

an Agreement with the State accepting the grant award (**Attachment C**). The Board also made the finding that the project was categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15308 (Class 8). Parks will administer and implement the project, with a completion date of March 15, 2022.

DISCUSSION:

Jacks Peak Park is an 892-acre county park, which is at high risk for a wildfire due to its location, environment and vegetation in the understory of the Monterey Pine forest. While no habitable structures lie within the proposed project area, this forested area's proximity to the cities of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Seaside, Del Rey Oaks, and the unincorporated communities of Carmel, Carmel Valley, Alta Loma and Laurels Grade is cause for concern as it poses risk to public health and safety of nearly 90,000 residents and properties.

The proposed project lies between Carmel Valley and the greater Monterey area, and may serve to help strategically facilitate wildfire containment. In the past few years there have been several devastating wildfires in Monterey County. This past summer there were three separate wildfires that started within days of one another: The River Fire caused by a lightning strike on August 16th that burned 48,088 acres, 30 structures destroyed (13 homes, 17 other structures); the Carmel Fire in Cachagua on August 18th that burned 6,905 acres, 73 structures destroyed (50 homes, 23 other structures); and the Dolan Fire, on August 18th that burned 124,924 acres, 19 structures destroyed (14 homes, 5 other structures).

In 2016 the nearby areas of Big Sur, Carmel Valley, and Carmel Highlands were impacted by the 2016 Soberanes fire which burned more than 132,000 acres and was only 5 miles from Jacks Peak, and the 2009 Basin Complex Fire of 2008 which burned over 162,000 acres at approximately 15 miles from Jacks Peak. Each of the wildfires caused significant impacts to air quality on a local, regional and statewide level.

Funds received through this grant will help with removing fuels in the form of dead and dying trees, downed vegetation, and ladder fuel vegetation (live or dead vegetation growing up from the ground into the tree canopies). The fuel material would be cleared utilizing the County Basic Defensible Space & Vegetation Management Guidelines of implementing a 100-foot defensible barrier around existing Park roads, buildings and maintenance facilities as shown in the Project Area Map (**Attachment D**).

The approach consists of removing the fuel material using equipment and hand crews within the project area. Parks staff has received estimates in the amount of \$14,900 to complete this work from Topes Tree Service (**Attachment E**). Next, staff will utilize a herd of goats to further reduce the dense, build-up of vegetation. The company, Goats R Us has provided a cost estimate for \$88,750 (**Attachment E**). Once the work using the goats is complete, crews will follow up to remove as much of the material as possible that has been exposed by the goats using the remaining \$13,000 in grant funds.

The total proposed treatment area is estimated to be approximately 40 acres.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Park staff is working with Cal Fire and County Fire representatives, representatives with the local Chapter of the Monterey Bay Area Native Plant Society and members with the Friends of Jacks Peak Park. The actual work is anticipated to be completed using in house RMA-Park staff, the Department of Corrections, Gabilan inmate fire/work crews, Cal Fire crews, park volunteers and/or outside, qualified vendors registered to do business with the County.

On November 19, 2020, the Budget Committee approved supporting the request.

The Office of County Counsel and County Administrative Office Budget and Analysis Division has reviewed this report and draft resolution for form and content.

FINANCING:

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection California Climate Investments (CCI) Fire Prevention Grant Program is a reimbursable grant program where the county will be required to cover the project costs up front and once project tasks are completed, the County will submit an invoice for reimbursement of the \$116,789 in grant funds. There is also a County in-kind match for staff costs to administer and manage the project in the amount of \$26,100, for a total project cost of \$142,889. Staff is requesting an increase in appropriations and revenues as this grant was not included in the FY 2020-21 Adopted Budget for Parks Operations. It is anticipated that all work will be completed by June 30, 2021.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

If approved, the recommended action supports the Board of Supervisors' Infrastructure and Public Safety Strategic Initiatives. This action would allow for the reduction of fuel load in Jacks Peak Park which in the event of a wildfire would help protect County infrastructure such as buildings and roads and provide for greater public safety as it could reduce the risk and intensity of a wildfire in the park and adjacent communities.

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Attachments:

- A. Draft Board Resolution
- B. Board Resolution No. 18-374
- C. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Climate Investments (CCI) Forest Health Grant Agreement
- D. Project Area Map
- E. Project Cost Estimates from Goats R Us and Topes Tree Service