



Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc.

Post Office Box 353, Agoura Hills, California 91301

*The **voice** and conscience of the Santa Monica Mountains for 45 years*

NOV. 2012 MEETING

Tuesday, Nov. 27 at 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

www.lvhf.org

The Place – Diamond X – Take Las Virgenes to Mulholland; turn left on Mulholland. For the next 3/4 mile, the King Gillette Ranch will be on your right. After you've passed Stokes Canyon Road, in about 3/4 mile, you will see a sign on your right with "Diamond X" and the National Park Service logo on it. A short distance past the sign a narrow road goes south at a right angle. This is Wickland Road, and, at this point you are entering the King Gillette Ranch. Follow Wickland about 300 yards until the road forks; take the left-hand fork; keep bearing left to the lighted house on the right. Park; enter through the lit doorway.

Call to Order
Roll Call
Agenda Changes/ Approval

Correspondence/Announcements
Officers' Reports
Approval of Meeting Minutes

OLD BUSINESS

1. Chesebro Meadow Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor Preservation Update. Jess Thomas.
2. Calabasas Right to Vote Initiative and Term Limits Initiative Updates. Jody Thomas.

3. Wildlife Corridor Committee Report & Breakout. Cynthia Maxwell.
4. Oak Tree Committee Report & Breakout. Roger Pugliese. Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance Amendments.
5. Protect CEQA Committee Report & Breakout.
6. Creek Stewards Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Pat Henkel – President, Malibou Lakeside Homeowners Association. Proposal for two new homes – each 8000 square feet – on the old lodge property. North Area Plan.
2. John Luker – Vice-President, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association. Update & presentation. Long term concerns Santa Susana Field Lab and Q & A.
3. Calabasas. Flurry of Development Projects. Diamond West, Inc. facilitating 3 mega mansion project on scenic corridor. Calabasas Highlands - heritage oak property.
4. LVHF Business – Banquet Committee, etc.

HOLIDAY PARTY!



FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

December 11, 2012 Meeting

1. Margie Steigerwald, principal planner National Park Service's Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Update. Comment period closes in early January.
2. Emma Howard, lead planner, Community Studies-North Section, re: the County's new Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Program.
3. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area proposed name change. Save Open Space (SOS).



WE SADLY BID OUR JOHN LOW FAREWELL

1950-2012



From our newly re-elected 27th District State Senator Fran Pavley and her husband Andy:

John loved the Santa Monica Mountains. His thoughtful leadership as president of the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation was just one of his many contributions that made our community such a special place to live. Andy and I spoke to John and Deborah last December near Union Square where they were enjoying their annual holiday trip to San Francisco together. We will miss John and our deepest sympathy is extended to Deborah and family members.

From our Los Angeles County Third District Supervisor, Zev Yaroslavsky:

I, and my staff, are very saddened by John's passing. He cared deeply for the Santa Monica Mountains and for the communities that make it up. I will always be grateful for all he did to preserve this unique resource of our County. We extend our sympathy and condolences to his wife Deborah, his family and friends. The mountains have lost a true friend.

The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation pays tribute to our past president, John Palmer Low, Jr. who unexpectedly passed away at the age of 62 in September. A cherished husband, son, brother, friend and activist John pursued family life, work, and friendship with passion.

He cared deeply about the exhibit projects he executed as the principal in John Palmer Low Designs, sharing his talent for visual storytelling with audiences across the country and around the globe. He had a great enthusiasm for exotic cars and delighted in cooking for family and friends. He was always eager to learn anything new and overcame his fear of heights by receiving his private pilot's license. An easy communicator, John was rarely at a loss for words on any subject!!

John was also a long time resident and activist of the beautiful mountain community of Monte Nido, tucked neatly away in unincorporated Los Angeles County between the cities of Malibu and Calabasas.

John was a gifted leader and advocate for the Santa Monica Mountains he so dearly loved. As our president, he was both a consensus builder and a warrior fighting the usual culprit developers to preserve the wild and wonderful places and things in our mountains. He had a generous heart and an open spirit. He was consistent and enduring and frequently harnessed the power of reason to create harmony from contentiousness. Under his guidance, the forces for good were reinforced and solidified and our beloved mountains protected.

John's contributions will live on forever. He was always ready for a new challenge, the different approach, the new day and new idea of how best to fight the latest battle.

He was taken from us far too early. He is survived by many relatives and friends across the country, but most specially by his wife and companion of 40 years, Deborah Low.

The Woad Has Died

The woad has died, leaves all crisp and brown, and so have you.

I blinked and you were gone.

Too soon too fast you breathed your last.

Remaining pain, the ache, the hollowness unimagined.

Yet you are everywhere within without my world.

Healing will come,

In time.

Time.

Time.

Time.

Deborah Low, Sept. 2012

We miss you John.

ALLIANCE!

The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc. is very pleased to announce an important new alliance with the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc.

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations (Hillside Federation) was founded in 1952 and stretches through the City of Los Angeles portions of the Santa Monica Mountains from Pacific Palisades to Griffith Park. The Hillside Federation currently represents approximately 200,000 homeowners.

Their mission of “protecting the quality of life of the residents of the Santa Monica Mountains and other hillside areas of Los Angeles and its environs and to preserve the natural topography and wildlife for the benefit of all the people of Los Angeles,” is very similar to that of LVHF's.

Our organizations will be joining forces to information share and serve on joint Committees. LVHF will be welcoming delegates from the Hillside Federation to serve on our Wildlife Corridor, Oak Tree, Creek Stewards and Defend CEQA Committees. Together we will have a stronger, combined voice, particularly at the state level.

Both the Las Virgenes and Hillside and Canyon Federations lie in Los Angeles County's Third Supervisorial District.

We are very much looking forward to working with the Hillside and Canyon Federation - with their President, Marian Dodge, Chairman, Charley Mims, and Vice Presidents Wendy-Sue Rosen and Mark Stratton.



“GROWTH PLAN RUN AMOK”

Whose Story Was It?

Anyone who suffered through Los Angeles County’s development spree in the Santa Monica Mountains in the 1980s and early 1990s when Michael Antonovich was the Third District Supervisor, is probably familiar with the 1998 *Los Angeles Times* article, “Growth Plan Run Amok.” The story was an exposé of Los Angeles County’s affinity for approving development with little regard for the general plan and area plan consistency.

Computer technology was used to quantitatively disclose to what extent the County exceeded prescribed residential densities in this area—an area of national significance due to its location within the authorized boundaries of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Eyebrows were raised, and audible gasps heard at the finding that 2,200 dwellings were approved in an area envisioned for just 1,000. During the development boom, one might sum up the County’s approach to hillside development this way: “We’ll approve it; you see if you can do it.”

