

The following questions and answers are intended to provide clarification and interpretation of the fire recovery guidelines.

	Question	Answer
1	Can these funds be used on leased <u>private lands</u> to replace/repair infrastructure damaged by fire?	Projects would be eligible on private lands such as this. However, the lessee would need to be working with someone within the company who is authorized to sign the cost-share agreement on behalf of the landowner as it is the <u>landowner</u> that will be responsible for maintaining the practice for the practice life. Replacements and repairs would need to be installed to NRCS standards.
2	Are lands under tribal ownership eligible?	It is our understanding that tribes are seeking USDA assistance for tribal lands. Tribal members should speak to the State Conservationist. This will be evaluated as the process moves forward, private projects are being addressed, and federal funding becomes more clear.
3	Are projects located on leased tribal land eligible?	The types of projects can be submitted with the following caveats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will start with private lands first and work through the projects. We will take a look again to see where money stands when projects on private lands are addressed. • It would need to be determined who is responsible for the infrastructure as described by the underlying lease (lessee or lessor). • It would need to be clear that if state funding is provided to the lessee the continuation of the lease is guaranteed and evidence that the landowner will allow immediate grazing. • Would be reviewed on a case by case basis.
4	Are projects located on leased state or federal lands eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See answer for #3
5	Are irrigation systems eligible?	Yes, however care must be taken to make sure that work conducted pertains to the portions of the system impacted by fire (i.e. not an opportunity to upgrade an old system)
6	What types of fencing are eligible?	All practices installed with this funding must have a basis in a resource concern related to fire. Boundary and exclusion fencing are eligible. Cross-fencing would be considered on a case by case basis – must be tied to a resource concern and case should be made to show that it is critical at this time.

7	Are culverts (stream, road, driveway, etc.) eligible for cost-share funding?	Yes, as long as it is based on a resource concern
8	Can we expend cultural resource review funding for projects beyond the approved cost-share projects so if additional funding is made available such as funds returned by other CDs, we can have the projects already approved and ready to go?	Highest priority is to make sure that cultural resources are covered for approved projects. Would need to request CR funds for these types of projects prior to CR funds being expended and requested projects must be identified. Approval would be based on status of available CR funding.
9	Can funding be used to match federal EWP funds?	Yes. Projects eligible and contracted for EWP will be directly matched by state funds. This is the only federal program that will receive direct matching funds
10	Can funds be used to match federal EQIP funds?	Yes, as long as the total coast share provided between all sources on a project does not exceed 100%
11	Can funds be used to match federal ECP funds?	In order to maximize federal funding, state funds cannot be contributed to ECP projects where the total cost if the implemented project is below the maximum ECP funds allowed per landowner. Funds would be eligible for use if the total project cost exceeds the ECP limit provided the project has a resource concern that is consistent with the fire recovery funding guidelines. It is very important for CD's to work with FSA to understand ECP funding rules and requirements.
12	Can we use some of these funds as match for other federal sources such as FEMA grants?	Match for FEMA projects would be submitted as any other project and prioritized by the CD. Highest priority would be for funds to match FEMA for on the ground projects with resource concerns consistent with the fire recovery guidelines. Match for FEMA funds assessments, studies, etc. would be considered lower priority. Highest emphasis is projects on the ground. The only federal funds to be directly matched are NRCS-EWP projects.
13	Will there be an opportunity for the CDs that are eligible to receive these funds participate in a conference call or in-person meeting at some point along the line, maybe more than once, to discuss what is working well, what is not working, and how we can collectively learn from each other on how to most effectively and efficiently implement these funds?	Yes, we will work to provide these opportunities.
14	In terms of eligibility for project funding, does a private landowner have to be directly affected by a fire, i.e. the fire burned their land, or are private landowners eligible for funding if they indirectly affected, i.e. debris flows that come through their property?	Can apply but would need to show linkage to the fire and would be addressed on case by case basis. Need to make a case as to how debris (or other indirect effect) is creating a loss. Funding is to help those that were directly impacted. So would need to make the case that it is a direct impact on these landowners. Also, has the source of the problem been addressed and will the project be successful if the source of the problem has not been addressed?
15	Can funding be used to assist with reseeding and fence replacement?	Must be based on a resource concern. Seeding for erosion control is clear cut. Seeding to replace pasture forage would need to make the connection to a resource concern.

16	Are logging companies that own land considered private landowners? On that same note, is a non-profit organization, such as a Museum, considered a private landowner?	Yes, but see notes on #1
17	Based on the comments and questions, is the Commission going to create some sort of ranking assessment that the Districts can use for ranking fire related projects, or is that something that we need to come up with on our own?	Ranking criteria for different types of projects would be up to each district. We are just asking that priority be given to projects that are not eligible for federal funds and projects that are matching federal funds if that comes into play or is applicable when you are determining priority between projects.
18	What is meant by “prevent crop damage”?	Projects that would address to fire-related items such as wildlife fencing around crops, irrigation systems that were burned, etc.
19	Can funding be used for EWP/BAER identified projects that are not being funded by EWP?	<p>Yes, with the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must meet a qualifying resource concern (in the guidelines) • Must be cost-share between district and landowner following the guidelines • District should discuss how projects will be prioritized when they are submitted • If the project was identified by NRCS as eligible for EWP and the landowner declined, then it would not be eligible. Landowners should be encouraged to pursue EWP if they are eligible.
20	Where can we find the fire recovery cost-share contract and will we need to use the CPDS version later or will this one be sufficient?	It will be available on the Commission website. The CPDS cost share contract form will not be used for fire recovery projects.
21	Will projects need to be entered into CPDS?	Project information will need to be entered into CPDS prior to receiving reimbursement for a voucher.
22	Who will be making decisions in regards to cultural resources? If a federal agency is providing funds and not requiring CR will WSCC?	If there is federal funding (or funding from another agency) their process would trump ours (similar to with normal cost-share). Our process would only apply if it is solely Commission funded.
23	Are there any restrictions regarding cost-share % or per unit rates? Is that up to each District? Is it too late for the board to approve emergency protocols if the board wanted to fund projects in a different manner than other projects not due to fire?	This is up to each district – it should be consistent with CD policy governing cost-share. The CD’s cost-share resolution can be updated at any time during the year so similarly, I do not see a reason that the board could not implement emergency protocols.
24	How long do districts have to allocate funds utilizing the initial funding allocation to each county before the funding reverts to one funding pot?	Funds not awarded and allocated to projects in each county by July 31 st will revert to one funding pot.
25	What is the role of the review committee?	The review committee is meant to serves the following purposes:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure consistency with funding guidelines and funding intent • To request clarity or additional information on the nature of specific projects • To provide for case by case consideration of projects that are unique cases • To provide formal award of funds for projects
26	How often can projects be submitted and how often will the review committee meet?	To get started, the committee will meet twice per month. Project submissions for consideration will be due by close of business on the 1 st and 3 rd Thursday of each month. The review committee will meet twice per month following the cut-off dates for project submittal. Frequency will be evaluated in later stages as the process moves forward.
27	Who will be on the review committee?	2 commission members, RM for that area, WSCC financial staff representative