





**MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
Ramirez Canyon Park  
5810 Ramirez Canyon Road  
Malibu, California 90265  
Phone (310) 589-3230 Fax (310) 589-3237

## Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application Laurel Canyon Spring Acquisition Project

### NARRATIVE

The requested grant funding would be targeted at acquiring APN 5565-003-041 (approximately 0.97 acres) in the Laurel Canyon watershed of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) currently has the parcel under a long-term option along with two other adjacent parcels.

The MRCA has been incrementally acquiring a six-parcel ownership at the southwest corner of Mulholland Drive and Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Three of the six parcels are now owned in fee simple by the MRCA or the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. These parcels are key to the east-west wildlife corridor through the eastern Santa Monica Mountains to Griffith Park and could well have hosted P-22 the resident mountain lion. Deer commonly visit the subject parcel because it is flat, open, shady, and has access to water.

The subject parcel, which is fully within the Inner Corridor of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway, contains a spring which provides a year-round water source for wildlife. The poor condition of this water source warrants immediate attention and restoration if it is to continue to benefit wildlife in the current drought conditions and beyond. Water is vital for both predator and prey species. A future goal would be to establish a stable amphibian population on the subject property.

The parcel is located near the conjunction of several USGS blue line streams that have been dramatically altered, or erased, since the early 1960s. The subject six lots were stacked with tens of thousands of cubic yards of fill and pads were created approximately around 1965. The infiltration and surface flow of this small Laurel Canyon headwaters area is hydrologically imbalanced to say the least. The flow of the spring stopped this year. Grading work is necessary on the subject parcel to lower grades and direct surface runoff to coax the spring above ground until closer to normal rainfall returns.

This Proposition 1 project represents a prime opportunity to acquire the parcel that contains the spring ahead of schedule and allow for its rehabilitation. (The rehabilitation would be funded with riparian mitigation funds held by the MRCA.) The total potential restorable area on the subject 0.97-acre parcel, including upstream drainage and downstream saturated habitat, exceeds 0.2 acres.

Without the subject Proposition 1 grant, the time table to acquire the three remaining parcels is approximately seven years using MRCA Community Facilities District No. 1 funding with annual fixed payments. In the option acquisition sequence, the subject

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spring parcel would be the last one acquired at a cost of \$700,000. The subject lot has the best road access and it is disruptive to the owner to sell it first. As an incentive to sell it first (February 2017), the MRCA would pay the Seller a full \$700,000 in 2017 rather than the obligated \$275,000 annual payment. The parcel has concentrated ecological and recreation benefits that warrant such a concentration of Proposition 1 funding. The health of the subject parcel benefits the ecological capacity of hundreds of connected acres of public open space.

The six combined parcels are important for east-west wildlife movement between the Laurel and Nichols Canyon watersheds leading towards Griffith Park, as well as north-south wildlife movement through upper central Laurel Canyon. They represent the eastern end of the multi-hundred-acre Wilacre-Fryman-Elrita Bowl core habitat area. They provide a broad interface along Laurel Canyon Boulevard for wildlife crossing. The subject parcel, APN 5565-003-041, is a key part of this habitat linkage.

The restoration of the on-site water source and stream would be funded with riparian mitigation funds held by the MRCA. The grant would also accelerate the overall completion of the Laurel and Mulholland acquisition wildlife corridor program.

Development of the property would result in increased Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. The property has the development potential for one single-family residence. The development of the property would produce, on an annual basis, 148,217 pounds (67 metric tons) of carbon dioxide from daily trip generations, and an equivalent of 172,352 pounds (78 metric tons) of carbon dioxide from energy consumed for transportation needs that could be sequestered by 64 acres of forestland in one year. Additionally, the annual energy demands of a single-family residence on the property is equivalent to 27,365 pounds (12.4 metric tons) of carbon dioxide that could be sequestered by 10.15 acres of forestland in one year. Protecting this property would mean preventing a total of approximately 348,000 pounds (159 metric tons) of carbon dioxide per year that would otherwise be produced from developing the property.

Monitoring and reporting on the progress and effectiveness of the project will occur via written project status reports as requested by the Conservancy that confirm ongoing permanent protection of the property and the prevention of detrimental activities by MRCA rangers and field personnel.

This land acquisition project will not use the services of local or State conservation corps. This land acquisition project will not employ new or innovative technology.

**Description of Property**

The parcel targeted for acquisition under the subject grant application, APN 5565-003-041, is the southernmost of the six parcels at the southwest corner of Mulholland Drive and Laurel Canyon Boulevard that the MRCA has had under option since 2007 and has slowly been acquiring free of any interest accrual. The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks acquired the upper largest 1.71-acre parcel at the street

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intersection. The MRCA now owns two parcels in fee simple and has conservation easements on unbuildable portions of APNs 5565-003-039, 5565-003-040, and 5565-003-041 to protect some habitat connectivity.

The six combined parcels are important for east-west wildlife movement between the Laurel and Nichols Canyon watersheds leading towards Griffith Park, and north-south wildlife movement throughout Laurel Canyon. They represent the eastern end of the multi-hundred-acre Wilacre-Fryman-Elrita Bowl core habitat area. They provide a broad interface along Laurel Canyon Boulevard for wildlife crossing. This habitat linkage is part of a greater habitat block that includes Laurel Canyon Park, Fryman Canyon Park, Wilacre Park, and hundreds of acres of undeveloped open space on private property. The subject parcel, APN 5565-003-041, is a key part of this habitat linkage.

The subject target parcel contains a spring which now provides a year-round water source for wildlife under non-severe drought conditions. After five years of drought, the spring is currently dry. A nearby spring that has perennially sent a ribbon of water across Laurel Canyon Boulevard several hundred feet to the northeast has also dried up. The poor condition of this water source warrants immediate attention and restoration.

The parcel is located near the conjunction of several USGS blueline streams that have been dramatically altered since the early 1960s. The parcel contains a long-40-foot-wide flag lot extension where the spring flow runs. The unpaved western 20 feet of this 200-foot-long extension can easily be restored into a mix of different riparian habitat types.

The property is regularly used for unsanctioned public access and has foot-worn dirt paths which connect to the MRCA-owned portion of Laurel Canyon park. The property can be reached from the MTA bus stop across the street, at the northeast corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Mulholland Drive. Pedestrian access, via dirt paths, exists from the southwest corner of the Laurel Canyon Boulevard – Mulholland Drive intersection, to the southern end of the subject property. The potential exists, once legal access across all six parcels is obtained, to implement a proposed trail connecting the six adjoining parcels to Laurel Canyon Park, via the Mulholland Drive public right-of-way (see attached trail figure).

The property is also identified by street address 8103 Amor Road, and is zoned for Very Low Residential Development in the City of Los Angeles. A partially paved fee simple portion of APN 5565-003-041, varying from 10 to 20 feet wide, also extends to the intersection of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Amor Road. Even a single house constructed on the property would adversely impact the already imperiled water resource and the ecological integrity of the site and thus the greater wildlife corridor.

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**BUDGET**

The parcel acquisition price in the option agreement, based on an existing appraisal, is \$700,000. The total project budget is \$705,000 which includes closing costs, and legal staff time. The grant request is for \$595,000. The amount of matching funds from the MRCA Community Facilities District funding is \$110,000. All Proposition 1 funds would go into escrow for the acquisition. Of the matching funds, \$5,000 would be used for escrow closing costs, and MRCA legal staff time.

**TIMELINE**

The proposed grant expenditure will be completed by February 28, 2017.

**RESPONSE TO EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**Project achieves the purposes of Proposition 1 per Water Code Section 79732(a)**

The proposed Laurel Canyon Spring Acquisition Project involves the protection and restoration of California rivers, lakes, streams and watersheds. The proposed grant achieves at least four Proposition 1 purposes:

1) Protect and increase the economic benefits arising from healthy watersheds, fishery resources, and instream flow.

The proposed project will protect and increase the economic benefits from healthy watersheds and instream flow by permanently protecting a natural spring and approximately 200 feet of riparian habitat that facilitates flow into the upper Laurel Canyon watershed, where it contributes to the replenishment of the upper Ballona Creek watershed. The project includes adequate buffer habitat, given the relative size of the stream. The potential exists for additional restoration in the form of redirecting the existing upstream Laurel Canyon stormwater run-off toward the spring.

2) Protect and restore aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems, including fish and wildlife corridors and the acquisition of water rights for instream flow.

The proposed project will protect a spring and approximately 200 feet of riparian habitat that is part of the upper Laurel Canyon watershed, and is wholly within the Inner Corridor of the City of Los Angeles' Mulholland Scenic Parkway. The subject parcel is a critical part of the habitat linkage that facilitates wildlife movement between eastern and western Laurel Canyon. This habitat linkage is part of a greater habitat block that includes Laurel Canyon Park, Fryman Canyon Park, Wilacre Park, and hundreds of acres of undeveloped open space on private property. The onsite spring is a critically important source of water for wildlife traveling through this area. Rehabilitation of this

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water source, and restoration of the surrounding riparian habitat, while not part of the proposed project, is a key part of the overall near-future plan for the subject acquisition. The potential exists for additional restoration in the form of redirecting the existing upstream Laurel Canyon stormwater run-off toward the spring.

The presence of California mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) P-22 in Griffith Park, in addition to recent sightings of mountain lions east of Laurel Canyon, indicate the need for improved access to fresh water for wildlife throughout the eastern Santa Monica Mountains wildlife corridor.

3) Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, stormwater resource management, and greenhouse gas reduction.

Permanent protection of the 0.97 acres ensures both higher water quality and increased flow into the upper Laurel Canyon watershed. Maintenance of the existing onsite recharge potential will contribute to groundwater supply. Protection of the Laurel Canyon watershed is integral to the overall health of the Ballona Creek watershed. The potential exists for additional restoration in the form of redirecting the existing upstream Laurel Canyon stormwater run-off toward the spring.

4) Reduce pollution or contamination of rivers, lakes, streams, or coastal waters, prevent and remediate mercury contamination from legacy mines, and protect or restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality, or flood management.

The permanent prevention of development on the parcel assures that no additional contaminants or pollution will come from the property into the Laurel Canyon watershed, or the Ballona Creek watershed. With the spring's location onsite, potential exists to also restore the adjacent onsite upstream drainage, which would greatly enhance the amount of onsite water capture. The lack of impervious surface on the majority of the property, and surrounding upslope areas will maintain existing water infiltration capacity to contribute to ground water recharge.

**The project will provide multiple benefits related to water quality, water supply, and/or watershed protection and restoration.**

The permanent protection of 0.97 acres and future rehabilitation of natural spring with approximately 200 feet of riparian habitat in the upper Laurel Canyon watershed and Mulholland Scenic Parkway sites, and maintains significant water infiltration area in an area where the availability of water resources to wildlife is imperiled.

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**The project results in more reliable water supplies pursuant to the California Water Action Plan.**

The permanent protection of 0.97 acres and future rehabilitation of natural spring with approximately 200 feet of riparian habitat assure a minimum level of storm water infiltration and flow into the groundwater systems in the upper Laurel Canyon watershed.

**The project results in restoration or protection of important species and habitat pursuant to the California Water Action Plan.**

The permanent protection of 0.97 acres and future rehabilitation of natural spring with approximately 200 feet of riparian habitat in the upper Laurel Canyon watershed, and Mulholland Scenic Parkway sites and maintains significant water infiltration area in an area where the availability of water resources to wildlife is imperiled. The presence of mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) P-22 in Griffith Park, in addition to recent sightings of mountain lions east of Laurel Canyon, indicate the need for improved access to fresh water for wildlife throughout the eastern Santa Monica Mountains wildlife corridor. The subject acquisition parcel is a critical part of the habitat linkage that facilitates wildlife movement between eastern and western Laurel Canyon.

**Applicant has proven that implementation of the project is feasible.**

The MRCA legal staff has the expertise to acquire the subject property. The MRCA owns and manages approximately 100 acres within a mile of the subject property. The proposed acquisition is a simple transaction from a willing seller and the MRCA has the subject mitigation matching funds in the bank.

**Applicant has financial capacity to perform project on a reimbursable basis.**

The MRCA has the financial capacity to perform this project on a reimbursable basis. MRCA has been implementing capital projects on a reimbursable basis for three decades, and anticipates reimbursable payments in its budgets. The MRCA also maintains a line of credit that can be drawn upon in the event of an extended delay.

**Applicant, or active project partner, has successfully completed multiple projects of similar size and scope.**

MRCA, founded in 1985, is a local public agency exercising the joint powers of [Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy](#), the [Conejo Recreation and Park District](#), and the [Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District](#). MRCA's mission is to complement the work of these and other agencies in protecting land and public access to natural lands in southern California's mountains and waterways. The MRCA currently manages over

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75,000 acres of parkland and holds fee title to approximately 20,000 acres. The MRCA owns and manages approximately 100 acres within a mile of the subject property.

**Completion of the project would assist a government agency in fulfilling a water resources protection, watershed ecosystem restoration or multi-benefit river parkway plan.**

The Ballona Creek watershed is part of the *Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP)*<sup>1</sup>. The project will contribute to four of the region's five objectives:

- Improve Water Supply – through groundwater recharge.
- Improve Water Quality – by protecting existing and finding new opportunities on site for storm water capture.
- Enhance Habitat – by preventing development and allowing natural processes to continue undisturbed on the subject property.
- Enhance Open Space and Recreation – by converting the property to public ownership, and creating a safer and more accessible means of accessing an area that already sees regular (if unsanctioned) recreational use by the public.

The project also implements the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's Acquisition Workprogram, and achieves several objectives of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works' Ballona Creek Watershed Management Plan.

**Applicant, or project partner, has 1+ years experience maintaining and operating projects of similar size and scope.**

The MRCA owns over 20,000 acres and manages over 75,000 acres of open space. The MRCA manages approximately 100 acres within a mile of the subject property. The MRCA has maintained open space for over 30 continuous years.

**The project implements a major component of an existing relevant plan related to a major recreational public use facility or watershed ecosystem restoration plan.**

The subject acquisition project, in combination with the acquisition of the five other above-mentioned Laurel – Mulholland parcels, will open up opportunities to implement the Mulholland Core Trail, and integral part of the City of Los Angeles' Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan. As noted above, the project also contributes to the implementation of IRWMP objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ladpw.org/wmd/irwmp/index.cfm?fuseaction=update2013>

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**Site contains substantial potential for restoration of rivers, lakes, streams, or coastal waters ecosystems.**

The proposed project will protect a natural spring and approximately 200 feet of a tributary stream that is part of the upper Laurel Canyon watershed. With the spring's location onsite, potential exists to also restore the adjacent onsite upstream drainage, which would greatly enhance the amount of onsite water capture.

**The project provides a high quality access point for nearby open space, parkland, regional multi-modal trails, or water-based recreation.**

Acquisition of the subject parcel will provide the public with sanctioned secondary access to the publicly-owned Laurel – Mulholland open space properties, via the southerly extension of the subject parcel to Amor Road. A safer and more accessible situation for public parking exists along the public right-of-way of Amor Road than for Laurel Canyon Boulevard.

**The project adds visitor-serving amenities, accessibility, and public safety improvements to public parkland with multiple ecosystem benefits.**

The subject acquisition parcel contains a flat pad that is suitable as a public picnic area. Additionally, the access to Amor Road offers the public a safer and more accessible parking situation than along Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Acquisition of the subject parcel will allow development of public access across all the publicly-owned Laurel-Mulholland open space properties to occur sooner.

**The project results in new public access to a watershed resource with high interpretive and/or educational value, or enhances existing access.**

The subject parcel's existing access to Amor Road offers the public a safer and more accessible parking situation than along Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Acquisition of the subject parcel will allow development of public access across all the publicly-owned Laurel-Mulholland open space properties to occur sooner.

**Project will benefit specially protected species pursuant to the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990.**

By permanently preventing development of the property, the project will benefit the eastern Santa Monica Mountains mountain lion population.

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**Extra Consideration Points**

**Quantifiable Carbon reduction Points**

**The project develops or maintains multi-use trails that connect communities, provides access to public resources and reduces vehicle miles traveled.**

The subject acquisition project, in combination with the acquisition of the five other above-mentioned Laurel – Mulholland parcels, will open up opportunities to implement the Mulholland Core Trail, and integral part of the City of Los Angeles' Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan. Additionally, the combined acquisitions, of which the subject acquisition is an integral part, will provide the public with a pedestrian-friendly connection amongst the neighborhoods along Amor Road, Mulholland Drive, and Laurel Canyon Place.

**Appendix A: Carbon Emissions Calculations**

For one single family residential development, it is assumed that:

- Each dwelling unit is an average of 1,583 square feet.
- 5 new residents will be added to the local population.
- Total number of daily trips generated will be 28 trips (distributed among the dwelling units).

**Annual Carbon Dioxide Emitted from Daily Trip Generation**

$$\frac{31.90 \text{ miles}}{\text{person} \times \text{day}} \times \frac{14 \text{ total trips}}{\text{day}} = 446.60 \text{ trip miles}$$

$$4446.60 \text{ trip miles} \div \frac{21.60 \text{ miles}}{\text{gallons}} = 20.68 \text{ gallons}$$

$$\frac{19.64 \text{ pounds CO}_2}{\text{gallons}} \times 20.68 \text{ gallons} = 406.08 \text{ lbs. CO}_2$$

$$\frac{406.08 \text{ lbs. CO}_2}{\text{day}} \times \frac{365 \text{ days}}{\text{year}} = \frac{148,217.44 \text{ lbs. CO}_2}{\text{year}}$$

**Annual Energy Consumed for Transportation Due to Residential Developments**

$$\frac{77,370,000 \text{ BTUs Consumed}}{\text{person}} \times 5 \text{ persons} = 386,850,000.00 \text{ BTUs (226,749.09 kWh)}$$

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This is equivalent to 172,352 pounds (78 metric tons) of carbon that could be sequestered by 64 acres of US forests in one year.

**Annual Carbon Equivalent Emitted From Residential Units**

$$\frac{38,800 \text{ BTUs}}{\text{ft}^2} \times \frac{1,538 \text{ ft}^2}{\text{DU}} \times 1 \text{ DUs} = 61,420,400.00 \text{ BTUs (18,000.54 kWh)}$$

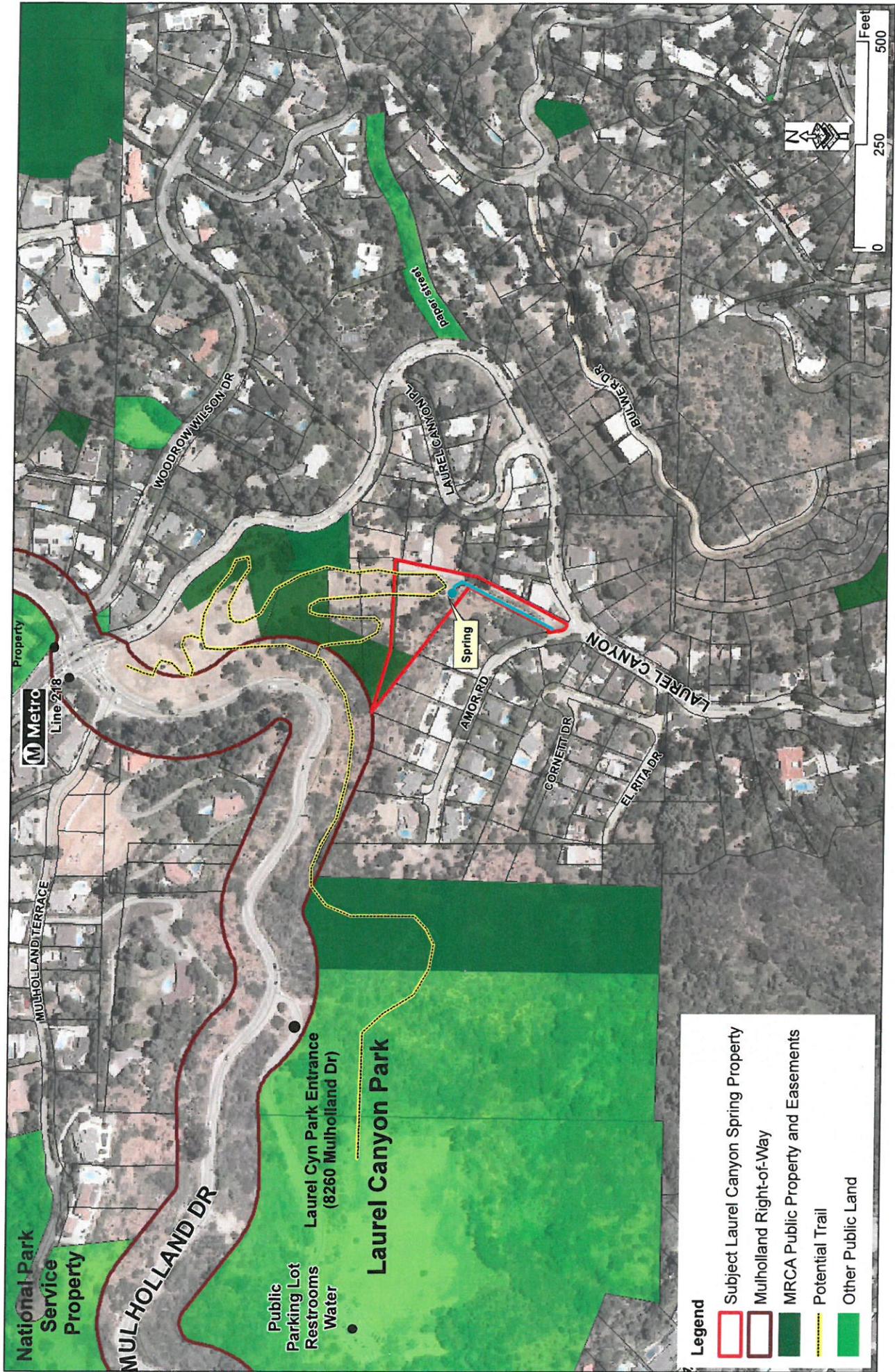
This is equivalent to 27,364.50 pounds (12.4 metric tons) of carbon that could be sequestered by 10.15 acres of US forests in one year.

