

# PLANNING ISSUES

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NRA**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



## LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

### THE NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION ACT

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was established by Congress and signed into law by President Carter on November 10, 1978 (P.L. 95-625, Sec. 507, the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978). This legislation recognized that the Santa Monica Mountains and the coastline adjacent to the Los Angeles metropolitan area have significant natural, cultural, and recreational value and that the federal government could play a role in their preservation. The National Park Service has been given the initial responsibility to preserve the mountains' qualities by planning, and managing a new recreation area in this portion of southern California.

### LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following planning provisions have been identified in the legislation establishing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. These requirements direct and affect the planning process and form the framework for the general management plan.

- By January 1, 1980, the National Park Service will submit to Congress a comprehensive land acquisition plan, including a final boundary map and five-year acquisition program. This plan will guide the Park Service's land acquisition program by establishing a priority of acquisition as funds become available for a five-year period. Acquisition is defined as the purchasing of lands, water or interests in lands (i.e. scenic easements) for public ownership.
- The National Park Service is required to complete the general management plan and its environmental document by November 10, 1980. It will contain the conceptual and long-range strategy for resources management, visitor use and recreational development within the recreation area.
- The Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission, established by the state of California, is responsible for land use planning in the Santa Monica Mountains zone. The commission will develop a comprehensive plan which addresses conservation, development and transportation issues.
- The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Advisory Commission will function as a vehicle for citizen involvement and a line of communication to various agencies, including the

National Park Service. By January 1, 1981 the commission will submit to Congress a report which assesses the capability of the state of California and local jurisdictions to manage the recreation area. The report will recommend whether there should be any changes in ownership or management.

### PLANNING CONCERNS

The following planning concerns have been raised by other agencies and private citizens through previous studies. They are intended as a starting point for discussions relating to opportunities and problems to be dealt with in the planning process. Please don't hesitate to add your ideas to the list!

- Vacant coastal land available for park acquisition is in scattered parcels, and generally cut off from beach access by roads and/or private development.
- The Santa Monica Mountains are experiencing intense development pressure.
- Public transportation systems do not at present adequately serve the recreation area.
- The national recreation area exists in three major political subdivisions of the state of California, the counties of Ventura and Los Angeles and the city of Los Angeles. Each political jurisdiction has its own land and park acquisition policies.
- The Santa Monica Mountains possess environmental hazards including landslides, erosion, fires, and floods.
- Of the entire land area 150,000 acres within the national recreation area boundary, very little is suitable for intensive recreation development.
- Are there other problems, opportunities, or questions that should be addressed in the general management plan?

## PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

### POTENTIAL VISITOR ACTIVITIES AT SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

To help the National Park Service and other involved agencies and commissions determine a strategy for land acquisition in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, we need your ideas in deciding what type of experiences for visitors and kinds of activities the national recreation area should provide for you and future visitors. The potential park area identified in the legislation represents a variety of natural settings which may form the framework for various future visitor experiences and resource protection programs. To help you focus on these issues, we have briefly described three recreation area concepts and suggested some ideas about possible visitor activities for each concept. Later we will ask you which concept you prefer (and why), and what activities and experiences should be provided in each resource area. Please keep in mind that these concepts and activities are intended as "thought starters" for group discussion during the workshops. You may decide to suggest uses and protection priorities drawn from all three concepts. Please feel free to suggest new concepts and ideas, for it is our goal to get the widest possible range of public thinking.

After reading each of the concepts, ask yourself the following questions:

Which geographic areas or resource types especially appeal to you for recreational use?

What activities and services exist in these locations and what should be provided in the future?

Which resources or locations should receive protection?

What activities and/or facilities should be developed to complement existing state, county, and municipal parks and beaches?

What other topics should planners and managers of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area be concerned about?

