

PRESS RELEASE



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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California Coastal Commission Unanimously Approves Historic Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and MRCA Plan to Increase Public Access to Coastal Parks in Malibu

Malibu—The California Coastal Commission voted unanimously (12-0) last night to approve and certify the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) Malibu Parks Public Access Enhancement Plan—Public Works Plan to improve and increase public use of five open space parks owned by the Conservancy or MRCA in Malibu. The Plan provides the first public camping ever in the city of Malibu, day-use picnic areas, 17.5 miles of new or improved recreational trails, new parking, restrooms, and two new trailheads.

“The people of California who purchased these parklands have won a major victory,” said Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. “This superb plan is the culmination of an effort that goes back 17 years. It owes to the resolution of the board members from both agencies, our public agency partners, and most of all from the outpouring of support from the public at large for increased access to public parks in Malibu. When the plan is fully implemented, 280 campers per night will be able to enjoy the blue water view of Malibu’s coast when they awake—an experience heretofore afforded only those who are residents of Malibu.”

(-More-)

At the Commission hearing in Oceanside, the many speakers in support of the project included public agencies, environmentalists, and community members who will be able to further enjoy nature in the public lands of the Santa Monica Mountains. A group of young people led by Charles Thomas, Executive Director of Outward Bound Adventures, spoke passionately about the value of nature, conservation, and the outdoors to build appreciation of wilderness, self, family and communities for urban youth. “California can lead the way in ensuring that all people have access to nature,” said Thomas.

Several homeowners groups in Malibu have fought to oppose the plan, citing fire danger from use of public parklands and from public camping. For this reason, the Conservancy and MRCA have worked diligently to provide a plan that addresses local concerns including an unprecedented, comprehensive fire protection plan which includes not allowing open flame of any kind at the campsites. The plan also clusters campsites at two parks—Corral Canyon Park and the Conservancy’s Malibu Bluffs Park—near Pacific Coast Highway and away from residences.

The Public Works Plan connects five coastal parks owned by the Conservancy, the MRCA, and the National Park Service—Ramirez Canyon Park, Escondido Canyon Park, Latigo Trailhead, Solstice Canyon Park, and Corral Canyon Park with seven new miles of the regionally significant Coastal Slope Trail. In addition to camping, 12 new day use picnic areas will be created at the parks and many ADA-accessible facilities.

“This (plan) is a really fabulous step forward, and will bring so much public access,” said Coastal Commissioner Sara Wan. “This will really tie together what’s missing in this area in the Santa Monica Mountains for the public.”

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was established by the California State Legislature in 1980. Since that time, it has helped to preserve over 60,000 acres of

parkland in both wilderness and urban settings, and has improved more than 114 public recreational facilities throughout Southern California.

The MRCA is a Joint Powers Agency of the State of California which includes the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, and the Conejo Recreation and Park District. The MRCA provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, park construction services, park operations, fire prevention, ranger services, educational and leadership programs for thousands of youth each year, and is one of the lead agencies providing for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

Editors note: Map illustrating plan attached.

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PROPOSED NEW FACILITIES

- 11 ADA-Accessible Campsites and 43 Regular Campsites serving a Maximum of 280 overnight visitors
- 17.5 miles of new or improved recreational trails
- 12 new day use Picnic areas
- 2 new Trailheads

