

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
March 25, 2004

**DEFOREST & DOMINGUEZ GAP WETLANDS: PRELIMINARY DESIGN**

File No. 04-005  
Project Manager: Karen C. Bane

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$400,000 to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to prepare a preliminary design and conduct environmental review for wetland creation along the Los Angeles River as recommended in the *DeForest Nature Center and Sixth Street Sites Wetland Feasibility Study* and the *Dominguez Gap Wetlands/Recreation Study*.

**LOCATION:** East side of Los Angeles River, City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County (Exhibit 1)

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Resource Enhancement

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: Project Location and Site Map

Exhibit 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary

Exhibit 3: Letters of Support

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31000 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) to prepare the preliminary design and conduct environmental review for the DeForest and Dominguez Gap Wetlands project, subject to the condition that, prior to the disbursement of any funds, the DPW shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a work program, including scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names of any contractors it intends to use to conduct the project.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 6 of the Public Resources Code (31251-31270) regarding enhancement of coastal resources.
  2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
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**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy provide a grant of \$400,000 to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) to prepare a preliminary design and conduct environmental review for wetland creation in the Market Street (also known as DeForest) and Dominguez Gap storm water retention basins along the Los Angeles River. The proposed project is a high priority project on the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project's 2003-2004 Work Plan. Recommendations would be incorporated from the *DeForest Nature Center and Sixth Street Sites Wetland Feasibility Study*, which was completed by the City of Long Beach with a grant from the Coastal Conservancy (Exhibit 2).

Open water, wetland, riparian, and scrub habitats will be planned in a two-mile corridor along the east side of the Los Angeles River. Wetland loss along the Los Angeles River has been staggering, with 51 miles encased in concrete for flood control and urban development to the river edge. Both the Market Street/DeForest and Dominguez Gap basins were identified as potential sites for wetland restoration in *Wetlands of the Los Angeles River Watershed: Profiles and Restoration Opportunities*, a study prepared by the Conservancy in 2000. Recognizing that the highly urbanized landscape prevents restoration or creation of wetlands to the extent they once existed in the watershed, the Conservancy study concluded that providing a representation of the historic distribution of wetlands resources and hydrologic conditions is valuable.

The wetland designs will optimize water quality improvement, to meet Title 22 standards for reuse as irrigation water, in the case of the Market Street/DeForest Basin, and recharge groundwater, in the case of Dominguez Gap.

Public facilities including trails, overlooks, gates, benches, and signage would help meet the need for open space and encourage public access to the coast. Residents from the neighborhoods and schools bordering the basins would gain park space and educational opportunities once the project is built. A bike path along the river levee connects communities to the coast. During one site visit, a woman with children on the bike path commented to staff that she would ride along the river more frequently if green spaces provided interesting views and rest stops.

The proposed project will set the stage for wetland construction by preparing a preliminary design and conducting required environmental review. The preliminary design will include plans, specifications, schedule, and costs for the wetlands and public facilities. Once the designs provide sufficient detail, environmental review will be completed to satisfy requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

The DPW owns and operates both basins. DPW's Watershed Division manages many complex design and construction projects involving multiple goals such as flood control, recreational amenities, and habitat creation or protection. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works completed the feasibility study for the Dominguez Gap Wetlands Multiuse Project and has adequate staffing and expertise to ensure project completion.

**Site Description:** The DeForest/Market Street Detention Basin and east basin of the Dominguez Gap Spreading Grounds form a contiguous, two-mile corridor along the east side of the Los Angeles River (Exhibit 1). The corridor averages 300 feet in width. The basins comprising the corridor are owned and operated by the DPW.

The northernmost basin, Market Street Basin, is a detention basin for flood control. The DeForest Nature Center is located at the north end and consists of an extensive area of planted woodland and a nature trail. Water enters the basin from local storm drains and is pumped into the Los Angeles River by the Market Street Pump Plant. The central and southern reaches of the basin are characterized by open and weedy cover with only a small amount of native vegetation.

The Dominguez Gap Basins are operated for storm water retention and as spreading grounds for infiltration. Water enters the East Basin from a diversion from the River and local storm drains. Excess flows can be pumped back into the River by the Dominguez Gap Pump Station, or transferred via siphon to the West Basin for infiltration into the aquifer.

