

Oregon Water Resources Department
Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage Grant Program
Evaluation for September 2, 2008 Applications

APPLICANT:	East Valley Water District		
STUDY TYPE:	Above Ground Storage		
APPLICATION NO.:	GA0035 09		
STUDY NAME:	Drift Creek Storage Project		
BASIN:	Willamette	WRD DISTRICT:	16
WRD FUNDS REQUESTED:	\$500,000	TOTAL COST:	\$1,007,010

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The East Valley Water District required a source of stable water supply for 15,000 acres of agricultural development. Conditional “time-limited” permit and temporary transfers now in place are not long-term and some of the time-limited permits have been canceled this year. The goal of the associated project is to provide the needed long-term stable water supply for the district farms through the development of an on-channel reservoir in the upper Pudding watershed on Drift Creek. The proposed reservoir would impound at least 12,000 acre-feet of water and will relieve pressure in the three limited groundwater areas in the District’s service area. The associated project will also relieve over-appropriated surface water sources.

The proposed studies will finalize costs and conditions for developing the reservoir. Tasks to be performed include: determining a wetland mitigation plan; analyze water delivery methods; determine fish passage mitigation requirements; comprehensive water quality analysis; cultural historical analysis, instream flow analysis and water right evaluation; fish habitat surveys; geotechnical investigations; defining critical path analysis for remaining tasks; identifying local permitting procedures; and providing engineering analysis of construction costs.

APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM EVALUATION:

The Application Review Team found the application to be well written and provided a detailed task list. The District has performed a number of studies in the last three years and they have a firm understanding of all permitting requirements. The application has broad local support as well as some statewide support. The team felt that there were limited options for the District; however the team would have liked to have seen a more detailed quantification of the need for the associated project.

The associated project could improve water quality, but blockage of fish passage would be a concern. The applicant will need to analyze peak flows as well as the other required elements for an on-channel reservoir project.

The team recommended funding the study, but had concerns related to three tasks, which it did not recommend funding. These three tasks are the pre-construction engineering/economic feasibility task, which appeared to be pushing the line between a feasibility study and initial stages of implementation; the analysis of water delivery system task, which was previously funded by Oregon Water Supply Conservation Initiative and therefore the team did not feel that it was appropriate to refund it; and the design of mitigation strategies (fish passage) task,

which could involve designing a fish ladder, and therefore would not be a feasibility study.

The study is a priority for funding under SB 1069 since it includes provisions for using stored water to augment instream flows to conserve, maintain and enhance aquatic life, fish life or other ecological values. The study could begin immediately and be completed by December 31, 2010.

Application Review Team Funding Recommendation: Do Fund: High Priority at \$272,581. Do not fund the following three tasks: Pre-construction engineering/economic feasibility; Analysis of water delivery system; Design of mitigation strategies (fish passage).

COMMENTS:

Letters of support for this application were received from Senator Kurt Schrader; a joint letter from Marion County Commissioners Samuel Brentano, Janet Carlson, and Patti Milne; Anita Winkler, Oregon Water Resources Congress; and David W. Leibbrandt, Murray, Smith & Associates, Inc.

These letters indicate that the studies conducted under the grant will finalize costs and conditions for developing a reservoir for the East Valley Water District that includes the Glad Tidings, Mt. Angel and Victor Point Groundwater Limited Areas. The reservoir shows strong promise of providing “real benefit” to the Silverton, Mt. Angel, and Molalla water shortage problems and will benefit local agricultural interests, small town economies, mitigate receding groundwater conditions, relieve over-appropriated surface water sources, benefit fish habitat, and reduce flooding risk.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Do Fund at \$258,952; contingent on contract negotiations to ensure that all provisions of the statute are met. Do not fund the following three tasks: Pre-construction engineering/economic feasibility; Analysis of water delivery system; Design of mitigation strategies (fish passage).

The staff recommendation reflects a 5 percent across the board funding reduction on all studies.

Commission Action:

On December 5, 2008, the Water Resources Commission took action to:

“Release funding to all feasibility study applicants the Commission authorized at its’ November 20 meeting, at a level representing 95% of staff recommendations, and move forward with grant agreement negotiations and signatures.”

This feasibility study received an award amount of \$246,004.