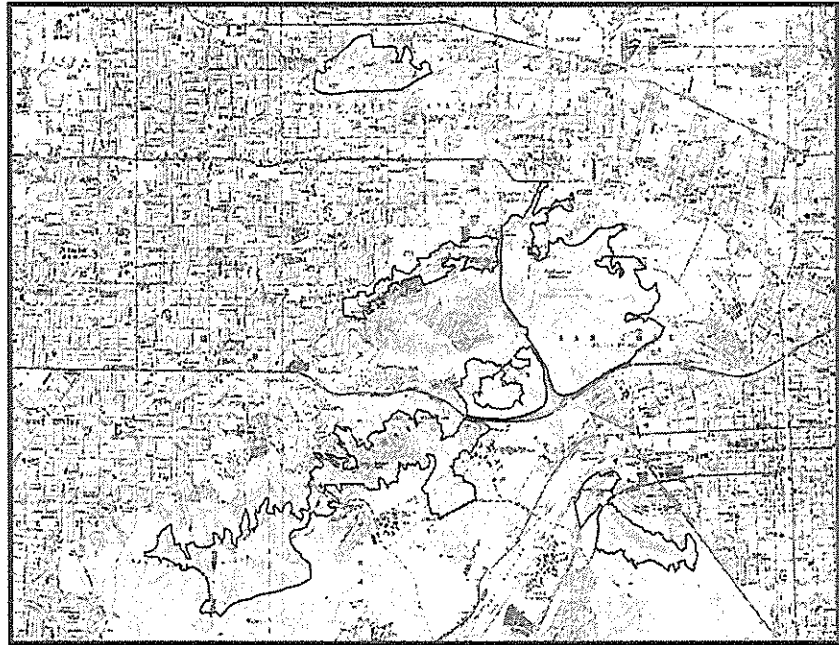


BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT  
OF THE PROPOSED  
EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY  
SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA

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**EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY**  
(Including Existing SEA No. 16)

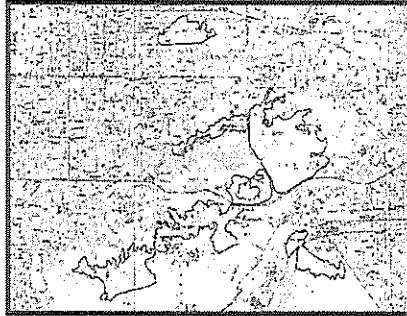
Los Angeles County, California

November 2000

PCR

**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT  
OF THE PROPOSED  
EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY  
SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA**

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**EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY**  
(Including Existing SEA No. 16)

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November 2000

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Location:** The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA is located in the easternmost portion of the San Gabriel Valley. The study area represents several ridgelines and hilltops and a major drainage at the eastern end of the San Jose Hills which have been surrounded by urban development over the past four decades. Over most of its boundaries the East San Gabriel Valley SEA is bordered by the edge of developed properties. It also incorporates existing SEA number 16.

**Description:** The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA is comprised of five component parts ranging in size from approximately 320 acres to approximately 1,794 acres. Combined, these components total approximately 5,175 acres. The location and configuration of this SEA and its parts are primarily defined by the urbanization of the eastern San Gabriel Valley which occurred over the more easily developed valley floor and lower slopes of the San Jose Hills. As a consequence of this development the SEA resembles an "archipelago" encompassing portions, or islands, of undeveloped ridgelines, hilltops and drainages, between the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, and the Puente Hills to the south. The proposed SEA overlaps into several different jurisdictions. These include: approximately 722 acres within unincorporated Los Angeles County; 27 acres within the City of Covina; 423 acres within the City of Glendora; 9 acres within the City of La Verne; 471 acres within the City of Pomona; 2,272 acres within the City of San Dimas; 988 acres within the City of Walnut; and 264 acres within the City of West Covina.

**Existing Land Use:** Land uses within the East San Gabriel Valley SEA vary from grazing to recreational and institutional use. A large portion of the SEA lies within established county and city park areas. The remaining lands share characteristics of natural open space with scattered clearings of unknown origin.

**Land Ownership:** Public, institutional and private ownerships exist within this SEA. Public ownerships include Los Angeles County (Bonelli and Walnut Creek Parks) and the City of Glendora (South Hills Park). Institutional owners include the Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College and the California State University system. The remainder of the land within the East San Gabriel Valley SEA is comprised of private ownerships; among the largest is Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

**Vegetation:** The variety of topography, soil types, slope aspects and water availability within this SEA creates a range of physical habitats which support numerous plant species. Eight major plant communities are found within the East San Gabriel Valley SEA including: oak woodland; oak

riparian forest; walnut woodland; southern willow scrub; chaparral; coastal sage scrub; freshwater marsh; and non-native grassland.

**Wildlife:** Wildlife populations within the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA are expected to reflect lower diversity and abundance for the habitat types present due to edge effects of surrounding development and existing recreational uses. However, a surprisingly high diversity of birds are documented to occur within this SEA, including the federally threatened California gnatcatcher.

**Wildlife Movement:** The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA represents a regional wildlife corridor between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente Hills/Chino Hills complex. Unlike the commonly held concept of a corridor, this SEA contains a series of discontinuous habitat blocks and patches rather than an unbroken corridor for movement. As such, this SEA facilitates movement and exchange between larger habitat areas by allowing for terrestrial "island-hopping" between and among the individual SEA components. The manner in which this SEA allows wildlife populations in different areas to interact is less than ideal. The extent of this exchange depends upon urbanization.

**Sensitive Biological Resources:** The East San Gabriel Valley SEA contains habitats, or plant communities, that are generally considered unique, of relatively limited distribution, or of particular value to wildlife. These are oak woodland, oak riparian forest, walnut woodland, southern willow scrub, and coastal sage scrub. Despite the fragmented nature of this SEA and adverse edge effects from surrounding development, a number of sensitive plant and wildlife species have been observed or may occur here. These species are considered sensitive due to declining, limited, or threatened populations, resulting in most cases from habitat reductions.

**Regional Biological Value:** In a regional context, the value of the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA is founded in four of the six criteria used in this study to identify and select SEAs (see Criteria Analysis table at the end of this summary).

**Recommended Management Practices:** Proposed new development within the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA should be designed to be highly compatible with the continued ecological function of each of the component biological resources described above. Although a comprehensive evaluation of all possible future land uses within this SEA cannot be made here, a general approach is outlined below which follows the guidelines and is recommended for use on a project specific basis. In order to preserve the integrity of the SEA, the proposed comprehensive management practices described in the *Los Angeles County SEA Update Study 2000 Background Report* are recommended. These practices address:

- Core habitat
- Habitat linkages and wildlife corridors
- Fire management
- Public access and recreation
- Infrastructure
- Wetlands, riparian habitats, and streambeds
- Non-riparian/upland woodlands

In addition to the comprehensive management practices the following proposed management practices are recommended specifically for the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA:

- Limit development densities to one residential unit per ten acre parcel, and constrain development design, where feasible, to cluster dwelling configuration along existing roadways in order to minimize clearing associated with fuel management, and to reduce the need for grading, fencing, and other habitat disturbances.
- Maintain the habitat of core populations of listed species including the federally threatened California gnatcatcher.
- Retain rare communities with adequate buffers so as to allow for the long term viability and integrity of plant communities as a whole. Rare communities include: oak woodland, oak riparian forest, walnut woodland, willow woodland, and coastal sage scrub.
- Retain connectivity and linkage values through this SEA as an island hopping linkage between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente Hills. Maintain lines of sight between components at or near their existing borders. To the greatest extent possible, existing distances between the components should be maintained rather than increase through intense uses at their perimeters.



**CRITERIA ANALYSIS  
OF THE PROPOSED EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SEA**

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Justification</u>
A) The habitat of core populations of endangered or threatened plant or animal species.	Met	This SEA contains habitat which supports a core population (and the only known population) of the federally threatened California gnatcatcher, in the eastern San Gabriel Valley. This population has been recently observed in coastal sage scrub at two locations in the area, Bonelli Park and Buzzard Peak. At both locations, surveys over multiple years indicate that this population has been increasing in numbers. Currently, it is believed that there are between ten and fifteen pairs of gnatcatchers in this population.
B) On a regional basis, biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitat of plant or animal species that are either unique or are restricted in distribution.	Met	Several plant communities within this SEA are CDFG highest inventory priority communities due to their restricted distribution in the Southern California region. These communities include: walnut woodlands which are scattered throughout the components of this SEA; oak riparian woodland which is best expressed within the Walnut Creek drainage; isolated stands of willow woodland along many of the drainages in the Bonelli/Walnut Creek Parks and Buzzard Peak components; freshwater marsh and open water found primarily in association with Puddingstone Reservoir; and coastal sage scrub, which also serves as the habitat for the California gnatcatcher, found in scattered patches over hillsides within the South Hills, Bonelli/Walnut Parks, Via Verde and Buzzard Peak components.
C) Within Los Angeles County, biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitat of plant or animal species that are either unique or are restricted in distribution.	Met	All of the plant communities and habitats indicated above as restricted in distribution on a regional basis, are also restricted in distribution within Los Angeles County.
D) Habitat that at some point in the life cycle of a species or group of species, serves as concentrated breeding, feeding, resting, or migrating grounds and is limited in availability either regionally or in Los Angeles County.	Met	Any relatively large body of water with pockets of natural lakeside vegetation along its shoreline potentially meets this criteria, particularly within the context of an arid to semiarid environment, characteristic of Los Angeles County. Although subjected to boating activities and shoreline recreational use, Puddingstone Reservoir serves as an important habitat for migrating water fowl and water birds, evident in the high diversity of birds recorded at the park over the past several years.
E) Biotic resources that are of scientific interest because they are either an extreme in physical/geographical limitations, or represent unusual variation in a population or community.	Not met	The SEA does not contain biotic resource that are clearly an extreme in physical/geographical limitations, or represent unusual variation in a population or community and therefore does not meet this criterion.

**CRITERIA ANALYSIS  
OF THE PROPOSED EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SEA  
(CONTINUED)**

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<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Justification</b>
F) Areas that would provide for the preservation of relatively undisturbed examples of the original natural biotic communities in Los Angeles County.	Not met	The proposed SEA does not contain areas that would provide for the preservation of relatively undisturbed examples of the original natural biotic communities in Los Angeles County

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## SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA UPDATE STUDY

