

Chapter Three - The Plan



Topanga Ranch Motel



PLAN OVERVIEW

Chapter 3 (the Plan) establishes the overall long-range direction and vision for the future management and development of Topanga State Park. The Mission of CSP, along with the Park's unit-classifications, Declaration of Purpose, and specific management goals and guidelines help further articulate the vision for Topanga State Park.

Specific facilities, carrying capacities, and locations are not being provided, instead general planning direction for the protection, preservation, restoration and development of the Park is addressed. This flexibility allows current and future park managers to use the latest technology and resource information available to meet current circumstances and visitor-use patterns.

Site, facility, or area specific management actions will be determined by future management plans. A management plan defines specific objectives (such as timelines, resources, and outcomes), methodologies, and/or design of how manage-

ment goals denoted in Chapter 3 will be accomplished. Management plans incorporate the design components such as siting, shape, and size that can be achieved within a specific time schedule.

Tentatively identified management actions determined by management plans include:

- Trailhead and Trail Use Management Plan
- Creek and Lagoon Restoration Plan
- Interpretive Master Plan
- Camping/Overnight use Management Plan

CSP'S MISSION

The overarching mandate for the management of Topanga State Park is the Mission of CSP, which reads:

Provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources,

and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

Inherent in the Mission of CSP is the potential conflict between the charge to preserve resources and the charge for providing high quality outdoor recreation. Adding to this challenge, as was evident during this planning process, is the occasional tension that arises among the various resources, particularly between natural and cultural resources.

The challenge lies in the balancing of all of the above, while establishing and adhering to a bold Park vision, which will provide invaluable and unique Park experiences for generations to come.

CLASSIFICATION

Further defining the responsibilities of CSP in the operations of Topanga State Park is the unit-classification as a state park as described in PRC 5019.53, which reads as follows:

State parks consist of relatively spacious areas of outstanding scenic or natural character, oftentimes also containing significant historical, archaeological, ecological, geological, or other such values. The purpose of state parks shall be to preserve outstanding natural, scenic, and cultural values, indigenous aquatic and terrestrial fauna, and flora...

Each state park shall be managed as a composite whole in order to restore, protect, and maintain its native environmental complexes to the extent compatible with the primary

purpose for which the park was established.

Improvements undertaken within state parks shall be for the purpose of making the areas available for public enjoyment and education in a manner consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, cultural, and ecological values for present and future generations. Improvements may be undertaken to provide for recreational activities including, but not limited to, camping, picnicking, sightseeing, nature study, hiking, and horseback riding, so long as such improvements include no major modification of lands, forests, or waters. Improvements, which do not directly enhance the public's enjoyment of the natural, scenic, cultural, or ecological values of the resource, which are attractions in themselves, or which are otherwise available to the public within a reasonable distance outside the park, shall not be undertaken within state parks.

PROPOSED SUB-CLASSIFICATION

As part of this planning process and based upon the significance of the cultural resources near Trippet Ranch, the sub-unit classification of a Cultural Preserve is being proposed in that location. The Cultural Preserve sub-unit provides additional protection and focused management for a significant cultural resource area of a park.

Refer to the Management Zones section on page 104, for the background and justification for

creating this sub-unit classification of a State Park. This requires approval by the State Park and Recreation Commission.

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

The Declaration of Purpose defines the purpose of the Park. A declaration of purpose is required by the Public Resource Code, Section 5002.2 (b), and “setting forth specific long-range management objectives for the Park consistent with the Park’s classification...”

When the Park was first acquired, the 1977 General Development Plan (GDP) denoted the impetus of the establishment of the Park with a Declaration of Purpose and a Declaration of Resource Management Policy. The 1977 Declaration of Purpose stated:

The primary purpose of this unit is to protect and preserve the wildland area and its open space character along with its scenic, geologic, edaphic, and biotic features, and to make available to the public the environmental amenities and the recreational and educational opportunities which the unit resources provide.

A secondary, but nonetheless important, purpose is to protect and preserve the important cultural resources within the unit and, in conjunction with those at the nearby Will Rogers State Historic Park, to make such resources available to the people for their enjoyment and enlightenment

Although much of the core of the Declaration of Purpose from the GDP pertaining to the “Wildlands” remains intact, a more contemporary Declaration of Purpose is required, to better reflect updated understanding of the Park’s resources and their management. Some of the influences that contributed to the need for this update include:

- 1) a growing list of at risk species and compromised habitat;
- 2) a better understanding of valuable early period cultural sites;
- 3) the need for enhanced protection of watershed integrity and wildlife corridors, especially with the acquisition of Lower Topanga Canyon.

The updated Declaration of Purpose will supersede all previous Declarations. The updated Declaration of Purpose is as follows:

Topanga State Park is a significant place of scenic wildlands within a fragmented and ever-encroaching urban setting. Although it is in the middle of the most heavily populated area of the State, the Park maintains a sense of wholeness and integrity. It is a landscape shaped by its underlying natural history and by its rich and diverse cultural history. Some of the earliest known areas of human habitation in California were established here thousands of years ago. Today many people have a great respect and passion for Topanga State Park including the descendants of those ancient inhabitants who hold these lands as sacred.

The purpose of Topanga State Park is to preserve, interpret, and protect a substantial and meaningful portion of its natural and cultural resources, so that the Park can:

- restore and sustain dynamic natural processes,
- retain its unique, rugged, and inherently majestic character,
- maintain and enhance wildlife corridors,
- nurture and promote superior coastal water quality,
- defend vital open space qualities and ecological integrity,
- provide a refuge that promotes the physical and mental wellbeing of its visitors,
- offer high-quality recreation and outdoor experiences,
- fulfill its highest potential for interpretation and education.
- present self-sustaining programs, services, and activities,
- honor and teach awareness, appreciation, and better understanding of the people who lived here before,
- facilitate the discovery and recognition of our relationships with the natural world and with each other,
- inspire us and our children to realize the importance of these landscapes to our health and the health of our urban environment.

PARKWIDE MANAGEMENT GOALS AND GUIDELINES

The following sections contain goals and guidelines for managing the resources of the Park. A few sections have overarching goals that apply to several subsections. For example, Vegetation Management includes Native Plant Communities and Sensitive Plant Species. Each subsection will have guidelines that relate to the overarching goal and to that specific subsection.

Essential to the realization of these goals is the periodic assessment of the status and conditions of key resources recognized as requiring protection and management within the Park.

Land management decisions are complex, and detailed site-specific data are often unavailable. However, lack of or delay of management actions for intensive studies or additional data can result in costly damage or the irreversible loss of the sensitive resources and qualities that provide a desirable visitor experience.

Land management actions will be based on sound scientific data. However, if such data do not currently exist and resource integrity appears in imminent danger, management action will be taken with the best available information and expertise of park staff and other associated experts.

PHYSICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Geology

The Park's geology is a direct result of its geological history and tectonism. Further documentation and preservation of the fragile geological

formations is important, and care must be taken to maintain their integrity.

Steep topography, unconsolidated soils, periodic heavy rainfall, and occasional earthquakes make this area naturally prone to floods, landslides, slope erosion, stream bank slumping, stream sedimentation, and log and debris jams. Human development and use, such as roads, trails, utilities, and recreation facilities, can increase the frequency and scale of these natural processes as well as introduce sediments, septic system wastes, and other pollutants into watersheds.

These goals and guidelines are further reinforced by implementing the policies presented in CSP's Department Operations Manual (DOM) for watershed management, stream management, watershed and stream protection, stream restoration, floodplain management, wetlands management, water quality and quantity, water rights, geologic hazards, facility siting in geologically hazardous areas (including seismic hazard zones), and protection of geologic and soil resources. In addition to the DOM, CSP has developed best management practices (BMPs) for road recontouring and rehabilitation, road removal, road to trail conversion, and culvert replacement. The standard construction BMPs for erosion and sediment control from the California Stormwater Quality Association will also be used where appropriate.

Goal: Protect and preserve the unique geological resources and features of the Park while protecting human life and property.

Guidelines:

1. Support efforts to map the stratigraphy and lithological formations and structural features in the Park.
2. Recognize and accordingly mitigate negative impacts to fragile geological features as part of management plans and decisions with respect to facilities development, visitor access, and recreation.
3. Identify and monitor significant geological features. Take protective measures where necessary.
4. Adequately and professionally manage and care for the geological collections.
5. Promote a better understanding and a greater appreciation of the geological resources of the Park.
6. Develop criteria that identify geological features and resources appropriate for public interpretation.
7. Analyze geological resources and data to best interpret the geological history of the Park.
8. Develop partnerships with universities to further scientific research and educational opportunities. Incorporate results from scientific research into geological resource management.

Hydrology

Surface and groundwater quality, quantity, and natural hydrological patterns are essential elements for healthy biota in the Park. Much of the biota and many sensitive species throughout this region depend on isolated surface or subsurface waters.

Goal: Protect, enhance, and restore the Park’s wetlands and hydrologic resources.

Guidelines:

1. Protect the surface water and groundwater of the Park.
2. Identify the sources that degrade water quality and quantity within the watersheds associated with the Park. Ensure that current and future park developments and visitor-use patterns do not degrade water quality and quantity. Pursue cooperative actions with watershed neighbors and users to improve water conservation ethics, reduce or eliminate the discharge of pollutants, and restore natural flow and hydrological processes.
3. Address strategies for stabilization and topographic restoration of severely eroded features and areas.
4. Perform wetland delineation in accordance with the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual prior to development near any wetland site.
5. Support and work towards the preservation, protection, and restoration of the lagoon at the mouth of Topanga Canyon.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Essential to the realization of the following goals is the periodic assessment of the status and conditions of key resources recognized as requiring protection and management within the Park. The present rate of decline and extinction of plants and animals supports the current global biodiversity crisis hypothesis. The

South Coast Ecoregion of California has been identified as a “hot-spot,” or region where extraordinary biodiversity and endemism overlap with extreme potential of habitat destruction, when compared to other regions around the earth. California has the greatest number of threatened and endangered species in the continental U.S., representing nearly every taxonomic group, from plants and invertebrates to birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and reptiles.

CSP has developed a process to assess the conditions of environmental complexes within units of the State Park System. The Inventory, Monitoring, and Assessment Program (IMAP) provides goals, guidance, and standards for CSP’s efforts to systematically evaluate the vegetation, wildlife, and physical natural resources of the State Park System. In order to assure that natural resource management goals for the Park are reached, this process should be implemented to supplement the baseline data that were assembled prior to this General Plan.



Vegetation Management

Native vegetation communities are essential habitat for wildlife species. Historical management practices such

as fire suppression and human encroachment have changed the species composition and ecological conditions of native plant communities in the Park. It was believed that fire suppression caused dense growth in chaparral and coastal sage scrub vegetation communities over the years. However, recent data does not support this theory. In addition, climate change is predicted to affect the long-term health and species composition of native plant communities. Although most of the vegetation management concerns, goals, and guidelines are the same throughout the entire Park, consideration must be made for those areas that are recognized and/or eligible cultural landscape resources. The vegetation management guidelines within cultural landscapes are discussed within the cultural resources section.

Native Plant Communities

Seven vegetation communities (habitats) were identified within the Park. These vegetation communities are essential habitat for many plant and wildlife species.

Goal: Promote and restore the sustainability of natural ecosystem processes by actively managing plant community health and development, while maintaining the protection of cultural resources. Efforts also will address the conservation of sensitive and unique species and the control of exotic invasive species.

Guidelines:

1. Develop scientifically based vegetation management objectives for issues such as habitat

restoration and prescribed fire management.

2. When appropriate, seek partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions and other agencies to implement a congruent plan for restoring and preserving native plant communities within the Park.

Sensitive Plant Species

Numerous plants that inhabit the Santa Monica Mountains are specifically adapted to these mountains, but the isolating effects of urban development present barriers to the movement of plant seeds, bulbs, and plantlets. Because of their limited distribution, environmental requirements, and often because of human impacts, these species become rare, threatened, or endangered.

Goal: Perpetuate wildlife assemblages by protecting, restoring, and interpreting the native plant communities within the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Protect sensitive plant species, including those that are legally listed under Federal and state laws as rare, threatened, or endangered, or that are considered rare by the CDFG. In addition, CSP will protect those species that meet the legal requirements for listing, but are not listed (i.e., California Native Plant Society List 1B taxa and the Federal candidates for listing), and those considered locally sensitive or endemic to the area. Protection may include, but is not limited to, habitat preservation, seed banking, restoration/enhancement, and visitor education.

2. Conduct regular monitoring of known populations of sensitive plant species to track population trends and health through time. Propagation and reintroduction programs may be considered with the consultation and assistance of research institutions and other government agencies. Projects may require the formation of inter-agency partnerships to plan and implement conservation actions.
3. Develop a scientifically sound protocol for sensitive plant surveys and implement to find previously unknown sensitive plant populations within the Park. In addition, sensitive plant surveys will be conducted as part of the environmental review process for future projects. Avoiding or minimizing cumulative negative effects on sensitive plant populations and their habitats will be a priority.
4. Avoid or minimize human activities that cause imbalances in the natural ecological system. Additionally, CSP shall conduct management activities, such as habitat restoration, that foster ecological balance.

