



Board Agenda Item 50

DATE: April 9, 2019

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Cooperative Agreements/Licenses with CAL FIRE

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, or designee, to execute a Cooperative Agreement/License with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to conduct a prescribed fire at China Creek Park, after filing a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. (\$0)**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, or designee, subject to review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form, to execute future Cooperative Agreements/Licenses with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to conduct prescribed fires at County-owned properties, after filing Notices of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. (\$0)**

Approval of the first recommended action will authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, or his designee, to sign a cooperative agreement/license with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to perform a prescribed fire at China Creek Park, per Public Resources Code, section 4141. The intention is to conduct a proposed prescribed burn over a 12-14 day period in spring 2019. In regards to the environmental review process, CAL FIRE representatives have filed a Notice of Exemption (NOE), ensuring that the project complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Approval of the second recommended action will authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, or his designee, subject to review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form, to sign future cooperative agreements/licenses with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to perform prescribed fires on County-owned properties, per Public Resources Code, section 4141, after filing NOE's with the State Clearinghouse.

The proposed initial prescribed burn at China Creek Park pertains to a location in District 5. Future prescribed burns may occur often and at various County locations.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may not approve the recommended actions. If denied, Department staff will continue to flail cut as much of the acreage as possible with the resources available.

Alternatively, your Board may choose to approve the first recommended action, in regards to the prescribed fire at China Creek Park, and not approve the second recommended action, in which case future Cooperative Agreements/Licenses with CAL FIRE would continue to come before your Board for approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The recommended agreements have no dollar value associated with it.

DISCUSSION:

CAL FIRE approached Department staff in January 2019 with a request for authority to perform a prescribed burn at China Creek Park. The 120-acre park is located on the west side of Centerville, 16 miles east of Fresno on State Route 180. CAL FIRE proposes to broadcast burn approximately 80 acres of grass to provide for fire service personnel training, reduce China Creek Park fuel loading, and enhance wildlife habitat. Department staff worked with CAL FIRE to determine the location and need for this action; CAL FIRE has filed a NOE, which is necessary to comply with CEQA. CAL FIRE has a standard list of contact agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Department staff notified the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society and the Kings River Conservancy of the proposed prescribed burn. Both groups have discussed the prescribed burn with CAL FIRE representatives and are in favor of the proposed action as a means of controlling invasive, non-native plants species such as the Yellow Star Thistle, Giant Reed, Fig, Tree of Heaven, and others.

Department staff recommends the prescribed burn, as it will reduce the fire hazard within the park this summer and the spread of invasive, non-native plants within the area, and enhance wildlife habitat as the native grasses germinate in spring 2020. The aerial map of China Creek Park and the proposed prescribed burn area are shown in Attachment A.

With your Board's approval, the Director will be authorized to execute a Cooperative Agreement/License with CAL FIRE for the China Creek prescribed burn (Attachment B). Approval of the second recommended action would authorize the Director to execute other cooperative agreements/licenses with CAL FIRE, similar in form to Attachment B, allowing the Department to respond expeditiously to citizens' concerns of potential fire hazards due to tall, dry grass and other vegetation in difficult-to-access areas within County-owned property.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #38, March 12, 2013

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Attachment A
Attachment B

CAO ANALYST:

Sonia M. De La Rosa