

Central Services  
**Joan Araujo**, Director

Engineering Services  
**Christopher Cooper**, Director

Roads & Transportation  
**David Fleisch**, Director

Water & Sanitation  
**Joseph Pope**, Director

Watershed Protection  
**Glenn Shephard**, Director

November 10, 2020

Board of Supervisors  
Ventura County Watershed Protection District  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Subject:**      **Authorization for the Ventura County Watershed Protection District to Apply for Up To \$4,000,000 in U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program Leveraged Partner Program Funding for the Ventura River Watershed - Matilija Regional Conservation Partnership Program Project. Watershed Protection District Zone 1, Supervisorial District 1.**

**Recommendation:**

Authorize the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (District) to apply for up to \$4,000,000 in U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Leveraged Partner Program funding for the Ventura River Watershed - Matilija Regional Conservation Partnership Program Project (Project).

**Fiscal/Mandates Impact:**

If the application is approved, the District will return to your Board with additional Project information and budget figures.

**Discussion:**

The RCPP funding program reflects NRCS' mission, which is to assist agricultural producers and rural communities address natural resource concerns impacting them. All USDA conservation programs are directed by Congress to be used by USDA to assist agricultural and rural communities address regulatory obligations. While it is not specifically within NRCS' primary mission to undertake ecosystem restoration projects broadly speaking, it is within NRCS' mission to address the agricultural and rural community flood protection aspects of such work. NRCS frequently targets funding to broader environmental efforts that raise agricultural and/or rural concerns.



The 2018 Farm Bill and RCPP rule affords a high priority in RCPP to implement existing watershed and restoration plans. RCPP also requires a partnership to identify the primary resource concern to be addressed by the project and secondary concerns.

The primary goals of this Project are to restore endangered southern California steelhead habitat, enhance agricultural water supply resiliency, and improve rural flood protection in the Ventura River watershed. Partner resources will be paired with RCPP funding to advance infrastructure improvements, invasive species control and on-farm conservation measures to achieve these interdependent goals.

The District will be the primary partner for the Project while partnering with contributing partners including State and Private funding sources such as California Coastal Conservancy, Resources Legacy Fund, Patagonia, and Matilija Coalition. The contributing partners will submit a letter of commitment to this Project outlining their in-kind and/or monetary contributions to the Project.

This Project will implement key parts of water resource, ecosystem restoration and federal endangered species recovery plans that impact area agricultural and rural communities.

This RCPP also proposes technical and financial assistance for public works/watershed infrastructure improvements first analyzed in the U.S Army Corps of Engineers' Matilija EIS/EIR for the MDERP to prepare a PL-566 Watershed Plan for four interrelated infrastructure components and related design work for certain of those components. These are the infrastructure improvements required to facilitate Matilija dam removal. In particular, RCPP funding will support a PL-566 Watershed Plan for the Robles Diversion, and for the Meiners Oaks, Live Oak Acres, and the Casitas Springs levees. The Casitas Springs and Live Oak Acres levees were originally constructed with NRCS assistance.

If the District is successful in being selected for funding, the District will return to your Board for acceptance of the agreement and with more complete information regarding Project information and budget figures

This item has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel.

If there are any questions regarding this item, please contact me at (805) 654-2040.



Glenn Shephard P.E.  
Director

