



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/25/2026

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Public Infrastructure

Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz, 707-565-2550

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Second

Title:

Biannual Update on the Development of the Bank Enabling Instrument for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank and Second Amendment to the Agreement

Recommended Action:

- A. Receive and file this biannual update on the progress of the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank and associated Bank Enabling Instrument (BEI), informing the Board on recent activities and outlining the plan for the next three to six months.
- B. Authorize the Director of Public Infrastructure to execute a Second Amendment to the agreement with WRA Environmental Consultants (WRA) for preparation of a BEI for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank to extend the agreement term for two additional years, through October 24, 2028, with no change to the contract not-to-exceed amount.

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Public Infrastructure (SPI) requests that the Board receive this biannual update on development of the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank and authorize a Second Amendment to the agreement with WRA to extend the agreement term for two additional years, through October 24, 2028. The term extension will allow the County and WRA to continue coordination with state and federal resource agencies and complete preparation, review, and approval of the BEI for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank.

Since the last biannual update in December 2025, the project team has continued refining the proposed California tiger salamander (CTS) translocation strategy, a key component of the mitigation bank framework. The refined strategy has been incorporated into a finalized technical memorandum that was transmitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (Collectively referred to as Agency/Agencies) to initiate discussions regarding its inclusion in the BEI. The proposed Second Amendment is limited to extending the agreement term and does not increase the agreement's not-to-exceed amount.

Discussion:

Background:

In December 2023, the Board approved an agreement with WRA to support development of the Mecham

Road Mitigation Bank and preparation of the associated BEI. The County's efforts to establish a mitigation bank at the Mecham Road site are intended to balance infrastructure delivery with long-term ecological stewardship, particularly for protected species such as CTS.

Public infrastructure projects, including roadway, bridge, and flood control improvements, can result in unavoidable impacts to sensitive habitats and species. To comply with state and federal environmental regulations, the impacts must be mitigated through habitat restoration, enhancement, preservation, or other approved conservation measures. The Mecham Road Mitigation Bank provides a proactive and cost-effective approach by establishing and managing high-quality habitat in advance of future project needs.

Once approved, the mitigation bank will generate mitigation credits based on habitat quality, ecological performance standards, and long-term management commitments. These credits can then be used to satisfy mitigation requirements for eligible County infrastructure projects within the approved service area. By consolidating mitigation efforts at a strategically located conservation site, the County can improve permitting efficiency, reduce project delivery risks, and achieve more meaningful ecological outcomes.

The agreement with WRA was originally approved for a three-year term ending October 24, 2026. Due to the extensive coordination required with regulatory agencies and the iterative nature of developing the BEI, additional time is needed to complete agency review and finalize the mitigation bank approval process. Staff therefore recommends approval of a Second Amendment extending the agreement term by two years, through October 24, 2028, with no change to the existing not-to-exceed contract amount.

Current Status:

CTS Translocation Strategy Development and Project Coordination: During this reporting period, the project team continued to refine the proposed CTS translocation approach in coordination with technical specialists and regulatory considerations. The refined approach has been incorporated into a finalized technical memorandum that documents the proposed methodology, implementation considerations, and anticipated conservation benefits. The memorandum was provided to CDFW and USFWS to support discussions regarding incorporation of the translocation strategy into the BEI framework.

In addition, the project team explored coordination opportunities with the nearby proposed landfill expansion project to better understand potential interactions between the two efforts and help ensure that development of the mitigation bank would not result in constraints to future project planning. This coordination effort supports a comprehensive approach to land use, habitat conservation, and infrastructure planning in the area.

The completion of the technical memorandum and continued coordination with related projects represent important milestones in advancing the mitigation bank and establishing a clear path forward for agency review and concurrence.

Next Steps:

Over the next three to six months, project efforts will focus on the following activities:

- Agency Coordination and Follow-Up Meetings

Following transmittal of the CTS technical memorandum, County staff and WRA will conduct follow-up

meetings with CDFW and USFWS to discuss the proposed translocation strategy, address agency comments, and identify any additional information needed to support inclusion of the approach in the BEI. Early and ongoing coordination is intended to facilitate consensus on key technical issues and minimize delays during formal review.

- Draft BEI Preparation and Submittal

Based on agency feedback, the project team will prepare and submit a draft BEI for regulatory review. The BEI serves as the governing document for the mitigation bank and establishes the operational framework, performance standards, monitoring requirements, credit release schedule, long-term management obligations, and financial assurances associated with the bank.

- Continued Regulatory Review and Final BEI Development

Following agency review of the draft BEI, the project team will address comments and revise the document as necessary to support preparation of a final BEI that will be presented for Board consideration and action. Continued coordination with the Interagency Review Team will be critical to achieving approval of the mitigation bank and advancing implementation of the County's long-term mitigation strategy.

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 1: Align the Board of Supervisor's strategic priorities, policy, and operational goals with funding and resources.

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

12/16/2025 - The Board received and filed the third mitigation bank biannual update on the development of the Bank Enabling Instrument for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank.

06/03/25 - The Board received and filed the second mitigation bank biannual update on the development of the Bank Enabling Instrument for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank.

06/04/24 - The Board received and filed the first mitigation bank biannual update on the development of the Bank Enabling Instrument for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank.

03/26/24 -The Board approved a First Amendment to expand the scope of service with WRA Environmental Consultants.

12/12/23 -The Board approved an agreement with WRA Environmental Consultants for the preparation of a Bank Enabling Instrument (BEI) for the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank.

9/15/20 -Board approved an agreement with WRA to prepare a draft mitigation bank prospectus for creating habitat for California Tiger Salamander.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There are no new fiscal impacts associated with this biannual update and Second Amendment; however, the overall cost of developing the Mecham Road Mitigation Bank remains an important consideration for the Board. To date, the Board has approved a total of \$1,309,793 for various contracted services, including \$318,647 for preparation of the mitigation bank prospectus; a \$774,704 contract with WRA for preparation of the Bank Enabling Instrument (including environmental design, regulatory coordination, and land use consultation services); and \$216,442 for California Tiger Salamander translocation, monitoring, fencing, and inspection services.

Appropriations for these costs are being funded through the Former Rural Landfill Fund (Fund 41122), which is designated for solid waste obligations and related environmental projects. No General Fund contributions are being used for this effort. Additional County staff time from Public Infrastructure and Sonoma Water has supported the project and is covered within annual Adopted Budgets.

Long-term, the project is anticipated to yield significant cost savings by reducing the need for project-specific mitigation and providing more affordable credits compared to the private market. Internal credit use for County infrastructure projects, particularly road improvements and waste facility compliance, will generate avoided costs projected in the range of \$20 million to \$126 million, based on recent market comparisons for species mitigation credits.

The Mecham Road Mitigation Bank remains a strategic, self-funding investment that supports regulatory compliance, environmental stewardship, and long-term cost containment across multiple County departments.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

Second Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement

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

Agreement with WRA Environmental Consultants

First Amendment to the Agreement with WRA Environmental Consultants