

NEWS RELEASE



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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New Nature Park Opens Along the Arroyo Seco in South Pasadena

Arroyo Seco-South Pasadena Woodland and Wildlife Park dedicated after more than six years of citizen effort transforms illegal dump site into thriving river parkland and riding trail

South Pasadena--Congressman Adam Schiff joined the City of South Pasadena, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) today to dedicate the new 3-acre Arroyo Seco-South Pasadena Woodland and Wildlife Park. Located in the City of South Pasadena along the bank of the Arroyo Seco, near the intersection of York Boulevard and the Arroyo Seco Parkway (SR-110), the gracious new park provides an on-the-ground example of the Conservancy's efforts to create open space, trails, and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the general public.

Already a favorite of local hikers, strollers, and equestrians, the park includes meandering trails among rarely seen California native walnut trees. A lookout point near the center of the site offers views of Mount Washington, the historic York Boulevard bridge, the Verdugo Mountains and the San Gabriel Mountains in the distance.

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Michael Cacciotti, a South Pasadena City Councilmember, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Advisory Committee member who worked alongside the community to bring together State and local resources to preserve the three-acre open space, and then with the MRCA to design an open space park that enhanced the natural beauty of the site, served as Master of Ceremonies. “This park is a testament to the determination and perseverance of a number of community volunteers, both students and adults, and Congressman Adam Schiff working together for over six years to preserve and restore one of our region’s significant natural treasures and resources, of the Arroyo Seco,” said Cacciotti.

At the dedication, local teacher Don Wielenga, who as a both middle school and high school teacher involved his students from his Arroyo Seco Field Science Program to recognize the importance of the property, was honored along with his students.

In 1998, a private group had been negotiating with the City to develop the site, which had been used as an illegal dumpsite. A citizen’s organization, Save Our Arroyo Seco Parklands, along with Mr. Wielenga and his students lobbied the City to recognize the site's value to the community and preserve it as a park. Then-Senator Adam Schiff requested a \$250,000 appropriation to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in the 2000/2001 State budget to create the park improvements. The Conservancy granted the funds to the MRCA to complete the project.

In 2002, the City agreed to dedicate the land as public open space and maintain improvements for a period of twenty years. The City appointed a citizen’s task force to work with MRCA on a park design. The result is a gently sloping series of paths surrounded by native habitat including California Sycamore, Oak Savannah grassland, and walnut woodland. Invasive exotic plants were removed. Native arroyo stone was incorporated for seatwalls and other amenities.

Interpretive information about native habitat and wildlife, natural sciences and the history of the site is incorporated into trailside displays and kiosks, and plant identification markers are located throughout the site.

South Pasadena Arroyo Seco Woodland and Wildlife Park will be owned and operated by the City of South Pasadena.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy works in cooperation with the MRCA and other local government partners to acquire parkland, participate in vital planning processes, and complete major park improvement projects. The MRCA provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, park construction services, park operations, fire prevention, ranger services, and interpretive programs, and is one of the lead agencies providing for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

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