



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 (i): Consideration of resolution authorizing submission of an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a project planning and design grant for the Ballona Creek and Ballona Wetlands area from Culver City to the Pacific Ocean, Santa Monica Bay Watershed.**

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 Ballona Creek and Ballona Wetlands area from Culver City to the Pacific Ocean, Santa Monica Bay Watershed.

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 Ballona Creek and Ballona Wetlands area from Culver City to the Pacific Ocean, Santa Monica Bay Watershed.

The planning and design project along the Ballona Creek would build upon recent and successful MRCA projects in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed. Ballona Creek is one of the few creeks in southern California whose entire life above ground is experienced within the urban matrix of Los Angeles. Such close proximity provides a wealth of opportunities for social, environmental, and recreational benefits. The Ballona area provides countless opportunities to connect publicly- and privately-owned vacant and developed land through the creation of new parklands and habitat linkages within established communities. Approximately 4.5 miles of the 7.5 mile Ballona Creek consists of soft-bottom section which serves as significant wildlife habitat. Planning for and creating open space, with water quality improvement components, directly adjacent to this segment is vital in sustaining the existing and future wildlife and providing additional green buffers. Additionally, the

Creek has a direct linkage to the Ballona Wetlands which are significant in their habitat and recreational potential. The Baldwin Hills is also located in close proximity to the Creek and is important to incorporate and develop projects within this area due to its direct connection to additional dense urban populations, open space (both protected and unprotected), and the potential for trail linkages. Given the opportunities, and potential project funding availability over the next two years, staff expects that the grant application will be for \$40,000 pending confirmation of funding availability.

The proposed project area included under this grant would encompass approximately 7.5 miles of Ballona Creek just below the 10 Fwy., include the Baldwin Hills, and south-west towards and including the Ballona Wetlands to the Pacific Ocean. Future projects developed through planning and design in this area would also create important linkages to other nearby planned and existing regional bike paths and trails. See attached map.