

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 24

Winter 2010

STATE PARKS - TO BE OR NOT TO BE

State Parks protect the very best of California. They are the canvas upon which our state's beauty, natural diversity, and rich history are captured. From our beaches to the soaring Sierras, from haunting gold mining towns to much needed recreational areas near urban centers, our state parks belong to no one and to everyone, for now and for tomorrow. California's 278 state parks are priceless public treasures and a vital legacy for our children and grandchildren. **But they are in peril.**

In response to the ongoing attacks on these treasures, a statewide coalition of park supporters has come together to propose a solution. **This coalition is currently circulating an initiative that calls on Californians to support their state park system** and wildlife conservation areas by paying \$18 annually for a State Park Access Pass on their vehicle's registration. In exchange, they would gain free day use to all State Parks and Beaches. This initiative establishes a separate fund so that parks will no longer rely on general fund support and be subject to the whims of those who are willing to forget who we are.

Nearly 220 parks were threatened with closure last year and all are at risk yet again. Chino Hills State Park and many others are now closed more than they are open. Make no mistake, if they remain closed, the door to abuse will be opened wide. Off roading,



Chino Hills State Park springtime glory.

Dr. Jeff Hansen

poaching, dangerous partying, and arson will do irreparable and expensive harm.

Sometimes a moment comes along when we will decide who we will be and whether or not we will honor all of the effort that has come before us in establishing the first state park system the world has ever seen. We will decide whether our grandchildren will be able to step foot in a mission the way we were able to, or whether they will be able visit the only place in the west where freshwater cascades off a cliff into the Pacific.

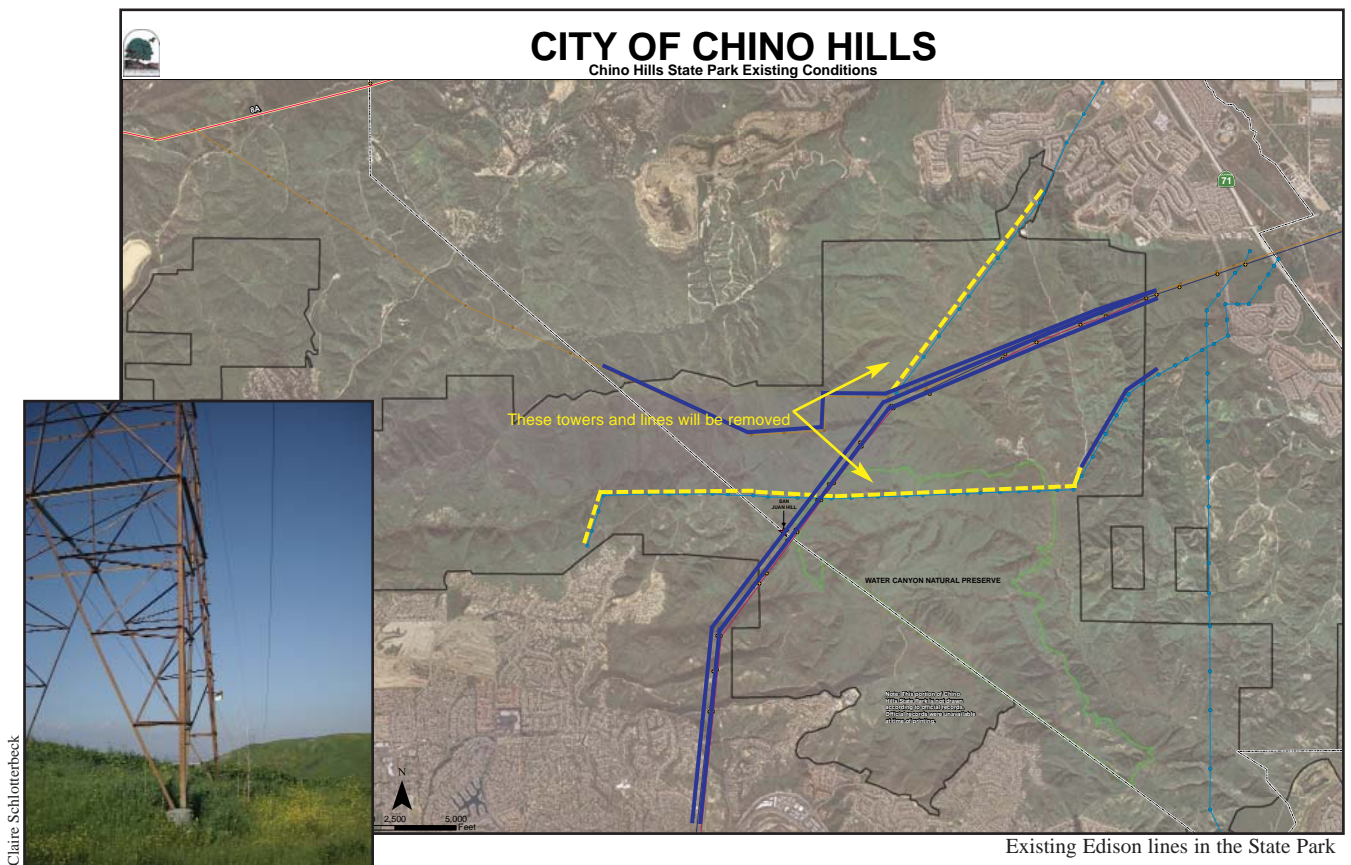
The initiative is written. Let's argue the merits of it once it qualifies. Until then it is all theory. We can tell you it was written by the best minds in the business and they plugged as many loopholes as possible. We can also tell you that the folks in charge of signature gathering have never failed to qualify an initiative for the ballot. So, if you lend your time, you will be successful. **If you want to help, we need you.** Volunteer teams are gathering signatures throughout the Wildlife Corridor. We will show you the ropes, give you the materials, and help you step into this role. We can meet our goal if you give three hours a month for the next three months.

To give the gift of your time, please call 714-687-1555 or email us at info@HillsForEveryone.org. For more information on the initiative itself or the statewide effort, visit www.YesForStateParks.com.



Claire Schlottenbeck

BIGGER EDISON TOWERS COMING OUR WAY



In mid-December the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) approved Southern California Edison's Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project (TRTP). Designed to bring more renewable energy to the region, the route begins in the Tehachapi Mountains in Kern County and ends in the Inland Empire. One leg of the TRTP project cuts through the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor. On the western side of the Corridor, the new taller towers and widened right-of-way will impact tremendously the Habitat Authority lands, yet the PUC failed to require Edison to specify adequate mitigation for impacts to these protected lands. There will be temporary, permanent, and cumulative impacts to the biology and aesthetics of the hills there.

On the eastern side of the hills, the PUC approved Edison's preferred route which will traverse neighborhoods in the City of Chino Hills on a small existing easement. As you may recall, Hills For Everyone, in conjunction with the City of Chino Hills, designed an alternative through the State Park. This alternative would have actually reduced the number of towers, lines, and spur roads by realigning the existing lines in the Park and removing others altogether. Ultimately, the PUC decided there were elements of unpredictability in this alternative with which they did not want to cope.

The City of Chino Hills has challenged this decision by filing an appeal with the State Supreme Court. They have also filed suit in Superior Court in San Bernardino County claiming that Edison is overburdening its easement. The existing lines in the neighborhood can carry 220 kV lines whereas the new lines will carry a whopping 500 kV.

