

**DATE:** March 21, 2016

**TO:** RMC Governing Board

**FROM:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 10: Consideration of a resolution approving a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority for Watershed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project (RMC15112).

**PROGRAM AREA:** All

**PROJECT TYPE:** Planning

**JURISDICTION:** Territory-wide

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Marybeth Vergara

**RECOMMENDATION:** The RMC Board approve a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) in the amount of \$650,000 for the Watershed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project (RMC15112).

<b>Project:</b>	Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN)	
<b>Applicant:</b>	Watershed Conservation Authority	
<b>Program area:</b>	Urban, Rivers/Tributaries	
<b>Amount requested:</b>	\$650,000	
<b>Amount recommended for funding:</b>	\$650,000	
<b>URBAN LANDS PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA SUMMARY</b>		
<b>Factor</b>	<b>Project Score</b>	<b>Total Possible Points</b>
1. Access Value	6	10
2. Cultural or Historic Resource Value	0	3
3. Educational / Interpretive Value	5	5
4. Habitat Value	10	21
5. Matching Funds	5	10
6. Public Health Value	9	12
7. Recreational Resource Value	9	13
8. Restoration Resource Value	1	3
9. Scenic Resource Value	1	2
10. Stakeholders / Partners Resource Value	4	4
11. Stewardship and Management Plan Value	0	5
12. Sustainability Value	2	6
13. Trails / Multi-use Trails	5	5
14. Urban Land Value	14	23
15. Water Resource and Quality Value	5	15
<b><u>TOTAL POINTS</u></b>	<b><u>76</u></b>	<b><u>137</u></b>

**BACKGROUND:** The GREEN program, builds upon the work first completed under the Watershed Coordinator program, funded by a grant of the Department of Conservation between 2008 and 2012 with matching funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. This seminal work was implemented in partnership with the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments and the Council for Watershed Health, proved highly beneficial in moving projects forward and creating a vision for new projects. Measurable benefits from the 2008-2012 Watershed Program included the identification of projects, programs, and policies, and through the technical services the WCA provided in areas such as: GIS mapping and analysis, public outreach, presentations, city policies/ environmental document reviews and comment letters, project/event planning, project management, graphic design, correspondence, and general administrative matters.

The WCA's proposed GREEN project seeks to take the lesson's learned from the original Watershed Coordinator program and expand its reach to beyond the San Gabriel River Watershed with the inclusion of the Lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, and the portion of the Santa Ana River Watershed within the RMC/WCA territory in Orange County. GREEN is designed to embrace new technology to create a regional open data platform that will aid in the forwarding of greening projects, such as the identification of projects and gap closures in trail systems done in collaboration with regional stakeholder to implement GREENways and GREEN-infrastructure projects.

- GREENways include interconnected active transportation and recreational trail systems and corridors that are continuous, easily accessible, landscaped or natural open space, incorporating green infrastructure to improve both habitat and water reliability through water capture, cleansing and infiltration features.
- GREENway's link parks, nature reserves, cultural features, economic centers and/or historic sites with each other in populated areas.
- GREEN Infrastructure projects incorporate water conservation, supply and quality features, as well as, improve habitats and health of communities and people through expanding access to parks, open space and enhancing communities through livable/walkable streets and neighborhoods.

This project will build upon and support current Legislative Bills, Planning/Initiatives and Funding Opportunities such as those listed in the following table, as well as, incorporating and supporting new initiatives as they develop. The resulting GREEN open data portal and planning tool can also be utilized by granting agencies (including the RMC) to track the progress of project investments and as a tool to aid grantees in applying for and being competitive in the granting process.

<b>Legislative Bills</b>	Agency	Goals
AB 530: Lower LA River Working Group	RMC, LAC Board of Supervisors (Solis)	Establishes a local working group tasked with updating the LA River Mater Plan to include a revitalization plan for the Lower LA River.
AB 1251: the Greenway Development and Sustainment Act	N/A	Provides mechanism for preserving greenways (similar to conservation easements) within 1/4 mile of the Rivers.
<b>Plans &amp; Initiatives</b>		
Emerald Necklace Master Plan	WCA, LA County Board of Supervisors	17-mile loop of proposed and existing parks, greenways, bikeways, and multiuse trails. A series of projects will connect the the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley
Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Plan	WCA, North-East Trees	Urban Greening Plan for the Gateway Cities (GC) region, made up of 26 cities and unincorporated areas, will incorporate existing plans and public input, identify new and improved park, trail, bikeway, water conservation and capture, complete streets, tree cover, and interpretive and way-finding opportunities throughout urban communities in GC
LA River Integrated Design and Technical Analysis	LA River Revitalization Corportation's (LARRC)	Provides for a range of river interventions and capital improvements along entire 51-miles of the LA River.
I-710 Corridor Project study and 710 Liveability Initiative	CalTrans, Metro, Gateway Cities COG Transportation Committees, among others	The I-710 Corridor from East LA to Long Beach runs parallel to the Lower LA River. The 710 Livability Initiative, which includes strategies, programs, and policies that address I-710 adjacent community goals and objectives, to be included as part of Metro's Alternatives Evaluation in the I-710 Recirculated dEIR/EIS.
Gateway Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (Gateway IRWMP)	Gateway Cities COG	Provides integrated and collaborative effort to manage all aspects of water resources in the Gatway Cities region.
Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (GLAC IRWMP) Lower San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Subregional plan	Gateway Cities COG, RMC	Describes subregion's physical setting, sources of water supply, water quality, environmental resources, planning objectives and targets, and partnership and multi-benefit opportunities.
<b>Future Funding Opportunities</b>		
Prop 1: Water Bond	RMC	Allocates \$100 million for the LA River, presenting communities the <u>opportunity to shape LA River Greenway development</u>
LA County Park Needs Assessment and Park Bond	LA County Parks and Recreation	Needs Assessment will identify park needs county wide which will influence investment in public access, communities of diversity, and local park improvements through a future park bond
Cap n Trade	Federal/State	<u>Bringing Parks to People</u> : Investments in new park development near urban areas. <u>Green Infrastructure/Passive Park Development</u> : Tree plantings, native landscaping and non-motorized trail improvements within existing parks or proposed for new parks. <u>Hardscape Conversion</u> : Converting asphalt areas and blighted, energy inefficient, urban settings that otherwise induce heat island scenarios.
River Greenway District Initiative	WCA, LA County	Developing a working group/task force with County and others; will define greenway needs and establish metrics to meet needs. Will potentially lead to a county-wide ballot measure (similar to parks needs assessment process).

The region hosts a plurality of active organizations, agencies, foundations, and businesses in growing fields that result in logistic complexities tracking and organizing efforts. The GREEN Portal is envisioned to store and report data in a manner to make connections, promote transparency, inform, and to assist entities to compliment and not duplicate efforts. Further, in recent years, many individual planning efforts have begun and more and more interest is being placed on green infrastructure projects, river access, river trails, investment in river projects and water infrastructure improvements for water quality, supply and reliability. With so much emphasis on green projects and new efforts starting up, the region would greatly benefit from having a comprehensive and shared data platform portal to knit together plans and projects to create a comprehensive Green network as a shared resource.

A GREEN network would afford project proponents the ability to build upon their own and others work, more readily identify network gaps, illustrate funding investment and disparities, and provide a means to track a variety of performance measures to gauge watershed improvement progress. The portal would both deliver and host data on a common platform and format that can be utilized by a variety of planning entities throughout the region to share resources and build an integrated database for all. The concept of a region wide open database will be possible through close collaboration with other regional partners, such as Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project is a collaborative planning and project implementation approach supporting watershed based greening efforts; including stakeholder participation and stewardship building; watershed needs assessment and identification of priority projects; community engagement strategies and analysis; launching and maintaining a GREEN project portal; and, catalyzing sustainable investment in the region. This project will allow for efficiency in development and implementation of projects throughout the Urban Program area as well as the Rivers/Tributaries program area.

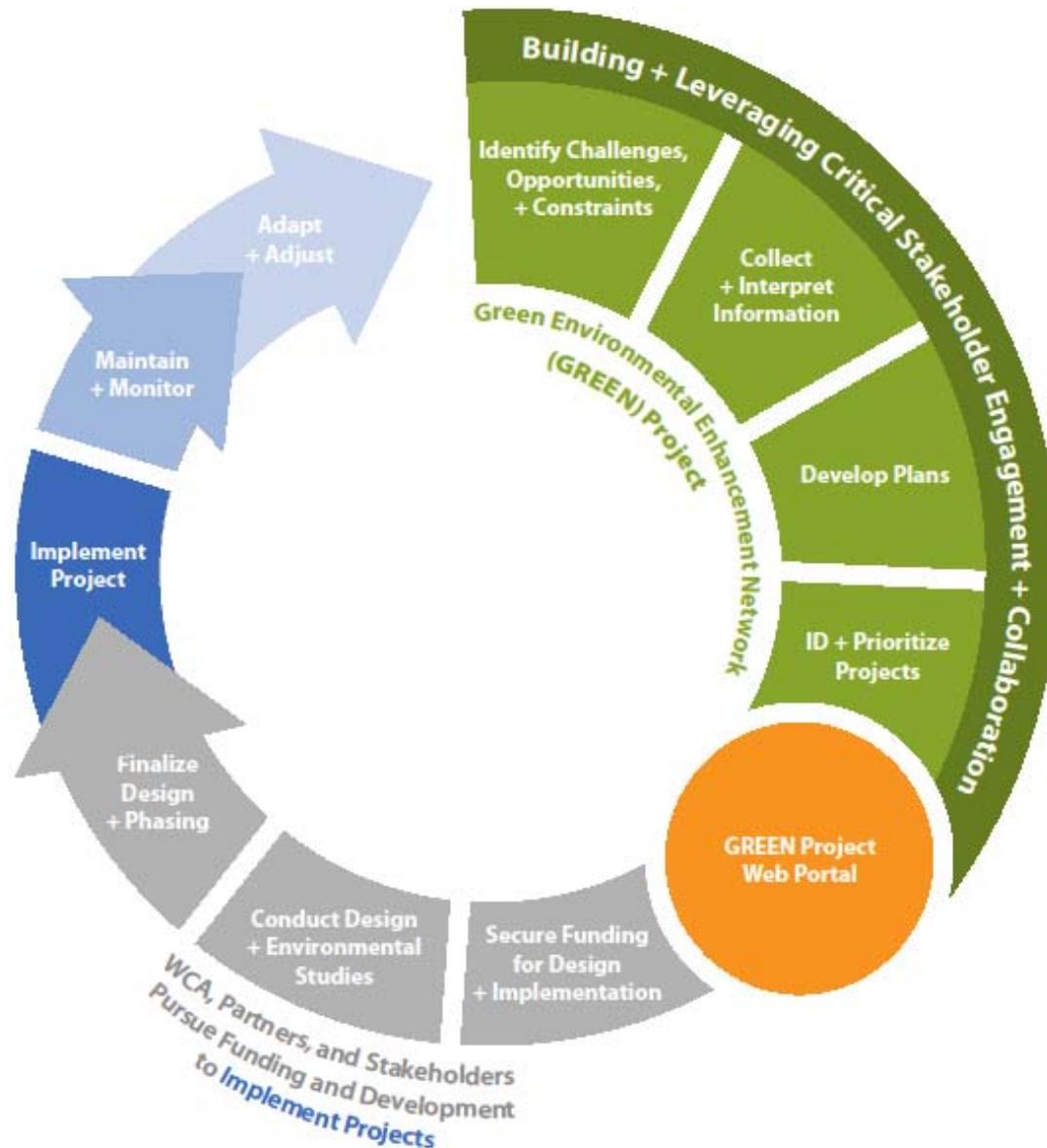
WCA, through the regional relationships and partnerships it has fostered over the years is positioned to serve the greater region by developing and operating the GREEN open data portal this grant would launch. This purposed role is supported by the WCA's mission of "Connecting Communities through Nature" and the forwarding of the goals and objectives of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and Los Angeles County Flood Control District for which the JPA was formed in 2003. Furthermore, the WCA is actively involved in a variety of regionally important planning and project implementation efforts including Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Plan, Emerald Necklace Master Plan and the newly created San Gabriel Valley Greenway Collaborative. In addition the WCA has a participating agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to aid in the planning and implementation of projects in the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

