

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: September 27, 2004

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 12 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for minor capital outlay FY04-05 for park improvement and equipment.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant in the amount of \$191,675 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for minor capital outlay FY 04-05 for park improvement and equipment from Section 5096.353 of the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000 (Proposition 12).

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

Background: The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000 (Proposition 12) allocated funds to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in Article 8, 5096.353, for capital outlay and grants for enhancement and restoration of natural lands, improvement of public recreation facilities, and for grants to local agencies to increase access to parks. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has applied for a grant of Proposition 12 funds for minor capital outlay in the 2004-2005 fiscal year, for enhancement and/or restoration of capital assets owned and/or operated by MRCA, specifically the Mentryville water system and Wilacre Park Trailhead, and related equipment purchases.

Government Code Section 16727, use of proceeds from sale of bonds; "Capital assets," allows for use of funds for the costs of construction or acquisition of capital assets. "Capital assets" includes major maintenance, reconstruction, demolition for purposes of reconstruction of facilities, and retrofitting work that is ordinarily done no more often than once every 5 to 15 years or expenditures that continue or enhance the useful life of the capital asset. "Capital assets" also include equipment with an expected useful life of two years or more.

The MRCA operates and manages multiple park sites and open space areas for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. To perform this job well, MRCA has a variety of equipment needs. Additionally, in order to provide a high quality park experience for park visitors, minor site improvements are often necessary. These include installation or replacement of site

fixtures including signage, park benches, picnic tables, interpretive displays, plantings and other park amenities.

Mentryville Water System Improvements

The MRCA operates Mentryville, in the Pico Canyon area of Santa Clarita Woodlands Park. The existing water system at Mentryville supplies the domestic, irrigation and firefighting water needs of the park. The entire system is in need of major repair and overhaul, including the purchase of a new pump. This improvement project will improve the operation and safety of the park. The anticipated cost of the water system improvement project is \$20,435.

Wilacre Park - Trailhead Improvements

The trailhead at Wilacre Park is an extremely popular destination for hikers in the Santa Monica Mountains. Its current parking capacity does not meet the demand. MRCA proposes increasing the public access to this park by adding additional parking spaces. Approximately twenty spaces would be added next to the existing parking. An adjoining area would also be graded to create a new overflow lot that could be opened at the park rangers' discretion. The improvement project would also include some new fencing, signage and planting. The anticipated cost for the Wilacre improvements is \$91,240.

Park Enhancement and Restoration Equipment

The MRCA continually undertakes restoration and enhancement projects on the many parks and open space areas it owns and/or operates needs to increase public access and provide safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities. For example, the MRCA may clear a new area in an existing park to create a usable lawn for picnicking and other informal recreation. Staff needs different equipment to make a project like this happen: chainsaws to clear the existing brush, a chipper to mulch the woody material (cheaper and more environmentally sound than disposing of it in a landfill), a trencher to dig the irrigation lines, an aerator to prepare the ground for laying sod or spreading seed, and a lawn mower to keep the improved area in good condition.

A portion of this grant would be used to purchase the equipment necessary to make a variety of these improvements. If the MRCA has the equipment on hand, staff can perform the work by force account. Otherwise, the MRCA must use outside contractors or rent the equipment, both of which often come at a higher price. This equipment includes, but is not limited to, riding and standing lawn mowers and trailers to transport them, a chipper, a brush blazer, weed whips, chain saws, pole saws, an aerator, a rototiller, blowers, a trencher, a jackhammer, a paint sprayer, and power washers. All the equipment contemplated for purchase would have a useful life of two years or more, would be used to continue or enhance the useful life of existing or

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planned capital assets, and would aid in the improvement of public recreation facilities and the enhancement of natural lands. The portion of funding in this grant for this equipment is anticipated to be \$80,000.

All improvement projects that are not exempt pursuant to the exemptions found in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be subject to future CEQA compliance.

Consideration: The grant to the MRCA is \$191,675. The funds would be used throughout the 04-05 fiscal year.