Yet that was just the beginning of the oft-cited investigative report. The story found development approvals were suspiciously in sync with campaign contributions to County Supervisors. Perhaps most upsetting to parkland supporters were the findings on disaster relief claims. Developers forced high density subdivisions onto steep hillsides by massive landform grading. The contrived, but ever-so-desirable, flat residential “pads” shook in the 1994 Northridge earthquake, cracked, and sometimes slipped down the hill after torrential rains. Before that, the houses built at the wildland interface burned in the 1993 wildfires. “Acts of God” seem to strike the Santa Monica Mountains routinely in some sort of vicious karmic retribution for imposing human will on the rugged terrain. Federal public disaster relief payouts in the amount of \$54 million benefitted a limited number of homeowners. Meanwhile, state and national park staff and the supportive public were routinely pleading for acquisition funds to buy lands that have to offer far more to the ecosystem to which they belong and to the general public than to future potential private homeowners. Wildlife needs the Santa Monica Mountains’ open spaces and so does the greater public for aesthetic and recreational enjoyment.

Follow-up editorials and community letters to the editor called yet again for campaign finance reform, for development review reform, and for the need to finish a new area plan underway for the Santa Monica Mountains because the old plan had been “loopholed” to death. The County did, indeed, change the way calculations for density were generated. Nearly 30 other municipalities asked how they could have such a before-and-after approval analysis done for their communities. The article, in other

words, created quite a splash and changed for the better the way development proposals in the Santa Monica Mountains are reviewed.

If you know the story, you may know it was written by *L.A. Times* staff writer T. Christian Miller. In 1999, he went on to win the prestigious John B. Oakes Award for environmental investigative reporting, an annual award program then managed by Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). The *Amicus Journal*, NRDC's journal at the time, published an excerpt from Miller's Oakes-award-winning *Times* story. According to a call-out box in the story:

"...Miller relied heavily on computer databases and computer mapping programs in conducting the research for this story." ... "Miller spent six months gathering and analyzing information from various government agencies, combing through about a dozen databases that included development records, property owner information, subdivision applications, county political contributions, and disaster damage reports. Out of this data, he created a map of the 1980 growth plan for the Santa Monica Mountains and a second map of developments built during the past twenty years. Then, using a computer mapping program, he overlaid the two maps. The result: a clear outline of which developments were in violation of growth limits in the original zoning plan."

What a great idea to use state-of-the-art computer databases and computer programs to disclose development approval trends. The findings could then be used to correlate approvals to campaign contributions, disaster relief claims, and development-specific investigation of the developer and county planning practices. Was this T. Christian Miller's original idea? Did he come up with how to put together the data necessary to make this award-winning land use analysis? Read on and decide for yourself.

The year is 1995. A CSUN geography grad student has finished another day interning at the Geographic Information System (GIS) Department at City Hall in Ventura. She's contemplating subjects for her master's thesis. She wants to do a thesis that isn't just an intellectual exercise left to molder on the CSUN library shelves. She wants her thesis to change hearts and minds. She's thinking about past years working at the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, and the staff who wrote comment letters on development proposals, repeatedly lamenting: "They're not following their own plan!" These exclamations were about a long string of subdivision proposals before L.A. County that exceeded prescribed density. "GIS" was just entering the scene—a computer mapping program that combines database manipulation capabilities tied to geographic location and map production facility. GIS offers endless opportunities to discern patterns, trends, and correlations of "stuff" scarring the face of the earth. In the Santa Monica Mountains, that "stuff" was poorly sited, sprawling development. Meaningful thesis identified: County not following plan... tremendous loss of long-envisioned public open space to the great heartbreak of the public...what had

the municipal plan called for...GIS...graphic, irrefutable, quantitative answers...highlighting the gap between intentions and planning policies directing the safeguarding of open space and open space values...and the ugly, post-approval, on-the-ground reality.

It is now 1996, and the student delved into thesis preparation. After determining a manageable study area for the thesis (unincorporated L.A. County that is now the City of Calabasas), she combed through development permitting information at numerous agencies, sat for days in the musty bowels of the County Recorder's Office figuring out tract boundaries (you should see what Prop 13 did to those hardcopy tract map books!), and digitized the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan (a tedious task). Then, she spent weeks in the National Park Service GIS lab creating the right set of GIS-ready data layers and arranging the right set of GIS commands to come up with the desired information. The data layers for prescribed density and approved development were then unioned in GIS matrimony and voilà, quantifiable data of approved development vs. prescribed density were created. More computing followed, and from maps and charts emerged a sobering picture: 72% of tract approvals exceeded prescribed density, two-thirds of which got approved in the "roaring" 1980s. The student's follow-up analyses confirmed that high-density approvals illustrated the failure of hillside management policies specifically designed to protect open space values: high density developments involved unimaginative, cookie-cutter housing architecture that works on flat pads graded into steep hillsides, streams were straight-jacketed into concrete channels, and open space set-aside requirements were spurned. Extra units granted for affordable housing were not rented as affordable housing. The student, holed up for more weeks on end, wrote up the thesis that described the GIS methodology and compliance/non-compliance findings in text, charts, and GIS-generated maps. The thesis was unglamorously titled "*Development of a Methodology to Track General Plan Compliance*," and it confirmed the local community's foregone conclusion that policies in the county-wide General Plan and the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan were grossly flouted. A notable conclusion in the thesis:

"The primary purpose of this project was to demonstrate the use of GIS-based methodology to track general plan compliance. However, in this thesis, the information generated by GIS analysis was so striking that the thesis will more likely be remembered for its secondary purpose: that local agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in monitoring land use change might use the information to elucidate the consequences of development approval and to adjust policies related to land use development in the Santa Monica Mountains" (pg. 89).

The CSUN thesis committee signed off on the work, and it was published in August, 1997, with a copyright designation for the grad student author.

The student gave presentations on her thesis to various agency staff and to local open space stakeholder groups in the Santa Monica Mountains. Even before the *Times* story, eyebrows were raised and people murmured about the quantitative data's confirmation of what they suspected all along: the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan lacked teeth, the amendments resulted in massive grading away of hills and valleys, and the envisioned gateway route into the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was suburbanized. There was also the humble affirmation of the rationale for the City of Calabasas' incorporation as a way to take land use control from L.A. County.

1998. *L.A. Times* staff writer T. Christian Miller approached staff at the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains seeking environmental reporting ideas. He was referred to the student and her thesis. Miller did call on the student. She discussed how she got the idea for the thesis ("They're not following their own plan!") and those important two purposes of the thesis: craft the GIS methodology to track compliance ("consistency") and spur change in planning and development policies for the Santa Monica Mountains. Furthermore, the student noted another thesis conclusion: "Much more extensive discourse on why such development has been permitted could fill pages of another thesis and would concern politics, economics, and sociology" (pg. 84). What a great story in this thesis! It may have been politically naïve on the student's part, but the heady excitement of the thesis "making a difference" outweighed any egocentric thoughts about the importance of being cited for one's own intellectual property. Miller said he'd work with the student on the citation issue, and he got busy with the story.

Miller expanded his area of interest to include the greater Santa Monica Mountains. He and other *Times* staff put in a lot of work compiling digital, GIS-ready development approval information, as had the student for the thesis. They digitized more of the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan's Land Use Policy Map. Miller even paid the student to come to the L.A. County Assessor's Office to run her thesis-crafted set of GIS commands. There were many calls to the student during this time requesting advice on processing the data.

It's early December, 1998. The student e-mailed Miller about when the story might run. He replied the story was with the editors, and he wasn't sure. She asked if she had been cited/quoted, just for the sake of government employee-associated issues, as well as for her own satisfaction of accuracy. Miller didn't reply to this e-mail, and the student didn't press him for an answer.

The article, "Growth Plan Run Amok," ran in the *L.A. Times* on December 27, 1998: Sunday Report on Page A1 front and center. The article filled two more full pages with text, maps, and graphics. It was a seminal "shock and awe" article, as could be

expected. Sources for the article were cited, but, lo and behold, they did not include the student and her thesis. The presentation of the results so closely looked and read like those findings and graphics in the thesis that several people called the student at work the next day asking, “Was that your thesis?” She answered humbly that, yes, it was indeed her thesis that was used to construct the story. “The *Times* didn’t cite you!” “It was your work and you should get credit for it.” She was going to have to speak with Mr. Miller about this. His response: “I thought you genuinely [sic] did not want to be cited.”

It’s early 1999. After the student reproached Miller for providing no citation at all, Miller provided a letter on *L.A. Times* letterhead thanking the student for her “time, energy and help” while he was researching his story, and that the thesis “was key to developing the methodology I used in writing the story and your GIS knowledge was immensely helpful in working with the assessor’s office.” Miller had told the student about his using the “approved” date versus the “recordation” date, but that the results were pretty much the same. Also, he looked at clustered tract approvals rather than a tract-by-tract analysis done in the thesis. Other than that, the article’s format of the findings and graphic presentation of information were strikingly similar to the thesis. Most importantly, Miller certainly wasn’t sitting alone contemplating GIS-based land use analysis for a great environmental investigative report.

He took the idea and the methodology from the student’s thesis and presented it as his own brain child.

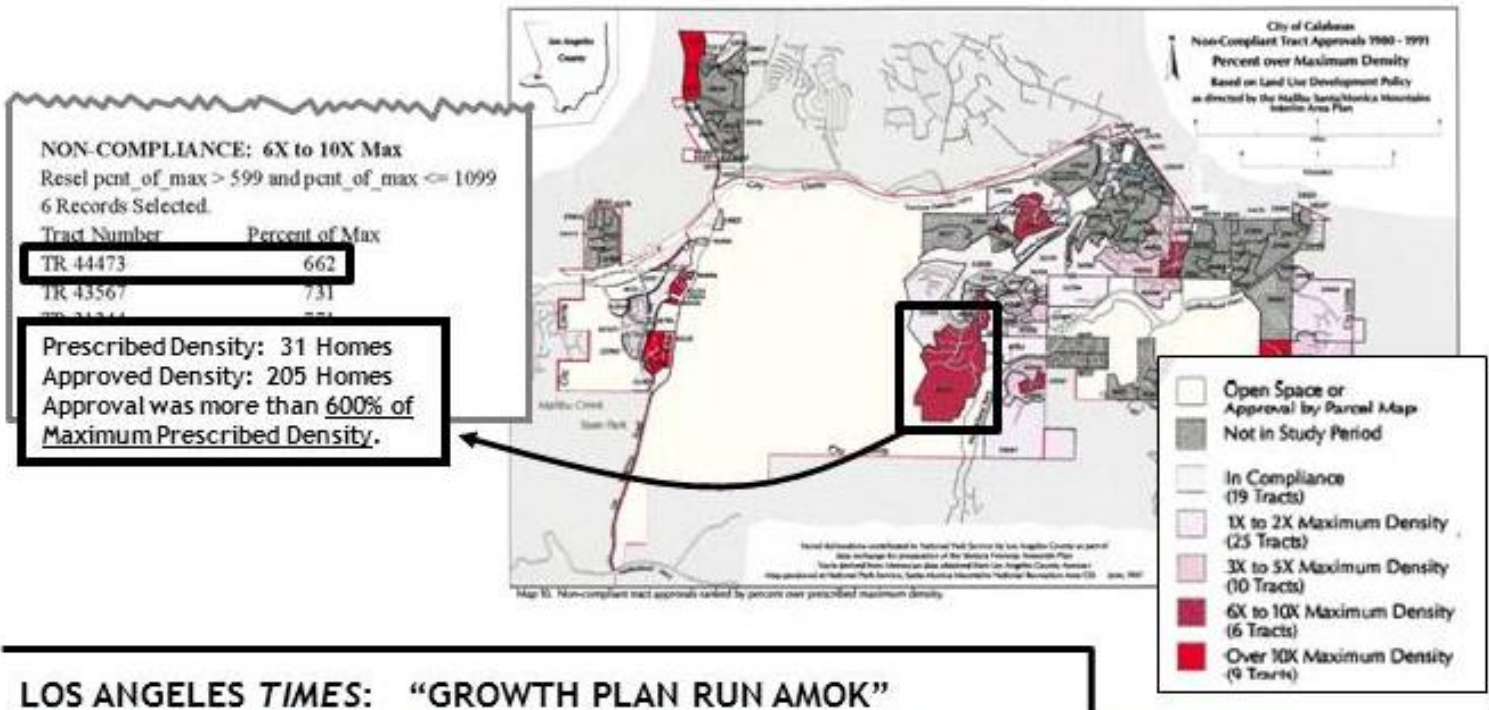
The student had been so accommodating during article preparation that to get angry and seek retribution at this point in the success of the story seemed counterproductive to the story’s effectiveness. Wasn’t it enough to have realized a “meaningful” thesis? Yes, ...mostly. The student is certainly proud to have indirectly, if not directly, raised awareness of the development boom of the 1980s and to have made a difference in planning practices at L.A. County. As for Miller, he wrote a great story. He won the Oakes award for this story, and has gone on to more courageous investigative reporting on corrupt contracting practices in Iraq and on the lack of adequate treatment for soldiers who have suffered traumatic brain injuries.

The story ran nearly 15 years ago. Density calculation methodology has been corrected. No similar subdivisions have been proposed since this development boom ran amok. Los Angeles County now has a new area plan for the Santa Monica Mountains and a ridgeline and grading ordinance to fend off the worst sorts of development. Who was this student? Well, it was me, Melanie Beck, and my thesis was the foundational contribution to the *Times*’ story. Miller needed my thesis to write “Growth Plan Run Amok,” and I needed Miller to spread the message.

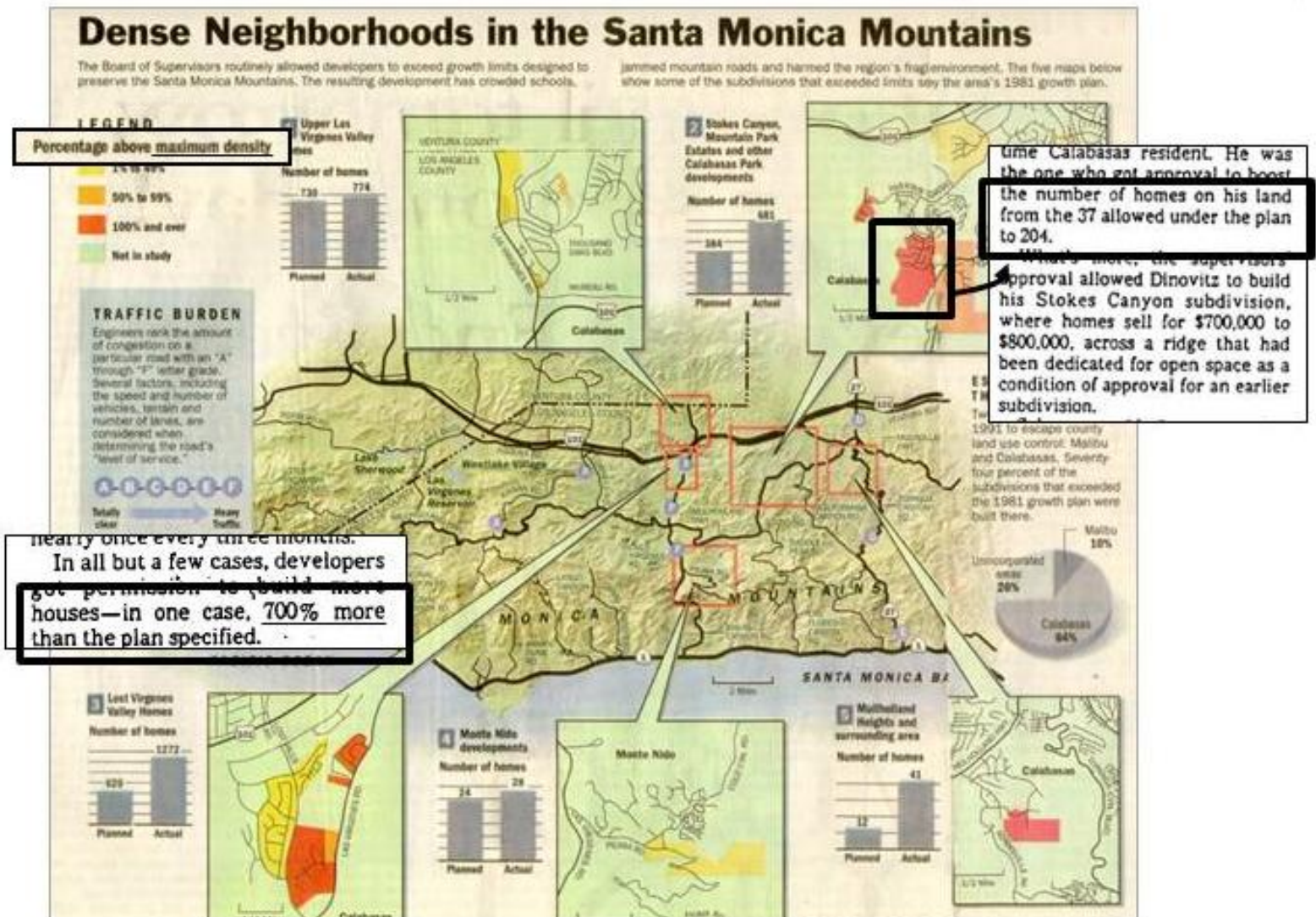
So, whose story was it?

DENSITY ANALYSIS: MASTER'S THESIS & TIMES

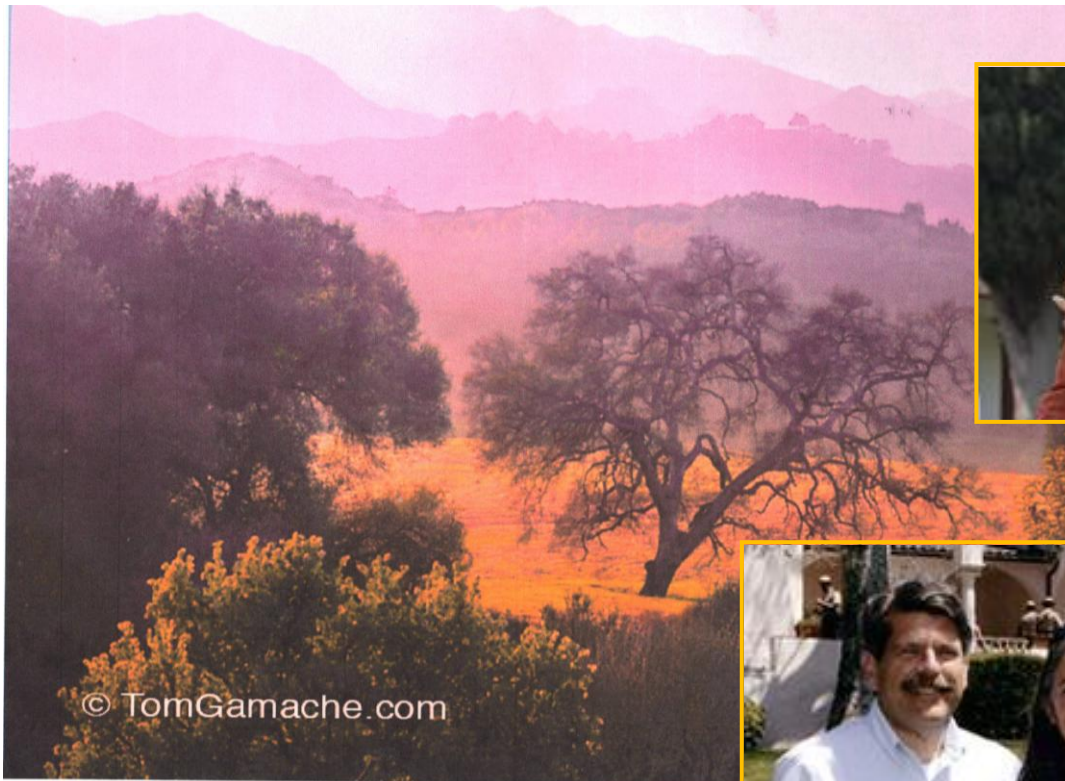
MASTER'S THESIS: DEVELOPMENT OF A METHODOLOGY TO TRACK GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE



LOS ANGELES TIMES: "GROWTH PLAN RUN AMOK"



FRAN PAVLEY CAPS HER CAREER WITH A SECOND TERM IN THE SENATE



Senator Fran Pavley was recently re-elected to the newly drawn 27th State Senate District in a grueling battle with Todd Zink, an opponent who had the support of big oil, tobacco and developers.

The much more challenging State Senate District, was one she described as “a pure swing seat” and “the most competitive district in the state”.

64% of the 935,656 residents of her new 27th Senate District, which includes Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Stevenson Ranch and half of Santa Clarita, had never before been represented by Fran, and her new district no longer included Santa Monica and Pacific Palisades which had been key parts of her old 23rd district.

Voter registration in the new 27th District is 41% Democrat, 34% Republican, and 20% decline to state, numbers that reinforce Fran’s description of it as a “pure swing seat”.

Fran, a former Federation Secretary, has always drawn support in the Santa Monica Mountains from Republicans and Democrats alike for her superb efforts on behalf of the environment, open space and conservation.

Fran had only a few months time to make the acquaintance of over 600,000 new constituents in her district - many of whom may have never heard her name until it appeared on their ballot.

During the campaign, Fran had to contend with opposition from an anonymous group, which spent \$561,000 on an inaccurate campaign against her. An investigation by the Ventura County Star showed the anonymous opposition group, the California Senior Advocates League PAC, was actually funded by well-known special interests, specifically, the National Association of Realtors, Anthem Blue Cross, Chevron, and Philip Morris. Eventually, special interests spent over \$2 million dollars in independent expenditures and in donations to her opponent.

On the evening of November 6th the absentee ballots and the Ventura County election results came in first, showing her opponent running a couple of thousand votes ahead of Fran. Those results held until after most people had gone to bed. Then the Los Angeles County results came in ...

Semi-final results in the 27th Senate District race show Fran Pavley leading Todd Zink with 182,861 votes (52.9%) to 162,532 votes (47.1%).

This will be the last election of Fran Pavley's long political career, which began with her election as Mayor of Agoura Hills. She will continue to serve as our State Senator through December, 2016.

* * *

Fran Pavley first appeared on the Las Virgenes scene almost forty years ago in the wake of a controversy over the creation of Malibu Creek State Park. The State had purchased over a thousand acres of oak savanna north of Mulholland from Bob Hope, but had not yet publicized that purchase or decided what to do with it.

The Liberty Canyon purchase brought the state ownership to within a few hundred yards of the Liberty Canyon community, where a couple of young teachers, Fran and Andy Pavley, had just brought home their first baby, a girl named Jenny.

Enter the American Motorcycle Association, which was looking for a good location for a motorcycle recreation area. Liberty Canyon seemed an ideal location to them, so they drew up a map showing the thousand acres laced with motorcycle trails and motocross race courses, and submitted it to the State.

Folks in Liberty Canyon were not aware of the American Motorcycle Association proposal until Bob Pool, then employed by the old Thousand Oaks News-Chronicle, got

wind of the story. He ran a blowup of the American Motorcycle Association motocross map on page one of the News-Chronicle. Superimposed on it was a photo of hundreds of motorcycles taking off in a cloud of dust at the start of the annual Las Vegas-to-Barstow race.

When the residents of Liberty Canyon saw Bob Pool's story and the accompanying photos, they went ballistic. The press and elected officials were barraged with angry letters and phone calls, demanding that the State immediately turn down the motorcycle proposal.

To alert the community and help clarify the situation for Liberty Canyon residents, several activists went door-to-door in the community. One of those activists, Dave Brown, said, "I knocked on the front door of the Pavleys home. Fran came to the door and told me she couldn't possibly attend any meetings, pointing to Baby Jenny as her excuse". According to Fran, Dave suggested she come to the meeting, anyway, and bring Baby Jenny along, which she did.

Hundreds of Liberty Canyon residents showed up for a particularly raucous hearing of the State Park Commission on the future uses of the Liberty Canyon purchase, some of them playing loud recordings of motorcycle noises to make their point. When the hearing was over, the State Park Commission voted to designate Liberty Canyon as a State Natural Preserve, and the American Motorcycle Association went home empty-handed.

* * *

In those days neither Calabasas nor Agoura Hills existed as incorporated cities. They were still unincorporated communities under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County, with their planning and zoning decisions at the mercy of pro-development County Supervisors such as Mike Antonovich, about whom it was said that he never met a developer he didn't like.

This was a time of runaway County development, where developers cut deals with supervisors and their staffs in the privacy of their downtown offices before going through the formality of public hearings that were invariably held downtown during working hours. Antonovich was represented locally by his Field Deputy, Leeta Pistone, who was almost inaccessible to any local homeowner who wasn't a subdivider.

Fran soon became active in the Liberty Canyon Homeowners Association, and, before long, had become its President. In the late 70's and early '80's she and her neighbors had their hands full with one development proposal after another.

Another problem Fran had to deal with was several homes in Liberty Canyon that had experienced slope failures during the heavy rains of the late '70's and early '80's. Antonovich and Leeta Pistone had done nothing to help the homeowners and acted as if they weren't even aware of the problem, so Fran sent out questionnaires to every

resident and discovered that more residents of Liberty Canyon than the County realized had been experiencing slope failures and cracked slabs on recently built homes.

Through Tom and Joan Yacovone, Fran made contact with Dr. James Slosson, one of the top geologists in the state and made him aware of the problems some of the homeowners in Liberty Canyon were experiencing. As a result, the County became at least better informed of the special problems in Liberty Canyon and the need to be more careful in processing development applications there.

In the late 70's and early '80's Fran and her neighbors, Tom and Joan Yacovone, Don and Fran Foster, and Don and Betty Wiechec, were opposing a number of developments in and around Liberty Canyon.

First Liberty Canyon tried unsuccessfully to block County approval of a 40-home tract developer Alan Satterlee was trying to get approved on the ridgeline above the Pavley home. Jim Slosson looked at Satterlee's geology report and found an amazing lack of data, and conclusions about the geology but, when these deficiencies were called to the County's attention the project was approved, nevertheless. Then there was an even bigger battle over Currey-Riach's plan for 1100 condos and a million square feet of commercial buildings in the Lost Hills development in the Las Virgenes Valley just over the ridge from the Pavley home, also approved by the Board of Supervisors without change from what the developer had proposed.

