



**Summary Text:**

This item is on the Board of Supervisors agenda to authorize the acceptance and administration of grant funds from Cal OES for Debris Flow Risk maps and analysis, updated evacuation planning, and to approve Budget Revision Request No. 006084.

As a result of a Presidential declaration of a major federal disaster, the State of California is eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding. This funding is provided under the authority of the Robert T. Safford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) through FEMA and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). Cal OES is responsible for identifying program priorities and reviewing sub applications, and FEMA has final approval for eligibility of funding.

The Office of Emergency Management applied for the HMPG-PF grant funds to provide for Debris Flow Risk maps and analysis, and updated evacuation planning. Cal OES reviewed and approved a total eligible project cost of \$124,000. The Federal Share (75%) is \$93,000 and the non-federal source of matching funds (25%) is \$31,000. The purpose of this project is to analyze the current Debris Flow Risk map for the area below the Thomas Burn area in Santa Barbara County to determine the life threat from this winter's rains. These updated maps will be used to determine which people to evacuate when a storm is predicted to cause violent deadly debris flows.

**Background:**

The 1/9 Debris Flow destroyed and damaged over 500 properties causing a significant economic impact, as well as causing the evacuations of over 21,000 people. Following the debris flow, the communities of Montecito and Carpinteria, and a portion of Santa Barbara were evacuated an additional three times for storms predicted to cause debris flows. While the personal impact of these evacuations is clearly present, there is also an economic impact. Providing pre-staged first responders for each of the storms that are predicted to reach rainfall thresholds strong enough to cause subsequent debris flows cost the County and Special Districts approximately \$400,000. Each person who is evacuated may suffer an economic impact from missing school and work, renting hotel rooms, and purchasing meals. Commercial businesses may be impacted by a loss of business during the evacuation period as well as a loss of perishable commodities that are not used during the evacuation. There are two hotels, numerous vacation rentals, and other lodging facilities in the evacuation area. All of these facilities may endure a loss of revenue and thus the County may have reduced transient occupancy tax revenue.

Another significant debris flow will impact local, State and Federal agencies and likely require support funding from CDAA and FEMA recovery and grant funds. This Debris Flow Risk Analysis project will provide an in-depth analysis that will more accurately identify the areas of impacts caused from a debris flow on the burn area and thus reduce the costs of preparing, responding and recovering from it.

In December 2017, as the Thomas Fire burned, the State Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) began assembling the SoCal Watershed Task Force, and by January 5th the Task Force was engaging with the U.S. Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Responses (BAER) Team and the CAL Fire Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) with the expressed focus on identifying the impacts of debris flows on the Los Padres Forest and more important on the communities directly below the Thomas Fire burn area. The BAER, WERT and SoCal Watershed Task Force teams were all made up of geologists, foresters, civil engineers, hydrologists, soil scientists, and GIS specialists from several state and federal agencies.

Following the January 9th Debris Flow disaster in Montecito, the Cal OES Watershed Task Force was quickly deployed to Santa Barbara County to assess and map affected areas and assist the County in identifying and addressing post-fire and post-debris flow risks to life and property. Using a fixed wing aircraft, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) imagery was conducted as the topography of the area had significantly been altered by the debris flow and all older data had become invalid.

By January 28th the Task Force provided the County with the critical map that is currently used to identify the risk areas to the 21,000 people living below the burn area both in Montecito and in Carpinteria. Evacuations are determined by using this map and the USGS rain intensity thresholds. Three times after the initial January 9th debris flow, evacuations were called for the communities based on the risks identified by this all important map. When the data was collected that formed the basis of the Task Force's mapping, it reflected that the 10 channels had changed course or filled with debris. The data also reflected that the 11 debris basins were all overfilled and damaged. It further showed that elevations had significantly increased or in some cases, channels had been scoured out. The channels are now cleared and the debris basin mostly empty. This now means that the map created by the Task Force is now in need of analysis and updating. The importance of updating the Post Event Debris Flow Assessment and map is that there may be an opportunity to reduce the identified risk areas to the communities as well as reduce the evacuation areas and the thresholds for evacuations. There may also be areas that were not previously identified as being in a risk area that should be as a result of this mapping project.

This project of analysis and map updates, currently underway, will ensure that evacuations are being done in, and only in, the areas that could be affected by future debris flows. It will also provide a base map for the operational responders to ensure the safety and deployment of response resources. This project will have no environmental impacts as it is a hazard identification and mapping project with no physical construction or ground disturbing activities and thus falls within the exception outlined in section 18 of the grant application.

This Debris Flow Risk Analysis project will provide this winter and the following winter's guiding map for life and safety protection and ensure that only the correct properties are being evacuated. To be useful, this map must be completed prior to this winter rains. Speedy approval of this grant application is critical so the scientists can begin this project. This refined mapping will be shared with the community in mid-December.

**Fiscal Analysis**

Narrative: The total project cost is \$124,000, of which \$14,000 was already included in the CEO's Fiscal Year 2018-19 Adopted Budget. Of the remaining \$110,000, the grant award will cover \$93,000. It is recommended that the remaining \$17,000 be allocated out of the \$6.25 million in Committed Disaster Recovery fund balance set aside in the Adopted FY 2018/19 budget to address Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow Disaster related costs.

**Special Instructions:**

Please provide copies of the executed Resolution and the minute order to the Office of Emergency Management, attention Sonia Thompson.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Budget Revision

**Authored by:**

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program-Post Fire (HMGP-PF)**

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Robert Lewin, Director Office of Emergency Management