

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
GRANT APPLICATION**

Project Name: Robins Nest Habitat and Site Restoration	Amount of Request: \$172,000						
Applicant Name: Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	Total Project Cost: \$172,000						
	Matching Funds: -0-						
	Lat/Long: 34°26'18.21"N, 118°16'33.24"W						
Applicant Address: 570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90065	Project Address: 8237 Soledad Canyon Rd, Acton, California 93510						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>County</td> <td>Senate District</td> <td>Assembly District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Los Angeles</td> <td>21</td> <td>36</td> </tr> </table>	County	Senate District	Assembly District	Los Angeles	21	36
County	Senate District	Assembly District					
Los Angeles	21	36					
Phone: 310-589-3230 x. 263							
Email: chris.trumpy@mrca.ca.gov	Tax ID: 77-0112367						

Grantee's Authorized Representative:

Cara Meyer, Deputy Executive Officer 323-221-9944, Ext. 117

Name and Title *Phone*

Overhead Allocation Notice:

- Any overhead costs will be identified as a separate line item in the budget and invoices.
- The Conservancy encourages grantees to reduce overhead costs including vehicle and phone expenses.
- The overhead allocation policy has been submitted prior to, or with, the grant application.

Outreach and Advertising Requirement:

- Applicant has read the staff report and board resolution regarding contract policies.
- Applicant has adopted contract policies for the purpose of increasing outreach and advertising to disadvantaged businesses and individuals.

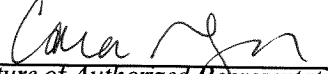
All check boxes must be checked

Brief Project Description: The MRCA requests Proposition 68 funding for habitat restoration and site remediation on its recently acquired 51-acre Robins Nest property in Soledad Canyon. Adjacent to the Pacific Crest Trail and Angeles National Forest, the former RV Campground has remarkable potential for public recreation and habitat restoration. The site supports a year-round section of the Santa Clara River that has been subject to decades of encroachment and material dumping to support the camp uses. The proposed work will reclaim the floodplain with riparian woodland and remove tons of human materials. The restoration will restore several onsite wells to enhance and expedite the restoration process.

Tasks / Milestones:	Budget:	Completion Date
Staff Time (Force Account)	\$70,000	11/30/2021
Waste Disposal (dump trucks, dumpsters, and fees)	\$12,000	11/30/2019
Contractors and equipment rental	\$35,000	11/30/2019
Planting Materials	\$35,000	11/30/2021
Permitting	\$10,000	5/1/2019
Contingency	\$10,000	n/a

For Acquisition Projects: APN(s): N/A
Acreage: N/A

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.


11-28-2018

Signature of Authorized Representative *Date*

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NARRATIVE

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) requests grant funding from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68) through the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's (Conservancy) Proposition 68 Grant Program to facilitate the proposed Robin's Nest Habitat and Site Restoration Project (Project).

With matching funds provided by San Fernando Valley Audubon (not fully committed as of date of this application) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), this Project will fund the cleanup, permitting, installation, and establishment phases of habitat restoration on the MRCA's Robin's Nest property in Soledad Canyon.

MRCA acquired the 51-acre Robin's Nest property (Property) in Soledad Canyon in June 2018. The property (APNs 3209-008-910, 911, and 912) is adjacent to the Pacific Crest Trail and the Angeles National Forest. It also abuts both BLM land and other property owned and managed by MRCA. The former RV Campground has remarkable potential for public recreation and habitat restoration. The MRCA intends to house a park ranger in the one house on the property.

The site has acres of disturbed, flat floodplain area served by a sturdy bridge over the river. The site supports a year-round, well wooded section of the Santa Clara River that has been subject to decades of encroachment and material dumping to support the campground uses. The proposed work will reclaim the floodplain with riparian woodland and remove tons of human accumulated materials. The restoration will restore several onsite wells to enhance and expedite the restoration process. The ground water levels on the site are particularly high.

The proposed restoration work will maximize working with natural flooding processes to establish riparian and riparian buffer vegetation. The requested funding in combination with the described matching funding will not come close to completing the floodplain restoration on several thousand linear feet of stream, but it will make the site feel natural and set the stage for many acres of future floodplain restoration-much of which nature may take care of on its own. The proposed work is a key first step to achieve broader restoration and recreation objectives on one of the most unique properties on the entirety of the Santa Clara River.

