

DATE ISSUED: January 28, 2004

REPORT NO. 04-021

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Agenda of February 2, 2004

SUBJECT: First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) Natural Resource
Management Plan

SUMMARY

Issue - Shall City Council adopt the First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) Natural Resource Management Plan dated September 2001?

Manager's Recommendation - Adopt the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan dated September 2001.

Other Recommendations -

1. San Diego River Park Foundation - In March 2002, the San Diego River Park Foundation staff reviewed the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan, found it to be consistent with their mission relative to development of the San Diego River Park, and therefore, recommended City Council adoption of the Plan.
2. FSDRIP Maintenance Assessment District Committee - In September 2001, the FSDRIP Maintenance Assessment District Committee voted unanimously to recommend City Council adoption of the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan dated September 2001.
3. FSDRIP Advisory Committee - In September 2001, the FSDRIP Advisory Committee reviewed the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan and unanimously recommended adoption by City Council.

Fiscal Impact - None with this action.

BACKGROUND

The First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) is a 45-acre flood control and mitigation project located within San Diego's Mission Valley area along a 7,000-linear foot section of the San Diego River (Figure 1). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CORPS), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) required 26.8 acres of riparian woodland, 9.7 acres of freshwater marsh, and 8.7 acres of open water as mitigation for the 100-year flood control project proposed by local land owners who needed the project in order to develop their land. The CORPS and CDFG required that the aforementioned habitat acreage be planted and maintained in perpetuity within the project limits. The City of San Diego took on the permit responsibilities for creating the project. A Maintenance Assessment District, funded by the benefiting property owners, was established to pay for monitoring, maintenance and dredging activities. The flood control project was completed in 1988.

As part of the permit process, a FSDRIP Advisory Committee was created comprised of representatives from CORPS, USFWS, and CDFG, FSDRIP property owners, and City staff to provide guidance to the City on implementation and monitoring of the FSDRIP habitat creation/restoration effort. The vegetation planted to meet mitigation requirements progressed well and, in 1995, the CORPS and CDFG agreed to sign off the project as meeting success criteria on the condition that a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) be prepared. The NRMP was the last CORPS requirement for final permit approval.

The NRMP was previously docketed for City Council approval in December 1997, but was pulled at the request of the affected property owners in the Maintenance Assessment District, who wanted more time to review the document. These owners then formed the FSDRIP Maintenance Assessment District Committee (MADC) to review all matters related to the Assessment District and FSDRIP. A representative from the MADC filled the FSDRIP Advisory Committee's property owners' representative position.

By October 2000, after extensive review, the FSDRIP Advisory Committee and MADC were in agreement on all elements of the Natural Resource Management Plan except construction noise parameters during the least Bell's vireo breeding season. For another year, between October 2000 and September 2001, the two groups worked together to develop mutually acceptable language related to this issue. The September 2001 FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan includes all revisions and amendments approved by the FSDRIP Advisory Committee and the FSDRIP MADC. The Plan is consistent with all FSDRIP mitigation and monitoring requirements. The both the FSDRIP MADC and the FSDRIP Advisory Committee unanimously recommended City Council adoption of the September 2001 FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan. The Plan was subsequently referred to the San Diego River Park Foundation for review, and was returned with a recommendation for approval in March of 2002.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1 Adopt the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan (September 2001) with changes.

2 Do not adopt the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan (September 2001).

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Oppenheim
Director, Park and Recreation

Approved: Bruce A. Herring
Deputy City Manager

OPPENHEIM/RS

Attachments: 1. Location Map
2. Executive Summary of FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan
(September 2001)

Note: Due to the size of the Plan, it is not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk at 202 "C" Street, San Deigo.