



October 2023

Annual Report 2022-23



Department of Public Works -
Special Districts
County Service Area 120

San Bernardino Countywide Vision Statement

We envision a complete county that capitalizes on the diversity of its people, its geography, and its economy to create a broad range of choices for its residents in how they live, work, and play.

We envision a vibrant economy with a skilled workforce that attracts employers who seize the opportunities presented by the county's unique advantages and provide the jobs that create countywide prosperity.

We envision a sustainable system of high-quality education, community health, public safety, housing, retail, recreation, arts and culture, and infrastructure, in which development complements our natural resources and environment.

We envision a model community which is governed in an open and ethical manner, where great ideas are replicated and brought to scale, and all sectors work collaboratively to reach shared goals.

From our valleys, across our mountains, and into our deserts, we envision a county that is a destination for visitors and a home for anyone seeking a sense of community and the best life has to offer.

Our Mission

To provide management for conservation, preservation, and mitigation properties within County Service Area 120 by providing ongoing protection of the natural ecosystem and habitats, through stewardship and education.



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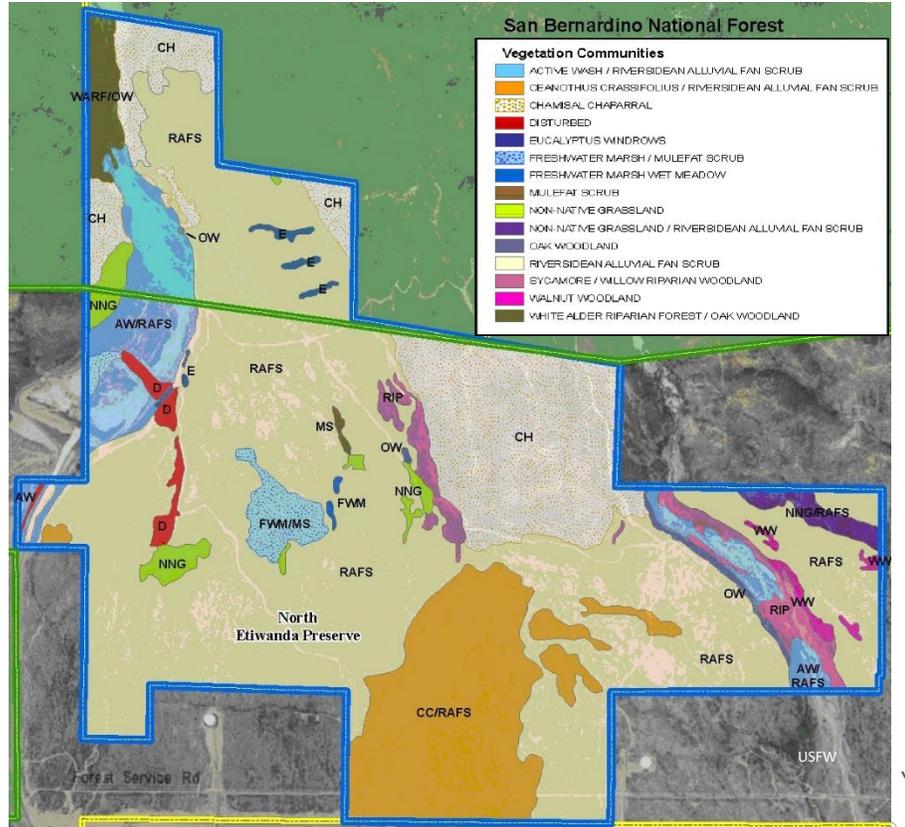


Introduction

County Service Area 120 (CSA 120) spans a 9,557 acre sphere area at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, located north of the cities of Rancho Cucamonga and Fontana. The Special Districts Division of San Bernardino County Public Works (SDD) is responsible for managing 18 conservation easements, encapsulating just over 1,200 acres. While each property is managed according to its individual mitigation requirement, the larger contiguous body of properties (SBCTA) created the North Etiwanda Preserve (NEP) in 1998. The NEP was formed to provide mitigation lands for the development of the 210 freeway, resulting in the conservation of 762 acres of habitat. In 2009, a centralized trail system and minor educational amenities were created to deter some of the damaging illegal activities occurring at the site, while fostering a stewardship ethic for the environment. Of the multiple mitigation properties managed by SDD, the NEP is the only area that warrants public access and visitorship.

