



CONTACT:

Melanie Schlotterbeck, Cell: (714) 501-3133

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2021

**400 Ridgeline Acres Funded for Protection
Adjacent to Chino Hills State Park**

Brea, California—At its May meeting, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved funding for two acquisitions of natural land adjacent to Chino Hills State Park. Using monies allocated through the Habitat Conservation Fund, approved by voters in 1990 as Proposition 117, these lands will be preserved because of their significant deer and mountain lion habitat. Both properties are also important ridgeline lands, protecting visitors and views from what could have been intrusive housing developments. Eastbridge, an 80-acre parcel, lies in southern Aliso Canyon. The 320-acre First National Investment Properties (First National) parcels are visible from the popular Lower Aliso Canyon Overlook. Escrow is expected to close on both properties in the next few weeks.

Last year, Hills For Everyone facilitated the preservation of 320 acres of the Eastbridge property as Phase 1 of a two-phase transaction. This year, the organization took the lead role on conserving the last 80 acres as Phase 2. The 80 acres was a small inholding surrounded on three sides by Chino Hills State Park. In a separate negotiation coordinated by The Conservation Fund, 320 acres of the First National acquisition, was completed with Hills For Everyone's assistance. This acquisition is the first in a series of what is expected to be a three-phased transaction to secure the remaining unprotected ridgelines, totaling nearly 1,200 acres. We are very grateful the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has agreed to be the interim owner and manager of the two WCB funded properties. MRCA already owns and manages Phase 1 of the Eastbridge property secured in July 2020.

“Securing these lands has been on the State’s and Hills For Everyone’s wish list since the late 1970s. Many people don’t realize the views looking east from Lower Aliso Canyon Overlook have been in private ownership. We expect escrow to close on each property transferring title from private ownership to a protected status in the next couple of weeks,” said Claire Schlotterbeck, Executive Director of Hills For Everyone. “Both properties include gently rolling grasslands, slopes dotted with oak trees, and coastal sage scrub—all important habitats

for the Southern California mountain lion, which is under review for permanent listing via California’s Endangered Species Act.”

“Chino Hills State Park is a treasured natural area that plays a vital role as a wildlife corridor and a place of respite for over 300,000 visitors each year,” said Steve Hobbs, California State Director of The Conservation Fund. “We’re honored to partner with Hills For Everyone to enhance protection of this beautiful landscape for the benefit of key species and outdoor lovers for generations to come.”

These transactions were only possible due to the commitment of willing sellers, WCB, MRCA, and the transaction teams. The long-term goal is to add these properties into state ownership to grow Chino Hills State Park, as was identified in the Park’s General Plan from 1999. These acquisitions secure ridgelines that—had they been developed—would have changed the views from inside the Park; added light, noise, and other human intrusions; and increased wildfire ignitions. See the acquisition map and photos.

###

*For more than 40 years, **Hills For Everyone** has worked to preserve the unique and disappearing landscapes of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor.*