

Firewise & Wildfire Restoration Steering Committee

Committee Members: Steve Keppers-Chair, Walt Lynn, Maria Smith, Angie Chiquette, Larry Goldman, Gerry Rising, Andy Pursch, Karen Pursch, Tom Coseno, Robin Keppers
Responsibilities:

Firewise

- ❖ Spearhead effort for TVW to continue to be designated as a Firewise Community
- ❖ Implement appropriate assessment recommendations produced by the Forest Service in conjunction with the LVFPD
- ❖ Schedule Firewise events periodically for community participation
- ❖ Promote activity and encourage participation from Owners

Wildfire Restoration Steering Committee

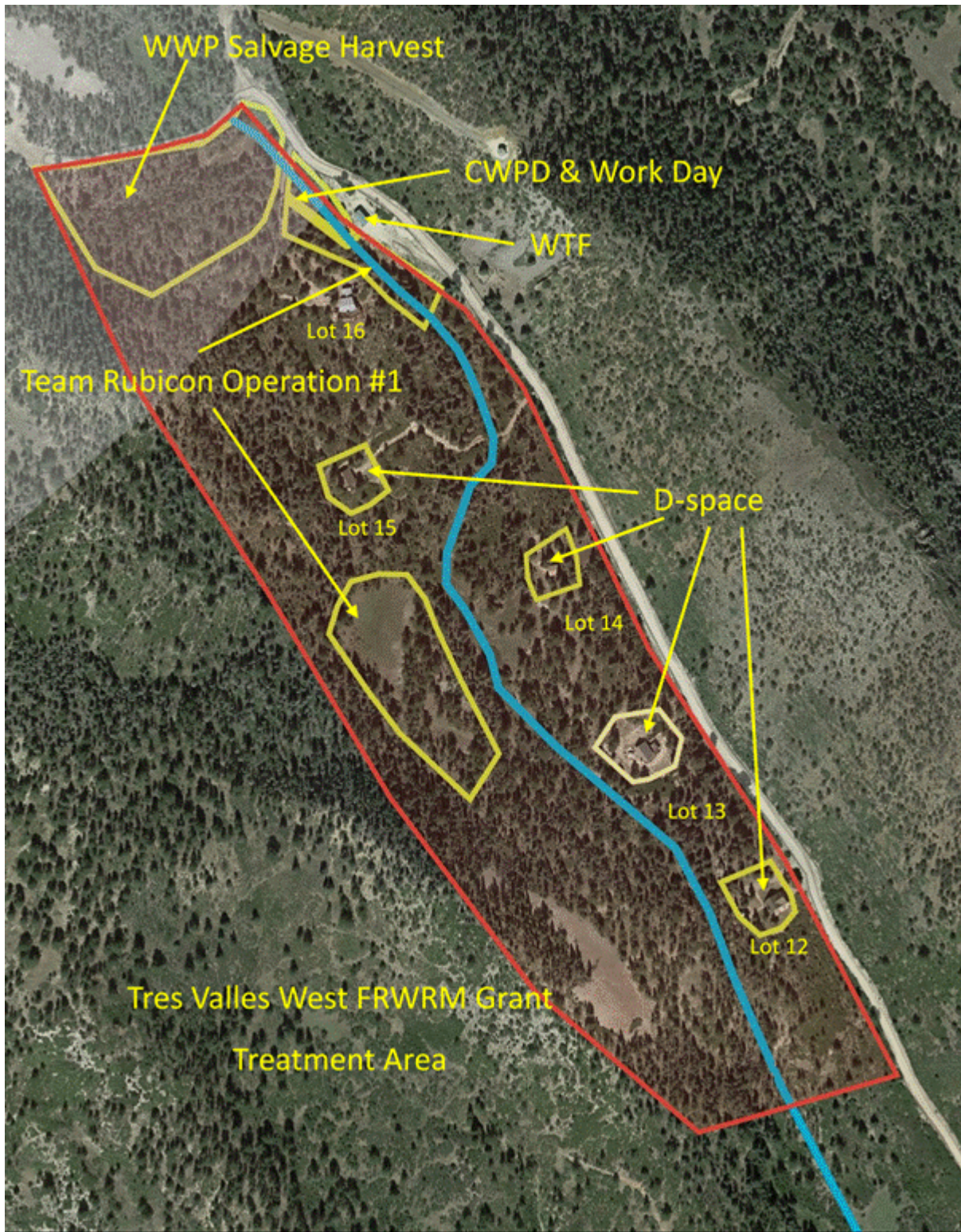
- ❖ Develop a Spring Creek Wildfire recovery plan for recommendation to the BoD / POA
- ❖ Establish / coordinate sub-committees as required for specific aspects of recovery
- ❖ Oversee the execution of the plan. (Committee may be active for several years.)

2020 Mid-Year Update

Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) Grant

Project Description

The project objectives for the Tres Valles West FRWRM Grant are to 1) create defensible space near homes (five) and the water treatment facility (WTF), 2) reduce fuels, and 3) create shaded fuel breaks which promote forest / watershed health and control wildfire movement and severity. The project treatment area shown on the map below, comprises 50 acres (red outline) of mixed conifer and oak, 5 residences, the community water treatment facility, domestic water source (spring) and a live stream which is part of the South Abeyta Creek / Upper Cucharas watershed. The CSFS grant award is \$40,000 with a 50% in-kind match (volunteer hours) from TVW owners, Team Rubicon and Huerfano County. The total project value of the grant plus in-kind contribution is expected to be greater than \$100,000.



TVW FRWRM Grant Treatment Area & Work Sites

Team Rubicon Operation #1

Team Rubicon (TR), a veteran based disaster relief organization, performed a volunteer fire mitigation, fuel reduction and shaded fuel break operation (nicknamed “Tres Amigos”) on the TVW FRWRM grant treatment area September 13 – 15, 2019. The TR team “command post” and housing at the Huerfano County Community Center in Walsenburg, with daily operations in the TVW treatment area. Summary accomplishments.

- 134 trees felled to create defensible barrier
- 799 cubic yards of debris managed into slash piles
- 1,852 – 4' logs for the Huerfano County Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)
- 8 “Spontaneous” TVW Volunteers managed
- \$33,265.71 Total In-Kind contribution



Team Rubicon fuel reduction operation

Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) July 2020

MHHC is performing fuel reduction and fire mitigation activities for the FRWRM grant during July 2020. The crew will spend three weeks clearing brush and ladder fuels along the stream and Bighorn Road below the Water Treatment Facility. This is a continuation of the FRWRM grant work done by Team Rubicon. MHHC will chip the slash from the mitigation work. The MHHC cost (~\$26,000) will be reimbursed from the CSFS grant.



Mile High Youth Corps Wildfire Mitigation

Spring Fire Restoration Plan

Project Description

The Wildfire Restoration Steering Committee (WRSC) was formed to evaluate the longer term impacts from the Spring Creek Fire, prioritize the areas and restoration work required, develop costs for treatment options, explore sources of funding, and make recommendations to the Board of Directors for restoration activities and an overall restoration plan. The restoration priorities are 1) protection of the water system – treatment plant, springs, water quality, 2) reduce the risk of flooding, manage erosion in the burn areas and protect the watershed, and 3) restore the forest health with revegetation.

The WRSC developed the Spring Fire Restoration Project Plan which encompasses the actual and proposed activities associated with Spring Fire Restoration on TVW. The plan includes actual and estimated costs and proposed timing of the activities. The plan and a special assessment of \$500 per lot (\$40,000 total) were approved at a special meeting of the TVW POA on 9/7/19.

Plan accomplishments are listed below and described in the following paragraphs:

- Salvage Harvest - Western Wood Products
- Log Erosion Barriers - Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC)
- Erosion Control – United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
- Erosion Control – Natural Resources Conservation Service / Emergency Watershed Protection (NRCS/EWP)
- Revegetation

The table below summarizes the project funding (insurance settlement, special assessment, POA operating budget (2018) and reimbursements), costs (including contingency), and the funding minus costs. The current forecast at completion of the project is Funding minus Costs of \$3,735.

Item / Task	Plan Total	Actual 6/30/20	Forecast 7/5/20
Total Restoration Funding	\$ 77,186	\$ 76,050	\$ 76,050
Total Costs to TVW	\$ 76,893	\$ 47,745	\$ 72,315
Total Funding Less Costs to TVW	\$ 293	\$ 28,305	\$ 3,735

Table 1 in the Appendix has details of the Restoration Plan showing the original plan, actual costs, and funding to date, and forecast cost of future tasks in the plan.

Salvage Harvest – Western Wood Products

TVW contracted with Western Wood Products (WWP) of Raton, NM to harvest and cut burnt trees in the central and west valley that were burnt in the Spring Creek Fire that passed through TVW June 28 – July 3, 2018. This work was performed from late July to mid-September, 2019. The WWP work encompassed 55.66 acres in the upper central valley and 12.32 acres in the upper west valley (above the water treatment plant). The central valley acreage includes 19.08 acres of work on private lots which was paid for by the individual property owners, and 4.2 acres in CSFS grant area reimbursed by CSFS. The total cost (net) to the TVW Owners Association was \$17,816.

WWP hauled out approximately 80 – 100 fully loaded logging trucks over the course of the operation. Non-commercial trees were cut and debranched. Having these trees cut reduces the chance of injury due to falling trees and helps with the mitigation of soil erosion caused by flash flooding.



West Valley from Water Tank: Left 10/5/18, Right 7/14/20



Central Valley from Water Tank: Left 10/5/18, Right 7/14/20

Log Erosion Barriers - Mile High Youth Corps

Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) was hired for a second straight year to build log erosion barriers (LEBs) in the upper central valley. The fundamental purpose of the LEBs is to slow water flow during flash flood events to mitigate soil erosion and promote regrowth of native vegetation. The crew was hired to work over a 4-day period beginning October 21, 2019. However, as in the previous year, the work was cut short due to snow. Nonetheless, the crew worked 2 10-hour days and accomplished the building of 57 LEBs to add to last year’s total. Below are photos of some of the new LEBs (left) and some of the work crew (right).



Log Erosion Barriers - MHYC

Erosion Control – United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

UMCOR is a volunteer organization that provides relief and disaster response to people in more than 80 countries, including the United States. A team of 10 volunteers worked for 3 days in the central valley doing contour felling of ~100 burnt trees on the steep hillside, and creating and repairing LEBs.



Central Valley erosion control - UMCOR

Erosion Control – Natural Resources Conservation Service / Emergency Watershed Protection (NRCS/EWP)

Following the fire in July 2018, a team from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) / Emergency Watershed Protection surveyed the entire Spring Creek Fire burn area to determine where flood / erosion control projects were required to protect the watersheds affected by the fire. The findings and project plans from the survey teams were submitted as a request for a federal assistance grant; the request was approved and approximately \$12M in funding was approved for Huerfano County / NRCS – including projects on Tres Valles West (west and central valleys) . The approved projects are engineered by the NRCS, contracted by the county, paid for on a 97% / 3% cost share to the landowner. The following is a summary of the tasks that were performed as part of the NRCS project. (Figure 1 in the Appendix shows the NRCS engineering plans for each location and the specific tasks for construction.)

- Replace undersized culvert and reinforce the stream crossings on Elk Road.
- Rock checks / rip rap, diversion structures to control the flow of water and minimize erosion.
- Install armored crossings and water diversion bars on roads and driveways to mitigate erosion of roads.
- Mulching and seeding of harvested burn areas (approximately 10 acres).
- The flood barrier structure directly above the water plant was not installed

All NRCS contractor work was completed 6/12/20. The total contractor cost was \$256,190; 3% owner contribution \$7,686 (POA contribution for West valley and Elk Road crossing: \$3,908. Central valley owner contribution paid by the Lynns – THANK YOU!)

Additional work was done after NRCS completion to divert water away from the WTF / Spring #2 area.



