

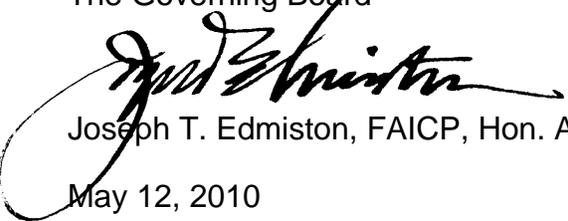


# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: May 12, 2010

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item V(b): Consideration of resolution approving the application for Nature Education Facility Program funds (Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006) for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Visitor Center project.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution approving the application for Nature Education Facility Program funds (Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006) for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Visitor Center project.

Background: The Nature Education Facility Program is a competitive grant program administered by the State Department of Parks and Recreation's Office of Grants and Local Services. The program will fund projects for development of nature education facilities, buildings, structures and exhibit galleries that present collections to inspire and educate the public and for marine wildlife conservation research equipment and facilities. Funding for this \$93 million grant program was made available through the Parks and Nature Education Facilities chapter in Proposition 84, Public Resources Code Division 43, Chap. 8, §75063 (b).

Eligible projects include nature education facilities, buildings, structures and exhibit galleries that present collections to inspire and educate the public and marine wildlife conservation research equipment and facilities. The funds were appropriated in the 2009/10 Budget Act and made available for the program as of July 1, 2009. There will only be one round of funding awards for this program, and the application deadline is July 1, 2010.

MRCA staff intend to submit an application for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Interagency Visitor Center project, located at King Gillette Ranch. Interpretive goals for the Visitor Center include an integrated relationship between architecture, education, and site. The Visitor Center's primary interpretive theme (*Climate, mountains, and ocean converge in the Santa Monica Mountains National*

*Recreation Area creating a rich Mediterranean environment that harbors unique natural communities and fosters diverse cultures.)* will be portrayed not only in traditional indoor exhibits, but also through landscape elements and programming delivered by staff from all of the partner agencies.

Conversion of a stable building into the primary indoor visitor facility has been undertaken by National Park Service with federal funding. The federal project includes rehabilitation of the stable building, installation of interpretive exhibits, construction of a new restroom/service building, parking, and minimal site improvements.

Additional amenities are needed to fully serve visitor needs and provide complete interpretation of the SMMNRA's resources. Elements of the Visitor Center that are not part of the federal project include an amphitheater, an accessible interpretive trail, family picnic area, an indoor multipurpose community room, and a botanic demonstration garden. The amphitheater and multipurpose community room will provide additional venues for public programs, while the interpretive trail, family picnic area, and botanic demonstration garden will enhance the visitor experience as well as provide additional means of interpretive information. The MRCA's grant application will request funding to provide all of these additional amenities not funded by the federal project.