




MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: November 7, 2018

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the acquisition of habitat connection parcels in the north-central Topanga Canyon watershed, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in an amount not to exceed \$325,000 for the acquisition of protected habitat connection parcels in the north-central area of the Topanga Canyon watershed.

Background: The only permanently protected contiguous east-west habitat linkage across Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Old Topanga Canyon Road is the narrow, State Park's-owned Backbone Trail corridor. As early as 1988 a report by Terry Lieberstein with Cal State Northridge addressed this protected lands gap between Topanga State Park and an area described as the Central Habitat Hub which extends north of the Backbone Trail corridor and includes Stunt Ranch, Cold Creek Preserve, and Red Rock Canyon Park. The attached map shows all of the protected lands in this portion of the watershed and identifies potentially acquired parcels to close protected land gaps. For the record, the gap to the west between the Central Habitat Hub and Malibu Creek State Park also requires much more land protection.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority currently has three Los Angeles County Proposition A grants that are active within this area. For a host of reasons it has been difficult to complete those projects. One of the reasons is a lack of adequate matching funding to meet acquisition prices. The proposed grant application would request up to \$325,000 of Proposition 68 funding from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to use for the parcels shown on the attached map and for the direct acquisition of tax defaulted parcels that help fill in protected land gaps between Topanga State Park and the Central Habitat Hub.

The goal of this grant application is to provide matching funding to complete two of the MRCA's three existing Proposition A grants and potentially provide base funding for a bargain sale of one or more of the identified parcels.