

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: January 26-27, 2022

From: MITCH WEISS, Executive Director

Reference Number: 4.17, Action

Prepared By: Kayla Giese
Program Analyst

Published Date: January 14, 2022

Subject: Approval of the 2020 and 2021 California Natural Resources Agency Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, Resolution G-22-25

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the 2020 and 2021 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, which includes 18 projects totaling \$12,174,207 and are included on the Projects Recommended for Funding list, with the following stipulations:

- The Commission expects that the funds allocated will be expended in accordance with the respective Budget Act fund conditions for each Budget Year.
- For land acquisition projects, funding recipients are encouraged to reduce overall project costs by exploring the feasibility of acquiring easements rather than fee title when appropriate.
- Due to the uniqueness of the individual projects in this program, the California Natural Resources Agency (Resources Agency) must provide on-site inspection and auditing of the projects included in the program.

Issue:

Section 164.56 of the Streets and Highways Code specifies that the Commission shall annually award grants to fund proposals that are included on a list prepared by the Resources Agency for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program. The Resources Agency is recommending 18 projects for funding which total \$12,174,207 for the combined 2020 and 2021 grant cycles of the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program.

Due to impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic, several programs administered by the Resources Agency were postponed, which allowed equitable access for all interested parties applying for funding. As a result of these postponements, the 2020 and 2021 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program grant cycles are combined into one program. The 2022

Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program grant cycle will resume on the usual schedule with anticipated solicitation for projects in April 2022.

In 2019, the Resources Agency recommended 11 projects for a total award amount of \$6,371,206, leaving \$328,794 to be programmed in the following grant cycle. The funding available for the 2020 and 2021 grant cycles are from the following sources: \$328,794 from the Budget Act of 2019, \$6,700,000 from the Budget Act of 2020, and \$6,700,000 from the Budget Act of 2021. The Resources Agency reviewed 26 grant applications and recommends \$12,174,207 in funding for 18 projects which includes the following breakdown: Six projects in Northern California totaling \$4,389,584, and twelve in Southern California totaling \$7,784,623. The remaining funding balance of \$1,554,587 was not awarded in this cycle and will be available for award as part of the 2022 grant cycle.

Eight projects are not recommended for funding by the Resources Agency: Three projects in Northern California and five projects in Southern California. The multi-disciplinary evaluation team convened by the Resources Agency used the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program procedures and criteria to evaluate applications and determined that these eight projects were not competitive project applications for award.

The 18 projects recommended for funding have provided the Resources Agency evidence of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance. The CEQA Lead Agencies have determined that 15 of the 18 projects are exempt from CEQA. A Notice of Determination was filed for the remaining three projects and the CEQA Lead Agency has provided evidence of CEQA compliance for the project.

Two of the recommended projects are highlighted as follows:

The Slauson Corridor: Making Connections Project in Los Angeles County. The project will expand the urban forest by planting 1,600 trees and understory plants in a disadvantaged and park poor community of South Los Angeles. New trees will be planted along a former rail line on Slauson Avenue that is being redesigned by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority as a new multi-purpose path. The project will transform an urban landscape into a green corridor with native species, will sequester carbon, increase biodiversity, reduce temperatures, provide shade, remove concrete to capture and infiltrate stormwater and encourage public transportation. The project provides enhanced mitigation for the impacts of the construction of high-occupancy vehicle facilities as a part of Phase 9: I-110 from 47th Street Undercrossing to Exposition Blvd in the City of Los Angeles.

The Martis Valley Headwaters Project in Placer County. The project will acquire and protect 1,057 acres of biodiverse, unfragmented coniferous forest, sagebrush, montane meadow, and riparian habitat in the Martis Valley of the Truckee River watershed. The project will protect the property from development and permanently protect habitat and water quality. The project provides enhanced mitigation for the impacts of the construction of the Truckee Bypass Project.

Background:

The Resources Agency has developed procedures and criteria to evaluate and rank each funding proposal forming a multi-disciplined evaluation team to review applications and recommend projects for funding.

