

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-006

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY DECLARING SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE MSHCP

WHEREAS, the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority ("RCA") is a public agency of the State of California formed by a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement ("JPA"); and

WHEREAS, the RCA is composed of the County of Riverside and the 18 cities in western Riverside County ("Member Agencies"); and

WHEREAS, the Member Agencies are all Permittees under the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan ("MSHCP") and parties to the MSHCP Implementing Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the MSHCP is to establish habitat reserves for the conservation and protection of species while expediting the construction of infrastructure and other projects; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS") is an agency of the United States Department of the Interior and has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, restoration, enhancement and management of fish, wildlife, native plants and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species to the extent set forth in the Federal Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 1531 et seq.) ("FESA") and other relevant federal laws; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the USFWS is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people; and

WHEREAS, the National Wildlife Refuge System is a program operated and implemented under the auspices of the USFWS; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans; and

WHEREAS, the USFWS is considering establishing a National Wildlife Refuge (the "Proposed Refuge") that would be located entirely within the

existing boundaries of the MSHCP Conservation Area in order to secure additional federal funding for the MSHCP; and

WHEREAS, designating a portion of the MSHCP Conservation Area as the Proposed Refuge would allow for an additional source of federal funding from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund; and

WHEREAS, no additional conservation land beyond what is currently required by the MSHCP would be required for the Proposed Refuge; and

WHEREAS, private property will not be included within the boundaries of the National Wildlife Refuge without the permission of the property owner. Private properties where the owners desire to be included after the initial National Wildlife Refuge boundaries have been defined, as well as new public or RCA acquisitions which appropriately should be included in the National Wildlife Refuge, can be part of regular amendments to the boundaries by Congress or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service through administrative action; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Refuge would continue to provide public access on trails and roads consistent with the MSHCP; and

WHEREAS, the RCA has the power to adopt such policies as the Board may deem necessary for the conduct of the RCA's affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors ("Board") declares that the mission and purpose of the MSHCP is consistent with the mission and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and also hereby resolves to support the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge within the existing boundaries of the MSHCP. The Board directs staff to work with USFWS to negotiate the terms and conditions of a Proposed Refuge to be approved by the RCA Board of Directors and ensure that: (1) the Refuge would have no adverse impacts on existing trails, roads and fire roads located within the Refuge boundaries; (2) private property rights within and adjacent to the boundaries of the Proposed Refuge would be fully protected; (3) any issues associated with fire and/or police protection services are fully addressed to ensure that no additional burdens or risks are placed on the RCA Member Agencies; and (4) USFWS will utilize RCA to acquire the property to assemble the Refuge. The Board directs staff to regularly report on the ongoing negotiations with USFWS and the status of the Refuge planning process. Final terms and conditions will be brought before the Board for approval prior to execution of any agreement.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority held this 2nd day of October, 2017.

By: Marion Ashley
Marion Ashley, Chairman
Western Riverside County
Regional Conservation Authority

ATTEST:

By: Honey Bernas
Honey Bernas, Clerk of the Board
Western Riverside County
Regional Conservation Authority