



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
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Agenda Item 16
SMMC
2/25/13

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: November 7, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a Project Agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Parks and Open Space District for the Escondido Creek small lots project adjacent to Latigo Canyon Road, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a Project Agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Parks and Open Space District for the Escondido Creek small lots project adjacent to Latigo Canyon Road, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Background: The subject 98-acre ownership comprised of 32 parcels in the heart of the Escondido Canyon watershed is unique for several reasons. It contains a long section of Escondido Creek with year-round flows and deeply shaded stream canopy. It is all zoned R-R-1 (Resort Recreational). This a unique zone that allows numerous outdoor public uses. How and when the property was developed with pads, wells, roads, ponds, water, electricity, and paths is not known to staff. The property has an existing road network and paved access both from Latigo Canyon Road and from Escondido Drive via Latigo Canyon Road. Because of this zoning and pre-Coastal Act development the property has a wide range of potential public uses to experience a coastal canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains. The ownership even includes an access easement that would allow hiking offsite on a old road that goes right up the drainage of Escondido Creek. The closet house is several hundred feet away from any potential public use area, and it is a uniquely quiet place both day and night. There really is no equivalent property in the Los Angeles County portion of the Santa Monica Mountains. Its only drawbacks are the twisty drive from Pacific Coast Highway and no ocean views. It is not within the Coastal Slope Trail corridor either.

The riparian corridor provides exceptional habitat resources and the property is located in a key east-west habitat linkage that connects the Latigo, Escondido, and Ramirez Canyon watersheds.

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Staff has appraised the property and is in negotiations with the Seller's representative. The proposed primary funding source is Third Supervisorial District Specified Proposition A Excess Funds. In addition, funding may also be used from an existing Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's (MRCA) Project Agreement that is restricted to expenditures in the Escondido Canyon watershed. The proposed action would authorize entering into a new Project Agreement with the Regional Park and Open Space District.

The MRCA would own and maintain the property. The property is on the market.