

**DATE:** June 1, 2023

**TO:** WCA Governing Board

**FROM:** Jane Tsong, Project Manager

**THROUGH:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 12: Consideration of a resolution to certify completion of the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition Project (RMC19006).

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**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board certify completion of the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition Project (RMC19006).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Work under a grant awarded by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition Project (grant number RMC19006) has been completed. The grant has accomplished:

- Purchase of the “Vasquez Overlook” parcel, AIN: 8684-024-908 (formerly AIN: 8684-024-001)
- Land Management Guidelines for both “Vasquez Overlook” and “Vasquez I” (AIN: 8684-024-907), which had been acquired in 2016
- Preacquisition activities for the undeveloped portions of the “Vasquez Entrance” parcel AIN: 8684-024-035

An overview of both acquisitions, which are now referred to as “Azusa Foothills Open Space” can be viewed at, along with biological surveys of both parcels:

[https://www.wca.ca.gov/azusa\\_foothills](https://www.wca.ca.gov/azusa_foothills)

The final Land Management Guidelines and video excerpts from stewardship workshops conducted from November 2022- January 2023 may be viewed at:

[https://www.wca.ca.gov/azusa\\_foothills\\_stewardship\\_plan](https://www.wca.ca.gov/azusa_foothills_stewardship_plan)

**BACKGROUND:**

RMC19006 provided the funds to purchase the “Vasquez Overlook” parcel, AIN: 8684-024-908 (formerly AIN: 8684-024-001). This transfer to WCA was recorded on January 24, 2020. At the same time, an access easement allowing WCA staff access to and use over the existing unpaved spur road from North Hilltop Drive to Glendora Ridge Motorway was recorded.

This easement provides an opportunity for WCA to build a public access program that integrates stewardship with public enjoyment in a way which aligns with the values of local community members.

WCA’s Azusa Foothills Open Space lands are situated on the south facing side of Glendora Ridge, just north of the City of Azusa in unincorporated Los Angeles County, and were acquired for their regional watershed and habitat conservation value. WCA’s Azusa Foothills Open Space extends and augments

other public lands flanking the San Gabriel Canyon, including WCA's Azusa Wilderness Park (71 acres) and Azusa-RMC JPA Open Space (>200 acres). [Exhibit A: Azusa Foothills Open Space Lands].

Acquisition of the parcel and easement by WCA facilitates a regional approach to stewardship and management and establishes a model for the management of adjacent public lands that is built on local partnerships and WCA's vision of "connecting communities through nature." The Azusa Foothills Open Space Stewardship Guidelines establishes a foundation for WCA's management of the Azusa Foothills Open Space lands by identifying and recognizing opportunities and challenges in management of these lands, and proposing directions for developing community benefits which may be explored through future partnerships. The plan is comprised of two components:

- Part I: Access and Stewardship Guidelines. A sustainable public access program will balance public use with the needs of the larger community, the neighboring ranch, local neighbors, and WCA's own organizational capacity. These guidelines summarize some of these considerations, while also recognizing their relationship to some of the unique assets of the Azusa environment that can be leveraged in "placemaking." The suggestions and feedback of community members collected over the course of eight Azusa Foothills Stewardship Workshops held between November 2022- January 2023, are presented here and synthesized into recommendations for building a community centered stewardship and access program.
- Part II: Azusa Foothills Open Space Invasive Species Management Guidelines (Wildscape Restoration, 2022). These guidelines lay out objectives for management of invasive species which have naturalized on WCA's Azusa Foothills Open Space lands, and will be used by WCA to contract for the required services as funding permits. The guidelines draw upon previous biological surveys of these lands conducted by Tidal Influence (2019) and Cooper Ecological Monitoring (2020).

This stewardship plan will guide WCA's management of the land, including seeking a structure for continued programming and access. The plan also communicates key issues to stakeholders to establish a foundation for continued dialogue and partnerships to solve challenges and shape opportunities for access and public benefit. WCA's acquisition of the Vasquez Overlook parcel and the completion of the Azusa Foothills Open Space Stewardship Guidelines demonstrates science-based approaches to managing our foothills open space and watershed health. The completion of a Stewardship Plan that is based on community feedback and conversation was a long-term investment in community engagement that may continue to influence stewardship in the Azusa foothills long after the term of this grant, by increasing public appreciation of our fragile open space and trails, and establishing a foundation for effective partnerships to share and protect these resources.

**FISCAL INFORMATION:** Final grant closeout is contingent on WCA Board certification of project completion. There is no fiscal impact

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**RESOLUTION 2023-15**

**RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO CERTIFY COMPLETION OF THE VASQUEZ OVERLOOK ACQUISITION PROJECT (RMC19006).**

**WHEREAS**, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established to facilitate joint projects between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and Los Angeles County Flood Control District; and

**WHEREAS**, The Watershed Conservation Authority has 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 will certify completion of the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition Project (RMC19006); and

**WHEREAS**, this action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); 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.
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated June 1, 2023.
4. **CERTIFIES** completion of the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition Project (RMC19006).

*~ End of Resolution ~*

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

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

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the  
**WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
On June 1, 2023

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Victoria Paul  
Governing Board Vice Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth St. John  
Deputy Attorney General