



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: October 6, 2004

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX: Consideration of resolution authorizing acceptance of augmented grant funds from the State Coastal Conservancy for the Lower Topanga Canyon Arundo and Non-Native Plant Eradication Project, pursuant to Amendment No. 1 of the existing grant agreement, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acceptance of augmented grant funds from the State Coastal Conservancy for the Lower Topanga Canyon Arundo and Non-Native Plant Eradication Project, pursuant to Amendment No. 1 of the existing grant agreement, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Background: The Lower Topanga Canyon Arundo and Non-Native Plant Eradication Project is currently being implemented by Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), in cooperation with California Department of Parks and Recreation, within Topanga State Park-Lower Topanga Canyon. On-the-ground work commenced in October 2003. The proposed action authorizes acceptance of a budget augmentation of \$18,000 that is necessary due to changes in the project since the original project proposal. Funding for this project is from Proposition 12, administered by the Coastal Conservancy, with direct oversight provided by Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. The Coastal Conservancy and Bay Restoration Commission have already approved the budget augmentation.

The original project proposal contemplated application of herbicide to the non-native, invasive weed, *Arundo donax* ("giant reed") within Topanga Creek after cutting the Arundo in fall 2003. A major change to the project is that herbicide has not been used, and the project now includes a volunteer Arundo repeated re-cutting program. The additional \$18,000 would be used for the significant additional labor (e.g., crews) and management/coordination costs associated with a manual removal project (currently without the use of herbicide). Herbicide may be used later for this project.

The MRCA Board previously took several actions related to this project. At the April 28, 2003 meeting, the MRCA took actions authorizing MRCA to enter into grant agreement(s) with the Coastal Conservancy and authorizing MRCA to accept the funds from the Coastal Conservancy. At the August 25, 2003 meeting, the MRCA authorized a grant to Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) for services related to the project, including removing Arundo. The LACC work has been completed. At the March 26, 2004 meeting, the MRCA authorized entering into sole source contracts with Kenneth Kietzer and Nathaniel Cox for plant eradication, coordination services, and biological surveys for the project. These contracts are ongoing.

Consideration: The original project cost was \$180,000. Pursuant to Amendment 1 of the existing grant agreement between State Coastal Conservancy and MRCA, the agreement would be increased by \$18,000 for a total of \$198,000.