

DRE

DISASTER RECOVERY EXPERTS

**Paradise Irrigation District
Request for Proposals for
FEMA Disaster Recovery Management
Consulting Services
September 3, 2025**

Disaster Recovery Expert, Inc.
Charles Rabamad | Chief Executive Officer
4238 Castleton Circle | Mather, CA 95655



September 3, 2025

Kevin Phillips, District Manager
Paradise Irrigation District
6332 Clark Road
Paradise, CA 95969
kphillips@paradiseirrigation.com

Subject: RFP – FEMA Disaster Recovery Services

Dear Mr. Phillips,

Disaster Recovery Expert, Inc. (DRE) is pleased to submit this proposal in response to the Paradise Irrigation District's (PID) Request for Proposals (RFP) for FEMA Disaster Recovery Management Consulting Services. We are committed to supporting PID in the management and administration of federal and state disaster recovery grants related to the 2018 Camp Fire and subsequent events.

With over 90 years of combined experience in disaster recovery across California, DRE specializes in grant management, compliance, and technical support. Our team has successfully guided numerous local governments, special districts, and agencies through the complexities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance program and California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA), helping maximize reimbursement, maintain audit readiness, and ensure compliance with federal procurement policies.

DRE's proposed team brings a depth of expertise tailored to PID's needs:

- **Charles Rabamad**, Program Director – Over 35 years of leadership in disaster recovery, including directing multi-billion-dollar FEMA recovery programs at the state level.
- **Michael Sabbaghian, P.E.**, Project Manager – A licensed engineer with extensive experience in infrastructure recovery, cost estimating, and scope development.
- **Sean Smith**, Public Assistance Technical Support Specialist – A veteran of FEMA joint damage assessments and recovery operations across California.

Our approach emphasizes strategic guidance, meticulous documentation, and proactive communication with FEMA and Cal OES to secure the best possible outcomes for PID. We are confident in our ability to provide the project management, compliance oversight, and technical expertise required to maximize PID's recovery.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal and look forward to partnering with PID. Should you have any questions, please contact me directly at (916) 764-7637.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Rabamad".

CHARLES RABAMAD
Chief Executive Officer

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Executive Summary

Disaster Recovery Expert, Inc. (DRE) is pleased to submit this proposal to Paradise Irrigation District (PID) to assist with the management and administration of FEMA disaster recovery grants services needed to support the recovery efforts following the 2018 Camp Fire (DR-4407) and subsequent events. With over 90 years of combined experience, DRE is well-equipped to navigate the complexities of disaster recovery, ensuring compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) and California Governor's Office of Emergency Services' (Cal OES) regulations and laws, while maximizing reimbursement and funding recovery.

DRE's approach is structured around five key phases, designed to efficiently and effectively manage PID's recovery process through to grant closeout.

- **Phase 1: Initial Assessment and Review**
Comprehensive evaluation of existing documentation to ensure regulatory compliance and alignment of goals through a kickoff meeting.
- **Phase 2: Prioritization and Scheduling**
Development of a detailed project schedule with assigned responsibilities and deadlines, based on urgency and funding criteria.
- **Phase 3: Ongoing Support and Monitoring**
Day-to-day project management, cost tracking, reimbursement submissions, regular reporting, and audit readiness.
- **Phase 4: Special Project Review and Mitigation**
Oversight of Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) and Hazard Mitigation (HM) projects and support in developing Alternate Project Proposals to enhance funding eligibility.
- **Phase 5: Project Closeout and Final Reporting**
Completion of final documentation and reports to support closeout, ensure disbursement of funds, and respond to audits.

DRE will also provide ongoing post-recovery support, including assistance with additional funding opportunities or FEMA audits.

Our deep California-specific experience, proven record of managing large-scale recovery projects, and commitment to compliance and efficiency make DRE the ideal partner to guide PID through successful recovery and restoration of the district's facilities.

Project Understanding, Approach, and Schedule

DRE understands the urgency and complexity of the recovery efforts for PID following the 2018 Camp Fire (DR-4407). Our approach is designed to ensure timely and effective disaster recovery, while adhering to FEMA's guidelines and maximizing cost recovery.

Phase 1: Initial Assessment and Review

Objective:

DRE will conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of all existing disaster recovery documentation, including project applications, scopes of work, cost estimates, and all related materials submitted to FEMA and Cal OES. This phase ensures all documentation is in full compliance with FEMA regulations.

Key Actions:

- **Review Existing Documentation:** DRE will assess the current status of the FEMA projects and ensure all documentation is compliant with federal and state requirements.
- **Coordination with PID:** A kick-off meeting will be scheduled with PID to establish clear communication protocols, define project goals, and reinforce the collaboration necessary for success.
- **FEMA Compliance Check:** DRE will ensure all scopes of work and cost estimates align with FEMA's guidelines, including cost eligibility and compliance with applicable regulations.

Phase 2: Prioritization

Objective:

Following the assessment, DRE will prioritize projects based on urgency, funding availability, and FEMA requirements, while developing a detailed schedule for each project's milestones and deliverables.

Key Actions:

- **Project Prioritization:** DRE will work closely with PID to identify and prioritize high-urgency projects. This will ensure the most critical projects are addressed first.
- **Schedule Development:** DRE will establish a comprehensive project schedule outlining specific milestones, deadlines, and assigned responsibilities. The timeline will be strictly enforced and rigorously maintained, with routine progress monitoring and updates to ensure accountability and on-time completion.
- **Resource Allocation:** DRE will ensure all necessary resources (personnel, documentation, etc.) are allocated appropriately to meet project deadlines.

Phase 3: Ongoing Support, Monitoring, and Expenditure Documentation and Tracking

Objective:

DRE will provide ongoing support for the management of disaster recovery projects, to ensure compliance with FEMA regulations and to facilitate the timely submission of reimbursement claims and required documentation.

Key Actions:

- **Project Management:** DRE will oversee the day-to-day management of recovery operations, ensuring all activities remain on schedule and within budget. Coordination

with FEMA and Cal OES will be maintained to ensure full compliance with grant management and reimbursement requirements.

- **Expenditure Tracking and Claims Submissions:** DRE will track all project expenditures, ensuring costs are properly documented and eligible for FEMA reimbursement. This includes developing cost estimates, maintaining financial records, and submitting timely and accurate claims.
- **Regular Updates and Communication:** DRE will provide PID with consistent and transparent project updates. Regular reporting ensures stakeholders are informed of progress, emerging issues, and recommended adjustments to maintain momentum and alignment.
- **Audit and Compliance Preparation:** DRE will proactively prepare for potential audits by FEMA and/or other oversight agencies by maintaining thorough, accurate documentation. This approach minimizes the risk of reimbursement delays and ensures regulatory compliance throughout the recovery process.
- **Training:** Train and support PID staff to build internal capacity and ensure consistent understanding of FEMA and Cal OES procedures, regulations, requirements, and statutes.

Phase 4: Special Project Review and Mitigation

Objective:

DRE will focus on projects that require specialized reviews, such as EHP and HM projects. When necessary, DRE will also assist in developing Alternate Project Proposals to ensure maximum funding opportunities.

Key Actions:

- **Special Project Reviews:** DRE will coordinate with FEMA and Cal OES to complete all required reviews related to EHP and HM compliance, ensuring projects meet eligibility criteria and funding guidelines.
- **Alternate Project Proposals:** For projects that do not qualify under standard procedures, DRE will collaborate with PID to formulate Alternate Project Proposals that maximize funding opportunities under FEMA's alternative procedures.
- **Environmental and Historic Preservation and Hazard Mitigation Support:** DRE will provide expertise to ensure all projects satisfy EHP and HM requirements, including assistance with the preparation and submission of required documentation.

Phase 5: Project Closeout and Final Reporting

Objective:

DRE will assist PID with the closeout process for all disaster recovery projects, ensuring full compliance with FEMA and Cal OES closeout protocols, documentation standards, and audit readiness.

Key Actions:

- **Final Documentation:** DRE will ensure all final project documentation is complete, including project reports, final cost summaries, and documentation required for reimbursement. This will ensure the recovery process is fully documented and compliant.

- **Audit Assistance:** DRE will assist with addressing audit findings and preparing all necessary documentation for any required audits, to ensure compliance with all federal and state requirements.
- **Grant Closeout:** DRE will work closely with PID to finalize grant closeouts for each project, to ensure all funding is properly disbursed and all reporting obligations are met.

Schedule:

DRE will provide support across all five phases simultaneously, tailoring to the status of each project. With DRE's expertise and guidance, we are confident all PID's work will be completed within required deadlines. DRE will assist PID with the management and submission of all required programmatic time extension requests to FEMA.

Ongoing Monitoring and Post-Recovery Support

Objective:

Following project closeout, DRE will remain available to PID for any necessary post-recovery support, including assistance with future funding opportunities or additional project requirements that may arise.

Key Actions:

- **Post-Recovery Support:** DRE will continue to provide support for any future grant applications, additional recovery projects, or unexpected recovery needs.
- **Grant Audits:** DRE will assist with any post-recovery audits or follow-up documentation requests from FEMA or Cal OES, ensuring continued compliance and accountability.

Conclusion

This approach provides a structured yet adaptable recovery strategy that enables DRE to effectively support PID in navigating the complex recovery process and the restoration of the district's facilities from the Camp Fire. By prioritizing projects, ensuring regulatory compliance with federal and state regulations, and maintaining clear and open communication with all involved parties, DRE will maximize funding, minimize the administrative burden, and streamline the grant management process for PID.

Firm Qualifications, Team Organization, Experience and Certifications/Qualifications

Founded in 2021 with a mission to support communities in recovering from disasters, DRE has rapidly become a recognized leader in disaster recovery, emergency management, and grant management services. With over 90 years of combined experience, our team has successfully assisted state agencies, local governments, state universities, special districts, private non-profits, and other organizations in navigating the complexities of federal and state disaster recovery programs in California. In addition to our extensive knowledge of disaster programs and strong technical capabilities, DRE brings a vast understanding of government operations and political environments, with proven experience working directly and effectively with elected officials, executive leadership, and agency heads at all levels of government. This enables DRE to communicate strategically, build consensus, and maximize recovery outcomes.

