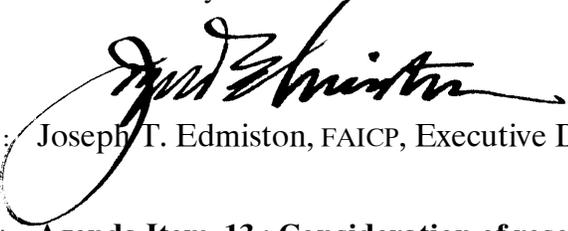


Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: July 25, 2005

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 13 : Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Propositions 50, 40 and 12 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority contingent upon approval by the Attorney General for park improvements to the West Mulholland Watershed Demonstration Project, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 50, 40 and 12 funds in a total amount not to exceed \$1.6 million to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) contingent upon approval by the Attorney General for improvements to the West Mulholland Watershed Demonstration Project, Los Angeles.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204(c) of Public Resources Code.

Background: The MRCA has submitted a grant application for Proposition 50, 40 and 12 funding in the sum of \$1.6 million, \$834,285 from Proposition 50, \$338,317 from Proposition 40 and \$427,398 from Proposition 12 to design and construct the West Mulholland Watershed Demonstration Project. The project will provide public park and habitat improvements that will incorporate innovative watershed enhancement features in this important Upper Los Angeles River Watershed location. The north-facing slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains above the San Fernando Valley flow to the Los Angeles River, and this park project will provide for onsite stormwater retention, enhanced infiltration, low-water-use native landscaping, stream restoration, trails, permeable parking, solar restroom, ranger station and watershed and habitat-related interpretive elements. Park features will include native tree, shrub, and groundcover landscaping, state-of-the-art permeable and semi-permeable surfaces, the creation of a stream and bioswale within the existing fill soil and reintroduction of riparian plants, hiking trails (including a full-access nature trail), a 70-car parking lot, picnic benches and shelters, interpretive kiosks, composting restroom facilities, a state-of-the-art, low impact ranger station/residence (approx. 1400 sq.ft.) and interpretive facility (1000 sq.ft.), and an outdoor classroom.

The West Mulholland Watershed Demonstration Project property is located in the City of Los Angeles, along the portion of Mulholland Drive in the Santa Monica Mountains approximately 0.75 miles east of Topanga Canyon Boulevard. The property abuts Mulholland Drive on the northwest, with hillside residential neighborhoods extending in that direction from this point.

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Open space or parkland surrounds the park in all other directions, connecting to Summit Valley/Ed Edelman Park, Topanga State Park, Chapter/Natoma Canyons (Avatar purchase), and Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park. The current land use is vacant.

The project site was graded for development in the 1960s via the importation of fill soil. The park development site is nestled at the bottom of natural bowl, and from the upper hills are scenic vistas to the north. The approximately 1.75 acre fill pad supports mostly weedy annual species, and is not visible from Mulholland Drive because of an on-site detention basin and berm. The site is located within the Mulholland Scenic Parkway viewshed.

The proposed project will utilize an irrigation system run by a solar pump and timer. The proposed ranger station/residence, outdoor classroom, composting restrooms, parking, interpretive center, and interpretive kiosks all feature state-of-the-art, low-impact sustainable designs to further demonstrate the watershed enhancement theme. All the project improvements will blend in with the natural character of the site, and will be augmented with native trees and landscaping.