

Meeting Minutes

Environmental Enhancement Committee Meeting

January 10, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Microsoft Teams and Live Meeting

Dial in [+1 916-535-0984](tel:+19165350984) United States, Sacramento (Toll)

Conference ID: 413 358 039#

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/OSPR/Science/Environmental-Enhancement-Fund>

[Public location for attendance: 1010 Riverside Parkway, West Sacramento CA 95605 in the California Poppy conference room.](#)

Public comments were accepted via the chat function on MS Teams and at the West Sacramento location.

The meeting called to order the Environmental Enhancement Committee (EEC) meeting at 10:04 am. Attendees included Dan Orr and Bruce Joab from 1010 Riverside Parkway, West Sacramento, CA 95605. EEC members Julie Yamamoto, Stephanie Tom Coupe, and Amy Hutzler attended online via MS Teams. No members of the public attended the live meeting in West Sacramento. Frank Kemp, Alice Nash, Cristina Perez, Shelby Kawana, Christina Paez, Heather Swinney, Kristen Elsmore, Kira Freeman, Charles Bartolotta, Soua Lee, Lori Werner and two anonymous participants joined as members of the public.

Dan did introductions and provided the ground rules for the meeting, and then presented his slide presentation.

Dan reviewed the agenda for today's meeting. He covered the meeting format and requirements, and what the Environmental Enhancement Fund (EEF) is and where funds come from, as well as its process. He showed the habitats that have benefited from these funds. EEF expansion in numbers was then described, by funds and the number of projects. Dan presented a summary of the process to date for the current proposals being considered. Dan asked if they wanted to see any details of the proposals that are not in the top seven as ranked by the technical review committee (TRC), and none of the EEC members did. Dan showed the top 10 ranking applications from the TRC. Then he showed blue highlighted proposals, which were just the most recommended few by the TRC. He explained that only \$750,000 in authority exists, so the EEC must limit the choices to that summed total.

Stephanie had a question about the top ten ranked proposals. There is a gap of three in between the top five and the Lake Earl proposal; so why is that? Dan explained how the TRC had a first and second review, with different recommendations from each, all stemming from the late discovery of 2 additional proposals that had been misplaced due to a technical error. He explained that the funding suggestions will further clarify this. The second review pushed the Lake Earl proposal further down after it was initially proposed by the TRC as a funding option.

Dan then presented slides reviewing the top seven projects in more detail, starting with the top-ranking project. Amy commented that The Coastal Conservancy has

been involved with the Mt. Diablo Marsh Creek group related to the top scoring project. There was a technical issue displaying the slides in a manner that was clearly visible to the public on-line, so Dan temporarily shut down the camera for the room and adjusted the online display to show the slides more clearly. The online participants indicated that they could now see the slides clearly. Dan continued, re-read the top-ranking project slide, then moved to the one describing the Yosemite proposal, which ranked second. Amy asked if this applicant was a private company and eligible for grant funds? Dan replied yes, they are a 501C organization and that they were eligible. Dan then checked for public comments in the chat area, and there were no new comments or questions there. He then described the bull kelp project in Albion Cove in more detail. Dan asked if there were any questions. He then described the next ranking project, Elk Creek Acquisition from Eel River Watershed. Dan asked if there were any questions, and Stephanie asked about the shift in this proposal from their previous application in a prior request for proposals. Dan explained that now this group's proposal contained more funds toward biological inventory and restoration and less money requested toward the acquisition, when compared to the previous version. He also explained that BLM is leveraging EEF funds to access matching requirements for other Federal funding sources. Dan checked for public comments again and found none. He next discussed the slide which summarized the Dune Habitat and Ecosystem Function at Northern Monterey County State Parks. Dan then asked if there were questions, and there were none. Dan then talked through his next slide on Morro Bay Coastal Habitat Enhancement Through Ice Plant Removal. Dan checked for public comments or questions and found none. Dan then covered the next slide, on the Lake Earl Wildlife Area Habitat Restoration Project. Dan asked if there were any questions, and there were none. Dan checked for public comments and found none.

Dan showed a slide of the top-ranking applications. He paused for the EEC to deliberate and for public comment before he showed the funding suggestions from the TRC. Stephanie asked for the proposal applications in advance so that she and the other committee members could evaluate all the proposals prior to the meeting and acknowledged the funding limitations. She also expressed that the format currently on the screen was more helpful for her since she can see the organization, habitat type, and location more easily than on the tables with proposal numbers in the first column. Amy said that since there were ten DFW scientists reviewing these proposals, she does not need to see them ahead of time, but she said she honestly would not look at them individually even if provided. She views her role as providing broader feedback to the program if there is a noticeable gap in what is not being funded. Dan made a suggestion, and he meant to get them the link to the applications in December but had a technical issue with some applications needing late review by the TRC which precluded that. Stephanie commented that she agrees with Amy, and is grateful for the TRC review, but if she is asked about other proposals, she would need to have access to them earlier. Dan asked if he could move on to funding suggestions. Dan then switched back to a slide showing the TRC funding suggestions; two different suggestions. One was constructed prior to considering the last two projects reviewed by the TRC, and one following those last two reviews being completed by the TRC. Dan described those two suggestions in more detail, and then paused and asked if there were any questions. Dan checked the chat, and found a question from the wildlife area but no public comments. Dan reminded the EEC members that he will need a motion. Amy suggested the second

funding suggestion by the TRC was her preference since The Coastal Conservancy was supporting Lake Earl already. She appreciated the fact that Morro Dunes was Central Coast, and that The Coastal Conservancy has funding available that applicants can apply for, including this Lake Earl project. Stephanie commented that she is leaning toward the second funding option since it allows full funding the Morro Bay proposal. Julie commented that this committee has funded a lot of Dunes projects, so she was hesitant about the second funding proposal that included more dunes work, but that she ultimately could support option two as well. She asked if other funding from OSPR could support the Lake Earl proposal, and Dan responded that we aren't aware of any such funding now. Stephanie commented that Morro Bay project may have more eligibility for other funds compared to Lake Earl. Julie motioned to support the second funding approach. Amy Hutzel seconded that motion. Dan asked for a vote for all those on the committee that are in favor, and the motion was unanimously approved by the EEC for the funding option two, to be awarded as reflected in the list below and totaling \$741,280.00:

- Watershed Restoration and Protection Marsh Creek 7 Water Flows to the Delta, submitted by Save Mount Diablo, for \$67,074.00.
- Restoring the High Elevation Freshwater Ecosystems of Yosemite National Park, submitted by Freshwater Life, Inc., for \$195,000.00.
- Bull Kelp Restoration in Albion Cove, submitted by Reef Check Foundation, for \$125,930.00.
- Elk Creek Acquisition-Eel River Watershed, submitted by Bureau of Land Management, for \$310,000.00.
- Morro Bay Coastal Enhancement Through Ice Plant Removal, submitted by Morro Bay National Estuary Program, for \$43,276.00.

Dan reviewed the Fund condition and Budget slide describing the Spring Finance Letter changes that are expected, if it is approved. He then covered the Moving Forward slide that described the timetable of the next steps and meetings for the EEF program, and more staff support for it from Cristina (Nina) Perez. He concluded with a last slide of thanks for all the support for this program. Dan checked for public questions, where he found a request for showing all of the projects in ranked order based on the TRC review. Amy said she hopes the Spring Finance letter goes through as they are all important, highlighting the increased need for more funding and larger grants and to have the funding last longer, and thanked him for the work on all of this. Dan mentioned amendments to our grants for EEF have been common, and that such changes would help with that aspect of grant management. Dan then showed a spreadsheet to address the public member's request with all of the project proposals shown as ranked by the TRC. Dan asked for contact information from the person that asked for this, indicating that he would get back to them and answer any follow up questions that they might have.

Dan thanked everyone and said that this would end the meeting for today, and he reminded everyone that the EEF website has the meeting minutes and other information, and that he will reach out in May, then wished everyone a Happy New Year.

The meeting adjourned at 11:07 am.