

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
County of Placer

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: August 21, 2012

FROM: ^{XB}
KEN GREHM / BOB COSTA

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES FLOODSAFE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND STATEWIDE RESOURCES OFFICE GRANT APPLICATION FOR ACQUISITION OF FLOOD AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON THE SCILACCI FARMS PROPERTY**

ACTION REQUESTED / RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the filing of a grant application with the State of California Department of Water Resources FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office for up to \$3,500,000 for acquisition of flood and conservation easements and habitat restoration on the Scilacci Farms property; and authorizing the Director of Public Works to execute all documents related to the grant.
2. Authorize a net county cost of up to \$700,000 of Open Space Fund, or other sources that may present a funding opportunity, for a local 20 percent funding match should the grant award be approved.

BACKGROUND / SUMMARY

The State of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO) is preparing to receive grant applications to fund activities relating to implementation of the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC). The SPFC is the collective facilities, lands, activities and operations of the state and federal flood protection system in the Central Valley. Funding for this grant has been authorized under Proposition 1E, the Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act.

Eligible projects for funding under this grant program include activities that incorporate environmental stewardship and sustainability principles, flood control improvement activities, as well as activities involving advance mitigation solutions for proposed SPFC facilities and improvements. Proposals are expected to provide or lead to ecological improvements, such as increased area and/or inundation of floodplain, or increased area of riparian, wetland, or floodplain habitats supporting sensitive species. Additionally, this is expected to occur in a strategic location that substantially improves regional connectivity and/or provides essential habitats in accordance with larger conservation plans, such as the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP). An advance mitigation crediting strategy for support of SPFC activities is also required.

The 456-acre Scilacci Farms property is located northwest of Lincoln, adjacent to the Placer-Sutter County Line along Coon Creek, as shown on attached Figure 1. The majority of this property has been converted for rice and wheat production, with some remaining riparian areas. This property is ideally situated to provide multiple benefits relating to local and regional flood control, agricultural and habitat conservation objectives, including those specifically required for the FESSRO grant. Owners Kirk and Michelle Scilacci are willing sellers, and support the activities anticipated for the property.

Since 2000, the Placer Legacy Program has been pursuing a conservation strategy aimed at preserving ecological functions within the Coon Creek watershed, a natural resource of local significance. Legacy actions to date have protected over five miles of Coon Creek, with an additional three miles pending. The addition of the Scilacci Farms property would form a core conservation reserve area within the PCCP, as shown on attached Figure 2, and would

compliment efforts on agricultural lands immediately to the east, including a DWR protected site which also provides floodplain and riparian protection.

The Coon Creek watershed is of significant importance to the PCCP because it is the only intact salmon-bearing watershed not heavily influenced by urbanization, and that provides valuable valley-to-foothills connectivity for fish and wildlife species. Acquisition of flood and conservation easements on Scilacci Farms would:

- Conserve 456 acres of agricultural land adjacent to Coon Creek in an area of increasing development pressure.
- Provide flood control benefits quickly and at relatively low cost per acre-foot of storage.
- Preserve and maintain surrogate wetlands.
- Provide connectivity with surrounding preserve and agriculture lands
- Provide 456 acres of land creditable to Placer County for mitigation requirements of the PCCP for riparian, perennial wetland, and grassland habitats.

Scilacci Farms lies completely within the FEMA 100-year floodplain and has a history of frequent and severe flooding. Most streams in the area, including Coon Creek have channel capacities of less than 10-year event flood flows. The project will increase floodwater retention over 330 acres of existing rice lands proposed for flood easements (see Figure 1) in two phases. The first phase would provide as much as 500 acre-feet of additional storage (retention) on the property with only minor repairs required to existing earthen checks and gate structures currently employed for rice production. The second phase of the project would involve enlarging the width and height of existing earthen checks to increase the total storage potential to 800 acre-feet across the site. Significant floodwater retention can be provided with this project at relatively low cost compared to other regional retention projects being pursued by local municipalities (i.e., Reason Farms and Lakeview Farms projects). The retention benefits provided can be claimed for mitigation by the County for past and future development within unincorporated areas of the Cross Canal watershed. The State's downstream Central Valley Flood Control Project, including the levees of the Cross Canal which provide protection to the Natomas area of development, will directly benefit from this project as well due to the reduction of peak flood flows on existing state levee systems. Additionally, the seasonal flood retention provided can occur without impact to the historic agricultural activities on the property.

The Department of Public Works is proposing submittal of a FESSRO grant application to fund acquisition of flood and conservation easements and to provide for riparian habitat restoration on the Scilacci Farms property. While the grant does not specify a local cost share requirement, DWR guidelines state that projects with local monetary or in-kind contributions are expected to score higher in the application review process. Should the grant be awarded, the Department will return to your Board for further actions regarding easement acquisition and habitat restoration efforts.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The requested actions are not subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act review pursuant to Section 15061 (b) (3) which exempts projects where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity discussed in this report may have a significant effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the County when applying for grant funds. Pursuing grant funds represents an opportunity to make progress on achieving flood protection and conservation goals. Total project costs are estimated at \$4,000,000. Acquisition of flood and conservation easements is estimated to be \$1,300,000, with habitat restoration actions estimated to cost

\$2,700,000. A proposed local contribution of \$700,000 of the total project cost, from the Placer Legacy Open Space Fund is proposed to improve chances of a grant award.

The current project estimate includes a \$60,000 budget for the initial three years of operations and maintenance (O&M). Continued funding for O&M could be generated through a County Service Area, or similar assessment method, applied to properties or entities receiving flood or habitat mitigation benefits from this project. Future acquisition and O&M funding sources and methodologies would be established with development of a mitigation crediting program.

Attachments: Resolution
Maps

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Before the Board of Supervisors
County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of: **A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FILING OF A GRANT APPLICATION WITH THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES FLOODSAFE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND STATEWIDE RESOURCES OFFICE AND AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE GRANT**

Resol. No:.....

Ord. No:.....

First Reading:.....

The following RESOLUTION was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held _____, by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

ATTEST:
Clerk of said Board

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

BE IT RESOLVED by the Placer County Board of Supervisors that the Director of Public Works is hereby authorized to sign and file, for and on behalf of the County of Placer, a grant application with the State Department of Water Resources for the acquisition of flood and conservation easements and habitat restoration on the Scilacci Farms property; and

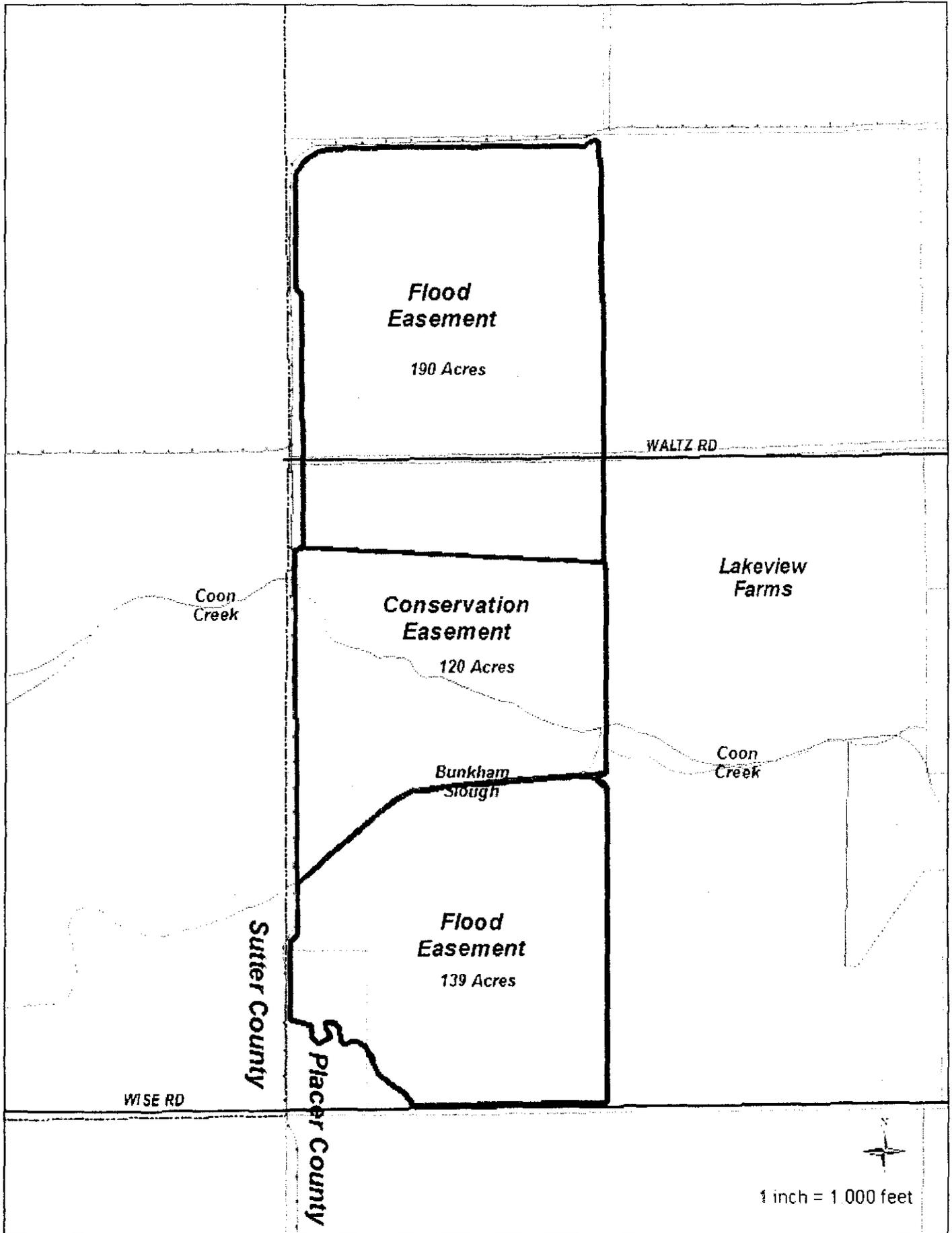
BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Placer hereby agrees and further does authorize the aforementioned representative or his/her designee to certify that the Agency has and will comply with all applicable state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements related to any financing or financial assistance received from the State Department of Water Resources; and

