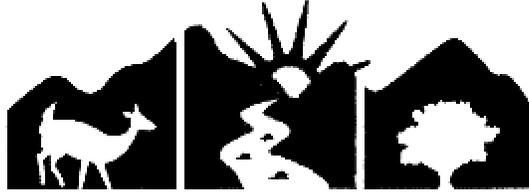


NEWS RELEASE



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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Senator Sheila Kuehl, Assemblymember Paul Koretz, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky Dedicate New Hollywood Hills Parkland

Private citizens, a non-profit land trust, State and local government worked together to save Briar Summit Open Space Preserve, a 52-acre wildlife corridor

Laurel Canyon, California—At a large gathering on a mountaintop overlooking the heart of the Hollywood Hills, Senator Sheila J. Kuehl, Assemblymember Paul Koretz, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, and community leaders joined the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to celebrate the dedication of a pivotal 52-acre open space preserve.

The landmark, 1,500-foot-high mountain will now be permanent public open space after surviving twenty years of development attempts. During a tenuous three year long escrow period, the non-profit Mountains Restoration Trust led the effort to acquire the property, raising \$150,000 of private neighborhood donations, over \$100,000 in Member Request funds from Senator Kuehl and Assemblymember Koretz, County Proposition A funds, and State Proposition 12 funds. A large gift from the Lloyd E. Rigler-Lawrence E. Deutsch Foundation kept the acquisition alive in the eleventh hour.

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The ultimate funding source was the MRCA's innovative Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment District, approved by 77% of property owners in the summer of 2002.

Briar Summit Mountain, visible from all over the City, is a fundamental property in the chain of natural areas that allows wildlife to thrive in the mostly developed eastern Santa Monica Mountains and ultimately to travel into Griffith Park. The mountain supports small populations of mule deer, bobcats, grey fox, coyote and their prey such as cottontail rabbits, California quail and woodrats. The drier south side of the mountain contains several trails. The moister north-facing side supports lush vegetation rich with wildlife niches. As well as providing a safe haven for wildlife, the property, along with portions of adjacent privately-owned parcels, functions as a multi-spoked hub that allows wildlife to move between numerous patches of open space. Development of even a few of the property's five legal lots could have spelled the end all medium and big-sized mammal species in the range between the Cahuenga Pass and Laurel Canyon.

The property's wide, but steep road climbs to vantage points offering a near 360-degree view encompassing all of the major geographic elements of the Los Angeles basin and San Fernando Valley. It is perhaps the best place in the Hollywood Hills to appreciate how the Santa Monica Mountains reach towards downtown with the Valley and city spreading out to the San Gabriel Mountains and Pacific Ocean, respectively. In the 1960's the military recognized this vantage point and placed one of the old Nike Missile System observation platforms squarely on the peak.

The property is one of five large acquisitions recently completed by the MRCA between Coldwater Canyon Avenue and Griffith Park using funding from the Open Space

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Preservation District after bonds were sold in March of this year.

The Briar Summit Open Space Preserve is owned and managed by the MRCA, a joint powers authority of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Rancho Simi and Conejo Recreation and Park District.

The MRCA works in cooperation with the Conservancy 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.

For more information about the open space preservation district visit www.preserveopenspace.com

For more information about Southern California parkland and open space preserves Visit www.lamountains.com.

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