

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: December 5, 2011

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 14: Consideration of resolution authorizing a budget augmentation for grant SMM-0605 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a budget augmentation of Proposition 50 funds in the amount of \$200,000 for grant SMM-0605 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204(c), 33204.2, and 33204.27 of the Public Resources Code.

Background: In 2006, the Conservancy awarded grant funds to MRCA for capital improvements to Franklin Canyon Park's visitor-serving amenities. MRCA has completed the planned improvements to the Sooky Goldman Nature Center Courtyard, Eugene and Michael Rosenfeld Auditorium, multiple picnic areas, park restrooms, and fencing. Initially a minor refurbishment of the Sam Goldman Amphitheater was also planned, but upon further investigation it became apparent that a more complete renovation is required to make a long-lasting facility with better accessibility.

The existing amphitheater is in poor condition with wood plank seating, railroad tie steps, and a drooping log backdrop. Tree roots have uplifted the steps and the plank seats are splintered and in need of replacement. Improvements will consist of new permanent seats and steps, reconfiguration to provide accessible seating, and replacement of the backdrop with a solid structure that can serve as a screen wall and will incorporate storage for naturalist program materials. These improvements will complement the work already completed at the park and will enable more visitors to use the amphitheater.

Site improvements are needed to better accommodate bus groups, amphitheater events, and general visitors. The area east of the amphitheater and nature center entrance will be reconfigured to provide a turnaround for buses and fire trucks, a drop-off area, accessible parking and paths, and clear wayfinding. Detailed site design has not been completed, but a key goal is to increase accessibility with minor changes to grading and circulation.

Some improvements to the Sooky Goldman Nature Center are also needed at this time. MRCA staff made an application to a California State Parks competitive program for a complete

overhaul of the nature center, but was not awarded funds. In addition to new interpretive exhibits, those funds would have covered minor cost-effective renovations to the building itself. These minor renovations, including energy efficient lighting and additional seating, are still desired and would result in reduced operating expenses and an improved visitor experience.

Consideration: The amount of MRCA's grant augmentation request is \$200,000.