



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** June 23, 2015

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Youth Watershed Education Program Contract With Explore Ecology

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Authorize the Parks and Recreation Director to execute a 12-month professional services contract with Explore Ecology in the amount of \$59,719.60 for the provision of Creeks Program youth and community watershed education programs in Fiscal Year 2016; and
- B. Authorize the Parks and Recreation Director to execute annual professional services contracts, in a form acceptable to the City Attorney, with Explore Ecology for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018, in an amount not to exceed \$65,000 per year.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Creeks Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Division (Creeks Division) recommends that the City contract with Explore Ecology to provide youth watershed education programs and support the continuation of community events and programming at the South Coast Watershed Resource Center at Arroyo Burro County Beach Park. Youth education is a key component of the Creeks Division's Public Education Plan and the City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), along with ongoing efforts to reduce urban runoff pollution and improve ocean water quality at the beach. By providing clear and engaging activities for youth and the community regarding the importance of clean water and the causes of pollution, these programs help people to develop an appreciation of creek and ocean water quality and adopt appropriate behaviors to protect and improve it.

Explore Ecology is a non-profit organization with a primary focus on environmental education for youth. Since 2002, the Creeks Division has implemented an education program for elementary age children, as well as community outreach programming based out of the Watershed Resource Center. The proposed contract with Explore Ecology would continue the existing and successful education partnership to meet the SWMP goal to reach 3,000 students annually.

## **Scope of Work**

Under the proposed contract, Explore Ecology will provide water quality education programs for schoolchildren within the City of Santa Barbara. These programs include: 1) a three-part Creek Kids series that is targeted to fourth through sixth grade students; 2) field trips to the Watershed Resource Center for kindergarten through sixth grade; 3) in-class creek lessons focusing on the watershed model; 4) assistance with watershed education field trips; and 5) hands-on water quality education activities at community and school events, including science nights. The Explore Ecology programs are correlated to state standards and are updated often to address teachers' suggestions as well as new pollutants of concern and water quality issues. Additionally, the proposed contract includes a partnership with Santa Barbara County to fund a part-time (five hours/week) staff person to manage and administer the Watershed Resource Center.

During Fiscal Year 2016, it is anticipated that Explore Ecology will conduct 160 presentations over a 12-month period, reaching at least 3,000 schoolchildren. Explore Ecology will also provide staffing and support to multiple community programs hosted at the Watershed Resource Center. New themes and special projects are developed each year to maintain an evolving program with fresh elements for teachers and students.

## **Regional Integration**

In addition to providing youth watershed education programs within the City, Explore Ecology is under contract with the County of Santa Barbara to provide similar programs to schoolchildren in other areas in the County. The Creeks Division recommends that the City and County continue to work with Explore Ecology to provide similar and consistent watershed education programs.

## **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The total cost of the contract with Art From Scrap is \$59,719.60. Appropriated funds for this contract are available in the proposed Creeks Division Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

Reducing the impact of polluted urban runoff from developed areas is critical for the protection of water quality in the City. An important goal of the Creeks Division public outreach effort is to educate residents about specific behaviors and habits that can improve water quality. Providing educational activities for youth and the community helps participants develop an appreciation of local creek and ocean water quality and adopt appropriate behaviors to protect and improve it.

A copy of the contract/agreement is available for public review in the City Clerk's Office.

**PREPARED BY:** Cameron Benson, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nancy Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office