

**TESTIMONY
OF
MAYOR ROBERT KELLAR
CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA**

**SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS, FORESTS, AND MINING**

S. 771

**PROJECT HISTORY, PRIOR FEDERAL LEGISLATION,
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCERNS**

NOVEMBER 20, 2013

SUMMARY

The City of Santa Clarita, California supports S. 771, for reasons outlined in this background document and in conformance with Mayor Bob Kellar's oral testimony to be presented on November 20, 2013, which accompanies this submission.

S. 771, sponsored by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), provides a reasoned solution to a difficult dispute that is now in its fourteenth year. The bill ensures that the long-term needs of the community are met through elimination of mining at the site. Over the past two decades, significant growth in the community has placed the once remote proposed mining site adjacent to a vibrant, urbanizing city. An important additional value supporting enactment of S. 771 is that it facilitates preservation of irreplaceable ecological natural resources, protection of species, and creates an important urban/wildland interface balance, complementing existing federal interests in the area. Furthermore, the bill provides for fair and appropriate compensation of CEMEX for the value of their valid mining contracts with the Bureau of Land Management.

During the past five years, four resource studies participated in by the United States Forest Service, National Park Service, or Bureau of Land Management have identified important ecological natural resources within the Upper Santa Clara River watershed, where the mine is proposed to be located. The studies, developed independently by the various federal agencies, provide significant new information that was unknown at the time the Record of Decision for the project was issued in 2000.

The commonly found aggregate is readily available throughout California and can be accessed at other locations. California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird's strong support for S. 771 validates both the importance of the recent federal resources studies and the availability of sand and gravel within the State of California, exclusive of the site under the two federal contracts.

S. 771 is the product of over six years of partnership between the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX in a mutual effort to find a responsible resolution to a seemingly intractable problem. The bill facilitates a winning scenario for the community, contract holder, and the United States government!

PROJECT HISTORY

Over the past fourteen years, the City of Santa Clarita, California and CEMEX have been in dispute over a proposed 56,000,000 ton (net) sand and gravel mine, to be located in the Soledad Canyon area, immediately east of the City of Santa Clarita. CEMEX currently holds two valid mining contracts (CA-22901 and CA-20139) issued by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on split estate; with the City of Santa Clarita owning the surface estate and the underlying mineral estate owned by BLM. The two contracts are each ten years in duration and, with consecutive application, represent twenty years of projected mining. The federal mining contracts were originally awarded almost a quarter century ago, in March 1990, with the Record of Decision for the project issued in August 2000.

It is certainly arguable that these contracts would not be issued today; in part, based upon rapid community urbanization and new information contained in recently completed and currently-in-progress federal resource studies. The studies have identified the Upper Santa Clara River area, in which the mining project is proposed to be located, as environmentally significant. The vast majority of information contained in the new studies was not known at the time the project's environmental documents were prepared and the Record of Decision issued. These new studies, coming forward within the past five years, have been conducted or participated in by the United States Forest Service, National Park Service, or Bureau of Land Management.

In addition to the new information related to the Upper Santa Clara River watershed, the project will significantly increase regional traffic congestion and negatively impact air quality. According to the environmental documents, at full operation the mine is anticipated to place 1164 additional truck trips daily onto California State Route 14, continuing south into the greater Los Angeles metropolitan freeway and arterial system. During an average day, once the project is fully online, this will mean one additional large truck on local roadways every two minutes, 24 hours per day! In addition to traffic congestion concerns, the mine is expected to negatively impact air quality within the geographically self-contained Santa Clarita Valley. According to the 2004 *South Coast Air Quality Management District Santa Clarita Valley Subregional Analysis*, while PM 10 emissions from the project would not exceed the federal standard; the more protective State of California standard would be exceeded. Furthermore, according to the study, "Santa Clarita does not meet the federal and California ozone air quality standards."

During the period from 1999 through 2006, the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX engaged in a bitter legal and public relations battle, costing both entities several million dollars. These efforts failed to resolve the dispute and both parties ultimately came to the conclusion that a cooperative strategy was more likely to yield results acceptable to both parties. Since 2007, the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX have been working in partnership to secure a legislative resolution to the ongoing dispute over proposed large-scale mining in Soledad Canyon.

Existing law does not provide the Department of the Interior with the necessary administrative authority to significantly modify or cancel the contracts. Federal legislation is required to provide authorization for the Secretary of the Interior to cancel the mining contracts and compensate CEMEX for the fair market value of their contracts with BLM. Enactment of federal legislation will facilitate fair compensation of CEMEX and protection of important natural resources identified by the various federal agencies through their studies.

During each of the last three sessions of Congress, Senator Boxer has introduced legislation to resolve the dispute between the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX. Additionally, going back almost a decade, in 2004, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) first addressed the dispute legislatively by introducing S. 2058, which terminated the two federal mining contracts, but did not provide compensation for CEMEX. A similar measure, H.R. 3529 had been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA-25) in late 2003.

In the 108th (S. 2058/H.R. 3529), 109th (H.R. 5471), 110th (H.R. 5887), 111th (S. 3057/H.R. 4332), 112th (S. 759/H.R. 6469) and 113th (S. 771) Congresses, there has been legislation introduced in either the Senate, House of Representatives, or both houses in an ongoing effort to bring a successful resolution to the issue. For a variety of reasons, many unrelated to the content of the measures, earlier efforts have been unsuccessful. However, each iteration of the legislation has served as a catalyst for discussion; resulting in refined language designed to meet the needs of the parties and resolve the long-term conflict in the best manner possible.

S.771 BACKGROUND

In April 18, 2013, Senator Barbara Boxer introduced S. 771, the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act. This bill was carefully crafted by Senator Boxer to incorporate three key components desired by the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX, as central to any successful legislative effort: 1) cancellation of the two ten-year consecutive valid mining contracts between BLM and CEMEX; 2) withdrawal of the site that is the subject of the two mining contracts from further mineral entry; meaning that the Secretary of the Interior is prohibited from further contracting, leasing or other conveyance of a right to mine the property; and 3) compensation of CEMEX for the fair market value of the two contracts.

An important element to this year’s legislative effort is the addition of Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) as a co-sponsor of S. 771. In addition to his long-standing leadership on the issue, United States Representative Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA-25) has expressed his personal support for enactment of S. 771, thus demonstrating strong bi-partisan support for a legislative resolution to the prolonged dispute.

The funds to fairly compensate CEMEX are derived from the sale of approximately 10,200 acres of BLM owned properties in San Bernardino County, California that have already been identified for disposal in the adopted 2006 *West Mojave Land Management Plan*. The lands are already slated to be sold by BLM and S. 771 simply establishes a specific time period in which the sales shall occur. All of the lands identified for sale have been vetted by the Sierra Club, which is in support of the bill.

In the event that the value of the lands identified for sale is less than the value of the contracts established by the Secretary of the Interior, S. 771 directs that the Secretary shall work with the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX to financially participate in the elimination of the shortfall. Both entities have assured Senator Boxer of their good-faith commitment to evaluate financial participation, should that become necessary.

THE CHANGING DYNAMIC OF THE SANTA CLARITA AREA

At the time the original contracts were issued in 1990, the population of the City of Santa Clarita was approximately 110,000 people. Today's population is almost double that at approximately 204,000, with an additional 70,000 people residing in the adjacent unincorporated areas of the geographically self-contained Santa Clarita Valley. In terms of population, Santa Clarita is the third largest municipality of the eighty-eight cities in Los Angeles County, behind Los Angeles and Long Beach. Santa Clarita ranks, by population, in the top 5% of California's 482 incorporated municipalities. The City of Santa Clarita was recently identified as the fastest growing city in California, based upon 2012 population figures provided by the California Department of Finance.

The Santa Clarita Valley is a geographically separate area, located immediately north of the City of Los Angeles. The community is essentially surrounded on three sides by the Angeles National Forest. The Santa Clara River, the largest relatively natural, free flowing river in Southern California bisects the community; as it travels east to west from Los Angeles County, through Ventura County, and flows into the Pacific Ocean.

For a number of years, there has been significant interest in preserving the natural habitat and other important ecological resources of the Upper Santa Clara River area, which is strategically located between the northern and southern segments of the Angeles National Forest. Additionally, the Pacific Crest Trail, which runs the entire length of the west coast, traverses the area and provides important interconnectivity with regional and local trail systems (refer to map entitled *Trails and Open Spaces Parks and Recreations Planning Map*).

Four critical studies have been conducted or are being conducted that are now quantifying the importance of the Upper Santa Clara River area. Each of these studies is outlined below.

EAST SANTA CLARITA LAND CONSERVATION CONCEPT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In 2008, a coalition comprised of the City of Santa Clarita, County of Los Angeles, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, United States Forest Service, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and Vulcan Materials Company (a major land owner in the area), developed the *East Santa Clarita Land Conservation Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy*. This collaboration built upon a number of earlier efforts, which identified the importance of connecting the northern and southern sections of the Angeles National Forest to facilitate critical wildlife linkages and habitat preservation.

The Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) was identified and a strategic effort was set into motion to begin purchasing properties, thus implementing the long held vision of connecting critical connections between the two sections of the Angeles National Forest. The CAPP area includes approximately 26,000 acres and the proposed mining site is located within the zone.

The 2005 Land Management Plan for the Angeles National Forest states, “*Opportunities for establishment of regional wildlife linkages to improve connectivity between the San Gabriel, Castaic, and Santa Susana Mountains exist and are needed in this place. Potential threats to sensitive habitat areas include developed and dispersed recreation, mining, wildland fire, and groundwater extraction.*” The report also states that, “*The national forest will work collaboratively with others to acquire land that contains unique resources; is needed for continued public access; enhances public use; or improves habitat linkage.*”

The plan also emphasizes the importance of the Pacific Crest Trail, a portion of which is located within the identified CAPP area. The Pacific Crest Trail is a 2,663 mile trail, running the entire length of the three west coast states from Canada to Mexico. The trail was designated a National Scenic Trail under the National Trails System Act of 1968.

For further information, please reference the *East Santa Clarita Land Conservation Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy* included with this submission.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE: RIM OF THE VALLEY CORRIDOR SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

The National Park Service has initiated the *Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study*, under authority granted through the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-229). The purpose of the study is to determine whether any of the evaluation area is eligible to be designated as part of the national park system or added to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. In the event that direct federal management is not appropriate, the study contemplates alternatives for government agencies at all levels and private entities to work in partnership to protect the area’s resources and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

The study is currently in progress, with an anticipated completion date sometime during calendar year 2014. Although not yet complete, the study has already identified Nationally Significant Natural Resources in the Upper Santa Clara River area, in which the proposed mining site is located.

According to the National Park Service's Fall 2012 Newsletter #3 regarding the Rim of the Valley study, "*The Upper Santa Clara River contains some of the highest quality, least disturbed and biotically intact acreage of big-cone Douglas fir-canyon oak forest, riparian forest and woodland, coastal sage scrub, and alluvial fan sage scrub. Invertebrate species diversity is very high with over 2,500 species.*"

For further information, please reference the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service *Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study Newsletter #3 – Fall 2012* included with this submission.

SAN GABRIEL WATERSHED AND MOUNTAINS SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

The National Park Service recently completed the *San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*. The Secretary of the Interior transmitted the study to Congress on April 10, 2013. The study zone overlaps a portion of the area contained within the *Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study*, including portions of the Upper Santa Clara River watershed.

The San Gabriel study's selected alternative establishes a San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The report further identifies the importance of strong partnerships between the federal government, state and local governments, non-profit organizations, and landowners as being the key toward achieving the conservation, recreation, and educational goals of the new unit.

The study highlights the Santa Clara River as "*the last unchannelized riparian and wildlife corridor in the region, providing the primary remaining east-west biological connection between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.*" The study goes on to note that "*the Santa Clara River functions as an important corridor between the mountains and the ocean. Protecting this corridor is a high priority for local and state agencies as well as conservation groups.*"

For further information, please reference the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service *San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study* extractions relating to Upper Santa Clara River included with this submission.

SOUTH COAST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Bureau of Land Management is currently completing the *South Coast Resource Management Plan*. This study has identified a number of potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for adoption under the new management plan. According to the study, "*ACECs are areas where special management attention is needed to protect, and to*

prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, and scenic values; fish or wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes; or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards.”

The current effort identifies eight existing ACECs and proposes up to eight additional environmentally critical areas be added to the updated *South Coast Resource Management Plan*. The Upper Santa Clara River ACEC is identified in Alternatives B and D in the draft environmental document. Alternative B identifies 32,368 acres and Alternative D identifies 31,713 acres that partially overlay and complement the Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) established in the *East Santa Clarita Land Conservation Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy*. There are 1,620 acres of BLM land within the proposed Upper Santa Clara River Area of Environmental Concern.

The rationale for seeking the Upper Santa Clara River ACEC designation recognizes the importance of maintaining the wildlife corridors and habitat in the area. The draft federal report underscores the important role of the Santa Clara River as a breeding ground, a wildlife travel route, for flood control, and groundwater recharge.

While the report and accompanying maps acknowledge the significant resource value of the area, the report is careful to specifically carve out the proposed CEMEX mining site from inclusion in the Area of Critical Environmental Concern under the preferred alternative (D). In reviewing the map, this is clearly a political decision vs. an objective environmental decision, as the lines eliminating the site are drawn in conformance with the mining site’s property boundaries. In its selection of the preferred alternative, it would appear that the department is concerned about not compromising its valid mining contracts. However, another alternative (B) shows that inclusion of the mining site does strongly suggest environmental value to the department. The report talks in terms of making the designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern off limits for major surface disturbance activities, while creating a specific exception for “State of California Division of Mines and Geology classified and designated sand and gravel resources in Los Angeles County.”

The draft South Coast Resource Management Plan very clearly recognizes the significant natural ecological resource value in the Upper Santa Clara River watershed and is generally consistent with the findings of the other federal and non-federal environmental resource studies.

For further information, please reference United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management *South Coast Resource Management Plan*, Appendix H, relating to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and maps for Alternative B and Alternative D, included with this submission.

SANTA CLARITA OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION DISTRICT

In 2007, the voters of Santa Clarita established an Open Space Preservation District. Santa Clarita voters realized that their personal financial participation was necessary for ensuring that local open space preservation and habitat enhancement goals are achieved. Since the City of

Santa Clarita's incorporation in December 1987, the City Council and community have been committed to establishing a green-belt around the City. This green-belt builds on existing federal land ownership, primarily in the form of the Angeles National Forest, which surrounds the City of Santa Clarita on the northern, eastern and southern sides. Complementary State of California open space and park ownerships, primarily in the form of the 4,000-acre Santa Clarita Woodlands Park and other Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy owned and managed properties, provide open space buffers and habitat linkages on the southern and western flanks of the City of Santa Clarita.

Since the City of Santa Clarita's incorporation in 1987, the Santa Clarita City Council, in partnership with the community, has made a strong commitment toward enhancing local and regional open space and parklands, in addition to building and connecting trail linkages. For example, over the past six years, Open Space Preservation District funding has been leveraged to acquire approximately 2,000 acres. Important natural resources, irreplaceable habitat, and open space are now being preserved in perpetuity.

COMPETING PRIORITIES

The current challenge is to balance the need for preserving irreplaceable natural resources in the Upper Santa Clara River watershed with the statewide need for construction aggregate. If the proposed mine moves forward, it will undoubtedly have a negative effect on open space retention, species protection, resource preservation and enhancement. The proposed CEMEX mine is located within areas identified in the four studies as important for preservation and habitat connectivity. The proposed mining site is also identified as an important, but not irreplaceable, source for construction aggregate within the San Fernando Valley-Saugus-Newhall aggregate study area, as outlined in the *Aggregate Sustainability in California 2012* report.

On October 3, 2013, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird wrote to Senator Boxer expressing "strong support" for S. 771. This statement of support is critical for two primary reasons. First, this is the only time that the State of California administration has expressed support for federal legislation relating to the proposed Soledad Canyon mining project. Second, Secretary Laird is charged, through the Department of Conservation--a constituent department of the California Natural Resources Agency, with identifying future aggregate resources in California and planning for future needs. A copy of Secretary Laird's letter in support of S. 771 is included with this submission.

Clearly, the Secretary believes that the ecological natural resources of the Upper Santa River area must be protected and that sufficient aggregate is available elsewhere in the state to meet California's future needs. S. 771 provides the legislative vehicle to facilitate realization of preservation and protection goals, which have been identified as important to the United States, State of California, City of Santa Clarita, and other public and private sector entities.

AGGREGATE AVAILABILITY IN CALIFORNIA

The California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey's *Aggregate Sustainability in California 2012* report was made publicly available in Spring 2013. The Department of Conservation is contained within the California Natural Resources Agency, under Secretary John Laird. This report is an update of the assessment published in 2006. The 2012 report identifies the availability of aggregate in California (sand, gravel and crushed stone) over the next 50 years. The California Department of Conservation divides the state into 31 aggregate study areas. Santa Clarita is included within the San Fernando Valley-Saugus-Newhall aggregate study area.

The 2012 California aggregate report identifies a statewide 50-year anticipated demand of 12,047,000,000 tons of aggregate. Currently, 4,067,000,000 tons of aggregate are permitted; meaning that "aggregate deposits that have been determined to be acceptable for commercial use, exist within properties owned or leased by aggregate producing companies, and have permits allowing mining of aggregate materials." The permitted deposits represent just under 34% of the identified statewide need over the next half-century.

The report also identifies approximately 74 billion tons of non-permitted aggregate resources within the 31 aggregate study areas, representing six times the anticipated statewide demand! Clearly, sand and gravel aggregate is not in short supply in California!

Within the San Fernando Valley-Saugus-Newhall study area, it has been determined that the 50-year aggregate demand is 476,000,000 tons. Currently, there are 77,000,000 tons permitted, representing approximately 16% of anticipated future demand. The proposed CEMEX mining project in Soledad Canyon is considered, for purposes of the study, to be a permitted project.

The proposed CEMEX project represents approximately 11.8% of the 50 year demand total for the local study area. Furthermore, BLM has identified the proposed CEMEX mining site as having an additional 300,000,000 tons of material, which would represent approximately 75% of the long term regional need. Over the past six years, permitted reserves in the San Fernando Valley-Saugus-Newhall study area have fallen by 11,000,000 tons or 13%, while the 50-year regional demand has increased by 19,000,000 tons or 4%. While BLM and the State of California have historically viewed the Soledad Canyon site as important to meeting future regional aggregate needs, the recent support of S. 771 by Secretary Laird places a premium on the protection and preservation of the ecological natural resources in the Upper Santa Clara River area.

In 2007, the City of Santa Clarita commissioned a study conducted by The Rose Institute of State and Local Government, Claremont-McKenna College, entitled *The Economic Impact of CEMEX's Soledad Canyon Project on the Surrounding Community and Los Angeles County*. This is an update to a study conducted in 2001, also authorized and paid for by the City of Santa Clarita. While the two studies were paid for by the City of Santa Clarita, the results were independently determined, as the City needed an unbiased, authoritative assessment of the proposed mining site's sand and gravel asset scarcity and importance. The updated study

determined that there were 11,500,000,000 tons of aggregate resources in Los Angeles County. This included permitted and non-permitted sand and gravel resources.

This number has not likely changed significantly over the past six years. As noted in the state report, it is highly unlikely that all the identified resources will be mined due to a number of reasons. The Rose Institute study does make the case that aggregate materials are not scarce and potentially available to meet anticipated demand!

During the past six and one-half years, the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX have been engaged in a highly public effort to legislatively resolve the now fourteen year old dispute over mining in Soledad Canyon and remove the site from the federal mineral portfolio. *A key question is “What sites have been identified or activities undertaken to secure additional permitted reserves within the San Fernando Valley-Saugus-Newhall study area during the past six years?”*

The state report acknowledges that while there are 74 billion tons of non-permitted aggregate resources identified within the 31 study areas throughout California, “it is unlikely that all of these resources will ever be mined because of social, environmental, or economic factors. The location of aggregate resources too close to urban or environmentally sensitive areas can limit or prevent their development.” The Soledad Canyon site is too close to urban and environmentally sensitive areas, based upon substantial growth in the community and the new federal studies coming forward. Secretary Laird’s letter of support for S. 771 appears to validate that perspective.

CONCLUSION:

The City of Santa Clarita respectfully requests that the members of the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining support S. 771.

CONTACT:

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Intergovernmental Relations Officer
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
JOHN LAIRD, Secretary for Natural Resources

October 3, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer:

I write to offer my strong support of the legislation you have introduced and Senator Feinstein has cosponsored to enact the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act (S. 771).

As you know, this bill provides the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX USA the path forward to successfully resolve a nearly fifteen year dispute involving sand and gravel contracts with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In addition to cancelling current mining contracts within the City of Santa Clarita that the city has consistently opposed, the bill directs BLM to sell 10,000 acres of public lands near the City of Victorville to compensate CEMEX for its cancelled contracts.

Your bill, S. 771, provides solutions for all parties engaged in this dispute and benefits an important watershed in Southern California. The City of Santa Clarita and its residents will greatly benefit from improved quality of life derived from large-scale sand and gravel mining operations moved to a more appropriate location. CEMEX is made whole for its cancelled contracts in Santa Clarita through the proceeds of other public lands already identified for disposal. Moreover, the natural resources located adjacent to the Upper Santa Clarita River, which contain critical riparian forest woodland and coastal sage scrub habitats, is protected and conserved to the benefit of the region and downstream into Ventura County.

S. 771 is supported by the City of Santa Clarita, CEMEX and additional stakeholders who see this as a solution to address the concerns of a fast growing community.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. If your office should have any questions about this issue, please contact Todd Ferrara, Deputy Secretary of External Affairs in my office at (916) 653-5656.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Laird'.

John Laird
Secretary for California Natural Resources

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814 Ph. 916.653.5656 Fax 916.653.8102 <http://resources.ca.gov>



cc: The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
The Honorable Ron Wyden, Chairman, Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
The Honorable Julia Brownley
The Honorable Tony Cardenas
The Honorable Brad Sherman
Jim Kenna, State Director, Bureau of Land Management
City of Santa Clarita
State Senator Fran Pavley
State Senator Steve Knight

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

Senate

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

June 14, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: S. 771 (Boxer and Feinstein)—The Soledad Canyon Settlement Act
POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Senators Boxer and Feinstein,

As representatives for the City of Santa Clarita and the Santa Clarita Valley, we are writing to express our support for your bill, S. 771. This legislation would cancel all current CEMEX USA mining contracts with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at the Soledad Canyon site in the City of Santa Clarita. The bill would direct the BLM to sell roughly 10,000 acres of public lands, identified for disposal, near the City of Victorville and use the proceeds to compensate CEMEX for its cancelled contracts.

The City of Santa Clarita has consistently opposed the proposed mine at Soledad Canyon due to concerns about the impacts of heavy blasting, aggregate crushing, air quality and traffic congestion associated with a mine that would potentially remove five million tons of sand and gravel per year. In addition to these concerns, the location of the CEMEX mine is adjacent to the Upper Santa Clara River which the National Park Service's Rim of the Valley Special Corridor Resources Study identified as containing critical riparian forest woodland and coastal sage scrub habitats. The protection and conservation of the Upper Santa Clara River is also critical to downstream constituents in Ventura County.

The area has seen tremendous growth since the original contracts were issued. The impact of a large-scale mining operation on the quality of life will impact our constituents directly. S. 771 proposes a win-win for both the City of Santa Clarita and CEMEX. The latest version of this bill has made important changes to help avoid a cost to federal taxpayers.

Thank you for introducing S. 771. We fully support this legislation and sincerely hope that the environment and health of this community will be protected.

Sincerely,



Fran Pavley
State Senator, 27th District



Steve Knight
State Senator, 21st District

Cc: U.S. Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, 25th CD
U.S. Congresswoman Julia Brownley, 26th CD
U.S. Congressman Tony Cardenas, 29th CD
U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman, 30th CD
City of Santa Clarita City Council

CARL BOYER
P.O. Box 220333
Santa Clarita, CA 91322-0333
(661) 259-3154 • cbover3154@yahoo.com

June 24, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
312 North Spring Street, Suite 1748
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Senator Boxer:

I want to express my fervent support for your bill, S. 771, the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act.

It is time for Congress to enact, in a bipartisan fashion, a solution to the huge threat that the mining contracts held by CEMEX from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management poses to the hundreds of thousands of people living in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Cancellation of the contracts in a fashion equitable to all will resolve the problems of air quality, spiraling costs of health care, and traffic congestion which will cost the Federal Government huge amounts of money each year over a very long time.

I hope those who are questioning potential costs of your bill will consider the negative economic impact of choking off the Antelope Valley from Los Angeles. It is obvious that every minute or two, as a CEMEX truck enters the freeway, drivers in the slow lane will brake, causing those behind them to brake more, and so on, until traffic comes to a halt in that lane, and slows in others as people try to change lanes.

Thank you very much for your continuing efforts to solve this tremendous problem.

Sincerely,

Carl Boyer, former Mayor, City of Santa Clarita

cc: U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein

✓ Members of the Santa Clarita City Council



June 4, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
312 N. Spring Street, Suite 1748
Los Angeles, CA 90012



Re: S. 771 (Boxer) Soledad Canyon Settlement Act – Support

Dear Senator Boxer:

Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) supports S. 771, the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act. CLWA is a public water wholesaler that provides about half of the water that Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) households and businesses use.

As you know, for 14 years, the City of Santa Clarita has been in a dispute with CEMEX USA regarding a mining proposal in Soledad Canyon, which is adjacent to the City. CEMEX currently holds mining contracts from the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which would allow for the extraction of 56 million tons of sand and gravel from Soledad Canyon over a maximum of twenty years.

S. 771 would provide the Secretary of the Interior with a balanced solution to cancel the sand and gravel mining contracts in Soledad Canyon and prohibit future mining at this site. This legislation will compensate CEMEX for the fair market value of the mining contracts by selling federal lands near Victorville, California, which are currently identified for disposal by BLM. S. 771 will also protect Santa Clarita Valley residents from the air pollution and traffic congestion that would result from a large scale mining operation in Soledad Canyon. Additionally, CLWA is concerned with the potential impacts of the proposed mine on the groundwater and surface water resources. The Santa Clarita Valley relies on groundwater for about half of its water supply. To the extent the proposed mine impacts those water supplies, CLWA would have to import additional water from the environmentally sensitive Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

CLWA strongly supports S.771 because it provides a reasonable solution among government, private business interests, environmental groups, and concerned citizens that benefits all organizations involved. Thank you for your efforts to enact this vital legislation and protect the Santa Clarita Valley from a large scale mine.

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SECRETARY

APRIL JACOBS

June 5, 2013

Page 2 of 2

Please contact me at (661) 513-1239 if you or your staff have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Masnada". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Dan Masnada
General Manager

cc: U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
Santa Clarita City Councilmembers



Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce

27451 Toumey Road, Suite 160 • Santa Clarita, CA 91355

(661) 702-6977 • (661) 702-6980

June 6, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
312 N. Spring Street, Suite 1748
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: SUPPORT for S. 771, the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act

Dear Senator Boxer:

I am writing today to inform you of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce's support of S. 771, the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act.

The Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce represents and promotes its 1,170 business members through leadership, advocacy and member services.

As you know, for 14 years, the City of Santa Clarita has been in a dispute with CEMEX USA regarding a mining proposal in Soledad Canyon, which is adjacent to Santa Clarita. CEMEX currently holds mining contracts from the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which would allow for the extraction of 56 million tons of sand and gravel from Soledad Canyon over a maximum of 20 years.

S. 771 will provide the Secretary of the Interior with a balanced solution to cancel the sand and gravel mining contracts in Soledad Canyon and prohibit future mining at this site. This legislation will compensate CEMEX for the fair market value of the mining contracts by selling federal lands near Victorville, CA, which are currently identified for disposal by BLM. S. 771 will also protect the people of the Santa Clarita Valley from the pollution and traffic congestion that would result from a large scale mining operation in Soledad Canyon.

The Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce strongly supports S.771 because it provides a reasonable solution between government, private business interests, environmental groups, and concerned citizens that benefits all organizations involved. Thank you for efforts to enact this vital legislation and protect Santa Clarita from a large scale mine!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terri K. Crain".

Terri K. Crain

cc: U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein:

11111 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 915
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Members of the Santa Clarita City Council:

23920 Valencia Blvd.
Santa Clarita, CA 91355



**Safe
Action
For the
Environment, Inc.**

Office of the President

COPY

May 28, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senator
Los Angeles District Office
312 North Spring Street, Suite 1748
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: SUPPORT AND THANK YOU – SENATE BILL S. 771
THE SOLEDAD CANYON SETTLEMENT ACT

Dear Senator Boxer:

With sincere thanks and profound gratitude, Safe Action For the Environment, Inc. (SAFE) is proud to offer its wholehearted support for the passage of Senate Bill S. 771 (The Soledad Canyon Settlement Act). We also thank Sen. Dianne Feinstein for her support of your legislation.

We believe the Soledad Canyon Settlement Act reflects a fair-minded approach to a complex situation that has evolved over the past two decades. By directing the Bureau of Land Management to cancel CEMEX USA's sand and gravel mining leases in Soledad Canyon and withdrawing the site from future mining, S. 771 addresses the concerns of area residents who have long been concerned that the mine would adversely impact air quality, human health and animal husbandry, traffic and overall quality of life.

The bill also calls for the BLM to sell surplus lands near Victorville, Calif., and utilize the proceeds to compensate CEMEX for the canceled contracts. This balanced solution addresses the concerns and interests of not only the affected communities, but also CEMEX itself.

This legislation has the strong support of Santa Clarita officials and SAFE is proud to add its support, too.

May 28, 2013

Page Two

SAFE was founded as a grass-roots effort by a group of concerned community members, and was formally incorporated in June 1999 as a California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation with a 501(C)(4) designation. The organization's mission has always been to defend the environmental integrity of the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. While we do not oppose mining projects in general, we have ardently disagreed with the size, scope and location of the Soledad Canyon project from its resurrection in 1999.

SAFE has been one of the preeminent organizations working alongside the City of Santa Clarita, the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County to the east and west of the City, the Antelope Valley cities of Palmdale and Lancaster, and numerous allies in a long-range effort to avert an environmental and logistical tragedy.

As part of our commitment to this issue, SAFE's Board of Directors hired a well-respected environmental attorney to professionally craft our responses to the BLM's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Los Angeles County's Environmental Impact Report (EIR); in addition, the Board authorized the commission of two comprehensive air quality studies, which were jointly submitted as comments to the EIS/EIR by SAFE and the City of Santa Clarita. Our organization has been working steadily for more than a decade to help reach a reasonable and equitable solution to this important matter.

SAFE's Board of Directors joins with the unprecedented coalition of businesses, educational bodies, political jurisdictions, environmental groups, governmental entities, labor organizations, media groups and others who support this legislation as a creative, balanced and fair resolution of this issue.

SAFE stands ready to assist you in any way to achieve passage of S. 771.

With warmest regards,

Andrew G. Fried
President
Safe Action For the Environment, Inc.



East Santa Clarita Land Conservation Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy

Santa Clarita Watershed and
Recreation Conservation Authority

City of Santa Clarita

Prepared by:
The Riverside Land Conservancy
The Dangermond Group

March 2008





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Executive Summary

The area east of the City of Santa Clarita, and west and south of the community of Agua Dulce, encompassing portions of Soledad Canyon and the Santa Clara River and its watershed, has been identified by multiple overlapping studies as a high priority for conservation. In addition, this area is threatened on many fronts from residential and industrial growth and the subdivision of many parcels. This study brings to focus the vision, goals, and needs of the area, reviews prior planning history, provides an overview of opportunities and challenges, and looks at comprehensive methods and options to achieve results.

The vision for this project is the implementation of a functioning wildlife corridor between the two segments of the Angeles National Forest, protection of the biodiversity of the area, creation of a green-belt east of the Santa Clarita City limits which buffers the community of Agua Dulce, establishment of a continuous trail system with connections to public parks and the Pacific Crest Trail, restoration of the Santa Clara River and tributaries with healthy populations of diverse species, and the redevelopment of disturbed areas.

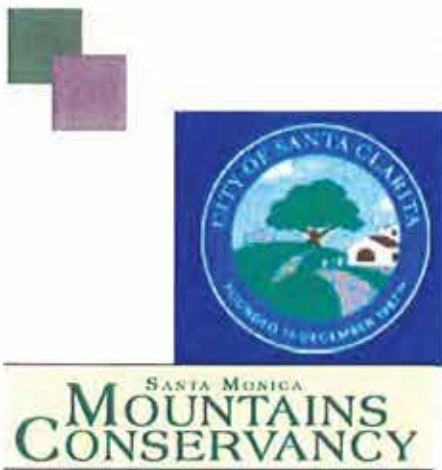
It will take many years and many organizations to preserve, protect, and restore the planning area. We believe, however, that by working together, it is possible to protect the area's open space, view sheds, important habitats, and the functioning wildlife corridor through the project area. In order to use limited resources wisely, we recommend specific strategies be employed in appropriate locations.

1. Available funding should be used prudently in the highest priority areas and should be combined and matched for as many properties as possible.
2. Project partners should work with the Pacific Crest Trail Association and the USDA Forest Service to identify priority parcels and assist with acquisitions and potential exchanges.
3. Active or proposed mining lands should be exchanged for lands outside of the project area, in less sensitive habitat areas, and mining lands redeveloped or restored.
4. Highly disturbed areas in the southwestern project area should be evaluated for redevelopment and appropriate mitigation or land dedications of open space.
5. Mitigation banks along the river should be created to develop the economic incentive to restore the Santa Clara River.
6. Where appropriate, density clustering and land dedications by developers should occur on the western edge of the project area in line with existing City and County planning guidelines.
7. The One Valley-One Vision Plan should incorporate the priorities and goals of this project.

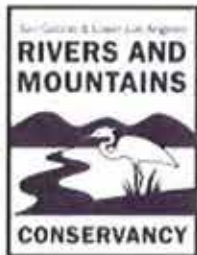


Introduction and Background

There are many different organizations working on land conservation throughout California, including many local, regional, and state agencies and hundreds of non-profit organizations, including land conservancies. So often, due perhaps to lack of resources such as staff time and money, land conservation occurs in an opportunistic fashion – one parcel at a time. This approach leads to spotty ownership that may or may not achieve overall goals of land conservation, such as protecting wildlife corridors, restoring or protecting functioning habitat, or protecting view sheds. Some areas are so important that they call for a concerted effort by many organizations, that is both proactive and opportunistic, to increase assurances that goals will be met and land will be protected. The land east of the City of Santa Clarita is an area that requires just such an effort.



The area east of the City of Santa Clarita, and west and south of the community of Agua Dulce, encompassing portions of Soledad Canyon and the Santa Clara River and its watershed, has been identified by multiple overlapping studies as a high priority for conservation. In addition, this area is threatened on many fronts from residential and industrial growth and the subdivision of many parcels. This study brings to focus the vision, goals, and needs of the area, reviews prior planning history, provides an overview of opportunities and challenges, and looks at comprehensive methods and options to achieve results.



RIVERSIDE



Project Introduction/History

The Riverside Land Conservancy (RLC) was retained by the City of Santa Clarita, Vulcan Materials Company (VMC), and the Santa Clarita Watershed and Recreation Conservation Authority (SCWRCA) (a Joint Powers Authority of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), and the City of Santa Clarita), to develop and complete an implementation strategy for open space and wildlife corridor preservation east of the City of Santa Clarita along a significant portion of the Santa Clara River. Many organizations have put forth large efforts to complete open space and conservation planning for this area, including South Coast Wildlands, the City of Santa Clarita, the County of Los Angeles, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and SMMC. Our goal in this project was to build upon the plans of others and to develop strategies to accomplish the goals set forth in those existing plans.

Partner Meetings

A wide group of partners was engaged in a series of meetings to define the project area and to discuss and evaluate a set of implementation strategies for that area. Partners from the City of Santa Clarita included staff from the Redevelopment Department, Plan-

ning Department, Parks Department, Acquisition Department and the City Manager's office. Active partners also included staff from the Los Angeles County Parks and Planning Departments, VMC, and many of the locally active conservation agencies and non-profit organizations including: SMMC, MRCA, RMC, SCWRCA, and TNC. Because the project area forms a necessary and missing linkage between the two arms of the Angeles National Forest, staff members from the USDA Forest Service also participated as a partner. Specific representatives from partner groups are listed in Appendix A.

Partners met for several hours every four to eight weeks over a period of approximately one year to discuss project scope, vision and goals, strategies, models, acquisitions and outreach. RLC staff and consultants organized and facilitated the meetings, presenting several acquisition strategies, which were then discussed and amended by the group. Discussions also focused on GIS mapping and modeling that were completed by RLC consultants, and updated based on partner comments. Each meeting also had focused discussions on landowner appraisals and contacts that were initiated by RLC and partners. A final topic of the partner meetings was the involvement of stakeholders in the process and preparing for stakeholder outreach.

Project Area

The area for this project was focused on lands east of the City of Santa Clarita limits, in between the two sections of the Angeles National Forest, and west and south of the community of Agua Dulce. The project area includes lands identified in the San Gabriel-Castaic Linkage of South Coast Wildlands Missing Linkages project, as well as lands identified in the Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The total acreage for the project area is approximately 26,000 acres.

West of the project area lies the City of Santa Clarita, which encompasses approximately 52 square miles between Interstate 5 and State Highway 14. The City has a current population of approximately 177,000. Over the past seven years, the City's population has grown by 17.9%. It is projected to reach 226,000 residents by the year 2030 (City of Santa Clarita Community Demographics). This projected population growth is putting strains on the open space surrounding the city as more land is developed to meet the needs of the expanding population.

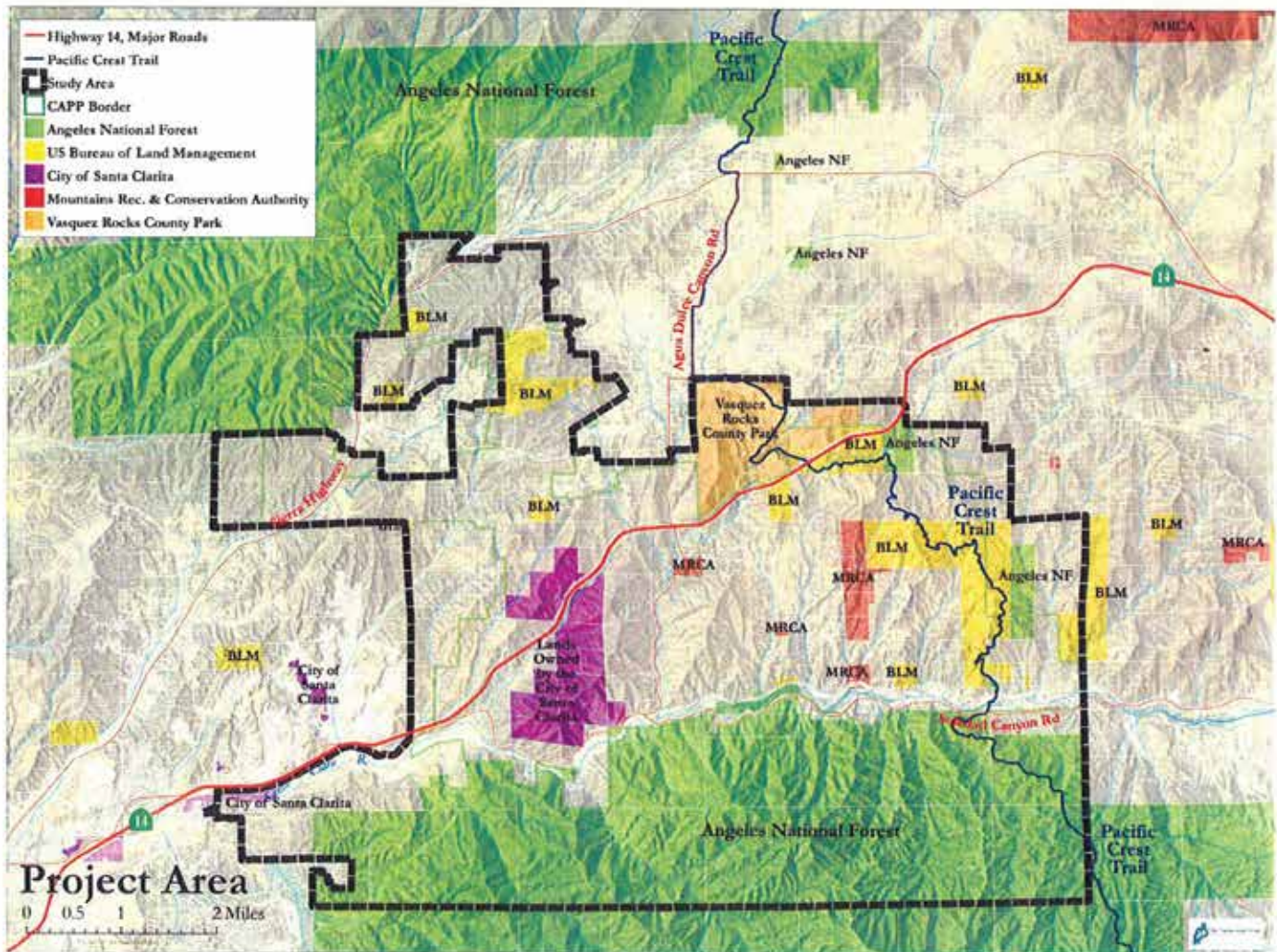
The project area is characterized by large areas of open space surrounding the Santa Clara River and its tributaries, with uplands of chaparral and coastal sage scrub intersected by canyons of coast live oak woodlands, riparian woodlands, and alluvial fan sage scrub. According to South Coast Wildlands, indicator species and





species of concern in the project area include spotted owl, mule deer, badger, puma, blotched salamander, western pond turtle, two-striped garter snake, Santa Ana sucker, unarmored threespine stickleback fish, southwestern willow flycatcher, and summer tanager. Finally, the Pacific Crest Trail travels through the project area.

There are several landowners of large parcels remaining in the area, including public owners, such as the City of Santa Clarita, BLM, USFS, Los Angeles County (with Vasquez Rocks County Park), and MRCA. The largest private ownerships in the area include VMC, NoMinn, LLC, Valley Canyon Partners, and Metta



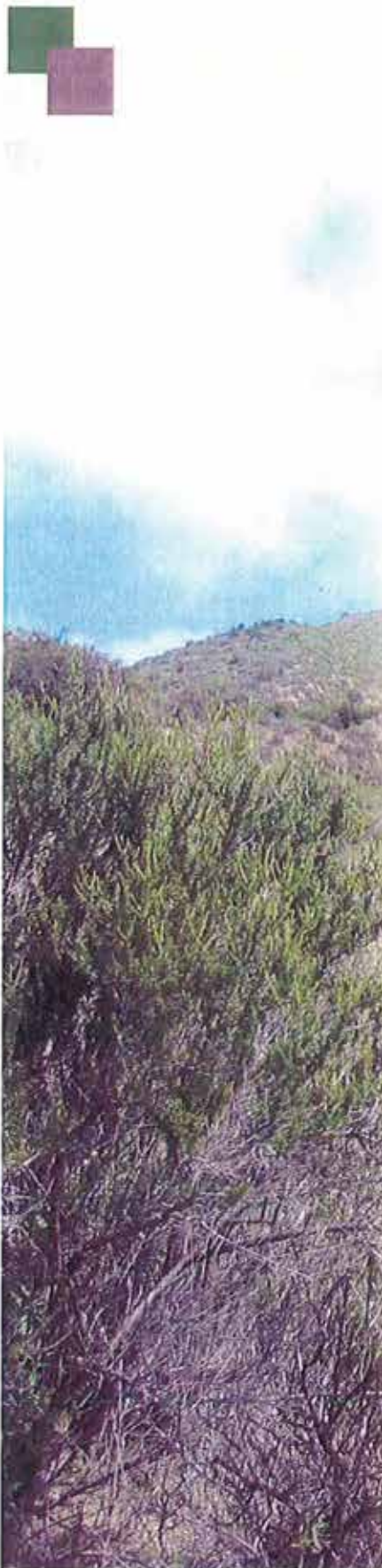
Homes, Inc. Each of these organizations own more than 500 acres, with VMC the largest private landowner in the project area. There are a total of 786 individual parcels within the project area, with 346 individual owners. Of these, 310 individual owners hold less than 100 acres. There is a trend in the area to subdivide lands into 5 to 20 acre ranchettes for individual residences.

Vision/Goals

The vision for this project is the maintenance of the integrity of a functioning wildlife corridor between the two segments of the Angeles National Forest, protection of the biodiversity of the area, creation of a green-belt east of the Santa Clarita city limits which creates a separation between urban and rural areas and buffers the rural community of Agua Dulce, establishment of a continuous trail system with connections to public parks and the Pacific Crest Trail, restoration of the Santa Clara River and tributaries with healthy populations of diverse species, and the redevelopment of disturbed areas.

Project goals include:

- Following the vision and guiding principles of One Valley One Vision (OVOV)
- Implementing acquisitions within the Angeles' Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) and project area
- Completing a habitat connection and wildlife corridor between segments of the Angeles National Forest
- Ensuring open space buffers around Forest Service lands
- Maximizing the green belt east of Santa Clarita's urban limit line and buffering the rural community of Agua Dulce
- Identifying high priority areas for acquisition
- Optimizing opportunities for public recreation, including supporting the County Trails Plan
- Protecting the Santa Clara River and tributaries through acquisition, restoration, and mitigation
- Supporting redevelopment of disturbed areas in the southwestern portion of the project area in alignment with the goals of OVOV



Planning History

Introduction

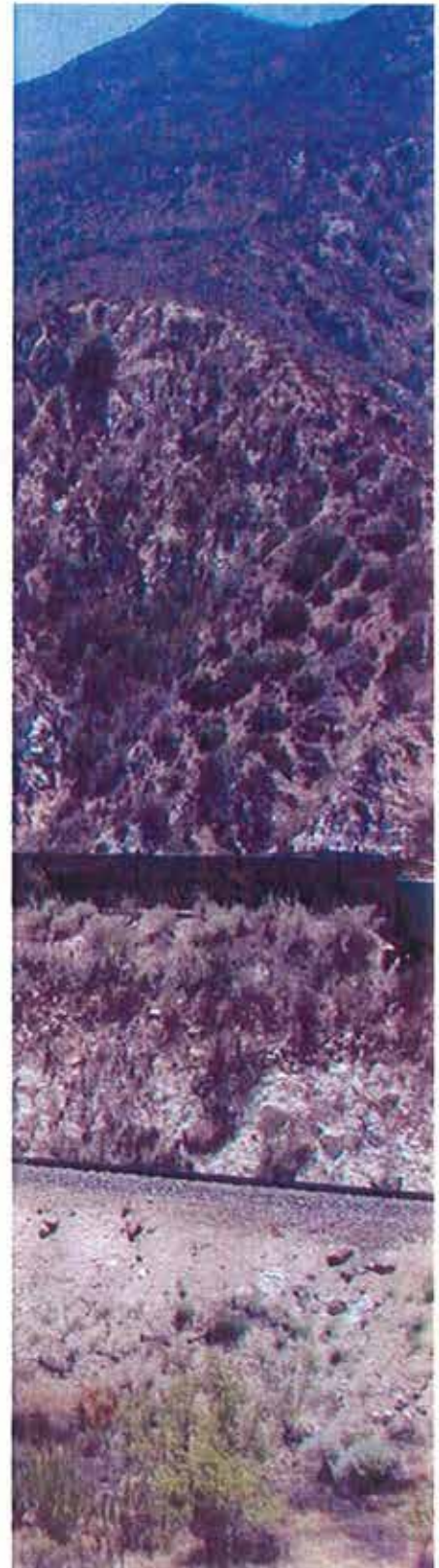
The Santa Clara River watershed, encompassing almost 1,600 square miles, is one of the last river systems to remain in a relatively natural state in southern California. The Santa Clara River and its watershed have been the focus of many studies outlining its rich biology and ecology. Many areas of the upper watershed which fall in this project area have remained relatively natural and contain rich biological communities, home to several threatened or endangered species. According to TNC, an estimated seventeen threatened and/or endangered species can be found in the Santa Clara River watershed, including the California red-legged frog, arroyo toad, and least Bell's vireo. Summaries of some of the more recent studies of the area are included below.

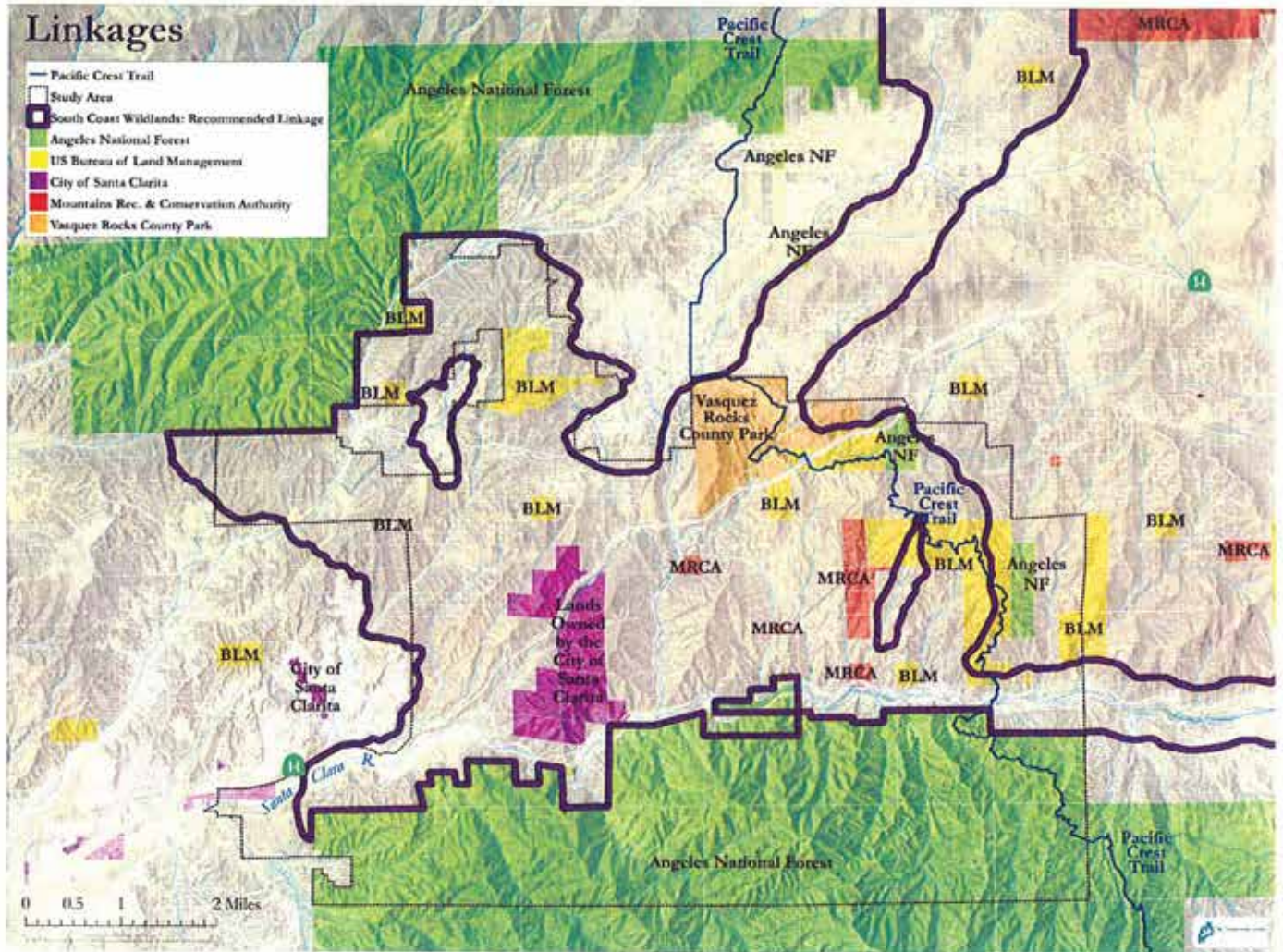
Summaries

Missing Linkages

The Missing Linkages Project was launched by South Coast Wildlands to identify and conserve fifteen critical linkages identified by the South Coast Missing Linkages Project. The vision of the Project is that the conserved land in the south coast area of southern California should essentially function as one large ecosystem. In order to protect this function, fifteen areas were identified as irreplaceable linkages between large conserved areas that protect wildlife corridors. The San Gabriel – Castaic Linkage encompasses this project area and is identified as one of the most threatened linkages and last chance for a connection to the coast between the San Gabriel and Castaic mountain ranges. The Linkage is a landscape level connection spanning a distance of approximately six to ten miles between the Santa Clara-Mojave Rivers and Los Angeles River Ranger Districts of the Angeles National Forest formed by the San Gabriel and Castaic ranges.

Through their planning process, SC Wildlands and their partners identified fifteen focal species in this area that are sensitive to habitat fragmentation and loss. Using these focal species, the plan identifies the best route to minimize threats to the species due to habitat loss, using known biology about each species. Barriers identified as having potential to threaten a functioning linkage, include roads, such as State Route (SR) 14 and Sierra Highway, rail lines, impediments to stream flow, industrial operations, and urban and rural residential development. Recommended mitigation measures include creating functioning wildlife crossings over or under roads and rail, restoring the natu-

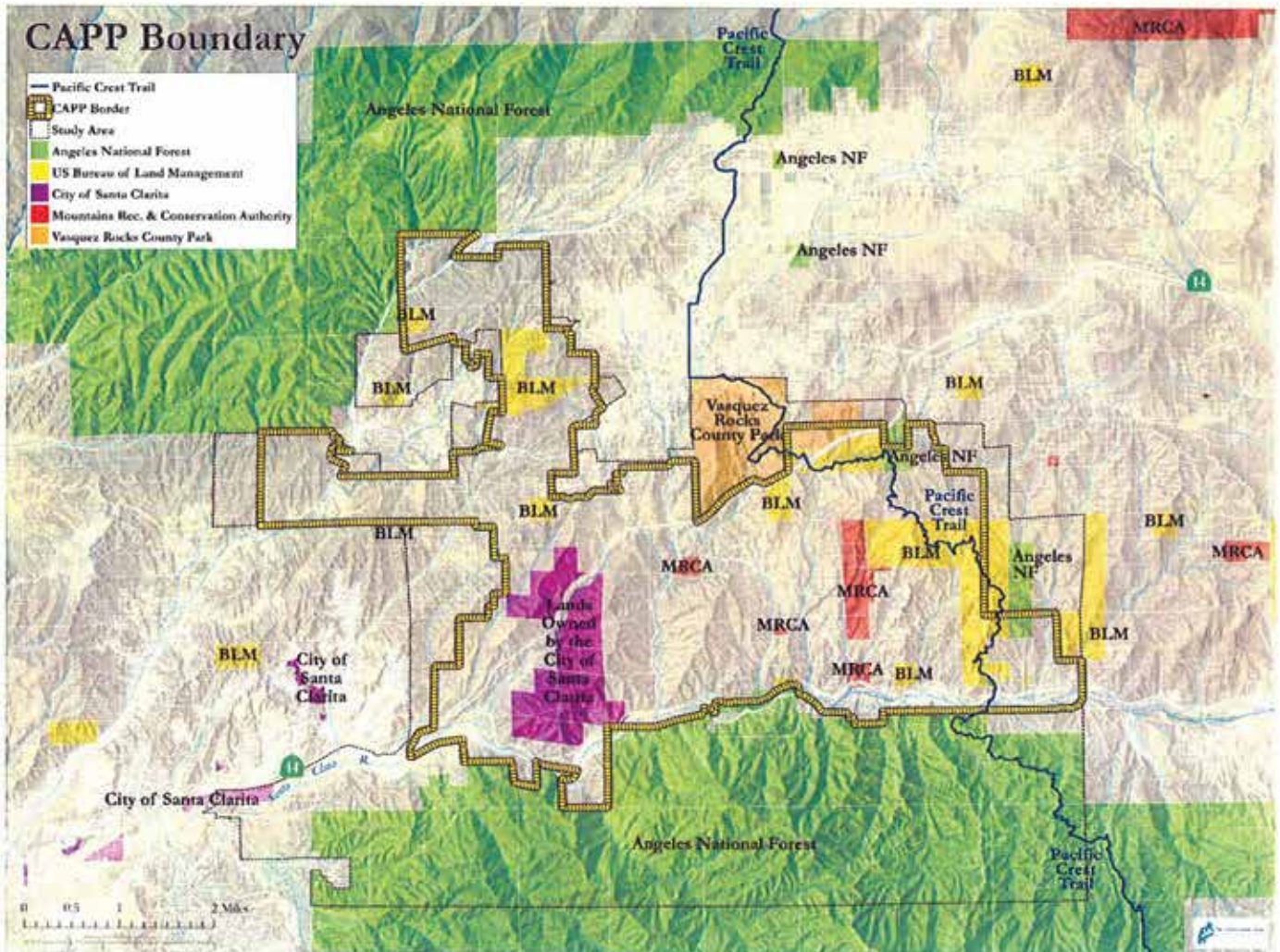




ral historic flow regime and native vegetation along rivers and streams, removing mining operations from stream beds, and minimizing development within the Linkage Design area.

Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan

The primary goal of the Angeles Linkage CAPP is to address habitat connectivity and the preservation of landscape conditions that support wildlife movement. Habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from rapid development in the region are the leading threats to biodiversity in the CAPP area. Conservation efforts focused on conserving networks or large wildland areas combat these threats. Acquisitions within the Angeles Linkage CAPP area will



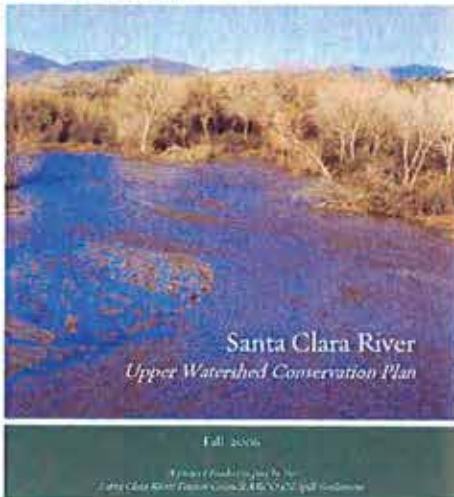
provide habitat for countless species associated with the San Gabriel and Castaic ranges.

The Linkage region is extremely diverse, supporting a variety of distinct natural vegetation communities. While the vegetation communities are important in their own right, the Angeles Linkage CAPP is traversed near the southern border by the Santa Clara River, one of the last free-flowing natural riparian systems in Southern California. The river and its tributaries support a diversity of aquatic, semi-aquatic and terrestrial species.

The Angeles Linkage CAPP was designed to maintain its viability over time. It is intended to provide live-in and move-through habitat for multiple species including sup-



The Nature Conservancy



porting populations of smaller species. The CAPP design ensures natural processes will continue to operate with minimal constraints from adjacent urban areas by protecting the availability of key resources, providing a buffer from edge effects, and reducing stream contamination. It encompasses approximately 8,500 acres over 380 parcels targeted for acquisition or easement.

Santa Clara River Upper Watershed Conservation Plan

The Santa Clara River Upper Watershed Conservation Plan highlights the ecological assets and conservation targets of the upper watershed. The plan was developed by TNC with the input of a large array of organizations and public agencies. It analyzes the land use, conditions, and activities that threaten the viability of the targets and identifies strategies that can be undertaken to enhance the viability of the area as well as abate conservation threats. The goal of the plan is:

“To preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life in the upper Santa Clara River watershed, by protecting the land and waters they need to survive.”

The plan identifies the following conservation targets in the watershed: riparian forest and scrub communities, grasslands, woodlands, coniferous forest, chaparral communities, aquatic vertebrates and wide-ranging terrestrial vertebrates. The critical threats identified include incompatible land-use and development, invasive species and altered fire regimes. The plan identifies land acquisition, the engagement of land use planners, and the removal of invasive species as the strategies and actions necessary to abate the threats and enhance the viability of the region.

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
PMS-427
December 2005

Land Management Plan Part 2 Angeles National Forest Strategy



Angeles National Forest Strategy

The 2005 Land Management Plan for the Angeles National Forest outlines the direction the Forest Service will take over the next ten to twenty years in land management decisions. It includes descriptions of suitable land uses for each designated zone of the forest. The Soledad Front Country Place borders the project area defined in this study. The Soledad Front Country Place is defined as a scenic backdrop and transitional landscape between urbanizing Los Angeles County with portions of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) bisecting the area. The plan states:

“Opportunities for establishment of regional wildlife linkages to improve connectivity between the San Gabriel, Castaic and Santa Susana Mountains exist and are

needed in this Place. Potential threats to sensitive habitat areas include developed and dispersed recreation, mining, wildland fire, and groundwater extraction.”



The Forest Service will focus on acquiring private land between the mountain ranges in order to connect the PCT and protecting open space and their boundaries in anticipation of future development.

One Valley One Vision

The One Valley One Vision (OVOV) project characterizes the Santa Clarita Valley community as a consistent whole despite jurisdictional boundaries and previous planning work. OVOV is a collaborative effort between the County of Los Angeles, the City of Santa Clarita, and Valley residents and businesses. The project aims to create a vision and set of guidelines for future growth, better planning for resource management, and an enhanced quality of life for residents in addition to greater cooperation between the County and the City.



The OVOV process will result in the creation of a 20+ year General Plan document and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Santa Clarita Valley planning area, which includes the communities of Stevenson Ranch, Castaic, Vale Verde, Agua Dulce, Newhall Ranch, the City of Santa Clarita and its four communities: Canyon Country, Newhall, Saugus and Valencia. Once complete, implementation of the OVOV plan will be administered by both the City and County within their respective jurisdictions.

The OVOV Land Use Concept Plan calls for four major land use types: Valley Center, a Valley of Villages, Employment Centers, and a Valley Greenbelt. Three of the land uses apply to this area. A Valley of Villages will result in integrated, sustainable communities with housing, employment, and recreation within each village. Employment Centers call for a 2:1 jobs to housing balance. Finally, a portion of the Valley Greenbelt will be through this project area and will help buffer the rural community of Agua Dulce from development within the City of Santa Clarita.

City of Santa Clarita Open Space Plan

Southern California is one of the fastest growing regions in the State of California and opportunities for acquiring and preserving open space are dwindling despite community identification of open space as vital to sustaining a high quality of life in the Santa Clarita Valley.

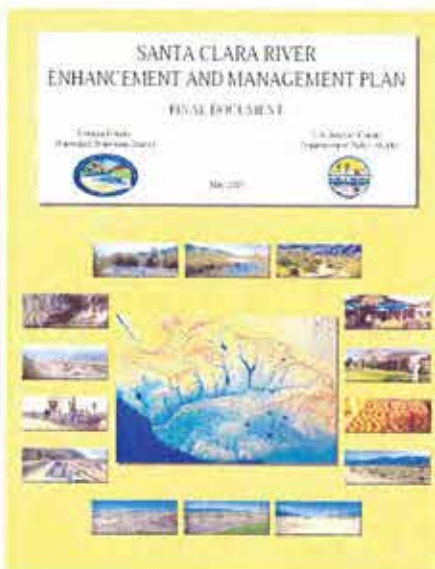


The need for an Open Space Acquisition Plan comes from



the City of Santa Clarita's General Plan, Open Space and Conservation Element and is confirmed by the rapid pace of development which is threatening existing open space. The plan defines open space as natural, vacant land and park areas that promote recreational use, and protect natural resources, views and the health and safety of residents.

The City of Santa Clarita Open Space Plan establishes a systematic and objective mechanism for evaluating open space acquisitions in support of the City's on-going efforts to preserve and protect open space in the Valley. The Plan is designed to assist efforts to establish a greenbelt around the City by providing a framework within which City staff can identify, evaluate, acquire, and maintain the most beneficial parcels in and around the City for preservation as open space. The plans allows City staff to maximize both obtainment and expenditure of acquisition and open space maintenance funding as well as to create partnerships with other governmental agencies operating in the Valley. Through this plan and others, the City both supports and endorses the policies of the County for creating a buffer between the City and the rural community of Agua Dulce.



Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan

The Santa Clara River is the largest river system in Southern California that still flows in a relatively natural state. The river travels approximately 84 miles in a westerly direction from its headwaters through the project area to the Pacific Ocean and supports a diversity of aquatic, semi-aquatic, and terrestrial organisms providing breeding sites, travel routes, and other resources for wildlife along the way. The river and its tributaries encompass a watershed area of approximately 1,600 square miles. The river generally exhibits an intermittent flow, though can change rapidly to severe flooding in response to high intensity rainfall.

The Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan (SCREMP) provides direction for the preservation of the physical, biological, and economic resources within the floodplain limits of the Santa Clara River. Implementation of the SCREMP will be the way the SCREMP Vision becomes a reality. The SCREMP Vision reads:

"The Santa Clara River is managed, used, and protected so as to ensure the preservation, enhancement, and sustainability of its physical, biological and economic resources. The river, its ecosystems, and its natural resources call for stewardship, and are recognized as exceptional in their value and quality by the local communities and the public in Southern California."

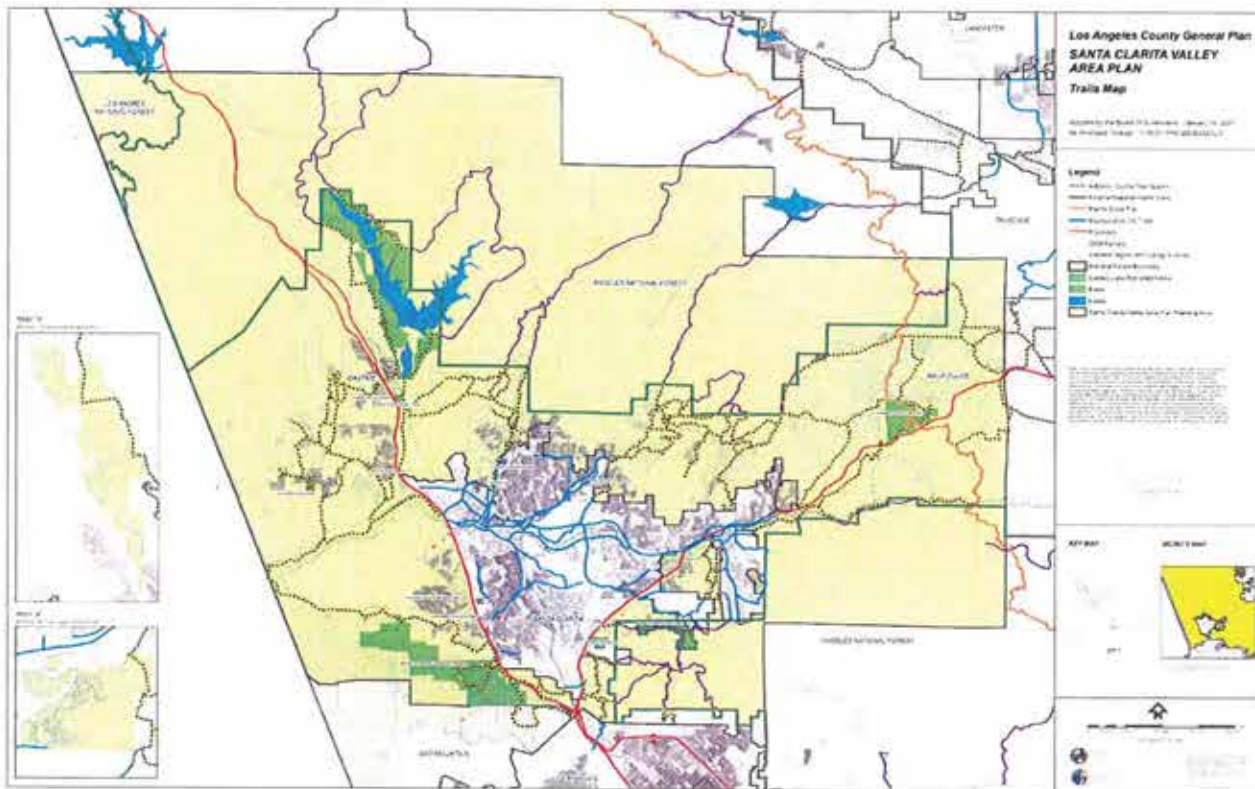
The SCREMP is not designed to be a regulatory document. Instead, it is developed as a set of policies and programs that are expected to promote the health and sustainability of resources within the 500-year floodplain of the river.

Los Angeles County Trails Plan

Northern Los Angeles communities are known for suburban and rural lifestyles which stress the value of multipurpose trails for hiking, bike riding and equestrian use. As growth in the region continues, new development must accommodate new trail routes.

An update to the Los Angeles County Trails Plan adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 2007 provides for an additional 140 miles of trails in the Santa Clarita Valley. The amendments in the proposed plan represent revisions to the 1990 Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan Trails Map.

The trail routes in the updated Trails Plan were identified by the Santa Clarita Valley Trails Advisory Committee (SCVTAC) which includes representatives from hiking groups, mountain bike groups, equestrian groups, other local community groups, land owners and developers, the Angeles National Forest, California State Parks, the City of Santa Clarita and the Santa Monica Mountains Conser-





vancy. The system is large enough to provide adequate connectivity and small enough to allow the County to effectively maintain the trails in the future. All of the trails are multi-use trails excluding motorized vehicle use which will benefit equestrian, hiking and biking use of the entire County trail system.

Conclusion

Many of the completed studies have focused on describing the importance of the area or outlining the reasons why the area should be conserved, restored, and protected. Some of the studies have made brief or general recommendations for how to accomplish the recommended protections. It is the focus of this study to specifically outline ways to implement conservation of the area and to begin that process.

Implementation Strategy

Introduction

Trying to protect or conserve large areas of open space is typically very time consuming and complex and often requires the efforts of multiple public agencies and private organizations. Even after an area has been deemed a high priority, such as the East Santa Clarita/Soledad Canyon area, it often takes many years to organize. When multiple agencies or organizations are focused on one area, it is helpful to have one entity act as project coordinator to facilitate efforts and ensure that multiple entities are not approaching one landowner and that all priorities are met.

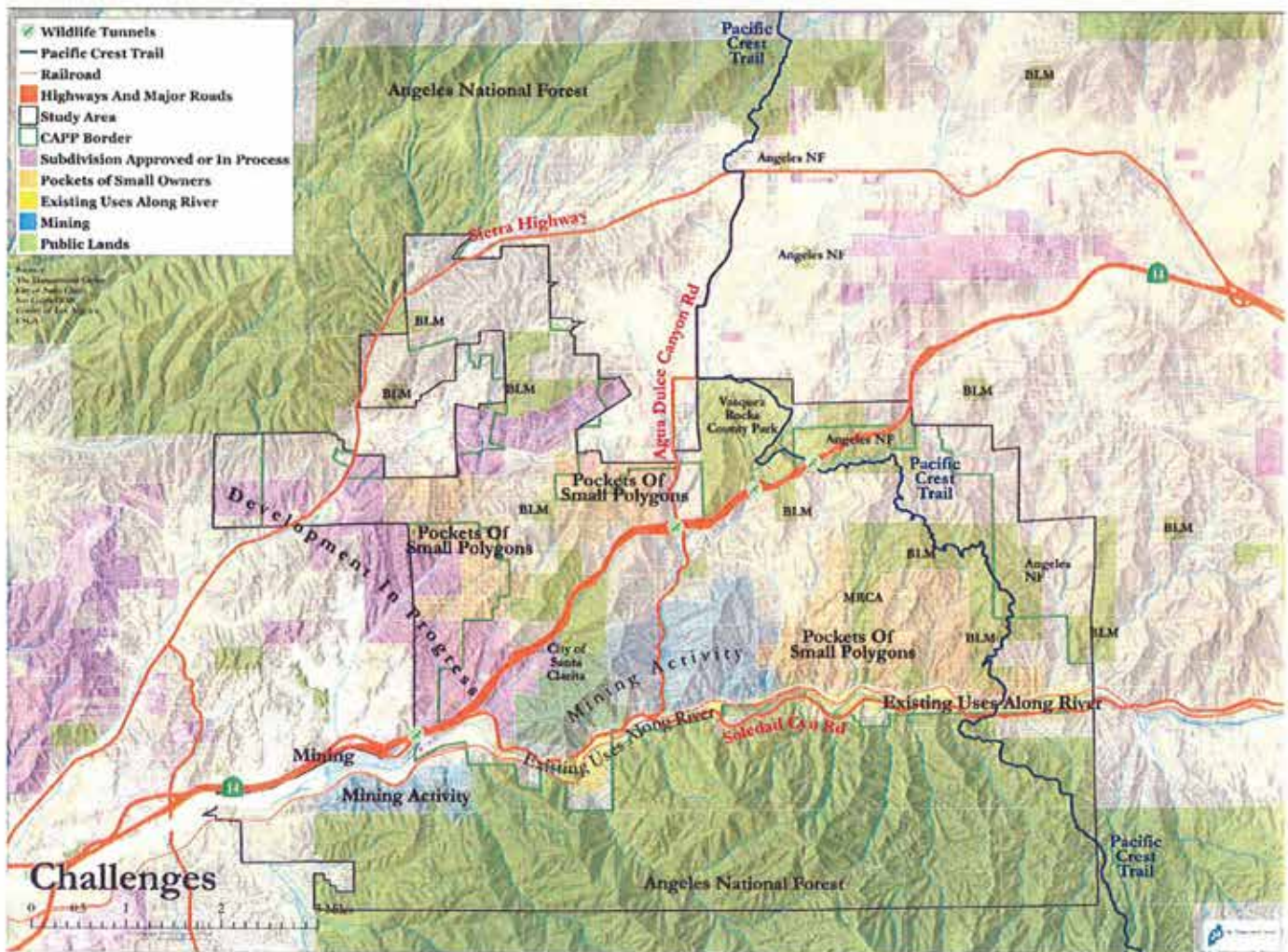
Likewise, protecting and conserving one area often requires multiple strategies to accomplish goals. There are simply not enough resources to acquire or protect all areas; priorities must be set and multiple strategies must be used. One of the most direct ways to protect open space is for property to be acquired in fee title by a public or not-for-profit conservation organization. However, the need for protection far outweighs funding availability. Thus, when analyzing how to implement an open space protection plan, it is imperative to create and consider multiple strategies and to focus efforts on the highest priority areas.

This section outlines our recommended strategies for implementation of an open space and wildlife corridor protection plan in the defined project area. It also includes a discussion of opportunities and challenges that are both general to conservation efforts and unique to this area.

Opportunities/Challenges

Like most areas prioritized as a potential open space or conservation area, the East Santa Clarita/Soledad Canyon area has its own challenges and opportunities to implementing an open space plan. One of the largest challenges is the size and number of individual parcel owners in the area. The project area is over 26,000 acres, with approximately 14,000 acres in private ownership, and over 340 individual owners. As outlined above, 310 owners hold parcels of 100 acres or less. Contacting the large number of owners of small parcels will be a very time intensive process. The smaller parcels also may be owned by people who have developed or have plans to develop the land as small ranchettes. It may be very difficult to put together groups of owners for land that would form a contiguous connector.

Other challenges were outlined in the SC Wildlands Missing Linkages report, including many existing impediments to wildlife connectivity, such as roads, freeways, railroads, and fences. By



Land Owners Holding More Than 100 Acres
(as of November 2007)

Land Owner	Total Acres
U S GOVT	10,621.8
VMC	1,420.0
NOMINN LLC	1,014.7
SANTA CLARITA CITY	980.6
LA COUNTY	783.9
VALLEY CYN PARTNERS	551.0
METTA HOMES, INC.	519.2
ROCK FOUNDATION INC	420.9
KATZ	339.0
BARTER	312.2
LACMTA	296.5
MRCA	271.1
GRIFFIS	241.3
RASMUSSEN CO LLC	241.0
RODDA	232.5
WILLIAMS	214.4
MAMEY	210.1
ROBINSON RANCH LP	193.8
CYN COUNTRY ENT. INC	182.8
CROCKER	178.7
BLOMGREN	177.4
MELENDREZ	170.2
SHADOW PINES LLC	169.9
HARTIGAN	168.9
JENKINS	165.1
MUSIC SQ. CHURCH INC	160.8
SO CA EDISON CO	160.5
LA CO PARKS	158.1
KOCH	154.7
GREAT WESTERN	145.0
GROSSKOPE	121.3
GEIGER	119.5
LA CITY DWP	118.4
TSENG	104.5
PROUD AMERICAN LLC	102.2
RILEY	101.2

creating wildlife crossings over or under the roads, freeways, and railroads, these impediments can be mitigated. A more difficult impediment is private fencing that exists on individual ranches, holding livestock and pets in, while keeping wildlife out. While it is important to keep wildlife and livestock and pets separate, the fencing creates a barrier for larger wildlife animals to naturally migrate through. Working with private landowners to develop ways to keep some land impediment free will be important. Alternatively, it may be that a corridor of contiguous publically owned parcels functions around existing and future private development.

Existing uses along the Santa Clara River provides a large challenge. There are several developed RV parks and campgrounds, and mining and other industrial uses both within the river bottom and along its edges. These uses disturb the natural flow of the intermittent river, as well as disrupt important native habitat. In order to restore the river, a goal of the City and many other agencies, some of these uses will have to be moved and the area restored.

The Santa Clarita Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in Southern California. This growth is putting pressure on open space to create residential and commercial developments, especially in the western edge of this project area along the City boundaries. While the development will remove existing habitat, local permitting agencies can work with private developers to plan development in such a way to minimize disruption and to mitigate the disruption to protect the main corridor connections. By developing the areas bounding existing development, and by using "Smart Growth" ideas and clustered development in urban land use designations, local agencies may use development as an opportunity to protect the highest priority areas.

An additional challenge is the existing, proposed, and potential mining in the area. There is currently mining activity along the river in the southwestern edge of the project area. Mining is proposed in areas controlled by BLM mining claims and others, for sand, aggregates, and a variety of minerals. This area has been identified by BLM as having a high number of mineral resources. Mining activity can be disruptive to wildlife through noise, dust, and other activities. These disruptions can be mitigated through the permitting process. However, other opportunities can be created for mining interests that would create economic benefits while phasing out mining. These opportunities should be explored by local agencies.

Like all areas, finding adequate funding is a large challenge. However, because of the large number of agencies interested in the area and the number of excellent studies that have documented the priorities for the area, there are many opportunities to create partnerships and find matching dollars to stretch individual dollars farther. Funding exists in limited capacity in many differ-

ent ways at both the state and local level. The challenge will be in applying these funds in the most appropriate area and creating the largest benefit for the limited funds and using tools such as conservation easements to protect areas using limited dollars.

In spite of these many challenges, there are a number of opportunities that will help streamline acquisition in this area. As previously discussed, there have been many studies and plans that have been completed by various organizations with a large amount stakeholder input that have documented the need for conservation in this area. These agencies or organizations already have committed to the area, and each brings various resources, including knowledge, funding, and staff. In addition, a CAPP has been completed for this area, opening up some types of state funding. This study also supports existing or proposed County land use designations for the area as well as the Agua Dulce Community Standards District (CSD), the purpose of which includes protecting sensitive features and preserving native vegetation.

Many parcels within the area have already been acquired by public agencies for open space, including lands held by BLM and USDA Forest Service, Los Angeles County, the MRCA, and the City of Santa Clarita. In addition, the City has already acquired land along the Santa Clara River within the City limits and along the western border of this project area. By continuing their efforts eastward, more land can be acquired along the River. In addition, river bottom land that is currently disturbed through mining or other industrial uses can be restored. Finally, disturbed lands outside of the river bottom may be restored or redeveloped, depending on local goals and resources.

Although there are many pockets of small parcel ownership in the area, there are also many large consolidated land holdings. Approximately 35 private landowners control over 8,000 acres. By focusing efforts on these large holdings, great strides can be made quickly to protect large areas. In addition, much of the area is currently open space and is already functioning as an existing wildlife corridor. Thus, if land were to be acquired by public agencies, no additional funds would be needed to restore the area or remove developments.

As previously noted, the Pacific Crest Trail bisects the project area. This trail, and others, create a network through the open space and offer additional types of funding opportunities to protect and expand this network.

Stakeholder Input

A meeting was held to review the strategies outlined in this document with representatives from public stakeholder groups. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the project





and describe the implementation strategies that were developed. Suggestions and comments and criticisms were solicited by the attendees. In addition to our partner groups, attendees included representatives from South Coast Wildlands, the Sierra Club, the Desert and Mountains Conservancy, and Friends of the Santa Clara River. The presentation that was developed for this meeting is attached in Appendix B.

Subsequent to the stakeholder meeting, an Agua Dulce Town Council meeting was held on this study. City and County staff presented information, responded to comments, and answered questions for Agua Dulce community members. Suggestions and comments from the stakeholders and Agua Dulce community were incorporated into this report.

Strategy Descriptions

State/Local Funding

Wildlife Conservation Board

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has funding available for acquisitions or conservation easements on properties within the approved CAPP. Priority areas for WCB funding should be those particular pinch points at the Highway 14/Agua Dulce Canyon Road junction and north of Hwy. 14 near Vasquez Rocks, and at the northern pinch points. WCB funds could be available relatively quickly, once appraisals are completed and owners are contacted.

Department of Water Resources

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has funding available through Proposition 84. This Proposition allocates \$5.4 billion to fund drinking water, water quality and supply, flood control, waterway and natural resource protection, water pollution and contamination control, state and local park improvements, public access to natural resources, and water conservation efforts. Land acquisition and restoration, as well as conservation easements, along the Santa Clara River and its tributaries could qualify for such funding.

SMMC/RMC

The property area falls within both the SMMC and RMC boundaries. Each Conservancy has some funding available for acquisitions or conservation easements, from bond funding or other funding mechanisms. Most of the RMC funds would be allocated through grant requests. In addition, SCRWCA has some funding available. It would be most prudent to use these funds in the highest priority lands and to use as matching funds for other sources, such as WCB or City funding.

Measure A funding

County Measure A has funds available for land acquisition and preservation. These funds can only be used south of Highway 14. It is estimated that approximately \$2 – 3 million per year is available for use within the project area. These funds can be used as matching funds for WCB or other funding.

City funding

The City has funds available for the purchase of open space to mitigate projects elsewhere and they are in the process of evaluating whether they should establish a mitigation bank on their properties. Additionally, Santa Clarita voters passed an Open Space Initiative that went to ballot in May 2007. This initiative is estimated to raise approximately \$1.5 million in annual assessment, which may result in \$30 – 40 million in current bonded funds. The City is currently evaluating priorities for these open space funds, but funds should be used as properties become available that fall into City identified priorities.

Federal Acquisitions

The Federal government has very limited funds available for purchasing lands. The majority of funds available to the Forest Service for this process have been identified for use to acquire in-holding properties. However, some of the funds may be available for lands in the northern portion of our property area that are contiguous and adjacent to existing Forest Service lands.

Additionally, priority funds are available to secure right-of-way and the viewshed of the PCT. Acquisitions are managed through the National Park Service (NPS) with input from the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA). As the PCT bisects the project area, there are many parcels that may qualify. Project partners should work with NPS and the PCTA to identify priority parcels and assist with acquisitions.

Exchanges

There are several active or proposed large mining areas within the project area. As described above, mining activities may have adverse impacts on the functioning of a wildlife corridor. CEMEX has won BLM rights to mine land currently owned by the City of Santa Clarita. The City is working with CEMEX and BLM to restrict mining in the project area to historic levels, or to exchange CEMEX's interest to other BLM properties outside of the project area. The final solution may require congressional legisla-

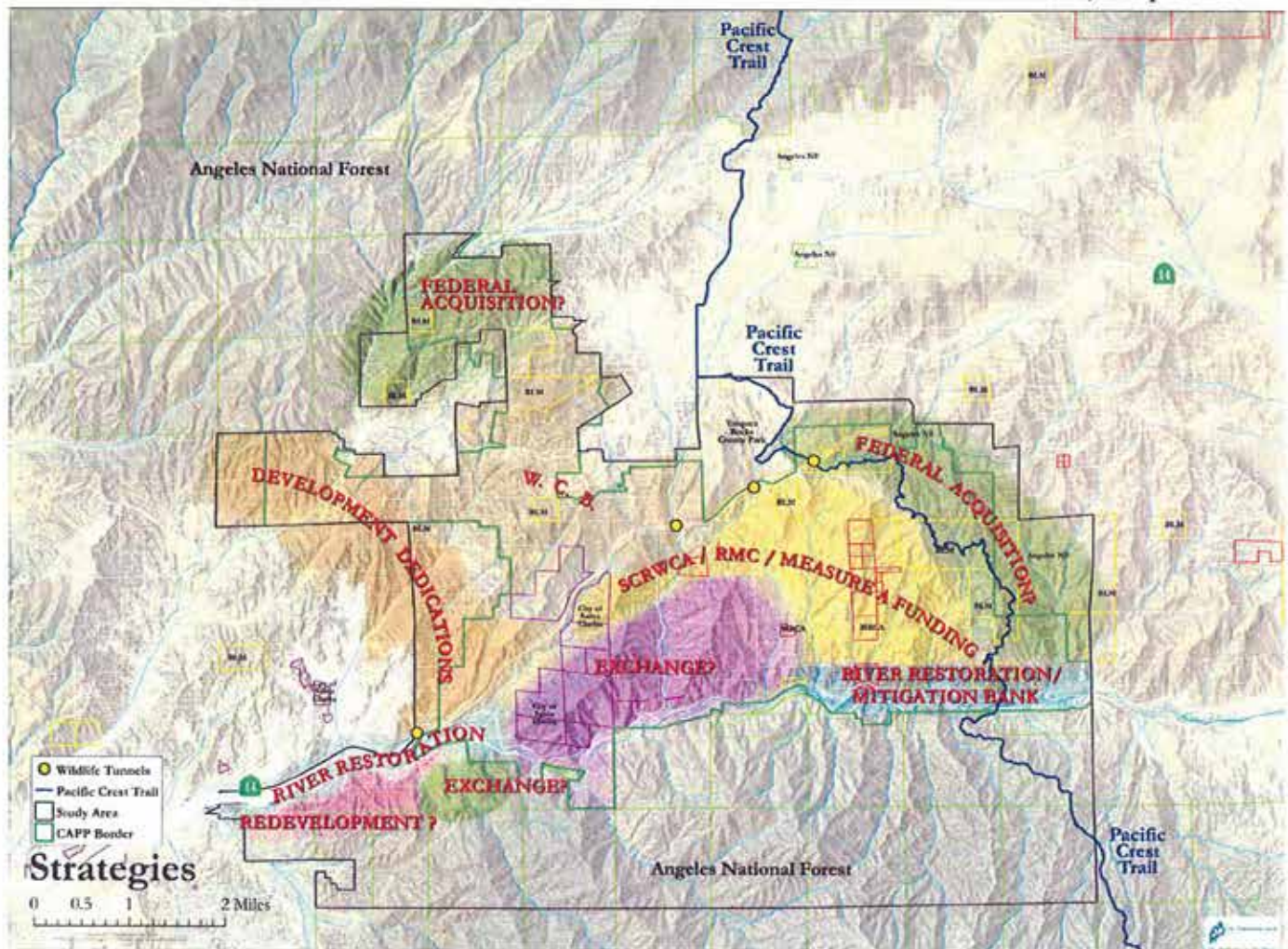




tion to accomplish. It may be possible to expand this legislation to qualify properties owned by VMC (notably those along Agua Dulce Canyon Road) for exchange of properties with the Forest Service or BLM, if necessary.

Although BLM owned parcels have been designated in this study as existing open space lands, BLM has a mandate to manage properties for other designations than just conservation. It will be important for partner agencies to work with BLM to encourage protection of lands within this overall project area in order to maintain and preserve existing habitat. BLM parcels outside of this project area may be possible to use as exchange properties for existing private land within the project area.

Additionally, Forest Service properties that are currently being mined could be exchanged for other, less disturbed properties, such as those along the Santa Clara River, other Forest Service priority in-holdings, or containing or adjacent to the Pacific Crest Trail. In the future, it is possible



for the currently mined lands to be redeveloped into industrial or commercial properties in association with residential/mixed-use development near the river. This potential redevelopment within urban land use designations would fit with OVOV goals for Villages and Employment Centers and development fees could help with acquisition or restoration of other lands.

Redevelopment

We recommend that highly disturbed areas within the southwestern portion of the project area should be evaluated for redevelopment into residential or commercial areas, where appropriate. Redevelopment will not only bring economic development potential into the area, but it will also allow for addition developer dedications, set-asides, or mitigation that could protect more undisturbed and higher priority areas. Specifically, redevelopment of areas adjacent to the river may result in funds that can be used to restore and protect the river area. Redevelopment of areas into residential or commercial areas would also fit within the goals and vision of OVOV. Any redevelopment should support existing and proposed City, County, and Agua Dulce CSD guidelines.

River Restoration/ Mitigation Bank

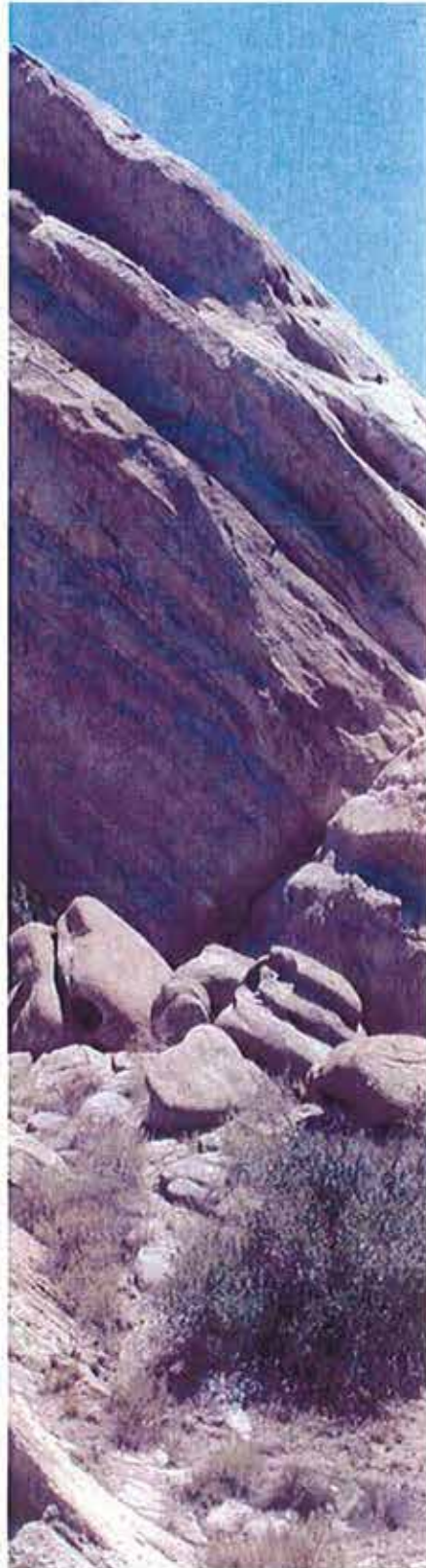
Throughout the study area, the Santa Clara River is quite disturbed, with mining, other industrial uses, residential accessory structures, recreational vehicle parks, and other uses. The ultimate goal for the river is to restore as much as possible to its natural state.

A mitigation bank along the Santa Clara River and tributaries could restore the river area to a functioning ecosystem, and sell mitigation credits to developers or others in order to pay for the high costs of acquisition and restoration. Restoration of the river could be quite costly, as there are several sewage systems, underground storage tanks, and accessory structures within or adjacent to the river bottom.

Development Dedications

Several proposed or approved large residential and commercial developments, including those in Tick Canyon and Bee Canyon, are located within urban land use designations along the western border of the project area (and eastern border of the City). Open space can be protected in this area with density clustering and developer dedications for open space and/or trails. Ideally, the open space areas





would be contiguous and bordering the corridor proposed in this study. These concepts can be integrated with OVOV. In addition, City and County Planning Staff should be made aware of this project and its goals and work with the project team and the developers to create dedications that would be most advantageous to the goals of this project.

Zoning Restrictions

Another way to protect open space is to adjust the zoning of an area. It may be possible to have the County limit development in the area bounded by the CAPP by creating a Corridor Overlay Zone that will have to be consulted whenever development is proposed within the project area. In addition, through the OVOV process the City and County will be establishing urban limit lines. Outside of these lines, only low density residential zoning will be allowed, with no clustering. Portions of the project area also fall within the Agua Dulce CSD, which opposes density clustering. Within urban limit lines, the City/County would like to see more residential/employment villages, with an overall 2:1 residence to job ratio within the Valley. In addition, the City/County may be able to restrict fencing in the project area to allow for easier wildlife access. All of these issues should be reviewed by the OVOV planning team.

Recommendations

It will take many years and many organizations to preserve, protect, and restore the planning area. By using strategies outlined above, it is possible to protect enough land to maintain open space around the City, protect some of the view sheds, protect and restore important habitats, and conserve and improve the functioning of the wildlife corridor through the project area. However, in order to use limited resources wisely, we recommend specific strategies be employed in appropriate locations.

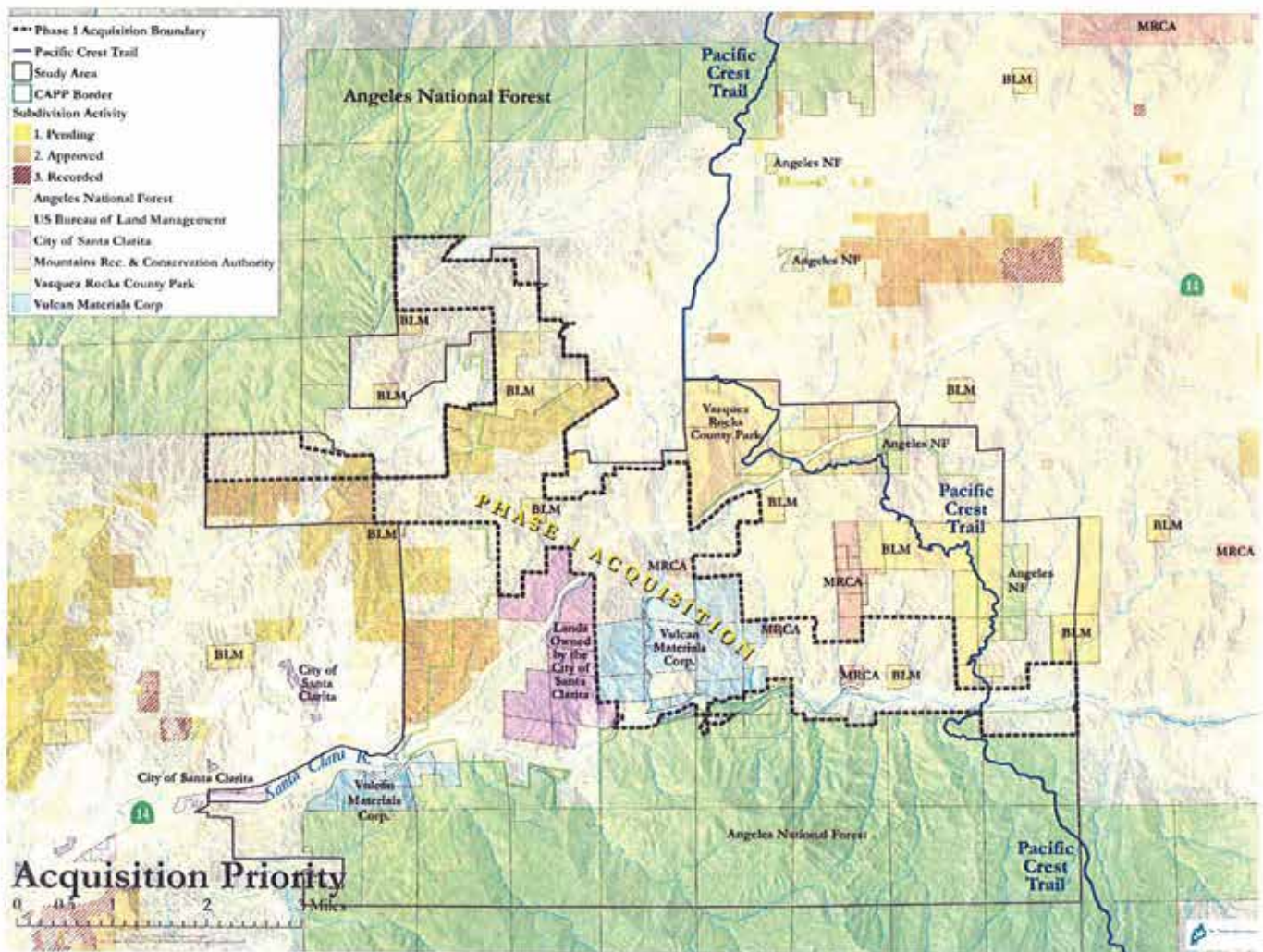
1. Available funding should be used prudently in the highest priority areas and should be combined and matched to be used for as many properties as possible.
2. Project partners should work with the PCTA and the USFS to identify priority parcels and assist with acquisitions and potential exchanges.
3. Active or proposed mining lands should be exchanged for lands outside of the project area, in less sensitive habitat areas, and mining lands redeveloped or restored.
4. Highly disturbed areas in the southwestern project area should be evaluated for redevelopment and appropriate mitigation or land dedications.
5. Creation of mitigation banks along the river may create the

- economic incentive to restore the Santa Clara River.
- 6. Where appropriate, density clustering and land dedications by developers should occur on the western edge of the project area in line with existing City and County planning guidelines.
- 7. The OVOV Plan should incorporate the priorities and goals of this project.



Implementation

To begin the implementation process, the planning team determined the highest priority parcels within the planning area. Through their individual studies, TNC and SC Wildlands had previously prioritized parcels within their project areas. The priority parcels for this project were determined using a model identifying parcels that were within SC Wildlands and TNC priority areas, along the river, exclude current development, and ensure the continuity of functioning corridors.





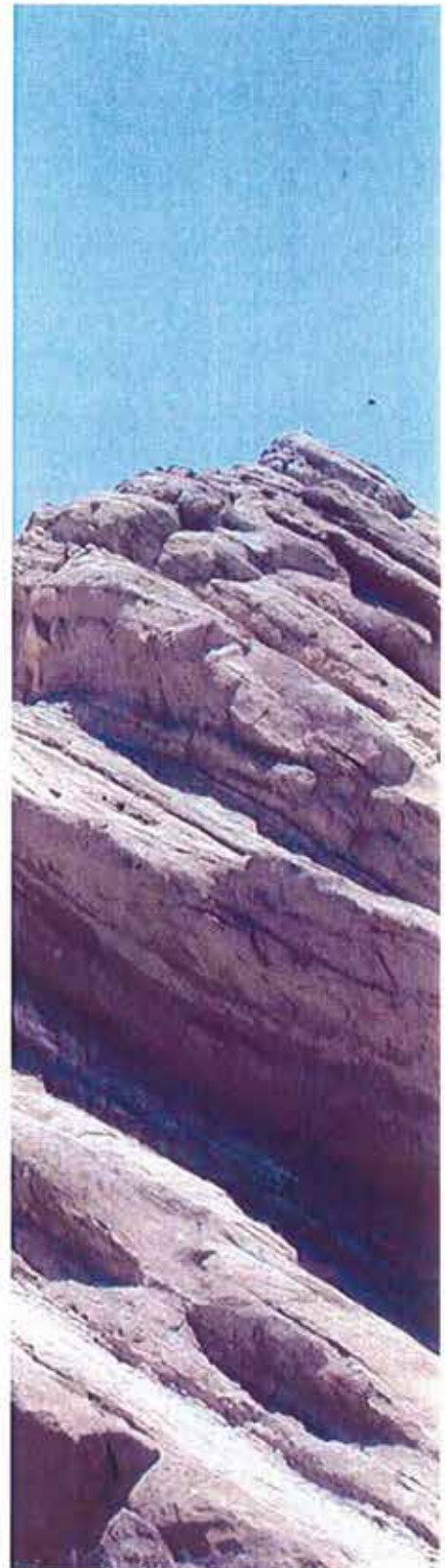
It is anticipated that first priority acquisitions will take several years. The project partners intend to only work with willing sellers and to not use eminent domain to acquire land or conservation easements. Through this process, it is not anticipated that 100% of the properties within the project area would be acquired, but rather enough contiguous parcels to protect the functionality of a wildlife corridor and meet the other goals of this project, including creating a buffer of open space between the City and the community of Agua Dulce. Once project goals have been met within the first priority area, subsequent priority areas will be established.

A letter was mailed to land owners whose property fell within the first priority zone. The goal within this zone is to first acquire existing open space land or priority land that can be restored and not to acquire land already developed with housing or commercial properties. RLC received phone calls from more than twenty land owners who were potentially willing to sell their property, or a conservation easement on it. These properties were all appraised and RLC is beginning to contact these sellers on a priority basis to try to reach agreement terms on potential sale or donation of land or easements. Conservation easements would be sold or dedicated for conservation purposes only and specific details would be negotiated on an individual basis.

TNC and the City have both continued to approach interested parties or willing sellers within their spheres of interest. All of the organizations involved in potential acquisition are continuing to coordinate.

Conclusions

- The area east of the City of Santa Clarita, encompassing portions of Soledad Canyon and the Santa Clara River and its watershed, has been identified by multiple studies as a high priority area for conservation and is threatened on many fronts.
- It will require both proactive and reactive strategies from multiple organizations to protect the area.
- Efforts need to be focused on highest priority areas, as funds and resources are limited.
- Specific strategies should be employed in appropriate locations:
 1. Available funding should be used prudently in the highest priority areas and should be combined and matched to be used for as many properties as possible.
 2. Project partners should work with the PCTA and the USFS to identify priority parcels and assist with acquisitions and potential exchanges.
 3. Active or proposed mining lands should be exchanged for lands outside of the project area, in less sensitive habitat areas, and mining lands redeveloped or restored.
 4. Highly disturbed areas in the southwestern project area should be evaluated for redevelopment and appropriate mitigation or land dedications.
 5. Creation of mitigation banks along the river may create the economic incentive to restore the Santa Clara River.
 6. Density clustering and land dedications by developers should occur on the eastern edge of the City within urban land use designations to create open space corridors.
 7. The OVOV Plan should incorporate the priorities and goals of this project.





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Appendix A



Project Participants

Partners

Paul Brotzman	City of Santa Clarita
John Capell	USDA Forest Service, Angeles National Forest
Christopher DiMaggio	Vulcan Materials Company
Dan Duncan	City of Santa Clarita
Paul Edelman	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Santa Clarita Watershed and Recreation Conservation Authority
Robert Glaser	Los Angeles County, Department of Regional Planning
Richard Gould	City of Santa Clarita Santa Clarita Watershed and Recreation Conservation Authority
Larry Hensley	Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation
Cliff Johnson	USDA Forest Service, Angeles National Forest
Michael Linton	Vulcan Materials Company
Michael Murphy	City of Santa Clarita
David Peterson	City of Santa Clarita
EJ Remson	The Nature Conservancy
Joan Rupert	Los Angeles County, Department of Parks and Recreation
Frank Simpson	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
Barbara Stoll	City of Santa Clarita
Susan Swinson	USDA Forest Service, Angeles National Forest

Riverside Land Conservancy

Pete Dangermond, Executive Director
Karin Winters, Consultant, The Dangermond Group
Ryan Lennox, Acquisitions Specialist

Public Stakeholders

Mary Loquvam	South Coast Wildlands
David Myerson	Desert and Mountains Conservancy
Henry Schultz	Sierra Club
Barbara Wampole	Friends of the Santa Clara River



Appendix B

Stakeholder Presentation

East Santa Clarita Park, Recreation, and Land Conservation Concept Plan and Implementation Strategy



Hosted by:
Santa Clarita Watershed and Recreation Conservation Authority
City of Santa Clarita



Presented by:
The Riverside Land Conservancy
The Dangermond Group



Agenda

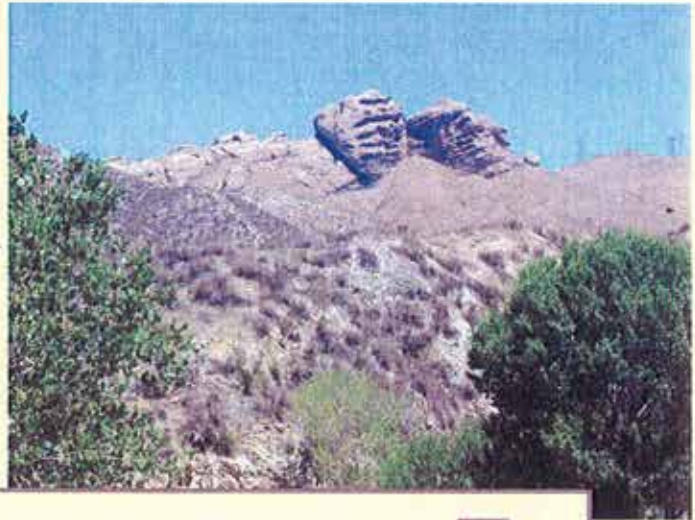
- Self Introductions
- Meeting Goals
- Introduction and Background
- Project Goals
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Solutions and Strategies
- Feedback
- Next Steps and Wrap-up

Self Introductions

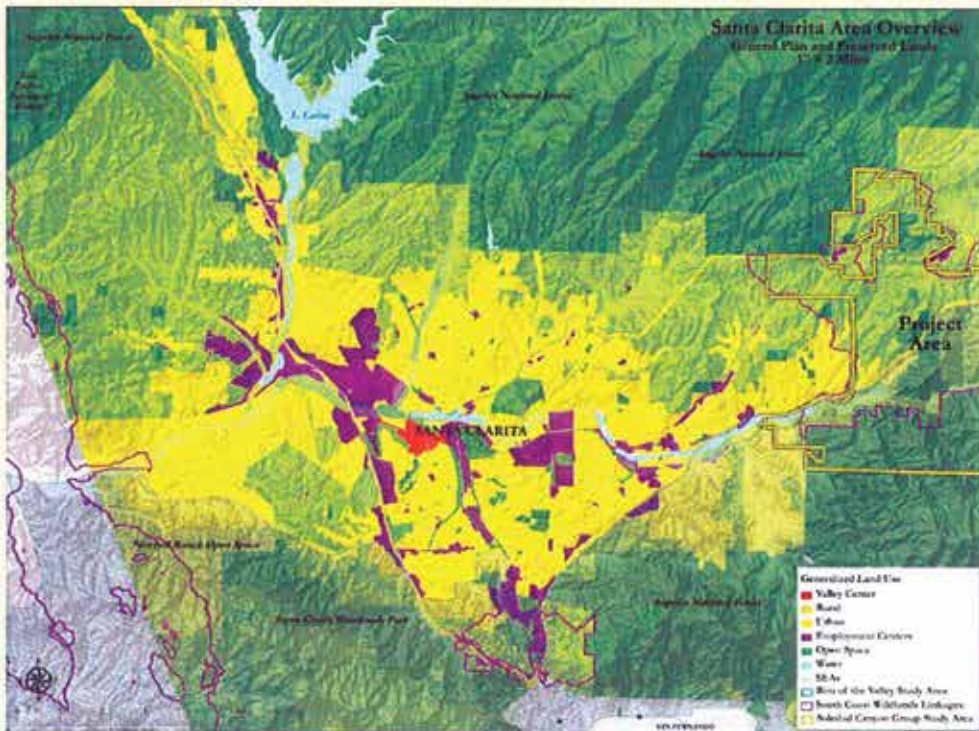


Meeting Goals

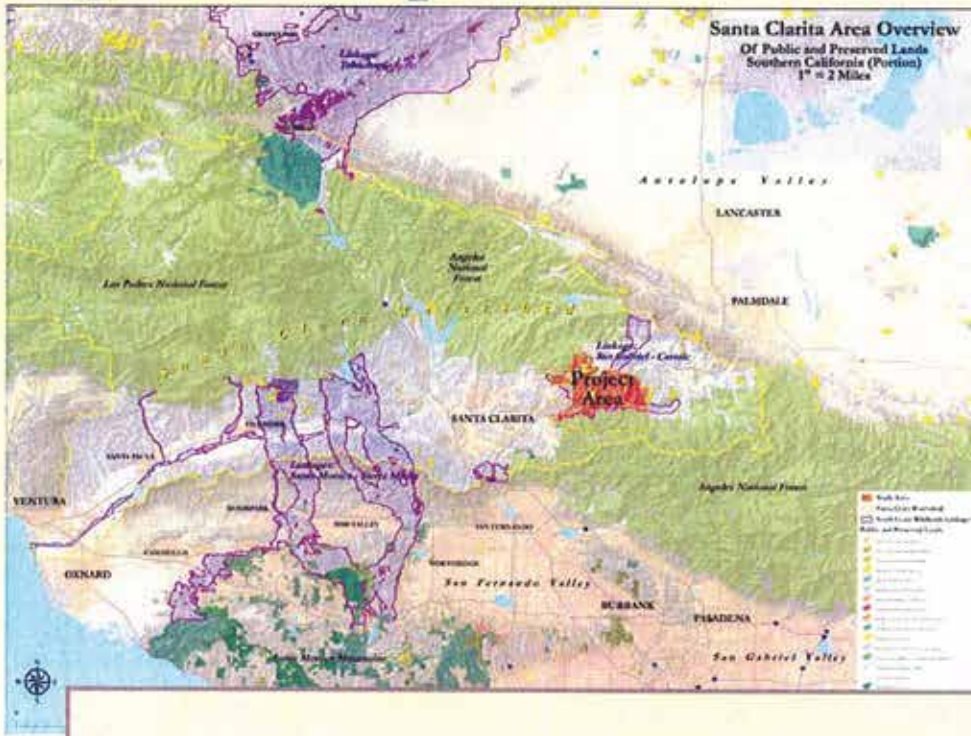
- Provide Project Overview
- Stakeholder General Suggestions
- Stakeholder Critical Review of Strategies



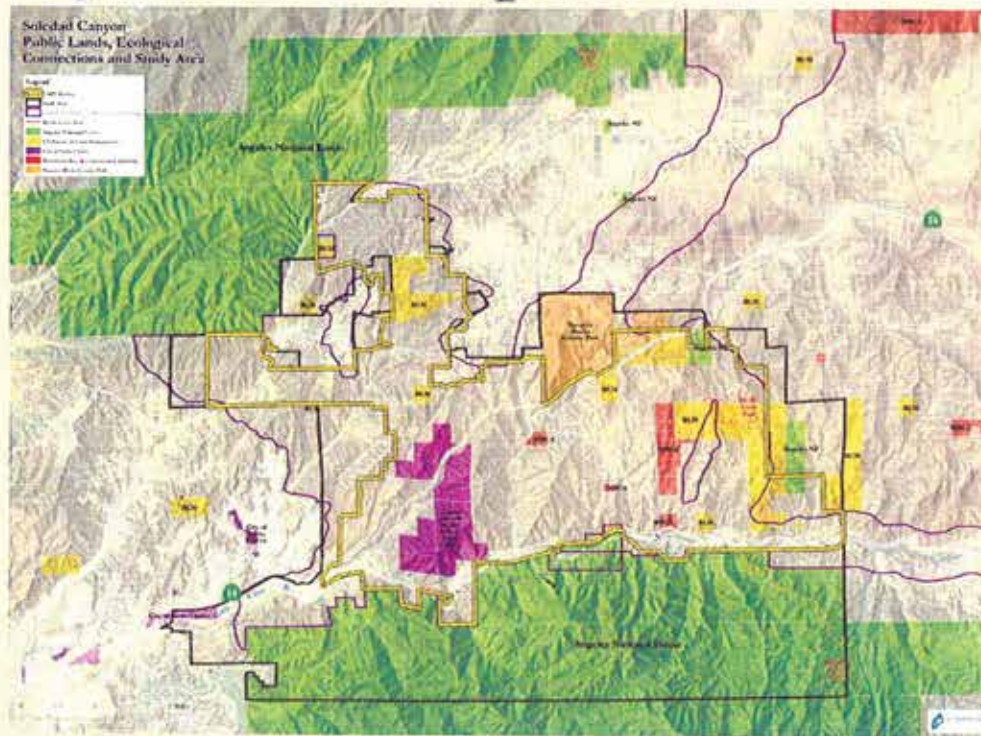
City of Santa Clarita



Regional Map



Project Area Map





Vision Statement



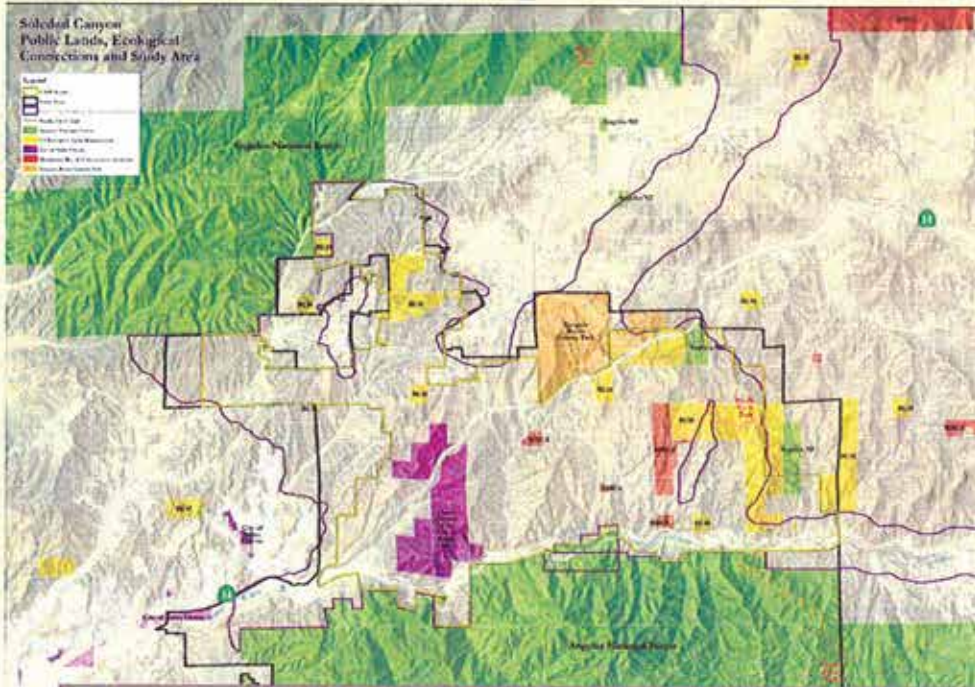
- Our vision for this project is the implementation of:
 - A functioning wildlife corridor between the two segments of the Angeles National Forest
 - A green-belt east of the city limits which creates a separation between urban and rural areas
 - A continuous trail system with connections to public parks and the Pacific Crest Trail
 - A restored Santa Clara River and tributaries with healthy populations of diverse species
 - Redevelopment of disturbed areas



Project Goals

- Follow Vision and Guiding Principles of OVOV
- Implement acquisitions within the CAPP
- Complete habitat connection/wildlife corridor between National Forest segments
- Ensure open space buffers around Forest Service lands
- Maximize Green Belt east of the City's urban limit line
- Identify high priority areas for acquisition
- Optimize opportunities for public recreation, including County Trails plan
- Protect Santa Clara River and tributaries through acquisition, restoration, and mitigation
- Support redevelopment of disturbed areas

Project Area Map

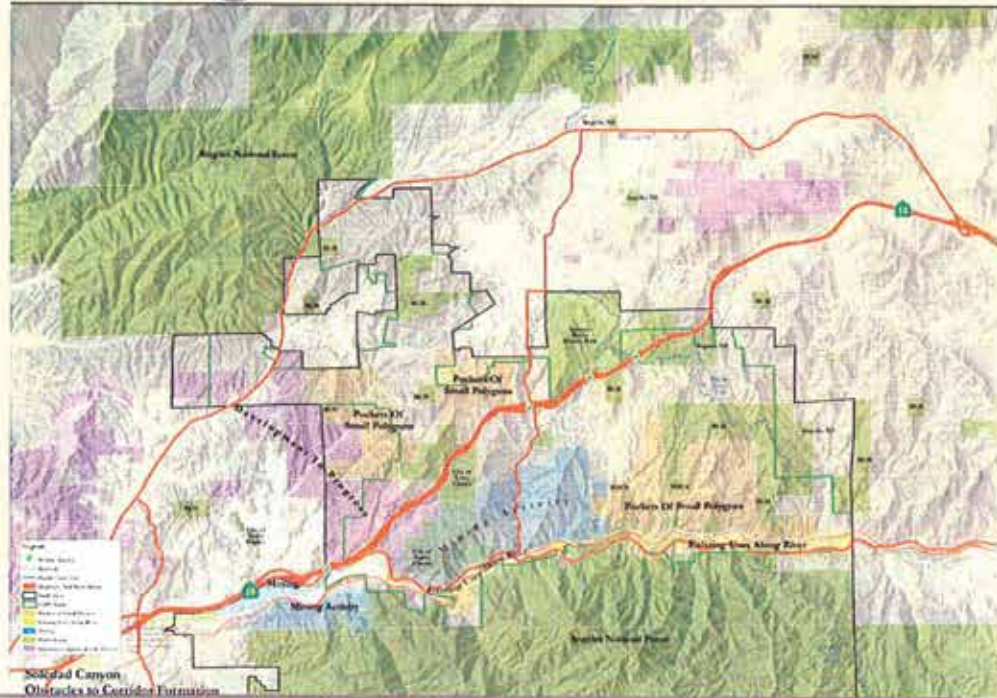


Challenges

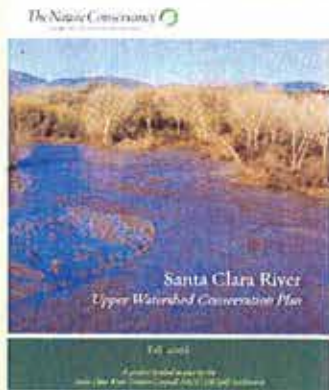
- Some smaller ownership pockets
- Existing impediments to wildlife connectivity
 - Fences, roads, freeways, railroads
- Existing uses along Santa Clara River
 - RV Parks, Industrial, etc.
- Proposed Development – western edge
- Existing, Proposed, & Potential Mining
- Limited Funding



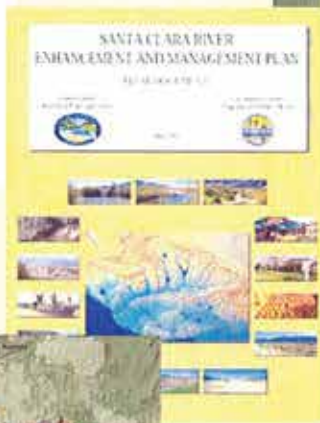
Challenges



Opportunities



USDA
Land Management Plan
 Part 2 Angeles National
 Forest Strategy



- Foundation for implementation based on prior studies/planning history

Opportunities



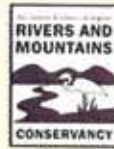
- Some large consolidated ownerships
- Current open spaces

Opportunities



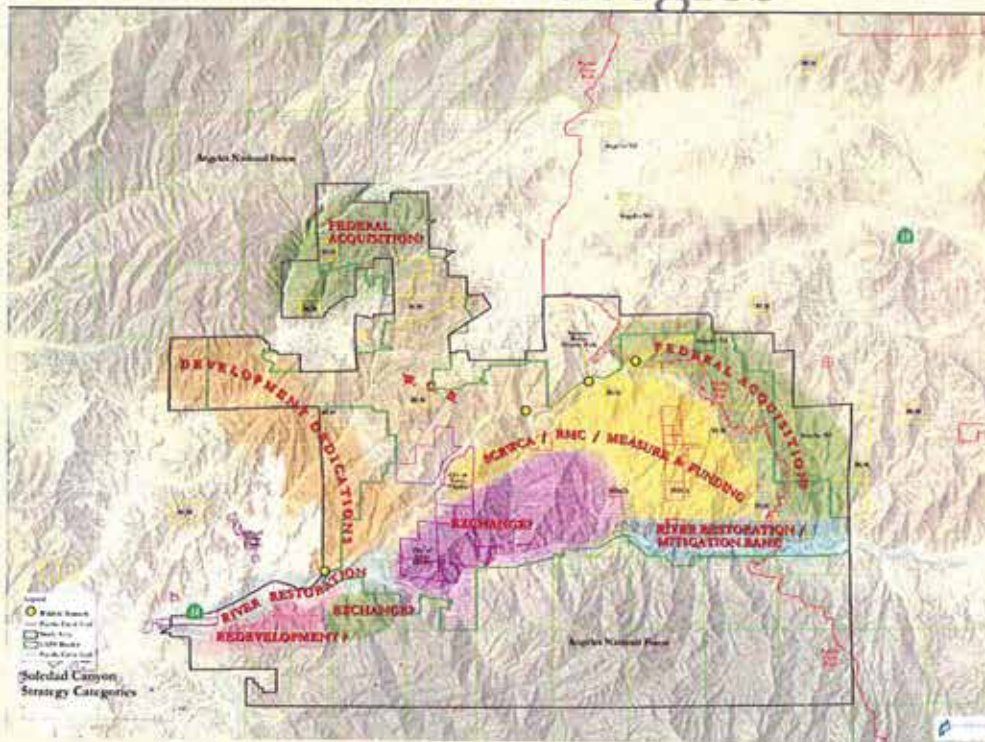
- Pacific Crest Trail and other existing trails

Opportunities



- Public/Private Commitment
- Some availability of Public Funds for Acquisitions/Easements

Solutions and Strategies



Proposed Financing Hierarchy



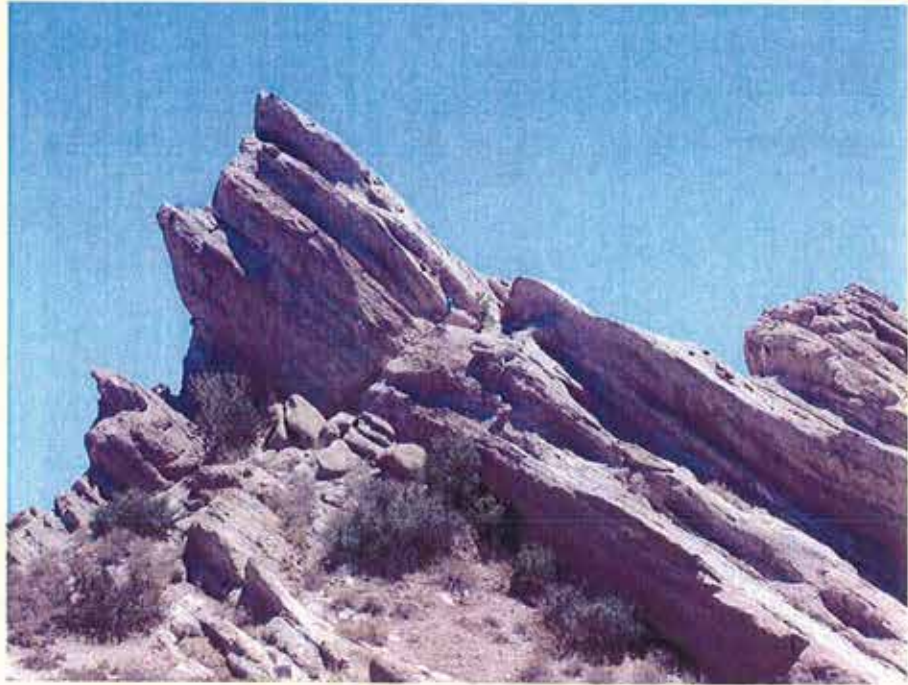
1. Apply private funding from mitigation requirements and set-asides wherever possible
2. Use State and Federal funds for acquisitions and easements
3. Focus on core priority areas and larger parcels
4. Use local funds to fill in gaps or for matching dollars

Feedback



- Do you have any questions?
 - What are your general thoughts on Project Vision and Goals?
 - Do you have any comments or additions to identified opportunities and/or challenges?
 - What are your thoughts on solutions and strategies?
 - What are your priorities?

Wrap-Up

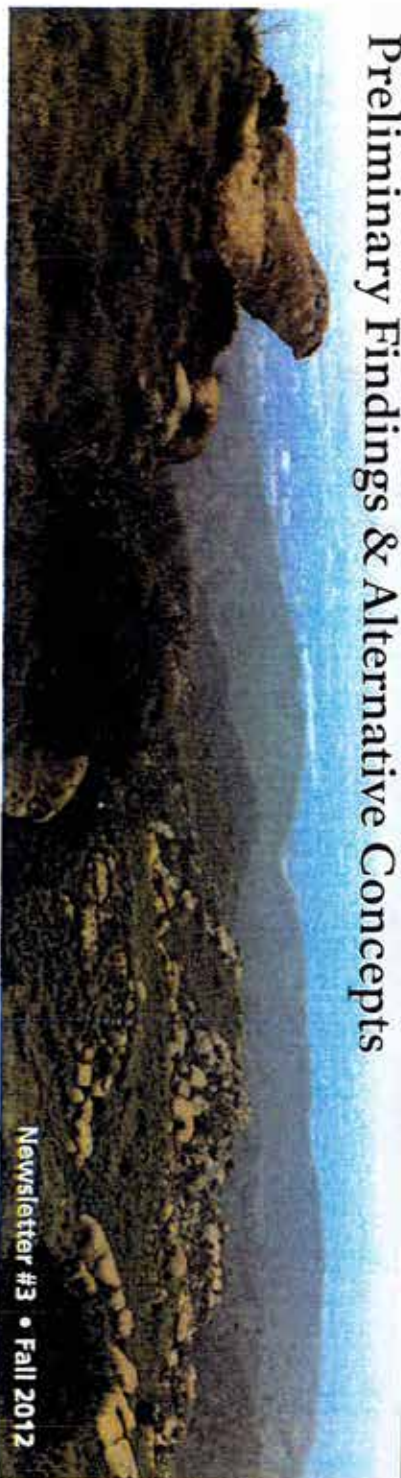


Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Preliminary Findings & Alternative Concepts



Newsletter #3 • Fall 2012

Dear Friends,

We are happy to report our progress on the Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study and we invite your feedback on the preliminary ideas presented in this newsletter. Since you last heard from us, we have been evaluating the study area to determine whether it contains nationally significant resources that are suitable and feasible for inclusion in the national park system as a separate park unit or as an addition to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). We have completed our preliminary analysis and want to share our findings with you. Your feedback at this stage will help us complete our analysis and create a range of feasible alternatives for the draft study report.

You can find a summary of the preliminary study findings on pages 4-10 of this newsletter. Do you agree with our findings? Does the analysis adequately address the criteria for a new park unit and the criteria for a SMMNRA boundary adjustment summarized on page 10? Have we overlooked anything?

Based on our preliminary findings, we begin the public dialogue on the role of the NPS in protecting these resources

on pages 11-19. These preliminary alternative concepts introduce a range of possible management strategies and serve as a starting point for discussion. Which elements of each of these concepts do you like or dislike? Is there a better combination of management strategies that would cost-effectively enhance protection of the resources? Are there any new management strategies that you would like to see included in the draft study report?

Please join us at one of several public meetings to be held in the area this fall to discuss the preliminary findings and alternative concepts. We invite you to visit our website at www.nps.gov/pwro/rimofthevalley to learn about the different ways you can send us your comments. You may also contact us directly via phone, mail or e-mail using the information on the back of this newsletter. Please send us your comments by **January 7, 2013**.

We look forward to hearing from you!

What's Inside...

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An overview of the study legislation and process

Study Schedule p.3

An outline of the study timeline

How to comment and stay involved p.3

Information about how to provide your input and stay engaged throughout the study process

Findings pp. 4-10

Preliminary findings on significance, suitability, feasibility, and boundary adjustment

Alternative Concepts pp.11-19

An overview of the four preliminary alternatives

Meeting schedule p. 20

Information about upcoming public meetings

Contact information p. 20

Information about how to contact the study team

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San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Study Update

The NPS continues to make progress on completing the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study. The final study will be made available to the public when it has been transmitted to Congress. For more information about the completion of this study, please visit the study website: <http://www.nps.gov/pwro/sangabriel/>

Sincerely,
The Study Team

Study Process



View of downtown Los Angeles from Griffith Park Photo: NPS.

Study Legislation

The Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-229 – May 2008) directed the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a special resource study of the area known as the Rim of the Valley Corridor, generally including the mountains enclosing the San Fernando, La Crescenta, Santa Clarita, Simi, and Conejo Valleys in California. The legislation also directed the NPS to determine whether any portion of the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area is eligible to be designated as a unit of the national park system or added to an existing national park unit (Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area); and to explore other ways that private and governmental entities can protect resources and provide more outdoor recreation opportunities.

Start Up of Study

The NPS introduced the Rim of the Valley Corridor special resource study and boundary analysis in 2010 through a newsletter and meetings with organizations, agencies, elected officials, and the public. More than 400 people attended public workshops and the study team received more than 2000 written comments on the study approach, important resources that should be included in the study, the potential impacts of the study, the scope and size of the study area, and the range of possible study outcomes. A summary of these comments can be seen on the study website.

Resource Analysis

Beginning with the resource information provided by the public and agency comments, the study team gathered existing documentation about potentially significant natural and cultural resources throughout the study area. These preliminary findings are summarized beginning on page 4 of this newsletter.

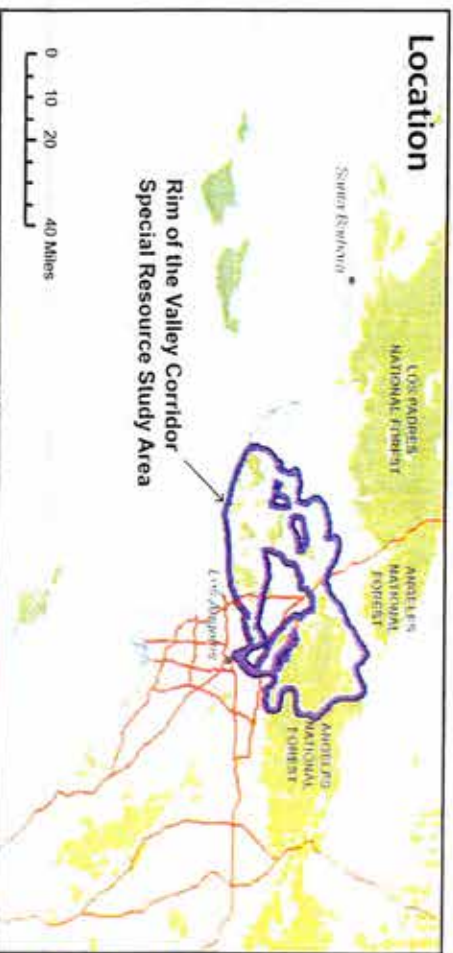
Alternatives

In a special resource study, “alternatives” are possible ways of managing resources within the study area. As part of the study process, all of the alternatives presented must be assessed for feasibility. Management by the NPS will be considered only if: 1) an area has adequate size and configuration to allow for resource protection and

visitor enjoyment; 2) can be administered at a reasonable cost; and 3) requires direct NPS management, instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. A range of “preliminary alternative concepts” for this study is presented in this newsletter beginning on page 11. The “preliminary alternative concepts” are initial ideas for the management of significant resources and public enjoyment opportunities in the study area. With your input, the planning team will refine and further develop these alternatives for evaluation in the draft study report.

Next Steps

After analyzing the public comments on the preliminary study findings and alternatives, the team will develop more detailed alternatives and complete further feasibility and environmental analysis of the alternatives. Next, a draft study report that includes the alternatives and environmental analysis will be published and provided for public comment. Based on these comments, the report will be revised as appropriate. Added to the final report will be a determination of the alternative that in the professional judgment of the Director of the NPS would be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing for public enjoyment. The final step in the process is transmittal of the final report from the Secretary of the Interior to Congress, along with a recommendation regarding the Secretary’s preferred management option for the area.



Study Schedule

Planning Activity		Dates
1	Public Start-up/Scoping Determine the "scope" or overall approach to the study. Host public meetings. Collect and analyze public comments.	2010 - 2011
2	Resource Analysis: Significance and Suitability Identify nationally significant resources (outstanding examples of particular type of resource). The NPS considers a resource to be suitable for inclusion in the national park system if it: 1) is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or 2) is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land managing entity.	2011 - 2012
3-4	Alternatives Development & Feasibility Analysis Identify feasible roles for the NPS and develop alternative concepts. You are invited to help refine and develop these concepts through written comments and participation in public meetings. All of the alternatives must be considered feasible for NPS management. For example they must be of adequate size and configuration to protect the resources, must be able to be administered at a reasonable cost, and must have public support.	2012 We Are Here
5	Environmental Impact Analysis Through a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, the NPS will analyze the potential for environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives.	2013
6	Draft Report The NPS will publish the findings of the study (analysis of resource significance, suitability, feasibility, relationship to purpose of the existing park, and need for NPS management), proposed alternatives, and environmental impact analysis. The Draft Report will contain a more detailed description and analysis of the area's resources and alternatives for the protection of significant resources and the enhancement of recreational opportunities. You will have an opportunity to comment on this draft before the report is finalized. The NPS will host public meetings and solicit public comments on the draft report.	2014
7	Final Report/Transmittal to Congress The final report includes a recommendation for a preferred management option for the area. If NPS involvement is recommended, implementation would require further Congressional action.	2014

We Would Like to Hear from You!

As you read through this newsletter and consider the alternative concepts, think about which ideas you like the most and which would best improve recreational opportunities and protect natural and cultural resources. Your written comments are welcomed and encouraged. Please consider the questions below in addition to any other thoughts and ideas you wish to share. Receiving your input by **January 7, 2013** will allow us to learn from you and revise our approach as we develop the draft study report.

- Is there one alternative concept or idea presented that you think is most valuable in terms of improving recreational opportunities and protecting significant resources? Tell us why you think this idea is valuable.
- What suggestions do you have for strengthening or improving the alternative concepts? Do you have an entirely different vision of how the area should be managed? If so, please describe your vision.
- What concerns do you have about the alternative concepts?
- What are your thoughts or comments on the preliminary study findings?

Please share your thoughts and comments by attending a public meeting or by submitting your comments electronically by e-mail (pwf_rimothievalley@nps.gov) or through the study web site (www.nps.gov/pwro/rimothievalley). You can also mail your comments to the physical address on the back of this newsletter.

How to Stay Involved

- Learn about the special resource study process:
- Visit the study web site: <http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rimothievalley>
 - Sign up for the study mailing list or e-mail list
 - Participate in one of the public meetings listed on the back page of this newsletter

Preliminary Study Findings



View of downtown Los Angeles and Elysian Park from the Verdugo Mountains. Photo: NPS.

The study process includes two separate, parallel analyses, one that focuses on the potential creation of a new unit of the national park system; and a second that focuses on potential adjustment of the existing boundary of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). It should be noted that there is a certain amount of overlap between the criteria for a new park unit and the criteria for a boundary adjustment. Both sets of criteria require proposals to be feasible and demonstrate a need for direct NPS management over management by other entities.

New Park Unit Evaluation

This special resource study evaluates the Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Area as a potential new unit of the national park system based on established criteria. A proposed addition to the national park system will receive a favorable recommendation from the NPS only if it meets all of the following four criteria for inclusion (NPS Management Policies 2006):

1. it possesses nationally significant natural or cultural resources;
2. it is a suitable addition to the system;
3. it is a feasible addition to the system; and
4. it requires direct NPS management, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector.

SMMNRA Boundary Evaluation

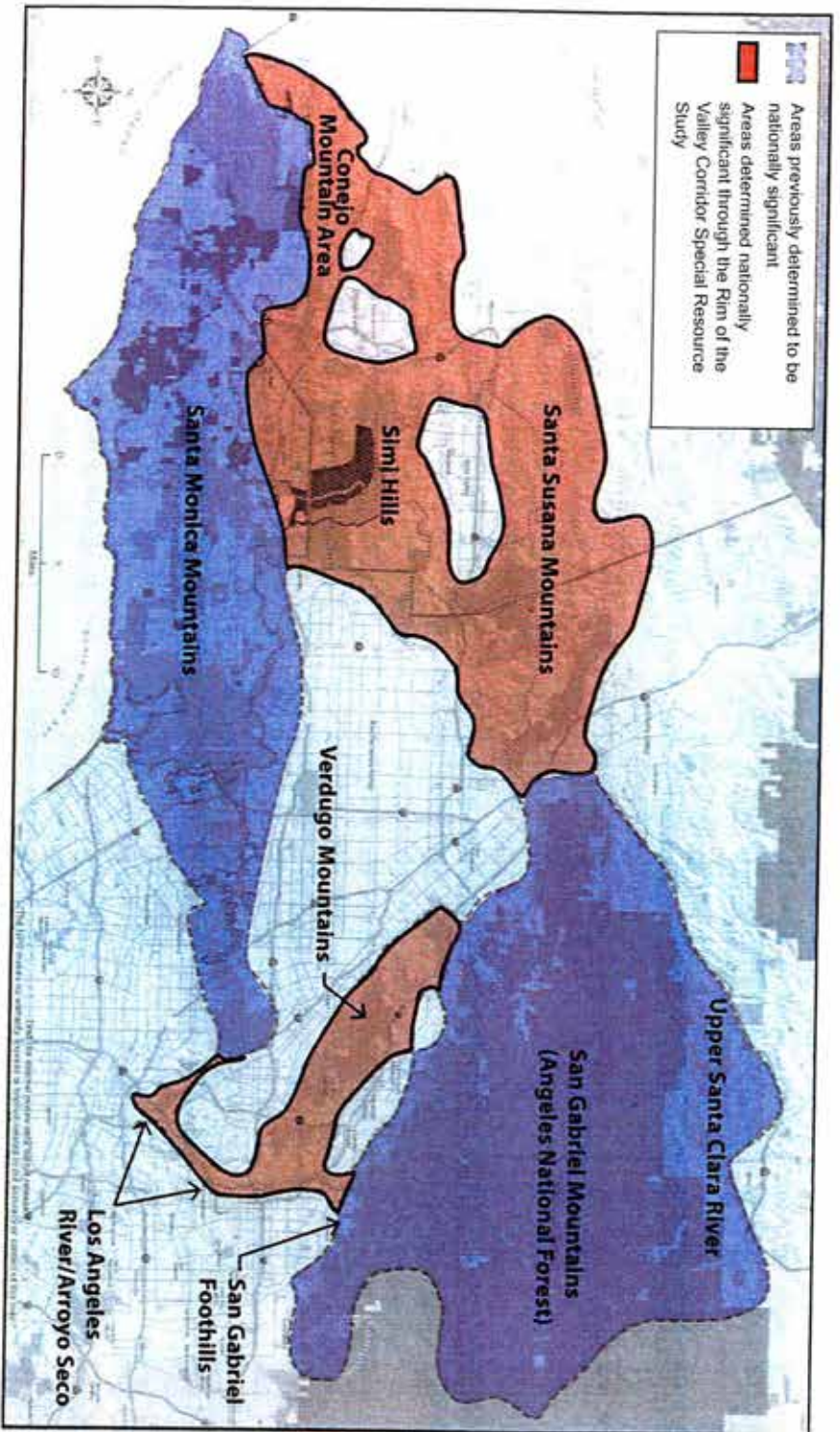
This study also evaluates the potential of including all or a portion of the study area as part of SMMNRA through an extension of the SMMNRA boundary.

For the Secretary of the Interior to recommend any portion of the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area as an addition to SMMNRA, the area must meet one of the following criteria (NPS Management Policies 2006):

- Protect significant resources and values or enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes; or
- Address operational and management issues, such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads; or
- Otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

The addition needs to:

- Be a feasible addition to the National Park System—the criteria is the same as the feasibility criteria for special resource studies listed above; and
- Require direct NPS management that cannot or will not be accomplished by another government entity or by the private sector.



Map to the left: Two geographic areas within the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area have previously been found by the NPS to contain nationally significant resources: the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the San Gabriel Mountains.

Special Resource Study Criteria Preliminary Findings (New Park Unit)

National Significance - Does the study area contain nationally significant resources?

Two geographic areas within the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area have previously been found by the NPS to contain nationally significant resources: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), and the San Gabriel Mountains.

The purpose and national significance of SMMNRA was established by Congress through its enabling legislation (Public Law 95-625). It recognizes the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline as an area of national significance because of its combination of natural, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic resources, and further states that, "... there is a national interest in protecting and preserving these

benefits." Through the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study process, the NPS has determined the San Gabriel Mountains to be of national significance for its geologic resources and high biodiversity. The Rim of the Valley Corridor study is not revisiting the significance of these two areas. However, the previously identified nationally significant resources are incorporated into the summary provided below.

The remaining portions of the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area are being evaluated through this study to determine the extent of nationally significant resources. The NPS preliminary findings indicate that the remainder of the study area contains nationally significant resources, including outstanding examples of geologic and paleontological resources, high biodiversity, as well as a culturally rich, long history of human use. The following summary describes how the study area resources, including the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains, meet the national significance criteria.



Top photo: Diverse geologic formations create scenic vistas throughout the Rim of the Valley Corridor. Center photo: SMMNRA contains one of the most extensive and diverse assemblages of fossil material known in the national park system. Bottom photo: The San Fernando Valley spineflower, once believed extinct, occurs in the study area. All photos NPS.

NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES

The Rim of the Valley Corridor study area provides outstanding examples of geologic history including the evolution of the Transverse Ranges Province and a diversity of both marine and terrestrial, well-preserved, paleontological resources. The study area contains a high level of biodiversity including outstanding examples of native grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, dry coniferous forests, and alluvial fan sage scrub.

Mountain Building and Diverse Geology Associated with the Transverse Ranges Province

- Volcanic and dolomitic formations in the Santa Monica Mountains, Conejo Mountain area and the Simi Hills were used in the historically significant paleo-magnetic testing that confirmed the 90 degree rotation of the Transverse Ranges Province.

- The San Gabriel Mountains are among the fastest growing mountains in the world - as much as 2 inches a year - thus serving as an excellent location to learn about mountain building. The Santa Susana Mountains, one the youngest mountain systems on the west coast, further contribute to understanding active mountain building in the region.
- One of the most geologically diverse mountain ranges in southern California, the San Gabriel Mountains are comprised of rocks representing every major geologic era, including some of the oldest rocks (over 1 billion years old) on the west coast of the United States.

Paleontology

- SMMNRA contains one of the most extensive and diverse assemblages of fossil material known in the national park system. There are at least 2,300 known fossil localities, representing over a dozen fossiliferous geologic formations.
- The Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, and the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains also contain significant fossiliferous formations, some of which are not currently represented in the Santa Monica Mountains.

High Levels of Biodiversity

- SMMNRA protects for the American people the greatest expanse of mainland Mediterranean ecosystems (biomes) in the national park system. With high concentrations of rare, sensitive, and endemic species, it is among the world's rarest and most endangered land types, one that occurs in only five locations throughout the world.
- The topographically and geologically diverse San Gabriel Mountains contain high levels of biodiversity. Outstanding examples of rare southern California communities in the western San Gabriel Mountains and foothills include: alluvial fan sage scrub, big-cone Douglas fir, coastal sage scrub, and riparian areas.
- The Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains contain outstanding examples of native southern California habitat which support a number of special status species considered rare, threatened or endangered.

- One of the most outstanding examples of native grasslands in southern California occurs at Lasky Mesa in the Simi Hills. The unique loamy soil hosts native bunchgrasses and habitat for the rare San Fernando Valley spineflower.
- The Santa Susana Mountains contain outstanding examples of oak woodlands and savannas and a relict Pleistocene big-cone Douglas fir forest.
- The Verdugo Mountains function as an island refuge providing an important link between nationally significant plant and animal populations in the San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountains. The genetic interchange of species between these two mountain ranges provides significant opportunities for scientific study.
- The Upper Santa Clara River contains some of the highest quality, least disturbed and biotically intact acreage of big-cone Douglas fir-canyon oak forest, riparian forest and woodland, coastal sage scrub, and alluvial fan sage scrub. Invertebrate species diversity is very high, with over 2,500 species.

NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Rim of the Valley Corridor study area contains nationally significant cultural resources including archeological sites and national historic landmarks related to cultural themes such as expanding science and technology, expressing cultural values, and development of the American economy.

- The collection of prehistoric and historic archeological sites related to over 10,000 years of human habitation is significant. More than 1000 known archeological sites exist within SMMNRA. Outside of SMMNRA over 500 sites have been evaluated. The potential for scientific identification and study of additional sites in the study area is high.

- Excellent examples of Chumash rock art are found within SMMNRA. The Saddle Rock Ranch Pictograph Site (NHL eligible), also known as the "Cave of the Four Horsemen," is a Native American rock art and settlement site located in the Santa Monica Mountains. It includes the only depictions in Chumash art of human figures in profile and of mounted horsemen.

- National historic landmarks (NHLs) within the study area have contributed major advances in science and technology including:
 - The Mount Wilson Observatory in the Angeles National Forest (NHL eligible) includes five historically significant telescopes which laid the technological foundation for all large modern telescopes.
 - The Space Flight Operations Facility (NHL) associated with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory near Pasadena has served as the primary NASA center for the unmanned exploration of the planets.
 - The Twenty five foot Simulator (NHL), also located on the campus of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, is the only NASA facility capable of producing high-quality space simulation for testing spacecraft under conditions of extreme cold; high vacuum; and intense, highly uniform, solar radiation.

- Well No. 4, Pico Canyon Oil Field (NHL) in the Santa Susana Mountains, was the first commercially successful oil well in California.

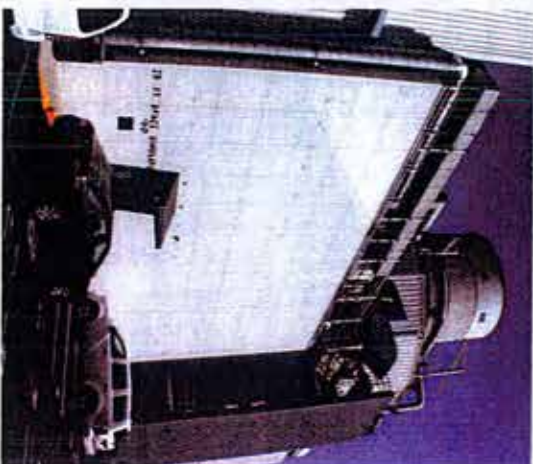
- Continued use of the Santa Monica Mountains for film production preserves a 75-year tradition that continues to hold the world's fascination. Paramount Ranch is held by some historians to be the nation's best remaining example of a film production facility from Hollywood's 'Golden Era' of Motion Pictures.

- The study area reflects a wide range of properties associated with significant examples of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. The Farnes House (NHL) in Pacific Palisades is one of the few architectural works attributed to Charles Farnes, and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics and ideals of postwar Modernism in the United States. The Gamble House (NHL) is the most complete and best preserved example of the work of the architects Greene & Greene and embodies the highest level of the California Bungalow style associated with the Arts and Crafts movement of the early 20th century.

- The Pasadena Rose Bowl (NHL) is of outstanding significance in the field of recreation as the site of the oldest and most renowned post-season college football "Bowl" game, held annually every New Year's in the Rose Bowl since the structure's completion in 1922.

Potential National Significance – Additional Research and Analysis Needed

In addition to the nationally significant resources described above, there are cultural resources that may be nationally significant, but require more research and analysis beyond the scope of this study. Those resources include Chumash rock art and archeological sites outside of SMMNRA, Santa Susana Field Laboratory historic districts and properties, and the four-level interchange associated with the completion of the Arroyo Seco Parkway. The Butterfield Overland Trail also traverses the study area and is currently being evaluated through another NPS study which will determine its significance.



Top photo: The Space Flight Operations Facility (NHL) at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory continues to be used as the primary NASA center for unmanned space exploration. Bottom photo: The Twenty five foot Simulator (NHL) at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory is the only NASA facility capable of producing high quality space simulation for testing spacecraft. All photos NPS.



Suitability Findings - Could the area help fill a crucial gap in the national park system?

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Based upon evaluation of the study area resources and their relative quality, character, and rarity, the study area primarily contains nationally significant resources already represented in SMMNRA including geologic features used in the studies that confirmed the 90 degree rotation of the Transverse Ranges Province, paleontological resources, and habitat essential for wildlife movement. Conservation of these resources would expand and enhance the significance of SMMNRA and provide new opportunities for scientific study.

The study area also contains nationally significant natural and cultural resources that are not currently represented in SMMNRA or the broader national park system. In the San Gabriel Mountains this includes geologic diversity and excellent examples of alluvial fan sage scrub habitat. In the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains examples of native grasslands, oak woodlands and savannas and national historic landmarks related to advancements in astronomy and space exploration, and the first commercially successful oil well in the west are not currently represented in the national park system.



Top photo: Study area natural resources include some not represented in SMMNRA, such as native grasslands and oak woodland savanna. Bottom photo: Well No. 4, Pico Canyon Oil Field (NHL) was the first commercially successful oil well in California and represents a resource not currently represented in SMMNRA. Pictured is the two-story hotel erected in 1880 for use by the oil men. All photos NPS.

Feasibility and Need for NPS Management Findings - Could the area be efficiently and effectively managed by the National Park Service?

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of efficient administration by the National Park Service (NPS) at a reasonable cost.

The NPS finds that the creation of a new national park unit is not feasible due to cost and operational efficiencies. Many of the significant resources within the study area expand on the national significance of SMMNRA and provide habitat connectivity essential for the long-term productivity of the significant resources within the Santa Monica Mountains thus warranting physical connection to the SMMNRA boundary and a seamless management approach. A separate unit would also be more costly than expanding existing park operations. The feasibility of a boundary adjustment to SMMNRA is discussed on the next page.

Because a new park unit is found not to be feasible, the need for direct NPS management of a park designation need not be evaluated.

Special Resource Study Criteria (New Park Unit) Preliminary Conclusion

The NPS finds that the Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Area contains nationally significant resources suitable for inclusion in the national park system. However, the study area is found not to be feasible as a new national park unit (separate from SMMNRA). Inclusion of study area resources in a boundary adjustment to SMMNRA would be more cost effective and provide for greater operational efficiency (see boundary adjustment analysis).

Boundary Adjustment Criteria (Additions to SMMNRA)

Criteria Analysis

The NPS finds that the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area contains nationally significant resources. Boundary adjustments within the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area would provide more opportunities to ensure long-term protection of nationally significant plants and wildlife associated with SMMNRA and would expand public enjoyment opportunities for the Los Angeles metropolitan region. Two boundary adjustment alternatives are described in this newsletter; one emphasizes a boundary adjustment focused on enhancing opportunities to reach a broad range of urban audiences; while the other emphasizes protection of ecological connectivity.

Feasibility and Need for Direct NPS Management Findings

The NPS finds that an adjustment to the boundary of SMMNRA is feasible using the existing collaborative partnership-based park model exemplified by SMMNRA, which respects the complex mix of land use, ownership, and regulatory authorities. Through a boundary adjustment the NPS and partners would have enhanced opportunities for collaborative management with local, state and federal managers to protect natural and cultural resources, provide recreation, and offer interpretation and educational programs.

While some of the lands in the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area are protected for conservation and recreation by other land management agencies and conservation organizations, inclusion of additional areas in the SMMNRA boundary would provide the opportunity for interagency coordination to achieve recreation and conservation goals and provides the NPS with the authority to more fully invest in conservation, planning, and public enjoyment of the area. The NPS could enter into cooperative management agreements with existing agencies and seek funds for targeted land acquisition from willing sellers. The need for direct

NPS management is still being evaluated. Comments on the preliminary alternative concepts presented in this newsletter will help the NPS to make this determination.

Boundary Adjustment Preliminary Conclusion

The NPS finds that the addition of lands in the study area to SMMNRA would contribute to protection of significant resources and expand opportunities for public enjoyment.



Boundary adjustments within the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area would provide more opportunities to ensure long-term protection of nationally significant plants and wildlife associated with the SMMNRA. Photo: NPS.

Special Resource Study Preliminary Findings (New Park Unit)

<p>Significance: Are there nationally significant resources in the study area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NPS determined that the remainder of the study area contains nationally significant resources, including outstanding examples of geologic resources, paleontological resources, biodiversity, as well as a culturally rich, long history of human use as evidenced by nationally significant cultural resources. 	Yes
<p>Suitability: Could the area help fill a crucial gap in the national park system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study area primarily contains nationally significant resources already represented in SMMNRA, a unit of the national park system Study area also contains suitable nationally significant resources (resources suitable for a new park unit) not currently represented in SMMNRA or the broader national park system. 	Partially
<p>Feasibility: Could the area be efficiently and effectively managed by the National Park Service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a new national park unit is not feasible due to cost and operational efficiencies. 	No
<p>Need for Direct NPS Management: Does the area require direct NPS management, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This criterion was not evaluated for consideration of a new park unit. 	Not applicable

Boundary Adjustment Preliminary Findings (Additions to SMMNRA)

<p>Boundary Adjustment Evaluation: Would portions of the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area protect significant resources, enhance opportunities for public enjoyment, address operation and management issues, or otherwise protect resources critical to fulfilling the purposes of SMMNRA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary adjustments within the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area could: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> provide more opportunities to ensure long-term protection of nationally significant resources associated with SMMNRA by expanding NPS opportunities to preserve ecological connectivity, provide an opportunity for the NPS to provide interpretation and education on natural and cultural themes not currently represented in the national park system, and expand recreational opportunities for Los Angeles area communities, some of which are currently deficient in access to parks and recreation. 	Yes
<p>Feasibility: Could portions of the study area be a feasible addition to SMMNRA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of a boundary adjustment to add portions of the study area to SMMNRA is feasible using the existing collaborative partnership-based park model exemplified by SMMNRA, which respects the complex mix of land use, ownership, and regulatory authority. 	Yes
<p>Need for Direct NPS Management: Does the area require direct NPS management, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for direct NPS management is still being evaluated. Comments on the preliminary alternative concepts presented in this newsletter will help the NPS make this determination 	TBD*

* To be determined



Introduction to the Preliminary Alternative Concepts

Coastal sage scrub and woodlands in the Santa Susana Mountains. Photo: NPS.

The preliminary alternative concepts presented in this newsletter were developed in cooperation with multiple land management agencies after an analysis of public comments, natural and cultural resource issues, and resource significance. These preliminary concepts illustrate different ways of providing protection and public enjoyment of resources that have been identified as potentially nationally significant through our draft analysis summarized on pages 5-10. The common focus of the preliminary alternatives is an emphasis on cooperative management of existing public lands. Based on the preliminary feasibility findings of the study, none of these alternative concepts includes a recommendation for a new national park unit. Each preliminary alternative concept could stand independently or components of different alternatives could be combined into new ideas. The concepts presented in this newsletter demonstrate a wide variety of solutions and serve as a starting point for discussion and public input.

Four different preliminary alternative concepts are included, the first of which is a "no action" alternative. In addition, three "action alternatives" present different approaches for management including boundary adjustments to SMMNRA and new partnership initiatives. Each of the action alternatives seeks to enhance the capabilities of existing agencies by leveraging resources, sharing information, and cooperative planning.

- **A: Continuation of Current Management:** This "no action" alternative focuses on existing management and authorities.
- **B: Cooperative Conservation Partnership:** This action alternative concentrates on partnership development to foster cooperative planning and funding tools to meet the demands of a growing urban population while meeting common resource protection goals.
- **C: Connecting Urban Communities: SMMNRA Boundary Adjustment:** This action alternative recommends a boundary adjustment for SMMNRA to provide more recreation opportunities and ecological connections with an

emphasis on creating better connections for a broad range of urban audiences including many who are under-represented in national parks and underserved by state and local parks.

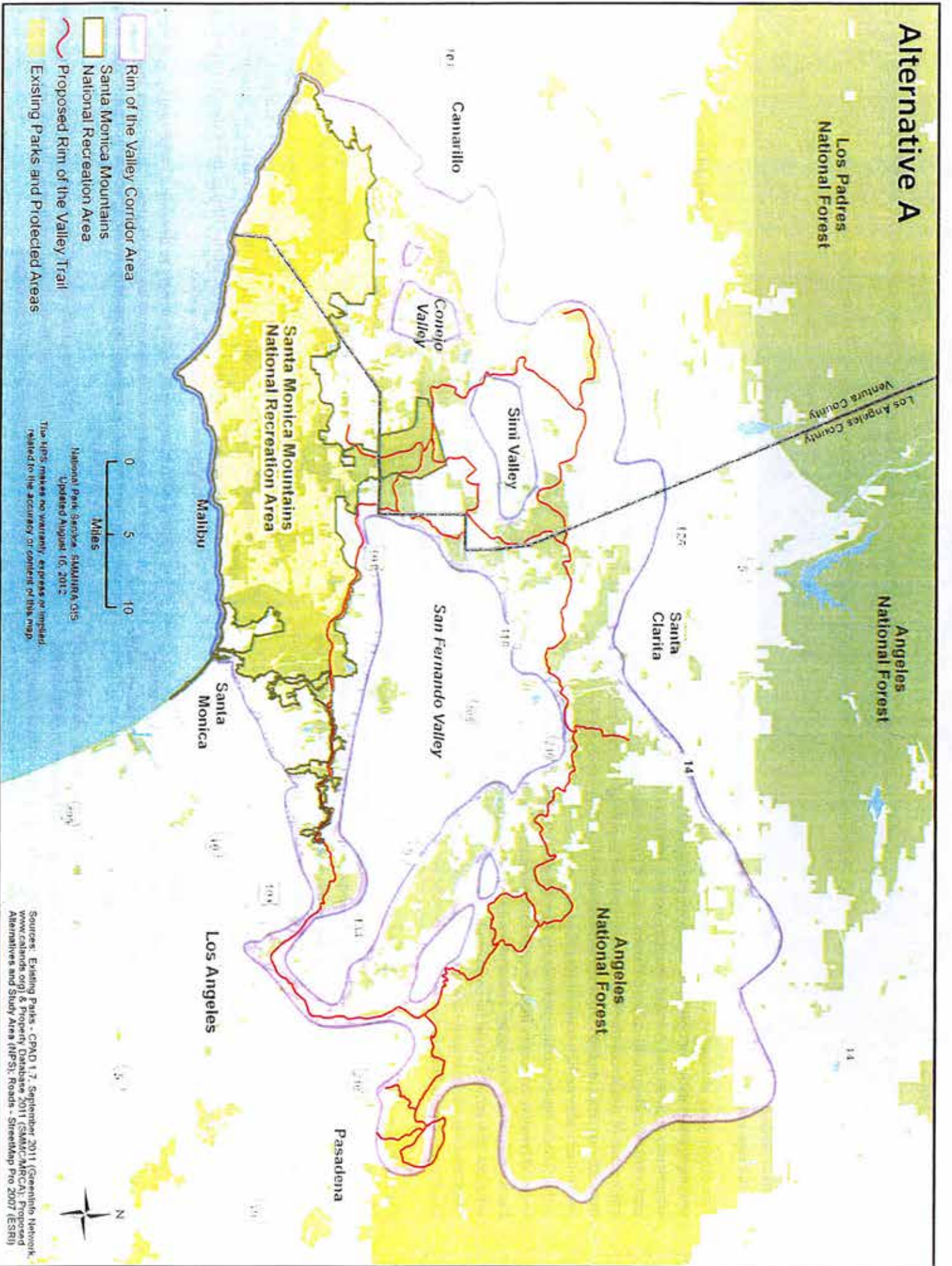
- **D: Connecting Natural Habitat: SMMNRA Boundary Adjustment:** This action alternative recommends a boundary adjustment for SMMNRA to encompass key land linkages and core habitats between SMMNRA, the Los Padres National Forest, the Angeles National Forest, and state and local habitat areas to promote long term resiliency of the natural resources within the existing SMMNRA boundary.

