

Meeting Date: September 27, 2017
Page 1



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Request for Approval to Enter into a Contract to Receive \$300,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Subsequently Enter into a \$264,000 Contract with the San Francisco Estuary Institute/Aquatic Science Center to Develop a Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory for Landscape Scale Evaluation of Wetlands in the Delta and Suisun Marsh

Staff Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends approval to receive funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) in the amount of \$300,000. Staff also recommends Board authorization for staff to enter into a contract with the San Francisco Estuary Institute/Aquatic Science Center (SFEI/ASC) for \$264,000 to develop a Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory for Landscape Scale Evaluation of Wetlands in the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Conservancy, in partnership with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), the Delta Science Program, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the San Francisco Estuary Institute's Aquatic Science Center, is facilitating the development of a publically available basemap of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh aquatic resources using a standardized, regionally relevant classification system for consistent tracking and reporting. Aquatic resources include wetlands, streams, lakes, rivers, springs, seeps, ponds, and groundwater. This will:

- Establish a standard approach to wetland mapping for the Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory (DARI)
- Develop a common map of Delta and Suisun Marsh aquatic resources
- Train agencies and organization in the Delta and build their capacity to apply mapping standards that will be integrated into EcoAtlas
- Create a dataset of aquatic resources, maps and other relevant information, that will be integrated into EcoAtlas to be used for regional watershed restoration, tracking, and reporting

The scope of work for the proposed contract is detailed in Attachment 2.

Meeting Date: September 27, 2017

Page 2

PROJECT BACKGROUND

This project builds upon the Conservancy's Delta Watershed Initiative Network (Delta WIN) effort by leveraging resources to improve the ecological benefits of the Bay Delta watershed through taking a watershed approach to coordinating and facilitating water quality projects. Over the last four years, the U.S. EPA has awarded the Conservancy grants totaling approximately \$1,000,000 to enhance tracking of wetland restoration projects and improve access and reporting of water quality and ecological data. Projects funded by these grants include:

- *Visualizing and Sharing Intensive Data Assessments*: Synthesizing multiple comprehensive datasets through EcoAtlas to visualize data for common understanding and making the data available to a broad user community
- *Delta Environmental Data for Understanding California Estuaries (DEDUCE)*: Developing a data repository to include Delta water quality data in the State's current infrastructure of databases, and
- *Advance Performance Measure Reporting*: Developing reporting functionalities within EcoAtlas for better reporting performance measure outcomes and outputs

The Conservancy coordinates and seeks input on implementation of these projects from the California Water Quality Monitoring Council and other Delta stakeholders. These projects are near completion and final project reports will be completed for the Data Visualization and DEDUCE projects at the end of September and for the Advance Performance Measure Reporting project in April 2018.

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 established the Conservancy and includes two relevant mandates; (1) to protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration; and (2) to protect and improve water quality. These efforts are consistent with the following objectives as outlined in the Conservancy's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, Goal 2. Delta Ecosystem Viability.

- Objective 1: Protect, restore or enhance habitat and improve water quality through implementation of grant funding projects
- Objective 2: Strengthen the coordination of water quality monitoring, data integration, and implementation of best management practices in partnership with existing Delta watershed efforts

Both the Delta Plan and Proposition 1 call for the careful tracking of restoration efforts and reporting on performance measures. This project will benefit both the tracking and reporting of restoration projects under the Delta Plan, EcoRestore, Proposition 1, and other programs in the Delta.

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