

Mecham Road Mitigation Bank Proposal

Enhancing Environmental & Project
Benefits for Sonoma County

December 12, 2023



Agenda

1. Project Background
2. Overview and Partnerships
3. What is a Mitigation Bank?
4. Mecham Road Bank
5. Benefits to Sonoma County
6. Fiscal Impact
7. Recommendations



Project Background

Projects with wetland, stream, habitat or species impacts require the following mitigation steps:

1. Avoid Environmental Impacts
2. Minimize Environmental Impacts
3. Compensatory mitigation to offset unavoidable adverse impacts which remain after avoidance and minimization has been achieved.

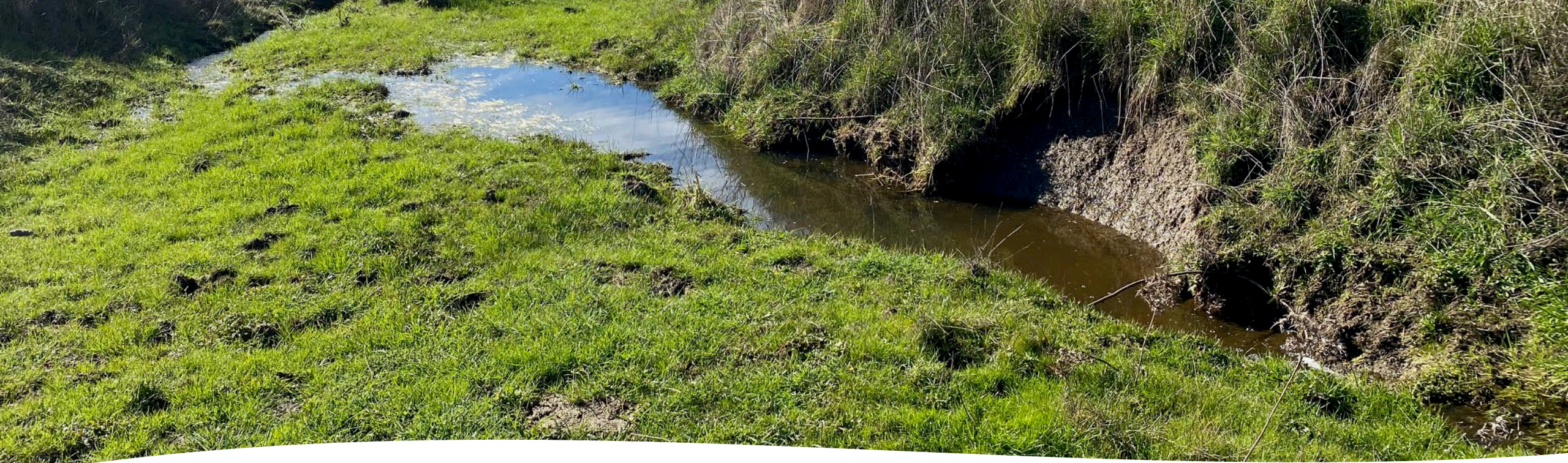
Challenges of Mitigation Without a County Bank

- Permittee responsible mitigation (project by project)
 - High costs
 - Higher rates of failure
 - Inefficient land use
- In-Lieu Fee/Mitigation Banking
 - Few banks within Sonoma County
 - Expensive

Project Overview & Partnerships

- **Impact on County Projects:**
Deferred Maintenance on infrastructure due to excessive costs.
- **Need for a Timely and Cost-Effective Solution:**
Establishment of a County owned mitigation bank.
- **Partnership:** Joint effort between SCPI and Permit Sonoma.





What is a Mitigation Bank?

Definition:

A mitigation bank is a wetland, stream, or aquatic resource area preserved, enhanced, restored, or established to compensate for unavoidable future impacts to aquatic resources.

Components of a Mitigation Bank

- The bank site: the physical acreage restored, established, enhanced, or preserved
- The Bank Enabling Instrument (BEI): the formal agreement between the bank owners and regulators
- The Interagency Review Team (IRT): the interagency team that provides regulatory review, approval, and oversight
- The service area: the geographic area in which permitted impacts can be compensated for at a given bank

Bank Site: 403 Mecham Road



Path: L:\Acad 2000 Files\31000\310082\GIS\Map\Final Prospect\Fig2_AerialSite.mxd

Sources: NAIP 2018 Aerial, WRA | Prepared By: SGillespie, 7/12/2021

Mecham Road Mitigation Bank Credit Potential and County Needs

Wetland, Riparian,
Intermittent Stream

- 4.11 acres

California Tiger Salamander

- 124.65 acres

California Red-Legged Frog

- 124.65 acres

Estimated County needs for
California Tiger Salamander
credits on the Santa Rosa
Plain: 309 acres





Benefits to County

- **Balancing Act:** Addresses the needs of both development and environmental conservation.
- **Mitigation Credits:** Secure on-demand credits for projects.
- **Economic Development:** Facilitate projects, long-term cost savings, and saved project time.

Fiscal Impact

- Value of bank credits estimated between \$20 million and \$126 million
- Approximate net cost of bank establishment including financial assurances: \$2.5 million
- Cost of development and maintenance is self funded where the cost of generating and maintaining credits will be recovered over internal savings across the bank's lifespan without using general fund money.

No Obligations or Financial Commitments in Development of BEI

During the development of the BEI, no formal obligations or financial commitments will be made such as to limit the board to either accept or decline the project or associated obligations that come with it.

Staff will return to the Board at least every six months to provide updates on the status of the pending application package to apprise the Board of the business decisions at issue.

Staff will return to the Board once the IRT has approved the conceptual Bank and outlined the terms and conditions for its formation, whereupon the Board can choose to accept said Bank or otherwise direct staff.

Recommendations:



- Approve agreement with Wetlands Research Associates Incorporated to facilitate a Bank Enabling Instrument Submittal.
- Approve a resolution adjusting the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget Programming Refuse Former Rural Landfill Fund balance.

QUESTIONS?