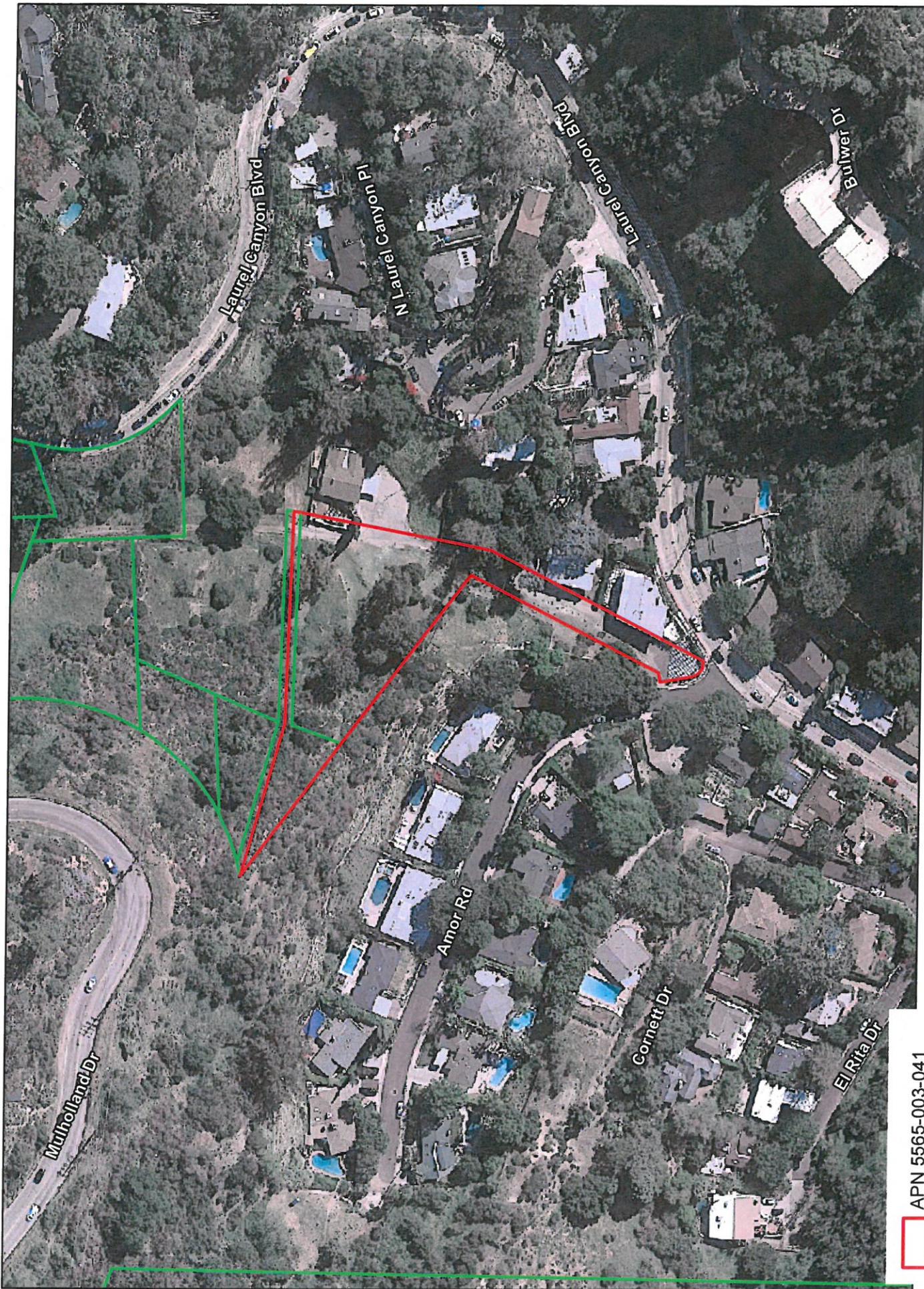
**Total carbon dioxide that would be produced annually from development:**

$$148,217.44 \text{ lbs. CO}_2 + 172,352 \text{ lbs. CO}_2 + 27,364.50 \text{ lbs. CO}_2 = 347,933.94 \text{ lbs. CO}_2$$

**Sources:**

- Bureau of Transportation Statistics. CA Average Daily Person Miles, 2009.
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Est. On-Road Fleet Fuel Economy, 2012.
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics. State Facts interactive map, 2012.
- Energy Information Administration (EIA). Frequently Asked Questions. How much carbon dioxide is produced by burning gasoline and diesel fuel?
- EIA. Residential Energy Consumption Survey, California, 2009, Table CE1.5 Summary Household Site Consumption and Expenditures in West Region, Divisions, and States.
- EIA. Residential Energy Consumption Survey, California, 2009, Table HC10.13 Average Square Footage of West Homes, by Housing Characteristics, 2009.



