



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

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

P.O. Box 4831
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831
ssmpa.com

June 25, 2015

National Park Service
570 W. Avenue 26, #175
Los Angeles, CA 90065

To be emailed to: pwr_rimofthevalley@nps.gov

Re: Rim of the Valley Corridor Draft Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment Comments on Draft Report

Dear Park Service,

The Santa Susana Mountain Park Association has been involved in local and regional open space preservation for the last 45 years. We strongly support the concept of the Rim of the Valley Corridor, and encourage adoption of this Corridor and related management areas.

We strongly support Alternative D. This proposal shows the designation of 313,000 acres for the Corridor and helps assure trail connectivity between major open space areas and other key areas where open space is needed for trails and wildlife. Alternative D can enable a very feasible habitat linkage that is critically important to offset some of the negative effects of: major commercial and residential developments, current and future; the lack of local and regional planning for open space connectivity; and the large population of this Southern California area.

If Alternative D cannot be adopted, we strongly suggest an expansion of Alternative C to include linkages to the north for both the Los Padres Forest and the Angeles National Forest. This adjustment would likely require expansion of the Proposed Boundary (in solid lavender) and the Cooperative Conservation Areas, such as are shown on Alternative D.

A major concern in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area has been the lack of connectivity to other dedicated open space areas. Commercial and residential development is rapidly expanding up the mountains within the ROV Study Area; in particular, gigantic developments are proposed along Highway 126 in the cross-hatched area north of Simi Valley. We encourage designation of a key wildlife habitat area as a Boundary Area between Simi Valley and the Los Padres Forest (perhaps a mile wide to provide the best opportunity for trail access and also for wildlife to cross comfortably through this area).

We have included a marked copy of Alternative C as per our proposed Expansion, and a copy of Alternative D for your convenient reference.

Our organization has especially watched recent developments at the former Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) in the Simi Hills, as it has been converted from industrial use, in part of the site, to open space. This 2750 acre site is one of the largest parcels in the area, is home to a substantial amount of local wildlife (from rare plants to animals and birds), and is an integral part of the local wildlife corridor between the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and open spaces to the north. In addition to serving as a key linkage in regional open space, the SSFL has significant archaeological resources, as well as significant historical structures associated with rocket engine development in the United States. Major parts of this site have never been used for any purpose but a “buffer” and provide a beautiful and striking record of how oak woodlands and chaparral may have looked across the entire western San Fernando Valley before modern settlements and developments came to this area. With its location in mid-Simi Hills on the west side of the San Fernando Valley, and the elevation and orientation of this site, the Santa Susana Field Laboratory lands offer a superior area for incorporation into Rim of the Valley Corridor.

Thank you for working on this concept. The Rim of the Valley Corridor was proposed in the 1970's and it is wonderful to see it finally moving forward. The Corridor will help provide hiking trails as well as open space for wildlife as it is fully implemented, and we hope to see it move rapidly to becoming a reality.

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 45 year-old non-profit organization based in Chatsworth, Los Angeles, California.

We represent approximately 700 members and concerned citizens, and we partner with many organizations to promote ecological and recreational quality in Southern California.

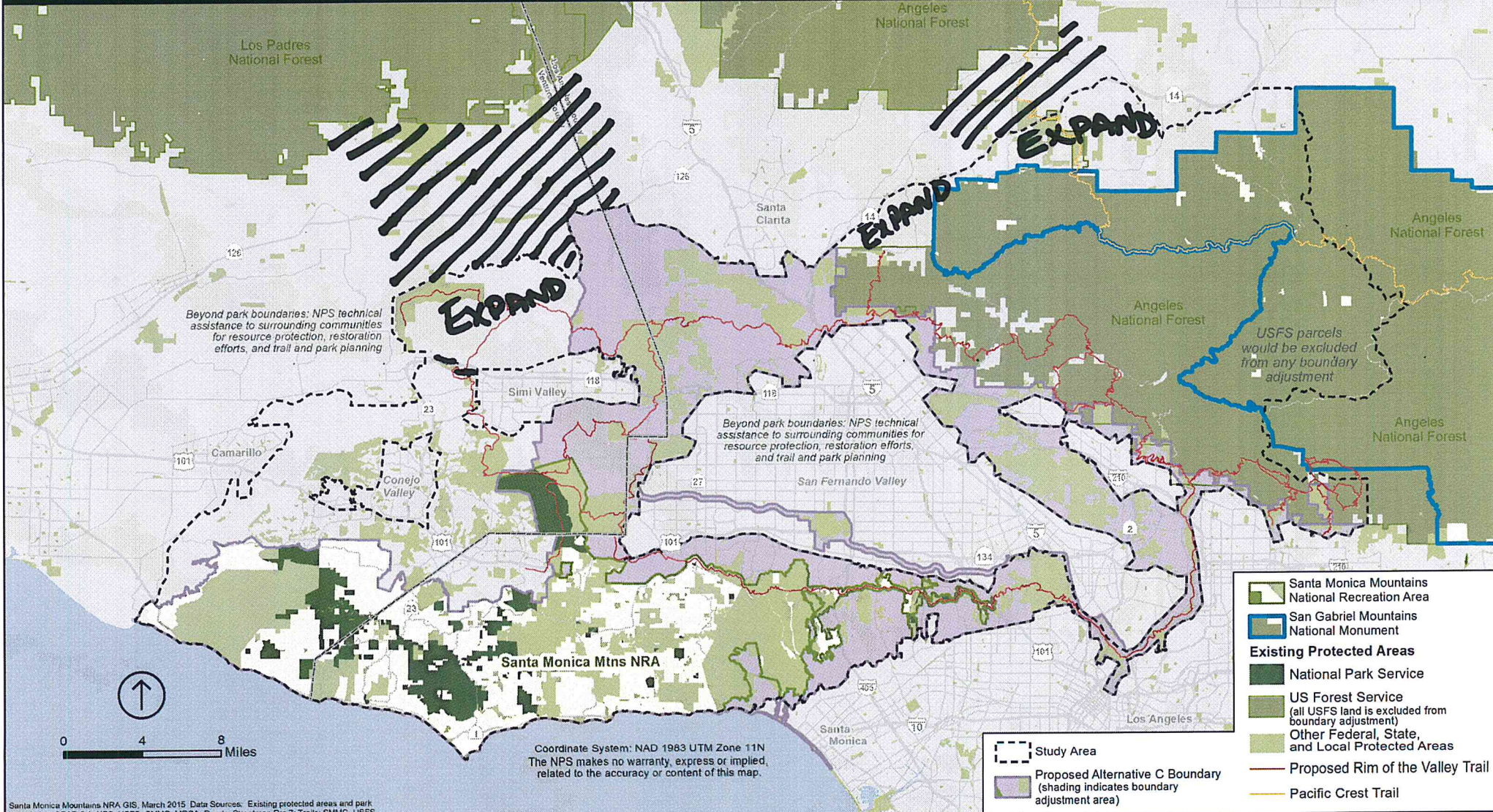
SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, and regional open space.

