



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 9, 2006

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Estuary Monitoring Contract With Ecorp Consulting Inc.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve and authorize the Parks and Recreation Director to execute a professional services contract with ECORP Consulting Inc. in the amount of \$53,000 to conduct focused tidewater goby and Benthic Macroinvertebrate (BMI) surveys in the Arroyo Burro Estuary and the Mission Creek Estuary.

DISCUSSION:

Background

ECORP Consulting Inc. (ECORP) provided tidewater goby and BMI surveys under contract to the Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department, from June 2004 to November 2005. The surveys were conducted in order to obtain baseline data on the tidewater goby and BMI populations within the Arroyo Burro and Mission Creek estuaries, and to determine how tidewater goby and BMI populations interact. Baseline information is vital for any potential future storm water treatment, creek restoration, or lagoon management projects for Arroyo Burro, Mission Creek, and Laguna Channel.

The tidewater goby is a small fish (one to two inches in length) which resides in the Mission Creek and Arroyo Burro estuaries. Currently on the Federal endangered species list, the tidewater goby feed on specific species of BMI, which are aquatic, bottom dwelling insects, crustaceans, worms, and snails living in creeks and estuaries.

Preliminary Study Results

The results of the first 2 years of study were very informative. The preliminary findings indicate that the highest concentrations of tidewater gobies are found in the upper portion of both the Arroyo Burro and Mission Creek estuaries. The surveys also revealed that the tidewater goby populations are most vulnerable during the early summer when they are spawning. In addition, the BMI food sources for the tidewater goby were found to be abundant in both estuaries. The results also indicate that the BMI species found within the

REVIEWED BY: _____ Finance _____ Attorney

Agenda Item No. _____

estuaries are very different than those found within the streams above the estuaries. In addition, the BMI populations within these 2 systems (creek and estuary) exist and reproduce independently of one another. A comprehensive monitoring report on survey results will be presented at the May 24, 2006, Creeks Advisory Committee meeting.

Recommendation for a Third Year of Study

Because these findings are preliminary and include only two years of data, the Creeks Division is recommending that a third year of surveys be completed. Three years of data will provide enough information to compensate for natural variations due to seasonal rainfall amounts and creek flow rates. Three years of data will provide sufficient evidence of variability in tidewater goby populations, distribution, seasonal fluctuations, food sources, and habitat requirements. The data will also offer the necessary baseline information for comparison purposes during construction and operation of future water quality and/or estuary enhancement projects.

The Creeks Division is recommending that the City continue to contract with ECORP for monitoring services. ECORP was initially hired through a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process in 2004. At that time, ECORP had the most competitive cost proposal, brought extensive experience in tidewater goby and BMI monitoring, and held the necessary Federal permits to conduct the tidewater goby surveys.

Over the last two years, ECORP performed well and became familiar with the Mission Creek and Arroyo Burro estuaries. In addition, ECORP worked diligently with the Creeks Division to make monitoring techniques more efficient and cost effective. In addition to cost effectiveness, data quality is important. Tidewater goby and BMI monitoring is very specialized. ECORP has provided high quality data collection and analysis services. In order to provide consistency in monitoring techniques, results and report writing, it is recommended that the City contract with ECORP for a third year of monitoring.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The total cost of the surveys is \$53,000. This includes 3 tidewater goby surveys in each estuary at a cost of \$27,498, 3 BMI surveys at each estuary at a cost of \$24,027, and presentation of the results to the Creeks Advisory Committee (\$1,475). Funds for surveys are appropriated in the Creeks Division Fiscal Year 2006 Operating Budget.

PREPARED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office