Description of Property

The Property is in Soledad Canyon and contains a perennial section of the Santa Clara River. The Property is entirely within the boundaries of the Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). MRCA owns and manages a 52-acre property adjacent

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to Robin's Nest (Bobcat Canyon Open Space), and a 41-acre property (Stickleback Ranch) located approximately one mile downstream.

The Property supports populations of multiple State and Federally-listed species. According to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), the property contains Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest, Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland, Southern Riparian Scrub, and Southern California Threespine Stickleback Stream. Listed animal species occurrences per CNDDDB include Unarmored Threespine Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculatus williamsoni*), Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), and Southern California legless lizard (*Anniela sp.*). The perennial flow most likely also contains a population of native arroyo chub fish. Fish specialists from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are just beginning to formally survey the property recently acquired by the MRCA.

Robin's Nest was formerly used as a larger RV campground. The structures and infrastructures have degraded due to lack of upkeep, and in some cases destroyed by vandalism. Considerable effort is needed to remove trash, discarded construction materials, and invasive plant species, to make the site safe, pleasant, and attractive for public use such as birding and picnicking.

BUDGET

This Project grant request to the Conservancy's Proposition 68 Grant Program is for a total of \$172,000 to be use for permitting, waste removal, equipment rental, planting materials, and MRCA staff time.

Additional funds from San Fernando Valley Audubon (\$100,000) not yet secured and WCB (\$300,000) will add to the overall success of this habitat and site restoration project. The WCB funds are for a tight distinct project restoration area. The Audubon funds would be strictly limited to riparian restoration adjacent to the defined WCB project area.

TIMELINE

The proposed grant expenditures for this Project will begin in Spring 2019 with an anticipated completion date of November 2021. The MRCA will provide permanent maintenance of the grant funded work and for the entirety of the property.

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RESPONSE TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Project achieves multiple purposes of Proposition 68 per Public Resource Code Section 80001(b) and several Strategic Goals and Common Ground principles of the Conservancy.

Prioritization Value

Project achieves 80001(b)(4) by providing urban recreation and protecting or restoring natural resources.

The proposed Project will protect and restore natural resources. Upon completion, the Project will restore multiple types of sensitive habitats of the Santa Clara River that have been degraded by invasive species and inorganic material waste which threatens the stream channel. Project site is located approximately 15 miles east of urban Santa Clara. The Project Area includes one of the 15 most critical regional habitat linkages defined in the South Coast Wildlands' Missing Linkage Report: The San Gabriel-Castaic Linkage.

Project achieves three or more actions listed in 80001(b)(8)(A through G).

Public relations are an integral part of any public park, recreation, and/or open space preservation agency. As part of regular employee duties, the MRCA has dedicated staff to promoting agency activities including the preservation and protection of natural lands and open spaces through social media and multilingual material. Working in coordination with local stakeholders is integral for the preservation and protection of high-priority wildlife corridor parcels within the Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan (SCREMP) area and San Gabriel-Castaic Linkage

Project achieves more than one of the Conservancy's Strategic Objectives.

The proposed Project furthers the Conservancy's efforts to implement the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan by funding MRCA staff time and related expenses to facilitate habitat restoration. The Project Area is wholly within the Rim of the Valley Trails Corridor Master Plan and the Santa Clara River watershed.

Project achieves more than one of the Conservancy's Common Ground guiding principles.

The proposed Project Area builds on the multi-agency prepared SCREMP as well as the South Coast Wildlands' Missing Linkages Report. This Project will facilitate habitat restoration and greenbelt preservation within the Project Area.

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Category Value

The project will provide benefits to multiple values including water, recreation, habitat, and interpretation of natural resources.

The proposed Project will directly benefit water resources of the Santa Clara River and associated habitats. As the Project site restoration commences, MRCA will be able to provide the opportunity for recreation and interpretation of natural resources.

The site lies wholly within a large block of undisturbed core habitat.

The proposed Project site lies entirely within the boundaries of the Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). Project Area represents predominantly undisturbed core habitat of the San Gabriel-Castaic Linkage.

At least one-fourth of the site is located within a designated ecologically sensitive watershed or significant ecological area.

The entirety of the Project site (portions of the parcels south of the railroad), is within the Santa Clara River Significant Ecological Area (SEA).

The site contains largely undisturbed communities with species diversity.

According to CNDDDB, the property consists of Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest, Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland, Southern Riparian Scrub, and Southern California Threespine Stickleback Stream. Listed animal species occurrences per CNDDDB include Unarmored Threespine Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculatus williamsoni*), Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), and Southern California legless lizard (*Anniela sp.*). These communities are largely undisturbed, though some threats from invasive species need to be removed as part of the Project.

Project will benefit specially protected species pursuant to the California Wildlife Act of 1990.

Mountain lion mortality, inbreeding and declining health are all well documented effects of habitat fragmentation. This Project will restore and protect this regional wildlife corridor. The Project Area represents the San Gabriel-Castaic Linkage within the SCR watershed. Restoration of the Project Area will have direct benefit to the local mountain lion populations in the San Gabriel Mountains and Castaic Range Mountains.

The site has documented use by State or Federally-listed animal species.

State and Federally listed animal species occurrences per CNDDDB include Unarmored Threespine Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculatus williamsoni*), Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), and Southern California legless lizard (*Anniela sp.*).

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The site contains 10% or greater cover of full canopy forest and/or oak woodland.

Approximately 55% of the Project site contains a full canopy forest of Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest, and approximately 10% contains Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland.

The site contains high quality fresh water habitat and/or a perennial natural water source.

The site contains approximately 2,500 linear feet of perennial water, which provides high quality habitat for freshwater plant and animal species.

The site contains 10% or greater cover of riparian habitat.

Approximately 55% of the Project site contains a riparian habitat mix of Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest, and/or Southern Riparian Scrub. The CNDDDB data overlaps for these two habitat types.

The site contains an area of riparian or wetland habitat that integrates with upland habitat.

The entire 2,500-foot stretch of the Santa Clara River that runs through the property integrates with adjacent upland communities.

The site supports substantial upland vegetative cover in a predominantly natural watershed.

The Santa Clara River is the largest river system in Southern California remaining in a relatively natural state. The Project Area consists of riparian and upland terrain within the Santa Clara River SEA. The non-riparian vegetation areas within the Project Area contains substantial upland vegetative cover. The Soledad Canyon watershed is predominantly natural, with limited human disturbance such as on the project site.

The project results in new public access to a natural resource with high interpretive and/or educational value, or enhances existing access.

The site is not currently open to the public. In the near future, the site will provide new public access to this section of the Santa Clara River and will provide information kiosks with high interpretive and educational value.

The project contains a link in a local trail system.

The site contains part of the proposed Los Angeles County Santa Clara River Trail and contains a section of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Project will result in new public access to local and regional trail systems.

The project provides a high-quality access point for nearby open space, parkland, regional multi-modal trails, or water-based recreation, including suitable area for parking and restrooms.

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The site will soon provide high-quality access to its own open space parkland and this section of the Santa Clara River, and will include suitable area for parking and restrooms.

The project protects critical viewshed within a major trail corridor.

Soledad Canyon Road is designated by Los Angeles County as a Scenic Highway. The entire Project Area is within the County's Rural Outdoor Lighting District (Dark Skies). Portions of the PCT both north and south of the site utilize viewshed aspects of the Project Area. Project site is visible to passing Amtrak trains. Project site is visible from the Angeles National Forest and the Indian Truck Trail.

The project alleviates stress on other overburdened recreational resources within a 0.5-mile radius.

Currently, only one public access point to the Santa Clara River exists within Soledad Canyon, owned and maintained downstream by the U.S. Forest Service. Project site will allow a second point of public access to this overburdened riparian recreational resource.

Project results in additional uses for users of a wide range of ability levels.

Restoration of the Robins Nest Project site will enable MRCA to provide recreation and interpretation facilities for a wide range of ability levels, including hiking, equestrian, and cycling uses. The Project Area is uniquely flat, providing recreational use for the near maximum amount of ability levels.

The project contains multi-modal accommodations that will benefit hikers, cyclists and equestrians.

The site will be used to accommodate hikers, equestrians, and cyclists. Directional signage and interpretive signage will provide sufficient information for groups and individuals to plan their use of the PCT and Santa Clara Trail within the Project Area.

The project is designed to accommodate the needs of users from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds.

Project Area is proximate to communities both upstream and downstream that represent diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. MRCA is committed to maintaining public parks, trails, signage, and open spaces for all. Public outreach is an integral part of any public park, recreation, and/or open space preservation agency.

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) utilizes a portion of the Project site. While exact usage statistics are not known for this section, the PCT Association states that over 2,100 section-hike permits were issued in each of years 2016 and 2017, an increase from previous years. Hundreds to thousands of people from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds are estimated to utilize this section of the trail each year.

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The site contains unique scenic elements: e.g. waterfalls; spectacular wildflower displays; geologic formations; vistas of scenic grandeur.

The site is in the heart of Soledad Canyon, providing dramatic scenes of unique rocky outcroppings that line the peaks of the canyon. This perennial section of the Santa Clara River provides rare aquatic views in this transitional desert habitat.

The project provides a new vista point or overlook for a significant scenic viewshed.

The Project area provides a new inverted vista point, where public can gaze upon the dramatic slopes and rocky outcroppings that line the ridges and peaks.

The site contains a suitable area for a planned major recreational facility— campground, picnic area, or interpretive center; with existing road access.

The site contains unparalleled area suitable for a major recreational facility with a campground, picnic area, and interpretive kiosks, and day use parking lot all accessible directly from Soledad Canyon Road.

The site is easily accessible from urban communities and contains suitable areas for parking and restrooms.

The site is easily accessible from urban Santa Clarita (approximately 15 miles) and nearby Acton, and currently contains suitable areas for parking and restrooms.

The site provides a significant contribution to an existing or proposed corridor or greenway.

The site is designated as the San Gabriel-Castaic Connection corridor, a linkage between parts of the San Gabriel Mountains and Castaic regions of the Sierra Pelona Mountains. It has been identified as a critical linkage to sustain ecological and evolutionary processes in the region.

The majority of the site is part of a watershed draining directly into an ecologically sensitive protected area.

The entire site is located within the Santa Clara River SEA. The presence of State and Federally-listed Unarmored Threespine Stickleback fish within this system contributes largely to the designation as a sensitive protected area.

The site directly abuts and increases the ecosystem function of a protected habitat area.

Project site abuts and increases the ecosystem function of the Threespine Stickleback Stream habitat, both upstream and downstream.

The site directly contributes to the connection of two core habitat areas by serving as a habitat linkage or movement corridor for wildlife.

Part of San Gabriel-Castaic Connection which links core habitat parts of the San Gabriel Mountains and Castaic regions of the Sierra Pelona Mountains. In addition, the Santa Clara River itself is a long linear regional habitat linkage.

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The site provides a location for an environmentally-significant riparian or wetland restoration project.

The site has remarkable potential for a riparian restoration project that in particular will benefit the environmentally-significant Unarmored Threespine Stickleback Stream habitat within the Santa Clara River SEA.

The site contains substantial potential for restoration of natural vegetation.

The former RV Campground has remarkable potential for restoration of natural vegetation. Numerous exotic and invasive species including tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) have been identified at the Project site. River channelization berms can be removed allowing natural hydrological processes to occur.

The habitat is partially degraded, but conditions are suitable for natural regeneration or restoration.

A berm constrains the floodplain preventing expansion of riparian vegetation. Portions of the berm will be removed as part of waste removal phase of the Project. Dilapidated structures will be removed making lands available for natural regeneration.

Implementation Value

Applicant has proven that implementation of the project is feasible.

The MRCA manages over 75,000 acres of parkland, including more than 20 habitat restoration sites. This Project will allow MRCA staff to restore and remediate sensitive habitat within the Project Area.

Applicant has financial and technical capacity to perform project.

MRCA staff has many years of experience coordinating improvement projects that require regulatory agency approval. MRCA staff has over 20 years of experience restoring and maintaining riparian restoration projects and maintains numerous recreational facilities throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

Applicant, or active project partner, has successfully completed multiple projects of similar size and scope.

