



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: November 5, 2008

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing (a) the application for grant funds from the California River Parkways Grant Program under the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) for the Big Tujunga Wash – Oro Vista Acquisition Project; (b) entering into a grant agreement; (c) acceptance of said funds; and (d) acquisition of said property, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing (a) the application for grant funds from the California River Parkways Grant Program under the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) for the Big Tujunga Wash – Oro Vista Acquisition Project; (b) entering into a grant agreement; (c) acceptance of said funds; and (d) acquisition of said property, Los Angeles.

Background: The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) authorized \$62 million to the State of California Resources Agency for the acquisition, protection and development of river parkways in accordance with the California River Parkways Act of 2004. Program goals for River Parkways are (1) protecting and restoring riparian and riverine habitat; and (2) directly improving the quality of life in California by providing important recreational, open space, wildlife, flood management, water quality, and urban waterfront revitalization benefits to communities in the State.

The Resources Agency is administering the River Parkway grants Program. The “Grant Guidelines” require that applicants submit an Authorizing Resolution from the applicant’s governing body. Applications for the funding are due November 12, 2008. MRCA staff is both overseeing and participating in the application for the Big Tujunga Wash - Oro Vista Acquisition Project, described below.

*Big Tujunga Wash - Oro Vista Acquisition Project*

The subject five-acre property is located next to the Big Tujunga Wash. Creation of the Oro Vista levee around 1970 separated the wash from the parcel. Nonetheless the property still supports alluvial fan scrub vegetation and provides an important wildlife corridor between the Angeles National Forest and the Big Tujunga Wash. The property is also part of a trail system between Foothill Boulevard and the National Forest. The City of Los Angeles plans to build a trailhead across the street in the near future. The parcel has a low elevation profile and hydrology conducive to riparian habitat creation and capturing and cleaning storm water.

The community was unsuccessful earlier this month in exacting an open space dedication, and the City Council rejected an appeal resulting in the approval of 18 lots. Nonetheless a cooperative landowner is willing to sell all or a portion of the property. The value of the entitled 18 lots is not within the reach of public agencies at this time. However the acquisition of between three and six lots is within reach. The landowner welcomes doing a joint project because the tract map is going to need adjustments in any case. The proposed project would be to acquire an approximately 1.25-acre portion of the site. That area now receives significant street runoff as configured and much more runoff could be directed to the site via an underground culvert located along the southern 1.25 acre that could be day lighted tapped into with a low flow gravity siphon. The culvert drains several hundred acres and feeds into Big Tujunga Wash.

The local community and equestrian community is strongly encouraging the MRCA to apply for funds to acquire a portion of this property. Community members have agreed to do the majority of the grant application work. It is a unique property with high potential. Most importantly the landowner is enthusiastic.