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### 1. LOCATION

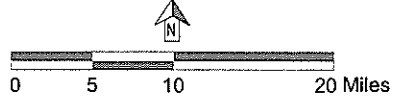
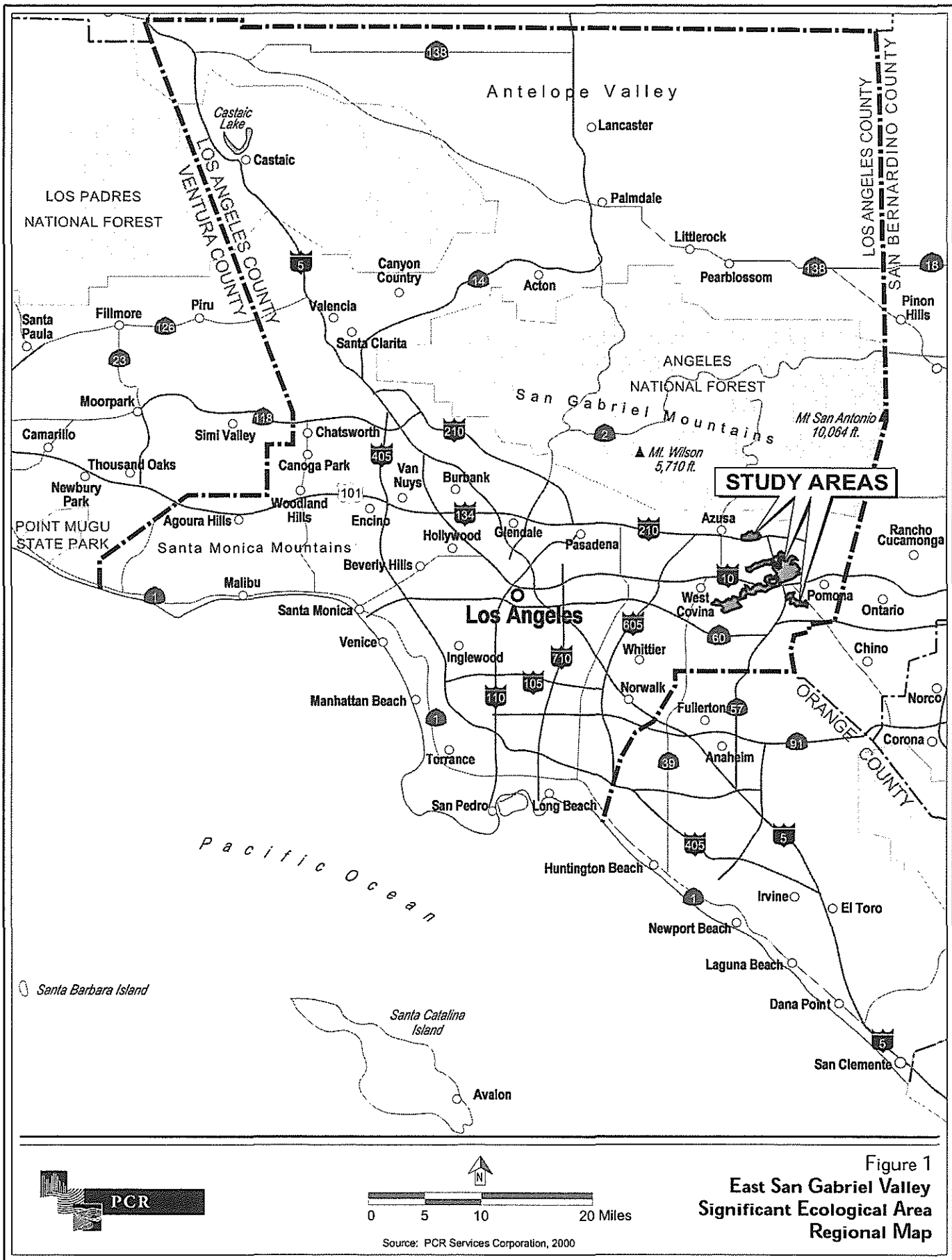
#### 1.1 GENERAL

The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA is located in the easternmost portion of the San Gabriel Valley as shown in Figure 1, *Regional Map*, on page 2. For the purpose of delineating an area-wide ecological unit with interacting component habitat areas this SEA includes incorporated as well as unincorporated lands. The study area represents several ridgelines and hilltops and a major drainage at the eastern end of the San Jose Hills which have been surrounded by urban development over the past four decades. The largest component of this SEA is Frank G. Bonelli Regional County Park (Bonelli Park) and a portion of Walnut Creek Park, both of which, are unincorporated. Other component parts are South Hills Park and surrounding undeveloped land in the City of Glendora, Buzzard Peak and undeveloped hillsides to the southwest within the cities of West Covina and Walnut, undeveloped slopes to the west of Bonelli Park and Interstate 210 (I-210) in the City of San Dimas, and Elephant Hill and an adjoining ridgeline in the City of Pomona.

In its entirety, the East San Gabriel Valley SEA is located within the San Dimas, Glendora and Baldwin Park United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' California Quadrangles as shown in Figure 2, *Existing and Proposed Boundaries* on page 3. It also incorporates existing SEA number 16.

#### 1.2 BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION




Over most of its boundaries the East San Gabriel Valley SEA is bordered by developed properties. At its most westerly point the Bonelli/Walnut Creek Parks component begins west of where South Reeder Avenue crosses the Walnut Creek drainage. Traveling east from this point the proposed SEA is bordered to the north and south by existing residential developments on the ridgelines above the creek and the most intensively developed portions of the Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College in the bottom of the drainage. The SEA continues east to where it meets the I-210, at which point it is interrupted, but kept physically intact by a freeway underpass for San Dimas Avenue. On the east side of the I-210 the boundaries follow the freeway right-of-way toward the north and south. After a short distance to the north the boundary turns due east where it continues



Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2000

**Figure 1**  
**East San Gabriel Valley**  
**Significant Ecological Area**  
**Regional Map**



-  Proposed SEA Boundary
-  Existing SEA Boundary
-  Angeles National Forest

*Figure 2*  
**East San Gabriel Valley  
 Significant Ecological Area  
 Existing and Proposed Boundaries**

0 5800 Feet  
 FORMA Systems  
 09/06/00

to follow the edge of development, which now includes business parks, industrial properties and Raging Waters theme park. In the area of Raging Waters the SEA includes two finger-like tributaries of Walnut Creek. The westernmost of these areas extend to the north where it terminates at Arrow Highway. The easternmost area runs in a northeasterly direction, ending at a Union Pacific Rail Road line. From the vicinity of Raging Waters the boundary continues east along Puddingstone Drive to the Puddingstone Channel. The eastern boundary of this component generally conforms to the eastern boundary of Bonelli Park, excluding the Mountain Meadows Golf Course, southward to Via Verde. From Via Verde the boundary extends east to Fairplex Drive, and Fairplex Drive south to Interstate 10 (I-10). The southern boundary is marked by the I-10 right-of-way. At the intersection of I-10 and I-210, the boundary travels north along the eastern I-210 right-of-way to meet Walnut Creek.

