

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

April 18, 2022, Monday, 7 p.m.

LOCATION:

This meeting will take place remotely in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e) *et seq.* (AB 361) and Resolution 22-05, adopted by the Board on April 8, 2022. Members of the public can observe and participate in the meeting as follows:

Via video (Zoom) by joining at this address: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83786070199>

- Or - Phone by joining at these numbers: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 346 248 7799

Meeting ID: 837 8607 0199, Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83786070199>

Roy Francis, Vice Chair	La Habra Heights
Catherine Houwen	La Habra Heights
Adam Nazaroff	La Habra Heights
Shelley Andros	Whittier
Ray Wong	Whittier
(vacant)	Whittier
(vacant)	County of Los Angeles
(vacant)	County of Los Angeles
(vacant)	County of Los Angeles

Members of the public may provide electronic comments by Friday, April 15, 2022, by 4:00 p.m. to mmiller@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.

Pursuant to Section 54956 of the Government Code, the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Authority) will hold a special 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 March 15, 2022, Regular Meeting.

- V. Standing Reports:
 - a) Report by Board Liaison on March 17 and April 8, 2022, Authority Board meetings.
 - b) Report from social media subcommittee.
 - c) Committee Member feedback from the public as it relates to the Habitat Authority.

- VI. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors regarding Authority comments on Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project.
- VII. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors approving Authority Resolution No. 2022-07 approving the application for grant funds for the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Wildfire Prevention Program for the Puente Hills Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Project Round Two.
- VIII. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors authorizing Executive Director to execute contract for mechanical fuel modification services with 805 Discing and Grading Inc. in the amount of \$24,249.60, for a possible five-year total of \$128,744.42.
- IX. Discussion, Committee members’ statements, Executive Director’s comments, responses or questions.
- X. Adjournment and announcement of 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. NOTE: 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. Questions about any agenda item can be addressed to Andrea Gullo, Executive Director, 562.945.9003. NOTE: Members of the public may address the Committee on any item shown on the agenda. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Melissa Miller at the Habitat Authority office 562.945.9003, at least 48 hours prior to this meeting.

DRAFT Minutes
PUENTE HILLS HABITAT PRESERVATION AUTHORITY
CITIZENS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 15, 2022

This meeting took place remotely in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e) et seq. (AB 361) and Resolution 22-01, adopted by the Board of Directors on February 17, 2022. Members of the public could observe and participate in the meeting as follows:

Via video (Zoom) and telephonically by joining at this address:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86968727249>

- Or - Phone by joining at these numbers: **+1 (669) 900-6833, +1 (346) 248-7799**
Meeting ID: 869 6872 7249, Find your local number:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86968727249>

The regular meeting of the Citizens Technical Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, via video and telephonically.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

The Vice Chair, Roy Francis, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL.

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

Members Present:	Roy Francis, Vice Chair	La Habra Heights
	Catherine Houwen	La Habra Heights
	Adam Nazaroff	La Habra Heights
	Shelley Andros	Whittier
	Ray Wong	Whittier
	(vacant)	Whittier
	(vacant)	County of Los Angeles
	(vacant)	County of Los Angeles
	(vacant)	County of Los Angeles

Members Absent: none

Authority Representatives Present:

Andrea Gullo, Executive Director
Michelle Mariscal, Ecologist

Melissa Miller, Administrative Assistant
Blair Aas, Director of Planning Services, SCI Consulting Group
Melanie Lee, Senior Consultant, SCI Consulting Group
Ryan Aston, Project Analyst, SCI Consulting Group

**Members of the
Public Present:**

Steve Huber, Whittier Area Audubon
Gina Natoli, former CTAC member
Adriana Quinones, Board Member for Hacienda Heights
Improvement Association
Two unidentified members of the public

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Steve Huber reported that the Audubon hike in Sycamore this past Saturday found almost 40 bird species visible and much nesting behavior, although no spring migrants yet.

Adriana Quinones stated that she will be asking the Authority Board Directors and CTAC members regarding the funding the Authority receives from Los Angeles County.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 15, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING.

Member Wong motioned to approve these minutes as drafted.
Member Houwen seconded this motion, and in a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

V. STANDING REPORTS:

a. REPORT BY BOARD LIAISON ON FEBRUARY 17, 2022, AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING.

Regarding the Board's February 17 meeting, Member Houwen reported that:

- the Board elected Director Sulic as their new Chair and Director Ferrante as their new Vice Chair;
- the Board received an update regarding the recent fire in the Sycamore Canyon area;
- the Board approved the submittal of an application to the NPS RTCA program for a signage update; and

- the Board authorized the execution of a letter agreement and any other necessary documents regarding access to two parcels on Reposado Drive in La Habra Heights.

b. REPORT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA SUBCOMMITTEE.

Member Andros thanked Authority Volunteer Bruce Everett for his recent photographs which have been posted to the Authority's social media pages.

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

There was nothing reported for this item.

VI. DISCUSSION, RECEIVE AND FILE END-OF-THE-YEAR AUTHORITY FISCAL YEAR BUDGET 2020-2021 AND HALF YEAR AUTHORITY FISCAL YEAR BUDGET 2021-22.

Executive Director Gullo reviewed the item and described how the Authority's useable funding will be decreasing in future years. The Committee received and filed these reports.

VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A) RECEIVE AND FILE THE SURVEY FINDINGS RELATED TO LOCAL FUNDING MEASURE, B) RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGARDING DIRECTION ON MOVING FORWARD WITH A FUNDING MEASURE, AND C) RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD REGARDING APPROVAL OF A NON-BID CONTRACT WITH SCI CONSULTING GROUP FOR SERVICES TO FACILITATE A FUNDING MEASURE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$55,500 OR \$80,000 DEPENDENT ON THE MECHANISM.

Executive Director Gullo reported that she learned yesterday that no further funding from Los Angeles County's Measure A funds will be allowed next year to be spent on the City of Whittier's properties managed by the Authority. Authority consultant Melanie Lee of SCI Consulting provided a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the results of their recent community survey conducted for the Authority. Member Houwen asked if the 6% response rate is normal, and Consultant Lee replied in the affirmative and also that the received responses were widely distributed over the surveyed area, not clustered in particular locations. Member Nazaroff recommended that SCI's presentation to the Board Directors on March 17 should include also more description of the next steps possible as well as the potential costs and risks of proceeding with pursuing this local funding mechanism, especially in the current inflationary economy.

Member Andros motioned to recommend to the Board of Directors that after reviewing SCI's presentation and Member Nazaroff's comments, the Board Directors take appropriate action to consider moving forward with this local funding. Member Andros seconded this motion, and in a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. DISCUSSION, RECEIVE AND FILE JANUARY 2022 MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (MRCA) RANGER REPORT.

After little discussion, the Committee received and filed this report.

IX. RECEIVE AND FILE AN UPDATE ON THE COMPLETED RIDGEWOOD/BREA POWER PHASE II COASTAL SAGE SCRUB MITIGATION SITE.

Ecologist Mariscal reviewed this item as presented in the staff report, and the Committee congratulated staff on this excellent result.

X. DISCUSSION, COMMITTEE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS, RESPONSES OR QUESTIONS.

Member Wong expressed concern about the moisture level in the habitat, and was assured by Ecologist Mariscal that the native vegetation is very drought-tolerant.

Member Andros asked about the timing and location for resuming meetings in-person, and Executive Director Gullo replied that is dependent on the State of California's declared state of emergency.

Executive Director Gullo mentioned two Junior Ranger hikes are planned for April 1st and 8th, and volunteer-led public hikes should resume soon as well. She noted that 2.1 acres have just been hydroseeded, planted and watered, and that there will be work in Powder Canyon to alleviate rutting of trails. She reported that the Authority has recently sent letters to State Senator Archuleta and State Assemblyperson Calderon inquiring about funding possibilities. Lastly, she reported that she'd recently attended a presentation of an independently filmed documentary entitled "Turnbull Canyon: Road Unwound" and found the historical information therein from the Workman Temple Museum staff to be substantial but the overall film emphasized various myths and sensationalized topics.

XI. ADJOURNMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING.

There being no further comments, or business to be discussed, Vice Chair Francis adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting date is April 19, 2022.

MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: April 18, 2022

To: Citizens Technical Advisory Committee

Prepared by: Michelle Mariscal, Ecologist

Through: Andrea Gullo, Executive Director

Agenda Item: **VI. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors regarding Authority comments on Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project.**

Background:

The City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project proposes to demolish two existing water reservoirs, construct a new reservoir on the same site, and replace all other site infrastructure. The purpose of the proposed project is to restore the integrity and storage capacity for the existing Murphy Reservoirs, thereby facilitating the City’s ability to continue providing a clean, reliable water supply to its residents. Currently, only one of the existing reservoirs is operational and has a storage capacity of 0.5 million gallons (MG; 500,000 gallons). The replacement reservoir will have a storage capacity of 2.31 MG. As the Lead Agency, the City of Whittier released an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND) document for public review on April 7th. Please see the Authority’s attached draft comment letter (Exhibit A) regarding the IS-MND.

The project site, 7900 Ocean View Avenue, is adjacent to the Authority-managed Core Habitat Zone of the Puente Hills Preserve (Exhibit B), owned by the City. Due to the Project’s proximity, Authority staff were contacted by City staff and have been communicating with them since early 2021 regarding this project, including two site visits and informal review of the IS-MND document prior to its public release. Authority staff will continue to coordinate with City staff during implementation of the project, including obtaining insurance certificates from City contractors if activity will occur on the Preserve. It is anticipated that a City contractor will need to access the Preserve on foot during installation of the retaining wall and perimeter fence. Authority staff advised City staff to review the City’s Proposition A acquisition grant agreement for the City’s property for compatibility and anything applicable to the construction of the retaining wall. City staff reported that nothing applicable was found in the agreement.

The deadline for submitting comments is May 6, 2022. The Notice of Availability and Draft Initial Study—Mitigated Negative Declaration are posted on the City’s website:

<https://www.cityofwhittier.org/government/community-development/environmental-documents-notices/mitigated-negative-declaration-and-appendices-for-the-murphy-reservoir-replacement-project>.

Recommendation:

That the Committee recommend that the Board of Directors approve the attached comment letter.

Attachments:

Habitat Authority Draft Comment letter
IS-MND Project Location Figure



Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority

Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill

EXHIBIT A

DRAFT

April 21, 2022

Kyle Cason, Director of Public Works
City of Whittier, Public Works Department
13230 Penn Street
Whittier, California 90602
PubWks@cityofwhittier.org

Re: Comments on Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project

Dear Mr. Cason:

The Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the City of Whittier’s Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project released April 7, 2022. The Board of Directors for the Habitat Authority met on April 21, 2022, and is submitting these comments for your consideration.

The Habitat Authority is a joint powers authority established pursuant to California Government Code Section 6500 *et seq.* with a Board of Directors consisting of the City of Whittier, County of Los Angeles, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, and the Hacienda Heights Improvement Association. According to its mission, the Habitat Authority is dedicated to the acquisition, restoration, and management of open space in the Puente Hills for preservation of the land in perpetuity, with the primary purpose to protect the biological diversity. Additionally, the agency endeavors to provide opportunities for outdoor education and low-impact recreation.

