

MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944 Fax (323) 221-9934

September 16, 2019

Chairperson Irma Muñoz
c/o Rorie Skei, Chief Deputy Executive Director
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
570 W. Ave 26, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065

Proposition 1 and 68 Competitive Grant Application River Green Project Planning and Design

Dear Chairperson Muñoz and Conservancy Members:

I am pleased to present the enclosed application for a grant for River Green Project Planning and Design. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) requests a total grant in the sum of \$1,000,000 from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), under the Conservancy's Urban Creeks Program, and also from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), under the Conservancy's Competitive Grant Program. The MRCA's Governing Board approved submittal of this application on August 7, 2019.

The proposed grant would fund a pre-improvement planning study that seeks to frame on-going River discussions with the premise that revitalization is fundamentally a green process. River Green is the idea that the essence of a river can be understood through its identifiable natural resources, such as presence of water, wildlife, ability to support recreation, etc., and that those characteristics are fundamentally important to all. The proposed grant will be used to develop a guiding vision and identify and develop a wide range of potential projects that would implement the River Green concept, including acquisition of land, public access points, and recreational opportunities throughout the watershed.

Please refer to the enclosed materials that describe the proposed grant and how it fits the Conservancy's Evaluation Criteria. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact me at (323) 221-9944, extension 117.

Sincerely,

Cara Meyer
Deputy Executive Officer

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
GRANT APPLICATION**

Project Name: River Green Project- Planning and Design	Amount of Request: \$1,000,000.00
Applicant Name: Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	Total Project Cost: \$1,000,000.00
	Matching Funds:
	Lat/Long: Various

Applicant Address: 570 W Avenue 26, Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90065	Project Address: various		
	County	Senate District	Assembly District
	Los Angeles	Various	Various
	Tax ID: 770112367		

Phone: (323) 221-9944
Email: Cara.meyer@mrca.ca.gov

Grantee's Authorized Representative:

Cara Meyer. Deputy Executive Officer <i>Name and Title</i>	323-221-9944 x117 <i>Phone</i>
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Overhead Allocation Notice:

- ✓ Any overhead costs will be identified as a separate line item in the budget and invoices.
- ✓ The Conservancy encourages grantees to reduce overhead costs including vehicle and phone expenses.
- ✓ The overhead allocation policy has been submitted prior to, or with, the grant application.

Outreach and Advertising Requirement:

- ✓ Applicant has read the staff report and board resolution regarding contract policies.
- ✓ Applicant has adopted contract policies for the purpose of increasing outreach and advertising to disadvantaged businesses and individuals.

All check boxes must be checked


Brief Project Description: The proposed grant will be used to develop a guiding vision and identify and develop a wide range of potential projects that would implement the River Green concept, including acquisition of land, public access points, and recreational opportunities throughout the watershed.

*attach additional pages with project detail

Tasks / Milestones: See attached.	Budget:	Completion Date
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For Acquisition Projects:	APN(s): N/A
	Acreage: N/A

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.


9/16/2019

Signature of Authorized Representative
Date

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

SCOPE OF WORK / PROJECT DESCRIPTION

River Green is the idea that the essence of a river can be understood through its identifiable natural resources, such as presence of water, wildlife, ability to support recreation, etc., and that those characteristics are fundamentally important to all. The historic pattern of land use and development around the Los Angeles River does not promote these values. Since the mid-1990s, MRCA, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and many community-based organizations have striven to keep protection of the river's natural resources in the forefront of discussions about the river's future. The success of MRCA's river parks, and their emotional appeal, attests both to the universal appeal of natural resources and to the need for more green projects on the river. These types of projects also increase the region's resiliency to the impacts of climate change and benefit all communities.

Several important regional river planning efforts are currently underway (e.g. the Conservancy's Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan and the County's Los Angeles River Master Plan Update) that seek to coordinate stakeholders and unify planning efforts throughout the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed. While these planning efforts strive to find balance in competing policies, goals, and systemic issues that affect the watershed, the region's current needs for low-cost housing, transportation options, and the conscientious use of water resources have the potential to overshadow our equally dire needs for more green space, natural habitat, outdoor passive recreation, and spaces for respite. Furthermore, today there is little discussion about connecting the region's waterway corridors to the wildlife and trail corridors that existing in the surrounding mountains, and this also needs to be included in current planning.

The MRCA seeks to frame River discussions with the premise that revitalization is fundamentally a green process. The proposed pre-improvement planning grant for River Green will focus on ensuring that the policies and goals now being developed include the *River Green* concept, and furthermore that it is deeply integrated in the efforts of all of the jurisdictions working along the waterways of the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed. Staff plan to work with a team of consultants to develop a guiding vision and recommendations that will be recommended for implementation in all the various planning efforts currently underway. Technical and engineering studies that support and quantify the *River Green* concept will be conducted. The proposed grant will also be used to identify and develop a wide range of potential projects that would implement the *River Green* concept, including acquisition of land, and development of public access points and recreational opportunities throughout the watershed.

MRCA is proposing that both Proposition 68 and Proposition 1 funds fund this effort, and responses to the evaluation criteria for both programs are provided below, separately.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

BUDGET

See attached budget.

TIMELINE

MRCA requests a completion date of June 30, 2022. Work will commence upon execution of the grant agreement.

Selection of consultants: 2-4 months,
Pre-improvement planning and analysis: 12-18 months
Preparation of recommendations: 3-4 months
Review by staff: 3-6 months
Contingency for unexpected delays: 6 months

Total: 24-36 months

PROPOSITION 68 - RESPONSES TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

Prioritization Value

The proposed project achieves the following Proposition 68 grant program priorities:

PV1. Project achieves 80001(b)(3)(4) by providing urban recreation and protecting or restoring natural resources.

The proposed Project will provide urban recreation and protect natural resources by using technical and engineering studies that support and quantify the River Green concept. The proposed grant will also be used to identify and develop a wide range of potential projects that would implement the River Green concept, including acquisition of land, public access points, and recreational opportunities throughout the watershed.

PV2. Project achieves 80001(b)(5) by providing workforce education and training, contractor, and job opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

The Project will seek to partner with project partners to conduct programs specifically designed to increase employment opportunities for disadvantaged communities. MRCA plans to partner with Community Nature Connection, a local environmental non-profit that trains and employs youth, for community engagement and outreach services.

PV3. Project achieves 80001(b)(6) by having already obtained all required permits and entitlements.

No permits or entitlements are needed. During the planning and design phase, consultants will help identify the permits and entitlements needed for project recommendations.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

PV4. Project achieves 80001(b)(9) - advances solutions to prevent displacement if a potential unintended consequence associated with the project is an increase in the cost of housing.

This criterion is not applicable for the pre-improvement planning itself. However, these issues are critical and may be a key component of any implementation plan that comes out of the effort.

PV5. Project achieves three or more actions listed in 80001(b)(8)(A through G).

By nature of the Project, it will accomplish the purpose of promoting diversity and inclusion in our public lands as recommended by Proposition 68. A primary purpose of the Project is to improve open space access to the public through our equally dire needs for more green space, natural habitat, outdoor passive recreation, and spaces for respite. The removal of barriers throughout the Upper Los Angeles River watershed will benefit all visitors and increase opportunities for visitors with disabilities. Active outreach to diverse populations, particularly minority, low-income, and disabled populations, is an integral part of the MRCA's goals. All communications about the Project will use multilingual and culturally appropriate materials. As part of their regular employee duties, MRCA staff promote awareness of open spaces, parks, trail locations, and restoration activities.

PV6. Project achieves more than one of the Conservancy's Strategic Objectives.

The proposed project furthers many of the following Conservancy Strategic Objectives:

- Implement the *Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan*.
- Implement the *Los Angeles County River Master Plan*.
- Implement the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan*.
- Create fifty-one miles of continuous river parkway and greenbelt
- Develop recreation, park, trail, and habitat restoration opportunities
- Restore balance between natural and human systems in the watersheds
- Coordinate watershed planning across jurisdictions and boundaries, encourage multi-objective planning and projects, use science as a basis for planning
- Further cooperation with local governments in the region to secure open space and parkland.
- Expand efforts to integrate nature into the urban environment.
- Expand education, public access, and resource stewardship components in a manner that best serves the public, protects habitat, and provides recreational opportunities.
- Develop long term capital improvement and maintenance plans

A primary purpose of the Project is study and create project recommendations that implement the River Green concept through improved public access that provide new and increased opportunities for visitation, recreation, programs, services, and activities for a variety of park users and to contribute to more enjoyable user experiences. This will also help to increase resource stewardship and educational/interpretative capabilities.

PV7. Project achieves more than one Common Ground guiding principle.

The proposed project furthers the following Common Ground guiding principles:

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

- Improve access to open space and recreation for all communities.
- Promote stewardship of the landscape.
- Establish riverfront greenways to cleanse water, hold floodwaters, and extend open space
- Encourage multiple-objective planning and projects.

The Project seeks to provide recommendations that implement the River Green concept through projects that improve public access and provide new and increased opportunities for recreation, enhance wildlife connectivity and create habitat, improve water quality, and coordinate planning across the region, which are all in line with Common Ground's guiding principles.

Category Value

CV1. The project will provide benefits to multiple values including water, recreation, habitat, and interpretation of natural resources.

Upon completion, the River Green concept Project's recommendations and its related improvement projects will have benefits to water, recreation, and habitat, and for the interpretation of natural resources. By strategically focusing public access and green open space in areas of least impact to habitat, the projects will be able to protect sensitive habitat while providing for this unique river experience. Protection of the Upper Los Angeles River watershed enhances the movement of large and small mammals.

CV2. The project implements a major component of an existing relevant plan related to a major recreational facility, regional ecosystem restoration, or master land protection plan.

In addition to the *Common Ground Plan*, the proposed improvements are consistent with other applicable plans, including the following:

- *Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (ARBOR)*
- *Greater Los Angeles Area Integrated Regional Water Management Plan*
- *City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan*
- *County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles River Master Plan*
- *Revitalization Plan for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (under development)*
- *Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan*
- *County of Los Angeles General Plan*

CV3. The project provides a plan or feasibility study to advance cooperative watershed health protection activities or recreation goals important to two or more organizations.

