



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/4/2025

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency

Staff Name and Phone Number: Grant Davis, 707-547-1900 and Devin Chatoian, 707-524-3783

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Funding for Mussel Inspection Programs at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute a 5-year Aquatic Invasive Species Project Partnership Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in substantially the form presented to this Board, for invasive species prevention activities within the Russian River Basin through December 31, 2030, and authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to amend the Project Partnership Agreement to extend the term, make modifications to the scope of work, accept additional funds, or terminate the agreement with approval of County Counsel.
- B) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to develop Annual Work Plans and execute annual Statements of Work throughout the life of the Project Partnership Agreement for invasive species prevention activities within the Russian River Basin, and authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to amend the Annual Work Plans and Statements of Work to extend the term, make modifications to the scope of work, accept additional funds, or terminate the agreement with approval of County Counsel.
- C) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to enter into consultant agreements in furtherance of the Project Partnership Agreement and annual Statements of Work in a cumulative not-to-exceed amount of \$850,000, in a form approved by County Counsel.
- D) Adopt a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency authorizing adjustments to the Board Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 for the Russian River Projects Fund in the amount of \$735,550 for conducting Invasive Species Activities at the Russian River Basin in Partnership with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (4/5th Vote Required).

Executive Summary:

Beginning in 2012, Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) self-funded mussel infestation prevention efforts at both Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma. Since 2020, Sonoma Water has received funding from the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program to support Sonoma Water's Mussel Infestation Prevention efforts at both lakes.

In 2025, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) approved Sonoma Water's Mussel Infestation Prevention Program for participation in USACE's cost-share Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Program, with the goal of expanding watercraft inspections, monitoring activities, and rapid response planning efforts to address the threat of AIS, particularly Invasive Mussels, in the Russian River Basin (RRB).

To participate in USACE's cost-share AIS program, USACE guidelines require execution of a 5-year Project Partnership Agreement (PPA), Annual Work Plans (AWP), and annual Statements of Work (SOW). The 5-year PPA is a funding agreement that outlines general terms, funding amounts, and eligible activities. Once the PPA is executed, work plans and budgets are developed annually, and attached to an annual SOW. The SOWs are executed annually as a formal acceptance of the work plan and budget for the year.

Sonoma Water is looking to enter into a 5-year PPA to establish a cost share relationship between Sonoma Water and USACE. The new USACE funding will be used to perform additional mussel inspections not reimbursed under the DBW grant program, purchase decontamination stations, and cover staff labor costs related to administering and managing the PPA to support Sonoma Water's ongoing Mussel Infestation Prevention Program at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. Executing the PPA will increase the overall program SOW and budget, and a budget resolution is requested to address the increased budget. The increased budget is expected to be \$735,550 for FY 2025/2026, with a revised total project cost of \$1,000,745, which includes costs incurred under Sonoma Water's existing mussel prevention program that are partially funded by the State. Federal revenue will offset \$648,208 (65%) of Mussel Infestation Prevention Program cost. The State funding secured from DBW and a portion of Sonoma Water's internal staff costs to administer the PPA will be used to meet the required \$352,537 (35%) match for tasks identified in the USACE funded PPA, AWP, and SOW.

Discussion:**HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND**

The Russian River Basin (RRB), including Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino, are at risk of a dreissenid infestation due to the mobility of watercraft transported overland between and within watersheds. In addition, the high survival rate of dreissenids once established, their ability to be hidden on or inside of boats and other structures, and the high fiscal and environmental costs of infestation present serious problems to those who live, work, or recreate in the Russian River Basin. Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino are currently mussel free; however, mussels have infested a waterway south of Mendocino and Sonoma counties, in San Benito County. This waterway, the San Justo reservoir, was closed to all public use since the mussels were first discovered in 2008 and remains closed 17 years later. It will cost an estimated \$6.5 million to eradicate the zebra mussel over five years once an eradication plan is implemented; however, the actual costs of closing the reservoir to recreational use is much higher.

CURRENT QUAGGA AND ZEBRA MUSSEL INSPECTION PROGRAM AT LAKE SONOMA AND LAKE MENDOCINO

The existing watercraft inspection program in the Russian River Basin is managed by Sonoma Water. Current inspection activities include inspecting watercraft at access points (boat ramps) within Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma, both of which are owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and jointly operated by USACE and Sonoma Water. Watercraft requiring decontamination are currently directed to Clear Lake and Lake Berryessa, California (outside of the RRB), where decontamination equipment is available. Federal participation will provide an opportunity to further enhance the ongoing prevention program and support additional activities to prevent the spread of invasive mussels into Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino.

Since 2020, Sonoma Water has received funding from the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program to support Sonoma Water's prevention efforts at both Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. Sonoma Water applies for DBW grant funds by intentionally offsetting applications for Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma by one year to increase the

competitiveness of the application for grant funding and to avoid staffing impacts. Collectively, the two grants provide roughly \$400,000 annually for Sonoma Water's contractor to perform mussel infestation inspections at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. The DBW Quagga and Zebra Mussel Grants only cover a portion of Sonoma Water's inspection costs. Sonoma Water incurs an additional \$220,000-\$270,000 in inspection costs in a typical year when both lakes are fully open to the public. Sonoma Water also incurs roughly \$110,000 annually to cover staff costs for Early Detection Mussel Monitoring, community education and outreach, and program management and administration necessary to successfully implement the Mussel Inspection Program at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino.

