NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Steven Lederer - Director of Public Works
       Public Works
REPORT BY: Michael Karath, Staff Services Analyst II - 299-1477
SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution Supporting the Acquisition of a Parcel (APN 048-080-002-000) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Expand the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge

RECOMMENDATION
Director of Public Works requests adoption of a resolution supporting the acquisition of a parcel (APN 048-080-002-000) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for management as part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge comprises 8,620 acres along the north shore of San Pablo Bay in Sonoma, Solano, and Napa Counties in northern California. The refuge includes open bay/tidal marsh, mud flats, and seasonal and managed wetland habitats.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking County support of the purchase of a 420-acre parcel from a private owner that includes 358 acres in Solano County and 62 acres in Napa County, to add to the refuge. The Napa-Sonoma marshes in San Pablo Bay have been greatly impacted by human activities such as hydraulic mining, salt production, water diversions, and diking, draining, and filling for industrial and agricultural uses. About 85 percent of the historic tidal marshes of San Pablo Bay have been altered, negatively affecting the ability of the remaining tidal marshes to accept winter rainfall and purify water in the bay.

The refuge provides critical migratory and wintering habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, particularly diving ducks, and provides year-round habitat for endangered, threatened, and sensitive species like the California clapper rail, salt marsh harvest mouse, California black rail, San Pablo song sparrow, and Suisun shrew. Numerous other threatened, endangered, and sensitive species require tidal marsh habitat for their survival, including 11 fish species that swim through San Pablo Bay to reach their fresh water spawning grounds.
FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

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

The San Pablo Bay National Refuge (Refuge) was created in 1974 to protect migratory birds, wetland habitat, and endangered species in response to rapidly disappearing wetlands located within the Pacific Flyway. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified a private property owner who is interested in selling land in this area, which will allow for expansion of the Refuge. They have requested a Resolution from Napa County in support of this expansion. County staff has reviewed the request and can find no significant negative impacts to the County in allowing this purchase to proceed.

The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge comprises 8,620 acres along the north shore of San Pablo Bay in Sonoma, Solano, and Napa Counties in northern California. The Refuge includes open bay/tidal marsh, mud flats, and seasonal and managed wetland habitats. Most of the land has been donated, some has been purchased using funds from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Fish and Wildlife Service manages the old military base at Skaggs Island and manages 11,200 acres under a lease from the State of California.

The Refuge and the San Pablo Bay support the largest wintering population of canvasbacks on the west coast, and provides habitat the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and the California clapper rail. About 85 percent of the historic tidal marshes of San Pablo Bay have been altered, negatively affecting the ability of the remaining tidal marshes to accept winter rainfall and purify water in the bay. The refuge provides critical migratory and wintering habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, particularly diving ducks, and provides year-round habitat for endangered, threatened, and sensitive species like the California clapper rail, salt marsh harvest mouse, California black rail, San Pablo song sparrow, and Suisun shrew. Numerous other threatened, endangered, and sensitive species require tidal marsh habitat for their survival, including 11 fish species that swim through San Pablo Bay to reach their fresh water spawning grounds.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A. Map - Land to be purchased
B. Map - ParcelQuest map
C. U.S. Department of Interior Letter Requesting Support
D. Resolution

CEO Recommendation: Approve