



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/12/2025

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 Ryan Pedrotti, 707-521-6209

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Russian River Watershed Program with Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Recommended Action:

Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute an agreement with Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, in substantially the form as the draft presented to this Board, to continue Sonoma Water's Russian River Watershed Program through August 31, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000.

Executive Summary:

This item requests authority for Sonoma County Water Agency's (Sonoma Water) General Manager to execute an agreement with Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (Gold Ridge RCD) to continue work under the Russian River Watershed Program (Program), including providing groundwater sustainability planning, conducting landowner outreach activities, developing grant proposals that could fund salmonid restoration projects to help improve Russian River Watershed conditions, and providing groundwater sustainability planning, reporting, and education.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Sonoma Water has a long history of partnerships with local Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) to provide technical and landowner assistance, public education and information, watershed stewardship, watershed monitoring, interagency coordination, resource enhancement, and planning assistance to local groups to help improve land management and restore fish habitat. The purpose of the subject funding agreements is to expand knowledge on the critical connection between landowner activities and the impacts on local creeks, streams, and other water bodies.

As a legal subdivision of the State of California, Gold Ridge RCD is organized to support natural resource management solutions through partnerships with individuals, organizations, and agencies. Gold Ridge RCD is uniquely qualified to work directly with landowners with nonregulatory cooperative agreements and is a trusted source of accurate and useful information.

Gold Ridge RCD's service area consists of 134,000 acres of diverse resources including streams, coastal areas, rangeland, woodland life and fisheries habitat, vineyards, orchards, and cropland, as well as rural and urban areas located in the Russian River and Bodega Bay watersheds.

Since 2001, Gold Ridge RCD has received funding from Sonoma Water to implement the Program in order to provide landowner assistance, public education and information, watershed stewardship, and assistance to local groups in providing land management and restoring fish habitat.

Sonoma Water and Gold Ridge RCD worked cooperatively on past fishery resource-related projects including instream habitat improvement projects on Dutch Bill, Green Valley, Purrington, Atascadero, Redwood, and Freezeout creeks; coordinating water quality sampling on Dutch Bill Creek; and riparian planting and erosion control work on Purrington, Green Valley, and Dutch Bill creeks.

Sonoma Water's work with, and partial funding of, Gold Ridge RCD benefits the communities Sonoma Water serves by allowing Gold Ridge RCD to carry out components of its annual work-plan including salmonid restoration, improvements to tributary streams, and education for landowners on streams that support the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Coho Captive Broodstock Program. In addition, it is beneficial to Gold Ridge RCD to work with Sonoma Water to conduct Russian River Watershed restoration activities.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the agreement, Gold Ridge RCD will conduct landowner outreach activities and develop grant proposals that could fund salmonid habitat restoration projects to help improve Russian River Watershed conditions. In addition, Gold Ridge RCD will provide support for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of stream monitoring data for the Lower Russian River and contribute to the implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Basin.

The cost of services will not exceed \$100,000; the term end date is August 31, 2027.

Under the agreement, the General Manager will 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 would 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

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

As part of the Program, work performed by Gold Ridge RCD under this agreement will provide groundwater sustainability planning, reporting and education, and collaboration within the community to restore resources and improve water quality and habitat. In addition, Gold Ridge RCD will conduct landowner outreach activities, water quality testing in tributary streams, and develop grant proposals that could fund salmonid restoration projects to help improve Russian River Watershed conditions.

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

08/22/2023 Approved fourth amended agreement between Sonoma Water and Gold Ridge RCD for funding of Russian River Watershed Program. Cost \$100,000; term end August 31, 2025.

07/13/2021 Approved third amended agreement between Sonoma Water and Gold Ridge RCD for funding of Russian River Watershed Program. Cost \$287,000; term end August 31, 2023.

09/17/2019 Approved second amended agreement between Sonoma Water and Gold Ridge RCD for funding of Russian River Watershed Program. New cost \$187,000; new term end August 31, 2021.

09/11/2018 Approved first amended agreement between Sonoma Water and Gold Ridge RCD for funding of Russian River Watershed Program. New cost \$87,000; no change to term end date.

09/19/2017 Approved agreement between Sonoma Water and Gold Ridge RCD for funding of Russian River Watershed Program. Cost \$60,000; term end August 31, 2019.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$50,000	\$50,000	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Budgeted amount of \$50,000 is available from FY 2025/2026 appropriations for the Russian River Projects fund. FY 2026/2027 appropriations will be budgeted in that fiscal year.

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

Agenda Date: 8/12/2025

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Agreement with Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

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

No