

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 25, 2014

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 10: Consideration of resolution authorizing the assignment of the right to apply for 5th District Specified Excess Funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the acquisition of Agua Dulce Canyon Wildlife corridor parcels, incorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the assignment of the right to apply for up to \$600k of 5th District Specified Excess Funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the acquisition of Agua Dulce properties.

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

Background: Los Angeles County Proposition A allocates Specified Excess Funds to the Fifth Supervisorial District. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) has the right to apply for some of those funds. To accomplish its objectives, the Conservancy can assign its rights to apply for specific amounts of said funds to other entities for defined projects.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has been working with the City of Santa Clarita and the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority (SCWRCA) to acquire land at a major inter-mountain habitat linkage choke point where Agua Dulce Canyon bisects State Route 14. This inter-mountain range habitat linkage is between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Sierra Pelona Range. This habitat connection was documented as part of the South Coast Missing Linkages Project as the San Gabriel-Castaic connection. The parcels are also high priorities in Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The CAPP is designed to include all the parcels necessary to ensure an adequate habitat connection between the two separate components of the Angeles National Forest.

The MRCA applied to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to use said Specified Excess Funds for five parcels on the north side of SR 14 at the Agua Dulce Canyon Road interchange (see attached map). The Board of Supervisors approved the use of \$280,000 of funding for these parcels. The MRCA has APNs 3212-004-014 and 3212-004-010 under contract. For the MRCA to receive the money and close the transaction, the Conservancy

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must adopt a resolution assigning the right to apply for the money to the MRCA.

Those two parcels are right at the freeway underpass, and they create a public ownership chain from Los Angeles County's Vasquez Rocks Park to Agua Dulce Canyon Road. The Pacific Crest Trail is located just east of the subject property, and it could be connected to Agua Dulce Canyon Road. The MRCA and the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority closed on two parcels totaling 56 acres across Agua Dulce Canyon Road two months ago.

The proposed action assigns to the MRCA the right to apply for \$600,000 which is \$320,000 more than the awarded \$280,000 in case the Fifth Supervisorial District agrees to fund additional parcels approved in Board of Supervisor's July 2014 action.