



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: June 2, 2004

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX: Consideration of resolution authorizing (a) entering into an agreement with the County of Los Angeles for the acquisition of approximately 20 acres of Los Angeles County-owned surplus real properties in Devil and Browns Canyons north of Deerlake Highlands, in the event of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's waiver of its first right of refusal for said properties pursuant to Public Resource Code § 33207, (b) authorizing acceptance of funds to acquire said properties, (c) authorizing acquisition of said properties, unincorporated Chatsworth area. Negotiators: Joseph T. Edmiston and Carlos Brea. Under consideration: terms. (This item may be heard in closed session pursuant to § 54956.8 of the Government Code.)**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing (a) entering into an agreement with the County of Los Angeles for the acquisition of approximately 20 acres of Los Angeles County-owned surplus real properties in Devil and Browns Canyons north of Deerlake Highlands, in the event of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's waiver of its first right of refusal for said properties pursuant to Public Resource Code § 33207, (b) authorizing acceptance of funds to acquire said properties, (c) authorizing acquisition of said properties, unincorporated Chatsworth area.

Background: The Real Estate Division of the County of Los Angeles Chief Administrative Office notified staff of its intent to sell approximately 20 acres of property in Devil Canyon north of Deerlake Highlands. The subject property is located in the southeast corner of Los Angeles County-designated Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Number 20 in the Santa Susana Mountains. The contiguous block of County property abuts the MRCA's recent Schweitzer Trust acquisition on the east side. This acquisition is now part of Michael D. Antonovich Park Regional Park. The attached map shows the relationship to surrounding parkland. The subject property contains high quality habitat contiguous to the core habitat of the

Santa Susana Mountains. Any future development of the subject County property would result in significant adverse viewshed, ecological, and recreational impacts.

In the winter of 2002, the Governing Board authorized entering into an identical agreement for 21.5 acres of County-owned property to the immediate north. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy adopted a resolution at its December 2002 meeting waiving its first right of refusal on those 21.5 acres but has not addressed the subject 20 acre set of parcels to the south.

The County has set a price for the sale of the first 21.5 acres at \$50,000, and likewise for the second set, for a total cost of \$100,000. If the Conservancy were to acquire the property, the cost of review by the Department of General Services would be several thousand dollars. Because of the cost savings of having the MRCA acquire the property, the preferred option is for the Conservancy to waive its first right of refusal pursuant to Section 33207 of the Public Resources Code.

If the County is not willing to enter into an agreement to sell any of the County-owned properties to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the value of the land warrants the Conservancy exercising its first right of refusal under any circumstances.

Because the properties are far removed from any inhabited areas, no brush clearance would be required. Because the properties are adjacent to existing MRCA parkland with dirt road access, the added ranger patrol required should be minimal.

