



The intersection
of research, practice
and reflection:
One agency's journey
to diversity and
inclusion

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Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

- To strategically buy, preserve, protect, restore, and enhance treasured pieces of Southern California to form an interlinking system of urban, rural, river parks, open space, trails and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the general public.
- We are a joint power authority between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Conejo and Rancho Simi Park and Recreation Districts.



Demographics

Los Angeles County

- 21.4% under 18
- 48.6% Latino/Hispanic
- 34.0% Foreign born
- 56.6% speak a language other than English at home

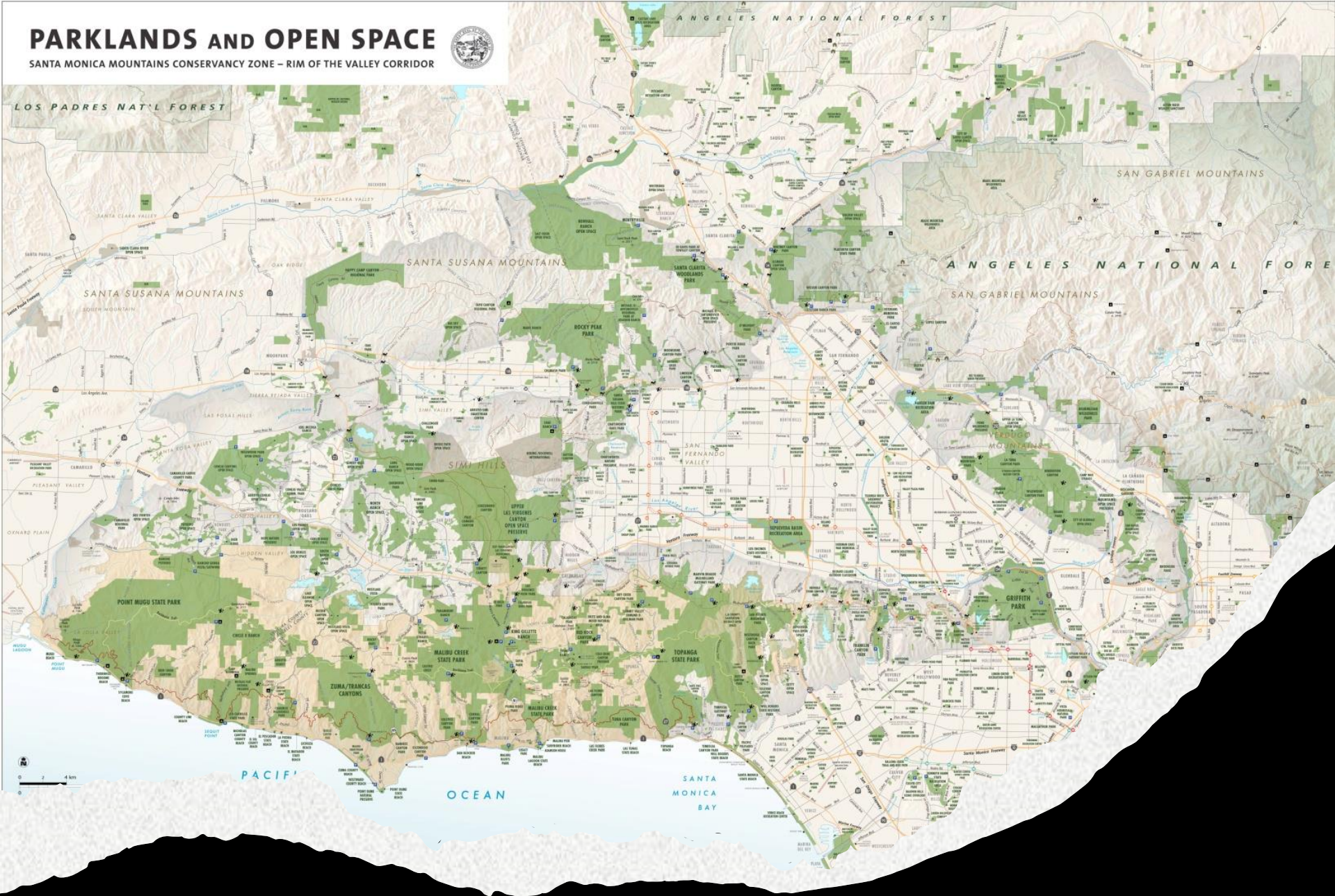
(Census data 2019 estimates)

- 8,495 people per square mile
(worldpopulationreview.com)



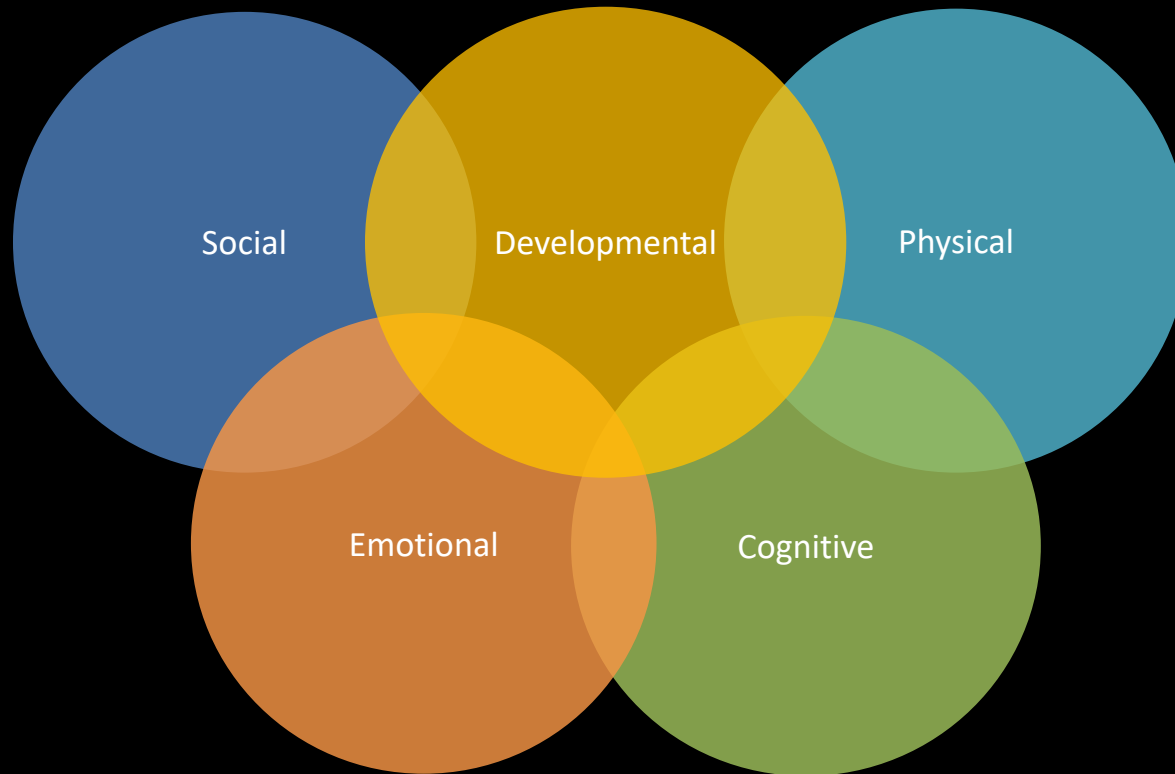
PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACE

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY ZONE – RIM OF THE VALLEY CORRIDOR



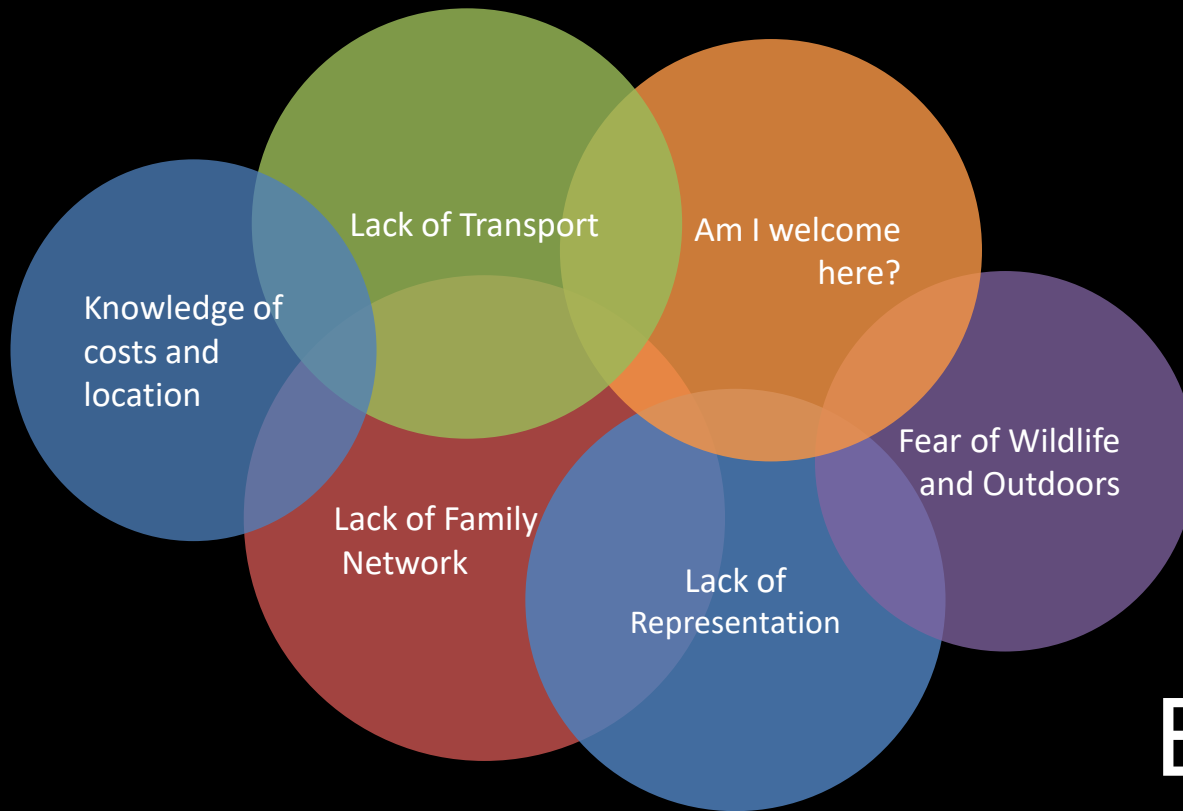
Nature is good for you!

