

# Agenda Report

**DATE:** August 1, 2011

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Public Works Department  
**SUBJECT: DEVIL'S GATE DAM SHORT-TERM SEDIMENT REMOVAL**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 Existing Facilities and Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Los Angeles County (LA County) for the use of "Johnson Field" to temporarily store sediment removed from the Devil's Gate Dam basin.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Following the 2009 Station Fire and subsequent winter storms, the Devil's Gate Reservoir received nearly 1 million cubic yards of sediment and debris, significantly reducing the capacity of the facility. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works responded by proposing a large-scale sediment removal project to re-establish the previous capacity. The large-scale project is expected to remove approximately 1.6 million cubic yards of sediment from the basin over a three year period.

On March 1, 2011, the LA County Board of Supervisors directed the LA County Department of Public Works staff to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed large-scale project. At that time, the Board also requested County staff to develop an interim program of repairs and maintenance to allow for continuing operation of the facility while the EIR is prepared. LA County has prepared a proposed interim project and related environmental determinations.

The interim project will remove up to 25,000 cubic yards of accumulated sediment from immediately behind the dam that if not removed, could potentially render the dam inoperable. Once the sediment removal is completed, various small improvements and repairs to the dam itself will take place. These efforts will allow for proper protection

and operation of the dam until LA County is able to proceed with their proposed large sediment removal project.

Ten to 15 percent of the sediment contains some amount of organic material and soils that must be treated as waste. These materials will be transported to the Scholl Canyon Landfill via I-210 and CA-134. Haul trucks would proceed northerly in the basin to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) east parking lot and then proceed southerly on Windsor Avenue to I-210.

Storing the remaining sediment onsite at Johnson Field is the preferable short-term solution. LA County has indicated that hauling the sediment offsite would result in considerable truck traffic on Windsor Avenue. During recent public input meetings, many comments were made related to this truck traffic. Onsite storage would produce 85-90% fewer truck trips through the neighborhood and reduce the duration of the project.

Currently, the Johnson Field area is not used for any specific recreation purpose and the area is not identified in the HWP master plan for future recreation use. Accordingly, Public Works staff has no objection to using Johnson Field to temporarily store sediment.

Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) also has no objection to LA County Public Works temporarily storing sediment on Johnson Field. Johnson Field has not been used as a spreading pond for over 20 years, and was initially envisioned as the 15<sup>th</sup> spreading pond in a series of ponds. However, PWP's Arroyo Seco and Millard Canyon stream intake structures currently do not have the capacity to fill all the spreading ponds; seldom does the water reach past pond number 12. At this time, Johnson Field has no water resource value.

PWP is currently investigating the possibility of upgrading or replacing its stream water intake structures. Work on the intake structures will not occur for several years. Therefore, Johnson Field could be temporarily available to LA County Public Works for storing sediment. At the end of the storage period of the project, PWP would require LA County Public Works to restore Johnson Field in a manner that will best accommodate a spreading operation.

LA County would utilize large, off-highway trucks to move the sediment more quickly. These trucks are wider than standard highway trucks and would require the route to be temporarily closed for recreational trail use. Staff has identified an alternative route using existing trails that would allow for uninterrupted trail use at HWP. (Attachment A)

The City's agreement to temporarily store sediment is the only action proposed herein. The City will participate in reviewing and commenting on LA County's proposed large-scale sediment removal project and related EIR at a later, appropriate time.

## **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION**

This action is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to "Improve, maintain and enhance public facilities and infrastructure", "Improve mobility and accessibility throughout the city", and "Ensure public safety".

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

As directed by the LA County Board of Supervisors the LA County Department of Public Works staff will prepare an EIR for LA County's proposed large-scale sediment removal project at Devil's Gate dam and reservoir. LA County staff has also developed an interim program of repairs and maintenance to allow for continuing operation of the facility while the EIR is prepared.

As noted earlier in this report, the interim LA County project will remove up to 25,000 cubic yards of accumulated sediment from immediately behind the dam that if not removed, could potentially render the dam inoperable and create substantial safety risks for Pasadena residents and facilities. Once the sediment removal is completed, small repairs to the dam will take place which will allow for proper protection and operation of the dam until LA County is able to proceed with their proposed large sediment removal project.

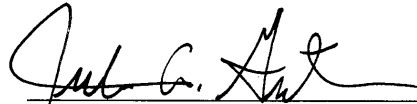
The action herein is the City of Pasadena's approval to allow the sediment removed by this interim project (approximately 25,000 cubic yards) to be temporarily placed in Johnson Field. At the City's request, the County retained a biologist to survey the Field for potential wildlife and habitat. Attached hereto as Exhibit B and incorporated herein is the biologist's report which concludes that there were no listed or sensitive species on the site during the biological survey. The Field was dry at the time of the survey, and any Western toads that occupied the site in the spring and early summer will likely migrate offsite to more moist or wet areas within the Reservoir.

Accordingly, this action is exempt from CEQA per Section 15301, Existing Facilities and Section 15308 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment. Existing Facilities allows for the maintenance, operation, repair, etc. of existing public or private facilities provided there is negligible or no expansion of use. Johnson Field is an existing municipal service facility and the use of the Field as a temporary storage location will not materially change its nature as an unused spreading basin. Section 15308 exempts action by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment. There is an immediate need to remove the sediment to protect the dam, and outlying and downstream areas of Pasadena, should the dam fail given its current impacted state. Therefore use of Johnson Field for temporary storage will assist in alleviating the immediate environmental and safety threat that could come with outlying and downstream flooding if the dam were to fail under its current conditions.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action and will not have any indirect or support cost requirements. The anticipated impact to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action will be minimal. Staff's participation will be limited to establishing an agreement with LA County and monitoring the activity. The LA County Public Works Department will pay for all costs associated with this work.

Respectfully submitted,



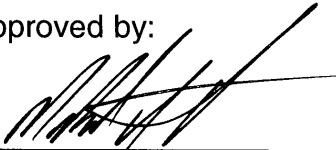
JULIE A. GUTIERREZ  
Assistant City Manager/  
Acting Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Loren Pluth  
Project Manager for Parks and Landscape

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK  
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A – Proposed temporary trail re-route.



Attachment B – Biologist's field survey



**Devil's Gate Dam**  
**Short-Term Sediment Removal**

Proposed Temporary Trail Re-Route  
June 20, 2011

**Legend**

Existing Trail	
Temporary Re-route	



June 21, 2011

Jemellee Cruz, P.E.  
 Flood Maintenance Division  
 County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
 900 South Fremont Avenue  
 Alhambra, CA 91803-1331

**Subject: Results of the Biological Resource Survey at Johnson Field within Devil's Gate Reservoir, Pasadena, California.**

Dear Ms. Cruz:

Chambers Group, Inc. (Chambers Group) was retained by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACDPW) to provide a Biological Resource Survey at Johnson Field for the Devil's Gate Dam Interim Measures Project emergency work (Project). The emergency work proposes to remove sediment from approximately 100-feet from the face of the dam and stockpile sediment within Johnson Field, within the reservoir area.

### Methods

Chambers Group biologist Paul Morrissey conducted a general biological resource survey throughout the Project footprint on June 15, 2011. Data was collected on wildlife species and active nests observed in the Project area. Sensitive/listed species and/or nest locations were recorded using a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) and were photo-documented.

### Results

The majority of the field is composed of the Developed community, which is defined as areas that have been altered by humans and now display man-made structures such as houses, paved roads, buildings, parks, and other maintained areas. This area was historically utilized as a spreading basin for the City of Pasadena, then as a baseball field for the public. The site is primarily devoid of vegetation, with the exception of non-native grasses. A few native species exist on the banks above the field, including black willow, black cottonwood, and coast live oak. Additionally, non-native palms occur within the western border of the field and one red willow occurs at the northeastern corner of the field. Black cottonwood and coast live oak occur on the eastern bank along the road. These species will be avoided during the proposed sediment placement.

Wildlife observed within Johnson Field included western toad. Hundreds of one-inch newly emerged toadlets were observed in areas with drying soils (Attachment 1). Adult western toads are 2 1/2-5" in

[www.chambersgroupinc.com](http://www.chambersgroupinc.com)  
 A Certified Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise

#### REDLANDS

302 Brookside Avenue  
 Redlands, California 92373  
 909 • 335 • 7068  
 909 • 335 • 6318 fax

#### SAN DIEGO

5787 Complex Drive, Suite 220B  
 San Diego, California 92123  
 858 • 541 • 2800  
 858 • 565 • 8950 fax

#### CORPORATE OFFICE

5 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 750  
 Santa Ana, California 92707  
 949 • 261 • 5414  
 714 • 545 • 2255 fax

#### RENO

1755 E. Plumb Lane, Suite 280  
 Reno, Nevada 89502  
 775 • 323 • 3555  
 fax 775 • 323 • 3554

#### COACHELLA

38-953 Cook Street, Suite 103  
 Palm Desert, California 92211  
 760 • 779 • 0108



size, and are gray to green, with a light-colored stripe down middle of their back. Western toads are a very common species found near springs, streams, meadows, woodlands. They range along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to Baja California and east to Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and Nevada. This species is mainly active at twilight but in higher elevations where night temperatures are very low, they will be active during the day. Western toads live in burrows that they have dug themselves or those of small rodents.

The toadlets were concentrated primarily in the inlet area on the northeast side of the basin, where soils remained damp. The recent rains flooded this area, and water was received into the basin from the north. The Johnson basin was dry at the time of the survey. The majority of the site is devoid of vegetation and does not provide cover for this species. A few scattered ground squirrel burrows did provide shelter, but the majority of toadlets were identified at the northeastern area near the red willow and open 18 inch CMP. The CMP at the south end was covered with sediment which did not allow for quick drainage of any collected water from rain events.

Many more toadlets were identified to the north, in the adjacent basin. It appears that this basin was used as a volleyball field, with disturbed vegetation and scattered native trees/shrubs. The soils in the basin appeared to hold more moisture. Additionally, more vegetation, including willows, exists in the drainage which provides cover/shelter for this species. The basin to the north was identified with ponded water, presumably the source of the western toads. The adjacent areas to the west are dry, with sandy loam soils and no moisture observed. As conditions dry out and temperatures rise, toads will presumably head north to the source of water or west towards the mule fat scrub for cover/shelter.

Although many birds were identified during the survey, including fledglings, no nesting birds were observed within trees or on the ground within Johnson Field.

### Conclusions

No sensitive or listed species were observed within Johnson Field during the survey. Western toads are present due to ponded water that existed within Johnson Field due to recent rains; however, Johnson Field was dry at the time of the survey and the soils are currently only slightly moist. This area will remain dry for the rest of the season. Aside from a few scattered ground squirrel burrows and the CMP pipe, the toads have no cover and therefore will most likely migrate from Johnson Field into moist or wet areas nearby and within Devil's Gate Reservoir.

Johnson Field does contain habitat for nesting birds. To remain in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a nesting bird survey will be conducted no more than one week prior to ground disturbing activities if work takes place during the nesting bird season (approximately March 1 through August 31).

Please do not hesitate to contact Saraiah Skidmore at (909) 335-7068 extension 7330, or on her cell phone at (909) 239-0655, to discuss any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Saraiah Skidmore




Saraiah Skidmore  
Staff biologist  
Chambers Group, Inc.  
sskidmore@chambersgroupinc.com

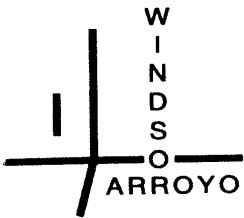
**ATTACHMENT 1: Site Photographs**





## ATTACHMENT 1 – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

	<p>Photo 1.</p> <p>Photo taken from the northeastern corner of Johnson’s Field looking southwest towards the egress ramp. Note that the majority of the site is devoid of vegetation that would provide cover/shelter for most animals.</p>
	<p>Photo 2.</p> <p>Photo taken looking southeast along the western boundary of Johnson’s Field. Several small non-native palm trees border the access road. No nests were identified within the field area.</p>
	<p>Photo 3.</p> <p>Photo taken at the north end of the field looking north at the 12 inch CMP inlet. Water from the basins in the north eventually drains into the field through this culvert. Western toadlets were primarily found at this inlet culvert and the outlet culvert at the southeast corner, where soils were damp.</p>



# WINDSOR-ARROYO NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 354  
Altadena, CA 91003

Tel: (626) 794-4666

email:  
WindsorArroyo@charter.net

June 27, 2011

Jacque Robinson  
District 1  
100 N. Garfield Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91109-7215

Subject: Devils Gate Interim Clean-out Project "the little dig"

The Windsor-Arroyo Neighborhood Association supports the temporary use of Johnson Field as a placement site for organics and debris for "the little dig" project at Devils Gate Dam. Several of our resident's properties abut Johnson Field and our major concerns are the project timeframes, truck haul routes and traffic congestion on Windsor Avenue.

On June 20, we walked the project site with individuals from Altadena Town Council, L.A. County Public Works, Mike Antonovich and Jacque Robinson office to evaluate alternatives. After candid discussions on alternatives, the various federal and state agencies involved and permitting process, it was determined the temporary use of Johnson Field is the most viable.

The benefits of Johnson field are:

- Reduction in the project timeframe
- Reduction in the daily use of trucks
- Reduction in the size of trucks

We ask city council to vote yes for the temporary use of Johnson Field for the Devils Gate Intern Clean-out project "the little dig".

Thank you,

  
Alonzo Edwards,  
President, Windsor-Arroyo Neighborhood Association



# ALTADENA TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the community since 1975

[www.altadenatowncouncil.org](http://www.altadenatowncouncil.org)

730 East Altadena Drive • Altadena, California 91001

Mayor William Bogaard  
City of Pasadena  
100 North Garfield Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91109

June 22, 2011

Dear Bill,

As I'm sure you are aware, the LA County flood control maintenance department will be making needed repairs on the Devil's Gate Dam this summer and that the required removal of the silt at the base of the dam is causing difficulties with affected residents both in Altadena and Pasadena. At this point in time, there are only two viable options to deal with the silt, temporarily store it on the Hahamongna site or truck it through the Windsor Ave. residential neighborhood. The residents along the Windsor corridor are already burdened with a high volume of JPL traffic and the recently reduced traffic lanes. The Council strongly feels that the imposition of a large volume of truck traffic on Windsor would cause unacceptable hardships to that neighborhood. In addition, there is the fear that using Windsor as the truck route for this project will create a precedent for future maintenance programs.

Therefore, at the meeting held on June 21, 2011, the Altadena Town Council voted unanimously to request that, if it is at all possible, the City of Pasadena allow the temporary storage of the silt on Johnson Field until the major removal project is initiated. Doing this would provide welcome relief to residents of both of our communities.

Hopefully, a long term solution to the maintenance of the dam and the Hahamongna Park will be developed in the upcoming EIR process.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Gino Sund, Chairman  
Altadena Town Council

Cc: Hon. Jacque Robinson, Council Member, City of Pasadena, District 1  
Mr. Michael Beck, City Manager, City of Pasadena  
Hon. Michael Antonovich, Supervisor, Fifth District



Rose Bowl Operating Company  
1001 Rose Bowl Drive, Pasadena, CA 91103

www.rosebowlstadium.com  
Office: (626) 577-3101 • Fax: (626) 405-0992

July 20, 2011

To: Mayor Bill Bogaard and Members of the City Council

Subject: Los Angeles County Devil's Gate Dam and Reservoir – Sediment Removal and Risk reduction Plan

This letter serves as the Rose Bowl Operating Company's (RBOC) Board of Directors perspective regarding the Los Angeles County (County) Devil's Gate Dam and Reservoir - Sediment Removal and Risk Reduction Plan as presented to the Pasadena City Council's Municipal Services Committee (MSC) on June 28, 2011.

