MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC)
March 23, 2015

Held at the
Garvey Center
9108 Garvey Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

And via conference call:
Orange County Public Works Department
2301 N. Glassell Street, Orange, CA 92865
And
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311-Conference Room 1306
Sacramento, CA 95814

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Colonna called the meeting to order at approximately 3:33 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Frank Colonna, Chair
Mr. Dan Arrighi, Vice Chair
Mr. Denis Bertone
Ms. Margaret Clark
Mr. Troy Edgar
Ms. Eraina Ortega (for Ms. Matosantos)
Ms. Marilyn Thoms (for Mr. Silsby)
Mr. Bryan Cash (for Secretary Laird)
Mr. Dan Sulzer (for Colonel Colloton)
Ms. Claudine Meeker

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Gail Farber
Mr. Jon Bishop (for Mr. Rodriguez)
Mr. Stan Chen (for Mr. Johnson)
Mr. Edward Wilson
Ms. Lisa Mangat
Mr. Thomas Contreras (for Mr. Moore)
Ms. Teresa Villegas (for Supervisor Solis)

STAFF PRESENT

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
Valerie Thompson, Executive Secretary
Terry Fujimoto, Deputy Attorney General
Luz Quinnell, Project Manager
Marybeth Vergara, Project Manager

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Swan, Amigos de los Rios, spoke in support of the San Gabriel River Discovery Center noting that the community deserves a state of the art science and environmental center as there are no regional environmental education facilities to service the San Gabriel Valley and other metro communities with a scope comparable to the Discovery Center.

Jim Odling, Friends of the Whittier Narrows, spoke in opposition to the San Gabriel River Discovery Center noting that it would use more water than the current situation and will cause vector control problems. He also voiced concerns regarding the proposed parking lot.

Juan Mercado, California Conservation Corps, provided information on how Proposition 1 guidelines affects the CCC and how the guidelines will impact projects that they will potentially be involved with.

Jeff Yann, Sierra Club, offered support on behalf of the Sierra Club for the San Gabriel River Discovery Center and gave an overview of the Sierra Club's role in creating the Discovery Center.

Mr. Uranga arrived at approximately 3:47 p.m.

Sandonne Goad, Gabrielino/Tongua Nation, spoke in support of the San Gabriel River Discovery Center. She gave a brief overview of Gabrielino historical documentation. She pointed out that the building is deteriorating and needs improvement, and that the Discovery Center would preserves indigenous plants, create bio swale improvement, and will create jobs.

Herbert Romero, San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corp, spoke in support of the San Gabriel River Discovery Center; specifically the Eco Voices program. He provided an overview of a recent field trip made by students from the Pomona Unified School District made, and pointed out many positive aspects of the program and how it will benefit students and the community. A student from the Pomona Unified School District, Gabriella Verdin, spoke about her experience when she visited the program, and elaborated on the environmental educational benefits that the program offers.

Mr. Edgar arrived at approximately 3:47 p.m.

Dr. Eric Strauss, LMU-Center for Urban Resilience, spoke in support of the San Gabriel River Discovery Center particularly the Eco Voices program. He explained how the Discovery Center would benefit the underserved communities in the surrounding areas.

Hugo Garcia, Consultant for the San Gabriel River Discovery Center and Natural Resources Defense Council, read a letter of support from the Southern California Ecosystems project which pointed out many of the aspects of the project that would benefit the community. Mr. Garcia noted that to date, the Discovery Center has received more than 100 letters of support from various organizations.

Dr. Richard Shope introduced several high school students who have participated in the Eco Voices program. The students shared their experience with and voiced their appreciation for the Eco Voices program. Dr. Shope gave a brief overview of the Eco voices program; specifically pointing out the three main goals of the program: 1) strengthen underserved communities through hands-on science education activities; 2) create jobs through youth workforce opportunities toward green career pathways; and 3) empower participatory through interaction with nature. He noted that the program will have a significant impact on the community.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no corrections noted.

