

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Individuals

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook Project

Lead Agency: California Department of Parks and Recreation
Southern Service Center
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San Diego, CA 92108
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Contact: Eric Wilson

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (Department), as the Lead Agency, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project described below. We would like to know the views of interested persons, organizations, and agencies as to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIR. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location, and potential environmental effects of the proposed project (to the extent known) are contained in this Notice of Preparation (NOP). Documents related to the

proposed project, including the CEQA Initial Study, are available for review online at http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22790.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response to this NOP should be sent at the earliest possible date, but **not later than 30 days** after issuance of this notice on November 11, 2003.

Please send your written response to Ron Saenz, Associate Parks and Recreation Specialist, California Department of Parks and Recreation, at the address shown above. Responses should include the name of a contact person at your agency.

Project Title: Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook Project

Project Location:

The proposed project site is located in the Baldwin Hills area in southwestern Los Angeles County (see attached Project Location Map), within the 387-acre Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (SRA). The project area encompasses 58 acres of natural landscape and open space, elevated above the surrounding active and passive recreational opportunities at Kenneth Hahn SRA. The project site provides sweeping views from the San Gabriel Mountains to the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The project falls within Culver City's limits, while at the base of the hill are residential and commercial developments which are divided up between the City of Culver, Los Angeles, and Inglewood.

Project Description:

The proposed project has three main elements: development of public access to the property; construction of a Visitor Center; and protection and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of the park and the adjacent Ballona Creek watershed. The project would also include restoration of the ridgelines and topography that were previously graded at the site, and would emphasize restoration and conservation of native habitat, including coastal sage scrub. As part of the project design process, the Department held two public workshops, the first on June 28,

2003, and the second on October 4, 2003. Members of the public and agency representatives attended the scoping meetings to provide feedback on preliminary project design alternatives. The preliminary design alternatives were presented in the first workshop, and the revised design alternatives based on public input were presented in the second workshop.

Development of the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook would fulfill an open space need for park visitors and local schools, which do not currently have available natural resource educational programs. The project would provide a Visitor Center that would serve as a visitor-use facility with interpretive and educational components.

Potential Environmental Effects:

Based on the existing natural resources and anticipated Park uses, potential environmental effects that will likely be addressed in the EIR, include:

- Potential conflicts between sensitive wildlife species/natural communities and development of the Visitor Center;
- Impacts to cultural resources from new or expanded facilities;
- Traffic and circulation issues, including park ingress/egress;
- Seismic and geologic hazards due to the active faults in the immediate project area;
- Noise associated with traffic and Visitor Center construction and operation;
- Air quality impacts associated with traffic and Visitor Center construction; and
- Potential impacts to the aesthetic resources in the park.

If the potential to take threatened and endangered species is identified, the EIR will describe future State and Federal consultation and permit requirements that will be necessary for development and the types of typical mitigation expected.

Intended Use of the EIR:

The Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission will use the EIR to consider the environmental effects, mitigation measures, and alternatives, when reviewing the proposed Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook Project for approval. Responsible agencies may also use the EIR as needed for subsequent discretionary actions.

Date: November 7, 2003

Signature: _____

Title:

Attachments: Project Location Map