



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 6/6/2023

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: David Cook 547-1944
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Fifth

Title:

Laguna-Mark West Creek Watershed Master Restoration Planning Project - High Priority Project

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution determining that the Laguna-Mark West Creek Watershed Master Restoration Planning Project - High Priority (Project) will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment, adopting the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project, adopting mitigation measures and the mitigation monitoring reporting program, making certain related findings, and approving the Project. (Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) is proposing the Project. The Project would restore a 3,200-foot-long reach of the Laguna de Santa Rosa (Laguna) channel and freshwater marsh, wet meadow, and riparian forest habitats on 119.43 acres. The Project site historically supported these habitat types prior to agricultural development. An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared to evaluate and disclose the potential environmental impacts of the Project, which determined that all potential impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. Approval of this item would adopt a resolution determining that the Project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment, adopt the Initial Study and the mitigation monitoring reporting program for the Project, make certain related findings, and approve the Project.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

The Project is located approximately five miles west of the City of Santa Rosa. The Project site is located on the western edge of the Laguna watershed between the confluences of Santa Rosa and Mark West creeks, and is bound by vineyards and agricultural lands to the north and east, Guerneville Road Bridge to the south, and the Laguna channel to the west. Historically, the Laguna within the Project site supported valley freshwater marsh bounded by small areas of oak savanna/vernal pool complex and oak savanna at higher elevations along the eastern boundary. The western boundary of the Project site contained willow forested wetland, mixed riparian forest, and wet meadow habitat types. Currently, the Project site is farmed wetland producing corn. The site is difficult to farm due to frequent and prolonged inundation by Laguna floodwaters and backwater from the Russian River that forms during fall, winter, and spring storms.

LAGUNA-MARK WEST CREEK WATERSHED MASTER RESTORATION PLANNING PROJECT - HIGH PRIORITY PROJECT

The Project would restore a 3,200-foot-long reach of the Laguna channel and adjacent freshwater marsh, wet meadow, and riparian forest habitats on 119.43 acres. By realigning the Laguna channel to its historical path, the Proposed Project site would inundate more gradually during floods and drain slowly as floodwaters recede than under current conditions. The restoration actions would consist of reestablishing the historic alignment of the Laguna, converting the existing engineered channel to a backwater, connecting two small east-west flowing tributary drainages to the new channel, and revegetation with native plants. The new channel and tributary connections would form a meandering stream configuration representative of the historic channel at the Project site. The new channel and floodplain would be graded to inundate newly established wetland habitat types and to connect existing tributaries traversing the site. The Project would also include an access path to allow for trash and debris removal.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT DOCUMENTATION

Sonoma Water, as a lead agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact (Initial Study) for the Project pursuant to the requirements of the CEQA (California Public Resources Code sections 21000 et seq.), the State CEQA Guidelines (Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3), and Sonoma Water's Compliance Procedures for CEQA. The Initial Study discloses potential environmental impacts of implementing the Project; identifies the means to avoid or reduce potential significant adverse impacts on the environment; and concludes the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

The Notice of Completion, and Notice of Availability and Notice of Intent to Adopt the Initial Study were filed with the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research's State Clearinghouse. The Initial Study was available on February 23, 2023, for a 32-day public review period that closed on March 27, 2023. The Notice of Availability for the Initial Study for public review was distributed to the jurisdictional and permitting agencies and sent to stakeholders, interested persons, and property owners adjacent to the Project area on February 22, 2023. Copies of the Initial Study and Notice of Availability were also made available at Sonoma Water's administrative office and an electronic version of the document was made available on Sonoma Water's website. A legal notice was also published in the Press Democrat on February 23, 2023. During the review period, Sonoma Water received no comment letters.

Sonoma Water staff recommends that the Board adopt a resolution determining that the Project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment, adopting the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project, adopting mitigation measures and the mitigation monitoring reporting program, making certain related findings, approving the Project, and acknowledging the filing of a Notice of Determination. □

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Strategic Plan:

Pillar: Resilient Infrastructure

Goal: Goal 5: Support, fund, and expand flood protection.

Objective: Objective 1: Develop partnerships with cities, tribal governments, and private organizations regarding flood protection and sustainability to identify gaps and address climate change impacts.

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Resolution

Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

None