

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

San Mateo - Santa Cruz Unit



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Release Date: February 4, 2020

CAL FIRE Funds over \$5 million in Forest Health and Resiliency Projects in San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties

BELMONT, CA - California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has awarded \$67 million for landscape-scale land management projects intended to restore and maintain healthy forests, conserve working forests, and enhance carbon storage in California's forests, including two here in San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties. The grants were awarded by CAL FIRE's Forest Health and Forest Legacy Programs to local and regional partners and collaboratives implementing forest treatment and conservation activities on state, local, tribal, federal, and private lands. This year's funded projects are distributed between 13 counties covering the length of California, from Siskiyou to San Diego.

Activities include thinning dense and degraded forests; reducing hazardous fuel loads to change extreme fire behavior across the landscape; managing for drought, insects and disease; and applying prescribed fire for ecological restoration. Some of the overstocked forest material will be converted to bioenergy. Reforestation efforts will result in planting approximately 170,000 trees that will sequester carbon, provide habitat for wildlife, and stabilize soil in severely burned areas.

We are pleased to announce that two of these projects are in the CAL FIRE San Mateo – Santa Cruz Unit (CAL FIRE CZU) jurisdiction.

In total, CAL FIRE CZU will receive more than \$5.2 million in grants for these important wildfire mitigation projects encompassing 965 acres of forest.

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District has been awarded \$2,553,334.00. A diverse group of local, state, and private entities, will implement forest health practices on four project sites totaling 459 acres to improve forest stand health and watershed processes, reduce catastrophic wildfire risk, and increase carbon sequestration. Activities will provide benefits at a landscape scale across the northern Santa Cruz Mountains.

The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County has been awarded \$2,736,367.74. In partnership with Santa Cruz Mountain Stewardship Network members, the Amah Mutsun tribal band, and private landowners, the RCD of Santa Cruz County will take a balanced approach (including fuel reduction, pest management, reforestation, and research) to improve forest health and fire resiliency on 506 high-priority acres of state responsibility lands in Santa Cruz County.

Through a handful of these projects, CAL FIRE will make an investment in human capital, to ensure that a workforce is available and appropriately trained to staff new wood products and forestry operations needed

in the state. Finally, research components on a portion of these projects will help gather information on best management practices and monitor the impact of forest treatment activities over time. CAL FIRE intends to announce the award of an additional \$2,000,000 in stand-alone research projects in the next two months.

CAL FIRE's Forest Legacy Program funded the establishment of conservation easements on three separate properties, totaling nearly 4,700 acres, in Humboldt County. The easements will protect these high-quality forestlands threatened with development and ensure the forests continue to provide for carbon storage and enduring natural resource, economic and recreational opportunities.

CAL FIRE's Forest Health grants were made available through California Climate Investments (CCI), a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars toward achieving the state's climate change goals while also strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment-particularly in disadvantaged communities. Since taking office, Governor Newsom has directed a significant investment in proactive forestland health maintenance, fire prevention and climate resiliency. The Governor has made available \$1 billion over the next five years, beginning this year, for the purpose of active forestland management. Within the next month, CAL FIRE expects to award up \$45 million from CCI for Fire Prevention projects.

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