



## Legislation Details (With Text)

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**File created:** 3/15/2019 **In control:** County Administrator  
**On agenda:** 4/2/2019 **Final action:** 4/2/2019  
**Title:** Expanded Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign  
**Sponsors:** County Administrator, Permit and Resource Management  
**Indexes:**  
**Attachments:** 1. Expanded-Fuels-Reduction-BOS-04022019.pdf, 2. Attachment A: Vegetation Management Program – Background and Fiscal Year 2018-19 Activities, 3. Attachment B: Season Timeline of Program, 4. Attachment C: Inspection and Enforcement Process Diagram, 5. Attachment D\_Fire Protection Responsibility Areas and 2019 Vegetation Inspection Program, 6. Attachment E: Existing Budget and Proposed Expenditures, 7. PowerPoint

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/2/2019	1	Board of Supervisors	Approved as recommended	Pass

**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Administrator and Permit Sonoma

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Virginia Mahacek (707.565.1739) and Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal James Williams (707.565.1152)

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisory District(s):** All

**Title:**  
Expanded Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign

### Recommended Actions:

- Receive an overview and update on the Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign underway as part of the Recovery & Resiliency Framework actions.
- Receive a progress report on fiscal year (FY) 18/19 implementation of vegetation management inspections and enforcement pursuant to the existing Vegetation Management Ordinance (County Code Chapter 13A).
- Receive an overview of a proposed allocation of \$900,000 annually for fiscal years FY 19/20 through FY 22/23 to support an expanded Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign.
- Direct staff to develop detailed program elements, budget, and schedule for the next four years of the Fuels Reduction and Resiliency Campaign.

### Executive Summary:

This item provides an update on the overall Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign underway as part of implementation of the Recovery & Resiliency Framework, a progress report on vegetation management inspections and enforcement under the County's Vegetation Management Ordinance (County Code Chapter 13A), and proposes an enhanced and expanded Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign. It requests allocating \$900,000 per year in County funds to accomplish critical work over the next four years. This local investment will achieve needed outcomes, demonstrate commitment useful for competitive funding proposals, and be leveraged with external funds. The focus of the requested expenditures

cover several Campaign elements, including:

1. Small Parcel Inspection and Fuels Management
2. Abatement Cost Recovery Funding
3. Large Parcels and Projects Implementation
4. Permitting and Compliance Support
5. Community Education and Engagement
6. County-Owned Parcel Treatment
7. Program Management/Administration

Staff will return to the Board this spring to present a detailed set of recommended actions, budget and schedule for FY 19/20.

### **Discussion:**

A large portion of Sonoma County and its population continues to face risks from wildfire. Factors include residential land use in wildland areas, homes built without fire resistant construction materials and practices, insufficient defensible space, and excessive vegetation fuels within and near residential areas. Countywide, approximately 165,000 residents live within the defined Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) area.

### **Overview and Purpose**

In a future characterized by increasing wildfire probability and consequent harm to Sonoma County's residents, economy and ecosystems, it is critical to use the best tools and available science to address risks. Sonoma County's comprehensive fuels reduction and landscape resiliency campaign addresses three major goals that are consistent with national and state wildfire hazard strategies:

- 1) Resilient Landscapes;
- 2) Fire-Adapted Communities; and,
- 3) Effective Fire Response.

The Sonoma County Recovery & Resiliency Framework approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 11, 2018 features community preparedness and natural resources goals that prepare residents for wildfires and inspire them to take actions that can be the most effective means of reducing risk to life and property loss. Enhancing and expanding vegetation management is a Top 10 Priority Project of the Framework.

Extensive efforts are underway by numerous County agencies and public and private partners to make progress towards these broad goals. Several programs and projects are taking on the challenges of issues like human-ignitions, fire prediction, home hardening, alert and warning, community-scale preparedness and evacuation planning, and landscape resiliency. They will be further reported upon during the quarterly update to the Board on April 16, 2019.

