



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Organization
Incorporated November 30, 1971

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November 27, 2012

Mr. David Szymanski
Superintendent
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Dear Superintendent Szymanski,

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association requests that the National Park Service (NPS) step forward now to be the eventual custodian of the land referred to as the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) in the Simi Hills.

The SSFL land is priceless for its cultural and historic sites, and for its natural beauty. Its preservation is essential to the continued ecological health of the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding wilderness.

We believe the NPS is the only entity with the expertise to preserve this land in perpetuity. Some of the SSFL land is particularly suited to accommodate a public museum commemorating our nation's rocketry achievements, and the rest of the land is critical habitat linking the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the Santa Susana Mountains, and Los Padres National Forest.

The NASA portion of the SSFL land also includes a very significant Native American archaeological district with many artifacts and locales that attest that the area was heavily used by Native Americans. A remarkable, well-preserved Native American pictograph site in the NASA section is registered with the National Register of Historic Places (#76000539 *NRIS*).

The General Services Agency (GSA) is tasked with disposing of excess federal property. About 400 acres of the approximately 2700 acre Santa Susana Field Laboratory site, owned and formerly operated by NASA, is now being disposed of through a federal government process that provides first refusal rights to other federal government agencies. This process began some time ago. The acquisition opportunity presented right now is one-time-only and will not arise again. After federal agencies pass on their first right, other parties then have freedom to acquire the NASA property. Other potential buyers, from a federally recognized Native American tribe to private citizens, including developers, are already expressing interest in acquiring the NASA parcel.

No actual property transfers should be made until the California Department of Toxic Substances Control declares the property to be cleaned to appropriate levels. NPS, however, must step forward now, if this key parcel that includes historic rocketry and archaeological features, situated in the middle of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, is to be preserved for public use in the future.

The remainder of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory property is owned by Boeing. Boeing has made commitments in many public meetings to eventually transfer its property to a public agency for parkland. The Boeing-owned properties are not part of the GSA disposal process and therefore are not under the critical time deadline that applies to the NASA property.

Superintendent Szymanski, we ask your help in preserving forever this key NASA parcel of the SSFL that contributes in so many ways to public goals. This parcel is crucial to securing the key linkage between the Santa Monica Mountains and other open space, and is at the center of a proposed extension of Santa Monica Mountain National Recreation Area into the Rim of the Valley Corridor.

Thank you for your support,

Sincerely,

Teena A. Takata
President, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association
P. O. Box 4831
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

About Santa Susana Mountain Park Association:

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association is a 41 year-old non-profit organization based in Chatsworth, Los Angeles, California.

We represent approximately 400 members and concerned citizens, and we partner with many organizations to promote ecological and recreational quality in Southern California.

SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect habitats for plants and animals native to our area, preserve unique geological formations, and sites of ethnological, archaeological, and historic interest, particularly in the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains. We also seek to provide passive recreational and environmental education opportunities, support the acquisition of new public parks, and open space and conservation easements, expand existing natural parks, and to participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs.