

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

407 W. IMPERIAL HWY, SUITE H, PMB #230, BREA, CALIFORNIA 92821

TELEPHONE: (310) 589-3230

FAX: (310) 589-2408

April 30, 2001

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

George Malone
Section Head
Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning
General Plan Development Section
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012

Comments on Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas Update Study, Proposed Puente Hills SEA

Dear Mr. Malone:

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) has reviewed the Significant Ecological Areas Update Study documents prepared by the consultant team for the County of Los Angeles (County) (PCR Services Corporation *et al.* 2000b, 2000c), including the Biological Resources Assessment of the Proposed Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area (PCR Services Corporation *et al.* 2000a). The following comments were adopted by our Governing Board at our March 7, 2001, meeting. Please note that as we previously indicated in an email to you, we will submit additional comments on the SEA Update Study after WCCA's next Governing Board meeting of May 2, 2001.

For the Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) program, the County of Los Angeles (County) is revising existing SEA boundaries and regulatory policies as part to the General Plan update effort. The objective of the SEA program is to preserve biotic diversity in the County, and this objective has been expanded to include the future sustainability of this diversity through the application of more current practices in conservation biology, primarily by consolidation into larger interconnected SEAs (PCR Services Corporation *et al.* 2000b). The proposed acreage of the consolidated areas has been substantially increased compared to the SEAs previously designated in the 1980 County General Plan.

WCCA commends the County and its consultants on the excellent work done for the Significant Ecological Areas Update Study and specifically on the consultants' efforts to propose more inclusive and biologically sound

boundaries to ensure sustainability of the SEAs. This is evident in the proposed Puente Hills SEA.

WCCA offers the following recommendations to fine-tune the proposed Puente Hills SEA. Our staff is available to work with the County and other interested parties to reach a resolution of these issues. The majority of these suggestions reflect the boundaries we proposed in our May 1, 2000, SEA nomination submittal. The following numbered comments correspond to the enclosed maps. These maps also depict portions of our original recommended boundaries. At times, it was difficult to verify the specific proposed SEA boundaries based on the scale of the mapping in the SEA reports. As such, we did our best to estimate the boundaries proposed in the SEA Update Study.

Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority's Recommendations for Modifications to Proposed Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area		
Area Number (see enclosed maps)	Location/Description	Recommendation and Rationale
1	Puente Hills Landfill. South of 60 Freeway, east of 605 Freeway	Include. Good habitat is present on the east and north side of property. Links to San Jose Creek and Whittier Narrows. Landfill will be closed and habitat value of landfill area will be determined in final closure plan.
2	Savage Canyon/ Worsham Canyon	Include. Good habitat value in Savage Canyon and lower Worsham Canyon.
3	North end of Mallas Property	Include. Land owned by Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority. Good habitat value.

Los Angeles County Proposed Puente Hills SEA Comments

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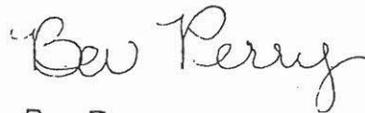
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4	Water tank area west of Powder Canyon and north of Reposado Drive	This area is a restricted corridor area. Corridor width must be maximized here. It is difficult to verify the exact location of the proposed SEA in this area. If an area around the water tank that was proposed by WCCA is not included in the proposed SEA, WCCA recommends including it.
5	Land southeast of Shea Homes	Include. This area forms the entrance to a small canyon which is a critical wildlife link and the area is core habitat of the western Puente Hills.
6	Oil field east of Harbor Boulevard	Include. This area is a buffer for a canyon which forms a critical wildlife link south of Shea Homes across Harbor Boulevard.
7	57 Freeway Corridor	SEA could exclude freeway but should include Brea Creek. The SEA should include land up to and excluding California Department of Transportation right of way to assure protection for Brea Creek. However, this should not include already deeded or entitled land within the City of Diamond Bar.
8	Southern boundary of Diamond Bar	It appears developed areas of Diamond Bar may have been included in the proposed revision (near 57 Freeway). These should be excluded and this boundary immediately adjacent to Diamond Bar should conform to boundary of existing SEA 15.
9 (Not shown on enclosed maps)	Part of City of Diamond Bar	The northern boundary of the proposed Puente Hills SEA east of the 57 Freeway and west of Los Angeles/San Bernardino County lines near the incorporated City of Diamond Bar should correspond to the existing SEA in this area. It is not necessary to include already deeded restricted open space and developed lands in Diamond Bar in the proposed SEA.

10 (Not shown on enclosed maps)	San Jose Creek and San Gabriel River	The soft-bottomed portions of San Jose Creek and the San Gabriel River, which provide wildlife habitat and potential movement corridors from the Puente Hills to Whittier Narrows and the San Gabriel Mountains, should be included. The specific area of San Jose Creek should include the soft bottom portions from its confluence with the San Gabriel River to approximately 8,000 feet east of the confluence.
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In summary, we commend and support the County and their consultants on their progress on the SEA Update Study, and particularly on the proposed Puente Hills SEA. We look forward to working with you to incorporate the above-mentioned suggestions. We will forward additional comments on the SEA Update Study after our May 2, 2001, Governing Board meeting. Please direct any questions and correspondence to Judi Tamasi of our staff at (310) 589-3200 ext. 121.

Sincerely,



Bev Perry
Chairperson

Enclosures (4)

Literature cited

PCR Services Corporation, Frank Havore & Associates, and FORMA Systems. 2000a. *Biological Resources Assessment of the Proposed Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area*. Prepared for: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning November.

PCR Services Corporation, Frank Havore & Associates, and FORMA Systems. 2000b. *Executive Summary of the Proposed Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas*. Prepared for: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. November.

PCR Services Corporation, Frank Havore & Associates, and FORMA Systems. 2000c. *Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas Update Study 2000 Background Report*. Prepared for: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. November.