

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: December 14, 2015

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for vegetation management projects in the Santa Monica Mountains Zone.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize a grant of \$500,000 in Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for vegetation management projects in the Santa Monica Mountains Zone/Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204.2(a) and 33204.27(a) of the Public Resources Code; and Section 79731(h) of the Water Code.

Background: Please see the attached Proposition 1 grant application from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. The grant request is for funding: reduction of hazardous fuels over hundreds of acres, removal of weedy exotic species including habitat improvements by enhancing native species recovery and/or re-establishment of fire-resistant native species (such as oaks and toyon), and prevention of wildfire risks on public parklands that damage habitat and structures. Wildfires release significant amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and of course can impose huge public safety impacts on residents, fire fighting staff, and park users.

Hazardous fuels reduction provides multiple direct and indirect benefits for watersheds and water quality, from prevention of erosion and sediment loading in streams, to enhancing ground water recharge.

The grant amount would provide for equipment (*e.g.*, weed whips, chainsaws, safety gear, equipment carts), MRCA fire staff field work, conservation corps, and private contractors.

Prevention of wildfires can obviate substantial carbon dioxide emissions (at least 67,000 metric tons) that might otherwise be released into the atmosphere. Preservation of tree canopy and greenways also ameliorates heat island effects. The applicant has provided a greenhouse gases analysis of the project using an EPA model.

Agenda Item 13  
December 14, 2015  
Page 2

Scoring the project under the Conservancy's adopted Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines results in the Vegetation Management category receiving 85 points (out of a possible 104), with a perfect score of 18 from climate change value points, plus 5 out of 20 possible points under Additional Criteria. **Total points: 108** (out of possible 142). Staff recommends award of \$500,000 for this project.