



FACT SHEET: New Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch

GENERAL

- A new interagency visitor center will open in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area on June 9 at King Gillette Ranch, the historic heart of the Santa Monica Mountains.
- Under the terms of a cooperative management agreement, the Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center will be jointly managed by the National Park Service (NPS), California State Parks (CSP), Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). The surrounding parkland is managed by MRCA.
- Formerly a horse stable for the Gillette Mansion, the re-purposed building unifies the local, state, and federal parks for SMMNRA's 35 million annual visitors and is a national model for cooperation and efficiency.
- Few locations in California offer in one setting the opportunity to understand a cross-section of California's rich history, including sites that represent Native American settlement, Spanish missions and adobes, Mexican ranchos, California homesteading, and modern movie-making.
- The new interagency visitor center replaces an existing NPS visitor center located outside the boundary in a poor-visibility area. That center will be closed to promote greater efficiency.
- Complimentary two-hour parking is available adjacent to the visitor center. A larger parking lot administered by the MRCA is nearby for a \$7 all-day permit.

HISTORY

- The prehistoric Native American Chumash village of Talopop covers the western portion of the site. Extensive archeological records are still present today for what is believed to be the largest interior Chumash settlement in California.
- King C. Gillette, the razor magnate, purchased the ranch in 1926 and commissioned Wallace Neff, considered "Architect of California's Golden Age," to design the estate, which was completed in 1928.
- Gillette died shortly after the ranch was completed and MGM movie director Clarence Brown (credits include "Anna Karenina," "National Velvet," and "The Yearling") purchased the property in 1935. The ranch was a frequent filming location, including the 1944 film "White Cliffs of Dover."
- Brown sold the property in 1952 and, after a series of different owners, NPS, CSP, SMMC, and MRCA jointly acquired the property in 2005 for \$35 million.



SUSTAINABILITY

- In alignment with the Department of Interior sustainability goals and the National Park Service's *Green Parks Plan*, the building is the first "net zero" visitor center in the National Park Service, producing all of its energy needs through a 94 kW photovoltaic solar energy system.
- Achieved LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification for environmental sustainability. Includes extensive use of natural light and a daylight dimming system for all artificial lighting.
- Meets the 2020 federal standard for sustainability eight years ahead of schedule.

COST

- The project received \$9.5 million in construction funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. MRCA and SMMC contributed financial and in-kind resources to the project as well, including a land donation for the visitor center site.
- NPS, CSP, SMMC, and MRCA jointly acquired the full 588 acres of the King Gillette Ranch site for \$35 million in 2005.
- The visitor center promotes government efficiency by co-locating local, state, and national park operating resources under one roof.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- The property hosts the largest concentration of the recently described Malibu baccharis (*baccharis malibuensis*). There are less than 10 known locations of this species, all within the Santa Monica Mountains.
- There are a number of scenic, sensitive plant communities on site, including southern oak woodland, oak savanna, coastal sage scrub, and riparian woodlands. Scientists estimate up to 85% of pre-European coastal sage scrub habitat in California has been lost to urban and agricultural encroachment. Similarly, valley oak savanna and riparian habitat have been reduced to a fraction of their pre-European extent.
- Two "blue-line streams" (streams that run all or most of the year and are marked on topographical maps with a solid blue line) cross the property, and combined with some 400 acres of diverse habitat, the site provides for increased habitat linkage and wildlife movement for the region's mountain lions, bobcats, and coyotes.

LOCATION

- King Gillette Ranch. 26876 Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, California 91302 (near the intersection of Mulholland and Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Rd).