



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: May 6, 2016

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XVI: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant request from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for interpretive materials and nonpersonal interpretive services.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant request from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant for interpretive materials and nonpersonal interpretive services.

Background: Parkland is preserved to protect the resources found therein and to provide access to the disappearing natural world for generations to come. The challenge then is to both protect and care for those resources while providing access to public lands to the millions of urban residents who have had little or no exposure to nature.

Research demonstrates that interpretation is an effective management tool leading to the protection of resources. Educating visitors and inspiring the emotional and intellectual connections between the interest of the visitor and the meanings inherent in the resources leads to greater understanding and of commitment to protection of those resources. People Care for what they value and value comes from the "interpretive continuum" that starts with awareness and understanding and ends with stewardship. In the case of Prop 84, protection is defined as "those actions necessary to prevent harm or damage to persons, property or natural resources" and includes interpretation as a means of doing so (Public Resources Code Section 75005(m)).

Interpretation, as defined in the measure, includes but is not limited to "a visitor serving amenity that educates and communicates the significance and value of natural, historical, and cultural resources in a way that increases the understanding and enjoyment of these resources and that may utilize the expertise of a naturalist or other specialist skilled at education interpretation" (Public Resources Code Section 75005(l)).

Interpretation is typically divided into two basic types: personal and nonpersonal. Personal interpretation involves some type of physical interaction between the interpreter (naturalist/guide/ranger) and the visitor. Traditionally the MRCA has invested heavily in personal interpretive programs and services. Nonpersonal interpretation involves the communication of a message without physical interaction or discourse with a live interpreter. Signs and brochures are classic examples of nonpersonal interpretive services. Nonpersonal interpretation typically reaches more visitors than personal interpretation, allows visitors freedom and individual exploration, and is often the first line of contact with the park or resource. Importantly, nonphysical interpretive materials have life beyond the first interaction with visitors. Past MRCA grants from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy have included both personal and nonpersonal services. With the proposal to move personal interpretive services to a nonprofit partner, this grant would fund the MRCA's nonpersonal interpretation, including park information, exhibit design, maps, digital media, and other tangible communication.

The proposed \$300,000 budget would fund production and design of park information. Specific exhibits and wayside signs for new or improved projects will be funded separately.