

**MINUTES  
BOARD MEETING  
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (WCA)  
January 21, 2016**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mejia at 1:33 p.m. The meeting was held at: Hall of Admin., 500 W. Temple Street, 3rd Floor, Room 383, Los Angeles, CA, Gateway Cities COG, 16401 Paramount Blvd, Conf. Room, Paramount, CA 90723 and San Gabriel Valley Water Company, 11142 Garvey Avenue, El Monte, CA 91734

**2. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Brian Mejia, Chair (for Supervisor Antonovich)  
Ms. Terri Grant (for Ms. Farber)  
Ms. Janet Chin (for Supervisor Solis)  
Mr. Dan Arrighi (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)  
Ms. Connie Sziebl (for Supervisor Knabe)  
Ms. Karly Katona (for Supervisor Ridley-Thomas)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mr. Frank Colonna (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)  
Mr. Roberto Uranga (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
Debbie Enos, Deputy Executive Officer  
Dena Williams, Board Secretary  
Salian Garcia, Fiscal Manager  
Rob Romanek, Project Manager  
Johnathan Perisho, Project Manager  
Joe Gonzalez, Project Manager  
Roxana Marashi, Project Manager

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Mejia mentioned that we have two sets of minutes to approve. The board tabled the May 14, 2015 minutes. Board member Karly Katona arrived at 1:38 pm.

**Board member Arrighi moved to have the September 24, 2015 minutes approved. Board member Chin seconded the motion. Board Voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions. Minutes were approved.**

#### 5. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Mejia did not give an actual report but he did want to express his appreciation to Mark, Debbie and Rob and staff for their participation in holding community meetings regarding the Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space Project. He also mentioned that there are park needs assessments occurring throughout the county and encouraged everyone to attend a meeting.

#### 6. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Chair Mejia nominated Karly Katona. Board member Arrighi nominated Janet Chin. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions in favor of Janet Chin as Vice Chair.

#### EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

#### 7. LIAISON & ACTIVITIES REPORT

The Executive Officer introduced two new WCA employees, Roxana Marashi and Salian Garcia. Mr. Stanley stated that the Leadership Committee with the IRWMP group of Greater Los Angeles County is in the midst of renewing the MOU and Operating Guidelines which is based on the regional plan update. He also stated that the Leadership Committee is also in the process of giving consideration to contracting services provided by Disadvantage Community outreach personnel. Mr. Stanley mentioned that a meeting with the SGRDCA Design Team and a red team plan check review with County took place to review the 90% Construction Documents for the first phase and is currently receiving comments back for pick-up. Mr. Stanley briefly mentioned the WCA facebook page was launched and happenings at WCA's office in the Canyon are highlighted, along with wildlife sightings, project updates, staff events and community engagement and outreach notices are being shared. Mr. Stanley mentioned that a concept plan for the Citrus Grove Heights Bike Stop has received preliminary approval to include prefabricated shade structure, bike service station, on-site storage, hitching posts, interpretive site elements, seating areas and a swale to capture water and provide habitat. Mr. Stanley stated that a red team meeting for the Duck Farm Project was held in late November to discuss completing the permit plan check reviews and comments from all departments except for plumbing have been received and are being picked up by AECOM with a target resubmittal date of February first. Mr. Stanley briefly mentioned that for the Emerald Necklace project, the project planning consultants continue to conduct updates to the project description for the 16 identified Phase 1 Implementation projects. He also mentioned that once a cost analysis and a Programmatic EIR are completed, the consultants will be able to position the 16 projects for effective and efficient implementation among the various Emerald Necklace partner agencies. Mr. Stanley stated that WCA held a second community outreach meeting in November with the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan, following the LA River workshop in August, this time focusing on the Lower San

Gabriel River. Mr. Stanley stated that attendance at this outreach meeting was very good and there were a number of speakers from all over including Claire Robinson from Amigos de los Rios, Kekoa from Gateway Cities COG, Mark from OC 4th District Supervisor Shawn Nelson's office and Ray from Friends of the Colorado Lagoon. Mr. Stanley stated that for the River Wilderness Park Project staff is currently reviewing the design development of the RWP Entry Improvements and has also prepared and submitted several grant proposals over the course of the past nine months totaling approximately \$4.5M in funding requests. The resulting programmatic initial study and draft mitigated declaration was released for public review on December 2, 2015 with a 30-day public review to solicit comments and input which resulted in multiple agency comment letters being received. No general public comments were submitted and so WCA staff and the environmental consultant, ECORP are currently responding to comments and preparing a final document and will be considered for adoption at the next board meeting. Mr. Stanley briefly mentioned the Cattle Canyon Project in that WCA staff and Angeles National Forest are reviewing the Final Concept Site Plan & Programming report and once that is finished the design plan will undergo a joint CEQA/NEPA analysis process so that WCA can move forward with this project. Lastly, Mr. Stanley stated that the City of San Dimas and WCA are continuing to collaborate through the CEQA analysis and documentation process, and in planning for the development of Phase 1. It is anticipated that the WCA and City will prepare one joint proposal to modify the Conceptual Master Plan and will be presented at a community workshop for further comments before any action is taken to further project implementation. Board Member Sziebl asked if a map and the sign-in sheets from the Gateway Cities And Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan workshops could be provided and Mark answered her absolutely.

## **8. EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Mr. Stanley stated that lease revenues reflect the receipt of annual South Gate Billboard for Calendar Year 2015 and that the timing of this annual payment is compensating for Duck Farm nursery lease being in arrears from June through December 2015. He also stated that WCA is taking action to collect the arrears, the nursery has made some payments, but they continue to be in arrears. Mr. Stanley mentioned that filming revenue is higher than budgeted due to special use fees received from a CBS Television shoot in the canyon that utilized the El Encanto parking lot for crew vehicles during this period. Mr. Stanley stated that in the expenses section fiscal services provided by the County Auditor-Controller are below budget projections due to the quarterly bill ending 12/31/15 not yet being received.

## **9. FUND BALANCE REPORT**

Mr. Stanley stated that for fund number V19 there was a decrease in Duck Farm operational funds due to increased Administrative/Personnel costs, fund number V48 there was a decrease in fund balance due to payments made to the City of South Gate to establish a water line for the Parque Dos Rios implementation project, fund number V71 there was an increase due to receipt of advance payments from the National Forest Foundation for short-term improvements for the Oaks Picnic Area Improvement Project, fund number V78 there was a decrease in fund balance primarily due to payments rendered to Withers & Sandgren LTD to provide planning and design services for the River Wilderness Park Entry Project, fund number V84 there was an increase due to an advance of funds to be utilized towards legal costs to be incurred to conduct legal review of documents to accept Conservation Easement from the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority, and fund number V89 there was an increase due to an advance received from the RMC for the implementation of the Emerald Necklace project. There were no questions or comments from the board members.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

10. **CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE AMENDING THE RESOLUTION FOR THE GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION TO THE CALIFORNIA RIVER PARKWAYS GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE RIVER WILDERNESS PARK ENTRY: RIVER ECOLOGY INTERPRETIVE SITE & TRAILSIDE OVERLOOK.**
11. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN UPDATE TO BILLABLE RATES FOR FY15/16.**
12. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE FY2015/16 JANITORIAL CONTRACT WITH BRITWORKS, INC. AND AMEND FY15/16 BUDGET.**
13. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SIGNATORY AUTHORIZATION FOR FISCAL MANAGER.**
14. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONDUCT WEED ABATEMENT AT THE DUCK FARM.**
15. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO RATIFY THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2014 RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE: 1) RAINBOW CANYON RANCH ACQUISITION & CONCEPT PLANNING; 2) RIVER WILDERNESS PARK: ARROYOS DEVELOPMENT; 3) LOWER Ia RIVER GREENWAYS DEVELOPMENT TOOL, AND 4) DUCK FARM HOUSE LANDSCAPE & WATER CONSERVATION CENTER PROJECTS.**

At this time, board member Katona left the meeting at approximately 2:01pm.

**Vice Chair Chin moved to approve the resolutions for Items 10 through 15. Board member Arrighi seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

**REGULAR CALENDAR**

16. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS WATERSHED GREEN REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT NETWORK (GREEN) PROJECT.**

Project Manager Joseph Gonzalez stated that the WCA is asking the board to authorize an application for grant funds from the RMC to the WCA in the amount of \$650,000 for up to five years for the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers Watershed GREEN Project. He also stated that this project is a continuation of the Watershed Coordinator Program that was established back in 2008 and continued through 2014. He went on to state that the program addressed partnership-building to advance water quality and security, habitat quality, open space, and recreational opportunities within the watershed and surrounding region. Mr.

Gonzalez mentioned the WCA is seeking funding to continue this effort and expand it beyond the San Gabriel River with the inclusion of the Lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries utilizing a 'Gray to Green' approach with this project.

**Board member Arrighi moved to approve the resolution. Board member Sziebl seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

**17. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR, OR DESIGNEE, THE DISCRETION TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE RIVER WILDERNESS PARK ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT.**

Project Manager Rob Romanek stated due to the elements of the improvements to the River Wilderness park entry, geotechnical consulting services are required for these elements to evaluate potential hazards, and provide geotechnical recommendations for the final design and construction of the park improvements. Mr. Romanek went on to state that the need for a geotechnical services has arisen based on preliminary geotechnical investigations within the River Wilderness Park area and that further geotechnical services will evaluate potential site hazards, and specifically with regards to possible slope failure, evaluate the proximity of proposed elements to the river bank as well as a proposed buttressed slope. Mr. Romanek explained that in an effort to maintain the project schedule staff recommends providing the Chair, or designee, the discretion to award a contract for these services with a not-to-exceed amount of \$21,000 which is being funded by the RMC grant and this contract is contracted is consistent with the adopted FY15/16 budget. Board member Sziebl asked what the agency is going to be looking for and why is this agency needed. Mr. Romanek answered with extensive studies of the soil are needed to find out if the structure of the soil will not fail because there will be slopes very close to edge of the river bank and we do not want soil failing or slipping into the river. Ms. Sziebl then asked if this would delay the project or would this study be running parallel and Mr. Romanek answered that this study would be running parallel with the project and the design development is still going and we are past 60% design and we are in the last stages so this is just a fine detail to make sure that the footings and the placements of these elements are appropriate.

