

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Newsletter No. 25

Fall 2010



YES ON PROPOSITION 21



Dr. Jeff Hansen

Prop. 21 establishes a trust fund to assure all State Parks can remain open so that we can all enjoy the hills for everyone, forever.

The future of our amazing California State Parks lies squarely in our hands. On November 2, California voters will be able to choose whether to continue to protect them or not. For the last 30 years, the State Legislature has been starving these wonderful wild spaces and significant historic places that define what we care about and what we want to remember.

Proposition 21 creates a stable funding source for State Parks by establishing a trust fund. California vehicles will get free day use admission in exchange for a new annual \$18 fee. (Out of state vehicles will continue to pay the regular access fees.) By comparison, the day use parking fee at Crystal Cove State Park is \$15, so you will have made this cost up with just one visit to this popular and nearby beach.

Conservation and environmental groups like The Nature Conservancy and Audubon California helped qualify the measure last spring. Labor and business groups also joined forces to place this measure on the ballot because our State Parks attract millions of tourists and tourist dollars each year. Indeed for every dollar spent from the state's General Fund, State Parks bring back \$2.35 to local and state governments.

Some have complained that parks should be paid for just by those who use them. Those folks forget we all pay for many services and programs we never use, from jails to restaurant inspections, but we still derive benefit from those programs. And we all benefit by having State Parks. Every dollar invested in parks comes back to us in the form of healthier lifestyles, business and job retention, sales tax revenues, and cleaner water.

As you know, we are working to protect the remaining natural lands in the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor from Whittier through Yorba Linda. By voting yes on Prop. 21, we demonstrate our commitment to adequately staff, protect, restore, and keep open existing parklands. This sends a clear message that parks are important to our families and our communities and can help us complete the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor.

Like the diverse support groups, we also see State Parks as a treasure entrusted to us and we simply cannot wait any longer for the Legislature to do its job. In an ideal world, state leaders would fund parks appropriately, but they have proven themselves to be incapable. So the public has an opportunity to say **Yes For State Parks with Proposition 21.**

www.YesForStateParks.com

ARUNDO REMOVAL

In April, the last landowner along the burned stretch of Carbon Canyon Creek (which flows through Chino Hills State Park) agreed to allow herbicide application on his property to eradicate the stubborn, invasive, and flammable *Arundo*. Staff from the Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA) sprayed within days. SAWA will soon issue a bid for contractors to remove the dead and dying plants in the canyon. Interestingly, even in its dead and dying state, *Arundo* is less flammable than when it is green and growing. When the rains come, what was not killed by spraying or removal will again be sprayed.

We are grateful that so many agencies joined our effort to help restore this creek and allow native plants and wildlife to return. These agencies include: California Department of Parks & Recreation (Chino Hills State Park), Caltrans, CalFire, Carbon Canyon Fire Safe Council, Chino Valley Fire District, City of Brea, City of Brea Fire Department, Santa Ana River & Orange County Weed Management Area, and the Santa Ana Watershed Association.



Dying *Arundo*, October 2010

Claire Schlotterbeck

MWD ROAD

Construction has begun on the north access road to the Metropolitan Water District water treatment plant through the main entrance of Chino Hills State Park. Noise, dust, and a painful view of the destruction of a walnut woodland await visitors at the entrance of Telegraph Canyon. The road work will continue through June 2011.



Two trucks prepare to pass one another on the new MWD road.

Melanie Schlotterbeck

WEBSITE REVAMPED

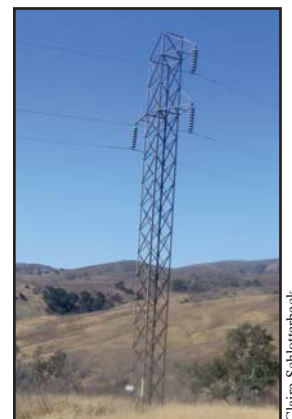
Our completely redesigned, renovated, user friendly website is up and running and ready for your visit at www.HillsForEveryone.org. See up-to-date project information, the "Latest News" feature on the home page, and you can now find us on Facebook!

EDISON LINE REMOVAL

Starting in early October 2010, over the next two months, Southern California Edison will begin removing about seven miles of deactivated transmission lines from Chino Hills State Park. A settlement agreement with Hills For Everyone required Edison to remove the towers in 1982. It never did.

