

# News Release



## Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

---

For Immediate Release  
June 27, 2007

Contact: Dash Stolarz  
(310) 985-5147 cell

### **MRCA Park Rangers Install No Smoking Signs for the First Time at Scenic Overlooks Along Historic Mulholland Drive in the Hollywood Hills**

*More than fifteen signs along Mulholland Scenic Highway will alert public to fire danger in the driest year on record.*

Los Angeles—Park rangers from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) installed more than fifteen signs at the scenic overlooks and parks operated by the MRCA along historic Mulholland Drive in the Hollywood Hills for the first time today. The park rangers—who are also trained wildland firefighters—hope to alert the public to the dangers of fire and smoking on or anywhere near wild land or roadsides.

“This is the driest year on record in Southern California,” said Senior Ranger Dave Updike, who is the Fire Management Officer for the MRCA. “Fuel moisture levels are abysmally low. The key to preventing a fire disaster in our wildland/urban interface areas is cooperation among all parties. Smoking and open fires are not allowed in any of our parks, ever. We want to get the message out that we will aggressively enforce these rules.”

Fire prevention is a year-round effort of the MRCA, which manages more than 60,000 acres of public parkland, including all land owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy—a State Agency. Last year, the MRCA spent over \$1.8 million clearing

(-More-)

more than 1,000 acres of brush. In addition, the MRCA formed a joint task force with the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and Ventura County to discuss vegetation management strategies, and to keep in regular communication. Cooperative efforts such as the installation of a Los Angeles County Fire Department weather station on MRCA parkland in Topanga Canyon will further insure public safety.

In addition to fire prevention, the MRCA also assists local fire departments in fighting wildland fires in protecting the array of resources on its own properties. It has 45 trained fire fighting personnel certified to the same federal training standards as the US Forest Service. Its fire fighting equipment includes one four-wheel drive type 2 fire engine, one type 3 engine, a water tender, two mobile command units, and eight fire patrol vehicles equipped with a minimum of 200 gallons of water. Trained personnel patrol the local mountain and hillside areas every day.

While the Fourth of July holiday is traditionally the start of the fire season every year, this year the season is already well underway. From the Hollywood Bowl Overlook, where the first no smoking sign was installed, one can see both the Hollywood Sign, where two teenagers started a blaze that consumed more than 150 acres of dry brush in April, and Griffith Park—where, in early May, more than 800 acres of parkland burned in the Park's worst fire in over thirty years.

Local hillside homeowners groups added their message to the fire prevention efforts of the MRCA. "We are very concerned about the danger posed by careless smoking in the hills," said Joann Deutch, Secretary/Treasurer of the Laurel Hills Homeowners Association. "Our rangers are putting up more signs to remind folks "DON'T SMOKE IN THE HILLS; and DON'T pitch your lit cigarette out your car window."

The MRCA is a local government public entity established in 1985 pursuant to the Joint Powers Act between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Its mission is to

create and maintain parkland and preserve open space within the Santa Monica Mountains, the mountains surrounding the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, La Crescenta, Simi and Conejo Valleys, and the Los Angeles River and its tributaries.

###