

Contact: Mr. David Lawrence, BBARWA
Email: dlawrence@bbarwa.org

Replenish Big Bear Receives \$4.5 Million, the Largest IRWM Prop 1 Funding Award in the Santa Ana River Watershed

June 9, 2020: Replenish Big Bear, a recycled water project that will serve Big Bear Valley (Valley), was awarded \$4,563,338 from the State of California's, Department of Water Resources (DWR), Proposition 1 Round 1 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant Program. This is the largest IRWM grant awarded in the Santa Ana River Watershed, a testament to the project's significant community and regional value and broad stakeholder support.

In the face of a changing climate, DWR's IRWM Grant Program is making \$403 million in grant funds available for the planning and implementation of water resource projects that benefit disadvantaged communities and water resiliency across the state. This is the largest grant received toward Replenish Big Bear costs 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 Valley has seen significant impacts of drought in recent years and it has become clear that a new way for integrated water management is a critical need for the community.

"This award is the result of years of effort and project support within the community. The Replenish Big Bear project team is excited to receive this significant award to help us keep a valuable water resource in the Valley and with the Santa Ana River Watershed," Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency (BBARWA) General Manager David Lawrence said.

Replenish Big Bear will capture water currently discharged outside of the Valley. This restored supplemental water source will help maintain Big Bear Lake levels and groundwater levels, even during periods of drought, enhance environmental protection and support a 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 and operation of a pilot treatment facility, which will inform the final design requirements, as soon as December 2020.

"This funding award is a testament to our efforts to deliver an innovative water resiliency solution for our community," said Mary Reeves, BBCCSD General Manager. "It supports our goals of delivering a high-quality and cost-effective water solution that offers multiple environmental and community benefits."

Submission of this grant application marks a two-year long effort by the project team to obtain essential funding for the project to reduce the cost to the local community.

The project team also 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 in June 2019.

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. This program could provide federal grant funds for up to 25 percent of the total project cost, if successful. The project team will continue to seek additional grant funds in support of this significant investment toward securing critical water supply for the Valley.

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