

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 27, 2016

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 14: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Proposition 1 grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the Laurel Canyon Spring acquisition project, APN 5565-003-041, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy authorize a grant not to exceed \$595,000 in Proposition 1 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for acquisition of APN 5565-0030041 in the Laurel Canyon watershed of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains.

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 the fee acquisition of a .97 acre parcel, which is under a long term option agreement and part of an incremental six-parcel acquisition project including the MRCA and the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. Three of the parcels are now owned in fee by the park agencies. Keeping the properties as undeveloped open space is essential to protection of the east-west wildlife habitat linkage through the eastern Santa Monica Mountains to Griffith Park. The property may well have been the route by which P-22 traveled into Griffith Park. A year-round spring provides a water source for deer and other wildlife, but restoration of altered blueline streams and enhancements for the spring are a future project opportunity, via riparian mitigation funds currently held by the applicant. The property is at the eastern end of a several-hundred-acre protected core habitat area that includes Wilacre Canyon Park, Fryman Park, and Elrita Bowl.

If this one parcel were to remain private and be developed, projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for a single-family residence could produce up to 159 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. Acquisition for conservation will eliminate that GHG source.

There is currently unsanctioned public use via well-used dirt pathways, and the property can be reached from the Metropolitan Transit Authority bus stop at the northeast corner of Laurel

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Canyon Boulevard and Mulholland Drive. Once all six parcels are in public ownership, the applicant proposes to implement and formalize a trail connecting the parcels to Laurel Canyon Park.

MRCA is providing a \$110,000 match for the acquisition, from its Community Facilities District funds.

Scoring under the Conservancy's adopted Proposition 1 Grant Project Land Acquisition Guidelines results in the Laurel Canyon Spring project receiving 120 points (out of a possible 137; 96 minimum required), plus 12 out of 18 climate change value points, plus 28 out of 33 possible points under Additional Criteria. **Total points: 160** (out of possible 188).

Staff recommends award of \$595,000 for this project.