Next came the monster Oren Realty proposal for 1700 condos, an industrial park, and a shopping center that would have destroyed the magnificent stands of oaks in nearby Cheeseboro Canyon. By this time the Pavleys were becoming active in the Federation, and took a lead role in the long fight against Oren Realty, which finally resulted in the National Park Service buying the property forty years later.

Another long-standing threat to Liberty Canyon in these years was a developer named Al Abrams, who owned a wooded canyon on the west side of lower Liberty Canyon. The Pavleys worked for years to keep him from getting the zoning and development approvals he needed to build 400 apartments on the property. Finally they helped persuade Abrams to sell the property to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as part of the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor.

* * *

Though Fran Pavley sometimes testified in opposition to pending developments, her style was different from that of most other activists. She was not particularly adversarial or aggressive and usually relied on reason and quiet persuasion. She preferred to explain her position rather than assert it aggressively. As a result, she got along better with Mike Antonovich, and, especially Roy Donley, his Planning Commissioner, who once said Fran reminded him of his daughter.

In fact, Fran and a group of Liberty Canyon homeowners were invited to a delicious dinner at Planning Commissioner Roy Donley's beautiful hillside home in Studio City.

* * *

By the early 1980's several Las Virgenes communities were becoming very dissatisfied with the way the County was treating them, especially on local planning issues. There was an unsuccessful attempt to incorporate the entire area in the early 1980's as the City of Las Virgenes. When that effort failed, there was a movement to liberate the unincorporated, largely developed, community of Agoura from the control of Los Angeles County and incorporate it as its own separate City of Agoura Hills.

Many citizens developed mixed feelings about incorporation, feeling that it would accelerate the urbanization of the area, but others, after several years of runaway development under the County, understood the importance of gaining local control of planning and zoning.

Fran Pavley was one of the latter group. She made a decision to run for City Council in the first incorporation election. In those days it cost little or nothing to run for City Council. Fran's biggest contributor – at less than \$100 – was Roy Donley, Antonovich's appointee to the Regional Planning Commission. Her second biggest contribution was \$50.

The residents of Agoura at that time, had not had any previous experience with self-government. The candidates in the first City Council election were a very mixed group. Many of them were little-known and appeared to have ties to developers and other moneyed interests. The questionable character of some of these City Council candidates made many people uneasy about the whole idea of incorporation and this threatened to de-rail the movement for cityhood. But Pat MacGregor took charge, drafted a flyer that reminded people of the benefits of self government, and circulated it



throughout the community. That flyer turned the scales in favor of cityhood.

Thanks to Pat and others, Agoura Hills ended up voting overwhelmingly in favor of incorporation, and Fran Pavley, as the top vote-getter among all the candidates for City Council, became the first Mayor of Agoura Hills.

Since there was no existing agency to oversee the creation of a city government, it was left to Fran and the other elected Council Members to put the City of Agoura Hills together from scratch. This was done in a series of meetings of the five members of the new Agoura Hills City Council-elect in Fran's favorite meeting place – her kitchen.

Some people may think of Fran Pavley as a political neophyte - a well-meaning, but somewhat naive schoolteacher in a room full of fat, cigar-smoking machine politicians. If you find yourself thinking of her this way, just remind yourself that this is the woman who, after she had appeared to exhaust her political influence by getting the State to cough up the money to buy Ahmanson Ranch, then had to turn around almost immediately and persuade the state to come up with \$36 million more to buy Soka when it unexpectedly came on the market.

You have to also remember that there were 119 other members of the California State Legislature, and that a lot of them could have put the money that was spent on Ahmanson Ranch and Soka to good use in their respective districts. It took some political skill for Fran to play the lead role of nailing down both of those major acquisitions. Clearly, Fran is a lot more than a naïve schoolteacher.

So, what in Fran's background would have given her this unusual political talent?

Several years ago, Mr. Brown said he was over at the Pavley's, and Fran gave him a tour of her living room, pointing out various pieces of furniture. Finally, she pointed to one and announced, "This one belonged to my Great Grandfather. He was William Jennings Bryan."

So, there's the answer. Fran is the Great-Grand Daughter of the youngest man ever to be nominated for President of the United States by a major political party (He was 36 at the time.). William Jennings Bryan didn't end up in the White House, but he was the Democratic nominee for President three times, in 1896, 1900, and 1908, and, made a very respectable showing each time, especially in the dramatic 1896 Election, where Bryan challenged the most powerful special interests of his day – the railroads, the trusts, and the banks – and came very close to winning the presidency.

Fran did not have an easy time as Mayor. For many years Los Angeles County had been very permissive in approving a large number of billboards and tall pole signs in Agoura's Freeway Corridor, giving the downtown area of the City the appearance of an oversized Texas truck stop. Fran and her newly-elected city council colleagues had promised to clean up this unsightly signage, but the sign owners, most of whom were out of state businesses backed by the well-funded Sign Users' Council, fought the City Council tooth and nail.

Candidates backed by developers and the sign interests challenged the City Council – especially Fran – in almost every election in these early years. These challenges were too often immature and abusive – and several people thought they had the backing of *The Acorn*.

Since Fran and the majority of her Council colleagues in these years were usually women, the pro-development, pro-pole sign male chauvinist opposition often publicly referred to the City Council derisively as "the girls".

As Mayor throughout these early years, Fran was subjected to special abuse. In one City Council election anonymous opponents circulated a forged letter at the last-minute, claiming Council Member Louise Rishoff had taken payoffs from a particularly unpopular developer. With no time to correct this forgery, Louise came within two votes of losing her seat.



Senator Pavley at the LVHF 2012 Banquet.
(From left to right) Liat Samouhi, Senator Pavley, Frank Angel, Glen Peterson and Jody Thomas.

COUNTY PREPARING NEW COUNTYWIDE GENERAL PLAN SEA Coverage Increase

This new Countywide General Plan will include four times the amount of acreage devoted to “Significant Ecological Areas” as the present General Plan. (Significant Ecological Areas - usually known by the acronym of “SEAs”- are defined by the County as natural areas containing rare or unusual flora or fauna or exceptionally good examples of more common natural communities.)

The county’s current General Plan includes 61 different SEAs that total 125,787 acres. The newly proposed General Plan increases the coverage of the SEAs to 645,517 acres, including the “Santa Monica Mountains Significant Ecological Area”, which would include most of the privately owned, undeveloped land in the unincorporated part of the Santa Monica Mountains.

