

DATE: September 15, 2016

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: Robert Romanek, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 13: Consideration of a resolution to authorize an amendment to a professional services contract with BlueGreen Consulting for planning, design, and environmental services for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board authorize the Chair, or designee to amend a professional services contract with BlueGreen Consulting for planning, design, and environmental services for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project, extending the performance period up to twelve (12) months and increasing the not-to-exceed contract value to an amount not to exceed \$600,000.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project (the “Cattle Canyon Project”), conducted in cooperation with the Angeles National Forest (ANF) and San Gabriel Mountain National Monument (SGMNM) seeks to address unsustainable recreation practices along a portion of the East Fork of the San Gabriel River (EFSGR), located within San Gabriel Canyon. A project location map is included as Exhibit A. Other goals of the project seek to improve safety, and to enhance the visitor experience. The stated purpose and need of the project is to:

- Provide recreation facilities and infrastructure that are high quality, well-maintained, safe, accessible and consistent with visitors’ expectations.
- Shift and concentrate recreational use to certain areas in order to minimize adverse effects over a broader area.
- Promote stewardship of public land by providing quality and sustainable recreation opportunities that result in increased visitor satisfaction.
- Allow for better management of the recreation resources on the Forest.
- Improve riparian habitat conditions in certain areas and make progress toward enhancing stream habitat conditions by restoring vegetation, minimizing invasive plants and noxious weed presence, and developing management strategies to regulate access.

This project, to be completed over three phases, includes multiple components: 1) a comprehensive site assessment, planning, and design process; 2) subsequent implementation of site improvements, including interpretive and directional signage and access improvements; 3) development and implementation of an interpretive outreach program; and 4) a study on the effectiveness of the interpretive outreach program. Developed as a pilot project, the approach may be replicated in other areas of the Forest and San Gabriel River Watershed where similar management challenges exist.

BACKGROUND: The project area encompasses a 2.5 mile long segment of EFSGR. This environmental conditions along this portion of the stream, and surrounding areas is degraded by heavy recreational use

combined with the lack of facilities. High-intensity dispersed river-focused use occurs throughout the project area, particularly during summer months. Impacts include damage to vegetation, soil compaction and erosion, on-site litter, and stream alteration where visitors build rock dams in the river bed to create recreational bathing pools. EFSGR has also experienced high levels of litter deposition both in and adjacent to the watercourse. The Regional Water Board determined that the level of trash has exceeded the existing Water Quality Standard necessary to protect the beneficial uses of the river. The water quality is impaired due to trash (section 303(d) listing). Stream alterations also impacts Critical Habitat designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the federally threatened Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*).

Visitor data collected during peak-use periods identifies that the users' average socioeconomic characteristics are significantly lower than County averages. For example, information collected from 849 interviews during the summer of 2014 showed that users had annual household incomes averaging \$35,222. That can be compared to the 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates identifying \$82,109 as the mean annual household income for Los Angeles County. As such, project planning, site design, and environmental impact analysis has and continues to consider environmental justice implications in addressing the degraded environmental conditions, and in managing for a sustainable level of public use.

This project planning and design effort began in May of 2014 when WCA authorized a professional services contract to BlueGreen Consulting in an amount not to exceed \$281,000 as Resolution 14-19. BlueGreen Consulting was selected as the most qualified bidder through a Request for Proposal process. Since that time BlueGreen Consulting and its environmental sub-consultant, Environmental Science Associates (ESA), have worked closely with the WCA and ANF project team. In February 2015, they completed a 431 page Existing Condition Report. Three conceptual design options were then prepared and finalized by June 2015. WCA and ANF Staff, and engaged stakeholders evaluated and commented on these options. BlueGreen subsequently prepared and submitted an administrative final concept site plan in March of 2016. The WCA and ANF provided further comments, and a revised final concept plan and final programming report is currently under development. The latest administrative draft of the final concept plan is included as Exhibit B.

Request for Add-Services: BlueGreen's remaining scope includes preparation of a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Environmental Assessment (MND/EA) to assist the agencies with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. However, WCA and ANF Staff have evaluated the proposed action within the final conceptual plan, and identified that potentially significant impacts could occur to the Santa Ana Sucker and the species designated as Critical Habitat. Impacts may occur from the proposed shifting and concentration of recreational use to certain areas of EFSGR in order to minimize adverse effects over a broader area. Construction related impacts may be significant as well, including installation of abutments for a proposed pedestrian bridge. As it pertains to the NEPA (but not CEQA), the project may have significant socioeconomic impacts due to displaced recreational users as the overall potential parking capacity at the site will be reduced.

Based on the potential for significant impacts it has been mutually determined by ANF and WCA Staff that an Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) must be prepared. This is the appropriate documents to disclose potential environmental impacts that may not be avoided through the proposed action, and must therefore be analyzed against at least one alternative, a no project alternative. Compared to the MND/EA, the preparation of a EIR/EIS requires a much greater effort on the

part of BlueGreen and ESA. Staff is also recommending a contingency for the EIR/EIS preparation, including the development and analysis of an alternative conceptual plan that seeks to reduce and avoid impacts to the Santa Ana Sucker. This alternative would be included in the EIR/EIS in addition to the proposed action and no action alternatives.

In addition to the move from an MND/EA to an EIR/EIS, Staff recommends contracting for additional technical reports to support the environmental analysis. This includes technical work originally slated to be conducted in-house by ANF, however, ANF presently has limited staff capacity for these activities and has asked WCA to contract for these services using federal funding obligated to the Authority for this project. The recommended add-services are summarized as follows:

Task	Description	Fee Requested by Consultant prior to Negotiations
Site Programing and Concept Design Services	Includes development of an additional design layout alternative, evaluated for feasibility and incorporated into the final project programing report.	\$9,940
Outreach Services	Requested to aid in the public review of the Draft EIR/EIS. Includes meeting preparations, participation, and language translation services.	\$23,030
Hydrology and Soils Technical Services (as requested by ANF)	An in-depth hydrology report with hydrologic modeling, erosion and water quality impact assessments, development of project specific BMPs and mitigation measures, baseline soil disturbance monitoring, and preparation of an erosion control plan.	\$81,280
Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation	Required to inform the above described hydrology services, as well as to support subsequent project permitting.	\$20,485
Cultural Resources Services	Field surveying and document research, culminating in the development of a Phase I Cultural Resources Report.	\$33,180
EIS/EIS Preparation	Includes administration and recordkeeping, public scoping meeting participation, development of a Draft EIR/EIS, development of a Final EIR/EIS with responses to public and agency comments, and development of a Mitigation Monitory & Reporting Program as required by CEQA.	\$254,730
	Other Direct Expenses (printing, etc.)	\$18,846
	Subtraction for original cost of MND/EA preparation	-\$50,420
	Total Requested Fee	\$391,071

Staff conservatively expects the added services to require a 12 month extension.

Status of Negotiations: WCA Staff has identified opportunities to reduce cost, and is continuing to negotiate toward a refined scope of work with a reduced budget in an amount not to exceed \$319,000, a nearly 20% reduction from the fee requested by the Consultant . Coordination is also ongoing with ANF

as opportunities are explored to complete portion of the services with in-house Forest Service specialist. Negotiations are expected to be completed within two weeks.

Basis for Recommendation: Staff has identified that BlueGreen Consulting and EAS are qualified to provide these requested services. Due to their current engagement and familiarity with the project they are also able to provide these services at a lower cost than any comparably qualified firms.

Furthermore, Government Code Section 4526 provides that selection by a local agency head for professional services of private landscape architectural and environmental firms shall be on the basis of demonstrated competence and on the professional qualifications necessary for the satisfactory performance of the services required. WCA has no statutory obligation to bid out these services.

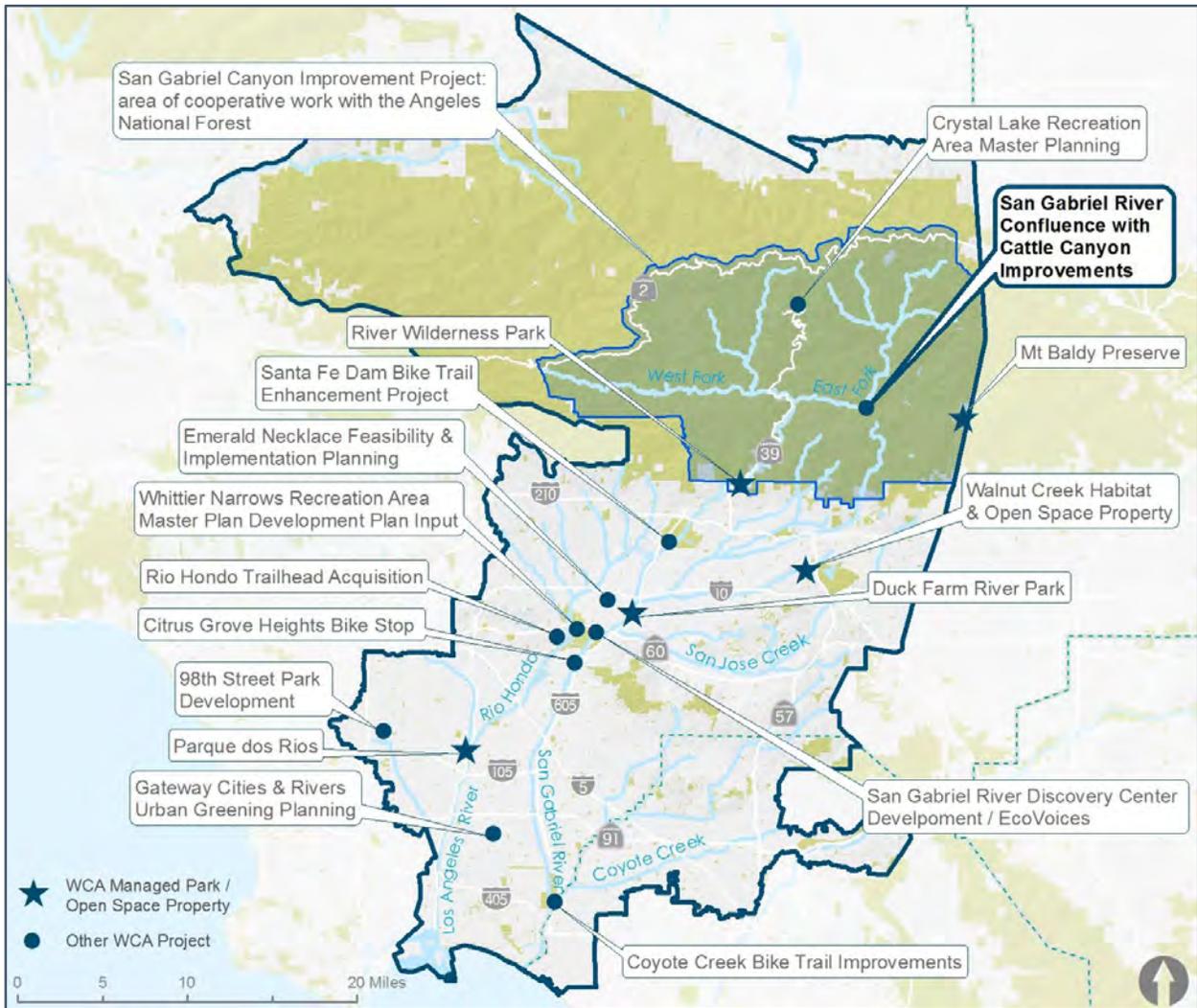
FISCAL INFORMATION: The professional services contract with BlueGreen Consulting is currently in an amount not to exceed \$281,000. Staff is recommending authorization for the Chair to amend the contract based on a negotiated fee for add services in an amount up to \$319,000 for a total amended contract value of \$600,000. Services will be funded with \$110,000 in State Proposition 84 funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and up to \$13,000 from a grant provided by the Resources Legacy Fund. The remaining balance and added WCA project management expenses will be funded by the Angeles National Forest through a portion of the \$850,000 obligated in an existing supplemental project agreement for the project.

If authorized, this increased project expenditure and revenues from the Angeles National Forest will exceed the adopted 2016/2017 Fiscal Year Budget. An amendment will come before the Board following success negotiation and award of an amended contract.



Exhibit A

Territory Map: San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project



SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT FINAL CONCEPT SITE PLAN

AUGUST 2, 2016

DESCRIPTION:
Day-use recreation is enhanced by a continuous 2.7 mile "East Fork Scenic Trail". The trail is located adjacent to the road with views of the river and provides access to overlooks, river access trails and backcountry trailheads. Loading/shuttle stops are provided.

