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*M Wi* PETE WILSON, Governor *PZ*

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Staff: JLR:LB *JLR*  
Staff Report: 1-13-98  
Hearing Date: 2/3-6, 1998  
Commission Action:



STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

APPLICATION NO.: 5-97-401

APPLICANT: California Department of Parks and Recreation

PROJECT LOCATION: Los Liones Drive, Pacific Palisades

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Construct an entrance-way to Los Liones Canyon located within Topanga State Park, reconstruct a drainage course and construct 2500 linear feet of hiking trails, an amphitheater, two trailer pads, a monument sign, restrooms, interpretive panels, shade ramadas, picnic tables, landscaping, 69 parking spaces and 1600 cubic yards of grading.

Lot area:	35 acres
Building coverage:	N/A
Pavement coverage:	N/A
Landscape coverage:	35 acres
Parking spaces:	69
Zoning:	Open Space
Plan designation:	Park
Project density:	N/A
Ht abv fin grade:	12'

LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED: Approval in Concept

- SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:
- 1) City adopted Brentwood-Pacific Palisades Community Plan
  - 2) Topanga State Park Resource Management Plan, General Development Plan and Environmental Impact Report
  - 3) Los Liones Canyon Roadside Recreation and Restoration Project Grant Request
  - 4) Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared by Geo Soils, Inc. dated November 8, 1991

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending approval with no Special Conditions.

## I. Approval

The Commission hereby grants a permit for the proposed development on the grounds that the development will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

## II. Standard Conditions.

1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgement. The permit is not valid and construction shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
2. Expiration. If construction has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application, or in the case of administrative permits, the date on which the permit is reported to the Commission. Construction shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
3. Compliance. All construction must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application for permit, subject to any special conditions set forth below. Any deviation from the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by the staff and may require Commission approval.
4. Interpretation. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director of the Commission.
5. Inspections. The Commission staff shall be allowed to inspect the site and the development during construction, subject to 24-hour advance notice.
6. Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
7. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. Special Conditions.

None

IV. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission hereby finds and declares as follows:

A. Project Description and Location

The applicant proposes to construct an entrance-way to Los Liones Canyon located within Topanga State Park, reconstruct a drainage course and construct 2500 linear feet of hiking trails, an amphitheater, two trailer pads, a monument sign, restrooms, interpretive panels, shade ramadas, picnic tables, landscaping, 69 parking spaces and 1600 cubic yards of grading.

The proposed project is located in Liones Canyon on a 35 acre parcel. The mouth of Liones Canyon is approximately 1/3 mile from Will Rogers State Beach. The project site is part of the 7,830 Topanga State Park. The site will serve as a major entrance-way to that park which contains miles of hiking trails and unspoiled natural scenery.

The proposed project is adjacent to Sunset Boulevard, a major arterial leading through the City of Los Angeles which is served by public transportation. Because of easy road access, its estimated that most visitors to Los Liones Canyon will be from the greater Los Angeles area. The proposed project will provide a low-cost roadside recreational use in a natural outdoor setting. Following is a more detailed project description as submitted by the applicant:

The proposed Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Project will create a recreational facility in Los Liones Canyon, within Topanga State Park. The project will provide parking, picnic tables with shade ramadas, interpretive displays, a 100 seat amphitheater, a restroom and walking trails. Natural vegetation will be restored on the site to provide a natural setting and enhance wildlife habitat. The revegetation will include the planting of 900 trees and 2,200 shrubs. A trailer pad will be constructed to provide a location for on-site ranger housing, which will ensure security of the site and visitors.

The project site is located in Los Liones Canyon, a part of Topanga State Park, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles. The project is adjacent to Sunset Boulevard, approximately one quarter mile from Pacific Coast Highway and the beach. The project area covers approximately 35 acres.

The purpose of the project is to provide increased roadside recreation opportunities in the Los Angeles area. This project will provide recreational opportunities in a natural setting, on terrain that is level enough to be accessible to all visitors. In addition, wildlife habitat

will be enhanced and the State Park System will make positive use of the site, which is currently unused and sought for private development. . . .

The project will provide easy access to the park from the City of Los Angeles near the intersection of two major highways, Sunset Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway. The gentle terrain will provide an opportunity to enjoy the native habitats of the mountains for less able park visitors who may not be able to negotiate the steeper trails of the upper canyon. Native vegetation will return to an area that has been degraded by weeds and illegal dumping for over twenty years.

