

CSPG

This poster raised awareness and support for incorporating the Santa Monica Mountains into the National Park System. It was produced in response to a plan by the City of Los Angeles to widen the scenic, two-lane Mulholland Drive into a four-lane thoroughfare. This would literally have paved the way for massive building in the then undeveloped Santa Monica Mountains.

Three Los Angeles women-- Margot Feuer of Malibu, Sue Nelson of Brentwood, and Jill Swift of Tarzana, led the effort to create a national park in the Santa Monica Mountains. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area—the world's largest urban national park and the most heavily used National Park facility in the nation.—won federal approval on November 10, 1978.

Feuer and Nelson focused more on lobbying public officials, while Swift devoted herself to building grass-roots awareness. She did it one step at a time, literally, by organizing hikes—first monthly, then weekly--bringing thousands of people in direct contact with the area's beaches, trails, flora and fauna.

In August, 1971, Swift organized a march on Mulholland Drive that drew 5,000 people. It was a turning point for the Los Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. For the first time it had gotten involved in opposing local land development. Conservation had come home. It was no longer a fight for a park in the mountains or desert, it meant battling the new development up the street. And it meant opposing real estate agents and developers and contractors, some of whom were neighbors and friends.

Swift, a self-described housewife and Girl Scout troop mother, mounted the Mulholland march "when my kids dared me to stop complaining about the paving of Mulholland Drive and do something about it." Some Sierra Club members did not think the club should discourage development and opposed the march, but it turned out to be a staggering success. It swung many local politicians over to the side of protecting the mountains and produced many new activists for the cause.