

**SOUTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT ROUND 16  
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS**

**Recommended Actions:** Adopt the three following resolutions:

- 1) Resolution 21-03-03.1 (Attachment 1) authorizing the expenditure of up to \$929,500 to implement the Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project, and the execution of agreements, including grants, as necessary for implementation;
- 2) Resolution 21-03-03.2 (Attachment 2) authorizing the expenditure of up to \$331,500 to implement the Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project on Conservancy land, and the execution of agreements as necessary for implementation; and
- 3) Resolution 21-03-03.3 (Attachment 3) authorizing the expenditure of up to \$97,500 to implement the Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project on Conservancy land, and the execution of agreements as necessary for implementation.

**Executive Summary:** These three recommended actions will result in the implementation of three fuel hazard reduction projects on the west shore within the high-priority wildland-urban interface (WUI). The treatments for the following three projects will involve hand thinning and pile burning on a total of 418 acres:

- Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project (286 acres)
- Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project (102 acres)
- Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project (30 acres)

These three projects will be the Board's fifth round of authorizations for project implementation funding associated with the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 16 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Grant (Grant). The recommended actions advance 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), as well as the goals of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). These authorizations are also consistent with the Lake Tahoe Basin's (Basin) 2014 Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Protection Strategy (Strategy), 2015 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), and 2019 Lake Tahoe Basin Forest Action Plan.

**Location:** The three project locations are within Placer County. The Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project will occur on 286 acres of land owned by

the Conservancy, the North Tahoe Public Utility District, multiple private water companies, and private owners in the Carnelian Bay area on the north shore. The Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project will occur on 102 acres of the Conservancy-owned Dollar Creek property, near Tahoe City. The Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project will occur on Conservancy-owned land consisting of 30 acres of open-space parcels west of the Tahoe Pines subdivision on the west shore, north of Homewood Ski Area. (Attachments 4a-4c)

**Fiscal Summary:** The Conservancy will use up to \$1,358,500 from the Grant to fund the recommended authorizations; all expended funds associated with the authorizations will be reimbursable to the Conservancy.

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## Overview

### History

Following the 2007 Angora Fire, the Basin's most destructive wildfire in recent history, a voluntary group of 21 Basin fire and land management agencies formed the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT). The TFFT serves as a statewide model of collaborative planning and implementation of fuel hazard reduction and wildfire mitigation projects. The TFFT has issued three Basinwide planning frameworks: the Strategy, CWPP, and Forest Action Plan.

Through the SNPLMA program, which is funded by land sales in the Las Vegas area, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) occasionally solicits nominations for fuel hazard reduction projects. In 2015 the BLM recommended that partners nominate large-scale, multijurisdictional, regional projects for funding, rather than small-scale, single-jurisdiction projects. The TFFT decided that one partner from California and one from Nevada would each submit a regional nomination for the SNPLMA Round 16 funding. The TFFT selected the Conservancy as the agency to submit the California nomination. In late 2016, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior approved the California nomination; soon afterwards the BLM awarded the Grant to the Conservancy.

In December 2016, the Board authorized accepting the \$6,814,500 Grant, which provides funding over a six-year timeframe for reducing hazardous fuels and improving forest health on 1,200 to 1,800 acres within the WUI. The Grant covers land owned and managed by the State of California, local jurisdictions, and large private landowners on the California side of the Basin. The Board also approved expending up to \$1,969,500 of the Grant for planning, monitoring, and assessment, and related direct and indirect costs, with the understanding that staff will return to the Board for authorizations to fund specific implementation projects. Staff finalized the Grant agreement with BLM in March 2017, and now works closely with the TFFT to prioritize, plan, and monitor projects.

The Board authorized the first round of implementation projects in June 2017, with subsequent authorizations in 2018, 2019, and 2020. The following table summarizes the previous and current authorizations:

| <b>Previous Authorizations</b>   | <b>Amount</b>      | <b>Acres Treated</b> |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| December 2016 (Planning)   | \$1,989,500        | N/A                  |
| June 2017 (Implementation)   | \$414,074          | 104                  |
| March 2018 (Implementation)  | \$42,250           | 14                   |
| December 2018 (Implementation)   | \$484,250          | 149                  |
| December 2019 (Implementation)   | \$1,036,750        | 319                  |
| September 2020 (Augmented a previous authorization for implementation) | \$97,500           | N/A                  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$4,044,324</b> | <b>586</b>           |
| <b>Current Authorizations (Implementation)</b>                         | \$1,358,500        | 418                  |
| Total of previous and current authorizations                           | \$5,402,824        | 1,004                |
| Remaining funding and balance of acreage to treat                      | \$1,411,676        | 196-796              |