Mr. Bertone motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Edgar seconded the motion. Minutes unanimously approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 9; Nays = 0; Abstention = 1.

Mr. Fujimoto administered the oath of office to new board member Roberto Uranga.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

No report was given.

6. DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT

No report was given.

7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

A. LEGISLATIVE

The Executive Officer presented an overview and update on several state and federal legislative initiatives and how they relate to the RMC which included SB 760 (Mendoza), SB 355 (Lara), SB 317 (De Leon), AB 615 (Rendon), AB 530 (Rendon), and the $50 Million Investment in Western Drought Response by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell.

Mr. Edgar voiced concerns regarding SB 355 and requested that staff follow up on this initiative and report back to the Board before the Board acts on the bill. Mr. Stanley explained that the report was for informational purposes only and no action by the Board is required. Ms. Clark also voiced concerns regarding the bill as it would eliminate one of the Orange County representatives to the Board. Mr. Stanley explained that he would follow the movement of the bill closely and would provide regular updates to the Board.

B. CAPITAL OUTLAY AND SUPPORT BUDGET

The Executive Officer reported that the current capital outlay totals are just over $5.7 million of unencumbered funds and $1.7 million of funds pending encumbrance, and pointed out that a list of the seven projects that were recently approved by the Board were included in the staff report. Mr. Stanley referred the Board to the Advance Funds, Support and Operations, and Contracts reports that were included in the staff report and provided an overview of each report.

C. CUMULATIVE GRANT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

The Executive Officer reported no changes since the last Board meeting in January; and noted that are 35 are active projects. Chair Colonna voiced concerns about some of the cities that are in need of funding and may not understand what the RMC's purpose is or the possibility of receiving grants, and wants to ensure that those cities receive outreach so that they have an opportunity to apply for the grants. Mr. Stanley explained that the agency has current funding available under its' current guidelines through Prop. 40, 50 and 84, and will soon have funding available through Prop. 1.

D. PROJECT AND LIAISON ACTIVITIES

The Executive Officer gave an update on the Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan. Mr. Stanley discussed the Lower Los Angeles River Bike Ride that took place in February and was coordinated by the RMC staff, and the Watershed Conservation Authority Junior Ranger Program. He further presented an update on the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon and the San Gabriel River Discovery Center informational flyer that will be distributed to stakeholders and interested parties on a monthly basis.

REGULAR CALENDAR

8. Consideration of a resolution to resolution authorizing a contract for consulting services to assist with the RMC 2015 Grant Guideline Update consistent with language from Proposition 1: Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (2014 Water Bond) (RMC14005).

Marybeth Vergara, Project Manager, gave an overview and update on the requirements for meeting the deadline for the 2015 Grant Guidelines for Proposition 1 funding, and explained why it is important to have a consultant assist staff with this undertaking. Ms. Vergara gave an overview of the scope of services which includes a review and update of the existing RMC grant guidelines and project evaluation criteria, prepare and co-facilitate public workshops, comparable analysis, and final guidelines summary; and the schedule and budget for completing the scope of services. In addition, Ms. Vergara presented background information on the consultant, Jose Gardea with Urbanism Advisors, and the work that his agency provided for the RMC in regards to the Environmental Justice criteria and the survey that was conducted on the project need of the 68 cities within the RMC jurisdiction. Ms. Vergara stressed that it is important that the item be approved as staff is behind in submitting the draft guidelines, and she elaborated on the survey and noted that out of the responses that have been received, there is an overwhelming need for water quality related projects that could be funded through Prop. 1.