The GREEN project will collaborate with a cross-section of Agencies and key stakeholders to provide guidance and technical assistance in the identification and implementation of greening projects and programs to enhance, expand, and increase access to functioning open spaces for water security, clean air, habitat integrity, public health, community equity and recreation. Plans, projects and funding opportunities will be collected, gaps identified and projects opportunities captured and reported on through the development of an open database portal for the purpose of catalyzing and supporting the implementation of greening projects throughout the region.

The following process graphic demonstrates how the GREEN project will apply a holistic approach to Watershed Planning and Project Implementation by Building and Leveraging critical stakeholder engagement and collaboration to result in the collection, mining and reporting of data through an open portal. Thus providing readily available data necessary as part of a regional plan to aid proponents in identifying projects, locating funding sources and building partnerships to implement local and regional projects and close critical trail and green infrastructure gaps. Lessons learned through the implementation and operational process will inform further data collection, planning efforts and continually enhance projects and project design to meet the environmental, transportation, recreational, water reliability and health needs of our communities, both human and wildlife.

## GREEN Project

Hollistic Approach for Watershed Planning and Project Implementation



The open data GREEN portal will provide greater transparency of existing and current planning efforts between entities to limit duplication of efforts and promote the pooling of resources to expand the reach of greening opportunities and open the door for greater collaboration between project proponents. The portal will also increase public transparency and increased visibility into the planning, project implementation and investment process and will catalyze additional investment while providing a platform for the tracking of progress through a performance metrics dedicated dashboard.

The GREEN project scope of (Exhibit A-1, A-2) will be conducted over approximately a 3 1/2 year period (Exhibit B). The deliverables and collected data making up the portal will, together with other GREEN Project elements and deliverables: advance coordination, encourage efficient acquisitions, provide a coordinated approach to project development, and streamline project implementations and provide better performance period monitoring. Staff recognizes that this project will be responding to the needs of the region and will be directly supporting implementation projects and as such, the specifics of the proposed deliverables and budget details allow for flexibility and adjustment during the grant term. RMC will regularly meet with the WCA to ensure that while the fine details of the project may change, that the overall intent of the project is maintained.

This grant application was authorized by the WCA board at their January 21, 2016 meeting to include the following:

GREEN Project Elements (Exhibit C) include:

- Stakeholder Participation and Stewardship Building
- Watershed Needs Assessment and Identification of Priority Projects
- Community Engagement Strategies and Analysis
- Launching and maintaining GREEN Project Portal
- Catalyzing Sustainable Investments in Portal
- Project Implementation and Operations

The GREEN portal is expected to increase the profile of local and regional greening plans and projects. This exposure will aid in the closing of critical green infrastructure gaps and facilitate greater investment in the watershed. The open-data platform will be designed to make collected information, metrics, and materials readily available, which may be exported and reconstructed as needed for the dynamic needs of greening initiatives and user groups whether it be other agencies or the public.

The Watershed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project meets the following RMC's Guiding Principles:

*Improve Access to Open Space and Recreation for All Communities*

- Accommodate active and passive recreational uses
- Incorporate passive and low-impact recreational facilities in habitat areas
- Accumulate and record the needs for active recreation facilities

*Connect Open Space with a Network of Trails*

- Develop continuous bike trail, equestrian, and public access systems along riverfronts and within the watershed
- Connect River trails to mountain trails, urban trails, local parks, open spaces, and beaches
- Connect open spaces to transit access points
- Provide for public safety and security along waterways and trails

*Promote Stewardship of the Landscape*

- Use drought-tolerant, native, and regionally-adapted plant materials
- Identify, preserve, and restore historic sites and cultural landscapes

*Involve the Public Through Education and Outreach Programs*

- Conduct public educational and outreach programs to promote watershed restoration
- Establish a process for project participation by stakeholder representatives and the public
- Present plans and programs in reader-friendly print and electronic versions
- Involve stakeholders and the public in project implementation and maintenance
- Recognize the significance and uniqueness of individual properties for watershed planning

**FISCAL INFORMATION:** This grant will award the WCA a total amount not to exceed \$650,000 of Proposition 84 (Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006) funds for planning and implementation of the San Gabriel River and Lower LA River Watershed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project (RMC 15112) for a period up to 5 years. This timeframe will begin as of January 2016 and continue through January 2020. See Exhibit A - Tasklist and Timeline and Exhibit B - Budget, for additional details.

