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EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT July 26, 2017

~ PROGRAM UPDATE ~

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM

Proposition 1 Grant Program:

The Conservancy's Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program funds competitive grants for multibenefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects in accordance with statewide priorities (Section 79730 of the Water Code). Staff is preparing for the third grant cycle (2017-2018), which will open in August; a detailed timeline is included with the request for Board approval of the Grant Guidelines (See Agenda Item 10).

The Conservancy Board approved or reserved \$4.4 million for four projects in the second cycle (2016-2017). Staff is working with grantees to clear conditions for approval and to prepare grant agreements for these projects. For the first cycle (2015-2016), the Board awarded or reserved approximately \$5.9 million for eight projects. Currently, there are five active projects total and staff is working with grantees to prepare grant agreements for the remaining three projects. More information about approved projects is provided in Agenda Item 8.

Delta Carbon Projects:

The Conservancy continues to meet with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to develop a pilot project on existing DWR managed wetlands on Sherman and Twitchell Islands as a way to demonstrate the newly adopted California Wetland protocol. Additionally, the Conservancy and our partners are meeting with other interested parties, including investors, who have expressed willingness to fund carbon projects.

Regional Planning to Identify Effective Investments of Proposition 1 Funding

Cache Slough Regional Planning:

The group has completed Phase 1 of the planning effort and is currently reviewing a draft final report. The group will continue to meet in late July or early August to develop a scope of work for Phase 2 of the effort.

Central Delta Corridor Partnership:

The Conservancy continues to convene this group of owners of publically financed and publically owned lands to discuss coordinated management and restoration opportunities.

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Invasive Species Coordination, Control, and Restoration

Arundo Control and Restoration Project:

Construction began at the Ulatis Creek restoration site in June. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation issued the necessary access approvals to conduct Arundo control at Brannan Island State Recreation Area and two nearby CDFW fishing access sites. A rare plant survey was conducted on July 6, 2017 at several state-owned sites on Brannan Island to ensure all necessary avoidance and mitigation for rare plants is identified in advance of Arundo control efforts this fall. This work is being coordinated with biological control efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Conservancy staff have requested an amendment of the USDA agreement for additional funds and a 1-year time extension. The Department of Water Resources is still reviewing the Conservancy's proposal for funding Phase 2 of this project which would expand the resources and scope of the existing program.

Delta Invasive Species Symposium:

The Conservancy-led Delta Invasive Species Interagency Team is planning an August 29 symposium at the University of California, Davis on invasive species in the Delta. This one-day symposium will include speakers, a panel discussion, and informational posters. Registration and poster abstract submission are currently open and 60 people have registered for the symposium to date.

WATERSHED PROGRAM

Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory for Landscape Scale Evaluation of Wetlands in the Delta and Suisun Marsh:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 has awarded the Conservancy a \$300,000 Wetland Program Development Grant. In partnership with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board, Delta Science Program, and Aquatic Science Center, these funds will be used to:

- Develop a common map of aquatic resources for the Delta,
- Establish a standard approach to wetland mapping for the Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory (DARI),
- Train local staff to develop the Geographical Information System (GIS) dataset,
- Build capacity to apply mapping standards, and
- Create a dataset that will be integrated into EcoAtlas and used for regional watershed restoration, tracking, and reporting.

At the September 27, 2017 Board meeting, the Board will consider approval for the Conservancy to enter into a contract to implement tasks related to this grant.

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (MERP):

Conservancy staff continue to coordinate the posting of mercury consumption advisory signs in the Delta. Four signs were posted in Sacramento County in June and the State Lands Commission is coordinating the posting of the Central and South Delta advisory signs in Suisun City. Staff is currently seeking input for posting the San Joaquin River advisory signs in San Joaquin County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Delta Marketing:

In alignment with the Delta Marketing Plan, the Conservancy will assist the Delta Marketing Task Force with implementing a Delta signage strategy using funding provided by the Delta Stewardship Council. The Conservancy will be convening public workshops during the next year to develop a Delta Signage Plan that will prioritize the best locations for various types of signs in the Delta, as well as design a coordinated look for signage in the Delta.

The Conservancy is also working with the Delta Protection Commission to develop a map of recreation opportunities in the Delta. Tied to the VisitCADelta website's maps and locations, this physical map will include the recreation opportunities that the Delta has to offer, as well as interesting facts about the Delta's heritage and culture. The Conservancy and Commission has convened a Delta Marketing Task Force meeting on July 26 to coordinate preferences and priorities for the map's design.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF – May 24, 2017

- 1) The Board requested that staff add a discussion item on Agricultural Sustainability project Proposition 1 eligibility to the June Program and Policy Subcommittee meeting.

Staff Response: The item was discussed at the June 21, 2017 Program and Policy Subcommittee meeting and the resolution of outstanding issues is included in the final draft of the Grant Guidelines that will be considered under Agenda Item 10..

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET UPDATE

Agenda Item 7.2 (Attachment 2): Expenditure Report

OUTREACH-DELTA MEETING MATRIX

Agenda Item 7.3 (Attachment 3): Outreach-Delta Meeting Matrix

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CORRESPONDENCE

None

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