

WHAT'S HAPPENED ON THE TRAILS THIS PAST YEAR?

- ✓ 2.5 new miles were constructed on the Backbone Trail.
- ✓ The National Park Service has been allocated \$6,000,000 from the TEA-21 program for SMMNRA Backbone Trail land acquisition and construction.
- ✓ The National Park Service is set to receive \$2,000,000 from Congress to help complete the Backbone Trail. The funds must be matched with \$2,000,000 from local or state sources.
- ✓ Calabasas and Agoura Hills received over \$1,000,000 to construct bicycle routes.
- ✓ The National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation received emergency federal funds to repair 45 miles of trails damaged by El Niño storms.
- ✓ Last year, volunteers contributed over 5,800 hours to help maintain trails within the Santa Monica Mountains.
- ✓ A bridge on the Santa Maria Canyon Trail in the eastern half of Ed Edelman Park will be built through a partnership between the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council.



**TRAIL PLANNING TEAM
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

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REGIONAL TRAILS UPDATE

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE □ CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS □ SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
NEWSLETTER #1 OCTOBER, 1999

TRAIL INVENTORY UNDERWAY

The National Park Service, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy are cooperatively compiling a detailed trail inventory for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. After the inventory is complete, the information will be used to prepare a regional trail management plan. This bulletin will give you information about the inventory, its role in trail plan preparation, and how both relate to the General Management Plan update. Also, you'll find an anticipated timeline for completion.

THE INVENTORY: FOLLOW-UP TO SMMART

Beginning in 1993, many people interested in trails participated in a project known as *Santa Monica Mountains Area Recreation Trails (SMMART) Project*. SMMART involved dozens of local organizations and agencies as well as individual trail users. Participants inventoried the area's trails, missing trail links, locations for trail camps, signage needs, trail construction guidelines for new multiple use trails, and ways to accommodate different types of trail uses within the trail network. Teams developed recommendations and shared them with the general public, parkland agencies and local governments for consideration and implementation.

Now, a group made up of planning, resource, maintenance, and law enforcement staff from the NPS, CDPR, and SMMC is working from SMMART's inventories and recommendations to draft a trail management plan. The team will fill in some gaps not addressed by SMMART. An environmental constraints analysis will inventory sensitive natural and cultural resource areas. Trail maintenance issues and costs will be inventoried to help "put a price tag" on maintaining trails. A recreational needs analysis will help assess use patterns and public access to the trail network.

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED

TRAIL INVENTORY – THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS	TRAIL MAINTENANCE	RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Soils ✓ Slope ✓ Geology ✓ Hydrology ✓ Cultural Sites ✓ Fire History ✓ Sensitive Plants ✓ Sensitive Animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Surface ✓ Width ✓ Water Bars ✓ Culverts ✓ Bridges ✓ Labor Costs ✓ Material Costs ✓ Signage Needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trailhead locations ✓ Trailhead facilities ✓ Public Transit Access ✓ ADA Access Trails ✓ Use Designations ✓ User Frequency ✓ Loop Distances ✓ Regional Connections

The NPS's Geographic Information System (GIS) will be used to analyze and model trail data. The GIS is a computer system that allows information to be mapped easily. Trail information can be overlaid with the locations of sensitive plants, soils, wildlife habitat, cultural resource and other sorts of information to identify possible impacts and to help identify potential alternative trail corridors. Ultimately, the information gathered during SMMART and gained from the trail inventory will provide the foundation for creating trail network design alternatives for the forthcoming trail management plan.

THE REGIONAL TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Upon completing the detailed inventory, NPS, CDPR, and SMMC will begin preparing a regional trail management plan. The goal of the interagency effort is to create a plan that will streamline management of and improve the trail system in ways that both protect the environment and enhance visitor experience. When completed, the plan will include trail management policies and a proposed trail network design. The plan will discuss proposed locations for trails and trailheads; trail construction, management, and operation guidelines; and allowable uses. An environmental assessment of feasible alternatives, impacts, and mitigations will also be prepared.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The trails plan and environmental assessment will be drafted after the current General Management Plan (GMP) revision is complete. The GMP, when updated, will take a broad-brush look at the overall vision and mission for the park and will set out general direction for park management. The GMP will be finished in June of 2000, following additional public comment opportunities this coming winter. The trail plan will follow and to establish specific trail-related policies and actions.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS

Thanks to the participation of so many of you in the SMMART process, a strong foundation has been laid for this subsequent effort. The trails team will review public comments from SMMART. A draft trail management plan and environmental assessment will be available for public review and comment late next year. If you would like to provide us with comments about trail inventory and management issues, please send written comments to the address below by **November 30, 1999**. If you participated in the SMMART process and have no new insights or concerns, there is no need to resubmit your comments. Comments should be addressed to:

**Trails Planning Team
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
401 W. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360**

If you would prefer, comments can also be submitted via the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/samo/resource/trails1.htm>. In subsequent editions of this newsletter, we will let you know about the status of the project and chances to participate and share your views.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ✓ SMMNRA's web page: www.nps.gov/samo
- ✓ California State Parks' web page: cal-parks.ca.gov/travel/regions/angeles/la_parks.htm
- ✓ Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's web page: ceres.ca.gov/smmc/
- ✓ For more information about the update of the General Management Plan, the latest newsletter is online at: www.nps.gov/planning/samo/news3/index.htm
- ✓ For more information about the SMMART project, the Executive Summary is located at: www.nps.gov/pwro/tca/smmart.htm
- ✓ For more information about the Regional Trail Management Plan process, call SMMNRA at (805) 370-2300, press #9.

