



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO.

C-13

For the meeting of: September 23, 2014

Date: September 2, 2014
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Thomas K. Mattson, Public Works Director
Subject: Title III, Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 Funding for County Projects and supplemental budget (4/5 vote required)

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve projected funding needs for existing Title III Projects as proposed in the staff report, and
2. Direct the Auditor-Controller to supplement the following budget (4/5 vote required):
 - a. Public Works Natural Resources Planning:
Revenue: 1100289-505010 \$82,575 US Forest Service Revenue
Expense: 1100289-3100 \$82,575 Title 3 Small Grants Program

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Title III, Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 - Trust Fund 3675

DISCUSSION:

On January 12, 2010, the Board approved a list of proposed projects to implement with funding from Title III, Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act) after a 45-day public

Prepared by Cybelle Immitt

CAO Approval

Cheryl Dillingham

REVIEW:

Auditor *MM*

County Counsel *Sm*

Human Resources

Other

TYPE OF ITEM:

☒ Consent
☐ Departmental
☐ Public Hearing
☐ Other

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No. E2, D10, E4, C6, D7, C6, C9

Meeting of: 11/4/08, 10/06/09, 11/10/09, 09/04/10, 01/12/10, 09/27/11, 09/17/14

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

Upon motion of Supervisor *Bass* Seconded by Supervisor *Sundberg*
Ayes *Sundberg, Lovelace, Bohn, Fennell, Bass*
Nays
Abstain
Absent

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: *Sept. 23, 2014*

By:

Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

Kathy Hayes

review period. Since that time, funding has been budgeted for each year to implement those approved projects, which include Sheriff's Department search and rescue on federal land, a community Firewise program, and the development and update of the countywide and local community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs). The aim has been to expend all Title III funds received into trust fund 3675 before the program end date. The SRS Act program has been extended several times and additional payment made to the County of Humboldt. On October 2, 2013 Congress passed a one year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act as part of HR 527 Helium Stewardship Act. Based on this most recent extension, the Title III funding must now be obligated (included in the County Budget) by September 30, 2014, or it must be returned to the United States Treasury. It is estimated that the trust fund contains approximately \$142,575.00 available for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 (FY 14-15) Title III projects. A brief history of the SRS Act and associated County actions is provided in Attachment 1.

Title III projects are managed by Public Works, Natural Resource Planning and the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office has used the funding to conduct numerous search and rescue operations on the Six Rivers National Forest. Public Works project activities have resulted in national recognition of eight Firewise® communities in Humboldt County, a comprehensive update of the County's CWPP, assistance with the update and development of local CWPPs, the leveraging of federal funds and local partner organization match to further community fire safety goals, and the development of Firewise outreach materials. Attachment 2 contains a summary of Firewise and CWPP project accomplishments to-date.

Staff recommends that your Board approve projected FY 14/15 funding needs to support the continuation of the Title III projects listed below. This action will ensure that the balance in the trust fund is used to benefit the County of Humboldt rather than being returned to United States Treasury.

Firewise® Project

Projected FY13/14 funding needs = \$112,575

This project involves assisting residential communities to become recognized Firewise® Communities/USA sites and implements actions to prevent the potential for home ignitions from wildfire.

CWPP Project

Projected FY13/14 funding needs = \$20,000

This project places its focus on improving the countywide fuels reduction and firesafe planning strategy through a coordinated update and refinement of the Humboldt County CWPP and local CWPPs.

Sheriff Search and Rescue

Projected FY13/14 funding needs = \$10,000

This funding will be used to reimburse the county for the cost of search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting, on federal land.

Care was taken to make sure that the projects are consistent with the allowable uses under the SRS Act. The approved Firewise® and CWPP projects are described in more detail in Attachment 3.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The proposed action will not impact the County General fund.

The funds to support the proposed actions will be transferred from trust fund 3675 to Public Works revenue account 1100-289-505010 and Sheriff's office revenue account 1100-221-515054. The projected balance in trust fund 3675, available to support FY 14-15 projects, is \$142,575. The FY14-15 budget includes \$50,000 for Public Works Projects (1100289-505010) and \$10,000 for the Sheriff's office (1100221-

515054). The recommended supplemental budget will increase appropriations in the Public Works budget by \$82,575, bringing the total Public Works Title III budget to \$132,575, thereby using all of the available Title III funds. The Sheriff's office is not requesting additional funds because of the unpredictability of search and rescue activities on federal lands. Based on past experience, \$10,000 is believed to be sufficient to cover anticipated costs.

The benefits achieved through the implementation of these projects will advance three of the County's core roles (provide for and maintain infrastructure, create opportunities for improved safety and health and protect vulnerable populations).

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Six Rivers National Forest, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Humboldt County Fire Safe Council

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Board discretion

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1	Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 History
Attachment 2	Title III Project Accomplishments
Attachment 3	Approved Title III Projects

Attachment 1

Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 History

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act), Public Law 106-393, was enacted to provide five years of transitional assistance to rural counties affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands. The last payment authorized under P.L. 106-393 was for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2006-2007. On May 25, 2007, the Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007, P.L. 110-28, was signed into law. It included a provision for payments to States and counties for FFY 2007-2008 and extended provisions of Title II and Title III of the SRS Act.

