

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY**

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**Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Wins Major Lawsuit**

*Ruling reaffirms Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy right to develop public access plan with Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to increase public use of parkland in Malibu*

Van Nuys—In a decision issued today, Superior Court Judge Richard B. Wolfe ruled against a group of Malibu homeowners and others who had sought an injunction to prevent the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) from preparing and submitting a plan to the California Coastal Commission that would increase public access to parks in Malibu. The case, captioned Herbert Jere Robings et Al v. Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy et Al, was filed last year after the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy held public hearings and voted to apply to the California Coastal Commission to approve an amendment to the Local Coastal Plan in Malibu (Malibu LCPA). The suit alleged that the Conservancy improperly granted State bond funds for public park purposes including developing the Malibu LCPA. The court ruled in favor of the Conservancy on all counts.

The ruling concluded:

“The plan developed by the grant is authorized by statute. Whether the content of the grant is to be approved is subject to approval of local agencies, including but not limited to the Coastal Commission, who reserves the final authority to approve or disapprove the ‘plan’ submitted by SMMC for the preservation, maintenance, and protection of the Ramirez, Escondido and Corral Canyon parcels of land, all of which are in the zone of the SMMC.”

The goal of the proposed Malibu LCPA is to increase public access to parks owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and MRCA (Ramirez, Escondido, and Corral Canyon

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Parks) and to make trail connections between these parks and National Park Service parkland (Zuma/Trancas and Solstice Canyon Parks).

“This is a major victory. We can now move forward a plan that will benefit all the people of the State of California,” said Ron Schafer, Chairperson of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. “The Conservancy will not let this group or any other prevent us from fulfilling our mandate to provide access to these unique public resources.”

The plan will be presented to the California Coastal Commission at its June 10-12, 2009 meeting in the Los Angeles area.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was established by the California State Legislature in 1980. Since that time, it has helped to preserve over 60,000 acres of parkland in both wilderness and urban settings, and has improved more than 114 public recreational facilities throughout Southern California.

The MRCA is a Joint Powers Agency of the State of California which includes the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, and the Conejo Recreation and Park District. The MRCA provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, park construction, park operations, fire prevention, ranger services, and educational and leadership programs for thousands of youth each year, and is one of the lead agencies providing for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

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