Devil's Gate Dam was the first dam constructed by Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) in the 1920's. The primary purpose of the dam is flood protection for the cities of Pasadena, South Pasadena and Los Angeles. The dam is designed to hold peak storm runoff and impound sediment and debris during storm events to prevent high flow rates from overwhelming the downstream system.

The 2009 Station Fire, combined with the 2009/2010, and 2010/2011, heavy rain storms produced 1,200,000 cubic yards of mud and sediment that settled behind Devil's Gate Dam. This is enough mud and sediment to fill the Rose Bowl three times. The sediment accumulation poses two major challenges.

1. The dam has a combination of gates/valves to control the outflow from the dam. The sediment currently impedes the ability to keep the outlet working properly.
2. The 1,200,000 cubic yards of sediment takes up reservoir capacity that would otherwise hold water and sediment during a storm event.

The County's presentation to the MSC on June 28, was an interim plan to minimize the flood risk, especially as it impacts Brookside Golf Club and the Rose Bowl. Until such time, when all 1,200,000 cubic yards of sediment can be moved, which could be years away, the County interim plan for the summer of 2011 includes:

1. Re-establish the access road in order to remove the sediment.
2. Remove up to 6,600 cubic yards of sediment this summer.
3. Install a new catwalk around the spillway ports.
4. Modify the Altadena West Storm Drain to allow discharge in the event the outlet becomes blocked by sediment.

**08/1/2011**

**Item 8**

5. Replace existing wooden boom logs that are used to trap floating debris.
6. Install new anchor points on banks of reservoir.
7. Replace 100 feet of damaged ladder system on the face of the dam.
8. Extend the height of existing sluice gate trash rack by approximately 32 feet.
9. Reduce the bar opening width of the existing sluice gate trash rack.
10. Remove another 25,000 cubic yards of sediment in the spring of 2012.

The RBOC is requesting that assurances be made by the County that these interim corrective measures will protect the RBOC's assets, specifically the golf course, stadium and adjacent surroundings. The RBOC would like to have assurances that this is not an emergency situation and that these interim corrective measures will suffice.

It is estimated that over three million people visit the Arroyo Seco Area annually which abuts the Devil's Gate Dam. The Rose Bowl Stadium and the Brookside Golf Club drive the economic engine of the Arroyo Seco. Currently the Stadium is undergoing a \$152M renovation to keep the facility competitive. Brookside is also undergoing an \$8.1M renovation, which will greatly improve the golfing and restaurant experience at Brookside. Both of these gems are over 80 years old and are iconic to the City of Pasadena. The City owns both the Rose Bowl and Brookside, but many organizations rely on the viability of these venues, as they have long-term agreements with the RBOC for the operation and use of these facilities. Included are: Tournament of Roses; UCLA; R.G. Canning Attractions (flea market); American Golf Corporation and John Wells Golf Shop. Also, thousands of residents enjoy recreation that is afforded by the Arroyo Seco on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.

In closing, the RBOC is committed to the longevity and sustainability of the Rose Bowl and Brookside Golf Club, but the work that is contemplated to be undertaken this summer by the County, at Devil's Gate Dam is beyond the control of the RBOC. However, the RBOC is requesting that assurances be made by the County that the proposed scope of work being undertaken at Devil's Gate Dam is the proper corrective measure to ensure that there will be no flooding of Brookside Golf Club and/or the Rose Bowl in the future.

Sincerely,



Darryl Dunn  
General Manager, Rose Bowl Operating Company

Cc: Members of Rose Bowl Operating Company Board of directors