Mr. Bertone voiced concerns that a deadline was not given on the survey and Ms. Vergara explained that there was no deadline because staff was not sure how long it would take to complete the process. Mr. Bertone questioned if all of the cities were included in the survey and requested an explanation as to why some were not. Ms. Vergara explained that because of the budget and time frame, staff was unable to include all of the cities, and specifically chose cities along the rivers as the survey was associated with the water bond and disadvantaged cities. Mr. Bertone also voiced his disappointment that many of the cities along the foothills were omitted from the process. Ms. Vergara explained that there were limitations that were associated with the budget and time frame

which made it difficult to include every city within the RMC jurisdiction, and that while some did not receive the survey, they received a telephone call or email informing them that the survey was taking place. Mr. Bertone mentioned that the foothill cities have parks that are used by not only the citizens of the foothills but also citizens who live in disadvantaged communities. Mr. Bertone asked if staff would coordinate future dates with the Council of Governments and Ms. Vergara informed him that staff has been in contact with the Council of Governments and will continue to keep them informed. Mr. Colonna explained that while some cities were not included in the survey, they would not be precluded from applying for grant funding. Mr. Gardea clarified the survey process and explained that cities such as Claremont and San Dimas were very responsive. He further explained that the survey was not conducted to prioritize but simply to measure the need.

Ms. Clark questioned how the cities were contacted. Mr. Gardea explained that the outreach was a combination of telephone calls and emails; including follow ups. Ms. Clark also questioned the cost associated with making the telephone calls and sending emails; why couldn't all of the cities have been contacted. Mr. Stanley explained that an effort was made to contact all of the cities; either by email or a telephone call, and that some cities were more responsive than others. In addition, Mr. Stanley gave an overview of the purpose of the survey and initial process. Mr. Gardea noted that out of all of the cities that were contacted, staff received a response from 50 percent of the cities.

Mr. Cash strongly opposed providing funding to have an outside agency complete the guidelines. He mentioned that staff should draw on their own resources to complete the guidelines noting that the other conservancies have completed their own. He also mentioned that Prop. 1 would allow for hiring more staff and that the guidelines could be completed using RMC staff at that time. Mr. Colonna voiced concerns that the RMC does not have the staffing resources to take on the effort. Mr. Cash noted that there is not an urgency in completing the guidelines hence allowing for staff to hiring more staff when funding is appropriated in July 2015. He also voiced concerns that if the RMC hires someone else to complete the guidelines, it could have a negative impact as all of the other conservancies, even the smaller ones, have used their own resources to complete the guidelines. Ms. Vergara noted that she will be on maternity leave soon leaving only one project manager to work on the guidelines and that Mr. Stanley is far too busy. Mr. Colonna said that he would prefer to error on the side of caution; small investment for making a mistake. Mr. Cash noted that there are two other conservancies that have only two staff and they were able to complete their guidelines, and noted again, that staff could hire new staff and complete the guidelines at a later time when they have more staff. He further mentioned that he would prefer to see the $25,000 spent on a project rather than on the guidelines. Mr. Stanley mentioned that it would be very difficult for staff to continue to monitor their existing projects and take on the effort of completing the guidelines. He also mentioned that staff has already requested more staff in the 2015/2016 budget; however, would prefer to move forward with hiring the consultant at this time. Ms. Clark suggested having the $25,000 reimbursed with Prop. 1 funds; however, Mr. Stanley said that he did not think that would be possible and would have to investigate the matter.

Mr. Donnelly questioned if there was a Request for Proposals associated with this contract. Mr. Stanley explained that staff solicited information from the council of governments to contract with a consultant and that two other contractors was contacted.

Mr. Uranga motioned to approve the resolution; Mr. Bertone seconded the motion. Approved.

Mr. Edgar suggested a substitute motion to wait until a later date to vote on the item. Ms. Ortega seconded the substitute motion. Roll call Vote – Ayes=7; Nays-3. No abstentions

Roll Call Vote on original motion and second by Mr. Uranga and Mr. Bertone – Ayes =6; Nays = 4. 0 Abstentions.

9. Consideration of a resolution to support the Bellflower Paramount Bicycle and Trail Master Plan.

Luz Quinnell, Project Manager, gave an overview on the project noting that it is a collaborative effort of the Cities of Bellflower and Paramount and the Southern California Association of Governments to promote bicycling as an alternate transportation choice. She pointed out that the goal of the bike master plan is to connect two major regional bicycle trails, connecting the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Bicycle Trails.

Mr. Arrighi motioned to approve the resolution; Mr. Bertone seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll Call Vote – Ayes =10; Nays = 0. 0 abstentions.

10. Consideration of a resolution to award a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority for program support for the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Watersheds (RMC14006).

The item was not heard.

11. Consideration of the resolution supporting AB530 (Rendon) Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan Working Group.

The Executive Officer provided a synopsis and analysis of the bill. He pointed out that the bill would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to appoint, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, a local working group to develop a revitalization plan for the Lower Los Angeles River, called the Lower Los Angeles Working Group; that the working group be developed by March 1, 2017; and that the RMC provide staffing to assist the working group. It was noted that RMC staff is working closely with Assemblymember Anthony Rendon. There was discussion regarding the coordination on a federal, state, and local level. A copy of the bill was included in the staff report.

Mr. Uranga motioned to approve the resolution; Ms. Meeker seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll Call Vote – Ayes 8; Nays = 0. 2 abstentions.

12. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SB 760 (MENDOZA) THE DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2015.

The Executive Officer provided a synopsis and analysis of the bill. He pointed out that the bill would require the Strategic Growth Council to develop and implement the Disadvantaged Community Enhancement Program to award grants to disadvantaged communities to facilitate projects for community enhancement improvements that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in furtherance of the goals of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and the Disadvantaged Community Enhancement Act of 2015 would provide additional funding opportunities to address infrastructure challenges in

California's most disadvantaged communities and promote projects that provide for multi-benefits that address physical blight and deficiencies while addressing climate change. It was noted that staff is working closely with Senator Tony Mendoza, and that staff will communicate with key stakeholders throughout the RMC territory to inform them of this potential new funding program and request feedback moving forward. There was discussion regarding funding for staff participation or how this would impact staff resources and expenditures. A copy of the bill was included in the staff report.

Mr. Bertone motioned to approve the resolution; Mr. Uranga seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll Call Vote – Ayes =8; Nays = 0. 2 abstentions.

13. SELECTION OF A RMC REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS NATIONAL MONUMENT COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Officer gave an overview and update on the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Collaborative Committee noting that staff received a correspondence on February 6, 2015, requesting that the RMC participate in the San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative. He noted that the Community Collaborative is separate from the U.S. forest Service's efforts to develop a Nation Monument Management Plan although it will be closely involved and engaged in informing the process. He also noted that it has been requested that the Watershed Conservation Authority be given consideration as a collaborative member and that discussions for this additional seat are ongoing. In addition, the Executive Officer suggested that the Board consider appointing an alternate to the committee as well.

Mr. Arrighi nominated Ms. Clark to be the representative to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Collaborative Committee; Mr. Edgar seconded the motion. Ms. Clark accepted. Roll Call Vote – Ayes= The vote passed unanimously.

The Executive Officer was appointed by Chair Colonna as the alternate; there were no objections.

Mr. Edgar left at approximately 5:05 p.m.

14. APPOINTMENT OF A RMC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER TO THE LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS AUTHORITY.

The Executive Officer reported that there is a vacancy due to Mr. Patrick O'Donnell no longer sitting on the Board. He gave an overview of the members of the LCWA Board.

Chair Colonna nominated Mr. Uranga; Mr. Bertone seconded. Mr. Uranga accepted. Unanimously passed.

15. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Clark welcomed Ms. Thompson back, and Mr. Colonna formally welcomed Mr. Uranga to the RMC Board. The Executive Officer mentioned that he would be on vacation but would return the day before the RMC 15 Year Anniversary Celebration. Ms. Clark requested that the celebration begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. and Chair Colonna strongly agreed.

16. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Colonna suggested meeting at 3:00 p.m. for all of the RMC Board meetings. There were no objections. The next meeting will be held on May 18, 2015 in the City of Bellflower.

17. ADJOURNMENT UPON COMPLETION OF BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Colonna at approximately 5:31 p.m.