# Santa Monica Mountains

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area

# Backbone Trail System

**National Park Service**
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area
26876 Mulholland Highway
Calabasas, CA 91302
*www.nps.gov/samo*

**Visitor Center:** 805-370-2301

**In emergency:** dial 911


## *Information & Safety*

### Information
At park visitor centers, take advantage of all the information about trail use in the Santa Monica Mountains. Maps and books on the Backbone Trail are available at the National Park Service Visitor Center in Calabasas, CA. Park staff can also answer questions about programs and other trails within Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

For more detailed information visit:
*www.nps.gov/samo/planyourvisit/backbonetrail.htm*

### Safety
Always stay on designated trails, carry a current trail map, and let someone know where you will be hiking. Learn to recognize and avoid common hazards, such as poison oak and rattlesnakes.

### Camping
Future plans call for a series of trail camps spaced along the trail. Currently, the trail is open to day-use only until the trail camps are constructed.

### Fires
No wood or charcoal fires are permitted along the Backbone Trail. Smoking is permitted only in parking areas.

### Water
Carry plenty of water. Water is not available at most trailheads. Water from streams is not safe to drink.

### Dogs
Dogs on leash are permitted on trails managed by the National Park Service. Dogs are not allowed on backcountry trails managed by California State Parks.

### Etiquette
Hikers must yield to horseback riders; mountain bikers must yield to hikers and horseback riders. Respect private property. Stay on designated trails and do not short-cut trails.


*Design and Production: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area - Division of Interpretation*
Recycled Paper December 2012

A Santa Monica Mountains ridgeline trail has been a vision for more than 50 years. Originally, it was to run from Griffith Park to Point Mugu, but that idea never went forward. In the 1970s, with the establishment of state parks in the mountains, the notion began to crystallize. The Backbone Trail would stretch from Will Rogers State Historic Park to Point Mugu, anchored in the middle by Malibu Creek State Park.

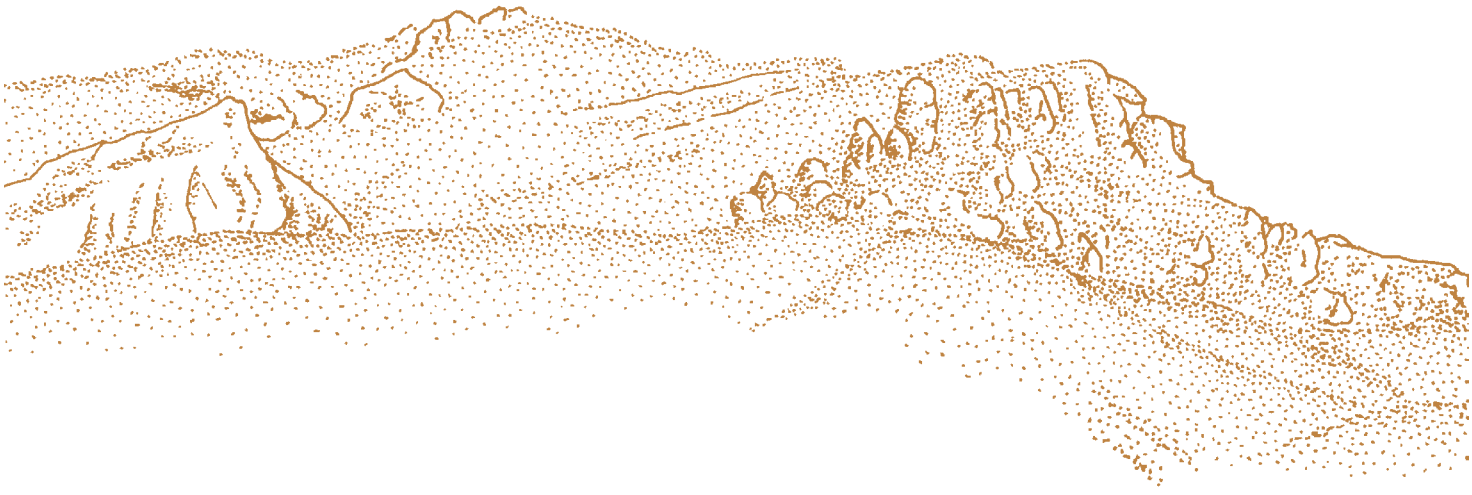
During the 1980s, many who shared the vision started working on the project with California State Parks, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the National Park Service. By 1990, 43 miles of the trail had been completed. It followed ridges, traversed chaparral-covered hillsides, entered oak woodlands, and crossed creeks and valleys.

Like Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the Backbone Trail System has progressed little by little across a patchwork of public lands. It has been constructed by volunteers, the California Conservation Corps, and professional staff from various parkland agencies. Parts of the trail were old animal paths that became single-track trails; other stretches were converted from fire roads. Only the newer sections have been built to modern trail standards.

