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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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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