ARROYO SECO FOUNDATION

January 12, 2016

Ara Maloyan, Director Pasadena Public Works Department 100 N. Garfield Ave. Pasadena, CA 91109

RE: Use of Nursery Facilities in Hahamongna Watershed Park

Dear Mr. Maloyan:

On behalf of the Arroyo Seco Foundation (ASF), I welcome you to Pasadena. ASF, which has long been a partner with the City of Pasadena in the Arroyo Seco, looks forward to a long and productive working relationship with you and the Public Works Department.

ASF, which is now using the nursery facilities in Hahamongna Annex in Hahamongna Watershed Park, would like to begin the process of developing an agreement to use the nursery site on a long-term basis.

ASF currently has an agreement with the Pasadena Water & Power Department (PWP) that extends to September, 2016, so this is a good time to formalize our long-term status on the site. ASF is a partner with PWP in the Arroyo Seco Canyon Project (ASCP). We have brought considerable resources and community support to that project, having developed the original conceptual plan for the project and a \$3.27 million grant from the CA Department of Water Resources. For the last three years, ASF has had a contract with PWP to provide planning and outreach services to complete the project. By agreement with PWP, ASF has revived the abandoned nursery on the Hahamongna Annex and used it to generate several thousand plants for the habitat restoration and landscaping elements of the project. We broke ground on this neglected facility last February, and since then it has been transformed into a thriving native plant nursery that has prepared all the plants needed for the project. ASCP has been approved by the Pasadena City Council, but an environmental lawsuit has delayed its completion and created some uncertainty about the care and disposition of the plants.

We understand that the Public Works Department is responsible for the long term operations and programs in Hahamongna Watershed Park, so we come to you to take the next step in formalizing our status there.

The Hahamongna Annex Addendum to the Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan, approved by the Pasadena City Council in 2010, describes the intended use for the nursery facilities:

"The native plant nursery co-op will provide facilities for the propagation and growing of native plant species and promote horticultural education with a particular focus on the restoration of the natural plant communities of the Arroyo Seco. The nursery co-op will provide a plant lab,

Arroyo Seco Foundation – Page 2

native plant germination green house facilities, growing beds and exterior space for nursery purposes."

This is precisely the vision ASF has tried to implement with our temporary use of the nursery.

ASF has a twenty five year history of cooperating with the City of Pasadena on projects to restore and improve the Arroyo Seco, including the Lower Arroyo Low Flow Stream Restoration Project in the 1990s, the Central Arroyo Stream Restoration Project from 2006-2008, and most recently ASCP. ASF is also a co-sponsor of the Berkshire Creek Restoration Program. In cooperation with the US Forest Service, which then had a ranger station on what is now the Hahamongna Annex, ASF used these same nursery facilities to propagate native plants for restoration projects in the Arroyo Seco for a period of six years in the 1990s. Then, as now, we placed a special emphasis on the stately Engelmann oak, *Quercus Engelmanni*, which has been popularly dubbed the Pasadena Oak.

Advantages

Hahamongna Cooperative Nursery is and can be an invaluable asset to the City of Pasadena and our entire region by providing low-cost native plants for restoration, conservation and park uses. Native plants are best adapted to deal with the variability of local climate as well as the challenges of climate change. California's long drought has underscored the sustainability benefits of native plants for Southern California. River restoration efforts in the Arroyo Seco and along the Los Angeles River have accentuated the largely unmet need for native plants that are regionally sourced and genetically appropriate. In addition to these restoration efforts, it is now imperative that Pasadena and Southern Californians focus on transforming the landscaping of our homes, parks and businesses to meet the challenges of drought and climate change. Native plants are a uniquely appropriate solution, and Hahamongna Cooperative Nursery can be an invaluable resource and educational hub to promote and disseminate these plants.

Native plants from Hahamongna Cooperative Nursery can be used for:

- Arroyo Seco habitat restoration programs such as ASCP and Berkshire Creek Restoration
- Drought response and conservation education for PWP
- Oak grove restoration in Hahamongna Watershed Park
- Park improvements throughout Pasadena and our region
- Landscaping of city facilities, such as fire stations and libraries, with a new native plant ethic
- Ecosystem restoration programs that the US Army Corps of Engineers is now planning for the Arroyo Seco and Los Angeles River, and
- Transforming the landscape ethic of Pasadena and our region with a renewed respect for the benefits of sustainability and native plants.

ASF has demonstrated the ability to run a fully-functional native plant nursery. Since we were allowed to move into the site in February 2015, we have revived facilities that have been neglected for two decades and turned them into a thriving nursery.

Arroyo Seco Foundation – Page 3

PWP has been generous in its support of the nursery to develop trees and plants for ASCP, and ASF has also invested a great deal of our time and resources into the newly revived nursery. Scores of volunteers have participated in numerous work days and workshops in native plant propagation and habitat. We have established a vital educational service in Hahamongna that is the first component of the environmental education center featured in the Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan. Nicholas Hummingbird, our nursery manager, has brought a depth of experience to the newly blossoming nursery, having worked with the National Park Service on Channel Islands habitat restoration projects. He also brings a respect for native ways, very much in keeping with the spirit of Hahamongna. He is an excellent teacher and has built a solid corps of volunteers to care for the nursery.

Nick and the enthusiastic volunteers have now filled up the nursery beds at Hahamongna with four thousand plants representing more than 80 native species. The nursery site also contains two utility buildings that can be used for greenhouse and storage facilities that would greatly improve the productivity of the nursery at minimal expense. There is also an area immediately north of the nursery beds that would be very beneficial for plant storage and some propagation purposes. Space for the nursery is very valuable and needed for its success, so we hope this area can be included in the nursery agreement, which brings the nursery footprint to approximately one-third of an acre in Hahamongna Watershed Park.

To ensure that Hahamongna Cooperative Nursery will be financially self-sustaining, ASF will work to develop agreements and partnerships with City of Pasadena agencies as well as other agencies and organizations involved in conservation, habitat restoration and native plant programs. We will develop contracts and seek grants and sponsorships in order to provide a solid and sustainable financial base to make the nursery a lasting asset for Pasadena and our region.

I hope we can begin discussions regarding the nursery right away so that we can formalize a long-term agreement by September, when our current agreement with Pasadena Water & Power expires. Please let me know the next steps to take to ensure the success of this key element of Hahamongna Watershed Park and Pasadena's Green programs.

Sincerely,

Timothy F. Brick Managing Director

Cc: Julie Gutierrez, Charles Peretz

Tim Brick