



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: April 5, 2017

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution (a) authorizing acceptance of conservation easements over APNs 2813-015-011, 012 and 2813-016-013, approximately 124-acres, and (b) acceptance of easement monitoring funding, Vasquez Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution (a) authorizing acceptance of conservation easements over APNs 2813-015-011, 012 and 2813-016-013, approximately 124-acres, and (b) acceptance of easement monitoring funding, Vasquez Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Background: The owner of the subject property is interested in donating conservation easements over the entirety of three near-contiguous parcels that total 124 acres in the Vasquez Canyon tributary of Bouquet Canyon in the Santa Clara River watershed. The attached figure shows three parcels that are bisected by a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power fee simple utility right of way. The 124 acres include several thousand feet of the Vasquez Creek riparian corridor. The northern boundary of the subject property abuts both the Angeles National Forest and a large Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) ownership that straddles the Vasquez and Texas canyons watershed divide. There is good dirt road access to the property. Public vehicles cannot reach the parcels because of gates. The property is fully integral to the Angeles National Forest core habitat located between Interstate 5 and State Route 14. The property has strong ecological significance.

The owner is interested using the property for habitat mitigation credits. The MRCA would be entirely removed from that process. The owner has agreed to negotiate an up front payment to the MRCA to fund monitoring of the conservation easements as is often required by regulatory agencies. The amount and structure of such a payment shall be negotiated. Preliminary discussions with the owner have assured staff that he has a base amount in mind to cover basic easement monitoring costs.

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The conservation easements themselves would not present any financial or other liability to the MRCA. The easements do not allow public access. Existing gates on the subject access road reduce the odds of ecological damage in the easement areas