



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: April 14, 2010

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing acceptance of a conservation easement, not to exceed 8 acres, on APN 104-0-170-415, Santa Paula, Ventura County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acceptance of a restoration mitigation project conservation easement, not to exceed eight acres, on APN 104-0-170-415 adjacent to the Santa Clara River in the City of Santa Paula, Ventura County, and acceptance of the processing fee from the property owner, as requested by California Department of Fish and Game.

Background: The subject property on which the 7.89-acre mitigation project conservation easement is located, is in the City of Santa Paula, approximately 0.10 miles east from the intersection of East Sant Maria Street and Steckley Drive. (See attached maps and photograph). The subject conservation easement will border the north bank of the Santa Clara River. The California Department of Fish and Game has requested that the MRCA accept this conservation easement due to the MRCA's unique function as a public agency that accepts such dedications. The property owner will pay the necessary processing fee associated with the acceptance of the conservation easement in addition to the cost of the title report. The property owner is financially responsible for all costs related to the restoration project on the subject conservation easement. There is no MRCA obligation to clear brush on this property.

The goals of the subject restoration project, as stated in section 4 of the Habitat Restoration and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), are the restoration of mulefat and southern willow riparian scrub habitat, the planting of upland plants as buffer to the proposed construction associated with this project, and the protection of existing fish and wildlife resources in perpetuity. Included in the HMMP planting plan (Section 6) are plans to plant California sagebrush, Pacific blackberry, California sycamore, and Fremont cottonwood.

A flood control easement dedicated to Ventura County exists on the site over a narrow, buried rock groin, but this does not lesson the ecological value of the conservation easement being dedicated.