

NEWS RELEASE



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102 Acres Added to Malibu Creek State Park

Soka Property, Jewel of Santa Monica Mountains, Purchased In Partnership Deal

SACRAMENTO -- State Parks Director Ruth Coleman today announced that the long-awaited desire of California State Parks to acquire a portion of the Soka/King Gillette Ranch became a done-deal on Friday, April 16, 2005, with the close of escrow on the 588 acre purchase. It is a partnership between State Parks and nine other agencies to preserve a property many have called the "Crown Jewel" of the Santa Monica Mountains.

"One cannot overstate the significance of acquiring this magnificent natural landscape," said Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Parks. "We have been trying to acquire this wonderful parcel since the mid-1970's. We now own a portion and all the partners in this endeavor are to be applauded for preserving this ecological jewel."

In March, the State Public Works Board authorizes California State Parks to acquire 102 of the total 588 acres. The State Parks' parcel consists of an irregular-shaped area situated on the southwest corner of the Soka property in the County of Los Angeles. It is adjacent to and will be added to the existing Malibu Creek State Park. Because it will be added to the existing park, all costs for management of the property will be handled with existing resources. State Parks will provide park ranger patrols using existing staff.

"From the State Parks' perspective," said Coleman, "we see this as preserving an important ecological linkage between two of our largest State Parks in the Los Angeles area, Malibu Creek State Park immediately adjacent to the west, and Topanga Canyon State Park to the east. This expansive natural area, a major watershed and riparian woodland, helps preserve the abundant wildlife within the Santa Monica Mountains for all generations to come, and it provides for exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities."

Malibu Creek State Park is approximately 15,000 acres. Topanga Canyon State Park is nearly 13,000 acres and is considered the world's largest wildland park within the boundaries of a major city. There are 28 state parks in Los Angeles County, providing over 32,000 acres of public parkland to the most populous county in the state.

The Soka property being added to Malibu Creek State Park is almost exclusively oak woodland, chaparral, and annual grassland. It is in native condition, with the exception of a few access roads and a small building at the edge of the property. The entire 588 acres of the Soka University property is seen as a critical habitat linkage for wildlife such as mountain lions, bobcats, badgers, and other animals within the Santa Monica Mountains.

The partnership funding for the acquisition is as follows: (Most of the funding comes from Propositions 40 and 50, bond acts passed by voters for land conservation.)

- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, \$10 million
- California State Parks, \$7.15 million
- State Coastal Conservancy Board, \$5.5 million
- State Wildlife Conservation Board, \$5 million
- Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, \$2.5 million
- National Park Service, \$2.5 million
- County of Los Angeles, Prop. A, \$2 million
- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, \$1.23 million
- Calabasas, \$250,000
- Agoura Hills, \$250,000.

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