

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
**December 2, 2005**

ITEM: **12**

SUBJECT: **HELIX WATER DISTRICT RESTORATION PROJECT  
IN EL MONTE VALLEY**

Mark Weston (General Manager, Helix Water District) and Michael Beck (Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League) will present an overview of Helix Water District's partnership with the Endangered Habitats League, and their mutual efforts to restore critical habitat along a two-mile stretch of the San Diego River in El Monte Valley (previously slated to become a golf course). The Board may take an action. *(Mark Weston and Michael Beck)*

PURPOSE: Information item. This item is included to inform the Board about the El Monte River Valley Restoration Project, and seek specific ways that the Conservancy can help to support these efforts.

DISCUSSION: On September 20, 2005, the Helix Water District Board of Directors unanimously voted to "accept in concept, the proposal to restore the El Monte Valley submitted by El Capitan Golf Club, LLC and direct staff to negotiate draft agreements acceptable to the parties interested, canceling the lease with El Capitan Golf Club, LLC, and creating a new lease with the Endangered Habitats League for a river restoration project."

The Environmental Habitats League (EHL) will lease a two-mile stretch of the San Diego River owned by the Helix Water District. This site has long been slated to become a 36-hole golf course. The new project will provide a wildlife corridor in the El Monte Valley that will assist in connecting the north side of the valley with Lake Jennings area and bring about a long-desired effort to return this area to a more natural state.

In addition to habitat restoration, the El Monte River Valley Restoration Project will also produce significant public

recreational opportunities through the use of hiking, biking and equestrian trails along both sides of the San Diego River.

This Helix Water District parcel includes an additional 1.5 mile area west of the planned golf course that is not part of the current restoration project. The restoration of this additional area represents a good potential opportunity for the Conservancy to partner with the Helix Water District and the Endangered Habitats League. Restoration of the remaining portion of the Helix El Monte Valley property will be included in the Conservancy's upcoming Strategic Plan/Five Year Infrastructure Plan for your review.

Mr. Beck, through his many affiliations (Endangered Habitats League, Lakeside's River Park Conservancy, and the San Diego River Park Foundation) has also been working tirelessly to acquire and restore a number of other neighboring properties in El Monte Valley area.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

SUPPORTING  
DOCUMENTS:

1. Helix Water District Board Report, dated September 20, 2005.
2. "Gold Plan for El Monte Valley Gives Way to Nature Habitat". San Diego Union Tribune. September 21, 2005.
3. "District to Decide Future of Valley Site". San Diego Union Tribune. September 19, 2005.
4. "Helix Water District Changes River Course", Helix Water District Press Release.

RECOMMENDATION: Accept Mr. Weston's and Mr. Beck's report.