

APPROVED

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 13-012

DATE January 16, 2013

JAN 18 2013

**BOARD OF RECREATION
& PARK COMMISSIONERS**

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BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: HANSEN DAM RECREATION AREA – PAYMENT TO GRIFFITH WILDLIFE BIOLOGY FOR COWBIRD TRAPPING SERVICES IN 2012

R. Adams	_____	K. Regan	_____
H. Fujita	_____	*M. Shull	<u><i>M. Shull</i></u>
V. Israel	_____	N. Williams	_____

[Signature]
General Manager

Approved *[Signature]*

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Approve the payment of Griffith Wildlife Biology Invoice No. Hansen Dam 12-1 in the amount of \$12,870 for required cowbird trapping services in the Hansen Dam Recreation Area; and,
2. Authorize the Chief Accounting Employee to make technical corrections as necessary and incorporate these changes.

SUMMARY:

The Environmental Assessment/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Hansen Dam Recreational Lake was completed in September 1994. It identified as one of its environmental mitigation measures for project impacts to biological resources the implementation of a brown-headed cowbird control program to be conducted in perpetuity.

Cowbirds about the size of a red-wing blackbird are brood parasites, for they never make their own nests or raise their own young. Instead, cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds (hosts), who then raise the cowbird chicks as their own at the expense of their own young. This parasitism has contributed to the serious reduction in the population of small songbirds like the vireo, the flycatcher and the gnatcatcher, to the point that they are considered endangered.

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The Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) initiated this environmental commitment in 1996, using Griffith Wildlife Biology (GWB), an environmental consulting firm based in Michigan, to conduct the annual cowbird trapping during the standard trapping period of April 1st to June 30th. GWB is a leader in the field having written the Brown-headed Cowbird Trapping Protocol that is used by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). They are the only consulting firm permitted by CDFG and USFWS to perform cowbird control work in the Hansen Dam area.

RAP retained GWB primarily through its as-needed environmental consultant contracts where GWB was used as a subcontractor to carry out the cowbird trapping. All these contracts expired in 2011. During the interim period while RAP was working on establishing new contracts, the execution of which would not have been completed until January 2013, a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with GWB was attempted for the 2012 cowbird trapping season. GWB's cost proposal was for \$12,870. When it became apparent that the LOA would not be executed by the start of the trapping period, GWB proceeded to set up the traps in Hansen Dam since they were doing cowbird trapping work in the surrounding area for other agencies, and they wanted to maintain the continuity of the Hansen Dam program. Consequently, no authority exists to pay GWB for the 2012 trapping work.

Staff recommends payment of the GWB invoice for cowbird trapping services conducted in 2012 since the work was part of an on-going environmental mitigation commitment associated with the construction of the Hansen Dam Recreational Lake. For 2013, a LOA will be executed to utilize GWB's services.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Funding for the cowbird trapping services is available in Fund 302, Department 88, Account 003040, Activity 2556 for Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

This report was prepared by David Attaway, Environmental Supervisor II, Planning, Construction, and Maintenance Branch.