Exotic Plant Control

Generally an invasive exotic plant is a species that is not known to have occurred previously in an area and can aggressively colonize an area. Invasive exotics pose a threat to native species and usually proliferate in both the absence of natural ecological processes and presence of unnatural, usually human-caused disturbances, often out-competing native plants for valuable resources.

The Santa Monica Mountains are known to harbor exotic plant taxa, and some have altered the ecological processes characteristic of the region. Exotic plant taxa can be spread by a variety of users and activities. Measures can be taken to minimize this and can result in a significant reduction in the introduction and spread of exotic species throughout the Park.

Equestrians and bike riders can increase the threat and spread of exotic plants within the Park. Seed is spread when it is carried on bike tires, in horses' hair, and/or when animals eliminate it after ingesting it in their food. Measures can be taken to help prevent this. Furthermore, removing as much as possible of horses' solid waste along trails can significantly reduce the introduction and spread of exotic species.

Heavy equipment, such as fire fighting vehicles, construction equipment and vehicles, and CSP equipment can also cause the spread of exotic species. In addition, exotic species used in landscaping on private property adjacent to the Park are known to spread onto Park property.

Goal: Reduce the presence and further invasion of exotic species in the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Develop an exotic plant species management plan and will be vigilant about identifying, monitoring, and controlling exotic plant infestations that pose a threat to native habitat. Monitoring and control efforts may require cooperative work with neighboring landowners, including various

local, state, and federal government agencies.

- a. This management plan will address the ability of bikes, horses and other pack animals, and fire, construction, and Park vehicles to carry and spread exotic plant seed throughout the Park.

The Park shall adopt a policy congruent with Federal agencies, such as NPS, to evaluate regulations to reduce exotic introduction.

- b. Develop interpretation for Park visitors covering how exotics, like mustard and thistle, have altered the Santa Monica Mountains landscape, ecology, and fire regime.
2. Support projects that quantify and map the distribution and abundance of exotic species within the Park and the extent to which they negatively affect the Park's native biota. Identify and implement effective methods of control and eradication, using the most effective techniques while balancing the need to reduce negative effects on the native biota and ecosystems.



Wildlife

Numerous wildlife species, including amphibians, reptiles, birds, and

mammals, make their homes in association with particular plant communities, geological, or hydrological characteristics. Within native ecosystems, the presence of people and associated food, trash, and development can sustain and enhance populations of some species at the expense of other species, thus upsetting the natural ecological balance.

Goal: Perpetuate wildlife assemblages by protecting, restoring, and interpreting the native terrestrial and aquatic animals within the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Avoid or minimize human activities that cause imbalances in natural ecological dynamics. Additionally, CSP will conduct management activities, such as habitat restoration, that foster ecological balance.
2. Use sound methods of resource management to evaluate the need for individual animal or population regulation. Necessary to the regulation process is the development of specific management plans or programs that incorporate habitat modification and visitor education as the first means of population regulation. For example, CSP can prevent the development of "nuisance behavior" by providing wildlife-proof garbage receptacles in any proposed campgrounds, and educating visitors about not feeding wildlife and the proper storage of camp food. Direct regulation will be carried out in accordance with CSP's Resource Management Directives. Population regulation

activities will be subject to environmental review and approval from the CDFG, and disturbance to non-target native species and other features will be avoided or minimized.

3. Identify situations where native species are rare or rapidly declining and develop methods to protect such species and/or their habitats as stewards of Parks resources. CSP will be proactive in biological conservation and not necessarily focus on species management when other levels of biological organization may be more appropriate units of conservation. CSP will manage for subspecies, evolutionary units, ecologically functional units, populations, metapopulations, biological landscapes, or other levels of biological organization if those appear to be the most practical units for conserving biodiversity. Proactive and protective treatment for rare and declining species will be incorporated into Park stewardship and planning in accordance with CSP's Mission and regional habitat conservation planning efforts. Habitat conservation planning efforts such as those adopted by local agencies, manage for multiple species within identified habitats to enhance overall ecological goals.
4. Ensure that the conservation of native wildlife is incorporated into all future developments, management plans, and visitor-use patterns throughout the Park, and that the protection of sensitive species and habitats receives high urgency.
5. Actively incorporate inventory and monitoring efforts into land

management actions. A major focus will be to quantify trends in species distribution and abundance, to document correlations between land management actions and biotic health, and to identify sensitive species and habitats. Management strategies will be developed to counteract declines or loss of native biota if those declines are the result of human actions and appear to indicate a compromised native species or ecological system.

Sensitive Wildlife Species

Goal: Protect all sensitive wildlife species occurring in the Park including those legally listed under federal and state law as threatened or endangered, those that are Species of Concern (CDFG), and those considered locally sensitive or endemic to the area.

Guidelines:

1. Preserve sensitive species and habitats to encourage their recovery. Comply with state and federal environmental legislation, Recovery Plans, and Critical Habitat designations enacted to protect this disappearing biota. Contribute to efforts that seek to "list" species that are in need of Threatened or Endangered designation, and work to extend Critical Habitat to appropriate regions within the Park.
2. Actively incorporate inventory and monitoring efforts into land management actions to track the health and sustainability of sensitive animal populations in the Park. Projects may require the formation of inter-agency partner-

ships to plan and implement conservation actions.

3. Protect sensitive habitats and species from visitor uses such as equestrian activity, mountain biking, hiking, and other uses not yet established in the Park. These activities will be appropriately planned such that the integrity of the habitat and the sensitive species is given highest priority.

Exotic Animal Control

Non-native animal species have been shown to exert pressure on native species through predation and out-competing them for resources. Although this is not currently a major issue at the Park, it may become more problematic as development in the area increases. For example, domesticated or feral cats, non-native cowbirds, bullfrogs, and crayfish are generally known to have a negative effect on native populations.

Goal: Work to control exotic animals that are found to upset natural ecological dynamics of native species.

Guidelines:

1. Conduct regular monitoring of exotic species to track the spread of ecologically damaging organisms. This may require cooperative work with neighboring landowners, including government agencies like NPS.

Wildfire and Fire Management

Wildfire management is essential for human safety and minimization of catastrophic fire damage to infrastructure, vegetation, wildlife, and cultural resources of the Park. Historic fire suppression, methods of wildfire

control, and the use of prescribed fire as a management tool are important park management issues. Fire suppression and a lack of fuel load reduction have created a situation where fires arising within the Park are continually extinguished by local fire suppression agencies out of fear for the safety of the neighboring communities. Today, wildfires fed by high fuel loads and under dry, hot, or windy conditions are a threat to natural resources, infrastructure, and human safety.

Until Europeans settled the area, fire ignited by lightning and Native Americans was a major force that shaped and maintained the health of plant communities. Before suppression, fire cycles promoted regeneration by opening the shrub canopy and reducing plant competition, burning off duff and litter to expose soil for seed germination, triggering seed release, reducing insect pests and disease that kill woody plants, and aiding in nutrient recycling.

In general, it was thought fire suppression had caused the development of dense vegetation, heavy loads of fuel, and in some situations the unchecked invasion of exotic weeds. Recent research has indicated that age-class mosaics have only a limited ability to prevent the spread of wind-driven fires and large fires in southern California have naturally/historically occurred. Suppression activities have not increased the occurrence of large fires in chaparral communities.

Coordination with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Los Angeles County Fire Department, and National

Park Service (NPS) are important elements in the Park's fire management strategy. CSP will continue cooperation with these agencies during fire events and share expertise incorporating CSP's and other agencies' fire data into CSP's Geographical Information System (GIS) database. CSP will also coordinate with NPS, CAL FIRE, Los Angeles County Fire Department, MCRA, and other local fire agencies when the Park's Wildfire Management Plan is updated. Additionally, CSP will work cooperatively with other agencies and strive to assist with fire management goals that provide a level of protection for both park lands and neighboring development through the placement of adequate buffers located outside of the Park boundaries, particularly for new development projects.

Prescribed burning is the planned application of fire implemented under safe weather conditions to restore a healthy shrubland ecosystem and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. At present, prescribed fires are used as a management tool to eliminate exotic weeds from native habitats, promote the growth of native plant species, and enhance wildlife habitat. By reintroducing fire cycles to the ecosystem, healthy landscape-level ecological dynamics can be restored.

Goal: All fire management activities within the Park shall be performed in accordance with CSP's Department Operations Manuel §313.2, the Natural Resources Handbook, any current interagency agreements, and/or other applicable state laws and regulations.

Guidelines:

1. Develop/update a fire management plan that incorporates all aspects of park management and work with other appropriate state, federal, and local agencies to implement wildfire management in the Park.
2. Work with SMMNRA, CAL FIRE, Los Angeles County Fire Department, MRCA, and other appropriate agencies and groups to ensure that the sensitive natural and cultural resources within the Park are incorporated into regional wildfire management plans and actions.
3. Take educational and preventative measures with the public to minimize the risk of wildfires originating within the Park. These measures shall include school programs, internet sites, fuel reduction on private property, and other such actions. In addition, fire's role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem shall be interpreted for park visitors.
4. Pursue fire management techniques that promote sound ecological principles or "buffer zones" between the Park and the neighboring communities. In cases where the adjacent land is currently developed or is planned for improvement, the footprint of these "buffer zones" should be implemented off of park property.
5. Follow prepared guidelines for the protection of buildings and structures near wildland vegetation (*Guidelines for the Protection of Structures from Wildland Fire* 2009). These guidelines are intended to minimize the

probability that structures near flammable vegetation will ignite and burn during a wildland fire.

Goal: Promote use of prescribed fire while protecting people and infrastructure development from catastrophic wildfire.

Guidelines:

1. Form cooperative partnerships with state and federal agencies, and research institutions/organizations to develop scientifically sound objectives and methodology for prescribed burning.
2. Identify areas within the Park to achieve maximum benefit from hazardous fuels reduction projects. Ideal locations would be along roadways (particularly where the vegetation is primarily flashy fuels, such as annual grasses or weeds), various locations throughout the Park with high density of exotic species, and areas of high visitor use (Lower Topanga Zone).
Acceptable resources to identify potential areas include vegetation maps, fire history maps, cultural resource maps/records, and other tools.
3. Avoid or minimize damage to sensitive natural and cultural resources before, during, and following prescribed burns and other fuel reduction projects.
4. Communicate prescribed fire methodology and intention to conduct burns to the public. In addition, interpret for the Park's visitors, fire's role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem via prescribed burns.

Goal: Manage for fire cycles and fire management actions that promote healthy ecological systems supportive of native biota.

Guidelines:

1. Pursue a greater understanding of the relationship between wildfire, prescribed fire, fire suppression, fire control, and the ecological systems of the region.
2. Recognize the role of fire in maintaining ecological balance, processes, and biodiversity in all fire management policies.

Pertinent issues to be discussed include methods of evacuation and infrastructure protection, methods of prescribed fire, fire suppression and fire containment, and post-fire clean up and restoration procedures.

3. In the event of a wildfire, implement appropriate suppression methods suitable to the different vegetative communities and terrain. Firefighting crews, equipment, and chemicals can inadvertently damage natural and cultural resources during and following firefighting activities. Procedures should be adjusted to the extent feasible to minimize damage to sensitive natural and cultural resources while implementing wildfire management;

Techniques can include minimizing the construction of fire line using mechanical equipment, using helicopter long lines instead of constructing heliports, use of cold trail techniques, limiting use of fire retardant, and use of natural

barriers instead of line construction.

4. Modify fire suppression tactics such as allowing the park to burn in areas with no facilities, and defending from roadways rather than aggressive, heavy equipment suppression techniques in previously undisturbed areas.
5. Ensure that CSP Environmental Scientists and cultural resource specialists provide input to the District/Sector Superintendent and work with interagency teams and Incident Command during wildfire events concerning sensitive resources to assure use of appropriate methodologies during firefighting events.
6. Initiate post-fire restoration of the Park's natural and cultural resources in order to minimize further damage to watersheds and ecosystems. For example, returning landform (berms, trails, roads, etc.) to original shape, removal of debris pushed into watercourses, erosion control, seeding and planting with native species, and post-fire field reviews to inventory damage and inspect for any resources uncovered by fire.
7. Rehabilitate all areas within the Park damaged by the various fire suppression agencies prior to demobilization of their crews. This includes returning landform (berms, trails, roads, etc.) to original shape and removal of debris pushed into watercourses. CSP shall provide input and work with interagency teams to accomplish this task.

Biocorridors

Biocorridors or linkages are interconnected tracts of land characterized by significant natural resource value through which native species can disperse. Corridors provide pathways for gene flow, seed dispersal, daily movement between habitats (home range movements), migration (seasonal or altitudinal), and dispersal habitat for juveniles. Corridors can function at various temporal and spatial scales. Temporally, it allows for both daily and seasonal movements as well as movements over many generations. Spatially, corridors can function on regional, landscape/ecosystem (landscape size can vary) or at smaller scale such as home range.

Though natural landscapes have an inherent degree of connectivity, recent (past 50 years) habitat alteration has greatly reduced this connectivity. Establishing connections between isolated or fragmented habitat patches is essential for sustaining natural ecological processes, population viability, and biological diversity. The Park functions as part of a regional biocorridor complex. The Science and Collaboration for Connected Wildlands (formerly South Coast Wildlands), working with CSP and other federal, state, and local agencies has identified no major dispersal corridors for numerous wildlife and plant species within the Park.

