

# Hills For Everyone

Friends of the  
Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 32

Spring 2015

## Residents Achieve Early Win in Yorba Linda



The Esperanza Hills project proposes to remove one third of this hillside to make room for 340 houses. Cielo Vista would add houses in the canyon bottom.

Situated high above Yorba Linda, but not within its city limits, lie two steep properties poised for bulldozing. In early March, the Orange County Board of Supervisors came to the plate with the power to approve or deny Esperanza Hills, the larger of two controversial projects. The developers of Esperanza Hills and Cielo Vista have proposed over 450 houses on 550 acres. The land has burned three times. Chino Hills State Park borders Esperanza Hills on four of its eight sides.

For the last four years we have worked with residents in Yorba Linda, helping them organize to fight these projects. They have held weekly rallies at congested intersections, displayed yard signs and banners, distributed informational postcards, walked their neighborhoods, attended city council meetings, researched issues, and raised funds to fight the project.

Using our recent experience with Madrona, we developed nine PowerPoint presentations to document concerns before the Board of Supervisors as to why they should turn Esperanza Hills down. These three minute presentations covered noise, access, fire (two), geology, water, traffic, policy, and biology. At the last minute we were told each speaker would be limited to one minute, so 18 more volunteers stepped to the podium and helped us deliver the whole presentation.

It's no accident that this property has not been developed. Access remains the key problem. Esperanza Hills requires two roads: one would need to go through city parkland down a rare inland year-round stream. The other access has two hairpin turns on steep grades and would send evacuees into the likely source of a flame front. The sites are further challenged by location, topography, configuration, operating oil wells, two major water pipelines, two major gas lines, two 500 kV Edison transmission lines, soils known to slide, and the Whittier-Elsinore earthquake fault crossing the two access points.

Esperanza Hills developers bought this land knowing full well it was zoned agriculture and was designated open space. They are not owed a zone change nor a General Plan Amendment to allow for residential development. And they did not get them. At the March 10th meeting, Supervisor Todd Spitzer made an impassioned plea for better land use planning.

The Board unanimously directed the developer to go to the City of Yorba Linda so the project would comply with tougher city standards since it would eventually be annexed into the city. This process will create many challenges for the developer. He will need voter approval to convert city parkland into the project's access road and voters are not likely to allow this.

# HFE Lawsuit on Madrona

All briefs have been filed. The judge is scheduled to hear the oral arguments this summer. One of many significant issues is Brea's Hillside Management Ordinance (HMO). The massive bulldozing on steep slopes required for Madrona violates the HMO. Both Brea and the landowner initially believed it applied to the project. They later changed their minds when they realized this would not allow project approval. The HMO specifically states it applies to all of the land in the city. If the judge honors the actual language of the ordinance, we should win the lawsuit. But we still need to pay for it until then.

## Gratitudes

Bruce Douglas, former La Habra Heights Councilmember and longtime board member retired from our board. We are so grateful for his service and support.

Roland vom Dorp, lifelong resident of La Habra Heights, recently joined the Board. Roland brings years of experience both enjoying the hills and protecting them.

Many thanks to Doug and Krista Stricklin and Duane and Luz Thompson who hosted "Stop Madrona" fundraisers at their lovely homes.

# Habitat Authority News

After nearly 10 months of a multi-agency effort to mitigate issues at the Orange Grove and Los Robles access gates in Hacienda Heights, the Sanitation Districts, which owns the property, had no choice. They were forced to close the access gates due to liability concerns and continuous complaints by nearby residents of illegal and nuisance activity such as staying in the Preserve after sunset.

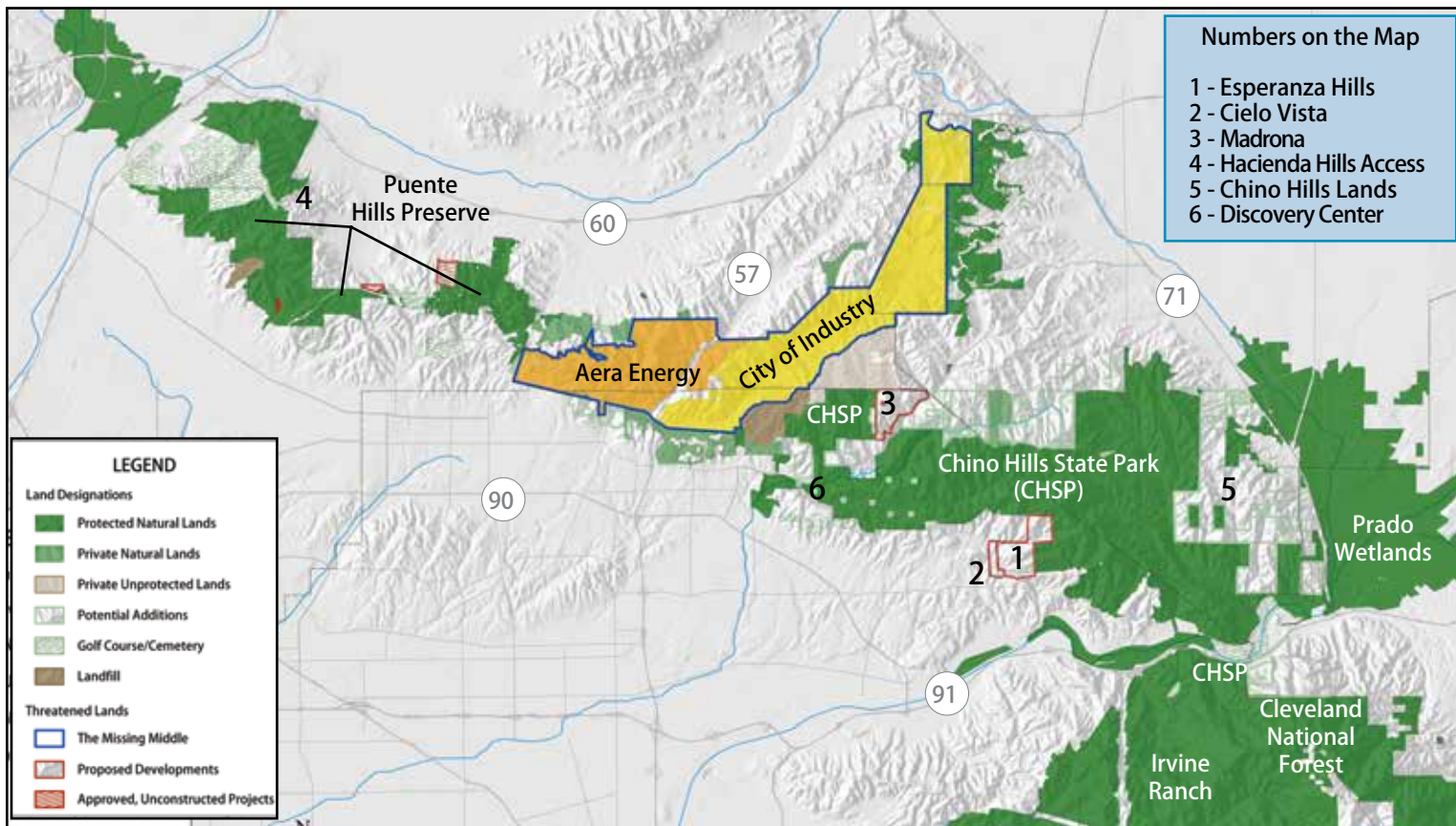


Melanie Schlotterbeck

The Hacienda Hills Trailhead will continue to remain open. It, and the ridgeline Schabarum Trail, are the designated Preserve access points for the 6-mile multi-use trail system in the immediate vicinity which includes Puma, Coyote, Ahwingna, and Native Oak trails. These connect to approximately 38 additional miles of trails in the Puente Hills Preserve.

The Habitat Authority offered a venue for public comment on the closure, but had no jurisdiction over it.

## Mapping the Corridor Projects



# Southern Chino Hills Lands at Risk

Recently, the City undertook a long overdue update on its 1994 General Plan which was adopted after the city incorporated in 1991. The way the community developed, however, was generally locked in place by a Specific Plan approved through the County of San Bernardino before the city was formed. In a quest for additional amenities (more parks, wider roads), the city often allowed even more houses. In 1999, citizens reacted to this “overdevelopment” and passed Measure U which requires a vote of the people if extra houses are allowed.

