



**M E M O R A N D U M**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING DIVISION**  
County of Placer

TO: Board of Supervisors DATE: March 9, 2021  
FROM: Ken Grehm, Director of Public Works  
By: Brett Storey, Principal Management Analyst  
SUBJECT: Authorize Grant Application and Resolution / California Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant / Michigan Bluff Community Protection Project

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**ACTION REQUESTED**

Adopt a Resolution approving a grant application for up to \$2,500,000 to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the Michigan Bluff Community Protection Project, and authorize the County Executive Officer, or designee, to sign the application and certify Placer County will comply with all legal requirements.

**BACKGROUND**

Michigan Bluff is an unincorporated community in Placer County, California, approximately five miles northeast of Foresthill on the American River Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest (TNF). The community is perched on a ridge top between several large canyons and several smaller drainages in an area susceptible to wildfires. Forest management is needed to reduce fuel loads, improve forest health and resilience, and provide safer ingress and egress on existing roads for the public and emergency personnel in the event of a wildfire. Overcrowded forests, due to a lack of fire, combined with recent drought conditions, have contributed to higher levels of tree mortality from bark beetle attacks. Currently in the Michigan Bluff area, numerous groups of beetle-killed trees are intermixed with live trees that are susceptible to further attacks. These trees, in and near the community of Michigan Bluff, are a potential fire hazard. Local roads have encroaching, dense, woody vegetation that could be unsafe for public and emergency personnel ingress and egress in the event of a wildfire.

On February 20, 2018, your Board approved a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) with the U.S. Forest Service TNF. The MSA was developed to facilitate projects that support forest health and potentially lower the risk of catastrophic fire in the TNF watersheds. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has a grant program with one-time funding within the Governor's budget to be spent on projects that have completed their environmental review and have project teams ready to implement and accomplish the work by the end of 2023. Staff is proposing to apply for this grant program to support the Michigan Bluff Community Protection Project (Project) towards the new grant guidelines approved at the SNC Board meeting on March 4, 2021.

The Project has a combination of on-the-ground treatments on over 1,000 acres of land in National Forest System (NFS) lands. The treatments include mechanical thinning, hand thinning, mastication, and the creation of fuel breaks with some road work and hazard tree removal. The work on these federal lands will be managed by Placer County via our MSA. While there is no requirement for matching funds by the SNC, both the Tahoe National Forest and the Middle Fork Project are budgeting funding to support this effort as the lands are critical to both agencies.

Pursuant to the grant requirements, your Board must adopt a Resolution approving submittal of the grant application, as well as certifying Placer County will comply with all legal requirements of the grant itself.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

A Resolution authorizing a grant application does not constitute a "Project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378(a) and (b)(5)

because it is an administrative action that does not result in any direct or physical change in the environment. Because the Project is on federal land, separate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review has been conducted and the Decision Memo for Michigan Bluff Community Protection Project was signed by TNF Forest Supervisor Eli Ilano on October 27, 2019.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Submittal of the California Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant application has no fiscal impact. If awarded, the grant would utilize the funding from the SNC grant, TNF funding, and MFP funding, and there are no Placer County matching requirements. Should the grant be awarded, a corresponding agreement acceptance action including fiscal responsibilities will be brought back to your Board for approval. There is no impact to the County General Fund.

**ATTACHMENT**

Resolution

# Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

**In the matter of:** A Resolution approving the application for Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience grant funds from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_ program.

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held March 9, 2021, by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of said Board

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WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided funds for the Program shown above; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of a portion of these Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience funds through a local assistance grants program, establishing necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the SNC require a resolution certifying the approval of application by the applicant's governing board before submission of said application to the SNC; and

WHEREAS, the applicant, if selected, will enter into an agreement with the SNC to carry out the Project; and

WHEREAS, the County has identified the Michigan Bluff Community Protection Project (Project) as valuable toward meeting its mission and goals.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors, County of Placer, State of California, as follows:

1. The Board of Supervisors approves the submittal of an application for the Project, and certifies that applicant understands the assurances and certification requirements in the application; and
2. Certifies that applicant or title holder will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the resource(s) consistent with the long-term benefits described in support of the application, or will secure the resources to do so; and
3. Certifies that applicant will comply with all legal requirements as determined during the application process; and
4. Appoints Placer County Executive Officer, or designee, as agent to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including but not limited to: applications, agreements, payment requests, and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned Project.