

June 3, 2013; Agenda Item No. 23

Resolution No. 13-57

RESOLUTION OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY AUTHORIZING A
PROPOSITION 50 GRANT TO COMMUNITY CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS FOR
THE LOS ANGELES RIVER GREENWAY PROJECT, LOS ANGELES

WHEREAS, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is authorized to award grants to non-profit agencies pursuant to Section 33204.2 of the Public Resources Code; and

WHEREAS, The State of California has authorized expenditure of funds from Proposition 50, the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Act of 2002, to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for capital outlay and grants to acquire, protect, and restore land and water resources in the Los Angeles River watershed; and

WHEREAS, Community Conservation Solutions has made a request for a grant from Proposition 50, Chapter 10, Section 79570(c); and

WHEREAS, the proposed project is consistent with the *Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan*, the *Rim of the Valley Corridor Plan*, and the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan*; and

WHEREAS, The proposed action is being taken subject to approval of the grant for compliance with the General Obligation Bond Law; and

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

WHEREAS, The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); Now

Therefore Be It Resolved, That the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy hereby:

1. FINDS that the proposed action is consistent with the *Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan*, the *Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan*, and the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan* as adopted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.
2. FINDS that the proposed action is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Objectives.
3. FINDS that the proposed project implements the goals stated in Proposition 50.

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4. FINDS that the proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
5. ADOPTS the staff report and recommendations dated June 3, 2013 for this item.
6. ADOPTS all of the preceding whereas clauses.
7. AUTHORIZES a grant of Proposition 50 funds to Community Conservation Solutions in the amount of \$300,000 for the Los Angeles River Greenway Trail & Habitat Restoration, Los Angeles.
8. FURTHER AUTHORIZES the Chairperson to execute the grant agreement and to perform any and all acts necessary to carry out this resolution; without limiting the generality of the foregoing, such authority shall include those provisions that he shall determine in the exclusive exercise of his discretion are necessary to carry out the purposes of this resolution and to comply with the policies of the Conservancy, and to otherwise carry out the provisions of state law and regulations.

~ End of Resolution ~

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was adopted at a meeting of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, duly noticed and held according to law, on the 3rd day of June, 2013 at Calabasas, California.

Dated: 6/3/13


Executive Director

State of California—The Natural Resources Agency

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
(323) 221-8900

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 3, 2013

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 23: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Proposition 50 grant to Community Conservation Solutions for the Los Angeles River Greenway project, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a Proposition 50 grant to Community Conservation Solutions for the Los Angeles River Greenway project in the amount of \$300,000, Los Angeles.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2 (a) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: Community Conservation Solutions, a non-profit organization, has submitted the attached application for a grant for the Los Angeles River Greenway Trail & Habitat Restoration, extending from Coldwater Canyon to Whitsett Avenue in the City of Los Angeles. The project will restore native habitat, plant native trees, shrubs and plants in an ecosystem-based design, and provide public access to a closed section of the Los Angeles River by constructing a half-mile scenic walking trail. By closing a gap between existing river trail segments, the project will create over five miles of continuous river trail in the San Fernando Valley. Planned improvements also includes a natural bioswale, an ADA-compliant access ramp, entry gate, safety fencing, natural seating and interpretive elements related to the Los Angeles River.

Objectives of the grant are to protect the Los Angeles River watershed through the restoration of native habitat, and promote public access to the watershed's land, water and wildlife resources by creating a half-mile trail link that will complete a five-mile long river trail. The site's location near public transit, public parking, and a pedestrian and bicycle bridge ensures that the project is easily accessed by the public. Visitors will experience native plant communities and see water conservation in action with a natural bioswale. The requested funds will match funds already secured through the California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Transportation, and in-kind services from the applicant, Studio City Residents Association, and Mia Lehrer and Associates.

Analysis—Proposition 50 and the Common Ground Plan

Section 79570 of the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act

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of 2002 (Proposition 50), allocates funds to various entities “for the purpose of protecting coastal watersheds”. Section 79570 (c) of the Act specifically allocates funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy “for protection of the Los Angeles River watershed upstream of the northernmost boundary of the City of Vernon”. Section 79508 of the Act states that watershed protection activities in the Los Angeles River watershed shall be consistent with the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan*.

The proposed grant constitutes watershed protection in the Los Angeles River watershed. The geographic area covered by the grant is within the Upper Los Angeles River watershed, and the project includes elements to protect and restore the river, watershed, and associated land, water and other natural resources.

The project planning and design grant is consistent with the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan* as required by Section 79508 of the Water Code. The *San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan*, also known as and hereinafter referred to as the "Common Ground" plan, was jointly developed by the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The purpose of the plan is to “articulate a vision for the future of the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watersheds” and “provide a framework for future watershed and open space planning.” The plan outlines a holistic approach to watershed protection and development, organized by a set of Guiding Principles. These broad principles are designed to accommodate the varying priorities and needs of projects in the region.

To help guide decision making in watershed planning and project selection, the Common Ground plan includes a set of Project Evaluation Criteria (Appendix F), developed to help the agencies determine “regionally significant” park, trail, and restoration projects. The Evaluation Criteria identify a diverse set of values that a site might have, such as Open Space, Recreational Resources, Wildlife Resources, Access, *et cetera*.

The Los Angeles River Greenway Trail & Habitat Restoration Project scores highly when tested using the Common Ground Plan’s Project Evaluation Criteria. In the value criteria of Public Recreation, Trail Project, Urban Park, Sustainability, and Partnership, the project achieves goals with the highest value:

- The project serves a visitor base in a regional or greater geographic area.
- The project builds a significant link in a major regional trail.
- The project will improve or significantly enhance open space parkland in a densely urban and/or park-poor community.
- The project provides innovative and substantial water conservation techniques.
- The project is significant to one or more partner government agencies with funds available.

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Analysis - General Obligation Bond Law

The General Obligation Bond Law provides that bond funds may be used for the construction and acquisition of "capital assets." Capital assets include major maintenance, reconstruction, demolition for purposes of reconstruction of facilities, and retrofitting work that is ordinarily done no more often than once every 5 to 15 years or expenditures that continue or enhance the useful life of the capital asset (Government code Section 16727 (a)). Capital assets also includes equipment with an expected useful life of two years or more, and tangible physical property with an expected useful life of 10 to 15 years. Section 16727 (a) also allows bond funds to be used for costs that are incidentally but directly related to construction or acquisition including costs for planning, engineering and other design work.

The activities that Community Conservation Solutions proposes to fund with this grant constitute planning and construction of an improvement project to protect land and water resources, protect and restore rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water and other natural resources. Thus, the proposed activities fall within the definition of "capital assets" or are incidentally but directly related to acquisition or construction, and therefore are proper under the General Obligation Bond Law.

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The Natural Resources Agency

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
 5750 Ramirez Canyon Road
 Malibu, California 90265
 Phone: 310-589-3200
 Fax: 310-589-3207
 www.smmc.ca.gov

Grant Application

Print Form

Project Title:	L.A. River Greenway Trail & Habitat <small>Restoration, Coldwater Canyon to Whitsett</small>	Date:	May 21, 2013
Funds:	Proposition 50	Amount:	300,000
Applicant Name:	Community Conservation Solutions	Match amount:	\$1,796,531
Address:	2554 Lincoln Blvd., Ste 223, Los Angeles	Match source:	See attached pages
State/Province:	California	Total Project Cost:	2,096,531
Zip/Postal code:	90291	Brief Project Description:	Restore native habitat in an ecosystem-based design and create a half-mile scenic walking trail to provide public access to a closed section of the Los Angeles
Phone:	310-398-8584		
Fax:	310-398-8564		

Grantee's Authorized Representative:	Esther Feldman	310-398-8584, x. 1	eldman@conservationsolutions.org
	<i>Name and Title</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>Email</i>

Person with day-to-day responsibility:	Chun Lu	310-398-8584, x. 2	clu@conservationsolutions.org
	<i>Name and Title</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>Email</i>

Project Objective: See attached pages

*Attach additional pages as necessary

Project Address: North bank of L.A. River, from Coldwater Canyon Avenue to Whitsett Avenue, Studio City, CA

Latitude:	34.14	Acreage:	3.156 acres	Trail Length:	One half mile
Longitude:	118.4	APN's:	see attached pages	Stream Miles:	.5348
Congressional District:	30	State Senate District:	20	Assembly District:	46

Tasks / Milestones: See attached pages **Budget:** **Completion Date:**

*Attach additional pages as necessary

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/> Signature of Authorized Representative	5/23/21013 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/> Date

Community Conservation Solutions

**L.A. River Greenway Trail and Habitat Restoration Project
Coldwater Canyon to Whitsett Avenue, San Fernando Valley**

Match source:

CalTrans-EEMP, CA Resources Agency-River Parkways, City of Los Angeles, L.A. County Prop. A(pending), Studio City Residents Association, Community Conservation Solutions, Mia Lehrer and Associates and other

Brief Project Description

The L.A. River Greenway Trail and Habitat Restoration Project will restore native habitat, plant 4,000 native trees, shrubs and plants in an ecosystem-based design, and provide public access to a closed section of the Los Angeles River by constructing a half-mile scenic walking trail to bridge the gap between existing river trail segments. The project will create over 5 miles of continuous river trail in the park-poor and densely-populated San Fernando Valley, and includes a natural bioswale, ADA-compliant access ramp, entry gate, safety fencing, natural seating and L.A. River interpretive elements.

