



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: March 4, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(c): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the State Coastal Conservancy for an "Explore the Coast" grant for a reservation program at Ramirez Canyon Park campground located in unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the State Coastal Conservancy for an "Explore the Coast" grant in the amount of \$50,000 for the Ramirez Canyon Park Campground Reservation Program.

Background: The Explore the Coast Grant Program of the State Coastal Conservancy was established in 2013 to encourage more people to explore and experience the state's spectacular coast. The grants fund a wide range of programs that bring people to the coast, increase stewardship of coastal resources, and provide educational opportunities. Among other objectives, the program focuses on projects that provide access to low-income and underserved populations and enhance the public's coastal experience in a way that does not currently exist.

The proposed grant application will fund development of a comprehensive reservation system for the existing campground at Ramirez Canyon Park (Park). The reservation system will include an analysis of the existing access to and from the campground, with consideration of the anticipated acquisition opportunities from Kanan Dume Road; the observations obtained from the 2018 pilot project camping users; the need for privacy and security for the existing staff residence and staff offices in the Park; the best practices of other existing campground reservation systems operating under similar contexts; and applicable new technology and web-based or mobile application reservation systems.

Under the current Coastal Development Permit, the Ramirez Canyon Park campground can host up to 16 campers per night during the 8-month season from January 16 to September 14. Only campers with proven ADA parking needs would

be allowed to park their vehicles overnight on site. Campers without such proven need would need to hike in and out for all access. The one exception would be for groups accompanied by an overnight MRCA staff person to be present in the campground vicinity at all times and transported using MRCA-vehicles. The first and to date only use of the campground was a pilot project in 2018 prior to the Woolsey Fire; the campground was inoperable for the 2019 season due to the Woolsey Fire recovery efforts at the Park.

There is no existing reservation system. Development of a reservation system is necessary to increase the public opportunities for low-cost overnight coastal accommodations. The lack of these accommodations is one of the largest economic barriers to coastal public access.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The proposed reservation system project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR section 15301, Existing Facilities, because it involves only the operation of the existing campground and negligible or no expansion of use. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR section 15311, construction or placement of minor structures accessory to existing facilities, because the grant funds will be used for the implementation of reservation system amenities and signage for the existing campground. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption.

Consideration: The request to the State Coastal Conservancy is for \$50,000. MRCA staff will submit the application by March 30, 2020.