

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY  
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC)**

**Monday, July 20, 2020**

**Held at  
TELECONFERENCE MEETING VIA ZOOMADDRESS:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88592595115?pwd=cldBWWlvSGtlUm9XTWtuNW9NYmJhZz09>  
Meeting ID: 885 9259 5115|Password: 494340 And by phone at 1-669-900-9128**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Colonna called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m.

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was recited by all who were in attendance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

**Voting Members Present**

Chair Frank Colonna	Vice Chair Dan Arrighi
Ms. Gary Boyer	Ms. Margaret Clark
Ms. Liz Reilly	Ms. Joe Kalmick
Mr. Denis Bertone	Mr. Amanda Martin (for Secretary Crowfoot)
Ms. Sandra Massa-Lavitt	Mr. John Bishop (for Mr. Blumenfeld)
Mr. Roberto Uranga	Mr. Vincent Chang (for Supervisor Solis)
Mr. Sally Lukenbill (for Ms. Bosler)	Mr. Ali Saleh

**Non-Voting Members Present**

Mr. Julian Juarez (for Mark Pestrella)	Mr. John Walsh (for John Donnelly)
Ms. Christy Suppes (for Mr. Bazmi)	

**Members Absent**

Mr. Stan Chen (for Mr. Johnson)	Mr. Ed DeMesa (for Ms. Colloton)
Mr. Sean Woods (for Ms. Mangat)	Mr. Jerry Perez (for Mr. Moore)
Vacant (for Senator Gonzalez)	
Ms. Marisol Barajas (for Assembly member P. O'Donnell)	

**Staff Present**

David Edsall, Jr., Deputy Attorney General  
Salian Garcia, Accounting Analyst  
Marybeth Vergara, Project Manager  
Joseph Gonzalez, Project Manager  
Sally Gee, Project Manager  
Arturo Gonzalez, Project Manager  
Jennifer Fierro, Executive Secretary

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments made during the meeting.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

There were no corrections noted by the Board.

**Ms. Reilly motioned to approve this item. Mr. Bertone seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – Ayes = 14; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0. Minutes were approved.**

**6. CHAIR’S REPORT**

There was no report given.

**7. DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL’S REPORT**

There was no report given.

**8. EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

**A. Legislative**

Marybeth Vergara commented that the California State Legislature is currently not in session, however, the budget was signed by Governor Newsom and the Legislative leaders this past June. The budget deal that was reached includes member specific requests like funding for the Lower LA River and Compton Creek; although, budget revisions are still anticipated to occur in the month of August. She explained this could lead to adjustments based on the States revenue at that time, since this could potentially impact the conservancy it will be tracked and reported at the future board meetings.

Ms. Vergara reviewed SB1296, the Nature and Parks Career Pathway and Community Resiliency Act of 2020. She stated this bill would require State Conservancies and the Wildlife Conservation Board to establish independent grant programs with a focus on disadvantaged communities, encourage work force development, as well as jobs and training for disadvantaged communities. While discussions of an Economic Development, Parks, Climate, and Drought Tolerance Bond was in the works, it is no longer anticipated to be on the November ballot. She explained this bill has been held in suspense; however, it is possible to be reintroduced.

Mr. Stanley commented to the board that the bills for the RMC’s expansion and Park Districts along the San Gabriel River and LA River are being held in suspense until next session. Nevertheless, the bills will be tracked and reported and will possibly come with new bill numbers. He stated the next session would start in January 2021, but due to the impacts of the pandemic it could start later.

**B. Capital Outlay and Support Budget**

Salian Garcia stated the Capital Outlay report contains information on the total capital outlay funds appropriated, encumbered, and remaining from Propositions 1, 40, 50, 68, and 84 as

of June 30, 2020. She noted little activity because there are no recently approved grants and stated there was an addition to the direct funding for the budget act of 2019 of \$3 million to the LA River and \$3 million to the Compton Creek. This funding is anticipated to be available for encumbrance until 2023.

