

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Punkte-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Newsletter No. 20

Winter 2008



Can Rowland Heights Save the Hills?



Mike Popovec

On December 6th, organizers of the effort to incorporate the community of Rowland Heights took a giant step forward with instructions from the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to begin signature gathering in their drive for cityhood. LAFCO is the governmental agency mandated by the State to be responsible for the orderly development of cities and for the delivery of services (water, sewer, etc.).

The boundary map of the future City of Rowland Heights includes the Shell-Aera land (west of the 57 freeway, in L.A. County) since that land is already part of Rowland Heights' Community Facilities District, not Diamond Bar's (See #1 on Corridor Map on page 2).

Many technical steps still need to be taken, including an economic analysis to ascertain if the new city can sustain itself. Most experts consider this economic analysis a "slam dunk" because of the extensive commercial development along Colima Road.

Leaders who have worked to save the hills consider this latest organizing effort hopeful since Rowland Heights is part of HOSEC (www.HOSEC.com) the regional coalition working to save the Shell-Aera land.

It is likely going to take a multi-pronged approach to save the hills and keep this region from being overrun by traffic and development. For more information visit:

www.RowlandHeightsCity.org

Still Awaiting Release of Shell-Aera Report

The Diamond Bar City Council election in early November saw the re-election of two sitting council members. Both have supported the proposed annexation of Shell-Aera land into their city and both approved the 3,600 unit pre-development agreement with Shell-Aera over a year ago (#2 on Map). This development would bulldoze the hills above Brea and Rowland Heights and likely sever the Punte-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor that Whittier has so heavily invested in protecting. It will also add an estimated 50,000 vehicle trips a day (VTD) to area streets and freeways. Having trouble believing this development could add 50,000 VTD? Read the article in the left corner of page 1.

Diamond Bar officials have stated the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Shell-Aera project will be released in early March 2008. However, in a recent newspaper article, Shell-Aera is less hopeful, suggesting that they expect the EIR to be circulated "this year." If you would like to effectively respond to this DEIR, we urge you to attend a workshop on March 1st further explained on the back page of this newsletter.

50,000 car trips a day?? Who are we kidding? No one.

From the 7th edition of the book Trip Generation by the Institute of Transportation Engineers:

The standard formula for calculating vehicle trips per day (VTD) generated by a single house is 9.57, (we rounded it to 10). This not only covers trips by the homeowner, but also all the services that a house demands – mail, pool service, UPS, gardeners, etc. Shell-Aera's 3,600 housing units = 36,000 trips a day.

Shell-Aera also proposes 200,000 square feet (ft²) of commercial space. How this commercial space is used

will determine the traffic volume. For example a Wal-Mart generates different traffic volumes than a Vons. Another variable is time of day. For example non-peak traffic for a supermarket is 69 VTD per 1000 ft², while peak hours can add 169 per 1000 ft².

Therefore, conservatively, the commercial component proposed by Shell-Aera can add 13,800 VTD (69 VTD/1000 x 200,000).

36,000 (housing)
+13,800 (commercial)
= **49,800 VTD for the project**

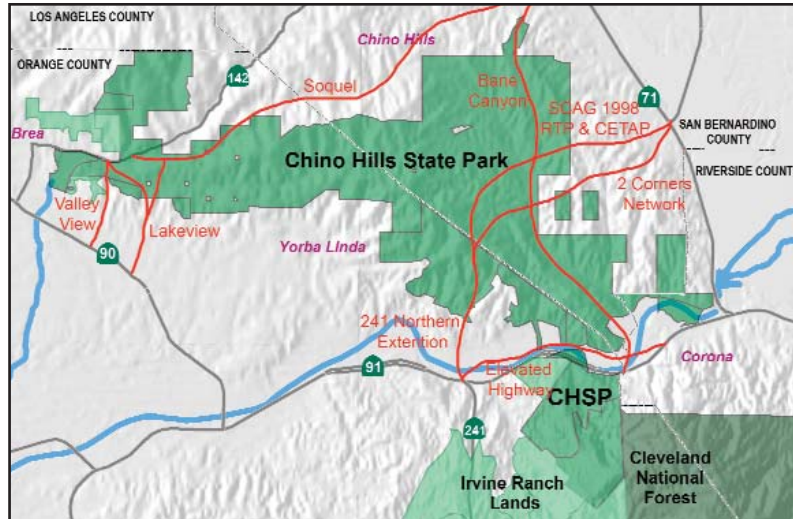


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THREATS THREATS EVERYWHERE, AND NOT

Metropolitan Water District (MWD) Road (#3 on Map)

Hills For Everyone forced MWD to recirculate its Environmental Impact Report on the road it proposed through Chino Hills State Park. Comments on the revised document were filed in early January. The proposed MWD road would cut through Chino Hills State Park and the habitat lands supposedly protected by a 1996 Habitat Conservation Plan. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has thus far refused to approve mitigation, taking seriously the commitment made by MWD, State Parks, Shell, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and DFG that the area would be protected. The road would parallel the State Park's hiking trail on the steep south wall in Telegraph Canyon, the formal Orange County entrance to the State Park. MWD believes building a two lane paved road into a secluded area will somehow enhance the security of its facility. We believe it is designed to relieve complaints from Yorba Linda residents who bought newly built houses along the existing MWD access road on the south side.



