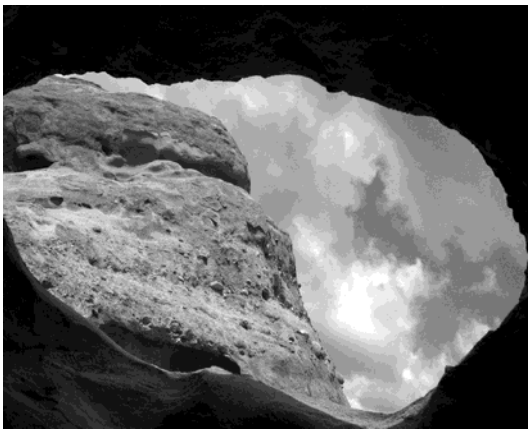


Chapter Two – Existing Conditions and Issues

Topanga Creek

PARK SUMMARY

The following section summarizes existing land uses, facilities, and significant resources of Topanga State Park. The information was adapted from resource inventories (Appendix G – under separate cover) conducted as part of the General Plan update process. These resource inventories supplement the baseline data provided by the 1977 Resource Management Plans, General Development Plans (GDP), and Environmental Impact Reports for Topanga, Malibu Creek, and Point Mugu State Parks. These data provided a baseline for developing:

- management zones and planning matrix;
- the goals and guidelines found in Chapter 3 (the Plan) and
- The Preferred Plan.

EXISTING LAND USE

Topanga State Park currently offers limited camping opportunities; a modest, but soon to be renovated nature center at the Trippet Ranch skeet lodge; and an extensive trail system that serves multiple regional and park-wide circulations needs. The Park's steep topography and vast expanse of canyons and ridgelines play host to a wide range of users, from recreational hikers, to bicyclists, to equestrians. Other users include scientists, scholars, and students such as geologists, entomologists, naturalists, biologists, historians, and archaeologists.

EXISTING FACILITIES

Trippet Ranch

Existing facilities at Trippet Ranch include the main residence, stable/barn, machine shed, and skeet lodge.

- Ranger and maintenance facilities - housed in the historic stable/barn and machine shed
- A nature center - housed in the historic skeet lodge (will reopen after renovation)
- Park staff residence – in the historic main ranch residence (dubbed the Superintendent's House)
- Park entrance station, restroom, picnic area, and parking

Maintenance Yard and Residential Area adjacent to Trippet Ranch

- Storage yard
- Two staff residences (one stand-alone and one modular)

Los Leones

- Amphitheater, ramadas, picnic tables, restroom, modular unit, and parking (another restroom is scheduled to be constructed in 2012)

Musch Camp

- Developed walk-in, bike-in (via paved service road from Hillside Drive), or horseback ride-in campground with restroom and corrals

Lower Topanga Canyon Area

- Topanga Motel
  - Approximately 27 structures; all currently vacant except for one staff residence
- Two restaurants with parking

- A retail business with parking selling animal feed, beach-going items, and gifts
- A furniture business with parking
- A vacant business structure adjacent to the creek – planned for an interim concession in 2011
- Parking, picnic tables, and beach access (under the highway)

Park staff residences

- One staff housed in one of the Topanga Motel units
- One staff housed in one of the structures at Trippet Ranch
- One stand-alone structure in the Residential Area near Trippet Ranch
- One modular unit in the Residential Area near Trippet Ranch
- One stand-alone structure near Musch Camp

Trail System

The Park contains an extensive trail system including an interpretive loop trail at Trippet Ranch.

- The Backbone Trail runs through the middle of the Park and the Rim of the Valley Trail passes through the northern part of the Park along Dirt Mulholland
- The Coastal Slope Trail is proposed to run through the southern part of the Park
- Trail nodes, including a developed node at Hub Junction, which is planned for a new vault toilet in 2012
- Overlooks and viewpoints are present throughout the trail system

The Overlook at the end of the ridge above Parker Mesa has been named "Vista Marquez" in honor of Francisco Marquez, who built the first adobe structure on Rancho Boca de Santa Monica. This Rancho was originally established in 1827 and granted to Marquez and his partner, Ysidro Reyes in 1838. It included the southern portion of what is today Topanga State Park.

Roads

Access into the Park is from adjacent or bisecting roads such as Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Pacific Coast Highway, Reseda Boulevard, Los Liones Drive, Entrada Road, and Sunset Boulevard, with internal circulation, mainly for operation and maintenance, handled by unpaved dirt service and fire roads. Along these fire roads are strategically located emergency landing zones for fire protection and management that are used by both the County and City of Los Angeles fire departments. One of the major emergency landing zones is near Trippet Ranch.

A traffic study prepared as part of this planning process produced data used to evaluate proposed planning decisions as well as for the Environmental Analysis.

Parking

Three parking areas currently exist within the Park at Trippet Ranch, Los Leones, and the Lower Topanga Canyon area. Street access to the

Park's Trippet Ranch entrance is from Entrada Road via Topanga Canyon Boulevard in the west central part of the Park. Los Liones Drive, off of West Sunset Boulevard and Temescal Canyon Road, provides access to the Los Leones entrance. The Lower Topanga Canyon area is accessed via Pacific Coast Highway.

Off-site parking is available along city and county streets and at adjacent and nearby parks and open space areas, some of which charge parking fees.

Utilities

The majority of the Park's water supply is via connection to local water district supply lines, while most of the wastewater treatment within the Park is handled via septic and leach field systems. For example, facilities at Trippet Ranch and the Lower Topanga Canyon area are connected to a local water line and sewage is treated via septic/leach systems, while the limited facilities at Los Leones are tied into municipal water and sewer systems.

The closest municipal sewer line to the Lower Topanga Canyon area is several miles north along Pacific Coast Highway, near Coastline Drive.

Utility easements, including road, sewer, and water easements run throughout the Park, with many such easements located near the Mulholland Corridor, and the Lower Topanga Canyon and Rustic Canyon areas.

OPERATIONS

Public Safety

The Park primarily relies on CSP rangers for visitor safety. When a 911 call is received by local law enforcement or fire departments, they contact the Southern Communication Center (SURCOM), which is CSP's law enforcement and emergency telecommunication service. SURCOM will then contact Topanga State Park rangers. For major crimes, the County and/or City of Los Angeles law enforcement agencies will be called upon depending where the crime falls within the Park (the majority of the Park falls within the City limit of Los Angeles).

In the recent past, criminal activities have been infrequent in the Park, mainly involving minor infractions and vandalism.

Firefighting within the Park is a multi-agency effort due to the high fire severity designation for most of the region. First responders for the Park are: County Fire Station #69 in the town of Topanga and City Fire Station #23, located in Pacific Palisades near Los Leones. CSP also has agreements with a few agencies such as the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MCRA), for providing joint-use of fire crews for fire protection.

Concessions

Four existing businesses (see Existing Facilities section, Lower Topanga Canyon area on page 11) were present prior to the acquisition of the Lower Topanga Canyon area. All four have been in continuous operations as part of the Interim Management Plan (IMP). These businesses are operating on either short term leases or month-to-month rental arrangements. Per CSP policies and regulations, all such businesses within a park unit shall be "concessions" as defined in California Resource Code sections 5080.02 - 5080.29, and any concessions

identified to remain need to be consistent with the Park's vision as denoted within the General Plan.

Filming

Although filming is not a major revenue generating component, parking and other fees are charged to recover such expenses as staff review time and monitoring of such events. Filming is allowed in the Park as long as the activities comply with CSP's filming polices as denoted in "The Guidelines for Filming in California State Parks" (1998). Several movies and television shows have used the Park as a minor filming location. The most well-known among these was the television series *The X-Files*, which filmed parts of an episode in the Lower Topanga Canyon area.

ADJACENT LAND USE

As part of the 150,000-acre Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), Topanga State Park has a wide variety of open space within a 20-mile radius of its boundaries, including ten other CSP-operated units:

- Leo Carrillo State Park
- Los Angeles State Historic Park
- Los Encinos State Historic Park
- Malibu Creek State Park
- Malibu Lagoon State Beach
- Point Mugu State Park
- Río de Los Ángeles State Park
- Robert H. Meyer Memorial State Beach
- Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park
- Will Rogers State Historic Park

The list of land ownership of the adjacent uses that range from public beaches to reservoirs and even a former Nike missile site, is as long as the numerous miles of highways that stretch adjacent to the Park, including Pacific Coast Highway, Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Sunset Boulevard and the Ventura Freeway. A sampling of adjacent land owners includes the National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, County of Los Angeles (e.g., the Beaches and Harbors and Sanitation Divisions), City of Los Angeles, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (Figure 2).

NATURAL RESOURCES

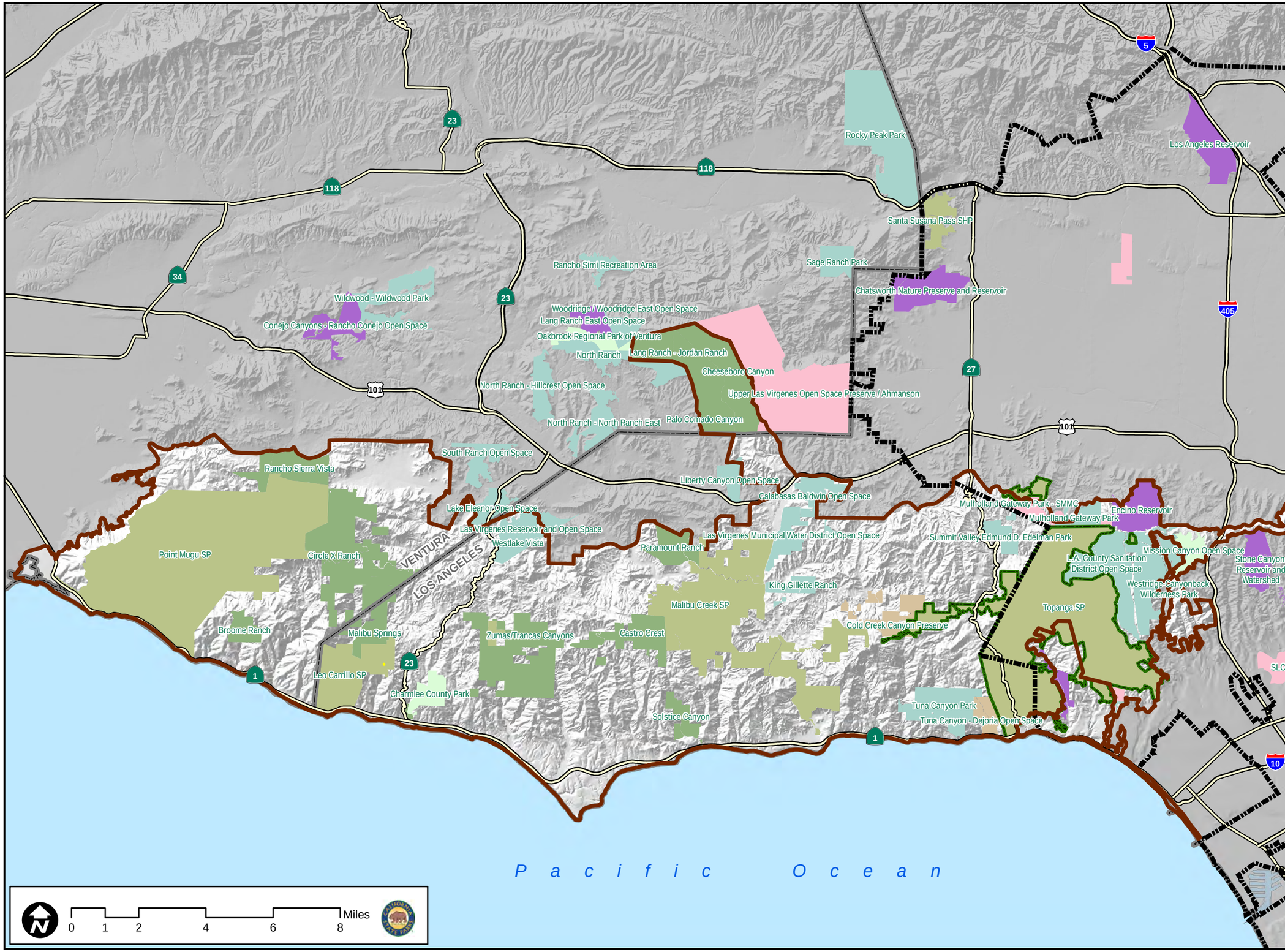
Environmental Setting

The Park is located in the California Floristic Province, Southwest Region, Western Transverse Ranges Subregion. Elevations within the Park range from sea level to 2,614 feet (Figure 3).

The climate is considered Mediterranean and fluctuates with the seasons with hot dry summers and mild wet winters. Average annual precipitation is approximately 16 inches, which primarily falls as rain in the winter. Temperatures range from highs of 68° to 96° F and lows from 38° to 58° F. The frost-free period is from 300 to 350 days.

On average, 86% of the rainfall occurs between November and March, with the majority (47%), concentrated in January and February from large storms that last for several days. The dry season is considered to be from May-October. Very little rainfall (1%) occurs in June, July, or August. Evaporation exceeds precipitation from April to November.

During the summer, a marine layer of fog is common along the coast during



Legend

- City of Los Angeles
- California Counties
- NRA Boundary
- Topanga State Park Boundary
- Highway

Parks and Open Space

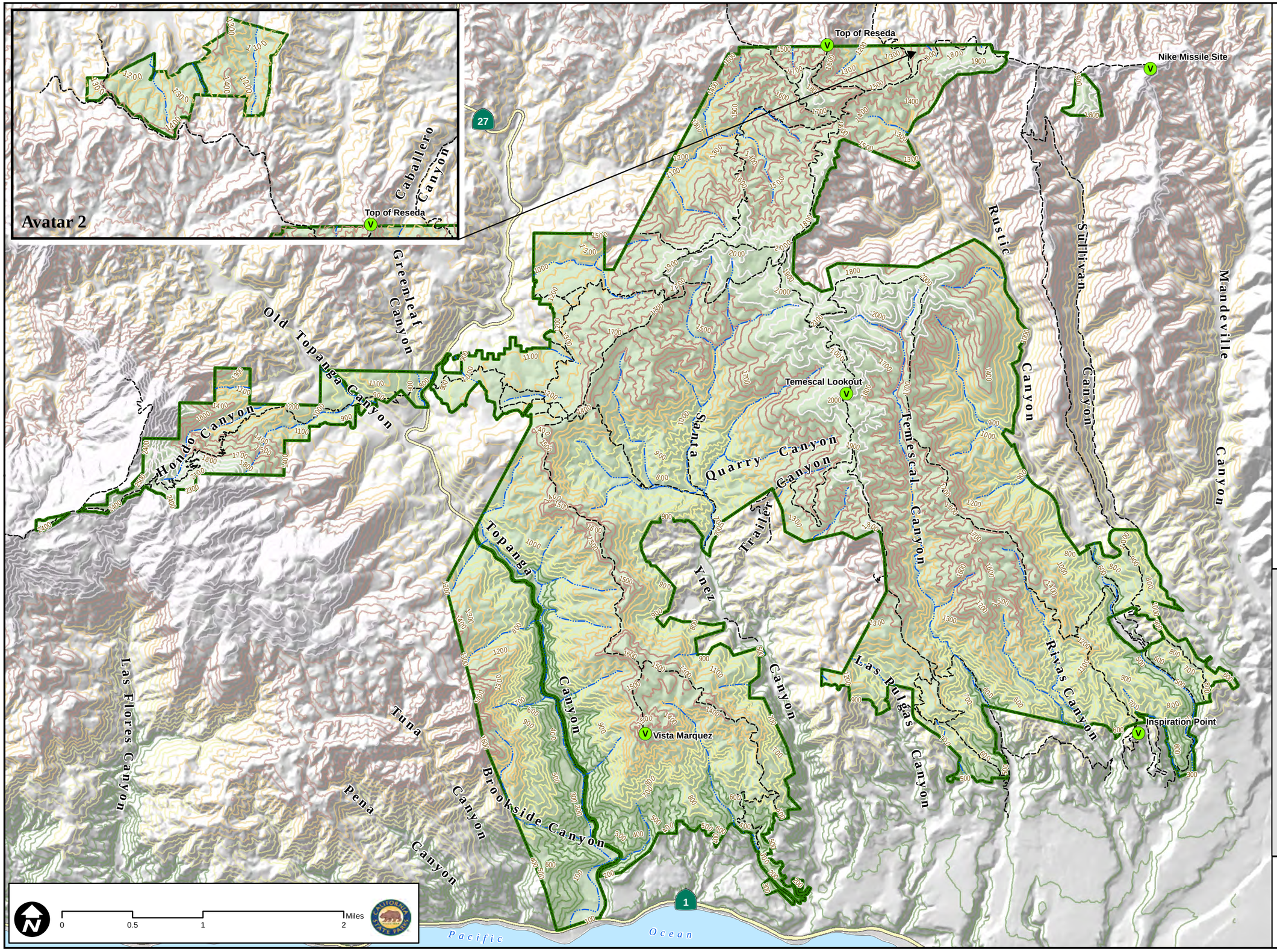
- CA Parks and Recreation
- City
- County
- National Park Service
- Other State
- Special District
- Non Governmental Organization

Figure 2
Topanga State Park Regional Map

Parcel boundaries are approximate and should not be considered legal descriptions. Maps are intended for study purposes only.

Data Sources: NPS, USGS, CA State Parks

View from Dirt Mulholland



Legend

- Vantage Points
- Creeks and Drainages
- Existing Trails
- Highway
- Topanga State Park Boundary

Contours (100ft Interval)

- 100 - 600
- 600 - 1000
- 1000 - 1300
- 1300 - 1700
- 1700 - 2500

Figure 3
Topanga State Park
Topography

Parcel boundaries are approximate and should not be considered legal descriptions. Maps are intended for study purposes only.

Data Sources: NPS, USGS, CA State Parks

Outcrops

the morning hours, but dissipates by early afternoon. Early in the morning inland valleys may be fog-shrouded, but as temperatures increase, the fog dissipates until it crests the mountains and is vaporized or pushed out to sea.

Hydrology

The Park encompasses parts of five different watersheds with Topanga Creek and Upper Santa Monica Bay the two largest (Figure 4). The Topanga Creek watershed covers approximately 18 square miles and is one of the few watersheds remaining in southern California with large sections that are publicly owned and undeveloped.

The Topanga Creek Lagoon is located at the mouth of Topanga Creek. This lagoon once covered approximately 30 acres. The California Department of Transportation filled in all but approximately two acres in 1933 during activities associated with the re-alignment of Pacific Coast Highway. The lagoon provides rearing habitat for both the endangered southern California steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and the tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*).

Streams/Drainages

Approximately 45 miles of perennial and intermittent drainages have been mapped within the Park and are delineated on United States Geological Services (USGS) topographic quad-rangle maps. Topanga Creek is the largest perennial drainage in the Park and currently one of only three creeks left in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed that potentially supports a reproducing population of steelhead.

In the fall of 2008 CSP removed a large earthen berm along Topanga Creek in the vicinity of the Rodeo Grounds. Removal of this berm has restored the natural creek channel and surrounding flood plain, allowed accumulated sediment to be carried out naturally by storms, and removed a barrier impeding steelhead passage.

Portions of Topanga Creek are listed by the Clean Water Act as a 303(d) listed body of water exceeding the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for lead. Other potential contributors to the poor water quality include old septic tanks and systems, corralled animals next to the creek, roadway runoff, trash, and sedimentation along the creek.

Springs and Seeps

Springs and seeps are found throughout the Park and are often associated with geological formations such as faults. Fifty-six springs and seeps have been identified along the lower 3.7 miles of Topanga Creek.

Geology and Geomorphology

The Park is located on the eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains which are part of California's Transverse Ranges. While other coastal mountain ranges run north-south, the Transverse Ranges run predominantly east-west due to a bend in the San Andreas Fault,

which has pushed the mountains up around it. Sedimentary rocks are most common on the western slopes while granitic and metamorphic rock dominate in the eastern mountains. Elevations in the Park range from 0 to 2,614 feet above mean sea level. Topographic relief is diverse and in some cases extreme.

Soils

The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service has mapped eleven soil series in the Park (Abaft, Botella, Chumash, Cotharin, Elder, Mipolomol, Sapwi, Sumiwawa, Tongva, Topanga, and Zumaridge). These soils vary widely in depth, fertility, permeability, and other important characteristics. There is one listed hydric (wet) soil (*Cumulic Haploxerolls*) identified within the Park boundaries. For detailed descriptions of these soils, please see the resource inventories (Appendix G under separate cover).

Vegetation Communities

From 2001 to 2005, the National Park Service in conjunction with other federal and State agencies developed a vegetation map (Figure 5) to document the vegetation types found within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) in which the Park is located. Mapping was accomplished using The Nature Conservancy's National Vegetation Classification. This system classifies vegetation at the alliance and association levels.

For purposes of this document, vegetation alliances and associations were crosswalked based on species composition with the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System (CWHR) to identify major habitat types. It is to be noted that these crosswalks may not be completely equivalent due to the differential spatial scales of both systems.

Chamise-Redshank Chaparral

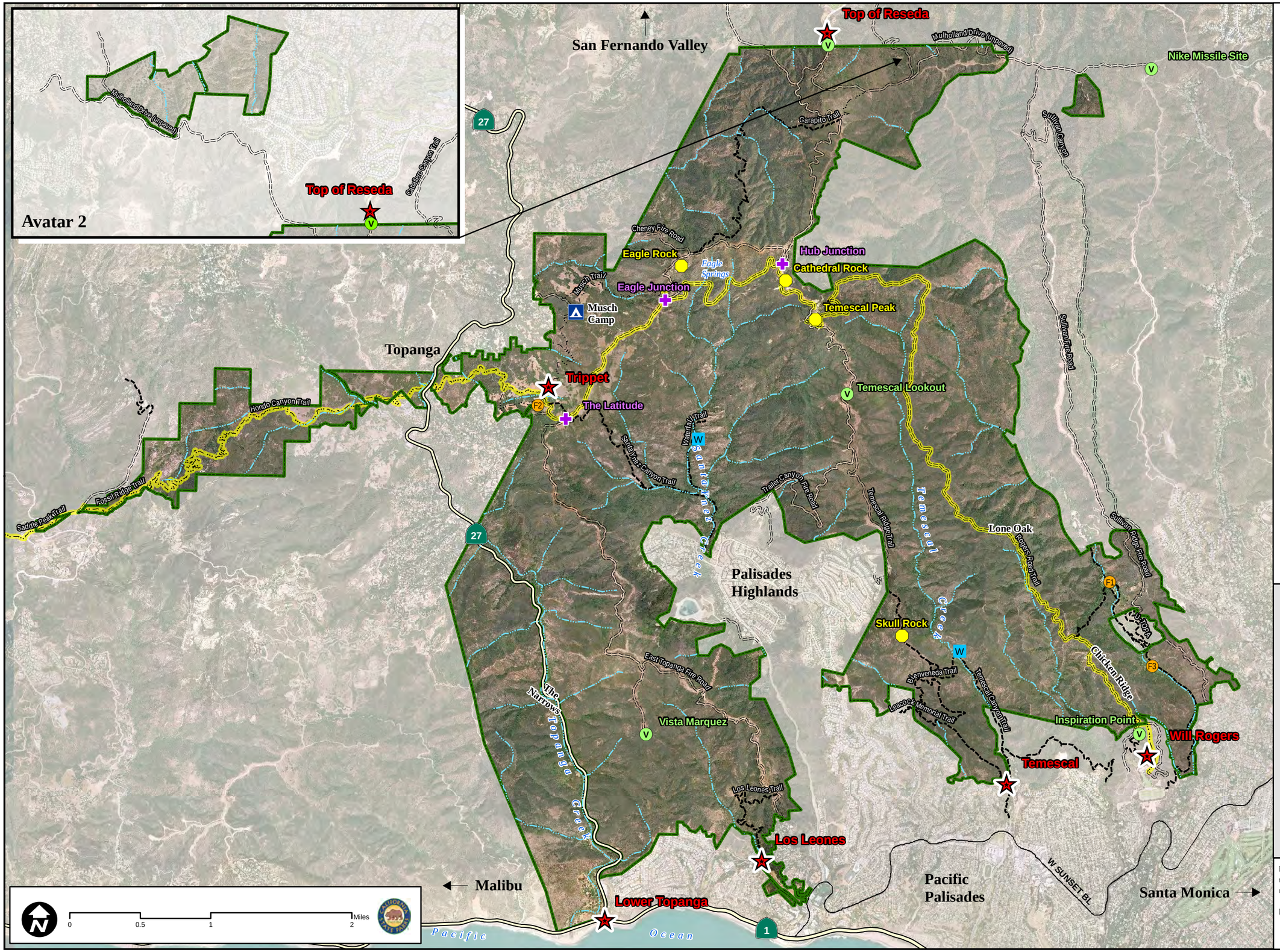
This shrubland association occurs on flat to steep slopes of variable aspect at low to middle elevations between 125 to 2,828 feet. It is dominated by chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) in the shrub layer with a diverse but low cover herbaceous layer. There are virtually no emergent trees, but occasionally, coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) can be present.

Coastal Sage Scrub

This shrubland association occurs on gentle to very steep slopes of variable aspect at low elevations between 0 to 2,520 feet. It is characterized by a dominance to co-dominance of California sage (*Artemisia californica*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum* sp.), or sage (*Salvia* sp.) in the shrub layer, and a scattered, mostly non-native herbaceous layer. The emergent tree layer can be insignificant to infrequent and can include coast live oak and California walnut (*Juglans californica*).

Mixed Chaparral

This shrubland alliance occurs on somewhat steep to steep northwest-facing slopes at low to middle to high elevations between 1,827 to 2,881 feet. It is dominated by bigpod ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus*), with East-wood's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*



Legend

- Primary Entrance
- Vantage Points
- Junction
- Geologic Features
- Waterfall

Park Features

- F1 Josepho Ranch
- F2 Trippet Ranch
- F3 Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin
- Creeks and Drainages
- Arterial Street
- Highway
- Topanga State Park Boundary

Existing Trails

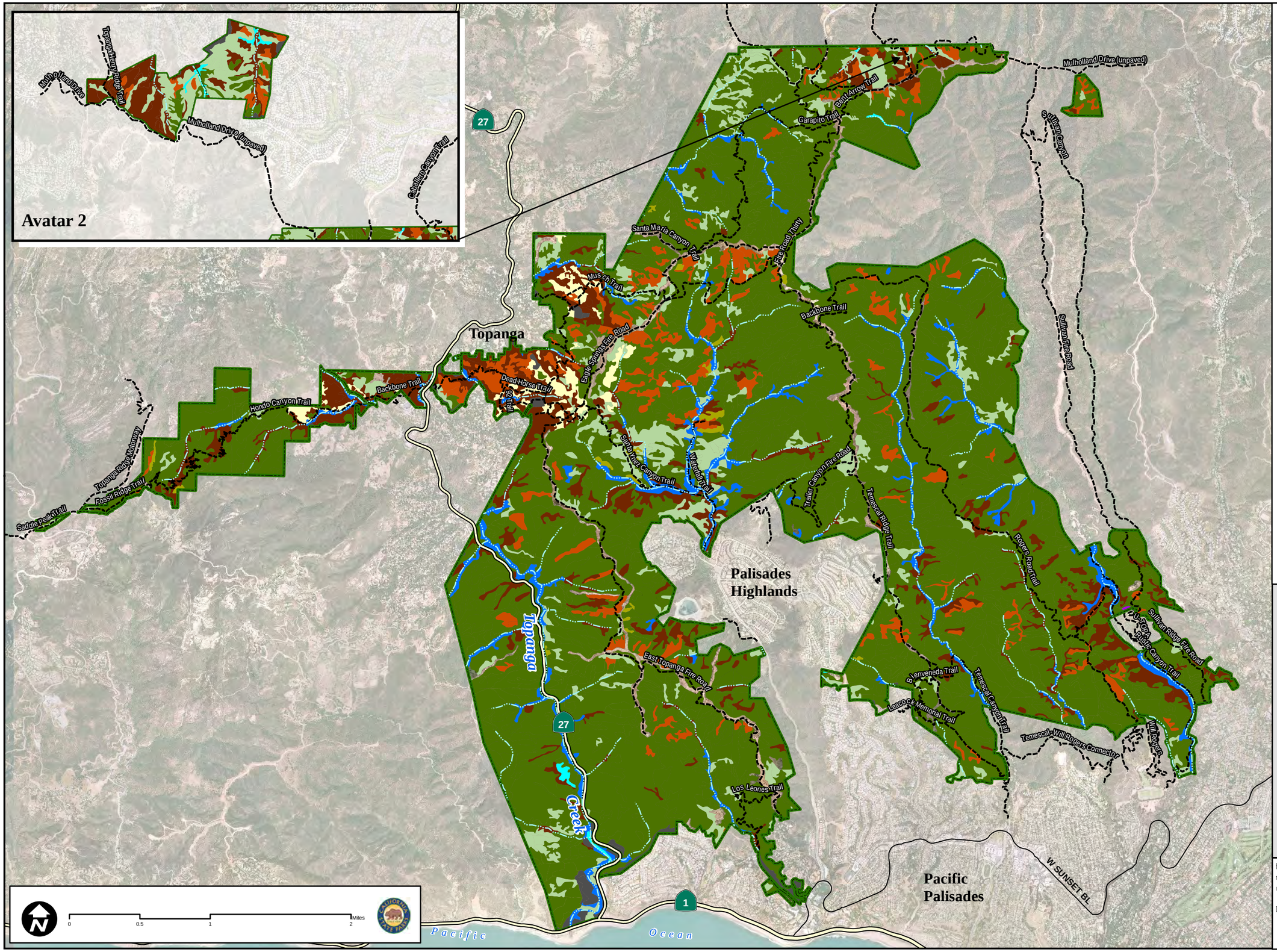
- Hike and Horse Trail
- Hike Only Trail
- Hike, Horse and Bike Trail
- Backbone Trail

Figure 4
Topanga State Park
Site Character

Parcel boundaries are approximate and should not be considered legal descriptions. Maps are intended for study purposes only.

Data Sources: NPS, USGS, CA State Parks

Along Eagle Spring Fire Road



Legend

- Creeks and Drainages
- Arterial Street
- Highway
- Existing Trails
- Topanga State Park Boundary

Vegetation

- Annual Grassland
- Barren
- Coastal Oak Woodland
- Chamise Redshank Chaparral
- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Eucalyptus
- Fresh Emergent Wetland
- Mixed Chaparral
- Urban
- Valley Riparian

Figure 5
Topanga State Park
Vegetation

Parcel boundaries are approximate and should not be considered legal descriptions. Maps are intended for study purposes only.

Data Sources: NPS, USGS, CA State Parks

Ramadas at Los Leones

glandulosa) also in the shrub layer, and has an insignificant herbaceous layer in the mature stands. The emergent tree layer can include coast live oak.

Coastal Oak Woodland (including California Walnut Woodlands and California Bay Woodlands)

This woodland/forest association occurs on flat to steep slopes that are often facing northwest at low elevations between 105 to 2,851 feet. It is dominated by coast live oak in the tree layer with various species in the shrub understory layer and a variety of grasses and forbs occurring in the herbaceous layer.

Valley Foothill Riparian

This woodland/forest association occurs on flat to somewhat steep slopes with variable aspects at low elevations between 440 to 1,509 feet. It can be dominated by California sycamore or white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) in the tree layer or red willow (*Salix laevigata*) and black willow (*S. lasiolepis*) in both the tree and shrub layers. The shrub and herbaceous layers are open with a variety of grasses and forbs occurring in the herbaceous layer at low cover.

Fresh Emergent Wetland

These associations occur on flat to steep slopes at low elevations between 0 to 1,864 feet. They are characterized by the dominance of mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and a variety of non-native largely annual grasses and herbs in the herbaceous layer, or California tule (*Scirpus californicus*), hardstem bulrush (*S. acutus*), and/or cattails (*Typha* spp.) in the herbaceous layer with arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) often found in the shrub layer at low cover.

Eucalyptus

This non-native woodland/forest alliance occurs on gentle to steep slopes with variable aspects at low elevations between 102 to 1,119 feet. The tree layer is open to dense, and it is mainly dominated by *Eucalyptus* spp. Both shrub and herb layers are sparse to open, and they may include shrubs such as laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*) and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), as well as non-native shortpod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*) and various annual grasses.

Fire

Fire is a natural process in southern California's Mediterranean ecosystem with fire-tolerant or fire-dependent adaptations characteristic of many species in the ecosystem. Vegetation plays an important role in the fire regime of the Park and plant species and vegetation have evolved to survive repeated fires. Some of these communities, such as chaparral and coastal scrub rely on occasional fires as part of their regeneration process even though the short-term impacts of fire in these natural communities can appear to be severe.

Fire regime refers to the patterns of fire that occur over long periods of time, and the immediate effects of fire in the ecosystem in which it occurs. Fire regime is a function of the frequency of fire occurrence, fire intensity and the amount of fuel consumed. The frequency is determined largely by ecosystem characteristics, weather, and ignition sources while the intensity is influenced by the quantity of fuel

available and the fuel's combustion rates. Interactions between frequency and intensity are influenced by wind, topography, and fire history. Human activity in and around the Santa Monica Mountains has reduced the length of fire-free intervals to between 10 and 30 years.

Wildfires in the Santa Monica Mountains can be fanned by Santa Anas – hot, dry winds that move through the region every fall and winter. These winds begin when masses of cold air form over the Great Basin (high desert plateaus in Utah and Nevada). The winds that spin off of these high pressure systems grow warmer, dryer, and stronger as they spill south and west, down through the steep mountain canyons towards the ocean.

At least twenty five fires are known to have burned through all or part of Topanga State Park since the mid-1920s. Table 2 shows the Fire History of the Park.

Due to local topography in the Santa Monica Mountains, fires can spread rapidly and extensively when Santa Ana winds are present. Santa Ana winds in excess of 90 M.P.H. combined with the steep terrain and north/south alignment of canyons promotes rapid fire movement.

Climate Change

Climate change refers to change in the Earth's weather patterns, including the rise in the Earth's temperature due to an increase in heat-trapping or greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, and sulfur hexafluoride, among others. Human activities are adding large

Table 2: Fire History

Fire Name	Date	Acres
Topanga P.O.	1925	172
Cold Creek No. 35	1936	2,642
Topanga No. 50	1938	14,532
Las Flores No. 47	1942	5,841
Woodland Hills No. 65	1943	14,919
Woodland Hills No. 47	1944	4,548
Topanga Fire No. 118	1948	3,278
Miller Fire No. 131	1948	41
Unknown	1955	333
Unknown	1956	46
Unknown	1957	411
Co. Fire 123158	1958	5,116
Unknown	1958	107
Unknown	1959	79
Unknown	1961	7,847
Unknown	1968	15
Wright Fire	1970	28,202
Unknown	1972	85
Unknown	1972	17
Trippet Fire	1973	2,831
Canyon Fire	1977	1,163
Mandeville Fire/LA City	1978	6,086
Unknown	1980	100
Unknown	1984	7
Mulholland Fire	1992	39
Old Topanga Fire	1993	16,468

amounts of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Combustion of fossil fuels for heat, electricity, and transportation are the main source of these gases.

According to an increasing body of scientific research, California's diversity of habitats and wildlife are threatened by climate change. Some potential effects of climate change on the Park may include:

- Changes in seasonal and mean temperature and precipitation.
- Changes to rainfall patterns, cloud cover, and/or reduction in coastal fog impacting plant, fish, and wildlife species.
- Alterations in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as storms, heat waves, flooding, and drought.
    - While this may not directly affect visitor use, storms and resultant flooding and mudslides could damage park infrastructure and access roads.
- Elimination of plant communities and wildlife habitat due to warmer temperatures and drier conditions.
- Increased habitat fragmentation and habitat shifts.
- Alteration of migratory patterns of various wildlife and fishes.
- Increase in frequency and intensity of fire and a longer fire season in southern California.
    - Chaparral plant communities located within the Park are very prone to fire. The plant species in this community are adapted to fire and can usually regenerate, but increased fire could cause habitat conversion, wildlife losses, and contribute to poor air quality in the Park.
- Increases in non-native, invasive species interrupting and/or changing behaviors/patterns of various wildlife and fish species.
- Rise in sea levels, which could in turn increase wave intensity and increase intrusion of seawater into Topanga Lagoon.

Air Quality

The Park is located within the South Coast Air Basin which is home to more than 43% of California's population and represents 28% of California's air pollution. Air quality in the Basin has improved significantly in terms of both pollution levels and high pollution days over the past three decades. However, the area still has a long way to go to achieve state and federal standards.

Numerous factors including physiography, atmospheric conditions, and coastal proximity affect air quality within the Park, with coastal portions of the Park generally experiencing better air quality than inland areas. With increased development and resulting increased traffic surrounding the Park, air quality is likely to continue to be an issue.

A major portion of the air pollution affecting the Park is wind-transported and likely arises from urban sources in the greater Los Angeles area. As of February 22, 2010, the South Coast Air Basin was designated as a serious non-attainment area for the 24-hour national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for particulate matter of 10 microns in diameter or smaller (PM10). It was also in non-attainment for particulate matter (PM-2.5) and

lead, and ranked serious for particulate matter PM10, 8-hour ozone (extreme).

Dry deposition of nitrogen compounds on vegetation can contribute significantly to elevated nutrients in streams when the rains wash the compounds off the leaves of plants within the various vegetation communities.

Biological Resources

Botanical Resources

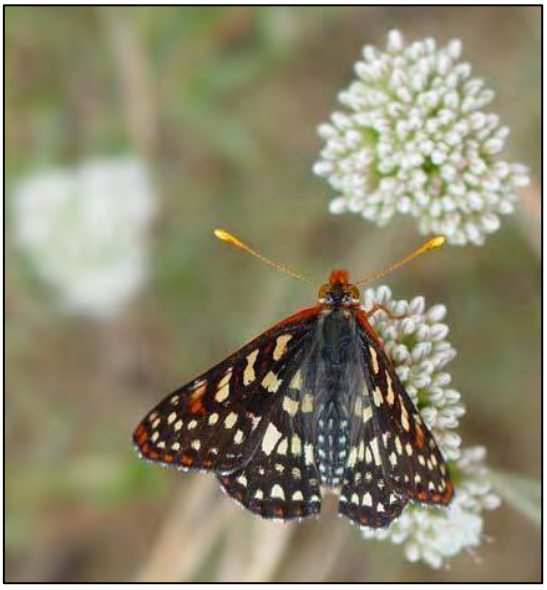
Research was conducted prior to field surveys to determine the vegetation communities in the project area and the associated specific plants. This research involved querying the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) Rarefind Database version 3.0.5 and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants electronic database version 7-09a for sensitive plants and natural communities, reviewing published and unpublished material, and contacting knowledgeable individuals. The Malibu Beach, Topanga, and Canoga Park USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles were used to query all databases and other sources.

According to a botanical survey conducted in the early 1980s, there are 347 plant taxa known to occur within the Park boundaries.

Sensitive Botanical Resources

A total of twenty special status plant species and six rare natural communities were identified as occurring in the Malibu Beach, Topanga, or Canoga Park USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles (Appendix B). An expanded discussion is provided in Appendix G for those sensitive or protected species with known occurrences or where habitat may exist within the Park. Known occurrences for any special status plant species were obtained from the CDFG CNDDB Rarefind Database, CSP files, CNPS, and Park personnel (Figure 5).

Some of the plants that were considered, though not formally listed as rare or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act, meet the definitions of Section 1901, Chapter 10 (Native Plant Protection) of the California Fish and Game Code, and are eligible for state listing. These plant species were given equal consideration during the assessment as if they were already listed species.



Wildlife Resources

A query of the CWHR Program using coastal oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, chamise-redshank chaparral, mixed chaparral, valley foothill riparian, fresh emergent wetland, annual grassland, eucalyptus, and barren habitats identified 424 wildlife species as potentially occurring in

these habitats in Los Angeles County, California (and thus potentially occurring in the Park). This includes 277 avian species, 85 mammals, 46 reptiles, and 16 amphibians.

Sensitive Wildlife Resources

The CNDDB version 3.1.0 was queried to compile a list of possible special status wildlife and fish species present in the project area. A total of 13 special status wildlife species, three fish species, and five invertebrate species were identified as occurring in the Topanga, Malibu Beach, or Canoga Park USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles (Appendix C). Critical habitat for the southern California Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of steelhead also exists from the outlet of Topanga Creek to an endpoint approximately 4 miles upstream (Santa Monica Bay Hydrologic Unit 4404). Additionally, an estimated 4 acres of CSP lands, located at the mouth of the creek, have been designated as critical habitat for the tidewater goby (LA-4 Topanaga Creek).

CSP Environmental Scientists compared specific habitat requirements, life history notes, elevation, species distribution, and species lists to determine if any special status species may be present in the Park. An expanded discussion is provided in Appendix G for those sensitive or protected species which may exist within the Park due to suitable/potential habitat or those that have been previously documented in the Park's vicinity. All known occurrences for any special status wildlife species were obtained from the CNDDB Rarefind Database and Park personnel.

Paleontology

The earliest accounts of paleontological resources in the Santa Monica Mountains are from Topanga and Temescal Canyons. The fossiliferous strata in this area were deposited approximately 15 million years ago. One of the best known invertebrate fossil localities within Los Angeles County is along the Topanga Canyon summit. Specimens most often collected are marine organisms, marine plants, and rarely, fish vertebrae.

A well-known fossil locality is also present in the Santa Ynez Canyon area, just outside the Park boundaries. Several giant ammonites (extinct relatives of the natulus) were found here in 1910.

Vertebrate fossils within the park are represented by fossil specimins of pocket mice, bristlemouth fish, and a long-snouted fish. Other vertebrate fossil locations lie just outside the Park, inclding fossil specimins of horse, camel, deer, ground sloth, leatherback turtle, and various other fish and marine mammals.

Fossil shells

Chert bifacial stone tool

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The cultural resources of Topanga State Park were researched, documented, and inventoried by CSP archaeologists and volunteers. The resulting data were compiled into resource inventories (Appendix G – under separate cover). A short synopsis is presented below.

Archaeological and Ethnographic Overview

The creation accounts of the indigenous people of the region tell them that their ancestors were placed in or brought to this area by the gods. Scientific evidence, such as radio-carbon dating, shows that people have been living in southern California for more than 9,000 years, with some evidence from the Channel Islands pushing the date back to at least 13,000 years ago. Evidence of early habitation in Topanga State Park is present at sites CA-LAN-1 and CA-LAN-2. Archaeologists first documented and excavated these sites in the late 1940s identifying an early, distinctive cultural division they called the Topanga Complex. It has similarities to other early cultures of southern California, but has many unique characteristics. Sites dating to these early periods tend to have larger flaked-stone tools, cog stones, and groundstone tools like manos (handstones) and metates.

The Park is within a transition zone between the traditional territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva to the east and the Ventureño Chumash to the west. Within this transition zone there was significant interaction between the two groups including marriage, trade, and political alliances.

According to Tongva and Chumash speakers who were interviewed in the early 1900s, Tupá'nga or topá'nga is the word for Topanga in the Ventureño Chumash language and it means "point that the mountain range, which ends there, in the sea."

Historic Overview

Topanga State Park's historical land use reflects over 460 years of written history from the early days of Spanish nautical and terrestrial exploration, through various attempts by Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo-American settlers to eke a living out of the area's coastal and mountainous regions. Strategically located between Santa Monica Bay and the San Fernando Valley, the area's rugged landscape both helped and hindered land-use development. In hindsight, the area's inaccessibility has led to the preservation of several unique areas for public recreational use.

For the sake of expediency, the Park's history is divided into several important historical eras that roughly correspond to its chronological development from 1542 to 2001.

Spanish Exploration Period

The first historical era is the period of Spanish Exploration from 1542 to 1769. During this time, European

explorers sailing along the coast or trekking across land first set eyes on and recorded what is now Topanga State Park. This was also a critical period of first contact between the Spanish explorers and local indigenous people.

Spanish Missions Period

The second historical period saw the rise of the Spanish Missions as a means for Imperial Spain to incorporate California into its north American empire. During this time, from 1769 to 1822, approximately 320 acres of the Park's northern boundary along what is now Dirt Mulholland were once part of the vast Rancho Mission San Fernando Rey de España. One of the most prosperous, the mission's huge 116,858-acre ranch supplied such agricultural products as olive oil, dates, wheat, wool, and leather hides to the Los Angeles pueblo and Mission Santa Barbara. Within the Park are the ruins of a lime kiln that may have been associated with the mission rancho's operation.

Spanish-Mexican Rancho Period

The third historical period, the secular Spanish-Mexican Rancho Period, developed on the heels of the previous. During this time, from 1802 to 1848, Spanish Imperial, and later Mexican Republican governments attempted to promote the civilian settlement and development of California via the use of land grants. Initially allotted to disabled or retired military or civilian settlers, these *ranchos* grew in size to accommodate thousands of head of cattle, horses, and sheep on huge tracts of land. The Park contains sections of two such land grants: *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica* and *Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica*.

Anglo-American Acquisition and Transition Period

The next historical period reflects approximately 50 years of Anglo-American land acquisition and California's transition from a Mexican province to U.S. statehood. Extending from 1848 to 1883, it was a time of severe weather conditions, when floods and droughts eliminated southern California's cattle industry. With the basis of their economy gone, and faced with financial and political pressure, many of the early Hispanic California ranching families were forced to sell their land to Anglo-American investors. As a result, Topanga State Park's two Mexican ranchos were subdivided into smaller parcels, and eventually sold to outside interests.

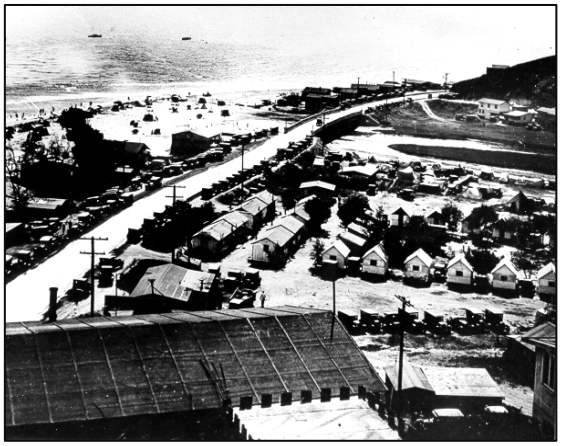
Homesteading Period

The next historical period, between 1875 and 1917, saw a flurry of homesteading activities in the Topanga region, where settlers began claiming federal homesteads on public lands outside the original ranchos. As a result, primitive roads began to develop throughout the Topanga Canyon area, facilitating further homesteading. Between 1899 and 1914, at least fourteen homesteaders filed claims within what is now Topanga State Park.

Recreational Tourism Period

Roughly coinciding with the latter period, from 1868 to 1915, was the sixth historical period, which saw the beginning of recreational tourism in Topanga Canyon and coastal beach communities. Vacationing middle-class families were among the first to regard the area's pristine beaches,

rustic canyons and higher mountain areas as purely tourist-oriented recreational destinations. This era also saw the beginnings of organized governmental attempts to improve roads into the area to facilitate automobile tourism.