MRCA staff has over 20 years of experience restoring and maintaining riparian restoration projects and maintains numerous recreational facilities throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Completion reports for habitat restoration projects have been provided to regulatory agencies such as California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and United State Army Corps of Engineers.

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The project is a partnership between two or more organizations and each organization has committed to contributing toward project implementation.

This Project incorporates the findings and implementation recommendations from the South Coast Wildlands' Missing Linkages Project and the Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan that included participants from nearly 40 different agencies, organizations and academic institutions. Project funding partners include the San Fernando Valley Audubon and Wildlife Conservation Board. Project implementation partners include California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) with regards to Stickleback habitat within the channel.

Applicant has conducted outreach to the affected communities.

MRCA staff continues to participate in the South Coast Missing Linkages Project which supported the development of the San Gabriel-Castaic Linkages. CDFW has approved a large scale Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) for the Project Area. Inclusion of lands within a designated CAPP increases partnership opportunities through public, private, and philanthropic investments and provides opportunities for Federal and State matching funds.

Applicant, or project partner, has 1+ years of experience operating projects of similar size and scope.

The MRCA, founded in 1985, is a local public agency exercising joint powers of the Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The agency's mission is to complement the work of these and other agencies in protecting land and public access in Los Angeles County and Ventura County mountains.

Applicant has identified maintenance funding for at least 2 years after completion.

The MRCA has a maintenance budget of more than \$9.5 million. The sum resources of the agency are great enough to ensure long-term maintenance of agency property. The MRCA maintains over 1,000 acres within three miles of the subject property.

Project has approval from all landowners to complete the project, or Applicant is the landowner.

MRCA (Applicant) currently owns the property. MRCA Governing Board has authorized staff to apply for these Proposition 68 funds through the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

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Climate Change Value

The project acquires and/or maintains wildlife corridors and linkages to provide connections between areas of undeveloped lands, particularly significant public lands and key habitat ecosystems.

The Project is within the San Gabriel-Castaic Connection regional habitat linkage defined by the South Coast Wildlands *Missing Linkages* study, and within the Soledad Canyon-Upper Santa Clara River Habitat Linkage project on the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's Workprogram. The Project will enhance key lands in this inter-mountain range habitat linkage.

The project engages local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation regarding long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

Public relations are an integral part of any public park, recreation, and/or open space preservation agency. As part of regular employee duties, the MRCA has dedicated staff to promoting agency activities including the preservation and protection of natural lands and open spaces through social media and multilingual material. Identifying restoration sites and working in coordination with local stakeholders is integral for the preservation and protection of high-priority wildlife corridor parcels within the Santa Clara River SEA, San Gabriel-Castaic Linkage, and SCREMP area.