Facilitating the movement of plants and animals within the Park and throughout the region outside of the Park is imperative to preserving natural ecosystem dynamics and regional bio-diversity. CSP will continue to support and work towards the preservation, protection, enhance-

ment, and identification of regional landscape linkages that connect the Park to other wildland areas. CSP will advocate the protection of key parcels within identified landscape linkages through acquisition or other conservation mechanisms, and incorporate departmental defensive planning policies for projects that decrease the viability of such landscape linkages. It is a standard practice of CSP to acquire property from willing sellers.

Guidelines:

1. Maintain high standards for ecosystem health and bio-diversity by protecting plant and animal habitat and dispersal corridors within the Park.
2. Continue to coordinate with local communities, county, state, and federal agencies, research institutions, and relevant organizations to develop an ecologically sound regional biocorridor system. In addition, CSP will discourage urban, suburban, and infrastructure planning that does not consider, through avoidance or mitigation, the degradation and fragmentation of habitat.
3. Actively work with or coordinate with other agencies and property owners to acquire or secure land acquisitions to ensure key biocorridors are preserved or enhanced.
4. Promote natural resource preservation by recognizing the importance of sustainable species populations and their genetic diversity. Inventory and monitoring of the Park's natural resources and human impacts will be done at regular intervals to assess and document

the health of species that rely on large areas to live, hunt, and disperse. Furthermore, CSP will participate with government agencies and research institutions in regional resource monitoring.

5. Interpret for park visitors the ecological significance of biocorridors, with emphasis on the Park and the surrounding region.

Buffers

Buffers, such as dedicated municipal open space, are relatively low-use areas between adjacent development and state park boundaries. Buffers separate conflicting land uses, like residential and park lands, and protect natural habitats from destructive impacts.

Some types of land use outside of park boundaries cause significant negative impacts to park land. Impacts may include exotic species invasion; the spread of wildfire; air, soil, and water pollution; noise pollution; predation and competition for resources by domestic pets; and the loss of habitat for plants and animals that would otherwise spread outside the boundaries of the Park.

Goal: As regional development pressures increase, establish, maintain, and protect buffers adjacent to the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Plan with neighboring land and business owners, communities, and city, county, state, and federal agencies to develop and maintain a buffer system along the outer edge of park boundaries. This buffer system should discourage dense urban development and include the

potential use of deed restrictions dealing with fire along the edges of park property.

2. Work with these constituents to minimize threats of wildfire in the community and maximize the value of local pollution control and education programs.
3. Form partnerships with neighbors, public agencies, and private businesses to plant native or non-invasive horticultural plant species in the vicinity of the Park.

Paleontology

Paleontological resources exist within the Park. “Fossil Ridge” is a well-known paleontological location in the Park. Other important fossil locations lie just outside the Park boundaries. Invertebrate, vertebrate, and plant specimens have all been documented within and adjacent to the Park.

Goal: Identify, document, and evaluate the paleontological resources in the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Develop a program for paleontological survey, site recordation and evaluation, GPS mapping, and preparation of records and reports for fossil specimens in the Park.
2. Support cooperative research ventures with local educational institutions, museums, and/or other governmental agencies to complement documentation, evaluation, and analysis needs.

Goal: Protect, stabilize, and preserve the paleontological resources within Topanga State Park.

Guidelines:

1. Carefully plan all undertakings, including routine maintenance and new facility development, within areas known to contain or with the potential to contain fossil specimens in order to avoid or minimize significant impacts to paleontological resources within the Park.
2. Assess the effects of visitor use, unauthorized collecting, and natural erosion on paleontological resources. Mitigation measures should be implemented where appreciable damage to these resources is identified.
3. Identify lands outside of the Park containing significant paleontological resources for potential acquisition and/or joint protection efforts.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archaeological Sites (Prehistoric and Historic)

Topanga State Park includes 60 recorded archaeological properties. Thirteen of these properties fall within the area proposed as a Cultural Preserve (see under Area Specific Goals and Guidelines: Trippet Ranch Area below) including CA-LAN-1, the first archaeological site recorded under the State Trinomial system within Los Angeles County. It and other sites within the Park are potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register and/or the California Register of Historical Resources, or hold highly sensitive resources, such as burials, cremations, and rock formations.



Rockshelter with stacked rock wall

Several historical archaeological sites are also located within the Park and reflect and document the various historical land uses and life ways within the Topanga and Santa Monica Mountains area (also see Historic Resources below).

Goal: Identify, document, and evaluate archaeological and

cultural resources within Topanga State Park.

Guidelines:

1. Develop an ongoing program for archaeological survey, site recordation and evaluation, GPS mapping, and preparation of records and reports for the cultural resources within the Park.
2. Nominate those archaeological and cultural resources that may be eligible for inclusion in the existing National Register and/or the California Register of Historical Resources designation boundaries (either as individual sites, districts, or as cultural landscape resources).
3. Locate descendants of families who lived or worked within the Park. Include homesteaders, quarry workers, farmers, ranchers, etc. Conduct oral history interviews with those who are still living. The information gained from the interviews will complement and expand upon existing historical data on early park use and could help in locating, identifying, and evaluating additional archaeological resources.
4. Promote cooperative research ventures with local educational institutions and other governmental agencies to complement site documentation, evaluation, and analysis needs.

Goal: Protect, stabilize, and preserve the archaeological resources within Topanga State Park.

Guidelines:

1. Identify procedures for careful planning of all undertakings, including routine maintenance and

- new facility development, to avoid or minimize significant impacts to cultural resources within the Park. Planning should include archaeological and historical research and consultation with Native Americans and/or other cultural groups as appropriate.
2. Develop measures to protect cultural resources during wildfire incidents, flood events, earthquakes, or other natural disasters and procedures for assessing damages after a natural disaster event. Archaeological sites most vulnerable to such damage, such as those located along drainages and gullies, those with dense surface artifact distributions, those with combustible materials, etc., will be identified for implementation of such protection measures.
 3. Provide cultural resource training to park rangers and make locations of previously recorded cultural sites known to them so that they can monitor site conditions and watch for deterioration and/or vandalism. Make sure they are aware of current cultural resource laws.
 4. Assess the effects of visitor use (camping, hiking, dirt bike riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, vehicle use, etc., as well as unauthorized collecting, off-trail use, and vandalism) and natural erosion on archaeological sites. Mitigation measures should be implemented where appreciable damage to sites is identified. Such measures can include site-specific closures, moving roads and trails or damaging activities away from archaeological sites, revegetation, sign placement, fencing, site burial, security monitoring, education, and other applicable methods.
 5. Establish a program for periodic examination, assessment, and evaluation of cultural resources within the Park. Examinations should be conducted by a qualified state archaeologist and should include documentation of sites and features through photographs, measurements, and GPS recordation. Condition monitoring/assessment records and updated site forms should be regularly prepared and submitted to document observed changes.
 6. Establish a site stewardship program whereby volunteers are trained to protect archaeological sites through periodic visitation and recognition and recordation of vandalism and other threats. This program can be based on the model established by the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program or another successful stewardship program.
 7. Identify lands containing significant historical resources outside of the Park for potential acquisition and/or joint protection efforts. Archaeological sites and historic properties should be specifically chosen to complement those already within the Park.
 8. Develop a program for cultural resource protection in conjunction with agencies or companies with right-of-way access within or adjacent to the Park. Program should include communication during planning phases of projects or work that may have the potential to affect cultural resources within Topanga State Park.

Goal: Educate the public and interpret the archaeological resources within Topanga State Park.

Guidelines:

1. Conduct site studies to determine if onsite interpretation programs (signs, tours, education programs, etc.) should be developed for those archaeological features that are currently in or adjacent to existing trails, proposed trails, or proposed facilities such as day-use parking, trail heads, or campgrounds.
2. Develop a program of education in cultural resource sensitivity for local schools, community groups, park neighbors, and other regular visitors. Program should be developed in conjunction with Native American groups where possible.
3. Incorporate information about the importance of archaeological and cultural resource protection into interpretation and education programs, website, brochures, and signage for the Park.
4. Create a cultural and archaeological interpretive center or centers within the Park. The Park needs a location to tell the story of the early cultures of this region and the important archaeological studies that occurred here. Such a facility could be placed within an existing building at Trippet Ranch (see under Trippet Ranch below), within recreated traditional dwellings, or in an open-space area.
5. Pursue ongoing consultation with Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva peoples. This is a vital part of presenting their ancestors' story. Per departmental policy (DN-2007-

05), ensure that regular consultation is held to obtain input on the preservation and interpretation of resources associated with their heritage.

[Also see Area Specific Goals and Guidelines.]

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

The Park is within a transition zone between the traditional territories of the Gabrielino/Tongva and Ventureño Chumash. These groups have areas of cultural and/or religious significance within the Park. Ethnographic accounts indicate that there were places the Gabrielino/Tongva and Ventureño Chumash considered to have special cultural or religious significance including mountains, springs, rock outcroppings, and other natural formations.

Many Native Americans consider the lands within Topanga State Park to be their ancestral homelands. The state parks system recognizes their long relationship with these lands and has established certain programs and procedures to enable them to continue this special relationship.

Goal: Identify and interpret the ethnographic uses of and resources in Topanga State Park and protect these culturally significant places.

Guidelines:

1. Work with local Native American groups, historical accounts, and ethnographic records to identify traditional cultural places including sites of special cultural and/or religious significance that are located within the Park.

- Record the traditional cultural places that are within the Park through consultation with the Gabrielino/Tongva and Chumash.
- Develop interpretation and education programs in conjunction with the Gabrielino/Tongva and Ventureño Chumash to highlight their cultures, their continuing presence, and their long-time use of and association with Topanga State Park and its resources.



Traditional Blessing on "Volunteer Day" 2008

Goal: Educate the Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva about the established procedures for ceremonial and/or traditional practices within the Park.

Guidelines:

- Inform Native American groups that certain Native American practices such as the gathering of traditional materials require a permit when performed within CSP lands. Native American Gathering Permits allow for the managed gathering of materials, prevent inadvertent significant impacts to natural resources, and promote

adherence to departmental mandates or policies regarding natural resources or other park procedures, facilities, or resources, while enabling CSP rangers and other staff to be aware of and supportive of such practices.

HISTORIC RESOURCES (STRUCTURES, SITES, AND LANDSCAPES)

Topanga State Park contains a number of significant historical resources that represent the broad sweep of the Park's historical land use. While some historical resources constitute built structures that CSP has adapted and maintained for park use, others have been vacant for years and would require substantial stabilization efforts prior to rehabilitation and active use.

Goal: Identify, document, evaluate, and manage historically significant resources and the history within Topanga State Park.

Guidelines:

- Develop an inventory, mapping, and informational database for the Park's known and potentially significant historic resources.
- Conduct field surveys in the Wildlands and other management zones for evidence of hitherto unknown historic properties (sites, buildings/structures/landscapes). Evaluate their historic background based on substantive research, including primary and secondary documentary evidence, and/or oral histories. Evaluate and determine their eligibility as historical resources for listing on the California Register of Historic

Resources and/or the National Register of Historic Places.

3. Locate individuals or their descendants who worked or lived within what is now Topanga State Park and conduct oral history interviews. The information gleaned from these individuals may be used to complement and expand upon existing historical data for planning and interpretive purposes.
4. Collect, store, preserve, and make available any original photographs, plans, documents, objects, transcribed oral histories, etc., associated with the Park's historic resources to qualified researchers and park interpreters.

Goal: Ensure the highest level of professional measures to protect the Park's historical resources.

Guidelines:

1. Base historical resource managerial decisions on a clear understanding of how they meet CSP's mission to protect its most valuable cultural resources; while still creating opportunities to inspire, educate, and provide high-quality outdoor recreational experiences for park visitors.
2. Develop managerial procedures for historical resources based on internal and external professional standards and guidelines such as CSP's Cultural Resource Management Directives; California Public Resources Code sections 5020 et seq.; Executive Order W-26-92; and the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties, to

protect the Park's historical resources.

3. Employ applicable professional standards to determine appropriate use (stabilize, restore, reconstruct, or modify for adaptive reuse) for all historical properties in order to provide regular maintenance and long-term preservation of these resources in support of the park and department's mission.
4. Conduct additional studies (i.e., archival research, detailed site and structure recordation and mapping, subsurface testing, etc.) for any proposed project or undertaking that has the potential to disturb any known or potentially eligible historical resource.
5. Consider the acquisition of additional land from willing sources that contain historical resources linked to those already identified within the Park; or areas that do not contain such resources, but may provide a buffer for their protection.

Goal: Promote a better understanding and a greater appreciation for Topanga State Park's historical resources and cultural history.

Guidelines:

1. Undertake site-specific studies to determine which onsite interpretive programs (i.e., signs, brochures, educational programs, public tours, etc.) should be developed for educating the public about the cultural history and associated significant historical resources in public-use areas.
2. Initiate staff or docent-led indoor and/or outdoor activities

introducing visitors to the Park's historic areas, resources, and cultural history.

3. Propose renaming certain geographical locations and trails with names that better represent and interpret the Park's historical development. For example, the replacement of "Parker Mesa Overlook" with "Vista Marquez."
4. Evaluate the potential for interpreting the Park's historic resources based on the following National Register-inspired "contextual themes:"

a. *Transforming the Environment*

This theme examines the variable and changing relationships and interactions between people and their environment. For example, how did historic rock quarrying, ranching, road-building, and recreation-related activities affect the Park's existing natural and cultural landscape?

b. *Developing the American Economy*

This theme reflects the way people have materially sustained themselves by various processes involving extraction, agriculture, automobile-tourism, and recreation-related activities. An example would be interpreting the role the Park's historic stone quarries played in developing local and regional economies. Another example would be interpreting the role highway improvements and subsequent automobile traffic had in the development of Lower Topanga Canyon as a

regional tourist and recreational destination.

c. *Expressing Cultural Values*

This theme involves people's beliefs about themselves and the world they inhabit expressed through architecture, traditional and social customs, and relationships. An example would be exploring how the siting, architecture, and use of the Park's "Gentlemen's Ranches" fulfilled their owners' recreational and social needs. Another example would be the conflict between natural resource exploitation and preservation.

d. *Defending the Nation*

This theme represents the impact that actual or threat of armed conflict has had on the environment and people living in or around same. For example, what role did a Nike anti-aircraft missile battery radar tracking station site at San Vicente Mountain Peak have on Topanga State Park's historical development? Should CSP initiate a cooperative agreement with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to interpret the historical role the Mulholland Corridor and the San Vicente Mountain Peak missile radar tracking station played as part of a complex Cold War weapons defense system?

[Also see Area Specific Goals and Guidelines.]

Cultural Landscape Resources

Cultural landscape resources are historical properties made up of geographic areas containing a variety of historic, natural, and/or ethnographic features.

In contrast to more traditional historical resource properties such as sites or buildings, cultural landscape properties often encompass an area or district of features and elements organized in an associated spatial pattern.

Typical character-defining feature types of such cultural or historical landscape resource properties may include topography, vegetation, circulation, water features, structures, buildings, site furnishings, and/or objects. These features and elements that make up the individual components of these properties may therefore be natural or man-made.

As such, cultural landscapes require multi-disciplinary management to preserve their integrity as eligible historical resources while recognizing the occasional conflicts that may arise with other natural or recreational resources.

An example of such a situation being non-native ornamental plantings as contributing components of a historical landscape, that would be in conflict with a natural resource management goal.

Therefore the following goals and guidelines are prepared to assure that input is gathered to provide the best approach for protecting the Park's historical and cultural landscape resources in a way that is prudent and feasible with natural or other resource goals.

Goal: Undertake comprehensive surveys, recordation, evaluation, and management studies, and plans for eligible cultural landscape resources within the park.

1. Identify, record, and preserve cultural landscape resources following professional best practices such as outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. Cultural Landscape Reports and management plans should be completed for any identified cultural landscape property.
2. Utilize project teams that include the full spectrum of Park operations, natural, and cultural specialists in order to obtain input and work cooperatively to manage the Park's cultural landscape resources in a way prudent and feasible to all park resource concerns.
3. Provide interpretation of the Park's cultural landscapes that addresses the interrelationship between the natural environment and those people and cultures that created these properties.
4. Avoid or minimize negative impacts to cultural resources during environmental regulatory procedures used to evaluate natural resource management techniques (e.g., prescribed fire) prior to program implementation.

COLLECTIONS

A Scope of Collections Statement has been prepared in tandem with this General Plan and is presented in Appendix H (under separate cover). It describes the existing collections, their history, and uses, as well as development and management goals for these and future collections.

Goal: Natural and cultural material and object collections at Topanga State Park will have a specific connection to the natural and cultural history of the Park, or provide support for interpretive themes and programs. Archaeological and paleontological materials, natural history specimens of park flora and fauna, and historic objects such as furnishings, equipment, or personal items associated with the Park are all potential collection items. Historic object collections will include those of the Gentlemen Ranchers Period (1917-1966) such as from the Trippet family's residence at their *Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales*.

Guidelines

1. Periodically update the Scope of Collections Statement (Appendix H – under separate cover) to provide clear guidelines on which objects to seek, acquire, decline, and deaccess.
2. Acquire ranching era artifacts that have a local historical association to the Trippet Ranch, or other ranching activities within or near Topanga State Park.

3. Collect and preserve, when necessary, natural history specimens to document the natural history of the Park.
4. Preserve, as required, architectural elements and other materials original to the Park or used in its historic structures to document the history of the Park and its historic properties.
5. Preserve archaeological materials found within the Park, and curate these collections at the Archeology, History and Museums Division headquarters facility and/or at a district curatorial facility if appropriate space is not available at the Park.
6. Establish safe and secure spaces for curation and display of park collections. Policies and procedures for management of collections as outlined in CSP's Department Operations Manual (DOM) Chapter 2000, Museum Collections Management, will be followed.
7. Consider transfer to a more suitable park unit or possible deaccession of previously acquired collection items that do not meet these guidelines or the Scope of Collections guidelines.



Gin bottles dating to the 1930s from the Lower Topanga Canyon Area



INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Park Interpretive Significance

Topanga State Park is a sea of wilderness within the surrounding urban development of Los Angeles. The land is at the crossroads of the Tongva and Chumash cultural territories and contains sites sacred to both groups. Geological, paleontological, and archaeological features preserve the stories of this ancient land. Mountains, canyons, and waterways sustain a variety of flora and fauna including the endangered southern steelhead trout and the tidewater goby. Fire is a natural part of the area's chaparral ecology. An extensive network of cross-connecting trails allows visitors to explore the Park, including scenic vistas from the top of the Santa Monica Mountains along the Mulholland Corridor, and from the lower reaches of Topanga Canyon along the world-famous Pacific Coast Highway.

The Park's cultural resources include CA-LAN-1 (the Tank Site), the first

site recorded in the State Trinomial System within Los Angeles County. It was at this site that several thousand "millingstones" were identified and it was here that the Topanga Archaeological Complex was first defined. Within the historic area of the Park, the era of Gentlemen Ranchers is exemplified through the skeet lodge and related structures that comprise the *Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales* (the Trippet family's "Ranch of the Heavenly Hills"). In the Lower Topanga Canyon area of the Park, the development of tourist-oriented recreational facilities and activities blossomed during the early 20th century.

Park Interpretation Mission

The mission of Topanga State Park interpretation is to create a sustaining connection between a diverse audience and the irreplaceable natural, cultural, and recreational resources at the Park, resulting in continued resource appreciation and stewardship.

Park Interpretation Vision

High-quality interpretation, both at Topanga State Park and via remote interpretive media, gives participants an understanding and appreciation of the significance of the Park wildlands, instilling in the visitors the sense of place and the need to preserve and protect this irreplaceable resource. Interpretation of the *Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales* (Trippet Ranch) complex, coastal Native American village site, historic CA-LAN-1 archaeological site, and Josepho Barn provides visitors with opportunities to learn the importance of preserving and protecting the cultural resources and landscapes of the Park. Interpretation audiences are inspired to assist

California State Parks in meeting resource management goals.

Park Interpretive Periods

Primary Interpretive Period/s

Native American Period (Millingstone Horizon to European Contact)

Lower Topanga Canyon Village site (CA-LAN-133)

The Tank Site (CA-LAN-1)

Gabrielino/Tongva and Ventureño Chumash sites and cultural territories

Gentlemen Ranchers Period (1917-1966)

Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales (Trippet Ranch)

Will Rogers “Hideaway Cabin” Site

Anatol Josepho Ranch Site/ Josepho Barn

Secondary Interpretive Period/s

Spanish and Mexican Rancho Period (1802-1848)

Rancho Boca de Santa Monica (Francisco Marquez and Ysidro Reyes)

Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica (Francisco Sepúlveda)

Recreational Development Period (1900-1930)

Camp Elkhorn Site (1900-1930)

Topanga Beach Ranch Rodeo Grounds Site (1924-1930)

Topanga Ranch Motel (1933-1960)

Wylie’s Bait Shop (1947-present)

Automobile Tourism (Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Pacific

Coast Highway)

Archaeological Investigation Period (1940s and 1950s)

Recordation and excavation of CA-LAN-1

Park Interpretive Themes

Unifying theme

Landscapes

The landscapes of Topanga State Park represent the endurance of ancient places that are needed to sustain healthy environments for wildlife and for people.

Primary interpretive themes

Natural resources

The flora and fauna of the Park’s wildlands are remarkably diverse and intact, providing the opportunity to see indigenous species in their natural habitat much as they might have been observed before the founding of Los Angeles.

Climate Change

A well-informed public that protects water resources and understands fire ecology will help the Park’s ecosystems to thrive.

Chaparral Ecology

A vital part of California’s natural heritage, chaparral must be seen as a valued ecosystem if it is to survive.

Prehistoric cultural resources

The interaction between people and the natural environment stretches back thousands of years when the Tongva, the Chumash and their ancestors first called this area home.

Historic resources (Gentlemen Ranchers)

The *Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales* (Trippet Ranch) represents a distinct period of time when Gentlemen's Ranches were a way for the social elite of Los Angeles to escape from the city and relax in rustic surroundings.

Secondary themes

Geology

Dramatic ridgelines, cliffs, and canyons form the geology of Topanga State Park, a rugged yet fragile landscape.

Land use

The establishment of ranchos and gentlemen ranches affected the area's natural landscape in ways that we are still learning about.

Recreation

Tourists and residents alike have long been drawn to recreational pursuits between Topanga's rugged mountains and its tranquil seashore.

Archaeology

Topanga State Park is home to one of the most important archaeological sites in the region – a testament to the ancient occupation of the area and a notable setting in the history of modern archaeology.

Environmentalism

Individual voices and political forces, acting in unison for a common goal, can halt and even reverse the impact of urban encroachment on the natural environment.

Interpretive Collections

The Park's hand-on objects are limited to those belonging to individual docents for use during school programs. Museum objects focus on the area's natural history and are expected to be displayed once again in the nature center upon completion of the Public Use Improvement project (scheduled completion date is 2012). Currently, its archaeological collections are stored in California State Parks facilities located in San Diego and Sacramento. In addition, the University of California, Los Angeles/Fowler Museum and the University of California, Berkeley own archaeological material associated with the significant CA-LAN-1 archaeological site (the Tank Site).

Interpretation Goals and Guidelines

Goal: Visitors will participate in a variety of interpretive programs throughout the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Provide self-guiding interpretive facilities and media that maximize offerings to park visitors and minimize impact on limited staff resources.
2. Boost docent recruitment to assist in meeting current and potential interpretive offerings.
3. Develop overnight opportunities such as group camping and Environmental Living Programs that incorporate interpretive and educational programming.
4. Explore the possibility of adding interpretive concessions to provide self-sustaining programs such as interpretive equestrian trail rides.

Goal: Interpretation will reach diverse audiences, including those that have been traditionally underserved.

Guidelines:

1. Establish an outreach program to encourage participation in the Park's interpretive and educational offerings.
2. Provide interpretive facilities, media, and programs along the Mulholland Corridor to provide easier access to the Park and its resources by those coming from or living in the San Fernando Valley.
3. Explore the possibility of establishing a "Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students" (PORTS) program at the Park to meet the educational needs of Los Angeles Unified School District.

Goal: Interpretive services will be accessible to all visitors

Guidelines:

1. Offer printed materials such as the self-guiding nature trail in alternate formats such as large print and multiple languages.
2. Work with community groups to seek input on improving program delivery to meet universal accessibility needs.
3. Improve existing facilities such as the self-guiding nature trail at Trippet Ranch to meet the needs of people with mobility impairments.
4. Add accessibility-related information to docent and staff training.

Goal: Interpretation will illuminate the Park's significant resources.

Guidelines:

1. Provide interpretive and educational programs of CA-LAN-1 (the Tank Site) to enhance visitor understanding of this site's significance.
2. Develop a program to link the trails between Trippet Ranch, Will Rogers Ranch, and the Josepho Ranch site to interpret the area's rancho and Gentlemen Ranch history.
3. Create printed and digital materials that interpret important resources for both the general public and for school groups to enhance units of study.
4. Improve interpretive and educational programs to increase public safety and protect sensitive park resources such as paleontological, archaeological, Native American, and historic sites and features.
5. Develop research opportunities that expand understanding of the Park's resources.

Goal: Interpretive collections will provide for the public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the Park's significant resources.

Guidelines:

1. Provide clean and secure facilities and displays that meet the conservation needs of museum objects placed on exhibit.
2. Maintain appropriate and current documentation for all interpretive collections.
3. Establish a secure, climate-controlled facility for the

permanent storage of the Park's archaeological collections.

4. Acquire hands-on objects to support interpretive and educational programs.

Goal: Park facilities, both existing and future, will support the delivery of interpretive services.

Guidelines:

1. Design interpretive trails to support both guided and self-guided programs, especially in the Mulholland Corridor and Lower Topanga Zones.
2. Identify optimal spaces for safely viewing natural habitats and processes, and enjoying scenic vistas.
3. Create areas that support the interpretation of local Native American culture, such as traditional and ceremonial activities in the Lower Topanga Zone.
4. Develop outdoor classrooms for hands-on activities, demonstrations, and programs.
5. Use design elements that incorporate traditional building methods and materials associated with the Tongva and Chumash cultural groups, particularly in the Lower Topanga Zone.
6. Explore the possibility of creating facilities to support day-long and overnight programs such as Environmental Studies programs and Environmental Living Programs, particularly in the Lower Topanga Zone.

Goal: Create long-term strategies to sustain park interpretation and education programming

Guidelines:

1. Complete an Interpretation Master Plan and Action Plan to address interpretation and education goals by developing specific objectives, strategies, tasks, and timelines.
2. Explore options to fund a permanent interpretive staff position at Topanga State Park to create personnel stability for interpretation and volunteer program management.
3. Evaluate visitor and management interests for interpretive programming to determine the most effective allocation of limited resources and staff.
4. Assess the possible long-range use of the Trippet Ranch outbuildings to maintain and, where appropriate, display park archives and collections to support artifact resource protection and ongoing interpretation and educational research.
5. Increase park interpretation program office and storage space.
6. Work closely with the Park's nonprofit organizations and volunteers to improve park interpretive resources, programs, and opportunities.
7. Continue existing and develop new partnerships to enrich outdoor environmental education opportunities in the area.
8. Coordinate interpretive programs and facilities with other area interpretation providers in order to enhance programs, share resources, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

AREA SPECIFIC GOALS AND GUIDELINES

Trippet Ranch Area

Trippet Ranch is currently one of the main gateways into the Park's interior. It contains a number of historically significant buildings and structures, as well as natural and man-made landscape features and improvements associated with the historic operational core: *Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales*, ("Ranch of the Heavenly Hills"). Archaeological sites, features, and artifacts are also present within this historic zone and the adjacent proposed Topanga Cultural Preserve.

Historic Zone

Goal: Establish a historic zone at Trippet Ranch, where the existing historic structures and landscape features will be protected and allow for appropriate preservation treatments including adaptive re-use.

Guidelines:

1. Encourage programmed events such as school groups or organized overnight opportunities, to control visitor use and to reduce vehicular traffic (school or shuttle buses



*Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales 1954.
Courtesy of the Trippet Family*

- should be explored for such uses).
2. Supplement the above guideline, by ensuring that modern day amenities such as parking and restroom facilities are subordinate to the historic fabric of the zone. For example, parking should be held to a minimum, and sustainable and permeable surfaces should be used to avoid distracting from the historic zone.
3. Evaluate the adaptive re-use of existing structures prior to proposing new construction of modern day facilities within the zone. Continue the current use of the skeet lodge as a nature center.
4. Encourage pedestrian flow through the zone with non-intrusive interpretive elements and whenever possible, a universally accessible trail system that incorporates such features as the historic orchard, pond, and the proposed Topanga Cultural Preserve.

Goal: Identify, document, evaluate, manage, and interpret historically significant resources within Trippet Ranch's Historic Zone, while enhancing visitor experiences.

Guidelines:

1. Evaluate the eligibility of the historic resources within the former ranch's Historic Zone for listing on either the California or National registers as a historic landscape district.
2. Relocate non-appropriate park operational use of the district's historic buildings to an area outside the Historic Zone.
3. Repair and rehabilitate the district's

historic buildings for more appropriate usage, e.g., an interpretive/research center for local natural and cultural resources, a ranger contact station, an equestrian center, staff housing, etc.

4. Restore the Historic Zone's landscape to its 1940 to 1963 period of historical significance.
5. Develop an interpretive trail system, displays, and activities within the Historic Zone to introduce visitors to what life was like on a historic mid-20th century "Gentleman's Ranch."
6. Link the Historic Zone's interpretive trail system with the trail leading to the Park's other historic Gentleman's Ranch site at the Josepho Ranch, to Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin, and to Will Rogers State Historic Park.

Goal: Establish Interpretation and Education facilities and programs at Trippet Ranch's Historic Zone relating to the adjacent proposed Topanga Cultural Preserve and archaeological and Native American resources within Topanga State Park in general.

Guidelines:

1. Add interpretive and educational signage at Trippet Ranch that focuses on archaeological and Native American resources within the cultural preserve and the Park.
2. Augment training of docent groups and other park staff and volunteers to include more information on archaeological and Native American resources within the Park.
3. Create a cultural and archaeological

interpretive center to tell the story of the early cultures of this region and the important archaeological studies that occurred here. Such a facility could be placed within an existing building in the Historic Zone once the operations and maintenance facilities are removed.

4. Pursue ongoing consultation with Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva peoples. This is a vital part of presenting their ancestors' story and is essential to developing the most complete understanding of this property.

Topanga Cultural Preserve

The proposed Topanga Cultural Preserve includes 13 recorded archaeological sites within 150 acres, including CA-LAN-1, the largest known site within the Park and one of the oldest documented in the area. This site was the first one recorded within Los Angeles County using the State Trinomial System, and, along with the adjacent CA-LAN-2, was where the "Topanga Archaeological Complex" was identified and defined and where the "Millingstone Horizon" was documented and refined by prominent and notable California archaeologists in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

These sites are considered sacred and special to the modern Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva and to their ancestors.

Goal: Establish the Topanga Cultural Preserve and protect, stabilize, and preserve the archaeological resources within the preserve.

Guidelines:

1. Formally establish the Topanga Cultural Preserve by presenting to

the State Park and Recreation Commission for their approval and classification.

2. Assess impacts of trails and other visitor activities to the sites within the preserve. The Backbone Trail runs through the preserve area. Study should be undertaken to determine if additional protective measures are needed such as boardwalks, paving, or other protective trail treatments; “walk-your-bike” measures; or other means to decrease trail erosion where the trail goes through or adjacent to sites.
3. Exclude existing vehicular roads and thoroughfares from the Cultural Preserve boundaries. Public Resource Code 5001.8 prohibits the use of motorized vehicles within cultural preserves. Existing park roads and fire roads provide vehicular access to park staff housing, proposed maintenance/operations facility, and to the interior of the Park. These existing roads will be excluded from the preserve boundaries to allow continued operational and emergency vehicle use along these routes.
4. Determine appropriateness of fencing or other protective measures for archaeological sites along trails. Use of fencing to keep visitors on trails should avoid drawing attention to the sites themselves. Signage should also be minimized or general in nature to avoid indicating the location of these sensitive sites.
5. Nominate CA-LAN-1 (and possibly other sites in the area) to the National Register of Historic Places. Site CA-LAN-1 is a highly

significant site that warrants national recognition. A nomination form was started for this site but was never completed. The form should be completed and submitted for consideration.

Goal: Educate the public and interpret the archaeological resources within the Topanga Cultural Preserve.

Guidelines:

1. Determine the appropriateness of interpretation and education measures within the preserve. Due to the sensitive nature of the sites within the preserve, it may be more appropriate to interpret the sites elsewhere in the Park, such as at a cultural interpretive center or archaeological interpretive center.
2. Conduct further studies and consult with Native American groups to determine the best method for conveying to the public the importance and significance of the sites within the preserve. Possible methods include generalized signs placed along trails within the preserve, outside of the site areas; exhibits or panels elsewhere in the Park (such as at a cultural or archaeological interpretive center, at campgrounds, at gateways, at trailheads, or along other trails in the Park) that explain the importance and significance of the sites and the preserve; educational programs for school children or other tour groups; etc.
3. Create a partnership with Native American individuals or groups to provide first-hand educational programs or information for interpretive exhibits/signage.

Rustic Canyon

The canyon's steep sides, limited access, and relative isolation have helped as well as hindered the protection and interpretation of the canyon's historic resources. For example, limited access has resulted in the degradation of two historic resources: the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site and the Josepho Ranch site. The former contains the ruins of a rustic cabin associated with noted American humorist and actor Will Rogers, while the latter contains a barn, orchard, and ornamental trees, which may be the only surviving landscape features associated with what was once a sizeable early- to mid-20th century "Gentleman's Ranch" complex along Rustic Canyon Creek.

Goal: Identify, document, evaluate, manage, and interpret the cultural resources of this area, while enhancing visitor experiences.

Guidelines:

1. Address limited accessibility due to steep terrain and adjacent land ownership by carefully examining the trail corridor for this area to ensure continued public access. However, vehicular access and parking should be held to a minimum, other than for operational, maintenance, and wildfire protection.
2. Enhance trail use by equestrians as well as hikers within this zone by limiting vehicular access and strengthening the interpretive and educational opportunities between the various historic elements, from the Josepho Barn north to Trippet Ranch, and south to the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site and

nearby Will Rogers State Historic Park.

3. Explore joint use opportunities with adjacent land owners, such as the Boy Scout campground facilities near Josepho Ranch, to provide the appropriate staffing/funding for proposed rehabilitation work and operations support at Josepho Barn and Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site.

Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin Site

Goal: Identify, document, evaluate, manage, and interpret the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site, while enhancing visitor experiences.

Guidelines:

1. Conduct additional research on the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site using primary and secondary documentary evidence including oral histories.
2. Evaluate the site's eligibility for listing on either the California or National registers.
3. Restore the cabin and its setting to their original 1935 configuration.
4. Initiate and conduct additional research and historic archaeological field investigations to locate the historic horse trail that once linked the cabin to the Will Rogers Ranch Headquarters to the south.
5. Incorporate and promote the cabin's history and importance as a destination along an interpretive equestrian trail system linking it with the Park's other Gentlemen Ranch locations (Josepho and Trippet Ranches) and with Will Rogers State Historic Park.



Josepho Barn

Anatol Josepho Ranch Headquarters Site

Goal: Identify, document, evaluate, manage, and interpret the Anatol Josepho Ranch Headquarters site, while enhancing visitor experiences.

Guidelines:

1. Conduct additional research on the site of the Anatol Josepho Ranch Headquarters.
 2. Locate, identify, map, evaluate, preserve, and interpret surviving historic landscape features and elements in-situ.
 3. Evaluate the site's eligibility for listing on either the California or National registers.
 4. Develop managerial procedures to protect and interpret the site's character-defining historic resources as one of three historic "Gentlemen's Ranch" sites in Topanga State Park. For example:
 - a. Initiate and complete a Historic Structure Report of the existing Anatol Josepho Ranch Barn.
 - b. Utilize the Historic Structure Report as a guide to stabilize and restore the barn to its 1933-1946 appearance and setting, including the nearby orchard, ornamental trees, access road, and other associate landscape features.
- c. Incorporate and promote the barn's history and importance as part of an interpretive equestrian trail system linking it respectively to the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site and the Trippet Ranch to the south and north.
 - d. Incorporate and promote the barn's history and importance as part of an interpretive trail system linking it with the nearby Boy Scouts of America's Camp Josepho to the north.
 - e. Initiate, develop, and actively pursue a jointly managed, yet historically appropriate adaptive reuse program for the barn. An example would be approaching the nearby Boy Scouts camp to incorporate the barn as part of its equestrian training program.
 - f. Limit vehicular access to the site to patrol, maintenance, and emergency services.
 - g. Rehabilitate and incorporate the Josepho Barn as a base of operations or substation for a park-wide ranger/volunteer equestrian patrol.
 - h. Create a vegetation management plan to manage fuels in the vicinity of the barn.

Lower Topanga and Lagoon Zones

This easily accessible gateway to the Park provides a unique opportunity to reach a large number of visitors. Situated at the nexus of two important highways, it is associated with the some of the earliest automobile tourism-related recreational activities in southern California. It also contains the lower reaches of Topanga Creek and the remnant lagoon/estuary at its mouth. It is home to the endangered southern steelhead trout and tidewater goby. Significant archaeological resources as well as the remains of a Native American village are found within this zone. Refer to the Lagoon and Lower Topanga zones on pages 109 and 110 for additional data.

Goal: Establish these two zones as a “natural” gateway into the Park with minimal built structures.

Guidelines:

1. Reduce the “visual clutter” by strategically re-locating or removing existing structures, and enhance the proposed scenic corridor along Topanga Canyon Boulevard, of which the Lower Topanga and Lagoon Zones serve as the corridor’s portal.
2. Optimize creek and lagoon restoration in conjunction with the interpretation and preservation of the Native American site located below the motel structures and adjacent to Topanga Creek.
3. Work cooperatively with appropriate agencies and groups, including Caltrans, Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors, and RCDSMM to achieve a balanced lagoon restoration with the existing Native American resources. Also,

these discussions will influence the appropriate bridge span along Pacific Coast Highway, if and when funding opportunities arise to improve or re-align the existing 80-foot long bridge.

Goal: Provide overnight lodging and concessions opportunities on the west side of the lagoon with concession opportunities on the east side of the creek.

Guidelines:

1. Explore the adaptive re-use of the existing historic motel structures as overnight lodging and relocate to the west side of the lagoon. If unfeasible, explore other non-traditional overnight use such as cabins or yurts.
2. Balance the size and number of overnight facilities with the lagoon and creek restoration efforts and the projected output of waste (refer to Operations section on page 13 for additional waste water treatment).
3. Implement an economic feasibility study to determine the appropriate number of overnight uses that can work within the development guidelines denoted within the Development section on page 99.
4. Refer to the aesthetics design goal/guidelines for additional siting and contextual design guidelines.