On October 3, 2008, P.L. 110-343 (H.R. 1424, Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, Energy Improvement and Extension Act of 2008, and Tax Extenders and Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008) was signed into law. Section 601 of Division C of P.L. 110-343 amends and reauthorizes the SRS Act (P.L. 106-393) and extends it for a period of four years. The new SRS Act (Public Law 110-343), as amended, retains the original title of "Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000". On November 4, 2008, October 6, 2009, September 14, 2010, September 27, 2011 the Board elected to reserve 85% of the funds under this Act for schools and roads, 8% for Title II, and 7% for Title III.

On July 6, 2012, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act) was reauthorized for federal fiscal year (FY) 2012 as part of Public Law 112-141. On July 27, 2012, the Board again elected to reserve 85% of the funds under this Act for schools and roads, 8% for Title II, and 7% for Title III. Under the new law, the deadline for a county to initiate Title III projects was extended to September 30, 2012. Humboldt County had already approved (initiated) projects on January 12, 2010, following a 45 day public review period. The nature of these projects has not changed since that date.

The Title III funds under the reauthorized Act have only three categories of approved projects, which are the following:

- 1) Carry out activities under the Firewise® Communities program through education and assistance to homeowners regarding ways to reduce risks from wildfire;
- 2) Reimburse counties for the cost of search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting, on federal lands; and
- 3) Develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP).

Through the reauthorization process a few important changes were made to the allowable uses of the Act. Some of the categories of approved projects from the original act were eliminated and the Firewise® Communities program category was added. For this reason, it was necessary to segregate the newly authorized Title III funding into trust fund 3675. The creation of the new trust fund was authorized by the Board on November 4, 2008 (Agenda item E-2).

The most recent reauthorization of the Secure Rural School and Self Determination Act was passed by Congress on October 2, 2013 as part of HR 527 Helium Stewardship Act. Subsequently, an additional deposit of Title III funding was made into the County trust fund. It is estimated that the current balance in Title III trust fund 3675 is approximately \$142,575. Per the most recent reauthorization, the funding in this account must be obligated (meaning included in the County budget) by September 30, 2014, or it must be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

Attachment 2 Title III Project Accomplishments

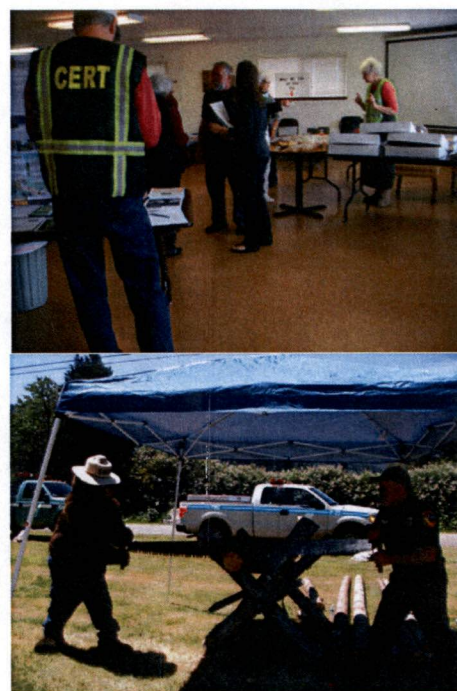
Firewise® Project Accomplishments:

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise® Communities Program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action to prevent losses. The program provides many tools and resources to communities. County staff, under the guidance of the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC), have worked closely with local communities to be recognized as Firewise® Communities/USA® sites. Title III grants have been awarded by the County to local FSCs to conduct community risk assessments, write Firewise® plans, and hold community Firewise® days in coordination with local fire departments. In some cases Title III grants were used as a local match to leveraged federal funding to support community wildfire mitigation projects. In this way, County funds were used to attract additional revenue that was used to help communities take local action that, in turn, gained them national Firewise® recognition.



During Fiscal Year 2013-14, the communities of Shelter Cove and Redwood Valley/Chezem joined Bridgeville, Honeydew, Upper Jacoby Creek, Orleans, Petrolia, and Willow Creek as national Firewise® Communities/USA®. This was made possible through the use of Title III funding to support technical assistance from County staff as well as small grants awarded to local communities. The communities of Honeydew, Petrolia, Shelter Cove, Orleans and Willow Creek, received Title III small grants from the County to achieve their Firewise goals. Types of Firewise projects included:

- Developing and/or updating Firewise Community Assessments and Action Plans,
- Holding Firewise Day events, such as Willow Creek's "12th Annual Fire Safe Fair and Youth Firewise Day" and Orleans's "Old Timer's Day Parade",
- Demonstration projects to model defensible space and fuel breaks;
- Educating residents on techniques for improving their personal fire-safety, including fuel reduction techniques, creating defensible space and general emergency preparedness.
- Documentation of the Firewise mini-grant projects, including before and after photographs and short videos, summarizing the project activities for widespread community education.



Community Wildfire Protection Plan Project Accomplishments:

The countywide fuel reduction and fire-safe planning strategy is supported through the maintenance and implementation of Humboldt County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). As part of this project, the HCFSC and County staff provided support to local FSCs as they worked to update their CWPPs. In addition, the hazardous fuels reduction goals of the recently updated County CWPP were persuaded.

Since 2010, Title III funds were combined with local match from multiple partners to leverage nearly \$600,000 from the California Fire Safe Council State Clearinghouse grant program funded by the United States Forest Service (a \$300,000 2010 grant and a \$195,000 2012 grant). The program is named Fire-adapted Landscapes and Safe Homes (FLASH) and provides incentives to property owners to mitigate wildfire hazards through vegetation management. This is done by awarding a rebate for the creation of defensible space around homes and strategic fuelbreaks along escape routes and high-risk areas. During the life of the FLASH program, hazardous vegetation on over 500 acres of land has been treated to reduce the wildfire risk for homesteads and access routes and a total of 190 landowners completed work on their properties through this program.



Before FLASH Project



After FLASH Project

In 2014, additional funds to support the continuation of the FLASH program were awarded through the California Fire Safe Council State Clearinghouse in the amount of \$200,000. Again, these federal dollars were leveraged using Title III funds and partner match. The goal of the 2014 FLASH Program is to treat approximately 140 acres of hazardous vegetation.

The Humboldt County CWPP will continue to be used as a guiding document to further county-wide wildfire mitigation action. The County will continue to use Title III funds to implement portions of the CWPP that will bring Firewise® recognition to local communities. Where possible, this local funding will be used to leverage additional project grant funds from state and federal sources.

Attachment 3 Approved Title III Projects¹

Firewise® Project

The Natural Resources Planning division of Public Works will work with, and support, local Fire Safe Councils (FSC) and other community organizations to plan and implement Firewise® actions. Activities under the Firewise® Project will include assisting individuals, neighborhoods, subdivisions, small towns and similar private residential communities with implementing actions to prevent the potential for home ignitions from wildfire.

Activities will also include assisting residential communities in becoming recognized Firewise® Communities/USA sites. While Humboldt County is not an eligible entity for recognition, it can assist small local communities in the recognition process. County staff will coordinate with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff to provide technical and education support for local communities working to become certified Firewise Communities. This will entail County staff time to support communities as they take on the following 5-step process of getting Firewise® Certified:

- Complete a community assessment and create a plan
- Form a Firewise® Board or Committee
- Hold a Firewise® Day event
- Invest a minimum of \$2/capita in local wildfire mitigation projects
- Submit an application to the Firewise® Communities Program via our state liaison

County staff will also provide assistance with implementing Firewise® projects within certified communities. Firewise® projects might include such activities as the following:

- Firewise® landscaping and home construction education programs
- GIS for Firewise® Communities (building a GIS database that will help communities with their Firewise® assessments)
 - GIS database for hazardous fuels reduction project tracking
 - GIS database for level of fire service mapping
 - GIS database EMS Roads and addressing
 - Using GIS to make map books for fire departments and FSCs in Firewise® communities
- Help with environmental compliance for fuels reduction projects identified as priorities in Firewise® plans.
- Title III Small Grants Program for communities with Firewise® certification. The small grant program will be modeled after the existing small grant program administered by the Natural Resources Planning division. Funds will be granted for Firewise® projects such as:
 - Local fire prevention planning projects
 - Fire Protection Service planning projects
 - Matching funds to leverage larger grants for bigger projects
 - Firewise® day events

¹ Project descriptions were modified only to reflect changes in responsibility for Title III Project management from the Community Development Services Department to the Public Works Department and to highlight project components that have been completed.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan Project

This project placed its focus on improving the countywide fuels reduction and firesafe planning strategy through a coordinated update and refinement of the Humboldt County CWPP. This plan was updated and certified as a CWPP by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors on May 28, 2013. As part of this project, County staff will work with communities to integrate their local CWPPs with the countywide CWPP. This activity will be guided by the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC) in partnership with all participating local FSCs and supported by County staff. This project will catalyze a much higher level of coordination and cooperation among fire safe organizations and increase the effectiveness of countywide efforts to reduce the risk of wildfire damage and loss. As part of this project, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database will be maintained that can be used by all participating FSCs to develop and update their CWPPs and monitor implementation progress.

Funding for this project will be used to support County staff time associated with maintaining the County CWPP, providing assistance to local communities with developing and updating their CWPPs, community outreach, and GIS database maintenances. Funds will also be made available to local community groups involved in drafting and updating CWPPs throughout the county as needed. County staff will manage the distribution and oversee the use of these small grants using the same process and procedures currently employed. Consultant services will be sought as needed.