

# Hills For Everyone

Friends of the  
Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 45

Fall 2021

## Chino Hills State Park to Grow by 10%



Melanie Schlotterbeck

*Looking southwest from Lower Aliso Overlook, the knuckled ridgelines photographed will be added to the Park.*

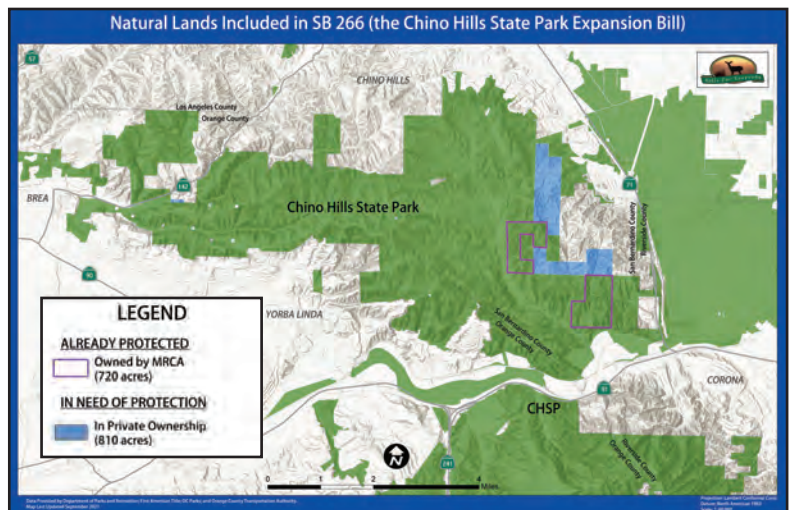
From its inception, Hills For Everyone has sought to protect the eastern ridgeline that parallels Bane Canyon Road, the only drive-in entrance to Chino Hills State Park. Over the decades, the State Parks Department has made many attempts to buy the land, but the long-time owners refused to sell, asking tenfold the appraised value.

Finally, in 2015, those owners sold the land to First National Investment Properties (FNIP) who, in turn, offered to sell it to the State. By then, however, State Parks was in the midst of an identity crisis and not acquiring land anywhere. This refusal to acquire land rendered the Parks Department out of compliance with a court-approved settlement with Hills For Everyone in which State Parks agreed to acquire walnut woodlands adjacent to the Park. Nevertheless, we pressed on, meeting with the Director of State Parks, who told us the only way we could incorporate the land into State Park ownership was through legislation.

After three attempts, **WE DID IT**. Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton) carried Senate Bill 266 with his co-author Assemblymember Phillip Chen (R-Diamond Bar). Under their leadership, the bill passed through the Senate and Assembly with no opposition, thus sustaining the long history of bipartisan and bicameral (both houses) support for the State Park. SB 266 was signed into law by Governor Newsom on October 9th.

The bill allows 1,530 acres to be added to the 14,107-acre State Park. Almost half of that acreage (~720 acres) has already recently been purchased using state and federal funds and is in the “protective custody” of the Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA). It will steward the land until HFE can secure the remaining 810 acres. We are now actively seeking grant and private funding to complete the acquisition.

We are deeply indebted to MRCA for taking stewardship of this land, specifically Joe Edmiston, Rorie Skei, Paul Edelman, and the MRCA Board, while we await its transfer to State Parks.



# Protecting 30% by 2030

A local, state, national, and global effort known as 30x30 is taking shape. Last October, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order aimed at conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030. To reach this goal, California needs to save an estimated eight million acres statewide. We want land in our region to be included.

To do our part, we participated in statewide workshops all summer and wrote numerous letters when the state sought input. Eventually, we partnered with the regional non-profit Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) to map and nominate land in the Puente-Chino Hills and across Orange County for consideration of conservation funding. We live in a highly urbanized, park-poor region of the state. Indeed, most conserved lands are up north. It's high time more Southern California land is protected.

HFE created the maps, and FHBP assembled the coalition. Thirty-one organizations supported the conservation of the properties we identified. From this mapping exercise, we now know that in the Puente-Chino Hills alone there are nearly 15,000 acres eligible for protection.

The California Natural Resources Agency just released a draft report which we will review and comment on.

