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1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov

MEETING SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS
Board Meeting – March 22, 2017
1450 Halyard Dr., Suite 6, West Sacramento

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Chair Jim Provenza.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and a quorum was established.

Board Members Present: Jim Provenza, Dolly Sandoval, Don Nottoli, Chuck Winn, Elizabeth Patterson, Todd Ferrara, Karen Finn, Mike Eaton, Darla Guenzler
Ex Officio Members Present: None
Liaison Advisors Present: Daniel Welsh, Jeff Melby, Steve Chappell, Marth Ozonoff, Erik Vink

The Chair announced that Senator Bill Dodd has been appointed to the Board as the Senate's non-voting ex-officio member. The Chair also introduced Michael Crow, Deputy Attorney General, who is filling in at this meeting for the Conservancy's assigned Attorney General Nicole Rinke.

Delta Conservancy Counsel Michael Crow swore in Elizabeth Patterson as a new Board Member prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Agenda Item 5 – Consent Calendar (*Action Item*)

MOTION: Board Member Winn moved, seconded by Board Member Finn, to approve the summary of the January 25, 2017 Board meeting. No other issues were included in the consent calendar.

A voice vote was taken by the Board to approve the motion.

2. Agenda Item 6 – Executive Officer's Report

The Executive Officer gave each of the Board Members a copy of the report titled *Human Use of Restored and Naturalized Delta Landscapes* by Brett Milligan and Alejo Kraus-Polk of U.C. Davis and *A Delta Renewed* by the San Francisco Estuary Institute. The Executive Officer then presented the Executive Officer's Report which included updates on the Proposition 1 Grant Program, the Arundo

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Control and Restoration Project, the Cache Slough Regional Planning effort, coordinated water quality monitoring at the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program, the Delta Marketing Project, and coordination efforts by the Conservancy with the San Francisco Estuary Institute for a July workshop on the Delta Landscapes project. Aaron Haiman gave an update on the Creek Week Delta cleanup that will be occurring on April 29, 2017. Debra Kustic presented the expenditure report for the current fiscal year. The Board requested an update on the CalSTARS expenditure at the next Board Meeting. The Executive Officer also presented the meeting matrix and a letter received from the Environmental Defense Fund on the withdrawal of the Habitat Improvement for Swainson's Hawk at Elliot Ranch Project from the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program.

The Executive Officer thanked Rogene and Bill Reynolds, and Jerry Robertson for providing a tour of the South Delta for Conservancy staff in early March. The Executive Officer also showcased two videos of levee damage at Tyler Island and McCormack-Williamson Tract that were provided by Judah Grossman of The Nature Conservancy. The Board discussed the current flood fight activities in the Delta and the benefits of past flood improvements projects.

3. Agenda Item 7 – Program and Policy Subcommittee Update

Debra Kustic presented an update on the Program and Policy Subcommittee meeting that occurred on February 15, 2017. The Program and Policy Subcommittee discussed the Proposition 1 Grant Program, agricultural sustainability project eligibility within the Proposition 1 Grant Program, staffing updates, and the fiscal year 16/17 budget.

4. Agenda Item 8 – Proposition 1 Grant Program Approved Project Update

Laura Jensen provided an update on the Proposition 1 Grant Program. For the current solicitation cycle, five of the nine invited concept proposal applicants submitted a full proposal, requesting a total of \$6.4 million. All proposals have been reviewed by staff and a panel of state and federal agency experts. Funding recommendations will be brought to the Board for consideration at the April 26, 2017 special Board meeting.

For the current active grants:

- One grant has submitted its first progress report and invoice.
- Two grants have their first progress reports due on April 30, 2017.
- One grant is being routed for signature.
- Two draft grant agreements are under development and will be routed for signatures at the end of April;
- The Paradise Cut Flood and Easement Acquisition Project has met its deadlines for removing conditional approvals;
- The Ducks Unlimited Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project has been delayed due to additional state funding coordination. The project did not complete the CEQA process by the Board's March deadline. It is anticipated that the project will complete the CEQA process by early July; and

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- The Swainson's Hawk at Elliot Ranch project withdrew from the grant program due to the landowner deciding to sell the property and no longer wishing to move forward with the project.

The Board discussed the reasons for the delay of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project. The project is making progress and applicants believe that the July date is reasonable and expect to meet it.

The Board requested that any project that will not meet its Board-approved deadline for releasing reserved funding or clearing conditional approvals be brought before the Board as an action item requesting an extension of the deadline.

The Chair moved Agenda Item 10 before Agenda Item 9 due to Board Member Guenzler need to leave the meeting early.

5. Agenda Item 10 – Request for Approval of the Paradise Cut Flood and Conservation Easement Acquisition Project as a Result of Satisfying the Conditions of Approval (*Action Item*)

Laura Jensen presented the staff report for the Paradise Cut Flood and Conservation Easement Acquisition Project. At the May 25, 2016 Board Meeting the Board reserved funds for the project, pending the completion of the CEQA process and conditional upon the submission of the required land acquisition documents listed in the Conservancy's acquisition checklist. The project proponents have met these conditions and completed the CEQA process. Staff recommended that the Board consider the materials provided to satisfy the conditions placed on the approval of the Paradise Cut Flood and Conservation Easement Acquisition Project (Prop1-Y1-2015-010), approve the project, release the reserved funds, and authorize the Executive Officer to execute the grant agreement.

