

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: Chris Delaney	Phone: (707) 547-1946	Board Date: 06-23-09	Deadline for Board Action:	
AGENDA SHORT TITLE: Russian River Estuary Circulation and Water Quality Monitoring				
REQUESTED BOARD ACTION(S):				
1. Authorize the Agency's General Manager/Chief Engineer to execute the Agreement for Preliminary Study of Russian River Estuary Circulation and Water Quality Monitoring between the Sonoma County Water Agency and the Regents of the University of California on behalf of its Davis campus Bodega Marine Laboratory (\$90,000) in substantially the form as the draft presented to this Board, following review and approval by County Counsel as to form and by Risk Management as to insurance requirements.				
2. Authorize the Agency's General Manager/Chief Engineer to amend the Agreement provided amendments do not cumulatively increase the total cost to the Agency by more than \$25,000 (taking into account all prior amendments) and do not substantially change the scope of work.				
CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT				
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>			<u>ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL</u>	
Estimated Cost	\$	90,000	Contingencies	\$
Amount Budgeted	\$	90,000	(Fund Name:)	
Other Avail Approp (Explain below)	\$		Unanticipated Revenue	\$
			(Source:)	
Additional Requested:	\$	-0-	Other Transfer(s)	\$
			(Source:)	
			Add'l Funds Requested:	\$ -0-
Explanation (if required): Funding is available in the amount of \$60,000 from the appropriation in the FY 08/09 budget for the Fund entitled Russian River Projects (Account No. 674515 6570) and \$30,000 from the appropriation in the FY 09/10 budget for the Fund entitled Watershed Planning/Restoration (Account No. 675728 6570)				
Prior Board Action(s):				
03/17/09 Authorizing General Manager/Chief Engineer to execute agreement for engineering and environmental services for Russian River Estuary Outlet Channel Management Plan.				
09/09/08 Authorizing General Manager/Chief Engineer to execute agreement for surveying services for Russian River Estuary Bathymetric Analysis.				
06/10/08 Authorizing General Manager/Chief Engineer to execute agreements for environmental services for Russian River Flow EIR/EIS and for support of the Russian River Flow Project Stakeholder Assessment.				
Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval:				

Background: Draft Agreement on file with the Clerk.

Three species of salmon in the Russian River are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA): Central California Coast (CCC) coho salmon, CCC steelhead, and California Coastal (CC) Chinook salmon. In 1997 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes the framework for a Russian River Section 7 Consultation required by the ESA with respect to the activities of USACE and Agency and certain activities of the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District.

NMFS issued its Biological Opinion (BO) for Water Supply, Flood Control Operations, and Channel Maintenance conducted by the USACE, the Agency, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District on September 24, 2008. NMFS found that the continued operations of Warm Springs and Coyote Valley dams, together with proposed Dry Creek channel maintenance activities, and estuary management are likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened CCC steelhead and endangered CCC coho salmon and adversely modify their critical habitats.

NMFS, Corps, and the Agency collaborated in developing a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) to the operations evaluated in the BO that, when implemented, would avoid the likelihood of jeopardizing steelhead and coho salmon populations and adversely modifying critical habitat. Implementation of the RPA allows NMFS to provide incidental take coverage to the USACE and the Agency for the operations described in the BO for a period of 15 years. The RPA requires that the Agency will collaborate with NMFS to modify estuary management to reduce marine influence during the summer to promote a higher water surface elevation and improve water quality in the estuary to enhance rearing habitat for steelhead. As stated in the BO, NMFS believes that a significantly deeper and stable brackish/freshwater estuary is likely more similar to historic rearing environment for Russian River salmonids than conditions induced by frequent breaching and conversion to a marine environment. The RPA sets a goal that the Agency shall attempt to maintain an average daily water surface elevation of at least 7 feet from May 15 to October 15.

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Continued...

Attachments:

On File With Clerk: Draft Agreement (1 Copy)

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

Background (continued):

The Agency is currently working with Phillip Williams and Associates (PWA) under a separate agreement to develop the Russian River Estuary Outlet Channel Management Plan (RREOCMP). This plan will provide management guidelines to modify the Agency's current breaching practices at the estuary in effort to meet the management goals of the BO.

The proposed Agreement with the Regents of the University of California, on behalf of its Davis campus Bodega Marine Lab, covers the implementation of a monitoring program to evaluate the water quality and flow dynamics of the estuary both prior to and during the implementation of the RREOCMP. Monitoring data collected under this Agreement will be used to evaluate the impacts of the RREOCMP's revised estuary management and to support studies to evaluate the Agency's long term estuary management alternatives as required by the BO.

Bodega Marine Lab (BML) was the only firm contacted and was selected to perform the work because of BML's unique expertise and experience working in the Russian River Estuary and other estuaries on the North Coast and BML's excellent credentials in the field of estuary circulation dynamics and water quality. The Agency does not have the skills or capacity to carryout this type of work in-house, and the price for the contract is reasonable, compared to market rates for this type of work. Additionally, implementation of the RREOCMP will likely begin in July, providing a limited time frame to implement the required monitoring program and necessitating the Agency to work very quickly to contract with a qualified institution. Finally, BML's close proximity to the project site will help reduce costs associated with mobilization and travel.

The Agreement includes provisions for the Agency's General Manager/Chief Engineer to terminate the Agreement.

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