NRCS – Central Valley: Mulch and Seed (left), Elk Road Armored Crossing (right)



NRCS – West Valley: Rock Check installation (left), Driveway Armored Crossing (right)

Revegetation

Colorado State University seedling grant - The POA applied for and received a grant from CSU for Aspen and Ponderosa seedlings to be planted in the burn scar areas. Arrangements were made for CSU student volunteers to plant the seedlings in the spring of 2020. The project was postponed until 2021 because of Covid-19 restrictions.

Ponderosa saplings - 204 ponderosa saplings were transplanted into the upper Central Valley. The planting and watering is paid from the BLM grant at no cost to the POA (see description below).

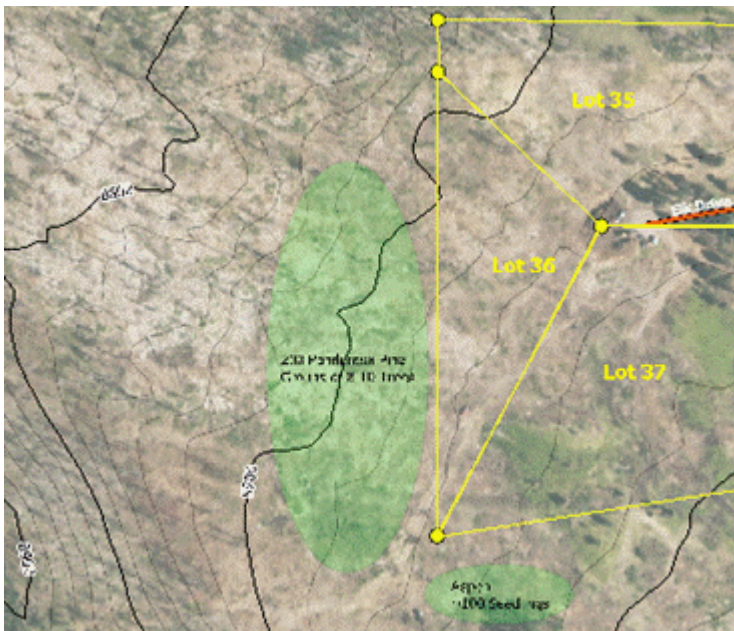
Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Wildfire Mitigation / Restoration Grant

Project Description

The principal purpose and objectives are to perform wildfire recovery and watershed protection activities in the burn scar area resulting from the 2018 Spring Creek Fire and reduce future wildfire risk in the Tres Valles West area that borders BLM land. Primary activities include the creation of erosion control features, salvage and sanitation forest treatments, fuel reduction, and planting trees for forest restoration. The anticipated outcome is a restored ecosystem that reduces risk to the watershed and promotes healthy forest regrowth.

Ponderosa Sapling Planting

Transplanted 204 Ponderosa trees for the BLM/TVW Spring Fire 2018 restoration project. The trees were located off County Road 363, donated by Paul Branson. The trees are approximately 2-4 feet in height. We employed Loren Willcox from HCTI in La Veta to perform the work. Holes were dug using a hydraulic auger attached to a skid steer. The work occurred in early April. Below is the location of the restoration area in the middle valley area.



Sapling Planting

Firewise

Project Description

TVW is a designated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) in the La Veta Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and has been a recognized Firewise USA community since 2014. For Firewise USA recognition TVW conducted a wildfire risk assessment with the Colorado State Forest Service and developed a TVW Local Action Plan to address the identified risks and actions. TVW Firewise projects are guided by these documents.

Firewise USA Recognition – Our application for renewal was approved 11/7/19 and we are a recognized Firewise USA community for 2021. Our “Firewise USA required annual contribution” for 2019 was 1290 hours and over \$30,000 (restoration contractors and mastication).

National Wildfire Preparedness Day / Clean-up day – Our project was to conduct a second Team Rubicon fire mitigation operation (Tres Amigos #2) in conjunction with National Wildfire Preparedness Day on May 4, 2020. We applied for and received a \$500 award from State Farm to support the project. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic Team Rubicon placed all mitigation operations on hold and the 2020 project was cancelled. The State Farm award was applied to slash pile mulching.

Slash Pile – The community slash pile continues to be extremely popular and encourages fire mitigation efforts. Over 500 cubic yards of slash were mulched 5/29/20.

Roadside brush clearing - 2170 linear feet of roadside brush were masticated to improve safe emergency operations and evacuation. The project was a cost sharing grant from Spanish Peaks Alliance for Wildfire Protection (SPAWP) and Huerfano County. The TVW cost share was 25% (\$643).

Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessments – Paul Branson (Huerfano County Wildfire Preparedness) sponsored a cost share program for homeowners to conduct HIZ assessments and perform mitigation work. HIZ assessments have been performed on 14 homes and 7 cost share activities have been conducted.

Wildfire Hazardous Activities Policy – The Spring Creek Fire in 2018 is a startling example of the magnitude of the devastation that can occur when fire risk is extreme and human negligence occurs. This policy is intended to reduce the risk of human- caused wildfire on Tres Valles West by specifying restrictions on hazardous activities that could result in wildfire. The policy has been approved by the Board of Directors, please vote for approval at the annual meeting.

Remaining Work/Projects

Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) Grant

Two tasks remain for completion of the FRWRM grant:

- 1) Perform forestry mulching of roadside vegetation (primarily oak), mulching / clumping of large areas of oak and mulching of slash piles created within the treatment area.
- 2) Conduct the postponed Team Rubicon Operation (Tres Amigos #2). Continue wildfire mitigation in the FTRWRM treatment area.

Spring Fire Restoration Plan

Three main tasks remain for completion of the Spring Fire Restoration plan:

- 1) Replace the north boundary fence that was destroyed during the fire and in general disrepair. The work and cost will be coordinated with our neighbor.
- 2) Repair the severe erosion on the East Valley Road.
- 3) Continue revegetation efforts in the central and west valleys. Replan the seedling planting project with CSFS and CSU.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Wildfire Mitigation / Restoration Grant *Wildfire Mitigation / Restoration*

Tres Valles West Homeowners Association (TVW) was awarded a 3-year contract from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to perform wildfire mitigation and forest restoration – the contract is 100% funded by BLM, zero POA funding is required. Funding of \$49,000 has been authorized for 2020, of which \$15,000 has been expended for tree planting and watering in the central valley burn scar. This project is for wildfire mitigation on ~11 acres of TVW common area along the Lost Lake trail that borders BLM land, and the removal of dead / burned trees from one acre around Lost Lake. (See map.)

The primary objective of this project is to mitigate wildfire risk and reduce hazardous fuels by selectively thinning and pruning trees and shrubs and remove selected trees in densely crowded areas. There is also minor “roadwork” that needs to be done to improve access to the mitigation area.



Firewise

Continuing Firewise tasks are:

- 1) Update the TVW wildfire risk assessment and action plan. Required every 5 years for Firewise USA recognition, performed in conjunction with CSFS and Huerfano County.
- 2) Develop TVW firewise guidelines for new construction
- 3) Promote wildfire awareness and adaptation through community mitigation events, slash pile, participation in Firewise USA and community organizations, and pursuit of funding opportunities

