State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
August 12, 2005

ITEM: **16**

SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATION FOR USE OF $240,000 SETTLEMENT AWARD: RIVER-WIDE HYDROLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

Consideration and possible adoption of a resolution (*tentative Resolution 05-22)* authorizing the Executive Officer to enter into a contractual agreement for the conduct of a river-wide hydrological assessment. Alternative uses for the funds will also be presented. *(Deborah Jayne)*

PURPOSE: Consideration and possible adoption of tentative Resolution 05-22.

DISCUSSION: At the April 8, 2005 Board meeting, the Board adopted Resolution 05-02, authorizing the Executive Officer to accept $240,000 of a settlement agreement between the City of San Diego and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region and to deposit these funds into a special interest bearing account.

Since that time, the Executive Officer has requested that the Department of Finance establish an interest-bearing Special Deposit Fund Account to hold certain funds received by the Conservancy as a result of a negotiated settlement or supplemental environmental project (SEP) **(Supporting Document 2)**. The Special Deposit Fund Account will provide the Conservancy the time and flexibility needed to evaluate various alternative uses for the funds and to select the use that best supports the Conservancy's mission, taking into account both current and long-term needs and objectives.

Riverwide Hydrology Assessment

Although there are many good alternatives, at this time the Executive Officer recommends that the $240,000 be used to conduct a Hydrology Assessment of the San Diego River from the El Capitan Dam to the Pacific Ocean. The single most important purpose of the Hydrology Assessment is to provide decision-makers with the essential information they need to make “***informed decisions***” about future project proposals (for development, redevelopment, maintenance, and repair, etc.).

Using sophisticated models, the Assessment will describe current or “baseline” conditions in the San Diego River in terms of numerous key hydrologic parameters. Once baseline is established, the model can then be used to predict the future hydrologic consequences of an infinite number of “build-out scenarios” associated with proposed development and redevelopment projects. Taking into account relevant factors such as percent impervious surfaces, new pollutant sources (such as people, cars and buildings), the model can predict the flow, volume, velocity, and pollutant loading (among other parameters) that the proposed project will generate under various weather conditions.

Armed with this powerful tool, the decision-makers can now ***“see”*** the hydrologic and water quality consequences of each proposed project <u>before</u> they are asked to make a decision. In the absence of this tool, decision-makers must continue to rely on the adequacy and accuracy of CEQA documents, their own personal experience and judgment, and whatever historical evidence may be available (there is no lack of mistakes from which to learn). The decision-maker must then wait, along with the public they serve, to actually observe the long-term impacts of their decisions.

As you know in the case of the Grantville Redevelopment Project and numerous other upcoming proposals, I strongly believe that the results of an area-wide Hydrology Assessment of the River and major tributaries are absolutely essential to informed decision-making. I also believe that this hydrology information must be reviewed and carefully considered prior to certifying the adequacy of an EIR or approving a project.

In summary, it seems only fair and common sense to provide the necessary tools to our decision-makers that allow them to make informed decisions. Informed decision-makers will hopefully make more River-sensitive decisions and can also be held more fully accountable for the long-term results of those decisions. Further I believe that an understanding of San Diego River hydrology should also be the starting point for the Conservancy’s decision-making and long-term strategic planning.

<u>Potential Funding Partners</u>
City of San Diego
San Diego State University

<u>Potential Contractors</u>
- Dr. Cheng, retired SDSU Professor of Engineering
- US Department of the Interior, Department of Reclamation
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- private contractors

<u>Other Alternatives</u>
Although the Executive Officer is currently recommending that the $240,000 be used for a Hydrologic Assessment of the San Diego River, the Board may wish to consider a number of other alternatives including:

1) <u>CEQA Analysis for City's River Park Master Plan</u>: Provide funding towards conduct of CEQA analysis for City's Master Plan. Upon completion of CEQA and adoption by the San Diego City Council, the Master Plan design guidelines and overlay zone will be "enforceable" as formal City policy. Total cost of CEQA is estimated to be approximately $600,000.

2) <u>Geospatial Information Management System</u>: Develop a Geospatial Information Management System for the Conservancy and San Diego River Watershed. The Executive Officer has discussed development and benefits of such a system several times over the past year with (a) members of San Diego Regional Workbench Consortium (Keith Pezzolli, et al); and (b) the Executive Officer of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

3) <u>Acquisitions Fund</u>: Set funds aside for high priority acquisitions and easements (which are currently unspecified).

4) <u>Matching Funds</u>: Set funds aside to meet the "matching funds" requirement for current and future grant funding proposals.

5) <u>Revolving Loan Fund</u>: Establish a Revolving Loan Fund to provide quick cash to cover upfront costs for property acquisitions or conservation easements. For example, appraisals or option agreements as needed to secure a property or easement.

6) <u>Other Projects</u>: Other projects as specified in the City's River Park Master Plan or other relevant planning document.

The Board may also wish to recommend additional alternatives.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:
1. Tentative Resolution 05-22
2. Letter from Deborah Jayne to Ken Lane, Department of Finance. June 1, 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution 05-22.