



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/5/2024

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency and Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency and Sonoma County Public Infrastructure

Staff Name and Phone Number: David Cook, 707-547-1944 and Tiffany Seder, 707-369-0058

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisorial District(s): Second

Title:

California Tiger Salamander Wilson Property Monitoring

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager and Sonoma County Public Infrastructure's Department Head to execute an agreement, in substantially the form as the draft presented to this Board, for Sonoma County Water Agency to conduct California tiger salamander monitoring on behalf of, and provide training to, Sonoma County Public Infrastructure through December 31, 2025, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$168,942 (Sonoma County Public Infrastructure is paying Sonoma County Water Agency).
- B) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager and Sonoma County Public Infrastructure's Department Head to amend the agreement to increase costs provided amendments do not cumulatively increase the total cost beyond \$185,837.
- C) Adopt a Resolution authorizing adjustments to the Board Adopted Budget for FY 2024/2025 for the Watershed Planning/Restoration Fund in the amount of \$168,942 for California Tiger Salamander Wilson Property Monitoring.

(4/5th Vote Required) (Second District)

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Public Infrastructure (SPI) is evaluating the feasibility of developing a conservation bank at its property located at 403 Mecham Road in unincorporated Sonoma County (Wilson Property). As part of the evaluation process, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requested additional information on whether California tiger salamander, *Ambystoma californiense*, (CTS) are currently present. SPI is requesting the assistance of Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) to inspect the installation of the pitfall trap array equipment, conduct a CTS monitoring study, provide training to SPI staff, and prepare a report on the study findings at the Wilson Property.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

SPI intends to develop a CTS conservation bank at the Wilson Property for CTS, among other sensitive resources, to offset impacts to CTS resources from development. CTS is protected under the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts. Impacts to CTS habitat require mitigation, which may include off-site preservation.

Following two seasons of negative aquatic surveys for CTS, SPI intends to perform pitfall trap surveys at the Wilson Property as part of due diligence associated with the development of a mitigation and multi-species conservation bank, and to evaluate whether the site will serve as habitat for CTS. The survey will support bank entitlement and potential CTS credit generation.

As a component of the interagency review team process, and while considering whether the Wilson Property is a possible candidate for a conservation bank, CDFW and USFWS requested additional data as to whether CTS already inhabit the Wilson Property. A monitoring plan for Wilson Property was prepared by SPI's consultant and was approved by USFWS and CDFW (monitoring plan).

Since CTS is listed as an endangered/threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act, SPI is requesting Sonoma Water conduct the CTS monitoring in accordance with the monitoring plan using Sonoma Water's existing state and federal permits, which are required to study CTS.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the agreement, Sonoma Water will inspect the installed drift fence and pitfall traps for compliance with the monitoring plan and conduct CTS monitoring activities during the 2024/2025 wet season. A report will be prepared summarizing the findings of the study. Sonoma Water will also provide CTS monitoring training to SPI staff.

Under the agreement, Sonoma Water will invoice SPI for services at the same rates Sonoma Water allocates to its internal projects and programs up to a maximum of \$168,928. Sonoma Water is recovering its actual costs of providing services to SPI with no mark-up. This agreement covers services rendered from September 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025.

The services to be performed under this proposed agreement are contingent on the amount of rainy days experienced during the 2024/2025 wet season, since pitfall trap monitoring occurs on days with forecasted rainfall during fall and winter. Sonoma Water requires authority to amend the agreement to increase costs provided that the amendments do not cumulatively increase the total cost beyond \$185,837. This authority would account for any additional monitoring beyond the agreement's current scope of work that may arise from a particularly rainy wet season or unforeseen repairs to any damaged pitfall traps or other delays that may arise from large storm events.

Under the agreement, Sonoma Water's General Manager and SPI's Department Head shall have the ability to extend the term of the agreement for up to two additional years by providing written notice to the other party thirty days in advance of the expiration date. The extension shall be formalized in an amended agreement or amendment signed by the parties.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:

N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:

Goal: Environmental Stewardship

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Strategy: 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: Support collaborative efforts to improve habitat and pursue restoration opportunities that provide integrated regional benefit.

The evaluation of the Wilson Property as a potential site for a mitigation and multi-species conservation bank will create an additional habitat location for the state and federally protected CTS as well as other species, potentially lessening the effects of climate change and human disturbance on the local animal population.

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

03/26/2024 - Approved first amendment between Sonoma County Public Infrastructure and WRA Environmental Consultants to expand the scope of service.

12/12/2023 - Approved agreement between Sonoma County Public Infrastructure and WRA Environmental Consultants for the preparation of a Bank Enabling Instrument (BEI) for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank.

09/15/2020 - Approved agreement between Sonoma County Public Infrastructure and WRA Environmental Consultants to prepare a draft mitigation bank prospectus for creating habitat for California Tiger Salamander.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$168,942		
Total Expenditures	\$168,942		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$168,942		
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$168,942		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

With Board approval of the attached budgetary resolution, FY 2024/2025 appropriations of \$168,942 will be made in the Watershed Planning/Restoration Fund. Offsetting revenue in the amount of \$168,942 will come from Sonoma County Public Infrastructure (SPI).

Staffing Impacts:

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Agreement with Sonoma County Public Infrastructure

Attachment 2: Budget Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None