2021 UC ANR CE Position Forestry Area Advisor (Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Santa Clara)

Position Title: This CE Area Forestry Advisor will work with forest landowners, land managers, and neighbors to support healthy forest ecosystems to provide economic, ecological, and social benefits to both landowners and the broader community. The Forestry Advisor will be expected to run a program of research and extension excellence addressing the challenges facing local landowners, companies, non-profits and land trusts in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Position: The candidate is expected to have at a minimum a Master's Degree in forestry, forest ecology, resource management or related field with a solid understanding of applied forest management. Familiarity with the Northern California forest conditions is preferred. Necessary experience in forest management practices and the ability to obtain the Registered Professional Forester's License with 3 years of being appointed is required.

Justification: The more than 250,000 acres of forested land in Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties compose a unique region with many forestry challenges not seen elsewhere in the state. In 2020, Santa Cruz produced 6.4 million dollars in farmgate value of wood (mainly high- value redwood that is processed locally into even higher value finished lumber). The forest lands are owned and managed by a mix of small landowners, one large company - Big Creek Lumber, Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific teaching ranch and forest, working forests with conservation easements, numerous historic state parks, and the new San Vicente Redwoods with its innovative mix of public and NGO governance over a working forest. All of these lands are at the highly visible forefront of restoring and maintaining high forest growth rates, improving healthy fish bearing streams and providing more recreational opportunities. Unfortunately, the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex burned over 85,000 acres, destroyed 1,490 structures, severely damaged some of the oldest redwood parks of California – and brought into sharp relief the pressing need for innovations in how redwood forests that were thought to be impervious to fire mortality are managed. The Santa Cruz mountains have the strictest forest practices rules in North America, but forest management approaches must now innovate to recover from the fires, improve its ability to withstand future risks, and provide a cost-effective alternative to 'trophy home estate' conversion – all within a few hour drive of 5 million urban residents who project their own open space values on to the landscape. The forestry advisor is well positioned to work closely with a wide range of working landscapes that can continue to be exemplars of a circular bioeconomy that will be increasingly necessary as we restructure landscapes to provide the products that can replace emission-intensive building materials such as cement and steel while continuing to support a rich biodiversity.

Fire, fuels management and prescribed fire planning and implementation are increasingly important themes in a region that was once considered the 'Asbestos Forest' of California. Fuels management is recognized as a critical aspect of sustainable forestry, and is especially relevant in the Santa Cruz mountains, where residential

development continues within and adjacent to the forest stands. Research with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust on the reintroduction of their cultural burning practices is another innovative and challenging task in this region. Integrating cultural burning, prescribed burning, impacts of wildfires, and planned vegetation management across varied ownerships is a new and unique challenge for this position.

Statewide Need for ANR: A significant gap exists in the modest statewide network of UC ANR foresters: a forester who works with the family landowners that compose the majority of forestry operators in the three counties. Not having an independent licensed forester in the Santa Cruz Mountains has meant an absence of the valued third-party opinions – such as those of a UC Cooperative Extension Advisor – that regulators seek when making decisions that affect management of these many small and large holdings of land.

Extension: The position is responsible for the development and implementation of extension activities to support the development of sound forest management practices, reforestation and silvicultural strategies in Santa Cruz, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. The position requires interaction with landowners, client groups and managers from private and public lands including professionals from a variety of public and private organizations and agencies. Extension with the Amah Mutsun tribal members will be a new collaboration in line with new state policies. Public outreach, such as child education through Project Learning Tree and Forestry Challenge is also expected of this this position.

Research: The Forest Advisor will develop and deliver a research and extension program to address the needs of the forests on the Central Coast of California and the range of issues identified in the ANR Strategic Vision that include topics in forest health management, enhancing climate benefits from both forest area and harvested products, silviculture, forest policy and economics, watershed, air and water quality, and wildlife. The Forest Advisor should communicate results of their research through newsletters, UC publications, peer- reviewed journals, individual consultations, field days, tours, meetings, web conferences and an appropriate mix of social media.

ANR Network: The position will fit into a network of UC ANR foresters already serving the state, along with the UC Berkeley Center for Forestry and will contribute uniquely with its focus on small scale family forestry operations. The position will also be able to partner with the network of Advisors already active in the area, e.g. those working on Sudden Oak Death and pine pitch canker. The position will benefit by the proximity to the University of California Berkeley campus and UC Santa Cruz.

Network External to ANR: The position will also be an opportunity to strengthen our university-university connections with Caly Poly through the Swanton Pacific Ranch that was also severely impacted in the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire. The Swanton Pacific Ranch maintained by CalPoly has excellent opportunities to partner on research, as a location for workshops, Master’s students and as a field research site. Relationships with landowners, non-profit organizations as well as the County Farm Bureaus will be part of this external network.

Support: Support: Primary support will come from UCCE Santa Cruz County, including office space, phone and internet access, and support for travel through the use of a county vehicle. Start-up support from UC ANR would assist with new technology purchases, as well as initial program development. Surrounding counties would provide reciprocal support with access to education venues, and staff.

Other support: Funding for support is available and abundant. There are several new sources of funds through CAL FIRE and other state funds. Federal funding from the USDA Forest Service, multistate funding programs, the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA), and emerging issues and innovative funds through the National Focus Fund projects are other key funding opportunities. The region is also the backdrop to the many active foundations in Silicon Valley.

Headquarters and Coverage Area: The position will be based in Santa Cruz County offices and will cover the redwood forest regions in neighboring San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Developed and proposed by: The draft proposal was developed Mark Bolda, CD UCCE Santa Cruz County, Yana Valachovic, Forestry Advisor and County Director, Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, Sheila Barry, Forest/Range Program Team Leader and CD Santa Clara County, Igor Lacan, Urban Forestry Advisor, San Mateo County, Larry Forero, Livestock and Natural Resource Advisor Shasta/Trinity County and William Stewart, Forestry Specialist and Forest/Range Program Team Leader.