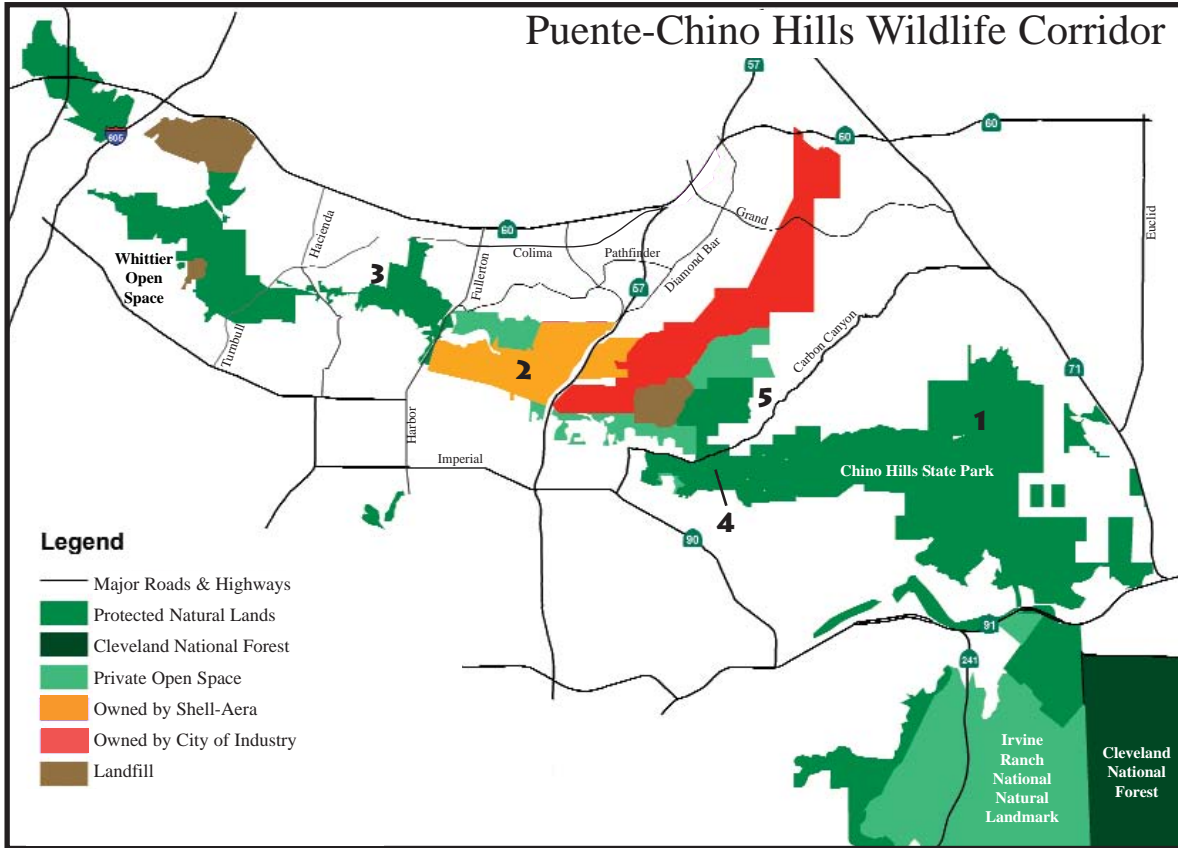
During the environmental and hearing processes, it came to light that Edison had failed to fulfill its obligations to remove approximately seven miles of inactive towers in the State Park. This obligation stems from a lawsuit and subsequent settlement with Hills For Everyone dating back to 1982. In December 2009, Edison was pushed to sign a formal agreement with the Department of Parks and Recreation outlining the steps to remove these towers in 2010, some 28 years late. We consider this a significant, though belated, victory to improve the Park's views and visitor experience.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE CITY OF INDUSTRY'S SHENANIGANS?

Read Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Victor Valle's new book which details the history, corruption, and scandals surrounding this rogue city. The book, [City of Industry Genealogies of Power in Southern California](#), is now available online and in stores.

