

Hills For Everyone

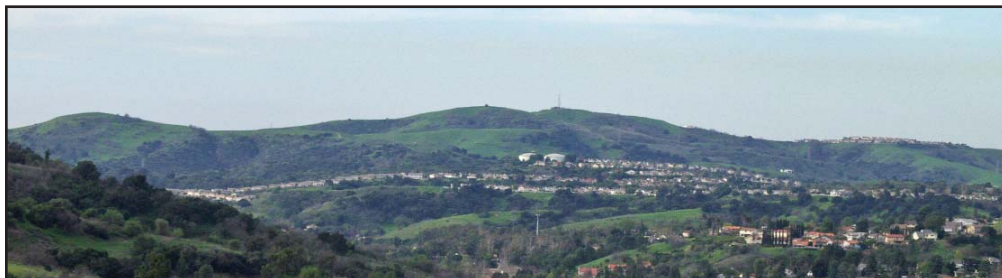
Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Newsletter No. 19

Summer 2007



Ruin Diamond Bar's Quest to ~~Ruin~~ the Region



Shell-Aera's property from Diamond Bar, looking southwest.

Melanie Schlotterbeck

Who Are They Calling Outsiders?

Diamond Bar city officials routinely criticize Hills For Everyone's effort to awaken Diamond Bar residents to the 3,600 unit Shell-Aera project that the Diamond Bar City Council supports. They consider our concern about the bulldozing of the hills an "intrusion" into their City affairs. But let's look at the facts.

First, this project is proposed by Shell Oil (based in the Netherlands) and ExxonMobil (based in Houston) through their subsidiary, Aera Energy (based in Bakersfield). Exactly what sense of responsibility will these corporations have to the welfare of the Diamond Bar community or our region?

Second, this massive project will impact all of our communities because of the 50,000 vehicle trips a day it will add to our transportation system. Don't we all have a stake in the future of this region?



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Third, by attempting to annex acreage outside of their Sphere of Influence, Diamond Bar City Council has intervened as outsiders themselves in the future of their neighbors. They should not be shocked that their jurisdictional land grab for territory that is currently planned for in the official **Rowland Heights** Community Plan angers residents there.

Finally and most importantly, with Diamond Bar choosing to be the Lead Agency on the Shell-Aera project, they will be deciding whether the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is adequate for ALL of the development, not just for the development in Diamond Bar's realm. This includes whether:

- a whopping 800 dwelling units and a commercial center in **Brea** are built at the most important wildlife crossing still needing protection at Tonner Canyon; and whether
- The \$45 million investment in land acquisition for habitat that **Whittier** has assembled over 25 years is honored with a *functional* wildlife corridor; and whether
- Traffic impacts on Harbor Blvd. and Fullerton Road in **La Habra** and **La Habra Heights** are

WRONG WAY ROAD INTO STATE PARK

A coalition of conservation groups co-signed our strongly worded and extensive comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the road proposed by Metropolitan Water District (MWD) through Chino Hills State Park. This road first crosses the State Park next to Carbon Canyon Regional Park and then traverses a steep slope covered with walnut trees to the hilltop facility. Under this short-sighted plan, all those park visitors who enter sensitive Telegraph Canyon, Orange County's formal entrance to the State Park, would be losing the quiet ambience of this canyon to MWD trucks entering every six minutes.

Rather than fight this road, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) decided to roll over and play dead in exchange for \$1.7 million in funding to finish, furnish, and endow a staff position at the soon to be built Visitor Center. When confronted with the hypocrisy in DPR's fight against a road in San Onofre State Park while accepting money for this road, we were told they were too busy with other more important projects. DPR's collective willingness to damage this important natural area and the experience of all of those people who visit it, suggests they have become simply land managers and not land stewards.

HFE has retained the law firm of Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger to protect the integrity of the Habitat Conservation Plan approved in 1995 for this canyon.

adequately mitigated for the houses proposed there; and whether

- Fifty-seven million cubic yards of dirt and 2,000 acres of natural lands will be bulldozed.

These facts suggest the Diamond Bar City Council has stepped out of their city boundaries and intruded into the future visions of many other communities. When they opened the door for Shell-Aera's development, they invited the long standing opposition in as well.

Diamond Bar Residents Rise Up

Diamond Bar residents opposed to the Shell-ERROR project (as they put it) continue to organize. They call themselves Diamond Bar Citizens Advocating for Responsible Development. More information is available on the web at: www.DiamondBarCARD.com.

Residents have been meeting regularly for three months and are now circulating a petition by walking neighborhoods. In one neighborhood alone, 90 of the 93 homeowners opposed the Shell-Aera project and the relocation of the golf course. If you want to help gather signatures, download the petition from the Diamond Bar CARD website.

Their efforts have already shown success. The City Council was about to spend \$457,000 on an EIR to study and plan for relocation of the Diamond Bar Golf Course. When 100 angry residents showed up and were inspired to speak against this spending, the City Council backed down. Apparently with a City Council election in November, they felt the need to quell the uprising. The City's desire to develop the golf course site remains strong and is reflected in the 2007-2008 City goals.

Residents have also criticized the fact that only Mayor Tye responds to emails sent to every Council member. Somewhere along the way the other four City Council members decided to cede over their responsibility to communicate with their own residents to the Mayor. This decision could not be found in the public record.

Diamond Bar and Shell-Aera Get an Earful

The City of Diamond Bar hosted a public meeting on May 16th to gather input on what the EIR should study for

the 3,600 unit Shell-Aera Master Plan housing project. Assuming the City would not encourage attendance (indeed they posted information just five days prior to the meeting on the City website), volunteers throughout the hills assembled a postcard mailing to alert supporters of hillside preservation and Diamond Bar residents of the meeting.

Over 200 people showed up. Based on the number of signs ups at the Hills For Everyone information table, most of the attendees were from Diamond Bar. At the meeting, the City's consultants gave a short presentation that was followed by a short Q & A. When the questions became tough, the City attempted to shut the public down. The consultants told citizens to make their comments one on one to a court reporter. A loud, spontaneous outcry from the stunned crowd forced the City to continue to allow public questions at this public meeting. At one point, a participant asked those in the audience who opposed the project to please stand up. Nearly everyone did, as captured in the photo below.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

It was a visual representation of the public sentiment in Diamond Bar and throughout the hills against this project. The meeting can be viewed as a video online via our website: www.HillsForEveryone.org.

Hills For Everyone submitted formal comments on the Notice of Preparation of the EIR drafted by our urban planner extraordinaire, Terry Watt. It was co-signed by local, regional, state, and national conservation groups:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Audubon Society | Natural Resources Defense Council |
| Center for Biological Diversity | Orange County Coastkeeper Planning and Conservation League |
| Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association | Sierra Club |
| Defenders of Wildlife | The Whittier Conservancy |
| Endangered Habitats League | Tri County Conservation League |
| Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks | Wild Heritage Planners |
| Friends of Whittier Hills | |

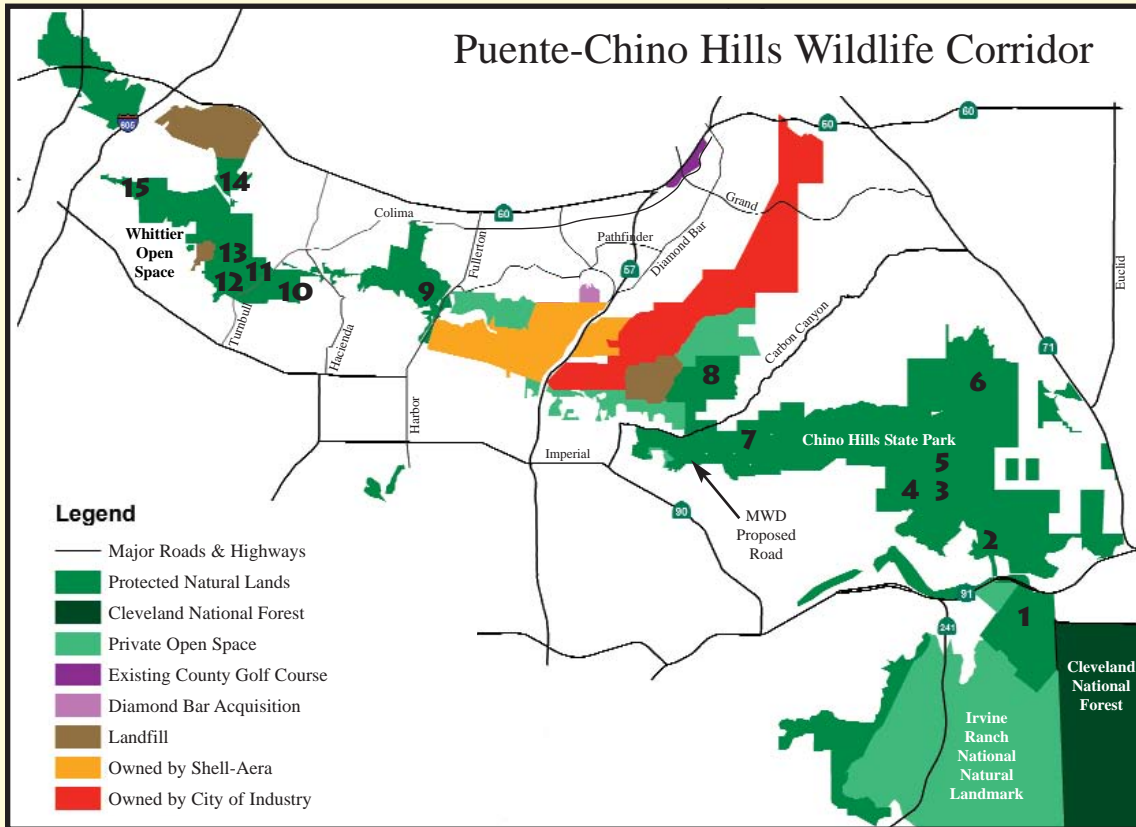
The Draft EIR will be written over the next few months. Since this is a regionally significant project, it will be circulated for at least 45 days of public review. Diamond Bar's and Shell-Aera's ambitious timeline targets a decision on the Final EIR in Spring 2008.



