

# LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

## SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE





**LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS  
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**

**2004**

**Prepared by**

**Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Santa Monica Mountains  
National Recreation Area**

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# INTRODUCTION

This Long- Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) presents a visitor experience vision for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area based on purpose, significance, and mission goals identified in the park's General Management Plan (GMP). The LRIP articulates park themes, describes visitor experience objectives, and proposes interpretation activities, services, media, and facilities to supplement GMP and Strategic Plan proposals.

The LRIP sets the interpretive direction for the national recreation area during the next decade. It is a conceptual plan that lays the foundation for future phases of a comprehensive interpretive planning process – media planning, design and production, and the organization of staff and activities into annual implementation plans. It is also a measure against which annual accomplishments can be evaluated.

The planning process used to develop this document facilitated collaborative creativity among a team of National Park Service (NPS) staff, interpretive partners, and media specialists. The planning team evaluated the national recreation area's visitor use programs and focused interpretive efforts on significant resources, primary themes, and current management issues. While this is primarily a National Park Service document, it proposes actions that reflect the partnership nature of this experiment in cooperative park management. Effective planning, implementation, and coordination among agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in this complex national recreation area is essential to efficient operations. Joint planning and leadership by the National Park Service, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy enhance opportunities for all stakeholders to understand, enjoy, and appreciate the reasons for which Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was established.



# PLAN SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING

This long- range interpretive plan establishes themes and visitor experience objectives based on purpose, significance, and management philosophy approved in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area General Management Plan.

Four primary interpretive themes (Escape/Open Space, Human Use/Cultural, Ecosystem, and National Park Service) describe ideas central to understanding significance of the national recreation area and provide guidelines for decisions concerning interpretive stories, facilities, and activities.

Analysis of current and potential stakeholders identified needs and expectations of recreation area audiences. Interpretation and education programs must serve the following audience groups: Commercial, Recreational, Cultural, Virtual/Non- Users, Educational, Local/Regional, Special Interests, Through Travelers, Organized Groups, and Employees, Volunteers, and Partners.

Issues identified for consideration in this plan are Land Ownership Responsibilities, Complexity, Community Connections, Partnership Coordination, Diversity, Staffing, Location, Visitor Profiles, and Implementation of General Management Plan.

## FUTURE INTERPRETATION PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This plan recommends interpretation, information, and education actions that conform to and augment general management plan guidelines.

This plan describes a tiered system of visitor contact facilities based on level of interpretation and staffing. The National Park Service and partners may operate the facilities independently or jointly. Tier I facilities include major visitor centers that open daily year- round to provide orientation and to interpret all national recreation area primary themes. Tier II staffed contact stations introduce all primary themes but focus on one or two that best represents resources and

stories near the station. They may open less than full- time but will provide services to meet demands of local visitation. Tier III facilities include self- service information buildings and kiosks that provide site- specific interpretation twenty- four hours daily year- round. Tier IV traditional wayside exhibits and bulletin boards provide general orientation and site- specific interpretation.

This plan establishes geographic interpretive areas. Themes, resources, and experience opportunities that reflect the distinctive character of different sections of the recreation area define interpretive area boundaries. Designated areas include Cold Creek Preserve/Stunt Ranch/Red Rock Creek, Rocky Oaks/Peter Strauss Ranch, Zuma/Trancas Canyons- Ramirez, Solstice Canyon, Simi Hills, Leo Carillo State Park, Point Mugu State Park/Rancho Sierra Vista/Circle- X(Malibu Springs)/Arroyo Sequit, Malibu Creek State Park/Paramount Ranch, Topanga State Park, Coastal Corridor, Backbone Trail Corridor, Mulholland Corridor, and Eastern End. The site strategy section of this plan describes themes, resources, experiences, and recommendations for each interpretive area.

This long- range interpretive plan provides a special section to present outreach recommendations that respond to the importance of community and park interaction. Community facilities outside the national recreation area boundary include a Tier I visitor center in Los Angeles and a Tier II visitor contact station at Los Angeles International Airport. Outreach activities target local, national, and international audiences and include extensive personal service and non- personal media.

Park- wide recommendations describe actions for visitor contact facilities within the park, partnerships, training, education programs, personal services, non- personal services, accessibility, and research and planning.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

An implementation plan summarizes and prioritizes recommendations, identifies potential funding sources, and suggests evaluation techniques appropriate for implementation at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

# BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING



# PURPOSE

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**"The mission  
of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SAMO)  
is to protect and enhance, on a sustainable basis,  
one of the world's last remaining examples of a Mediterranean  
ecosystem  
and to maintain the area's unique natural, cultural, and scenic resources,  
unimpaired for future generations.**

**The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area  
provides an inter-linking system of parklands and open spaces  
that offer compatible recreation and education opportunities  
that are accessible to a diverse public.**

**This is accomplished by an innovative  
federal, state, local, and private partnership  
that enhances the region's quality of life  
and provides a model for other parks challenged by urbanization."**

General Management Plan  
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

As stated in the park's General Management Plan, the purpose for the establishment of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is to:

Preserve the scenic, natural and historic, as well as public health values of the Santa Monica Mountains.

# RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

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The following statements summarize the significance of national recreation area resources and capture the essence of this area's importance to our natural and cultural heritage.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area is nationally significant because it:

Protects the greatest expanse of mainland Mediterranean ecosystems in the National Park System, an extraordinarily diverse resource that is among the world's rarest and most endangered ecosystems.

Contains within park boundaries more than 1000 archeological sites that reflect human habitations in these mountains dating back at least 10,000 years.

Is rich in historical themes, ranging from California's earliest exploration and settlement to Los Angeles' urbanization.

# THEMES

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Interpretive themes describe ideas, concepts, or messages about Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area that are so important all visitors should understand them. They provide guidelines for making decisions concerning interpretive stories to be told and facilities and activities required for telling those stories. Themes may not include everything interpreted, but they should include ideas critical to understanding the significance of the national recreation area. All interpretive efforts (both media and personal service) should relate to one or more of the themes; each theme should be addressed by some part of the interpretive program.

The following themes are followed by some of the many topics to be interpreted at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

## ESCAPE / OPEN SPACE

In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

### Topics:

Educational and recreational opportunities

Recreational resources

Diverse, pleasing, natural and cultural landscape

Opportunities to experience solitude, contemplation and inspiration

Cultural and environmental responsibility

Gateway between the urban environment and the natural world

## HUMAN USE / CULTURAL

For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

### Topics:

Agricultural history of area

Tongva / Gabrieleño

Spanish / Rancho history

Records of thousands of years of human interactions with the area  
Human spirit and imagination reach beyond geographic limitations

Chumash trading networks

Industry – film, aerospace, water distribution and transportation

Global perspective on continuing relationship between land and humans

Evolving cultural landscape of this region

## **ECOSYSTEM**

The Mediterranean- type ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves one of these rapidly diminishing resources.

Topics:

Examples of the rare, dynamic, diverse Mediterranean- type ecosystem

Factors creating the unique Mediterranean- type climate

Diversity and relationship of habitats

Diversity of individual organisms and processes

Ever changing landscape

Local and global human impacts

Preservation for the enjoyment of present and future generations

National and global significance of Santa Monica Mountains NRA

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

Topics:

An island of parklands buffeted by urban development and challenges

Need for balance of development and preservation

Awareness of natural and cultural resources foster environmental ethic

Challenges from non- compatible activities

Cooperation between public and private organizations

Parks enhance the quality of life

Value of wise use, responsible development and preservation

How parks support humans in terms of ecosystem services, clean water, and water purification

# MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

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“Significant natural and cultural resources would be protected while providing compatible recreation and educational opportunities to a diverse public.

Approximately 80 percent of parkland would be designated low intensity. Moderate intensity areas would act as a buffer around urban areas and scenic corridors in some instances. Small pockets of concentrated high intensity activities would be located in non-sensitive or previously developed areas.”

General Management Plan

This long- range interpretive plan applies the management philosophy established for the national recreation area in the general management plan. This philosophy recognizes the distinctive character of individual geographical zones in the recreation area and the suitability of various areas in those zones to provide for a range of visitor experiences.

## MANAGEMENT AREAS

Five management areas within the national recreation area reflect different levels of desired resource conditions, visitor experiences, types of management activities, and development.

### Low Intensity

Approximately 80 percent of the national recreation area is designated low intensity. Management of these areas seeks to preserve natural and cultural resources and provide public safety. The only environmental modifications are for the purposes of protecting resources from the impacts of visitor use and facility development. Facilities are maintained in a relatively primitive manner to preserve the visitor experience. Low intensity areas accommodate only development that

is harmonious with the natural setting. Historical and ethnographic resources are preserved and protected. Watersheds and coastal resources are protected and preserved through coordinated watershed management practices and improvements. Lagoons, coastal wetlands, and interface areas receive focused attention and restoration to a natural state where practical. Compatible scientific research will be allowed and resources will be monitored for evidence of deterioration. Some fire roads and non- historic trails may be closed and re-vegetated. Prohibition of motorized equipment in designated wilderness areas allows quiet enjoyment of natural sights and sounds. Restricted activities include day- use horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking on designated trails without pets.

### **Moderate Intensity**

Approximately 15 percent of the area within the national recreation area boundary is designated moderate intensity. Management of this area protects, and preserves or rehabilitates as appropriate, natural and cultural resources.

Development in moderate intensity areas is allowed if it harmonizes with natural settings. Some trails may be closed or re- routed to protect resources; those retained can be maintained with motorized equipment. Boardwalks protect resources where necessary. Campground development is limited. Picnic areas and equestrian access sites are planned where they have the least impact while providing reasonable access to resources. Utility corridors will be maintained with utilities placed underground whenever possible. Access to utility and fire roads is for administrative use only. Management of fire suppression and search and rescue will minimize landscape disturbance.

Moderate intensity areas provide only essential visitor services and facilities (restrooms, water, trailhead parking). Resource compatible recreational activities are managed and encouraged (hiking, wildlife observation). Visitors shall expect higher visitation than in the low intensity area and more frequent encounters with people, including maintenance, protection, and interpretive staff. Activities are limited to hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking on designated trails; only designated trails will be multi- use. National recreation area staff provides guided walks and develops self- guided trails. Low impact camping and picnicking are allowed. Pets are permitted on leashes in designated areas.

## **High Intensity**

Approximately 5 percent of area within the national recreation area boundary is designated high intensity.

Visitors to this area shall expect higher visitation, more sights and sounds of development, and frequent encounters with people and vehicles. Full visitor services (restrooms, potable water, trailhead parking, and visitor orientation) are located for relatively easy access. This area will provide structured interpretive and education programs, self-guided activities, and many indoor and outdoor interpretive exhibits. Opportunities to visit historic structures and cultural landscapes will be increased. Facilities are planned to provide overnight camping, including group camping, picnicking, swimming, surfing, kayaking, and other recreational activities. Commercial filming is more prevalent. Leashed pets can enter designated areas.

Resources are managed with a high degree of infrastructure and facility development to protect them from impacts of visitors. Sensitive resources will be interpreted at visitor centers and other exhibit areas. Visitor use is intensely managed to protect visitors and resources. Many trails of various lengths and difficulties are maintained using motorized equipment. The need for facilities is routinely evaluated and new development implemented or existing facilities (trails, roads, structures, and exhibits) upgraded, closed, or relocated as appropriate. Essential utility corridors are maintained with as many utilities underground as possible. All management activities are implemented to minimize landscape disturbance.

New facilities will be designed to protect resources and harmonize with nearby natural and cultural settings. Appropriate developments can include campgrounds, interpretive overlooks, waysides, exhibits, self-guided interpretive trails, parking areas for beaches or frequently used trails, and appropriate public transportation (park and rides). Gravel, compacted gravel/soil, pavement, or boardwalks for trails, access routes, and trailhead parking will be used where appropriate.

## **Scenic Corridor**

Scenic corridors provide access among the many separate publicly owned sections of the national recreation area. Scenic pullouts along the corridors can provide a platform from which to view the entire recreation area. A trail system within the corridors promotes pedestrian and bicycle use. Future roadside environment along the

scenic corridors shall promote traffic safety while being consistent with the scenic character of the recreation area. Cooperative planning, development, and maintenance can improve the potential experience within scenic corridors with removal of street lighting, overhead power lines where possible and exotic landscape material.

### **Community Landscape**

The National Park Service, California State Parks and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy can provide local decision-makers with the resource data and technical assistance necessary to maintain the unique character of these areas consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the national recreation area.

## **MANAGEMENT GOALS**

The general management plan for the national recreation area identifies goals for visitor experience, education and interpretation.

Complete Backbone Trail and manage as a scenic corridor for non-motorized access to diverse opportunity for recreation, interpretation, and appreciation involving natural and cultural resources.

Anticipate and manage potential conflicts among recreational uses. Appropriately enhance visitor experience and provide a safe and conflict-free environment.

Accord privacy for traditional and ceremonial uses of the park's ethnographic resources. Encourage appreciation of American Indian history and culture without focusing visitor attention on particularly sensitive resources.

Create a seamless, enjoyable experience for visitors.

Make facilities, programs, and services of the recreation area reasonably accessible to all people, including those with disabilities.

Provide an educational outreach program to instruct participants on the functions, issues, opportunities, and value of the ecosystem in an expanding urban community. A formal component of this program would be developed in partnership with the local educational system.

Request that members of distinct cultural communities provide interpretation and education programs.

Encourage safe and enjoyable resource use and protection. Place information and interpretation at appropriate locations throughout the recreation area and nearby communities. Visitors with differing levels of interest and understanding would easily find the area's cultural and natural features, visitor facilities, activities, and services.

Create an experience that may increase visitor appreciation and awareness of the environment and historic sites within Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and their place in the history of California.

Place visitor- contact facilities strategically at several locations within the recreation area to detail significant stories and provide information and directions to sites and activities.

# VISITATION AND VISITOR USE DATA

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## ANNUAL RECREATION VISITS

1992	365,215
1993	401,739
1994	384,324
1995	388,047
1996	428,524
1997	530,198
1998	516,249
1999	555,529
2000	469,344
2001	532,898

## MONTH RECREATION VISITS - 2001

January	40,199
February	30,630
March	48,544
April	49,070
May	64,007
June	54,322
July	55,896
August	47,411
September	38,709
October	33,598
November	37,444
December	33,068

## SEASON RECREATION VISITATION PATTERNS - 2001

Summer (Jun – Aug)	29.58%
Autumn (Sep – Nov)	20.59%
Winter (Dec – Feb)	19.50%
Spring (Mar – May)	30.33%

## **VISITOR PROFILE SUMMARY – 1993 VISITOR SURVEY**

The Visitor Services Project at University of Idaho Cooperative Studies Unit conducted a visitor survey in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area during May 2- 9, 1993. The survey reflected the following profiles of visitors interviewed at that time.

Over one- third (35%) of the visitor groups were family groups. Almost one- third (30%) were groups of friends.

Thirty- eight percent of visitor groups were groups of two, and eighteen percent were traveling alone.

Forty- two percent of visitors were 26 to 40 years old; approximately equal numbers (16 – 17%) were 15 and younger or 41 to 50 years old.

Thirty- nine percent of visitors were making their first visit to the site where they were interviewed; sixty- one percent were repeat visitors to the site. Over half (52%) spent 2 or 3 hours at the site where interviewed. Fifteen percent spent one hour; 17% spent 4 hours. Most visitors (67%) arrived between 8 and 11:30 am.

The sources of information most used by groups were previous visit (56%), friends or relatives (43%), maps/brochure (28%), entrance sign (21%), newspaper/magazine (21%).

On this visit, the most common activities were sightsee (71%), hike (61%), picnic (30%), mountain bike (23%), visiting beach (22%), viewing birds (19%), nature study (18%).

Reasons for visit: enjoy scenic views (80%), recreation (66%) and escape the city (53%).

The services and facilities most used by visitor groups were trails (61%), parking area (56%), park map/brochure (38%) and bulletin board (34%). Extremely important services and facilities were trails (82%), campgrounds (59%), parking areas (57%), park maps/brochures (57%), highway directional signs (54%), and picnic areas (51%).

On previous visit 6% listened to information radio station; on this visit only 2% of these same visitors listened to the radio broadcasts.

## **STAKEHOLDER / AUDIENCE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS**

All people interested in the national recreation area need access to information about resources, use opportunities, and management issues. They expect easy access to information about laws, regulations, and penalties and about recreation resources, safety trip planning, and low impact travel and camping. Different levels of detail will meet the needs of first time or repeat visitors. While self-reliant users may look for limited contact with staff and media, most users will benefit from detailed information. People interact with a boundary-less park and enjoy non-park resources within the national recreation area. Cooperative interpretive planning and development between the park and other visitor service providers will enable all providers to provide services that meet or exceed stakeholder expectations.

Facility users expect a variety of media, programs, and activities suitable for diverse audiences. They need orientation that places resources at the national recreation area into perspective with the Los Angeles metropolitan area and the remainder of the United States. Identification and interpretation of significant resources inside the parklands can solicit dialogue about how each person contributes to sustainable conservation of resources worldwide. Facilities educate and inform people about the National Park Service and its role in helping maintain resources for everyone's enjoyment and benefit.

The high number of visitors interacting with park resources in family groups indicates need for more family friendly activities. Continuation and expansion of Junior Ranger activities, family-oriented walking trails, and other informal, relaxing, and exciting activities can facilitate inter-generational connections to the resource.

The following description of current and potential audiences and their need and expectations is based on observation of visitors and review of visitor register comments. This information supplements 1993 visitor survey data to guide development of interpretation and education actions presented in **INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**.

### **Commercial**

Film, customer service, media, special event organizers, hotels, real estate and other businesses, contractors, concessionaires and vendors operate in and near the recreation area. Although focused on income, commercial entities provide a potential means to convey national recreation area messages. Their operations can influence visitor

experience positively or negatively. To operate effectively in partnership with the National Park Service they need immediate, accurate, and appropriate information at quantities and detail level that meet their needs. They need knowledge of rules, regulations, and permit process. They also need information about programs, activities, and resources inside the national recreation area.

## **Recreational**

Two types of recreation users are based on speed of travel and intensity of activity: back country cardio Trail Users and front country ambler Low Energy Users. Although type of use varies with the season needs and expectations remain similar within each group.

**RECREATION TRAIL USERS** (mountain bikers, equestrians, hikers, kayakers, campers, climbers, geo- caching, surfing, wind sailing)

The more energetic recreation users are often looking for different levels of opportunity to match their level of skill and physical ability. They frequently want opportunities for independent use and may not visit traditional visitor facilities. They need access to pre- trip planning information and on- site signs directing them to permit desks, recreation opportunity sites, restroom, water, and parking facilities. They need orientation and information at all accesses. Information will present current conditions, skills needed, critical care locations and contacts, and general rules and regulations. These users also need maps, safety warnings, information about where to get essential supplies/equipment, what they can expect to see, basic Leave No Trace stewardship information, and pet care alternatives.

**RECREATION LOW ENERGY USERS** (nature students, whale and bird watchers, flower enthusiasts, picnickers, walkers, campers, dog walkers, beach enthusiasts, sightseers, artists, photographers, fishers, sun bathers, kite flyers, motorcyclists, night sky viewers)

Casual users are typically looking for an easy connection to resources. Some may require solitude, but most tolerate a high level of visitor activity. Many may seek social activities among people with similar interests. These more traditional park users are likely to visit other areas in the recreation area and other National Park Service areas in the United States. They often identify changes in resource conditions and visitor use trends, and they share observations with park staff as informal monitors.

These stakeholders often are looking for more detailed information than the backcountry user. They need information about site- specific history, current/seasonal conditions, programmed activity schedules, specialized facility locations, and special events. They need safety and regulation information, orientation to activity sites, accurate directional signs, maps, and land use etiquette guidelines. They often want open areas with sheltered kiosks that facilitate self- directed recreational activities.

## **Cultural**

American Indian, Latino, Asian- American, film buff, artist and other culturally oriented users often seek activities and social opportunities to enjoy resources. Members of these groups participate more freely when they have a sense of belonging and feel welcome and safe. Recreation site development must invite and facilitate use by cultural groups. Facility size, number, design, and location can encourage family and other social activities. Recreation area staff needs a better understanding of needs of each cultural group to provide effective orientation, create directional signs, and relate information about park rules and regulations that effectively communicates with various cultures. Some members of visitor service staff need capability to communicate in languages frequently encountered, and all must have basic understanding of non- verbal language used by larger cultural groups.

## **Virtual / Non- Users**

Many people interested in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area may never visit the area because of economic, physical, transportation, or other limitations. They may enjoy “arm chair” visits through Internet, phone, mail, or other technology. This increasing group of virtual visitors and non- visitors are also potential onsite visitors.

Many of these people need quick information. Others may have time and interest to vicariously explore the recreation area thoroughly. These virtual visitors need access to information and interpretation that lets them choose their desired level of involvement from basic travel planning to moderate interpretation or a detailed education program. At minimum, they need access to a free, quick overview of resources and themes and directions to sources of moderate priced audiovisual and publication materials. They need to know about the National Park Service and Santa Monica Mountains National

Recreation Area and what each offers them. Information can convey a feeling of excitement about the area and a desire to protect resources. Well-planned information can contribute to a feeling of welcome and security that begins to break down psychological barriers between the stakeholder and the recreation area.

These stakeholders expect contact sites to be convenient and easy to access, often through virtual technology. They expect National Park Service technology for mass mailing, telephone communication, and Internet to compete effectively with technology employed by competitors and to be compatible with the technology available to end-users. All media must compete effectively with other sites using high-energy design, exciting graphics and easy navigation to accurate, up-to-date information. These web resources can be linked to school visits as well as both pre and post visit lessons.

### **Educational**

This group of stakeholders includes students, teachers, researchers, and scientists. They need information and interpretation presented at many levels from elementary to graduate and using varied media from simple graphics to professional exhibits and audiovisuals.

### **FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Education organizations will benefit from an increase in the types of media and activities offered at the recreation area and through offsite programs. Communication and networking of recreation area staff with educational institutions and development of creative projects that challenge students will facilitate a feeling of park “ownership” by educational communities. These stakeholders need access to transportation to and from the recreation area, availability of substitute teachers/volunteers/staff, an adequate supply of educational materials, and knowledge about grants or other sources of funding. They need a program that is curriculum based, age appropriate, and useful in meeting school standards. They need teacher workshops and hands-on student fieldwork that is fun and offers freedom to experiment. The formal education program must outreach to diverse groups, reflect cultural sensitivity and reach parents through students involved in the program. Education stakeholders need to be involved in evaluation of activities and development of an expanded program as need is identified.

## RESEARCHERS/SCIENTISTS

This group of education stakeholders expects opportunity to do things other visitors cannot do. They want access to libraries, museum collections, and professional staff. They need an easy permitting process and knowledge about how the process works. They need access to information about resources, research opportunities, and regulations and rules. The recreation area will also need to help protect researchers' sites from public tampering with their experiments. Researchers and research sites must be identified to recreation area staff and visitors. Staff and researchers need to know each other and work as a team with common goals. Effective communication between staff and researchers and scientists will include advance notice of research activity and location. Researchers need to know at the beginning of each project that they are expected to share their research findings with the recreation area and the public through a variety of methods, including lectures.

### **Local / Regional**

This stakeholder category includes residents, landowners and homeowners near the recreation area, neighbors within and adjacent to recreation area boundaries, elected officials and other agencies. Local communities provide a large audience for interpretive programs. Some people from these communities use parklands regularly for a variety of recreational activities. They want park portals convenient to their homes and may expect special treatment. Others seldom use the recreation area and know little about its significance. A few feel exempt and may contribute to law enforcement situations. Some want to avoid negative impacts to their lives imposed by the recreation area.

These stakeholders need basic information and orientation presented in a way that does not offend and that provides information about how to participate in available visitor opportunities. These sophisticated, highly educated stakeholders need a variety of opportunities for in-depth understanding of area significance that results in a sense of inclusion and desire to support area management. They need detailed education about regulations, preservation, wildlife interaction, and fire prevention. They may not visit information centers and often want to be left alone when in the recreation area. Still, they need consistent, personal contact involving good two-way communication with the recreation area staff on and off-site. Interactions can share knowledge about changes to policy, regulations, events, and programs.

Accurate, prompt information about national recreation area resources, National Park Service management, and appropriate visitor activities needs to be in a format easily available at private homes and public workplaces. Agencies need close coordination, cooperation, and consultation with park management staff and involvement in planning activities to assure everyone an opportunity to manage ecosystem resources effectively.

The park needs to work with neighbors to educate them on the benefits of living near a national park. Park land increases property values, protects land and water resources in the region, and provides scenery and local recreation opportunities. Park staff can help dispel myths concerning the park interest in lands by emphasizing the National Park Service land management plan for the area and the limits imposed on public land acquisition.

### **Special Interests**

Special interest stakeholders include participants in special events, elder hostel, single parents, film/media specialists, members of diverse cultural groups, language- diverse stakeholders, and religious groups. This group also includes geographic, age, and economic diverse audiences. All people of this category need programs, activities, and environments with which they feel comfortable. They often want and need one- on- one attention through personal services that provides information on issues important to them. Information/interpretation must provide rules and regulations, orientation, and identification of activity locations in a format usable by specific targeted audiences. National recreation area staff needs to allocate a lot of preparation time and can expect to provide more attention to special interest stakeholders.

### **Through Travelers**

Through travelers represent large potential audiences that may also become National Park System ambassadors. Fly- over passengers, commuters and road users may not be using the recreation area as a destination experience.

These travelers need locations identified, visitor experience opportunities described, and good directional signs given for easy, convenient travel to and through the area. Many through travelers want a place to rest but do not know what facilities are available at various recreation area sites. These visitors would benefit from

placement of small signs showing picnic table or restroom symbol below directional signs on busy roads. They need to understand that roads used for non - resource based activities (commuting) or somewhat resource based (challenge / enjoyable drive) also provide access to undiscovered attractions. These potential visitors need introduction to rules and regulations, knowledge of visitor use programs, and easy access to short, introductory activities. They need opportunity for positive interaction with other visitors, general information about the park appropriate for visitors with limited amount of time, and affordable materials for purchase that provide introduction to park mission and primary themes.

This audience is difficult to reach and it is very difficult to connect them to messages important to the recreation area. They seldom stop at visitor centers; interpretive program needs to reach them at dispersed contact points throughout the area. The national recreation area must have good sociological data to identify visitor needs and develop opportunities to connect with commuters, capture their attention, and plant seeds of interest.

### **Employees, Volunteers and Partners**

All employees and partners need basic information upon or before arrival at their work site. Essential information includes management purpose, significance and stable, long term goals. Experienced employees need current information about recreation area operations and projects, including activities of other management divisions. All need to feel included and appreciated as a part of the National Park Service team. They need opportunity for growth in an environment of common trust, honesty and purpose. They need to personally accept ownership of the recreation area and National Park Service policies. They need knowledge to answer most visitor questions or to direct visitors to appropriate locations to have questions answered. All operational divisions, volunteers and partners need to share expertise, facilities and funding to maximize available resources.

All partners involved in management of the national recreation area need to share a common identity while maintaining their individual agency agendas and policies. Each partner agency needs inclusion in other partner systems to understand similarity of goals and differences of policies so they can effectively work through or around bureaucratic barriers. Informal relationships and formal memoranda of understanding will facilitate delivery of common messages.

## **Organized Groups**

Scouts, community groups, correctional institutions, environmental clubs, and other organizations are interested in the national recreation area. They want orientation and information about lodging, rules and regulations, safety, attraction location, activities, and sites that can be visited with little time commitment. They need readily available information publications, personal services and activities that provide a good experience, keep groups in the national recreation area longer, and encourage stewardship.

Youth groups require a lot of staff time, especially if they are involved in park resource management projects. They need personal orientation and detailed information about rules and regulations and Leave No Trace principles to minimize resource damage. Group leaders need detailed information and education materials before arrival, personal services from recreation area staff upon arrival, and multiple activities to keep participants occupied after arrival.

Community groups often request free services tailored to specific needs. They need offsite contacts that provide awareness and basic orientation to the recreation area and detailed information about current events, future plans, and how to use the park. Offsite personal contacts, onsite activities, and virtual access to information about opportunities encourage community groups to participate in available programs as visitors or volunteers.

People participating in onsite and offsite special events need identification of host sites, orientation to the park, information about rules and regulations, and knowledge about attractions and programs. They expect adequate amenities, such as parking and restrooms, to facilitate a comfortable, safe, enjoyable experience. Organization of group events requires significant preparation time and media relations to assure availability of appropriate experience opportunity.

# VISITOR EXPERIENCE OBJECTIVES

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Visitor experience objectives describe physical, intellectual, and emotional opportunities that should be available to people interested in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Long-range interpretive plan proposals for interpretation and education will achieve the following visitor experience objectives.

## OBJECTIVES

Well- designed and maintained interpretive media using up- to- date technology that is simple and easy to use and incorporating multi-sensory, provocative, interactive techniques provide a full sense of area significance.

Conservation messages delivered by innovative interpretation programs and skill development workshops educate visitors for proper use of parks, instill appreciation and sense of pride in the land, and contribute to preservation, restoration, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources.

An integrated interpretive program developed cooperatively by visitor service providers throughout the recreation area offers a seamless experience characterized by consistency and continuity that eliminates visitor frustration.

Visitors can participate in life- long (progressive and augmentable) learning opportunities to understand the cultures that have used this area and the complex natural resources that continue to provide desirable habitat for humans and other animals.

Convenient access, consistent directions/signs, and accurate information about stopping opportunities along visitor- use corridors provide easy way- finding that contributes to a sense of safety and encourages participation in recreation area activities.

Visitors can participate in a variety of interpretation, education, and recreation experience opportunities appropriate for audiences with differing levels of interest, understanding, and sophistication.

Progressive education programs developed in partnership with national parks, state parks, school systems and others reach all segments of area population with a curriculum that is aligned with state standards and meet student and educator needs. Program participants have opportunity for a thorough understanding of Mediterranean-type ecosystems, how they function, and their value to increasingly urban communities.

Orientation and directions provided through a variety of media and at appropriate locations throughout the recreation area and nearby communities enables visitors to easily find facilities, activities, and services.

Information provided in orientation and interpretation media and services encourages safe use, resource protection and a feeling of comfort while stakeholders enjoy the area's cultural and natural features.

Staff and participants in interpretation and education programs reflect the cultural diversity of the urban communities served.

Visitor contact facilities will be strategically placed at several locations within the recreation area boundary for optimum visitor contact. Facilities provide opportunity for visitor contact with credible, knowledgeable staff that interprets the park's significant stories and provides information and directions to sites and activities.

Through Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area the National Park Service reaches out to the diverse audiences of Los Angeles and the nation and attracts visitors to reach in to the recreation area as a training ground for other national park experiences.

National Park Service staff will strive to understand community needs and develop programs that facilitate visitation of diverse audiences.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

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## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Introduction

The external boundary of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area encompasses 150,000 acres. The area is more than forty miles long and thirteen miles wide. Public and private recreation providers and landowners cooperatively manage the land. Approximately 20,000 acres are federally owned and managed.

Unlike traditional national park areas with formal gateway entrances, visitors to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area enter via many portals. More than thirty state, local, county, or non-profit organizations work with the National Park Service to provide interpretive services. Most list their public activities in a quarterly publication *Outdoors in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (Outdoors)* produced by the National Park Service. The national recreation area's biggest challenge is serving more than 100,000 people that reside within the recreation area boundary and fifteen million people that live within a half day drive of the area.

Using the National Park Service Interpretive Report categories as a guide, the national recreation area interpretive facilities and services can be broken down as follows: personal, non-personal, and outreach.

### Personal Services

## VISITOR CENTERS

National Park Service volunteers and employees staff five visitor centers and contact stations in the national recreation area. In Fiscal Year 2002 these visitor centers served 61,000 visitors. The main center open daily at park headquarters contains exhibits and a cooperating association sales outlet. It carries information on all National Park

System units. Although this center serves as the primary visitor center signs directing visitors to the site do not exist. This deficiency is especially critical since the center is located seven miles outside the recreation area in a highly urban and congested area of Thousand Oaks. If visitors locate the center, they are again challenged to find the entrance to the building down a precariously angled flight of stairs. An elevator is available but signs directing visitors to the center and the elevator from the parking area are inadequate. The center is located at the western end of the 40- mile long recreation area. Presently visitation to the visitor center averages less than forty people each day.

The Sooky Goldman Nature Center located in the eastern part of the recreation area and the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center located in the western end are two of the busiest contact stations based on hours of operation.

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) manages Sooky Goldman Nature Center through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. The center, open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., contains exhibits and rest facilities. A conglomeration of miss- matched exhibits lack both theme and continuity. Education programs at the site are popular with area school and children groups. Visitors to the site have difficulty finding the center due to a lack of signs and narrow, residential roads leading to it.

The Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center is operated through a cooperative agreement with the Friends of Satwiwa (FOS), a non- profit organization. The center is located at a popular site within the recreation area and receives high traffic flow, especially on weekends. Parking lots are located a quarter mile from the cultural center so recreational users often by- pass the center to use trails in the area. A secondary parking area located closer to the center for mobility impaired visitors is not well identified. Still it frequently reaches capacity on busy weekends and many impaired people must park in the distant parking area. Staff must be vigilant so visitors do not park cars along a fire road potentially blocking emergency vehicles. Although open only on weekends this center serves more people than the primary visitor center does with daily operations. Due to funding shortfalls during construction, the building was reduced in size and the exhibits had to be designed and fabricated at the park. The exhibits are fair quality, but the American Indian community wants to focus on present cultures instead of past history. A portion of the center features changing art displays of American Indian artists.

Contact stations at Circle X Ranch and Cheeseboro Canyon are staffed by volunteers on weekends to provide maps and directions to visitors. There are no signs directing visitors to the facilities or indicating when the stations are staffed. The station at Circle X contains a small exhibit and rest facilities. A small trailer houses the station at Cheeseboro Canyon. The canyon is extremely hot during summer months. Neither facility is accessible. An assessment is needed to determine if both sites should continue as contact stations and what types of personal and non-personal interpretive services are appropriate at each site.

The national recreation area provides intermittent interpretive services throughout the mountains and the greater Los Angeles area during special events. In Fiscal Year 2002, four events contacted 1,500 people. Booths contain temporary exhibits highlighting a park theme related to specific events and they provide general recreation area information. They also serve as the event's lost and found center for children and objects. A mobile visitor center is presently in planning.

A contact station at Paramount Ranch is no longer in use. The station was located in an administrative building away from visitor flow and received little visitation.

#### INFORMAL INTERPRETATION

More than twenty-four interpretive roves conducted by National Park Service paid interpretive staff in Fiscal Year 2002 contacted approximately 1,100 visitors. Informal interpretation generally takes place on weekends and holidays. Roving is not a regular part of the weekly schedule; it is only scheduled when staff time is available and is often the first thing cut to cover other facilities and programs. Staff chooses sites based on visitation and will go to sites that they have not recently roved. Most roving is on foot, however, many recreation area visitors are mountain bikers, horseback riders, and other recreational users. In the past recreation area staff has roved using mountain bikes and found them to be a good means of transportation. Horseback roving remains impractical due to logistic issues involving transportation of horses from one site to another.

Two of the recreation area's volunteer groups, the Mountain Bike and Horse Patrol units, provide informal roving interpretation to supplement paid interpreters. There is a need to ensure that volunteers receive interpretive training and that they are continually provided with the most accurate and up to date information.

## FORMAL INTERPRETATION

More than thirty organizations list programs in the *Outdoors* calendar of events. A majority of these lectures, workshops, hikes, talks, and campfire programs are presented on weekends and holidays. In Fiscal Year 2002, approximately 14,300 people participated in 421 programs provided by paid staff and volunteers including docents at William O. Douglas Outdoor Center (WODOC). Statistics in this section focus on programs provided by the National Park Service and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority staffs and volunteers.

Although formal programs are presented throughout the mountains, Franklin Canyon and Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa are the focal points. These sites have the busiest contact stations. In Fiscal Year 2002, fifty-four percent of program participants attended activities at Franklin Canyon located on the east side of the mountains close to Los Angeles. National Park Service volunteers and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority staff conduct programs at Franklin Canyon and WODOC. These programs are popular with groups but are not curriculum based and need redesign to meet state criteria. At Satwiwa, Friends of Satwiwa in collaboration with the National Park Service reached thirty-one percent of formal activity participants. Workshops, evening campfire programs, cultural demonstrations, and interpretive talks focus on American Indian cultural heritage at or near Satwiwa Native American Indian Cultural Center. The potential for expansion of this program is high. These programs are popular and provide an excellent opportunity to reach a broad audience.

The remaining fifteen percent of formal program participants explored sites throughout the mountains on guided hikes and walks or participated in a lecture series at recreation area headquarters. An evaluation of the existing programs needs to insure that staff and resources are used in the best possible manner to meet the needs of the audiences that visit the recreation area.

## DEMONSTRATIONS AND PERFORMING ARTS

Demonstration and performing arts programs draw the largest number of people per event. In Fiscal Year 2002, almost 2,000 people attended thirteen programs. The most attended activities included *Sunday Concerts* at Peter Strauss Ranch and *Silents Under the Stars* at Paramount Ranch. Both outdoor events that have become more popular in recent years attract 150 to 350 participants per program.

Since the 1980s, free *Sunday Concerts* have served as a venue for new musicians. In Fiscal Year 2002 concerts attracted over 1,300 people. Each of the two hour concerts features a variety of music from bluegrass to blues to classical. Many concerts at Peter Strauss Ranch are provided by partner organizations. Activities that are not self-supporting might become so if fees were implemented. Conversely, non-fee events might attract non-typical users who are financially limited or unwilling to pay for a recreation area activity. National recreation area staff will evaluate to effects of charging a fee on visitor participation and the ability to offer more program activities.

For the past fifteen years, *Silents Under the Stars* has been presented twice each summer by the National Park Service and the Silent Society of Hollywood Heritage, Inc. (SSHHI). Classic silent movies with live music are shown at the Paramount Ranch pavilion. This fee-based program is self-sustaining. Fees collected are divided equally between the recreation area's donation account to repair and upgrade pavilion facilities and the SSHHI to cover the cost of films and musicians. Events have attracted over 300 people to each program.

*Cuttin'a Rug* celebrates music through traditional and contemporary dance. Offered in May and June at Peter Strauss Ranch this program is conducted on a historic dance floor that was used in the big band era. *Cuttin'a Rug* events average fifty to seventy participants. The cost for this program is high averaging \$700 per program. Presently funds from the recreation area's donation account or cooperating association are used to pay for dance instructors and bands. This program might become self-supporting if fees were charged to the participants.

Movie technology programs are presented one to four times each year at Paramount Ranch. Each demonstration focuses on a different aspect of movie making such as sound effects, make-up, and special effects. Demonstrators who charge a fee are paid from the recreation area's donation cooperative association accounts.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area has five curriculum-based programs that reach a variety of students and cover a range of recreation area themes. Recreation area staff and volunteers service an average of 10,000 students per year. The overall approach is to balance both on-site and off-site opportunities to schools that may or may not have transportation to the national recreation area.

Education programs have been designed for and are presented to a diverse representative population of students in the Los Angeles and Ventura County school districts. Currently the recreation area has a two- year waiting list for third and fourth grade participation in activities at the recreation area and a year wait for other programs.

To reach more future National Park Service constituents the recreation area has requested an operating increase for staffing. This proposal has been the highest interpretive priority for the Pacific West Region and is in the top ten percent of National Park Service requests. If funded the national recreation area will expand education and outreach programs. Alternative staffing may be available through a partnership with a local university for volunteer interns. Development of a ranger/volunteer-led program for K- 2 students is needed to serve area schools.

All national recreation area education programs are developed with advisory committees that include teachers, subject matter experts, and recreation area staff to ensure that the academic needs of students and educators are being met. After development, frequent evaluation and update ensure programs remain relevant and current. Teachers and students are also surveyed about their wants and needs.

Many programs were developed with grant or other non- appropriated federal money. Grants cover student transportation to the mountains and some operational costs for middle and high school programs.

The education program includes five curriculum- based education units. *The Chumash: A Changing People, A Changing Land* (Grades 3 and 4), a hands- on experiential program conducted at the park, explores concepts of bio- diversity. *One Land: Many People, Many Ways* (Grades 4 and 5) reflects upon how all cultures contribute to history. Rangers present this program in the classroom. *National Park Legacy* (Grades 1 to 12) uses surplus brochures from the national recreation area visitor center. Brochures are available by National Park System themes. Worksheets and lesson plans are available for primary (Grades 1 to 3), elementary (4 and 5), middle school (6 to 8), and high school (9 to 12). *Parks as Laboratories: Studies of the Land, Water and Air* (Grades 6 to 8) serves students from a primarily urban audience who conduct “health exams” of recreation area sites through hands- on water, soil, and air quality experiments. *National Park Labs: Studies of Wildland Fire Ecology* (Grades 9 to 12) focuses on fire ecology, integrated science, and resource management. Students conduct hands- on field experiments and record and analyze data.

In an effort to reach students the national recreation area has chosen to keep the ranger/volunteer to student ratio low. The ratio ranges from 1:20 for our elementary school programs to 1:6 for both the Parks as Laboratories and Wildland Fire Programs.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and California Lutheran University (CLU) present workshops to teachers. Each workshop provides background information to enrich teacher presentation of curriculum-based materials. Currently the recreation area presents two workshops. *Nature's Laboratories in PARKS (Parks as Resources for Knowledge in Science)* targets teachers of grades 6 to 12. *The Material Cultures and History of the Santa Monica Mountains* serves teachers of grades 3 to 5. The park also assists LAUSD with four to ten of their one- day *Eisenhower Workshops* each year. The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds the Eisenhower workshops through the Los Angeles Systemic Initiative. At all of these workshops teachers receive an orientation to the National Park Service and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Workshops face challenges because the National Park Service does not have authority to issue continuing education or graduate credits. The national recreation area must work with accredited educational institutions to offer teacher credits. This system worked fine until partner organizations faced budget cuts requiring them to make workshops self- supporting. When workshops failed to attract thirty teachers CLU cancelled. Ways to solve this problem include acquiring additional funding that will allow academic partners to host workshops at a financial loss and seeking accreditation for the national recreation area program.

## JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

*Weaving Cultures (Ages 8 to 13)* explore past and contemporary lives of the Chumash people. Participants completing this program receive a Junior Ranger patch. This program is hands- on and uses stories, songs, material cultural items, and real- life experiences to reveal the dynamic roles that environment and culture have on our lives. Traditional songs and stories bring the past to life. Oral histories reveal how traditional beliefs and customs integrate into modern Chumash culture. This program is expensive due to the high cost of the junior ranger booklet, pins, and patch.

## Non- Personal Services

Non- personal services are some of the biggest assets of the national recreation area. Due to its large size and proximity to Los Angeles the recreation area has expended a large effort on non - personal services. A visual information specialist designs and oversees the development and production of recreation area publications, teachers' manuals, and exhibits.

## PARK PRODUCED PUBLICATIONS

The national recreation area reaches its residents and neighbors through forty different publications. In Fiscal Year 2002, these publications had a circulation of 213,000 copies. The most popular publication is a quarterly calendar of events, *Outdoors*, which lists public programs, activities, and special events that occur in the national recreation area. This publication has 3,500 subscribers and is distributed by recreation area partners, libraries, hotels, and other institutions to more than 120,000 people per year. The publication is popular with the public; however, recreation area staff has concerns regarding the increased cost for production, printing, and distribution. Some of *Outdoors* printing and production costs are covered by donations, but the recreation area must seek other options for distribution and printing to offset expanding costs.

The other thirty- nine publications include three categories: site information and maps, recreational interest, and operations support. Western Parks and Monument Association has historically funded much of the printing costs for these publications.

## WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Due to the national recreation area's disjointed and intermingled lands, park staff has developed an extensive wayside exhibit program. A wayside exhibit plan developed in January 2000 addresses most wayside exhibit needs.

## TRAVELERS INFORMATION STATIONS

Four Travelers Information Stations (TIS) provide visitors with twenty- four hour general park information and safety messages. Only one is located on National Park Service land. These radio broadcast stations are located at Rocky Oaks, Point Mugu State Park, Malibu Creek State Park and Malibu Lagoon State Beach. Digitally recorded

messages are updated quarterly; in emergencies they can be updated via telephone as often as necessary. Due to their exposure to the elements and isolated locations maintenance is an ongoing problem. Poor radio reception caused by the Santa Monica Mountains limits their broadcast range.

## AUDIO VISUAL MEDIA

The national recreation area presently does not have an audio-visual film or video. Funding has been requested for a recreation area film that will provide visitor orientation and an overview of resources in the area. This critical need for the recreation area could serve as an important thread to tie the various partnership sites together into one cohesive National Park Service unit.

Recently a solution to this challenge may have presented itself. A National Park Service partnership conference is scheduled to be held in Los Angeles in November 2003. Harpers Ferry Center has agreed to produce a video for this conference highlighting the partnerships that support the national recreation area. This video could potentially serve the current needs of the park.

## Outreach Services

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In Fiscal Year 2002 Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area participated in seventy-one community outreach programs serving 331,131 contacts. The recreation area provided offsite programs to community, religious, scout, youth, and other groups and participated in career day events. Most outreach efforts targeted communities traditionally not reached by the National Park Service. Many of these programs depend on outside funding.

*Orientation to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* provides information on recreational opportunities in the Santa Monica Mountains including logistics, safety, and current resource management issues. The recreation area cooperates with local agencies to create and staff interagency booths for Los Angeles and Ventura County Fairs. These events create a National Park Service presence in the community that reaches 60,000 or more people each year. The national recreation area also designs, produces, and staffs exhibits at conventions, career days, local neighborhoods, and city events.

For several years national recreation area outreach efforts have focused on youth and family programs. Park rangers attend community events in under-served neighborhoods and provide transportation for community residents to visit recreation area sites. Participants hike, bike, picnic, or attend any scheduled events at the recreation area.

*ECO Heroes and ECO Helpers (Ages 15 to 18)* bridge volunteering, education and diversity of people and resources. These programs link ethnically diverse high school students with public land agencies in an effort to educate students from the city about the need to preserve natural environments and to understand stewardship responsibilities. Participation in natural resource management projects and education activities augment this program. Interpretive staff provides assistance to the recreation area personnel office and Equal Opportunity committee by coordinating *Careers in the National Parks: Job Shadowing Days (Ages 12 to 21)*. Participants in the one-day program meet as a group to receive orientation to the mission, history, and career opportunities of the National Park Service. Then they pair by interest with staff from all recreation area management departments. Participants shadow staff and ask questions. Those over 16 years of age are encouraged to apply for recreation area student internships.

*Paramount Great Adventure (Ages 8 to 14)*, a program used with Boys and Girls clubs, camps, and scouts, links film history with today. Students participate in a short tour of the national recreation area. Then they write a film script and act it out for recording on a video that they take home with them.

*National Park Service Orientation (Ages 15 to 17)* links the agency cultural and natural preservation mission to today and future needs. Students learn about their role as future leaders and voters and career possibilities. A safety orientation and *Leave No Trace* message are also featured before students go on a short walk or hike. This program is designed for students from under-served communities.

#### LOAN MATERIALS - TRAVELING TRUNKS

In Fiscal Year 2002 the national recreation area completed development of Traveling Trunks. These trunks mirror the recreation area's *One Land: Many People, Many Ways* program and contain reproduction American Indian and ranching artifacts that illustrate life before 1850. Four trunks are piloted by the LAUSD and the other two distributed by recreation area staff.

## LIBRARIES

Although the national recreation area does not loan materials to the public, the interpretive division maintains two libraries. One is located at national recreation area headquarters in Thousand Oaks and the other at the education operations building at Rancho Sierra Vista. Visitors may use library materials on site to conduct research. Advisory committee members, partners, staff, and volunteers may borrow books and publications.

## PARK WEB SITE

In Fiscal Year 2002, the national recreation area's web site had over 124,000 hits. Ninety percent of the website meets Americans with Disabilities Act standards for people with visual and/or mobility impairments. The web site continues to be updated and upgraded with the intention to add more information on resource management projects and issues and internship opportunities for students.

An expanded web page includes designated sections for recreational activities, visitor safety, children activities, and natural and cultural history information. Virtual visitors can obtain current information on camping, biking, interpretive programs, rules and regulations, best places to view wild flowers, trails (including maps), public use permits, and national recreation area projects.

The recreation area uses the Internet to post current press releases and management documents such as environmental assessments and draft general management plans. General information about the recreation area translated into Spanish includes directions to the area, contact information, local recreational opportunities, activities, permits, special events, closures, and links to other National Park Service sites. The children activity section features *Cultural Journey*, an interactive game that explores the cultural history of the Santa Monica Mountains. This program is an extension of *One Land: Many People, Many Ways* and is designed for elementary school children. *Cultural Journey* focuses on the region's Chumash, Tongva, Spanish, and Mexican cultural heritage.

## **ISSUES**

### **Increasing, Conflicting Uses**

Population growth and increasing visitation require more facilities, parking areas, and established trails, and decrease opportunities for solitude in much of the recreation area. Different stakeholder groups seek different experiences and conditions. Conflicts among users such as mountain bikers, horseback riders and hikers detract from quality of recreation area experience. For example, individuals seeking quiet or solitude may object to noise from large groups of mountain bikers or horse back riders. Demand for privacy by some recreation area neighbors hinders programming activities for other potential visitors.

### **Land Ownership Responsibilities**

The National Park Service does not own most of the land within the boundary of the national recreation area. Some non- owned lands containing resources significant to the recreation area may be acquired in the future. Acquisition can greatly expand the acreage and operational responsibilities of the National Park Service, including increase of the extent and scope of interpretive responsibilities. The scope of this long- range interpretive plan will include considerations for visitor experiences and interpretation throughout the national recreation area. The National park Service does not have authority over other organizations operating within the national recreation area boundaries, however, this plan recommends actions that contribute to a consistent visitor experience throughout the recreation area. Such an interpretive concept plan will assure stakeholders an opportunity to participate in an integrated program developed cooperatively by the National Park Service and other visitor service providers to offer a complete, balanced experience in the national recreation area.

### **Complexity**

Geographic, political, and operational complexity of the recreation area impact ability to manage resources and provide visitor experience opportunities. Many access points, sources of information, and operational entities diffuse organizational identities and confuse visitors. Juxtaposition of many stories and presentation methods hinder visitor ability to learn about primary themes. Many visitors and other stakeholders lack knowledge of the national recreation area significance and perception of its importance to them.

## **Community Connections**

The current level of interaction between recreation area staff and residents of communities in and near the national recreation area limits opportunity to involve the public in interpretation, education and resource management programs. Lack of community understanding of the national recreation area limits support for management programs. Lack of a friends group impacts abilities to reach and encourage non-users to become users. Recreation area staff is challenged to deliver National Park Service messages in creative ways. Staff needs improved capability to respond to requests for services that reach all audiences with appropriate level and type of information. Communication methods must include technology that assures success. Internet, local broadcasts, and community newspapers can inform people of amenities the national recreation area offers and present significant and interesting management and conservation issues.

## **Partnership Coordination**

The creation of this national recreation area was a new venture into park management. It involves cooperation among national, state, local, and private partners. These diverse entities are challenged to work together to make the area a success. Many partners have developed their own plans for ownership and use of resources. Some are now implementing these plans and pursuing their own activities. Varied agendas, multiple goals, and uncoordinated funding limits total efficiency of all partners in the national recreation area venture. Improved coordination will enable all partners to work more effectively with neighbors, improve identity of the recreation area in nearby communities, and assist with current partner disconnects, such as between field and administration in school systems. A seamless organization of rules, regulations and inter- agency communication will improve experiences for people participating in activities provided by partners throughout the national recreation area.

The National Park Service is eager to accept its role as lead partner to promote, protect, and develop the park using a variety of strategies. National Park Service and other national recreation area partners need to fully explore opportunities to coordinate information, education, and interpretation programs. The long- range interpretive plan will examine optimum ways to deliver visitor education and information and take advantage of the talents and resources of all partners.

## **Diversity**

Social, personal, economic, interest, experience, cultural, and language diversities are prevalent among stakeholders interested in the national recreation area. Diversity of potential audiences affects both content and treatment of interpretive services. Diverse groups and individuals make up a significant segment of neighbors, visitors, and potential receivers of interpretative services. Program planning, design, and implementation require cultural awareness and sensitivity as well as consultation and participation of the area's people. Sometimes these factors determine delivery and content of interpretation. For example, language diversity requires evaluation of the need multilingual interpretive services appropriate for targeted audiences. At other times these factors indicate where, when, and how services are delivered. For example, current environmental education programs are too limited in availability to meet the needs and numbers of the diverse population in the Los Angeles area.

## **Staffing**

The current staffing level will not accommodate the expected increase in visitor use or handle the variety of existing outreach, orientation, interpretation, education, and other visitor services necessary to keep the national recreation area operational. More efficient use of existing staff, building staff support, increasing staff, and prioritization of activities will provide better capability to respond to requests for services. New visitor contact facilities, education programs, and interpretation activities will be necessary to reach the large potential audiences in the southern California area. Quality and quantity of programming need evaluation. Can the National Park Service reach into all communities? "Teaching New America", Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area's planned educational and interpretation program, describes the need for fifty staff by 2010.

## **Location**

Adequacy of space and appropriateness of location for visitor contact facilities on National Park Service owned property need evaluation. Current location of staffing and distribution of contact points result in missed opportunities for effective interaction between staff and visitors. Identification of appropriate contact points and relocation of activities can provide increased learning opportunities and improved gateways to communities in and surrounding the recreation area.

## **Visitor Profiles**

Recent, professional visitor use studies have not been conducted at the national recreation area. Several sources have provided basic visitor profile information. Much of the information is out of date and inadequate in scope to be useful in designing interpretive activities. The small number of visitors interviewed in previous surveys limits the effectiveness of the results. Visitor use managers need additional data to accurately describe stakeholder wants, needs and expectations and trends predicted, such as aging of the visitor population.

## **Implementation of General Management Plan**

The approved general management plan proposes significant development and program changes for the national recreation area. Implementation plans are needed to provide specific guidance. This long- range interpretive plan will guide planning and development of interpretive and visitor experience activities, facilities, and media. All implementation plans currently approved or being developed must support recommendations in the general management plan and reflect compatibility with each other. Involvement of multi- disciplinary planning teams including all park functions, American Indian tribal representatives, and other partners assure high quality plans. This long- range interpretive planning effort will consider several other plans currently approved or in production.



# FUTURE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



# OUTREACH

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## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This plan classifies visitor contact facilities operated by the National Park Service and partners in four tiers based on level of interpretation and staffing. Tier I major visitor centers open daily year- round to provide park- wide orientation and interpretation of all recreation area themes. Tier II staffed contact stations introduce all themes but focus on one or two that best represents local resources and stories. They may open less than full- time to meet demands of local stakeholders. Tier III classification includes self- service information facilities at buildings and kiosks that provide site- specific interpretation twenty- four hours a day. Tier IV includes wayside exhibits and bulletin boards that provide general orientation and site- specific interpretation.

### TIER I - MAJOR VISITOR CENTERS

#### Themes

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**National Park Service:** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

#### Experiences

Tier I visitor centers outside the national recreation area boundary provide awareness of resources, issues and visitor experience opportunities in the recreation area. They function as gateways to introduce and guide potential users into Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and other National Park System areas.

Experiences at Tier I facilities create a sense of welcome for all stakeholders and audiences. A comfortable, safe feeling at each facility provides a sense that national recreation area sites are a safe, “cool” place worthy of visits. Credibility of staff encourages a positive relationship with visitors. The physical environment and emotional atmosphere of the facility evokes a personal connection between staff and visitors and provides a flavor or sensory experience of the park. Some experience opportunities at the facility will have a positive impact on visitor perception of Santa Monica National Recreation Area even if visitors never visit the recreation area. Other experiences will encourage facility visitors to also become park stewards and tantalize them to want to visit sites within the national recreation area.

The primary functions of outreach Tier I facilities are information, orientation, and education.

Availability of quick, accurate information will capture stakeholder attention and direct visitors to other, more detailed information sources. Media and programs will provide information about sites, facilities and activities in the recreation area. Information will identify the variety of resources and things to see and do in the area and explain how to become involved in recreation area programs.

The education function provides opportunity to learn about the importance of the national recreation area, its resources, mission, issues, and visitor activities to neighborhood communities. Education activities at Tier I facilities help visitors learn the value of open space – in and out of the park – to understand that their environment is endangered, but can be conserved through their interest, advocacy, and participation.

### **Recommendations**

A Tier I visitor information site located in downtown Los Angeles, possibly at El Pueblo, will provide park orientation and information to inner-city populations and introduce them to recreation and learning opportunities in the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Los Angeles facility will provide opportunity for park staff to interact with people and help connect them to resources found in the national recreation area. To the extent feasible staff at the facility will speak the predominant languages and know the culture of the surrounding community. Positive interaction between visitors and staff encourages cultural sensitivity, enhances understanding of

similarities among life- ways and ideas, and expands perceptions of and respect for other cultures. Interaction provides opportunity for local residents and other visitors to understand and support National Park Service mission in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and throughout the United States.

A social science research program will identify needs, wants, and expectations of the community surrounding the Los Angeles facility. National Park Service interpretive managers will adapt information, education, and interpretation venues to the character of the community identified by accurate social science research. For example, special events designed to fit the character of the community may attract local residents to the facility where they will also be introduced to the national recreation area.

Initial experience opportunities at the facility will reflect the Human Use – Cultural theme to make personal connections with local residents. Topics may include history of the Santa Monica Mountains region before 1850, creation of the heart of Los Angeles, and how the development of water system continues to sustain the city. Topics will extend beyond Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Presentation of topics in a broad context will connect visitors and their environments to their history and cultures, predominantly Spanish. Distribution of free publications and availability of maps and interpretive sales items will extend and reinforce the initial experience and encourage additional visits.

The Los Angeles information and interpretation will depict the community as a little ecosystem. A virtual nature experience in the facility will link the urban environment to the larger natural systems of which it is a part. Exhibits, audiovisuals, and information media will link the community, the national recreation area, the southern California Mediterranean type ecosystem, and other ecosystems worldwide. Parallel presentations may depict how local residents fought to preserve their community and how the National Park Service continues to fight to preserve resources.

Park managers will encourage commercial entities surrounding the visitor center to develop exhibits, architectural style, and interior design to present a Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area theme throughout the development.

## **TIER II - STAFFED CONTACT STATIONS**

### **Themes**

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**National Park Service: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area** is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

### **Experiences**

Staffed contact stations outside the park will introduce all national recreation area themes but focus on one or two that best represents local resources and stories. These Tier II facilities may open less than full- time but will provide services sufficient to meet demands of local visitation. They provide awareness of resources, issues, and visitor experience opportunities within the recreation area. Design of the facility and the media it houses provide sensory experiences that encourage facility users to become national recreation area visitors. Visitors can obtain quick, accurate information about other sites and facilities and learn where to obtain more information and how to participate in recreation area activities.

### **Recommendations**

A visitor information site located within the Los Angeles International Airport will provide orientation to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and serve as a retail sales site for park merchandise.

A variety of exhibits, audiovisuals, and information displays will provide opportunities for visitors to choose media and levels of detail based on their individual interest. Media will include a brochure display, exhibits with audiovisual interactive components reflecting primary themes, and large poster photos characterizing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area resources and visitor opportunities. Multi- language information displays will capture airport patron attention, introduce them to the recreation area interpretive themes, provide information about experience opportunities, and encourage people to visit the national recreation area.

An entry exhibit and signs at the airport facility will identify the recreation area as a unit of the National Park System and clearly reflect the mission of the area and the National Park Service. Personnel at an information desk will provide orientation, sale of national park passes, and space for staff/visitor interaction.

A sales area to support and extend interpretive opportunities will be located adjacent to the exhibit area where easily seen from concourse travel lanes. A cash register at a sales desk, a storage area for inventory, security safe and cooperating association workspace will be convenient to the sales area. Adequate display and circulation space will encourage people to browse merchandise while waiting for their departure flights.

Staffing and exhibits might be shared with partner organizations within the national recreation area to ease the burden of site operations.

Until a Tier II facility is developed at the airport an interim self- service Tier III facility without the sales component will be planned, produced, and installed cooperatively by National Park Service and airport managers. The Tier III facility will provide self- service information and introductory interpretation of national recreation area themes.

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

### **Themes**

**Escape - Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**National Park Service:** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

## **Experiences**

Anticipation and excitement about Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area can develop before visitors enter the recreation area boundary. People seeking knowledge of the area will have convenient access to adequate, accurate information and interpretation of resources, activities and programs through telephone, web- site, mail, and state and local tourism media.

Descriptions of activities in languages appropriate to identified audiences and appropriate to various age groups will provide hours of operation, directions, fees, and scheduled and special events. Regional residents will learn about a variety of activities appropriate for repeat visits. Information will clearly identify the park as a unit of the National Park System with appropriate national or international significance. The outreach program will include activities reflecting all primary themes; individual activities may focus on a single theme. Maps and information will provide basic treatment of all primary themes and selected topics, suggest sources of detailed information, and give information about how to visit the park.

## **Recommendations**

### **PERSONAL SERVICES**

Interpretive staff will develop and present activities to surrounding communities to encourage participation and support of recreation area programs. Communication between staff and neighbors through outreach programs create a positive personal relationship and effectively communicate important resource based messages to nearby communities. Personal services can relate information about current events in recreation area operations. Interpretive programs, recent research findings, management activities and planning are appropriate topics for personal service activities. Interpreter presentations can reach the total population; manager interactions with community leaders could treat the same topics on a different level.

Presentations will be factually correct and appropriate for the current interest level of intended audiences. Each presentation will offer opportunities for members of the audience to build on their interest in the area and increase their understanding of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the National Park Service.

National recreation area staff will implement the following specific recommendations when funding becomes available.

Managers will establish a permanent Outreach Coordinator position. The incumbent will identify and manage environmental education activities and work with communities and partners to enhance rapport between the recreation area and community that supports stewardship.

Interpretation managers of partner organizations will plan, develop, coordinate, and present “show- me” days and special events. Presented cooperatively by the entire national recreation area community, these interpretive events will connect the national recreation area and the Local/Regional category of stakeholder.

An outreach recreational skills program developed and presented in partnership with local businesses and recreational organizations will teach a variety of skills to new and diverse audiences.

Recruitment, selection, and placement of staff assure that employees presenting outreach activities speak the languages and represent the cultures of current audiences. The recreation area training program will include segments specifically planned to improve outreach. Segments will include cultural sensitivity, local knowledge, and cultural communication skills. A cadre of volunteers, interns, and docents from nearby communities will supplement employed staff conducting orientation, interpretation, and education activities in targeted outreach communities and at outreach facilities.

Frequent interaction between recreation area staff and other visitor service providers will assure that all visitor contact personnel have accurate information to deliver to visitors. All staff will be encouraged to participate and interact with organizations to foster communications, recognition, and acceptance of the national recreation area and its programs. Staff will provide training, familiarization tours, and published materials including information about the recreation area and communication skills.

The national recreation area will actively participate in the CREEK Network. Interpretive and education staff will work with a learning center to integrate programs. Development of standard operating procedures will facilitate effective, mutual interactions. For example, education program teacher training may combine with learning center training activities. Teachers will benefit from internships or volunteer assignment to assist Learning Center researchers. Teacher training and

research assistant positions might be funded through Parks As Classrooms grant or money from a foundation if established as a component of the Learning Center. Pre-service training opportunities or graduate study established through colleges can pair students with researchers for in- depth learning experiences.

## NON- PERSONAL SERVICES

Off- site non- personal services will focus on encouraging outreach audiences to become recreation area users and supporters. Outreach media will provide information about how potential visitors can get to the recreation area. It will describe visitor experience opportunities and present information about programs designed to introduce people to recreation area resources and programs. Recreation area staff, community groups, and political entities can cooperate to identify currently available transportation between local communities and the recreation area. Creation of new methods to expand transportation links from Los Angeles to the recreation area will include expansion of the Recreational Transit program, implementation of the Heart of the Park Shuttle, and connections between those initiatives and existing MTA routes. Cooperation between the recreation area and senior citizens groups, home schools, and other organizations may identify new and attractive ways to attract visitors. One example is camping programs that invite recreation users to stay overnight for introductory camping experiences. Program operators will partner with schools and with families to provide teacher or parent chaperones.

Major events offsite can inform and invite potential visitors to the national recreation area. Recreation area staff will design, produce, and procure a Tier III traveling information display to introduce new audiences to the National Park System. A Harpers Ferry Center Discovery Station exhibit or custom designed exhibit produced in cooperation with and funded jointly by national recreation area partners may be adapted to a variety of theme- related topics and venues. Staff will also complete specifications for procuring a traveling information van for use as a Tier II facility to conduct outreach and enhance education programs. Media designed, produced, and installed in the van will include both permanent and temporary exhibits. Permanent exhibits will provide introductory interpretation of primary themes. Changeable exhibits will connect the van to various venues in which it may take part. The traveling information display and van can be used effectively at special events, schools, in malls, shopping centers, and community/county/state fairs.

National recreation area staff will develop a marketing program appropriate to current and potential audiences. All staff members have a significant marketing role to help local and national audiences understand recreation area activities and values. Interpretive activities can reach the total population; manager interactions with community leaders can treat the same topics on a different level.

A marketing plan developed by an interdisciplinary team composed of recreation area staff and contractor or consultant will explore marketing ideas. Marketing through regional newspapers, radio, and personal visits to visitor service providers will encourage local constituents to participate in national recreation area programs. Activities can target specific audiences. Topical programs including air quality, wildlife, and management decisions will help staff and local audiences deal with threats inside and outside the recreation area. These programs will help neighbors understand decisions and actions of recreation area managers and staff. Media distributed through American Automobile Association, sport shops, bus tour operators, and recreational organizations will reach national and international audiences. Developing a mascot symbol of the recreation area will provide an effective marketing tool, especially to reach children. Another idea for exploration is development of interpretive clothing with thematic messages for sale through the cooperating association.

Mass media techniques will reach local audiences and travelers passing through the region. Mailings and news releases increase neighborhood understanding of recreation area manager decisions. They also spark interest in the recreation area as a community amenity. Publication media will include articles for local newsletters, event schedules for activity sections of multi- language phone books, and a single panel rack card for distribution at museums, parks, and other visitor sites. A newspaper column drafted by recreation area staff and syndicated to regional papers will reach many homes in the Los Angeles area. Broadcast media will include Hispanic radio stations, public broadcast facilities, in- hotel television channels, and community announcements on local radio stations. Frequent attention from network television stations in the Los Angeles area will require personal interaction between national recreation area staff and television producers to identify stories that appeal to mass audiences. Local distribution of recreation area information will include community interest organizations such as Welcome Wagon. Information on feeder buses for a shuttle system will inform people about transportation links between urban communities and the recreation area.

The proposed marketing plan will also consider mass media techniques appropriate for national and international audiences. Partner facilities can include regional and national broadcast radio and television, such as travel, outdoor, and discovery channels. A series of magazine articles for travel and corporate- produced employee publications can reach vast audiences. News releases distributed to recreation, conservation, and travel organizations for publication in member newsletters will provide information to large groups of stakeholders and potential visitors.

A web coordinator with assistance of other staff will maintain and enhance the national recreation area Internet web site to meet the growing demand for electronic information. Frequent updates will ensure that content is accurate, current, easily accessible, and compelling. People contacting the web site can learn about significant resources, resource management programs and special activities, programs and visitor services. A virtual tour of the national recreation area using high- speed internet technology will provide visitors a unique experience and enhance understanding and awareness of recreation area resources and mission. The web site will also include an expanded virtual visitor center that provides evocative interpretation for people who cannot visit the area. Electronic versions of site bulletins will provide detailed information about specific topics. Short digitized video clips of footage from orientation and interpretive films incorporated into the web site will present mini- documentaries of resources and activities. Legacy, Junior Ranger, and other programs will be adapted for Internet delivery. Extension education programs reflecting national educational standards will provide activities that are relevant to audiences throughout the United States. Pages dedicated to each division or each function (interpretation, protection, resource management, park management and administration, etc.) will link to a central page. Links to other California tourism web sites will allow people to contact partnership entities for specific information about related sites. Global links will connect Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area web pages to web sites of other Mediterranean- type ecosystems worldwide. Recreation area staff will identify web sites disseminating Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area information and work with web managers and authors to improve accuracy and quality of information provided.

# PARKWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

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## VISITOR CONTACT FACILITIES

Visitor contact facilities operated by the National Park Service and partners are classified in this long- range interpretive plan in four tiers based on level of interpretation and staffing. Tier I facilities include major visitor centers that open daily year- round to provide park- wide orientation and interpretation of all national recreation area themes. Tier II staffed contact stations introduce all themes but focus on one or two that best represents local resources and stories. They may open less than full time but will provide services to meet demands of local visitation. Tier III classification includes self- service information buildings and kiosks that provide site- specific interpretation twenty- four hours daily year- round. Tier IV wayside exhibits and bulletin boards provide general orientation and site- specific interpretation.

## TIER I – MAJOR VISITOR CENTERS

### Themes

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem -** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**National Park Service:** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America’s natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

## **Experiences**

Major visitor centers present a welcoming atmosphere characterized by clean facilities and high- quality customer services that accommodate all visitors. Helpful, friendly staff and efficient visitor center operations invite community participation in a variety of activities.

Visitors to Tier I facilities find easy entry, physical and visual, that invites them to participate in visitor center programs. Fully accessible buildings and media are family friendly and informative. Engaging design of structures and media include attractive formats that provide peaceful experiences. Logical floor plans and simple signs facilitate intuitive way- finding without imposing physical or intuitive barriers. Traffic flow corridors control visitor actions and enable them to easily focus on what they need or want.

Location of each major visitor center building will contribute to interpretation of resources. Major visitor centers provide opportunity for visitors to vicariously experience part of the national recreation area. Natural landscapes surrounding each facility provide glimpses of experiences available throughout the area. The natural landscape surrounding visitor centers may be supplemented with native plant gardens located within the developed area. Labeled plants supplied by the Resource Management staff will help visitors identify plants encountered during their visit to natural sites throughout the national recreation area. Media and personnel provide effective, efficient orientation, basic interpretation, and safety messages that contribute to a positive experience.

Basic way- finding information will connect the visitor center to other recreation area sites, facilities, and resources. Clear directions and basic interpretation of primary themes encourage visitor center patrons to visit other sites.

Activities offered at Tier I facilities are appropriate for single or repeat visits. Different levels of information, including after- hours information provided outside each facility, meet the needs of most audiences. Visitors can choose from a variety of exhibits and audiovisual media to make a basic or enhanced connection to resources based on their level of interest. Visitors can also select from many theme- related interpretive items from a book sales area to expand their knowledge of area resources and programs.

Tier I visitor centers introduce people to the national recreation area and the National Park System and they provide gateways to all parks, forests, and recreation areas. Each visitor center will identify missions of the site, recreation area, and National Park Service and relate those missions to recreation area resources and agency values. Visitors will clearly understand the partnership relationship among the National Park Service, California State Parks, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the public to protect the values of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

## **Recommendations**

### **FACILITY LOCATIONS**

The planning team for this long- range interpretive plan analyzed current visitor center operations and identified the following major visitor centers to accommodate visitors and residents.

The Tier I visitor center at El Pueblo in Los Angeles previously described in **OUTREACH – Community Facilities** will serve visitors at the east end of the national recreation area.

Tier I visitor centers located at strategic points within the national recreation area boundary will offer visitors convenient opportunities to acquire essential information and interpretation.

National Park Service staff will continue to conduct visitor center operations at the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area headquarters in Thousand Oaks until a Tier I visitor center is developed at a more centrally located site within the recreation area.

Installation of a video projection system and sound system in the existing headquarters visitor center audiovisual room will improve media at the center.

Development of other Tier I visitor centers proposed in this plan may change the function of the headquarters center. After construction of the Malibu Creek, Paramount Ranch, or Malibu Bluffs Tier I facilities park managers will re- evaluate the effectiveness of the headquarters visitor center. At that time it may be appropriate to relegate the headquarters center to a Tier II or III facility.

A Tier I visitor center at Malibu Bluffs will serve visitors entering the national recreation area from the south. This highest priority visitor center may be developed by 2007. It will provide orientation to the national recreation area and interpretation of national and state park resources. The facility may be staffed jointly by partner organizations. A visitor center at this location will provide views of the coastline and a major bird flyway and it will interpret Malibu Lagoon, one of few significant lagoons in California. Development of the visitor center facility will require new construction unless adaptation of the existing Landon Center building provides adequate space for all necessary functions proposed for this location.

A major visitor center at Point Mugu Lagoon, a partnership endeavor with the United States Navy and second priority for new visitor center development, will provide a western portal into the national recreation area for visitors traveling from Ventura. This facility, possibly developed before 2010, will require new construction. It will house orientation media and facilitate interpretation and education activities focused on wetland estuary and wildlife resource values. Presentation techniques will move visitors through the facility quickly and out into resources around the building.

A Tier I facility at Malibu Creek State Park will provide visitor orientation and interpretation for visitors entering the north section of the national recreation area. Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the National Park Service, the facility will provide orientation and interpretation of national and state park resources.

An alternate site at Paramount Ranch can provide the same orientation and interpretation if the proposed facility at Malibu Creek State Park cannot be developed. National Park Service staff would operate the alternate Tier I facility at Paramount Ranch with assistance from California State Parks.

If neither Malibu Creek nor Paramount visitor center sites are developed Peter Strauss Ranch will be evaluated as an alternate Tier I site.

If a Tier I facility is not developed at El Pueblo as proposed in the general management plan for the national recreation area park managers will evaluate William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom at Franklin Canyon and Santa Monica Pier as alternate locations for a Tier I facility.

## FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Each Tier I facility will include comfortable outside areas, inside seating, children's interpretation area, and family- friendly child care areas that encourage visitors to spend time enjoying the facilities. Each facility will include adequate parking, restrooms, circulation corridors, storage for recreational equipment and strollers to accommodate the number and category of expected users.

Tier I visitor centers will present a variety of information, orientation, interpretation, and education services. Each will provide initial orientation to the national recreation area and interpret ecosystems, resources management, and human interactions with the recreation area environment. Concise, basic information will let visitors move into the recreation area quickly if that is their agenda. Detailed information and interpretation will be available for visitors who have more time to spend in the visitor center. Description of several experience options encourages apprehensive visitors to take initial steps toward immersion in resources throughout the area.

Each major visitor center will present distinctive media but all will reflect a similar identity that represents Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Style, function, size, and contents of each center will be determined during construction planning and design. Available funding and need for new or adaptive construction will influence final design. Construction planning will consider the following suggested functional areas for inclusion in all Tier I facilities.

### Exterior

The visitor center will be clearly identified as a National Park Service facility while identifying all major partners involved in the national recreation area. Its location and design must present an attractive appearance that is inviting to various groups of people. The design of roads, parking areas, decks and walks will be logical, clear and evocative of recreation area values making navigating through the visitor complex intuitive and easy.

Adequate sized parking will accommodate automobiles, recreational vehicles and commercial tour buses. Space will also accommodate a staging area for transit vehicles if the visitor center also functions as transportation system hub.

Wayside exhibits, possibly augmented with audiovisual components, between the parking area and the visitor center entrance will provide basic self- service orientation for visitors who arrive when the building is closed or who choose not to go inside the center.

Architecture of new construction will reflect the natural and cultural environment of recreation area resources and be sensitive to conservation and sustainable practices. New facilities will reflect in design, finishes, colors, and media treatments the major themes of the national recreation area. Structural design will facilitate visitor flow between indoor and outdoor elements of visitor experience at the complex.

If space is available a landscaped plaza and picnic area adjacent to the visitor center can create an exciting visitor experience. It can also create a feeling of being away from the congestion of the entry highway and enhance transitional experiences between developed and natural/historical environments. A visitor center porch connecting indoor and outdoor spaces will shelter visitors from the sun and heat and provide an area for a variety of functions and activities.

Where space permits a short nature/history trail will link interpretation inside visitor centers with outdoor resources. Small trail- side exhibits can introduce outdoor resources in a safe, comfortable setting that encourages visitors to seek further immersion in the recreation area.

### Entry

A National Recreation Area Partnership exhibit in an introductory area for viewing as visitors approach the visitor center can introduce the partnership nature of the national recreation area. This area will use media, architecture, signs and possibly sculptural elements to clarify and distinguish the partners and their functions and to emphasize the significance of their union.

### Lobby

Visitors will first enter a lobby for information and directions to other parts of the building and national recreation area. Information related to travel, accessibility, back- country use, tour options, and recreation area features will be offered in a variety of media formats, including an information desk with personal services.

Orientation exhibits will identify where visitors are located in relation to other resources and describe experience opportunities from which visitors can choose to meet their individual needs. Media might include interactive computer terminals and a monitor with recreation area web- cam views, weather reports and traffic information.

Sufficient circulation space will be provided for users to move among the information area, exhibit spaces, and restrooms without congesting the lobby. Comfortable seating will be available for mobility impaired visitors and those wanting a casual experience.

### Exhibit Area

Interpretive exhibits at each major visitor center will reflect all primary themes established for the recreation area using topics and resources appropriate to the geographic area in which the visitor center is located.

Exhibit designers will avoid using a multitude of small images. Large images are more fitting for this national recreation area, and play to the strength of the exhibit medium. Exhibit units will have a clear organizational principle, but will not require visitors to follow a set sequence.

The exhibit area will accommodate changing exhibits that can interpret special issues, seasonal experience opportunities, or reflect evolving research and management activities. In addition to dedicated space for rotating exhibits in the exhibit area or meeting rooms, design of some cases in the primary exhibit area will accept rotating, changeable objects and displays.

If the visitor centers also house museum collections, artifact storage and treatment space will interface with the exhibit area to permit interpretation of research and curatorial functions. Exhibit and curatorial areas of the building will share a common wall with glass partition to permit exhibition and interpretation of significant objects and curatorial and research activities.

Specific exhibit descriptions, exhibit room layout and selection of media, artifacts, objects, and detailed content will be accomplished during the exhibit design concept phase of planning for each major visitor center.

All major visitor centers will include a space to accommodate audiovisual projection and group meetings. Small visitor centers may combine these functions in a single room. Visitor centers with sufficient space will include separate dedicated rooms for both audiovisual projection and group meetings.

Dedicated theater spaces will have a sloped floor where possible and formal, comfortable seating to improve audiovisual viewing quality. Space at the front of the theater will accommodate a small fixed or moveable stage. Extensive audiovisual capabilities will include a projection system reflecting current technology. Hardware and software will accommodate effective public address, video projection, motion picture projection, slide projection and computer generated activities such as Power Point. Storage space will accommodate backup equipment and supplies. Controls will allow operation from the information desk, projection booth if supplied, and from the front of the auditorium.

Multi- purpose rooms or spaces dedicated to group meetings will feature moveable seating, worktables and audiovisual capabilities adaptable to a variety of activities. These spaces will accommodate temporary exhibits, classroom instruction, special meetings and training. They can also accommodate talks, slide presentations, interactive programs and cultural demonstrations that cannot be presented outside. Location on an outside wall will facilitate education activity links between interior and exterior spaces.

#### Sales Area

A small sales area to support and extend interpretive opportunities will be located out of the main circulation path but easily seen from the lobby. A cash register at a sales desk, a storage area for inventory, security safe and cooperating association workspace will be located convenient to the sales area. Adequate display and circulation space will be provided to encourage people to browse.

#### Restrooms

Facility designers will plan public restroom size and location to adequately serve the anticipated audience. Features near the public rest rooms will include water fountains and public telephones. Staff restrooms will include space for changing and storing clothing during cultural demonstrations and other functions.

## **Offices / Storage**

Staff offices and work spaces will include mail room, copier, fax, scanner, and printer and break room. A large storage area will be needed for brochures, supplies, and interpretation materials.

## **Library**

A library space of sufficient size to accommodate current and projected library collection (books, journals, photo/slide files) at each visitor center will also include a computer work station.

## **Maintenance**

Maintenance and storage will occupy two rooms or locking sections, one a janitorial wet section and the other a dry storage area.

## **TIER II – STAFFED CONTACT STATIONS**

### **Themes**

Each staffed contact station will introduce all primary themes established for the national recreation area and emphasize one or two themes best reflected by resources near the facility.

### **Experiences**

Tier II staffed visitor contact stations provide basic orientation to the entire recreation area and interpretation focused on resources at or near the contact station site.

Information signs and intuitive way-finding design inside and outside the contact station enable most visitors to easily identify functions of each station and navigate to and through the facility.

A welcoming atmosphere enhanced by helpful, friendly, culturally sensitive staff makes all visitors feel welcome. Visitors will find opportunity for spontaneous contact with program staff and a personal relationship that provides answers to questions reflecting specific interests of each visitor. Adequate, comfortable rest areas provide welcoming invitations. Family friendly activities encourage visitor involvement with stories and resources. Media and personnel evoke patron desire to explore other sites in the national recreation area.

Visitors at Tier II facilities will find readily available information presented in easily accessible formats. Clear, concise self- help information inside and outside the facility identifies experience opportunities, activity schedules, access directions, and safety considerations.

## **Recommendations**

### **FACILITY LOCATIONS**

National recreation area partners will cooperate to assure availability of a balanced Santa Monica Mountains experience to all visitors.

The National Park Service will be the primary operator of Tier II facilities at William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom at Franklin Canyon, Satwiwa Native American Indian Cultural Center, Paramount Ranch and the Pacific Coast Highway Visitor Information Site at 415 PCH or Santa Monica Pier.

Other partners will be the primary operators of Tier II facilities at Temescal Gateway Park, Will Rogers State Historic Park, Coldwater Canyon Park, Adamson House, Leo Carillo State Park, Point Mugu State Park, Topanga State Park-Trippet Ranch, Malibu Creek State Park Nature Center, and Reagan Ranch.

If the Tier I facility proposed for the east end of the recreation area is not developed William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom at Franklin Canyon will be evaluated as an alternate Tier I site.

### **FUNCTIONS / ACTIVITIES**

Staffed contact stations serve two major functions. They provide a sheltered location for personal services (primary emphasis) where visitors have access to information, orientation, and responses to specific interests. They also provide self- service information about what to see and do in the nearby areas.

Visitors arriving at Tier II contact stations by automobile can clearly identify function of the facility. Text and emblems on road signs and front of the building identify the facility as a location for National Park Service and other visitor information.

Access routes from the parking lot to the visitor information building require media that provides arriving visitors a welcoming greeting, decision- making information, and way- finding directions. Visitors can easily locate entrances to the building. Wayside exhibits at strategic locations will intercept visitors with information that provides orientation when the information station is closed. These exhibits can also relieve congestion inside the building and take pressure off staff for providing basic information that can just as easily be provided by outside exhibits and signs.

Contact station design facilitates employee safety, security and ease of operation. These facilities will adequately serve the needs of expected visitor numbers. Nearby parking and well- designed structures and media make facilities fully accessible. Spaces provide visitors adequate recreation equipment storage and formal and informal gathering areas.

Visitors can easily differentiate among functional areas as they enter the building. Routes to each area will be clearly signed to avoid confusion during movement through the building.

Informal activities and flexible programming differentiate Tier II from Tier I visitor facilities. Staffing and hours of operating will respond to visitor use patterns at each site. Tier II facilities provide detailed site-specific information about trails, scheduled activities, education, and recreation opportunities. Information encourages uses that protect resources and prevents unintentional disobedience of regulations.

A combination of personal services and exhibits at each staffed information station quickly provide needed information to visitors. This media will encourage them to visit Tier I facilities and outdoor resources and media for thematic interpretation.

Personal services will dominate visitor experience inside the visitor contact station. Recreation area staff and volunteers will provide information on current conditions and experience opportunities, answer orientation questions, and provide interpretation in response to specific visitor interests.

A few museum exhibits will supplement personal services inside the building. Compelling images and minimum text incorporated into exhibits will quickly convey an overview of primary themes and interpret one or two appropriate overriding messages related to resources near the station.

Interpretation outside the contact station will rely primarily on wayside exhibits featuring resources visible from the site. Roving personal service activities will supplement the wayside exhibits and provide opportunity for visitors to meet and talk to a Ranger. Occasional guided walks scheduled to attract large audiences will supplement wayside exhibits and roving contacts.

The **SITE STRATEGIES** section of this plan describes themes, visitor experience opportunities, media and activities for Tier II facilities.

### **TIER III – SELF- SERVICE INFORMATION FACILITIES**

#### **Themes**

Self- service information facilities provide detailed site specific information and introductory interpretation of resources in the immediate vicinity of each facility.

#### **Experiences**

Readily available information and interpretation at sites that best reflect national recreation area resources enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of area values.

Tier III facilities are available to visitors twenty- four hours daily.

Self- service information panels and publications at picnic areas, recreation areas, trail heads, and visitor center plazas provide shelter and comfort that encourages relaxation, pause, and contemplation.

Tier III visitor facilities provide easy- to- understand directions to major visitor centers and staffed contact stations where additional information and interpretation is available.

Tier III sites are located for easy access from major travel corridors.

#### **Recommendations**

Tier III sites will be located at developed areas providing gateways to national recreation area experiences such as trail heads and shuttle stops. All facilities will include information and interpretation media. Some facilities may include convenience facilities such as rest rooms, water, phone, and storage structures for recreational equipment.

Information kiosks at Tier III sites will include upright wayside exhibits. One exhibit will provide detailed site- specific orientation, basic interpretation, and directions to significant points of interest near the kiosk. A second panel can present local features in a park- wide and ecosystem context. A “you are here” approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of all sites. Kiosks at shuttle system and boat tour stops will include a third exhibit. It will focus on information about the shuttle or tour system, such as overview, hours of operation, areas served, and how to effectively use the system. The exhibit kiosk can also contain safety and regulation information specific to its location and it can provide information about hours of operation of facilities not always open to visitors.

#### **TIER IV - TRADITIONAL WAYSIDE EXHIBIT MEDIA**

##### **Themes**

Wayside exhibit media provides general orientation and site specific interpretation of topics related to primary interpretive themes.

##### **Experiences**

Wayside exhibits throughout the national recreation area present a family resemblance easily recognized by park users. Exhibits produced by National Park Service and other visitor service agencies provide unity and continuity to visitor experiences that enhance visitor understanding of resource connectivity and resource significance.

A universal identifier on all wayside media developed by the National Park Service and partners indicate participation in the national recreation area partnership.

##### **Recommendations**

The recreation area wayside proposal plan will be amended to incorporate wayside exhibit concepts identified in this plan and the recreation area shuttle plan. Recreation area staff can complete all or part of this planning effort independently or in consultation with Harpers Ferry Center. The revised plan will consolidate all recommendations into a cohesive, efficient family of exhibits. The **SITE STRATEGIES** section of this plan provides detailed descriptions of specific wayside exhibit and kiosk locations.

## **PARK- WIDE PROGRAMS**

### **Themes**

All interpretive efforts (both media and personal service) will relate to one or more of the primary themes developed for the national recreation area; each primary theme will be addressed by some part of the park- wide interpretive program.

### **Experiences**

Park- wide programs will strive to achieve all objectives identified for the national recreation area in **BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING – VISITOR EXPERIENCE OBJECTIVES**.

### **Recommendations**

National Park Service staff will facilitate development of a national recreation area image that reflects the partnership character of the area and is easily recognized by stakeholders. The complexity of partnership relationships obscures stakeholder understanding of the recreation area mission and organization. Individual identity of National Park Service, California State Parks, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and their joint identity with the national recreation area results in a crisis for stakeholders and unit managers of partner organizations. Development of a unifying image will help connect all partner units in the minds of unit managers and in the eyes of current and future stakeholders.

A jointly approved image patterned after the National Park Service Message Project and Graphic Identity Program Standards will help all partners and stakeholders understand and embrace the unique significance of the national recreation area partnership. The image program will encourage staff of all cooperating entities to present themselves as national recreation area partners while maintaining their agency identity. A team of partner representatives will plan the image program to include a variety of physical and intuitive concepts. For example, a unifying logo might reflect a combination of all existing agency emblems. Developing an “Avenue of Pride” concept will let all partners know that they are an important and equal part of the partnership. The image planning team will develop a unified mission statement to umbrella the individual mission statements of each partner. An annual report showing the accomplishments and contributions of each partner will help all feel a significant part of the

uniquely significant Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area partnership. National Park Service staff will volunteer to lead the image planning project with active planning team participation from all cooperating entities.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Sites within Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area offer many experience opportunities. Visitors can participate in a program of activities integrated by the National Park Service, California State Parks, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and other partners to offer a complete, balanced Santa Monica Mountains experience.

The following description of partnership opportunities expresses the National Park Service's interest in collaborating with visitor service providers within and outside the national recreation area. Successful implementation of this interpretive plan depends on continuation and expansion of existing partnerships and initiation of new ones. Positive cooperation among all providers of tourism services will help each respond to the opportunities and challenges that face them.

### **Intra- park Cooperation**

Cooperation among National Park Service functional units is a critical need to effectively use available personnel. Frequent interaction between interpretive program managers and staff and the managers and staff of other disciplines of management will assure that all employees are well- informed about issues and initiatives. The interpretation and education function will be severely limited in its effectiveness without close coordination and mutual support of other management activities.

### **Cultural Interaction**

Partnerships with several cultures (American Indian, Asian, Spanish, etc) are critical to effectively tell stories related to primary themes. National Park Service staff will create and maintain relationships with people and organizations reflecting cultures of communities in and around the recreation area. Fundamental questions must be answered to cement effective, long lasting partnerships between the recreation area and all stakeholders. How will the recreation area deal with American Indian stories? Which elements of those stories can staff relate to visitors and which must be told by native people? How can programs be designed to attract Asian and Spanish audiences? What is

the need and expectation of potential audiences in various communities? Effective interactions between recreation area staff and people of those communities will enhance accuracy and dissemination techniques for delivering cultural stories and values to visitors and for providing a welcoming environment at all developed areas.

#### Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association

This National Park Service cooperating association provides significant information, interpretation, and education materials to recreation area visitors. The non-profit organization operates sales facilities for interpretive materials at several recreation area locations. It also markets interpretive materials worldwide through an electronic bookstore. Proceeds from sales benefit the interpretive, educational, cultural and scientific programs at the recreation area.

#### California State Parks

Several state park facilities share the national recreation area boundary and responsibility for preservation, interpretation and management of biological and cultural resources, viewsheds, and wildlife and human corridors. Partnership activities and responsibilities contribute to quality visitor experiences throughout the area. State park facilities include visitor contact stations that provide opportunities to orient visitors to all recreation area resources and visitor programs. Personal services and publications at contact stations can deliver basic information about national recreation area themes and stories. Collaboration and resource sharing between the National Park Service and California State Parks will increase the number of interpretive programs offered to the public.

Cooperative ventures will include proposals for standardization of design, format, and messages of signs and wayside exhibits. Signs and exhibits will present a recognizable image that helps visitors understand partnership management of the recreation area. The National Park Service will commit to maintain and copy interpretive exhibit files for interpretation partners at state parks within the recreation area boundary.

#### Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

The Conservancy is a State of California agency which preserves and protects open space and wildlife habitat in the Santa Monica Mountains. Its mission is to buy, preserve, restore, and enhance

treasured pieces of Southern California to form an inter-linking system of urban, rural, and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the general public. The Conservancy partners with the National Park Service, California State Parks, and other organizations to protect properties in urban and wilderness areas of the national recreation area.

#### Other Partnership Opportunities

A variety of cooperative interpretation activities may be developed with partners inside and outside the recreation area. The National Park Service will seek partnerships with regional school districts to encourage education programs, with environmental groups to assist interpretation, and with professional/educational organizations to conduct research, resource management, and visitor surveys. Activities may include sharing of expertise and funding for training, historical and natural research, special events and seminars, exhibit planning and development, site promotion, and tours. Visitors and regional residents will benefit from expanded, multifaceted visitor experience opportunities. Integration of interpretive themes will present a more complete, balanced story and resources of each partner will be used more efficiently.

A National Park Service partnership with University of California at Los Angeles to operate the Ecoheros Outreach Program for Diverse Youth will provide young people meaningful park experiences and employment opportunities.

Interpretive managers will implement a recreational skills program in partnership with local businesses and recreation organizations. A program of onsite and outreach activities will teach a variety of recreation skills and safety to new audiences.

The Chief of Interpretation at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area will coordinate and administer the Mountains Interpretive Council. Active participation by the National Park Service in this organization will promote partnerships among agencies, individuals, and organizations for interpretation and education programs.

Formal partnership agreements with local museums such as the Natural History Museum and California Science Center will enhance educational programs in the region.

Expansion of the Volunteer- In- Parks Program and re- energizing of existing volunteers will increase the number of interpretive programs provided by docents. Additional training and incentives will attract volunteers. The volunteer coordinator will recruit in many locations. For example, University of California at Los Angeles may provide volunteers or interns seeking college credit for service projects. Interns from several departments related to interpretation and education can contribute enthusiasm and knowledge of current technology. A volunteer Friends of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area may be included in the volunteer program or created as a separate entity. A Stewardship Initiative will offer opportunity for volunteer resource managers to work throughout the recreation area.

## TRAINING

The quality of interpretive activities presented to the public, and by extension the image and reputation of the National Park Service, directly relates to the skills, knowledge and attitude of the interpreters who provide the service. Interpreter familiarity with the recreation area, current research findings, interpretive methods and evaluation techniques must couple with objectivity, sensitivity to controversial issues and policies, and management directives. A good training program is vital to ensure a well designed personal service interpretive program that includes consistency and high quality.

Interpretation and education managers at the national recreation area will complete individual development plans for all subordinate staff. Each plan will include training recommendations for appropriate interpretive competency training elements. All staff lacking training required to meet competencies established for their position will receive that required training as soon as possible. Managers will program training required for promotion to the next grade when funding becomes available for supplemental training.

The recreation area training program will focus on content, accuracy, completeness, and interpretive and communication skills necessary for preparing and presenting programs and activities. Staff training, including customer service training, will be developed cooperatively among National Park Service and partners to help each entity more effectively interact/relate with stakeholders. Training presented as a social experience will attract trainees and increase retention of material presented. The training program will also encourage and facilitate employee attendance at conducted visitor activities where employees can informally learn about visitor services. Training components will

include official and social networking through cross- division and interagency activities, inter- divisional liaison and communication, and cooperative programming. Training elements appropriate for volunteer docents will increase the number of recreation area activities provided by volunteers.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Participants in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area curriculum- based education program will learn to connect people, parks, and natural and cultural resources. To facilitate those connections recreation area managers and staff will strive to accomplish the education initiative described in "Teaching New America" booklet. Application of the recommendations in that plan will adapt to changing trends in education. The following guidelines supplement the proposals described in the current Teaching New America program.

I. Continue using existing facilities and programs and develop new ones as time and funding permits.

The education program will fit established state curricula of California and reflect national standards. Pre- visit materials and activities will prepare teachers and students for a beneficial visit. Post- visit activities will reinforce topics covered to extend learning experiences throughout the school year. Time spent at the recreation area will include activities in a curriculum- based education center and a stroll through area resources.

Current travel restrictions and budget cuts experienced by most school districts emphasize a need for recreation area staff to deliver education activities to schools. The future education program will focus on offsite activities (personal and non- personal) with the culminating activity being a visit to the national recreation area.

Future program development will focus on integrating content. Education program activities will reflect real- life application that is compatible with current school criteria. Recreation area and school staffs must be aware of various learning styles and develop activities that respond effectively to as many styles as possible. Activity format will provide multilevel opportunities within each activity to reach different levels of intelligence and interest universally found within each participant group.

Recreation area staff must explore potential distance learning opportunities. Cooperation with regional schools and national education organizations will identify current and future technologies planned to link schools to other education resources. Education managers at the national recreation area will prepare a proposal to implement a distance learning program in partnership with area school districts. A linked education program will enable students to interact with educators and scientists via the Internet and other distance learning venues. Potential to establish live satellite links between schools and interpretive programs being conducted in the field will be explored. Education program managers will revise and reprint the Parks As Laboratories Program Manual and assess potential to redesign the program to reach a global audience.

Enhanced partnerships and affiliations with universities and public schools will create new curriculum- based programs. Educational resource kits will include illustrated natural and cultural history themes and topics, oral histories, a seasonal almanac, picture gazetteer, pre- and post- visit CD ROMS and DVDS, and a teacher's guide and bibliography.

## II. Involve an education advisory group in program development and implementation.

Active and direct involvement with cooperating school districts will be necessary to assure well- coordinated, beneficial education experiences for all groups. An education specialist will coordinate the recreation area curriculum- based education program and attend faculty meetings, in- service workshops, seminars, and other teacher gatherings. The coordinator and other rangers or volunteers will visit schools within commuting distance to encourage cooperation between the recreation area and school districts.

Education staff at the national recreation area will continue to work with existing education advisory groups to develop inquiry- based programs and materials. The advisory and implementation group will provide outside perspectives to help education staff generate new interpretation and education ideas. The group will include representatives from school districts participating in the program, education associations, university professors and state department of education representatives. Teacher components of the group will be appropriate for the grade and content of the program being developed or revised. For example, secondary science teachers will work with recreation area staff to assure that curriculum and learning activities

meet the needs of middle and high school students. Pre- kindergarten to second grade teachers will help develop activities for lower elementary grade students.

Advisory group members may also assist with classroom instruction and presentation of teacher workshops. Several classroom teachers will be included in the advisory group to assure that activities developed align with classroom requirements. National Park Service recruiting and hiring officers will seek classroom teachers as summer seasonal employees to supplement the educational expertise represented on the advisory group. Education specialists may also convene a series of meetings with teachers to develop activities that reflect current teacher needs.

### III. Implement professional training and internship programs for employees and education partners.

The future education program product should be well- educated teachers. That requires a change in focus from the current goal of a “well- educated student.” The goal will be educated, confident teachers knowledgeable of recreation area themes and stories who can present education activities independent of National Park Service staff. Without special training most teachers do not feel comfortable leading outdoor trips. Professional education training in colleges and universities focuses on classroom activities. Teachers rely on recreation area staff to conduct on- site activities. Future teacher training sponsored by the national recreation area will include techniques to help teachers feel comfortable in conducting outdoor learning experiences for students in outside- classroom environments at the recreation area or elsewhere.

Teacher training produced by the national recreation area will focus on future teachers while they are still in college learning how to teach. Most student teachers need more in- depth training in teaching methods to be good teachers. While still in college and beginning their training experiences they have more time to devote to learning than after they become classroom teachers.

All new teachers participating in the education program will receive copies of activities developed by experienced teachers and successfully implemented in an outdoor setting. Clear guidelines will help new teachers feel comfortable in their role as classroom and outdoor education leaders.

Recent changes in many schools districts make teacher training less discretionary. Those changes make participation in continuing education courses by experienced classroom teachers more difficult. Recreation area education staff must work closely with schools to develop a program of in- service teacher training that reflects current school needs so school administrators will allow teachers to participate in education activities sponsored by the recreation area.

Education program staff will explore opportunities to establish a cooperative program with colleges and universities for student teacher internship and other training. Students participating in approved education classes could spend time at the recreation area honing their outdoor teaching skills.

The education advisory group described above will evaluate the potential of training high school students as education activity leaders. High school students who are future teachers may participate in special opportunities to learn environmental education teaching techniques. After training by education specialists, students can lead elementary students through education activities at schools and at the recreation area.

#### IV. Develop a funding strategy for supporting additional education programs and implementing the Teaching New America proposal.

Education program managers will seek appropriated funds to meet current and future demands for educational services described in Teaching New America. Recreation area staff will commit to find and tap varied, sustainable funding sources that will enable them to maintain current programs and develop new ones. For example, media project funding may be available through the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program or Parks as Classrooms grants.

Recreation area managers will create an interdisciplinary team of park staff to identify education projects appropriate for incorporation into all management functions. The team will work with partners to identify fund raising and partnership opportunities. It will also survey other national parks with curriculum- based education programs to identify successful funding strategies. Review of funded Parks as Classrooms projects may generate ideas for projects appropriate for funding from that program. The funding team and education program managers will participate in workshops on how to apply for Parks as Classrooms and other grants.

#### V. Link curriculum- based education and learning center programs.

Learning center and education program managers will evaluate the potential for interface between programs. Development of standard operating procedures will facilitate effective, mutual interactions. Education program teacher training can combine with learning center training activities. Teachers can benefit from internships or volunteer assignments to assist learning center researchers. Training of teachers and research assistants might be funded through Parks As Classrooms grant or money from a foundation if established as a component of the learning center. Pre- service training opportunities or graduate study established through local colleges can pair university students with researchers for in- depth learning experiences.

#### VI. Establish and maintain currency.

An effective education program will require frequent curriculum refinement. Constant interaction between teachers and recreation area staff will help both learn of changes in program activities.

Education program development will assure that activities remain compatible with classroom need. Frequent change to teaching requirements demands continuous education program evolution. Recreation area managers will establish an assessment program to evaluate activities and to assist teachers in making student evaluations.

Current trends in education will guide program evolution. One trend is emphasis on a higher level of thinking and understanding. Another is education activity that reflects applicability of learning. Teachers must include these elements in instruction. Schools also need to incorporate workplace perspective in teaching methods. The recreation area can help meet that need by advertising employment opportunities and by illustrating the difference between a career and a job.

Any activities developed for presentation to schools must be based on and aligned with California core content. Schools conduct assessments to meet state and national standards of learning. Recreation area staff will communicate with California Department of Education to learn the state's current testing subject and schedule of future assessments. Recreation area staff must learn about upcoming assessment changes in time to prepare new activities so the education program remains viable as a component of California's education system.

## PERSONAL SERVICES

Personal service activities will continue as an essential component of the interpretive program.

Personal contact between interpreters and visitors has advantages over other media. Interpreters can immediately adapt presentation style and depth to interests of specific audiences and to changing situations. Personal services provide visitors a feeling of security and safety as they attempt new experiences. That confident feeling encourages them to further explore recreation area resources.

Many scheduled personal service activities reach a relatively small number of visitors. To improve this situation stationed assignments at major visitor contact facilities and roving activities at frequently visited sites will form the core of a future personal service program.

Uniformed employees, volunteers and cooperating association sales clerks will staff visitor center information and sales desks. They will direct visitors to points of interest and relay information about special activities. Personnel at visitor contact stations direct visitor attention to regulations, safety, resource management issues and other matters affecting visitor use in specific areas.

Roving interpretation at roadside overlooks and developed areas provide informal visitor contact that encourages discussion of themes.

Roving and stationed activities will be supplemented with environmental education, talks, guided walks and conducted tours.

The personal service program will encourage and facilitate operational division cross over. Interpreters will request and use information from other division staff to present to the public in an interpretive format. Staff of other divisions and guest speakers interested and capable can present programs to recreation area staff and public audiences.

Recreation area staff will regularly monitor visitor use in all National Park Service areas and develop personal service activities in response to changing visitation patterns. Staff will routinely analyze all personal service activities for thematic depth and diversity. Continuous appraisal of the program will focus activities on specific resources and compelling stories and assure that visitor desires and management needs are met with the greatest possible effectiveness.

## NON- PERSONAL SERVICES

Discovery Packs developed for rent or lend to family groups will promote use, especially to new or untraditional visitors. Packs might include field guides, hand lenses, binoculars, and activity booklets.

An annual photo contest can raise local community awareness about the national significance of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Photographs obtained from the contest can be published in a variety of media.

An identity package based on National Park Service Messaging and Identity Project and the needs of partner organizations will help unify management units within the national recreation area. For example, a national recreation area logo and a distinctive logo for each site can identify the partnership character of the recreation area while reflecting individuality of each partner.

Interpretive managers will expand the number of National Park Service passport stamp locations. Each location will be supplemented with a national recreation area passport stamp program for all partnership sites within the recreation area.

### Publications

Publications (including photographs and literature or their electronic equivalents) play an important role in the recreation area interpretive program. Interpretive staff will continue to make available to visitors three types of up to date publications: general subject publications, park- wide publications, and site bulletin topical publications.

General publications related to Santa Monica Mountains are available through commercial sources. Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association offers an excellent array of high quality products for sale at several recreation area sites. The association will continue the current product line and search for new products to improve, augment, or replace existing inventory.

A series of site bulletins for many topics are currently available for distribution at the recreation area and through mail to distance stakeholders. Additional site bulletins will be developed as needs are identified. Suggestions for topics include new primary interpretive themes developed during this long- range interpretation planning process. For example, a single panel rack card publication on each

primary theme will let visitors choose to seek understanding of themes that match their individual interest. The recreation area will continue publishing the *Outdoor Calendar* in print and Internet formats to inform stakeholders of National Park Service and partner programs.

Recreation area staff will routinely review all publications for accuracy and will assure that design reflects a family resemblance based on the National Park Service Identity Project. New site bulletins and reprints of existing site bulletins will be produced in multi-lingual text for use by increasingly diverse audiences.

The recreation area publication program is lacking items in the park-wide category. The following recommendations will fill that void.

Interpretation and cooperating association managers will solicit interest from publishers for development of a magazine format publication. K C Publications, publisher of *Story Behind the Scenery* series, or other publishers who produce similar items will be included in the solicitation. Many visitors want a moderately priced, attractive educational booklet. High color, profuse graphics and photographs, and moderate text will explore topics related to recreation area themes and resources. The booklet will also provide a high quality souvenir for visitors to share with friends and family and for prolonging memories of experiences at the recreation area.

A similar book, *Story Behind the Names*, will relate place name history. It will link current recreation area features to historic views and relate stories that emphasize the evolution of uses and names in the Santa Monica Mountains.

An annual national recreation area calendar will display photographs depicting significant features during various seasons. An amateur photographer contest can provide photographs for the calendar and build rapport between the recreation area and adjacent communities.

Guide booklets for designated loop tours and transportation corridors will be developed by recreation area staff and produced by cooperating association or other funding sources. The guide booklets will interpret significant resources and stories along designated routes for visitors who want more information than available in brochures. An attractive, inexpensive publication will provide visitors interesting interpretation, effective way-finding and an attractive souvenir that extends their enjoyment and connection to the recreation area long after their visit.

A historical documentary book of *Films Shot in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* will be produced. A comprehensive treatment of the film industry, perhaps in coffee table book format, can provide information about the long history of filming in the Santa Monica Mountains.

### Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits interpreting natural and cultural features are located at roadside pullouts, parking areas, and significant resource sites throughout the recreation area. Exhibits at trail heads, developed areas, and recreation access points provide information about recreation, resource management, and safety.

An interdisciplinary team of recreation area staff will periodically review existing wayside exhibits and propose appropriate revisions, replacements, and additions. The team will also review new plans as developed (long-range interpretive plan, shuttle plan, trails management plan) and develop an amended wayside exhibit proposal, design and production plan to recommend appropriate wayside exhibit. Park staff can complete all or part of this planning effort in consultation with Harpers Ferry Center. The revised plan will consolidate all recommendations into a cohesive, efficient, family of exhibits. The plan will include thematic interpretive panels, information exhibits for trail heads, and panels to describe specific management issues.

Existing roadside pullouts will be analyzed for their potential for wayside exhibit interpretation. New pullouts will be developed as appropriate to interpret significant resources. An extensive system of thematic pullouts with natural and cultural history wayside exhibits with solar powered audio components will help visitors understand and appreciate recreation area values.

Wayside exhibits supplemented with bulletin boards and brochure dispensers as appropriate will provide orientation at trail heads and picnic areas. Similar exhibits outside Tier I visitor centers and Tier II visitor contact stations will summarize interior interpretation. These exhibits will be especially beneficial for visitors who arrive late in the day or during the off-season when the facility may operate on a limited schedule. Orientation will include trail access points, scheduled activities and points of interest near the visitor facility.

Kiosks at all shuttle stops proposed in the recreation area shuttle plan will include upright wayside exhibits. One exhibit can focus on information about the shuttle system, such as overview, hours of operation, areas served, and how to effectively use the system. Another exhibit will provide detailed orientation, basic interpretation and directions to nearby points of interest. A You Are Here approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of sites. A third panel can interpret features near the kiosk in a park-wide and ecosystem context. The kiosk can also contain regulation and safety information specific to its location. It can provide information about hours of operation of facilities not always open to visitors.

Wayside exhibits will identify and map complex trail systems linked to developed areas. Positioned at central, heavily used locations, they assure all visitors opportunity to learn about walking opportunities. The exhibits will present safety information, minimum impact techniques, and resource management issues specific to the developed area. Site-specific exhibits at each trail head will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, and safety considerations and present photographs of features that can be seen from the trail.

Wayside exhibits play a significant role in informing visitors about resources and the management actions necessary to protect and perpetuate them for future generations. For example, interpretation of fire at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a major story. Fire management concentrates on suppression and prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuel levels and maintain habitat vitality. A movable wayside exhibit that describes prescribed fires and another that interprets wildfire will be developed. The exhibits can be placed temporarily at appropriate locations within the recreation area during and following either prescribed or wild fire incidents.

#### Audiovisual

Recreation area staff will evaluate potential for radio broadcast stations throughout the area to provide information about hazards, road conditions, and weather. Locations near recreation area entrances and at major intersections can also provide information needed to make decisions about experience opportunities. The stations may also provide interpretation appropriate to each site. Each station will welcome visitors to the area, invite people to escape fast paced highway travel to leisurely explore resources, and identify visitor centers and contact stations as essential stops for additional information.

Recreation area staff will expand the Internet web site and investigate the feasibility of establishing a dedicated server. The expanded web site will include a virtual tour of the recreation area to enhance understanding of primary themes and awareness of resource significance. The development of a virtual tour will help people, including people who may never visit the area, better understand Mediterranean type ecosystem resources. Panoramic views and video and audio segments from various locations within the recreation area will help people visualize the extent and complexity of resources.

The expanded web site will also feature a virtual Junior Ranger program. Children accessing the site can answer online questions about the national recreation area and the National Park Service. Answers to questions may be found by researching the recreation area web site and exploring links to other sites such as the central National Park Service web site. Participants may download completion certificates directly from the web site or request delivery by mail.

The expanded web site will include short video trailers of recreation area interpretive film and orientation video as online mini-documentaries.

Interpretation managers will seek funding as soon as possible to produce a seven to ten minute video that will provide general orientation to the recreation area. The video will contain information about resources and visitor experience opportunities and directions to locations where visitors can obtain detailed information (brochures, maps, etc) and interpretation. Information about hiking opportunities will include levels of accessibility, length and difficulty. Safety messages will identify special areas of concern such as possibility of human/wildlife interactions and certainty of need for safe driving on narrow, winding roads.

The video might incorporate a combination of audiovisual elements. A narrated script and appropriate scenes interspersed with voice-overs can be effective. For example, a park ranger's voice discussing hiking in high and dry canyons and ridges can be used over shots of those environments. Text on the screen can emphasize safety points or recommend hikes. Graphic boxes containing specific, close-up views can be super-imposed over a portion of a large scene of the area. This technique can show a close view of a trail as well as the view visitors can see at the end of the hike.

The orientation video can be shown at any location with appropriate equipment (VCR or DVD player and monitor) including visitor centers, contact stations, auditoriums, and amphitheaters. It can also provide outreach to community groups, media outlets, tourism organizations, and tour organizers to increase awareness of the recreation area.

Interpretive managers will also seek funding or services to develop an interpretive film that explores the recreation area and showcases the interpretive themes and resources to visitors. The film will reflect the complexity and significance of Mediterranean-type ecosystem resources and depict components of the ecosystem that are difficult for most visitors to understand. Film is a great format to evoke emotional responses, create connections and take visitors to places they may not see while visiting the recreation area.

The twenty to twenty five minute interpretive film or high definition video will emphasize the significance and scope of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area while introducing all primary themes. The specific format will be decided closer to the pre-production phase to assure application of the most appropriate technology. The audiovisual program will include a minimum of three channel, but more preferable, surround sound mix. Beautiful, inspirational and intriguing, this production will show all the features of the landscape that has attracted people for centuries. It will not deal with the recreation area as a delineated park with political boundaries. For automobile sightseers and back country hikers, the film will offer a brief foretaste of what they can expect to see onsite. For people who do not venture far from their car the film will instill appreciation of and reverence for the natural and cultural wonders beyond their reach.

One compelling way to incorporate a number of themes and perspectives into a program is use of multiple, diverse voices. This style enables divergent perspectives to coexist within a presentation and allows the viewer to formulate their opinions and questions based on multiple perspectives. A diversity of voices can intertwine to develop a concept of how the land is viewed and used. American Indian perspectives may be heard in a discussion of those natural features in the recreation area that have been given American Indian names. If American Indian stakeholders have a creation story they are willing to share in English and their native language, parts of these stories can be used at the beginning of the production over scenic shots. Voices of geologists and ecologists can be interspersed and used in conjunction with film footage of mountains, canyons, and ocean.

Aerials can take the viewer into remote, back country places as well as introduce viewers to the Mediterranean type ecosystem. The notion of natural versus political boundaries can be explored, not just socially, but in terms of how people care for the land individually and in partnership. Views of back country areas can illustrate narration about the concept of wilderness and stewardship. These concepts of land values and land use can be told with historic images, including photographs, drawings, and maps, narrated excerpts from journals, oral histories, and historic and contemporary film footage. Stories of early recreation and other cultural activities related to land use can be told to link today's visitors to past uses and users.

Change is a general theme that runs through most of life. It is also an unavoidable thread within the natural and cultural history of this recreation area. Change can be so slow it is imperceptible from year to year, such as the natural building and erosion of mountains. Change can also be so obvious that it cannot be avoided, such as the results of a fire or current political climate, which affects our concepts and practices relating to conservation. This program will have a continuous flow and movement, giving viewers the sense of slow, barely visible changes as well abrupt and dramatic changes, both of which will endure indefinitely.

In addition to being shown regularly in recreation area visitor facilities, the interpretive film can be distributed to schools as a pre-visit activity and for incorporation into appropriate curricula. It can be shown on local public access channels and public television, and duplicates can be distributed to tour service providers. Sales through the recreation area cooperating association may subsidize production costs.

Web cams can provide real time views of resources and activities. Recreation area staff will develop a funding proposal for utilizing web cams and other real-time sensing devices to interpret on-going resource management projects. Web cams can also provide live video feeds from recreation area sites. Surf watch or sunset watch on the recreation area web site, in visitor centers and broadcast through local television will inform potential visitors of experience opportunities.

Recreation area interpretive staff and cooperating association managers will develop a project to produce a video/disk format collection of film snippets of films produced in the Santa Monica Mountains. The cooperating association can also acquire copies of movies filmed in the recreation area for distribution as sales items.

A variety of audio tours will guide visitors and interpret resources on designated tour loops, travel corridors and thematic routes. Thematic audio driving tours will include souvenir CDs, DVDs, and CR- ROMs. These tour guides will provide in- depth interpretation of data from research projects as well as provide surrogate natural and cultural experiences for local and international visitors. One tour might present *Houses of the Rich and Famous* on DVD.

Audiovisual spot promotions, possibly produced using corporate sponsorship, can be flashed for a few seconds as headers on movie theater screens and on public television. Similar visual spots can be presented in state and local publications. Spots might include a photo of park visitor centers or other scenes representative of the recreation area. Text or sound bytes will focus attention on the recreation area and invite viewers to become visitors and stakeholders.

Interpretive and public affairs staff will explore potential to develop partnerships for marketing and media production. Partnerships between the recreation area and commercial entities or university film and mass media departments may result in development of media plans and production of media at reduced or no cost. Partnerships with radio, television, and newspaper firms may enhance recreation area marketing and publicity programs.

Recreation area staff will identify criteria media editors use to select appropriate materials, stories and events for publication or broadcast. Staff can develop and deliver materials in the style and format that meet editor needs.

Until funding is available for a major film production, recreation area staff will use existing audiovisual products for on- site and outreach. A DVD/CDROM format developed by re- cutting existing films showing national recreation area resources can fit the needs of most audiences. For example, one DVD/CDROM might target outreach to school groups and another provide orientation to the recreation area.

#### Exhibits

Design, production and installation plans for museum exhibits will be developed for each Tier I visitor center and selected Tier II visitor contact stations. The plans will include label copy, design elements and graphic components for each new exhibit.

Exhibit plans will include the following exhibit concepts as deemed appropriate during pre- construction planning for each project.

Cooperating association sales areas will integrate with exhibit areas. For example, a partition between the sales area and the exhibit area may accommodate a two- sided presentation. A component of the exhibit can be a Viewmaster or other viewing device presenting scenes of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The reverse side of the exhibit (in the sales area) can have a similar viewing device displayed with viewers and disks for sale.

Controlled graffiti stations in staffed visitor facilities will to let visitors legally write thoughts without damaging resources.

An exhibit with audiovisual and publication components will introduce the recreation area to visitors. The exhibit can be displayed in any on- site or off- site location where visitors and potential visitors congregate. Repetition of the same exhibit in many locations will enhance identity of the national recreation area with stakeholders.

## RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Preparation of this interpretive plan is the initial step in the National Park Service comprehensive interpretive planning and media planning, design and production processes. Recreation area staff will program the following detailed plans and research needed to implement proposals in this plan.

### Annual Implementation Plan

Based on the long- range interpretive plan and funding projections, interpretive managers will prepare implementation plans annually. These plans will briefly analyze the current interpretation program in relation to the implementation plan proposed in the long- range interpretive plan. The annual plan will identify management issues facing interpretation, propose an annual work plan, and describe new individual service plans. The plans will establish an annual interpretive program far enough in advance so adequate detailed planning facilitates efficient implementation. Each plan will present a comprehensive view of the annual interpretation and education program including the needs of other functional departments in the national recreation area.

## Wayside Exhibit Plan

The current wayside exhibit proposal fulfills recreation area needs. As additional developments are implemented the plan will be reviewed and revised. A detailed design and production plan will be developed to implement new wayside exhibit proposals in this plan, the park trails plan, and plans for shuttle stops. The plan will include label copy, design elements, graphic components, and site development that are compatible with wayside exhibits already installed.

## Museum Exhibit Plans

Design, production and installation plans will guide development of visitor center lobbies and exhibit areas in each Tier I visitor center and Tier II contact station. The plans will include label copy, design elements and graphic components for new exhibits.

## Audiovisual Plan

Detailed plans including film treatments, film script, audio scripts, presentation hardware, and implementation strategies are needed to guide production and installation of proposed new audiovisual media. Recreation area staff will program the plans when funding for audiovisual development appears imminent.

## Visitor Studies

Previous visitor survey provides basic data for interpretive program planning. Because of ever changing demographics, scientific studies will be scheduled on a five to ten year cycle compatible with available budget. Frequent use of focus groups and other evaluation techniques will supplement these cyclical studies to assure that services meet stakeholder need. This long- range interpretive plan APPENDICES include description of evaluation techniques recommended for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Social science research will enable recreation area staff to identify interpretive messages and media appropriate for reaching under- represented audiences.

## Family Camping Action Plan

The plan will propose activities and development that expand family camping opportunity in the recreation area. The National Park Service will provide equipment for new campers to introduce them to area resources and recreational opportunities.

## Trails Management Plan

Interpretive staff will cooperate with other management divisions in development of a trails management plan, including development of trail camps on Backbone Trail and bike path around wilderness areas, possibly through Rancho Sierra Vista.

## Marketing Plan

Interpretive and public relations staff will survey business schools to secure a contractor or consultant to develop a professional marketing survey and plan. A marketing, communication, and promotion plan will include a list of friends/partners/stakeholders, public service announcements, printed schedules of marketing activities, mailing lists, and newsletters targeted to local and repeat visitors.

## Project Management Information System

Submissions will be prepared for projects proposed in the long- range interpretive plan that may be appropriate for National Park Service funding.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Equal, reasonable, and universal access will be provided for all people, including those with sight, hearing, learning, and mobility impairments, visitors who do not speak English, and the elderly and young children. Accommodation will be made for access to resources and interpretive media. Approved accessibility guidelines and regulations are available to guide recreation area staff and media and facility designers.

Public Law 90- 480, the Architectural Barriers Act, and the American's With Disabilities Act establish standards for physical access. Design of any new facilities constructed, such as the proposed Tier I facilities, will provide optimum access for visitors and employees.

All new interpretive media will conform to National Park Service Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media (see APPENDICES).

Existing programs and facilities will be made accessible as a high priority.

A few premiere sites will be selected by interpretive and resource management staff for “Wilderness- on- Wheels” experiences. Creating, in locations where feasible, boardwalks or hard surfaced trails will allow physically challenged visitors a chance to leave the roadway and parking areas. Accessible trails will also appeal to visitors who have limited time, yet desire short walks and a break from driving. Short trails into a variety of plant communities and several landscapes will provide most visitors relatively easy access to the diversity of recreation area resources.

Alternative interpretation methods at facilities near areas that cannot be made physically accessible will enable all visitors to understand and appreciate the resource. Photographs on wayside exhibits and publications can bring distant, inaccessible sights to visitors at trail heads or overlook parking areas.

The national recreation area interpretive program will provide multilingual information to an appropriate extent based on current visitation. Interpretive managers and accessibility specialists will decide the needed extent. A moderate approach will initially provide fundamental information in a few languages. The number of activities offered in Spanish will increase to address a growing demand for culturally diverse programs.

# SITE STRATEGIES

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## **COLD CREEK PRESERVE, STUNT RANCH, RED ROCK CREEK**

### **Themes**

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

### **Resources**

Significant cultural resources in this geographic section of the recreation area include paleontology sites

Significant natural resources are represented by a variety of unique geology features, interesting plants, and riparian areas.

A natural research preserve with a resident facility offers opportunities for study, understanding, and appreciation of these resources.

### **Experiences**

Education groups have opportunity for overnight experiences at Red Rocks Canyon. Additional immersion opportunities will be available at Stunt Ranch in the future.

Visitors can immerse themselves in rugged terrain similar to the Utah desert. This terrain presents unique features such as Saddle Peak and offers opportunities to study a variety of paleontology and culture resources. Fossils and bedrock mortars are easy to identify.

Resources in this geographic area provide a variety of backcountry experience opportunities, including opportunity for ridge line vistas. Limited facilities for parking and rest rooms add to the rustic experience. A few easy recreational activities provide opportunities for introductory challenge for visitors who want to escape developed sections of the recreation area.

### **Recommendations**

Park staff will cooperate with management partners in the recreation area to improve visitor experiences. The following approved actions will encourage additional proposals in the future.

Identification and way- finding media will be improved. New and revised signs will provide clear, efficient navigation that improves visitor emotional comfort during arrival and while participating in on-site activities. Additional wayside exhibit media including bulletin boards will provide efficient orientation to visitor use sites and information about resources and visitor experience opportunities.

Centrally located trail system exhibits including maps and information will provide guidance to trail locations and trailheads; exhibits at each trailhead will mitigate confusion because of multiple trails and inadequate signs. Geographic area trail system exhibits will be located at visitor assembly sites such as parking areas. Individual trail exhibits at each trailhead will present a trail map and information including trail length, difficulty, time requirement, and significant destination features. Safety information will include orientation to mountain weather issues and information about recreation in wildlife country.

Recreation area managers will explore the potential to develop short recreational loop trails in this area. Trail system and individual trail exhibits will focus visitor attention on potential of this area for day hiking and introduce visitors to opportunities for hiking longer trails.

## **ROCKY OAKS, PETER STRAUSS RANCH**

### **Themes**

Human Use – Cultural: For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

### **Resources**

Resources in this geographic area reflect the striking diversity of several ecosystem elements. The area provides a refuge for wildlife and haven for endangered species.

Rocky Oaks includes significant archeology sites, rock art and objects and diverse plant communities in proximity. Oak woodland and wetland habitats include one of few recreation area sites with year round creeks and pond. An oak grove shades nature trails, an amphitheater, and picnic area. A building in the area offers potential for adaptive use for interpretive functions.

Peter Strauss Ranch is an easily accessible scenic site with interesting cultural history dating to the original owner Harry Miller (inventor of the carburetor and race car designer). A mix of native and non- native plants, original stone house (1927), outbuildings, swimming pool, and expansive lawn at this small ranch reflects landscapes reminiscent of the Santa Monica Mountains resort era. The intact resources at this cultural site reflect historic destinations and opportunities for continued recreational use.

### **Experiences**

A variety of ecosystem elements in a small area provides diverse experience opportunities within short, easy walking distance from parking areas.

Family friendly facilities and activities create good opportunities for non- recreational users to experience the park.

A level, easy to get to area near a road encourages many people to use this section of the park. Seniors and other visitors with limited mobility can easily visit sites within this geographic area.

Rocky Oaks provides scenic, easy trail experiences with a pond at a focal point. Here visitors can appreciate and learn about night sky away from light pollution of the metropolitan area.

Easy access from highways and level to rolling terrain at Peter Strauss Ranch makes the site a popular destination for family outings, especially on Sundays. Existing facilities offer opportunities to participate in musical and other cultural events.

### **Recommendations**

Developed areas and programmed interpretive, educational and recreational activities will encourage participation of several visitor categories including families with small children and people with disabilities. Facilities, special events, personal services, and self- service activities encourage day outings and introductory exploration of recreation area resources.

### **PETER STRAUS RANCH**

Facilities designed for intuitive way- finding will provide transition from the highway and parking lot to the historic character and activities available. Wayside exhibit media will provide orientation at the parking lot. Other signs, wayside exhibits, landscape, and designated travel routes will direct visitors to points of interest with little confusion and negligible intrusion on the historic character of the site. All media will encourage sensitivity to resource preservation.

Visitor activities will include casual day outings, picnicking, easy walking, art festivals, music concerts, and other special events. Native plant restoration will create opportunities for visitors to link natural and historic environments at this site to other sites throughout the recreation area. A Children Challenge Play Area surrounded with natural features will adapt youthful energy to creative learning experiences. Guided and self- service interpretive walks will capture casual interest and focus that interest into more in- depth involvement with resources.

Facilities and programs at Peter Strauss Ranch will emphasize the arts. An arts venue will include programs, classes, and special events build around an Artist in Residence Program. Consideration will be given to adaptation of the main ranch house as an Artist in Residence Gallery. A small secondary residence overlooking the ranch house might house resident artists participating in the program. Sound, lighting, stage, and seating improvements at a stone amphitheater will adapt the facility to accommodate an expanded series of music concerts and theatrical presentations.

## **ROCKY OAKS**

A team of interpretive, maintenance, and resource management staff will plan, develop and maintain a short loop trail. The trail surface will accommodate wheelchairs. Trail- side exhibits and other media will make interpretation accessible to as many visitors as feasible. Permanent trail- side devices will present thematic interpretation based on ecological communities at the site recreation area themes. Trail guide publications, each presenting a separate theme, will be available at the trailhead. A variety of publications may be available for visitor selection or publications might be changed seasonally to encourage and accommodate repeat visitation.

Introductory hikes for children provided by Park Rangers or by self-service publications and trail- side media will link to a Junior Ranger Program.

Redesign and reconstruction of the existing amphitheater will orient visitor seating and presentation site 180 degrees from its current location.

## **ZUMA / TRANCAS CANYONS- RAMIREZ**

### **Themes**

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

### **Resources**

The large size of this geographic area presents terrain and scenic variety including expansive views of spectacular mountains, ocean and islands. Undeveloped coastal canyons lay adjacent to developed areas. Riparian areas, including rare perennial streams and broad flat flood plains, support abundant and diverse species including threatened and endangered plants and animals.

The area is a critical wildlife habitat that links Point Mugu and Malibu Creek.

Resources reflect natural reclamation of previously impacted lands. Original remnants of a rich cultural history, especially resources related to ranching, can be observed adjacent to natural areas.

An existing multi- use trail system provides opportunities to experience a variety of resources.

### **Experiences**

Visitors can expect few encounters with other users and minimal evidence of human intrusions in this natural haven away from the city.

Existing experiences are trail- based and nature oriented. Scenic trails of varying lengths and difficulties provide access to natural resources. Visitors can choose to participate in short walks near roads and parking areas or hike to desirable destinations along Backbone Trail.

Visitors to these wild coastal canyons and surrounding landscape see some of the most isolated sections of the recreation area. Significant open space reflects what Malibu was like before development.

An oasis environment in lower elevations provides convenient access for short, easy experiences. Scenic pullouts on roads at higher elevations provide accessible views to canyons and the ocean.

Rugged terrain and sandy, rocky riparian areas that make travel to the interior of this geographic area difficult provide opportunity for off-trail exploration, solitude, and adventure.

Visitors can see and feel seasonal differences represented by rains, flooding, and wildflowers.

### **Recommendations**

Interpretation in this area will focus on topics related to the forces of nature that emphasize the primary themes of escape/open space and ecosystem. Interpretive activities and media will link resources and stories to the ocean lagoon sustained by this watershed. Completion of research related to homesteading may reveal a need to include the human use/cultural theme in this area.

Existing interpretation media includes wayside exhibits at the Kanan Road entry point. Recreation area media designers will plan and install additional wayside exhibits at overlooks on Kanan Road. Well-placed exhibits will encourage people traveling through the area to pause and learn about topics related to primary themes. Revision to the existing wayside exhibit proposal will evaluate potential for wayside exhibits at specific locations and provide topics and design proposals for exhibits.

Four existing trail heads provide access into this geographic area. All need arrival experience improvement. Two trail heads, one a shuttle stop and the other an entry to Backbone Trail, demand high priority for media development. The shuttle stop will feature a kiosk to shelter upright wayside exhibits. One exhibit will focus on information about the shuttle system, such as overview, hours of operation, areas served, and how to effectively use the system. A second exhibit will provide detailed orientation, basic interpretation and directions to nearby points of interest. A "You Are Here" approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of all sites. A third panel will interpret resources surrounding the kiosk in a park-wide and ecosystem context. The exhibits may also contain safety and regulation information specific to this geographic area of the recreation area. Individual, site-specific exhibits at each trail head will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, safety considerations and photographs of natural or cultural features that can be seen from the trail. Interpretive managers will coordinate wayside exhibit planning for this site with the Trail Management Plan to assure that wayside exhibits are accurate in content and effective in location and design.

Roving interpretation at roadside overlooks, trail heads, and developed areas provide informal visitor contact that encourages personal discussion of recreation area themes. Roving contacts will form the core of the personal service program in this area. Guided walks can supplement roving on an occasional, scheduled basis. Plant walks have historically received positive public response. Future services for this area will include a walk presented each season to focus on changes in these Mediterranean-type ecosystem resources. If guided walks are staged at these trail heads rest room facilities will be required.

Interpretation and information services at Ramirez will emphasize issues related to interface between public and private ownership within the recreation area. Interpretive media will inform visitors of the private status of Escondido Canyon. This issue is of importance throughout the recreation area.

## **SOLSTICE CANYON**

### **Themes**

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

### **Resources**

Juxtaposition of natural and man- made landscapes illustrates previous changes wrought by human activities and nature's resilience evidenced by on- going recovery of plants and animals, such as steelhead fish.

A year- round stream supports a vibrant riparian area including vegetation such as alders unique to this environment. Vegetation and water affect plant, animal and human use of the area.

Cultural resources include buildings and other structures (TRW building and Williams and Keller houses) representative of recent human habitation and stories related to American Indian residence and their continued interest in the land.

History of fires from natural and human causes offers opportunities to learn about useful and destructive applications of fire.

### **Experiences**

Visitors can experience a feeling of escape in a comfortable area of moderate temperatures. Here visitors can escape the crowded ocean environment for a cooler, slower paced, relaxing experience.

Absence of barriers in this area offer visitors very easy access to education activities, casual self- service interaction with resources, and opportunity to get close to water.

Natural resources exude quiet beauty from a scenic/picturesque landscape that invites people to enjoy and learn.

Family groups can immerse themselves in an outdoor environment to depths that meet individual interests. Young children can enjoy level areas near trails and developed areas. Older children and adults can find opportunities for more challenging experiences in distant, rugged sections of the area.

Individual and group visitors can select from a variety of opportunities to interact with resources on several levels that meet needs of varied audiences. Some may participate in curriculum-based education study. Others may choose to seek opportunity for interaction with wildlife frequently seen in the area. Some visitors may look for spiritual interaction with resources; an informal shrine area developed several years ago still attracts visitors.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations in this long-range interpretive plan supplement recommendations in previously approved planning documents for Solstice Canyon.

Way-finding to the site from Pacific Coast Highway will be improved to let people know what experiences the site offers and to guide visitors to the site. The recreation area sign committee will evaluate sign accuracy and effectiveness and recommend specific improvements. Future revision of sign plans will focus on installation of clear, accurate signs that provide convenient way finding by the most direct route without a lot of question. The goal will be the smallest number of signs necessary to help visitors reach a comfort level at which they can see, process and understand information.

Interpretation at Solstice will focus on presentation of formal education activities and provision of facilities and media to encourage and enhance casual use. Education and casual use interpretation will focus on interrelationships of humans and natural resources. An environmental education facility will be established. Improvements will be made to previously disturbed areas to enhance parking, restroom facilities, and outdoor classroom experiences.

Natural resource interpretation will focus on the character of the riparian environment. Activities and media will point out specific features and key topics but will emphasize the aggregate beauty of those topics and features that provides a sense of calm, inspiration, and renewal. Appropriate topics include steelhead trout recovery, water quality, removal of exotics, and ecosystem restoration.

Cultural resources at Solstice reflect a continuum of human uses that natural resources in the canyon have attracted. Additional research will define resource significance and answer interpretation questions. Should continuous use of a shrine at the Roberts House / Williams House be interpreted? Should American Indian use of the canyon be interpreted to visitors? Is the space technology story reflected in existing structures of sufficient significance to warrant interpretation?

Wayside exhibits at a sheltered orientation site will provide basic information and interpretation and encourage visitors to explore the area on their own. Exhibits will include a combination of upright and low-profile design. One upright exhibit will focus on information about the shuttle system, such as overview, hours of operation, areas served, and how to effectively use the system. A second exhibit will provide detailed orientation, basic interpretation and directions to nearby points of interest. A You Are Here approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of site features. A third panel will interpret features surrounding the kiosk in a park-wide and ecosystem context. The exhibit kiosk can include an upright bulletin case with safety and regulation information specific to Solstice Canyon. Low profile wayside exhibits will interpret specific features that visitors can see from each exhibit.

If multiple trailheads are established in the future a system-wide trail map exhibit will be added. A location between the orientation exhibit shelter described above and the trailheads will assure that all visitors learn about walking opportunities. The exhibit will present Leave-No-Trace minimum impact techniques and resource management issues related to the trail system. Individual, site-specific exhibits at each trailhead will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, safety considerations and provide photographs of natural or cultural features on the trail. Each trailhead exhibit will invite visitors to explore. Text will present thought provoking questions that encourage visitor enjoyment, contemplation, and formulation of their own questions and opinions about human use of the area.

The section of trail from the parking area to Keller House will be improved to meet accessibility standards for mobility impaired visitors. A trail guide publication or small trail-side exhibits will interpret resources visitors encounter along the accessible section of this trail.

When heavy visitor use warrants and funding is available roving interpretation provided by Park Rangers will supplement interpretation provided by media. A lecture series coordinated with the shuttle system may be scheduled as a special event activity.

## **SIMI HILLS COMPLEX**

### **Themes**

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean- type ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

### **Resources**

Abundant wildlife inhabits and passes through this area. A heavily used wildlife corridor between Santa Susanna Mountains, Las Padres Forest and Santa Monica Mountains provides extensive research opportunities. Rock lands are more than unique scenic features; they also provide significant habitat for raptors and bobcats.

Vegetation variety changes through a significant elevation range. Grassland, woodland, and nearly bare rock outcrops occupy their own niches. The evocative rolling hills landscape differs from other sites in the national recreation area. Oak woodland including live and valley oak represent the largest protected area for Valley Oak Savanna in the National Park System.

Significant archeology sites include threatened remnant cave paintings left by American Indian ancestors, evidence of Chumash and Tongva interface, and rock pen structures representing Bosque sheep ranching culture.

The Simi Hills watershed is the headwaters of Malibu Creek, a significant habitat for steelhead trout.

A landfill adjacent to grassland and oak savannah creates a contrast that provides opportunity for interpretation of many land use topics.

Facilities include parking areas and a trail system that receives heavy recreation activity.

## **Experiences**

Visitors are likely to encounter significant numbers of people near major access points. Popular activities include hiking, biking, and equestrian although frequent hot temperatures challenge users.

Three separate canyons and a significant elevation range provide a variety of experiences. Sheltered valley walks look up to ridges. Open expanses from Simi Peak reveal several mountain ranges.

Visitors who accept the challenges of Simi Hills find opportunity for a safe experience where they can contrast natural areas to surrounding developed areas. Here visitors may sense they have escaped to a sanctuary for patient, quiet observation and sensory experiences.

Visitors can see wildlife and learn the importance of maintaining wildlife corridors in an expanding urban area.

Here visitors can see evidence of past human uses such as structures left from Basque ranching and herding.

## **Recommendations**

Simi Hills Comprehensive Design Plan provides guidelines for future development and use at this complex geographic area. This long-range interpretive plan supplements that document with a few specific recommendations to improve visitor experience and interpretation.

The Simi Hills complex occupies one large area but many entrances segment visitor experience. Orientation, trail system and bulletin case exhibits in kiosks at major access points and where several trail heads are in close proximity will inform visitors that Simi Hills includes many experience areas. A map exhibit of the entire trail system will describe minimum impact techniques and resource management and safety issues specific to Simi Hills. Exhibits at each trail head will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, safety and trail features.

Recreation area staff will conduct a social science survey in the arrival area. The survey will include the amount and type of visitor use at the existing trailer contact station. How many visitors stop at the trailer? What do they ask? Is the trailer an important source of information? Would an information kiosk as described above be more effective? Future development of visitor services at Simi Hills will be based on accurate information resulting from the survey.

The recreation area general management plan recommends that the 1,200- mile Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail be aligned through Simi Hills. Short trails will connect to the national historic trail to provide recreation area visitors extended hiking opportunity.

Interpretation and resource managers will plan and construct trails to eliminate need for social trails. Two short trails designed for access by wheelchairs, preferably loops with small trail- side exhibits, will interpret topics related to the themes established for Simi Hills.

Personal services at Simi Hills will include extensive roving by park rangers, especially at trail heads and major access points. Personal contact between recreation area employees and visitors can provide specific interactions that respond to visitor need. Staff will engage visitors in conversation to learn about their interests and issues and to explain the reasons for National Park Service regulations and management policies. Extended use of roving personal services can create a positive relationship between the recreation area and stakeholders in nearby communities that affects future use. A partnership with local residents who are already interested in the area will provide a friends or volunteer group to help maintain the area.

Visitor access points into Simi Hills are difficult to locate. The park sign committee will evaluate existing signs and recommend changes to improve visitor navigation from major travel routes to the site.

## **LEO CARILLO STATE PARK**

### **Themes**

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

National Park Service: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

The National Park Service theme presented at the state park will include state park preservation themes.

### **Resources**

Significant water resources include unique ocean tide pools, ocean waves and kelp forest, and a watershed with unusually clean water.

Sea tunnels provide opportunity to learn about and enjoy coastal geology.

Nicholas Flats contains a pond and important cultural area.

Flora and fauna provide nature study opportunities. This area includes one of the most significant marine environments in the recreation area. It is also one of the best wildflower viewing areas and a significant migration route for Monarch butterflies.

Spectacular views from and into the national recreation area contribute to understanding area resources and values.

Archeology sites in this geographic area include significant middens.

### **Experiences**

A range of visitor experience opportunities are provided by the state park. Water related activities predominate. Beach and canyon campground facilities, a group campground, hiking and biking campsites, group campfire programs and personal services by park rangers and lifeguards provide opportunities for visitors to use and enjoy the park.

Visitors using the state park and other national recreation area lands will understand the partnership relation between California State Parks and the National Park Service in managing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

A variety of habitats transcending from tide pools to uplands offer experiences contributing to a sense of exploration, discovery, and challenge.

Land and ocean environments and one of the most scenic pond areas along the coast provide opportunities for hiking, swimming, wading, and nature study.

Opportunities to easily explore ocean resources while participating in social activities attract stakeholders from various cultures, ages and abilities.

### **Recommendations**

A Tier II visitor contact station is recommended for development at Leo Carillo State Park, either in the existing blue structure overlooking the beach or in new construction. The contact station might be included in a coastal environmental education center proposed in the national recreation area general management plan for development at Staircase Beach. The contact station will introduce all national recreation area themes and interpret two themes: Ecosystem and Escape / Open Space.

The top priority for visitor experience near this proposed Tier II contact facility is activities at coastal tide pools. Other experience opportunities include seeing wildflowers, visiting boundaries where the land meets the sea, learning about wildlife migration routes, seeing animals flying and swimming those routes, and learning about environmental issues and environmentalists related to Mediterranean type ecosystems and oceans environments.

Several improvements are recommended for Nicholas Flat. Signs, bulletin boards, and wayside exhibits are needed to provide visitor way- finding and orientation. Trail head exhibits will include trail maps and a brochure dispenser to distribute a site bulletin trail guide interpreting American Indian culture. Facility and media design will project the recreation area identity recommended in **PARK- WIDE PROGRAMS Recommendations** section of this interpretive plan.

National Park Service staff will initiate and facilitate partnership visitor programming with California State Parks. Proposed partner projects include coordinating bulletin board design so visitors can easily recognize standardized bulletin boards reflecting the national recreation area image. Cooperative development of campfire programs and minimum impact tide pool activities will enable both managing entities to meet visitor service goals more efficiently.

## **POINT MUGU STATE PARK / RANCHO SIERRA VISTA / CIRCLE X (MALIBU SPRINGS) / ARROYO- SEQUIT**

### **Themes**

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**National Park Service (Including state park preservation):** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

### **Resources**

This large remote area with unique vegetation provides core wildlife habitat for a great number of animals. The largest grassland in the national recreation area, much of it in preserved wilderness, is interestingly situated within a large populated area. Point Mugu State Park contains the largest contiguous landmass and diversity of habitats in the recreation area. National Park System land at Circle X / Malibu Springs provides a gateway into to the most remote and wild part of the recreation area, including gateway to Boney Mountain and its high wilderness quality.

Water resources in this section of the national recreation area range from the ocean to high elevation springs and streams. Some scenic and picturesque riparian habitats including the Grotto at Circle X attract animals, plants, and humans. Point Mugu State Park contains one of few perennial streams in the recreation area.

This geographic area retains sites and stories of special significance to American Indians. Boney Mountain is a significant cultural resource for Chumash people. Point Mugu contains an important American

Indian trade route and village sites. Rancho Sierra Vista / Satwiwa, a significant interior habitation site for Chumash culture, was and is spiritually and economically important to American Indians.

Other cultural resources represent ranching history. Point Mugu reflects the rancho era while Sierra Vista contains an early 20<sup>th</sup> century ranch operation.

Sandstone Peak at Circle X is the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains.

### **Experiences**

Developed areas provide a variety of easily accessible recreation and education opportunities in a social environment. They open gateways to the wild areas of the recreation area for challenge and solitude.

Mountain and coastal interface provides diverse interpretation and recreation; interface between visitors and resources offer opportunities for enjoyment and education. Visitors can see and learn about biology and geology from peak to ocean by viewing striking geologic scenes and dramatic topographical variety. At lower terrain visitors can see undeveloped shoreline and immerse in the ocean environment. Stunning views of Boney Mountain and the ocean inspire and invite exploration. Cultural connections that is easy to recognize link modern visitors to past human use of the area.

Visitors can participate in many activities. Easy access to park resources by road offer wildlife viewing, short recreational outings, and opportunity to help the recreation area through volunteer activities. Trails through high- wilderness environments and mountainous terrain offer challenging recreational experiences. Here visitors can experience a sense of exploration, renewal, and inspiration.

### **Recommendations**

#### **POINT MUGU STATE PARK**

Picnic area, beach and canyon campgrounds, group camp, and fishing opportunities facilitate social experiences in and near developed areas. Hiking and horseback riding trails guide people into a large wilderness area for solitude. Cultural resources provide opportunity to connect present to past human activities by learning about American Indian settlement sites in the lagoon area.

A Tier II visitor contact station will be developed by cooperation of National Park Service and California State Parks staff. The station will provide orientation to the national recreation area, brief introduction to all themes with focus on Ecosystem and Escape/Open space, and introduction to the partnership character of the recreation area. Visitors will be able to obtain information about the ocean and the American Indian trade route that crossed the area. The facility may occupy an existing ranger station on the beach or other small building near the beach parking area. If the Tier I visitor center proposed at Point Mugu Lagoon cannot be developed, opportunity to develop a Tier I facility at Point Mugu State Park will be explored.

The National Park Service will assist state park staff with design and presentation of interpretive services to improve overall visitor experience in the national recreation area.

Cooperative ventures will include proposals for standardization of design, format, and messages of signs and wayside exhibits including bulletin boards. Signs and exhibits that present a recognizable image throughout the recreation area will help visitors identify experience sites and understand the partnership management character of the area. Signs and wayside exhibits will be limited to the minimum number necessary to provide clear direction and information to visitors. Positive messages will invite visitors to participate in recreation area activities and explain rules and regulations that protect visitors and resources. The National Park Service will commit to maintain and copy interpretive exhibit files for interpretation partners.

Recommended personal services include informal roving contacts and scheduled talks and walks.

Site bulletin publications will interpret special emphasis areas and stories such as wilderness, ranching activities in this part of California, and the ocean and beach environment.

## **RANCHO SIERRA VISTA**

A pastoral ranch setting at Rancho Sierra Vista buffers the recreation area wilderness from nearby urban development. This area serves as a gateway to wild sections of the recreation area, including Point Mugu State Park and Boney Mountain. Here visitors have an imposing view of mountains flanked by grasslands, chaparral, and gently rolling to steeply sloping terrain. Visitors can also participate in cultural interpretation programs at Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center and a Twentieth Century livestock ranch.

Interpretation at Rancho Sierra Vista will include cultural history, recreation, and environmentalism. Cultural history will focus on American Indian lifestyles at Satwiwa and ranching history at the livestock ranch. Both locations can compare stories of past and present land uses to link American Indian, Rancho, Ranching, Recreation, and other land use periods at this and other sites. Recreation topics will include activities appropriate to the recreation area, safety issues, recreation skills, and Leave- No- Trace techniques. Site resources will illustrate environmental topics to show what works and what fails. For example, water pipes at Satwiwa can illustrate an unsuccessful attempt to efficiently harness solar energy for building heating. As long as the native plant nursery and trail restoration area remains at this location, environmental interpretation can focus on successful resource management activities.

The National Park Service management team will consider the following proposed changes to facilities and activities that detract from visitor experience. Administrative structures painted a color that makes them “disappear” into surrounding natural features will conceal them from visitors looking for visitor facilities. Consider relocation of administrative and maintenance facilities to another site and focus use of facilities at Rancho Sierra Vista on interpretation and education.

A personal service program will focus on roving contacts in heavy visitor use areas and stationed assignments at Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center. Occasional talks and guide walks, recreation skills workshops, and cultural skills demonstrations will supplement roving and stationed activities.

Improved way- finding will eliminate current confusion during arrival and onsite visitor use. Signs and wayside exhibits will present the uniform image found throughout the national recreation area to let visitors know they have arrived at a recreation area site. Interpretation and sign committee staff will evaluate existing signs and wayside exhibits and recommend improvements for the recreation area sign plan and wayside exhibit proposal. Amended plans will include the following recommendations.

Redesign way- finding and guide signs along trails and at trail intersections throughout the site to include easily seen size and color, easily read text, and consistent materials. Sign and accessibility standards will provide guidance for sign design. Signs will clearly direct visitors to significant destinations and indicate appropriate activities using text or symbols.

Move existing wayside exhibit kiosk at the parking lot to a position on the opposing side of the restroom building. A location slightly behind the restroom structure and on the trail leading to the culture center will create intuitive guidance that attracts visitors into the area after parking and visiting the restroom.

Re- orient wayside exhibits at the intersection of hiker and equestrian trails between the parking lot and visitor center. Position exhibits for easy viewing by visitors using both trails.

Add a wayside exhibit at an appropriate location between the parking area and cultural center to identify and interpret Boney Mountain.

Several trail improvements are recommended in the heavily used area between the parking area, barn, and culture center. Develop trails in this area with clearly defined intuitive routes and accessible surfaces. Designate and maintain or eliminate confusing social trails and improve trail ingress and egress to the barn area from the parking lot. Relocate existing trails and signs or add new trails near the culture center to encourage more visitors to stop at the center. Enhance interpretive media along trails in this developed area to include low profile wayside exhibits and small trail- side exhibits.

An education facility, possibly in the Rancho Sierra Vista barn, will provide curriculum- based education activities related to contemporary and traditional American Indian culture and ranching history. A day camp located here will connect American Indian and ranching history and culture to the resources still available for exploration by stakeholders. Cooperative activities will link programs at the proposed education facility to existing activities at the cultural center and the learning center currently located in a maintenance facility. Formal internship agreements with colleges might provide young adult instructors for high school and elementary school students participating in education activities at Rancho Sierra Vista. A Junior Volunteer Program might involve high school students in a “kids instruct kids” program.

Recreation area staff will explore partnerships outside the education program. Partnerships with individuals and groups from communities near Rancho Sierra Vista can facilitate neighborhood involvement and stewardship at the national recreation area and in their community. A partnership between the National Park Service and a horse rental facility might return horses to the site to create an environment for understanding ranch culture topics.

## Satwiwa Contact Station

The Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center will be retained and enhanced as a Tier II staffed contact station. An expanded schedule of operations will include weekends. The contact station will provide orientation to all primary themes at an information desk. Interpretation of the human use/cultural theme will focus on American Indian topics. Appropriate topics include American Indian past (pre-European contact Chumash / Tongva), American Indian contemporary (all nations and tribes), land use past (hunting, gathering, maritime, trading), and land use present (recreation, cultural sensitivity).

Relocation of a canoe exhibit inside the culture center will provide space for visitor seating. Comfortable seats at the site of former water tubes will encourage pause and contemplation of open space views seen through the culture center window.

A contemplative seating area outside the center will invite arriving and departing visitors to pause for reflection on area values. The area will occupy the site of the existing native plant garden. Improved landscape will connect native and ethno- related plants to interpretive topics appropriate for the site. Two modes of ambient sounds will facilitate the contemplative function of the area. Natural sounds will include raptors, owls, and rodents and snake and wind rustles through vegetation. Cultural sounds will represent American Indian hunting and social songs, drumming, and village ambience.

Relocation of trails and improved signs and wayside exhibits will encourage recreational visitors to stop at the center. The existing site identification sign will be located closer to the road/trail to attract trail users. Several special events and special venues attractive to recreational users presented annually at the center will connect recreational stakeholders to the facility.

Park staff will expand the guest host program to increase the number of activities offered to visitors in the culture center and demonstration village. Visitors will have more opportunities to participate in cultural demonstrations of past and contemporary American Indian lifestyles.

Park staff will complete a plan for an American Indian Demonstration Village or gathering spot at Satwiwa. Facility design will improve opportunities for visitors and American Indian people to use the site and learn about cultural history of the area. The gathering area will accommodate many activities, possibly including demonstrations, living history, pow- wows, a craft gallery and gift sales.

National Park Service staff and partners will produce videos of contemporary American Indian life- ways, historic village life, and past and contemporary arts and crafts that reflect American Indian cultures. Staff at the culture center will show the videos to visitors when native people are not available for visitor contact. The videos may also be sold through the recreation area cooperating association.

#### CIRCLE X (MALIBU SPRINGS)

The Circle X developed sites provides gateways to the wildest part of the recreation area, secluded mountains with impressive rock outcrops. Here visitors can enjoy a cool microclimate surrounding one of the most unusual water features in the recreation area, the Grotto.

A trail system exhibit outside the information station will provide visitors a geographic area trail map and information. The exhibit will present Leave- No- Trace minimum impact techniques, resource management issues, and safety information specific to Circle X.

An exhibit at each trail access point will describe trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, and safety considerations. Each exhibit will display photographs of natural or cultural features along the trail.

A shaded wayside exhibit structure at the major trailhead in the developed area will shelter upright wayside exhibits and provide shade for trail users and casual visitors who stop at the trail head parking area. One exhibit will provide detailed orientation, basic interpretation and directions for nearby points of interest. A “You Are Here” approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of all sites. A second panel can interpret resource features near the kiosk in relation to a park- wide and ecosystem context. The exhibit kiosk will also contain safety and regulation information specific Circle X and the Backbone Trail.

Signs and trail exhibits will be restricted to short interpretive trails that may be developed. Backcountry trails will only include signs necessary to provide directions or to identify locations such as campsites.

The information station structure will retain its rustic exterior. Outdoor wayside exhibits between the parking area and the information station or on the porch of the station will summarize orientation and interpretation provided inside the building. Outside exhibits will provide information to visitors who arrive when the station is closed and people who choose not to go inside the building.

Personal services at Circle X will include stationed assignments at the information station, roving contacts at heavily used trailheads and overlooks, and occasional, scheduled conducted activities.

A few wayside exhibits at significant overlooks, such as the information station, will relate significant features to primary interpretive themes.

Circle X will provide a variety of recreational facilities. A primitive overnight camp will include facilities for group camping. A separate, more highly developed camping area will include accessible sites. Other facilities will improve access to backcountry recreation trails, including the Backbone Trail. Accessible bathrooms and picnic area will meet needs of casual visitors.

### **ARROYO SEQUIT**

An upright wayside exhibit at the parking lot will include a map of the area, directions from parking lot to trail head, interpretation of homesteading, and safety messages specific to Arroyo Sequit.

A trail head exhibit will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated walking time, safety considerations and photographs of natural or cultural features seen along the trail. A site bulletin distributed in brochure dispensers at the parking lot will provide information about the area and a trail guide.

Significance of historic structures in the Arroyo Sequit area needs evaluation. A research project will evaluate resources and recommend specific interpretation topics and stories.

### **MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK / PARAMOUNT RANCH**

#### **Themes**

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

Escape – Open Space: In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

National Park Service (Includes state park preservation): Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

## Resources

Natural resources in this area include endangered species, exposed geologic features, and a variety of habitats. Varied vegetation including valley oak savanna creates a dramatic and changing scenic beauty that has attracted people for centuries. Significant riparian areas include the largest watershed and perennial creek in the Santa Monica Mountains and Century Lake, the largest freshwater lake in the region. Large habitat with little fragmentation attracts extensive wildlife; this is the southernmost habitat for steelhead trout and golden eagles.

Cultural resources include historic buildings and sites reflecting layers of history. A continuous time- line extends from American Indian occupation to early Rancho Spanish land grant settlement, ranching, and current recreation. Malibu Creek is the site of significant interface between two American Indian groups, the Chumash and Tongva.

Nationally significant Paramount Ranch includes a historic Western Town movie set still used by film- makers and surrounded by oak studded flood plains with rural character. It is the most interpreted site related to the film industry in the National Park System.

Malibu Creek State Park includes movie locations (*MASH*, *Roots*, *How the West Was Won*), streams, rock pool, lake, picnic facilities, campground, and fishing opportunities.

Paramount Ranch and Malibu Creek State Park present memorable, three- dimensional scenes from movie and television productions that range from silent to modern film technology. American films shot in this area provide a statement about how Americans view the world and how the world views America.

This geographic section offers recreational opportunities suitable for individual and group participation including sites for camping.

## **Experiences**

Visitors to Malibu Creek State Park may see movie landscapes that recall memories and link individual past experience to recreation area resources. Visitors must hike to most areas, but some sites near parking lots offer opportunities for people to picnic and sit near water.

Paramount Ranch provides opportunity for interpretation and observation of film- making. Visitors can learn film history while experiencing ever- changing conditions, such as natural lighting, that makes the area attractive to film- makers. Facilities encourage participation in festivals and group picnics.

Visitors to this geographic interpretive area can enjoy excitement of personal involvement with people of diverse cultures. Easy access to attractions in this physical center of the recreation area invites people to participate in a range of recreation and interpretation activities. Experience opportunities vary from short to extended, group/social to alone/solitude and easy to challenging.

## **Recommendations**

Managers in this section of the recreation area will develop interpretive media and activities appropriate for multi- cultural groups. A positive approach that invites participation will permeate publication, wayside exhibit and personal service media. Multilingual interpretation will initially target Hispanic populations; studies will identify other cultural audiences for future interpretation emphasis. Site bulletins easily and inexpensively developed in many languages will respond to audience needs.

Other interpretation and education programs will attract all stakeholder categories. Occasional special events will focus activities on specific groups such as non - traditional users.

## **MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK**

A Tier I gateway visitor center at the state park will be developed and operated cooperatively by National Park Service and California State Parks. It will introduce all primary themes established for the national recreation area and focus on the escape/open space theme. This center will orient visitors to resources and opportunities provided by all partners in the north section of the national recreation area.

A welcoming atmosphere that engages all ages will invite visitors to participate in state and national park programs. Visitors to the center will easily recognize the partnership nature of the national recreation area. Missions of the national and state parks prominently displayed near the entrance will greet visitors and invite participation in activities that preserve resource values of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Information and orientation provided by exhibits and personal services will direct visitors to recreation and interpretation sites in the state park and national recreation area.

Interpretation will include Tier I media and services described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this plan.

Peaceful, subdued, natural/organic, simple low technology exhibits will interpret all primary themes established for the national recreation area. Topic will focus on resources found in the north central section of the area. An exhibit plan that recommends exhibit content and design will be developed when funding appears imminent for a Tier I visitor at this location.

A projection room will accommodate the film proposed in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** and other films recommended by state park and national park interpretive staff.

Alternative sites for a Tier I facility at Malibu Creek State Park will be explored by national and state park managers. Consideration will be given to adaptively using existing structures such as the state park Headquarters building. New construction might be located at the proposed joint state park and national park administrative facility near the intersection of Las Virgenes Canyon Road and Mulholland Highway or another location in or near the state park.

A Tier II visitor contact station at Malibu Creek Nature Center in the state park will provide orientation to nearby points of interest for visitors who have not stopped at the Tier I visitor center described above. The contact station can also provide interpretation of ecosystem and human use/cultural themes with emphasis on Mediterranean type ecosystem topics using animal displays currently in the center as story nuclei.

Wayside exhibits at trailheads for the Backbone Trail will provide interpretation of Castro Crest. A wayside exhibit structure will shelter upright exhibit panels. One exhibit will incorporate a "You Are Here"

approach to provide detailed orientation, basic interpretation and directions to nearby points of interest. A second panel will interpret resource features near the kiosk in relation to a park- wide and ecosystem context. A trailhead exhibit with map will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, and safety considerations. It may also display photographs of ocean, mountain and valley views located along the trail. The exhibit kiosk will also contain safety and regulation information specific to this ridge line terrain. A Backbone Trail site bulletin with trail map distributed in a brochure dispenser will provide a trail guide to the prominent ridge line, rock formations, and wildlife habitat in the Castro Crest area.

## PARAMOUNT RANCH

Film- making significance at Paramount Ranch spans the time from 1927 to 1954. Roads, trees, and some structures are still intact to help visitors experience a cultural landscape reflecting the era of significance. Routine maintenance and continued filming at the site preserve a cultural icon of American film- making for present and future visitors.

Arriving visitors are unsure of their options and basic way- finding. A small visitor contact station in a ranger station attracts few visitors due to its location. The orientation facility and trails linking it to the parking area and historic movie set need redesign and relocation to provide clear and intuitive guidance.

Future design and development of facilities to improve arrival experience will locate a Tier II facility to intercept visitors between the parking area and the Western Town movie set. A visitor contact station just before crossing the bridge to the movie town will provide orientation to Paramount Ranch. It will also use the interest in film history to hook visitors and introduce them to nearby points of interest such as Malibu Creek State Park and other national recreation area sites. An interim Tier II facility may be developed in the first building visitors encounter in the Western Town to provide arriving visitors information until the proposed Tier II contact station is developed near the parking area.

If a Tier I visitor center is not developed at Malibu Creek State Park, the Tier II contact station at Paramount Ranch will be adapted to provide Tier I media and services as described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS.**

Interpretation of Paramount Ranch needs to bring the site to life. The Western Town and surrounding landscape will continue functioning as a film production set to preserve a traditional use associated with the site. Visitors will continue to visit the set to see the structures, learn about film making, and watch filming in progress. The site will also include facilities for a film history center and museum. The museum may be included in a Tier I facility if developed at Paramount Ranch or in another building at the site.

The film history museum will include the following interactive media and activities to increase vivacity of the Paramount Ranch experience.

#### Audiovisual

Interpretation managers will develop a national recreation area filmography. Video compilations of movie and television clips featuring Paramount Ranch and nearby locations will help visitors connect the national recreation area to historic films and personal memories of seeing those films.

An interactive program will involve visitors in filmmaking. A blue screen and camera with a switcher will enable a “film producer” or “director” to superimpose visitors into background clips of past Paramount productions using Paramount Ranch sites and scenes.

“Behind the scenes” how- to videos will present production techniques featuring actors and crews filming and editing real productions.

Expansion of the film festival program initiated by *Silents Under the Stars* will include special history- of- the- month subjects.

#### Exhibits

Simple, hands- on exhibits will invite visitor interaction.

Some exhibits will include three- dimensional displays of old cameras, costumes, and other props and equipment used at Paramount Ranch to interpret filmmaking.

Still photographs of old equipment and scenes of filmmaking will interpret topics for which appropriate artifacts are not available.

A National Parks in Film exhibit will tie Paramount Ranch to other national park sites used in the film industry, focusing on famous films that visitors are likely to remember.

Interactive quizzes will include film and television history, production techniques, and filmmaking terminology. A combination of manual and electronic or audiovisual media will attract a wide audience for inter- generational fun and learning.

#### Wayside Exhibits and Trails

Wayside exhibits will identify and interpret film locations. An exhibit on Mulholland Highway can identify and interpret the location of filming *MASH*, and a wayside exhibit in the Western Town can portray filming of the *Doctor Quinn, Medicine Woman* television series.

Portable wayside exhibits that allow easy temporary re- location will occupy interpretation sites frequently used for filming. Small trailside exhibits that create minimal intrusion will interpret other sites.

An accessible loop nature/history trail will enable all visitors to explore landscapes around the Western Town. Exhibits will identify filming sites and describe how the natural landscape attracted the film industry. Low profile wayside panels and trailside exhibits will help visitors learn about filming history of the area.

#### Publications

A walking tour brochure will interpret the Western Town and surrounding landscape.

#### Personal Services

Stationed and roving contacts in the Western Town will provide opportunity for all visitors to contact rangers. Living history and events will supplement interpretation for special occasions.

#### Partnerships

Initiation and cultivation of partnerships with film studios, producers, and organizations such as the American film Institute will enable the National Park Service to provide better service to visitors. Partnerships can provide staff for a lecture series and funding for special activities.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITY**

A Tier II or Tier III facility will be developed at a joint National Park Service and California State Park administrative and education complex near the intersection of Mulholland Highway and Las Virgenes Canyon Road. The facility will provide basic orientation and way-finding to state park and national park sites for people using the education center and visiting the administrative offices.

## **REAGAN RANCH**

A Tier II facility at Reagan Ranch will provide orientation to recreation area resources and basic interpretation of the human use/cultural theme. The station will provide standard visitor contact station services as described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**.

Visitor experience will include connections to the presidency, horseback riding and horse issues, and a link to the Reagan Library.

## **TOPANGA STATE PARK**

### **Themes**

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**National Park Service (state park preservation):** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

## **Resources**

Significant paleontology sites include marine and plant fossils.

Oak woodland and chaparral vegetation combine with a high quality watershed and riparian area to create extensive wildlife habitat. This large contiguous section of land provides homes for many animal species in an urban environment, including large mammals and endangered species.

Cultural sites and stories reflect a long and continuing association between humans and the land in this interpretive area. Stories and sites related to the Chumash and Tongva show the interface between American Indian cultures. Will Rogers State Historic Park features Will Rogers House Museum, a visitor center, nature center, polo fields, and horse stables. Hiking and horse trails link the historic park to Topanga State Park. A Nike missile site surrounded by recreational lands reflects recent history.

Temescal Canyon features a residential camp that provides opportunity for extended exploration of area resources.

## **Experiences**

Hidden off Topanga Canyon Boulevard, the developed area of this state park offers hiking and horse trails, picnic area, flat areas for informal sports, drinking fountains and portable toilets.

This big, wild area offers an escape to solitude while maintaining a comforting contact with the city that many visitors want. The area offers recreational activities for challenging experiences.

Expansive views of resources that mirror pre-development California offer enjoyment, inspiration, and renewal.

Park lands and facilities provide a corridor that connects all resources from mountaintop to ocean.

## **Recommendations**

This long-range interpretive plan suggests the following actions at Topanga State Park and surrounding areas within the national recreation area to improve cumulative visitor experiences.

National Park Service staff will work with Topanga State Park staff and other partners to develop a loop tour through the recreation area. A thematic publication or audiovisual tour guide will interpret topics related to national recreation area primary themes. Wayside exhibits at appropriate roadside pullouts will supplement the tour guide.

Staffs of both parks will cooperate in developing the Mountain to Ocean Trail and providing mountain bike patrols. Updated wayside exhibits and bulletin boards will provide orientation, information, and interpretation of trail resources.

A variety of media will improve information available to visitors about Sullivan Canyon and Mandeville. Media presented in several locations will describe how to get to the sites, the purpose and significance of the area, and what visitors can expect to see and do at each site.

The following Tier II facilities are recommended for this interpretive section. Each will open at appropriate times to meet visitor need. All Tier II contact stations will present media and services described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** section of this plan.

#### TOPANGA/TRIPPET

A visitor contact station at Trippet will orient visitors to the national recreation area and focus basic interpretation on the ecosystem theme. Visitor experience will include activities that link the primary theme to topics related to resources near the contact station. Appropriate topics include plant communities, environment issues, Backbone Trail resources, and pre- contact interface of cultures.

#### TEMESCAL

A Tier II facility at Temescal will orient visitors to area resources and activities and present introductory interpretation of escape/open space and ecosystem themes.

This orientation site offers visitors opportunity to plan for experiences at other locations in the national recreation area. The site attracts a large local audience and provides the first national recreation area experience for many visitors. A major function at this contact station is to provide visitors an understanding of rules and regulations and tell them where to go for interesting experiences.

## **WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORICAL PARK**

A visitor contact facility at this historical park will orient visitors to recreation area opportunities and interpret two themes, human use/cultural and the national and state park services.

The park is a gateway to the Backbone Trail that directs visitors into other sections of the national recreational area. Information and interpretation will emphasize the three main subjects of the site - Will Rogers, film history, and California lifestyle.

## **TOPANGA/PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY**

Topanga State Park plans to develop an education and interpretation facility near the Pacific Coast Highway. National Park Service managers will contact California State Parks to explore potential for partnering in a Tier II contact station in the new facility. A contact station at this location can orient visitors to the entire national recreation area.

## **COASTAL CORRIDOR**

### **Themes**

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**National Park Service:** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages – and the need to preserve them.

## **Resources**

Stories related to Pacific Coast Highway engineering and history is an important intangible resource linked to the physical resources.

The Pacific Ocean, lagoons, tide pools and related water resources provide many thematic stories and experiences for visitors and neighborhood residents.

Cultural resources include Rancho Malibu, American Indian sites and stories, and stories related to film history.

Freshwater resources within view of the Pacific Coast Highway support natural areas, restored features, and water- based recreation.

## **Experiences**

A feeling of comfort and a variety of sensory experiences in the easily accessible corridor attract many recreational visitors and commuters. Visitors using the corridor have opportunities to learn about other recreation area resources and stories.

Recreation users can immerse in the ocean environment and participate in various water sports and other impromptu and organized recreation activities.

Coastal corridor users can participate in and make connections to past and present cultures.

The coastal corridor provides opportunities to have fun, discover, and learn on various levels while participating in large events and social activities that facilitate sharing and creating family traditions and memories.

Views from this corridor on the western edge of the continent offer opportunity to think about worldwide links to Mediterranean type ecosystems and climates.

## **Recommendations**

An information radio station at the western end of the coastal corridor will welcome visitors to the national recreation area. A second station will be located at the eastern end if a suitable and feasible location can be found. The stations will identify the partnership nature of the area

and introduce the Mediterranean- type ecosystem and need for preservation of these important resources. They will invite people to exit the fast paced highway to leisurely explore resources. Tier I visitor centers will be identified as essential stops for additional information.

Prominently displayed entrance signs on Pacific Coast Highway will identify Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

A coastal corridor logo or emblem will be developed to identify designated and recommended stops along the corridor that significantly relate to national recreation area themes.

All shuttle stops within the coastal corridor will include an information kiosk with upright wayside exhibits. One exhibit will present shuttle system hours of operation, areas served and how to effectively use the system. A second exhibit will provide detailed orientation, basic interpretation, and directions to nearby points of interest. A “You Are Here” approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of all sites. A third panel will link the kiosk site to other resources in a park- wide and ecosystem context.

A scenic boat tour in the coastal corridor will provide visitors a unique view of coastal and mountain scenery and offer opportunities to learn about marine life. This partnership project will design and operate a water shuttle system between Malibu Pier and Santa Monica Pier with links to the national recreation area shuttle system. Interpretation will include introduction to interpretive stories at the station, an interpretive/information kiosk at the boat docking facility, and a variety of media presented on the boat. Interpretation on the boat will consist of personal services, an audio narration played by boat operators, and publications. Interpretive content will include shoreline and skyline feature identification, wildlife likely to be encountered, and marine ecology including under water features.

Extensive roadside pullouts will feature wayside exhibits to interpret natural and cultural history topics related to themes. Some wayside exhibits may include solar powered audio components.

Recreation area interpretation managers will work with the park cooperating association or other publisher to develop a brochure or CD/DVD interpreting the corridor. Either or both technologies can present a progressive tour that may be taken in a single day or spread over a longer time period.

Recreation area managers will work with businesses within the corridor to tell stories of people and their connections to resources. Managers will encourage commercial entities to develop exhibits, architectural style, and decor to present a recreation area theme throughout the corridor. For example, an "Art Walk" concept can link sites and involve property owners in a unified visitor experience.

## SANTA MONICA

A Tier II staffed contact station at Marion Davies House 415 PCH or Tier I gateway visitor center at Santa Monica Pier will welcome visitors to the national recreation area. It will provide orientation and interpretation of all themes with focus on resources along the Coastal Corridor and the Eastern End of the recreation area.

The general management plan for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area recommends a visitor center at 415 Pacific Coast Highway. A visitor center at this or a nearby location will attract potential visitors from Pacific Coast Highway, historic Route 66, and major interstate highways that converge on the coast in Santa Monica. The interface of urban development and the Pacific Ocean attract many people to this section of the recreation area. However, several conditions limit potential for a visitor center at the proposed location. Difficulty of ingress and egress to the site from Pacific Coast Highway creates visitor confusion and requires unsafe traffic maneuvers. A visitor center at this location will be inconspicuous among other uses including commercial shops and attractions. Effectiveness of a visitor center at 415 PCH may be limited by adaptive use restrictions of the historic Marion Davies House proposed as a visitor facility.

This long-range interpretive plan proposes that a Tier I gateway visitor center be developed at an accessible location on or near Santa Monica Pier. Existing parking, easy access from highways, and a concentration of recreation visitors make the pier an ideal visitor center site. A location at or near the UCLA nature center will attract many visitors from the crowds that frequent this beach area. A location on the pier will provide an even more accessible visitor center.

A visitor center on or near the pier can include the same stories and activities as proposed for 415 PCH. In addition, it will present other functions proposed in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** for Tier I facilities, principally a higher level of interpretation of national recreation area themes.

A visitor contact facility at this location will provide opportunities for visitors to immerse in an urban ocean environment. A variety of sensory experience opportunities near the facility relate to present and past California beach lifestyles. Visitors can experience contemporary Santa Monica/Malibu by visiting shops and the ocean. They can also participate in traditional impromptu and organized recreational activities such as volley ball, skateboarding, and roller skating.

The visitor center will provide orientation to Santa Monica National Recreation Area recreation, interpretation, and other experience opportunities within the Coastal Corridor and Eastern End sections. Many visitors to a Santa Monica Pier facility will discover the national recreation area for the first time, learn about its themes and significance, and plan future exploration of recreation area resources.

Interpretation will introduce all primary themes and focus on human use/cultural and National Park Service. Topics can include surfing and California beach history to capture and focus visitor interest on the national recreation area. Exhibits and audiovisual media interpreting primary themes will focus on Coastal Corridor and Eastern End resources. Some exhibits will link recreation area resources to the evolution of southern California coastal culture, the history of Pacific Coast Highway, and historic Route 66 that terminates nearby.

A shuttle stop kiosk adjacent to Pacific Coast Highway near the visitor center will include at least three upright wayside exhibits. One exhibit will focus on information about the shuttle system, such as overview, hours of operation, areas served, and how visitors can effectively use the system. A “You Are Here” orientation exhibit will provide directions to the visitor center and to a boat tour kiosk on the pier (described below). A third panel will focus on basic interpretation of Coastal Corridor themes in context with the entire national recreation area and California Mediterranean type ecosystem.

A boat tour exhibit kiosk on Santa Monica Pier will mirror the shuttle kiosk in design and function. Upright wayside exhibits will provide orientation and basic interpretation. One exhibit will provide detailed information about the boat tour including schedule, tour route, and location for obtaining tour reservations. A second exhibit will provide detailed “You Are Here” orientation and directions to the national recreation visitor center and Coastal Corridor shuttle kiosk. A third panel will provide introductory interpretation of scenery, wildlife, and marine ecology topics that the boat tour will explore in detail.

## MALIBU BLUFFS

Signs on Pacific Coast Highway will clearly identify visitor use functions at Malibu Bluffs and guide visitors from the highway to visitor information and interpretation facilities. Well- designed way-finding will provide arriving visitors a feeling of comfort.

A national recreation area visitor facility will present all media and services described for Tier I visitor centers in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**. It will introduce all themes established for the recreation area and emphasize the ecosystem theme with topics illustrating “Where the land (Mediterranean- type ecosystem) meets the sea (Marine)”. It may also serve as a staging area and orientation for Adamson House, Malibu Lagoon, and Malibu Pier.

Vertical wayside exhibits outside the facility will provide orientation and interpretation for visitors arriving when the building is closed. The exhibits will summarize information provide inside the building. One panel will relate the natural and cultural resources in the Coastal Corridor and south central section of the recreation area to themes. Another panel will provide orientation to Adamson House, Malibu Lagoon, Malibu Pier, and other nearby national recreation area sites. A brochure dispenser will distribute the park folder or a site bulletin.

An exhibit in an arrival space outside or inside the visitor center will introduce the partnership nature of the national recreation area. This exhibit will identify individual partners and their functions and emphasize the significance of their union.

Introductory exhibits in a lobby will provide orientation to national recreation area resources and experience opportunities. Media might include information desk, brochure displays, maps, interactive computer terminals or webcam monitors presenting recreation area scenes, weather reports, and traffic information.

Museum exhibits provide interpretation of primary themes using topics related to natural, cultural, and recreational resources in the south central section of the national recreation area. Exhibits provide opportunity for visitors to discover and learn about the area so they will seek additional experiences with resources and stories. Permanent exhibits will introduce primary themes; changing exhibits will interpret special issues, seasonal experience opportunities, and evolving research and management activities.

Exhibit descriptions, exhibit room layout and selection of media, artifacts, objects, and detailed content will be accomplished during the exhibit design concept phase of planning for the visitor center. Specific design will depend on the facility selected for use as a visitor center, whether adaptive use of an existing facility or new construction.

An audiovisual theater or multipurpose room will accommodate the national recreation area film proposed in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS – Audiovisual** and other audiovisual presentations approved by the National Park Service and partners.

A Malibu Bluffs visitor center might occupy the Landon Center if that facility becomes available for remodeling, but small space limits the utility of Landon Center as a Tier I visitor center. New construction can provide a building designed to fully meet intended functions.

An accessible loop trail with low profile wayside exhibits along the bluff rim overlooking the ocean will interpret wildlife and ocean habitat. Fixed telescopes will focus visitor attention on the ocean and enable visitors to spot wildlife. Interpretation along the trail will encourage visitors to experience the ocean environment and link that environment to adjacent terrestrial resources. Other potential links include oceans, Mediterranean type ecosystems, and climates.

#### **POINT MUGU LAGOON**

National recreation area staff will remove the existing wayside exhibits overlooking Mugu Lagoon but referring to Mulholland Corridor. The exhibits will be installed at an appropriate location near intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Mulholland Highway. Two or three new wayside exhibits designed to interpret lagoon resources will replace the exhibits removed. Site design for a new visitor center proposed at this location will incorporate the new wayside exhibits into an outdoor interpretive area. Additional exhibits designed and installed during construction of the center will expand outdoor interpretation.

New construction to house the visitor education center proposed in the general management plan will emphasize use of sustainable energy and materials as a working education demonstration. The facility will provide an important information site for the national recreation area and a significant interpretation area for the estuarine ecosystem. This location offers beautiful views of the coast, an unspoiled view of the mountains, and a panorama of the lagoon.

Visitors at the new facility will understand that they are in a National Park System area. Signs and information radio station on Pacific Coast Highway will clearly identify the facility as a National Park Service visitor center. Motorists will be invited to stop for orientation, education, and opportunity to get out of their car and into the lagoon.

Vertical wayside exhibits between the parking area and the visitor center entrance will summarize orientation provided inside the building for visitors arriving when the facility is closed. One panel will relate the lagoon and other natural and cultural resources in the Coastal Corridor and western section of the recreation area to themes. Another panel will orient visitors to nearby points of interest such as Naval Air Station Point Mugu.

An entry plaza will include a National Recreation Area Partnership exhibit to introduce the partnership nature of the area. Individual agency emblems will distinguish partners; brief text will identify their functions and emphasize the significance of their union.

A Tier I visitor center at this location will present all media and services described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**. It will introduce all primary themes with topics illustrating resources in the Coastal Corridor and western end of the recreation area. Interpretation will focus on lagoon resources to show how the cultural history and ecosystem themes intertwined in the past and present.

Orientation media and services will help all visitors have a safe visit and feel welcome and relaxed. A lobby area will include an information desk, introductory exhibits, brochure displays, and maps. Orientation exhibits provide basic information about things to see and do in the Coastal Corridor and the western end of the recreation area. Personal services will include stationed assignments, roving contacts, and scheduled talks and walks. A cooperating association sales area will supplement interpretation and education programs with interpretive sales inventory. Appropriate sales items include information about the lagoon environment, the nearby naval operation, cultural resources, and the natural environment of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The visitor center will include an audiovisual/multipurpose room to accommodate films, videos, personal presentations, and education programs. The film proposed in audiovisual section of **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** will alternate with other audiovisual presentations approved by the National Park Service and partners.

Museum exhibits inside the visitor center will provide threshold interpretation that prepares visitors to explore the lagoon and other national recreation area resources. The exhibits will introduce all themes using topics related to resources in the Coastal Corridor and western end of the recreation area. Exhibits provide opportunity for visitors to discover and learn about the area so they will seek additional experiences with the lagoon and other resources and stories.

Low- tech interpretive exhibits will include interactive components to attract and hold the attention of visitors, especially children participating in curriculum- based education activities. Exhibits will not compete with resources, but they will effectively provide a basis for understanding the significance of resources near the visitor center.

A permanent exhibit area will include the following exhibits.

**Lagoon Ecology** will interpret estuarine resources above, on, and below the surface of Mugu Lagoon.

**Mugu Lagoon and the Chumash** will help visitors understand the lagoon resources and their relationship to the Chumash people who developed significant coastal villages in the area.

**Point Mugu and the Military** will link significance of the area as a military staging site from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam to the current military presence.

**Energy Demonstration Project** will identify the visitor center building as a museum exhibit illustrating the practical use of energy efficient technology and sustainable design.

A changing exhibit area will interpret special issues, seasonal experience opportunities, and evolving research and management activities. Traveling exhibits and temporary exhibits designed for curriculum- based education will keep the visitor center experience fresh for repeat visitors.

Exhibit descriptions, room layout and selection of media, artifacts, objects, and text for each exhibit will be accomplished during the exhibit design concept phase of planning for the visitor center. A museum exhibit plan will present design, production, and installation specifications for the permanent exhibit area. The plan will include label copy, design elements, and graphic components for all exhibits.

A boardwalk into the lagoon will guide visitors through sensory and cognitive experiences. The boardwalk will connect human visitors to the natural world of wildlife and water with minimal damage to fragile resources. Here visitors can enjoy and learn from a major migratory flyway along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to South America and see the second largest lagoon system in California.

Wayside exhibits will provide experiences for school groups, families, and individuals. Low profile exhibits at a visitor center deck and a path along the bluff will overlook the lagoon. Exhibits on lagoon boardwalks will include low profile panels to interpret major concepts and small trailside exhibits to identify specific resources and topics.

The center will feature curriculum- based education components. Partnerships with organizations such as wildlife rehabilitation facilities and school districts will enhance teacher- led interpretive programs.

If future management decisions determine that a Tier I visitor center cannot be developed at Mugu Lagoon, recreation area managers will consider a cooperative Tier I facility at Point Mugu State Park.

#### ADAMSON HOUSE

Resources and media at Adamson House will emphasize the human use/cultural theme. Topics will include history of Malibu (Malibu Tile), history of Adamson/Ringe families and their delay of Malibu development, open space conservation, and historic preservation.

Adamson House will include a Tier II contact station as described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**. Staff and media will orient visitors to this and other sites in the national recreation area.

#### ZUMA LAGOON

Wayside exhibits at Zuma Lagoon will interpret features related to national recreation area themes.

Zuma Beach features large, accessible beach areas, parking lots, playground, lifeguards, a surfing beach and fishing. Upright wayside exhibits near beach restrooms and parking areas will provide orientation to the national recreation area.

## **POINT DUME**

Wayside exhibits at Point Dume will emphasize character differences north and south of this point along the Coastal Corridor. One exhibit will emphasize that the area from Point Dume to Los Angeles is highly developed; the other will focus on the more natural character from Point Dume to Mugu Lagoon. Both will stress the importance of development and preservation and link those concepts to the value of the recreation area to the region and nation.

## **BACKBONE TRAIL CORRIDOR**

### **Themes**

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

### **Resources**

The Backbone Trail provides a physical and interpretive link to many natural resources in the national recreation area.

Trail and camp facilities encourage a variety of recreation activities.

High mountain views let trail users see and appreciate the magnitude of the Santa Monica Mountains.

### **Experiences**

The rugged terrain traversed by the Backbone Trail provides opportunities for heavy exercise, strenuous recreation, and challenge.

Long and short segments of the Backbone Trail provide opportunities to match resource experiences with personal interest and ability.

Camping provides multi- day immersion experiences in area resources.

## **Recommendations**

Park interpretation and resource management staff will coordinate backcountry trail planning and interpretation planning to assure visitors the best possible experience on the Backbone Trail. An interdisciplinary team of park staff will periodically survey visitor use of the trail, review existing plans related to the trail to determine if current operations best serve visitor needs, and develop proposals to improve trail experiences. The team will also review new plans as developed (long- range interpretive plan, shuttle plan, trails management plan) and develop amended sign, wayside exhibit, and publication plans to maintain compatibility of all recommendations with management goals.

Major access points near highways will include a trail kiosk similar to kiosks proposed for shuttle stops and coastal boat tour docks. Kiosks in open areas will include shade shelters. Each kiosk will include an upright wayside exhibit with a map of Backbone Trail to the next major trailhead in both directions. The map exhibit can also present safety and regulation information specific to its location and minimum impact techniques. Another exhibit will provide detailed orientation and directions to nearby points of interest. A “You Are Here” approach will help visitors understand the physical and interpretive connections between those points of interest and the Backbone Trail. A third exhibit will interpret resources encountered on Backbone Trail and link those resources to recreation area themes.

Trailheads not furnished with a kiosk will feature site- specific trailhead exhibits. Each exhibit will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, safety considerations and photographs of natural or cultural features seen from more remote sections of the trail.

Information and way- finding media permanently placed on the trail at locations other than trailheads will be kept to the minimum necessary to enhance visitor safety and emotional comfort. Small signs will clearly identify campsites and provide directions at trail intersections and other locations where visitors may have difficulty determining trail route. A Backbone Trail logo or color marker consistently displayed throughout the trail route will also appear on all printed information media for the trail. Printed media providing information, way- finding and interpretation include trail maps, guidebooks, and trail folders. This combination of media will provide information and interpretation in levels of detail that meet the needs of most trail users.

Interpretation and resource protection managers will seek funding to develop a trail video for showing at visitor contact facilities and for sale to trail users. The video will reflect the complexity and significance of resources traversed by the recreation area trail system. It can emphasize resources that are difficult for visitors to see unless they hike the entire Backbone Trail. This video will show the majesty of the landscape that has attracted people for centuries. It will describe the Backbone Trail in detail so potential hikers can select experiences matching their interest. The video will also provide safety and Leave No Trace techniques that prepare users for a safe and enjoyable trip. The film will offer backcountry hikers a brief foretaste of what they can see. For visitors who do not venture far from their car, the video will instill an appreciation for the resources that they may never see.

## **MULHOLLAND CORRIDOR**

### **Themes**

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

### **Resources**

Expansive views of mountains, canyons, ridges, and ocean provide recreational users, commuters, neighbors, and visitors an overview of the entire national recreation area.

Scenic Mulholland Highway provides escape from urban development, opportunity to see many components of California's Mediterranean type ecosystem, and resources that reflect centuries of human use.

Stories related to Mulholland Highway are intangible resources that add interest to physical resources.

## **Experiences**

The Mulholland Corridor provides commuters and recreation seekers a scenic, mountainous route to the ocean and the Coastal Corridor.

Mulholland Highway provides access into the national recreation area for people with limited mobility.

Visitors traveling this corridor see many natural and cultural transitions that connect recreation area sites and stories.

Mountain to ocean experience along the corridor provides a sense of national recreation area value to local and national stakeholders.

The route offers interpretation managers opportunity to invite and lead visitors into all sections of the national recreation area, especially the car and motorcycle cultures.

## **Recommendations**

Mulholland Corridor interpretation will emphasize continuity, historic significance, and scenic values of Mulholland Highway and adjacent resources. Interpretation may present stories from both scientific and traditional (American Indian) perspectives without bias. Visitors can compare points of view and develop personally meaningful themes based on individual interest and previous experiences.

The variety of resources along the corridor provides many destination and interpretation opportunities. An exhibit at Peter Strauss Ranch can emphasize auto culture and the San Vicente military story. Geology is an appropriate story along Las Virgenes Road, at Cold Creek area, and near Peter Strauss Ranch and Paramount Ranch. Astronomy may be emphasized at Arroyo Sequit with a *Mulholland at Night* program. Rocky Oaks can interpret plant communities, and an overlook above Hollywood Bowl can interpret preservation.

A distinctive logo reflecting the National Park Service Identity Program will link all sites along the corridor. Extensive use of the logo on guide and site identification signs, wayside exhibits and tour publications will unify all resources. To avoid confusion of multiple logos the recreation area may create a design similar to the Parks- as- Classrooms Patch. An umbrella logo can consolidate site logos to produce a unifying design that leaves each site logo as a distinct design that can stand alone.

Interpretation managers will develop other thematic linking media. National Park Service staff and partners will cooperate with state and national agencies to evaluate potential for designation of Mulholland Highway as a California or national scenic byway. Several audio driving tours will provide in- depth interpretation and information. For example, an architectural tour can present cultural stories along the corridor. Tour guides presented in CD and DVD format with multiple tracks can also create surrogate natural and cultural experiences for local and international visitors. Personal service and audio delivery of information and interpretation on shuttles within the corridor can thematically link natural and cultural topics.

The corridor will include an extensive system of interpretive roadside pullouts. Evaluation of all existing pullouts will determine the interpretive potential of each. New pullouts will be developed to interpret significant resources where desirable and feasible. Thematic wayside exhibits, some with solar powered audio components, will help visitors understand and appreciate recreation area values.

Kiosks will shelter exhibits and visitors at bypass areas and major intersections linking the corridor and other highways. The kiosks will mirror kiosks proposed for shuttle stops and boat tour docks in the Coastal Corridor. Each kiosk will include an upright wayside exhibit with a map of nearby sections of Mulholland Highway. A small inset map identifying the entire corridor with a "You Are Here" indicator will help visitors understand the physical and interpretive connections between all points. The map exhibit can also present safety and regulation information specific to Mulholland Corridor. Another exhibit will provide detailed orientation and directions to points of interest a short distance off the highway. A third exhibit will connect resources encountered within the corridor to recreation area themes.

A team of park interpreters and accessibility specialists will evaluate all currently installed wayside exhibits for proper site location and recommend improvements as appropriate. Recommendations will assure that each exhibit interprets resource features or stories within view of the wayside. The team will recommend relocation or site development so all wayside exhibits are accessible to visitors to the greatest extent possible. For example, exhibits at the overlook above Hollywood Bowl can introduce the partnership concept for managing the national recreation area more clearly to visitors. Relocation of wayside exhibits at Fryman Canyon overlook can position exhibits where mobility impaired visitors can see and read them.

## **EASTERN END**

### **Themes**

**Ecosystem:** The Mediterranean ecosystem exists in only five places in the world. In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves these rapidly diminishing resources.

**Escape – Open Space:** In a vast expanding urban area, the open space of the Santa Monica Mountains provides an oasis for inspiration and renewal.

**Human Use – Cultural:** For over 10,000 years, people have shaped the land just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

### **Resources**

Cultural resources include houses, roads, exotic vegetation, and other designed features. Water features include a pond, reservoir, and a portion of the water delivery system designed by Mulholland.

Natural resources deserving protection and interpretation include a canyon offering hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities in the heart of Los Angeles, striking geologic formations, fire history, and environmental quality (water and air).

Narrow, picturesque Franklin Canyon features streams, creek, and a lake.

### **Experiences**

This geographic interpretive area provides an eastern gateway to the national recreation area and an opportunity to introduce many regional residents to the values of this national park area.

Many stakeholders consider this area a neighborhood park providing an oasis of backyard wilderness in the heart of an urban environment.

Connector trails from nearby communities provide easy neighborhood access for quick, spur-of-the-moment escape and exercise.

## **Recommendations**

Directional way- finding and access improvements will enable local stakeholders and visitors from outside the area to easily find, enter, and enjoy recreation area properties. New and improved road and trail maps will inform potential visitors of alternate routes to this seemingly difficult to reach area. Expanded recreational opportunities such as biking and stroller trails will separate pedestrian and automobile traffic. An improved trail system throughout the area will help visitors and local residents feel safe and welcome.

A special effort by recreation area staff will focus information, interpretation and education activities on local stakeholders. A variety of media and personal service activities will attempt to develop positive links between goals of the national recreation area and those of neighborhoods in the Eastern End. Education activities targeted to local audiences will help residents overcome fear of visitors. Activities will encourage residents to understand and take pride in the fact that they are part of the National Park System. Special events reflecting local interests will attract a local audience. Brochures distributed in neighborhoods will encourage residents to learn about and participate in activities throughout the recreation area. Partnership with organizations that support recreation area programs will develop sustainable community stewardship and support for management goals. For example, parallel concerns for appropriate fire management make fire safety messages appropriate for Eastern End neighborhoods.

The national recreation area objective to link the Eastern End to other sites needs further implementation. Many residents and visitors do not appreciate the value of the recreation area and do not participate in activities outside the Eastern End. An architecture focus in interpretive activities in this area and along Mulholland Corridor will open a gateway that links Eastern End visitors to other recreation area sites.

### **WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS OUTDOOR CLASSROOM - WODOC**

National Park Service and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) staff will complete a cooperative agreement for William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom. The agreement will specify terms, conditions, and responsibilities for operation of programs and facilities. Cooperative activities will enhance visitor services, interpretation, staff training, operational efficiencies, and other areas of mutual benefit.

National recreation area staff will develop a Tier II visitor contact station to provide orientation and information media and services described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**.

Orientation will introduce all national recreation area themes and identify locations where visitors can find resources and activities related to those themes. The station will emphasize themes for ecosystem and human use/culture. Topics will include filming and Beverly Hills, the movie industry, and personalities associated with this section of the recreation area. Specific topics may include water and reservoir systems, William Mulholland, Mediterranean type ecology, National Park Service, creation and maintenance of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and the Doheney residence oil story.

Opportunities for escape and education in an area that seems an oasis of natural features in a large metropolitan area dominate visitor experience. Here visitors can learn the values of preservation and recreation by seeing properties protected by the National Park Service. Engaging activities and facilities attract adults and children from local and distant communities.

The William O. Douglas Outdoor Center is a significant contributor to the recreation area curriculum- based education program. It currently offers an educational day camp program for Los Angeles County schools. Expansion of day camp activities will enable the recreation area to reach a more extensive audience. The day camp and other programs developed in the future will link to curriculum- based education programs provided by the National Park Service and partners throughout the national recreation area. Exhibits and activities will reflect National Park Service primary themes and objectives for interpretation and education. They will also parallel current education standards and initiatives of school districts using the program. Media and activities must provide experiences that both students and school administrators find attractive and beneficial.

National Park Service staff will survey Harpers Ferry Center exhibit planners and designers, regional office interpretive specialists, and managers of other education facilities to identify successful education programs. Those projects will provide ideas acceptable to National Park Service, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and school partners. Data from the survey will direct future planning for exhibits, activities, and other media at the education facility.

Program planners will implement the following suggestions for exhibits in the education building. Thematic exhibits that link topics and stories related to primary themes will provide cohesive, interesting learning experiences that meet the interest level of various visitors. Frequent maintenance and rehabilitation will assure that all exhibits are operational and reflect current visitor expectations. Inoperable exhibits will be removed and new exhibits installed. Simple, inexpensive exhibits that work with little maintenance can be constructed of plywood and other common materials. An Earthquake Table constructed on a moveable sheet of plywood with sand, dirt, rocks, and models of houses and automobiles will provide a simple interactive exhibit. The exhibit can be “destroyed” and rebuilt by students in the exhibit area. A Discovery Station designed by Harpers Ferry Center can provide changeable exhibits with audio, video, computers, and three- dimensional components. Education staff may contract development of the station through Harpers Ferry Center or obtain construction drawings to produce the exhibit locally. Several simple exhibits of biomes found outside the center can surround and supplement the Discovery Station education activities.

National Park Service and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority staff will produce an exhibit plan for the facility. Participation of school districts on the exhibit planning team will assure that proposed exhibits reflect current education standards and projected assessment goals.

#### **COLDWATER**

A visitor facility at Coldwater Canyon will provide media and services described in **PARK- WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** for Tier II visitor contact stations. Focusing on the ecosystem theme, the contact station will emphasize topics of trees and urban forestry to provide education, outreach, environmental, and volunteer experiences.

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



# SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND PRIORITIES/PHASES

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The following list summarizes proposals presented in this plan, identifies possible funding/implementation strategies, and establishes prioritized phases of implementation. National recreation area staff will develop necessary funding requests to begin the federal funding process. They will also initiate contacts with potential partnership organizations to implement projects well suited to alternative funding.

Some of the recommendations in this plan can be implemented with existing staff, funds and partnerships; some must be completed before others can be initiated. These projects are identified as Phase 1. The implementation of other projects is essential to tell stories which reflect primary themes or to resolve issues identified in this plan. The National Park Service will aggressively pursue the implementation of the recommendations in this plan identified as Phase 2 as opportunities for partnership and funding permit. Phase 3 projects are ones that must be delayed until other projects are implemented, advanced planning completed or large amounts of funding accumulated.

**PROPOSAL**

**PRIORITY/PHASE**

<b>Visitor Contact Facilities</b>	
Plan, develop and staff a Los Angeles information center. (Pg 51)	
Plan, produce and install information facility at LAX. (Pg 53)	
Develop and operate Tier I visitor centers at gateway locations:	
Malibu Creek State Park. (Pg 120)	
Santa Monica. (Pg 131)	
Malibu Bluffs. (Pg 133)	
Point Mugu Lagoon. (Pg 134)	
NPS and partners will establish and maintain Tier II contact stations at appropriate locations:	
Leo Carrillo State Park. (Pg 110)	
Point Mugu State Park. (Pg 112)	
Malibu Creek Nature Center. (Pg 121)	
Paramount Ranch. (Pg 122)	

Reagan Ranch. (Pg 125)	
Trippet. (Pg 127)	
Temescal. (Pg 127)	
Will Rogers State Historical Park. (Pg 128)	
Explore potential at Topanga near PCH. (Pg 128)	
Adamson House. (Pg 137)	
William O. Douglas Outdoor Center. (Pg 145)	
Coldwater. (Pg 146)	
Establish Tier III sites at appropriate gateways and intersections. (Pg 71)	
Develop Tier II or III facility at joint NPS/CSP administrative facility. (Pg 125)	
Upgrade facilities, media and activities at Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center. (Pg 116)	
Plan and develop a film history center and museum at Paramount Ranch. (Pg 123)	
<b>Personal Services</b>	
Develop and present recreational skill, special event, education activities in communities in and around recreation area. (Pg 55)	
Establish Outreach Coordinator position. (Pg 56)	
Develop cooperative training program. (Pg 77)	
Build park- wide personal service program around stationed and roving activities. (Pg 83)	
Develop Zuma/Trancas program around a core of roving interpretation. (Pg 102)	
Build Simi Hills program around roving interpretation and a friends group. (Pg 108)	
Assist Point Mugu State Park with design and presentation of interpretation services. (Pg 112)	
Focus Rancho Sierra Vista program on roving and stationed. (Pg 114)	
Plan and present personal services for Coastal Corridor boat tour/shuttle. (Pg 130)	
Assist commercial stakeholders in development of recreation area theme in Coastal Corridor. (Pg 131)	
<b>Museum Exhibits</b>	
Design and produce traveling information display. (Pg 57)	
Develop specifications for procuring a traveling information van with exhibits. (Pg 57)	

Develop plans for design, production and installation of museum exhibits at all Tier I visitor centers and Tier II contact stations. (Pg 91)	
Plan, produce and install William O. Douglas Outdoor Center education exhibits (Pg 146)	
<b>Wayside Exhibits</b>	
Amend wayside exhibit proposal plan to include roadside pullouts, trail heads and developed areas. (Pg 72; 86)	
Plan, produce and install wayside exhibits at:	
Trail system in Cold Creek Preserve, Stunt Ranch, Red Rock Creek section. (Pg 97)	
Kanan Road; and evaluate potential for wayside exhibits at specific locations at Trancas/Zuma Canyon. (Pg 101)	
Zuma/Trancas- Ramirez trailheads to improve arrival experience. (Pg 102)	
Solstice. (Pg 105)	
Simi Hills for orientation, trail system, bulletin cases. (Pg 107)	
Nicholas Flat. (Pg 110)	
Circle X information station and overlooks. (Pg 117)	
Parking and trailhead at Arroyo Sequit. (Pg 118)	
Paramount Ranch western town - portable. (Pg 124)	
Topanga to updated exhibits and bulletin case for Mountain to Ocean Trail. (Pg 127)	
Shuttle stop and scenic boat tour information kiosks. (Pg 130; 132)	
Coastal Corridor roadside pullouts. (Pg 130)	
Point Mugu Lagoon parking, visitor center entry, and boardwalk. (Pg 134)	
Zuma Beach and Lagoon. (Pg 137)	
Point Dume. (Pg 138)	
Backbone Trail access points. (Pg 139)	
Evaluate and upgrade as appropriate signs, wayside exhibits and shade structures at Circle X trails. (Pg 117)	
Improve Castro Crest interpretation – trailhead wayside exhibit and site bulletin trail map. (Pg 121)	
Expand the number of roadside pullouts with wayside exhibits and kiosk shelters in Mulholland Corridor. (Pg 142)	
Evaluate and improve as appropriate site development for wayside exhibits in Mulholland Corridor. (Pg 141)	

<b>Signs/Way- finding</b>	
Work with neighbor communities to expand transportation links between communities and park experience sites. (Pg 57)	
Improve identification and way- finding media at Cold Creek Preserve/Stunt Ranch/Red Rock Creek. (Pg 97)	
Design produce and install intuitive way- finding media and facilities at Peter Strauss Ranch. (Pg 99)	
Improve way- finding / sign program at Solstice. (Pg 104)	
Improve pre- arrival and onsite navigation signs at the Simi Hills section. (Pg 108)	
Plan and install improved signs at Nicholas Flat. (Pg 110)	
Improve facilities and way- finding at Rancho Sierra Vista: structures, trails, signs and wayside exhibits. (Pg 114)	
Prominently display national recreation area entrance signs at eastern and western end of Coastal Corridor. (Pg 130)	
Plan and implement access improvements in Eastern End section: road/trail maps, improved trails. (Pg 144)	
<b>Audiovisuals</b>	
A web coordinator will maintain, enhance and expand park web site. (Pg 59; 88)	
Install video projection and sound system at headquarters contact station. (Pg 62)	
Evaluate potential and plan and produce as appropriate information radio broadcast stations throughout the national recreation area. (Pg 87; 129)	
Plan and produce a 7- 10 minute national recreation area orientation video. (Pg 88)	
Plan and produce a 20- 25 minute interpretive film integrating themes and significant resources. (Pg 89)	
Prepare funding proposal to develop real time video delivery of activities. (Pg 90)	
Produce and distribute through area sales facilities a video/disk collection of films shot in Santa Monica Mountains. (Pg 90)	
Plan and produce a variety of audio tour guides. (Pg 91)	
Plan and produce Coastal Corridor boat and road tour guide as CD/DVD or publication. (Pg 130)	
Seek funding to develop a Backbone Trail video. (Pg 140)	
Plan and produce audio driving tours of Mulholland Corridor. (Pg 142)	

<b>Publications</b>	
Produce and distribute a variety of publications. (Pg 85)	
Plan, produce and distribute a Nicholas Flat site bulletin. (Pg 110)	
Distribute a site bulletin / trail guide at Arroyo Sequit parking area. (Pg 118)	
Plan, produce and distribute a walking tour brochure at Paramount Ranch. (Pg 124)	
Develop loop tour with tour guide booklet and/or wayside exhibits at Topanga State Park. (Pg 127)	
Plan and produce publication media for the proposed Coastal Corridor boat tour/shuttle. (Pg 130)	
Plan and produce a Coastal Corridor road tour on CD or brochure. (Pg 130)	
<b>Education</b>	
Implement education program described in "Teaching New America" and long range interpretive plan. (Pg 78)	
Plan and develop a curriculum- based education facility at Rancho Sierra Vista. (Pg 114)	
Expand WODOC education activities and develop other interpretation linked to curriculum- based criteria. (Pg 145)	
<b>Partnerships</b>	
Continue, expand and initiate new partnerships. (Pg 74)	
Explore potential to develop marketing and media development partnerships. (Pg 91)	
Plan and implement partner programming. (Pg 110)	
Explore potential for additional partnerships at Rancho Sierra Vista. (Pg 114)	
Initiate and cultivate Paramount Ranch partnerships. (Pg 124)	
<b>Planning / Research</b>	
Program and develop marketing program / plan appropriate for current and potential audiences. (Pg 58; 94)	
Facilitate development of a recognizable national recreation area image/identity based on NPS Identity Program and reflecting partnership character. (Pg 73; 84)	

Program research and planning projects:	
Annual Implementation Plan (Pg 92)	
Revised Wayside Exhibit Proposal / Plan (Pg 93)	
Museum Exhibit Plans (Pg 93)	
Audiovisual Plan (Pg 93)	
Visitor Studies (Pg 93)	
Family Camping Action Plan (Pg 93)	
Trails Management Plan (Pg 94)	
Marketing Plan (Pg 94)	
Project Management Information System draft (Pg 94)	
Develop plan to adapt facilities and programs at Peter Strauss Ranch around Artist In Residence Program and casual experience opportunities. (Pg 99)	
Develop plan for redesign and reconstruction of amphitheater at Rocky Oaks. (Pg 99)	
Link hikes and publications at Rocky Oaks to Junior Ranger Program. (Pg 99)	
Develop Solstice natural and cultural interpretation program focused on formal education and casual use. (Pg 104)	
Conduct social science survey at Simi Hills. (Pg 107)	
Develop Rancho Sierra Vista interpretation related to cultural history, recreation and environmentalism. (Pg 114)	
Participate in planning recreational facilities at Circle X. (Pg 118)	
Establish research project to analyze resource significance and recommend interpretive topics at Arroyo Sequit. (Pg 118)	
Plan and develop media to interpret Sullivan Canyon and Mandeville. (Pg 127)	
Develop a Coastal Corridor emblem or logo to identify and unify all visitor sites in the corridor. (Pg 130)	
Establish a team to coordinate Backbone Trail and interpretive planning. (Pg 139)	
Develop a Mulholland Corridor logo to unify all sites. (Pg 141)	
Explore potential of designating Mulholland Corridor as a scenic byway. (Pg 142)	
Focus Eastern End information, interpretation and education on local stakeholders. (Pg 144)	
Approve and implement a cooperative agreement between NPS and MRCA for operation of William O. Douglas Outdoor Center. (Pg 144)	
Survey other successful education programs and apply survey results to improve William O. Douglas Outdoor Center program. (Pg 145)	

<b>Trails</b>	
Explore potential to develop short loop trails at Cold Creek Preserve/Stunt Ranch/Red Rock Creek (Pg 97)	
Plan, develop and maintain a short accessible loop trail with interpretive media at Rocky Oaks. (Pg 99)	
Develop an accessible trail and trailside media at Solstice Canyon. (Pg 105)	
Plan and construct an improved trail system including accessible trails at Simi Hills. (Pg 108)	
Plan and develop accessible loop trail with interpretive media at Paramount Ranch. (Pg 124)	
Participate in development of Mountain to Ocean Trail at Topanga. (Pg 127)	
Plan and develop improved trails in Eastern End section of the recreation area. (Pg 144)	
<b>Access</b>	
Make existing programs and facilities accessible. (Pg 94)	
Select sites and develop Wilderness on Wheels facilities. (Pg 95)	
Provide multi- lingual information. (Pg 95)	

# FUNDING SOURCES

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## **ANNUAL OPERATING FUNDS OR PARK BASE – FUND TYPE 01**

This primary source of recurring operational funding is used for park management, interpretation, visitor services, maintenance, and resource protection. Parks request base increases.

## **CHALLENGE COST- SHARE – FUND TYPE 01**

The program provides a maximum 50% cost- share grant to expedite mutually beneficial projects with outside sources. It increases public awareness and participation in the preservation and improvement of National Park Service recreational, cultural, and natural resources. Partners may include individuals, groups, companies, corporation, state and local agencies and other non- Federal entities that donate funds, equipment, supplies or labor to complete a park project.

## **CULTURAL CYCLIC MAINTENANCE – FUND TYPE 01**

Funds maintain and rehabilitate historic structures and museum collections. Appropriate projects include predictable tasks performed on a fixed periodic basis with a cycle longer than one year.

## **DONATIONS - FUND TYPE 26**

Parks can accept and use donated funds to meet the purposes of the National Park Service. Use of funds is controlled, must be consistent with legislative authority, and must meet grantor approval.

## **EMERGENCY RELIEF AND STORM DAMAGE – FUND TYPE 04**

Funding may be available for emergency repairs to park facilities damaged by acts of nature and structural fire. Requests for funding should be submitted to the Regional Office for review and approval.

**EXHIBIT REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION PROGRAM  
– FUND TYPE 01**

The Major Rehab Program administered by Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) provides repair, rehabilitation or replacement of audiovisuals and exhibits, preservation of artifacts and museum specimens, and acquisition of historic furnishings. Interpretive media projects in newly authorized areas may also be submitted.

**FEE PROGRAM – FUND TYPE 04**

No- year funding to offset (not enhance) park base funding allows flexibility to carry base funding across fiscal years on a limited basis.

**FEE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM – FUND TYPE 25**

The recreation fee demonstration program allows parks that collect fees to retain 80% of the revenues generated. The remaining 20 percent will be made available Service wide.

**INFORMATION PUBLICATION PROGRAM – FUND TYPE 01**

Park folders, handbooks, posters, and other publications prepared by Harpers Ferry Center for parks are funded from this account. Note: Regional offices frequently supplement funding for folders.

**NATIONAL PARKS PASS – FUND TYPE 22**

Seventy percent of proceeds from Pass sales remain with the selling park to fund approved projects. The remaining proceeds support projects Service wide.

**PARKS AS CLASSROOMS – FUND TYPE 01**

Funds may be requested to promote cooperative education programs combining park settings and classroom study. Eligible activities include those presented at the park, at schools and at community organizations near parks.

### **PARK CONCESSIONS FRANCHISE FEES – FUND TYPE 99**

Eighty percent of concessions franchise fees generated at a park are available to that park for approved projects (concessions related needs, environmental and energy efficiency projects, visitor services, resource management programs). The remaining 20 percent will be made available for service wide projects.

### **REGULAR CYCLIC MAINTENANCE – FUND TYPE 01**

To qualify for funding projects must be submitted to the park's ten-year cyclic maintenance program. Funds may be used to maintain park roads, trails, building, utility systems, and other facilities. Appropriate projects include tasks recurring on a fixed periodic cycle that is longer than one year and no longer than ten years. Some Regions also fund Exhibit Cyclic Maintenance and Natural Resources Cyclic Maintenance from this fund source.

