

Chatsworth Nature Preserve Coalition

Working together to preserve as open space for wildlife, local and migratory birds, natural habitat, cultural and archaeological assets.

A meadowlark needs a meadow to sing ...

September 03, 2013

Los Angeles County Supervisors
Michael Antonovich
Zev Yaroslavsky
Gloria Molina
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Don Knabe

Re: Woolsey Canyon Estates TR061037, RCUP 200500011, RCUP04-069, R0AK 04-069, ZC 04-069

Dear County Supervisors:

The above referenced project is 14 single family residences on approximately 32 acres that straddle Woolsey Canyon Blvd., in the Simi Hills SEA #14.

This area teems with wildlife: It supports occasional passage of mountain lions and mule deer and is home to coyotes, bobcats, raccoons, opossums, rabbits, reptiles and amphibians including western spadefoot toad, slender salamander, and western skink, and hundreds of birds – from eagles, hawks, falcons, roadrunners, quail, and owls, to tiny songbirds that travel thousands of miles from Alaska to winter in our area, and a plethora of so many more.

Wildlife Corridor: The Simi Hills wildlife corridor is being choked from development. Both Ventura County and Los Angeles County need to understand that the Simi Hills is the most vulnerable crucial link in the wildlife corridor. The Simi Hills is a crucial wildlife habitat link between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Santa Susana Mountains and beyond. Studies by Kathleen Delaney, Seth Riley, and Jeff Sikich with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area have shown that wildlife populations (flying, walking, or crawling) cannot survive in fragmented habitats. As urban sprawl moves into the Simi Hills the habitat fragmentation will lead to wildlife extinction in Southern California.

Watershed/Groundwater: The water flows off slopes of the Simi hills and feeds the Woolsey Canyon Creek that runs into the Chatsworth Nature Preserve (CNP). The State Water Resources Board supports watershed protection of the Upper Los Angeles River watershed from the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains. The CNP seasonal wetlands and vernal pools are crucial to a healthy ecosystem and support of wildlife. The Woolsey Canyon Creek will be rendered polluted and the life-giving marshes it supports for plants and wildlife will be compromised.

Oak Trees: There are four oak trees targeted for destruction in this proposed development. Rather than planting a million, often non-native trees, it doesn't make sense to destroy native oak trees for development. At what point will there be any oak trees remaining as one proposed development after another is given permission by LA County and/or LA City to be destroyed? These trees are the lifeblood/home of many critters and a source of oxygen for humans. It is nothing short of criminal to destroy one oak tree in this era of devastating oak diseases and parasites.

Anti-coagulant poisoning: Once homeowners move into environmental areas that are also home to a wide range of animals, everything from rodents, rattlesnakes, and their natural predators, the anti-coagulant poisoning of rodents begins. Anti-coagulants kill not only the target rodents but also the rodents' natural predators – foxes, weasels, coyotes, hawks, owls, and cougars – that eat the poisoned carrion that causes the predators' stomachs to bleed out causing a slow death. The common misuse of anti-coagulants by homeowners in wildlife areas causes the unintended death of the rodents' natural predators and results in a vicious circle of rodent poisoning, predator deaths, and increased rodent populations resulting in additional poisoning.

Endangered and rare plant life in the Simi Hills: San Fernando spineflower and Santa Susana tarplant are at risk in this region. The Santa Susana Bush Monkey Flower and Sticky Monkey Flower, at this time are not rare but indigenous to this region, flourishing in the rock outcroppings, under oak woodlands, serpentine cliffs and near seasonal springs. The Santa Susana tarplant and monkey flower grows in rock crevices. The spineflowers' greatest threat is development. Grading of hillsides will destroy the sensitive habitat needed for these native plants.

The Simi Hills and Chatsworth Nature Preserve is one of the last outposts of L.A. County that has scenic vistas, open space, native plants and trees, and abundant wildlife. Development will destroy forever this rare ecosystem, negatively impact adjacent habitats, and deprive future generations of this important natural resource. We urge you to consider this and not allow this irresponsible proposed building of residential homes in this crucial wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

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Santa Susana Mtn. Park Association

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Cc: Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles Mayor, Fran Pavley, CA State Senate
Jodie Sackett, LA County Dept. of Regional Planning
Scott Harris, Environmental Scientist, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife