

**COUNTY OF SONOMA
AGENDA ITEM
SUMMARY REPORT**

Clerk of the Board Use Only
Meeting Date **Held Until**
 ___/___/___ ___/___/___
Agenda Item No: **Agenda Item No:**
 _____ _____

Department:
 Sonoma County Water Agency

() 4/5 Vote Required

Contact: Matt Vail **Phone:** (707) 547-1971 **Board Date:** 05/05/09

Deadline for Board Action:

AGENDA SHORT TITLE:
 Application to Acquire Property for Public Access and the Headwaters 2 Ocean Education Program

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION(S):
 Resolution authorizing the General Manager/Chief Engineer to evaluate acquisition of Lake Sonoma Tract 1607, to submit an application and any related documents to the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service to acquire Lake Sonoma Tract 1607, to acquire the property, and to negotiate any necessary contracts relating to the property, for Board consideration, as are necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Federal Lands to Parks Program for use of the property.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>		<u>ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL</u>	
Estimated Cost	\$ -0-	Contingencies	\$
		(Fund Name:)	
Amount Budgeted	\$ -0-	Unanticipated Revenue	\$
		(Source:)	
Other Avail Approp (Explain below)	\$ _____	Other Transfer(s)	\$ _____
		(Source:)	
Additional Requested:	\$ -0-	Add'l Funds Requested:	\$ _____

Explanation (if required):

Prior Board Action(s):
 Board Resolution 08-0303 authorized the General Manager/Chief Engineer to evaluate acquisition of Lake Sonoma, Tract 1607 and work with the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) and/or area school district offices to develop a water education program for the property and to develop any necessary applications and contracts, for Board consideration, as are necessary to fulfill the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education for use of this property.

Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval: Without Board authorization the Agency can not complete its application to acquire Federal surplus property and cannot obtain Tract 1607 at Lake Sonoma.

Background: Program Description on file with the Clerk.

In November 2007, Agency staff learned that the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) was about to return to the federal government a 140-acre parcel of property located in the watershed above Lake Sonoma. The property, identified as Tract 1607 and shown on the attached map, had been acquired by SCOE through a Public Benefit Allowance credit. This federal program allows state and local governmental entities to acquire surplus federal property at a reduced cost provided that the property is used for educational purposes. Because SCOE was unable to complete an outdoor educational program on Tract 1607, SCOE was required to allow the property to revert to federal government ownership.

The Agency now seeks Board authority to acquire this property under the Federal Lands to Parks program. The acquisition of Tract 1607 would provide an excellent opportunity for the Agency to provide a site for public access and for use in connection with the water and natural resource education programs. Agency staff has taken initial steps to prepare an application to the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service to acquire Tract 1607 for use for public access and educational purposes. The Agency would make the property available for public access and use the property in its watershed and water resources education program *Headwaters 2 Ocean ("H2O")*. Under this program, students would explore the natural and human processes that shape the Russian River watershed, from the headwaters of its tributaries to the ocean. Tract 1607 makes an ideal first field trip destination, demonstrating the dynamic nature of water originating in the highest reaches of a watershed. Tract 1607 also would provide access to the nearby Don Clausen Fish Hatchery and the Coho Salmon Recovery program, which is another important element of H2O program. The property also could be an important educational link to other Agency efforts, such as the Agency's implementation of the habitat restoration projects under the NMFS Biological Opinion in Dry Creek.

Agency staff has been working with the U.S. Department of Interior/National Park Service to prepare and submit to the U.S. Department of Interior/National Park Service an Application to Acquire Surplus Federal Real Property under the Federal Lands to Parks Program. Agency staff estimates that the fair market value of the property is approximately \$500,000. Under the Federal Lands to Parks program, the Agency would be able to acquire the property at a reduced price, reflecting the public access and educational uses to which the property will be put. The exact amount of the reduction has not been determined. The General Manager/Chief Engineer will return to the Board to obtain Board approval of the final acquisition price once it is determined.

The attached resolution would authorize the Agency's General Manager/Chief Engineer to submit the application to the U.S. Department of Interior/National Park Service, to evaluate acquisition of Tract 1607, and to acquire the property. The resolution is required by the U.S. Department of Interior/National Park Service as a condition to applying for the property.

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION(S):

Resolution authorizing the General Manager/Chief Engineer to evaluate acquisition of Lake Sonoma Tract 1607, to submit an application and any related documents to the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service to acquire Lake Sonoma Tract 1607, to acquire the property, and to negotiate any necessary contracts relating to the property, for Board consideration, as are necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Federal Lands to Parks Program for use of the property.

Attachments: Resolution (R1)

On File With Clerk: Program Description

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote: