

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: April 27, 2015

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 19: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for North East Los Angeles Hilltops and Connectors project planning and design work, Los Angeles River watershed.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for North East Los Angeles Hilltops and Connectors project planning and design work in the Upper Los Angeles River watershed in the amount of \$95,000.

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

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has submitted the attached application for a project planning and design grant that would cover the full gambit of hilltop areas and open space connectors in the North East Los Angeles area. A map of the proposed grant area is attached. That area is framed by the 134, 5, 10 and 710 freeways. It includes, but is not limited to, the Walnut Canyon-Cazador Ridge area, Elephant Hill, Paradise Hill, around Ernest E. Debs Park, Ascot Hills, Montecito Heights, and Mount Washington.

The application makes a strong case to support vital pre-acquisition and acquisition work for the many different hilltop areas and connecting lands that each serve many communities. Both through Los Angeles County Proposition A, Proposition 1, and potentially state cap and trade funding, there is a high likelihood of significant capital funding being available over the next two years to acquire natural lands in this project area. This grant should leverage significant acquisition funding within the proposed two year project timeline.

These hilltops provide substantial ecological diversity, watershed, airshed, viewshed, and recreational values in close proximity to high population densities. The added benefit of this project is a concentration on wildlife corridor parcels.

The MRCA has a proven track record of delivering significant real estate interests into the public domain in the subject area.