



## COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

### SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 3/2/2021

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**To:** Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** David Manning 547-1988  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** All

**Title:**

Biological Assessment for Second Russian River Biological Opinion

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute an agreement with Environmental Science Associates for biological assessment services from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$999,360.

**Executive Summary:**

In anticipation of the expiration of the 15-year 2008 Biological Opinion (BO), Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) is working with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to reinstate consultation and develop a biological assessment for continuation of the Corps and Sonoma Water operations in the Russian River watershed (Action). Under this Agreement, Environmental Science Associates (Consultant) will work with Sonoma Water to complete a biological assessment (BA) that can be used to produce a new Biological Opinion authorizing incidental take of Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead related to management of water supply, flood control operations, and channel maintenance.

**Discussion:**

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Three species of salmon in the Russian River are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended: Central California Coast (CCC) coho salmon, Central California Coast steelhead, and California Coastal Chinook salmon. Central California Coast coho salmon are also listed as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). On September 24, 2008, NMFS issued a BO for water supply, flood control operations, and channel maintenance conducted by the Corps, Sonoma Water, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District in the Russian River watershed. NMFS found that the continued water supply, flood control operations, and channel maintenance operations of the Corps and Sonoma Water are likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened CCC steelhead and endangered CCC coho salmon and adversely modify their critical habitats.

The BO requires Sonoma Water and the Corps to implement a series of actions to minimize impacts to listed salmon species and enhance their habitats within the Russian River and its tributaries.

In anticipation of the expiration of the 15-year BO, Sonoma Water is working with NMFS, the Corps, and

California Department of Fish and Wildlife to reinitiate consultation and develop a biological assessment for continuation of the Action.

#### SELECTION PROCESS

On July 6, 2020, Sonoma Water issued a Request for Statements of Qualifications to 50 firms. The solicitation was also posted on the Sonoma Water and County of Sonoma Purchasing Department websites.

Thirty-seven firms submitted Statements of Qualifications (SOQs). The following criteria were used to evaluate each firm:

- Thoroughness of SOQ
- Professional qualifications and demonstrated ability to perform the work
- Exceptions to standard terms in the sample agreement

Based on the evaluations, the respondents listed in Attachment 2 were selected for the list of qualified consultants.

Environmental Science Associates was selected from this list of qualified consultants based on the firm's expertise in Endangered Species Act consultations, experience with and understanding of Corps and Sonoma Water operations within the Russian River watershed, and experience with similar consultation efforts in California.

Sonoma Water may seek to amend or enter into subsequent agreement(s) with Board approval if required, relying upon this competitive selection process, after the preliminary or initial work is completed.

#### SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the proposed agreement, Consultant will work with Sonoma Water to complete a biological assessment that can be used by both the Corps and NMFS to produce a new Biological Opinion authorizing incidental take of Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead related to management of reservoir releases, river flow, habitat condition, and facilities in portions of the mainstem Russian River, Dry Creek, and Russian River Estuary. Consultant will develop an environmental baseline, develop a description of the proposed action, prepare the BA, support consultation with NMFS and Corps to develop the biological opinion, obtain CESA coverage, and provide coordination and project management services.

The cost of services will not exceed \$999,360. This agreement covers services rendered from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023.

#### **Prior Board Actions:**

09/22/2009: Authorize Determination of Consistency with the California Endangered Species Act for listed coho salmon.

10/03/2017: Authorize an agreement with Environmental Science Associates to provide technical support services related to the management of the Russian River Estuary in accordance with the Biological Opinion.

04/16/2019: Authorize a Design Agreement with United States Army Corps of Engineers in a cost-share partnership for the development of project designs for habitat enhancement work in Dry Creek to design and

construct 2.6 miles of habitat restoration in partnership with the Army Corps.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY21-22 Projected</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$500,000	\$258,000	\$241,360
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$258,000</b>	<b>\$241,360</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$500,000	\$258,000	\$241,360
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$258,000</b>	<b>\$241,360</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Budgeted amount of \$500,000 is available from FY 2020/2021 appropriations for the Watershed Planning and Restoration Fund (\$167,000), the Russian River Projects Fund (\$166,500), and the Warm Springs Dam Fund (\$166,500). FY 2021/2022 and FY2022/2023 appropriations will be budgeted in those fiscal years.

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

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Agreement with Environmental Science Associates

Attachment 2: List of Qualified Consultants

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

None