

Memorandum

To: The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: March 28, 2016


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

Subject: **Agenda Item 12: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for acquisition of Woolsey Canyon Creek property, Chatsworth area.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize a grant not to exceed \$355,000 in Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for acquisition of Woolsey Canyon Creek property, APN 2017-005-020, linking the Chatsworth Nature Preserve with Simi Hills core habitat.

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 (MRCA).

The property is within the Los Angeles County-designated Simi Hills Significant Ecological Area, and its acquisition is crucial to ensure protection of 2,200 feet of blueline- stream Woolsey Creek, a wildlife linkage, an alternative Rim of the Valley Trail alignment, groundwater recharge and protection of the downstream 1100-acre Chatsworth Nature Preserve. The subject parcel is 30.7 acres. Matching funds from the MRCA's in lieu mitigation fees account will be provided in the amount of \$82,000. The grant request plus the matching funds is expected to cover the land cost plus appraisal, title report, closing costs, and legal staff time.

In addition to water protection, watershed, and excellent habitat resource values, the site also presents a good opportunity for creating a scenic turnout parking area off Woolsey Canyon Road, public access, additional tree planting, interpretive displays, and trail linkage including the Dayton Canyon loop trail.

Although a development proposal for the site includes 14 homes, even a more realistic two-home project would greatly impact the stream, natural resources, and public use potential. The

grant applicant has prepared a greenhouse gas analysis that indicates preservation would avoid 318 metric tons of CO₂ emissions per year that otherwise would be produced from a two-home development of the parcel.

Scoring under the Conservancy's adopted Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines for Land Acquisition results in the Woolsey Canyon Creek project receiving 111 points (out of a possible 137; 96 minimum required), plus 16 out of 18 climate change value points, plus 8 out of 33 possible points under Additional Criteria. **Total points: 135** (out of possible 188).

Staff recommends award of \$355,000 for this project.