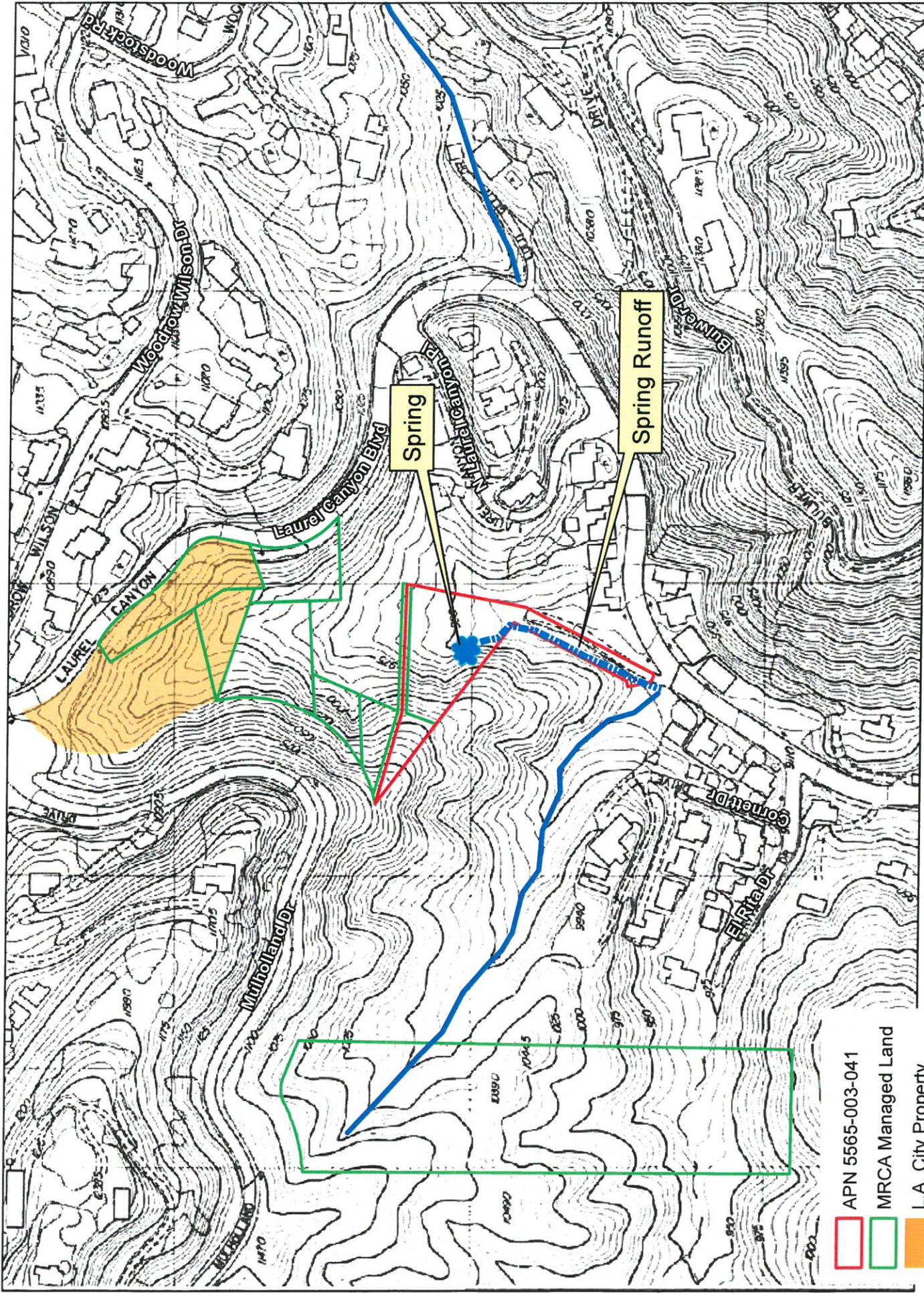


APN 5565-003-041

MRCA Managed Land

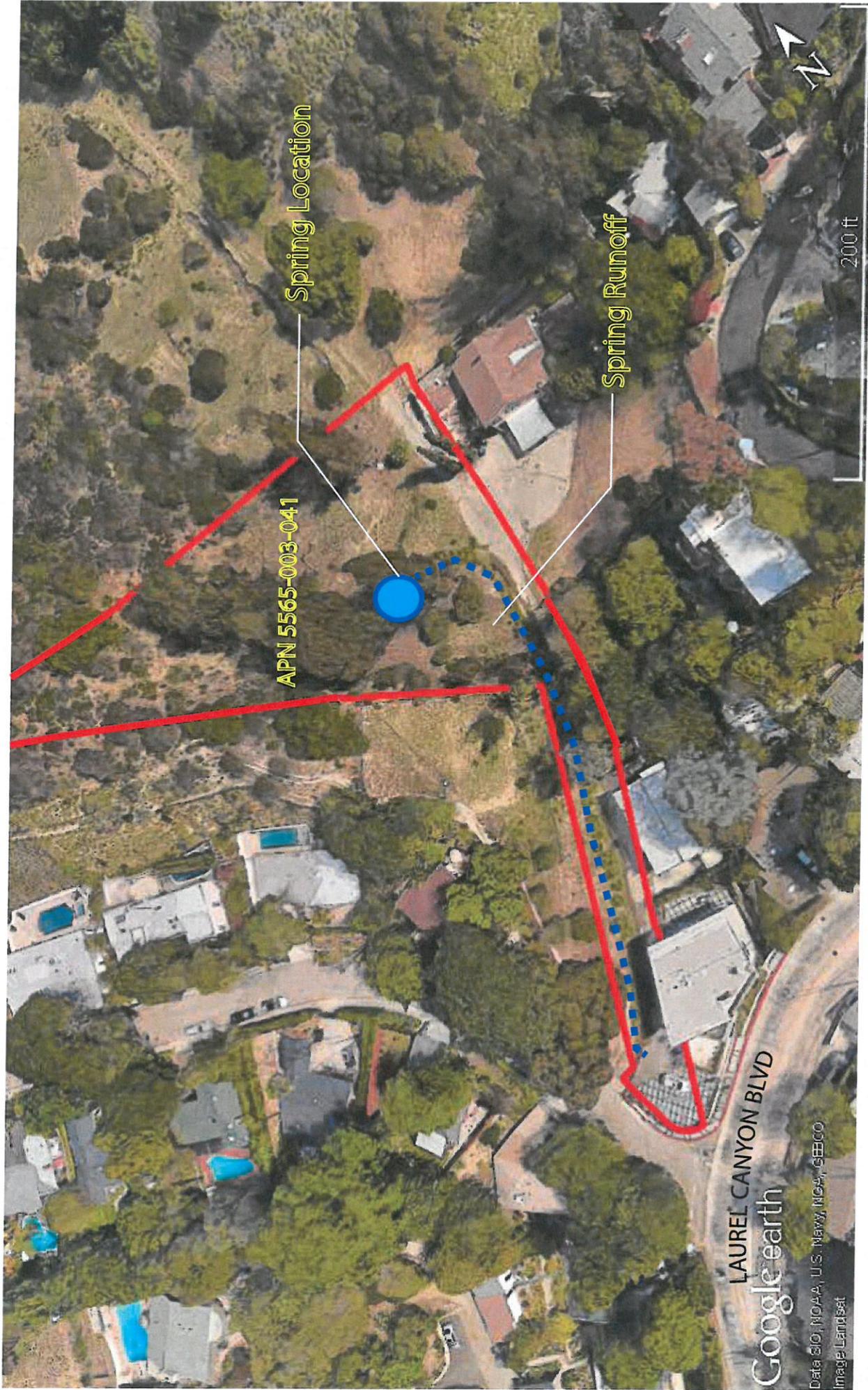
Laurel Canyon Spring Acquisition - Aerial Map