Ms. Garcia stated the total available funding for encumbrance and expenditure is \$112,541, 692. The Support Budget report is still being updated as there are invoices still being received from the last fiscal year and will be accrued for fiscal year 2020. She noted that Exhibit A-1, Support and operations Budget has been reduced. This is mainly because support funds for Propositions 40, 50, and 84 are running out. The focus is on using 0140 funding, Proposition 1 and 68 with an additional 5% reduction across the board. Exhibit B has not changed, and there have been no advanced funds. Lastly, the cumulative contract report will show that for the current fiscal year that older contracts that have fallen off the chart.

Board Member Bertone asked amount of \$112,541, 692, noted on page 2 of the report, was how much the board has? Ms. Garcia responded yes.

Board Member Bertone then asked when the next round for Call for Projects will take place? Mr. Stanley responded the next round of Call for Projects would take place in September for Proposition 68 region-wide funding.

### **C. Cumulative Grant Project Status Summary**

Ms. Garcia reported these are projects identified by funding source, Proposition 1, 40, 50, and 84. As of this date RMC has authorized 261 total projects, which consist of 204 completed projects, 45 are certified, 0 approved and awaiting encumbrance, and with the remaining balance of 12 withdrawn projects.

### **D. Project and Liaison Activities**

The Project Managers gave updates about the various projects and activities for RMC.

Mr. Stanley reviewed the Strategic Planning Board Retreat and stated he is still looking to have this but due to the pandemic the planning for this event has changed in terms of the gathering potential of the board members. Efforts will be made to move forward with this, and the board will hear more in the future months.

Sally Gee reported on the River Ranger program and stated this project is at the pilot stage of establishing REACH zones and referred to a map on page 3 noting various REACH zones along the Rio Hondo. She noted some funding has been made available to implement programs leading to a collaboration with WCA to plan the implementation of the program. The next steps are to create a community advisory committee to discuss the programming, planning and implementation of the programs.

Joseph Gonzalez stated the IAG Meeting was last held June 24, 2020 where RMC provided updates on various projects. He noted a few from the liaison report: Measure A, a competitive grant program that is set to kick off at the end of the year with applications being accepted in September; an update of the Lower LA River Pocket Parks; a review of the Sleepy Lagoon Projects design and concept; a review of Deforest Park Projects vision plan; an update on Urban Orchard moving forward with construction this fall; and a review of

Parque dos Rios artistic gates and park signage. He also wanted to note that Trails Unlimited will be likely to send an application for the City of Paramount channels for habitat improvements. He stated the next meeting would occur in September.

Ms. Vergara gave a report on the Compton Creek Implementation Plan and stated they were able to retain the \$3 million, for allocation of the State 2019 Budget Act. She noted the Working Group continued to meet via phone and emails to stay updated on the analysis of properties identified in other planning efforts for the Compton Creek Watershed. These were narrowed down to two project sites in Compton but are still waiting to hear from the city to determine a site. The site identification should be confirmed by August, at which time they will have to return to the Board for an amendment to the contract with Studio MLA to complete construction documents to implement the project.

Ms. Vergara reported on the San Gabriel River and Wilderness Park Restoration Downey. She stated the Board had approved this project back in January 2017 as well as a grant amendment in the amount of \$1.3 million. This project is now in construction along the 605 freeway where you can see the lakes have been fully drained and improvements like the recycled irrigation system, native plant life gardens, trail improvements and signage have begun. She invited the Board to tour the construction site prior to completion and noted the board would receive a notice via email.

Ms. Vergara reported on the Urban Orchard Project Construction and stated the planning components of the project have been completed and are now working on the wetland components. The Trust for Public Land in partnership with the City of South Gate are working together to convert 30 acres of vacant land along the 710 freeway. Phase one of this portion will convert 7 acres of the property to a wetland and orchard and will pull water from the Bandini Channel to filter for the wetlands. This project is in process, although, delays like contaminated soil has left the project at a stand-still until additional funding can be identified. She noted the Trust for Public Land is waiting for possible approval for a grant from Urban Greening in efforts to proceed with the project

Board Member Reilly asked what the problem with the soil was? Ms. Vergara responded that the soil was more contaminated than first anticipated and this left an anticipated \$4 million cost for removal.

