

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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**Governor Gray Davis Announces Acquisition
of Major Southern California Urban Parkland**

*244-Acre Preserve in Verdugo Mountains Protects Extraordinary Natural
Resources*

Glendale—Governor Gray Davis announced today the acquisition of the 244-acre Verdugo Mountains Open Space Preserve. The land is in the Verdugo Mountains in the northern portion of the City of Glendale, twenty minutes from downtown Los Angeles. Formerly known as the Oakmont V property, the purchase is wholly within a ‘Significant Ecological Area,’ a resources designation of Los Angeles County. The stunningly beautiful preserve contains more than 2,300 mature coast live oaks, sycamores, big leaf maples, bay laurels, and other indigenous trees. Numerous springs and streams provide for a rich diversity of habitat.

“Thanks to the partnership between community groups, the City of Glendale and the State, this spectacular land in the Verdugo Mountains is protected forever for Californians to enjoy for generations to come,” said Governor Davis.

The present acquisition falls within the Governor’s Urban Parks Initiative which was designed to acquire open space and parkland within urban areas, essentially ‘bringing the parks to the people.’ Other purchases in this effort include the Cornfield and Taylor Yards purchases in downtown Los Angeles. “This important purchase not only preserves open space and habitat, it also makes it accessible to millions of inhabitants of the Los Angeles Basin to enjoy, providing crucially needed parkland in the heart of the largest urban area in the State,” said Governor Davis.

The \$25 million purchase was made with funds contributed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the City of Glendale. The City contributed \$13.5 million to

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the purchase. The balance came from State funds including a \$5 million appropriation secured by then-Senator (now Congressman) Adam Schiff, with the balance paid by two recent State Bond measures, Propositions 13 and 40.

Along with the Governor, Assemblymember Dario Frommer worked closely with the citizen's group Volunteers Organized in Conserving the Environment (VOICE), the City of Glendale, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to secure funding for the acquisition, which has been actively pursued since 1997. The property is owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and will be operated by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and the City of Glendale.

The Verdugo Mountains are unique urban mountain range comprised of 14 square miles of habitat that remain tenuously connected to the Angeles National Forest via the Big Tujunga Wash. The acquisition bolsters a contiguous 4000-acre block of open space including parkland owned by the City of Glendale, the City of Burbank, the City of Los Angeles, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The property contains several prominent ridgelines and is highly visible from the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor, the 210 freeway, and the Angeles National Forest. Equally dramatic are the vistas from the upper slopes of the property. An extensive network of existing trails on the property highlight its immediate recreational value for more than one million residents nearby.

The property adjoins Camp Max Straus, a 112-acre resident children's camp continuously operated by the Jewish Big Brothers of Los Angeles since 1938. The facility serves at-risk youth from all over the Los Angeles region, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation.

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