

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: February 26, 2007

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

SMMC Agenda Item 9(d) July 9, 2007
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Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution authorizing two grants, one contingent upon budget authority approval in the FY 07-08 State Budget, to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the acquisition of APNs 649-0-070-050, 649-0-070-060, 649-0-070-360, 648-0-200-020, and 648-0-183-050 on the south-facing slope of Chatsworth Peak, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing the following two grants to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA): 1) a Proposition 50 grant in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 and 2) a Proposition 84 grant in an amount not to exceed \$225,000, contingent upon budget authority approval in the FY 07-08 State Budget, for the acquisition of APNs 649-0-070-050, 649-0-070-060, 649-0-070-360, 648-0-200-020, and 648-0-183-050 on the south-facing slope of Chatsworth Peak, in unincorporated Ventura County, with the total grant amount not to exceed \$250,000.

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

Background: Chatsworth Peak is part of the critical inter-mountain range habitat linkage between the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills. In regards to this habitat linkage, most attention has focused on the north-facing slope of the peak more specifically on the connection between Santa Susana Pass and Box Canyon Road. However, a high quality habitat linkage also exists across the south-facing slope via Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. The south-facing slope contains a high concentration of large sandstone outcrops and unique micro-habitats. However the only protected land between the State Historic Park and Box Canyon is an approximately 10-acre open space area owned and managed by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD).

Efforts are underway to develop residences on many of the other lots in this corridor. One such threatened ownership is the Zorro's cabin parcels that the RSRPD was outbid on earlier this year. The Conservancy's \$100,000 grant to RSRPD towards the acquisition of that parcel was subsequently terminated. The general Zorro's cabin ownership area is at the edge of a broad, gently-sloping shelf of land between Lilac Lane and Studio Road. This shelf makes an ideal area for a trail between the State Historic Park and the North American Cut Off which is a frequently traveled dirt road between Box Canyon Road and Sage Ranch Park.