

Topanga Natural Preserve

Natural Preserve Definition. Natural Preserves [PRC § 5019.71] are distinct 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 Euro-American modifications, 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. Natural Preserves shall be managed to allow natural dynamics of ecological interaction to continue without interference, where possible. 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. Motor vehicle use is prohibited in Natural Preserves (see DOM Section 0304.5.2).

Proposed Size. Approximately 41 ha (100 ac).

Location in Park. Topanga Creek from Topanga Lagoon up to approximately 6,000 m (19,686 ft) upstream from Pacific coast highway including all associated 2nd order drainages.

Justifications for creation of the Topanga Natural Preserve

- The southern California steelhead was listed as an endangered species on October 17, 1997. The population as a whole continues to decline and is in danger of extinction according to the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- The southern California steelhead are descendants of the original species that appeared after the Ice Age melt (Knite 2008).
- The Topanga Creek Watershed is the second largest watershed in the Santa Monica Mountains and Topanga Creek is one of only three drainages that support southern steelhead in the Santa Monica Bay watershed.
- Topanga Creek has not yet been "invaded by any exotic fishes, bullfrogs, or the New Zealand Mud Snail (Dagit 2009).
- Year round water sources (groundwater, seeps and springs) within Topanga Canyon are directly correlated to distribution of steelhead in Topanga Creek (Tobias 2006).
- There are six critical riparian zone functions that are essential to the development and maintenance of aquatic habitats (Spence et al. 1996) including.
 - ❖ Providing shade;
 - ❖ Controlling sediment;
 - ❖ Contributing large woody debris;
 - ❖ Adding organic matter;
 - ❖ Stabilizing streambanks;
 - ❖ Regulating pollutants;
- Establishment of riparian buffers is accepted as the most effective way of protecting aquatic and riparian resources (Cummins et al. 1994).

