

Water Research Project, Los Angeles County: **Funding Needed to Further “The Green Solution”**

Purpose

Potential new county funding: As part of development of a long-term, countywide approach to help clean up L.A. County’s polluted rivers, streams, ocean and bays, funding is needed to quantify the “Green Solution” approach to the county’s urgent and critical water quality problems. Focused research, mapping, property identification, evaluation and analysis is needed to bridge the existing quantification gap between the water quality improvement goals established by the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the county and the identification of the acreage necessary for conversion from concrete to multi-benefit projects in order to help meet those goals.

THE GREEN SOLUTION – Protecting, restoring and creating new habitat, park and natural open space lands to address water pollution: Almost all water bodies of the Santa Monica Bay and Upper Los Angeles River watersheds – rivers, streams, lakes, bays, ocean – are in violation of state and federal water quality standards, with nearly 100 pollutants affecting over 500 miles of rivers and streams and the county coastline. Many experts agree that one of the very best “Best Management Practices” (BMP) for addressing water pollution is to treat urban and stormwater runoff by unpaving a wide variety of currently impervious areas and creating wetlands, parks and other natural open space that can be used as natural treatment areas. This Green Solution approach is essential to effectively address water pollution in all urbanized watersheds throughout the nation, and particularly in L.A. County, where the natural functions of watersheds, rivers and the soil itself have been so dramatically altered.

The Importance of The Green Solution

“The Green Solution” focuses on cleaning up polluted urban and stormwater runoff by “unpaving” impervious areas throughout urbanized Los Angeles County watersheds to create networks of new, protected and restored habitat, parks and recreation areas that function as water quality treatment areas as well as providing a wide range of open space and other benefits.

There are nearly 100 different pollutants found in various combinations throughout L.A. County’s rivers, streams and lakes, along all of the county’s beaches and in its bays and ocean. The impacts of this polluted water on beaches, aquatic life and human health have been well documented. The RWQCB and other water quality experts believe that significant portions of this pollutant load could be permanently addressed by diverting polluted urban and stormwater runoff to a network of new and well-designed pervious landscapes that would allow soil and plants to filter and uptake water and pollutants. This would also have the benefit of providing desperately-needed park,

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recreation and habitat in parts of urbanized L.A. County that seriously lack parks, recreation, habitat and other open space lands.

Funding Needed to Bridge The Green Solution's Quantification Gap

The existing quantification gap must be bridged in order to identify and develop meaningful levels of funding for the Green Solution approach. Through this research project, CCI will work with Geo Syntech, the county Department of Public Works, the County Assessor's office, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and other experts as necessary to quantify the number of acres, geographic targets by watershed and amount of land available for conversion throughout L.A. County that would be necessary to make urgently-needed and lasting water quality improvements in Santa Monica Bay and Upper Los Angeles River watersheds. CCI is working in partnership with a number of public agencies, including the State Coastal Conservancy, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission.

About CCI

CCI is a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles that specializes in tackling complex and challenging problems created by the interaction of people and nature. CCI's leadership has a unique track record in successfully developing and implementing new public funding sources, and is responsible for the creation of a county-wide special benefit assessment district and over \$1 billion in voter-approved funds for parks, recreation and natural lands, trails and tree-planting, senior and youth facilities and hundreds of other public open space projects throughout L.A. County.