



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 5/11/2021

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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:** Susan Haydon 547-1937  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Consulting Services for North Coast Resource Partnership

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute an agreement with West Coast Watershed, Inc. for North Coast Resource Partnership planning services and development of grant applications through June 30, 2026, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$810,000.

**Executive Summary:**

The North Coast Resource Partnership (Partnership) develops guiding foundational plans for the North Coast region and submits grant applications to secure funding for plan implementation. These plans address critical regional and community needs related to water, natural resources, forest health and wildfire risk reduction, increasing renewable power, and climate resiliency. Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) is responsible for development of the overall Partnership program to stimulate local development and investment, continue the integration of climate initiatives into the North Coast planning framework, secure grant funding, and conduct outreach and advocacy. County of Humboldt is responsible for grant administration including contracting with the state and other funders, and overseeing completion of participating entities' projects. Approval of the proposed agreement will enable Sonoma Water to continue its successful role in the integrated regional water management and climate resiliency effort.

The proposed agreement supports the administration and program management of the Partnership, including the planning, grant writing, and facilitation aspects of the Partnership. The proposed agreement also supports Sonoma Water in the management and development of a wildfire risk reduction decision support framework applicable Sonoma countywide. This framework is integrated with an innovative parcel level tool developed by University of California Cooperative Extension. By design, the framework will interface with wildfire risk reduction prioritization planning and tools, developed for the region through the Partnership, providing critically needed prioritization tools to reduce wildfire risk and accelerate vegetation management and decision making at all scales: region, county, and parcel levels. Sonoma County's PG&E settlement funds authorized by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (Board) on December 15, 2020 will support tasks related to development of the framework.

Since inception in 2005, the Partnership has secured state funding of more than \$85 million for water, energy, wildfire, and watershed health-related projects in the North Coast region including approximately \$13.6 million for projects in Sonoma County.

**Discussion:**

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

### **Organization of the North Coast Resource Partnership**

Seven counties participate in the Partnership, which is governed by a policy review panel consisting of 17 appointees from the seven county Boards of Supervisors and from tribal governments (Policy Review Panel). In 2013, the Policy Review Panel voted to change the name of the program from the “North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan” to the “North Coast Resource Partnership” to reflect expansion of the planning effort to include other resource goals including reduced greenhouse gas emission, increased renewable power production, and regional sustainability. In 2017, with Regional Forest & Fire Capacity program block grant funding from the California Natural Resources Agency and Department of Conservation, the Partnership began developing a forest health and wildfire risk reduction prioritization plan with regional tools and mapping to increase the capacity to implement wildfire risk reduction projects addressing the critical needs of the region. The Policy Review Panel selected Humboldt County to act as the fiscal agent for the Partnership and to oversee implementation of projects throughout the seven-county region. Sonoma Water is responsible for planning aspects of the Partnership including administration, development of updated Partnership plans, and the preparation and submittal of grant applications.

Since 2005, Partnership planning and project implementation has secured financing from a variety of sources, including Integrated Regional Water Management grant funding from Department of Water Resources; California Energy Commission, Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant Program; and Strategic Growth Council Sustainable Communities Grant funding. Most recently, in 2019, the Partnership received \$4.25 million in a regional capacity building grant from the California Natural Resources Agency and Department of Conservation to develop a regional priority plan that will outline a region-wide strategy for fire fuel load reduction and forest health, including a list of priority forest health and fire resiliency projects, strategies, and tools. Partnership funding awards from 2005 to 2020 total over \$85 million and leverage over \$160 million in funding match. With the Partnership’s commitment to achieving multiple objectives through local action, the Partnership is well positioned to continue to attract and utilize new federal, state, local, and private funding sources as they become available.

### **Consultant Services**

In April 2006, Sonoma Water entered into an agreement with West Coast Watershed, Inc. (West Coast Watershed) to perform planning and facilitate implementation of the Partnership plan; this agreement was subsequently amended four times. The agreement, as amended, allowed a total expenditure of \$2,115,440 over a nine-year period (through 2015) with \$846,000 of those costs reimbursed to Sonoma Water from the State of California through agreements with the Partnership’s fiscal agent, the County of Humboldt.

During that nine-year period, West Coast Watershed was responsible for development of the Partnership’s Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, administration, preparation of grant applications for planning and implementation of water management projects, coordination of meetings with the Policy Review Panel and the Technical Peer Review Committee, convening of regional conferences on integrated planning, outreach to tribal organizations for participation in the planning program, and other tasks. The effort brought together officials from seven counties, tribes within the region, as well as non-governmental organizations. Officials implemented plan governance under a Policy Review Panel utilizing a Technical Peer Review Committee to review project proposals for the 19,000 square mile region.

In December 2013, the agreement with West Coast Watershed was terminated and replaced by two new agreements between Sonoma Water and West Coast Watershed to continue planning efforts. One agreement was for Proposition 84 grant-funded work and the other agreement was for work funded by Sonoma Water, and not reimbursed from the Proposition 84 Grant. The separate agreement for the portion of the work funded by a grant from the State of California was necessary to facilitate grant administration and accountability. Portions of the program not reimbursed by the State were included in the non-grant funded agreement.