DRE's roots trace back to a team of disaster recovery professionals with extensive experience in the public sector. Charles Rabamad, DRE's founder and Program Director, brings more than 35 years of hands-on experience in emergency management. Charles began his career responding to the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake with FEMA and joined Cal OES in 1991 as a Disaster Assistance Programs Specialist (DAPS). He played a pivotal role in the recovery from the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, assisting large local government applicants with Public Assistance projects. Those efforts included identifying damage, developing scopes of work, and preparing cost estimates for Project Worksheet (PW) development to restore damaged facilities to pre-disaster condition, in compliance with applicable codes and standards. He was involved in various disasters as the lead DAPS until his promotion to program manager in 1997.

Between 2003 and 2019, Charles was instrumental in managing more than 283 federal and state disaster declarations (major disaster, emergency disaster, fire management assistance grant, and California Disaster Assistance Act events). He served as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) and as the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) for 121 of those events. For the remaining 162 events, Charles served as the State Public Assistance Officer. Notable disasters during this period include the Drought (2014), South Napa Earthquake (2015), Valley and Butte Fires (2015), Severe Winter Storms Statewide and Oroville Dam Incident (2017), October California Wildfires (2017), Thomas Fire and Montecito Mud Flows (2017), Camp Fire (2018), Woolsey/Hill Fires (2018), and the Mid-February Storms and Late February Storms (2019).

Charles' extensive leadership experience has been instrumental in shaping DRE's strategic direction. Under his guidance, the company is equipped to expertly support clients through every phase of disaster recovery, from initial response to grant closeout, including evaluating insurance and identifying hazard mitigation, while maximizing available federal and state funding.

Alongside Charles, Mahyar "Michael" Sabbaghian is a registered and highly skilled civil engineer with more than 30 years of experience managing major infrastructure projects and emergency management programs for Cal OES, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and in the private sector. During his 14-year tenure at Cal OES, Michael held several key leadership roles, culminating in his position as Disaster Recovery Chief. His expertise in preliminary damage assessments, declaration processes, and recovery program management—spanning Public Assistance, Individual Assistance, Hazard Mitigation, and Technical Assistance—is unmatched. His ability to coordinate across federal, state, and local

levels, coupled with his engineering and land surveying background, enhances DRE's technical capabilities in project development and compliance.

Sean Smith, DRE co-founder and President, contributes more than 25 years of field experience in disaster recovery and project management, particularly with debris removal and damage assessments. His expertise as a Statewide Debris Coordinator for Cal OES has been pivotal in DRE's success, especially in debris removal operations and ensuring compliance with FEMA regulations. Sean's extensive work on disaster recovery efforts, including but not limited to the Baja Earthquake (2010), Severe Winter Storms Statewide and Oroville Dam Incident (2017), and the Thomas Fire and Montecito Mud Flows (2017-2018), has contributed significantly to the company's reputation as a trusted disaster recovery partner. In 2021, Sean transitioned to the private sector where he managed the Dixie Fire debris cleanup efforts, further solidifying his reputation as a trusted expert in FEMA-compliant recovery operations.

Throughout the years DRE's leadership has played a critical role in responding to major disaster events in California, including wildfires, earthquakes, drought, and flooding. Most recently, DRE led the efforts in Ventura County of the successful removal of debris from 133 parcels impacted by the November 2024 Mountain Fire. By utilizing the team's expertise in quality assurance and quality control, DRE completed the project in under four months. The company's extensive experience working with all levels of FEMA, Cal OES, local government, and other federal and state partners ensures that DRE is able to deliver timely and effective solutions for both immediate response and long-term recovery.

DRE is a well-established, financially stable firm with active contracts across various recovery phases and sufficient staffing to manage current and future workloads. The team identified in this proposal will serve as the core personnel for the project. As a California-based company with all staff located throughout the state, DRE is uniquely positioned to respond quickly and efficiently to disaster events. Our in-state presence ensures familiarity with local conditions, facilitates streamlined coordination with state and local agencies, and allows for rapid mobilization when urgent needs arise.

We strategically allocate staff based on project scope, timelines, and complexity, ensuring balanced workloads and consistent quality. Backed by decades of leadership experience and a strong bench of project managers, grant specialists, and technical experts, we are fully equipped to meet client demands without compromising performance.

DRE's continued growth and consistent demand reflect our reliability and our ability to scale quickly in response to high-impact events.

Staff Qualifications

DRE offers a lean, experienced leadership team dedicated to supporting PID. Our team brings unmatched knowledge of and expertise with Public Assistance (PA), Individual Assistance (IA), and Hazard Mitigation (HM) programs, as well as Cal OES coordination, and federal grants compliance — with a focus on California jurisdictions.

DRE understands the urgency and complexity of disaster recovery, and our approach is designed to ensure both timely execution and effective outcomes. Our team combines extensive disaster programs and technical expertise with a strong understanding of how government operates—including direct experience working with elected officials, executive leadership, and agency heads. This enables us to communicate strategically, build consensus, and maximize cost recovery while maintaining full compliance with federal and state regulations.

