



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/19/2022

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Joan Hultberg 707-547-1902
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

Lake Mendocino Mussel Infestation Prevention Program

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution ratifying and approving the signing and filing of grant applications to the California Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways, and taking other actions related to the administration of the grant and implementation of the program.

Executive Summary:

Quagga and zebra mussels are an invasive mussel that, if introduced into a waterway, can devastate the natural environment, clog water and flood protection infrastructure, and cost millions of dollars in maintenance. Mussels are transported between waterways by watercraft, primarily recreational boats.

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) has self-funded infestation prevention efforts at both Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma since 2012, and in 2020 was able to successfully obtain funds from the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) to support these efforts. The DBW offers competitive two-year grants to eligible applicants on an annual basis. Sonoma Water intentionally offsets applications for Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma by one year to avoid staffing impacts. The application for Lake Sonoma was awarded for the 2021 funding cycle. Applications for the 2022 funding cycle were due April 15, 2022, and Sonoma Water submitted an application for a \$400,000 grant to fund inspection programs at Lake Mendocino. If awarded, program guidelines require a resolution from the applicant's governing Board to be signed and submitted prior to executing a funding agreement.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Sonoma Water is a member of the North Coast Mussel Prevention Consortium (Consortium) and is working with the Consortium's partner agencies to implement watercraft inspections at Lake Mendocino. Lake Mendocino is 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 14 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.

Since 2014, DBW's Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program has funded prevention plans and implementation activities that help protect California's reservoirs from quagga and zebra mussel infestation. Until program changes in 2017, Sonoma Water had not been an eligible applicant for these funds due to a requirement that applicants must own or manage a reservoir. In 2017, requirements were expanded to include the phrase "manage some aspect of the reservoir." Sonoma Water manages the water supply storage pool at Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma and thus became eligible to apply for the grant program at both reservoirs. Sonoma Water intentionally offsets applications for Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma by one year to avoid staffing impacts. The application for Lake Sonoma was awarded for the 2021 funding cycle.

Current DBW funding of Lake Mendocino's Mussel Infestation Prevention Program will expire in 2022. In order to extend this funding source at Lake Mendocino, Sonoma Water applied for a \$400,000 grant to extend and enhance the Lake Mendocino program through 2024.

If the grant is awarded, the funds will be used to continue the existing invasive mussel prevention program at Lake Mendocino. Funds will be used to enhance watercraft inspections at Lake Mendocino, in order to reduce the number of vessels entering the lake outside of inspection hours. Community education and outreach activities also will be conducted through popular community events frequented by the boating public, and a survey will be conducted to gauge public knowledge of Mussel Infestation issues.

NEXT STEPS

If the Board adopts the resolution as requested, Sonoma Water's grant application will be able to compete for the grant funds. If the Board chooses not to adopt the resolution, the grant application will be rejected by the funding agency.

In the event that the Lake Mendocino project is awarded grant funds, Sonoma Water will conduct a solicitation for a qualified consultant to perform inspections and other program related activities and will return to the Board with a program update and to seek approval of the services agreements. Grant awards are currently planned to be announced by September 2022.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Sonoma Water's General Manager has determined that the project activities are exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15309, Inspections, because the activities are limited to watercraft quagga and zebra mussel inspections, inspection trainings, and education and outreach activities that help prevent potential for infestation at Lake Mendocino. The proposed 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 cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource or tribal cultural resource.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment: N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment

Water Supply and Transmission System, Goal 1: Protect drinking water supply and promote water-use efficiency.

This project aligns with Sonoma Water Goals 1 and 2 to protect the drinking water supply and maintain the reliability of the water transmission system.

The goal of Sonoma Water's Lake Mendocino Mussel Infestation Prevention Program is to keep non-native invasive quagga and zebra mussel species out of our drinking water reservoirs. In other lakes, infestations have caused millions of dollars in maintenance, cleaning, and filtering costs of drinking water infrastructure systems costs that are passed down to the consumer in higher drinking water bills. This program aligns with Sonoma Water Goals 1 and 2 to protect the drinking water supply and maintain the reliability of the water transmission system.

Prior Board Actions:

02/25/2020: 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 the signing of a Settlement Agreement to accept \$400,000 to fund a mussel infestation prevention program at Lake Mendocino and take other actions.

03/03/2015: Authorized Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between Sonoma County Water Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Quagga/Zebra Mussel Vulnerability Assessment Study and Inspection Implementation Plan for Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma. Cost \$125,000.

09/05/2012: Adopted Resolution authorizing Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to (a) make application to California Department of Fish and Game for a grant to partially fund the "Don't Move a Mussel" public education campaign and (b) to enter into an agreement to receive a grant for "Don't Move a Mussel" public education campaign

05/08/2012: Authorized the Chair to execute the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Counties of Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt and the Sonoma County Water Agency, North Marin Water District, Marin Municipal Water District, and Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District Regarding the North Coast Zebra and Quagga Mussel Consortium.

01/10/2012: Adopted Resolution identifying potential for an infestation of dreissenid mussels into North Coast waterways and seeking collaboration with North Coast counties to increase public awareness and manage prevention and inspection programs at North Coast waterways.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			

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Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

No fiscal impact at this time.

In the event that the Lake Mendocino Mussel Infestation Prevention Program is awarded grant funds, Sonoma Water will return to the Board to seek approval of the services agreements, expenditure authorization, and offsetting grant funds.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

Resolution ratifying and approving submission of grant application and signing of funding agreement for Lake Mendocino Mussel Infestation Prevention Program

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

N/A