



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY  
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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:   
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: August 4, 2004, 3 pm

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution adopting Mitigated Negative Declaration for Deerlake Highlands APN 2821-019-007 Access Easement project, Devil Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution adopting a final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Reporting Program for Deerlake Highlands APN 2821-019-007 Access Easement project in the unincorporated Chatsworth area.

Background: At its July 7, 2004 meeting the Governing Board adopted the attached resolution (04-101) authorizing (a) conditionally entering into a Settlement Agreement and Release with Presidio Chatsworth Partners, LLC, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and Linda Corbridge regarding access to APN 2821-019-007 through Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) property in Browns and Devil Canyon, and (b) conditionally granting an access easement across MRCA Deerlake Highlands property to Linda Corbridge.

The main condition to clear before granting an access easement to Linda Corbridge to benefit APN 2821-019-007 was to complete a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. In addition, the MRCA legal staff needs to conduct a final review of the adequacy of the subject Settlement Agreement and Release. Also as recommended by the Governing Board, staff met with the applicant, three concerned community members, and the Senior Field Deputy for the 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District. Furthermore, a field trip to the site is scheduled just prior to the August 4<sup>th</sup> Governing Board meeting. The 10-foot-deep and up to 58-foot-wide easement will be marked on the site for the field visit.

The attached Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared by a consultant under staff's direction. Notice was posted at the site, published for three days in the Daily News legal notices section, and posted at the County Clerks office. The comment period for the document is from July 13 to August 2, 2004. Any comments received up until the August 4<sup>th</sup> Governing Board meeting will be analyzed and distributed to the Governing Board members.

The only mitigation measure in the document is to ensure that the described northern portion of APN 2821-019-007 is permanently protected through a deed restriction as called for in the Settlement Agreement and Release. Ms. Corbridge and the Presidio have signed this Settlement Agreement and Release. It is anticipated that the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy will also sign the document. As of July 30, 2004 no comments have been received on the MND.

APN 2821-019-007 is an approximately 40-acre parcel located between the proposed Deerlake Ranch development in the Deerlake Highlands and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's (MRCA) 405-acre Schweitzer Trust-Webb property between Devil and Browns Creeks. That holding is part of Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park at Joughin Ranch. The proposed main parking and staging area for the park is located just north of the subject property in the abandoned Gopher Canyon gravel quarry area. The 40-acre property contains two prominent knolls that provide complete visual separation between Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park at Joughin Ranch and the proposed Deerlake Ranch project. The entire property recently burned. All of it is integral to the core habitat of the Santa Susana Mountains.

The MRCA made a formal offer on the property in the fall of 2002 and was outbid by Linda Corbridge. To staff's knowledge the parcel has no recorded legal access. The property can be reached through at least three dirt roads that cross MRCA property on the southern, northern and eastern boundaries of the property. The western boundary of the property abuts both small private lots and Los Angeles County-owned property. The MRCA's 10-foot-wide strip of land along the entire northern boundary of the Deerlake Ranch project (Deerlake Highlands) runs along the southern boundary of APN 2821-019-007.

Ms. Corbridge has been requesting access to her 40 acres for over a year. Earlier this year she filed suit against the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the developer of Deerlake Ranch (Presidio Chatsworth Partners, LLC) to force access. The Conservancy does not own any of the subject land.

The proposed Settlement Agreement and Release with Presidio Chatsworth Partners, LLC, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and Linda Corbridge regarding access to APN 2821-019-007 through MRCA property in Browns and Devil Canyon would grant Ms. Corbridge a 28 to 58-foot-wide access and utility easement and a temporary grading license over the MRCA's ten-foot-wide strip. The easement would only benefit APN 2821-019-007. The width of the permanent easement would not exceed 28 feet unless the County specifically required a wider easement over the MRCA's ten foot strip.

Ms. Corbridge would release Presidio Chatsworth Partners, LLC, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the MRCA from the lawsuit and she would Quit Claim any prescriptive easements over surrounding MRCA properties. Transfer of the access

easement will require Ms. Corbridge to permanently deed restrict all portions of her property on the northern, Gopher Canyon watershed portion of her property. The attached figure shows the deed restriction area. The line was defined by the watershed boundary. The deed restriction would also restrict the development area to four houses and related amenities. When Ms. Corbridge, or her successors, receive entitlements to build on the allowable development area, at a minimum, a conservation easement must be granted to the MRCA over the deed restriction area. The option remains open for additional easement or land interest to the MRCA through donation or the entitlement process.