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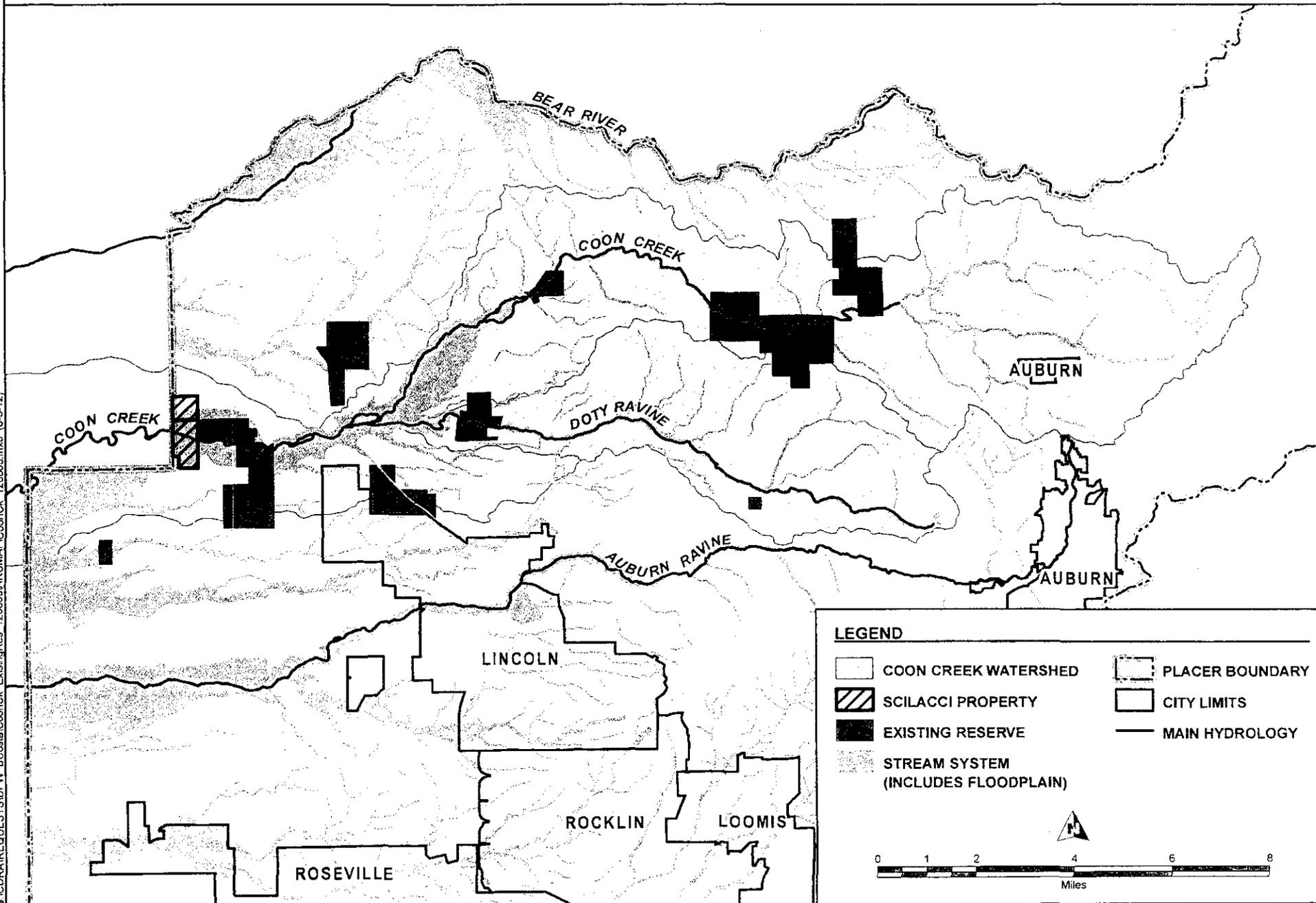
Resolution Authorizing the Filing of a Grant Application with the State of California Department of Water Resources

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of Public Works of County of Placer is hereby authorized to negotiate and execute a financial assistance agreement from the State Department of Water Resources and any amendments or change orders thereto and certify financing agreement disbursements on behalf of the County of Placer.

Scilacci Farms



Existing Reserves in the Coon Creek Watershed



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