

Meeting Date: July 26, 2017

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Request for Approval to Extend the Deadline to Complete the CEQA Process for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project

Staff Report

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board extend the deadline for Ducks Unlimited to complete the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project (#Prop 1-Y1-2015-003), to January 24, 2018.

REQUEST BACKGROUND

The applicant will not meet the July 2017 deadline for completing CEQA. The CEQA process has been further delayed because of a prolonged review process by the lead agency, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), due to unforeseeable and unavoidable circumstances including tribal consultation delays. The final administrative draft of the CEQA documents were sent on May 18, 2017 to CDFW for their review and approval. The applicant anticipates that they will complete the CEQA process by January 2018.

The Board reserved \$2,000,000 for the project at the May 25, 2016 Board meeting, as part of the Conservancy's first Proposition 1 grant cycle. At that time, the Board reserved funding until March 22, 2017 to allow the project proponents to complete the CEQA process. Due to the need to coordinate between State funders, the project was delayed and did not complete the CEQA process by the Board's original deadline. Project proponents received funding to complete the CEQA process from the CDFW Prop 1 grant program. Developing and executing the grant agreement with CDFW took three months longer than expected, delaying the start of the project. At the March 22, 2017 Board meeting, the Board granted an extension to the project until July 26, 2017.

The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project (#Prop 1-Y1-2015-003), submitted by Ducks Unlimited, is a Category 2 implementation project with the goals of enhancing habitat for migrating waterfowl and other species, improving agricultural sustainability and wildlife friendly agricultural practices, and increasing public access opportunities at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. The project will create 220 acres of wetland and improve water management on 1,250 acres of existing wetlands and 540 acres of agricultural land.

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