

SANTA CLARITA WATERSHED RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

A PUBLIC ENTITY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA EXERCISING JOINT POWERS OF THE CITY OF SANTA CLARITA AND THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 6500 ET SEQ.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: June 7, 2007

SUBJECT: Agenda Item XII: Consideration of resolution authorizing the application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for a grant to acquire property within the Soledad Canyon Conceptual Area Protection Plan.

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for a grant to acquire property within the Soledad Canyon Conceptual Area Protection Plan.

Background: The Angeles Connector (Soledad Canyon) Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) addresses a land acquisition program to provide an adequate habitat linkage between the two major portions of the Angeles National Forest. This habitat linkage was also addressed by the South Coast Wildlands Project in its Missing Linkages program via a report, entitled, "*South Coast Missing Linkages Project – A Linkage for the San Gabriel - Castaic Connection.*" The CAPP was prepared by a broad lists of agency staff members including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (the Conservancy), the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, State Coastal Conservancy, City of Santa Clarita (the City), Los Angeles County Nature Centers, and California Department of Fish and Game. This group is still meeting under the auspices of the State Coastal Conservancy's watershed coordinator program and is known as the Upper Santa Clara River Biodiversity Group.

Staff is working jointly with most of the above agencies to implement acquisition of CAPP properties. Agency efforts are greatly focused on a key choke point at the intersection of State Route 14 and Agua Dulce Canyon. The Nature Conservancy is also spearheading the acquisition parcels along the main stem of Soledad Canyon both within and just outside the CAPP boundary. Because the CAPP is approved by the California Department of Fish and Game, the approximately 450 parcels in the 10,600-acre CAPP area are eligible for

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funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The WCB looks favorably upon projects that have other funding sources. The City and the Conservancy are both working to acquire properties within the CAPP.

The WCB will meet in August, 2007. Application for this meeting must be completed by mid-June. For various reasons, SCWRCA may be the best situated agency to apply to the WCB for CAPP funding. Whether or not a deal with one or more land owners can be put together in the next week or two is up in the air. It is important to have a standing SCWRCA resolution if staff decides to make a last minute application.