

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

RAMIREZ CANYON PARK
5750 RAMIREZ CANYON ROAD
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA 90265
PHONE (310) 589-3200
FAX (310) 589-3207



January 5, 2005

Mayor Ed Corridori
City Councilmembers
Greg Ramirez, City Manager
City of Agoura Hills
Agoura Hills, California 91301

Soka University Site Land Acquisition Project

Dear Mayor Kuperberg, Councilmembers, and Mr. Ramirez:

I am writing to seek the help of the City of Agoura Hills in a multi-agency effort to preserve the Soka University property as parkland. I believe we can present a compelling case for the City's participation, and hope to meet with your staff to discuss the issue.

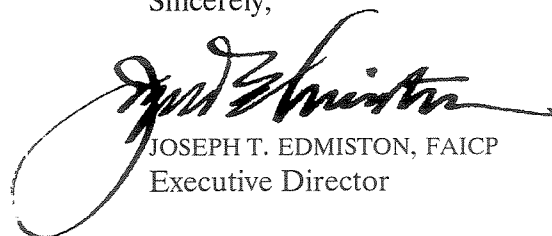
As you know, last spring the owners of the 588-acre Soka University indicated to Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky that they might be willing at last to sell their property for parkland, an astounding turn of events in the history of the Santa Monica Mountains park efforts. For the past 30 years the Soka site (also known variously as the historic King Gillette Estate, Claretville, and Camelot) has been the subject of acquisition efforts by California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), the National Park Service, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). Purchase of the property would achieve preservation of the most significant remaining private land in the geographic heart of the Santa Monica Mountains. The present window of opportunity afforded by Soka is time-limited: the Conservancy and MRCA are currently working toward a March 15 deadline to exercise the MRCA's purchase option, with April 15 as the deadline to close escrow.

Ten million dollars have already been granted by the Conservancy toward the acquisition price of \$35 million, and other committed partners include the City of Calabasas, State Parks, the National Park Service, and the County of Los Angeles, with the Wildlife Conservation Board, the State Coastal Conservancy, and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission as expected participants also. The Mountains Restoration Trust is spearheading a private fund-raising effort as well.

Mayor Corridori
Councilmembers
Greg Ramirez
January 5, 2005
Page 2

Rorie Skei, Chief Deputy Director and I would be happy to meet with your staff and provide any additional background information, which we trust will result in Agoura Hills' interest. The City has always been a staunch friend and supporter of the Santa Monica Mountains park effort, and we certainly want to keep you apprised of this landmark issue.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH T. EDMISTON, FAICP
Executive Director