

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: February 22, 2010

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 6: Consideration of resolution authorizing an advance payment of deposited mitigation funds (SMM CF-0907) from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Fund to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for continuation of the Browns Canyon riparian habitat restoration and creation project, unincorporated Los Angeles County, Chatsworth area.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing an advance payment of deposited mitigation funds (SMM CF-0907) from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Fund in an amount not to exceed \$300,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for continuation of the Browns Canyon riparian habitat restoration and creation project in Chatsworth.

Legislative Authority: Section 33215, 33204.2 (a), and 33204.27(a) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: In December 2008 the Conservancy received a \$915,980 check from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to fund 7.046 acres of riparian habitat restoration and creation in the Gopher Canyon tributary of Browns Canyon. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) owns and manages the subject property. The money was deposited into the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Fund (Conservancy Fund). The funding is an approved appropriation in the State budget.

At its March 2009 meeting the Conservancy authorized grant number SMM CF-907 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). At its May 2009 meeting the Conservancy authorized a \$346,000 advance of funds to the MRCA.

The attached letter from the Chairperson of the MRCA dated February 12, 2010 requests a second advance of funds both to ensure the survival and protection of existing planted vegetation and to keep the remainder of the project on schedule per a four-way agreement between the Conservancy, Caltrans, Army Corps, and the Federal Highway Administration. The amount of the requested advance is \$300,000 to carry the project approximately through February 2011.

Staff has inspected the site and agrees that the project is on schedule and progressing well as represented in the attached letter. Any gap or uncertainty in the project funding would be detrimental to the survival, timing, quality, and efficiency of a unique restoration project.