The WCA has matching funds in the amount of \$330,500 from a grant for the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Plan (RMC 13002) from the Strategic Growth Council. Additionally, there is the potential for millions in funding for implementation projects identified through this project including from Proposition 1 water bond fund sources as identified in AB 530 (Rendon)--Lower LA River Working Group and other proposed regional funding initiatives. The WCA will continue to seek additional grant funds from various state, federal and private sources to contribute towards this work.

Proposition 84 allocations, under statute read:

75050. The sum of nine hundred twenty eight million dollars (\$928,000,000) shall be available for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources in accordance with the following schedule:... (g) The sum of seventy two million dollars (\$72,000,000) shall be available for projects within the watersheds of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers according to the following schedule:

(1) \$36,000,000 to the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy pursuant to Division 22.8 (commencing with Section 32600).....

75060. The sum of five hundred forty million dollars (\$540,000,000) shall be available for the protection of beaches, bays and coastal waters and watersheds, including projects to prevent contamination and degradation of coastal waters and watersheds, projects to protect and restore the natural habitat values of coastal waters and lands, and projects and expenditures to promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state, in accordance with the following schedule:.... (3) To the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.....\$15,000,000.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND RMC ADOPTED POLICIES/AUTHORITIES:** The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) statute provides in part that:

Section 32602: There is in the Resources Agency, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, which is created as a state agency for the following purposes:

- (a) To acquire and manage public lands within the Lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds, and to provide open-space, low-impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvement within the territory.
- (b) To preserve the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River consistent with existing and adopted river and flood control projects for the protection of life and property.
- (c) To acquire open-space lands within the territory of the conservancy.

Section 32604: The conservancy shall do all of the following:

- (a) Establish policies and priorities for the conservancy regarding the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River, and their watersheds, and conduct any necessary planning activities, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (b) Approve conservancy funded projects that advance the policies and priorities set forth in Section 32602.
- (d) To provide for the public's enjoyment and enhancement of recreational and educational experiences on public lands in the San Gabriel Watershed and Lower Los Angeles River, and the San Gabriel Mountains in a manner consistent with the protection of lands and resources in those watersheds.

Section 32614: The conservancy may do all of the following:

- (b) Enter into contracts with any public agency, private entity, or person necessary for the proper discharge of the conservancy's duties, and enter into a joint powers agreement with a public agency, in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (e) Enter into any other agreement with any public agency, private entity, or person necessary for the proper discharge of the conservancy's duties for the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (f) Recruit and coordinate volunteers and experts to conduct interpretive and recreational programs and assist with construction projects and the maintenance of parkway facilities.

Further, Section 32614 provides that: The conservancy may do all of the following:

- (g) Undertake, within the territory, site improvement projects, regulate public access, and revegetate and otherwise rehabilitate degraded areas, in consultation with any other public agency with appropriate jurisdiction and expertise, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602. The conservancy may also, within the territory, upgrade deteriorating facilities and construct new facilities as needed for outdoor recreation, nature appreciation and interpretation, and natural resources projection. The conservancy may undertake those projects by itself or in conjunction with another local agency; however, the conservancy shall provide overall coordination of those projects by setting priorities for the projects and by ensuring a uniform approach to projects. The conservancy may undertake those projects with prior notification to the legislative body of the local agency that has jurisdiction in the area in which the conservancy proposes to undertake that activity.

Section 32614.5:

- (a) The conservancy may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of this division.
- (b) Grants to nonprofit organizations for the acquisition of real property or interests in real property shall be subject to all of the following conditions:
  - (1) The purchase price of any interest in land acquired by the nonprofit organization may not exceed fair market value as established by an appraisal approved by the conservancy.
  - (2) The conservancy approves the terms under which the interest in land is acquired.
  - (3) The interest in land acquired pursuant to a grant from the conservancy may not be used as security for any debt incurred by the nonprofit organization unless the conservancy approves the transaction.

- (4) The transfer of land acquired pursuant to a grant shall be subject to the approval of the conservancy and the execution of an agreement between the conservancy and the transferee sufficient to protect the interests of the state.
  - (5) The state shall have a right of entry and power of termination in and over all interests in real property acquired with state funds, which may be exercised if any essential term or condition of the grant is violated.
  - (6) If the existence of the nonprofit organization is terminated for any reason, title to all interest in real property acquired with state funds shall immediately vest in the state, except that, prior to that termination, another public agency or nonprofit organization may receive title to all or a portion of that interest in real property, by recording its acceptance of title, together with the conservancy's approval, in writing.
- (c) Any deed or other instrument of conveyance whereby real property is acquired by a nonprofit organization pursuant to this section shall be recorded and shall set forth the executor interest or right of entry on the part of the state.

RMC Resolution 2012-01 allowed staff to re-evaluate projects already received and projects must meet or exceed the RMC's criteria and guiding principles and funding must be identified before a recommendation is presented to the RMC Governing Board for approval.



