

Project Summary Sheet

Project Name: Hanson El Monte Pond (HEMP): A Flood Control, Recharge, Habitat Restoration Project – Phase One

Tracking No: 200784105

Location: Lakeside

County: San Diego

Project Sponsor: Lakeside's River Park Conservancy

Point of Contact: Robin Rierdan, (619) 443-4770

Co-applicant(s): None

Assembly District: #77 Joel Anderson **Senate District:** #36 Dennis Hollingsworth

Project Summary:

The applicant is asking for funding to purchase 145 acres that include the 60-acre El Monte Pond.

Acquisition is part of an overall project called the El Monte Valley Nature Park which would restore 1,000 acres. The project is located along the San Diego River. The Pond is on the downstream portion of the overall project. The remainder of the overall project includes the river and adjacent areas upstream of the Hanson El Monte pond. This adjacent property is owned by the Helix Water District. The pond is separated from the river by large levees on the northern and eastern sides. The river is bordered by roads on the north and south sides.

A conservation group working with the Helix Water District plans restoration of the riverbed to reclaim water for the community. Currently the water table is below the riverbed. They want to remove the sand to allow for an open flowing river. There would also be restoration of riparian, sycamore, chaparral, and scrub vegetation for wildlife habitat.

There are currently levees located between the Helix portion of the river and the Hanson El Monte pond. The sponsor and partners would like to breach the northern levee and remove the eastern levee to allow the Pond and surrounding low-lying uplands to act as a detention basin during periods of high flow.

The pond was created by sand and gravel mining and is currently 30-50 feet deep. The project proposes to fill approximately 1/3 of the 60-acre pond to create an emergent marsh wetland.

It could take 30 years to complete this phase, depending on the availability of material to fill the remainder of the hole.

Flood Benefits:

Primary flood benefits include increases in transitory storage, prevention of urban development in a floodplain that is subject to development pressure, improved sediment balance, and protection of downstream bridges and a water pipeline that crosses the river 2000 feet downstream of the project. The closest urban area is Lakeside approximately 1.5 miles downstream.

Flooding along the river flooding is usually due to passive release through the upstream dam spillway. In the time since dams went in, damaging floods have occurred about every 17 years.

A 20-year flood would cause water to be stored within the emergent wetland. There will be a campsite adjacent to the emergent wetland. This 15-acre area will hold water in a 50-year flood. During a 100-year flood it is expected that some of the water could not be held in the detention basin and would be released through a spillway. The Pond holds 750 acre feet of water.

The riverbed would be excavated 14 feet deep to water table depth for 2.3 miles, increasing the transitory storage footprint from 75 to 100 acres. The river will hold 850 acre-feet of water.

In total there would be 1660 acre feet of transitory storage, enough to reduce damages downstream in a 10 year event.

The project would benefit the downstream cities of Lakeside and Santee. Floods that are less than 25-year are damaging. Reduction of flood damage costs due to the project are estimated to be \$289,134 in a 10-year flood, \$92,523 in a 25-year flood, \$24,287 in a 50-year flood, \$10,408 in a 100-year flood.

Agricultural Benefits: N/A

Agricultural Land Conserved: N/A

Wildlife Benefits:

Immediate benefit would be to preserve the pond and adjacent area, preventing use of the land for ranchette development or other use that would be incompatible with the floodplain and habitat value of the site.

There would be 30 acres of emergent marsh wetland habitat created within El Monte pond and the remaining pond acreage would be open water habitat or edge habitat.

The portion of the overall project located upstream on the Helix Water District property (that would be funded from another source) would create or enhance 150 acres of high value coastal sage scrub, riparian habitat and sycamore/oak woodland. The River would also provide habitat, but the acreage is unknown.

The project would provide habitat for an abundance of wildlife including the endangered least Bell's vireo, threatened California gnatcatcher, Coastal Cactus Wren, Orange-throated Whiptail, and species of concern Coast horned lizard.

Wildlife Habitat Conserved: 60 acres (pond)

Total area conserved: 145 acres (total area to be acquired)

Other Benefits:

The project would increase groundwater storage. Sediment balance would improve providing benefits in any sized event but particularly beneficial in a 50-year or 100-year event.

