

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the
Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 33

Summer 2015

Tres Hermanos Being Eyed for Development



Melanie Schlotterbeck

The grassland and oak and walnut-covered Tres Hermanos property is bound on the east by the City of Chino Hills and the west by the City of Diamond Bar.

The City of Industry made three separate purchases of land outside of its city limits but in our hills beginning in 1978. At that time its Redevelopment Agency bought the 2,450 acre Tres Hermanos property in upper Tonner Canyon. This land straddles both sides of Grand Avenue and serves as visual relief for the thousands of commuters who drive by daily. Most of the land (1,750 acres) lies within the city limits of Chino Hills including both sides of Grand Avenue. The remaining 700 acres are within Diamond Bar.

Purchase of the Tres Hermanos land by Industry's Urban Development Agency (IUDA) was illegal since it was not within the Redevelopment Area (much less within the city limits). They got away with it because no one challenged it.

Decades later, Industry bought 2,500 acres (2/3) of the former Firestone Boy Scout Reservation in middle Tonner and 525 acres of Brea Cañon Oil in lower Tonner in Orange County.

City documents show officials had hoped to build a series of massive dams that would have required bulldozing the extensive oak woodlands and drowning the canyon. The primary dam would have been within yards of the Whittier-Elsinore earthquake fault above Brea.

In 2012 the state mercifully dissolved redevelopment agencies thereby drying up Industry's ludicrous and destructive water reservoir plans. The City is now being forced to sell the Tres Hermanos property. The successor agency to IUDA has hired a company to market and sell the land. So the future of the land remains uncertain.

Whoever buys the land will no doubt be lobbying the cities for zone changes in an attempt to pack in housing. Given Diamond Bar's historic support for development and opposition to protecting the wildlife corridor, more housing will likely be rubber stamped. But Diamond Bar is dependent on Chino Hills for access to Grand Avenue. Adding higher housing density in Chino Hills will be harder for developers. Residents passed Measure U in 1999. If a developer wants to add houses over the General Plan allotment, they must go to a vote of people.

Currently the land in Diamond Bar is zoned for about 628 houses. In Chino Hills it is zoned for a maximum of 682 houses. Keep in mind each house generates 10 vehicle trips per day.

If you are interested in helping, a group has formed on Facebook – Save the Tres Hermanos Ranch or email us at info@HillsForEveryone.org and we will put you in touch with them.

Esperanza Hills Update

The 340 unit housing project on 469 acres lies above Yorba Linda in county territory. The project was approved in early June by the Orange County Board of Supervisors. The Tract Map was not approved because access to the project has not been confirmed. The only legal access, a steep road with two 180 degree turns, has been described by decision makers as dangerous. The preferred access goes through City parkland and is not assured.

With our assistance, residents opposing the project formed a group called Protect Our Homes and Hills. They filed a lawsuit claiming violations of the California Environmental Quality Act and local and state planning laws. Residents have assumed the full responsibility for paying for the lawsuit.

Because of the many natural resources on the site, four other groups signed on to the lawsuit, including Hills For Everyone, Endangered Habitats League, California Native Plant Society, and Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks.



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State Park Road Opens

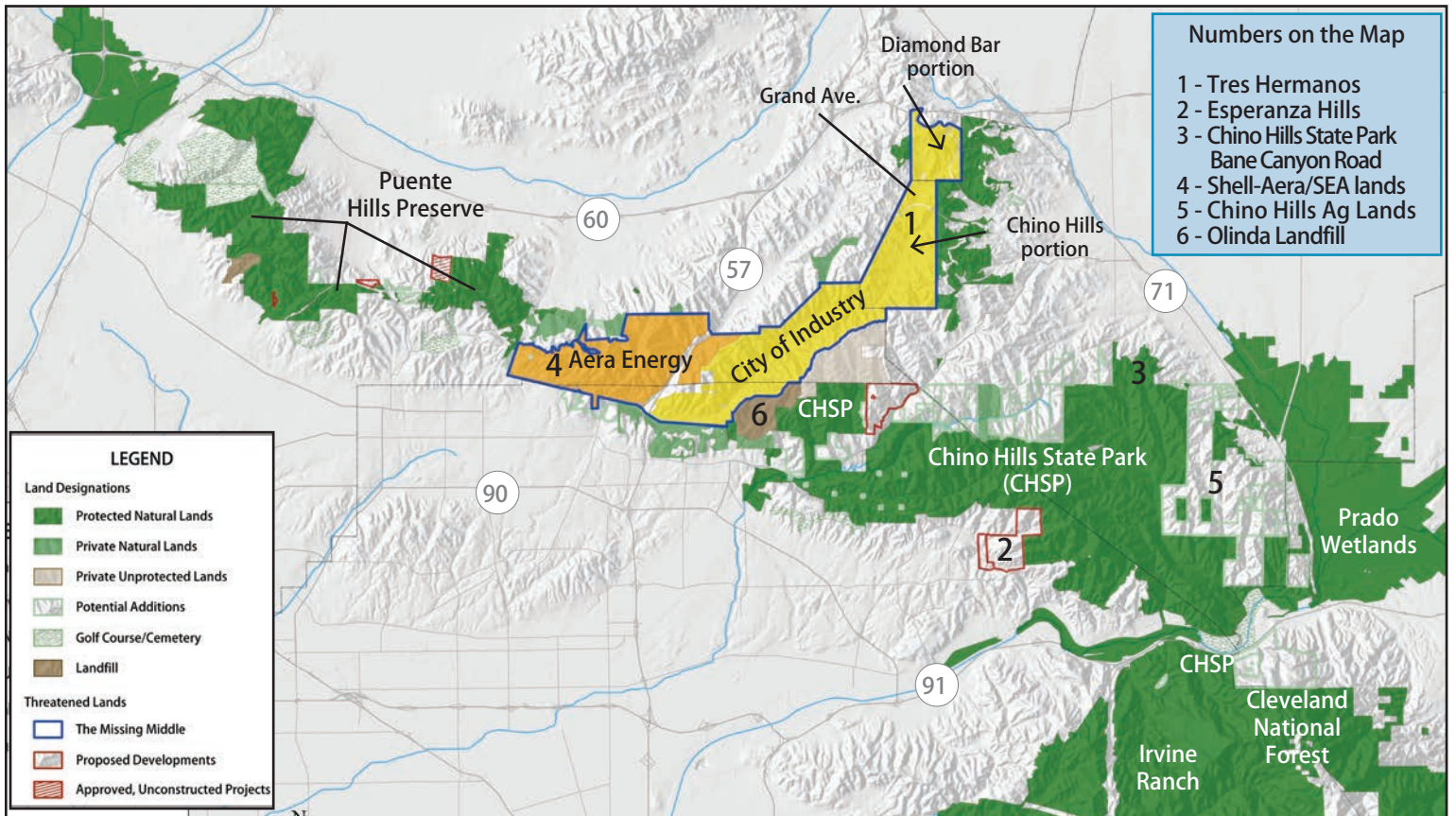
After three years of closure, the drive-in access road to Chino Hills State Park is finished and the road is open! The paved road will allow year round visits as well as access for school busses. The former dirt and gutted old ranch road was frequently closed after rain storms preventing access. The new road has been moved to the hillside to reduce impacts to the sensitive streamside area. Overlooks with handicapped accessibility have also been added with shade structures for picnicking. Curves hugging the natural terrain serve as traffic calming measures so that the road cannot be used as a speedway.

Among the newest in the state, there are 18 campsites and two handicapped accessible sites available. Shade trees are doing their best to grow in the drought. Flush toilets and showers serve the campground visitors. Eventually the campsites will need to be reserved online through Reserve America, but for now reservations are on a first come-first served basis.