Addressing this failure, the California Public Utilities Commission again ordered Edison to remove the towers in December 2009. The operation will require the use of helicopters (to reduce the footprint of the disturbance).

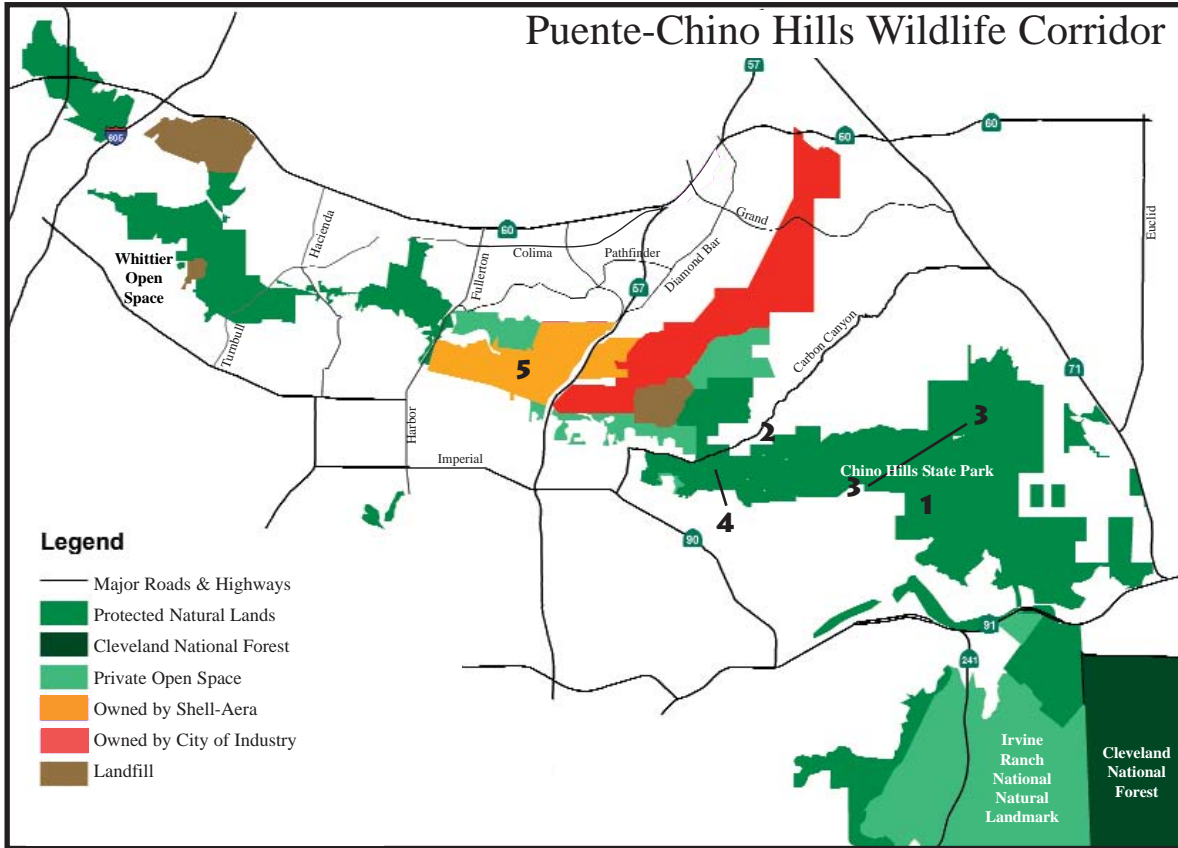
The base of operation will be the Equestrian Staging Area which will therefore be closed in October and November. Impacted roads and trails will also be closed as the job progresses. There will be signs and traffic control as needed. Edison may also decide to completely close the Park during certain phases of removal if safety issues warrant a closure.



Claire Schlotterbeck

AROUND THE CORRIDOR

Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



NUMBERS ON THE MAP

- 1 - Chino Hills SP
- 2 - Carbon Creek
- 3 - Edison Lines
- 4 - Visitor's Center
- 5 - Shell-Aera

TIME TO RENEW

RALPH'S COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION CYCLE

Thanks to all those who signed up for Ralph's donation program online. Ralph's current yearly cycle had ended. To continue to support HFE when you use your Ralph's card you will need to sign up again online starting September 1st. Our organizational number for this program is NPO #91199.



