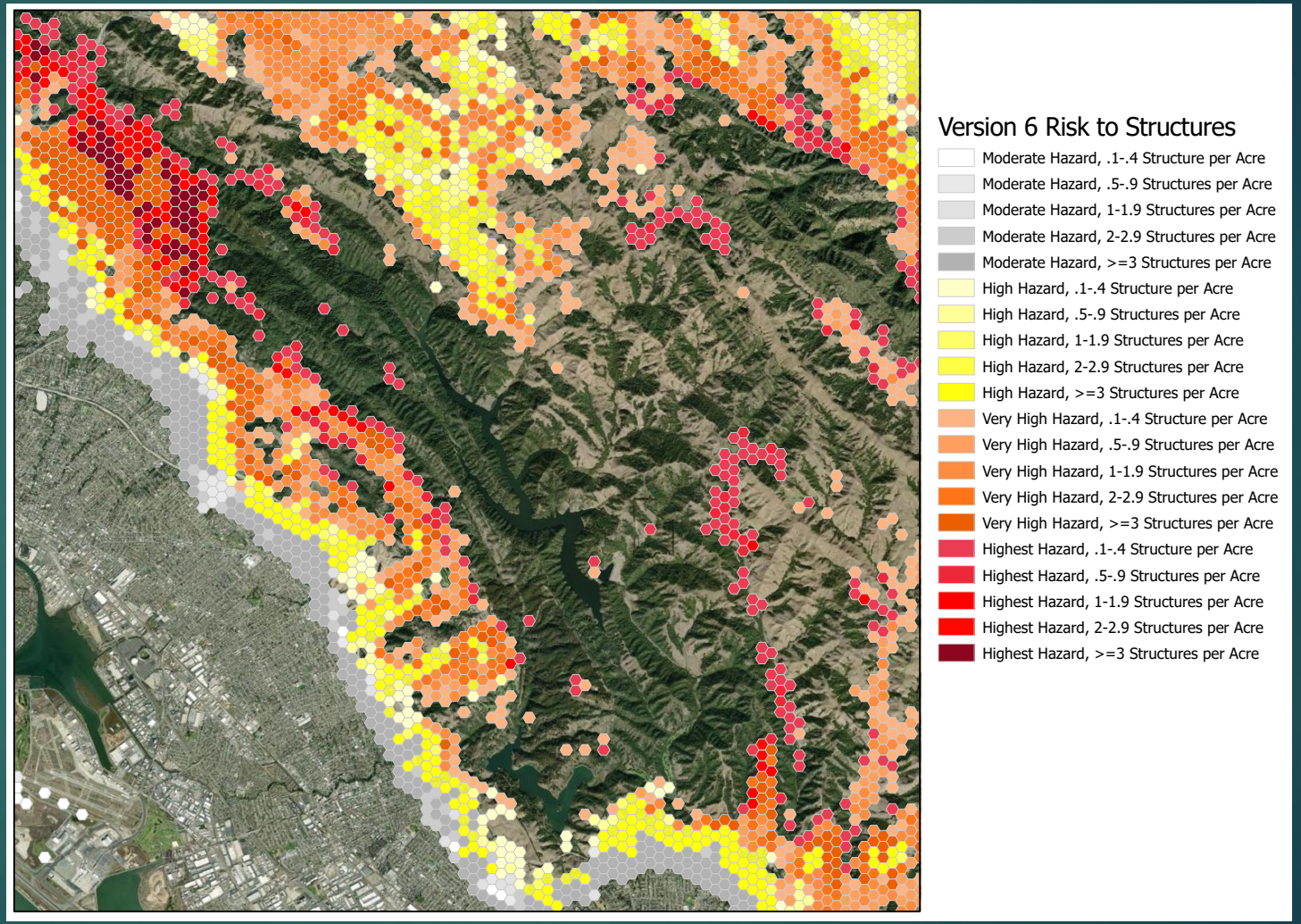
East Bay WUI Vegetation & Forest Restoration Plan, Historic Ecology Study, and CEQA Documentation

Wildfire Risk to Structures, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties



EBWC MEETING – NOVEMBER 14, 2024

MARK TUKMAN, LARA RACHOWICZ, SEAN BAUMGARTEN

Agenda

- Introduction and objectives
- Historic Ecology Reconnaissance Study (Sean)
- WUI Vegetation and Forest Restoration Plan (Mark)
- CEQA Documentation (Lara)

Historical Ecology Reconnaissance Study

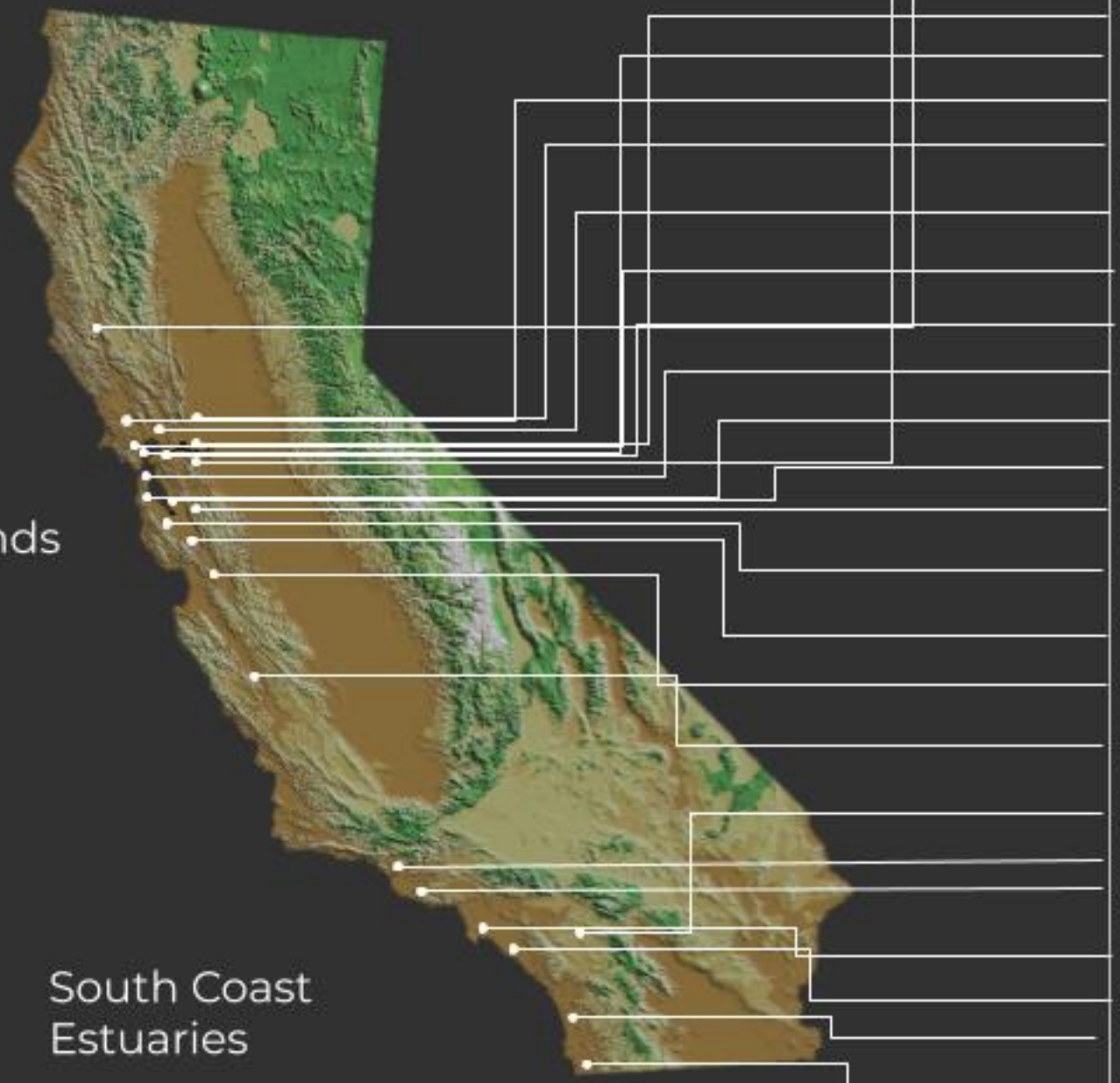
Sean Baumgarten, Senior Scientist
San Francisco Estuary Institute

