

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 27, 2016

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 12: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Proposition 1 grant to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District for the Simi Hills-Joncich Acquisition Project, APN's 646-0-170-040 and 649-0-010-415, unincorporated Ventura County area.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize a grant not to exceed \$500,000 in Proposition 1 funds to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) for acquisition of two parcels comprising 371 acres, APN's 646-0-170-040 and 649-0-010-415, in the Simi Hills inter-mountain range habitat linkage.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) of the Public Resources Code; and Section 79731(h) of the Water Code.

Background: Please see the attached Proposition 1 grant application from the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The grant request is for funding the fee acquisition of two key parcels in the Simi Hills, totaling 317 acres, which have been long included in the Conservancy's adopted Land Acquisition Workprogram, and are part of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) recently approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The property is a critical connection in the inter-mountain habitat linkage between the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains. A segment of the Rim of the Valley Trail crosses the property. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's Sage Ranch Park borders the Joncich property to the west. Habitat values are good, with at least 2800 feet of a USGS blueline stream tributary of the Arroyo Simi, including chaparral, oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, and grassland. Spectacular rock formations and outcrops support a number of species including the State-listed Santa Susana Tarplant. Habitat restoration may be a future project in areas damaged by ill-advised road cuts. There is a potential for up to 0.2 acres of riparian restoration. The land lies in both the Arroyo Simi /Calleguas Creek Watershed and the Los Angeles River Watershed.

Assuming the development potential of two single-family homes on each parcel, preservation of the lot would avoid up to 695,867.89 lbs, or 315 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year from trip generation, transportation, and residential unit emissions.

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The Park District is requesting \$500,000 to go to acquisition, matched by \$125,000 from MRCA's Caltrans mitigation funding, and has an application pending for \$1,900,000 from the state Wildlife Conservation Board.

Scoring under the Conservancy's adopted Proposition 1 Grant Project Land Acquisition Guidelines results in the Simi Hills-Joncich project receiving 125 points (out of a possible 137; 96 minimum required), plus 12 out of 18 climate change value points, plus 23 out of 33 possible points under Additional Criteria. **Total points: 160** (out of possible 188).

Staff recommends award of \$500,000 for this project.