

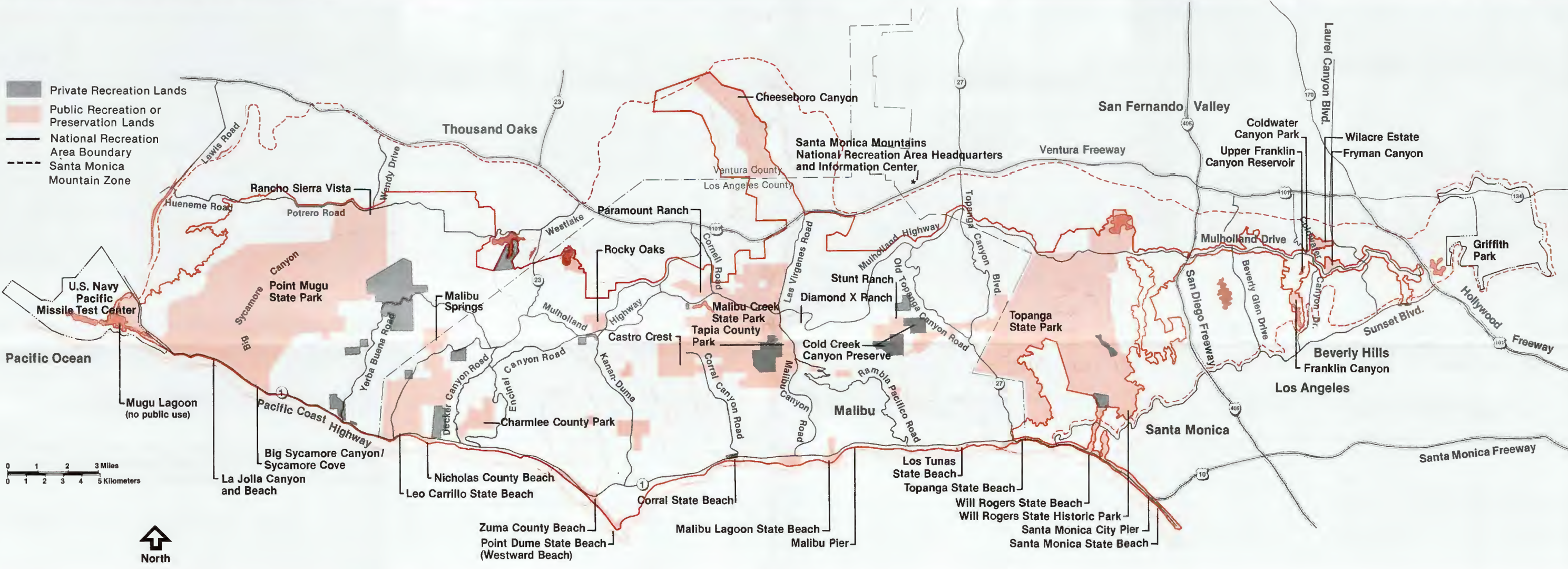
# Santa Monica Mountains

National Recreation Area  
California

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Existing Recreational Use and Preservation



## People, Land and Sea: Exploring the Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore

Within the National Recreation Area boundary are towns, developments, private ranches and homesites, and a range of existing private recreation areas and public parklands. The National Park Service, working with state and local agencies and private organizations, intends to connect existing parklands, protect the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Corridor, develop and interpret historic and recreation sites, and preserve and protect the mountain and seashore area. A majority of the land will remain in private ownership.

### The Mountain Parks

*"You don't know what a country we have got till you start prowling around it."* —Will Rogers

**Point Mugu State Park** (15 miles southeast of Oxnard on Pacific Coast Highway. Phone: 213-706-1310.) Point Mugu forms the westernmost end of the Santa Monica Mountains. The park includes five miles of ocean shoreline with rocky bluffs, sandy beaches, a grass picnic area, barbecues, and two drive-in campgrounds (La Jolla with RV camping and Sycamore Canyon). Seventy miles of hiking and riding trails crisscross the interior canyons and rugged uplands of the park. During the summer, rangers lead children's activities, nature walks, and campfire programs. Campsite reservations recommended at La Jolla Beach and Sycamore Canyon. A hike-in camp at La Jolla Valley is established on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Hikers can choose between two destinations. La Jolla Valley has one of the best remaining stands of California native grasses and is abundant with wildflowers during the spring months. Big Sycamore Canyon, in contrast, is lined with sycamore, cottonwood, big-leaf maple, and dogwood with lush ferns growing near its springs.



**Rancho Sierra Vista** National Park Service (located on Potrero Road off Wendy Drive, north of Point Mugu State Park. Phone: 213-888-3770) Open for hikes and ranger led interpretation on a reservation basis. Once a part of the Spanish Rancho El Conejo, this area will be used for California living history, an outdoor education area, and as the site for a proposed Native American cultural area.

**Malibu Springs** National Park Service (located off Mulholland near Ventura/Los Angeles County line. Phone: 213-888-3770) Open for hiking on a reservation basis.

**Leo Carrillo State Beach** (21 miles southeast of Oxnard at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Mulholland Highway. Phone: 805-499-2112 or 213-706-1310.) Although you can explore the uplands of Arroyo Sequit, most visitors spend their time near the ocean. The park is famous for its 6,600 foot beach which is divided by Sequit Point, a bluff riddled with caves and a sea-carved tunnel. Canyon Campground can accommodate motorhomes up to 31 feet long while the Beach Campground is suitable for tents and self-contained RVs. A walk-in group campground is located at the north end of the canyon and must be reserved in advance. Reservations are recommended for the other campgrounds.

**Charmlee County Park** (entrance on Encinal road, four miles inland from Pacific Coast Highway. Phone: 213-744-4210.) Chaparral and oak woodlands provide an area for easy walks and rides on trails which wind through meadows and along bluffs overlooking the Malibu coastline. This park is a good place for whale watching and picnicking.

**Rocky Oaks** National Park Service (corner of Mulholland and Kanan Roads. Phone: 213-888-3770) Day-use area open for hiking, riding and

group picnicking on a reservation basis. Future uses include outdoor education and special events. Ranger-led hikes are available on weekends.

**Cheesebore Canyon** National Park Service (located north of 101, Ventura Freeway, off Cheesebore turnoff. Phone: 213-888-3770.) Concentrations of 400-year-old valley and coast live oak predominating grasslands along a year-round stream. This area is part of the upper Malibu Creek watershed which flows through Malibu Creek and drains into Malibu Lagoon State Beach.

Open for hiking, equestrian use and group hike-in camping on a reservation basis.

**Paramount Ranch** National Park Service (located near Mulholland on Cornell Road, two miles south of 101, Ventura Freeway. Phone: 213-888-3770) Paramount Studios owned 4,000 acres in this area from the early 20's to the mid-40's. In its heyday, the ranch saw enormous sets and large casts of extras. One particularly large movie, the 1937 "Adventures of Marco Polo," included elephants, 2,000 decorated horses, and construction of a huge fortress.

Today's ranch totals 336 acres. Gentle rolling hills spread below Sugarloaf Mountain, making an inviting place for walking, equestrian uses, and picnicking. A western town movie set is still used by television and movie companies, and the ranch serves as a staging area for the annual Renaissance Pleasure Faire. The ranch is open daily, and ranger guided hikes of the ranch and tours of the movie set are conducted on weekends.

**Malibu Creek State Park** (entrances located on corner of Mulholland and Cornell Roads and on Las Virgenes-Malibu Canyon Road. Phone: 213-991-1827) Malibu Creek State Park preserves an area of rugged cliffs and gorges along upper Malibu and Las Virgenes creeks. Along the creek are waterfalls, a rock pool, and Century Lake. Away from the creeks are slopes of chaparral, grassland, and groves of coast live oak shading picnic tables. About fifteen miles of hiking and riding trails thread the park's rocky terrain. Docents provide interpretive services on weekends.

Portions of Malibu Creek were purchased from 20th Century Fox Studios which had used the land for filming such motion pictures as "How Green Was My Valley" and "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing." Filming continues with bits of the park being changed in time and place for a few days while the cameras roll.

**Castro Crest** National Park Service (reached from Corral Canyon Road off Pacific Coast Highway. Phone: 213-888-3770 to check on fire conditions.) Open every day for hiking, this area is an extension of what eventually will be the Backbone Trail which will stretch 55 miles along the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains from Griffith Park to Point Mugu.

**Diamond X Ranch** National Park Service (located off Mulholland Highway, east of Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road. Phone: 213-888-3770) Cowboy star Rex Allen previously owned this 18-acre park site. It is used as a ranger station and maintenance headquarters as well as for community meetings and outdoor education center. Reservations are required.

**Tapia County Park** (located five miles south of 101 Freeway on Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road. Phone: 213-744-4210.) Tapia contains an abundance of uses in a small area. Hiking and equestrian trails wind along the banks of Malibu Creek, next to a developed recreational area focused on group use. A group campground, picnic tables, grills, and a sports field are available below a backdrop of rolling hills, rugged peaks, and oak groves. Group reservations are required.

**Cold Creek Canyon Preserve** Nature Conservancy (located on Stunt Road off Mulholland Highway. Phone: 213-880-5800) Rocky canyons contain pristine native vegetation, streams, and waterfalls. The Nature Conservancy has preserved this ecologically important area for research and allows limited hiking by reservation. There is a self-guided nature trail, and docents provide environmental education.

**Stunt Ranch** Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Phone: 213-620-2021 or 213-888-3770) Programs which include the natural and cultural history of the Santa Monica Mountains are available from docents. Reservations are required.



**Topanga State Park** (Topanga Canyon Boulevard to Entrada Road, continue on to the park headquarters. Phone: 213-455-2465 or 213-454-8212) Topanga State Park is a large natural area which rises above suburban San Fernando Valley and the coastal communities. Most of the park's backcountry contains chaparral and coastal sage with open streamside groves.

The park headquarters offers picnicking, a one-mile self-guided trail, and group tours by docents.

Thirty-five miles of equestrian and hiking trails lead to such goals as Eagle Springs and a spectacular view from Eagle Rock. A scenic nine mile route leads from Topanga to Will Rogers State Historic Park.

**Will Rogers State Historic Park** (entrance between Amalfi Drive and Brooktree Road off Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades. Phone: 213-454-8212) Will Rogers lived here from 1928 until his death in 1935. Today, in addition to the historic ranch house and grounds, trails lead past scenic Inspiration Point into adjacent Topanga State Park. The park includes a visitor center, nature center, bookstore and stables. Polo games are scheduled every Saturday afternoon on the front polo fields.

**Cross Mountain Park** (entrance located at intersection of Coldwater Canyon, Mulholland and Franklin Canyon Roads. Phone: 213-888-3770) The Cross Mountain Park is a multi-agency and multi-organizational effort. The National Park Service is taking the lead in planning efforts. In the meantime, the following special areas are available for use:

**Wilacre Estate** (State land operated under an agreement with the City of Los Angeles. Phone: 213-769-2663) The Tree People will operate outdoor educational programs on this park site in the future.

**Coldwater Canyon Park** (Phone: 212-769-2663) This small park is headquarters for the Tree People whose focus is to plant smog-resistant trees in areas damaged by air pollution. In their environmental education center, the Tree People present slide shows on trees, smog, solar energy and urban forestry. Nature trails are available and various volunteer programs provide opportunities for tree planting or disaster relief.

**Upper Franklin Canyon Reservoir** (Phone: 213-271-2222 or 213-858-3834) Environmental education is provided on a reservation basis by William Douglas Outdoor Classroom docents around this city-owned reservoir.

**Franklin Canyon Ranch** Service (Phone: 213-888-3770) National Park Service rangers and docents from William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom provide outdoor education opportunities on a reservation basis. Hiking trails along fire roads offer views of western Los Angeles beyond the canyon chaparral.

**Fryman Canyon** Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Phone: 213-620-2021) A scenic overlook along Mulholland Highway provides the opportunity to view canyon and valley areas. Future plans call for a hiking trail into Fryman Canyon.

**Griffith Park** (located off Freeway 134 at I-5 Golden State Freeway and Los Feliz Boulevard. Phone: 213-665-5188) Griffith Park, one of the largest city parks in the world, occupies over 4,000 acres in the eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains zone. Over 53 miles of equestrian and hiking trails crisscross the park. Horse rental stables are located near the northwestern and southwestern boundary of Griffith Park. A variety of activities are offered: Greek Theatre, Griffith Observatory and Planetarium, Los Angeles Zoo, and the Pettigrew Science Center. Golfing, swimming, tennis, picnicking, and fishing are available.

### The Beaches

From the beginning of the nineteenth century until 1925, the area known as Malibu was a working rancho and was owned by four families. The last person to own the rancho, Mrs. May Rindge, battled to keep her

property private, inaccessible and intact. She built a railroad, the Hueneme and Malibu to Port Angeles Railroad, to prevent Southern Pacific Railroad from crossing her land. Mrs. Rindge was defeated by state highway builders, however, and surveyors began laying out the portion of the Pacific Coast Highway which follows the shoreline from the Pacific Palisades to Oxnard. Mrs. Rindge began leasing lots along her shoreline and, later, the famous Malibu Colony was created when film stars and writers built summer homes on the sand.

Twelve public beaches now extend along the Pacific Coast Highway in the 47 miles between Point Mugu and Santa Monica. Nine of these beaches can be reached by RTD Bus #175 which travels as far as Trancas Canyon.

Each public beach has its own distinct personality; pick one to suit your mood and interest. Several beaches are known for superb surfing, some for diving, and a couple for their rocky shorelines with tidepools. Other beaches provide picnic areas and grills, and two beaches in Santa Monica and Malibu provide public fishing piers and other recreational and educational experiences. Parking fees are charged in designated areas.

Emergency numbers and surf conditions can be obtained by calling the Los Angeles County lifeguard stations. Phone: 213-457-2528 or 213-457-9701.

Despite proximity to one of the world's most populated urban centers, the coastal resources of the Santa Monica Mountains retain a large measure of their ecological integrity. Steelhead trout still spawn in several of the creeks and Malibu and Mugu Lagoons are resting and feeding stops for migratory birds following the Pacific Flyway along the North American coast.

Campsites are available within Point Mugu State Park and Leo Carrillo State Beach. From March through September, reservations from Ticketron are requested; for the remainder of the year, space is available on a first come, first serve basis.

The public beaches listed below provide a variety of recreational and educational experiences:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Point Mugu State Park                   | Corral State Beach        |
| Leo Carrillo State Beach                | Malibu Lagoon State Beach |
| Nicholas County Beach                   | Las Tunas State Beach     |
| Zuma County Beach                       | Topanga State Beach       |
| Point Dume State Beach (Westward Beach) | Will Rogers State Beach   |
|   | Santa Monica State Beach  |
|   | Santa Monica City Pier    |

**Mulholland Scenic Corridor** All of famous Mulholland Drive and Highway lies within the National Recreation Area. This scenic drive leads 50 winding miles westward from the Hollywood Freeway to the Pacific Ocean at Leo Carrillo State Beach. Spectacular views of the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles with the Pacific Ocean in the distance, and the interior of the Santa Monica Mountains are nearly constant in its length. One stretch north of Topanga State Park remains unpaved. Parts of Mulholland Highway are extremely narrow and winding making it a popular route for motorcycle traffic.

The scenic drive was the pet project of William Mulholland, the Los Angeles Water Department Chief Engineer who brought water from the Owens Valley to the growing city in its early years. He conceived of the road along the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains in 1913 and 11 years later the first stretch of the highway was completed when steam shovels working east from Calabasas and west from Chahuenga met amidst a city-wide festival celebrating the event. The drive was destined "... to take its place as one of the most famous scenic highways of the world."

Other scenic crestline and canyon roads include *Potrero Road* (which winds through pastoral Hidden Valley), *Decker Road*, *Yerba Buena Road* (with sweeping views up to 3,111 foot Sandstone Peak), *Encinal Canyon Road*, *Corral Canyon Road* (with excellent views into interior canyons), and *Tuna Canyon*, *Saddle Peak* and *Piuma Roads* with coastal views and varied scenery.

Mountain roads are usually narrow and winding. Other vehicles, especially motorcycles or bicycles may seem to appear suddenly on the road. Drive courteously.



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## Mountains in the City: A Laboratory for Learning

"... our good fortune can't possibly last any longer than our natural resources."  
—Will Rogers

To Will Rogers, the Santa Monica Mountains were home—a place where the cowboy-philosopher created a comfortable ranch in the midst of Hollywood glitter. To visionary Los Angeles water engineer William Mulholland, the Santa Monicas formed a natural park, "... fifty-five miles of scenic splendor for the ... people of Los Angeles." For the Chumash and Gabrielenos, the mountains provided a place for inland and coastal villages and a base for trade and fishing expeditions to the Channel Islands. For the movie moguls of the thirties, the Santa Monicas provided a dynamic landscape which could be transformed from the wild west to colonial Massachusetts to China.

And to ten million residents of today's Los Angeles urban area, the Santa Monica Mountains are a place for education, recreation and rejuvenation.

For here, in the heart of the West's largest city, a unique partnership of government, commercial and private interests is coming together to create a new part of the National Park System.

In 1978, fifteen years of effort to establish parklands and preserve open space in the mountains was culminated with the creation of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. As envisioned by Congress, this would be a cooperative project combining Federal, state, county and community parks with private camps, homeowners and land planning agencies in an effort to preserve, protect and wisely use 150,000 acres of mountains and seashore.

The mountains and seashore have always been a special place for recreation. Private camps have long provided camping and outdoor experiences. The equestrian tradition can be traced back to the Rancho Period. The famous Malibu and Santa Monica beaches are visited by over 27 million people a year.

With inflation and high travel expenses, both visitors and residents are

now provided opportunities to enjoy the ever-shrinking open space and mountain area—a vast laboratory for learning about our relationship with the earth and with each other.

The Santa Monica Mountains stretch almost fifty miles westward from Griffith Park to Point Mugu—a rare combination of major mountain range, seashore and urban area.

The land itself—this coastal mountain range—forms a remarkable resource. Created by movements of the earth's crust, the mountains may be part of the same geologic uplift which created the Channel Islands to the west. Rugged slopes and valleys reflect eons of changes in the earth's surface. Ancient seabeds and marine fossils are found on high ridgelines.

The recreation area constitutes a sizeable national preserve for Southern California's Mediterranean ecosystem limited in the world to four other western coasts. Miles of mountains are covered with chaparral and sage. Between these mountains lie woodlands and grasslands, increasingly rare environments in Southern California. Steep, rocky canyons in the Santa Monicas plunge seaward, sheltering waterfalls and streamside groves of oak and sycamore. The seashore offers salt and fresh water marshes as well as rock reefs and offshore kelp beds.

Southern California's native wildlife still survives in the mountains. Footprints of mountain lion, coyote, mule, deer and bobcats can be found. Golden eagles nest in mountain cliffs overlooking streams which still harbor spawning steelhead trout. Massive migrations of birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway between Alaska and South America are visible at Malibu and Mugu Lagoons.

The Mediterranean climate varies—accounting for the diversity in native plants and animals. Winter brings cool, foggy weather and as much as 25 inches of rain to the interior canyons. Spring blossoms forth with a golden dazle of poppies, mustard, and coreopsis (a shrubby sunflower), green meadows, and a blue haze of ceanothus on the hillside.

Summer and fall dries the inland grassland to brown and gold, leaving lands dangerously susceptible to wildfires. At this driest time of year, the hot Santa Ana winds, blowing toward the coast, can fan the smallest spark into flame. Fires sweep through the chaparral, reducing it to burned skeletons, yet triggering the life cycle to begin again. Unfortunately for residents of the mountains, wildfires leave bare slopes which are prone to flooding and landslides when rains return in winter.

People have long dealt with the cycle of fire in the Santa Monicas. They have lived here for more than seven thousand years, attracted by the water, open land, sunshine, and a warm climate equally healthy for crops and humans.

