

California Department of Parks and Recreation

November 2003

Malibu Creek State Park

Preliminary General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report



MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK

Preliminary General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report

SCH No. 2002121108

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NOVEMBER 2003

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Summary

The Malibu Creek State Park General Plan (General Plan) provides a broad vision for the long-term management of the Park, outlining key management intentions for an ecologically healthy and visitor-friendly park. One of the primary objectives of this plan is the need and desire to balance ecological and human processes, which is represented by the General Plan's purpose statement:

The primary purpose of Malibu Creek State Park (Park) is to protect and perpetuate the woodland and riparian features of a ruggedly beautiful natural landscape that has been set aside for the protection of its diverse natural resources. These resources include rare biota and regionally important expanses of coastal scrublands, oak woodlands and savannas, and riparian systems along Malibu and Las Virgenes creeks. The enjoyment of these natural features and the cultural history of the Park is to be made available to the public in a manner that is compatible with the Park's ecological values and the recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities that the California Park System provides.

Chapter 1 introduces the plan by providing a synopsis of the Park's origins and development to date, including the public meetings and consultation that led to the development of this General Plan.

The rich and varied ecological, cultural, visitor, and staff resources provided by and at the Park are outlined in Chapter 2. An assessment of the condition of those and other Park resources is integrated with discussion of visitor demographic characteristics, the role of Park interest groups, and public concerns regarding management of the Park. The influence of system-wide policies and guidelines established by the Department of Parks and Recreation (Department), which manages the Park, as well as region-wide influences such as encroaching development and habitat fragmentation, are discussed.

The Park Plan, provided in Chapter 3, contains a comprehensive and cohesive set of Park-wide and location-specific goals and guidelines for the long-term direction of the Park. This chapter provides broad-scope direction for the management of those natural, cultural, and recreational resources discussed in Chapter 2. The Park Plan also addresses the important question of carrying capacity, and introduces a set of indicators for use in adaptive management of the Park. A comprehensive set of management zones are introduced, encompassing the entire Park and providing detailed direction tailored to each of the use and condition characteristics at the Park. The four zones – Core Habitat, Natural Open Space, Cultural/Historic, and Recreation/Operations – provide desirable experiences for visitors while enhancing and preserving the natural and cultural features that make the Park a unique destination.

Summary

Analysis of the proposed General Plan is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This analysis is provided in Chapter 4, which represents a program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR examines the goals and objectives outlined in the Park Plan. Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of alternatives to the proposed plan, focusing on recreational and conservation-based alternatives, as well as the no project alternative.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 conclude the report with a synopsis of organizations and persons contacted while preparing this plan, report contributors, and references cited.

This plan supercedes the Park's original General Plan, which was adopted in 1978.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Malibu Creek State Park is an area of outstanding natural and scenic beauty in the midst of a large metropolitan area. On any given day, visitors can access dramatic mountain peaks with views of the Pacific Ocean, walk through lush oak woodland valleys, relax on the edge of beautiful streams and pools and enjoy picturesque rock formations. Visitors of all abilities and ages can experience the natural environment and learn about the rich history of the Park. The Park is a place for visitors to retreat from their hectic daily life and be inspired and renewed by nature.



The primary purpose of Malibu Creek State Park (Park) is to protect and perpetuate the woodland and riparian features of a ruggedly beautiful natural landscape that has been set aside for the protection of its diverse natural resources. These resources include rare biota and regionally important expanses of coastal scrublands, oak woodlands and savannas, and riparian systems along Malibu and Las Virgenes creeks. The enjoyment of these natural features and the cultural history of the Park is to be made available to the public in a manner that is compatible with the Park's ecological values and the recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities that the California Park System provides.

1.1 PARK LOCATION AND HISTORY

Malibu Creek State Park has been referred to as the “Yosemite of Los Angeles.” The 7,553-acre Park and its majestic creek are valuable resources to parched Angelinos and visitors from around the world and a welcome respite from an expanse of urban sprawl. Owned and operated by the Department as a part of the larger State Park System, the Park serves visitors from one of the most recreationally underserved metropolitan areas in the United States. The Park is more than an important gathering place for the public; it also serves a critical role in preserving the dwindling oak woodlands and valley oak savanna groves, riparian woodlands, grasslands, coastal sage scrub, freshwater marsh, and other sensitive plant regimes. Moreover, the rich and varied cultural heritage of the Park provides many opportunities to experience and learn about the way the land has been used over time.

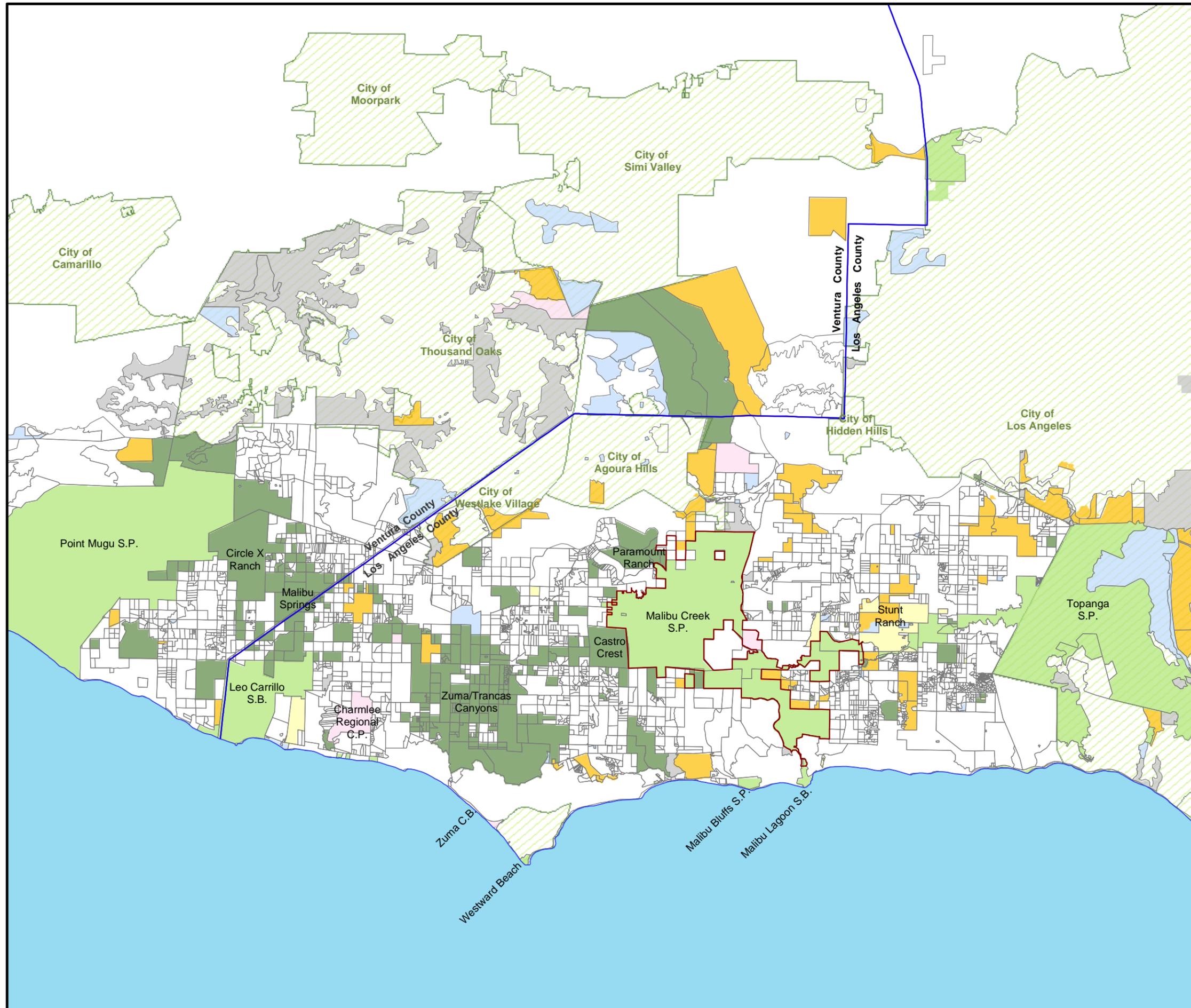
Much of the parkland is bordered and buffered from developed land by other government owned property. The Park is located approximately 25 miles west of downtown Los Angeles in the heart of the National Park Services’ Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), one of the world’s largest urban recreation areas situated in the northwestern corner of the populous and diverse County of Los Angeles (Figure 1). Outside of the SMMNRA, the Park is surrounded by a number of cities and communities in Los Angeles County. North of the Park, lies the City of Agoura Hills and the unincorporated communities of Cornell and Agoura; northeast of the Park lie the cities of Calabasas and Hidden Hills, and the communities of Calabasas Highlands and Calabasas Park; east of the Park lies the community of Monte Nido. The city of Malibu lies within the SMMNRA, as do the nearby unincorporated areas of Malibu Bowl and El Nido. The community of Malibou Lake lies to the northwest of the Park.