In the Santa Monica Mountains, the General Plan contains two Area Plans that provide

more specific guidance over land use development in our area: the North Area Plan, which will govern land use and zoning north of the Coastal Zone boundary (generally north of Mulholland Highway), while the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Plan will govern land use and zoning issues within five miles of the ocean (generally the area south of Mulholland).

The North Area Plan was originally approved by the Board of Supervisors 12 years ago, but the Board has not yet enacted many of the needed rules that will fully implement the Plan.

The Board of Supervisors has indicated its intent to approve the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program, which must be based on the requirements of the Coastal Act. But it still needs additional work and cannot take effect until it has been certified by the Coastal Commission.

So, just what is a "significant ecological area", anyway?

SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA SURVEY FORM SENT TO COLLEGES, MUSEUMS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT LOS ANGELES COUNTY IN 1976.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012
Telephone: 974-6401

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Planning Director
EDGAR T. IRVINE
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SADIE B. CLARK
LUCILLA BARTHEL
Secretary to the Commission

May 13, 1976

Dear Sir,

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning is currently in the process of developing a countywide general plan. At the present time, a data base is being compiled to be used in the planning process. To facilitate this effort, the services of a private consultant have been enlisted. England and Nelson, Environmental Consultants, of Riverside, are the biological members of the consultant team, and it is their duty to prepare a report on the significant ecological areas in Los Angeles County. However, in order to provide maximum professional input, and due to severe budgetary restrictions, we are asking for your help as well.

Please assist us by filling the attached survey-questionnaire. This is not a blanket survey. It is being sent to selected groups and individuals, that are recognized as experts, and who will be able to maintain the level of expertise required during the planning process.

This is your opportunity to have input in the early phases of the planning process. If you do not utilize this opportunity, important significant ecological areas may be overlooked, and the chances for their preservation will be severely reduced. It will be appreciated if you could send your response within the next 14 days. A return envelope is enclosed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Sid England or Mr. Steve Nelson at (714) 682-3209.

Sincerely,
Robert W. Chave
Robert W. Chave, Deputy Director
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

RWC:mac
Enclosure

In 1976, the late Jill Swift, then chair of the Santa Monica Mountains Task Force of the Sierra Club, received a form letter from the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (see left) that said the county was compiling a database of "significant ecological areas" for use in a new "countywide general plan."

"However", the letter went on, "in order to provide maximum professional input, and due to severe budgetary restrictions, we are asking for your help."

Included with the letter was a form recipients could use to nominate additional significant ecological areas to be included in the upcoming County General Plan.

Several local activists collaborated and nominated at least eight areas for possible designation as SEAs, including Malibu Canyon, Malibu Lagoon, Cold Creek, the wooded hillsides along the 101 Freeway, watersheds draining into Malibu Creek State Park, Tuna Canyon, Zuma Canyon, and Upper La Sierra Canyon above Seminole Hot Springs.

The county distributed it to a broad list of its deemed experts. All told these “experts” nominated a total of 115 potential SEAs and 62 were subsequently designated as such in the County’s 1980 General Plan, including the eight areas mentioned in the previous paragraph.

So, why, back in 1976, was the notoriously pro-development Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors so anxious to persuade scientists and environmentalists to nominate areas to be given a special planning designation as significant ecological areas?

The Open Space Lands Act Of 1970

A product of the original Earth Day, the Open Space Lands Act of 1970 requires every city and county in California to adopt an Open Space Element in its General Plan and to, “take positive action to carry out such plans ... “. It goes on to say, “no building permit may be issued, no subdivision map approved, and no open space ordinance adopted unless the proposed construction, subdivision, or ordinance is consistent with the local open space plan.”

In spite of this, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors continued its customary practice of going through the motions of zoning large areas for “open space” and then later approving high-density urban developments in those same areas. Before long, the media were trumpeting plans for large-scale urban developments in Lower Malibu Canyon, Upper Topanga, Brentwood, Westlake Village, and the heart of the Las Virgenes Valley in the area then known as “Century Ranch”, now Malibu Creek State Park.

Environmentalists Sue the County (The “Judge Thomas Decision”)

In 1975, the Center for Law in the Public Interest, joined by the Sierra Club and Margot Feuer filed suit against the county for violating the Open Space Lands Act, winning an injunction that overturned the County’s 1973 General Plan and blocked approval of any further urban development in rural-zoned areas of the Santa Monica Mountains.

To avoid further litigation, the county hired the consulting firm of England and Nelson and began to draw up a new General Plan that would satisfy the court and pay lip service to the Open Space Lands Act and the protection of Significant Ecological Areas.

In addition to the 62 proposed SEAs, England and Nelson also recommended that, “riparian woodland habitat outside the designated significant ecological areas... should be regarded as important wildlife habitat and preserved,” describing it as, “the best wildlife habitat remaining in the state”. “No developments should take place”, it asserted, “which would alter the flow of water into or through the area”.

“In addition a 75 – 100 foot buffer of natural vegetation should be maintained surrounding the riparian community. This is necessary because many of the organisms which nest or roost in the riparian habitat forage in adjacent areas.”

Since that time development proposals within any of the SEAs have been required to obtain a Conditional Use Permit and the development itself would have to be reviewed by the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC), a committee of independent experts appointed by the County Planning Director.

But, the “bad old days” were not yet over. In the 1980 election the Building Industry Association backed a slate of pro-development candidates, swept four of the five seats on the Board of Supervisors, and set out to undo the environmental gains of the 1970s, including the SEA program.

During the 1980s, several developers ignored the Open Space Lands Act and urged the Board of Supervisors to allow them to build more than 6,000 homes in the Palo Comado Significant Ecological Area alone. One developer sought county approval to build 1,700 condominiums, a shopping center, and an industrial park, along with a highway that would be carved through well over a mile of oak savanna on National Park Service land within the Palo Comado SEA. The Baldwin development, known facetiously today as “The Oaks”, proposed to remove over 1,800 native oaks to make room for 1,500 mansions and a four-lane boulevard, also entirely within the Palo Comado SEA.

One pro-development County Planning Commissioner, appointed by Mike Antonovich, seriously proposed building a four-lane boulevard along the very crest of the Santa Monica Mountains which would have intersected a north-south-boulevard through the Malibu Canyon SEA and carved a swath through Malibu Canyon to the coast.

Since most SEAs are on private property that has already been zoned for some type of development, the courts believe they cannot constitutionally allow SEAs to be treated as if they were public wilderness preserves. Unless park agencies are able to come up with enough money to buy and administer the land – an increasingly difficult challenge today - the only hope of saving these special places may be to find a constitutional way to regulate the development of the property that will ensure the survival of at least some of each SEA’s unique natural resources.

