

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 17, 2015

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing approval for Wildlife Conservation Board Proposition 50 funding pursuant to Chapter 10, Section 79572(a)(2) to the California Department of Parks and Recreation for Malibu Creek Ridge Dam Removal Planning, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize approval for the Wildlife Conservation Board's funding of a Proposition 50 grant of up to \$610,000 to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) for Rindge Dam Removal Planning, pursuant to provisions in Proposition 50.

Legislative Authority: Section 79572 (a) (2) of the Water Code, which states in part:

79572. (a) Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, the sum of seven hundred fifty million dollars (\$750,000,000) is hereby continuously appropriated to the Wildlife Conservation Board . . . Eligible projects shall be limited to the following: . . .

(2) Acquisition, protection, and restoration of coastal watershed and adjacent lands located in Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties. Any project financed pursuant to this paragraph within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, as defined in Section 33105 of the Public Resources Code, shall be by grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. . . .

And Section 33204(c) of the Public Resources Code which provides that the Conservancy may make grants to other government agencies.

Background: Because the provisions of Proposition 50 regarding WCB funding for projects in the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, the Conservancy must approve State Parks' grant application to WCB. WCB staff contacted Conservancy staff with the request for approval of the \$610,000 grant to State Parks for finalizing a study for feasibility of removal of the Rindge Dam in Malibu Creek, and preparation of an EIS/EIR. The grant would be added to other funding from the US Army Corps of Engineers, State Coastal Conservancy, Los Angeles County, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Regional Water Quality Control

Board, for a projected *total planning* project cost of over \$6,000,000.

The Ridge Dam was built in 1926 and within the Malibu Creek Watershed it remains the largest disruption to natural stream flow, sediment transport, and most importantly, as a barrier to recovery of the endangered Southern Steelhead Trout. Remediating the dam's barrier to fish migration has been a priority for steelhead recovery by many agencies, including the Conservancy, National Park Service, State Parks, and Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. In fact, over twenty-five years ago the Conservancy worked with the nonprofit Cal Trout for feasibility studies to provide fish passage over Rindge Dam (see attached 1988 Conservancy background material), and in 1991 the agency facilitated a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to further that proposal. The Conservancy joined the Southern California Steelhead Recovery Coalition by resolution in 1999. In 2007 the Conservancy provided authorization for a Wildlife Conservation Board Proposition 50 pass-through grant to the City of Malibu for steelhead passage improvements at Solstice Canyon and Corral Canyon Road.

If the Conservancy authorizes approval of the recommended Rindge Dam planning grant, staff will work with the staff of the Wildlife Conservation Board to ensure appropriate procedures and grant language for a decision by that board.

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July 21, 2015 4pm-7pm
Los Angeles River Center and Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six
Los Angeles, California 90065