

Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



Newsletter No. 54

Spring 2026

Bald Eagles in the Neighborhood



Pete Bloom, Ph.D.

A Bald Eagle sits on a snag calling out.

By: Claire Schlotterbeck

If you have ever seen a Bald Eagle, you have probably felt something akin to breathtaking awe. I first saw one on a trip to Alaska in 2001, and it thrilled me. Maybe it's their size. Maybe it's that white head bookended by the white tail. Maybe it's their distinctive hooked beak, their fierce eyes, their impressive wingspan, or their majestic presence in flight. When I saw a recent report of a sighting in Brea, I couldn't believe it—but photographs and videos proved it to be true.

I shouldn't have been surprised. There are successful nests in the Prado Basin and the foothills south of the 91 Freeway. Bald Eagles have been photographed perching on telephone poles adjacent to the 71 Freeway and hunting along the Santa Ana River—and now, right down the street from my home. Seeing those photos made my heart race. I wanted to tell every birding photographer I know! (But, I didn't want to chase it away, so I only told a few.)

I'm not the only one entranced by Bald Eagles. Much attention has been shown on the now-famous nest in Big Bear. People around the world watch the live stream—following, worrying, and interpreting every move Jackie and Shadow make as the mated-for-life pair tend their chicks in a massive nest six feet across and just as deep.

Bald Eagles were not always the objects of human affection and admiration. Throughout the 1800s, they were slaughtered by hunters and by farmers who mistakenly saw them as competition or threat. It wasn't until the passing of the Bald Eagle Protection Act in 1940 that they were finally protected—but it wasn't enough. Lead poisoning, electrocution, habitat loss, and the widespread use of pesticides continued to harm the

population. So, when the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) passed in 1972, Bald Eagles were on the first list. The Act protected their habitat and created a recovery plan and it worked. They were removed from the Endangered Species list in 2007—one of the most famous successes of the ESA.

Now, in 2026, the Endangered Species Act itself is threatened. The Federal Administration has proposed changes that could allow the destruction of habitats that many endangered species depend on. So, the trees in which Bald Eagles build their nests may cease to be protected. Our work isn't finished.

These birds are evidence of the successful conservation work we've been doing in our region for the last 50 years. Their presence in the skies above the Puente-Chino Hills is a remarkable endorsement of the support our region's residents continue to provide for wild things.

Welcome to the neighborhood, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*.



Pete Bloom, Ph.D.

First “Preserve” Funds Arrive

By: Andrea Gullo

In January, the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) received the first installment of funds from voter-approved Measure PH. It marked an important milestone for protecting the Puente Hills and the surrounding communities.

Approved by voters in November 2024 with more than two-thirds of the vote, Measure PH established a modest special tax to help ensure long-term stewardship of more than 3,800 acres of preserved open space in the Puente Hills.

With these new resources, the Habitat Authority will strengthen several core programs that help protect both habitat and public safety. Planned work includes wildfire prevention efforts (such as clearing hazardous brush and maintaining emergency access routes), expanding ranger patrols throughout the Preserve, protecting sensitive wildlife habitat, and repairing and maintaining popular trail areas (including Turnbull Canyon, Hacienda Hills, Sycamore Canyon, Hellman Park, Arroyo Pescadero, and Powder Canyon). The agency will hire staff to implement these projects.

For supporters of the Wildlife Corridor, this milestone reflects decades of advocacy to preserve the Puente Hills landscape. Measure PH provides a sustainable funding source to help these hills remain protected and accessible for generations to come.

YL Hills Fire Safe Council

In November 2025, Hills For Everyone and its fiscally sponsored group, Protect Our Homes and Hills launched the Yorba Linda Hills Fire Safe Council (YLHFS). This new non-profit organization is a required step to complete the settlement agreement for the Cielo Vista development off of Via del Agua and Stonehaven.

The name and logo are confirmed, the articles of incorporation are submitted, and next we plan to adopt the by-laws and elect officers. The purpose of the YLHFS is to provide education, programs, and support in order to help protect people, property, and natural lands from the dangers of wildfires in and around the Yorba Linda Hills. It will be funded through a monthly \$13 per home fee through the Cielo Vista Homeowners' Association for 10 years.

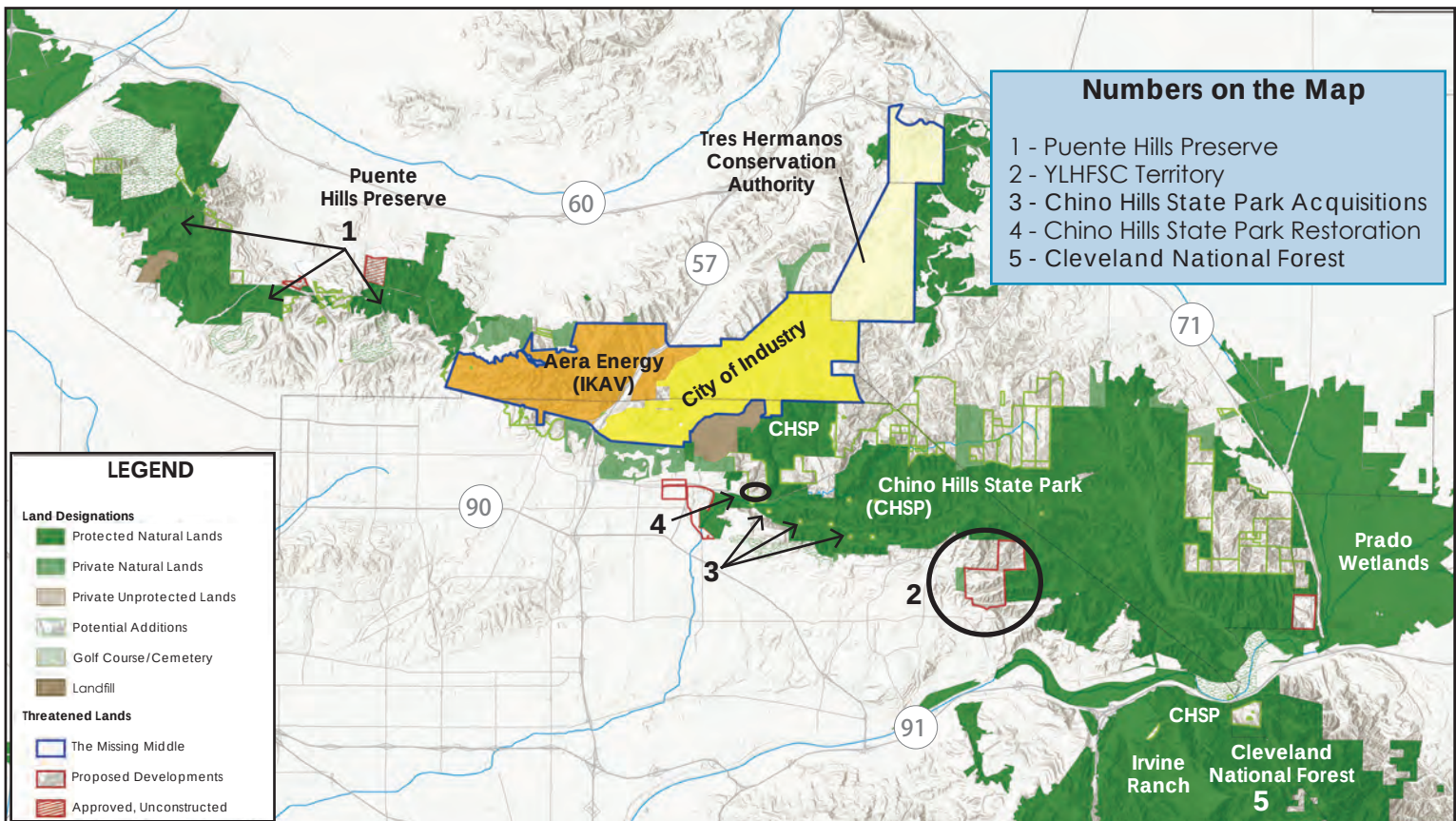
The creation of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan is nearly complete—another requirement of the settlement. Meetings are monthly (the first Thursday) from 7 - 8:30 pm on Zoom (bit.ly/YLHFS-Meetings).

Join us and our special guest speakers including:

- CA Department of Insurance (May 7th)
- Irvine Ranch Conservancy (June 4th)
- CA Fire Safe Council (July 2nd)
- Yorba Linda Water District (August 6th)



Mapping the Corridor Projects



What's In a Name?

The Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association has been reincarnated as the Friends of Chino Hills State Park. Same people, same mission, friendlier name. Though it is formally the fundraising partner for the Park, it does so much more. Volunteers have organized work parties to remove barbed wire fencelines leftover from the ranching days, making it safer for wildlife movement. They have put up directional and trail signs to guide users. The group also purchased counters to gather data at entrances to the Park. This data documents visitors' usage to help us establish the need for more resources for our large and relatively new Park.



Mary Glaser



State Park To Grow

Those who drive through Carbon Canyon may have noticed bulldozing on the north side of the road across from the State Park Discovery Center. It's always disconcerting to see natural land torn up—but this time, those are good bulldozers. They're creating a restoration site as mitigation for the nearby Brea 265 housing project under construction on Aera Energy land along Rose Drive and Valencia. Once the restoration project is successfully completed, the approximately 60-acre parcel is expected to be turned over as an addition to Chino Hills State Park (See Map #4). The process to accept that dedication of land is underway in the Parks Department.

In addition, you may remember seeing eight little empty squares on the map of Chino Hills State Park, like pieces missing from a jigsaw puzzle. Those parcels have never been part of the Park. They were sites that Shell Oil held back as future drilling locations when it originally sold land to the Park in 1983. These eight sites (22 acres in total) will now finally become part of the State Park. (See Map #3)

Threats to National Forests - Rally for Nature (May 7th)

This spring, Hills For Everyone and several partners are coming together for one of the most important gatherings our wildlands have faced in 30 years.

On **Thursday, May 7, 2026**, from **3-6 pm**, we'll **Rally for Nature** in the **Santa Ana Mountain Foothills** to **defend the Roadless Rule**—the policy that has quietly protected almost 60 million acres of our wildest national forests since 1999. With one federal decision, those safeguards could disappear. Register here: bit.ly/OCforests

Proposed in 1999 and adopted in 2001, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule keeps remaining undeveloped national forest lands largely free of new roads and logging. It helps:

- Keep big, unbroken forests and shrublands intact for wildlife.
- Protect clean drinking water and clear streams.
- Support quiet recreation—hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, birding.
- Save taxpayers billions in road-building and maintenance.

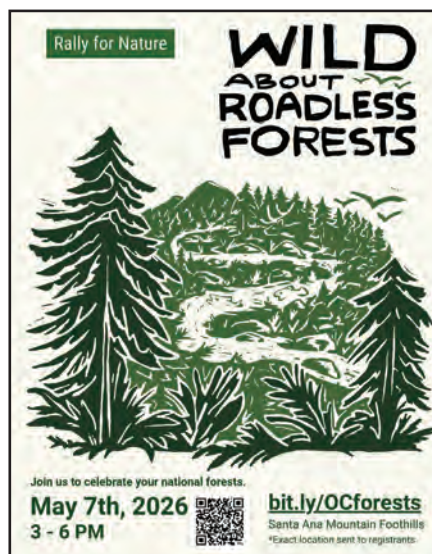
The Federal Administration is pushing to rescind the Roadless Rule, reopening nearly 60 million acres of national forests—including about 4.4 million acres in California—to new roads and logging.

Here in Southern California, that includes portions of the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest (See Map #5), which straddles Orange and Riverside Counties and totals more than 138,000 acres, including about 40,000 acres of wilderness. Losing Roadless protections here means more roads, more erosion, more fragmented habitat, and more costs to maintain infrastructure in places that should stay wild.

The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness—one of the last intact coastal watersheds in Southern California—is also at risk. Its chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak woodlands, and pristine San Mateo Creek support mountain lion, mule deer, golden eagle, southern steelhead trout, California gnatcatcher, and coastal cactus wren. Keeping this area roadless is critical for wildlife connectivity, clean water that drains to the coast, and long-term ecosystem health.

And, without these wild places, the mountain lions that use the Puente-Chino Hills would be even more threatened due to habitat loss. All of our landscapes are interconnected. When one suffers—the next one suffers. We need you with us.

Can't make it to the Rally? You can still help.
Submit a written comment: www.roadless.org





Hills For Everyone
P.O. Box 9835
Brea, CA 92822-1835
www.HillsForEveryone.org

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FULLERTON, CA
PERMIT NO. 56

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

Hills For Everyone Board of Directors

President: Michael Hughes
Vice President: Josh Schroeder
Secretary-Treasurer: Bev Perry
Members at Large: Jeff Garvin
Bob Henderson
Dr. Carol McKenzie
Glenn Parker

Executive Director:
Claire Schlotterbeck
Editor: Melanie Schlotterbeck

Environmental Law Under Threat



Photo Credits: USFWS



Efforts by the Governor and Legislature to undermine the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) have already done damage. The heart of CEQA is the requirement of the Lead Agency to complete an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that informs the public of the potential negative consequences of the proposed development project and lay out ways to lessen the damage. An effort to end this requirement, supported by Governor Newsom and some state legislators, was narrowly blocked—but other damaging exclusions were put in place. These exclusions removed protections for endangered species and wetlands. They also allow many industrial facilities to dump more pollution into our environment without an EIR. Efforts are both under way to restore protections and continue its dismantling. Stay tuned as this fight unfolds.

Get Involved

There are many ways to support HFE'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:



www.HillsForEveryone.org



[Facebook.com/Hills4Everyone](https://www.facebook.com/Hills4Everyone)



bsky.app/profile/hills4everyone.bsky.social



[Instagram.com/Hills4Everyone](https://www.instagram.com/Hills4Everyone)



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/Hills-For-Everyone>