



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 7, 2009

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Mission Creek Fish Passage – Accept Grant Funding For Design Of CalTrans Channel Steelhead Migration Barrier Removal

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Authorizing the Parks and Recreation Director to Accept Grant Funds and Execute a Grant Agreement for \$500,000 from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Fisheries Restoration Grant Program for the Mission Creek Fish Passage Project at the CalTrans Channel; and
- B. Increase the appropriation and estimated revenue by \$500,000 in the Creeks Division Capital Fund for the Mission Creek Fish Passage Project at the CalTrans Channel.

DISCUSSION:

Introduction

Over the last three years, the Creeks Division has worked with the CDFG, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, Environmental Defense Center (EDC), and community members to remove barriers to steelhead trout migration in Mission Creek.

Mission Creek is considered the most viable stream for steelhead trout restoration in the City of Santa Barbara. Mission Creek contains high quality spawning and rearing habitat in the mid and upper watershed and currently has a population of rainbow trout (freshwater version of steelhead). Mission Creek also has a documented historic run of steelhead trout and, every year for the last five years, steelhead trout have been recorded attempting to migrate upstream without success due to barriers within the stream channel.

There are 12 identified barriers to steelhead trout migration on Mission Creek. The three most significant barriers are the CalTrans Channel, the Tallant Road Bridge, and the Highway 192 Bridge. Removing these barriers would provide access for steelhead trout to 4.86 miles of creek channel, which include two miles of moderate to high quality spawning and rearing habitat. These three barriers are the primary focus of the Creeks Division's restoration efforts on Mission Creek.

The most significant barrier to allowing steelhead trout to migrate upstream is the CalTrans Channel. It is the lowest downstream barrier on Mission Creek and is completely impassable by steelhead trout. A conceptual design for making this barrier passable has been developed and tested using computer and physical modeling. Funds for that work were provided by grants from the CDFG and the Annenberg Foundation (through the EDC). The next steps toward establishing steelhead migration into the upper watershed are to complete the design and construction specifications, permitting, and environmental review processes for a fish passage project at the CalTrans Channel.

In May 2008, the Creeks Division applied for a grant with the CDFG to complete design, permitting, and environmental review for the Mission Creek Fish Passage Project at the CalTrans Channel. In March 2009, CDFG notified the Creeks Division that grant funds for this project had been awarded to the City. The Creeks Division is now recommending that Council accept the CDFG grant. Once approved, the Creeks Division will oversee preparation of design plans and construction specifications, permitting, and environmental review for the CalTrans Channel fish passage project.

Assuming Council accepts the grant funds, the grant contract with CDFG will be finalized by April 17, 2009. An RFP will be sent out to design engineering firms for the plans and specifications on April 10, 2009. A contract to hire the engineering design firm will be ready for City Council approval on June 2, 2009. The design firm will complete plans and specifications by March 31, 2010.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The estimated cost to complete design plans, specifications, and permitting is \$768,000. Funding includes the \$500,000 CDFG grant, \$135,000 from the EDC through a grant from the Annenberg Foundation, and \$132,500 from Measure B funds in the Creeks Division capital budget. The Creeks Division has \$189,000 available for Mission Creek Barrier removal projects in its Fiscal Year 2009 capital budget.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

This fish passage project will contribute to local, regional, and federal objectives of removing migration barriers for the endangered steelhead trout within Mission Creek.

PREPARED BY: Cameron Benson, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office