

## **Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority**

**Date:** August 1<sup>st</sup> 2024

**To:** Governing Board Members

**From:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**Subject: Item 08: Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer, to negotiate and enter into one or more contracts for coastal restoration, community stewardship, and sea turtle monitoring services at the Los Cerritos Wetlands**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA) authorize the Executive Officer, to negotiate and enter into one or more contracts for coastal restoration, community stewardship, and sea turtle monitoring services at the Los Cerritos Wetlands.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

[Exhibit A: Project Location Map](#)

[Exhibit B: Request for Qualifications for Coastal Restoration and Stewardship Services](#)

[Exhibit C: Consultant Rate Sheets](#)

The LCWA is seeking one or more qualified individuals, firms, or entities to provide consultant services for coastal restoration, community stewardship services, and sea turtle monitoring to implement grant funds received from AES Alamitos, LLC. On May 17, 2024 the LCWA released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ, Exhibit B) for Coastal Restoration and Stewardship Services. In accordance with the approved AES Coastal Enhancement Grant Program budget and workplan, selected consultants would be responsible for general tasks and services including but not limited to:

1. Restoration and enhancement of coastal bluff scrub habitat within the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands
2. Environmental education programs for underserved schools and disadvantaged communities
3. Collaboration with other Coastal Enhancement Program Partners
4. Reintroduction of endangered Salt Marsh Bird's Beak plant in Los Cerritos Wetlands

The RFQ was released on May 17, 2024, proposals were due June 17, 2024, a total of five (5) submissions from qualified firms were received. Proposals were evaluated by a panel appointed by the LCWA, and scored (55 maximum points) based on the consultant(s) approach, recognition/understanding, project qualifications and support services. The average scores for each consultant are summarized below:

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Average</b>
<i>Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust</i>	47.3
<i>RECON</i>	47.3
<i>Tidal Influence</i>	52
<i>Ina Buckner-Barnette</i>	31
<i>Great Ecology</i>	39

Contract durations will range but may be negotiated for up to three (3) years for certain services as needed. The selected consultant(s) are expected to work closely with the LCWA, and other selected consultants. Consultants may be placed on a list for on-call services.

**Consultant Selections:**

1. Staff seeks to negotiate and enter into a contract with Tidal Influence who ranked first overall and possess the required qualifications to carry out the coastal restoration and community stewardship services outlined in the AES MOU.
2. Staff seeks to negotiate and enter a contract with the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust (LCWLT), who possess the requisite qualifications and local expertise to implement successful field trip programming for youth from surrounding communities.
3. The AOP's Southern California Sea Turtle Monitoring Community Science Program is specifically named as the recipient of the Sea Turtle Monitoring support in the AES MOU approved by the board on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023.

Staff seeks to negotiate and enter into a contract with the Aquarium of the Pacific (AOP) to expand its Southern California Sea Turtle Monitoring Community Science Program. The Southern California Sea Turtle Monitoring Program focuses on green sea turtle presence in the lower San Gabriel River, centered at Los Cerritos Wetlands. With over a decade of data (<https://www.m8dpi.com/2076-2615/13/3/434>), the program combines research and public awareness initiatives. The Aquarium of the Pacific's expertise in marine conservation and community science makes it ideal for managing this program. Since 2008, the Aquarium has led research demonstrating year-round sea turtle presence and contributed valuable data to scientific communities. Engaging local stakeholders and collaborating with agencies ensures effective conservation efforts.

In the event that the LCWA cannot come to an agreement with either Tidal Influence, LCWLT, or Aquarium of the Pacific, or the need arise for additional support from qualified firms, staff will begin negotiations with the next qualified proposer.

Contract tasks, amounts, timelines, and durations will be negotiated to be congruent with the approved AES MOU Workplan budget summarized in the table below:

*\*note it is not anticipated that a contract for tribal programming will be awarded at this time as additional tribal input on use of the funds is needed\**

Project/Task	Description	2024	2025	2026
<i>Zedler Marsh Restoration</i>	These habitat restoration efforts at Zedler Marsh will be performed with funding support from the TSO. Part of this task will complete the first outplanting of endangered salt marsh bird's beak in Los Cerritos Wetlands. Thousands of salt marsh bird's beak seed will be installed at Zedler Marsh and monitored for their successful establishment. Additionally, to support large-scale planting efforts, the native plant nursery will be improved and expanded to grow the thousands of plants required for large projects.	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$75,000.00
<i>Youth Field Trips</i>	Environmental education programs for local school groups from disadvantaged communities in Long Beach and Orange County in collaboration with LCWA's community partners, AES and/or other AES Coastal Enhancement Program partners.	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$45,000.00
<i>Tribal Programming</i>	Tribal groups will be engaged in the process of planning opportunities for tribal gatherings and traditional cultural practices. One activity that will be focused on is the addition of a "harvest garden" which is intended to feature native plant species with cultural value and plants that can be harvested for basketry, such as <i>Juncus acutus</i> . Gathering events will take place at the Los Cerritos Wetlands to reconnect with the land. Special land tours for tribal community members may also be hosted. Environmental education curriculum for ethnobotanical uses of native plants will be developed and implemented.	\$30,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
<i>Sea Turtle Monitoring</i>	This program, developed by the Aquarium of the Pacific and partners, monitors the Pacific green sea turtle population in the San Gabriel River. This long-term data set can be supported with staff support for volunteer citizen science monitoring program to assist with volunteer coordination, data management, outreach, and reporting. This program will be continued in Year 2 using another \$25,000 in TSO funding.	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	
<i>Southern Area Bluff Scrub</i>	This work will cover any tasks necessary to be completed before the Southern LCW Restoration Project has received the Coastal Development Permit. This include propagule (seed/cutting) collection and initial efforts to begin propagation of bluff scrub plant species in the LCWA native plant nursery. A seed storage cabinet will be created. Target species will include bladderpod, cholla, prickly pear, lemonade berry, quailbush, and woolly seablite to name a few.	\$25,000.00	\$145,000.00	\$200,000.00