HFE prevailed but if planners had their way six roads would have cut through the State Park.

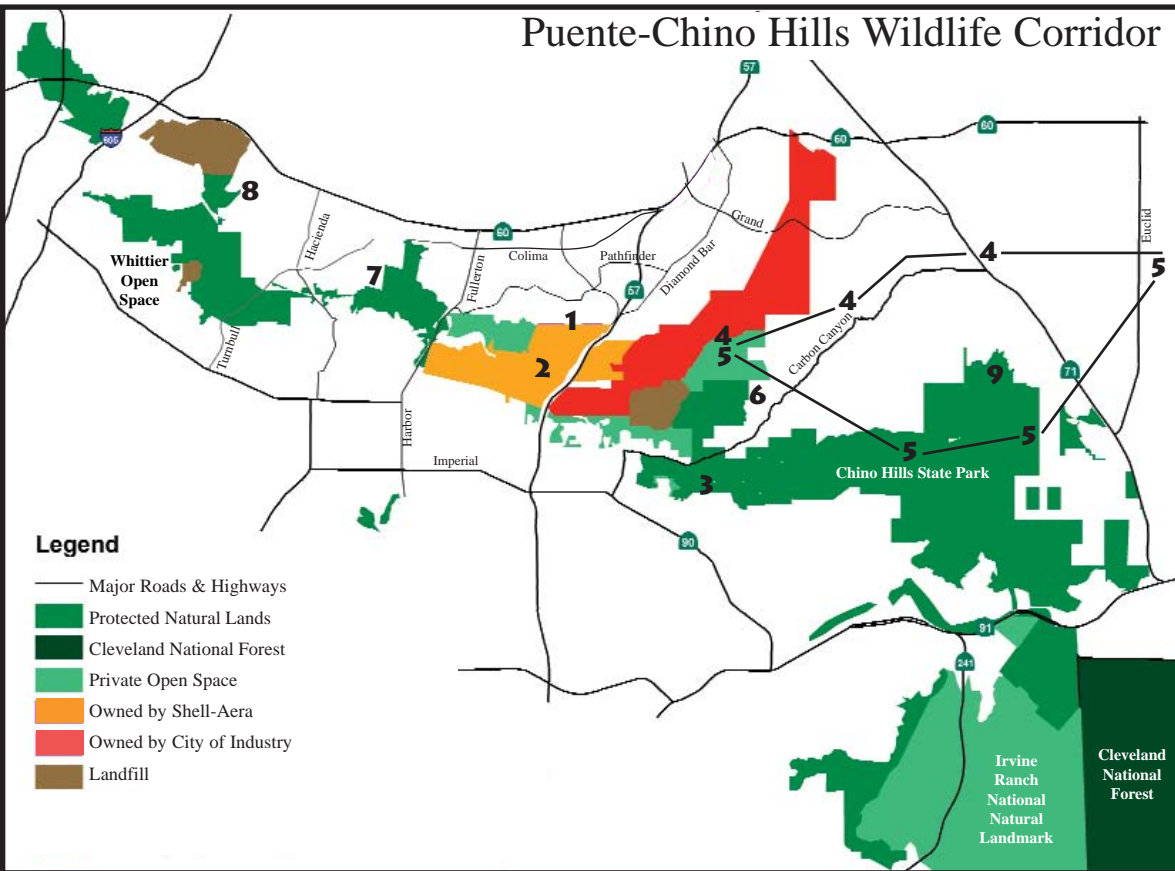
Hills that has grown up on either side of Edison's existing easement (#4 on Map). Two council members live in that neighborhood and though they were conflicted out of the vote, three other council members did them the favor of allocating \$650,000 of public money to fight the taller towers.

Southern California Edison Lines

Edison appears to be selling its proposed upgrade of transmission lines from the Tehachapi Mountains on the back of adding green wind energy. In reality it appears they are mainly delivering more energy to the Inland Empire.

One segment of Edison's preferred alternative for this upgrade goes through a neighborhood in the City of Chino

The City has proposed alternatives all of which go through the State Park (#5 on Map). All of these alternatives also violate a settlement agreement Hills For Everyone reached with Edison in 1982 to limit the number of transmission lines in the Park. This is the same city that supported a toll road through the State Park, approved houses where a breeding pair of golden eagles once nested and bulldozed the



headwaters of Bane Canyon for a water tank. Sadly, this City continues to look at the State Park, owned by us all, as simply a place holder for urban infrastructure they did not adequately plan for.

Hills For Everyone has proposed that the current alignment, preferred by Edison, be left in place, the existing towers removed and this segment of the new transmission line be under grounded. The easement on top can be restored and the neighborhood can enjoy the benefit of a greenbelt where towers once stood. And the State Park is spared as well.

A TREE LEFT STANDING

Canyon Crest Project (#6 on Map)

The project that never dies just gets worse. The developer of 367 acres has proposed 165 units on ridgeline land next to Chino Hills State Park in Brea.

