



Staff Report

for the Board of Directors' Meeting of July 14, 2021

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Neysa King, Environmental Resources Administrator
Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager

DATE: July 1, 2021

SUBJECT: **Grant Application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for the English Meadow Floodplain Restoration Project (FATR #2039)**

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. 2021-26 (Approving the Application for Grant Funds for the Wildlife Conservation Board for the English Meadow Floodplain Enhancement and Restoration Project), and authorize the General Manager to execute the appropriate documents.

BACKGROUND:

The English Meadow Restoration Project will consist of improvements to the meadow basin as well as the surrounding slopes on 380-acres of District-owned property. English Meadow is currently experiencing excessively dry soil conditions, headcutting tributaries, and lodgepole pine encroachment due to the incision of the river channel. Furthermore, excavated drainage ditches allow flows to escape the meadow before they can infiltrate the floodplain, which exacerbates these conditions.

The goal of this project is to implement a process facilitation approach to: slow the velocity of water within the stream, halt headcutting tributaries, decrease the rate of water loss, and remove encroaching lodgepole pine by installing woody debris jams in the main channel. We will also utilize on-site woody debris and soil material to repair headcuts and fill the excavated drainage ditches. In addition, 180-acres of understory thinning will be implemented on the slopes surrounding the meadow to improve forest health and decrease the risk of extreme wildfire, which has the potential to disturb this montane meadow watershed feature and habitat. In total, this project will benefit downstream water availability and quality, decrease sedimentation into Jackson Meadows Reservoir, improve seasonal release of water

from the meadow aquifer, improve and protect terrestrial and wetland habitats, and improve forest health and snowpack accumulation.

Staff recommends that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2021-26 approving the Application for Grant Funding to the Wildlife Conservation Board.

This item aligns with District Goals by implementing proactive management of our financial resources and the stewardship of District resources and further builds a collaborative relationship with our local and regional community and partners. The project is based on current science and climate preparedness concepts supporting healthy and functioning watersheds, prioritizing hydrologic features like montane meadows for water resources and biological benefits.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Staff anticipates an annual budget allocation of \$40,000 through 2023 for this work. This funding will be leveraged by the grant of \$1.2M from the Wildlife Conservation Board. NID staff will administer the grant and the project budget is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Grantee	Cost share partner1	Cost share partner3	Total
1. Project Management	\$0	\$244,000	N/A	N/A	\$244,000
2. Restoration	\$1,251,000	\$99,000	N/A	N/A	\$1,350,000
3. Monitoring	\$0	\$0	N/A	N/A	\$0
4. Indirect Costs	\$0		N/A	N/A	
TOTAL	\$1,251,000	\$343,000			\$1,594,000

Since 2016, NID has budgeted for the English Meadow restoration project and has spent approximately \$235,000 to date. Additionally, in 2020, NID completed a \$50,000 grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to prepare a Forest Management Plan for English Meadow and the surrounding watershed of the Middle Yuba River headwaters. This support leveraged NID’s ongoing investment to complete multiple years of hydrologic, geologic, floral, and faunal surveys. NID staff completed the construction of a stream gage which further advances our capacity to monitor the Middle Yuba River headwaters and long-term changes that may be associated with project implementation.

NK/GJ

Attachments: (1)

- Resolution 2021-26 – Approving the Application for Grant Funds for the Wildlife Conservation Board for the English Meadow Floodplain Enhancement and Restoration Project



RESOLUTION NO. 2021-26

OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE ENGLISH MEADOW FLOODPLAIN ENHANCEMENT AND RESTORATION PROJECT

WHEREAS, funds were made available to the Wildlife Conservation Board for the enhancement or restoration of fish and wildlife habitat and for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing or other wildlife-oriented recreational uses.

WHEREAS, the Nevada Irrigation District (the "District") intends to improve forest health and meadow condition by thinning understory vegetation from the slopes of the meadow, utilizing lodgepole pine encroaching on the meadow to raise the level of the main stem of the Middle Yuba River, and fill excavated ditches and head cuts to prevent unnecessary erosion of meadow soils and dewatering.

WHEREAS, the Nevada Irrigation District has identified the English Meadow Floodplain Enhancement and Restoration Project (the "Project") as valuable toward meeting its mission and goals; and

WHEREAS, the Project is located on District owned properties at English Meadow (Nevada and Sierra Counties); approximately 556 acres; and

WHEREAS, the District intends to submit an application to the Wildlife Conservation Board (the "WCB") for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the District, if selected, will enter into an agreement with the WCB to carry out the Project; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District that it does find as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. Approves the submittal of an application for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board; and
3. Certifies that District understands the assurances and certification requirements in the application.
4. Certifies that District will comply with all federal, state and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project

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and will obtain or will ensure that the other project partners obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project; and

5. Further commits to the terms and conditions specified in the grant agreement; and
6. Appoints its General Manager, or designee, as representative of the District to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit and sign all documents, including but not limited to: applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District at a regular meeting held on the 14th day of July, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:	Directors:
NOES:	Directors:
ABSENT:	Directors:
ABSTAINS:	Directors:

President of the Board of Directors

Attest:

Secretary to the Board of Directors