

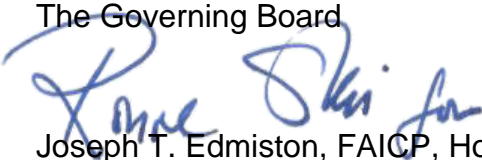


# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Governing Board

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

**DATE:** November 7, 2012

**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution authorizing execution of grant agreement with, and acceptance of grant funds from, California Department of Fish and Game to conduct weed management at Tierra Rejada Vernal Pool Preserve, City of Moorpark, Ventura County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing execution of grant agreement with, and acceptance of grant funds from, California Department of Fish and Game to conduct weed management at Tierra Rejada Vernal Pool Preserve, City of Moorpark, Ventura County.

Background: In 2001, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) acquired fee title of the Tierra Rejada Vernal Pool Preserve in the City of Moorpark, County of Ventura. The Preserve is located in a gated residential community near the intersection of California State Route 23 and Tierra Rejada Road. Permanent protection of this site was a requirement of a Biological Opinion prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which addressed impacts to several federally protected species from a proposed residential development. The Biological Opinion required the property to be transferred to MRCA and that a management plan be developed. MRCA has been conducting the maintenance and monitoring required in the management plan for over ten years. The rare species at the site include: the federally endangered Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*), the federally endangered plant Lyon's pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*), and the federally endangered plant California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*). The vernal pool wetland at the site, in which the fairy shrimp and the Orcutt grass reside, ponds on a seasonal basis and it does not pond every year. The fairy shrimp and Orcutt grass do not appear every year. Lyon's pentachaeta is an upland (non-wetland), annual flowering plant species and has been observed during every year of monitoring.

The proposed action would authorize MRCA to execute a grant agreement with, and accept grant funds from, California Department of Fish and Game to conduct weed management at the Preserve. The goal of the project is to improve native habitat and growing conditions for Lyon's pentachaeta and its insect pollinators, by

effectively controlling and reducing the extent of non-native invasive competitors (i.e., weeds) at the Preserve. The project will implement strategically-timed, focused weed control within occupied and historically occupied habitat areas over a minimum of two growing seasons. Approximately 2.35 acres within the core Lyon's pentachaeta habitat area will be targeted for weed treatment using broadcast and spot herbicide applications and manual removal methods. Studies have documented that Lyon's pentachaeta vigor and reproductive output are adversely affected by key non-native competitors, and weed expansion over time has been identified as a key contributor to declines in habitat suitability for Lyon's pentachaeta.

The management plan dictates the MRCA receive a set amount of funding from the homeowners association every year to conduct the minimal required monitoring (e.g., monitoring the rare species, preparing annual reports, etc.) and maintenance (i.e., brush clearance). However, this amount (\$8,150 per year) does not increase with inflation and is typically barely enough (or not enough) to cover the required activities every year. The management plan did not contemplate that weed management would be done on a regular basis with the use of the required annual maintenance funding.

Execution of the proposed grant would be consistent with the management plan. The management plan (p. 63) states in part:

17.5 Other: Funding for research, affirmative habitat management and modification, exotic plant removal and introduction of new management techniques may be available from a variety of public and private sources...As owner of the Preserve Area, it is likely that the MRCA will be responsible for management of any grants or funds from other sources.

The amount of the grant would be \$27,802, and would cover staff time and expenses. The funding source for this grant is the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (Section 6 of the Federal Endangered Species Act).