

**Report from Naming Policy Subcommittee, SMMC Chair Irma Munoz
and Advisory Committee Member Alan Kishbaugh, to the SMMC Board and Advisory
Committee**

Recommendation: That a codified policy not be adopted, but that a general approach remain in place for those infrequent opportunities to recognize extraordinary contributions to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, with direction to the Conservancy staff to use its best discretion in consultation with the SMMC Board Chairperson.

Further, that opportunities to honor other individuals be encouraged, with staff facilitation, such as annual memorial hikes, donations in the name of the individual, interpretative materials in a park kiosk, or reinstating a 'donation wall.'

The SMMC Board authorized a Naming Policy Subcommittee to review and discuss options for whether to create a formalized mechanism for place-naming of Conservancy-owned parklands, trails, and buildings. The initiative came about from a request by an individual who wants the Conservancy to name a trailhead after a friend who had led many hikes in the mountains, but whose volunteer activity was previously not directly affiliated with the agency. Similar requests have arisen from time to time for the Conservancy to honor individuals whose accomplishments may be very worthy, but may be not be directly linked to the agency.

Up to this date, the Conservancy has based the naming of any parks, trails, or buildings almost entirely on recognition of individuals who have been directly affiliated with or very well-known to the agency and have made substantial contributions that have directly contributed to the success of the agency, such as financial, political, and historical linkages, volunteerism, or similar manifestations of solidarity. Such naming has typically been informally initiated by the staff in consultation with the Board Chair. Examples include:

Ed Davis Park in Towsley Canyon, where former State Senator Ed Davis was honored in his lifetime for his legislation and support for preserving the Santa Clarita Woodlands, securing funding, and extending the Conservancy's legislative authority to that geographic area.

Michael D. Antonovich Open Space Preserve, which came about from a BFI Sunshine Canyon Landfill mitigation buffer requirement that the Supervisor's motion imposed on BFI in the early 1990's, which resulted in the 500+ acre pristine forested area to be preserved as part of the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park.

Sonia Thompson Nature Center, which was named in honor of the earliest employee besides the Executive Director, of the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission and the Conservancy from 1977 to her retirement in 1990.

Peter Strauss Ranch, since turned over to the National Park Service, was named after the owner-actor as part of the acquisition purchase agreement, in which the owner accepted less than appraised value with the offer to name the park after him.

The Augustus F. Hawkins Natural Park in South Los Angeles, built by the Conservancy and Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA) on city-owned land and since turned over to LA City Recreation and Parks Department, was so named at the suggestion of then-Los Angeles City Councilwoman Rita Walters, to honor the first African-American congressman from the area. The Evan Frankel Nature Center in the park was so named to recognize a large monetary donation from relatives of Mr. Frankel toward building the park.

Charles and Lotte Melhorn Scenic Overlook on Mulholland Drive honors Charles Melhorn, an early and consistent -advocate for creation of the Conservancy and protection of the Santa Monica Mountains in parklands in his capacity with the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations. His wife Lotte Melhorn helped create the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom in Franklin Canyon, was a many-decades volunteer there, and provided significant monetary donations to the park during her lifetime, and in her will.

Jerome C. Daniel Hollywood Bowl Overlook was re-dedicated in honor of Mr. Daniel, in recognition of his service as the longest-serving member of the Conservancy Board, and his tireless advocacy of the Conservancy, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and the preservation of parklands throughout the area.

Other recent Conservancy honorees include Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and former Coastal Commissioner Sara Wan.

But there are many dozens of other individuals well known to the agency who have made substantial contributions of time and volunteerism, that we have not yet and may never be able to fully honor or commemorate with a place naming, but who are surely deserving of praise and recognition whether that results in a place naming, or other memorial: The late Ron Schafer, Milt McAuley, Peter Douglas, Eldred Lokker, and Grant Gerson come to mind, not to mention MRCA's own Environmental Interpretation staffer, the late Robin Smith, and long time WODOC volunteer Rae Mitchell. And happily still with us are park and trail supporters including Advisory Committee Member Dave Brown, Linda Palmer, Don Mullally, Liz Blackwelder, many long-time WODOC volunteers, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council workers, interpretive hike leader volunteers with the agency, Mountain Bike Unit and Mounted Assistance Unit volunteers in our parks.

The Committee recommends that in the cases of outside individuals or entities being recommended for naming, absent a substantial monetary contribution to the agency for that purpose, that (a) the staff facilitate programs such as a one-time or annual memorial trail hike or ride; or

(b) Continue to accept memorial or honoring donations in the name of the honoree, for specified purposes in consultation with the donor (e.g., for a particular park, trail, or nature interpretive program purposes); and/or

(c) Explore reinstating a donations /memorial placque, listing honorees, to be displayed at Franklin Canyon Park or other public location.