Claire Schlotterbeck

DON'T DESPAIR, SUCCESS STORIES ABOUND

By joining together across the hills we have won many battles to save the hills - the fact that 18,000 acres have been preserved is the proof. Another way to describe our victories is this:



CANYONS SAVED (numbered on the map)

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Coal | 6 - Bane | 11 - Arroyo Pescadero |
| 2 - Brush | 7 - Telegraph | 12 - Worsham |
| 3 - Blue Mud | 8 - Sonome | 13 - Turnbull |
| 4 - Water | 9 - Powder | 14 - Oak |
| 5 - Aliso | 10 - Arroyo San Miguel | 15 - Sycamore |

Hills For Everyone Honored

Environment Now, a non-profit based in Santa Monica recently released its annual "List of Top Achievements in the Environmental Community in Southern California." Under the category of *Land Use, Open Space, and Smart Growth*, it applauded Hills For Everyone's leadership in helping secure \$243.5 million in conservation funding in the renewal of Orange County's transportation sales tax, Measure M. Due, in part, to the successful coalition of 33 conservation groups that endorsed this renewal, Measure M passed by 68%, the only local sales tax transportation measure to pass in California in the November 2006 election. This measure offers a potential funding source for purchase of the Shell-Aera land.



Harris Hawk

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Brea Cares for the Canyons

After years of study and scrutiny, Brea City Council voted 5-0 to support the revocation of the overly ambitious Carbon Canyon Specific Plan. This plan, approved in 1985 applied "Columbus Acres" (as if the world were flat) to this very steep canyon area. Awakened by the concern of residents about excessive bulldozing required to develop the area, the hazard that steep roads posed for firefighting equipment, expensive landslides in nearby cities, and a General Plan that was not in compliance with the Specific Plan, Brea chose to "do the right thing." Kudos to the staff and City Council who took careful steps to reconcile the diverse interests. The number of allowable dwelling units dropped from 1,685 to between 220-500.

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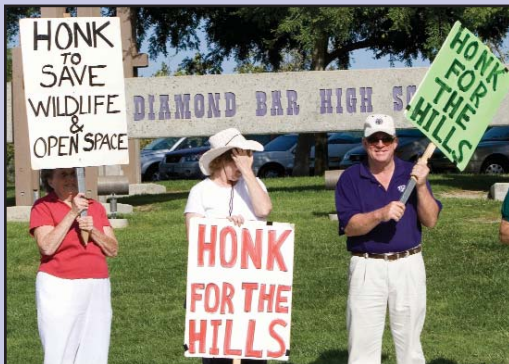
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You Can Act to Save the Hills

Email Diamond Bar City Council members with your opposition to the Shell-Aera project.

steve.tye@ci.diamond-bar.ca.us
jack.tanaka@ci.diamond-bar.ca.us
wen.chang@ci.diamond-bar.ca.us
ron.everett@ci.diamond-bar.ca.us
carol.herrera@ci.diamond-bar.ca.us

**If not you, then who?
If not now, then when?**



Lu Ting Zheng

Rally for the Ridgelines in Diamond Bar

Every other Friday from 5:00 - 6:00 PM hillside supporters Rally for the Ridgelines. We invite you to join us at an upcoming Rally:

August 3rd
Brea Canyon Cut-off and Pathfinder

August 17th
Grand Avenue and Diamond Bar Blvd.

HELP! Tell Us Your Stories

What have the natural lands meant to you and your family? What wildlife have you seen or what other captivating experiences have you experienced on your forays into the canyons and hills?

We will share your stories with decision makers and the press to emphasize how important the lands have been to the people who live near them or enjoy using them.

Please email your story to: info@HillsForEveryone.org -- Thank you!



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Send Us Your Email Address

If you have not heard from us lately via email please be sure we have your correct email address by emailing us at info@HillsForEveryone.org or by visiting our website www.HillsForEveryone.org to join our email list.

Newsletter Recipients

If this is the first time you have received this newsletter, it is likely because you registered opposition to the Shell-Aera project or are in a neighborhood impacted by the project. If you wish to be removed from this mailing list, call 714-687-1555 and provide your name and mailing address or email us at: info@HillsForEveryone.org.

Want Diamond Bar to approve 3,600 houses, adding 50,000 more cars as they bulldoze the 57 hills? Neither do we.

Email us at info@HillsForEveryone.org to request a FREE Stop Shell-Aera Bumper Sticker Today!

**SAVE OUR HILLS...
SAVE OUR COMMUNITIES!**

STOP SHELL-AERA

www.HillsForEveryone.org



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