

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** March 11, 2020  
**To:** Board of Directors, California Exposition & State Fair  
**Via:** Rick K. Pickering, Chief Executive Officer  
**From:** Tom Martinez, Chief Deputy General Manager  
**Subject:** Presentation – Proposed Bushy Lake Conceptual Restoration Plan

### BACKGROUND

This item is being brought to your attention at the request of California State University Sacramento Professor Michelle Stevens. Professor Stevens has applied to the California Wildlife Conservation Board for a \$375,000 grant, which would provide for the development of a draft conceptual plan for Bushy Lake habitat and education. This grant application is currently before the Wildlife Conservation Board for consideration and approval. Since the grant applicant must obtain the permission of the property owner, Professor Stevens is seeking a letter of support from the California Exposition & State Fair Board of Directors for her application.

Bushy Lake is located on Cal Expo property within the Lower American River Parkway. In accordance with the Bushy Lake Preservation Act of 1976, Cal Expo coordinates with the Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks to maintain the area. As required by the Act, one of Cal Expo's maintenance activities is to provide Bushy Lake with water. Annually, depending on the amount of rain, Cal Expo provides Bushy Lake with some 50,000,000 gallons of pumped ground water to keep it viable. This 50,000,000 gallons represents more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the 140,000,000 gallons of ground water pumped by Cal Expo each year.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Professor Stevens describes the objective of her project is to create a Conceptual Restoration Plan for Bushy Lake with the following goals:

- 1) Protect, enhance and restore a sustainable habitat refuge for western pond turtles
- 2) To enhance habitat for fire resilient native flora and fauna and
- 3) Enhance the education and interpretation of resources in the Parkway, specifically showcasing tribal cultural use of the Parkway.

## STAKEHOLDERS

After being made aware of the proposed grant application, Cal Expo provided a letter to the Wildlife Conservation Board on February 13, 2020, to advise them of the planned widening of the freeway adjacent to Bushy Lake.

The California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans) is currently undertaking appropriate environmental review related to its planned widening of State Route 51 (Capital City Freeway.) According to Cal Trans, this is the most congested corridor in the Sacramento region. The project calls for widening the freeway and the American River Bridge to accommodate a bus/carpool lane, an auxiliary lane, and a Class 1 bike path. This portion of the Business 80 sees more incidents each year than all the Sacramento region freeways combined. Consequently, this widening is critical to providing safe transportation for thousands of people traveling to their homes, jobs, schools, appointments and more. Given Cal Expo's location on the Parkway, Cal Trans has requested that a portion of Cal Expo's developed property (north of the levee) serve as a possible staging site for the construction contractor.

Since Cal Trans' freeway-widening project will necessitate that the contractor somehow access and traverse the Lower American River Parkway near Bushy Lake, Cal Expo's February 13<sup>th</sup> letter respectfully recommended that award of this particular grant be prudently postponed until Cal Trans completes its work in this area.

On February 21, 2020, Cal Expo and California Department of Transportation staff met with Professor Stevens to learn more about her project and its projected footprint. Also in attendance at this site visit were representatives of the County of Sacramento Regional Parks, and representatives of the Wildlife Conservation Board.

Professor Stevens has asked to make a presentation to the Cal Expo Board on her proposed grant application.



Cara Allen, Sr. Environmental Scientist  
Wildlife Conservation Board  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

February 13, 2020

Dear Ms. Allen:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me regarding the grant application that is under consideration by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Bushy Lake Conceptual Restoration Plan). As the landowner of some 408 acres of the Lower American River Parkway, the California Exposition and State Fair (Cal Expo) has longed worked jointly with the County of Sacramento to protect and enhance the area, as well as facilitate public access and enjoyment (in accordance with the 2008 American River Parkway Plan and the 1976 Bushy Lake Preservation Act). Cal Expo appreciates the work of the California State University Sacramento students and faculty that have participated in cleanup and conservation efforts on our Parkway property in the past. We have reviewed Professor Michelle Stevens grant application to perform work on Cal Expo's property in the Parkway, specifically at Bushy Lake.

Please be advised that the California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans) is currently undertaking appropriate environmental review related to its planned widening of State Route 51 (Capital City Freeway). According to Cal Trans, this is the most congested corridor in the Sacramento region. The project calls for widening the freeway and the American River Bridge to accommodate a bus/carpool lane, an auxiliary lane, and a Class 1 bike path. Given Cal Expo's location on the Parkway, Cal Trans has requested that a portion of Cal Expo's developed property (north of the levee) serve as a possible staging site for the construction contractor.

Since Cal Trans freeway-widening project will necessitate that the contractor somehow access and traverse the Lower American River Parkway near Bushy Lake, Cal Expo respectfully recommends that award of this particular grant be prudently postponed until Cal Trans completes its work in this area.

Sincerely,



Rick K. Pickering  
CEO

cc: Senator Dr Richard Pan  
Assembly Member Kevin McCarty  
John P. Donnelly, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board  
Nav Gill, County Executive, County of Sacramento  
Liz Bellas, Director, County of Sacramento Regional Parks  
Michelle L. Stevens, PhD, California State University Sacramento