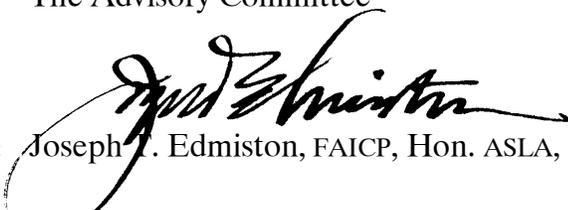


## Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 5, 2007

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

Subject: **Agenda Item 14: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 40 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the development and improvement of land and water resources at Towsley Canyon, Santa Clarita.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 40 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the development and improvement of land and water resources at Towsley Canyon, in the amount of \$250,000.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) and 5096.650(b) of Public Resources Code.

Background: The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), allocated funds to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in Article 5, 5096.650(b) of the Public Resources Code, for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration, and protection of land and water resources. The General Provisions in Article 1, 5096.605(c) describe development as including but not limited to improvement, rehabilitation, restoration, enhancement, preservation, protection, and interpretation. Article 1, 5096.605(j) describes preservation as identification, evaluation, recordation, documentation, interpretation, protection, rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization, development, and reconstruction, or any combination of those activities.

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.”

Towsley Canyon offers numerous visitor serving amenities with easy access just off the I-5 freeway. Trails for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use lead visitors through an astonishing variety of habitat types. Towsley Lodge sits atop a large green knoll surrounded by cottonwoods. The lodge is used by visitors for meetings, weddings and small group overnights. Towsley Canyon burned in the fires of October 2003. MRCA staff saved the structures in the canyon including the lodge. In the heavy storms of the 2004-05 winter, the

road in the park was damaged where it crossed the creek. The road has been repaired using FEMA funds.

While most of the facilities in the park are currently functional, some select capital improvements will make the park into a prime destination. Renovations need to be made to the Towsley Lodge including but not limited to roof repair, restroom renovation, new HVAC systems, lighting upgrades, replacement of exterior and interior finishes, and new meeting and overnight furniture.

The large shady, lawn that spreads out just below the lodge serves as a lovely informal picnic area and special event space. The large trees in the lawn and in the surrounding landscape suffered in the 2003 fire. Some need to be removed and replaced with new trees such as sycamores and oaks. Irrigation to the lawn and planted areas also needs to be improved. Additional capital expenditures are necessary to provide safe and enjoyable public access including some new fencing and interpretive signage.

It is anticipated that the improvements to the park would be completed by both in-house staff and outside consultants.

Consideration: The grant to the MRCA would be in the amount of \$250,000.