

DATE: March 21, 2019

TO: WCA Governing Board

FROM: Alex Linz, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 20: Consideration of a resolution to accept the donation of real property AINs 8636-047-021, 8636-047-022, 8636-047-023, 8636-019-001, 8636-019-006, and 8636-020-034 known as Colby Property from Glendora Community Conservancy in the foothills of the City of Glendora.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board accept the donation of real property AINs 8636-047-021, 8636-047-022, 8636-047-023, 8636-019-001, 8636-019-006, and 8636-020-034 known as Colby Property from Glendora Community Conservancy in the foothills of the City of Glendora by transfer of Grant Deed. Property Owner Glendora Community Conservancy; WCA Negotiators: Mark Stanley; Laurie Collins, Esq.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The acquisition by donation of property The Colby Property, ±143.6 open space acres, is located in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills above the City of Glendora, within Los Angeles County (see Exhibit A). Acquiring the property would involve the transfer of donated land from Glendora Community Conservancy (GCC), a 501(c)(3) to the WCA and into public ownership. The recommended acceptance of donated land will increase the Authority's holding of conserved open space and habitat to maintain watershed health benefits, as well as, continue to provide public access to the nearly two-mile-long Colby Trail. The same trail joins Glendora Ridge trail which could support future connections to other WCA open space properties being considered as part of the San Gabriel Foothills Acquisition Master Plan. The transfer would require the drafting of legal documents as well as the engagement of a notary public and title officer and could be completed in less than one month from the decision to proceed.

BACKGROUND: The Glendora Community Conservancy was deeded the property by the City of Glendora after its acquisition through the Trust for Public Land in 1994 for a total consideration of \$1,470,000. Prop A (1992) funds mobilized by the City carried the requirement that the land be maintained and operated in perpetuity only for the purpose of an open space wildlife corridor open and accessible to the general public. The land supports high quality native plant communities including oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage and needle grass habitats. In 2014, the Colby Fire affected portions of the Colby Trail property and it remains in varying stages of regrowth. The trail follows a hilly ridge, the lower two thirds of which was burned on the west side. The drainage infrastructure at the Colby Trail trailhead is maintained by the City of Glendora.

Late in 2016, a Glendora Community Conservancy representative contacted WCA staff to explore the Authority's interest in taking over ownership of three foothill properties (Easley Canyon, Colby Trail and Blue Bird Ranch) held by GCC. GCC, as a small local, volunteer organization, has encountered challenges in maintaining and operating the properties. WCA has experience maintaining and developing open space for conservation and recreation. The agency recently met with the new City Manager of Glendora with whom we have good relations and who is interested in the local administration of significant expanses of

property in the city. WCA is well-positioned to mobilize resources through grants, including from its JPA partner RMC to meet any requirements that should arise through The Wildlife Conservation Board regarding the care of species of interest, including the thread-leafed brodiaea, known to occur on the property. The agency is property tax exempt and able to patrol acquired lands. Staff provided a letter of interest to GCC for consideration. The WCA's letter of interest in acquiring the properties was considered and accepted by GCC board of directors as evidenced by a willing seller letter (Exhibit B).

WCA staff and legal advisor have completed the following due diligence activities:

- Staff has reviewed the updated Preliminary Title Report with legal counsel and was advised that the non-monetary exceptions in the report do not pose significant risks to accepting the property
- Conducted site visits and found no significant physical defects (see Exhibit C)
- Established exemption from CEQA, the transfer of the property to the Authority is CEQA exempt
- Evaluated the potential for acceptance or refusal of the donation to advance agency goals

The transfer would preserve significant watershed and native species habitat as well as scenic resources and publicly recreational open space. The transfer also adds potential future access and connections to close-by conservation lands held by the WCA (River Wilderness Park and Azusa Foothills), the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy/City of Azusa (Azusa Foothill Property) and the City of Glendora's Wilderness Park that will be developed as part of WCA's San Gabriel Foothills Acquisition Master Plan. The existing Glendora Ridge trail connects to Colby Trail and could, with future trail development, connect to WCA property pending final acquisition at Easley Canyon, at the River Wilderness Park, and at Vasquez Ranch. Exhibits D and E provide aerial maps of the proposed acquisition, its vicinity, and surrounding land ownership as well as potential for connecting to existing and proposed foothill trails.

