

DATE: November 21, 2019

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: Bryan Moller, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 15: Consideration of a resolution to accept a grant from Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project (RMC 19005).

RECOMMENDATION: That the Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board accept a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy in the amount of \$250,000 for River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project (RMC 19005).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project will facilitate coordination between Los Angeles River and tributary-adjacent governments to develop a river ranger pilot program. As well as developing interpretive programming, recreation and education programs in providing on-going public engagement to let river-adjacent communities know that the pilot is coming and gauge overall public views and evaluation of the program. See Exhibit A: Funding Request Letter

In support of this objective, this funding for the River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project will ensure the successful launch of the pilot through the development and execution of participating Agency agreements, development of programs and educational materials. In addition, provide on-going public engagement and the preparation of a post-program evaluation tool to summarize lessons learned. See Exhibit B: Timeline; Exhibit C: Budget.

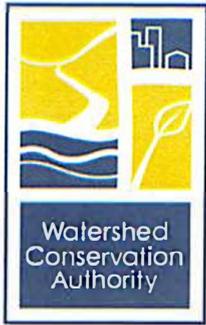
BACKGROUND: The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) established an agreement to implement Assembly Bill 1558 (AB 1558), also known as the River Ranger Bill, introduced by Assembly member Cristina Garcia (AD 58). The bill required both Conservancies to collaborate with multiple state and local agencies to develop a river ranger program to provide a network of river rangers along the entire 51-mile Los Angeles River and its tributaries. The Conservancies agreed to implement AB 1558 with support from their JPAs – WCA and MRCA. MRCA facilitated the completion of Phase 1 – Visioning and Framework, which included development of vision, goals, objectives, and framework for a river ranger program which was finalized in June 2018. Senate Bill 1126 (SB 1126) introduced by State Senator Anthony J. Portantino (SD 25) and signed by Governor Brown on September 28, 2018 extended the time frame of AB 1558 to March 30, 2019 to allow for WCA to facilitate the completion of Phase 2 of the report.

On October 15, 2018, WCA Board approved resolution 2018-23 to accept a \$250,000 grant from the RMC (RMC 18005) to complete the River Ranger Program Establishment Plan. Phase 2 included recommendations for a governance structure, identification of funding sources to sustain a river ranger network, and a pilot program implementation strategy. WCA, working with our MRCA partners, engaged agency stakeholders while community-based organizations conducted targeted public outreach throughout the study area to inform the final plan. By the mandated March 2019 deadline, the final plan was submitted to the State Legislature for consideration to fund the following three-tiered pilot River Ranger program:

1. Enhance Public safety, resource management and general maintenance utilizing Sworn Peace Officer Rangers.
2. Engage river adjacent communities through interpretation and recreation opportunities administered by program staff & contracted partners.
3. Employ Conservation Corps Youth and trainees to become River Stewards providing maintenance services and supporting naturalist and outreach programs.

State funding has been identified to implement an initial two-year seasonal River Ranger pilot program rollout starting this summer 2020 along one or more reaches of the Lower LA River.

FISCAL INFORMATION: The FY19/20 capital budget will be updated to reflect the \$250,000 grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.



November 12, 2019

Mark Stanley
Executive Officer
Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
100 N. Old San Gabriel Canyon Rd.
Azusa, CA 91702

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Mark Stanley

Dear Mr. Stanley,

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) respectfully requests your consideration to provide Proposition 1 grant funds, not to exceed \$250,000, for the River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project. (Exhibit A: Budget; Exhibit B: Timeline)

Project Summary

The River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project is part of the implementation stage of the River Ranger Program Establishment Plan, which provided visions, goals, and frameworks for a potential river ranger program on the Los Angeles River and its tributaries.

The River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project will facilitate coordination between Los Angeles River and tributary-adjacent governments to develop a river ranger pilot program. In addition, the project will develop potential programming, such as educational programs. The project will ensure that river-adjacent communities know that the pilot is coming to their communities through on-going public engagement and will gauge overall public views of the pilot.

As a two-year grant, the project will consist of two pilots taking place Summer 2020 and Summer 2021, which will allow for the development and evaluation of two distinct pilot programs. Lessons learned in the Summer 2020 pilot will be applied to the Summer 2021 pilot, both pilot programs will be evaluated.

The specific tasks, detailed below, include project management, agency agreements for the river rangers, program development, community outreach, and evaluation of the river ranger program.

Tasks and Deliverables

The budget and timeline are provided as Exhibits A and B, respectively, and the specific tasks and deliverables are provided in detail below:

Task 1: Project Management

WCA will provide project and grant management for the life of the grant, including, but not limited to, administrative oversight and financial accounting.

Deliverables: Invoice packages and quarterly reports.

Task 2: Agency Partnerships

Partnerships between WCA, RMC, and river-adjacent governments and agencies are crucial for the pilot project, as those government entities have control over river rights-of-way. Those local, and regional, agencies must be on-board with the river ranger program and must establish formal agreements with the RMC to pursue the program.

WCA will facilitate meetings between the RMC and river-adjacent agencies, such as cities, police agencies that will participate (LA County Sheriff or local police departments), regional entities including the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, non-profit organizations, schools near the Lower Los Angeles River, and the general public. The purpose of the meetings will be to identify exact locations along the river for the pilot programs, which agencies will take responsibility on pilot program elements such as public safety and maintenance, and drafting and finalizing agency agreements on the responsibilities and structure of the pilot programs.

Deliverables: Meeting agendas and agency agreements.

Task 3: Program Development

The opportunity to develop potential programming, such as active recreation or river and water education, as a part of the river ranger program presents itself as part of the pilot program. Providing programming will ensure that the river is used by park-poor river-adjacent communities.

WCA will provide due-diligence on potential programming, which may include pilots of the programming itself.

Deliverable: Programming Report, detailing potential programs and outcome of the pilot programs.

Task 4: Public and Stakeholder Outreach

Public acceptance of the river ranger program rests on how much they know about the program itself and how it can help them safely access the river, outreach and letting the public know that the river rangers are coming will provide for a program that the public trusts.

WCA will provide outreach, which may include partnering with local organizations for robust and on-going outreach to inform river-adjacent communities about the river ranger pilot. Outreach will include, but not be limited to, door-to-door engagement, pop-ups, and learning opportunity events.

Deliverables: Flyers, email lists and newsletters, correspondence with river-adjacent communities.

Task 5: Program Evaluation Development

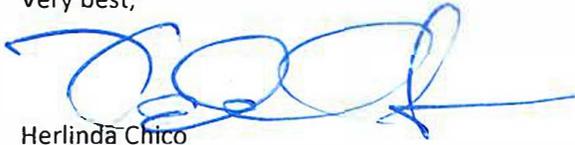
Evaluating how and what the river ranger program did well and what it could add or improve upon at the end of the pilot period will provide for a holistic evaluation that can add to the program if it's made permanent.

WCA will develop evaluation materials, including, but not limited to, public safety perception, crime statistics, cleanliness, and overall impact of the rangers.

Deliverables: Evaluation materials, and preliminary evaluation materials.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this request or the attached budget and timeline, please contact Bryan Moller, Project Manager at bmoller@wca.ca.gov.

Very best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Herlinda Chico', written in a cursive style.

Herlinda Chico
WCA Governing Board Chair

River Ranger Pilot Program Implementation								
Timeline								
Tasks & Timeline	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4	2021 Q1	2021 Q2	2021 Q3	2021 Q4
Task 1: Project Management								
Task 2: Agency Agreements								
Task 3: Program Development								
Task 4: Public and Stakeholder Outreach								
Task 5: Program Evaluation Development								

River Ranger Program Establishment Plan Budget	
Task	Task Budget
Task 1: Project Management	\$25,000
Task 2: Agency Agreements	\$45,000
Task 3: Program Development	\$75,000
Task 4: Public and Stakeholder Outreach	\$50,000
Task 5: Program Evaluation Development	\$30,000
Indirect Costs (10%)	\$25,000
Total Budget	\$250,000

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RESOLUTION 2019-50

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT A GRANT FROM RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR THE RIVER RANGER PILOT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (RMC19005).

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 authorizes the acceptance of grant funds from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project; 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 November 21, 2019.
4. **ACCEPTS** a grant of up to \$250,000 from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the River Ranger Pilot Program Development Project.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

On November 21, 2019.

Herlinda Chico, Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall, Jr.
Deputy Attorney General