#### B. Topanga State Park

Topanga State Park is located in the southeastern area of the Santa Monica Mountain Range which encompasses 220,000 acres. The Range is approximately 46 miles long and 8 to 10 miles wide. It is bounded by the Oxnard Coastal Plain to the west, the Los Angeles area to the east, the Simi Hills to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The three State Parks that are located adjacent to the Los Angeles Metropolitan area are Point Mugu, Malibu Creek and Topanga State Park. Following is a description of Topanga State Park excerpted from the 1977 Environmental Report of the Topanga State Park's General Plan:

Topanga State Park is located at the southeastern portion of the Santa Monica Mountains. These mountains lie along the southwestern margin of southern California's transverse ranges. The Santa Monica Mountains are aligned east-west with intervening parallel valleys in steeply sloping terrain. Elevations range from 100 feet to approximately 2,100 feet above sea level. The southern California chaparral vegetation type is representative of the flora of the entire Southwest Mountains and Valleys Landscape Province.

Topanga State Park which now contains 7,830 acres is located within the Los Angeles City limits, approximately 30 miles northwest of the downtown area. Will Rogers State Historic Park adjoins the park along Topanga State Park's east boundary.

Several other state park system units are situated in the Santa Monica Mountains. These include Malibu Creek State Park, 6 miles northwest of Topanga State Park; Leo Carrillo State Beach, 25 miles west; Point Mugu State Park, 35 miles west; and Malibu Lagoon State Beach, 6 miles southwest.

Highway 101 or State Highway 1 provides access to the Los Liones and Lower Topanga Canyon area. Topanga Canyon Boulevard provides access to the Yoba and Upper Topanga Canyon areas. Sunset Boulevard provides access to the Rustic Canyon area and Will Rogers State Historic Park. Mulholland Highway provides access to the Mulholland area.

#### C. Public Access/Recreation/Views

The following Sections of the Coastal Act are relevant:

Section 30210

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Section 30213

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

Section 30223

Upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses shall be reserved for such uses, where feasible.

Section 30251

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation Topanga State Park General Development Plan proposes relatively more intensive recreational use in the peripheral areas of the park and less intensive recreational use in the interior portions of the park. Use in the peripheral areas of the park would include hiking, picnicking, parking, orientation and interpretation. Use in the interior of the park would include hiking, horseback riding and some trail camping.

Los Liones is located in a peripheral area and will support access into the canyon for family and group picnicking. The proposed recreation uses are consistent with the recreational uses anticipated in the Topanga State Park General Development Plan. Topanga State Park will be primarily a day-use facility oriented toward group use. The proposed amphitheater will provide a facility for group orientation to interpret the Topanga area's cultural and natural resources. It is anticipated that school children will arrive by bus to participate in instructional programs. Individual visitors may also visit the park on a drop-in basis for hiking and picnicking.

The Santa Monica Mountains are rugged without much level land. At least 90 percent of Topanga State Park has slopes in excess of 20 percent. Essentially, there are no alternative sites for development on flat land. The

proposed project will develop a picnic area easily accessible by automobile. State Parks identifies this as a Roadside Recreation area. It will be located on relatively level terrain that will allow persons who are not able to traverse the steeper slopes an opportunity to enjoy a natural outdoor environmental setting.

The proposed project will provide a new low cost public recreational opportunity that will lessen overcrowding at the existing park in Temescal Canyon. The project site, which can be served by public transportation, is an ideal location for an urban public recreational amenity. The proposed development, which includes native plant revegetation, will convert an unused, degraded parcel of parkland into a public recreational use that is compatible with the surrounding natural setting. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed roadside recreational use will provide a low cost public recreational use that will lessen the overcrowding of other areas of the park, consistent with the public access/recreation provisions of the Coastal Act.

D. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat

Section 30240(b) of the Coastal Act states:

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

The proposed project is located in a riparian corridor in the Santa Monica Mountains. The subject site was created by the deposition of a large amount of fill material in preparation for a condominium project in the 1970's. Subsequently, the California Department of Parks and Recreation acquired the parcel in 1977. The proposed project includes the removal of non-native weedy vegetation to be replaced with native plants. Following is a brief description of the habitat replacement as submitted by the applicant:

Although this project is being submitted in the Roadside Recreation category, it also provides many of the benefits of a Resource Lands project. The reintroduction of native plants to the site will provide environmental enhancement of the site, creating additional wildlife habitat and an increased opportunity for park visitors to view wildlife in its natural setting.

The natural habitat type that occupied Los Liones Canyon prior to the grading activities that leveled the lower canyon floor was riparian woodland. This project does not contemplate a full restoration of riparian habitat, but will afford a partial restoration of the site, mixed in with the recreational amenities to be constructed. The conversion of the site from its present denuded condition to one of native shrubs and trees will provide additional habitat and cover to wildlife in the area. Moreover, the planting of oaks, sycamores and willows will provide enhanced air quality mitigation for automobile traffic on Sunset Boulevard, in that it will help remove pollutants from the air.