Any local, state or federal agency, or nonprofit entity may apply for and receive funding to undertake environmental enhancement and mitigation projects that are directly or indirectly related to the environmental impact of modifying existing transportation facilities or for the design, construction or expansion of new transportation facilities.

Projects eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Urban Forestry - projects designed to offset vehicular emissions of carbon dioxide.
- Resource Lands - projects for acquisition or enhancement of resource lands to mitigate the loss of, or the detriment to, resource lands lying within the right-of-way acquired for proposed transportation improvements.
- Mitigation Projects Beyond the Scope of the Lead Agency - projects to mitigate the impact of proposed transportation facilities or to enhance the environment, where the ability to effectuate the mitigation or enhancement measures is beyond the scope of the lead agency responsible for assessing the environmental impact of the proposed transportation improvement.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Resolution G-22-25
- Attachment B: California Natural Resources Agency Proposed 2020 and 2021 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program Recommendation

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Approval of the 2020 and 2021 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation
Program

RESOLUTION G-22-25

- 1.1 **WHEREAS**, Streets and Highways Code Section 164.56 establishes the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program; and
- 1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program provides funding annually for environmental enhancement and mitigation projects which are directly or indirectly related to the environmental impact of modifying existing transportation facilities or for the design, construction, or expansion of new transportation facilities; and
- 1.3 **WHEREAS**, the California Natural Resources Agency (Resources Agency) is charged with evaluating proposals submitted for this program and providing a list of proposals recommended for funding to the California Transportation Commission (Commission); and
- 1.4 **WHEREAS**, the Commission is responsible to award funding for proposals which are included on the list prepared by the Resources Agency; and
- 1.5 **WHEREAS**, the Resources Agency has prepared a Projects Recommended for Funding list (Attachment B) totaling \$12,174,207 for 18 projects, and that list has been reviewed by the Commission; and
- 1.6 **WHEREAS**, the funding available is from the following sources: \$328,794 rollover from the Budget Act of 2019, \$6,700,000 from the Budget Act of 2020, and \$6,700,000 from the Budget Act of 2021; and
- 1.7 **WHEREAS**, the remaining funding balance of \$1,554,587 will be available for award as part of the 2022 grant cycle; and
- 1.8 **WHEREAS**, all 18 projects recommended for funding have provided the Resources Agency evidence of California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) compliance; and
- 1.9 **WHEREAS**, the CEQA Lead Agencies have determined that 15 of the 18 projects are exempt from CEQA. A Notice of Determination was filed for the

remaining three projects.

- 1.10 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Commission approves the 2020 and 2021 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, as indicated in the Projects Recommended for Funding list (Attachment B); and
- 1.11 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that for projects which include land acquisition, the Commission encourages funding recipients to reduce overall project costs by exploring the feasibility of acquiring easements rather than fee title when appropriate; and
- 1.12 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that due to the uniqueness of the individual projects in this program, the Commission recommends the Resources Agency provide on-site inspection and auditing of the projects included in this program.



GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
WADE CROWFOOT, Secretary for Natural Resources

December 14, 2021

Mitch Weiss
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Weiss:

As provided in Section 164.56 of the Streets and Highways Code, the California Natural Resources Agency (Agency) has evaluated the 2020-21 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM) program grant proposals and provided the attached recommendations. Projects on the Recommended for Funding List meet the statutory requirements and contribute to the mitigation of the environmental effects of transportation facilities.

Agency recommends the projects on the Recommended for Funding List be authorized to receive immediate funding. These recommendations were determined by a multi-disciplined evaluation team. The list includes 18 projects with a total value of \$12,174,207 which includes \$328,794 roll over from 2019, \$6,700,000 from 2020 and \$5,145,413 of the \$6,700,000 2021 appropriation. The balance of \$1,554,587 will be available for award as part of the 2022 grant cycle.

If you have any questions about the recommended projects or the process used to evaluate them, please contact Carol Carter, Chief, Bonds and Grants Unit at (916) 902-6364 or by email at carol.carter@resources.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wade Crowfoot".

