

Staff Report

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager

DATE: May 25, 2022

SUBJECT: Repealing Declaration of Emergency – River Fire

ADMINISTRATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. 2022-32 - Repealing Declaration of Emergency for the River Fire, and direct the General Manager to take appropriate actions to implement this resolution.

BACKGROUND:

Beginning August 4, 2021, the River Fire scorched over 2,600 acres, inclusive of over four river miles of the Bear River watershed in Placer and Nevada counties. NID owns approximately 320 acres of burned area within the watershed. The fire burned in areas where much of the terrain is steep and consists of montane hardwood and mixed conifer forests, including oak woodlands, ponderosa and grey pines, and cedar and fir trees. Slightly higher at the northern end of the fire, the lower end of the John Henry Meyer Canal flows through approximately one mile of burned slopes near Chicago Park.

On August 25, 2021, NID declared a declaration of emergency for the River Fire (Resolution No. 2021-30), authorizing an emergency \$500,000 for contracting and purchasing of equipment and materials deemed necessary to avoid and/or mitigate against interruption of essential public water services, hydroelectric generation, and impacts to the environment.

NID's primary concerns of the fire aftermath included the burn area's hillside stability, downstream water quality issues, and the near and long-term implications to operations & maintenance of downstream facilities. Approximately 15,000 treated water (LOP and N. Auburn WTP's) and 3,000 raw water customers are

dependent upon NID’s infrastructure, including Combie Reservoir and Combie-Ophir Canal System, downstream of the wildfire-impacted area.

In the fall of 2021, NID identified emergency measures to mitigate the impacts of potential winter storm hillside erosion, vegetation intrusion, and increased sedimentation into the river. Staff conducted a watershed assessment where response short, mid, and long-term actions have been identified for recovery efforts. To date, the District has spent nearly \$400,000 on equipment, materials and contractor expenses and has treated the highest priority 50-acres of District-owned lands. Activities have included the clean-up and replacement of the John Meyer Canal, mastication, hand-thinning, timber felling and soil stabilization in the burn scar.

Below is a table of expenditures to date*:

Category		Description	Expense
Equipment	Worthington Products	Tuffboom	\$38,355
Materials	Ferguson	6” PVC Pipe	\$25,386
	Various	Freight, Lumber, Rental, etc.	<u>\$19,116</u>
	<i>Total Equipment & Materials:</i>		<u>\$82,858</u>
Contractor Expense	Frank Dial Logging	Felling & Removal 7 Acres	\$80,000
	Red Mountain Resource	Hand crews 20 Acres	\$78,000
	Jensen’s Tree Care	Mastication 20 Acres	\$52,600
	Frank Dial Logging	Canal Tree Felling & Removal: ~1 Mile	\$28,000
	Jensen’s Tree Care	Hand crews Tree removal and Erosion control – 6 Acres	\$20,800
	Jensen’s Tree Care	Mastication / Hand crew -26 Acres	\$48,000
	<i>Total Contractor Expense:</i>		<u>\$307,400</u>
Total River Fire Emergency Expenses To Date:			\$389,258

* Not including staff costs and time

In February 2022, NID adopted Resolution No. 2022-08 (Authorizing the Application for Grant Funds to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program for the Bear River Wildfire Recovery Project). SNC’s program funding will help NID significantly reduce the negative impacts of the River Fire and improve forest health in the Bear River watershed. NID intends to implement additional fire fuels reduction treatment utilizing mastication and/or hand crew cutting and chipping of ladder fuels, leave

selected trees as habitat, and install strategic erosion control straw bales and wattles to limit sediment transport throughout the burned NID lands. NID has requested \$570,000 in grant funding for a total project budget of \$770,400. Staff anticipates knowing the outcome of this grant application in June.

NID's emergency actions in priority and targeted areas have greatly reduced the potential impacts associated with large landscape-level impacts. The work NID has accomplished within the burn scar has greatly reduced the long-range threat to the health of the Bear River and that of the watershed. Although the winter of 2021-2022 brought torrential rains to the area, staff has not witnessed large-scale slope destabilization, which we were previously concerned about. Additionally, the hazard tree removal that NID completed adjacent to Ben Taylor Rd. below PG&E's Bear River Canal successfully reduce the direct risk to this facility, and the site does not demonstrate elevated erosion due to the severe temperatures reached while the wildfire burned through this section of the canyon.

NID staff have been planning for and budgeting for additional work in the burn scar in the fall of 2022 and beyond. It is staff's opinion that the District is no longer in an emergency condition, and the District may rescind the emergency requirements of Resolution No. 2021-30.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The adoption of Resolution No. 2022-32 will not have a budgetary impact on the District. The Watershed Department has budgeted \$400,000 in Contractor and Consultant expenses for 2022 River Fire activities.

Attachments: (1)

- Resolution No. 2022-32: Repealing Declaration of Emergency River Fire



RESOLUTION NO. 2022-32
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

REPEALING DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY – RIVER FIRE

WHEREAS, On August 4, 2021, the River Fire started near Colfax, California, and rapidly increased in size to threaten Nevada Irrigation District water supplies, facilities, property, and the public in general; and

WHEREAS, On August 5, 2021, the Governor of the State of California proclaimed a State of Emergency for Nevada and Placer Counties due to the River Fire; and

WHEREAS, on August 10, 2021, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 21-365 ratifying a local health emergency proclamation due to the immediate public health threat caused by hazardous waste and debris from the River Fire; and

WHEREAS, On August 25, 2021, NID declared a declaration of emergency for the River Fire (Resolution No. 2021-30) authorizing an emergency \$500,000 for contracting and purchasing of equipment and materials deemed necessary to avoid and/or mitigate against interruption of essential public water services, hydroelectric generation, and impacts to the environment; and

WHEREAS, NID's primary concerns of the fire aftermath included the burn area's hillside stability, downstream water quality issues, and the near and long-term implications to operations & maintenance of downstream facilities; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 15,000 treated water (LOP and N. Auburn WTP's) and 3,000 raw water customers are dependent upon NID's infrastructure, including Combie Reservoir and Combie-Ophir Canal, downstream of the wildfire-impacted area; and

WHEREAS, To date the District has spent nearly \$400,000 on equipment, materials and contractor expenses and has treated the highest priority 50-acres of

District-owned lands; and

WHEREAS, NID actions in priority and targeted areas have greatly reduced the potential impacts associated with large landscape-level impacts and has greatly reduced the long-range threat to the health of the Bear River and that of the watershed; and

WHEREAS, NID staff and consultants have been planning for and budgeting for additional work in the burn scar in the fall of 2022 and beyond.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of Nevada Irrigation District:

1. The Board of Directors hereby determines that conditions of local emergency due to the River Fire no longer exist within Nevada Irrigation District; consequently Resolution No. 2021-30, establishing a Declaration of Emergency for the River Fire is repealed; and
2. The Board of Directors hereby authorizes the General Manager to take appropriate actions to implement this resolution.

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PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District at a regular meeting held on the 25th day of May 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:	Directors:
NOES:	Directors:
ABSENT:	Directors:
ABSTAINS:	Directors:

President of the Board of Directors

Attest:

Secretary to the Board of Directors