

SANTA CLARITA WATERSHED RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
24255 The Old Road, Newhall, CA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Joseph T. Edmiston, AICP

DATE: August 29, 1996

SUBJ: Agenda Item IV: Consideration of resolution authorizing joint re-application, with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, for Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program (EEMP) funds for the East Canyon Wildlife Corridor Reforestation project.

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board authorize the joint re-application to EEMP with the MRCA, up to the amount of \$235,000 for habitat enhancement, stream restoration, and related projects at East Canyon.

The East Canyon to Gavin Canyon area of the Santa Clarita Woodlands is a critical wildlife corridor; additionally, it promises to be the ideal trailhead/staging area for low-intensity recreational use of the southern portion of the Woodlands (such as East Canyon to O'Melveny Park and the Rice Canyon area). However, this critical linkage has been degraded by the adjacent freeway demolition and reconstruction project, and past grazing use and other land uses have also taken a toll.

Last October the board authorized application for EEMP grant funds for this project and staff prepared the submission accordingly. The projects for consideration under the EEMP totaled several times the amount of money actually available for restoration, enhancement, or recreation projects that would meet the description of Resource Lands, Highway Landscaping and Urban Forestry, or Roadside Recreation grant categories. After discussion with the EEMP Director at the Resources agency, staff was encouraged to reapply for the grant application cycle which closes on November 4, 1996.

SCWRCA and MRCA can jointly apply for grant funds to maximize East Canyon as an intermountain wildlife corridor, while also accommodating public use as a staging area by enhancing native tree cover in a "divider/buffer." Increasing the vegetative structural diversity at the mouth of the canyon would benefit habitat linkage viability. Streambank enhancement is also a component of the project. Exotic non-native grasses and invasive weeds (thistles as an example) will be eradicated or controlled as well, thereby improving habitat quality and visitor experience for enhancement of the riparian corridor and valley oak woodland.