



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RELEASE: Central Sierra Resiliency Fund Partners with Tree Fresno to Allocate California ReLeaf Grant Funding to Pine Ridge Elementary School Project

SHAVER LAKE, CALIFORNIA – March 2022. The Central Sierra Resiliency Fund (CSRF) is excited to announce that they have been awarded grant funding through the Relief Through ReLeaf Program. CSRF will be partnering with Tree Fresno to allocate funds and coordinate volunteers for planting of seedlings at the Pine Ridge Elementary School Project.

The Creek Fire devastated a vast region of the Central Sierra mountains which led to a significant loss of trees, animal habitat and accessible recreational trails that made living in the region a keystone factor for locals, those in the Central Valley and beyond. At the center of some of the most intense fire damage is Pine Ridge Elementary School. Many of these students either lost homes or had their properties destroyed in the fire and all have been attending school in the burn scar.

The project will begin in March 2022. It will include the planting of up to 600 Seedlings of Hope (SOH) native seedlings on the Pine Ridge property and additional seedlings on nearby properties. The SOH program is projected to have planted 40,000 seedlings by December 31, 2022 (soil and fuel conditions permitting) within the Creek Fire footprint. CSRF foresters will continue to map and monitor trees after the completion of project to assess the health of the seedlings. To complete a project of this scale, a large volunteer workforce will be recruited and trained. Together with Tree Fresno, CSRF plans to engage volunteer support from the following groups:

- AmeriCorps
- Climate Action Corps/CivicSpark
- Green Team Youth Ambassadors / Fresno Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce
- Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
- CAL FIRE
- Central Sierra Historical Society
- 4-H Clubs in Fresno County
- Sierra High School Stewards of the Sierra Club

In addition to restoration, this project will provide community education through workshops centered around best tree planting practices to optimize seedling survival, unify like-minded non-profits and community leaders for optimal progress towards the revitalization of the forest, and bridge the gap between youth in the mountains and the San Joaquin Valley.

About Central Sierra Resiliency Fund

The Central Sierra Resiliency Fund's mission is to support the revitalization of the forests and communities surrounding Shaver Lake through land restoration, local stewardship, and economic efforts that honor the historical legacy of the Central Sierra region. CSRF is a community initiative held at the Central Sierra Historical Society and Museum. Local community members and concerned professionals have collaborated to create a Resiliency Council to administer the restricted fund and determine funding recipients. The Council is partnering with other local, state, and national organizations to ensure resources to empower the mountain community to get people living, working, and recreating on the mountain again. For more information, visit: <https://museumofthesierra.org/resiliencyfund> or follow the Resiliency Fund on Facebook (@sierraresiliencyfund) and Instagram (@resiliencyfund).

Relief Through ReLeaf Program

The original Relief Through ReLeaf grant funding was provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection with Prop 68 funds, and then the USDA Forest Service provided additional funds to support 4 to 6 additional community projects.

The Relief Through ReLeaf program supports critical urban and rural reforestation efforts in multiple underserved California communities adversely impacted by extreme weather events catalyzed through climate change. The weather events include extreme wildfire and stormwater flooding. Past communities who received Relief Through ReLeaf include Paradise and Redding – communities whose names have become synonymous with the mention of the Camp and Carr fires.

Reaching out directly to carefully selected communities, this initiative specifically addresses reforestation gaps in the wildland urban interface and more rural parts of these communities. The intent is to help bring back some of this green infrastructure through tree planting and capacity building that will translate not only into community rebuilding and healing, but also community resiliency building.

About Tree Fresno

The mission of Tree Fresno is to transform the San Joaquin Valley with water-wise trees and increased green space.

Tree Fresno specializes in providing large-canopy, drought-tolerant trees and **education about the value of urban trees** to cities, schools, churches, and parks. The organization stewards meaningful community partnerships, allowing for the planting and long-term care of more trees. Since it was founded in 1985, Tree Fresno has planted over 50,000 trees throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

For more information, visit Tree Fresno's Facebook page or website: <https://treefresno.org/>