

California Native Plant Society

South Coast Chapter

October 2, 2007

PUMP Committee
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

Re Canyons Ecological Reserve

To the PUMP Committee:

The South Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) requests that the PUMP Committee restrict trail designations in the Canyons Ecological Reserve (Canyons ER) to a minimal configuration in both distance and trail widths with no greater impact than that shown in the existing Conceptual Trails Plan. CNPS also requests that the impacts of trail usage be carefully considered and that use designations on trails be restricted when particular types of trail use or multiple trail use may increase impacts in sensitive areas.

Betsey Landis of the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains Chapter of CNPS recently gave a presentation to your committee providing an overview of our general concerns regarding trail designations in the Nature Preserve. As she pointed out, there are many areas which are particularly important as remnant sites of native wildflower species as well as areas which are particularly vulnerable to erosion.

In the Canyons ER in particular, Betsey used red arrows on the map to highlight some areas of particular concern, as follows (clockwise from paired arrows on upper right):

The upper arrow highlights the only area on the peninsula where ***Brodiaea joloensis*** is known to occur. The arrow immediately below shows one of only a few locations where **Goldenbush**, *Eriacameria palmeri*, occurs. Both of these plants species are unusual locally and may have specific genetic adaptations to the peninsula. Every effort should be made to protect these plant populations on site. These areas also have been known to have **Golden Stars**, *Bloomeria crocea*, and **Catalina Mariposa Lily**, *Calochortus catalinae*, which also deserve protection. CNPS opposes the proposed designations of new trails in this area.

The third arrow down points to a large area in which many new trails are proposed. CNPS opposes any new trail designations in this area because it is an area where the only specimens of **Greenbark Ceanothus**, *Ceanothus spinosus*, are known to occur on the peninsula. Only a few of these plants remain. Again, these plants may have genetic adaptations unique to the peninsula which are important to preserve. **Small Flowered Morning Glory**, *Convolvulus simulans*, has also been observed in that area – and is another plant which is locally rare.

The fourth arrow down points to an area where two new trails are proposed. CNPS opposes additional trail fragmentation of this habitat area. The lemonadeberry cover here is likely to protect a valuable and diverse seed bank of other native species because of the area's unique geologic attributes. This has also been an important location for gnatcatchers.



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The lowest arrow in the center of the map points to an area which seems to be highly erodable because of the visible cracks in the ground and which is crisscrossed by far too many proposed trails. CNPS opposes the multiple new trails proposed here. This has also historically been an area important to gnatcatchers.

The sixth arrow on the far left points to a diverse area which was interesting to observe after the recent fire with a display of native wildflowers which are rarely seen locally including **Delphinium**, **Chinese houses**, *Collinsea heterophylla*, and **Fire Poppies**, *Papaver californicum*, as well as lovely displays of **Calochortus** and **Paintbrush**, *Castilleja affinis*. CNPS opposes any additional fragmentation of this area with newly proposed trails.

Please keep in mind first and foremost that the Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve was not funded or established primarily as a recreation area. It was established for the primary purpose of protecting natural resources. CNPS is not opposed to trails, but it is our position that trails should be designed to minimize habitat disturbances. In order to achieve that goal, trail widths and configurations in this Nature Preserve should be minimized so that large contiguous areas of habitat are left intact, unfragmented, and undisturbed. Furthermore, it is especially important to avoid routing trails through areas where species are especially vulnerable to extirpation (the local elimination of a plant species). Please keep in mind that trails can not only directly impact plant species by trampling and soil compaction, but can also cause indirect impacts by introducing weed seeds which can out-compete native plant species and thus degrade the quality of natural areas.

As many "old timers" can tell you, we have already sadly lost much of the natural wildflower diversity that occurred on the peninsula only a few decades ago. Please make every effort to preserve the diversity of those species which still remain.

Respectfully,

Barbara Sattler
President, South Coast Chapter
California Native Plant Society

Attachment: annotated map of Canyons Ecological Reserve



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CANYONS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE



CONCEPTUAL TRAILS PLAN
PROPOSED TRAILS
OUTSIDE PRESERVE (SHOWN IN WHITE)
2-28-07