The Colby Trail property has historically required regular maintenance, described in Exhibit F, as it is in frequent use. These include weed abatement, trail clearance, and patrolling. WCA staff will apply for minor capital improvements throughout the LA County 5th District property such as securing the site and developing and installing wayfinding and interpretive signage with Prop A funding and therefore allow access to utilize Measure A operations and maintenance funding allocated to the Authority. Colby Trail Property has a USFWS grant for restoration of a Vernal Pool; an SCE Grant was just completed for Bird Survey/Research; in addition to City's mitigation project for riparian restoration on lower Colby Canyon Creek.

The instrument of property transfer will be a transfer of Grant Deed from grantor, Glendora Community Conservancy, to grantee Watershed Conservation Authority for no consideration to be signed by both parties and witnessed by a notary public with no escrow. The signed grant deed and WCA's certificate of acceptance, will be sent to the title officer with instructions to record the grant deed when the terms of acceptance such as the payment of tax liens are met. There may be small fees associated with these transactions which will be paid through the San Gabriel Foothills Acquisition Master Plan grant.

Staff finds the documents and the property to be acceptable. Staff recommends the Board approve the acceptance of the property donation from Glendora Community Conservancy by transfer of Grant Deed by and between Glendora Community Conservancy and Watershed Conservation Authority.

FISCAL INFORMATION: WCA staff labor, legal counsel, due diligence, and transaction costs-to-date estimated at \$4,800 are funded by the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan grant from the RMC. The final cost to complete the transfer is estimated to total \$6,000.

Current annual O&M costs are estimated at \$26,750 to be paid from WCA general operating accounts and additionally supported by future Prop A / Measure A funding. The GCC has a Maintenance Endowment allocated by TPL for \$75,000 in 1993 that would be transferred along with the property to WCA. Since most of the prior maintenance has been done with volunteers, close to half of the endowment is still in the bank for future use.

Exhibit A Glendora Conservancy: Properties

Total Acreage: 609.2 acres



Legend

 Glendora Conservancy  City Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles



Exhibit B
Willing Seller Letter

Item 20



RECEIVED

117-98
JAN 30 2017

WATERSHED CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY

Conservancy Mission: To promote the preservation of land and/or buildings for historical, educational, ecological, recreational, scenic, or open space opportunities. Tax ID #95-4393802 **Home of the Brodiaea Reserve – Glendora's Historic Flower

January 23, 2017

Mark Stanley
Executive Officer
Watershed Conservation Authority
100 N. Old San Gabriel Canyon Road
Azusa, CA 91702

Dear Mr. Stanley:

The Glendora Community Conservancy (GCC) Board of Directors at GCC Board Meeting on January 19, 2017, voted unanimously to send a "willing seller letter" to the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) for consideration of sale/transfer of all GCC properties to WCA ownership. Attached, please find a list of APN number identified properties of GCC, to be included in the transfer.

Please contact GCC for discussions regarding future partnering related to conservation and restoration opportunities on the parcels listed.

Feel free to contact GCC for any clarification and/or request for additional information.

Thank you for your timely consideration and response to the above offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Barron".

Sarah Barron, Secretary
Board of Directors
Glendora Community Conservancy
P.O. Box 963
Glendora, CA 91740
www.glendoraconservancy.org

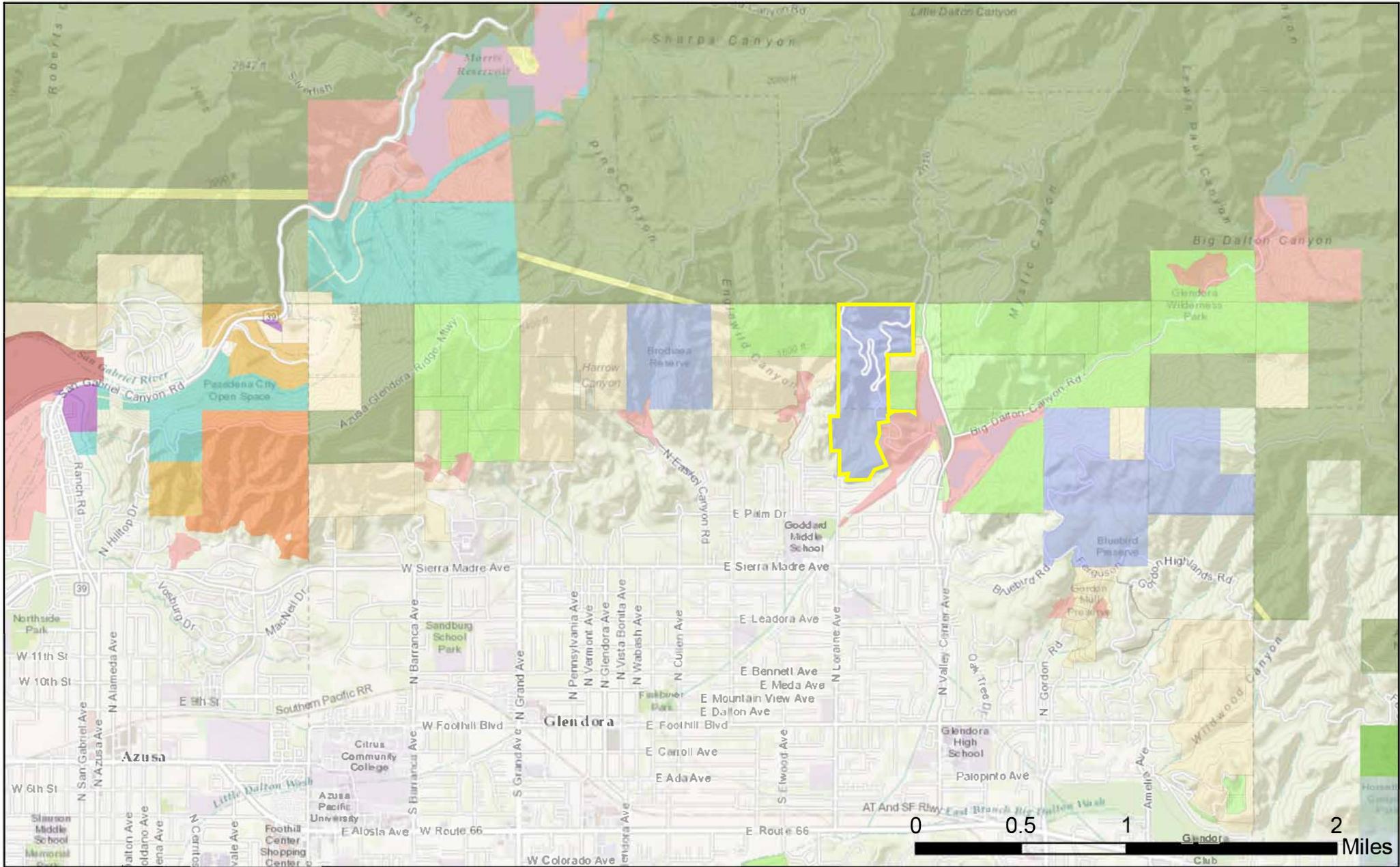
Phone/Fax 626.335.1771 ☐☐ GCC, P.O. Box 963, Glendora, CA 91740 ☐☐ www.glendoraconservancy.org

Glendora Community Conservancy Site Visit

5/24/2018



Exhibit D Azusa Canyon Foothills Vicinity Map and Landownership

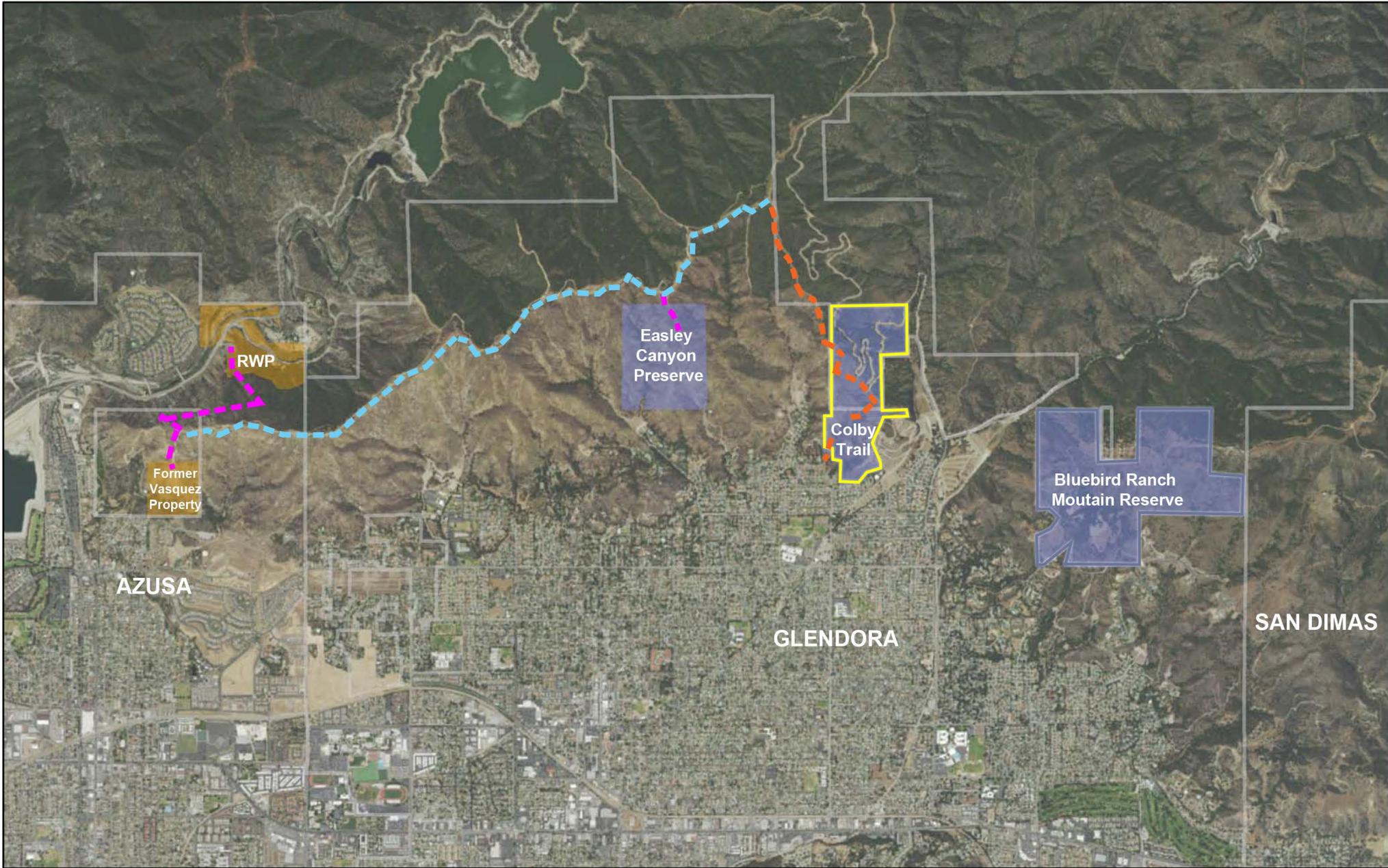


Legend

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|----------------------|--|---------------|--|---------|
| | US Army Corps of Eng. | | City of Pasadena | | Glendora Conservancy | | Private | | Utility |
| | City of Azusa | | City of Glendora | | LAC Parks & Rec | | RMC-Azusa JPA | | WCA |
| | City of San Dimas | | LACFCD | | US Forest Service | | | | |



