



MEMORANDUM
PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING DIVISION
County of Placer

TO: Board of Supervisors DATE: September 13, 2016
FROM: Ken Grehm, Director of Public Works and Facilities
By: Brett Storey, Principal Management Analyst
SUBJECT: Environmental Engineering / Staff Update / Fuel Reduction Management Program
Funding Recommendations for 2016

ACTION REQUESTED

Approve funding for the Fuel Reduction Management Program for the Middle Fork Project and authorize the Director of Public Works and Facilities or designee to sign funding agreements in an amount not to exceed \$78,500.

BACKGROUND

At the June 3, 2014 Board of Supervisors meeting, your Board approved the Fuel Reduction Management (FRM) Program. The FRM Program provides funds to projects that perform fuel management activities that reduce potential fire risks in the Middle Fork Project (MFP) nexus area. This area is a critical forested watershed and its protection is of paramount importance to the MFP.

The FRM Program includes a semi-annual application period (January and June) that provides participating organizations the opportunity to coordinate FRM funding with other grant funding timelines.

The MFP is a multi-purpose water supply and hydro-generation project designed to conserve and control waters of the Middle Fork American River, the Rubicon River, and several associated tributary streams. Beginning in 2014, and for the duration of the federal license for the MFP, funding will be made available annually to organizations that propose projects or have programs that 1) have a direct nexus to the MFP area and 2) show the potential to reduce fire danger through some form of fuel management projects.

For the June 2016 phase of the program, staff recommends funding the following three projects that meet all of the FRM criteria and directly support fuel reduction in the MFP area:

- 1) City of Auburn Department of Public Safety: \$5,000 for MFP portion of Tamaroo Drainage Shaded Fuel Break (Phase II)
- 2) City of Auburn Department of Public Safety: \$24,000 for MFP portion of Olive Orchard Shaded Fuel Break (Phase II)
- 3) Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council: \$49,500 for MFP portion of Tree Mortality Removal Program 2016 (Phase II)

These were the three grant requests received during this phase of the FRM. Staff has developed a standardized FRM Grant Agreement. Copies of the proposed agreements are on file with the Clerk of the Board.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Staff's recommendation provides partial funding to previously approved projects. As such staff's request is not subject to environmental review.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for MFP nexus projects is available in Capital Project 04996 – Middle Fork Project for FY 2016-17. Staff anticipated funding projects totaling a not to exceed amount of \$200,000 for 2016. This request of \$78,500 brings the total amount for 2016 to \$177,500. The remaining funds are rolled over into the existing account and can be used for future year projects. Funding for these requests is provided pursuant to the Middle Fork Project Memorandum of Agreement with Placer County Water Agency.

ATTACHMENTS

Fuel Reduction Management Program Recommendations for 2016 (Phase II)



Middle Fork Project Area Fuel Reduction Program

Fuel Reduction Management Program Recommendations for 2016 (Phase II)

Background: The Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted the Fuel Reduction Management (FRM) Program in 2014 to implement a program that funds projects that perform fuel management activities that support a reduction in potential fire in the Middle Fork Project (MFP) nexus area. The funding available is pursuant to the Middle Fork Project Memorandum of Agreement with Placer County Water Agency and based upon a nexus to the MFP area.

Process: The BOS Adopted FRM program allows for the application period to be twice annually; once in January and one in June. Three applications were received by two organizations and were reviewed by a joint County/PCWA staff panel and the following recommendations for projects have been proposed.

Individual Projects Recommendations: The following projects were reviewed by staff to meet all FRM program qualifications and are recommended for funding in the FRM Program. Staff is recommending a total of \$78,500 in funding to the Placer County Board of Supervisors.

Individual Projects declined: There were no applications declined during this final phase of 2016.



Middle Fork Project Area Fuel Reduction Program

Project Recommendation #1

Title: American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break – Tamaroo Drainage Shaded Fuel Break (Phase II)

Applicant: City of Auburn Department of Public Safety

County Plan project references: 1) Western Slope Placer County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), 2) DMA 2000 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (FEMA approved), and 3) the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council (GAAFSC) Strategic Plan.

Total Project Cost: \$21,350

Application agency contribution: \$16,350

Request of funds: \$5,000

Recommendation of funds: \$5,000 (maximum amount allowed 40% of total project)

Summary of Project: The objective of the American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break proposed project is to provide a means of protection to the Auburn community from the disaster of wildfire, preserve our natural and cultural resources, enhance our watershed, support wildlife habitat, and maintain recreational opportunities to the pristine American River and Auburn State Recreation Area. The Phase II project area will encompass approximately 4 acres where maintenance treatment will be applied.

