

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 24, 2019

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 9(d): Consideration of resolution authorizing augmentation of Proposition 1 grant funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for Fire Resilience, Prevention and Vegetation Management projects, Counties of Los Angeles and Ventura.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing augmentation of a Proposition 1 grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for Fire Resilience, Prevention and Vegetation Management projects in the amount of \$2,000,000, Counties of Los Angeles and Ventura.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33204.2 and 33204.27 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). However, rather than entering into a new grant agreement staff proposes augmentation of an existing Prop 1 grant which is for the same scope and purpose of reduction of hazardous fuels and drought-damaged vegetation over more than 1,000 acres, in order to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds, prevent the air quality degradation that would result from wildfire, and promote establishment of resilient native trees and vegetation such as oaks and toyon. Prevention of wildfire on public parklands is a high priority, particularly in wildland-urban interface areas. Years of drought and climate change impacts necessitate an ongoing effort to remove dead or diseased trees, as they present a safety risk and are more susceptible to invasive pests. Fuel management also benefits water resources through the prevention of erosion that typically occurs after wildfires. Preservation of healthy tree canopy and greenways also ameliorates heat island effects. While fires still occur on land that has been maintained and brushed, proper vegetation management gives firefighters space to defend resources and can reduce fire intensity.

Wildfires release significant amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and as is evident during fires every year, impose huge public safety impacts on residents, fire fighting personnel, and parkland resources. This grant will also fund capital equipment including suppression systems, chainsaws, weedwhips, chippers, personal protection and safety equipment; including contract and staff services. The applicant provided a greenhouse gas analysis using an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change model, showing a potential reduction of over 10,000 metric tons of CO₂.

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Scoring under the Conservancy's adopted Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines for Vegetation Management results in the application receiving 99 points out of a possible 104 (minimum required is 73); 12 out of a total 18 climate change value points, and 10 out of 20 possible Additional Criteria points. Total points 121 out of possible 142.