APN's:

22375-010-902, 2375-018-903, 2375-021-903

Community Conservation Solutions

L.A. River Greenway Trail and Habitat Restoration Project Coldwater Canyon to Whitsett Avenue, San Fernando Valley

Project Objective

The L.A. River Greenway Trail and Habitat Restoration Project will restore native habitat along the L.A. River between Coldwater Canyon and Whitsett Avenues in the San Fernando Valley, and will create a trail to bridge the gap between existing trail segments, providing public access to a closed section of the L.A. River. This project will create over five miles of continuous L.A. River trail in the Valley, and will help provide regional public access to the L.A. River by connecting to a river-adjacent public parking garage and pedestrian and bicycle bridge.

The grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy will help match public and private funds and in-kind services committed to the project by the California Department of Transportation's Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program, the California Natural Resources Agency's River Parkway grant program, City of Los Angeles, Studio City Residents Association, Community Conservation Solutions, and Mia Lehrer and Associates. The project will create an easily-accessible and attractive natural public open space, restore native habitat in an ecosystem-based design, enhance drainage and provide natural stormwater capture, improve air quality and provide important river-themed interpretation. The project includes the following elements:

- One-half mile of ADA-compliant decomposed granite walking trail
- ADA-compliant public access ramp
- River-themed entry gate
- Safety fencing along the river channel
- Restoration of native oak woodland, mixed scrub and chaparral communities using indigenous plants in an ecosystem-based design
- Plant 4,000 native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowering plants
- Natural bioswale to capture stormwater runoff and enhance infiltration
- Incorporate river-themed interpretive elements that tell the river's natural, hydrologic and human stories
- Create a natural bioswale to improve site drainage and infiltration
- Construct a shaded river viewing area with natural seating, interpretive signage and a signed native habitat walk
- Install a smart irrigation system to establish new plantings

The L.A. River Greenway Trail and Habitat Restoration Project will a) increase the function of the L.A. River as a regional recreational destination; b) showcase ecosystem-based habitat restoration design focused on re-establishing natural plant communities for long-term sustainability and creation of viable native invertebrate and bird habitat; c) provide vital habitat for resident and migratory bird species; and install smart irrigation; d) help improve water quality in the L.A. River by reducing sedimentation and increasing infiltration; e) create a quiet and natural location as a respite from the pressures of surrounding urban congestion; and f) improve public health by promoting walking and jogging along the L.A. River.

Community Conservation Solutions

This project is located in the park-poor, heavily urbanized and ethnically diverse San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles, with nearly two million residents, heavy traffic and a serious lack of both open space and walking trails. There is less than one acre of accessible parkland per 1,000 people within three miles of the project site - far below the National Recreation and Park Association recommended average of four to ten acres. Within a three-mile radius of the project site, 55% of the population is non-white: 42% is Latino; 6% is Asian/Pacific Islander and 4% is African American. Youth make up 26% of the population and there are 3,500 youth per square mile.

By restoring native habitat in an ecosystem-based design, restoring soil fertility and installing a natural bioswale, the project will help improve the overall water quality of the Los Angeles River by increasing water uptake and natural filtration of pollutants and site infiltration of runoff. The extensive and deep root structures of native trees, shrubs and plants will increase both the uptake and infiltration of water on the site and will increase the natural biological uptake processes in the soil, providing increased natural filtration of on-site stormwater runoff.

The project will help reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions consistent with the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 by using a native ecosystem model to maximize carbon sequestration. Replacing non-native trees and plants with a complex of overstory and understory native trees, shrubs, grasses and other plants that are adapted to the region's drought cycles will maximize canopy coverage and ensure longevity, so carbon sequestration can continue for many decades to come. This will help California to reach both 2020 and 2050 targets for GHG emission reductions, while also reducing local heat island impacts, which will increase with climate change. Increasing shade cover through strategic use of long-lived, drought-adapted native trees and plants that are tolerant of temperature and moisture swings will help adaptability to the climate change impacts of both higher and lower temperatures for longer periods of time.

The L.A. River Greenway Trail and Habitat Restoration Project is an important piece of the entire 51-mile long L.A. River Greenway being established in 15 cities, and provides a vital addition to the L.A. River Greenway in the densely-populated San Fernando Valley. The site location provides easy regional public access to the L.A. River by both public transit and car, with a bus stop a few yards from the planned entrance, two freeway off-ramps within one mile, and a nearby 391-car public parking garage adjacent to the L.A. River trail.

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Community Conservation Solutions

Project Title: L.A. River Greenway Trail & Habitat Restoration, Coldwater Canyon to Whitsett Avenue

Task#	Tasks/Milestones	Budget	Completion Date
1	Planning & Site Design prepare draft trail design; incorporate engineering, landscape architecture, trail elements & habitat restoration; planning; site survey; community meetings; develop documents	30,000	September, 2014
2	Permitting Obtain permit & use agreement from Los Angeles County Flood Control District & U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; meetings; coordinate with Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy/MRCA	60,000	September, 2015
3	Construction, Labor & Materials	182,000	June, 2016
4	Project Administration & Direction coordinate subcontractors, grant management, document management, documentation, correspondence, meetings	5,000	June, 2016
	Expense & Contingency	23,000	June, 2016
	Total	300,000	