

**DATE:** March 26, 2018

**TO:** RMC Governing Board

**FROM:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 10: Consideration of a resolution approving a grant extension to the Watershed Conservation Authority for the Cattle Canyon Project (RMC 09105).

**PROGRAM AREA:** Mountains, Hills, Foothills

**PROJECT TYPE:** Planning and Interpretation

**JURISDICTION:** County of Los Angeles / Angeles National Forest

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Joseph Gonzalez

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the RMC authorizes a grant amendment to the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) to extend the timeline for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project (RMC09105) through March 31, 2019.

**PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:** The San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project was developed as a pilot project between the WCA and the Angeles National Forest (ANF) to better manage recreational use and balance the needs for resource protection along a 2.5-mile reach of the East Fork of the San Gabriel River (EFSGR). This project is located approximately 14 miles north of the city of Azusa on federal lands managed by the ANF San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, within the boundaries of the WCA territory. A project vicinity map is included as Exhibit A.

The future desired condition to be advanced by the Cattle Canyon Project includes environmentally sustainable recreation opportunities to meet the needs of a growing urban and culturally diverse population, particularly for day use. The project seeks to:

- Provide recreation facilities and infrastructure that are high quality, well-maintained, safe, accessible and consistent with visitors' expectations.
- Shift and concentrate recreational use to certain areas to minimize adverse effects over a broader area.
- Promote stewardship of public land by providing quality and sustainable recreation opportunities that result in increased visitor satisfaction.
- Allow for better management of the recreation resources on the Forest.
- Improve riparian habitat conditions in certain areas and make progress toward enhancing stream habitat conditions by restoring vegetation, minimizing invasive plants and noxious weed presence, and developing management strategies to regulate access.

The project, which is to be completed over three phases, includes (1) project identification and development, (2) project designs, and (3) implementation of physical site improvements and restoration activities, as well as development and implementation of an interpretive outreach program and a study on the effectiveness of the overall project activities. RMC09105 is a grant to support Phase 1 - Project Identification and Development, which includes the feasibility study

(completed), development and implementation of a 2-year summer outreach program (completed), and the environmental impact assessments (CEQA/NEPA)–in-process. This pilot project is being completed with the intent that it will be replicated in other areas of the Angeles National Forest and the San Gabriel River Watershed.

**BACKGROUND:** Recreational use is highly concentrated in areas of the ANF that are relatively flat, such as within the project area. This is due to steep topography and dense chaparral that dominates the mountainous landscape. The heavy use combined with a lack of facilities has resulted in degradation within the project site. Current conditions are not sustainable for long-term management. Impacts include: damage to vegetation, soil compaction and erosion, on-site litter, and stream alteration where visitors build rock dams in the river bed to create recreational bathing pools. The East Fork of the San Gabriel River (EFSGR) has also experienced high levels of litter deposition both in and adjacent to the watercourse. The Regional Water Board determined that the level of trash has exceeded the existing Water Quality Standard necessary to protect the beneficial uses of the river. The water quality is impaired due to trash (section 303(d) listing).

The current Phase 1 of the Cattle Canyon Project has seen the development of an outreach program focused on the prevention of specific harmful recreational behaviors. Two seasons of implementation have been completed during the Summers of 2013 and 2014. Between 2014-2016, WCA, ANF Staff, and project consultants completed a Final Concept Site Plan and Programming report. The remaining Phase 1 project component includes the completion of the environmental assessments in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act, and other applicable laws. In 2016, based on the potential for significant impacts, it was mutually determined by ANF and WCA Staff that an Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) must be prepared. This is the appropriate documents to disclose the potential environmental impacts that may not be avoided through the proposed action.

WCA had initially determined that the procedural process for preparing a joint EIR/EIS could be completed by October 31, 2017, but delays in the Draft EIR/EIS development process—from additional administrative reviews, extensive technical report analyses, and ANF staffing limitation during fire season—has necessitated an additional project extension through March 31, 2019 (see Exhibit B). The extension request letter to the RMC from the WCA is included as Exhibit C.

RMC Staff considers the project as highly successful in advancing plans and activities that addresses a complex project scope through cooperative efforts between the WCA and ANF, but acknowledges that the nature of this collaboration has delayed the project timeline.