Go to: www.Ralphs.com click on Services, click on Community Contributions, near the bottom of the page click on "For Participant Questions, click here" and then click the "enroll" button.

UPCOMING DATES

- Sierra Club Hikes** (www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org)
- November 20th Rim Crest (CHSP in Yorba Linda)
 - December 11th Powder Canyon (La Habra Heights)
 - January 15th La Vida Trail (CHSP in Brea)
 - February 12th Seventh Ave. (Hacienda Heights)

Election November 2nd
Remember to Vote!

CITY OF INDUSTRY

Two recent articles in the Los Angeles Times shed light on City of Industry shenanigans. As you know Industry has purchased nearly all of the undeveloped land in beautiful Tonner Canyon. One of the Mayor's family businesses (Zerep) has provided management for the 5,700 acres. Visit our website to read these articles.

STATE PARK VISITOR'S CENTER

It's getting close. Located next to Carbon Canyon Regional Park in Brea, the new Visitor Center at the State Park is nearly complete. Restrooms and parking should be available by November though the interior of the building will not be finished until next spring. With the new parking lot available, parking will no longer be allowed along Carbon Canyon Road.



A THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF OUR HILLS - PART 2



Melanie Schlotterbeck

By Paul Spitzzeri

To the east in the Chino Hills, encouraging tourism arose with Carbon Canyon Road, which had been opened as an unpaved route in 1914. The creation, however, of Los Serranos Country Club in 1925 brought a proposal to improve and pave the road. When completed, the road served to bring golfers and buyers of lots in the adjacent subdivision to Los Serranos, while offering another cutoff to beach areas from inland locales.

Tourism also took advantage of the natural beauty and geologic features of the hills. In the Puente Hills, Alvarado Hot Springs in current Rowland Heights was actively used for decades, while its counterpart in the Chino Hills was La Vida Mineral Springs in Carbon Canyon, which opened in 1924 and operated for over 60 years. On the northern fringe of the Puente Hills in what is now Walnut there was a guest ranch called Silver Peak, which opened in the 1920s.

Some portions of the hills also attracted people seeking weekend getaways. A large-scale example was the purchase in the 1920s of several thousand acres in the Chino Hills by three wealthy men, Los Angeles Times publisher Harry Chandler, Puente Oil Company and former Los Angeles County Sheriff William Rowland, and oil executive Thomas Scott. The property, not surprisingly, became known as Tres Hermanos (Three Brothers) ranch, now owned by the City of Industry. On a more modest scale, Cleve Purington purchased about 80 acres in Carbon Canyon in the 1920s and developed the community of Sleepy Hollow, where people built rustic cabins for a quick out-of-town retreat. This was soon followed by Mountain View Estates a short distance to the east.

Meantime, a more unusual development for permanent residents at the extreme west end of the Puente Hills was the establishment, in the 1920s, of Rose Hills Memorial Park, a cemetery that was modest in its initial incarnation but grew into one of the largest cemeteries in the region.

As residential and tourist developments began to proliferate, the risk from natural and man-made disasters increased, including flooding, especially during the storms of 1927 and 1938, and wildfires, of which 1929 and 1958 were among the worst. Flood control became a major issue in Carbon Canyon after the 1938 deluge, although the Great Depression and World War II delayed implementation of control measures and limited development generally.

The post-World War II era brought many changes to the hills, first in the Puente Hills region as a huge influx of new residents from other states and “white flight” to suburbs lead to major building, by the 1960s, in Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights, Murphy Ranch in Whittier, and Diamond Bar to name a few prominent examples. Although the 1960s was the peak of this hillside development, projects have continued over the years and become more controversial as remaining acreage, including in closed oil fields, is targeted for housing projects. Other aspects of suburban development also included Rio Hondo College and the Puente Hills Landfill in the Puente Hills and the establishment of the Aerojet munitions testing facility in the Chino Hills, all of which came in the postwar period. A little known military component that was somewhat short lived was the establishment, in the Puente Hills, of two Nike missile silos, one above Rio Hondo College and the other north of the Memory Garden Memorial Park in Brea.

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SHELL-AERA FLIP-FLOPS AGAIN

Aera Energy, the wholly owned subsidiary of Shell/ExxonMobil owns the natural lands above Brea and Rowland Heights, between the 57 Freeway and Harbor Blvd. The company appears to be playing a strange game.

After five years of processing its 3,600 unit development through Los Angeles County, Aera was told by the County to revise and downsize the project. Instead, in late 2006, Aera picked up stakes and took the same project proposal to Diamond Bar in hopes of being annexed into that city. Again, Aera was told to make it a greener project, downsize, and reduce the footprint (grading). Now Aera is no longer processing the project in Diamond Bar and the city will soon be formally ending the application.

Despite an additional 50,000 vehicle trips a day generated by the project, Aera continues to refuse to pay for improvements to the 57 Freeway. Both Diamond Bar and Brea are not happy about that.

Apparently Aera plans to return to Los Angeles County for project approvals, but the County has not yet received a formal application. It will be interesting to see if the project has changed. Aera has long touted a need for executive homes but the bottom has dropped out of that market in the recession and there is a flood of executive homes for sale.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

In the meantime, the Aera property was on a short list for potential funding from Measure M, Orange County's transportation sales tax measure, to save the land. Aera had stated publicly that they were willing to look at a sale for preservation by using funds from this measure, but in April, Aera removed itself from consideration. The next round of funding comes in the summer of 2011.

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Concerning some of the stranger proposals that never got much further than initial planning was an idea to convert State Route 39 into a multi-lane freeway through the heart of the Puente Hills to connect Orange County to the San Gabriel Valley and another that involved an international airport in the Chino Hills. In recent years, a planned reservoir project by the City of Industry in Tonner Canyon, part of the Chino Hills area, has generated significant controversy.

The intersection between continued development and preservation movements has created significant tensions, but also resulted in the important protection of thousands of acres of the hills. In particular, the creation of Chino Hills State Park in the early 1980s and subsequent conservation of parcels in the western and central Puente Hills as part of the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority. More broadly, the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority

is charged with preserving a functional wildlife corridor between the Santa Ana Mountains and the Puente Hills in Whittier. Projects such as Canyon Crest in Brea (shown below), Shell-Aera in the Rowland Heights/Diamond Bar/Brea area, and a proposed reservoir in Tonner Canyon represent the last of the major parcels under dispute. Their futures speak volumes about the future viability of the communities around them. Today's economic uncertainties might well yield to future development booms that will increase the pressure for these projects to be approved.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Canyon Crest

WHAT KIND OF CAT IS THAT?



Dr. Jeff Hansen

Recent sightings in backyards in Carbon Canyon have prompted resident concern and interest. Was that a bobcat we saw or was it a cougar? If you can keep your composure at the thrill of a sighting, look for these differences.

A bobcat is much smaller than a mountain lion. It has tufted ears that are pointy like a house cat. It is spotted and has a very short tail (4-7 inch long). Bobcats eat small animals like squirrels, rabbits, and mice. A bobcat is shown in the left photo.

A cougar, on the other hand, has no spots and is a brown / tawny color. It has rounded ears and a very long tail (up to 3 feet long). They are much larger than a bobcat. Their diet is usually composed of deer, but in hard times, they will eat anything. Due to the fire and drought of recent years, these are hard times. A cougar is shown in the right photo.

NEWSLETTER RECIPIENTS

If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, call 714-687-1555 or email us at info@HillsForEveryone.org.

EMAIL UPDATES

If you haven't heard from us in a while, be sure we have the right email address for you. We do not share or sell our lists. Send your name and email address to: info@HillsForeveryone.org.

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OIL DRILLING UPDATE

The Whittier Hills Oil project EIR can be found at <http://www.CityOfWhittier.org/> Go to the Minerals Extraction Project EIR for this very extensive report. Comments are due December 6th.

OUR PARK IS A STAR!

Earlier this year, Chino Hills State Park served as a backdrop for filming for a segment in a documentary on the history of California State Parks. Production has wrapped up and the completed film will be delivered for distribution to PBS stations in December. Rest assured we will keep you informed of the dates when this film will air. Chino Hills was featured because this wilderness park lies near an otherwise underserved population.



Claire Schlotterbeck

POWERPOINTS AVAILABLE

Looking for a program for your service club, church group, scout troop, homeowner association or environmental club? We offer free programs, full of pictures, and insightful information and we can design it based on what you want to learn about in the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor. Email info@HillsForEveryone.org