Appendix

Table 1- Spring Fire Restoration Plan / Actual Costs

Spring Fire Restoration Project Plan / Actual										
Item / Task	Qty	Unit Cost	Actual 2018	Plan 2019	Plan 2020	Plan 2021+	Plan Total	Actual 6/30/20	Forecast 7/5/20	Notes
Costs										
Salvage harvest - Western Wood Products										
West Valley (Water Plant)	27	\$ 400		\$ 10,800			\$ 10,800	\$ 4,928	\$ 4,928	12.32 Acres
Central Valley (Lynn)	53	\$ 400		\$ 21,200			\$ 21,200	\$ 22,264	\$ 22,264	55.66 Acres
Contingency Common Area	10	\$ 400		\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ -	
Subtotal Salvage Harvest	90	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ 36,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 36,000	\$ 27,192	\$ 27,192	67.98 Acres
Salvage Harvest Reimbursement - Lot Owners	-34	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ (13,600)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (13,600)	\$ (7,632)	\$ (7,632)	19.08 Acres
Subtotal Salvage Harvest after Lot Owner reimbursement	56	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ 22,400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,400	\$ 19,560	\$ 19,560	
Water System										
Water system restoration and sanitation			\$ 1,543				\$ 1,543	\$ 1,543	\$ 1,543	Insurance
Cleaning of water plant exterior				\$ 3,530			\$ 3,530	\$ -	\$ 200	Insurance
Subtotal Water System			\$ 1,543	\$ 3,530	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,073	\$ 1,543	\$ 1,743	
Common Area										
<i>Erosion Control</i>										
MHYC LEBs - Valley 2 (2 days)			\$ 3,320				\$ 3,320	\$ 3,320	\$ 3,320	
MHYC LEBs - Valley 2 (40 hours)				\$ 8,300			\$ 8,300	\$ 6,225	\$ 6,225	3 of 4 days, snowed out again!
NRCS Erosion Control - Valley 1				\$ 1,800			\$ 1,800	\$ 3,908	\$ 7,078	3% Match to FES cost-Lot16+M&M Const. @ WTF
Subtotal Erosion Control			\$ 3,320	\$ 10,100	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,420	\$ 13,453	\$ 16,623	
<i>Other Common Area</i>										
Revegetation - Tree planting					\$ 1,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000	204 Ponderosa planted for BLM
Revegetation - Re-seed			\$ 282	\$ 600			\$ 882	\$ 282	\$ 282	
Fence repair / replace			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	Insurance. Cost share Andreatta.
Road Drainage and Culverts 2018			\$ 12,323	\$ -			\$ 12,323	\$ 12,323	\$ 12,323	2018 Roads Maintenance
Road Drainage and Culverts 2019+			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	CapEx
East Valley Road					\$ 3,200		\$ 3,200	\$ -	\$ 3,200	
Weed Spraying			\$ 420		\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 1,420	\$ 420	\$ 1,420	
Drainage Assessment			\$ 175				\$ 175	\$ 175	\$ 175	
Subtotal Other Common Area			\$ 13,200	\$ 600	\$ 14,700	\$ 3,500	\$ 32,000	\$ 13,200	\$ 30,400	
Subtotal Common Area			\$ 16,520	\$ 10,700	\$ 14,700	\$ 3,500	\$ 45,420	\$ 26,652	\$ 47,022	
Contingency / Miscellaneous										
Contingency			\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000	
Lot #41 shut-off valve repair			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (250)	\$ (250)	Credit to WWP invoice
MHYC Porta-a-potty			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 240	\$ 240	Mountain Disposal
Subtotal Contingency / Miscellaneous			\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ (10)	\$ 3,990	
Total Costs to TVW			\$ 18,063	\$ 40,630	\$ 14,700	\$ 3,500	\$ 76,893	\$ 47,745	\$ 72,315	
Restoration Funding										
Operating Budget			\$ 18,063				\$ 18,063	\$ 18,063	\$ 18,063	
Insurance Settlement			\$ 16,323				\$ 16,323	\$ 16,323	\$ 16,323	
CSFS FRWRM Grant Reimbursement	7	\$ 400		\$ 2,800			\$ 2,800	\$ 1,664	\$ 1,664	4.16 Acres
Spring Fire Restoration Assessment	80	\$ 500		\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000		\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	
Total Restoration Funding			\$ 34,386	\$ 42,800	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ 77,186	\$ 76,050	\$ 76,050	
Total Restoration Funding			\$ 34,386	\$ 42,800	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ 77,186	\$ 76,050	\$ 76,050	
Total Costs to TVW			\$ 18,063	\$ 40,630	\$ 14,700	\$ 3,500	\$ 76,893	\$ 47,745	\$ 72,315	
Total Funding Less Costs to TVW			\$ 16,323	\$ 2,170	\$ 5,300	\$ (3,500)	\$ 293	\$ 28,305	\$ 3,735	

Figure 1 NRCS Project Engineering – West Valley (WTF) and Central Valley (Lynn)

