

**Flood Protection Corridor Program  
Project Evaluation Criteria  
And Competitive Grant Application Form  
For**

**Headwater Corners**



Mountains Restoration Trust  
7050 Owensmouth Avenue, #206  
Canoga Park, CA 91303  
And  
City of Calabasas  
26135 Mureau Road  
Calabasas, CA 91302

February 13, 2003

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**I. Introduction**

Grant funds under the Flood Protection Corridor Program (FPCP) of the Costa Machado Water Act of 2000 (Proposition 13) are available to local public agencies and nonprofit organizations from the Department of Water Resources. Funds will be used to pursue FPCP goals, which are to provide “for the protection, creation, and enhancement of flood protection corridors through all of the following actions:

“(1) Acquiring easements and other interests in real property from willing sellers to protect or enhance flood protection corridors and floodplains while preserving or enhancing the agricultural use of the real property.

“(2) Setting back existing flood control levees and, in conjunction with undertaking those setbacks, strengthening or modifying existing levees.

“(3) Acquiring interests in real property from willing sellers located in a floodplain that can not reasonably be made safe from future flooding.

“(4) Acquiring easements and other interests in real property from willing sellers to protect or enhance flood protection corridors while preserving or enhancing the wildlife value of the real property.”

-- [Water Code, Chapter 5, Article 2.5, Section 79037(b)]

The following information constitutes the basis for determining whether a proposed project meets the legal criteria for funding under the Flood Protection Corridor Program and for evaluating the proposal to determine its priority in competition with all concurrent proposals. Proposals qualified under Section III of these criteria will be placed on one of two priority lists. If the proposal serves a flood protection need that is a high priority with the Department of Water Resources (other than through this Program) and it also rates a high priority *either* with the Department of Conservation for purposes of preserving agricultural land under the California Farmland Conservancy Program, *or* with the Department of Fish and Game for purposes of wildlife habitat or restoration, it will be placed on the “A List”. All other qualified projects will be placed on the “B List”. “A List” projects will be funded first, and when all “A List” projects have been funded to the Department’s stated limit, “B List” projects will be funded.

**II. General Information**

Project Name: Headwater Corners

Project Location: Northwest corner of Old Topanga Canyon Road and Mulholland Highway, City of Calabasas County: Los Angeles

Name and address of sponsoring agency or non-profit organization:

Mountains Restoration Trust and City of Calabasas  
7050 Owensmouth Avenue, #206 26135 Mureau Road  
Canoga Park, CA 91303 Calabasas, CA 91302

Name of Project Manager (contact): Debra O'Hare

Phone Number: (818) 346-9576 x16 E-mail Address: dohare@mountainstrust.org

Grant Request Amount: \$1,584,825

Mountains Restoration Trust

*Original signed*

By: \_\_\_\_\_ President  
Stephen A. Harris Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

City of Calabasas

*Original signed*

By: \_\_\_\_\_ City Manager  
Donald Duckworth Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Project Objective(s): Briefly describe your project and explain how it will advance FPCP goals. Please also include a detailed map of the immediate project site and another that shows its location within your geographical area. Photographs showing problem areas proposed to be enhanced by the project should also be included.

The California Resources Agency reports that over 75% of the streams in the Los Angeles River Watershed are contained within concrete-lined channels, modified for flood protection purposes ("Common Ground from the Mountains to the Sea, the Watershed and Open Space Plan for the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers", October 2001). This storm drain system has allowed urban growth to envelope historic floodplains at a tremendous cost to the environment.

In 1991, the County of Los Angeles proposed a flood control project on Dry Canyon Creek, the western perennial headwater of the Los Angeles River, and within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, to alleviate recurring flood damage in the area. The original design included removal of a 500-foot section of Dry Canyon Creek containing a mature Valley Oak-Willow Riparian habitat at Old Topanga Canyon Road and Mulholland Highway, and burying the stream in a concrete box. The project was met with tremendous public outcry, led by the newly-formed City of Calabasas. Under this intense public demand for preservation of the native landscape, the project area was reduced to avoid the Valley Oak-Willow Riparian section of Dry Canyon Creek. The Dry Canyon Creek Flood Control Project, subsequently built in 1994, extended the storm drain system designed for a 25-year storm event up to the mature riparian habitat. Storms beyond a 25-year event flood the upstream area and overspill onto Old Topanga Canyon Road.

The upstream mature riparian corridor remains a soft channel. However, the floodplain has deteriorated with over 100 years of human manipulation, resulting in an obstructed floodway. Floodwaters no longer have the natural land to spread upon. Instead, the water and its associated sediment has found its way down roadways, and into structures, picking up debris ranging from washing machines, refrigerators, and even vehicles that clog the floodways, further exasperating the flows desire for balance. Streambanks are unstable, and wildlife values continue to diminish.

In 2000, Mountains Restoration Trust, a community-based public benefit land trust, and the City of Calabasas partnered to implement a 500-acre acquisition and restoration project in the Dry Canyon Watershed. To date, 91 parcels totaling 111 acres valued at \$8.6 million have been acquired at a cost of \$3.2 million. Headwater Corners is the 35-acre "core" area along Dry Canyon Creek. Headwater Corners, when restored, will be a regionally-significant demonstration and interpretive center for environmental awareness in the Santa Monica Mountains. Headwater Corners will benefit a population of 1.6 million people within a 20-mile radius.

Headwater Corners will:

- Return the natural fluvial processes to the system, allowing seasonal flooding;
- Expand the riparian and wetland habitats, thereby reducing flood impacts in the area;
- Restore native habitat in this wildlife corridor and buffer zone for the protected lands of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area;
- Adapt two single-family structures (one circa 1899) in the floodplain for re-use as an environmental demonstration center;
- Demonstrate to the public various methods of protecting structures that are located in the floodplain while preserving the native habitat and the floodplain;
- Demonstrate best management practices to sustain resources that are promoted by government agencies ranging from local to the federal levels, academics, and environmental organizations.

Headwater Corners will advance the FPCP goals, which are to provide “for the protection, creation, and enhancement of flood protection corridors” by:

- Acquiring 8.5 acres of real property, from a willing seller, located in the Dry Canyon Creek floodplain, and
- Enhancing the flood protection corridor along 0.5 miles of Dry Canyon Creek, a perennial headwater of the Los Angeles River, 1.3 miles of unnamed intermittent blue-line stream tributaries to Dry Canyon Creek, and enhance the wildlife value of 500 acres by preserving open space and restoring degraded habitat.

This grant request will provide funds to:

- Complete acquisitions to implement a strategic plan to utilize non-structural methods to restore, and expand upon, the historic floodplain thereby reducing flood damage possibilities while enhancing wildlife values;
- Widen the 100 year floodplain corridor and return the natural fluvial processes to the system without impact to adjacent landowners;
- Enhance the flood protection corridor along 0.5 miles of Dry Canyon Creek, the perennial headwater of the Los Angeles River, while enhancing the wildlife value of 14.86 acres;
- Utilize Outward Bound Adventures, an at-risk youth program, and community members in restoring the native habitat and non-structural streambank stabilization methods where feasible.

