



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Irvine Ranch Conservancy Contact:  
Wida Karim 714-508-4760/ Cell: 949-309-9838

### **Irlandmarks.org Receives *Standard of Excellence Award***

*Partner website recognized nationally by New Media Institute*

**Irvine, CA (October 25, 2010)**— The Irvine Ranch Conservancy and partners today announced that the irlandmarks.org Web site has received the 2010 “*Standard of Excellence Award*” from the New Media Institute (NMI) in New York ([www.newmediaawards.org](http://www.newmediaawards.org)).

NMI judges reviewed dozens of sites from around the world, from major corporations to small- to mid-sized companies, non-profits, and government agencies. Each site was rated based on the following:

- Ease of navigation
- Content
- Visual design
- Overall user experience

Launched in January 2010, irlandmarks.org is a highly interactive site that makes it easy and enjoyable for the public to discover and explore the wonders of the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks. The site features all of the partners on the land, including OC Parks, the City of Irvine, California State Parks, and non-profit organizations among many others. The City of Irvine, OC Parks and The Irvine Company were primary partners in development of the site, and the City and County continue to play important roles in its operation.

The state-of-the-art Web site showcases a large, interactive map on the homepage that brings the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks to life at the click of a mouse. The site is filled with detailed descriptions and stunning photos of the thousands of acres of permanently preserved land, along with updated features and tools that enable visitors to quickly find information about the land, register for programs, and learn how to become involved in a huge variety of activities and volunteer opportunities.

**-More-**

“We are extremely excited about this award and accept it on behalf of all the organizations working together to protect this remarkable land and connect people to it,” said Michael O’Connell, executive director of the Irvine Ranch Conservancy. “All the partners wanted the site to be a simple, virtual gateway so people can have a seamless experience on the land regardless of who owns it. We designed the website to achieve that vision. Through the use of abundant photos and descriptions of what makes the Landmarks so special, the site helps deepen people’s appreciation for the land and the many ways to discover it.”

Nearly 40,000 acres of open space on the historic Irvine Ranch have been designated a Natural Landmark by both the U.S. Department of the Interior and the State of California, in recognition of their scientific value and importance.

Highlights of the award-winning [irlandmarks.org](http://irlandmarks.org) website:

- A large interactive map on the homepage collects the wilderness areas, parks and other features into a single, easily accessible location. Visitors can mouse over a specific place on the land, click on the corresponding popup box, and read about activities, view photos, and get directions. One more click takes visitors to a sorted menu of activities and more information about the natural resources and history of each place.
- A feature on the homepage enables visitors to learn more about all the partners working to care for and manage the Landmarks. By clicking on their logo, a new window opens and visitors are taken directly to that organization’s website.
- The homepage also features a site search function and a button that instantly enables visitors to sign up for activities - the vast majority of which are free of charge. Activities may be sorted by either type (such as hiking or mountain biking) or by place.
- The site makes it easy to get involved in the land. A variety of volunteering opportunities appear throughout the site. Most pages feature a button visitors can click to quickly fill out a volunteer interest form. The site also hosts multiple tools and pages for current volunteers including program scheduling, reporting, a photo gallery, and training modules.

For a complete list of all of the New Media Institute award winners, visit:

[http://www.newmediaawards.org/websiteawards/2010/website\\_awards\\_winners.html](http://www.newmediaawards.org/websiteawards/2010/website_awards_winners.html).

Partners on the land include many local, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and community organizations. Irvine Ranch Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-advocacy organization created in 2005 to protect the Natural Landmarks on the historic Irvine Ranch and enhance the public’s connection to them, while helping partners and landowners with all aspects of stewardship. It offers a variety of free, guided outdoor programs for all nature enthusiasts including hiking, mountain biking, horse-back riding and much more. For more information on the Conservancy, visit [www.irconservancy.org](http://www.irconservancy.org) or call 714.508.4757.

The award-winning [irlandmarks.org](http://irlandmarks.org) Web site was designed by Kokinakes Design ([www.kokinakesdesign.com](http://www.kokinakesdesign.com)) and programmed by Sitewire Marketspace Solutions, LLC ([www.sitewire.com](http://www.sitewire.com)).

**###**