The Santa Monica Mountains connect the Park to other parks and open space areas through a series of trail systems in and around Los Angeles and Ventura counties. The mountains are unique in that they represent a Southern Mediterranean biome, one of only five such ecosystems in the world, and are home to numerous species of animals and native plant communities, including several threatened and endangered species.

There is much evidence of the rich cultural history of the area (Table 1-1). The largest western tribe, the Chumash Indians, first inhabited the region extending from northern San Luis Obispo County, south to Malibu, and west to the Channel Islands. The Chumash still consider many sites in and around the Park as “sacred sites.” There is evidence of a Chumash village near the main entrance station on Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road. In the late 18th century, Spanish explorers traveled through the region and were soon followed by Spanish missionaries. The Europeans brought livestock and exotic plants as well as new diseases, greatly affecting the Native American villages and bringing the traditional Chumash era to an end.

Malibu Creek State Park

**FIGURE 1
REGIONAL SETTING**



Basemap Features

-  MCSP Boundary
-  City Boundaries
-  County Lines
-  NPS
-  State Parks
-  MRCA&SMMC
-  County Parkland
-  COSCA
-  Other
-  MRT

Scale of Main View: 1 inch - 2.5 miles



Source Data: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), 2002; National Elevation Dataset (NED) Shaded Relief Imagery from United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2003.

EDAW
Nov. 25, 2003



At the turn of the 19th century, Mexican rancheros moved into the region and established large cattle ranches. After the Mexican-American War, the rancheros sold pieces of their large land holdings to American homesteaders. The Americans set up small farms and cattle ranches and cleared many of the oak trees. Such ranches and farms dominated the area throughout most of the century; however, insufficient surface and well water brought hard times. Eventually the lack of water drove most to more hospitable lands.

**Table 1-1
Timeline of Land Use in Malibu Creek State Park Area**

Timeline	Events in Area of Current Malibu Creek State Park
7000 BP*	Early human settlement in the Santa Monica Mountains
2000 BP	Chumash occupy the coastal region from San Luis Obispo to Malibu Canyon
14 th century to mid-18 th century	European explorers passed through the Santa Monica Mountains
mid-18 th century to early 20 th century	Mexican and American settlers brought ranching and farming to the area
1863	Sepulveda Adobe constructed at present location
1910	Resorts and country clubs were established in the Santa Monica Mountains
1911	Curtis Colyear purchases 160 acres in the Las Virgenes Valley for agricultural use. His land is the original portion of White Oak Farm
1946	Movie and television filming began in the Park
1973 - 1975	The Department purchased the 20 th Century-Fox property in the Santa Monica Mountains; obtained Reagan Ranch and Hope Ranch
1976	The Department opened the Park to the public

*Before Present

The modern metropolis of Los Angeles began to take shape in the early 20th century. The mountainous region's proximity to Los Angeles made the area desirable for recreation and filmmaking. At the beginning of the century, land now in the Park was owned by Crags Country Club, a private hunting club. By mid-century, the club was closed and 20th Century Fox began to film movies on the land. A few years later, the studio decided to purchase the property. The dramatic scenery provided the setting for numerous films and commercials until the State of California (State) purchased the land in the mid-1970s.

1.2 PURPOSE FOR ACQUISITION

The current boundaries of the Park are shown on Figure 2. As discussed above, much of the present-day Park was owned by 20th Century Fox from 1946 to 1973. This land, referred to as the Century Ranch, was purchased by the State in 1973, with other contiguous parcels soon acquired. In 1975, a 1,000-acre parcel north of Mulholland Highway was purchased from Bob Hope and soon after, Reagan Ranch was acquired from former President Ronald Reagan. The State classified the land as a State Park to restore and preserve the natural beauty of the area, which opened to the public on July 10, 1976.

The State has greatly expanded the size of the Park since it opened. Between 1978 and 1982, a number of large properties were acquired, including the large meadow south of Stokes Creek, land along Mulholland Highway, and more than 1,000 acres along Bulldog Canyon and along Mesa Peak Road in the southern portion of the Park. Land purchases later extended the Park boundary south toward the coast and east along the Backbone Trail to Saddle Peak Road. More recently, the State negotiated a land swap with the County of Los Angeles (County) that transferred ownership of Tapia Park to the Department, and Placerita Canyon Park to the County.

The Department continues to acquire land surrounding the Park in an effort to preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources and expand recreational and support facilities for future generations.

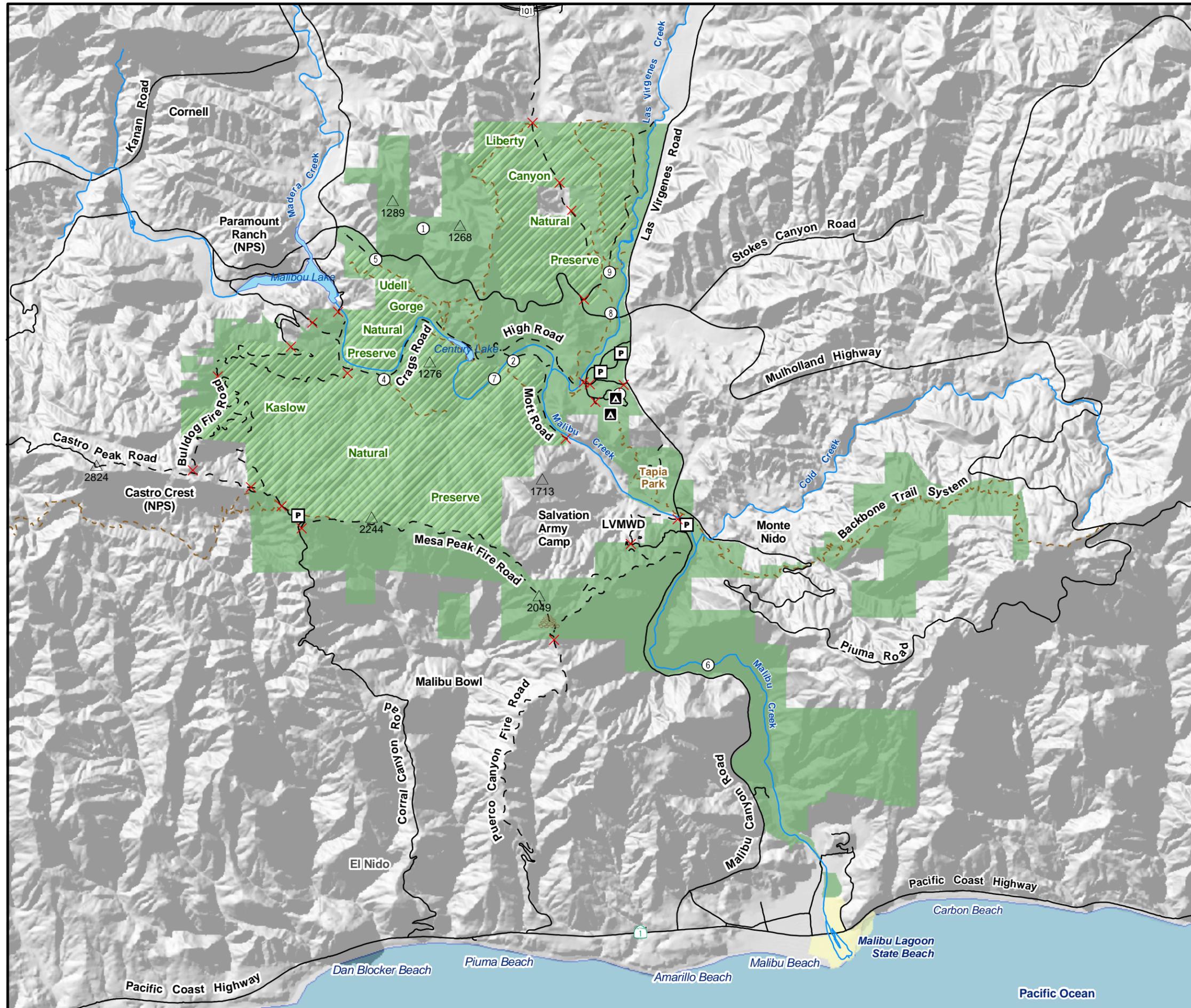
1.3 SPIRIT OF THE PLACE

The Park is a place of rugged natural beauty. The Park provides escape from the urban environment with its outstanding scenic character, its historic buildings and cultural sites, as well as passive and active recreational opportunities. Visitors to the Park are greeted by dramatic geologic formations and inspired by vast open vistas and natural treasures. The name “Yosemite of Los Angeles” was inspired by the similar features in Yosemite National Park, particularly the dramatic rock formations and water elements.



Malibu Creek State Park

**FIGURE 2
PARK FEATURES**



Basemap Features

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Trails
- Locked Gates
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Landslide
- Mountains
- Natural Preserves

Park Features

- April Road House/Greenhouse
- Hunt House
- Hunter House
- MASH Site
- Reagan Ranch
- Rindge Dam
- Rock Pool
- Sepulveda Adobe
- White Oak Farm
- Parking
- Existing Official Campground

Scale of Main View: 1 inch - 4,000 feet
 0 500 1000 2000 3000 4000
 Feet

Source Data: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), 2002; National Elevation Dataset (NED) Shaded Relief Imagery from United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2003.



The Park offers a wide variety of cultural perspectives reflective of the coastal southern California region. Evidence from thousands of years of Native American inhabitation can be found throughout the Park, providing an opportunity for visitors to learn about the region's first inhabitants. The area's history can be enjoyed by visiting the newly refurbished 19th century adobe (Sepulveda Adobe), the ruins of the Mott Adobe, an early 20th century hunting club and farm, and ranches owned by former President Ronald Reagan and actor/comedian Bob Hope. Visitors are also drawn to the Park by its long history of television and film activities, including popular filming locations for Tarzan, Roots, Planet of the Apes, M*A*S*H, and Pleasantville.

The Park's history has been greatly influenced by the natural conditions present in the Santa Monica Mountains. The following excerpt from author Milt McAuley's *Hiking Trails of Malibu Creek State Park* (1996) describes the natural attributes of the Park that have attracted humans for thousands of years:

Welcome to this mountain park, nestled deep in the Santa Monica Mountains, and cradled in a bedrock of volcanic stone. Conceived of ocean deposits, matured by time, and born of compressive land forces, this land has seen fire and flood, and grown through earthquake and volcanic action.

Come along with me on a hike into the Park. We'll walk a trail high on the ridge where we can view the ocean on one side and see Malibu Canyon on the other. We will make our way through canyons that see filtered sunshine only at midday and seldom feel the wrath of wind. We will lean against a sycamore at the edge of Rock Pool and marvel at this exquisite jewel mounted in a natural setting. Nature has indeed created a masterpiece with this enchanted spot.

Come along with me some day in spring, and we'll see wildflowers in bloom along every trail, in every field, and on all the ridges. We'll work our way along a streambed and look for ferns; Golden back, Polypody, and Woody ferns are easy to find, so we'll look for the more elusive Maidenhair and Chain fern. You are challenged to find the Bigleaf maples, the Dogwood, and the Chocolate lilies – they are all here.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

General Plans are broad policy documents that set the direction for park management and development. State Park General Plans are mandated under PRC Section 5002.2 (a).

General Plans are designed to provide guidance for a broad, long-range strategic time frame. The General Planning process does not attempt to identify specific steps for meeting its identified goals. The specifics of implementation will be

addressed in follow-up management plans (operational, interpretative, landscape, recreation, natural resource protection, etc.), which will include the necessary detailed planning objectives to be achieved for individual park areas, resources, or programs.

Rick Montgomery, Malibu Creek Docents



Future planning efforts will invite public comments to address visitor needs and community interests. In addition, management plans and subsequent

development projects are subject to additional environmental review to address issues unforeseen during the General Plan process.

The public has several opportunities to provide comments and suggestions for Park improvements during the general planning process. Three public meetings were held to ensure input from the community at key stages during plan development. The first meeting was held on January 9, 2003. The Department described the General Plan process and the community had the opportunity to comment on the Park's existing conditions, suggestions for Park improvements, and enhancements. A summary of the comments discussed at the public meetings is provided in Appendix B.

At the second meeting on July 23, 2003, three alternatives were presented to the community based on the first public meeting's existing conditions information. Based on the public comments, these alternatives were then refined into a Preferred Alternative.

A draft EIR was developed to assess the potential environmental impacts of the planned development and management strategies in the General Plan, pursuant to the requirements of the CEQA. At this point, the public and other governmental agencies received notification for comment on the scope of the Draft EIR and the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the potential environmental impacts of the General Plan.

After the completion of the Draft EIR review period, a Final EIR was completed. The Department then reviewed the EIR for adequacy and considered the document for certification. Both the Final EIR and Final Draft of the Park's General Plan were considered for approval or denial on a separate basis to the California State Park and Recreation Commission.

The General Plan does not attempt to identify specific objectives for meeting its identified goals, but rather sets broad goals to direct those steps. The specifics of implementation will be addressed in subsequent management plans, which will include the necessary detailed planning documents. These documents will require additional public and government agency review to ensure adherence to the goals established within this General Plan. Some management plans, such as those required for resource protection, are based on legislation or other directives. Future planning efforts will invite public comments to address visitor needs and community interests. In addition, management plans and subsequent development projects are subject to further environmental review.

The planning and development guidelines provided in the 1978 General Plan were developed for a park that had just been established. In 1978, the Park did not have an entrance, trails, parking, or other facilities, so the 1978 General Plan established a framework for a new park. This new General Plan supercedes the original General Plan, adopted just two years after the Park was opened to the public, and endeavors to restore and maintain the Park's natural and cultural resources, while improving opportunities for public use and enjoyment. Creative and strategic responses will be required by the Department as new opportunities to meet the established goals of the General Plan emerge.

