

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: April 28, 2014

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 15: Consideration of resolution approving the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's use of Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund to acquire APNs 4465-005-006 and 4465-004-053 in Escondido Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution approving the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's use of up to \$100,000 of Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund to acquire APNs 4465-005-006 and 4465-004-053 comprising approximately 78 acres in Escondido Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County

Legislative Authority: Section 33211(c) of Public Resources Code.

Background: At its March 24, 2014 meeting the Conservancy authorized a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for the acquisition of 77.43 acres (APNs 4465-004-053 and 4465-005-006) in the Escondido Canyon watershed adjacent to other parkland. The acquisition is proposed to be funded by that Conservancy grant, Proposition A funds, and Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund. A map of the property is attached.

Each CHIMF expenditure by the MRCA must first be approved by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The MRCA holds and expends these mitigation funds that can only be spent within in the Coastal Zone boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains. The proposed action would provide that approval for the two subject parcels in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.

The subject parcels are included in the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's Acquisition Workprogram and the Conservancy-adopted Ramirez-Escondido Canyons Upper Project Plan from May 2001. Both parcels are given the highest priority with the fee acquisition designation in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area *Land Protection Plan*.

The subject parcels make up the only designated habitat linkage in the Los Angeles County General Plan for the Santa Monica Mountains, which provides for east-west wildlife movement from the Zuma/Trancas Canyon unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to the Latigo-Solstice Canyon habitat complex. The subject parcels would create be part of a major eastern extension of the Zuma/Trancas Canyon unit. Most of the property is designated Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area in the existing Los Angeles County General

Agenda Item 15  
April 28, 2014  
Page 2

Plan and the soon to be adopted Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program. The subject parcels support a variety of plant communities including sycamore oak riparian woodland, large stands of purple sage coastal sage scrub, multi-acre coastal live oak woodlands, walnut woodlands, and different species of ceanothus chaparral.

The subject parcels would provide a key trail linkage from the Weintraub Family Park to several public open space areas. A new trail to the west through the subject parcels would provide a gateway from the planned public use area in the Weintraub Family Park to Ramirez Canyon and across Kanan Dume Road into Zuma/Trancas Canyon system. The north-south linkage would provide an opportunity to connect the Ramirez Canyon ridgeline trail southward to the proposed Coastal Slope Trail that would lead into Escondido and Ramirez Canyon Parks, and northward to the Backbone Trail.