Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0429, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Gregg Horton, 707-547-1907
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:
Salmonid Monitoring in Russian River Watershed

Recommended Action:

A) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's (Sonoma Water) General Manager to execute an agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), in a form approved by County Counsel, to receive up to $2,355,000 to conduct salmonid population monitoring in the Russian River watershed through June 30, 2025.

B) Authorize Sonoma Water's General Manager to amend the agreement to extend the term, make modifications to the scope of work, accept additional funds, or terminate the agreement with approval of County Counsel.

C) Authorize the General Manager or designee to negotiate and execute an agreement, following a federally compliant competitive selection process and in a form approved by County Counsel, in an amount not to exceed $1,156,002, to a qualified subconsultant for assistance with salmonid population monitoring in the Russian River watershed through June 30, 2025.

D) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to amend the agreement to extend the term, make modifications to the scope of work, and increase costs provided amendments do not cumulatively increase the total cost to Sonoma County Water Agency beyond $50,000.

E) Adopt a Resolution authorizing adjustments to the Board Adopted Budget for FY 2021/2022 for the Sonoma Water Warm Springs Dam fund in the amount of $1,156,002.

(4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), through a direct contract with Sonoma Water, will provide up to $2,355,000 to continue a fish monitoring program aimed at aiding in the recovery of endangered or threatened salmon and steelhead in the Russian River watershed. The data collected through monitoring salmonids in the Russian River watershed will contribute to the California Coastal Monitoring Program that monitors salmon and steelhead in coastal California rivers. Sonoma Water has been collecting data on fish populations in the Russian River basin since 1999, and has a long history of developing, funding, and implementing fisheries habitat enhancement and fish population monitoring programs in the Russian River watershed.

Discussion:
HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Sonoma Water has been collecting data on fish populations in the Russian River basin since 1999, and has a long history of developing, funding, and implementing fisheries habitat enhancement and fish population monitoring programs in the Russian River watershed.
Central California Coast Coho Salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch), California Coastal Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha), and Central California Coast steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss) are all listed as either threatened or endangered under Federal and/or State Endangered Species Acts. Recovery plans call for long-term population assessment and monitoring that address viable salmonid population indicators of abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and diversity. Delisting will depend on whether distinct population segments have reached abundance thresholds, thus spawner escapement is a primary measure of recovery. The California Salmonid Population Monitoring Plan (CMP) methodology provides population level estimates of salmonids and monitors status and trends at evolutionarily significant regional scales.

The purpose of the agreement between CDFW and Sonoma Water is to provide salmonid population monitoring data from the Russian River watershed for three consecutive years. Activities will include conducting Coho Salmon and steelhead spawning ground surveys, snorkel surveys, and life cycle monitoring to provide estimates of adult and juvenile salmonid abundance, redd abundance, and juvenile occupancy rates.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED
Sonoma Water will provide monitoring coordination, planning, and reporting. This work includes overall project coordination, oversight of field activities, data QA/QC procedures, spatial and tabular database management, data accessibility, refinement of the Russian River sample frame, map preparation, reporting, responding to data requests, coordination with existing monitoring efforts in the watershed, and participation in technical advisory meetings.

The following tasks will be performed:

- Life Cycle Monitoring for Steelhead. Project personnel shall maintain close coordination with the existing Coho Salmon monitoring program to estimate population metrics for steelhead. When stream flow and related environmental conditions allow, life cycle monitoring to estimate the number of juvenile steelhead emigrants, the number of adult steelhead returns, and the number of steelhead redds will occur in Mill Creek, Green Valley Creek, Dutch Bill Creek, and Willow Creek..

- Basinwide Spawning Ground Surveys and Snorkel Surveys in Coho Salmon Habitat. This task will consist of annual adult spawner surveys and juvenile snorkel surveys to generate annual estimates of Coho Salmon and steelhead redds in the Coho Salmon sample stratum and to evaluate the spatial structure of juvenile Coho Salmon in the Coho Salmon stratum of the Russian River watershed. Project personnel will survey a spatially balanced random sample of Coho Salmon reaches drawn from the current Russian River sample frame each year (pending landowner access approval).

In order to perform this work, landowner access to conduct field monitoring must be secured. This entails individual landowner access requests, coordination with other agencies accessing the streams for similar purposes and maintaining a landowner communication database. There are nearly 3,400 unique landowners adjacent to streams in the California Coastal Salmonid Monitoring Plan Russian River sample frame, and access requests to approximately 900 landowners will be needed on an annual basis to conduct surveys for Coho Salmon basinwide monitoring. In addition, appropriate regional, state, and federal permits to conduct all monitoring tasks must be secured.

Sonoma Water will require the assistance of a subconsultant to perform these activities. The work will be performed collaboratively, in teams of both Sonoma Water and subconsultant employees. The project manager estimates that the cost of subconsultant services will not exceed $1,156,002; the term end date is June 30, 2025. Current staffing levels within Sonoma Water are sufficient to support and facilitate this work.

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

SELECTION PROCESS
At the time of this writing, Sonoma Water was conducting a federally-compliant competitive selection process to identify and select a subconsultant(s) to assist in the monitoring efforts. A Request for Proposals was issued on April 11, 2022 and proposals are due to Sonoma Water on May 10, 2022.

Selection of a subconsultant will be based upon relevant wildlife or fisheries field sampling experience, ability to secure landowner access, and ability to obtain appropriate regional, state, and federal permits.

CDFW has indicated they would like to execute the direct contract with Sonoma Water as soon as possible. Due to the seasonally dependent nature of the monitoring activities, this work must begin in the July timeframe. As a result, staff is requesting Board authority for the General Manager to negotiate and execute the agreement with the subconsultant in order to accommodate these needs.

Strategic Plan:
N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment
Climate Change, Goal 1: Continuing improving our ability to respond and adapt to climate
Climate change, especially the effects of extended droughts, greatly impact fish populations in the Russian River basin. By collecting and quantifying related data and contributing it to a larger data collection program, scientists and biologists can find ways to support threatened and endangered fish species in our watershed and beyond.

Prior Board Actions:
05/19/2015: Resolution 15-0210 authorizing the General Manager execute a grant agreement with California Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for $1,790,861 in support of the California Coastal Monitoring Program in the Russian River Watershed.
05/14/2013: Resolution 13-0196 authorizing the General Manager execute a grant agreement with California Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for $826,277 in support of the California Coastal Monitoring Program in the Russian River Watershed.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	**FY 21-22 Adopted**	**FY22-23 Projected**	**FY 23-24 Projected**
Budgeted Expenses	27,000	648,249	648,249

Additional Appropriation Requested	1,156,002		
Total Expenditures	**$1,183,002**	**$648,249**	**$648,249**
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	1,156,002	399,666	399,666
Fees/Other	27,000	248,583	248,583
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	**$1,183,002**	**$648,249**	**$648,249**

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:
Budgeted amount of $27,000 is available from FY 2021/2022 appropriations for the Warm Springs Dam Fund. Additional appropriations in the amount of $1,156,002 are required to process this expense. Offsetting revenue in the amount of $1,156,002 will come from CDFW. Non-funded costs will be from the Warm Springs Dam Fund. A budgetary resolution has been submitted with this item.

FY 2022/2023, FY2023/2024, and FY2024/2025 appropriations will be budgeted in those fiscal years.

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:
Attachment 1: Budget Resolution R-1

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:
None