

# NEWS RELEASE



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

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For Immediate Release  
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### **Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Statement Regarding Swimming Pool at Temescal Gateway Park in Pacific Palisades**

Pacific Palisades, California—This morning Los Angeles Superior Court Judge David Yaffe denied a request by the organization Friends of Temescal Pool for a temporary restraining order and order to show cause to prevent the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) from filling in the empty swimming pool at its Temescal Gateway Park. The California Coastal Commission issued an emergency permit to allow the Conservancy to do so on January 7, 2009.

Last month, on December 2, 2008, the Conservancy Board held a lengthy public hearing to make decisions relative to the future use of the pool. At that meeting the Conservancy:

1. Rejected a proposal to instigate a competitive bid process to lease the Temescal pool site on a temporary basis; and
2. Heard expert testimony about the liability associated with the empty pool, as well as the deleterious effects to the structure of the existing pool should it be left unfilled for a significant period of time; and

(-More-)

3. Ordered a long-term master planning process for the entire 141-acre Temescal Gateway Park site, to evaluate the various uses of sites within the park, including the pool.

After the California Coastal Commission issued its emergency permit, the MRCA commenced to fill in the pool with gravel and dirt, as recommended by structural engineers. Should the long-term master planning process determine that a public pool is indeed the best use of the site, the existing pool is being filled in such a way that it could be rehabilitated without the structural damage that inevitably would occur from leaving the pool empty for long periods of time.

Temescal Gateway Park was purchased with public funds by the Conservancy in 1994 and is operated by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). Until June 2008, the Temescal swimming pool had been operated by the YMCA under a lease agreement with the previous owner of the property, Presbyterian Synod, for more than 25 years. During that time, the pool had fallen into disrepair. In February 2008, YMCA drained the pool to investigate a leaking problem. They subsequently discovered plumbing and other repair issues with an estimated cost of \$400,000. The pool has been empty since that time. The abandoned pool has been and continues to be a significant public safety threat.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a State Agency dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and creation of public parkland. The Conservancy's mission is to form an interlinking system of urban, rural, and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitat that are easily accessible to the public. Since it was created by the Legislature in 1980, the Conservancy has helped preserve over 65,000 acres urban and wilderness parkland throughout Southern California.

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The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is a local government agency established 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. The MRCA manages and provides planning, education and interpretation, construction, ranger and fire prevention services for parkland it owns or that is owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy or other agencies. The MRCA is one of the principal agencies working towards revitalization of the Los Angeles River and is the leader in providing nature parks in urban areas of Southern California.

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