



**Consideration of Awards and Applicable Resolutions to Adopt California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Responsible Agency Findings for the Fifth Cycle of the Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program
Staff Report**

This agenda item presents staff’s funding recommendations for the Cycle 5 proposal solicitation of the Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program to the Board for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve Proposition 1 grant funding for six projects.

DESCRIPTION

The Conservancy received eight full proposals requesting a total of approximately \$4,739,050. One applicant withdrew their proposal during the review process, resulting in seven proposals for Proposition 1 funding consideration. For more information about the Cycle 5 project proposals received by the Conservancy, please see Table 1 and the attached map below.

Proposals went through a two-part review process to assess their administrative and technical qualifications. Delta Conservancy staff conducted an administrative review of proposals to ensure that they were eligible, complete, and consistent with program requirements. This process included visits to verify all project sites and review of legal matters by the Department of Justice’s Deputy Attorney General retained by the Conservancy. Conservancy staff notified local governments and districts, water agencies, and tribes about projects within their jurisdiction and provided them the opportunity to comment. In addition to local notifications, the Conservancy solicited and considered comments from the Delta Stewardship Council regarding projects’ adaptive management, best available science, and Delta Plan consistency.

To assess their technical qualifications, all proposals were reviewed by Delta Conservancy staff and at least four external reviewers on the Professional Review Panel. The Professional Review Panel consists of state and federal agency experts from the Delta Protection Commission, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the State Water Resources Control Board, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Delta Stewardship Council. External reviewers evaluated only the proposals and criteria relevant to their expertise.

The overall merit of the proposals was evaluated based on 10 evaluation criteria (adopted by the Board on January 27, 2021) and scored based on a point scale totaling 100 points. Staff and external professional reviewers evaluated proposals based on the criteria below.

1. Project Description (13 points)
2. Project Team (5 points)
3. Budget (7 points)
4. Cost Share (5 points)
5. Cost Leveraging (3 points)
6. Alignment with State Priorities (15 points)
7. Long Term Viability (5 points)
8. Readiness (12 points)
9. Local Support (15 points)
10. Scientific Merit (20 points)

Conservancy staff compiled internal and external scores and held meetings with reviewers, where applicable, to normalize scoring. All scores were averaged to determine a final score for each proposal. Per the Board-approved Grant Guidelines, only proposals scoring 75 points or more may be considered for funding.

Staff Recommendations

The attachments to this Staff Report include a comprehensive analysis for six projects that met the 75-point minimum threshold to be considered for funding. The seventh project (Project ID P1-2203) is recommended for consideration of funding through the Conservancy's Climate, Access, and Restoration general fund allocation (see Agenda Item 10). Staff will present each of the six projects to the Board for individual consideration. The Board will consider each individually.

Proposals Recommended for Funding

Staff recommends that the Board award funding for six proposals expending \$ 3,035,255 of the \$3,498,133 available for Cycle. Staff anticipates executing grant agreements between August 2022 and March 2023, as projects are ready.

The projects recommended for funding are anticipated to produce the following benefits:

- Advance planning or implementation of multi-benefit restoration projects for floodplain, wetland, and riparian ecosystems, and working lands; and
- Significantly reduce invasive nonnative species.
- Improve hydrological connectivity and management for floodplain, wetland, and riparian ecosystems, and working lands

BACKGROUND

The Conservancy's Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program provided \$50 million to support multi-benefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects in accordance with statewide priorities.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE:

Project specific language is provided in each of the attached staff recommendations.

CONTACT

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Table 1. Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program, Cycle 5 Staff Funding Recommendations

Project ID	Project Name	Applicant	County	Category	Amount Recommended	Final Score	Recommended Action
P1-2203	Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Project	East Bay Regional Park District	Contra Costa	Planning	\$390,000	88	Approve using CAR funding (Agenda Item 11)
P1-2204	Little Franks Tract Invasive Weed Removal and Restoration Project	Contra Costa Resource Conservation District	Contra Costa	Implementation	\$427,706	87	Approve
P1-2207	Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project, Phase II	Ducks Unlimited	Yolo	Implementation	\$887,516	93	Approve
P1-2208	Ulatis Creek Habitat Restoration Project	Solano Resource Conservation District	Solano	Implementation	\$359,639	91	Approve
P1-2209	Improving Hydrological Resiliency of Managed Wetlands in Suisun Marsh	Suisun Resource Conservation District	Solano	Implementation	\$542,546	93	Approve
P1-2211	Marsh Creek Reservoir Restoration and Total Mercury Reduction	Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Contra Costa	Planning	\$350,000	79	Approve
P1-2212	Van Buskirk Multi-Benefit Ecosystem Restoration Project	American Rivers	San Joaquin	Planning	467,848	88	Approve