What kinds of land use policies are needed to ensure that SMMNRA becomes what you want it to be?

a

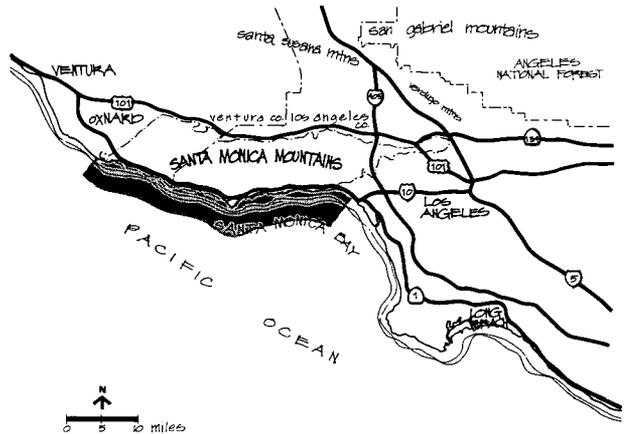


FIGURE 1

### SEACOAST RECREATION AREA

The coastline within the national recreation area is characterized by sandy and rocky beaches, many with seacliffs. This concept would stress increased protection of the area in Figure 1.

More visitor use opportunities would be created through more efficient access and parking. Facilities for beach use, such as change houses and comfort stations, could be expanded. Increased emphasis would be placed on nature study and camping opportunities. Consideration also could be given to public transportation systems which would reduce gasoline consumption and provide easier access for more people.



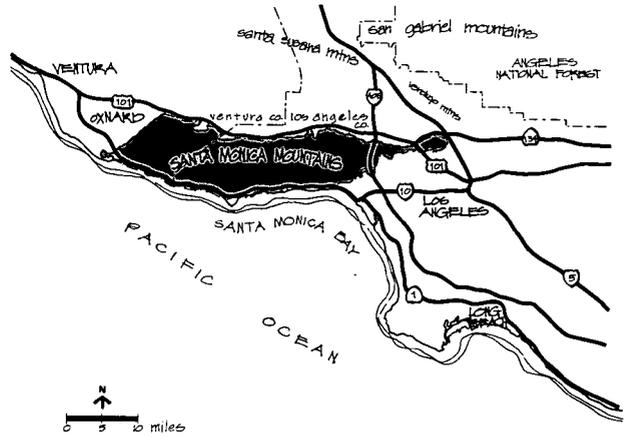
**b**

FIGURE 2

### MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

The main area depicted in Figure 2 is characterized by steep slopes, interior valleys, and deep canyons. Present uses of this area include camping, hiking, horseback riding, photography and nature study.

With this concept, protection priority might be given to large land tracts in the central and northern portions of the national recreation area. The resource base would be primarily rural and mountainous open space, containing few man-made developments. This concept would be aimed at providing low-density, resource-oriented backcountry experiences for many visitors. Some higher-density, vehicle-oriented campgrounds might also be developed in this concept if suitable locations could be found. Interest has been expressed in providing improved access from the mountains to the seacoast and vice versa. Private vehicles, horses, and footpower might be the primary means of circulation in this alternative.



C



### PROGRAM-ORIENTED URBAN AREA

In this concept federal monies would be expended to improve access to existing public lands (state parks, county parks, etc.) and to expand the range of visitor use opportunities at these locations. Protection priority might be given to parcels, along the coastline or in the mountains, necessary to expand upon and complement existing activities and programs. Environmental education programs and facilities for school groups, with provisions for overnight stays in a natural setting, could be established. Protection of lands on the urban fringe could create spaces for high density recreational facilities (athletic fields, group picnic areas, activity centers for fairs and arts shows, etc.). Consideration would be given to transportation systems which could promote greater use of facilities and programs throughout the national recreation area.

PLANNING WORKBOOK  
RESPONSE SHEET

1. Which concept or concepts do you favor for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area?

A

B

C

Why?

If no one concept seems appropriate, describe the mix of visitor uses and geographic areas for protection which makes most sense to you.

Please tell us the reasons for your selections.

(Continue on back if necessary)

2. What activities do you most want provided for in the national recreation area? List them from the most to the least important and try to give us at least five activities.

Other comments?

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Your responses are confidential.

If you wish to receive further publications about Santa Monica Mountains planning efforts, please fill in below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

