

Memorandum

To: The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: March 28, 2016

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design in the Arroyo Sequit Watershed, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize a grant not to exceed \$250,000 in Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for project planning and design in the Arroyo Sequit Watershed.

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 project planning for watershed protection actions in the Arroyo Sequit Watershed related to feasibility of land acquisition, site improvements, and stream protection projects at Camp Bloomfield. The camp has been operated by the Junior Blind of America for many years, but the organization may be contemplating a move and sale of the property. The Arroyo Sequit and some tributary drainages traverse the property, which is directly upstream from California State Parks' Leo Carrillo State Park and beach. National Park land also abuts the Camp. The Camp property encompasses approximately 45 acres and has numerous buildings and capacity for 200 or more overnight visitors, including schoolchildren and those with sight, mobility, and other disabilities. Beyond its great potential for public use, the site does present challenges and opportunities for better water management and resource protection. The Arroyo Sequit is known habitat for the federally-listed Southern Steelhead Trout, among other native species. A planning and design grant will provide information needed before a public agency embarks on an acquisition. The MRCA's budget includes staff time for investigation of constraints and opportunities, appraisal and title costs, engineering, and structure condition assessments.

This is a planning grant proposal, but the applicant has provided a greenhouse gases analysis of the project site using a tree benefit analysis of a sample of 108 existing coast live oaks in excellent health, projecting rainfall interception, stormwater runoff savings, and 500,000 pounds of CO2 reduction through carbon sequestration and decreased energy needs, over a 40 year period. One avenue of investigation for the planning grant should be an analysis of the opportunity for additional tree planting and restoration for additional GHG benefits.

Scoring under the Conservancy's adopted Proposition 1 Grant Project Planning and Design Guidelines results in the Arroyo Sequit project receiving 69 points (out of a possible 86; 61 minimum required), plus 4 out of 4 climate change value points, plus 10 out of 25 possible points under Additional Criteria. **Total points: 79** (out of possible 115).

Staff recommends award of \$250,000 for this project.