

Central Services
Joan Araujo, Director

Engineering Services
Anastasia Seims, Director

Roads & Transportation
Anitha Balan, Director

Water & Sanitation
Vacant, Director

Watershed Protection
Vacant, Director

June 3, 2025

Board of Supervisors
Ventura County Watershed Protection District

Subject: Approval of Plans and Specifications for the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel (Structure Demolition) Project; Waive Any Minor Bid Irregularities; Award of, and Authorization for the Watershed Protection District Director to Execute, a Contract with Fees Trucking and Construction in the Amount of \$136,805.00; Find that the Project is Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act. Specification No. WP25-15, Project No. P6081176; Watershed Protection District Zone No. 1; Supervisorial District No. 1.

Recommendations:

1. Approve the plans and specifications for the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel (Structure Demolition) Project, located in the unincorporated area of Casitas Springs near Ojai, CA (Exhibits 1 and 2); Specification No. WP25-15, Project No. P6081176 (collectively, the Project); Watershed Protection District Zone No. 1; Supervisorial District No. 1.
2. Waive any minor bid irregularities, award, and authorize the Watershed Protection District (District) Director or designee to execute a contract with Fees Trucking and Construction, as the lowest response, responsible bidder, in the amount of \$136,805.00, for Project work and services.
3. Find that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act as an emergency project pursuant to 14 C.C.R. § 15269 (a) and (c).

Fiscal Impact:

	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26
Revenue	\$128,255	\$ 0
Costs	\$332,006	\$ 0
Net Cost	\$203,751	\$ 0

Funding Source(s): Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and Watershed Protection District Zone 1

Match Requirement: 25% of eligible costs, of which CalOES will cover 75%



Sufficient revenue and appropriations are available in the FY 2024-25 Watershed Protection District Zone 1 Adjusted Budget.

Discussion:

The Project is located within and along Coyote Creek, a tributary to the Ventura River, near the unincorporated area of Casitas Springs in Ventura County, California (Exhibit 1). The project site is located at 575 Casitas Vista Road (Exhibit 2).

The storm events experienced early in 2023 caused flooding in the areas adjacent to Coyote Creek, including the above-mentioned property. The strength and duration of the storms experienced in 2023 and early 2024 exacerbated sediment build up in the creek by bringing sediment from the nearby mountains down the creek. After most of the water had receded, the extent of accumulated sediment within the project site is approximately 4 feet. The purpose of the Project is to restore the subject property to its natural habitat by demolishing, removing, and disposing of all residential structures and improvements as this property is within the floodway and the flood plain of Coyote Creek. The 575 Casitas Vista Road property was purchased and acquired by Watershed Protection District in late 2024. Project work will occur simultaneously with the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel Phase II project, approved by your Board on May 20, 2025.

The Project involves demolishing all structures located within the project boundary including but not limited to two houses and accessory dwelling buildings, a pool, three sheds, a septic tank, concrete driveway and pavement, and block wall fence. It is preferable that construction occurs during the dry season to reduce impacts to water quality. Any water that will be present within the creek during construction will require diversion, control, and removal. The District would like to do the work before the rainy season so obstructions to flow are removed and winter storm flow can pass through the system without potential flooding to surrounding neighbors or additional sediment deposition.

The District is working in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Funding is available for the proposed channel improvements on private property through the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP). NRCS administers the EWPP, which responds to emergencies created by natural disasters. The EWPP is a recovery effort aimed at relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural disasters. Threats that the EWPP addresses are termed watershed impairments. NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the eligible construction cost of emergency measures.

The Project must have a sponsor, which is a responsible government agency. The District was requested to sponsor this project by Supervisor LaVere, with concurrence by the affected residents. Initial discussions were held with NRCS, and the District was informed in June 2024 that the Project was eligible for 75% of the estimated project cost. NRCS issued the District a Notice of Award on September 10, 2024.



The NRCS program also requires a local match for the remaining 25 percent of the project construction cost, approximately \$34,201. The California Office of Emergency Services

(CalOES) has a program that will fund 75 percent of the remaining local 25 percent cost share for the Project, or \$25,651. This leaves \$8,550. Note that the CalOES funding is only available at project completion. The District intends to apply to CalOES for reimbursement once the Project has been completed and closed out by NRCS.

The District requests your Board award, and authorize the District Director to execute, a contract with Fees Trucking and Construction, as the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, in the amount of \$136,805.00 to expedite the construction Project schedule and issue a Notice to Proceed to commence the work.

No additional right-of-way is required for this Project.

A total of five (5) bids were received in response to the District's invitation for bids. Bids for the Project were opened on April 29, 2025. A copy of the bid abstract is attached as Exhibit 4. The bid has been checked and is in satisfactory form. The lowest responsible bid in the amount of \$136,805 was submitted by Fees Trucking & Construction. The lowest bid is approximately 32% below the Engineer's estimate of \$200,000 which is within the reasonable range of probable construction cost.

The lowest bid appears to be reasonable and reflects the value of the work to be done as evidenced by examination of the bids received. The AGENCY recommends awarding the contract to Fees Trucking and Construction.

Regulatory permitting for the project is current and includes authorizations issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Biological Opinion No. 2024-0100544-S7-001), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (NWP 37 No. SPL-2024-00385), Regional Water Quality Control Board (401 Certification No. 24-082), and an emergency notification was submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (VEN-53566). The project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15269 (a) and (c), Emergency Projects. The Notice of Exemption was filed after your Board's approval of the Project on July 23, 2024.

The estimated total project costs are as follows:

Preliminary Engineering:	\$ 70,000
Construction Contract:	\$ 136,805
Construction Engineering:	\$ 91,000
Right of Way:	\$ 0
Contingencies:	<u>\$ 34,201</u>
Total	\$ 332,006



Strategic Plan:

This item contributes to the Board of Supervisors (Board's) 2024-2027 strategic priority to provide:

- III. Reliable infrastructure and sustainability through
 - 3. Investing in sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, and preservation of our natural resources.

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel. The Contract is on a standard form previously reviewed by County Counsel.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact the undersigned at 805-654-2040.

Sincerely,



Jeff Palmer, P.E.
Director
Watershed Protection District

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 2 – Location Map
- Exhibit 3 – Plans and Specifications
- Exhibit 4 – Abstract of Bids