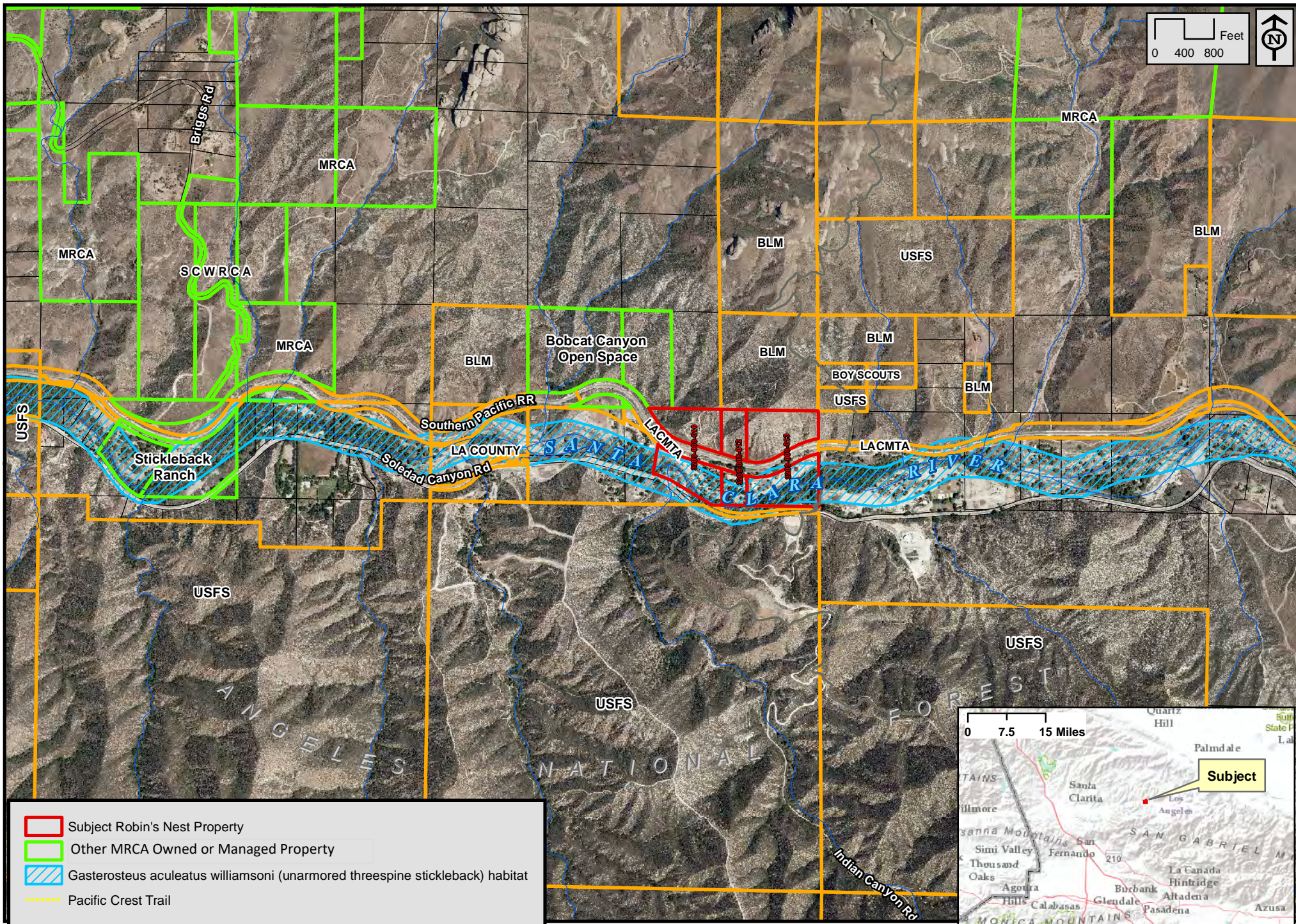
The project implements water saving technologies and techniques to yield quantifiable water and energy savings. Such techniques may include the use of drought-efficient landscaping, stormwater filtration, impervious surfaces, green roofs and other forms of water capture and storage.

Because the SCR valley region is one of the fastest growing areas in the State and is dependent on imported water to supplement limited groundwater resources, the SCREMP developed seven Riverwide Policies to preserve, enhance, and sustain water supply, water quality, water rights and groundwater recharge within the 500-year floodplain of the SCR. This Project will support five of the seven Riverwide Policies:

- RP(1): Promote the acquisition of property from willing sellers in an effort to preserve and enhance beneficial uses of water within the SCR 500-year floodplain, improve quality of groundwater, and restore the diminished groundwater supplies.
- RP(4): Promote activities that will preserve and enhance the beneficial uses and discourage activities that lead to the degradation of water quality and alterations of the river that will significantly adversely impact the natural recharge of underlying aquifers from the river channel.
- RP(5): Support the regulation of groundwater pumping and continuation of water conservation and recharge activities as the feasible and appropriate means to address the saltwater intrusion problems on the Oxnard Plain.
- RP(6): Promote efficient use of water resources and maximize use of existing water supplies through water conservation.

