

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: September 27, 2010

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 14: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Proposition 84 matching grant to the City of Santa Clarita to purchase approximately 842 acres, Elsmere and Grapevine Canyons, unincorporated County of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt a resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the City of Santa Clarita in the amount of \$500,000 to help acquire the Los Angeles River watershed portion of the 842 acre acquisition.

Legislative Authority: Public Resources Code Section 33204(c) provides that the Conservancy may award grants to cities for the purpose of acquiring sites identified as necessary for park, recreation, or conservation purposes. Public Resources Code Section 75050 (g)(2) provides that the Conservancy may award grants for the implementation of watershed protection activities throughout the watershed of the Upper Los Angeles River.

Background: The City of Santa Clarita has submitted the attached application and cover letter for a Proposition 84 grant to match \$5,500,000 in public funds. The proposed 842 acre acquisition includes portions of Elsmere and Grapevine Canyons.

The property is a portion of an approximately 1200 acre property previously owned by Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI). In 2007, BFI donated the northerly 400 acres of Elsmere Canyon to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. The 400 acres is located adjacent to Whitney Canyon, which was acquired by the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority. BFI sold the remainder of the approximately 1200 acres of property to a developer.

The acquisition complies with the provisions of Water Code Section 79508, a requirement of Public Resources Code Section 75050(g)(2). Section 79508 provides that watershed protection activities shall be consistent with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan (Common Ground). The acquisition is consistent with the following guiding principles of Common Ground. The acquisition will create, expand and improve public open space and recreation, and maintain and improve flood protection.