The focus areas of this update and proposal are vegetative fuels treatments to protect homes, communities and other valuable assets and resources, and enhancing community adaptation to wildfire threats. Research clearly indicates that risks of wildfire property damage are greatly reduced when vegetation is managed near homes and buildings ("defensible space"). Property owners have a responsibility to maintain defensible space. Sonoma County needs to bring to bear every resource possible to support and harness the heightened

community interest to minimize risks from future wildfires. A summary of ongoing fuels reduction activities by County agencies is provided below.

### Highlights of Ongoing Fuels Reduction Activities by County Departments/Agencies

**Ag + Open Space** has completed or is in process on all of the recovery actions identified in the approved Framework. Key properties in and near Santa Rosa and the urbanized areas along 101 north of Santa Rosa that will serve as fire buffers into the future (Mark West properties, Weeks Ranch on Lost Alamos Road) have been acquired. Additionally, the Vital Lands Initiative is prioritizing projects that further recovery and resiliency, and promote wildland/urban buffers. Acquisition and Stewardship staff at Ag + Open Space are updating standard conservation easement language to ensure that best practices for fire management are allowed. Conservation Planning staff are identifying priority areas on the landscape for forest and resiliency management actions. Ag + Open Space recently released NASA-funded research results and geospatial data resources that will be used by the County and our partners in planning, prioritization and decision support for fuels reduction and resiliency management actions.

The **County Administrator's Office** has been working closely with Regional Parks, Sonoma Water, Ag + Open Space, Permit Sonoma and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) to assist with local and external funding sources to expedite thinning, burning and grazing projects and to reduce fuel loads in priority locations that reduce wildfire hazards to communities.

**Regional Parks** has monitored natural recovery in Shiloh Ranch, Hood Mountain, and Sonoma Valley Parks affected by the 2017 fires, as well as in the newly acquired Mark West Regional Park to inform priorities for post-fire fuels management. They have conducted shaded fuel and brush pile burning at Shiloh Ranch. Shaded fuel breaks are 'thinning from below' treatments that keep the tree canopy in place but remove shrubs, branches and other 'ladder fuels'. The shaded fuel breaks are in strategic locations like trails, roads and ridge lines to provide strategic support for firefighting. Regional Parks is expanding their vegetation management using grazing by increasing the acres accessible for on-going cattle and sheep grazing at six parks (4,440 acres as of 2019), and initiating grazing at four additional parks (158 acres in 2019). Regional Parks is working with neighboring land owners on planning and funding requests for potential multi-benefit buffers along parks and communities around the County.

**Sonoma Water** continues to spearhead efforts by multiple entities to improve fuels management for reduced wildfire risk in the 83,000 acre Lake Sonoma watershed, via their FireSmart workshops that engaged with private landowners, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CAL FIRE), local fire districts, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Resource Conservation Districts and UCCE staff, among other stakeholders. The collaborative learning, community organizing and partnerships invigorated by the FireSmart project are generating partnered funding requests, short-term implementation pilots and long-term planning of fuels treatments and improved watershed health that is protective of water supply water quality.

**Transportation and Public Works** and **Permit Sonoma** Fire Prevention (in partnership with Fire Safe Sonoma) are implementing the 'Northwest Roadway Safety, Fuels Reduction, and Community Chipper and Engagement Project', funded by a \$1.7 million Fire Prevention Grant from CAL FIRE. Since receiving authorization to proceed in December 2018, Transportation and Public Works has completed development of a GIS-based assessment tracking tool, and has begun roadside survey for fuels removal. Fire Safe Sonoma has made initial

outreach contacts in lower Russian River Area with local fire staff, and residents in the target areas of Rio Nido, Old Cazadero Road, Monte Rio, and Timber Cove.

The **Agricultural Commissioner** continues to help prevent invasive species on lands disturbed by the fires through inspection of incoming plant shipments.

