

Hills For Everyone

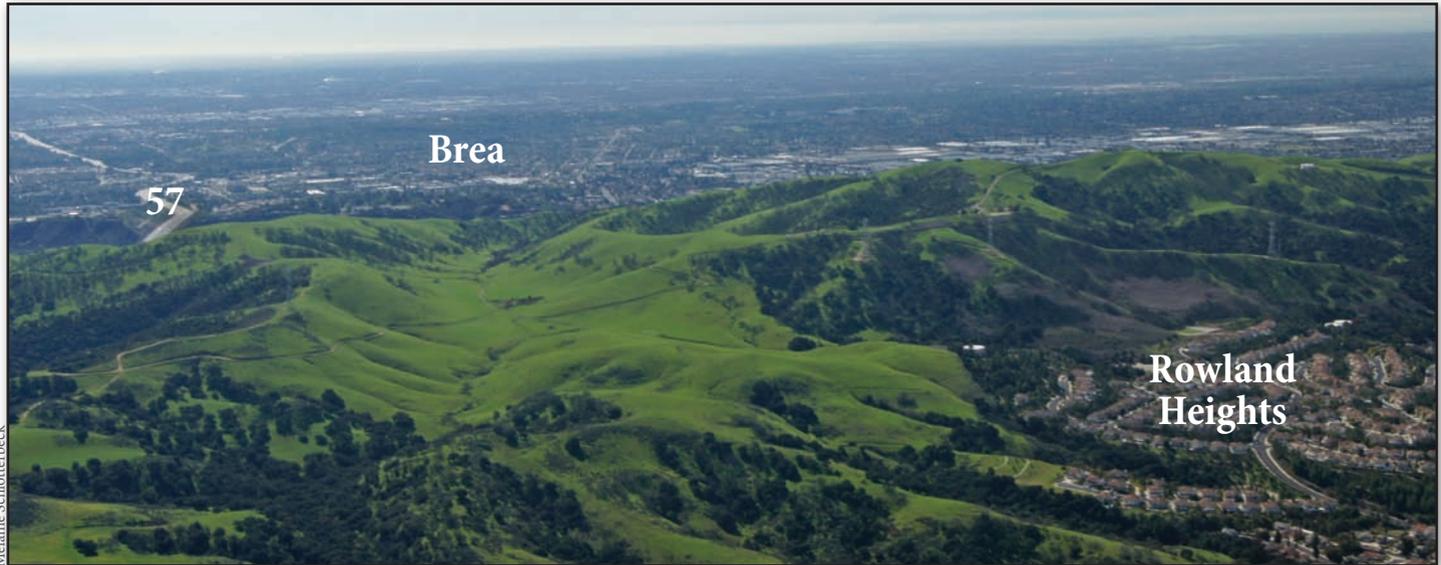
Friends of the
Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 28

Spring 2013

Hillside Coalition Goes After Conservation Funding



The Hillside Open Space Education Coalition was formed to protect the Aera Energy property, shown above.

A step by step legislative and planning process may yield funds for local land conservation. Nearly a decade ago the cities of Whittier, Brea, La Habra, and La Habra Heights and the unincorporated communities of Hacienda Heights and Rowland Heights united in a common effort to protect the 3,000 acres of land owned by Aera Energy. The group is called the Hillside Open Space Education Coalition (HOSEC).

These six communities committed over \$500,000 toward the conservation effort. The Coalition's fund has grown over the years and the leadership continues to meet as needed even as Aera has been focused on developing other properties.

Aera is a subsidiary of Shell and ExxonMobil, and it has proposed 3,600 houses on the property which would add an additional 50,000 car trips a day to area streets and likely sever the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor. The land is located east and west of the 57 freeway and extends across the hills to Harbor Boulevard.

There are essentially four steps to this legislative and planning process which could lead to conservation funding for our hills:

Step 1 - Curb Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The State of California has been taking steps to address climate change. In 2006, California enacted AB 32 (the Global Warming Solutions Act) that requires the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 1990 levels by 2020.

Step 2 - Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled

A complementary bill was passed in 2008 to help achieve AB 32's objectives. This bill, SB 375 (the Sustainable Communities Planning Act), requires a reduction in the vehicle miles traveled (how much we drive) in passenger vehicles by linking transportation, housing, and land use decisions.

Step 3 - Establish a Cap and Trade Program

One mechanism that the state can utilize to reduce GHG is a system of cap and trade—a market-based approach to reduce emissions by incentivizing pollution reduction. In order to direct some of the revenues generated by the cap and trade auctions, California enacted AB 1532. This bill sets up the allowable uses of the cap and trade revenues and includes specific purposes, such as land conservation.

Step 4 - Determine How to Spend the Revenues

The California Air Resources Board, in conjunction with other state agencies, drafted an investment plan

for the cap and trade revenues. Surprisingly, that draft did not include any specific conservation measures, even though AB 1532 specifically calls for protection of natural resources.

Hills For Everyone and numerous other conservation organizations submitted comments requesting the final document include conservation strategies. HOSEC joined the statewide effort to assure land conservation is included in the final plan.

After successful advocacy from the conservation community, the Air Resources Board updated its Investment Plan to include a more robust natural resources program. The Investment Plan will focus on enhancing existing programs the first year because those programs have “shovel” ready projects. There will be more opportunities for new and revised programs (such as conservation) in the second and third years of the program. It is expected that with each auction, the fund has the potential to raise billions of dollars and, with continued efforts, some of those funds could be spent protecting our Wildlife Corridor.

The preservation of natural land offers two ways to both reduce GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled. First, plants naturally absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and through photosynthesis it is stored as carbon in the plant’s branches, leaves, trunks, roots and soil. If land is developed and the vegetation removed, all of that stored carbon is released into the atmosphere, thereby increasing GHG emissions. So nature is already reducing emissions by simply being itself. Second, if land is preserved and no longer available for development, all of the construction related emissions, and permanent additional traffic are not generated. Land preservation avoids increasing the amount of carbon emissions that would have occurred from a development.

We are grateful that HOSEC has chosen to invest in securing conservation dollars for our region. Their participation adds a strong regional voice to the effort. Their leadership should be applauded.

Chino Hills State Park Updates



Claire Schlotterbeck

Bane Canyon Entrance Closed

After several years of delay, the paving and rerouting of the Bane Canyon Road has been underway since August 2012. Though it is inconvenient now, once completed the new paved road will provide year round access to the interior of the Park.

Trails will still close for 48 hours after rain events but the Rolling M Ranch, picnic areas along Bane Canyon Road, the group camping, and the Rolling M Ranch Campground will be open once the road is completed.

The new road will make access into the Park safer for vehicles, pedestrians, wildlife, and the environment as well as keeping cars cleaner. Visitors still can access the Park off of Carbon Canyon Road in Brea through the Discovery Center and at the Quarterhorse entrance in Yorba Linda.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Discovery Center

The exhibits in this visitor facility will be completed in early summer. They will highlight the rich biodiversity of the region and the Park’s role as the anchor parcel for the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor that extends from the 91 and 71 freeways in Corona all the way up to the 60 and 605 freeways in Whittier.

Now Open 7 Days a Week

In response to a slightly loosened state budget, the Park is now open seven days a week through September from 8 AM – 7 PM. The Park will also offer campfire and other family friendly programs in Brea throughout the summer. Visit the Park’s website for the most up-to-date information for each week: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=648.

Reporting Works, Keep It Up

We are very grateful that many residents and park users are contacting us to report abuses of the State Park and wildlands. Here are a few of the stories and how they've helped.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

One hiker from Chino Hills noticed many dead great horned owls over an 18 month period and then happened upon some dCON rat poison laid on the ground near some apiaries (commercial bee hives). The dCON label explicitly states it is not for use outside.

Additionally, apiaries are not allowed in Brea. Although unproven, it is likely the owls ate poisoned rodents and then died themselves. Poisons move up the food chain. A second illegal bee hive was then reported and removed in county territory frequently used by bicyclists.

Another resident reported the location and number of errant cows in the State Park. Cattle do great damage, especially to streams. The problem was



Claire Schlotterbeck

so long standing that many cows were now feral. This reporting helped the rangers document the problem and then exercise the authority to have wranglers remove the errant grazers. Some reports even came from park users through our Facebook page!