The overall project will include camping areas, trails for people and horses, a boardwalk in the pond with access for the disabled, and interpretive educational information.

Total Cost: \$9,973,269

FPCP Funds Requested: \$3,999,760

FPCP Funds Recommended by Management Team: \$3,228,656, an amount sufficient to make the project viable.

Funding Partners and Share of Cost:

In-kind funds \$322,509, The Resource Agency via San Diego River Park Foundation \$1,500,000, Wildlife Conservation Board \$1,550,000, and San Diego River Conservancy \$1,500,000. An additional \$1,000,000 has been committed from an undisclosed source.

Supplemental Information:

1. Is there a full hydrologic report with the application, or is there simply an engineer's opinion? Either way, what is the conclusion as to the anticipated flood benefits of the project? Response: There is a full hydrologic report which indicates that the greatest benefit comes from smaller events (10 to 20 year recurrence interval), although the applicant has conveyed a willingness to design the project so the inlet and outlet for transitory storage can be managed to improve benefits in the larger events.

2. What exactly will the FPCP funds pay for? Response: Funding will come from multiple sources, and the other funding partners will be purchasing the property. DWR will pay for project administration, a \$500,000 maintenance endowment fund, environmental permits, feasibility evaluation, plans and specifications, and construction.
 - a. If the project applicant indicated they could accept less – then what (if anything) would be cut from the project? (What is lost by providing less FPCP grant money?). Response: The applicant already reduced the funding request by \$1 million. There will likely be enough funding leftover from this grantee’s other FPCP-funded project, the San Diego River Park in the community of Lakeside to make the project viable at the funding level recommended by the FPCP Management Review Team.
 - b. Does the applicant have access to alternate funding to replace the amount deducted from their request so that they can still spend the total amount they requested? If so, what would be the alternate funding source(s) and is the alternate funding already allocated, promised or committed? Response: See the response to “a” above.
 - c. When giving a project score credit for matching funds, how much of the funding is matched? What is the source of the matching funds and are the matching funds already committed? Response: The applicant has verbal assurance from all the funding sources but is collecting written documentation for DWR and will provide this before we enter into a funding agreement.
3. If there is funding for acquisition of property, what is the type of ownership? Easement? Fee title? Or Both? Response: Ownership will be fee title to be owned initially either by the Lakeside River Park Conservancy or by the Endangered Habitats Conservancy with title to pass to the Lakeside River Park Conservancy upon completion of the habitat improvements. In lieu of a conservation easement, there will be a conditional irrevocable offer of dedication in favor of the CA Coastal Conservancy or alternate acceptable to DWR such that if the restrictions on use of the property for flood and habitat purposes are violated, title would transfer to the Coastal Conservancy or whoever is the designated alternate owner.
 - a. Who will own the easement or fee title? DWR? Project applicant? Other? Response: See response above.
 - b. What funding is committed or pending toward the 145-acre property purchase?: Response: The grantee is working together with the Endangered Habitats Conservancy and together have secured or expect to receive the necessary funding. The Resources Agency River Parkways Program has awarded a grant of \$1,521,000 to the EHC and a grant of \$1,514 to the San Diego River Park Foundation. The State Coastal Conservancy staff is recommending award of a grant of \$1,000,000 to the Endangered Habitats

Conservancy. Wildlife Conservation Board staff is recommending the WCB award a grant for any remaining balance not covered by our grant and the other grants. So \$3,035,000 is committed, and \$1 million plus WCB funding is pending. The application also listed \$1.5 million coming from the San Diego River Conservancy, but FPCP staff did not receive confirmation of this source.

4. Does any portion of the project site have mitigation bank potential for DWR to gain mitigation credits for its maintenance program? (Note: Mitigation property would need to be within 40 miles of the disturbance area that needs to be mitigated) Response: No.
5. Is the project a USACE authorized project? If so, is there USACE funding for the project? Should the USACE be fully funding the project? Response: This is not a USACE authorized project so no Corps funding is available.
6. Can the management of transitory water storage on the site be optimized for flood benefit? Is the applicant willing to work with DWR on water management during extreme flood events? Response: Yes. See response to question No. 1 above.