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1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6  
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***Request for Approval of the California Environmental Quality Act Responsible Agency Findings and Grant Award for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project***

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**Staff Report**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board consider the [Final Mitigated Negative Declaration](#), prepared by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the lead agency in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and adopt Resolution 18-001 which finds that all necessary mitigation measures have been included in the project to eliminate any significant effects on the environment, and that no additional mitigation measures within the Board's authority are necessary.

Contingent upon the adoption of the responsible agency findings, staff recommends that the Board approve the grant request for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project and authorize the Executive Officer to execute a grant agreement. The board previously reserved funds for this project as part of the first Proposition 1 grant cycle.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project (#Prop 1-Y1-2015-003), submitted by Ducks Unlimited, Inc. 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.

**BUDGET**

The Delta Conservancy Board reserved \$2,000,000 for the implementation of this project, which includes the installation of new culverts, relocation of a supply pump, a new water control structure, two new diversion structures, and miscellaneous canal enhancements. Construction of the project is expected to run through September 2019.

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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. The Board reserved funding until March 22, 2017 to allow the project proponents to complete the CEQA process, and to clear the conditions placed on the award (see the Proposition 1 Grant Program Update for more information on conditions and the dates on which they were cleared). 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Proposition 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 of the project until July 26, 2017. The applicant did not meet the July 2017 deadline for completing CEQA because of a prolonged review process by the lead agency, CDFW, and due to unforeseeable and unavoidable circumstances including tribal consultation delays. In July 2017, the Board granted an extension until January 24, 2018.

On January 8, 2018, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as the lead agency, made findings of no significant effect, and adopted the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration, including the Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program. The Delta Conservancy, as a Responsible Agency, has reviewed these documents and findings, and staff recommends that the Board make Responsible Agency Findings concluding that all necessary mitigation measures have been included in the project to eliminate any significant effects on the environment. Staff further recommends that the Delta Conservancy approve the requested grant and authorize the Executive Officer to execute the grant agreement.

**Contact**

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