**Draft Project Purpose and Need**

**UMWRA FPP Phase 2**

The Project is needed because past management actions, including fire suppression, historic logging practices, changing climate, increased human populations, and increased human-caused fires/ignitions over the last 150 years have extensively altered current forest conditions and ecosystem processes from historic conditions in the Sierra Nevada. Current conditions are exacerbated by drought, bark beetle and other insect outbreaks, large high-intensity wildfires, and associated tree mortality. While ecosystems of the Sierra Nevada have evolved to be well-adapted to fire, the recent increases in the size, frequency, and intensity of fires have resulted in ecosystem transitions, changes in hydrology, and associated effects to sediment and nutrient fate and transport. These dramatic shifts have reduced forest health, forest resiliency, and habitat quality and quantity for sensitive species and pose a risk to natural biodiversity (North et al. 2021). Current conditions have also placed surrounding human communities at an elevated risk to high-severity wildfire. The purpose of the Project is to conduct forest planning and implement active forest management activities that will build forest and community resilience at the landscape scale. The planning process and plan, including decisions about desired forest conditions, will be informed by the USFS Wildfire Crisis Strategy, the ENF Resilience Strategy, the State of California Wildfire Taskforce’s Roadmap to a Million Acres, Forest Plans, and other applicable documents and studies. The following goals will guide the development of proposed actions:

* **Reduce risks to human communities, resources, and infrastructure** 
  + Reduce the risks of wildfire on communities and their assets within and adjacent to USFS managed lands, including evacuation routes and safe access for fire-fighting and other emergency personnel.
  + Achieve and maintain resilient forest landscapes that will offer opportunities for people today and in the future to connect with the natural environment through recreation, cultural values, and environmental stewardship.
* **Restore ecosystem health and resilience**
  + Reduce the potential for large, catastrophic wildfire and effects of other stressors, including climate change, through forest management practices that, over time, support desired forest composition, function, and structure that in turn support critical ecosystem services. This will support ecological benefits to plant and wildlife species, including but not limited to California spotted owl and northern goshawk, and community benefits to those living within the wildland urban interface and beyond.
  + Achieve and maintain health and resilience of ecological communities adjacent to forests.
  + Reduce the spread of non-native, invasive plants by coordinating active forest management efforts with implementation of an effective invasive plant management plan.
* **Promote a fire resilient landscape**
  + Modify the landscape vegetation by placing treatments and creating conditions (i.e., landscape heterogeneity) that allow for the reestablishment of fire processes and the safe and effective use of fire management, which includes fire suppression, use of managed wildland fire, and prescribed fire, while protecting public and community health and safety and reducing the risk of fire damaging highly valued resources and assets and critical infrastructure.
* **Maintain and support economic opportunities to local communities**
  + Implement forest management activities with an emphasis on the maintenance of safe and consistent access to National Forest Systems (NFS) lands for recreation and industry uses (i.e., timber and concessionaire businesses on and near NFS lands).
  + Manage forest resources in an economically efficient and cost-effective manner to maintain and support a viable local circular forest economy.