**\*To be complete, an application package must include all of the items specified in the proposed Section 497.7 of Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, that is available on the FPCP web site ([www.dfm.water.ca.gov/fpcp](http://www.dfm.water.ca.gov/fpcp)) by selecting the Regulations link.**

### **III. Minimum Qualifications**

*Project proposals that do not meet the minimum qualifications will not be accepted.*

- A. ρ The project proposes to use any granted funds for protection, creation, and enhancement of flood protection corridors [*Water Code Section 79037(b)*].
- B. ρ A local public agency, a non-profit organization, or a joint venture of local public agencies, non-profit organizations, or both proposes the project [*Water Code Section 79037(a)*].
- C. ρ The project will use the California Conservation Corps or a community conservation corps whenever feasible [*Water Code Section 79038(b)*].
- D. ρ If it is proposed to acquire property in fee to protect or enhance flood protection corridors and floodplains while preserving or enhancing agricultural use, the proponent has considered and documented all practical alternatives to acquisition of fee interest [*Water Code Section 79039(a)*].
- E. ρ Holders of property interests proposed to be acquired are willing to sell them [*Water Code Section 79040*].
- F. ρ If it is proposed to acquire property interests, the proposal describes how a plan will be developed that evaluates and minimizes the impact on adjacent landowners prior to such acquisition and evaluates the impact on the following [*Water Code Section 79041*]:
  - ▶ Floodwaters including water surface elevations and flow velocities
  - ▶ The structural integrity of affected levees
  - ▶ Diversion facilities
  - ▶ Customary agricultural husbandry practices
  - ▶ Timber extraction operations

The proposal must also describe maintenance required for a) the acquired property, b) any facilities that are to be constructed or altered.

- G. ρ The project site is located at least partially in one of the following:
  1. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), or
  2. An area that would be inundated if the project were completed and an adjacent FEMA SFHA were inundated, or
  3. A FEMA SFHA, which is determined by using the detailed methods identified in FEMA Publication 37, published in January 1995, titled "Flood Insurance Study Guidelines and Specifications for Study Contractors", or
  4. A floodplain designated by The Reclamation Board under Water Code Section 8402(f) [*Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Section 497.5(a)*], or a

5. Locally designated Flood Hazard Area, with credible hydrologic data to support designation of at least one in 100 annual probability of flood risk. This is applicable to locations without levees, or where existing levees can be set back, breached, or removed. In the latter case, levee setbacks, removal, or breaching to allow inundation of the floodplain should be part of the project.

**Applicants response to minimum qualifications**

Mountains Restoration Trust and the City of Calabasas have studied the minimum qualifications stated in Section III A through G and states this application meets them.

#### **IV. (340 points) Flood Protection Benefits**

##### **A. Existing and potential urban development in the floodplain (50)**

1. Describe the existing and potential urban development at the site and the nature of the flood risk.

Existing Development: Headwater Corners includes two single-family structures and several ancillary structures. One of the single-family homes, built circa 1899 by the original homesteader, is historically significant to the Santa Monica National Recreation Area. Adjacent to the Project Area is a commercial center, equestrian center, two school facilities, and open space. The 8.5-acre acquisition parcel (“Subject Property”) is currently being used as a temporary residence that includes a camper shell, generator, and other equipment, but otherwise is undeveloped.

Potential Urban Development: Headwater Corners is located at the intersection of two major thoroughfares. Urban development characterized by large homes on small lots has occurred up to the northern edge, placing Headwater Corners in a critical transition zone between urban and rural development. Acquisitions to date have retired 91 legal parcels that had the potential of being developed into 150 single-family homes under the current City of Calabasas Land Use Plan. The Subject Property could be developed with up to 8 single-family homes.

Nature of the Flood Risk: The upper Dry Canyon Watershed contains rural type residences in relatively steep canyons. Old Topanga Canyon Road is a historic travel route documented back to 1860-1885 when the original BLM surveys were conducted. USGS maps from 1902 and other historic references indicate that Dry Canyon was the route to the Port of Los Angeles around the turn-of-the-century when the port was a one-mile long wharf to deep water, just north of Santa Monica. Because the canyon was easily accessed, settlers came into the area and sited homes near the streams. What was once floodplain are now paved roads, lifted out of the floodway with fill material, restricting the floodwaters into narrow channels. Additional 100-year floodplain areas have been filled to expand pad areas for development.

These northerly-facing canyons can experience intense rainfall, swelling the streams of the Dry Canyon Watershed. The floodway at the confluence of two major streams, Dry Canyon Creek and its un-named Old Topanga tributary, has been constricted by the placement of fill materials, raising the level of peak flows beyond the capacity of culverts and downstream flood control facilities.

2. How often has flooding occurred historically?

A partial list of flood events from eyewitness accounts:

1978 - Dry Canyon Creek floods causing damage to residential and commercial properties, and sediment deposition closes roads and Highway 101.

- 1980 - Dry Canyon Creek floods Project Area causing damage to structures and closing roads.
- 1993 - Dry Canyon Creek floods damaging homes and closing Old Topanga Canyon Road.
- 1997 - Dry Canyon Creek and Old Topanga Canyon un-named tributary floods causing damage to homes.

3. Discuss the importance of improving the flood protection at this location. Include the number of people and structures that are affected by the flood hazard, and the flood impacts to highways and roads, railroads, airports and other infrastructure, and agriculture.

Urban development has restricted the floodways downstream of the Project Area to a narrow channel. The built environment encroaches into the floodway upstream of the Project Area, yet the channel itself remains relatively soft-channeled. The Project Area is the only location in this watershed to allow a widening of the floodway to reduce peak flows and deposit sediments and bulk materials before entering the highly restrictive flood control improvements downstream (see engineer report and 100-year floodplain delineation map). The Project Area has a history of being the point at which flows jump their artificial banks and flood roads and structures. In addition, obstructions in this section of Dry Canyon Creek have caused floodwaters to back-up, causing upstream flooding. The Project Area is located at the intersection Mulholland Highway and Old Topanga Canyon Road, a major access route to the Santa Monica Mountains, 3 schools, and several hundred homes in the area, all of which will benefit from this project.

In addition to reducing the flood potential in Dry Canyon, Headwater Corners will demonstrate to property owners living in the floodplain throughout the region effective ways to reduce potential flooding on their own property while enhancing wildlife values.

#### **B. Flood damage reduction benefits of the project (100)**

1. Does the proposed project provide for transitory storage of floodwaters? What is the total community need for transitory storage related to this water course and what percentage of the total need does this project satisfy? What is the volume of water and how long is it detained?

Transitory storage of flood waters will occur in the expanded wetland area and vegetated treatment systems. This will benefit downstream storm drain systems by reducing peak flows. The community need for transitory storage in this watercourse has not been analyzed but has been shown by repeated floodings (see A.2.). The volume of water and how long it is detained will be determined when the engineers complete their studies and associated restoration plans.

2. Describe any structural and non-structural flood damage reduction elements of the project. (Examples of structural elements are levees, weirs, detention/retention basins, rock slope-protection, etc. Examples of non-structural elements are acquisition of property for open space, acquisition of land for flood flow easements,

transitory storage, relocation of structures and other flood prone development, elevating flood prone structures, flood proofing structures, etc.)

Non-structural flood damage reduction elements at Headwater Corners on the historic floodplain are:

- Acquire properties in the floodplain
- Eliminate potential urban development
- Preserve open space
- Widen the floodway by removing fill material
- Remove obstructions in floodway
- Provide transitory storage areas by creating vegetated swales and other non-structural methods
- Move one structure out of floodplain
- Demonstrate to the public flood-proofing methods for structures currently in the floodplain
- Educate the public about proper management techniques for real property located in the floodplain
- Educate the public about the beneficial uses of native plants as streambank stabilizers

3. By what methods and by how much dollar value will the project decrease expected average annual flood damages?

The methods used to reduce flood damage include:

- Increasing the area for flood flows;
- Allowing deposition of sediments and bulk materials that historically have blocked storm drain systems forcing the flows to find alternative paths;
- Remove an undersized culvert, a major obstruction for the floodwaters.

The average annual savings is estimated to be \$300,000 to \$500,000 for reduced flood damage to structures, streets, and flood control improvements. These are assumptions based on the frequency and intensity of flooding events, amounts of debris, minimal flood protection measures around the structures, and the current state of the floodway obstructions.

4. How does the project affect the hydrologic and hydraulic conditions at the project site and adjacent properties?

The hydrologic and hydraulic conditions of the project site and adjacent properties have been analyzed by David Cannon, P.E., and Chimin Chian, P.H. of Everest International Consultants, Inc. A copy of their report and a preliminary delineation of the 100-year floodplain is included with this application. In addition, Elden Gatwood, a fluvial geomorphologist with Tetra-Tech and over 15 years with the Army Corp of Engineers, has evaluated the site for the project's intended on-site work. While the scientists require further studies in developing working plans for the restoration/enhancement work, both

have determined the project will increase flood protection in the area. Assistance from these scientists were provided in answering the questions regarding flood flows, natural fluvial processes, hydrology, and hydraulics.

- a) Will the project reduce the magnitude of a flood flow, which could cause property damage and/or loss of life?

No, the project will not reduce the magnitude of flood flows.

- b) What are the effects of the project on water surface elevations during a flood event which could cause property damage and/or loss of life?

The project will result in lower water elevations within the channel during flood flows due to the increased cross-sectional area and reduction in flow constrictions.

- c) How are flow velocities impacted by the project during a flood flow which could cause property damage and/or loss of life?

The project will result in lower water velocities within the channel during flood flows due to the increased cross-sectional area.

### **C. Restoration of natural processes (60)**

1. Describe how any natural channel processes will be restored (for example: for channel meander, sediment transport, inundation of historic floodplain, etc.) and describe how these natural processes will affect flood management and adjacent properties.

Natural sediment transport and channel meandering will be restored through elimination of manmade flow constrictions (fill and culverts) and removal of non-native plant species (*Arundo donax*, *Parthenocissus inserta*, and *Vinca major*). Restoration of these natural processes will improve flood management in the watershed and reduce the threat of flooding on adjacent properties by reducing upstream backwater effects, restoring native habitat, reducing streambank/sterambed erosion, and improving aesthetics.

2. Describe any upstream or downstream hydraulic or other effects (such as bank erosion or scour, sediment transport, growth inducement, etc.).

The project will reduce upstream flood water levels by eliminating backwater effects associated with stream channel filling and undersized culverts. Scour in the vicinity of the project site will be decreased due to lower velocities associated with the increase in channel cross-section. The project will be designed to decrease or maintain the levels of channel erosion in the upstream and downstream reaches of the stream.

3. If the project includes channel modification or bank protection work, will riprap or dredging be part of the design? If so, provide an analysis of potential benefits and impacts.

The project will include channel modification and bank protection work. However, no dredging is proposed as part of the channel modification work. In addition, there are no hard structures (riprap, grout, concrete) proposed to provide bank protection. Bioengineering methods (e.g., willows and other native vegetation) will be used to provide the necessary bank protection.

#### **D. Project effects on the local community (60)**

1. How will the project impact future flooding on and off this site?

The Project will improve future flooding conditions on and off the project site. Upstream water levels will be reduced and flow velocities through the site will be reduced. The effects of these changes in fluvial processes will be to decrease the frequency and/or area of upstream flooding as well as reduce channel erosion in the vicinity of the project site.

2. How will the project affect emergency evacuation routes or emergency services and demands for emergency services?

The Project area is at the intersection of Mulholland Highway and Old Topanga Canyon Road. Mulholland Highway is a major route into the Santa Monica Mountains and three schools in the immediate area. Emergency vehicles depend upon this intersection to provide services to thousands of people. This project will reduce the potential of flooding on these roads.

3. Explain how the project will comply with the local community floodplain management ordinance and the floodplain management criteria specified in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program (FEMA's NFIP).

The project will comply with the City of Calabasas Development Code that includes a 100-foot setback requirement from blue-line streams for new construction. There are no specific floodplain ordinances currently in the code.

The Project complies with three categories of FEMA's NFIP:

- Public Information (Series 300) – advising the public on ways to reduce flood damage
- Mapping and Regulations (Series 400) – preserving open space and managing stormwater
- Flood Damage Reduction (Series 500) – maintaining drainage systems and retrofitting floodprone structures

## **E. Value of improvements protected (70)**

1. What is the assessed value of structural improvements that will be protected by the project?

Within the Project Area: Two single-family structures were acquired in January 2003 at a cost of \$1,700,000. The Los Angeles County Tax Assessor's office takes up to 18 months to reassess a property after a change in ownership. Both properties have been held under the same ownership for at least 25 years (the historic house was held by one family for 45 years), keeping assessed values extremely low. Therefore, the assessed value of the structures must be estimated based on replacement values of \$200 per square foot, or \$820,000. The historically significant structure would be difficult to replace, placing a currently unknown additional value on that structure.

Upstream: There are two school facilities and a commercial equestrian center.

- Viewpoint, a private K-12 school facility, is in the floodplain of Dry Canyon Creek. In 1999 Viewpoint School's 72,670 square feet of structure was assessed by the county tax assessor at \$3,252,000, which equates to \$44.75 per square foot, far below replacement value.
- Creekside Park, a preschool, was purchased by the City of Calabasas in 1997 for \$1,000,000, with an assessed value of \$720,000.
- The equestrian center developed at the confluence of two blue-line streams. The 15,000 square foot structures are assessed at \$110,000, based on a 1999 transfer.
- There are 40 single-family homes along the Old Topanga blue-line tributary of Dry Canyon Creek. The values range from \$400,000 to \$800,000 (est.) per home.

Downstream benefits: A single family home adjacent to the project area was purchased in 1998 for \$540,000. Its assessed value for 2,500 square feet of improvements is \$170,000, considerably less than replacement cost.

Additional downstream structures that could benefit from this project include several hundred residences, commercial centers, and a preschool, ranging in value from \$400,000 to well over \$1,000,000 for each structure.

2. What is the estimated replacement value of any flood control facilities or structures protected by the project?

The project will protect the Los Angeles County Flood Control District's inlet structure immediately downstream from the project area from potential debris damage. The inlet structure's replacement value is approximately \$180,000.

## **V. (340 points) Wildlife and Agricultural Land Conservation Benefits**

*Proponent should provide a statement of the relative importance of the project's wildlife and agricultural land conservation benefits. DWR will use the statement and all other project materials to assign a fraction of the total benefits to each type (wildlife ( $F_w$ ) or agricultural land conservation ( $F_a$ )) so that the fractions total unity. Actual points scored for each type of resource will be multiplied by the respective fraction for each resource, and the wildlife and agricultural scores resulting for each type of resource will be added together.*

### **A. (340x $F_w$ points) Wildlife Benefits**

*Habitat values refer to the ecological value and significance of the habitat features at this location that presently occur, have occurred historically, or will occur after restoration.*

*Viability refers to the site's ability, after restoration if necessary, to remain ecologically viable with minimal on-site management over the long-term, and to be able to recover from any natural catastrophic disturbances (fire, floods, etc.).*

#### **A1. Importance of the site to regional ecology (70)**

1. Describe any habitat linkages, ecotones, corridors, or other buffer zones within or adjacent to the site. How are these affected by the project?

The Project is entirely within the boundaries of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) that Congress established and recognized in 1978 as being nationally significant. "The park is a cooperative effort to preserve the scenic, natural and historic, as well as public health values of the Santa Monica Mountains." (Draft General Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement, SMMNRA 2000).

"The SMMNRA is nationally significant because it protects for the American people the greatest expanse of mainland Mediterranean ecosystems in the National Park System."