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Chapter 2 Existing Conditions and Issues

2.1 PARK SUMMARY

Malibu Creek meanders through the Santa Monica Mountains supporting a complex mosaic of life critical to maintaining the regional ecosystem. The 7,553-acre Park serves as one of the last areas of natural open space in Los Angeles County and has a rich history dating back to early Native American occupation. The Park's rugged mountains and scenic vistas have attracted visitors since the turn of the 20th century. Visitors can spend the day picnicking, hiking, biking, horseback riding, swimming, or visiting historic sites. Overnight camping and special programs for school age children and outdoor recreational enthusiasts are available. On weekdays, the Park continues to be a much-used location for the film and television industry. The following section summarizes the existing land uses, facilities, and significant natural, cultural, aesthetic, and recreational resources of the Park.



2.1.1 Park Conditions and Resources

Classification

The Park is classified as a “State Park” as defined in Section 5019.53 of the PRC, which states:

State parks consist of relatively spacious areas of outstanding scenic or natural character, oftentimes also containing significant historical, archaeological, ecological, geological, or other similar values. The purpose of state parks shall be to preserve outstanding natural, scenic, and cultural values, indigenous aquatic and terrestrial fauna and flora, and the most significant examples of ecological regions of California, such as the Sierra Nevada, northeast volcanic, great valley, coastal strip, Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains, southwest mountains and valleys, redwoods, foothills and low coastal mountains, and desert and desert mountains.

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.

The Park has three areas that have been given the sub-classification of “Natural Preserve.” The Natural Preserves, located at Kaslow, Liberty Canyon, and Udell Gorge, together encompass more than one-third of the existing Park acreage. A Natural Preserve is defined in Section 5019.71 of the PRC:

Natural preserves consist of distinct non-marine areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance established within the boundaries of other state park system units. The purpose of natural preserves shall be to preserve such features as rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystems, representative examples of plant or animal communities existing in California prior to the impact of civilization, geological features illustrative of geological processes, significant fossil occurrences or geological features of cultural or economic interest, or topographic features illustrative of representative or unique biogeographical patterns. Areas set aside as natural preserves shall be of sufficient size to allow, where possible, the natural dynamics of ecological interaction to continue without interference, and to provide, in all cases, a practicable management unit. Habitat manipulation shall be permitted only in those areas found by scientific analysis to require manipulation to preserve the species or associations that constitute the basis for the establishment of the natural preserve.

Existing Park Areas

The Park’s recreational areas include both day and overnight visitor facilities, as well as Park administrative, maintenance, operation, and staff housing areas.

The Park features over 40 miles of trails and fire roads for hiking, wildlife nature walks, mountain biking, and horseback riding. The existing Park areas are shown in Figure 2 and the main park entrance area is shown in Figure 3. The primary areas of the Park include the main entrance/campground/day use area, the visitor center/Rock Pool/Century Lake area, Tapia Park area, Sepulveda Adobe/White Oak Farm Area, Reagan Ranch Area, Saddle Peak Area, and the Natural Preserves. The main entrance/campground/day use area, the visitor center/Rock Pool/Century Lake area, and Tapia Park area have the most concentrated level of use.

Main Entrance/Campground/Day Use Area

The main Park entrance road is located just south of Mulholland Highway on Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road. There is a check-in kiosk staffed by the Department. When open, visitors must check-in with staff and pay an entrance fee to enter the Park day use area or to camp overnight. When the kiosk is closed, visitors are required to use the self pay device for camping and day use fees; an automated system will be installed by May 2004. Visitors have access to parking, picnic tables, limited shaded areas, barbecues, and restroom facilities. As there is little shade in the area, the picnic and barbecue areas can be hot in the summer. Two campgrounds are located farther south of the day use area, and are used year round, but most heavily in the summer months. Camping is available through the Department Reservation System, either online (<http://www.reserveamerica.com>) or by telephone. The Park's camping facilities includes one group camp site and 63 individual sites that are open year round. The camp services and amenities include trails, fishing areas, fire pits, restrooms, showers, laundry tub, and a dump station.

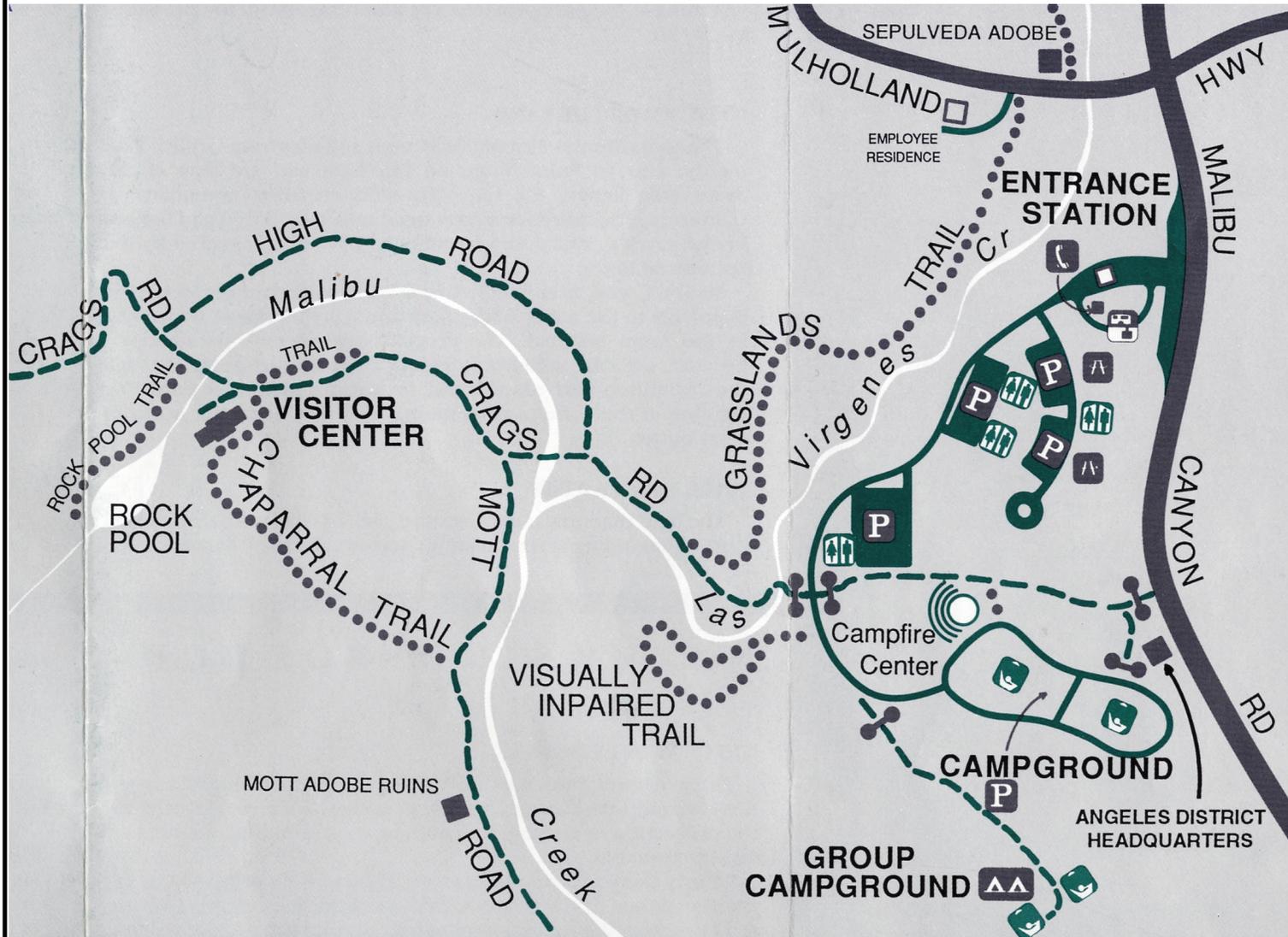
Visitor Center (Hunt House)/Rock Pool/Century Lake Area

A short downhill path leads from the main entrance in the lower (northern) parking lot to Crags Road. Visitors can follow the road a short distance and cross Malibu Creek via a lovely bridge and view or visit the colonial revival-style Hunt House, set amongst a grove of large sycamore trees. During the fall when the leaves are turning, the views are spectacular and often painted by artists. Visitors can view the Park's wildlife exhibits and monitor the latest interpretive activities. The Visitor Center is open on weekends and special holidays, weather permitting. Volunteers staff the Visitor Center from noon to 4 p.m. daily.

