



Administrative Report

CONSENT ITEM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: James Vega, City Manager
Greg Grant, Public Works Director/ City Engineer

DATE REPORT PREPARED: February 21, 2020

MEETING DATE: March 10, 2020

SUBJECT: Fire Risk Reduction and Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek Grant Applications

Recommendations

1. Adopt a resolution Supporting Applications to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Wildlife Conservation Board for the Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek; and
2. If the grant application is not successful, authorize staff to resubmit similar applications as additional Proposition 1 and 68 grant and related grant solicitations occur.

Discussion

City Council, staff and residents have expressed concerns with fire hazards in the Stewart Canyon Creek area on the City Hall property where numerous invasive eucalyptus and Mexican fan palms trees exists. Additionally, the invasive trees impact the stream ecology by consuming much higher levels of water than native vegetation. In the fall of 2018, staff submitted grant applications to CalFire and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in pursuit of funding to remove the invasive trees, both submittals were unsuccessful.

The CDFW and the State Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) have more funding opportunities for ecosystem restoration and protection projects under both Proposition 1 and Proposition 68. A primary goal of these programs is reestablishing a functioning riparian ecosystem that supports a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plant species. These programs have grant opportunities that provide for the removal of the extensive number of invasive trees, primarily Mexican fan palms and Eucalyptus trees, that have invaded the stream on the City's property and immediately downstream, including restoration and maintenance of the area with native vegetation. Attachment B shows the project location as "Mid Stewart Canyon Creek" in orange. Staff is pursuing these funding opportunities as an efficient rework of previous grant applications, with revisions as recommended based on State grant reviewer comments.

The following invasive trees exist on the City’s property and the similar connected area downstream for approximately 2,000 feet, ending at the junction with the Fox Canyon Barranca (just off S. Ventura Street). Note a similar grant removed invasive trees on the intersecting Fox Canyon Barranca, funded by a Southern California Wetlands Restoration Grant Program in 2016-2017. This is one of the last upstream sections of the creek requiring significant invasive tree/plant removal and restoration before its confluence with San Antonio Creek.

| Invasive Tree Removals | Eucalyptus | | | Mexican Fan Palm | Total Trees |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Small (<12 in.) | Medium (12-24 in.) | Large (>24 in.) | | |
| Total | 378 | 153 | 73 | 79 | 683 |

The number of trees on the City’s section is approximately half of the trees, with an estimated cost of over \$500,000 to remove and restore the area. Combining the creek section south of the City’s section together as one makes a project with a reasonable chance of success, versus only submitting the City’s section as a grant submittal would have very limited chance of being awarded as there would be a high likelihood of the invasive trees moving rapidly up the wet stream area and reverse the project progress. CDFW has funded similar projects downstream of this project area, increasing the likelihood of this project being awarded funding.

The project scope includes:

- Remove non-native tree and understory vegetation. Removal would occur in phases by canopy and orientation to the creek to not lose all shade for the creek at once. For example, remove Mexican fan palm and small eucalyptus trees closest to the riparian corridor in the first phase, with removal of exotic understory plants such as periwinkle and German ivy. Then plant trees and large shrubs based on the restoration design plan for the riparian corridor. In phase two, remove larger trees away from the corridor, remediating the adjacent plant communities to the creek.
- Restore function of low flow channel by removing tree liter, rubble and debris dammed up from invasive plants.
- Developing a functioning riparian ecosystem that supports a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plant species.
- Provide ongoing stewardship of Stewart Canyon Creek. Develop outreach and networking that will help to continue project funding from a variety of community-based sources.
- In cooperation with the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy a local volunteer effort including over 100 volunteers with three planting days and field.
- Adjacent homeowner education program on runoff management, native landscaping practices, and other practices that will support the immediate and long-term health of this local riparian habitat.
- Native American and Archeological monitoring of any excavation activity.
- Annual and final reporting as required by the grant.

Due to an urgent deadline, staff recently submitted the application. To increase the likelihood of

receiving a grant, staff recommends Council provide the attached resolution of support for the grant. If Council does not support the grant, the application can be withdrawn. Further, if the grant application is not successful, staff requests authorization to refine the application and resubmit similar applications as additional Proposition 1 and 68 grant and related solicitations occur.

The complete grant submittal is extensive and available on the City's website on the City's Public Works web page (open the "Public Works Department" pulldown tab, and the documents are the first reference).

Schedule:

Assuming award in the spring of 2020, the following schedule is anticipated:

- Winter 2019/2020: Application process, project planning. Note: All necessary regulatory permits and CEQA NOE have been completed and filed.
- August 2020: Secure bids from local professional tree removal companies as well as certified herbicide applicators.
- Fall/Winter 2020/2021: Begin removal of small trees (<12 in. Diameter at Breast Height) and removal all non-native understory.
- Fall/Winter 2020/2021: Begin removal of medium eucalyptus trees (12-24 in. DBH), removal of large eucalyptus (>24 in. DBH), and Mexican fan palm trees.
- Summer 2021: First re-sprouting prevention and weeding scheduled.
- Fall/Winter 2021/2022: Plant first round of trees in coordination with tree removal schedule. Begin regular watering schedule which will continue through spring 2024, as well as weeding, on a weekly to monthly basis depending on the time of year and rainfall.
- Summer 2022: Second re-sprouting prevention and weeding scheduled.
- Fall/Winter 2022: Continue native planting in coordination with tree removal schedule.
- Summer 2023: Third re-sprouting prevention and weeding scheduled.
- Fall/Winter 2023: Plant small to medium sized herbaceous plants and shrubs (remainder of plant inventory) in coordination with tree removal schedule. Potentially re-seed some areas.

Project Costs:

The total grant application is \$1,070,653. See Attachment C for the cost estimate summary. The majority of the cost is tree removal in this difficult to access area.

If the grant is awarded to the City, the following in in-kind matching by the City would occur over the next five years, primarily as staff support for project management, supervision, and outreach:

- \$63,000 in FY 2021
- \$43,000 in FY 2022
- \$34,000 in FY 2023
- \$7,000 in FY 2024
- \$4,000 in FY 2025

The following approximately \$17,000 in direct cash expenditures would be provided by the City:

- \$12,000 in trail materials such as decomposed granite, edging and gopher net in FY 2022.
- \$5,000 in fencing and supplies to protect newly planted areas, split between FY 2022 and 2023.


Disposal of the unwanted green waste such as invasive weeds and palm frond debris would utilize the City's free disposal service under the solid waste franchise agreement.

Fiscal Impact

The preparation and submittal of the grant application is approximately \$3,800 this fiscal year. There are no further costs anticipated this fiscal year. If the grant is awarded, staff support and direct expenses in future fiscal years outlined above would be required and budgeted for accordingly as part of the upcoming and following year's annual budgeting process.



Prepared by: Greg Grant
Public Works Director



Submitted by: James Vega
City Manager

Attachments:

- A – Resolution No. 20-_____ Supporting an Application an Application to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek.
- B – Map or Proposed Project Location
- C – Cost Estimate

City of Ojai
RESOLUTION NO. 20-__

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OJAI
SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH
AND WILDLIFE AND THE STATE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE
RESTORATION OF THE MIDDLE STEWART CANYON CREEK FOR A GRANT
FUNDING FOR FIRE RISK REDUCTION**

WHEREAS, the City Council expressed concerns with fire hazards in the Stewart Canyon Creek area on the City Hall property where numerous invasive eucalyptus and Mexican fan palms trees; and

WHEREAS, invasive trees impact the stream ecology by consuming much higher levels of water than native vegetation; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2018 staff submitted grant applications to CalFire and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in pursuit of funding to remove the invasive trees, both submittals were unsuccessful; and

WHEREAS, The CDFW and the State Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) have more funding opportunities for ecosystem restoration and protection projects under both Proposition 1 and Proposition 68; and

WHEREAS, a primary goal of these programs is reestablishing a functioning riparian ecosystem that supports a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plant species; and

WHEREAS, these programs have grant opportunities that provide for the removal of the extensive number of invasive trees, primarily Mexican fan palms and Eucalyptus trees, that have invaded the stream on the City's property and immediately downstream, including restoration and maintenance of the area with native vegetation; and

WHEREAS, staff is pursuing these funding opportunities as an efficient rework of previous grant applications, with revisions as recommended based on State grant reviewer comments; and

WHEREAS, the City supports an application to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Wildlife Conservation Board for the Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Ojai that:

SECTION 1. The City Council hereby determines that the foregoing findings are true and correct, and incorporates them herein by reference.

SECTION 2. The City is hereby authorized to apply for and submit to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Wildlife Conservation Board for the Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek released in the fall of 2019 in the amount of \$1,070,653.

SECTION 3. The City staff is hereby authorized to apply for and submit for similarly scoped project to other agencies for the amount not to exceed \$1,070,653.

SECTION 4. In connection with the subject grant applications, if the application is approved, the City Manager is authorized to enter into, execute, and deliver a standard agreement for the amount not to exceed \$1,070,653, and any and all other documents required or deemed necessary or appropriate to evidence and secure the grant, the City's obligations related thereto, and all amendments thereto (collectively, the "Grant Documents").

SECTION 5. The City shall be subject to the terms and conditions as specified in the Standard Agreement, the Grants Program Guidelines, and any applicable guidelines published by the awarding agency. Funds are to be used for allowable expenditures as specifically identified in the Standard Agreement. The application in full is incorporated as part of the Standard Agreement. Any and all activities funded, information provided, and timelines represented in the application will be enforceable through the executed Standard Agreement. The City hereby agrees to use the fund eligible uses in the manner presented in the application as approved by the awarding agency, be it the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Wildlife Conservation Board for the Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek.

SECTION 4. The City Manager is authorized to execute the City of Ojai California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Wildlife Conservation Board for the Restoration of the Middle Stewart Canyon Creek grant application, related Grant Documents, and any amendments thereto, on behalf of the City as required by the awarding agency for receipt of the subject grant.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this 10th day of March, 2020.

John F. Johnston, Mayor

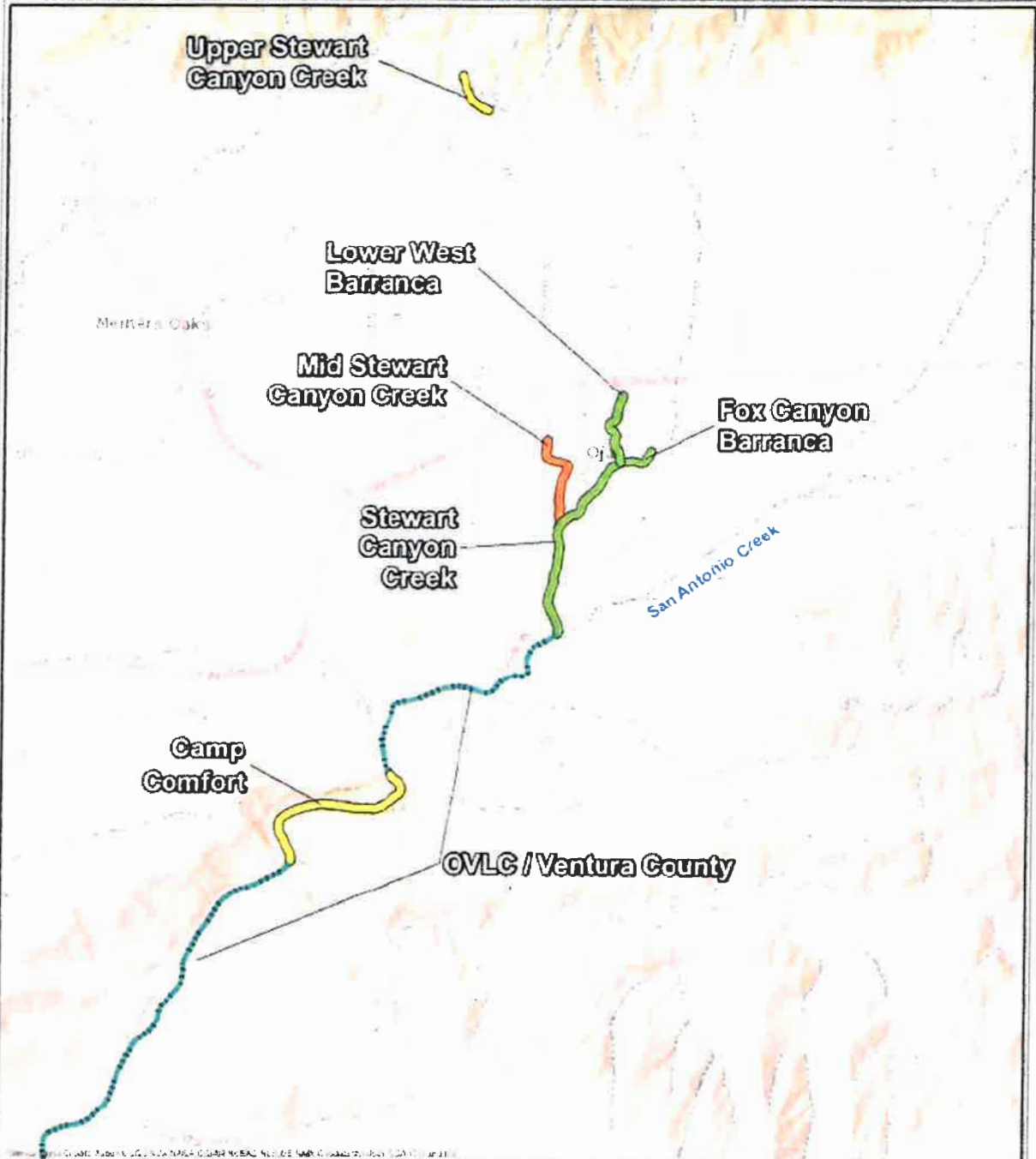
ATTEST:

