



**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Dash Stolarz

(310) 985-5147

dash.stolarz@mrca.ca.gov

Trail Dedicated at Ed Davis Park in Towsley Canyon in Santa Clarita

Don Mullally Trail named for naturalist, educator, writer, and hiker, known as the father of the Santa Clarita Woodlands

Newhall, California (September 29, 2014)—At a late afternoon ceremony held in the picnic grounds of majestic Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) named one of the park’s most prominent trails for one of its greatest advocates—Don Mullally. More than 50 close friends, fellow hikers, and Santa Susana Mountains advocates—including Santa Clarita Mayor Laurene Weste—gathered to honor Mr. Mullally, now an octogenarian, who spent the last three decades working to preserve the Santa Clarita Woodlands as public parkland.

“Don’s advocacy for the environment and biological analysis of his work in support of the passage of legislation to create the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park helped preserve this pristine environmentally sensitive open space park in the Santa Clarita Valley,” said Mayor Laurene Weste.

In the 1980’s Don Mullally, a former high school biology teacher, teamed up with a core group of activists in an effort to preserve the heavily wooded northeastern Santa Susana Mountains. At least one of the primary woodland’s canyons was targeted for colossal-sized County landfill. Don’s insatiable interest in exploring every nook and cranny of these globally unique woodlands, coupled with his scientific knowledge, provided an essential tool in this campaign. Leading hikes, distributing ecological papers, and attending dozens of hearings locally and in Sacramento, Don used every means possible

(-More-)

Dedication of Don Mullally Trail

September 29, 2014

Page 2

to bring awareness to these ecologically rich and unusual woodlands. He coined the name Santa Clarita Woodlands to provide a signature for the area. Home to black bears, and, in the past, condors and southern spotted owls, much of the Woodlands are now permanently protected.

“Future generations will be able to experience the deep beauty of these local mountains because of Don Mullally,” said Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. “The effect this open space has on the ecological health of the region is profound.”

Relying on Don’s investigation and description of the Woodland’s vast assemblage of native tree species, key figures such as State Senator Ed Davis and current City of Santa Clarita Mayor Laurene Weste conducted deft maneuvers to make willing sellers out of the key landowners. Expansion of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy’s jurisdiction to cover Woodlands was one of the essential steps. Over the course of a few years in the mid-1990s, the Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority acquired a 3,500-acre contiguous block of parkland including East, Rice, Wiley, Towsley, and Pico Canyons. The core of Don’s Santa Clarita Woodlands Park was formed and has grown by almost 1,000 acres since then.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was established by the Legislature in 1980. Since that time, it has helped to preserve and protect over 70,000 acres of public parkland in both wilderness and urban settings, and has improved hundreds of public recreational facilities in the State’s most densely populated region.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is a local public park agency dedicated to the preservation and management of open space, urban parkland, watershed lands, trails, and wildlife habitat. The MRCA manages more than 70,000 acres of public parkland and provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, operations, fire prevention and ranger services, as well as education and leadership programs for thousands of youth each year. It is one of the lead agencies revitalizing the Los Angeles River.

Editor’s note: For Photos of the event visit our Flickr Page:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lamountains/sets/72157647768918878/>

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