**Chair Mejia moved to approve the resolution. Vice Chair Chin seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

**18. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO 1) APPROVE THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND ACT OF 2006 RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY GRANT PROGRAM FOR PRE-ACQUISITION AND DUE DILIGENCE EXPENSES; AND 2) AUTHORIZE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE FOOTHILLS ABOVE AZUSA, ASSESSOR PARCEL NO. 8684-024-036. PROPERTY OWNER: SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS REGIONAL CONSERVANCY; WCA NEGOTIATORS: LAURIE COLLINS, ESQUIRE, MARK STANLEY, DEBBIE ENOS, ROBERT ROMANEK.**

Project Manager Rob Romanek stated that this acquisition preserves one of the last remaining undeveloped private holding along the foothill interface between the San Gabriel Valley and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument for the purpose of watershed restoration, community-driven stewardship, and suitable low-impact recreation. Mr. Romanek also stated that by transferring this property to WCA it would protect significant natural and scenic resources, and help to preserve critical landscape connections to close-by conservation lands, including the River Wilderness Park. Mr. Romanek mentioned that the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy (SGMRC) acquired the property in 2014 with a mortgage note held by the former owner and informed the WCA staff that the majority of the funding originally slated to pay off the note is no longer available for the intended use, resulting in the organizations' inability to make regular payments toward the note. Board member Sziebl asked how much is the land valued at and do we need to pay any money into the mortgage. Mr. Romanek answered that SGMRC acquired the land at \$1.4 million and have paid \$750,000 and the WCA would only pay what is left on the note and not what has already been paid by SGMRC. Vice Chair Chin asked if this type of action has ever been done before and Mr. Stanley answered not to his knowledge since he has been in the office.

**Vice Chair Chin moved to approve the resolution. Chair Mejia seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

**19. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO 1) ACCEPT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS WITHIN THE PUENTE HILLS TOTALING 53 ACRES; AND 2) ACCEPT MONITORING FUND ENDOWMENT MANAGED BY THE SAN DIEGO FOUNDATION.**

Deputy Executive Officer Debbie Enos stated that Southern California Edison (SCE) was granted the ability to construct the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a biological opinion in 2010 that obligated SCE to perform mitigation to offset TRTP related impacts to occupied and designated critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher. Ms. Enos further stated that California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) has directed that a suitable third-party accept the conservation easements (CE) and both RMC and WCA have been identified as acceptable CE holders. Ms. Enos added that SCE was required to establish a monitoring endowment fund for the CE holder and SCE satisfied this requirement by depositing \$41,000 with the San Diego Foundation who will manage the fund, issue earnings reports and will make future annual distributions to the CE holder of record to fund the monitoring and reporting requirement associated with acceptance of the Conservation Easements. Chair Mejia asked what the San Diego Foundation was and Ms. Enos answered that they were the desired recipient of the funds and they invest funds for the purpose of mitigation and invest them in agreements such as this one that is located on page 10 of the report.

**Board member Arrighi moved to approve the resolution. Board member Sziebl seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

**20. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND/OR DESIGNEE TO EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THIRD-PARTY FINANCING, SPECIFIC SOURCE**

## **FUND MANAGEMENT AND SHORT-TERM WORKING CAPITAL PARTNER INVESTMENTS.**

Project Manager Johnathan Perisho stated that staff intends to explore short-term loan opportunities with public and/or private funding sources to address grant costs that may not be reimbursed for extended periods of time. Mr. Perisho further stated that presently, the California Natural Resources Agency does not and will not advance reimbursements until physical proof of checks have been cleared and due to the internal billing through Los Angeles County this can take up to several months to cover in-house and contractor expenses. Mr. Perisho mentioned a few of the projects that will suffer greatly due to cash flow limitations is Citrus Grove Heights Rest Area, Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan and the Duck Farm River Parkway project. Board member Sziebl asked what does it mean that it could take up to several months to cover large expenditures, how many months are we talking about. Mr. Stanley answered with it depends on which grant it is and the requirements of the funds that are being provided. Ms. Sziebl asked what do you mean by short-term loan opportunities. Mr. Stanley stated that we are not talking about a multi-year process but rather a six month process and we are not talking about the entire balance of the project and this will also be a continuing conversation.

**Vice Chair Chin moved to approve the resolution. Board member Arrighi seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

### **21. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A CONTRACT AMENDMENT FROM THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER DISCOVERY CENTER AUTHORITY FOR MANAGEMENT SERVICES.**

Deputy Executive Officer Debbie Enos stated that a contract amendment from the San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority (SGRDCA) for management services is needed for a contract value of \$136,500 and extending the contract for a 2-year term through June 30, 2017.

**Vice Chair Chin moved to approve the resolution. Chair Mejia seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.**

### **22. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be held on March 17, 2016.

### **23. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Mejia at approximately 2:54 pm.

**X**

---

Brian Mejia  
Chair

**X**

---

Dena Williams  
Board Secretary