

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA)**  
**Thursday, November 17, 2022**  
**Held at**  
**Teleconference Meeting Via Zoom Address:**  
**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83724815470?pwd=YWZ6YU52eGJFR0xINVN3b1hyWWJsdz09>**  
**Meeting ID: 837 2481 5470, Passcode: 966549, And by phone: +16699009128**

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Board Member Laura Muraida at approximately 1:36pm

**2. Roll Call**

**Voting Members Present**

Ms. Victoria Paul (For Supervisor Barger)  
Ms. Carolina Hernandez (For Mark Pestrella)  
Mr. Vincent Chang (For Supervisor Solis)  
Ms. Laura Muraida (For Supervisor Mitchell)  
Ms. Denise Diaz

**Non-Voting Members Present**

Mr. Ernesto Rivera

**Members Absent**

Chair Herlinda Chico  
Mr. Roberto Uranga  
Mr. Dan Arrighi

**Staff Present**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
Elizabeth St. John, Deputy Attorney General  
Nicole Law  
Jeremy Munns  
Jonathan Perisho

**3. Vote pursuant to Gov. Code section 54953**

Elizabeth St. John explained that, pursuant to the Brown Act, in order to conduct the Board Meetings remotely and comply with all provisions for teleconferencing, the Board must make certain findings at the beginning of each meeting. St. John stated staff recommends that the Board finds that 1. it (WCA Governing Board) has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency since the last meeting of the Board and 2. find that one or more of the following circumstances continue to exist: the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability

of the members to meet safely in person and/or that state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing.

**Board Member Hernandez motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chang seconded.**

**Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

**4. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to Close public comments. Chair Chico seconded. Public comments closed.**

**5. Approval of Minutes**

There were no corrections noted by the Board. Minutes received and filed.

**6. Chair's Report**

There was no Chair's Report.

**7. Executive Officer's Report**

Mark Stanley provided an update on items 8 and 9.

**8. Watershed Conservation Authority Response to COVID-19**

Mark Stanley stated WCA staff continues to work a hybrid work schedule with one to two days in person. Stanley stated staff teleworks and anticipates to continue doing so. Stanley noted staff is updating the agency's telework policy to integrate this into a normal work schedule before the end of the calendar year.

**9. Liaison and Activities Report**

Mark Stanley stated a number of bills were passed in 2022. Stanley noted the State Legislature is not currently in session and will return in January 2023 and in December will have swearings-in of new members. Stanley highlighted SB1122 which was signed by Governor Newsom and goes into effect January 1, 2023. Stanley stated the bill is an expansion of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy by 14% into the Dominguez Channel Watershed and Catalina Islands. Stanley stated the bill opens an opportunity to discuss the boundaries of the WCA as well. Stanley noted there are a number of possible funding opportunities the WCA can explore.

Jeremy Munns highlighted the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project. Munns noted the project is currently in the permitting phase. Munns stated staff is currently experiencing challenges with access to the site and doing additional geotechnical work to certify the road to pass County Fire requirements. Munns noted staff hopes to complete the permitting process by Spring.

Munns stated Wildscape Restoration began work on Invasive Species Management Guidelines for the Azusa Foothills Open Space parcels. Munns noted Wildscape conducted a site visit to assess site conditions and make note of access and staging areas that can be used by future field crews. WCA met with the team to discuss the larger context of stewardship building for Azusa Foothills Open Space parcels. Munns stated their work will conclude by January 15, 2023. Munns stated staff has begun a series of eight workshops held in the Azusa Foothills Open Space. Munns noted the last workshop is in January 2023.

Munns stated the Cattle Canyon Project has received proposals from the remaining constituents and is moving forward after a delay. Munns stated staff anticipates permitting will be continuing much of next year 2023.

Munns highlighted the Walnut Creek Project and stated trail work has been completed. Munns stated staff is continuing with the lot line adjustment with the Tzu Chi foundation. Munns stated monuments to denote the new property boundaries will be installed. Munns stated the project is expected to be completed by the new year.

Suely Saro, Project Development Specialist for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy stated the River Ranger Pilot Program Project Team consisting of Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB), River in Action (RIA), and Nature for All (NFA) continues with its program planning and development. Saro stated the program has continued with Phase 1 programming and development and has begun Phase 2 implementation. Saro stated the program started late Spring and early June 2022. Saro stated the program has begun weekly training. Saro stated River in Action continues with their environmental education K-5 workshops and the distribution of the coloring book, "The Adventure of Roxanna and the Lower LA River Treasure Island Park." Saro noted Nature for All began its program in October 2022. They launched their first workshop on October 29, 2022 and they will conduct monthly workshops until February 2024 with a total of 8 workshops.

Johnathan Perisho highlighted the Parque Dos Rios improvements at South Gate. Perisho noted an official ribbon cutting event was held October 15th, and the WCA is deeply appreciative of everyone that contributed and shared the day with us. Perisho stated they had a great turnout and recognition for work moving forward. Perisho highlighted the various individuals and agencies that attended the event. Perisho stated additional interpretation panels have been designed and were displayed at the event. Perisho stated WCA staff continues to evaluate options for brown field assessments and remediation to address subsurface legacy waste for approvals to complete

revegetation of the wider site, and to advance potential project work for water management and habitat opportunities at this site and in the vicinity.

Carolina Hernandez asked if the River Ranger Program has access to the Lower LA River guidelines for signage prior to submitting to public works. Jeremy Munns stated the signage is based off of and in alignment with the guidelines.

## **10. Expenditure Report**

Nicole Law stated the report is for the budget with balances as of October 31, 2022 to September 30, 2022. Law stated the Authority anticipates the lease revenue from July to September from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy will be received by the second quarter of 2023. Law stated the Authority is awaiting reimbursement from several other grants; thus, revenue from Grant has been minimal. The revenue will be reflected when submitted costs expended under the grant has been approved for reimbursement and the reimbursement is received.

Law stated property management line item is higher than YTD budget projections mainly due to the installation of Highway 39 sign and tree removal service at El Encanto. The Authority anticipates expenses incurred through the end of the fiscal year to be within budgeted projections. Law added property Tax for a portion of the Mt. Baldy property located in San Bernardino County are paid through the end of this year. The Authority do not anticipate expending the remaining budget balance.

## **Consent Calendar**

### **10. Fund Balance Report**

**11. Consideration of a resolution to ratify purchase order for fabrication of interpretation panels for the Parque dos Rios Improvements project.**

**12. Consideration of a resolution to ratify application for Southern California Edison permitting review for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.**

**Board Member Chang motioned to approve this item. Board Member Paul seconded.**

**Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

## **Regular Calendar**

**13. Consideration of a resolution to update Billable Rates for Fiscal Year 2022/2023.**

Nicole Law stated staff recommends the Board approve an update to the WCA Billable Rates for Fiscal Year 2022/2023. Law stated the Authority anticipates the Project Manager III position will

be filled in the third quarter of FY 2022/2023. Law noted the Authority implements 10% compensation plan adjustments for active employee salaries. Law stated the four rates developed best reflect reporting and reimbursement requirements under the Agency's current portfolio of projects. If approved, staff plans to make the updated Billable Rates effective November 17, 2022, for the payroll period ending November 20, 2022. This action results in no direct fiscal impact.

**Board Member Hernandez motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chang seconded. Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

**14. Consideration of a resolution to (1) approve grant application and (2) accept funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the River Park Phase 1A Step 2 project.**

Johnathan Perisho stated the WCA is preparing an application for \$1,636,680 for funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the River Park Phase 1A Step 2 project.

Perisho stated the proposed River Park Phase 1A Step 2 is approximately 30 acres of a planned 80+ acres of river front park along the San Gabriel River in the unincorporated community of Avocado Heights, La Puente. Perisho noted the property is the largest single open space along the Emerald Necklace, the heart of a developing 130 miles of bike paths, trails, and green spaces across the San Gabriel Valley in a historically underserved and environmentally impacted area. Perisho stated the extent of the area is notable as lands along the river represent the strongest opportunity for climate resilience and adaptation. Perisho stated the project began in 2008 and was split into two phases due to project scope. In 2021, Phase Step 1 began for demolition. Perisho stated the next several years consisted of securing permits and funding for step 2 construction of features to make the site accessible to the public. Perisho noted that, due to partially completed work by a former contractor, escalation, and market impacts, cost of remaining work has increased. Perisho stated the Phase 1A Step 2 Implementation Project for River Park includes a pocket park and entry, parking, pedestrian amenities and access improvements, interpretive features, 1.5-mile trail loop, riparian landscape, river overlook, and expansive areas planted with native vegetation for habitat and community demonstrations. Perisho stated the proposed action would approve an application and if awarded grant funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The associated work outlined in the budget from the grant application below would be funded through requested funding in an amount up to \$1,636,680.

Laura Muraida asked how the flooding benefits were identified for the area. Perisho stated they were identified for the LA Basin and presents the same risk for damage from such an event.