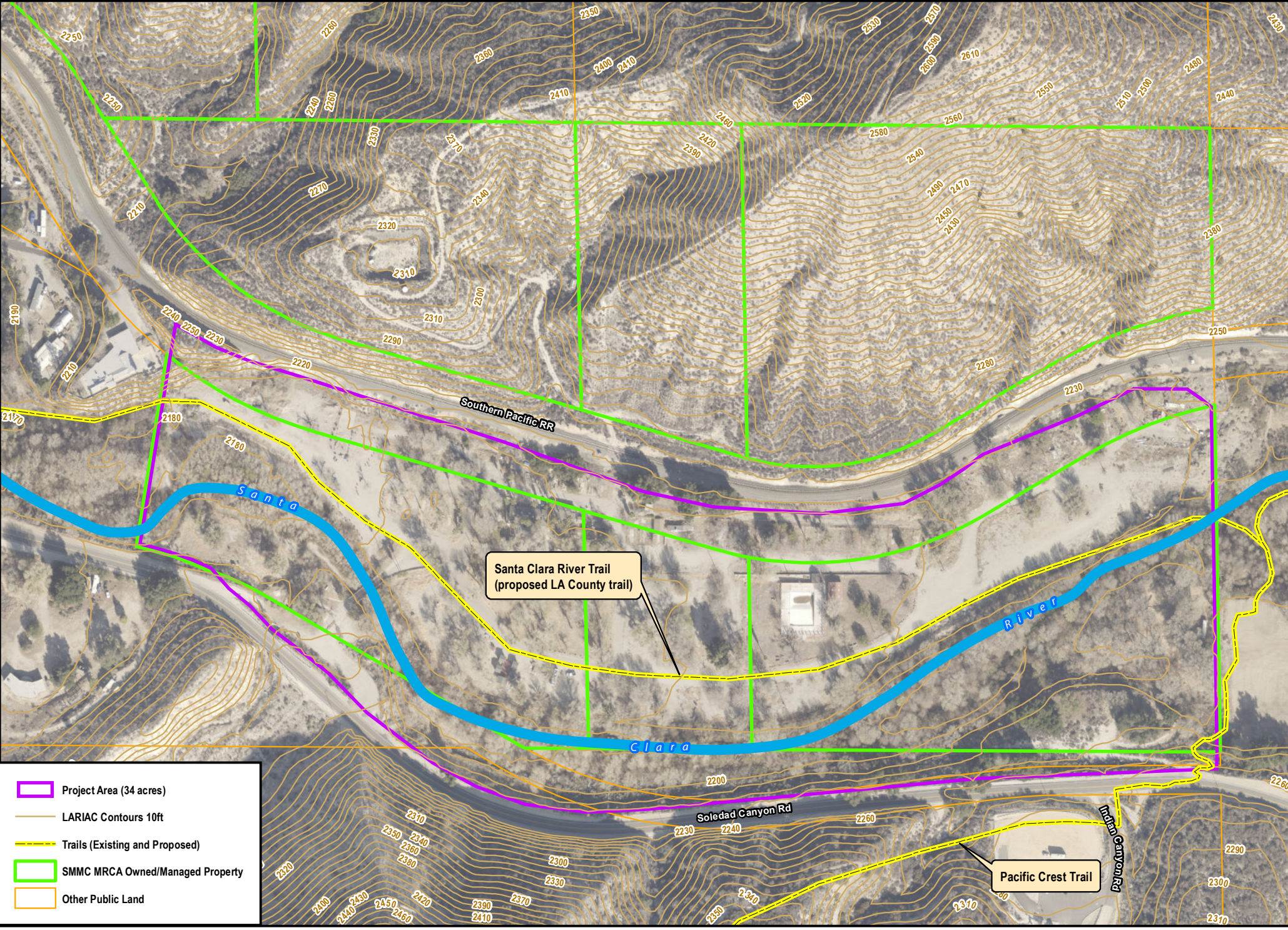
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- RP(7): Support enforcement of State Uniform Building Code, Chapter 70 (Excavation and Grading), to ensure that any proposed grading in a waterway or wetland is adequately investigated and that any development incorporates appropriate design provisions to protect waterways and wetlands.



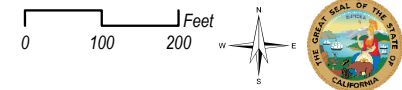
Robin's Nest Habitat and Site Restoration Project - Vicinity Map