## Exhibit A

<b>Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project</b>		
<b>BUDGET</b>		
<b>WCA Proposal</b>	<b>RMC Grant</b>	<b>Match: SGC Grant</b>
<b>0.00 Project Management</b>	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
0.01 Project Administration and Contract Procurement		
0.02 Project Management, Reporting, Grant Admin, and Close-Out		
0.03 Reimbursements (mileage, printing, other)		
<b>1.00 Stakeholder Participation and Stewardship Building</b>	\$ 100,000	\$ 48,000
1.01 Stakeholder outreach to agencies and groups		
1.02 Develop framework for Watershed Conservation Stewardship Programs		
1.03 Support leading regional initiatives to improve watershed health		
<b>2.00 Watershed Needs Priority Projects</b>	\$ 150,000	\$ 70,000
2.01 Create an 'Inventory of Resources'		
2.02 Community Needs' Inventory		
2.03 Develop 'Opportunities and Constraints Matrix'		
2.04 Identify priority project opportunities and project gaps		
<b>3.00 Greenway Development</b>	\$ 100,000	\$ 28,500
3.01 Support greenway development and coordinate with local agencies		
3.02 Identify connections, expansion and gap closures of existing Greenway network		
3.03 Identify and address challenges to greenway development		
3.04 Develop community way-finding communication strategy		
3.05 Promote River Greenway Development through a potential 'River District' for region's major urban waterways (long term)		
<b>4.00 Community Engagement Strategies Analysis</b>	\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000
4.01 Undertake landscape analysis of civic engagement strategies that have and have not worked with greening projects locally and nationally		
4.02 Engage key stakeholders and constituencies through a targeted strategic outreach campaigns		
4.03 Report on innovative developments, publishing a quarterly blog, newsletter, and/or website/social media posts		
<b>5.00 GREEN Project Portal</b>	\$ 150,000	\$ 59,000
5.01 Development of GREEN Project Portal		
5.02 Open Data/Open Performance Platform (subscription for 2 years)		
5.03 Develop Protocol for Updating Data and sharing Information on Portal Long-Term		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 650,000</b>	<b>\$ 330,500</b>

**Match SGC Grant**, for Gateway Cities and River Urban Greening Plan, funding source is the Strategic Growth Council's Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Grant Program

**Match DWR IRWM**, for Upper Santa Clara River IRWMP, funding source is Department of Water Resources IRWM Grant Program

Exhibit B

<b>Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (G.R.E.E.N.) Project SCHEDULE</b>															
WCA Proposal	2016			2017				2018				2019			
	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q
Project Management															
Stakeholder Participation and Stewardship Building															
Watershed Needs Priority Projects															
Implementing G.R.E.E.N. Projects															
Community Engagement Strategies Analysis															
G.R.E.E.N. Project Portal															



March 8, 2016

Mark Stanley  
Executive Officer  
Rivers and Mountains Conservancy  
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Azusa, CA 91702

#### GOVERNING BOARD

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Director  
Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Works

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Mark Stanley**

**SUBJECT: Application to the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project**

Dear Mr. Stanley,

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) is pleased to submit this proposal to provide support to advance the joint missions of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the WCA.

As part of the WCA's vision of *Connecting Communities Through Nature* the Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project will dedicate resources to achieve a collaborative approach: providing guidance and technical assistance to project proponents for the identification and implementation of projects and programs to enhance, expand, and increase access to functioning open spaces for water security, clean air, habitat integrity, public health and recreation, and community equity and wellbeing.

This scope of work includes:

1. Stakeholder Participation and Stewardship Building
2. Watershed Needs Priority Projects
3. Implementing GREEN Projects
4. Community Engagement Strategies Analysis
5. GREEN Project Portal

#### **BACKGROUND**

Under the original 2008-2014 Watershed Coordinator Program the WCA provided invaluable services to the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC).

WCA staff coordinated with local and regional plans and partners, shared and built knowledge, and explored and realized opportunities to address the critical regional challenges the RMC/WCA were created to address: watershed health, water security, public health, habitat integrity, mobility and access to open space, and social equity. The RMC territory shared by the WCA is the most urban of any conservancy in California, home to some of the most densely populated and disadvantaged communities in the United States, while at the same time also a region recognized by the State and internationally as an ecological hotspot for the diversity of wildlife and for the importance of conservation. The region is faced with water shortage, failure to meet Clean Air and Clean Water Act standards, fragmented habitats and communities, and a growing need to build resilience in the face of climate change.

There is a clear and present need in the region for agencies such as the RMC and WCA to continue to maintain a leadership role and actively participate in initiatives and planning efforts to catalyze communities, not-profits, and agencies to undertake projects that will result in meaningful change within our varied watersheds. This requires ongoing engagement, open and collaborative communication, sharing of data and organized planning efforts that fill gaps, and building upon current and planned projects.

WCA staff embodies extensive training and experience with diverse skillsets including planning, design, project management, research, writing, graphic art, outreach, knowledge of regional issues and initiatives, and proficiency with technical skills and tools critical in the fields of Land Planning, Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, Resource Management and Public Engagement. The WCA proposes—in expanding beyond the previous work completed in the Upper San Gabriel River Watershed and currently in progress within the Gateway Cities—to continue this vital work in conjunction with our project proponents and stakeholders across the three major watersheds found within the RMC and WCA territories, including those of the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and Santa Ana Rivers. This work will entail the building of initiatives, aiding in the development of plans, and identification of critical projects and the empowering of communities to achieve sustainable, healthy environments.

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The proposed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project responds to the great environmental, social and water related challenges we face today and for the foreseeable future. The drought and economic pressures of the past several years and the nexus of several high profile, yet area specific planning efforts indicates that the time is right to build a regional response. As such, the WCA has outlined a work plan to be completed over the next 4 years to take advantage of climate for change that is sweeping the region and to integrate plans and move toward measureable performance measures as identified projects are completed and gaps are closed.

The GREEN Project will fund: (1) stakeholder and stewardship building, (2) identification and advancement of greening projects, (3) community engagement, (4) greenway development, and the (5) development of an Open Data Platform to share and promote information instrumental for realizing local and regional greening goals and supporting an overall transition from single purpose to multi-purpose watershed projects that improve social, economic and watershed health for all.

The GREEN Project area is defined by the boundary of the RMC and WCA territory. This RMC grant will leverage funds and efforts within the San Gabriel Valley, Orange County and Gateway Cities and will aid in integrating and developing a united greening vision for the region. This effort will provide guidance, direction, and assistance to agencies and groups working on developing greening and greenway plans and projects and the culmination of the GREEN project work performed under this proposal will become the foundation for future planning, performance measurement of the attainment of goals and implementation of watershed projects and related scopes.

The **Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project** activities submitted for RMC for grant funding consideration include the following major program components:

## 1. Stakeholder Participation and Stewardship Building:

### Objective

The success of the GREEN Project critically depends upon the involvement of engaged and dedicated proponents and stakeholders able to represent and interface with the diverse cities, agencies, and groups within the watershed region. WCA staff will engage stakeholders to review and develop plans and initiatives to facilitate support, assist and promote community engagement, ensure plan accuracy and completeness, and to provide ongoing support for implementations. The WCA continues to foster relationships with key stakeholders and agencies who are instrumental to getting greening projects implemented, which this funding would help support and strengthen.

### Activities

- Engage, participate, and collaborate in planning and outreach efforts with regional planning organizations and districts across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Attend and participate in regional and local water, open space, and active transportation working groups, community and agency initiatives, and project development aimed at resource conservation, protection, and enhancing access to public open space, particularly along our waterways and within the National Monument in cooperation with US Forest Service and LA County Flood Control.
- Stakeholders for this effort may include representatives from:
  - Council of Governments (COGs): San Gabriel Valley, Gateway Cities, and Orange County COGs, including committees such as their Transportation Committee, I-710 Corridor Committee, 710 Livability Initiative; among other regional planning agencies such as Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
  - Water Resource Agencies: Gateway Water Management Authority (GWMA) and other local water resource planning agencies, such as LA County Flood and the Metropolitan Water District
  - Open Space Planners: Environmental Planning Agencies, Conservancies, and Landscape Architects such as Friends of the Colorado Lagoon, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Tidal Influence, and Mia Lehrer
  - Community Groups: Community non-profits and local initiatives, such as the East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ), LA County Bike Coalition, Trails4All, Heal the Bay, Friends of the LA River, Amigos de los Rios, and Campfire
  - Government Agencies and utilities such as Metro and Southern California Edison
  - Local, college-level institutions specializing in environmental planning and/or community-based participatory planning, such as Cal Poly Pomona, CSU Long Beach, and UCLA Luskin Center
  - Elected officials, residents, and community leaders from each of the participating cities and unincorporated areas within the planning boundaries
- Develop a framework to establish a Watershed Conservation Stewardship Program (WCSP) to disseminate information to improve land management and develop conservation projects. The WCSP concept builds off of youth work executed in partnership with the Forest Service, the Jr. Ranger Program inspired by similar MRCA programs, and additional partnerships in development. WCA—working in collaboration with partners—seeks to expand opportunities for stewardship and interpretive activities in the San Gabriel

National Forest and throughout the watersheds to increase awareness and protection of our natural resources.

### **Anticipated Deliverables:**

- Report to include meeting outcomes and support materials
- Stakeholder Contact List of individuals and representatives active in greening initiatives
- Framework for Watershed Conservation Stewardship Program and summary of related activities

## **2. Watershed Needs Priority Projects**

### **Objective**

The primary objective of this task is to study and collect information about existing and planned projects relating to urban greening and green infrastructure, and to begin highlighting and prioritizing multiple benefit approaches and project opportunities which provide for water storage and water quality treatment, habitat improvement, increased native vegetation biodiversity, improved connectivity of systems and natural processes, and incorporation of community opportunities.

### **Activities**

- Aid in cataloging State, regional, and local plans and projects related to greening opportunities represented by the following plan categories:
  - Water Resources (e.g. Integrated Regional Water Management Plans [IRWMPs], Enhanced Water Management Plans [EWMPs], County Basin Stormwater Conservation Study, US NRCS Soil Study)
  - Active Transportation (e.g. Active Transportation Plans, Bike Master Plans, County Trail Plans).
  - Passive Recreation and Open Space (e.g. Greening Plans, County Needs Assessment, City Master Plans)
  - Habitat/Biological Resources (e.g. State Wildlife Action Plan, County Significant Ecological Areas [SEAs], California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project [CEHCP], Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project).
  - Community Initiatives (e.g. Livability Initiatives, Environmental Justice Elements)
  - Significant socio-cultural opportunities and historical locations and structures.
  - Connections, expansion, and gap closures to existing routes, patches and/or fragments (e.g. for Habitat, Active Transportation, Recreation, etc.).
  - Potential Greenway Development acquisitions (e.g. within ¼ mile of the River, Tax-default properties and vacant, under-utilized, or inaccessible public or private holdings)
- Data assessment through GIS mapping of the populations that would most benefit from greenway and green infrastructure development within the study area, identifying vulnerable communities, such as those with socio-economic burdens, environmental pollution burdens, safety, and negative health indicators.
- Evaluate the challenges and advantages associated with expansion of green infrastructure through review of related literature and stakeholder feedback.
- Identify priority project opportunities and planning area gaps within the territory to further goals of open space, water security (infiltration, treatment, and conservation), connectivity, habitat, flood management, and host an interactive map portal.

**Anticipated Deliverables**

- GIS resource maps of biophysical and socio-cultural inventory
- Compilation of ecosystem services assessments throughout territory
- Baseline data on community needs and issues
- List of prioritized projects and corridors based on project benefits for implementation by agencies, municipalities, and nonprofits

**3. Implementing GREEN Projects****Objective**

To provide guidance, direction, and assistance to agencies and groups developing multi-beneficial projects incorporating rivers, waterways, utility easements, and railroad corridors within the RMC and WCA territory.

**Activities**

- Support existing efforts and proposals to develop greenways.
  - Work with committees and agencies to coordinate efforts across the territory (e.g. San Gabriel Valley Greenway Steering Committee, Orange County Transportation Authority OC Loop)
  - Coordinating bike counts in strategic locations (e.g. with Bike SGV and LA Bike Coalition)
  - Coordinate in the development of Bike First Aid Stations (e.g. efforts with Metro and LA County Department of Public Works)
  - Work with local groups, agencies, and cities to advance the planting and care of native trees and plants
- Assist with the identification of connection, expansion, and gap closures to existing routes and explore the challenges and advantages with expansion of greenway network with stakeholders.
- Develop community wayfinding communication strategies for distinctive corridors and regions—both directions and referrals—utilizing scenario rating, visual preference, and image rating survey tools.
- Expand on *California Greenway Development and Sustainment Act of 2015 (AB 1251)* by promoting greenway development (within 1/4 mile of Rivers) through the establishment of 'River Districts' to catalyze greenway development and natural systems functions, ensuring they will be expanded, maintained, and protected in perpetuity through public and private partnership building.

**Anticipated Deliverables**

- Report on study of existing and proposed greenway facilities
- Guidelines for consistent signage, markings, mile markers, branding, and amenities standards for greenways throughout territory
- Framework for the establishment of a 'River District' in territory along one or more rivers as implementation, funding, and maintenance strategy to foster completion of greenways and returning landscape functions

#### 4. Community Engagement Strategies Analysis

##### Objective

Engage public, stakeholders, and relevant groups—exploring leading outreach methods and parallel initiatives—to build understanding of both public and expert knowledge and interests.

##### Activities

- Undertake a landscape analysis of the types of engagement strategies that have and have not worked with greening projects locally and nationally.
  - Review related literature
  - Engage institutions which are coordinating community-participatory planning in the region, such as Cal Poly Pomona and UCLA
- Engage targeted key stakeholders and constituencies through possible efforts such as online public opinion surveys, in-person interviews, one-on-one meetings, workshops, and focus groups (multi-lingual approach required), in order to provide a baseline on where communities stand on Greening overall, how they would like to be engaged in the process, what mediums they find most useful, what messengers they trust, and how they would like to participate in various civic engagement tactics throughout GREEN Project development.
- Update the WCA webpage, partner Agency website(s), and social media on events and developments to expand, inform, and open dialog with public audience.

##### Anticipated Deliverables

- 'Initial Findings Report' with lessoned learned, refined audiences personas, and metrics identified to track GREENing progress on desired outcomes
- Summary of feedback/dialogue results received (online and offline) for further cultivation and to aid in informing planning and implementation projects.

#### 5. GREEN Project Portal

##### Objective

Develop a GREEN Data and Project Portal to integrate plans and projects in a readily accessible format for public and professionals that will communicate greening visions and benefits, inventory projects, and create a framework for agency data sharing, project developments, and projecting benefits and impacts through defined performance metrics for both projects that exist and as they are completed.

##### Activities

- Participate in the development, establishment, and potential data coordination of a GREEN (Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network) Project Portal. The Project Portal will employ third-party software to host a public site that would include visions for greening, and ultimately mapping and dashboard/performance measurement functionality.
  - Development of goals and performance metrics with stakeholders for greenway development which quantify potential benefits and impacts
  - Development of performance dashboard, data narrative elements, and formatting tools, providing for better engagement through the dissemination of relevant information, visionary concepts, and both regional and local data through a more human-centric perspective, utilizing data narratives and community snapshots (elements may be integrated in phases)

- Operate and maintain an Open Data/Open Performance Dashboard Platform as part of a website for at least 2 years
- Develop potential protocols for updating data and sharing information on the Database System long-term with regional planning organizations and/or districts.
  - Develop protocols for streamlining the process of integrating new projects into the online engagement/development process across jurisdictions.

### **Anticipated Deliverables**

- Framework for portal components and management, including layout, uploading of data and analyses, partnerships, and agreement of Portal Host
- Development and launch of the GREEN Project Portal
- Performance metrics developed with stakeholders
- Recommended next steps and long-term strategies for hosting and maintaining Portal

### **FUND REQUEST**

This request for a \$650,000 grant will aid in funding the Watershed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project which would be completed over a 3 ½ to 4 year period. See Exhibit A and B—Budget and Schedule—for details. This request for grant funding is authorized by resolution 2016-10 of the Watershed Conservation Authority Board at our January 21, 2016 Board meeting.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer this proposal to the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and regional greening proponents—for which this work would greatly benefit—including Lower LA River Working Group, San Gabriel Valley Greenways Collaborative, Gateway Cities, and interface with the OC Loop initiative.

If you should have any questions concerning this request for grant funding or proposed project please contact Deborah Enos at [denos@wca.ca.gov](mailto:denos@wca.ca.gov) or 626-815-1019 ext. 112.