This could mean trying to persuade the landowner to sell or donate the most sensitive

parts of an SEA to a park agency or to a non-profit or allowing the owner to cluster his development on part of the property and donate the rest to a park agency or to a non-profit. A combination of purchase in fee, partial development, and dedication of the remainder, has already been used to preserve 2,000 acres – more than 60% of the Palo Comado SEA - along the Ventura Freeway. A majority of the Cold Creek SEA has been preserved through purchase by the Mountains Restoration Trust and State Parks.

Other SEAs, such as the Malibu Canyon and Lagoon SEA, Cheeseboro Canyon, and Upper La Sierra Canyon, have been largely or partially preserved by state, federal, or private purchase – after their designation as SEAs focused public attention on the importance of preserving their unique natural resources.

The replacement of pro-development County Supervisors, such as Deane Dana and Mike Antonovich, with Ed Edelman in 1991 and later with Zev Yaroslavsky in 1994, along with the incorporation of local cities more committed to the protection of the environment has made the County more sensitive to the need to protect SEAs, at least for now. Under current Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, protection of SEAs has been a high priority. But unfortunately, Zev will be “termed out” in two years and, with each Supervisor called on to represent two million largely urban constituents, most of them a long way from the Santa Monica Mountains, we have no guarantee Zev’s successor will share our commitment to the protection of our significant ecological areas. In case she or he doesn’t, we will need to be prepared to insist the County maintain a strong SEA program.

(Next Page - See article from Business Week in 1972 “*Californians Battle Over Who Gets the Land*”)

Californians battle over who gets the land

Los Angeles' Santa Monica hills may end up as our first urban national park

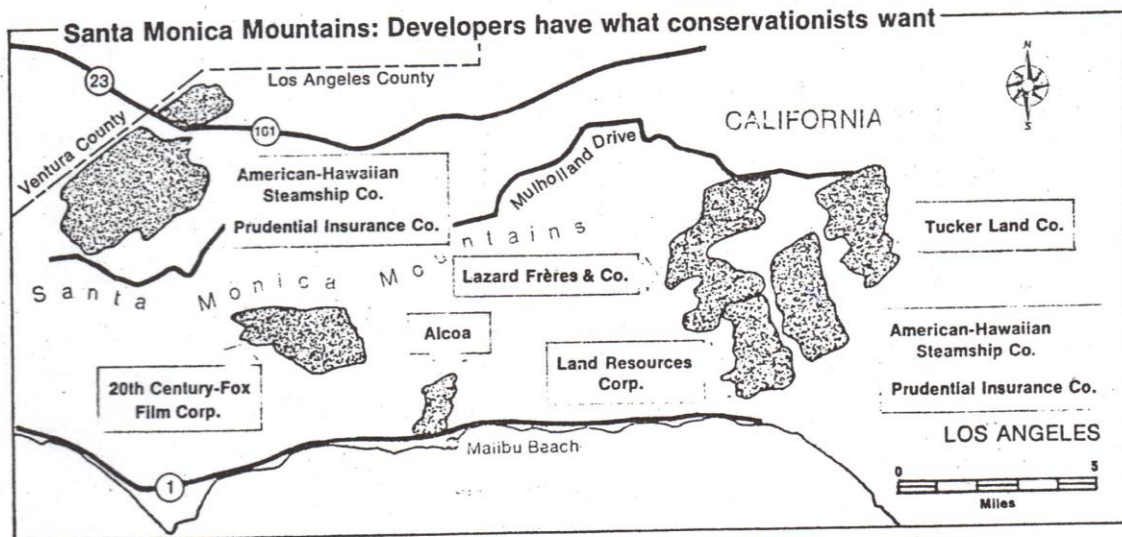
Fights over land use are erupting all across the U.S., and none is fiercer than the struggle over Los Angeles' Santa Monica Mountains, 200,000 acres of semi-arid hills only five minutes' drive from downtown. The owners of much of this land, such as American-Hawaiian Steamship Co., Aluminum Co. of America, Twentieth Century-

Now a group of congressmen has toured the area in preparation for a big push in Washington to create a national park. The Interior Dept. has made an extensive feasibility study, and a bill authorizing federal land acquisition for the park is waiting in Congress. Meanwhile, conservationists are pressing the state to take full control of land use and slow down any further development for at least two years while the park is being established.

Better than waiting. Business interests in the area are supporting the park idea—with reservations. They want to see

These issues boil down to the need to reconcile conflicting demands for development and conservation of what the firm's report calls "a unique and irreplaceable finite resource." Ray Murray, coordinator for the Interior Dept. study, sees the Santa Monica controversy as "the perfect example of how urbanization is coming into direct conflict with the protection of natural environment and open space."

Under fire for years. "Mountains" is an ambitious description of the brush-covered, fire- and flood-prone hills northwest of Los Angeles, running about 25



Fox Film Corp., and Lazard Frères & Co., see it as a tract of increasingly valuable and prime real estate, worth well over \$1-billion, that rising taxes and urgent demand for homesites are pressing them to develop.

But California's conservationists, who include some of the country's most aggressive and politically skillful groups, see the mountains as the last sizable piece of open land in Los Angeles County that is still in private hands. The area is one of the few nearby refuges of campers, hikers, and picnickers from the city's traffic, noise, and crowding. The tract belongs to the whole region, the environmentalists assert, and should be kept free from further development. They want it taken over as the country's first urban national park.

For a decade, the conservationists and the developers have been battling sporadically over the mountain lands.

just how much land and just which land will be taken out of private hands, what controls will be imposed on land adjoining the park, and how the whole enterprise will be administered. But most of them are weary of frustrating and expensive uncertainties, of having their development plans sidetracked. And, of course, the land not taken for park use would increase in value. "We support the park," says Robert L. Healy, president of Tucker Land Co. in Los Angeles, which owns nearly 2,000 acres. "It's the best alternative to being regulated out of business."

In California, environmentalists are also whipping up public support for regulating all development along the state's 1,100-mi. coastline. But the Santa Monica battle embraces the key issues in most coast-to-coast land fights, says a study by the California environmental planning firm of Eckbo, Dean, Austin & Williams.

mi. along the coast and 15 mi. inland. Tract and luxury housing, shopping centers, and light industry hem them in on three sides and march inexorably up their eastern flanks. But about 100,000 acres remain untouched.

In the past, growth has been slowed both by the hilly, inaccessible terrain and by such groups as the Friends of the Santa Monica Mountains and the Save Malibu Canyon Committee. They have halted freeway construction, stalled sewers, and balked moves to make a multi-lane freeway of Mulholland Drive, the narrow, partly unpaved road that meanders along the ridge.

Now, developers have persuaded county officials to widen and pave roads. Techniques for perching houses on hillsides have improved. And always there is the rising pressure of taxes on undeveloped land; county assessors say these taxes have risen as much as 20 times since 1963.

Business Week
1972