**U.C. Cooperative Extension** has provided home and landowners, and other interested parties a series of workshops covering best practices for home hardening, prescribed burn, grazing, and other vegetation management tools. UCCE has helped establish the Good Fire Alliance (GFA). The GFA is a community based effort on which tools to use and associated costs for vegetation management and training opportunities for private landowners in the use of prescribed fire. UCCE is actively working with several communities in the west county regarding active management of lands using combinations of methods to achieve shaded fuel breaks and lessen fuels loading. UCCE has a grazing school workshop planned on May 16-17, 2019 and will hold smaller ones around the county, in areas like Lake Sonoma, Gualala Ranch, and Healdsburg (Fitch Mountain). These workshops will discuss all aspects of grazing, including the use of goats, for vegetation management.

**Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Division** is conducting activities pursuant to the County's existing Abatement of Hazardous Vegetation and Combustible Materials, Ordinance 6148 (Vegetation Management Ordinance - Chapter 13A) which became effective on April 19, 2016. A summary of past and upcoming actions is provided below (see Attachment A for additional details).

A pilot Vegetation Management Inspection Program in the Fitch Mountain and Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Service Areas conducted nearly a thousand inspections on improved and unimproved parcels in summer of 2017. Inspections were an excellent incentive and resulted in removal of hazardous vegetation, especially on improved parcels.

On May 19, 2018 the Vegetation Management Ordinance became enforceable in the entire unincorporated County and the Board allocated \$500,000 to support the inspection program on July 1, 2018. In October 2018, the Board authorized the Director of Fire and Emergency Services to enter into agreements with local Fire Protection Districts to implement a Vegetation Management Inspection Program in collaboration with the Sonoma County Fire Prevention staff and in coordination with CAL FIRE.

Since October 2018, the Fire Prevention Division staff were integrated into Permit Sonoma and have completed the following:

- Contracted with fire districts to conduct complaint-driven inspections in their jurisdictions in spring 2019 (the map in Attachment D highlights those Districts that are participating as of March 2019).
- Identified areas with highest risk for wildfire losses as a focus of the 2019 inspections, in coordination with fire districts and CAL FIRE.
- Established a Sonoma County Vegetation Management Working Group with representatives from fire districts and began regular internal meetings between County Agencies.
- Developed procedures and materials for the collaborative inspection program:
  - Educational materials for notification to affected parcels about upcoming inspections.
  - Standard documents and letters for notification of violations and other enforcement steps.
  - Training materials for County and districts' staff.
  - Procedures for data management, notification of violations, hearings, abatement, and liens.

- Developed an inspection tool that uses the ESRI Collector App GIS mobile platform to compile data, maps, and photographs efficiently.
- Re-inspected all Fitch Mountain parcels found to be out of compliance in September 2017 and sent Notices of Violation.

Over the next few months, The Fire Prevention Division will implement the following actions, consistent with typical seasonal opportunities and constraints for vegetative fuels inspection program (see Attachment B for an illustration of the seasonal pattern), and in accordance with the standard enforcement timeline (see Attachment C for a detailed flow chart):

#### **April 2019**

- Train district inspectors.
- Mail Notification of Upcoming Inspection informational flyer.
- Send targeted media-based reminders of inspections.
- Coordinate with fire districts and CAL FIRE on inspection areas.
- Outreach to educate community groups.

#### **May 2019**

- Initiate abatement process for remaining non-compliant Fitch Mountain properties.
- Begin First Inspections in the identified 2019 areas.
- Perform ongoing data management and reporting.
- Outreach to educate community groups.
- Track inspection progress and resolve problems.
- Operate the curbside, by request Chipper Program services.

#### **June 2019 to October 2019**

- Outreach to educate community groups.
- Continue First Inspections.
- Make Second Inspections of violations.
- Issue notices, process hearing requests, conduct hearings, as necessary, following the required timeframes and processes (Attachment B)
- Perform abatements, weather permitting.
- Operate the curbside, by request Chipper Program services.

#### **November 2019**

- Convene a debrief meeting with the Vegetation Management Working Group.
- Conduct abatements as needed, weather and fire activity permitting.

