



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center and Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944 Fax (323) 221-9934

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: August 8, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(b): Consideration of resolution authorizing the expenditure of Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Funds to acquire all or a portion of APNs 4467-003-044, 021, 031, 4460-014-006, 008, and 4467-002-060 and 044 in Ramirez and Escondido Canyons, Malibu.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the expenditure of Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Funds to acquire all or a portion of APNs 4467-003-044, 021, 031, 4460-014-006, 008, and 4467-002-060 and 044 in Ramirez and Escondido Canyons.

Background: As agencies work together to acquire the land interests necessary to implement the Coastal Slope Trail from Will Rogers State Park to beyond the Ventura County line, it is essential to patch together funding sources.

In 2002 the California Coastal Commission approved a Local Coastal Program (LCP) for the City of Malibu. The implementation document included an element in which specific mitigation funds are to be paid to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) into the "Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund." In November of 2003, the Conservancy, the MRCA, and the California Coastal Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding administration of this fund.

The MRCA is the entity that receives, holds, and expends the mitigation funds. However, the MOU states, "No funds shall be expended or transferred unless the Conservancy has reviewed and recommended approval of, and MRCA approves, expenditure of the funds either by MRCA or another recipient." The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy took such an action at a meeting on July 30, 2007.

The adopted Conservancy staff report and resolution found that the subject set of properties are integral to the protection of the Ramirez and Escondido Canyon watersheds within the Coastal Zone portion of the Santa Monica Mountains. The properties are also integral to the Coastal Slope Trail.

The Coastal Habitat Impact Mitigation Fund has approximately \$540,000 accumulated to date. Approximately \$325,000 of the amount is committed to other acquisitions.

The proposed action would provide the authority to use the remaining amount (approximately \$115,000) on any of the subject seven properties. All of the properties have significant habitat value and are connected to the core habitat of Santa Monica Mountains. The funds are expected to be combined with other funding sources (Conservancy's approved Coastal Slope Trail Proposition 50 grant and 3rd Supervisorial District Proposition A Excess Funds). The funds will be used on the parcel(s) that maximize the protection of coastal habitat and further completion of the Coastal Slope Trail.

APNs 4460-014-006 and 008 are located in Escondido Canyon just east of the divide with Latigo Canyon. Both properties contain mixed coastal sage scrub and chaparral vegetation. The former Winding Way - Malibu Coastal Road (now proposed Coastal Slope Trail alignment) courses through the northern edge of each property. In this area there is absolutely no other feasible alternative for the Coastal Slope Trail alignment.

APNs 4467-003-044, 021, and 031 cover two possible routes between the park unit formed by Ramirez Canyon Park and National Park Service property in Ramirez Canyon and Escondido Canyon Park. All of the properties contain high quality mixed coastal sage scrub and chaparral vegetation.

APNs 4467-002-060 and 044 are located between Ramirez Canyon Park and Kanan Dume Road. Both parcels contain high quality mixed coastal sage scrub and chaparral vegetation. APN 4467-002-060 contains some riparian scrub in a small drainage that parallels the southern property boundary. These parcels are necessary to create a Coastal Slope Trail alignment that meets National Park Service standards for equestrian and mountain bike usage.