

DATE: March 16, 2017

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: Debbie Enos, Deputy Executive Officer

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 15: Consideration of a resolution to authorize the negotiation for the acquisition of real property within the foothills above Glendora, Assessor Parcel Numbers (AIN) 8636-047-021, -022, -023; 8636-013-005, -006; 8636-013-012; 8636-039-024; 8636-016-009; 8636-019-001, 8626-019-006; 8658-002-033; 8636-026-013; 8658-002-032; 8636-026-025; 8636-026-028; 8636-020-034 from the Glendora Community Conservancy. Property Owner: Glendora Community Conservancy. WCA Negotiator: Mark Stanley.

RECOMMENDATION: The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board authorize the negotiation for the acquisition of real property within the foothills above Glendora, Assessor Parcel Numbers (AIN) 8636-047-021, -022, -023; 8636-013-005, -006; 8636-013-012; 8636-039-024; 8636-016-009; 8636-019-001, 8626-019-006; 8658-002-033; 8636-026-013; 8658-002-032; 8636-026-025; 8636-026-028; 8636-020-034 from the Glendora Community Conservancy. Property Owner: Glendora Community Conservancy. WCA Negotiator: Mark Stanley.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Consideration to acquire ±609 open space acres, known as the Easley Canyon (128.4 acres), Colby Trail/Glendora Mountain Road Watershed Properties (143.6 acres), and Bluebird Ranch Preserve Properties (337.2 acres), located in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills above the City of Glendora, within Los Angeles County, see Exhibit A. These subject open space properties under consideration would involve the transfer lands from Glendora Community Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) to the WCA and into public ownership. The transfer would further protect significant natural and scenic resources, and help to preserve critical landscape connections to close-by conservation lands held by the WCA (River Wilderness Park and Azusa Foothill), the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy/City of Azusa (Azusa Foothill Property) and the City of Glendora's Wilderness Park. Exhibits B and C provide aerial maps of the proposed acquisition, its vicinity, and surrounding land ownership respectively.

BACKGROUND: The Glendora Community Conservancy (GCC), a private 501(c)(3) formed in 1991 has focused on the acquisition, watershed conservation and watershed and habitat restoration; including, the protection and restoration of the Brodiaea, and endangered native plant found in the foothills.

The GCC acquired the subject properties utilizing grants and gifts and whose land hosts high quality native plant communities including oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage and needle grass habitats and are to be held as open space in perpetuity. The city of Glendora holds a conservation easement on the Bluebird Ranch property due to the land's significant wildlife habitat, aesthetic and ecological values with the land to be protected predominantly in its natural, scenic and open space condition and to prevent any use of the Property that will impair or interfere with the Conservation Values of the property. Due to proximity to residential neighborhoods the construction of fire roads for fire protection, public health and safety, are allowed under the Easement. The 2014 Colby fire impacted the Easley Canyon and Colby Trail/Glendora Mountain Road Watershed Properties with each in varying states of recovery.

Late in 2016, a GCC representative contacted WCA staff, to explore the Authority's interest in taking over ownership of the three foothill properties. GCC, as a small local, volunteer organization, has encountered challenges in maintaining and operating the properties, jurisdictional, easement, and water supply challenges. As well as, an unsustainable financial burden on the non-profit conservancy due to the need to cover annual fixed costs, like the payment of property taxes.

WCA is seeks board authorization to conduct pre-acquisition and due diligence reviews towards a transfer and conveyance of the subject properties to ensure clean title can be obtained and to fully understand the management and operational challenges that may exist and if those will be hurdles to taking title.

Staff will:

- Complete initial due diligence reviews
- Visit/Tour and photo document properties.
- Conduct due diligence review
- Draft agreements for the transfer of real property
- Investigate operations and maintenance requirements
- Review jurisdictional and water supply considerations

Staff, with support of legal counsel, will conduct the following due diligence activities:

- Review a preliminary title report. Identify exceptions and determine their impact on the property and whether these would be viewed as obstacles to title acceptance
- Request and receive insurance liability assessment for the properties
- Request and review statement of circumstances related and associated with GCC's acquisition of the various parcels/properties
- Request and review existing agreements (leases of buildings with private parties), legal notices, financial obligations, conservation easements, grant requirements recorded encumbrances, easements, etc.

Staff provided a letter of interest to GCC for consideration. The letter of interest was considered and accepted by GCC board of directors as evidenced by Willing seller letter. (Exhibits D and E, respectively).

While GCC, has provided a letter accepting WCA's interest letter and wanting to complete the land transfer with WCA; it should be noted, that if an agreement cannot be reached in a timely manner GCC will pursue other offers including that of an out of the area private non-profit conservancy.

In summary, the benefits to conserving the property includes the protection of viewsheds, conservation and restoration of habitat areas, including opportunities to satisfy future mitigation needs for WCA and its JPA members, as well as, potential for direct public use, including: educational programing, community stewardship, restoration and habitat enhancement, and trail connections along the foothills. It is anticipated that WCA would manage the natural resource as open space and restoration sites. The sites sensitive plant and wildlife species, may lend itself for future mitigation and in-lieu fee programs managed by the WCA and/or in partnership with GCC. This potential use could meet a strategic plan goal of improving water quality through habitat and natural system enhancements to the land.

Staff recommends Governing Board authorize staff to conduct due diligence reviews and negotiate for the acquisition of GCC's foothill properties and bring the investigation results to a future Governing Board meeting for consideration to acquire.

FISCAL INFORMATION: Initial due diligence investigation shall be funded from a small contract request of the RMC not to exceed \$10,000.

Exhibit A - Glendora Conservancy: Properties

Total Acreage: 609.2 acres



Legend

-  Glendora Conservancy
-  City Boundary





Legend



Foothill Cities



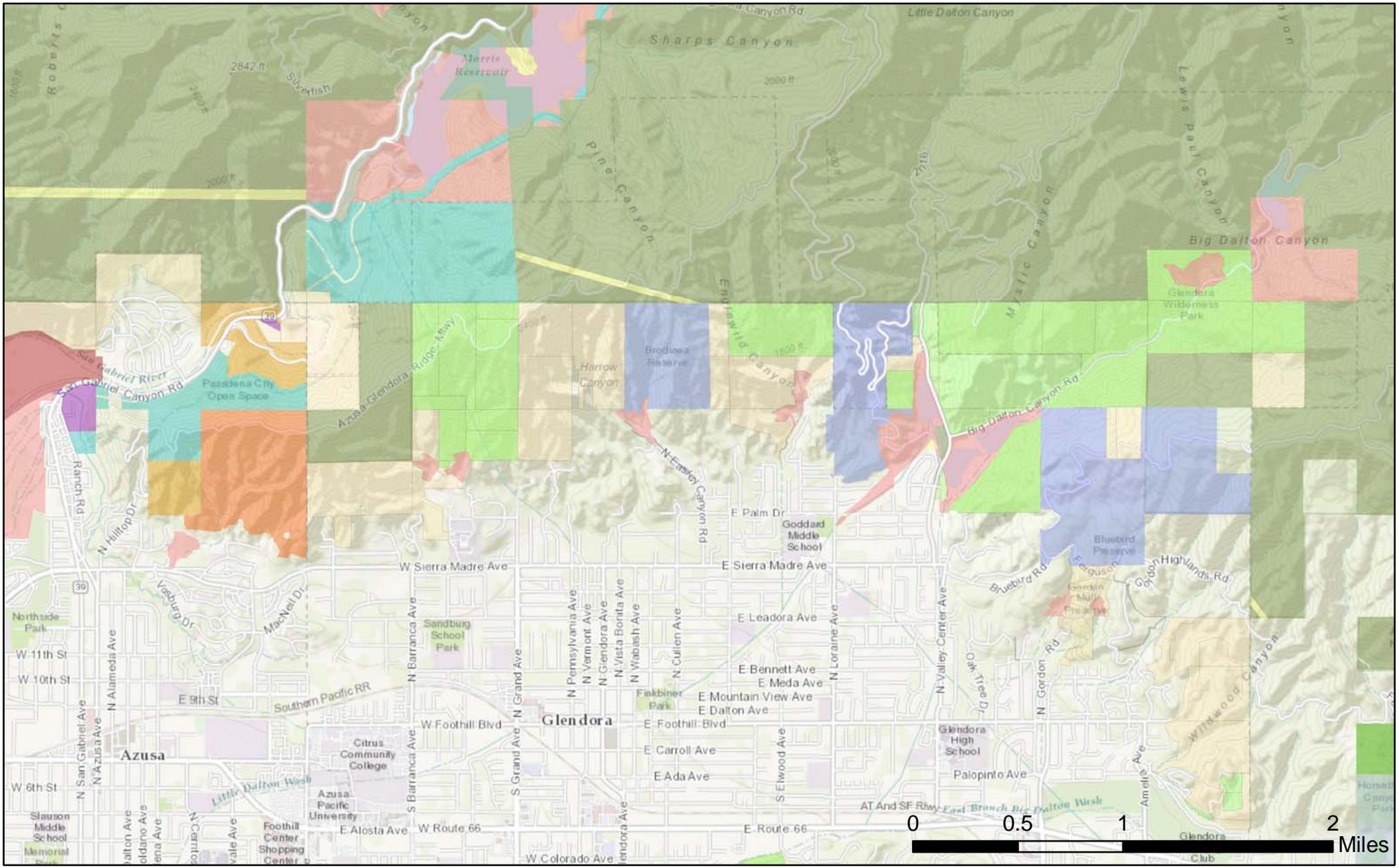
Glendale Conservancy Property



Watershed Conservation Authority Property



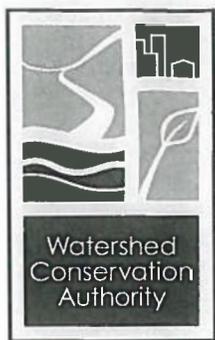
Exhibit C - Azusa Canyon Foothills Vicinity Map and Landownership



Legend

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|----------------------|--|---------------|--|---------|
| | US Army Corps of Eng. | | City of Pasadena | | Glendora Conservancy | | Private | | Utility |
| | City of Azusa | | City of Glendora | | LAC Parks & Rec | | RMC-Azusa JPA | | WCA |
| | City of San Dimas | | LACFCD | | US Forest Service | | | | |





January 4, 2017

Ann Croissant, Ph. D.
Glendora Community Conservancy
P.O. Box 963
Glendora, California 91740

GÖVERNING BOARD

Vacant

Designee for Kathryn Barger
Los Angeles County Board of
Supervisors, 5th District

**Janet Chin,
Vice Chair**

Designee for Hilda Solis
Los Angeles County Board of
Supervisors, 1st District

Karly Katona

Designee for Mark Ridley-
Thomas
Los Angeles County Board of
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Rivers and Mountains
Conservancy

Frank Colonna

Rivers and Mountains
Conservancy

Roberto Uranga

Rivers and Mountains
Conservancy

EX OFFICIO MEMBER

Terri Grant

Designee for Gail Farber,
Director
Los Angeles County
Department of Public Works

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mark Stanley

**RE: INTEREST IN ACQUIRING GLENDORA COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY
PROPERTIES LOCATED WITHIN THE FOOTHILLS ABOVE GLENDORA**

Dear Dr. Croissant,

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) is expressing an interest in acquiring the following named properties held by the Glendora Community Conservancy (GCC): Easley Canyon Preserve, Colby Trail/Glendora Mountain Road Vernal Pool and Brodea Reserve, and the Bluebird Ranch Mountain Preserve.

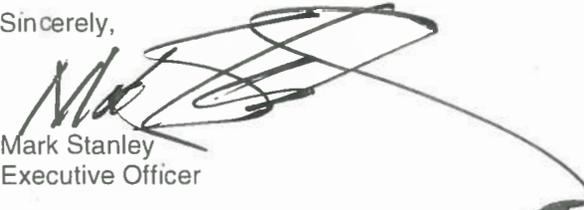
Under preliminary review—having toured the subject parcels in December—the WCA finds that the properties each present both significant and different natural resources and management challenges. The properties also present a variety of opportunities to partner with GCC in the future to conduct restoration, conservation, and watershed benefits projects within the property boundaries. Individually and collectively there are watershed benefits and opportunities to preserve and improve habitat integrity, two of the properties offer trail connectivity opportunities that meet the Agency’s mission of *Connecting Communities Through Nature*.

To proceed with consideration for acquisitions, the WCA will need to obtain Board of Director approval to enter into negotiation with GCC. The next regularly scheduled Board Meetings are January 19th and March 16th. A willing seller letter from GCC will be required in order for the WCA board to consider entering into negotiations for transfer of the property.

Given these conditions, if GCC remains interested in the potential for the WCA to acquire the property— and perhaps potential for partnership on future projects related to the restoration and conservation opportunities on the land— please provide WCA with a willing seller letter, including identifying APN numbers for the subject parcels, at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions about our intent or pre-acquisition efforts identified in this letter, please contact Deborah Enos, Deputy Executive Officer, at (626) 815-1019 x112 or via email at denos@wca.ca.gov.

Sincerely,


Mark Stanley
Executive Officer

MS:de

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2017-133

RECEIVED117-98
JAN 30 2017WATERSHED CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY

Conservancy Mission: To promote the preservation of land and/or buildings for historical, educational, ecological, recreational, scenic, or open space opportunities. Tax ID #95-4393802 **Home of the Brodiaea Reserve – Glendora's Historic Flower

January 23, 2017

Mark Stanley
Executive Officer
Watershed Conservation Authority
100 N. Old San Gabriel Canyon Road
Azusa, CA 91702

Dear Mr. Stanley:

The Glendora Community Conservancy (GCC) Board of Directors at GCC Board Meeting on January 19, 2017, voted unanimously to send a "willing seller letter" to the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) for consideration of sale/transfer of all GCC properties to WCA ownership. Attached, please find a list of APN number identified properties of GCC, to be included in the transfer.

Please contact GCC for discussions regarding future partnering related to conservation and restoration opportunities on the parcels listed.

Feel free to contact GCC for any clarification and/or request for additional information.

Thank you for your timely consideration and response to the above offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Barron".

Sarah Barron, Secretary
Board of Directors
Glendora Community Conservancy
P.O. Box 963
Glendora, CA 91740
www.glendoraconservancy.org

**Glendora Community Conservancy
Property Tax Welfare Exemptions**

<u>Property</u>	<u>Parcel Number</u>	<u>Property Claim #</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Colby Trail property	8636-047-021	1	
	8636-047-022	1	80 acres
	8636-047-023	1	
Gates property	8636-013-005	2	
	8636-013-006	2	128.8 acres
	8636-013-012	2	
Coronet property	8636-039-024	4	?
Gordon/Stringfellow property	8636-016-009	3	40 acres
Gordon property	8636-019-001	6	
Stringfellow property	8626-019-006	6	53.28 acres
Bluebird property (Phase I)	8658-002-033	7	69.32 acres
Bluebird property (Phase II)	8636-026-013	8	53.33 acres
	8658-002-032	9	3.0 aces
	8636-026-025	10	132.52 acres
	8636-026-028	11	73.34 acres
Hilton property	8636-020-034	12	4.27 acres

March 16, 2017 - Item 15

RESOLUTION 2017-14

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE THE NEGOTIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE FOOTHILLS ABOVE GLENDORA, ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBERS (AIN) 8636-047-021, -022, -023; 8636-013-005, -006; 8636-013-012; 8636-039-024; 8636-016-009; 8636-019-001, 8626-019-006; 8658-002-033; 8636-026-013; 8658-002-032; 8636-026-025; 8636-026-028; 8636-020-034 FROM THE GLENDORA COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY. PROPERTY OWNER: GLENDORA COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY. WCA NEGOTIATOR: MARK STANLEY.

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 Executive Officer to negotiate for the acquisition of real property within the foothills above Glendora, Assessor Parcel Numbers (AIN) 8636-047-021, -022, -023; 8636-013-005, -006; 8636-013-012; 8636-039-024; 8636-016-009; 8636-019-001, 8626-019-006; 8658-002-033; 8636-026-013; 8658-002-032; 8636-026-025; 8636-026-028; 8636-020-034 from the Glendora Community Conservancy; 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 March 16, 2017.
4. **AUTHORIZES** the Executive Officer to negotiate for the acquisition of real property within the foothills above Glendora, Assessor Parcel Numbers (AIN) 8636-047-021, -022, -023; 8636-013-005, -006; 8636-013-012; 8636-039-024; 8636-016-009; 8636-019-001, 8626-019-006; 8658-002-033; 8636-026-013; 8658-002-032; 8636-026-025; 8636-026-028; 8636-020-034 from the Glendora Community Conservancy.
5. **AUTHORIZES** the acceptance of funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On March 16, 2017

M. Janet Chin, Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall
Deputy Attorney General