

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 25, 2014

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution authorizing the assignment of the right to apply for 3rd District Specified Excess Funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the acquisition of northeastern Topanga Canyon watershed parcels, incorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution designating the Conservancy's rights to apply for 3rd Supervisorial District Specified Excess Funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the Topanga Canyon Watershed Project in the amount of \$2,500,000.

Legislative Authority: Public Resources Code Section 33211(c)

Background: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is the designated recipient of Third Supervisorial District Proposition A (Big Five) Excess Funds for projects in the Santa Monica Mountains. To achieve its objectives the Conservancy can assign the rights to apply for those funds to other entities for a defined project and cost.

The upper northeastern Topanga Canyon watershed is an area of concern to the Conservancy, State Parks, and the National Park Service. This area includes the upper portions of the Garapito and Santa Maria Canyon tributaries. The area in need of protection is sandwiched by Topanga State Park, Marvin Braude - Mulholland Gateway Park, and Ed Edelman - Summit Valley Park (see attached map). The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) recently acquired two parcels totaling 39 acres in this area. Park agencies have attempted to acquire the Mulholland Associates and Steers ownerships for almost 20 years.

The Third Supervisorial District has agreed to fund this project with \$1,250,000. The principal acquisition would be the Steers property APNs 4434-008-007 and 4434-001-004 comprised of 37 acres. The proposed Santa Maria Canyon Trail courses southward through the parcels from dirt Mulholland Drive. Any development of the property would have significant adverse ecological, visual, and recreational impacts within the 20,000-acre Big Wild and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The proposed action would assign the right to apply for \$2,500,000 of Specified Excess Funds

Agenda Item 11
August 25, 2014
Page 2

to acquire and improve property in the northeastern Topanga Canyon watershed area to the MRCA. The recommended assigned amount exceeds the Third District's current funding commitment in case other opportunity projects come up in the short and medium run.