The proposed team is as follows:



Charles Rabamad

Role: Program Manager

Availability: Oversight and strategic support throughout project lifecycle.

Phone: (916) 764-7637

Email: charlesr@dr-experts.com

Charles brings more than 35 years of leadership experience in emergency management and disaster recovery. He held senior roles at Cal OES, directing nearly 300 federal and state disaster declarations, and was appointed four times by Governor Jerry Brown to lead statewide recovery efforts at the highest level of state government, including serving as Senior Advisor to the Cal OES Director.

Key Expertise:

- Former Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) for all disasters in California during his Governor's appointment periods.
- Former State Coordinating Officer (SCO) for federally-declared disasters during his Governor's appointment periods.
- Former State Public Assistance Officer (PAO) for 162 disaster declarations.
- Executive Duty Officer and State Operations Center Director for innumerable disasters throughout California.
- Senior Advisor on development of FEMA Grants Portal procedures.
- Compliance with laws and regulations, including FEMA, CDAA, FHWA, CEQA, and NEPA.
- Expert in hazard mitigation funding strategies, appeals, and grant closeout.

- Lead state official for development of California Disaster Recovery Framework and its six Recovery Support Functions.

Charles will serve as a senior-level strategist and key liaison with federal and state agencies, ensuring PID's efforts align with best practices and are optimized for maximum reimbursement.

Mahyar "Michael" Sabbaghian, P.E.

Role: Project Manager

Availability: Day-to-day point of contact | Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Phone: (916) 955-9825

Email: michaels@dr-experts.com

Michael is a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) with more than 30 years of experience managing infrastructure repair, and disaster recovery and hazard mitigation programs. As a senior leader at Cal OES and DWR, Michael oversaw the Technical Assistance Program, directed FEMA PA recovery efforts for critical infrastructure, and specialized in complex hazard mitigation projects under FEMA 404 and 406 programs.

Key Expertise:

- Technical Assistance Programs, including safety assessment, geotechnical, landslides, and complex engineering damage.
- FEMA PA eligibility and project scoping.
- Hazard mitigation grant development and benefit-cost analysis (BCA).
- Engineering design review for improved and alternate projects.
- Disaster insurance claims support, including documentation and coordination.
- Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA) and initial engineering estimates.
- CEQA/NEPA environmental compliance for federally funded projects.
- FEMA project documentation, closeout support, and audit preparation.

Michael will serve as PID's primary liaison for all recovery, reimbursement, and grant management activities. He will provide expert-level technical guidance on FEMA PA infrastructure projects, hazard mitigation opportunities, project eligibility, and compliance documentation to maximize PID's cost recovery, as well as how to navigate FEMA's Grants Portal database.

Sean Smith

Role: Public Assistance Subject Matter Expert

Availability: Day-to-day point of contact | Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Phone: (916) 879-2740

Email: ssmith@dr-experts.com

Sean is a veteran emergency manager with over 25 years of field experience in project management, disaster recovery, damage assessments, debris operations, and FEMA/Cal OES coordination. Sean served as the Operations Section Chief for several major disasters and as the Statewide Debris Coordinator for Cal OES, directing 30 major debris operations. As a special advisor for the Cal OES Assistant Director for Recovery Operations, Sean served as the lead for assessing damage estimates provided by local governments pursuing federal and/or state disaster funding. Sean worked closely with Cal OES Legal to design and implement California's Consolidated Debris Removal Program. Under an Emergency Management

Assistance Compact, Sean deployed to Puerto Rico to provide expert advice on how to carry out debris removal operations.

Key Expertise:

- Project management to ensure adherence to regulations regarding federal and state PA and hazard mitigation programs.
- Damage assessment, including identification and evaluation of damage.
- Large project monitoring and coordination.
- Incident Command System (ICS) leadership and field operations management.
- Construction and environmental oversight.
- Strategic Planning and Interagency Coordination.
- Public presentations, training, and community engagement.

Sean will serve as the subject matter expert for all recovery, reimbursement, and grant management activities. His background in public infrastructure, hazard mitigation, debris management, and FEMA program compliance ensures a high level of operational efficiency.

References

Ventura County Resource Management Agency

Project: Mountain Fire Recovery & Debris Management (2024-2025)

Contact: Sean Debley, Environmental Health Division Manager

Phone: (805) 648-9248

Email: sean.debley@ventura.org

Scope:

- Lead Incident Management Team (IMT) for debris removal operations.
- Provide planning, operations, and finance section leadership under Incident Command Structure (ICS).
- Deliver technical guidance on FEMA PA, insurance claims, and CDAA coordination.
- Assist in grant reporting, invoice reconciliation, and audit preparations.
- Maintain accurate financial records and documentation for compliance and reimbursement.

Fresno County Office of Emergency Services

Project: DR-4683 and DR-4699 2022/2023 Winter Storms and DR-4569 2020 Creek Fire
FEMA Public Assistance, CDAA Grant Management (2023-2025)

Contact: Terri Mejorado, Emergency Manager

Phone: (559) 600-4065

Email: tmejorado@fresnocountyca.gov

Scope:

- Provide comprehensive disaster recovery grant management support.
- Manage ongoing grant activities, including project tracking and reimbursements.
- Manage all aspects of FEMA PA documentation and project formulation, including 406 HM.
- Support development of a countywide grant tracking system.
- Provide technical assistance for 404 Hazard Mitigation proposals.
- Assist with Cal OES coordination and compliance reporting.
- Prepare correspondence, attend coordination meetings, and assist with disputes or appeals.
- Ensure procurement processes meet federal and state standards, including reviewing solicitations and contract templates.
- Support closeout, audit responses, and post-award grant activities.

City of Pasadena

Project: Eaton Fire Disaster Recovery Consulting and Support Service (2025-2026)

Contact: Israel Del Toro

Phone: (626) 744-7138

Email: ideltoro@cityofpasadena.net

Scope:

- Provide comprehensive disaster recovery services following Eaton Fire.
- Engage with FEMA, Cal OES, and Los Angeles County to advocate for City of Pasadena's recovery efforts.
- Assist with state and federal recovery grants, including PA and HM, to maximize cost recovery and ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

- Manage Right-of-Entry (ROE) forms and associated documentation, including intake, tracking, homeowner follow-up, and coordination with agency partners.
- Present program updates and technical information at public meetings and community forums to support transparency and stakeholder engagement.
- Train and support a local task force group to build internal capacity and ensure consistent understanding of FEMA and Cal OES disaster recovery roles and processes, including federal and state regulations and statutes.
- Ensure procurement and financial management processes meet federal and state funding requirements to avoid delays in reimbursement.
- Advise on funding maximization strategies and ensure compliance with FEMA and Cal OES requirements throughout the project lifecycle.
- Prepare correspondence, attend coordination meetings, and assist with the resolution of disputes or appeals.
- Ensure procurement processes meet federal and state standards, including reviewing solicitations and contract templates.
- Support grant closeout, audit responses, and post-award compliance activities.

Cost Proposal

DRE proposes to provide services to PID on a time-and-expense basis, in accordance with FEMA and Cal OES cost reimbursement guidelines. DRE believes the majority of costs outlined in this proposal qualify for federal and state reimbursement as eligible grant administrative costs. The following table outlines the estimated hours and total costs associated with each major task within the identified phases included in the RFP Project Understanding, Approach, and Schedule. Hourly rates have been blended to reflect the technical expertise required for each phase of work. Travel costs are estimated separately per trip and will be billed based on actual expenses incurred, consistent with FEMA eligibility guidelines.

Phase	Description	Quantity	Unit of Measure	Total
1	Initial Assessment & Review	120	Hours	\$19,500
2	Prioritization	140	Hours	\$22,700
3	Ongoing Support & Monitoring	280	Hours	\$44,200
4	Special Project Review & Mitigation	240	Hours	\$39,100
5	Project Closeout & Final Reporting	195	Hours	\$31,900
	Travel Costs	10	Each (trip)	\$3,500
	Total			\$160,900

Consulting Services Rates	Hourly
Program Manager	\$175
Project Manager	\$165
PA Subject Matter Expert	\$155
PA Technical Support Specialist	\$145
Administrative Support	\$120

Invoices will be submitted monthly and will include detailed reporting of personnel name, position, billing rate, hours worked, activity description, project code, and associated sub-task. DRE is committed to maintaining transparent cost tracking, compliance with Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200's procurement standards, and with accurate documentation to support audit-readiness and grant cost recovery.

Based on the estimated rates above, the estimated total for this scope of work shall not exceed **\$160,900**. Actual billing will be based on actual hours worked and approved travel.

Appendix A – Key Personnel Resumes

Charles Rabamad

Proposed Role: Program Manager

Michael Sabbaghian

Proposed Role: Project Manager

Sean Smith

Proposed Role: Public Assistance Subject Matter Expert



Charles Rabamad
Mather, CA 95655

(916) 764-7637
charlesr@dr-experts.com

Professional Summary

Disaster recovery and emergency management expert with over 35 years of experience leading large-scale recovery operations across California. Proven track record in managing multi-billion-dollar disaster recovery programs, coordinating with federal and state agencies, and providing expert testimony on disaster response and procurement policies. Recognized for strategic leadership in complex recovery efforts, including wildfire debris removal, hazard mitigation, and infrastructure restoration.

Professional Experience

Chief Executive Officer

Disaster Recovery Expert, Inc., Mather, CA

2020 – Present

- Lead a team offering comprehensive disaster recovery support services, including emergency management, debris removal, hazard mitigation, and grant management.
- Provide expert opinions and testimony on disaster response, recovery management, and government procurement policies.
- Collaborate with local governments, Cal OES, and FEMA to deliver effective recovery solutions.

City of Pasadena

Post-Eaton Fire Recovery (2025)

- Provided a range of disaster recovery consulting and support services to the City of Pasadena.
- Developed both short- and long-term recovery strategies.

Ventura County

Post-Mountain Fire Recovery & Debris Management (2024-2025)

- Led Incident Management Team (IMT) for debris removal operations.
- Provided planning, operations, and finance section leadership under Incident Command Structure.
- Delivered technical guidance on FEMA PA, insurance claims, and CDAA coordination.
- Assisted in grant reporting, invoice reconciliation, and audit preparations.

Fresno County

FEMA Public Assistance, CDAA Grant Management (2023-2025)

- Managed all aspects of FEMA PA documentation and project formulation, including 406 HM.
- Supported development of a countywide grant tracking system.
- Provided technical assistance for 404 HM proposals.
- Assisted with Cal OES coordination and compliance reporting.

Odin Environmental / Odin Construction Solutions

Wildfire Debris Management and Disaster Consulting (2022-present)

- Provided consultation services regarding various issues related to disaster recovery projects, including FEMA PA eligibility, environmental and historic preservation (EHP) compliance, and debris operations oversight.

Eleven Canterbury

Expert Opinion Consulting (2021)

- Provided expert opinions and testimony on matters relating to disaster response and recovery management and government procurement policies for Hurricane Maria (DR-4339). Case No. 1:20-cv-20263-RNS, MasTec Renewables Puerto Rico, LLC, v. Mammoth Energy Services, Inc. and Cobra Acquisitions, LLC., Southern District of Florida.

Vice President, Response and Recovery Services

Odin Construction Solutions, Roseville, CA

2019 – 2022

- Managed disaster recovery projects, including structural debris and hazard tree removal in Mariposa County post-Oak Fire, overseeing the clearing of 127 properties and removal of 4,500 hazard trees.
- Led the Paradise Tree Felling project, coordinating the removal of approximately 40,000 hazardous trees within city limits.
- Directed the 2020 Fires Debris Removal & Hazard Tree Removal Services across multiple counties, managing a \$226M project involving the removal of approximately 170,000 dangerous trees and contaminated soil.
- Oversaw construction projects such as the 200-Year Goldfields Soil-Bentonite Cutoff Wall and the Marysville Ring Levee Phase 2C, ensuring compliance with safety and environmental standards.

Assistant Director for Disaster Recovery

Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Sacramento, CA

2012 – 2016; 2017 – 2019

- Appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to lead recovery efforts for major disasters, including the 2014 Napa Earthquake, 2015 Valley and Butte Fires, 2017 Floods, and the 2018 Camp Fire.
- Managed Public Assistance, Individual Assistance, Hazard Mitigation, and Technical Assistance Programs, overseeing over \$6 billion in approved disaster funding.
- Served as the Alternate State Coordinating Officer and the Governor's Authorized Representative for multiple major disaster events.

Program Advisor / Project Manager

California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Sacramento, CA

2009 – 2012; 2016 – 2017

- Advised on disaster response and recovery activities post-Oroville Dam Incident, providing guidance on cost recovery, documentation, procurement processes, and environmental permitting.
- Managed projects including the Folsom Dam Auxiliary Spillway and Folsom Dam Raise, coordinating funding agreements, engineering, design, construction, and environmental processes.

Various Roles in Disaster Recovery and Civil Engineering

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IX; International Road Construction Company; ACE Planning & Consulting Group; Ron Miller Surveyor Group

1982 – 1991

- Held positions ranging from Assistant Surveyor to Civil Engineer, contributing to significant projects such as disaster recovery efforts following the Loma Prieta Earthquake and infrastructure development in West Africa.

Education

1991 – Bachelor of Science in Civil and Structural Engineering Technology

Cogswell Polytechnical College

Professional Affiliations

- Board of Directors, Community Housing Opportunities Corporation

Certifications & Training

- Extensive training in emergency management, disaster recovery, and hazard mitigation programs.
- Proficient in navigating federal and state procurement processes, environmental and historic preservation compliance, and project monitoring.



Summary of Qualifications

Licensed Professional Civil Engineer with over 35 years of experience in engineering, disaster recovery, and program management across local, state, and federal agencies. Proven track record managing large-scale recovery operations, securing federal and state funding, implementing complex infrastructure projects, and leading multi-disciplinary teams. Demonstrated expertise in FEMA Public Assistance, California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA), and compliance with federal procurement and cost recovery requirements.

