

Replenish Big Bear Reaches Funding Milestone A \$500,000 Grant Award

December 5, 2019: Replenish Big Bear, a recycled water project that will serve Big Bear Valley (Valley), accepted a \$500,000 grant award from the State of California's Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DCI) Program this week.

The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) is serving as the program manager for the grant funds from DWR and will enter into a Sub-Grant Agreement with the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency (BBARWA) on behalf of the Replenish Big Bear project team to provide \$500,000 for technical assistance on Replenish Big Bear. Funds will be used to cover costs related to permitting incurred between February 2019 and December 2020. This is the first grant received by the project and is critical to support a new high-quality water source that will help meet Big Bear Valley's current and future water needs.

"The Replenish Big Bear project team is excited to receive outside project funding that is in direct support of our community to help us keep a valuable water resource in the Valley," BBARWA General Manager David Lawrence said.

Replenish Big Bear will capture our lost water currently discharged outside of the Valley. This new supplemental water source will help maintain Big Bear Lake levels and groundwater levels, even during periods of drought, enhance environmental protection and support our thriving community. The partnership of five local agencies is vital to make the project a reality: BBARWA; Big Bear City Community Services District (BBCCSD); City of Big Bear Lake Department of Water (BBLDWP); Big Bear Municipal Water District (BBMWD); and Bear Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (BVBGSA). Replenish Big Bear is now in the preliminary design, permitting and environmental review phase and may begin construction of a pilot treatment facility as soon as 2020.

The project team also submitted two other grant applications in 2019, which could provide a combined \$6.8 million in additional grant funds, if selected. In November, the project team applied for over \$4.5 million from the Proposition 1 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program, also administered by SAWPA on behalf of DWR. Leading up to this application, the project team participated in an extensive stakeholder process through SAWPA's One Water One Watershed (OWOW) program that evaluated all the proposed water resource projects in the region based on a variety of criteria established by the OWOW stakeholder group. Through this process, Replenish Big Bear was identified as the *highest ranked large project* in the Upper Santa Ana River watershed and was recommended by the SAWPA Authority Commission to receive over \$4.5 million in proposed funding, out of a total \$22 million that was allocated to the entire Santa Ana River watershed region. This is the highest dollar award recommendation in the region, a testament to the project's significant community and regional value and broad stakeholder support. DWR is expected to make the final awards for the Proposition 1 IWRM grant in mid-2020.

“DWR will make the final decision on whether to award the \$4.5 million to Replenish Big Bear but has typically followed the recommendations of SAWPA in the past so we are very optimistic that this funding will come through in 2020,” said Mike Stephenson, BBMWD General Manager.

In June, the project team applied for over \$2.3 million in grant funds from the United States Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Title XVI WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Projects program. The awards for this grant program have not yet been announced but Replenish Big Bear will be eligible to apply for additional funds in the future, whether or not the grant is received this year. This program could ultimately provide federal grant funds for up to 25% of the total project cost, if successful.

Submission of these grant applications marks a year and half long effort by the project team to obtain essential grant funding for the project to reduce the cost to the local community. The project team will continue to seek additional grant funds to support the significant investment required to secure this critical water source for the Valley.

To learn more about Replenish Big Bear and keep up with the latest news, visit www.ReplenishBigBear.org.

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