

Central Services  
Joan Araujo, Director

Engineering Services  
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Roads & Transportation  
Anitha Balan, Director

Water & Sanitation  
Vacant, Director

Watershed Protection  
Jeff Palmer, Director

July 23, 2024

Ventura County Watershed Protection District  
Board of Supervisors  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Subject: Approval of the Plans and Specifications for the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel Project; Find the Project Statutorily Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act; Authorization for the Public Works Agency Director or His Designee to Approve Addenda, to Waive Minor Irregularities in the Bid, to Award the Contract to the Lowest Responsive, Responsible Bidder Provided that the Low Bid Does not Exceed the Engineer's Estimate of \$1,512,000 and to Execute a Contract With That Bidder for the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel Project – Located in the unincorporated area of Casitas Springs near Ojai, CA; Specification No. WP25-01, Project No. P6081175; Supervisorial District No. 1. Recommendation No. 5 (REQUIRES 4/5THS VOTE).**

**Recommendations:**

1. Approve the plans and specifications including addenda for the construction of the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel Project – located in the unincorporated area of Casitas Springs near Ojai, CA (Exhibits 1 and 2), Specification No. WP25-01, Project No 81175;
2. Authorize the Public Works Agency (PWA) Director or his designee to issue and approve addenda which clarify ambiguities, or correct errors in the plans and specifications;
3. Authorize the PWA Director or his designee to waive any minor irregularities in the bids;
4. Authorize the PWA Director or his designee to award a contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder provided the low bid does not exceed the Engineer's estimate of \$1,512,000, and to execute subject contract after review and approval as to form by County Counsel;



5. Find that the Coyote Creek Pilot Channel project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Sections 15269 (a) and (c), Emergency Projects, approve the project and CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE), and authorize the Director of Public Works, or his designee, to sign and file the NOE with the County Clerk.

**Fiscal/Mandates Impact:**

Mandatory: No  
 Source of Funding: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ventura County Community Foundation, General Fund and Watershed Protection District Zone 1  
 Funding Match Required: 25% of eligible costs  
 Impact on Other Department(s): None

**Summary of Revenue and Total Costs:**

	<u>FY 2024-25</u>	<u>FY 2025-26</u>
Revenue:	\$ 1,247,399	\$ 283,500
Costs:		
Direct	\$ 1,685,328	\$ 0
Indirect – Agency/Dept.	\$ 9,678	\$ 0
Indirect – County CAP	\$ 425	\$ 0
Total Costs	\$ 1,695,431	\$ 0
Net Costs	\$ 448,032	(\$ 283,500)
Recovered Indirect Costs	\$ 0	\$ 0

**Current FY Budget Projection:**

<b>Current FY 2024-25 Budget Projection for Watershed Protection District Zone 1 - Unit 4211</b>				
	Adopted Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$9,580,000	\$9,580,000	\$9,580,000	\$0
Revenue	\$13,539,200	\$13,539,200	\$13,539,200	\$0
Net Cost	(\$3,959,200)	(\$3,959,200)	(\$3,959,200)	\$0

Sufficient revenue and appropriations are included in the FY 2024-25 Zone 1 Adjusted Budget. Revenue will be included in the FY2025-2026 budget as appropriate.



**Discussion:**

The project is located within Coyote Creek, a tributary to the Ventura River, near the unincorporated area of Casitas Springs in Ventura County, California (See Exhibits 1 and 2). The project site is parallel to Casitas Vista Road starting approximately 500 feet upstream of Camp Chaffee Road and extending about 1,060 feet downstream of the Santa Ana Road bridge, for a total project length of approximately 3,300 linear feet (Exhibit 2).

The storm events experienced early in 2023 caused flooding in the areas adjacent to Coyote Creek. The strength and duration of the storms experienced early this year exacerbated sediment buildup 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 creek is now especially evident at the Camp Chaffee Road low water crossing, where there are approximately 4 feet of sediment and surface water on top of the existing road surface.

The subject project involves excavating 2,421 linear feet (LF) of a pilot channel 25 feet wide and 5 feet deep (average) with banks at 2(H):1(V) tying to the existing topography. The existing terrain is heavily vegetated which has also contributed to the sediment buildup by slowing down the water; this causes sediment suspended in the water to settle and deposit over time and will require 3,300 LF of vegetation and tree removal within the limits of the pilot channel. Vegetation will also be cut down to the existing surface elevation 15 feet past the overbanks on both sides of the pilot channel to provide construction equipment access. 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 Coyote Creek Pilot Channel project includes four construction schedules consisting of vegetation removal from Station 1+00 to Sta 21+00 and from Station 24+00 to Station 34+00, within the limits shown on the plans; and excavation of the pilot channel from Station 9+79 to Station 21+00 and from Station 24+00 to Station 34+00 (Exhibit 3). The project was divided into four construction schedules to be able to delete schedules as needed in case the low bidder exceeds the maximum amount authorized by your Board. A companion project to be done under a separate contract requires reaching an agreement with the property owner and securing NRCS funding for the buyout of the property located at 575 Casitas Vista Road. It will consist of the demolition, removal, and disposal of the existing houses and other structures within the buyout property. This project will also consist of vegetation removal and the excavation of the pilot channel from Station 21+00 to Station 24+00, connecting the gap from the first Pilot Channel Project

The Watershed Protection District (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 subject project must have a project 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 August 2023, that the Project was eligible for 75% of the estimated project cost. NRCS issued the District a Notice of Award on March 11, 2024.

The NRCS program also requires a local match for the remaining 25 percent of the project construction cost, approximately \$378,000. The California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) has a program that will fund 75 percent of the remaining local 25 percent cost share for this project, or \$283,500. This leaves \$94,500. The residents raised \$72,163. On January 23, 2024, your Board approved a contribution of \$25,000 from the General Fund toward the local match. 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.

Your Board is requested to authorize the Public Works Agency Director or his designee, to award the construction contract due to your Board's being dark until September 10, 2024, and the urgency to issue a Notice to Proceed and commence the work. The EWPP funding expires at the end of 2024. In addition, because of anticipated regulatory conditions, the construction window for the Project is limited to August 1 to October 31, 2024.

Regulatory permitting for the project is in progress and includes authorizations to be issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Regional Water Quality Control Board. The project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15269 (a) and (c), Emergency Projects. The NOE will be filed after your Board's approval (see Exhibit 7).

The estimated total project costs are as follows:

Preliminary Engineering:	\$ 142,750
Construction Contract:	\$ 1,512,000
Construction Engineering:	\$ 150,000
Right of Way:	\$ 15,000
Contingencies:	<u>\$ 0</u>
Total	\$ 1,819,750



\*\$124,319 in Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way Costs was incurred in previous fiscal year.

**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 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 6 – Abstract of Bids
- Exhibit 7 – CEQA NOE

