitled to civil remedies set forth in the California False Claim Act.
- 7) **It is understood that CDA reserves the right to reject any or all RFP responses.**

C. RESPONSE FORMAT

- 1) Bidders shall not submit to CDA a re-typed or otherwise re-created version of these documents or any other CDA-provided document.
- 2) RFP responses, in whole or in part, are NOT to be marked confidential or proprietary. CDA may refuse to consider any RFP response or part thereof so marked. RFP responses submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to public disclosure. CDA shall not be liable in any way for disclosure of any such records.

III. CDA PROCEDURES, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS

A. RFP ACCEPTANCE AND AWARD

- 1) RFP responses will be evaluated by a selection committee (i.e., CDA, CDFW).
- 2) **The committee will recommend award to the Bidder who, in its opinion, is best qualified to perform the work described in this RFP. Award may not necessarily be made to the Bidder with the lowest bid. (Best Value)**
- 3) CDA reserves the right to award a single or to multiple General Service Providers, dependent upon what is in the best interest of CDA.
- 4) CDA has the right to decline to award this contract or any part of it for any reason.
- 5) Any specifications, terms, or conditions issued by CDA, or those included in the Bidder’s submission, in relation to this RFP, may be incorporated into any contract that may be awarded as a result of this RFP.
- 6) CDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to accept one part of a proposal and reject the other, unless the bidder stipulates to the contrary, and to waive technical defects, as the interest of CDA may require. Award will be made by an authorized CDA Representative.

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All bids are subject to evaluation by the Selection Committee (SC). The SC will be composed of CDA staff, CDFW staff, and other individuals who have expertise or experience in this type of project. The SC will select/recommend a Bidder in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP. Evaluation criteria include technical approach, capacity and past performance, and benefits to local communities. The evaluation of the RFP responses shall be within the sole judgment and discretion of the SC.

The award will be made to the Bidder (a) whose proposal is technically acceptable and (b) whose technical/price relationship is the most advantageous to CDA. Therefore, CDA reserves the right to award without discussions with the Bidders. However, after receipt of initial offers, written or oral discussions may be conducted with all responsible Bidders whose offers are determined to be in the competitive range. Discussions conducted after receipt of an offer do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by CDA.

Firms lacking a past performance record (new firms or those with no relevant experience within their organization) will be treated as an unknown performance risk and will receive a neutral rating in this criterion. A neutral rating will be established as the average of all other competing Bidders.

CDA will base the award decision on a tradeoff between price and non-price factors, comparing the relative risk to CDA of poor or non-performance posed by each of the Bidders, and making a judgement as to whether or not reduced risk of performance is worth additional cost. In some cases, this will result in award to a lower-ranked but lower-priced offer, in other cases award may be to a higher-ranked but higher-priced offer. CDA may, when in its interest, reject any or all offers or waive any informality in offers received.