### **REPAIR AND REHABILITATION – FUND TYPE 01**

Funding is used to cover the cost of repair and rehabilitation of existing facilities, roads, trails and utility systems. Permanent employee's salaries should not be charged to repair and rehabilitation accounts.

### **VOLUNTEERS- IN- PARKS (VIP) – FUND TYPE 01**

Funding may be requested for training and incidental expenses such as uniforms, period clothing, local travel, supplies, lodging, meals and other direct costs chargeable to the Volunteer- in- Parks Program.

# **MEDIA DESIGN AND PRODUCTION**

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There are many options for parks that want to accomplish media projects. Harpers Ferry Center staff, park staff, contractors and others can do the work; development processes vary with the source of media development assistance. Other project considerations include value analysis, Development Advisory Board review, government contracting procedures, and the need for partner collaboration. Park staff should collaborate with media specialists in developing an effective and efficient strategy.

## **STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING MEDIA PROJECTS**

### **Who Will Do the Work?**

Major tasks for team members include project management, review, research, planning, design, contracting, detailing, fabrication and evaluation. Team members can be assembled from several sources. Park staff may have expertise to lead or participate in project development. In addition to its own talented staff Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area can take advantage of its proximity to world class designers and fabricators. The National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center can develop projects in- house or through contractors. Contractors may be identified through a request for proposal or a indefinite quantity list. Other sources of possible assistance include subcontractors, architectural firms, partners, cooperating associations, friends groups, park volunteers, support offices, clusters, neighbor parks, regional offices and service centers.

### **How Will They Do It?**

Development processes vary, and tend to be linked to team preferences. Processes start with completion of a Long- Range Interpretive Plan for guidance. Typical National Park Service steps in the process include Schematic Design, Concept Design, Final Design, Fabrication, and Installation. Contractors typically follow a process

including Master Plan, Schematic Design, Concept Design, and Fabrication. Architectural firms may follow Concept Design with Schematic Design, Construction Documents, and Construction. Curators, Smithsonian, American Association of Museums and others can suggest additional processes.

### **How Long Will It Take?**

Schedules vary according to project conditions and team member availability. A normal process could include two years, one year for planning and design and a second year for production. Accelerated projects, not usually practical, may only take six months for planning and design and six months for production. A more extended project could require five years, 3.5 for planning and design and 1.5 to produce. Funding and facility development problems may delay either schedule.

### **How Much Will It Cost?**

Final project costs can vary. Determinates include how much money is available, estimated cost, who controls the budget, and what controls are used.

### **What Resources Does the Park Have?**

Processes begin with assessment of available resources. A survey of park staff will identify specialized skills for media work. Project managers will also identify graphics, film footage, artifacts, specimens, exhibit spaces, facilities, and other infrastructure that can contribute to a successful project.

## **KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MEDIA PROJECTS**

### **Launching a Media Project**

Recognize the importance of media in the park's overall program for visitors.

Insure that interpretive themes and objectives are defined before media planning.

Honor plans that have been approved – Long Range Interpretive Plans, General Management Plans, media plans.

Insure that project goals are clearly laid out in advance.

Involve media specialists in facility design from the beginning.

Make comments on media concepts, techniques, and solutions early in the process.

Recognize the required on the part of park staff, and plan accordingly.

Invite park staff with needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to participate in planning.

Assign a project manager for the park, and grant authority to make decisions.

### **Planning, Designing, and Producing the Project**

Take time to prepare and use effective contracts and project agreements.

Allow the project team to exercise creativity - don't provide the solution up front.

Manage the budget in a clear and efficient way for the project team; don't let funding lapses or glitches stall the project.

Provide timely and constructive reviews of project submittals.

Insure that project requirements, policies and standards are met; consider universal design, object conservation, diverse audiences, and sustainability.

Work with partners and other stakeholders to promote teamwork, and to resolve potential problems and conflicts.

Systematically evaluate the effectiveness of media throughout the process.

Take ownership of the project before, during, and after completion.

# EVALUATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is an essential part of planning and operating a park interpretive program. Over the years it has become increasingly evident that interpretation facilities, media and activities benefit from evaluation. Evaluation should begin during planning and development of interpretive program components. A variety of evaluation activities tailored to specific tasks and questions to be answered should be an ongoing process following program implementation.

A complete evaluation program should include three cycles.

**Front- End Evaluations** are appropriate when conceptual planning considers themes, story lines and program ideas.

**Formative Evaluations** are done during a process, such as early fabrication of exhibits and test run of activities. Formative evaluations are increasing in the Park Service, especially with the implementation of GPRA and value analysis.

**Summative or Remedial Evaluations** are performed at the end of a process. Summative evaluations have been more common in government agencies. Performance is measured and assessed at the end of a fiscal year. Achievement of media objectives is determined after the media are installed for a period of time. Achievement of short- term educational goals is measured at the conclusion of a program.

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EVALUATION PROGRAM

**Visitor Services Project** assesses visitor backgrounds, preferences, activities, and opinions through surveys. The Cooperative Park Study Unit (CPSU) at the University of Idaho coordinates the program.

**Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)** holds offices and parks accountable for defining and assessing desired outcomes. Park staff conducts evaluation of goal accomplishment annually.

**Value Analysis Program** assesses the cost effectiveness of design and construction projects in excess of \$500,000.

**Post Occupancy Evaluation Program (POE)** assesses the effectiveness of interpretive facilities and media. The program is coordinated by Denver Service Center and Harpers Ferry Center and may be applied following implementation of media proposals.

**Post Construction Evaluation** coordinated by Denver Service Center looks at the quality of construction of facilities built by DSC.

**Park Initiated Evaluations** are conducted or contracted by parks with assistance from regional offices, service centers and the Washington Office.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is one of the leading national park areas in education program evaluations. Park materials have been copied by other national park and environmental education sites. The recreation area education program uses several instruments to measure student and teacher attitudes and student knowledge. These include pre- visit and post- visit testing and teacher and student evaluation. The Cultural Resources program also uses teacher evaluation instruments. Park staff also uses Assessing Parks as Classrooms program and has welcomed independent evaluators such as National Science Teachers Association.

## **TECHNIQUES**

The following techniques are recommended as **Park Initiated Evaluations**. These methods were selected because they can be applied with relative ease and because they represent techniques with low to moderate cost and time commitments that yield moderate to high value/benefits. A Field Guide for Evaluating National Park Service Interpretation by Brett Wright and Marcella Wells provides a complete description of these and other techniques.

### **Importance/Performance Analysis**

Cost – Low    Time - Moderate    Value – High

This analysis, more quantitative than qualitative, is an empirical test used to obtain assessment of visitor satisfaction. The analysis helps determine which areas of a program require the most resources and

attention, which resources could be reduced or eliminated from particular areas of a program, or which efforts should be maintained. This technique is easily understood, easily displayed, easily interpreted to obtain data that can be applied readily to program decisions. It can be used to evaluate both overall program as well as single activities.

### **Auditing**

Cost – Moderate    Time - Moderate    Value - Moderate/High

Auditing helps supervisors guide development of interpretive activities and interpreters improve their performance. The auditor and interpreter set and discuss objectives prior to the audit. The auditor then conducts the formal audit using checklists adapted to the program being audited. A post- audit conference, a direct two- way communication, must take place as soon as possible after the formal audit. It provides prompt feedback to the interpreter being audited and provide basis for follow- up coaching. The evaluator is able to assess interpreter's actual performance in terms of content and technique. Coaching aspects of the audit to lessen the intimidation of the evaluation process and provide the opportunity to correct inconsistencies before they become habit.

### **Interviewing**

Cost - Low/Moderate    Time - High    Value – High

There are three approaches to interviewing. In each a single interviewer facilitates the conversation to gather data that reveals the interviewees perspective by allowing them to express their understanding of a situation in their own words. The Informal Conversational Interview, or unstructured interview, presents open-ended questions in spontaneous, free- flowing conversation. The Interview Guide Approach, or semi- structured interview, uses predetermined questions or issues, but the interviewer adapts wording and sequence flexibly during the interview. This approach may be used effectively for group interviews where the facilitator focuses the conversation. The Standardized Open Ended Interview presents the same carefully worded questions in the same sequence to all interviewees. This method reduces interviewer bias and makes data analysis easier than other methods. Regardless of the approach to interviewing, response rates for interviews are usually higher than with a questionnaire and more complex issues can be addressed.

## **Focus Groups**

Cost - Low    Time - Moderate    Value - High

Focus groups are helpful as formative and summative evaluations. They capitalize on the value of group dynamics to assure high validity while examining issues and concerns in a social context. This technique yields qualitative information often missed in statistical studies. It can be used to evaluate the message transmitted, determine visitor perceptions, measure strengths and weaknesses, or anticipate visitor needs for both personal and non- personal interpretation. Small groups led by a well- trained facilitator discuss a particular question, concern or problem using a study guide. Focus Groups: A Tool for Evaluating Interpretive Services, a National Park Service training package, describes procedures for conducting focus group evaluations.

## **Observation**

Cost - Low    Time - Moderate/High    Value - Moderate/High

This qualitative technique can effectively evaluate interpretive episodes as they occur. Observing people in a natural setting can reveal high quality information not revealed by more quantitative techniques. Observational data helps understand the impacts of interpretive programs without encumbering visitors. It can be applied to interpretation in a variety of overt and covert observation strategies (direct, indirect, unobtrusive, and interactive) to gather observational data. The evaluator might observe Statistical Evidence such as program attendance and other visitor use data. Physical Evidence of tile and carpet wear around exhibits, trail wear and wear on exhibit material can expose visitor interests and desires. Archival Evidence includes permits, sales records, number of complaints and compliments and trail logs. Participant Observation of non- participation, time dedicated to a particular activity, body language and language and conversation reveals interests. Use of video or audio tape, still photography of time-lapse photography illustrates Contrived Observation techniques.

## **Connoisseurship and Criticism**

Cost - Moderate    Time - Low/Moderate    Value - Moderate

The strength of this technique lies in its capability to turn trained observation into statements about interpretive quality through interpretation and evaluation of what is observed. This qualitative

method yields valuable information about content, quality, and presentation of interpretive activities. An evaluator with training, experience and refined perceptual capabilities conducts the evaluation and prepares a critical narrative to help interpreters see, understand and appraise situations being critiqued. The written critique includes three components. A descriptive section presents a vivid and factual description of the situation. An interpretive section accounts for the interactions perceived in the situation by interpreting processes observed. The evaluator presents value judgments based on criteria related to the specific situation and the needs of the creator or presenter of the interpretive experience.



# APPENDICES



# PLANNING TEAM AND CONSULTANTS

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## SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Barbara Applebaum	Park Ranger
Debbie Conway	Chief of Interpretation
Marion Guthrie- Kennedy	Park Ranger
Ted Hilmer	Deputy Superintendent
Ken Low	Park Ranger
Mike Malone	Park Ranger
Arnie Miller	Park Ranger
Woody Smeck	Superintendent
Amy Yee	Park Ranger

## HARPERS FERRY CENTER

Keith Morgan	Park Ranger- Planner (Team Leader)
Polly Nordstrand	Exhibit Curator/Museum Design
Tim Radford	Audiovisual Producer - Director

## PARK PARTNERS

Cara O'Brien	California State Parks
??????????????	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

# PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY

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## GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETIVE MEDIA – JUNE 1999

The following guidelines were prepared by the Harpers Ferry Center Accessibility Task Force to advise the National Park Service concerning interpretive media planning and design.

### Statement of Purpose

This document is a guide for promoting full access to interpretive media to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. Just as the needs and abilities of individuals cannot be reduced to simple statements, it is impossible to construct guidelines for interpretive media that can apply to every situation in the National Park System.

These guidelines define a high level of programmatic access that can be met in most situations. They articulate key areas of concern and note generally accepted solutions. Due to the diversity of park resources and the variety of interpretive situations, flexibility and versatility are important.

Each interpretive medium contributes to the total park program. All media have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and it is our intent to capitalize on their strengths and provide alternatives where they are deficient. It should also be understood that any interpretive medium is just one component of the overall park experience. In some instances, especially with regard to learning disabilities, personal services, that is one-on-one interaction, may be the most appropriate and versatile interpretive approach.

In the final analysis, interpretive design is subjective, and dependent on aesthetic considerations as well as the particular characteristics and resources available for a specific program. Success or failure should be evaluated by examining all interpretive offerings of a park. Due to the unique characteristics of each situation, parks should be evaluated on a

case by case basis. Nonetheless, the goal is to fully comply with NPS policy:

**"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."**

NPS Special Directive 83, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

### **Audiovisual Programs**

Audiovisual programs include video programs, and audio and interactive programs. As a matter of policy, all audiovisual programs produced by the Harper's Ferry Center will include some method of captioning. The approach used will vary according to the conditions of the installation area and the media format used, and will be selected in consultation with the parks and regions.

The captioning method will be identified as early as possible in the planning process and will be presented in an integrated setting where possible. To the extent possible, visitors will be offered a choice in viewing captioned or uncaptioned versions, but in situations where a choice is not possible or feasible a captioned version of all programs will be made available. Park management will decide on the most appropriate operational approach for the particular site.

### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

1. The theater, auditorium, or viewing area should be accessible and free of architectural barriers, or alternative accommodations will be provided, UFAS 4.1.
2. Wheelchair locations will be provided according to ratios outlined in UFAS 4.1.2(18a).
3. Viewing heights and angles will be favorable for those in designated wheelchair locations.
4. In designing video or interactive components, control mechanisms will be placed in accessible location, usually

between 9" and 48" from the ground and no more than 24" deep.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Simultaneous audio description will be considered for installations where the equipment can be properly installed and maintained.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. All audiovisual programs will be produced with appropriate captions.
2. Copies of scripts will be provided to the parks as a standard procedure.
3. Audio amplification and listening systems will be provided in accordance with UFAS 4.1.2(l 8b).

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH LEARNING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Unnecessarily complex and confusing concepts will be avoided.
2. Graphic elements will be chosen to communicate without reliance on the verbal component.
3. Narration will be concise and free of unnecessary jargon and technical information.

#### **Exhibits**

Numerous factors affect the design of exhibits, reflecting the unique circumstances of the specific space and the nature of the materials to be interpreted. It is clear that thoughtful, sensitive design can go a long way in producing exhibits that can be enjoyed by a broad range of people. Yet, due to the diversity of situations encountered, it is impossible to articulate guidelines that can be applied universally.

In some situations, the exhibit designer has little or no control over the space. Often exhibits are placed in areas ill suited for that purpose, they may incorporate large or unyielding specimens, they may incorporate sensitive artifacts that require special environmental controls, and room decor or architectural features may dictate certain solutions. All in all, exhibit design is an art that defies simple description. However, one central concern is to communicate the message to the largest audience possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to eliminate any factors limiting communication through physical modification or by providing an alternate means of communication.

## **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

**Note:** The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is the standard followed by the National Park Service and is therefore the basis for the accessibility standards for exhibits, where applicable.

1. Height/position of labels: Body copy on vertical exhibit walls should be placed at between 36" and 60" from the floor.
2. Artifact Cases:
  - a. Maximum height of floor of artifact case display area shall be no higher than 30" from the floor of the room. This includes vitrines that are recessed into an exhibit wall.
  - b. Artifact labels should be placed so as to be visible to a person within a 43" to 51" eye level. This includes mounting labels within the case at an angle to maximize its visibility to all viewers.
3. Touchable Exhibits: Touchable exhibits positioned horizontally should be placed no higher than 30" from the floor. Also, if the exhibit is approachable only on one side, it should be no deeper than 31".
4. Railings/barriers: Railings around any horizontal model or exhibit element shall have a maximum height of 36" from the floor.
5. Information desks: Information desks and sales counters shall include a section made to accommodate both a visitor in a wheelchair and an employee in a wheelchair working on the other

side. A section of the desk/counter shall have the following dimensions:

- a. Height from the floor to the top: 28 to 34 inches. (ADAAG 4.32.4)
- b. Minimum knee clearance space: 27" high, 30" wide and 19" deep of clearance underneath the desk is the minimum space required under ADAAG 4.32.3, but a space 30" high, 36" wide and 24" deep is recommended.
- c. Width of top surface of section: at least 36 inches. Additional space must be provided for any equipment such as a cash register.
- d. Area underneath desk: Since both sides of the desk may have to accommodate a wheelchair, this area should be open all the way through to the other side. In addition, there should be no sharp or abrasive surfaces underneath the desk. The floor space behind the counter shall be free of obstructions.

6. Circulation Space:

- a. Passageways through exhibits shall be at least 36" wide.
- b. If an exhibit passageway reaches a dead-end, an area 60" by 78" should be provided at the end for turning around.
- c. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges between 27" and 80" above the floor shall protrude no more than 4" in passageways or aisles. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges at or below 27" above the floor can protrude any amount.
- d. Freestanding objects mounted on posts or pylons may overhang a maximum of 12" from 27" to 80" above the floor. (ADAAG 4.4.1)
- e. Protruding objects shall not reduce the clear width of an accessible route to less than the minimum required amount. (ADAAG 4.4.1)
- f. Passageways or other circulation spaces shall have a minimum clear head room of 80". For example, signage hanging from the

ceiling must have at least 80" from the floor to the bottom edge of the sign. (ADAAG 4.4.2)

7. Floors:

- a. Floors and ramps shall be stable, level, firm and slip- resistant.
- b. Changes in level between 1/4" and 1/2" shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1:2. Changes in level greater than 1/2" shall be accomplished by means of a ramp that complies with ADAAG 4.7 or 4.8. (ADAAG 4.5.2)
- c. Carpet in exhibit areas shall comply with ADAAG 4.5.3 for pile height, texture, pad thickness, and trim.

8. Seating - Interactive Stations/Work Areas: The minimum knee space underneath a work desk is 27" high, 30" wide and 19" deep, with a clear floor space of at least 30" by 30" in front. The top of the desk or work surface shall be between 28" and 34" from the floor. (ADAAG 4.32, Fig.45)

#### GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

1. Tactile models and other touchable exhibit items should be used whenever possible. Examples of touchable exhibit elements include relief maps, scale models, raised images of simple graphics, reproduction objects, and replaceable objects (such as natural history or geological specimens, cultural history items, etc.).
2. Typography - Readability of exhibit labels by visitors with various degrees of visual impairment shall be maximized by using the following guidelines:
  - a. Type size - No type in the exhibit shall be smaller than 24 point.
  - b. Typeface - The most readable typefaces should be used whenever possible, particularly for body copy. They are: Times Roman, Palatino, Century, Helvetica and Universe.
  - c. Styles, Spacing - Text set in both caps and lower case is easier to read than all caps. Choose letter spacing and word spacing for maximum readability. Avoid too much italic type.

- d. **Line Length** - Limit the line length for body copy to no more than 45 to 50 characters per line.
- e. **Amount of Text** - Each unit of body copy should have a maximum of 45- 60 words.
- f. **Margins** - Flush left, ragged right margins are easiest to read.

3. **Color:**

- a. **Type/Background Contrast** - Percentage of contrast between the type and the background should be a minimum of 70%.
- b. **Red/Green** - Do not use red on green or green on red as the type/background color combination.
- c. Do not place body copy on top of graphic images that impair readability.

4. **Samples:** During the design process, it is recommended that samples be made for review of all size, typeface and color combinations for labels in that exhibit.

5. **Exhibit Lighting:**

- a. All labels shall receive sufficient, even light for good readability. Exhibit text in areas where light levels have been reduced for conservation purposes should have a minimum of 10 foot-candles of illumination.
- b. Harsh reflections and glare should be avoided.
- c. The lighting system shall be flexible enough to allow adjustments on- site.
- d. Transitions between the floor and walls, columns or other structures should be made clearly visible. Finishes for vertical surfaces should contrast clearly with the floor finish. Floor circulation routes should have a minimum of 10 foot- candles of illumination.

6. **Signage:** When permanent building signage is required as a part of an exhibit project, the ADAAG guidelines shall be consulted.

Signs, which designate permanent rooms and spaces, shall comply with ADAAG 4.30.1, 4.30.4, 4.30.5, and 4.30.6. Other signs, which provide direction to or information about functional spaces of the building, shall comply with ADAAG 4.30.1, 4.30.2, 4.30.3, and 4.30.5. Note: When the International Symbol of Accessibility (wheelchair symbol) is used, the word "Handicapped" shall not be used beneath the symbol. Instead, use the word "Accessible".

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Information presented via audio formats will be duplicated in a visual medium, such as in the exhibit label copy or by captioning. All video programs incorporated into the exhibit, which contain audio, shall be open captioned.
2. Amplification systems and volume controls should be incorporated with audio equipment used individually by the visitor, such as audio handsets.
3. Information desks shall allow for Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) equipment.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH LEARNING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. The exhibits will present the main interpretive themes on a variety of levels of complexity, so people with varying abilities and interests can understand them.
2. The exhibits should avoid unnecessarily complex and confusing topics, technical terms, and unfamiliar expressions. Pronunciation aids should be provided where appropriate.
3. Graphic elements shall be used to communicate non-verbally.
4. The exhibits shall be a multi-sensory experience. Techniques to maximize the number of senses used in the exhibits should be encouraged.
5. Exhibit design shall use color and other creative approaches to facilitate comprehension of maps by visitors with directional impairments.

## **Historic Furnishings**

Historically furnished rooms offer the public a unique interpretive experience by placing visitors within historic spaces. Surrounded by historic artifacts visitors can feel the spaces "come alive" and relate more directly to the historic events or personalities commemorated by the park.

Accessibility is problematical in many NPS furnished sites because of the very nature of historic architecture. Buildings were erected with a functional point of view that is many times at odds with our modern views of accessibility.

The approach used to convey the experience of historically furnished spaces will vary from site to site. The goals, however, will remain the same, to give the public as rich an interpretive experience as possible given the nature of the structure.

## **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

1. The exhibit space should be free of architectural barriers or a method of alternate accommodation should be provided, such as slide programs, videotaped tours, visual aids, dioramas, etc.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances shall (when possible) meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3 to provide adequate clearance for wheelchair routes.
3. Ramps shall be as gradual as possible and not exceed a 1" rise in 12" run, and conform to UFAS 4.8.
4. Railings and room barriers will be constructed to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.
5. In the planning and design process, furnishing inaccessible areas, such as upper floors of historic buildings, will be discouraged unless essential for interpretation.
6. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections when viewed from a wheelchair.

7. Alternative methods of interpretation, such as audiovisual programs, audio description, photo albums, and personal services will be used in areas that present difficulty for visitors with physical impairments.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Exhibit typefaces will be selected for readability and legibility, and conform to good industry practice.
2. Audio description will be used to describe furnished rooms, where appropriate.
3. Windows will be treated with film to provide balanced light levels and minimize glare.
4. Where appropriate, visitor- controlled rheostat- type lighting will be provided to augment general room lighting.
5. Where appropriate and when proper clearance has been approved, surplus artifacts or reproductions will be utilized as "hands- on" tactile interpretive devices.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Information about room interiors will be presented in a visual medium such as exhibit copy, text, pamphlets, etc.
2. Captions will be provided for all AV programs relating to historic furnishing.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH LEARNING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Where appropriate, hands- on participatory elements geared to the level of visitor capabilities will be used.
2. Living history activities and demonstrations, which utilize the physical space as a method of providing multi- sensory experiences, will be encouraged.

## **Publications**

A variety of publications are offered to visitors, ranging from park folders, which provide an overview and orientation to a park, to more comprehensive handbooks. Each park folder should give a brief description of services available to visitors with disabilities, list significant barriers, and note the existence of TDD phone numbers, if available.

In addition, informal site bulletins are often produced to provide more specialized information about a specific site or topic. It is recommended that each park produce an easily updateable "Accessibility Site Bulletin" which could include detailed information about the specific programs, services, and opportunities available for visitors with disabilities and to describe barriers that are present in the park. A template for this site bulletin will be on the Division of Publications website for parks to create with ease, a consistent look throughout the park service. These bulletins should be in large type, 16 points minimum and follow the large- print criteria below.

### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Park folders, site bulletins, and sales literature will be distributed from accessible locations and heights.
2. Park folders and Accessibility Site Bulletins should endeavor to carry information on the accessibility of buildings, trails, and programs by visitors with disabilities.

### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Publications for the general public:
  - a. Text
    - (1) Size: the largest type size appropriate for the format.  
(Main body of text should be 10pt)
    - (2) Leading should be at least 20% greater than the font size used.
    - (3) Proportional letter spacing
    - (4) Main body of text set in caps and lower case.
    - (5) Margins are flush left and ragged right
    - (6) Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.

- (7) Ink coverage is dense
- (8) Underlining does not connect with the letters being underlined.
- (9) Contrast of typeface and illustrations to background is high (70% contrast is recommended)
- (10) Photographs have a wide range of gray scale variation.
- (11) Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and 8 pt type minimum.
- (12) No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
- (13) Reversal type should be minimum of 11 point medium or bold sans serif type.

b. The paper:

- (1) Surface preferred is a matte finish. Dull- coated stock is acceptable.
- (2) Has sufficient weight to avoid “show- through” on pages printed on both sides.

2. Large- print version publications:

a. Text

- (1) Size: minimum 16 point type.
- (2) Leading is 16 on 20pt.
- (3) Proportional letter spacing
- (4) Main body of text set in caps and lower case.
- (5) Margins are flush left and ragged right.
- (6) Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.
- (7) Ink coverage is dense.
- (8) Underlining does not connect with the letters being underlined.
- (9) Contrast of typeface and illustrations to background is high (70% contrast is recommended)
- (10) Photographs have a wide range of gray scale variation.
- (11) Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and minimum 14 pt type.
- (12) No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
- (13) Sans- serif or simple- serif typeface
- (14) No oblique or italic typefaces
- (15) Maximum of 50 characters (average) per line.
- (16) No type is printed over other designs.

- (17) Document has a flexible binding, preferably one that allows the publication to lie flat.
- (18) Gutter margins are a minimum of 22mm; outside margin smaller but not less than 13mm.

b. Paper:

- (1) Surface is off- white or natural with matte finish.
- (2) Has sufficient weight to avoid “show- through” on pages printed on both sides.

3. Maps:

- a. The less clutter the map, the more visitors that can use it.
  - b. The ultimate is one map that is large- print and tactile.
  - c. Raised line/tactile maps are something that could be developed in future, using our present digital files and a Thermoform machine. Lines are distinguished by line-weight, color and height. Areas are distinguished by color, height, and texture.
  - d. The digital maps are on an accessible web site.
  - e. Same paper guides as above.
  - f. Contrast of typeface background is high. (70% contrast is recommended)
  - g. Proportional letter spacing
  - h. Labels set in caps and lower case
  - i. Map notes are flush left and ragged right.
  - j. Little or no hyphenation is used as ends of lines.
  - k. No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
  - l. Sans- serif or simple- serif typeface.
4. The text contained in the park folder should also be available on audiocassette, CD and accessible web site. Handbooks, accessibility guides, and other publications should be similarly recorded where possible.
5. The official park publication is available in a word processing format. This could be translated into Braille as needed.

## **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Park site bulletins will note the availability of such special services as sign language interpretation and captioned programs.

## **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH LEARNING IMPAIRMENTS**

1. The park site bulletin should list any special services available to these visitors.
2. Publications:
  - a. Use language that appropriately describes persons with disabilities.
  - b. Topics will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
  - c. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
  - d. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
  - e. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.

### **Wayside Exhibits**

Wayside exhibits, which include outdoor interpretive exhibits and signs, orientation shelter exhibits, trailhead exhibits, and bulletin boards, offer special advantages to visitors with disabilities. The liberal use of photographs, artwork, diagrams, and maps, combined with highly readable type, make wayside exhibits an excellent medium for visitors with hearing and learning impairments. For visitors with sight impairments, waysides offer large type and high legibility.

Although a limited number of NPS wayside exhibits will always be inaccessible to visitors with mobility impairments, the great majority is placed at accessible pullouts, viewpoints, parking areas, and trailheads.

The NPS accessibility guidelines for wayside exhibits help insure a standard of quality that will be appreciated by all visitors. Nearly everyone benefits from high quality graphics, readable type,

comfortable base designs, accessible locations, hard- surfaced exhibit pads, and well- landscaped exhibit sites.

While waysides are valuable on- site "interpreters," it should be remembered that the park resources themselves are the primary things visitors come to experience. Good waysides focus attention on the features they interpret, and not on themselves. A wayside exhibit is only one of the many interpretive tools which visitors can use to enhance their appreciation of a park.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Wayside exhibits will be installed at accessible locations whenever possible.
2. Wayside exhibits will be installed at heights and angles favorable for viewing by most visitors including those in wheelchairs. For standard NPS low- profile units the recommended height is 30 inches from the bottom edge of the exhibit panel to the finished grade; for vertical exhibits the height of 6- 28 inches.
3. Trailhead exhibits will include information on trail conditions which affect accessibility.
4. Wayside exhibit sites will have level, hard surfaced exhibit pads.
5. Exhibit sites will offer clear, unrestricted views of park features described in exhibits.

#### **GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

1. Exhibit type will be as legible and readable as possible.
2. Panel colors will be selected to reduce eyestrain and glare, and to provide excellent readability under field conditions. White should not be used as a background color.
3. Selected wayside exhibits may incorporate audio stations or tactile elements such as models, texture blocks, and relief maps.
4. For all major features interpreted by wayside exhibits, the park should offer non- visual interpretation covering the same

subject matter. Examples include cassette tape tours, radio messages, and ranger talks.

5. Appropriate tactile cues should be provided to help visually impaired visitors locate exhibits.

#### GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

1. Wayside exhibits will communicate visually, and will rely heavily on graphics to interpret park resources.
2. Essential information included in audio station messages will be duplicated in written form, either as part of the exhibit text or with printed material.

#### GUIDELINES AFFECTING VISITORS WITH LEARNING IMPAIRMENTS

1. Topics for wayside exhibits will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
2. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
3. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
4. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.

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