Experience & Skills

Program Management

- Ventura County Mountain Fire Private Property Debris Removal Operation, responsible for overall oversight, conflict resolution, technical engineering assessments, California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) cost recovery, and advising county on insurance and proceeds. Within four months of engagement, debris removal completed on 133 properties and all CDAA claims submitted.
- Fresno County Cost Recovery, supported recovery operation through FEMA Public Assistance process for 2023 Storm Events. Ensured proper project formulation, sufficient supporting documentation, worked with Cal OES and FEMA to ensure projects properly captured within FEMA's Grants Portal, and monitored progress through system. Assisted county with potential Improved and Alternate Project considerations and previous disaster appeals.
- Security and Emergency Management Program Interim Deputy Director, responsible for department's emergency management and security with small team of experts. Coordination with all programs at the department to establish policies and procedures for both programs. Key activities include operating the Department Operations Center, FEMA cost recovery for the 2017 Oroville Dam and 2023 Winter Storms events, and security evaluation of all DWR facilities.
- Flood Maintenance Office Chief, responsible for maintenance of 300 miles of levee, 1,200 miles of channel, and 30+ flood structures with over 100 employees. Coordination with Central Valley Flood Protection Board, local maintaining agencies, and other divisions at DWR, and managing a budget of nearly \$45 million annually.
- Southern Region Office Chief, responsible for all office activities with about 40 employees handling various Integrated Regional Water Management programs in Southern California, including grants, planning, data collection, coordination, and projects involving both groundwater and surface water sources.
- Flood Project Office Chief, responsible for over \$1 billion of state and federal flood protection projects, implementation of changes to improve State's role in federal projects, and overall process improvements for effective and efficient delivery of eight different programs.
- Effective management of Early Implementation and Urban Flood Risk Reduction Programs with 14 levee improvement projects and \$900 million in bond funds. Successful implementation of the competitive process to award funds to urban areas with full consideration of current design standards and environmental laws and regulations.
- Programs Branch Chief and Operations Chief responsible for all recovery programs (public assistance, individual assistance, and hazard mitigation). Responsible for over 80 staff statewide.
- Deputy Public Assistance Officer, responsible for statewide programs and activities of over 80 professional staff and 900 Applicants. Close coordination with HM and IA programs.
- Inter-office and inter-agency coordination between state, federal, and local governments.
- Coordination of field activities, correspondence preparation, technical review, agency databases, conferences with media and congressional representatives, and providing statewide training.
- Train, hire, and promote staff; prepare weekly and periodic performance and programmatic reports.
- Managed a Consulting Division, responsible for earthquake (structural) and environmental (asbestos) hazard inspection of residential and commercial buildings.

Civil Engineering

- Civil Engineer with State of California at DWR and Cal OES.
- Licensed PE, performing engineering studies and calculations; including grading and draining plans, retaining wall design, foundation repairs, and beam designs.
- Project engineer, managed various design teams: building, landscape, and lighting architects; civil, geotechnical, structural, and environmental engineers.

- Design changes considering the governing codes and standards and construction practices and methods.
- Performed on-site surveying for grading and locating structure boundaries.
- Manage large engineering projects: concrete retaining walls, concrete garage structures, complex earthquake designed wood frame buildings, and earth moving/excavation.

Project Engineer / Construction Management

- Responsible for Early Implementation Program projects in order to improve urban area levees.
- Managed various construction and land development projects with very strict timelines.
- Responsible for all corporate activities from securing investors, to sale or lease of the finished project. Included feasibility studies, land acquisitions, architectural and engineering, specifications, financing, solicitation of bids, development, land surveying, excavation, construction, inspection, completion and occupancy certificates.
- Large asbestos abatement projects of multi-story office buildings.

Communication

- Prepared reports and issue papers.
- Prepared guidelines and procedures for implementing various programs or performing particular tasks.
- Prepared structural and environmental reports and specifications for residential and multi-story office buildings.
- Good oral communication - communicating effectively with the staff and clients.
- Designated speaker to media (TV, radio, and newspapers), and congressional representatives.
- Master of ceremony and speaker in applicants' briefings and workshops throughout the state for public officials (groups of 20 to over 500).
- Communicated effectively with various construction disciplines, which included interaction with investors, financial institutes, technical professionals, city and county officials, construction workers and contractors, and potential buyers or lessors.

Employment History

Kerend Enterprises, LLC – Carmichael, CA

Engineering and Disaster Consulting

Principal Consultant, Jan 2022 – Present

Contract with Disaster Recovery Experts (DRE) on projects, including Ventura County Mountain Fire Private Property Debris Removal Operation (2025) and Fresno County Cost Recovery (2024)

Department of Water Resources (DWR) – Sacramento, CA

Principal Engineer, Supervising Engineer, Senior Engineer | Aug 2008 – Present

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) – Sacramento, CA

Senior Civil Engineer & Program Manager | Feb 1994 – Aug 2008

Includes Acting Recovery Branch Chief (2 years), Unit / Team Leader, and Field Inspector

MAS-CON Company / Kerend, Inc. – San Rafael, CA

Owner, Construction, Consulting & Project Management / Project Engineer & Construction Manager | 1988 – 94

Education & Credentials

- MBA, University of Phoenix – Sacramento, CA (2003)
- BS, Civil Engineering, University of the Pacific – Stockton, CA (1984)
- PE, Civil Engineer, License No. C 056080 – Expires 12/31/2026
- Project Manager Professional Training – 2009 & 2012
- Coursework toward MS in Construction Engineering and Management, USC (1986–87)
- California Contractor's License No. 568355 (Inactive) (1989)
- Associate Member, American Society of Civil Engineers (1983)

Technical Skills

- Microsoft Office Suite: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Project
- Database & CAD Tools: dBase, MS Access, AutoCAD
- Operating Systems: Windows & macOS
- FEMA Grants Portal, Cal OES databases, and agency-specific systems
- Good understanding of the network environment and databases



Sean Smith
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 (916) 879-2740
 ssmith@dr-experts.com