Just to the southwest of the Visitor Center lies the Rock Pool, a popular warm weather swimming and wading spot. A dramatic outcrop of granite boulders, and several species of trees and native shrubs surround the pool of water. During

Malibu Creek State Park

FIGURE 3
PARK ENTRANCE AREA



Source: Malibu Creek State Park



the weekend and on hot days, the Rock Pool is used as a swimming, diving, and rock climbing area, which presents visitor safety challenges to Park staff. Further west on Crags Road lies a Century Lake, valued for its scenic appeal and bird watching opportunities. Century Lake is also a popular fishing area. Access is limited due to trail erosion and the dense brush that has grown around the lake.

Sepulveda Adobe/White Oak Farm Area

North of the main entrance area lies the Sepulveda Adobe, located off of Mulholland Highway and west of Las Virgenes Road. The adobe was damaged during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, but renovated and reopened on May 31, 2003. Renovations were completed through State Park Bond funds, Deferred Maintenance Funds, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds. After renovation, the adobe was reopened to the public. Archaeological investigations are ongoing.

About a half-mile northeast of the Sepulveda Adobe on Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road lies White Oak Farm, currently used as State Park staff housing. Motorists and recreationists can view the charming historic farm and barn while driving along Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road or using the trails in the area.

Reagan Ranch Area

Reagan Ranch is located in the northwestern corner of the Park, off of Mulholland Highway, and adjacent to National Park Service's (NPS) Paramount Ranch. Little remains of the original ranch except the stables and a few other structures. It is currently the Ranger Station Headquarters, with staff housing and maintenance facilities. A gravel parking lot just off of Cornell Road provides access to trails in the area and is primarily used by equestrians and hikers.

Tapia Park Area

The 126-acre Tapia Park subunit, located south of the main entrance and west of Malibu Canyon Road, was acquired from the County of Los Angeles. Tapia Park is a very attractive day-use area with picnic areas and numerous individual and group barbecues as well as a scenic and biologically sensitive dense oak canopy. An administrative building is also on the premises. Hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers can access trails that lead from Tapia Park into other portions of the Park. Tapia Park is a favorite picnic spot for families. The high intensity of picnic use hinders the regeneration of the oak grove.

Saddle Peak Area

The Saddle Peak area of the Park is located east of Piuma Road and west of Stunt Road along the Backbone Trail System. The Backbone Trail System enters the Park from the east in the Saddle Peak area. No facilities or services are located in this undeveloped portion of the Park.

Natural Preserves

Nearly 3,000 acres of the Park are set aside as natural preserves (Figure 4). The three natural preserve areas in the Park are Kaslow Natural Preserve, Liberty Canyon Natural Preserve, and Udell Gorge Natural Preserve. Resources protection is the primary emphasis of the natural preserves; active recreational use, vehicle use, and development are not permitted. Hiking and other passive uses are allowed in the preserves. The natural preserves contain many sensitive wildlife and plant species; a complete list of these species is included later in this chapter in Tables 2-2 and 2-3. Table 3-1 in Chapter 3 describes restricted and allowable uses within the natural preserves.

Kaslow Natural Preserve is a 1,900-acre preserve located near the center of the Park. The Kaslow Natural Preserve protects the natural habitat and nesting grounds of the golden eagle. It supports many other rare plants and animals, including the Santa Susana tarplant (*Deinandra minthornii*) and mountain lion (*Felis concolor*). Several streams flow through it.

Liberty Canyon Natural Preserve is a 730-acre preserve located in the northeast portion of the Park. Liberty Canyon is valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) woodland/savannah. Visitors can enjoy views of the area from trails in the preserve.

Udell Gorge Natural Preserve is a 300-acre preserve located north of Malibu Creek and west of Century Lake. This area encompasses oak woodland, river marsh, buttes, and Udell Gorge. The Gorge is bordered to the north by the meadow at Reagan Ranch. Several rare plants such as the Santa Susana tarplant and Santa Monica Mountains dudleya (*Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *Ovatifolia*), grow inside this preserve. The Deer Leg Trail runs along the eastern boundary of the natural preserve offering views into the preserved area.

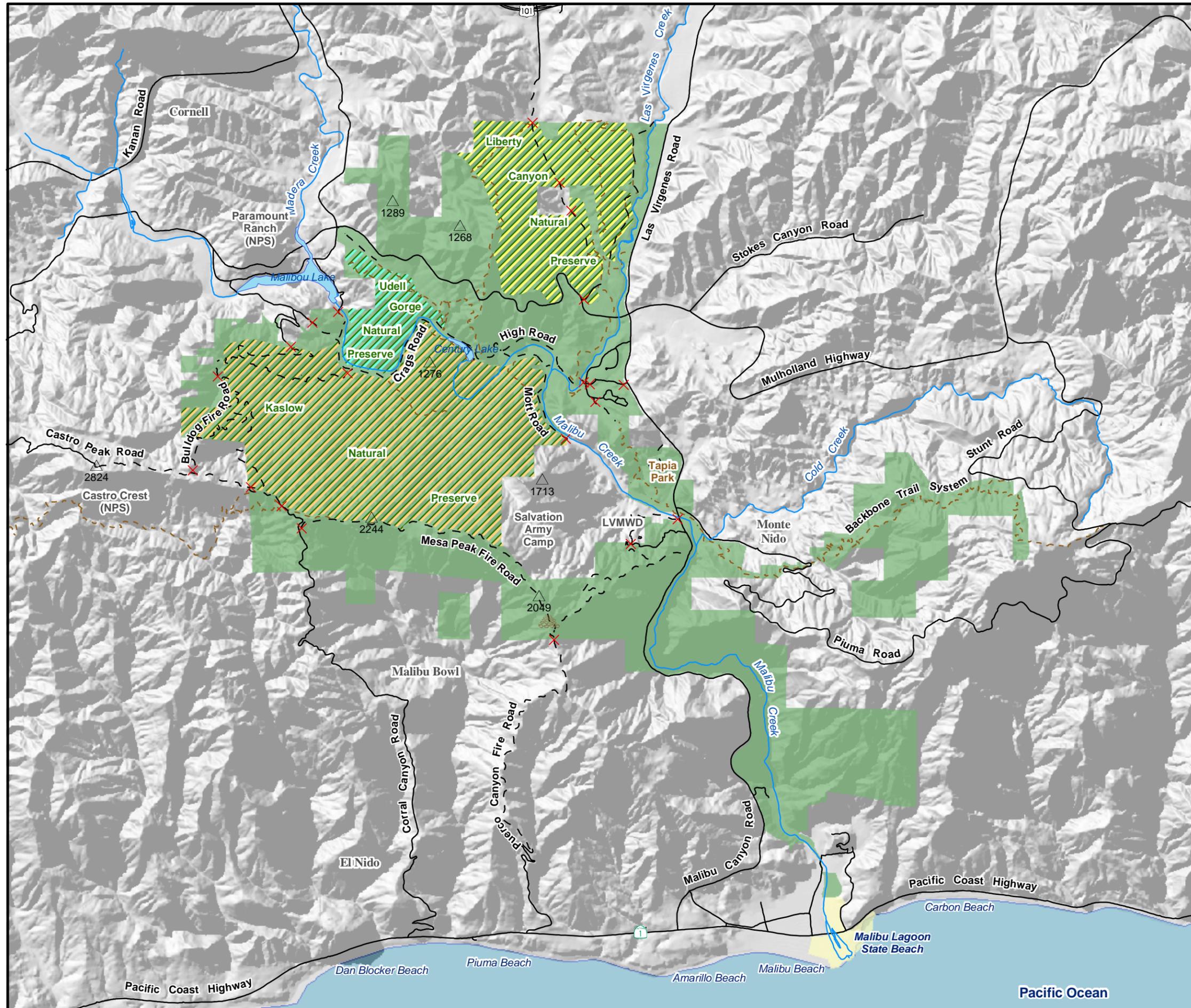
Fire management roads providing necessary access into all the natural preserves have, by default, become trails. The fire road trails are not easily accessible for individuals with disabilities. No more roads or trails will be built in the preserves.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Park is surrounded by parcels of private and public land. Open space and institutional land uses dominate the area. Adjacent to the Park are two privately owned camps, Mount Crags/Camp Gilmore Salvation Army Camp and David Gonzales Juvenile Detention Camp. The Salvation Army Camp is located immediately west of Tapia Park and is used primarily as a summer Christian recreation camp. David Gonzales Juvenile Detention Camp is a secure facility located immediately north of Tapia Park and is one of the oldest youth detention camps in California. Abutting the Park along the western boundary are Paramount Ranch and Castro Crest, owned by NPS.

