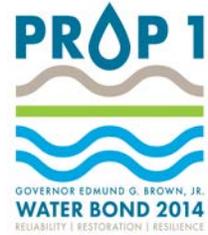




SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

A California State Agency



Proposition 1 Grant Program 2017-18 Staff Recommendation

I. Project Overview

Project Title	Mitchell Trust Farm Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Easement Acquisition		
Applicant	Yolo Habitat Conservancy		
Project Number	Prop 1-1707		
Category	Implementation	Funding Request	\$2,829,718
County	Yolo	Total Project Cost	\$2,922,068
Score	87.0	Funding Recommended	\$2,829,718
Staff Recommendation	Approve requested funds conditional upon submittal and approval of the items enumerated in the recommendation below.		

II. Staff Recommendations

Delta Conservancy staff recommends that the Board approve funding for the Mitchell Trust Farm Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Easement Acquisition project (Prop 1-1707) proposed by Yolo Habitat Conservancy conditional upon the submittal and approval of the items enumerated below.

Conditions of Approval:

- (1) A revised budget that justifies and/or refines amounts requested for project management the development of a management plan.

Conditional approvals must be resolved by August 1, 2018.

Staff has prepared the text below based on staff's best understanding of the information provided in the application. The Conservancy has received comments on the proposal from the Professional Review Panel, the Delta Stewardship Council, and local governments and districts, water agencies, and tribes that responded to the local notification process. Prior to entering into a grant agreement, staff will work with the applicant to further refine the project's scope of work and to address any remaining comments.

III. Project Summary

The Mitchell Trust Farm Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Easement Acquisition project will purchase a multi-species habitat conservation easement on the 275.31-acre Mitchell Trust Farm property to protect important habitat for listed species in perpetuity. The property shares both its southern and eastern borders with the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, and therefore this project will expand permanent protection in an important wildlife corridor; it will also provide high quality foraging habitat for Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, and tricolored blackbird, and habitat for two nesting pairs of burrowing owls. This project is located in Yolo County, 5.5 miles southeast of the City of Davis. The project site is privately owned and is currently leveled for farming. See Attachment 1 for a project location map.

Delta Conservancy funding will be used to prepare for and purchase a conservation easement. Specifically, the applicant will use the funds to conduct public outreach, develop a management plan,

draft and negotiate easement language, conduct due diligence on the property, complete a baseline conditions report, and record the easement, as well as for project management and indirect expenses.

The project is proposed by the Yolo Habitat Conservancy, which has demonstrated that the project team has sufficient expertise, capacity, and partnerships to successfully carry out this project.

The proposal requests \$2,829,718 from the Delta Conservancy. Cost share is provided by the applicant for a total contribution of \$92,350.

This project is ready to begin work as of October 31, 2018. This project is exempt from CEQA per California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19 Section 15325, subsections (a) and (b), which exempts acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas to preserve the existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats; and acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas to allow continued agricultural use of the areas. The Yolo Habitat Conservancy will coordinate with the Delta Conservancy to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. This implementation project will provide benefits that align with Proposition 1 and State priorities, and that will be maintained in perpetuity.

IV. Consistency with State Priorities

The project is consistent with and directly and specifically links to multiple actions and priorities identified in Proposition 1, the California Water Action Plan, the Conservancy's enabling legislation and strategic plan, and the Delta Plan. The project's consistency with State plans is listed below.

Prop. 1

- Section 79732 (a)(12): The project will assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened, or migratory species by improving watershed health, instream flows, fish passage, coastal or inland wetland restoration or other means, such as natural community conservation plan and habitat conservation plan implementation.
- Section 79736 (e)(3): The project protects or promotes the restoration of endangered or threatened species.

California Water Action Plan

- Action 3: Achieve the Co-Equal Goals for the Delta.
- Action 4: Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems.

Delta Conservancy's enabling legislation

- Section 32322 (b)(1): Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.
- Section 32322 (b)(2): Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscape.
- Section 32322 (b)(9): Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
- Section 32322 (b)(10): Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs).

This proposed acquisition project addresses the requirements of the Conservancy's enabling legislation (PRC section 32364.5(b)). The intended use of the property is wildlife-friendly agriculture, and the manner in which the land will be managed is as wildlife-friendly farmland by the landowner. The cost of ongoing operations, maintenance, and management will be provided by the landowner, which has demonstrated financial capacity to support those ongoing costs with income from row and field crops. The landowner will maintain responsibility for property taxes and assessments.



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Delta Conservancy's Strategic Plan

- Goal 1: Promote multi-benefit Delta working landscapes and a robust Delta tourism economy, in collaboration with local stakeholders and the Delta Protection Commission, to enhance the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta.
- Goal 2: Fund and implement high priority projects that increase Delta ecosystem viability through sustaining critical habitat, restoring ecological function, improving water quality, protecting listed species, increasing ecosystem diversity, and managing for climate change; and continue to work collaboratively to define multi-benefit restoration.

Delta Plan

- ER P3: Protect Opportunities to Restore Habitat
- DP R10: Encourage Wildlife-friendly Farming

V. Local Support

The proposal demonstrates local support from the Yolo Basin Foundation. The proposal details an approach to inform and consult with all affected parties and to avoid/reduce/mitigate conflicts with existing and adjacent land uses. The proposal includes a Yolo County resolution of support.

VI. Scientific Merit

The proposal describes and references the scientific basis of the project and incorporates best available science. The proposal demonstrates efforts to develop an adaptive management approach and sufficient capacity and resources to implement it. The proposal addresses climate impacts/benefits and provides a mechanism for incorporating climate change considerations into the project. Outcomes and outputs utilize standard measures, are achievable and connect to objectives and goals. The proposal includes a clear process for measuring and monitoring progress towards stated outcomes and outputs and demonstrates an approach for collecting and managing data, and for reporting results beyond the applicant's organization.

Attachment 1. Project Map