### **Active Grant Opportunities**

#### Applications Submitted

Sonoma County agencies and partners continue to pursue a range of external funding sources for the overall Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign in addition to the grant funded efforts underway. The projects listed below are the current grant proposals that emphasize fuels reduction and vegetation management. The grant performance periods are typically limited to three or four years. Therefore, the focus of requests are on first phases of implementation, education and incentive programs, planning, and decision

support tools. Decisions about external grant awards are not known for 12 to 18 months from submittal, and funds are not typically available until many months after favorable decisions. Therefore, the proposed near-term County investments are needed to start producing outcomes, even as some of these expenditures may serve as match against the eventual grant-funded activities.

- **Permit Sonoma** Fire Prevention Division submitted a \$6.7 million proposal to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program in September 2018. If funded, it will educate Sonoma County's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) residents about the importance of defensible space and the principles of structural hardening through targeted events and outreach. Outreach will be followed by comprehensive community-wide Defensible Space Inspections, voluntary WUI structure evaluations and cost share incentives for implementation for vegetation management and structural hardening.
- **Permit Sonoma** Fire Prevention Division submitted a \$150,000 proposal to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to provide a critical update to the current Sonoma County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in September 2018. The existing CWPP will be modified to incorporate revised mapping and data analysis to better reflect changes to the physical and human environment subsequent to the 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires. The updated CWPP will be annexed into a proposed update of 2017 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and subsequently the Safety Element of the County's General Plan.
- **Permit Sonoma** Fire Prevention submitted a grant in partnership with Pepperwood Preserve and Fire Safe Sonoma in December 2018 to create a new, science-based decision support tool that will use Geographical Information System (GIS)-data to accurately assess vegetation communities across the County. If accepted for funding, the "Fine-Scale Decision Support Data Toolkit" will provide much needed accurate fuels assessment to help fire agency staff and the public accelerate the scale and pace of hazardous fuels reduction.
- **Permit Sonoma** Fire Prevention Division submitted a \$4.5 million proposal to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to improve forest health and wildfire resilience in the County's forested areas in March 2019. This request would include funds for a dedicated seasonal fuels treatment crew to put the 'boots on the ground' in Sonoma County.
- **Sonoma Water**, as part of a team with the Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Geological Survey California Water Science Center, submitted a \$ 400,000 request to the North Coast Resource Partnership's Proposition 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program in March 2019. If funded, the team would develop a decision system (DSS) that identifies and prioritizes the location and type of fire risk mitigation projects needed to be most effective in protecting the Lake Sonoma Watershed.

Additional grants and other financing will be necessary to maintain a fire-adapted community and resilient landscape over the long-term. The requested allocation can provide in-kind cost share necessary to demonstrate local commitment and leverage additional state and/or federal dollars toward this program.

#### Recent Opportunities

There is a need for substantial effort over the next few years to establish a robust program that can be sustained. While the County continues to pursue external grants, we will also advocate for legislative changes and direct allocations and explore innovative financing mechanisms in collaboration with partners.

A recently established grant opportunity that Sonoma County may benefit from is the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Block Grant, administered by the Department of Conservation on behalf of the California Natural Resources Agency and funded by \$20 million from California Climate Investments. The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP), whose region includes much of Sonoma County, is receiving a \$4,250,000 block grant via this program for the preparation of a Regional Priority Plan; project development and permitting; demonstration projects; and outreach, education, and training within Modoc, Siskiyou, Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino and Sonoma Counties.

Additionally, Sonoma County is actively tracking and participating in identification, mapping and prioritization of projects that may be funded with approximately \$1 billion to be allocated over the next five years pursuant to SB 901. Staff are communicating directly with CAL FIRE unit representatives and participating in the Northern Regional Prioritization Working Group of the Governor's Forest Management Task Force (FMTF) to convey local stakeholder information, ideas, and concerns.

