



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

510 S. Vermont Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90020-1975. (213) 738-2981. <http://openspacedistrict.lacounty.info>

September 11, 2012

The Honorable Board of Directors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

ADOPTED

REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

2-P September 18, 2012

Sachi A. Hamai
SACHI A. HAMAI
SECRETARY

Dear Directors:

ALLOCATE THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT COMPETITIVE AND SPECIFIED EXCESS FUNDS AND AUTHORIZE AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION OF EXCESS FUNDS GRANTS FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT ACQUISITION FOR TRAILS GRANT PROGRAM (THIRD DISTRICT - 3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

Approval of the recommended actions will award a total of \$3,231,498 in Third Supervisorial District Competitive and Specified Excess Funds to the Cities of Agoura Hills and Westlake Village, the Mountains Restoration Trust, the Trust for Public Land, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and the National Park Service for the acquisition of land for trails in the Santa Monica Mountains. Of the \$3,231,498 for the competitively-awarded grant program, \$2,024,438 of the total will be awarded to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy who will assign the right to apply for that amount to grantees in the grant program.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Find that the proposed Cold Creek High Trail Project, Ramirez Canyon Acquisition Project, Summit Valley – Mulholland Gateway Gap Enclosure Project, Backbone Trail Project, Agoura Hills Recreation Center Trailhead Project, and Ridgeford Trail Development Project are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act because these projects consist of installation of small new structures, minor alterations to the condition of land, acquisition of areas to preserve open space for park purposes and small habitat restoration projects for the reasons stated herein and reflected in the record of the Projects.
2. Allocate Competitive Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District, in the amount of \$1,207,060 to the projects as follows:

- Mountains Restoration Trust - \$500,000 for the Cold Creek High Trail Project
- Trust for Public Land - \$500,000 for the Ramirez Canyon Acquisition Project
- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority - \$207,060 for the Summit Valley – Mulholland Gateway Gap Enclosure Project.

3. Allocate Specified Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District, in the amount of \$2,024,438 to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy who will assign the right to apply for the funds to the projects as follows:

- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority - \$59,438 for the Summit Valley – Mulholland Gateway Gap Enclosure Project
- National Park Service - \$465,000 for the Backbone Trail Project
- City of Agoura Hills - \$500,000 for the Agoura Hills Recreation Center Trailhead Project
- City of Westlake Village - \$500,000 for the Ridgeford Trail Development Project
- Department of Parks and Recreation - \$500,000 for the Don Wallace Trail Project.

4. Authorize the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as the Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, to award Competitive Excess Funds grants in the amount of \$1,207,060 to the Mountains Recreation Trust, the Trust for Public Land and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, if applicable conditions have been met, and to administer the grant as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for Specified, Per Parcel, and Excess Funds Projects; otherwise funds shall remain in the Excess Funds account.

5. Authorize the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as the Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, to award Specified Excess Funds grants in the amount of \$2,024,438, to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the National Park Service, the City of Agoura Hills, the City of Westlake Village and the Department of Parks and Recreation after the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy assigns its right to apply for the funds to the grantees, if applicable conditions have been met, and to administer the grant as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for Specified, Per Parcel, and Excess Funds Projects; otherwise funds shall remain in the Excess Funds account.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of the recommended actions will allocate a total of \$3,231,498 in Competitive and Specified Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District for the acquisition and development of natural land for trails projects consistent with the Trails Component of the Los Angeles County General Plan as follows:

- Mountains Restoration Trust - \$500,000 for the Cold Creek High Trail Project. The project consists of the acquisition and development of 17.4 acres of land in the Stunt Ranch area of the Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains. The total cost for the project is \$517,000 and the requested \$500,000 will be supplemented with \$17,000 in private contributions.
- Trust for Public Land - \$500,000 for the Ramirez Canyon Acquisition Project. The project consists of the acquisition of 110 acres in Ramirez Canyon in Malibu to be added to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The total cost for the project is \$3,528,500 and the requested \$500,000 will be supplemented with \$3,028,500 from other sources to be identified.

- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority - \$266,498 for the Summit Valley – Mulholland Gateway Gap Enclosure Project. The project consists of the acquisition and development of 15.8 acres of land in Santa Maria Canyon between Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Mulholland Drive and trail construction in several areas. The total cost for the project is \$500,000 and the requested \$266,498 will be supplemented with \$233,502 in Quimby Funds.
- National Park Service - \$465,000 for the Backbone Trail Project. The project consists of the acquisition of 40 acres of private land in Trancas Canyon and securing a trail easement over a private parcel along Etz Meloy Motorway to complete the Backbone Trail. The total cost for the project is \$565,000 and the requested \$465,000 will be supplemented with \$40,000 of Land and Water Conservation Funds and \$60,000 in Public Land Corps Funds.
- City of Agoura Hills - \$500,000 for the Agoura Hills Recreation Center Trailhead Project. The project consists of the construction of a new trailhead and trail from the city's new Recreation Center to connect to existing trails in the surrounding Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the regional trail system. The total cost for the project is \$880,000 and the requested \$500,000 will be supplemented with \$380,000 of City General Funds.
- City of Westlake Village - \$500,000 for the Ridgford Trail Development Project. The project consists of the development of a hiking and riding trail as well as trail head improvements to include grading, landscaping, irrigation, picnic amenities, trail fencing and trail signs. The total cost for the project is \$663,000 and the requested \$500,000 will be supplemented with \$163,000 of City General Funds.
- Department of Parks and Recreation - \$500,000 for the Don Wallace Trail Project. The project consists of the construction of a multi-use connector trail at Las Virgines Road and Agoura Hills Road in the City of Calabasas. At this time the Open Space District only requests your approval to award the \$500,000 as part of the \$2,024,438 allocation of Specified Funds to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Once the appropriate CEQA finding for the project is made, the project will be submitted to your Board for further authorization.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, which is a designated recipient of Regional Excess Funds for projects in the Santa Monica Mountains under the 1996 Proposition, will assign its right to apply for the funds to the five grantees (Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, City of Agoura Hills, City of Westlake Village, National Park Service, and County's Department of Parks and Recreation), if applicable conditions have been met, and to administer the grant as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for Specified, Per Parcel, and Excess Funds Projects; otherwise funds shall remain in the Excess Funds account.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The proposed recommendations further the Board approved County Strategic Plan Goals of Operational Effectiveness (Goal 1) and Integrated Services Delivery (Goal 3), by allocating Excess Funds for projects to enhance trails on natural lands in the Santa Monica Mountains in the Third Supervisorial District.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Sufficient appropriation for the grants in the amount of \$3,231,498 is budgeted in the Third Supervisorial District portion of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District

