

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: November 8, 2010

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 19: Consideration of resolution authorizing the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to use the Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund for acquisition of APNS 4448-018-023, 024, 025, 026, 041, comprised of 20.66 acres, Topanga Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's use of up to \$100,000 of the Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund for the acquisition of APNS 4448-018-023, 024, 025, 026, 041 in Topanga Canyon.

Legislative Authority: Section 33211(c) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The five contiguous subject parcels are located in the Coastal Zone portion of Topanga Canyon, less than one mile west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, and less than 0.60 miles west of Topanga State Park. The subject parcels are home to Miocene-era sandstone outcrops and a diverse number of species, including the State-listed, threatened Santa Susana tarweed. A significant ephemeral drainage course with a thick canopy of bay-laurel trees exists on the property as well. The three southernmost parcels are adjacent to MRCA-owned open space to the west.

The property is accessible from Fernwood Pacific Drive through unpaved Rocky Ledge Road. (See attached maps.) Potential future public access to all five parcels currently exists in the form of unimproved roads created by the owner.

The funds for the acquisition would come primarily from Los Angeles County and some small private donations. Staff is recommending a \$100,000 contribution from the Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund. The acquisition of the subject properties by the MRCA is supported by the local community as well as by Third District Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. A group of local community members have been pushing for the MRCA to acquire these parcels for more than a year. The seller has recently sold two of the adjacent parcels and the subject property has been listed on the market. The MRCA would take and hold title to the property.