



SANTA MONICA  
MOUNTAINS



National Park Service

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

# Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

## Long-Range Interpretive Plan

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*Front Cover:* Education programs in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area reach thousands of students each year.

*\* All document photos are credited to NPS unless otherwise noted*

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Together, government agencies, landowners, and the people who use this land are working to provide places for people to live, work, and play while protecting the mountains for future generations.

# Executive Summary

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) protects a spectacular California landscape in and around Los Angeles, serves a diverse public and protects a fragile, diminishing the Mediterranean ecosystem that harbors hundreds of species of plants and wildlife. The park is a cooperative effort joining federal, state, and local park agencies with private landowners to protect this extraordinary terrain. With the opening of a new, centrally located Interagency Visitor Center in 2012, SMMNRA is well positioned to achieve a higher profile among existing and potential users of the park within the greater Los Angeles region and beyond.

This long-range interpretive plan, developed in 2011-12 with input from numerous stakeholders and park partners, documents the park's foundational elements and offers four primary interpretive themes to help park stewards assimilate, connect with and interpret SMMNRA's many recreational, cultural, and natural features for millions of visitors each year. Each primary theme is supported by subthemes and storylines that offer further guidance on creative, engaging ways to tell the many stories of the Santa Monica Mountains.

## **SMMNRA Primary Interpretive 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/Cultures**

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

### **Mediterranean Ecosystem**

In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves a substantial portion of the rare Mediterranean biome (ecosystem), a rapidly diminishing resource that exists in only five places in the world.

### **Gateway to the National Park System**

SMMNRA is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages and the need to preserve them.

In addition to the primary themes, this interpretive plan describes a number of ideal visitor experiences at the park – things visitors can do, learn, feel, and be inspired by.

The plan then recommends specific ways for the park to enhance and improve its interpretive program over the next ten years. Divided into short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities, the recommendations offer a strategic, sequenced approach for improving and expanding SMMNRA visitor experiences over the coming decade.

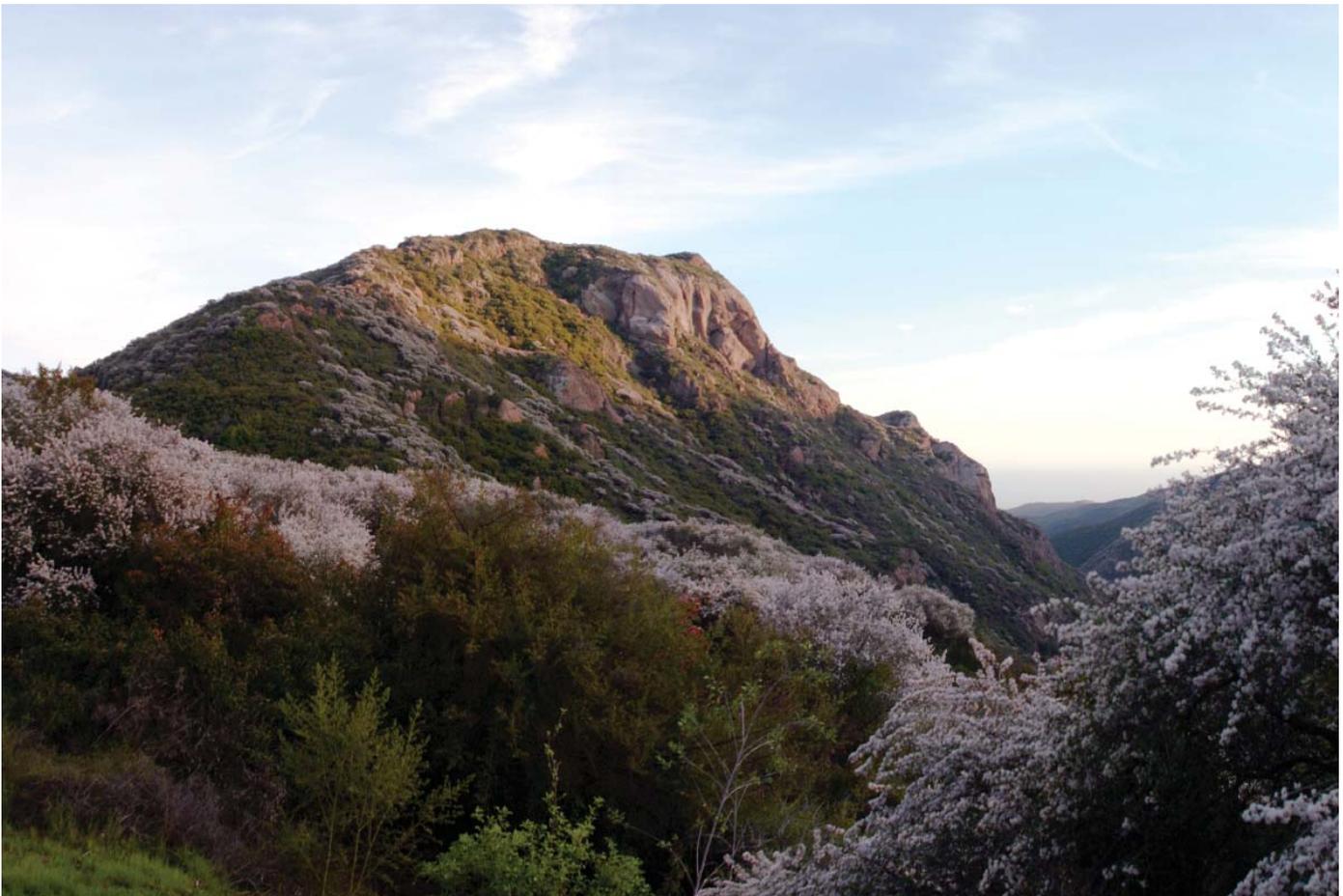
## Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations for visitor engagement, partnerships, outreach, and volunteerism aim are intended to strengthen the park's ties in the community, thereby building visitation and stewardship over time among a large and diverse population. Specifically, the park is encouraged to reach out to potential visitors by improving and expanding its branding and identity in greater Los Angeles; moving forward with plans for a new office in the historic Olvera Street area in downtown Los Angeles, a catalyst for outreach activities focused especially for urban, under-served audiences; and expanding outreach efforts to neighborhoods immediately adjoining the park by promoting the park as a resource for individual and community wellness.

Other recommendations focus on interpretive media, ranging from major interior exhibits to ephemeral social media posts on Twitter or Facebook. This plan recommends that the park continue to expand its web and new media presence in multiple ways, including the NPS website, Facebook, and other social media. The park also needs to upgrade and expand its use of more traditional audiovisual materials, from podcasts and YouTube videos to a major new film about the park.

The plan also supports the creation of additional branding/wayfinding and wayside interpretive signs, an effort that is already underway. Another category of need is for interior exhibits. Although the new Interagency Visitor Center will have new, state-of-the-art exhibits, the other frequently visited visitor contact facilities in the park (Satwiwa, Circle X, Franklin Canyon) should be scheduled for new exhibits within the next four to six years.

To support these and other recommendations, the plan recommends filling all existing staff vacancies as well as adding five new positions to help manage partnership relations, provide more outreach capacity, increase interpretive programming and informal interpretive opportunities, and staff visitor facilities.



Spring brings blooming Ceanothus to Zuma Canyon.



## Introduction

*"In my heart nothing is bigger than this place."*

- Nadiya Littlewarrior, May 1, 2005

## Background

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) is the nation's largest urban national park. Encompassing 153,250 acres of rugged mountains, narrow canyons, chaparral, and pounding surf, this splendid landscape embodies the best of southern California. Visitors can enjoy sunny skies and cool breezes, abundant wildlife, flowering plants, and cultural and historic sites.

The recreation area is located in one of the nation's fastest growing and most diverse communities. More than 17 million people live within an hour's drive of SMMNRA, including the diverse population of greater Los Angeles, the second-largest city in the United States. The Santa Monica Mountains rise out of the heart of Los Angeles and follow the Pacific coast some 50 miles. The National Recreation Area created to protect these mountains is at once an integral part of the city... and a world apart.

The park has been protected as a mosaic of public and private lands. As such, it functions as a vast, sustaining habitat for hundreds of California's most pressured native plants and animals, constituting one of the highest concentrations of rare species in the United States.

The area is also one of the best examples of the Mediterranean biome, a land type that is among the rarest on earth. Due to the mild and pleasant climate, this biome is ideal for human occupation, a significant reason why only 20% of the world's Mediterranean biomes remain intact.

Administratively, the recreation area is a cooperative effort that joins federal, state, and local park agencies with private landowners to protect the natural and cultural resources of this transverse mountain range and seashore. Of the authorized land area of 153,250 acres, roughly 80,000 acres are public lands. As of the first quarter of 2012, the largest landowners are California State Parks (35,844 acres), the National Park Service (23,495 acres), the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) (9,560 acres), and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (5,580 acres). These agencies working within the Santa Monica Mountains continue to acquire more acreage in the authorized land area as funding and tracts become available.



A rustic wagon under the shade of a valley oak invoke feelings of earlier times at Paramount Ranch.

## Creating a Long-Range Interpretive Plan

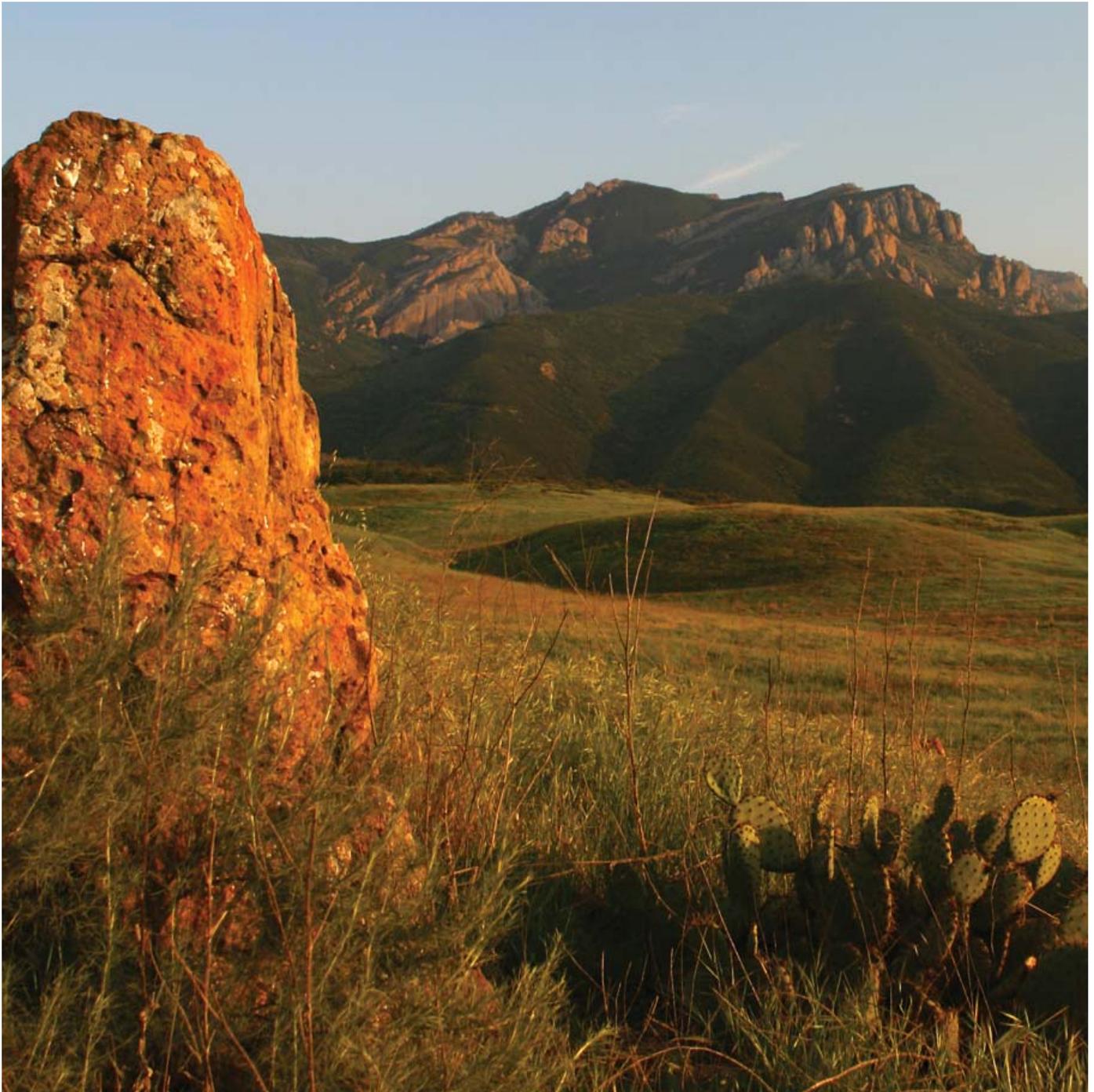
In the hierarchy of planning approaches used by the National Park Service (NPS), interpretive planning is the category of planning that focuses on visitors' enjoyment and appreciation of a site. Interpretive planning concentrates on what visitors might have opportunities to do, think, feel, learn, and become inspired by when they explore a given site. Interpretive planning analyzes how and why people choose to visit a site, what kinds of experiences they expect to have while there, and what kinds of programs and materials NPS management and partners can provide to enhance visitor experiences and inspire meaningful, personal connections with the land and its resources. While a park's management, land use, or facilities management planning may complement its interpretive plan, the interpretive plan stands as the fundamental planning tool for developing potential visitor experiences at a park.

A consultant team working closely with the NPS staff and park partners, including agency representatives, members of the public, and volunteers, developed this long-range interpretive plan (LRIP) for SMMNRA. Planning participants attended foundational and recommendations workshops in June and August of 2011. In the June workshops, participants reviewed the legislation, purpose, and significance statements establishing the park and shared their own perspectives and knowledge about what makes SMMNRA special. Based on workshop findings, a core planning team of NPS and partner staff members and consultants worked together to craft primary interpretive themes and subthemes to guide future interpretation for the park. In the August workshops, planning participants reviewed and revised the themes and engaged in a series of interactive exercises designed to elicit recommendations targeted by audience type, park locations, and preferred media. The core team reviewed and organized these recommendations, and the consultants then drafted the planning document for review.

With approval by partners, administrators, and the core planning team, this document provides guidance for interpretive services and programming for the park for the next seven to ten years. While the more detailed staffing and media recommendations in this plan pertain primarily to the National Park Service, the plan's over-arching scope and intent is to encompass the legislative history, primary interpretive themes, desired visitor experiences, existing conditions, and interpretive challenges of SMMNRA as a whole.

Barring legislative changes, the foundational elements in this plan are expected to remain constant over the life of the park. Specific recommendations about interpretive programs or media may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. In addition, further design documents must be produced to implement some of the recommendations set forth in the plan.





## Foundation for Planning

*"The way we protect our quality of life is to offer it to everybody. This must be a program that involves something for the whole city."*

- Sue Nelson, advocating national park status, 1978

## Historical Background

Efforts to preserve and protect the Santa Monica Mountains spans at least a century, with many participants, plans, and milestones along the way. One of the better-documented sagas began in 1892, when a Californian named Henry Keller sold his 13,000-acre Rancho Malibu to a wealthy Massachusetts transplant, Frederick H. Rindge.

After Frederick's death in 1905, his wife, Rhoda May Knight Rindge, fought to prevent highway and railroad intrusion into her property by proposing creation of a National Forest behind the ranch. By 1923, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce was encouraging Los Angeles County – unsuccessfully – to buy Rancho Malibu as parkland. In 1928, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. made specific recommendations regarding the Santa Monica Mountains in a landmark study supporting creation of state parks in California. Despite Olmsted's advice, Los Angeles County refused to acquire the bankrupt Rindge property in 1938 for \$1.1 million in back taxes – 17,000 acres for only \$64 per acre. Two years later (December 1940), the Rindge ranch was divided and sold at auction through the Rindge-controlled Marblehead Land Company. Potential buyers were advised in advertisements to hurry and choose among “ocean-front lots, sites for villas, hotels, golf clubs, estates, beach and yacht clubs, income and business lots, small summer home places, ranchitos, 100-[to] 640-acre ranchos, and acreage for further subdivision” – prescient descriptions 70 years ahead of the developed landscape of present-day Malibu.

Over the next few decades the state of California was able to acquire and protect a succession of notable sites in the area: Will Rogers State Historic Park (1944), Leo Carrillo State Beach (1953), Point Mugu State Park (1966), Topanga State Park (1967), Trippet Ranch (1971, as part of Topanga), and Malibu Creek State Park (1977).

Meanwhile, a potential “Toyon National Park” was first proposed in the 1950s. The idea was revived as “Toyon National Forest” in the 1970s, and then introduced in Congress in 1972 as an effort to establish Toyon National Park. By 1978, after extensive political maneuvering, public hearings, and numerous attempts at legislation, California Congressman Anthony C. Beilenson introduced Bill 12536 recommending protection of the region as a national recreation area. The bill establishing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area passed the U.S. House of Representatives in May 1978.

## Enabling Legislation

On November 10, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed the omnibus National Parks and Recreation Act, which authorized the creation of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area as the 295<sup>th</sup> unit of the National Park System.

In the 1978 Act establishing the recreation area, Congress finds that

1. there are significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, natural, archeological, and public health benefits provided by the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area;
2. there is a national interest in protecting and preserving these benefits for the residents of and visitors to the area; and
3. the State of California and its local units of government have authority to prevent or minimize adverse uses of the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area and can, to a great extent, protect the health, safety, and general welfare by the use of such authority.

The legislation goes on to charge the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, with managing the recreation area so as to:

“preserve and enhance its scenic, natural, and historical setting and its public health value as an airshed for the Southern California metropolitan area while providing for the recreational and educational need of the visiting public.”

Congress further directed that the National Park Service should serve as the lead coordinating agency for the cooperative administration of this complex national recreation area. This cooperative effort was formalized in a 2000 agreement signed by the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The conservancy, created in 1979 to succeed the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission, acquires lands and delegates their management to its Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.



School children are spellbound by a wildlife sighting during an education program.

## Park Mission, Purpose, and Significance

### Mission Statement

The National Park Service, California State Parks, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy created the following joint mission statement for the recreation area in 1997:

The mission of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area 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 is to provide 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.

### Park Purpose Statement

Park purpose statements explain why the site has been set aside as a unit of the National Park System. Purpose statements draw on the area's enabling legislation and function as fundamental criteria in determining future planning and management.

As stated in the language of the enabling legislation, SMMNRA was set aside for the following purposes:

1. there are significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, natural, archeological, and public health benefits provide by the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area; and
2. there is a national interest in protecting and preserving these benefits for the residents of and visitors to the area.



Ranger leading youth on an exploration of the great outdoors.

*(Credit: Ethan Kerr, Outward Bound Adventures)*

## Park Significance Statements

As presented in the 2002 General Management Plan, the following statements express why the resources and values of SMMNRA warrant national park designation:

- SMMNRA protects for the American people the greatest expanse of mainland Mediterranean ecosystems (biomes) in the National Park System. As such, it is among the world's rarest and most endangered land types, one that occurs in only five locations throughout the world.
- This extraordinarily diverse ecosystem is home to 26 distinct natural communities, from freshwater aquatic habitats and two of the last salt marshes on the Pacific Coast, to oak woodlands, valley oak savannas, and chaparral.
- The proximity of the national recreation area to a diverse urban population of over 17 million people is a unique opportunity to introduce this population to the national park system, its attendant health, recreation, and education benefits, and the importance of stewardship for these public lands.
- The recreation area is a critical haven for more than 450 animal species, including mountain lions, bobcats and golden eagles; more than 20 federal to state-listed threatened or endangered plants and animals; and another 46 animals and 11 plants that are federal or state species of concern. Together, these severely stressed plants and animals constitute one of the highest concentrations of rare species in the United States.
- More than 1,000 known archeological sites exist within the park's boundaries, reflecting human habitation dating back at least 10,000 years.
- Three structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and more than 73 archeological or historical sites are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register.
- Native American Indians have a long and deeply spiritual history of interaction with the Santa Monica Mountains, and many parts of the park are especially valued by them as places to seek spiritual renewal, conduct traditional ceremonies, and to gather plants for traditional purposes.
- The park demonstrates historical themes ranging from California's earliest exploration and settlement by Spain to its subsequent administration by the Republic of Mexico, as well as the course of Los Angeles' urbanization, from citrus groves to tract homes by way of oil development, motion pictures and freeways. Paramount Ranch, as a case in point, is held by some historians to be the nation's best remaining example of a film production facility from Hollywood's "Golden Era of Motion Pictures."

## Primary Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are the “main messages” about a place. These themes are centered on the fundamental ideas, concepts, and inherent meanings that should be readily apparent and accessible to every visitor who comes to the site. Themes give meaning and context to the purpose statements, national significance, and historic and cultural resources of the park. Well-crafted, focused themes inspire and provoke visitors into making highly personal, memorable intellectual and emotional connections to a site and its stories and resources.

Interpretive themes also give shape and coherence to interpretive programming and media, whether that content is delivered via ranger-led talks, wayside exhibits, special events and activities, educational curricula, large-scale exhibits, guided hiking expeditions, or digital and social media.

Depending on the complexity of the area’s resources, each primary theme may be subdivided into several subthemes that lead deeper into the site’s stories and resources. In this LRIP, each primary theme is followed by several subthemes with examples of potential storylines – a sampling of the resource-based stories, scientific details, and cultural history that interpreters may choose to illustrate the themes in ways that invite people to listen, learn, and care.