Board Member Clark asked if anyone knew what was done with the water that was drained from the lakes? Ms. Vergara stated she would have to ask the city what happened to the water and report back to her about that.

Ms. Gee reviewed the LCWA Planning and Restoration Project and noted that during the last board meeting comments were made regarding the LCWA's public engagement process carried out during as a part of the impact report. She stated the draft PIR went out May 8<sup>th</sup> for a 45-day public comment period which was set to close June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The public comment period was extended two more weeks and ended July 6<sup>th</sup> for a total 60-day comment period. During this time LCWA held two public virtual meetings to walk participants through parts of the EIR and allow the public to ask questions. After the public comment period closed, they received 23 letters from the public and are now being processed and responded to.

Ms. Gee reported on the Canyon Country Community Center and stated they have completed most of the construction of the storm water basins underground. During the last

meeting they requested an extension to complete some of the landscaping and interpretive elements that were delayed because of the pandemic.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 9. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF LONG BEACH FOR THE MUNICIPLE URBAN STORMWATER TREATMENT PROJECT.**
- 10. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A SMALL GRANT TO NATURE FOR ALL FOR THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS TRANSIT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (SMG-TIP).**

**Mr. Bertone motioned to approve this item. Mr. Uranga seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote –Ayes = 14; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**REGULAR CALENDAR**

- 11. **PROJECT UPDATE FROM GLAAC BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA FOR THE TRASK SCOUT RESERVATION WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (RMC 18006)**

This report was a receive and file.

- 12. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY’S FINAL FISCAL YEAR 2020/2021 ANNUAL BUDGET**

Nicole Law gave a presentation on this item and started by sharing the WCA’s mission. She reviewed the WCA’s Fiscal Year 2019-2020 accomplishments and noted that Administrative and Accounting established a \$1.5 Million Subvention Fund agreement with the RMC to provide WCA with project cash flow stability and that the Acquisition of Properties received a \$1,064,200 grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the 40-acre Vasquez Overlook parcel. The Grants and Contract Awards Grants noted \$2,024,020 grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for Duck Farm River Center Development Project. The Major Project Milestones include the Duck Farm Project that on February 27, 2020, several members of both the WCA & RMC Board of Directors participated in a construction site tour highlighting construction and landscaping elements of the park, and as of As of May 2020, a number of important tasks/deliverables have been completed; and Parque Dos Rios for which WCA, contracted with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach to construct the habitat improvements and overlook bike stop along the Lower Los Angeles River in the City of South Gate.

She then reported the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Program Highlights and Opportunities like the Duck Farm River Park implementation project, the 30-acre park will be completed during the new fiscal year and arrangements will be made to open the park to the public; and the Parque dos Rios/South Gate Riparian Project, the 7-acre habitat restoration and overlook bike stop along the Lower LA River will be completed in August 2020 and will soon after be open to the public. A quick Budget Overview for the Consolidated Budget Fiscal Year 2020-2021 showed that the Total Revenue is 5,918,973, the Total Expense is 5,972,081, the Change in Net Position Before Transfers is 53,108, and the agency plans to use the

reserves to cover the deficits. She explained that the Revenue Overview projected a total of \$5,918,973 in Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Revenue available for general administrative and operational expenditures totals \$695,094 or 12% of all revenue. Revenue expected to be available and utilized for grant and special projects during the fiscal year totals \$5,223,878, of which \$2,619,351 or 50% is expected to be derived from federal, state, county, local funds, consultant contracts and other project revenue, \$2,604,528 is expected to be derived from grants from the RMC. The Expenditure Overview showed FY 20/21, expenditures are projected to total \$5,972,080. This total reflects 38% or \$3,719,596 decrease from FY 19/20 budgeted expenses. The decrease is primarily due to an anticipated decrease in capital outlay projects and costs from awarded grants and contracts for the agency's grants and special projects. The expenditure components are as follows: 1) General Administrative Expenses, \$179,797 or 3%, 2) General Operational Expenses, \$389,069 or 7%, 3) Personnel, \$681,713 or 11%, and 4) Grant & Special Projects Capital Outlay Expenses, \$4,721,501 or 79%. Lastly, Ms. Law reviewed the Grants and Special Projects Expenditure and stated the WCA anticipates that it will utilize \$5,223,878 of its grants and special project funding in FY 20/21, with a portion on hand being carried from the previous fiscal year. Expenditures allocated to capital activity are expected to total \$4,721,501. Capital activity accounts for all project expenditures except for personnel expenses and administrative overhead. The remaining \$502,377 is allocated to cover personnel expenses and administrative overhead as permitted by the grant and project agreements and in accordance with the WCA's Billable Rate Plan.

