

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: February 27, 2006

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 16: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 50 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design, Escondido and Ramirez Canyons and Ramirez Creek restoration, Cities of Malibu and Unincorporated County of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 50 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for project planning and design, Escondido and Ramirez Canyons and Ramirez Creek restoration, in the amount of \$200,000.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) of Public Resources Code.

Background: The State of California has authorized expenditure of funds from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50) to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, in Chapter 10, Sections 79570(c) and 79571, for purpose of protecting coastal watersheds, including but not limited to, acquisition, protection, and restoration of land and water resources and associated planning, permitting, and administrative costs, and for the acquisition and development of facilities to promote public access to and participation in the conservation of land, water, and wildlife resources.

Public Resources Code Section 33204(c): “The Conservancy may, in accordance with the priorities of the plan . . . award grants to state agencies, cities, counties, resource conservation districts, and park and recreation districts for the purpose of acquiring sites identified as necessary for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for development of essential related public facilities.”

The MRCA is proposing a Coastal Development project to protect the land and water resources of the Santa Monica Bay coastal watershed. The requested funding would allow the project to commence. The project includes restoration of Ramirez Creek, expanding the scope of recreational use of Ramirez Canyon Park and Escondido Canyon, addressing problems in the current Coastal Development permit, and enhancing existing programs conducted at Ramirez Canyon Park. The Coastal permit process can be quite complex. The MRCA has retained a professional environmental planner to assist in the process. Other outside consultants will be utilized as well. A variety of engineering and technical services will be

necessary to make a permit complete. This work could include but not be limited to traffic, hydrology, geology, grading, biology, water quality, noise, and archaeological studies. At the beginning of the permit process, it is difficult to judge exactly which outside consultants will be necessary.

Staff will be revising public outreach programs and increasing public access at Ramirez Canyon Park. Additionally, to expand recreational use, staff will be evaluating the possible trail connections between Ramirez Canyon Park and Escondido Canyon. Staff activities may include researching subject properties' natural resources and ownership, negotiations and preparation of purchase agreements, obtaining and reviewing appraisals, title reports, and environmental assessments, mapping and graphics to support acquisitions, and preparation of project plans as necessary. Outside trail planning consultants may be used to determine trail alignment and grading.

Consideration: The grant to the MRCA would be in the amount of \$200,000.