The following primary interpretive themes and subthemes represent the evolution of themes developed initially as part of a 2004 draft Long-Range Interpretive Plan, revisited in 2010 and 2011 as part of the design development phase for exhibits and programming for the new Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch, and refined in stakeholder and management workshops in summer 2011 for this LRIP. See Appendix E for interpretive storylines.

### Escape/Open Space

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

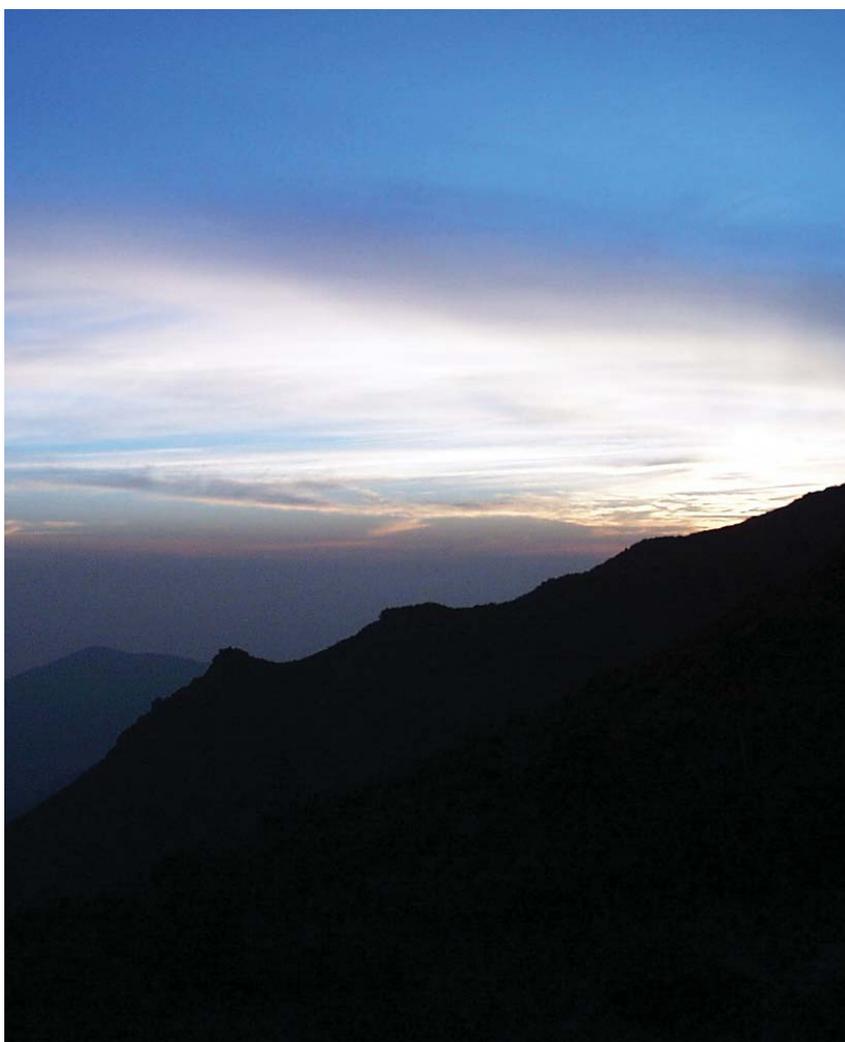
- Located near one of the nation’s most populated metropolitan areas, the almost 154,000-acre SMMNRA offers a wide array of outdoor recreational experiences.
- The diverse scenic natural and cultural landscapes of SMMNRA offer many opportunities to experience solitude, engage in quiet contemplation, and draw inspiration from the region’s long human history and immersion in the natural world.
- SMMNRA serves as a gateway between our 21st-century urban environment and the natural world.

### Human Use/Cultures

For over 12,000 years, people have shaped this land, just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

- The Chumash, Gabrielino-Tongva, and other Native American people have called the Santa Monica Mountains home for at least 12,000 years and their descendants live here today.
- Settlers, ranchers, and other more recent arrivals, drawn to the resources of the Santa Monica Mountains, have changed and continue to change the ecology of the landscape.
- Architecture, filmmaking, and other art forms contribute to a popular worldview of the southern California culture.

- Numerous extant historic ranches in SMMNRA exemplify the evolving attitudes and economics of land use, the tensions between preservation and exploitation, and the continuing pressures of human incursions on natural ecosystems.
- Movement of people through the area has affected the landscape of the Santa Monica Mountains throughout human history, as people have traveled, explored, and experienced the resources and assets of the region.



Twilight through the clouds from the Santa Monica Mountains.

## Mediterranean Ecosystem

In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves a substantial portion of the rare Mediterranean biome (ecosystem), a rapidly diminishing resource that exists in only five places in the world.

- The unique factors creating the Mediterranean ecosystem include hot dry summers, mild wet winters, drought-adapted shrublands, and fire ecology.
- The Mediterranean ecosystem needs protection as one of earth's smallest, most biologically diverse, and most threatened biomes (land types), composing 2% of the world's landmass.
- SMMNRA is a vital part of the watershed and water supply for greater Los Angeles.
- SMMNRA plays an important role in the airshed and air quality of greater Los Angeles.
- SMMNRA is a vital resource for education and research in a variety of fields for visitors of all ages, interests, and levels of training.
- The geological processes that created the Santa Monica Mountains had and continue to exert powerful influences on the park's fragile Mediterranean biome.
- Climate change and other environmental changes present challenges and opportunities for stewardship in SMMNRA.

## Gateway to the National Park System

SMMNRA is a gateway for discovering America's natural wonders and cultural heritages and the need to preserve them.

- The Santa Monica Mountains area is a mosaic of public and private land ownership where involved citizens and public agencies work toward a common vision of stewardship, conservation, and preservation.
- The establishment of SMMNRA represents a major step – a workable, collaborative framework for action – in preserving this unique landscape for the enjoyment of current and future generations.
- National Recreation Areas such as SMMNRA are an example of the many kinds of collaborative ventures the National Park Service engages in to protect our nation's special places for future generations.



Western Town ready for filming on a spring day.

## Visitor Experience Goals

What do visitors want when they visit SMMNRA? What are their expectations of this natural, largely undeveloped area next to a crowded, sprawling Los Angeles, the city generally identified as the “entertainment capital” of the world? Why, given all that greater Los Angeles has to offer, do they seek out the rugged mountains and ocean breezes here? Conversely, why do millions of other residents of the region never discover or choose to explore this extraordinary natural world only minutes from their own homes?

Observations from SMMNRA staff and stakeholders indicate that many regular visitors arrive planning specific activities – swimming, biking, horseback riding, or hiking on a certain trail – while others, especially first-timers, come as casual visitors with non-specific goals: They want to explore the area, see the sights, or simply enjoy the outdoors. In this large, diverse recreation area, different visitors seek many different kinds of experiences, ranging from active sports (hiking, camping, horseback riding, mountain biking, climbing, and swimming) to

sightseeing via automobile, touring historic structures, bird watching, photographing eye-catching plants and animals, or quietly enjoying the scenery and solitude.

Whatever approach or activity they prefer, visitors come hoping for an enjoyable, memorable experience that enriches their lives.

This long-range interpretive plan explores ways to enhance, expand, and improve visitor experiences throughout the park and to reach new audiences within the local urban area. Specifically, this plan addresses ways that interpreters and interpretive media can function to help visitors **do** meaningful activities, **learn** key messages about the site, **feel** an emotional connection to this special place, and **behave** differently because of visiting the site. By categorizing visitor experience goals in this way – experiential, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral – the planning process can identify multiple ways for interpreters and interpretive programming to serve visitors.



Volunteers from partner organizations help students feel what it's like to be part of nature.

Ideally, a comprehensive, well-designed interpretive program will provide *all* visitors – regardless of age, interests, background, or ability – with opportunities for meaningful, enriching experiences as they engage with and enjoy the park. Based on analysis of the park’s resources and input from workshop participants, the following visitor experience goals have been identified for SMMNRA.

**Experiential goals:**

What should visitors have the opportunity to **do** when they visit SMMNRA?

Visitors should have opportunities to:

- Participate in land-based outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, and ecosystem/plant and animal observation.
- Participate in water-based outdoor recreational activities such as swimming, exploring tidal pools, whale watching, surfing and seeing, hearing, touching, and tasting the vast, powerful Pacific Ocean.
- Find the quiet, peaceful seclusion of an undeveloped natural setting in the area’s unique Mediterranean climate, only minutes away from a busy urban core.
- Use their artistic talents to capture the meaning of the park through photography, art, painting, and sculpture.
- Encounter some of the region’s distinctive plant and animal life “up close” and living in the wild, from beautiful butterflies to impressive oaks to soaring eagles. . . and perhaps the scat or tracks of a roving deer or mountain lion.
- Enjoy the natural environment as a place for unstructured, all-ages “play” for families, youth, and multi-generational groups.
- Tour extant examples of the area’s fascinating cultural history, as exemplified by Native American Indian sites, historic ranches, and agricultural landscapes and architectural structures from the Spanish era through the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century to the present day.
- Challenge themselves to experience something new.
- Have quality family or friend time through picnicking, recreation, or simply just being outdoors.



Rangers surveying tide pools in preparation for a beach ecology program.

**Cognitive goals:**

What should visitors have the opportunity to **learn** when they visit SMMNRA?

Visitors should have opportunities to:

- Recognize the unique features of the SMMRA's rare Mediterranean biome such as its mild, pleasant climate and its appeal as a desirable place to live.
- Learn about the area's distinctive cultures and land uses through the ages, from ancient Chumash settlements to widespread ranching to the movie industry.
- Learn about the natural history of the region: native plants and animals, geology, watersheds, and the region's role as a protective airshed for greater Los Angeles.
- Learn relevant skills for popular outdoor activities in the area, including, hiking, camping, rock climbing, mountain biking, or horseback riding.
- Learn how they are connected to the park, even though they may live miles away (climate change, watersheds, airsheds).
- Learn that SMMNRA is part of a larger national agency of other diverse park sites, and learn about opportunities to visit these places.
- Learn about the complex land uses of SMMNRA (including the founding and partitioning of SMMNRA) and how partners work together to enable our enjoyment of this park and act as an example to other urban national parks.
- Learn about other opportunities to engage in stewardship activities in the park.



A monarch butterfly sipping nectar within the recreation area.

**Emotional goals:**

What should visitors have opportunities to **feel** when they visit SMMNRA?

Visitors should have opportunities to:

- Appreciate the beauty, complexity, and natural splendor of the mountain and coastal landscapes here.
- Make meaningful personal connections to SMMNRA and its resources in their own unique ways, according to their own preferences and abilities.
- Feel a sense of accomplishment and well-being from engaging in physical activity.
- Gain a sense of peace and serenity by being immersed in nature.
- Sense the need for balance between human needs and those of the natural world.
- Feel a sense of excitement and discovery when exploring this wild place.
- Feel welcome and comfortable interacting with SMMNRA's resources, staff, and other visitors.
- Feel a sense of responsibility to help protect and care for the park's natural and cultural resources by volunteering time, talents, or other resources.

**Behavioral goals:**

What opportunities can inspire visitors to **change behavior** when they visit SMMNRA?

Visitors should be inspired to:

- Make repeat visits to the recreation area and bring friends and family.
- Feel a sense of pride and ownership of these protected public lands.
- Become more physically active for better physical and mental health.
- Be respectful of plants and animals as well as people.
- Get involved as a volunteer by helping to maintain trails, assist in special events, and participate in other park activities and programs.
- Advocate for SMMNRA and other parks and green space among peers and within the larger community by voting, writing letters, attending meetings, and talking with decision makers.
- Become more environmentally aware and responsible at home and in the community in daily life.
- Recognize the individual (i.e., personal) impacts on our environment, and how we can “lighten the load” with specific changes in behavior to become more ecologically sensitive, with the parks setting examples in green technology and reducing environmental footprints.
- Return to or visit other national parks.



Outreach programs engage kids and build stewardship through interaction with natural resources.

## Visitor Data

The mountains, beaches, historic sites, and wild landscapes of SMMNRA attract an estimated 33 million visits per year. The vast majority of visitors come from greater Los Angeles, one of the largest U.S. urban areas, with a population of some 17 million.

For only the NPS-managed sites of the recreation area, the most recent figures show considerably smaller totals:

FY2011 – 680,883

FY2010 – 615,155

FY2009 – 551,175

FY2008 – 504,444

FY2007 – 577,686

According to the FY2010 SMMNRA Servicewide Interpretive Report (SIR), the NPS Interpretation, Education, and Outreach staff made a total of 208,346 visitor contacts, including off-site community outreach programs.

## Who Comes and Why

As might be expected, visitors come to the park for a variety of reasons, some of which may overlap. Anecdotal and observational evidence, including focus-group-style interviews by a professional marketing firm, indicates that the vast majority of visitors come for specific recreational activities. These visitors may range from casual groups of family and friends to goal-oriented adventure seekers, but many people come especially for the beaches and the trails.

Many of the visitors who flock to SMMNRA, especially its beaches and shorter trails, may be unaware that they are visiting a unit of the National Park System. (The most popular beaches already have well-established, named identities as state parks.) Many regular visitors, including walkers, runners, swimmers, surfers, dog-walkers, bird-watchers, horseback riders, and nature lovers, live very close to or within



Horseback riding is an important recreational activity.

SMMNRA boundaries, and these local residents use the park in ways that correspond more closely to local park usage than to visitation patterns normally associated with national parks. In effect, SMMNRA serves as many visitors' regular weekend beach trip or their local community or neighborhood park, and they view it as a routine part of their daily lives.

Other visitors come to the recreation area from farther away on day trips as organized interest groups – seniors, youth groups, birding groups, educational groups, bicycle clubs, bus tours, special needs users, or family groups. The park is actively working to attract new urban visitors by providing transportation to underserved communities and reaching out to targeted groups who do not routinely visit national parks.

Various commercial users constitute another visitor category at SMMNRA. These users may include people in the film industry people on a shoot, corporations or non-profits using the park for a retreat or group picnic, or recreational services providers offering horseback riding, kayaking, or other kinds of tourism.

Another group of visitors might be described as cultural heritage tourists, those who travel to see cultural and historic sites and engage in culturally related activities ranging from museums and historic house tours to craft fairs. Generally ranked as the largest category of tourists on the national scene, with 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers participating in cultural heritage activities while traveling (Mandala Research, 2009, for the National Trust for Historic Preservation), these kinds of visitors seem to be relatively sparse in SMMNRA. Anecdotal evidence suggests that unless a Los Angeles-area tourist has a specific interest in Chumash culture or seeing Paramount Ranch, that person is unlikely to seek

out SMMNRA as a unique destination during a tourist stay in greater Los Angeles.

Sizable groups of regional visitors are drawn to SMMNRA for special events. For example, in April 2010, the first two-day Science Festival (slated to become an annual event), drew crowds of 600 on Friday evening and an estimated 2,100 for the Saturday events, plus some 375 students from nine elementary schools. In 2008 and 2009, other themed special events (a Sneak Preview Screening and reception for the Ken Burns film “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea”) and the BioBlitz (a 24-hour species inventory co-sponsored by National Geographic) also brought large crowds for these one-time activities.

Given SMMNRA’s variable terrain and the distances within the park, its visitation varies widely by geography: The beaches get large crowds and frequent use, especially on the weekends, while other areas appear almost deserted. Visitation patterns over the past few decades indicate that seasonal visits peak in spring and summer and wane by about 10% in autumn and winter overall, but the patterns depend upon the location. For example, inland visitation is higher in winter and spring, but coastal visitation is higher in the summer.

SMMNRA also gets substantial traffic from “virtual” visitors – people who explore the recreation area from its online presence and do not physically come to the park. The NPS website offers several levels of virtual tours, including an interactive Junior Ranger presentation. The park has recently begun taking major steps to upgrade its online presence with both enriched content on the main website and an entry into social media sites including Facebook and Twitter. While the interpretive team recognizes that a virtual visit to a SMMNRA beach or

mountain trail cannot replicate “the real thing,” an exciting array of web tools now enable online interactivity. Increasingly, virtual visitors can expect more immersive interpretive experiences online, even though they may never have the opportunity to visit in person. For example, exploring cultural heritage sites or ecosystems online can be a compelling interpretive exercise that will meet selected segments of SMMNRA’s visitor experience goals and convey some of the primary themes of the park.

### **What Visitors Think of the Park**

Empirical data is limited on what visitors think of SMMNRA, its landscapes, and its myriad offerings. The last SMMNRA Visitor Services Project (VSP) survey (a program conducted for the NPS by the University of Idaho Cooperative Studies Unit) occurred 18 years ago, during the week of May 2-9, 1993, and included 971 returned questionnaires of 1455 distributed (a 67% response rate). Among general visitors polled

(excluding those attending a special event), 61% were repeat visitors to the specific site they were visiting, 95% were non-Hispanic white, and 42% were between 26 and 40 years old.

SMMNRA has participated in the VSP Visitor Survey Card program since 1999. Although visitors generally rank the overall park experience quite high, with ratings in the 88<sup>th</sup> to 100<sup>th</sup> percentiles, the number of participants in these surveys is very small. Over the past ten years, participant numbers range from a low of 47 to a high of 104 individuals – out of a total annual visitation numbering in the millions.

Despite the survey limitations, however, it is notable that overall, the survey respondents ranked personal interactions with park rangers and staff and park brochures as quite high (with 100% describing these interactions as good or very good), while visitor center facilities and exhibits ranked considerably lower (in the high 70<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> percentiles).



Volunteer Mountain Bike Unit members provide assistance to visitors in backcountry areas.

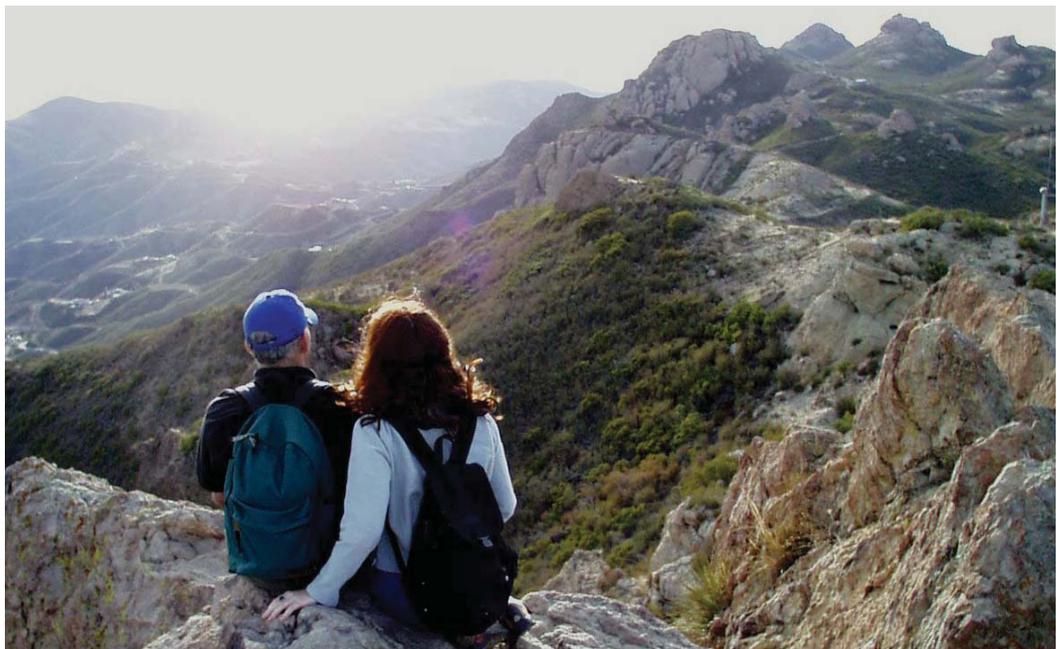
### “Non-Visitors” of SMMNRA

In recent years SMMNRA has taken concrete steps to identify and reach out to categories of potential visitors in greater Los Angeles who currently do not visit the park, including youth, minorities, and urban families. In a 2011 analysis conducted by The Designory, a Los Angeles-based marketing branding design firm, interviewers found that, with the exception of immediate park neighbors, “Awareness of SMMNRA with [the] target audiences is nil.” The firm also found that for many of these groups, SMMNRA was perceived as being outside their “comfort zones” – it was a large, unfamiliar place with unknown and potentially uncomfortable physical demands and characteristics. For example:

- Safety concerns, lack of transportation, and lack of access to technology were significant barriers to visitation for the region’s large population of under-served inner-city youth.
- For tourists, the existence of a large urban wilderness is usually a major surprise, and few tourists thought of National Park System sites being located in Los Angeles.

- Among park neighbors, the Designory team found enthusiasm and appreciation for adjacent parklands, balanced by concerns about fire hazards and occasionally inconsiderate youth behaviors within the park – but relatively limited direct knowledge of SMMNRA as a whole.
- Among affluent visitors, the interviewers found affinities for a few select locations, concerns over stewardship and appropriate behaviors – but again, little knowledge of the park as a whole.

Significantly, the Designory team found that when the aforementioned barriers are removed, target audiences do have resoundingly positive experiences in the park. Further, in order to inspire any of these groups of non-visitors to become regular visitors, the Designory team advised the park to embark on a path of “integrated solutions.” That is, SMMNRA cannot engage these audiences only once; the park must welcome them every step of the way. Such an approach will require a large investment of time and resources, but has the potential to reap great benefits for both SMMNRA and its targeted audience of current non-visitors.



Taking in a spectacular view at Circle X Ranch.