This project is crucial to reduce destruction from wildfire and is critical to the watershed. These areas are located in drainages known as “chutes” or “chimneys”; very steep V shaped canyons with massive fuel loads of natural vegetation when during a wildfire will burn with fierce intensity and cause major destruction to any structures as well as the land itself. Fire professionals are extremely concerned when any wildfire occurs in drainages because fuels burn extremely rapid, there is limited success in fire suppression efforts because of terrain, and such areas are an extreme safety concern for firefighting personnel and surrounding development due to intense fire behavior. The 2012 Robbers Fire, the 2013 American Fire in the upper American River Watershed System, and the recent Trailhead Fire all encountered intense fire behavior in such drainages.



Middle Fork Project Area Fuel Reduction Program

Project Recommendation #2

Title: American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break – Olive Orchard (Phase II)
Applicant: City of Auburn Department of Public Safety
County Plan project references: 1) Western Slope Placer County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), 2) DMA 2000 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (FEMA approved), and 3) the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council (GAAFSC) Strategic Plan.

Total Project Cost: \$127,730
Application agency contribution: \$103,730
Request of funds: \$24,000

Recommendation of funds: \$24,000 (maximum amount allowed 40% of total project)

Summary of Project: The objective of the American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break proposed project is to provide a means of protection to the Auburn community from the disaster of wildfire, preserve our natural and cultural resources, enhance our watershed, support wildlife habitat, and maintain recreational opportunities to the pristine American River and Auburn State Recreation Area. Phase II of the project area will encompass approximately 7 additional acres, as well as maintenance to the previously treated 10 acres, where treatment will be applied using Cal Fire hand crews and a contracted chipping vendor with the type of equipment that is appropriate for the terrain.

This project is crucial to reduce destruction from wildfire and is critical to the watershed. These areas are located in drainages known as “chutes” or “chimneys”; very steep V shaped canyons with massive fuel loads of natural vegetation when during a wildfire will burn with fierce intensity and cause major destruction to any structures as well as the land itself. Fire professionals are extremely concerned when any wildfire occurs in drainages because fuels burn extremely rapid, there is limited success in fire suppression efforts because of terrain, and such areas are an extreme safety concern for firefighting personnel and surrounding development due to intense fire behavior. The 2012 Robbers Fire, the 2013 American Fire, the 2014 King Fire in the upper American River Watershed System, and the recent Trailhead Fire experienced intense fire behavior in such drainages.



Middle Fork Project Area Fuel Reduction Program

Project Recommendation #3

Title: Tree Mortality Removal Program 2016 (Phase II)

Applicant: Foresthill/Iowa Hill Firesafe Council

County Plan project references: 1) Western Slope Placer County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), 2) DMA 2000 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (FEMA approved), 3) Cal Fires unit fire plan, and 4) the Foresthill/Iowa Hill Risk Assessment Mitigation Systems Plan.

Total Project Cost: \$124,000

Application agency contribution: \$74,500

Request of funds: \$49,500

Recommendation of funds: \$49,500 (maximum amount allowed < 40% of total project)

Summary of Project: The Foresthill/Iowa Hill Firesafe Council in cooperation with the Monte Verde Estates, Trailhead Estates, Michigan Bluff, and Foresthill Firewise Communities, Cal Fire NEU Unit, USFS, Placer County Fire Alliance, and other partners propose to expand a program to assist homeowners in removing dead or dying trees within the 150' defensible space of structures in the Foresthill/Iowa Hill FSC MFP nexus area. This program will help address the Governor's October 30, 2015 State of Emergency Proclamation on Tree Mortality, and the Placer County Board of Supervisors Resolution # 2015-253 "Proclaiming A Local Emergency Due to Tree Mortality in Placer County". Dead or dying trees resulting from extreme prolonged drought, pine beetles, and other tree parasites will be removed, thus reducing the risk to public safety, ingress and egress, structures, and perform fuel management activities that support a reduction in potential fire in the MFP area. This area is a critical forested watershed and protection of it is of paramount importance along with the forest communities that are critical to our economy. This program will assist in removing approximately 75 dead or dying trees adjacent to or within strategically placed fuels reduction project areas planned for 2016 or completed within the past 5 years. This project is adjacent to Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) lands, U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest (USFS) lands and the PCWA Middle Fork Project area. Property valued at greater than \$853 million dollars will be protected once this project is completed. Fire Safe and defensible space information will be distributed to over 7000 residents in these communities.