1920s Vacation Tents
Topanga Creek and Lagoon in background.
Courtesy of Topanga Historical Society.

Development of Topanga Beach Period

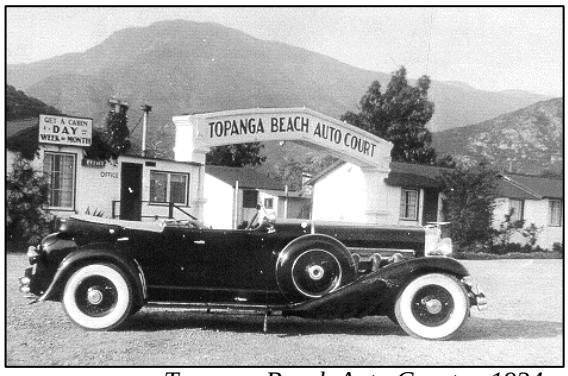
The introduction of hundreds of cars and trucks along the coast road between Santa Monica and Topanga Canyon further stimulated the next historical period, which saw the development of the Topanga Beach area from 1919 to 1930. The first organized attempts to protect as well as exploit Topanga Creek's lagoon area occurred during this time. As a result, the broad sandy beach at the junction of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway became an extremely popular automobile-tourist destination, with an "autocamp," rental cabins, bath house, dance pavilion, gas stations, markets, and other automobile-tourist-oriented businesses. Other recreational activities were a number of heavily promoted seasonal rodeos in a clearing north of the lagoon. Another "recreational" activity of sorts was the use of the beach for the clandestine dropping off of illegal liquor during Prohibition.

Modernization Period

The eighth historical period coincides with the modernization of Topanga Beach between 1930 and 1956. During this time, larger forces were at work to change the community's dynamics. The realignment, widening, and installation of new bridges on both Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway elevated them from roads to major highways. This period also saw the narrowing of the creek mouth and partial filling in of the lagoon area.

Evolution of the "Auto Motel" Period

Coinciding with the latter historical period was the evolution of the "Auto Motel" at Topanga Beach, where, from 1933 to 1956, the lower Topanga Canyon beach and lagoon area evolved from a sprawling ad hoc automobile-tourist-oriented beach hamlet into a semi-permanent residential community of beach-front cottages, mountain cabins, and small commercial roadside enterprises. The latter included the National Register-eligible Topanga Ranch Motel complex. A number of disastrous wild fires and floods played



Topanga Beach Auto Court c. 1934
Courtesy of Topanga Historical Society

havoc throughout the area during this time. As many as 118 homes in lower Topanga Canyon were destroyed during a 4-day wild fire in 1938.

Gentlemen Ranchers Period

Another historical period that roughly coincided with the latter two was associated with a number of Gentlemen Ranchers: upper-middle class professionals who, between 1917 and 1966, sought retreat from their busy schedules in rustic mountain hideaways. Two of these ranches: Trippet and Josepho are located within the Park. In addition, the Will Rogers ranch at Will Rogers State Historic Park is located just outside the southeastern corner of the Park. However, Will Rogers' hideaway cabin is located north of the ranch, within Topanga State Park. Of the Gentlemen Ranchers resources within the Park, the Trippet family's *Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales*, is one of the best preserved in the region.

"Cement Controversy" Period

The eleventh historical period involves the Alphonzo Bell "Cement Controversy." Between 1925 and 1950 millionaire real estate developer Bell was engaged in a running battle with neighboring residents, as well as negative press, due to his mining and processing of sand, gravel, shale, and limestone deposits in the Santa Ynez Canyon area at an on-site concrete plant in the upper end of Las Pulgas Canyon. The resulting political battle, as well as worsening economic conditions, forced Bell to abandon his project around 1931. However, stone quarrying continued in the area until just after World War II.

Local opposition to Bell's infamous cement venture fostered nascent community pride and public advocacy toward environmental concerns that led invariably to the development of Topanga State Park between 1964 and 2001. Reportedly the second largest natural urban park in the nation at the time, Topanga State Park would eventually include the Los Leones and Lower Topanga Canyon acquisitions. By doing so, CSP was able to extend Topanga State Park from the mountains to the sea.

Archaeological Resources

The first archaeological site identified within what is today Topanga State Park was a village site in the Lower Topanga Canyon Area, which was documented by Sophie Bayler in 1905. The earliest professional archaeological work within the Park began in the mid-1940s with the recordation and excavation of the first site recorded under the State Trinomial system in Los Angeles County: CA-LAN-1. This site is an early habitation site, which has been radiocarbon dated to at least 6,080 years before present, making it one of the oldest documented in the area. It was the location of some of the earliest and most significant archaeological studies in this region by notable archaeologists including Robert F. Heizer, one of the founders and first director of the University of California Archaeological Survey, and Adan E. Treganza, who along with Heizer and others wrote and published the first book on field methods for California Archaeologists, based in part on techniques developed and used at CA-LAN-1.

There are 29 Native American archaeological sites and isolated artifacts that have been recorded

within the Park (see Appendix D). These include habitation sites, bedrock grinding features, rock shelters, procurement areas, and work stations. Archaeological surveys of the Park have not been exhaustive and there is a high probability that additional Native American sites exist within those areas of the Park that were not examined during the resource inventories.

Historical Archaeological Resources

Historic archaeological resources also exist within the Park. Twenty-five historical archaeological sites and isolated artifacts have been recorded within the Park (see Appendix D). Most of these date from the early- to mid-1900s. They include a lime kiln, trash dumps, mining excavations, cabin and building sites, and bridges and trails. Due to the limited nature of the resource inventories and the archaeological survey work that has occurred within the Park, it is presumed that additional historic archaeological sites exist within unexamined areas of the Park.

Caballero Canyon lime kiln site

Historical Resources

Topanga State Park includes a number of unique historical resources that represent the region's historic growth and development from the early 18th to late 20th centuries. Further study and evaluation will have to be undertaken to determine their eligibility for placement on either the state or national historic registers. They are listed below in rough chronological order.

Caballero Canyon Lime Kiln Ruins Site

The site appears to be associated with a historic lime kiln operation that may date back to the Spanish Mission period.

Joseph B. Robison Homestead Site and Road

The stone-lined root cellar built into the stone retaining wall behind the Trippet Ranch Custodian's House may mark the site of Robison's 1902 homestead. In addition, the dirt road leading from the Trippet Ranch Headquarters Complex to Dead Horse Trail may date back to homestead days.

Reverend Frederick H. Post Homestead Site

Dating from 1912, dry-laid quarried stone masonry retaining walls, cement piers, and scattered artifacts mark the likely location of Rev. Post's "comfortable house ... in the canyon bearing his name."

Cheney Fire Road

This dirt road is associated with another pioneer Topanga homestead. It belonged to Columbus and Lucy Cheney who settled in the area in 1889.

Camp Elkhorn Site

Camp Elkhorn was one of several commercial recreational tourist-oriented destinations that sprang up along Topanga Canyon between 1900 and 1930.

Topanga Beach Ranch Rodeo Grounds Site

The site is associated with a number of popular rodeos held on summer weekends and holidays from 1924 to 1930.

Topanga Ranch Motel

The Topanga Ranch Motel is a loose grouping of small detached vernacular folk-influenced wood frame cabins. It was an attractive, cost-effective alternative for middle-class automobile travelers visiting the Topanga Beach area since 1933.

Rust/Wood Family Cottage

Originally located near the mouth of Topanga Creek, it is the last surviving example of the type of vacation cabin associated with Topanga Beach's "beach hamlet" from 1924 to 1933.

Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales/Trippet Ranch Historic District

An early 1940s example of a Gentleman's Ranch, it was the headquarters of an actual working ranch where its owners also engaged in recreation activities and entertained important guests like President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice-president Richard M. Nixon.

Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site in Rustic Canyon

The site is associated with the ruins of a cabin that Will Rogers built as a secluded retreat for himself and his wife.

Ganatolia: the Anatol Josepho Ranch Site

The site of another Gentleman's Ranch, a 1978 wildfire and flood destroyed all the buildings except for a barn.

Quarry Canyon Limestone Quarry Site

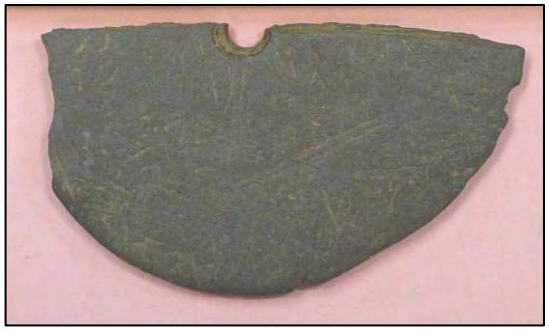
The site is the remains of a 1920s to 1940s limestone rock quarry associated with Los Angeles real estate investor Alphonzo Bell's attempt to turn most of what is now south-central Topanga State Park into an upscale residential community.

Wylie's Bait Shop

Reportedly the oldest family-run business in the Topanga/Malibu area, Wylie's has been a well-known location for sports fishing aficionados since 1947.

Historic Transportation Corridors

Three historic road easements, Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Pacific Coast Highway, and Dirt Mulholland/Mulholland Drive, have contributed to the area's residential and commercial development since the late 1800s.



Slate disk fragment

COLLECTIONS

Collections are the holdings of a museum or park unit acquired and preserved because of their intrinsic value as examples, as reference material, or as objects of aesthetic, historical, scientific, or educational importance. The Topanga State Park collections are comprised primarily of archaeological objects and natural history specimens.

The archaeological collections include artifacts representing both the Native American and historic periods of the Park and, with very few exceptions, are in storage. These collections include a mano/pestle combination and a portable stone mortar, as well as hundreds of objects recovered during archaeological investigations between 2003 and 2007.

Some examples of these archaeological investigations and their resulting collections include:

- A borehole testing project in the Lower Topanga Canyon area in 2003, which yielded between 50 and 100 objects, consisting of both prehistoric and historic items.
- Archaeological investigations at Trippet Ranch in 2004, which recovered four objects dating to the site's prehistoric period including half of a round slate disc with a hole drilled through the center – an uncommon artifact.
- An archaeological monitoring project in the Lower Topanga Canyon area, which yielded approximately 50 items including a significant collection of Gordon's Gin bottles and stoppers, ceramic tableware fragments, and various other miscellaneous household items.
- A monitoring project in the Lower Topanga Canyon area recovered various historic artifacts including glass bottles, ceramics, and metal objects.

In addition to these collections, two non-CSP repositories (UCLA and UC Berkeley) hold important archaeological collections associated with the Park. These collections are significant as they contain objects recovered from CA-LAN-1 (the Tank Site) and CA-LAN-2, the first archaeological sites recorded in Los Angeles County under the official state trinomial system.

The natural history collection is interpretively and educationally significant in that it provides park visitors with a broad array of species common to the Santa Monica Mountains. These collections are described in the Interpretive Collections section on page 39.

In addition to the archaeological objects and natural history specimens, the Park's collections include three Chumash rock art reproductions made by Dr. Harold Barnes. Each is made of wood with a sandy cover and red painted symbols.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Interpretation and education increases public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of natural, cultural, and recreational values. Providing experiences that are both meaningful and inspiring is one of CSP's core program initiatives. The educational and interpretive programs and facilities within Topanga State Park aim to connect visitors with the Park's significant resources.

Interpretation and Education Facilities

Currently, interpretive facilities are located in three areas within the Park: Trippet Ranch (the center of park operations), Hub Junction (in Upper Topanga), and Los Leones (near the southern end of the Park). The Trippet Ranch Nature Center has featured natural history-based exhibits for at least two decades. The Nature Center is currently closed, the collections are in storage, and the nearby outdoor exhibits have been removed in preparation for a State-funded Public Use Improvement project at the Park. The building is scheduled to re-open in 2012 with expanded interpretation of the Park's flora and fauna, archaeology, Native American presence (ancient and contemporary), and Trippet Ranch. Related topics will include wilderness, natural habitats, Gentlemen's Ranches, and the Chumash and Tongva cultures.

The project will also fund interpretive panels at Hub Junction to replace existing wayside exhibits. Topics such as geology, earthquakes, chaparral environment, ecology of fire, trail safety, and Chumash and Tongva territories will be interpreted here. Another interpretive facility, a small amphitheater, is located at Los Leones. The Public Use Improvement project will add a native plant garden and interpretive panels to this site. Interpretive topics will include environmental stewardship, restoration of Los Leones, coastal sage scrub environment, Monarch butterfly migration, and use of plants by Native American cultural groups.

Current Programs/Personal Interpretation

The Park's interpretive programs are mostly held at Trippet Ranch. School programs are offered on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, October through May. The program has been designed for children in grades 2 through 5. Guided nature walks are offered on Sundays from January through the end of June. Both of these programs are led by the Topanga Canyon Docents and usually include time in the Nature Center. The nearby Trippet Ranch Nature Trail is approximately one mile long and passes through open grassland, shaded oak woodland, and onto chaparral-covered slopes overlooking the ocean. An accompanying brochure, "Trippet

Ranch Self-Guided Nature Trail" is available at the start of the trail.

Roving interpretation is provided throughout the Park and is conducted primarily by park rangers. Topics frequently addressed are the Park's plants and wildlife, fire and safety issues, size of the Park, and the job of a park ranger.

Guided nature hikes are also provided at Los Leones and other nearby trailheads. These programs are led by volunteers from the Temescal Canyon Association. Topics focus on the area's plants and wildlife.

Print Publications

A map of Topanga State Park is available at the Park for a nominal fee. The map includes the various hiking trails and contains information on the flora, fauna, and geography of the Park. Because Topanga State Park is a part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, descriptions of the interpretive programs offered at the Park are included in the *OUTDOORS* publication. This free, quarterly guide is also available online at www.nps.gov/samo.

Electronic Interpretation and Orientation Information

Visitors may obtain information prior to arriving at the Park by visiting the CSP website (www.parks.ca.gov), then following the "Visit a Park" link to Topanga State Park. A description of the Park and information on its many trails, including the popular Eagle Rock Loop Trail, can be found on this webpage. The Park's webpage contains a link to the Topanga Canyon Docents website, which includes information on the school programs.

Universal Accessibility of Park Interpretation

The Public Use Improvement project will provide new pathways and interpretive exhibits that meet the department's accessibility guidelines at Trippet Ranch, Hub Junction, and Los Leones. Other park interpretation such as the nature trail and related brochure are not universally accessible. Visitors with limited English proficiency do not have materials available to them in other languages, nor are staff or volunteers proficient in languages other than English. Interpretive materials are not available in alternate formats, such as large-print or audio recordings, for people with disabilities.

Interpretation and Education Planning

The *Topanga State Park Interpretive Prospectus – Part I, Will Rogers Area* (February 1977), was developed shortly after the site became part of the California State Park system. This 16-page document contains a summary of interpretive resources, an overview of visitors and their needs, and recommendations for interpretive services. Proposed themes were identified as chaparral ecology, the Topanga Culture, recent cultural history, and a farm experience (although when compared to the current definition of interpretive themes, these would more appropriately be referred to as topics). The ecological balance of the chaparral community and discussion of Topanga Canyon's extremely flammable natural environment are further noted as being important concepts to interpret. The Tank Site (CA-LAN-1) near Trippet Ranch is listed as an important cultural resource that provides another

interpretive topic for the Park.

The 67-page *Topanga State Park Interpretive Plan* (June 15, 1984) includes themes, objectives, background information, species checklists, and a bibliography related to the natural and cultural features to be interpreted. Interpretive panels were proposed for the Entrada Area, the Day-Use Area, and the Backbone Trailhead. Exhibits were proposed for Trippet Skeet Lodge. Themes (topics) were expanded from those found in the 1977 Interpretive Prospectus and include the following:

Primary Themes

A. Chaparral Ecology
   1. Plant Adaptation to the Climate
   2. Succession
   3. Animals of the Chaparral
      a. Mammals
      b. Reptiles
      c. Birds
B. Fire Ecology
   1. Fire's role in the Chaparral Ecology
   2. Fire Management Techniques
C. Native Americans
   1. Topanga Culture People and Lifestyle
   2. Fernandeño Gabrielino Peoples
   3. Foods and Medicines – Uses of Native Plants
D. Trails

Secondary Themes

a. Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica to Present Time
b. Geology

The interpretive planning and exhibit development included in the current Public Use Improvement project is documented in three reports:

- *Topanga State Park Interpretive Center and Exterior Interpretive Facilities Planning and Exhibits: Vision Report – Trippet Skeet Lodge, Hub Junction, Los Liones* (June 2006)
- *Topanga State Park Interpretive Plan: Trippet Ranch Nature Center, Hub Junction, Los Liones Canyon Park* (April 2007)
- *Design Development Drawings* (May 2008)

Together, these three documents provide the Park's most recent interpretive planning efforts specifically for Trippet Ranch, Hub Junction, and Los Leones. The 87-page interpretive plan identifies interpretive goals and objectives, exhibit concepts, and key messages. Four matrices are also included that summarize the alignment of science, history, and social science curricula standards for grades 3, 4, and 5 with exhibit content.

Interpretive Collections

The Park's interpretive collections are comprised of museum collections and hand-held objects. The hand-held objects are owned by the Topanga Canyon Docents and used as part of the Park's school programs. These include facsimiles of Native American toys, games, ornaments, tools and baskets. The museum collections are comprised primarily of archaeological objects and natural history specimens.

The Park's natural history specimens include several mounted animals, a

variety of bird nests and eggs, geological objects, and insect specimens. These collections are currently in storage but are expected to be returned to public display in the Nature Center after completion of the Public Use Improvement project.

The archaeological objects are associated with excavations and isolated finds in the Park dating to 2003. These are described in the Collections section on page 36.

Interpretation Audience Demographics

Visitors enjoy Topanga State Park year round. Attendance figures collected at the Park between 1996 and 2008 show an average annual park attendance of 404,302 visitors. Data for interpretive and educational programs has only been actively collected since 2006. A comparison of park attendance and program attendance indicates that only a small amount of park visitors attend interpretive programs. In 2008, for example, park attendance was 169,190 and interpretive program attendance was 7,490, indicating that 4.4% of park visitors attended an interpretive program.

CSP has been collecting school group program evaluations for several years. Although results for Topanga State Park are limited, responses by teachers whose students have participated in the Park's school program have been favorable. Teachers commented that hiking in nature, hands-on activities, and seeing exhibits of animals in their habitats were among the contributions of the Park's school program.

See this General Plan's Existing Conditions – Recreational Resources – Planning Influences section for more details related to Visitor Profile/ Demographics.

Support for Interpretation

Topanga State Park Rangers and seasonal Park Aids present interpretation as part of their regular duties. One of the Park's rangers serves as volunteer coordinator for CSP's Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program. A district interpretive specialist provides interpretive support to the various state parks in the Los Angeles area, including Topanga State Park. There is no interpreter position assigned specifically to the Park.

The Topanga Canyon Docents (TCD) are a dedicated group of volunteers, staffing the nature center, leading nature hikes, and conducting school programs since 1974. Additionally, TCD has been coordinating the 10-week docent training program for 35 years. The Temescal Canyon Association (TCA) is another dedicated group of volunteers, leading nature hikes from Los Leones and nearby trailheads, and providing funds for the Topanga State Park map.

Local, Regional, and Statewide Context

Significance of the Park's resources on a local, regional, and statewide basis

The resources associated with Topanga State Park have local, regional, and statewide significance as a part of the larger Santa Monica Mountains story. Topanga State Park is located in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a unit of NPS. Within this broad geographic area, NPS, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), and CSP each manage several parks. Of the 150,000

acres included within the boundary of the national recreation area, CSP manages an estimated 33,271 acres. The area that comprises Topanga State Park is the largest contiguous block of native habitat in the eastern part of the Santa Monica Mountains and has some of the most significant marine and plant fossils in this mountainous range.

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is distinguished from many other national parks/recreation areas in that it is a single expanse of land rather than a series of pocket parks. This is important because large blocks of land sustain the habitat or living space required by native wild plants and animals. The area is also the National Park Service's best mainland example of the Mediterranean Biome (land type), one of the smallest and most biologically diverse biomes found on the face of the earth, with only 18 percent left undisturbed. Another distinguishing factor is that the city of Los Angeles is possibly the only city in the world divided by a mountain range or national recreation area and one of a few cities that has a national recreation area so readily accessible to so many people – 15.6 million.

Importance of the Park in meeting interpretation and education needs

In addition to the previously described programs led by park staff, TCD, and TCA, other groups provide programs at the Park. Monthly bird walks are led by the Sierra Club and Los Angeles Audubon Society. School programs are provided by the MRCA at the Temescal Canyon entrance to the Park. The Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) is another important program provider, bringing an average of 12 school groups to Trippet Ranch each year.

An effort to coordinate program and planning in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area has recently begun under the auspices of the Santa Monica Mountains Education Consortium. Members of this consortium include CSP, National Park Service, Topanga Canyon Docents, MRCA, and RCDSMM.

Brief profiles of interpretive facilities or programs in the surrounding communities

A variety of similar resource-based interpretive facilities and programs exist in the surrounding communities, including one proposed facility. Brief profiles of these facilities and programs follow:

Ballona Wetlands Interpretive Center (proposed): The Ballona Wetlands Foundation is working in partnership with members of the Gabrielino/ Tongva nation and Friends of Ballona Wetlands to design and build a Cultural Interpretive Center.

Chumash Discovery Village: This re-creation of a working Native American village is located on a four-acre site at Nicholas Canyon County Beach in Malibu. The Chumash Village offers students and the general public a unique, multi-sensory experience with authentic replicas of Chumash dwellings (*aps*), a sea worthy canoe (*tomol*), tools, and handicrafts, in addition to performance of ceremonies, blessings, solstice activities, and celebrations.

King Gillette Ranch: This 588-acre historic ranch, situated in the heart of the Malibu Creek watershed and at the lower end of the Las Virgenes Valley, is a haven for larger mammals of the Santa Monica Mountains. The ranch is owned and managed by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in cooperation with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and CSP.

Malibu Lagoon Museum: A part of Malibu Lagoon State Beach and adjacent to the historic Adamson House, this museum interprets the area's Chumash culture, gentlemen ranchers, and the birth of the surfing era.

NatureBridge/Santa Monica Mountains Institute: In partnership with the National Park Service, customized two- to five-day residential environmental science education programs are offered for grades 4-12 in the Santa Monica Mountains and the Channel Islands, as well as single-day and multi-day trips.

Rancho Sierra Vista: A part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, this site reflects a ranching history dating to 1803. The Ranch Overlook Trail provides views of the site, but no interpretive facilities are available.

Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center and Natural Area: Located in the Santa Monica Mountains, this learning center is a collective effort among the Chumash, Tongva, and other Native Peoples and the National Park Service.

Will Rogers State Historic Park: Located along the southeastern edge of Topanga State Park, this historic (1928-1935) Santa Monica Mountains ranch preserves the original buildings and personal belongings of famed cowboy humorist Will Rogers.

Will Rogers State Historic Park

AESTHETIC RESOURCES

The aesthetics experience of an environment is as complex and multi-dimensional as the environment itself. Topanga State Park's 11,525 acres are a wonderful composite of such environments. In one park-place we can experience the sublime vastness of the Pacific Ocean and the steep magnificence of mountainsides covered in thick, blue green sheets of chaparral; we can walk through ancestral oak woodlands and shady, stream-fed canyon bottoms; we can view layer upon layer of scenic canyons and ridgelines; and we can come "home" to the rolling grassland-savannah.

The establishment of Topanga State Park was an extraordinary cultural act. It placed social value on a natural landscape that can be appreciated for its environmental integrity or wholeness, as well as for its many-dimensional complexity. Because people believe in its worthiness, for these values continue through time, and because they wanted to share the privilege of experiencing them, these lands were set aside as state park lands. As expressed in the Spirit of Place: "How very privileged we are to have such a place."

Special Features and Landscape

Visitors come to Topanga State Park for many reasons. Often they choose specific trails and areas of the Park based on what they expect to experience. From past surveys, a few reasons for park visits include: to commune with nature, to enjoy scenic beauty, and to see/hear wildlife. Such reasons relate well to how a visitor experiences a given landscape aesthetically. They relate to a site's inherent character and environmental qualities, as well as to its special features.

On a trail, recognizable features and landscapes help us to orient ourselves. They are "place-making" components. They also reward our desire for exploration and discovery.

A few notable features at Topanga State Park include:

- Viewsheds and Vantage Points such as Vista Marquez
- Historic Sites and Structures such as Trippet Ranch
- Rock Features such as Eagle Rock
- Canyons and Creeks such as Santa Ynez, Temescal, and Topanga
- Trails such as the Backbone Trail
- Significant Cultural areas such as CA-LAN-1, the first site recorded in the State Trinomial System within Los Angeles County.

The above features and additional feature categories have been recorded and mapped, and are denoted in the Aesthetic Resource Inventory which provided baseline data for this General Plan.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Outdoor recreation has long been a part of the Topanga landscape. After many thousands of years of Native American occupation and transitional settlement, subsistence hunting, trapping, and fishing gave way to sport hunting and sport fishing, while subsistence ranching gave way to the outdoor-loving gentlemen's ranches.

Today, most of these historic recreational activities are faint memories and scattered remnants hidden along the extensive trail system and within the vast wildlands.

Trails

Just as animal trails gave way to Native American travel routes, and then to horse and wagon roads; routes along canyons passages and the coastline were adjusted, widened, and eventually paved, becoming the designated routes we still travel today. These trails and fire roads are now part of the predominant recreational use of Topanga State Park.

The Park offers 36 miles of trails and hosts large numbers of trail users with over 60 official and "unofficial" access points. The Park's trail system connects to such regional trails as the Backbone Trail and the Rim of the Valley Trail.

An on-going joint effort between the National Park Service (NPS), Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), and CSP will establish the overall direction of future development of the regional trail networks, with Topanga State Park occupying a key position in this comprehensive planning effort. Refer to the Planning Influence section of Chapter 2 for additional information on this joint effort: The Trail Management Plan (TMP).

Camping

The only camping opportunity currently offered in Topanga State Park is at Musch Camp. This walk-in, bike-in, or horseback ride-in campground has eight camp sites and a restroom facility, as well as a few equestrian corrals. Bike access to the Musch Campground is available via the paved service road accessible from Hillside Drive.

Per the 1977 General Development Plan (GDP), major campground development was recommended

Eagle Spring Fire Road

throughout the Park, including 25 family sites, 50 tent sites, four trail camps, a hostel, and equestrian camps. However, based upon the natural and cultural resource inventories undertaken as part of this General Plan process and the desired resource character and management, as well as the desired visitor use and experiences, the GDP scale of recommended development was deemed no longer feasible or desirable.

Therefore, a more modest approach to camping and overnight use was examined during this planning process. The camping alternatives that were explored included the use of non-traditional overnight facilities such as cabins and yurts; programmed overnight camp-outs for school groups; equestrian campgrounds; and primitive environmental campsites.

Equestrian Activities

Equestrian activities are closely associated with the notable equestrian history of the Park and adjoining areas, including historic equestrian use at Trippet Ranch, Josepho Barn, and at the Will Rogers Ranch. The continuation of equestrian activity within the Park is being proposed on designated trails to create interesting interpretive and recreational opportunities that will link the entire Park together. For example, equestrian use can strengthen the interpretive and educational connection between the two existing Gentlemen's Ranches: Trippet Ranch in the west-central part of the Park and Will Rogers State Historic Park, which is just outside the Park's southeastern boundary.

Visitor Support

Visitor support, as used here, includes facilities like trailheads, visitor contact elements, restrooms, parking, and picnic areas. Such facilities serve the needs of park visitors and enhance their experience in the park setting.

Topanga State Park has been operated as a state park unit for over 30 years, and a small number of park facilities have been developed over this span, from a nature center in the Skeet Lodge at Trippet Ranch to an amphitheater and restroom at Los Leones. The existing nature center at Trippet Ranch, which is earmarked for a major restoration in 2012, currently serves as the main organized visitor contact for the Park. Specific programs associated with a given facility are further elaborated within the Interpretation and Education section of Chapter 2 (page 37).

The majority of the Park, with its steep terrain and remote sites, lends well to it remaining a minimally developed area, contributing to the "wildlands" essence of the Park. Also with the Park being adjacent to other developed parklands such as Will Rogers State Historic Park and Temescal Canyon Gateway Park (operated by MRCA), it is favorable for support facilities to be clustered at the Park's periphery and to be relatively small in scale.

With the acquisition of the Lower Topanga Canyon parcel, a physical connection has been created between the interior of the Park and the coast, whereby a "natural and scenic gateway" into the Park can be enhanced.

PLANNING INFLUENCES

Existing CSP system-wide planning influences that cross park and regional boundaries may affect planning decisions regarding the Park. The following represent such influential policies, regulations, and plans:

System-wide Planning Influences

- Public Resource Code (PRC)
- California Code of Regulations (CCR)
- Policies, Rules, Regulations, and Orders of California State Park and Recreation Commission and California State Parks
- Planning Handbook – April 2010 (Planning Division)
- Department Operations Manual (DOM)
- Department Administration Manual (DAM)
- California State Parks System Plan
- California State Parks Mission Statement
- California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines - 2009 edition (Accessibility Section, Acquisition and Development Division)
- California Recreational Trail Plan - 2009
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Interim Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report (IMP) - July 2002

This management plan was approved in July 2002 to serve as an interim management tool for the parcel of land (1,659 acres) acquired in 2001 until a new General Plan could be completed for the entire park.

With the approval of this General Plan, the IMP will be superseded.

Topanga, Malibu Creek, and Point Mugu Resource Management Plans, General Development Plans (GDP) and Environmental Impact Report - August 1977

This planning document, structured prior to the development of the Planning Handbook, published in February 2002 and updated in April 2010 by CSP, attempted to plan for three separate park units that shared similar resources and problems. However, due to changes in visitor-use patterns and the passage of over 30 years, is has become clear that the 1977 GDP has served its purpose for Topanga State Park.

With the approval of the updated Topanga General Plan, the GDP section pertaining to Topanga State Park shall be superseded.

Regional Planning Influences

The following legislations, plans, and programs address regional issues that may affect planning decisions at the Park. The list is not all-inclusive and the following documents and studies are being cited for reference only.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (Volumes 1 and 2) July 2002

In 1978, NPS was granted authority to promote joint administration of the parklands with CSP and SMMC for the majority of open spaces that fall within the boundaries of SMMNRA including

Topanga State Park and several other State Park units. NPS, SMMC, and CSP collaborated in the development of the General Management Plan, which serves as a "global" management document for the region.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Trail Management Plan (TMP) - the Interagency Regional Trail Management Plan

NPS, SMMC, and CSP started the scoping process in September 2005 for an interagency regional trail management plan that would establish the overall direction of future development and completion of the SMMNRA trail network over the next 15 years. This network encompasses approximately 800 miles of recreational routes including trails, dirt roads, and paved roads.

Upon the completion of the TMP, the designation of trail use for the regional trail system shall be determined, which in turn will influence CSP's evaluation and final implementation of trail designations within Topanga State Park.

In addition to the TMP, the following regional trails are undergoing separate planning efforts:

- Backbone Trail, an approximately 60-mile long trail situated along the backbone of the mountains, from Will Rogers State Historic Park to a terminus at the west end of Point Mugu State Park.
- Rim of the Valley Trail, an approximately 130-mile long trail that completely encircles the San Fernando and La Crescenta valleys and crosses through the northern part of Topanga State Park along the Dirt Mulholland corridor.
- Coastal Slope Trail, a proposed trail from the western terminus of Ventura County to the eastern terminus at Los Leones in Topanga State Park.
- California Coastal Trail, a 1,200-mile trail that will travel along the coastline from Oregon to the U.S./Mexico border.

Will Rogers State Historic Park General Plan – March 1992

Located along the southeastern end of Topanga State Park, Will Rogers State Historic Park serves as one of the main trail gateways into Topanga State Park, and is intertwined with the historic fabric of the Gentlemen Ranching era of the region. Also, remnants of the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin are located in Topanga State Park.

Mulholland Scenic Parkway and Corridor Specific Plan – 1992

This Specific Plan by the City of Los Angeles includes the "Big Wild," a term coined about 1990 to describe a potential 20,000-acre wildlife and open space area at the northern edge of Topanga State Park. This plan will greatly influence park access and uses along the northern boundaries.

Topanga Lagoon Bridge Replacement and Lagoon Restoration Project Study Report – 2004 Caltrans

This document prepared by Moffatt and Nichols Engineers for RCDSMM explored various conceptual options for the restoration of the lower reaches of Topanga Creek and the examination of various bridge replacement designs for the existing vehicular bridge along Pacific Coast Highway.

County of Los Angeles General Plan (including Planning Amendments for both Topanga and Will Rogers State Beaches)

This document covers planning efforts and proposed improvements at the former Topanga State Beach, now owned by the County of Los Angeles Beaches and Harbors. This will need to be closely coordinated with any proposed park improvements along Pacific Coast Highway.

Various Watershed and Lagoon Restoration Feasibility Studies by Resource Conservation District (RCDSMM)

Various studies undertaken by RCDSMM explored the Topanga Creek watershed, including a section along Topanga Canyon Boulevard dubbed the "Narrows" and the examination of the creek's water quality and steelhead population. Refer to RCDSMM's website rcdsmm.org/ topanga-creek-watershed-research-reports

Visitor Profile/Demographics

Visitors enjoy Topanga State Park year round. Attendance figures collected at the Park since 1996 show an average annual park attendance of approximately 400,000 visitors per year.

A statewide visitor survey completed at the Park between 1996 and 2000 provides some insight into the demographic characteristic of park users as reflected by the following:

- 91% replied that they were from Los Angeles County. The other top responses were:
  - Orange County – 3%
  - Ventura County – 2%
  - San Diego County – 1%
  - Alameda County – 1%
- The top non-California states where visitors originated from included:
  - New York – 15%
  - Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas – each 12%
- The top non-U.S. countries of visitor origin were:
  - Brazil – 67%
  - Holland – 33%
- The range of respondents in age categories were as follows:
  - no response – 16%
  - less than 21 years of age – 4%
  - 21 to 35 years of age – 45%
  - 36 to 55 years of age – 29%
  - over 55 years of age – 6%

Data from other visitor surveys completed for adjacent Park units and lands as well as the U.S. Census for 2010 were all examined as part of these planning efforts. A few quick facts from the 2010 Census for Los Angeles County include:

- Countywide population of 9,818,605 with a 3.1% increase from the 2000 census
- 50.4% Female
- 49.6% Male
- 50.3% White/Caucasian
- 47.7% Hispanic/Latino Origin

Results from one of the adjacent visitor surveys by NPS (SMMNRA Trail Use Survey - 2003), which in part includes trails within Topanga State Park that connect with NPS trails, indicated that the dominant trail users at SMMNRA were white, middle-aged men (59% of those surveyed were male), who were born in the United States, spoke English, were college-educated, relatively affluent, owned their own

homes, did not have children under 18 years of age, and lived in single person households. They typically visited the SMMNRA with friends and were return visitors. People of color and low-income earners were noticeably under-represented in the survey sample.

The population of Los Angeles County is projected to continue to grow and will exceed 10 million by the next census in 2020. The Hispanic/Latino population will also continue to increase and other ethnic groups (Native American, Mexican, Multi-race, Asian American, and Pacific Islanders) are projected to increase slightly, while others (Whites and Blacks) are projected to decrease.

Another demographic projection is that those ages 55 to 85+ will continue to increase in 2020 and 2030.

The above data was gleaned from the Topanga State Park – Interpretation and Education Resource Inventory – June 2011.

Public Involvement

CSP initiated the planning process for Topanga State Park in September 2009, with a scoping meeting held at Temescal Gateway Park located in Pacific Palisades, California. Approximately 60 people attended the first meeting. At this meeting, the Resource Inventory data was presented to the public to provide a general background of the Park resources. After the presentation of the resources, the meeting participants were directed into smaller groups to focus on specific topics such as exploring issues, challenges, and opportunities.

An underlying concern that arose from the scoping meeting was that the Park users desired to protect the natural and cultural resources by minimizing development. Such concerns were illustrated by such recorded comments as: “Keep it wild” and “no more buildings” and “we have such a rare and precious opportunity here to do something; it would be a shame to waste it on something that could be done anywhere, anytime.”

Eight additional focus group meetings were held to better understand a few site specific issues that arose from the scoping meeting, including:

1) The future of the Lower Topanga Canyon area, regarding the fundamental relationship between the unquestionable and rare opportunity to restore the lagoon/creek with the existing and desired land uses, including the possible relocation or removal of the motel structures;
2) Cultural resources concerns voiced by Native Americans, which include the village sites under the motel structures in the Lower Topanga Canyon area and near

Trippet Ranch;

3) Water quality of Topanga Creek and its impact to the natural resources and the ocean waters;
4) Acceptable concession opportunities, especially along the strip of land adjacent to Pacific Coast Highway;
5) Trail conflicts between hikers, bikers and equestrian users.

General Plan team members met with representatives from National Park Service, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (along with its sister agency: the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority), Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, Caltrans, Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors, and other stakeholders to solicit additional comments and input.

Second public meeting

Subsequent to the scoping meeting and the focus group meetings, two more public meetings were held, in July 2010 and June 2011. The second meeting was a workshop setting, where the meeting participants (approx. eighty-five people) were provided a menu of resources, conditions, and visitor-use experiences and tasked to develop a Preferred Plan for the Park. They were also asked to give their input towards developing an updated Declaration of Purpose.

At the third public meeting, the updated Declaration of Purpose and the Preferred Plan were presented and then subsequently posted on the General Plan website.

Other techniques used to involve the public included:

1) establishing a website that documented the General Plan process and allowed posting of pertinent planning information and updates;
2) having comments cards available at the public meetings;
3) randomly calling meeting participants seeking their feedback on the meeting they had attended;
4) posting meeting announcements in local newspapers and at the Park trailheads;
5) sending out over two hundred mailings/notices of the second meeting;
6) implementing a docent survey on visitor uses.

Letters, emails, and development proposals trickled in throughout the process, usually expressing particular interests ranging from a request for a permanent site in the Lower Topanga Canyon area to house a wildlife rescue organization to establishing an eco-art/retail center. All comments were fully vetted and considered, ensuring the planning process reflected an informed community and state-wide based planning process.

Native American Input

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted and asked to provide CSP with a list of interested Native American groups and individuals. The list that the NAHC supplied included groups and representatives from the Ventureño Chumash and the Gabrielino/Tongva. Letters and/or emails regarding the planning process and public and focus group meetings were sent to each person or group on the list. Additional Native American individuals with previous experience or concerns in Topanga State Park were also contacted. Follow-up phone calls were made to ensure that the correspondence had been received.

Two consultation meetings were held with the Native Americans, one at the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians' Tribal Hall and one at the Park. These were attended by representatives from the Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva groups. At least three individuals from these Tribes also attended one or more of the public meetings.

Native American input came in the form of phone calls, letters, email, and verbal comments received during the public and consultation meetings. Comments were generally supportive of CSP's plans for protection and interpretation of the Park and its resources. The main concerns and/or requests were for protection of the archaeological and sacred sites, continuing consultation with the Native American groups, and monitoring of future construction activities within culturally sensitive areas.

Park Support

Community groups and organizations such as TCD and Temescal Canyon Association, two non-profit organizations with many years of park support, continue to be integral supporters of the protection of the natural and cultural resources and the development of recreational enjoyment of the Park. Both have been major advocates in fighting to keep state parks open during the on-going State budget crisis.

Also, due to the tireless efforts of the original citizen groups who fought for the establishment of the Park over 30 years ago, the Santa Monica Mountains Regional Park Association and Friends of the Santa Monica Mountains State Park need to be mentioned here as supporters of the Park.

Adjoining agencies such as National Park Service, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) have continued to be great partners in the regional planning efforts that greatly affect Topanga State Park. Also, MRCA generously provided the use of their conference facility at Temescal Gateway Park for two of the public meetings.

Other supporters are denoted in the Support for Interpretation section (page 40).

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following is a summary of major issues derived from the development of the various aspects of the park summary and the planning process, particularly the public participation component. These issues are in addition to the issues denoted in the Public Involvement section on page 49. All these issues are intertwined, making the "goals and guidelines" and the "management zones" denoted within Chapter 3 crucial to the immediate use and future management of the entire park.

Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

The challenge throughout the Park is to reconcile the most appropriate land uses with the right balance of natural resource preservation, cultural and historic resource protection, and visitor use. One area in particular where this challenge is evident is Lower Topanga Canyon. This area includes the National Register-eligible historic Topanga Ranch Motel, situated atop highway construction fill covering a Native American village archaeological site. These cultural resources are in tension with on-going lagoon/creek restoration efforts and existing businesses. This challenge is also evident at Trippet Ranch, where visitor use and park operations may be compromising historic/cultural fabric and interpretive/educational opportunities.

Natural Resources

As the density of the urban areas surrounding the Park increases, the protection of the Park's natural resources becomes more challenging. Balancing visitor use and access with the protection of the Park's resources is essential to the maintenance of the Park's ecosystem.

Concentrated visitor uses, expanding impacts (such as open camping), adjacent land-use effects on water quality and quantity, exotic species invasion, and random environmental changes may have dramatic and devastating consequences for these environments and especially for the less mobile species. Edge effects such as trespassing, pollution, and exotic species introduction may have serious negative effects on the Park's biota and can creep in over a broad front.

Water Quality

Historically, water quality had been associated with either stormwater run-off or waste water treatment facilities associated with existing structures in or near Lower Topanga Canyon. Although the majority of the structures were removed as part of the IMP, water quality continues to be of concern, particularly any impacts to the watershed upstream of the Lower Topanga Canyon area. These concerns must be addressed to better protect the natural resources including the endangered steelhead and tidewater goby.

Visitor Use and Experience

The 1977 General Development Plan (GDP) for Topanga State Park contained a large number of development recommendations, including large interpretive facilities and large parking areas that may need to be scaled back to better balance visitor uses with the updated resource inventories. However, to ensure recreational opportunities are not limited, a holistic approach of deter-

mining the appropriate recreational and visitor uses throughout the entire park needs to be implemented. Part of this holistic approach is the examination of available regional uses that can help avoid the duplication of uses and/or create joint use and partnership opportunities (i.e., shared parking trailheads, visitor contacts centers) with adjoining open space agencies.

Recreational Facilities

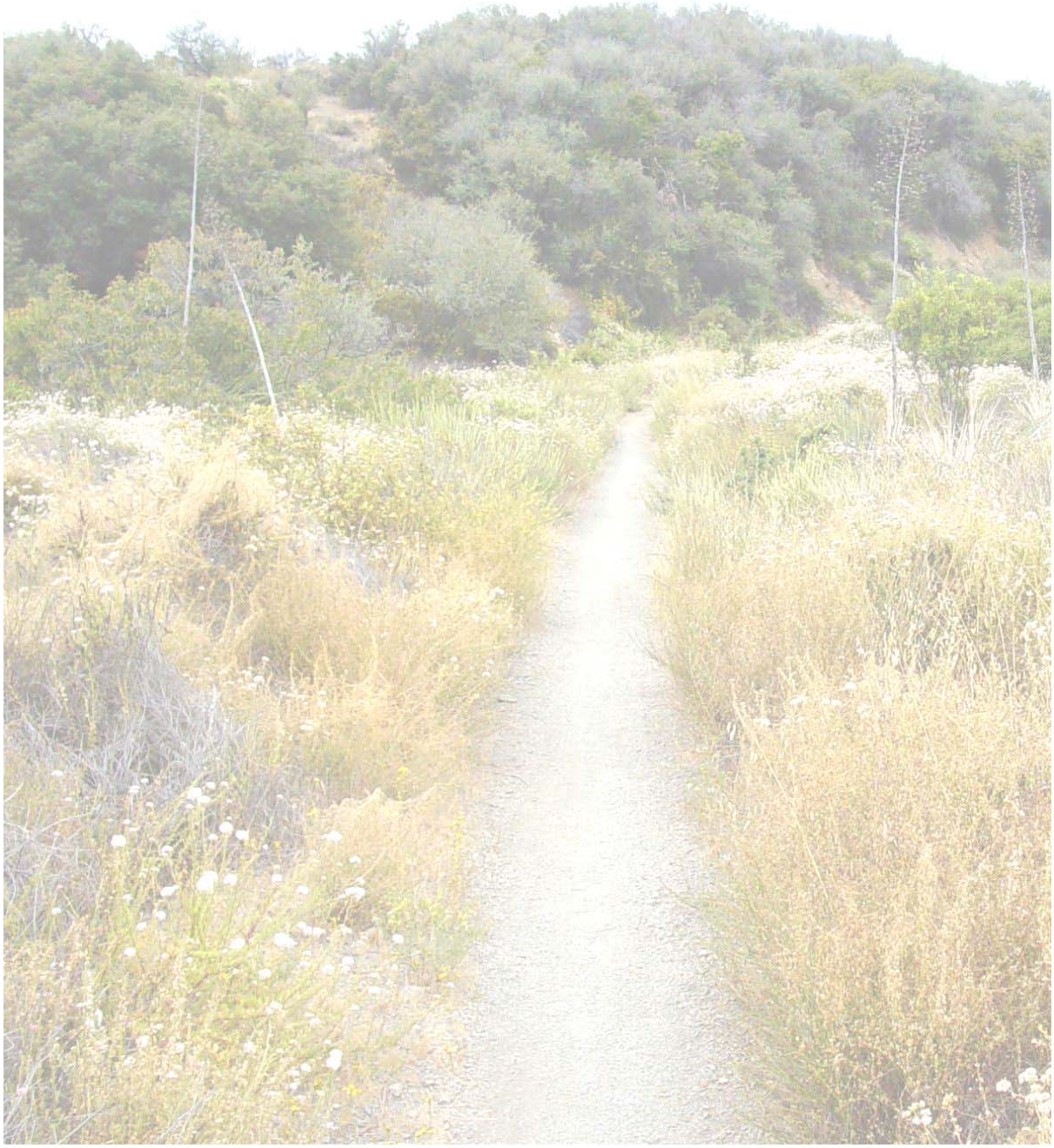
Trail use is clearly the major recreational use at the Park and with the Park's vast acres of open space, including steep and rugged topography so close to an urban setting, the popularity of mountain biking is increasing within the Park, which in turn raises the classic issue of equality of trail use among hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians.

Specific trail-use designations are not part of this plan because the intent of this planning process is to establish the long-range purpose and vision for the future of Topanga State Park. With the establishment of a park vision, specific park policies such as trail-use designations and regulations can then be determined by park operations.

However, trail corridors, as well as trail goals and guidelines, will be established as part of this process, which will assist and influence park operations in determining the most appropriate trail-use designations.

Interpretation

The Park's programs, media, and facilities are currently limited to Trippet Ranch and Los Leones. Few of these interpretive services are accessible to people with disabilities, including mobility, visual, and hearing impairments, and limited English proficiency. The number of staff and docents available to provide interpretive and educational programs is small when compared to the large size of the Park and its multiple access points. Most programs are only offered during the day, including school programs, which prevents working parents from participating and also prevents students and families from experiencing the nocturnal side of the Park. Significant resource characteristics need to be interpreted to increase visitor understanding and to promote resource protection.



Backbone Trail/Rogers Road Trail