AROUND THE CORRIDOR

Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



NUMBERS ON THE MAP

- 1 - Powerlines
- 2 - Shell-Aera
- 3 - Pacific Heights
- 4 - Visitor's Center
- 5 - Canyon Crest

MEASURE M, MAKING PROGRESS

In November 2006, Orange County voters passed Measure M, a half-cent sales tax for transportation. Over 30 environmental groups endorsed and helped pass the measure because over \$240 million for conservation funding was called out to mitigate habitat impacts of freeway projects. The money is to be spent acquiring and restoring significant resource lands. The Environmental Oversight Committee has been meeting for two years developing the criteria and process for selection of lands. Four properties in our area met the biological criteria and are still in the running for potential acquisition as long as the landowner is cooperating. These properties include the Shell-Aera land on the hills along the 57 freeway and three properties in Carbon Canyon next to the State Park.

PACIFIC HEIGHTS APPROVED, BUT IMPROVED

The 47 unit Pacific Heights project on 114 acres next to Schabarum Park was approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors late last year. Though it will destroy many oak trees, some improvements to the project were made. These include: donation of property to L.A. County Parks, longer monitoring for oak tree restoration, no fuel modification on public park land, payment of park-in-lieu fees, and a potential trail easement to Habitat Authority lands.

VISITOR CENTER RESTART

Stalled by the state bond crisis last year, the State Park Visitor Center project next to Carbon Canyon Regional Park has kicked back into gear. The building will be completed this summer with the parking lot and restrooms open for the public probably by July. State Park's staff envision that the interpretive exhibits will be completed by Spring 2011.

UPCOMING DATES

- Sierra Club Hikes (www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org)
 - March 13 Lower Aliso Canyon (CHSP in Chino Hills)
 - April 10 Rim Crest (CHSP in Yorba Linda)
 - May 15 Hills For Everyone Trail (CHSP in Chino Hills)

We could use some volunteer help!

- April 17 Earth Day at the barn in Chino Hills State Park
- April 17 Green Scene at the Fullerton Arboretum
- May 22 Avocado Festival at the Park in La Habra Heights

A THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF OUR HILLS - PART 1



Melanie Schlotterbeck

By Paul Spitzzeri

If you look at a topographic map of the world you will see that most mountain ranges run north-south. Not so our hills. Part of the unusual east-west Transverse Range formed by the bend of the San Andreas Fault, the Chino and Puente Hills are now surrounded by and, in many cases, absorbed within a huge metropolitan area. The transformation of the landscape of these hills, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon, subjected to technological changes from the late 19th-century onward.

This is not to say the hills were of no use or importance to native peoples. From hunting and gathering to the use of natural springs to transportation and to the identification with spiritual sites, the hills were part of Indian life for thousands of years. Yet, the significant physical changes to the hills was not to occur until the late 19th century and beyond.

The first written record of these hills was provided by Father Juan Crespí, a member of the Portolá Expedition, the first land-based exploration by Spaniards. In his diary on 30 July 1769, the priest wrote:

We set out about seven o'clock in the morning. . . from the knoll here at the Saint Martha village, taking a due north-northwestward course. We went down the knoll and crossed the large valley I spoke of. . . Once across this valley here, which has very fine soil and better grass, we went up a pass, all grass-grown and sheer soil, and came into hollows with very large live oaks, and sycamores, and through these, on going three hours in which we must have made three leagues, we came down to a very wide-reaching, green, exceedingly spacious valley of dark, very level friable soil, all burnt off by the heathens.

The Saint Martha village was an expedition campsite near an Indian village located at or near Hillcrest Park in Fullerton. Despite a 1930s historical marker in Brea Canyon that claimed the Expedition went that direction, Crespí clearly states that the group went up a pass (la abra, corrupted into La Habra) that is most likely the route of Hacienda Boulevard through La Habra Heights and Hacienda Heights. When the Expedition reached a large valley, they named it San Miguel (now the San Gabriel Valley).

