

NEWS RELEASE



SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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Parklands in the Simi Hills Reopen with Restricted Access

Calabasas, California—The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) announced today that with the Topanga Fire now controlled, parkland in those portions of the Simi Hills that were affected by the fire are now open to the public.

Previously closed on September 28, 2005 to protect public safety, the Conservancy parks now open include Upper Las Virgenes Open Space Preserve (formerly Ahmanson Ranch), and Sage Ranch Park in the Simi Hills. Cheeseboro, Palo Comado, and Liberty Canyons, under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, are also open for restricted use. Park officials expect the restrictions to continue for at least one year or until the area has had a chance to stabilize and begin the recovery process.

The public must stay on established roads and trails and observe all posted closure signs. Access to the public parkland will be permitted from sunrise to sunset. Motor vehicles are not allowed, as always.

Superintendent of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Woody Smeck said, “By complying with the restrictions, the public and park neighbors can play

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a vital role in the restoration process of our land, wildlife, vegetation, and cultural resources.”

In the short term, visitors who recreate in the Simi Hills area can expect to see a blackened landscape with pockets of unburned vegetation. Many oak trees, while scorched, will survive as they have in past fires. Over time, the land will begin to change as vegetation resprouts, wildflowers bloom, and many wildlife species return to the area.

To enforce the restrictions, Conservancy and NPS staff and volunteers will increase law enforcement patrol of the parks. The restrictions are in accordance with regulations and the delegated authority provided in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations Section 1.5(a), the California Public Resources Code 33211.6, and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Ordinance 1-2005, as amended.

For further information, contact the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area visitor center at (805) 370-2301 or <http://www.nps.gov/samo/>. For more information about the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, visit www.smmc.ca.gov or www.lamountains.com.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and its Joint Powers partner, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority are dedicated to the preservation and creation of parkland within the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Rim of the Valley Corridor including the Santa Clarita, La Crescenta, Simi and Conejo Valleys.

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