



## MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: February 5, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant to Outward Bound Adventures for construction of Sunset Ridge Connector Trail, Unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant to Outward Bound Adventures in the amount of \$70,000 for construction of Sunset Ridge Connector Trail in Unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Background: In 2017, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (“Conservancy”) settled litigation related to the proposed Millard Canyon and Sunset Ridge Connector Trails, adjacent to the La Vina community in Altadena. The two trail connectors will provide access to the Altadena Crest Trail and Chaney Trail, as well as the Angeles National Forest’s extensive network of trails. The completion of this long-awaited project represents the conclusion of various legal disputes among Los Angeles County, the La Vina developer and Homeowner’s Association, other stakeholders, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy dating back more than two decades. As part of the settlement, Los Angeles County provided funding to MRCA for construction of the trails. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has also provided funding to MRCA for the project.

While the trail alignments were generally set in the settlement, both trails traverse complicated, rough, and steep terrain, sensitive habitat, and are geographically constrained by easement limits. Staff are working with County trails staff and volunteers from the Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group to determine feasible alignments on the ground. The Sunset Ridge Connector Trail, located on the east side of the La Vina development, will be implemented first, as it can most quickly provide new public access. A portion of the County funds is contingent upon completion of this connector. Planning and implementation of the Millard Canyon connector, on the west side of the development, will proceed once the eastern trail’s exact alignment is set.

The proposed grant to Outward Bound Adventures would be used to construct approximately 80% of the eastern trail, and administer community volunteer days. Exact alignment for the remaining 20% is still under development, and costs cannot yet be determined.

Outward Bound Adventures (OBA) is a non-profit organization which engages inner-city youth to help promote stewardship of open spaces. OBA was founded in 1962 and is based at John Muir High School in northwest Pasadena, about two miles from the project site. OBA has successfully completed trail projects nearby in the Angeles National Forest, and the youth crews are familiar with the area. Their Operating Principles include:

To serve underserved urban and low-income populations and their families by providing meaningful and educational contact with nature that results in a greater appreciation of wilderness, self, family and community.

To advance cultural, class and ethnic diversity and ensure equal access and opportunity for all to enjoy and learn in the wilderness and engage in nature-based recreation, volunteer service and employment.

Utilizing OBA for this project will allow the project funds to directly benefit disadvantaged youth in the vicinity of the project. A portion of the John Muir HS district is considered a disadvantaged community per SB 535 and CalEnviroScreen 3.0, and 78% of the student body is characterized as socio-economically disadvantaged by the California Department of Education. This opportunity will allow the OBA youth to develop their skills and understanding of team building and leadership, technical trail construction, stewardship, and outdoor careers in conservation. Students will also be able to network with local trail advocate organizations during volunteer days.

Section 5.4 of MRCA's Procurement Procedures allows MRCA to provide funding to another entity in the form of a grant for a specific purpose for a public benefit. Governing Board authorization is required when the grant amount exceeds \$2,500.

Consideration: The proposed grant to Outward Bound Adventures is \$70,000.

Fiscal Impact: The agreement will be funded through existing grants, and was included in the fiscal year 2019-20 budget. The subject funding cannot be transferred to other projects. Completion of the trails is an MRCA obligation under the settlement.