



**ACTION ITEM**  
May 4, 2015

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** **Public Affairs & Legislation Committee**  
(Directors Barbre, Hinman, Tamaribuchi)

Robert Hunter  
General Manager

Staff Contact: Jessica Ouwerkerk  
Karl Seckel

**SUBJECT: Recommendation for MWDOC School Program Beginning 2015-16**

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends the Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to enter into contracts with both the Discovery Science Center and The Ecology Center in respective amounts of \$220,000 and \$80,000 for fiscal years 2015-16 through 2017-18 per the details provided below.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

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Committee recommends (To be determined at Committee Meeting)

**SUMMARY**

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In response to the Water Education School Program Request for Proposals (RFP), MWDOC received six well thought-out proposals for implementation of the School Program beginning in 2015-16. Staff and an evaluation committee comprised of representatives from our member agencies and City of Anaheim selected three proposers to participate in an interview process. Based on their findings, the evaluation committee recommended entering into contracts with Discovery Science Center for grades 1-6 and The Ecology Center for grades 9-12, as outlined below. The combination of proposals below will make the School Program available to more students, at a better cost, over a wider range of grades, with better technology than our existing program, and includes follow-up activities that were previously not included in the program.

<b>Budgeted (Y/N): Y</b>	Budgeted amount: \$300,000	Core <input type="checkbox"/>	Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Action item amount: \$300,000</b>		Line item: 63-7040	
<b>Fiscal Impact (explain if unbudgeted):</b>			

## **DETAILED REPORT**

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Staff developed and distributed the School Program RFP to vendors on March 18, 2015. The deadline for written questions regarding the RFP was April 7, 2015. Proposals were due on April 13, 2015. MWDOC received six proposals from the following vendors:

- Discovery Science Center
- The Ecology Center
- Inside the Outdoors
- SGA (S. Groner Associates, Inc.)
- Building Block Entertainment
- Numedeon, Inc.

The proposals were reviewed and ranked by a combination of MWDOC staff and volunteer representatives from our member agencies as well as City of Anaheim. The evaluation committee was impressed with quality and creativity of the proposals received. The three top-ranked vendors were invited for interviews on Monday, April 27:

- Discovery Science Center
- Inside the Outdoors
- The Ecology Center

### **Evaluation Committee Recommendation**

Following the interview process, the evaluation committee discussed a hybrid recommendation based on some of the innovative proposal options. The recommendation involved the following:

- Utilizing DSC for the assembly programs for grades 1-6 if they could bring the Keypad Program pricing down to \$3.65 per student
- Utilizing The Ecology Center for grades 9-12

MWDOC staff contacted/followed-up with the two vendors to resolve specific program requirements, thereby selecting the strongest programs from the two vendors. The table below summarizes the three finalists' initial ranking, original proposal costs, and adjusted proposals.

Summary of Proposals and Ranking Process				
Vendor	Initial Rank	Original Proposal & Per Student Cost to MWDOC (First Year)	Adjusted Proposals	Changes Made in the Proposals
Discovery Science Center	1	\$298,975, 72,000 students @\$4.15	\$220,000, 60,274 students @\$3.65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited to grades 1-6, all with keypads</li> </ul>
Inside the Outdoors	2	\$300,000, 80,000 students @\$3.75	N/A	
The Ecology Center	3	\$300,000, 35,900 students @\$10.20	\$80,000, 22,610 students @\$3.54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited to only grades 9-12</li> </ul>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,000, 82,884 students @\$3.62</b>	

The combination of the **adjusted** proposals in the above table will yield a School Program that reaches more students, at a better cost, over a wider range of grades, with better technology than our existing program, and includes follow-up activities that were previously not included in the programs.

### **Recommendation to the PAL Committee and the Board**

The overall staff recommendation is as follows and includes the contents from **Adjusted Proposals** from the two finalists (the proposals were adjusted based on input and direction from the evaluation group):

1. Authorize staff to enter into an Agreement with DSC for the next three years, with two one-year extensions under the following conditions. The outline below follows the **Adjusted Proposal** from DSC after staff requested changes in their original proposal:
  - a. DSC would provide assembly programs within Orange County for grades 1-6, with the keypads offered in all of these grades.
  - b. One-third of the annual contract would be paid to DSC up-front (early in the fiscal year, approximately \$70,000).
  - c. MWDOC would work with its member agencies to guarantee 60,274 as a minimum number of students in the program.
  - d. The pricing would be \$3.65 per students for a total contract amount of \$220,000.
  - e. The per-student compensation would increase in subsequent years by 3% each year.

- f. The Water Quality and Basic Assembly Programs (without keypads) would not be offered by DSC.
  - g. DSC would implement the "Follow-up Program" offered in their proposal. This includes:
    - i. An online survey, integrated with MWDOC's website, would be developed by DSC and MWDOC working together. The survey would assess household water use practices and suggest water-saving measures and rebate programs.
    - ii. This reinforces what has been taught in the classes and allows the student to implement changes around the home.
    - iii. Teachers would receive a separate survey.
    - iv. Incentives could be provided for completed surveys.
    - v. The information developed via this mode could be utilized to reach out to students and teachers for additional programs.
2. Authorize staff to enter into an Agreement with The Ecology Center to develop and implement a program at an annual cost of \$80,000 to educate and engage students in grades 9-12 in water education programs. The outline below follows the **Adjusted Proposal** from The Ecology Center when they responded to just forming a program for grades 9-12:
- a. The Ecology Center is leveraging MWDOC's \$80,000 with \$75,500 and will be implementing a program costing \$155,500 with the elements below.
  - b. Teacher Trainings
  - c. Youth Advisory Board input into the programs
  - d. Campus Activation Programs
  - e. Direct programs with high schools
  - f. Develop and implement online and classroom-based lesson plans, activities, and interactive water conservation curriculum.
  - g. Using Zago (a digital partner of The Ecology Center), they will develop an innovative, youth-oriented water conservation campaign with campus activation, online engagement, and social media sharing components.
  - h. World Water Day Mobilization - Classroom activities throughout the first semester will culminate on March 22, 2016 (World Water Day) with an OC-wide campaign to save as many gallons as possible.
  - i. Youth Led Activism - Ten *Good Water* Steward Clubs will have educational exhibitions, program-branded resources, and incentives to rally students at their schools to engage in the World Water Day 2016 campaign. Hurley will dedicate \$10,000 in incentives for the program.
  - j. Additional Program Components - Best performing schools will receive free assemblies with their award-winning exhibition, *The Water Shed*, or all-expense paid field trips to The Ecology Center.
  - k. Student & teacher entry and exit surveys on all programming will measure qualitatively and quantitatively awareness and concept retention.
  - l. The Overall First Year Summary Program:
    - i. Proposes to reach 22,610 students the first year, growing to 48,750 by year 3
    - ii. Leverages the MWDOC \$80,000 with its own \$75,000, thereby increasing the overall program to \$155,000 in year 1 increasing to \$163,500 in year 3.
    - iii. Includes 90 classroom programs in year 1 (3,360 students)

- iv. Includes 7500 visitors to The Ecology Center
- v. Includes \$10,000 in incentives for 6 to 10 high school incentivized activations
- vi. Includes education of 150 teachers (5,250 students)
- vii. Includes formation of 10 High School clubs (2,500 students)
- viii. The first year cost to MWDOC is \$3.54 per student (total cost is \$6.85); the three-year cost to MWDOC is \$2.12 per student (total cost of \$4.25)
- m. Over the Subsequent two years, the programs will be expanded as follows:
  - i. Catalytic Change - They will increase numbers of youth advisory clubs from 10 to 25 to 50 over the course of three years, interacting with 17,500 students. They will play a key role in informing us on ways to continuously evolve curriculum, campaigns, and club activities.
  - ii. Teacher Trainings - They will increase numbers of teacher offerings per year with a goal of training an additional 100 teachers per semester, with overall reach of 24,000 students.
  - iii. Classroom Activation – The Good Water Program will be taught in 390 classrooms, influencing 15,000 students.
  - iv. Digital Platform - They will continually improve the digital platform to facilitate and evaluate continued student participation, networking, and story-sharing between schools, reaching 45,000 students and the community in water conservation.