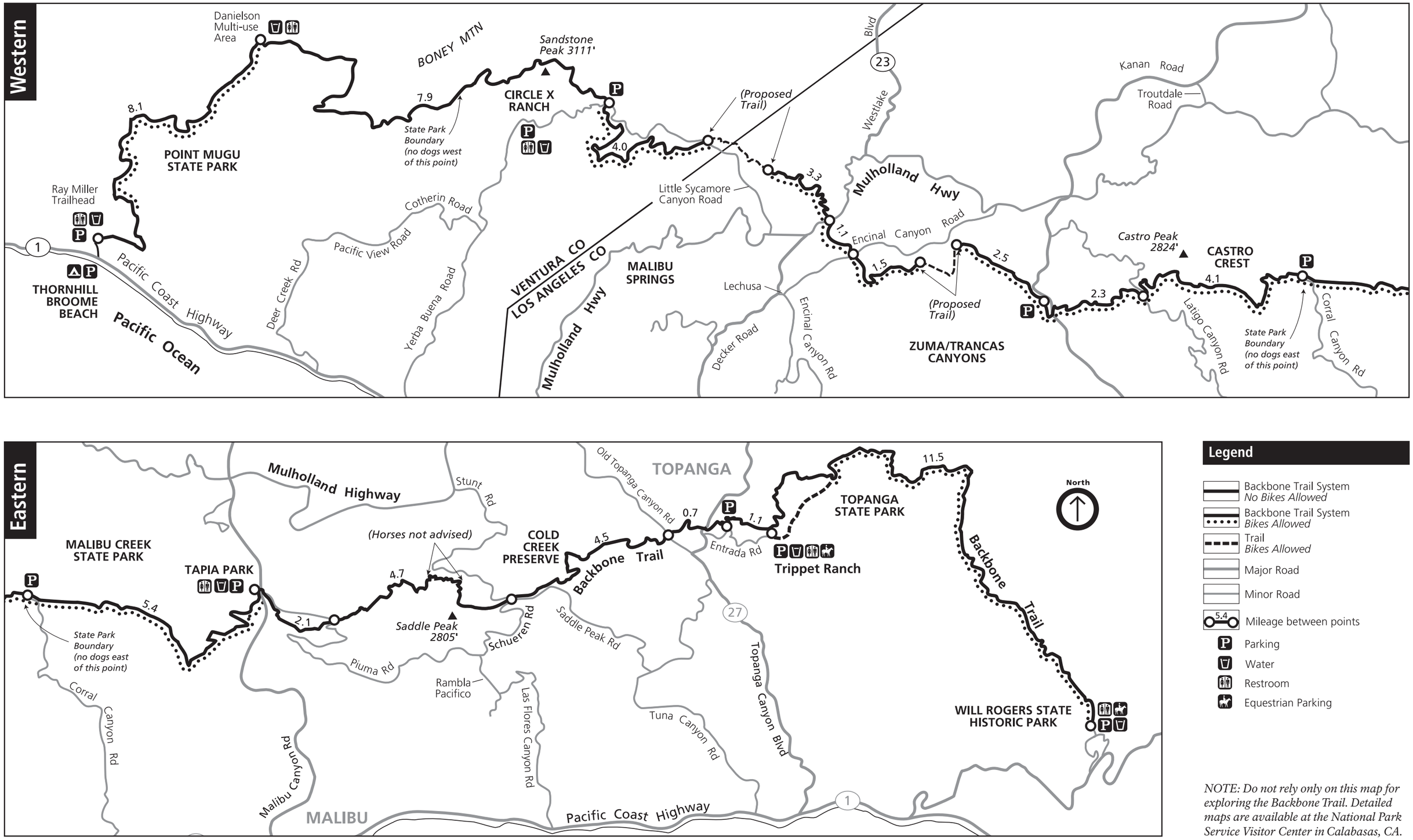
Because the trail system has been pieced together, trail sections may have different names and not all sections are open to all users. For example, mountain bikes are limited to fire roads and are not allowed on single-track trails—unless the trail is posted for mountain bike usage. For equestrians, many trails and roads are suitable for safe passage, but others may be too narrow. Please contact the appropriate agency to check the safety of each Backbone Trail segment open to horses. Good equestrian parking is located at Topanga and Malibu Creek State Parks.

In a few years, when the Backbone Trail System is finished, it will extend more than 65 miles, unifying parklands in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

*If you would like to help complete or maintain the trail, please call the Santa Monica Mountains Trail Council at 805-222-4531, or visit www.SMMTC.org.*



# Backbone Trail System




## Legend

- Backbone Trail System *No Bikes Allowed*
- Backbone Trail System *Bikes Allowed*
- Trail *Bikes Allowed*
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- 5.4 Mileage between points
- P Parking
- Water
- Restroom
- Equestrian Parking

*NOTE: Do not rely only on this map for exploring the Backbone Trail. Detailed maps are available at the National Park Service Visitor Center in Calabasas, CA.*