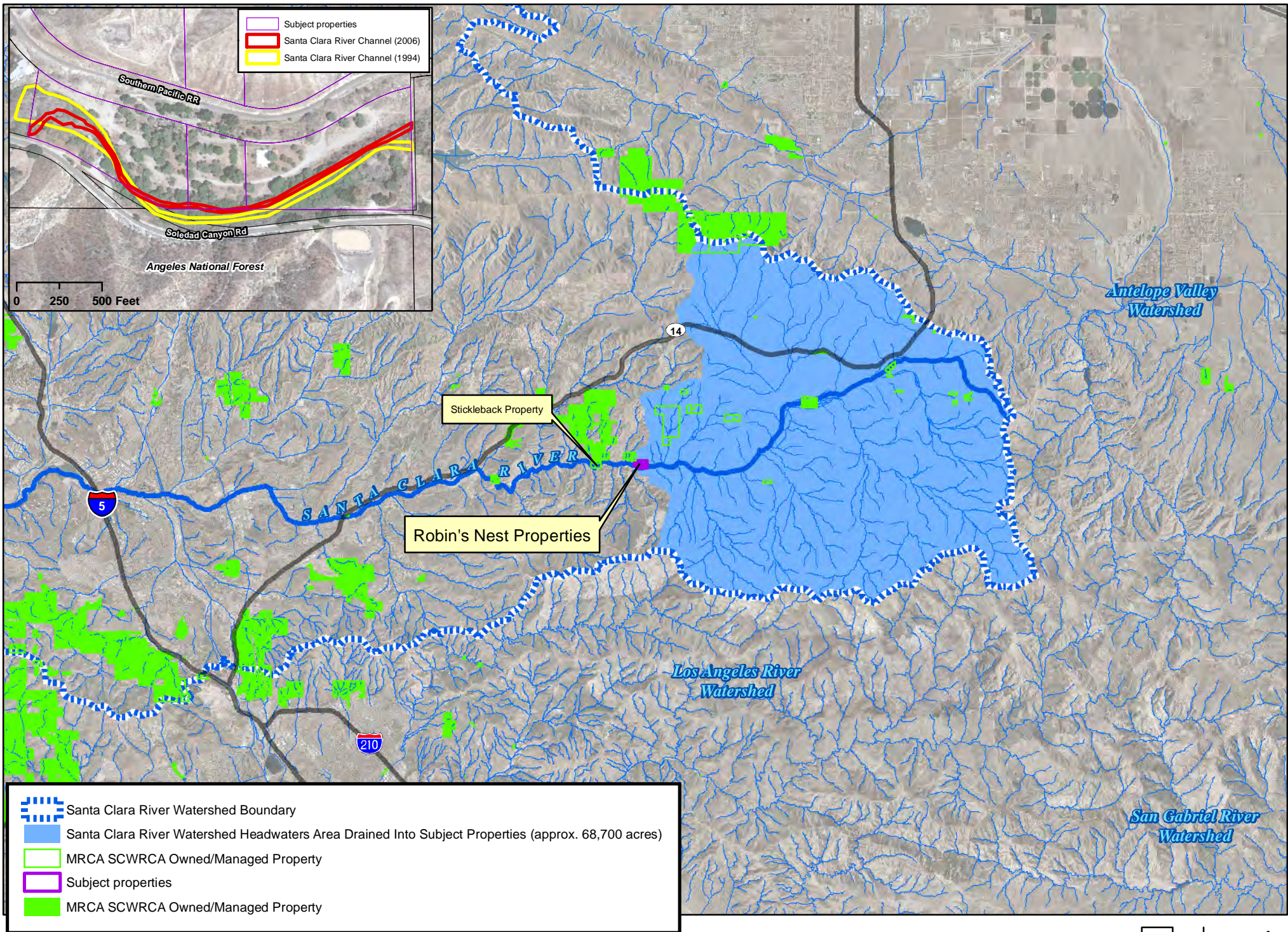
Service Layer Credits:
 California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB): CA Dept Fish & Wildlife
 ESRI, Garmin, IFS, USGS, LA County Assessor, USFS








- Project Area (34 acres)
- LARIAC Contours 10ft
- Trails (Existing and Proposed)
- SMMC MRCA Owned/Managed Property
- Other Public Land

Robin's Nest Habitat and Site Restoration Project - Trail & Contour Map





-  Santa Clara River Watershed Boundary
-  Santa Clara River Watershed Headwaters Area Drained Into Subject Properties (approx. 68,700 acres)
-  MRCA SCWRCA Owned/Managed Property
-  Subject properties
-  MRCA SCWRCA Owned/Managed Property

Robin's Nest Habitat and Site Restoration Project - Watershed Map

