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EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
March 22, 2017

~ PROGRAM UPDATE ~

Ecosystem Restoration

Proposition 1 Grant Program: The Conservancy's Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program (Grant Program) focuses on the restoration of important species and habitat, on improving water quality, and on agricultural sustainability. The Grant Program identifies projects to protect and restore California rivers, lakes, streams, and watersheds are eligible for funding under Proposition 1 (Sec. 79732 et seq). The Conservancy received five full proposals for the 2016-2017 fiscal year solicitation. In total, applicants requested \$6.4 million. All proposals have been reviewed by Delta Conservancy staff and by at least two external reviewers on the Professional Review Panel. The Professional Review Panel consists of State and federal agency experts from the Delta Protection Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Water Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Staff will provide the Board with recommendations for funding at the April Board meeting.

For the 2015-2016 funding cycle, the Conservancy approved or reserved funding for nine projects that requested approximately \$6.3 million in grant funding. One project has withdrawn from the program, leaving eight remaining projects with a total funding request of \$5.9 million. To date, three grant agreements have been fully executed, one is being routed for signature, two are being drafted, and two are conditionally approved.

Arundo Control and Restoration Project: The Arundo Control and Restoration Program permits are in the process of being finalized. The Army Corps of Engineers has completed and issued the 408 permit. The Central Valley Flood Protection Board has completed and issued the encroachment permit. The Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit is still outstanding. That permit is expected to be issued on or around March 20th. This will be the final permit required for the habitat restoration work at Ulatis Creek, which is scheduled to begin in May when the Giant Gartersnake work season opens. The Conservancy's agreement with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to complete the Arundo Control and Restoration Project is in effect through December 2019. The Conservancy's proposal for Phase 2 funding from DWR is still under review.

Cache Slough Regional Planning: The group continues to meet monthly with meetings held in February and March and meetings scheduled for April, May and June. Participants continue to include representatives from Solano and Yolo Counties; the Yolo, Solano, and Dixon Resource Conservation Districts; the Solano County Water Agency; Reclamation District 2068; and several state agencies and consultants. The group has reviewed and discussed available information on agricultural systems, flood protection, water supply and ecosystems and is beginning to overlay these information sets to glean initial concepts for integration and compatibility. The next meeting is scheduled for the morning of Friday, April 14th.

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Water Quality

Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring at Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge: The Delta Conservancy submitted a proposal for \$25,000 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services for water quality monitoring at the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The proposed monitoring includes establishing baseline water quality monitoring for nine locations and a report. The proposed monitoring will build on the previous monitoring by the Conservancy at the Refuge for basic water quality parameters to help determine current water quality conditions.

The Refuge provides important habitat for fish and wildlife, supporting more than 200 species of birds and numerous fish and wildlife species, including several species listed as threatened and endangered. Monitoring will provide important information for management of the Refuge as good water quality is essential to the health of the plants and wildlife that use Refuge waters and to support continued opportunities for recreation related wildlife viewing.

Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (MERP): Over the next six months, fish consumption advisory signs will be posted at sites throughout the Delta. The MERP signs were developed using scientific information from advisories issued by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). The field-tested signs provide warnings and guidance on the specific types and amount of Delta fish that can be eaten safely. Delta MERP will collaborate with agencies and organizations to continue posting advisory signs at various locations throughout the Delta where people are fishing or boating. The first sign was posted in Consumes River Preserve in January (pictured below).



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Economic Development

Delta Marketing Program: The project is nearly complete. The Delta Marketing Plan is final and is included in the Board Packets with the staff report for the Delta Marketing Project Update. The Task Force will meet regularly in the future to consider which strategies of the Marketing Plan to pursue collectively and to discuss the transition of, and content for, the Delta marketing website.

The Delta marketing website will be ready for a “hard” launch by the end of March and is expected to be linked to Visit California’s website. The participants of the Delta Protection Commission’s Delta Leaders Program are working on a “Best of the Delta” promotion that would part of the website.

Coordination

Delta Landscape Restoration Guide Workshop: The Delta Conservancy, in coordination with the San Francisco Estuary Institute, the Delta Science Program, and the Water Education Foundation, is planning for a workshop in July in the Delta. The Delta Landscape Restoration Guide Workshop will introduce and familiarize participants with the Delta Landscapes project, the recent report “A Delta Renewed”, and seek input on how the report can best be used. A guideline document describing how to use the Delta Renewed report will be produced using the information and ideas from the participants at the workshop.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF – January 25, 2017

1. Staff will provide more information on the progress of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project at the next Board Meeting.

Staff Response: Progress on the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project is included in the Board Report for the Proposition 1 Grant Program Update.

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET UPDATE

Agenda Item 6.2 (Attachment 2): Expenditure Report

OUTREACH-DELTA MEETING MATRIX

Agenda Item 6.3 (Attachment 3): Outreach-Delta Meeting Matrix

CORRESPONDENCE

Agenda Item 6.4 (Attachment 4): Letter from the Environmental Defense Fund on the withdrawal of the Elliot Ranch Project from the Proposition 1 Grant Program

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