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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Acquires Ecologically Prime Open Space Adjacent to the Angeles National Forest in Big Tujunga Wash**

***State Wildlife Conservation Board and the County of Los Angeles helped preserve 111 acres at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains in the community of Tujunga in the City of Los Angeles***

LOS ANGELES (April 15, 2018) - The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority announced that it had acquired 111 acres of prime open space in Big Tujunga Canyon adjacent to the Angeles National Forest. The new parkland above the San Fernando Valley is bordered on all sides by public open space in a key habitat area essential for wildlife movement in the mountain range. With coast live oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral vegetation, a USGS blue line stream tributary on the site also supports exceptionally robust alluvial fan scrub vegetation. The Marge Feinberg Rim of the Valley Trail alignment on the new parkland will eventually provide recreational access to the Angeles National Forest.

"Virtually no other property in the Rim of the Valley Corridor can provide the recreation access, viewshed, watershed, and ecological benefits of this now permanently protected public open space," said Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, which contributed \$3.5 million in local assistance funding appropriated in the State budget to acquire the parkland. The total purchase price for the remarkable new parkland was \$4,440,000.

The State Wildlife Conservation Board granted \$800,000 to the acquisition to maintain a viable migration corridor for mountain lion and deer, enhance wildlife linkages, and provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities. A large-scale subdivision of approximately 100 homes was proposed in 2013. That development would have fragmented the key habitat transition area between the Big Tujunga Wash and the narrow, steep-walled Big Tujunga gorge. Its edge effects would also have diminished the biological values of scores of acres of surrounding public land.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger also contributed \$140,000 in Proposition A funds to the cooperative project which is located in a County-designated Significant Ecological Area that encompasses one of the most biologically diverse regions of the County. "This important acquisition of open space in Big Tujunga Wash is a step forward

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in our effort to increase access to recreational opportunities in the Angeles National Forest," said Supervisor Barger.

"This is a huge victory for our community," said Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez in whose district the new parkland is located. "This acquisition will expand our park space, protect our natural habitat, and create significant recreational resources for the people of Los Angeles. Most importantly, the newly acquired 111 acres will preserve much-needed open space for many generations to come."

Immediate plans for the property include measures to eliminate illegal vehicle access, cleanup of dumping, and scoping for habitat restoration efforts.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is a local public park agency dedicated to the preservation and management of open space, urban parkland, watershed lands, trails, and wildlife habitat. The MRCA manages more than 73,000 acres of public parkland and provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, operations, fire prevention and ranger services, as well as education and leadership programs for thousands of youth each year. It is one of the lead agencies revitalizing the Los Angeles River and its tributaries.

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