

County Of Sonoma Agenda Item Summary Report

Clerk of the Board Use Only

Meeting Date

Held Until

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Agenda Item No:

Agenda Item No:

Department: Sonoma County Water Agency

4/5 Vote Not Required

Contact:

Michael Thompson

Phone:

(707) 521-1863

Board Date:

9/22/2009

Deadline for Board Action:

AGENDA SHORT TITLE:

Approve Application for Grant Funds from the Habitat Conservation Fund Program

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:

Request the Board of Directors Approve Application for Grant Funds from the Habitat Conservation Fund Program.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT - None.

Explanation (if required): None.

Prior Board Action: None.

Alternatives – Results of Non-Approval: The Agency would need to use Zone 1A funds for habitat restoration on the Laguna Channel. Less funding would be available for local non-profit organizations to complete habitat restoration work in the Laguna Channel.

Background

The Agency owns and maintains the Laguna Flood Control Channel (Laguna Channel), which is located between Rohnert Park and Llano Road near Sebastopol. The infestation of the Laguna de Santa Rosa by the highly invasive aquatic plant Ludwigia contributes to reductions in water quality and channel capacity and inhibits mosquito control efforts.

From 2005-2008 the Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) and other agencies supported the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (Foundation) in its efforts to control the plant in two heavily infested areas. Ludwigia removal efforts were conducted on this channel in the vicinity of the Stony Point Road Bridge near Rohnert Park Expressway. Although the efforts provided substantial relief, insufficient funding for ongoing management has enabled the plant to return. Preventing regrowth will require changes to underlying physical conditions at the site that make it favorable to Ludwigia. One of these is lack of drainage during the summer months leading to stagnant, shallow water with full access to sun.

The Agency has completed numerous cross-section surveys of the channel downstream of the Stony Point Road Bridge, which have identified the accumulation of significant levels of sediment, due in part to an abandoned cattle crossing that acts as a dam. To improve drainage, the Agency conducted extensive vegetation maintenance in this portion of the channel this year and plans to remove sediment in the channel during this summer. The sediment removal project will improve flood protection in Rohnert Park and near the City of Santa Rosa’s Subregional Wastewater Treatment Plant, and is consistent with the Agency’s long-term plan to provide better drainage in areas experiencing rapid Ludwigia growth. The Agency also plans to create a trail along this stretch of the Laguna for public access.

The Foundation supports these efforts to improve drainage and also hopes to begin restoration of the riparian forest along this reach between Stony Point Road and Llano Road. While this area does contain many trees, many of the trees are Arroyo Willow, which the Agency is working to replace with species that do not cause significant maintenance impacts such as Red Willow or Alders. There are also large areas of channel bank that do not contain trees, which are covered with other invasive non-native vegetation such as Himalayan Blackberry, which represent a flood protection concern, that will be removed and planted with native trees.

A grant is available through the California State Parks Habitat Conservation Fund that can provide funding for restoration on the Agency's Laguna Channel. The Laguna Foundation has indicated it will prepare the grant application and perform the project. However, because the grant is not open to non-profit organizations, the Foundation will prepare and submit the grant on behalf of the Agency. The Agency’s sediment removal funding can be used as a match for a grant from the State. The Agency can also assist the Laguna Foundation with permitting under its Stream Maintenance Program. The scope of the grant will include roughly 17 acres of tree planting and weed control estimated to cost \$300,000. While these projects will significantly decrease the ability of Ludwigia from coming back, the Laguna Foundation and the Agency will provide ongoing maintenance to manage vegetation to help ensure the channel is clear in the future.

As part of the grant application, the Agency's Board of Directors must adopt the attached resolution indicating that the Agency has sufficient funds to complete, operate and maintain the restoration project; certifies that the Agency has reviewed, understands, and agrees to the General Provisions contained in the Contract shown in the Procedural Guide for the grant application; and delegates the authority to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, and payment requests, which may be necessary for the completion of the project.

Attachments: Resolution (R1)

On File With Clerk: None.

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Board Action (If other than "Requested")	Vote:
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