



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: March 4, 2015

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a project agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for Devil and Browns Canyon parcels, unincorporated Los Angeles County**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a project agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for Devil and Browns Canyon parcels, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and the 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District have worked together to acquire land in the Browns and Devil Canyon watersheds of the Santa Susana Mountains since the acquisition of Joughin Ranch in the 1990s. The core of this MRCA land holding is now known as the Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park at Joughin Ranch. The attached figure shows the extensive amount of MRCA ownership in these two watersheds. The Board of Supervisors recently approved funding to acquire the Green Ranch at the confluence of Browns Creek and Mormon Creek. These collective watersheds offer the best habitat and recreation values in the Los Angeles River watershed portion of the Santa Susana Mountains.

The principal event that precipitated this proposed action was the 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District agreeing to reimburse the MRCA up to a specific amount if the MRCA was able to be the successful bidder at the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector 2014C sealed bid auction in November 2014 for a 150-acre property. The MRCA successfully acquired APN 2821-010-032 as shown on the attached figure. Because the County reimbursement source is Proposition A Specified Excess funds, the MRCA must make an application for said funding to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy must also adopt a resolution assigning the right to apply for the funds to the MRCA.

The proposed project boundary for this application is much larger than the subject 150-acre parcel. The proposed boundary is shown on the attached map. The purpose of this expanded boundary is to get a head of the curve on future acquisitions that the 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District may agree to fund in the Browns and Devil Canyon watersheds. The scope of the agreement can be set with this level of breadth initially. Agreement amendments to add funding are much easier and less time consuming than amendments that change the agreement scope. For example three County departments must review every parcel in every agreement that involves the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy directly or indirectly as in this case. Those departmental reviews take time and can be done more cost effectively if done in mass.

With this proposed authorization, from the Governing Board staff will immediately work with the 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District staff to come up with the initial funding amount for the Project Agreement. That amount may be as low as the acquisition price of the above described 150 acres. In the interim that allows the MRCA to be reimbursed for the money if fronted for that acquisition.