

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: November 4, 2013

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 10(c): Consideration of resolution authorizing the assignment of the right to apply for 5<sup>th</sup> District Specified Excess Funds to the Trust for Public Land for the acquisition of Newhall Pass properties east of Interstate 5, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the assignment of the right to apply for \$1,300,000 of 5<sup>th</sup> District Specified Excess Funds to the Trust for Public Land for the acquisition of Newhall Pass properties east of Interstate 5.

Legislative Authority: Public Resources Code Section 33211(c)

Background: The subject property formerly known as Gateway Ranch occupies 302 acres in the Newhall Pass. This property is located between Interstate 5 and State Route 14 near the base of the Newhall Pass almost entirely within the Santa Clara River watershed. The property is a key Interstate 5 viewshed and inter-mountain range (Santa Susanna to San Gabriel Mountains) habitat linkage element. The attached maps show project location and public land context.

As part of a multi-agency collaboration, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife approved the Santa Clarita Conservation Corridor, a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), which prioritized parcels for potential acquisition. The CAPP covers the inter-mountain range habitat linkage along and between Interstate 5 and Interstate 14, connecting the Angeles National Forest to the Santa Susana Mountains.

A representative of the City of Santa Clarita contacted staff about the use of Proposition A Excess Funds to help fund land acquisition in this CAPP area. The two targeted ownerships Gateway Ranch and McHaddad in this Newhall wedge area are now under contract for conservation sales. Another item on this agenda addresses the more southern Mchaddad ownership in the Los Angeles River watershed.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a nonprofit land trust that facilitates the transfer of land from willing private landowners to public ownership. Over the past three years, TPL continued to engage the property owner of Gateway Ranch and successfully negotiated a purchase price for the 302 acres. In an effort to secure the necessary acquisition funds, TPL has submitted

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applications to following three partners to assist with this purchase: the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board (CWCB), the State's Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program (EEMP), and Proposition A.

The proposed action by the Conservancy authorizes the assignment of the right to apply to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for up to \$1,300,000 to TPL to acquire the Gateway Ranch property.

The City of Santa Clarita would be the land owning and management agency for the 302 acres.