The South Hills Park component has as its northern boundary Big Dalton Wash, which is a concrete-lined flood control channel, and existing residential development where the SEA does not abut the channel itself. The eastern boundary of this component is also marked by existing residential development. The western boundary lies along Glendora Avenue. The southern boundary consists of the I-210 right-of-way.

Buzzard Peak and its associated lands begin in the east along a ridgeline immediately north and above the California State Polytechnic University (Cal Poly), Pomona campus. This component follows the ridgeline west to where it crosses Grand Avenue and continues in a westerly direction, encompassing a series of minor ridgelines and drainages. Moving east to west, its northern boundary is marked by I-10, developed portions of the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Covina Hills and existing residential development. Moving from east to west, its southern boundary is marked by developed and cultivated areas of the Cal Poly campus, Amar Road and existing residential development. Along their entire lengths, the northern and southern boundaries follow highly circuitous alignments at the edge of developed landscape.

A minor component of this SEA is located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of I-10 and I-210. This relatively small area is comprised of undeveloped hillsides bound on the east by the I-210 right-of-way, the south by the I-10 right-of-way and existing residential development on the west and north. This area also wraps around a residential enclave which takes access across the northern boundary.

The Elephant Hill component begins in the north at the toe of its slopes which generally parallels a Union Pacific Rail Road line. From here, it follows a northwest to southeast trending ridgeline. The SEA boundary in this area is marked on its eastern, southern and western edges by existing residential development.

## **2. DESCRIPTION**

The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA is comprised of five component parts ranging in size from approximately 320 acres to approximately 1,794 acres. Combined, these components total approximately 5,175 acres. The location and configuration of this SEA and its parts are primarily defined by the urbanization of the eastern San Gabriel Valley which has occurred over the more developable valley floor and lower slopes of the San Jose Hills. As a consequence, of the SEA resembles an "archipelago" encompassing portions, or islands, of undeveloped ridgelines, hilltops and drainages between the San Gabriel Mountains to the north and the Puente Hills to the south.

Generally, the topography within this SEA consists of moderate to steep hillsides with north, south, east and west slope aspects. Ridgelines vary in width from narrow to broad with well defined drainages in between. One major drainage, Walnut Creek, and a man-made reservoir, Puddingstone Reservoir, are found within this SEA. Elevations range from a low of approximately 560 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL) in the Walnut Creek drainage to a high of approximately 1,375 feet above MSL at Buzzard Peak.

The biological communities found in this SEA vary according to physical habitat conditions (i.e., slope exposure, soil type and depth, and the availability of water) and the area's history of grazing practices. Elevation plays almost no role in defining habitat types. Many slopes support oak and walnut woodland which often intergrade with prevalent stands of mixed chaparral. Coastal sage scrub is also found on slopes with shallower, drier soils. Drainages are typically vegetated with oak riparian woodlands and forests, with stands of western sycamore and willow woodland. More moderate slopes and broader ridgelines have been subjected to livestock grazing. In these areas, the dominant vegetation consists of open non-native grassland. Oftentimes, grassland exists as the understory ground cover for wooded areas creating oak and walnut savannahs. Small isolated areas of freshwater marsh are also found around Puddingstone Reservoir.

The proposed SEA overlaps into several different jurisdictions. These include: approximately 722 acres within unincorporated Los Angeles County; 27 acres within the City of Covina; 423 acres within the City of Glendora; 9 acres within the City of La Verne; 471 acres within the City of Pomona; 2,272 acres within the City of San Dimas; 988 acres within the City of Walnut; and 264 acres within the City of West Covina.

## **3. EXISTING LAND USE**

Land uses within the East San Gabriel Valley SEA vary from low to high intensity recreation to grazing. The majority of the Bonelli/Walnut Creek Parks component lies within established park

areas. Bonelli Park is a county regional park including facilities for a wide range of recreational pursuits. These include hiking, riding and biking trails, picnic grounds, beach areas, boating facilities, equestrian centers and stables and recreational vehicle campgrounds. More intense recreational uses are restricted to areas around the reservoir and to enclaves scattered throughout the park. Most of the park, however, has been maintained in natural open space and is accessible by trails only. Similarly, Walnut Creek Park is a part of the County park system and supports hiking, riding and biking uses. In addition, a limited area of Walnut Creek is within the undeveloped grounds of the Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College.

The majority of the South Hills component of this SEA is located within South Hills Park which is maintained by the City of Glendora. With the exception of two water tanks and radio towers within its interior, this area remains relatively natural with disturbance limited to grazing. Other disturbances include several trails, unimproved roads, and an improved utility road.

The Buzzard Peak component appears to be the least disturbed component of this SEA. It does contain a number of unimproved access roads, trails and evidence of grazing. However, most of its area exists as natural open space, disturbed to a minor degree.

The Elephant Hill and Via Verde components share the characteristic of natural open space with scattered clearings of unknown origin. Fewer trails and unimproved roads exist in this component than in others making up this SEA. Presumably, this is due to their access being limited public access by private residential communities and freeways which are found at their borders.