## BACKGROUND:

In February 2024 the LCWA entered a Memorandum of Understanding with AES Alamitos LLC (AES), a subsidiary of the AES Corporation, a global energy company. As a part of the California State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB's) approval of Once-Through-Cooling extension at the Alamitos Generating Station, AES committed to

an additional, voluntary environmental benefits program, known as the Coastal Enhancement Program, from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2026. AES identified the LCWA as a Coastal Enhancement Program grant recipient, approving \$750,000 in funding (“OTC” Grant) to support the LCWA’s programming and restoration efforts on the Los Cerritos Wetlands. Additionally, as a part of the SWQCB, Los Angeles Region’s approval of the Time Schedule Order concerning compliance with waste discharge requirements at the Alamitos Generating Station, AES committed to a second voluntary grant (“TSO Grant”) of \$250,000, aligning with the goals of the Coastal Enhancement Programs objectives and running from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025.

Programming supported by this funding will compliment and overlap with efforts previously supported by a 2022 AES grant. On May 26, 2022, the LCWA agreed to an MOA with AES Redondo Beach, LLC to receive grant funds in the amount of \$1,000,000 to support planning, engineering, restoration, and rehabilitation of the Los Cerritos Wetlands. Since then, staff has coordinated the appropriation of those funds to a variety of projects and tasks in accordance with an annual work plan that is developed in coordination with AES staff.

**FISCAL:**

The above-mentioned contracts and programs will be funded by the \$750,000 “OTC” grant through December 31 2026, and \$250,000 “TSO” grant through December 31, 2025. Both grants, together totaling \$1,000,000, were voluntarily awarded to the LCWA by AES Alamitos LLC. The LCWA authorized the Executive Officer to negotiate the MOU and accept the grant on August 23, 2023 (resolution 2023-04)

August 1, 2024– Item 08

RESOLUTION 2024-05

RESOLUTION OF THE LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS AUTHORITY  
(LCWA) AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO  
NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO ONE OR MORE CONTRACTS FOR  
COASTAL RESTORATION, COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP, AND SEA  
TURTLE MONITORING AT THE LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS

WHEREAS, the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (Authority) has been established between the Coastal Conservancy, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the City of Seal Beach and the City of Long Beach to facilitate the acquisition, protection, conservation, restoration, maintenance and operation an environmental enhancement of the Los Cerritos Wetlands; and

WHEREAS, the LCWA has further been established to focus on projects which will provide open space, habitat restoration, and watershed improvement projects within the Los Cerritos Wetlands; and

WHEREAS, the LCWA has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with AES Alamitos LLC, to accept funds (Grant Funds) from their Voluntary Coastal Enhancement Grants Program in the amount of \$750,000, and a second voluntary grant in the amount of \$250,000; and

WHEREAS, the Grant Funds are to be utilized to restore and improve access to wetlands and other coastal environments for this and future generations, and further a shared commitment to social justice by expanding outreach and environmental education programs; and

WHEREAS, the LCWA has received the Year 1 Grant Funds totaling \$225,00 to be expended by March 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the LCWA has issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking one or more individuals, entities, or firms to provide coastal restoration and community stewardship programming at the Los Cerritos Wetlands; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with the previously approved AES MOU, Grant Funds will be used for the expansion of the Aquarium of the Pacific's Southern California Sea Turtle Monitoring Community Science Program; and

WHEREAS, this action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and NOW

*Therefore be it resolved*, that the LCWA hereby:

1. FINDS that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
2. FINDS that this action is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the LCWA.

3. FINDS that this action is consistent with the intended purpose of the Grant Funds.
4. ADOPTS the staff report dated August 1, 2024.
5. AUTHORIZES the Executive Officer, or designee, to negotiate and enter into one or more contracts for coastal restoration, community stewardship, and sea turtle monitoring at the Los Cerritos Wetlands.

*~ End of Resolution ~*

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS  
AUTHORITY on August 1, 2024.

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Kristina Duggan, Chair

ATTEST:

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Elizabeth St. John  
Deputy Attorney  
General