COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
June 15, 2017

CABALLERO CREEK PARK

Project No. 16-056-01
Project Manager: Kara Kemmler

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to $500,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for final design and implementation of Caballero Creek Park at the confluence of Caballero Creek and the Los Angeles River in the San Fernando Valley area of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County.

LOCATION: 6353 Lindley Avenue, Tarzana neighborhood of San Fernando Valley, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resource Protection

---

EXHIBITS

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Section 31220 of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority ("the grantee") for final design and implementation of Caballero Creek Park at the confluence of Caballero Creek and the Los Angeles River in the San Fernando Valley area of the City of Los Angeles, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Conservancy's Executive Officer: a work program, including budget and schedule; names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained for project work; a signage plan for the project acknowledging Conservancy funding; and a signed agreement with the landowners, the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles,

regarding (1) site access for construction and monitoring and (2) long-term operation and maintenance.

2. Prior to commencement of construction, the grantee shall submit final construction plans and evidence that all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained.
3. The grantee shall ensure that the design of project access facilities is consistent with all applicable federal or state laws governing access for persons with disabilities."

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 authorization is consistent with Chapter 5.5 regarding improving and protecting coastal and marine water quality and habitats (Section 31220).
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize up to $500,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for final design and implementation of Caballero Creek Park at the confluence of Caballero Creek and the Los Angeles (LA) River in the San Fernando Valley area of the City of Los Angeles (City).

Caballero Creek Park will convert 1.6-acres of vacant land into a model multiple-benefit public park. The park will feature a wetland and bioswale, wildlife habitat, native drought tolerant landscaping, trails, fitness stations, seating and picnic areas, interpretive learning areas, a shaded platform near the wetland to serve as an outdoor classroom, and a boardwalk spur to give visitors a close view of the wetland. The confluence of the L.A. River and Caballero Creek is visible from the site and a future segment of the LA River Greenway will run adjacent to the park.

The Park's design uses an innovative mix of low-tech mechanical and biological methods to achieve watershed protection. Currently, the stormwater runoff from a 17-acre urban residential area is piped along Lindley Avenue and enters the Los Angeles River untreated, carrying trash, sediment, nutrients, oils, bacteria, and other urban pollution. The Project will intercept this flow at a catch basin on Lindley Avenue, and divert it through filters and the bioswale, allowing for natural percolation. The infiltrated water will replenish the local aquifer, increasing the local supply of water. Additionally, water will be pumped out of Caballero Creek, a concrete channel that is wet year-round due to urban runoff. This water will be sent through filters and then into the park's constructed wetland to support that habitat. Water leaving the wetland will then enter the bio-swale, supplementing its infiltration function. All water that is not infiltrated will enter a cistern that will feed the park's irrigation system. (See Exhibit 2.) The wetland will treat an estimated 8.5 acre-feet of water each year, which is enough to sustain the new plantings year round, including wetland and riparian species.

The project will create habitat for local wildlife, and is uniquely situated to benefit multiple populations. The site is 2.5 miles downstream along Caballero Creek from the Santa Monica Mountains significant ecological area, and 3 miles upstream along the Los Angeles River from the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Preserve, see Exhibit 1. As such, the park will provide a critical connection between these two sensitive ecological areas and help to mitigate habitat fragmentation. This will increase opportunities for biodiversity mixing and for species seeking alternate shelter as they adapt to climate change. Since the habitat enhancement will be located at the confluence of two waterways, the project's benefits will have a multiplier effect as it can provide respite and increase connectivity for migratory species using both waterways.

The park will serve as an educational environment creating a dynamic, outdoor experience for youth and their families to learn about the watershed, water resource issues, and native flora and fauna. The park's trail climbs up to an overlook spot, creating advantageous perches for viewing birds and other wildlife without disturbance. Interpretive signs will contain information about the park's sustainability features and natural resources. These kinds of outdoor learning activities help build meaningful relationships with nature that can lead to a deeper understanding and care for the environment, particularly California's unique riverine ecosystems and the wildlife that thrives within. Three public schools are within walking distance of the project. Studies have shown that exposure to nature supports children's healthy and creative development, strong immune systems, and beneficial effects on behavioral conduct and well-being (*Taylor, A., Kuo, F. (2008), Children with attention deficits concentrate better after walk in the park, Journal of Attention Disorders; Parks After Dark: Preventing Violence While Promoting Healthy, Active Living, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation*.) In addition, the park environment and amenities will serve as a shady place for passive recreation and respite as well as a connector for active recreation between adjacent communities and the river.

The park will be an "urban green island" with many anthropocentric benefits serving to mitigate the climate change impacts LA residents are likely to face including severe droughts, more intense heat spells, and overall decreased quality of life especially for disadvantaged communities. The project will result in increased water supply, which will reduce reliance on imported water and thusly, reduction of GHGs to deliver water, reduction of the urban heat island effect, generation of oxygen and removal of air pollutants (carbon sequestration), and increased opportunities for active transportation and recreation.

Caballero Creek Park will be of great significance on a regional scale as well, due to its demonstration of how urban runoff can be cleaned on-site and used to irrigate new plantings. One of the most profound conflicts faced by California is that the need for additional trees and plants to increase climate resiliency requires a higher use of water to establish and sustain those plantings during drought. The cost and timeframe to build municipal infrastructure for reclaimed water makes that a very long-term solution, even as new development projects continue unabated. Dry season urban runoff is readily available in many areas, particularly along flood control structures, and the project will demonstrate that a small-size wetland, using durable and proven equipment, can supply adequate water for more plantings. Caballero Creek Park is a model of sustainability for water and energy use and these aspects are replicable for other projects.

As the revitalization of urban rivers increases in popularity, the need for replicable examples of sustainable river-front development also increases. The efforts to revitalize and restore the Los Angeles River that began in the 1990s have now resulted in a high demand for riverfront development. This development pressure is no longer just for parks and trails to replace industrial zones, but for upscale residential and commercial uses. This trend is readily apparent along portions of the Los Angeles River today, and inevitably will reach other areas of the river, including the project site. While a multitude of planning documents and design guidelines exist, there are few examples of built projects that are truly water sustainable, resilient to drought and climate change impacts, and almost none that benefit wetlands. Caballero Creek Park will help the City advance climate change resilience, urban cooling, watershed restoration, better air quality, water security, water self-reliance, and integrated water management, while also serving as a model of urban greening as a self-sustaining, net zero park for energy and water systems.

The MRCA is a local public agency exercising the joint powers of Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The MRCA's mission is to protect land and public access to natural lands in Southern California. Since its inception in 1985, the MRCA has designed, planned and constructed scores of natural park projects throughout Los Angeles. The overall goal for the MRCA's urban parklands program is to "integrate nature into the urban environment". The proposed project is a multi-benefit park in urban LA that will serve to integrate nature into the urban environment and engage the public in a way that will promote more future projects in the same vein.

Site Description: Caballero Creek Park will transform a 1.6-acre vacant lot into a natural park with 670 feet of river frontage, restored habitat, and wetlands that will filter urban runoff. The project site is located at the confluence of the LA River and Caballero Creek, in the Tarzana neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley area of the City of Los Angeles. Caballero Creek begins at El Caballero Country Club, built on land originally owned by Edgar Rice Burroughs of Tarzan fame, which of course became the namesake of Tarzana. Like many tributaries of the LA River, the creek was channelized in concrete by mid-century, and the site at the confluence has been empty for years. It is currently an under-utilized, vacant and blighted asphalt lot, mostly made up of impervious asphalt surface with weeds and invasive species growing throughout, and illegal dumping occurrences are common. The site is owned by the City. The adjacent maintenance road is owned by the County of Los Angeles Flood Control District. The concept design for the park was developed in partnership with the City and County and is supported by numerous plans recommending the implementation of a contiguous Los Angeles River Parkway to ultimately aid in the connectivity of all the region's waterways. These improvements will be a significant piece of a larger vision for the area to transform the waterways of LA into continuous parklands and multi-purpose greenways.

There is an unquestioned need for additional park and green space in urban Los Angeles. The critical lack of park space impacts public health, habitat for our native species, resilience to climate change, equity for disadvantaged communities, and the ability to teach environmental stewardship and natural sciences. The immediate neighborhood surrounding Caballero Creek Park has only 3.8 acres of usable park space per 1,000 residents, below both the Los Angeles County (County) average of 6.2 acres and the recommended standard of 10 acres. While the San

Fernando Valley is frequently associated with green, suburban environments, the reality is that this area has 20-30% tree canopy.

Since the site is adjacent to a disadvantaged community (DAC), it will directly serve the need for a local neighborhood park. The census tracts adjacent to the project site have scores of 81-85% and the community within walking distance of the park is comprised of a mix of census tracts which have CalEnviroScreen scores of 66-70% (higher percentile indicates a higher relative burden to the area). The County Public Health's West Valley statistics show that among the project area's population, 20% of middle-school youth are obese, 17% of adults are obese, 7% of adults have diabetes, and 23% of adults have hypertension. The project's recreational amenities will provide a new exercise option for all local residents, helping to reduce sedentary lifestyles through increased physical activity. Furthermore, the project's unprogrammed natural spaces will provide a place for residents to simply "get away from it all" which is invaluable in this densely populated urban area. Respite is a deep human need in our society. Consistently, the most popular activity in MRCA's varied parks is lounging with family and friends in a place of sanctuary. This type of use cannot be quantified in the way that athletic facilities can, but that does not make the environmental health benefits trivial. The park will be planted with native California species, which will improve air quality, and the infiltration of stormwater will improve regional water quality and supply for this DAC.

Project History: Based on the MRCA's experience with implementing natural parks in urban LA, the City approached the MRCA with the site as a park development opportunity. The MRCA met with various City departments, City Council staff, and community groups to determine if there was sufficient interest and resources to implement a project at this site. The support was overwhelming, leading the MRCA to prioritize the project's development. The City and County of Los Angeles have committed to retain ownership, maintenance, and operation responsibilities while allowing the MRCA to oversee the design and construction.

The MRCA has implemented several Coastal Conservancy funded projects which are similar in size, budget, and scope to the proposed project including Compton Creek Natural Park and Ballona Creek Milton Park, both exemplary urban natural parks. These projects are multi-million dollar projects that bear multiple benefits similar to the proposed project and serve park-poor neighborhoods.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	$500,000
California Department of Natural Resources (Urban Greening)	$1,146,500
City of Los Angeles (MICLA)	$750,000
Los Angeles County (Prop A)	$300,000
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Prop 84)	$250,000
Project Total	**$2,946,500**

The expected source of funding for this authorization is the fiscal year 2016/17 appropriation to the Conservancy from the "Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014" (Proposition 1, Division 26.7 of the Water Code, § 79700 *et seq.*). Funds appropriated to the Conservancy derive from Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 79730) and may be used "for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state" (Section 79731). Section 79732(a) identifies thirteen specific purposes of Chapter 6; of those, the proposed project will help achieve eight as follows:

- Protect and increase the economic benefits arising from healthy watersheds and instream flow (subsection (a)(1));
- Implement watershed adaptation projects to reduce the impacts of climate change on California's communities and ecosystems (subsection (a)(2));
- Restore river parkways throughout the state (subsection (a)(3));
- Protect and restore aquatic, wetland and migratory bird ecosystems including fish and wildlife corridors (subsection (a)(4));
- Protect and restore urban watershed health (subsection (a)(9));
- Protect and restore coastal watersheds (subsection (a)(10));
- Reduce pollution or contamination of rivers and coastal waters and protect or restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality, or flood management (subsection (a)(11)); and
- Assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened or migratory species by improving watershed health, inland wetland restoration, or other means (subsection (a)(12)).

The proposed project was selected through the fourth-round competitive grant process under the Conservancy's *Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines* adopted in June 2015 (see Section 79706(a)). The proposed project meets each of the evaluation criteria in the Proposition 1 Guidelines as described in further detail in this "Project Financing" section, the "Project Summary" section above, and in the "Consistency with Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines" section below of this staff recommendation.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 5.5 regarding improving and protecting coastal and marine water quality and habitats (Pub. Resources Code § 31220).

Section 31220(a) permits the Conservancy to provide grants for coastal watershed and coastal water quality, sediment management, and resources protection projects, if the projects meet one or more of the objectives detailed in Section 31220(b). Subsections (1), (2), (6), (7) and (8) of Section 31220(b) specifically authorize projects that reduce contamination of waters within the coastal zone; protect or restore fish and wildlife habitat within coastal and marine waters and coastal watersheds; acquire, protect, and restore coastal wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains, and other sensitive watershed lands, including watershed lands draining to sensitive coastal or marine areas; reduce the impact of population and economic pressures on coastal and marine resources; and provide for public access compatible with resource protection and restoration objectives. The

proposed project is a multi-benefit park which will reduce contamination of coastal waters, protect and restore wildlife habitat in the LA River watershed, restore wetlands and riparian habitat, reduce pressures such as the need for green space, cooling, air quality, water quality and water supply, and provide access and recreation opportunities compatible with the restored environment.

As also required by Section 31220(a), Conservancy staff has consulted with the State Water Resources Control Board to ensure consistency with Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30915) of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code. In addition, consistent with Section 31220(c) the proposed project will include a monitoring and evaluation component and is consistent with regional, local or State watershed management and water quality plans or programs, as described in the "Consistency with Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan" section, below.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), AS REVISED JUNE 25, 2015:

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective F**, the proposed project will include public access trails that will connect to the LA River Greenway trail system ultimately connecting inland, underserved populations to the coast.

Consistent with **Goal 3, Objective B**, the proposed project will implement a waterfront revitalization project increasing accessibility, creating more inclusive access opportunities, and promoting excellence and innovation in urban design, which is resilient to a changing climate.

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objectives B, D and G**, the proposed project will (B) restore and enhance coastal habitats, including the stream corridor along the confluence of Caballero Creek and the LA River by restoring native vegetation and wetlands, (D) preserve and enhance the coastal watershed and floodplain of the LA River, and (G) improve water quality by preventing pollutants from entering the LA River and thereby benefitting coastal and ocean resources downstream.

Consistent with **Goal 7, Objectives F and G**, the proposed project will enhance the resiliency of coastal communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change by (F) reducing greenhouse gases via increased carbon sequestration resulting from restoration of habitat onsite and reduction of energy consumption by increasing groundwater recharge and installing solar panels to supply irrigation and stormwater measures, and (G) creating a park that will combat urban heat island effects, reduce energy use, improve air quality, enhance stormwater management, and improve quality of life.

Consistent with **Goal 9, Objective B**, the proposed project will include interpretive and educational displays and an outdoor classroom to promote education related to coastal and watershed resources and climate change.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, 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 the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:**
    a. *California Water Action Plan.* The proposed project will result in a project that helps achieve California Water Action Plan Action #2 Increase Regional Self-Reliance through infiltration of water via the bioswale increasing the quantity of groundwater supply, and the capture and reuse of water via both wetland and bioswale for onsite irrigation which will reduce the amount of potable water needed for irrigation, thereby reducing the amount of imported water needed for Southern California; #4 Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems by restoring degraded habitat in an important coastal watershed; and Action #8 Increase Flood Protection by providing stormwater infiltration and alleviating local flooding.
    b. *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report*. The proposed project will advance the following recommendations of the Report, consistent with State planning priorities of AB857: Preserve and Steward the State's Lands and Natural Resources by increasing ecosystem services and biodiversity, increasing resilience of natural systems to recover from disruption, and promoting the use of "green infrastructure" to lessen environmental impacts of development and to provide greater protection from natural disturbances; and Build Sustainable Regions that Support Healthy, Livable Communities by investing in sound infrastructure that is consistent with the state's long-term environmental goals (specifically that will benefit disadvantaged communities), incorporating and investing in active transportation projects, such as walking and biking infrastructure, and advancing clean air and water goals.
    c. *CA Climate Adaptation Strategy: Safeguarding California*. The proposed project is consistent with this 2014 Plan and its 2016 Implementation Action Plans because the proposed project will advance the following strategies: 1. *Biodiversity and Habitat* by helping safeguard species and ecosystems from climate risks by restoring native habitat and improving habitat connectivity, and by supporting environmental stewardship with learning activities and an outdoor classroom promoting understanding of climate risks to biodiversity and habitats; 5. *Public Health* by expanding urban greening and employing green infrastructure to cool, generate oxygen, sequester carbon and remove pollutants from the air thus helping to address and reduce GHG emissions and helping with the adverse health impacts of global warming, as well as encourage healthy activities such as walking and biking; and, 6. *Water* by preparing California for flooding by rehabilitating upper watershed source areas, providing more natural floodplain features and functions

that slow, spread, capture, and/or infiltrate floodwaters throughout a watershed, and reusing stormwater for irrigation thus reducing the amount of imported water needed.

d. *California Essential Habitat Connectivity Strategy for Conserving a Connected California.* "A functional network of connected habitats is essential to the continued existence of California's diverse species and natural communities in the face of both human land use and climate change" (CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife). The proposed project creates and contributes to that network of habitats to ensure the conservation of local wildlife. Per CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, "As habitat conditions change in the face of climate change, some species ranges are already shifting and wildlife must be provided greater opportunities for movement, migration, and changes in distribution," and the project will provide such opportunities.

4. **Support of the public:** The proposed project enjoys broad support from state elected officials to the community level, including Senator Henry Stern, Mayor Eric Garcetti, City Councilman Bob Blumenfield, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, and Reseda High School. The Project concept has been approved by the Tarzana Neighborhood Council and the Los Angeles River Cooperation Committee, which is comprised of various City and departments as well as the US Army Corps of Engineers.

5. **Location:** The proposed project is located within the Tarzana neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley in the City outside of the coastal zone. The site is adjacent to the confluence of Caballero Creek and the LA River and will have beneficial impacts on the coastal watershed system and ultimately on the coastal environment downstream where the river meets the Pacific Ocean. The proposed project will also include trails that connect to the Los Angeles River Greenway that links to the California Coastal Trail.

6. **Need:** If Conservancy funds are not awarded, the MRCA will eliminate the wetlands component and other valuable elements of the Project. The Project would be built with the currently available funds but the design of the park would be simplified to contain fewer educational, landscaping and recreational elements, and would not be self-sustaining (net zero). Potable water would have to be used to irrigate the park's landscaping.

7. **Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed project will connect to the LA River Greenway, which is a popular recreation area for local residents as well as visitors from around the state and beyond. In addition, the project will have water quality and water supply impacts that will benefit the region from inland to the beach.

8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The proposed project site is located more than twenty miles inland of the coast and is not vulnerable to sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

10. Resolution of more than one issue: The proposed project is a multi-benefit park that will address water quality, water supply, wildlife habitat, access and recreation and climate change issues.

11. Leverage: See the "Project Financing" section above.

13. Innovation: The Project will supply its own energy via solar panels and its own water for irrigation. A grid-tied array of solar panels will be sized to generate the amount of energy required by the park during normal operation to achieve a net-zero energy balance. More

importantly, the park is designed to use a combination of stormwater from Lindley Avenue and dry weather runoff from Caballero Creek and supply all necessary water for irrigation, as well as maintain habitat for the wetland. This requires the use of careful selection of pumps (powered by solar energy), filtration, and disinfection equipment that are relatively simple to maintain. A custom hydrologic computer model will be used to simulate future water and energy requirements for the park, which will become the basis of sizing the final design of park elements needed to achieve the net zero energy and water systems.

14. **Readiness**: The grantee has secured the balance of funding required for final design and construction of the park and is ready to undertake the proposed project immediately.

15. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals**: See "Project History" section above.

17. **Cooperation:** The Project has been developed by an exemplary partnership among the MRCA, the City of Los Angeles (Councilmember Blumenfield, River Office, Department of General Services, Recreation and Parks, and Bureau of Sanitation), the County of Los Angeles, former Senator Fran Pavley, and three nearby Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools.

18. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** The design of the proposed project anticipates and mitigates the climate change impacts Los Angeles County will likely face including severe droughts, more intense heat spells, and loss of California's native biodiversity. Increasing opportunities for rainwater to filter into the water table will reduce the risk of minor flooding, increase local water reserves, and improve the quality of water within the watershed upon which wildlife depends. Native plant landscaping will serve as new and enhanced habitat and open space for wildlife, as the site lies between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Preserve, both of which provide a habitat stepping stone to facilitate movement of wildlife increasing the resiliency of California's biodiversity. Additionally, in case of fire or extreme drought in the western Santa Monica Mountains, the park will act as a reserve of food, water, and shelter to migrating species. The park will also enhance the quality of life in the community, alleviating impacts from pollution, limited access to green space and recreation opportunities, and increased temperatures.

19. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The park's trees will sequester 2.2 metric tons of CO^2 in 2025 and 5.6 metric tons of CO^2 in 2045. Solar panels will be installed on the roof of the shade structure to power the filtration system and pump/irrigation components for the park. The decking material planned for the board walk will also be recycled. MRCA plans to employ green building techniques by reuse of existing materials on site when possible, and construction materials will be purchased from local suppliers when feasible. This will reduce waste in our landfills and reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled during construction.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/ STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:

Caballero Creek Park is listed as a project in the Greater Los Angeles County Region Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. The project will advance the plan's regional water quality and habitat/open space restoration targets for watershed health. The project will also help

implement the 2015 Enhanced Watershed Management Program (EWMP) for the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project, design and construction of Caballero Creek Park, involves conversion of vacant land, mostly covered by impervious asphalt surface with weeds and invasive species (see Exhibit 3), to public park space including creation of wildlife habitat, irrigation and stormwater management elements, a pedestrian bridge, fitness equipment, an outdoor classroom, and other passive park amenities. The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15304, which allows minor alterations to land, such as grading and landscaping. The project will involve grading to create the wetland and bioswale features, and landscaping with native plants. Furthermore, Section 15303 exempts construction of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, including accessory (appurtenant) structures, which applies to the installation of park amenities and underground stormwater BMPs. The stormwater elements will be placed underground on the vacant lot and connect to the street running along the eastern boundary of the lot and the concrete creek channel at the north end of the site. No natural resources will be impacted by the location of these structures or the water pumping activities from Caballero Creek, which is a concrete channel. Additionally, Section 15333 exempts projects not to exceed five acres in size to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife, such as revegetation of disturbed areas with native plant species. The project will convert a disturbed site to native habitat that will benefit wildlife and will not have any potential adverse impacts on sensitive water or wildlife resources.

Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption for this project.