

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: July 22, 2013

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 12: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for purchase of construction equipment.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for purchase of construction equipment in the amount of \$385,000, Los Angeles.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2, and 33204.27 of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) operates and manages dozens of park sites located throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The MRCA's Construction Division is an integral part of keeping these parks safe and enjoyable for the public, by performing work necessary for restoration, rehabilitation, and protection of the park resources, as well as implementing new park improvements throughout the agency's jurisdiction. The Division relies on a complement of heavy equipment to accomplish all these tasks, much of which is used on a daily basis. This heavy equipment is also used by other departments in the agency to complete a variety of tasks. The requested grant funding will be used to purchase durable equipment which will be utilized in capital improvement projects throughout all the parks that the agency manages. Renting equipment is not cost-effective for items that are used so frequently. Additionally, in an emergency, such as an earthquake, fire or flood, the equipment is often not readily available from rental companies. Having equipment on hand means that staff can respond quickly to emergencies on agency property.

The MRCA continually undertakes restoration and enhancement projects on the many parks and open space areas it operates in order to increase public access and to provide safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities. The requested grant is to purchase needed equipment to perform a variety of construction work. The items requested are those that through experience staff knows to be the most useful and practical for the agency as a whole. All the equipment proposed for purchase under this grant would have a useful service life of more than two years and would be used to continue or enhance the useful life of existing or planned parks, trails, and trailheads. This equipment would improve the condition, safety, and longevity of parks and trails managed by the MRCA, as well as make construction work safer and more efficient.

Several pieces of equipment currently in use no longer meet current South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) guidelines for off-road diesel engines/construction equipment (Tier 3), exceeding the age, hours of use, and general wear recommendations. The newly purchased items will provide many years of relatively low maintenance cost operation and meet current AQMD guidelines. Owned equipment is more cost-effective than equipment rentals for frequently-used items such as the items proposed in this grant.

Objectives of the Construction Equipment purchase are to acquire capital assets equipment to be used in the development, rehabilitation, restoration or protection of land and water resources. These objectives will be achieved by purchase of a backhoe, mini-excavator, farm-style tractor, skip loader, trailer, and dump truck. All equipment purchased will meet Air Quality Management District guidelines.

Project Components: The following equipment is used by the construction division daily and frequently loaned to other divisions.

Backhoe: The existing Case Backhoe (unit #28) has unknown hours of use on the equipment due to a broken Hobbs engine hour meter. The backhoe is in poor shape, exhibiting many hydraulic leaks as well as poor brakes and the equipment does not comply with AQMD standards. This equipment is used to dig trenches as well as lifting and earth moving, but is primarily utilized for heavy digging, such as deep trenching (over 6 feet deep) to install pipelines for water supply, drainage, and/or septic systems. Other uses include heavy earth moving to deliver, shape and/or remove soil, trees, rocks etc. Projects and locations where the backhoe would be used to protect land and water resources include pipeline replacement in the Santa Clarita Woodlands, new septic system for a proposed public restroom in Lopez Canyon, earth moving for new trailhead at the Zev Yaroslavsky Highlands Park, and debris removal at any number of park locations with streams and slopes susceptible to erosion. These types of activities protect land and water resources by stabilizing habitat and providing safe access to publicly owned lands.

Backhoe or similar-function piece of equipment replacement cost: \$ 80,000

Mini-excavator: The existing Takeuchi mini-excavator (unit #29) has over 3000 hours of use on the equipment. The unit is in poor shape due to wear on all moving parts, and exhibits some hydraulic leaks. The mini-excavator does not comply with AQMD standards. This equipment is used daily for digging trenches and drilling holes in confined space areas. The mini-excavator easily maneuvers around tight and confined sites, allowing work to be completed efficiently that would otherwise take many hours of labor with hand equipment. The mini-excavator is probably the most heavily used piece of large equipment in the agency. The mini-excavator's

primary benefit is its small size and lightweight footprint on the land. It is commonly used for light trenching (less than 3 feet deep) to install irrigation, surface drainage, footings for walls and structures, and to move and shape soils, and relocate boulders. Since it can support several different attachments, the mini-excavator has also proven to be well suited for building trails. With the change of implement heads, the mini has the ability to dig post holes for fencing and plant larger trees. With yet another implement, the “breaker bar”, the mini is used to demolish existing concrete pads, break large boulders and/or punch holes in pool bottoms. Projects and locations where the mini-excavator would be used to protect land and water resources include irrigation upgrades and replacements at Towsley Canyon Park and Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park, new tree planting and trail construction throughout the Santa Monica Mountains, underground utility upgrades at King Gillette Ranch, and refurbishment of the amphitheater at Franklin Canyon Park. These types of activities protect land and water resources by restoring native plant communities and rehabilitating existing public facilities.

Mini-excavator replacement cost: \$ 35,000

Farm-style Tractor: The existing 1992 Kubota farm-style tractor (unit #30) has over 1000 hours of operation. The tractor is in fair shape, but does not comply with AQMD standards. This equipment is used for mowing large areas as well as general earth moving. Replacement of the unit cost would include a new mower head since the current one is very worn. The tractor is primarily used for mowing large acreage areas for brushing to provide fire protection. As the tractor has a lifting bucket, it doubles its usefulness by moving soils and rocks, and provides for heavy lifting. Projects and locations where the farm-style tractor would be used include all accessible areas that require fuel modification, such as King Gillette Ranch and Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve. These types of activities protect land and water resources by keeping public facilities protected from wildfire.

Farm-style Tractor replacement cost: \$ 50,000

Skip Loader: The existing 1993 Case Skip Loader (unit #33) has unknown hours of use on the equipment due to a broken Hobbs engine hour meter. The skip loader is in poor shape due to daily use and all moving parts are very worn. This equipment does not comply with AQMD standards. The skip loader is used for grading and shaping work on roads, parking lots, trails, etc, as well as for moving large boulders and other materials. The skip loader also provides for removal of debris such as mud, soils, brush, rocks, trash, etc., and for transporting materials such as road base, trees, soils, etc. This equipment also provides for heavy lifting. Projects and locations where the skip loader would be used to protect land and water resources include a proposed new parking area in Lopez Canyon, construction of new culverts at stream crossings prone to washouts, and construction of a new trailhead at the Zev Yaroslavsky Highlands Park. These types of activities protect land and water resources by providing public access to natural

lands and trails and protecting park infrastructure.

Skip Loader replacement cost: \$ 66,000

Trailer: MRCA currently uses a 1993 16-ft Ziemen trailer (unit #31) to move equipment and materials to and from our park sites in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. This equipment is well worn, and is undersized for much of work it needs to perform, leading to additional trips and staff time. The trailer is used to transport all of the other equipment between park locations, and also to transport large amounts of construction supplies such as box trees, fence panels, boulders, etc. On project sites that cannot be fully secured, construction materials are typically stored off site at another facility and transported daily as needed. Projects and locations where the trailer would be used include all park and project sites. These types of activities protect land and water resources by facilitating rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization, development or reconstruction activities.

Trailer replacement cost: \$ 12,000

Dump Truck: A five to seven yard dump truck would be added to MRCA's fleet of equipment to support daily operations throughout the agency. This vehicle will give the agency added self reliance on construction projects, emergency service, and provide added towing abilities. Currently MRCA must rent or contract out for this use, causing additional costs and delays. The five to seven yard dump truck will provide for movement of other equipment (with use of a trailer), in addition to moving soils into and out of parks and our park construction sites. The truck will also provide for movement of general construction supplies such as cement, pipe, wood, box trees, boulders, etc. Projects and locations where the trailer would be used include all park and project sites (for transporting equipment), a proposed new restroom and parking area in Lopez Canyon, and roofing removal/replacement at King Gillette Ranch and Ramirez Canyon Park. These types of activities protect land and water resources by extending the useful life of public structures and providing public access to natural lands and trails.

Dump Truck Cost: \$100,000

Other Costs: Other expenses included in the grant request are sales tax on the purchases, staff time to gather bids and coordinate the orders, and staff time to pick up the equipment and transport it to park storage.

Analysis–Proposition 40:

The “California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act

of 2002” (Proposition 40) allocated \$40 million to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration, and protection of land and water resources in accordance with the Conservancy Act. The California Attorney General has previously advised the Conservancy that Proposition 40 bond proceeds may be used for preservation which, as defined in the bond act, includes interpretation, protection, rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization, development or reconstruction. Proposition 40 also defines “development” to include “improvement, rehabilitation, restoration, enhancement, preservation, protection, and interpretation.” In the General Provisions of the Proposition, the Legislature declares that “to maintain a high quality of life for California’s growing population requires a continuing investment in parks, recreation facilities, and in the protection of the state’s natural and historical resources.” Proposition 40 bond proceeds may also be used to pay costs that are incidentally but directly related to the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration or protection of a capital asset.

As outlined in the application, the proposed project is consistent with Proposition 40. Durable equipment purchased with the grant will be used in the development, rehabilitation, restoration, and protection of land and water resources. The work performed with the equipment will be capital improvement projects that will enhance the useful life of park facilities, provide public access to parkland, and/or are major maintenance projects that ordinarily not be done more often than every five to fifteen years. This equipment will enable the MRCA to provide a continuing investment in parks and recreation facilities within the Santa Monica Mountains and the surrounding region.

All of the projects listed above as examples for where equipment would be used are located within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, as defined in the Conservancy Act. The Conservancy Act declares that the Santa Monica Mountains Zone is a unique and valuable resource that should be held in trust for the public and that the preservation and protection of this resource is in the public interest. The project examples represent only a small portion of the work that would eventually be undertaken with the equipment because the equipment’s life span will outlast the current list of projects. MRCA manages the properties listed that are owned by the Conservancy, demonstrating further consistency with the Conservancy Act.

Analysis - General Obligation Bond Law:

Under the General Obligation Bond Law, bond funds may be used for the construction or acquisition of capital assets. (Gov. Code Section 16727, subd.(a).) "Capital assets" is defined to include “major maintenance, reconstruction, demolition for purposes of reconstruction of facilities and retrofitting work that is ordinarily done no more often then once every 5 to 15 years or expenditures that continue or enhance the useful life of the capital asset. Capital

assets also include equipment which has an expected useful life of more than two years. The equipment purchased with this grant is therefore eligible as a capital asset, and the grant request is consistent with the General Obligation Bond Law.

Analysis–Consistency with Plans: The proposed grant is consistent with all applicable plans, including the *Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Strategic Plan*, the *Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan*, and the *Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan*.

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Strategic Plan

The *Santa Monica Mountains Strategic Plan*, adopted in 1997, identifies the Conservancy's goals. The requested grant meets the following goals of the *Strategic Plan*.

Complete trails and trail amenities recommended by the Rim of the Valley Trails Corridor Master Plan: The new equipment will be used for trail and trail amenity projects within the Rim of the Valley Trail corridor.

Implement the Los Angeles County River Master Plan by developing recreation, park, trail and habitat restoration opportunities: The new equipment will be used in the construction of recreation, park, and trail projects along the Los Angeles River.

Expand Efforts to Integrate Nature into the Urban Environment by creating parkland in urban areas that lack open space or natural parks: The new equipment will be used in the construction of recreation, park, and trail projects in urban areas.

Expand Education, Public Access, and Resource Stewardship Components by developing long term capital improvement and maintenance plans: The new equipment will be used in the construction of capital improvement projects.

Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan, 1979

Equipment purchased with the requested grant will be used, in part, within the Santa Monica Mountains. The equipment will be used for capital improvement projects that achieve the Plan's objectives to provide public parks and facilities that offer a variety of recreation opportunities, improve air and water quality, and protect the natural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan, 1990

Equipment purchased with the requested grant will be used, in part, within the Rim of the Valley (ROV) trail corridor. The equipment will be used for capital improvement projects

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including access and loop trails, trailheads, and recreational improvements as recommended by the plan.

Consideration: The application from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is for \$385,000 of Proposition 40 funds.