In the Puente Hills, the Habitat Authority manages the open space in its ownership as well as open spaced owned by the City of Whittier and Sanitation Districts, totaling over 3,880 acres, within the Cities of Whittier and La Habra Heights and the County unincorporated area known as Hacienda Heights. These lands are collectively referred to as the Puente Hills Preserve (Preserve). The proposed Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project is adjacent to Preserve lands that are managed by the Habitat Authority through Agreements with the City of Whittier, A97-172 and A15-128.

Overall, we support the City’s efforts to improve water supply to its residents and greatly appreciate the coordination and communication between Public Works staff and the Habitat Authority concerning the proposed project. Upon review of the Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration we were pleased to note that careful consideration was given to avoiding direct and indirect impacts to biological resources on the adjacent Preserve, including

implementation of several appropriate project-specific Best Management Practices and avoiding heavy equipment activities from January 1 through September 1 when raptor and songbirds have a high potential to nest in the adjacent habitat.

Thank you for your consideration, and feel free to contact me or Ecologist Michelle Mariscal (mmariscal@habitatauthority.org) for further discussion. Also, please maintain our agency on the contact list for this planning process.

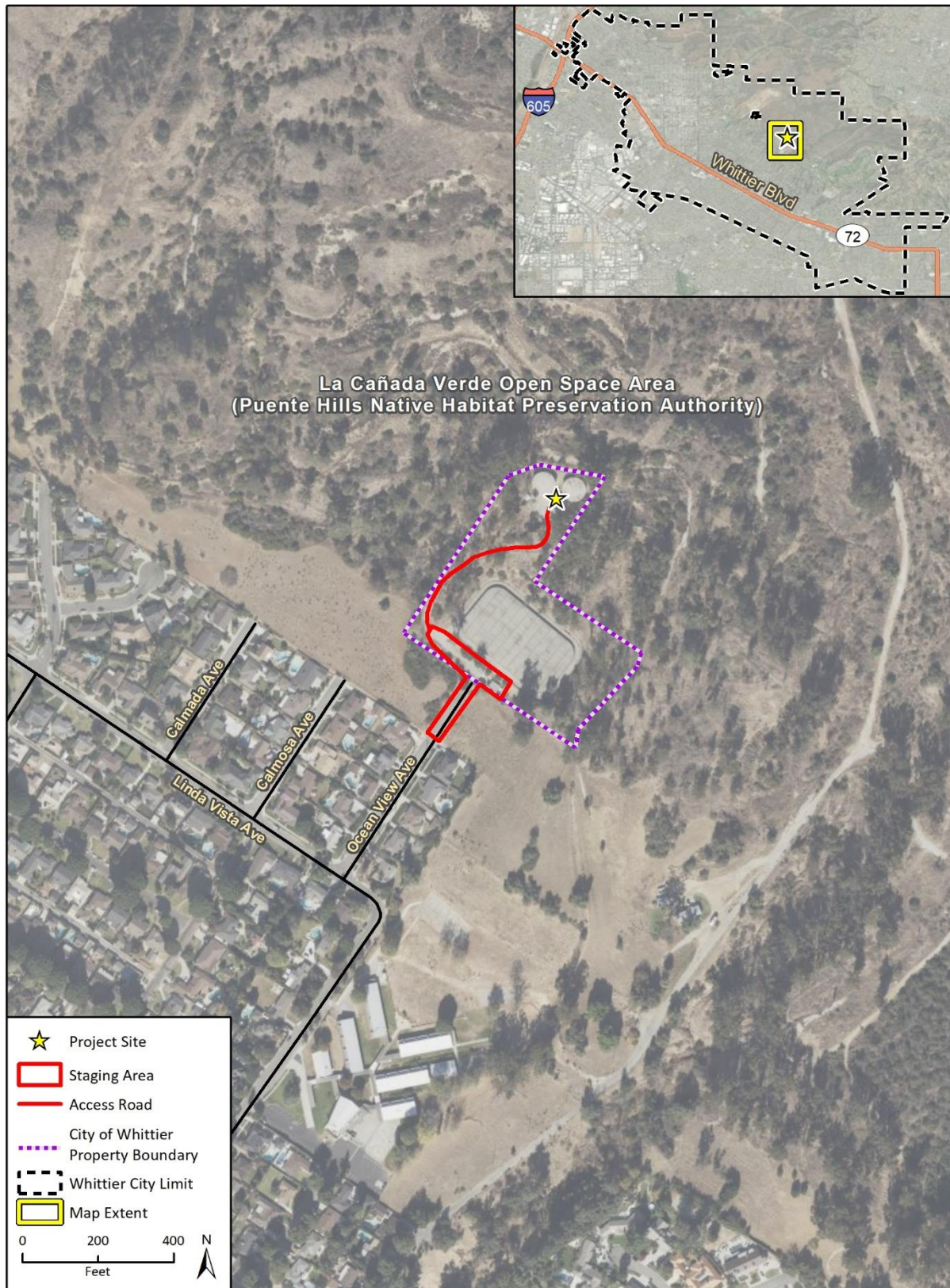
Sincerely,

DRAFT

Ivan Sulic
Chair

cc: Board of Directors
Citizens Technical Advisory Committee

Figure 1 Project Location



MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: April 18, 2022

To: Citizens Technical Advisory Committee

Prepared by: Michelle Mariscal, Ecologist

Through: Andrea Gullo, Executive Director

Agenda Item: **VII. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors approving Authority Resolution No. 2022-07 approving the application for grant funds for the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Wildfire Prevention Program for the Puente Hills Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Project Round Two.**

Background:

The Authority is applying to receive grant funds from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) in the amount of \$275,600 for wildfire fuel reduction actions. This funding is sourced from the Governor's wildfire resilience plan. The RMC is looking to award funds by mid-May. If awarded, the funds would need to be spent by the end of FY 24-25. Proposed projects include defensible space clearance in Hacienda Heights, fuel load reduction via goat grazing in La Habra Heights, invasive species removal coupled with habitat enhancement in Whittier, and roadside clearance along emergency access routes. The work would commence in the fall of 2022, with most clearance tasks being repeated annually for an additional two years. Goat grazing would occur during spring of 2023 and spring of 2024. Due to limited Authority staff capacity, the grant amount also includes funds to hire a biological consultant to oversee the implementation of the projects through 2024; that work would include contractor scheduling, communications, and site visits to assess job completion. The grant application assumes that the Authority would be hiring two contractors, Nakae and Associates and Land IQ, in a noncompetitive manner to complete the projects due to project timing, staff capacity, and because they are the most satisfactory for Authority purposes. Should the Board approve this application, and the RMC awards the grant, then those two contracts would return to the Board for consideration of approval expected in May.

According to Section 2-1 of the Authority's Purchasing Policy, contracts over \$25,000 need Board approval. Also, in accordance with section 4-4 of the Purchasing Policy, it is recommended that if competitive procurement of services is not in the best interest of the

Authority it is not required. Nakae and Land IQ are recommended because timing of the project is of the essence, and the proposed contractors are known to possess the needed experience and qualifications as they have successfully implemented several landscape contracts, including goat grazing services, for the Authority. Therefore they are the most satisfactory for Authority purposes.

The Authority is including a 10% contingency in the project budget to cover any unforeseen circumstances that might arise. Attached is the grant resolution (Exhibit A) and project timeline (Exhibit B).

Preliminary Budget (FY 21-22 through FY 23-24)

\$	212,000	Fuel reduction, defensible space, habitat enhancement, project oversight
\$	21,200	Contingency (10%)
\$	233,200	Subtotal
\$	21,200	Project Management (10%)
\$	21,200	Indirect (10%)
\$	275,600	Total

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact with the grant project. It will also support indirect costs and staff time associated with the managing the projects.

Recommendation:

That the Committee recommend that the Board of Directors approve the attached grant-required Resolution 2022-07 read in title only which authorizes the Executive Director to submit and execute associated grant documents as needed.

Attachments:

- Grant resolution
- Project timeline

April 21, 2022

RESOLUTION 2022-07

RESOLUTION OF THE PUENTE HILLS HABITAT PRESERVATION
AUTHORITY APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT
FUNDS FOR THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
WILDFIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR
Puente Hills Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Round Two
PROJECT

WHEREAS, the State of California has authorized an expenditure of General Funds by the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) for the Wildfire Prevention Early Action Budget Plan in Section 14 of the Budget Act of 2020, and in the Wildfire and Forest Resilience package in Section 68 of the Budget Act of 2021; and

WHEREAS, The RMC has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of the grant program in its jurisdiction, setting up necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the RMC require the Applicant's Governing Body to certify by resolution the approval of the Application before submission of said Application to the State; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant will enter into a contract with the State of California for the Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority hereby;

Approves the filing of an Application for Grant Funds from the RMC Wildfire Prevention Program; and

Certifies that the Puente Hills Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Round Two Project is consistent with local or regional land use plans or Programs (or if it is not, that the project is still approved); and

Certifies that the Project is consistent with the goals of Wildfire Prevention Program including multi-beneficial and multi-jurisdictional ecosystem and watershed protection projects in accordance with statewide priorities; and

Certifies that the Application has or will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the Project that is being submitted for funding consideration; and

Certifies that the Applicant has reviewed and understands the General Requirements and General Policies of the RMC Grant Program Guidelines; and

Finds that this action and Puente Hills Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Round Two project are exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Appoints and authorizes the Executive Director (or her designee) as agent to conduct all negotiations, execute, and submit all documents including, but not limited to Applications, agreements, payment requests and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the Project.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Board of Directors, and the Board Secretary shall certify the vote adopting this resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority at this regular meeting of April 21, 2022 by the following vote.

Motion _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

Abstentions: _____

Signature

Chair of Board of Directors

----- CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION -----

ATTEST:

I Melissa Miller, Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority, witness my hand on the 21st of April, 2022.

Signature

EXHIBIT B

Puente Hills Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Round Two

Timeline

Performance Begin and End Date: June 2022 through December 2024

Project	Tasks	FY 21-22	FY 22-23				FY 23-24			
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	File CEQA Cat. Exemption	■								
Project 1- LBCC*	Remove vegetation piles along access roads	■	■							
Project 2- Peppergrass Trail fuel reduction and habitat enhancement	Clear weeds along trail and haul to legal landfill		■		■				■	
	Enhancement area weeding				■		■			
	Replace existing straw wattles to prevent erosion						■			
	Native seed collection from the Preserve					■	■			
	Harvest and install 100 prickly pear cactus pads							■		
	Hand seed with Coastal Sage Scrub seed mix							■		
Project 3- Turnbull Cyn Trail invasive removal	Weed management along emergency access road		■		■				■	
Project 4- Hacienda Hills Trailhead defensible space	Clear non-native weeds within the bioswale		■		■				■	
	Prune vegetation along emergency access road				■				■	
	Clear brush behind western property line				■				■	
Project 5- Goat grazing fuel reduction	Goat grazing (30 acres) in La Habra Heights				■	■			■	■

* Long Beach Conservation Corp (LBCC), operating under a separate RMC grant, will be pruning vegetation along emergency access roads and piling the debris along the road for pick up.

MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: April 18, 2022
To: Citizens Technical Advisory Committee
Prepared by: Andrea Gullo, Executive Director

Agenda Item VIII. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors authorizing Executive Director to execute contract for mechanical fuel modification services with 805 Discing and Grading Inc. in the amount of \$24,249.60, for a possible five-year total of \$128,744.42.