Malibu Creek State Park

**FIGURE 4
NATURAL PRESERVES**



Basemap Features

- ~ Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Trails
- ✕ Locked Gates
- ~ Rivers
- ~ Lakes
- ~ Landslide
- △ Mountains

Natural Preserves

- ▨ Kaslow N.P.
- ▨ Liberty Canyon N.P.
- ▨ Udell Gorge N.P.

Scale of Main View: 1 inch - 4,000 feet

Source Data: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), 2002; National Elevation Dataset (NED) Shaded Relief Imagery from United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2003.

EDAW
Nov. 25, 2003



The Park is one of the largest park holdings in the SMMNRA, a 150,050-acre national recreation area established in 1978 by the United States Congress. The SMMNRA is 90 percent undeveloped, with nearly half of the land reserved as open space held by government and conservation agencies. The remainder of the land is under private ownership. NPS, the Department, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) jointly administer the public parklands in the SMMNRA. Several other Department units are located nearby, as indicated on Figure 1.

Outside of the SMMNRA are urban and rural residential land uses in the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, and Malibu; and the unincorporated communities of Cornell, Agoura, Calabasas Highlands, Calabasas Park, Monte Nido, Malibu Bowl, El Nido, and Malibou Lake.

Open Space/Parkland Availability

The Park is surrounded by private and public land. The majority of the land surrounding the Park is unincorporated and is under the jurisdiction of the County. Much of this unincorporated land is undeveloped; however, some residential development borders the Park near the communities of Malibou Lake and Monte Nido. The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) owns a large tract of land along Las Virgenes Road on the northeastern side of the Park.

The Park is located in the SMMNRA, which is composed of a mosaic of land ownerships and land uses spread over 150,050 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains. In 1984, NPS prepared a Land Protection Plan (LPP) that identified lands necessary for the protection of the significant natural, cultural, and scenic resources, and necessary to provide public recreational and educational use of the SMMNRA. The plan, amended in 1987, 1989, and 1991, identifies a number of proposed NPS acquisition areas immediately west and south of the Park. In 1998, a revised LPP was prepared by NPS that focused on the execution and implementation of land protection strategies in the Santa Monica Mountains. The resource information and land protection strategies provided in the 1991 and 1998 LPPs can be used to help guide future acquisition efforts at the Park.



The Department encourages land acquisitions from willing sellers that would increase access to recreational lands and important cultural resources, offer

connections to wildlife habitat, and provide natural resource linkages to help achieve resource management objectives.

Existing Facilities

Entrance Station

The main entrance station to the Park is located on Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road, slightly south of Mulholland Highway, and is the only entrance that is staffed. At the Park entrance booth, a Park ranger or Park aide is available seasonally during the day to provide information and collect an entrance fee. The Park is also accessible from the north via Cornell Road and Mulholland Highway; from the east via the Stunt Road, Saddle Peak Road, and Schueren Road intersection; and from the south via Corral Canyon Road.

Visitor Center

The house that serves as the Visitor Center was originally a home for a member of the Craggs Country Club and today is named the Hunt House. The Hunt House is divided in two, with staff housing on the south side of the building and the Visitor Center, operated by the Malibu Creek Docents, on the north side. Guests can browse through the center's pamphlets, videos, slide shows, and displays that explain the history of the Park and the types of flora and fauna found in the Park. A bookstore is also on the premises.

Operational Facilities

The Park's operational facilities are not located in one central location but rather are spread across various locations throughout the Park. The Hunter House, which serves as the Park's main administrative building, is also the Department Angeles District Headquarters. This two-story building is located adjacent to the family campground. Park Ranger and maintenance staff offices are located on the western side of the Park at the Reagan Ranch area. A small greenhouse/nursery is located near April Road. Currently, a district administration center (DAC) is being constructed at the upper group day use area.

Concessions

The Park does not have a concession stand or restaurant; however, the Visitor Center carries some provisions and has a bookstore. The Park is within a short driving distance from restaurants, gas stations, and convenience stores in the cities of Calabasas and Malibu.

Employee Housing

Housing is provided for several Department employees at the Park. Employee houses are located at Reagan Ranch, White Oak Farm, and along Mulholland Highway.

Restrooms

Permanent restroom facilities are located at the designated campsites, main entrance parking lots, and at Tapia Park. All toilets provided are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible flush toilets. Portable toilets are located at the more popular locations in the Park, including the Rock Pool parking lot.

California Wildlife Center

The California Wildlife Center, a non-profit organization, is located on Park property in the El Nido area on Piuma Road. This facility provides veterinary services and special facilities to rehabilitate wild animals.

Circulation

Roads

The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume along Las Virgenes Road between Lost Hills Road and Mulholland Highway was 18,900 in 1995. Along the Park, Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road is a two-lane roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour (mph) and a level of service (LOS) of F (City of Calabasas 1995). Being one of three major north-south routes from the Conejo Valley through the Santa Monica Mountains to the Los Angeles basin, Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road is heavily used by commuters as well as Park visitors.

Heavy use of the road has created traffic congestion, resulting in degraded air quality and increased noise in the Park area. The Park is only accessible by private vehicle as there is no public transit available to visitors or for commuters heading north or south through the Santa Monica Mountains. Due to interest in public transportation for the recreation area, NPS is proposing to implement a shuttle system throughout the SMMNRA. NPS and the Department want to determine the demand for such a shuttle service and have developed the "Heart-of-the-Park" Demonstration Shuttle Project. The program will run on weekends for one year. Shuttles will travel in a loop along Malibu Canyon Road, Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), Kanan Dume Road, and Mulholland Highway. If the program meets the projected annual ridership goal of 23,500 to 30,500 passengers, the Demonstration Program will likely be adopted as a public transportation option for SMMNRA (NPS 2002).