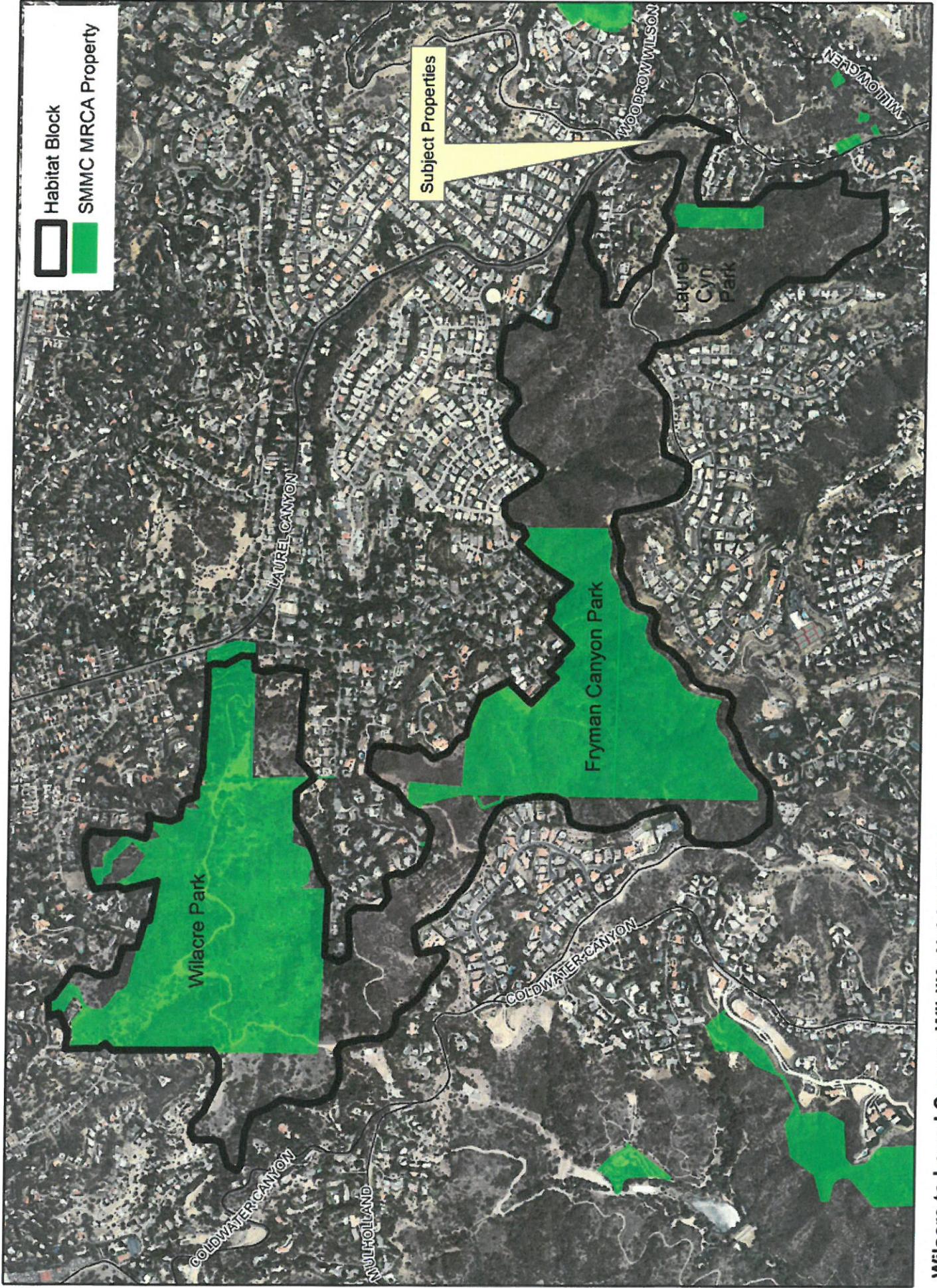


Laurel Canyon Spring Acquisition - Topo Map

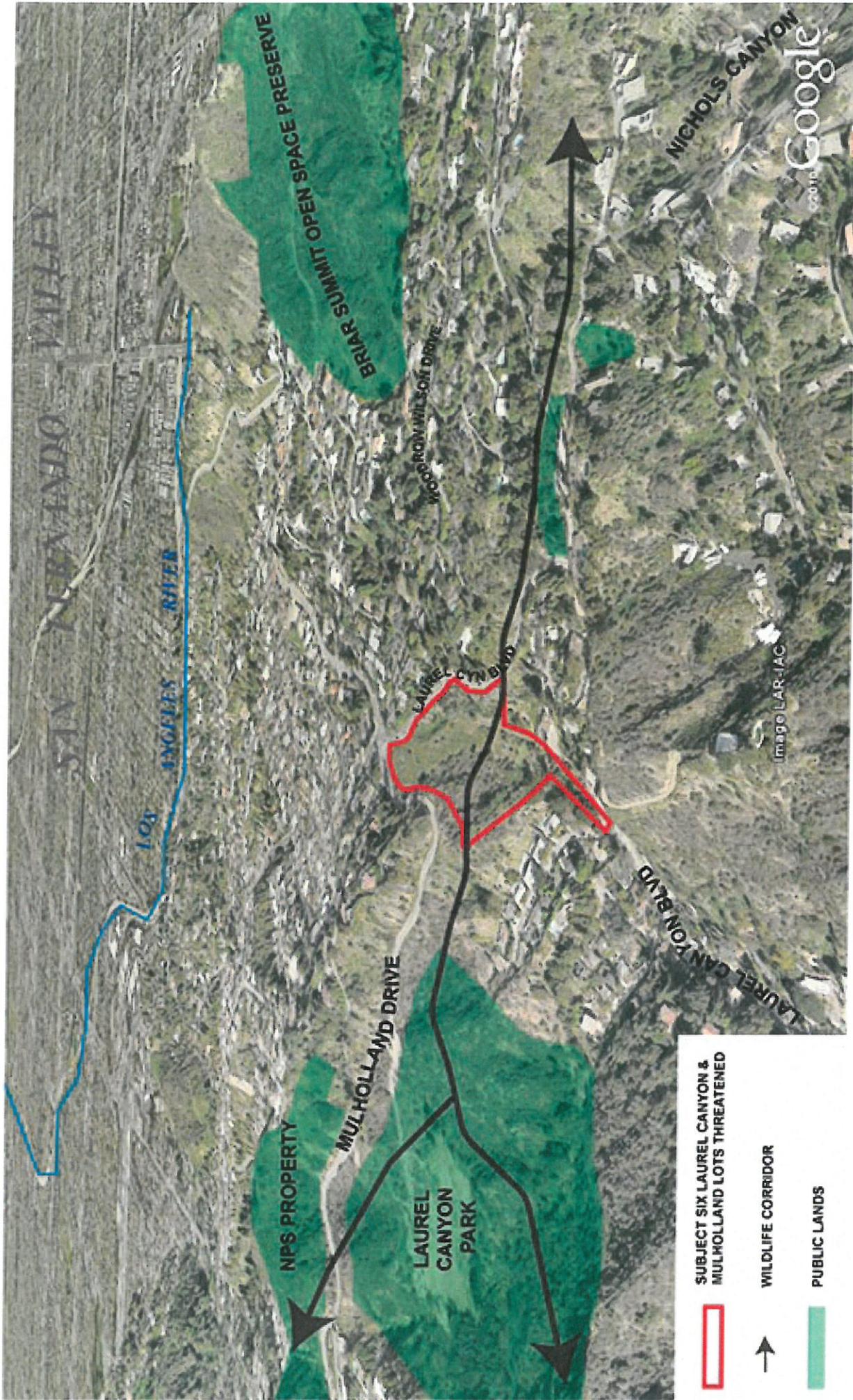
- APN 5565-003-041
- MRCA Managed Land
- L.A. City Property
- USGS Streams

