

**NORTH SHORE SUGAR PINE RESTORATION FOR MOUNTAIN  
PINE BEETLE OUTBREAK RECOVERY**

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 17-12-02 (Attachment 1) authorizing up to \$68,191 for a contract with The Regents of the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) to restore sugar pine in areas of the north shore that suffered high tree mortality from prolonged drought and associated mountain pine beetle activity.

**Location:** The North Shore Sugar Pine Restoration for Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak Recovery project is located on the northern and western portions of Lake Tahoe between Tahoe City and Kings Beach.

**Fiscal Summary:** A total of \$68,191 of Proposition 12 funding will be expended through a contract with UC Davis.

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**Overview**

**Description of Recommended Action**

Staff recommends the Board authorize spending up to \$68,191 for the North Shore Sugar Pine Restoration for Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak Recovery project (project). The goal of the project is to restore sugar pine, which is a native species to the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin), in areas of the north shore heavily impacted by the combined effects of drought and mountain pine beetle attack. This project will promote forest health and resiliency to climate change.

UC Davis staff will collect sugar pine seeds from 100 local sugar pine trees believed to be resistant to drought and mountain pine beetle. The seeds will be processed and germinated at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's L.A. Moran Reforestation Center. Next, the seedlings will be transferred to the UC Davis field station in Tahoe City and maintained for two years to improve survivorship. California Conservation Corps (CCC) handcrews will plant approximately 6,000 seedlings on a

combination of California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy), California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands. Funding provided by the Tahoe Fund will allow citizens to plant an additional 4,000 seedlings on private land. UC Davis and Conservancy staff expect to restore sugar pines on approximately 120 acres.

UC Davis submitted this project as a Proposition 1 proposal in April 2017 and the external review committee ranked the project high for its forest health benefits. Conservancy staff, however, determined that Proposition 12 would be a more appropriate funding source. The Conservancy believes this project will promote restoration and resilience of sugar pines and contribute to long-term carbon storage.

### **History**

The Basin, like much of California, is just now starting to recover from the severe effects of a five-year drought. The drought and successive bark beetle induced tree mortality has been detrimental to the health of forests. Tree mortality in the Basin doubled from 35,000 in 2015 to 72,000 in 2016 and many of the largest trees to die on the north shore are sugar pines.

UC Davis is a leader in studying genetic variation and the biology of sugar pines in the Basin. They have found significant genetic variation and local adaptation to the effects of climate change in sugar pines, such as water-use efficiency. UC Davis hopes to use this understanding and apply it to this project. The sourcing of seeds from local, healthy sugar pines will maintain and improve adaptations that promote resiliency to climate change. UC Davis has been collecting and cultivating sugar pines for more than ten years and, with this additional funding, will be able to replant sugar pine seedlings to help offset tree mortality losses.

### **Financing**

Staff recommends providing \$68,191 in Proposition 12 funds to UC Davis to support the project. UC Davis has also secured \$33,000 from the Tahoe Fund for the Project, which will help UC Davis plant seedlings on private lands and conduct public outreach.

### **Proposed Budget**

Staff recommends the budget as shown below. Line item expenses may be adjusted slightly in the final contract but total expenditures under this contract will not exceed \$68,191.

<b>Proposition 12 Contract</b>	
Seedling Germination Costs (Fiscal Year 18/19)	\$30,469
Seedling Nursery Costs (Fiscal Year 19/20)	\$15,235
CCC Planting on Public Lands (Fiscal Year 20/21)	\$22,487
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$68,191</b>

### **Authority**

#### **Consistency with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation**

Implementation of this project is consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to enter into agreements with local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for purposes consistent with its mission.

#### **Consistency with the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan**

The recommended action is consistent with Strategies II and III of the Strategic Plan. Strategy II.A focuses on advancement of the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) and the development of partnerships to increase private investment in the EIP. Strategy III focuses on effectively managing Conservancy land and aims to implement up to 20 restoration projects per year. The project is an EIP project that will restore up to 120 acres of sugar pine habitat.

#### **Consistency with the Conservancy’s Program Guidelines**

The recommended action is consistent with the Forest Improvement Guidelines approved by the Board on June 18, 2015. Forest ecosystem health is a key provision of these Guidelines. The project directly promotes forest health by specifically focusing on planting progeny of sugar pines are resistant to drought and mountain pine beetle.

#### **Consistency with External Authorities**

Proposition 12, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000, authorizes the Conservancy under Public Resources Code sections 5096.310(n) and 5096.351 to expend funding for, among other things, the protection, restoration, and enhancement of streams and natural areas. The project falls within the authority of this act and specifically aids in restoring and enhancing of natural areas and streams through soil stabilization.

The recommended action is also consistent with the EIP and State Wildlife Action Plan. The project is an EIP project (project # 02.01.01.0139) that will restore both forest and wildlife habitat.

### **Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain classes of activities are statutorily exempt from CEQA or are exempt because they have been determined by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to have no significant effect on the environment. Pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21001(f) and 21082, the Conservancy has also adopted regulations to implement, interpret, and make specific, the provisions of CEQA. (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 12100 et seq.) Staff has evaluated the Project, and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. This Project qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines, section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), and the Conservancy's CEQA regulations, section 12102.4. Staff has drafted a notice of exemption (NOE) for the Project (Attachment 2). If the Board approves the Project, staff will file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15062.

### **List of Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Resolution 17-12-02

Attachment 2 – Notice of Exemption, Exhibit A

### **Conservancy Staff Contact**

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