

NEWS RELEASE



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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1,256-ACRE TUNA CANYON PARK IN SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS DEDICATED

Coastal mountain park in Malibu protects habitat, offers public million-dollar views of Santa Monica Bay, Santa Monica, Santa Susana and San Gabriel Mountains

Malibu—California Secretary for Resources, Mary D. Nichols, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, and Congressman Brad Sherman joined the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) today to dedicate Tuna Canyon Park—a stunning 1,256-acre Malibu coastal bluff property paralleling more than two miles of the Pacific Coast. Situated between Las Flores Canyon on the west, and Tuna Canyon on the east, the property rises from sea level to over 1,600 feet in elevation, and provides dramatic 360-degree views that encompass Palos Verde Peninsula and Santa Catalina Island to the south, Oat Mountain to the north, and Mt. Wilson to the northeast.

Once slated for development of as many as 100 estate homes, the \$42.5 million property was one of the largest tracts of privately-owned undeveloped land along the Southern California Coast. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy brought together local, State and Federal funding sources to purchase 240 acres to augment a donation of 1,016 acres of pristine coastal mountain land.

“The dedication of Tuna Canyon Park highlights the cooperative efforts of a private donor, non-profit land trusts, and every level of government to preserve this remarkable and beautiful coastal property for generations to come,” said Rorie Skei, Chief Deputy Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

In donating the property to the Conservancy, the former owner, biomedical entrepreneur Alfred E. Mann, took advantage of the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax

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Credit Act of 2000, signed into law by Governor Gray Davis. The law provides for tax credits to preserve habitat and open space of regional and statewide significance. The Riverside Land Conservancy, and former Director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Pete Dangermond, were instrumental in securing the donation. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy acquired the additional 240 acres with \$3.5 million in Los Angeles County Proposition A funds obtained by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky; a State Coastal Conservancy grant of \$1 million; \$500,000 in Federal TEA funds; and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's share of Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond (Proposition 12) funds.

Over half of the new park lies within Los Angeles County-designated Significant Ecological Area Number 10. Deep canyons and ridges support a rich mosaic of coastal Southern California plant communities including sycamore riparian woodland, oak woodland, a robust example of the increasingly rare coastal sage scrub habitat, and native grasslands with sensitive species such as Plummer's mariposa lily. Tuna Creek, one of the most pristine aquatic habitats in the Santa Monica Mountains, courses through the eastern end of the property to the ocean.

In the interior of the property, Piedra Gorda and Peña Canyons contain perhaps the most remote coastal wilderness in Los Angeles County, and provide important habitat for native and migratory birds. Wildlife including mountain lion, bobcat, mule deer, American badger, coyote and gray fox, as well as numerous reptile and amphibian species populate the park.

The site was inhabited by Native Americans 8000 years ago. More recently, members of the Chumash tribe made their homes on the gentle terrain.

Tuna Canyon Park connects with Conservancy-owned Las Flores Canyon open space on the west, and adjoins the 417-acre Lower Tuna Canyon open space parcel to the east, recently acquired by the Mountain Restoration Trust (MRT), a private land trust. The MRT property in turn links Tuna Canyon Park to Topanga State Park, thus expanding the 15,000-acre protected Topanga State Park ecosystem by 3,846-acres. The proposed Coastal Slope Trail, a major new cooperative effort between State and Federal agencies, bisects much of the property. This new public open space will be managed for resource protection and appropriate low impact use such as hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, and a possible primitive camp for youth.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the MRCA are dedicated to the preservation and acquisition of open space and parkland throughout Southern California.

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