



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: July 12, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a Project Agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District using Proposition A Excess Funds to acquire APN's 2572-028-028; 2572-026-024 and 006; and 027-031 and 019 in the Verdugo Mountains and acquisition of the subject parcels, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a Project Agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District in an amount not to exceed \$1,750,000 using Proposition A Excess Funds to acquire APN's 2572-028-028; 2572-026-024 and 006; and 027-031 and 019 in the Verdugo Mountains and acquisition of the subject parcels, Los Angeles.

Background: The subject 227-acre ownership in the heart of the Verdugo Mountains abuts Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy-owned 1100-acre La Tuna Canyon Park, State Park property, and City of Glendale-owned Henderson Canyon open space. The ownership poses a large private hole within both a sea of high quality parkland and the core habitat of the 15-square-mile Verdugo range. The core of the Hostetter Fire Road courses through the property from La Tuna Canyon Road to the crest of the Verdugo Mountains. This trail head is one of the primary trail heads in the range. As shown in the attached aerial photograph, the beginning of the trail is a paved City street that the owners could use for access to a remote estate community. The best use for this property is public open space. The owner is a willing and cooperative seller.

The property is a high priority to both the Conservancy and MRCA staffs. Staff had the property appraised almost a year ago. Since that time, Los Angeles City Council member Wendy Gruehl has submitted a Proposition K application for approximately \$1,000,000 to partner in the acquisition. The City (Department of Recreation and Parks) would own the portions paid for with Proposition K funds and the MRCA the portion paid for with Proposition A funds. That exact ownership mix of the five parcels would be determined by the final acquisition price, funding balances, and the City's preferences.

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The competitiveness of the Proposition K application depends on the ability to show secured matching funds. This proposed action is the first step in providing those matching funds. Because of this timing issue, the proposed action gets a little bit ahead of the 5th Supervisorial District and Board of Supervisors approval process. The amount of Proposition K funds secured for the project is a critical component of the County decision process.