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Zone 7 Collaborates in Regional Water Management Plan

Plan will help agency compete for state grants

The Livermore-Amador Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency board has voted to join other Bay Area entities in adopting an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan that promotes regional collaboration.

The plan also will help Zone 7 and other agencies secure state grant funding for various water, flood-control, habitat restoration and recycled water projects, including from Nov. 7's voter-approved Proposition 84.

Zone 7 and more than 20 other Bay Area water-management agencies have been working with the California Coastal Conservancy and other entities on a plan for increased coordination of water-management strategies in the Bay Area. The idea is to reduce duplication in planning, where feasible.

The participating agencies must adopt the plan by Jan. 1, 2007 to qualify for remaining implementation grant funds authorized by Proposition 50 and, more recently, by Proposition 84, which earmarks \$138 million for Bay Area water-resource management projects.

Earlier this week, the Bay Area coalition learned that following a statewide competition, its \$25 million grant application for a round of Proposition 50 funding was not included in preliminary recommendations by the state Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board. The application had included \$1.5 million for Zone 7's

planned \$30 million Mocho Groundwater Demineralization Facility to reduce salts and minerals from underground drinking water supplies. Zone 7 also would have received some money for water-conservation rebate programs.

Nevertheless, Zone 7 and other coalition members hope that formal adoption of the regional plan – developed with help from a Proposition 50 planning grant – will put their projects in a better future competitive position.

In seeking further funding from Proposition 50, or from Proposition 84 and potentially federal grants, the coalition will need to review the state’s evaluation of its application before deciding whether to resubmit it as is, or revise it. Vince Wong, an assistant general manager of Zone 7, said Zone 7 also could seek funding for projects in its newly adopted Stream Management Master Plan, which is aimed at protecting communities from floods while at the same time improving water quality, wildlife habitat and public recreational/educational opportunities.

“We’re hoping our SMMP projects will be more ready than they were in June, when the Bay Area submitted its original grant proposal,” Wong said.

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The Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 190,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.