Wade Crowfoot
Secretary for Natural Resources

Enclosures

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ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AND MITIGATION GRANT –

2020-2021 GRANT CYCLE

RECOMMENDATION

Approve grants for 18 projects totaling \$12,174,207

BACKGROUND

Under Streets and Highways Code Section 164.56(a), the California Transportation Commission (Commission) is charged with the responsibility of funding an annual Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM) Program administered by the California Natural Resources Agency (Agency) at the funding level provided in the State Budget.

The EEM Program awards grants to environmental enhancement and mitigation projects that are directly or indirectly related to the environmental impact of modifying existing transportation facilities or the design, construction, or expansion of new transportation facilities.

California Streets and Highways Code Section 164.56 (as amended in 2013, SB 99) provides for grants to be awarded in three categories:

- Urban Forestry: Projects designed to offset vehicular emissions of carbon dioxide.
- Resource Lands: Acquisition or enhancement of resource lands to mitigate the loss of, or the detriment to, resource lands lying within the right-of-way acquired for proposed transportation improvements.
- Mitigation Projects Beyond the Scope of the Lead Agency: Projects to mitigate the impact of proposed transportation facilities or to enhance the environment, where the ability to effectuate the mitigation or enhancement measures is beyond the scope of the lead agency responsible for assessing the environmental impact of the proposed transportation improvement.

Agency is responsible for developing and adopting guidelines (procedures and criteria) and determining eligibility, evaluating proposals, recommending projects for funding, and managing grants post awards. Agency's procedures and criteria contain a scoring mechanism to evaluate projects by assigning point scores to each project. Projects making the initial cut are then visited for further vetting. In accordance with the provisions of Section 187 and 188 of the Streets and Highways Code, Agency attempts to allocate 40% of the total amount recommended to projects in northern counties and 60% to projects in southern counties. The percentages vary slightly year to year depending on the pool of applications and competitiveness.

SOLICITATION CYCLES

Due to impacts related to COVID-19, several programs administered by the Agency's Bonds and Grants Unit were postponed to ensure equitable access for all interested in applying for funding. As a result of timeline postponements, the EEM 2020 and 2021 allocations were combined into one cycle and solicitation. The 2022 cycle will resume on the usual schedule with anticipated solicitation of release in April 2022.

AVAILABLE FUNDING 2020-2021

Funds are available from the following appropriations for a total of \$13,728,794:

- 2019 roll over of \$328,794
- 2020 - \$6.7M
- 2021 - \$6.7M

A balance of \$1,554,587 from the 2021 appropriation will be available for award in the 2022 cycle (2021 allocation is available to encumber until June 30, 2024.)

CEQA

Notice of Exemptions have been filed for 15 of the 18 projects recommended for funding and Notice of Determinations filed for the remaining 3 projects.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

- The City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation will expand the urban forest by planting 1,600 trees and understory in a disadvantaged and park poor community of South Los Angeles. New trees will be planted along a former rail line on Slauson Avenue being redesigned by LA County Metro Transit Authority as a new multi-purpose path. The project will transform an urban landscape into a green corridor with native species, will sequester carbon, increase biodiversity, reduce temperatures, provide shade, remove concrete to capture and infiltrate stormwater and encourage public transportation. The project provides enhanced mitigation for the impacts of the construction of high-occupancy vehicle facilities, Phase 9: I-110 from 47th Street Undercrossing to Exposition Blvd in the City of Los Angeles.
- Truckee Donner Land Trust will acquire and protect 1,057 acres of biodiverse, unfragmented coniferous forest, sagebrush, montane meadow, and riparian habitat in the Martis Valley of the Truckee River watershed. The project will protect the property from development and permanently protect habitat and water quality. The project provides enhanced mitigation for the impacts of the construction of the Truckee Bypass Project.