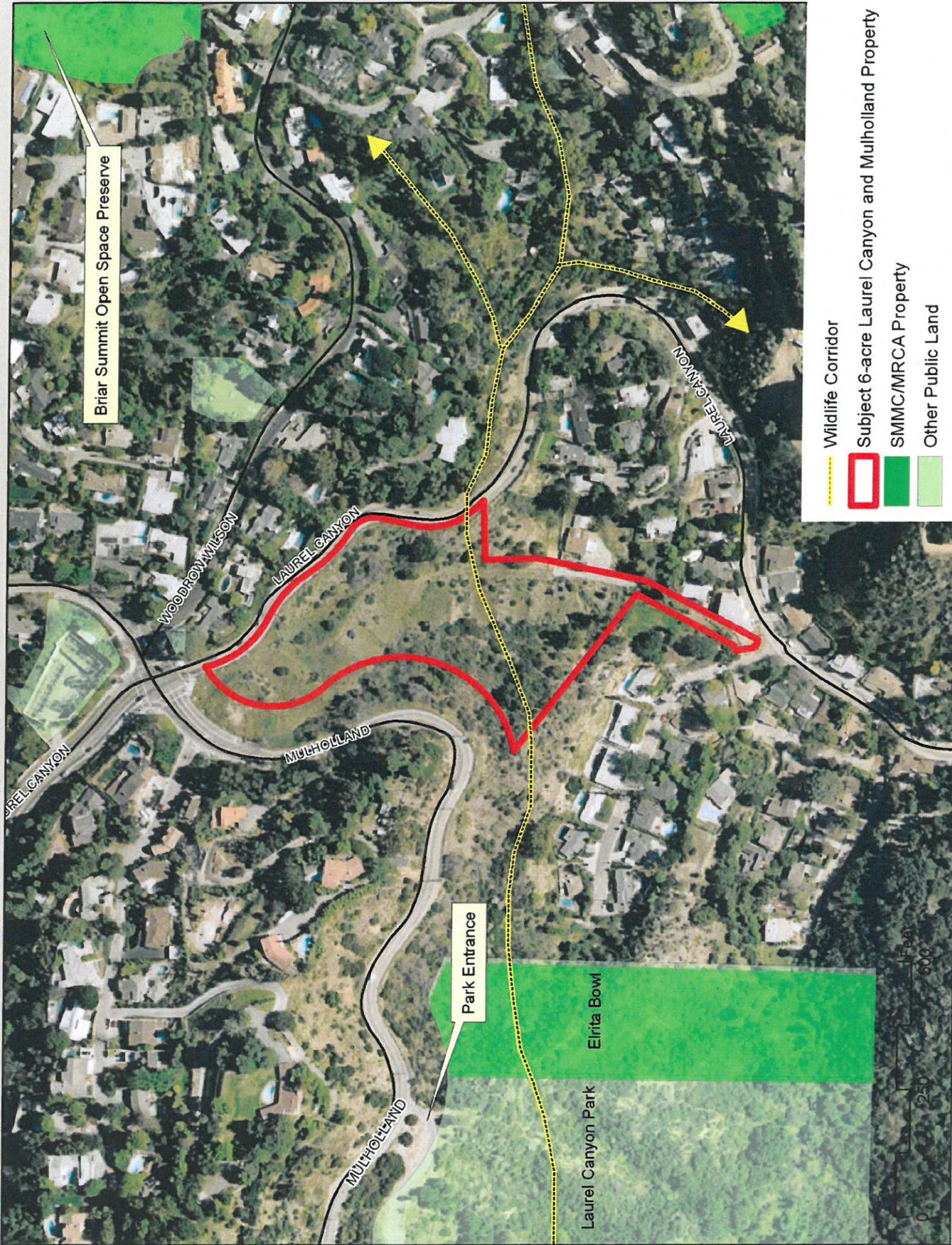


Laurel Canyon Spring Acquisition - Oblique Aerial View



**Wilacre to Laurel Canyon Wildlife Habitat Block**





Briar Summit Open Space Preserve

WOODROW WILSON

LAUREL CANYON

LAUREL CANYON

LAUREL CANYON

MULHOLLAND

MULHOLLAND

Park Entrance

Eirita Bowl

Laurel Canyon Park

Wildlife Corridor

Subject 6-acre Laurel Canyon and Mulholland Property

SMMC/MRCA Property

Other Public Land



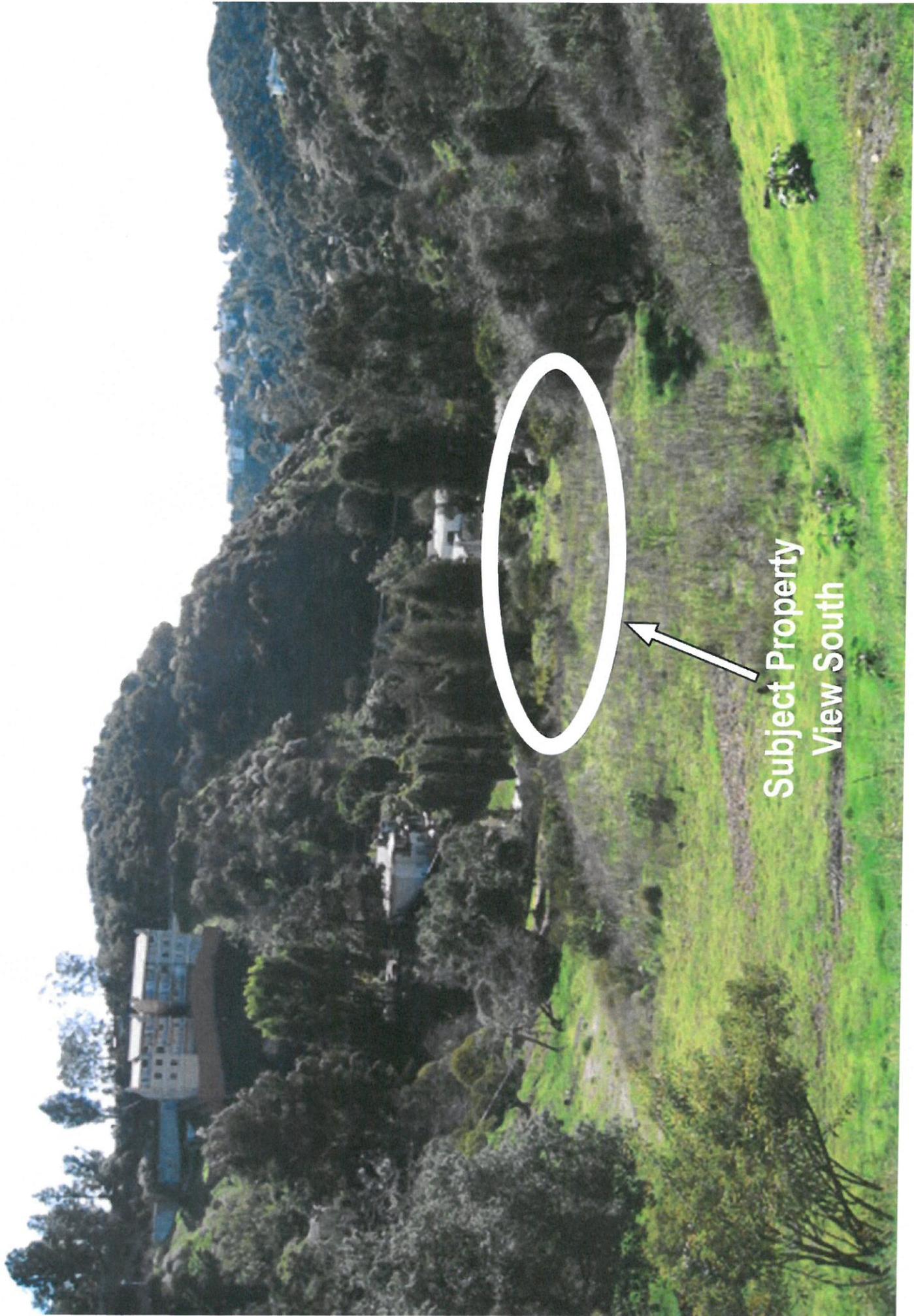


Subject Laurel Canyon and Mulholland property

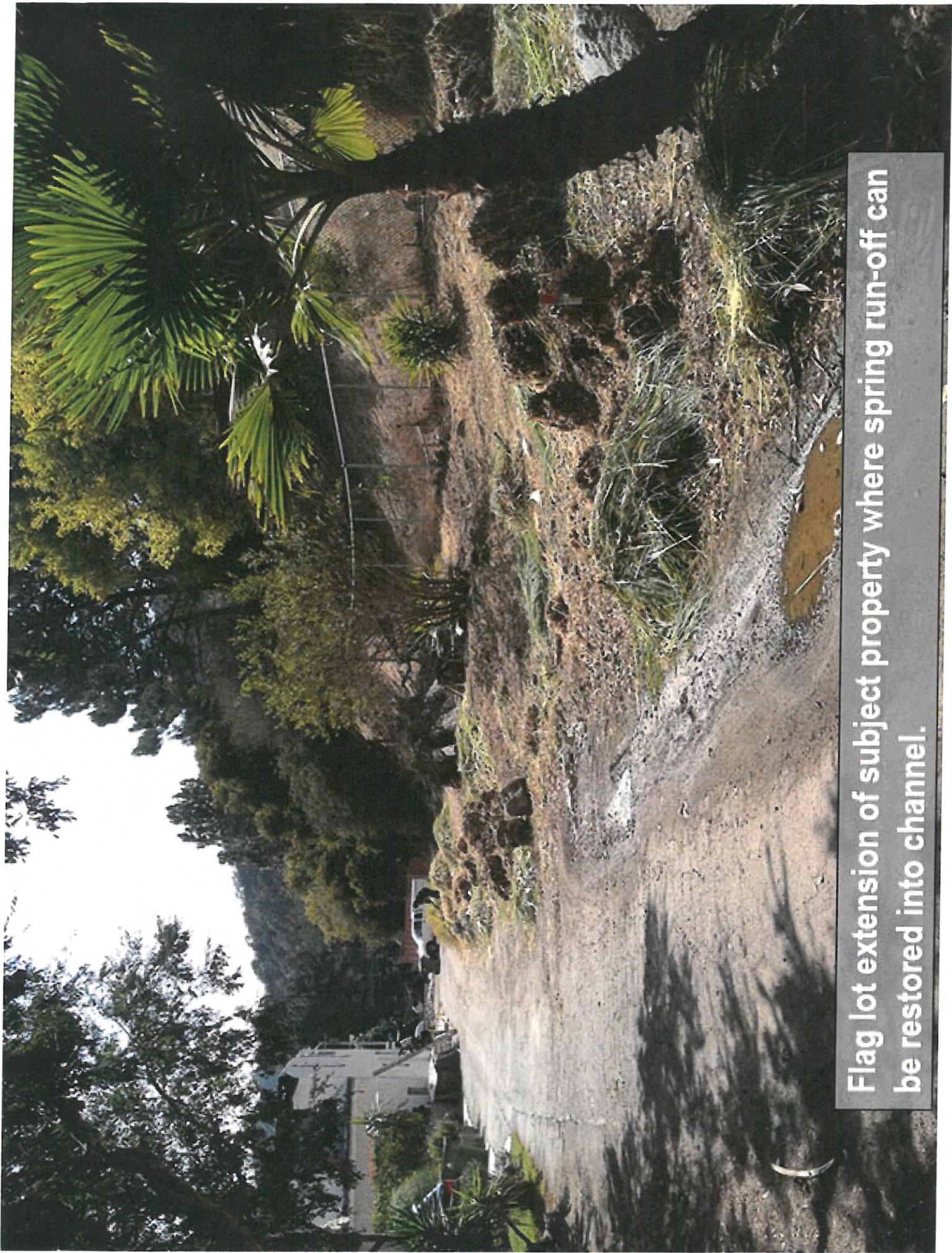
Public Land

Conceptual Trail Alignment

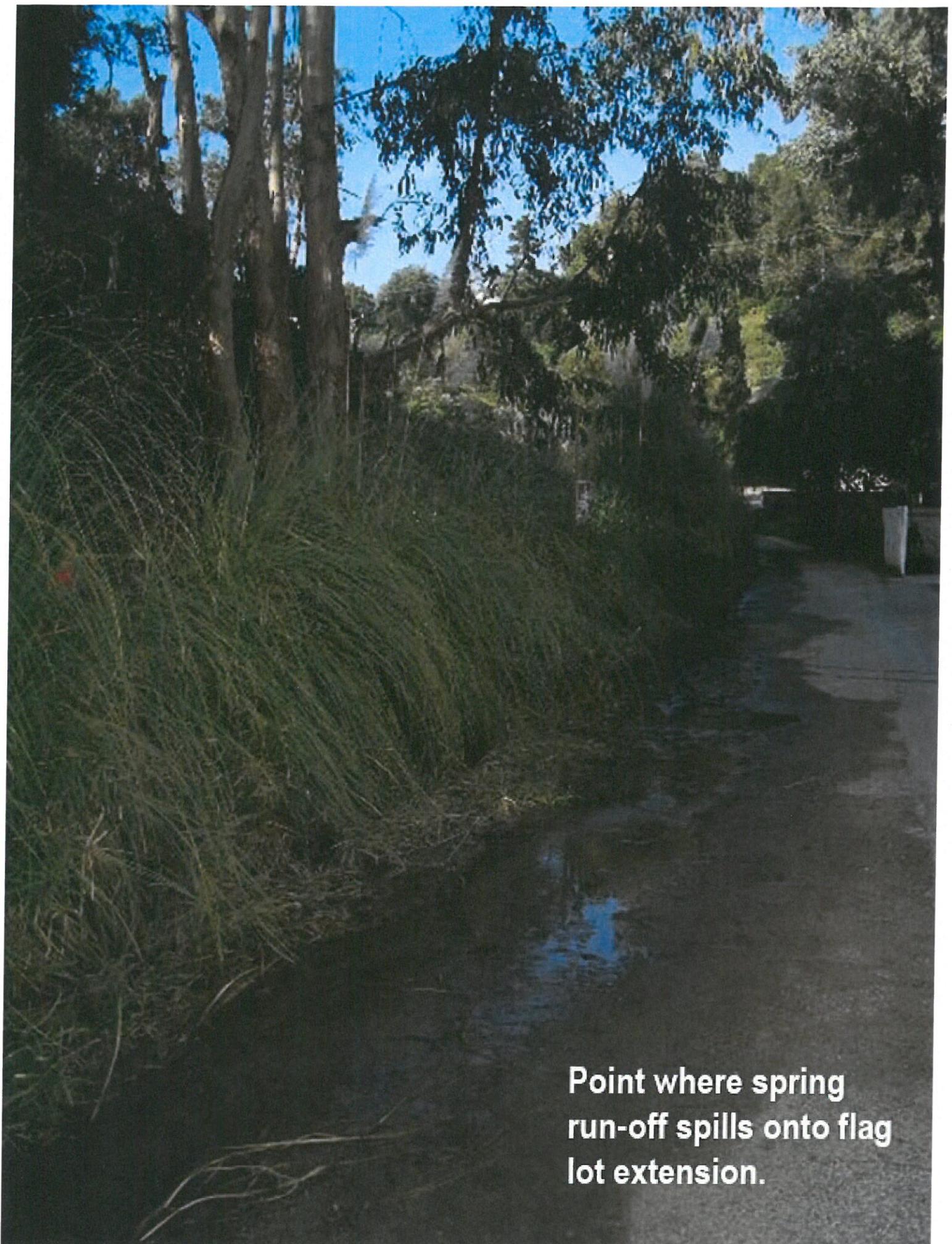




Subject Property  
View South



Flag lot extension of subject property where spring run-off can be restored into channel.



**Point where spring  
run-off spills onto flag  
lot extension.**

Spring's transition onto pavement with non-native plants.