seanb@sfei.org
www.sfei.org/programs/rl

De Mofras 1844
Courtesy of David Rumsey Map Collection

SFEI San Francisco Estuary Institute

SFEI Historical Ecology Studies



Navarro River watershed
Lower Walnut Creek
Suisun Marsh
Novato Creek baylands
Laguna de Santa Rosa
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta
Napa Valley
Petaluma River
Eastern Contra Costa County
San Francisco
Peninsula Watershed
Alameda Creek watershed
Penitencia Creek
Western Santa Clara Valley
Coyote Creek
Southern Santa Clara Valley
Salinas River
Riverside/Santa Ana River
Ventura River Valley
Santa Clara River Valley
Ballona Creek
San Gabriel River
Northern San Diego County Lagoons
Tijuana River Valley

Why Historical Ecology?

Examining **past landscape conditions**

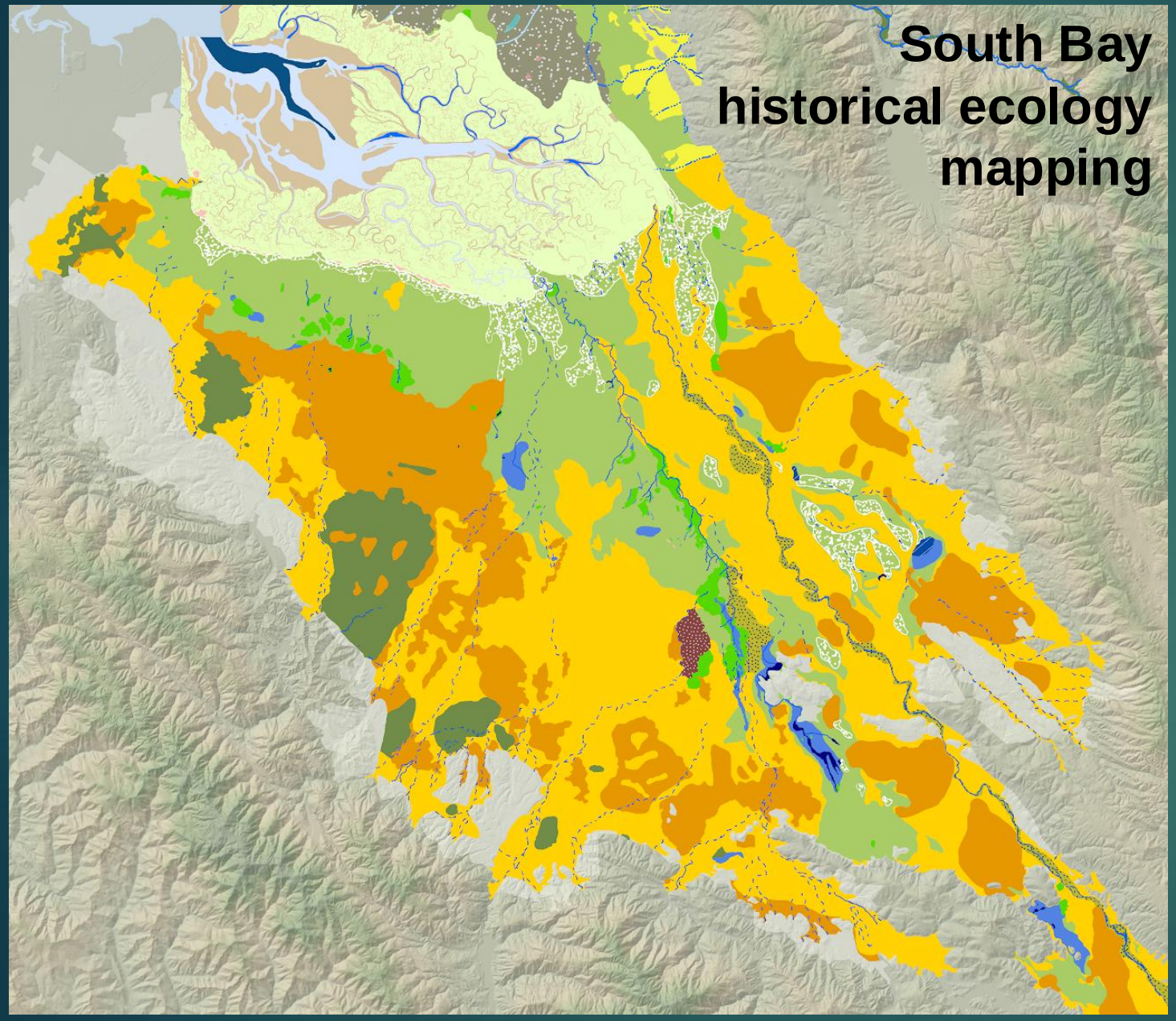
landscape patterns, physical processes, ecological functions

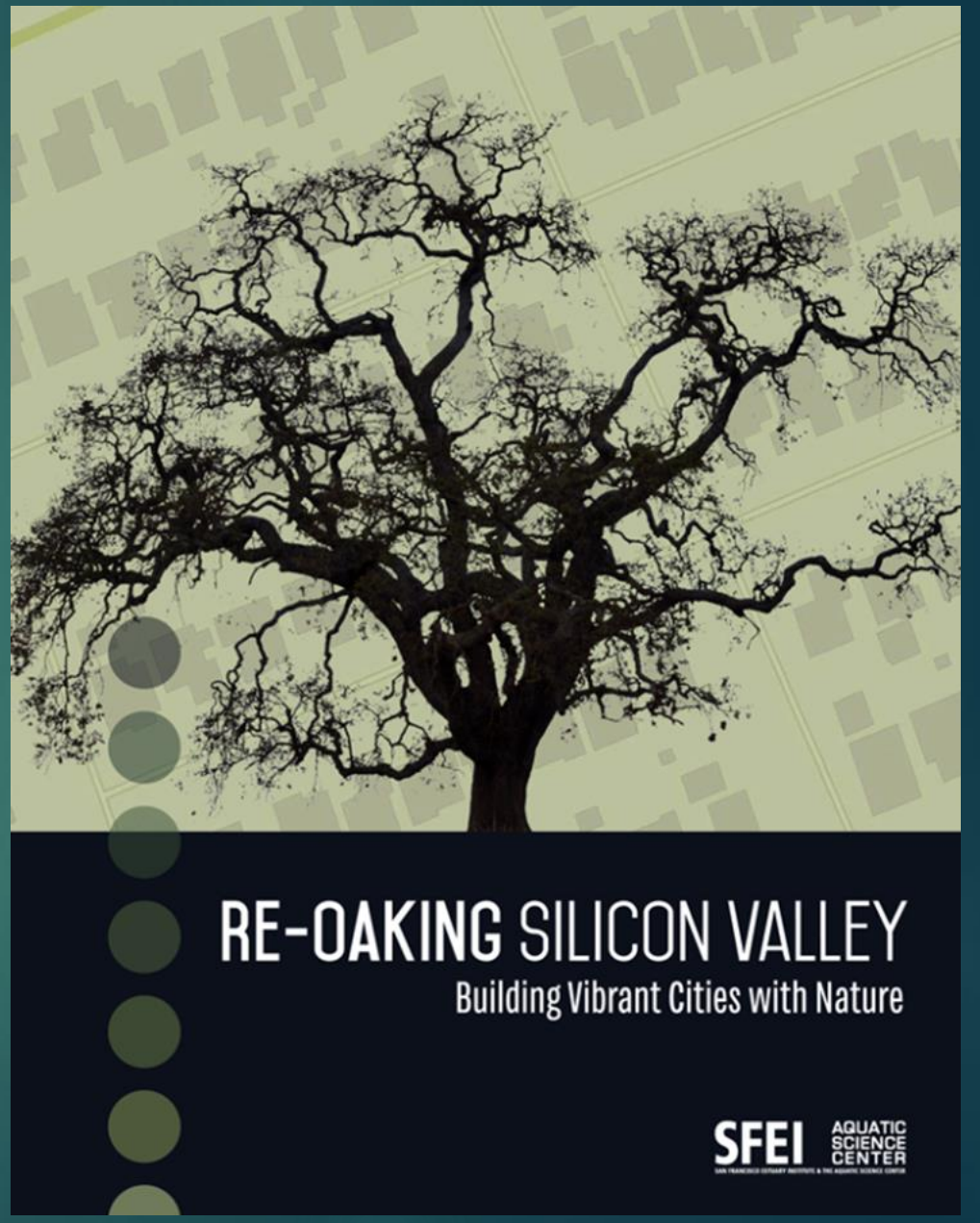
...to better understand the **present landscape**

trajectories and drivers of environmental change (and persistence)

...and envision **future potential**

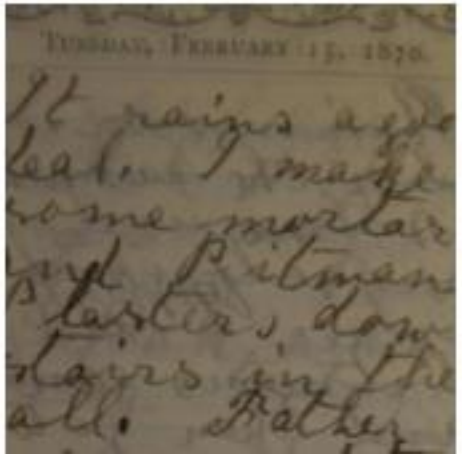
management and restoration opportunities and targets

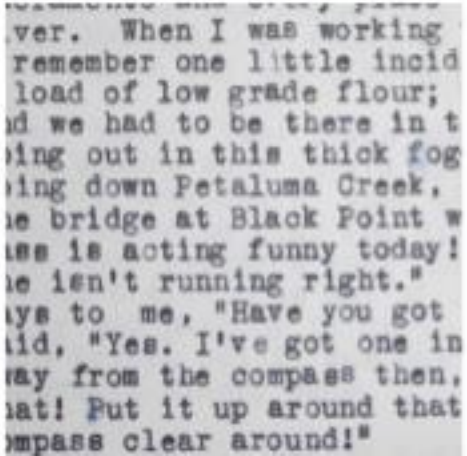

South Bay
historical ecology
mapping

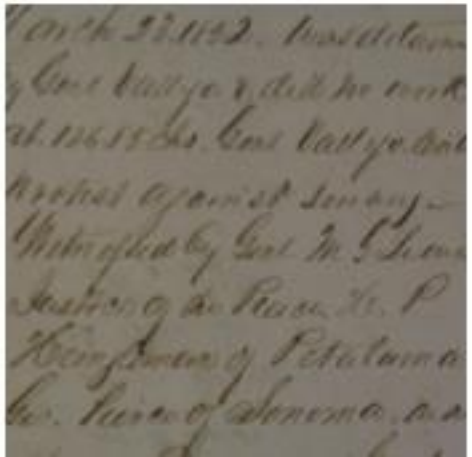

RE-OAKING SILICON VALLEY
Building Vibrant Cities with Nature
SFEI
AQUATIC
SCIENCE
CENTER