Background:

The mechanical fuel clearance contract for Whittier and Hacienda Heights was previously with Gardner Tractor, and could have been renewed through 2023, however the contractor retired.

Solicitation for competitive proposals for the mechanical fuel modification (brush clearance) services for agency properties in Whittier and Hacienda Heights was made by the Authority in accordance with the Authority Purchasing Policy. The invitation for proposals and specifications package was made available on the Authority’s website and distributed to six companies. A mandatory job walk was held, and two contractors attended. One proposal was received by the deadline on April 6.

The cost estimate received from 805 Discing and Grading Inc. was within the range expected for this project. Staff checked references and the contractor appears to be qualified and have the experience to implement the work. With Board approval and upon execution of the contract, work is expected to begin April 25.

Contractor’s hourly rate and proposed costs:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total for five years
	FY 21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	years
Base	\$ 24,249.60	\$ 24,977.09	\$ 25,726.40	\$ 26,498.19	\$ 27,293.14	\$ 128,744.42
Hourly Rate	\$ 306.00	\$ 329.60	\$ 339.48	\$ 349.67	\$ 360.16	

Fiscal Impact:

This contract is compatible with the current Authority operating budget which allocated \$160,000 for fuel modification services. In May 2021, the Authority entered into a grant with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for Wildfire Prevention Program funds to reimburse the Authority for annual fuel clearance expenditures.

Recommendation:

That the Advisory Committee recommend to the Board of Directors that they authorize Executive Director to execute the above-mentioned contract for a term of one year, plus the option for staff to renew it annually up to five years total, and to amend the budget if deemed appropriate.

Additional Materials

Sen. Archuleta Recognizes 2022 Women of Achievement for the 32nd Senate District



*32nd District's Woman of the Year,
with them is Se. Bob Archuleta (D)
Pico Rivera.*

March 28, 2022

WHITTIER, CA – As Women’s History Month comes to a close, Senator Bob Archuleta (D- Pico Rivera) hosted the 2022 Women of Achievement of the 32nd Senate District on Saturday, March 26, 2022 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Whittier.

This event, which is the first hosted by the senator’s office in more than two years, celebrated the accomplishments of 11 women who have contributed to the well-being of their respective communities within the district.

“These women were nominated for their outstanding hard work and dedication to the district during the ongoing public health crisis,” Senator Archuleta said. “Our district is fortunate to call home to a great number of women who make considerable contributions to their families, professions and individual communities, and we are honored to recognize these leaders for exemplifying the strength and abilities of all women in our Senate district.”

The 2022 Women of Achievement of the 32nd Senate District are:

Virginia “Ginny” Ball, nominated by City of Whittier Business Development Manager Katie Galvin-Surbatovic.

Ginny serves as a board member for a wide array of local non-profit organizations, including her ongoing work on behalf of Whittier First Day, a transitional living facility in Whittier. First Day serves approximately 2,300 individuals with critical social services, making them a beacon of hope for many who were displaced during the covid-19 pandemic. During her time on the Whittier Area Chamber Board of Directors, Ginny founded the Whittier Apartment Owners Association, which brings landlords

and tenants together to better understand their rights, discuss impactful legislation, and identify local resources. As such, she became a resource for people dealing with housing issues during the pandemic.

Blanca Curiel, nominated by daughter Okxana Vega.

Blanca enlisted in the United States Army in 1983 when she was just 17 years old, and rose through the ranks and became a Master Sergeant where she served as the Battalion First Sergeant, overseeing a battalion of 400 soldiers. After a 33-year military career serving her country, Blanca now works in the healthcare system. She sees it as a continuation of her military service, using the organizational skills she learned in the Army, to provide for the seniors in her care. Her work was even more critical during the pandemic, as Blanca aided seniors with their daily care, as well as providing companionship.

Dr. Rosalba González, nominated by Los Angeles Unified School District Teacher James Ng

Rosalba exemplifies the American Dream, having immigrated from Mexico as a young adult, while overcame barriers and obstacles to become an educator.

Her career in education includes being a teacher, a counselor, a vice principal, and is currently a principal at Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy, where she is deeply committed to making a positive difference in the lives of her students. During the pandemic, Rosalba has made it a priority to continue focusing on a positive school culture, setting high expectations for administrators, teachers, and students, while engaging the community.

Cathy Houwen, nominated by Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority Executive Director Andrea Gullo.

During the pandemic, Cathy's work as a funeral director at Community Funeral Service in La Habra were filled with ensuring grieving families were treated with dignity as they said goodbye to their loved ones. She and her colleagues worked long hours with rare days off to meet the demands of funeral services during the height of the pandemic. Cathy has volunteered her time on the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority's Community Advisory Committee for 10 years representing the City of La Habra Heights, serving as the Chair for three years.

Isis Huckins, nominated by Rose Hills Director of Community Relations & Communications Antoinette Lou.

Throughout her career, Isis has worked quietly behind the scenes while bringing loved ones into the Professional Service's care at Rose Hills. She and her team ensure each family's loved one is treated with the utmost respect and care. Over the past two years, Isis and her team were extremely challenged to meet the demands of the community during the pandemic. She and her team worked 24 hours a day to ensure every loved one was appropriately cared for and each family could proceed with a dignified funeral.

Shannon Kolbjornsen, nominated by Rose Hills Director of Community Relations & Communications Antoinette Lou.

Shannon has served families in the funeral industry for over 15 years. Throughout her career, she has assisted families in making funeral arrangements, and providing visitation/funeral services for their loved ones. Over the past couple of years, her team at Rose Hills, while adhering to the various covid requirements, continued to serve families to the best of their abilities. As our community required an

increasing demand for funeral services, Shannon coached her team to meet the demands without lowering the honor or respect given to each family.

