



Consideration of Grant Award for the Phase 1 San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration and Floodway Enhancement at Banta-Carbona Project
Staff Report

This agenda item presents for Board consideration a recommendation to award Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program funding for the Phase 1 San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration and Floodway Enhancement at Banta-Carbona Project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board approve funding not to exceed \$750,931 for the project.

DESCRIPTION

At the May 22, 2019 Board meeting, staff did not recommend that the Board approve funding for this project for the following reason.

- The habitat benefits are not clear: it is not clear from the proposal what steps will be taken to ensure that high quality habitat is created and how much of the project would focus on fisheries improvements versus upgrading diversion facilities.

This issue was raised during the technical review process and was also separately raised by the Delta Stewardship Council during the process of seeking high-level feedback from Delta agencies. In addition, the application was missing information related to the project budget. The Board directed Conservancy staff to work with the applicant and present a recommendation for consideration at a future Board meeting.

In the intervening time period, Conservancy staff worked with the project team to acquire additional information and address the concern raised at the May Board meeting. The requested materials included:

- A technical memo that addresses habitat benefits, detailing how habitat considerations will be incorporated into project design, describing the components of the floodplain habitat that will ensure that the project yields the intended benefits, and clarifying what the overall ecosystem impact of the project will be.
- A budget memo justifying the reasonableness for modeling, design, and permitting costs.
- The missing components of the application:
 - A complete Financial Management Questionnaire and Cost Allocation.
 - Information regarding the project's proximity to disadvantaged communities.

Upon review of the materials submitted, Conservancy staff concluded that the explanations of specific habitat improvements and anticipated benefits to fisheries are satisfactorily described in the technical memo and concerns regarding the significance of habitat benefits and potential entrainment are adequately addressed. The memo provides detail about existing and future site conditions, proposed recontouring of the existing floodplain, and proposed increases in the frequency and duration of inundation of the site during the salmonid fry rearing period. The memo further explains that the proposed sediment transport modeling will inform project designs that will address current sedimentation issues in front of the fish screens and result in improved efficiency of the fish screens. It also clarifies that these improvements do not constitute an upgrading of diversion facilities.

Staff found the justification of costs, to be acceptable. The final version of the budget memo provides an adequate justification of costs, including explanation for why contracted services are restricted/unique and the consequences if these services are not purchased from the specified contractors.

BACKGROUND

The Phase 1 San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration and Floodway Enhancement at Banta-Carbona project is proposed to design and permit a multi-benefit habitat restoration project to advance planning for restoration of 30 acres of seasonally-inundated floodplain and for improved water supply reliability. The project will improve rearing habitat for juvenile salmon, reduce flood risk, and address sedimentation at the applicant's intake fish screen. This project is located in San Joaquin County near Manteca.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE

Move that the Board approve a grant not to exceed \$750,931 to Banta-Carbona Irrigation District for the Phase 1 San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration and Floodway Enhancement at Banta-Carbona Project.

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