

Meeting Date: September 27, 2017

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## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

September 27, 2017

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### ~ 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). Conservancy staff have received and evaluated concept proposals for the third grant cycle (FY2017-18) and will provide applicants with written feedback and the opportunity to discuss feedback at a meeting in late September. Full proposal solicitation will open October 2 with full proposals due November 30, 2017.

The Conservancy Board approved or reserved \$4.4 million for four projects in the second cycle (2016-2017). One agreement has been executed, and staff is working with grantees to clear conditions for approval and to prepare grant agreements for the remaining projects. For the first cycle (2015-2016), the Board awarded or reserved approximately \$5.9 million for eight projects. Currently, there are a total of five active projects 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 7.

##### 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 October to develop a scope of work for Phase 2 of the effort.

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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. At the August meeting, the corridor land-owners (Department of Water Resources, Metropolitan Water District, the Nature Conservancy, California Waterfowl Association, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) agreed to develop a Corridor Restoration Strategy that will identify restoration and coordinated land management opportunities. The Conservancy is working with the partners to develop a scope of work for the effort.

Invasive Species Coordination, Control, and Restoration

Arundo Control and Restoration Project:

Construction began at the Ulatis Creek restoration site in June with ground preparation activities, including smoothing of terrain and clearing of invasive weeds. The area-wide irrigation system will be installed September 6 and 7 to prepare soil and begin non-native weed control (see Figure 1 and 2). The Delta Conservancy's partner, Sonoma Ecology Center, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are finalizing plans for integrated chemical and biological control at Brannan Island State Recreational Area to begin this fall. The USDA approved 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.



Figure 1. Ulatis Creek habitat restoration site at the time of initial biological monitoring.



Figure 2. Ulatis Creek habitat restoration site after ground preparation activities.

Delta Invasive Species Symposium:

The Conservancy-led [Delta Inter-agency Invasive Species Coordination Team](#), Delta Stewardship Council, and the University of California, Davis sponsored an August 29 symposium at the University of California, Davis on invasive species in the Delta. More than 130 people attended this one-day symposium that included speakers, a panel discussion, and informational posters.

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### **WATERSHED PROGRAM**

The Conservancy is collaborating with the Yolo Basin Foundation (YBF) in developing a water quality monitoring education and outreach project. The YBF is developing the project as an extension of their *Discover the Flyway* field trips, combining in-class lectures with hands-on field learning. The water quality monitoring will include monitoring conventional pollutants and will continue for two years with monitoring 3-4 times during the wet and dry seasons. The purpose of this project is to collect water quality data in support of existing efforts in the Yolo Basin, and to introduce students to the critical issues of water quality, healthy communities, and climate change. Total cost for the project is approximately \$10,000 and will be funded by the Bureau of Reclamation grant to the Conservancy.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

#### Delta Marketing:

A contractor has been selected for to facilitate the Delta Signage Workshops. The Conservancy is currently soliciting a contractor to develop the Delta Signage Plan and sign proofs based on feedback received at the public workshops. The first of the five public workshops will be held in late October and will focus on the current signage issues in the Delta.

The Conservancy is also working with the Delta Protection Commission to procure a contractor for the development of a map of recreation opportunities in the Delta. The map is expected to be completed and available for the 2018 Delta Summer season.

### **BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF – July 26, 2017**

- 1) The Board requested that staff number each row of the expenditure report for easier reference.

*Staff Response: The expenditure report has been numbered as requested.*

- 2) The Board requested the following changes to the 2017-2022 Delta Conservancy Strategic Plan:
  - a. Replace a few of the pictures in the plan with pictures that include people
  - b. Clarify that the water quality best management practices goal is for outflow improvements
  - c. Specify that the code section referenced in Appendix C is the Public Resources Code

*Staff Response: The changes to the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan have been made as requested. A copy of the Strategic Plan can be found on the Delta Conservancy's website.*

- 3) The Board requested that a discussion regarding the agricultural sustainability external reviewer for Proposition 1 be added to a future Program and Policy Subcommittee or full Board meeting.

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*Staff Response: The agricultural sustainability external reviewer for Proposition 1 will be discussed during the Proposition 1 Grant Program Update.*

***DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET UPDATE***

Agenda Item 6 (Attachment 2): Expenditure Report

***OUTREACH-DELTA MEETING MATRIX***

Agenda Item 6 (Attachment 3): Outreach-Delta Meeting Matrix

***CORRESPONDENCE***

None

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