

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: March 30, 2015

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 12: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the protection and restoration of natural and developed resources by removal of invasive plant species, reduction of hazardous fire-fuel loads, and erosion protection.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution recommending authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the protection and restoration of natural and developed resources by removal of invasive plant species, reduction of hazardous fire-fuel loads, and erosion protection in the amount of \$330,000.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2, 33204.27(a), 75050(g)(2), and 75060(d)(1) of the Public Resources Code.

Consideration: The application from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is for \$330,000 of Proposition 84 funds.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority operates and manages dozens of park sites, hundreds of individual APN locations, and thousands of acres of open space located throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The protection and restoration of both natural and developed resources found on these lands can be facilitated by the systematic removal of invasive plants and restoration of native plant communities in their place. The removal of hazardous fuel-loads directly protects structures and other park features. Moreover, such wildfire prevention efforts help to protect wildlife and plant communities found in fragmented urban interface and open space areas. Erosion and watershed protection is also accomplished by restoration of native plant communities and the prevention of wildfires through the reduction of fuel loads. These actions also reduce sediment, ash, and organic matter loading of streams draining these watersheds.

Analysis - Proposition 84 and the Common Ground Plan

Sections 75050 and 75060 of the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), allocates funds to

various entities “for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources.”

“Protection” is defined in Proposition 84 as those actions necessary to prevent harm or damage to persons, property or natural resources or those actions necessary to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property or natural resources and includes acquisition, development, restoration, preservation and interpretation.

“Preservation” means rehabilitation, stabilization, restoration, development and reconstruction, or any combination or those activities.

“Restoration” is defined in Proposition 84 to mean the “improvement of physical structures or facilities and, in the case of natural systems and landscape features includes, but is not limited to, projects for the control of erosion, the control and elimination of exotic species, prescribed burning, fuel hazard reduction, fencing out threats to existing or restored natural resources, road elimination, and other plant and wildlife habitat improvement to increase the natural system value of the property.”

The proposed project constitutes watershed protection, preservation and restoration activities in the Upper Los Angeles River and Santa Monica Bay watersheds. The sites are within the Upper Los Angeles River and Santa Monica Bay watersheds and are consistent with the Proposition 84 definition of protection, preservation, and restoration. The project contains elements which protect and restore the Los Angeles River and Santa Monica Bay watersheds and associated land, water and other natural resources.

Section 75050(g)(2) funds from Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy “for implementation of watershed protection activities throughout the watershed of the Upper Los Angeles River pursuant to Section 79508 of the water Code.” The section of the Water Code referenced therein states that watershed protection activities in the Los Angeles River shall be consistent with the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan*.

The watershed protection and restoration activities proposed under this grant are consistent with Water Code Section 79508. The proposed project is consistent with *Common Ground* in that it will implement the guiding principles including: Improve Habitat Quality, Quantity and Connectivity, Improve Quality of Surface Water and Groundwater, Improve Flood Safety Through Restoration of River and Creek Ecosystems.