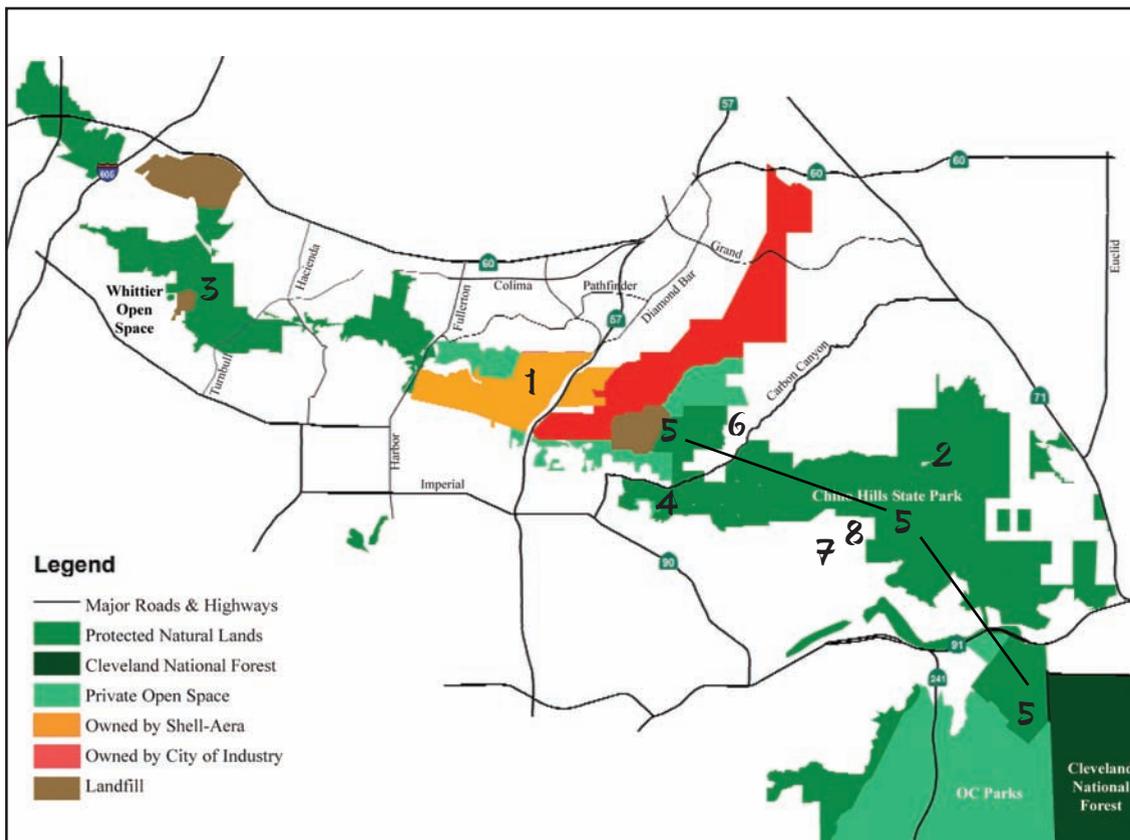
We have also learned and received documentation from Yorba Linda residents of the presence of golden eagles in the Puente-Chino Hills. These sightings are a remarkable measure of the wildness that remains in our hills. Further official documentation is underway across the Corridor.

Keep up the good reporting, you are making a difference!



Yorba Linda Resident

Mapping the Corridor Projects



Numbers on the Map

- 1 - Aera Energy
- 2 - Chino Hills State Park
- 3 - Habitat Authority Lands
- 4 - Discovery Center
- 5 - Fire Study Area
- 6 - Madrona
- 7 - Cielo Vista
- 8 - Esperanza Hills

Calendar of Events

State Park Campfire Programs

All programs are held at the Discovery Center (4500 Carbon Canyon Road, Brea) and begin at 5:30 PM.



June 15th - TBD
June 29th - Rattle Snakes
July 13th - Mountain Lions
July 27th - What's in the Park
August 10th - The Adaptable Coyote
August 24th - Mystery Program

Habitat Authority Hikes

Check the Habitat Authority's website for up to date information on their regularly scheduled hikes:



www.HabitatAuthority.org.

May 18th - Wildflower Walk (Sycamore) 9 AM
June 15th - Rattlesnakes (Arroyo Pescadero) 8 AM
July 20th - Woodrats (Hacienda Heights) 8 AM
August 17th - Fitness Hike (Powder Canyon) 8 AM

Why Birds Matter

Birds matter because:

- They are all we have left of the dinosaurs.
- They are like rock stars, they dress up and sing.
- They are amazing: a tiny hummingbird that weighs less than a book of matches can fly non-stop over the Gulf of Mexico.
- They can fly and we can't.
- No matter where you are: in the city, in the country, on the coast, or in the ocean: you can find them and experience nature right there.
- They are one of the first responders to any sort of change in their environment and we can tell very quickly the health of a natural place by what birds are there.
- They remind us daily that there are worlds that we don't see and we don't understand.

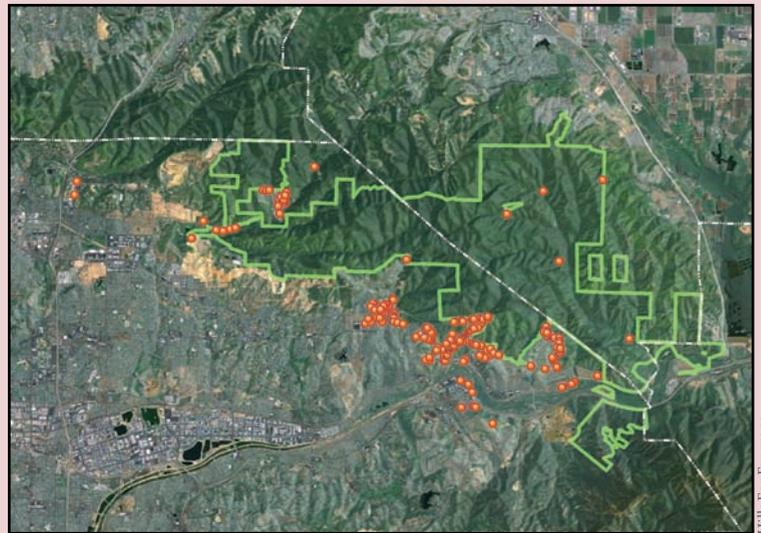
Collected from numerous Audubon resources.

Fire Study, Making the Rounds

Last August, Hills For Everyone released a study of fires in the lands in and near Chino Hills State Park over the last 100 years. Using data sets from numerous fire agencies we overlaid the various fire perimeters and points of origins. In so doing we identified three hot spots (where fires frequently start): along the 91 freeway between the 241 and 71 freeways, off of Rimcrest in Yorba Linda and along Carbon Canyon Road in Brea.

To counter some of the misconceptions about the Freeway Complex Fire impacts, we recently completed a Properties Damaged Map (shown right). Nearly 300 structures were damaged or destroyed in that fire. The Orange County Fire Authority's After Action Report stated that the brush clearance wasn't an issue, instead it was the wind-driven fire throwing embers a mile or two ahead of the flame front.

To follow up and be sure our information was received, we have been providing PowerPoint presentations to numerous agencies and organizations. These include Caltrans District 12, Cities of Chino Hills and Yorba Linda, Riverside



County Transportation Commission, and the Carbon Canyon Fire Safe Council. We are still hoping to meet with the Orange County Fire Authority. Unfortunately, neither the County of Orange nor the City of Brea have allowed an informational presentation at a public meeting yet.

If you and your organization would like to hear this presentation, please contact us to schedule a PowerPoint at: info@HillsForEveryone.org.

Corridor Updates



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Landfill Mitigation Funds At Risk

Brea has hosted the landfill for over 50 years. Nearly a decade ago Brea reached agreement with the OC Waste & Recycling that it would receive about \$30 million in mitigation funds for impacts to the community for hosting this unsightly but necessary requirement of urban life. Hills For Everyone was first approached in 2000 to work toward using this sizable mitigation package to save other hillside lands, particularly the backdrop of Brea ... the Shell-Aera property. Instead Brea has begun chipping away at the funding. First they took \$1.2 million for the solar project when the original estimate was wrong. Brea has no plans to reimburse the landfill fund out of future solar savings. More recently they have floated the idea of moving the County Library to the downtown. How this serves as mitigation for hills destroyed by the landfill remains a mystery. We know that if we have any chance of saving the Shell-Aera land, it will take multiple funding sources including this one. Brea needs to be held accountable.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Madrona (Brea)

The power of zoning carries with it the responsibility for consequences. Local decision makers will soon be put to the test. The renamed Madrona project (formerly Canyon Crest) in Brea's Carbon Canyon area will be approved or denied by Brea City Council this summer. If approved, the 162 unit project on 367 acres, next to Chino Hills State Park, will bulldoze ridgelines and rip out 1400 mature oak and walnut trees. The property is surrounded by undeveloped hills and encircles two City of Brea owned water tanks (photo above, arrow points to water tanks). This supposed executive housing project will provide none of the amenities normally expected in such developments: parks, a swimming pool and spa, tennis courts, clubhouse, etc. The need for irrigated landscaping on manufactured slopes (to provide defensible space in wildfires) will cause the project to use an excessive amount of water. Currently the site uses no water.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Two Projects Haunt Yorba Linda

Two similar projects on land governed by the County of Orange, but surrounded by Yorba Linda and the State Park, would also bulldoze hillsides and habitat (photo left). Cielo Vista proposes 112 houses on 87 acres, while Esperanza Hills proposes 340 houses on 460 acres. Ingress and egress challenges have caused the County of Orange to halt processing the projects until the developers propose feasible access alternatives. While evacuating during the 2008 Freeway Complex Fire, existing residents faced gridlock on the same streets these projects would need to use. Locals are organizing to fight the development. You can like them on Facebook and visit their website: www.Protect-Our-Homes-And-Hills.org.

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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Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/HillsForEveryone

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.

Monthly Giving

Your support is what has made protecting the Wildlife Corridor possible. Nearly 18,000 acres have been protected because of you. Thank you for your vision.

Hills For Everyone has appreciated your support. If you would like to provide sustained support throughout the year, we now have the ability to charge credit cards monthly. Monthly giving helps us keep up hillside protection efforts and respond nimbly.

Visit www.HillsForEveryone.org to download the form or phone us at 714-687-1555.

The Wildflowers Are in Bloom

