

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: April 25, 2016

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 40 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design work on upper Santa Clara River watershed projects in the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor, City of Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 40 funds in an amount of \$100,000 for project planning and design work in the Santa Clara River watershed portion of the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Zone.

Legislative Authority: Public Resource Code Sections 33204.2(a) and 33204.27(a)

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has submitted the attached grant applicant for Proposition 40 funds to conduct project planning and design work in the Santa Clara River watershed portion of the Conservancy's jurisdiction. The application shows well over a hundred private parcels within this portion of the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor zone. The work area would extend from the Santa Clarita Woodlands in the south fork of the Santa Clara River to the upper reaches of Soledad Canyon tributary. There are many high priority, high ecological value parcels in this area.

The application emphasizes the importance of a proactive effort to secure open space dedications, bargain or cooperative sales, and acceptance of outright donations of steep or limited access parcels.

The MRCA has not applied to the Conservancy for a project planning and design grant in the Santa Clara River watershed in over five years. Proposition 84 did not provide any Conservancy funds for the Santa Clara River watershed. The MRCA application makes the case for such a grant given the presence of two fully approved Conceptual Area Project Plans, Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas, the Santa Clarita Woodlands, the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Santa Clara River itself. The regional connectivity of the Conservancy Zone depends on connectivity to and with the Santa Clara River.

Funding dedicated to the MRCA for project planning and for land acquisition work in the Santa Clara River watershed should yield substantial protected acreage for the Conservancy investment.