

DATE: May 14, 2015

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: Johnathan Perisho, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 11: Consideration of a resolution (1) approving the application to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program for the River Wilderness Park Development Project, and (2) adopt a Youth Employment Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That the WCA Governing Board approve the application for grant funds from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for the 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program for the River Wilderness Park Development in the amount of \$974,000 and to adopt a Youth Employment Plan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The River Wilderness Park (RWP) Development Project includes the capital implementation of the RWP Master Plan, as adopted by the WCA Board in September 2012. Design and production of construction documents for an initial phase of implementation, referred to as the RWP Entry Improvements, are nearing completion. These elements include development of a formal entryway with signage, an extension of the Azusa Bikeway into the park, and traffic calming measures along State Route 39 that will facilitate a safer at-grade bicycle crossing into the RWP. Other elements include development of a restroom building, open-air pavilion, picnicking areas, interactive children's nature play area, river overlooks, interpretive features, and realignment of North Old San Gabriel Canyon Road and parking. Staff proposes to apply for Prop A funds to install portions of the project which may include site preparation, grading, constructing the open-air pavilion, and an interactive children's nature play area. The RWP is located in the City of Azusa, along State Route 39 at the mouth of the San Gabriel Canyon. A project location map is included as Exhibit A, while RWP Entry Improvements Site Plan is included as Exhibit B.

BACKGROUND: The RWP project provides a nature experience at the gateway to the newly dedicated San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. Implementation of the RWP Development Project will realize goals of the RWP Master Plan, and establishes a key link between the San Gabriel River Bike Trail and further connections to the National Monument and Angeles National Forest. The Park and Open Space District 2015 Countywide Grant is allocated from the remaining Proposition A funds, which are available for projects that include the scope of these improvements.

On March 31, 2015 the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District announced application guidelines for the 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program (Exhibit C). This program will allocate an amount of \$5,151,680 in remaining 1992 and 1996 Proposition A funds. Within the funding category of River and Streams, \$4,262,543 is available for restoration, rehabilitation or acquisition of natural lands and the development of recreational resources along the Santa Clara, San Gabriel and Los Angeles rivers or their tributaries. The offices of the Los Angeles Regional Park and Open Space District is accepting applications from eligible organizations, including public agencies, conservancies, and non-profits for purposes including natural reclamation, restoration, and park improvements. WCA staff proposes to apply for grant funds to install a portion of the plans developed for the RWP Entry Improvements Project.

A general conceptual planning process for the RWP was completed in October 2007, and the subsequent planning product was adopted by the WCA as the RWP Master Plan. The conceptual plan for the park, while including the Canyon Inn property at the front entry area, was only generally planned as it was privately held at the time. However, by the fall of 2008, the WCA was able to negotiate and complete the purchase of the Canyon Inn property. An updated planning effort commenced and on September 2012, the WCA Board formally adopted the Canyon Inn conceptual plan and incorporated the plan into the RWP Master Plan. Both phases of conceptual planning included public and stakeholder outreach and engagement.

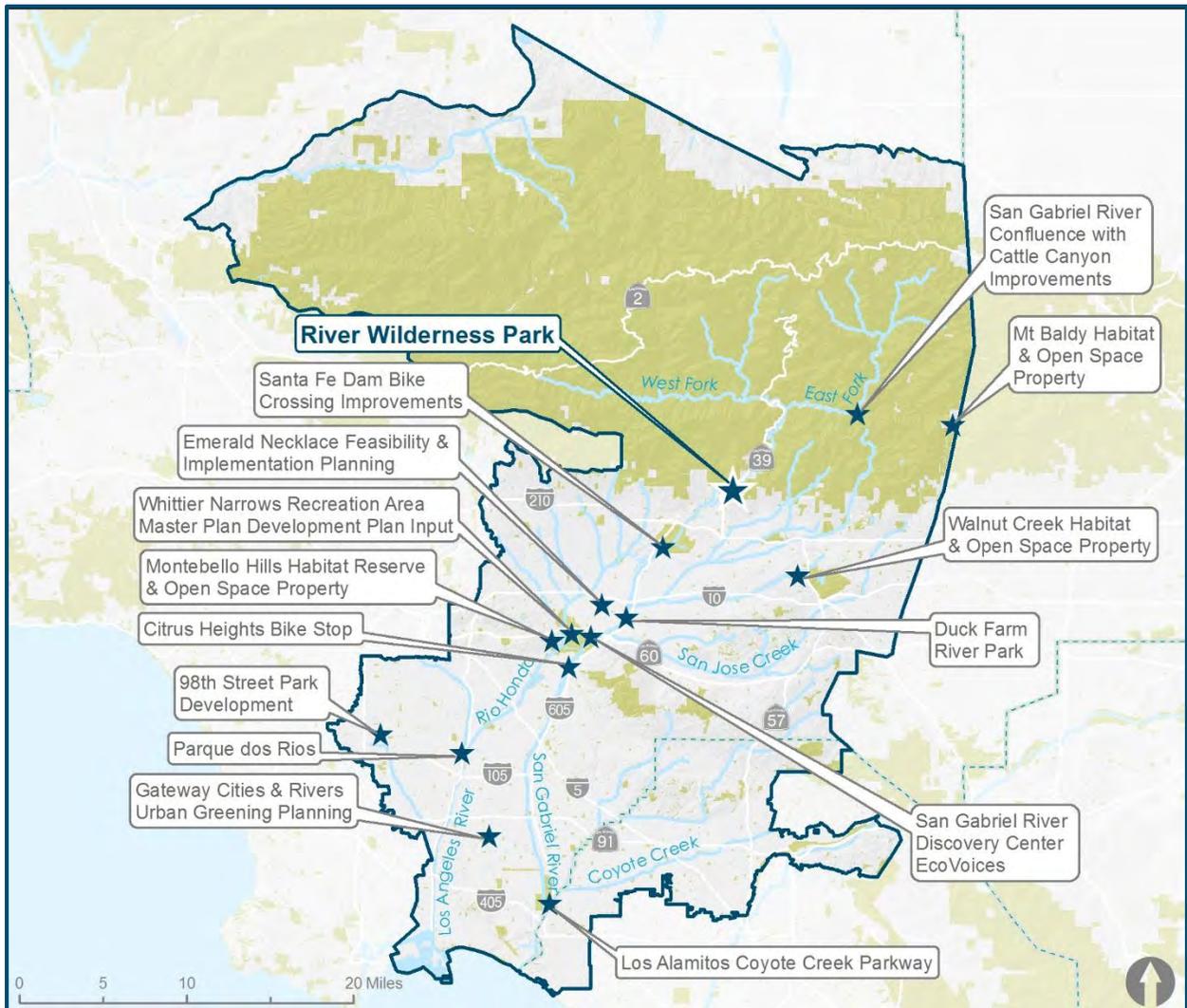
In moving the park from concept to reality, in the spring of 2014, the WCA was awarded a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (\$455,998) to complete construction documents for the new entrance to RWP. These construction documents are scheduled to be completed within the calendar year 2015. Following both the completion of construction documents and the permit process the project will be ready for implementation pending the securing of construction funds. Staff is actively engaged in seeking and applying for a variety of grants and funding sources to complete this phase of the project.

The Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program, as a condition of funding, requires that agencies take action to adopt a Youth Employment Plan. Exhibit D is the staff recommended plan to contract with a registered Youth Conservation Corps to provide meaningful training and work experience. Youth employment work will include landscaping for the interactive children's nature play area, as well as landscaping for other project components through other funding sources.

FISCAL INFORMATION: Funds authorized for the Proposition A 2015 Countywide Grant Program total approximately \$5,154,680. The grant has a minimum award level of \$15,000 and no maximum award limit listed. WCA shall prepare a competitive scope of work and budget, valued up to \$974,000, which will also include budgeting for additional funding sources to exceed match funding requirements.



River Wilderness Park





WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

RIVER WILDERNESS PARK ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS

WITHERS & SANDGREN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING

0 15 30 60
1" = 30'



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

RECEIVED

APR 09 2015

WATERSHED CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY

March 31, 2015

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ANNOUNCES THE 2015 COUNTYWIDE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

The Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (District) announces the availability of approximately \$5,154,680 for the 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program. Applicants may apply for grant funding in one or both of the following program categories, and are strongly encouraged to demonstrate matching funding commitments of at least 25 percent. One goal of this program is to appropriately allocate all remaining funds for these categories from the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition A of 1992 and 1996.

Rivers and Streams

The available grant funding for the Rivers and Streams category is approximately \$4,262,543. The projects may consist of restoration, rehabilitation or acquisition of natural lands and the development of recreational resources along the Santa Clara, San Gabriel and Los Angeles rivers or their tributaries. In order to be eligible, recreational resources must be compatible with existing or restored natural habitat.

Projects that are eligible include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of exotic, non-native, vegetation and/or debris to return the river or tributary to its natural, self-maintaining, state;
- Enhancement of wildlife through habitat restoration;
- Planting of native species consistent with an undisturbed condition of the river or tributary;
- Stream realignment which restores the natural course of the river or tributary;
- Acquisition of natural lands that will provide for wildlife enhancement, restoration of the river or tributary, or development of a recreational facility that enhances public use or appreciation of the river or tributary without degrading natural values; or
- Development of new recreation facilities such as parks, trails or interpretive centers, which involve the public in the river or tributary and are compatible with existing or restored natural habitat.

The 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program

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Santa Monica Bay

The available grant funding for the Santa Monica Bay category is approximately \$892,136. Priorities will be given to multi-benefit projects that restore and improve the Santa Monica Bay by measurably reducing the toxicity of and/or pollutant load in urban runoff to the Bay. In accordance with Section 9 of Proposition A, funds shall be available for grants to public agencies and shall be expended only for capital outlay projects which meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Protect public health in recreational waters; or
2. Preserve and enhance the ecological integrity of significant watersheds containing Significant Ecological Areas; or
3. Are Best Management Practices as defined in the Stormwater National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the County and approved by the Executive Officer of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board; or
4. Reduce runoff into Santa Monica Bay where the runoff travels across lands that contribute large amounts of toxic pollutants to the storm drain system, or measurably reduce the toxicity of that runoff.

Capital outlay projects are defined to be any type of construction/acquisition project that will directly lead to the reduction of pollutants that enter Santa Monica Bay. Some examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Diversion of storm drains to treatment facilities;
- Construction of treatment facilities to handle storm drain flows;
- Construction of sediment basins;
- Construction of debris fences in storm drain channels;
- Installation of runoff pollution control devices and instruments, such as infiltration basins, runoff enhancement devices, and catch basin screens.

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Executive Officer will review and approve final proposal recommendations of the selection committee prior to any commitment for funding.

Proposals are due on or before June 3, 2015, by 12:00 p.m.

Submit to:

Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District

510 S. Vermont Avenue, Room 230

Los Angeles, CA 90020

Attn: Steven Chang

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March 31, 2015
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Available Funding: \$5,154,680.

Minimum Grant Request: \$15,000.

If there are no suitable proposals or if an insufficient number of proposals are received, the District reserves the right to award less than the available \$5,154,680.

- **Eligible Grant Applicants:** Public agencies; Conservancies; and qualified Non-profit organizations in partnership with Public agencies.
- **Proposal Requirements:** Included within the Application Manual for each Grant Program category.
- **Project Timeline:** Projects shall be completed within two years of the date of execution of the grant agreement. Project performance period extension beyond the two year limit will require approval from the District.
- **Changes to Project:** Due to the competitive nature of this program, once a project has been selected for funding, the District will not approve any change in the project that substantially affects the use, scope, capacity or service area of the project as presented in the application form.
- **Contact Person: Mr. Steven Chang**
Program Manager, Grants Section
Los Angeles County | Regional Park & Open Space District
510 S. Vermont Ave., Room 230 | Los Angeles, CA 90020
schang@parks.lacounty.gov | Office: 213-738- 4251

For complete grant program information, please visit our website at <http://osd.lacounty.gov>.

Watershed Conservation Authority
River Wilderness Park Development
2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program
Youth Employment Plan

Background: The WCA is a joint powers authority of San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District whose mission is to provide for a comprehensive program to expand and improve the open space and recreational opportunities for the conservation, restoration, and environmental enhancement of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers Watershed area consistent with the goals of flood protection, water supply, groundwater recharge and water conservation.

In the spring of 2014, the WCA was awarded a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy to complete construction documents for the new entrance to River Wilderness Park. These construction documents are scheduled to be completed within the calendar year 2015. Following both the completion of construction documents and the permit process the project will be ready for implementation pending the securing of construction funds. The LA County Regional Park and Open Space District (District) 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program could provide capital funds for implementation of project components including site preparation, grading, an open-air pavilion, and interactive children's nature play area.

The discrete work to be funded by this grant is identified in the construction plans and includes landscaping work to be completed primarily under contract to a registered Youth Conservation Corps and separate from any overall general construction package for the park's construction. This may include landscaping for the children's nature play area, as well as landscaping for other project components through other funding sources.

Tasks that may be performed by Corps member crews:

1. Installation of Irrigation for native trees and other plantings.
2. Planting of native trees, shrubs and other plantings.
3. General site preparation and finishing.

Estimated Cost of Youth Employment:

The estimated youth labor costs will be approximately \$20,000 (10%) of the \$200,000 budget for the interactive children's nature play area component. This may increase depending on the capacity of the corps to complete planting and irrigation system installation and modifications. Youth employment may also be contracted for landscaping in other project areas through other funding sources.

Method of Youth Employment:

The Watershed Conservation Authority will issue a Request for Proposal to each of the three local corps to complete the tree planting and irrigation scope of work associated with this grant. The WCA staff will review the proposal and will contract with the corps organization best qualified to complete the identified tasks.

Youth Employment Goal:

Under the provisions of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District policy on employment of at-risk youth, the goal of the WCA is to utilize the Conservation Corps for as much of the appropriate work as possible, which is estimated to be approximately \$20,000 of the of the \$200,000 interactive children's nature play area budget (10%) for work that will not require specialized training.

The WCA has an on-going and consistent history of commitment to supporting and utilizing youth employment via partnerships with State and local youth employment programs such as the California Conservation Corps, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, San Gabriel Conservation Corps amongst others. The WCA actively utilizes youth corps members in the property management and development of its park and open spaces. As well as, in the commencement of specialized projects and program such as the highly successful San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project outreach pilot program along the East Fork of the San Gabriel River in the Angeles Forest. This pilot program is largely run by the Urban Conservation Corps, which uses corps members as 'Conservation Leaders'. The Conservation Leaders are provided training in natural resource interpretation, and then employed throughout summer weekends to make contact with the visiting public, and to ask them to practice ethical use of public lands. Young college-age adults have also been employed over the past summer to implement a visitor survey.

May 14, 2015 – Item 11

RESOLUTION 2015-17

Resolution approving the application to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant funds for the River Wilderness Park Project.

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; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority 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 approving the application to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for Proposition A 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant funds for the River Wilderness Park Project; and

WHEREAS, the people of the County of Los Angeles on November 3, 1992, and on November 5, 1996 enacted Los Angeles County Proposition A, Safe Neighborhood Parks, Gang Prevention, Tree-Planting, Senior and Youth Recreation, Beach and Wildlife Protection (the Propositions), which among other uses, provides funds to public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the County for the purpose of acquiring and/or development facilities and open space for public recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Propositions also created the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (the District) to administer said funds; and

WHEREAS, the District has set forth the necessary procedures governing application for grant funds under the Propositions, and

WHEREAS, the District's procedures require the WCA to certify, by resolution, the approval of the application before submission of said application(s) to the District; and

WHEREAS, said application contains assurances that the WCA must comply with; and

WHEREAS, the WCA certifies, through this resolution, that the application is approved for submission to the District; and

WHEREAS, the WCA will enter into an Agreement with the District to provide funds for acquisition and development projects.

WHEREAS, the District's procedures require the adoption of a Youth Employment Plan for development projects by the governing body of the agency.

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 May 14, 2015.
4. **APPROVES** the filing of an application with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for \$974,000 of 2015 Countywide Competitive Grant Program Funding for the above project; and
5. **CERTIFIES** that the WCA understands the assurances and certification in the application form; and
6. **CERTIFIES** that the WCA has, or will have, sufficient funds to operate and maintain the project in perpetuity; and
7. **CERTIFIES** that the WCA will sign and return, within 30 days, both copies of the project agreement sent by the District for authorizing signature; and
8. **Approves** the adoption of a Youth Employment Plan for the project (see attached); and
9. **APPOINTS** the Executive Officer, Mark Stanley, or designee, to conduct all negotiations, and to execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests and so forth, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned 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 May 14, 2015

Brian Mejia, Chair

ATTEST: _____
Terry Fujimoto
Deputy Attorney General