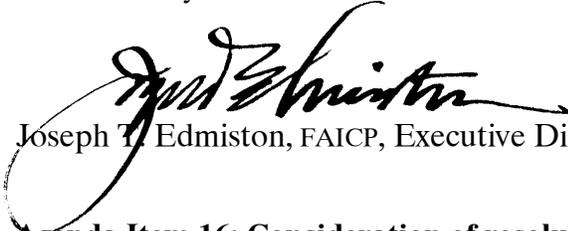


Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 30, 2004

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 16: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 50 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the South Pasadena-Arroyo Seco Woodland and Wildlife Park restoration project, South Pasadena.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 50 funds in the amount of \$17,040.00 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the South Pasadena-Arroyo Seco Woodland and Wildlife Park restoration project, South Pasadena.

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

Background: On October 23, 2000, the Conservancy authorized a grant in the amount of \$250,000.00 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for restoration and improvements to an Arroyo Seco park in the City of South Pasadena. This project, the South Pasadena-Arroyo Seco Woodland and Wildlife Park, is located on land owned by the City of South Pasadena, and will be maintained by the City. The MRCA has submitted a grant application for Proposition 50 funding in the sum of \$17,040.

The project is eligible for funding under Chapter 10, Section 79750(c) of Proposition 50, and implements the goals stated in Chapter 1, Section 79501(e) and (f) of Proposition 50: “Improve practices within watershed to improve water quality, reduce pollution, capture additional storm water runoff...reduce pollution of rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife.”

The MRCA is nearing the end of the restoration and construction work funded by the original grant, including the creation of two small bioswales to detain stormwater runoff from a storm sewer that empties onto the site. The bioswales are planted with native grasses and allow stormwater to infiltrate into the soil instead of flowing into the concrete-lined Arroyo Seco, adjacent to the park. The work funded by this grant will help to ensure the survival of the restored areas and bioswales.

Most of the disturbed areas on the site, including the bioswales, are experiencing vigorous establishment of castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), an invasive exotic plant that is difficult to eradicate. According to *Invasive Plants of California's Wildlands*, “Castor bean displaces native

plant species in riparian areas and drainages...Plants colonize disturbed areas, and they grow rapidly, shading out native seeds and seedlings and producing monospecific stands in areas with previously healthy native vegetation.”

The proposed grant would provide for additional restoration of native plants and removal of castor bean. A portion of this work would occur immediately, with the remainder occurring in the spring of 2005 following the rainy season. All planted areas will be mulched to discourage further establishment of invasive exotic plants. Restoration work will also include pruning mature native trees to promote healthier growth. These trees will be trimmed judiciously so that the natural character of the park is not compromised. After pruning, the native trees will be less susceptible to pests and will be better able to out-compete invasive exotic plants that threaten the restoration work.

The project is within the upper Los Angeles River watershed and the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor, and is consistent with the *San Gabriel and Los Angeles River Watershed and Open Space Plan* (Watershed Plan) as adopted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Four of the Watershed Plan’s Guiding Principles are met with this project:

- Create, Expand and Improve Public Open Space Throughout the Region: The project will result in a new public park.
- Improve Access to Open Space and Recreation for All Communities: The project will create public access to a natural open space.
- Improve Habitat Quality, Quantity and Connectivity: The project will restore habitat for native plant communities.
- Promote Stewardship of the Landscape: The project includes interpretive exhibits related to native plants and animals.

Consideration: The grant to the MRCA is \$17,040.00. \$10,000 would be used immediately for plant restoration, exotic removal, mulching and tree trimming, and the remainder used in the spring of 2005.