

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was allocated \$54 million in bond funds through Proposition 84, passed by voters in 2006. Since 2007, the SNC has conducted multiple Proposition 84 grant rounds and funded over 300 successful projects throughout the Sierra Nevada Region. In September 2017, the SNC Board unanimously passed a motion modifying the delegated authority of the Executive Officer to approve and execute grants using any remaining Proposition 84 funds to include the entire SNC jurisdiction, consistent with all remaining criteria, including a requirement that all grants contribute to innovative development and planning of projects that increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration or use of forest products. The Board required all grants awarded under authority delegated to the Executive Officer be reported at the next scheduled meeting. The next such grant award has been made to the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) for the Tree Mortality Crisis Response on Private Lands.

Current Status

In March 2018, under authority delegated by the Board, the SNC Executive Officer authorized Grant Agreement No. 918 to the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts in the amount of \$42,000. Staff filed a Notice of Exemption with the Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse to satisfy CEQA requirements. The project provides a rare opportunity for a federal/state/local/private partnership to address the issue of tree mortality in the Sierra Nevada Region. The cost associated with addressing tree mortality on private lands has resulted in very little activity.

The CARCD received a \$10,000,000 grant through the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for the implementation of forest restoration activities on private forestlands over a three-to-five-year period. (SNC staff assisted in the development of the application.) SNC funds will support project management activities for approximately 7,500 acres of forest restoration work being completed on nonindustrial private forestlands located within the 10 high-hazard tree mortality counties. SNC funding represents an essential resource to complete the program budget. Without this funding the applicant would not be able to effectively manage the complex communication and coordination for necessary pre-project management activities involved with the RCPP grant.

Next Steps

The SNC staff will continue to work with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts on the project with an expected completion in January 2020.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Board members are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.