

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 6, 2018

RUSSIAN RIVER FLOODPLAIN ENHANCEMENT: AUGMENTATION

Project No. 12-007-03
Project Manager: Michael Bowen

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 received from the Sonoma County Water Agency to augment the Conservancy's September 29, 2016 authorization to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy to design a floodplain restoration project at the Hanson-Windsor Gravel Ponds near Windsor, Sonoma County.

LOCATION: Hanson Ponds, Windsor, Sonoma County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson-Windsor Ponds Environmental Review and Design Staff Recommendation dated September 29, 2016.](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31111 and 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an additional one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) received from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC) for a total disbursement not to exceed four hundred forty five thousand dollars (\$445,000) for the Russian River Floodplain Enhancement Project near Windsor in Sonoma County.

This authorization is subject to all of the conditions imposed upon EHC through the September 29, 2016 Conservancy authorization for this project attached as Exhibit 2 to this staff recommendation as well as the condition that EHC will assist the Conservancy in complying with the terms and conditions of the SCWA grant agreement.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 6 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding plans and feasibility studies and coastal resource enhancement.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy augment the existing grant to EHC for the Russian River Floodplain Enhancement Project by authorizing the disbursement of up to an additional \$100,000 provided to the Conservancy by the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), for development of the Russian River Floodplain Enhancement Project (project). The total amount of the grant augmentation is \$100,000. The Conservancy previously granted EHC \$345,000 for preparation of plans, designs, permits and environmental analyses for the project. After augmentation, the total amount of the grant will be \$445,000. The grant augmentation is needed to conduct groundwater analyses identified as a priority information gap by EHC and SCWA after the September 29, 2016 authorization. Additional funding will be used to conduct groundwater analyses about the potential groundwater and surface water interactions between the river and the project footprint. In particular, the analyses will examine the potential for the water and sediment found within the existing gravel quarry ponds to adversely impact either the Sonoma County Water Agency intakes immediately downstream of the project footprint, or the City of Windsor water intakes immediately upstream. Analyzing these risks will better inform EHC, SCWA and SCC about the proposed project’s benefits, while helping to ensure that the project does not have unforeseen adverse impacts to critical nearby infrastructure.

The project is fully described in the September 29, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2). No significant changes have been made to the project since the Conservancy authorized funding. EHC has retained a consulting firm to develop the groundwater analysis in connection with the project designs and environmental compliance materials.

Site Description: The project area remains as described in the September 29, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

Project History: The project history remains as described in the September 29, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

PROJECT FINANCING

September 29, 2016 Authorization

Coastal Conservancy	\$345,000
Sonoma County (TBD)	\$172,500
Hanson Aggregates (TBD)	\$172,500

Total Prior Project Cost **\$690,000**

September 6, 2018 Authorization and Revised Budget

Coastal Conservancy (September 29, 2016 authorization)	\$345,000
Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (Grant to EHC)	\$150,000
Coastal Conservancy Augmentation (SCWA)	\$100,000

Project Total **\$595,000**

The project budget at the time of the September 29, 2016 authorization assumed a project cost of \$690,000. Since then the project cost estimate has been revised to \$595,000. The SCWA has granted funds to the Conservancy via a cost-sharing agreement in order to advance a groundwater study in the project area. SCWA’s contribution augments a separate grant from the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation to EHC of \$150,000 for the project. In addition to the capital costs of the project, in-kind contributions will be provided by the County and the landowner, Hanson Aggregates, as described in the previous staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

The anticipated source of funding augmentation for this project is the SCWA deposit of \$100,000 to the Coastal Conservancy’s Coastal Trust Fund.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is undertaken pursuant to Chapter 6 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Section 31220), as described in the September 29, 2016 staff recommendation attached as Exhibit 2 and remains consistent with the purposes of this Chapter.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

The project remains consistent with strategic plan objectives 2(E), 4(C) and 5(C) as described in the 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2); these same objectives are included in the Conservancy’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan as objectives 2(E), 5(C) and 6(C), respectively.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy project selection criteria and guidelines, as described in the September 29, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

As discussed in the September 29, 2016 staff recommendation, the proposed project is consistent with the Sonoma County Local Coastal Program, certified in 1981 and revised in 1999, specifically Section III Environmental Resources. Section III, Recommendation Numbers 9, 10, 12 and 71, specifically calls out areas degraded due to historic mining as requiring special corrective action and identifies strategies for addressing the degradation.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The previous staff recommendation (Exhibit 2) discusses CEQA compliance.

The authorization will enable EHC to continue to conduct data gathering, planning, constraints and impacts analyses and early design and planning work necessary for the advancement of the environmental review process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is thus statutorily exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, §15262.

Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.