Items Common to All Preliminary Action Alternatives

The preliminary alternative concepts include several actions that are common to all of them, including the following:

- The Angeles National Forest would continue to be managed by the USFS.
- NPS and the USFS would work cooperatively through the Service First authority on initiatives to protect resources and conduct public outreach.
- Boundary additions to SMMNRA would not establish additional regulatory authority or land use authorities over local governments included. NPS land management policies would only apply to lands that the NPS acquires.
- The NPS would support completion of the Rim of the Valley Trail through partnerships and technical assistance.
- SMMNRA would work with partners to develop a collaborative geographic database to support decision making in this area. Universities and other partners would be engaged to assist in building scientific knowledge to support decision-making.
- Once established, the Rim of the Valley Trail would be eligible for designation as a National Recreation Trail, through the existing application process, which is voluntary and initiated by trail managers.

Alternative A



Alternative A: Continuation of Current Management (No Action)

Concept

The "no action" alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide a baseline from which to compare alternatives. Under the no action alternative, the NPS would have no role in the study area beyond existing national park units (i.e. SMMNRA, Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (NHT)) and existing financial and technical assistance programs such as Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program, the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), and the National Historic Landmark (NHL) program. This alternative assumes that the current programs and policies of existing federal, state, local and non-profit organizations would continue at existing levels and current conditions and trends would continue.

Management

SMMNRA would continue to be managed according to its authorized purpose to protect and preserve the significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, natural, archeological, and public health benefits provided by the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area for the residents of and visitors to the area. There would be no new NPS role in the Rim of the Valley Corridor area. Any NPS management activities in areas beyond the current park boundary would be limited to projects that further SMMNRA's defined purpose. Otherwise, management of areas beyond the current park boundary would continue to be conducted by existing landowners and managers.

Resource Management

The NPS would continue its existing resource management activities, partnering with stakeholders within the existing authorities of SMMNRA. State and local stakeholders would continue to have access to existing financial and technical assis-

tance programs such as Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program, the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), and the National Historic Landmark (NHL) program within the existing authorities and policies of these programs.

Resources would continue to be managed by existing federal, state, and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners. Coordination among agencies to protect wildlife habitat and corridors would continue to occur on a case-by-case basis.

Public Enjoyment

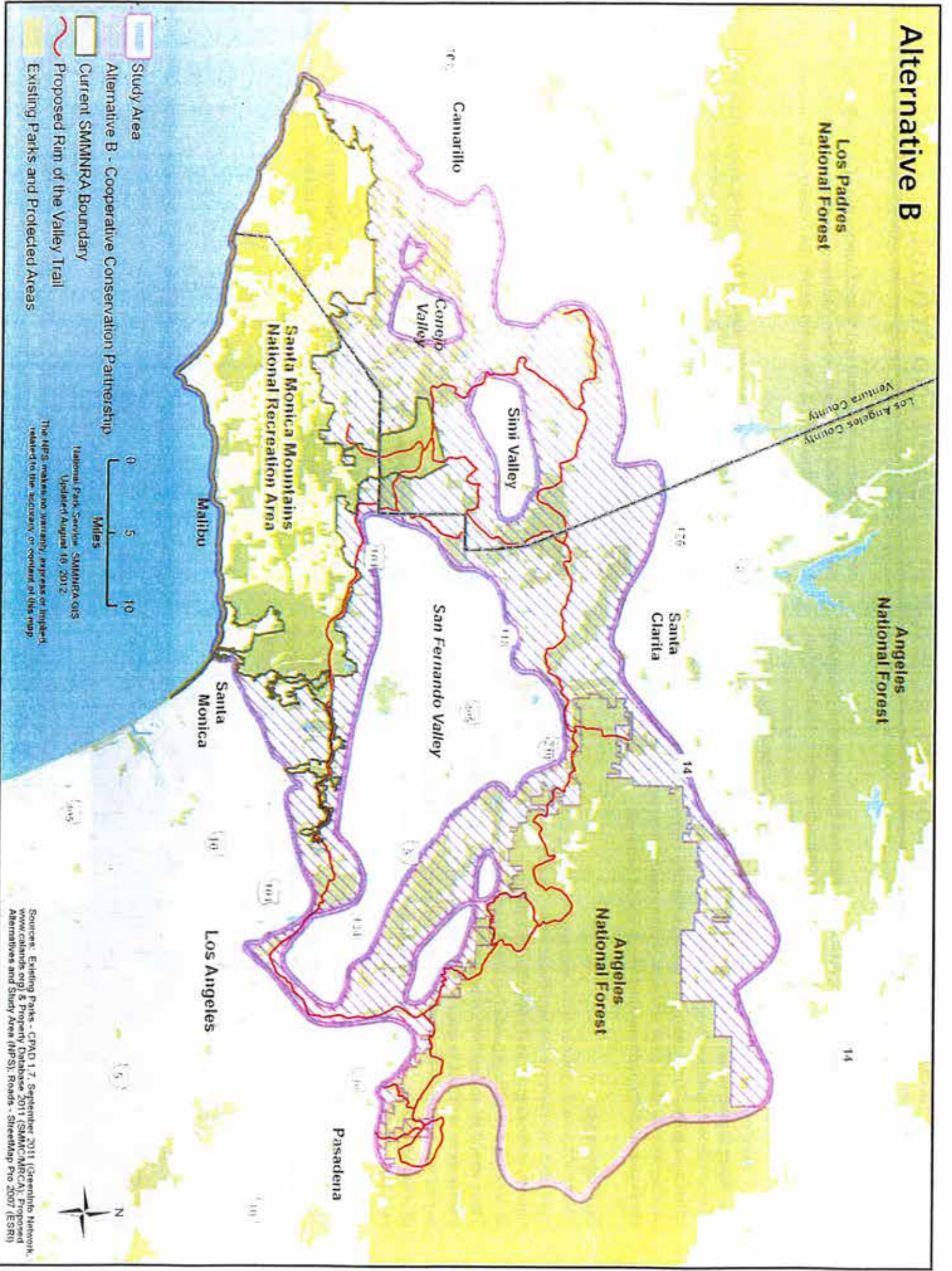
The NPS would continue current outreach and other related programmatic efforts to engage urban communities in the Rim of the Valley area. Existing agencies and organizations would continue to provide recreational opportunities for the public. Recreational access would continue to be limited for some portions of the study area.

Rim of the Valley Trail

Various agencies and organizations would continue to develop proposed segments of the Rim of the Valley Trail. Accordingly, the NPS would continue to plan and implement portions of the trail that traverse park boundaries as funds become available. NPS technical assistance in completion of the full trail would be limited to existing technical assistance and grant programs. Once established, the Rim of the Valley Trail would be eligible for designation as a National Recreation Trail, through the existing application process, which is voluntary and initiated by trail managers.



Alternative B



- Study Area
- Alternative B - Cooperative Conservation Partnership
- Current SMMNRA Boundary
- Proposed Rim of the Valley Trail
- Existing Parks and Protected Areas



National Park Service SMMNRA.crs
Updated August 19 2012
The NPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of this map.



Source: Existing Parks - CPAO 1.7, September 2011 (GreenInfo Network, www.calands.org) & Property Database 2011 (SMMNRA/CA); Proposed Alternatives and Study Area (NPS); Roads - StreetMap Pro 2007 (ESRI)

Alternative B: Cooperative Conservation Partnership

Concept

Congress would authorize SMMNRA to lead a partnership of public and private landowners, organizations, and institutions to protect and expand regional open spaces in the Rim of the Valley Corridor area. The geographic focus of the partnership would generally include the Rim of the Valley study area and wildlife corridors important for protection of SMMNRA's significant resources. The partnership would explore collaborative means for establishing an interconnected system of parks, habitats, and open spaces, connecting urban neighborhoods and surrounding mountains. The partnership would also collaborate to provide coordinated education and interpretation focused on connecting people to the special resources and stories in the Rim of the Valley Corridor area. There would be no new national park unit or boundary adjustment to SMMNRA.

Management

Congressional authorization would specifically direct SMMNRA to take a lead effort in the development of a cooperative conservation plan for the Rim of the Valley Corridor area. The plan would identify mechanisms and strategies for the partnership to implement common goals and objectives. These would be executed by state and local government and private entities within the parameters of existing NPS authorities. The NPS would provide initial planning and administrative assistance for a specified term for completion of this coordinated management plan.

Following completion of the plan, SMMNRA would provide continuing technical assistance to the partnership on a more limited scale, including the development of interpretive and educational materials. Implementation of the plan would largely be completed by other agencies. The NPS would have no authority to acquire or manage lands outside of the existing SMMNRA boundary.

Resource Management

The focus of natural resource protection would be protecting and enhancing habitat and connectivity between parks, habitat areas and open spaces. The partnership would also explore and make recommendations related to cultural resource protection and interpretation and would engage key educational and research institutions.

Public Enjoyment

Engagement of citizens in resource protection through interpretation and citizen science would also be explored.

Rim of the Valley Trail

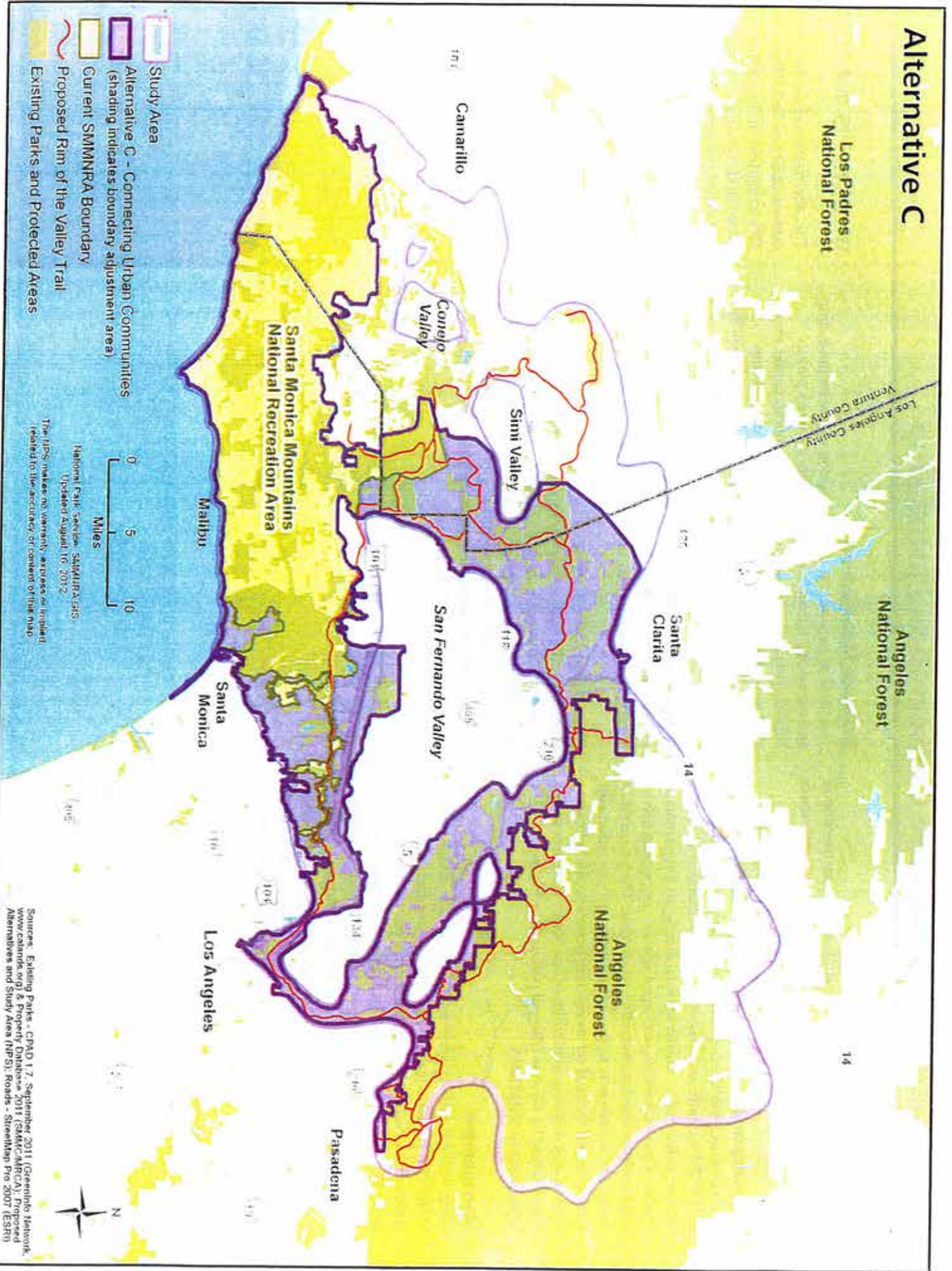
Planning and implementation of the trail would be supported by the NPS through technical assistance and partnership development. The trail would be owned and managed by partner agencies and organizations. The NPS would only own or manage segments of the Rim of the Valley Trail within the existing national recreation area.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

This alternative would extend the current ability of SMMNRA and NPS to partner and coordinate with other land managers, landowners, and other stakeholders to establish an interconnected system of parks, habitats, and open spaces, connecting urban neighborhoods and surrounding mountains, without expanding the current boundary of SMMNRA. The organizations would also collaborate to provide coordinated education and interpretation focused on connecting people to the special resources and stories in the Rim of the Valley Corridor area.



Alternative C



- Study Area
- Alternative C - Connecting Urban Communities (shading indicates boundary adjustment area)
- Current SMMNRA Boundary
- Existing Parks and Protected Areas



National Park Service, SMMNRA GIS
Updated August 16, 2012

The GPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of the map.



Source: Existing Parks - CPAD 1.7, September 2011 (GreenInfo Network, www.calnps.org) & Property Database 2011 (SMA/CALRCAN). Proposed Alternatives and Study Area (NPS). Roads - StreetMap Pro 2007 (ESRI)

Alternative C: Connecting Urban Parks - SMMNRA Boundary Adjustment

Concept

This alternative recommends a boundary adjustment for SMMNRA to provide more recreational opportunities for a broad range of urban audiences, including many who are under-represented in national parks and underserved by state and local parks. SMMNRA would have the authority to manage the new area in the same manner as the existing NRA, in partnership with existing land management agencies and organizations. The boundary adjustment includes portions of the study area bordering the most populous areas of the Los Angeles region, including the mountains surrounding the San Fernando and La Crescenta Valleys, and the Los Angeles River and Arroyo Seco corridors. The boundary adjustment also includes Hansen Dam, Sepulveda Basin, Los Encinos State Park, Debs Park, and El Pueblo de Los Angeles City Monument, which would serve as major portals into the Rim of the Valley Corridor area for urban populations.

Management

NPS management of the new area would emphasize expanded partnership efforts with California State Parks and other organizations focused on connecting people to the national recreation area through new recreational opportunities, outreach, educational and interpretive programs.

The NPS would also work collaboratively with public and private partners to protect significant resources. NPS land acquisition would continue to be completed in partnership with other agencies and organizations. NPS land acquisition would be small and targeted to significant resources and key recreational connections. The NPS would only consider purchase of land from willing sellers. In addition, the NPS would work cooperatively with conservation organizations and private landowners to undertake cooperative conservation efforts (easements, technical assistance, etc.) that do not require federal land acquisition.

Resource Management

The resource protection focus for this alternative would be cultural resources and the Los Angeles River and its tributaries within urban areas. The NPS would facilitate the development of a network of cultural resource stakeholders including historical societies, institutions, and other organizations. This network would explore and make recommendations related to cultural resource protection and interpretation. Natural resource management would emphasize restoration and enhancement. The NPS would partner with stakeholders to develop a collaborative land protection program that includes cooperative planning tools and strategic land acquisition.

Public Enjoyment

Interpretive themes would focus on interactions between human culture and the natural environment, including relationships between urban communities and the Rim of the Valley Corridor areas. With the Los Angeles River and its tributaries providing close-to-home physical, recreational connections, watershed interpretive themes would be emphasized. With a focus on engaging urban populations, the NPS would create a network of natural and cultural resource partners that would develop resource management programs to engage the public through citizen science, volunteer programs and interpretation. A major focus would be partnership development with existing nature centers and recreation facilities to facilitate access to the Rim of the Valley Corridor.

Rim of the Valley Trail

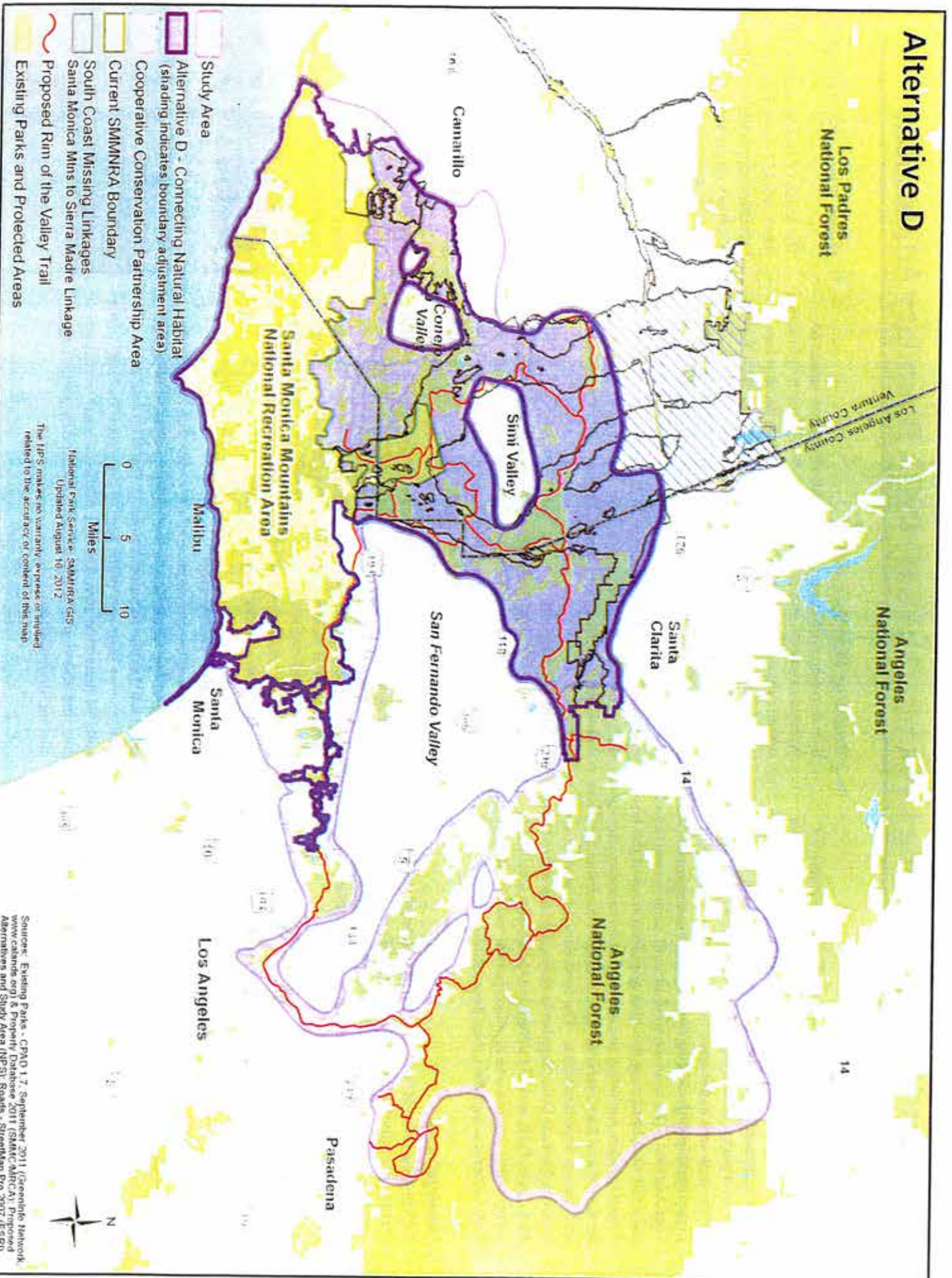
Planning and implementation of the entire Rim of the Valley Trail would be supported by the NPS through technical assistance and partnership development. The NPS could own or manage new segments of the Rim of the Valley Trail within the national recreation area. Outside of the national recreation area, the trail would be owned and managed by partner agencies and organizations.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The focus of this boundary adjustment would be providing more recreation opportunities with an emphasis on creating better connections and access for a broad range of urban audiences, including many who are under-represented in national parks and underserved by state and local parks. To best accomplish this, the alternative would focus on the portions of the study area that border the most populous areas of the Los Angeles region. With the second largest population in the US, the Los Angeles metropolitan region is home to approximately 17 million people. This alternative would provide more close-to-home opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the study area's resources, while providing portals to national park experiences.



Alternative D



The HPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of this map.

National Park Service - SMMNRA/CIS
Updated August 16, 2012

Source: Existing Parks - CPAD 1.7, September 2011 (Seonolo, Harlock, www.calandis.org) & Property Database 2011 (SMMNRA/CIS). Proposed Alternatives and Study Area (HPS); Roads - Streetlap Pro 2007 (ESTRI)

Alternative D: Connecting Natural Habitat - SMMNRA Boundary Adjustment

Concept

This alternative would adjust the boundary of SMMNRA to encompass key landscape linkages and core habitat areas that connect the large natural areas of SMMNRA, the Los Padres National Forest, the Angeles National Forest, and state and local habitat areas to promote long term resiliency of the natural resources within SMMNRA. SMMNRA would have the authority to manage the new area in the same manner as the existing NRA, in partnership with existing land management agencies and organizations.

These linkages would include habitat connections north of the Santa Susana Mountains to the southern boundary of the Los Padres National Forest and the connection from the eastern Santa Susana Mountains to the western boundary of the San Gabriel Mountains portion of the Angeles National Forest.

Management

NPS management of the new area would emphasize collaborative partnerships focused on habitat connectivity. The NPS would work collaboratively with public and private partners to protect significant resources, expand public enjoyment opportunities, and provide interpretation and education about the area's resources.

NPS land acquisition would continue to be completed in partnership with other agencies and organizations. NPS land acquisition would be small and targeted to significant resources and ecological connectivity. The NPS would only consider purchase of land from willing sellers. The NPS would also work cooperatively with conservation organizations and private landowners to undertake cooperative conservation efforts that do not require federal land acquisition (easements, grants, technical assistance for best management practices, etc.). Universities and other partners would be engaged to

assist in building scientific knowledge to support decision-making.

To facilitate habitat connectivity between the Los Padres National Forest and the Rim of the Valley Corridor, the NPS would be authorized to engage in cooperative conservation partnerships with public and private landowners, organizations, and institutions to the north of the study area. Authorities would not include land acquisition or management.

Resource Management

The primary focus of resource protection in this alternative would be natural resource protection and connectivity to promote long term resiliency of biological resources in the Rim of the Valley Corridor. Preserving connections between large habitat areas would help protect existing natural resources in SMMNRA by providing flexibility for migration and adaptation in response to periodic disturbance, such as large scale fire, and longer term environmental changes. While the emphasis would be on natural resources, a number of significant cultural resources would be included and protected within the boundary and would provide opportunities for interpretation and education around cultural resource themes.

Public Enjoyment

The interpretive focus in this alternative would be the interaction between human culture and the natural environment, focusing on themes related to biodiversity. The NPS would provide technical assistance and other partnership and programmatic related roles to support trail and recreation efforts through existing authorities. The NPS would continue current outreach and other related programmatic efforts to engage urban communities in the Rim of the Valley area.

Rim of the Valley Trail

Same as Alternative C.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The focus of this boundary adjustment would be on including key landscape linkages and core habitat areas that connect the large natural areas of SMMNRA, the Los Padres National Forest, the Angeles National Forest, and state and local habitat areas. With ongoing habitat loss and fragmentation in the region, as well as the threats associated with disturbances such as large scale fire, these key linkages are critical for the long term survival of the natural resources within the existing SMMNRA boundary. Without functional landscape connections for migration, dispersal, and other ecological functions, some native species in the Santa Monica Mountains may cease to exist there in the future.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study
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Public Meeting Schedule

Check the study website for a full list of public meetings in the area as well as ways to engage in the study online. To receive up-to-date information about public meetings, please join our e-mail list by visiting: www.nps.gov/pwro/rimofthevalley

Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 7 - 9 p.m.

Conejo Recreation and Parks District
Community Room
403 Hillcrest Dr.
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Thursday, November 8, 2012, 7 - 9 p.m.

George A. Carvalho Santa Clarita Sports Complex
Activities Center Building
20880 Centre Pointe Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

*Tuesday, November 13, 2012, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Pacific Community Center
501 S. Pacific Ave.
Glendale, CA 91204

Thursday, November 15, 2012, 7 - 9 p.m.

Mason Recreation Center
10500 Mason Ave.
Chatsworth, CA 91311

Tuesday, November 27, 2012, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Encino Community Center - Women's Club
4935 Balboa Blvd.
Encino, CA 91316

*Thursday, November 29, 2012, 7 - 9 p.m.

Moorpark Community Center
799 Moorpark Ave.
Moorpark, CA 93021

Saturday, December 1, 2012, 10 a.m. - noon

Eaton Canyon Nature Center
1750 North Altadena Dr.
Pasadena, CA 91107

**Habrá un traductor disponible para estas reuniones públicas.*



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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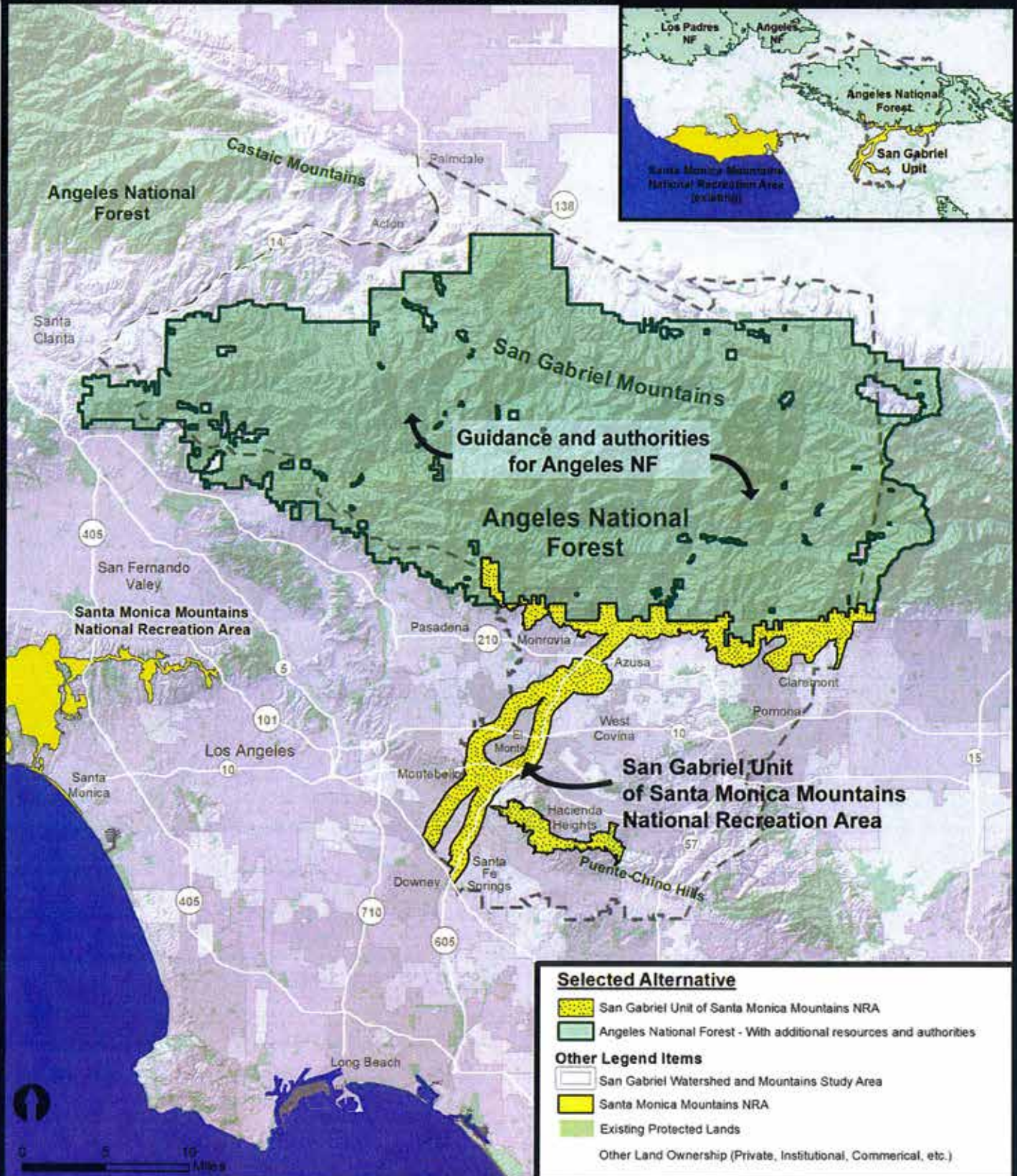
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<http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rimofthevalley>

Selected Alternative



San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study



Upper Santa Clara River Review: National Park Service *Draft San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*

Summary:

“The National Park Service (NPS) prepared the *Draft San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study* to determine whether all or part of the study area is significant, suitable, and feasible for designation as a unit of the national park system.” (*Draft San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*, 2011, p. v)

Status:

“The National Park Service is pleased to announce the completion of the *San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*. The Secretary of the Interior transmitted the final study to Congress on April 10, 2013.”

(<http://www.nps.gov/pwro/sangabriel/>)

Recommended Action:

“The selected alternative is primarily a combination of management concepts from alternative A (San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area) and alternative D (San Gabriel Region National Recreation Area), as presented in the *Draft San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*. Some additional refinements have been made to reflect public concerns, provide for efficient management, and to take advantage of new authorities provided to the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) through the Service First authority.

“The selected alternative would establish a San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area which would provide the NPS, and other land

management agencies and organizations with guidance and direction to work together in new ways. Partnership arrangements among federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and area landowners would be the primary means to achieve the conservation, recreational, and educational goals of the San Gabriel unit. Although the Angeles National Forest (Angeles NF) would not be included in the San Gabriel unit, the NPS and USFS would be directed to work in partnership. In addition, legislative guidance would provide additional support and authorities for the Angeles NF to steward resources and improve recreational opportunities.

San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA (San Gabriel unit)

“The San Gabriel Mountains foothills, San Gabriel and Rio Hondo river corridors and the western Puente Hills (alternative D south of the Angeles NF) would be established as an additional unit of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA. The NPS and numerous other agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area would: 1) work collaboratively to protect significant resources, restore ecological communities, and improve recreational opportunities; 2) provide technical assistance to willing communities for conservation planning to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces; and 3) offer new educational and interpretive opportunities.

Angeles National Forest

“The selected alternative would also bring additional recognition, tools, and support to the Angeles NF in order to steward watershed resources and ecosystems and improve recreational opportunities. In lieu of a new designation for the Angeles NF, this guidance would: 1) reaffirm the primary importance of the Angeles NF in preserving watershed and natural resources, while continuing to provide for multiple use management; and 2) prioritize funding for resource protection, recreation, and education, and establish mechanisms to increase funding for facilities, maintenance, ecological restoration, visitor management; and offer new educational programming, and stewardship activities. This would be accomplished without a national recreation area designation on the Angeles NF.

Collaborative Federal Management

“The NPS and USFS would collaborate through the Service First authority and other mechanisms to protect the significant resources of the San Gabriel watershed and mountains, provide high quality recreation and education opportunities, and assist the surrounding communities in providing community-based recreation and conservation opportunities. The NPS and the USFS would work together:

- To explore opportunities to protect and enhance interconnected ecosystems essential for long-term viability of significant natural resources.
- To help communities provide close-to-home outdoor recreation, conservation and education opportunities for their residents, as well as to better connect to the

nearby national park and national forest areas.

