

News Release

For Immediate Release: November 24, 2019

Smith River NRA Watershed Improvements Grant Awarded

Crescent City, CA. – The Smith River Collaborative announced a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to Del Norte County to implement critically important watershed infrastructure improvements for nearly 30 miles of streams, and associated roads and trails in the Smith River National Recreation Area. The \$330,526 grant provides funding for implementation of projects and improvements developed through the *Smith River National Recreation Area Restoration and Motorized Travel Management Project (TMP)*.

The application to NFWF was prepared by the U.S. Forest Service in collaboration with the Smith River Collaborative (SRC)—a joint venture between the Six Rivers National Forest, Elk Valley Rancheria, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Del Norte County, Del Norte Fire Safe Council, the American Forest Resource Council, and local and regional environmental groups Klamath Forest Alliance/EPIC, Smith River Alliance, the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildland Center, and Friends of Del Norte.

“This is about watershed health and maintaining access to our public land,” said SRC Co-Chair and County Supervisor Gerry Hemmingsen. “Del Norte County was active in the development of this Travel Management Project—and while the stakeholder process was sometimes frustrating, it is great to see work getting underway on priority components. The Forest Service deserves a lot of credit for this funding—and they are also directing \$440,000 of internal funds to the project. Their leadership is very much appreciated.”

The watershed infrastructure project with funding from NFWF and the U.S. Forest Service includes components to improve road and trail conditions, while also benefitting fish, wildlife, sensitive plants, and enhancing water quality. Most of the project components and activity will occur within the North and Middle Fork drainages.

“Partnership and cooperation made this project possible,” said SRC Co-Chair Grant Werschull of the Smith River Alliance. “When interested and motivated parties are willing to work together in a zone of agreement there’s no limit to what can be achieved. The partnership involving SRC and the Forest Service is really exciting. The SRC is motivated and the Forest Service has been an outstanding partner.”

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