



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-1513, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Staff Name and Phone Number: Louisa Morris, 565-1537
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Fifth

Title:

Silva Ranch Conservation Easement CalFIRE (Forest Health) Grant Agreement: Transfer From Western Rivers Conservancy To Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation And Open Space District

Recommended Action:

Approve resolution of the Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District:

- A) Authorizing the submission of a Forest Health Grant Program application to the State of California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFIRE) for \$4,050,000, for acquisition of a conservation easement over Silva Ranch; and
- B) Authorizing the General Manager to sign the grant agreement and all associated certifications and assurances in a form approved by County Counsel.

(Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

The Western Rivers Conservancy, a non-profit, applied for and was awarded a \$4,050,000 grant from CalFIRE's Forest Health Grant Program. This grant will assist with acquisition of the Silva Ranch conservation easement, which will protect a 4,344-acre property in the Gualala River watershed. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District plans to contribute funds (pending Board approval) and in-kind staff time toward the purchase of this conservation easement. Western Rivers Conservancy and CalFIRE want the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, as the eventual Silva Ranch conservation easement holder, to receive the grant funds. Staff is requesting the Board authorize the General Manager to apply for and enter into the grant agreement. Of note, this project supports the Board's Climate Change priority as well as the County's Recovery Framework goals of fuel/vegetation management and watershed recovery in Strategy Area 5: Natural Resources.

Discussion:

The Forest Health Grant Program is a CalFIRE-managed State grant program that supports the State's Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction goals by making strategic investments to protect forest health.

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) is currently in negotiations with the property owner and their agent, the Western Rivers Conservancy, regarding the final conservation easement terms and the acquisition price of the conservation easement. Under the terms of the CalFIRE grant agreement, Ag + Open Space will have until March 30, 2022 to expend the grant funds. In the

event that Ag + Open Space and the property owner are unable to reach agreement, the funds will revert back to CalFIRE.

The Board will have the opportunity to consider the conservation easement project as a whole once we have completed the negotiation and appraisal process and executed the grant agreement. This CalFIRE grant offers an excellent opportunity to leverage Ag + Open Space funding for this conservation easement project.

In order to complete the application for this CalFIRE Forest Health grant, Ag + Open Space staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached resolution to:

1. Authorize submission of a Forest Health Grant Program application to the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFIRE) for \$4,050,000, for acquisition of a conservation easement over Silva Ranch; and
2. Authorize the General Manager, or his designee, to sign the grant agreement and all associated certifications and assurances in a form approved by County Counsel.

Prior Board Actions:

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$4,050,000	0	0
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$4,050,000	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$4,050,000		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$4,050,000	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The Silva Ranch project is budgeted for FY 19-20, including any grant funding received as a result of this item and contributions from Ag + Open Space. Consideration of the purchase of the conservation easement will be brought to the Board in the future. Funding from this grant will be received as part of Ag + Open Space's conservation easement acquisition.

Staffing Impacts:

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Resolution

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

1. Draft grant agreement
2. Grant application