

JOINT POWERS PARTNERS

A joint powers entity is a public agency created pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Act (Government Code Section 6500 et seq). Two or more government agencies establish a new public entity authorized to exercise those powers jointly held. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a member of seven joint powers entities that seek to preserve and create public parkland in Southern California. These entities are legally distinct government entities with their own governing boards. Central to the success of the seven joint powers entities is their ability to forge partnerships and complement the work of other organizations protecting open space and providing stewardship to a wide variety of public resources.

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Of the seven joint powers entities, the most active is the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). As it was originally envisioned, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was established by the Legislature to acquire land and transfer it to the National Park Service, Department of Parks and Recreation, or local government agencies. By the mid-1980s, these agencies were either unable or unwilling to assume new management responsibilities for land purchased by the Conservancy. Therefore, in 1985, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy created a joint powers authority with the Conejo Recreation and Park District. The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District joined the MRCA in 1986. The MRCA works closely with the Conservancy to acquire parkland, participate in vital planning processes, and complete major park improvement projects. The MRCA is comprised of nine divisions: acquisition and legal services; administration and finance; natural resources and planning; operations and ranger services; construction, public affairs; education and interpretation; developed resources; and watershed planning.



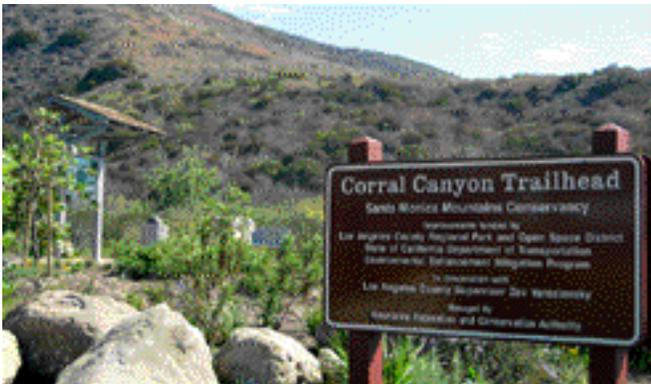
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Acquisition and Legal Services Division

All legal and real estate services related to appraisals, purchase and sale contracts, leases, easements, donations, escrow and title matters are handled by this division. This division is also responsible for all legal advice on open meeting laws, CEQA compliance, bidding and contacting, and litigation.

Construction Division

The Construction Division oversees capital improvement projects. With a staff of twenty, this division completed six improvement projects this year. Highlights include a massive site clean-up and installation of a ranger residence in 442-acre Whitney Canyon in Santa Clarita, and the completion of the Richard Lillard Outdoor Classroom along the Los Angeles River in Studio City. Construction staff developed a trailhead and a mile-long connector trail at the Marge Feinberg Rim of the Valley Trailhead at Saddletree Ranch in Sylmar, built a two and a half mile trail in Corral Canyon in Malibu, and constructed a bicycle staging area with a restroom at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens. Projects in progress include a park in South Pasadena along the Arroyo Seco, and the renovation of the Superintendent's house and the schoolhouse in Mentryville.



Education and Interpretation Division

Overall agency functions for interpretation and environmental education are handled by this Division including all youth programs, school programs, public programs and interpretive programs. This division is also responsible for educational program development and implementation, community outreach, interpretive materials and publications, curriculum development and training.



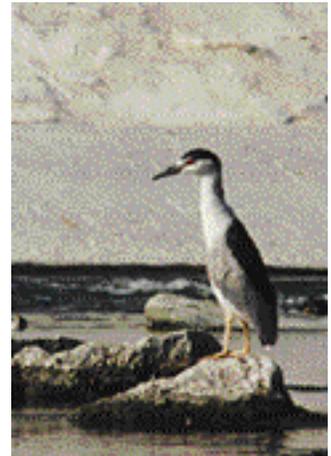
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Finance and Administration Division

The Finance and Administration Division is responsible for overseeing the fiscal activities of the Agency. These activities include accounts payables; accounts receivables; budget development and monitoring; financial analysis, as well as administration and human resources.

Natural Resources and Planning Division

The Natural Resources and Planning Division has the agency-wide responsibility to prioritize and negotiate land acquisitions, bring improvement projects to a construction-ready stage, monitor development projects, and prepare grant applications. This division is also responsible for providing resource management guidance, mapping, and the preparation of California Environmental Quality Act documents for improvement projects. Specialized groups within this division include design services, geographic information system mapping, habitat restoration, and biologists. In addition, the Division provides all technical and staff support for the various joint powers entities of which the Conservancy is a member.



Operations Division

The Operations Division is responsible for assuring that all agency and agency controlled parkland is well maintained and safe for public use. Law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical aid, park maintenance, natural resource management, and interpretive programs are just a few of the duties performed by this Division. The Operations Division effectively manages these services upon thousands of acres of open space for the benefit of citizens throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

In addition to managing MRCA parklands and facilities, the Operations Division provides a wide variety of contract services to several land management agencies, including the City of Los Angeles, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, the State Coastal Conservancy, and the Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority. The division provides these agencies with professional park and recreation resources that directly assist them in providing excellent service to park visitors. The Division also provides both personnel and equipment resources to outside park agencies and local governments when requested to do so during public safety emergencies such as wildfires.

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The responsibilities of the MRCA Operations Division are summarized on the following chart:

Project Name	Acres	Funding Source	Amount
Big Wild/Corbin Canyon	3,159	Proposition A	\$293,557
Young/Stoney Point	276	Proposition A	\$4,905
Wilson Canyon	242	Proposition A	\$10,914
Wilacre	128	Proposition A	\$28,357
Whittier Open Space Management Contract	1,800	NHPA Operational Funds	\$77,441
Urban Wild	794	Proposition A	\$247,730
Towsley Canyon	273	Proposition A	\$169,358
Top of Topanga	9	Proposition A	\$19,071
Augustus F. Hawkins Natural Park	8	City of Los Angeles Prop. A & K Funds	\$363,518
Temescal Gateway Park	165	Proposition A & MRCA Operations Fund	\$470,836
Sage Ranch	635	MRCA Operations Fund	\$26,493
River/Elysian Valley	4	Proposition A	\$88,228
Ritter Ranch	4,234	MRCA Operations Fund	\$2,822
Red Rock Canyon	250	MRCA Operations Fund	\$21,417
Puente Hills Open Space Management Contract	1,300	NHPA Operational Funds	\$148,430
Studio City Outdoor Classroom	N/A	Proposition A	\$14,169
Tuna Canyon	1,255	Proposition A	\$8,000
Mulholland Security Contract	N/A	City of Los Angeles	\$135,000
Pico Canyon/Mentryville	810	Propositon A & MRCA Operations Fund	\$36,530
Sanitation District Open Space	N/A	Sanitation District Small Contract Fund	\$7,348
Liberty Canyon	311	Proposition A	\$9,782
Happy Camp	3,000	MRCA Operations Fund	\$7,414

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Project Name	Acres	Funding Source	Amount
Franklin Canyon Park	137	Propositon A & MRCA Operations Fund	\$100,000
Elyria Canyon	35	Proposition A	\$26,465
East Canyon	22	Proposition A	\$60,447
Deerlake Highlands/ Santa Susana	4,815	MRCA Operations Fund	\$151,251
Western Santa Monica Mountains Zone Patrol Operations	7,042	Proposition A	\$77,000
Bosque Del Rio Hondo	12	Proposition A	\$40,947
Whitney Canyon	442	MRCA Operations Fund	\$54,800
Malibu Beach Access Coastal Operations	N/A 1,052.26	Coastal Conservancy Grant Proposition A	\$374,299 \$93,554
Total Acres Managed:	33,145	Total Amount Funded:	\$2,699,247



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Public Affairs Division

The Public Affairs Division oversees external communications, interfaces with elected officials, conducts public outreach, and plans events for the Conservancy and MRCA. Functions include planning park dedications, press conferences and tours. The Division also produces all agency-wide publications and collateral materials, interpretive signage, and provides graphic design services.

This year, the Public Affairs Division helped with the formation of two Benefit Assessment Districts in the City of Los Angeles portion of the Santa Monica Mountains. Property owners east and west of the 405 Freeway were asked by mailed ballot whether to establish two separate assessment districts under the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 and the Improvement Bond Act of 1915. A weighted majority of property owners in each District voted to assess themselves no more than \$40 per year over thirty years to fund the acquisition and preservation of nearby open space and parkland and to annually clear brush to reduce fire hazards in their acquisition area. The balloting procedures were conducted under the provisions of the Taxpayers Right to Vote on Taxes Act (Proposition 218) and its implementing legislation. The measures were approved by a weighted majority of 77.3% in District One (east of the 405 Freeway to Griffith Park) and 68.1% in District Two (west of the 405 Freeway to the Calabasas border). The Districts will provide for the preservation of thousands of acres of parkland in these local areas.



Watershed Division

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has worked to protect watersheds for over twenty years. Watersheds divide the landscape into hydrologically defined geographic areas and are effective indicators of environmental processes over spatial and temporal scales. The Conservancy Zone encompasses the major watersheds of the Santa Clara River, the Ventura River, Calleguas-Conejo Creeks, Malibu Creek, Topanga Creek, the smaller Santa Monica Bay Watersheds, and the Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River .

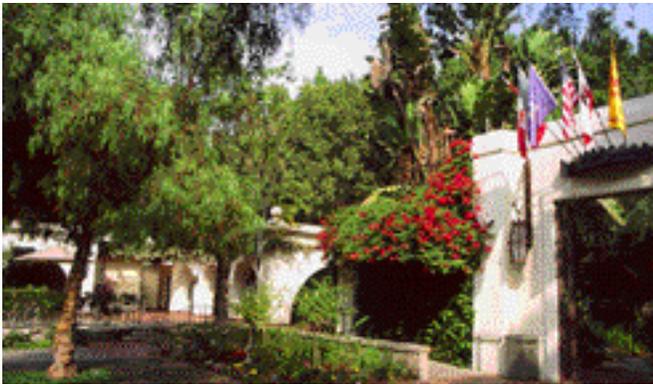
As watersheds have become the basic planning unit for identifying and allocating resources statewide, this year, MRCA formed the Watershed Division. The goals of the Watershed Division are to help lead watershed management and implementation; create projects with clear, measurable results that advance the science of watershed management; and, cultivate strong partnerships that capitalize on the core competencies of various non-governmental organizations, the Conservancy and MRCA.

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Developed Resources

The Developed Resources Division was created this year to oversee three of the Conservancy's most complex parks. These parks, Ramirez Canyon Park, Temescal Gateway Park and the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, have many similarities in that they have highly developed grounds, many and varied buildings, and heavy public use. The various facilities make each ideal for both educational outreach programs and private events. An important goal of this Division has been to streamline the rental process and to consolidate staff resources and expertise.

Each park in the Division has benefited from staff cooperation on the ground as well. Maintenance and grounds personnel from different parks have worked jointly on several projects. The former residential landscape of Ramirez Canyon is maintained with great care to stay full and abundant. New horticulturally-trained staff at the River Center have begun to make its highly specialized gardens thrive. The largest of the three, Temescal Gateway Park, has been undergoing many improvement projects including the construction of new buildings, the refurbishment of existing ones, the installation of interpretive kiosks, the planting of specialized gardens, and the maintenance of many trails.



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Mountains Conservation and Education Authority

The Mountains Conservation and Education Authority (MCEA) was created in 1986 as a partnership between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. MCEA can serve as an additional instrument through which the Conservancy can apply for grant funding for educational programs.



Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the County of Ventura formed Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority (EVCCA) in 1990 to facilitate the opening and operation of Happy Camp Canyon Regional Park. Happy Camp is a 3,000-acre wilderness area in the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor between Moorpark and Simi Valley in the Santa Susana Mountains. Under an agreement with EVCCA, the MRCA provides ranger services and volunteer trail assistance for the park.

Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority

Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority (SCWRCA) was established in 1993 by the City of Santa Clarita and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to cooperatively plan for preservation of open space, trails, parkland, and watershed protection in the Santa Clarita area and the upper Santa Clara River Watershed. In June 2002, SCWRCA acquired its first park in Whitney Canyon in cooperation with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Grants from the Conservancy, the City of Santa Clarita, and the Resources Agency of California funded the purchase. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority under a cooperative agreement with SCWRCA made site improvements to Whitney Canyon Park in fiscal year 2002-2003, and Whitney Canyon Park was dedicated in November 2002.

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Whittier-Puente Hills Conservation Authority

The Whittier/Puente Hills Conservation Authority (WPHCA) is a public entity, established to provide for the acquisition and conservation of park and open space lands within the Whittier Hills. WPHCA's Governing Board consists of two representatives from the City of Whittier, two representatives from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and one public member. Funding for WPHCA projects and acquisitions comes from the County of Los Angeles Safe Neighborhood Parks Act (Proposition A) of 1992 and 1996.



Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) was established to provide for the proper planning, conservation, environmental protection, and maintenance of lands within the Puente-Chino Hills corridor area. Its goal is to assure that sufficient continuity of habitat can be preserved to maintain a functioning wildlife corridor made up of about 40,000 acres of land. WCCA's Governing Board consists of representatives from the cities of Brea, Whittier, Diamond Bar, La Habra Heights, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles County, two public members, and the California Department of Fish and Game (ex-officio member).

The ecosystem which supports wildlife within the corridor of the Puente-Chino Hills area encompasses portions of four counties. Preserving land in the corridor has been a cooperative endeavor with other public agencies and many nonprofit organizations. WCCA consistently provides comments on development proposals and other projects to support environmentally sensitive activities in the corridor. In addition, members of WCCA participate continually in advisory committees for local planning efforts.

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Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy joined the County of Los Angeles to form the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority (BHRCA). The mission of BHRCA is to acquire, expand, and improve open space within the Baldwin Hills and Ballona Creek, and other natural and recreational areas in the Second Supervisorial District of Los Angeles County.

This year, BHRCA proceeded with the implementation of the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Improvement Project. The Ballona Creek Bike Path extends approximately eight miles through the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City, and connects with the Beach Bike Path. The project is part of a larger effort to improve the area surrounding Ballona Creek and its adjacent wetlands, and make connections between Ballona Creek and the Baldwin Hills.

