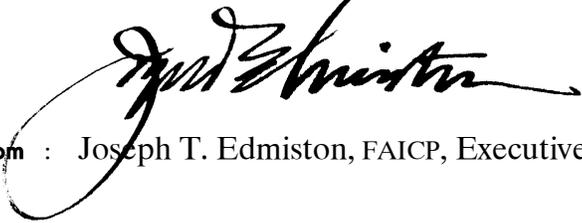


# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: June 14, 2004



From : Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

**Subject:** Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution (a) amending the Initial Workprogram for Safe Neighborhood Parks Act of 1996 (Proposition A), and (b) amending the Conservancy Workprogram to include King Gillette Ranch (Soka University), Calabasas area, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

**Staff Recommendation:** That the Conservancy adopt a resolution amending (a) amending the Initial Workprogram for Safe Neighborhood Parks Act of 1996 (Proposition A), and (b) amending the Conservancy Workprogram to include King Gillette Ranch (Soka University), Calabasas area, unincorporated Los Angeles County.

**Legislative Authority:** Sections 33208(a)(2) and 33204(c) of the Public Resources Code.

**Background:** Please refer also to the attachments for map, historical ownerships and acquisition attempts timeline, photos, and resource values summary of the Soka University property (formerly known variously as King Gillette Ranch, Claretville, and Camelot). Display boards of this notable property will be available for viewing at the Conservancy meeting.

Soon after voters approved Los Angeles County Proposition A in 1996, the Conservancy submitted a workprogram of projects for review by County departments and approval by the Board of Supervisors. That workprogram is officially entitled "Initial Workprogram for the Safe Neighborhood Parks Act of 1996." It is commonly referred to as the Conservancy's Prop A Workprogram. The recommended action would add the Soka University site in the Western Santa Monica Mountains, approximately 588 acres in size, to the Prop A Workprogram and likewise to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Workprogram. Although considered since at least the late 1970's as a critically important site for preservation in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and Conservancy Zone, the property was not previously included in the 1996 Prop A Initial Workprogram nor the SMMC's 2000 Workprogram because its acquisition had already been litigated, settled, and Soka had County and Coastal Commission approvals for expansion of its university uses.

Because Soka University has very recently indicated that it is now willing to consider a sale, the property should certainly be considered for inclusion in the workprograms as a necessary step.

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The site is important watershed in the Malibu Creek Watershed, and may be eligible for funding from Propositions 12, 13, 40, and 50. The university lies at the heart of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, located at the intersection of Mulholland Highway and Las Virgenes Canyon Road, directly across from Malibu Creek State Park.

The heretofore unsuccessful attempts to preserve the then-244 acre King Gillette Ranch site as parkland have included a State Park's effort between 1976 and 1978, and at least two offers by the National Park Service in the 1980's. In 1992 the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority filed its first and only eminent domain action for 244 acres, then considered a last-ditch move to save the property.