- To provide an array of seamless outdoor experiences in the San Gabriel watershed and mountains.”
(Summary and Final Recommendations, 2013, p. 10)

Details:

Chapter 1: Introduction

“The study area covers more than 1,000 square miles (over 700,000 acres) in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region. It is one of the most densely populated and diverse areas of the United States. Most of the study area is located in Los Angeles County (approximately 85%), the remainder lies in Orange and San Bernardino counties. In addition to the portions of San Gabriel River watershed, the study area also includes portions of the Los Angeles River, **the Santa Clara River**, and the Antelope Valley watersheds, as well as very small portions of the Santa Ana River and Mojave watersheds.” (*Draft San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*, 2011, p. 2)

“Over fifty communities are located in the study area with approximately 1.5 million residents as of 2000 census. The Los Angeles metropolitan region is home to over 16 million residents. The largest communities in the study area south of the San Gabriel Mountains include Pomona and **Santa Clarita** with populations near 150,000. The City of Palmdale is the largest community at the northern end of the study area with approximately 115,000 residents.” (p. 4)

“The study area is part of a complex landscape where the geomorphic provinces of the Transverse Ranges and Peninsular

Ranges come together. The mountains, hills, and valleys of these provinces characterize the regional landscape. Major topographic features include the San Gabriel Mountains, the San Jose Hills, and the Puente-Chino Hills. The mountains and hills define valleys, including the **Santa Clarita**, Antelope and San Gabriel valleys, and other portions of the Los Angeles basin and coastal plain. The northern limit of the study area includes the southwestern extent of the Mojave Desert in the Antelope Valley.” (p. 4)

Chapter 2: Resources Description SOLEDAD BASIN/ SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

“The Soledad basin lies at the northwestern base of the San Gabriel Mountains. On the north it is defined by the Sierra Pelona Range. The San Andreas fault and the San Gabriel fault bound the basin on its northeast and southwest borders. The **Upper Santa Clara River** and its headwaters drain from both the San Gabriel Mountains and the Sierra Pelona Range into the Soledad basin and **Santa Clarita Valley**.” (p. 14)

Sand and Aggregate

“The highly erosive slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains provide a seemingly endless source of aggregate which is a necessary ingredient in building roads and concrete structures. Sand, gravel, and other rock products are the most significant mineral resources, exclusive of petroleum, in the Transverse Ranges (Morton 1982; Dibblee 1982). There are multiple sand and gravel operations in the study area. Some of the largest are located near the Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale, and in the Soledad basin. The **Santa Clara River** also has several aggregate mining operations.” (p. 25)

SURFACE WATER

“The study area contains portions of five major watersheds in the Los Angeles region: the San Gabriel River watershed, the Los Angeles River watershed, the **Santa Clara River watershed**, the Antelope Valley watershed, and a very small portion of the Santa Ana River watershed. In the mountains and foothills, coastal watersheds feature natural streams with year-round flow and high quality habitat. Downstream, the urbanized Los Angeles basin features river systems that have been engineered to protect homes and businesses from flooding.” (p. 26)

Santa Clara River Watershed

“The **Santa Clara River** is the largest river system in southern California that remains in a relatively natural state. Approximately 1,200 square miles of this watershed drains to the **Santa Clara River Estuary** in Ventura County. The only major dams in the watershed are located outside of the study area in the Sierra Pelona Range. No major dams have been located on the main river channel. The **Santa Clara River** is the last unchannelized riparian and wildlife corridor in the region, providing the primary remaining east-west biological connection between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Pacific Ocean (California Coastal Conservancy 2001).

“Portions of the **Upper Santa Clara River watershed** are located in the study area where the **Santa Clara River** originates in the San Gabriel Mountains. The **Upper Santa Clara River** is a large ephemeral stream. As the river exits the confinement of the mountains, it has braided stream geomorphology characterized by the frequent shifting network of channels and the intervening bars, and the broad

floodplain area, and typical of braided stream deposits (LADPW 2005)." (p. 28)

EXISTING VEGETATION AND HABITAT

"Within the study area, fragmentary representatives of native grasslands exist in the Antelope Valley, along the **Santa Clara River**, eastern San Gabriel Valley, San Jose Hills, Puente Hills, and the San Gabriel Canyon. The native grasslands in these areas are typically occurring in scattered patches." (p. 36)

*"Alluvial wash and alluvial fan sage scrub generally consists of a mixture of shrubs, which colonize and persist within infrequently scoured and flooded terrain such as floodplains, alluvial plains, or along seasonal streams. The dominant shrub in most washes is scalebroom. Alluvial fan sage scrub type is found in alluvial plains and washes in the Antelope Valley, in canyons adjacent to the San Gabriel Valley and throughout the alluvial plains and washes of the **Santa Clara River**. It is extremely reduced from its historic range as a result of alterations to river channels for flood protection."* (p. 38)

*"Chamise-redshank chaparral consists of nearly pure stands of chamise or redshank. Wildlife species associated with this chaparral are similar to those associated with sagebrush and coastal sage scrub. Within the study area it is abundant in the San Gabriel Mountains and southern foothills, the **Upper Santa Clara River watershed**, and a few stands in canyons of the Puente-Chino Hills (CDFG 2008a, Davis et.al. 1994)." (p. 38)*

"In the Puente-Chino Hills area, the dominant oak species is the coast live oak. It is found scattered throughout many hillsides,

drainages, and broad valleys. It is most prevalent on north facing slopes and in drainage bottoms. Large complexes of oak woodland are found in Powder Canyon, Brea Canyon, and Tonner Canyon. Throughout the San Gabriel Valley and southern San Gabriel Mountains foothills, oak woodland is found scattered on north facing slopes and in drainage bottoms. The **Upper Santa Clara River watershed** contains coast live oak woodlands, usually along the margins of canyon bottoms and on lower slopes in chaparral and coastal sage scrub understory habitats." (p. 39)

*"Juniper woodlands are dominated by California juniper, often with an understory of desert scrub species including foothill yucca and buckwheat. Within the study area, juniper woodlands are typically found on northern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains, lower slopes within the eastern portion of the **Upper Santa Clara River watershed**, and on lower slopes in the San Andreas rift zone where it is mixed with Joshua tree woodland and chaparral. Juniper berries are an important food source to bird species and the foliage is consumed by some mammal species (CDFG 2008a, PCR Services Corporation 2006, Davis et.al. 1994)." (p. 39)*

*"Pinyon-juniper woodland consists of a mixture of single needle leaf pinyon pine and California juniper, with mountain mahogany, buckwheat, squawbush, foothill yucca, penstemons, and native grasses. This habitat is found in the **Upper Santa Clara River watershed** and along the northern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains at middle elevations (PCR Services Corporation 2006)." (p. 39)*

“Much of the remaining intact riparian habitat in the study area is in the San Gabriel Mountains and foothills and the **Upper Santa Clara watershed.**” (p. 40)

“*Lacustrine wetlands or freshwater marsh* develop in areas of still or slow-moving permanent freshwater and is dominated by the perennial, emergent cattail. Small areas of freshwater marsh are found in Puente Hills valleys, along major drainages, in scattered locations along the shorelines of reservoirs and natural lakes in the San Gabriel Mountains, along slow-flow portions of the river and tributaries within the **Upper Santa Clara River**, adjacent to artificially created impoundments used to water livestock, and in scattered ponds and irrigation ditches throughout the Antelope Valley.” (p. 41)

“California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia California*) is an annual grass associated with vernal pool systems in Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego Counties. Listed as endangered by both federal and state governments, this species is in decline. Several specimens have been located in the **Upper Santa Clara watershed** (CDFG 2000). Threats include habitat loss and degradation due to urban and agricultural development, livestock grazing, offroad vehicle use, trampling, invasions from weedy nonnative plants, and other factors (USFWS 1998).” (p. 41)

“Slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*) is an annual in the buckwheat family. Its habitat is older alluvial scrub habitat in southern California. Within the study area, populations occur in the **Santa Clara, Tujunga, and Santa Ana River watersheds**. Remaining populations are primarily threatened by development

projects, flood control activities, sand and gravel mining, and recreational uses (CDFG 2000).” (p. 42)

“Another important regional wildlife corridor is the connection between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Sierra Pelona Range. The Agua Dulce Canyon in Soledad basin provides an important wildlife corridor between these two large protected areas. As the only major river in southern California without any dams on its main channel, the **Santa Clara River** functions as an important corridor between the mountains and the ocean. Protecting this corridor is a high priority for local and state agencies as well as conservation groups.” (p. 42)

“The **Santa Clara River** also supports important habitat for native fish including southern steelhead, unarmored three-spine stickleback, tidewater goby, Santa Ana sucker, and arroyo chub (LADPW 2005).” (p. 47)

“The unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*) is a small, scaleless, native fish that resides in slow water creeks along the California coast. It is endangered in its native habitat, the western and northeastern seaboard of the United States. Within the study area the stickleback is found in the Soledad basin in several tributaries of the **Upper Santa Clara River** (CDFG 2000). Threats include habitat loss through stream channelization, increased water turbidity, introduction of nonnative competitors, water pollution, aquifer draw downs, and beaver activity. Critical habitat for the stickleback has been proposed for portions of the **Upper Santa Clara River** and several of its tributaries (USFWS 1980).” (p. 47)

HISTORY

“Most of the recorded archeological sites within the study area are within the Angeles National Forest. Approximately 225 prehistoric sites are located within the Forest, not including isolated finds of individual artifacts. The 7,800-acre Aliso-Arrastre Middle and North Special Interest Area, located within the Aliso, Arrastre, and Kentucky Springs watersheds on the **Santa Clara-Mojave Rivers** Ranger District, includes numerous prehistoric archaeological sites ranging from long-term occupation sites to seasonal encampments and special-use resource procurement, processing, and storage sites.” (p. 55)

“California’s petroleum industry began in the **Santa Clarita Valley**. The Pico Well No. 4, Pico Canyon Oil Field, west of Newhall (just outside the study area), was the first commercially successful well in California and led to other oil production operations within the study area.” (p. 61)

“The Marge Feinberg Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor encompasses the entire upper Los Angeles River watershed area within the Angeles National Forest and portions of the **Upper Santa Clarita River watershed**.” (p. 91)

Chapter 3: Resource Significance

“Riparian areas are important for resident and migratory bird species. The Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area and the **Santa Clara River** at the base of the mountains contain riparian areas that are recognized International Bird Areas because they support a high number of bird species (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works 2006a; Audubon Society 2007; San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy 2001).” (p. 105)

“The **Santa Clara River** is the only major river corridor in southern California that runs freely without obstruction by major flood protection facilities. Although much of the **Upper Santa Clara watershed** is located within the Angeles National Forest, the U.S. Forest Service did not include this corridor in their Wild and Scenic River analysis as the main stem of the river is outside the national forest boundaries. The **Upper Santa Clara River** in the Soledad basin contains high quality riparian and aquatic habitats that support the Santa Ana sucker, arroyo toad, unarmored threespine stickleback and the southwestern willow-flycatcher. This area also functions as one of the important habitat linkages in the Los Angeles region, providing a connection between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Sierra Pelona Range (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999).” (p. 106)

“California walnut (*Juglans californica*) woodlands and forests are found only in southern California. The historic distribution of California walnut woodlands and forests is limited to the areas between the **Santa Clara River** drainage in Ventura County on the north and the Chino Hills on the south. Outside this range, walnuts only occur interspersed with other foothill woodland species such as oaks (Quinn 1990).” (p. 114)

“Also recognized as an International Bird Area is the **Santa Clara River** which supports a high number of bird species associated with riparian habitat (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works 2006a; Audubon Society 2007; San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy 2001).” (p. 117)

Chapter 4: Sustainability

This chapter re-emphasized information already presented regarding the Upper Santa Clara River.

Chapter 5: Feasibility and Need for NPS Management

There was no mention of the Upper Santa Clara River in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Alternatives

There was no mention of the Upper Santa Clara River in this chapter.

Chapter 7: Environmental Consequences

“The northwestern corner of the study area lies in the **Santa Clarita Valley**, which has its own land use challenges. The Los Angeles County Planning Department has identified a list of needs for land use planning in this region including accommodation of growth to the area’s build-out capacity while preserving open space, particularly through retention and expansion of an open space greenbelt around the valley and is discouraging urban sprawl into foothill areas. **The City of Santa Clarita**, in cooperation with partners such as the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, has worked to acquire lands or require developers to preserve open space in a greenbelt around the city through an acquisition plan adopted in 2002.

Approximately 50 percent of these acquisition objectives have been met to date. Some of these identified lands are within the study area, along with ongoing and planned development projects (Los Angeles County 2010).” (p. 233)

Chapter 8: Consultation and Coordination

There was no mention of the Upper Santa Clara River in this chapter.

Appendices:

There was no mention of the Upper Santa Clara River in this chapter.

**South Coast Resource Management Plan
Draft Resource Management Plan
and
Environmental Impact Statement**

August 2011

BLM

Palm Springs South Coast Field Office

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South Coast Resource Management
Plan

Appendix H

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Appendix H

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Introduction

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) were authorized in Section 202 (C)(3) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA, P.L. 94-579).

ACECs are areas where special management attention is needed to protect, and to prevent irreparable damage to, important historic, cultural, and scenic values; fish; or wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes; or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards.

The ACEC designation indicates that the BLM recognizes that an area has significant values, and establishes special management measures to protect those values. In addition, designation also serves as a reminder that significant value(s) or resource(s) exist which must be accommodated when future management actions and land use proposals are considered in or near an ACEC. For more information on the ACEC designation and process, please refer to BLM Handbook 1601-1– Land Use Planning, Appendix C.

Before an ACEC can be considered, an area must meet both the criteria of importance and relevance.

Relevance An area meets the "relevance" criterion if it contains one or more of the following:

- A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).
- A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive or threatened species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).
- A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).
- Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process.

Importance An important resource is a value, system, process or hazard which has substantial significance and values. This generally means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

- Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.
- Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
- Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.
- Has qualities which warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
- Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

To be designated as an ACEC, an area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values. These are management measures which would not be necessary nor prescribed if the critical and important features were not present. That is, they would not be prescribed in the absence of the designation. Management prescriptions for each ACEC are identified in this plan and are summarized below.

Under all alternatives, and for all existing or proposed ACECS, fire and fuels management will be conducted to ensure protection of public safety and property, protection of the ACEC's resource values, and consideration of adjacent Federal and local agency's fire management plans. ACEC designation does not in itself present constraints to fire or fuels management, or suppression actions in ACECs. This plan revision also recognizes that ACEC designations along the US-Mexico Border must allow for flexibility and coordination with the Department of Homeland Security for operations involving border surveillance, enforcement operations, and tactical infrastructure needs.

Existing ACEC Designations in the South Coast RMP

Cedar Canyon

The Cedar Canyon ACEC (Map 2-15) encompasses approximately 708 acres of BLM public lands and 280 acres of private lands targeted for acquisition. Most of Cedar Canyon, on the northeastern flank of Otay Mountain, would be within the ACEC

boundaries. This canyon contains one of the only known populations of Mexican flannel bush (*Fremontodendron mexicanus*), a shrub or small tree listed by the State of California as rare, and a candidate species for federal listing as threatened or endangered. In 1994, approximately forty specimens of that species were known to occur within the canyon. This was the only known population in the world. Cedar Canyon also contains pristine stands of riparian woodlands, as well as stands of Tecate cypress, a candidate species for federal listing as threatened or endangered. Rapid development of the private lands immediately to the north of Cedar Canyon, and easier access provided by the subdivision of what used to be large ranches in the vicinity, will likely result in increased impact levels from recreation, accidental fires, and off-road vehicle traffic. Cedar Canyon is designated as an ACEC/RNA to provide the necessary management attention to conserve the sensitive natural resources contained therein. The ACEC is a right-of-way avoidance area, is not available for mineral material sales or livestock grazing, and is closed to motorized vehicle use.

Johnson Canyon

The ACEC includes a total of 1,800 acres (Map 2-15). This area is currently under a Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) lease and is used by the Systems Ecology Research Group of San Diego State University for research and educational purposes. The relatively small area ranges in elevation from over 6,000 to under 4,600 feet, and contains a unique diversity of vegetation including Coulter pine forest in the upper reaches and mixtures of both chamise and red shank chaparral at lower elevations.

Research opportunities to study mediterranean-type ecosystems, in particular chaparral management, are needed, but are being lost at an increasing rate due to development. Johnson Canyon is one of the few locations where this type of research can be conducted. The need to protect this unique area from uses incompatible with its sensitive resources and principle use as an outdoor classroom and field biology research necessitate special management considerations and planning. In addition to ACEC designation, Johnson Canyon is not available for mineral material sales or livestock grazing, and is a right-of-way avoidance area.

Kuchamaa

Lands surrounding Tecate Peak and little Tecate Peak (803 acres) are included in the Kuchamaa ACEC (Map 2-15) for the protection of Native American religious heritage. The importance of Tecate Peak (Kuchamaa), and Little Tecate Peak, lies in their extreme religious and spiritual importance to the Kumeyaay People. In particular, Kuchamaa holds special significance because "it is where the shamans obtained their power and knowledge" (Robertson 1982), and where initiates were brought into the Shaman (spiritual/religious) order. Since time immemorial to the present day these mountains have also served as places to hold sacred dances, ceremonies, ancient sacramental acts, and to receive healing and spiritual cleansing.

These mountains also act today as a cultural link with the Kumeyaay ethnic past and their religious heritage. Parallels have been drawn comparing the Native American view of Kuchamaa to the Christian respect for a cathedral, as both represent places of great religious importance.

Contemporary Native American religious activities on Kuchamaa have become somewhat expanded from that of the past. Whereas formerly only shamans and their initiates were allowed on the summit, today the summit is open to all Kumeyaay who feel worthy of involving themselves with the spiritual power of Kuchamaa. Kumeyaay visits to the mountain are for the purposes of praying, spiritual cleansing, and other religious activities (Shipek: Personal Communication). Though religious practices have diversified, the importance of the mountain has not lessened. As a result of the strong Native American religious values held for Kuchamaa, the mountain has been recently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

There is a threat that individuals might unknowingly perform sacrilegious acts such as off-road driving, rock-hounding, hunting, or drawing graffiti on these mountains. As a result, Kuchamaa and little Tecate Peak have been designated as an ACEC. Acquisition of approximately 422 acres for addition to the ACEC would be pursued. The ACEC is a right-of-way avoidance area, and is not available for mineral material sales or livestock grazing. Motorized vehicle use is limited to the designated routes.

Million Dollar Spring

Approximately 6,265 acres of BLM public lands within the eastern part of the Beauty Mountain WSA are designated as an ACEC/ONA (Map 2-15). The area contains fragile soils (Knecht, 1917) that underlay one of the largest pristine watersheds found on BLM public lands within the South Coast Area. This watershed includes three perennial springs and approximately 300 acres of South Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest and Southern Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, two communities considered rare by Holland (1986). All have significant values for wildlife management.

To conserve the sensitive natural resources and to help maintain its viability as an important water source, the ACEC is a right-of-way avoidance area, is not available for material sales, and all activities (such as grazing, public access, hunting and other recreational activities) must be in conformance with the BLM-California 208 Water Quality Management Plan. 510 acres are targeted for acquisition.

Potrero

The Potrero ACEC (Map 2-14) includes 1,419 acres of BLM public land, with approximately 12,000 acres of private land proposed for acquisition. The broad Potrero Valley, surrounded by chaparral covered hills, contains almost 13,000 acres. The Potrero Reserve contains over 1,900 acres of occupied Stephens' kangaroo rat habitat. The BLM currently administers six parcels (1,030 acres) within the proposed reserve, as well as another 7,969-acre parcel to the east. The ACEC is located within the Western

Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, adopted in 2003, and also includes lands indentified in the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan. Since 1994, most of the land within the Potrero ACEC proposed for acquisition by BLM has been purchased or acquired by the California Department of Fish and Game for management of habitat and resource values.

In addition to Stephens' kangaroo rat, the Potrero area contains 88 acres of potential least Bell's Vireo habitat. Other listed or candidate species observed on the site include the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, orange-throated whiptail and San Diego horned lizard. California gnatcatcher has not been recorded on the site; however the area contains 55 acres of suitable habitat.

Two category 2 candidate plant species have been recorded at Potrero: Payson's jewelflower (*Caulanthus simulans*) and Parry's spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *parryi*). The area also supports 95 acres of Southern Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest and a small stand of South Coast live Oak Riparian Forest (MWD, Eastside Reservoir Project Final EIS, October 1991).

As an ACEC, the area is unavailable for mineral material sales. The ACEC was proposed for closure to entry under the mineral leasing and 1872 Mining laws, but was never implemented. The area continues to be a right-of-way avoidance area and grazing is permissible if compatible with habitat management.

Santa Ana River Wash

The ACEC (Map 2-14) encompasses 750 acres of BLM public lands north of Redlands within the flood-plains of the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek. The ACEC was designated to provide enhanced protection of the sensitive habitats for, and populations of, two federally listed plant species: the Santa Ana River woolly-star (*Eriastrum densifolium* ssp. *sanctorum*) and the slender-homed spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*). Currently, a proposed plan amendment is being developed in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (SBVWCD) in order to address new management strategies in the ACEC. Should this proposed plan amendment be finalized, the final decision would be incorporated by reference into the final South Coast RMP EIS.

The ACEC/RNA status provides special management of the area for the conservation and recovery of these two very rare species. Rapid urban development of the surrounding area and high demand for sand and gravel mining within the floodplain of the Santa Ana River put extreme pressures on these BLM public lands, and may be detrimental to the two endangered species. ACEC status provides the framework within which the resolution of these demands and the conservation of these species could be achieved. Since 1994 a task group of the SBVWCD, the BLM, mining companies, the USFWS, the CDFG, and the cities of Redlands and Highland have worked to prepare a habitat conservation plan for the Upper Santa Ana River.

Under the existing RMP, the ACEC is a right-of-way avoidance area, is unavailable for mineral material sales, is closed to motorized vehicle use, and is unavailable for livestock grazing.

Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve

The Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve (Map 2-14) is administered by the Systems Ecology Research Group of San Diego State University (SDSU) and is used primarily for research and educational purposes. The reserve is a tract of about 2,700 acres acquired by the State of California and presently designated for use by the California State Colleges as a field biology research area. SDSU also administers approximately 1,247 acres of BLM public lands under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Land Management. The combined BLM/SDSU holdings in the reserve make it one of the largest public holdings of coastal wildlands in southern California for research and educational purposes.

In addition to occupied summer habitat for Least Bell's Vireo (a federally endangered species), the preserve also includes significant stands of pristine deer grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*), and habitat for species such as the orange-throated whiptail, southwestern pond turtle, and sticky dudleya (*Dudleya viscida*). To protect this unique area from uses incompatible with its sensitive resources and to ensure its principle use as an outdoor classroom and field biology research site, the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve ACEC is designated with the following management prescriptions: the ACEC is a right-of-way avoidance area and is unavailable for mineral material sales and livestock grazing. The ACEC was proposed for closure to entry under the mineral leasing and 1872 Mining laws, but was never implemented. 360 acres are closed to motorized vehicle use and 300 acres are targeted for acquisition to the ACEC.

California Rocks and Islands

By a decision of February 5, 1990 the California Rocks and Islands were designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. This decision, which is incorporated by reference, applies to all islands, rocks and pinnacles off the California coast which were withdrawn by Public Land Order (PLO) 6369. The withdrawal is for establishment of the California Islands Wildlife Sanctuary and will continue, as will management of the wildlife sanctuary by the California Department of Fish and Game through Memorandum of Understanding. Islands, rocks and pinnacles not affected by PLO 6369 include those off the Orange County Coast (these being temporarily withdrawn by the Act of Congress approved February 18, 1931) as well as Santa Catalina Island and San Clemente Island.

On January 11, 2000, President Clinton established the California Coastal National Monument under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906. This National Monument encompasses all of the public lands in the California Rocks and Islands ACEC. The ACEC designation remains unchanged unless modified or eliminated in the South Coast RMP revision. Because the ACEC applies across five Field Office jurisdictions, and

would require numerous plan amendments for consistency, the ACEC will remain in place under all alternatives in the South Coast RMP revision.

Proposed ACEC Designations in the South Coast RMP

Upper Santa Clara River ACEC (Alternatives B and D)

1,620 acres (Maps 2-16 and 2-22)

The Upper Santa Clara watershed is located in northern Los Angeles County. The portion of the watershed within the planning area includes public lands in the vicinity of the communities of Canyon Country, Agua Dulce, and Acton, and generally bounded by Mint Canyon on the north and Soledad Canyon on the south. The Santa Clara River is one of the few perennial and free flowing rivers in Southern California. Although no segments of the Santa Clara River cross BLM managed public lands, the BLM parcels near the river have become important for maintaining wildlife corridors and habitat in the region. The BLM parcels are intermixed with private, state, and local government conserved lands and BLM has participated in a collaborative approach to local planning to maintain biodiversity in the watershed.

The proposed Santa Clara River ACEC would include BLM parcels within the Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) proposed by the Upper Santa Clara Biodiversity Working Group. The ACEC designation would only apply to BLM managed surface lands and split estate.

Relevance

The area meets the relevance criteria by containing significant scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, and natural processes and systems. The Santa Clara River corridor runs between the San Gabriel and Castaic mountain ranges, which together are included in the Angeles National Forest. This corridor between the two units of the National Forest contains a mix of private, state, and local government conserved lands, and several parcels of public land managed by BLM. The BLM parcels are crossed by segments of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and provide a scenic background for thousands of residents. The BLM parcels also provide essential travel routes for wide-ranging species like cougars, badgers and deer, and refuge for some of southern California's most rare and imperiled animals and plants.

Importance

The wildlife habitat linkage encompasses a unique transition zone between coastal and desert landscapes, featuring coastal sage and chaparral on the west, and desert scrub, juniper and Joshua tree woodlands to the east. The Santa Clara River, one of the last free-flowing rivers in southern California and an integral part of the linkage, provides

breeding sites and traveling routes for a variety of wildlife, and supports other critical natural processes such as natural flood control, recharge of groundwater basins and nutrient cycling.

The BLM parcels are critical to a multi-agency approach to maintaining and enhancing this important wildlife corridor. A consortium of federal, state, local agencies and non-profit organizations has developed a conceptual area protection plan (CAPP) for the "Angeles Linkage" portion of the Santa Clara River watershed. Essentially the report describes the need to implement a functioning wildlife corridor between the two segments of the Angeles National Forest, creation of a green-belt east of the Santa Clarita City limits, establishment of a continuous trail system connection to public parks and the Pacific Crest Trail, and restoration of the Santa Clara River and tributaries.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities. The ACEC would remain open for wind energy ROW if the ACEC relevance and importance values are protected.
- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be a ROW avoidance area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development, and partly closed for oil and gas as shown on (Map 2-31) under Alternative D.
- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals, except for State of California Division of Mines and Geology classified and designated sand and gravel resources in Los Angeles County.
- The ACEC would be closed to grazing.
- The ACEC would be closed to OHV use under Alternative B, and limited to designated routes under Alternative D.
- The VRM designation for the ACEC would be VRM Class 2.

Western Riverside County ACEC (Alternative B)

24,995 acres (Map 2-17)

The Western Riverside County ACEC would include BLM lands within the planning boundary of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

Relevance

The Western Riverside County MSHCP is designed to protect over 150 species and conserve over 500,000 acres of open space and habitat preserves. The MSHCP Plan Area encompasses approximately 1.26 million acres (1,966 square miles); it includes all unincorporated Riverside County land west of the crest of the San Jacinto Mountains to the Orange County line, as well as the jurisdictional areas of 14 cities, including 24,995 acres of BLM managed lands. This HCP is one of the largest plans ever attempted. It covers multiple species and multiple habitats within a diverse landscape, from urban centers to undeveloped foothills and montane forests, all under multiple jurisdictions. It extends across many Bioregions as well, including the Santa Ana Mountains, Riverside Lowlands, San Jacinto Foothills, San Jacinto Mountains, Agua Tibia Mountains, Desert Transition, and San Bernardino Mountains. It will provide a coordinated MSHCP Conservation Area and implementation program to preserve biological diversity and maintain the region's quality of life.

Importance

Most of the BLM parcels within the Western Riverside County MSHCP are considered "core habitat" and are essential as the links or building blocks that connect the other conserved lands in the MSHCP. The BLM parcels contain habitat for many, if not most, of the 150 species covered by the MSHCP, as well as critical habitat for several federally listed species. Riverside County and the other jurisdictions with the MSHCP consider conservation of the BLM parcels as critical to the biological goals and successful implementation of the MSHCP.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained or available for exchange to meet the conservation objectives of the MSHCP or SKR HCP.
- The ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities, but could be open for wind energy development if the ACEC values of relevance and importance are protected.

- The ACEC would be an avoidance area for renewable and non-renewable energy development.
- The ACEC would be closed for oil and gas development.
- The ACEC would be an avoidance area for disposal of saleable minerals.
- The ACEC would be closed to grazing.
- The ACEC would be limited to designated routes for OHV use.
- The VRM designation would be VRM Class 2 and Class 3.

Gavilan ACEC (Alternative D)

3,822 acres (Map 2-23)

The proposed Gavilan ACEC would encompass thirteen BLM parcels that are essential to the Western Riverside County MSHCP and the Stephens' kangaroo rat HCP. This cluster of BLM parcels are adjacent to other conserved, or core preserve, lands and protect critical habitat and/or habitat linkage for several of the species covered under these HCPs.

Relevance/Importance

The relevance and importance attributes are discussed above under the Western Riverside County ACEC alternative. In particular, this ACEC would provide protection and habitat connectivity for 20 species covered under the HCPs, including nine federally listed species (Quino checkerspot butterfly, thread-leaved brodiaea, coastal California gnatcatcher, Stephens' kangaroo rat, southwest willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, Munz's onion, San Diego ambrosia, and slenderhorned spine flower). Critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher is included in this proposed ACEC.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained, or would be available for exchange to meet the conservation objectives of the MSHCP or SKR HCP.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities. The ACEC would remain open for wind energy ROW if the ACEC relevance and importance values are protected.

- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be a ROW avoidance area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities.
- The ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development.
- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals.
- The ACEC would be unavailable to grazing under Alternatives B and D.
- The ACEC would be closed to OHV use.
- The VRM designation for the ACEC would be VRM Class 3.

Oak Mountain ACEC (Alternative D)

894 acres (Map 2-23)

The proposed Oak Mountain ACEC would encompass three BLM parcels that are critical to the Western Riverside County MSHCP and the Stephens' kangaroo rat HCP. This cluster of BLM parcels are adjacent to other conserved, or core preserve, lands and provide a habitat linkage for several of the species covered under these HCPs.

Relevance/Importance

The relevance and importance attributes are discussed above under the Western Riverside County ACEC alternative. In particular, this ACEC would provide protection and habitat connectivity for 23 species covered under the HCPs, including seven federally listed species (arroyo toad, California red legged frog, coastal California gnatcatcher, Stephens' kangaroo rat, southwest willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, Munz's onion, slenderhorned spine flower, and Nevin's barberry). Critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher and Nevin's barberry is included in this proposed ACEC.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities. The ACEC would remain open for wind energy ROW if the ACEC relevance and importance values are protected.
- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be a ROW avoidance area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities.

- The ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development.
- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals.
- The ACEC would be closed to grazing.
- The VRM designation for the ACEC would be VRM Class 2.
- The ACEC would be closed to OHV use.

Badlands ACEC (Alternative D)

1,051 acres (2-23)

The proposed Badlands ACEC would encompass three BLM parcels that are within an area proposed as additional core habitat for the Western Riverside County MSHCP and the Stephens' kangaroo rat HCP. This cluster of BLM parcels are adjacent to other conserved or open space lands and provide a habitat linkage for several of the species covered under these HCPs.

Relevance/Importance

The relevance and importance attributes are discussed above under the Western Riverside County ACEC alternative. In particular, this ACEC would provide protection and habitat connectivity for ten species covered under the HCPs, including three federally listed species (San Bernardino kangaroo rat, Stephens' kangaroo rat, and Nevin's barberry).

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities. The ACEC would remain open for wind energy ROW if the ACEC relevance and importance values are protected.
- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be a ROW avoidance area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities.
- The ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development.

- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals.
- The ACEC would be closed to grazing.
- The ACEC would be designated as VRM Class 3.
- The ACEC would be limited to designated routes for OHV use.

Expanded Santa Margarita River Ecological Reserve ACEC (Alternative B and D)
4,474 acres (Map 2-17 and 2-23)

This alternative would expand the existing ACEC to include the three Fern Creek parcels to the west of the ACEC. The San Diego MSCP North County Sub-area Plan covers 63 species and includes these BLM parcels as part of the core preserve areas.

