

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Newsletter No. 27

Fall 2012



TOO MANY FIRES, TOO OFTEN



Claire Schlotterbeck



Claire Schlotterbeck

These photographs show the difference in vegetation on one property in Carbon Canyon after just one fire.

Following the November 2008 Freeway Complex Fire which burned over 30,000 acres in four counties, Hills For Everyone became curious about the frequency and location of fires occurring in this region. As founders of the 14,100 acre Chino Hills State Park, our interest was more than passing. It was evident that fires were taking a toll on the Park. The 2008 fire burned 95% of Chino Hills State Park in the most devastating assault we had seen to date.

Environmental Scientist with the Park confirmed what we were seeing. Too frequent fires were causing the vegetation to “type convert” from highly valued oak and walnut woodlands, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub to non-native annual grasslands. These grasses are highly flammable because they dry earlier, ignite easier, and spread fire faster than native vegetation. In addition, non-native vegetation lacks the nutritional value to support the array of wildlife in the Park. From bugs to birds to bobcats wildlife depend on native plants.

We began to wonder what could be done to reduce the frequency of fires to slow the decline of the Park’s heralded and now dwindling natural resources. Federal, state, county, local, and private groups have invested over \$150 million to protect these hills because of their rich biodiversity and proximity to urban weary residents. As part of the 31 mile long

Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor, the State Park serves as the anchor parcel for the Corridor and as a visual and recreational relief for millions of residents who live near the hills or drive by them every day.

Methodology

We began by securing digital files and other fire data from CalFire, Orange County Fire Authority, Chino Valley Independent Fire District, and Inland Empire District of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. We eventually also searched the archives of the area’s eight newspapers including the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register, and the Press Enterprise. Our goal was to understand where fires burned, where they started, and what caused them. In the end, the research covered nearly 100 years of fires.

We limited the study to the Chino Hills area because our cumulative recollections did not recall the same severity and frequency of fires in the Puente Hills in eastern Los Angeles County.

Our database included the fire name (if it had one), perimeter, point of origin, cause, acreage, alarm date, and data source. When available, we added the weather features on the dates of the fires as well.

The Results

Three main maps emerged: one with perimeters, one with points of origins and causes, and one that

is an overlay of all of the fires to see what areas burn most often—the darker the color the more frequent the area has burned. The latter map, Fire Frequency is shown below.

We learned that most fires start (1) in the east-west trending Santa Ana Canyon in Yorba Linda, Anaheim, and Corona along the 91 Freeway, (2) along Carbon Canyon Road in Brea, and (3) near Rim Crest in Yorba Linda, an unplanned access point into the State Park. We also found that arson, powerlines, and car fires ignited the most fires.

Report Released

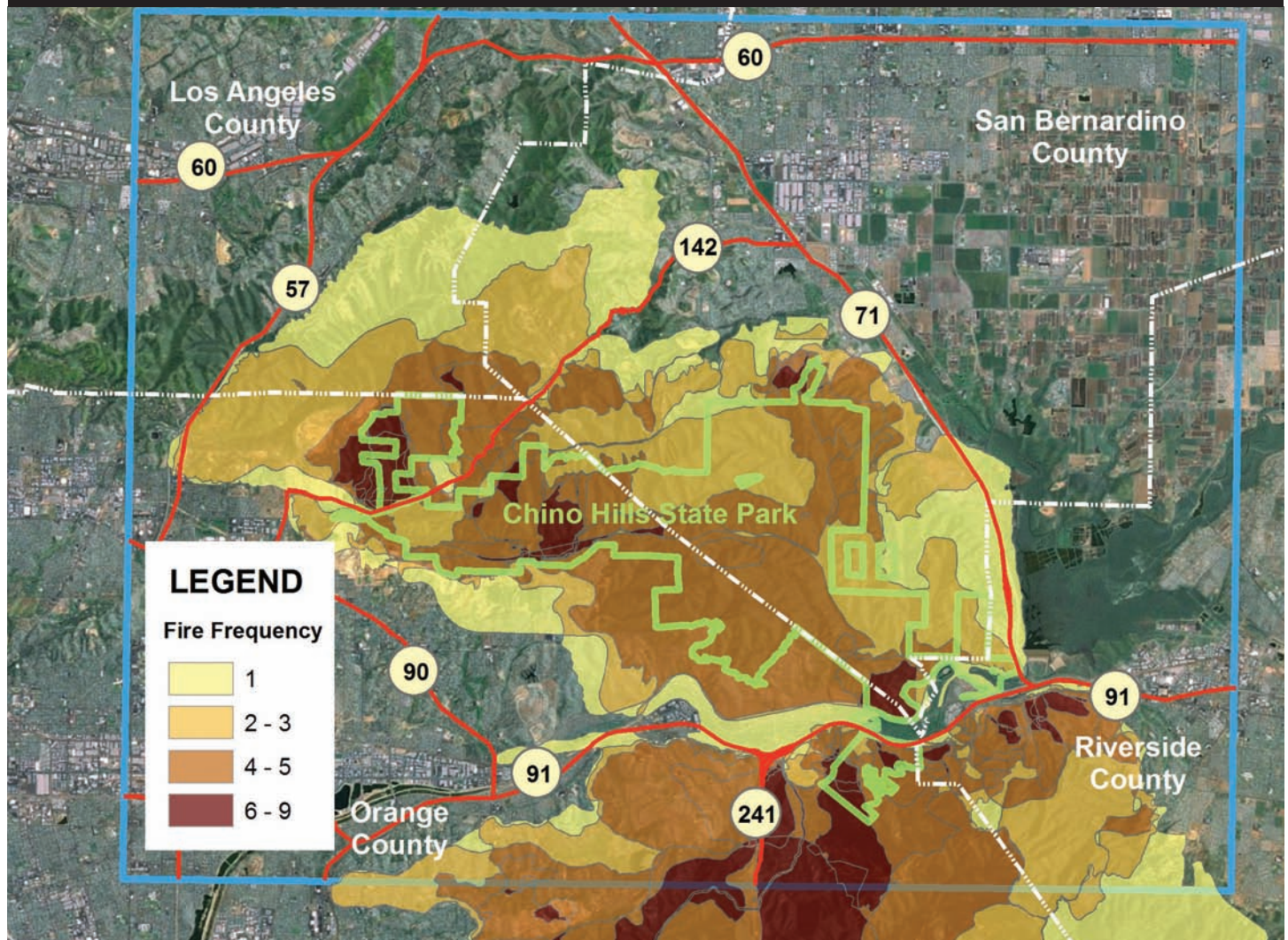
Over time our goal evolved to not only share this data with the responsible agencies and residents but with the press as well. We were increasingly frustrated when we heard newspaper, television or radio accounts of a fire burning in our area and causing “great concern because the land had not burned in decades.” We knew better and now we can prove it.

The Fire Study includes interactive maps viewable on Google Earth, and instructions on how that program works. They are available on our website: www.HillsForEveryone.org.



Nicholas Staldon

FIRE FREQUENCY OF CHINO HILLS STATE PARK



YORBA LINDA HOUSING PROJECTS IGNITE LAND USE BATTLES

Yorba Linda residents were shocked to awaken to scraped ridges on the hillsides in early July as trenching ripped up land to the east of Casino Ridge. It was preparatory work to determine the location of the Whittier fault for a huge housing project. The decision on this project will be made by Orange County Board of Supervisors as it is an “island” of county jurisdiction and not within Yorba Linda’s city limits.

