

Lower American River Parkway Natural Resources Management Plan \$ 500,000.00  
Sacramento County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Sacramento County Regional Parks for the development of a Natural Resources Management Plan for the Lower American River in Sacramento County.

### LOCATION

The American River Parkway (Parkway) is an open space greenbelt that extends approximately 29 miles from Folsom Dam at the northeast to the American River's confluence with the Sacramento River at the southwest. It lies immediately next to and within the City of Sacramento, City of Rancho Cordova, and the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. The Parkway is defined as the area from Hazel Avenue downstream to its confluence with the Sacramento River, and encompasses 5,000± acres on both sides of the river. It includes a complex modified landscape shaped by hydraulic and dredge gold mining in the 1800s, and by dam and levee construction in the 1900s.

Having a drainage area of 120± square miles, the lower American River (LAR) is characterized by managed river flow, associated riparian vegetation, side channels and ponds. The floodplain of the LAR is bordered by high bluffs in its upper reaches, and by levees in its lower reaches. The river provides habitat for anadromous fisheries, migratory birds, and other wildlife. Sensitive species found in the area include Swainson's hawk, peregrine falcon, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, and western pond turtles. Additional benefits of the area include flood control. The Parkway is considered a regional jewel and provides numerous recreating opportunities including cycling, hiking, fishing, swimming, rafting, horse riding, picnicking, and bird watching, and offers commercial, scientific and education uses and benefits.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this project is to develop a natural resources management plan for the LAR. The current guiding document for the LAR is the American River Parkway Plan (Parkway Plan) (County of Sacramento, 2008), which is a general policy document that identifies land use designations and area plans, and broadly describes the resources within the Parkway.

The Lower American River Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) is a Sacramento County-initiated process which addresses Sacramento County Regional Parks' jurisdictional resource management responsibilities on the American River Parkway and will be aligned with the goals and policies of the Parkway Plan. The purposes of the NRMP are to develop resource information and Parkway resource management objectives to be used by Regional Parks in its management of the American River Parkway. The NRMP's management factors will consider each of the following categories: fire prevention, habitats, trails and recreation, and public safety.

The NRMP actions, recommendations, and guidelines will be based on an assessment of desired conditions, which will set the framework for balancing resource management

with recreation, optimizing resource conditions and values, and defining resource management objectives for individual management units.

Site-specific resource condition standards will be developed for each Land Use Designation in each sub-unit of the Parkway, based on:

- Sub-unit specific resources and activities
- Results of Parkway-wide desired future conditions analysis
- Wild & Scenic River protection guidelines
- Species of greatest conservation need

An additional standard for establishing minimum resource conditions will be the non-degradation obligation under the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council guidelines for the management of 2(a)(ii) state managed federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. This will require:

- Determining resource conditions as of 1981, the date the Lower American River was included into the federal system,
- Determining resource condition changes, since 1981, due to natural processes outside of management control,
- Estimating future change of resource conditions due to natural processes outside of management control,
- Developing desired resource condition management objectives,
- Establishing minimum standards that reflect either
  - 1981 conditions, or
  - Expected conditions due to changes resulting from ongoing natural processes outside of management control,
- Recommending management actions to improve degraded areas, and
- Developing strategies to maintain or enhance resource conditions.

Because the NRMP will propose actions that the County and/or regulatory agencies will need to approve for implementation, a joint Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared, which is expected to simplify environmental review for individual implementation projects within the Parkway. Subsequent activities in the program will be examined under the Programmatic EIR/EIS to determine whether an individual environmental document must be prepared. Long-term management of the LAR Parkway will follow an adaptive management process to fulfill the goals and objectives of the Parkway’s resources.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Task #	Task	WCB Funds	Applicant Funds	Other Funds	Total Cost
1	Project Management	\$10,473	\$96,955	---	\$107,428
2	Data Collection, Data Management and	\$26,439	\$17,473	---	\$43,912

	GIS				
3	Public Outreach	\$4,954	\$14,862	---	\$19,816
4	NRMP	\$179,938	\$175,876	---	\$355,814
5	PEIR/EIS	\$278,196	\$28,274	---	\$306,470
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$333,440</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>\$833,440</b>

Project costs will be for project management, data management and the development of a Geographic Information System, public outreach, NRMP preparation, and a programmatic EIR/EIS.

#### WCB PROGRAM

WCB authorizes grants under the Lower American River Conservancy (LARC) Program. Assembly Bill 1716, which created the LARC Program, prioritizes the development and implementation of a natural resources management plan, and prioritizes improving public access, protection and restoration of the American River Parkway.

The proposed project will be funded through the LARC Program and meets the program's goals of expending funds for the development and implementation of a natural resources management plan for the LAR.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Advisory Committee of the Lower American River Conservancy Program recommend this project as proposed, and recommend WCB staff to present this project to the Wildlife Conservation Board for approval at its November 2018 meeting.