

Background

In January, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded California and Tuolumne County a disaster relief grant in the amount of \$70,359,459 as part of a National Disaster Resilience Competition. The purpose of the grant is to help Tuolumne County recover from the Rim Fire of 2013. The grant provides assistance in three areas: (1) forest and watershed health (\$28.6M), (2) development of a biomass utilization facility (\$22M), and (3) development of a community resilience center (\$19.8M).

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is acting as the project manager with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the forest and watershed and biomass utilization areas of activity included in the grant award. The SNC Board has previously authorized staff to enter into agreements and hire the staff necessary to support those activities.

Current Status

At the time of this writing, HUD and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) still have not finalized or signed grant agreements, though HUD has approved a waiver request that extends the project implementation period from two to five years from the date of the final grant agreement. Once HUD and HCD have their agreement in place, SNC will be in a position to complete an interagency agreement with HCD and from there to work with CAL FIRE and the United States Forest Service to finalize the additional agreements that will be necessary for them to get work completed on the ground.

As we wait for grant agreements to be signed, SNC staff continues to work with project partners to develop metrics and the project plans necessary to implement the grant. Additionally, staff has taken steps to draft and release duty statements so that we are ready to make hiring offers to necessary personnel immediately upon signing an SNC-HCD interagency agreement.

Next Steps

Until the grant agreements are in place, SNC staff will continue to focus on the highest priority activities – minimal stakeholder communication and hiring the necessary personnel to properly implement the grant. Once grant agreements and new personnel are in place, staff will begin work to develop a detailed public outreach plan as well as the required Action Plan that will guide project roll out into the future.

Recommendation

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