



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: May 1, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI (h): Consideration of resolution authorizing submission of an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a project planning and design grant for the San Rafael Hills, Verdugo Mountains, and Northeast Los Angeles Openspace, including Arroyo Seco and Verdugo Wash.**

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 San Rafael Hills, Verdugo Mountains, and Northeast Los Angeles Openspace, including Arroyo Seco and Verdugo Wash.

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 project planning and design within the San Rafael Hills, Verdugo Mountains, and Northeast Los Angeles Openspace, including Arroyo Seco and Verdugo Wash.

The planning and design efforts within the San Rafael Hills, Verdugo Mountains, and Northeast Los Angeles Openspace, including Arroyo Seco and Verdugo Wash, are crucial in identifying, creating, restoring, and preserving much needed openspace in Los Angeles. Arroyo Seco, Semi Hills and Verdugo Mountains are all within the Santa Monica Conservancy Zone and the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Boundary and are vital for wildlife corridors and recreational opportunities. This project area includes significant areas of habitat and habitat linkages: Many sections within the area have been identified as being in need of acquisition to save this critical habitat and protect it from development. Focus will be placed on permanently protecting and enhancing public open space in strategic portions of land and creating multiple-benefit green space which will offer public access to valuable amenities, education,

habitat, and stormwater management. Additionally, areas along the Arroyo Seco and the Verdugo Wash are potential and important locations for further creation of open space and habitat. Multiple opportunities exist and need to be researched further to convert and connect vacant rights-of-way for recreational and educational improvements through new parklands and trails along these waterways. In the dense and growing communities of Los Angeles with very little remaining available open space, taking advantage of protecting and enhancing the land as a publicly accessible environmental and recreational resource is important. Given the opportunities, and potential project funding availability over the next two years, staff expects that the grant application will be for \$90,000 pending confirmation of funding availability

The proposed project area included under this grant would encompass the area east of the Los Angeles River, including the Verdugo Mountains, beginning south-east of Shadow Hills, continuing south including the Verdugo Wash, past Eagle Rock, including the Arroyo Seco, and ending in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles. See attached map.