

## Memorandum

To: Advisory Committee  
Lower American River Conservancy Program

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Subject: **Funding Augmentation Process for Approved Projects**

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) administers two types of competitive grant processes, continuous and time-limited. Continuous processes are open year-round and are not bound by the timelines within a solicitation notice. Time-limited processes are advertised to the public through a solicitation notice and have set due dates and strict guidelines for submitting a grant application. The funding source dictates the type of grant process that will be followed when spending state dollars. WCB also decides how each grant process will be conducted and how grants approved under that process will be administered.

To date, the funding sources for the Lower American River Conservancy Program (Program) have been the state's General Fund (continuous) and Proposition 68 (time-limited). Ten projects have been approved for funding through the Program, of which, one is solely funded by General Fund and the other nine are wholly or partially funded by Proposition 68. Grants approved for funding with Proposition 68 funds have followed the time-limited grant process and are administered accordingly.

It is WCB's decision that grants received, evaluated, selected, and approved for funding under a time-limited grant process are not eligible for a funding augmentation without re-applying through a subsequent solicitation. This does not preclude grantees from seeking non-WCB funds to augment an existing grant.

Grants that are approved under a continuous grant process may request a funding augmentation, but such request must be reviewed and approved by the WCB voting board as a new grant.

At the October 17, 2019, meeting of the Program's Advisory Committee (Committee), the topic of WCB approving funding augmentations for approved projects was discussed. The Committee agreed by unanimous vote that augmentations for less than 10% of the original grant amount could be approved by the WCB voting board without the recommendation of the Committee. However, as described above, the delegation of authority granted at the meeting on October 17, 2019, only applies to grants approved for funding under the continuous grant process.

At a regular meeting of the Committee held on February 11, 2021, concern was expressed with the process of presenting a funding augmentation request to the Committee for review and recommendation before presenting the augmentation request to the voting board of WCB for approval. The concern is that a project could be immoderately delayed until the next Committee meeting given the Committee meets twice each calendar year. It was suggested that a policy be considered that delegates full authority to WCB staff to recommend augmentations to WCB's voting board for approval to ensure augmentations are not delayed.

After internal discussion, WCB's staff position is that no change be made to the funding augmentation process for approved projects under continuous funding for the following reasons:

- The Program's Guidelines establish the process, procedures, and general requirements through which WCB will administer the Program. Section 3, Project Selection, identifies Committee review as part of the process in selecting projects to present to the voting board of WCB for funding approval. Furthermore, funding augmentations are processed as a new grant project subject to WCB's voting board approval. As such, funding augmentation requests are considered a new project and should follow the Program Guidelines for project selection.
- WCB practice is to keep the Committee and public informed and engaged on decisions that affect the Program, its funding, and the status of funded projects. This is consistent with WCB's 2019 Strategic Plan Update and Strategic Initiative 6, WCB Organization and Transparency, that commits WCB to effective and transparent operations to meeting the public's conservation and access expectations and commits staff to efficiency and open communication.
- It is important for Committee members to keep track of the Program's funding which may ebb and flow making it important to know of funding augmentation requests, and recommend them, particularly in lean times.
- Discussing funding augmentation requests with the Committee will keep members informed of the fiscal challenges of projects and the expertise and preparedness of grantees in scoping and budgeting grant projects. Moreover, this process will help newer grantees, with little to no experience in applying for WCB funding, gain more knowledge and experience in project budgeting to better inform future grant proposals.

In closing, WCB strongly believes in the established process for reviewing and recommending funding augmentations for continuous grants because it upholds the intent and purpose of establishing the Program and providing a state partner to work collaboratively with the American River Parkway stakeholders in funding projects and providing grants.

As our commitment to transparency, for any continuous grant WCB will notify the Committee at regularly scheduled meetings of any funding augmentation that is approved by the voting board of WCB for 10% or less of the original grant amount. If

a funding augmentation request is more than 10% of the original grant amount, WCB will present the request to the Committee for review and recommendation per the delegation of authority granted at the October 2019 meeting.

For any time-limited grant submitting a proposal for a funding augmentation, it will be presented to the Committee for review and prioritization alongside other time-limited grant proposals using the current year solicitation notice's schedule and criteria.