#### **4. LAND OWNERSHIP**

Public, institutional and private holdings exist within this SEA. Public ownerships include Los Angeles County (Bonelli and Walnut Creek Parks) and the City of Glendora (South Hills Park). Institutional owners include the Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College and the California State University system. The remainder of the land within the East San Gabriel Valley SEA is comprised of private ownerships; among the largest is Forest Lawn Memorial Park. Land owned, under long-term lease, or utility easements may exist as well.

#### **5. VEGETATION**

The variety of topography, soil types, slope aspects and water availability within this SEA create a range of physical habitats which support numerous plant species. All plant species observed or recorded in previous documentation within the study area are indicated in the *Comprehensive Floral & Faunal Compendium* of the *Los Angeles County SEA Update Study 2000 Background*



*Report.* Sensitive plant species occurring within the proposed SEA are discussed in the Sensitive Biological Resources section of this document. Many of these species, although often different in their growth form, prefer similar habitat characteristics and are often found in recurring assemblages to form plant communities. Eight major plant communities are found within the East San Gabriel Valley SEA. Plant communities within the proposed SEA were classified using standard methodology and terminology. Most of the communities discussed in this study correspond directly with those listed in Holland's *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California* (1986 and 1992 update). Other communities are named based on dominant species and/or commonly used terminology. Brief descriptions and general locations of each plant community present within the SEA are provided below, including oak woodland, oak riparian forest, walnut woodland, willow woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, freshwater marsh, and non-native grassland.

**Oak woodland** is a plant community dominated by species of the genus *Quercus*. Within this SEA the dominant species is the coast live oak, which typically grows to heights of 20 to 40 feet and forms either closed or open canopies. Understory vegetation varies from grassland in areas subject to grazing to shrubs where topography is steeper and/or grazing has been relaxed. This vegetation may also intergrade with shrub communities. Within this SEA, oak woodland is scattered throughout all components where it is most prevalent on northfacing slopes and in drainage bottoms.

A highly related community found in the proposed SEA includes **oak riparian forest**. It is also dominated by coast live oak. The primary difference between oak woodland and oak riparian forest is the greater availability of water in riparian situations which is expressed in a dense tree canopy cover and tree clusters. A greater number of hydrophytic (moister favoring) plant species are also found in the understory. Typical riparian trees such as western sycamore and willow occasionally occur as well. Oak riparian forest is most well developed within Walnut Creek. Riparian trees are also scattered in other drainages throughout the Buzzard Peak component of this SEA.

Often intergrading with oak dominated woodlands or developed as a distinct community is **walnut woodland**. This community is dominated by the California walnut which grows 10 to 30 feet high. More often than not, the California walnut grows in open stands; however, closed tree canopies are not uncommon. In similar fashion to oak woodlands its understory varies from grasses to shrubs. Thus, it forms stands ranging from savannahs to forests throughout the East San Gabriel Valley SEA. It is most common within the Bonelli/Walnut Parks, South Hills, and Buzzard Peak components.

A well developed **southern willow scrub** community is found along Live Oak Creek upstream and at the point where the creek flows into Puddingstone Reservoir in the Bonelli/Walnut Parks component. Smaller patches of this community are also found scattered along drainages in the Buzzard Peak component. This community is dominated by species of willow which form nearly monotypic stands due to their dense growth. These stands generally reach 10 to 20 feet in height with little understory vegetation.

Mixed **chaparral** is a shrub community composed of robust species. Within this SEA these species include laurel sumac, toyon, lemonadeberry and Mexican elderberry. Along with other shrub species, chaparral forms dense vegetation covers growing five to ten feet in height. The development of chaparral is most pronounced within the South Hills, Bonelli/Walnut Parks, and Buzzard Peak components.

Communities of **coastal sage scrub** exhibit less robust structure within this SEA. This plant community is dominated by California sagebrush, California encelia, white sage, black sage, and California buckwheat. Coastal sage scrub also forms dense stands which grow three to four feet in height. Within this SEA, it is generally found in scattered patches which are highly integrated with mixed chaparral. These communities are primarily located in the South Hills, Bonelli/Walnut Parks, Via Verde, and Buzzard Peak components.

**Non-native grassland** consists of non-native annual grasses and forbs. These opportunistically growing species include brome grasses, wild oats and mustards. Characteristic of other parts of southern California, this community became established as a result of livestock grazing; in the process native vegetation is removed, sometimes by mechanical means, and replaced by more adventitious species. Non-native grassland is found throughout all components of this SEA.

Small areas supporting **freshwater marsh** are found at scattered locations along the shoreline of Puddingstone Reservoir. This community may also exist at other locations, in or adjacent to artificially created impoundments used to water livestock. Freshwater marsh requires perennially shallow water or saturated soils. Dominant plants are comprised of emergent species including cattails and bulrushes.

## 6. WILDLIFE

Wildlife populations within the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA are generally expected to reflect lower diversity and abundance of habitat types. This is due to the influences of surrounding development and location of recreational uses over relatively large areas of the SEA components. Analysis of invertebrates on any given site generally is limited by a lack of specific

data; however, the SEA is considered sufficient to encompass moderately healthy populations of common invertebrate species. Fair numbers of amphibians are expected to be present primarily due to the aquatic and semi-aquatic habitats provided by Puddingstone Reservoir, and riparian habitats along Live Oak Channel and Walnut Creek. Diversity and evenness among these populations, however, is likely to be degraded due to history of urbanization resulting in few species adaptable to this sort of environment.