The Mediterranean biome covers only 2% of the world's land mass. It is among the smallest and most rare on earth and is found in only five locations in the world. It is under threat of irreversible extinction and diminished function. The moderate climate of a Mediterranean ecosystem also provides a comfortable life-style for millions of people attracted to its areas. Natural resources are on a conflict course with real estate development. As a result, only 18% of the Mediterranean ecosystem remains undisturbed in the world. (SMMNRA, 2000)

"Nearly 400 species of birds, 450 species of animals and 35 species of reptiles and amphibians are known to occur in the SMMNRA. There are 23 federally-listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species, three state-listed threatened and endangered species, and 46 animal and 12 plant "species of concern. These wildlife species and vegetation types are a part of a diverse and

increasingly rare, complex natural ecosystem that has adapted to the southern California Mediterranean-type climate of wet winters and warm, dry summers.” The Santa Monica Mountains without a north-to-south wildlife corridor to the other transverse ranges will, in effect, become an island. Agricultural lands are to the west on the Oxnard Plain, Santa Monica Bay is to the south, and dense urban development is to the east, north and northwest. Genetic diversity would be lost.

The project will reverse the adverse impacts of development, infrastructure and habitat fragmentation on the site, will re-introduce extirpated native plant species, and will eliminate invasive non-native plants. With a restored habitat, wildlife populations will increase, and the project site will remain ecologically viable.

Habitat linkages – Headwater Corners is the northern extent of Mountains Restoration Trust’s Tri-Watershed Ecological Area project which acquires significant wildlife habitat in three contiguous watersheds: Los Angeles River watershed, Old Topanga/Topanga Creek sub-watershed, and Cold Creek/Malibu Creek sub-watershed, and the adjacent Tuna Canyon sub-watershed within the Santa Monica Bay watershed. Habitat linkages between core habitat areas prevent habitat fragmentation.

Ecotones – Headwater Corners contains representative examples of five plant communities – riparian, wetland, woodland, grassland, and coastal sage scrub. These five plant communities support a range of avian, amphibian, mammalian, insect and aquatic species.

Habitat corridors within Los Angeles County are a priority issue due to intense urban sprawl. Headwater Corners becomes significant in connecting to wildlife movement in the east-to-west corridors between Topanga State Park and Pt. Mugu State Park, and to the north-to-south corridor from Santa Monica Bay through the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills to the San Gabriel Mountains.

Buffer Zone – Headwater Corners is a buffer between urban development and the larger protected open space areas of the Santa Monica Mountains, and itself is buffered by the 500 acres of the project.

Affect of Project – Headwater Corners will preserve and enhance the open space and restore native riparian-wetland habitat that has been degraded with fill materials and non-native invasive plants. Habitat linkage, corridors, and the ecosystem of the site and adjacent areas will benefit.

2. Is the site adjacent to any existing conservation areas?

The Subject Property is adjacent to 88 acres recently acquired by the Partnership. An adjacent 15 acres is a restricted-use area currently owned by the homeowners association.

3. Describe any plans for aquatic restoration resulting in in-stream benefits.

Aquatic plant species (*Juncus*, *Scirpus*, *Cyperus*, *Typha*) will benefit wildlife and improve water quality through bio-remediation, as will streamside riparian species (*Vitis*, *Apocynum* [Indian hemp].)

Culturally and educationally, one of Headwater Corners partners will harvest tules and rushes to demonstrate Native American basket weaving, an added restoration benefit.

The riparian corridor will be expanded to provide a wider canopy to shade the stream which will improve in-stream habitat by reduce water temperature.

4. Discuss any natural landscapes within the site that support representative examples of important, landscape-scale ecological functions (flooding, fire, sand transport, sediment trapping, etc.)?

The natural landscape supports a perennial stream, providing water, food, and nesting habitat for the wildlife of the area. When restored to historic attributes (see 1980 photos), the landscape will provide the additional benefits of an enlarged flood area and wetland, sediment transport and trapping, and water quality improvement to the ecological system. The site has a history of cyclical flooding episodes.

As part of a Mediterranean ecosystem, Headwater Corners is subject to wildfire regimes. Since the ecosystem evolved with fire as a major restorative function, native plant life is self-sustaining and self-restoring. Structures on-site are protected as much as possible by following an in-process fuel modification plan approved by the Los Angeles County Fire Department that reduces flammable materials on and near the structures.

**A2. Diversity of species and habitat types (70)**

1. Does the site possess any:

i. areas of unique ecological and/or biological diversity?

- five plant communities are in close proximity on 35 acres;
- the site represents the southern-most boundary of *Quercus lobata* (valley oak);

- the juxtaposition of multiple plant communities equals a high rate of biological diversity.
- ii. vegetative complexity either horizontally or vertically?
- both horizontal and vertical vegetative complexity are extant or are restorable;
  - the greatest portion of plants on site are native although for the Santa Monica Mountains as a whole, 27% of flora are non-native species, a result of the prolonged disturbance regime initiated by early settlers;
  - depauperate areas stripped of vegetation by former fuel modification practices (discing) are being restored by removing non-native plant species and planting native grass and forb species;
  - horizontal complexity created by over-lapping plant community species.
  - vertical complexity consists of multiple layers of plant forms. Examples are:
    - **ground covers** - *Artemisia douglasii* (mugwort);
    - **sub-shrubs** - *Lessingia filaginifolia* (cudweed aster);
    - **shrubs and small trees** - *Sambucus mexicana* (elderberry), *Salix* spp. (willow) and *Juncus californica* (California black walnut);
    - **trees** - *Quercus agrifolia* (coast live oak) and *Q. lobata*.

2. Describe habitat components including year-round availability of water, adequate nesting/denning areas, food sources, etc.

- Dry Canyon Creek is a perennial stream;
- site is without impact from domestic animals to prey on nests of ground- and shrub-nesting species, e.g., birds, lizards, small mammals;
- food sources are plentiful because of the diversity of plant species which provide food for herbivores and carnivores;
- a ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*) was seen on project site during the winter of 2002 which indicates the presence of nearby or on site denning areas.

3. Describe any superior representative examples of specific species or habitats.

The coast live oak woodland that canopies the hilltop blends into a pure stand of purple sage. Below the purple sage is the future site of native grassland which in turn blends into the riparian canopy covering the perennial Dry Canyon Creek which is protected by existing and planned wetland species.

Representative species are listed below.

4. Does the site contain a high number of species and habitat types? List and describe.

Yes.

Eight plant series were selected as representative of vegetation within the project site as described in *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer & Keeler-Wolf 1995). Keeler-Wolf is in the process of describing additional series that are more representative of vegetation in southern California. These eight plant series support a diversity of biological species.

Oaks are “keystone” species on which over 500 species rely.

#### Valley Oak Series

This community is dominated by valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), a deciduous tree that reaches 12-30 m in height. This community typically occurs on gentle slopes below 775 meters in valley bottoms and summit valleys where soils are seasonally saturated. Other characteristic species in this community include: California coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), California wild grape (*Vitis californica*), coast live oak (*Q. agrifolia*), and poisonoak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*).

(Only *Vitis californica* is not present on site but is a planned replacement for *Parthenocissus inserta* [Virginia creeper] and *Vinca major* [periwinkle]).

#### Arroyo Willow Series

Arroyo Willow Series is found in low gradient depositions along stream channels below 1800 meters. This community, dominated by arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), is typically associated with species such as mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*), and Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*).

(All species occur on site.)

#### Coast Live Oak Series

This community is dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), an evergreen tree that reaches 10-25 m in height, and is typically associated with species such as toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), poison-oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), hairy-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), and California bay (*Umbellularia californica*). This community generally occurs in shaded ravines or on north-facing slopes, usually below 4000 feet. Slopes are typically very steep and soils are primarily sandstone or shale-derived.

(All species occur on site.)

### California Walnut Series

California Walnut Series is dominated by California walnut (*Juglans California var. californica*). This community is associated with deep, shale-derived soils on north-facing slopes, terraces, and flats between 150-900 meters. Characteristic species include: California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), foothill ash (*Fraxinus dipetala*), and Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*).

(Only foothill ash has not been identified on site but is expected to occur on north-facing slopes.)