Board Member Reilly asked what the Compensation Plan Adjustment was for? Ms. Law responded that in June 2020 WCA issued an RFP to award a contract to a consulting firm to develop a Compensation Analysis Plan for which they are still waiting for responses.

Board Member Boyer noted discrepancies in the Revenue and Expenditure section, he asked if revenue intended for Administrative Costs are transferred around? He wondered why the revenues are not budgeted closer to what the actual expenditures are. He asked if this is standard practice for WCA? Mr. Stanley replied that the WCA receives funding from several sources through grants, bonds, Measures and more, of which a percentage is set aside for Administrative costs. Ms. Garcia added the percentage is determined by the prospective JPA agreements. Each JPA provides a certain amount each fiscal year which have not changed since 2010.

**Mr. Uranga motioned to approve this item. Mr. Boyer seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote –Ayes = 14; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**13. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH STUDIO MLA FOR THE COMPTON CREEK PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT (RMC19513)**

This item was pulled from the regular calendar.

**14. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN RMC PROPOSITION 1 AND 68 SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM DRAFT GUIDELINES**

Mr. Gonzalez recommended the RMC adopt a resolution approving RMC Proposition 1 and 68 Small Grants Program Draft Guidelines. He stated the RMC Proposition 1 and 68 Small Grants Draft Program Guidelines ("Small Grants Program") explain the process and criteria

that the Conservancy will use to solicit applications, evaluate proposals, and award grants with Proposition 1 and 68 funds. The Small Grants Program will be limited to 15% of each allocation from Proposition 1 and 68. These guidelines have been adapted from the RMC Proposition 68 Regional and Lower LA River (LLAR) Final Guidelines, which were developed in consideration of public comment from four (4) public meetings in November 2018 and approved by the Board in January 2019 (Reso 2019-06). Additionally, the RMC Proposition 1 LLAR Guidelines are based on RMC Proposition 1 Regional Guidelines. Some of the key differences highlight in the Small Grants Program include: program places an emphasis on smaller quick start projects with grant awards between \$10,000 and \$300,000, and provides Proposition 68 grant funds for technical assistance to help develop and implement projects that achieve Conservancy's goals.

He went on to explain that the grant project continuum includes web design and development resources, technical advisors, training and development, and ongoing RMC support and professional services. Assistance in applying for grants, performing feasibility and other technical studies, and administrative grants is included to support grantees directly. He mentioned RMC is also looking at elements for smaller grants of up to 10,000, for GAP emergencies or small project implementations which is intended to be accepted as a proposal versus a complete application. The evaluation criteria for these grants would be 70% to allow these grantees to apply competitively. This will be an ongoing Call for Projects once the final guidelines are approved.

Board Member Chang asked if this program was only available to cities? Mr. Gonzalez replies yes, it is open for any qualifying candidates.

**Ms. Reilly motioned to approve this item. Mr. Bishop seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote –Ayes = 14; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**15. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

There were no board member comments.

**16. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Colonna announced the next meeting would be held Monday, September 21, 2020.

**17. ADJOURNMENT UPON COMPLETION OF BUSINESS**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Colonna at approximately 3:05 p.m.

X

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Frank Colonna  
Governing Board Chair

X

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Jennifer Fierro  
Board Secretary