



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 2/27/2024

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrators Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Michael Makdisi 565-3747

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

Resolution accepting a funding award and delegating implementation for the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution delegating authority to the County Administrator to enter into a funding agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board, accept and expend \$250,000 of State funds, and authorize the County Administrator, or designee, to carry out the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project.

Executive Summary:

In 2021, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board approved a plan to prohibit discharge of pathogens into the Russian River. Their plan, which is awaiting State approval, requires actions to address pathogen pollution from over a dozen identified sources, including the following four sources: septic systems, recreation, homeless encampments, and grazing animals. Staff applied for a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to conduct the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project, which will further characterize these sources of pollution and their impacts to the Russian River and engage stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing pathogen reduction strategies. The SWRCB approved the proposed project in July 2023. The resolution proposed today will authorize the County Administrator to enter into an agreement with the SWRCB to accept and expend State money and carry out the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project.

Discussion:

Background:

In 2021, the Board acknowledged that new and foreseeable state requirements would impact septic system infrastructure and allocated \$350,000 from the General Fund to better understand the septic system related wastewater challenges and opportunities and to conduct community engagement. Of the \$350,000, it was expected that \$250,000 would be used for a mapping study and analysis and \$100,000 would be used for community engagement. The Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) mapping study is currently underway through a contract approved by the Board on August 1, 2023.

On December 2, 2021, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board approved an amendment to the

Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region, which included a plan to implement a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for pathogens in the Russian River Watershed (Pathogen TMDL Action Plan), and which prohibits pathogen discharge. This plan is awaiting approval from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and articulates actions to address over a dozen sources of pathogen pollution, including specific requirements for OWTS, commonly referred to as septic systems.

The County's Proposed Planning Project:

In December 2022, the Climate Action and Resiliency Division (CARD) of the County Administrator's Office applied for a grant from the SWRCB and proposed the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project (Project). The purpose of the Project is to further characterize pathogen sources in the Russian River and engage stakeholders with outreach and education while identifying and prioritizing pathogen reduction strategies related to four sources of pathogen pollution, including septic systems, recreation, homeless encampments, and grazing animals. Staff plans to solicit professional services to perform most of the work, while CARD staff will manage the contract and the CARD Clean Water Ombudsman will participate and collaborate in the outreach portion of the project.

On July 19, 2024, staff was notified by the SWRCB that the County received approval for grant funding in the amount of \$250,000.00 to perform the Project. A minimum local match of 25% of total project costs is required for this grant. As a preliminary activity, the Project includes the OWTS mapping study, which is scheduled for completion in mid-2024 and which will inform both the source characterization and outreach efforts of the Project. Because the Project will develop possible wastewater solutions respecting septic systems, CARD was able to leverage the countywide OWTS mapping study as well as planned public engagement (approximately \$330,000 combined), to serve as the required local match for the grant. The award of this planning grant for the Project extends the scope of work already planned (OWTS mapping and engagement) and will furnish the County with critical information and plans that are needed to apply for future funding to support community compliance with the Pathogen TMDL Action Plan.

Resolution Details:

In July 2023, the SWRCB approved a funding award for the Project, pending acceptance by this Board and pending subsequent written agreement. Before entering into contract, the SWRCB requires a resolution from the Board authorizing County representatives to enter into an agreement and any necessary subsequent amendments, to accept and expend the State funds, and to carry out the responsibilities of the agreement, including approving and signing invoices and requests for reimbursement. After receiving the resolution, the SWRCB will work with staff and County Counsel to finalize the award contract.

The basic terms of the contract will include the provision of \$250,000 from the SWRCB, with \$329,948 matching funds in the form of the OWTS mapping study and engagement already funded by the Board. The entire project is expected to be completed in approximately one year after it begins. Further details about the scope can be found in the attached grant application's proposed scope of work.

The proposed resolution authorizes the County Administrator to sign, for and on behalf of the County, the funding agreement to accept and expend State funds for the Project and any amendments thereto. It will also authorize the County Administrator, or designee, to represent the County in carrying out the responsibilities

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under the funding agreement, including approving and signing invoices and requests for reimbursement of Project costs. In signing the Agreement, the County Administrator will commit to complete the mapping study and the planned public engagement as local match for the grant award.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

June 15, 2021: Approved Budget that included funds for septic system infrastructure mapping and outreach.
Aug. 1, 2023: Authorized County Administrator to execute a service contract to create an interactive map and analysis report.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$329,948		
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$250,000		
Total Expenditures	\$579,948		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF (local match)	\$329,948		
State/Federal	\$250,000		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$579,948		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The total cost of the Project is \$579,948. This includes \$250,000 in grant funding through Section 319(h), which this item authorizes the County Administrator to accept, with \$329,948 as local match in the form of the OWTS Mapping Study (\$249,948 contract approved by the Board on August 1, 2023) and \$80,000 for public engagement. Funds for the OWTS Mapping Study and the public engagement were approved in the FY 2021-22 budget. The County is leveraging approximately \$329,948 in already planned work as matching funds to obtain an additional \$250,000 grant from the State to carry out the Russian River Pathogen Reduction Planning Project. The necessary budget adjustments will be made as part of an FY 2023-24 Consolidated Budget Adjustment.

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Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

There are no staffing impacts. The project resulting from this funding agreement is expected to be carried out primarily by a contractor. County will utilize existing staff to manage the contract, participate and collaborate with the contractor, and otherwise carry out its responsibilities under the funding agreement.

Attachments:

Resolution regarding 319(h) grant
CARD's Proposed Scope of Work

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

N/A