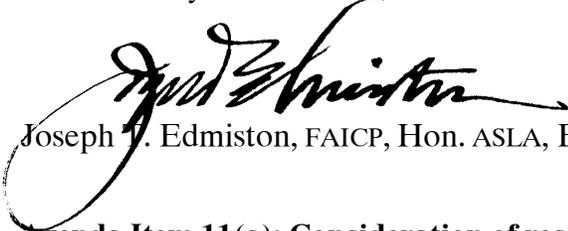


## Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: February 25, 2008

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 11(a): Consideration of resolution authorizing the expenditure of Conservancy Fund to contract with the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority for pre-acquisition services in the Soledad-Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan area, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the expenditure of Conservancy Fund to contract with the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority for pre-acquisition services in the Soledad-Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan area, unincorporated Los Angeles County in the amount of \$12,000.00.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33211(b) and (c) of the Public Resources Code

Background: The Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority (SCWRCA) is a Joint Powers Authority formed between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the City of Santa Clarita. SCWRCA was created as a separate entity to help identify future sites that would be suitable for acquisition for the purpose of creating additional open space, parks, and trails. The Soledad-Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) project is focused on the protection of an adequate habitat linkage system between the Angeles National Forest south of State Route (SR) 14 (San Gabriel Mountains) and the part of the national forest north of SR 14 (Sierra Pelona-Castaic-Sierra Madre ranges). In addition, the protection of rare and endangered species habitat in the Santa Clara River and its tributaries were, and still are, a primary focus.

The CAPP project area has also been included in a Joint Study Area prepared by the Riverside Land Conservancy (RLC). RLC has prepared a draft report titled "East Santa Clarita Land Conservation Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy" in conjunction with SCWRCA, the City of Santa Clarita, Vulcan Materials Company, South Coast Wildlands, The Nature Conservancy, and other public and private organizations. Essentially the report describes the need to implement "a functioning wildlife corridor between the two segments of the Angeles National Forest, creation of a green-belt east of the Santa Clarita City limits, establishment of a continuous trail system connections to public parks and the Pacific Crest Trail, restoration of the Santa Clara River and tributaries... and the redevelopment of disturbed areas."

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This report was funded by the City of Santa Clarita, SCWRCA, and Vulcan Materials Company via a contract between SCWRCA and the RLC. As part of the contract, the RLC is doing extensive landowner contact work and has been negotiating with one half of a dozen owners. Vulcan Materials Company has also graciously funded an appraisal of over 50 parcels as part of this effort. The appraisals area currently being reviewed by the Department of General Services. Essentially the plan is to continue to fund RLC's efforts via a new contract with SCWRCA.

An expenditure of \$12,000.00 from the Conservancy Fund to SCWRCA for pre-acquisition funding for land appraisals, title reports, mapping, and landowner contacts is essential in the CAPP area. This funding would continue to build on the momentum that the RLC has established in the project area. The City of Santa Clarita staff has committed approximately \$15,000.00, and Vulcan Materials Company has committed \$15,000.00 as well to this new contract. RLC's work has been effective to date and it is efficient to contract through SCRWCA with the City of Santa Clarita being the Treasurer.