

Meeting Date: March 22, 2017

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Initial Concepts and Timeline for the 2017/18 Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines Revisions

Staff Report

FISCAL YEAR 2017/18 SOLICITATION

The Delta Conservancy will run its third cycle of the Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program (Proposition 1 Grant Program) during the 2017/18 fiscal year. Staff plans to update the grant program Grant Guidelines in advance of the next solicitation. As a result of some of the challenges that the program has faced this year, staff has begun an internal review of the grant program – including outreach, solicitation, and agreement processes – to identify areas that can be modified to promote enhanced programmatic efficiency and effectiveness. Staff has collected feedback from applicants, grantees, and reviewers, and has incorporated this feedback into a synthesis of challenges and the recommended changes to address these challenges. Staff will present this synthesis to the Board, and will incorporate the Board’s feedback into the planning and Grant Guidelines for the next solicitation. Staff proposes to bring revised draft Grant Guidelines to the Board at the May meeting. If approved by the Board, staff will post the draft guidelines for public comment for the month of June, and will bring final Grant Guidelines to the Board at the July 2017 meeting.

BACKGROUND

Proposition 1 identified \$50 million for the Delta Conservancy “for competitive grants for multibenefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects in accordance with statewide priorities (Sec. 79730 and 79731).” The Conservancy’s Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program is focused on restoring Delta ecosystems, improving water quality, and enhancing agricultural sustainability. During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Conservancy ran its first grant cycle for the Prop 1 Grant Program, followed by a second cycle in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The Conservancy anticipates administering at least one grant cycle each fiscal year, with a third grant solicitation period opening in late summer of 2017 and funding being awarded in spring of 2018. The Grant Program is competitive and Proposals are subject to a rigorous scoring and evaluation process by both staff and an external review panel and are recommended based upon score and funding availability.

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