The applicant proposes to plant trees and shrubs that are native to the Santa Monica Mountains that will be adapted to grow in the weather conditions of the site. Along the drainage course, planted trees will consist of coast live

oaks, western sycamores and willows. The area outside of the drainage course will be planted with coast live oaks, California black walnuts and Mexican elderberries, consistent with a coast live oak woodland community. All these plants are indigenous to the area and will be collected from local stock.

The proposed native trees will enhance the surrounding habitat by providing shelter and forage for local wildlife. Acorns, walnuts and cranberries are utilized by a number of birds and mammals in the Santa Monica Mountains. The proposed development, when completed will provide a continuity of native habitat across the site from one fully vegetated ridge to another. The proposed project will return native vegetation to an area that has been degraded by weeds and illegal dumping for over twenty years. Therefore, the Commission finds that, as submitted, the proposed project is designed to enhance an environmentally sensitive habitat area, consistent with Section 30240(b) of the Coastal Act.

E. Natural Hazards.

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act provides in part:

New development shall:

(1) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.

(2) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

The proposed recreational use is located on a hillside lot in an area which is subject to natural hazards. Natural hazards common to this area include landslides, erosion, flooding and slumping. The applicant has submitted three geological reports that analyze the subject site and surrounding parcels. Those reports note that the west lobe of the ancient Paseo Miramar Slide is present on the site. Following is an excerpt from a geology report prepared by James E. Slosson and Associates:

Paseo Miramar Landslides

The principal problem related to development of the Los Liones Parcel is the presence of an apparently active landslide complex in the southeast sector of the site. In all, this slide complex involves approximately 5 to 10 acres, or roughly 1/5 of the property. This landslide area is commonly referred to as the "Paseo Miramar Landslide" after the street (Paseo Miramar) which traverses the lower portion of the slide area. Data acquired during the field investigation, however, indicates that the slide area actually consists of two distinct, and somewhat different landslides. These are indicated as "Paseo Miramar Landslide #1" and "Paseo Miramar Landslide #2" on the accompanying geologic map. Hereafter, in this report, they will be more simply described as "Slide #1" and

"Slide #2." The landslide materials, underlying bedrock, and exploration procedures are discussed in detail under the following subheadings.

As previously discussed, the lower Los Liones Canyon was created by the deposition of a large amount of fill in preparation for a condominium complex to be constructed in the 1970's. The applicant's geology report concludes that the fill material that was placed at the toe of the landslide will minimize the potential for reactivation of the slide. Following is a quote from that report:

Subsequent to canyon cleanouts, during grading an additional 40 feet (minimum) of fill was placed above the original grade. The potential for reactivation of this ancient slide has been lessened by fill placed and internal drainage at the toe, so that it is nearer a grossly stable configuration than it was prior to grading.

The Commission, in previous permit actions on development in this area has found that there are certain risks associated with hillside development that can never be entirely eliminated. The applicant's geology report also supports that conclusion because the site contains older landslide debris. In addition to the general risks associated with hillside development in geologically hazardous areas, the Commission notes that its approval is based on professional reports and professional engineering solutions that are the responsibility of the applicants.

Because of the presence of landslides throughout this area and site specific soil/geologic constraints addressed in the applicant's geology report, the Commission, as a condition of approval on previous permits, has required an applicant to assume the risks inherent in potential slope failure from erosion. However, because California Department of Parks and Recreation is a State agency, the Commission is not requiring an assumption of risk as a special condition because it would make no sense for the Commission, a State agency, to indemnify another state agency. Based on the stability calculations and site specific constraints discussed in the geotechnical report, the applicant's geology report concludes that a recreational use on the subject site is appropriate. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project for a recreational use will minimize risks in this area that may occur as a result of natural hazards, consistent with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act.

**F. Local Coastal Program:**

Section 30604 (a) of the Coastal Act states that:

Prior to certification of the Local Coastal Program, a Coastal Development Permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the Commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a local coastal program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

The City of Los Angeles has not prepared a draft Land Use Plan for this



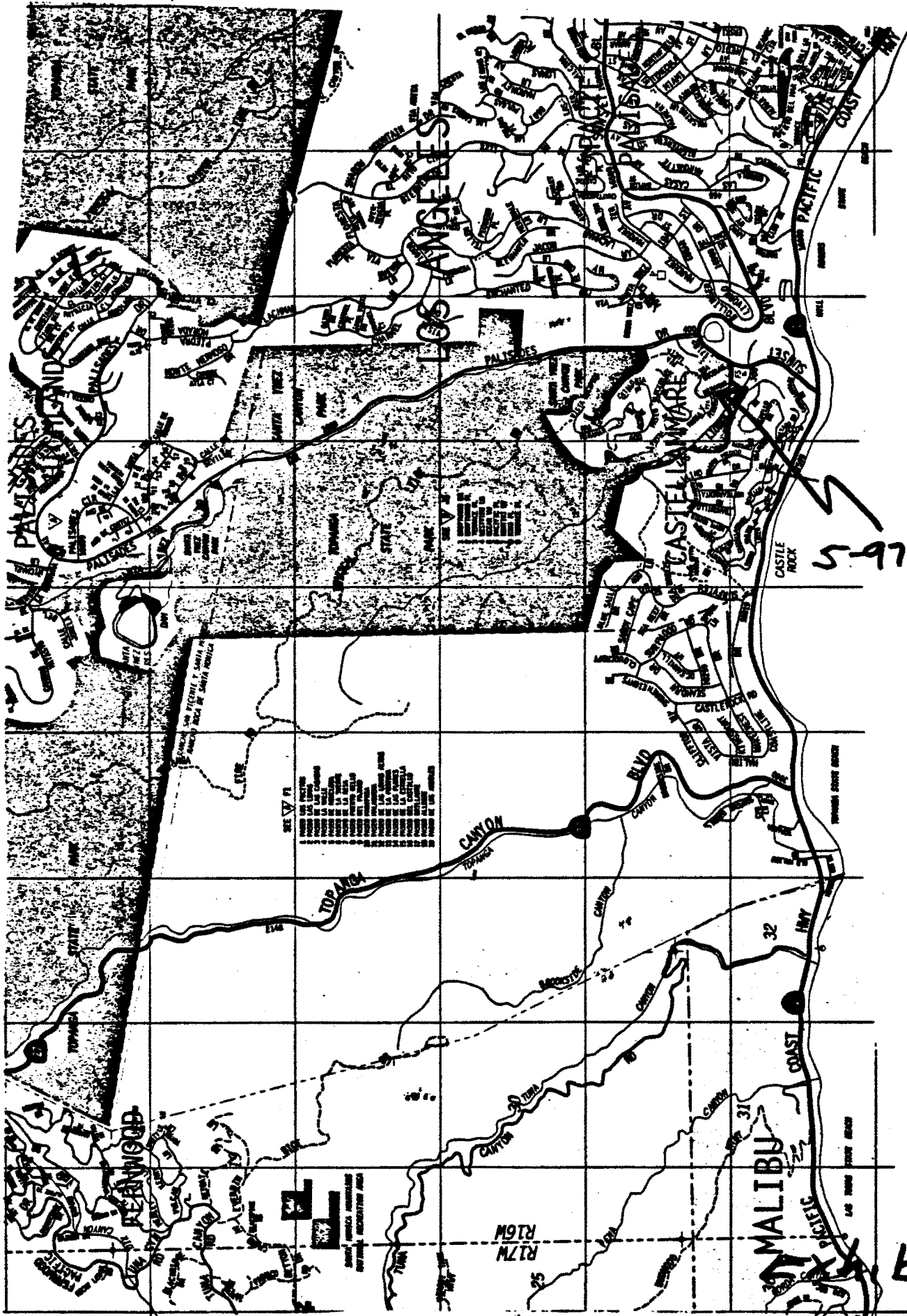
planning subarea. However, the City's work program to develop a Local Coastal Program considers natural hazards as an issue for this area of the City. Approval of the proposed development, as submitted, will not prejudice the City's ability to prepare a certifiable Local Coastal Program. The Commission, therefore, finds that the proposed project is consistent with the provisions of Section 30604 (a) of the Coastal Act.

G. Consistency with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Section 13096 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permits to be supported by a finding showing the permit, as conditioned, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5 (d) (2) (i) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment.