Gail Davis, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Matthew T. Summers, City Attorney

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Legend

-  Other Completed Project
-  Previously Restored Section
-  Current Restoration Project
-  Proposed Future Project





Date: 12/13/2018

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N
Projection: Transverse Mercator

PAX
Environmental, Inc.



Pacific Ocean

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| Budget Justification | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Applicant | City of Ojai | | | | |
| Project Title | Middle Stewart Canyon Creek Restoration Project | | | | |
| Task Number/ Name ¹ | Activity/ Equipment/ Subcontractor ² | Total Cost Share (Non-WCB Funds) | Total WCB Requested Cost | Total Cost by Task | Justification (Provide a concise justification of budget item and cost) |
| 1. Biological Monitoring & Data Collection | Pax Environmental | \$ 1,260.00 | \$ 11,340.00 | \$ 12,600.00 | Pre- mid- and post-project data collection; reporting to grant manager |
| 2. Cultural Monitoring | Contractor TBD | | \$ 18,400.00 | \$ 18,400.00 | Pre-project, mid-project, and as-needed monitoring for sensitive cultural areas |
| 3. Protected Tree Monitoring | Certified Arborist TBD | | \$ 11,000.00 | \$ 11,000.00 | Identification and monitoring of protected trees during non-native tree removal period |
| 4. Non-Native Small Tree and Understory Removal | CCC | \$ 22,081.60 | \$ 71,040.00 | \$ 93,121.60 | Remove non-native trees <12" in diameter and vegetation using hand tools and small power tools |
| 4. Non-Native Small Tree and Understory Removal | The C.R.E.W. | \$ 22,081.60 | \$ 71,040.00 | \$ 93,121.60 | Remove non-native trees <12" in diameter and vegetation using hand tools and small power tools |
| 4. Non-Native Small Tree and Understory Removal | City of Ojai | | \$ 7,920.00 | \$ 7,920.00 | Chipper rental |
| 4. Non-Native Small Tree and Understory Removal | City of Ojai | \$ 79,944.00 | | \$ 79,944.00 | City staff will provide supervision, and disposal of removed vegetation |
| 4. Non-Native Small Tree and Understory Removal | Pax Environmental | \$ 2,880.00 | \$ 25,920.00 | \$ 28,800.00 | Monitoring during removal process (10% match) |
| 5. Non-Native Medium and Large Tree Removal | Contractor TBD | | \$ 376,000.00 | \$ 376,000.00 | Tree contractor is required to remove trees greater than 12" in diameter; this work will be publicly bid, and includes chipper, winch trucks, crane, and removal of organic material. |
| 6. Resprouting Prevention | Contractor TBD | | \$ 37,840.00 | \$ 37,840.00 | Professional herbicide application and/or solarization after tree removal; annual re-application for 2 subsequent years |
| 7. Native Planting | City of Ojai | \$ 29,232.00 | | \$ 29,232.00 | Supervision and staff support |
| 7. Native Planting | Pax Environmental | | \$ 42,850.00 | \$ 42,850.00 | Native plant acquisition (5,000 trees, cuttings, and potted plants) |
| 7. Native Planting | Pax Environmental | \$ 144.00 | \$ 1,296.00 | \$ 1,440.00 | Monitoring; ensure adherence to planting plan (10% match) |
| 7. Native Planting | CCC | \$ 2,088.80 | \$ 6,720.00 | \$ 8,808.80 | Native planting; 280 hours |
| 7. Native Planting | The C.R.E.W. | \$ 2,088.80 | \$ 6,720.00 | \$ 8,808.80 | Native planting; 280 hours |
| 7. Native Planting | Ojai Valley Land Conservancy | | | | Facilitate/lead volunteer planting events; budgeted under 10. Community Education |
| 8. Weeding/Watering | The C.R.E.W. | \$ 3,750.00 | \$ 60,588.00 | \$ 64,338.00 | Weeding and watering (60 days over 2 years; 5-person crews each day at 8-hour days) |
| 9. Trail & Seating Area Restoration | The C.R.E.W. | \$ 5,385.60 | \$ 48,470.40 | \$ 53,856.00 | 1580 estimated hours (10% match) |
| 9. Trail & Seating Area Restoration | The C.R.E.W. | | \$ 11,708.00 | \$ 11,708.00 | Trail materials (decomposed granite; edging; gopher net) |
| 9. Trail & Seating Area Restoration | City of Ojai | \$ 15,427.00 | | \$ 15,427.00 | Supervision and staff support |
| 10. Community Education | Ojai Valley Land Conservancy | \$ 14,400.00 | \$ 5,400.00 | \$ 19,800.00 | Community planting days; staff leadership; match of 600 volunteer hours |
| 10. Community Education | Once Upon A Watershed | \$ 9,780.00 | \$ 19,290.00 | \$ 29,070.00 | Staff leadership of field trips for >360 school children; leadership and supplies for 6 community workshops |
| 10. Community Education | City of Ojai | \$ 5,472.00 | | \$ 5,472.00 | City staff personally contact each property owner along Middle Stewart Canyon Creek and provide materials explaining the identification, avoidance, weeding of invasive plants; stream pollution sources; and habitat preservation best practices. |
| 10. Community Education | Taft Gardens | | \$ 2,314.00 | \$ 2,314.00 | Materials and labor hours for kiosk creation, installation |
| 11. Long-Term Management Plan | City of Ojai | \$ 7,714.00 | | \$ 7,714.00 | Collate project data and feedback, refine & launch long-term management |
| 12. Grant Management | City of Ojai | | \$ 9,000.00 | \$ 9,000.00 | Track project status, timeline; complete reports and invoicing |
| Cost Contingency (if applicable) | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Totals | | \$ 223,729.40 | \$ 844,856.40 | \$ 1,068,585.80 | |

City Total: \$ 137,789.00 \$ 16,920.00

¹ Task numbers/names should be consistent with those presented in the responses to the Work Plan (Task Description) and Schedule and Deliverables questions in the Application Form. Provide a justification of costs for each individual task

² If the California Conservation Corps (CCC) or Local Conservation Corps (CALCC) determine that their services can be used in a proposed project, the applicant must identify the appropriate CCC or CALCC and their role in the work plan and

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