



Agenda Date: 12/18/2007  
Agenda Placement: 6L

## NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Hillary Gitelman - Director  
Conservation, Development & Planning

**REPORT BY:** Jeff Sharp, Principal Planner , 259-5936

**SUBJECT:** Request for approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign a letter in support of a grant application by the Resource Conservation District to the Calif. Dept. of Conservation and authorize WICC Board staff participation in grant activities.

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Director of Conservation, Development and Planning requests the following actions relating to a Watershed Coordinator grant application submitted by the Napa County Resource Conservation District to the Department of Conservation for funding under the CALFED Watershed Program:

1. Approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign a letter in support of the Watershed Coordinator grant application; and
2. Approval of and authorization for the Watershed Information Center & Conservancy (WICC) Board staff to participate in Watershed Coordinator grant related activities.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The goal of the 2007 Watershed Coordinator Grant Program is to improve watersheds which affect the CALFED Solution Area by providing support for local watershed improvement efforts. The purpose of this grant program is to fund watershed coordinator positions to facilitate watershed management and improvement efforts. The funded positions must demonstrate a direct benefit to the Bay-Delta system and support the goals and objectives of the CALFED Watershed Program. The grant program offers local organizations a unique opportunity to improve watersheds through a coordinated collaborative process.

The grant funding in support of the Napa County Resource Conservation District's (RCD's) proposal would be used to build upon and expand preceding successes in the Napa River and San Pablo Bay watersheds. If funded, the Watershed Coordinator will facilitate cooperative multi-objective watershed planning and projects at various geographic scales (small tributary watersheds, the Napa River watershed, the San Pablo Bay watershed, and the San Francisco Bay watershed). At every scale the Watershed Coordinator's efforts will focus on addressing natural resource concerns in an integrated and cooperative manner such that benefits to ecosystem and habitat function, water quality, flood management, and water supply reliability can be realized. The Coordinator's focus will be on

resource issues that are important to the Napa River watershed and to the larger San Pablo Bay watershed, such as excess sediment, stream bank instability, high water temperatures, low summer stream flows, lack of in-stream and riparian habitat, fish migration barriers, and overall aquatic habitat degradation. Efforts will be conducted in coordination with local and regional flood management and water supply reliability projects.

The goals of the RCD's Watershed Coordinator proposal are aligned with the WICC's mission and directly supports a number of priority action items identified in the WICC's Strategic Plan. The WICC's participation in the Watershed Coordinator proposal is consistent with current WICC staffing and budget allocations. Obtaining adequate funding through grants and other means to support the WICC's charge and mission is priority action of the WICC. As proposed, the RCD's Watershed Coordinator grant proposal has no fiscal impact to the County. The grant utilizes in-kind match that is already apart of the WICC's function and capacity and no cash match is anticipated. Furthermore, continued funding for the WICC program is expected over the term of the grant.

At this time, the Director of Conservation, Development and Planning is requesting approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign a letter in support of the Watershed Coordinator grant application; and approval of and authorization for the Watershed Information Center & Conservancy (WICC) Board to participate in Watershed Coordinator grant related activities, should the grant be awarded.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact?                      No

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: Statutory Exemption. Feasibility and Planning Studies involving only feasibility or planning for possible future actions which the agency, board, or commission has not approved, adopted, or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. [See Title 14. California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3. Guidelines For the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 18. Statutory Exemptions, CCR 15262].

### **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

In 2000, the California Legislature approved a \$2 million pilot grant program to fund watershed coordinators through Resource Conservation Districts. The Department of Conservation (DOC) was authorized to administer the program. State funding was approved for two years and due to the success of the pilot program the California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA) partnered with DOC to extend the program for another 18 months. In 2004, as the effectiveness and importance of the program became more evident, DOC again worked with CBDA to expand the grant program with CALFED funding from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50). The 2007 grant program will again be funded through CALFED Proposition 50 funds and will provide \$9 million for a three-year period, beginning in 2008. The 2007 Grant Program is designed as a three-year grant program. To date, however, the Legislature has appropriated funds only for part of the first year. This procedure is being followed for all CALFED-related programs to insure accountability for the use of public funds. Future funding will be dependent on continued legislative appropriations.

The pilot Watershed Coordinator Grant Program demonstrated that watershed coordinators are effective in facilitating collaboration, building consensus, obtaining project funding, and initiating watershed improvement

projects. Using a coordinated approach to planning and management has resulted in successful and sustainable watershed improvements across the state.

The goal of the 2007 Watershed Coordinator Grant Program is to improve watersheds which affect the CALFED Solution Area by providing support for local watershed improvement efforts. The purpose of this grant program is to fund watershed coordinator positions in order to facilitate watershed improvement efforts which affect the CALFED Solution Area. These positions must demonstrate a direct benefit to the Bay-Delta system and support the goals and objectives of the CALFED Watershed Program. The grant program offers organizations a unique opportunity to improve watersheds through a coordinated collaborative process. A major goal of this program is to foster collaboration and partnerships. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to work cooperatively with other organizations to formulate a comprehensive and competitive proposal.

The grant funding in support of the Napa County Resource Conservation District's (RCD's) proposal would be used to build upon and expand preceding successes in the Napa River and San Pablo Bay watersheds. The Watershed Coordinator will facilitate cooperative multi-objective watershed planning and projects at various geographic scales (small *tributary* watersheds, the *Napa River* watershed, the *San Pablo Bay* watershed, and the *San Francisco Bay* watershed). At every scale the Watershed Coordinator's efforts will focus on addressing natural resource concerns in an integrated and cooperative manner such that benefits to ecosystem and habitat function, water quality, flood management, and water supply reliability can be realized. The Coordinator's focus will be on resource issues that are important to the Napa River watershed and to the larger San Pablo Bay watershed, such as excess sediment, stream bank instability, high water temperatures, low summer stream flows, lack of in-stream and riparian habitat, fish migration barriers, and overall aquatic habitat degradation. Work will be conducted in coordination with local and regional flood management and water supply reliability projects, including current groundwater assessment and planning efforts being conducted by the Department of Public Works for the Miliken-Sarco-Tulucay (MST) basin (see Public Works item).

- | *At the tributary watershed scale*, the Watershed Coordinator will coordinate outreach/assistance to landowners/managers in up to 10 watersheds where priority steelhead trout habitat has been identified and assessed. Outreach/assistance will include information such as existing conditions and challenges within each watershed, recommended actions for addressing the challenges, contact information for agencies/organizations that can assist landowners with natural resource management, and individual field visits and assistance with project planning and funding proposals. As a result of this and other work plan tasks, specific fish habitat improvement projects will be identified and implemented.
- | *At the Napa River watershed scale*, the Watershed Coordinator will build upon the collaborative partnerships that have developed since 2001 with government agencies, watershed groups, and other organizations through the Watershed Information Center and Conservancy (WICC) of Napa County to facilitate development of an integrated natural resources plan and an on-line project database for the Napa River watershed that can tie into other regional plans such as the Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. Such a plan and database will build upon the tributary watershed assessments and plans that have already been completed and will facilitate expanded opportunities for additional community participation in project identification, integration, and prioritization. The plan and database will also better prepare the local community to participate in larger regional and state natural resource planning efforts and funding opportunities. In addition the Watershed Coordinator will assist the WICC in implementing it's current and future strategic plans by developing and coordinating a community advisory committee and taking other actions necessary to increase cooperation and coordination among watershed stakeholders.
- | *At the San Pablo Bay watershed scale*, the Watershed Coordinator will continue to assist with coordination of the North Bay Watershed Network (an ad-hoc stakeholder group established by Watershed Coordinators in the San Pablo Bay in 2005) and the North Bay Watershed Association's Watershed Council such that projects of regional significance (e.g., watershed health indicators, fisheries monitoring, water quality monitoring, etc.) can be addressed in a collaborative way, and recognize the needs of Napa County's watersheds.

- 1 *The San Francisco Bay watershed* will benefit from the efforts of the Watershed Coordinator through development of the integrated natural resources plan for the Napa River watershed. Completion of the local plan will allow for more coordinated participation on behalf of the Napa River watershed in the Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning process and on-going implementation of that plan. With a local plan in place, integrated and prioritized projects from the Napa River plan can be brought forth to the larger Bay Area IRWM for inclusion and further integration and funding.

The goals of the RCD's Watershed Coordinator proposal are aligned with the WICC's Strategic Plan and directly support a number of priority action items. The WICC's participation in the Watershed Coordinator proposal is consistent with current WICC staffing and budget allocations, and reflects recent recommendations from the WICC Board to broaden its partnership with the Departments of Public Works, Environmental Management, and the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

Obtaining adequate funding through grants and other means in support of WICC's charge and mission is priority action identified in the WICC's Strategic Plan. Work in assisting the RCD in preparing this grant application and upfront coordination of partnerships described in the grant is currently funded under WICC program. As proposed, the RCD's Watershed Coordinator grant proposal has no fiscal impact to the County. If funded the proposal will benefit the County by supporting the WICC's mission and goals. Should the grant be awarded and any formal agreements between the RCD and the County need to be developed, any fiscal obligations to the County will be disclosed and considered at that time. As currently proposed, the grant utilizes in-kind match that is already apart of the WICC's function and capacity and no cash match is anticipated. Furthermore, continued funding for the WICC program is expected over the term of the grant.

At this time, the Director of Conservation, Development and Planning is requesting approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign a letter in support of the Watershed Coordinator grant application; and approval of and authorization for the Watershed Information Center & Conservancy (WICC) Board to participate in Watershed Coordinator grant related activities, should the grant be awarded.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

A . Watershed Coordinator Support Letter

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi