



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 1/6/2026

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Regional Parks
Staff Name and Phone Number: Bert Whitaker, 707-565-2041
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): First and Fourth Districts

Title:

Mark West Creek and Wetland Restoration Implementation Wildlife Conservation Board Grant Application

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Director and/or designee to apply for a Wildlife Conservation Board restoration grant in the amount of \$1,505,000 to implement habitat restoration at Mark West Creek Regional Park and Open Space Preserve; to execute all documents necessary to carry out and administer the grant; and to make a determination that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Public Resources Code section 21080.56.

Executive Summary:

Regional Parks is seeking a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to implement the first phase of the Mark West Creek and Wetland Restoration Project (Project). If implemented, the Project will benefit the health and function of the Mark West Creek watershed through improved water quality, enhanced streamflow, improved fish passage, and enhanced habitat for salmonids including endangered coho salmon.

Discussion:

Regional Parks requests approval from the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (Board) to apply for \$1,505,000 from the Wildlife Conservation Board to implement the first phase of the Mark West Creek Wetland and Restoration Project. The first phase includes the following four (4) actions:

1. Wet meadow swale restoration to enhance natural water storage.
2. Upland process-based restoration and fuel management utilizing small-diameter trees and shrubs thinned from the site and reusing them in small in-stream structures that mimic beaver dams and other natural structures.
3. Wood-loading in Mill Creek to add larger-diameter trees into the creek channel to create habitat for fish.
4. Fish passage enhancement through the removal and modification of relic dams that are barriers to salmon.

Collectively, this project will help to improve stream flow and salmonid fish access to prime habitat locations in the upper watershed as well as to improve in-stream habitat for salmonids on the property.

Mark West Creek has been identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as critical to the recovery of Central California Coast coho

salmon. The first phase of restoration implementation will support salmonid recovery by directly restoring habitat, monitoring Mark West Creek and tributaries, and through outreach and education.

With prior approval from the Board, Regional Parks successfully applied for a related planning grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board in 2023. The planning grant resulted in a complete suite of proposed designs for multiple restoration projects including this first phase of implementation. Implementation of the proposed current and future phases is contingent on funding.

Regional Parks asks the Board to make the determination that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (Public Resources Code Section 21080.56). Regional Parks has received a concurrence from CDFW for this determination. As required by CDFW, Regional Parks will file a Notice of Exemption including the CDFW concurrence within 48 hours of the Board's determination.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Climate Action and Resiliency

Goal: Goal 5: Maximize opportunities for mitigation of climate change and adaptation through land conservation work and land use policies

Objective: Objective 2: Develop policies to maximize carbon sequestration and minimize loss of natural carbon sinks including old growth forests, the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and rangelands. Encourage agricultural and open space land management to maximize sequestration

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

July 11, 2023: Resolution Approving the Application for Grant Funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board for the Mark West Creek Regional Parks Restoration Planning Project

FISCAL SUMMARY**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There is no fiscal impact to approving this grant application. If the grant application is approved and the funding is awarded, the related revenue and expenditures will be included in the FY 2025-2026 budget during consolidated budget adjustments or factored into the FY 2026-2027 budget depending on grant approval timing.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

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Resolution

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Concurrence Letter

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

None