Relevance/Importance

The existing Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve ACEC is one of the largest public holdings of coastal wildlands in southern California for research and educational purposes. The reserve is also significant for the biological and riparian values protected in the ACEC. The BLM parcels to the west of the ACEC contain 1,973 acres which include oak/sycamore riparian and marsh communities and populations of the federally listed Orcutt's brodiaea and San Diego button celery. Adding these parcels to the ACEC would provide additional management emphasis to the protection of sensitive habitat and species, and ensure connectivity and consistency with the North County MSCP.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities. The ACEC would remain open for wind energy ROW if the ACEC relevance and importance values are protected.
- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be a ROW avoidance area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities.
- The ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development.
- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals.

- The ACEC would be closed to grazing.
- The ACEC would be designated as VRM Class 2.
- The ACEC would be limited to designated routes.

Beauty Mountain ACEC

Alternative B

27,376 acres (Map 2-18)

Alternative D

3,925 acres (Map 2-24)

There are two proposals for ACEC designations in the Beauty Mountain Management Area. Both are intended to encompass lands recently acquired for conservation purposes, including 2,175 acres recently donated to BLM in the vicinity of Adobe Spring. Under alternative B, the existing Million Dollar Spring and Johnson Canyon ACECs, along with the Beauty Mountain WSA, and lands with wilderness characteristics, are included in one ACEC. This alternative would provide the maximum conservation and protection of resources.

Under Alternative D, the portion of the existing Million Dollar Spring ACEC outside wilderness is expanded to include the donated lands around Adobe Spring. Surrounding public lands outside the ACEC would be protected and managed under the existing Beauty Mountain WSA and as lands with wilderness characteristics. The existing Johnson Canyon ACEC remains unchanged.

Relevance/Importance

These lands contain South Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest, which is a plant community considered rare in southern California, and also significant cultural resources related to human occupation on the site. Both proposed ACECs contain fragile soils that underlay one of the largest pristine watersheds found on BLM public lands within the South Coast Planning Area. This watershed includes three perennial springs and approximately 300 acres of South Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest and Southern Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest. Oak woodlands, the sheltered valley, and available water have attracted human settlement around Adobe Spring over a period of several thousand years. The donated lands around Adobe Springs complement the Million Dollar Spring ACEC and would provide additional management emphasis and protection for the extensive cultural resources found on the site. These lands are expected to provide important information on the human history and resources of the region.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACECs:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACECs would be exclusion areas for ROWs and land use authorizations. ACECs would remain open to wind energy development if the ACEC values of relevance and importance are preserved.
- Under Alternative D, the ACECs would be avoidance areas for ROWs, including wind and renewable energy, and land use authorizations.
- The ACECs would be closed to oil and gas development.
- The ACECs would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals.
- Under Alternatives A and C, the Beauty Mountain and Rogers Canyon Allotments would be available for grazing year-round. Under Alternatives B and D, the Beauty Mountain Allotment would be available for limited grazing between 11/1 and 3/30 and the Rogers Canyon Allotment would be unavailable for grazing.
- The Beauty Mountain WSA would be designated as VRM Class 1, with the remainder of the ACECs designated as VRM Class 2 or Class 3.
- The ACECs would be limited to designated routes for OHV use.
- The ACECs would be open for hunting under CDFG and local regulations, and a recreation area management plan would be developed to designate public access and parking.

Otay/Kuchamaa ACEC (Alternative B and D)

8,291 acres (Map 2-18 and 2-24)

The proposed ACEC would include the BLM managed lands outside wilderness within the Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area as identified in the San Diego MSCP. The proposed ACEC would replace the existing Cedar Canyon and Kuchamaa ACECs and surround the Otay Mountain Wilderness. Under the MSCP plan, the BLM agreed to acquire lands within the Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area. Since 1994, the BLM has acquired over 4,000 acres through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to be included in the MSCP preserve system.

Relevance

The San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) covers 582,000 acres and establishes a 172,000-acre preserve system in southwestern San Diego County. The MSCP plan and sub-area plans cover 85 species of plants and animals and 23 vegetation types. The MSCP plan area encompasses eleven planning subareas, which include individual cities, the county, water districts, and other jurisdictions. The boundary and objectives of this ACEC would match the Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area which was identified in the Final MSCP Plan (Section 4.2.2) and EIR/EIS (1998).

The BLM managed lands within the MSCP are considered "core habitat" and are essential as the links or building blocks that connect the other conserved lands in the MSCP. The BLM lands in the proposed Otay/Kuchamaa ACEC contain habitat for many of the species covered by the MSCP, as well as critical habitat for several federally listed species. San Diego County and the other jurisdictions with the MSCP consider conservation of the BLM parcels as critical to the biological goals and successful implementation of the MSHCP.

Importance

This ACEC would provide protection and habitat connectivity for several species covered under the MSCP. Critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher, Quino checkerspot butterfly, and Mexican flannelbush are included in this proposed ACEC.

The existing Cedar Canyon ACEC was designated in 1994 to protect the only known occurrence of the federally listed Mexican flannelbush, and stands of Tecate cypress. The Kuchamaa ACEC was also designated in 1994 to protect the cultural values of Tecate Peak and Little Tecate Peak. Tecate Peak was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

In addition to the importance of the biological and cultural resources in the proposed ACEC, there is also an element of public safety and significant hazards due to the proximity of the US-Mexico International Border. These BLM lands are adjacent to the border and have a long history as a corridor used for illegal entry into the United State by undocumented immigrants and smugglers. Over the last several years the Border Patrol has increased their personnel and enforcement on these public lands. The Secure Border Act and other legislation have mandated construction of new border fencing and other infrastructure along the border within the proposed ACEC. Although these efforts are intended to reduce illegal traffic and improve safety, some areas may still present significant risks or hazards to casual visitors. The BLM works closely with the Border Patrol to implement these national security projects, and is often asked to temporarily close or limit access to public lands to visitor use during construction or enforcement activities. This ACEC designation would emphasize the need for special management attention to the area.

Land Use Allocations

The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be exclusion areas for ROWs and land use authorizations. The ACEC would remain open to wind energy development if the ACEC values of relevance and importance are preserved.
- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be avoidance areas for ROWs, including wind and renewable energy, and land use authorizations.
- All communication sites in the ACEC are built out and no new or expanded communication site facilities would be approved.
- The ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development.
- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals.
- Under Alternatives B and D, the ACEC would be restricted to seasonal grazing and reduced numbers of livestock.
- The Otay Mountain Wilderness is closed to OHV use; the remainder of the ACEC would be limited to designated routes for OHV use.
- The Otay Mountain Wilderness would be designated as VRM Class 1, with the remainder of the ACEC designated as VRM Class 2.
- The ACEC would be open for hunting under CDFG and local regulations, and a recreation management plan would be developed to designate public access and parking.

**Upper Santa Clara River Review: Draft South Coast Resource Management Plan Revision
& Environmental Impact Statement**

Status

The draft was released in August 2011 and the public comment phases has been completed. The Plan is presently in a waiting period due to the sequester which has caused a loss of funding and staff.

Ch. 1.0 Introduction

The Los Angeles County Management Area includes all but the northeastern desert portion of Los Angeles County, and contains approximately 5,500 acres of BLM public land and an additional 36,000 acres of BLM split estate land. Much of the BLM public land has high to moderate potential for oil and gas, and **some of the BLM split estate lands in the Soledad Canyon area contain valuable sand and gravel deposits.**

(1-4)

Ch. 2.0 Description of Alternatives

This plan offers four management alternatives. These alternatives and their impacts on the Upper Santa Clara River are detailed in the tables that follow this section, but first here is a brief description of each alternative generally.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) describes the continuation of the present management of the Planning Area. Alternative A will serve as a baseline for most resources and land use allocations. Alternative A provides an opportunity to compare the current management with various management alternatives suggested to be proposed for future management (Alternatives B, C, and D).

Alternative B (Conservation Alternative) generally places emphasis on preservation of the Planning Area's natural and cultural resources through partnerships with local governments and strict implementation of regional habitat conservation plans. This alternative provides visitors with opportunities to experience natural and cultural resource values of the Planning Area through low impact recreation opportunities. It proposes a combination of natural processes and active management techniques for resource and use management and it provides access through a limited transportation network.

Alternative C (Public Use Alternative) provides for enhanced recreational access, including motorized use, and opportunities for additional resource use and development such as grazing, renewable energy, transportation and utility rights-of-way (ROWs), sand and gravel production, and communication facilities. Public use and development of resources would be coordinated with local governments through flexible implementation of regional habitat conservation plans while adhering to BLM policy and guidance.

Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) represents a combination from Alternatives A, B, and C for management of each resource and resource use, and provides for a balance between authorized resource use and the protection and long-term sustainability of

sensitive resources. It allows visitation and development within the Planning Area while ensuring that future development does not compromise resource protection in accordance with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). The proposed decisions under this alternative could be identical to those under one of the other alternatives presented or could be a combination of features from several of the other alternatives.

(2-1—2-2)

Table 2-1: Draft Alternatives Summary

Alternative	A	B	C	D
Special Status Species				
Los Angeles County Management Area: Santa Clara River corridor lands are managed for three-spined stickleback and western pond turtle.		X		X
Los Angeles County Management Areas: designate Upper Santa Clara River lands as an ACEC.		X		X
Special Designations: Existing and Proposed ACECs by acreage; see Appendix H for individual ACEC Plan prescriptions				
Upper Santa Clara River ACEC	0	1,620	0	1,620
Mineral Resources: Salable Minerals (Mineral Materials)				
Continue to allow mineral material disposals on a case by-case basis subject to site-specific environmental analysis. Allow no disposal of mineral materials in wilderness, WSAs, and lands with wilderness characteristics (47,358 acres), developed recreation sites, and within the following proposed ACECs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Santa Clara River: 1,620 acres 		X		

(2-3—2-18)

Table 2-4: Special Status Species Management by Alternative

Alternative	A	B	C	D
Los Angeles County Management Area: Santa Clara River corridor lands (to be acquired) are managed for three-spined stickle-back and western pond turtle.	X			
Los Angeles County Management Area: designate lands within the Upper Santa Clara River as an ACEC (acreage would vary depending on the alternative with Alt B resulting in a larger ACEC).		X		X

(2-39)

Table 2-11: ACEC Management by Alternative

Alternative	A	B	C	D
Proposed New ACECs				
Upper Santa Clara River	0	1,620	0	1,620

(2-63)

Table 2-17: Mineral Resources Management by Alternative

Alternative	A	B	C	D
Locatable Minerals Management				
Recommend withdrawing the following from mineral entry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Santa Clara River ACEC: 1,620 acres 		X		
Salable Minerals Management				
The closed area of the proposed Upper Santa Clara River ACEC does not include existing contracts and California Mineral Classifications designated for future sand and resources.		X		

(2-77—2-79)

**Table 2-20 OHV (Off Highway Vehicle)
 Area Designations by Recreation Management Area**

Alternative	A	B	C	D
South Coast ERMA (Extensive Recreation Management Areas)				
CLOSED: Upper Santa Clarita River ACEC		X		

(2-91)

* **Ch. 3.0 Affected Environment**

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (FE). This species is currently known to occur in very few areas within the planning area. The following drainages represent the known range in the South Coast planning area: Sweetwater River, San Luis Rey River, and the Santa Margarita River at Camp Pendleton in San Diego County; Prado Basin and the Santa Ana River in Riverside County; and the **Santa Clara River in Los Angeles County.**

(3-49)

* **Unarmored Threespine Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*) (FE).** This endangered fish species does not occur on BLM public lands. Its range within the **Santa Clara River** is, however, adjacent to several small BLM public land parcels and BLM split estate lands with moderate to high potential for aggregate material. This puts the species in a position of potentially being impacted from secondary impacts related to sand and gravel extraction, such as increased sediment loads.

(3-50)

Ch. 4.0 Environmental Consequences

The information in this section is captured in the tables from Ch. 2.0.

Ch. 5.0 Coordination & Consultation

There are no references to the Upper Santa Clara River in this chapter.

Ch. 6.0 Appendices

Proposed ACEC Designations in the South Coast RMP Upper Santa Clara River ACEC (Alternatives B and D) 1,620 acres

The Upper Santa Clara watershed is located in northern Los Angeles County. The portion of the watershed within the planning area includes public lands in the vicinity of the communities of Canyon Country, Agua Dulce, and Acton, and generally bounded by Mint Canyon on the north and Soledad Canyon on the south. The Santa Clara River is one of the few perennial and free flowing rivers in Southern California. Although no segments of the Santa Clara River cross BLM managed public lands, the BLM parcels near the river have become important for maintaining wildlife corridors and habitat in the region. The BLM parcels are intermixed with private, state, and local government conserved lands and BLM has participated in a collaborative approach to local planning to maintain biodiversity in the watershed.

The proposed Santa Clara River ACEC would include BLM parcels within the Angeles Linkage Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) proposed by the Upper Santa Clara Biodiversity Working Group. The ACEC designation would only apply to BLM managed surface lands and split estate.

Relevance

The area meets the relevance criteria by containing significant scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, and natural processes and systems. The Santa Clara River corridor runs between the San Gabriel and Castaic mountain ranges, which together are included in the Angeles National Forest. This corridor between the two units of the National Forest contains a mix of private, state, and local government conserved lands, and several parcels of public land managed by BLM. The BLM parcels are crossed by segments of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and provide a scenic background for thousands of residents. The BLM parcels also provide essential travel routes for wide-ranging species like cougars, badgers and deer, and refuge for some of southern California's most rare and imperiled animals and plants.

Importance

The wildlife habitat linkage encompasses a unique transition zone between coastal and desert landscapes, featuring coastal sage and chaparral on the west, and desert scrub, juniper and Joshua tree woodlands to the east. The Santa Clara River, one of the last free-flowing rivers in southern California and an integral part of the linkage, provides breeding sites and traveling routes for a variety of wildlife, and supports other critical natural processes such as natural flood control, recharge of groundwater basins and nutrient cycling.

The BLM parcels are critical to a multi-agency approach to maintaining and enhancing this important wildlife corridor. A consortium of federal, state, local agencies and non-profit organizations has developed a conceptual area protection plan (CAPP) for the "Angeles Linkage" portion of the Santa Clara River watershed. Essentially the report describes the need to implement a functioning wildlife corridor between the two segments of the Angeles National Forest, creation of a green-belt east of the Santa Clarita City limits, establishment of a

continuous trail system connection to public parks and the Pacific Crest Trail, and restoration of the Santa Clara River and tributaries.

Land Use Allocations

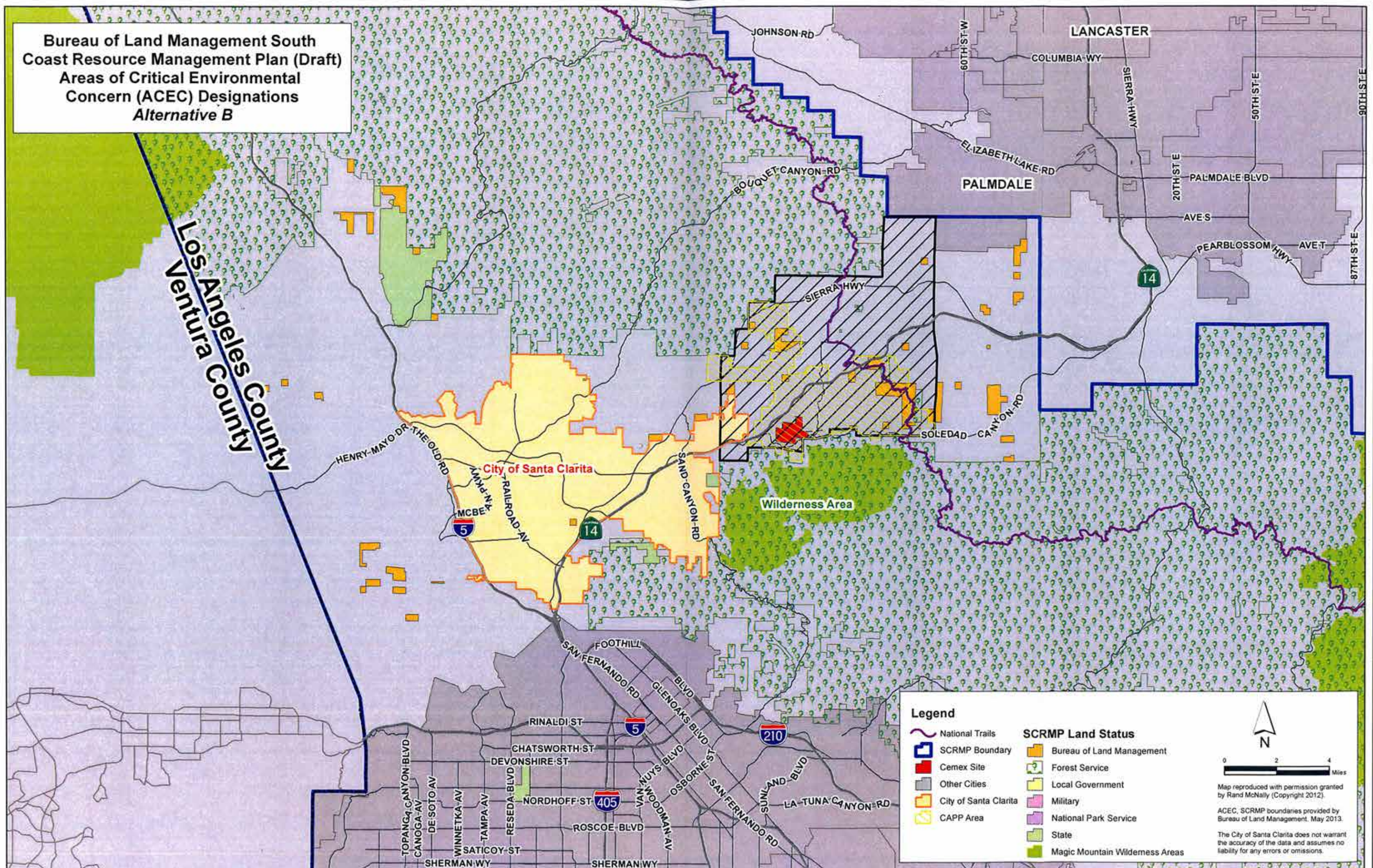
The following land use allocations would apply to the proposed ACEC:

- All public lands would be retained.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities. The ACEC would remain open for wind energy ROW if the ACEC relevance and importance values are protected.
- Under Alternative D, the ACEC would be a ROW avoidance area for land use authorizations and major surface disturbing activities.
- Under Alternative B, the ACEC would be closed to oil and gas development, and partly closed for oil and gas under Alternative D.
- The ACEC would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals, except for State of California Division of Mines and Geology classified and designated sand and gravel resources in Los Angeles County.
- The ACEC would be closed to grazing.
- The ACEC would be closed to OHV use under Alternative B, and limited to designated routes under Alternative D.
- The VRM designation for the ACEC would be VRM Class 2.

(Appendix H p.7-8)

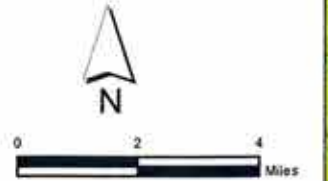
**Bureau of Land Management South Coast Resource Management Plan (Draft)
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Designations
Alternative B**

Los Angeles County
Ventura County



Legend

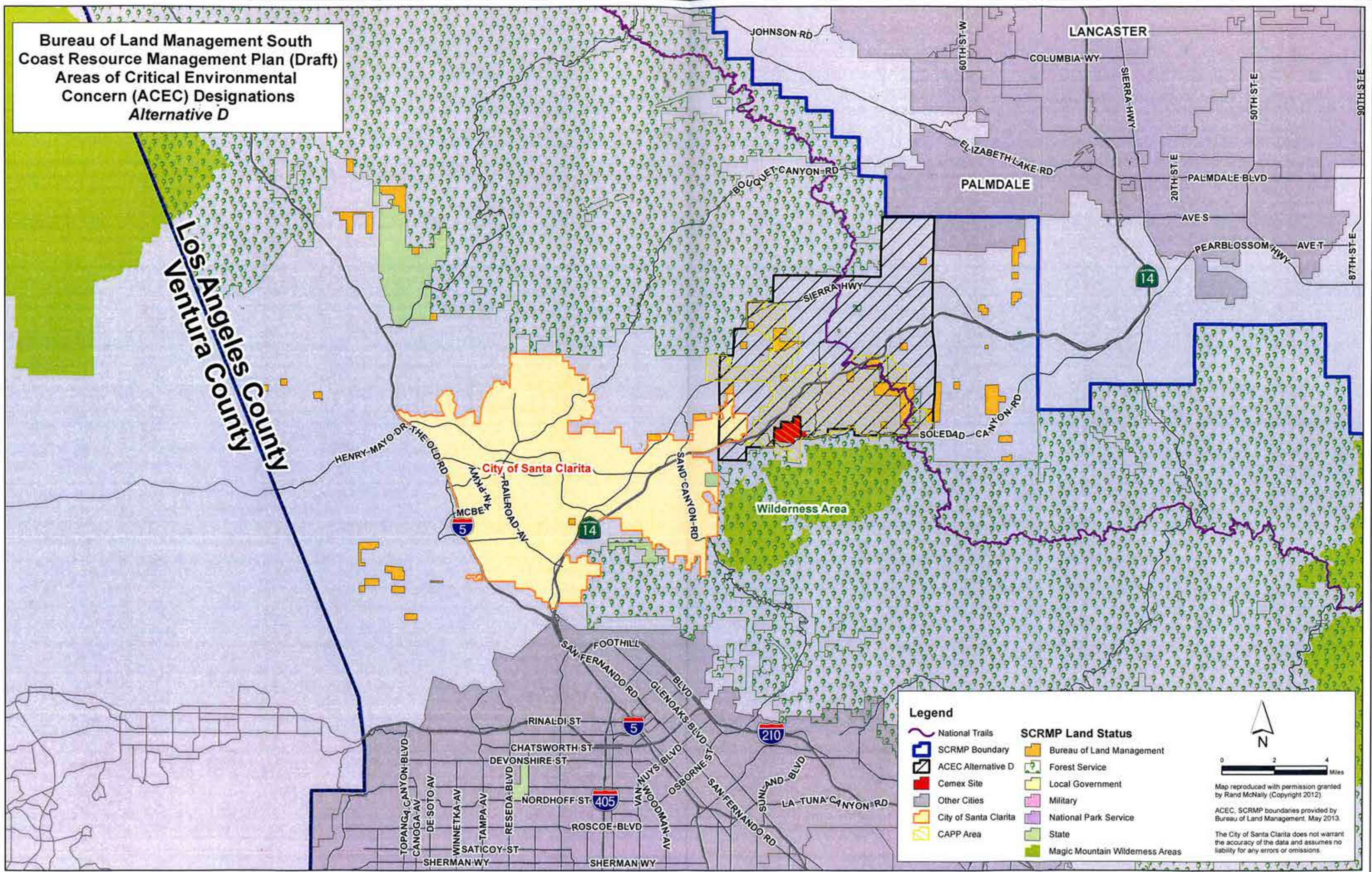
- National Trails
- SCRMP Boundary
- Cemex Site
- Other Cities
- City of Santa Clarita
- CAPP Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Local Government
- Military
- National Park Service
- State
- Magic Mountain Wilderness Areas



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**Bureau of Land Management South Coast Resource Management Plan (Draft)
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Designations
Alternative D**

**Los Angeles County
Ventura County**



Legend

National Trails	SCRMP Boundary	Bureau of Land Management
ACEC Alternative D	Forest Service	Local Government
Cemex Site	Military	National Park Service
Other Cities	State	Magic Mountain Wilderness Areas
City of Santa Clarita		
CAPP Area		

SCRMP Land Status

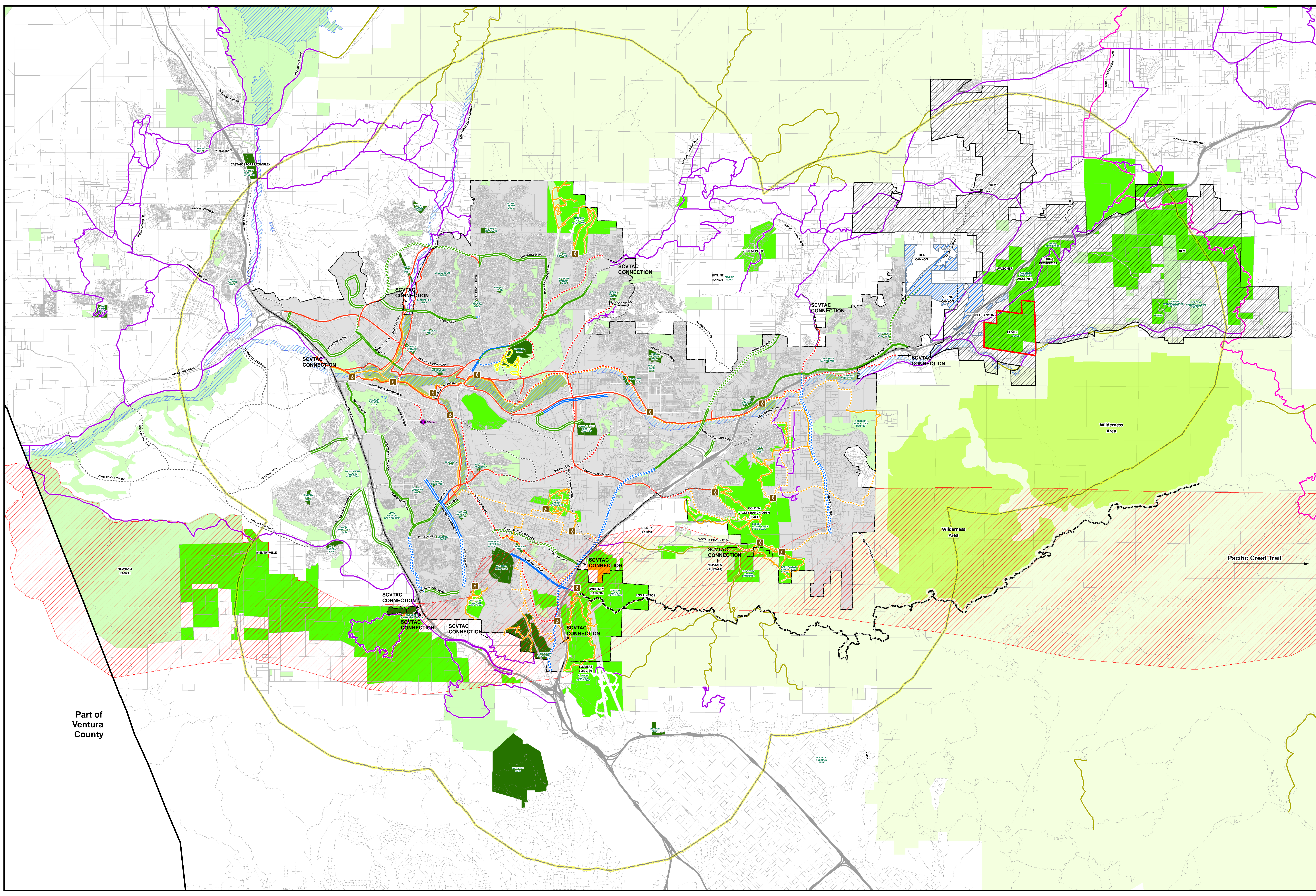
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City of **SANTA CLARITA**
TRAILS & OPEN SPACES
Parks & Recreations Planning Map

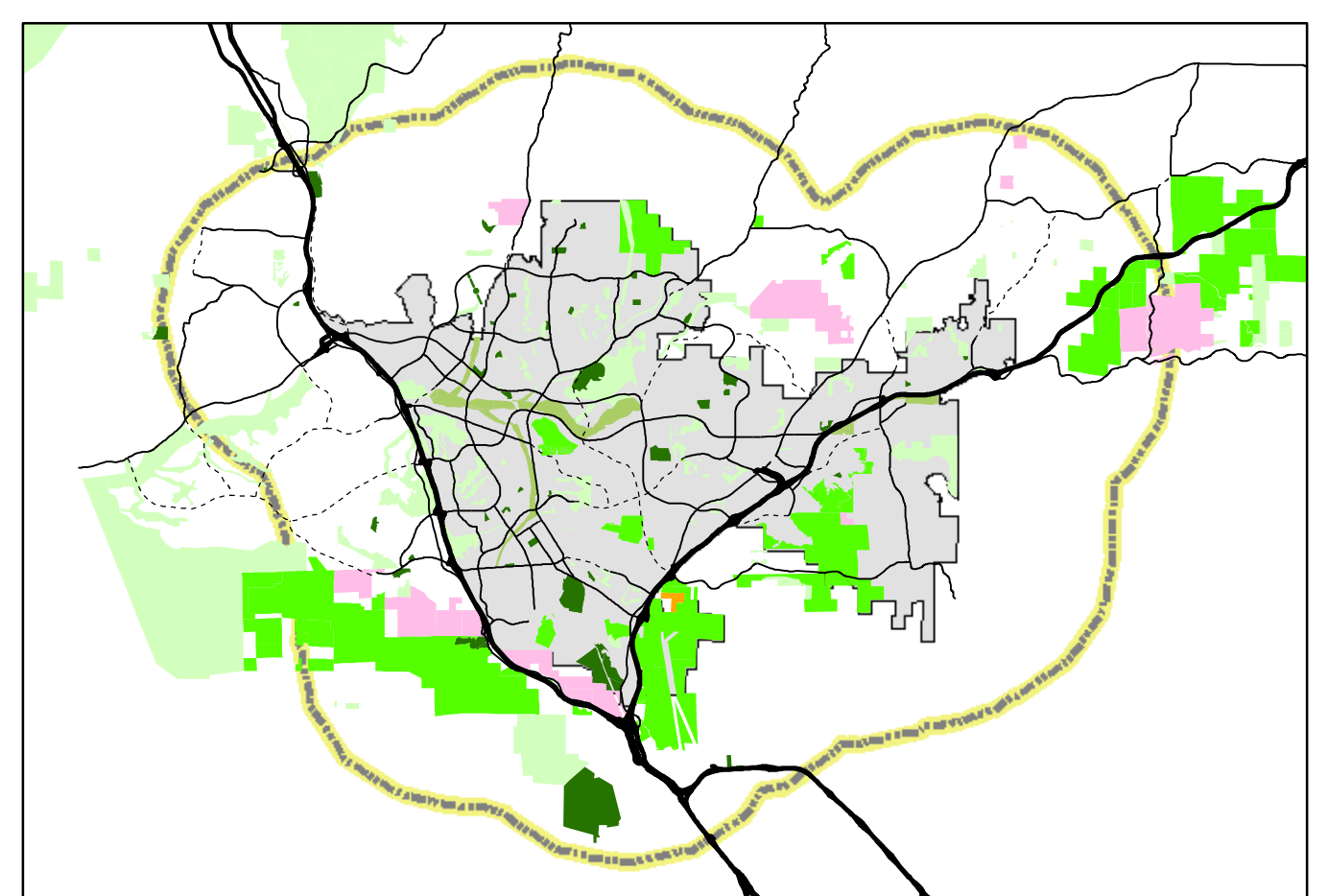
Last Map Update: August 2013



- City of Santa Clarita Trails System**
- Existing Class I
 - Existing Class II
 - Existing Class III
 - Existing Multi-Purpose
 - Cross Country Trail
 - Proposed Class I
 - Proposed Class II
 - Proposed Class III
 - Proposed Multi-Purpose
- LA County Backbone Trails System**
- Adopted County Trail System
 - Federal/National Forest Trails
 - Pacific Crest Trail
- Parks & Open Spaces**
- Active Parks
 - Public Open Spaces
 - River Parcels
 - Other Open Spaces
 - Parcels of Interest - Trail Alignment
 - Magic Mountain Wilderness Areas
 - Santa Clara Divide
- Other Features**
- Trailheads
 - Predicted Open Space Set-Asides
 - LA County Border
 - 3-Mile Buffer Around City-owned Properties
 - Proposed Crest-to-Coast Trail Study Area
 - CAPP Area
 - Proposed Roads
 - Parcel Outlines
 - Water Features
 - City of Santa Clarita Boundary
 - Angeles National Forest

Part of
Ventura
County

Pacific Crest Trail →



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