

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY  
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC)  
May 23, 2016**

**Held at the  
Garvey Center  
9108 Garvey Avenue  
Rosemead, CA 91770**

And via conference call:  
Orange County Public Works Department  
2301 N. Glassell Street, Orange, CA 92865  
And  
California Natural Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311-Conference Room 1306  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Colonna called the meeting to order at approximately 1:32 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Frank Colonna, Chair	Mr. Bryan Cash (for Secretary Laird)
Ms. Margaret Clark	Ms. Janet Chin (for Supervisor Solis)
Mr. Denis Bertone	Ms. Eraina Ortega (Mr. Cohen)
Mr. Roberto Uranga	Mr. Terri Grant (for Ms. Gail Farber)
Ms. Judy Nelson	Mr. Dan Sulzer (for Colonel Colloton)
Mr. John Donnelly	Ms. Allison Gallagher (for Assemblymember O'Donnell)
Mr. Troy Edgar	Mr. Lawrence Cooper (for Senator Lara)
	Ms. Marilyn Thoms (for Mr. Silsby)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mr. Dan Arrighi, Vice Chair  
Mr. Luis Marquez  
Mr. Matthew Rodriguez  
Mr. Randy Moore  
Ms. Lisa Mangat  
Mr. Steve Johnson

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
Terry Fujimoto, Deputy Attorney General

**STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)**

Valerie Thompson, Executive Secretary  
Luz Quinnell, Project Manager  
Marybeth Vergara, Project Manager

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jim Odling mentioned that the Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates is sponsoring an art show on Sunday to support local artist and invited the board members to attend.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There were no inaccuracies noted.

**Mr. Bertone motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Edgar seconded the motion. Minutes approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 8; Nays = 0; Abstention = 1.**

**5. CHAIR'S REPORT**

No report was given.

**6. DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT**

No report was given.

**7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS**

**A. LEGISLATIVE**

The Executive Officer gave an update on several legislative items which included AB 2444: Garcia – CA Water Quality, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access Improvement Act of 2016; AB 2651: Gomez – Greenway Easements; AB 1550: Gomez – Greenhouse Gases: Investment Plan: Disadvantaged Communities; AB 2796: Low – Active Transportation Program; SB 163: Hertzberg – Wastewater Treatment: Recycled Water; and SB 1374: Lara – Lower Los Angeles River.

Regarding SB 1374, Mr. Edgar question whether funding would be made available for staffing needs for the L.A. Working Group as the RMC was designated through legislation to provide staffing needs for the group. Mr. Stanley explained that Chapter 6 of the Water Bond, that funds the California Natural Resources projects, has a direct allocation to the RMC of \$30 million that can be used and there is also \$100 million pending allocation in which a portion of those funds will be available to the RMC that could also be used for staffing needs for the L.A. Working Group. He further explained that staff requested \$7 million in a budget proposal that was submitted for next year that could also be used. He noted, in regards to the allocation of the \$100 million, that the RMC could use more support to ensure that the RMC receives its' fair share of those funds. He also noted that, in the budget proposal, staff also requested two additional staff members to help facilitate the L.A. Working Group staffing needs so that there is no additional burden on the current staff resources. Mr. Edgar voiced additional concerns, in relation to SB1374, regarding the

reforming of the scope of the Board and Conservancy to focus on the lower L.A. River versus the entire San Gabriel River, and that he is concerned about the upper L.A. River and how much the Conservancy is actually advocating for that portion of the river versus how much of it is in the Conservancy jurisdiction. He asked, respectfully, that when staff tries to get comments, to balance it across the entire Board in order to have both sides of the perspective. Ms. Clark referred to the legislative language in SB 919 that would require the Public Utilities Commission to adopt and implement policies or tariffs to address the oversupply of renewable energy resources, and questioned the idea that there is too much renewable energy and that it now has to be taxed. Ms. Nelson pointed out that the issue was also addressed at the recent San Gabriel Valley Water Association meeting, and that they have asked Congresswoman Napolitano and Congresswoman Chu to assist in opposing the legislation. Mr. Stanley advised that he would do further research and will provide additional information regarding this specific matter at the June Board meeting, and discuss with the Board whether the RMC should support or oppose it.

#### **B. CAPITAL OUTLAY AND SUPPORT BUDGET**

The Executive Officer provided an overview of the staff report which included information on the total capital outlay funds appropriated, encumbered and remaining Proposition 40, 50, 84, 13 and 1. Mr. Bertone questioned the approximately \$10 million allocated for Prop. 1 instead of \$15 million since the Tier 1 projects total \$15 million. Mr. Stanley explained that the additional funding needed to fund the Tier 1 projects will be provided in the next fiscal year as staff only budgeted for \$10 million, out of the \$30 million that was allocated, this fiscal year and will budget for \$7 million in the upcoming fiscal year. He mentioned that there is still discussion that there may be an allocation of funds from the \$100 million in funds to be divided between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the RMC. He noted that a list of projects that are currently unencumbered in the amount of \$1.9 million, and that he anticipates that they will soon be encumbered. He also made reference to Exhibit A; Report on Advance Funds and Exhibit C; Contracts for this fiscal year.

#### **C. CUMULATIVE GRANT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY**

The Executive Officer reported that there are 205 total projects in which 36 of those projects are still active "certified" and 166 are completed. A list of those projects were included in the staff report.

#### **D. PROJECT AND LIAISON ACTIVITIES**

The Executive Officer gave an update on several projects which included the Regional Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Planning; specifically the Leadership and Disadvantaged Communities Committees. In addition, he gave an update on several Watershed Conservation Authority projects which included the Citrus Grove Heights Bike Stop, Emerald Necklace, Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan, San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon. He pointed out the Los Cerritos Wetlands flyer that includes a calendar of future activities at the Los Cerritos Wetlands which was included in the staff report, and gave an update on the stewardship program.

**Ms. Gallagher arrived at approximately 2:03 p.m.**

**REGULAR CALENDAR****8. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY PROPOSITION 1 TIER 1 AND TIER 2 GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS.**

Marybeth Vergara, Project Manager, gave a summary of the projects that were previously approved based on the project evaluation criteria in March, and gave an overview of the process used by staff to review the grant proposals. Ms. Vergara explained that the project evaluation criteria for Tier 1 had a total possible score of 133 for the urban lands projects, 133 for the river and tributary parkways projects, and 123 for the mountains, hills, and foothills. In addition to the Tier 1 criteria, she explained that RMC staff and reviewers also conducted an analysis of each project based on the project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC). Ms. Vergara also explained that as a result of evaluating the score of the project evaluation criteria and SWOC there are a total of 14 projects for a grant request totaling \$15,897,489, and that the projects recommendations are broken down in the following program areas: six for urban lands, seven for rivers and tributary; and one for mountains, hills, and foothills. She mentioned that a full list of the projects that met the Tier 1 criteria and were being recommended for funding was included in the staff report. She noted that staff would like to go back and look at each of the applicants to do a very detailed analysis of the projects budget, timeline, scope of work, and task list to ensure that all of the elements are still consistent. She also noted that the final grant award may be for full or partial funding. Mr. Bertone asked if the individual projects will be brought before the Board for approval. Ms. Vergara explained that the projects will be brought to the Board individually with a full staff analysis which would include the final grant amount.

In addition, Ms. Vergara gave an overview of the funding that was allocated directly to the RMC through Chapter 6, Proposition 1 for competitive grants for multi-benefit ecosystem, watershed protection and restoration projects which included how the project managers will seek to prioritize projects that meet the very specific Project Eligibility criteria identified in the grant program guidelines. She noted that staff anticipates one, possibly two, more call for projects which would be determined based on projects that would be brought to the RMC and project need. Ms. Vergara mentioned that the individual grants would be brought before the Board for individual approval in June or July 2016.

Mr. Cash questioned a couple of projects in regards to their description as to how they met the requirement for Prop. 1 to focus on water elements, and suggested that staff focus on projects that can actually be funded by Prop. 1 and not projects with recreational elements. Ms. Vergara explained that staff will encourage grantees to seek matching funds for elements in their projects that are not eligible for Prop. 1 funds. There was further discussion regarding Prop. 1 funding criteria and how projects qualify for Tier 1 and Tier 2. Ms. Nelson requested that staff provide the Board with the breakdown for scoring projects and how they rank. Ms. Vergara explained that the Board was presented with the project scores at the last Board meeting. Mr. Stanley explained that when each project is presented to the Board individually for consideration, a breakdown of the scoring would be included. Mr. Edgar questioned the reviewing process and Ms. Vergara explained that the process used has been used in the pass which involves staff and volunteers who had expertise in various environmental areas completing the task of reviewing the projects. Mr.