Sincerely,



Deborah Enos  
Deputy Executive Officer

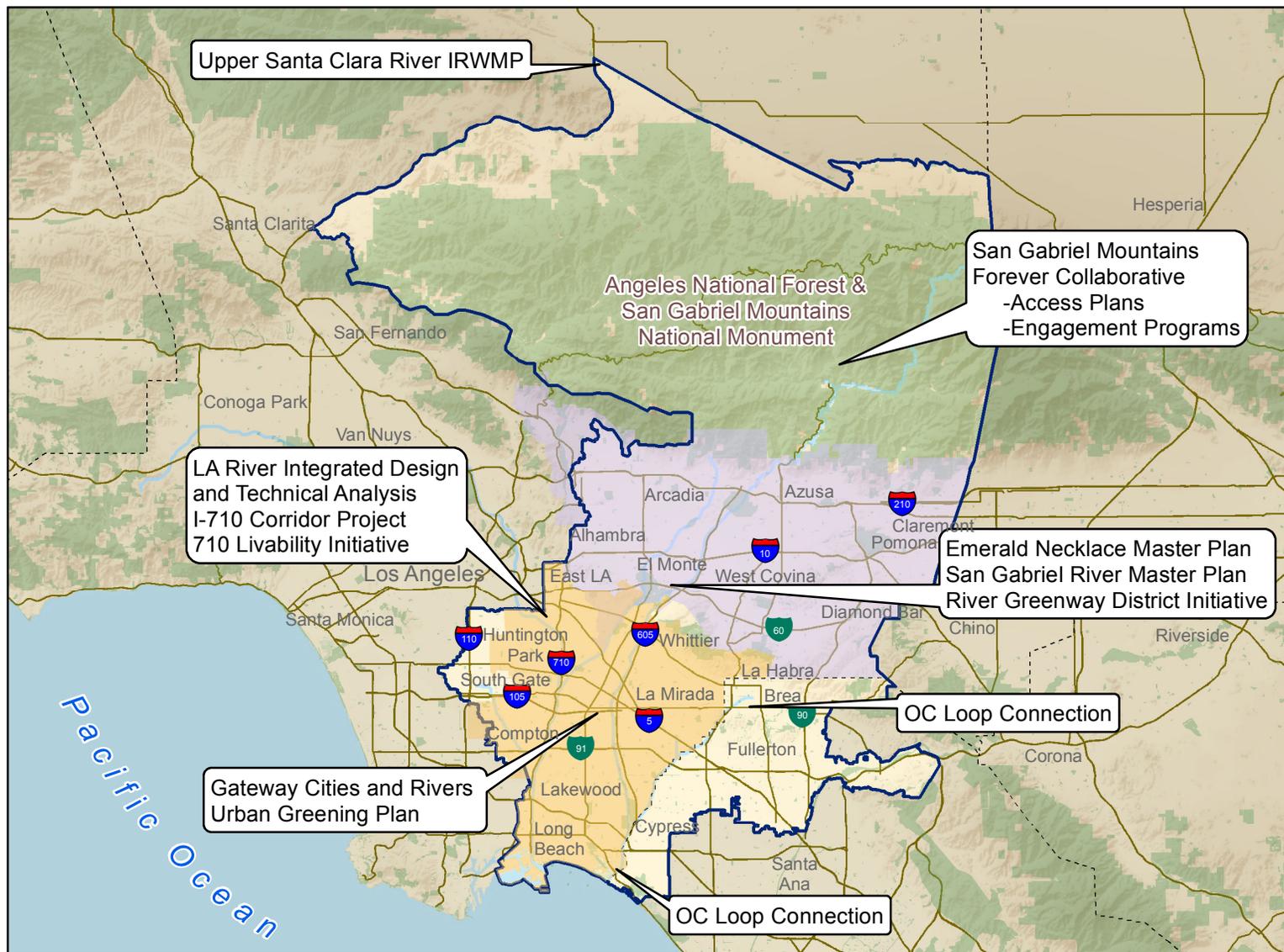




# San Gabriel River and Lower LA River Watersheds GREEN Project

RMC / WCA Territory

## Exhibit D: Regional Plans and Initiatives



- Legend**
- RMC / WCA Territory
  - GatewayCities\_COG\_Communities
  - SGVCOG\_Boundary
  - Protected Open Space
  - County Boundary
  - Freeways
  - Rivers and Water Bodies

Data: Base Map Service provided by ESRI. The RMC boundary provided by the RMC. County Boundaries provided by SCAG County Boundary (2010). Rivers, streams, and waterbodies provided by National Hydrography Dataset (2011). Freeway dataset provided by LA County Department of Regional Planning's Master Plan of Highways (2015).



## Item 10

## RESOLUTION 2016-08

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS  
AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC) AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE  
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (WCA) FOR THE WATERSHED  
GREEN REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT NETWORK (GREEN)  
PROJECT (RMC15112)

WHEREAS, The legislature has found and declared that the San Gabriel River and its tributaries, the Lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, and the San Gabriel Mountains, Puente Hills, and San Jose Hills constitute a unique and important open space, environmental, anthropological, cultural, scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, and wildlife resource that should be held in trust to be preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of, and appreciation by, present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, The people of the State of California have enacted the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, which provides funds for the RMC grant program; and

WHEREAS, The RMC may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of Division 22.8 the Public Resources Code; and

WHEREAS, This action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and NOW

*Therefore be it resolved that* the RMC hereby:

- 1 FINDS that this action is consistent with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act and is necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of Division 22.8 of the Public Resources Code.
- 2 FINDS that the grant is consistent with the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, which provides funds for the RMC grant program.
- 3 FINDS that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
- 4 ADOPTS the staff report dated March 21, 2016.
- 5 AUTHORIZES a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority in the amount of \$650,000 for the Watershed Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network Project (RMC15112).

*~ End of Resolution ~*

Motion \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_ Abstentions: \_\_\_\_\_

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the  
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVANCY on March 21, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Colonna, Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Terry Fujimoto  
Deputy Attorney General