### **Program Milestones**

1. As a result of the work conducted by West Coast Watershed to date, the Partnership has secured over

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\$85 million in state funding for North Coast water planning and implementation projects and regional sustainability programs. One hundred percent of the state funding available to the North Coast for Partnership plans has been secured or recommended to-date. Partnership proposals consistently ranked in the top 5 percent statewide among funding proposals often scoring number one in grant proposal rankings by state officials. Accomplishments include:

Proposition 50, North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management (NCIRWMP) Planning Grant	2005	\$500,000
Proposition 50, Implementation Grant, Round 1	2006	\$25,000,000
Proposition 50, Implementation Grant, Round 2	2007	\$2,079,000
Proposition 50 Implementation Supplemental Funding	2010	\$2,176,860
California Energy Commission Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant	2010	\$959,117
Proposition 50, Department of Water Resources directed funding for Water & Wastewater Service Provider Outreach & Support Program	2011	\$500,000
Proposition 84, NCIRWMP Planning Grant	2011	\$1,000,000
Proposition 84, NCIRWMP Implementation Grant, Round 1	2011	\$8,222,000
Proposition 84, NCIRWMP Implementation Grant, Round 2	2013	\$5,386,000
Strategic Growth Council, Sustainable Communities Grant	2014	\$1,000,000
North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) 2014 Proposition 84, Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Drought Project Grant	2014	\$8,700,000
NCRP 2015 Proposition 84, IRWM Project Grant	2015	\$11,047,939
NCRP Proposition 1, Disadvantaged Community Involvement funding	2017	\$2,650,000
California Natural Resource Agency, NCRP Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program	2019	\$4,037,500
Proposition 1, Round 1 IRWM Implementation Project Grant	2020	\$12,720,000
<b>TOTAL</b> □		<b>\$85,978,416</b> □

2. Projects located in Sonoma County include the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Study, Copeland Creek restoration project, Santa Rosa water recycling and habitat preservation project, Northern Sonoma County Water Conservation Program, and Russian River Drought Relief Program. These and other local projects received more than \$13.6 million of the State funding listed above. A list of projects completed specifically in Sonoma County is available as Attachment 2 (North Coast Resource Partnership Projects in Sonoma County).

#### SELECTION PROCESS

On September 14, 2020, Sonoma Water issued a Request for Statements of Qualifications to the following three firms:

1. West Coast Watershed, Inc., Healdsburg, CA
2. West Yost Associates, Santa Rosa, CA
3. Woodard and Curran, Walnut Creek, CA

The Request for Statements of Qualifications was also posted on the Sonoma Water and County of Sonoma Purchasing Department websites.

The three firms listed below submitted Statements of Qualifications:

1. 347 Group, Granite Bay, CA
2. Consero Solutions, Davis, CA
3. West Coast Watershed, Inc.

The following criteria were used to evaluate each firm:

1. Thoroughness of Statements of Qualifications
2. Professional qualifications and demonstrated ability to perform the work
3. Exceptions to standard terms in the sample agreement

West Coast Watershed was selected due to superior experience, expertise, and long held positive relationships essential for effective facilitation and consensus on funding decisions.

### SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the proposed agreement, West Coast Watershed will continue administration of the Partnership governance panel and Technical Peer Review Committee, development of updated Partnership plans, preparation of regional grant applications, oversight of technical assistance, communication and outreach services, and other related functions. These are ongoing long term activities expected to continue as long as the Partnership is in effect.

West Coast Watershed will also coordinate the development of the countywide decision support framework to reduce wildfire risk in alignment with decision support plans and tools developed at the regional scale for the Partnership. Activities will include coordinating the team of Sonoma Water's technical consultants and facilitating an interface between the prioritization of vegetation management actions developed by decision support tools at landscape and parcel scales. In addition, West Coast Watershed will facilitate stakeholder and technical advisory groups to inform the development of the Decision Support Framework. West Coast Watershed will ensure that the Decision Support Framework reflects local, regional, state, and federal priorities for forest health and wildfire risk reduction and is aligned and supports the regional wildfire risk reduction efforts of the Partnership. Sonoma County's PG&E settlement funds authorized by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (Board) on December 15, 2020 will support tasks related to development of the framework.

The cost of services will not exceed \$810,000 (North Coast Regional Partnership work \$650,000 from Sonoma Water and wildfire decision support tool coordination \$160,000 from PG&E Settlement funds); the term end date is June 30, 2026.

The agreement includes two options for Sonoma Water to extend this agreement for a period of one year each by providing written notice to West Coast Watershed thirty days in advance of the expiration date of the agreement and of the first extension option.

### **Prior Board Actions:**

- 7/18/2017: Approved second amended agreement between Sonoma Water and West Coast Watershed, for planning services and development of grant applications for the North Coast Resource Partnership. Cost \$350,000; for a new agreement total of \$1,028,620, and term end 6/30/2020.
- 5/19/2015: Approved first amended agreement between Sonoma Water and West Coast Watershed, for planning services and development of grant applications for the North Coast Resource Partnership. Cost \$350,000; for a new agreement total of \$678,620, and term end 6/30/2017.
- 12/10/2013: Approved agreement between Sonoma Water and West Coast Watershed, for planning services and development of grant applications for the North Coast Resource Partnership. Cost \$328,620; term end

6/30/2015.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY21-22 Projected</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$310,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	\$310,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$310,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	\$310,000	\$150,000	\$150,000

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Budgeted amount of \$310,000 is available from FY 2020/2021 appropriations for the Russian River Projects Fund (\$75,000), Flood Control Zone 1A Fund (\$27,000), Recycled Water Fund (\$27,000), and the Water Transmission Fund (\$21,000), and Sonoma Water's General Fund (\$160,000). Offsetting revenue in the amount of \$160,000 is from the December 15, 2020, Board-authorized from Sonoma County's PG&E settlement funds.

Future year 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 West Coast Watershed, Inc.

Attachment 2: North Coast Resource Partnership Projects in Sonoma County

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

None

