

# News Release



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** Stephanie Campbell, Los Angeles Sector  
(323) 441-9181  
scampbell@parks.ca.gov

## **Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook Grand Opening**

### **New Breathtaking Views, Trails and Visitor Center near Los Angeles**

CULVER CITY – California State Parks is about to open to the public the last large swath of open space in one of the most densely populated regions of California.

“We wanted to provide a tranquil respite from big city life,” said State Parks Director Ruth Colman. “Now, people living in this highly congested area can get out and experience nature close to home.”

The Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, in western Los Angeles County, will open this month. Visitors will be able to hike trails through restored native habitat, enjoy a state-of-the-art visitor center and take in 360-degree panoramic views, 500 feet above the Los Angeles basin.

Visitors are invited “*Back to Nature in the City*” for a grand opening celebration on April 18. The event includes dignitaries, music, guided tours, bird watching, native plant restoration, eco crafts, refreshments and healthy food for the whole family. A press event is scheduled from 10 am to 12 pm with fun and festivities for the public offered from noon to sunset.

From the overlook, visitors can see panoramic views with the Pacific Ocean, Santa Monica and Century City to the west; Marina del Rey to the south; dramatic views of the downtown Los Angeles skyline to the east; to the north-east Griffith Observatory, the Hollywood Hills, and Hollywood Sign. Also visible are the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains and the entirety of the Ballona Creek watershed.

The visitor center complex will take advantage of these dramatic vistas to tell the cultural history of Los Angeles ranging from the Native American period to the arrival of Europeans and the growth that followed. The story of urban Los Angeles will be traced through the development of the movie, oil and transportation industries, all of which dramatically influenced the transformation of the landscape.

(more)

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The opening of the overlook solidifies the California State Parks' commitment to bringing open space and recreational opportunities to traditionally underserved, ethnically diverse communities in urban Los Angeles. More than three million residents live within a five-mile radius. The majority of these residents are low-income, minority families with limited access to open space. The ratio of open space per resident in this area is less than one acre per thousand people, far below the recommended state and national standards.

The opening of the overlook is the culmination of State Parks bond funded Urban Parks Initiative which invested over \$150 million dollars in new urban park projects in Los Angeles' most park-poor neighborhoods. The land, formerly known as Vista Pacifica, was first acquired in 2000 with partial funding from the 'Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond act of 2000' (Proposition 12). Approximately \$32 million dollars from Prop 12 was used along with funding from other sources to acquire 68 acres for a total of \$41.1 million dollars.

With additional construction funds in the amount of \$6.9 million dollars provided through Proposition 40, the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook represents a \$50 million dollar investment in the community that ardently supported and advocated the establishment of this land as a State Park and public resource for their neighborhood.

Visitors will enjoy a showcase for native plants and animals including California's unique coastal sage scrub habitat. A partnership with Los Angeles Audubon will provide interpretive programming and fill a need for park visitors and local schools that do not have natural resource and educational programs readily available.

State Parks received a generous donation of multimedia equipment from Sony Pictures Entertainment for use in the visitor center theater, in conjunction with the State Parks' PORTS (Parks Online Resource for Teachers and Students) program. The program and equipment will enhance the visitor experience and make the center a portal to the best of State Parks' natural and cultural resources.

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