

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: May 23, 2016

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority from the Conservancy Fund for transition and mobilization costs necessary for the continuation of education and interpretive programs and services by the Mountains Education Program, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in the amount of \$50,000 from the Conservancy Fund for transition and mobilization costs necessary for the continuation of education and interpretive programs and services by the Mountains Education Program, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2 and 33204.27 of the Public Resources Code.

Background: In 1989, the nonprofit Mountains Education Program (MEP) was founded to provide access to Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) parkland using education and interpretive programs as a mechanism for reaching under served populations. Over time the size and scope of MEP programming grew and in 1997 the programs and staff were absorbed by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), as the Division of Education and Interpretation.

Given the position of the Resources Agency that, notwithstanding allowable language and approval by the Attorney General, grants for personal interpretation will no longer be funded by bond measures, those MRCA programs using personal interpretation such as community programs, job training and other programs to address the barriers faced by under served communities will necessarily be transitioned back to MEP. This transition will cause a diminution of a program staff by a full 50%.

The transition of MRCA's Division of Education and Interpretation to MEP will require investment and mobilization to ensure continuation of programs and to protect the MRCA and SMMC investment to meet the fiscal and legal requirement of the nonprofit organization. This grant of \$50,000 will allow the MRCA to support the transition to MEP.

All education and interpretive programs have been designed to support the strategic objectives

of SMMC. These include:

- Expand Efforts to Integrate Nature into the Urban Environment
- Maximize funding opportunities through partnerships; and
- Expand education, public access, and resource stewardship components in a manner that best serves the public, protects habitat, and provides recreational opportunities.
- Expand local government, school district, and nonprofit ventures to provide increased educational and access opportunities; and
- Increase resource stewardship and educational/interpretive capabilities within the Conservancy Zone.