### Mixed Sage Series

This community is characterized by three or more species equally sharing commonness and cover. These species typically include: black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), bush monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Mexican Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), and white sage (*Salvia apiana*). Mixed Sage Series is generally found on dry slopes with shallow soils below 1200 meters.

(All species occur on site.)

### California Annual Grassland Series

Sawyer & Keeler-Wolf (1995) describes this community as an assortment of several alien and native annual species with significant variation of species composition among stands. This series is found in all topographic upland locations below 1200 meters and is typically comprised of annual grasses and herbs dominant in the ground layer. Species associated with California Annual Grassland Series include, but are not limited to, the following: bromes (*Bromus species*), mustards (*Brassica species*), wild oat (*Avena fatua*), ripgut (*Bromus diandrus*), lupines (*Lupinus species*), and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*).

(The two native species, *Lupinus* and *Eschscholzia*, will be joined by native grasses and forbs to replace non-native grasses and mustards.)

### Nodding Needlegrass Series

This community is dominated by nodding needlegrass (*Stipa cernua*) and is typically located in deep soils with high clay content. Characteristic species include: foothill needlegrass (*Stipa lepida*), blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), purple needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*), and California fescue (*Festuca californica*).

(Nodding needlegrass and Foothill needlegrass series are present within the project site and are targeted for restoration. Since California grasses do not form monotypic areas, native and perennial forbs and bulbs will be included as restoration species.)

Bulrush-cattail Series

Bulrushes and cattails are important herbs emerging from water. Broadleaf cattail (*Typha latifolia*), California bulrush (*Scirpus californicus*), umbrella flatsedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*), slender-beaked sedge (*Carex athrostachya*) and/or yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*) may be present. Wetlands habitat can be permanently, regularly, semipermanently, seasonally, or irregularly flooded and/or irregularly exposed.

(Other local species will be added to the restoration palette.)

5. Does the site contain populations of native species that exhibit important subspecies or genetic varieties historically present prior to European immigration?

Since areas of this site have had very little disturbance, it is possible. Certainly, the valley oaks date back to pre-settlement days and have been estimated to be over 200 years old.

**A3. Ecological importance of species and habitat types (100)**

1. Discuss the significance of habitat types at this location and include any local, regional, or statewide benefits received by preserving or improving the area.

The habitat types of the project site will preserve and/or restore the historic California landscape that is being swept away by rapid urban expansion into natural areas.

Headwater Corners will be a demonstration site where the benefits of a viable ecosystem with representative habitat types can be viewed by the larger public, who may take away the message that using native flora in a home setting is a sustainable and viable procedure.

Restoring the project site meets nine of the seventeen Resource Condition Goals of the SMMNRA:

- i. Protect and enhance species, habitat diversity and natural processes. . .
- ii. Protect and restore native plant species and plant communities . . .
- iii. Enact program to combat and remove the encroachment of exotic flora and fauna . . .
- iv. Maintain or improve water quality . . .
- v. Allow natural erosion processes to continue . . .
- vi. Preserve the cultural history . . .

- vii. Encourage cooperation between land managing agencies and local organizations . . .
  - viii. Share results from consultations with Native American Indians . . .
  - ix. Establish and ongoing dialogue and partnership with state and local governments, agencies, jurisdictions, and park neighbors to promote share responsibility to protect open space . . . .
2. Does the site contain any significant wintering, breeding, or nesting areas? Does it fall within any established migratory corridors? What is the level of significance? How are these affected by the project?

The site contains wintering, breeding and/or nesting areas for some of the 400 species of birds in the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Santa Monica Mountains are in the Pacific flyway so migratory corridors are expected. To date, no bird count has been undertaken on site.

Elements of the project provide bird habitat:

- Natural areas are isolated from human and domestic animal disturbance.
- The previous owner of one ex-residence landscaped primarily with native species; non-native elms harbor the hanging nests of bushtits.
- The 1890 structure will be restored to an historic landscape typical of a homestead residence.

Available nesting sites are found in:

- coastal sage scrub for ground and shrub nesting species (quail, doves);
- oak trees and willow snags for cavity dwellers (woodpeckers), branch nesters (hawks, ravens, scrub jays, doves), and pouch nesters (bushtits);
- shrubs and bushes throughout (hummingbirds, wrentits, brown thrashers house finch, brown towhee, rufous-sided towhee;
- wetlands restoration will provide nesting habitat for red-winged blackbirds.

Migratory or winter resident birds include Audubon warbler, Oregon junco, white-crown sparrow, golden crown sparrow, orioles, fox sparrow.

3. Describe any existing habitats that support any sensitive, rare, “keystone” or declining species with known highly restricted distributions in the region or state. Does the site contain any designated critical habitat? How are these affected by the project?

The coast live oak and the valley oak are “keystone” species.

The ringtail (or ringtail cat) is locally rare.

Special Status Natural Communities of Los Angeles County that exist or are expected to have a representative within the Project include:

- California walnut woodland - *Juglans californica*
- Mainland cherry forest - *Prunus illicifolia*

- Southern coast live oak riparian forest - *Quercus agrifolia*
- Valley needlegrass grassland - *Stipa pulchra*
- Valley oak woodland - *Quercus lobata*
- Coastal sage scrub - *Salvia* spp.

“Endangered Plant Communities of Southern California,” published by Southern California Botanists, edited by Allan A. Schoenherr, 1999 includes:

- California valley grassland;
- Californian coastal sage scrub;
- Walnut woodland;
- Riparian woodland;

and are all on Project site.

The site does not contain a state-designated habitat but is within the area designated by the National Park Service for maximum protection of all native flora and fauna.

4. What is the amount of shaded riverine aquatic (SRA) and riparian habitat to be developed, restored, or preserved?

One-half (0.5) mile of riverine aquatic and riparian habitat will be preserved, expanded or restored.

**A4. Public benefits accrued from expected habitat improvements (60)**

1. Describe present public use/access, if any. For instance, does or will the public have access for the purpose of wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, photography, picnics, etc.

The properties were in private ownership until January 2003. MRT-sponsored activities for the public are ongoing (restoration activities), and the public will have use/access to the project site after the management plan is completed.

The management plan will include activities such as hiking (A Los Angeles County adopted trail passes through the property), on-site nature walks, passive recreation, picnicking, and visits to the interpretive center.

Hunting is not allowed in the Santa Monica Mountains.

There are no fish in Dry Canyon Creek.

2. Discuss areas on the site that are critical for successfully implementing landscape or regional conservation plans. How will the project help to successfully implement the plans?

The entire area of Headwater Corners is critical for successfully meeting the nine previously-referenced goals of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area which is the regional conservation plan agreed to by the cooperative collaboration of local land management agencies.

Headwater Corners will be a living example and demonstration site incorporating sustainable best management practices into the landscape of developed sites as well as adjacent natural areas.

3. Describe the surrounding vicinity. Include the presence or absence of large urban areas, rapidly developing areas, and adjacent disturbed areas with non-native vegetation and other anthropogenic features. Do any surrounding areas detract from habitat values on the site?

Headwater Corners is the boundary between urban portions of the City of Calabasas and the natural landscape of the Santa Monica Mountains.

To the north and east of the project site, there are commercial, residential and educational uses as well as the core of the City of Calabasas.

To the south and west of the project site, there is dedicated open space. Annual discing required by the fire department has resulted in conversion to non-native grasslands south of the project site.

To the west, portions of the 15-acre open space of the homeowner's association have been disturbed by previous uses, but, except for some exotic species from their landscaping, the area has shown good native vegetative recovery.

The surrounding areas complement the habitat values on the site.

4. Describe compatibility with adjacent land uses.

There is no conflict between the Project and adjacent land uses.

The Project is separated from adjacent land uses by physical barriers. The urban environment on adjacent lands is separated from the project site by Old Topanga Canyon Road, and the residential development north of the project site is separated from the project by a wall erected by the property owners.

The owners of the residence immediately north of the Project are cooperating partners.

#### **A5. Viability/sustainability of habitat improvements (40)**

1. Describe any future operation, maintenance and monitoring activities planned for the site. How would these activities affect habitat values?

Restoration, maintenance and monitoring the restoration sites by community volunteers and youth-at-risk groups will continue until the ecosystem can sustain itself. Estimated time for native species to dominate the landscape is approximately three years.

Restoration will increase habitat values and biodiversity. Established and undisturbed native plant communities are self-sustaining and prevent the intrusion of non-native plants.

2. Does the site contain large areas of native vegetation or is it adjacent to large protected natural areas or other natural landscapes (for example, a large stand of blue-oak woodland adjacent to public land)?

The project site is a large area of native vegetation and is adjacent to large protected natural areas. The only acceptable non-native vegetation will be located near structures. The native plant communities on site were described earlier.

3. Is the watershed upstream of the site relatively undisturbed or undeveloped and likely to remain so into the foreseeable future? Describe its condition.

The upstream watershed of Dry Canyon Creek is relatively undisturbed. There are residences, a City of Calabasas park and pre-school, and private K-12 school. The land next to a tributary of Dry Canyon Creek is developed. The City of Calabasas, Mountains Restoration Trust, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and National Park Service target the upper watershed for preservation, however intense development pressure remains constant.

4. Describe any populations of native species or stands of native habitats that show representative environmental settings, such as soil, elevations, geographic extremes, or climatic conditions (for example, the wettest or most northerly location of a species within the state.)

The soils of the Santa Monica Mountains form a mosaic of soil types. Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) completed a soils survey for the National Park Service and will be incorporated into the resources surveys for the project site.

There are no significant elevation changes on the site.

There are no topographic extremes although there are discrete variations which account for the multitude of plant communities.

Climatic conditions in a Mediterranean ecosystem are mild. However, temperatures can range from summer temperatures over 100 degrees to winter temperatures to below freezing. Rainfall is cyclic between drought and flood conditions – there is no “normal” rainfall.

Headwater Corners is the southernmost range of the giant *Quercus lobata* (valley oak), some of which on the Project are hundreds of years old and are naturally self-restoring with abundant seedlings.

**B. (340x $F_a$  points) Agricultural Land Conservation Benefits**  
**B1. Potential productivity of the site as farmland (120)**

**THIS PROJECT HAS NO AGRICULTURAL BENEFITS**

1. Describe the quality of the agricultural land based on land capability, farmland mapping and monitoring program definitions, productivity indices, and other soil, climate and vegetative factors.
2. Are projected agricultural practices compatible with water availability?
3. Does the site come with riparian, mineral, and/or development rights?
4. Is the site large enough to sustain future commercial agricultural production?
5. Does the site contain any adverse or beneficial deed restrictions affecting agricultural land conservation?
6. Describe the present type of agricultural use including the level of production in relation to the site's productivity potential. What is the condition of the existing infrastructure that supports agriculture uses?

**B2. Farming practices and commercial viability (40)**

1. Does the area possess necessary market infrastructure and agricultural support services?
2. Are surrounding parcels compatible with commercial agricultural production?
3. Is there local government economic support in place for agricultural enterprises including water policies, public education, marketing support, and consumer and recreational incentives?
4. Describe any present or planned future environmentally friendly farm practices (no till, erosion control, wetlands avoidance, eco-friendly chemicals, recycling wastes, water conservation, biological pest control).

**B3. Need and urgency for farmland preservation measures (70)**

1. Is the project site under a Williamson Act contract?
2. Describe the surrounding vicinity. Include the presence or absence of large urban areas, rapidly developing areas, low density ranchette communities, and adjacent disturbed areas with non-native vegetation and other human-induced features. Do any surrounding areas detract from agricultural values on the site?
3. What types of conversion or development are likely on neighboring parcels? What are the land uses of nearby parcels? Describe the effects, if any, of this project to neighboring farming operations or other neighboring land uses.

4. Describe the relationship between the project site and any applicable sphere of influence.
5. Is the agricultural land use on the project site consistent with the local General Plan? Does the General Plan demonstrate commitment to long-term agricultural conservation.

**B4. Compatibility of project with local government planning (50)**

1. Is the agricultural land use on the project site consistent with the local General Plan? Does the General Plan demonstrate commitment to long-term agricultural conservation?
2. What is the present zoning and is the parcel developable?
3. Is there an effective right to farm ordinance in place?
4. Is the project description consistent with the policies of the Local Agency Formation Commission?
5. Will the project as proposed impact the present tax base?

**B5. Quality of agricultural conservation measures in the project (50)**

1. For agriculture lands proposed for conservation, describe any additional site features to be conserved that meet multiple natural resource conservation objectives, including wetland protection, wildlife habitat conservation, and scenic open space preservation where the conservation of each additional site feature does not restrict potential farming activities on the agriculture portions of the site.
2. What are the present biological/ecological values to wildlife? How are these values affected by the proposed project?
3. Is the project proponent working with any local agricultural conservancies or trusts?
4. Does conservation of this site support long-term private stewardship of agricultural land? How does this proposal demonstrate an innovative approach to agricultural land conservation?
5. Without conservation, is the land proposed for protection likely to be converted to non-agricultural use in the foreseeable future?

**VI. (320 points) Miscellaneous Benefits and Quality of Proposal**

**A. Size of request, other contributions, number of persons benefiting, cost of grant per benefited person (40)**

The following figures reflect those costs associated with the protection, creation, and enhancement of the flood protection of Dry Canyon Creek. The indirect benefits to the flood protection project, such as the upper watershed open space preservation and retirement of building rights upstream from the Project Area are not reflected. Additional data is available upon request.

Estimated Total Project Cost	\$4,352,135
Amount of FPCP Grant Funds Requested	\$1,584,825
Amount of Local Funds Contributed	\$ 810,000
Amount of In-kind Contributions *	\$1,957,310

**Additional Funding Sources:**

- City of Calabasas
- Mountains Restoration Trust
- State Water Board
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- State Department of Water Resources – Urban Streams
- California State Parks – administrator of federal funds –  
Land and Water Conservation Fund and the  
Recreational Trails Program
- National Park Service
- State Coastal Conservancy
- Envicom, an environmental consultant firm
- Steve Craig, archeologist
- Chester King, archeologist
- USC, Landscape Architectural School
- Community members
- Mr. Baiba, property owner

Number of persons expected to benefit	<u>10,000 per annum</u>
Flood Protection Corridor Funds per person benefited*	<u>\$158 for one year</u>

Headwater Corners will be a public facility for educational and recreational users, with the potential to benefit hundreds of thousands of people over a twenty year period. A figure of 10,000 per annum was used based on reduced occupancy on lands protected as open space, vehicle use, student programs, adult education demonstrations, and a conservative figure for annual recreational users.

**NOTE: If the cost is amortized over a period of twenty years, the Flood Protection Corridor Funds per person benefited is \$8.00**

(\* Count as beneficiaries those receiving flood benefits, recreational users)

of habitat areas protected by the Project, and consumers of food products from agricultural areas conserved by the Project.)

Persons expected to benefit: The numbers of people that will benefit from this Project is staggering. There are 1.6 million people within a 20-mile radius of Headwater Corners, and 17 million people within a one-hour drive.

Thousand of vehicles use this intersection daily to enter the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and access the 1,500 residences of Cold Creek, Monte Nido, Old Topanga, Calabasas Highlands, Mountain Park, Calabasas Village Mobile Estates, and the school facilities of Calabasas High School, 1,600 student population, Viewpoint School, 1,000 student population, and Creekside Park Pre-school, student population of 200.

#### **B. Quality of effects on water supply or water quality (90)**

1. Will water stored by the project provide for any conjunctive use, groundwater recharge, or water supply benefit?

Dry Canyon Creek is an impaired waterbody listed on the 2002 305(b) draft list for fecal coliform & selenium. Algae blooms persist, and erosion of the banks increases sedimentation which further degrades the quality of the stream. Restoring the riparian/wetland habitat will improve the water quality by allowing the wetland plant and other living organisms to remove contaminants. Willows, sedges, and other riparian plants will stabilize streambanks, reducing sedimentation.

2. Does the project fence cattle out?

There is no grazing on Headwater Corners.

3. Does the project pass water over newly developed fresh water marsh?

The project develops a series of wetlands and vegetated treatment systems in the historic and expanded floodplain that are appropriate for this region. The Santa Monica Mountains are semi-arid, and wetlands experience periods of dry conditions. Vegetated treatment systems will filter street runoff prior to entering Dry Canyon Creek.

4. Does the project trap sediments?

It is anticipated that sediments and bulk materials will settle in the widened floodway when completed. Annual monitoring and any maintenance required, such as removing excessive amounts of sediment and harvesting plant materials, will be performed by the applicants.

#### **C. Quality of impact on underrepresented populations or historic or cultural resources (60)**

1. Does the project benefit underrepresented populations? Explain.

Yes. Located in the ethnically diverse 345.8 square mile geographical area known as the San Fernando Valley (“Valley”) (population is 51% non-white according to the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley Demographics 1998-estimated), Headwater Corners provides an opportunity for people of all backgrounds to enjoy the natural environment of the headwaters of Los Angeles River.

Headwater Corners is located on and near major regional public transit routes, such as US Highway 101, Ventura Boulevard, and Mulholland Highway. These transit routes open up the opportunity for the evolving and underserved population of the City of Los Angeles dependent upon public transportation systems, to enjoy Headwater Corners. In addition, the City of Calabasas operates a trolley service within the city limits that will stop at Headwater Corners.

An estimated 1.6 million people live in the Valley (1998 estimated population, Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley). The Valley contains 50% of the City of Los Angeles which has only 3% of its total area devoted to park and recreation land and open space (City of Calabasas *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*).

2. Are historical or cultural resources impacted by the project? Explain.

Yes. The Project Area was once part of a 160-acre homestead granted in 1904 to William Masson. The preservation of the original home, adjacent to Dry Canyon Creek, will be incorporated into the environmental and cultural education programs. Several of the ancillary structures in the Project Area could date back to the 1940’s when the San Fernando Valley was a rural community. The tremendous growth of Los Angeles since World War II, in addition to natural disasters such as fire and flood, has eliminated 99% of the buildings from the turn-of-the-century.

**D. Technical and fiscal capability of the project team (60)**

1. Does the project require scientific or technical expertise, and if so, is it provided for in the grant proposal?

Yes, scientific and technical expertise is required for Headwater Corners. Mountains Restoration Trust has put together a team of experts to complete the restoration and enhancement plans for Dry Canyon Creek. The team is comprised of a fluvial geomorphologist, restoration ecologist, hydraulic and civil engineers, botanists, and biologist, environmental education experts, to name a few. The grant requests funds to pay a portion of these costs.

2. Grant funds will be available in phases. What monitoring and reporting mechanisms are built into your administrative plan to track progress, initiation, and completion of successive phases?

Each phase will be evaluated prior to commencing with the subsequent phase. Baseline mapping will establish the benchmark for monitoring the success of the project. Water quality monitoring has been done monthly for over four years, and will continue throughout the project. Results from the water analysis will determine the effectiveness of the vegetated treatment systems and best management practices used during construction.

3. Please outline your team's management, fiscal and technical capability to effectively carry out your proposal. Mention any previous or ongoing grant management experience you have.

### City of Calabasas

The City of Calabasas operates 10 parks and co-owns with the City of Agoura a community center that serves both cities. The City has displayed its commitment to environmental responsibility through a number of innovative grant-funded programs that have been initiated and completed in a timely manner.

- 2000 Water Bond, Dept. of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Grant awarded in 2002 for acquisitions and restoration at Headwater Corners, co-sponsored with Mountains Restoration Trust
- 2000 Park Bond, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project Grant awarded in 2001 and 2000 Water Bond, Dept. of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Grant awarded in 2003 for removing concrete from a local creek and restoring it to benefit the existing wildlife corridor, co-sponsored with Mountains Restoration Trust
- Prop A, Los Angeles County Grant for installation and maintenance of water quality improvement facilities awarded in 1999
- 319(h), State Water Board Grant for water quality monitoring program to identify stream pollutants and educate the public about local pollution prevention awarded in 1998
- California State Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Grant for the purchase of a natural gas-powered trolley to serve as city transportation awarded in 2001
- 205(j), State Water Board Grant to conduct a comprehensive creek plan for the Calabasas area awarded in 2000

### Mountains Restoration Trust

Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT) is a Santa Monica Mountains (Los Angeles County) nonprofit land trust created in 1981 by the California Coastal Commission

and the State Coastal Conservancy to provide open space, resource protection and public recreation. MRT is experienced in management, restoration, and acquisition.

- MRT owns and manages the 1028-acre Cold Creek Preserve and partners with the National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California State Parks, City of Calabasas, City of Agoura Hills, and Los Angeles County to acquire and enhance resource lands, wildlife corridors and trail systems.
- MRT is in the third year of a five-year *Arundo donax* removal program in Malibu Creek funded in partnership with Los Angeles County, National Park Service, State Parks, and State Coastal Conservancy.
- In 2001, MRT completed the acquisition of 416 acres of coastal canyon with a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

**E. Coordination and cooperation with other projects, partner agencies, and affected organizations and individuals (80)**

1. List cost sharing and in-kind partners and any other stakeholders involved with your project and indicate the nature of their contribution, if any. Address the team's ability to leverage outside funds.

Cost sharing and in-kind partners:

City of Calabasas – funds, technical assistance, and overall management support

Mountains Restoration Trust – funds, management, technical support

State Water Board - funds

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy - funds

State Department of Water Resources – Urban Streams - funds

California State Parks – administrator of federal funds –

Land and Water Conservation Fund and the  
Recreational Trails Program

State Coastal Conservancy – funds

National Park Service – interpretive design

Natural Resources Conservation Service – engineering and biological support

California Native Plant Society – biological support

USC, Landscape Architectural School – technical support

Mr. Baiba, property owner – charitable contribution

Wildan Associates – engineering support

Envicom, an environmental consultant firm – biological support

Steve Craig, archeologist – technical support

Chester King, archeologist –technical support

Community members – sweat labor

Ability to leverage outside funds

The public-private partnership of Mountains Restoration Trust, a community-based nonprofit land trust, and the City of Calabasas has a proven track record of leveraging funds, as evident by the project acquisitions to date. The partnership has pulled together multiple funding partners to implement Headwater Corners, a 500-acre acquisition and restoration project in the Dry Canyon Watershed. Since 2000, 91 parcels totaling 111 acres valued at \$8.6 million have been acquired at a cost of \$3.2 million. Funding sources for acquisitions and restoration for the Headwater Corners project are as follows:

City of Calabasas	\$ 918,000
Mountains Restoration Trust	\$ 250,000
State Coastal Conservancy	\$ 65,000
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	\$1,136,000
State Dept. of Water Resources	\$ 419,000
Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$ 375,000
Federal Highway Transportation Funds (Recreational Trails Program)	<u>\$ 150,000</u>
Total	\$3,313,000

Another example of Mountains Restoration Trust's ability to leverage funds:

Since 1996, Mountains Restoration Trust has partnered with Los Angeles County to acquire 372.27 acres, primarily in Cold Creek, with funding from grants from the Habitat Conservation Fund, State Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Recreational Trails Grant, and Los Angeles County's Prop A grant program.

1. Does your project overlap with or complement ongoing activities being carried out by others (such as CALFED, the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study, the Delta levee program, local floodplain management programs, the Reclamation Board's Designated Floodway program, or a multiple objective regional or watershed plan)? If so, indicate any coordination that has taken place to date or is scheduled to take place in the future.

Evidence of consistency with the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan, the California State Resources Agency, October 2001:

The Project will protect a large percentage of the remaining open space in the Dry Canyon Watershed, a major sub-watershed of the Los Angeles River Watershed according to the Plan. Coordination that has taken place to date or is scheduled to take place in the future:

### Guiding Principles:

- Establish priorities for land acquisition
- Improve habitat quality, quantity, and connectivity
- Promote stewardship of the landscape
- Maintain and improve flood protection
- Maintain or enhance existing flood protection
- Utilize nonstructural methods for flood management where feasible
- Reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff where feasible
- Acquire land for flood management, wetlands, cleansing of water
- Improve quality of surface water and groundwater
- Improve flood safety through restoration of river and creek ecosystems
- Restore the natural hydrologic functioning of subwatershed areas where feasible
- Maintain sufficient flow conditions to support riparian/riverine habitats

### Planning:

- Coordinate watershed planning across jurisdictions and boundaries
- Plan at the subwatershed level
- Encourage and facilitate public and private partnerships to implement projects
- Involve the residential, business, and professional communities in all aspects of planning
- Encourage multi-objective planning and projects
- Develop demonstration open space projects with multiple watershed objectives
- Use science as a basis for planning
- Involve the public through education and outreach programs
- Conduct public educational and outreach programs to promote watershed restoration

### Opportunities:

- Land acquisition, connectivity, and open space
- Mountains, foothills, and hills
- Tributaries
- Native plants and wildlife
- Habitat and linkages
- Wetlands
- Water resources
- Flood protection
- Utilize a range of flood protection methods, including non-structural; maintain and enhance flood protection, while utilizing open spaces and

landscaped areas to filter, cleanse and retain stormwater and enhance groundwater infiltration.

- Surface water
- Improve stormwater runoff quality to assure protection of surface and groundwater. Encourage infiltration of urban runoff into groundwater where feasible and without having a negative impact on groundwater quality, to extend the water supply, thereby reducing reliance on imported water.

2. Will this application, if approved, begin the next phase of a previously approved project or advance an ongoing project substantially toward completion?

The funds requested with this application will complete acquisitions valued at \$3,550,000 and implement a full restoration/enhancement plan for Dry Canyon Creek. When completed, Dry Canyon Creek will be a laboratory for the region's population to explore and understand the natural fluvial processes of the headwaters of the Los Angeles River.

Headwater Corners will be a public facility specifically designed to allow access to the riparian habitat while demonstrating the balance required for a mutually beneficial existence between man's built environment and the natural world.

3. Describe how the proposal demonstrates a coordinated approach among affected landowners, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. If other entities are affected, is there written support for the proposal and a willingness to cooperate?

Headwater Corners is an exemplary example of a coordinated effort between the community, local government and a non-profit organization. Headwater Corners has support from a diverse group:

American Indian Basket Weavers Association  
United American Indian Involvement, Inc.  
Calabasas and Granada Hills high school students  
UCLA Native American Cultures graduate program  
USC Landscape Architecture/Restoration Ecology graduate program  
Calabasas Historical Society  
Local residents  
Old Topanga Homeowners Association  
Greater Mulwood Homeowners Association  
Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation  
Assemblymember Fran Pavley  
State Senator Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Congressman Brad Sherman

Support Letters are on file from numerous individuals, agencies, and organizations, and will be supplied upon request.

Thank you for taking the time and effort to fill out this application. Please send one hard copy with required signatures by 3:00 p.m. on February 14th, 2003 to:

Earl Nelson, Program Manager  
Flood Protection Corridor Program  
Division of Flood Management  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 1641  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Please also send an electronic copy by 3:00 p.m. on February 14th, 2003 to:

Bonnie Ross at [bross@water.ca.gov](mailto:bross@water.ca.gov)

Additional Items required pursuant to Section 497.7 of Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Division 2

(a)(11) List of permits and implementation plan for their procurement

California Department of Fish and Game

Army Corp of Engineers

Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Project will prepare the baseline studies, and engineering plans for submittal to the City of Calabasas departments with jurisdiction over the project, such as stormwater management, public works, and planning. Comments will be incorporated into the plans and submitted to the jurisdictions listed above for their review and issuance of the permits.

(d) Summary of proposed property acquisition rights

(1) Identification of each property

Property to be acquired is known as Assessor Parcel Number 2069-016-038 comprised of 8.5 acres of land and fronting on Mulholland Highway, City of Calabasas, County of Los Angeles.

(2) Names, addresses and telephone numbers of the property owners

Meir Baiba  
4366 Park Corona  
Calabasas, CA 91302  
(818) 591-0975

NOTE: due to the nature of real property negotiations, applicants request no contact be made with property owner without first contacting applicant.

(3) Type of property rights to be acquired

Fee simple title.

(4) Evidence that affected landowners are willing participants

A letter is attached from the property owner indicating a willingness to sell.

(e) A tentative work plan for the project including:

(1) A timetable for execution of the project

See the attached budget.

(2) A task breakdown for the project

See the attached budget.

(3) A description of how services of the California Conservation Corps, or local community conservation corps will be used in the project.

Mountains Restoration Trust will conduct numerous “Community Restoration Days” for the streambank stabilization, vegetated treatment systems, and wetlands expansion components of the project. The local community and adjacent high school will be the target groups for the restoration and educational activities.

Mountains Restoration Trust’s restoration crew, composed of 15-18-year-old youth-at-risk from Outward Bound Adventures (OBA), will assist MRT staff on the workdays by showing the volunteers proper planting techniques. The youth are taught environmental education, leadership skills and teamwork and will coordinate community volunteer events.

(f) A list of names and addresses of owners of all property interest in parcels adjacent to those for which acquisition of property rights is proposed.

Mountains Restoration Trust  
7050 Owensmouth Ave., #206  
Canoga Park, CA 91303

Viewpoint School  
23620 Mulholland Highway  
Calabasas, CA 91302

Bejan Rufeh  
1441 Butler Avenue #2  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Mr. & Mrs. John Peters  
23238 Mulholland Highway  
Calabasas, CA 91302

Clairidge Homeowners Association  
15315 Magnolia Blvd., #212  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

City of Calabasas  
26135 Mureau Road  
Calabasas, CA 91302

Calabasas LLC  
23200 Mulholland Highway  
Calabasas, CA 91302

(g) If property rights are to be acquired for the project, or if a need is indicated in environmental review documentation prepared for the project pursuant to CEQA, a plan to minimize the impact on adjacent property owners, including but not limited to the following:

Headwater Corners  
Mountains Restoration Trust  
City of Calabasas  
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There will be no negative impacts to adjacent property owners.

(1) An evaluation of the impact on floodwaters

Floodwater levels will decrease, thereby reducing flood damage potential to upstream properties.

(2) The structural integrity of affected levees

There are no levees in the vicinity of the project area.

(3) Diversion facilities

There are no diversion facilities in the vicinity of the project area.

(4) Current and historic agricultural practices on the project site and in the vicinity

There are no current agricultural activities in the Dry Canyon Watershed. The historic agricultural practices included grazing and timber extraction have been replaced by urbanization of the area.

(5) Timber extraction operations

There are no timber extraction operations in the vicinity of the project.

(6) An evaluation with regard to maintenance

Maintenance will include removing excessive sediment, woody debris, and trash. Funds from this grant will be put into a trust account for future maintenance.

(h) A description of the input and participation that local groups and affected parties provided in the preparation of the work plan and application.

Community members were solicited for input into this application. Local groups have been included in the planning process since inception of the acquisition and restoration planning began in 2000.