



# **The Puente - Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor**

**Saving Urban Open Space in the Los Angeles Basin**







Mule deer at sunrise

D. Myers

## *A Personal Reflection*

*"The early morning sun had barely penetrated the mid-winter cold when I rounded a bend on the trail and caught my first glimpse of a miracle. Standing in a meadow on the ridge, their heads buried in the cool grasses, were a dozen mule deer. Even in the wilderness, the sight of twelve deer together is unusual, but I was not in the wilderness. My suburban home was barely two miles away, and the city stretched in all directions beneath the hills.*

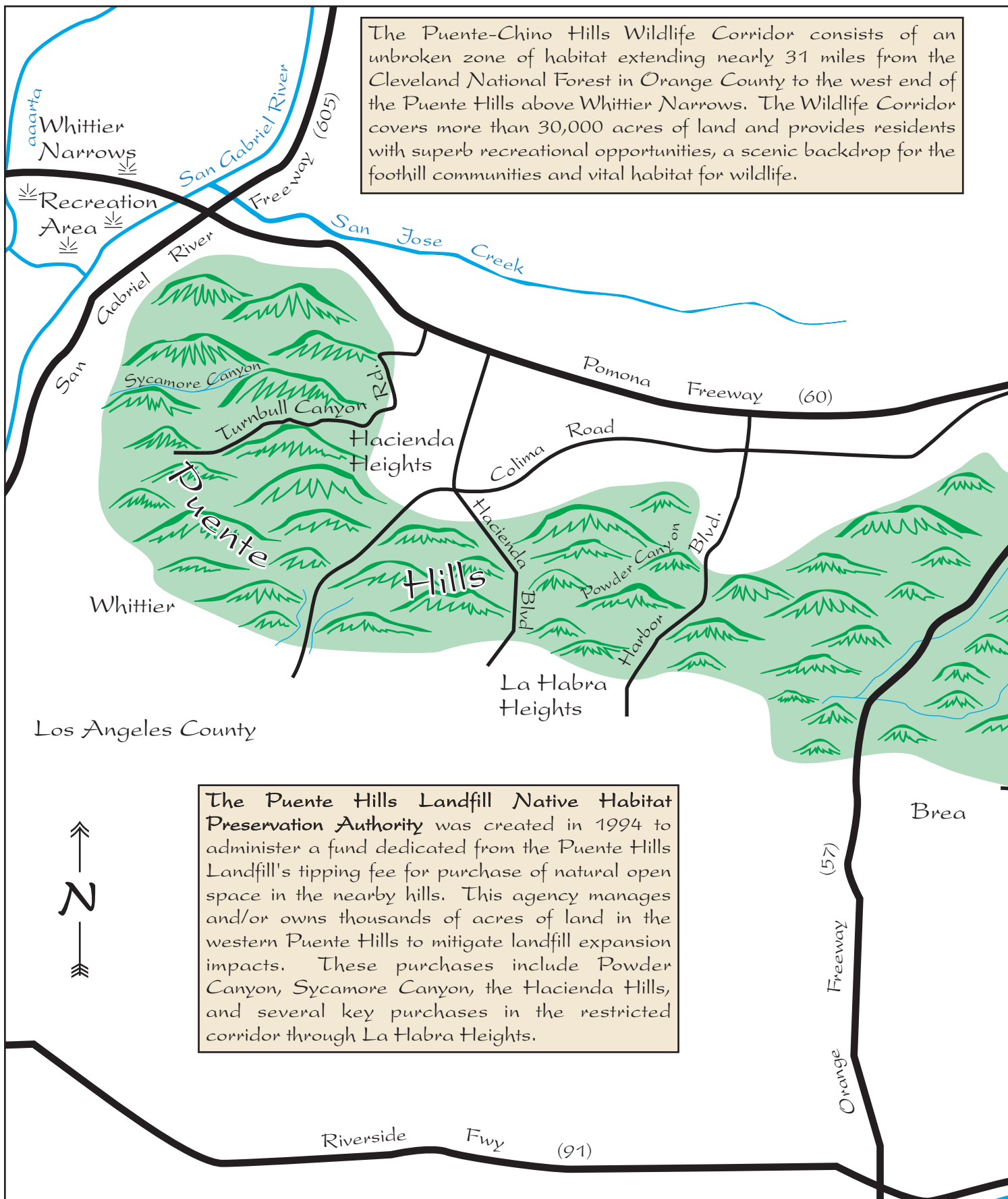
*Two decades would pass before I would understand the true significance of this metropolitan miracle, now called..."The Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor."*



## *A Metropolitan Miracle*

This brochure describes the Wildlife Corridor, its plants and animals, and what it means to the millions of people who live around it. It faces threats from urban encroachment, invasive species and misuse. Your help is needed to assure this resource remains for current and future citizens to enjoy.

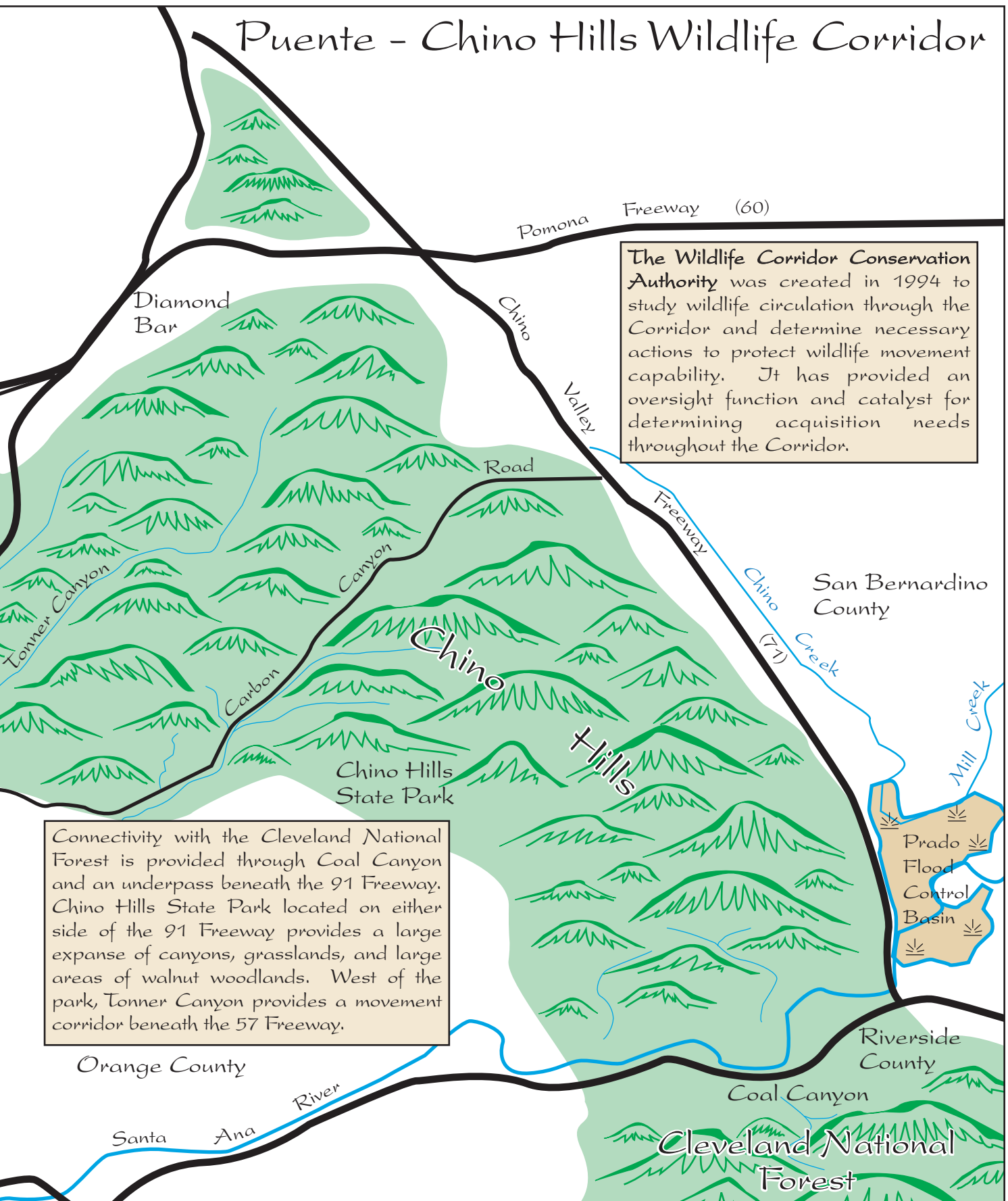




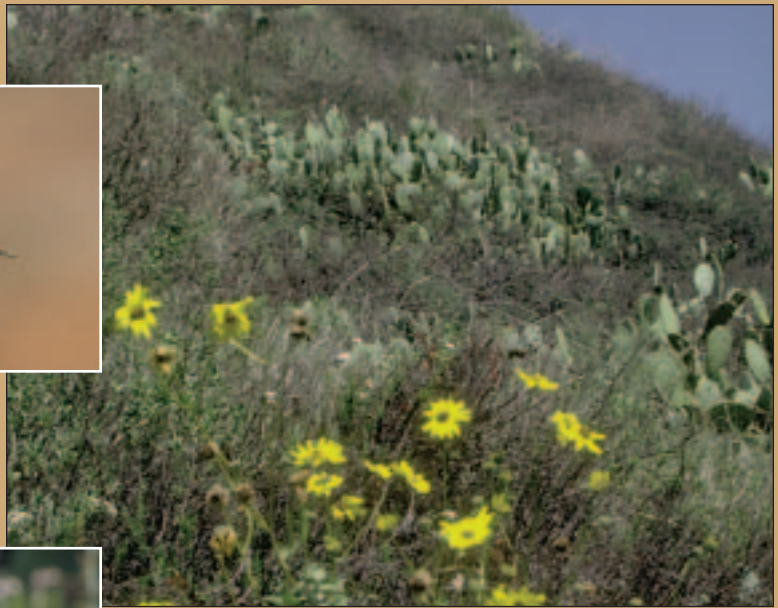
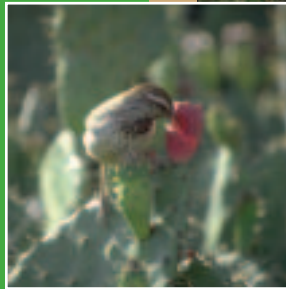
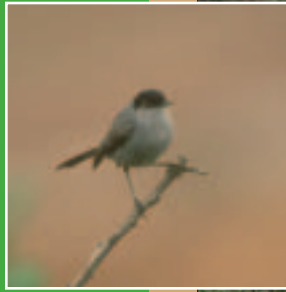
The Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor consists of an unbroken zone of habitat extending nearly 31 miles from the Cleveland National Forest in Orange County to the west end of the Puente Hills above Whittier Narrows. The Wildlife Corridor covers more than 30,000 acres of land and provides residents with superb recreational opportunities, a scenic backdrop for the foothill communities and vital habitat for wildlife.

The Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority was created in 1994 to administer a fund dedicated from the Puente Hills Landfill's tipping fee for purchase of natural open space in the nearby hills. This agency manages and/or owns thousands of acres of land in the western Puente Hills to mitigate landfill expansion impacts. These purchases include Powder Canyon, Sycamore Canyon, the Hacienda Hills, and several key purchases in the restricted corridor through La Habra Heights.

# Puente - Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



The Puente-Chino Hills contain some of the last remaining stands of several habitat types that are declining in the Los Angeles Basin. Habitat loss means loss of species dependent on these vegetation types. As a result, an area once graced with a wide variety of habitat resources now finds itself a hotbed of extinctions. While random development has left many habitat islands scattered through the area, the connectivity still present in the Puente-Chino Hills provides a rare opportunity to preserve a functional wildland. Loss of this connectivity at any point will lead to ultimate loss of many species in the isolated section.



*Coastal Sage Scrub with California Gnatcatcher, inset above, and Cactus Wren, inset below.* J. Yann

A. Ing

## Sensitive Habitats Still Found in the Wildlife Corridor

- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Walnut Woodlands
- Riparian Woodlands
- Grasslands
- Southern Oak Woodlands



*Oak woodlands in Powder Canyon*

S. Bert





*Acorn woodpecker*

L. Bulmer

*H*abitats favorable to wildlife also provide pleasure to human residents, and a reminder of a simpler time when people lived closer to the natural world. Whether it is to find shade on a hot summer day, or to enjoy a family picnic, or simply to relax amid the world of nature, the leafy canopy of the canyon is a place of escape from the busy world of the city beyond.

## Wildlife Corridor Benefits the Urban Environment

- Provides High Quality Recreation
- Enhances Property Values
- Improves Quality of Life
- Stimulates the Senses and Imagination
- Offers Urban Nature Experiences
- Protects Urban Open Space
- Saves Natural Heritage
- Conserves Biodiversity



*School nature walk in Whittier*

C. Hanson



*Queen Butterfly*

R. Williams



*Coast Horned Lizard*

A. Ing



*Coyote*

A. Ing

The Corridor still contains an amazing diversity of plant and animal life. Birds are in many ways both the most obvious animal presence and a good indicator of the health of the Corridor. Resident birds include a large variety of raptors, along with woodpeckers, flycatchers, towhees, sparrows, goldfinches, warblers, and rare species like the California gnatcatcher, cactus wren, and least Bell's vireo. Many species migrate through the Corridor, depending on it for providing part of their lifetime needs. Some species, like the phainopepla, spend the summer before returning to the deserts in the fall.

Visitors still thrill to the sight of mule deer, coyotes and gray fox, along with smaller mammals like raccoons, cottontails, weasels, and squirrels. A fascinating array of reptiles, amphibians and insects also call the Corridor home. Loss of free circulation of these species at any point jeopardizes the survival of many of them in the isolated segment.



*Spotted Towhee*

L. Bulmer



*Phainopepla*

L. Bulmer



Where can city kids go to see nature? How about a trip to the natural world just beyond their backyard! The wonders of the Wildlife Corridor are available to many children who may not have the means to travel to the mountains or other more remote parks. The Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority sponsors many Junior Ranger programs. These outdoor educational programs are offered to children in surrounding communities. These programs can open up the eyes of a child to a whole new world they would never get to see in their city homes.

The Corridor lands can provide much needed outdoor recreation for all. Hiking, running, horseback riding, nature study, or just a chance to relax in the peaceful world of nature—all these pleasures fill a basic need for dwellers in the urban world.



*Tree planting*

E. Hughes



*Blue-eyed Grass*

J. Yann



*California Quail*

L. Bulmer



*Horseback riding*

S. Feld



*Nature study*

C. Hanson

*T*he diverse early uses of the Corridor lands, along with availability of level land in the valleys below, have preserved the wildlife value of this open space. Now, many of those early uses are ended and land values drive the prospect of hillside development ever closer. Carefully planned housing in perimeter areas, with adequate buffering, can preserve the wildlife value and the sense of wonder for visitors.

*T*he Wildlife Corridor is a unique resource. Its preservation requires a careful balance between the needs of development, wildlife and recreation. It is vital that funds be available, both for studies to provide guidance to determine Corridor areas that must be protected, as well as being able to fund purchases of those critical properties.

*I*n many ways, the Corridor is a fortunate outcome of many serendipitous factors that left its wildlife function intact. Now, armed with knowledge of its workings, and knowing its pleasures, could we look our grandchildren in the eye while we explain how we let it all slip away? Instead, let's tell them how all of us came together with a commitment that natural miracles do happen, even in the center of the Los Angeles Basin.



J. Yann



A. Ing





## *The Wildlife Corridor Needs Your Support*

To fulfill the promise of this urban open space, the Wildlife Corridor requires the commitment of many. Allocations of public funds and commitments of private grants and endowments are essential to the successful completion of Corridor acquisitions. Critical areas that need your support:

- Funding for land acquisition
- Funding for resource management
- Legislative support
- Educational programs
- Promotion of resource stewardship
- Encouraging property donations and corporate grants
- Fostering public awareness of Corridor benefits stimulating cooperation among stakeholders



*Family hiking in the Puente Hills above Whittier*

PHLNHPA



*Jogging in Toyon Canyon*

Sierra Club

Production of this brochure was sponsored by:



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and



*California*

### **The Trust For Public Land**

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**Front Cover:** top photo, *Sycamore Canyon, Whittier* - C. Collins  
photo left, *Roadrunner* - L. Bulmer  
photo right, *Bobcat* - A. Ing  
**Back Cover:** *Spreading Coast Live Oak*

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# Joint Powers Authorities Pledged to Preserving The Puente - Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor



## Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority

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### Board of Directors Consists of:

- Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
- County of Los Angeles
- City of Whittier
- Hacienda Heights Improvement Association

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## Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority

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### Board of Directors Consists of:

- City of Brea
- City of Diamond Bar
- City of La Habra Heights
- City of Whittier
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- California Department of Parks and Recreation - Inland Empire District
- California Department of Fish and Game
- County of Los Angeles
- Two Public Members

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