

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: December 11, 2017

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 25: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to implement Chapter 452, Statutes of 2017 (Assembly Bill 1558) with matching funds from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy as determined through the agreement established in item 24.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to implement Chapter 452, Statutes of 2017 (Assembly Bill 1558) with matching funds from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy as determined through the agreement established in item 24.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204, 33204.2 and 33204.27 of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers Conservancy (RMC) are establishing an agreement to implement Assembly Bill 1558 (AB 1558), Chapter 452, Statutes of 2017. AB 1558 will therefore require extensive coordination between the Conservancies and this agreement will establish how the Conservancies will work together on implementation, planning, design and delivery of the AB 1558 River Rangers program. Please see materials for Item 24 for more information regarding the agreement. The proposed grant is for \$500,000 split evenly between the two Conservancies for project planning and design of the AB 1558 River Rangers program in accordance with the agreement.

The goals of the River Ranger program are identified in ab 1558 as follows:

1. Establish an identity for the Los Angeles River as a place for its communities to enjoy recreational opportunities and learn about the river's history and environmental resources.
2. Improve public safety for visitors to the Los Angeles River.
3. Foster collaboration among state and local government entities and other public agencies with jurisdiction over the Los Angeles River, and coordinate the work of these entities and public agencies with regard to the development, maintenance, and enhancement of the river and its resources.
4. Protect the parks, open space, and other public places adjacent to the Los Angeles

- River.
5. Engage communities along the Los Angeles River in the protection and preservation of the Los Angeles River and its resources.
  6. Promote equal access and equity among all communities along the Los Angeles River with regard to the development and placement of improvements along the river.
  7. Monitor the physical conditions, environmental health, and development of green space along the Los Angeles River.
  8. Provide a system for coordinating the work of river rangers with programs and services offered by local governments and conservation corps.
  9. Incorporate the findings and principles expressed in the “Presidential Memorandum--Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Our National Parks, National Forests, and Other Public Lands and Waters,” dated January 12, 2017.

No later than June 30, 2018, the Conservancies are required to submit a copy of the plan to the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code. With such a short timeline, the Conservancy is establishing the agreements and funding necessary as soon as possible.

Earlier this year, the State of California appropriated Proposition 1's Urban Creeks funding to the Conservancies. Of the ninety-eight million dollars (\$98,000,000) appropriated to the Conservancies, thirteen million dollars (\$13,000,000) is for planning and implementation of projects approved jointly by both Conservancies. The proposed grant is to be funded from these joint funds.

#### **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 to be funded with this grant constitute planning of projects 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.

**Scoring - Competitive Grant Program**

Please see the attached Proposition 1 grant analysis. Scoring under the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Guidelines results in the Upper Los Angeles River Project Planning and Design project receiving 74 points (out of a possible 86; 61 minimum required), plus 4 out of 4 climate change value points, plus 20 out of 25 possible points under Additional Criteria. Total points: 98 (out of possible 115).

Consideration: The application from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is for \$250,000 of Proposition 1 funds.