



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: August 3, 2016

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX(k): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of conservation easements to the Desert and Mountains Conservation Authority, over APNs 3206-012-900, 3206-012-901, 3224-034-906, 3236-003-904, 3240-005-908, 3240-005-909, 3257-006-901, 3257-006-902, 3267-024-911, 3267-026-900, 3267-028-900, and 3279-002-902, totaling approximately 112 acres, Antelope Valley, County of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of conservation easements over the twelve subject parcels in the southern Antelope Valley.

Background: The twelve subject parcels in the Antelope Valley along the southern edge of the Sierra Pelona Mountains were acquired by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) between 2011 and 2014 with mitigation funding. The attached map shows the concerned 112 acres that contain at least 13.6 acres of dry desert wash habitat.

In April 2008, the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a set of rules for all mitigation programs, such as the in-lieu fee mitigation program administered by the MRCA. This rule requires that mitigation sites and mitigation acquisitions be held under a third party conservation easement to ensure permanent site protection.

In June 2015, the Desert and Mountain Conservation Authority (DMCA) adopted a resolution authorizing the acceptance of multiple conservation easements over all or portions of the subject twelve parcels to satisfy such an agency requirement. The MRCA would cover all costs. The DMCA would have the rights, but not the obligation, to monitor, report on, or defend the conservation easements. The DMCA would have no liabilities from holding the subject twelve easements. The easements would prohibit any ecologically deleterious uses. The proposed action aids the MRCA in protecting land. The DMCA is available to provide future reciprocal services to the MRCA.