

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: April 29, 2013

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 12(f) - Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design for the Sage Ranch to Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park habitat linkage project in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and coastal watersheds of Santa Monica Bay, Simi Hills, unincorporated Ventura and Los Angeles counties.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, for project planning and design to implement the Sage Ranch to Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park habitat linkage project in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and coastal watersheds of Santa Monica Bay, in the amount of \$57,500.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2(a), 33204.27(a), 75050(g)(2), and 75060(d)(1) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority has submitted the attached grant application for project planning and design services in a discrete section of the upper Los Angeles River watershed. Staff has worked collaboratively with the MRCA staff to identify key project areas where project planning and design services are needed. The application includes extensive background, mapping, and justification. The project area overlaps the Chatsworth Reservoir-East Connector, Chatsworth Reservoir-West Connector, Sage Ranch Park Additions, 118 Wildlife Corridor-Clejan, 118 Wildlife Corridor-Santa Susana Pass Road to Clejan, Box Canyon West- Pioneer Pass, 118 Wildlife Corridor Corriganville to Santa Susana Pass Road, Santa Susana Mountain Park Additions-South, 118 Wildlife Corridor Chatsworth Peak-NW Slope, Box Canyon South-Chatsworth Peak, Hanging Valley, and Black Canyon-East Hanging Valley projects from the SMMC Workprogram.

The area between Sage Ranch Park and the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park is vital both to the Rim of the Valley Trail and the Santa Susana Mountains - Simi Hills wildlife corridor. A CAPP recently prepared by the Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District may open the door to important Wildlife Conservation Board funding. Various mitigation funding sources are also available. Key ground work is necessary to set up the opportunities to use this funding in a regionally significant area. Many longstanding Conservancy acquisition priorities are in this proposed Sage Ranch to Santa Susana State Historic Park habitat linkage project.

The proposed project area included under this grant would encompass approximately six miles of blue line streams and approximately 150 parcels, totaling approximately 2,200 acres in the Simi Hills. These parcels includes approximately four miles of a key contiguous north-south Rim of the Valley Trail segment along the North American Cutoff Road.

Public Resources Code Section 75050(g)(2) allocated the sum of \$36,000,000 to the Conservancy for implementation of watershed protection activities throughout the Upper Los Angeles River pursuant to Section 79508 of the Water Code. The subject study area is within the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed. Section 79508 provides that watershed protection activities shall be consistent with the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan (Common Ground)*. The proposed project would provide opportunities to implement planning principles in *Common Ground* including: *Improve habitat quality, quantity and connectivity*, and *Establish riverfront greenways to cleanse water, hold floodwaters and extend open space*. This project is also consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Objectives: Further Cooperation with Local Governments in the Region to Secure Open Space and Parkland and Expand Efforts to Integrate Nature into the Urban Environment.

The proposed grant would allocate \$55,000 under Section 75050(g)(2) of Proposition 84 for the Upper Los Angeles River and \$2,500 under Section 75060(d)(1) for the coastal watersheds of Santa Monica Bay.