

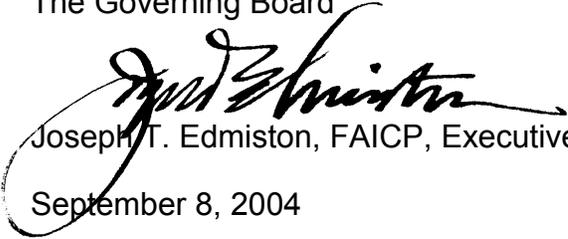


# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens  
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Phone (323) 221-9944

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:   
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: September 8, 2004

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item V(c): Consideration of resolution accepting a grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Project Planning and Design services for the Soka University acquisition project, unincorporated Calabasas area.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution accepting a grant in the amount of \$200,000.00 from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Project Planning and Design services for the Soka University acquisition project, unincorporated Calabasas area.

Background: At its August 30, 2004 meeting, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy authorized a grant to MRCA of Proposition 50 funds for Project Planning and Design Services for Project Planning and Design services directly related to the Soka University acquisition project.

The requested funding would be used for the MRCA's project planning and design activities leading directly to the fee simple acquisition of the 588-acre Soka University property, and for initial site improvements for public access to the property. The MRCA has already obtained an appraisal of the property and has had initial communications with the seller. However, a great deal of work remains to finalize the transaction and open the property to the public.

Acquisition activities will include preparation of a purchase agreement, filing necessary documents with the state and county as required, securing funding for the acquisition, setting up escrow, relocation consultant, review of title reports and appraisals, obtaining environmental assessments, and property mapping and graphics to support the acquisition. Funding for the acquisition is expected to come from multiple sources, and will likely require many in-person meetings at various agency offices in Sacramento and Los Angeles. The acquisition is expected to be completed by December 31, 2004. The grant will also pay for some or all closing

Agenda Item V(c)  
September 8, 2004  
Page 2

costs, because these costs may not be allowable expenses for the acquisition funding sources.

Post-acquisition activities will focus on implementation of initial site improvements to ensure adequate and safe public access, physical improvements to protect sensitive natural and cultural resources, and habitat restoration to maximize the value of the property for downstream Southern steelhead trout and all indigenous wildlife. Post-acquisition activities will commence immediately following the purchase, and will be completed by December 31, 2005.

A draft grant agreement and the application to the Conservancy are attached.