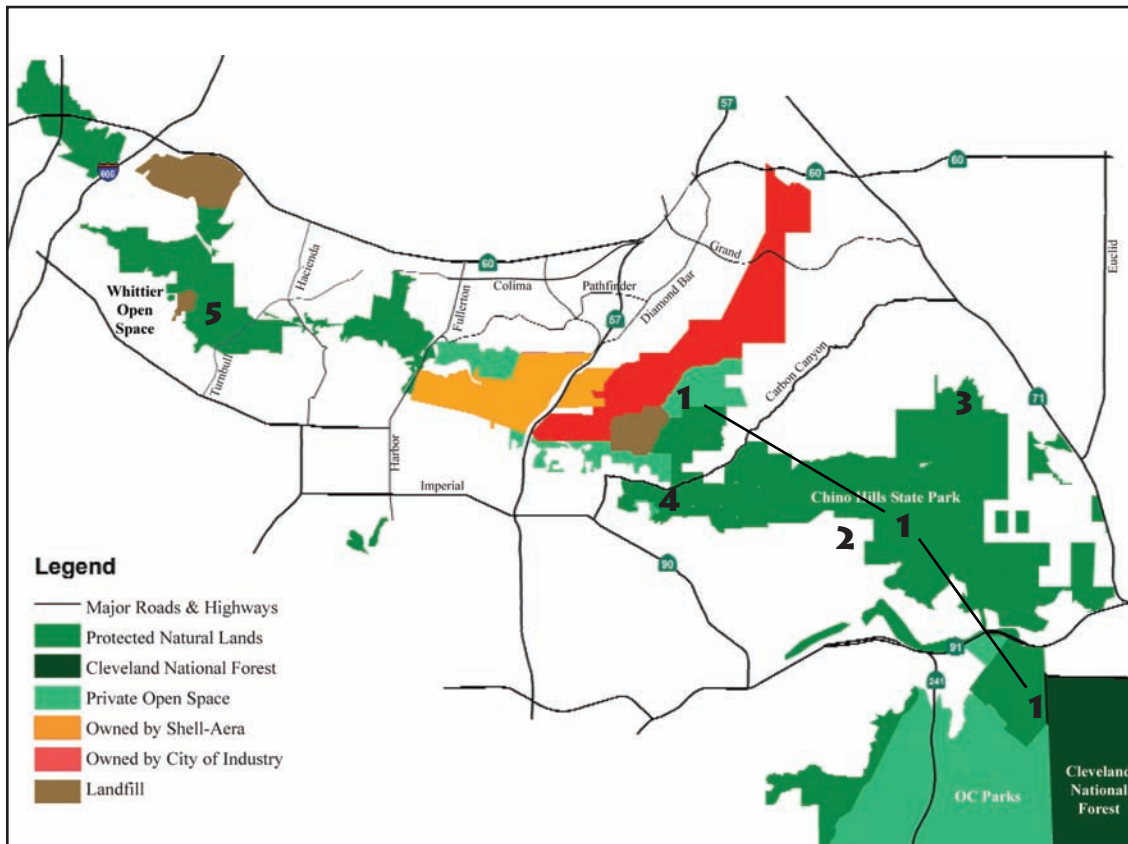
This project will be known as the Esperanza Hills (formerly Yorba Linda Estates/Murdock). The developer has not yet filed the application with the County. It calls for 340 houses on 469 acres on very steep terrain in an area that has burned three times. Several adjacent property owners could propose even more houses but have not yet joined this development effort. The plan includes the main ingress and egress off of Aspen and San Antonio with emergency access available through other neighborhoods including Hidden Hills and Stonehaven.

A second and neighboring project, Cielo Vista—Sage, proposes 112 houses on 84 acres along San Antonio with access for 17 houses off of Aspen Way and access of Via Del Agua for the other 95 units. A meeting was held in mid-July to notify the public that an Environmental Impact Report is being prepared since an application has been filed with Orange County Planning. Three agencies that commented on this project all recommended that the two developments be combined for review since access through Cielo Vista is required for the Esperanza Hills project.

Those who experienced the Freeway Complex Fire, recall that gridlock greeted them at Yorba Linda Boulevard whether they were fleeing the flames from San Antonio or Via del Agua – even without an additional nearly 500 houses.



AROUND THE CORRIDOR



NUMBERS ON THE MAP

- 1** - Fire Study Area
- 2** - Esperanza Hills and Cielo Vista
- 3** - Bane Canyon
- 4** - Discovery Center
- 5** - Habitat Authority

UPCOMING EVENTS



SEPT. 8TH

Fundraiser and local premiere of *California Forever* 3 PM or 7 PM. Buy show tickets at www.HillsForEveryone.org



SEPT. 15TH

Habitat Authority's Volunteer Orientation Day from 9 - Noon. Get details on the training at www.HabitatAuthority.org



SEPT. 22ND

Habitat Authority's Wildlife Track Hike in Arroyo San Miguel at 8 AM. Learn more at www.HabitatAuthority.org



OCT. 20TH

Sierra Club Hike at Powder Canyon (La Habra Heights) begins at 9 AM. Learn more at www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org



NOV. 17TH

Sierra Club Hike at Rim Crest (Chino Hills SP) begins at 9 AM. Learn more at www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org



DEC. 8TH

Sierra Club Hike at Hellman Canyon (Whittier) begins at 9 AM. Learn more at www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org



JAN. 5TH

Sierra Club Hike at Coal Canyon (Chino Hills SP) begins at 9 AM. Learn more at www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org



FEB. 2ND

Sierra Club Hike on the La Vida Trail (Chino Hills SP) begins at 9 AM. Learn more at www.SaveTheWildlifeCorridor.org

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE HILLS

SHOPPING AT RALPH'S CAN SUPPORT THE HILLS

If you are a Ralph's shopper, please re-enroll your Ralph's card to continue to support HFE when you shop. If you'd like to continue supporting the hills, cards must be re-enrolled beginning 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. Thank you!

WIN A GIFT CARD!!

Hills For Everyone will provide a \$25 Staples gift card during a drawing that will happen at our fundraiser on September 8th. How do you win? Simply "Like" the Hills For Everyone Facebook page by September 6th to be included in the drawing.



GET A SECURE HOLD ON THE FUTURE



FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Thoughtful estate planning includes considering:

- Your own financial future and retirement
- Your family's financial security
- A safe and healthy environment for future generations

Hills For Everyone will be establishing a legacy program in the coming months. In the meantime, if you are interested in information about estate planning options please let us know by emailing info@HillsForEveryone.org or calling 714-671-1555. More details will be provided in a future newsletter on planned giving opportunities.

CORRIDOR UPDATES

STATE PARK ENTRANCE ROAD TO BE CLOSED FOR ONE YEAR

The Bane Canyon area is now closed for a year to public vehicles and all trail users as construction crews begin work on the long awaited paving of the access road. The Equestrian Staging Area and Campground will also be closed until construction is completed. The access road will not be widened much and, where topography allows, it will be realigned away from the sensitive streamside area. Best of all, it will be wide enough for school busses. The funding comes from federal park funds as well as Park Bond Acts passed by voters.

Day use trails can still be accessed from other entrances so this might be a good time to explore the other areas of this 14,100 acre park in three counties.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

DOGS AND PARK WILDLIFE

Why are dogs restricted in the State Park? The mission of the State Park system is to protect the health of the habitat and wildlife they steward. When dogs roam the landscape they interfere with bobcats in particular. Their urine and feces (scat) can cause bobcats to avoid the area where a dog has been present. Life is hard enough for wild animals. Please follow the rules—never let your dog run off leash and only take them in designated areas.



Melanie Schlotterbeck



Dr. Jeff Hansen

DISCOVERY CENTER

This fall the interpretive exhibits will be installed in the main building at the Discovery Center. The exhibits are scheduled to be finished by the end of November. A grand opening is planned for January 2013.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Discovery Center please stop by. There are many opportunities including the construction and development of the native plant nursery. Educational programs are also being developed. Email jlclagett@parks.ca.gov for more information.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

BREAKING NEWS

The Whittier City Council voted to send up to \$2 million a year in oil royalties to the Habitat Authority which manages the nearly 4,000 acres of protected lands in and near Whittier. The money would come from the controversial oil and gas drilling project that was approved on Habitat Authority lands in November 2011. The funds are supposed to enhance the funding for the Authority once the Puente Hills Landfill closes in 2013.

The oil drilling project is still mired in lawsuits filed by a local group the Open Space Legal Defense Fund, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Mountains and Recreation Authority sued the city. These lawsuits have charged that the city is violating Proposition A which was a park bond measure approved by Los Angeles County voters in 1992. Funds from that measure helped acquire land that the oil drilling will occur on.



presents a local premiere of the PBS film
about California's State Parks:



SEPTEMBER 8, 2012
Matinee: 3 pm
Evening: 7 pm

You are invited to join Hills For Everyone for a fun and entertaining event on September 8th at the State Park Discovery Center at 4500 Carbon Canyon Road in Brea. We will be holding a local premiere of the film *California Forever*, the story of our wonderful State Parks. It features numerous parks including our own Chino Hills State Park. Tickets can be purchased on our website or using the form (shown right).

Show Times:

- A matinee will be held at 3:00 PM with tickets for a family of four for \$40 or \$12.50 per person.
- The evening gathering begins at 7:00 PM with tickets per couple for \$40 or \$25 per person.

Evening Silent Auction with Wine and Desserts

Those that attend our evening showing will be able to bid on wonderful silent auction items, including but not limited to:

- Gift baskets,
- A condo rental at Mammoth Lakes,
- Artwork and quilts,
- Gift cards and more!

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.

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Claire Schlotterbeck
Editor: Melanie Schlotterbeck

TICKET PURCHASE & DONATION FORM

- I'd love to attend. I'd like to buy:
- ___ Individual Ticket (3 PM) x \$12.50 = \$ _____
- ___ Family Pack (3 PM) x \$40 = \$ _____
- ___ Individual Ticket (7 PM) x \$25 = \$ _____
- ___ Couples Ticket (7 PM) x \$40 = \$ _____
- I can't make it but I'd like to support the hills with a donation of \$ _____ to Hills For Everyone.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Make checks payable to Hills For Everyone and mail payment/donation with this form to us at:
P.O. Box 9835
Brea, CA 92822-1835

POWERPOINTS AVAILABLE

Hills For Everyone representatives provide informative presentations to interested groups. Topics may include biodiversity, achievements, threats or possibilities, and fires history of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor. Schedule a presentation by emailing us at: info@HillsForEveryone.org.



Hills For Everyone
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