



Staff Report

File #: 19-288

Version: 1

Date: 7/8/2019

Item #: 3.3b.

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Memorandum of Understanding between City of Salem and Willamette Riverkeeper.

Ward(s): Ward 7
Councilor(s): Cook
Neighborhood(s): Southwest Association of Neighbors
Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Willamette Riverkeeper for aquatic invasive weed work within and adjacent to the Willamette Slough?

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Willamette Riverkeeper for aquatic invasive weed work within and adjacent to the Willamette Slough.

SUMMARY:

Willamette Riverkeeper has been awarded a Willamette Mainstem Anchor Habitat Investments grant from Meyer Memorial Trust and Bonneville Power Administration for aquatic invasive treatments in the Willamette Slough at Minto Brown Island Park.

The grant funds will be used to control aquatic invasive weeds, primarily Uruguayan waterprimrose (*Ludwigia spp.*) and parrotsfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) that cover approximately 34 acres of the Willamette Slough. These aquatic weeds are adversely affecting in-water habitat and recreation. Invasive weeds along the edge of the Willamette Slough, such as blackberry (*Rubus armenicus*) and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) will also be treated as part of the project as shown on

Attachment 1. The weeds will be treated with an approved herbicide that has been used up and down the Willamette River specifically for these aquatic and near-water invasive weeds.

As the property owner, the City will contract directly with Integrated Resource Management (IRM) for the treatments of the weeds over three successive summers. IRM personnel are licensed herbicide applicators and have done similar work for the Portland Metro, City of Eugene, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, among others.

The City will be reimbursed by Willamette Riverkeeper through grant funds for the work conducted by IRM. In addition, the City will provide match to the grant through staff time, water quality monitoring, and water quality equipment.

This work is Phase Two of restoration work in the Minto Island Conservation Area. Phase One began with a grant from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board in 2015 and focused on the east side forested floodplain restoration and planting along the paved trail. The proposed Phase Three project will focus on the west side forested floodplain.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

The Willamette Mainstem Anchor Habitat Investments program is specifically intended for projects within the Willamette River mainstem project area and within a designated “anchor habitat,” such as Minto Brown Island Park and the Willamette Slough. Funding is available for projects on the Willamette River, including technical assistance and restoration projects. Funding for the Minto grant will be from Meyer Memorial Trust and Bonneville Power Administration.

1. Willamette Riverkeeper has been awarded a grant for the management of aquatic invasive weeds within and adjacent to the Willamette Slough. The grant award is \$229,334. The total project cost is \$301,950 (Attachment 2).
2. Of that total grant award, IRM is funded for a total of \$123,850.
3. The City will contract with IRM and will be reimbursed by Willamette Riverkeeper from the grant funds.

4. The City will provide \$53,116 of in-kind match through staff project coordination, water quality monitoring and equipment, and public outreach. An additional \$19,500 will be provided by private organizations.
5. The Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment 3) describes the roles and responsibilities of Willamette Riverkeeper, as the grant manager, and the City, as the property owner, and reflects the project scope and budget as in the awarded grant.
6. The work will begin in the summer of 2019 and continue for three years. Approximately 34-acres of weeds will be treated.

BACKGROUND:

There is a growing concern among restoration professionals in the Willamette River Basin about the increasing threat of aquatic invasive plants. Infestations, when combined with changing weather patterns, contribute to the rapid degradation of the quality of existing sloughs, side channels, wetlands, ponds, and floodplains along the mainstem Willamette River. These habitats are critical for anadromous and resident Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish, including: juvenile Upper Willamette spring Chinook, Upper Willamette steelhead, and the recently delisted Oregon chub. Other wildlife species that utilize these important habitats include; lamprey, sturgeon, and numerous amphibians, reptiles, birds, and aquatic mammals.

Willamette Riverkeeper and Integrated Resource Management have been working both upstream and downstream of the Willamette Slough to reduce the coverage and spread of aquatic invasive plants. The aquatic weed population in the Willamette Slough is a continuing source of downriver infestations. Reducing the aquatic weed coverage in this area will improve habitat as well as recreation in the Willamette Slough.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Map of Project Area
2. Grant Application and Budget
3. Memorandum of Understanding