

DATE: June 25, 2015

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: Jennifer Thompson, Fiscal Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 11: Consideration of a resolution approving a contract for ranger services.

RECOMMENDATION: The WCA Governing Board 1) approve a contract with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) in an amount not to exceed \$92,000 to provide ranger services for FY 15/16; and 2) authorize the Executive Officer, or designee, to negotiate contract terms and extend the agreement annually for up to four additional years subject to the annually approved budget.

BACKGROUND: The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been contracting with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) since 2005. Over the years, staff has researched and contacted agencies that provide security management of open space areas and have released RFP's and have conducted phone interviews with perspective entities.

Two entities, the Office of Public Safety, who had patrolled County Parks and MRCA rangers who patrolled the nearby Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority were identified as potential service providers. However, during that initial proposal process and for each contract period since it has been found that the following services provided by MRCA rangers are unmatched by any other agency:

- 1) Public Safety Services- patrolling, law enforcement, emergency response
- 2) Interpretation & Event Coordination-event set up, nature and environmental programming, promote safe interaction of the public with parklands and wildlife
- 3) Maintenance- completion of minor property maintenance and identification of safety hazards
- 4) Weed Abatement-coordination and oversight of other weed abatement providers, hands-on assistance with application of herbicides/pre-emergent, weed whipping, and mowing

The above services are beneficial to the WCA in the maintenance, operation and protection of its properties. In addition, LA County Sheriff's department, who took over the patrol of LA County Parks in 2009 do not offer these expanded services and MRCA has been providing ranger services to WCA continuously since 2005.

Additionally, MRCA rangers have established a long term working relationship with WCA staff and have been able to balance our needs and budgetary constraints without sacrificing service. The rangers have

provided exceptional services in support of the WCA vision, mission and goals. MRCA rangers have experience in law enforcement, forestry, public engagement, interpretation, safety, open space management, policy and procedures, firefighting, weed control, trail maintenance, first aid, rescue, emergency first responder and command and control. Their firefighting, and emergency response skills and services were very advantageous to the WCA during the 2014 Colby Fire that threatened the River Wilderness Park and WCA offices. And they were instrumental in coordinating camp crews to provide post fire cleanup and deal with the resulting aftermath as rains came and mudflows filled the parks frontage.

Rangers participate in monthly property management meetings with staff, attend special events and this year helped launch a pilot Jr. Ranger Program at the River Wilderness Park. Rangers support property management and up keep by engaging the help of and supervising camp crews, conservation corps, and court ordered community service work.

Rangers are often the public face of the WCA with their daily interactions with park visitors and they strive to engage the public in a proactive, positive and professional manner.

By utilizing a singular agency for all of these divergent services, the MRCA is able to be flexible in its execution of the work and can provide services based on WCA's varying needs on a month-to-month basis. Additionally, under the current contract arrangement with MRCA, the WCA benefits from the ability to retain a portion of the citation revenue generated by citations issued on WCA properties (currently ranging in average annual revenues of \$7,500) and by the residency of a ranger at the River Wilderness Park. This added 24/7 ranger presence provides an additional layer of property surveillance to protect the park and offices of the WCA in this rather remote canyon location.

As WCA transitions some properties from development to operational as a public park the MRCA ranger's services are capable of growing with and meeting the change in needs, as well as, offer the ability to expand park programming and public engagement. For example, MRCA rangers conducted a pilot Jr. Ranger Program in March of this year at the River Wilderness Park which exposed community youth to nature, hiking, and the importance of being good watershed stewards. This pilot project, funded by a small grant of the 3M Corporation and in partnership with the Habitat Fund non-profit group, was a huge success with surveyed participants acknowledging that the MRCA Rangers were welcoming, knowledgeable, and greatly enhanced the learning experience. The program identified an unmet need in the community for additional programming at the WCA's various properties in addition to highlighting the importance of any Ranger working within the WCA's properties to be seen as watershed ambassadors, interpreters and safety resources as they are the primary public interface of the Authority.

MRCA Ranger's work to date has been exemplary, meeting the varied needs of the WCA for security, and operation and maintenance of the Duck Farm, River Wilderness Park, Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space, Parque Dos Rios, Citrus Heights and Mt Baldy properties. As well as their ability to offer

interpretive and programming services. See Exhibit A attached for a comprehensive scope of work to be included as part of the executed contract.

As there is only one current and local provider of ranger services that meets the needs of the WCA, staff recommends entering into a five year agreement subject to annual budget approvals for Ranger Service expenses. Fiscal Year 2015/2016 budget allocation is defined as an amount not to exceed \$92,000. The budget for subsequent years will be brought before the board as part of the annual budget approval process.

Periodically throughout 5-year authorized period, the WCA will continue to conduct periodic inquiries to ensure that the Authority is receiving the highest level of service for the contract value and will ensure that no other agencies could potentially provide that same service.

FISCAL INFORMATION: Based on the attached scope of work, the cost for basic ranger services will not exceed \$92,000, at an hourly rate of \$65.90 for FY 15/16. The subsequent four years are subject to fiscal years terms, budget and negotiation by the Executive Officer or designee for an amount not to exceed approved annual budgetary expenditures. Sufficient funds are available from projected lease income from Duck Farm, South Gate, and El Encanto properties for FY 15/16.

EXHIBIT A

MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
SCOPE OF WORK
FOR RANGER SERVICES
PROVIDED TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
JULY 1ST, 2015

1. Public Safety

- 1.1. The contractor shall provide California Peace Officers or rangers qualified under PC830.31(b) to patrol the WCA properties. The contractor's personnel patrolling the property shall have the authority to issue citations and make arrests.
- 1.2. Contractor shall provide patrols of the WCA properties including the Citrus Heights, Duck Farm, Parque Dos Rios, River Wilderness Park, Mt. Baldy and Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space properties according to a schedule to be determined by the annual detail budget and in consultation with the WCA representative designated by the Executive Officer.
- 1.3. In consultation with the WCA representative, the Contractor shall develop a format for a Quarterly Report to record activities on the properties. The Report shall be submitted to the WCA at a schedule to be determined in consultation with the WCA representative. The report shall be used to record Contractor's tasks for this scope of work including but not limited to times and dates of incidents occurring on the property, calls to the Contractor regarding the property, security and safety issues observed by the Contractor, and all other activities associated with this scope of work.
- 1.4. The contractor shall maintain standard incident reports. Contractor shall add the incidents to the quarterly report.
- 1.5. The contractor may utilize bicycles and horseback as needed for additional patrol.
- 1.6. The contractor will work closely with all surrounding agencies, routinely and during emergencies.
- 1.7. Contractor will inform WCA assigned representative of unauthorized activities on site by phone within 24-hours of each occurrence. Contractor provide the WCA with a brief incident report within 48-hours of the time the incident was recorded, detailing time of occurrence and associated Contractor response. Format for the incident report will conform to the standard incident report.
- 1.8. Contractor shall provide the WCA representative for the property a 24-hour round-the-clock phone number where the Contractor's representative may be reached. Contractor shall maintain a posting of the same contact number at a location where it may be accessed by surrounding residents.

- 1.9. Contractor shall close off WCA properties that are open to the public when extreme weather condition warrants such action. The determination of appropriate weather condition to warrant a closer will be at the discretion of the consultant, but will include notification to WCA management within 24-hours. The consultant will re-open WCA properties closed due to weather once a determination that the property is safe has been made between the consultant and WCA management. Property closers shall include placing signage at access points and locking access gates. Opening a property after a closer shall include removing signage and opening access gates.

2 Interpretation and Event Coordination

- 2.1 By special arrangement with WCA and at a rate to be determined, Contractor shall be available to provide assistance to the WCA for special events, community meetings and outreach opportunities. These services may include, but will not be limited to directing parking and assisting staff with set-up and tear-down of tables, chairs, and shade structures.
- 2.2 Contractor shall record all calls from the surrounding community regarding the property in the Quarterly Report and shall notify the WCA representative within 24 hours of receiving the call. Notification shall indicate the purpose of the call and contact information for the party who made the call.
- 2.3 Contractor shall provide interpretive ranger services throughout the year including but not limited to nature walks, amphitheater nature programming, and ranger lead discussion on various topics relating to public land management.
- 2.4 Contractor shall provide personnel who are knowledgeable of and able to manage the safe interaction of the public with wild lands and wildlife, and have knowledge of additional public land management issues including, but not limited to natural resource conservation, nature education, park stewardship, and wilderness skills.

3 Maintenance

- 3.1 Contractor shall complete minor property maintenance of WCA properties under the direction of WCA management including but not limited to informational kiosk maintenance, graffiti removal, fence/gate repair, parking lot striping.
- 3.2 Contractor shall report observations and make recommendations to WCA representative by phone or email on maintenance duties necessary to maintain the property in a clean and safe condition including but not limited to:
 - Identifying safety hazards, graffiti, vandalism, litter and dumping and damage to fences and gates.
 - Contractor shall notify WCA within 24 hours if an incident calls for more than incidental repairs and will include such observations in the quarterly report.
 - Graffiti shall be removed by the contractor immediately unless it requires additional equipment or personnel.

- Maintenance projects that take additional time, supplies and/or an outside assistance will be approved in writing by the WCA.
- 3.3 Contractor shall liaison with the other WCA consultant's construction and maintenance work on WCA properties including providing oversight and access to the property (unlocking and locking gates).

4 Weed Abatement

- 4.1 Contractor shall report observations and make recommendations to WCA representative by phone or email on weed abatement task necessary to maintain the property in a safe condition, as well as in meeting County of Los Angeles brush clearance standards.
- 4.2 Contractor shall provide weed control/abatement services annually. Services may include, but may not be limited to the application of herbicides/pre-emergent, weed whipping, and mowing.
- 4.3 Contractor shall liaison with the other WCA contractor's conducting weed abatement work on WCA properties, including providing oversight.

Budget Detail

	Weekly Patrol Hours*	Total
Duck Farm	15/week	\$ 40,000
River Wilderness Park	13/week	\$ 41,000
Parque Dos Rios	On-Call	\$ 2,000
Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space	On-Call	\$ 7,000
Mt. Baldy	On-Call	\$2,000
Total		\$ 92,000

* Hours per property are approximate

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RESOLUTION 2015-21

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO 1) APPROVE A CONTRACT WITH THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (MRCA) TO PROVIDE RANGER SERVICES FOR FY 15/16; AND 2) AUTHORIZE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE TO NEGOTIATE CONTRACT TERMS AND EXTEND THE AGREEMENT ANNUALLY FOR UP TO FOUR ADDITIONAL YEARS SUBJECT TO THE ANNUALLY APPROVED BUDGET.

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 1) enter into a contract for ranger services with Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for FY 15/16; and 2) authorize the Executive Officer, or designee to negotiate contract terms and extend the agreement annually for up to four additional years subject to the annually approved budget; 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 25, 2015.
4. **APPROVES** a contract with Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) in an amount not to exceed \$92,000 for FY 15/16.
5. **AUTHORIZES** the Executive Officer, or designee to negotiate contract terms and extend the agreement annually for up to four additional years subject to the annually approved budget.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Resolution 2015-21

Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On June 25, 2015

Brian Mejia, Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
Terry Fujimoto
Deputy Attorney General