

PRESS RELEASE



MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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Automated Stop Sign Enforcement in Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority-Managed Parks Starts With Warning Period

*Thirty-day notice period begins this week at the Top of Topanga Overlook,
Franklin Canyon, and Temescal Gateway Parks*

Los Angeles—In an effort to prevent accidents and make park roads safer for the hikers, bicyclists, strollers, and motorists who visit its parks, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) will begin its new stop sign photo enforcement program this week at three of its most heavily-used parks. Cameras and violation sensors will monitor stop signs at Franklin Canyon Park off of Mulholland Drive, Temescal Gateway Park in Pacific Palisades, and Top of Topanga Overlook in Topanga. When fully implemented, the program will also be put into service at Hollywood Bowl Overlook, and Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park in Tarzana.

The program is seen by the MRCA as an important step to improve the safety of park roads shared by hikers, bicyclists, and motorists, as well as wildlife. “Our Park Rangers are California Peace Officers and will always have traffic enforcement as part of their duty,” said Dash Stolarz, Director of Public Affairs of the MRCA. “However, Park Rangers are also wildland fire fighters and naturalist interpreters. Many are also trained in swiftwater rescue, advanced emergency medical care, and search and rescue. We

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see automated enforcement as a way of keeping parks safer, while rangers provide much-needed services to the community.”

The MRCA is giving drivers a 30-day grace period before actual citations are issued. “Photo enforcement has a greater deterrent effect if drivers are aware it’s out there,” continued Stolarz. “We want all drivers to know we’re using photo enforcement and to slow down and drive more safely in our parks.”

Traffic issues have significantly increased in recent years at MRCA parks. At 680-acre Franklin Canyon Park, commuters use the park as a shortcut to bypass heavy rush hour traffic on nearby Coldwater Canyon between Mulholland Drive and the City of Beverly Hills. The posted speed limit is 15 miles per hour on a road with blind curves and deep canyons. Hikers and school groups commonly walk the road to take in stunning views of oak woodlands and chaparral, and access hiking trails, expansive picnic grounds, a three-acre lake and an ADA-accessible duck pond. Nonetheless, many motorists fail to stop at stop signs along the windy and sometimes narrow road.

Temescal Gateway Park in Pacific Palisades is one of the most popular parks in the Santa Monica Mountains. The park encompasses 141 acres of oak and sycamore canyons, and provides access to miles of trails in Topanga State Park, Will Rogers State Historic Park and beyond. A single road leads through the park and is shared by hikers, two preschools, the Los Angeles Unified School District Science Camp, and the YMCA summer camp and pool. In order to bypass turn restrictions on busy Sunset Boulevard at the park entrance, commuters speed down the road, make a u-turn, and often run through a stop sign. This dangerous maneuver occurs adjacent to the same area where YMCA camp children gather.

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At the Top of Topanga Overlook in Topanga, vehicles commonly run a stop sign onto busy Topanga Canyon Boulevard (SR-27). Many of these same vehicles also make an illegal left turn in front of opposing traffic coming around a blind curve.

“We will issue only Warning Notices during the warning period,” said Stolarz. “After 30 days, violators will then be responsible for paying the \$100.00 fine listed on the Citation.”

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is a local public agency established in 1985 pursuant to the Joint Powers Act, dedicated to the preservation and management of local open space and parkland, watershed lands, trails, and wildlife habitat. The MRCA manages and provides ranger services, including fire protection, for over 60,000 acres of public parkland within the Santa Monica Mountains, Los Angeles River, and the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor including the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, La Crescenta, Simi, and Conejo Valleys.

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