

DATE: June 21, 2018

TO: WCA Governing Board

FROM: Salian Garcia, Fiscal Manager

SUBJECT: **Item 11: Consideration of a resolution approving a grant modification to the United States Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry program grant**

RECOMMENDATION: That the WCA Governing Board approve a grant modification to the United States Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (USFS U&CF) program grant for administration, environmental education, and outreach for the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority's summer programming.

BACKGROUND: In 2013 the San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority (SGRDCA), in collaboration with the Rivers & Mountains Conservancy and the non-profit Youth Science Center (and later, World Space Foundation) launched EcoVoices, an innovative environmental and science program serving traditionally underserved youth from Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley school districts and community programs. The SGRDCA, an agency with no employees, contracts with the Watershed Conservation Authority to provide management service activities that occur under the purview of the SGRDCA. In the same year, WCA staff on behalf of the SGRDCA sought funding from the United States Forest Service to assist in development and implementation of EcoVoices programming based on objectives of the Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program, totaling \$182,000.

Student participants, many of whom have never visited a National Forest or Park, are exposed to the urban forest and natural area located at the Whittier Narrows Nature Center, which was set to house the future home of the Discovery Center. In February 2017, SGRDCA terminated its contract with World Space Foundation and sought a replacement for environmental education programming. SGRDCA found the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation's "Nature by Design" to be a great complement to the Discovery Center. "Nature by Design," an educational program carried out by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (LADPR), was approved by the SGRDCA Governing Board on November 1, 2017 to replace the "EcoVoices" programming at the Whittier Narrows Nature Center. However, due to the unanticipated departure of previous project manager and the timing between implementation of programming and the school district's schedule, "Nature by Design" will not be able to begin until Spring 2019, surpassing the current grant end date of June 30, 2018.

Subsequently, to expend the remaining Grant balance of approximately \$38,000 within the five-year grant period and to comply with the Grant Program requirements, the WCA recommends the following:

- Extend the performance end date of Grant to the end of the five-year grant period: August 1, 2018
- Funding and programming to be moved from SGRDCA to sister Joint Powers Authority, Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA) for its BeSAFE and related summer environmental education programming

A part of the current educational programming between LCWA and its partner agencies, Tidal Influence and Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, BeSAFE is a STEM-based curriculum geared toward youth from grades K-12. These participants are at-risk/at-promise youth, who are generally out of school during the summer yet left at home so their parents may continue to work. BeSAFE participants have been visiting

the Los Cerritos Wetlands for the past eight years and with the funding, the curriculum will be expanded to include the Zedler Marsh, a 10-acre wetlands habitat and active restoration site within the 170-acres owned by LCWA. The participants will receive a tour along a one-mile trail around the coastal wetland habitat during which they will participate in various naturalist activities including wildlife tracking and observation, plant and insect identification, and bird counting, while learning about endangered species, the native people of the region, and some of the most productive forests off the California coasts – kelp forests! It will also include a tour to view the threatened Pacific Green Sea Turtle population in the San Gabriel River. The program currently outreaches to eleven park community centers in West, Central and North Long Beach. The U&CF Grant Program would be able to fund an additional six days of programming for 300-350 participants. BeSAFE and related environmental education programming will expand outside of these community centers to host additional summertime youth programs at the Wetlands, potentially reaching out to 1,000 participants from historically underserved areas such as San Pedro, Wilmington, and Lakewood.

Most of the outputs and objectives targeted in the 2013 grant will continue and have been adjusted accordingly and proportionately to correspond to the grant period extension and funding. The following are goals, objectives, and budget summaries for the grant modification:

Goals:

- a. To provide traditionally underserved students and youth access and exposure to natural areas and habitat while learning about endangered species and the native people of the region
- b. Program participants will learn how to investigate and interpret ecological and environmental concepts, including plant identification and wildlife tracking
- c. Students will gain experience and understanding of scientific concepts and participate in service-learning tasks
- d. Encourage and inspire youth so that they may become scientists or professionals in their communities and better understand the need to protect our urban forest areas and the natural environment
- e. Students will learn to understand the importance of the urban and kelp forests, and benefits both the urban and natural forest provide, by having hands-on experience rowing plants and restoring a wetland habitat

Objectives:

Under the former environmental education programming, objectives included engaging over 8,000 students from the Los Angeles/San Gabriel Valley area in environmental education in the outdoors/natural environment and two staff persons for administrative and financial oversight of all aspects of program activities. Utilizing the remaining grant funds within the remainder of the grant funding period, the new and additional objectives include:

- a. Local students and community youth from surrounding areas will become aware of the need to contribute to the vitality of the watershed and the area's urban and kelp forests
- b. Increase participation in environmental science by over 1,000 K-12 grade students from underserved communities, particularly at-risk/at-promise students
- c. Engage K-12 grade students in environmental education in the outdoors/natural environment, with a focus on the Los Cerritos Wetlands and San Gabriel River
- d. The Project Manager and program staff (LCWA and partner agencies) will conduct program outreach, make presentations and meet local community-based organizations to host education programming for youth from historically underserved areas

Budget Summaries:

Program/Project & Cost Items	Object Class Category	Federal Money (\$)	Grantee Matching (\$)	Source of Matching
Project Manager	Salary	105,835.97		
Fiscal Analyst	Salary	8,930.58		
EcoVoices Consultant	Salary		63,574.00	World Space Foundation, Youth Science Center
Project Management Staff	Salary	16,585.76	76,953.85	WCA
Busing transportation	Travel	556.00	28,923.73	LAUSD, American GTS, Basset USD, West Covina USD, El Monte School District
Office supplies & business cards	Supplies	3,969.20		
Mileage/Gasoline for Auto	Travel	4,317.78		
Communication Device & related charges	Other	3,019.14		
Printing Costs & Advertisement	Supplies/Materials	438.16		
TOTAL FOR AUGUST 2013 – MAY 2018		\$143,652.59	\$169,451.58	

Program/Project & Cost Items	Object Class Category	Federal Money (\$)	Grantee Matching (\$)	Source of Matching
Project Manager	Salary	6,197.41		
Fiscal Analyst	Salary	1,500.00		
Outreach Coordinator	Salary	3,600.00		
Project Management Staff	Salary	14,800.00	12,548.42	RMC, WCA
Tribal Representative	Salary	1,200.00		
Busing transportation	Travel	7,200.00		
Educational Materials	Supplies/Materials	2,850.00		
Printing Costs	Supplies/Materials	1,000.00		
TOTAL FOR JUNE 2018 – AUGUST 2018		38,347.41	12,548.42	
GRAND TOTAL		182,000.00	182,000.00	

Fiscal Impact: Acceptance of the modification will allow for continuation of the USFS U&CF Grant Program through the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority's summer programming. The Watershed Conservation Authority has already included the remaining grant balance in its FY 2017/18 and 2018/19 Budget, and therefore, the modification has no additional fiscal impact on its budget.

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RESOLUTION 2018-12

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A GRANT MODIFICATION TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM GRANT

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established as a joint powers agency between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (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 will approve the WCA to modify the United States Forest Urban and Community Forestry program grant.; and

WHEREAS, the proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act; 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 the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated June 21, 2018.
4. **APPROVES** the Watershed Conservation Authority to modify the United States Forest Urban and Community Forestry program grant.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Resolution 2018-12

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On June 21, 2018

M. Janet Chin, Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall, Jr.
Deputy Attorney General