



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: June 4, 2014

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIV: Consideration of resolution authorizing the acceptance of a donation of APNs 2031-415-001 and 2031-001-006 totaling 22.8 acres, with partial consideration of agency campground use for the Girl Scouts of America, El Escorpián Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the acceptance of a donation of APNs 2031-415-001 and 2031-001-006 totaling 22.8 acres, with partial consideration of agency campground use for the Girl Scouts of America, El Escorpián and Bell Canyons, Simi Hills.

Background: APNs 2031-415-001 and 2031-001-006 form a long north-south oriented private ownership that separates City of Los Angeles El Escorpián Canyon and Bell Canyon parkland from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (ULVCOSP). The property is a key component both to ensure permanent public access from Valley Circle Drive into ULVCOSP and to conserve an ecologically rich part of the Simi Hills that spans two major watersheds. The property includes the well developed riparian corridor along El Escorpián Creek and it includes a short segment of the Rim of the Valley Trail alignment.

A representative of the owner reached out to staff last month seeking to exchange the property to secure some no cost camping rights for local Girl Scouts in MRCA operated campgrounds. The owner realized that it would be tough to permit and operate a campground on the subject 22.8 acres.

Representatives of the Girl Scouts visited the MRCA's Sage Ranch campground a couple of weeks ago. Staff should know the results of their inspection at the Governing Board meeting. The only other campground now operated by the MRCA

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is in Red Rock Canyon Park in the Old Topanga Canyon watershed. The oversight and use of that facility are just evolving. Interestingly it was originally a Boy Scouts-owned camp facility at one time.

The exchange would involve granting the Girl Scouts a specific number of free camping nights at MRCA campgrounds for a specific number of years in exchange for a donation of the two subject parcels.