- River access - 6 locations with restrooms, dumpsters & signage
- Parking - Angled and perpendicular bays with curbs, limited roadside parking, parking lot in Former Fire Station area with bus parking
- ROW - Reduced speed, crosswalks, stop signs, footpath along top of slope on south/east side of road, trash grates on drain inlets
- Amenities - Picnic tables, East Fork Scenic Trail, interpretive sites including 2 interpretive trails, scenic overlooks, bilingual signage including wayfinding and trail signage, trailheads, designated loading/shuttle stop locations
- Toilets - 2 and 4-Unit facilities located near river access points and other popular areas
- Trash - Small trash receptacles to be located at all river access points and all picnic sites. Dumpsters to be set within rock barriers.
- Areas to bring back to natural condition or restore through native revegetation - Multiple informal trails to river, soil deposits along roadside, seeps/springs on east side of road, stream habitat in tributary behind Oaks Picnic Area, phase out non-native "plantation" plantings

PROJECT AREA TOTALS	
Trailheads	4
Restrooms	TBD
Crosswalks	TBD
Designated Picnic Areas	TBD
East Fork Scenic Trail (mi.)	TBD
Interpretive Elements	TBD
River Access Points	6
USFS Visitor Kiosk	TBD
Bus/Tram Stop	3
Parking	270

**ADMINISTRATIVE FINAL DRAFT
For Discussion Purposes Only**



- HEATON FLAT AREA**
- 1 Enhanced picnic area with improved trailhead, interpretive sign, new restroom & river access
- COYOTE FLAT, OVERLOOK, FIRESTATION & CANYON AREAS**
- 1 Developed picnic area & new restroom with maintenance access road
 - 2 Scenic overlook with planters, seatwalls, native tree plantings, monument sign, "Geology Hut" interpretive building, USFS visitor kiosk, and perimeter path, East Fork Scenic Trail interpretive sign
 - 3 Camp Bonita Road turnaround, loading area/shuttle stop, cross walk, Heaton Flat trailhead, new restroom
 - 4 Developed parking area with native tree plantings, parking kiosk, bus parking, new restroom & picnic area
 - 5 Stairs from parking area lead across boardwalk bridge to Botanical Interpretive Trail trailhead
 - 6 Stairway leading from East Fork Scenic Overlook to Coyote Flat

- OAKS AREAS**
- 3 Expansion of existing Oaks Picnic Area, including more sites, larger tables, native tree plantings, new restrooms, a group BBQ area, & botanical interpretive area. Existing parking configuration is retained.
 - 4 River access points with parking, native tree plantings, East Fork Scenic Trail, USFS Visitor Kiosk, picnic area, new restrooms and loading area/shuttle stop, East Fork Scenic Trail interpretive sign
 - 5 Botanical interpretive site

- CONFLUENCE AREA**
- 1 Scenic overlook with Eldoradoville interpretive element, East Fork Scenic Trail interpretive sign
 - 2 River access and new single restroom
 - 3 Pedestrian bridge (on west side of existing bridge) and shuttle stop
 - 4 Portions of road are realigned to accommodate East Fork Scenic Trail

- JUNCTION AREA**
- 1 Three way stop with emergency vehicle turnaround and lockable gate to close Camp Bonita Road
 - 2 Portions of road are realigned to accommodate East Fork Scenic Trail

September 15, 2016 - Item 13

RESOLUTION 2016-35

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE AN AMENDMENT TO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT WITH BLUEGREEN CONSULTING FOR PLANNING, DESIGN, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT.

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established as a joint powers agency between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has further been established to focus on projects which will provide open space, habitat restoration, and watershed improvement projects in both the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers watershed; and

WHEREAS, this action authorizes the Chair, or designee to amend a professional service contract with BlueGreen Consulting for planning, design, and environmental services for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project; and

WHEREAS, the proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); NOW

Therefore be it resolved that the WCA hereby:

1. **FINDS** that this action is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the WCA.
2. **FINDS** that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of CEQA.
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated September 15, 2016.
4. **AUTHORIZES** the Chair, or designee to amend a professional service contract with BlueGreen Consulting for planning, design, and environmental services for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project, extending the performance period of the contract up to twelve (12) months and increasing the not-to-exceed contract value to an amount not greater than \$600,000.

~ End of Resolution ~

//

Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On September 15, 2016

Brian Mejia, Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
Terry Fujimoto
Deputy Attorney General