Goal: Restore, maintain and protect the lagoon/estuarine ecosystem and allow for scientific research as needed to reach these goals.

Guidelines:

1. Develop a scientifically based lagoon restoration plan to create a

properly functioning natural estuarine system at the mouth of Topanga Creek.

- a. Restoration should take into consideration factors such as watershed size and characteristics, geology and geological processes influencing estuary development, sea level change, sediment loads, various coastal processes, and other pertinent processes.
 - b. Lagoon restoration should also take into account historical and cultural resources and Native American concerns.
2. Do not allow development or modifications within the Lagoon Zone other than infrastructure that will improve the lagoon wildlife corridor, specifically the steelhead and tidewater goby populations.
 3. Periodically collect baseline information to monitor the health and function of the lagoon/estuary system.
 4. Monitor wildlife/fisheries as necessary, to identify wildlife/fisheries population trends.

Goal: Provide visitor-use and interpretive opportunities that are reflective of the creek/lagoon restoration efforts in conjunction with the Native American story of the area.

Guidelines

1. Encourage the use of outdoor classrooms or the adaptive re-use of a few existing historic motel structures instead of traditional buildings, for interpretive and educational opportunities.

2. Establish a trail system that not only provides recreational needs but orients visitors to interpretive and educational opportunities.
3. Refer to the Parking/Public Transportation section on page 100 for the consideration of modest parking elements within the Lower Topanga Canyon area.

Goal: Educate the public and interpret the archaeological resources within Topanga State Park in general and in the Lower Topanga Canyon area in particular.

Guidelines:

1. Establish an educational and interpretive area within the Lower Topanga Zone to showcase the archaeological and Native American resources within the Park. This area may include recreated traditional structures and/or features, interactive exhibits, displays, signage, or other interpretive facilities.
2. Work with the Chumash and Gabrielino/Tongva to develop appropriate interpretive and educational material for this location.

Goal: Identify, document, evaluate, and manage historically significant resources within the Lower Topanga Canyon area, while enhancing visitor experiences.

Guidelines:

1. Conduct additional historical and archaeological research and investigation of other historic areas/sites within the Lower Topanga Canyon area including

Camp Elkhorn, Old Malibu Road, Cooper's Autocamp, Rodeo Grounds, and others.

2. Evaluate eligibility of such properties for listing on either the California or National registers as historic sites.
3. Develop contextual themes for interpreting the area's history. For example, interpret the roles that Camp Elkhorn, the Topanga Ranch Motel, the Rodeo Grounds, and Wylie's Bait Shop played in the overall development of automobile-tourism in Lower Topanga Canyon and the Lagoon area from 1900 to 1970.
4. Preserve, rehabilitate, or mothball vacant historic structures.
5. Relocate and rehabilitate structures if necessary to preserve historic structures.
6. Incorporate new construction design guidelines based on historic examples. For example, any proposed new construction built along a renovated Old Malibu Road should emulate, but not mimic historic cottages that once lined the road overlooking the mouth of Topanga Creek.

Watershed Conservation Zone

This zone contains the Topanga Creek Watershed, one of the few primarily publicly owned watersheds remaining in southern California, and home to the endangered southern steelhead trout.

A healthy watershed provides numerous benefits including reduced vulnerability to invasive species, climate change, and future land-use changes. Native land cover and soil resources within these watersheds

provide vast carbon storage capabilities, offsetting greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, they also offer habitat for fish, amphibians, birds, and insects and a key connection across the landscape for wildlife and fish.



Goal: Restore, maintain, and protect the native ecosystem of this zone, especially the riparian vegetation and wildlife corridor.

Guidelines:

1. No development or modifications shall be allowed other than infrastructure that will improve the wildlife corridor, specifically to preserve the steelhead population.
2. Only trails such as the coastal slope trail and local connector trails shall be allowed.
3. Habitat manipulation is only permitted to preserve the unique species or characteristics, which constitute the basis of the zone.
4. Invasive non-native species shall be managed with appropriate methods to prevent their establishment and spread.

5. Periodically collect baseline information to monitor the health and function of the watershed.
6. Monitor wildlife/fisheries as necessary to identify wildlife/fisheries population trends.
7. Allow for scientific research as needed to reach above-mentioned goals.



Lower Topanga Creek

VISITOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT

VISITOR USE

This General Plan will provide the desired conditions of the Park's visitors' experience via the establishment of management zones (refer to page 104). These desired conditions combined with the future monitoring of visitor-use levels at the Park, will be part of an on-going dynamic planning process whereby future park management can adjust and readjust to the changing conditions, such as demographics and visitor-use patterns (refer to the Carrying Capacity section page 104).

RECREATIONAL USES

Trails

An on-going trail analysis is being implemented by the district for the existing trails while a TMP joint regional trail study between NPS, SMMC, and CSP will be addressing the appropriate trail designation and usage, for the region. As such, the trail system denoted in the Preferred Plan



represents all the officially sanctioned trails, and proposed trail corridors (refer to the Wildlands section on page 107, for additional information on trail corridors).

Any unofficial or volunteer trails have been deleted from the plan. In order to address public safety issues the Park Superintendent will continue current trail designations or implement interim guidelines.

Goal: Continue to assess the current and proposed trail system based upon capacity objectives and visitor experiences as denoted in the Planning Matrix and make changes where necessary to meet visitors varied needs.

Guidelines:

1. Continue to monitor visitor-use levels on the existing trails to determine impacts to natural and cultural resources. If impacts are determined via measurable indicators such as erosion, soil compaction, or safety issues, then adjustments or new management measures will be implemented. Refer to CSP publications: *Trail Handbook* and *Road and Trail Use Change Survey* for additional trail information (available at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=26278).
2. Until the final trail use designations are determined via the TMP process, minimize trail-use conflicts by adhering to CSP's Road and Trail Use Change Survey process denoted above, and by following CSP's Trail Policy (available at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23419).

3. Develop interpretive programs, such as the equestrian story associated with the Gentlemen’s Ranch era and ranching in general, by applying historic, cultural and other resource considerations upon the various proposed trails.
4. Encourage adherence of trail use designation through education (e.g., signage, interpretive program and trail brochures) and through appropriate designing of trail nodes or staging areas. A node or staging area, is where a trail may originate or at the intersection of several trails, such as the existing Hub Junction. Node improvements should blend with the site context by using the Aesthetic guidelines denoted in the Development section on page 99.
5. Maintain involvement with NPS and other adjoining agencies such as Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors and SMMC, to ensure the Park remains a vital and seamless connection to the surrounding open spaces.
6. Consider all trails for universal accessibility; however, smaller loop type trails, such as potential areas at Trippet Ranch, Los Leones, and Lower Topanga zones should be examined first for their ability to provide immediate universally accessible educational and interpretive trails.

Goal: Upon completion of the TMP effort, and as part of the subsequent task to provide the appropriate designation of trail use, all access points into the Park should be evaluated for their appropriateness and continue need. With over sixty

official and “unofficial” access points, a park-wide evaluation will be important to manage visitor use within the Park.

Guidelines:

1. Enhance the branding and identification of the area as a state park by ensuring all access points have a consistent element that is contextual in design to the site.
2. Provide a common gateway element such as a message board, to post policies and regulations as well as announcements, to ensure a consistent park message with regards to park policies and regulations.
3. Control visual clutter at these access points by keeping the above design elements minor and modest in scale.

Goal: Trail maintenance and repair is crucial for the success and longevity of any system, and as such, the prioritizations of trial maintenance projects are necessary.

Guidelines:

1. Work jointly with volunteer groups, adjoining agencies, and corporate partnerships, to monitor, maintain, and enhance trail conditions in spite of limited staffing at the Park, and limited maintenance and operational budgets.
2. Secure annual trail maintenance funding, which includes the clearing of brush, addressing surface erosion, trail surface repairs, and improving trail wayfinding signage.

3. Allow temporary closure and re-routing of trails to provide for trail maintenance or to improve existing trails for public safety.

Camping

Currently camping is only allowed at Musch Camp and through this planning process, several other acceptable areas have been identified for camping or overnight opportunities, including sites along the Backbone Trail and in the Mulholland Corridor.

Goal: Develop limited camping opportunities within the core of the Park, while providing nontraditional camping (overnight use) opportunities in the Park's perimeter management zones. Nontraditional camping examples include cabins or yurts and overnight/camping school programs (see Interpretation and Education section on page 81).

Guidelines:

1. Implement additional resources studies to determine the most appropriate campground sites within the Mulholland Corridor. Small designated walk-in camping sites are recommended over group sites in this management zone.
2. Continue to work jointly with National Park Service to develop primitive environmental camp sites along the Backbone Trail, with the capacity of three to six sites at each location, and no campfires or stoves.
3. In conjunction with the study of the historic Topanga Motel structures, examine the possibility of adaptive

re-use of such facilities for overnight use including relocation to the west side of the lagoon if impacted by lagoon restoration.

Goal: Enhance existing campground facility at Musch Campground.

Guidelines:

1. Examine the potential for increasing the capacity at Musch Camp, with both equestrian and non-equestrian camp sites while providing adequate separation of the two sites.
2. In conjunction with the development of interpretive and educational opportunities of connecting Will Rogers State Historic Park with Trippet Ranch, examine the potential of using Musch Campground as a staging or stopover node for such programs. As such, explore day-use equestrian components which may be required, such as hitching posts and additional corrals.

Equestrian

There is a notable equestrian history associated with Topanga State Park due to the Gentlemen's Ranch era and ranching in general as well as the Park's connection to Will Rogers. As such, equestrian activity should continue to be a recreational and educational use within the Park.

Goal: Upon completion of the TMP, district staff should work cooperatively with local stakeholders, to examine appropriate trail designations for the trail system so that equestrians, bicyclists and hikers have balanced opportunities.

Guidelines:

1. Continually evaluate equestrian use and modify or remove uses that cause erosion and soil compaction.
2. Explore providing equestrian staging and interpretive nodes at Trippet Ranch, Josepho Barn, and Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site/State Historic Park, as part of a parkwide interpretive and educational opportunity.

Emerging Trends

Examples of emerging trends include the use of digital technology for both geocaching and for interpretation, and the increasing popularity of rock climbing.

Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity that involves finding hidden containers known as geocaches by navigating to them using a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver.



Geocache in a rockshelter

CSP established general Geocaching Guidelines which can be found on the CSP website at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25665 and presently several “unofficial” sites exist within the Park. Per CSP guidelines, Topanga State Park is not currently listed as a

park allowing geocaching, but per the guidelines such use can be allowed and approved by the District Superintendent.

Rock climbing involves scrambling on boulders and surface climbing. Climbing is currently very limited within the Park.

Goal: Both traditional and nontraditional recreational activities should be carefully examined and incorporated into the Park’s management and operational programs.

Guidelines:

1. Allow geocaching at the Park if the District Superintendent finds such activity acceptable, and only where minimal impact to the resources will be experienced. To ensure no impacts to natural and cultural resources, geocaching should not be allowed within the following zones: Topanga Cultural Preserve, Watershed Conservation Zone, and Lagoon Zone.
2. Examine all “unofficial” geocaching sites that were not properly registered with the district as per CSP’s geocaching guidelines. If adverse impacts are present, the district should contact the responsibly party requesting they delete references to the cache by deactivating those references, whether online or through other media.
3. Embrace digital technologies that do not conflict with the essence or the “sense of place” for interpretive and educational opportunities.
4. Work collaboratively with climbing groups and local stakeholders to

develop a management plan for climbing based upon avoiding sensitive natural and cultural resources.

5. Prohibit flaking, drilling, bolting, or any other climbing method that causes physical damage to boulders in the Park.
6. Prohibit climbing in the Topanga Cultural Preserve, the Watershed Conservation Zone, and the Lagoon Zone.

DEVELOPMENT

The 2010 United States Census denoted Los Angeles as the most populous city in California and the second most populous city in the United States. Since Topanga State Park is in such close proximity to this populous city, and due to its relatively restricted position between the Pacific Ocean to the south and urbanized areas encroaching on all other sides, the preciousness of the open space of the Park is obvious. Because of this, the development of any future visitor-use and park operation facilities needs to be carefully considered. Necessary infrastructure such as roads, trails, and visitor-use and operational buildings needs to be sensitively implemented to ensure the protection of the natural and cultural resources and to provide an integrated and aesthetically pleasing park setting and visitor experience.

Goal: Minimize development within the core of the Park, while concentrating visitor orientation elements to the perimeter management zones.

Guidelines:

1. Work cooperatively with adjoining agencies such as the National Park

Service, Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy (and its sister agency MRCA), City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors, and others to explore joint use facilities and programs such as visitor orientation centers at the Park perimeters or off-site, to minimize development within the core of the Park.

2. Explore the use of non-traditional visitor-use facilities, such as open air pavilions for modest visitor contacts/orientation and outdoor spaces and places versus the large and physical presence of a traditional enclosed visitor center or complex. If traditional buildings such as maintenance or restroom facilities are implemented, then the aesthetic guidelines denoted within that management zone should be followed.
3. Consider the proximity and/or location of proposed visitor-use facilities to public transportation routes and connections including bus stops and car pool areas.