The habitat composition of CSA 120 is primarily that of the highly endangered Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub (RAFSS) with several sub-habitat areas (Chaparral, Freshwater Marsh, Riparian, Disturbed Grassland, etc.). This habitat is historically known to have been home to over 18 federally and state protected species such as the California Gnatcatcher, San Bernardino Merriam's Kangaroo Rat, Plummer's Mariposa Lily, Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, Parry's Spineflower, Mountain Yellow-Legged Tree Frog, etc.

Origin of Land Deeds	Acceptance	Total Acreage	Mitigation Conditions
SBCTA	1998	762	RAFSS Protection
Lennar Comm.	2003	32.93	RAFSS Protection
A & J Resources	2004	172	Open Space (OS)
Granite Homes	2005	86.15	OS/ Habitat Preservation
Centex Homes	2005	149.3	OS/ Habitat Preservation
Western Slope & Mineral Co.	2010	5	OS/ Habitat Preservation



California Gnatcatcher
(*Poliophtila californica*)



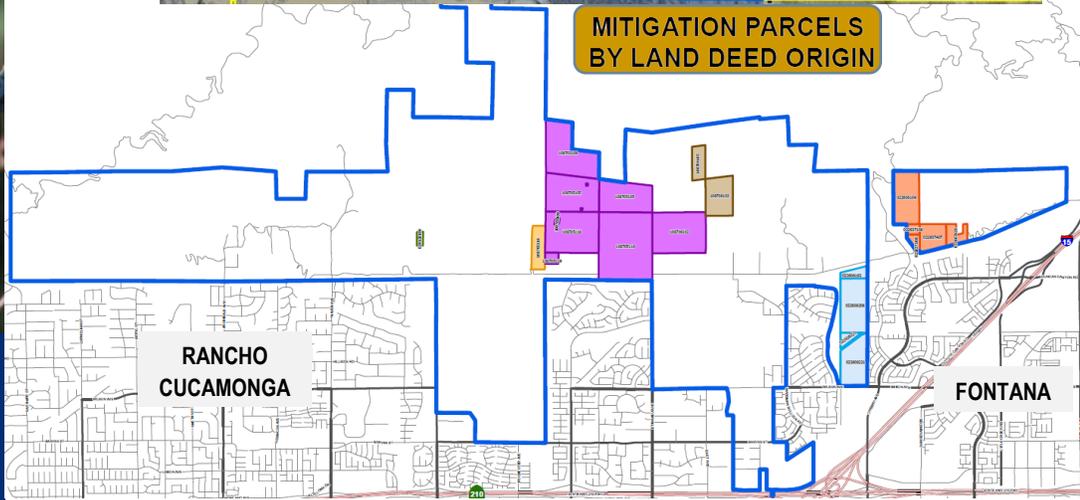
Tom Benson 2010



May 2015

Plummer's Mariposa Lily
(*Calochortus plummerae*)

MITIGATION PARCELS BY LAND DEED ORIGIN



- County Service Area 120 Sphere of Influence
- SBCTA
- A & J Resources
- Centex Homes
- Lennar
- Granite Homes
- Western Slope & Mineral Co.



Management

Management Challenges	New Management Measure(s)	Noticeable Effect(s)
After-Hours Trespassing	-Incidents are reported directly to the Sheriff. -Looking into potential security cameras at night. -Greater enforcement needed	-Increased Police Patrols in the area. -Growing conversation of local partnerships and ways to manage enforcement.
Dogs on Site	-Staff and Stewards actively work to educate persons on site and through web portals. -A informational flyer of impact is given to owners and are asked to leave	-Seen a significant decline in the number of dogs brought to the NEP. Volunteers once reported 5-7 dogs per visit, while records now indicate less than 1-2 per visit.
Graffiti	-All photos are stored in a database and forwarded to the Sheriff for enforcement. -Removal often involves an incident report and depending on the sensitivity of the area, low-impact sand blasting may be administered.	-Graffiti is often removed in a timely fashion -Impact currently remains steady, occurring about once every 1-2 months. -Greater Enforcement Needed
Illegal Plant Harvesting	-Report occurrences to the Sheriff or Code Enforcement -District staff and Stewards often educate harvesters of the rules and will escort them to the authority and/or will confiscate the plant material	-Appears to be a growing enterprise. Hours and avoidance tactics remain dynamic. -Have issued 1 citation and 1 late hours arrest -Greater enforcement needed
Invasive Species	-Active hand removal of invasive species by special groups, Stewards, and at cleanups -Spread native seeds in fire restoration areas to discourage non-native growth	-Since the fire, invasive mustard and thistles plague the site, but drought seems to be taking a toll, allowing natives to propagate.
Littering	-Staff and Stewards regularly patrol parking lot, kiosks, and trail areas removing litter.	-Trash remains constant. -Illegal dumping appears more common when dumpsters are on site for cleanups.
Vehicle Intrusion	-Post-fire revealed historic entry points. Active trail maintenance and rock buildups were created to cease intrusions	-Intrusions appear to be minimal to non-existent.



Biology



View of the hiking trail at the Etiwanda Preserve in the morning

Committed to Conservation

The Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) obtained a crucial permit from San Bernardino County in July of 2023 to initiate a vital project aimed at mitigating invasive plant species within the Etiwanda Preserve. The permit represents a step towards safeguarding the ecosystem of the preserve. The IERCD's efforts, combined with the county's endorsement, demonstrate a collective commitment to preserving the native flora and fauna of the Etiwanda Preserve. The IERCD will be working diligently to ensure that invasive species are effectively managed and the Preserve's biodiversity is preserved for generations to come.



Calling All Nature Enthusiasts and Scientists!

Before the pandemic hit, the North Etiwanda Preserve was buzzing with the presence of college students, college professors, scientists, and nature enthusiasts who visited regularly to conduct ecological and biological studies. It was a hub of research and a sanctuary for biodiversity exploration. However, the pandemic brought a pause to these vital activities.

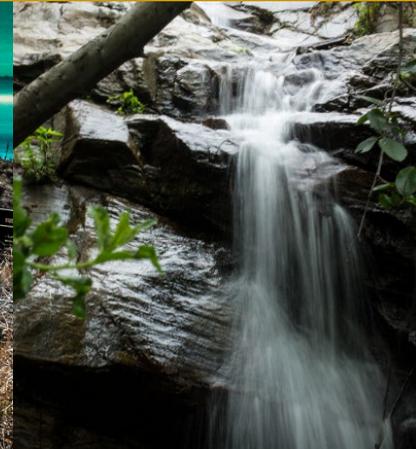
Now, it's time to rekindle that spirit of discovery and conservation. The North Etiwanda Preserve, with its rich and diverse ecosystem, asks you to return and continue the important work that helps us understand, protect, and preserve our natural heritage.

Permits Issued

- ◆ **Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) – July 2023**
-Mitigation of Invasive Plants

Student Projects

- ◆ None to report



Volunteerism

Now is the time to revive the spirit of volunteerism! The North Etiwanda Preserve extends a warm invitation to all nature enthusiasts and community members to return and continue the vital work of preserving and restoring our cherished natural sanctuary.

The Preserve is eager to welcome back volunteers with open arms. Whether you're an experienced volunteer or just beginning your journey in nature conservation, your dedication is invaluable.

Let's roll up our sleeves, rally the community, and get back to work - cleaning, weeding, and restoring North Etiwanda Preserve to glory. If you're interested in volunteering or have any inquiries, please contact nep@specialdistricts.org or connect with the North Etiwanda Preserve management.

Together, we can revive North Etiwanda Preserve as a vibrant hub of volunteerism, where the community comes together to protect and restore this community gem.

A big thank you to our regular support groups!



Workers and Volunteers collect several bags of trash each week

Tri-Annual Cleanup Events

World Wetlands Day

1st Friday in February
(2-2-2024)

Endangered Species Day

3rd Friday in May
(5-17-2024)

Make a Difference Day

Last Saturday in October
(10-26-2024)



Volunteers and staff work together to restore trails following the Etiwanda Fire of 2014.

Looking to Get More Involved?

Each week the Preserve is visited by thousands of people looking to get some fresh air, maybe even a little exercise, but ultimately develop a deeper connection with nature. District-certified Stewards work daily to support the beautification of the area, while educating visitors on the things that make the NEP unique. In addition to standard tasks, Stewards are encouraged to get involved in areas of the NEP that interest them most, such as: trail planning, photography, education programs, restoration, and so much more!

Think this might be something for you?

Join Us and Find Out!

Email us at: nep@specialdistricts.org



Education

A Typical Day as a Student at the NEP

Following a quick safety discussion from the NEP lead educator, students eagerly exit the bus as they are greeted by the spectacular vistas of the San Gabriel Mountains and the Inland Valley below. NEP educators divide students into three groups to begin interactive station work, which focuses on incorporating classroom learning objectives in a tactile way. Student groups are then cycled through three stations, which vary by grade level. Following station work, students are given either a scavenger hunt or plant journal to complete by identifying species discussed on the hike. NEP educators then guide students through the Preserve, discussing important topics and points of interest along the way to reinforce concepts presented both in the classroom and in pre-hike stations.



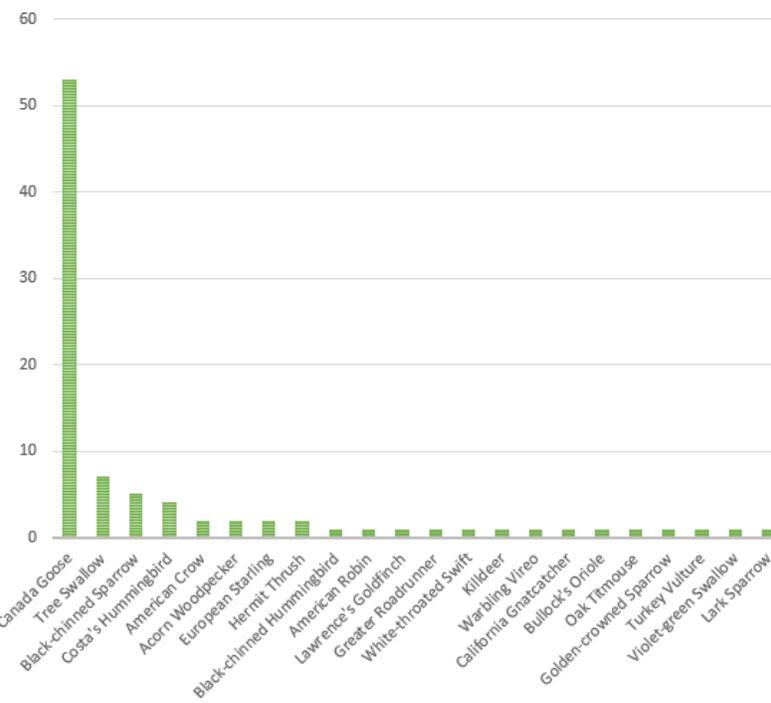
NEP educators lead 4th grade classes on a field trip at the Preserve.



