

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
GRANT APPLICATION**

**Project Name: Land Protection Action
Blueprints for Thirteen Year-Round Water
Sources, Eastern Santa Monica Mountains
PP&D**

Amount of Request: \$250,000

Applicant Name:
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Total Project Cost: \$250,000
Matching Funds: -0-
Lat/Long: *See Below

Applicant Address:

570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Project Address: Eastern Santa Monica
Mountains

County	Senate District	Assembly District
Los Angeles	18, 26	43, 46, 50

Phone: 310-589-3230, ext. 122
Email: diane.sacks@mrca.ca.gov

Tax ID: 77-0112367

Grantee's Authorized Representative:

Amy Lethbridge, Deputy Executive Officer
Name and Title

323-221-9944, ext. 188
Phone

Overhead Allocation Notice:

- ✓ Any overhead costs will be identified as a separate line item in the budget and invoices.
- ✓ The Conservancy encourages grantees to reduce overhead costs including vehicle and phone expenses.
- ✓ The overhead allocation policy has been submitted prior to or with the grant application.

All check boxes must be checked

Project Description:

This proposed Proposition 1 Project Planning and Design project will prepare parcel specific and sub-parcel specific land protection blueprints for thirteen known year-round water sources in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains between Bundy Canyon west of the 405 freeway and Lake Hollywood east of the 101 freeway. The proposed baseline product of each plan is to graphically show in detail with supportive text what land must be protected to maintain adequate wildlife access to each water source. Employing as many factors as possible, strategies will be laid out to achieve adequate protection via fee simple acquisition, conservation easements, and deed restrictions in favor of the MRCA.

* 34° 5'58.22"N - 118°29'25.17"W; 34° 7'5.30"N - 118°28'3.99"W; 34° 6'52.07"N - 118°22'29.66"W; 34° 6'56.40"N - 118°22'54.56"W; 34° 6'24.39"N - 118°21'37.63"W; 34° 7'12.67"N - 118°21'39.85"W; 34° 7'14.24"N - 118°20'2.94"W; 34° 7'38.60"N - 118°21'21.70"W; 34° 8'1.89"N - 118°22'3.32"W; 34° 7'51.61"N - 118°22'52.61"W; 34° 8'0.04"N - 118°25'25.11"W; 34° 8'9.21"N - 118°26'46.25"W; 34° 7'16.30"N - 118°22'30.33"W

Tasks / Milestones:	Budget:	Completion Date
Property Acquisition	-0-	---
Staff Time (Legal and Planning)	\$175,000	18 months
Appraisal, Title Reports and Appraisal Review	\$75,000	18 months

For Acquisition Projects: APN(s): N/A
Acreage: N/A

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.


Signature of Authorized Representative

2-28-14
Date

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

NARRATIVE

The requested grant funding from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1) is for project planning and design to protect wildlife access to, and the integrity of, thirteen year-round water sources in the Santa Monica Mountains between Bundy Canyon and Lake Hollywood. Without exception, year-round water sources in this planning area support wetland or riparian habitat that is rare in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. Such water sources and their associated habitat are vital to support all medium and large-sized mammals. They are also vital to amphibians and a few native reptiles.

A stepping stone system of wildlife-accessible natural water sources is essential for a viable habitat linkage system between Topanga State Park and Griffith Park. Last month the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy adopted its Eastern Santa Monica Mountains Habitat Linkage Planning Map. This proposed project planning and design effort piggybacks on that map to move closer to a permanently-protected functional linkage network. Time is of the essence to achieve adequate land protection for a system that spans approximately ten miles from east to west. The presence of sustainable medium and large-sized mammal populations in Griffith Park and all of the public lands located between the 101 and 405 freeways depends on an unbroken east-west wildlife corridor.

This proposed Proposition 1 Project Planning and Design project will prepare parcel specific and sub-parcel specific land protection blueprints for thirteen known year-round water sources in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains between Bundy Canyon west of the 405 freeway and Lake Hollywood east of the 101 freeway. The proposed baseline product of each plan is to graphically show in detail, with supportive text, what land must be protected to maintain adequate wildlife access to each water source. Employing as many factors as possible, strategies will be laid out to achieve adequate protection via fee simple acquisition, conservation easements, and deed restrictions in favor of the MRCA.

Each of the thirteen sites is demonstratively different. In some cases the water sources are already on protected land, but the property is poorly integrated into the larger habitat linkage system. The blueprints will show at a fine scale the minimum width areas necessary to at least be permanently free of obstructive fencing to provide such integration. Tools used to prepare the protection blueprints include: direct communications with property owners, analysis of title reports, application of multiple GIS layers, integration of all available City of Los Angeles data, and extensive site reconnaissance. The baseline data included for each site will show all directly related watershed, habitat connectivity, and wildlife movement barriers.

The proposed budget includes substantial funding to conduct both fee simple and conservation easement appraisals as part of the work scope. The real time availability of land valuations can be critical information to guide strategies and maximize fruitful landowner participation. Each plan will provide a turnkey template to begin negotiations

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

with landowners as either potential funding or landowner interest in charitable land donations arise. Every landowner involved will be aware of this protection effort as part of the process. In every respect, implementation of the effort begins with the first landowner contact. Effective outreach from this proposed project could be essential to the longterm viability of the entire wildlife corridor function.

Monitoring and reporting on the progress and effectiveness of the project will occur via written project status reports.

Thirteen Year-Round Water Source Locations

The thirteen proposed water source locations include eight on the south-facing slope of the range and five on the north-facing slope.

The south-facing slope locations from west to east include Oak Forest Canyon, Dixie Canyon, Laurel Canyon- Streamview, Lankershim Boulevard Terminus, and Oakshire Canyon.

The north-facing slope locations from west to east include Upper Bundy Canyon, Hoag Canyon, Laurel Canyon-Laurel Pass, Laurel Canyon-Upper Watershed, Laurel Canyon - Lookout Mountain, Upper Nichols Canyon, Lower Nichols Canyon, and Lake Hollywood – DWP.

A figure showing the context of all thirteen locations is attached. A more close up aerial photograph of each water source is also attached. The GPS location of each site is shown the application cover page.

BUDGET

The proposed Proposition 1 grant request and total project budget is \$250,000. All work will be performed by MRCA staff with the exception of real estate appraisers.

TIMELINE

The proposed grant expenditure to prepare thirteen land protection blueprints will be completed by the end of December 2017.

RESPONSE TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

The proposed acquisition project involves the protection and restoration of California streams and watersheds. The proposed acquisition project achieves six (6) Proposition 1 purposes:

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

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

The proposed project will directly contribute to the protection of land in immediate proximity to rare year-round water sources in both the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek watersheds. That land protection will secure sensitive watershed and benefit instream flow by moving future development away from thirteen year-round water sources. In addition, all land preservation ensures unimpeded rainfall infiltration and unpolluted surface runoff from the multiple subject properties both which benefit downstream water quality.

4) 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 directly contribute to the protection of land in immediate proximity to thirteen rare year-round water sources and their associated wetland and riparian habitat. The proposed project will directly contribute to the protection of land that provides habitat connectivity to thirteen year-round water sources.

8) Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health.

The proposed project will directly contribute to the protection of land in immediate proximity to thirteen rare year-round water sources and their associated wetland and riparian habitat. This protection will maintain rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge. The proposed project actions are all directly related to long-term watershed health.

9) 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.

The proposed project will directly contribute to the protection of land in immediate proximity to thirteen rare year-round water sources and their associated wetland and riparian habitat. This protection will maintain rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge in the immediately surrounding watershed. The proposed project actions are all directly related to long-term watershed health. In addition all land preservation ensures unimpeded rainfall infiltration and unpolluted surface runoff from the multiple subject properties both which benefit downstream water quality. The protection of natural land ensures the presence of a carbon sink (sequestration) in an urban area to help with the reduction of greenhouse gas.

11) 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 proposed project will directly contribute to the protection of land in immediate proximity to thirteen rare year-round water sources and their associated wetland and riparian habitat. This protection will maintain rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge in the immediately surrounding watershed. The proposed project actions are all directly related to long-term watershed health. In addition all land preservation ensures unimpeded rainfall infiltration and unpolluted surface runoff from the multiple

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

subject properties both which benefit downstream water quality. Preservation of permeable landscape reduces potential flooding in downstream areas.

12) Assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened, or migratory species by improving watershed health, instream flows, fish passage, coastal or inland wetland restoration, or other means, such as natural community conservation plan and habitat conservation plan implementation.

The proposed project will directly facilitate the permanent protection of key watershed area adjacent to thirteen rare year-round water sources. The protected land will provide ample opportunity for habitat and drainage restoration to improve watershed and ecosystem health. More protected and restored land in watersheds directly above these natural surface water locations incrementally results in increased groundwater recharge and subsequent above ground flows.

The proposed project is directly related to the implementation of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's December 2016 adopted Eastern Santa Monica Mountains Habitat Linkage Planning Map. Aided by this adopted map, the project will directly assist in the protection of habitat linkages for all medium and large-bodied mammals that must migrate through the eastern Santa Monica Mountains to find mates, new territory, water sources, and food. In addition, this project shall directly lead to improved habitat conditions and connectivity for all wildlife species including small mammals, birds, and herpetofauna.

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

The proposed project will directly contribute to the protection of land in immediate proximity to thirteen rare year-round water sources and their associated wetland and riparian habitat. This protection will maintain rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge in the immediately surrounding watershed. The proposed project actions are all directly related to long-term watershed health. In addition all land preservation ensures unimpeded rainfall infiltration and unpolluted surface runoff from the multiple subject properties both which benefit downstream water quality.

The proposed project will directly facilitate the permanent protection of key watershed area adjacent to thirteen rare year-round water sources. The protected land will provide ample opportunity for habitat and drainage restoration to improve watershed and ecosystem health. More protected and restored land in watersheds directly above these natural surface water locations incrementally results in increased groundwater recharge and subsequent above ground flows.

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

Through the facilitation of permanent land protection in close proximity to rare natural perennial water sources, the project has the potential to infiltrate a substantial amount of

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

storm water into the natural landscape, which will incrementally augment groundwater storage and overall natural watershed storage capacity. Additionally, surface runoff from the property would generally be free of anthropogenic pollutants, creating a more reliable water supply for a healthier watershed and improved water quality. The thirteen subject locations are part of the headwaters of Ballona Creek or the Los Angeles River.

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

All thirteen of the subject locations are integral to a State (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy) designated Eastern Santa Monica Mountains Habitat Linkage Planning Area Map. Additionally, protection of the subject property will also provide habitat for multiple other species including raptors and all sized mammals that require a habitat connectivity to survive in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. Mountain lions and bobcats are now present east of the 405 freeway.

The project results in more resilient and sustainably managed water infrastructure pursuant to the California Water Action Plan.

Through the incremental prevention of impermeable development near thirteen year-round water sources, the project will result in more natural water infrastructure in the form of infiltration, enhanced stream flow, and improved water quality. A new development would likely result in increased runoff and a greater need for flood protection structures. By eliminating the possibility of these new impacts to the region's infrastructure, the proposed project meets this objective of the California Water Action Plan.

The project employs new or innovative technology or practices, including decision support tools that support the integration of multiple jurisdictions, including, but not limited to, water supply, flood control, land use, and sanitation.

The project employs the innovative and proactive practice of developing hyper-focused year-round water source land protection plans. This practice is not generalized planning or mapping. It is laser-focused, high detail work with the defined objective of land protection to habitat linkages that connect and buffer thirteen identified natural perennial water sources for wildlife.

Applicant has proven that implementation of the project is feasible.

The existing MRCA staff biologists, project analysts, and GIS specialist have the expertise to undertake this project in a timely manner.

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 land planning and protection projects on a reimbursable

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

basis for decades. 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 joint powers of the 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 mountains. Since its inception, the MRCA has acquired fee title to over 75,000 acres for natural resources conservation and manages over 55,000 acres of parkland.

The MRCA has been involved in eastern Santa Monica Mountain's planning, land protection actions, and land interest acquisitions continuously for approximately the last thirty years.

The project is a partnership between two or more organizations and each organization has committed to contributing toward project implementation.

The project will be conducted in consultation with Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW). CLAW is a non-profit organization with local expertise and strong rapport with local landowners in many of the subject canyon sites. CLAW is fully committed to providing assistance on the project.

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 subject property is within the *Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP)*¹. The proposed acquisition will contribute to four of the subregion's five objectives:

- Improve Water Supply – through capturing storm water via infiltration and groundwater recharge over the long term.
- Improve Water Quality – the prevention of development onsite would allow unpolluted surface water runoff from the property to dilute the downstream concentrations of pollutants found in all downstream portions of the watershed.
- Enhance Habitat – by preventing development and protecting natural resources in perpetuity, allowing for habitat conservation and water quality enhancement opportunities.
- Enhance Open Space and Recreation – by converting some property to public ownership, which will allow for passive recreation opportunities.

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

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

Additionally, both the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek are listed as impaired water bodies (coliform bacteria, selenium) pursuant to the Clean Water Act. Both the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek would benefit from the project as the permanent protection of natural watershed would assist in improving this impaired condition.

The project provides a plan or feasibility study that enhances cooperative watershed health protection and restoration important to two or more organizations.

The proposed permanent protection of land both around, and leading to, thirteen natural year-round water sources will result in open space protection, habitat enhancement, and improved water quality. The property is within the *Greater Los Angeles County IRWMP*, which involves the cooperation of multiple local and municipal agencies within Los Angeles County. The project benefits water quality for all Santa Monica Bay associated organizations.

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

MRCA has acquired fee simple properties and managed those lands since the agency's inception in 1985. The MRCA has acquired conservation easements and deed restrictions for over twenty years. The MRCA monitors its conservation easements and deed restrictions and has the in house legal capacity to pursue violations. Additionally, MRCA has assisted several other public agencies in managing their lands, such as the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The MRCA, City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy own a multitude of parklands near the subject thirteen water sources.

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

As noted above, the project contributes to implementation of IRWMP objectives and Santa Monica Bay water quality objectives. The whole project area is part of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's recently adopted Eastern Santa Monica Mountains Habitat Linkage Planning Map. Several of the thirteen water sources are located within the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan boundary. The Lake Hollywood site includes the Lake Hollywood trail around the reservoir.

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

The primary objectives of the proposed land protection blueprints are to permanently protect natural year-round water sources and the habitat linkages that tie them into the larger, overall eastern Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem. However those objectives do not always have to conflict with recreational uses. One of the proposed land

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

protection blueprint areas—Hoag Canyon—would provide a high quality access point for a major open space canyon with no existing public access. Any land protection around any of the twelve other water source locations would enhance public views from existing public lands.

Applicant has conducted outreach to the affected communities.

The MRCA has not conducted direct recent affected-community outreach for this project. However, if the affected community is partially constituted by the private landowners adjacent to the thirteen water sources, the MRCA has done a substantial amount of public outreach over the course of many years with many landowners and affected neighbors.

The project includes interpretive programming or personal interpretation, and a plan to reach community audiences with meaningful information about a watershed resource.

The project does not include interpretive programming or personal interpretation. However, the project will generate detailed site specific information that will be exceptionally meaningful about thirteen specific watershed resources.

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

The project does not add visitor-serving amenities, accessibility, and public safety improvements to public parkland with multiple ecosystem benefits.

The project provides non-personal interpretive elements that will significantly enhance appreciation and enjoyment of a watershed resource.

The project does not provide any non-personal interpretive elements.

The project creates a new venue for education and/or interpretation activities that promote water conservation and stewardship, or enhances an existing venue.

The project does not create any new venues for education and/or interpretive activities.

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

One of the proposed land protection blueprint areas—Hoag Canyon—would provide a high quality access point for a major open space canyon with no existing public access. Hoag Canyon is a large scale watershed resource with both high interpretive and education value.

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

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

By directly facilitating the permanent protection of land around thirteen year-round natural water sources and protecting wildlife corridors that lead to the water sources, the proposed project will benefit the local mountain lion population. With the exception of the Laurel Canyon – Streamview location, all of the subject sites are readily accessible by mountain lions. The number of lion sightings in the study area has shown a steady increase over the past five years.

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 project does not develop or maintain any multi-use trails.

The project engages local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation regarding long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

The project does not engage broader local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation regarding long-term stewardship and climate change awareness. The project does, however, engage a community of at least 100 landowners that have property necessary to meet the project objectives.

Additional Criteria

Completion of the project would assist in fulfilling a Federal water resources protection or watershed ecosystem restoration plan.

Section 303 of the Federal Clean Water Act requires that each State identify waters where the quality is impaired for applicable standards. The list of impaired waters, called the §303(d) list, evaluates water bodies in terms of pollution levels, the severity of pollution, and the beneficial uses. Where quality is impaired, a total maximum daily load (TMDL) is required to be established for each pollutant. All of the thirteen project sites drain into either the Los Angeles River or Ballona Creek which are both listed as impaired for fecal coliform bacteria and selenium².

² http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/2010state_ir_reports/01113.shtml#20203

Proposition 1 Competitive Grant Application
PP&D

Project utilizes a local job training entity for a portion of the work.

The project does not include the use of a local job training entity. The tasks needed to complete the proposed acquisition are not entry-level skills.

Project has secured matching funds of at least 25 percent of total project costs.

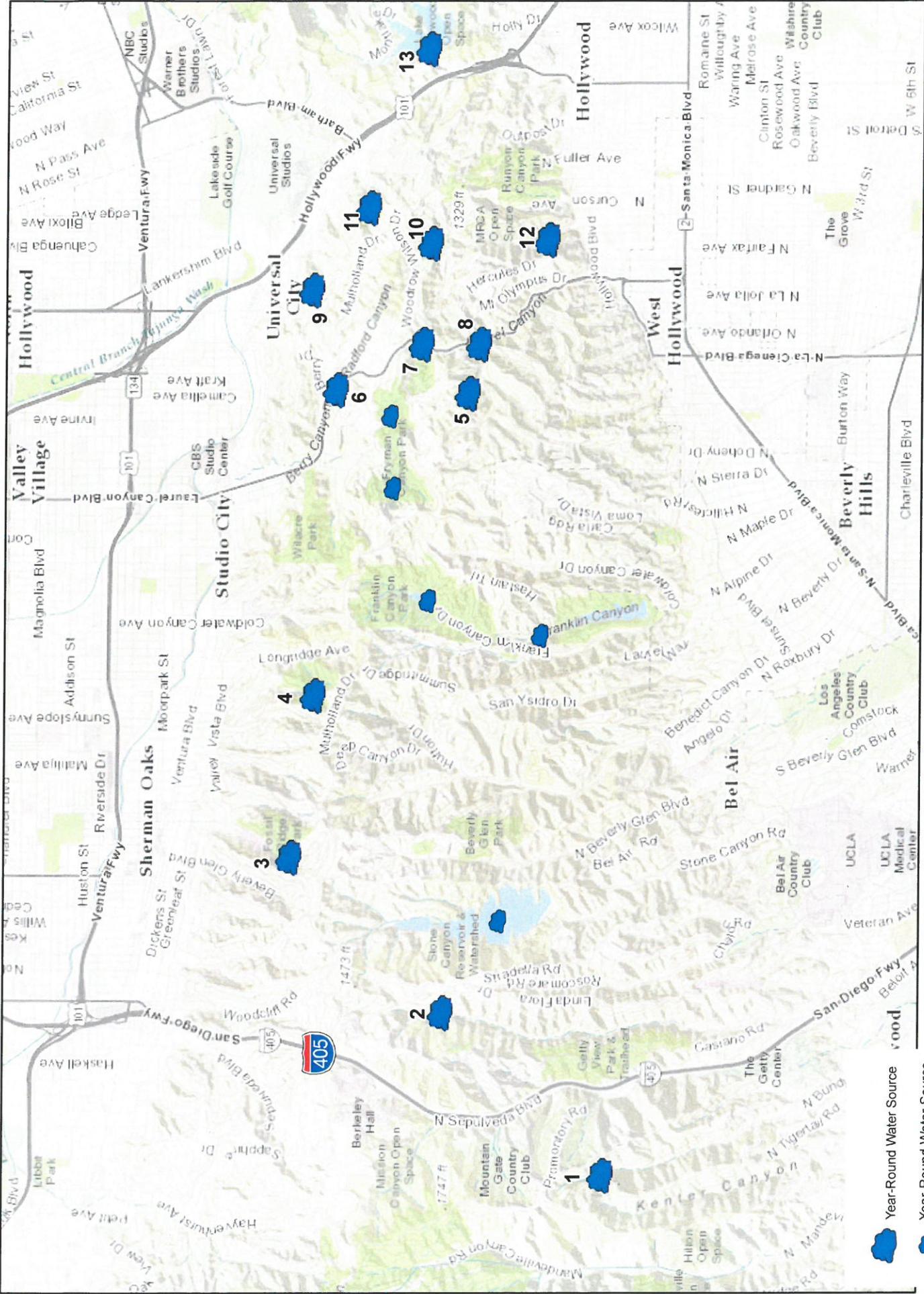
The project has not secured at least 25 percent in matching funds.

Project is within 1 mile of public transportation.

Four of the thirteen year-round water source sites are located within one mile of MTA line 218 (Laurel Canyon). Line 218 connects to both the Fairfax and Studio City sides of the mountains. On weekends the buses run from approximately 7 am to 7 pm. On Weekdays from 6 am to after 8 pm.

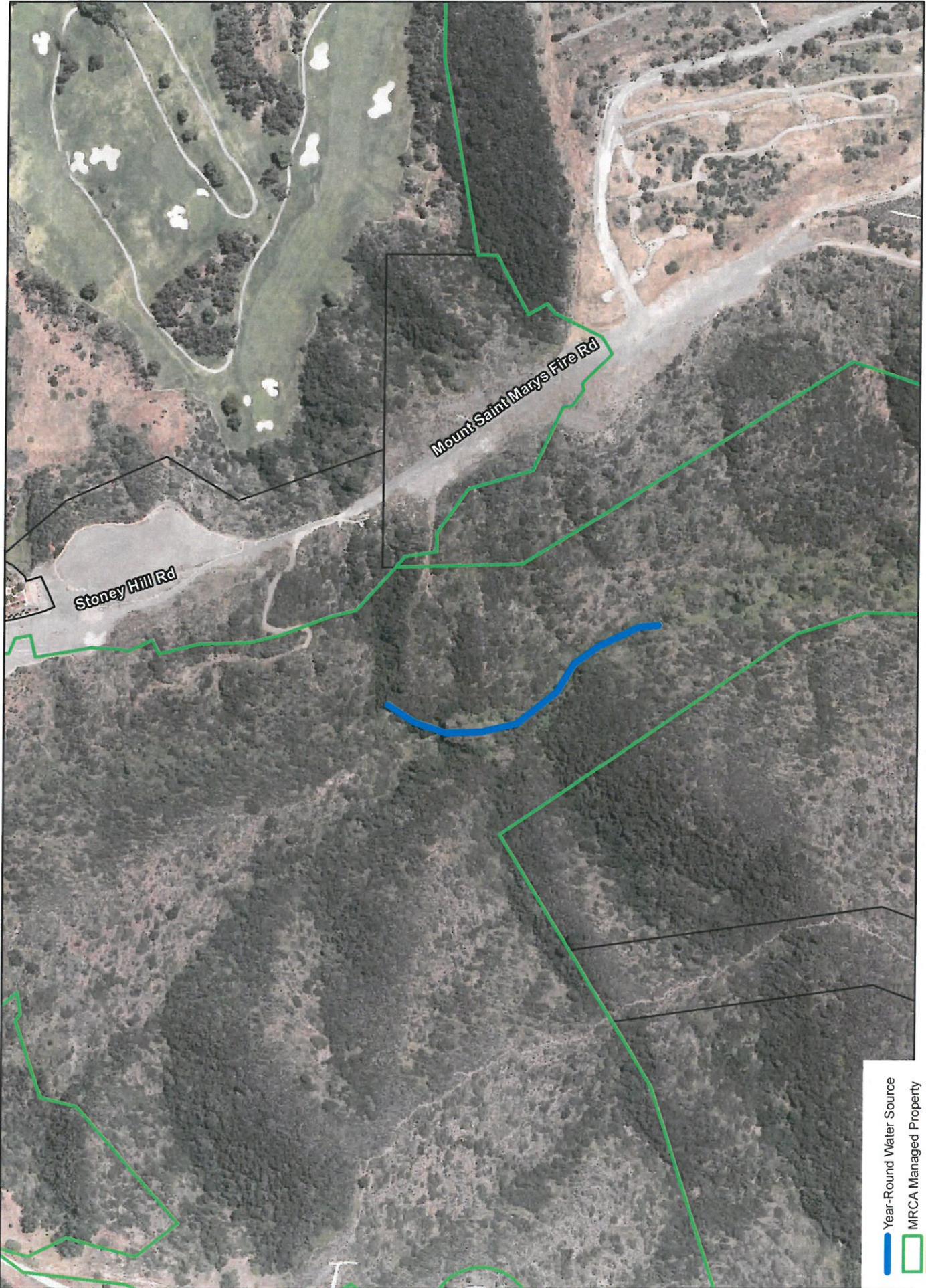
Project results in additional uses for users of a wide range of ability levels.

The project does not result in additional uses for users of a wide range of ability levels.



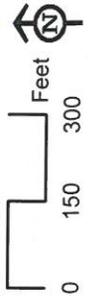
Land Protection Action Blueprints for Thirteen Year-Round Water Sources, Eastern Santa Monica Mountains

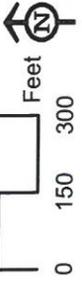
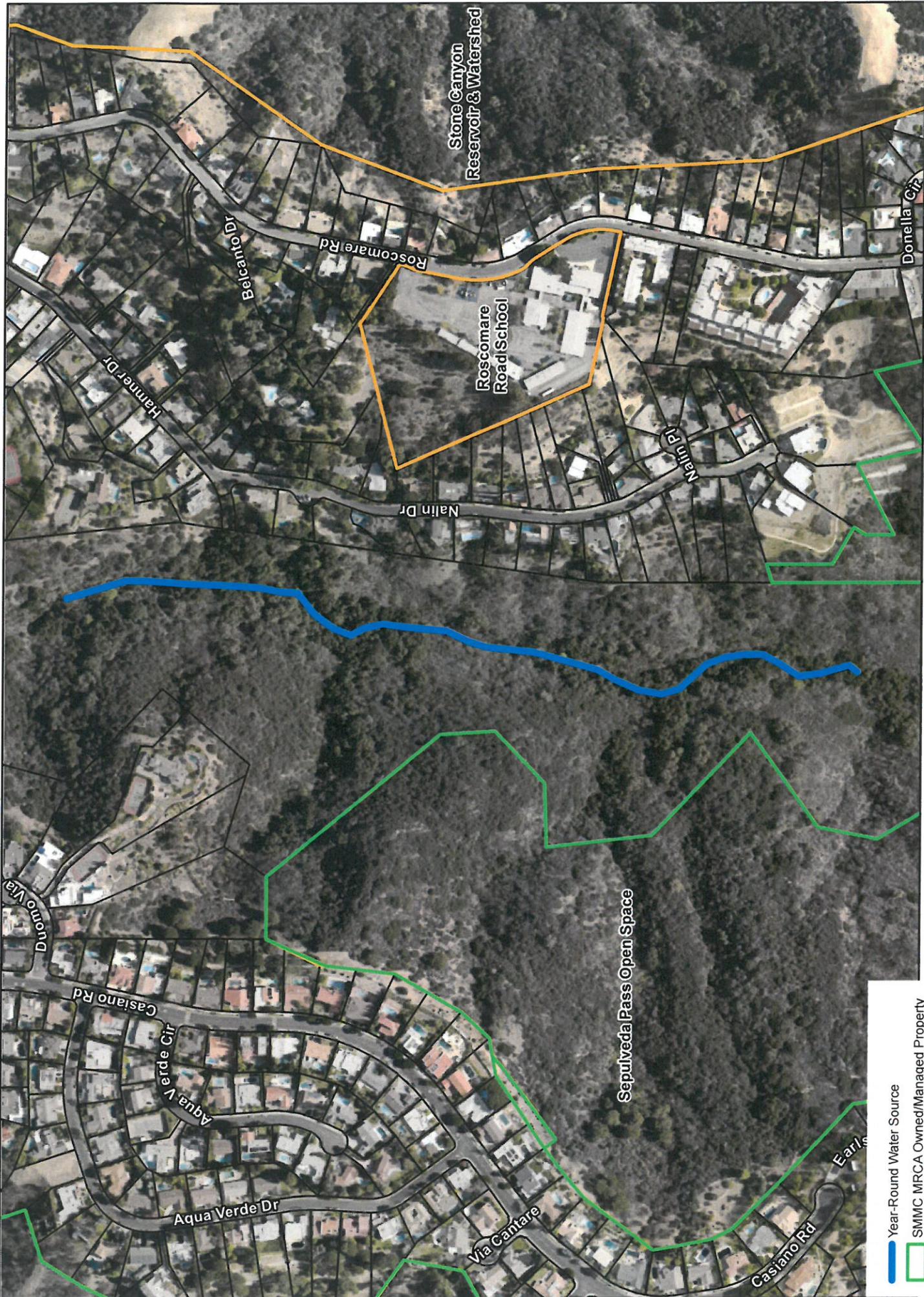
-  Year-Round Water Source
-  Year-Round Water Source Not in Need of Additional Study or Protection



- Year-Round Water Source
- MRCA Managed Property
- Other Public Land

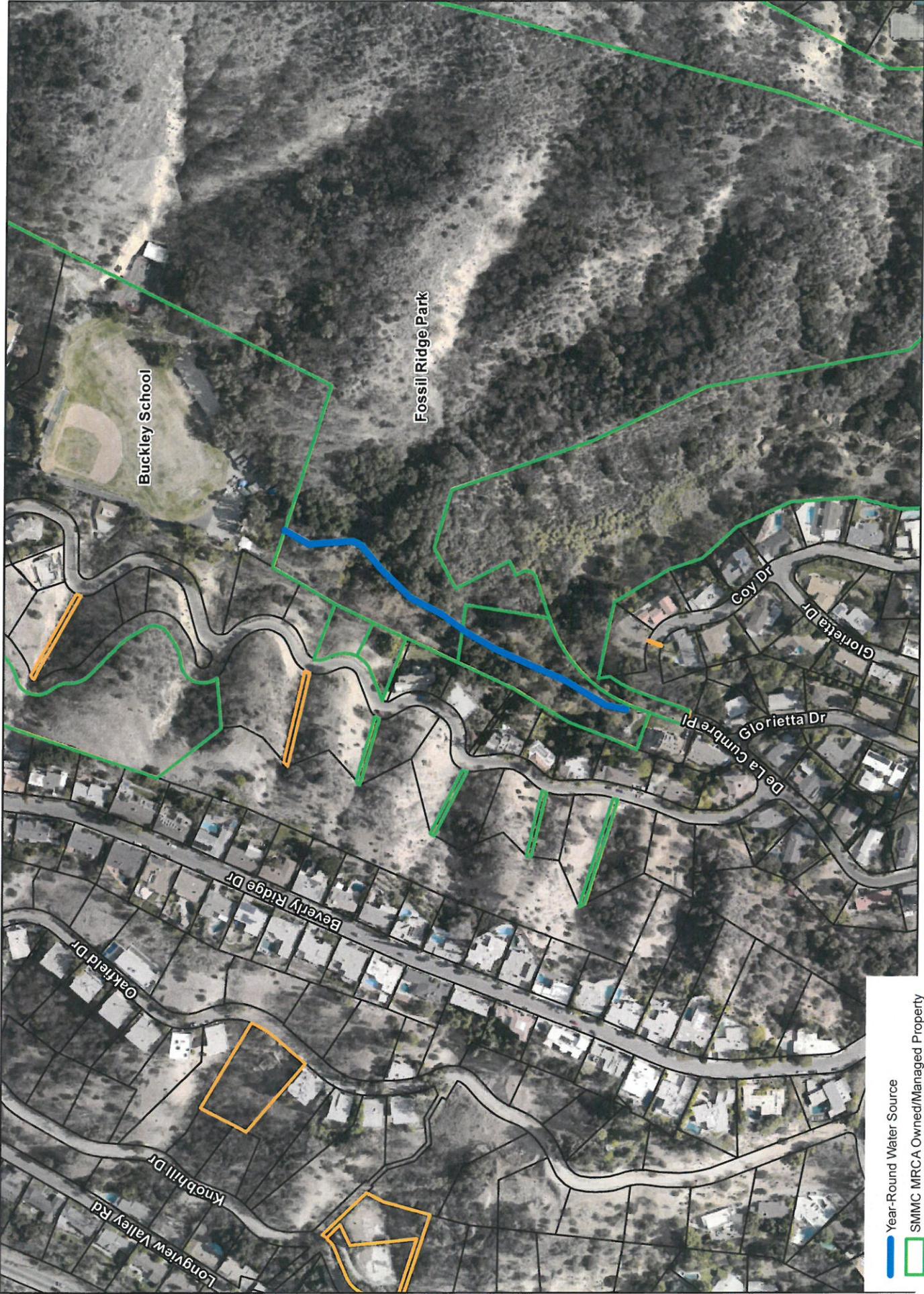
Site 1. Upper Bundy Canyon





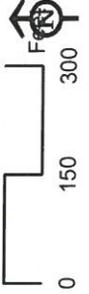
Site 2. Hoag Canyon

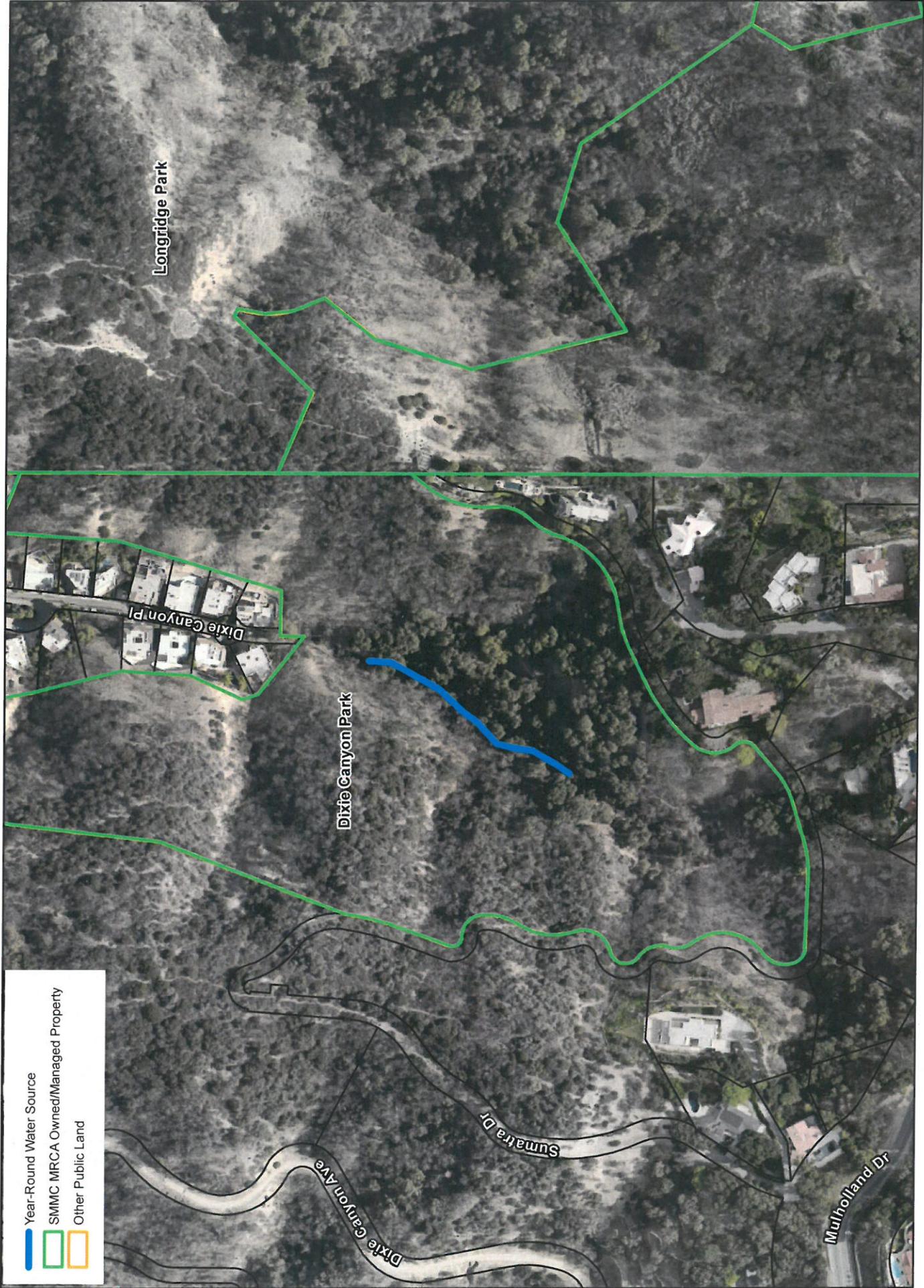
- Year-Round Water Source
- SMMC MRCA Owned/Managed Property
- Other Public Land



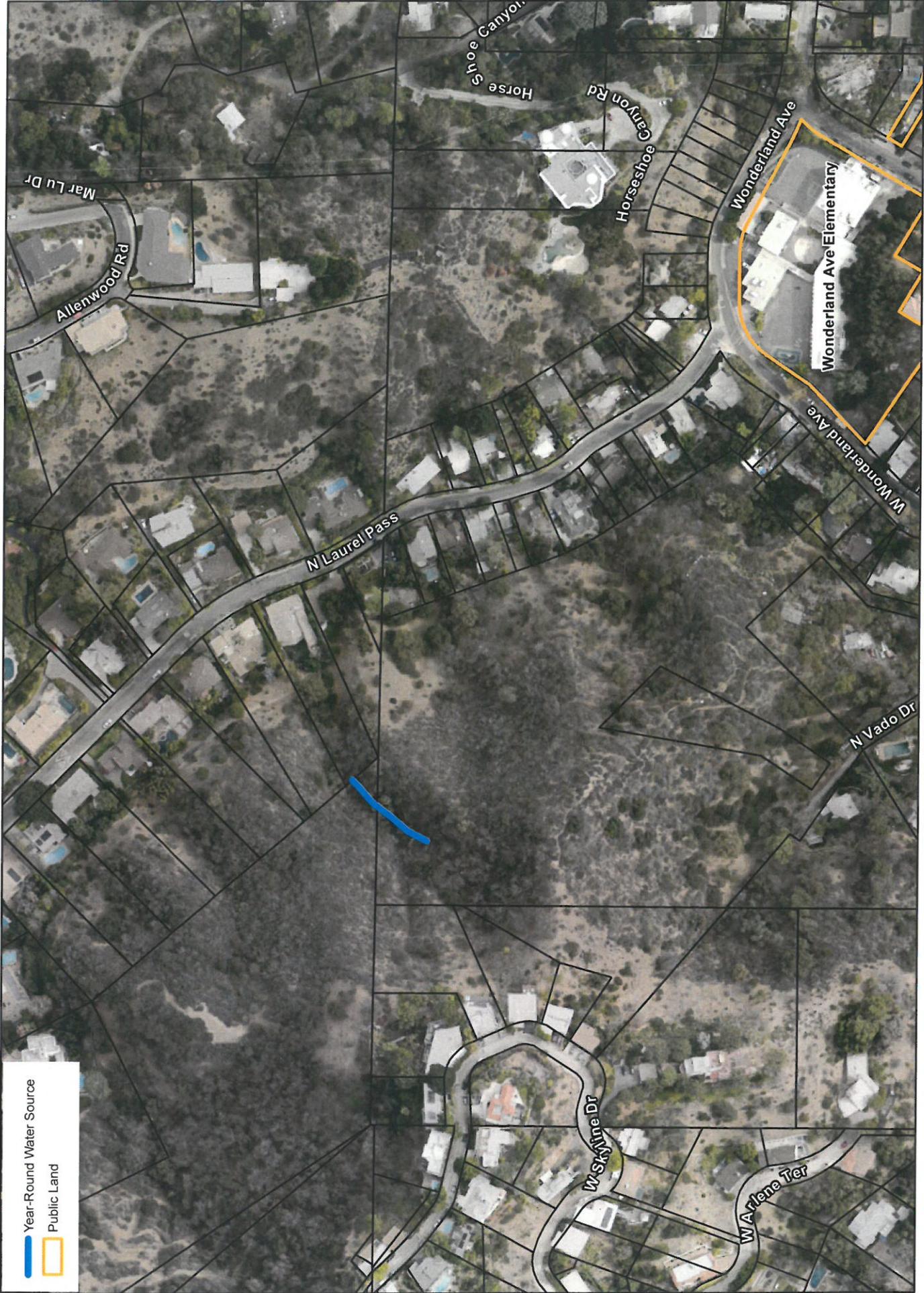
- █ Year-Round Water Source
- █ SMMC MRCA Owned/Managed Property
- █ Other Public Land

Site 3. Oak Forest Canyon





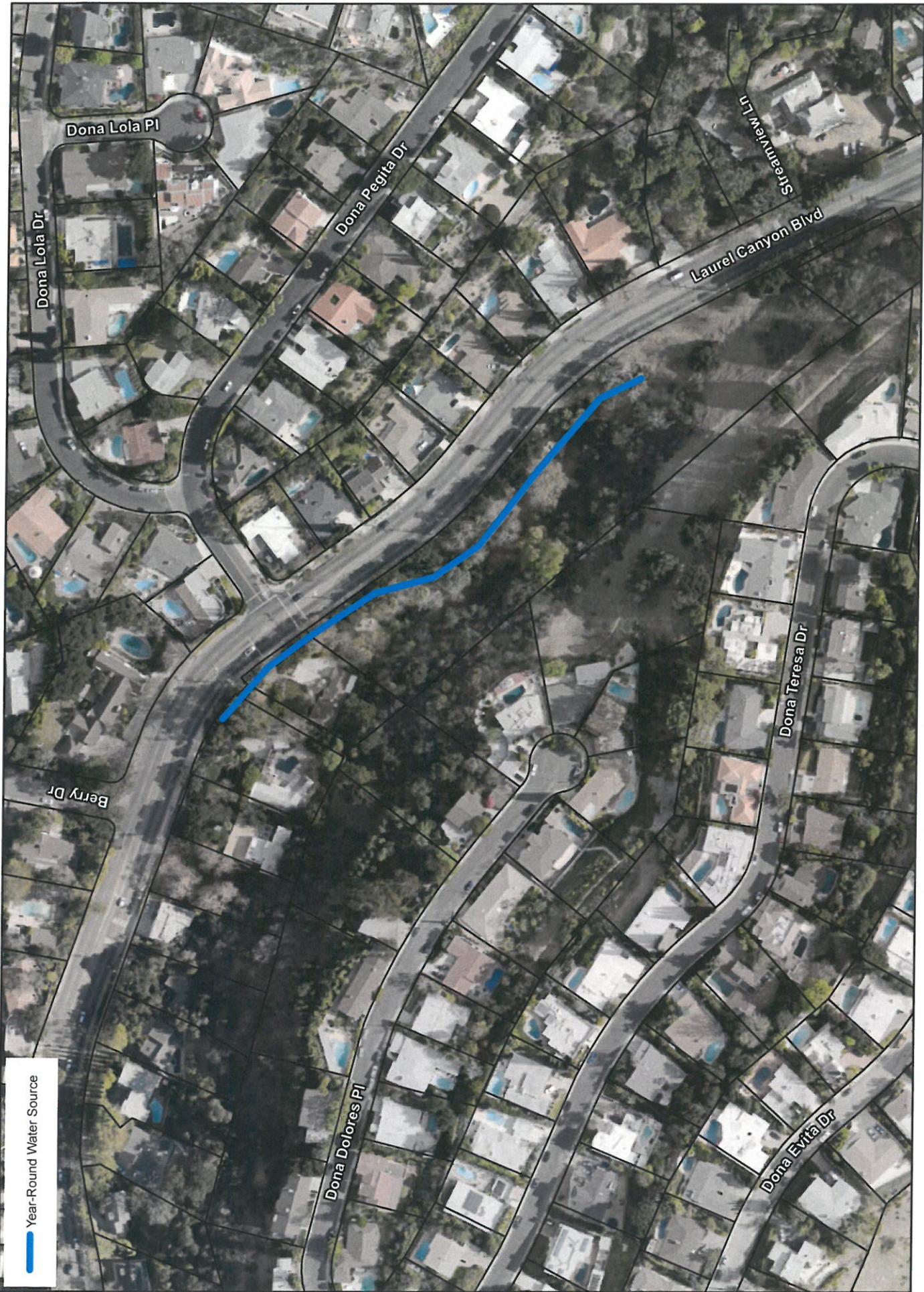
Site 4. Dixie Canyon



Year-Round Water Source
Public Land



Site 5. Laurel Canyon- Laurel Pass



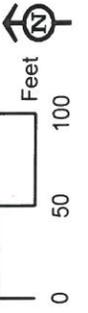
Site 6. Laurel Canyon - Streamview



Year-Round Water Source

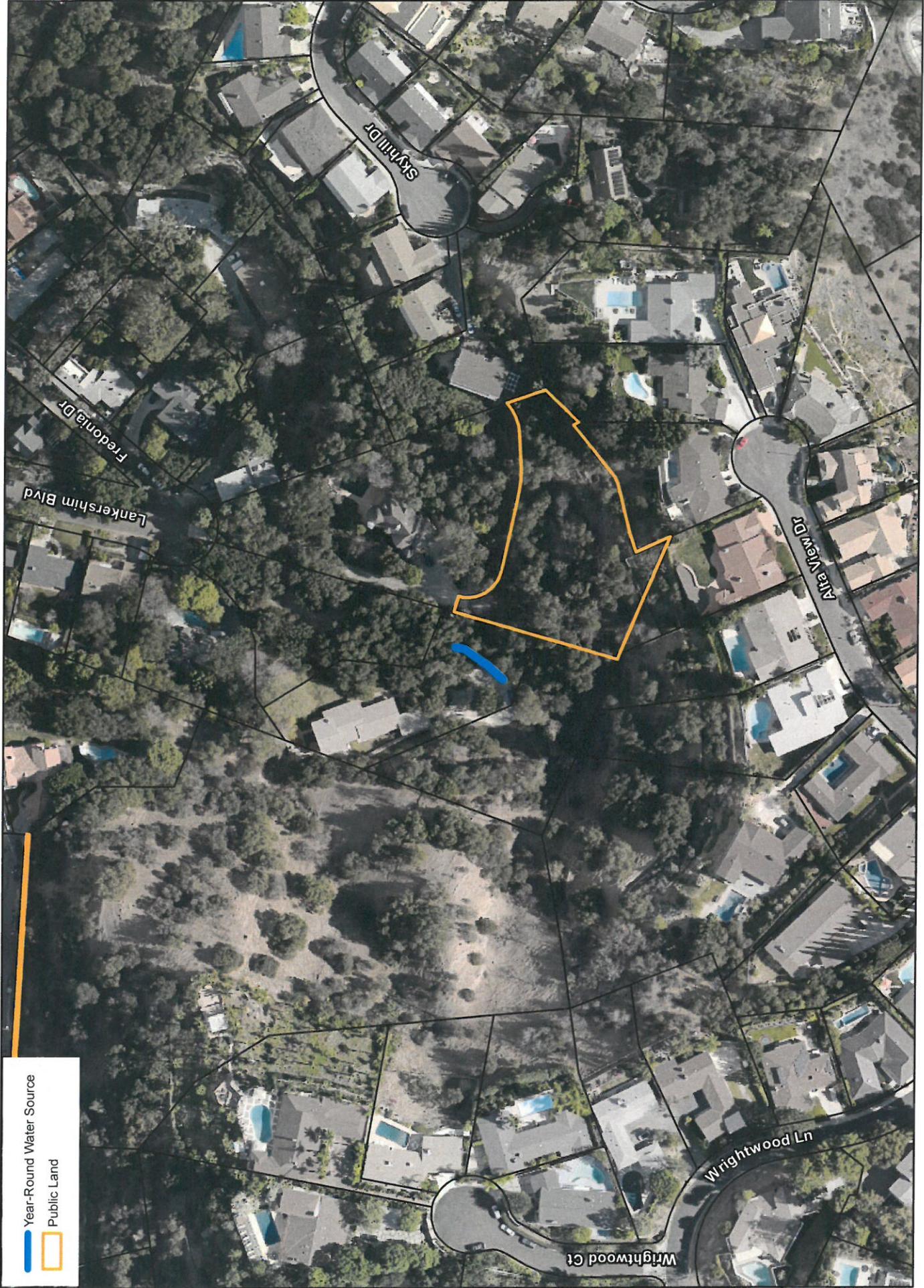
SMMC MRCA Owned/Managed Property

Site 7. Laurel Canyon - Upper Watershed





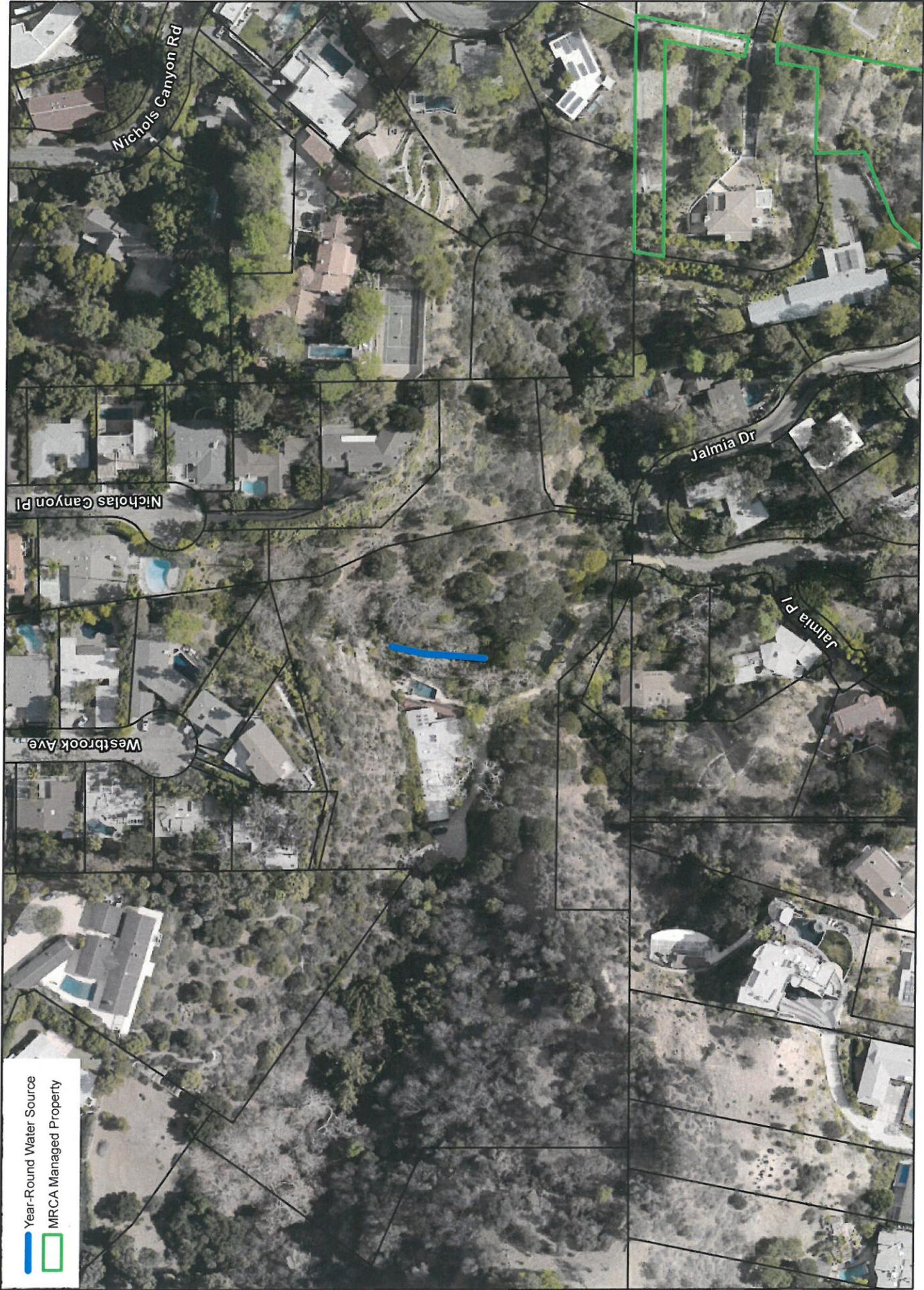
Site 8. Laurel Canyon- Lookout Mountain



Year-Round Water Source
Public Land



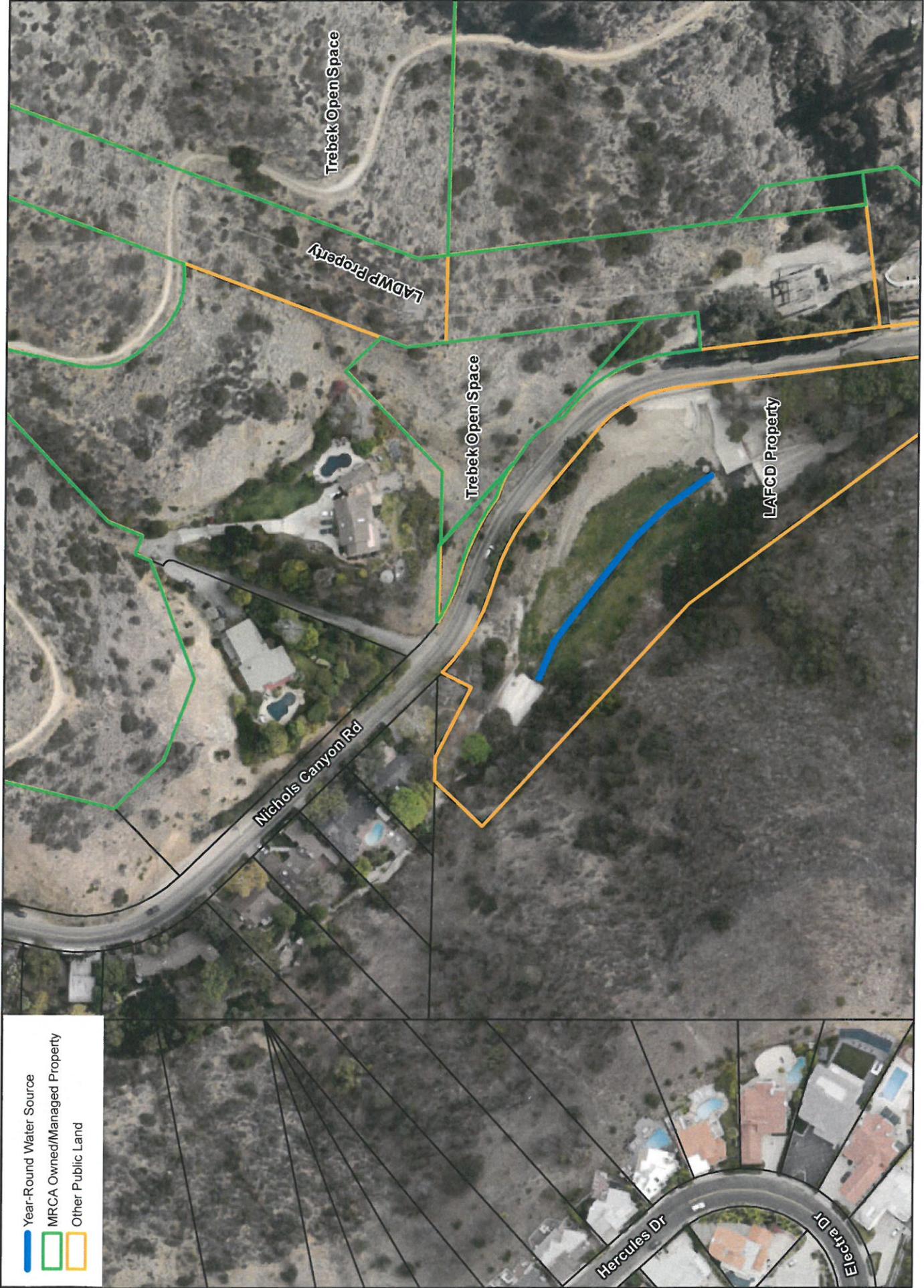
Site 9, Lankershim Blvd Terminus



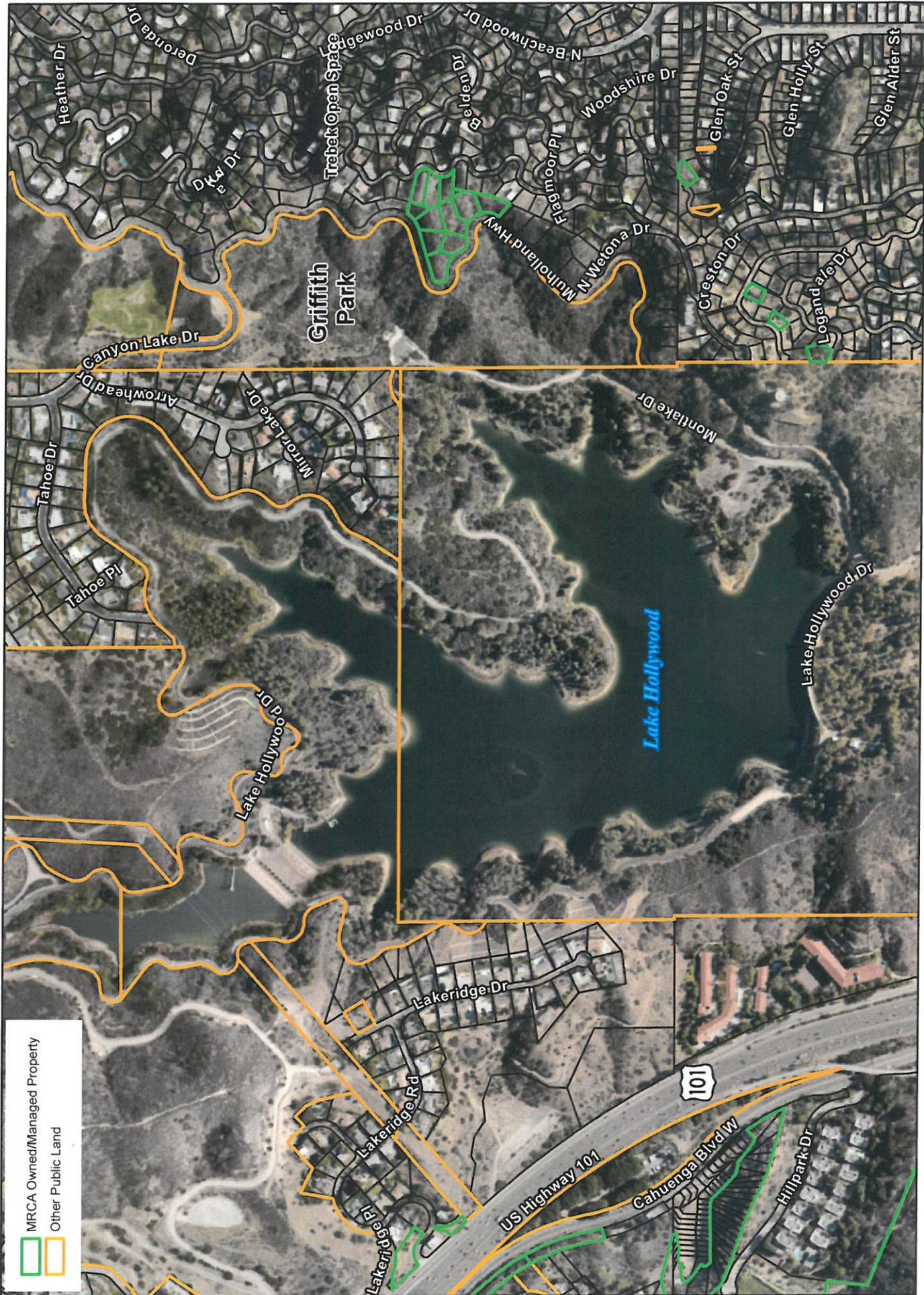
Site 10. Upper Nichols Canyon



Site 11. Oakshire Canyon



Site 12. Lower Nichols Canyon



Site 13. Lake Hollywood- DWP