



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 10/21/2025

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, Shiyu Xin 707-524-1164
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Fourth

Title:

Russian River Operations and Maintenance Manual Update and Alexander Valley Feasibility Study

Recommended Action:

Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute an agreement with Environmental Science Associates, in substantially the form as the draft presented to this Board, for river channel assessment and management services through August 31, 2028, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$1,203,404.

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) will be assessing the existing conditions and identifying enhancement opportunities in the Alexander Valley Russian River area and conducting hydrologic-hydraulic modeling, geomorphic analysis, and ecological analysis to inform future updates to the United States Army Corp of Engineers' (USACE) Russian River Channel Improvement Operations and Maintenance Manual (O&M Manual). Sonoma Water is also evaluating broader actions as part of the Alexander Valley feasibility study for management and restoration actions outside of the O&M Manual update, including identifying other funding and governance options.

As part of the O&M Manual update, Sonoma Water will be developing three alternatives for consideration and implementation under the guidance of the Board of Directors. In addition, the broader valley-wide recommendations will also be brought to the Board of Directors for consideration of the preferred restoration and management actions.

(Fourth District)

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

From 1956 to 1963, USACE constructed channel improvements along the Russian River with the intention to promote bank stability and reduce bank erosion that could be caused by flood control releases from Coyote Valley Dam. Channel improvements are located in the Alexander Valley area of the Russian River watershed, between the City of Cloverdale and the City of Healdsburg. Sonoma Water is identified as the local sponsor in carrying out the operations and maintenance obligations associated with these improvements in the USACE 1965 Russian River Channel Improvement Operations and Maintenance Manual (O&M Manual). Due to natural fluvial processes, other environmental stressors, and human alterations, the condition and functionality of these improvements have changed and may no longer meet the intended purpose of the original work completed. A 2010 Condition Assessment conducted by Sonoma Water's consultant Horizon Water and Environment (now called Montrose Environmental Group), concluded that the ongoing repair and

replacement of channel stabilization works as proposed in the O&M Manual is not cost effective, nor would it prevent further bank erosion in most instances.

Sonoma Water is proposing an update to the O&M Manual with the goal of modifying the scope of features and facilities Sonoma Water maintains with appropriate requirements that better reflect existing and reasonably foreseeable future conditions along the river. Recommendations may be made to remove or modify certain destroyed or abandoned structures that encroach on the channel, pose a navigation hazard, and/or no longer serve their original intended function. In such cases, it is anticipated that an updated O&M Manual may eliminate or limit Sonoma Water's responsibility for future maintenance of these structures. Moreover, the update can ensure methods included are consistent with contemporary environmental regulations and river management practices.

In conjunction with the O&M Manual update, a broader feasibility study of the Alexander Valley will also be conducted. The feasibility study will include analyses for potential project sites beyond the footprint covered by the O&M Manual. The feasibility study will focus on ongoing river management and watershed concerns by identifying opportunities and constraints needed to meet desired bank stabilization, flood management, gravel and sediment management, and habitat enhancement objectives in Alexander Valley. Sonoma Water will explore opportunities to enhance stabilization by maintaining, modifying, or replacing existing structures listed under the O&M Manual, and consider actions in the broader Alexander Valley, including major tributaries to the Russian River that can improve sediment transport dynamics, reduce flood risks, and enhance ecological conditions in the system. Funding for the feasibility study is provided by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' Water Security Fund allocation for water and natural resource management in the Alexander Valley.

SELECTION PROCESS

Environmental Science Associates (Consultant) was selected from a list of qualified consultants developed from a competitive selection process. Attached is a memo that explains the competitive selection process.

Consultant was selected for the subject work because of its relevant experience in similar projects and expertise in the subject matters of project scope. Consultant has also demonstrated a strong understanding of the project needs, especially with Montrose Environmental Group as their subconsultant. Montrose Environmental Group assisted Sonoma Water with conducting the 2010 Condition Assessment and coordinating with USACE in regard to the O&M Manual update effort.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the proposed agreement, Consultant will conduct field assessments; develop geomorphic conceptual models; update hydrologic and hydraulic models; develop and evaluate multiple approaches for analyzing the existing structures installed by USACE within Russian River Miles 42 to 63 (between the cities of Cloverdale and Healdsburg); identify improvement opportunities such as bank stabilization, flood management, gravel and sediment management, and habitat enhancement; and prepare reports of the results.

The cost of services will not exceed \$1,203,404; the term end date is August 31, 2028.

Through the agreement, the General Manager will be delegated the authority to approve a written amendment to extend the term of the agreement for up to two additional years by providing written notice to

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the other party thirty days in advance of the expiration date and by executing an agreement amendment.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:

N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment

Goal: Planning and Infrastructure

Strategy: Conduct planning that integrates and balances operational, maintenance and infrastructure priorities.

Action: Continue to engage in planning efforts and partnerships to protect and enhance our water supply.

Updating the O&M Manual and conducting the Alexander Valley Feasibility Study will allow Sonoma Water to prioritize and plan different maintenance activities and capital projects to protect and enhance Sonoma County's water supply.

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

11/10/2009 Board approved agreement between Sonoma Water and Horizon Water and Environment, LLC for Environmental Services for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Operations at Coyote Dam and Warm Springs Dam; Russian River and Dry Creek Channel Maintenance; and Operation and Maintenance Manual. Cost \$771,781.

02/07/2006 Board approved agreement between Sonoma Water and Jones and Stokes Associates for Environmental services for US Army Corps of Engineers flood control operations at Coyote Dam and Warm Springs Dam; Don Clausen Fish Hatchery; Russian River and Dry Creek Channel Maintenance; and Operation and Maintenance Manuals. Cost \$1,018,060.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$1,203,404		
Total Expenditures	\$1,203,404		
Funding Sources	\$		
General Fund/WA GF	\$		
State/Federal	\$		
Fees/Other	\$1,203,404		
Use of Fund Balance	\$		
General Fund Contingencies	\$		
Total Sources	\$1,203,404		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

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\$1,203,404 from the Russian River Projects fund (\$703,404) and the Warm Springs Dam fund (\$500,000) are required to process this expense. Funding for the feasibility study is provided by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' Water Security Fund allocation (\$703,404) for water and natural resource management in Alexander Valley. With Board approval, unused expense appropriations in the amount of \$1,203,404 from the Russian River Projects fund (\$703,404) and the Warm Springs Dam fund (\$500,000) will be rolled forward to FY 25/26 in Sonoma Water's Q1 consolidated budget adjustments. In addition, revenue appropriations from the Russian River Projects fund related to Water Security funding in the amount of \$703,404 will also be rolled forward.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Agreement with Environmental Science Associates

Attachment 2: Competitive Selection Process Memo

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

None.