



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Board of Directors
Title: Memorandum of Agreement between Marin County Fire Department and Marin Municipal Water District
From: Shaun Horne, Director of Watershed Resources
Through: Ben Horenstein, General Manager
Meeting Date: February 13, 2024

TYPE OF ACTION: X Action Information Review and Refer

RECOMMENDATION: Approve Memorandum of Agreement between Marin County Fire Department and Marin Municipal Water District

SUMMARY: The Marin County Fire Department and Marin Municipal Water District entered into a Master Mutual Benefit Agreement on January 1, 2018 for the purpose of vegetation management activities. The agreement expired on June 30, 2022. Staff is requesting that the Board of Directors approve a new agreement between Marin County Fire Department (MCFD) and Marin Municipal Water District to support the implementation of the Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) on the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed and to help support county wide workforce development.

DISCUSSION: In October of 2019, the District adopted the BFFIP, and associated Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), which describes the actions the District will implement to reduce wildfire hazards and to maintain and enhance ecosystem function on the watershed. 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. Additionally, One Tam partner agencies, with funding support from California Coastal Conservancy Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Grant Program, developed a Marin Regional Forest Health Strategy (Forest Health Strategy), which is a crucial step forward in understanding the condition of key forest communities in Marin County. Utilizing best available data, local knowledge, and expert analysis, the Forest Health Strategy provides essential insight into the threats currently impacting forest resilience in Marin. The Forest Health Strategy furnishes a science-based framework for identifying how and where agencies can work both independently and together across jurisdictional boundaries to increase and protect forest resiliency in our region while supporting wildfire risk reduction.

Projects identified in the BFFIP and Forest Health Strategy are also informing recent grant applications to Cal Fire's Forest Health Program, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and California Coastal Conservancy. As of February 2024, One Tam partners have submitted grant proposals totaling \$14,160,000 of which \$6,820,000 would fund Marin Water's BFFIP work over the next 3-5 years. On an annual basis District staff, contractors and partners such as California Conservation Corps and California Conservation Corps North Bay Crews carry out vegetation management work on the watershed. The Memorandum of Agreement between MCFD and the District would provide available funding from the District to MCFD to provide additional BFFIP implementation. It would also allow the District to support county wide work force development efforts through utilizing the Marin County Fire Departments Tam Crew and the Fire Innovation, Recruitment & Education (FIRE) Foundry Crews.

In May 20, 2005, the Marin County Board of Supervisor approved funding for the Tamalpais Fire Crew. The program is more than just a vegetation management tool, it is used to build firefighting skills, work ethic, and leadership competency among the firefighters that will become the future of MCFD and other fire agencies throughout the state. Similarly, the FIRE Foundry Organization was developed as a workforce development program designed to support early career recruits with diverse backgrounds through career exploration in fire services and strengthening their competitiveness for future employment as firefighters or in related careers in medicine, public safety, and natural resources management in Marin County. College of Marin is a partner to the FIRE Foundry Organization where recruits can take prerequisite courses for fire academies and paramedic schools, obtain career counseling, and enroll in physical education classes in order to prepare to apply to and enroll in a Fire Academy. Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB) is also a program partner with the FIRE Foundry Organization. CCNB is the employer of record for a position designed specifically for FIRE Foundry recruits. The employment opportunity can be full-time or part-time, and is designed to work around the FIRE Foundry recruits educational activities.

In partnership with MCFD, the District can advance the implementation of the BIFFIP and Forest Health Strategy by funding crews to carry out critical vegetation management, forest restoration, pile burning and prescribed burning projects on the watershed. The MCFD is a critical partner for advancing the BFFIP prescribed fire goals and was instrumental in the implementation of the Rock Springs prescribed fire in 2023. On an annual basis, District staff will meet with MCFD to review BFFIP projects and to help inform annual work plans for the Tam Crew and FIRE Foundry crew.

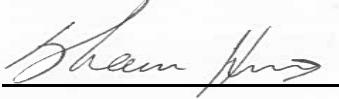

Staff is requesting that the Board of Directors approve a new agreement between Marin County Fire Department (MCFD) and Marin Municipal Water District in an effort to support these work force development efforts and to help increase the pace and scale of BFFIP implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The District as the Lead Agency, has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) pursuant to the provisions of CEQA for the BFFIP which was adopted in 2019 and covers all BFFIP related work that would be performed as part of the Memorandum of Agreement.

FISCAL IMPACT: The District budgets for BFFIP implementation in the Watershed Operations and Capital Funds. Grant funds would also be used where appropriate to cover crew costs. Annual budgets and scopes of work will be prepared each year based on available BFFIP grant funds and District funds.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Proposed Memorandum of Agreement between Marin County Fire Department and Marin Municipal Water District

DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION	DIVISION MANAGER	APPROVED
Watershed		
	Shaun Horne Watershed Resources Director	Ben Horenstein General Manager