SSMPA Board of Directors:
Teena Takata, John Luker, Vanessa Watters, Bob Dager,
Carla Bollinger, Warren Stone, Donna Nachtrab, Tom Nachtrab, Wendi Gladstone

Alternative C Expanded

Alternative C (NPS Preferred Alternative) Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment

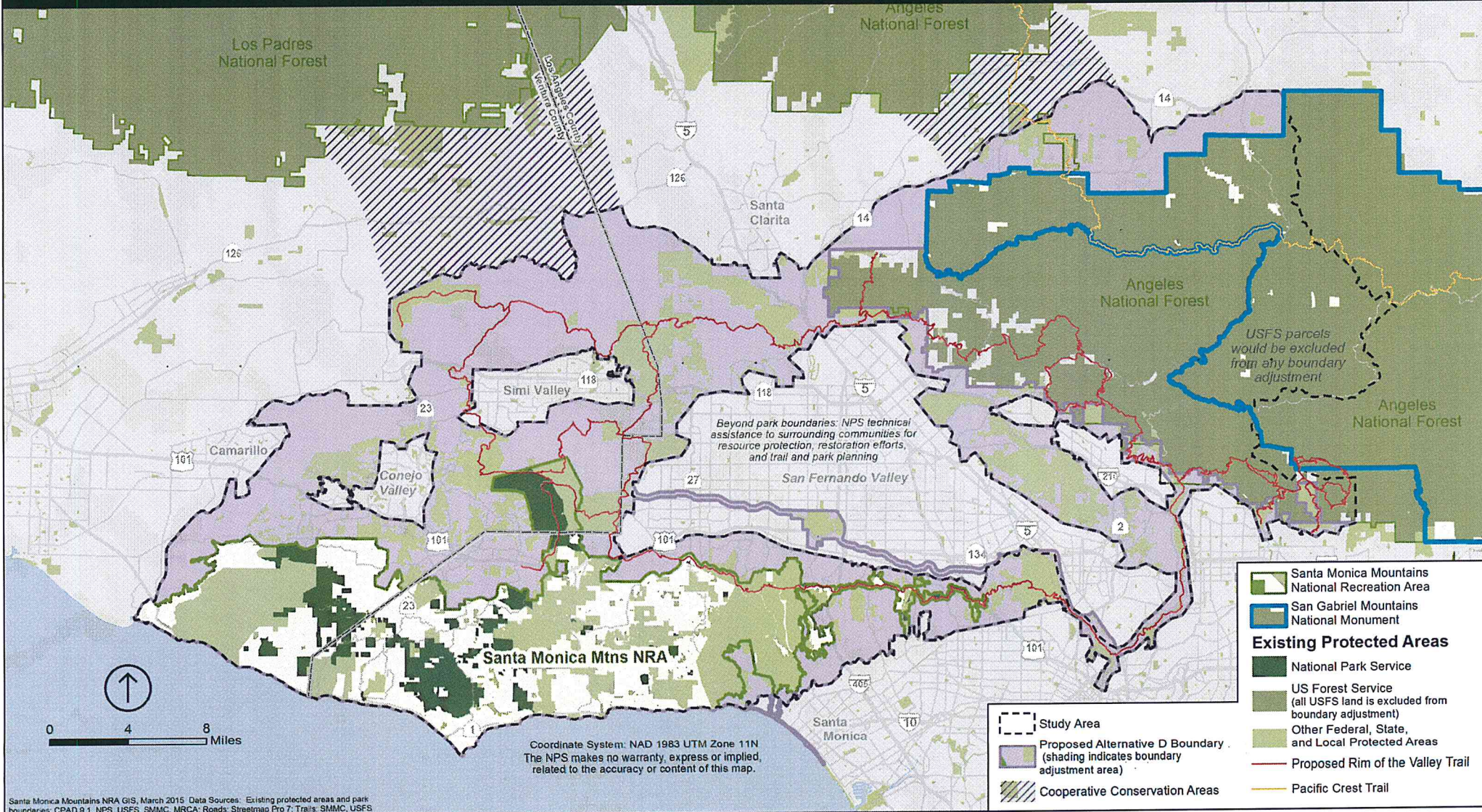
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Alternative D

Regional Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment and Cooperative Conservation Areas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Santa Monica Mountains NRA GIS, March 2015. Data Sources: Existing protected areas and park boundaries: CPAD 9.1, NPS, USFS, SMMC, MRCA; Roads: Streetmap Pro 7; Trails: SMMC, USFS