



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

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

DATE: June 6, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for a grant to acquire properties within the Angeles Linkage (Soledad Canyon) Conceptual Area Projection, upper Santa Clara River, unincorporated Los Angeles County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for a grant to acquire properties within the Angeles Linkage (Soledad Canyon) Conceptual Area Protection Plan in the upper Santa Clara River.

Background: The Angeles Linkage (Soledad Canyon) Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) addresses a land acquisition program to provide an adequate habitat linkage between the two major portions of the Angeles National Forest. This habitat linkage was also addressed by the South Coast Wildlands Project in its Missing Linkages program via a report, entitled, "*South Coast Missing Linkages Project - A Linkage Design for the San Gabriel - Castaic Connection.*" The CAPP was prepared by a broad list of agency staff members including the Conservancy, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, State Coastal Conservancy, City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County Nature Centers, and California Department of Fish and Game. This group is still meeting under the auspices of the State Coastal Conservancy's watershed coordinator program and is known as the Upper Santa Clara River Biodiversity Working Group.

The MRCA is working jointly with most of the above agencies to implement acquisition of CAPP properties. Agency efforts are greatly focused on a key choke point at the intersection of State Route 14 and Agua Dulce Canyon. The Nature Conservancy is also spearheading the acquisition parcels along the main stem of Soledad Canyon both within and just outside the CAPP boundary. Because the CAPP is approved by the California Department of Fish and Game, the approximately 450 parcels within 10,600 acres are eligible for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB).

The MRCA and the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority (SCWRCA) are the two entities best positioned to apply for WCB funding at the agencies August meeting. A contractor working for SCWRCA is attempting to negotiate deals with several landowners in order to make this agenda. It is critical to have a standing resolution authorizing application to the WCB to be prepared to move forward.

The WCB looks favorably upon projects that have other funding sources. The MRCA has applied to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a \$124,000 grant and SCWRCA has approved approximately \$130,000 in matching funds. The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy has also expressed interest in a CAPP matching grant.