



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: July 2, 2014

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIV: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Audubon Youth Environmental Stewards, a program of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society for adoption of portions of the Los Angeles River Greenway, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Audubon Youth Environmental Stewards, a program of the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society for adoption of portions of the Los Angeles River Greenway, Los Angeles.

Background: The partnership with Audubon Youth Environmental Stewards ("Audubon YES") described in the Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") will serve as an "Adopt-A-Park" type program. MRCA has been implementing Los Angeles River Greenway projects since 1996 and has continued to acquire and enhance land adjacent to the Los Angeles River with multiple-benefit parks, recreational amenities, and native landscaping. One of the benefits for which these parks were developed is to give the visitors a place to experience and connect with nature. Guided hands-on stewardship activities is an opportunity for youth and the community to connect with the environment in a meaningful way.

Audubon YES was created to help connect youth with volunteer opportunities with local environmental organizations. Audubon YES program goals include engaging and inspiring youth and community to actively volunteer to care for our environment through hands-on outdoor activities. Audubon YES engages over 200 members who attend 27 different high schools in Los Angeles County.

A partnership between MRCA and Audubon YES will encourage use, understanding, and care for the MRCA Los Angeles River Greenway parks and the environment of the Los Angeles River. The MOU between the MRCA and Audubon YES outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner to ensure good communication and successful collaboration. MRCA will continue to be responsible for the day-to-day

maintenance of the parks and will provide guidance, approval, and oversight of the activities that Audubon YES proposes.

Adoption of these parks would include land stewardship activities such as weeding, mulching, planting of California native plants, shrubs, and trees. Activities to inspire youth and community involvement may also include outdoor environmental educational programming with partnering Audubon YES schools, organizations, and community volunteer events and socials. Directed community involvement in the on-going stewardship will lead to an increased awareness and understanding of the benefits to habitat, wildlife, and recreational visitors that these spaces provide.