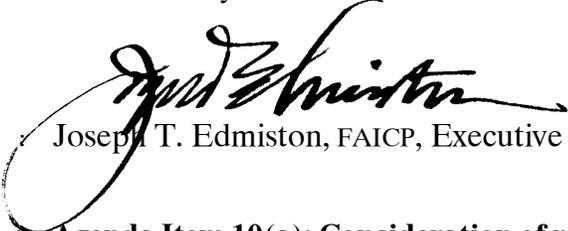


# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 30, 2004

From :   
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 10(a): Consideration of resolution authorizing the addition of Soledad Canyon-Upper Clara River Habitat Linkage; Topanga Canyon-Kerry Lane; and Topanga Canyon-Garapito Canyon-Hillside Drive to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Land Acquisition Workprogram.\***

Staff Recommendation: That the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) adopt the attached resolution authorizing the addition of Soledad Canyon-Upper Clara River Habitat Linkage; Topanga Canyon-Kerry Lane; and Topanga Canyon-Garapito Canyon-Hillside Drive to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Land Acquisition Workprogram.

Legislative Authority: Sections 33208 and 33210 of the Public Resources Code and Joint Exercise Powers Act, Section 6500 *et seq.* of the Government Code.

Background: The recommended action would add Soledad Canyon-Upper Clara River Habitat Linkage; Topanga Canyon-Kerry Lane; and Topanga Canyon-Garapito Canyon-Hillside Drive to the Conservancy' Land Acquisition Workprogram.

## Soledad Canyon-Upper Clara River Habitat Linkage

The project area is located in the Upper Santa Clara River watershed. The southern boundary of the project area is the Angeles National Forest Boundary and Soledad Canyon Road, the northern boundary is the Antelope Valley Freeway, the western boundary is Spring Canyon, and the eastern boundary follows to the east of the Pacific Crest Trail. The project area is part of the Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) that is being prepared in coordination with many agencies including the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, MRCA, SMMC, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, City of Santa Clarita, and The Nature Conservancy.

This project area is a critical part of the inter-mountain range habitat linkage and wildlife corridor across State Route 14 between the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountains. The properties contain a variety of habitat including juniper woodland, riparian, and desert scrub. Intermittent streams flow through many of the canyons down to the Santa Clara River.

### Topanga Canyon-Kerry Lane

The Topanga Canyon-Kerry Lane parcels proposed to be added to the Workprogram total approximately 24 acres, comprised of about 34 parcels (or portions of parcels). The parcels are adjacent to the existing Topanga State Park (the portion recently acquired). Land owned by Mountains Restoration Trust also abuts the proposed addition. Several trails currently exist onsite, including a loop trail on a County unpaved road. These trails would provide access to the State Park. A blue line stream, including a year-round spring, is also present onsite. The parcels support several native plant communities, including sycamore-coast live oak association and chaparral. A wide variety of wildlife have been observed in the area, and the parcels provide ample opportunities for wildlife movement. Many spectacular views of the State Park can be seen from the proposed Kerry Lane properties. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority has accepted several open space easements within the proposed addition area. The Kerry Lane Preservation Project, a group interested in preserving this land, is actively working to appraise and acquire the properties. Some of the parcels in the area are for sale.

### Topanga Canyon-Garapito Canyon-Hillside Drive

The Topanga Canyon-Garapito Canyon-Hillside Drive parcels proposed to be added to the Workprogram at tonight's meeting total approximately 61.04 acres, comprised of about 18 parcels. These are described in more detail below as two sets of parcels. The County of Los Angeles has previously offered several of these parcels as surplus, and the Conservancy took two previous actions regarding this first set of parcels (49.44 acres; 8 parcels). A second set of parcels is also being considered at tonight's meeting (11.6 acres; 10 parcels) for inclusion in the Workprogram.

The Conservancy has taken two Board actions related to the first set of parcels. On January 27, 2003, the Conservancy authorized the waiver of first right of refusal on approximately 58 of the 164 acres of County surplus properties located in the Sylvia Park area to allow for their acquisition by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Those parcels are shown at the eastern end on the attached aerial. The Conservancy took an action at its November 24, 2003 meeting to waive its first right of refusal pursuant to section 33207 of the Public Resources Code on a portion of the remaining 106 acres of Los Angeles County surplus properties in the Sylvia Park area. These are located west of Topanga State Park, and on both sides of Topanga Canyon Boulevard. At that meeting, the Conservancy did not waive its right of refusal on eight parcels, totaling 49.44 acres, but waived on the remainder of the parcels. These eight parcels are proposed to be added to the Workprogram at tonight's meeting. These parcels contain high quality chaparral vegetation with minimal interface along existing development.

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The second set of parcels, consisting of 10 parcels (11.6 acres), have also been offered as surplus by the County, and the Conservancy has not taken Board action on these parcels. Staff is proposing that these also be added to the Workprogram at tonight's meeting. These are shown on the attached aerial as all of the parcels west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, except for the largest parcel. These parcels are located near the Theatricum Botanicum. These parcels also contain high quality chaparral vegetation with minimal interface along existing development.