After the creation of Mission San Gabriel, first at Whittier Narrows in 1771 and then upland at its current location within a few years, the Puente Hills were part of that mission's domains and it is likely that much or all of the Chino Hills were, as well. When the missions were secularized in the 1830s, private ranchos were created from the lands once controlled by the mission. Among these were La Puente, Paso de Bartolo, La Habra, Cañada de la Brea and Del Chino, all of which were located on portions of the two hill systems. Importantly, significant portions of the hill areas were left as public land to allow ranchers (such as William Workman, John Rowland, and Pio Pico) to graze their cattle and horses in common.

Little changed with the use of the hills until the latter 19th century. On the north slope of the Puente Hills in present-day Rowland Heights, oil was discovered in 1885 by William R. Rowland and partner William Lacy, who created the Puente Oil Company. In 1896, Edward Doheny, developer of the first oil well in Los Angeles, drilled a successful well in the western reaches of the Chino Hills at Olinda that launched the oil industry in Orange County. Later, significant fields were opened in Whittier, La Habra, and Brea that included hill areas. Although there are still a few producing wells, many of the fields have

NEW OWNER OF THE CANYON CREST PROPERTY

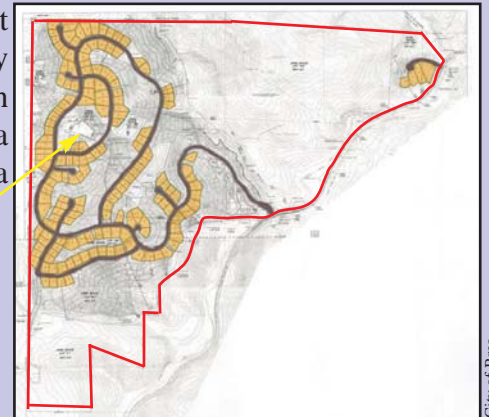
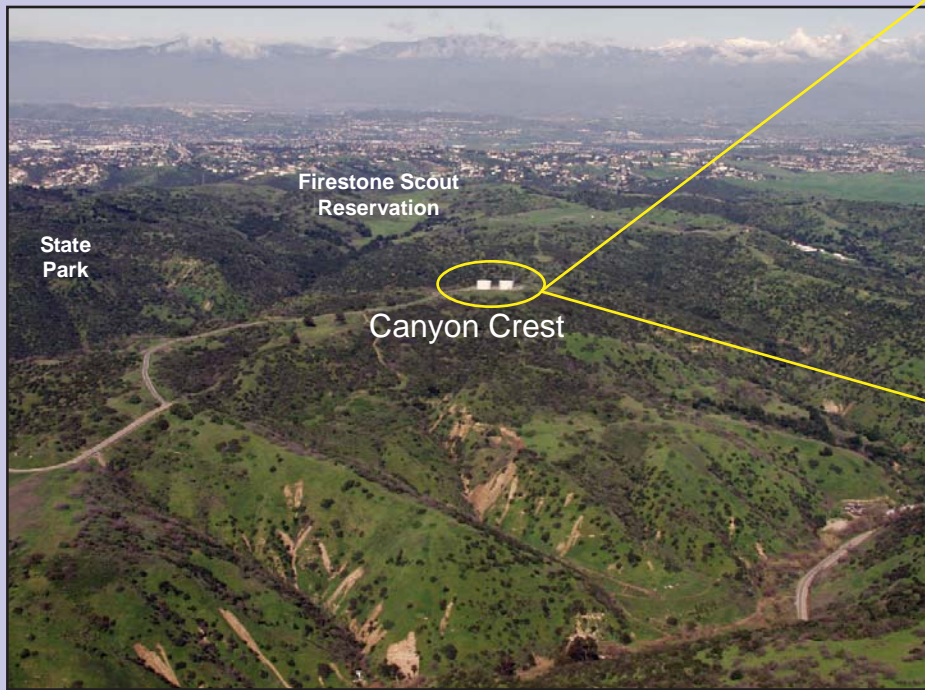
The troubled Canyon Crest property in Brea has a new owner, Old Standard Life Insurance, the former note holder for the land. The Shopoff Group, known for purchasing “distressed properties,” is now out of the picture. They had carefully carried favor in Brea political circles with donations and support for popular community groups. This property appears to have been more distressed than even they could handle.

The 367-acre aptly named ridge top property can be seen from the

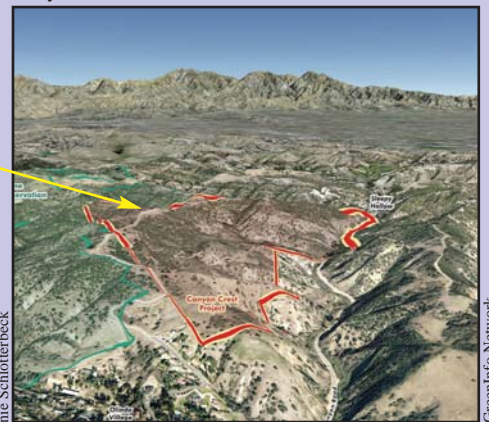
ocean, with its two distinctive white water tanks. It is located on the land that spans all the way from the State Park north of Carbon Canyon road to the San Bernardino County line, east of Olinda Village. The proposed 165-unit project was headed toward approval before the November 2008 fire hit the hills and burned the site.

Old Standard is evaluating what to do next. This is complicated by the fact they themselves are in bankruptcy. In the meantime, Brea is assessing to what extent a

Supplemental Environmental Impact Report is required and what it would look at anew - biology, grading, public safety? When the fire decimated the project site, the “existing conditions” (upon which the original environmental review document was based) changed considerably.



Canyon Crest Site Plan



Melanie Schlotterbeck

City of Brea

GreenInfo Network

Continued from page 5

been closed and protected as open space. Other land, has been converted to or proposed for development.

Development for residences, in fact, did not, by and large, reach the hills until the 1910s. A Los Angeles syndicate bought land at the north side of the Puente Hills from the estate of “Lucky” Baldwin and created North Whittier Heights, later called Hacienda Heights. In the 1920s, North Whittier Heights sales agent, Edwin Hart, developed La Habra Heights on the southern reaches of the hill system. Rideout Heights in the hills northwest of downtown Whittier was another early subdivision.

There was also an emerging tourist angle to the hills. With the creation of North Whittier Heights, a movement formed to build a cutoff road through the Puente Hills that would shorten the drive from the inland valleys to the coast. The result, in 1915, was the opening of Turnbull Canyon Road. Postcards were printed and a map issued by the Automobile Club of Southern California to encourage locals and visitors to enjoy a nice Sunday drive on the route.

To be continued in the next newsletter..

BBQ EVENT A SUCCESS

Many thanks to Duane and Luz Thompson for hosting our barbeque fundraiser at their lovely Brea home. We are greatly indebted to the planning team of Ofelia Bermudez, Anne Cote, Kelly Reed, Melanie Schlotterbeck, and Duane Thompson. If you are looking for a tasty tri tip caterer we suggest local resident Vance

Stearns who's great cooking filled us all (<http://www.CharlasTriTip.com>).

The Nature of Wildworks was a popular attraction at the party. Guests enjoyed the stately redtail hawk, the lively red fox, barn owl, and the stunning, though non-native, African serval. Entertainment kudos go to Dr. Jay Bock and his band *Last Chance* who, by popular

demand, entertained the crowd into the night. The volunteer hosts at the beer stations meted out their guests' choices with great aplomb and we thank them for their donations. Finally, we are very grateful to the many attendees whose generous support made it a successful and amusing evening.

Photos by Melanie Schlotterbeck, unless otherwise indicated



Sona McCoy



Sona McCoy

EMAIL UPDATES

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.

POWERPOINTS AVAILABLE

Free PowerPoint presentations to interested groups on the threats and possibilities for the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor are available. Email info@HillsForEveryone.org

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