



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: May 4, 2016

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(e): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of mitigation funds to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District for the acquisition of APNs 646-0-170-040 and 649-0-010-415, Simi Hills, unincorporated Ventura County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of mitigation funds to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District for the acquisition of APNs 646-0-170-040 and 649-0-010-415 in the Simi Hills in an amount not to exceed \$199,000.

Background: The subject two parcels comprise 371 acres in the key inter-mountain range habitat linkage that connects the Santa Susana Mountains to the Simi Hills via the Santa Susana Pass. That inter-mountain range wildlife corridor cannot work in the long-term without protection of the subject ownership. A portion of the Rim of the Valley Trail (North American Cut Off Road) courses through the subject property.

These parcels are part of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) that was recently approved at the highest levels of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). There is a willing seller and an appraisal approved by the State Department of General Services. Staff has been working with the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District staff to pursue the acquisition. That pursuit includes an application to Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) for funding. Matching funding is critical to secure a grant from the WCB. The proposed action would begin the process of approving secured matching funds for the acquisition.

The District staff has not yet taken a formal action on the subject property. The proposed road map is for the District to apply to the WCB for funding and to be the acquisition and long-term operations entity. Time is tight to secure potential WCB funding in 2016.

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The subject funding is mitigation funding from Caltrans related to biological impacts on the 118 freeway. The Governing Board has already authorized the use of a portion of the \$199,000 of funding. In case that acquisition does not occur, the proposed action authorizes using all, or the remainder, of the \$199,000 for the subject 371-acres. Caltrans has authorized the use of the mitigation funding for the subject 371 acres.