Photos

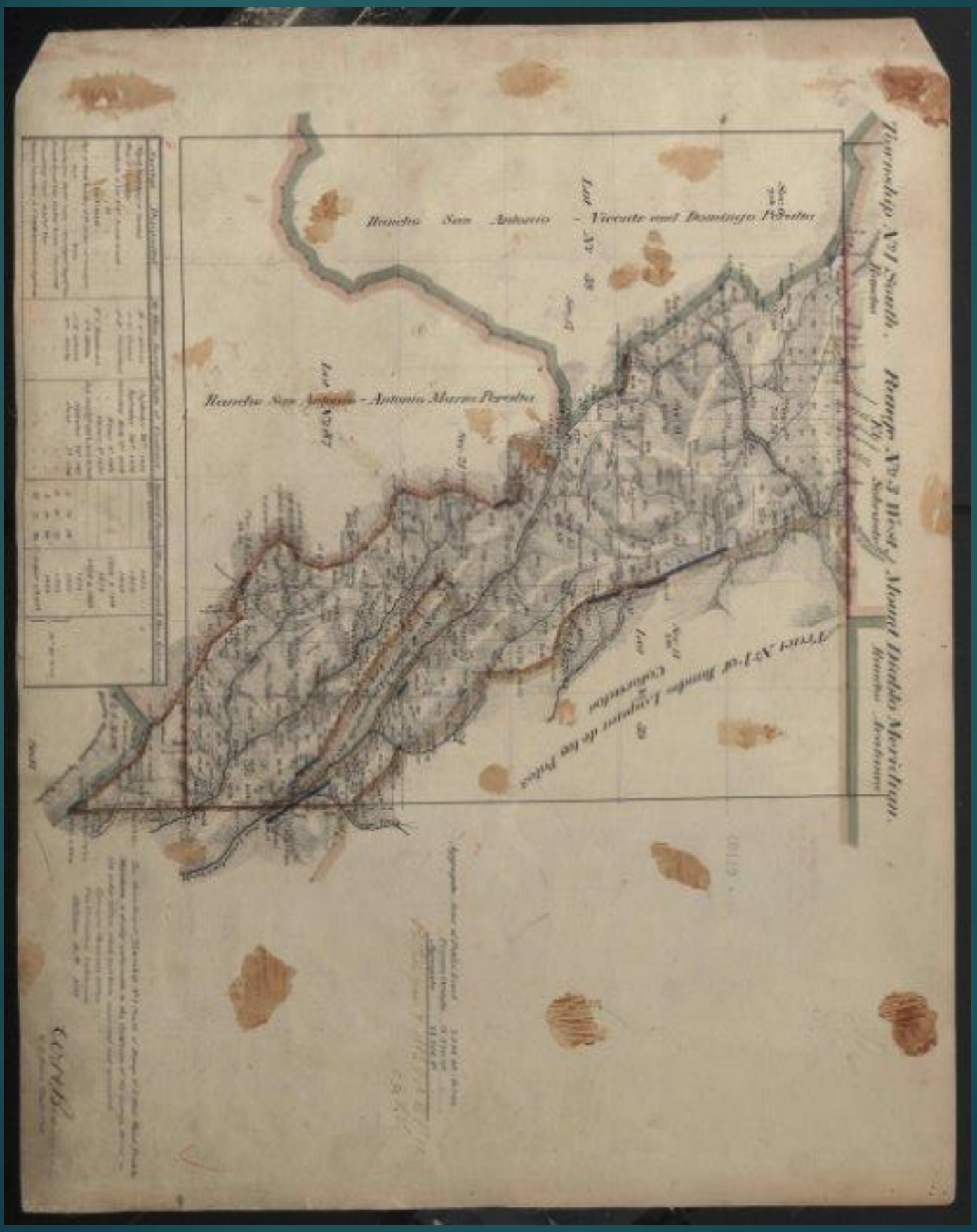
Maps and Drawings







Texts



Map of Township 1 South Range 3 West
Courtesy of Bureau of Land Management

Historical Ecology Reconnaissance Study

- Collect and compile key archival data sources (maps, photos, texts)

Historical Ecology Reconnaissance Study

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Mills College, circa 1873
Eadward Muybridge, courtesy of Northeastern University

Historical Ecology Reconnaissance Study

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- Summarize methods and findings in brief report and slidedeck
- Coordination with technical advisors, Tribal engagement

Budget range $100,000 - $200,000

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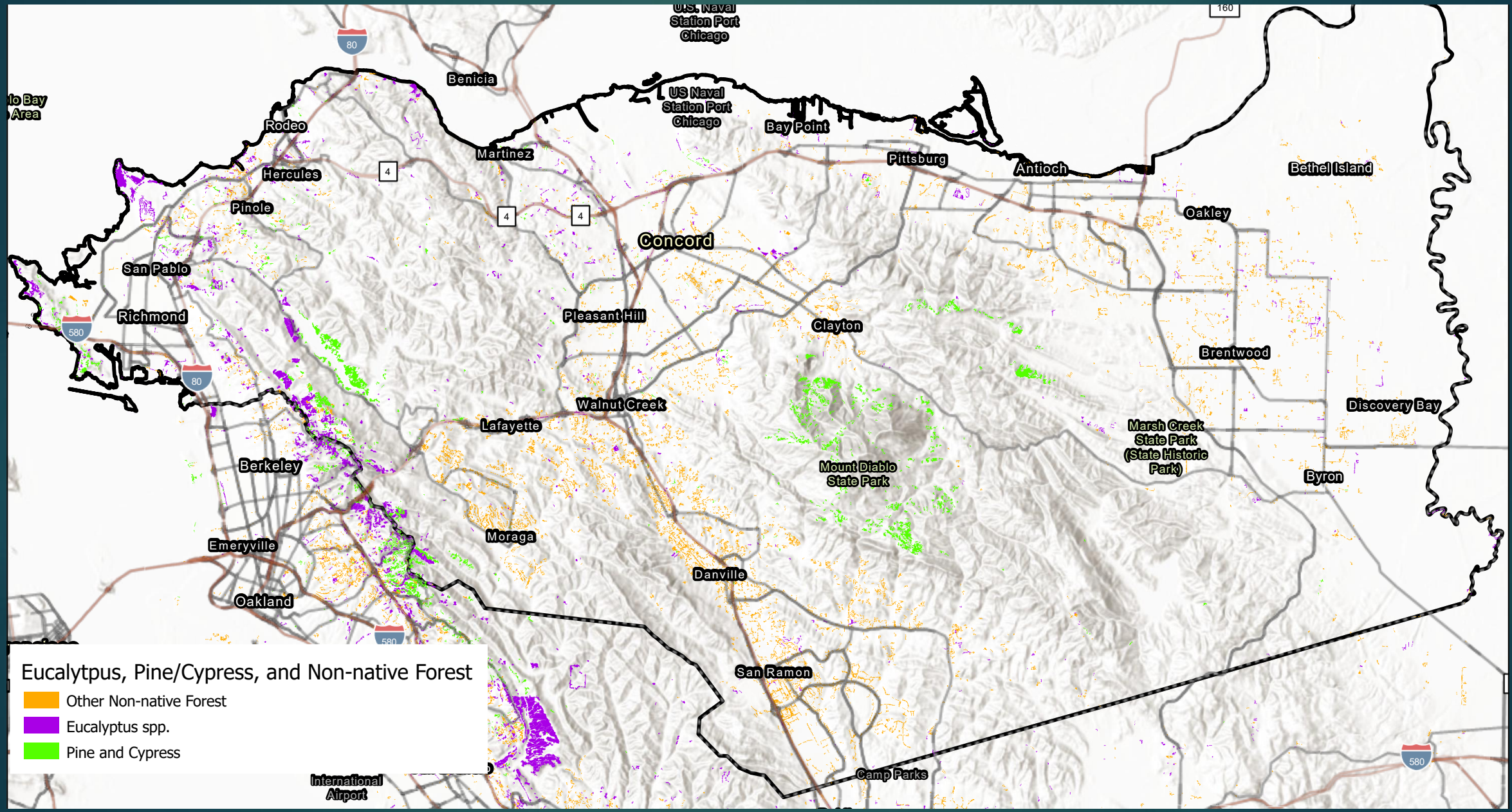
- Foundation for future in-depth historical ecology research

