Quality and Productivity Commission

28th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program

"Los Angeles County: Ahead of the Curve"

2014 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: TEAM UP TO CLEAN UP

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: MARCH 2012
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2013)

PROJECT STATUS: _____ Ongoing x____ One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? _____ Yes x____ No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner.

Los Angeles County's wildlife sanctuaries are dazzling examples of the uncommon biodiversity of the desert ecosystem - preserved and protected to safeguard precious wildlife habitat, and ensure that residents and visitors can enjoy these priceless natural resources for generations to come. These ideals were the chief motivating factors behind Team Up to Clean Up, an initiative to combat illegal dumping in these sanctuaries, which often introduces contaminants that can have far-reaching effects on the plants and animals that call these areas home. To pursue this goal in the most cost-effective and environmentally-sound manner possible, the Department of Parks and Recreation sought and received grant funds from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to perform cleanups in two Antelope Valley sanctuaries, Carl O. Gerhardy and Jackrabbit Flats. The result was astounding: removal of more than 56 tons of debris, and a virtual clean slate that has allowed the Department to install new signage, develop a public education campaign aimed at discouraging unlawful dumping and partner with law enforcement to prevent future habitat degradation by more closely monitoring activity in these sanctuaries.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED **ANNUAL** COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED **ANNUAL** COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED **ANNUAL** REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL **ANNUAL** ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
$ 32,000.00	**$**	**$**	**$ 32,000.00**	☐

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation 433 S. Vermont Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90020	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 738-2963
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Kim Bosell	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (626) 398-5420 **EMAIL** kbosell@parks.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) **DATE** Elizabeth Mendez 07/15/14	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 738-3040 **EMAIL** lmendez@parks.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE **DATE** Russ Guiney 7-15-14	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 738-2951

We Support Plain Language

2014 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):
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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project.

The Challenge:

The land within the Department of Parks and Recreation's Wildlife and Wildflower Sanctuaries has been set aside over a number of decades, to protect natural desert habitat is home to unique species of flora and fauna found in few places in Southern California.

Unfortunately, the remote location of these sanctuaries also serves as a lure for businesses and individuals determined to avoid disposal fees by using them illegally as dumping grounds for small and large-scale items. The illegal dumping tips the scale in the wrong direction for the desert - which has adapted over the millennia to survive under extreme conditions like minimal water and intense heat, but not to filter its water and nutrients through waste materials like oil and other contaminants left behind as a result of illegal dumping.

All too often, the dumping results in barren land and dead plants, in areas where dazzlingly colorful wildflower displays draw amazed visitors each spring, some species of plants can survive without water for five years, the oldest Joshua Trees have been standing for hundreds of years and some creosote plants have been growing since the last Ice Age.

This problem has proven so acute in recent years that an Antelope Valley Illegal Dumping Task Force was formed by Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, in order to bring stakeholders together to explore ways to end this practice and mitigate its effects. Still, fighting it in a thorough manner has posed a tremendous challenge under existing Department staffing levels - given that anyone with access to a four-wheel-drive truck and a mind to perform this unlawful activity, especially in the dead of night, can find a way to do it virtually undetected by driving acres away from dirt roads that provide access to Department staff and law enforcement.

The ramifications of illegally dumped waste in wildlife sanctuaries are as heartbreaking as they are hazardous: shards of sharp material can be easily mistaken for bone by scavenging birds native to the area, with at least one California Condor chick reported to have suffered fatal stomach perforation as a result of ingesting broken glass; increased fire risk due to larger-scale items dumped near desert brush; escalated risk of groundwater contamination; and inflated rodent populations, due to piles of waste material that can serve as havens and breeding grounds for species that are vectors for human disease.

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Two wildlife sanctuaries have suffered mightily from this practice: 120-acre Jackrabbit Flats, where the dumping of small items has resulted in large pockets of "micro-trash" that pose a threat to animals like condors and turkey vultures that may mistake it for food; and 200-acre Carl O. Gerhardy, the Department's largest sanctuary, where an accumulation of trash has attracted and sustained a larger-than normal population of Common Ravens. These birds feed on juvenile Mojave Desert Tortoises, whose shells are not yet strong enough to offer protection from predators they might not otherwise have to face in the absence of illegal dumping.

The Solution:

Mindful of budgetary restrictions but resolved to begin helping to return these areas to their once-pristine state, the Department of Parks and Recreation submitted a successful grant application to the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). With that, the State's leading authority on recycling, waste reduction and product reuse awarded the Department $32,000 to clean up the areas and help prevent further habitat degradation from illegally dumped materials such as appliances, furniture, construction debris and even boats.

With the grant funds used for removal and environmentally appropriate disposal of the debris by a conservation corps - and an additional $15,000 contributed by the Department for project management, new signage and a public information campaign centered on production of an informative video on the environmental effects of illegal dumping - Team Up to Clean Up conducted a massive September 2013 operation that resulted in the removal of more than 56 tons of material.

With all of the material collected by hand (rather than using heavy equipment, which could further damage habitat) and disposed of with careful consideration of environmental impact, the two sanctuaries were cleaned to a degree that makes it possible for the Department to push a virtual "reset" button that ensures that future monitoring of the sites can be more effective in stopping and mitigating illegal dumping there before it can spiral out of control.

The Benefits:

Team Up to Clean Up removed more than 56 tons of waste. The waste removal has improved conditions that help bolster the intended purpose of the sanctuaries - preserving of the land for the sake of current and future generations, as well as nature study - and exemplifies the best values of the Department of Parks and

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):
By seeking and receiving grant funds for a project essential to the present and future welfare of a precious County resource, the Department proactively sought a non-traditional yet fiscally-prudent approach to problem-solving. In doing so, it maximized an opportunity to make measurable and substantial improvements for the potential benefit of all County residents and visitors. **FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY (GOAL 2) AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY (GOAL 3).**

Recreation, as environmental stewards dedicated to creative thinking that keeps open space freely available to those who seek a closer connection to the natural wonder of Los Angeles County.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation.

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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The Department avoided the $32,000 in costs due to receiving the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery Grant. The grant funds went to dumpster and dumping fees associated with removal of the debris. Grant funds were also used for labor by the California Conservation Corps.