



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: November 1, 2017

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds to acquire a portion of the Triangle Ranch property, Medea Creek, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds to acquire a portion of the Triangle Ranch property along Medea Creek.

Background: Staff is working to solidify a deal on the 320.6-acre Triangle Ranch ownership in the unincorporated Agoura Hills area of the Santa Monica Mountains. Triangle Ranch abuts open space owned by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) in all compass directions. Acquisition of the property will provide a broad habitat connection between the Liberty Canyon wildlife corridor and the Ladyface Mountain core habitat area that contains over 1,000 protected acres. Acquisition would protect a regionally significant viewshed along Kanan Road as one of the gateway's to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The acquisition will protect over 2,500 feet of Medea Creek with a board riparian corridor and adjacent coast live oak and valley oak woodlands. The perennial section of Medea Creek within the project area supports the sensitive western pond turtle. Two additional unnamed USGS blueline streams join Medea Creek within the subject property.

The property supports substantial populations of two Federally-listed plant species: Agoura Hills dudleya (*Dudleya agourensis*) and Lyon's pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*). The subject property also supports Ojai navarretia (*Navarretia ojaiensis*) a CNPS-listed 1B.1 species of concern.

The property includes broad swaths of Chamisal chaparral with highly diverse understory vegetation unique to basalt substrates. There is even some red shanks (*Adenostema sparsifolium*) in the mix of chaparral shrub species. Other onsite vegetation types are purple sage coastal sage scrub, native and annual grassland, and valley oak savannah. Many rock outcroppings contain unique microsites for plants and animals.

The property has an approved tract map for approximately 61 units in four development clusters. The deal is to acquire the whole property in four phases by the end of 2018. The first phase is a 60 acre section located just east of Kanan Road that includes a good stretch of Medea Creek that is tributary to Malibu Creek. The attached map shows how these 60 acres include all of APN 2063-036-001 and the northern portion of APN 2063-006-022 west of Cornell Road. Because this phase of the acquisition includes Medea Creek it is most eligible for a Proposition 1 grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

Staff seeks authority to apply for an approximately \$2 million grant to the Conservancy for the Conservancy's November 30, 2017 grant round. The deal with the Triangle Ranch ownership requires this first acquisition phase to close in calendar year 2017. Hence it is critical to seek funding immediately with a short payment turnaround. The Conservancy intends to have a meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup> to consider grant applications submitted during this upcoming grant round.

The completion of this phase will require the contribution of substantial funding from both the City of Agoura Hills and Los Angeles County. Item XI on this agenda addresses these funding sources and the option agreement.