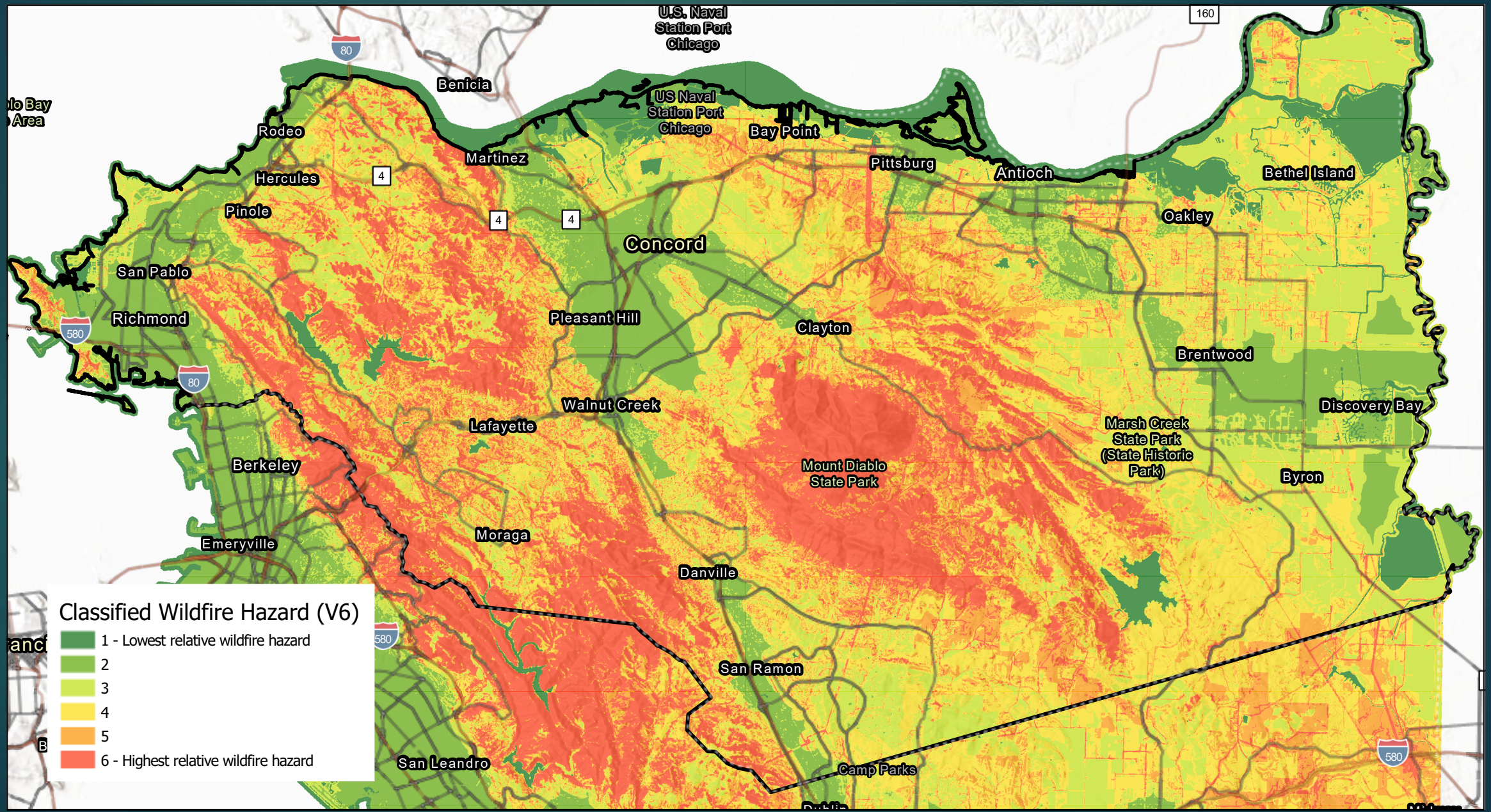
WUI Vegetation and Forest Restoration Plan

- Compile the best available datasets
- Analysis to identify hazardous fuels and structures at risk
- Work with East Bay Hills partners to develop draft priority polygons
- Develop web maps and narrative reports

