



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

AGENDA DATE: September 23, 2008
TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
FROM: Airport Administration
SUBJECT: GAP Fire Flood Protection And Mitigation Project

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Approve and authorize the Airport Director, subject to approval by the City Attorney, to execute an Agreement for Cost Sharing of the Gap Fire Flood Protection and Mitigation Project: Aerial Hydromulching between the City of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and the City of Goleta; and
- B. Appropriate \$70,000 to be funded from Airport reserves above policy.

DISCUSSION:

Background

In July 2008, the Gap Fire burned in the hills above Goleta and impacted six watersheds, four of which drain or flow onto the Airport. About 9,500 acres of steep terrain was burned including most of the vegetation. About half of the burn area is within U.S. Forest Service National Forest which is at the top of the watershed. The remaining burned area is on privately owned land in the County of Santa Barbara. There is great concern that, due to the bare hillsides, winter rains will cause significant flooding to the urban areas below.

Burn Area Emergency Rehabilitation

In recognition that some wildfires may cause damage to people or land downstream after the fire by increased water runoff, flooding, and sediment flow downstream, the Forest Service is required to evaluate the burned area and prescribe treatments to protect the land quickly and effectively. This information is incorporated into a Burn Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) plan for implementation and funding for Forest Service land only.

However, the Plan also provides a good assessment of what the downstream land owners and agencies can expect. In the case of the Gap Fire, the Forest Service has determined that 76% of the area the BAER team (USFS specially trained hydrologists, geologists, etc) analyzed will produce high runoff and sediment yield. Based on

historical data and modeling, the Forest Service hydrologist state that sediment production is expected to be 15-20 times greater than the baseline. In the next rainy season the model shows that a 5-year rain event will behave like a 10-year storm, and 10-year like a 25-year event.

Local Agency Emergency Planning

The Santa Barbara County Flood Control District has taken the lead in coordinating with the Santa Barbara Airport, City of Goleta, Forest Service and others. Each agency is taking proactive measures to help minimize damage from flooding and developing response plans for during and after flooding.

Cost Sharing Agreement

Santa Barbara County Flood Control District is currently conducting its routine creek cleaning and dredging as well as constructing debris barriers in the watershed. Aerial hydromulching in the burn area has been identified as an important protective measure that the Forest Service will be funding and using on forest lands and the County will be using on private lands. The cost of hydromulching is in addition to the routine protective measures normally funded by the Flood Control District.

The County, Airport, and City of Goleta will all benefit by the hydromulch application if it minimizes flooding and sediment flow from the burn area into the Goleta community and the Airport. To that end, staff recommends that the cost of the hydromulch application be shared between the three agencies.

Pursuant to the FAA Grant Assurances, use of airport revenues is restricted to Airport operations, maintenance, and capital improvements. Airport staff requested and received FAA authorization to expend airport revenues for the hydromulch operation.

The Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service will fund 75% of the cost of hydromulching, with a 25% local share. The State of California Office of Emergency Services will fund 25% of the local share, leaving the remainder of the cost to be divided between the County, Airport, and Goleta.

The Agreement identifies the cost to the Airport and City of Goleta as \$70,000 each with the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District responsible for the remainder of the local share.

PREPARED BY: Karen Ramsdell, Airport Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office