

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: March 24, 2008

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution authorizing the expansion of the La Tuna Canyon Park Additions project and adding the La Tuna, Barras, and Haines Canyons North of the 210 Freeway project to the Conservancy Workprogram.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the expansion of the La Tuna Canyon Park Additions project and adding the La Tuna, Barras, and Haines Canyons North of the 210 Freeway project to the Conservancy Workprogram

Legislative Authority: Section 33208 of the Public Resources Code

Background: The 14-square-mile Verdugo Mountains ecosystem has been remarkably resilient in maintaining populations of larger mammal species amidst a continuing diminution of habitat within the range and its connectivity to the San Gabriel Mountains. The maintenance of these sub-populations depends both on connectivity and preserving remaining habitat any where in the range.

The viewshed from the 210 Freeway and La Tuna Canyon Road is a regionally significant resource that benefits motorists with many miles of mountain scenery. Maintenance of this viewshed depends on both the strategic placement of development and the acquisition of private lands.

The two proposed additions to the Conservancy Workprogram achieve both of these objectives. A figure showing the existing and proposed Workprogram project boundaries is attached.

The La Tuna Canyon Park Additions project is proposed to be expanded eastward to include all private land between the Conservancy's La Tuna Canyon Park and State Parks-owned property to the east. This gap in the Workprogram came to light as the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) continues to pursue a large acquisition in this area. The acquisition cannot be funded with Proposition A funds unless the property has been added to the Conservancy's Workprogram.

The Workprogram coverage on the north side of the 210 Freeway in this area terminates at the "Duke" property also commonly known as the Hillview project (west of Haines Canyon Park).

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Between the Hillview property and Tujunga Canyon Boulevard there are a series of various sized private ownerships that should be protected. The largest and easternmost of these ownerships is the Verdugo Hills golf course which is rimmed with high-quality-chaparral covered open space. The channel for Blanchard Canyon forms the eastern boundary of the golf course ownership. To incorporate this area into the Conservancy Workprogram, a project, entitled, "La Tuna, Barras, and Haines Canyons North of the 210 Freeway project" is proposed to be added. This step is critical to make any of the properties eligible for Proposition A funding or State bond funds.