One special area, 3,000 acres in southern Chino Hills, was originally designated a very low density. In 1994, the City Council minutes show this area was approved for one housing unit per 40 acres and this was reflected on the Zoning Map. The 2015 General Plan update seemed to leave out this one unit per 40 acre designation, changing it to one unit per five acres. In our comments, Hills For Everyone asked that the language between the map and text be made consistent. Staff agreed with this revision



until landowners in that area saw an opportunity to try to get the land “upzoned” to one unit per five acres. This would require ignoring the current Zoning Map and what 1994 City Council meeting minutes reflect.

The City Council passed the General Plan update, but set aside the issue of the southern 3,000 acres until further homework could be done. Stay tuned. Conservation starts with local policies in the General Plans of cities and counties.

## Chino Hills State Park

The paved road on the eastern side of the State Park will be completed this year, hopefully by September, if not before. The \$5 million project has been underway for three years. It ran into difficulty when the original contractor was unable to perform the job and a new one needed to be vetted and hired. The road will provide easier access into the heart of the Park and campground. It also makes the Park accessible to school busses.

The exhibits at the Discovery Center at 4500 Carbon Canyon Road in Brea are now complete and the facility is open on weekends from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Efforts are underway to hire an interpreter to fully staff the facility. Stop by and check it out for yourself!



## Support Our Work

### I Heart OC

Tax-deductible donations made online to Hills For Everyone through the Orange County Community Foundation’s “I Heart OC” Campaign between 6 AM on April 21 and noon on April 22 get matched. We become eligible for matching funds and cash prizes the more our supporters give to us during this online-only fundraiser. Find and then donate to Hills For Everyone on the [IHeartOC.org](http://IHeartOC.org) website. We will send a reminder to our online supporters... so, please send your email address to: [info@HillsForEveryone.org](mailto:info@HillsForEveryone.org).



### AmazonSmile

If you shop at Amazon, register Hills For Everyone as your non-profit of choice through [AmazonSmile.org](http://AmazonSmile.org) and we’ll receive a portion of the proceeds for all eligible transactions.



### Ralphs Club

If you shop at Ralphs, register your award card (annual registration required on/after September 1st) and select Hills For Everyone. We will receive a donation from Ralphs when you shop there. Go to [Ralphs.com](http://Ralphs.com), click on Community, Community Contributions, then Participant and register there. Hills For Everyone’s organization code is 91199.





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## Email Updates

If you have not heard from us lately via email please be sure we have your correct email address by contacting us at: [info@HillsForEveryone.org](mailto:info@HillsForEveryone.org).

## Hills For Everyone Board of Directors

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## Upcoming Events

We hope you have a chance to get out and enjoy the nature in our hills—hills that we are all trying to protect. We recognize this newsletter is full of policy, and while we much prefer to talk about the hills and the wildlife that flourish there, conservation starts with local policies. Hills For Everyone is at the table in four counties and in 12 cities.

### Saturday, April 18th from 9 AM - 1 PM

Sign up for this Earth Day event at Chino Hills State Park. Register online at: [Calparks.org](http://Calparks.org)

### Saturday, April 25th from 10 AM - 1 PM

Join Hills For Everyone for a Garden Tour of beautifully landscaped (and water wise) homes in Brea. Buy tickets at [HillsForEveryone.org](http://HillsForEveryone.org)

### Monday, June 8th at 7 PM

Join the Chino Hills Historical Society for a presentation on the History of Chino Hills State Park.

Visit the Events Calendar on the Hills For Everyone website to see activities offered by us, the Habitat Authority, Sierra Club, and others. Go to: [www.HillsForEveryone.org/events](http://www.HillsForEveryone.org/events) to learn more!

## PowerPoints Available

Hills For Everyone representatives provide interesting presentations to local groups, clubs, and organizations. Topics may include biodiversity, achievements, threats or possibilities, and fire history of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor. Schedule a presentation by emailing us at:

[info@HillsForEveryone.org](mailto:info@HillsForEveryone.org)



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