The benefits of this two-pronged approach are:

- MWDOC maintains a highly leveraged student education program that continues the long-running assembly programs in grades 1-6, but with an improved format to utilize keypads for all grades AND we create a NEW program targeting high school students.
- The proposed high school program will activate and inspire high school students to make changes in their community, valuing water as the precious resource it is.
- Follow-up activities will continue to engage students on an ongoing basis; this was not part of our prior programs.
- With leveraged growth and dollars, the number of teachers and students reached should increase over time and the per-student cost should decrease.

### **Attachments:**

Additional details on each of the three finalists' proposals. Please note this section summarizes the ORIGINAL proposals. The highlights of the Ecology Center adjusted proposal and the DSC adjusted proposal are summarized in the discussions above.

### **Background on Discovery Science Center ORIGINAL Proposal**

Discovery Science Center (DSC) provided a proposal that was very consistent with what they provide now and what has been provided over the past 10 years. They offered a four part program, but indicated they were flexible in changing student counts from among the four choices offered, which included:

	Price	Participants	Total
Assembly-Style Program	\$2.65	62000	\$164,300.00
Assembly-Style Program with Keypads	\$5.78	7500	\$43,350.00
Water Quality Workshop Program	\$16.53	2500	\$41,325.00
Teacher Training Workshops	\$200.00	250	\$50,000.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$298,975.00</b>

The overall cost per student for DSC was \$4.15 per student as offered above.

The evaluation group had a high level of confidence in DSC and their ability to deliver based on prior performance (they are a known entity). Their proposal did add some new elements in the follow-up section, but the group was surprised that they stayed primarily with what had been done in the past. We asked about adding Junior and Senior High School programs, and it was their opinion that resources were better spent at the young ages when kids are more impressionable.

The evaluation group was interested in the pricing differential between the basic assembly program and the keypad assembly program, which is more than double the cost. During the interview process, the question was asked about the high differential when the costs of the keypad units has come down drastically. DSC noted that with higher student counts, the differential cost could be reduced, but they did not speculate to what level. DSC supported the use of the keypads as it both keeps the students engaged and immediately indicates by the responses whether the students understand the topics being discussed.

## Background on The Ecology Center ORIGINAL Proposal

The Ecology Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit located in San Juan Capistrano. In six years, they have developed a house and property into a learning center for sustainability education, eco-conscious living resources, and water conservation techniques. The Ecology Center serves as an innovative educational venue that is shifting behavior towards positive empowerment through attainable and hands-on water conservation solutions – putting theory to practice by incorporating water education in all aspects of the property, including greywater systems, rainwater harvesting, and bioswales earthworks. It serves as a location for tours, student field trips, school programming, and community events that receives over 30,000 visitors annually.

The Ecology Center is funded, in rough numbers, 1/3 via earned income from the services they offer, 1/3 from private donations and 1/3 through corporate donations. They mentioned Hurley and several other corporate sponsors and indicated they work closely with Coastkeepers.

The energy, innovation and passion of their concepts and their dedicated location for teaching (as well as their hands-on education experience) impressed the evaluation committee as something new that could be brought to the School Program, particularly for older students. The drawback is that it would require a very large scale-up by The Ecology Center to reach the numbers of students MWDOC had requested. In fact, not everything is in place today to just *bring the MWDOC program over*, and their proposal reached the fewest students in year one (35,900), but included a large build-up projected in years two (52,800) and three (90,400). The committee was impressed with the approach, thought processes, dedication and passion of The Ecology Center's staff and proposal and what they had built over a short period of time, but the group was quite concerned that they may not reach the numbers advertised. We discussed alternatives that might lead to a hybrid recommendation with respect to The Ecology Center.

