

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: November 4, 2013

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 14 - Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for acquisition of APN 2274-018-014, Oak Forest Canyon wildlife corridor, City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for acquisition of APN 2274-018-014, Oak Forest Canyon wildlife corridor, in the amount of \$215,000.

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

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has submitted the attached grant application for the acquisition of a 1.6-acre Oak Forest Canyon wildlife corridor parcel (APN 2274-018-014) in Sherman Oaks. The attached figures within the application show the location of the parcel, its characteristics, and how it fits into the eastern Santa Monica Mountains wildlife corridor. The parcel is part of the Oak Forest Canyon West Project on the Conservancy Acquisition Workprogram.

The subject 1.6-acre parcel containing California black walnut woodland, is located on the north slope of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains, just west of the Conservancy-owned Fossil Ridge Park. The parcel is bounded by MRCA property to the north and west, and Conservancy property to the south and east. East-west wildlife movement on the north slope of the Santa Monica Mountains in the Sherman Oaks area is severely hampered by dense ridgeline development and some late 1980s subdivisions. For the Interstate 405 to Griffith Park wildlife corridor to function, it is imperative to maintain all existing north slope and south slope wildlife corridors and key habitat nodes along those corridors. The subject leg of the wildlife corridor ties the north (valley side) of Beverly Glen Canyon to the Oak Forest Canyon Fossil Ridge habitat blocks via a circuitous northern extending route. The surrounding MRCA and Conservancy properties, together with this parcel, form a significant-sized habitat node at a key juncture in this intra-mountain range wildlife corridor. Mountain lion P-22 probably used this corridor to traverse to Griffith Park. Bobcats are also frequently seen in this area.

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The seller of the subject parcel has agreed to a bargain sale if the property closes by the end of 2013. Development of the property would both choke off the wildlife corridor, destroy a key multi-acre habitat node, and cause extensive permanent brush clearance on public open space. This acquisition helps protect the existing public investment in open space and maintains part of a functioning wildlife corridor that delivered a mountain lion to Griffith Park. Up to \$20,000 of matching funding is available for this acquisition from the Buckley School Neighborhood Protection Fund, dispersed by the City of Los Angeles. Additional funding in the amount of \$215,000 from the Conservancy is needed in order to ensure the transaction will close in a timely manner within calendar year 2013.