



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Watershed Committee/Board of Directors
Title: California Conservation Corps Annual Contract
From: Shaun Horne, Watershed Resources Manager
Through: Ben Horenstein, General Manager
Meeting Date: December 12, 2023

TYPE OF ACTION: Action Information X Review and Refer

RECOMMENDATION: Refer the California Conservation Corps contract to a future Board of Directors Meeting for approval

SUMMARY: On March 2, 2017, the District entered into a Sponsor Agreement (CCC-96) with the California Conservation Corps (CCC), which determined that there were mutual advantages and a public benefit to having CCC members complete agreed upon land management activities on the District’s watershed lands. On an annual basis, the District enters into subsequent agreements/amendments to support critical vegetation, fuels, forestry and trails work. Staff is recommending that the Watershed Committee review and refer to a regularly scheduled Board of Directors Meeting approval of the FY 2024 California Conservation Corps contract in the amount of \$207,933.

DISCUSSION: In October of 2019, the District adopted the Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) which describes the actions the District will implement to reduce wildfire hazards and to maintain and enhance ecosystem function. Under the BFFIP there are 27 management actions that are being implemented to fulfill the goals and approaches described in the BFFIP. Vegetation management under the BFFIP aims to reduce fuel loads, maintain fuelbreak infrastructure, preserve defensible space, and reduce invasive weed species. Vegetation management is conducted continuously throughout the year with the chief goal of reducing fuel loads and maintaining the watershed’s biological diversity. This contract will support the scaling up of vegetation management work and forest restoration on the Mt. Tamalpais watershed, which is necessary to address fuel load issues and ensure maintenance of existing fuelbreak infrastructure.

The District adopted an Amendment to the *Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP)* for the Restoration of Azalea Hill (Project) on May 14, 2019. The Project will: 1) remove approximately 4.4-miles of non-system roads and trails and restore those routes to natural conditions to improve habitat and water quality; 2) adopt and improve a 1.9-mile Class IV road comprised of the

existing Liberty Gulch Road (1.2 miles) and convert an existing non-system trail (0.7 miles) to the wider, small vehicle route); 3) improve the hiking and equestrian route over Azalea Hill by correcting erosion and drainage problems along approximately 1.1 miles of existing Class VI trail, rerouting the trail around sensitive plants and adopting 250 feet of an existing non-system trail; and 4) treat the Azalea Hill parking lot to correct its erosion problems and improve the visitor amenities. Upon its completion, the project would prevent up to an estimated 219 cubic yards of sediment from entering Azalea Hill's creeks and Alpine Lake annually (or 4,380 cubic yards over 20 years) and would restore approximately one acre of habitat. This contract will support ongoing trail system improvements as part of the Azalea Hill Trail Project.

The CCC spike team is based out of Ukiah, California, and reports to sponsor work sites for an eight-day rotation or "spike". The CCC crew is composed of 10-13 corps members who work in 10-hour shifts. Corps members are working on the Mt. Tamalpais watershed lands to carry out fuel reduction, forest restoration, fuelbreak maintenance and trails work. Crews work under the direction and supervision of Watershed Maintenance staff as well as a CCC on-site supervisor. Over the past three years CCC crews have been camping at the Sky Oaks Ranger station in the old Girl Scout Camp. This arrangement maximizes the crew's time conducting work by reducing commute times and helps keep the overall contract costs lower. The Contract for FY 2024 will fund 7 CCC spikes on the watershed.

Staff is recommending that the Watershed Committee review and refer to a regularly scheduled Board of Directors Meeting approval of the FY 2023/2024 California Conservation Corps Contract in the amount of \$207,993.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Work performed under this contract is covered by the 2019 Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) Environmental Impact Report and the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) Environmental Impact Report and associated IS/MND for the Restoration of Azalea Hill Project.

FISCAL IMPACT: The total contract costs is \$207,993 and is budgeted in the Watershed's Capital A1E07 'Green Infrastructure' and the CalFIRE grant for forestry restoration, fuel load reduction, and fuelbreak maintenance. Work on the Azalea Hill Trail Project will be covered by the State Parks Recreation Trail Program Grant that the District secured for construction of the Azalea Hill Trail Restoration Project.

ATTACHMENT(S): None.