



# Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Grisanti and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Mary Linden, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Steve McClary, Interim City Manager

Date prepared: August 18, 2021 Meeting date: August 23, 2021

Subject: Wildlife Conservation Board Grant for Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing Project (Mayor Grisanti and Mayor Pro Tem Silverstein)

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** At the request of Mayor Grisanti and Mayor Pro Tem Silverstein, authorize the Mayor to submit a letter to the Wildlife Conservation Board in support of allocating \$20 million in grant funding to the National Wildlife Federation for the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing Project.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

**WORK PLAN:** This item was not included in the Adopted Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. This project is part of normal staff operations.

**DISCUSSION:** On the agenda for the Wildlife Conservation Board meeting of August 26, 2021 is an item to consider the allocation of a \$20 million grant to the National Wildlife Federation for a project to construct a wildlife crossing over U.S. Highway 101 (US 101).

The Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing project is a cooperative effort with Caltrans, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), State Coastal Conservancy, City of Agoura Hills, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC). The SMMC website states: "The purpose of the project is to provide a safe and sustainable passage for wildlife across US-101 near Liberty Canyon Road in the City of Agoura Hills that reduces wildlife death and allows for the movement of animals and the exchange of genetic material." [<https://smmc.ca.gov/liberty-canyon-wildlife-corridor/>]

The Council has previously taken actions to support efforts to protect wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains:

- On March 9, 2020, the Council authorized the Mayor to send a letter in support of designating mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains as “threatened” (Attachment 1).
- On April 13, 2020, the Council authorized the Mayor to submit a letter of support for the purchase of 150 acres of the Triangle Ranch property to support the success of the wildlife crossing (Attachment 2).

Mayor Grisanti and Mayor Pro Tem Silverstein are requesting the Council authorize the Mayor to submit a letter to the Wildlife Conservation Board in support of approving the \$20 million grant allocation for this important project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. March 11, 2020 letter to Director of California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding protection of Southern California and Central Coast Mountain Lions
2. April 17, 2020 letter of support for the purchase of the Triangle Ranch Property at the US-101/Kanan Dume Road Corridor



# City of Malibu

Karen Farrer, Mayor

23825 Stuart Ranch Road · Malibu, California · 90265-4861  
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March 11, 2020

*Sent via Email to [Chuck.Bonham@Wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Chuck.Bonham@Wildlife.ca.gov)*

Charlton H. Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
PO Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

RE: Protection of Southern California and Central Coast Mountain Lions

Dear Director Bonham:

Mountain lion hunting has been banned in California since 1990. In 2014, an exception to the law was enacted allowing for depredation permits to be issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife allowing a landowner to take lethal action when a mountain lion has killed or injured livestock or pets after other deterrents have failed to stop the lion from returning to the property. In the Santa Monica Mountains and Santa Ana Mountains areas, where the mountain lion populations are isolated and at risk, an individual must allow for a “three-strike” policy, which went into effect in 2017, requiring a landowner to submit three reports of separate attacks before a permit can be considered. The applicant must also provide proof of varied actions taken to stop the mountain lion from returning.

In January 2020, a mountain lion monitored by the National Park Service since 2017, identified as P-56, was killed near Camarillo. A landowner had been issued a depredation permit after P-56 was reported to have killed over a dozen of the owner’s animals and despite numerous attempts by the landowner to thwart the lion’s return.

P-56 was the first mountain lion killed in the Santa Monica Mountains area under the State’s depredation permit law. The death of P-56 has put the entire population of mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains area at risk as he was one of just two known males in the area.

On February 12, 2020, State Senators Henry Stern and Ben Allen, and Assembly Members Richard Bloom and Laura Friedman, co-signed a letter to the Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (attached) offering support for any effort to protect the State’s mountain lion population. The legislators also indicated support for a petition that was filed with the California Fish and Game Commission to start the process of protecting mountain lions in most of the state, including Southern California, under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

In addition, one day after the killing of P-56 was announced, Los Angeles City Councilmembers Paul Koretz and David Ryu announced a proposed resolution seeking to halt depredation permits and to request the City of Los Angeles’ support for listing Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions as threatened under CESA.

At its Regular meeting on March 9, 2020, the Malibu City Council voted unanimously to join these local officials in requesting that the California Fish and Game Commission list Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions in sensitive areas, including the Santa Monica Mountains, as “threatened” under CESA. The City further requests that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife immediately cease the issuance of depredation permits in these areas.

On behalf of the Malibu community, which includes the precious wildlife that share our land, we strongly urge your understanding and cooperation in this life and death situation. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me at [KFarrer@malibucity.org](mailto:KFarrer@malibucity.org).

Sincerely,

*Karen Farrer*

Karen Farrer  
Mayor

Cc: Honorable Members of the Malibu City Council  
Honorable Henry Stern, California State Senate, 27<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Ben Allen, California State Senate, 26<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Richard Bloom, California State Assembly, 50<sup>th</sup> District  
California Fish and Game Commission ([fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov))



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April 17, 2020

Honorable Henry Stern  
California State Senate, 27<sup>th</sup> District  
*Sent via Email to [Henry.Stern@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Henry.Stern@sen.ca.gov)*

Honorable Richard Bloom  
California State Assembly, 50<sup>th</sup> District  
*Sent via Email to [Richard.Bloom@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Richard.Bloom@asm.ca.gov)*

RE: Purchase of Triangle Ranch Property at US-10/Kanan Dume Road Corridor – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Stern and Assemblymember Bloom:


In September 2018, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) completed the acquisition of 170 acres of open space in the central Santa Monica Mountains south of the 101 Freeway along Kanan Road. The acreage was part of what is known as the Triangle Ranch property and was purchased with grants from numerous State and local funding sources.

The remaining piece of the property is comprised of 150 acres at the base of Ladyface Mountain, currently part of a development project of more than 25 large, single family dwellings. This development threatens the health and safety of the wildlife living in the Santa Monica Mountains and will have a detrimental impact on the success of the wildlife crossing being constructed at Liberty Canyon to provide safe and sustainable passage for wildlife across the 101 Freeway.

In addition, Kanan Dume Road is designated by the County of Los Angeles as a Disaster Route, and is a critical piece of Malibu's Evacuation Plan as it one of the main arterial connector roads between Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu and the US-101 freeway through the Santa Monica Mountains.

At its Regular meeting on April 13, 2020, the Malibu City Council voted unanimously to join the City of Agoura Hills in supporting your proposal of a State budget item of \$14,500,000 for SMMC to purchase the remaining property as dedicated open space to prevent the proposed development phase of the Triangle Ranch project. The City of Malibu truly appreciates your ongoing efforts to protect precious open space and wildlife protections throughout the Santa Monica Mountains area.

Sincerely,

  
Karen Farrer  
Mayor

Cc: Honorable Members of the Malibu City Council