

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 8.a.
June 15, 2017

STATE PARKS FUELS REDUCTION AND UNDERSTORY BURNING PROJECT

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution 17-06-02 (Attachment 1) authorizing a grant to the California Department of Parks and Recreation for up to \$414,074 for the State Parks Fuels Reduction and Understory Burning Project (Project).

Location: The Project will be implemented in two different areas: 108 acres within Ed Z'Berg Sugar Pine Point State Park and four acres in the Tahoe State Recreation Area near Lake Forest. (Attachments 2a and 2b).

Fiscal Summary: The grant award of \$414,074, will be funded with Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Round 16 funds available through a Federal Trust Fund appropriation contingent upon and subject to the enactment of the 2017 Budget Act.

Overview

Description of Recommended Action

Staff recommends the Board authorize a \$414,074 grant to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for forest health projects at Ed Z'Berg Sugar Pine Point State Park (108 acres) and Tahoe State Recreation Area (4 acres) on the west shore of the Lake Tahoe Basin (Attachments 2a and 2b). The funds for the Project are part of a \$6.8 million grant from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) for high priority forest health and hazardous fuels reduction projects.

The Project will enhance forest health and resiliency, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the adjacent communities of Tahoma and Lake Forest, and in the surrounding forest. The Project includes hand thinning, piling, chipping, and understory burning.

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) developed a process to prioritize treatment areas under the SNPLMA grant. The TFFT identified this Project to be a high priority forest health project and it is the first to be recommended for funding under the Conservancy's SNPLMA grant. Staff will seek Board approval to award grants for other projects under the SNPLMA grant on a regular basis as California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reviews and other requirements are completed.

Staff anticipates entering into the grant with DPR this summer contingent upon and subject to enactment of the 2017 Budget Act. DPR plans to begin the Project in September 2017 and complete the project by December 2018.

History

In December 2016, the Board authorized acceptance of a \$6,814,500 Hazardous Fuels and Wildfire Prevention grant from BLM. The Board also approved expenditures of up to \$1,969,500 for activities associated with planning, monitoring and assessment, and related direct and indirect costs, with the understanding that staff will return to the Board for authorization to fund specific implementation projects.

The BLM grant provides funding for forest health and fuels reduction projects on 1,200-1,800 acres within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) over a six-year term on lands owned and managed by the State of California, local jurisdictions, and large private landowners on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Staff finalized the grant agreement with BLM in March 2017, and has been working closely with the TFFT to prioritize, plan, and monitor the funded projects.

Financing

Staff recommends the award of a site improvement grant of up to \$414,074 of SNPLMA funds included in a Federal Trust Fund local assistance appropriation in the 2017 Budget Act. This action is contingent upon and subject to enactment of the 2017 Budget Act. The proposed grant includes \$17,795 previously authorized for planning, layout, and project preparation activities, and \$396,279 of newly authorized funds for implementation.

Project Budget

Activity	Acres	Amount
Broadcast Burning	53	\$135,085
Hand Thin, Chip, Pile Burn	59	\$261,194
Proposed Implementation Total (New Authorization)	112	\$396,279
 		
Planning, Layout, Project Preparation(Previously Authorized Activities December 2016)		\$17,795
Total Grant	112	\$414,074

The budget may be adjusted between line items, but total expenditures under the grant will not exceed \$414,074.

As a partner agency to the larger BLM grant, DPR is providing a \$30,000 match over the six-year term of the grant. For this Project, DPR is providing a match of \$11,397 in the form of staff time.

Authority

Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

Implementation of this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Government Code section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to State agencies for purposes consistent with its mission.

Consistency with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan

The recommended action is consistent with the Strategic Plan because the partnership effort allows 112 acres in high priority WUI areas to be efficiently managed for fuels treatment (Strategy III.A.).

Consistency with the Conservancy's Program Guidelines

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy's Forest Improvement Program Guidelines. The Project reduces the risk of property and forest loss from catastrophic wildfire and increases the health and vigor of the retained trees. Healthy forests are better equipped to deal with the effects of climate change, sequester carbon, improve visual appeal, and increase wildlife function.

Consistency with External Authorities

The recommended action is consistent with the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) because it facilitates the implementation of EIP project # 10085.

This action is also consistent with the most recently adopted versions of both the *2014 Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Protection Strategy* and the *2015 Lake Tahoe Basin Community Wildfire Protection Plan*.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

Acting as a responsible agency, the Board previously considered DPR's Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for Fuels Reduction and Understory Burning, which includes Ed Z'Berg Sugar Pine Point State Park and Tahoe State Recreation Area, in compliance with CEQA. The Conservancy submitted a notice of determination to the State Clearinghouse on June 28, 2013. Staff previously analyzed all potential environmental effects of the current recommended action in the MND.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Resolution 17-06-02
Attachments 2a and 2b – Project Location Maps

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