## Existing Conditions

*"No other urban national park features such a diversity of natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources within a densely populated area."*

- General Management Plan, July 2002

## Pre-visit and Arrival

Unlike many national parks with only one or two entry points, SMMNRA has hundreds of entry points in an area spanning over 150,000 acres and extending more than 40 miles long and 13 miles wide. Given its size and multiple routes to and through the area, pre-visit and arrival information is critical for many visitors. However, there are few signs on major highway exits and only four entry signs for the recreation area. Most individual sites have entrance signs, but sign styles are inconsistent and may confuse visitors. In addition, some access points in or near residential areas lack sufficient directional signage. In contrast, street parking and parking lots for beach access are well marked and quickly reach capacity.

Beginning in 2007, NPS management at SMMNRA set in motion a long-range initiative to improve the park's profile through an analysis and recommendations regarding signage throughout the park (the Hunt Design report), followed by a branding and visitor engagement assessment in 2011 (The Designory). Changes based on these initiatives should improve visitor arrival experiences in the future.

The NPS website ([www.nps.gov/samo](http://www.nps.gov/samo)) provides basic park-wide pre-visit information and interpretive materials for the NPS-owned sites, including an online pdf version of the comprehensive quarterly print and online calendar/magazine *OUTDOORS*. California State Parks (CSP) also provides detailed listings and some maps for state parks within the recreation area, although its website does not identify the parks as being a part of SMMNRA. The Santa Monica

Mountains Conservancy's website, [LAMountains.com](http://LAMountains.com), provides detailed information on the lands managed by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), as well as information and links for NPS and CSP sites. Among these three major partners, adequate information is available – but there is no single place for visitors to obtain all the information they need at once. The search for comprehensive information can be confusing and may undermine the potential for positive visitor experiences. In addition, visitors accessing information through CSP or MRCA may never know they are visiting a National Recreation Area.

Other partners' websites also provide variable levels of pre-visit information. The recreation area and its various sites are also described in numerous unaffiliated print and online media listings and interest-group websites, with varying degrees of accuracy and up-to-date information.

Park staff regularly informs the public of upcoming events, news, and special programs through press releases. For programming, activities, and special events throughout the recreation area, by far the best one-stop vehicle is the *OUTDOORS*. The printed publication is distributed free at visitor centers, contact stations, and other sites in the area. *OUTDOORS* currently has a quarterly print run of 15,000, with an estimated distribution of approximately 10,000 per year by mail (including a small number of out-of-state recipients), within SMMNRA, and at selected recreation-oriented sites in greater Los Angeles and/or adjacent to the park.

## Sites and Facilities for Interpretation

SMMNRA encompasses more than 35 different sites and facilities where interpretation, education, and outreach activities are currently provided.

NPS-owned sites include Arroyo Sequit, Cheeseboro/Palo Comado Canyons, Circle X Ranch, Upper Franklin Canyon Park, Paramount Ranch, Peter Strauss Ranch, Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa, Rocky Oaks, Solstice Canyon, and Zuma/Trancas Canyons. Among these NPS lands are 29 cultural landscapes that are listed, eligible, or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

In 2011, the NPS managed one permanent visitor center (Thousand Oaks), one Native American Indian culture center (Satwiwa), one small weekend visitor contact station (Circle X), a portable visitor contact trailer

(stationed in 2011 at Cheeseboro), an information table at Paramount Ranch on the weekends, and a roving van staffed by NPS staff and volunteers.

CSP has visitor contact stations at Leo Carrillo, Sycamore Canyon, Malibu Creek State Park, Topanga State Park and Trippet Ranch, Will Rogers State Historic Park, and Malibu Lagoon. MRCA operates visitor contact stations at Franklin Canyon Park and Temescal Gateway Park. In addition, the Charmlee Wilderness Area has a small visitor contact station.

The following interpretive sites have been identified geographically, from west to east, in alphabetical order. Each site's management entity appears in parentheses.



Active recreation can happen in many ways and at many sites in the mountains.

## Western Area



### Arroyo Sequit (NPS)

Rolling grassland mixed with chaparral, this site exemplifies the homesteading era. Sheltered from the lights of Los Angeles, it is an excellent place for viewing the night sky. Parking is adequate for small groups.

### Backbone Trail (NPS, CSP, MRCA)

Envisioned as a full-length ridgeline trail across the Santa Monica Mountains, the Backbone Trail can be accessed at trailheads throughout the area. Still in development, the trail has 63 miles of the proposed 65 miles completed.

### Circle X Ranch (NPS)

Once a Boy Scout camp, Circle X Ranch is secluded amid rocky outcrops and surrounded by scenic trails. The ranch serves as a gateway to the most remote parts of the recreation area, including Sandstone Peak, its highest peak. The site has a group campground facility. Park interpretive programming includes events such as Star Parties, Camp with a Ranger, and Cider at Circle X. Volunteers staff the contact station on weekends. In 2010 NatureBridge, a non-profit organization, began piloting overnight programming for elementary, middle, and high school students and youth organizations using Circle X facilities.

### Leo Carrillo State Park (CSP)

Wildflowers, tide pools, monarch butterflies, canyon campgrounds (including group camping), and easy access to the beach attract large numbers of visitors year-round. Interpretive services at this very popular park include a visitor contact station, tide pool programs, campfire programs, and festivals.

**NPS SMMNRA Headquarters (NPS)**

Located in Thousand Oaks, this facility houses NPS offices and serves as the primary SMMNRA visitor center, with a staffed visitor desk, brochures and maps, a small exhibit area, park passes for sale, and a small bookstore. Upon completion of the new Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch in 2012, the visitor center at this site will be closed (though the headquarters/office space will remain in use with a small reception area).

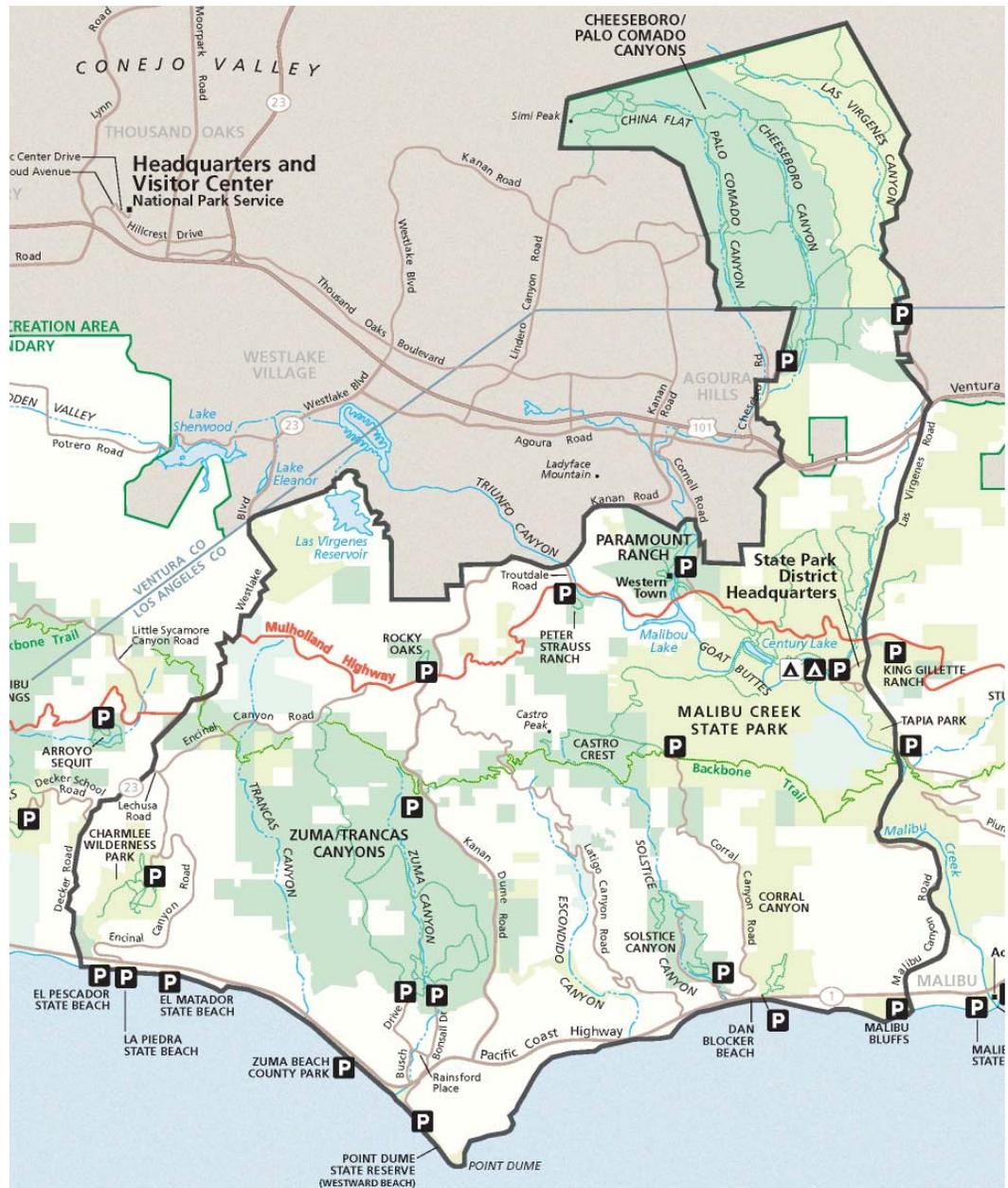
**Point Mugu State Park (CSP)**

Point Mugu State Park is contiguous with Circle X Ranch and Rancho Sierra Vista and constitutes one of the largest undisturbed areas within SMMNRA. The area encompasses the Boney Mountains State Wilderness Area, diverse plant communities, two major river canyons and several perennial streams, rugged hills and uplands, wide grassy valleys dotted with sycamores, oaks and walnuts, archeological sites, and five miles of ocean shoreline with rocky bluffs, sandy beaches, sand dunes. The park offers beach and canyon campgrounds, a small walk-in campground, a visitor contact station, a camp store, and more than 70 miles of trails. The park also includes beach access at Sycamore Cove and Thornhill Broome Beach.

**Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa (NPS)**

This area preserves sites of ancient Chumash habitation and is the crossroads of two Native American Indian trails and trade routes, including the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. The Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center offers an outdoor reproduction of an ancient Chumash dwelling, an ethnobotanical native plant garden, a small bookstore and interior exhibits, interpretive programs by Native American Indian speakers, environmental education programs, interpretive programs for the public and outreach groups, and a Junior Ranger program on Native American Indian culture. The site is also used for teacher workshops, art exhibits, arts/crafts programs, and annual art and native plant sales. Recreational trails here are popular with locals, families, bicyclists, and equestrians. Some trails connect to Point Mugu State Park and Boney Mountain Wilderness.

## West-Central Area



### Cheeseboro/Palo Comado Canyons (NPS)

The rolling hills and oak savannas of these canyons provide nesting habitat for raptors and scenic vistas and trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. The area was a cattle ranching district used from the 1780s to the 1900s. Significant Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva religious sites are nearby. A volunteer-staffed trailer is used as a weekend contact station, and a kiosk contains site-specific interpretive signs and parkwide information.

### Charmlee Wilderness Park (City of Malibu)

Charmlee Wilderness Park includes picnic areas, native plant displays, a nature center, and more than eight miles of hiking trails. Programs include a volunteer docent program, school and group nature programs, and a variety of public hikes and interpretive programs.

### El Matador State Beach, El Pescador State Beach, and La Piedra State Beach (CSP)

These three beaches provide visitors with access to southern California beach and surf activities.

### Malibu Creek State Park (CSP)

With a 1,900-foot-deep canyon and a variety of habitats, perennial creeks, pools, lakes, valley oaks, riparian areas, and mountain views, Malibu Creek State Park has been used for many movie and television locations. Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva presence has been documented here. This park, which also serves as headquarters for the Angeles District of California State Parks, offers a docent-staffed visitor center, Youth Adventures programs, and special programming such as mountain biking skills classes, running events, nature programs, and horseback riding. One of the most heavily visited sites in SMMNRA, its popularity also stems from camping opportunities and multiple trails. The location also includes Tapia Park, a popular family picnicking spot with access to several trailheads.

### Paramount Ranch (NPS)

This historic movie ranch, including a Western-style town with period wooden buildings (saloon, hotel, jail) has been and continues to be used by filmmakers to represent the Wild West, landscapes in China, and many other scenes. Paramount Ranch is a primary interpretive and recreational site used for hiking, horseback riding, and interpretive, educational, and outreach programming. The site offers interpretive signs about the ranch's movie history, opportunities to observe live filmmaking, an outdoor classroom for environmental education, weekly staffing by volunteers who can answer visitors' questions, scheduled interpretive programs, special events such as the annual Science Festival and Summer "Silents Under the Stars" Series, geocaching locations, and multiple trails for hiking and running.



The SAMOBILE and its travelling exhibits are used during special events, such as the Pumpkin Festival at Paramount Ranch.

### **Peter Strauss Ranch (NPS)**

This small ranch preserves the 1927 stone house and outbuildings built by the original owner, Harry Miller, inventor of the automobile carburetor, as well as the outdoor star-shaped tile dance floor and the large, empty swimming pool left over from the site's days as the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century resort park Lake Enchanto. Neither the house nor the outbuildings are open for visitor tours. A small amphitheater is very popular for concerts and campfire programs. The lawn is used for public programs, and the ranch hosts occasional festivals and special events. A parking lot kiosk offers minimal interpretation of the site, which was owned most recently by the actor Peter Strauss before being sold to the NPS. Hiking and horseback riding trails can also be accessed here.

### **Point Dume State Reserve/Westward Beach (CSP/LA County)**

This promontory defines the northern end of Santa Monica Bay and provides spectacular views of the entire coastal corridor of the recreation area. The unit is divided into a popular recreational beach area and a natural preserve that is a favorite for whale watching and exploring natural upland habitat and tide pools.

### **Rocky Oaks (NPS)**

Easy access, scenic oak woodlands, a pond, and wetlands make this an attractive location. The area has nature trails, a small amphitheater, and a picnic area, with occasional NPS interpreter-led programs.

### **Solstice Canyon (NPS)**

Solstice Canyon, a narrow, beautiful canyon with a perennial stream and an extensive riparian community, features hiking trails and the fire-damaged ruins of two historic houses, the Keller stone hunting cabin and the Roberts Ranch House. A large pavilion/outdoor classroom on the property is used for environmental education, and the site is also used for public education and outreach programming. Due to very limited parking and egress issues, there are limits on large groups and programming.

### **Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (MRCA)**

In late 2003, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy completed the long-awaited purchase of the 2,983-acre Ahmanson Ranch, which is now a part of the existing 2,650-acre Upper Las Virgenes Open Space Park. The parkland is part of a critical ecological linkage and wildlife corridor between the Santa Monica Mountains and the ranges to the north. Its rolling hills studded with valley oaks, sycamore-lined canyon bottoms, miles of potential trails, and vistas of unspoiled California landscapes are now part of SMMNRA.

### **Zuma/Trancas Canyon (NPS)**

Wild and largely undisturbed, this area attracts many local users to trails leading through large expanses of coastal sage scrub. Interpretive programming includes the Eco-Helpers program and the SAMO Youth restoration of the Zuma Lagoon.

### **Zuma Beach (LA County)**

This wide, sandy beach along the Pacific Coast Highway is a popular destination for surfing, swimming, and observing dolphin and sea lions or the diverse wildlife around the restored wetlands of nearby Zuma Lagoon. The beach has parking, volleyball courts, lifeguard stations, swing sets, and a snack bar. A scenic bike path starts here and runs northward for about 2.5 miles.

## East-Central Area



### King Gillette Ranch (MCRA/NPS)

The 588-acre King Gillette Ranch is situated in the heart of the Malibu Creek Watershed near the confluence of five major tributaries and adjacent to Malibu Creek State Park. A haven for larger mammals of the Santa Monica Mountains, the ranch offers rich archeological, cultural, and historic resources, including a Chumash settlement, and nationally significant structures designed for razor magnate King C. Gillette in the 1920s by Wallace Neff, architect of California's Golden Age. Some areas are used for filming TV shows such as "The Biggest Loser."

As noted previously, the centrally located King Gillette Ranch will house the new Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center, an adaptive reuse of the 6,900-square-foot historic stable building expected to open in 2012. This new visitor center for SMMNRA will include an information desk, exhibits, a bookstore, audiovisual room, public restrooms, and space for interpretive and educational programs, offices and storage.

### Malibu Lagoon State Beach and the Adamson House (CSP, LA County)

One of four significant lagoons in southern California, this beach is a stop along a major bird flyway and a habitat for steelhead trout and tidewater goby, as well as a favorite site for surfing. A Chumash village site here was a regional capital before the Spanish arrived. The Adamson House, a historic house on the property and one of the first homes on the Malibu coast, offers docent-led tours of Spanish Revival architecture and the Malibu tile industry.

**Mulholland Scenic Parkway and Corridor (City of LA, CDOT)**

This winding, 55-mile corridor, an incomparable scenic drive through the heart of the Santa Monica Mountains, offers panoramic views of the city, the mountains, and the ocean. Seven scenic overlooks with interpretive signs offer visitors places to stop and marvel over archetypal California landscapes and the sprawling city. A drive from downtown Los Angeles along this route leads directly to Leo Carrillo State Beach.

**Red Rock Canyon Park (MRCA)**

Large, beautiful boulders of sandstone and conglomerate rock fill this canyon. Once a Boy Scout camp, the park now has a trail leading up a fire road to Calabasas Peak with spectacular views.

**San Vicente Mountain Park (MRCA)**

The former site of a Nike missile tracking station in the 1950s and 1960s, this 10.23-acre park has been restored to native vegetation and gravel paths, with the intent of converting the old radar tower into a hillside viewing platform.

**Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve (UCLA)**

This 310-acre biological field station offers a variety of public outreach programs for K-12 students by special arrangement with area schools.

**Temescal Gateway Park (MRCA)**

This canyon park contains the historic structures built for the Presbyterian Conference Grounds in the 1920s for annual Chautauqua summer festivals. The Temescal Canyon Conference and Retreat Center now offers overnight accommodations for up to 100 people. The facilities are also used to host elementary, middle and high school students for three-day/two-night science programs. Organized hikes here include the “Grandparents & Parents & Me” program and other guided walks.

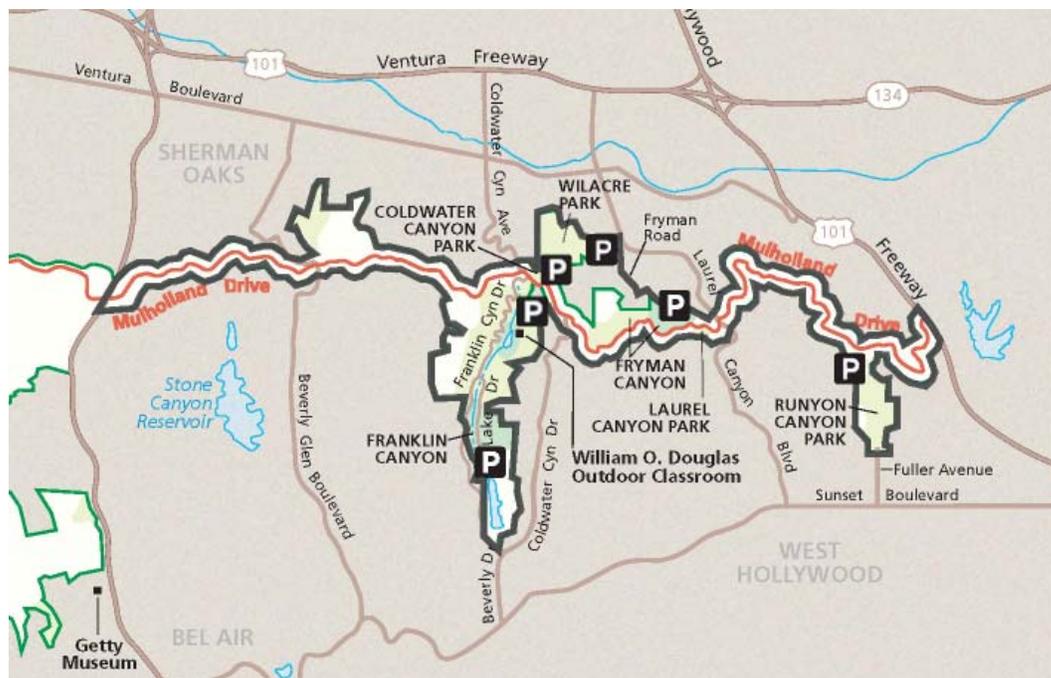
**Topanga State Park (CSP)**

Hiking and horse trails, wide vistas and sheltered canyons, a small picnic area, and a greenspace for informal sports make this park a popular destination. It encompasses the largest contiguous block of native habitat in the eastern part of the Santa Monica Mountains and has significant marine and plant fossils and archeological sites. The site also includes hike-in camping at Musch Ranch. A newly refurbished visitor center at Trippet Ranch is scheduled to open in 2012.

**Will Rogers State Historic Park (CSP)**

This site preserves the 1930s-era, 31-room ranch house and grounds of movie star, radio personality, columnist, philosopher, and American cowboy Will Rogers. The iconic ranch house is on the National Register of Historic Places. The park also includes a historic stable, an active polo field, a riding arena, a roping area, corrals, pastures, a golf course, and hiking trails, including the Inspiration Point Trail providing 360-degree mountain and ocean views and access to the Backbone Trail. Interpretive offerings include house and stable tours, movie nights, and special events. A new visitor center opened on the site in 2010.

## East Area



### Coldwater Canyon Park (MRCA)

Once the mountain patrol headquarters for the Los Angeles Fire Department, this site is now an environmental education center with small exhibits and seven miles of nature trails.

### Franklin Canyon Park (NPS, MRCA)

This close-in canyon off Mulholland Drive features an accessible trail and duck pond, a nature center with exhibits on water, an amphitheater, an auditorium, and an outdoor classroom. The Sooky Goldman Nature Center located here is the most visited contact station in SMMNRA. The site contains portions of the water delivery system to Los Angeles from the Owens Valley Aqueduct (designed by William Mulholland and potentially eligible for the National Register). This site is often used for education and interpretive programs.

### Fryman Canyon (MRCA)

Wayside overlooks with interpretive waysides along Mulholland Drive provide great views of Los Angeles, Hollywood, the San Fernando Valley, the Santa Susanna Mountains, and the west end of the San Gabriel Mountains. A mountain trail connects to Coldwater Canyon and Wilacre Park through a chaparral wilderness.

### Runyon Canyon Park (City of LA)

Only two blocks from Hollywood Boulevard, this 130-acre park exists as an “urban wilderness” with an intact chaparral ecosystem, within a stone’s throw of the Hollywood Freeway and Mulholland Drive.

### Wilacre Park (City of LA)

This 128-acre park provides access to the Dearing and Cross Mountain Park trails through landscapes of chaparral, walnut woodland, and coastal sage scrub. The park’s large parking lot, restrooms, and picnic area as well as accessibility by car or MTA bus make it a popular weekend destination for hikers and dog walkers.

## Public Programming

SMMNRA benefits tremendously from strong partnerships. Park partners offer a variety of high-quality interpretive programming and personal services covering numerous themes and locations. Visitors benefit from the support, collaboration, and different strengths that each partner brings to the park. The NPS staff works with other SMMNRA partners to be able to serve as large and diverse audience as possible.

In an area as large as SMMNRA, personal services for the NPS Interpretation, Education, and Outreach staff are strategic. In 2011, the NPS permanent interpretive staffing totaled 15.50 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and 4.6 seasonal positions. This staff must balance providing personal interaction with visitors – an occurrence universally ranked high on visitor surveys – and working with partners to meet the needs of millions of existing and potential visitors.

In FY2010, the NPS team recorded a total of 1,238 instances of interpreter-provided programming, including formal/guided talks, demonstrations and performing arts, special events, educational programs, outreach services, community programs, and loaned materials. The team estimates that these services yielded a total of 203,465 NPS visitor contacts. Total NPS visitor contacts in FY2011 are estimated at 208,346.

Estimates of visitor contacts and interpretive programming for the entire recreation area are significantly higher; the power of partnership expands visitor interactions and contacts significantly.

CSP offers an array of interpretive services: interpretive tours, educational programs, summer community group programs, an annual whale festival, and seasonal campground programs. Due to budgetary constraints in the State of California, CSP staff levels are significantly lower than in past years. To mitigate a negative effect on the visitor experience, SMMNRA partner agencies are working more closely to support each other through leaner times. One example of such collaboration is the joint NPS and CSP annual sponsorship of a booth at the Ventura County fair with the Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary Volunteer Naturalist Corps.

MRCA also offers significant programming within SMMNRA: curriculum-based environmental education programs; after-school programs for at-risk youth; public programs for seniors, families and small children; transportation programs that offer groups and organizations the opportunity to visit public open space; and training programs for individuals and other park professionals.



The Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program introduces new faces to the National Parks.

In addition to formal programming, roving and informal interpretation is also conducted in SMMNRA. During heavy visitor periods, NPS park rangers rove high visitation areas for several hours and provide informal interpretation to visitors they encounter. In 2010, NPS rangers roved a total of 2,914 hours, including time spent on CSP-owned properties.

Visitors can also take advantage of several Junior Ranger programs throughout SMMNRA. The current NPS Junior Ranger workbook, “Weaving Cultures,” focuses on the history and culture of the Chumash. Visitors who complete the NPS program can visit either the NPS Visitor Center in Thousand Oaks or the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center to take their oaths and receive their badges.

MRCA offers Junior Ranger and Ranger Explorer programs for youth ages 8 to 16 that utilize a combination of environmental science, outdoor skills, experiential learning, and leadership activities. In addition to classes and camping trips, MRCA Junior Rangers must complete 24 hours of community service in both urban areas and at local parks and beaches. Good citizen skills (including communication, responsibility, trust, critical thinking, and teamwork) are threaded throughout the curriculum.

Programming in SMMNRA can be found in the *OUTDOORS* publication. Typical spring offerings might include dozens of interpretive activities covering myriad aspects of natural history, cultural history, environmental education, recreational skills, and much more during a single week.



College students lending a helping hand at beach clean up on Public Lands Day.

## Partnerships

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a collaborative effort made possible by many partners. In some cases, the partners have formal cooperative agreements, memoranda of understanding, or contractual obligations. In other cases, the partnerships derive from shared ownerships or responsibilities.

The following list of park partners represents a collaboration of city, county, and state agencies as well as other organizations who work together to make SMMNRA a unique place in which to live, volunteer, work, and play.

An asterisk (\*) denotes landowners/managers within the recreation area. A plus sign (+) indicates providers of interpretive programming. Many of these partners provide a wide variety of services to one or more units within the SMMNRA, including fundraising and financial support, volunteers, programming, and donation of sites, expertise, or materials.

Allied Artists Santa Monica Mountains  
Cold Creek Docents  
\*City of Malibu Parks & Recreation  
+The Children's Nature Institute  
California Lutheran University  
California Native Plant Society  
+California Science Center  
Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association  
\*Conejo Recreation & Park District  
\*+California State Parks  
Coastwalk California  
Friends of Runyon Canyon  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
\*+Los Angeles County Recreation & Parks  
North American Butterfly Association, Los Angeles Chapter

LA Works  
+Malibu Creek Docents  
+Malibu Lagoon Museum Docents  
\*+Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority Mountains Restoration Trust  
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
+NatureBridge  
The Nature of Wildworks  
\*+National Park Service  
Pasadena City College  
Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains  
Sierra Club  
+San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
San Fernando Valley Gourd Patch  
+Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society  
\*+Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy  
Santa Monica Mountains Fund  
Santa Monica Mountains Natural History Association  
Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council  
\*Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve (UCLA)  
Temescal Canyon Association  
+Topanga Canyon Docents  
Thousand Oaks Plein Air Watercolorists  
+TreePeople  
UC Channel Islands  
University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)  
+Will Rogers State Historic Park Docents

In addition to this list of institutional/organizational partners, SMMNRA also partners, formally and informally, with approximately 1,000 private landowners who own property within the authorized recreational area boundaries.

## Outreach

In 2010, the NPS interpretive division formally established an outreach branch to lead future outreach efforts to connect the park, its resources, and its mission with urban audiences in the Los Angeles area. This branch will also serve as a resource for existing outreach efforts undertaken by staff from various divisions throughout the park.

Building an audience base from an under-engaged public represents new potential for local visitation to SMMNRA, as well as potential for greater awareness of the National Park System as a whole. Audience building includes developing programming to introduce and engage the public with outdoor recreation as a catalyst for building stewardship for the park, the NPS, and partnering land use agencies. The outreach staff is working to build relationships with community

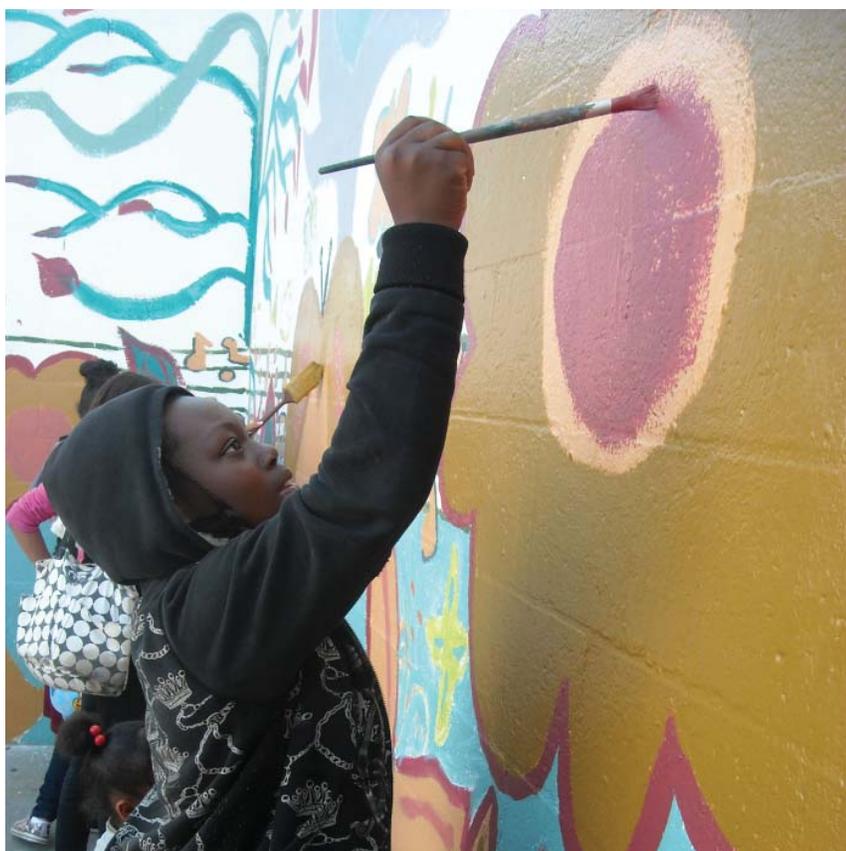
organizations in the Los Angeles area and share resources and expertise, as well as to develop a network of agencies committed to engaging urban audiences with environmental messaging.

The outreach program also seeks to work with immediate park neighbors, many of whom are not aware of and do not use the park. Park staff has initiated programs to work with neighborhood schools and community and recreation centers to inspire community members to get involved with the park.

In 2011, the park found a space within the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument (in partnership with CSP) at Olvera Street to serve as a base of operations within the City of Los Angeles. The team will collaborate with CSP and the City of Los Angeles in the urban center to reach additional audiences.

A very successful youth employment program called SAMO Youth, begun in 2000, introduces students to the National Park Service mission and the benefits of environmental careers while accomplishing much-needed work at the park. This training and employment program is designed to reach students early in their career decision making. In particular, this program serves youth who may not otherwise have discovered the National Park Service as a career choice because of limited access to the park or the agency.

The SAMO Youth program takes students enrolled in the Los Angeles Unified School District at Woodrow Wilson High School (East Los Angeles) and the Oxnard Union High School District (Ventura County) and combines their academic training with practical experience working in national parks beginning in their junior year of high school.



Outward Bound Adventure students painting murals of their National Recreation Area experiences at John Muir Middle School playground in Los Angeles.

## Education

The NPS education team at SMMNRA has developed a continuum of popular, high-quality curricula with close attention to California state education standards and, where applicable, the National Science Education Standards.

Education programs range from kindergarten through high school and are aligned to state curriculum objectives for designated subject areas. The following programs, including ranger-led and teacher-led activities, were presented in 2010-2011:

- The EcoHelpers program engages high school students in helping perform native habitat restoration (primarily removing invasive species and planting natives) at selected sites within SMMNRA. In 2010, the EcoHelpers restoration program completed its eighth year with 93 programs for 3,513 participants at Zuma Canyon. Participants planted approximately 20 species of the coastal sage scrub community, which totaled 8,735 plants.
- The Wildland Fire Ecology program is one of five National Park Labs programs designed to enhance science, math, and technology studies for high school students. Students visit sites within SMMNRA and learn about fire-dependent ecosystems, the urban-wildland interface, and environmental conditions.
- Several SMMNRA environmental education programs engage students from kindergarten through middle school in a variety of hands-on activities.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade SHRUBs program is conducted with two elementary schools and reaches approximately 200 students per year. This service learning program offers multiple opportunities for students to help restore native habitat. The program is conducted in partnership with staff from the park's Planning, Science and Resource Management division.
- The SEEDs and SPROUTS programs were developed by the EARTHs Magnet School (Newbury Park, California) as an outdoor classroom experience where elementary teachers conducted all activities independent of park staff.
- The TREEs program (Teens Restoring Endangered Ecosystems) engages middle school students in understanding how humans have shaped the appearance and ecological function of the landscape at Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa. (The TREE program was not conducted in 2011 due to scheduling difficulties; at this juncture, it is uncertain if this program will continue as the education staff is developing a new middle school program for 2012.)



Ranger and student sharing a moment of discovery at Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa.

- *The Chumash: A Changing People, A Changing Land* (Biodiversity) is a curriculum-based outdoors program conducted for third- and fourth-grade students at the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center and Satwiwa Natural Area. Students rotate through three study stations where they learn about different plant communities, habitats, endangered species and how the Chumash relied on the resources for their survival. Students also make a small abalone shell necklace similar to the ones the Chumash wore.

A summary of NPS education program statistics over the past three years (see table below) shows a total of 7505 students engaged in programs in 2008; 6924 students in 2009; and 7032 students in 2010. (The decrease in participation between 2008 and 2009 reflects several education vacancies, weather and changes to school schedules, which shortens the time students are in school on Tuesdays. The decrease between 2008 and 2010 reflects the reduction in days schools are in session.) In addition to regularly scheduled programs, the park education team also stages a number of special events that attract several hundred youth per event.

Program Name	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010
Biodiversity program	3016	2762	1891
Parks as Laboratories	576	537	553
Wildland Fire Ecology	499	308	547
SHRUBS	493	474	528
TREES	462	200	-
EcoHelpers	2459	2643	3513

## The Santa Monica Mountains Education Consortium

The NPS education team at SMMNRA is also working with the Santa Monica Mountains Education Consortium on its five-year education plan to encourage collaboration and communication on the use of the resources of the recreation area for K-12 science education. In January 2011, the consortium sponsored a one-day training program on child development and group management, which was attended by 49 participants throughout SMMNRA. As of February 2011, a new consortium website became available, providing teachers with a central website for checking availability and information regarding education programs offered in SMMNRA.

## Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Participation

The park has recently implemented the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher (TRT) Program. For the past two years, three to four classroom teachers have participated in the TRT program, a nationwide program that introduces teachers to the NPS. Each summer, selected teachers work at the park's visitor center and culture center, help outreach and interpretive staff conduct programs, rove park trails, and develop curriculum-based education programs. During the school year, participants share their NPS experiences with their students and colleagues.

### Teacher Workshops

SMMNRA's education branch also offers teacher workshops during the summer. Each summer several teacher workshops are offered by the education staff to elementary, middle, and high school classroom teachers. The two-day workshop topics vary from year to year but usually highlight the natural and cultural history of the Santa Monica Mountains region. Workshops include hands-on lessons, lectures, first-hand field exploration, and presenters from partner organizations. Workshops are conducted in partnership with California Lutheran University, allowing workshop participants an opportunity to earn Continuing Professional Education (CPE) units; the university charges a fee per CPE unit. The park charges participants a \$35.00 materials fee per workshop.

### Southern California Research Learning Center Collaborations

The park's educational offerings also draw on the resources of the Southern California Research Learning Center (SCRLC), one of a network of 17 NPS Research Learning Centers across the nation. SCRLC programs focus primarily on college-level students and university-affiliated researchers, as well as Public Participatory Science (PPS) including the Climate Change Ambassador and the National Native Bee/Climate Change programs. The SCRLC also integrates PPS into local college courses at Santa Monica College and Pasadena City College as well as offers distance education workshops using accessible technology through the Sea to Shining Sea LIVE program. This innovative distance learning initiative allows schoolchildren to view ranger programs remotely at national parks across the country.

SMMNRA is a pilot park for the California Phenology Project, which is an effort among several national parks in California to engage visitors in citizen science monitoring efforts that contribute to climate change research. SMMNRA Interpretation and Education staff are working with Planning, Science and Resource Management staff to identify appropriate means for implementation of phenology monitoring throughout SMMNRA. SMMNRA also has a Climate Change working group, which is working to develop appropriate climate change themes to be incorporated into existing and future programs.

### Partner Education Programs

Other SMMNRA partners also offer high-quality, curriculum-based educational programming as well. A 2010-2011 sampling of programs includes the following:

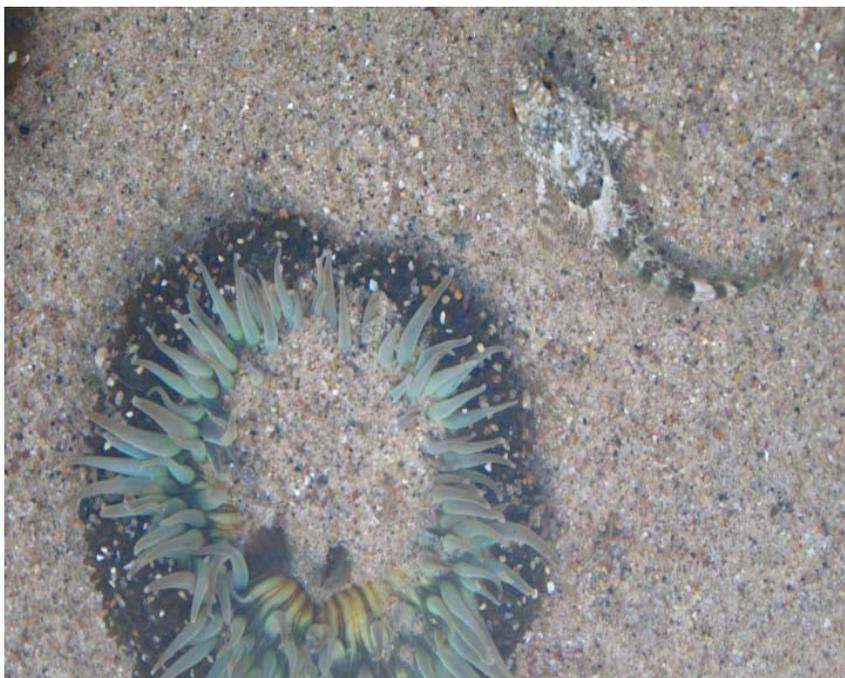
- CSP offers educational programming for grades 3 through 12 on marine ecology at Leo Carrillo State Park; native plants and wildlife at Point Mugu State Park; habitat preservation and wetlands functions at Malibu Lagoon; and habitat preservation and wilderness safety at Malibu Creek.
- MRCA offers three- to five-day residential educational camps focusing on natural sciences, social sciences, outdoor skills, and team- and leadership-building at King Gillette Ranch and Temescal Gateway Park. Similar programming is offered in shorter timeframes (hikes, campfires, single overnights) at other MRCA parks. In addition, MRCA also works with the NPS education team to provide interpretive nature hikes emphasizing ecology, plants and animals, Native Americans, and sensory awareness for K-6<sup>th</sup> grades at Franklin Canyon Park.

- The Mountains Restoration Trust offers a Youth Naturalist Program, a Discovery Nature Camp, and the SHRUB program for children and youth, as well as programs in conservation, restoration, natural and cultural history, and native plants for grades 2 through 12.
- The Resource Conservation District (RCD) of the Santa Monica Mountains offers programs for grades K-6 on Chumash cultural and natural history at Topanga State Park, and science programming for grades 4 through 6 on freshwater lake habitats at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve and Malibu Lagoon.
- The Children's Nature Institute offers a regular schedule of Outreach Field Discovery trips to SMMNRA.
- NatureBridge, the newest educational partner in SMMNRA, began offering overnight programming for youth organizations and students in grades 4 through 12 at Circle X Ranch in 2010.

## Volunteers

Like most National Park Service sites, SMMNRA could not function at current levels without its volunteers. The park registered over 8,000 individual volunteers who contributed more than 86,167 volunteer hours in FY2011, which represents an increase of over 2,300 hours from FY2010.

Volunteers provide numerous hours of support to park visitors through programs such as the Mountain Bike Unit and the Mounted Volunteer Patrol, who collectively contributed over 20,000 hours this past fiscal year. Each volunteer group has approximately 100 members who often serve as the first point of contact for park visitors in the field. In addition, through partnerships with a variety of national and local organizations such as the Sierra Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, and local colleges, the park is provided with volunteers for special events such as National Trails Day, National Public Lands Day, Keep America Beautiful, the Great American Clean Up, and Earth Day. Other growing volunteer resources derive from providing community service opportunities for high school and college students, as well as the continual growth of the association with the Boy Scouts of America, which has resulted with several Eagle Projects a year benefiting both the scouts and the park service. SMMNRA has also developed volunteer projects for college students from programs such as AmeriCorps, Student Conservation Association, and Alternative Spring Breaks.



Tidepools help students learn about predator-prey relationships.

Currently the park volunteer base is made up of approximately 400 volunteers, which equates roughly to three volunteers for every paid staff member. Most SMMNRA volunteers provide services for special events, perform maintenance, patrol park trails, and do other non-interpretive duties. However, a group of approximately 25 people provide consistent support for interpretive, education, and outreach activities throughout SMMNRA; a core of some additional 60 volunteers assist NPS and MRCA with interpretive programming in Franklin Canyon. These volunteers help with educational programming, lead hikes, present special programs within their areas of interest, and volunteer their skills in technology and other expertise to assist in programming.

Due to the park's close proximity to numerous communities and the urban areas of greater Los Angeles, the volunteer program receives many requests for volunteer opportunities and experiences. The desirable California climate encourages people from all across the country and occasionally outside the U.S. to volunteer. The future growth of the volunteer program will concentrate on working with internal staff and park partners to develop volunteer opportunities that appeal to multi-generational groups and to define strategies on how to recruit a diverse volunteer core from the urban centers in the area.



Volunteers facilitate learning about Indigenous cultures at Satwiwa Native American Culture Center.

## Non-Personal Services/ Interpretive Media

### Audiovisuals

The recreation area has a 20-minute feature film, “Mountains, Movies, and Magic,” which was produced by the Discovery Channel; it is available on DVD.

An interactive online program, “Chumash Cultural Journey” is available on the park website through the Parks as Classrooms program.

### Bookstores

The NPS currently operates two small bookstores: one at the Visitor Center in Thousand Oaks, and the second at the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center. Both stores are managed by the Western National Parks Association (WNPA). The new Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch will also have a bookstore, replacing the one in the Thousand Oaks Visitor Center.

Other SMMNRA partners also offer book and gift sales in the following locations: Sooky Goldman Nature Center at Franklin Canyon, Leo Carrillo State Park, Malibu Creek State Park, Adamson House and Charmlee Wilderness Park.

### Interior Exhibits

Current interior exhibits for the NPS-managed sites are featured in a few venues: small, installations on natural and cultural history as well as recreational opportunities at the visitor center in Thousand Oaks; changing local art and photography exhibits and small outdated temporary displays at the Satwiwa Native American Culture Center at Rancho Sierra Vista; and the portable exhibits in the traveling SAMobile interpretive van. The SAMobile is an in-house product

developed by the interpretive rangers and has served as a model for other national parks and other park partners (The Irvine Conservancy, etc.).

With the opening of the Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch in summer of 2012, SMMNRA visitors will be able to experience new exhibits, including an interactive map room and extensive natural and cultural history installations designed to appeal to diverse and multi-generational users that reflect the demographics of greater LA and surrounding areas.

### Exterior Exhibits

Most major trailheads and NPS sites with parking lots in SMMNRA have some level of interpretation via exterior exhibits, primarily two- or three-paneled kiosks with panels for interpretation plus one side for use as a bulletin board. A few areas also have interpretive waysides on trails or near historic cultural sites. NPS exterior exhibits conform to the NPS style guides of Harpers Ferry Center, but have been modified by SMMNRA interpretive media staff to serve this park’s specific challenges and needs.

Other partners throughout SMMNRA also have interpretive signs. These vary widely as to condition, interpretive messaging, and cohesiveness of branding and identity.

At this juncture, the NPS is preparing to proceed with park-wide planning of wayside exhibits through a contract awarded in December 2011. A draft wayside proposal was completed more than a decade ago; the new wayside exhibit proposal will update NPS interpretive signs for several key sites within SMMNRA.

In addition, the new wayside proposal is expected to draw on recommendations from the 2011 Designory Branding & Marketing report, which should help inform the treatments in the forthcoming new signs. The new wayside exhibit proposal also seeks analysis of need and appropriateness for bilingual, multi-sensory elements, and new technology options, including QR codes to engage targeted audiences.

### Printed Publications

The NPS Interpretive, Education, and Outreach division produces a total of 20 interpretive publications for visitor use. Brochures are currently being translated into Spanish, Chinese (traditional & simplified), Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Russian, German, and French. These include:

- Site bulletins/brochures on the following sites:
  - Backbone Trail Map
  - Cheeseboro/Palo Comado Canyons
  - Circle X Ranch
  - Paramount Ranch
  - Peter Strauss Ranch
  - Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa
  - Rocky Oaks
  - Solstice Canyon
  - Zuma/Trancas Canyons
- Topical/behavioral brochures
  - Safe, Not Sorry
  - Mountain Biking in the Park
  - Enjoying the Park with Your Dog
- Unigrid brochure with park map
- Invasive Weed Field Guide
- Park newsmagazine/calendar, *OUTDOORS in SMMNRA (OUTDOORS)*
- Map/Trail Guide: Explore the Trails! From the Five Cities of the Las Virgenes-Malibu Area

### Web-based Interpretive Materials

The park website ([www.nps.gov/samo](http://www.nps.gov/samo)) provides visitor information and interpretive material on elements of the park's natural and cultural history. As of 2011, the park is exploring the use of media such as mobile applications, downloads for smartphones, QR codes, Facebook and Twitter, GPS-based geocaching, and more. For example, a park volunteer recently produced a downloadable, searchable electronic database to identify and locate wildflowers throughout SMMNRA. The park also has new "apps" for identifying "What's Invasive" and "What's Blooming."

SMMNRA has a content-rich Facebook page with numerous levels of interactive interpretive discussions (<http://www.facebook.com/santamonicamtms>). As of February 6, 2012, the page had received 2,461 "likes." In addition to the NPS-managed Facebook page, both MRCA and CSP have Facebook pages for visitor engagement with SMMNRA.

A SMMNRA Twitter account (<http://www.twitter.com/santamonicamtms>) had 4,096 followers as of February 6, 2012.

In early 2011, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy launched a comprehensive website, [www.LAMountains.com](http://www.LAMountains.com). This site provides a searchable listings of all the parks and recreation sites within and adjacent to SMMNRA, as well as detailed calendar listings of events and programs throughout all the sites.

Although NPS-administered pages have a link to the NPS SAMO website, there is no identification of SMMNRA included on LAMountains.com, a well-known resource throughout the region for events in the Santa Monica Mountains. Further, there is no indication that the vast majority of the parks listed on this site are partners with and within the boundaries of SMMNRA. The only SMMNRA reference on the site is alphabetized under A for the existing Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Center in Thousand Oaks.



Making use of new technology: brochure holder at trailhead uses a QR code, allowing visitor access to site map even if holder is out of the print version.

## Collections

SMMNRA collections include cultural history (archival, archaeological, and historical) and natural history collections.

Archeological collections include nearly 14,000 artifacts and other materials obtained using archaeological methods.

The park's archival collection includes oral histories, photographic prints, negatives and slides, blueprints, specifications and other items documenting facility development, materials related to scientific studies, and resource management activities. There are currently over 170 linear feet of archival material in the park's collections.

The natural history collections include a herbarium of over 400 specimens, a paleontology collection containing over 200 specimens, and associated records of the natural history collections.



Collections provide tangible examples of the park's cultural and natural history.



## Issues, Influences, and Opportunities

*“A large segment of the American public does not know who we are [or] what we do or see themselves in the [NPS]... We need to make the national parks and the work of the National Park Service relevant to all Americans.”*

- Jon Jarvis, Director, National Park Service

### **Working in Partnership**

The partners comprising SMMNRA work together well. They share resources – and millions of visitors – while respecting each other’s entities’ missions, policies, and areas of expertise. Overall, these many different governing bodies manage to provide the vast majority of visitors with an engaging, enjoyable, seamless experience in a beautiful and unique landscape, no matter what part or parts of SMMNRA they traverse during their stay.

Working in partnership has benefits and constraints. The ability to share resources, enthusiasm, ideas, training, volunteers, materials, and much more is obviously a tremendous benefit for all. Likewise, the assurance that other partners can “fill in the gaps” on some topics enables partners to concentrate on their most compelling stories and deliver strong, focused programs on topics they are uniquely suited to deliver.

As for constraints, working in partnership means that partners must give up a bit of their own individual identity in return for association with the partnership as a whole. Within SMMNRA, these pressures are moderate and well-respected, but even among partners of good will and historical collaboration, the result can be a rather fragmented group identity – a landscape littered with different brands, different sign styles, different color palettes and typefaces, different Junior Ranger standards, and even differing standards of interpretation and for visitor behavior (i.e., dogs allowed here; no dogs allowed there).

Some of these issues cannot be alleviated. Others can be addressed through positive forces such as collaborative training, decision making at appropriate levels, and ongoing communication, including effective technological tools or mechanisms to make communication as efficient as possible.

For interpretive managers and interpreters on the front lines, often the single biggest challenge is simply finding the right tools and times to communicate with each other. Once this hurdle is overcome, partners can work together efficiently and effectively across jurisdictional lines, avoiding duplication of programming or situations where visitors feel confused because one agency does not know what another agency is doing.

This LRIP offers recommendations to help SMMNRA strengthen partnership communication and overall identity.

### **The Interagency Visitor Center**

For the first time since SMMNRA’s founding, the park’s three major landholding agencies will be co-operating in a centrally located visitor center. The new Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch is both a great opportunity and a tremendous challenge. More than ever before, the park partners will have to learn how to integrate their respective strengths and staffs to meet the needs of a wider, more diverse audience with higher expectations, and a more constant presence with little opportunity for down time. Even as they are assessing and adjusting to the demands of the new visitor center and its overall impact on the park, the partner interpretive teams will have to manage their other sites as usual, with no expectation that visitation will diminish (indeed, it may increase) at these sites.

With all three agencies working under one roof representing SMMNRA as a unit, the need for a more coherent joint identity for SMMNRA will be inescapable. Visitors will expect a simple, unified approach regardless of which uniformed person they talk with. Likewise, they will need unified collateral interpretive materials (brochures, maps) that represent the mountains and its myriad opportunities, and partners who are willing to “meet them where they are” regarding their knowledge and understanding of this complex multi-dimensional, multi-jurisdictional national recreational area.

### **Outreach in Los Angeles**

Beginning in 2012, the NPS will open a branch office on the historic Olvera Street Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. The benefits of an NPS presence in downtown LA cannot be underestimated: the new facility will elevate the NPS and SMMNRA profile among city political, religious, corporate, and cultural leaders; reach out to under-served populations

of all ages and ethnicities; promote SMMNRA to an array of urban dwellers as well as tourists; and offer opportunities for inspired, creative interpretive approaches that have yet to be developed.

The new facility will also bring challenges. The outreach staff will be located approximately 50 miles and up to two hours of high-traffic driving time from headquarters. It will require a new approach to interpretive programming, where interpreters are physically separated from the resource, where audiences may have no prior knowledge of SMMNRA and its offerings at all, and where they may still experience difficulty getting to the park once they discover it.

Opportunities for partnerships abound in this one-of-a-kind downtown neighborhood, and this innovative move offers the interpretive staff the chance to introduce SMMNRA to a multitude of diverse populations.



Outreach Ranger assists student with homework at Academia del Pueblo Eastmont Community Center in East Los Angeles.

## Accessing the Park

In an area extending 40 miles long and 13 miles wide and crossing multiple jurisdictional boundaries, accessing SMMNRA and moving about within it can be difficult. Few, if any sites, within SMMNRA can be accessed by public transportation, a major barrier for urban residents without a car, as well as for tourists and people with disabilities that prevent them from driving. NPS, MRCA, and CSP support some level of bus transportation for educational and community groups, but funding is limited.

Further, parking is limited in certain sites. Park fees at California State Park sites increased in 2011 to \$12/day per car. The rise in parking fees has intensified the problem of unauthorized parking and led to more parking on streets, NPS sites, and other lands. In addition, depending on timing and specific locations, traffic within the recreation area can become congested. An NPS effort to establish a fixed-route shuttle service within the recreation area some years ago was unsuccessful, though the bus stop shelters remain.

Other access concerns are more subtle. For some area residents, the idea of being alone in a wild area – no crowds, no picnic tables, limited restroom facilities, no athletic fields – is daunting and uncomfortable. For extended family groups seeking large park-like areas for socializing and picnicking, many SMMNRA landscapes can appear uninviting or unsafe, or simply too far. Other visitors remain unaware that their favorite state beach is within the national recreation area boundaries. Without knowledge of SMMNRA, they do not perceive themselves as being users or supporters of the park.

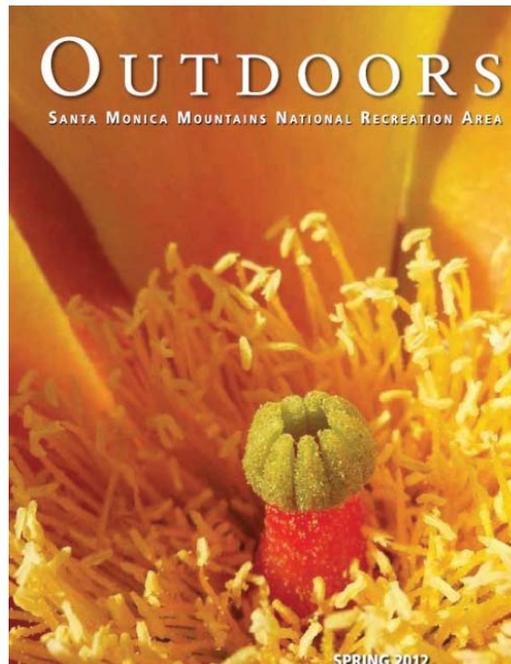
SMMNRA still struggles with issues of identity, both as a Los Angeles-area destination and as a unit of the National Park Service. Many units within the recreation area do not identify themselves – or are not identified by public media or visitor-oriented websites – as part of SMMNRA.

For example, Google Maps does not demarcate the boundaries of SMMNRA, although it does highlight the state parks within. The website for California State Parks does not identify which parks are within the National Recreation Area; instead, they are ordered by region and by county, with no mention of SMMNRA. The LAMountains.com website has only two references to SMMNRA, both deep within the site.

SMMNRA's diffuse identity remains problematic. There are more than 30 federal, state, local, county, and non-profit organizations offering access, programming, and activities in different locations within the recreation area. To date, there is no readily identifiable SMMNRA logo, and few partner webpages link back to the NPS website. Fortunately for millions of potential visitors and supporters, this spectacular, federally protected landscape is positioned to become far better known in the coming decade. Through the new visitor center, new branding, social media networking, and strategic outreach efforts in greater Los Angeles, growing numbers of potential visitors will be able to access the park, understand how and why it exists, know what it offers, and differentiate it from other public and private recreational opportunities in the region.

## Communications

Currently, there is no central online website or electronic clearinghouse to serve all the entities affiliated with SMMNRA. The Conservancy-hosted website LAMountains.com, launched in 2011, offers online calendar listings and park site information, although it does not identify itself with SMMNRA. For most of the partners, funding constraints or rigid web guidelines eliminate the opportunity to establish such as centralized site. Both interpreters and volunteers lack a timely, easily accessible central information venue for needed information about the park as a result. Special-interest electronic newsletters reach their own constituents but face growing concerns about spam and unwanted email. The single best source for keeping up with multiple interpretive offerings throughout the park still seems to be the NPS print publication *OUTDOORS*, but its three-month lead time for submission of calendar listings means that many activities do not make the deadline and are not included. Furthermore, in an age of instant messages and rapid response, *OUTDOORS* is a one-way, rather than a two-way or interactive, form of communication.



Cover of *OUTDOORS* magazine, Spring 2012.

## Finding the Right Role for Technology

Increasing the use of technology within SMMNRA presents a dilemma: in this natural setting, what is the appropriate role of modern communications technology? Are technological devices and programming desirable? How much is too much? The short answer is that of course, technology has its place – from smartphones to photovoltaic-powered kiosks to GPS units – in helping visitors access and become engaged in public lands.

Today, technology plays a vital part in many park visitors' experiences, by providing opportunities through the use of current and new technologies, including mountain bikes, cars, GPS units, digital cameras, smart phones, iPads, and more. The park is well situated to test and try out new technologies that enhance the visitor's understanding of its resources, assets, and purpose.

The agencies involved in SMMNRA have differing restrictions and abilities to invest in new technologies; each partner invests in new technologies to the best of its abilities. To date, SMMNRA has introduced new technology-based recreation to connect people to the park through such approaches as park geocaching via GPS, web cameras, social media, and mobile applications (apps) for Public Participatory Science projects such as plant identification.

Though there is no substitute for actually visiting the park and experiencing the recreational activities available, SMMNRA is also expanding its use of technology to reach out to new audiences, including tech-savvy youth, young adults, and those unable to visit the park in person because of distance or disability.

## Changing Demographics and Dynamics

Over the life of this interpretive plan, several demographic and societal trends will change the composition of the American traveling public. These changes are likely to have a dramatic impact on visitation – and future stewardship – at SMMNRA. Consider:

- In ten years, the oldest baby-boomers, still America’s largest population cohort, will reach age 75.
- In ten years, computer and handheld technology literacy will be almost universal.
- In ten years, millions more children will have come of age with “nature deficit disorder” – a profound ignorance of the natural world resulting from restrictions on unstructured outdoor play.
- Perhaps most significantly, the Latino population of southern California will continue to grow. According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the Latino/Hispanic population now represents the largest ethnic group (40.57%) in southern California, followed by white (38.85%), Asian (10.19%), and African American (7.30%). California state projections show that by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Hispanics will be 52% of the state’s population, with whites comprising only 26%.

A substantial amount of 21<sup>st</sup>-century data from the NPS and the USDA Forest Service confirm in various ways what can be easily observed at almost any national park or other large expanse of public land: most adult, non-school-group visitors are white.

“Researchers have found consistent and substantial evidence of the under-representation of racial and ethnic minorities in outdoor recreation,” writes NPS researcher Daniel N. Laven in a 2008 report. Theories on why this under-representation occurs range from economics to transportation access to cultural preference. For example, according to findings from USDA Forest Service researcher Deborah Chavez, who has researched Latino usage of Angeles National Forest near SMMNRA, Latino visitors to recreational lands generally prefer more picnic tables and facilities for large family groups – and areas without these amenities will not be as popular among Latino families. In addition, some Latinos she surveyed expressed constraints such as “being uncomfortable in the outdoors,” perceiving the long travel time to natural areas as too onerous, and feeling discriminated against at the site.

For SMMNRA, these and related demographic changes carry significant implications and opportunities for future programming. For example, aging populations may need recreational and interpretive activities that accommodate physical limitations. New generations of visitors acclimated to self-accessed media may be less interested in personal, ranger-led face-to-face interpretation and more interested in technology-based programming. Children who have seldom explored the natural world may need more safety instruction and more exposure to hands-on activities. And if SMMNRA is to develop the supporters and stewards it will need in the coming decades, it must work closely with Latinos and other ethnic groups to develop interpretive programs, facilities, and employees that relate to increasingly diverse future generations.



## Recommendations

*"We need to respect values and connections to find a model for collaboration and communications."*

- Woody Smeck, former Superintendent

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area represents an outstanding success story in the preservation and protection of a beautiful, fragile landscape that is vitally important on many levels. Through the years, SMMNRA has established a culture and protocols to ensure protection of this magnificent resource through the generations.

Within FY2012, SMMNRA will celebrate several major milestones that will significantly affect its overall operations, visibility, and interpretive programming in the immediate near-term, as well as over a seven- to ten-year span addressed by this LRIP.

1. The Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center at the King Gillette Ranch will open in June, 2012, and the existing visitor center within the NPS SAMO headquarters will close. The new facility, centrally located within SMMNRA on a major access route (Mulholland Highway) will not only provide a new focal point for visitors, it will also require reconfiguring SAMO staff assignments and adding two new positions (a visitor use assistant or park guide) to provide personal services in the new VC in collaboration with partners and volunteers.
2. The SAMO interpretive outreach unit is establishing an office and outreach programming in downtown Los Angeles in the Hellman Quon building, one of 27 historic structures within El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument – a City of Los Angeles “living museum” that preserves sites associated with the founding of the city. The office space became

available in August 2011 and, after remodeling, is expected to be ready for occupancy in 2012. At present SAMO staffing appears adequate to handle this new assignment, but as programming expands in this location, an additional position (a visitor use assistant or park guide) may be advisable.

3. NPS SAMO leadership has launched a concerted effort to analyze the identity and public profile of SMMNRA and “rebrand” the park. Prospective changes include a distinctive brand and graphic look to be used on all park entry portals, internal units and attractions, wayfinding and interpretive signs, future publications, and other media including digital.

To sustain this momentum and assure its stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this unique national recreation area must maximize its interpretive capabilities to communicate and interpret its benefits to a new generation of SMMNRA visitors and potential stewards.

The following recommendations aim to enhance and strengthen SMMNRA’s interpretive programming in multiple ways over the next ten years. Recommendations were developed in several phases: first, with initial input and discussions in the August stakeholder/partner planning workshop; second, from analysis and refinement by the core planning team; third, with compilation and further refinement by the consultant team and the interpretive staff and management in outreach, education, and interpretive operations; and finally, by review and approval from park interpretive and administrative management.

## Visitor Engagement

One of the largest tasks set forth by SMMNRA is increasing visibility and visitor engagement. The strategies listed under visitor engagement will require effort from all divisions in the park, including the superintendent's office. The effort to improve "brand identity" of the park and to attract more diverse populations (both visitors and potential visitors) across the greater Los Angeles area is a long-term effort that involves all staff and partners.

### Increase awareness through a cohesive identity.

Move forward with the branding and visitor engagement plan that was approved in December 2011.

- Work with all partner entities to introduce the branding design and to form a more cohesive visual presence for SMMNRA.
- Incorporate the new branding on all SMMNRA print, web, and sign media as funds are available and/or as these materials are upgraded or refreshed/reprinted.

- Promote, distribute, and monitor use of the new branding among media outlets, social networking sites, online information resources such as Google and MapQuest, and among political entities, chambers of commerce, and tourism bureaus throughout the region.

## Partnerships

SMMNRA is unique among national park service units due to its need for strong collaboration with partner organizations. Currently, the partnership tasks for the park are the responsibility of many different divisions and staff members. In order to more effectively manage the myriad partnerships necessary to make SMMNRA function, the addition of a dedicated partnership coordinator position would greatly benefit the park.

### Improve resource-sharing and communication among partners.

In a large, multi-jurisdictional partnership park such as SMMNRA, interpreters share many areas of



Father and daughter engage in creating a Native American craft project during a workshop demonstration at Satwiwa.

overlapping interests, tasks, and needs. Clear, well-established mechanisms for resource-sharing and regular communication can benefit interpreters (and, by extension, their audiences) throughout the partnership network.

- Develop a “central portal” online that presents SMMNRA and all its partners as a unified entity with a master calendar, web links, and a “partners only” log-in section to house a variety of useful materials for partners.
  - Seek an independent source/ server to provide design, maintenance, and support for this portal so that no single partner is charged with this responsibility.
  - Create an interactive inventory of interpretive materials that are available for SMMNRA, and house this list within the “partners only” site.
  - Post relevant documents such as training schedules, volunteer interests and requirements, grants possibilities, and similar materials on the partners-only site.
  
- Schedule bi-annual get-togethers for all interpreters within SMMNRA to share ideas, challenges, and plans.

- Create a partners’ list-serv for rapid communication, problem-solving, and sharing among SMMNRA interpreters.

**Work collaboratively with partners to improve level of interpretation throughout the mountains.**

The NPS interpretive division should collaborate, train and share best practices with partners.

- Host an annual half-day “interpreters’ open house” each spring, featuring informal discussions and a few short workshop-style interpretive training tips, to keep lines of communication open and support for all partners and volunteers who interact with visitors within the park.
- Regularly share news and resources about interpretation with the SMMNRA community. Such information may include links to online courses from The Eppley Institute, regional and national NAI workshops, new research on effective interpretation, and similar activities.



Bringing music to the park with a free performance at Paramount Ranch by the Channel Islands Air National Guard Band.

## Outreach and Volunteerism

With the creation of an outreach and volunteerism branch within the NPS interpretive division at SMMNRA in 2010, the park has already begun to make great strides in reaching out to targeted populations: identified under engaged urban youth, Latinos, and urban families. By combining outreach and volunteerism into one branch, the park is making a concerted effort to connect with visitors on an entire continuum of levels, from discovery to stewardship.

The following interpretive outreach recommendations include specific suggestions for the outreach team as well as outreach strategies for SMMNRA as a whole.

### Define and develop outreach in downtown Los Angeles.

The new office space proposed for Olvera Street in El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument near downtown Los Angeles offers tremendous potential for outreach to a wide range of potential visitors. These visitors include not only tourists exploring the historic Olvera Street Plaza, but also large populations of local residents of various ethnicities who

have historically been under-engaged with the National Park System and public lands in general.

- Develop and equip the Hellman Quon space as a base of operations for outreach activities, and secondarily as an information center regarding the recreation area and the NPS in Los Angeles.
  - This facility will provide a small area devoted for information area, including maps, exhibits and printed interpretive materials in Spanish, English, and other languages to be determined.
  - Also, the location offers opportunities to tie in SMMNRA and the NPS to the cultural traditions of the immediately surrounding Chinese-American and Mexican-American communities, as well as the opportunity to interpret the building's history.
- Develop local youth programming to reach out to the immediate community and nearby schools, working with the Education team as needed.
- Position the Hellman Quon site as a staging area for visits to destinations within SMMNRA.
- Reassess interpretive roles and needs at this location at regular intervals (for example, after the first summer season or the first school year) to match capabilities and goals with community needs.
- Explore cooperative programming and cross-training with other cultural venues in the Olvera Street area.



During a camp-with-a-ranger program, youth finish pitching their tents before they get ready to enjoy an evening hike.

- Create new mini-“traveling trunk” pocket programs that roving interpreters can use to draw attention and spark visitor interactions in the high-traffic Olvera Street Plaza surrounding the Hellman Quon building.
- Develop at least one roving cart with interpretive materials for use by the interpretive outreach staff in Olvera Street Plaza.

**Connect with SMMNRA neighbors.**

- Designate interpretive rangers to develop relationships with community groups by participating in meetings and presenting programs.
- Host “meet the neighbor” events at SMMNRA to introduce neighbors to park/public lands representatives.
- Identify a network of appropriate trails for use by family hiking groups (use Meet-Up.com and other social networking).
- Present cultural and natural history programs in libraries and community centers.

**Recruit volunteers who represent the diversity of the LA metro area.**

- Develop a strategic plan for volunteerism within SMMNRA and in collaboration with partners.
- Create a committee of community leaders to assist and inform community outreach among targeted SMMNRA communities.
- Recruit and train community group leaders to be ambassadors for SMMNRA within their own spheres of influence in the region.
- Develop opportunities for family volunteerism with activities that are appropriate and appealing to multi-generational groups.
- Network with universities in the region to attract individual students and student groups as volunteers.
- Review the current volunteer application process and materials to make volunteerism more appealing and accessible to potential applicants.
  - To the extent possible, personalize the SAMO volunteer form with a cover letter from the SAMO Superintendent, descriptions of potential volunteer activities, and other details.



“Is that a snake in the bushes?”

## Education/Youth

Providing well-designed, curriculum-based educational programs and dynamic, engaging interpretation for youth is critical not only because of such tangibles as hands-on science and physical exercise for today's youth; such programs are critical, also, for their essential role in building future stewardship for SMMNRA. The following recommendations seek to meet existing education and youth needs within SMMNRA's broad, diverse audience, as well as build connections that will inspire future stewardship of the park and other public lands.

### Engage more teachers and pre-service teachers in SMMNRA programming.

- Expand teacher workshops to include half-day, weekend, after-school, and Los Angeles Unified School District-sponsored workshops.
- Develop a teacher training program to empower new and returning teachers to bring students to SMMNRA on their own.

- Develop pre-service teacher training with regional universities.
  - Provide academic credit to pre-service teachers who visit sites and complete training materials on the Santa Monica Mountains.
  - Work with credentialing programs at local universities and with Los Angeles Unified School District's credentialing program.
- Develop an incentive program for teachers who bring their students to the park on their own.
- Expand existing programs for teachers and pre-service teachers.
- Develop an international program for teachers from different Mediterranean-type biomes to develop international education programs connecting their schools and students to share information and explore ways to conduct scientific studies comparing different Mediterranean biomes.

### Reach more diverse schools.

- Actively market all education programs in SMMNRA to underserved districts by attending school district principal meetings and PTA meetings.
- Create a more unified teacher/school database with Santa Monica Mountains Education Consortium members to track the teachers and schools served.
- Leverage new and existing park partners to deliver education programs in collaboration with one another to reach more students.



An intense nature discussion about biodiversity.

- Offer a multi-agency grade-specific curriculum-based science or cultural festivals/events in SMMNRA and/or outside of the park.
- Conduct programs at inner-city State Park and MRCA parks for inner-city students as the first introduction to the outdoors followed by a visit to the SMMNRA.
- Develop programs for middle schools not currently being reached due to lack of grade-specific programs and geographic location.
- Market programs to more public, private, and home schools.
- Market programs to schools which serve special needs students (physical, emotional, intellectual), non-college bound students, foster care and homeless students, and students enrolled in summer schools and continuation schools.

**Connect more students with SMMNRA.**

- Incorporate distance learning into existing or new programs in order to:
  - Prepare students for a field trip to the park
  - Follow up on a field trip
  - Deliver curriculum-based lessons
  - Reach students who may not have an opportunity to visit the park
- Integrate the use of current technologies such as GPS and iPads to existing and new programs to enhance learning in the field.
- Develop new inquiry-based programs that are data driven, address critical issues, and that engage students in collecting data which will be used for scientific studies. Also incorporate mapping,

graphing and writing skills into programs to address the Response to Intervention initiative.

- Develop and implement grades K-2 education programs which link math, science, and language arts standards.
- Develop a career path for non-college bound students to gain employment with NPS and other public lands agencies in maintenance and administrative divisions.
- Develop a Lifelong Learning Program for adults and Elderhostel groups.
- Develop on- or off-site education programs for students enrolled in academic afterschool programs.
- Bring SAMObile-type vehicles to schools.

**Upgrade and expand SMMNRA Junior Ranger programs.**

- Develop a new interagency Junior Ranger program.
  - Integrate technology to appeal to youth.
  - Expand the content to be inter-generational.
- Refresh the existing Satwiwa-based NPS Junior Ranger program.
- Create a web-based virtual Web Ranger for SMMNRA.
- Create Junior Ranger programs at sites throughout SMMNRA, including the Los Angeles Outreach office.

## Public Programming

Public programming is the public face of SMMNRA – the high-quality programs and activities delivered in person by employees and volunteers of all the partners making up the national recreation area. As described in the Existing Conditions chapter of this document, an impressive network of SMMNRA staff and volunteers plan, develop, and deliver public programming to thousands of SMMNRA visitors year-round. Although this planning process has not evaluated the quality or audience share of individual programs, the plan assumes that the majority of SMMNRA’s long-established public programming will continue to the extent that funding and human resources allow.

Future public programming recommendations relate directly to the new set of primary interpretive themes and desired visitor experiences developed as the cornerstones of this plan. As new public programming recommendations are implemented, the workload on individual interpretive staff will necessarily increase unless some existing programs are dropped. To staff the interpretive operations team adequately in the coming decade, this plan recommends the addition of one full-time park ranger and one park guide to support both the new visitor center and growing technology needs.



Mounted volunteer patrol members ending a successful backcountry patrol.

## Expand services at King Gillette Ranch.

- Develop and provide interpretive programming in collaboration with MRCA and CSP for the new Interagency Visitor Center and grounds at King Gillette Ranch. Possible programming topics include:
  - Guided tour of King Gillette historic house
  - Guided tour of the renovated stable building/visitor center, with emphasis on its sustainability/LEED features
  - Architectural history of the King Gillette estate
  - Archeology findings in the area
  - Natural resources/natural history guided tours, hands-on programs, and demonstrations
  - Native plant garden programming
  - Cultural history of Native American Indian presence in the area through the centuries

## Enhance roving interpretation.

- Increase the use of roving interpreters during peak times at the park’s most heavily visited sites, including sites owned by other partners (i.e., the beaches).
  - These interpreters may be a combination of permanent staff, seasonal staff, partners, or volunteers who have received appropriate interpretive training.
  - At least some roving interpreters should be bilingual in English and Spanish.

**Create a “wellness” focus at SMMNRA.**

In “A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement,” issued by NPS Director Jarvis in August 2011, item 6 among the top ten recommended actions addresses the value of parks for personal health and well-being:

Expand the health community’s use of parks as a healing tool and increase citizen recognition of the value of parks to improve health and well-being by establishing 50 formal partnerships with health and medical providers across the country.

A wide-ranging interpretive focus on SMMNRA as a major contributor to health and well-being in greater Los Angeles could serve as a universal and highly effective outreach tool – and free media publicity “hook” – across multiple populations in greater Los Angeles.

- Work with the Superintendent’s office and Administration to create a SMMNRA-wide program to encourage staff fitness and overall wellness, including encouraging SMMNRA employees and contractors to model positive wellness behaviors.
- Develop interpretive programming that specifically addresses the role of nature and open space as contributors to personal physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health.
- Explore partnership and sponsorship opportunities with local health and medical providers.

- Create customized interpretive programs that incorporate wellness components, such as:
  - Guided hikes for dog-owners
  - Yoga programs that incorporate nature and outdoor themes
  - Tai chi programs
  - Children and youth wellness
  - Special needs, elderly, and nursing-home wellness
  - Boot camps and fitness programs
- Develop a series of special events within SMMNRA to highlight the park’s role in helping keep Los Angeles-area residents healthy. For example:
  - SMMNRA’s contributions to clean air and water
  - A SMMNRA fun run, triathlon, or other fitness event
- Consider a parkwide assessment of universal accessibility in order to address wellness/fitness and access needs of persons with disabilities.



Youth participate in a “Let’s Move Outside” program: enjoying the beach and getting fit at the same time.

## Non-Personal Services/ Interpretive Media

Given the rapid 21<sup>st</sup>-century developments in electronic media, the traditional categories of interpretive media – print, audiovisuals, and exhibits – have expanded into an exciting, demanding, interactive cross-platform universe. New generations of park visitors arrive technologically equipped and desirous of self-accessible, instantaneous information and multiple links that allow them to follow their own interests and customize their experiences. In order to meet the rapidly growing and changing media requirements, including implementing the new branding and engagement plan, this plan recommends one additional ranger in interpretive media.

### Upgrade and adapt park audiovisuals for auditorium and web use.

- Explore the creation of short, park-created videos for use on the park website, YouTube, and other social media outlets.
- Create a searchable database of SMMNRA images for use in interpretive materials.
- In partnership with CSP and MRCA, commission a new professional-quality film for the new interagency visitor center that can eventually replace the existing “Mountains, Movies, and Magic” Discovery Channel production.
  - The new film should be planned to be used as a whole on both full auditorium screens and large flat-screen TV monitors, but it should also be adaptable to be divided into short segments that can be placed on the web and made available for download and for social media.

### Assess and upgrade exterior signs throughout SMMNRA as needed.

The branding and marketing project currently underway in 2011 by the Designory marketing firm addresses the critical need for branding and visual identity of SMMNRA throughout the park and the greater Los Angeles region. While a full-scale rebranding effort will take considerable effort, expense, and time, this well-researched and sequential initiative can be expected to have a significant effect on SMMNRA’s identity and visitation within the ten-year range of this LRIP. The following recommendations on exterior signs should be viewed as working in tandem with the park’s branding and marketing efforts over the next ten years.

- Move forward on a comprehensive SMMNRA sign plan (begun in 2007 by a site report from contractor Hunt Designs) that will accommodate all sign needs – interpretive, wayfinding, informational/mapping, and safety/regulatory messaging – in an aesthetically appealing, positive manner. The Hunt study organized SMMNRA signs in the following five categories, with recommendations for each:
  - Overall visual identity of SMMNRA and component destinations signs
  - Property edge and visitor interface signs
  - In-park vehicular wayfinding and identity signs
  - Trailhead presentation signs
  - Trail signs
- Move forward with the current (2012) wayside exhibit proposal to update the draft wayside exhibit plan produced in 2000, establishing a hierarchy of trailhead, site overview, and interpretive signs, as well as design templates for four prototype wayside exhibit panel styles to accommodate SMMNRA needs for partnership, bilingual,

new media/technology, and multi-sensory exterior exhibits (i.e., with tactile elements, audio components, built-in viewing scopes, and other low-tech all-weather devices).

- The NPS-generated wayside exhibit proposal can aid and inspire partners in prioritizing their sites and topics to replace/upgrade some of the older interpretive signs as well.
- Work with safety, regulatory, and maintenance personnel throughout SMMNRA and its multiple jurisdictions to devise an effective but aesthetically compatible system of safety/regulatory messaging, so as to avoid “sign clutter” at trailheads, parking lots, and other primary gathering spots.
- Create and maintain a SMMNRA-wide database of interpretive signs and make available on the proposed partners online portal.

**Develop professional-quality interior exhibits** for selected sites within SMMNRA and selected satellite locations.

- Plan and create a series of rotating, small-scale multi-lingual exhibits for the new SMMNRA space in the Hellman Quon building in downtown Los Angeles (see Outreach Recommendations).
  - By planning ahead and using modular structures, the interpretive team can maximize these exhibit pieces as portable installations that can serve the Quon space and also be cycled through various NPS and partner venues throughout SMMNRA and other sites (i.e., tourism bureaus, corporate lobbies, community centers. This approach will leverage the initial investment to provide a revolving cache of fresh materials to diverse visitors at different locations within and outside the park.
- These exhibits should have options for multiple languages and/or QR codes for translation links.
- Plan, develop and install permanent exhibits within the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center.
  - Work with the Native American Indian community including tribal representatives as appropriate in developing these exhibits.
- Plan, develop, and install new exhibits in the Circle X visitor contact station.
- Upgrade and/or develop new, theme-based exhibit materials to be used in conjunction with SMMNRA’s portable, seasonal visitor contact stations.
- Create and maintain an online inventory of portable exhibit elements for collaborative use by SMMNRA partners.
- Develop a fleet of two or more new SAMobile vehicles with interpretive materials to travel throughout metro LA to neighborhoods, churches, parks, and community centers.
  - For greater flexibility in customizing programming and maximizing interpretive effectiveness, each vehicle in the fleet could offer broad overview interpretation of SMMNRA, along with its own unique theme- or audience-based approach.
- Assist MRCA and other partners in planning and obtaining support for upgrading the interpretive exhibit space within the Sooky Goldman Nature Center in Franklin Canyon Park.
  - Although the existing interactive exhibits in this facility are aging and in some cases inoperable, they address an important

primary theme of SMMNRA – water – that is well-suited to the site’s history, features, and partners; furthermore, this theme is not extensively covered in interpretive media elsewhere in the region. In upgrading these exhibits, this connection should not be lost.

### Create suggested visitor itineraries

with recommended routes and stops to make it easier for first-time or infrequent visitors to access “best places” in SMMNRA more efficiently.

- Create a series of print and web-accessible self-guided itineraries – including engaging interpretive details – that will encourage and enable visitors to explore segments of SMMNRA according to their available schedules, individual interests, preferred activities, and/or geographical locations. For example, the park could create a range of suggested itineraries that:
  - Start at different geographical locations within SMMNRA and span two hours, a half day, and a whole day;

- Appeal to specific visitor types, such as families/multi-generational groups, local residents, youth groups, persons with disabilities, or international visitors.
- Focus on thematic explorations: mountain geology, historic ranches, Chumash culture, movie locations, coastal ecology, plants or animals of the Mediterranean biome, etc.
- Highlight hiking, bicycling, children’s activities, birding, driving, and other popular pursuits; or
- Center on significant, easily accessible locations such as Paramount Ranch, Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa, or King Gillette Ranch.

As the content and transportation/driving routes for each itinerary are developed, these materials can be provided in multiple formats, including printed handouts and online downloads in both print and audiovisual formats (i.e., podcasts). Itineraries should be promoted and made available at major



Visitors enjoying a group hike into the wide-open spaces at Cheeseboro Canyon.

tourist venues outside SMMNRA as well as at all visitor contact venues within the recreation area, especially the beaches and picnic areas that attract large numbers of visitors who could benefit from helpful information about wider possibilities within the park.

In addition, these materials can be distributed to commercial tour operators as promotional and training aids to inform and encourage organized bus tours using onboard or step-on interpretive guides.

**Create an online media library to share with partners and supporters of the park.**

- Create a public-use online library of searchable, high-resolution photographs of SMMNRA sites, plants and animals, and activities for use by all SMMNRA partners, news media, and friends.
  - Strong photo images are collected on the SMMNRA Facebook page and are easily downloadable for casual use; however, the resolution of these images as currently presented is not high enough for professional media use.
  
- Consider creating a “virtual museum” displaying a selection of theme-based SMMNRA artifacts and archival materials.

**Update and expand print publications.**

- Update the NPS unigrid brochure to reflect the new Interagency Visitor Center and other changes at King Gillette Ranch.
  
- Partner with MRCA to create a site bulletin and web-page that interprets the new visitor center, including its historical use, adaptive reuse, and sustainability features.
  
- Create a simple, attractive “first-time visitor guide” with baseline interpretation of major sites and

suggested itineraries for defined timespans and interests. This guide should be available in multiple media formats (i.e., print and download) and, at a minimum, in both Spanish and English.

- Update existing site bulletins to add web addresses, GPS coordinates, and other relevant online media information.

**Use social media to engage with visitors and encourage visitation and stewardship.**

In 2011, millions of people are all-but-constant participants in a vibrant field of interactive social media– Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, MeetUp.com and other online networking groups, instant messaging and texting, photo-sharing sites such as Flickr, and tools such as Quick Response (QR) codes or Microsoft Tag.

- Continue to expand SMMNRA’s presence in social media, including monitoring of results and evaluation of effectiveness relative to investment of staff time.



Close up of a Humboldt Lily, a late spring wildflower.

- Integrate OUTDOORS publication with social media and other web tools to make it a full-featured interactive resource.
  - Facebook and Twitter links in both print and online versions
  - Additional use of QR codes and active links embedded in the online pdf to link to park partner websites and park maps
  - GPS coordinates for park locations/venues for listed events
- Develop smartphone application that is a trip planner in line with the map table at the new interagency visitor center.
- Install additional webcams and mobile webcams at selected locations.
- Develop a series of e-hikes that allow potential and virtual visitors to explore favorite SMMNRA hikes.

#### **Improve web-based interpretation.**

- Continue to upgrade and improve the NPS SAMO website to the fullest extent possible given NPS architecture and protocols, adding more features, creative interpretation, and interactivity.
- Improve website content including updating natural and cultural resource information.
- Provide links to partner sites and other resources from the NPS SAMO website.
- Create a series of short videos for the website and for download; sample topics include:
  - Introduction to SMMNRA (or specific other units within the park)
  - Ranger Minutes
  - Nature Notes
  - Ranger's Favorite Hikes
- Continue and expand applications of iPad and other tablets for interactive programming and as ranger/volunteer resources in the field, especially for night-time programs.
- Develop mobile web access to NPS webpages for visitors and potential visitors to SMMNRA. (One current example can be found at Acadia National Park at <http://www.nps.gov/acad/mobile.htm>.)
- Monitor and expand Global Positioning Systems (GPS)-based coordinates and activities in the park, including park caches.

#### **Research Needs in Support of Interpretation**

- Support the cultural resource staff in beginning an Administrative History of SMMNRA.
- Commission a Visitor Survey from the Visitor Services Project at the University of Idaho to gain new information on visitor opinions of interpretation at SMMNRA.
- Support the resource management staff in excerpting portions of SMMNRA's extensive collection of oral histories for portrayal on the website.
- Work with resource management staff to sponsor new scholarship on the historical role and the cultural importance of the Santa Monica Mountains to diverse groups.