The goal of the Project is to develop pre-improvement plans for the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed open space, outdoor passive recreation, natural habitat enhancements,

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

and water quality in order to enhance watershed protection and restoration which is important to the MRCA and SMMC. Analyzing the feasibility of proposed improvements and new project implementation is an inherent part of pre-improvement planning.

CV4. Applicant has a realistic plan for serving disadvantaged communities upon completion of the improvements.

Disadvantaged communities will be served during and after the planning and design phase. Community input will be used to create project recommendations that encompass the River Green concepts and the resulting project will serve as a guide for each of the regional and local watershed planning documents that will set the course for future water resource utilization, open space, habitat, and recreational opportunities.

CV5. The project uses renewable or non-potable water sources of water, such as reclaimed water, captured stormwater, or other method.

The types of projects recommended will include water conservation measures, leading to more reliable water supplies for the State. Developing open space in the urbanized environment could create new opportunities to re-use stormwater and graywater.

CV6. Project implements Best Management Practices (BMP) to treat stormwater.

All River Green concept project recommendation will have BMP principles. Upon completion, the River Green Project will identify projects that feature many uses and benefits including: nature education and habitat for the area's animal species and promote nature education; stormwater capture and treatment resulting in improved watershed health and water quality in the Los Angeles River and watershed; increased vegetation will reduce concentration of greenhouse gases (slowing the rate of global warming) and reduce the heat-island effect; reduced impervious surfaces and promotion of infiltration projects following contaminant remediation; and aesthetic enhancement to the public and River area.

CV7. Project provides safe and reliable drinking water supplies to park and open space visitors.

While not directly accomplishing this criterion, the River Green project is intended to promote sustainable uses of water at a regional level. A characteristic of any specific projects that are identified can be the provision of drinking water to visitors. The project's regional context will contribute to meeting TMDL levels and the IRWM regional planning goals, objectives, and targets for watershed health, which will help to provide safe and reliable drinking water.

CV8. The project provides a high-quality access point for nearby open space, parkland, regional multi-modal trails, or water-based recreation.

The primary purpose and intent of the Project is to incubate the River Green concept into new project recommendations and regional watershed planning documents in development. The provision of open space, parkland, regional trails and water-based recreation are not adequately addressed in those efforts, and the intent of River Green is to change that.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

CV9. The project completes a new, significant link in a regional trail system.

The Los Angeles River is both a River Parkway and an Urban Stream that is used for recreation and wildlife habitat. The Project focuses from the River channel outward to opportunities for continuous linked Greenways that can be developed and reach throughout a highly urbanized watershed. The communities surrounding the River, within a half mile of the east and west banks, vary between residential and industrial land uses. This study area is so densely populated that that nearly half of residents in the perimeter are not within walking distance of a park. This is far below the accepted national standard of 10-acres per 1,000 residents, and is low even compared to other areas of Los Angeles County. Southern California contains a wonderful network of open space and trails throughout local mountains and the coastline, but it is not readily accessible to all urban residents and this Project will analyze important opportunities to further develop a regional trail and greenway network.

CV10. Project adds new trail or recreational resources not available within a 0.5-mile radius.

The intent of the Project is to utilize the concept of River Green into new project recommendations and regional watershed planning documents in development: such as new greenway trails and resources for passive recreation.

CV11. The project contains multi-modal accommodations that will benefit hikers, cyclists and equestrians.

As mentioned above, the Project seeks to develop new project recommendations that could benefit multi-modal users, such as hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.

CV12. The project results in new public access to a natural resource with high interpretive and/or educational value, or enhances existing access.

The proposed Project would enhance public use of the River, to promote use of the River and tributaries as an amenity and natural resource, while addressing water quality concerns. This will educate the public about environmental issues and how they can help improve water quality in the River.

CV13. The project provides non-personal interpretive elements that will significantly enhance appreciation and enjoyment of a natural resource.

Recommendations for non-personal interpretive elements will be incorporated into the pre-improvement plan. Topics that could be incorporated include recreational opportunities within and around the River, stormwater treatment, and water resources. These elements promote environmental stewardship by teaching the public about environmental issues, potential solutions, and about the areas' precious natural resources and how they can play a role in improving the environment and supporting a healthy watershed.

CV14. The project creates a new venue, or enhances an existing venue, for education and/or interpretation activities that promote natural resources stewardship.

The need and feasibility for new or enhanced venue(s) will be studied as part of the pre-

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

improvement planning Project.

CV15. The project alleviates stress on other overburdened recreational resources within a 0.5-mile radius.

The proposed Project has the potential to relieve stress on overburdened recreational resources along the River and tributaries.

CV16. The project provides a new vista point or overlook for a significant scenic view shed.

Opportunities for new vista points and/or overlooks will be studied as part of the pre-improvement planning Project.

CV17. The project adds visitor-serving amenities, accessibility, and public safety improvements to existing parkland.

A core feature of the proposed Project is the identification for development of new green recreational open spaces. These improvements will increase opportunities for recreation, activities, and programs to a wide variety of people, of all abilities.

CV18. Project results in additional uses for users of a wide range of ability levels.

Recreation opportunities for a range of ability levels could be incorporated into recommended projects when the proposed River Green concept is implemented. The improvement projects will use current codes and standards to ensure that a wide range of abilities will be accommodated.

CV19. The project is designed to accommodate the needs of users from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds.

As mentioned, the purpose of the project is to create project recommendations that improve access for visitation, recreation, activities, and programs to the public, including people from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds, who live throughout Upper Los Angeles Watershed. These amenities are, and will continue to be, free of charge. As a result of the project, the watershed wide network of open space will be able to serve more and diverse populations, including disadvantaged, minority, low-income, and disabled groups from many different cultures and backgrounds.

CV20. The project directly abuts and increases the ecosystem function of a protected habitat area including fish and wildlife corridors.

Open waterways, such as the River and tributaries, function as habitat corridors, while being recognized as being a hotspot for migratory birds and small mammals, aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems and therefore provide an appropriate location for analysis. The Project study area is located from the Santa Monica Mountains to the Angeles National Forest and includes the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Preserve, which provide a habitat stepping stone to facilitate movement of wildlife. Ultimately, by prioritizing the River Green concept into the most important regional river planning efforts being developed, the Project seeks to positively impact greater wildlife connectivity with the significant ecological areas that currently exist. Further, enhancing water quality will reduce the amount of pollutants in the river, potentially through dilution and thus improve

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

the habitat potential and water quality within the river and Pacific Ocean. By improving water quality in the upper reaches of the River can help to protect aquatic and migratory bird ecosystems. Additionally, new vegetation can continue to thrive with cleaner water which will provide new habitat for birds and other species.

CV21. The project includes restoration, protection or enhancements of a native ecosystem appropriate to the site.

Healthy ecosystems are a product of their environment. Indicators of a healthy urban watershed include healthy waters and presence of instream flow, thriving vegetation and wildlife. All of which are present with in the River in varying amounts, not only in the natural soft bottom areas, but also visible in the channelized bottoms through presence of bird populations. The project will have a direct beneficial impact to the watershed health of urban Los Angeles, through its focus on the environmental benefit impacts of conservation and open space projects surrounding the Los Angeles River and tributaries. These projects are critical to improving watershed health in urban areas. The health benefits of park and open space projects are magnified in disadvantaged communities and ensuring that projects can succeed there is critical to improving not only public health but wildlife habitats.

The Project intends to recommend systems that capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater to improve water quality, increase watershed storage capacity, and reduce the volume of water and amount of pollutants expelled into the Los Angeles River untreated, thus protecting and restoring the health of the watershed. Furthermore, the Project will examine suitable sites for installation of additional California native trees and shrubs. The purpose of the trees will be to create habitat for local wildlife, provide shade for pedestrians, reduce the Urban Heat Island effect created by the urban environment, generate oxygen, and remove pollutants from the air thus helping to address and reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and helping with the adverse impacts of global warming. The spacing of the vegetation will be designed to maximize those benefits.

CV22. Project will benefit specially protected species pursuant to the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990.

In June of 1990 voters of California approved Proposition 117, the California Wildlife Protection Act, prohibiting the sport hunting of the California Mountain Lion and declaring them to be a specially protected species. The local population of mountain lions requires large areas of undisturbed habitat to thrive. The consideration of these needs will be incorporated into the River Green project.

CV23. The project employs new or innovative technology or practices.

The Project aims to facilitate employment of the most innovative technology and practices into local stormwater treatment into projects throughout the watershed, as well as to further develop partnerships with many local agencies that will carry out the projects.

Implementation Value

IV1. Applicant has proven that implementation of the project is feasible.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

MRCA has years of experience in planning, designing, permitting and implementing complex improvement projects and has conducted enough research to confirm the Project's feasibility. The MRCA manages many of the lands in the plan area.

IV2. Applicant has financial capacity to perform project on a reimbursable basis.

MRCA has the financial capacity to perform this project on a reimbursable basis. MRCA has been implementing capital projects on a reimbursable basis for many years and anticipates reimbursable payments in our budgets. MRCA also maintains a line of credit that can be drawn upon in the event of an extended delay.

IV3. Applicant, or active project partner, has successfully completed multiple projects of similar size and scope.

The MRCA has successfully planned, designed, and implemented multiple-benefit recreational projects throughout Los Angeles: Several completed MRCA projects are similar in size, budget, scope and duration to the proposed project including the Pacoima Wash Vision Plan and Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization (ULART) Plan.

The MRCA, founded in 1985, is a local public agency exercising joint powers of Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. MRCA's mission is to complement the work of these and other agencies in protecting land and public access to natural lands in southern California mountains. Since its inception, the MRCA has designed, planned and constructed scores of small and large projects throughout Los Angeles. The MRCA currently manages over 75,000 acres of parkland and holds fee title to approximately 10,000 acres. The overall goal for MRCA's urban parklands program is to "integrate nature into the urban environment". The completion of this project will represent one additional step toward that goal.

IV4. The project is a partnership between two or more organizations and each organization has committed to contributing toward project implementation.

MRCA is a local public agency exercising joint powers of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation & Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District pursuant to Section 6500 *et seq.* of the Government Code. These three entities each have a voting member on MRCA's Governing Board, which approved the grant application. The MRCA will also seek to work with local agency and non-profit partners to ensure that projects modeling the River Green concept are implemented throughout the watershed.