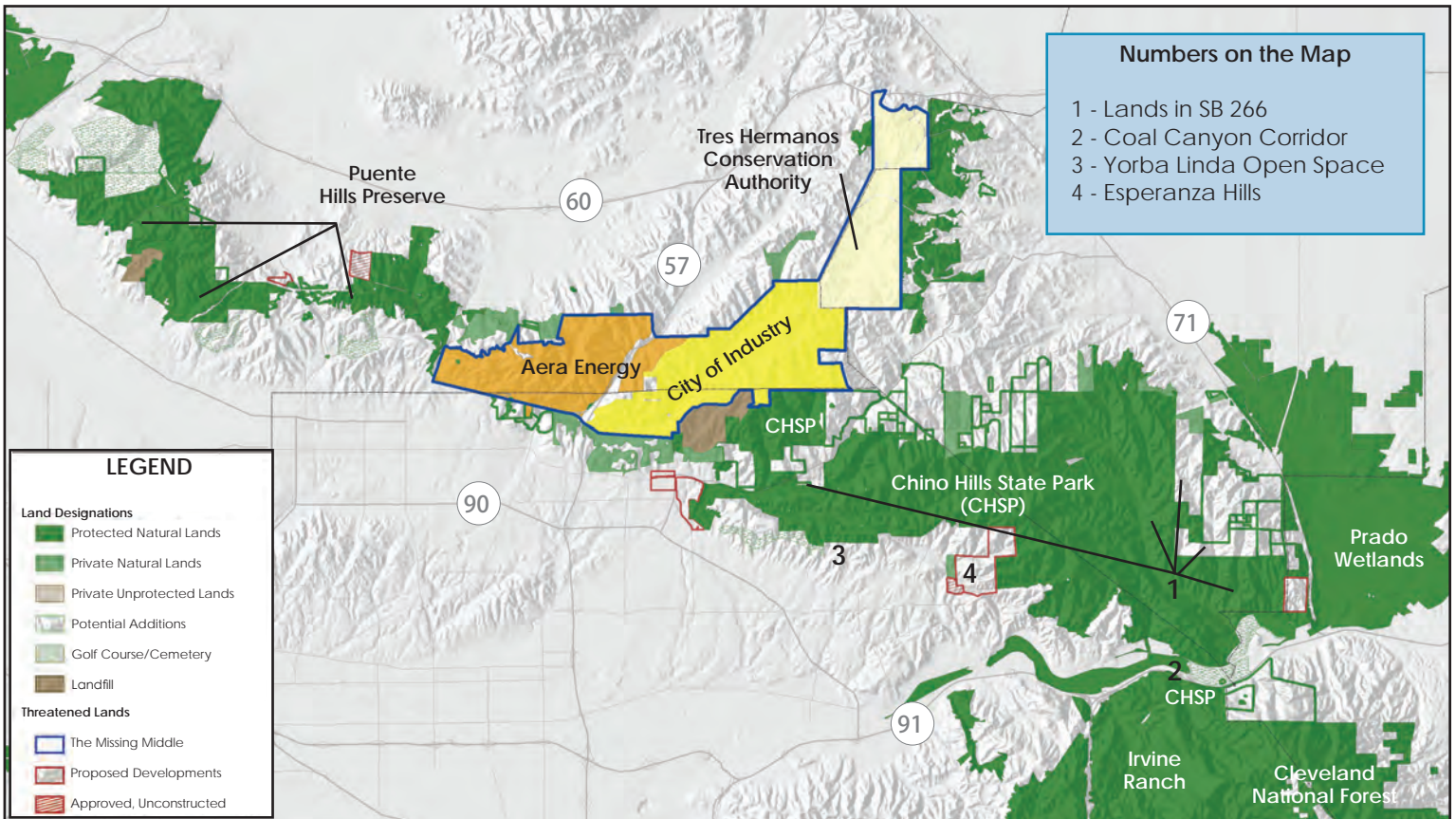


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## Plants: Natural Solar Panels

Why 30%? It is actually an interim step to 50% by 2050. This target is based on scientists' estimation of what is needed to keep the planet's ecosystems functioning and avert the dual climate and extinction crises we are in. The big aim is to keep us alive by keeping native plants alive. At its core, everything—including people and wildlife—depends on plant life. Using sunlight as fuel, plants absorb planet-warming CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and turn it into vital oxygen. As natural lands are converted for more urban uses (highways, residential developments, commercial centers, etc.), we lose the plants and their ability to remove greenhouse gases and provide us oxygen.