### **Expanded Fuels Management Local Funding Proposal**

It remains essential to provide local funding of the Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign (Campaign) to leverage external funding from state and federal agencies and the expenditures of private landowners, businesses, and non-governmental organizations. The \$500,000 approved by the Board in 2018 has supported initial actions of the Campaign. This proposal requests additional investment by the County to support expanded fuels reduction activities over the next four years, including:

1. Small Parcel Inspections and Fuels Management
2. Abatement Cost Recovery Funding
3. Large Parcels and Projects Implementation
4. Permitting and Compliance Support
5. Community Education and Engagement
6. County-Owned Parcel Treatment
7. Program Management/Administration

The following section provides a summary for each of these needs. A proposed budget is provided as Attachment E. Proposed levels of annual spending for each of the fuels reduction needs are indicated below, totaling \$900,000. These local expenditures could constitute in-kind local cost-share for external grants. The distribution of budget between elements and from year-to-year could vary from this initial proposal, and would be developed in the detailed program plan for authorization, updated on annual budgeting cycles.

#### **1. Small Parcel Inspections and Fuels Management**

CAL FIRE has primary responsibility for defensible space inspections in the State Responsibility Areas (SRA). In Local Responsibility Areas (LRA), the local fire agency has primary jurisdiction and responsibility for inspections (see Attachment D for a map view of these boundaries in Sonoma County). For this program, inspections will be primarily focused in the unincorporated LRA that do not fall under CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. However, CAL FIRE's inspection program can only address a portion of the SRA parcels in a year. In order to address areas at high risk that will not be inspected under CAL FIRE's program, and help fairly allocate County funding to the Districts most in need, this program would also include some inspections in SRA. This approach will primarily utilize existing CAL FIRE inspection resources for the areas under their jurisdiction, while increasing inspections

in the LRA areas which are not within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. Under the proposed budget, this program will address approximately 10% to 20% of Unincorporated LRA parcels per year. Sustained funding would allow inspections of all parcels at risk over an approximately five year rotation. Additional funding which may be authorized by the State Legislature and/or via state and federal grant funding, would allow for a shorter inspection cycle. Prioritizing areas most at risk helps direct services where they are most needed. Additionally, "problem" parcels can be identified in given areas, and can be re-inspected on a more frequent basis to ensure better compliance.

Inspection programs for defensible space need to take place within a short timeframe, ideally after grasses have dried and cured following winter rains, and before the worst of fire season starts. Performing inspections during May and June allows for enforcement and abatement to take place between July and August. Due process requires approximately 45 days between the first inspection and enforcement and abatement. By the time this period has elapsed, typically, either the low humidity and high temperatures that typify late fall months make abatement work risky, or winter rains have returned.

One month or more prior to inspections, notification is direct mailed to residents in target areas. The mailer includes inspection criteria for Ordinance 6148, as well as basic information about structural hardening and preparing for wildfire. Parcels out of compliance receive a Notification of Violation immediately after inspection (see Attachment C for the detailed process flow chart). The notice informs them that they have 30 days to clear violations before a second inspection. If, after second inspection, parcels remain out of compliance, property owners have fifteen days to request a hearing. If after fifteen days, Permit Sonoma has not received a request for hearing, the property is posted, and abatement procedures begin. Hearings, if requested by the property owner, will lengthen the time elapsed between inspection and abatement.

Based on vegetation management and/or weed abatement program data received from other jurisdictions, as well as the Sonoma County pilot program, the enforcement effort produce a 62% to 97% compliance rate over time. It generally takes three to five years for the community awareness and commitment to be fully realized.

#### Proposed Annual Spending: \$375,000

The majority of these funds will be used for reimbursement to fire districts for inspections through agreements. The remainder will be allocated for some in-house Fire Prevention staff inspections in areas under County jurisdiction and general coordination and support to the fire district programs, including printing and mailings.

## **2. Abatement and Cost Recovery Funding**

Abatement of parcels not compliant with the Vegetation Management Ordinance will address fuels within 100 feet of structures and on roadsides, including mechanical removal of dead and dying vegetation, and mowing of tall dry grasses and flammable vegetation that encroaches on private roadways. Following completion of due process requirements (described above and in Attachment C), abatement will be carried out by contractors such as the County's Supervised Adult Crews (SAC), North Bay Conservation Corps (NBCC), Regional Parks' crews, and or qualified private contractors.

Abatement cost recovery will proceed through a billing and/or lien process. However, the abatement and lien process takes time and cost recovery may not take place until (or if) parcels are sold. Overall recovery rates are typically low. Therefore, funding to seed the abatement cost recovery fund is a necessary component of this program. As the program continues, the number of parcels requiring abatement should decrease year by year



as property owners accept responsibility for maintaining their properties in compliance with regulations and learn that abatement is more expensive than bringing their properties into compliance.

Proposed Annual Spending: \$80,000

These funds will be used to conduct abatement actions (by contracted service providers) via seed monies that may be recovered (at a partial rate) through billings and liens.

### **3. Large Parcels and Projects Implementation**

A critical element of the Campaign is coordination with large parcel owners and land managers (including public owners) to identify and implement fuels treatments and related multi-benefit ecosystem health projects at priority locations. This element includes continued participation in project prioritization efforts with funders at regional and state scales to leverage local dollars and express local needs and priorities. It also involves coordination with CAL FIRE on unit plans, to avoid duplication and gain synergy on roadway projects, evacuation plans, and shaded fuel breaks. It would aim to develop large projects that bundle efforts on parcels of various ownerships and sizes and are suited to some of the recent external funding opportunities. The full range of treatment types and options, as appropriate for the parcel location and characteristics, would be considered, including mechanical thinning, prescribed fire, and herbivory by cattle, goats, and sheep. Staff would explore potential changes to local ordinances to address fuels reduction needs on parcels larger than five acres in locations posing additional wildfire risk to populated communities.

Proposed Annual Spending: \$100,000

About half of this budget would cover staff time performing and coordinating the services listed above. The remaining funds would be directed to specialty services via consultants for technical analyses, materials, or pilot treatments.

### **4. Permitting and Compliance Support**

Improved project planning, permitting and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance options are necessary to help public and private landowners get fuels reduction projects delivered quickly and cost-effectively. This is a critical element of the overall Campaign. It could include application of relevant programmatic CEQA or federal National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) analyses for larger projects that have CAL FIRE or other state and federal participation. It would also require continued advocacy for federal and state agency streamlining and coordination efforts. Directed outreach and education to property owners and land managers would enhance landowners and land managers' awareness of and access to new permitting and environmental compliance options and opportunities.

Proposed Annual Spending: \$150,000

Most of this budget would cover staff time performing and coordinating the services listed above. The remaining funds would be available to contract for specialty services via consultants to provide environmental analyses.

### **5. Community Education and Engagement**

A goal of this Campaign element is to increase the capacity of Fire Safe Sonoma, Inc. (the countywide Fire Safe Council), to support and prompt establishment of effective local Fire Safe Councils, and provide high quality outreach and education about wildfire loss prevention throughout Sonoma County. Properly supported, local fire safe councils foster and promote wildfire education, write and manage grant projects to address prioritized risks, and act as a conduit to help galvanize entire communities towards positive behavioral change.

Their work is an extremely cost-efficient means to compound the benefits of fire prevention and preparedness work performed directly by fire officials and public agencies.

It is Fire Safe Sonoma's role, with the support of the state-wide California Fire Safe Council, to help create new local fire safe councils, and boost their capacity to achieve their missions. Fire Safe Sonoma, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has provided education, planning and fuels management in the county's Wildland/Urban Interface areas since 1996. Fire Safe Sonoma led the development of the Sonoma County Wildfire Protection Plan adopted by the Board in September, 2016.

Fire Safe Sonoma recently completed three Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for the Upper Mark West Watershed, Fitch Mountain, and Fort Ross VFD Service Area using grant funding awarded by CAL FIRE. Each of these communities, and others like Sea Ranch that have a CWPP have identified priority local projects that can become part of various grant proposals.

Proposed Annual Spending: \$85,000

A small portion of this budget would cover staff time performing and coordinating the services listed above. Existing County staff would be utilized in development of print materials, GIS support, and assessor's data analysis. The majority of the budget would be directed to Fire Safe Sonoma and local fire safe councils.