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Mapping the Corridor Projects



Protections Almost Lost in Los Angeles County

In March we learned of sudden changes to Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) in the update of LA County's General Plan. For 15 years the County has been working on this plan, using science based data to update and expand SEAs. Suddenly the expanded versions were now called *Conceptual* SEAs. We activated the Sierra Club, the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA), and Hillside Open Space Education Coalition and their related staffs. Letters were sent in opposing the loss of these areas.

After unpeeling layers of information, we learned that in December (while many people are busy with the holidays), two Planning Commissioners tried to eliminate SEAs completely. Planning staff successfully argued that they needed to come up with a different outcome since SEAs are part of a legal settlement dating back to the 1980s. Conceptual SEAs were a "save" by planning staff.

The entire planning process has now slowed considerably. SEAs are important to our efforts because they add a critical layer of protection to much of the

Chino Hills Stands Firm

In early July, the City of Chino Hills resoundingly supported our position that the 3,000 acres in southeastern Chino Hills were intended to be zoned one housing unit per 40 acres. During the recent General Plan update, landowners had argued it was zoned one unit per five acres. After reviewing City minutes, agendas, and reports from the first General Plan in the mid-1990s, the City Attorney

and planning staff agreed with us. Several ridgeline parcels in this area still need to be purchased and protected as part of Chino Hills State Park. We hope a 2016 Park Bond Act will provide needed funds.



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Easily Support the Hills

AmazonSmile

If you shop at Amazon, shop through [AmazonSmile.org](https://www.amazon.com/amazonsmile) name Hills For Everyone as your charity of choice, and we'll receive a portion of the proceeds for all eligible sales.

Ralphs Club

Register your Ralphs award card (after September 1st). Go to [Ralphs.com](https://www.ralphs.com), click on Community, Community Contributions, then Participant, and register there. Our organization code is 91199.



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Shell-Aera property and the former Firestone Scout Reservation in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

In 1994 LA County residents approved Proposition A which allocated \$10 million to WCCA for acquisition of land. Since then the dollar amount has grown considerably bigger, but LA County Supervisor Knabe has refused to release it for WCCA's use. We are looking at ways to encourage his cooperation. Saving important lands in his district would be a tremendous legacy as he leaves office in 2016.

Gratitudes

Many thanks to Suzanne and Don Hodson who hosted our wine tasting fundraiser at their lovely home.

And thanks to Ascension Cellars owners Kathleen Pinckard and Erick Allen for their donation of all of the wines that were "tasted" and enjoyed.

We could not have done it without the planning team of Jebb Harris, Bev Perry, Eric Johnson, Duane and Luz

Thompson, and chair Melanie Schlotterbeck.



Jebb Harris



Jebb Harris



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Brea Landfill Funds at Risk

In 2009 the County of Orange reached agreement with the City of Brea to provide mitigation for the inconvenience and impacts of the Olinda Landfill's damage to the hills. This mitigation came in the form of an initial outlay of money to make improvements along the access road to the landfill. In Brea's budget this money is set aside as the 560 Fund. More funds, in the form of a tipping fee, will soon be coming to Brea as well. These funds will be housed in the 140 Fund. By the end date of the agreement, these funds will total nearly \$18 million.

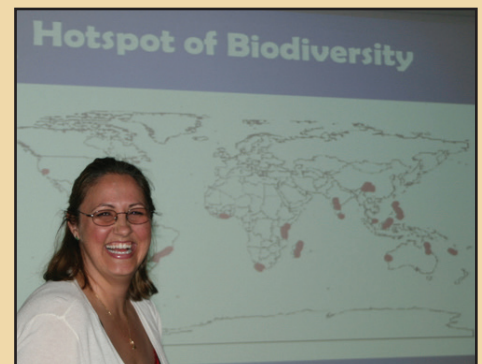


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The intent of these funds, dating back to when they were first offered by then 3rd District Supervisor Todd Spitzer, has always been to use them to save the back drop of Brea, the undeveloped hills that frame this City. But there has been increased chatter about spending these funds on such things as a new parking structure in Brea's downtown. We are working to remind Brea decision makers of their long standing commitment to save the hillside back drop of Brea.

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.



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