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**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Board Agenda Memo**

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**MEETING DATE:**      October 24, 2023

**TO:**                              Board of Supervisors

**FROM:**                        **Craig Griesbach – Office of Emergency Services**

**SUBJECT:**                Resolution accepting the USDA, United States Forest Service (USFS), Pacific Southwest Region, Fire and Aviation Management grant for the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Extension Project (23-DG-11052012-154) in the amount of \$750,000 during the period August 29, 2023 through August 1, 2025, ratifying the execution of the Grant Agreement dated August 29, 2023, and authorizing the Director of Office of Emergency Services to execute all additional documents required to fulfill the requirements of the grant on behalf of the County of Nevada.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the attached Resolution.

**FUNDING:** The \$750,000 grant funds will be received in the Office of Emergency Services budget. Per USFS (funder), this project does not require match; however, Office of Emergency Services has requested \$750,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to ensure sufficient funds are in place for project success. This ARPA component would come from the \$3 Million “Grant Support and Match” project, as adopted by the Board of Supervisors via Resolution 23-485. A budget amendment will be requested at a future resolution upon award of contracts for project execution.

**BACKGROUND:**

Nevada County responded to the FY23 Federal Earmark Opportunities under the Appropriations Fund, Subcommittee on Interior and Environment: United States Forest Service – State and Private Forestry (Landscape Scale Restoration Program) on April 23, 2022. The County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services request for FY23 funds was subsequently approved as Congressionally Designated Community Project Funds on December 22, 2022. The County of Nevada submitted a Grant Packet to USDA, United States Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Fire and Aviation Management, the administrating agency of these funds on May 12, 2023. On August 29, 2023, USDA, United States Forest Service (USFS), Pacific Southwest Region, Fire and Aviation Management awarded the grant for the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Extension Project (23-DG-11052012-154) to the County of Nevada.

The Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Extension (Phase 1 Maintenance) Project advances the state of California's Forest Action Plan program goal to improve forest resiliency to natural disasters and climate change and is ranked the number one priority in the Nevada County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This project, located in Western Nevada County just west of the town of Grass Valley, will result in a second-pass 600-acre fuels reduction treatment within 1,200 acres of privately owned property, roughly bordered by McCourtney Road to the south and just south of Rough and Ready Highway to the north. If ARPA Grant Support funds are approved the project treatment area will be increased commiserate with funding increase. The impact area includes approximately 3,000 residences in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities of Lake Wildwood, Penn Valley, Rough and Ready, and the City of Grass Valley, as well as critical infrastructure for state commerce, such as State Highway 20, power and water infrastructure, and Nevada County facilities. Within one mile of the project are seven churches, 12 bridges, six schools, three fire stations, two government buildings, and four emergency shelter sites including the County fairgrounds.

The objective of the project is to maintain outcomes achieved during the first pass of implementation including reduced vegetation density, reduced height to live crown, and reduced surface fuels. By reducing the amount of fuel, the heat intensity of wildfire is reduced. The outcome is a landscape that is aesthetically pleasing and that simultaneously provides a zone where evacuations are safe and ground crews can get in to fight a fire.

This project will be a public private partnership between the landowners whose property will be treated and the County of Nevada and will leverage and maintain the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Phase 1 Project that wrapped up on March 15, 2022. In sum, the Phase 1 and Extension Projects will create a contiguous zone of wildfire protection running just south of Rough and Ready Highway (north) to McCourtney Road (south).

**Item Initiated by:** Alex Keeble-Toll, Senior Administrative Analyst, OES

**Approved by:** Craig Griesbach, Director, OES