Datasets – East Bay Target Species for Treatments

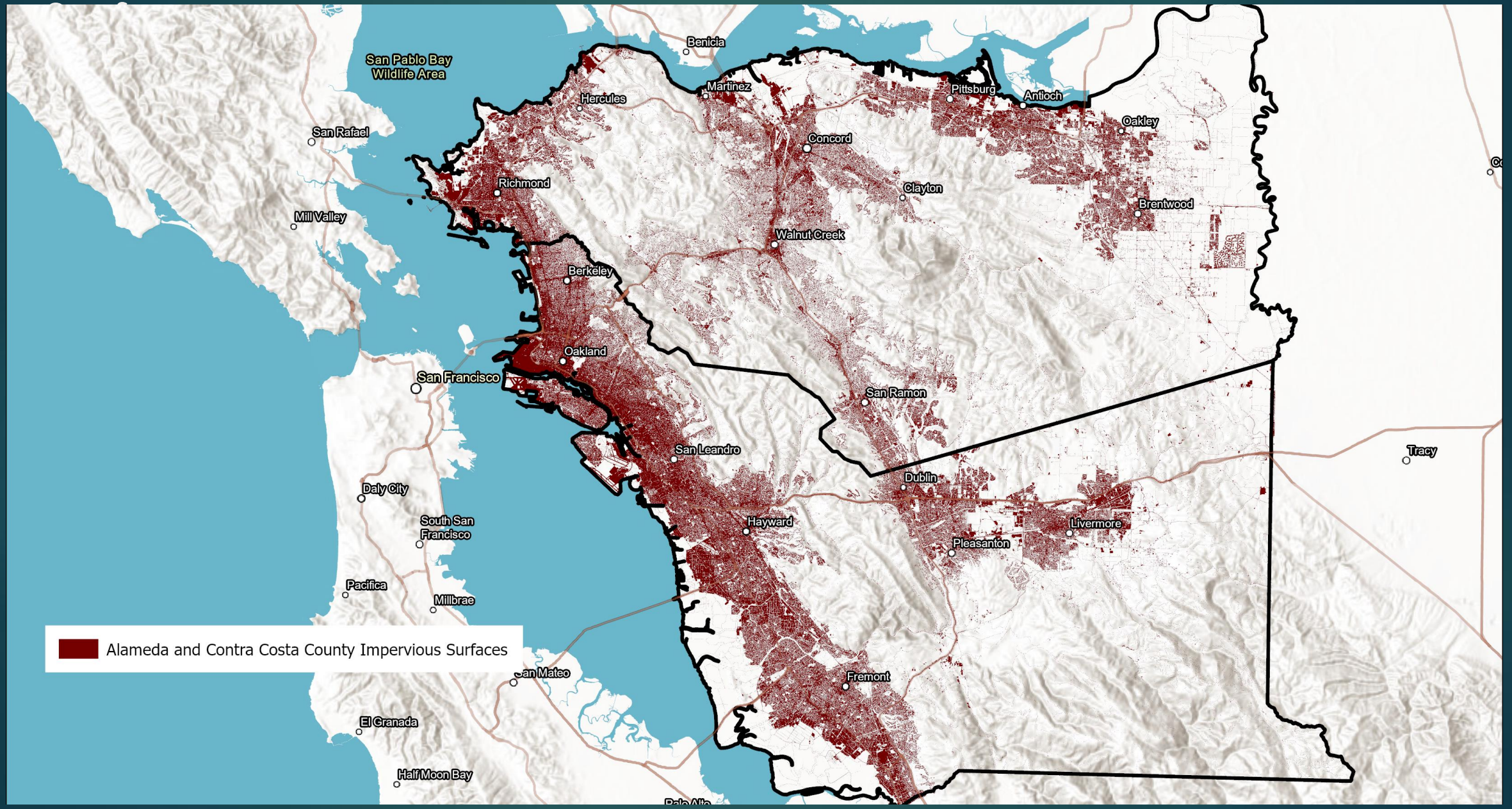


Datasets – East Bay Hills Wildfire Hazard



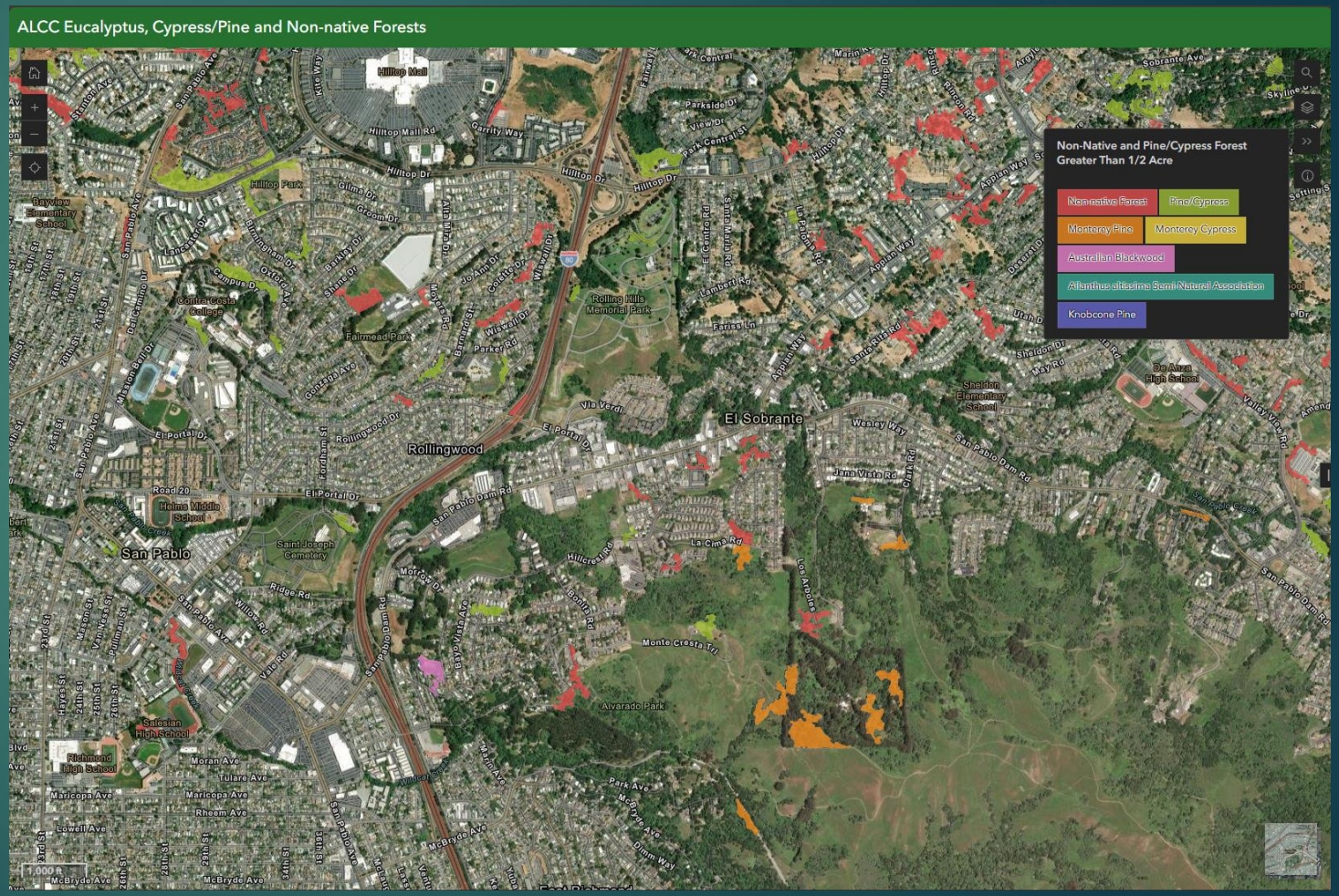
Datasets - Contra Costa Wildfire Risk to Structures

Datasets - Alameda and Contra Costa County Impervious



WUI Vegetation and Forest Restoration Plan - Deliverables

- Deliverables
  - Proposed boundaries for fuels treatment projects
  - Web mapping to show proposed projects, hazard and risk data, fuels data
  - Narrative report



