

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
December 1, 2022

SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION REGULATORY INTEGRATION TEAM

Project No. 18-019-01
Project Manager: Evyan Borgnis Sloane

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$482,423 of San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority funding to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board to augment the Conservancy’s previously authorized grant for operation of the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team to enable operation through September 2024.

LOCATION: All nine San Francisco Bay Area counties

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Coastal Conservancy Staff Recommendation of September 6, 2018](#)
- Exhibit 2: [San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Resolution No. 102 dated October 14, 2022](#)
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes augmentation of a grant to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (“the grantee”), previously authorized by the Conservancy on September 6, 2018, by an amount not to exceed four hundred eighty-two thousand four hundred twenty-three dollars (\$482,423) to operate the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team through September 2024, subject to the same conditions as the set forth in the Conservancy’s authorization of September 6, 2018.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization remains consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$482,423 of San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority funding to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to augment the Conservancy's grant to the RWQCB to operate the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT); the augmentation will enable the RWQCB to operate the BRRIT (the project) through September 2024 (for a total of five years).

On September 6, 2018, the Conservancy authorized disbursement of \$250,000 annually for five years to various state and federal agencies to operate the BRRIT (Exhibit 1). The Conservancy's authorization complemented an authorization by the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) to disburse \$650,000 annually to these same agencies for the BRRIT. (Exhibit 2). Pursuant to the September 6, 2018 authorization, the Conservancy granted \$237,931.84 to RWQCB to operate the BRRIT for 1 year. The Conservancy anticipated that the Authority would grant the RWQCB the additional funds needed to operate the BRRIT for another 4 years, but the RWQCB cannot accept grant funds from the Authority. The Conservancy amended the grant with RWQCB while they explored solutions to accept funds from the Authority with an additional \$169,170.36 for an additional 1.5 years. With no solution achieved for the RWQCB to accept money directly from the Authority, the Authority has agreed to provide its funds to the Conservancy to grant to the RWQCB. The Conservancy will disburse to the RWQCB the exact amount of funds provided by the Authority. The overall amount of funds disbursed by the Authority and the Conservancy for the BRRIT will remain the same.

Findings of consistency with the Conservancy's current project selection criteria are below. All other sections of the Conservancy's September 6, 2018 staff recommendation remain applicable to the project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

Selection Criteria

1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.

See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Strategic Plan" section of the Conservancy's September 6, 2018 staff recommendation attached as Exhibit 1.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

The BRRIT will improve the pace and scale of multi-benefit wetland restoration projects throughout San Francisco Bay. Coordinated permitting should accelerate the restoration community's ability to move projects through planning and into construction, and ultimately get habitat established in time to keep pace with sea level rise as recommended in the science update to the regional San Francisco Bay Habitat Goals Report (The Baylands and Climate Change: What We Can Do. Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Science Update 2015).

The BRRIT will significantly change the way multi-benefit wetland restoration projects in San Francisco Bay are permitted, expediting permitting by having all of the agencies review a project in parallel and early in the project's planning and environmental review process. In addition, the BRRIT's Policy Management Team will address policy issues to increase efficiencies in permitting. The BRRIT is consistent with statewide goals of cutting green tape.

3. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

Restoration projects proposed within the San Francisco Bay Area are encouraged by many agencies, programs, and collaboratives (including the Conservancy and the SFBRA) to be multi-benefit and provide for habitat restoration/enhancement and public access and enjoyment, and contribute natural enhancements to flood control. The BRRIT will help ensure that multi-benefit restoration projects can be implemented more efficiently and at a faster pace.