

# STAFF REPORT

## *City Council Business Item*

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**DATE:** July 17, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Brendan Byrd, Public Works Director/City Engineer

**THROUGH:** Merritt Perry, City Manager

**SUBJECT:** **Authorize the City Manager to Submit a Grant to the Wildlife Conservation Board for the Design and Permitting of Replacement Culverts along Mill Creek and to Designate the City Manager as the Authorized Representative; *Resolution 2023-21***

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider adopting *Resolution 2023-21* approving the submission of a grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for the Mill Creek Habitat Connectivity Project and designate the City Manager as the authorized representative.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Since the completion of the Jameson Creek Project in 2020, staff have been interested in pursuing further restoration grant funding for various culvert crossings along Mill Creek, the southernmost of the City's four major creeks in the City. Although one of the smaller creeks, Mill Creek is a surprisingly productive stream for salmonids, and as high up a Weber Street (Campton Heights) adult steelhead, coho, and coastal cutthroat trout have been observed by fish and wildlife officials. The Weber Street crossing is the uppermost extent that fish have been observed at, as the crossing is a fish passage barrier. Additionally, the crossing is significantly undersized and beyond its design life.



**Figure 1.** Mill Creek culvert outlet at Weber Street.

In 2022, it came to staff's attention that funding was available for such planning projects through the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The WCB is the agency that partially funded the Jameson Creek project. In response to the funding availability, staff initially began working with our consulting engineer to develop a planning project for the Weber Street culvert crossing, which would include 100% engineering plans, specifications, construction cost estimate, and permitting for the project. When complete, the engineering plans could be used to seek further construction implementation grant funding if/when it became available.

After some initial discussions with the WCB, it became clear that their program was seeking to fund larger projects, beyond the overall scope and scale of the City's proposed single crossing, and therefore staff elected to include the next three upstream crossings along Mill Creek in the project. These three additional crossings are located at Rohnerville Road, Mill Street, and Mountain View Road. Each of these crossings poses at least a partial barrier to fish passage, and several of them are also in need to repair or reconfiguration. In early 2023, staff and our consultants finalized a scope of work for the project, which would include all work necessary to develop bid-ready construction plans for each crossing location, and staff submitted the grant application to the WCB. In May, staff were informed that the project would be recommended to the WCB board for a funding recommendation in August 2023.

The final piece to finish the application is to include in the WCB board packet a Resolution from the City confirming the council's approval of the project, and designating an authorized representative that is able to execute all applicable grant documentation. To meet this requirement, *Resolution 2023-21* has been drafted, and the City Manager has been designated as the authorized representative.

If the resolution is approved, the project will go to the WCB board in August. If approved by the WCB, staff would anticipate working with WCB on developing the grant agreement, and staff are hopeful that reimbursable project activity could begin before the end of the year.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

If awarded, the grant would provide \$976,000 of funding for the completion of field investigations, design, and permitting for the four culvert crossings associated with the Mill Creek Habitat Connectivity Project. In the grant application, staff have committed to providing \$10,000 of in-kind staff time match, which over the course of the project should be achievable through regular project participation and grant management. No City funds are being proposed or are required to obtain the grant funding.

### **RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:**

1. Receive staff presentation and review Council questions with staff
2. Open public comment
3. Close public comment
4. Motion to adopt *Resolution 2023-21* and read by title only. Roll call vote.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- *Resolution 2023-21; A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fortuna Approving the Application for Grant Funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board for the Mill Creek Habitat Connectivity Project and Designating the City Manager as the Authorized Representative*