Operations

Necessary infrastructure such as administrative functions, maintenance areas, sewer treatment, service roads, and employee residences are the underlying “foundation” on which health, safety, and comfort of park visitors depends. These infrastructures can enhance the visitor enjoyment by providing the basic level of services and comfort.

Guidelines:

1. Provide minor operational facilities as denoted in the Planning Matrix (Table 3), in particular in the Operations/Maintenance Zone at

Trippet Ranch. Refer to the aesthetics design goal/guidelines for additional siting and contextual design guidelines.

2. Encourage off-site employee housing to minimize development within the Park. Although employee residences have been identified within a few management zones, to help guide land uses; options for off-site housing should be examined prior to construction of new housing or renovation of existing housing.
3. Actively explore adjacent land acquisitions that are located near vehicular access/circulation for future maintenance/operations expansion, thus preserving the essence of the existing land as “Wildlands”.
4. Carefully coordinate with the appropriate fire agencies the use of current fire roads and the development of future fire roads, to alleviate both visual and environmental impacts to the Park, including preservation of existing ridgelines and canyon bottoms. In addition, maintenance of fire roads by fire agencies shall comply with CSP road and trail standards.
5. For any proposed development, examine the feasibility of connecting to adjacent municipal waste water systems or explore tertiary sewer treatment systems, to minimize leach field size and to allow for the use of the treated water for irrigation.

Parking/Public Transportation

Parking is a necessary component of visitor use; however the obvious function of parking needs to be

balanced with inspired design ideas. Bigger parking facilities and more capacity does not necessarily translate to a better visitor experience.

Guidelines:

1. Work cooperatively with SMMC/MRCA, Los Angeles Beaches and Harbors, and Caltrans to explore joint parking facilities, and to ensure adequate parking is provided for both the Park and beach use, especially along the Park boundary that abuts to Pacific Coast Highway.
2. Encourage public and group transportation through educational and signage programs at the Park’s main access points.
 - a. If a public transportation route or bus stop does not exist near a proposed visitor-use area, but a major public route exists, CSP should work cooperatively with the Southern California Association of Government, which functions as a regional transportation planning agency in the Los Angeles region along with the City/County of Los Angeles, to establish a route or stop.
 - b. With public funding limited, the preceding goal may not be feasible in the near future, and as such, the aspect of public/private partnerships of public transportation proposals should be explored, such as demonstration or pilot shuttle bus programs.
3. When feasible, provide for electrical vehicle recharging stations by working cooperatively

with the appropriate power agencies.

4. Minimize views into any proposed parking areas, and limit the parking footprint visually and environmentally by incorporating sustainable design elements such as permeable paving and vegetated earth berms for screening.
5. Encourage low environmental impacts by minimizing vehicle turning radii, avoiding wide driving lanes, and considering dispersed parking areas to work with existing topography rather than grading down ridgelines or clear cutting vegetation.
6. Encourage pedestrian flow and walking by not necessarily siting parking areas immediately adjacent to proposed park use. However, fully comply with accessibility criteria for parking stalls that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Aesthetics

Goal: Adhere to the *Guiding Principle for Quality Aesthetic Design at State Parks* which reads: “Design of park facilities should embody the same vigor and spirit that CSP applies to its mission while evoking forward thinking design theories, producing meaningful places and spaces, worthy of preservation by future generations.”

Guidelines:

1. Develop designs through a collaborative and visual process that is led by a design professional and involves the users, district

staff, resource professionals, and the other stakeholders, including the various volunteer and docent groups.

2. Make design decisions that are sensitive to the contextual nature of the site, including the region’s cultural and physical environment in which the project is located. Ensure that designs recognize and respect the past but not necessarily mimic a style or era.
3. Make certain that design dialogues extend throughout CSP and beyond to ensure that meaningful places and spaces are designed and maintained in keeping with the richness and grandeur of the CSP system.
4. Embrace the use of sustainable design, universal accessibility, and new technology and materials. However, a project’s economy and practicality regarding its construction, operations, and maintenance should remain grounded through sound but innovative design decisions.

CONCESSION AND REVENUE GENERATION

Concession operation shall conform to the policies as set forth in the Public Resource Code, sections 5080.02 through 5080.29 and by the State Park and Recreation Commission.

A concession is defined as a grant to a natural person, corporation, partnership, or association for the use of certain lands of the State Park System for the specific purpose of providing for general public service, products, facilities, and programs for

use, enjoyment, and educational experiences.

Included in this section are the remaining businesses that have been in operation prior to CSP acquiring the Lower Topanga Canyon parcel.

Goal: All existing businesses that are deemed appropriate and reflective of the desired visitor experience in a proposed management zone shall be transitioned to concession opportunities.

Guidelines:

1. Follow the prescribed concession process as governed by PRC sections 5080.02 through 5080.29, to select and establish the most suitable visitor-use concession opportunities.
2. Evaluate potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to the Park's resources, including water usage and waste output, by a proposed concession, prior to approval to proceed with implementation. This includes the expansion of any existing concession opportunities.
3. Ensure that concession operations conform to the appropriateness of the proposed management zone, whereby the service, product, facilities, or program provides an approved visitor use, enjoyment, or educational experience. Food service is considered a suitable concession for the management zones at Lower Topanga, and Trippet Ranch.

Goal: Explore a short term parking metering/vending machine system in high-use zones, to

manage visitor-use level and to generate revenue.

Guidelines:

1. Analyze such vending systems prior to implementation, to ensure that use of a system in a particular management zone will have a net increase in revenue as well as a benefit to the public; i.e., allowing more visitor to experience a park use, while alleviating the need for staff to man an entry kiosk.

ACQUISITIONS

Both private and public lands in the vicinity of Topanga State Park may influence the Park's character, natural and cultural resource bases, and operations. Monitoring the development of these lands is crucial to the protection and enhancement of the Park.

Of special note, is the protection of the visual and natural character of the proposed Scenic Corridor along Topanga Canyon Boulevard and the water quality impacts to the proposed Water Conservation Zone and Lagoon Zone. Acquisition of adjacent lands that will provide enhancement of the visual corridor or protection of biocorridors should be a high priority for CSP.

Goal: Acquire land from willing sellers that will enhance the visitor experience and/or the integrity of the natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources.

Guidelines:

1. Consider the following types of land acquisitions, should they become available:

- a. Lands that complete landscape linkages and additional habitat connectivity (biocorridors).
 - b. Lands that complete watersheds and regions supporting significant natural processes, in particular any lands that impact the proposed Watershed Conservation Zone.
 - c. Cultural properties including sites and cultural landscapes.
 - d. Lands containing significant paleontological resources.
 - e. Lands that impacts viewsheds and scenic corridors.
 - f. Lands that provide ease of public access, for future gateways or parking, and of special note are lands adjacent to the Mulholland Corridor.
 - g. Lands that provide for the expansion of operations.
2. Actively work and coordinate with other agencies and property owners to secure land acquisitions.



MANAGEMENT ZONES

The management zones depicted in Figure 6 were delineated based upon their geographical, natural, cultural, aesthetical, and recreational sensitivity and values. Within these management zones, desired resource character, proposed visitor experiences and uses, and range of possible features were determined by careful analysis of the resource inventories (Appendix G – under separate cover), public input, and consultation with adjoining agencies.

Ten management zones were created, with three of the zones being grouped together for geographical reasons and ease of recognition. The grouped Area is the Trippet Ranch Area and that area includes an Operations/Maintenance Zone, a Historic Zone, and the Topanga Cultural Preserve. The other established zones include: Los Leones Zone, Mulholland Corridor, Rustic Canyon Zone, Wildlands, Lower Topanga Zone, Watershed Conservation Zone, and Lagoon Zone.

The management zones can be viewed as a gradient, with the highest level of visitor use allowed in the Los Leones Zone, while the lowest level of use is within the Watershed Conservation Zone.

All the management zones will adhere to the appropriate goals and guidelines found within the preceding Parkwide Goals and Guidelines section and the following Planning Matrix (Table 3). Also, the management zones will adhere to the State Park classification and sub-classification including the sub-classification for a Cultural Preserve as put forth in Public Resource Code 5019.74 (see Topanga Cultural Preserve on page 108).

CARRYING CAPACITY

CSP is required to assess carrying capacity issues in drafting General Plans in order to comply with section 5019.5 of Public Resource Code. Carrying capacity can be defined as a prescribe number and type of visitors that an area will accommodate given the desired natural/cultural resource character, visitor experiences, and management programs.

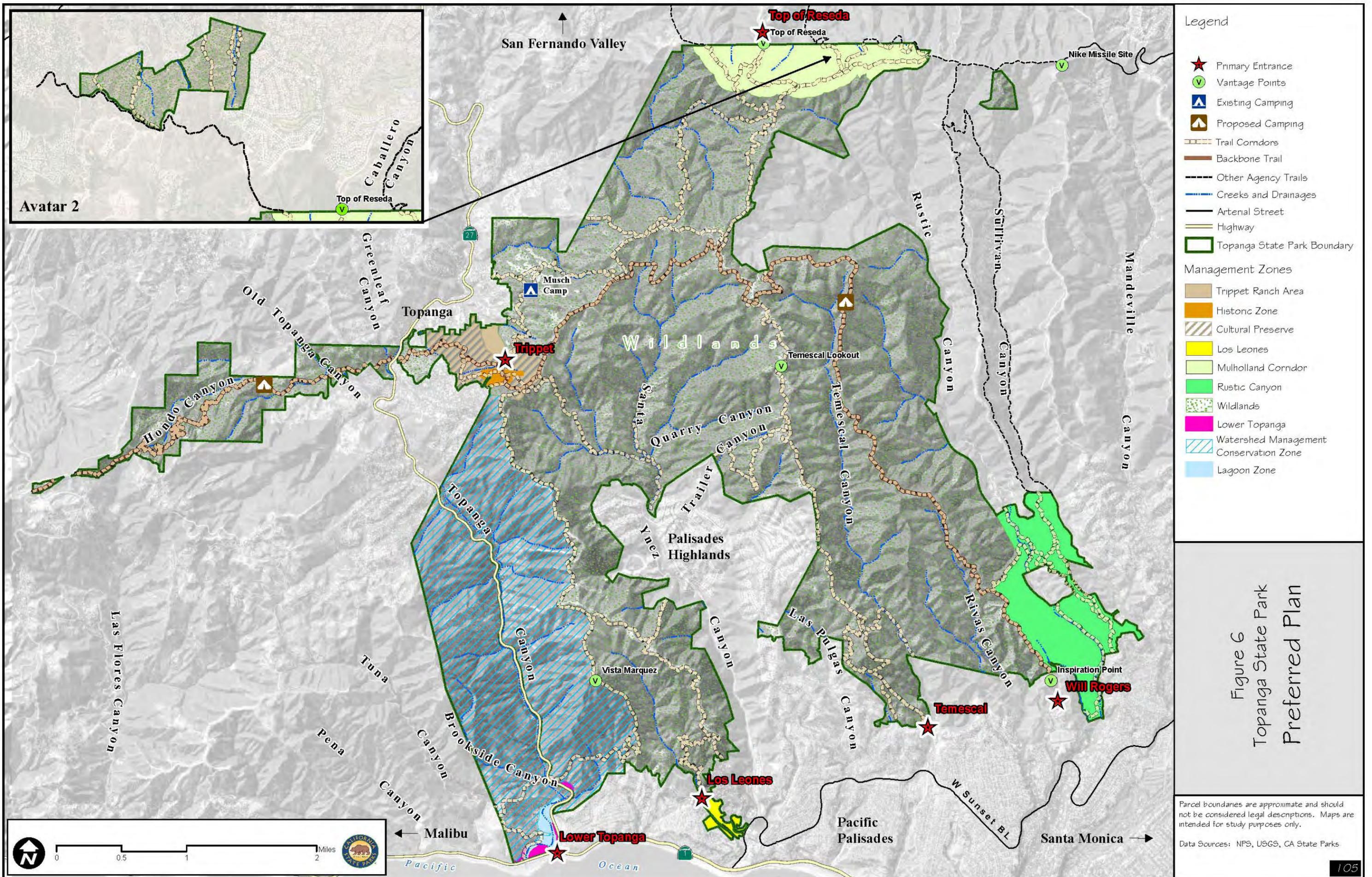
Within the Planning Matrix (Table 3) on pages 112 and 113, the prescribed capacity is denoted via a range from low to high level of use.

As part of the goals and guidelines section, measurable indicators such as impact to the natural or cultural resources, and continued monitoring are cited. These measurable indicators represent an adaptive management cycle or methodology that will foster a sustainable resource base and visitor-use character that fulfills the Park Purpose and the Mission of CSP.

MANAGEMENT ZONES

The following is a summary and description of the purposed management zones for the Park. The boundaries of these zones are graphically delineated on the Preferred Plan on page 105, and are further defined by the Planning Matrix on pages 112 and 113.

