SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:	
Prepared on:	3/21/06
Department Name:	Agricultural Commissioner
Department No.:	051
Agenda Date:	4/18/06
Placement:	Administrative
Estimate Time:	5 minutes
Continued Item:	NO
If Yes, date from:	

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: William D. Gillette
Agricultural Commissioner/Director

STAFF CONTACT: David Chang
(805) 681-5600

SUBJECT: Approve the application for grant funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board - California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program for the Carpinteria Creek Arundo Removal Project

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Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the resolution to approve the funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board – California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program; and,
2. Certify that the County of Santa Barbara will comply with all federal, state, and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project and will obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project; and
3. Agree to operate and maintain the project and further commits to the terms and conditions specified in the grant agreement; and
4. Appoint William D. Gillette, Agricultural Commissioner, as representative of the County of Santa Barbara to conduct negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:
The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 4. A Community that is Economically Vital and Sustainable.

Executive Summary and Discussion:
Execution of the attached resolution will enable the department to apply for and be reimbursed for activities to remove the noxious weed, *Arundo donax*, from the bed, banks, and overbanks of public and private property adjacent to Carpinteria Creek. The removal of arundo will protect and enhance coastal natural habitat, improve recreational access, improve aesthetics, reduce

flood and fire hazard, increase native plant habitat, restore steelhead habitat and increase wildlife diversity.

The Wildlife Conservation Board's California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program is providing $80,000 in grant funds to assist this project. The Wildlife Conservation Board requires its grantees to obtain their governing board's approval and certification that the grantee will conduct the project as specified in the attached resolution.

This project has been included in the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District's Annual Maintenance Plan for fiscal year 2005/06, which establishes compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code, Federal and California Endangered Species Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act, California Coastal Act and Local Coastal Programs. A Coastal Development Permit was issued to this project on September 8, 2005.

Mandates and Service Levels:
The staffing needs for this project include an agricultural programs specialist.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:
This resolution is a requirement of a grant fund source to receive $80,000 of pass-through funds to conduct a weed removal project. This revenue will be received during FY 06/07 and will be deposited in Department 051, Fund 0001, Account 4000, Program 2000, Activity WMA. The revenues received will be used to offset various expenditures in services and supplies and contractual services required to complete this project.

Special Instructions:
Please approve and adopt the attached Resolution No. _____ and return it to the Agricultural Commissioner's Office along with a copy of the minute order.

Concurrence:
Flood Control/Water Resources
Auditor-Controller

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY
OF SANTA BARBARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD – CALIFORNIA RIPARIAN HABITAT CONSERVATION PROGRAM FOR THE CARPINTERIA CREEK ARUNDO REMOVAL PROJECT	))))))	RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, the Legislature has established the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program within the Wildlife Conservation Board and, through a grant program is providing assistance to further the objectives of the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program.

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Barbara intends to remove the noxious weed, *Arundo donax*, from the riparian corridor of Carpinteria Creek, Santa Barbara County, California, for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of riparian habitat.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara HEREBY:

1. Approves the filing of an application for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board/California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program; and,

2. Certifies that the County of Santa Barbara will comply with all federal, state, and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project and will obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project; and

3. Agrees to operate and maintain the project and further commits to the terms and conditions specified in the grant agreement; and

4. Appoints William D. Gillette, Agricultural Commissioner, as representative of the County of Santa Barbara to conduct negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this _____day of _____, 2006 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

County of Santa Barbara

Attest:
Michael F. Brown
Clerk of the Board

By _____
Joni Gray
Chair, Board of Supervisors

By _____
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
COUNTY COUNSEL

By_____
Deputy County Counsel

APPROVED AS TO FORM
RISK MANAGEMENT

By _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

By: _____

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

1. **Project Name:** Carpinteria Creek Arundo Removal Project

2. **Type of Project:** Restoration/Enhancement

3. **Project summary:** This project proposes to remove the non-native invasive weed, *Arundo donax*, from the bed, banks, and overbanks of Carpinteria Creek and its tributaries.

4. **Location:**
   County: Santa Barbara County
   Watershed: Carpinteria Creek
   State Senate District (#): 19th
   State Assembly District (#): 35th

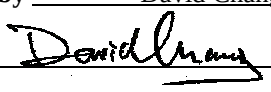
5. **Acreage:**
   Total acreage of project area: 3 acres .
   Acres of existing (pre-project) wetland habitat: 2.5 acres .
   Acres of post-project wetland habitat: 2.5 acres .
   Feet of stream corridor (if applicable): 12,300 feet .

6. **Budget Summary:**
   Total project cost: $129,180 .
   Amount requested from WRP: $70,000 .

7. **Contact Information:**

Name:	David Chang
Organization:	County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Address:	263 Camino del Remedio
	Santa Barbara CA 93110
Telephone:	(805) 681-5600
Fax:	(805) 681-5603
Email:	dchang@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

8. **Proposal prepared by** David Chang Title Agricultural Program Specialist

   Signature  Date January 31, 2005

CARPINTERIA CREEK ARUNDO REMOVAL PROJECT
PROJECT PROPOSAL

Site Description:

Carpinteria Creek is located in coastal Santa Barbara County, about 10 miles southeast of the City of Santa Barbara and 16 miles northwest of the City of Ventura. It drains a watershed of about 15 square miles, or about 9700 acres. The watershed begins in the Santa Ynez Mountains at an elevation of about 4,700 feet and drains steep hillsides and canyons before flowing through orchards, agricultural fields, and urban areas, and emptying into the Pacific at Carpinteria State Beach.

Vegetation types include chaparral, coastal sage scrub, freshwater marsh, riparian scrub/woodland, oak woodland and ruderal vegetation. Typical wetland plants include cattail, bulrush, horsetail fern, spikerush, umbrella plant, and watercress. Typical riparian vegetation includes willows, mulefat, cottonwood, and sycamore, intermingled with some adjacent oak woodland, coastal sage, chaparral and invasive weeds such as arundo, eupatory, fennel, and cape ivy.

Biologists for the California Department of Fish & Game believe that Carpinteria Creek offers the best opportunity among all South Coast urban streams for restoring significant steelhead runs in the next few years. The Conception Coast Project recently evaluated Santa Barbara County's southern coastal streams for steelhead recovery. The project's study, "Steelhead Assessment and Recovery Opportunities in Southern Santa Barbara County, California" (published in June 2002), found that of all the focal watersheds analyzed in the study, Carpinteria Creek offered the highest potential for steelhead recovery, both because of its biological value and because of relative impact of passage barriers on the creek.

This project is largely located on private lands and some public land, owned mostly by the County of Santa Barbara or State of California. Surveys of Carpinteria Creek, from the creek mouth to upstream of Casitas Pass Road at the Sutton Creek confluence and of Gobernador Creek to a ¼ mile past the debris dam, were conducted in 2004 to determine the extent of the arundo infestation. Arundo is estimated to occupy approximately 2.5 acres on the banks of Carpinteria Creek. The main infested segment occurs on approximately 1.25 miles of creek length. There is one small patch on Gobernador Creek.

Project Description

Goal. This project proposes to remove approximately 2.5 acres of *Arundo donax*, from the bed, banks and overbanks along a 2.5 mile stretch of Carpinteria Creek and a small patch on Gobernador Creek.

Need. The detrimental effects of arundo infestation are well known to habitat restorationists and natural resource managers. Arundo tends to form large, continuous, clonal root masses, sometimes covering several acres, usually at the expense of native riparian vegetation which cannot compete. Arundo increases the risk of flooding and property damage. Errant arundo stalks can become lodged at bridges, culverts, and banks disrupting flood flows and causing bridges and other infrastructures to fail. Arundo is also flammable, presenting an additional hazard to nearby residents, native animals and vegetation. Arundo uses significantly more water, as much as three times more, than native vegetation. Arundo's growth structure does not provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. The restoration of sites formerly occupied by arundo will benefit birds by increasing nesting opportunities for both ground nesting and tree nesting species; by increasing food sources, as arundo has no insects that graze it and no seeds to offer as food; and by freeing up travel through the riparian corridor.

The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition was formed in 2001 to steward the watershed for steelhead recovery, erosion, and other water quality issues. The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office was invited by the coalition to participate in the restoration of Carpinteria Creek and was recently awarded $42,500 by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to conduct an arundo removal project. However, more money will likely be needed to complete the project and to maintain project sites after the initial removal.

Because of the high potential for steelhead recovery, the enhancement of bird habitat, and the synergism provided by over $850,000 worth of projects by the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition's partners, the Carpinteria Creek provides an excellent opportunity for grant funds to make a difference.

Method. The primary arundo removal technique to be used by this project will be the cut stump method – cutting down the arundo close to the base of the plant, and applying undiluted glyphosate directly to the cut stumps. Cut canes will be chipped and hauled out of the creek bed for disposal at the Tajiguas landfill. To reduce disposal costs, some arundo chips will be deposited as mulch at neighboring properties, located well away from the riparian corridor. These sites will be monitored for regrowth.

Where feasible, arundo will be foliar sprayed with an 8% glyphosate solution. A feasible site is one where non-target damage to adjacent desirable vegetation and over-spray to flowing creek water can be avoided and where aesthetics and fire hazard will not be a problem. When the foliage of a treated patch dies, it will be cut down and chipped. Mulch will be deposited in an appropriate site, or hauled to Tajiguas landfill for disposal.

The project will be timed to avoid impact on nesting birds and other wildlife. A local biologist will be contracted to determine the presence of bird nests during the treatment period.

Treated stands will be monitored for regrowth. Regrowth will be treated by either the cut-stump method, again, or by foliar spray. The choice of method will be determined by the potential for overspray to contact actively flowing creek water and the size of regrowth – if arundo clumps are next to water flowing within the creek, the cut-stump method will be employed; otherwise regrowth will be foliar sprayed.

Alternative Methods. The nature of Carpinteria Creek precludes the use of large flail mowers or other arundo control methods that might be less expensive. The creek is incised or has limited access throughout much of the riparian corridor and does not have much flat ground where mowing equipment or trucks can be brought in. Tarping of infestations is a non-pesticidal method with reports of some success. However, it is yet to be a generally recommended technique. The methods chosen are considered the best available techniques for the project. This project will consider best management techniques as may be developed by the Ventura River Arundo Removal Demonstration Project.

Habitat Restoration. Some replanting of native plants will be needed to alleviate erosion problems and speed restoration. Each revegetation site may need customized solutions. A biologist will be contracted to design a restoration plan. Ideally, willow, alder, and cottonwood will be available on-site for cutting and planting. Also, native plants will be purchased from a nursery.

Monitoring and Evaluation. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office will maintain project sites, and survey for regrowth and missed arundo patches for five years subsequent from the beginning of this project or until the declaration of local eradication, whichever comes first. Eradication of arundo from the project areas will be declared upon not finding individual or regrown arundo plants within the project areas for three consecutive years.

Project History and Development

Fifty years ago, Carpinteria Creek was home to plentiful runs of steelhead trout. Although recent surveys suggest that small numbers of fish may still enter the Creek to spawn, anadromous populations are a mere fraction of their numbers in the 1940s. Despite its problems, Carpinteria Creek offers great potential for steelhead recovery. In the 1960s and 70s, the City of Carpinteria refused to allow the creek to be channelized with concrete for flood control. As a result, the channel still runs freely under open spans (rather than through culverts) at both the Union Pacific tracks and the 101 freeway. The upper reaches of the creek contain very valuable fish habitat, and a tall tree canopy runs through much of the riparian corridor. As mentioned previously, biologists from the California Department of Fish & Game and a study of Santa Barbara County southern coastal creeks consider Carpinteria Creek a prime site for steelhead recovery projects.

The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition, led by the Community Environmental Council, has attracted significant grant funds to remove fish passage barriers and develop a watershed plan. Members include local landowners,

California Department of Fish & Game, Cachuma Resource Conservation District, Santa Barbara County Water Agency and Flood Control District, the City of Carpinteria, and others. Current projects of the coalition include development of a watershed assessment and management plan, removal of fish passage barriers, and invasive weed removal. The coalition also conducts public outreach to update local residents and gain support. More information about the coalition can be found at: http://carpinteriacreek.org/index.htm.

This project will be added to the local Flood Control District's Annual Maintenance Plan, which will permit it under their Streambed Alteration Agreement. A CEQA Notice of Exemption and Army Corps 404 permit exemption is issued with inclusion in the plan. Permissions are currently being sought from landowners on project sites. This project is in the Coastal Zone. The determination of whether a coastal development permit will be required is currently underway.

Applicable Experience

Similar projects that have been completed by the applicant or are currently in progress include:

1. Arundo removal in Hidden Valley Park along Arroyo Burro Creek and San Roque Creek, a tributary of Arroyo Burro Creek. The applicant conducted a project that removed 1 acre of arundo from a 7,000 foot stretch of Arroyo Burro Creek. That project was funded by the Calif. Dept. of Food & Agriculture's Noxious Weed Management Account and by the Partners for Fish & Wildlife. That project is currently continuing in a maintenance mode.

2. Pampas grass removal at the "Patterson Ave Ag Block", along Arroyo Burro Creek. Significant infestations of pampas grass were removed by the applicant in the area of the Patterson Ave Ag Block, along Las Positas Avenue at Arroyo Burro Creek, and on Elings Park.

3. Noxious weed control on Santa Cruz Island. The applicant is also administering a noxious weed control project on Santa Cruz Island. That project has completed its first year and is moving into its second year phase.

All of these projects were conducted subsequent to the applicant's formation and leadership of the Santa Barbara County Weed Management Area in 2001.

PROJECT BUDGET

Table 2A: Estimated Project Budget

Project Task	Estimated Cost
25 days cut, treat, chip, haul arundo	$50,000.00
Refuse disposal	$10,500.00
40 hours habitat restoration plan	$2,000.00
40 hours wildlife protection survey	$2,000.00
15 days planting labor & site maintenance	$9,000.00
10 days watering labor	$1,000.00
Native plant purchase	$10,000.00
Project Management	$43,680.00
Miscellaneous supplies, herbicides, equipment rental	$1,000.00
Total:	$129,180.00

Table 2B: Estimated Funding Sources

Funding Source	Amount	Confirmed/Applied/Etc.
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	$42,500.00	Confirmed
Wetlands Recovery Project Work Plan	$70,000.00	Applied
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	$36,600.00	Confirmed
County of Santa Barbara	$48,930.00	Confirmed