

**DATE:** September 25, 2025

**TO:** WCA Governing Board

**FROM:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 11: Consideration of a resolution to accept grant in the amount of \$4,350,000 from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Phase II Project

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the WCA Governing Board accept grant in the amount of \$4,350,000 from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Phase II Project

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Funding from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy will support completion of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project on the 2+ acre for a demonstration facility and visitor resource center at the San Gabriel River Park.

The first phase of the project is complete, the transformation of the space into a demonstration garden, to showcase many different indigenous plants within the Los Angeles basin mediterranean climate. The Center will include interpretive elements that explore the agrarian roots of the community and the watershed history of the San Gabriel River, its ecology and the role the river still plays today as an infiltration site providing potable drinking water to the region's communities.

The exterior garden space provides additional outdoor learning spaces for visitors and organized school groups. The site's design, stormwater BMPs, and planting will encourage residents to retrofit high resource consumptive landscapes into functional sites that capture and conserve water using simple and aesthetically pleasing strategies. It provides a clear example for residential landscapes to transition towards more resilient models showcasing water capture strategies such as rain gardens, bioswales, and cisterns, as well as presenting patterns of drought resistance built upon a foundation of native trees (estimated 40 trees) and shrubs. The site is designed to capture the first flush from rain events and then capture, filter and store rainwater via a system capable of managing a 3/4-inch rain event. Site improvements will provide a greywater system for localized irrigation needs and track the annual usage of potable water.

The indoor space is designed to feature local art, celebrate local water resources, and have interpretation, displays and programming that will demonstrate and highlight practical strategies for water security and climate resilience. The project will incorporate universal design features including water conservation, shade structures, and landscape features to mitigate sound and environmental impacts of the nearby freeway.

One of the center pieces on the two-acre property is the Park House, a 1929 Spanish colonial revival style farmhouse. However, upon inspection of the Parkhouse building, by the project team, inclusive of the architect (Page & Turnbull), construction management (Cummings Group), Phase I general contractor (LA Engineering), and the proposed operator team (LA County Parks and Recreation), it became clear that the build has significantly deteriorated beyond the point of recovery.

Given this finding, staff over the course of meetings with the architect and contractor in our professional opinions determined it would be more cost efficient and practical remove the Parkhouse and replace it with a new facility. The primary source of funding will go towards the new facility.

**BACKGROUND**

The River Center is situated in a two-acre area that includes an existing 1929 Spanish colonial revival style farmhouse. The site is being transformed into a water-wise educational resource and visitor center for the public. The Center is adjacent to the San Gabriel River Park, which opened to the public on June 8, 2024.

The San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project is an expansion of the River Park (former Duck Farm) to include the old farmhouse location as a community water conservation resource center and garden build out. Currently, this project is funded by an RMC Proposition 68 grant (RMC19013) and matching funds from the LA Sanitation District SEP for the waterwise education center to complete facility modifications/rebuild and non-water related public amenities including outdoor courtyard/classroom, restrooms.

**FISCAL INFORMATION**

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy will provide a Proposition 4 grant in the amount of \$4,350,000 for Phase II elements of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.

September 15, 2025 – Item 17

RESOLUTION 2025-51

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES  
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC) APPROVING A  
GRANT TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR  
THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CENTER AND GARDENS PHASE II  
PROJECT

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, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024; and

WHEREAS, Section 93020(a),, three hundred twenty million dollars (\$320,000,000) shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to reduce the risks of climate change impacts upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources, and increase public access, and shall be allocated in accordance with the following schedule: (6) San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, forty-eight million dollars (\$48,000,000); and

WHEREAS, The RMC may enter into any agreement with any public agency, private entity, or person necessary for the proper discharge of the conservancy's duties for the purposes set forth in Section 32602; 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, The proposed project meets an objective of the California Water Action Plan and Climate Resiliency Action Plan for more resilient and sustainably managed infrastructure, more reliable water supplies, restoration of important species and habitat; and

WHEREAS, The proposed project meets the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration consistent with AB 32; and

WHEREAS, The proposed project is consistent with the San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan; and

WHEREAS, The proposed project protects land and water resources; and

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

Resolution No. 2025-51

Therefore be it resolved that the RMC hereby:

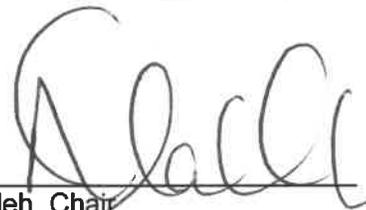
1. FINDS that this action is consistent with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act and is necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of Division 22.8 of the Public Resources Code.
2. FINDS that the proposed action is consistent with the San Gabriel and Lower San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan as adopted by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.
3. FINDS that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
4. ADOPTS the staff report dated September 15, 2025 for this item.
5. APPROVES a grant award to Watershed Conservation Authority in the amount of \$4,350,000 for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project for a performance period from November 1, 2025 through May 31, 2027.

~ End of Resolution ~

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the  
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVANCY on September 15, 2025.

Motion D. Fredendall Second: J. Kalmick

Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

  
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Ali Saleh, Chair

ATTEST:   
John Natalizio  
Deputy Attorney General

September 25, 2025– Item 11

**RESOLUTION 2025-31**

**CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT GRANT IN THE  
AMOUNT OF \$4,350,000 FROM THE SAN GABRIEL AND  
LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVANCY FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CENTER AND  
GARDENS PHASE II PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, The Watershed Conservation Authority has been established as a joint powers agency between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District); and

**WHEREAS**, The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has further 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**, The purpose of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project on 2+ acre is being built as a demonstration facility and visitor resource center at the San Gabriel River Park; and

**WHEREAS**, The first phase of the project is complete, the transformation of the space into a demonstration garden, to showcase many different indigenous plants within the Los Angeles basin mediterranean climate; and

**WHEREAS**, Phase II includes demolition of the existing structure, new prefabricated facility, garden improvements, utility connections, greywater system infrastructure and finishing; and

**WHEREAS**, The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act; 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 (CEQA).
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated September 25, 2025.
4. **APPROVES** acceptance of a grant in the amount of \$4,350,000 from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Phase II Project

*~ End of Resolution ~*

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

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

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the  
**WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
On September 25, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vincent Chang  
Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Natalizio  
Deputy Attorney General