



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Board of Directors
Title: Nicasio Vegetation Management 2026 Project
From: Paul Sellier, Director of Water Resources
Through: Ben Horenstein, General Manager
Meeting Date: August 18, 2026

TYPE OF ITEM: X Action Information

RECOMMENDATION: Approve Nicasio Vegetation Management 2026 Project and authorize the anticipated budget not to exceed \$1,054,760, which includes a 35% (\$273,456) contingency; and Approve the use of the Capital Reserve to increase budget appropriations in the Capital Fund by \$1,054,760 for this project

SUMMARY: Through the Nicasio Vegetation Management 2026 Project (Project), the District is seeking to manage vegetation to help restore flow in Nicasio Creek and Halleck creek upstream of Nicasio reservoir and to improve habitat on the banks of the reservoir.

DISCUSSION: The Project proposes restoration work including vegetation thinning beginning at the edge of Nicasio Reservoir and working upstream along Upper Nicasio Creek to Ranch Road Bridge as well as restoring willows on the shoreline of Nicasio Reservoir near where the creek enters the reservoir. Vegetation removal would involve vegetation thinning along the Upper Nicasio Creek riparian corridor using hand tools along approximately 3,850 linear feet of Upper Nicasio Creek within the approximate 100-year floodplain above the top bank working from the furthest downstream extent at Nicasio Reservoir first and then moving upstream. Large, mature trees and vegetation larger than 4-inches diameter at breast height would be preserved, but lower limbs within the active conveyance area would be removed. The proposed vegetation trimming would be performed by hand and primarily occurring on those branches with a diameter of 4 inches or less.

The Project requires permits from the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board and from California Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Staff has submitted permit applications and will be prepared to move forward with the work as soon as permits have been issued. It is possible that the CDFW permit may not be issued in sufficient time to proceed with the work and staff understand that there may be a pathway to proceed with the work on an emergency basis to preserve life and property. In 2025 a 7-year storm event resulted in flooding of roads in the vicinity of Nicasio and Halleck Creeks preventing access for vehicles and flooding properties in the area. Given the forecasted strong El Nino conditions it

seems reasonable to anticipate precipitation events of a greater magnitude this coming winter that may warrant additional work under an emergency permit.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The Nicasio Reservoir Vegetation Management 2026 Project is exempt under CEQA as an existing facility (Section 15301), minor alteration to the land (Section 15304). A memo outlining the basis for the CEQA exemptions is included as an attachment.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding for the Nicasio Reservoir Vegetation Management 2026 Project was not included in the 2-year adopted budget for FY 2025/26 – FY 2026-27, however, funding is available in the District’s Capital Reserve for this purpose. The Board’s approval of this project will increase expenditure appropriations in the Capital Fund Reservoir/Dam Facilities fund center (A1A05) by \$1,054,760.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. CEQA Notice of Exemption Memo
2. CEQA Memorandum Attachment A - Project Figures
3. CEQA Memorandum Attachment B - Environmental Protection Measures
4. CEQA Memorandum Attachment C – Biological Resources

DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION	DIVISION MANAGER	APPROVED
Water Resources	 Paul Sellier Water Resources Director	 Ben Horenstein General Manager