## **6. County-Owned Parcel Treatment**

The County owns many properties which are maintained by departments from their existing budget allocations and/or with supplemental external funding. This request would not duplicate or replace those needs. Rather, this targeted treatment effort focuses on planning and implementation of fuels treatment on small, dispersed public parcels that pose specific wildfire threats in communities.

Proposed Annual Spending: \$20,000

These funds will be used to conduct fuels reduction treatments by existing county staff and/or contracted service providers.

## **7. Program Management and Administration**

The management of this vegetation management program along with the proposed core fuels treatments within the larger context of the overall Campaign includes executing administrative processes properly, overseeing contracts with fire districts, supervising employees and coordination with a myriad of entities. This element includes tracking program metrics (e.g., inspections completed, compliance rates, chipper services provided, volumes and weight of fuels removed, properties abated) and reporting to the Board and the public quarterly, with an annual summary. Staff proposes a 10 percent limit on management and administration.

Proposed Annual Spending: \$ 90,000

The management and administration budget would be spent on the staff time and direct expenses required to lead, execute, and report out on the program.

## **Implementation Strategy and Steps**

The requested \$900,000 annual investment for the next four fiscal years will facilitate achievement of substantial fuels reduction, a key part of the overall Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign. Multiple years of investment are necessary at a substantial level to complete meaningful treatments across the county. Significantly, this commitment of local funds increases the County's opportunities to leverage

external state and federal funding sources.

Over the next couple of months (overlapping with the implementation of FY 18/19 actions), staff will coordinate with County agencies, local fire districts, CAL FIRE, Fire Safe Sonoma, fire safe councils and community stakeholders to vet the proposed budget (Attachment E) and prepare a detailed scope, resource plan, schedule and refined budget for FY 19/20. Staff will bring this forward to the Board before budget hearings.

#### **Prior Board Actions:**

12/11/2018: Approved Recovery & Resiliency Framework and identification of Vegetation Management enhancements as one of the key projects.

10/23/18: Authorized the Director of Fire and Emergency Services to enter into agreements with local Fire Protection Districts to implement a Vegetation Management Inspection Program in partnership with the Sonoma County Fire Prevention Division to reduce vegetation fuel loads and enhance public safety for one year, as funding permits, not-to-exceed \$500,000 in Fiscal Year 2018-19; any remaining funds to carry over to Fiscal Year 2019-20.

07/11/2017: Accepted Update on Vegetation Management Ordinance

04/19/2016: Adopted Ordinance #6148 requiring the Abatement of Hazardous Vegetation and Combustible Materials and implementation of the Pilot Vegetation Management Inspection Program.

#### **FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 18-19 Adopted</b>	<b>FY19-20 Projected</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses		900,000	900,000
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		900,000	900,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		900,000	900,000
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>		900,000	900,000

#### **Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

The program update report about FY 18/19 activities describes Vegetation Management and Inspection efforts underway that will be completed within the previously authorized and budgeted amount of \$500,000. No additional appropriations are requested for fiscal impact for FY 18/19.

For FY 19/20 and subsequent three fiscal years, appropriations would be requested through the normal County budget process. The Board is considering a separate policy decision on the use of Transient Occupancy

Tax that, if approved, could provide funding.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

Existing Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention staff are working to accomplish the management, noticing, enforcement, and abatement of the FY 18/19 program, including oversight of the contracted inspection services by local Fire Districts.

For FY 19/20 and subsequent fiscal years, the program would require one technical and one administrative position, as well as two seasonal workers to perform the full range of activities, oversee all contracted services, and produce all the deliverables and outcomes. Staff will evaluate existing capacities and explore means for efficiencies in position conversions or responsibility shifts before proposing new positions.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Vegetation Management Program - Background and Fiscal Year 2018-19 Activities

Attachment B: Seasonal Timeline of Program

Attachment C: Inspection and Enforcement Process Diagram

Attachment D: Fire Protection Responsibility Areas and 2019 Vegetation Inspection Program

Attachment E: Existing Budget and Proposed Expenditures

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**