



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Planning Committee/Board of Directors
Title: Lake Lagunitas Outdoor Education Project
From: Carl Sanders, Natural Resources Program Manager
Through: Shaun Horne, General Manager
Meeting Date: October 27, 2026



TYPE OF ITEM: Approve X Review and Comment

RECOMMENDATION: Review and comment on the Lake Lagunitas Outdoor Education Project grant opportunity and required resolution, match, and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation

SUMMARY: The District is advancing the Lake Lagunitas Outdoor Education Project to improve visitor experience and educational opportunities at the existing Lake Lagunitas Picnic Area. To support implementation, staff is preparing a grant proposal for California State Parks' Land and Water Conservation Fund. A Board resolution, completed CEQA document, and committed matching funds for 50% of the project total are required at the time of submission.

DISCUSSION: At the April 1, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting, the Board approved a grant award of \$200,000 from the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Fund to advance a Watershed Facilities Assessment and Conceptual Plan. The Board subsequently approved entering into a Project Agreement with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (GGNPC) for project management support at the August 19, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting. The GGNPC, as part of the One Tam collaborative, has helped the District and other public land management agencies on similar planning efforts in the past; previous Mt. Tamalpais Watershed plans include concept plans for the Lake Lagunitas Picnic Area and West Peak.

District staff worked with GGNPC to develop a request for proposals for an architectural firm and selected PROTOinc and Roth/LaMotte Landscape Architecture (RLLA) to develop high-level assessments and visions for Task 1: the Sky Oaks Watershed Headquarters, Task 2: housing opportunities for seasonal staff, and Task 3: an outdoor education space. Staff presented initial assessments and high-level concepts to the Watershed Committee on September 17, 2026, and recommended that Task 1 be integrated into the broader District facilities planning effort, Task 2 be concluded, and Task 3 be advanced for further design.

Staff is working with GGNPC and RLLA to advance conceptual designs for educational and visitor improvements to the Lake Lagunitas Picnic Area. To support implementation, staff recommends submitting a grant proposal to the California State Parks Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding opportunity. Staff estimates a total project cost of \$900,000, which would be funded with \$450,000 in grant funds and \$450,000 in matching funds. To satisfy the matching requirement, staff is recommending a disbursement from the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Fund in the amount of \$450,000 contingent on receiving an LWCF grant award. The District created the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Fund in 1996 to give watershed visitors the opportunity to help protect the mountain through a tax-deductible donation and to provide support for the watershed management activities of the Mount Tamalpais watershed and other District watershed lands.

LWCF provides federal funding administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) and helps public agencies implement projects that create or improve outdoor recreation and education opportunities. LWCF applications require a 50% cost-share, completed CEQA, and a Board resolution at the time of submission. The deadline for the current 2027 LWCF opportunity is January 14, 2027.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land). The project involves improvements to an existing developed recreational area, including minor site alterations and installation of small recreational and educational amenities.

FISCAL IMPACT: LWCF grants require a 50% cost-share. Staff estimates a total project cost of \$900,000, which would be funded with \$450,000 in grant funds and \$450,000 in matching funds. To satisfy the matching requirement, staff is recommending a disbursement from the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Fund in the amount of \$450,000 contingent on receiving an LWCF grant award. The current balance of the fund is \$720,789.44.

ATTACHMENT(S): None.