

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: February 26, 2007

From :  Joseph J. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 8 (c): Consideration of resolution amending the Sage Ranch Park Additions and adding Cold Creek-Red Rock Connector projects to the Conservancy Acquisition Workprogram.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution amending the Sage Ranch Park Additions and adding Cold Creek-Red Rock Connector projects to the Conservancy Acquisition Workprogram.

Legislative Authority: Section 33203 and 33211 (c) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The current Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Acquisition Workprogram was adopted in 2000. Subsequent to that adoption, the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor was expanded a third time to include all lands south of the Antelope Valley Freeway in the Santa Clara River watershed. In addition, the passage of Proposition 50 modified the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains Zone to include all portions of the Los Angeles River watershed from the northernmost point of the City of Vernon. During the last six years, projects have been periodically added.

The proposed action would adding the Cold Creek- Red Rock Connector project to the Acquisition Workprogram. Generally, projects are added to the Workprogram to take advantage of opportunity purchases (such as tax defaulted properties and bargain sales), to accommodate area specific funding sources, and to compensate for prior omissions. Furthermore, in Los Angeles County, in order for either the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), or the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, to use Proposition A Excess Funds on a project, the project must be on the Workprogram submitted by the Conservancy to the Governor as part of its annual report.

Post release of the meeting agenda, staff discovered that a portion of the area shown in the new project boundary is owned by the Mountains Restoration Trust. Nonetheless, the MRCA's potential ability to acquire a single parcel warrants adding this project to the Workprogram.

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In order for the MRCA to use Prop A funds for any properties, the area must first be on the Conservancy Acquisition Workprogram. MRCA has a Chapter 8 agreement pending with a parcel in each project area.

Sage Ranch Park

It is important to connect Sage Ranch with Chatsworth Reservoir and the whole Dayton Canyon area. The subject parcel provides important linkage between the two areas, previously omitted due to lack of aerial and parcel data.

Cold Creek-Red Rock Connector

Continuity between Red Rock Canyon and Cold Creek watersheds is important to implementing the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan, and maintaining the Cold Creek core habitat area. MRCA has a tax defaulted parcel on a ridge line between the two watersheds that they would like to acquire.

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