

**PHASE 2 OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FUEL HAZARD REDUCTION AND UNDERSTORY BURNING PROJECT**

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 20-09-05 (Attachment 1) authorizing staff to grant to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) up to \$97,500 for Phase 2 of the California State Parks Fuel Hazard Reduction and Understory Burning Project (Project).

**Executive Summary:** In 2016, the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) received a Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Round 16 Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant (SNPLMA Grant) from the Bureau of Land Management. The SNPLMA Grant funds the Project and other fuel hazard reduction and forest health projects in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) 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 (Basin). The recommended action will add \$97,500 to a \$487,500 grant to the DPR that the Conservancy Board authorized in December 2019. The DPR will complete Phase 2 of the Project, which includes fuel hazard reduction treatments on 150 acres of WUI land. The authorization advances the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Goals 1 (Steward Conservancy Lands and Protect Basin Communities from Wildfire) and 2 (Restore the Resilience of Basin Forests and Watersheds), as well as the goals of the Lake Tahoe Basin Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). The authorization is also consistent with the 2014 Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Protection Strategy (Strategy), the 2015 Lake Tahoe Basin Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), and the 2019 Lake Tahoe Basin Forest Action Plan (Forest Action Plan).

**Location:** The Project will occur on 150 acres of land owned and managed by the DPR within a 267-acre area of Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park (Park) on the west shore of the Basin. (Attachment 2)

**Fiscal Summary:** The Conservancy will use \$97,500 from the SNPLMA Grant to fund the recommended authorization; all expended funds associated with the authorization will be reimbursable to the Conservancy.

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## Overview

### History

The Board previously approved the Project in June 2013 when, acting as a responsible agency, it reviewed and considered the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) that DPR adopted to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for fuel hazard reduction and understory burning at the Park.

In December 2016, the Board authorized the acceptance of the SNPLMA Grant. The Board concurrently authorized expending up to \$1,989,500 for planning, layout, project preparation, and other costs. Staff has returned to the Board annually to request project-specific implementation funding.

The Board authorized a grant to the DPR in June 2017 for up to \$414,074 to implement Phase 1 of the Project, which reduced fuel hazards on 104 acres within the Park. The DPR completed Phase 1 and requested funding in 2019 to implement Phase 2 of the Project. The Board authorized a grant to the DPR in December 2019 for up to \$487,500 to implement Phase 2.

The Conservancy executed a \$487,500 grant agreement with the DPR for Phase 2 in June 2020. Work on Phase 2 is proceeding on schedule. However, the DPR and staff determined that the DPR does not have sufficient funds to complete the Project. Staff now seeks authorization to grant an additional \$97,500 to the DPR.

### Detailed Description of Recommended Action

#### 1. Major Elements and/or Steps of the Recommended Action

The recommended action authorizes staff to grant an additional \$97,500 to the DPR to complete Phase 2 of the Project. With the grant funding, the DPR will reduce hazardous fuels using hand thinning and understory burning on 150 acres within a 267-acre area of the Park. The DPR will perform all activities consistent with the Project Requirements and Mitigation Measures set forth in the IS/MND.

#### 2. Overall Context and Benefits

The Strategy, CWPP, and Forest Action Plan identified the Project area as a high priority for treatment. The DPR designed the treatment to reduce hazardous fuels, decrease the potential for high-intensity wildfire, and increase forest resiliency. Healthy and resilient forests sequester carbon, provide scenic value, provide wildlife habitat, can better withstand disturbances like wildfire and insects, and can better adapt to climate change. The Project complements past forestry-related efforts on adjacent federal and non-federal lands, furthering the Basin goal of completing all initial WUI treatments by 2025. The recommended action also advances Conservancy Strategic Goals, Conservancy deliverables for the SNPLMA Grant, Basinwide forestry plans, and the EIP.

3. Schedule for the Recommended Action  
DPR began implementing Phase 2 in July 2020. Following authorization, staff will add funds to the grant agreement. Implementation will continue through fall 2021.

### Financing

Project	Acres	Amount
Phase 2 of the Project (Previously Authorized in December 2019)	150	\$487,500
Additional Funds (New Authorization)	-	\$97,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>\$585,000</b>

### Authority

#### Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

Implementation of the Project is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Specifically, 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 Conservancy's Strategic Plan Goal 1 (Steward Conservancy Lands and Protect Basin Communities from Wildfire) and Goal 2 (Restore the Resilience of Basin Forests and Watersheds). The Project uses federal grant funds to reduce hazardous fuels on 150 acres of land located within a high-priority WUI area.

#### Consistency with the Conservancy's Program Guidelines

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy's Forest Improvement Program Guidelines.

#### Consistency with External Authorities

The recommended action is consistent with the EIP, specifically EIP project #02.01.01.0144. This action is also consistent with the Strategy, CWPP, and Forest Action Plan.

### Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

The DPR prepared and adopted the IS/MND for this project to comply with CEQA. On June 20, 2013, acting as a responsible agency, the Board reviewed and considered the IS/MND and approved the Project. Upon approval staff filed a notice of determination with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, section 15096. All potential environmental effects of Phase 2 of this Project were analyzed in the IS/MND and previously considered by the Board. Since DPR adopted the IS/MND, there is no new

information, substantial changes to the Project, or changes to Project implementation that would involve any new significant effects not analyzed in the IS/MND.

### **List of Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Resolution 20-09-05

Attachment 2 – Project Map

### **Conservancy Staff Contact**

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