The proposed project is consistent with the public recreation and access policies of the Coastal Act. As submitted, there are no feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

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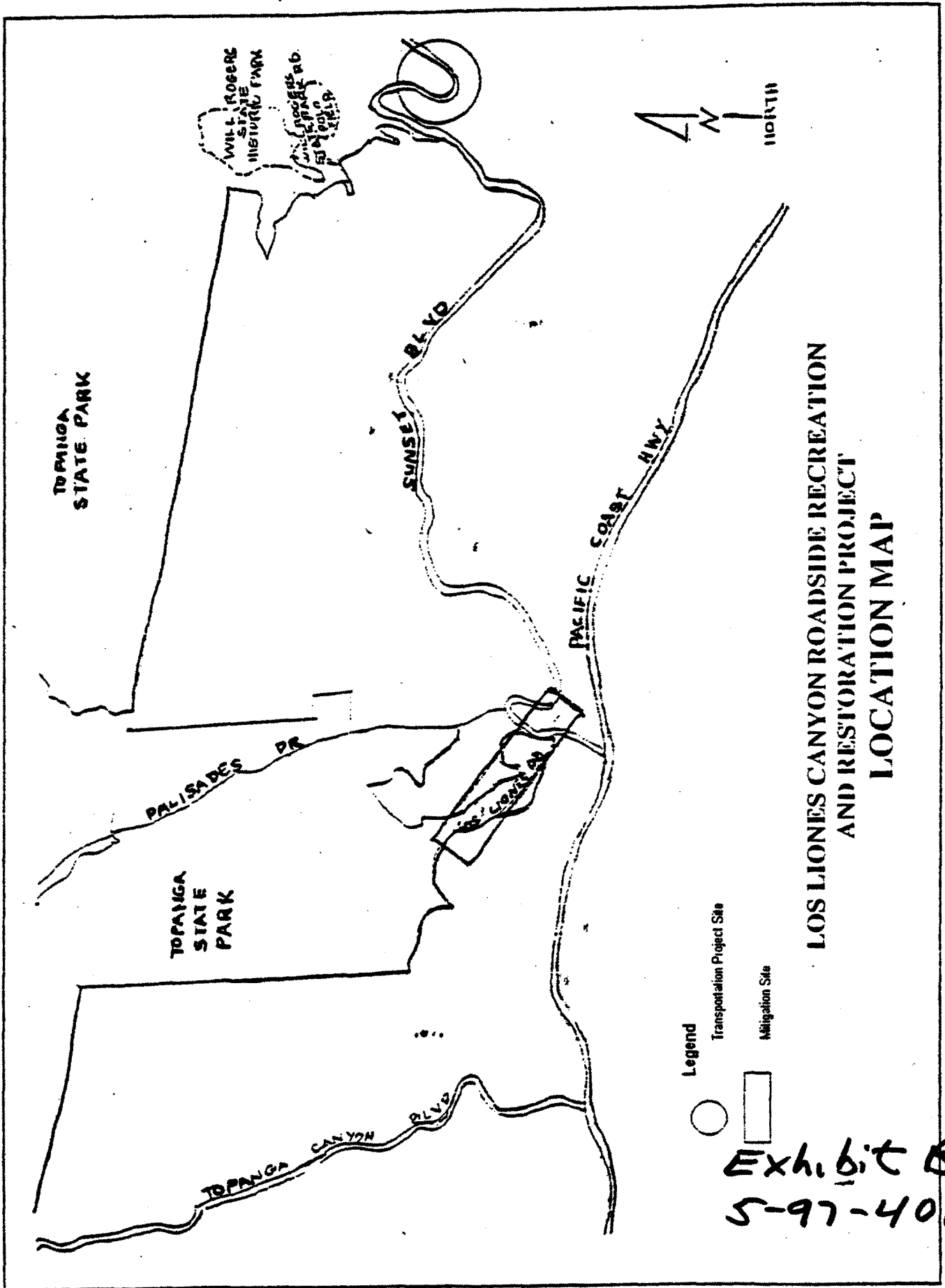
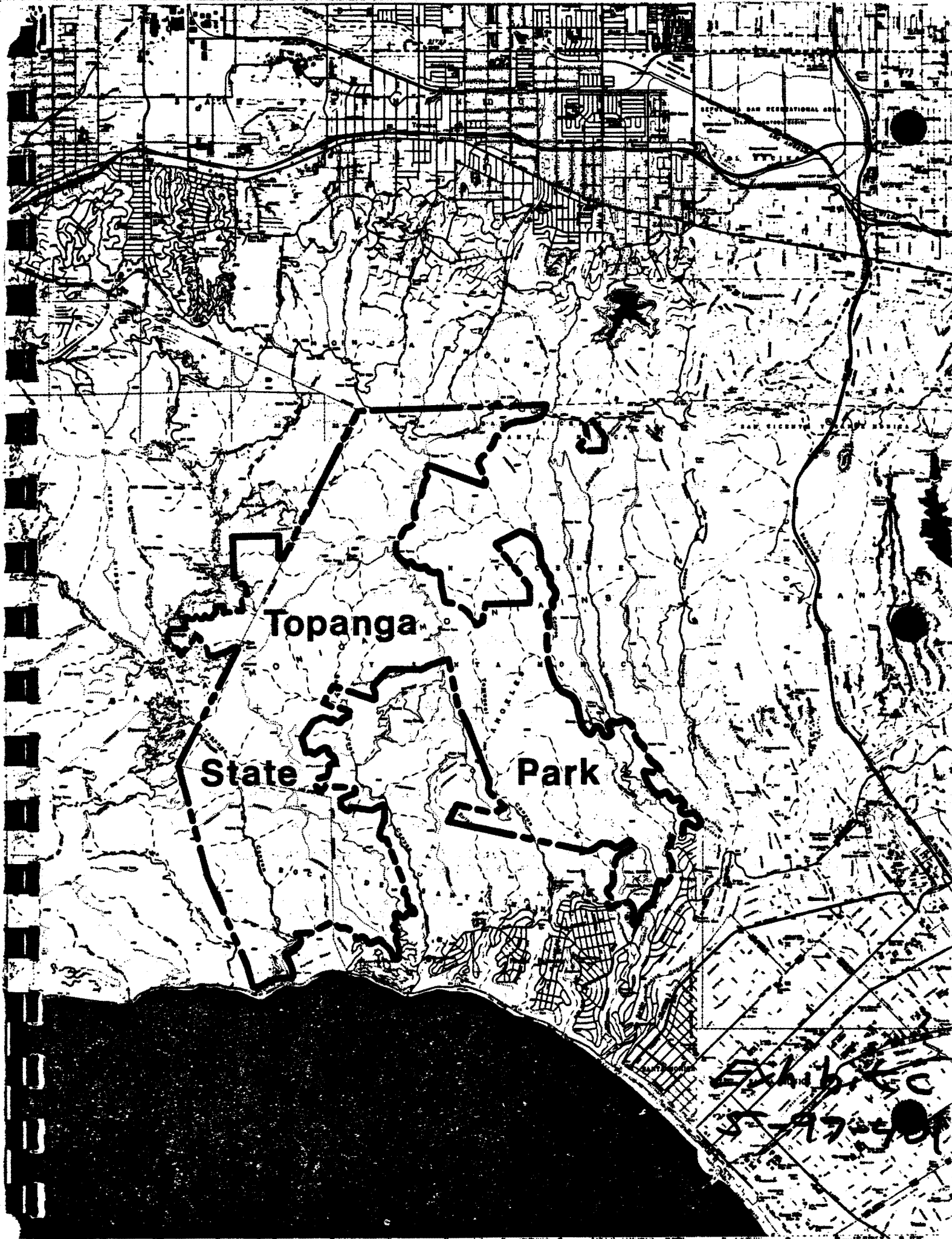


