

SANTA CLARITA WATERSHED RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

*A PUBLIC ENTITY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA EXERCISING JOINT POWERS OF THE CITY OF SANTA
CLARITA AND THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE
SECTION 6500 ET SEQ.*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: June 7, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX: Consideration of resolution authorizing acquisition of approximately 1,018 acres comprised of APNs 3210-001-004, 3210-002-007, 3210-004-004, 005, 008, 009, 010, 011, 013, 014, 3210-005-006, 007, 008, 027, 035, 040, 3210-006-005, 3210-008-021, 022, and 3210-010-001 in the Soledad Canyon watershed, and entering into a management agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acquisition of approximately 1,018 acres comprised of APNs 3210-001-004, 3210-002-007, 3210-004-004, 005, 008, 009, 010, 011, 013, 014, 3210-005-006, 007, 008, 027, 035, 040, 3210-006-005, 3210-008-021, 022, and 3210-010-001 in the Soledad Canyon watershed, and entering into a management agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

The subject 1,018-acre ownership in the heart of the Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan has been on the agency's radar screen since 1996 when the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and private parties attempted to secure the property (then Rio Dulce Ranch) in a 2006 Bay Area bankruptcy auction. The private party representing the conservation entities was outbid by Nomin, Inc. Nomin, Inc. still owns the property.

The Riverside Land Conservancy (RLC) has the property under contract to acquire by July 31, 2012. The project is being funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board, the City of Santa Clarita Open Space District, and 5th Supervisorial District Proposition A Specified Excess funds through the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA).

The RLC will initially take title to the property, but expressly desires to immediately transfer it to a public agency. The consensus among the City, MRCA and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy staffs is that Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority (SCWRCA) is the most appropriate agency to hold title to the property. The MRCA would be the managing entity under a new or revised agreement with SCWRCA. The proposed action authorizes a management agreement with the MRCA. As shown on the attached map, the MRCA owns and manages four properties that border the subject ownership in four different locations.

The 1,018 property also connects to open space owned by the City's Open Space District, and the Bureau of Land Management. The property forms the core of the inter-mountain range habitat linkage between the two main portions of the Angeles National Forest on either side of State Route 14. The property includes portions of numerous blueline streams and multiple vegetation types. It is on the SCWRCA FY 2011-2012 Workprogram.

The property is bisected by Los Angeles County's fee ownership for Briggs Road. Most of the completely unpaved Briggs Road is far from the Briggs Road right-of-way. Approximately one dozen properties with homes use this dirt road for access to Agua Dulce Canyon Road. Those residents do not have an easement over the Nomin property. Los Angeles County, the City and MRCA staffs are all working to resolve these access and right-of-way issues.