



February 20, 2024

SENT VIA: EMAIL

Jennifer M. Norris, PhD
Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for City of Santa Rosa Lower Colgan Creek Restoration Project - Phase 3

MEMBER AGENCIES

- City of Cloverdale
- City of Cotati
- City of Healdsburg
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- City of Ukiah
- County of Mendocino
- County of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Town of Windsor

ANDY RODGERS
Executive Director

300 Seminary Avenue
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 508-3670
info@rrwatershed.org
www.rrwatershed.org

Dear Ms. Norris:

I am writing on behalf of the Russian River Watershed Association (RRWA) in support of the Lower Colgan Creek Restoration Project - Phase 3 request for funding from the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board.

The City of Santa Rosa has developed the Lower Colgan Creek Restoration Project which will restore 1.3 miles of channelized creek in three connecting phases. The requested funding would allow the City to complete construction and education and outreach for the Lower Colgan Creek Restoration Project - Phase 3. This project would expand flood capacity of the channel to provide 100-year flood protection and provide open space within an underserved, ethnically diverse community. Phase 3 construction would also install natural meanders to decrease water velocity and erosion and create woody in-stream habitat structures to promote the reestablishment of pools and riffles and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Installation of over 2,000 native plants will create a healthy riparian corridor, including shade trees, culturally significant basket weaving plants, and mass seeding of milkweed and nectar plants for monarch butterfly breeding habitat.

The RRWA is a coalition of ten public agencies in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties that have come together to coordinate regional programs in the Russian River Watershed for clean water, habitat restoration, and watershed enhancement. The RRWA has long prioritized efforts that promote the sustainability and resiliency of our region's water resources, particularly in light of the ever-escalating challenges posed by climate change and periodic droughts. The project's restoration enhancements will increase groundwater filtration and reduce flooding as flood waters slow through an enlarged floodplain. To promote climate adaptation, flood protection will be increased from 25 to 100-year flood capacity to add resiliency and protect area homes and businesses, while improving the ecological habitat.

Phase 3 will continue the efforts of Phases 1 and 2 to energize the community to support the creek. A strong environmental education and nature access component will link nearby schools and neighbors to the creek through educational programming, student-led citizen science, wildlife viewing points, art installations, volunteer events, plus paid work training for local

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February 20, 2024

Page 2

conservation corps programs. A newly constructed ADA creek trail and bridge, as well as a future neighborhood park centered on the creek, will greatly enhance public access. Interpretative signage will provide information in both English and Spanish and help the community to connect with the City's and Sonoma Water's Creek Stewardship Program.

Thank you for your consideration. This request represents an important creek restoration and flood control project that will not only benefit Southwest Santa Rosa but the entire community. We look forward to a positive outcome for the City of Santa Rosa and Russian River Watershed residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, flowing line that starts with a small loop and ends with a long, sweeping tail.

Andy Rodgers, RRWA Executive Director