With respect to reaching students, they had programs to bring the students to their site and they had a very innovative mobile Water Shed (a wood shed with a water focus) where students receive an allocation of water and must make decisions on where to use their allocation. Their target audience now is typically grades 2-5, but their overall theme is to reach and reinforce learning from K-12, including developing and utilizing a digital format to expand the number of students to be reached via their favorite media, the internet. This would be achieved via their digital partner, Zago, who has helped them develop the products they utilize today. The pricing outlined in The Ecology Center's proposal included:

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	TOTAL
Yearly Budget	\$366,500	\$367,500	\$379,500	\$1,113,500
Hands-on Activation (# of students)	15,900	32,800	50,400	99,100
Digital Platform (# of students)	20,000	20,000	40,000	80,000
<b>Total # of Students</b>	<b>35,900</b>	<b>52,800</b>	<b>90,400</b>	<b>179,100</b>
<b>Cost Per Student</b>	<b>\$10.20/student</b>	<b>\$6.96/student</b>	<b>\$4.19/student</b>	<b>\$6.21/student</b>

The Hands-on Activation includes a combination of field trips and school visits. The first year cost of the program was the highest at \$10.20 per student due to the need to develop, implement, market, and expand the digital platform.

**Background on Inside the Outdoors Proposal**

Inside the Outdoors is a division of the Orange County Department of Education functioning as the OCDE’s environmental science program. Inside the Outdoors has been in business for over 40 years. They currently service about 80,000 kids through the entirety of their programs each year, so there was a high level of confidence of them being successful with the addition of MWDOC’s School Program. They did indicate they would have to staff-up in the area of teachers, but they have the management and administrative infrastructure in place to allow them to staff up and down with teachers as their programs require and based on the funding available; they did not feel they would have any problems meeting our goals. Currently, their funding comes from their fee-based structure for providing services, fundraising, City partners and grants. In fact, their proposal indicated a commitment for year one to include a matching grant they have already secured for \$64,804. They indicated for years 2 and 3 they would assist us (at their cost) in securing grants to help cover the cost of the programs without any additional compensation.

Inside the Outdoors offered the following in their proposal (they were flexible with changing the counts in the various categories):

Field Trips	\$184,800 = 8,000 students x \$23.10
Traveling Scientist	\$20,000 = 2,000 students x \$10.00
Service-Learning Programs	\$140,004 = 70,000 students x ≈\$2.00
Follow-up Activities	\$20,000 = 80,000 students x \$0.25
TOTAL ANNUAL COST.....	<u>\$364,804</u>
Deduct for Matching Grant	<u>\$64,804</u>
TOTAL ANNUAL COST TO MWDOC.....	\$300,000

(Translates to \$3.75 per student for 80,000 students served)

The Programs offered by Inside the Outdoors would take the place of the MWDOC Assembly programs and are offered in grades K-12 in three formats:

Service-Learning – Campus-Wide Fairs: A class/grade level registers to be the onsite lead for a day-long water education fair. Students work with Inside the Outdoors staff to plan student-designed water education materials. The fair is hosted in common areas so that all students can participate. Classes rotate through the fair and engage in hands-on water education activities for 30-45 minutes per class.

Service-Learning – Peer-to-Peer: A class/grade level registers to be the onsite lead for peer-to-peer water education initiative. Students work with Traveling Scientists to design projects, which can include a combination of the following student-led activities: plays, PSAs, contests, common area water education displays, classroom surveys, and presentations to classmates. Follow-up activities support continued learning and sustained behavior change. Classes rotate through the fair and engage in hands-on water education activities for 30-45 minutes per class.

The Traveling Scientist Program turns classrooms into laboratories as small groups of students rotate through hands-on science investigation activities. Lessons are focused on water treatment and recycling, aquifers, conservation, usage, and sources. Follow-up activities support continued learning and sustained behavior change.