



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: September 10, 2014

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XV: Consideration of resolution authorizing application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a project planning and design grant for the Eastern Simi Hills – Upper Los Angeles River Watershed area.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a project planning and design grant in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 for the Eastern Simi Hills – Upper Los Angeles River Watershed area.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (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 upper Los Angeles River watershed portion of the Simi Hills. This area includes portions of both Ventura and Los Angeles counties.

The eastern side of the Simi Hills provide numerous trailhead opportunities at the edge of the San Fernando Valley and form part of the inter-mountain range habitat linkage from the Santa Susana Pass area. The area also provides the habitat linkages to the Chatsworth Reservoir Nature Preserve. There are many gaps between protected habitat areas and many trails on private lands that should be permanently protected. The area also hosts several key ownerships that have attempted dense subdivision over the past two decades. The next two years will pose one time opportunities to work to secure public open space and trail dedications and many land donations. The subject Eastern Simi Hills - Upper Los Angeles River Watershed area is shown on the attached map.

From south to north the subject proposed grant work area encompasses portions of the following Los Angeles River tributaries: El Escorpián, Bell, Dayton, Woolsey, Box, Chatsworth, and Santa Susana. The area also includes miles of the Rim of

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the Valley Trail Alignment. Some public lands—more specifically Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park and City of Los Angeles properties are included in the proposed grant area boundary to prevent the visually disruptive segmentation of one overall project boundary. The grant area encompasses 4085 acres. It includes 1036 parcels in Ventura County and 350 parcels in Los Angeles County, including existing public lands.