

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

LOS ANGELES RIVER CENTER & GARDENS
570 WEST AVENUE TWENTY-SIX, SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065
PHONE (323) 221-8900
FAX (323) 221-9001
WWW.SMMC.CA.GOV



November 8, 2010

Ms. Anne Dove, Project Manager
National Park Service
Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study
570 West Avenue 26, Suite 175
Los Angeles, California 90065

Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study

Dear Ms. Dove:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy appreciates this opportunity to provide written comments on the National Park Service (NPS) Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study. This letter summarizes and is a supplement to our participation in the NPS public community scoping meetings. Staff has earlier consulted with you and provided background materials and older study information on the Conservancy's Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor. The NPS Rim of the Valley Special Resource Study is a long awaited mechanism designed to incorporate and synthesize many years of land conservation efforts by local, state, and federal agencies and community groups, and will result, we trust, in a blueprint for the National Park Service to assist and enhance preservation of wildlife linkages, recreational opportunities, and public programs beyond the current Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area boundaries.

Background

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's statutory jurisdiction includes the Santa Monica Mountains Zone and the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor. The ROV Trail Corridor was first established by the State Legislature beginning in 1983 with a bill that provided that the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor would be a system of recreational trails connecting parks and open space lands around the San Fernando and La Crescenta Valleys. A map was prepared by the Conservancy in compliance with Section 33105.5 of Division 23 of the state Public Resources Code, and filed with the Secretary of State in June 1984. (The legislation and the map built upon the idea promoted by trail activist Marge Feinberg in her Rim of the Valley Trail master's thesis at Cal State Northridge.)

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The Legislature also called for a trail route between Griffith Park and El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. Between 1984 and 2009, the State Legislature periodically authorized the Conservancy to further expand the ROV Trail Corridor. The Santa Clarita Woodlands were included in 1989, and the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan was adopted in June 1990, which called for preservation of wildlife habitat linkages, and recreational trail connections in a larger geographic area between the Santa Monica Mountains and the ranges to the north: the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, San Rafael Hills, and portions of the San Gabriel Mountains. In 2002 the ROV Corridor was enlarged after study by the Conservancy to include the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed and all of Upper Los Angeles River Watershed in the San Gabriel Mountains and Angeles National Forest. The most recent legislation allowed for Elsmere Canyon between Santa Clarita and Sylmar to be included in the ROV Trail Corridor boundaries.

Recommendations

The NPS Special Resource Study should incorporate at least all the Conservancy's current Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor jurisdiction. The study should additionally include these important geographic areas:

Connections between the two segments of Angeles National Forest via the Pacific Crest Trail and the Upper Santa Clara River.

Connecting north-south linkages across the Santa Clara River between the Santa Susana Mountains and Los Padres National Forest, as identified in the South Coast Wildlands Missing Linkages study.

The Los Angeles River as a recreational trail and natural resource linkage from Downtown Los Angeles westward to the Santa Monica Mountains, using the "Los Angeles River Urban Wildlife Refuge" concept study commissioned by the Conservancy as one potential tool.

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Opportunities in the Calleguas Creek Watershed for watershed protection, restoration, trail and recreational access that link existing local, state, and federal parklands.

Further, the study will ideally also address potential restoration, community involvement, nature programming, and public access to natural area parks, especially from intensely urban neighborhoods.

If you have any questions or if our staff can be of further service, please call Rorie Skei, Chief Deputy Director, at (310) 589-3200, extension 112, or Paul Edelman, Deputy Director for Natural Resources and Planning, at extension 128.

Sincerely,

ANTONIO GONZALEZ
Chairperson

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