**Project History:** Both the DeForest/Market Street and Dominguez Gap basins were identified as potential sites for wetland restoration in *Wetlands of the Los Angeles River Watershed: Profiles and Restoration Opportunities*, prepared by the Conservancy in 2000. Staff explored the City of Long Beach's interest in creating wetlands in the DeForest Basin. The Parks, Recreation and Marine Department was interested in the opportunity, as well as the Water Department, which wanted to harness the wetlands to treat water for reuse. In February 2000, the Conservancy authorized a \$300,000 grant for the City of Long Beach to conduct a feasibility study (Exhibit 2). Completed in summer 2002, it demonstrated that treatment wetlands, trails, and new public-use facilities to support passive recreational and educational activities could be developed.

Independently, in February 2001 the DPW completed a feasibility study for the Dominguez Gap Spreading Grounds and concluded that the Spreading Grounds could be modified to allow a continuous flow of water to create year-round aquatic habitat for native wetland and riparian plant species. Complementary enhancement of existing trails and access points, as well as construction of new public-use facilities to support recreational activities such as bird watching, nature study, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and environmental education activities could also be included.

Since the City of Long Beach and the DPW were ready to conduct design and environmental review for preferred alternatives from their feasibility studies, they agreed to proceed jointly with the next phase. Joint design will ensure that the habitat, recreational elements, and infrastructure are complementary across the neighboring basins. The work is intended to benefit from economy of scale as well. Since DPW owns both basins, it will be the administrative lead agency for the project. The City will participate with DPW in selecting consultants and reviewing designs.

**PROJECT FINANCING:**

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Coastal Conservancy                           | \$400,000        |
| Los Angeles County Department of Public Works | 250,000          |
| Rivers and Mountains Conservancy              | <u>200,000</u>   |
| <b>Total Project Cost</b>                     | <b>\$850,000</b> |

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is an appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of

2002 (Proposition 40). Consistent with the purposes of this funding source, the proposed project would be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy's enabling legislation and would involve restoration of land and water resources and matching funds are being provided by DPW and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

Implementation of the proposed project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 6 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Public Resource Code Sections 31251-31270. Pursuant to §31251, the Coastal Conservancy may award grants to public agencies to enhance coastal resources, which have suffered loss of natural values because of natural or human-induced events. Consistent with this section, the proposed project would facilitate the design and possible enhancement of wetland resources along the coastal plain portion of the Los Angeles River. The river-associated wetlands that are the objective of the project once existed along the coastal portions of most southern California streams, but virtually all such wetlands have been degraded and lost due to urban development. The proposed design and environmental review may also lead to the enhancement of the natural and scenic character of the area.

Section 31251.2 authorizes Coastal Conservancy participation in projects to enhance a watershed resource that is partly outside of the coastal zone where such action protects or enhances coastal resources within the coastal zone. The types of wetlands that are the subject of the proposed project existed both within and outside the coastal zone under natural conditions. Channelization and encroachment of urban development resulted in almost total obliteration of these river-associated wetlands. In addition, loss of wetlands throughout the Los Angeles River watershed has put more pressure on those small patches of coastal zone wetlands that have been restored or have accreted within the lowest reach of the river. While the project site is outside the very narrow area that is designated as coastal zone at the mouth of the Los Angeles River, it presents a rare opportunity to replace the lost coastal wetland habitat and reduce pressure on existing habitat. Indeed, once constructed, the proposed project would better support species traveling along the Pacific Flyway by increasing aquatic habitat. Demonstration of retention, treatment, and re-use of storm water for irrigation and groundwater recharge may reduce the need for further channelization of waterways in the coastal zone for flood control.

As required by §31252, the proposed project is consistent with the City of Long Beach's Local Coastal Program, as described in the "Consistency with Local Coastal Program Policies" section.

Consistent with §31253, the amount of proposed Conservancy funding for this project was determined by the total amount of funding available for coastal resource enhancement projects, the fiscal resources of project participants and the urgency of the project relative to other eligible coastal resource enhancement projects. Matching funds have been committed to the proposed project by DPW and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. Without funding from the Coastal Conservancy the level of design may be too limited to support the preparation of an adequate environmental review document.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective A** of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, the proposed project will facilitate the re-creation of coastal habitats in the coastal plain of the Los Angeles River in-

cluding freshwater marsh, riparian areas, and coastal scrub. Also, consistent with **Goal 6, Objectives A and B**, the proposed project would set the stage for construction of wetlands along a two-mile corridor of the Los Angeles River and the improvement of storm runoff and river water for reuse and groundwater infiltration.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S  
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** When the wetland feasibility studies for DeForest Nature Center and Dominguez Gap were presented in public meetings, residents of the City of Long Beach passionately expressed support for the opportunity to access natural open space for recreation and education. Support letters are provided in Exhibit 3.
4. **Location:** The proposed project site begins five miles upstream from the mouth of the Los Angeles River. The types of wetlands that are the subject of the proposed project existed both within and outside the coastal zone under natural conditions. Channelization and encroachment of urban development resulted in almost total obliteration of these river-associated wetlands. In addition, loss of wetlands throughout the Los Angeles River watershed has put more pressure on those small patches of coastal zone wetlands that have been restored or have accreted within the lowest reach of the river. While the project site is outside the very narrow area that is designated as coastal zone at the mouth of the Los Angeles River, it presents a rare opportunity to replace the lost coastal wetland habitat and reduce pressure on existing habitat.
5. **Need:** Without Conservancy participation, the design would be limited thereby risking the adequacy of the environmental review and the significant investment by matching funders.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed project would prepare the way for construction of wetlands along two miles on the east side of the Los Angeles River. Once achieved, the project site would be an anchor for the City of Long Beach's vision of a continuous open space corridor along the entire 11-mile reach of the Los Angeles River through the city. Not only would the significant increase in aquatic habitat better support species traveling along the Pacific Flyway, but also would build support from urban residents for statewide protection and restoration of coastal resources.

**Additional Criteria**

8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The proposed multi-purpose project includes re-creation of coastal habitats, open space for passive recreation, environmental education, and water quality improvement and reuse.

9. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Innovation:** The proposed design would incorporate and test guiding principles recommended by *Habitat Value of Wetlands Used to Treat Urban Runoff: A Literature Review*, which was commissioned by the Conservancy on behalf of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project.
12. **Readiness:** DPW is poised to release a request for proposals and anticipates a contractor starting work in April 2004.
13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See the “Project History” section above.
15. **Cooperation:** The City of Long Beach and DPW have agreed to jointly direct the proposed project, while DPW provides the administrative support.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:**

The City of Long Beach’s LCP acknowledges the need for “public attention to ensure . . . protection and enhancement” of “sensitive coastal resource areas which are suffering some form of deterioration or development pressure” and “degraded or less than pristine wetlands of any size” (p. I-3). As predicted in the LCP, which was adopted in 1980, a marina near the mouth of the Los Angeles River was converted into inter-tidal wetlands to mitigate the loss of inter-tidal habitat during construction of the downtown harbor (p. III-DS-32). The value of this area, known as Golden Shore, for wildlife will be enhanced with the eventual addition of wetlands in the DeForest/Market and Dominguez Gap basins. Wildlife species often use multiple habitat types during their daily activities (*e.g.*, roosting and foraging) and over their life. A network of aquatic and upland habitats in the vicinity of Golden Shore may increase the attractiveness and usefulness of Golden Shore for wildlife. Also, the risk of Golden Shores being loved to death will be reduced as the public gains access to more wetland habitat such as the proposed project for wildlife viewing, passive recreation, and educational uses.

Golden Shore has been plagued with contaminated silt and trash deposited by the river. In the long-term, the pollutants in urban runoff that adhere to sediment in the river could be reduced if more municipalities incorporate the principles, demonstrated in the proposed project, of retaining storm water and urban runoff for restoration, water treatment, and water reuse.

The LCP identifies bicycle paths as one means to improve access to the downtown shoreline. The bicycle path on the eastern levee of the Los Angeles River passes Golden Shore and connects with a path bordering the ocean. The proposed project would provide a more inviting and safe entry point to the river bike path for residents north of the downtown area. In addition, the number of riders and trips may increase once an aesthetically appealing corridor is created along the river.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15306 in that it involves information collection to prepare a preliminary design and documentation to comply with CEQA. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the proposed authorization.

**EXHIBIT 2**

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**EXHIBIT 2**

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**COASTAL CONSERVANCY**

Project Summary  
February 24, 2000

**LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER  
WETLAND RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDIES**

File No. 00-001  
Project Manager: Sean Woods

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse funds to the City of Long Beach for preparation of feasibility studies for two potential wetland restoration sites along the lower Los Angeles River.

**LOCATION:** Adjacent to the eastern bank of the Los Angeles River in the City of Long Beach (Exhibits 1, 2, and 3)

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Resource Enhancement

|                        |  |                  |
|------------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> | Coastal Conservancy                                | \$300,000        |
|                        | (1996 Safe, Clean, Reliable<br>Water Supply Fund*) |                  |
|                        | City of Long Beach (Est. in-kind services)         | <u>30,000</u>    |
|                        | <b>Total:</b>                                      | <b>\$330,000</b> |

\* 1997 appropriation to Conservancy for Los Angeles River parkway

**PROJECT SUMMARY:** The recommended authorization would enable the Conservancy to assist the City of Long Beach with feasibility studies intended to determine the potential for restoring two publicly-owned historic wetland areas along the east bank of the lower Los Angeles River, and for integrating compatible uses into the restoration. The potential restoration would replace river-associated wetlands that once bordered the Los Angeles River and other southern California streams in the vicinity of the coast, virtually all of which have been lost to urban development. The project is proposed in the context of widespread and growing public interest in bringing back fish and wildlife habitat in and around the Los

Angeles River and in making the best use of the river as a recreation and open space amenity.

The feasibility studies that are the subject of this recommendation would refine a preliminary analysis by staff of the City, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, and the Conservancy of wetland restoration opportunities adjacent to DeForest Park and to the 6<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. The feasibility analyses would also follow up on a recent City Water Department conceptual plan for wetland creation and water reuse. Studies of each of the sites would begin with identifying and examining any fatal flaws that could render restoration infeasible, and, barring such obstacles, follow up by determining such basic restoration factors as options for supplying suitable water, alternative types and configurations of wetland habitat, implementation costs, and a preliminary identification of potential environmental impacts. Approaches to integrating compatible purposes and uses such as groundwater recharge, trails, and an environmental education center would also be investigated.

Prior to the onset of agricultural and urban development, most of the streams that traverse the Los Angeles area floodplains as they approach the coast were braided, prone to realignment during floods, and bordered by and interspersed with thousands of acres of wetland habitat. At present, all of the previously meandering coastal plain streams have been confined to single channels and all but occasional patches of wetland habitat have been drained or built upon. The wildlife that depended upon those wetlands has been crowded onto the remnant patches, with resulting population losses and ecological disruption. Few sites suitable for wetland restoration remain.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, citizen activism and public agency focus have crystallized around the concept of taking advantage of the Los Angeles River and adjacent lands for fish and wildlife habitat restoration, public recreation, and trail linkage between the interior and the coast. Visions for the use of the river corridor range from installing pocket parks to removing the miles of concrete channel.

The proposed project falls within the range of river restoration concepts that seem likely to be realized in the next 50 years and is consistent with public agency

plans. In particular, Los Angeles County has prepared a Los Angeles River Master Plan that calls for a river “greenway” incorporating parks, open space, and wild-life habitat such as Conservancy staff and the City propose to study on the subject properties. The City’s General Plan designates these areas for recreation and open space. The project is also consistent with the findings of a Coastal Conservancy report on public access and habitat on the river, prepared in the early 1990s at the direction of the Legislature.

The two sites that are the subject of this staff recommendation were specifically identified in the course of a Coastal Conservancy search for wetland restoration opportunities along the Los Angeles River and within its watershed.\* (The sites and their restoration potential are described in the “Project Description” section of the accompanying staff recommendation.) Wetland restoration may be possible at additional sites along the river in the City of Long Beach and further upstream, but no other sites are known to have the combination of a cooperative public landowner and potential for extensive wetland habitat.

\* A report on this search, "Wetlands of the Los Angeles River Watershed: Profiles and Restoration Opportunities," will be circulated at the Conservancy's February 24 meeting.

**EXHIBIT 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary**

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STATE CAPITOL  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-4900  
TEL (916) 445-6447  
FAX (916) 327-9113

3711 LONG BEACH BOULEVARD  
SUITE 801  
LONG BEACH, CA 90807  
TEL (562) 997-0794  
FAX (562) 997-0799



**California State Senate**

**BETTY KARNETTE**

SENATOR  
TWENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

**COMMITTEES:**

**CHAIR:**  
BLUE-RIBBON STATE COMMISSION  
ON TRANSPORTATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CALIFORNIA  
EUROPEAN TRADE DEVELOPMENT  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
ALAMEDA CORRIDOR  
MEMBER:  
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INTERNATIONAL TRADE  
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GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
AND RETIREMENT  
RULES  
TRANSPORTATION  
SELECT COMMITTEE:  
ALAMEDA CORRIDOR EAST  
(VICE CHAIR)  
CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM  
INVESTIGATE PRICE MANIPULATION  
OF THE WHOLESALE ENERGY  
MARKET  
LEGISLATIVE MEMBER:  
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION  
METROPOLITAN TRANSIT  
AUTHORITY

March 10, 2004

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chairman  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

Attn: Karen C. Bane

**Re: Support for Dominguez Gap – DeForest Wetlands Project**

Dear Mr. Morabito,

I am writing to seek your support for the Coastal Conservancy's disbursement of \$400,000 for the preliminary design and environmental review of the Dominguez Gap – DeForest Wetlands Project.

This proposed project would incorporate alternatives developed by the feasibility study that I supported in my February 8, 2000 letter to Chairman Hernandez. Historic wetlands that once bordered the L.A. River in the vicinity of the coast would be restored according to the designs prepared with Conservancy funds.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betty Karnette".

BETTY KARNETTE

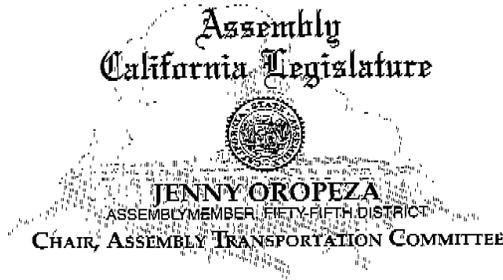
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**EXHIBIT 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary**

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STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942649  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0055  
(916) 519-2055  
FAX (916) 319-2155  
**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
ONE CIVIC PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 460  
CARSON, CA 90745-2243  
(310) 518-3324 or (562) 461-9740  
FAX (310) 518-3508



**COMMITTEES:**  
CHAIR, TRANSPORTATION  
AGRICULTURE  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE ECONOMY

March 10, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Attn: Karen C. Bane

VIA US Post and Facsimile (510/286-3840)

Re: Support for Dominguez Gap – DeForest Wetlands Project

Dear Chair. Morabito,

I am writing to express my support for a \$400,000 grant for the preliminary design and environmental review of the Dominguez Gap – DeForest Wetlands Project from the California Coastal Conservancy.

The historic wetlands that once bordered the Los Angeles River in the vicinity of the coast would be restored in accordance with the prepared designs. In order to produce sufficiently detailed preliminary designs, Conservancy funds are needed to complement those from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this request and would welcome the opportunity to provide any further information you would find helpful.

Sincerely,

JENNY OROPEZA  
Assemblymember, 55 Assembly District

  
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## CITY OF LONG BEACH

Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine

2760 Studebaker Road, Long Beach, CA 90815-1697

(562) 570-3100 • FAX (562) 570-3109

January 29, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman  
State of California Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Support for the Dominguez Gap -- DeForest Wetlands Project

Dear Mr. Morabito:

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I encourage you to support the Dominguez Gap -- DeForest Wetlands Project. The City of Long Beach is the holder of a permit to utilize part of the northern basin (known as the DeForest Nature Center) in the Dominguez Gap storm water retention basin complex. For twenty-five years, members of the community in north Long Beach have pursued habitat restoration of this area for the beautification of their neighborhood and so that everyone in this very urbanized area can experience and appreciate what was the natural condition of the area before human disturbance. Finally, the City and County governments adopted the citizens' vision in 1996 when the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the Los Angeles River Master Plan.

Following the adoption of the Los Angeles River Master Plan, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works conducted a feasibility study of the restoration of the eastern and western basins for habitat restoration and recreational uses. That was followed by a similar study, conducted by the City of Long Beach and funded by the State of California Coastal Conservancy, of the feasibility of habitat restoration and water reclamation in the northern, or DeForest, Basin. Both studies showed habitat restorations to be feasible.

The project before you now is the next step in implementing the restoration project, a conceptual design and environmental impact analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act. I encourage your support of this project, as this is one of the key sites that provide opportunities for habitat restoration along the Los Angeles River. Not only do I encourage your action for the benefit of the neighborhood immediately adjacent to the site but for the vision incorporated in the Los Angeles River Master Plan. This site, with a combined length of three miles, provides a unique opportunity for a significant scale of restored habitat. The riparian wetlands of the river were once a vital link in the lives of many now endangered and threatened species, especially migratory

**EXHIBIT 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary**

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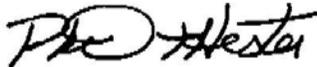
State of California Coastal Conservancy  
January 29, 2004  
Page 2

species along the Pacific flyway. Implementation of this project can be a major step in saving those species.

Funding this project also encourages work toward an even larger adjacent habitat. Just south of the Dominguez Gap basins, the City of Long Beach has acquired privately owned properties and is seeking to acquire others to allow a further continuation of the habitat restoration efforts. Farther south, in the Wrigley Croonbolt area, near the beginning of the soft bottom portion of the river, both the City and the County are pursuing plans on separate sites for increased riparian reforestation to help support the many birds that are drawn to the river channel and to provide shade and rest areas along the recreational trail parallel to the river. Together these efforts will help restore plants and animals that are facing extinction and help draw residents to and along the river habitat to appreciate them.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this request. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me at (562) 570-3170.

Sincerely,



Phil T. Hester  
Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine

PTH:DLE:lr

DOCS\MEMO&LTR\DeForest\CCCsupport.doc

c: Karen C. Bane, Project Manager, State of California Coastal Conservancy  
Dan Sharp, Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Works, Watershed Management  
Carl Kemp, Government Affairs Officer  
Dennis Eschen, Manager of Planning and Development

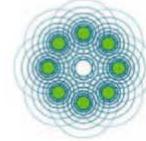
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FEB 2 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF

February 27, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman  
California Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612



**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE DOMINGUEZ GAP-DEFOREST WETLANDS PROJECT**

Dear Mr. Morabito,

The Watershed Council is pleased to support the Los Angeles County Department of Public Work's proposal with regard to the Dominguez Gap – DeForest Wetlands Project. This is a project that has been germinating for many years. We have consistently recognized its importance with regard to Los Angeles River revitalization and restoration of wetlands habitat, and are very pleased to see it coming to fruition.

The stakeholders of our organization (see attached one-page description) have developed a Vision for the double watershed of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers, which identifies eight major themes to be realized over the next 25 years. This letter speaks to the consistency of the Dominguez Gap proposal with this Vision, which represents an extraordinary consensus across a broad spectrum of actors and interests. Several of the elements in this Vision pertain to natural resources and urban quality of life, but five are especially pertinent to the primary goals of this proposal. These are:

- Celebrating our rivers with greenway/bikeways, habitat, recreation areas, and interpretive signs;
- Restoring habitat for fish, birds, and wildlife;
- Creating truly livable communities around revitalized rivers;
- Using all of our water resources efficiently; and
- Managing the watershed for economic vitality, environmental health and sustainability.

The proposed project is highly consistent with these adopted principles and would implement many of the vision elements we would like to see in place.

