



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: April 3, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(d): Consideration of resolution authorizing submission of an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a project planning and design grant for the Browns Canyon watershed project, Santa Susana Mountains, Chatsworth area.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing submission of an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a project planning and design grant for the Browns Canyon watershed project in the amount of \$35,000-40,000.

Background: The MRCA develops and implements a wide range of projects for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy including through project planning and design grants. To continue this effort to secure and develop land interests and public recreation resources in the Conservancy's jurisdiction, staff is seeking authorization to submit a project planning and design grant application to the Conservancy. This proposed grant application is for the Browns Canyon watershed project in the Santa Susana Mountains.

As the premiere natural area on the south-facing slope of the Santa Susana Mountains, Browns Canyon has the potential for many additional new trail systems and recreation staging areas. There are also many additional parcels necessary to acquire to complete the existing protected core habitat area comprised of Browns, Devil and Mormon Canyons. The Browns Canyon watershed project is geared to continue to fill out the framework put in place by two decades of SMMC and MRCA land acquisition and development in this area. This work shall set the critical stage for many existing funding sources including Los Angeles County Proposition A funds. Given the opportunities, the projects on the Conservancy's Workprogram, and potential project funding availability over the next three years, staff recommends that the grant application be for \$35,000-40,000.

The proposed project area included under this grant would encompass over 13 miles of blue line streams including the creeks of Browns, Devil, Ybarra and

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Mormon Canyons. Approximately 310 undeveloped private parcels, totaling approximately 3,500 acres, exist within this region of the Santa Susana Mountains. These include a potential 5-mile east-west segment of the planned Rim of the Valley Trail. There are also numerous trail opportunities leading to and from Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park at Joughin Ranch (MDA) and Rocky Peak Park. The easternmost parcels could potentially be acquired as a buffer to the ongoing larger development in Porter Ranch. The westernmost parcels could serve to bridge the gap between Indian Springs Open Space, Rocky Peak Park, and MDA. This area is accessible from Browns Canyon Road, north of the 118 freeway in Chatsworth.