

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the
Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 47

Fall 2022

Chino Hills State Park To Grow Again



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Chino Hills State Park ridgelines with the proposed restored lands for donation in the center/right canyon and plateau.

In July, the Brea City Council approved a 1,134-unit housing project on 265 acres of land owned by Aera Energy on the eastern edge of Brea.

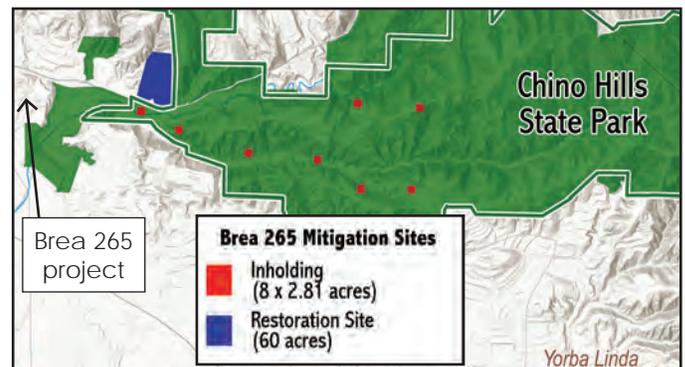
As part of the mitigation, Aera will donate approximately 82 acres to the State Park. When Aera sold western Telegraph Canyon to the State Park in 1983, it maintained ownership of eight square parcels of land surrounded by the State Park (inholdings) for future oil well sites. As part of the mitigation, Aera is now offering these 22 acres of inholdings to the Park. Aera also still owns land north of Carbon Canyon Road. It will restore and transfer an additional 60 acres adjacent to existing parkland there. (See map bottom right)

Aera's landscape plan will emphasize native walnut trees and drought-tolerant natives, while prohibiting grass on any homeowners' association (HOA) easements. The HOA will not be allowed to install any invasive non-native plants that could spread to nearby parklands. The project's fencing will be bird-safe, and the lighting specifications on the eastern perimeter will be aimed down—reducing light intrusion into parklands.

Hills For Everyone (HFE) has negotiated a unique mitigation: the establishment of a State Park impact fee. This housing project will link many trails and bring in more park users. These new visitors will, for the most part, be non-paying, yet the Park must still absorb their impact. Aera agreed to require the future HOA (or a similar

tool) to collect a park impact fee of \$10 per year per household (excluding affordable units). The funds will go to the State Park's non-profit partner, Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association. The fee will be collected upon occupancy of each housing unit and the program will be in effect for 25 years.

The project will be built in phases, with the first phase located along Rose Drive where the Christmas tree farm and fruit stand was/is located. During this time, the second phase will undergo clean up of the former oil fields, including the flat land along Lambert Road west of Valencia. The final phase will be built on the hills east of Valencia and south of Carbon Canyon Road, although there will be no access onto Carbon Canyon Road. If we want to protect the hills, this is where housing should be built.



Leadership in State Effort

A local, state, national, and global effort known as 30x30 is taking shape. Two years ago, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order aimed at conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030. To reach this goal, California needs to save an estimated six million acres statewide. We want land in our region to be included, so we submitted our own map of targeted conservation lands in the Puente-Chino Hills.

This Spring we were asked to facilitate the Southland region 30x30 coalition so that our region is better represented. (Historically, a lot of conservation dollars have gone to acquisitions up north.) This coalition includes all of Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties, and the western portions of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. We now manage a coalition of more than 100 organizations. The members recently ranked projects under the three 30x30 priorities: biodiversity, access, and climate resilience. Two of HFE's projects were included since they ranked well in a science- and fact-based evaluation process.

Then, in August, our Conservation Consultant, Melanie Schlotterbeck, was appointed by the California Natural Resources Secretary to serve on the statewide 30x30 Partnership Coordinating Committee. Melanie's background, contacts, and experience creating conservation mechanisms made her a great pick!

Cougar Crossing Funded

Last April, a young dispersing male cougar was killed on the north side of the 60 Freeway in Diamond Bar. Experts wondered if it could possibly have migrated from the San Gabriel Mountains, passing through a very dense urban landscape. DNA results instead showed it migrated up from the Santa Ana Mountains through our Chino Hills.

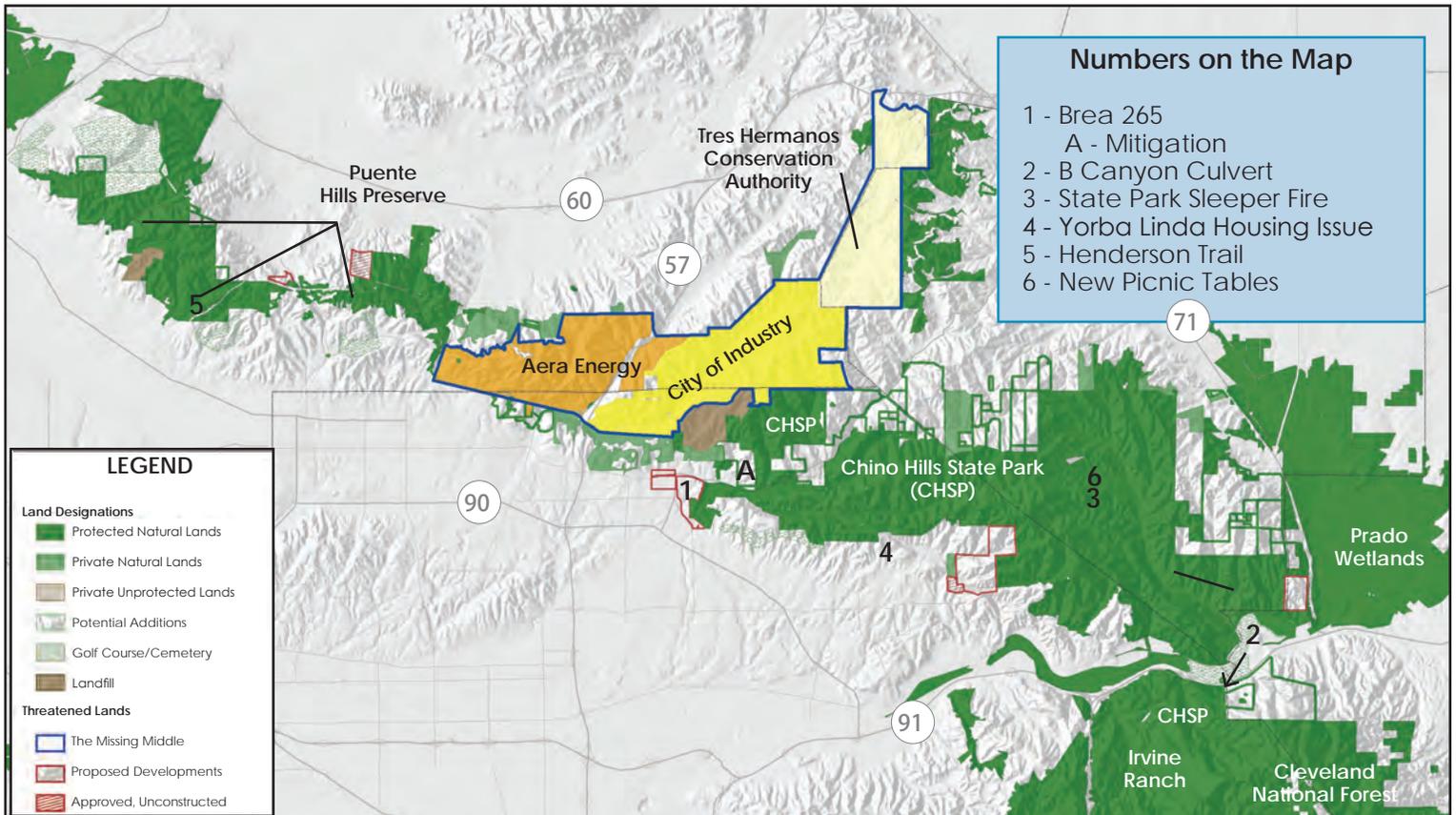
To help with wildlife movement, Santa Ana Mountain cougars will get a safer crossing because the funding arm of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife recently approved a planning grant to improve a large culvert near Green River under the 91 Freeway. (Culvert photo below)

To be sure our region is included in the statewide corridor database, we submitted our local wildlife corridors and crossings for addition.



Caltrans

Mapping the Corridor Projects



Unusual Fire in State Park

A fire erupted on a ridge in Chino Hills State Park southwest of the campground on July 2. Firefighting personnel raced into action with 30 trucks, three helicopters, and four airplanes. Mother Nature helped as well, using cross winds to contain the fire to about five acres. Interestingly, the fire actually started on June 22 with a lightning bolt. The strike hit a rock on a ridge and was so hot it ignited the roots of nearby plants, causing them to smolder underground in the surrounding area. The roots of these plants smoldered for the next 10 days. The fire finally broke through above ground when the conditions were ripe on July 2.



Claire Schlotterbeck

Yorba Linda Revises Plan

Last month, residents of Yorba Linda took the City to task for a glaring error in its Housing Element Update within its General Plan to the State of California. The City claimed it could build 230 units including a multi-story building on a hillside, but a publicly-available land analysis determined only 27 units were feasible. With homework and legwork help from residents, HFE submitted a letter that documented arguments against the outrageous number of units. The site, which borders the State Park, was removed from the rezoning effort going before voters in November.



Google Earth

Heartfelt Thank You!

Roland vom Dorp, a lifelong La Habra Heights resident, has resigned from our Board of Directors. He was a leader of the "good fight" that saved Powder Canyon. This successful effort preserved the connectivity for wildlife and trails across the hills to Whittier. He also helped at numerous HFE events on the west side of the hills like the Avocado Festival in La Habra Heights. The entire Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor benefited from your knowledgeable activism. Thank you, Roland.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Hearty Congratulations!



Claire Schlotterbeck

The work of another Board member was recently recognized by the Habitat Authority with the dedication of a plaque and the naming of a trail. As a longtime Whittier Councilmember and Authority founder, Bob Henderson (photo far right) negotiated many parkland transactions and helped the local resident's group, Save Whittier Hills, do just that—save the hills. Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (photo yellow outfit) and Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn (photo next to Bob in jean jacket) attended the ceremony along with other elected officials and many of Bob's longtime friends and supporters. His wife, Judi, whom he has known since 8th grade, brought the rest of the family as well, for a very crowded and celebratory event. Congratulations Bob!



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Final Fire Grant Expenditures

As a follow up to our last newsletter... three generous grants from the California State Parks Foundation funded work in Chino Hills State Park. These grants went to the Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association (CHSPIA), HFE, and the State Park. Together we coordinated our funds to repair structural damage from the October 2020 Blue Ridge Fire.

Since our last newsletter six campground picnic tables have been replaced with concrete picnic tables, which don't burn and aren't easily movable like the wood picnic tables. As additional funding becomes available, our goal would be to continue this work to fund repairs to damaged areas in the State Park and replace the infrastructure with more resilient and longer lasting materials.



Melanie Schlotterbeck



Get Involved

There are many ways to support HFE's work. In addition to these platforms, you can join our email list. We send out about one email a month and never sell, trade, or share our list. Subscribe on our website:



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