



**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 17, 2014

Contact: Dash Stolarz
(323)221-9944 x198

Congressman Tony Cardenas, Senator Kevin de Leon, Assemblymember Raul Bocanegra, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Dedicate New Park in San Fernando

Innovative Pacoima Wash Natural Park uses smart design to clean and replenish groundwater, fulfill vision of Recreational Greenway Along Pacoima Wash

San Fernando, CA, (May 17, 2014)—On the heels of a four-day heat wave, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) opened up a beautiful and innovative new 4.7-acre park today along the banks of the Pacoima Wash in the City of San Fernando. Smartly designed to use the land, and a system of built and natural filters to clean and store water that runs off adjacent city streets, the park features walking trails, quaint bridges, and a picnic area under a shady arbor.

“Pacoima Wash Natural Park is the model of how to bring nature into neighborhoods, and clean and conserve water at the same time,” said Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. “These parks will help solve our regional water problems and create badly needed parkland in urban areas.”

Funded by the Conservancy with Proposition 50 and Proposition 84 funds approved by the voters, and a competitive Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan (IRWMP) grant from the California Department of Water Resources, this beautiful neighborhood amenity is the first of many parks planned along the Pacoima Wash Greenway on the historic Pacoima Wash that flows from the Angeles National Forest. It provides habitat and ecosystem restoration, open space, and opportunities for environmental education.

The MRCA transformed what was essentially a flat and neglected parcel at the end of two neighborhood streets by grading the land to divert stormwater and street runoff from a 33-acre area into two circular *placitas*, which are fashioned to slow down water and catch trash and sediment. These *placitas*, which are designed in the local Spanish-

(-More-)

Mission style, are planted with large California Sycamore trees. A system of grates and filters remove trash and sediment and direct water into a vegetated creek bed, or “arroyo” that parallels the wash. Up to 371,000 gallons of water at a time—enough to fill 8,800 bathtubs—collects in the arroyo and is cleansed a final time through a natural system of sand, gravel, and boulders before it soaks into the ground and recharges the San Fernando Valley Groundwater Basin. Excess water overflows into the Pacoima Wash.

Designed to highlight the natural beauty of the area, including spectacular views of the San Gabriel Mountains, the park is landscaped with California native vegetation including trees and wildflowers, and incorporates artistic features such as hand-forged iron works, attractive fencing, and masonry. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky contributed \$100,000 in Los Angeles County Safe Neighborhood Parks (Proposition A) funding to plant trees.

The Conservancy and MRCA are currently working on several projects in the area. With \$983,000 in funding from the Federal Department of Transportation, the MRCA is planning and designing the Pacoima Wash Bikeway, a proposed 3.25-mile regional bikeway adjacent to the Pacoima Wash that will connect Northeast San Fernando Valley communities and parks to the Angeles National Forest.

El Dorado Park, further down the wash near San Fernando Road, is the next park being built by the MRCA along the greenway with \$1,075,500 in State bond funds designated by the Legislature for park poor areas. Senator Kevin de Leon, who authored AB31, the bill that created the funding source, also attended the program. The park is currently in the engineering phase.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was established by the California State Legislature in 1980. Since that time, it has helped to preserve over 69,000 acres of parkland in both wilderness and urban settings, and has improved hundreds of public recreational facilities throughout Southern California.

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 69,000 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, including the Pacoima Wash.