



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 9/16/2025

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Administrator's Office

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** M. Christina Rivera, Christel Querijero, Todd Hunsdorfer 707-565-2431

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Consulting Agreement for Pathogen Reduction Planning Project

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize the County Executive or designee to execute an Agreement with Arup US, Inc. for work associated with developing pathogen reduction strategies for the Russian River, in an amount not to exceed \$330,000 and with a term ending on December 31, 2026.

**Executive Summary:**

In 2023, the County was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to conduct a pathogen reduction planning project for the Russian River. This project will characterize sources of pollution - including from septic systems, recreation, homeless encampments, and grazing animals - and their impacts to the Russian River and engage stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing pathogen reduction strategies. This effort is intended to make the County eligible for project-based awards through the State's 319 (h) funding. According to the SWRCB, The Russian River needs a detailed and complete nine element watershed plan, and this proposed work is intended to fill in the missing pieces of a state defined plan. Thus, improving the likelihood of competitive funding being awarded for future pathogen reduction projects.

The Board set aside \$350,000 of one-time General Fund for septic infrastructure mapping, at the FY 21-22 budget hearings, to better understand septic system-related wastewater challenges, given new and foreseeable state requirements. Part of this funding was utilized for onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) mapping study, completed in 2024 and presented to the Board and the public on October 8, 2024. The balance of the allocated funds, \$80,000, is being recommended by staff to be used for this project.

After a competitive evaluation process, Arup US, Inc. was selected for the pathogen reduction planning project. Approval today will authorize the County Executive or designee to execute an agreement for consulting services with Arup US Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$330,000 and with a term ending on December 31, 2026.

**Discussion:**

In 2021, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board approved a plan to prohibit discharge of pathogens into the Russian River. Their plan, which is awaiting State approval, requires actions to address pathogen pollution from over a dozen identified sources.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff worked with County staff on developing a proposal that was awarded grant funds in 2023. The intent of the proposal is to model pathogen loading rates to the Russian River to better quantify and measure the success of specific pollution reduction actions. This “cause and effect” relationship is an essential part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s nine-element watershed plan. To be eligible for project-based awards through the State’s 319(h) funding, the Russian River needs a detailed and complete nine-element watershed plan. This proposed work is intended to fill in the missing pieces of a state defined plan and improve the likelihood of competitive funding being awarded for specific pathogen reduction projects.

### **Request for Proposals**

In May 2025, staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a multidisciplinary consultant team with expertise in wastewater management, data and spatial analysis, and community engagement. Proposers were evaluated on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to complete the project as described
- Record of accomplishments with similar deliverables
- Cost of service relative to the scope
- Firm’s experience, qualifications, and expertise of identified staff
- Proposed timeline

Though numerous invitations to submit proposals and notifications of the RFP were sent to potential proposers, the County received only one proposal from Arup US, Inc. A committee comprised of staff from the County Executive’s Office, Permit Sonoma, and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board evaluated Arup’s proposal and determined that Arup met the RFP criteria.

Arup was also the consultant hired for the OWTS mapping study and analysis and is familiar with many of the issues influencing this work. Arup also has a level of digital expertise that will be essential for modelling pathogenic pollution by land use type. The firm submitted a thorough and well-defined proposal that emphasized a partnership with the firm Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman (MIG), a consultant that has facilitated several Sonoma County community engagement efforts in the past.

### **Overview of Workplan**

Arup US, Inc. proposed a scope of work that achieves the deliverables of the SWRCB grant agreement. At a high level the tasks include:

1. Pollution Source Characterization Literature and Data Review
2. Outreach and Community Engagement
3. Source Characterization Methodology
4. Development of Priority Solutions

The consultant will conduct a stakeholder-focused approach backed by extensive technical experience in wastewater and watershed policy and modeling for this project. Arup is planning to work closely with the County to develop a methodology for source characterization to understand and quantify pollution sources, using spatial tools in combination with informed input from local stakeholders to help make decisions on project priorities to reduce pollution to the Russian River.

A detailed outline of Arup US, Inc's workplan can be found in Attachment 3.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

**Racial Equity:**

N/A

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

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

June 15, 2021: Approved Budget that included \$350,000 in funds for septic system infrastructure mapping and outreach.

Aug. 1, 2023: Authorized County Administrator to execute a service contract, not to exceed \$250,000 to create an interactive map and analysis report.

Feb. 27, 2024: Resolution accepting a funding award and delegating implementation for the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY25-26 Adopted</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>	<b>FY27-28 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$330,000		
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>		
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$250,000		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$80,000		
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>		

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

The \$330,000 contract with Arup US, Inc. will be funded by the SWRCB grant (\$250,000) and \$80,000 of funds previously approved by the Board for septic system infrastructure mapping and outreach, currently in the Designated Purposes Fund. Appropriations for the agreement will be included in the second quarter consolidated budget adjustments.

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

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**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

There are no staffing impacts.

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: SWRCB Grant Agreement Scope of Work

Attachment 2: Contract for Professional Services with Arup US, Inc.

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

Resolution regarding 319(h) grant