

 **ARROYO SECO FOUNDATION**

June 19, 2014

Michael Beck, City Manager
City of Pasadena
100 No. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

Dear Mr. Beck:

We have been informed that Pasadena's Urban Forest Advisory Committee has recently voted to remove four mature native trees from the Lower Arroyo Nature Park. The action of this advisory committee, which rejects the Pasadena staff recommendation, comes in a response to a request by the Pasadena Casting Club to remove these trees so they can expand their activities.

The trees involved, which include three Coast Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and one Sycamore (*Plantanus racemosa*) represent the signature trees of the Arroyo Seco. They were planted as part of an historic restoration program twenty years ago that the Arroyo Seco Foundation played an instrumental role in developing. ASF recruited Browning Ferris Industries (BFI) to select the Lower Arroyo in Pasadena as the site for an environmental mitigation program that was required by the expansion of BFI's Sunshine Canyon Landfill in the San Fernando Valley. The City of Pasadena agreed to co-sponsor the BFI Low-flow Stream Restoration Program, which took several years to complete, during which the Arroyo Seco Foundation worked closely with BFI and Pasadena to fulfill the restoration goals of the project. In agreeing to serve as the site for the mitigation program, Pasadena took on the responsibility to protect and maintain the habitat restoration associated with it.

Furthermore it has long been Pasadena's policy to treat the Lower Arroyo as a natural preservation area. In 1964 Pasadena City Council adopted the Jencks Resolution calling for care and stewardship of the Arroyo Seco. Later in 1990 the City Council adopted the Arroyo Seco Public Lands Ordinance. In that ordinance the Lower Arroyo is specifically designated as a "natural preservation area." While the ordinance allows low-impact recreational uses such as fly-casting to remain, it specifically states that there shall be no expansion of such uses. (PMC 3.32.110 C). The Lower Arroyo Master Plan, adopted in 2003, also precludes the expansion of such uses. Regrettably, the staff report to the Urban Forest Advisory Committee did not mention these prohibitions.

The Arroyo Seco Foundation believes that the Pasadena Casting Club has been a positive part of the Lower Arroyo for many decades, but we feel that their presence in such a natural preservation area is a secondary and subservient use that should not undermine the natural character of the Arroyo or cause undue harm to the trees and habitat in the Lower Arroyo. We, therefore, note with concern not only their application but also their purpose for requesting the removal of the trees. Their applicant states their intent to expand the number and scope of their activities even including casting competitions or tournaments. Such an expansion of activity clearly is prohibited by the Arroyo Seco Public Lands Ordinance and the Lower Arroyo Master Plan.

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PO Box 91622, Pasadena, CA 91109-1622**

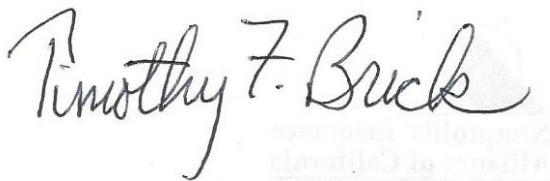
It seems that the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee failed to consider the unique status of the Lower Arroyo as a natural preservation area, the city's responsibilities to maintain an environmental mitigation project, and the very clear requirements of the Arroyo Public Lands Ordinance, Pasadena's Tree Ordinance and the Lower Arroyo Master Plan. We urge you to reject this ill-advised recommendation of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee and to preserve these stately trees.

The Pasadena Casting Club's tree removal proposal raises important issues about private use of a public area. Pasadena, like other governmental entities, acquires park and open space lands for the general benefit of the public at large. In some cases, such as the Arroyo Seco, environmentally sensitive land is acquired to protect its rare ecological and natural resource values. The Arroyo Seco Foundation has long opposed the exclusive use of public land in the Arroyo Seco by private interests. The Arroyo Seco and the Lower Arroyo in particular should be for the benefit of the public at large. It is used extensively by local residents and the public, including walkers, dog-walkers, hikers, bird-watchers, nature lovers and just ordinary people who relish the tranquil natural setting it provides. As the Arroyo Seco Public Lands Ordinance and the Arroyo Seco Master Plan make clear, recreational uses by private organizations, such as the Pasadena Casting Club, are secondary and should not detract significantly from the natural character of Arroyo or from the enjoyment of the broader public, whose tax dollars have purchased and maintained these public treasures. We urge you to continue to protect the public benefits of the Arroyo Seco as well as its natural character.

The BFI Low-Flow Stream Restoration Project is an outstanding example of the partnership of the Arroyo Seco Foundation with the City of Pasadena over the past twenty-five years. Others include hundreds of trees that line the Arroyo, the Central Arroyo Stream Restoration Program that restored native Arroyo Chub to the stream near Brookside Park, and the Arroyo Seco Canyon Project now underway. Just last week we received notice that the agreements have been finalized for another project ASF is co-sponsoring with Pasadena, the Berkshire Creek restoration in Hahamongna Watershed Park. As we pursue these projects, the goal of the Arroyo Seco Foundation is to restore and enhance the natural character of the Arroyo and the ability of the public at large to enjoy that. We appreciate Pasadena's commitment to those same goals.

We have posted a petition to save the Lower Arroyo trees on our website (<http://www.arroyoseco.org/lowerarroyotrees.htm>). It has already garnered significant public support. We will send you the results soon.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy F. Brick". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature, there is a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark, but the text within it is illegible.

Timothy F. Brick, Managing Director