

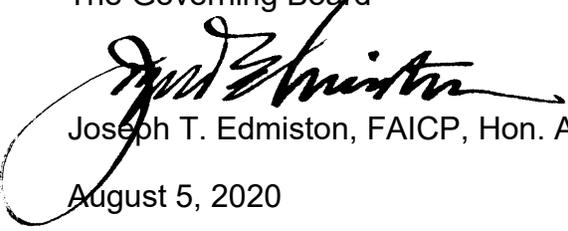


# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: August 5, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution (a) authorizing an application to the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Wildlife Corridor and Fish Passage Program, (b) accepting the WCB grant award, and (c) entering into a grant agreement with WCB to implement the Agua Dulce Creek State Route 14 Wildlife Undercrossing Enhancement Project in unincorporated Agua Dulce, Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution (a) authorizing an application to the WCB Wildlife Corridor and Fish Passage Program, (b) accepting the WCB grant award, and (c) entering into a grant agreement with WCB to implement the Agua Dulce Creek State Route 14 Wildlife Undercrossing Enhancement Project in unincorporated Agua Dulce, Los Angeles County.

Background: In 2014, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) acquired the 5.6-acre subject property and is the managing entity for approximately 104 acres north of SR-14 bisected by Agua Dulce Canyon Road. MRCA is also maintaining a separate, and complimentary, 2.5-acre habitat restoration project on the south side of SR-14 that the Agua Dulce Creek culvert connects to. The approximate 21-foot-wide by 23-foot-tall conical shaped culvert undercrossing of SR-14 provides critical connectivity between units of the Angeles National Forest.

The South Coast Missing Linkages Project identifies Agua Dulce Canyon as a central landscape linkage of the *San Gabriel - Castaic Connection* least-cost corridor for the Pacific kangaroo rat, mule deer, and mountain lion among other species of concern and further recognizes enhancing connectivity and linking natural landscapes is the single most important adaptation strategy to conserve biodiversity during climate change.

The proposed Agua Dulce Creek State Route 14 Wildlife Undercrossing Enhancement Project (Project) seeks \$381,000 to restore/enhance approximate 2.75-acre of habitat along approximately 1,300 linear feet of Agua Dulce Creek's

northern approach to the SR-14 culvert undercrossing. This Project is a shovel-ready implementation project designed to improve conditions for wildlife usage of the SR-14 culvert by controlling non-native vegetation and installing native vegetation to shield light and noise from both SR-14 and Agua Dulce Canyon Road traffic and provide shade, cover, and increased forage potential for wildlife before and after crossing.

Co-benefits of the Project include: improved water quality of Agua Dulce Creek in the upper Santa Clara River watershed; nature-based solutions to flood control; increased native, flowering plants for local pollinators; and carbon sequestration from enhanced native woody vegetation.

The Project Area is also visible from both the SR-14 and Agua Dulce Canyon Road. Successful completion will improve regional scenic resources adjacent Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park.

Long-term maintenance by MRCA staff will ensure that non-natives do not reestablish and planted natives become firmly established.