



Board Report

File #: 17-0840, **Version:** 1

- a. Approve, retroactively, an Agreement to provide access authorization for Salinas Watershed Invasive Non-Native Plant Control and Restoration Program between the County of Monterey and Resource Conservation District of Monterey County; and
- b. Ratify the July 17, 2017 signature of the Resource Management Agency Director on the Access Agreement between the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County and the County of Monterey.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Approve, retroactively, an Agreement to provide access authorization for Salinas Watershed Invasive Non-Native Plant Control and Restoration Program between the County of Monterey and Resource Conservation District of Monterey County; and
- b. Ratify the July 17, 2017 signature of the Resource Management Agency Director on the Access Agreement between the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County and the County of Monterey.

On July 13, 2017, the Resource Management Agency (RMA) Director sent a memo to the Board of Supervisors notifying them of the need to expedite the signing of an access agreement for the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCD) who required permission from the County, as the landowner, to perform eradication measures for arundo and tamarisk along the Salinas River within San Lorenzo Park. RMA was contacted by RCD regarding Monterey County's Salinas River Invasive Plant Control Program. Staff is returning to the Board of Supervisors requesting they retroactively approve the access agreement, and ratify the signature by the RMA Director.

Since 2014, RCD has worked closely with the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner (AC) concerning controlling arundo and tamarisk on the Salinas River with grant funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board. RCD is expanding their program into the King City area, which includes a parcel on the river that is owned by the County (San Lorenzo Park, APN 245111006000).

RCD requires permission to perform work on County owned property. The treatment on our parcel would consist of foliar application of glyphosate-based aquatic-formulated herbicide and would follow up with retreatment as needed for five years. RCD requests to enter into an Access Agreement ("Agreement") with the County for the above referenced APN 24511006000 for a term of ten years. For the first five years of this Agreement, all Project costs would be the sole responsibility of the RCD. For the remaining five years of this Agreement, the County would be responsible for treating remaining arundo and if present, tamarisk. The County would not be responsible for treating new arundo invasions from upstream sources, or for treating any arundo that has received less than three total years of treatment by the RCD within the first five years of this Agreement. The cost for treating arundo during the final five years of this Agreement is estimated to no more than one hour of labor per acre, plus herbicide and equipment which would be funded under the RMA or AC.

RCD's project schedule reflects needing access to perform arundo eradication before the end of July 2017, as required by permit conditions. Due to timing constraints with bringing this item to the Board of Supervisors, the RMA Director informed you of his intent to sign the Access Agreement on July 13, 2017, and his intent to

bring the Agreement for your ratification in August.

DISCUSSION:

The Salinas River and its tributaries are threatened by invasive non-native plants, including the second-largest infestation of *Arundo donax* (arundo) in a California watershed. *Arundo* has overtaken nearly 1,500 acres of the Salinas River, forming enormous monocultures that increase flood and fire risk, consume large amounts of water, and provide virtually no food or habitat value for native wildlife.

In collaboration with the AC, the RCD has developed a program and acquired all necessary permits to undertake a large-scale, multi-year program to eliminate arundo from the Salinas River watershed. They request that landowners to sign a ten-year agreement allowing the RCD to treat arundo for the first five years, at no cost to landowners. For the remaining five years, landowners are asked to assume responsibility for treating any remaining arundo as needed, which is estimated to be no more than one hour per acre and the cost of herbicide.

The long-term success of the Salinas River Watershed Invasive Non-native Plant Management and Restoration Program is dependent on full participation of all landowners in the watershed who have arundo on their property. Any arundo left untreated will spread downstream and re-invade previously treated areas. The program includes the County of Monterey participating in arundo elimination within the County's San Lorenzo Park (APN 245111006000).

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors retroactively approve and ratify the RMA Director's signature to the attached Access Agreement to Provide Access Authorization for Salinas River Watershed Invasive Non-Native Plant Control and Restoration.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Resource Management Agency partnered with the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office in developing the July 13, 2017 Memo to the Board of Supervisors, as well as this report.

FINANCE

The County will not incur any costs for the first five years of the program. The County will incur minimal cost for the remaining five years to assume responsibility for treating any remaining arundo and tamarisk as needed. Costs would be limited to contracting the spraying of herbicide on the remaining arundo within the County parcel APN 245111006000, which is estimated to be no more than one hour of labor per acre, plus herbicide and equipment. It is anticipated that the cost for this program will be funded out of the Resource Management Agency's Parks Operations Unit 001-3000-8475-8149 -RMA006. Should funding not be available, the RMA will work closely with the Agricultural Commissioner's office as a potential source for providing the necessary resources to ensure remaining arundo is treated as necessary.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This project maintains and improves the Salinas River Channel, and eliminates significant use of water by this non-native invasive weed. *Arundo* removal maintains and improves the ability of the Salinas River Channel to convey water and prevents flooding of agricultural fields and communities.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

☐ Economic Development

☐ Administration

☐ Health & Human Services

X Infrastructure

X Public Safety

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Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director

Attachments:

Attachment A - RCDMC Salinas River Watershed Invasive Non-native Plant Management and Restoration Program

Attachment B - Access Agreement

Attachment C - Memo to the Board Members dated July 13, 2017

(Attachments on file with the Clerk of the Board)