

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Leslie Ferguson)
MEETING DATE: September 13, 2006

ITEM: 6F

SUBJECT: **The Napa River/Napa Creek Flood Protection Project, Napa County -
Resolution Supporting the Designation of the Napa River/Napa Creek Flood Protection Project
as a U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers Project of National Significance**

DISCUSSION: The tentative resolution requests that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confer the designation of “Nationally Significant” to the Napa River/Napa Creek Flood Protection Project (Project), thus enabling it to qualify for full federal funding and serve as a national and State model of integrated flood control and ecosystem restoration. The City of Napa has experienced 27 major floods in the past 120 years, and 4 major floods since 1990. To provide an economically feasible and environmentally sensitive method to protect the City of Napa from the computed 100-year flood event, the Project design was developed through a two year community-wide coalition process, including a broad group of stakeholders consisting of residents, businesses, political and community leaders, and environmental agencies with diverse interests in flood protection. The Project is being jointly implemented by the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Board approved Waste Discharge Requirements for the project in September 1999, and, in subsequent orders, approved cleanup of petroleum-contaminated sites within the Project’s footprint, which has resulted in removal of over a quarter-million cubic yards of contaminated soil.

The City flooded December 31, 2005, in an event estimated to be the 25- year event. At this time, the Project was less than 40% complete. The constructed Project improvements caused a reduction in water surface elevations and the flood waters to recede more quickly from the City than would have occurred prior to Project initiation. However, until all Project improvements are constructed and can function as a system as designed, the City continues to be vulnerable to flooding. All ecosystem restoration components are also not complete.

The Project is being funded through a local-federal partnership. The federal share of Project funding for design and construction, however, has fallen far short of the original schedule and plan. 2006 was the original completion date for the Project, but due to the lack of federal funds, the current estimated completion date is now 2011. The Corps annually evaluates and prioritizes individual projects based on their cost-effectiveness and the significance of their environmental outputs. The significance of a project's outputs is determined based on criteria that measure scientific factors including habitat scarcity, connectivity, special status species, and ability to be self- sustaining. Projects are ranked by the Corps and those with the highest scores may qualify as “Nationally Significant”, which typically guarantees a high level of funding.

Board and District staff believe the Project qualifies for the Nationally Significant designation because the Project achieves flood protection and ecosystem restoration by using environmentally beneficial methods, such as the creation of wetlands, marshplain and

floodplain terraces, selective removal of existing levees and use of open space as the floodway, setback levees, bypass channels, biotechnical bank stabilization, and remediation of petroleum-contaminated riverbank sites. These restoration components meet the Corps' criteria of significance by restoring habitat that is nationally and regionally scarce; providing a high degree of habitat connectivity along the Napa River; providing critical habitat for steelhead, a federally-threatened species, and several state-listed species and species of concern; and being specifically designed to be self-sustaining.

There is a lack of model projects locally, regionally and nation-wide that demonstrate the viability of the integration of flood control measures and ecosystem restoration. Therefore, it is essential for this Project to receive full funding to effectively accomplish its flood protection and ecosystem restoration goals, and to demonstrate that this integration is feasible and beneficial.

RECOMMEN- Adopt the Tentative Resolution
DATION

APPENDIX A: Tentative Resolution