**Board Member Paul motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chang seconded. Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

**15. Consideration of a resolution to certify completion of the RMC14001 River Wilderness Park Entry Improvements Project.**

Johnathan Perisho stated in October 2007, a River Wilderness Park Master Plan was adopted by the WCA. On May 15, 2014, the WCA accepted this grant number RMC14001 from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) in the amount of \$455,998 for planning and design through construction documents, for an initial package of entry improvements and related park features. Perisho stated these documents have been completed and have been moving through final approvals while comprehensive funds for elements are sought for an efficient construction process that would minimize significant costs and impacts of phasing. Perisho stated the tasks under this grant have been specific to development and delivery of construction documents for the Azusa River Wilderness Part Entry Improvements Project which have been completed and are accessible at a Dropbox link here due to size of documents: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1uhmy9se9n9l635/AABNeaDt9tkqOdwiiffcMuSr7a?dl=0>. Perisho stated elements of this plan set include walking paths, grading, and planting for water management and habitat, children's adventure play area, pavilion, restrooms, river overlooks, interpretive features, foundation for a new concession building, new entrance, and accessible parking. Perisho noted final grant closeout is contingent on certification of project completion.

**Board Member Chang motioned to approve this item. Board Member Diaz seconded.**

**Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**16. Consideration of a resolution to award contract to Ersoylu Consulting for River Ranger Pilot Program Evaluation Services.**

Suely Saro stated staff recommends the Board authorize Executive Officer or designee to negotiate and enter into a contract with Ersoylu Consulting for evaluation services for the Los Angeles River Ranger Pilot Program. Saro stated WCA issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in April 2022 for professional services to evaluate the River Ranger Pilot Program development process and program implementation. Only one proposal was received from Benchmarq Consulting by the closeout date and subsequently a second proposal was solicited from Ersoylu Consulting for comparison after the RFP process closed. Saro stated solicitation was conducted by a party that would not be a juror for scoring. The information presented in both proposals were reviewed and scored by RMC and WCA staff who composed a team of three (3) jurors. Benchmarq Consulting received an average of 86% and Ersoylu Consulting received an average of 76%. Saro stated there was significant discrepancy between scores and interviews were subsequently conducted with both consultants to better understand their background, experiences, and proposals to build consensus. The proposals were re-scored after the interviews, subsequently Benchmarq received 78.67% and Ersoylu Consulting received a score of 90%. Given that the proposals were reviewed for the quality of response, the procurement process was reopened on September 22, 2022 with an extended deadline for submission of 12pm October 21, 2022. Saro stated the RFP was updated to be inclusive of additional administrative language for clarity. As no new proposals or proposal

updates have been received the juror committee has maintained the scoring for Benchmark which received 78.67% and Ersoylu Consulting which received the highest score of 90%. Saro stated Ersoylu Consulting has been recommended for award of contract for River Ranger Pilot Program Evaluation Services. Saro added that upon no protest within 5 days of a posting of Notice of Intent to Award and board approval the WCA would move forward with negotiation to enter into a contract. Saro stated the recommendation is to approve award of contract Ersoylu for a not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000 to be funded through the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for program evaluation services for the LA River Ranger Program REACH Zone.

**Board Member Diaz motioned to approve this item. Board Member Muraida seconded.**

**Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

**17. Consideration of a resolution to amend the professional services contract (WCA21511) with Page & Turnbull to provide additional A/E services for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.**

Jeremy Munns stated the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project is an expansion of the River Park (in Avocado Heights) which will transform the old farm house location into a community water conservation resource center and demonstration facility. Munns stated the original project schedule anticipated permitting would be complete by the end of September 2022. Due to unexpected complexities with the project and the length of turnaround time within the County's review system, the permitting schedule has been extended six (6) months and is now anticipated to be complete by the end of February 2023. Munns stated this additional service proposal covers Page & Turnbull's additional permitting management and coordination services associated with this schedule extension. Munns stated staff recommends the Board authorize a design services contract amendment to WCA21511 with Page & Turnbull to provide additional A/E services for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project for an additional \$18,900, for a new authorized not to exceed contract value of \$361,329. Munns stated the contract amendment not to exceed \$18,900 will be funded under the RMC grant (RMC22013) which was awarded in October 2022 and includes a line item for A&E services

**Board Member Diaz motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chang seconded.**

**Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

**18. Closed session: Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1) and (4), the Watershed Conservation Authority may hold a closed session on the following item: River Park Phase 1A Step 2.**

The Board had a closed session on the following item: River Park Phase 1A Step 2. Elizabeth St. John stated the item was informational only, and no action was taken.

**19. Announcement of next meeting date – Thursday, January 19, 2023 @ 1:30 pm**

**20. Adjournment**

Board Member Muraida adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:54.