The Chumash and Gabrielenos left behind beautiful rock paintings, tracings of villages, and burial sites. The Chumash, noted astronomers, are known for their advanced monetary system. Surveys have identified trails and settlements and have unearthed hundreds of archeological sites although few have been preserved. Presently, thousands of their descendants live in the Southern California area.

In the 1700's Spanish then Mexican settlers came. They brought with them horses and cattle to make this a land of ranchos and vaqueros. Western settlers in the 1800's added dry farming and railroads to the landscape.

Early in the 20th Century the addition of water from the Owens Valley helped the area's population to boom. The oil, movie and aerospace industries brought even more people and more changes to the land.

Today's Los Angeles continues a human story which stretches unbroken from nomadic hunters to an ethnically and economically varied metropolitan area.

These mountains provide us with important perspectives. Commuters travel the major freeways while hikers pause a mile away, watching a red tail hawk bank in the wind. From the air at night, the lights of city

streets surround and bisect the mountain area. Mountain lions roam the dark canyons. Whales migrate off the Malibu shoreline.

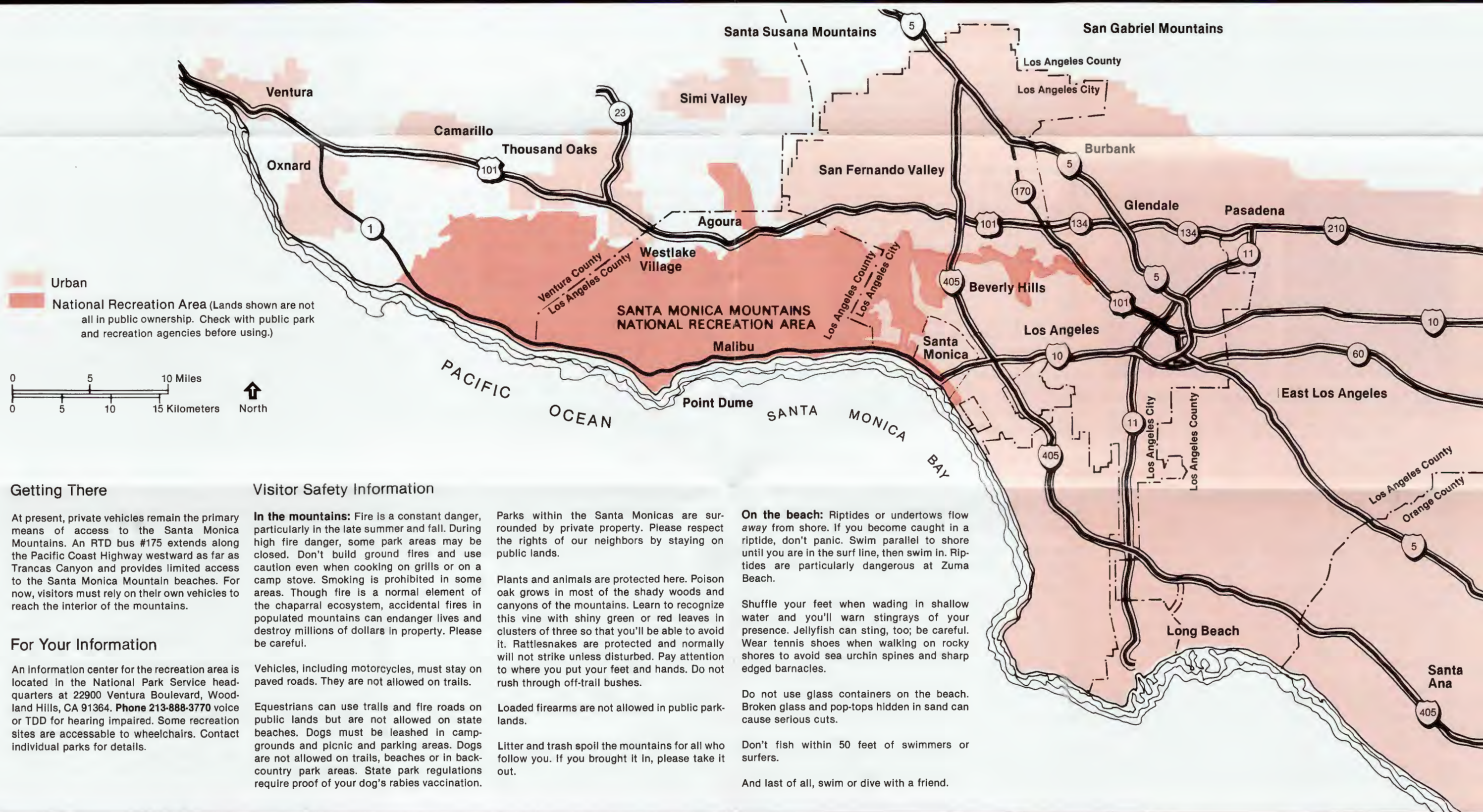
People, land and sea interact here to create a distinctive place. The healthy future of the land and sea depends on people—on our capacity for respect, vision, compromise and care.