Significant research on the benefits of being in Nature/
Nature Experiences



Research and Intersectionality

Significant research on barriers to nature



**Barriers
Intersect**



A Facilitated
Experience



Ambassadors from
the community

Fun for the
whole family!





Outdoor Equity



Barrier

**Lack of Proximity to
nature/open space**



Program Solution

Advocate

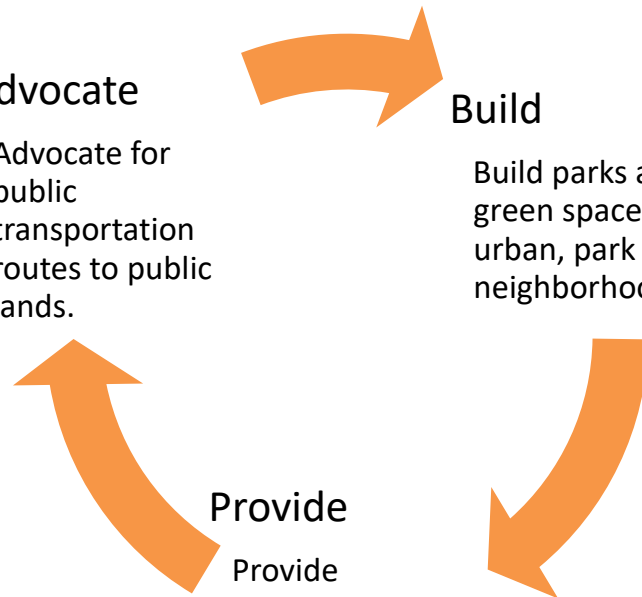
Advocate for public transportation routes to public lands.

Build

Build parks and green spaces in urban, park poor neighborhoods;

Provide

Provide transportation to regional parks and open space; and



Barrier

Lack of representation of a diverse public in the form of park staff, volunteers and outreach materials



Program Solution

Targeted recruitment;

Job training programs that include career tracks beyond maintenance and operations into the carrying levels of an agency/organization;

Review and amendment of job requirements;

Develop partnerships with colleges and universities.

Barrier

**No historic
outdoor social or
family networks**



Program Solution

Partnership with community organizations, churches, libraries

Diversification of outreach to community-based organizations

Multi-generational programming



Barrier

Am I welcome
here/Perceived
racism



Program Solution

Diversify park staff
and volunteers;

Customer service training for
all staff;

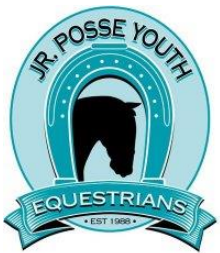
Diversity and inclusion training
for all staff and volunteers;

Match staffing with community
representation;

Best practices of interpretation.

Barrier

Community involvement in program development



Program Solution

Community listening sessions;

Let the community lead;

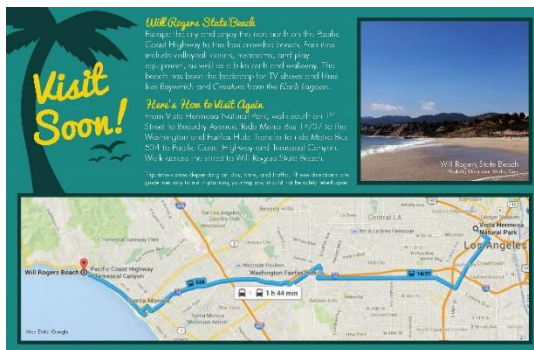
Park visits with community hosts;

Hire consultants/engagement professional locally;

Partner with local nonprofits.

Barrier

Lack of knowledge
– Where? What?
How?



Program Solution



Park information in multiple languages in nontraditional places;



Skills classes;



Maps with public transportation routes;



Equipment loan programs (FamCamp);



Guided hikes and facilitated experiences designed for first time park visitors; and



Technical assistance for community-based organizations



Create a Community- Focused Culture

The Community is the expert
on the community!

It's about relationships!

You want them to help you –
how can you help them?

What do they want/need as
opposed to what you think
they need





Invest In Community

- Assistance with capacity building;
- Increased program offerings;
- Organizational esteem and pride;
- Provide compensation;
- In kind support, introductions advocacy; and
- Opportunities for members/participants.



Commitment at
all levels