

MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Ramirez Canyon Park
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Malibu, California 90265

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March 2, 2011

SMMC 3/28/11
Agenda Item 12
Attachment

Mr. Antonio Gonzalez
Chairperson
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
5750 Ramirez Canyon Road
Malibu, California 90265

Request for Augmentation of Grant SMM-0754 Project Planning and Design

Dear Chairperson Gonzalez and Conservancy Members:

The subject grant was first awarded to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) in July 2007 for Project Planning and Design (PP&D) activities in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and the coastal watersheds of the Santa Monica Bay. The grant was funded from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). The MRCA has utilized this grant funding to achieve a litany of both tangible and in process results, including the completion of many Conservancy and MRCA Workprogram projects with or without any capital funding from the Conservancy.

This PP&D capability over many geographic locations allows staff to flexibly pursue opportunities for project development and fast completion as they arise. Key for effective MRCA capital grant proposals and funding applications is the ability to keep multiple projects in the pipeline. By the nature of land acquisition, and to some extent construction, timelines are fluid with uncertainty about which projects will advance when. This grant covers staff time for many projects that are in their infancy and not yet developed enough to qualify for grant applications. Funding is then leveraged as the MRCA can seek multiple funding sources for projects once they are solidified. Many of the projects worked on under this grant produce land and trail interests with zero capital funding.

The flexibility of this grant specifically permits MRCA staff to pursue a broad array of project opportunities that achieve immense public benefits often at little or no cost to the MRCA aside from staff time. Most tasks performed by MRCA staff under this grant deliver projects on the approved project list with no capital funding from Proposition 84. More specifically, land that implements the Conservancy Act is obtained at no public cost or using non-Proposition 84 funding.

For example, this grant funds staff time to participate in the development review and entitlement process for proposed projects in the Conservancy's jurisdiction. Working through the dedication process, staff is able to pursue and secure fee simple, conservation easement, or trail easement land interests. Since the original grant award in July 2007, the MRCA has accepted 109 offers-to-dedicate in the Coastal Zone, protecting approximately 1,500 acres via conservation, scenic, open space, and trail easements. While these are not all directly associated with Proposition 84 PP&D activities, they are representative of the type and efficacy of work funded by this grant. This grant funding is essential to fund the legal work needed to finalize these easements and record documents.

Grant funding is also used for staff to participate in tax default auctions, which enables strategic and cost-effective acquisitions of parcels in target areas. Since the beginning of this grant, seven tax-defaulted properties in the Los Angeles River watershed and 13 in the Santa Monica Bay watershed were acquired using Proposition 84-funded staff time.

The MRCA also accepts donations of property or land interests, which requires only staff time and title reports to process. The MRCA is able to provide a tax deduction to donors for the value of donated property, which makes land donation particularly appealing. Grant funding is used to pursue donation and dedication opportunities as they arise and to process the transfer of title. Proposition 84 PP&D funding was instrumental in securing 32 MRCA donations or dedications since the original grant award, protecting well over 300 acres of land.

Real estate deals require a large amount of work that may or may not be covered by a dedicated funding source. PP&D funding is critical for MRCA staff time to close on acquisitions that have their purchase price paid for by other sources. Proposition 84 PP&D funding paid for the staff time required to purchase 21 parcels in the grant project scope areas, totaling more than 90 acres. Often the ability to devote sufficient staff time is the single greatest determinant of success for acquisitions.

PP&D funding is also used to contract for appraisals, appraisal reviews, title reports, and phase I environmental assessments. Having these documents prepared as needed furthers the acquisition process, making MRCA acquisitions more competitive for funding opportunities. If the MRCA was required to secure a property-specific funding source for each appraisal, staff would be less nimble and real estate transactions less predictable. Instead, the MRCA has developed a track record for expeditious and efficient property acquisition. The subject Proposition 84 PP&D grant has funded 19 appraisals and appraisal reviews, in addition to numerous title reports.

The MRCA has submitted the attached application for a \$550,000 augmentation to the existing Proposition 84 Project Planning and Design grant (SMM-0754). The Conservancy last augmented this grant for \$375,000 in April 2010, bringing the total to the present

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\$1,125,000. The application budget calls for \$330,000 to be spent in the upper Los Angeles River watershed, which includes the entire San Fernando Valley and all urban areas north of the City of Vernon boundary, and \$220,000 to be spent in coastal watersheds of the Santa Monica Bay, including the Calleguas Creek watershed. An expenditure plan for each of these geographic areas is included in the attached application.

Even at a less than average expenditure rate, it is anticipated that the current grant funds will be exhausted during the spring of 2011. This request would be adequate to prevent any unnecessary delays that are irreversibly detrimental to the implementation of projects on the approved project list. The current MRCA team is well-suited to continue its track record of efficient and cost-effective project delivery. To maintain the MRCA's delivery and continued development of projects in the grant scope areas, an augmentation is required. The requested \$550,000 should carry the same level of MRCA project delivery through near the end of 2012.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Barbara Romero at 323-221-9944, ext. 188.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Lange", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

George Lange
Chairperson

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY GRANT APPLICATION			
Project Name: Project Planning and Design		Amount of Request: \$ 550,000	
		Total Project Cost: \$ 1,675,000	
Applicant Name: Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority		Amount of Match: \$ N/A	
		Source of Match: N/A	
Applicant Address: 570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90065		Project Address: N/A	
		County	Senate District
		LA & Ventura	Various
Phone: 323-221-9944			
Fax: 323-221-9934		Email: barbara.romero@mrca.ca.gov	
Grantee's Authorized Representative:			
Cara Meyer, Contracts Officer		323-221-9944 x117	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<i>Name and Title</i>		<i>Phone</i>	
Person with day-to-day responsibility for project:			
Barbara Romero, Chief of Urban and Watershed Projects		323-221-9944 x188	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<i>Name and Title</i>		<i>Phone</i>	
Brief Scope of Work (60 words maximum):			
Project planning and design activities leading directly to the preservation, protection, and restoration of land, water, and other natural resources in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and the watersheds of the Santa Monica Bay, including the Calleguas Creek watershed. Such projects shall be fully consistent with the projects identified in the geographic specific Projects List approved by the Conservancy initially in September 2007 and subsequently in 2008. (See attached)			
Funding Source Applied for: Proposition 84			
Narrative/Project Description:			
<p>The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's (MRCA) requested Project Planning and Design Services grant augmentation would continue to fund activities directly related to the acquisition, preservation, protection, and restoration of land, water, and other natural resources and associated planning, permitting, and administrative costs for eligible projects located in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and the coastal watersheds of the Santa Monica Bay, including the Calleguas Creek watershed.</p> <p>The MRCA will develop and implement projects that maximize the protection, enhancement, distribution, and creation of public parks and natural areas throughout the upper Los Angeles River watershed and the coastal canyons of the Santa Monica Bay. The funding will be used for Proposition 84 funding eligible projects in the specific geographic areas listed in the figure entitled "Potential Projects List." The scope of these projects shall range from the acquisition and development of urban native habitat parks and trails to the acquisition of habitat linkages between the major core habitats of the Santa Monica Mountains zone. MRCA staff efforts will also include the obtainment and processing of land and trail easement dedications and donations. To the extent possible, all planning, design, and implementation efforts shall be multi-objective to integrate increased water supply and quality, wildlife habitat including fisheries, habitat connectivity, and the broad distribution of passive recreational opportunities that may incorporate interpretive displays. All of the subject project planning and design activities would be consistent with the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Project</p>			

development will strongly focus on combining multiple funding sources to stretch both local and State dollars.

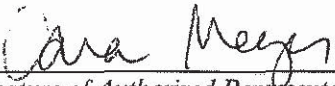
The MRCA will continue to concentrate on project development in the eligible urban sections of the Los Angeles River watershed projects to be partially or wholly funded by Proposition 84.

The MRCA requests that the term of the agreement end no earlier than June 30, 2013.

Tasks / Milestones:	Budget:	Completion Date
1 Project Planning – upper LA River	\$ 330,000	6/30/13
2 Project Planning – Santa Monica Bay	\$ 220,000	6/30/13

Acquisition Projects: APN(s): N/A
Acreage: N/A

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.



Signature of Authorized Representative

3/14/11

Date

Form SMM-001

STATE OF CALIFORNIA ♦ THE RESOURCES AGENCY

**Proposed MRCA Budget
Augmentation of SMM-0754**

Expense Type	Proposed Grant Allocation*		
	Upper Los Angeles River Watershed	Coastal Watersheds of Santa Monica Bay (inc. Calleguas Creek)	Total
1. Direct Acquisition Expenses	\$80,000	\$60,000	\$140,000
a. Appraisals (Average \$5,000)			
b. Appraisal Reviews (Average \$1,500)			
c. Preliminary Title Reports (\$750 each)			
2. MRCA Staff Time	\$238,000	\$151,000	\$389,000
a. Legal			
b. Natural Resources and Planning			
c. Design Services			
3. Professional Services, Travel & Miscellaneous Expenses	\$12,000	\$9,000	\$21,000
a. Transportation			
b. Filing Fees			
c. Phase I Environmental Reports			
d. Surveys and Legal Descriptions			
e. Miscellaneous Expenses			
Total	\$330,000	\$220,000	\$550,000

* All proposed grant sub-allocation figures are approximate within each watershed area.