FEDERAL FUNDING

The Federal Watercraft Inspection Station Program is authorized by Section 104 of the 1958 Rivers and Harbor Act, as amended (33 USC § 610). Under 33 USC § 610, Congress authorized USACE to enter into cost-share agreements with non-federal partners in specific river basins, such as the Russian River Basin, to establish, operate, and maintain new or existing watercraft inspection stations, among other activities for the purpose of preventing the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) into, out of, or within specific river basins, such as the Russian River Basin.

To execute a cost-share funding agreement, USACE first develops an Integrated Letter Report and Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) to document the environmental, planning, and economic considerations that are used to determine if USACE should participate in a program. Eligible activities approved in the Letter Report and EA include increased inspections; construct inspection site improvements; increase public awareness and education; monitoring for water chemistry and early detection; regional watercraft inspection and decontamination data sharing; real-time watercraft transportation tracking; regional traffic studies; and contingency and rapid response planning.

Upon review and approval of the Letter Report and Programmatic Environmental Assessment, the next step is for USACE to execute a 5-year Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) with Sonoma Water. The 5-year PPA establishes the terms and conditions for funding as well as the eligible project activities.

Once the 5-year PPA is executed, Annual Work Plans (AWPs) are developed as an attachment to the Statements of Work (SOW), which are signed annually. The AWPs include activity descriptions and cost breakdown estimates that establish a baseline of AIS activities that will be conducted for the year. Once an AWP is approved, it is attached to the SOW, and the SOW is signed as a "formal" acceptance of the work plan and budget for the year. While Sonoma Water intends to continue applying annually for California DBW funds to support baseline inspections, USACE funding will initially support costs for all AIS activities defined in the PPA and implemented through the SOW, including increased inspections, purchase of decontamination stations at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino, Early Detection Mussel Monitoring, community education and outreach, and program management and administration necessary to successfully implement the Mussel Inspection Program at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. Additional eligible activities approved in USACE's Letter Report and EA, such as establishing on-site decontamination stations, water chemistry monitoring, and regional data sharing may be added to future AWPs and SOWs as needed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The USACE's EA determined that the project would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been signed and approved. Cost-share activities will be evaluated for consistency with this analysis during the review of Sonoma Water's annual work plan. Additional analysis under NEPA would be conducted prior to reimbursement if USACE determines a proposed Sonoma Water action was not addressed in the FONSI analysis.

California Environmental Quality Act

Sonoma Water's General Manager determined that the ongoing project is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15309, Inspections, because the activities are limited to watercraft mussel inspections, inspection training, and education and outreach activities that help prevent potential for infestation at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. The project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, have a cumulatively considerable effect, or cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly and would not result in damage to scenic or historical resources.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan:

N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment

This item directly supports Sonoma Water's Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following goal, strategy, and action item.

Goal: 3. Environmental Stewardship - Protect and sustain our watersheds to maintain water resources, ecosystems, and communities.

Strategy: 3.2 Protect, enhance, and monitor natural resources, watershed conditions, and ecosystem health that are vital to the Russian River, Petaluma River, and Sonoma Creek watersheds.

Action Item: 3.2.2 Conduct fisheries, wildlife, and water quality monitoring through existing programs and use of new technologies.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

08/12/2025: Adopted a Resolution ratifying the signing and filing of grant applications to the California Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways, and other related actions to accept \$400,000 to fund a mussel infestation prevention program at Lake Sonoma and take other actions related to the grant.

09/10/2024: Adopted a Resolution ratifying the signing and filing of grant applications to the California Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways, and other related actions to accept \$400,000 to fund a mussel infestation prevention program at Lake Mendocino and take other actions related to the grant.

08/01/2023: Adopted a Resolution ratifying the signing and filing of grant applications to the California

Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways, and other related actions to accept \$400,000 to fund a mussel infestation prevention program at Lake Sonoma and take other actions related to the grant.

07/19/2022: Adopted a Resolution ratifying the signing and filing of grant applications to the California Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways, and other related actions to accept \$400,000 to fund a mussel infestation prevention program at Lake Mendocino and take other actions related to the grant.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$735,550		
Total Expenditures	\$735,550		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$648,208		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$87,342		
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$735,550		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

With Board approval of the attached budgetary resolution, FY 2025/2026 appropriations of \$735,550 will be made in the Russian River Projects fund, with \$648,208 in offsetting federal revenue.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

No staffing impacts are anticipated as the additional funding will support our existing Mussel Prevention Program. Sonoma Water's current program coordinator and the Grants and Funded Projects Team have the capacity to manage and implement the additional activities in the PPA without the need to request for additional resources.

Attachments:

Agenda Date: 11/4/2025

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Project Partnership Agreement

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None