



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** June 9, 2009

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** National Emergency Grant For The Rehabilitation Of Parma Park And Rattlesnake Trail

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Authorize the Parks and Recreation Director to enter into a contractual agreement with the County of Santa Barbara Workforce Investment Board for implementation of a National Emergency Grant (NEG) for the Rehabilitation of Parma Park and Rattlesnake Trail; and
- B. Increase revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$186,190 in the Parks and Recreation Department Miscellaneous Grants Fund.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Background

In response to the announcement of NEG funding for the 2008 Southern California Wildfires Disaster, the Parks and Recreation Department submitted a proposal for the rehabilitation of Parma Park and Rattlesnake Canyon Trail. The proposal was submitted through the County of Santa Barbara Workforce Investment Board (WIB) since the funding is made available through the Department of Labor under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The purpose of the NEG funding is to create temporary jobs for workers that either lost jobs as a result of the fires or the recent economic downturn. The temporary jobs are focused on the rehabilitation of wildfire disaster areas in Southern California.

Both Parma Park and Rattlesnake Canyon Trail were adversely impacted by the November 2008 Tea Fire. Over 95 percent of the native riparian, oak woodland and grassland habitats within Parma Park were destroyed by the fire. Due to the fire, the park sustained a significant loss of vegetation and soil erosion. Hiking and equestrian trails and fire access roads were damaged. Although the Department addressed immediate hazards soon after the fire with the assistance of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds, there is a significant need for a sustained rehabilitation program. NEG funding will play a critical role in the Department's efforts to initiate a long-term rehabilitation and restoration plan for both Parma Park and Rattlesnake Trail.

### National Emergency Grant Funding

The scope of work for the NEG funding includes replacement of park fencing and signage, installation of erosion control mechanisms, removal of dead trees and downed brush, and trail repairs. Eradication of non-native invasive plants that have emerged as a result of exposed soils represents significant work effort to be funded by the grant. Restoration activities will include the re-construction of trails, and re-planting of riparian areas and woodlands with new trees and other native shrubs. Trail improvements include the clean-up and removal of dead trees and vegetation and downed woody debris, erosion control measures and improvements to trail tread and drainage.

NEG funding will enable the Parks Division to employ 11 hourly staff full-time for a 6-month period from July 2009 through December 2009. Nine of the hourly staff will be hired as entry-level Grounds Maintenance Assistants through the County WIB One-Stop Program. The remaining two hourly staff will be hired by the Parks Division to supervise the entry level staff.

### Parma Park Restoration Program

The Parks and Recreation Department recently received approval from the Parma Park Trustee for a 2.5 year (January 2009 – June 2011) restoration program at Parma Park. The restoration program assumed the Department would receive the NEG funding. The Parma Park Trustee has committed to contribute \$224,921 over the 2.5 years. In addition to ongoing annual maintenance, these funds will be used to support non-native exotics removal, habitat restoration, trail and defensible space maintenance, new signage and fence materials, restoration of the olive grove, community outreach, volunteer programs, and project management.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Of the \$186,190 National Emergency Grant, approximately \$151,168 will be used for the salaries and benefits of the temporary staff and \$34,023 will be used for operating expenses and supplies.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

Parma Park and Rattlesnake Canyon Park provide 651 acres of undeveloped open space for passive outdoor recreation benefits. NEG funding will provide a critical foundation for the long-term restoration and reduce potential downstream impacts from soil erosion and creek sedimentation.

**PREPARED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office