

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

DATE: February 2, 2022
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Jackie Nelson, Environmental Education Supervisor
REVIEWED BY: Rafael Payan, General Manager
SUBJECT: Approval to Submit a 2022 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, California Bay Watershed Education and Training Grant Application

SUMMARY:

Staff present for Board approval a request to authorize staff to apply for the 2022 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), California Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant to pilot the MPRPD Healthy Habitats education program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Up to \$70,000 in grant revenue.

FUNDING SOURCE:

To be determined.

FUNDING BALANCE:

To be determined.

DISCUSSION:

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries announced that approximately \$1,500,000 may be available for B-WET program in FY 2022. It anticipates that approximately 6-10 grants will be awarded with these funds. Up to 60% of CA B-WET funding will be set aside for new applicants. Therefore, the total funding amount for applicants that have successfully received B-WET funding in the past will be limited to 40%. MPRPD was awarded a B-WET grant for the Watershed Explorers program from 2016-2018.

The B-WET grant program is an environmental education program that promotes place-based experiential learning for K–12 students and related professional development for teachers. B-WET funding supports locally relevant opportunities for youth and teachers to get out into the environment to learn meaningful ways to understand environmental issues and give the students tools, techniques, and resources to move towards addressing these areas for the future.

Since the hiring of a full-time Environmental Education Coordinator for programs in March 2021, staff has developed a “Healthy Habitats” program for secondary students (grades 7-12) and their teachers. *Healthy Habitats*, an inquiry-based field program focused on local habitats of Palo Corona Regional Park, employs field data collected during the trip to

provide analysis for addressing complex ecosystem dynamics and function concepts through various metrics of habitat and ecosystem health. Students will analyze and measure biotic and abiotic factors in different habitat locations in the park and compare data and identify key factors affecting animal habitat quality.

Healthy Habitats aligns well with NOAA's "Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences" a core framework that focuses on investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed action. Staff is seeking funding support for staffing assistance and program materials to implement the pilot program. The grant application for California is due February 18, 2022, with a project start date of August 1, 2022.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff respectfully recommends that the Board approve and authorize staff to apply for the 2022 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), California Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant to pilot the MPRPD Healthy Habitats education program.