President | Emergency Management & Disaster Recovery Expert

Accomplished emergency manager with over 25 years of field experience leading damage assessment, debris management, and large-scale disaster recovery operations. Renowned for managing California's most significant disasters—including wildfires, earthquakes, and the Oroville Dam failure—while serving in high-impact roles at the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). Proven leader in creating and implementing innovative programs like the Consolidated Debris Removal Program (CDRP), and in serving as a trusted advisor to Cal OES senior leadership, local governments, and international partners. Exceptional communicator, policy strategist, and incident commander.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Disaster Recovery Operations
 - Debris Management (Public & Private Property)
 - Initial Damage Estimates
 - Preliminary Damage Assessments
 - State and Federal Public Assistance Grant Programs
 - Incident Command & Emergency Operations
 - Strategic Planning & Interagency Coordination
 - Public Presentations & Community Engagement
-

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Disaster Recovery Expert, Inc. – President

Jan 2023 – Present

- Direct all business operations, disaster response deployments, and consulting services.
- Lead a team offering comprehensive disaster recovery support services, including emergency management, debris removal, hazard mitigation, and grant management.
- Provide expert opinions on disaster response, recovery management, and government procurement policies.
- Collaborate with local governments, Cal OES, and FEMA to deliver effective recovery solutions.

City of Pasadena

Post-Eaton Fire Recovery (2025)

- Provided a range of disaster recovery consulting and support services.
- Developed both short- and long-term recovery strategies.
- Provided subject matter expert support for Right-of-Entry process.
- Provided subject matter expert support during public meetings.
- Provided survivor outreach related to debris removal processes.
- Trained local task force group on disaster recovery roles and processes.

Ventura County

Post-Mountain Fire Recovery & Debris Management (2024-2025)

- Efficiently managed debris removal for Mountain Fire, clearing 133 properties in 90 days.
- Served as Operations Section Chief for day-to-day debris removal operations, including oversight of 12 debris removal crews.
- Responsible for coordination between all contractors on operation.
- Delivered technical guidance on FEMA PA, insurance claims, and CDAA coordination.
- Provided presentations and updates at public meetings.
- Interacted with survivors and other affected community members.

Fresno County

FEMA Public Assistance, CDAA Grant Management (2023-2025)

- Advised on FEMA Public Assistance strategies for disaster reimbursement.
 - Provided technical assistance for 404 HM proposals.
 - Assisted with Cal OES coordination and programmatic compliance reporting.
 - Assisted in grant reporting, invoice reconciliation, and audit preparations.
-

California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) – Senior Emergency Services Coordinator
Jun 2020 – Aug 2021 & Feb 2022 – Dec 2024

- Oversaw emergency management functions for five forensic hospital campuses.
- Led emergency planning, training, response, and recovery efforts statewide.

Odin Construction Solutions – Debris Removal Project Manager

Aug 2021 – Feb 2022

- Developed and executed bid for Dixie Fire debris removal; managed field operations clearing over 290 parcels.
- Liaised with Cal OES, FEMA, and CalRecycle to ensure environmental compliance and cost reimbursement.

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES)

Various Leadership Roles | Apr 2010 – Jun 2020

Damage Assessment Coordinator & Special Projects Coordinator (2014 – 2020)

- State lead for all Joint FEMA-State PDAs in California; helped secure billions in disaster declarations.
- Delivered statewide training on debris operations and damage assessments.
- Provided subject matter expertise to Puerto Rico post-earthquakes (2020) on California's debris removal practices.

Statewide Debris Task Force Leader (2015 – 2019)

- Directed simultaneous debris removal efforts across up to 12 counties (e.g., Camp, Woolsey, Carr, Thomas Fires).
- Created a formalized debris management training program for over 150 staff.
- Managed \$200M fire debris removal contract and oversaw related construction repairs on 400+ parcels.

Operations Section Chief & Incident Commander (2014 – 2017)

- Coordinated statewide drought and storm response (including Oroville Dam) from the State Operations Center.
- Led Incident Management Teams for multiple major fires (Clayton, Erskine, Detwiler, Helena).
- Conducted public meetings and briefings, serving as the state's lead recovery spokesperson.

Advanced Recovery Liaison & Recovery Operations Chief (2014 – 2015)

- Embedded in local EOCs (Weed, Napa, Lake County) to provide Public Assistance expertise.
- Presented to Boards of Supervisors and City Councils on state recovery operations and policies.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **CDRP Development** – Designed California's Consolidated Debris Removal Program in partnership with Cal OES Legal. Adopted as a model by other states and FEMA regions.
- **Puerto Rico Earthquake Recovery (2020)** – Led California's debris advisory team; guided island leaders on FEMA eligibility, cost share, and operational protocols.
- **Debris Mission Leadership** – Directed removal efforts for the 2018 Montecito Mudslides and 2017 Northern California Fires.
- **Operations Excellence** – Spearheaded delivery of potable water during 2014–2015 drought; key liaison to Governor's Drought Task Force.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- NIMS ICS All-Hazards Position Specific Operations Section Chief (L-958)
- ICS-100, 200, 300, 400, 700, 800 | FEMA Public Assistance Program (IS-634)
- Debris Management Train-the-Trainer | Emergency Planning (IS-235b)
- Dozens of specialized FEMA/Cal OES disaster recovery and emergency management courses

Full course list available upon request.