Web Application Showing Target Species for Treatment

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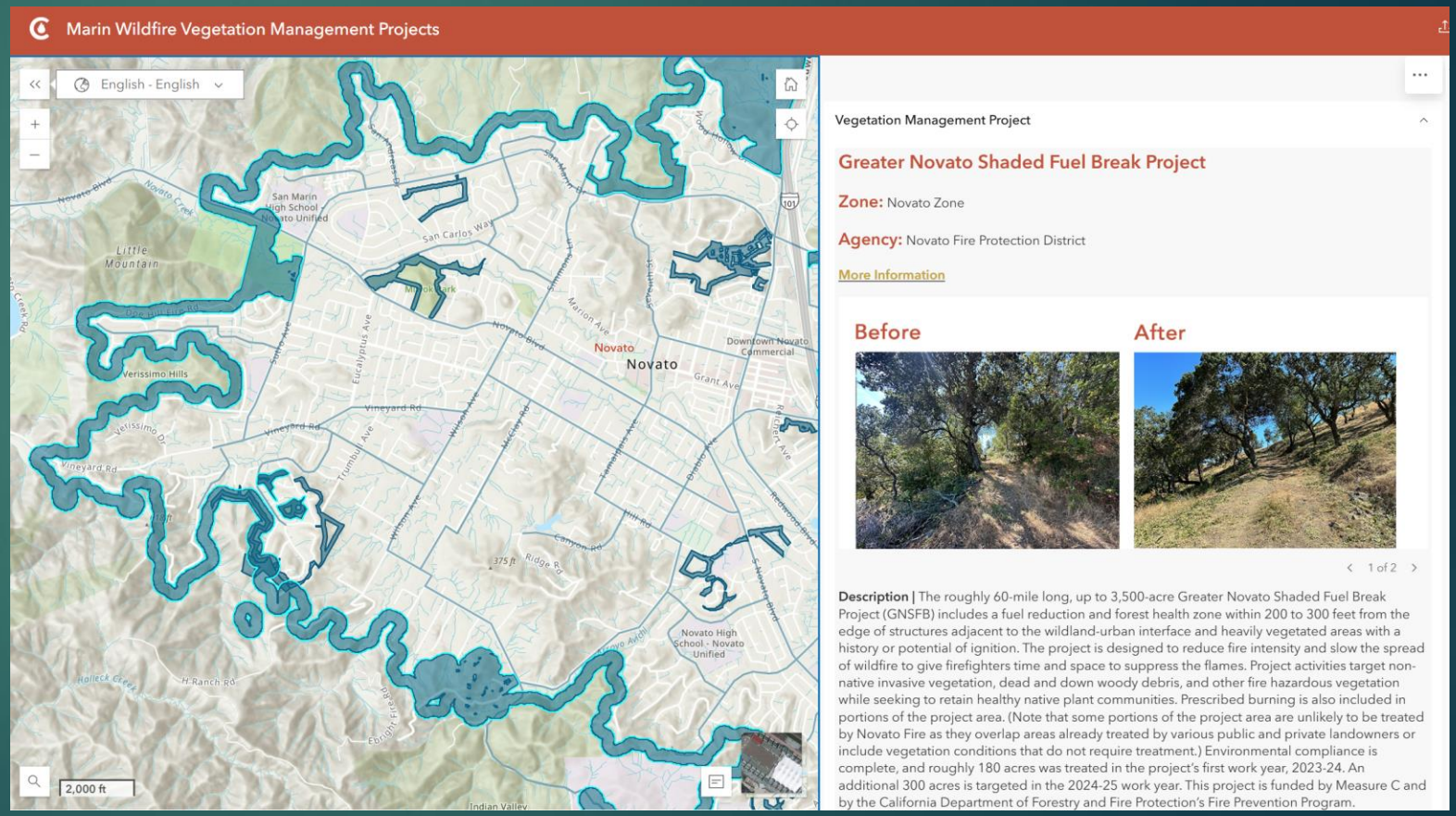


CEQA Documentation

California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Program EIR

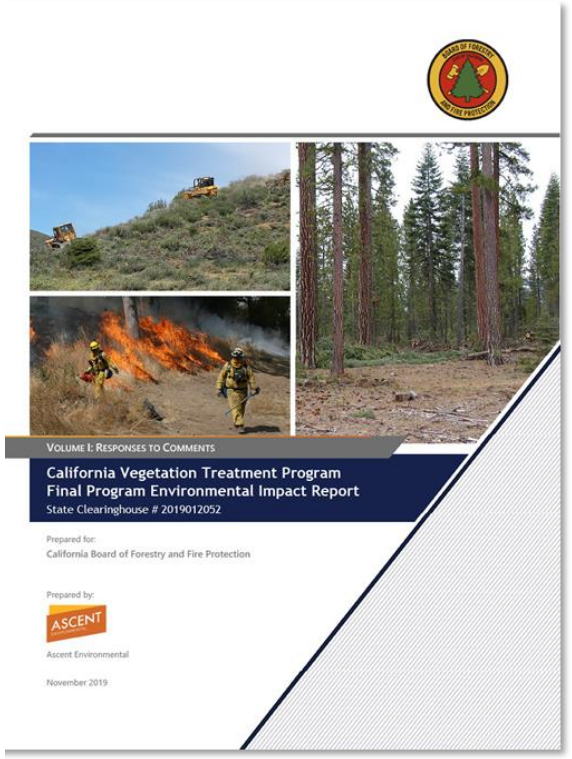
Overview of the California Vegetation Treatment Program and Use by EBWC

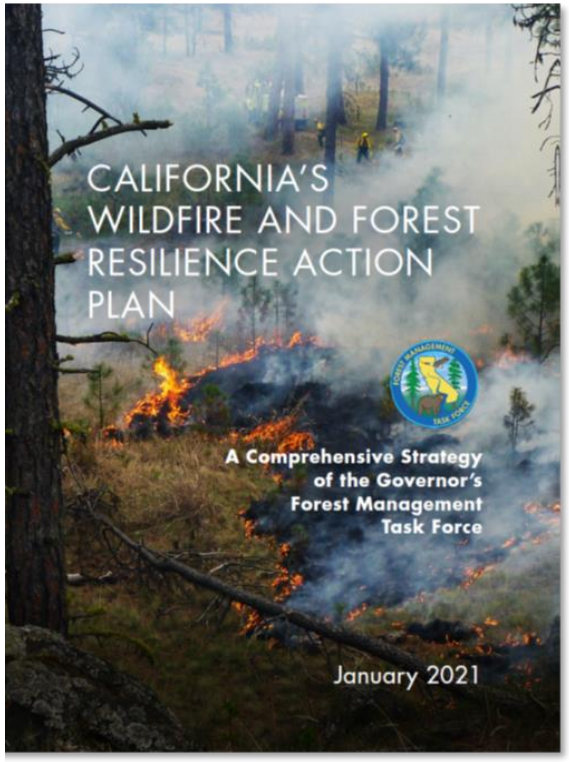
Lara Rachowicz, PhD, Senior Ecologist

ASCENT

California Vegetation Treatment Project (CalVTP)

- Provides CEQA efficiencies for use by many agencies to increase the pace and scale of vegetation treatments while maintaining environmental protections





CalVTP Program Area

"Treatable Landscape"