Michelle Lynch, nominated by City of La Mirada Mayor Ed Eng.

During the many challenges presented by the continued covid-19 pandemic, Michelle has led by example, showing the community that this is the time to come together and help each other. As Neighborhood Watch Block Captain since 2011, she has continued to play a pivotal role in keeping the community safe by hosting virtual Neighborhood Watch meetings and safe in-person meetings. She also hosted the La Mirada Heroes Dinner in appreciation of first responders' work through the pandemic.

Dr. Irella Perez, nominated by Education Activists Dr. James Vigil and Polly Vigil.

Irella's journey from non-English speaking immigrant to school administrator, education advocate, environmentalist and children's book author, is an all-American story of self-reliance fueled by perseverance, passion and conviction. Irella has been one of many community leaders providing vital support to parents and students during the pandemic. Irella provided leadership, along with her colleagues on the Whittier City School Board, to ensure quality education and mental health services to students during remote learning.

Katrina Rodriguez, RN BSN, nominated by PIH Health Whittier Hospital Chief Nursing Officer Ramona Pratt.

Katrina serves as clinical director of PIH Health Whittier Hospital's general medicine/respiratory unit. Through her exemplary leadership, Katrina spearheaded the primary covid-19 unit through the last three pandemic surges, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams to ensure that patients' needs are always at the forefront of care. She led efforts to establish communication plans for PIH Health's primary covid-19 unit. The plan ensures families can keep in contact and are kept up to date regarding the condition of their loved ones through Zoom visiting and daily update calls to a designated patient representative.

Sarah Templeton, nominated by Biola University Vice President for Student Development Andre Stephens, Ph.D.

Sarah serves as the Director of the Biola University Student Health Center. During her 20-plus years at Biola, she has forged strong working relationships with those inside and outside of the university. As a member of Biola's covid-19 compliance team, she has kept the campus informed of the emerging data, research and changing protocols throughout the pandemic. Sarah put in place health and safety protocols for quarantining infected and exposed students, while working with county officials to manage outbreaks, obtain testing supplies and to help clarify protocols. When vaccines became available, Sarah was able to secure them and offer vaccine clinics on campus for students and employees, and eventually for community members.

Echo Tsai, nominated by Venerable Hui Dung.

Echo devotes a great deal of time volunteering at Fo Guang Shan Hsi Lai Temple since 1997 and Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA) since 2001. Echo's primary practice in life is to help others and serve the needs of the community by organizing and coordinating activities and events. They include senior programs, a student scholarship event, and the distribution of personal protective equipment to hospitals, law enforcement, fire stations, nursing homes, churches, schools, homeless shelters and non-profit organizations.



County Limits Development in Fire Hazard Areas

Uploaded: , Tuesday, Apr 12, 2022

By Press Release

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a new Safety Element Update to the county's general plan on April 5, which will limit new development in wildfire hazard zones, reducing regional risk as California braces for what could be another intense fire season.

According to the California Planning & Development Report, a newsletter that keeps tabs on on planning and development issues in California, the update restricts new subdivisions in very high fire hazard severity zones and prohibits amendments that would increase residential density in fire- and flood-prone areas to reduce risks to people, property and wildlife

County officials said the move will reduce sprawl and minimize construction of new power lines and electrical equipment that are frequently responsible for wildfires. The update will complement the Housing Element to provide safe, affordable housing while protecting natural habitats.

“Los Angeles County leaders made sensible policy changes that recognize the seriousness of a prolonged wildfire season,” said Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat, a campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity. “By putting commonsense limits on building in the most dangerous and fire-prone areas of the county, we’re planning for a safer, more sustainable future.”

Development restrictions in fire-prone wildlands also keep certain wildlife habitats intact and protect the region's biodiversity.

“Southern California is starting to shed its sprawl reputation and embrace smarter land-use decisions,” said Reid-Wainscoat. “I hope other decision makers will follow suit and pass similar measures to keep their communities safe.”

Residents learn about birds during nature walk

City's Audubon Society has sponsored monthly excursion for 20 years

By [Mike Sprague](#) | msprague@scng.com | Whittier Daily News

PUBLISHED: April 9, 2022 at 12:26 p.m. | UPDATED: April 9, 2022 at 12:26 p.m.

A small group learned a little more about bird life [when they took a walk](#) on Saturday, April 9, through Sycamore Canyon in the Whittier hills.

The monthly walk was hosted by the Whittier Area Audubon Society. It has offered the event for more than 20 years.

“We call it a beginner’s bird walk open to anyone to learn about bird life,” said Steve Huber, president of the Whittier Area Audubon Society.

“It’s also what you might call citizen science because we are keeping track of what we see posting on sites like eBird,” Huber said. “We are documenting the quantity of species we see and any behaviors we see, like nesting behaviors.”



From left, Steve Huber, Linda Leroy and Letty Brooks look up at birds. The Whittier Area Audubon Society took people on a Beginner Bird Walk on the Sycamore Canyon Trail on Saturday in Whittier.

PHOTOS BY JOHN MCCOY



A California towhee is seen next to the trail. The Whittier Area Audubon Society took a Beginner Bird Walk on the Sycamore Canyon Trail on Saturday. (Photo by John McCoy, Contributing Photographer)

Photos from online version:



A female Nuttall's woodpecker is seen along the trail. The Whittier Area Audubon Society took a Beginner Bird Walk on the Sycamore Canyon Trail on April 9, 2022 in Montebello, CA. (Photo by John McCoy, Contributing Photographer)



Edwin Menendez stands next to wild mustard while looking at birds. The Whittier Area Audubon Society took a Beginner Bird Walk on the Sycamore Canyon Trail on April 9, 2022 in Whittier, CA. (Photo by John McCoy, Contributing Photographer)



The Whittier Area Audubon Society took a Beginner Bird Walk on the Sycamore Canyon Trail on April 9, 2022 in Whittier, CA. (Photo by John McCoy, Contributing Photographer)

America's most exciting new park hides a hideous highway

The Presidio Tunnel Top is a \$118 million park that sits on top of a highway in San Francisco.

03-29-22 *By Elissaveta M. Brandon*



[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]

Here's a noncontroversial opinion. Highways, especially those that run through the heart of a city, kind of suck.

After 75 years of use, San Francisco's Doyle Drive had become seismically unsafe. Connecting the Golden Gate Bridge with the rest of the city, the elevated roadway couldn't exactly be torn down like other highways around the country (including San

Francisco's former Embarcadero Freeway, which ran

along the waterfront). But the city had another idea: What if part of the highway was buried under tunnels, and then parks were built on top of them?

The new Presidio Parkway opened in 2015 with two sets of tunnels, located about a mile from one another. Now, both parks are almost ready. Opening on April 23, the Battery Bluff Park will offer 6 acres of parkland with over 50,000 native plants on top of the first set of tunnels. The project's real star,



[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]

however, is the Presidio Tunnel Top—a \$118 million park that sits on top of the second set of tunnels and creates a bridge over the highway. When it opens in July, the park will reconnect the Presidio neighborhood to the city's waterfront, marking it the first time pedestrians can cross over to the other side in almost 100 years.



Aerial Presidio view of the Marina approach to the Golden Gate Bridge, circa 1935 [Photo: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library/courtesy Presidio Trust]

When a highway runs through a landscape, it divides that landscape in two, making it challenging and sometimes even impossible for pedestrians ([and animals](#)) to cross from one side of the highway to the other. This becomes particularly problematic when a highway splits an urban landscape. From [Tulsa](#) to Nashville to New Orleans, such highways often plowed through Black and brown neighborhoods, demolishing homes and dividing communities.

Aerial Presidio view of the Marina approach to the Golden Gate Bridge, circa 1935 [Photo: San Francisco History

Center, San Francisco Public Library/courtesy Presidio Trust]

In San Francisco, the context is a little different. Starting in 1776, and for the next 218 years, the Presidio was used as a military base by the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. armies. Stretching all the way to

the waterfront, where the U.S. Army airfield was located, the whole area was closed to the public, and, from 1937, further isolated by Doyle Road.

Then, in 1994, the military base was transferred to the National Park Service, and the site became a 1,500-acre park that hugs some of the city's most affluent neighborhoods like Pacific Heights and



Presidio Terrace. (The former airfield now serves as a popular recreation center, known as Crissy Field; the site's military legacy is also on display at the Battery Bluff Park, where the Presidio Trust restored four historic military batteries that hadn't been seen by the public since Doyle Road was built in 1936.)

[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]



“Historically, Doyle Drive and the highway bifurcated, so they were two different worlds in a way,” says Michael Boland, Chief Park Officer of the Presidio Trust, which managed the transformation along with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the National Park Service. “The tunnel top is the connector, it’s the hub that connects all the spokes throughout Crissy Field and the Presidio at large.”

[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]



The “connector” was designed by James Corner Field Operations, the renowned landscape design studio behind New York’s High Line and Miami’s Underline. Spanning 14 acres, the Presidio Tunnel Top promises to be a verdant symphony of trails, overlooks, and meadows, all of which spread over the highway tunnels like a green blanket.

[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]

Where once there were none, now there are three ways for pedestrians to get from the Presidio neighborhood to the waterfront. You can follow a winding promenade along the embankment and marvel at sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay and the Marin headlands. Or, you can also go down a series of terraced lawns to sit on. “It is meant to be a large piece of social furniture looking out at the



view,” says Richard Kennedy, a senior principal at James Corner Fields Operation. And if neither the promenade nor the steps speak to you, you can follow an ADA-accessible ramp, or a stairway, down to the water—where the designers have created a giant playground, complete with tree trunks, boulders, and rope swings.

[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]

Inevitably, building a park on top of a tunnel required a healthy dose of engineering. Kennedy explains that the tunnels were engineered to support a limited amount of weight. Soil can be quite heavy, so the architects interspersed it with a lightweight foam in strategic places around the park. (A digital model helped them keep track of the overall weight and adjust it accordingly.)

To remedy the noise from the highway below, they designed a set of noise barriers, wrapped them in willow branches to simulate a wooden fence, and built them on the edge of the park. And since building in San Francisco comes with a host of seismic requirements (literally!), they took a page from the way the highway was built to make the park earthquake-proof. Kennedy explains that CalTrans bore a dense network of 40-foot holes into the ground, then filled them with gravel. If the ground shakes, the soil will liquefy and the gravel will hold it together. “It’s one of these invisible innovations that make parks like this possible,” says Kennedy.



[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]



The resulting Presidio Tunnel Top may be one of the most engineered parks ever built, but similar ideas have been used before. In Seattle, the Freeway Park was built in 1976 to reconnect the city’s downtown neighborhoods, which had been divided by I-5. (It’s currently getting [a \\$10 million makeover.](#)) And in Denver, a 57-year-old viaduct is now being replaced with a lower highway, with a [4-acre park](#) nearby.

[Image: courtesy James Corner Field Operations]

These strategies can help other cities rethink existing highways, but Kennedy says the principle can be applied to future infrastructure, too. “[A highway] shouldn’t be a barrier, it can be a public asset, even an ecological asset,” he says. “This becomes a model for other cities to say, ‘If they can do it, we can do it.’”

Winston Vickers' research aims to give local mountain lions a fighting chance



While the former Anaheim veterinarian is now based at UC Davis, Winston Vickers' primary research work focuses on the mountain lions of the Santa Ana Mountains. In 2019, a CalPoly study he helped launch a study of possible wildlife crossings at the I15 Freeway that could be key to the cats' long-term survival. (File Photo by Mark Rightmire, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By [Michaela Haas](#) | info@michaelahaas.com |

PUBLISHED: March 24, 2022 at 12:32 p.m. | UPDATED: March 24, 2022 at 12:36 p.m.

Winston Vickers might have one of the most suspenseful screen feeds in the state: His team has installed dozens of strategically placed cameras in the Orange County backcountry to track where mountain lions roam. As we speak, he is waiting for a mountain lion to approach the deer carcass one of the four biologists on his team laid out in the Santa Ana Mountains. They are hoping to lure a cougar with a free meal so that Vickers can collar it with a GPS tracker.

Director of the California Mountain Lion Project at UC Davis' Wildlife Health Center, Vickers, 68, is one of the most experienced cougar experts in the U.S. He raves about his close encounters with the majestic predators.

“When you handle them, oh my gosh, look at their claws and those teeth! They weigh about the same as me,” the tall and trim gray-haired researcher says with playful envy in his voice, “but holy smokes, unlike me, they’re all muscle!”

His research focus has an ominous background: Just as their neighbors in the Santa Monica Mountains, the survival of mountain lions in Orange County is threatened by inbreeding, car crashes and rodenticide.

“Cars and roads, in a nutshell, are the main cause of their deaths,” Vickers says via Zoom from his office.

According to his count, roughly 20 to 25 mountain lions live in the Santa Ana Mountains, and a few get killed each year in crashes. His cameras catch thousands of hikers who trek through these mountains or Orange County parks every year, unaware that a puma might be watching them. But the territory of roughly 2,000 square miles is hemmed in by major freeways and encroaching urban development.

“Especially the I-15 is a very substantial barrier to the lions’ movement.” Vickers has documented several mountain lions reaching the freeway, sitting for hours as cars and trucks speed past, and then turning around because they don’t dare to cross. Therefore, inbreeding is a growing problem — already, some newborns in OC show deformities such as kinked tails, and Vickers was instrumental in a recent study which discovered that 93 percent of the males’ sperm is abnormal.

“There’s a race to the bottom,” he says.

Along with other experts, he estimates that the mountain lions will be locally extinct by 2050 if the state does not take drastic measures to help them survive.

Vickers grew up on a cattle farm in the Ozarks, the son of a country vet. “We treated every creature, small and large, from cats to cows.” He describes himself as an outdoorsy kid, “always fishing and hunting and canoeing.” He vowed not to follow in his father’s footsteps but after a few semesters of studying engineering, the call of the wild was too strong, and he switched to veterinary medicine after all.

“What my dad really gave me was appreciation for animals and caring about their welfare.”

Vickers became a vegetarian when he started to work as a veterinarian, “because I couldn’t really see the value of working so hard to save the life of one cow only to then kill it for a steak.”

He worked as a regular vet in Arkansas and California for nearly two decades while also accepting every chance to treat wildlife. His fascination with big cats even led him all the way to Nepal to study snow leopards. A second degree in epidemiology at UC Davis inspired him to join the Mountain Lion Project there in 2002. Initially, the vets had started out researching the endangered bighorn sheep in Anza Borrego State Park and considered mountain lions a threat to them.



A remote camera, placed at hair snare sites, captured this mountain lion. (Photo courtesy of the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center)

“We were soon shocked to find that the mountain lions had an unusually high mortality rate,” Vickers remembers. Thus, the researchers started tracking mountain lions, accumulating 20 years of detailed knowledge about the reclusive animals, “and the data has become valuable for conservation to show their most important habitats and corridors.”

Vickers is among those calling for wildlife crossings over major freeways so that the local mountain lions can mix and mate with peers from neighboring habitats. In the Santa Monica Mountains, Caltrans will break ground this month for the world's biggest wildlife overpass, the so-called Liberty Crossing over the busy 101. The new bridge will cost a whopping \$88 million. The sum sounds outrageous until one considers the alternative: In the last three years, wildlife crashes in California have cost more than \$1 billion. Wildlife crossings have proven to reduce fatal deer collisions by 98.5% in Utah and nearly 90% in Colorado. Apex predators like pumas also act as "ecological brokers," a recent study found, and play "an outsize role" for the health and biodiversity of their territories.

Vickers hopes he can convince the state and conservationists to add several smaller crossings in Orange County as well and improve the small existing freeway underpass near Temecula Creek. He soon will start meeting with experts and engineers from Caltrans, the Nature Conservancy, National Park Service and other organizations to determine the best designs and locations for crossings "to help as many species as possible. Mountain lions have become the poster child, but the barriers affect many other animals, including birds that don't like to fly over freeways."

As a scientist, he supplies the data, but he also understands his job to advocate for the animals with locals. Though California is the only U.S. state that made hunting mountain lions illegal, the animals are not just brought down by their genes but also by guns.

"The second leading cause of death is people shooting them because they've killed their goat, their dog or their chicken," Vickers says. "I care a lot about these animals, too, but I hate to see the mountain lions die as a result."

He considers almost all of these attacks preventable. "For me, it's about educating owners on how to protect their animals from coyotes, mountain lions or bobcats."

Acknowledging that "it's hard to get people to change their behavior and spend money to build a barn or a secure cage for their animals at night," he focuses on young people. "Educating the young when they're at the formative stage on how to protect animals, hopefully, that's a long-term solution."

When asked what fascinates him the most about the charismatic cougars, he raves about their resilience.

"Despite dramatic persecution, they have been the most successful of the big carnivores to persist," he says, with awe in his raspy voice. "You just have to admire their ability to continue to exist against all odds."