IV5. Applicant has conducted outreach to the affected communities.

The MRCA will work with a team of consultants and stakeholders to ensure community involvement.

IV6. Applicant, or project partner, has 1+ years' experience maintaining and operating projects of similar size and scope.

MRCA has more than 30 years of experience implementing pre-improvement projects

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

similar to the proposed Project.

IV7. Applicant has identified maintenance funding for at least 2 years after completion.

The long-term operation and maintenance of project improvements will be defined at the time that projects are implemented.

IV8. Project has approval from all landowners to complete the project, or Applicant is the landowner.

This is a pre-improvement planning study that aims to identify potential sites suitable for development that support the River Green concept. The Applicant is the landowner of many sites throughout the study area that may be recommended for development, but it is presumptuous ahead of the analysis work to determine what sites may be most critical, and whether the landowner will supply approval for what the studies recommend. The Project will identify willing landowners and partners during the course of the study.

Climate Change Value

CC1. The project demonstrates a reduction in baseline greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration or other innovative techniques or project designs, such as diverting organic material from landfills.

Such measures could be incorporated into recommendation projects when the proposed River Green concept plan is implemented, but this scale of design is more detailed than will be studied for the proposed Project.

CC2. The project implements water saving technologies and techniques to yield quantifiable water and energy savings. Such techniques may include the use of drought-efficient landscaping, including climate resilient and native landscaping whenever possible, stormwater filtration, impervious surfaces, green roofs and other forms of water capture and storage.

Such measures could be incorporated into recommendation projects when the proposed River Green concept plan is implemented, but this scale of design is more detailed than will be studied for the proposed Project.

CC3. The project contributes to tree canopy cover and/or greenways in urban areas to mitigate heat island effects and promote public health and recreation.

The Project is a pre-improvement plan that will include recommendation of areas to implement native plants and habitat creation in urban areas that will mitigate heat island effects. The development of open space and river projects in conjunction with other developments, such as affordable housing, could create new opportunities to use native plants in traditional developments, as well as to use a coordinated plant/habitat palette across a larger geographic area where ornamental species are typically used. By designing to infiltrate and filter stormwater, the water entering the infrastructure of the River will be both reduced and cleaner, promoting public health.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

CC4. The project develops or maintains multi-use trails that connect communities, provides access to public resources and reduces vehicle miles traveled.

Investment in this project will support the protection of natural resources and facilitate the further development of a livable, walkable, and healthy community, which is a principal goal of this grant program: As part of the project's scope, MRCA plans to study potential recreational opportunities within the Los Angeles river watershed. This will eventually enable visitors to more conveniently access and utilize all of the area's amenities and will encourage more outdoor activity. These proposed new improvements are expected to create better user experiences and watershed benefits. The location greenways adjacent to the river will encourage people to bicycle or walk to their parks for exercise or simply enjoy the outdoors instead of commuting to a similar amenity, thereby reducing GHG emissions from transportation sources. Analysis will need to be performed in how to best implement these strategies, but a goal is for the Project to result in very limited new vehicle trips and, as mentioned, is expected to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

CC5. The project engages local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation regarding long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

The grant includes funding for partner Community Nature Connection to provide engagement outreach to local communities within the study area. Their approach is not yet defined, but CNC programs are designed to increase stewardship of natural resources. During these meetings, the importance of the River Green concept that provides multiple benefit spaces, protecting our natural resources, establishing healthy watersheds, enhanced access to our waterways, and providing wildlife habitat will be promoted and discussed. This will increase public awareness and eventually provide an outdoor learning tool for nearby students, which will contribute to future and additional environmental stewardship.

CC6. The project implements water saving techniques that utilize nature-based solutions.

Such measures could be incorporated into recommendation projects when the proposed River Green concept plan is implemented, but this scale of design is more detailed than will be studied for the proposed Project.

Additional Considerations

AC1. The site is subject to an imminent threat that would preclude future implementation value.

Southern California is in an extreme housing shortage and there is significant pressure to develop housing across the region. This could lead to development of housing on sites that are critical to keep undeveloped to serve as regional greenways, wildlife corridors, green infrastructure, open space. The Project seeks to identify sites critical for implementing the River Green concept and where future implementation is significantly important.

AC2. Project utilizes a local job training entity for a portion of the work.

MRCA intends to partner with Community Nature Connection, a local environmental non-

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

profit that trains and employs youth, for community engagement and outreach services related to the plan.

AC3. Project is within 0.25 miles of public transportation.

Several portions of the study area are within 0.25 miles from a public transportation site. Multiple Metro bus stops are located on major street crossings along the main transit corridors along the River. Also, Metrolink has several stops and runs parallel to the River.

AC4. Project serves a disadvantaged community.

The Upper Los Angeles River Watershed contains several disadvantaged communities, which CalEnviroScreen 3.0 categorizes in the most affected 96-100 percentile. The purpose of the project is to help create more green open space, natural habitat and outdoor passive recreation opportunities that will help influence environmental stewardship and give direct access to these disadvantage communities.

AC5. Project serves a severely disadvantaged community.

The Upper Los Angeles River Watershed contains several disadvantaged communities, which CalEnviroScreen 3.0 categorizes in the most affected 96-100 percentile.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

PROPOSITION 1 - RESPONSE TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project achieves the purposes of Proposition 1 per Water Code Section 79732(a).

The project will involve the protection and restoration of California rivers, lakes, streams and watersheds. The proposed grant achieves the following eight (8) Proposition 1 purposes:

1) Protect and increase the economic benefits arising from healthy watersheds, fishery resources, and instream flow.

The project accomplishes this through its focus on the impacts of river revitalization projects. Since a goal of the Project is advocate for watershed planning that balances land and resource consumption with protection of wildlife and recreational uses, it will thereby ultimately increase the usage of the River, by bringing more visitors to the River and in-turn encouraging spending at local businesses. Additionally, the Project could provide economic benefits by increased interest from concessionaires who may provide supplies and equipment for recreational activities (e.g. boating, birdwatching, fishing, etc.) along with tours and events in and around the River, as well as increased connectivity to regional trails and greenways. These projects are critical to improving watershed health in urban areas, yet cannot succeed without community input and the support of the residents.

2) Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate change on California's communities and ecosystems.

Los Angeles will likely be affected by climate change in the following ways: more severe droughts, more intense heat spells, and loss of California's native biodiversity. Through project planning and design of the River Green concept, this Project seeks to anticipate how these changes may be born out and begin to mitigate them. The Project will accomplish this by identifying a wide range of projects that implement the River Green concept, including land acquisition, public access points and watershed recreational opportunities.

3) Restore river parkways throughout the state.

The Los Angeles River is both a River Parkway and an Urban Stream that is used for recreation and wildlife habitat. The Project focuses from the River channel and outward to the opportunity for continuous linked Greenways that can be developed and reach throughout a highly urbanized watershed. The communities surrounding the River, within a half mile of the east and west banks, vary between residential and industrial land uses. This study area is so densely populated that that nearly half of residents in the perimeter are not within walking distance of a park. This is far below the accepted national standard of 10-acres per 1,000 residents, and is low even compared to other areas of Los Angeles County. Southern California contains a wonderful network of open space and trails throughout local mountains and the coastline, but it is not readily accessible to all urban residents.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

4) [Protect and restore aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems, including fish and wildlife corridors and the acquisition of water rights for instream flow.](#)

Open waterways, such as the River, function as habitat corridors, while being recognized as being a hotspot for migratory birds and small mammals, aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems and therefore provide an appropriate location for analysis. The Project study area is located near the Santa Monica Mountains and includes the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Preserve, both of which provide a habitat stepping stone to facilitate movement of wildlife. Ultimately, by prioritizing the River Green concept into the most important regional river planning efforts being developed, the Project seeks to positively impact greater wildlife connectivity with the significant ecological areas that currently exist. Further, enhancing water quality will reduce the amount of pollutants in the river, potentially through dilution and thus improve the habitat potential and water quality within the river and Pacific Ocean. By improving water quality in the upper reaches of the River can help to protect aquatic and migratory bird ecosystems. Additionally, new vegetation can continue to thrive with cleaner water which will provide new habitat for birds and other species.

9) [Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, stormwater resource management, and greenhouse gas reduction.](#)

Healthy ecosystems are a product of their environment. Indicators of a healthy urban watershed include healthy waters and presence of instream flow, thriving vegetation and wildlife. All of which are present with in the River in varying amounts, not only in the natural soft bottom areas, but also visible in the channelized bottoms through presence of bird populations. The project will have a direct beneficial impact to the watershed health of urban Los Angeles, through its focus on the environmental benefit impacts of conservation and open space projects surrounding the Los Angeles River and tributaries. These projects are critical to improving watershed health in urban areas. The health benefits of park and open space projects are magnified in disadvantaged communities, and ensuring that projects can succeed there is critical to improving not only public health but wildlife habitats.

The Project intends to recommend systems that capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater to improve water quality, increase watershed storage capacity, and reduce the volume of water and amount of pollutants expelled into the Los Angeles River untreated, thus protecting and restoring the health of the watershed. Furthermore, the Project will examine suitable sites for installation of additional California native trees and shrubs. The purpose of the trees will be to create habitat for local wildlife, provide shade for pedestrians, reduce the Urban Heat Island effect created by the urban environment, generate oxygen, and remove pollutants from the air thus helping to address and reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and helping with the adverse impacts of global warming. The spacing of the vegetation will be designed to maximize those benefits.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

- 10). [Protect and restore coastal watersheds, including, but not limited to, bays, marine estuaries, and nearshore ecosystems.](#)

The Los Angeles River is a coastal watershed, and the Project's implementation will benefit its natural resources and water quality throughout the River entirety.

- 11). [Reduce pollution or contamination of rivers, lakes, streams, or coastal waters, prevent and remediate mercury contamination from legacy mines, and protect or restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality, or flood management.](#)

As in many previous MRCA multi-benefit projects already implemented, the Project will promote design solutions that reduce sediment, trash, and organic matter from loading and contaminating the Los Angeles River draining the Upper Los Angeles watershed thereby limiting sedimentation and encouraging ground water recharge. As mentioned, the Project will show sites that can capture, treat, and infiltrate the maximum amount of wet and dry weather urban runoff in order to remove various pollutants including trash, metals, bacteria, and oil from the water before they can reach the river. Once implemented, the captured runoff will infiltrate thereby increasing the water supply in the local aquifer and will reduce the volume of water entering the river (helping with flood management). The overall cumulative impact of this Project is potentially substantial for the given urban area and will treat water that would otherwise enter the river untreated through a crowd of new project sites throughout the watershed.