- Non-federal land
- 20.3 million acres total
- Tree, shrub, grass fuel types

CalVTP Program Description

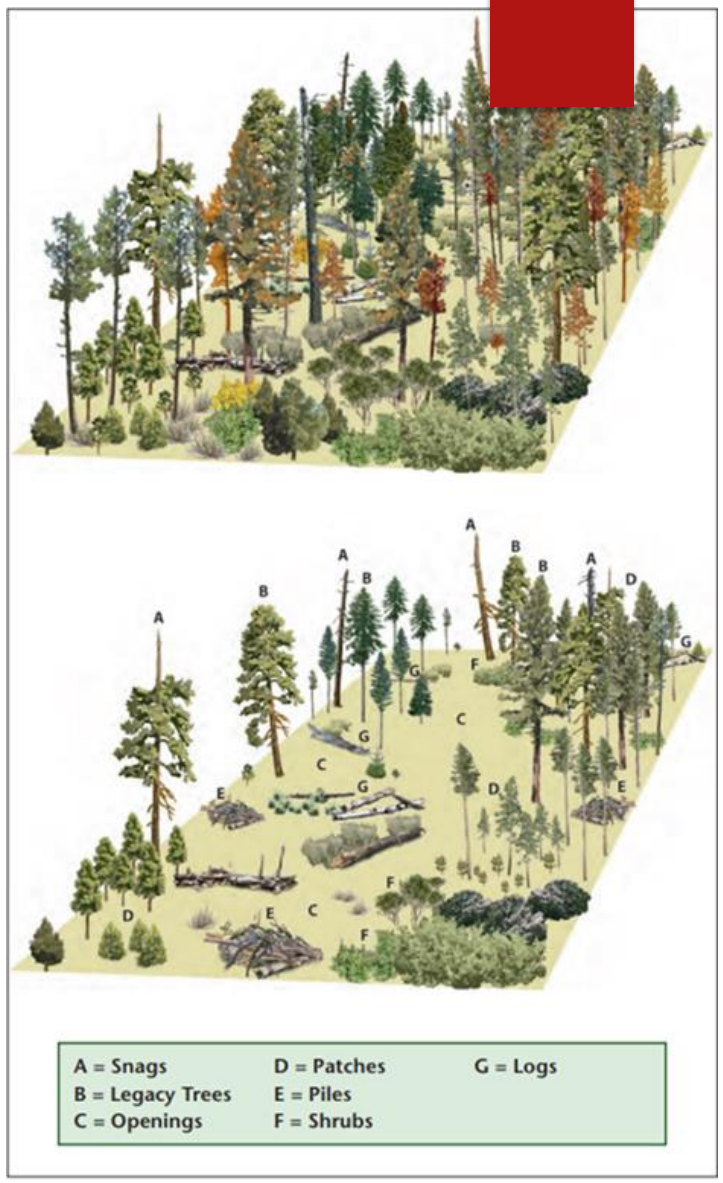
- Covered Treatment Types
  - Wildland-urban interface (WUI) fuel reduction
  - Fuel breaks (shaded and non-shaded)
  - Ecological restoration
- Covered Treatment Activities
  - Prescribed burning
  - Manual and mechanical vegetation treatment
  - Prescribed herbivory
  - Targeted ground application of herbicides

Project-Specific Analysis (PSA)

- Evaluate a later vegetation treatment project to determine if the project is consistent with the CalVTP
  - Documented in a **PSA** checklist
- An Addendum to the CalVTP can be paired with a PSA to address elements related to treatment that were not covered in the Program EIR
  - **PSA/Addendum**

CalVTP Environmentally Protective Measures

- Standard Project Requirements (SPRs)
  - Requirements to avoid or minimize impacts of vegetation treatments
  - Incorporated into the PSA as a standard part of treatment design and implementation
- Formulated through interagency coordination with:
  - California Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - California Coastal Commission
  - California Air Resources Board
  - State Water Resources Control Board



Benefits of Using the CalVTP

	Average Size/Length	Public Review Requirements	Overall Timeline to Complete	Standard of Review
EIR	300-1000+	30-day review period for the NOP 30-45 day review period for draft EIR	12-18 months	Substantial evidence
IS/ND **IS/MND**	70-120 pages	20-30 day review period for proposed ND/MND	6-8 months	Fair argument
PSA **PSA/Addendum**	40-80 pages	None required	4-6 months	Substantial evidence

How to Use a PSA/Addendum

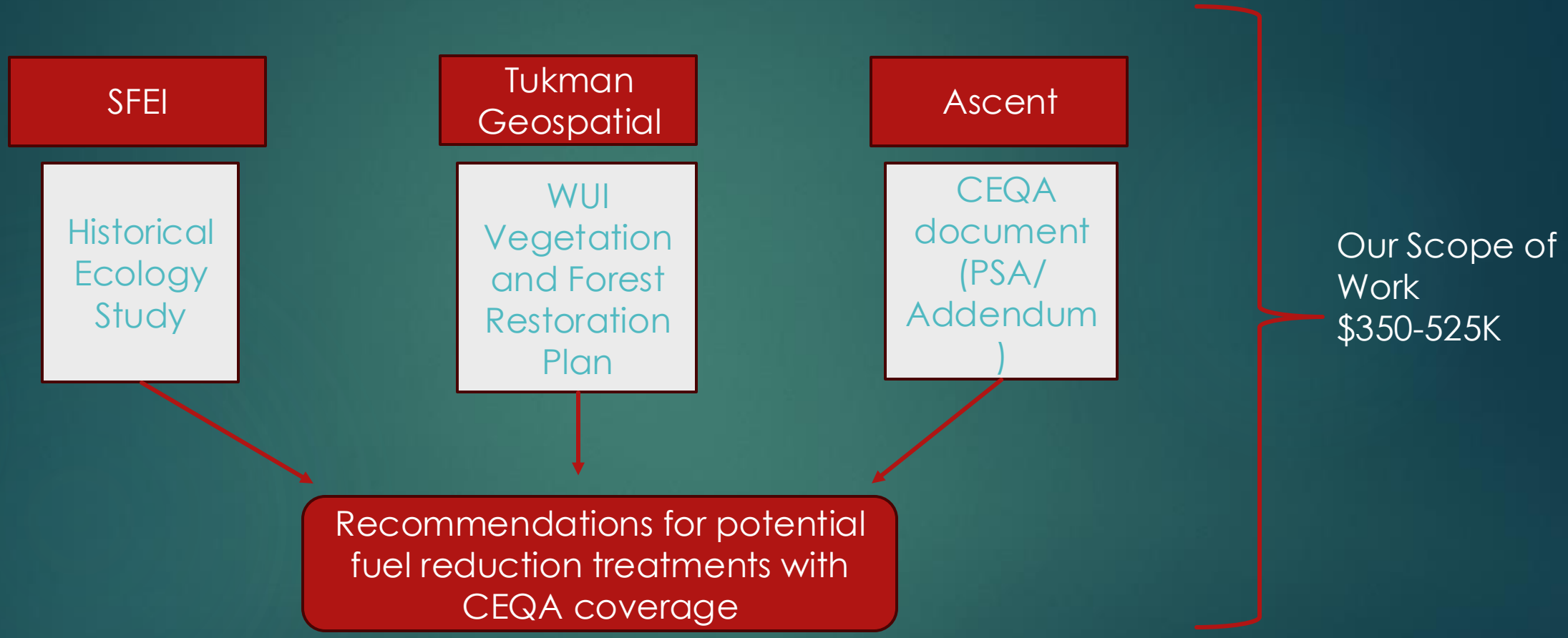
One CEQA Lead Agency

Other EBWC agencies: Responsible Agencies

For each discretionary approval

- File Notice of Determination (NOD)
- Prepare CEQA Findings

Collaboration with A Focus on Implementation



Next Steps for EBCG – more funding, ground investigations, gain access/participation by landowners, detailed treatment prescriptions, implementation

Q&A / Discussion