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Mariposa County Resource Conservation District Secures \$3.4 Million for Large Scale Fuel Reduction Projects Countywide

Partnering with local, state and federal agencies, the RCD brings funding and benefits to Mariposa County

Mariposa, CA – The Mariposa County Resource Conservation District has recently obtained two large grants to work with Mariposa County, the Sierra National Forest, and Yosemite National Park to implement fuels reduction, reforestation, and biomass utilization projects. A \$2 million grant from CAL FIRE’s California Climate Investments (CCI) Forest Health grant program will remove 3,222 tons of dead and downed trees from around County facilities and along County roads as well as along Wawona Road in Yosemite and convert it to energy or biochar. This will provide a net benefit of reducing 52,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The project also includes reforestation within the Ferguson Fire burn scar and preparation for future prescribed burns.

A \$1.3 million grant in Prop 68 funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board’s Forest Conservation program (pending Board approval) will focus on fuels reduction around the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in Yosemite and northeast of the community of Fish Camp on the Sierra National Forest. Approximately 150 acres of reforestation will also be performed as part of the Fish Camp Project in areas heavily affected by tree mortality after excess fuels have been removed. American Forests, a national non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring forests, is also a partner on the grant and will be responsible for outreach and developing a climate-smart reforestation strategy for use in future projects throughout the area.

The projects address the current focus of granting agencies on multi-partner, multi-benefit projects that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and promote forest health. “By working with these partners, the Mariposa County RCD is able to get grants to fund important projects that are over and above their normal operating budgets, or need to be done sooner than normal budget cycles allow,” said David Mecchi, Mariposa RCD Board President.

“Mariposa County faces huge challenges in protecting our forested lands as well as our residents. Grant funding available through California Climate Investments and Prop 68 are intended for just this purpose and we are working hard to bring them here.”

All told, the partner agencies will be treating almost 4,000 acres, protecting County facilities and roads, preserving the iconic Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, and

replanting almost 200 acres of new trees. Mariposa County will be starting work by the end of the year with Tree Mortality contractor Blue Ridge Services clearing downed logs from County roadsides and facilities like parks. Yosemite National Park and the Sierra National Forest are expected to begin work next Spring. The terms of the two grants run through 2024.

Over \$2 million in funding for these projects was provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection as part of the California Climate Investments (CCI) Program. CCI is, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing GHG emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment— particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefiting residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low income households across California. For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at: www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov.”

For more information about the Wildlife Conservation Board’s Prop 68-funded Forest Conservation program, please visit <https://wcb.ca.gov/Programs/Forest>

The mission of the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District is to encourage and facilitate cooperative solutions to local resource conservation issues. We provide technical, financial and educational resources to meet the needs of local land users.