The project is also consistent with the goals and objectives of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP), for which we serve as Co-Chair of the Los Angeles County Task Force. The Dominguez Gap area was identified in the May 2000 publication by the Coastal Conservancy of *Wetlands of the Los Angeles River Watershed: Profiles and Restoration Opportunities*, and it has subsequently been the subject of detailed investigation by the City of Long Beach and the County Department of Public Works. Restoration in this locale is especially valuable because of the bird

**THE LOS ANGELES & SAN GABRIEL RIVERS WATERSHED COUNCIL**

700 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 T 213/ 229-9945 F 213/ 229-9952

## EXHIBIT 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary

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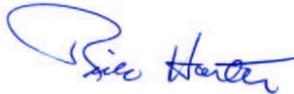
THE LOS ANGELES & SAN GABRIEL RIVERS  
WATERSHED COUNCIL

habitat that could be enhanced, as identified in the May 2002 publication by LASGRWC in collaboration with Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) of *Avifauna Along Portions of the Los Angeles River*, which focused largely on this three-mile corridor north of the Queensway Bay estuary (see the 'Publications' page on our web site at <http://www.lasgrwc.org/publications.html>).

The project would also provide a destination for the Long Beach RiverLink program that we have been participating in, which looks to provide pathways for people in western and northern Long Beach to connect to the Los Angeles River and onward to the estuary. Pedestrian and bike trails are already in place, thanks to the LACDA project, and this new initiative would significantly increase the aesthetic and recreational value of the area.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for this project. If you have any questions or require further elaboration, don't hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,



Rick Harter,  
Executive Director  
(213) 229-9950 [direct line]

*Note: The Watershed Council, in expressing support for projects and proposals consistent with its Mission and Vision, does not evaluate or rank competing proposals relative to one another. The Council's determination that a proposal is consistent with our Mission and Vision and worthy of support does not imply that individual agencies or organizations participating in the Council also support, or have reviewed, the proposal.*

Cc: Karen Bane, South Coast Regional Staff, California Coastal Conservancy  
Maria Chong-Castillo, Office of Hon. Zev Yaroslavsky, LA County Supervisor, Third District  
Dan Sharp, Watershed Management Division, LA County Department of Public Works

**LOS ANGELES & SAN GABRIEL RIVERS  
WATERSHED COUNCIL**

**Who We Are:**

The Watershed Council is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization incorporated in 1996. The 18-member Board of Directors is required by our By-Laws to be comprised of six categories of stakeholders, including:

- environmental organizations and community groups,
- government agencies at all levels,
- educational institutions and professional associations,
- business groups and property owners,
- water and wastewater agencies, and
- the general public.

**Our Mission:**

to facilitate a comprehensive, multipurpose, stakeholder-driven consensus process to preserve, restore, and enhance the many beneficial uses - economic, social, environmental and biological - of the Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds ecosystem through education, research, planning, and mediation.

**Our 25-Year Vision for the Watersheds:**

acting together, our communities and our watershed will be renewed through an integrated and cooperative approach to restoring the environment and the economy, creating a more livable future with regard to:

*Water Supply*

- Using all of our water resources efficiently.

*Water Quality*

- Improving water quality to support boating, fishing and swimming in the rivers and at the beach.

*Natural Resources*

- Managing the forest for water supply and quality.
- Restoring habitat for fish, birds, and wildlife.

*Urban Quality of Life*

- Celebrating our rivers with greenway/bikeways, habitat, recreation areas, and interpretive signs.
- Re-developing urban zones with offices, shops and cafes.
- Creating truly livable communities around the revitalized rivers.

*Integrated Management & Sustainability*

- Managing the watershed for economic vitality, environmental health and sustainability.

**Our Current Initiatives:**

In service to our stakeholders, we have formed the following strategic committees:

- Water Quality
- Landscape Ethic
- GIS Coordination
- Funding / Economics
- Education / Outreach

For further information, see our web site at <[www.LASGRWC.org](http://www.LASGRWC.org)>.



CALIFORNIA RESOURCES AGENCY

San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles  
**RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY**

**Governing Board of the  
Conservancy**

Frank Colonna  
Chair  
City of Long Beach

Bev Perry  
Vice-Chair  
Orange County Division of the League of  
California Cities

Mike Chrisman  
Secretary for Resources  
Resources Agency

Margaret Clark  
San Gabriel Valley Council of  
Governments

Cristina Cruz Madrid  
San Gabriel Valley Council of  
Governments

Ed Wilson  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments

Mark Grajeda  
Valley County Water District  
San Gabriel Valley Water Association

Donna Arduin  
Director  
Department of Finance

Terry Tamminen  
Secretary  
California Environmental Protection  
Agency

Gloria Molina  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Rick Ruiz  
Environmental Public Member

Dr. Paul Yost  
Director  
Orange County Division of the League of  
California Cities

Dan Arrighi  
Central Basin Water Association

Ruth Coleman  
Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation

Colonel Richard Thompson  
District Engineer, Los Angeles District  
US Army Corps of Engineers

Al Wright  
Executive Director  
Wildlife Conservation Board

Thomas M. Stetson  
San Gabriel River Water Master

Jim Noyes  
LA County Public Works

Jack Blackwell  
Angeles National Forest  
US Forest Service

Vicki Wilson  
Orange County Executive Office

Belinda V. Faustinos  
Executive Officer

February 24, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Support for Dominguez Gap DeForest Wetlands  
Project

Dear: Mr. Morabito

On behalf of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, I encourage your support for the Dominguez Gap -- DeForest Wetlands Project. The RMC authorizing statute (Public Resources Code, Sections 32602(a)) authorizes the RMC to acquire and manage public lands within the Lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds, and to provide open-space, low-impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvement within the territory. The goals of the RMC are described Common Ground, the Conservancy's Watershed and Open Space Plan. The Plan presents a simple vision for the future: restore balance between natural and human systems in the watersheds.

The Plan also encourages creation of river parkways along the rivers and tributaries, preservation of land in the mountains and foothills to preserve important wildlife habitat and open space; creation of a comprehensive network of pedestrian, bike, and equestrian trails; maintenance and enhancement of flood protection using a range of flood protection methods; optimization of water supplies, protection of beneficial uses; and expansion of groundwater infiltration. The RMC supports the Dominguez Gap -- Deforest Wetlands project as it will provide valuable freshwater and estuarine wetland habitats, is located in the Pacific Flyway, and will create a three mile stretch of open space for habitat, education, and passive recreation. As of this date the RMC has approved a planning grant to the Los

900 S. Fremont Ave., Annex, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor • P.O. Box 1460 • Alhambra, CA 91802-1460  
Phone: (626) 458-4315 • Fax: (626) 979-3363 • E-mail: [biaustinos@rmc.ca.gov](mailto:biaustinos@rmc.ca.gov)  
[www.rmc.ca.gov](http://www.rmc.ca.gov)

**EXHIBIT 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary**

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Angeles County Flood Control District in the amount of \$200,000 for this project.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this request.

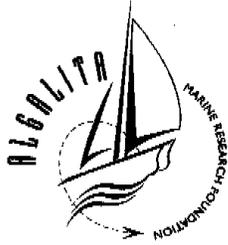
Sincerely,

*Belinda N. Faustinos*  
Belinda Faustinos,  
Executive Officer

cc: Karen C. Bane

**RECEIVED**  
FEB 26 2004  
COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

EXHIBIT 2: February 24, 2000 Staff Recommendation Project Summary



March 16, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

VIA US Post and Facsimile (510) 286-3840

Re: Support for Dominguez Gap – DeForest Wetlands Project

Dear Mr. Morabito,

I am writing to seek your support for the Coastal Conservancy's disbursement of \$400,000 for the preliminary design and environmental review of the Dominguez Gap-DeForest Wetlands Project. Historic wetlands that once bordered the L.A. River in the vicinity of the coast would be restored according to the designs prepared with Conservancy funds. Active steps must be taken to recapture these lost wetlands including mitigation and education themes.

This proposed project would incorporate alternatives developed by the feasibility study that Betty Karnette supported in her February 8, 2000 letter to Chairman Hernandez.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

W. D. Grafton III,  
AMRF President, Board of Directors

148 N Marina Dr.  
Long Beach  
California 90803  
562-598-4880  
F 562-598-8712  
www.algalita.org

CC: Marieta Francis, AMRF Director of Operations

