



*Proposition 1 Grant Program 2017-18 Staff Recommendation*

**I. Project Overview**

<b>Project Title</b>	Stone Lakes Restoration Project		
<b>Applicant</b>	Ducks Unlimited Inc.		
<b>Project Number</b>	Prop 1-1713		
<b>Category</b>	Planning	<b>Funding Request</b>	\$635,573
<b>County</b>	Sacramento	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	\$668,573
<b>Score</b>	86.2	<b>Funding Recommended</b>	Up to \$635,573
<b>Staff Recommendation</b>	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 Stone Lakes Restoration Project (#Prop 1-1713) proposed by Ducks Unlimited, conditional upon the submittal and approval of the items enumerated below.

**Conditions of Approval:**

- (1) Revised budget that justifies and/or refines and corrects inconsistencies in the amounts requested.

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 Stone Lakes Restoration Project is the planning phase for an ecosystem restoration and enhancement project on the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge that will restore approximately 257 acres of seasonal wetland and 39 acres is riparian seasonal wetland, and enhance 20 acres of existing low-quality wetland. This project will generate engineering design documents, environmental documents (per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)), permit applications, and all necessary supporting documents, resulting in a shovel-ready project. Once restored and enhanced, wetlands will be managed to provide optimum conditions for wetland dependent species and to provide other critical hydrologic and water quality functions. This project is located in Sacramento County, within the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge near the eastern boundary of the Delta. A portion of the property is in public (federal) ownership and a portion of it is privately held and protected with a conservation easement. See Attachment 1 for a project location map.

Delta Conservancy funding will be used for engineering design, development of environmental documents and permits and an adaptive management plan, as well as baseline monitoring, project management, and indirect expenses.

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

The proposal requests \$635,573 from the Delta Conservancy. Cost share is provided by Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife for a total contribution of \$33,000.

This project is ready to begin work as of November 2018. This planning project will advance planning for a specific, on-the-ground project, the benefits of which align with Proposition 1 and State priorities.

#### **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)(4): Protect and restore aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems, including fish and wildlife corridors and the acquisition of water rights for instream flow.

##### 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)(3): Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta.

##### Delta Conservancy's Strategic Plan

- 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 P2: Restore Habitats at Appropriate Elevations.
- ER R2: Prioritize and Implement Projects that Restore Delta Habitat

#### **V. Local Support**

The proposal demonstrates strong local support from Friends of Stone Lakes, Serra Family Trust, and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. 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 Sacramento County resolution of support.

#### **VI. Scientific Merit**

The proposal describes and references the scientific basis of the project and incorporates the 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.



**Attachment 1. Project Map**



**Conceptual Map**

Project Name: Stone Lakes Restoration Project  
 Applicant Name: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.



**Legend**

- +— Powerline
- Private\_Seasonal Wetland Restore, 25 acres
- ▨ Private\_Seasonal Wetland Enhance, 20 acres
- USFWS\_Riparian Seasonal Wetland Restoration, 39 acres
- USFWS\_Seasonal\_Wetland\_Restore, 232 acres