- 12). [Assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened, or migratory species by improving watershed health, instream flows, fish passage, coastal or inland wetland restoration, or other means, such as natural community conservation plan and habitat conservation plan implementation.](#)

The Project will improve watershed health and benefit migratory species by studying open space, recreational and habitat improvement projects which will help to protect plant and animal species and their habitat found in the fragmented urban interface. The Project will also study and recommend water conservation measures to improve the quality of water and reduce the trash within the River. Improving local water quality is essential to the survival of the area's wildlife species. Cleaner water within the Los Angeles River and its tributaries, means not only cleaner water within the entire River, but also an enhancement to local wildlife habitat for sensitive and endangered species, such as the California Gnatcatcher and the San Diego Horned Lizard. Additionally, the density of native vegetation will be studied and recommended to sequester carbon as well as cool the atmosphere, further helping California's native biodiversity by reducing intense heat spells created by climate change. The Southern California endangered subspecies Least Bell's Vireo have been found to nest within vegetation along the banks of the Sepulveda Basin, and this Project seeks to ultimately enhance access points along the River in suitable areas to provide protections for this species and sensitive habitat.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

The project will provide multiple benefits related to water quality, water supply and/or watershed protection and restoration.

Upon completion, the River Green Project will identify projects that feature many uses and benefits including: nature education and habitat for the area's animal species and promote nature education; stormwater capture and treatment resulting in improved watershed health and water quality in the Los Angeles River and watershed; increased vegetation will reduce concentration of greenhouse gases (slowing the rate of global warming) and reduce the heat-island effect; reduced impervious surfaces and promotion of infiltration projects following contaminant remediation; and aesthetic enhancement to the public and River area.

The project results in more reliable water supplies pursuant to the California Water Action Plan.

The types of projects recommended will include water conservation measures, leading to more reliable water supplies for the State. Developing open space in the urbanized environment could create new opportunities to re-use stormwater and gray water.

The project results in restoration or protection of important species and habitat pursuant to the California Water Action Plan.

The Project is a pre-improvement plan that will identify areas for implementation aiming to benefit the Los Angeles River and watershed, which provides a migratory route and habitat to both sensitive and endangered species.

The project results in more resilient and sustainably managed water infrastructure pursuant to the California Water Action Plan.

The Project is a pre-improvement plan that will recommend areas to implement native plants and habitat creation in urban areas. The development of open space and river projects in conjunction with other developments, such as affordable housing, could create new opportunities to use native plants in traditional developments, as well as to use a coordinated plant/habitat palette across a larger geographic area where ornamental species are typically used. By designing to infiltrate and filter stormwater, the water entering the infrastructure of the River will be both reduced and cleaner.

The project employs new or innovative technology or practices, including decision support tools that support the integration of multiple jurisdictions, including, but not limited to, water supply, flood control, land use, and sanitation.

See response to Proposition 68 criterion CV23.

Applicant has proven that implementation of the project is feasible.

See response to Proposition 68 criterion IV1.

Applicant has the financial capacity to perform project on a reimbursable basis.

See response to Proposition 68 criterion IV2.

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Applicant, or active project partner, has successfully completed multiple projects of similar size and scope.

See response to Proposition 68 criterion IV3.

The project is a partnership between two or more organizations and each organization has committed to contributing toward project implementation.

See response to Proposition 68 criterion IV4.

Completion of the project would assist a government agency in fulfilling a water resources protection, watershed ecosystem restoration, or multi-benefit river parkway plan.

It is expected that the implementation of River Green concept within regional watershed planning documents will also likely impact decision making and policy. Further, the Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management (GLAC IRWM) includes the Los Angeles River TMDL goals. The Project will help contribute to one day meeting the TMDL and GLAC regional planning goals, objectives, and targets for watershed health.

The project provides a plan or feasibility study that enhances cooperative watershed health protection and restoration important to two or more organizations.

See response to Prop 68 criterion CV3.

Applicant, or project partner, has 1+ years' experience maintaining and operating projects of similar size and scope.

See response to Prop 68 criterion IV6.

The project implements a major component of an existing relevant plan related to a major recreational public use facility or watershed ecosystem restoration plan.

The *Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan* (2007) envisions the River as a natural resource asset and recreational facility. The River sparingly, only in two locations currently offers this opportunity, in the Sepulveda Basin and the Glendale Narrows. This Project seeks to maintain and enhance the Master Plan's goal, in addition to objectives stating, "to conserve, maintain and better utilize existing recreation and park facilities which promote the recreational experience".

The project provides a high quality access point for nearby open space, parkland, regional multi-modal trails, or water-based recreation.

