

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
February 26, 2009

SAN ELIJO LAGOON RESTORATION PROJECT: PLANNING PHASE II

File No. 08-118-02
Project Manager: Megan Johnson

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to augment the Conservancy's December 4, 2008 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to \$960,000 in funds from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy for conceptual designs, technical studies, environmental review, and permit applications for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project, San Diego County.

LOCATION: San Elijo Lagoon, Cities of Encinitas and Solana Beach, County of San Diego

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Conservancy's authorization of December 4, 2008](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31251 - 31270 of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby augments its December 4, 2008 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to nine hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$960,000) in funds received from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy to fund conceptual designs, technical studies, environmental review, and permit applications for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project, San Diego County. This authorization remains subject to the conditions of the December 4, 2008 authorization and is subject to an additional condition that prior to the disbursement of the SANDAG funds, the Conservancy's Executive Officer shall enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with SANDAG for receipt of these funds for the project."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following finding:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that the proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's findings under its December 4, 2008 authorization."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy augment its December 4, 2008 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to \$960,000 in SANDAG funds to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELC) for conceptual designs, technical studies, environmental review, and permit applications for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project (SELRP). The SANDAG funding for this augmented authorization is part of a program to identify potential mitigation projects for transportation corridor improvements in north San Diego County (See Exhibit 2).

As described in Exhibit 2, the goal of the project is to enhance and restore the biological functions and values of the San Elijo Lagoon Reserve with a balance of habitat types, taking into account regional historic losses. San Elijo Lagoon is owned by the California Department of Fish and Game, the County of San Diego and SELC. It is designated as a State Ecological Reserve and is located at the southern boundary of the City of Encinitas adjacent to Solana Beach (Exhibit 1).

Project History

On December 4, 2008 the Conservancy authorized disbursement of \$680,000 in Conservancy funds for this project. Subsequent to that approval, SANDAG approved a grant of an amount up to \$1,500,000 to the Conservancy for this project and the Buena Vista Lagoon Project.

The project history is described in detail in the attached December 4, 2008 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

PROJECT FINANCING:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Coastal Conservancy (SANDAG) | \$960,000 |
| <u>Coastal Conservancy</u> | <u>680,000 (December 4, 2008 authorization)</u> |
| Total Project Cost | \$1,590,000 |

The source of funds for this authorization is a grant to the Conservancy from SANDAG via the Department of Transportation (CalTrans) (See Exhibit 3). SANDAG and CalTrans are currently proposing a major expansion of Interstate 5, one of the three major transportation corridors that bisect the lagoon. SANDAG has agreed to partially fund the proposed project because of its interest in identifying potential environmental mitigation projects for the Interstate 5 widening project. The funding for the Interstate 5 widening will come from a half-cent sales tax for local transportation projects called TransNet, which includes \$850,000,000 for an environmental mitigation program. This environmental mitigation program will fund the acquisition, restoration, and maintenance of many open spaces and wetlands throughout San Diego County.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION, 2007
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA
& GUIDELINES, LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES and CEQA:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's December 4, 2008 authorization in these areas (Exhibit 2).