

**PUENTE HILLS HABITAT PRESERVATION AUTHORITY
CITIZENS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
*Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill***

July 15, 2025, Tuesday, 7 p.m.

The regular meeting will take place in-person. Members of the public can observe and participate in the meeting in person.

LOCATION:

Whittier Senior Center: 13225 Walnut St., Whittier, CA 90602.

Catherine Houwen	La Habra Heights
Adam Nazaroff, Chair	La Habra Heights
Roy Francis	La Habra Heights
Shelley Andros	Whittier
Janis Cavanaugh	Whittier
Michelle Pekko-Seymoure	Whittier
Matthew Liang, Vice Chair	County of Los Angeles
(Vacant)	County of Los Angeles
Bryan Coreas	County of Los Angeles

Members of the public may provide electronic comments by Monday, July 14, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. to info@habitatauthority.org. Please label the email in the subject heading as “Public Comments.” Public comments may also be verbally heard during item III of the meeting.

72 hours prior to Citizens Technical Advisory Committee meetings, the entire Citizens Technical Advisory Committee agenda package is available for review, along with any meeting-related writings or documents provided to a majority of the Committee members after distribution of the agenda package, at the Authority’s website, www.habitatauthority.org. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Carlos Zelaya at 562.945.9003, at least 48 hours prior to meeting.

Pursuant to Section 54954 of the Government Code, the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Authority) will hold a regular meeting of the Citizens Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) at the above time and location for the purpose of:

AGENDA

- I. Call to order.
- II. Roll call.
- III. Public comments.
- IV. Approval of Minutes for the June 17, 2025 Advisory Committee Meeting.
- V. Standing Reports:

- a) Report by the Board Liaison on previous Authority's Board of Directors meeting.
 - b) Committee Member feedback from the public as it relates to the Authority.
- VI. Presentation, discussion and review of end of the year Authority workplan for fiscal year 2024-25.
- VII. Closing remarks (Comments/questions from Committee Members and/or Executive Director).
- VIII. Adjournment and announcement of the next meeting.

The Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority is a public entity established pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Act by agreement between the City of Whittier, Los Angeles County, and Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. Regular meetings of the Citizens Technical Advisory Committee are scheduled for the Tuesday before the third Thursday of every month. Questions about any agenda item can be addressed to Andrea Gullo, Executive Director, 562.945.9003.

DRAFT Minutes
PUENTE HILLS HABITAT PRESERVATION AUTHORITY
CITIZENS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
June 17, 2025

The meeting of the Citizens Technical Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at the Whittier Senior Center, 13225 Walnut Ave, Whittier, CA 90602.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chair Nazaroff called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL.

A roll call was taken, and there was a quorum at this time.

Members Present:

Catherine Houwen	La Habra Heights
Adam Nazaroff, Chair	La Habra Heights
Dr. Janis Cavanaugh	Whittier
Michelle Pekko-Seymoure	Whittier
Bryan Coreas	County of Los Angeles

Members Absent:

Roy Francis	La Habra Heights
Shelley Andros	Whittier
(Vacant)	County of Los Angeles
Matthew Liang, Vice Chair	County of Los Angeles

Authority Representatives Present:

Andrea Gullo, Executive Director
Carlos Zelaya, Program Analyst
Kenn Hughs, MRCA Deputy Chief Ranger

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Steve Huber from Whittier Area Audubon shared information regarding their last beginners bird walk, there were thirty-eight species of birds. Members Cavanaugh and Pekko-Seymoure were in attendance as well as Lee Willard from Friends of the Whittier Hills. Hikes have stopped for the summer and will resume in September.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MAY 13, 2025, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING.

Member Houwen motioned to approve the May 13, 2025, minutes as drafted. Member Cavanaugh seconded the motion, and in a vote, the motioned passed unanimously.

V. STANDING REPORTS:

a. REPORT BY BOARD LIAISON ON PREVIOUS MONTH'S AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING.

Member Houwen, Board Liaison, provided the report for the May Board meeting.

b. COMMITTEE MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM THE PUBLIC AS IT RELATES TO THE AUTHORITY.

Member Houwen attended the La Habra Heights City Council meeting and provided an update. She also attended the La Habra Heights Fire Watch meeting.

VI. VERBAL UPDATE FROM DEPUTY CHIEF RANGER HUGHES REGARDING RANGER AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (MRCA).

Deputy Chief Ranger Hughes provided a presentation regarding a variety of matters including annual fuel clearance, July 4th patrol, calls from the public, encounters with the homeless, enforcement of electric bikes, and dogs overheating on the trails.

VII. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE THE THIRTY-FIFTH AMENDMENT OF THE OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (MRCA) FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION SERVICES EXTENDING THE TERM AN ADDITIONAL YEAR FROM 7/1/25 TO 6/30/26 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$592,800.

Executive Director Gullo and Deputy Chief Ranger Hughes provided an overview.

Member Pekko-Seymour motioned to recommend to the Board of Directors to authorize Executive Director Gullo to execute the thirty-fifth amendment of the open space management agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for maintenance and operation services extending the term an additional year from 7/1/25 to 6/30/26 in the amount of \$592,800. Member Houwen seconded the motion, and in a vote, the motioned passed unanimously.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ADOPT AUTHORITY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-03, APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY WILDFIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR PUENTE HILLS FIRE RESILIENCY PROJECT.

Executive Director Gullo provided an overview.

Member Cavanagh motioned to recommend to the Board of Directors the adoption of the Authority Resolution No. 2025-03, approving the application for grant funds for the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Wildfire Prevention Program for Puente Hills Fire Resiliency Project. Member Pekko-Seymour seconded the motion, and in a vote, the motioned passed unanimously.

IX. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2025-0_ DECLARING JUNE AS PRIDE MONTH.

Executive Director Gullo provided an overview. It was explained that resolution numbers will be assigned when the resolution is approved by the Board of Directors.

Member Pekko-Seymour motioned to recommend to the Board of Directors to adopt an Authority resolution declaring June as pride month. Member Cavanaugh seconded the motion, and in a vote, the motioned passed unanimously.

X. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2025-0_ DECLARING JULY AS PARKS MONTH.

Executive Director Gullo provided an overview.

Member Houwen motioned to recommend to the Board of Directors to adopt an Authority resolution declaring July as Parks month. Member Pekko-Seymoure seconded the motion, noting a minor edit to clarify the month, and in a vote, the motioned passed unanimously.

XI. CLOSING REMARKS (COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND/OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR).

Executive Director Gullo announced that staff would be participating in the City of Whittier's virtual Fire Hazard Map Workshop scheduled for 6/18/25.

Executive Director Gullo announced a mandatory pre-meeting on June 29 for the July 4th static patrol for anyone interested in volunteering this year.

Member Houwen thanked Steve Huber for taking her call while on vacation. He assisted her in dealing with a neighborhood issue regarding bird nests affected by removal of trees.

XII. ADJOURNMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEXT MEETING.

There being no further comments or business to discuss, Chair Nazaroff adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: July 15, 2025

To: Citizens Technical Advisory Committee

Prepared by: Andrea Gullo, Executive Director

Agenda Item VI. Presentation, discussion and review of end of the year Authority workplan for fiscal year 2024-25.

Background:

Attached is the Authority's end-of-the-year update of the agency workplan for fiscal year 2024-25, its summary notes, and the Restoration Workplan. The format of the agency workplan in general does not reflect routine day to day and core functions of staff's time which essentially support the mission of the agency. Due to workload, a prolonged staff vacancy, unexpected happenings, and circumstances beyond control, progress on a few of these items is not at the level previously estimated or anticipated.

The highlights of the agency workplan are: Measure PH passed, 16 presentations, 3 open houses, anniversary celebration, closed out two grants, and was awarded two grants (\$9,000 and \$4.9 million).

The Authority workplan and day-to-day Authority mission-driven tasks are in accordance with the attached Authority's Strategic Planning Guidelines, which set priorities for the agency core functions. Below are year-end highlights of four of the agency's core functions: outreach and involvement, resource management, preserve management and administration.

Public Outreach and Involvement:

Per the Authority's Strategic Planning Guidelines, the agency has historically been committed to providing high quality opportunities for outdoor learning and community involvement. For FY 24-25, as in recent years, outdoor education and interpretive programming¹ were not prioritized, and outdoor school programs did not occur at previous levels due to ongoing staff vacancies.

¹ Interpreters connect visitors to important natural, cultural, and historical resources at parks and anywhere that people come to learn about places. The National Association for Interpretation defines interpretation as "a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource."

Chart B, below, illustrates a truncated compilation of estimated participants reached from outreach efforts since 2001. Records from the years 2020 to present are primarily estimates due to reduced staff capacity to track as accurately as had been done in the past. Over 880 visitors to the Preserve were offered docent lead hikes during FY 24-25.

Historical Volunteer Time (Chart A)						
Fiscal Year	Docent Hours	Trail Watch Hours	Other Hours	Total	Hourly Rate	Total Value
20-21	22	415	313	750	\$33.61	\$25,207.50
21-22	23	453	414	890	\$35.56	\$31,648.40
22-23	80	298	193	571	\$37.32	\$21,309.72
23-24	356	180.4	555	1,091.6	\$38.61	\$42,148.22
24-25	394.5	181.1	164.5	740.1	\$40.14	\$29,707.61
<u>Totals Since FY 10-11</u>						
Hours		28,475		Estimated Cost		\$824,352.97
source for hourly rate: Independentsector.org						

Historic Participants Reached (Chart B)					
Fiscal Year	Hills Alive- students	Jr. Ranger- students	Total Students	Other	ALL Outreach (estimated) TOTAL
2001-2007/08		3769			3769
<i>Other years are not shown</i>					
2018/19	966	353	1,319	1,059	2,378
2019/20	741	556	1,297	711	2,008
2020/21	-	-	-	35	35
2021/22				19	19
2022/23				139	139
2023/24				711	711
2024/25				884	884
Totals since 2001	10,358	9,274	15,863	14,495	37,470

Resource Management:

We are committed to promoting and protecting biodiversity in the Preserve. Main ecological activities this past year included beginning the Metro Heights in-lieu fee mitigation project, obtaining regulatory agency sign-off certifying completion of the Monterey and Southern California Edison mitigation projects, and submitting a manuscript for publication in collaboration with Whittier College. Restoration projects are on schedule and budget, and at the end of FY 24-25, 37 acres were being restored. To date 285 acres in the Preserve have been fully restored. Attached is a detailed end-of-the-year restoration workplan report. Below is a summary of the revenue and acreage from the restoration program. Overall, the mitigation restoration program has attracted between \$20 to \$30 million of outside funding for the hills.

Habitat Restoration	Implemented By	Fees Received from 2002 to present*	Acreage Ongoing	Acreage Complete	Total
Restoration	Habitat Authority	not applicable	1.6	125.4	127
Mitigation	Habitat Authority (ILF)	\$3,446,093	35.3	84.7	120
Mitigation	Outside Entity (PIM)	\$1,083,550	0	74.8	74.8
Totals		\$4,529,643	36.9	284.9	321.8

**Fees include mitigation access, administration, and management*

Preserve Management:

While protecting biodiversity remains the primary priority, the Authority is also committed to offering low-impact recreational opportunities so long as they are balanced with long-term ecological sustainability. Preserve management and safety was primarily accomplished via the various grant programs, fuel clearance, routine trailhead maintenance, trail repairs and the ranger/park services contract with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA).

Administration/General Operations:

The Habitat Authority operates with minimal staffing and professional services support, employing only three full-time staff members. The Program Analyst position was vacant for over four months until filled in April. To supplement internal staffing, the Habitat Authority contracts with the City of Whittier for personnel services and with the County of Los Angeles for financial and investment support. Legal services are also obtained through contractual agreements. During the past fiscal year, the Habitat Authority executed 15 new contracts and four contract amendments to support its obligations and project implementation. Additionally, staff issued 11 special use permits this past year.

Staff continues to maintain organizational capacities and equipment for operations. Operations include but are not limited to document retention, accounts payable, technology services, the website, public records requests, vehicle and housing upkeep, insurance, audits, accounting services, and personnel services. Furthermore, over 478 payment request memos (a 58% increase from five years prior) were made to Los Angeles County (the Authority's Controller) and at least an additional 12 were made to City of Whittier to facilitate payment of credit card costs. Also, this year we facilitated the internal accounting transition process to QuickBooks. Lastly, unique website active users was at 40.3K, and of that amount 36.2K were new users.

The Authority strives to provide friendly and responsive service to the community. Staff responded to a variety of inquiries from local residents, addressing specific concerns as well as general inquiries related to trail hours and similar topics. Several house calls were made by rangers and staff when necessary, and many additional calls to the ranger emergency services phone number were fielded by the MRCA.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact.

Recommendation:

That the Committee discuss, receive and file.

Attachments:

End of Year update FY 24-25 agency workplan

End of Year Summary of workplan

End of Year update FY 24-25 restoration update

Authority's Strategic Planning Guidelines

	GOAL	Resp. Party	** Priority Level (1-3)	Est. Completion Date	Update Approx. % Complete	Board Approval Date	Cost / Funding
1	Heli-hydrant project	Board,staff, Attorney	1	Ongoing	90%	direction provided sprg/smmr 2021	
2	Implement CalFire Grant	Staff, Rngr	1	3/30/2025	100%	5/20/2021	CalFire
3	Implement RMC Round 2 Grant	Staff, Rngr	1	3/30/2025	100%	4/21/2022	RMC
4	Address funding issues and community outreach	ED, Brd subcom., Board, CTAC	1	Ongoing	Ongoing	11/17/2022	Access Fee Reserves/ Operations/Excess mitigation funds
5	Plan and host 30th Anniversary	Board and staff	1	9/21/2024	100%	1/18/2024	
6	Seek M&S funding reimbursement Fys 21-22, 22-23, 23-24	ED, Projct Analyst	1	Ongoing	66%	7/15/2021, 6/30/2022, 5/25/2023	County
7	Administer Caltrans grant	ED, Projct Analyst	1	2026 or earlier	83%	5/25/2023	Caltrans
8	Seek additional grant funding (fuel clearance, gate installation, acquisition, etc.)	ED, staff	2	Ongoing	Ongoing		
9	Repair Authority residences	ED, Rgr	3	6/30/2026	60%	direction provided in spring 2021, and 2024	State funds through Caltrans
10	Process new mitigation opportunities as they arise.	ED, Ecol	3	Ongoing	Ongoing	7/15/2021	Mitigation funding
11	Repair Arroyo Pescadero gate and Hacienda Hills Trailhead railing	ED	3	TBD	0%	7/15/2021, 5/25/2023	Access Fee Reserves/ State funds through Caltrans
12	Revise Authority trailhead rules signs	Staff, Rngrs, CTAC, Board, NPS	3	TBD	5%	6/30/2022	Operations/ possible RMC grant
13	Hire Naturalist to coordinate volunteers	ED	3	TBD	0%	6/30/2022	Operations

UPDATE SUMMARY, FY24-25 EOY

	GOAL	Notes
1	Heli-hydrant project	In progress of completing agreement.
2	Implement CalFire grant	Started fall of 2021. Received grant amendment. Completed. Goats grazed 27-36 acres for two years, contractors cleared over 137 acres of urban wildland interface and access routes for two years, removed over 320 hazardous trees.
3	Implement RMC Grant (2)	Started fall of 2022. Received grant amendment. Completed. Goat grazed 11-30 acres for two years, contractors cleared over 67 acres for defensible space, 1.9 acres of habitat enhanced.
4	Address funding issues and community outreach	Conducted extensive outreach and educated the community before Meaasure PH and continued outreach afterwards. Held 3 open houses, 16 presentations, completed a community mailer, social media and newsletter publications ongoing.
5	Plan and host 30th Anniversary	Held event in September. Completed.
6	Seek M&S funding reimbursement Fys 21-22, 22-23, 23-24	Submitted reimbursement request for FY 21-22 for city properties. FY 22-23 and 23-24 submittals to city are partially completed. Submitted first phase of FY 22-23 and 23-24 reimbursement for PHHPA Turnbull property request to the County.
7	Administer Caltrans grant	Ongoing.
8	Seek additional grant funding (fuel clearance, gate installation, acquisition, etc.)	Received Hills For Everyone \$9,000 grant. Received RMC grant \$4.9M
9	Repair Authority residences	Delayed due to workload and funding assessment.
10	Process new mitigation opportunities as they arise.	Ongoing.
11	Repair Arroyo Pescadero gate and Hacienda Hills Trailhead railing	Delayed due to workload.
12	Revise Authority trailhead rules signs	Delayed due to staff workload and coordination with National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Reached out to NPS.
13	Hire Naturalist to coordinate volunteers	Delayed due to staff workload.

June/30/2025

**Restoration Work Plan
End of the Fiscal Year Update**

SUMMARY:					
Overall (Habitat Authority and Mitigation) restoration projects (includes mitigation restoration, habitat restoration, and enhancement/weeding):					
36.9 acres ongoing					
284.8 acres completed					
321.7 acres total					
Habitat Authority Restoration Projects:					
<u>Restoration - 0.75 acres Ongoing, 64.33 acres Complete, 65.08 acres Total</u>					
Ongoing Projects	Activity	Original Completion Date	Estimated Completion Date	Status	Comments
Peppergrass Restoration (0.75 ac)	Planting cactus, seeding and maintenance	Spring 2019	Spring 2027	Ongoing	Additional restoration efforts are anticipated contingent upon future RMC grant funding.
<u>Enhancement/weeding - 0.8 acres Ongoing, 61.1 acres Complete, 61.9 acres Total</u>					
Ongoing projects include hand weeding a portion of the former OCWR mitigation area. Completed projects woody invasive removal along Turnbull Canyon Trail and within the Canlas parcel restoration area, invasive removal at the Hacienda Hills Trailhead, and weeding of the Hacienda Hills bioswale. General weed removal efforts,					
<u>HABITAT AUTHORITY RESTORATION PROJECTS SUMMARY</u>					
1.6 ACRES ONGOING					
125.4 ACRES COMPLETE					
127 ACRES TOTAL					
Mitigation Projects:					
<u>Outside Entity Implementing (0 acres Ongoing, 74.8 acres Complete, 74.8 acres Total)</u>					
Completed Projects	Activity	Original Completion Date	Estimated/Actual Completion Date	Status	Comments
Monterey Park Marketplace					Conservation Easement recorded
15 ac CSS (Powder Canyon)	Site Preparation	Fall 2017		Complete	Grazing conducted Oct-Nov 2017
	Temporary Irrigation	Fall 2017		Complete	
	Grow & Kill*	Fall 2019	Winter 2018	Complete	One year of weed abatement; Feb
	Planting*	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Complete	March - April 2019
	Hydroseeding*	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Complete	

*Original completion dates assume two years of grow and kill cycles

Restoration Work Plan
End of the Fiscal Year Update

	Maintenance*	Spring 2025	Spring 2024	Complete	
	Final performance monitoring	Winter 2025	Winter 2024	Complete	Project signoff rec'd Feb 2025
Habitat Authority Implementing (35.3 acres Ongoing, 84.7 acres Complete, 120 acres Total)					
Ongoing Projects	Activity	Original Completion Date	Estimated/Actual Completion Date	Status	Comments
Turnbull Riparian Restoration					
1.35 ac Riparian (Turnbull Canyon)	Seeding and maintenance	Fall 2017 (Original mitigation project)	Fall 2025	Ongoing	Formerly Permittee Implemented Mitigation (PXP/Sentinel); transferred to Habitat Authority in 2021
Olinda (OCWR2)					
19.86 ac CSS (Arroyo San Miguel)	Site Preparation	Fall 2018		Complete	Conservation Easement recorded
	Temporary Irrigation install	Fall 2018		Complete	
	Grow & Kill*	Fall 2020		Complete	
	Planting*	Winter 2020	Spring 2021	Complete	
	Hydroseeding*	Winter 2020	Spring 2021	Complete	
	Maintenance	Spring 2026		Ongoing	Currently in maintenance year 4
	Final performance monitoring report	Winter 2026		Planned	Project signoff expected by February 2027
Brea 57 / Lambert					
2.1 ac CSS (Powder Canyon)	Site Preparation	Fall 2019		Complete	Conservation Easement recorded
	Temporary Irrigation install	Fall 2019		Complete	
	Grow & Kill*	Fall 2021		Complete	
	Planting*	Winter 2021		Complete	
	Hydroseeding*	Winter 2021		Complete	
	Maintenance	Spring 2027		Ongoing	Currently in maintenance year 3
	Final performance monitoring report	Winter 2027		Planned	Project signoff expected by February 2028
Metro Heights					
12 ac CSS (Powder Canyon & Arroyo San Miguel)	Site Preparation	Fall 2024		Complete	Project broke ground Oct 2024

*Original completion dates assume two years of grow and kill cycles

**Restoration Work Plan
End of the Fiscal Year Update**

	Temporary Irrigation install	Fall 2024		Complete	
	Grow & Kill*	Fall 2026		Ongoing	
	Conservation easement-survey and record	Winter 2026		Planned	Shall be recorded within 2 years of mitigation agreement effective
Ongoing Projects (continued)	Activity	Original Completion Date	Estimated/Actual Completion Date	Status	Comments
	Planting & Hydroseeding*	Winter 2026		Planned	
	Maintenance	Spring 2032		Planned	
	Final performance monitoring report	Winter 2032		Planned	
Completed Projects	Activity	Original Completion Date	Estimated/Actual Completion Date	Status	Comments
SCE					Conservation Easement recorded
60 ac CSS (Powder Canyon)	Site Preparation	Fall 2016		Complete	Sept 2016-Dec 2018
	Temporary Irrigation install	Fall 2016		Complete	
	Grow & Kill*	Fall 2018	Winter 2018	Complete	
	Planting*	Winter 2018	Spring 2019	Complete	Fall 2018-Spring 2019
	Hydroseeding*	Winter 2018	Spring 2019	Complete	Fall 2018-Spring 2019
	Maintenance	Spring 2024		Complete	
	Final performance monitoring report	Fall 2024		Complete	Project signoff rec'd Dec 2024 (CPUC) and Jan 2025 (USFWS)
<u>MITIGATION PROJECTS SUMMARY</u>					
	35.3 ACRES ONGOING				
	159.4 ACRES COMPLETE				
	194.7 ACRES TOTAL				

*Original completion dates assume two years of grow and kill cycles

PUENTE HILLS HABITAT PRESERVATION AUTHORITY
Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill
Strategic Planning Guidelines

1. Administration and General Operations

Goal A: Create effective financial and operational forecasts.

Goal B: Develop and maintain organizational capacities for operational needs.

2. Acquisition

Goal A: Add acreage to strengthen existing habitat areas.

Goal B: Ensure linkage to eastern habitat area.

Priority of Acquisitions:

High Priority

- Dark Canyon
- Linkage area at Hacienda Boulevard and restricted “Corridor” between Powder Canyon and former Unocal property

Priority

- Additional open space to strengthen existing habitat areas

Other

- Opportunity purchases

3. Preserve Management

Goal A: Provide adequate public safety and management services.

Goal B: Offer access and recreational opportunities for the public benefit, balancing with ecological sustainability.

Goal C: Facilitate various maintenance projects that benefit the Preserve.

4. Public Outreach, Education and Involvement (Interpretation)

Goal A: Provide high-quality educational and outdoor learning opportunities.

Goal B: Provide opportunities for community involvement.

5. Resource Management

Goal A: Promote and protect biodiversity as well as natural and cultural resources.

Goal B: Promote management practices that protect ecological health of the environment.

Goal C: Address various projects that have the potential to negatively affect the Preserve, and work to avoid, minimize or mitigate their impacts.

Jan 2012

Additional Materials

Press Releases

PRESS RELEASE: Whittier and Puente Hills Habitat Authority Unite for Fire Safety

Post Date: 06/27/2025 6:00 PM

20250627 - Whittier and Puente Hills Habitat Authority Unite for Fire Safety

City of Whittier and Puente Hills Habitat Authority Unite for Fire Safety

Whittier, CA — As cities across California prepare for a fire-prone Fourth of July, the City of Whittier is taking a proactive, people-powered approach to public safety. In addition to strict fireworks enforcement—with fines up to \$5,000 for violations—the City is partnering with the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority to activate a volunteer Fireworks Static Patrol.

Residents who sign up participate in a coordinated safety effort that includes a pre-holiday briefing and a dedicated patrol of Whittier's hillside trails and open spaces, areas particularly vulnerable to wildfires sparked by illegal fireworks. This boots-on-the-ground effort gives the community an active role in fire prevention and provides a real-time reporting mechanism for emergency response.

"Keeping our hills safe from fire danger is a shared responsibility," said Mayor Joe Vinatieri. "This partnership allows our residents to play a direct role in protecting Whittier and shows what's possible when cities and agencies work together toward public safety."

Whittier's approach highlights the value of interagency cooperation and grassroots prevention at a time when communities across California are grappling with increasingly destructive fire seasons. The City hopes the program can serve as a model for other jurisdictions looking to combine code enforcement, environmental stewardship, and civic volunteerism.

For additional information, please contact Assistant City Manager Shannon DeLong at (562) 567-9301 or admin@cityofwhittier.org.

###

[Return to full list >>](#)



Andrea Gullo
Executive Director



Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority

Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ivan Sulic
Chair
County of Los Angeles

Mary Ann Pacheco
Vice Chair
City of Whittier

Robert Ferrante
Director Sanitation Districts of
Los Angeles County

Cassandra Garcia
Director
Hacienda Heights

July 8, 2025

The Honorable Ali Saleh, Mayor/City of Bell &
Elected Chair
Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
100 N. Old San Gabriel Canyon Road
Azusa, California 91702

Appreciation for the Puente Hills Fire Resiliency Grant

Dear Chair Saleh and Board Members:

Thank you very much for your agency's award of the Puente Hills Fire Resiliency Grant to the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority).

As wildfire seasons continue to increase in both duration and intensity, securing funding for proactive wildfire resiliency projects has become crucial to our agency. Support such as this enables us to implement comprehensive projects aimed at protecting facilities and the open space, reducing hazardous fuel loads, and strengthening wildfire prevention strategies—all in service of safeguarding surrounding communities and the irreplaceable natural resources of the Puente Hills Preserve under the Habitat Authority's stewardship.

This grant award means a great deal to the Habitat Authority. It represents a dynamic multi-pronged approach to wildfire preparedness and the ongoing protection of communities neighboring the Preserve. Your continued support of our agency's efforts is simply invaluable.

With Gratitude,

Ivan Sulic
Chair of the Board of Directors

C:

Mark Stanley, RMC Executive Officer
Habitat Authority Board of Directors and Advisory Committee
Habitat Authority, Executive Director

Ivan Sulic
Chair
County of Los Angeles

Mary Ann Pacheco
Vice Chair
City of Whittier

Robert Ferrante
Director Sanitation Districts of
Los Angeles County

Cassandra Garcia
Director
Hacienda Heights

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2025

Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority Awarded \$4.9 Million Grant for Wildfire Resiliency

Whittier, CA — In June, the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) was awarded \$4,977,000 in grant funding from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), a state agency. The funding will support the Habitat Authority's Puente Hills Fire Resiliency project, which aims to enhance wildfire safety for the Puente Hills Preserve and the surrounding communities of Whittier, La Habra Heights, Hacienda Heights and Rowland Heights.

The state funding is sourced from the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, appropriations under Chapter 3 Wildfire and Forest Resilience. The three-year grant agreement, expected to be executed in August, has four primary tasks: A. Wildfire Prevention and Protection, B. Wildfire Prevention Planning, C. Biological Consulting & Contractor Oversight, and D. Acquisition.

Wildfire planning is multifaceted, encompassing everything from ignition prevention to emergency infrastructure and home hardening. This dynamic grant project will include exciting elements such as: home hardening for an agency facility; protective wrought iron boundary fencing at key locations; vegetation and hazardous tree clearance; habitat enhancement; equipment purchases including a flail mower, two 1,000 gallon mobile water trailers, and a 2,000 gallon water tender to be used for firefighting efforts; vegetation mapping; fire fuel modeling; land acquisition; and development of a permanent firebreak in the form of a trailhead.

Importantly, the grant allows the Habitat Authority to address critical wildfire resiliency activities that would otherwise not be covered under the agency's regular budget, which is funded in part by Measure PH. Letters of support for the grant were received from the City of Whittier, Sierra Club San Gabriel Valley Task Force, Friends of the Whittier Hills, and Hills For Everyone.

"We are extremely grateful to the RMC for their funding of this critically important grant. This proactive project is a part of the Habitat Authority's ongoing commitment to wildfire preparedness for the benefit of the Preserve and the local communities for years to come." said Ivan Sulic, Chair of the Habitat Authority's Board of Directors.

"This comprehensive grant provides us with the necessary additional resources needed to implement priority wildfire prevention and protection strategies, preserve natural habitats, and safeguard local communities. It's a win-win for the region." said Andrea Gullo, Habitat Authority Executive Director.

Since its establishment in 1994, the Habitat Authority has been committed to preserving and protecting the over 3,800 acres of natural habitats of the Puente Hills area, including Hacienda Hills, Turnbull Canyon, Sycamore Canyon, Hellman Park, Arroyo Pescadero, and Powder Canyon. The Habitat Authority offers vital benefits by preventing wildfires, preserving natural habitats, and providing recreational opportunities. <https://www.habitatauthority.org/> ##

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