Categories:
 RL - Resource Lands
 UF - Urban Forestry

**2020-2021 Grant Cycle
 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation
 Grant Program**

PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING (18)					
SOUTHERN PROJECTS					
Applicant	Project Name	County	Category	Recommended \$	Project Description
City of Chino Hills	Eucalyptus Nature Park Project	San Bernardino	UF	\$ 317,415	Project to improve the urban forest in a neighborhood park of the City of Chino Hills by planting native trees and removing non-native dead or diseased trees.
City of Los Angeles - Bureau of Sanitation	Slauson Corridor: Making Connections	Los Angeles	UF	\$ 500,000	Project to plant 1,600 trees and other plants in a disadvantaged and park-poor area of South Los Angeles. Trees will be planted along Slauson Ave. and adjacent streets transforming an existing barren transit corridor to a park-like environment with shade and reduced temperatures.
Claremont Wildlands Conservancy	Clara Oaks Acquisition Project	Los Angeles	RL	\$ 1,000,000	Project to acquire 103-ac. of open space adding to the City of Claremont's 2,507-acre Claremont Hills Wilderness Park in the San Gabriel Mountains. Project will permanently protect creeks and CA sycamores.
Koreatown Youth and Community Center	Purple Line Trees for Equitable Canopy	Los Angeles	UF	\$ 500,000	Project to remove concrete and create tree wells to plant new trees in a 14-sq. mile area of Koreatown and Westlake/MacArthur Park, Los Angeles. Planting areas will be near the Metro Purple Line extension and will assist in combating environmental injustices.
Lakeside's River Park Conservancy	Urban Forestry: Shading the San Diego River Trail in Lakeside	San Diego	UF	\$ 499,921	Project to plant native shrubs and oak trees to attenuate heat impacts; provide habitat and carbon sequestration benefits along a 1-mi. segment of the San Diego River Trail in Lakeside.
Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County	Mioosi Trust Ranch Conservation Easement	San Luis Obispo	RL	\$ 775,500	Project to acquire a conservation easement on the 130-ac. Mioosi Trust Ranch near San Luis Obispo to permanently protect oak woodlands, serpentine rock outcrops, riparian habitat, and a wildlife corridor.
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	Temescal Ranch Acquisition Project - Phase 3	Los Angeles	RL	\$ 1,000,000	Project to acquire 3,605-ac. of Temescal Ranch. This is the last phase to permanently protect 6,006-ac. adjacent to the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests in Los Angeles County.
National Wildlife Federation	Wildlife Crossing at Liberty Canyon Road	Los Angeles	RL	\$ 500,000	Project to construct a safe and sustainable passage for wildlife across US-101 at Liberty Canyon Rd. in Agoura Hills to facilitate regional wildlife movement and genetic exchange of the area's cougar population. The crossing will be the first of its kind in California.
Oswit Land Trust	Mesquite Ridge Acquisition Project	Riverside	RL	\$ 700,673	Project to acquire and permanently protect 29-ac. of endangered Peninsular bighorn sheep and desert tortoise habitat in Riverside County. The property will be managed for conservation and responsible public access.
Regents of University of California Santa Barbara	UCSB Campus Point: Coastal Terrace Restoration	Santa Barbara	RL	\$ 491,130	Project to restore a 7-ac. coastal terrace by removing asphalt, dead trees, and non-native species, replacing with coastal dune and bluff scrub, back-dune swale, salt marsh, and chaparral.

Categories:
 RL - Resource Lands
 UF - Urban Forestry

**2020-2021 Grant Cycle
 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation
 Grant Program**

Applicant	Project Name	County	Category	Recommended \$	Project Description
The Chaparral Lands Conservancy	Otay Mesa Habitat Restoration Project II	San Diego	RL	\$ 499,984	Project to restore 5-ac. of sensitive vernal pools and maritime succulent scrub habitat located in western Otay Mesa's Clayton Preserve in the City of San Diego.
The Trust for Public Land	Escondido Falls Trail Extension Project	Los Angeles	RL	\$ 1,000,000	Project to acquire 88-ac. of high-quality habitat adjacent to Escondido Canyon Park to protect biodiversity, ecosystem health, water quality, and connectivity in the North Santa Monica Bay watershed. The project provides future opportunities to expand the park to include the Upper Escondido Falls, improve safety of the existing informal trail, and improve trail access to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.
12 SOUTHERN PROJECTS (64% TOTAL FUNDING)				\$ 7,784,623	
NORTHERN PROJECTS					
American River Conservancy	Lewis Ranch - Greenwood Creek Conservation Project	El Dorado	RL	\$ 1,000,000	Project to acquire 970-ac. of oak woodlands, mixed conifer forest and riparian habitat in the Greenwood Creek watershed, a South Fork American River tributary.
City of Berkeley	Trees Make Life Better	Alameda	UF	\$ 500,000	Project to plant 600 trees in parks and urban streets of the City of Berkeley.
Save the Redwoods League	Montgomery Woods Expansion Project	Mendocino	RL	\$ 550,000	Project to acquire 453-ac. of biodiverse, unfragmented forest lands adjacent to Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve in Mendocino County. Project will protect oak woodland, coastal redwood, douglas-fir, and 1.25 miles of So. Fork Big River Class 1 tributaries.
Sierra Foothill Conservancy	Wandern Ranch Conservation Easement Acquisition Phase 1	Madera	RL	\$ 339,584	Project to acquire a conservation easement on a 1,030-ac. portion of the larger 2,300-ac. Wandern Ranch located in Madera County along the Chowchilla River. The project will permanently conserve oak savannah/woodlands and valley oak riparian habitat.
Sonoma Land Trust	Felder Ranch Conservation Easement	Sonoma	RL	\$ 1,000,000	Project to acquire an agricultural conservation easement on the 703-ac. Felder Ranch in Sonoma County. Project will permanently protect oak woodlands, riparian habitat, wildlife corridor and two Sonoma Creek tributaries to Sonoma Creek.
Truckee Donner Land Trust	Martis Valley Headwaters Project	Placer	RL	\$ 1,000,000	Project to acquire and protect 1,057-ac. of biodiverse, unfragmented coniferous forest, sagebrush, montane meadow, and riparian habitat in the Martis Valley of the Truckee River watershed.
6 NORTHERN PROJECTS (36% TOTAL FUNDING)				\$ 4,389,584	
18 PROJECTS - TOTAL RECOMMENDED				\$ 12,174,207	
ROLL OVER TO 2022 CYCLE				\$ 1,554,587	

Categories:
 RL - Resource Lands
 UF - Urban Forestry

**2020-2021 Grant Cycle
 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Grant Program**

PROJECTS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING (13)					
Applicant	Project Name	County	Category	N/S	Requested \$
Northcoast Regional Land Trust	Lindsay Creek Conservation Easement	Humboldt	RL	North	\$ 500,000
Amigos de los Rios	Emerald Necklace John Muir High School Natural Infrastructure Campus Project	Los Angeles	UF	South	\$ 499,976
California Rangeland Trust	Sans Topo Conservation Easement	San Benito	RL	North	\$ 650,000
City of Dinuba	Dinuba El Monte Way Median Improvements	Tulare	UF	South	\$ 468,957
City of Visalia	Packwood Creek Trail	Tulare	UF	South	\$ 362,218
City of Yucaipa	North Bench Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Project	San Bernardino	MP	South	\$ 500,000
Golden State Land Conservancy	Muddy Gulch Creek Forest Conservation Easement	Mendocino	RL	North	\$ 715,111
River Partners	Otay Property Acquisition	San Diego	RL	South	\$ 551,000
PROJECTS NOT RECOMMENDED - WITHDRAWN					
Northcoast Regional Land Trust	Kinsey Ranch Conservation Easement	Humboldt	RL	North	\$ 1,000,000
City of Anderson	Anderson's Tree Restoration for Enhanced Environments (A-Tree)	Shasta	UF	North	\$ 259,100
Fallbrook Land Conservancy	Pala Mesa 36 Acquisition to support California gnatcatcher	San Diego	RL	South	\$ 208,850
The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County	Orella Ranch Conservation Easement Acquisition Project	Santa Barbara	RL	South	\$ 500,000
The Trust for Public Land	Nyland Ranch Easement Acquisition Project	San Benito	RL	North	\$ 815,000