## Staffing Recommendations

Over the next ten years, the planning team envisions significant changes in SMMNRA's interpretive facilities, its popularity among an increasingly diverse public, and an ever-expanding use of electronic media in various forms in delivering interpretation.

At present, the interpretive team consists of the following:

- 1 Chief of Interpretation (GS-13)
- 1 Interpretation Administrative Assistant (GS-6)
- 1 Education Specialist (GS-11)
- 4 Branch Chiefs (all GS-11) :
  - Interpretive Operations Branch Chief
  - Education Operations Branch Chief
  - Outreach & Volunteerism Branch Chief
  - Interpretive Media Branch Chief
- 11 park ranger (GS-9) positions (2 vacant) :
  - 4 park rangers in Interpretive Operations (one vacant)
  - 4 park rangers in Education Operations (one vacant)
- 3 park rangers in Outreach and Volunteerism (one vacant TERM)
- 2 park ranger (GS-5) positions (one vacant)
- 2 to 8 seasonal park rangers (GS-3/4/5)
- 2 interns
- 3 to 5 Teacher-Ranger-Teachers per year

In order to accomplish the interpretive vision set forth in this document, an ideal staffing level includes all the above staff – vacancies filled– plus the following additions over the next ten years:

- A partnership coordinator
- 1 more park ranger in Interpretive Media
- 1 more park ranger in Interpretive Operations to support visitor engagement, technology, and program needs
- 2 visitor use assistants or park guides to assist in the new visitor center and the downtown LA outreach office



Costa's hummingbird on a cold day with feathers fluffed to keep warm air near his body.



## Implementation Guide

*"I can't help but think that we are on to something really special... that every day is another opportunity to discover the Santa Monica Mountains for the first time."*

- Anthony Bevilacqua, Park Ranger

Implementing the recommendations in this Long-Range Interpretive Plan will be a gradual process, and park decision makers should feel free to reevaluate and make adjustments in the plan as circumstances change. This implementation guide is designed to help the SMMNRA set priorities and make concrete, measurable progress toward strengthening and expanding its interpretive program over the next ten years.

The chart below presents step-by-step sequences for each major category of recommendations. Indicators (xx) mark each action as short-term (within the next three years), mid-term (within the next four to seven years), or long-term (seven to ten years away). Entries with indicators across all three timeframes should be considered as continuous, ongoing activities.

The cost projection column provides a rough estimate of the projected costs of each recommendation, using the symbol \$ to indicate comparative costs per year, inclusive of staffing, supplies, and related expenses.

**Cost key:**

\$	=	under \$25,000 per year
\$\$	=	\$25,000 to \$50,000 per year
\$\$\$	=	\$50,000 to \$75,000 per year
\$\$\$\$	=	\$75,000 to \$100,000 per year
\$\$\$\$\$	=	over \$100,000 per year, such as capital expenditures for facilities remodeling, exhibit installations, visitor transportation vehicles, etc.

<b>INTERPRETIVE PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>Short-term 1-3 years</b>	<b>Mid-term 4-6 years</b>	<b>Long-term 7-10 years</b>	<b>Cost Projection</b>
<b>Visitor Engagement</b>				
<b>Increase awareness through a cohesive identity.</b>				
Move forward with the branding and visitor engagement project.	XX	XX		\$\$\$
Work to get all partner entities to introduce the branding design and form more cohesive visual presence for SMMNRA.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Incorporate the new branding on all SMMNRA print, web, and sign media as funding is available and materials are upgraded.	XX	XX	XX	\$\$\$\$
Promote, distribute, and monitor use of the new branding among media outlets, social networking sites, online information resources, and other information outlets in the region.	XX	XX	XX	\$\$
<b>Partnerships</b>				
<b>Improve resource-sharing and communication among partners.</b>				
Develop a “central portal” online that presents SMMNRA and all its partners as a unified entity with a master calendar, web links, and a “partners only” log-in section.	XX			\$\$\$
Schedule bi-annual get-togethers for all interpreters.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Create a partners’ list-serv.	XX			\$
<b>Work collaboratively with partners to improve interpretation throughout the mountains.</b>				
Host an annual half-day interpreters’ open house/informal workshop each spring for all SMMNRA interpreters.	XX			\$
Share news and resources about interpretation within the SMMNRA community.	XX			\$
Help train NPS and non-NPS interpreters through formal and informal training and sharing of best practices.			XX	\$
<b>Outreach and Volunteerism</b>				
<b>Define and develop outreach in downtown Los Angeles</b>				
Develop and equip the Hellman Quon space as a base of operations for outreach activities and secondarily as an information stop for SMMNRA and NPS interpretation in Los Angeles.	XX			\$\$\$
Develop local youth programming to reach out to the community and nearby schools.	XX			\$
Position the Hellman Quon site as a staging area for visits to SMMNRA.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Reassess interpretive roles and needs at this location at regular intervals and adjust according to community needs.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Explore cooperative programming and cross-training with other cultural venues.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Create new mini- “Traveling trunk” pocket programs for roving interpreters in the Olvera Street Plaza area.	XX			\$
Develop at least one roving cart with interpretive materials for use by interpreters in the Olvera Street area.	XX			\$

<b>Connect with SMMNRA neighbors.</b>				
Designate interpretive rangers to develop relationships with community groups.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Host “meet the neighbor” events.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Create a network of appropriate trails for family hiking	XX			\$
Present cultural and natural history programs in libraries and community centers.	XX	XX	XX	\$
<b>Recruit volunteers who represent the diversity of the LA metro area.</b>				
Develop a strategic plan for volunteerism.	XX			\$\$
Create a committee of community leaders.	XX	XX		\$
Recruit and train community group leaders to be ambassadors for SMMNRA.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Develop opportunities for family volunteerism.		XX	XX	\$
Network with universities in the region to attract individual students and student groups as volunteers.	XX	XX	XX	\$
Review the current volunteer application process.	XX			\$
<b>Education/Youth Recommendations</b>				
<b>Engage more teachers and pre-service teachers in SMMNRA programming.</b>				
Expand teacher workshops.	XX			\$
Develop a teacher-training program.	XX			\$
Develop pre-service teacher training.	XX			\$\$
Develop an incentive program for teachers who bring their students to the park on their own.		XX		\$\$
Expand existing programs for teachers and pre-service teachers.		XX		\$\$
Develop an international program for teachers from different Mediterranean-type biomes.			XX	\$\$\$
<b>Reach more diverse schools.</b>				
Actively market all education programs in SMMNRA to underserved school districts.	XX			\$
Create a more unified teacher/school database.	XX			\$\$
Leverage new and existing park partners to deliver education programs.		XX		\$
Offer a multi-agency grade-specific curriculum-based science program or cultural festivals/events in SMMNRA.		XX		\$\$
Conduct programs at inner-city State Park and MRCA parks for inner-city students.		XX		\$\$
Develop programs for middle schools not currently being reached.			XX	\$\$
Market programs to more public, private, and home schools.			XX	\$
Market programs to schools that serve special needs students.		XX	XX	\$\$

<b>Connect more students to SMMNRA.</b>				
Incorporate distance learning into existing or new programs.	XX			\$\$
Integrate the use of current technologies such as GPS and iPads to existing and new programs.	XX			\$\$
Develop new inquiry-based programs that are data driven, address critical issues, and that engage students in collecting data.		XX		\$\$
Develop and implement grades K-2 education programs that link math, science, and language arts standards.		XX		\$\$
Develop a career path for non-college bound students to gain employment with NPS and other public land agencies.		XX		\$
Develop a Lifelong Learning Program for adults and Elderhostel groups.			XX	\$
Develop on- or off-site education programs for students enrolled in academic afterschool programs.			XX	\$
Bring eco-vans and SAMObile type vehicles to schools.			XX	\$\$\$
<b>Upgrade and expand SMMNRA Junior Ranger programs.</b>				
Develop a new tri-agency Junior Ranger program.	XX			\$
Refresh the existing Satwiwa-based NPS Junior Ranger program.	XX			\$
Create a web-based virtual Web Ranger for SMMNRA.		XX	XX	\$
Create Junior Ranger stations at sites throughout SMMNRA, including the Los Angeles Outreach office.		XX	XX	\$
<b>Public Programming</b>				
<b>Expand services at King Gillette Ranch.</b>				
Develop and provide interpretive programming in collaboration with MRCA and CSP for the new Interagency Visitor Center and grounds at King Gillette Ranch.	XX	XX	XX	\$
<b>Enhance roving interpretation.</b>				
Increase the use of roving interpreters during peak times at the park's most heavily visited sites.		XX	XX	\$\$
<b>Create a "Wellness" focus at SMMNRA.</b>				
Advocate for a SMMNRA-wide program to encourage staff fitness and overall wellness.	XX			\$
Develop interpretive programming that specifically addresses the role of nature and open space as contributors to personal physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health.	XX	XX		\$\$\$
Explore partnership and sponsorship opportunities with local health and medical providers.	XX			\$
Create customized interpretive programs that incorporate wellness components.	XX			\$\$
Work with partners to develop a series of special events to highlight the park's role in helping keep Los Angeles-area residents healthy.	XX	XX		\$\$\$
Consider a parkwide assessment of universal accessibility.		XX		\$\$\$\$

<b>Non-Personal Services/Interpretive Media</b>				
<b>Audiovisuals: Upgrade and adapt films for auditorium and web use.</b>				
Explore the creation of short, park-created videos for use on the park website.	XX			\$\$
Create a searchable database of SMMNRA images.	XX			\$
Commission a new professional-quality film about SMMNRA.		XX		\$\$\$\$
<b>Exterior signs: Assess and upgrade exterior signs in a systematic and comprehensive manner.</b>				
Move forward on the ongoing comprehensive SMMNRA sign plan that includes interpretive, wayfinding, informational/mapping, and safety/regulatory messaging.	XX	XX		\$\$\$\$
Move forward with the current (2011) wayside exhibit proposal.	XX	XX		\$\$\$\$
Work with safety, regulatory, and maintenance personnel throughout SMMNRA and its multiple jurisdictions to devise an effective but aesthetically compatible system of safety/regulatory messaging.	XX	XX	XX	\$\$
Create and maintain a SMMNRA-wide database of interpretive signs.	XX	XX	XX	\$\$
<b>Interior Exhibits: Develop professional-quality interior exhibits throughout SMMNRA.</b>				
Plan and create a series of rotating, small-scale multi-lingual exhibits for the new SMMNRA space in the Hellman Quon building.	XX			\$\$
Plan, develop, design and install permanent exhibits within the Satwiwa Native American Indian Cultural Center.		XX		\$\$\$\$\$
Plan, develop, and install new exhibits in the Circle X visitor contact station.		XX		\$\$\$\$
Upgrade and/or develop new, theme-based exhibit materials to be used in conjunction with SMMNRA's portable, seasonal visitor contact stations.		XX		\$\$
Create and maintain an online inventory of portable exhibit elements for collaborative use by SMMNRA partners.		XX		\$
Develop a fleet of two or more new SAMobile vans with interpretive materials to travel throughout metro LA.			XX	\$\$\$\$
Assist MRCA and other partners in planning and obtaining support for upgrading the interpretive exhibit space within the Sooky Goldman Nature Center in Franklin Canyon Park.		XX	XX	\$\$\$\$
<b>Itineraries: Create visitor itineraries for exploring SMMNRA.</b>				
Create a series of print and web-accessible self-guided itineraries to help visitors explore SMMNRA efficiently in the time they have for a visit.	XX			\$\$
<b>Media Library: Create an online media library</b>				
Create a public-use online library of searchable, high-resolution photographs.	XX	XX		\$\$
Consider creating a "virtual museum" displaying a selection of theme-based SMMNRA artifacts and archival materials.		XX		\$\$

<b>Printed Publications: Update and update print publications as needed.</b>				
Update the NPS unigrid brochure to reflect the new Interagency Visitor Center and other changes at King Gillette Ranch.	XX			\$\$
Create or assist MRCA in creating a site bulletin that interprets the new VC.	XX			\$\$
Create a simple, attractive “first-time visitor guide.”	XX			\$\$
Update existing site bulletins to add web addresses, GPS coordinates, and other relevant online media information.	XX			\$\$\$
<b>Interactive/Social Media: Use social media efficiently to engage with visitors and encourage visitation and</b>				
Continue to expand SMMNRA’s presence in social media.	XX			\$\$
Integrate OUTDOORS publication with social media and other web tools.	XX			\$\$
<b>Media Recommendations: Improve web-based interpretation.</b>				
Continue to upgrade and improve the NPS SAMO website with more features and interactivity.	XX			\$\$
Improve website content, including updating natural and cultural resource information.	XX			\$
Provide links to partner sites and other resources from the NPS SAMO website.	XX			\$
Create a series of short video podcasts for the website and for download.	XX			\$\$
Introduce iPad and other tablets for interactive programming and as ranger/volunteer resources.	XX			\$
Develop mobile web access to NPS webpages.	XX			\$
Encourage development of smart phone applications (apps).	XX			\$
Install webcams and mobile webcams at selected locations.		XX		\$\$
Develop a series of e-hikes.	XX			\$
Monitor and expand Global Positioning Systems (GPS)-based coordinates and activities in the park.	XX			\$
<b>Research Needs in Support of Interpretation</b>				
Support cultural resource staff in moving forward on the Administrative History of SMMNRA.		XX		\$\$\$
Commission a Visitor Survey.		XX		\$\$
Support resource management staff in excerpting portions of SMMNRA’s extensive collection of oral histories for website.		XX	XX	\$\$
Work with resource management to sponsor new scholarship on diverse groups in the Santa Monica Mountains and their historical and cultural importance.				
<b>Staffing Needs for Interpretation</b>				
A partnership coordinator	XX			\$\$\$\$
1 more park ranger in Outreach		XX		\$\$\$
1 more park ranger in Interpretive Operations		XX		\$\$\$
2 visitor use assistants or park guides		XX		\$\$



Pelicans drafting over squid boats. *(Credit: Suzy Demeter Levitt)*



## Appendices

*"I have this enormous sense of a real renewing of one's faith in the public role... All of these people who worked - for that length of time - did it."*

- Margot Feuer, grassroots organizer, 1978

## Appendix A: Legislation

PUBLIC LAW 95-625—NOV. 10, 1978

92 STAT. 3501

Register at such time as he determines that sufficient property to constitute an administrable unit has been acquired. Pending such establishment and thereafter, the Secretary shall administer the property acquired pursuant to this section in accordance with this section and provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535) and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666).

(c) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for lands and interests in lands and \$200,000 for development to carry out the provisions of this section.

Administration.

16 USC 1 *et seq.*  
16 USC 461 note.  
Appropriation authorizations.

### SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

SEC. 507. (a) The Congress finds that—

(1) there are significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, natural, archeological, and public health benefits provided by the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area;

(2) there is a national interest in protecting and preserving these benefits for the residents of and visitors to the area; and

(3) the State of California and its local units of government have authority to prevent or minimize adverse uses of the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area and can, to a great extent, protect the health, safety, and general welfare by the use of such authority.

(b) There is hereby established the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (hereinafter referred to as the “recreation area”). The Secretary shall manage the recreation area in a manner which will preserve and enhance its scenic, natural, and historical setting and its public health value as an airshed for the Southern California metropolitan area while providing for the recreational and educational need of the visiting public.

(c) (1) The recreation area shall consist of the lands and waters and interests generally depicted as the recreation area on the map entitled “Boundary Map, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, California, and Santa Monica Mountains Zone”, numbered SMM-NRA 80.000, and dated May 1978, which shall be on file and available for inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, District of Columbia, and in the offices of the General Services Administration in the Federal Office Building in West Los Angeles, California, and in the main public library in Ventura, California. After advising the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate, in writing, the Secretary may make minor revisions of the boundaries of the recreation area when necessary by publication of a revised drawing or other boundary description in the Federal Register.

(2) Not later than ninety days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, after consultation with the Governor of the State of California, the California Coastal Commission, and the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission, shall commence acquisition of lands, improvements, waters, or interests therein within the recreation area. Such acquisition may be by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, transfer from any Federal agency, exchange, or otherwise. Any lands or interests therein owned by the State of California or any political subdivision thereof (including any park district or other public entity) may be acquired only by

16 USC 460kk.

Establishment.

Management.

Description.

Boundary revisions, notice to congressional committees and publication in Federal Register.

Lands, waters, and interests, acquisition and consultation.

donation, except that such lands acquired after the date of enactment of this section by the State of California or its political subdivisions may be acquired by purchase or exchange if the Secretary determines that the lands were acquired for purposes which further the national interest in protecting the area and that the purchase price or value on exchange does not exceed fair market value on the date that the State acquired the land or interest: *Provided, however,* That the value of any lands acquired by the Secretary under the exception in this sentence shall be deducted from the amount of moneys available for grants to the State under subsection (n) of this section. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any Federal property located within the boundaries of the recreation area shall, with the concurrence of the head of the agency having custody thereof, be transferred without cost, to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary for the purposes of the recreation area.

**Federal property, transferral.**

**Site transferral.** (3) The Administrator of the General Services Administration is hereby authorized and directed to transfer the site generally known as Nike Site 78 to the Secretary for inclusion in the recreation area: *Provided,* That the county of Los Angeles shall be permitted to continue to use without charge the facilities together with sufficient land as in the determination of the Secretary shall be necessary to continue to maintain and operate a fire suppression and training facility and shall be excused from payment for any use of the land and facilities on the site prior to the enactment of this Act. At such time as the county of Los Angeles, California, relinquishes control of such facilities and adjacent land or ceases the operation of the fire suppression and training facility, the land and facilities shall be managed by the Secretary as a part of the recreation area.

**Lands, waters, and interests, identification.** (d) (1) Within six months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall identify the lands, waters, and interests within the recreation area which must be acquired and held in public ownership for the following critical purposes: preservation of beaches and coastal uplands; protection of undeveloped inland stream drainage basins; connection of existing State and local government parks and other publicly owned lands to enhance their potential for public recreation use; protection of existing park roads and scenic corridors, including such right-of-way as is necessary for the protection of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Corridor; protection of the public health and welfare; and development and interpretation of historic sites and recreation areas in connection therewith, to include, but not be limited to, parks, picnic areas, scenic overlooks, hiking trails, bicycle trails, and equestrian trails. The Secretary may from time to time revise the identification of such areas, and any such revisions shall become effective in the same manner as herein provided for revisions in the boundaries of the recreation area.

**Revisions.**

**Plan, submittal to congressional committees.** (2) By January 1, 1980, the Secretary shall submit, in writing, to the committees referred to in subsection (c) and to the Committees on Appropriations of the United States Congress a detailed plan which shall indicate—

- (A) the lands and areas identified in paragraph (1),
- (B) the lands which he has previously acquired by purchase, donation, exchange, or transfer for the purpose of this recreation area,
- (C) the annual acquisition program (including the level of funding) recommended for the ensuing five fiscal years, and
- (D) the final boundary map for the recreation area.

(e) With respect to improved properties, as defined in this section, fee title shall not be acquired unless the Secretary finds that such lands are being used, or are threatened with uses, which are detrimental to the purposes of the recreation area, or unless each acquisition is necessary to fulfill the purposes of this section. The Secretary may acquire scenic easements to such improved property or such other interests as, in his judgment are necessary for the purposes of the recreation area.

Improved properties, acquisition.

Scenic easements.

(f) For the purposes of this section, the term "improved property" means—

Definition.

(1) a detached single-family dwelling, the construction of which was begun before January 1, 1976 (hereafter referred to as "dwelling"), together with so much of the land on which the dwelling is situated as is in the same ownership as the dwelling and as the Secretary designates to be reasonably necessary for the enjoyment of the dwelling for the sole purpose of noncommercial residential use, together with any structures necessary to the dwelling which are situated on the land so designated, and

(2) property developed for agricultural uses, together with any structures accessory thereto as were used for agricultural purposes on or before January 1, 1978.

In determining when and to what extent a property is to be treated as "improved property" for purposes of this section, the Secretary shall take into consideration the manner of use of such buildings and lands prior to January 1, 1978, and shall designate such lands as are reasonably necessary for the continued enjoyment of the property in the same manner and to the same extent as existed prior to such date.

Designation.

(g) The owner of an improved property, as defined in this section, on the date of its acquisition, as a condition of such acquisition, may retain for herself or himself, her or his heirs and assigns, a right of use and occupancy of the improved property for noncommercial residential or agriculture purposes, as the case may be, for a definite term of not more than twenty-five years, or, in lieu thereof, for a term ending at the death of the owner or the death of her or his spouse, whichever is later. The owner shall elect the term to be reserved. Unless the property is wholly or partially donated, the Secretary shall pay to the owner the fair market value of the property on the date of its acquisition, less the fair market value on that date of the right retained by the owner. A right retained by the owner pursuant to this section shall be subject to termination by the Secretary upon his determination that it is being exercised in a manner inconsistent with the purposes of this section, and it shall terminate by operation of law upon notification by the Secretary to the holder of the right of such determination and tendering to him the amount equal to the fair market value of that portion which remains unexpired.

Use and occupancy rights, retention.

Payment.

Termination, notification.

(h) In exercising the authority to acquire property under this section, the Secretary shall give prompt and careful consideration to any offer made by an individual owning property within the recreation area to sell such property, if such individual notifies the Secretary that the continued ownership of such property is causing, or would result in, undue hardship.

(i) The Secretary shall administer the recreation area in accordance with this Act and provisions of laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.). In the administration of the recreation area, the Secretary may utilize such statutory authority

Administration.

available for the conservation and management of wildlife and natural resources as appropriate to carry out the purpose of this section. The fragile resource areas of the recreation area shall be administered on a low-intensity basis, as determined by the Secretary.

Cooperative agreements.

(j) The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of California, or any political subdivision thereof, for the rendering, on a reimbursable basis, of rescue, firefighting, and law enforcement services and cooperative assistance by nearby law enforcement and fire preventive agencies.

Donations.

(k) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary is authorized to accept donations of funds, property, or services from individuals, foundations, corporations, or public entities for the purpose of land acquisition and providing services and facilities which the Secretary deems consistent with the purposes of this section.

Report.

(l) By January 1, 1981, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Advisory Commission, established by this section, shall submit a report to the Secretary which shall—

(1) assess the capability and willingness of the State of California and the local units of government to manage and operate the recreation area,

(2) recommend any changes in ownership, management, and operation which would better accomplish the purposes of this section, and

(3) recommend any conditions, joint management agreements, or other land use mechanisms to be contingent on any transfer of land.

Report to congressional committees.

(m) The Secretary, after giving careful consideration to the recommendations set forth by the Advisory Commission, shall, by January 1, 1982, submit a report to the Committees referred to in subsection (c) which shall incorporate the recommendations of the Advisory Commission as well as set forth the Secretary's recommendations. Such report shall—

(1) assess the benefits and costs of continued management as a unit of the National Park System,

(2) assess the capability and willingness of the State of California and the local units of government to manage and operate the recreation area, and

(3) recommend any changes in ownership, management, and operation which would better accomplish the purposes of this section.

Comprehensive plan.

(n)(1) The Secretary shall request the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission to submit a comprehensive plan, prepared in accord with this section and title 7.75 of the California Government Code (commencing with section 67450), for the Santa Monica Mountains Zone generally depicted on the map referred to in subsection (c) of this section for approval.

(2) The comprehensive plan shall include, in addition to the requirements of California State law—

(A) an identification and designation of public and private uses which are compatible with and which would not significantly impair the significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, natural, archeological, and public health benefits present in the zone and which would not have an adverse impact on the recreation area or on the air quality of the south coast air basin;

(B) a specific minimum land acquisition program which shall include, but not be limited to, fee and less than fee acquisition

of strategic and critical sites not to be acquired by the Federal Government for public recreational and other related uses; and a program for the complementary use of State and local authority to regulate the use of lands and waters within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone to the fullest extent practicable consistent with the purposes of this section; and

(C) a recreation transportation system which may include but need not be limited to existing public transit.

(3) No plan submitted to the Secretary under this section shall be approved unless the Secretary finds the plan consistent with paragraph (2) and finds that—

(A) the planning commission has afforded adequate opportunity, including public hearings, for public involvement in the preparation and review of the plan, and public comments were received and considered in the plan or revision as presented to him;

(B) the State and local units of government identified in the plan as responsible for implementing its provisions have the necessary authority to implement the plan and such State and local units of government have indicated their intention to use such authority to implement the plan;

(C) the plan, if implemented, would preserve significant natural, historical, and archeological benefits and, consistent with such benefits, provide increased recreational opportunities for persons residing in the greater Los Angeles-southern California metropolitan area; and

(D) implementation of the plan would not have a serious adverse impact on the air quality or public health of the greater Los Angeles region.

Before making his findings on the air quality and public health impacts of the plan, the Secretary shall consult with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Consultation with EPA.

(4) Following approval of the plan with respect to the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, upon receipt of adequate assurances that all aspects of that jurisdiction's implementation responsibilities will be adopted and put into effect, the Secretary shall—

(A) provide grants to the State and through the State to local governmental bodies for acquisition of lands, waters, and interests therein identified in paragraph (2) (B), and for development of essential public facilities, except that such grants shall be made only for the acquisition of lands, waters, and interests therein, and related essential public facilities, for park, recreation, and conservation purposes; and

Grants.

(B) provide, subject to agreements that in the opinion of the Secretary will assure additional preservation of the lands and waters of the zone, such funds as may be necessary to retire bonded indebtedness for water and sewer and other utilities already incurred by property owners which in the opinion of the Secretary would if left outstanding contribute to further development of the zone in a manner inconsistent with the approved plan developed by the planning commission.

Funds.

No grant for acquisition of land may be made under subparagraph (A) unless the Secretary receives satisfactory assurances that such lands acquired under subparagraph (A) shall not be converted to other than park, recreation, and conservation purposes without the approval of the Secretary and without provision for suitable replacement land.

Assurance requirements.

**Grant requirements.** (5) Grants under this section shall be made only upon application of the recipient State and shall be in addition to any other Federal financial assistance for any other program, and shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. Any jurisdiction that implements changes to the approved plan which are inconsistent with the purposes of this section, or adopts or acquiesces in changes to laws regulations or policies necessary to implement or protect the approved plan, without approval of the Secretary, may be liable for reimbursement of all funds previously granted or available to it under the terms of this section without regard to such additional terms and conditions or other requirements of law that may be applicable to such grants. During the life of the planning commission, changes to the plan must be submitted by the planning commission to the Secretary for approval. No such application for a grant may be made after the date five years from the date of the Secretary's approval of the plan.

**Plan changes.**

**Comments.** (o) The head of any Federal agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed Federal or federally assisted undertaking in the lands and waters within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, generally depicted on the map referred to in subsection (c), and the head of any Federal agency having authority to license or permit any undertaking in such lands and waters shall, prior to the approval of the expenditure of any Federal funds on such undertaking or prior to the issuance of any license or permit, as the case may be, afford the Secretary a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking and shall give due consideration to any comments made by the Secretary and to the effect of such undertaking on the "findings" and purposes of this section.

(p) The Secretary shall give full consideration to the recommendations of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission, and the California Coastal Commission.

**Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Advisory Commission. Establishment. Membership.** (q) (1) There is hereby established the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Advisory Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Advisory Commission"). The Advisory Commission shall terminate ten years after the date of establishment of the recreation area.

(2) The Advisory Commission shall be composed of the following members to serve for terms of five years as follows:

- (A) one member appointed by the Governor of the State of California;
- (B) one member appointed by the mayor of the city of Los Angeles;
- (C) one member appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County;
- (D) one member appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County; and
- (E) five members appointed by the Secretary, one of whom shall serve as the Commission Chairperson.

**Meetings. Notice, publication in newspapers.** (3) The Advisory Commission shall meet on a regular basis. Notice of meetings and agenda shall be published in local newspapers which have a distribution which generally covers the area. Commission meetings shall be held at locations and in such a manner as to insure adequate public involvement. Such locations shall be in the region of the Santa Monica Mountains and no more than twenty-five miles from it.

(4) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation as such, but the Secretary may pay expenses reasonably incurred in carrying out their responsibilities under this Act on vouchers signed by the Chairperson. Compensation and expenses.

(5) The Secretary, or his or her designee, shall from time to time but at least semiannually, meet and consult with the Advisory Commission on matters relating to the development of this recreation area and with respect to carrying out the provisions of this section. Consultation.

(r) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for acquisition of lands and interests in land within the boundaries of the recreation area established under this section, but not more than \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 1979, \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 1980, \$45,000,000 for fiscal year 1981, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1982, and \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 1983, such sums to remain available until expended. For grants to the State pursuant to subsection (n) there are authorized to be appropriated not more than \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1979, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1980, \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 1981, and \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 1982, such sums to remain available until expended. For the authorizations made in this subsection, any amounts authorized but not appropriated in any fiscal year shall remain available for appropriation in succeeding fiscal years. Appropriation authorization.

(s) For the development of essential public facilities in the recreation area there are authorized to be appropriated not more than \$500,000. The Congress expects that, at least until assessment of the report required by subsection (t), any further development of the area shall be accomplished by the State of California or local units of government, subject to the approval of the Director, National Park Service.

(t) Within two years from the date of establishment of the recreation area pursuant to this section, the Secretary shall, after consulting with the Advisory Commission, develop and transmit to the Committees referred to in subsection (c) a general management plan for the recreation area consistent with the objectives of this section. Such plan shall indicate— Management plan, transmittal to Congress.

(1) a plan for visitor use including the facilities needed to accommodate the health, safety, education and recreation needs of the public;

(2) the location and estimated costs of all facilities;

(3) the projected need for any additional facilities within the area;

(4) any additions or alterations to the boundaries of the recreation area which are necessary or desirable to the better carrying out of the purposes of this section; and

(5) a plan for preservation of scenic, archeological and natural values and of fragile ecological areas.

**EBEY'S LANDING NATIONAL HISTORICAL RESERVE**

SEC. 508. (a) There is hereby established the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (hereinafter referred to as the "reserve"), in order to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historical record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement in Puget Sound to the present time, and to commemorate— Establishment.  
16 USC 461 note.

(1) the first thorough exploration of the Puget Sound area, by Captain George Vancouver, in 1792;

## Appendix B: Planning Team

### Long-Range Interpretive Plan Participants

#### California State Parks

Karma Graham, District Interpretive Specialist

#### Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA)

Amy Lethbridge, Deputy Executive Officer

Michelle Renner, Naturalist

#### National Park Service (SMMNRA staff unless otherwise noted)

Barbara Applebaum, Supervisory Park Ranger (Education)

Adriana Barrera, Park Ranger (Outreach)

Shawn Bawden, Park Ranger (Volunteer Program)

Anthony Bevilacqua, Park Ranger (Education)

Sheila Braden, Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Christy Brigham, Chief of Planning, Science and Resource Management

Robert Cromwell, Park Ranger (Education)

Razsa Cruz, Park Ranger (Outreach)

Toni Dufficy, Contracting Officer's Representative, Harpers Ferry Center

Kate Eschelbach, Supervisory Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Lorenza Fong, Deputy Superintendent

Julie Fonseca de Borges, Supervisory Park Ranger (Outreach and Volunteerism)

Jack Gillooly, Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Phil Holmes, Cultural Anthropologist

Mary Holmes, Park Ranger (Outreach)

Evan Jones, Chief Ranger

Meghan Kish, Chief of Interpretation, Education and Outreach

Ken Low, Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Mike Malone, Park Ranger (Volunteer Program Manager)

Tom Medema, Chief of Interpretation, Yosemite National Park

Jackie Muller, Intern (Interpretation)

Lisa Okazaki, Education Specialist

Michael Seacord, Park Ranger (Education)

Woody Smeck, Superintendent

Antonio Solorio, Youth Program Coordinator

Margie Steigerwald, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Marilyn Sutton, Chief of Administration

Susan Teel, Director, Southern California Research Learning Center

Mike Theune, Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Linda Valois, Cultural Resources

Daniel C. Williams, Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Amy Yee, Visual Information Specialist (Interpretive Media)

Carole Yokota, Administrative Assistant (Interpretation)

#### Partner and Stakeholder Participants

Jason Anderson, Angeles National Forest, USDA Forest Service

Jane Beseda, Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society

Karen Caruso, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Elementary School

Jeff Crow, NatureBridge

Kelly Decker, The Children's Nature Institute

Debbie DiMascio, Park Volunteer – Mounted Volunteer Patrol  
Carol Felixson, UCLA Stunt Ranch Reserve and Kretz Center  
Muriel Kotin, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
Mark Langton, Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency; Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association  
Rose Leibowitz, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society  
Henry Salcido, NatureBridge  
Christine Steigelman, EARTHS Magnet School  
Stephen Vodantis, Resource Conservation District of Santa Monica Mountains  
Carol Westberg, Western National Parks Association Bookshop Manager  
Ralph Waycott, Park Volunteer – Backbone Trail

**Consultant Team**

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## Appendix C: Santa Monica Mountains Education Consortium

### Organizational Members, 2011

California State Parks, Angeles District  
Children's Nature Institute  
City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks, Park Ranger Division  
City of Malibu Charmlee Docents  
Cold Creek Docents  
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District  
Los Angeles Unified School District, Outdoor Education  
Malibu Creek Docents  
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority  
Mountains Restoration Trust  
National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area  
NatureBridge  
Nature of Wildworks  
Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains  
Topanga Canyon Docents  
TreePeople  
UCLA La Kretz Center for California Conservation Science  
UCLA Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve

## Appendix D: References

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## Appendix E: Primary Interpretive Themes Storylines

Presented below are the primary interpretive themes, subthemes, and storylines for the Long-Range Interpretive Plan.

### Escape/Open Space

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

- Located near one of the nation’s most populated metropolitan areas, the almost 154,000-acre SMMNRA offers a wide array of outdoor recreational experiences.
  - Interpretation on various nature-oriented sporting activities (trail-running, kayaking, bird watching)
  - Ways of escape: how being outdoors can help visitors explore other aspects of themselves/alternate identities as weekend warriors, skilled climbers, birders, or impassioned naturalists
  - Availability of sports activities and endeavors in the region: surfing culture, other ocean watersports, mountain biking, horseback riding, triathlons, etc.
  - Hiking the Backbone Trail
- The diverse scenic natural and cultural landscapes of SMMNRA offer many opportunities to experience solitude, engage in quiet contemplation, and draw inspiration from the region’s long human history and immersion in the natural world.
  - National parks/public lands as places specifically set aside to “re-create” oneself, to seek spiritual growth, time out, and renewal
  - Natural landscapes as an inspiration for human creativity in the arts: painting, photography, poetry, literature, architecture, and film
  - Ancient and contemporary American Indian perspectives on the quest for solitude and renewal in the Santa Monica Mountains
- SMMNRA serves as a gateway between our 21st-century urban environment and the natural world.
  - How SMMNRA can help prevent “nature deficit disorder”
  - How the world looks, feels, sounds, smells, and even tastes different from the city once you arrive in SMMNRA
  - An experience in the wild outdoors of SMMNRA can be fun and exciting

### Human Use/Cultures

For over 12,000 years, people have shaped this land, just as the land has shaped the people. These processes continue today.

- The Chumash, Gabrielino-Tongva, and other Native American people have called the Santa Monica Mountains home for at least 12,000 years and their descendants live here today.
  - Lifeways, artifacts, and activities that portray/evoke how Chumash and Gabrielino-Tongva ancestors lived and survived here thousands of years ago
  - Documented Chumash trading networks through the region and beyond
  - Explorations of the living culture and contemporary descendants of these residents and descendants of Native Americans nationwide and how they have adapted traditional teachings to contemporary life (sustainability) in the greater LA area
- Settlers, ranchers, and other more recent arrivals, drawn to the resources of the Santa Monica Mountains, have changed and continue to change the ecology of the landscape.
  - Early European (primarily Spanish) explorers – Juan Bautista de Anza, the Camino Real, etc.
  - Spanish missions and settlements

- The Rancho period of land grants from the King of Spain – creation of parcels of Malibu, Guadelasca, Rancho El Conejo, Las Virgenes
- American expansionism and homesteading – Cheeseborough, Agoura, Borchard, Ballard – and early diversity in the mountains
- California slave or free state/territory – possible underground railroad connection
- The quest for urban utopias in the mountains – King Gillette, the Malibu Colony, gentlemen ranchers, Peter Strauss Ranch early history
- William Mulholland and the California Water Wars
  
- Current uses: agriculture, military, scientific research, and other endeavors
  
- Architecture, filmmaking, and other art forms contribute to a popular worldview of the southern California culture.
  - Stories of the film industry (past and present) in the Santa Monica Mountains, including Paramount Ranch
  - Involvement of Hollywood celebrities in the preservation of the Santa Monica Mountains landscape (Will Rogers, Leo Carrillo, Bob Hope, Peter Strauss)
  - Vernacular and Spanish-influenced architecture as illustrated in historic structures throughout the NRA
  - A view of the mountains through the eyes of artists – photography, sculpture and painting
  - Musicians in the Santa Monica Mountains (primarily Laurel and Topanga Canyons)
  
- Numerous extant historic ranches in SMMNRA exemplify the evolving attitudes and economics of land use, the tensions between preservation and exploitation, and the continuing pressures of human incursions on natural ecosystems.
  - The historic and current role of the ranches in protecting watersheds and preserving diverse ecosystems and wildlife corridors within the Santa Monica Mountains
  - Archeology and history of Chumash settlements as preserved on ranch lands
  - King C. Gillette and his 1920s Wallace Neff-designed Spanish Colonial Revival mansion and grounds as representative of the architecture and lifestyles of California’s Golden Age
  - History, ownership, and usage changes of the King Gillette Ranch (Gillette, MGM film director Clarence Brown, the Catholic Church, Elizabeth Clare Prophet and her New Age church, Soka University, MRCA, SMMNRA)
  - The new Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch as a demonstration of sustainable features that inspire visitors to live in harmony with the natural ecosystem
  - Circle X Ranch, its past as a Boy Scout retreat, and its current uses, plus other scout camps, disabled camps/ranches, and similar ventures
  - The Peter Strauss Ranch as an early “resort park” for the region, followed by its use as a retreat for Strauss
  
- Movement of people through the area has affected the landscape of the Santa Monica Mountains throughout human history, as people have traveled, explored, and experienced the resources and assets of the region.
  - Indigenous groups walking through the mountains, creating hunting paths and trading routes
  - Scenic touring and the development of parkways and byways for leisure and recreation (Mulholland Highway, Pacific Coast Highway, Backbone Trail, Potrero Road)
  - Expansion of small-scale and large commercial agriculture in the region
  - Continuing urban encroachment into once-inaccessible mountains and canyons

## Mediterranean Ecosystem

In a growing urban environment, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area preserves a substantial portion of the rare Mediterranean biome (ecosystem), a rapidly diminishing resource that exists in only five places in the world.

- The unique factors creating the Mediterranean ecosystem include hot dry summers, mild wet winters, drought-adapted shrublands, and fire ecology.
  - Diversity and relationships of habitats, individual organisms, and natural processes
  - The role of fire
  - Plants and animals of the Mediterranean ecosystem
  - “Behind the scenes” – subsurface, microscopic, other unseen, yet important components (lichen, micorrizae, bacteria)
  - Ever-changing and dynamic ecosystem as it responds to external forces such as urban expansion, invasives, climate change, more devastating fires
- The Mediterranean ecosystem needs protection as one of earth’s smallest, most biologically diverse, and most threatened biomes (land types), composing 2% of the world’s landmass.
  - Where in the world: the five locations worldwide with Mediterranean biomes
  - Specific, intriguing stories of how individual plant and animal species survive and thrive in this biome – including bellwether examples/indicators of environmental problems
  - Threats to this fragile ecosystem and the plants and animals that call it home – including more than 20 federal or state-listed threatened or endangered plants and animals, and another 46 animals and 11 plants that are federal or state species of concern. Together, these severely stressed plants and animals constitute one of the highest concentrations of rare species in the United States.
  - Importance of SMMNRA in protecting this ecosystem
- SMMNRA is a vital part of the watershed and water supply for greater Los Angeles.
  - You and your watershed – understanding your impacts and how you can protect your watershed
  - How and where water arrives in greater Los Angeles
  - The role of the Santa Monica Mountains and wetlands in supplying and cleansing Los Angeles’ water
  - Connections between terrestrial and marine environments in SMMNRA
- SMMNRA plays an important role in the airshed and air quality of greater Los Angeles.
  - Mountains, oceans, and air currents
  - The pollution absorption qualities of SMMNRA vegetation
  - The importance of air quality to the health of plants and animals, including people
  - Unique ability to observe the night sky; astronomy opportunities
- SMMNRA is a vital resource for education and research in a variety of fields for visitors of all ages, interests, and levels of training.
  - The recreation area as a living outdoor lab for scientific learning and exploration
  - Examples of scientific research in SMMNRA: monitoring mountain lions and other biological research
  - Numerous specific educational programs based on natural and cultural history of the region
  - Phenology/climate change studies
  - Fragmentation in an urban environment
  - University and higher education involvement
  - Early satellite and MRI Research (Solstice, Hughes Lab)

- The geological processes that created the Santa Monica Mountains had and continue to exert powerful influences on the park’s fragile Mediterranean biome.
  - How the mountains and their geochemistry influence the flora and fauna of the park and its landscape
  - How the geology and geophysics of SMMNRA ties in with other Mediterranean ecosystems such as the Andes (Chile), Darling Scarp (Western Australia) and Atlas Mountains (Mediterranean Basin)
- Climate change and other environmental changes present challenges and opportunities for stewardship in SMMNRA.
  - Call to action for public involvement

### **Gateway to the National Park System**

SMMNRA is a gateway for discovering America’s natural wonders and cultural heritages and the need to preserve them.

- The Santa Monica Mountains area is a mosaic of public and private land ownership where involved citizens and public agencies work toward a common vision of stewardship, conservation, and preservation.
  - Stories of the founding of SMMNRA and the individuals involved
  - The founding of SMMNRA in the larger context of the nation’s continuing efforts to set aside and protect certain landscapes as public lands
  - The incredible diversity of land ownership and involvement by public and private land owners and interests that exists today (military to wineries)
- The establishment of SMMNRA represents a major step – a workable, collaborative framework for action – in preserving this unique landscape for the enjoyment of current and future generations.
  - How SMMNRA functions today – who does what, planning efforts and public input, how lands are acquired
  - SMMNRA as a public endeavor, open to all – the importance of public participation and support
  - What do the mountains represent to you? Personal connections
- National Recreation Areas such as SMMNRA are an example of the many kinds of collaborative ventures the National Park Service engages in to protect our nation’s special places for future generations.
  - Other NPS sites in California, from large national parks to small historic sites
  - NPS outreach in schools and communities
  - Parks as a catalyst for community involvement
  - Plans and reflections on the upcoming Centennial of the NPS in 2016



Harpers Ferry Center  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



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