## Mapping the Corridor Projects



# SoCal Cougars Studied

In April 2020, the subspecies of Southern California and Central Coast mountain lion was *provisionally* listed as a California Endangered Species. They qualified for the list due to shrinking and fragmented habitats, declining numbers, and growing incidence of birth defects due to inbreeding. In our region, the cougar has come to symbolize our collective need to co-exist. Though they are a large and scary predator, cougars are essential for managing healthy ecosystems. In the simplest terms, without the cougar, the populations of mid-level predators like skunk, opossums, and raccoons skyrocket. They, in turn, raid bird nests, shrinking bird populations.



UC Davis Wildlife Health Center



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Without birds, plant seeds are not distributed, and the whole ecosystem begins to collapse over time.

Researchers at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are currently conducting a status review to determine whether they should *permanently* list the Southern California cougar. This report will be available November 3. The state Fish and Game Commission is expected to receive the report at its December meeting, then conduct a final vote at its subsequent meeting early next year. Coal Canyon under the 91 freeway is our link to the Santa Ana Mountains for cougar movement.

## Who Came Before Us

The Puente-Chino Hills are ancestral lands of at least three bands of Indigenous Peoples: the Tongva/Kizh, Acjachemen, and Payómkawichum. Most Californians know them as Gabrieleño (people living near the San Gabriel Mission), Juaneño (people living near San Juan Capistrano Mission) and Luiseño (people living near San Luis Rey Mission) respectively. These more commonly-used names were assigned to them by the Spanish and are not what they necessarily called themselves. Their presence on these lands dates back some 12,000 years. For more information on the people who tended these lands visit: <https://native-land.ca>.

## Esperanza Hills

The saga of the 340-unit Esperanza Hills project continues. The volunteer group, Protect Our Homes and Hills, that staved off the development for eight long years finally ran out of legal options. At that point, the developer asked for a grading permit from the City of Yorba Linda. It was turned down because the City contends he only has a legal right to a 20-24 foot wide road and not the 80-100 feet he needs. The developer, Doug Wymore, has also now sued the City of Yorba Linda for not allowing him to use another parcel of dedicated open space for his entrance road. The case goes before a judge in December.

## Farewell to a Friend

We were heartbroken to learn of the sudden passing of Marc Hanson, Chief of Staff of Senator Newman, in late August. Always willing to listen and learn, he was a consummate public servant. His expertise, enthusiasm, and good sense made him easy to work with. Marc assisted with and strategized on the bill mentioned in the cover story. His passing is a loss to all who knew him.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

Claire Schlotterbeck gives an overview of the Puente-Chino Hills. Marc is in the green jacket.



Melanie Schlotterbeck

1st row: Melanie Schlotterbeck, 2nd row: Marc Hanson, Chino Hills Councilmember Cynthia Moran & 3rd row: Spencer Custodio.



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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:  
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We changed our newsletter font. This font is more easily read for those with visual impairments and dyslexia.

## Open Space, Saved

Hills For Everyone assisted a resident-based group in Yorba Linda in fighting a proposed project that would have converted existing open space into a single, 15,000 square foot home on land adjacent to Chino Hills State Park. In the 1980s, the land was set aside as required mitigation for a housing development. But, due to poor record keeping by the City, the acreage was auctioned off, ending up in the hands of owners who wanted to change its use from open space to residential. After stiff and organized neighborhood opposition, the application was withdrawn by the landowner. Three cheers to the group, Preserve Yorba Linda Hills.

## Ralph's Club Contributions

Every year Ralph's Club shoppers must re-instate their charity of choice. Here are the instructions:

### 1. Create a digital account.

A digital account is needed to participate in Ralph's Community Contribution Program. If you already have one, simply link your Shopper's Card to your account so that all transactions apply toward the organization you choose.

### 2. Link your Card to Hills For Everyone.

1. Sign in to your digital account at:  
[ralphs.com/i/community/community-contribution-program](http://ralphs.com/i/community/community-contribution-program)
2. Search for Hills For Everyone.
3. Enter the name or NPO number (IC960).
4. Select Hills For Everyone from the list and click "Save."



## Get Involved

There are many ways to support Hills For Everyone's work. In addition to these platforms, you can join our email list. We send out about one email a month and never sell, trade, or share our list. Subscribe on our website:



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