



Agenda Date: 10/10/2006
Agenda Placement: 6F

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning
REPORT BY: John Woodbury, Principal Planner , 259-5933
SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing application for Bay Area Ridge Trail/State Coastal Conservancy grant for recreational trail feasibility study for City of Napa Milliken watershed lands

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Conservation, Development and Planning requests adoption of a resolution:

1. Authorizing the Chair to sign a grant application submittal to the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council/State Coastal Conservancy to support a recreational trail feasibility study for the Milliken watershed lands owned by the City of Napa; and
2. Authorizing acceptance of the grant if awarded.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed grant would fund a study evaluating the feasibility of constructing and operating trails and associated facilities on watershed lands owned by the City of Napa at Milliken Reservoir. This study is eligible for funding through a program operated by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and the State Coastal Conservancy because it includes a segment of the proposed Bay Area Ridge Trail and local connecting trails. In March of this year the City of Napa authorized County staff to evaluate the feasibility of opening the City's watershed lands for public, nature-based recreational use. The proposed grant will enable the County to hire outside expertise to assist staff in designing a practical trail system and staging area, evaluating key issues related to protecting water quality and habitat, and developing a detailed operations and management plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Is there a Fiscal Impact? | Yes |
| Is it currently budgeted? | Yes |
| Where is it budgeted? | Conservation, Development & Planning |

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| Is it Mandatory or Discretionary? | Discretionary |
| Discretionary Justification: | The City of Napa's Milliken Reservoir watershed lands represent the single greatest opportunity for providing nature-based recreation in close proximity to where Napa County residents live, but these lands have been closed to the public since 1978 when budget cuts eliminated the day and overnight camp program operated there by the Napa County Unified School District in partnership with the City of Napa. The City has authorized the County to explore the feasibility of reopening this beautiful area for limited public use. To determine whether this is feasible, specialized expertise is needed related to protecting water quality and the environment, designing trails and facilities, and developing a detailed operation and management plan. The requested grant will pay for this specialized expertise. |
| Is the general fund affected? | Yes |
| Future fiscal impact: | The estimated 216 hours of County staff time needed to manage and supplement the consultants' work will be spread between FY 2006-07 and FY 2007-08, utilizing existing staff within the Conservation, Development and Planning Department. |
| Consequences if not approved: | Without the grant the expertise needed to address key design, environmental and operational issues will not be available to the County, and it will not be possible at this time to complete an adequate study of the feasibility of providing low-impact, nature-based public recreation on the City's Milliken watershed lands. |
| Additional Information: | None |

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Prior to 1978 the City's 2,198 acres of land in the Milliken watershed allowed public access in conjunction with a day camp operated through a joint agreement of the City of Napa, College of Napa and Napa Unified School District. Budget cutbacks following the passage of Proposition 13 eliminated that program, however, and since that time the City's lands have been closed to the public.

After the Napa County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee was established in 2003, it developed an inventory of existing public open space lands in the County that either did or could provide nature-based recreational opportunities for Napa residents. Through this inventory, the Committee identified the City of Napa's Milliken watershed lands as a prime opportunity because of its large size, beauty and location only 15 minutes drive from downtown Napa. This opportunity was reported to the Board of Supervisors as part of the Committee's status reports in December 2004 and October 2005.

In March 2006 the City of Napa indicated its support of County staff exploring the feasibility of reopening the City's lands at Milliken Reservoir for public recreational use. Several issues are central to the question of whether public

recreational access would be feasible, including: protecting water quality, not impacting normal City operation of the reservoir, protecting other natural resource values on the watershed lands, assuring public safety, and developing an operations and management plan which does not present a financial burden for the City.

The proposed grant will enable the County to contract for professional expertise to evaluate how other water districts have provided public recreation consistent with water quality protection, identify native plant, animal and cultural resources found on the watershed lands and recommend policies for protecting those resources, design and prepare cost estimates for trails and associated recreational facilities and work with County staff to develop a recommended management plan. The management plan will include a detailed analysis operational needs, and identify the degree to which these can be met utilizing partnerships with other organizations, businesses and a volunteer trail host or caretaker program. The objective is to develop a management plan which does not rely on ongoing City or County funds.

Approval of the submittal of this grant application does not commit the County to any expenditures or action beyond providing staff support for the proposed feasibility study. Upon completion of the study the County and the City of Napa will decide whether and how to proceed. If the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District is approved by the voters at the November 2006 election, further action on developing trails and related nature-based recreational access to the Milliken watershed lands would likely be the responsibility of the District.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Resolution
- B . Grant Application
- C . Letter from City of Napa

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Andrew Carey