

Background

At the September 2, 2010 Board meeting, the Executive Officer was authorized to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and subsequent funding agreements with the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council). The MOU includes descriptions of roles and duties to be performed by the SNC related to the monitoring of lands or easements to be donated to various organizations. The MOU clearly states that no agreement would require the SNC to perform duties unless adequate resources were provided to reimburse the SNC, and such duties would only be performed to the extent that resources were available.

Further, the SNC Board also authorized the Executive Officer to establish an appropriate budgetary mechanism to receive and expend funds necessary to fully cover the costs to perform the responsibilities associated with the MOU and any subsequent authorized agreements between the SNC and the Stewardship Council.

On September 16, 2010 the Stewardship Council board delegated authority to the Stewardship Council Executive Director to enter into a MOU with the SNC that would guide the negotiation of specific contracts pertaining to: 1) the SNC serving as the covenant holder on watershed lands donated to the US Forest Service (USFS); and 2) the SNC carrying out certain other roles with respect to conservation easements on donated lands. The delegation was approved with the understanding that the negotiated contracts would be subject to board approval at a later date.

Current Status

The MOU with the Stewardship Council remains in effect; however there has been very little progress on taking the actions contemplated when the MOU was signed. The Stewardship Council is still assessing how to proceed with donations and which, if any, lands may be donated to various USFS units. This process is taking longer than initially anticipated due largely to unresolved technical and legal issues. Therefore, negotiations with the Stewardship Council on the implementation of the MOU proposed tasks have been indefinitely delayed.

Based on discussions with the Department of Finance, the SNC has received support from Secretary John Laird, Natural Resources Agency, to use existing reimbursement authority to recover costs associated with tasks that could begin as early as FY 2011-12.

Next Steps

The SNC will continue to communicate with the Stewardship Council and stay current with their process. If and when further services of the SNC are requested, the SNC will assess staff resources and determine how to best support the Stewardship Council. In the meantime, the SNC will submit a Budget Concept Paper to the Department of Finance to prepare for the possible use of the existing Reimbursement Authority to recover costs beyond FY 2011-12. Any further actions will be reported to the SNC Board as they occur.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.