Similar effects would be anticipated for reptiles. Reptilian species typically found in suburban and rural areas are expected in relatively high numbers. Less common, and perhaps, locally extinct would be those species that are more secretive in their habitats and/or not as prolific.

A surprisingly high diversity of birds are documented within this SEA including the largest population of California gnatcatcher, a federally threatened species, in the County. For numerous upland, raptorial, and water associated birds the East San Gabriel Valley SEA provides a mosaic of habitats. Between woodland, shrubland, grassland and wetlands, diverse populations of birds are able to meet nesting, foraging, and migratory requirements.

Mammal populations also reflect the suburban environs imparting this SEA. Small mammals are expected to be uneven in their diversity with more adaptive, introduced European species in greater numbers compared to others species. Medium sized mammal populations are expected to exhibit the same characteristics. Large mammals are largely absent on a resident basis.

All wildlife species previously recorded, as well as those expected to occur within this SEA are tabulated in the *Comprehensive Floral & Faunal Compendium of the Los Angeles County SEA Update Study 2000 Background Report*. Sensitive wildlife species occurring or potentially occurring within the SEA are discussed in the Sensitive Biological Resources section of this document.

## **7. WILDLIFE MOVEMENT**

The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA represents the only regional wildlife linkage between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente Hills/Chino Hills complex. Unlike the commonly held concept of a corridor, however, this SEA contains a series of discontinuous habitat blocks and patches rather than an unbroken corridor for movement. As such, this SEA facilitates movement and exchange between larger habitat areas by permitting terrestrial "island-hopping" between the SEA components.

Using birds as an example, movement may be initiated by an individual or group of birds in either the San Gabriel Mountains or the Puente Hills. Larger species, with the capacity to cover long

distances, may make the passage as one segment of its journey. Smaller species, however, lacking physical or behavioral capacity may not be able to attain this movement under normal circumstances. By utilizing various component parts of the SEA, the same species can cover this journey in several smaller trips. The same example may also apply to winged insects and wind-borne plant pollen. Interaction between, not just through the components can occur as well.

This same function probably does not apply to other taxonomic groups. It is highly doubtful that amphibian, reptile and most mammal populations use this corridor as effectively as birds, if at all. Mule deer, for example, do not occur within Bonelli Park but are common in the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente Hills. However, some mammals which tolerate urban environments; such as Virginia opossum, raccoon, and striped skunk, use the corridor in the manner described. Even mountain lions periodically enter Bonelli Park and Walnut Creek Park from the outside by way of routes related to SEA components.

The manner in which the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA allows wildlife populations in different areas to interact is less than ideal. However, exchange in the manner described above is dictated by the widespread urbanization of the region; it is the only remaining way regional interaction can occur and contribute to the maintenance of genetic variability and health of regional wildlife populations.

## **8. SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Sensitive biological resources are habitats or individual species that have been given special recognition by federal, state, or local conservation agencies and organizations as endangered, threatened, rare, or otherwise sensitive. This is principally due to the species' declining or limited population sizes, usually resulting from habitat loss. Watch lists of such resources are maintained by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and special groups such as the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). The following sections indicate the habitats as well as plant and animal species present, or potentially present within the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA, that have been afforded special recognition.

### **8.1 SENSITIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES/HABITATS**

The proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA supports several habitat types considered sensitive by resource agencies, namely the CDFG, due to scarcity and serving as habitat for a number of state and federally listed endangered, threatened, and rare vascular plants, bird and reptile species. Vegetation communities include: **oak riparian woodland, walnut woodland, southern willow scrub, coastal sage scrub, and freshwater marsh** which occur throughout the study area. These

communities, or closely related designations, are considered highest-inventory priority by the CDFG, indicating that they are experiencing a decline throughout their range. The distribution and floral composition of these communities is discussed above.

## **8.2 SENSITIVE SPECIES**

Sensitive species include those listed, or candidates for listing by the USFWS, CDFG, and CNPS (particularly List 1A, 1B, and 2 as defined in the Sensitive Species Table). The Sensitive Species Table on page 12 lists those species which have been recorded within the proposed SEA as well as those reasonable expected to occur. The table includes locations of sensitive species observed, recorded in the CNDDDB, or reported in previous documentation as observed within or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed SEA. Additional species, such as native oak or sycamore trees, may be protected under local ordinances but are not included in this table.

**SENSITIVE SPECIES  
OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING  
WITHIN THE PROPOSED EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SEA**

**VASCULAR PLANTS**

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Agency Listing Status</u>	<u>CNPS Listing Status</u>	<u>Preferred Habitat</u>	<u>Location</u>
<b>ANGIOSPERMS (Dicotyledons)</b>					
<b>Asteraceae</b>	<b>Sunflower Family</b>				
<i>Senecio aphanactis</i>	rayless ragwort		2	Cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, drying alkaline flats.	Puddingstone Dam (1932)
<b>Boraginaceae</b>	<b>Borage Family</b>				
<i>Harpagonella palmeri</i>	Palmer's grappling hook	FSC	2	Sage scrub; clay soils; below 2,500 ft.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Crassulaceae</b>	<b>Stonecrop Family</b>				
<i>Dudleya multicaulis</i>	many-stemmed dudleya	FSC	1B	California plant communities including sage scrub, valley and foothill grassland; heavy clay soils or rock outcrops; below 2,000 ft..	Bonelli Regional Co. Park (1987 and 1982); recorded on Way Hill (1987)
<b>Fabaceae</b>	<b>Legume Family</b>				
<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i>	Braunton's milk-vetch	FE	1B	Sage scrub, chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, closed cone coniferous forest; limestone endemic, carbonate soils, recent burns and disturbed areas.	Potential where habitat occurs

**Legend**

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		CSC	California Special Concern Species
		1A	Presumed extinct in California.
		1B	Rare, threatened, or endangered throughout their range.
		2	Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common in other states.
		3	Plant species for which additional information is needed before rarity can be determined.
		4	Species of limited distribution in California (i.e., naturally rare in the wild), but whose existence does not appear to be susceptible to threat.

**SENSITIVE SPECIES  
OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING  
WITHIN THE PROPOSED EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SEA  
(CONTINUED)**

<b>VASCULAR PLANTS</b>		<b>Agency Listing Status</b>	<b>CNPS Listing Status</b>	<b>Preferred Habitat</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>				
<b>Juglandaceae</b>		<b>Walnut Family</b>			
<i>Juglans californica</i> var. <i>californica</i>	Southern California black walnut		4	Sage scrub, chaparral, cismontane woodland; often in association with oaks/oak woodland; frequently found on steep hillsides with northern exposures; deep alluvial soils.	Base of San Gabriel foothills, Los Pinetos Springs (1999)
<b>Scrophulariaceae</b>		<b>Figwort Family</b>			
<i>Fremontodendron mexicanum</i>	Mexican flannelbrush	FE, SR	1B	Closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, creeks or dry canyons, gabbro soils.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>ANGIOSPERMS (Monocotyledons)</b>					
<b>Liliaceae</b>		<b>Lily Family</b>			
<i>Brodiaea filifolia</i>	thread-leaved brodiaea	FT, SE	1B	Sage scrub, valley/foothill grassland, cismontane woodland; vernal pools (clay soils).	Potential where habitat occurs

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OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING  
WITHIN THE PROPOSED EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SEA  
(CONTINUED)**

<b>VASCULAR PLANTS</b>		<b>Agency Listing Status</b>	<b>CNPS Listing Status</b>	<b>Preferred Habitat</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>				
<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily		4	Openings in chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, cismontane woodland; heavy soils.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Calochortus plummerae</i>	Plummer's mariposa lily	FSC	1B	Sage scrub, valley and foothill grassland, yellow pine forest; dry, rocky or sandy sites, granitic or alluvial soil; to 4,800 feet.	Live Oak Cyn., Claremont (1928); along Mills Ave, Claremont (1937)
<i>Calochortus weedii</i> var. <i>intermedius</i>	intermediate mariposa lily	FSC	1B	Chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grasslands.	Elephant Hill (1991); on summit of hill near Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (1927)

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**SENSITIVE SPECIES  
OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING  
WITHIN THE PROPOSED EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SEA  
(CONTINUED)**

<b>VERTEBRATES</b>				
<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Agency Listing Status</u>	<u>Preferred Habitat</u>	<u>Location</u>
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>				
<b>Pelobatidae</b>		<b>Spadefoot Toad Family</b>		
<i>Scaphiopus hammondi</i>	western spadefoot	FSC, CSC, SP	Prefers relatively open areas in lowland grasslands, chaparral, and pine-oak woodlands, areas of sandy or gravelly soil in alluvial fans, washes, and floodplains.	Workman Hill in Puente Hills (1998); Puente Hills (1998)
<b>REPTILES</b>				
<b>Emydidae</b>		<b>Box and Water Turtle Family</b>		
<i>Clemmys marmorata pallida</i>	southwestern pond turtle	FSC, CSC, SFP	Ponds, marshes, rivers, streams, irrigation ditches.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Iguanidae</b>		<b>Iguanid Lizard Family</b>		
<i>Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei</i>	San Diego coast horned lizard	FSC, CSC, SP	Valley-foothill hardwood, conifer, and riparian habitats, pine-cypress, juniper and annual grassland habitats below 6,000 feet, open country, especially sandy areas, washes, flood plains, and windblown deposits.	NW corner of Bonelli Regional Co. Park (1996)
<b>Teiidae</b>		<b>Whiptail Lizard Family</b>		
<i>Anniella pulchra pulchra</i>	silvery legless lizard	CSC	Several habitats but especially in coastal dune, valley-foothill, chaparral, and coastal scrub habitats.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Cnemidophorus tigris multiscutatus</i>	coastal western whiptail	FSC	Arid and semi-arid desert to open woodlands, where vegetation is sparse.	Potential where habitat occurs

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(CONTINUED)**

<b>VERTEBRATES</b>				
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Agency Listing Status</b>	<b>Preferred Habitat</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Viperiidae</b>		<b>Viper Snake Family</b>		
<i>Crotalus ruber ruber</i>	northern red-diamond rattlesnake	FSC, CSC	Chaparral, woodland, and arid desert habitats in rocky areas with dense vegetation.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Pelecanidae</b>		<b>Pelican Family</b>		
<i>Pelecanus occidentalis californicus</i>	California brown pelican	FE, SE, SFP	Coastal, salt bays, ocean, and beaches.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Phalacrocoracidae</b>		<b>Cormorant Family</b>		
<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	double-crested cormorant	CSC	Coasts, bays, lakes, and rivers.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Accipitridae</b>		<b>Hawks, Kites, Harriers and Eagle Family</b>		
<i>Accipiter cooperi</i>	Cooper's hawk	CSC	Open woodlands especially riparian woodland.	Active nest observed in Bonelli park (1991); Bonelli Park (1994)
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	northern goshawk	CSC	Prefers middle and higher elevations and mature, dense coniferous forests.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	sharp-shinned hawk	CSC	Woodlands; forages over chaparral and other scrublands; prefers riparian habitats and north-facing slopes, with plucking perch sites.	Audubon Society record in Bonelli Park
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	golden eagle	CSC, SFP	Mountains, deserts, and open country; prefer to forage over grasslands, deserts, savannahs and early successional stages of forest and shrub habitats.	In vicinity of Bonelli Park

