



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 19-0259, **Version:** 1

Receive a report on Fuel Management Efforts through a Cal Fire Grant for Jacks Peak Park.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Parks Commission receive a report on Fuel Management Efforts through a Cal Fire Grant for Jacks Peak Park.

SUMMARY:

To address the potential for a devastating wildfire at Jacks Peak County Park, the Resource Management Agency (RMA-Park Planning Division) applied for a grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's California Climate Investments (CCI) - Fire Prevention Grant Program and was awarded funds in the amount of \$116,789. The County's proposal is intended to help reduce fuel load, or the build up of dead and invasive or non-native plant material to better manage wildfire risk at Jacks Peak County Park. The project consists of a State award in the amount of \$116,789. There is no County financial match, however, there is a County in-kind match for administrative staff costs in the amount of \$26,100, for a total project cost of \$142,889.

As a part of the requirement of the grant program, an Agreement was executed between the County and CalFire. The approach consists of removing fuels loads and invasive, non-native vegetation along park roads and around facilities/buildings. Its envisioned that a first phase of work will remove invasive vegetation and fuel loads approximately 3 to 5 feet from the edge of these developed areas. The next phase will continue to focus on the removal of non-native vegetation and fuel loads and extend 5 to 10 feet from the edge of developed areas. The project will be administered by RMA-Parks, with a project completion date of March 15, 2022.

DISCUSSION:

Jacks Peak is an 892-acre county park, which is at high risk for a devastating wildfire due to its location, vegetation type (Monterey Pines) with a buildup of dry brush and understory, including pine pitch which can be highly flammable. 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, 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. The nearby areas of Big Sur, Carmel Valley, and Carmel Highlands were recently affected by the 2016 Sobranes fire which burned more than 132,000 acres over 2-1/2 months between July 22nd and October 12th and was only 5 miles from Jacks Peak, and the 2008 Basin Complex Fire which burned over 162,000 acres over approximately one month and came within approximately 15 miles from Jacks Peak. Both fires proved to be devastating due to the topography and high winds in the area creating

challenges for fire fighters. Large fires like these significantly impact air quality.

Funds received through this grant would help manage fire fuel loads by selectively removing dead and dying vegetation as well as ladder fuel vegetation (vegetation growing up from the ground into the tree canopies) in a manner that both reduces fire loads and improves the ecology around critical roads, buildings and maintenance facilities. The total proposed treatment area is estimated to be approximately 170 acres.

Staff plans to coordinate these efforts with representatives from CalFire County Regional Fire, the Native Plant Society and members with the Friends of Jacks Peak Park. The actual work is anticipated to be completed using RMA-Park field staff, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Gabilan inmate fire/work crews, CalFire crews and/or park volunteers. RMA-Parks Administrative Operations will oversee the work and administer the grant.

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Reviewed by: Shawne Ellerbee, RMA Deputy Director of Administrative Services

Approved by: Carl P. Holm, RMA Director

Attachments:

A- Grant Application

B- Award Letter, CAL FIRE's CCI - *Fire Prevention Grant Program*