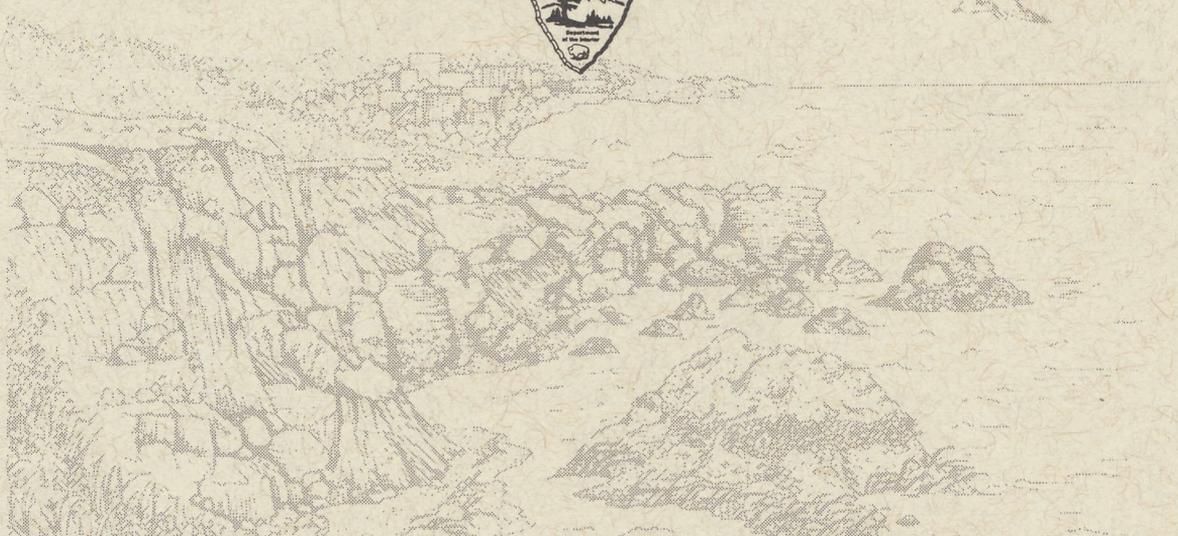

SANTA
MONICA
MOUNTAINS
NATIONAL
RECREATION
AREA



STATEMENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

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The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area protects the greatest expanse of Mediterranean ecosystem in the National Park System. This extraordinarily diverse ecosystem is home to 26 distinct natural communities, from freshwater aquatic habitats and coastal lagoons to oak woodlands, valley oak savanna and chaparral. Situated in densely populated southern California, the recreation area is a critical haven for more than 450 animal species, including mountain lions, bobcats and golden eagles. It is also home to more than 10 threatened or endangered plants and animals.

Many attributes contribute to the special recognition of the Santa Monica Mountains as nationally significant. The following pages highlight some of the special and unique resources that visitors from this country and around the world can learn about and enjoy within the park boundary.



More than 1,000 archaeological sites are located within the park boundary, one of the highest densities of archaeological resources found in any mountain range in the world. The 26 known Chumash pictograph sites, sacred to traditional Native American Indians, are among the most spectacular found anywhere. Nearly every major prehistoric and historic theme associated with human interaction and development of the western United States is represented here.

No other national park unit features such a diverse assemblage of natural, cultural, scenic and recreational resources within easy reach of more than 12 million Americans, nearly 5% of the nation's total population. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area provides the National Park Service with an unprecedented opportunity to exercise its role as a world leader in the areas of environmental education, sustainable living, and natural and cultural resource management.

Natural Resources

The unique Mediterranean ecosystem protected in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is found only four other places in the world — southwestern Chile, southwestern Australia, south Africa and the Mediterranean. Many of the rare natural communities within the park are the focus of special conservation efforts.

More than 450 vertebrate species live within the recreation area, including 50 mammals, 384 birds, and 36 reptiles and amphibians. The abundance and diversity of wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains is especially unique given its proximity to one of the world's largest urban centers.

The Santa Monica Mountains support one of the largest diversities of nesting raptor species (13) in the country, rivaling the congressionally-designated Snake River Birds of Prey Sanctuary in Idaho.

The Santa Monica Mountains are home to more than 10 endangered plants and animals. Over 50 other species are candidates for federal listing as threatened or endangered.

The recreation area protects large, connected areas of core wildlife habitat critical to the survival of animals such as the mountain lion.

The mountains exhibit the greatest geological diversity of all major transverse (east-west trending) mountain ranges in North America. The range is actively being uplifted by plate tectonics, and continues to increase in height at an estimated rate of one inch per 1,000 years. New theories about crustal rotation and plate tectonic interactions are being developed from studies of the Santa Monica Mountains.

NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Greatest expanse of protected Mediterranean ecosystem in the National Park System
- More than 10 threatened or endangered animals and plants
- Rare California native prairie grassland
- Two of the last remaining coastal salt marshes on the Pacific Coast
- High diversity of nesting raptor species



NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

Continued

- Key stop on Pacific Flyway for migratory birds
- Greatest geologic diversity of any transverse mountain range in the United States
- Coastline is one of most biologically significant in the state
- More than 14 significant ecological areas
- Southernmost spawning grounds for steelhead trout



The recreation area's 46 miles of coastline contains broad sandy beaches, interspersed with rocky intertidal areas. More than half of the coastline, from Laguna Point to Latigo Point, is designated an area of "special biological significance" by the California Water Resources Control Board due to the area's diverse biotic communities and exemplary water quality.

Two of the most significant coastal salt marshes on the Pacific Coast — Mugu Lagoon and Malibu Lagoon — are located within the park boundary. These habitats are critical to the survival of several threatened and endangered species. Malibu Lagoon recently became a successful reintroduction site for the endangered tidewater goby. Both lagoons are important stopovers on the Pacific Flyway (Alaska to South America) for migratory birds.

The Santa Monica Mountain's 49 coastal drainages contain diverse riparian habitats, one of the most endangered plant communities in California. Malibu Creek supports the southernmost population of spawning steelhead trout on the Pacific Coast.

Many other areas of the park also possess outstanding ecological value. The La Jolla Valley in Point Mugu State Park contains some of the last California native prairie grassland. Cheeseboro and Palo Comado Canyons contain some of the best examples of the valley oak savanna community at the southernmost extension of its range. In all, 14 of Los Angeles County's significant ecological areas, and five of Ventura County's "natural areas of special concern" are located within the Santa Monica Mountains.

Cultural Resources

The Santa Monica Mountains boast a rich and colorful history of continuous human occupation dating back 10,000 years and are home to two of the largest Native American Indian groups in California, the Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva. Over time, these complex and advanced cultures developed large villages, which included extensive trading and monetary systems, astronomical knowledge, exquisite basketry, stone and wood carvings, and a legacy of sacred pictographs. As an interface between these two complex societies, the mountains offer great scientific importance for hypothesis testing about cultural development, interaction and change.



CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 1,000 archaeological sites
 - 26 known pictograph sites sacred to traditional Native American Indians
 - Home of two significant Native American Indian cultures
 - 73 sites are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places
-

The mountains feature one of the highest densities of archaeological sites found in any mountain range in the world. More than 1,000 archaeological sites are currently known to be located within the park boundary.

The recreation area's 26 known Chumash pictograph sites are among the most spectacular in the world. These pictographs are sacred to traditional Native American Indians.

Today, the largest Native American Indian population in the world, representing virtually every tribe, lives within easy access of the recreation area.

Nearly every major prehistoric and historic theme associated with human interaction and development of the western United States is represented within the park boundary — from the early hunters and gatherers, to Native American Indian cultures, the Spanish mission and rancho periods, and the American homestead era. Modern-day residents continue to make unique cultural and ethnic contributions to the country as a result of their special relationship to the Santa Monica Mountains landscape.

More than 73 sites in the Santa Monica Mountains are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Of the more than 2000 architecturally significant buildings identified in Gebhard and Winter's book *Architecture in Los Angeles*, approximately 600 are located in the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent foothills. Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, Paul Williams and Wallace Neff are just a few of the architects with significant design accomplishments in the Santa Monica Mountains.

The three technological innovations which shaped the urban form of Los Angeles as a metropolis and influenced world events are all represented on NPS sites in the Santa Monica Mountains: the importation of water, the development of oil as a fuel, and the development of the modern carburetor.

When the film industry began to export the Hollywood version of American culture to the world, the Santa Monica Mountains became the venue for hundreds of films. Today, park sites such as Paramount Ranch continue to be used for filming and are nationally significant cultural landscapes.

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

Continued

- Spanish mission and rancho periods represented
 - Outstanding examples of Los Angeles architecture
 - Popular historic and present-day filming venue
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Recreational Resources

The natural beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline, combined with a mild climate, make the area one of the most popular recreation and tourist destinations in the world. Tourism is the region's second largest industry; Los Angeles International Airport has the highest tourist/business traveler ratio of any airport in the nation.

Every year, the park's coastline alone is visited by more than 30 million people.

Environmental and cultural educational programs are offered to thousands of children and adults every year, including many from disadvantaged communities.

A variety of internationally recognized recreational and cultural attractions are situated within the recreation area, from the Hollywood Bowl to the J. Paul Getty Museum.

More than 500 miles of hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails provide panoramic mountain, valley, ocean and island views.

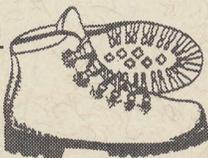
Park sites, such as Paramount Ranch, enable visitors to enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at the entertainment industry, as they watch the filming of movies and television productions.

The park contains two of the most well-traveled and photographed scenic drives in the United States — Pacific Coast Highway (Highway 1) and Mulholland Highway.

For inner-city residents, the Santa Monica Mountains may provide the only opportunity to visit a national park and explore America's heritage. Camping facilities in the park provide a low-cost overnight experience in America's great outdoors.

RECREATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Top tourist destination
- Millions of visitors annually
- Internationally-recognized recreational and cultural attractions
- Environmental and cultural education programs
- Group and family camping facilities
- Popular venue for special events from multi-cultural festivals and music concerts to Native American Indian pow-wows
- 500-mile trail system with panoramic views
- Two spectacular scenic drives



Research affiliations

The unique environmental and cultural setting of the park makes it especially suitable for a wide range of educational and research pursuits among the more than 100 universities, colleges, museums and related institutions located in the surrounding area.

In 1994, more than 25 ongoing research projects were monitored within the recreation area boundary. Park sites provide invaluable benchmarks by which to measure changes in ecosystem dynamics along the urban/wildland interface. As human development encroaches upon and subdivides habitats worldwide, the lessons learned in the Santa Monica Mountains promise to generate improved resource protection strategies for other national parks and reserves facing similar threats.

UNIQUE AMONG NATIONAL PARKS

The natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area are not adequately represented in any other national park unit or federal holding in the United States. The national importance of the recreation area is succinctly stated in the legislation authorizing the park (Public Law 95-625). It recognizes the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline as an area of national significance because of their unique combination of natural, cultural, recreational and aesthetic resources, and further states, "*... there is a national interest in protecting and preserving these benefits.*"

The enabling legislation also recognizes that people and private property are an inherent part of the recreation area. It sets forth a creative framework for coordination in recreation, resource management, and planning among the more than 60 jurisdictions in the mountains. Because of this partnership approach to resource protection and visitor use, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is one of the most cost-effective national park units in the system.

By the year 2010, it is projected that one in every 15 people in the United States will reside in the southern California metropolitan area. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area will become increasingly important to the health and vitality of the Mediterranean chaparral ecosystem, as a haven for area wildlife and endangered species, and as a recreational, cultural and educational resource unparalleled in its accessibility to the American public.