To hike and wade along mountain creeks, to sleep beneath glittering stars under a great oak tree, and to look to a horizon free of roads, billboards and buildings—these are powerful experiences. Such escapes free us from our everyday demands, release our imaginations, and assist us in appreciating the open spaces and exhilarating natural landscapes which intermingle here in urban Southern California.

The efforts to protect and carefully use the Santa Monica Mountains will teach us much about each other. But our goal is also to preserve wild places close to home and save a piece of our heritage that will hold "answers to questions we don't yet know how to ask."



## Vicinity Map



## Getting There

At present, private vehicles remain the primary means of access to the Santa Monica Mountains. An RTD bus #175 extends along the Pacific Coast Highway westward as far as Trancas Canyon and provides limited access to the Santa Monica Mountain beaches. For now, visitors must rely on their own vehicles to reach the interior of the mountains.

## For Your Information

An information center for the recreation area is located in the National Park Service headquarters at 22900 Ventura Boulevard, Woodland Hills, CA 91364. Phone 213-888-3770 voice or TDD for hearing impaired. Some recreation sites are accessible to wheelchairs. Contact individual parks for details.

## Visitor Safety Information

**In the mountains:** Fire is a constant danger, particularly in the late summer and fall. During high fire danger, some park areas may be closed. Don't build ground fires and use caution even when cooking on grills or on a camp stove. Smoking is prohibited in some areas. Though fire is a normal element of the chaparral ecosystem, accidental fires in populated mountains can endanger lives and destroy millions of dollars in property. Please be careful.

Vehicles, including motorcycles, must stay on paved roads. They are not allowed on trails.

Equestrians can use trails and fire roads on public lands but are not allowed on state beaches. Dogs must be leashed in campgrounds and picnic and parking areas. Dogs are not allowed on trails, beaches or in back-country park areas. State park regulations require proof of your dog's rabies vaccination.

Parks within the Santa Monicas are surrounded by private property. Please respect the rights of our neighbors by staying on public lands.

Plants and animals are protected here. Poison oak grows in most of the shady woods and canyons of the mountains. Learn to recognize this vine with shiny green or red leaves in clusters of three so that you'll be able to avoid it. Rattlesnakes are protected and normally will not strike unless disturbed. Pay attention to where you put your feet and hands. Do not rush through off-trail bushes.

Loaded firearms are not allowed in public lands.

Litter and trash spoil the mountains for all who follow you. If you brought it in, please take it out.

**On the beach:** Rip tides or undertows flow away from shore. If you become caught in a rip tide, don't panic. Swim parallel to shore until you are in the surf line, then swim in. Rip tides are particularly dangerous at Zuma Beach.

Shuffle your feet when wading in shallow water and you'll warn stingrays of your presence. Jellyfish can sting, too; be careful. Wear tennis shoes when walking on rocky shores to avoid sea urchin spines and sharp edged barnacles.

Do not use glass containers on the beach. Broken glass and pop-tops hidden in sand can cause serious cuts.

Don't fish within 50 feet of swimmers or surfers.

And last of all, swim or dive with a friend.