Educate ♦ Appreciate ♦ Nature

2022-2023

BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED

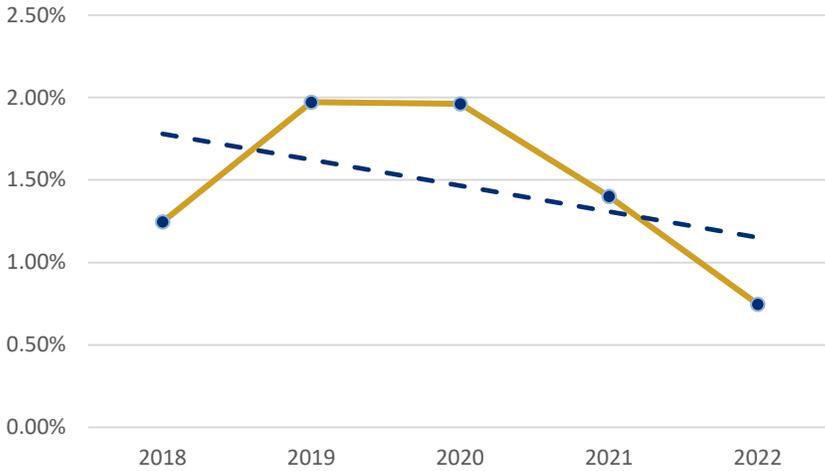


Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius* – Erika Lippoldt 2023



Financial

History of Endowment Interest Earnings

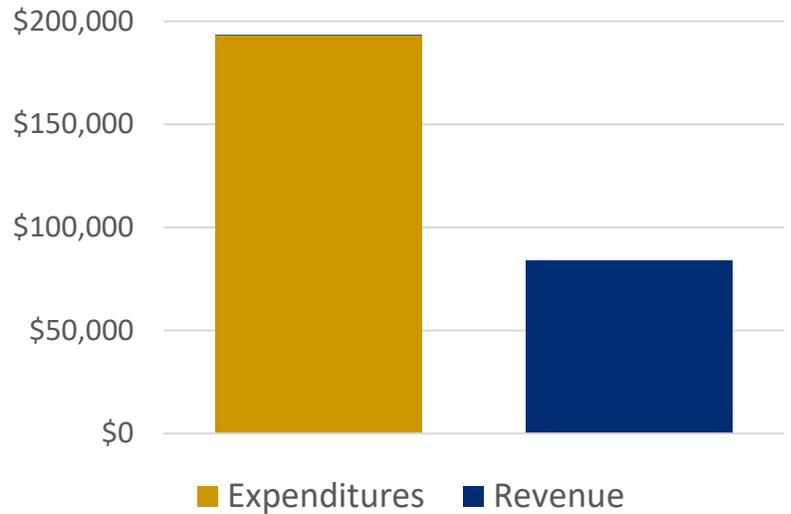


The graph to the left demonstrates the decline in endowment fund interest yields that has occurred since its inception. Interest earnings tend to follow societal economic trends, as earnings are generated as a result of safe investments managed by the County's Auditor-Controller Department. The interest generated from the endowment directly funds the management and administration of CSA 120. Low yielding years create an increased strain on the operating budget, resulting in heavier reliance on in-kind services to achieve management objectives. The district intends to apply for supplementary funding sources to bolster the endowment earnings in covering operating costs for the CSA 120 properties.

CSA 120 Endowment Interest Earnings

2018	\$20,168	1.25%
2019	\$31,900	1.97%
2020	\$32,415	1.96%
2021	\$23,597	1.40%
2022	\$12,761	0.75%
Annual Average	\$24,168	1.47%

CSA 120 Operations FY22/23



The graph above demonstrates the actual revenues and expenditures for CSA 120. In-kind services were not quantified here due to the drop in volunteers since March of 2020. The amount of volunteer assistance provides economic relief on the district budget. Expenditures are high due to depreciation of land. In 2022, parking fees were introduced. Park Staff ensured that vehicles that park at the Preserve paid for a day-pass each day they parked in the parking lot. Parking fees are expected to bring approximately \$60K in fee revenue per year to the Preserve.

Maintaining the Checks and Balances

The long-term operation and maintenance requirements are dictated by the North Etiwanda Preserve Management Plan (MP). At the time of property acceptance, a corresponding endowment was provided to achieve conservation goals identified in the MP. The endowment maintains a minimum balance, which consists of the combined total of all mitigation funds accepted. The interest earnings are re-directed into the operating budget for the Preserve.

Mitigation Property Share of Endowment Funds

SBCTA	43.57%
Centex Homes	23.23%
A & J Resources	13.69%
Granite Homes	13.42%
Lennar	5.33%
Western Slope & Mineral Company	0.78%

Expenditures

- Administration/Staffing, Auditing, Brochures, County Counsel, HCF Grant, LAFCO, Legal Notices, O&M/Cleanups, Real Estate Services

Revenues

- HCF Grant, Endowment Interest Earnings, In-Kind Services, Parking Fees Collected

