

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

PROJECT TITLE: TOPANGA STATE PARK GENERAL PLAN

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) is the Lead Agency under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is preparing a program level (first-tier) environmental document for the project identified above. CDPR would like to know the views of your agency or organization concerning the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the statutory responsibilities of your agency or organization, in connection with the proposed project. If you do not belong to an agency or organization, this notice has been sent to inform you that detailed planning for the Topanga General Plan is commencing and to provide you with an early opportunity to learn more about the project at the second upcoming Public Meeting/Workshop. If there are important issues you believe should be discussed in the General Plan, a written response to this Notice of Preparation will provide you with the opportunity to identify and discuss these issues.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: To meet requirements set forth in Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code and Section 4332 of Title 14 of the California Administration Code, CDPR is preparing a General Plan for Topanga State Park (Park). The General Plan will delineate a number of management areas and corridors. It will recommend goals and guidelines for specific areas of the Park, as well as for the Park as a whole. These goals and guidelines will address future management of Park resources, land use and development, visitor use, and operational issues at a general plan level of specificity. As a land-use plan, the General Plan may make recommendations for levels and types of use, capacities and visitation, and location and type of future facilities. Special designations, protections, or sub-classifications may also be proposed for specific areas within the Park. This long-range plan will be consistent with the classification of *State Park* as set forth in section 5019.53 of the Public Resources Code and with Department Resource Management Directives. It is anticipated that future project development at the Park will be guided by, and consistent with, the adopted general plan.

Current facilities within the 11,525- acre Park include:

- Trippet Ranch, which offers parking, picnic tables, restrooms, and serves as a major trail hub. The Skeet Lodge serves as a visitor center, while all of the other historic ranch buildings are used for operational purposes.

- Los Liones Canyon includes an outdoor amphitheatre / classroom, restrooms, several picnic ramadas, and small parking lots. The area serves as a popular trailhead and day-use area. Planned improvements currently include an additional restroom, parking modifications, and interpretive elements.
- Lower Topanga is an area in transition from commercial and residential land uses to park land and open space. Interim facilities include parking, a small picnic area, a local trail and scenic overlook, and portable restrooms.
- Numerous trailheads and trail junctions offer limited facilities throughout the Park, including some combination of restrooms, parking, picnic tables, viewpoint seating and interpretive or trail signage. Hub Junction and the Dead Horse Trailhead are examples of such areas.

Facilities located adjacent to the Park include:

- Nearby gateway parks, operated by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and other public agencies, also provide visitor-use facilities. These include Temescal Canyon Gateway Park, Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park (Top of Reseda), San Vicente Mountain Park (Nike Missile Site), and Summit Valley-Ed Edelman Park (Top of Topanga Overlook).
- Will Rogers State Historic Park is located adjacent to the Park and is a portal to the Park's back country, providing parking, restrooms, and equestrian staging areas. This historic park offers a small visitor center, house museum, polo field, and other historic ranch features. It is the eastern terminus of the Backbone Trail.

The Park also contains significant cultural resources, both historical and archaeological, and significant ecological resources including wildlife corridors and sensitive riparian and upland habitats that support a variety of wildlife species, some that are considered sensitive by local, State and/or Federal agencies.

PROJECT LOCATION: The Park is located primarily within the City of Los Angeles but portions are also located in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The Park is bounded on the south by the neighborhoods of Pacific Palisades and Brentwood, on the west by Topanga Canyon, and on the east by Rustic Canyon (Figure 1). The Park is located on the eastern edge of the Santa Monica Mountains and is within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). Topanga State Park is one of the four original cornerstone parks of the SMMNRA, which was created by an Act of Congress in 1978 as an inter-linked system of parklands and open spaces co-operatively managed by federal and state park agencies, as well as local governments and private landowners.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS AND MITIGATIONS: The project has the potential to cause significant effects on aesthetics, cultural resources, hazards, and noise. To reduce potential impacts of the proposed project the General Plan will identify broad level avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures. Additional environmental review will be conducted as more specific projects within the designated management areas/corridors are proposed.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: Public meetings and workshops are an important part of the general planning process and CDPR's public involvement program. The first workshop

focused on existing conditions and issue identification and was held on September 29, 2009. We anticipate the second workshop will be held on May 11, 2010 at the Stewart Hall facility at Temescal Canyon Gateway Park; however please check the following website for the most up-to-date information regarding this meeting http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=25956. CDPR will present project alternatives for public consideration and comment. The third workshop will present the preferred alternative for public consideration and has not yet been scheduled.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Once written and prepared, the Preliminary General Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be made available for public review and comment in accordance with CEQA. The Preliminary General Plan/EIR will then be refined, and responses to public comments prepared. The Preliminary General Plan/Final EIR will then be presented along with public comments and responses to comments, to the California State Parks and Recreation Commission Hearing for approval. Subsequent to approval, a General Plan will be prepared to guide the uses, appropriate facilities, and management at the Park. Site specific facility development plans will be subsequently prepared in conformance with the approved General Plan and CEQA, as funding becomes available. Notices associated with the project's CEQA review are available at: http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=25956 and http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=983.

Your response must be sent to the address below not later than thirty (30) days after the receipt of this notice and should include a mailing address. We would appreciate the name of a contact person in your agency.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTACT PERSON:

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