

# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: March 22, 2004

  
From : Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 9(a): Consideration of resolution amending Resolution Nos. 92-81 and 94-83 regarding parking and safety conditions of use so that such conditions apply uniformly to properties owned by the Conservancy and managed by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.**

**NOTE: The Resolution for this item will be delivered under separate cover.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution amending Resolutions 92-81 and 94-83 regarding parking and safety conditions so as to make such conditions apply uniformly to property owned by the Conservancy and managed by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.

Legislative Authority: Public Resources Code Section 33211.5.

Background: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has a reciprocal management agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) whereby the MRCA manages property owned by the Conservancy. Generally speaking, most management responsibilities are covered by this agreement. However, the regulation of vehicles and parking fees therefor, has been done on an *ad hoc* basis, beginning in 1992 with Solstice Canyon and in 1994 with Temescal Canyon. Since these 1992 and 1994 actions, the Conservancy has acquired many properties and has not kept pace in amending its management conditions.

Proposal: Rather than the Conservancy regulating vehicle use and parking on an *ad hoc* basis, this resolution proposes that these functions, like other property management responsibilities, be vested with the MRCA, subject to guidelines as established below.

- Pursuant to the Reciprocal Management Agreement, MRCA may establish speed limits and post vehicle regulatory signs (including, without limitation, stop signs, parking area designations, and speed limits) after consultation with traffic and/or law enforcement experts, provided that a speed limit lower than 25 m.p.h. shall be justified by a qualified traffic consultant. The MRCA governing board may delegate such functions to the Executive Officer.

- Pursuant to the Reciprocal Management Agreement, MRCA shall establish a uniform system of parking fees based on the level of services provided at each park. A uniform parking charge may be imposed in each park area where restrooms and picnicking facilities are provided. In facilities offering flush toilets and substantially developed recreational amenities a parking surcharge may be imposed.
- All fees collected shall be used only for the improvement, maintenance, and patrol of park facilities, including direct and indirect administrative costs associated therewith.
- Fees may not exceed those imposed for similar units of the State Park System.

Safety issues: The public safety issues here are self evident. Many facilities were not originally adapted to the uses to which they are now put, *e.g.*, Temescal Canyon Conference and Retreat Center was a private church camp until purchased by the Conservancy and turned into a major public access point into the Santa Monica Mountains. Likewise, Franklin Canyon was laid out as a LADWP reservoir, without configuring it to serve as a major visitor serving facility of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Intensive management of these properties is required in order to safely provide for the high level of public use that has obtained since these properties were opened.

Parking fees: With regard to fees, the current base-level parking fee imposed by MRCA is \$3.00 per day for a park with non-flush restrooms and minimal picnicking facilities. Temescal Gateway Park and the Temescal Canyon Conference and Retreat Center constitute the most developed facilities owned by the Conservancy and a \$2.00 surcharge is imposed for parking at these facilities (because of the improvements and amenities this is justified way beyond the initial \$3.00 parking fee). To the extent that similar amenities are introduced into other parks, it is only fair that an equivalent fee be charged. At present, staff is only considering adding such amenities at the former Ahmanson Ranch.

If this resolution is passed the base level parking fee (currently set at \$3.00 per vehicle) would apply to the following parks: Wilson Canyon, Wilacre Park, Summit Valley/Edmund D. Edelman Park, Red Rock Park, Corral Canyon trail head, and the property formally known as Ahmanson Ranch (until such time as more advanced facilities are provided).

Use of fees: All fees will be used at the park of origin for the purposes as stated above.

Fee Cap: Under this proposal fees are no more than applied for similar units of the State Park System. Within this fee cap, the MRCA may set parking fees as necessary on a tiered basis, *i.e.*,

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an initial sum based on the level of facilities development, and a surcharge for flush restrooms and more extensive park amenities. The ultimate maximum of fees in each category would depend on the similar category of fees imposed on an equivalent unit of the State Park System.