

DATE: August 21, 2019

TO: WCA Governing Board

FROM: Jane Tsong, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 14: Consideration of a resolution to authorize the Chair and/or designee to negotiate and enter into a professional services contract to provide a biological report for the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board authorize the Chair or designee to negotiate and enter into a professional services contract for a biological consultant to support the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Plan. Scope of work will include analysis of regional-scale biological opportunities, recommendations, and optional maps for a not-to-exceed amount up to \$20,000.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A consultant will compile a regional biological report that summarizes priorities for future acquisition of conservation lands. The study will include:

- Analysis of trends observed in foothills biological communities;
- Discussion of biological priorities for conservation, enhancement, and restoration;
- Discussion of how climate change may affect the above priorities;
- Opportunities for enhancement of habitat and wildlife connectivity;
- Regional scale management strategies and recommendations;
- Mapping may be proposed as an optional task. Mapping topics may include wildlife connectivity, opportunity zones, management/restoration priorities, and threats.

WCA will conduct a competitive RFP process for biological consultants. A consultant will be chosen from candidates who can demonstrate substantial field experience in the San Gabriel Mountain Foothills, and insight into factors that affect regional conservation priorities including but not limited to: regional wildlife movement patterns, trends over time, climate change, hydrological connectivity, habitat management, invasive species control, and the unique opportunities and constraints of the urban wildlands interface.

The requested services will take place between October 15, 2019 and April 30, 2020.

BACKGROUND: San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan, funded by RMC17019, will develop a prioritized acquisition strategy for conservation lands. The plan will include a resource management and operations strategy that will enable WCA to manage these lands to preserve habitat and open space, improve watershed health, and increase public access for compatible uses such

as multi-use trails and related passive recreational amenities along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

The grant has funded two separate studies that will contribute to an acquisition strategy for WCA:

1) Trust for Public Land (TPL) is in the process of compiling a report that prioritizes 37 clusters of privately-owned parcels in the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills for acquisition. The TPL analysis is based on federal and state data that includes physical, conservation, hydrology, and regulatory factors.

2) Lee-Anne Milburn, Ph. D., has been engaged to produce an analysis on human factors that bear on public management of conservation lands:

- Potential for partnership with foothills municipalities and other conservancies;
- Factors that impact operations and management costs;
- User challenges and opportunities related to access and low-impact recreational uses of open space lands;
- Resource management and operations strategies

In order to expedite conclusion of the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan, it is recommended that the Governing Board authorize the Chair or designee to negotiate and enter into professional services contract to provide biological consultant services for the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan.

FISCAL INFORMATION: This resolution for approval includes a not-to-exceed value of up to \$20,000, which would be funded by the existing grant RMC17019 for the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan.

September 12, 2019 – Item 14

RESOLUTION 2019-43

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR AND/OR DESIGNEE TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT TO PROVIDE A BIOLOGICAL REPORT FOR THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS AND FOOTHILLS OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION MASTER PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established to facilitate joint projects between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and Los Angeles County Flood Control District; and

WHEREAS, The Watershed Conservation Authority has 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 negotiate and enter into a professional services contract to provide biological consultant services for the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, this action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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.
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated September 12, 2019.
4. **AUTHORIZES** the Chair or designee to negotiate and enter into a professional services contract to provide biological consultant services for the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan for a not-to-exceed amount up to \$20,000.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Resolution 2019-43

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On September 12, 2019

Herlinda Chico
Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall, Jr.
Deputy Attorney General