

**SECTION 7  
RECREATION**



TOPANGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*“One of the best paying professions is getting a hold of pieces of country in your mind, learning their smell and moods, sorting out the pieces of a view, deciding what grows there and there and why, how many steps that hill will take, where the creek winds, and where it meets the other one below...which contour lines on a map mean better cliffs or mountains. This is the best kind of ownership, and the most permanent. It feels good to say “I know the Sierra,” or “I know Point Reyes.” But you don’t. What you know better is yourself, and the Sierra and Point Reyes have helped.” – Terry and Renny Russell*

### GOALS:

- Provide opportunities for healthful passive recreation, while minimizing impacts to native biodiversity.

### Introduction

The vast open spaces of public land in the Topanga Creek Watershed offer numerous opportunities for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. From the ridgetops in Topanga State Park down to Topanga Beach, many miles of trails and beautiful vistas await visitors from the surrounding urban Los Angeles Region. It is estimated that over 75,000 people visit Topanga Beach and approximately 200,000 people visit the parks in the upper watershed. Given the close proximity of these wildlands to their urban surroundings, numerous management issues arise. Brush clearance adjacent to park/private land boundaries, impacts of dogs and feral animals, trail maintenance to reduce sedimentation and erosion, and making trails available to a variety of users are clearly all challenges. Developing and implementing creative restoration plans and prioritizing needs throughout the watershed benefit from stakeholder input. The Topanga Creek Watershed Management Plan recommendations are meant to serve as a starting point in the ongoing dialogue with all the park agencies to develop and implement successful, sustainable recreational use that preserves the ecological integrity of the wildlands.

### ACTIONS:

- 7.1 Encourage recreational use of the watershed.
- 7.2 Assess the trails within the watershed and evaluate their use levels and impacts. Determine if there are too many trails.
- 7.3 Solicit input from all stakeholders concerning ways to provide safe access across roads in the watershed in order to preserve and enhance trail connectivity.

### *Recommendations which require legal and political changes for implementation:*

- 7.4 Educate the public using a variety of methods, including signage, nature walks, etc.

- 7.5 Evaluate impacts of recreation to fishing, swimming and surfing due to water quality.
- 7.6 Evaluate trails as source of erosion, spread of exotics, vegetation type conversion and habitat fragmentation.
- 7.7 Provide forum for input of residents on public use/abuse of trails.
- 7.8 Enforce ban on motorcycles on public lands.
- 7.9 Enforce speed control of mountain bikes to promote safe riding.

### References

- CA Department of Parks and Recreation. 2002. Lower Topanga Acquisition Interim Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report.
- CA Department of Parks and Recreation. 1977. Topanga State Park General Plan
- McAuley, Milt. 1990. Guide to the Backbone Trail. Canyon Publishing Co., Canoga Park, CA
- McAuley, Milt. 1987. Hiking Trails of the Santa Monica Mountains. Canyon Publishing Co., Canoga Park, CA
- McKinney, John. 2001. Day Hikers Guide to Southern California. Olympus Press, Santa Barbara, CA.
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. 2000. General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement
- Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council. 1999. SMART Report.

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

**Lists of park activities are published regularly by:**

Audubon Society  
Sierra Club  
Outdoors in the Santa Monica Mountains  
*Topanga Messenger*  
[www.TopangaOnline.com](http://www.TopangaOnline.com)  
[www.nps.org](http://www.nps.org)

For more information on local activities call:  
Topanga Canyon Docents Hotline  
310-535-9400

