



Date: June 10, 2025

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: James Blattler, Emergency Services Manager

Title: **2025-26 CAL FIRE Wildland Protection Agreement**

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

Recommended Action: That Council Adopt Resolution 2025-43 authorizing the Town Manager to execute jointly with the Truckee Fire Protection District the Wildland Protection Agreement with CAL FIRE for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 to provide wildland firefighting resources within the Town of Truckee in the amount up to \$929,426.52.

Discussion:

Agreement Background

The Town of Truckee has contracted a Wildland Protection Agreement with CAL FIRE since its incorporation in 1993. The contract was originally used to meet condition # 21 of the LAFCo Incorporation Documents requiring the Town to pay Truckee Fire Protection District (TRPD) for wildland fire protection, which reads:

Wildland Fire Mitigation: The new Town shall pay to the Truckee Fire Protection District an annual wildland fire protection fee in the amount of \$112,000 and the fire district, shall, in exchange, agree to assume certain responsibilities for wildland fire prevention and suppression within the boundaries of the Town as set forth in the letter attached as "Exhibit C" hereto and made a part hereof. Said fee may be adjusted from time to time through negotiations between the Town and fire district to reflect changes in cost and desired service levels.

Prior to incorporation, CAL FIRE (then CDF) had responsibility for all wildlands in the unincorporated areas of the State, or what is commonly referenced as State Responsibility Area. After incorporation, the Town's boundary was re-classified as a "Local Responsibility Area".

Maintaining a Wildland Protection Agreement with CAL FIRE has two notable benefits. First, for all areas covered under the agreement, CAL FIRE assumes all suppression responsibility, including costs, for wildland fires. The service agreement works similarly to an insurance policy, where the Town is shielded from the risk of a potentially significant financial burden that accompanies a destructive wildland fire. Secondly, through this agreement, all fires within the covered area receive automatic initial dispatch of CAL FIRE's wildland fire response, which includes specialized equipment such as fixed-wing and rotor-wing air resources, bulldozers, and hand crews. Being part of an initial dispatch can reduce response times dramatically, when minutes can often make a notable impact on firefighters' ability to control a newly started wildfire.

Changes from Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Rate, Cost, and Acreage:

The Wildland Protection Agreement rate-per-acre increased by 16.45% from the cost of \$47.73 per acre in Fiscal Year 2024-25 for a new cost of \$55.58 per acre. The new rate is comprised of a base rate of \$50.18 with an additional 10.77% administrative rate. The annual rate is dictated legislatively on an annual basis by CAL FIRE and is based on the 10-year rolling average of the State’s firefighting costs. The proposed agreement is a 125.3% cost increase over Fiscal Year 2024-25 due to a combination of the proposed increase in covered acres (as explained below) and the rate increase.

After consultation with CAL FIRE and the Truckee Fire Protection District, Town staff is recommending an increase in covered acres under the Wildland Protection Agreement. Historically, the acreage covered under this agreement has fluctuated, primarily due to budget restrictions. The acreage remained static for seven years in large part because the agreement was renewed without undergoing a comprehensive review of the covered acres for several years. [In FY2024-25 the Town’s Office of Emergency Services staff took the lead on the agreement](#) from the Clerk’s Office and worked within budget considerations to expand the covered acres to meet the growing risk of wildfire that has occurred in the western United States since 2017.

- **FY 2017-18 through FY2023-24:** 6,800
- **FY2024-25:** 8,644 (27.1% increase)
- **Proposed FY2025-26:** 16,721(93.4% increase)

The FY 2025-26 map (Attachment 2) was developed to expand the coverage map in FY2024-25. A number of considerations were used to develop the updated map, including the recently updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone map, fire history, likely demand for specialized and extended fire suppression resources, values at risk, prevalence of human activity, and Town wildfire risk profiles.

Additional important considerations for increasing the covered acres are the ongoing changes in emergency funding programs at the Federal level. One example being the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG), which provides up to 75% in funding to local governments to control wildfires. The threshold for receiving an FMAG, along with Presidentially Declared Disaster Public Assistance program approval is reported to be increasing substantially in the coming year. These changes may limit the availability of federal recovery funding.

While the increase in covered acres does come with a considerable cost increase, the Town plans to utilize the increase in covered acres as a bridge to close the gap between the Town’s current wildfire risk profile and the implementation and ultimate fruition of impactful wildfire mitigation projects and programs both at the parcel, Town, and regional level in future years.

Operating Plan:

The only notable change to the operating plan is adding a section which facilitates the assistance from CAL FIRE’s prevention staff to assist with cause and origin investigations, which are separate from arson investigations handled by law enforcement. While this type of assistance from CAL FIRE has occurred in the past, the addition of this language formalizes the support for areas covered under the agreement.

Priority:

<input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Investment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Service

Fiscal Impact:

The total cost of the proposed contract as mapped is \$929,426.52. Staff recommends the utilization of Measure E dollars to fund the increase of \$516,829.55 from FY2024-25. This is included in the proposed budget for FY2025-26 being brought to Council for adoption as a separate item at this Council meeting.

Public Communication: None beyond this staff report and a website posting regarding the proposed recommendation.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Resolution 2025-43

Attachment 2 – Wildland Protection Map 2025-26