

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Newsletter No. 15

Winter 2006



IF SHELL-AERA SUCCEEDS...



Looking south toward Orange County, Rowland Heights in the foreground.



Photo & Photo Morph: Melanie Schlotterbeck

What Hidden Valley could look like with houses in the grasslands and forest.

OUR COMMUNITIES LOSE!

Aera Energy - a land development company owned by Shell and ExxonMobil continues to process its massive housing development plans for the natural lands north of Brea and south of Rowland Heights. This land is bounded by Harbor Boulevard/Fullerton Road on the west near La Habra Heights and up and over the forested ridges east of the 57 freeway near Diamond Bar. Shell-Aera still proposes 3,600 housing units on its 3,000 acres.

If Shell-Aera succeeds, its project would generate 40,000 vehicle trips a day. Shell-Aera predicts that two-thirds of these drivers will head north for work into Los Angeles County and one-third will head south into Orange County.

If Shell-Aera succeeds, bulldozers will destroy the hills, the ridgelines and the streams with massive grading. This grading will be necessary to create pads for the subdivisions and the roads for internal circulation.

If Shell-Aera succeeds, not only will our existing road network (infrastructure) be further overburdened, but so will our public services like police, fire, schools, sewers, and water supplies.

The proposed housing project would also sever the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor, an area of natural lands that citizens, state and local officials, and agencies have worked nearly three decades to protect.

How do we stop this? We stay tuned - just as we have done for over 25 years. We stay prepared to act - whether it is to attend public hearings, write a letter, make a phone call or rally in the streets like we did last summer.

Two possibilities light our way. The Legislature is considering including in its infrastructure bond proposals the contents of Senate Bill 153 (SB 153), a Water and Parks bond act. SB 153 includes funding for Shell-Aera. The infrastructure bond could make it onto the June 2006 or November 2006 ballot. If the Legislature fails to act, a Clean Water initiative is circulating in the state and that would also contain enough funding for our needs.

Senator Chesbro is sponsoring SB 153. Send an email of support to him at Senator.Chesbro@sen.ca.gov.

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

Add your name to the Hills For Everyone email list to keep informed about the latest and rapidly emerging developments. Log on to www.HillsForEveryone.org and send us your email address. Or email us at info@HillsForEveryone.org and ask to be added. We will not sell our list nor allow its use by any other groups and will only send emails when it is important.

- RECENT CELEBRATIONS -

CHINO HILLS STATE PARK

The 40 year old federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established to protect America's resources. The theory behind it was that as natural resources are depleted off shore (through oil drilling leases), the revenue from those leases should be spent to conserve land onshore. Chino Hills State Park was honored as the 40,000th recipient of a grant from this Fund for the construction of the only paved road into the Park. Among other things, this road will allow access by buses for school children to visit the Park.



Photo by: Dr. Carol McKenzie

The awarding of the grant was celebrated at a special ceremony on November 30th. The event featured National Park Service Deputy Director Donald Murphy, State Senator Bob Margett (shown left) with HFE Executive Director Claire Schlotterbeck, California Department of Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Coleman and state and local elected officials.

NEW TRAILHEAD OPENED

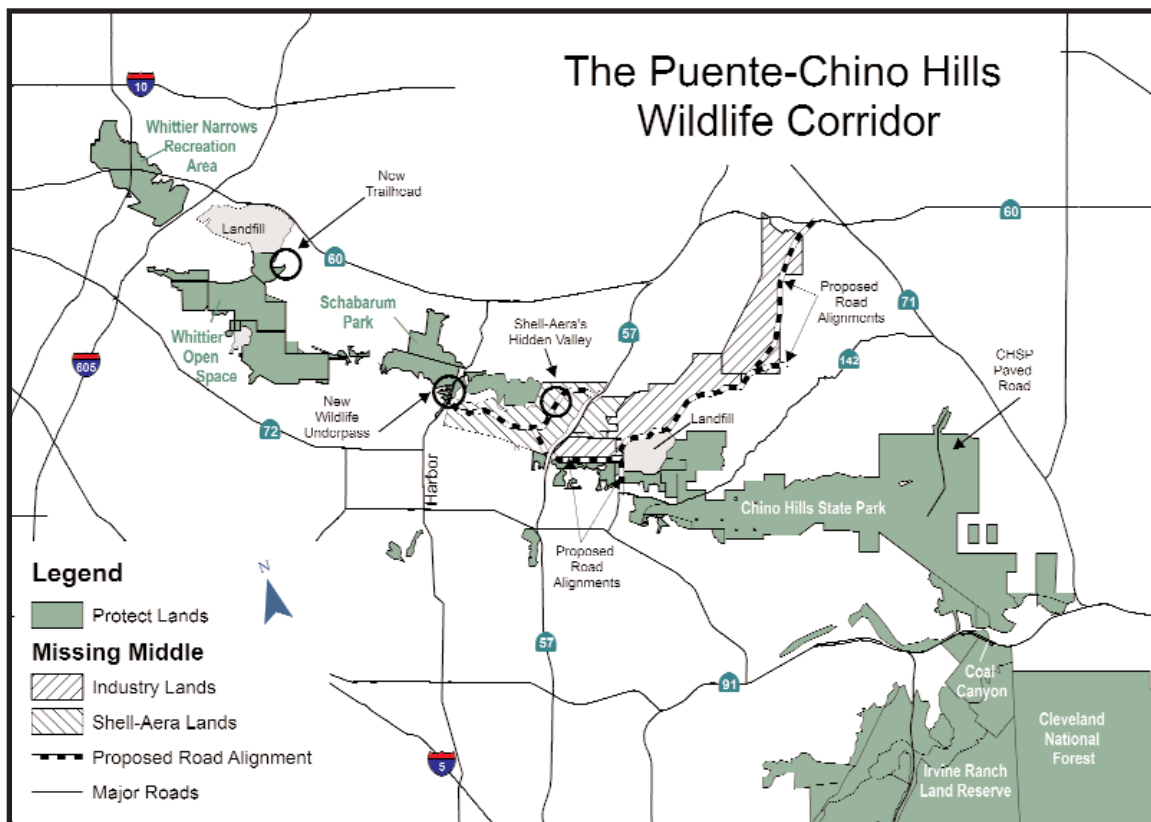
The Habitat Authority proudly opened a new trailhead in Hacienda Heights last September, with the help of 260 community supporters. L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe is shown right standing next to the new entrance gates. These gates were designed by local high school students and mark the entrance of this portal to the hills and its many trails. Visitors can take their first steps, gallops or ride on the Ahwingna Trail named after a nearby historical Tongva village that was regarded as a local "capital" for the tribe. The release of rehabilitated barn owls signified the official opening of this special site.



Melanie Schlotterbeck



Melanie Schlotterbeck



Habitat Authority on the Move... by Andrea Gullo

HABITAT AUTHORITY PROGRAMS

In addition to its new projects described below, the Habitat Authority continues to host its ongoing activities such as trail clearing, Jr. Ranger programs, and native vegetation restoration. Our priority still remains purchasing open space properties that will contribute to the Habitat Authority's mission of protecting the area's native habitat for generations to come.

SAFE PASSAGE FOR WILDLIFE

Construction of the Harbor Boulevard Wildlife Underpass is proceeding smoothly. Weather permitting, the project is expected to be done by mid-April. The wildlife tunnel has been installed and we look forward to the day when vegetation will be completely restored and the animals start using it. Since there will not be funneling fence installed with this phase of the project, the level of use is unpredictable. Cal State Fullerton will continue to monitor all wildlife movement in the area to give us a good indication of the movement patterns. We are thrilled about this project, because soon the wildlife and motorists will be safer! We hope other jurisdictions that have similar wildlife crossing conflicts can look at this project as a successful model.



Claire Schlotterbeck

A bulldozer scrapes the dirt away from the entrance of the tunnel under Harbor Blvd.

ARTISTS ARENA AT ARROYO PESCADERO

Working with the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Program, the Habitat Authority and its resident artists focused on a project at the Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead. The Artists Arena is a natural rammed earth arena that can seat about fifty children and is complemented by a native plant demonstration garden. In the past, the children sat on old eucalyptus logs as they listened to the rangers talk about plants and animals. Soon they will have a nice seating area with a beautiful forward view of the canyons. The artists have done their best to intertwine historical and natural elements into this project that can be used for educational and outreach programs. The project area was landscaped with native plants and will hopefully be completed by the end of summer.



Andrea Gullo

A view of the artist's arena, which is still under construction.

PLANNING FOR THE HILLS

The Habitat Authority is in the process of creating a Resource Management Plan (RMP), which will help guide our future management activities. In doing this, we have been gathering important baseline data about the plants and animals that live in the hills.



Jeff Yann

Studies currently being conducted or that are finished include: birds, small mammals,

riparian (streamside) areas, butterflies, herpetofauna (reptiles), mammal movement, bats, plants, and gnatcatchers. Creating a trails plan is also a part of this planning process. We hope to have a draft plan available for public review this summer. To learn more please visit www.habitatauthority.org.

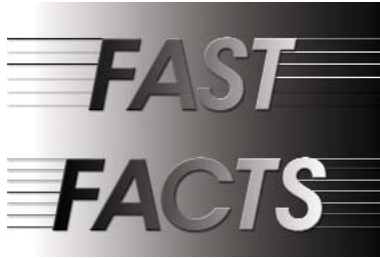
For more information visit: www.HabitatAuthority.org



Hikers gather at Arroyo San Miguel in Whittier.

GREAT EARTH WALK GREAT FUN

Last fall over 200 residents turned out for a morning walk in our hills. Hikers visited the canyons and ridgelines from Whittier and La Habra Heights to Yorba Linda, Anaheim and Chino Hills. Special thanks to Orange County Supervisor Bill Campbell who joined the Coal Canyon hike. We hear he was quite a trooper.



- Permanently protected lands in the Puente-Chino Hills: 17,000 acres (so far)
 - 4,000 acres in the Whittier Hills
 - 13,000 acres in Chino Hills State Park
- Land still threatened in the Missing Middle: 8,700 acres
 - 5,700 acres owned by the City of Industry
 - 3,000 acres owned by Shell-Aera

HILLS FOR EVERYONE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Exec. Director: Claire Schlotterbeck
 Editor: Melanie Schlotterbeck

Upcoming April Events

LIVE WILD ANIMALS SATURDAY, APRIL 15



Dr. Carol McKenzie

On Saturday, April 15th the Puente-Chino Hills Task Force of the Sierra Club is hosting a free public event, in cooperation with L.A. County and the Habitat Authority. See wild animals, their adaptations, and how to peacefully co-exist with them. Join us at 11 am at Pathfinder Park in Rowland Heights east of Harbor Blvd. (Fullerton Rd.) on Pathfinder Road. For more information call: 714-524-7763.

THE GREEN SCENE SAT & SUN, APRIL 22/23

Hills For Everyone will be hosting a booth again this year at the Fullerton Arboretum. The two-day event will include crafts, native plants, garden supplies, specialty plants and food. The Green Scene brings families from all over the region to enjoy native and specialized plants and have fun in a relaxing setting. Log on to: www.HillsForEveryone.org and volunteer to help staff our booth.



Date: Sat., April 22 from 9 - 4
 Sun., April 23 from 10 - 4

LET'S GO CAMPING AT CHINO HILLS STATE PARK

Twenty new campsites await your visit to Chino Hills State Park. With the recent rains, the grasses are turning green and the rolling hills offer a nearby respite. Owl hoots and coyote yips will serenade you at night. The entrance is located off the 71 freeway in Chino Hills. Exit Soquel Canyon Road, head west toward the hills. Turn left onto Elinvar and left on Sapphire to the entrance.



Hills For Everyone
 P.O. Box 9835
 Brea, CA 92822-1835

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VISIT US AT: www.HillsForEveryone.org
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