Exhibit E Azusa Canyon Foothills



Legend

Foothill Cities

Glendora Ridge Mtwy

Glendale Conservancy Property (Future Acquisition)

Watershed Conservation Authority Property

Potential Trail

Colby Trail



Colby Trail Operations and Maintenance

Maintenance Item	Frequency	Description	Work by	Effort hrs/yr	Rate	Total
Weed Abatement	Annual	Brush clearance around structures per LA County requirements. This mainly require weed whacking. Deadlines for completion vary from May to June depending on the parcel.	MRCA Rangers and Camp 19 crew	30	\$ 175.00	\$5,250
Trail clearance	Annual	At the end of the Spring season, weeds and chapparal need to be cleared back from trail in several locations.	Conservation Corps	16	\$ 100.00	\$1,600
Children's Forest Mowing	Annual	At the end of the Spring season, the grasses and weeds around the planted trees need to be mowed down. This is usually done with a tractor/mower.	County Ag	10	\$ 50.00	\$500
Stream culverts	Annual	Culverts running under the trail need to be cleared of debris. Some years there is not much debris.	Conservation Corps	16	\$ 100.00	\$1,600
Water bars	Annual	About a dozen water bars, consisting of low profile dirt berms, serve to shunt running water off of the trail. These berms need to be built up before the rainy season.	Conservation Corps	8	\$ 100.00	\$800
Hazard trees	Occasionally	Dead trees and limbs along the trail need to be cut down. This is normally not a big effort, however, there have been more dead trees in recent years following the Colby fire.	MRCA Rangers and Camp 19 crew	24	\$ 175.00	\$4,200
Bicycle jumps	Occasionally	Berms and jumps erected by BMXers on the trails need to be removed. This happens very infrequently; about 4 times over the last 10 years. Quick removal discourages repeat activity.	Conservation Corps	6	\$ 100.00	\$600
Patrolling	Weekly	check condition and activities on trail to inform WCA. Remove graffiti. Empty trashcans at trailhead every 2 weeks	MRCA Rangers	112	\$ 100.00	\$11,200
General liability insurance	Annual	general liability insurance	Henderson	1	\$ 1,000.00	\$1,000
Total				223		\$26,750

March 21, 2019 – Item 20

RESOLUTION 2019-21

**RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE DONATION OF REAL PROPERTY
ASSESSOR IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (AIN) 8636-047-021, 8636-047-
022, 8636-013-023, 8636-019-001, 8636-019-006, AND 8636-020-034
KNOWN AS COLBY PROPERTY FROM GLENDORA COMMUNITY
CONSERVANCY IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE CITY OF GLENDORA**

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established as a joint powers agency between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Los Angeles County Flood Control 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, this action accepts the donation of real property AINs 8636-047-021, 8636-047-022, 8636-013-023, 8636-019-001, 8636-019-006, AND 8636-020-034 known as Colby Property from Glendora Community Conservancy in the foothills of the City of Glendora; 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 March 21, 2019.
4. **ACCEPTS** the donation of real property AINs 8636-047-021, 8636-047-022, 8636-013-023, 8636-19-001, 8636-019-006, AND 8636-020-034 known as Colby Property from Glendora Community Conservancy in the foothills of the City of Glendora.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On March 21, 2019

Herlinda Chico, Governing Board Vice Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall, Jr.
Deputy Attorney General