Exhibit B  
5-97-401



Topanga

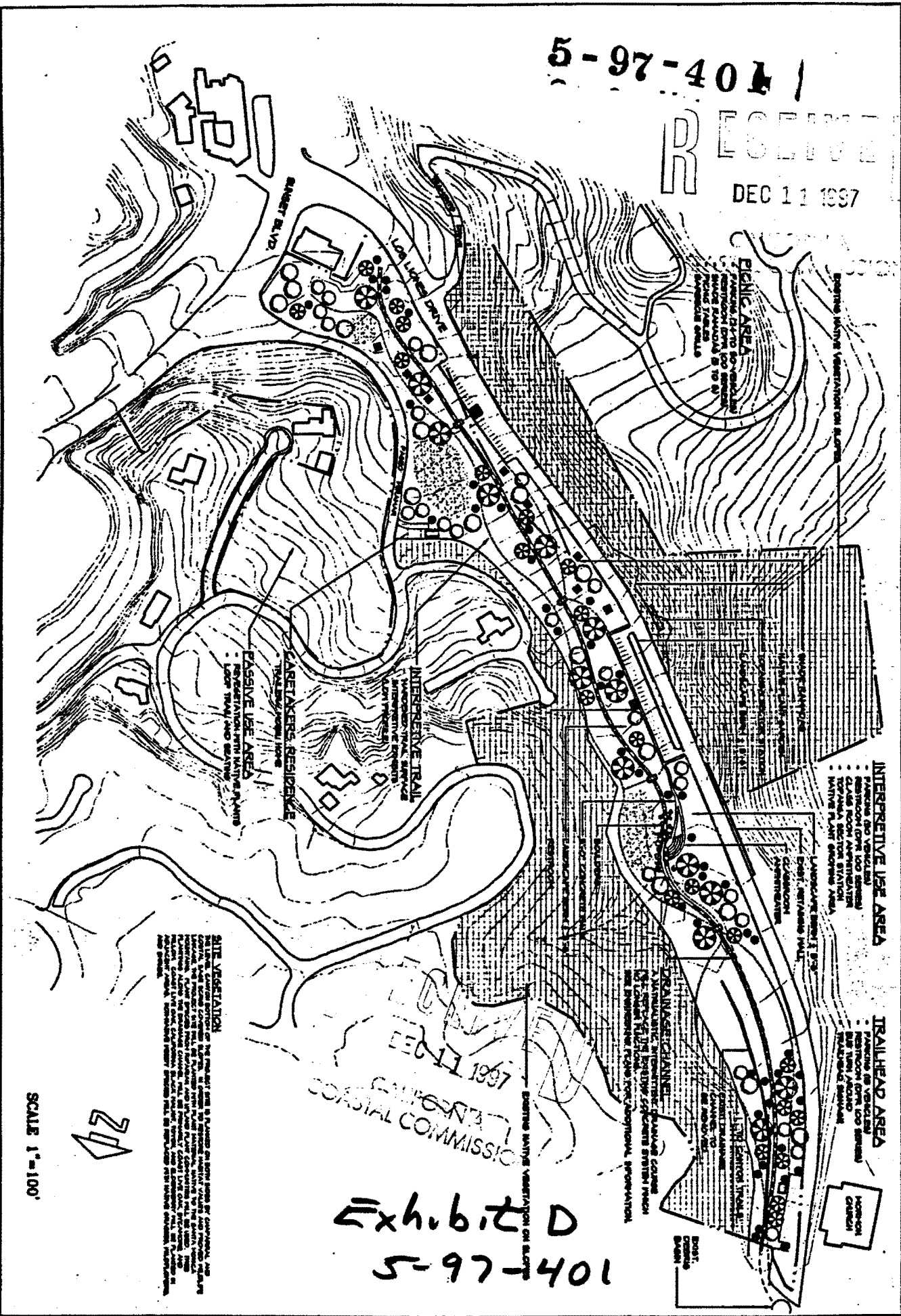
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Park

Exhibit 50  
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SCALE 1"=100'

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Exhibit D  
5-97-401

SHEET NO. X-X	PROJECT NO. 97-041-01	LOS LIONES STATE PARK TOPANGA SECTOR LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION SOUTHERN SERVICE CENTER	APPROVED	DATE	REVISION	DATE	APPROVED

**LEGEND:**

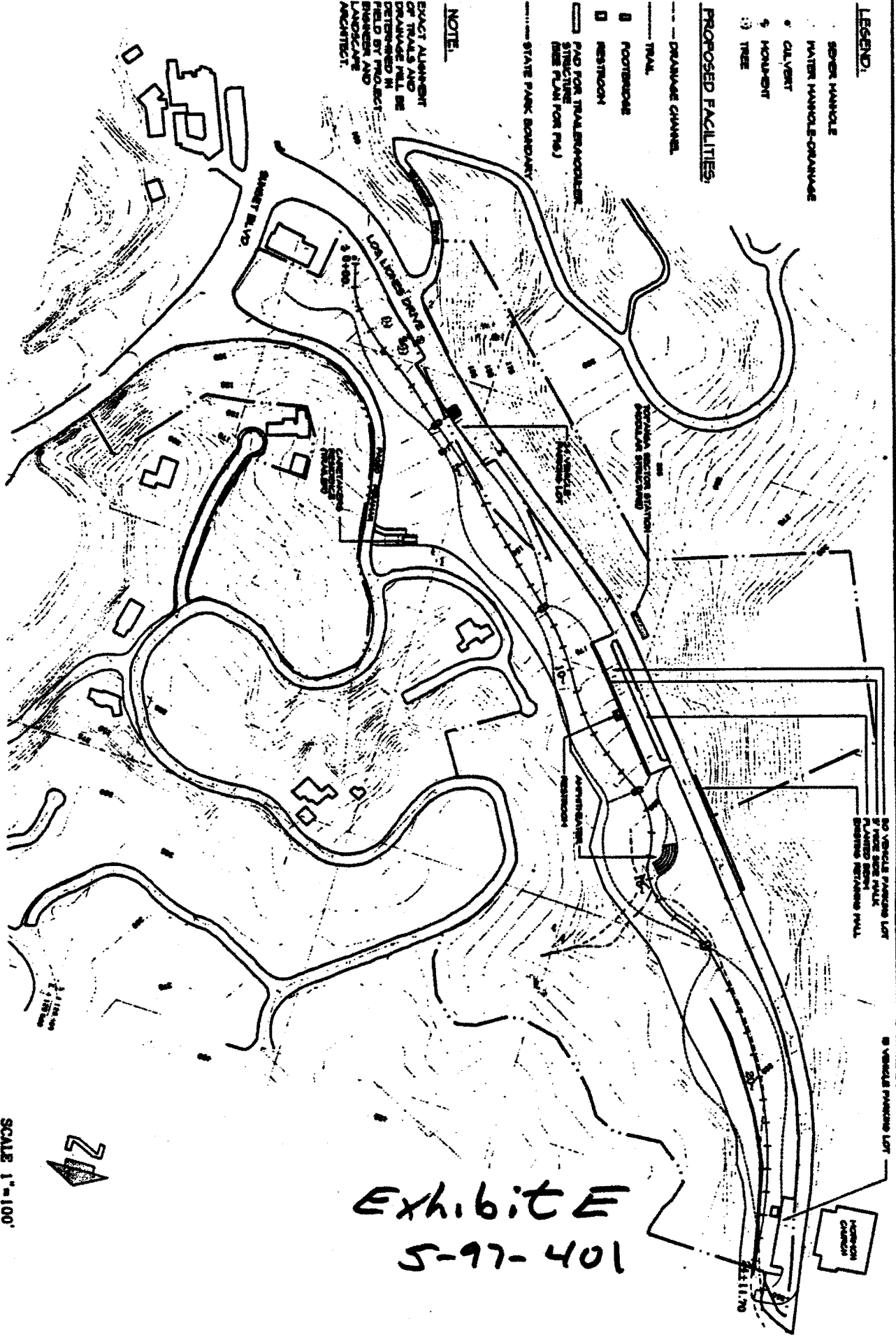
- SEWER MAINLINE
- WATER MAINLINE-DRAINAGE
- CULVERT
- ⊕ MONUMENT
- ⊙ TREE

**PROPOSED FACILITIES:**

- DRAINAGE CHANNEL
- TRAIL
- FOOTBOLE
- RESTROOM
- PAD FOR TRAILER/MODEL
- STRUCTURE (SEE PLAN FOR PAJ)
- STATE PARK BOUNDARY

**NOTE:**

EXACT ALIGNMENT OF TRAILS AND DRAINAGE WILL BE DETERMINED IN FIELD BY PROJECT ENGINEER AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.



SCALE 1"=100'



Exhibit E  
5-97-401

Exhibit k & l

1. The plant species selected for the Los Liones Canyon project are ecologically and physically appropriate for the site. The site is a riparian corridor in the Santa Monica Mountains that was filled in and levelled for housing construction in the 1970's. This project will not attempt a full restoration of this riparian corridor, but will complete a partial restoration of the riparian and adjacent upland plant community. A small drainage channel bisects the site. Along the channel, plantings will consist of Coast live oaks, western sycamores and willows. Outside of this area, planted trees will consist of coast live oaks, California black walnuts and Mexican elderberries, consistent with the coast live oak woodland community. All of these species are indigenous to the area. All plants will be from locally collected stock.

These trees will perform their natural ecological function by providing shelter and forage for local wildlife. Acorns, walnuts and elderberries are all well utilized by a number of birds and mammals in the Santa Monica Mountains. The completed project will provide habitat continuity across the site from one fully vegetated ridge to another. The trees will also provide shade and visual relief for park visitors.

There is ample space available for these trees. The site is a gently sloping area of approximately 30 acres that currently supports no native trees, other than two large specimen coast live oaks that have been relocated there from another site.

2. Initial sizes of the trees will be either one-gallon or five-gallon sizes. In some instances, seeds will be planted directly into the soil. Experience in this area has shown that planting of the smallest size trees results in mature trees that are well-adapted to the site. Success rates for the smaller stock exceeds that of larger stock.

3. The planting will be planned to ensure maintenance of the trees during and beyond the establishment period. Soil amendments will be applied to the planting site for each tree. A regular watering schedule will be developed and followed to allow taproots to grow rapidly through the fill soil and reach the water table below. Roots will be protected from underground predation by enclosing them in open-ended cylinders of poultry netting. The trees will receive supplemental irrigation during the dry season for a period of three years

4. The project will occur on state property and is therefore not subject to local tree ordinances. The project is consistent with Resource Management Directives of the California Department of Parks and Recreation by revegetating an impacted area with native trees that would have occurred on the site prior to disturbance. A coastal permit for the entire project will be sought.

5. All trees meet or exceed the acceptance standards specified in the American Standard for Nursery Stock (ANSI 160, 1-1990) as adapted for California.

*I hereby certify that the above plan will result in the establishment of the tree species identified*  
**EXHIBIT F**  
JPK 1774  
5-97-401

Herb Spitzer  
Registered Professional Forester