According to the Recirculated Draft EIR (RDEIR) the plan is to remove 1,900 oak and walnut trees. Future Canyon Crest residents will use almost six times the amount of water an average Brea resident will use because the developer plans to bulldoze the property and then will need to restore the vegetation and keep it alive to protect against slope failure.

Because the project's paper work was filed prior to Brea's recent General Plan revisions, the developer is allowed to process the project

under the old rules that governed the hills. After submitting comments on the RDEIR, our attorneys sent a letter to Brea in mid-December advising them that we believe the Canyon Crest project

cannot be approved in its current configuration and density because it violates the OLD Hillside Management Ordinance (and the RDEIR even states that).



Pacific Heights Development is Alive (#7 on Map)

It appears that this 47 house development in the hills south of Hacienda Heights and immediately west of Schabarum Regional Park is once again moving forward. Pacific Communities recently sent letters to Los Angeles County Regional Planning and to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors submitting a Revised Tentative Tract Map, Zoning and Subdivision Application and updated CUP (Conditional Use Permit) burdens of proof.

For decades this 114 acre site has been targeted by various developers but the sensitive site has always proven difficult to build on. By using outdated biota surveys, it appears that this developer is refusing to comply with the request by the Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEA-TAC) to let the Committee determine whether the Draft EIR biota section should be updated. Compliance with this request would have required a Recirculated DEIR thus allowing for public review.

Because the property, which abuts the Puente Hills Native Habitat Authority lands and Schabarum Park, contains sensitive woodlands and habitats for endangered species, neighbors are once again organizing to stop destruction of this wonderful area.

Corridor Updates

Habitat Authority Happenings (#8 on Map)

The Hacienda Hills Trailhead is scheduled to be completed this winter. While improvements are being made to the parking lot, the trailhead remains open for all to use.

The Trail Map can now be viewed online at: www.HabitatAuthority.org. The Authority is in the process of naming all of the trails while also creating user-friendly detailed maps of each trailhead area. The new info will be posted on the website when completed.

For those who'd like to volunteer to lead hikes in the western Puente Hills, the Habitat Authority is hoping to train docents this spring. Contact Suzanne Avila for more information at savila@HabitatAuthority.org.

Paved Entrance Road for the State Park (#9 on Map)

Using an array of funding sources, the construction of a paved road into the barn and camping area will go out to bid this spring with a 3-5 month bidding period expected. Construction will begin in the Fall of 2008 and will last 6-9 months. Bane Canyon Road will be closed throughout construction, including all campgrounds. All other access points to the Park will remain open for day use.

LOOK WHO LIVES IN OUR HILLS

This wonderful, rare creature was found near the 91 freeway and Lakeview Avenue in Anaheim Hills. Although more and more anecdotal sightings have been reported in the hills in recent years, this is proof positive the ringtail cat still exists nearby. In an effort to save its life, the injured leg of this ringtail cat was amputated. Sadly, she died the next day.



SAVE THE DATE

Coyotes: Friend or Foe?

Join the Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association on March 29 & 30 for another Evening Program and Camp Out. For more information visit: ChinoHillsStatePark.org.

Earth Day

Help celebrate Earth Day by participating in work parties on April 19 at Chino Hills State Park. More information on this event will be available on our website soon!

The Green Scene

Have a green thumb? Visit the Fullerton Arboretum on April 18 & 19 to buy plants, pottery and visit or help staff the Hills For Everyone information booth. Email us to volunteer.

A Wine Tasting Fundraiser

If you enjoy wine, good company and the hills -- this is the perfect way to drink to all three! Stay tuned on our website and let us know if you would like to help.

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. We do not share or sell our lists.

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.

TOOL TIME! MARCH 1ST WORKSHOP

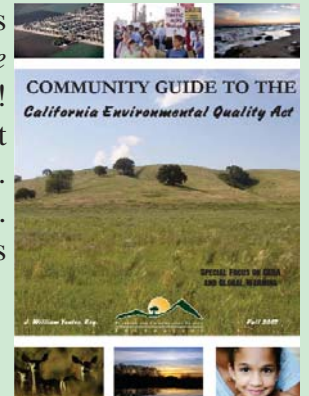
You've heard of EIRs and that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) could maybe help you save land. But you're not sure what it is all about. Have we got a deal for you.

On Saturday, March 1st Hills For Everyone is partnering with the statewide Planning and Conservation League Foundation (PCLF) to offer a training for citizens, advocates and agency staff to learn how to effectively use CEQA to influence development projects. PCLF has revised its *Community Guide to CEQA*, which offers helpful tips to empower you to participate in the environmental review process.

The Workshop will be held at the AQMD headquarters in Diamond Bar at 21865 Copley Drive from 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. The fee for registration is a sliding scale and covers morning coffee and a copy of the *Community Guide* (valued at \$35). Community members pay only \$35 for the *Guide* and Workshop - what a deal! Come add this important planning tool to your arsenal.

Registration is required. Learn more about this daylong workshop at:

www.HillsForEveryone.org



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

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