

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 6

SUBJECT: ADOPT RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM LOCAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM AND ESTABLISH APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT TO BENEFIT TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD PROJECT AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (DISTRICT: 2)

OVERVIEW

The State of California's Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Local Assistance Grant Program was created to assist local public and non-profit entities in implementing NCCPs throughout California. The Local Assistance Grant Program, administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), allocates funds for projects associated with the planning and implementation of established conservation programs such as the County of San Diego's (County) Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The MSCP is a long-term, regional habitat conservation program focused on balancing the protection of plant and animal species with recreation, development, and agricultural activities within the San Diego region. On October 22, 1997 (1), the County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted the 50-year MSCP South County Subarea Plan, which includes the unincorporated areas in the southwestern portion of the region. In total, there are three Plan Areas within the County's MSCP, including the adopted South County Subarea, the draft North County, and the proposed East County MSCP Plan Areas.

The County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) evaluated eligible projects that are part of the MSCP in conjunction with the requirements of the Local Assistance Grant Program and determined that the Habitat Enhancement to Benefit Tricolored Blackbird Project (Project) would meet a known conservation need and be competitive for available grant funding. Previous Local Assistance Grant-funded projects have been performed on multiple County Preserves, including Lakeside Linkage Preserve and Otay Ranch Preserve, and benefited MSCP-covered species, including coastal cactus wren and federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly.

The Project includes managing the existing old-growth bulrush and installing cattails and nettle species to diversify the plant species and removing invasive non-native plant species at an on-site pond in Boulder Oaks Preserve (Preserve). Enhancing the pond vegetation would improve habitat for wildlife species, particularly the tricolored blackbird, a rare species that contributes to local biodiversity and is found year-round in the Ramona area. On July 17, 2025, DPR submitted an NCCP Local Assistance Grant Program (LAG) application to CDFW for the Project and received notification from CDFW on October 7, 2025, that the Project was awarded \$79,989 in grant funding. The awarded LAG funding will fully fund the Project's activities with nominal County staff time for project administration.

Today's requested action is to adopt a resolution authorizing DPR to accept up to \$79,989 of Local Assistance Grant funds from CDFW that will be expended through the term of the Project, April 2026 through March 2028. Although the County Board delegated general authority to pursue and accept grant funding on October 23, 2024 (7), a requirement of the grant application is that applicants must provide a project-specific resolution from the governing body that identifies the project to be implemented with

the grant funds. In addition, today's actions will establish appropriations in DPR and authorize the Director of DPR, or designee, to conduct all negotiations and to execute and submit all documents that may be necessary to accept the grant funds.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Find that the proposed Habitat Enhancement to Benefit Tricolored Blackbird Project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 because the project involves minor alterations in the condition of vegetation, which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, or scenic trees.
2. Adopt the Resolution entitled: RESOLUTION OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS FROM THE Local Assistance GRANT PROGRAM FOR Habitat Enhancement to Benefit tricolored blackbird PROJECT.
3. Establish appropriations of \$79,989 in the Department of Parks and Recreation, Services and Supplies, for the Habitat Enhancement to Benefit Tricolored Blackbird Project, based on funding from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. **(4 VOTES)**
4. Authorize the Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, or designee, as agent of the County of San Diego, to conduct all negotiations and submit all documents necessary to accept grant funds, including but not limited to, grant contracts, payment requests, and to execute the grant agreements, including any extensions or amendments thereof that do not materially impact or alter the grant programs or funding levels.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Department of Parks and Recreation's proposed efforts to accept grant funds through the Local Assistance Grant Program to enhance natural habitat in Boulder Oaks Preserve, through the enhancement activities of the Project, will benefit threatened animal species, reduce fuel loads, and enhance fire resiliency of the vegetation in the Preserve. The Project is anticipated to have a positive impact on all residents and visitors by improving water and air quality and providing wildfire protection.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action of the Department of Parks and Recreation to accept grant funds through the Local Assistance Grant Program to enhance natural habitat in Boulder Oaks Preserve (Preserve) contributes to the County of San Diego Sustainability Goal No. 6 to protect ecosystems, habitats, and biodiversity. The Project will enhance the native vegetation in the area, thus expanding available nesting habitat for a threatened animal species and increasing the biodiversity in the Preserve.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of \$79,989 related to Recommendation 3. The funding source is grant funds from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). If approved, the proposed action will also adopt a resolution authorizing DPR to accept \$79,989 of Local Assistance Grant (LAG) funding from CDFW for the Habitat Enhancement to Benefit Tricolored Blackbird Project related to Recommendation 2.

The Local Assistance Grant program strongly encourages matching funds for all project proposals. Matching funds will be provided through in-kind services in the form of County staff time up to the amount of \$4,838 for the Habitat Enhancement to Benefit Tricolored Blackbird Project. The funding source is existing General Purpose Revenue in DPR. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

With the \$79,989 of LAG funding and \$4,838 of County matching funds for DPR staff time, the total budget for the Project will be \$84,827 if approved.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent, adopting Resolution No. 26-008, entitled: RESOLUTION OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS FROM THE LOCAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM FOR HABITAT ENHANCEMENT TO BENEFIT TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD PROJECT.

AYES: Aguirre, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: Anderson

State of California)
County of San Diego)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter