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Executive Summary

The Round Valley Indian Tribes (RVIT) will have 15 AmeriCorps members who will work on the three interventions that comprise the AmeriCorps Environmental Action Initiative (AEAI) on the Round Valley Indian Reservation in California. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps member workers will be responsible for completing training and implementation of fire prevention, stream restoration and environmental clean-up projects.

In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 25 youth volunteers who will be trained by AmeriCorps workers and then engaged in stream restoration activities in years two and three of the project.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Environmental Stewardship. The CNCS investment of \$245,025.00 will be matched with \$75,972.00 in public funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Rationale and Approach/Program Design (50%)

The Round Valley Indian Tribes propose to employ AmeriCorps members to implement the AmeriCorps Environmental Action Initiative (AEAI) to conduct forestry stewardship aimed at fire prevention, restore five streams on the Round Valley Reservation, and clean up five illegal waste dumps on tribal lands. The following seven tribes are included in the Round Valley Indian Tribes (RVIT): Concow (a Maidu Tribe), Little Lake, Nome-Lackie (or Nomalacki), Pit River, Pomo, Wailacki, and Yuki. RVIT includes 4,965 enrolled tribal members, with 1,159 tribal members living on the Round Valley Indian Reservation adjacent to the unincorporated town of Covelo, California and the Mendocino National Forest. The Reservation encompasses 59 square miles of land located in the beautiful rugged mountain forest of northern Mendocino County (with a small portion of tribal lands extending into Trinity County to the North).

During the *ꞀdrivesꞀ* of Native people forced to relocate from their ancestral lands to designated living areas, which occurred throughout northern California in the mid-1860s, approximately 13 different tribes, with different cultures and languages, were thrown together at the Round Valley Nome Lackie Subsidiary Farm on what was originally Yuki land. Many of these tribes were forced to walk a great distance over a short period of time in brutal winter weather, resulting in the death of many tribal members along our own regional *Ꞁtrail of tearsꞀ*. The drives of Native people in the northern California region are generally viewed as the most horrific instance of abuse of Native people in all of

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California. Some of the tribes consolidated on the land in Round Valley had a history of traditional enmity. In 1858, the Nome Lackie Subsidiary Farm became the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

a. Problem/Need (9 points)

In 2011, a massive fire raged in the Mendocino National Forest bordering tribal lands and 50,000 acres were burned, including 450 acres of the Round Valley Indian Reservation. Because of previous fire prevention work accomplished by RVIT, the overall damage to tribal lands was relatively minimal, even with such a large fire. Forestry stewardship is an ongoing practice and we are now worried about protecting 60,000 acres of forest within the boundaries of the Reservation. The 2011 fire was caused by a lightning strike. We are presently experiencing the worst year of drought in the history of record-keeping for the State of California. The vulnerability to fire on the Reservation, both in residential areas and on forested lands, is alarming. Unless we can clear brush and vegetation, we will remain open to devastation from fire. We need more manpower to accomplish this work as quickly as possible. Our first priority will be to clear and protect land surrounding dwellings and homes. After that we will prioritize habitat for plants and animals that contribute to the livelihood, nurturance, and culture of the tribal community living on our land.

The challenges posed by the remote location of our tribal lands cannot be over-emphasized. Other reservations in California are not in this situation. We are bounded on one side by the vast Mendocino National Forest and on other sides by state and county lands that are sparsely populated and include much forest and wild land. The Reservation includes a great deal of remote and rugged terrain, and it is not only located in Mendocino County but also extends up into Trinity County.

There are five major streams on the Reservation and all of them have eroded and washed out. They have not been properly tended in so many years that much sediment has built up, preventing fish from moving through their accustomed routes. These fish, most notably salmon and steelhead trout, not only feed tribal members but are a source of income for some tribal families who have traditionally fished these waters and taken fish to market. With a vital weekly Farmer's Market in Willits and Ukiah for much of the year, there is a convenient mechanism for supporting this business. However, the fish are dying out because their habitat is disintegrating. Fishing is a deeply embedded piece of Native culture in our geographic area and we are losing traditions along with the diminished fish and the disappearing streams.

To mitigate the deterioration of the streams, we need to clear the streams and plant willow trees along them to hold the banks in place and we lack the manpower to do this. Because of sediment build-up, the streams have dissipated into many smaller tributaries that cannot support the natural aquatic life

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of the larger streams. We successfully restored one of our streams using research-proven practices involving the moving of earth and rock (using large earthmover vehicles) to redirect the water from the tributaries back into the main stream. Once this is accomplished, the willow trees are planted along the banks and they keep the banks healthy so that the streams do not spread out again. We will use this technique for the AEAI. Youth volunteers will be enlisted to plant the trees and then they will raise fish and release the fish into the revived streams. RVIT has a fish farm set up that we used once before for a stream restoration project. Also, the local public school district collaborated with us in the past to raise fish in the classrooms and release them into the restored stream. With the AmeriCorps members to do the heavy lifting part of the stream restorations, we will leverage our other community resources and the manpower of our tribal youth to plant trees and raise and release fish to finish the project. Our youth will also conduct fish counts and monitor the progress of streams as they return to their natural flow and ecological balance.

An ongoing problem in rural communities is illegal dumping. On the Reservation, there are five large illegal dump sites that contain all manner of materials, including hazardous waste. We need to clean up these sites carefully using best practices for handling toxic materials and disposing of this type of waste responsibly. We also need to implement a communitywide education program to teach tribal members about the detrimental impact of dumping, the toxins they are putting in the environment when they engaged in illegal dumping, and the importance of protecting our tribal lands from this hazard. Once we clean up these five sites, if we can properly educate the tribal community about the issue of toxic waste and illegal dumping then we can maintain the integrity, beauty, and spirit of our tribal lands. We will also utilize AmeriCorps members to support efforts to reduce illegal dumping that will include strategies such as providing a monthly waste pick-up. AmeriCorps members will drive a waste pick-up truck through the Reservation making it easy for tribal members to dispose of unwanted items, including hazardous materials.

With 28% of tribal members under the age of 19, a large portion of the tribal membership does not contribute earnings to the economy of the RVIT community. All RVIT children who attend public school live below the poverty line and qualify for a free lunch. Additionally, 83% of our households fall into the HUD Low-Income Category and the unemployment rate on the Reservation is 86%. Many tribal members living on and off the Reservation live in extreme poverty. RVIT has incurred debt as a result of numerous economic development projects, including a casino. Although these projects provide revenue, it will be some time before we realize substantially increased income since we must first pay off loans taken for development.

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b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems: Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact

THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL (17 POINTS)

We will implement three interventions as outlined on the Logic Model Worksheet provided via email. RVIT will employ 15 AmeriCorps members who will work on the three interventions that comprise the AEAI. For the (1) Fire Prevention and Forestry Stewardship intervention, eight workers will clear brush/vegetation in residential areas (where there are dwellings) and clean forest lands in order to mitigate vulnerability to fire. For the (2) Stream Restoration intervention, three workers will assess the work needed to restore the project streams, develop a stream restoration plan, implement the plan, and educate and supervise 25 youth volunteers who will help with the restoration work. For the (3) Environmental Cleanup intervention, four workers will take classes in environmental cleanup and hazardous waste removal and will apply what they learn to clean up the five most egregious illegal dump sites on the Reservation. They will also conduct educational activities for tribal members to promote prevention of illegal dumping in the future.

The theory of change behind the Fire Prevention and Forestry Stewardship intervention is that by using evidence-based forestry preservation and protection strategies to mitigate fire hazard in the forested and vegetative terrain of the Reservation we can greatly reduce the risk of fire damage to large portions of the Reservation. This is particularly applicable around the homes of tribal community members. By clearing brush and other growth away from structures, they can be well-protected from fire. This will make it much easier for firefighters to contain a fire quickly before it can spread.

The theory of change behind the Stream Restoration intervention is that we can apply evidence-based best practices in cleaning up sediment and detrimental natural deterioration that has occurred along streams to improve their functioning and the ability of wildlife to live in this habitat. In particular, we know what works to restore streams to conditions conducive to traditional, healthy lifecycles for cold water fish, such as salmon and steelhead trout. Using research-based environmental preservation techniques, we can bring our streams back to health, which will contribute to the health of our tribal members who depend on aquatic life for food and, in some instances, livelihood. We also believe that by teaching our youth how to keep our streams healthy and enlisting them to help in good stewardship of our streams, they will know how to protect this natural resource for our tribal community in the future.

The theory of change behind the Environmental Cleanup intervention is twofold. First and foremost

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we must remove the garbage and toxic waste that has accrued at five known illegal dump sites on the Reservation. This must be done carefully following evidence-based best practices for environmental clean-up and hazardous waste removal. Workers doing this job will be trained by Jamison Recycling (a highly qualified and experienced waste management firm based on Covelo) in how to do this safely so that neither they nor the environment are harmed in the process. Second, as a prevention and sustainability effort, we must educate tribal members about the importance of disposing of waste correctly so that these illegal dump sites do not happen again. By connecting the importance of protecting our natural resources and the health of our tribal lands to the traditional cultural values of our Tribes, we will touch a nerve with the tribal community. In this way, we will change cultural norms about waste disposal and join together in protecting our natural environment in the same way that our people have done for thousands of years.

As depicted on the Logic Model, AmeriCorps members will provide services on the Reservation. Fire Prevention and Forestry Stewardship will take place throughout tribal lands, with high emphasis on land surrounding residences and will be conducted by eight AmeriCorps members (8 MSYs). Stream Restoration will take place at the five large streams that flow on the Reservation and will be conducted by three AmeriCorps members (3 MSYs). Environmental Cleanup will take place at the five most egregious illegal dump sites on tribal lands and will be conducted by four AmeriCorps members (4 MSYs). Core activities for each intervention are described above. The entire AEAI is planned to span three years. AmeriCorps crews will work for 1720 hours each year at 40 hours per week for 43 weeks. The target population for the interventions is the entire tribal community since education efforts will be directed toward the entire community, and since tribal adolescents will be included in the Stream Restoration intervention. These tribal adolescents could well be described as disconnected youth.

Indicators of progress in meeting goals will include quarterly progress reports submitted by the natural resources manager, photographs of work completed, and documentation provided by the three designated project supervisors as well as field workers (AmeriCorps members) including data on assessments and on work completed (e.g., clean-up, forestry clearing, planting along streams, etc.). Training and education activities will be documented, with attendance lists, overviews of material covered, and exit evaluation surveys of participants. A detailed implementation plan will be created for each of the three interventions with time-bound milestones for progress embedded. Our project is a Tier 2 project as defined by CNCS because it falls under the priority performance measure of Environmental Stewardship and because 100% of our MSYs are in this identified performance

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measure.

EVIDENCE BASE (8 POINTS)

Fire Prevention and Forestry Stewardship: In April 2014, the U.S. Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy, and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy released a study that provided research-based evidence that fire prevention measures, such as controlled burns and brush clearing, can cut fire severity up to 75%. The study confirms that treating fire-prone forests to prevent the increasingly prevalent “megafires” would have benefits worth two to three times the cost incurred by fighting such fires. Today, it is not uncommon for suppression operations for a single wildfire to exceed costs of \$1 million in just a few days. FEMA and the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) develop specific policies to guide homeowners and builders in how to build and maintain structures at the “wildland-urban interface” and how to protect against catastrophic losses from wildland fires. According to NFPA Standard 1141 (for fire protection infrastructure for land development in wildland and rural areas), an overgrowth of forest vegetation is a major contributing factor to wildfires and clearing vegetation from forested areas has a significant positive impact on preventing wildfires from spreading and improving the effectiveness of firefighting techniques in containing wildfires. (National Fire Protection Agency, NFPA Standard 1144, Standard for reducing structure ignition hazards from wildland fire, 2013.)

Stream Restoration: Stream restoration describes a set of evidence-based activities that help improve the environmental health of a river or stream. These activities aim to restore the natural state and functioning of the river system in support of biodiversity, recreation, flood management and landscape development. (“What is river restoration, and how to do it?” Retrieved from: www.restorerivers.eu/RiverRestoration/WhatIsRiverRestoration/tabid/2614/Default.aspx.) Improved health of streams is measured by expanded habitat for diverse species (e.g., fish, aquatic insects, other wildlife) and reduced stream bank erosion. (“Benefits of Stream Restoration,” Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, Rockville, MD, 2013.) A research study of the restoration of Robinson Creek in Boonville, California confirms that streams can be returned to health and ecological balance through rebuilding and reshaping the stream bank slopes (to increase flow), the planting of live willow trees and placing of large rock baffles, removal of invasive species and re-vegetation with indigenous species, and reintroduction of fish. (Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, Ukiah, CA, “Robinson Creek Restoration Project,” 2008.)

Environmental Clean-up: There are many types of toxic waste and accompanying research studies on the best ways to clean up contamination from each of these substances/toxins. The overall

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approach taken by the Pala Band of Mission Indians in San Diego, California is documented in a research report published by the Pala in 2006. The Pala successfully cleaned up five illegal dump sites on tribal lands over a period of five years using tribal funds, BIA funds, and EPA CWA 319 funds. The Pala were accountable to funders for their project and maintained detailed data and research about the progress of their clean-up efforts as well as the end results. The types of waste and toxins the Pala encountered and removed (such as tires, vehicles, large and small household appliances, paint, batteries, metal, and household trash) were much the same as those we will be faced with at RVIT. (Pala Band of Mission Indians, A Tribal Case Study: Integrating a Tribal NPS Program into Watershed-Wide Objectives, 2006.) We will follow their example in our Environmental Clean-up intervention.

c. Member Training (8 points)

Fire Prevention and Forestry Stewardship AmeriCorps members will receive training in how to clear brush and clean forested lands to mitigate fire vulnerability. Training will also address clearing methods to be used in more residential rural areas and around homes. This training will be provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) within the first six months of the first year.

Stream Restoration AmeriCorps members will receive training from the RVIT natural resources manager in how to assess restoration needs of streams on tribal lands within the first four months of the first year. While assessment is underway, the natural resources manager will continue to train workers in this intervention area on the actual clean-up and stream restoration techniques. The assessment will be completed by the end of month nine so that the restoration plan can be completed by the end of the first year. Training on clean-up and restoration (including planting of willow trees) will also be completed by the end of the first year so that the work can begin in year two. One of the AmeriCorps workers in this intervention area will receive additional training from the natural resources manager in providing training to others (training of trainers) so that s/he can train youth volunteers in year two to assist with restoration efforts.

For the third intervention area of Environmental Clean-up, AmeriCorps members will receive training from Jamison Recycling in Covelo, which operates a transfer station, does environmental clean-up, and disposes of hazardous waste. Indian Health Services will provide training in handling medical-related waste contaminated with human bodily fluids (such as needles). Training will be provided during the first six months of the project. Training will include topics related to environmental clean-up of illegal waste dumps as well as how to handle toxic and hazardous waste. Some of this training

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will take place in the field (hands-on). Training will be completed by month six of the project. The natural resources manager will work with CNCS to become familiar with rules regarding prohibited activities and will train AEAI supervisors in each of the intervention areas as well as the AmeriCorps members on these rules. She will then monitor AEAI activities in all three intervention areas to ensure that AmeriCorps members adhere to these rules. AmeriCorps members conducting the Stream Restoration intervention will ensure that youth volunteers working in this area adhere to the rules.

d. Member Supervision (8 points)

RVIT has two departments that handle environmental concerns. The Tribal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees water quality, air quality, and solid waste management. The Natural Resources Department oversees fishery, forestry and fire management, agriculture (including timber management), mineral extractions, and parks. These two departments work closely together. The AEAI will be managed by the natural resources director who runs the Natural Resources Department. The 15 AmeriCorps members will be supervised by a designated employee of RVIT assigned to each of the three intervention areas. The three supervisors will report to the RVIT natural resources manager. The fire prevention officer (in the Natural Resources Department) will supervise the day-to-day operations of the Fire and Forestry Stewardship intervention; the water quality manager (in the EPA) will supervise the day-to-day operations of the Stream Restoration intervention; and the tribal EPA director will supervise the day-to-day operations of the Environmental Clean-up intervention. Each of these staff members will accompany AmeriCorps members into the field to provide adequate supervision, support, and guidance. Although they will not always be in the field with AmeriCorps members, they will be there about 75% of the time.

Each of the three work crews will have a designated lead worker to organize activities. To provide leadership training to all AmeriCorps members and to maintain equity, the lead worker on each of the crews will be a rotating position that will be held by each worker for part of each project year. All AmeriCorps members on these work crews will be included in the weekly staff meetings held jointly by the EPA and the Natural Resources Department. Other tribal employees work in these departments and some of them will be formally designated as peer mentors for the AmeriCorps members during the first six months of the project to help them get started in their work. In the event of turnover, any new AmeriCorps members will receive a peer support mentor assigned for their first few months on the job.

e. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

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We will purchase T-shirts and sweatshirts for AmeriCorps members to wear while working that display the AmeriCorps logo on them. AmeriCorps members will be made to understand that these are their uniforms and that they will be expected to wear these clothes while on the job to the greatest extent possible, weather permitting. We will strongly identify them as AmeriCorps members within the tribal community. We will host an introductory event to launch the AEAI and to honor and introduce those hired as AmeriCorps members to work within the project. The AEAI will be publicized in the community with a write-up in the regional newspaper, The Ukiah Daily Journal, and the more local Willits News. Through our existing relationships with local media outlets, we will ensure that ongoing newspaper articles, radio shows, and other media exposure will follow the progress of the project and the AmeriCorps members. RVIT will regularly post information about the AmeriCorps members and the AEAI on the RVIT website. We will host informational family nights on the Reservation and in the community at least three times each year to give AmeriCorps members the opportunity to speak about their experience and the work that they are doing.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Capability (25%)

a. Organizational Background and Staffing (10 points for new applicants)

The RVIT Tribal Council is comprised of seven elected officials who serve staggered terms of four years each. Any vacancies created by resignation, death, or removal are filled through election for the remainder of the original term of service. The Tribal Council selects a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms from among their own ranks of elected members; thus the general membership does not vote on who will fill these positions. The Tribal Council meets monthly, with executive council member meetings taking place weekly. Every six months the Tribal Council calls a general membership meeting. At this meeting all offices, departments, and working committees provide a verbal report of their activities and progress on initiatives to the general membership.

The RVIT natural resources manager will oversee the project and will supervise the work of the three supervisors assigned to each of the three interventions (co-supervising work with the EPA director in the Environmental Clean-up intervention). Budget accountability for the project will be provided by the RVIT fiscal department, which employs a qualified fiscal officer. The tribal administrator will oversee this process. Jamison Recycling is well qualified to provide environmental clean-up and waste disposal guidance and training for the Environmental Clean-up intervention. Jamison owns large, portable waste containers and can bring them to the Reservation so that metals can be sorted onsite. They have conducted environmental clean-up work for RVIT in the past. Jamison operates recycle

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centers in Mendocino and Humboldt Counties, and they set up the recycling station at the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians Rancheria.

Although RVIT has not received an AmeriCorps grant before, we have been awarded and successfully administered many other federal grants. RVIT currently administers over 35 active federal grant contracts totaling over \$10 million. This does not include all of our HUD-funded projects, which are managed as a separate entity because, combined, they are so large. (The HUD-funded projects total over \$10 million and include our Health Center.) The budget for the Natural Resources Department alone is over \$1 million per year. We have a 638 Contract through the BIA under self-determination, which provides funds to RVIT for us to use however we choose. We have chosen to use a substantial portion of these funds for environmental protection activities. Because RVIT has set and met high standards for accountability and results, the BIA continues to provide us with funding based on our past compliance and performance. We have also had clean (no findings) third party audits of our finances for many years.

(Refer to the emailed organizational chart.)

b. Compliance and Accountability (15 points for new applicants)

The natural resources manager and the three intervention area supervisors will receive training and technical assistance through our regional AmeriCorps officer on the AmeriCorps rules and regulations, including those related to prohibited activities. These RVIT employees will monitor project activities to prevent and detect compliance issues. As part of their orientation to the project, the 15 AmeriCorps members will receive training (provided by their intervention area supervisor) on the rules and regulations and will be charged with reporting any suspected compliance issues to the natural resources manager. If a noncompliance occurs, the natural resources manager will report it to the tribal administrator and the Tribal Council. An action plan to correct the noncompliance and prevent it (and any potential related noncompliance issues) from occurring in the future. The tribal administrator and natural resources manager will monitor the implementation of the action plan and will report back to the Tribal Council on progress and completion. Based on our past history of excellent compliance on projects funded through the BIA and the many years during which we have had clean audits of our finances, we feel confident that we will successfully comply with all AmeriCorps rules and regulations.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

a. Cost Effectiveness (13 points)

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The Round Valley Indian Tribes has budgeted for an allowance of \$15,480 per Member Service Year that includes a total of 1,720 hours per member. The CNCS budget request allows for the required health care, criminal background checks in addition to funding requested to purchase AmeriCorps identifying uniforms and basic training for members. Several funding sources provide funding based on the national mean of staffing costs and costs to acquire goods without realizing the elevated costs in our remote area. Choices are often made to use the funding provided for equipment/supplies necessary to complete projects without adequate staffing levels. This approach is most effective to complete the three identified environmental action initiatives in terms of the workforce provided through service which is often underfunded with other funding sources.

The MSY cost is slightly higher than the minimum allowance due to the geographic location of the projects on the Round Valley Indian Reservation. There is only one grocery store in the town resulting in notably higher prices to acquire basic foods. The nearest town of 5,000 people is 45 miles away on a windy road that can take over an hour to reach lower cost goods. Many individuals lack adequate transportation to leave the reservation and are therefore dependent on the high costs of living.

b. Budget Adequacy (12 points)

The Round Valley Indian Tribes will be using existing federal funds to leverage matching funds for the successful implementation of the Tribal AmeriCorps program. Based upon our identified projects in the environmental action initiative areas, our Tribal Natural Resources Department will oversee the new AmeriCorps program with personnel time allocated from federal grants received from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Environmental Protection Agency as a match. Additionally, project time committed by our Tribal Administrator and Tribal Controller will be leveraged from funding received from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The vehicle operations expenses to carry out project goals will be leveraged from funding received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Expenses incurred through the solid waste project will be leveraged from funding received by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Clarification Summary

Budget Clarification Items

1. Section I. Personnel Fringe benefits: The proposed cost is zero as the methodology behind the Tribe decision is to hire applicants through a contract process, eliminating the fringe costs.

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2. Section II. B.: Indian Health Services (IHS) does provide medical services for Tribal Members only. If all applicants are Tribal Members this cost would be zero although it is open and candidates are not selected to ensure the cost is not necessary.

3. Section II. B.: As mentioned above in section I , with no fringe costs these costs are also obsolete, unless otherwise instructed

4. Section III: Admin./Indirect Cost B. The Tribe has a federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate. A copy will be e-mailed to kmitchell@cns.gov

Programmatic Clarification Items

1. Executive Summary Format has been updated.

2. Background checks will be completed for Applicants. Existing Tribal Employees involved with the project have had background checks through Tribal Personnel Procedures.

3. The Tribe will be providing necessary safety equipment.

4. The Tribe will accept the advisable start dates and enrollment dates. August 1st will be the beginning of enrollment date. Start date will be September 15, this will allow adequate time for enrollment responsibilities.

5. The Tribe will utilize programs that are in operations to raise or secure additional resources.

Performance Measure Clarification

1. PM were changed to acres.

2. The instrument to measure targets will be through tools such as linear feet measurement and estimated tons per acre removal of vegetation. Daily logs of production rates will also support target measures.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics