

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

Date: June 11, 2008

To: The Governing Board Members

From:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, ASLA (Hon), Executive Officer

Subject: **Agenda Item XIV: Discussion and possible action regarding Montebello Hills Specific Plan.**

Background: The Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Montebello Hills Specific Plan proposed by Cook Hill Properties, LLC, has been released. Staff is bringing this item to the Board for discussion to see whether they would like staff to track this project so that WCCA may comment on the DEIR in the future. This project could be interpreted as being slightly outside the Puente-Chino Hills wildlife corridor proper, although certain ecological resources are nevertheless connected. A letter on the NOP prepared by Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority is attached.

Most of the following information on the project was found online at <http://www.montebellohillsreserve.com/>. The 487-acre property is located west of the 605 Freeway, west of Rosemead Boulevard, and is bordered roughly on the north and west by North Montebello Boulevard, by North Lincoln Avenue to the south, and by San Gabriel Boulevard to the east. An aerial of the Montebello Hills shows the existing roads and disturbances associated with oil fields onsite. As proposed, the 1,200 new homes on 172 acres in the Specific Plan will be developed in five separate Planning Areas. The environmentally safe modernization program includes the consolidation of the 96 producing wells into 8 wellpads, all of which will be located outside of the neighborhood development area.

Some of the plant communities onsite include coastal sage scrub, mulefat scrub, and live oak woodland. The site is occupied by the federally-listed threatened bird, coastal California gnatcatcher. According to the website, approximately two-thirds (315 acres) of the 487-acre site will be set aside for permanent open space. Nearly 80% of this open space will be a habitat conservation area to be maintained and managed by a third-party conservancy. The project includes habitat enhancement and coastal sage scrub restoration.