



Consideration of Request to Extend the Term of the Fish Friendly Farming Certification Program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Project Grant
Staff Report

This agenda item presents to the Board for consideration a request to extend the funding term of the agreement for the Fish Friendly Farming Certification Program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta grant (#Prop 1-2015-Y1-005).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve an amendment to the scope of work for the Fish Friendly Farming Certification Program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta project to extend the funding term of the agreement from January 9, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

DESCRIPTION

The grantee expects to complete all deliverables for this agreement by April 28, 2020 and is requesting to extend the funding term of this agreement to allow for successful completion of the project. The change in term is requested to accommodate a four-month delay to the project due to a medical emergency experienced by the grantee. The Conservancy will provide for two months after the non-administrative tasks are expected to be completed to allow time to close the grant. At the September 25, 2019 Board meeting, as part of the regular Proposition 1 Grant Program Update, staff noted to the Board concerns regarding the grantee's performance. Specifically, invoices and reports that the grantee submitted to the Conservancy contained inaccurate and incomplete information, necessitating that staff spend considerable time working with the grantee to rectify issues. The grantee has submitted several technical documents of sufficient quality to satisfy the deliverables requirements of the grant agreement. The only significant issues with this project are administrative.

Since the September Board meeting, staff has continued to work closely with the grantee and provide assistance. The grant manager and program manager hold regular calls with the grantee to receive updates, discuss challenges with the project, and problem solve. Recent invoices and reports submitted, while still requiring work, were improved from past submissions. Given the recent improvement in the grantee's performance, staff is recommending that the grant funding term be extended. If the Board approves an extension, staff will continue to monitor the grant closely and report to the Board if significant concerns arise.

Changes of this nature that are not time sensitive are generally placed on the consent calendar. Given the concerns previously noted, the Board requested at the September 25, 2019 Board meeting to have an item regarding this grant presented for individual consideration.

If the Board does not approve this amendment, the term of the agreement will remain unchanged and the grantee will not be able to submit the final deliverables for the project. If the grantee is unable to

produce the deliverables required under this grant agreement, the Conservancy will be unable to work together with the grantee to implement the Fish Friendly Farming Certification Program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, bringing water quality benefits to fruition. This amendment will not alter the project's intent or deliverables, nor will it negatively impact Proposition 1 program delivery, capacity, budget, or programmatic performance measures.

BACKGROUND

On May 5, 2016, the Conservancy Board awarded \$89,450 to the California Land Stewardship Institute for the Fish Friendly Farming Certification Program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta project. This project seeks to create a set of best management practices and a farm plan template that will be used to implement a Fish Friendly Farming program in the Delta. Fish Friendly Farming is a voluntary program for implementing operational or procedural practices that address water quality impairments on private agricultural land to improve and sustain water quality, protect and enhance habitat, and conserve water. The objective of the Fish Friendly Farming program in the Delta is to reduce the level of toxic chemicals entering Delta waterbodies through farm run-off by working with farmers to implement beneficial practices on their farms. To date, the grantee has held meetings with a variety of experts in the field, including county Agricultural Commissioners, representatives from non-governmental organizations, and representatives from state agencies. The grantee has submitted a draft of the best management practices and a farm plan template to the Conservancy for review. The Conservancy's Senior Environmental Scientist provided comments on the documents and California Land Stewardship Institute is making revisions. Conservancy staff is optimistic that, after the deliverables are complete and implementation begins, this project will succeed in improving water quality in the Delta, while also reducing Delta farmers' regulatory burden and providing them with an opportunity to market their products as certified by the Fish friendly Farming program. This project will be carried out across the Delta with special concern given to areas with known exceedances of the toxic chemicals the Fish Friendly Farming Program is hoping to reduce.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE:

Move that the Board approve an extension to the funding term for the Fish Friendly Farming Certification Program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin project from January 9, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

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