### **Detailed Description of Recommended Actions**

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

Upon Board authorization, staff may enter into agreements as necessary to implement three fuel hazard reduction projects:

- **Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project (286 acres – Up to \$929,500):** The Conservancy and the North Tahoe Fire Protection District will reduce hazardous fuels and conifer density by hand thinning and pile burning. Activities will occur on 208 acres of Conservancy-owned land and 78 acres of adjacent private and local government land in the Carnelian Bay area of Placer County. The Conservancy will award a grant of up to \$253,500 to the North Tahoe Fire Protection District to implement the portion of the project on private and local government lands and expend up to \$676,000 for implementation on Conservancy land.
- **Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project (102 acres – Up to \$331,500):** The Conservancy will reduce hazardous fuels and conifer density by

hand thinning and pile burning on the southwest side of the Conservancy’s Dollar Creek property in Placer County. This project connects previous treatments on the Dollar Creek property to create a continuous buffer of community protection.

- **Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project (30 acres – Up to \$97,500):**  
The Conservancy will reduce hazardous fuels and conifer density by hand thinning and pile burning on 30 acres of Conservancy-owned property. The project is located directly west of the Tahoe Pines neighborhood in Placer County.

## 2. Overall Context and Benefits

All the proposed project areas are within the defense zone of the WUI on the California side of the Basin. These areas are among the highest priorities identified in the CWPP and the Strategy. The TFFT endorsed the projects. The treatments will improve forest health and reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. The Conservancy designed the treatments to reduce hazardous fuels, decrease the potential for high-intensity wildfire, and increase forest resilience. Healthy forests sequester more carbon, have greater visual appeal, increase wildlife function, and are more resilient to the effects of climate change. These projects will complement past forestry efforts on adjacent federal and non-federal lands, and further the Basin goal of completing all initial WUI treatments by 2025. The recommended actions also advance the Conservancy’s Strategic Goals, SNPLMA Round 16 Grant deliverables, the EIP, and the Forest Action Plan.

## 3. Schedule for the Recommended Actions

Following authorization, staff anticipates executing contracts and grant agreements in spring 2021, with implementation beginning in summer 2021 and continuing through spring 2023.

### Financing

Staff recommends the expenditures shown below. Total expenditures for each project will not exceed the amounts provided.

| <b>Project</b>                         | <b>Acres</b> | <b>Amount</b>      |
|--|--------------|--------------------|
| Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction | 286          | \$929,500          |
| Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction | 102          | \$331,500          |
| Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction      | 30           | \$97,500           |
| <b>Total (Current Authorizations)</b>  | <b>418</b>   | <b>\$1,358,500</b> |

## **Authority**

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

The recommended actions are consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66907.10 authorizes the Conservancy to improve and develop acquired lands for a variety of purposes, including protecting the natural environment. Under Government Code section 66907.9, the Conservancy is authorized to initiate, negotiate, and participate in agreements to manage land under its ownership and control. Finally, Government Code section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to local public agencies for purposes consistent with its mission.

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

The recommended actions are consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Goals 1 and 2. The proposed projects use federal grant funds to reduce hazardous fuels on a total of 418 acres of land located within high-priority WUI areas.

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

The recommended actions are consistent with the Conservancy's Forest Improvement Program Guidelines. The projects reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and increase the health and vigor of the forest. Healthy forests sequester more carbon, have greater visual appeal, increase wildlife function, and are more resilient to the effects of climate change.

### **Consistency with External Authorities**

The recommended actions are consistent with EIP project #02.01.01.0144. These recommended actions are also consistent with the Strategy, CWPP, and Forest Action Plan.

## **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 (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 12100 et seq.). Staff evaluated all three projects: 1) the Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project, 2) the Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project, and 3) the Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project, and has found each of the three projects to be exempt under CEQA. Each of these three projects qualify for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), as well as the Conservancy's CEQA regulations, section 12102.4. Staff prepared three notices of exemption (NOE) for the projects (Attachments

5-7). If the Board approves the projects, staff will file the NOEs with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

### **List of Attachments**

Attachment 1– Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project Resolution 21-03-03.1

Attachment 2 – Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project Resolution 21-03-03.2

Attachment 3 – Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project Resolution 21-03-03.3

Attachment 4a – Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project Map

Attachment 4b – Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project Map

Attachment 4c – Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project Map

Attachment 5 – Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project NOE

- Exhibit A – NOE Map

Attachment 6 – Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project NOE

- Exhibit A – NOE Map

Attachment 7 –Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project NOE

- Exhibit A – NOE Map

### **Conservancy Staff Contact**

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