

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: April 29, 2013

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 12(g) - Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design for the Mulholland Drive Scenic Corridor in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and coastal watersheds of Santa Monica Bay, Santa Monica Mountains, Los Angeles County.**

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 Mulholland Drive Scenic Corridor in the upper Los Angeles River watershed and coastal watersheds of Santa Monica Bay, Santa Monica Mountains, Los Angeles County, in the amount of \$80,000.

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 Summit Valley-North Addition, Benedict Canyon Watershed-West Slope, Benedict Canyon Watershed-East Slope, Mission-Rustic-Sullivan Canyons, Encino Reservoir, Hoag Canyon, Mulholland Gateway - Chapter-Natoma, Oak Forest-Fossil Ridge Adjacent, Cahuenga Pass Property, Lake Hollywood, Laurel Canyon-East Core Habitat, Runyon Canyon-Trebek Connector, Ventura Canyon, Mulholland Gateway Southeast, Mulholland Gateway Southwest, Runyon-101 Freeway Connector, Longridge Connector, Mulholland Gateway- 21000 Mulholland, Oak Forest Canyon- West, Wilacre Park Additions, Stone Canyon Reservoir Adjacent, Coldwater Canyon Wildlife Corridor, and Elrita Bowl-Laurel Canyon Park Adjacent projects from the SMMC Workprogram.

The Mulholland Scenic Corridor is the backbone of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. The open space protection and development needs along the corridor between the Lake Hollywood area and Woodland Hills are varied and unique. Complex work is necessary to maintain the remarkable habitat linkage that ties Griffith Park to the 20,000-acre Big Wild habitat area anchored by Topanga State Park. The numerous parks along the corridor need habitat and

trail connections to expand both their ecological and recreational capacity flanked by dense city on two sides. The Conservancy has made a significant public investment in this area over a 30 year period that it seeks to protect and enhance.

Public Resources Code Sections 75050(g)(2) a 75060(d)(a) allocated the sum of \$36,000,000 to the Conservancy for implementation of watershed protection activities throughout the Upper Los Angeles River and \$20,000,000 throughout the Santa Monica Bay Watershed 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 \$75,000 under Section 75050(g)(2) of Proposition 84 for the Upper Los Angeles River portion of the Mulholland Scenic Corridor and \$5,000 under Section 75060(d)(1) for the coastal watersheds of Santa Monica Bay.