The draft EIR/EIS was published in November 2017, and the final EIR/EIS is expected by December 2018.

**FISCAL INFORMATION:** The not-to-exceed budget for RMC09105 is \$770,584.00. WCA received \$250,000 in federal funding provided by the ANF through a cooperative agreement to cover the cost of additional environmental services needed for the EIR/EIS preparation.

This grant was initially authorized by the RMC on June 28, 2010, as specified in Resolution 2010-68. RMC Resolution 2012-14 approved a grant amendment to extend the performance period through May 30, 2015. RMC Resolution 2014-10 approved: 1) adjustment in the scope of the design and permitting scope, 2) increase the grant by \$4,000 to a total not to exceed amount of \$770,584 and, 3) adjusted the funding allocation between tasks identified in the grant budget. A timeline extension to September 30, 2016 on January 25, 2015 was authorized on by Resolution

2016-02. An additional timeline extension to October 31, 2017 on September 26, 2016 by Resolution 2016-09.

Funding for this project is allocated from the following Proposition 84 allocations, under statute:

75050. The sum of nine hundred twenty-eight million dollars (\$928,000,000) shall be available for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources in accordance with the following schedule: (g) The sum of seventy-two million dollars (\$72,000,000) shall be available for projects within the watersheds of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers according to the following schedule:

(1) \$36,000,000 to the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy pursuant to Division 22.8 (commencing with Section 32600).....

75060. The sum of five hundred forty million dollars (\$540,000,000) shall be available for the protection of beaches, bays and coastal waters and watersheds, including projects to prevent contamination and degradation of coastal waters and watersheds, projects to protect and restore the natural habitat values of coastal waters and lands, and projects and expenditures to promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state, in accordance with the following schedule:.... (3) To the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.....\$15,000,000.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND RMC ADOPTED POLICIES/AUTHORITIES:** Section 32602: There is in the Resources Agency, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, which is created as a state agency for the following purposes:

- (a) To acquire and manage public lands within the Lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds, and to provide open-space, low-impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvement within the territory.
- (b) To preserve the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River consistent with existing and adopted river and flood control projects for the protection of life and property.
- (c) To acquire open-space lands within the territory of the conservancy.

Section 32604: The conservancy shall do all of the following:

- (a) Establish policies and priorities for the conservancy regarding the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River, and their watersheds, and conduct any necessary planning activities, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (c) Approve conservancy funded projects that advance the policies and priorities set forth in Section 32602.

Section 32614.5:

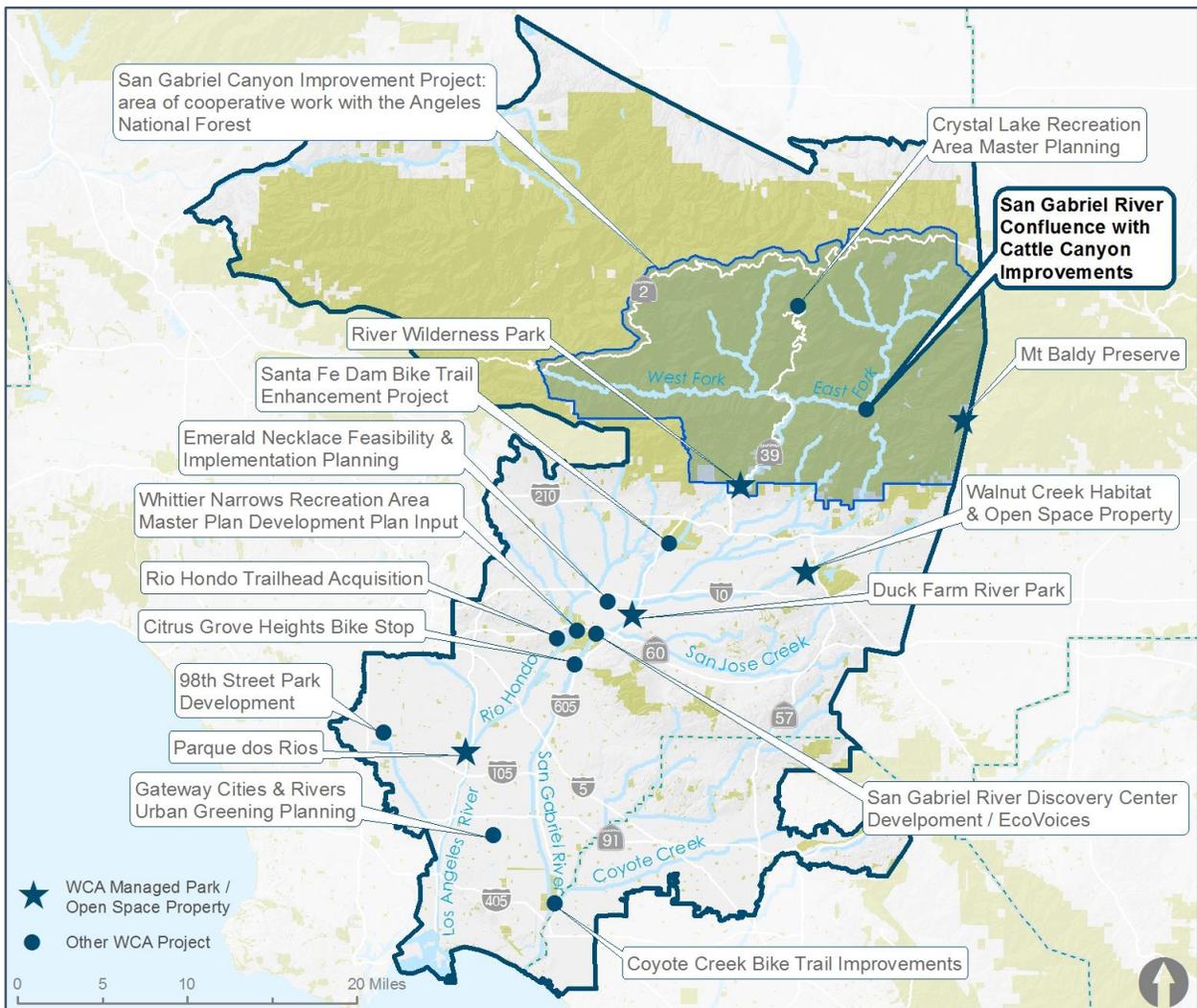
- (a) The conservancy may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of this division.
- (b) Grants to nonprofit organizations for the acquisition of real property or interests in real property shall be subject to all of the following conditions:

- (1) The purchase price of any interest in land acquired by the nonprofit organization may not exceed fair market value as established by an appraisal approved by the conservancy.
  - (2) The conservancy approves the terms under which the interest in land is acquired.
  - (3) The interest in land acquired pursuant to a grant from the conservancy may not be used as security for any debt incurred by the nonprofit organization unless the conservancy approves the transaction.
  - (4) The transfer of land acquired pursuant to a grant shall be subject to the approval of the conservancy and the execution of an agreement between the conservancy and the transferee sufficient to protect the interests of the state.
  - (5) The state shall have a right of entry and power of termination in and over all interests in real property acquired with state funds, which may be exercised if any essential term or condition of the grant is violated.
  - (6) If the existence of the nonprofit organization is terminated for any reason, title to all interest in real property acquired with state funds shall immediately vest in the state, except that, prior to that termination, another public agency or nonprofit organization may receive title to all or a portion of that interest in real property, by recording its acceptance of title, together with the conservancy's approval, in writing.
- (c) Any deed or other instrument of conveyance whereby real property is acquired by a nonprofit organization pursuant to this section shall be recorded and shall set forth the executory interest or right of entry on the part of the state.



## Exhibit A

# Territory Map: San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project



**Exhibit B: San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project, Phase 1 Amended Task List & Timeline (RMC09105)**

March 2018

Task ID	Tasks	2012	2013	2014	2015	Jan-March 2016	April-June 2016	July-Sept 2016	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-March 2017	April-June 2017	July-Sept 2017	Oct-Dec 2017	Jan-March 2018	April-June 2018	July-Sept 2018	Oct-Dec 2018	Jan-March 2019
1	Fully Execute Partnership Agreement	█	█															
2A	Visitor Survey & Interpretive Program Evaluation Survey Development		█															
2B	Visitor Survey Implementation		█	█														
2C	Visitor Survey Implementation Report			█														
3A	Interpretive Program Development & Training		█	█														
3B	Interpretive Program Implementation		█	█														
4	Site Assessment			█														
5	Concept Plan & Feasibility Study			█	█	█	█	█	█									
6	Environmental Impact Assessment (CEQA/NEPA)							█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
6A	ID Team, IDT Meetings, develop Proposed Action, Scoping period							█	█									
6B	Complete Draft EIS/EIR									█	█	█	█					
6C	Publish Draft EIS/EIR & Public Comment Period												█	█	█	█	█	
6D	Finalize EIS/EIR														█	█	█	
7	Water Quality Monitoring		█	█														
8	Close Out Grant Doc																	█

**RECEIVED**

1N18-159

MAR 20 2018

RIVERS & MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVANCY



March 15, 2018

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

**Re: San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project (RMC09105) Grant Extension**

**GOVERNING BOARD**

**Janet Chin,**  
**Chair**  
Designee for Hilda Solis  
Los Angeles County Board of  
Supervisors, 1st District

**Dan Arrighi,**  
**Vice Chair**  
Rivers and Mountains  
Conservancy

**Karly Katona**  
Designee for Mark Ridley-  
Thomas  
Los Angeles County Board of  
Supervisors, 2nd District

**Herlinda Chico**  
Designee for Janice Hahn  
Los Angeles County Board of  
Supervisors, 4th District

**Debra Mendelsohn**  
Designee for Kathryn Barger  
Los Angeles County Board of  
Supervisors, 5th District

**Frank Colonna**  
Rivers and Mountains  
Conservancy

**Roberto Uranga**  
Rivers and Mountains  
Conservancy

**EX OFFICIO MEMBER**  
**Keith Lilley**  
Designee for Mark Pestrella,  
Director  
Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Works

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**Mark Stanley**

Dear Mr. Stanley:

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) is hereby requesting an extension through March 31, 2019 for the RMC grant for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project (RMC09105). Please find attached for your review and approval an amended project timeline (Exhibit A).

This extension is being requested as the process to prepare, review, and finalize a joint NEPA/CEQA document (EIS/EIR) in partnership with Angeles National Forest (ANF) Staff has taken longer than anticipated. Several reasons for the delay include an ANF request for an additional administrative draft review before publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, which extended the development process by four months. Additionally, during fire season, Forest Service had unexpected staffing limitations to continue providing technical support which also affected the Draft review period.

The Draft EIS/EIR was published and made publicly available on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and the project received public comments through December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The Project Team is currently finalizing responses to comments and incorporating necessary revisions to the Draft. WCA plans to initiate the required Fish and Wildlife Services consultation soon, which takes 135 days.

A timeline line extension through March 2019 is being requested to accommodate for the prolonged review and project approval process to the end of the project. If you have any questions, please contact the WCA project manager, Alex Linz at [ALinz@wca.ca.gov](mailto:ALinz@wca.ca.gov) or at (626) 815-1019 ext. 105.

Sincerely,

Janet Chin  
Governing Board Chair

Enclosure: Amended Project Timeline

JC:al

March 26, 2018 – Item 10

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-06

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC) AUTHORIZING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO EXTEND THE TIMELINE FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (RMC09105).

WHEREAS, The legislature has found and declared that the San Gabriel River and its tributaries, the Lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, and the San Gabriel Mountains, Puente Hills, and San Jose Hills constitute a unique and important open space, environmental, anthropological, cultural, scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, and wildlife resource that should be held in trust to be preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of, and appreciation by, present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, The people of the State of California have enacted the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), which provides funds for the RMC grant program; and

WHEREAS, The RMC may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of Division 22.8 the Public Resources Code; and

WHEREAS, This action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and NOW

*Therefore be it resolved that* the RMC hereby:

1. FINDS that this action is consistent with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act and is necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of Division 22.8 of the Public Resources Code.
2. FINDS that the grant is consistent with the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, which provides funds for the RMC grant program.
3. FINDS that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
4. APPROVES a grant amendment to the Watershed Conservation Authority to extend the timeline for the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project (RMC09105) through March 31, 2019.
5. ADOPTS the staff report dated March 26, 2018.

~ End of Resolution ~

Motion \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_ Abstentions: \_\_\_\_\_

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the  
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVANCY on March 26, 2018

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Colonna, Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Edsall, Jr.  
Deputy Attorney General