



STAFF REPORT

May 11, 2022
File Number 1320-10

SUBJECT

APPROVAL OF FUNDS FOR LAKE HENSHAW ALGAE MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

DEPARTMENT

Utilities Department, Water Division

RECOMMENDATION

It is requested that the City Council adopt Resolution 2022-55, agreeing to equally share the cost of managing, mitigating, and treating harmful algal blooms in Lake Henshaw. The cost of algae mitigation shall be split equally between the City of Escondido (“City”) and the Vista Irrigation District (“VID”) pursuant to the Agreement Between the City of Escondido and the Vista Irrigation District for the Allocation and Management of Local Water Facilities, executed in January 2017 (“Local Entities’ Agreement”). The City of Escondido’s share of the cost for algae mitigation shall not exceed \$300,000.

Staff Recommendation: Approval (Utilities Department, Water Division: Christopher W. McKinney)

Presenter: Reed Harlan, Deputy Director of Utilities; Water

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The Water Enterprise Fund, fiscal year budget 2022-2023, will fund the City of Escondido’s cost-share for algae mitigation services. The Water Enterprise Fund’s 2022-2023 fiscal year budget will be presented by the Finance Department in June 2022 for the City Council’s consideration and approval.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On January 25, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2017-20, authorizing the City to enter into a Global Agreement with the Vista Irrigation District for the allocation and management of local water facilities (“Local Entities Agreement.”) On February 10, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2021-26, authorizing the City to equally share the cost of obtaining the consulting services of Stillwater Ecosystem, Watershed & Riverine Services (“Stillwater”) to develop strategies to manage, mitigate, and treat harmful algal blooms in Lake Henshaw and Lake Wohlford.



CITY *of* ESCONDIDO

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BACKGROUND

The City and VID jointly own and operate a raw, drinking-water system that supplies critical local water for both agencies. This supply has historically accounted for 25% of the City's drinking water supply and offsets some of the need for more expensive imported water from the Colorado River and Northern California.

Much of the local water system, including the Escondido Canal, is jointly owned and operated by the City and VID. However, the two lakes in the system are each owned by a single agency: Lake Henshaw is owned by VID and Lake Wohlford is owned by the City. The cost of operating and maintaining each lake is the responsibility of the owning agency, except for work to maintain or improve the quality of the shared water supply.

Pursuant to the terms of the Local Entities' Agreement, the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement, and Implementing Agreement, costs of work to maintain or improve quality of the shared water supply shall be split between the City and VID by mutual agreement. VID has, in the past, shared equally in the cost of maintaining water quality in Lake Wohlford as the lake's water quality is critical to both agencies. The same is true of Lake Henshaw, which sits at the very head of the local water system.

Over the past few years, algal blooms have caused water quality problems in lakes across the region. High temperatures, below average rainfall, and tightening regulations all contribute to the increased frequency of water quality problems related to algal blooms. In Lake Henshaw, recent blooms have been dominated by the microcystin algae. Microcystin algae has the potential to carry cyanotoxin bacteria, which is toxic for plants, animals, and people. Algal blooms in 2020 caused restrictions in recreational use and prevented delivery of water from Lake Henshaw via the Escondido Canal to Lake Wohlford.

The City and VID desire to treat the water in Lake Henshaw, which is the collection basin for our local water system, to help control harmful algal blooms. To achieve this, VID will procure the services of a licensed contractor that specializes in the application of algaecides and other chemicals. The City and VID anticipate these services will take place over the next year and will help secure the future of our local water supplies.

Given the importance of combating harmful algal blooms in the local water supply, staff recommends sharing the cost of algae mitigation.

RESOLUTIONS

- A. Resolution No. 2022-55