Excess Funds Project Fund, HD6.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The 1996 Proposition requires that agencies to which funds were allocated under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 encumber all such funds prior to receiving grants of Excess Funds. All seven agencies to be allocated funding in this action meet this requirement.

The 1996 Proposition provides a method for determining each fiscal year the amount of funds available in the following fiscal year to fund capital improvement projects in addition to the amounts specifically identified for projects in the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996. The recommended grants would be funded from the Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District from Excess Funds for competitive and regional projects.

The Board may establish additional conditions on grants of Excess Funds. The Director would be authorized to award grants when all applicable conditions have been met. Any funds allocated by the Board, but not encumbered by award of a grant contract in the same fiscal year, shall be available for allocation by the Board in the following fiscal year.

Your Board approved a Procedural Guide on June 2, 2009, to govern the administration of Regional Park and Open Space District grants. This Procedural Guide would appropriately govern the administration of the recommended additional grant as well.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

All public agency projects funded by the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) are required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a condition of the grant. The lead agency is responsible for preparing the appropriate environmental documentation for the project. The RPOSD is the CEQA lead agency for the Cold Creek High Trail Project, the Ramirez Canyon Acquisition Project and the Backbone Trail Project. For the National Environmental Policy Act, (NEPA), the National Park Service is the lead agency for the Backbone Trail Project. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is the lead agency for the Summit Valley – Mulholland Gateway Gap Enclosure Project. The City of Agoura Hills is the lead agency for the Agoura Hills Recreation Center Trailhead Project. The City of Westlake Village is the lead agency for the Ridgeford Trail Development Project. The County is the lead agency for the Don Wallace Trail Project.

The proposed Cold Creek High Trail Project is categorically exempt from CEQA according to Sections 15325 (f) and 15333 of the State CEQA Guidelines and Class 25 of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because it consists of installation of small new structures, minor alterations in the condition of land, landscaping, acquisition of area to preserve open space for park purposes and maintenance, restoration, enhancement and protection of habitat for fish, plants and wildlife.

The proposed Ramirez Canyon Acquisition Project is categorically exempt from CEQA according to Section 15325 (f) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Class 25 of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because it involves acquisition of area to preserve open space for park purposes.

The proposed Summit Valley – Mulholland Gateway Gap Enclosure Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The Project, which consists of the acquisition and development of 15.8 acres of land to connect existing trails, is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets criteria set forth in Sections 15304 (a) and 15325 (f) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Classes 4 (a) and 25 of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because it involves minor alterations to the condition of the land and acquisition of area to preserve open space for park purposes.

The proposed Backbone Trail is a federal facility under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS). As a federal facility, all projects on the Backbone Trail must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NPS has determined that the project is in compliance with NEPA and that the project when considered individually and cumulatively does not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment. With respect to CEQA, the proposed Backbone Trail Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The Project, which consists of the acquisition of 40 acres of private land to align the Backbone Trail and installation of directional signage, is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets criteria set forth in Sections 15304 (a), 15311 (a) and 15325 (f) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Classes 4 (a), 11 (d), and 25 of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because it involves minor alterations to the condition of the land, installation of directional on-premise signs, and acquisition of area to preserve open space for park purposes.

The proposed Agoura Hills Recreation Center Trailhead Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The Project, which consists of the construction of a new trailhead and trail from the city's new Recreation Center to connect to existing trails in the surrounding Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the regional trail system, is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets criteria set forth in Sections 15303 (e) and 15304 (a) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Classes 3 (b) and 4 (a) of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because it consists of installation of small new structures and minor alterations in the condition of land.

The proposed Ridgeford Trail Development Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The Project, which consists of the acquisition and development of 57 acres of private land, including grading, landscaping, irrigation, picnic amenities, trail fencing, and trail signs, is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets criteria set forth in Sections 15303 (e), 15304 (a), and 15325 (f) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Classes 3 (b), 4 (a), and 25 of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because it consists of installation of small new structures, minor alterations in the condition of land, and acquisition of area to preserve open space for park purposes.

Appropriate environmental document for the Don Wallace Trail Project will be submitted to your Board for consideration prior to requesting authorization to construct the project.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

Grant Project Agreements will be entered into and administered under authority delegated to the Director and pursuant to the Procedural Guide approved by the Board in 2009. The Project Agreements will be approved as to form by County Counsel.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The recommended projects will enhance recreational opportunities on trails in natural areas in the Santa Monica Mountains in the Third Supervisorial District.

CONCLUSION

Please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to return one adopted copy of this action to the Chief Executive Office, Capital Projects Division, and to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russ Guiney".

RUSS GUINEY
Director

RG:IV:LB

c: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel