



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: May 7, 2014

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(k): Consideration of resolution authorizing acceptance of conservation easements over APNs 2836-003-010, 2836-002-038, 2836-002-047, 2836-003-017, 2836-003-018, 2836-003-019 and associated processing funds, City of Santa Clarita.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acceptance of conservation easements over APNs 2836-003-010, 2836-002-038, 2836-002-047, 2836-003-017, 2836-003-018, 2836-003-019 and associated processing funds, City of Santa Clarita.

Background: Wildscape Restoration, on behalf of Williams Homes, contacted MRCA staff in April 2014 regarding the granting of a conservation easement for as mitigation associated with impacts resulting from their Soledad Circle Development. The easement of up to five acres, is located within the Santa Clara River bed, and part of the southern bank of the river, in the City of Santa Clarita. A map is attached.

Regulatory agencies are currently requiring developers to grant third party conservation easements for all development impacts to jurisdictional waters. We see the MRCA as serving an important role in that function. Additional protection anywhere along the Santa Clara River is important, and it has been policy of MRCA staff to accept any easement that is feasible and beneficial to habitat protection.

Accepting easements can be staff intensive, requiring title reports, property inspection, and recording of the legal easement.

In this case, when the MRCA is benefitting a private party fulfilling mitigation obligations, then the MRCA should be able to accomplish the habitat protection at no net cost. The proposed \$6,500 fee is tailored to cover this transaction. Part of this \$6,500 includes a contribution to build up the MRCA's Conservation Easement Legal Defense Fund.

The MRCA does not have any obligations associated with accepting the easement.