Also, the Lower Topanga Canyon area is a location that received much attention during the planning process, since it was the most recent land acquisition to the Park and one of the contributing factors to the need for a new General Plan. As such, a larger and slightly more detailed graphic has been developed to further refine that

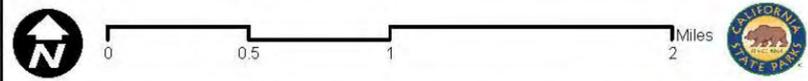


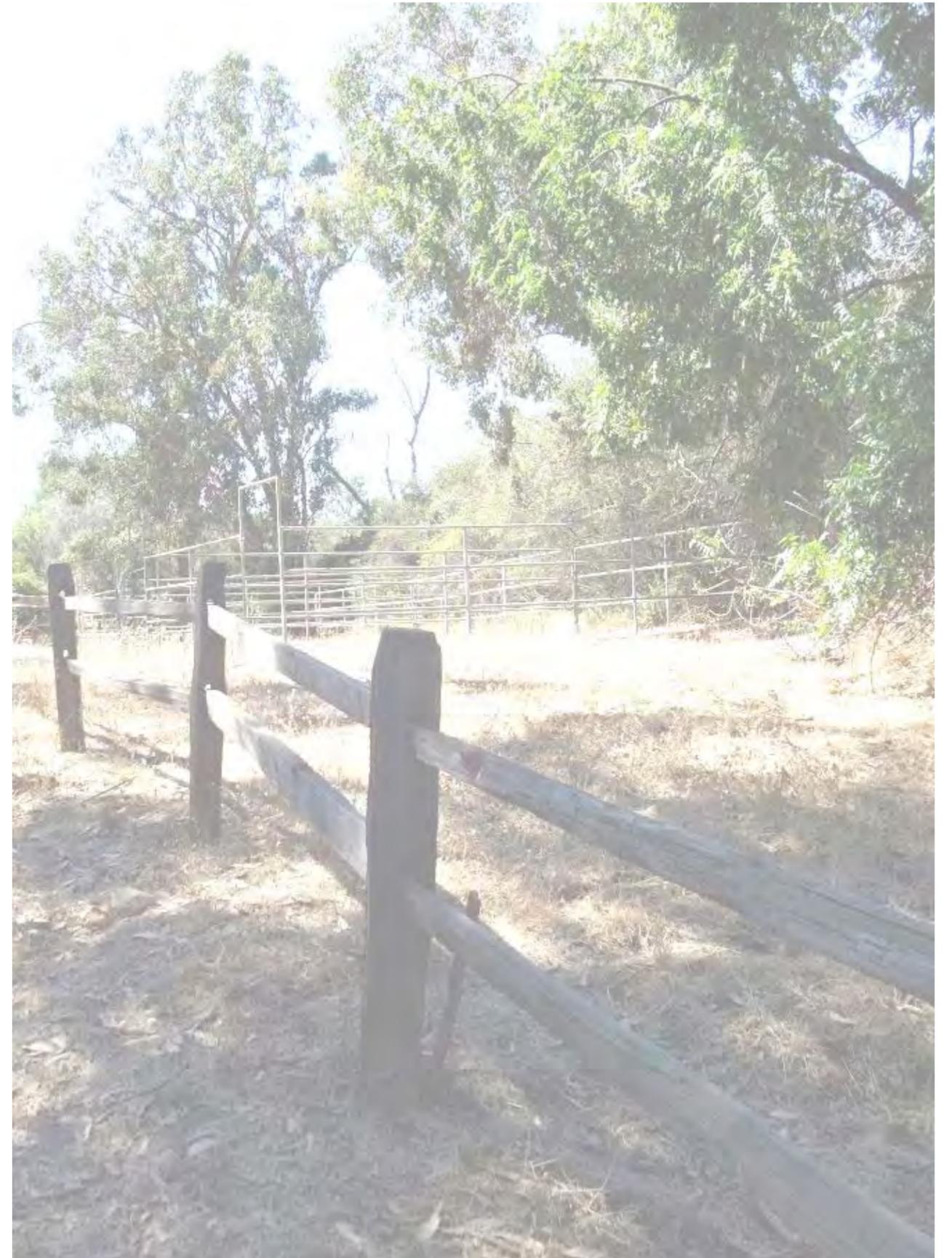
- Legend**
- ★ Primary Entrance
 - Ⓥ Vantage Points
 - ▲ Existing Camping
 - ▲ Proposed Camping
 - Trail Corridors
 - Backbone Trail
 - Other Agency Trails
 - Creeks and Drainages
 - Arterial Street
 - Highway
 - ▭ Topanga State Park Boundary
- Management Zones**
- ▭ Trippet Ranch Area
 - ▭ Historic Zone
 - ▭ Cultural Preserve
 - ▭ Los Leones
 - ▭ Mulholland Corridor
 - ▭ Rustic Canyon
 - ▭ Wildlands
 - ▭ Lower Topanga
 - ▭ Watershed Management Conservation Zone
 - ▭ Lagoon Zone

Figure 6
Topanga State Park
Preferred Plan

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





Musch Camp

particular area. This enlarged plan is located on page 115.

Wildlands

The management zone dubbed the “Wildlands” contains rugged terrain, mosaic habitat, and scenic vistas and 8,445 acres of the total 11,525 acres of the Park. Visitors will be able to view and explore steep canyons and ridgelines, ancestral oak woodlands, and grassland-savannahs within this zone.

This zone will remain natural and wild with minimal development other than trails and modest camping opportunities. Two regional trail systems in which Topanga State Park plays an important link are the Backbone Trail and the future Coastal Slope Trail, both of which are at least partially located within the Wildlands Zone.

As part of this Plan, trail corridors are being denoted to convey the current and proposed visitor and operational circulations through the Park, which are required to connect the proposed management zones, and to fulfill either a recreational, interpretive, or operational use. The designations of use of these trail corridors are not being denoted within this Plan.

Mulholland Corridor

This zone is at the northern edge of the Park along a section of Dirt Mulholland, and covers approximately 345 acres. Dirt Mulholland is the 7 to 8 miles of unpaved road which is the unfinished extension of the famous and paved portion of Mulholland Drive. Dirt Mulholland is closed to vehicles and serves as a fire road and a multi-use trail, which regional trails (including the Rim of the Valley Trail)

feed into and extend beyond the boundaries of Topanga State Park.

The Mulholland Corridor serves as a crucial buffer and transition between the Park and the highly urbanized San Fernando Valley.

This zone will serve as the northern gateway into the Park, and with adjoining open spaces being managed by other agencies; this zone will require a multi-agency cooperative approach to ensure appropriate planning for a cohesive open space area along the Park’s northern edge.

Trippet Ranch Area

This 197-acre Area is divided into three zones: the Operations/Maintenance Zone, the Historic Zone, and the Topanga Cultural Preserve. These three zones were grouped together, based upon their close proximity to Trippet Ranch, a historic Gentleman’s Ranch.

In this entire Area, vehicular use shall be controlled by encouraging the use of public transportation, by organizing programmed events such as school groups, where student can be bused in, and by balancing the parking requirements with visitor-use capacity.

Operations/Maintenance Zone

The plan for this 21-acre zone is to relocate the majority of park operations, maintenance, and storage to this area from the current location within the Historic Zone.

Access to this zone will be restricted. Natural screening of structures, equipment, and storage yards will be maintained.

Historic Zone

A major recommendation with this

Plan is to establish an 18-acre Historic Zone, that comprises of the historic core of the former Rancho Las Lomas Celestiales (The Ranch of the Heavenly Hills), which later became in the 1940s a “Gentleman’s Ranch” operated by a prominent Los Angeles lawyer, Oscar A. Trippet Jr.

With the establishment of this Historic Zone, the majority of park operations and maintenance storage will be relocated outside the Historic Zone.

This recommendation will help preserve and enhance the many existing classic “Gentleman’s Ranch” features of Trippet Ranch, which include a residence, stables/barn, machine shed, corrals, orchards, and skeet lodge.



Topanga Cultural Preserve

A 158-acre Cultural Preserve is being established to heighten the protection and interpretation of this distinct district of outstanding cultural interest, which includes the largest known Native American Village site within the Park, and the first site recorded in the State Trinomial System within Los Angeles County.

Currently the area is governed by State Park classification as stated in Public Resource Code, Section 5019.53. The change to a Cultural Preserve will

provide the highest level of protection within the area and will take precedence over recreational use as established by PRC section 5019.74, which governs the intent, management and use of Cultural Preserves:

Cultural Preserves consist of distinct non-marine areas of outstanding cultural interest established within the boundaries of other state park system units for the purpose of protecting such features as sites, buildings, or zones which represent significant places or events in the flow of human experience in California. Areas set aside as cultural preserves shall be large enough to provide for the effective protection of the prime cultural resources from potentially damaging influences, and to permit the effective management and interpretation of the resources. Within cultural preserves, complete integrity of the cultural resources shall be sought, and no structures or improvements that conflict with the integrity shall be permitted.

The essence of this zone is to make visitors aware of the importance and fragility of the area’s cultural resources, and to provide interpretive and educational opportunities. Being part of the Trippet Ranch Area, one visitor-use possibility is to provide interpretative opportunities of the Native American stories within one of the existing Trippet Ranch structures.

Rustic Canyon Zone

This zone is named after the canyon that comes up beside Will Rogers State Historic Park and extends into and then

outside of Topanga State Park boundaries. This zone includes the lone remaining barn from Josepho Ranch and the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site. And because of these historic remnants and their close proximity to Will Rogers State Historic Park, visitors will be introduced to the Gentlemen’s Ranch story and historic ranching in general via a proposed trail system that will connect Will Rogers State Historic Park to Trippet Ranch, with interpretive stopovers at both the Will Rogers Hideaway Cabin site and the Josepho Barn.

This zone, comprised of 483 acres, will be the transitional zone from a high level of visitor use at Will Rogers State Historic Park to the low level of visitor use in the adjacent Wildlands.

Los Leones Zone

This zone is the southern access into the Park via Los Liones Drive off Sunset Boulevard, allowing ease of vehicular access. Readily available parking currently exists at this very popular trailhead location which translates to a high level of visitor use.

With the ease of public access, many outdoor spaces and places for hands-on teaching and exploring programs can be implemented within this 31-acre zone. The visitor-use focus here remains as it was denoted in the GDP, on the botanical character of the Park. The existing amphitheater and a future native plant garden and interpretive trails can help orient visitors to the Park and its natural resources, and work in conjunction with the nature center activities at Trippet Ranch.

Watershed Conservation Zone

One of the reasons for acquiring the

Lower Topanga Canyon parcel in 2000, which included much of the Topanga Creek watershed, was to provide a coastal connection with the interior of the Park and to protect Topanga Creek. As such, the Watershed Conservation Zone was created to protect one of the few remaining watersheds in southern California, which now falls almost entirely within public lands and is the home of the endangered southern steelhead trout. The watershed designation will assist in acquiring funding for future enhancement and restoration projects associated with the creek and lagoon

This zone is comprised of 1,984 acres and will provide a high level of natural resource protection, where the resources will take precedence over recreational use. However, visitor access and use via a proposed trail system, trail bridges, and overlooks shall provide recreational use while emphasizing protection of the resources through interpretive and educational opportunities.

The essence of this zone is to protect the “integrity of the ecosystem” of the watershed rather than the “vastness and wildness” characteristic that defines the surrounding Wildlands. A trail connection to the Wildlands will be provided by the strategic location of trail crossings and/or bridges over Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

Lagoon Zone

As part of the Interim Management Plan (IMP) for Lower Topanga Canyon approved in July 2002, an action item to remove non-historic structures, fences, miscellaneous debris, and hazardous material was proposed and subsequently implemented.

Over the past decade, the majority of the structures have been successfully removed in the lower reaches of Topanga Creek, along with the removal of a man-made earth berm which was altering the natural flow of the creek. This berm removal and ongoing removal of exotic plant material influenced the establishment of this Lagoon Zone, whereby the intent of this 29-acre zone is to optimize lagoon restoration via a cooperative process with the appropriate agencies.

Lower Topanga Zone

This zone along Pacific Coast Highway and Topanga Canyon Boulevard includes the existing businesses that were in operation prior to CSP acquiring the Lower Topanga Canyon area. This zone becomes one of the proposed areas in the Park, where concession opportunities could exist.

Cleaning up the visual clutter of the existing structures along Pacific Coast Highway and Topanga Canyon Boulevard is being recommended so this entire zone can become a visual gateway for the Park, creating a wonderful “sense of arrival” for park visitors and for the daily commuters, who use Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

The gateway recommendation does not necessarily translate to the develop-

ment of many new buildings per se (i.e., a traditional Visitor Center complex), but rather this Plan is recommending the entire zone become a “natural” gateway with proposed development being strategically located and secondary to the natural and cultural resources of the Lower Topanga Zone.

It is recommended that the majority of concession opportunities, including overnight use, be placed on the west side of the lagoon with minimal concession opportunities on the east side. This will concentrate the development and better handle the projected sewer output and treatment. Existing sewer systems are old septic systems, which require routine pumping. As such, an influential factor on the size and number of concession opportunities will depend on the proper managing of the sewer output from such concessions (see Concession and Revenue Generation on page 101).

Aside from the “natural” gateway recommendation, the visitor experience for this zone will be to view a major creek/lagoon restoration effort, while becoming aware of the Park’s many natural and cultural resources, including the Native American village site that is located below the existing historic motel structures.



*Woman walking near the mouth of Topanga Canyon, Calif. c. 1912
Courtesy of the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives*