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NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning

REPORT BY: Jeff Sharp, Planner III , 259-5936

SUBJECT: Conservation Development & Planning Director requests Adoption of a Resolution and related actions for submittal of an Application for a CalFed Watershed Program Grant.

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Conservation, Development and Planning requests the following actions relating to a grant application to the CalFed Watershed Program in the amount of \$394,000 for the term January 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010:

1. Adoption of a resolution authorizing the Director to apply for the grant, affirming the County's intent to conduct the proposed project pursuant to the grant conditions, and appointing a grant contact person designated by title; and
2. Approval of and authorization for the Watershed Information Center and Conservancy (WICC) Board to participate in related grant activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 16, 2007, the Director of Conservation, Development and Planning submitted a non-binding "concept" proposal to the CalFed Watershed Program to assist the Watershed Information Center and Conservancy (WICC) Board with the development of a long-term county-wide watershed monitoring program, a priority action item identified in the WICC's Strategic Plan. The conceptual proposal was for a maximum of \$394,000 for the term of 01/01/08 through 12/31/09. Tasks would support the development and analysis of watershed monitoring indicators for the Napa River watershed in conjunction with a larger regional effort in the greater North Bay/Delta area via partnerships with the University of California, Davis, Napa County Resource Conservation District, and the Sonoma Ecology Center.

On May 1, 2007 the Department received notification of approval to advance to the "full" proposal phase of the grant review process. Eligibility requirements of a full proposal application include a resolution by the Board affirming the County's intent to conduct the proposed project pursuant to all grant conditions, and appointment of a grant contact person designated by title (Patrick Lowe, Deputy Director of the Conservaiton Divsion).

The goals in the grant proposal are well aligned with the mission of the WICC, which is to educate and support the

community in its efforts to maintain and improve the health of Napa County's watershed lands. The proposed work plan further supports monitoring objectives outlined in the WICC's Watershed Monitoring Strategy; which are to characterize watershed conditions and trends using appropriate indicators and to track the success of natural resource protection and restoration efforts, and evaluate the long-term health of Napa County's watershed lands.

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

The proposed "Watershed Assessment Framework: North-Bay and Delta Scoping and Napa River Pilot Project" is a coordinated effort to develop performance measures and indicators for "watershed health." It will apply a watershed assessment framework (WAF), which is a means of evaluating/reporting on ecosystem services and socio-economic benefits/conditions, in the Napa River watershed and across the Bay-Delta region. The Napa River watershed will serve as a pilot and will be the focus of the data analysis phase of the project. The information learned through this pilot application will provide Napa County a set of key watershed indicators and a framework by which to gauge and report the effectiveness of local restoration and watershed enhancement activities intend to improve water quality and meet state and local watershed goals (i.e., TMDL implementation and reporting requirements). Outcomes learned from the Napa River pilot application can also then be used to inform a broader application of the WAF throughout the North Bay-Delta region.

Partners on the project include: The University of California, Davis; Napa County Resource Conservation District; Sonoma Ecology Center; U.S. Geological Survey; and the Calaveras County Water District (representing stakeholders in the Delta Mokelumne and Calaveras watersheds). The project will provide important information to stakeholders about appropriate ways to measure watershed conditions and the effectiveness of actions taken to improve water quality and meet local and regional watershed goals and objectives. (Project work tasks and budget outline is attached.)

The project will be coordinated with a statewide effort involving other related projects in the region and across California. Based on a science-based process to develop a local and regional watershed indicator database, stakeholders from existing forums will be invited to join regional technical advisory committees and public forums to discuss the selected monitoring indicators. The Watershed Information Center and Conservancy (WICC) Board, the WICC's Technical Advisory Committee, the North Bay Watershed Network, as well as other targeted public forums will be used to gain stakeholder input into indicator selection and use. Although focus for the pilot application will be in the Napa River watershed, limited set of critical regional indicators will be developed. The proposed indicators will be reviewed by experts, including the CalFed Science Program prior to analysis, to address questions such as: 1) is there an appropriate suite of watershed parameters and associated

indicators? 2) Are selected watershed indicators linked to important ecosystem processes and beneficial uses? 3) How does one make/measure connections between management actions and watershed effects?

A critical aspect of the project is providing a science-based, yet understandable, depiction of conditions, influences, and changes in the Napa River watershed. For this reason, the project will develop a reporting device for the Napa River that will overtime 1) analyze conditions in the watershed relative to standards, references, and goals, 2) record change in condition over time, and 3) track differences among tributaries. In the long run, project reporting will inform local and regional adaptive management to systematically improve management policies and practices by learning from recorded outcomes. The pilot effort will also improve future development of watershed and ecosystem indicators by CALFED, the Department of Water Resources, and other state and local agencies tasked to improve watershed monitoring and other watershed management programs.

Obtaining adequate funding through grants and other means in support of WICC's charge and mission is priority action item identified in the WICC's Strategic Plan. Work in preparing this grant application and upfront coordination of partnerships described in the grant is currently funded though under WICC program. At this point in the grant application process there is no fiscal impact to the County. Should the grant be awarded, formal agreements between the state and County will be developed and 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 little if any cash match is anticipated. Furthermore, continued funding for the WICC is expected next fiscal year upon adoption of the 07-08 Budget.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Project Work Tasks and Budget Outline
- B . Resolution

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi