

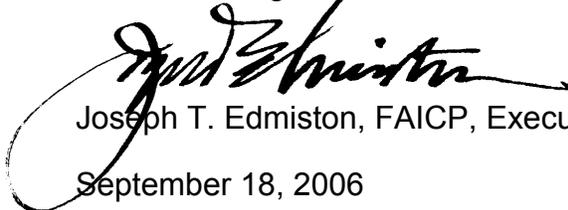


# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: September 18, 2006

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of in lieu mitigation funds to Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District to acquire approximately 42 acres (APN 685-0-120-420) in the Wood Ranch Area, Simi Valley.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of in lieu mitigation funds to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District in an amount not to exceed \$295,000.00 to acquire approximately 42 acres (APN 685-0-120-420) in the Wood Ranch Area.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has held approximately \$300,000 of in lieu mitigation funds that must be spent in the Calleguas Creek watershed to restore or acquire land with riparian vegetation. Earlier efforts to find an affordable parcel with 4.38 acres of riparian and mixed woodland habitat were not successful. The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) staff approached staff about contributing to the subject acquisition almost two years ago. The District's deal with the owner (local school district) has come to fruition along with all the remaining funding sources. The appraised value is far in excess of the proposed grant amount.

The property contains the necessary acreage of riparian and woodland resources for the MRCA to expend the mitigation funding. The MRCA currently owns the multi-hundred-acre property surrounding the subject 42 acre property. The land is managed by RSRPD and is expected to be transferred to the District. The 42 acres contain a stream with a continuous riparian canopy and many perennial sections of surface water. Staff walked the stream bed area thoroughly over a year ago. The whole parcel qualifies as Simi Hills core habitat area while also providing an existing dirt road for excellent public access. The land would be owned and maintained by RSRPD.

The high resource value of this inholding (with quality easement access) and the ability for the MRCA to meet a difficult task of protecting 4.38 acres of riparian habitat with greatly increase land values warrant this grant of funds.