The Project would ensure higher quality access points and amenities for the community, specifically, by ensuring passive recreational uses such as kayaking, fishing, birding, and others remain feasible. The River currently offers a regional network of parks and trails that are highly utilized and enjoyed for their natural beauty, and the ability to combat heat-island effect, due to the River's mitigating abilities through providing vegetation and cool shaded areas. Sufficient instream flow, which fosters wildlife habitat is also a highlight and value the River adds.

Applicant has conducted outreach to the affected communities

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

See response to Prop 68 criterion IV5.

The project includes interpretive programming or personal interpretation, and a plan to reach community audiences with meaningful information about a watershed resource.

The project itself does not provide programming or personal interpretation, but the discussions are intended to reach a wide community audience, and will introduce the goals of conservation habitat restoration, outdoor recreation and of the Los Angeles River's resources to them.

The project adds visitor-serving amenities, accessibility, and public safety improvements to public parkland with multiple ecosystem benefits.

The proposed Project seeks to develop public parkland with multiple ecosystem benefits, such as creating networks of walking trails and viewing areas, stormwater networks of bioswales and infiltration basins, trees for shade, urban cooling and wildlife protection, and native planting areas that provide habitat patches for wildlife. The Project will recommend wildlife appropriate visitor-serving amenities, including interpretive signage, greater educational content and more, where they are currently lacking. The efforts are expected to attract more people than currently use the River, and this can also lead to improved public safety.

The project provides non-personal interpretive elements that will significantly enhance appreciation and enjoyment of a watershed resource.

See response to Prop 68 criterion CV13.

The project creates a new venue for education and/or interpretation activities that promote water conservation and stewardship or enhances an existing venue.

See response to Prop 68 criterion CV14.

The project results in new public access to a watershed resource with high interpretive and/or educational value, or enhance existing access.

Upon completion of the pre-improvement planning project, the River will attract more visitors due to conditions that are protective of wildlife and recreation for many uses. The Project's goal of balancing conservation needs with habitat, wildlife and recreation will promote value of our watershed, natural resources and river flows, which will benefit the community and enhance its use by the public.

Project will benefit specially protected species pursuant to the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990.

See response to Prop 68 criterion CV22.

EXTRA CONSIDERATION POINTS

QUANTIFIABLE CARBON REDUCTION POINTS

Competitive Grant Application - Visitor Serving Development and Improvement Project
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

The project develops or maintains multi-use trails that connect communities, provides access to public resources and reduces vehicle miles traveled.

See response to Prop 68 criterion CC4.

The project engages local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation regarding long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

See response to Prop 68 criterion CC5.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

Completion of the project would assist in fulfilling a Federal water resources protection or watershed ecosystem restoration plan.

Yes, the results of this project will assist implementation of any projects to fulfill the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Plan. These issues will need to be addressed for the projects identified in the plan to go forward. Section 303 of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that each State identify waters where the quality is impaired for applicable standards. The list of impaired waters, called the §303(d) list, evaluates water bodies in terms of pollution levels, the severity of pollution, and the beneficial uses. Where quality is impaired, a total maximum daily load (TMDL) is required to be established for each pollutant. The River ultimately drains into the Pacific Ocean, and is listed as an impaired waterbody for trash, cadmium, coliform bacteria, lead, copper, and other pollutants. The result of the Project shall contribute to healthier waters in the River through contaminant concentration reduction.

Project utilizes a local job training entity for a portion of the work.

See response to Prop 68 criterion AC2.

Project has secured matching funds of at least 25 percent of total project costs.

This project seeks to impact regional watershed planning studies underway including the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization (ULART) Plan currently underway and administered by the MRCA with funding from the Conservancy. Since this project ultimately will contribute to the ULART Plan and is also likely to benefit from opportunity sites identified in its process to be further developed, the MRCA advocates that the \$1.7M in funds directed to the ULART Plan could be considered a match to the Project.

Project is within 1 mile of public transportation.

Multiple Metro bus stops are located on major street crossings along the main transit corridors along the River. Also, Metrolink has several stops and runs parallel to the River.

Project results in additional uses for users of a wide range of ability levels.

The Project seeks to ensure public uses of the River for both wildlife and recreation, while balancing conservation needs. Any designs for future improvements will incorporate a wide range of new amenities for park visitors, and to accommodate users of all ability levels.

**Budget for Grant Application
River Green Pre-Improvement Planning**

Grant Request: \$ 1,000,000

Budget Item	Amount	Prop 1	Prop 68
A. MRCA Staff			
various Direct Salaries, Payroll Tax, Benefits & Allocations Project Management, Pre-Improvement Planning	\$ 290,000	\$ 145,000	\$ 145,000
9998, 9999 Administrative Cost	\$ 230,000	\$ 115,000	\$ 115,000
SUBTOTAL A, MRCA Staff:	\$ 520,000	\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000
B. Materials and Supplies			
5115 Land & Building Improvement - Pre-Construction	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
7777 Equipment Allocation	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
SUBTOTAL B, Materials and Supplies:	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
C. Consultants and Contractors			
5115 Land & Building Improvement - Pre-Construction Engineering, Concept Design, Etc.	\$ 400,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
Community Outreach	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
Contingency	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
SUBTOTAL C, Consultants/Contractors:	\$ 465,000	\$ 232,500	\$ 232,500
Grand Total (A+B+C):	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000