Parking

Several parking areas are located on the outskirts of the Park. There are five parking lots at the main Park entrance, one parking lot on Malibu Canyon Road slightly south of Piuma Road, street parking near PCH, and a parking lot off of Corral Canyon Road at the Backbone Trailhead. Combined, the parking facilities can accommodate approximately 798 cars and 14 buses, as shown below in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1
Malibu Creek State Park - Public Parking Facilities**

Location	Parking Spaces					
	Regular	Handicapped	Restricted	Subtotal	Oversize	Total
Main Park Entrance Area						
<i>Entry Kiosk</i>	4	1	1	6	0	6
<i>Upper Day Use Parking Lot</i>	290	6	0	296	0	296
<i>Lower Day Use Parking Lot</i>	195	6	0	201	14	215
Campgrounds						
<i>Campground</i>	14	2	0	16	0	16
<i>Group Campground</i>	20	0	0	20	0	20
Tapia Park	159	9	0	168*	0	168*
Sepulveda Adobe	0	0	0	0	0	0*
White Oak Farm	0	0	0	0	0	0*
Hunt House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rock Pool	0	0	0	0	0	0
Century Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0
April Road	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reagan Ranch	35**	0	0	35**	0	35**
Corral Canyon Rd.	35	0	0	35	0	35
Piuma Day Use Lot	20	1	0	21	0	21
TOTAL	772	25	1	798	14	812

* does not include dirt parking along road

** decomposed granite lot (parking numbers are approximate)

Trails

As mentioned above, there are over 40 miles of trails and fire roads in the Park. These trails and roads pass through areas available for rock climbing, bird watching, swimming, fishing, and camping. The Ann Skager Trail for the Visually Impaired has been in place for over 10 years (ca. early 1990s). It gives the visually impaired access to Park resources and provides opportunities for individuals to learn more about the plants and natural features. Trails are discussed in more detail in the Recreational Resources section.

Utilities

Sewage and Water Treatment

A sewage and water treatment facility, the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility, is located on Malibu Canyon Road just south of Tapia Park and is jointly operated by the LVMWD and Triunfo Sanitation District. These two agencies provide wastewater service to over 80,000 residents over a 150 square-mile area. The facility was constructed in 1965 at a low point in the Malibu Creek watershed to allow for gravity flows to the plant. It currently has a capacity of 16 million gallons per day (mgd). On average, Tapia treats 9.5 mgd of wastewater. The treated water is discharged into the creek and is also used as recycled irrigation water.

In addition to treating water, the on-site State-certified water quality laboratory monitors water quality in Malibu Creek (LVMWD 2000). A force main carrying sludge from the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility to a composting facility runs beneath Las Virgenes Road and parallels the Park boundary. This line has ruptured in the past resulting in significant impacts to the Park. Sewer mains run along Las Virgenes Creek and Mott Road, parallel to Malibu Creek, to the LVMWD treatment plant.

High Voltage Power Lines

Southern California Edison Company (SCE) power lines currently run along Las Virgenes/Malibu Creek Road and Mulholland Highway and provide power to Park facilities (NPS 2002). A high voltage line and service road also traverse the Park's backcountry. An SCE substation and access road are located in the area between Sepulveda Adobe and White Oak Farm.

Park Support

Emergency Services

Numerous fire roads within the Park boundaries allow emergency service providers to access remote areas of the Park. Fire protection, Park security, and medical aid providers are discussed below.

Fire Management Protection

The Department, with assistance from the County, conducts fire management activities at the Park. This includes prescribed or controlled burning and maintenance of fire breaks and fire roads. The Park is serviced primarily by three County fire stations: Stations 67, 88, and 65. Station 67 is located just outside the eastern edge of the Park boundary at 25801 Piuma Road, Calabasas, and has a three-person engine company. Station 88 is located south of the Park at 23720 West Malibu Road, Malibu, and is equipped with a three-person squirt and a two-person paramedic squad. Station 65 is located north-west of the Park at 4206 North Cornell Road, Agoura. It is equipped with two 3-person engine companies and one 2-person paramedic squad.

Visitor Protection and Enforcement

Park rangers are the primary provider of visitor safety and law enforcement. A memorandum of understanding with NPS has been developed for law enforcement responsibilities. If a major crime is committed in the Park, the County Sheriff's Department is called to the Park. For major traffic accidents, the California Highway Patrol is contacted.

Medical Aid

Medical emergencies are handled by the local emergency responders as well as the local fire departments. Search and rescue operations are conducted by a combined effort with Park Rangers and County Fire and Sheriff's departments.

Park Capacity

Determining the visitor capacity of the Park is useful in evaluating the intensity, environmental performance, and land management expectations for optimum public enjoyment of the Park and its facilities. No formal capacity studies have been completed at the Park. Major factors governing the land carrying capacity are developable acreage, fire hazard, environmental sensitivity, quality of visitor experiences, existing visitor capacities, aesthetic impacts, access and circulation, and utility availability.

Park Access

Regional access to the Park is provided via US-101 from the north and PCH from the south. The main Park entrance is located on Las Virgenes Road just south of Mulholland Highway. Las Virgenes Road, which becomes Malibu Canyon Road farther south, connects to US-101 approximately 4 miles north of the Park and PCH approximately 6 miles to the south.

Visitors can enter the Park from a number of locations, thereby gaining access to different parking areas and trailheads. Parking lots are located immediately west of the main entrance station, at the end of Corral Canyon Road (pay use area), at Tapia Park off Las Virgenes Road just north of Piuma Road, and near Reagan Ranch Ranger Station on the corner of Cornell Road and Mulholland Highway. Hikers can enter the Park from a number of trails, including the Backbone Trail System, Grasslands Trail, Corral Canyon Road, Castro Peak Road, from the Tapia Park sub-unit, Lost Hills Road, Deer Leg Trail, and Las Virgenes Connector Trail at De Anza Park and Liberty Canyon. Within the Park, a network of fire roads and trails provides access to hikers, bikers, and equestrian users. Access points are shown in Figure 5.

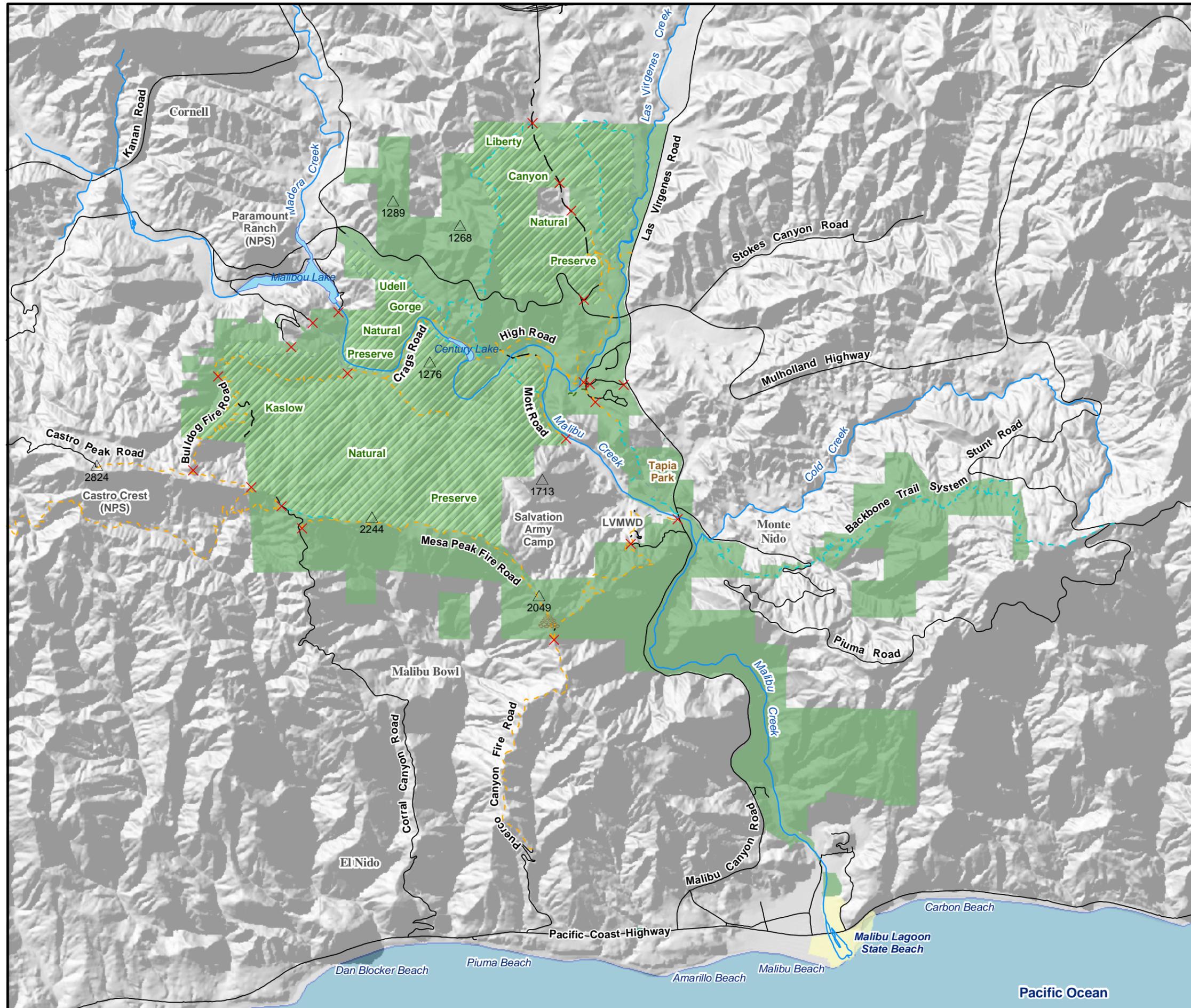
Visitor Profile

The Park attracts a wide variety of visitors including hikers, wildlife enthusiasts, bikers, college and university classes, equestrian users, campers, picnickers (large and small groups), and school groups. Most Park users are drawn from the southern California region; however, many visitors from other parts of country and from around the world visit the Park each year.

A State Park visitor satisfaction survey has been conducted annually by the Department since 1996. The surveys profile the demographic character of park users and solicit opinions regarding park facilities, staff, and overall satisfaction

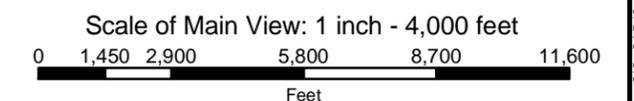
Malibu Creek State Park

**FIGURE 5
TRAILS AND ACCESS ROUTES**



Basemap Features

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Hiker Only Trails
- Disabled Access Trails
- Hiker/Equestrian Trails
- Multi Use Trails
- Undesignated Trails
- Locked Gates
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Landslide
- Mountains



Source Data: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), 2002; National Elevation Dataset (NED) Shaded Relief Imagery from United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2003.



with the visitor experience. The majority of the survey respondents were Caucasian; however, this does not necessarily reflect the use patterns of the entire Park. For example, Tapia Park is heavily used by Hispanic visitors, which is not reflected in the survey results. Based on the survey, most visitors who camp do so for at least two nights, and many enjoy hiking and horseback riding on the trails and fire roads that traverse the Park. The survey indicates that the Park is used primarily by people residing within an hour driving radius, some of whom enjoy the Park as an extension of their backyard.

Patterns and Levels of Recreational Use

There are several distinct patterns and levels of recreational use at the Park. High-intensity day uses such as hiking and picnicking are concentrated near the main entrance and at Tapia Park. Areas most frequently visited in this area include the Rock Pool, Century Lake, and the picnic facilities at Tapia Park. These areas experience moderate levels of use on the weekdays; however, extremely large crowds visit the Park on holidays and most weekends. Cars are occasionally turned away from the Park on the busiest holiday weekends.

The vast majority of the Park's land is undeveloped; therefore, trail use is one of the more common recreational activities. Trail use tends to increase in periods of warm and clear weather and decrease immediately after large storms; however, the Park's trails and fire roads are usually well populated by hikers, joggers, bikers, and equestrians.

2.1.2 Significant Resource Values and Constraints

Physical Resources

Meteorology

Coastal southern California is characterized by a Mediterranean climate, with warm, dry summers, and mild winters with occasional rain. Along the coast, the ocean buffers temperatures, preventing the extreme temperatures found inland, by converting the sun's heat into water vapor and producing cloud cover. Annual precipitation in the Santa Monica Mountains averages between 15 and 24 inches, with most falling between November and April. Park elevations above the 1,000-foot altitude line of the Santa Monica Mountains and west-facing slopes receive greater amounts of rain. Most of the Park is located above 1,000 feet in elevation, making it hotter in the summer and wetter and colder in the winter, compared to surrounding areas.

During the warmer months, a temperature inversion persists, trapping moist marine air below 1,300 feet. Canyon areas often enjoy moderate temperatures throughout summer, with cloudy mornings and clear afternoons, while higher slopes and peaks are clear and warm throughout the day. Summer average temperatures at higher altitudes do not generally exceed 75 degrees Fahrenheit

(°F). Winters at higher altitudes tend to be cool, with temperatures averaging less than 50°F.

Topography

The Santa Monica Mountain Range is one of only three east-west trending ranges in California, extending 35 miles from Oxnard to the Los Angeles Basin. Deep, narrow canyons incise the steep mountain slopes. Along the western portion of the range, an area that includes the Park, the Santa Monica Mountains are at their broadest, ranging from 8 to 10 miles wide. This area also includes Sandstone Peak, the highest peak in the range, at 3,111 feet.

The Park is immediately north of the crest of the central Santa Monica Mountains. The topography of the Park is dominated by the deep canyon formed by Malibu Creek, which runs in a northwest to southeast direction, flowing through the mountains. Much of the canyon floor is boulder-filled. Away from the canyon walls and high ridges, the Park exhibits level fields and rolling hills.

Geology

The Santa Monica Mountains are composed of markedly faulted and folded coarse- to medium-grained sediments. From the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains in the south of the Park to the Thousand Oaks Corridor Hills in the Park's north lie belts of sandstone and fossil-bearing Miocene shale. Over 15 million years ago, during the Middle Miocene age, the sandstone and shale were covered by Conejo Volcanics, a molten volcanic rock. The volcanic rock, layered with sedimentary rock, began the mountain formation. After the volcanic activity, marine sediment formed the Calabasas formation, which consists of layers of sandstone, siltstone, and fragments of sedimentary rock imbedded in sandstone (McAuley 1996a). The Park has many steep canyons with shallow alluvial fills, ranging in thickness from 30 feet at the bottom of canyons to less than 4 feet on canyon slopes.

The Santa Monica Mountains display relatively low seismic activity, compared to the regionally high seismic levels in southern California. The mountains are bordered by two major fault lines, the Simi-Northridge-Santa Susana-Verdugo fault and the Malibu Coast-Santa Monica-Raymond Hill fault, to the north and south, respectively. No major earthquakes are known to have originated in the Park. The Park is not located in an Alquist-Priolo special study zone. Landslides are the seismic activity most likely to affect the Park.

Soils

The Malibu Creek watershed includes a range of soils, including loamy, silty, sandy, and clayey soils. These soils originated from a combination of rock types, including sandstone, shale, and igneous rocks, which were laid in place as marine and non-marine terrace deposits. Folding and erosion of these terraces, and deposition by rivers left the alluvial soils that are now abundant in the Park.