



TITLE

Napa River Ecology Center at American Canyon Wetlands

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt by Minute Order a Term Sheet with the American Canyon Community and Parks Foundation for development of the Napa River Ecology Center at the former City Corporation Yard (205 Wetlands Edge Road).

CONTACT

Jason Holley, City Manager

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The item tonight is a continuation of the September 7, 2021, presentation to Council.

Corporation Yard Relocation

The idea begins with the relocation of the City's Corporation Yard from 205 Wetlands Edge Road to the former Napa Junction Elementary School. The Corporation Yard's long-intended exit from the Wetlands Edge Road location will address neighborhood compatibility concerns raised by nearby residents. While the nearby residents will benefit from the City's physical relocation, city-wide operations will also benefit from the consolidation of staff at a singular location.

"Eco-Center" at Corporation Yard Instead of Clark Ranch

Clark Ranch is an undeveloped city-owned property approximately 1-mile north of the Corporation Yard (at the intersection of Wetlands Edge Court and Eucalyptus Drive). The *Clark Ranch Master Plan* calls for a new regional nature/environmental/community center (the "eco-center") originally planned to be "an indoor interpretative, recreation and community space with classrooms and multipurpose rooms to support programming and exhibits (watershed protection/education, wetlands habitat/biology). Possible space for vendor sales (deli/gifts) and rentals (bike/kayak)."

While a laudable and aspirational idea, Clark Ranch is not a great location for an "eco-center" for a variety of reasons (inconvenient location, competing uses and large upfront costs, just to name a few). Instead, over the past 2 years, an idea to re-imagine the former Corporation Yard as a new eco-center has taken shape.

The American Canyon Community and Parks Foundation (<https://www.acparks.org>) (ACCPF) is spearheading an effort to re-purpose the Corporation Yard into the Napa River Ecology Center at the American Canyon Wetlands (Attachment 2). The venerable ACCPF is a local non-profit with an unmatched track-record of fundraising and delivering successful projects and initiative for the community, and they are the perfect partner for the City. The City entered into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with ACCPF for development of the Eco-Center in 2021.

ACCPF shared their vision for the Eco-Center during a well-attended community meeting on June 1. The Eco-Center's formal development program (the "Project") would be subject to additional public review and comment during the entitlement process.

The Napa River Ecology Center at the American Canyon Wetlands is envisioned to:

- Provide a home for environmental education, nature art, and science programs for students and community members in Napa County and beyond.
- Strengthen American Canyon as a leader in environmental leadership, research, and programming.
- Harness the power of our diverse community to further the conservation movement.
- "Root" our families in nature and develop the next generation of nature lovers who will help solve our most complex environmental issues.

Other key attributes include:

- Repurposes old industrial site along Napa River Wetlands.
- Two-acre parcel with 5,000 square-foot building.
- Model public/private partnership between the City of AC and ACCPF.
- Serves 20,000 people each year in nature programming.
- Centrally located in North Bay along San Francisco Bay Trail.
- New public access to pristine Wetlands habitat.
- Green demonstration features.

The next step to move the Eco-Center Project forward is to finalize a long-term lease. Once the lease is done, ACCPF can finish the entitlement process.

Staff has worked with a Council Ad-Hoc Committee (Oro/Washington) to negotiate the deal points of a lease. Those deal points are memorialized in a term sheet.

Staff recommends Council approve the Term Sheet (Attachment 1) and direct staff to prepare a Long-Term Lease consistent with the Term Sheet and submit it for Council consideration.

COUNCIL PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Infrastructure: "Develop and maintain infrastructure resources to support sustainable growth."

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended action will have no impact on the FY 23/24 Budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

There is no requested Council action tonight and thus, no environmental review is needed.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment 1: Term Sheet](#)

[Attachment 2: Wetlands Eco-Center](#)