John Caine, from American Rivers, presented on the project, the completed CEQA process, and the land acquisition documents. The Board discussed the uses of the project, its benefits, and progress made to date.

MOTION: *Board Member Winn moved, seconded by Vice Chair Sandoval, to consider the materials provided to satisfy the conditions placed on the approval of the Paradise Cut Flood and Conservation Easement Acquisition Project (Prop1-Y1-2015-010), approve the project, release the reserved funds, and authorize the Executive Officer to execute the grant agreement.*

A roll call vote was taken with all Board Members present voting to approve the motion.

The Board returned to Agenda Item 9.

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6. Agenda Item 9 – Initial Concepts and Timeline for the 2017/2018 Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines Revisions

Laura Jensen presented initial concepts for revisions to the 2017/2018 Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines. Staff plans to update the Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines in advance of the next solicitation cycle. As a result of some of the challenges that the program has faced this year, staff is assessing the program to identify ways to enhance programmatic efficiency and effectiveness.

Staff will take input from the Board's discussions and present the draft 2017/2018 Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines at the May 25, 2017 Board Meeting. If approved by the Board, the Guidelines will be posted for public comment, and the final Grant Guidelines will be presented to the Board for consideration at the July 26, 2017 Board Meeting.

The following concepts for revisions to the grant guidelines were presented and discussed:

1) Potential Changes to Solicitation

- a. Streamline concept proposal process
- b. Allow more time for full proposal
- c. Clarify that funding for planning projects is available
- d. Increase implementation funding caps or remove per-project min/max entirely
- e. Revise the evaluation criteria and full proposal requirements for clarity and brevity
- f. Clarify grant guidelines

2) Potential Changes to Granting Process

- a. Manage internal capacity to ensure quick processing on grant agreements
- b. Fast-track agreements with earlier start dates
- c. Allow applicants to develop their monitoring and management plans as a condition of the grant agreement
- d. Review the grant agreement to identify possible areas that can be streamlined

3) Potential Changes to Project Cultivation

- a. Increase and diversify applicant workshops
- b. Work to scope and cultivate viable projects
- c. Provide examples of successful projects

The Board discussed the feedback that has been received from grant applicants on the Proposition 1 Grant Program's process, staff's initial concepts for changes to the guidelines, and potential collaboration to improve participation in the Program. In general, the Board supported the proposed changes to the solicitation so long as the changes are consistent with the intent of bond funding. Public comment on the initial concepts was also received. Members of the public expressed their encouragement for the proposed changes related to the concept proposal process and planning projects; they remarked on the pre-award expenses associated with the Conservancy's grant program and encouraged staff to explore ways to reduce the costs of applying to and participating in the program.

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7. Agenda Item 11 – Present Initial Working Draft of the 2017 Strategic Plan

The Executive Officer presented the Initial Working Draft of the 2017 Strategic Plan and requested the Board to review and provide comments by April 7, 2017. Kearns & West will then incorporate the comments and staff will present a public draft of the 2017 Strategic Plan for the Board's consideration at the April 26, 2017 special Board Meeting. If approved by the Board, the public draft will be made available for a 45-day public review period and the final draft of the 2017 Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board for consideration at the July 26, 2017 Board meeting.

8. Agenda Item 12 – Delta Marketing Project Update

Brandon Chapin presented the Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan. A product of the Delta Marketing Taskforce, the Marketing Plan has been finalized and identifies six "Key Strategic Imperatives":

- Create a unified tourist perception of the Delta
- Empower partnership and collaboration among stakeholders
- Bolster off-season visitation creatively
- Add content marketing & crowdsourcing content to current efforts
- Improve guest experience and visitor services
- Share environmental efforts in engaging mediums

The Marketing Plan is a guiding document for marketing efforts in the Delta over the next 5 years. The Task Force will be meeting regularly to consider which strategies to pursue collectively and to discuss transition and content for the Delta marketing website.

Brandon also presented the Delta marketing website which will be launched in late-March/early-April. The website is to serve as a "hub" to the numerous recreation and tourism opportunities in the Delta, as well as highlights events, businesses, and best locations for activities. The launch of the site will coincide with the Delta Leader Program's "Best of the Delta" promotion project.

The Board discussed the potential activities and locations to highlight on the website, the location boundaries for what can be included in the website's map, and the transition of the plan and website to be "Delta-run."

9. Agenda Item 13 – Potential Agenda Items for April 26, 2017

The Executive Officer presented potential agenda items for the April 26, 2017 Special Board Meeting. Along with standing items, the Board will consider approval of staff recommendations for the second solicitation cycle of the Proposition 1 Grant Program, and consider approval to post the public draft of the 2017 Strategic Plan for a 45-day public comment period. The agenda will also resume having regular updates on Water Fix, EcoRestore, and the Delta Protection Commission.

10. Agenda Item 14 – Public Comments

No public comment.

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BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

- 1) The Board requested to receive an update on the CalSTARS expenditure. **(Agenda Item 6)**
- 2) The Board requested that any project that will not meet its Board-approved deadline for releasing reserved funding or clearing conditional approvals be brought before the Board as an action item requesting an extension of the deadline. **(Agenda Item 8)**

MEETING ADJOURNED by Chair Provenza at 11:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted on March 27, 2017
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Contact Person:

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