Edgar voiced concerns with the process in regards to scoring and transparency to the Board and the public. He also expressed concerns about staff being prepared to make recommendations when the Board has not yet had access to the project scores and do not know the influences of the outside reviewers, and concerns about the binary of projects either being above or below meeting the criteria for Tier 1. He recommended that staff hold off on the recommendations until staff can create a more transparent process. Mr. Stanley explained that when staff brings each individual project before the board for funding consideration, the scores of projects are presented to the Board and are made available to the public for review; including a full analysis of each of the projects. He also explained that, traditionally, staff has broken the projects down in Tier 1 and Tier 2 prior to the project being fully analyzed for consideration of funding. Ms. Ortega voiced concerns in regards to the language written in the resolution as being unclear, and there was discussion regarding the purpose of the resolution and what exactly would be approve. Mr. Uranga mentioned that he would prefer that the applicants know exactly where their project is deficient in regards to scoring and explain it to them in detail to give them an opportunity to work on the project's shortcomings. It was suggested that the language in the resolution be changed to clarify what exactly is being approved. Ms. Clark requested that the item be deferred until the June meeting. Chair Colonna explained that it has always been the Conservancies position to assist the applicants so they meet the criteria so their projects can be funded. Mr. Donnelly mentioned that it is important that all grant applicants be contacted so there does not appear to be any partiality. There was further discussion regarding the applicants meeting criteria for Tier 1, scoring transparency, and disadvantaged cities being helped with the process. Mr. Colonna directed staff to create a list with all of the applicant's project scores and send the list to all of the applicants, and the item was deferred until the June meeting.

**The item was deferred until the next meeting in June.**

**9. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC FOR THE OUTDOOR WATERSHED CLASSROOM (RMC15115).**

Luz Quinnell, Project Manager, explained that the grant would allow for watershed exhibit and classroom improvements which would include updating the existing signage and add new watershed signage and exhibits, enhance and expand the capacity of the watershed classroom, and enhance the aesthetics of the watershed area. She noted that the grant would be in the amount of \$358,600. Ms. Nelson suggested that the staff at the Aquarium view a short video produced by the Water Associations that describes Southern California water issues in terms of where it comes from, future water prospects, and how to provide demand with and decreasing supply as she believes it would benefit the Aquarium prior to the finalization of the project.

**Mr. Bertone motioned to approve the resolution; Mr. Uranga seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – ayes = 9; nays = 0; 0 abstentions.**

**10. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE CALIFORNIA RESOURCE CONNECTIONS, INC. TO EXTEND THE TIMELINE FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS (RMC12002).**

Luz Quinnell gave an update on the project and explained that the grant would allow for the improvement of interpretive signage for consistency with the San Gabriel River Trail Signage Guidelines. She pointed out that the signage improvements would include areas

along the San Gabriel River Trail from just south of the Azusa Rockery and Geology Park to the current trail end along State Highway 39 near the entrance to the Azusa River Wilderness Park. She noted that staff will be working with the CRC to install the signage within the next three to six weeks, and hope to close out the grant in September.

**Mr. Edgar motioned to approve the resolution; Mr. Uranga seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll Call Vote – Ayes = 9; Nays = 0; 0 abstentions.**

**11. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY PRELIMINARY BUDGET FY 2016/2017.**

Salian Garcia, Fiscal Manager for the WCA, gave an overview of the WCA's preliminary budget which included Administrative, Personnel, Operations, and Capital Outlay/Grants and Special Projects budget items that total \$6,436,748. There was discussion regarding grants/special projects revenue, retirement contributions and pensions, healthcare, 2016 revenue compared to 2015 and 2017 projected revenue, and 2016 janitorial expenses. The preliminary budget was included in the staff report.

**Mr. Bertone motioned to approve the resolution; Mr. Edgar seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll Call Vote – Ayes = 19; Nays = 0; 0 abstentions.**

**12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

The Executive Officer presented Mr. Dan Sulzer with a certificate of appreciation for his 10 years of service as a Board member designee for the Army Corps of Engineers.

**13. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be held on June 27, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. in the City of Bellflower.

**14. ADJOURNMENT UPON COMPLETION OF BUSINESS**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Colonna at approximately 2:56 p.m.