



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: July 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for vegetation management.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Proposition 1 funds for vegetation management.

Background: The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1) was approved by voters in November of 2014. Proposition 1 authorizes \$7.545 billion in general obligation bonds for State water projects including surface and groundwater storage, ecosystems and watershed protection and restoration, and drinking water production. Proposition 1 allocated funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) for multiple benefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects (Water Code Section 79731(h)) and for projects to protect and enhance an urban creek (Water Code Section 79735(a)). The Conservancy has a quarterly grant program, including grants for vegetation management. Applications will be due on August 31 and subsequently on November 30.

The MRCA operates and manages dozens of park sites, hundreds of individual APN locations, and thousands of acres of open space located throughout the Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Prolonged drought and proliferation of invasive grasses result in a more fire prone landscape. Current conditions, as a result of unusually large precipitation during the 2016-17 rainy season, revealed increased quantities of flash fuels impacting vegetation management and give way to an elevated wildfire risk. The rate of fuel removal is two to three times slower than during an average year, and consequently costs are higher.

The systematic reduction of flash fuel vegetation directly reduces wildfire risk, protects watersheds, and promotes watershed health. The task of protection and restoration covered under this grant application will be performed by MRCA staff and

contractors. Specialized suppression equipment to be purchased will include but is not limited to chainsaws, chippers, flail mower, sprayers, & water tender. Capital improvements to the network of fire roads will also result in resource protection by providing for safer ingress and egress. Removal of dead, dying, or diseased trees that pose a structural threat to roadways and to public safety is also required.

Consideration: Staff continue to analyze the upcoming budget needs for vegetation management, tree removals and fire road improvements. The final application amount has not been determined but is likely to range from \$750,000 to \$1.5 million.

Fiscal Impact: The final budget for fiscal year 2017-18 will include a portion of the subject grant funds. There is no impact on the general fund expected.