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OCCURRING OR POTENTIALLY OCCURRING  
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(CONTINUED)**

**VERTEBRATES**

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Agency Listing Status</u>	<u>Preferred Habitat</u>	<u>Location</u>
<i>Buteo regalis</i>	ferruginous hawk	CSC	Rivers, lakes, and coasts; open tracts of sparse shrubs and grasslands, and agricultural areas during winter.	Documented in winter at Bonelli Park
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	northern harrier	CSC	Coastal salt marshes, freshwater marshes, grasslands, and agricultural fields; occasionally forages over open desert and brushlands.	Bonelli Park
<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	white-tailed kite	SFP	Grasslands with scattered trees, near marshes, along highways.	Historically documented in Bonelli Regional Co. Park
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	bald eagle	FT, FPD, CSC, SE	Lakes, reservoirs, rivers, offshore islands, and some rangelands and coastal wetlands in southern California.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	osprey	CSC	Rivers, lakes, and coasts, mixed conifer.	Bonelli Park (1994)
<b>Falconidae</b>	<b>Falcon Family</b>			
<i>Falco columbarius</i>	merlin	CSC	Coastlines, wetlands, woodlands, agricultural fields, and grasslands.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	prairie falcon	CSC	Grasslands, savannahs, rangeland, agricultural fields, and desert scrub; often uses sheltered cliff ledges for cover.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Laridae</b>	<b>Gulls and Tern Family</b>			
<i>Larus californicus</i>	California gull	CSC	Seacoasts, lakes, farms, and urban centers.	Potential where habitat occurs

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<u>VERTEBRATES</u>				
<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Agency Listing Status</u>	<u>Preferred Habitat</u>	<u>Location</u>
<b>Strigidae</b>	<b>True Owl Family</b>			
<i>Asio flammeus</i>	short-eared owl	CSC	Prairies, marshes (fresh and salt) dunes, tundra.	Historic records in Bonelli Park, fairly common in winter
<i>Asio otus</i>	long-eared owl	CSC	Riparian and live oak woodlands.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	burrowing owl	FSC, CSC	Dry grasslands, desert habitats, and open pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine woodlands below 5,300 feet elevation. Prefers berms, ditches, and grasslands adjacent to rivers, agricultural, and scrub areas.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Apodidae</b>	<b>Swift Family</b>			
<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	Vaux's swift	CSC	Redwood and douglas fir habitats.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Tyrannidae</b>	<b>Tyrant Flycatcher Family</b>			
<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	willow flycatcher	SE	Wet meadow and montane riparian habitats, river valleys and large mtn. meadows.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	southwestern willow flycatcher	FE	<u>Low elevational sites</u> : Riparian woodlands that contain water and low growing willow thickets. <u>High elevational sites</u> : Large, flat, wet meadows that contain patches of willow trees.	Potential where habitat occurs

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(CONTINUED)**

<b>VERTEBRATES</b>				
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<b>Alaudidae Lark Family</b>				
<i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i>	California horned lark	CSC	Open habitats, grasslands along the coast, deserts near sea level to alpine dwarf shrub habitat, uncommonly in coniferous and chaparral habitats.	Historical sightings in Bonelli Park
<b>Troglodytidae Wren Family</b>				
<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus couesi</i>	coastal cactus wren	CSC	Coastal sage scrub, vegetation with thickets of prickly pear or cholla cactus.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Muscicapidae Kinglets, Gnatcatchers, Thrushes, and Babbler Family</b>				
<i>Polioptila californica californica</i>	California gnatcatcher	FT, CSC	Coastal sage scrub vegetation below 2,500 feet elevation in Riverside County and generally below 1,000 feet elevation along the coastal slope; generally avoids steep slopes and dense vegetation for nesting.	NW corner of Bonelli Park, at or near Puddingstone Reservoir (1996)
<b>Laniidae Shrike Family</b>				
<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	loggerhead shrike	FSC, CSC	Open habitats with scattered shrubs, trees, posts, fences, utility lines, or other perches.	Bonelli Park, in buckwheat scrub near reservoir

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(CONTINUED)**

<b>VERTEBRATES</b>				
<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Agency Listing Status</u>	<u>Preferred Habitat</u>	<u>Location</u>
<b>Vireonidae</b>		<b>Vireo Family</b>		
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	least Bell's vireo	FE, SE	Perennial and intermittent streams with low, dense riparian scrub and riparian woodland habitats below 2,000 feet elevation; nests primarily in willows and forages in the riparian and occasionally in adjoining upland habitats. Associated with willow, cottonwood, and mule fat.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Emberizidae</b>		<b>Wood Warblers, Tanagers, Buntings, and Blackbird Family</b>		
<i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i>	Southern California (ashy) rufous-crowned sparrow	FSC, CSC	Generally, steep, rocky areas within coastal sage scrub and chaparral, often with scattered bunches of grass; prefers relatively recently burned areas.	Bonelli Park (1994)
<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i>	yellow warbler	CSC	Riparian woodlands, montane chaparral, and mixed conifer habitats.	Potential where habitat occurs
<i>Icteria virens</i>	yellow-breasted chat	CSC	Riparian woodlands with a thick understory.	Bonelli Park (1994)
<b>Vespertilionidae</b>		<b>Evening Bat Family</b>		
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	pallid bat	CSC	Nests in dry, rocky habitats/caves, crevices in rocks, arid habitats including deserts, chaparral, and scrublands.	Potential where habitat occurs

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**VERTEBRATES**

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<b>Molossidae</b>		<b>Free-Tailed Bat Family</b>		
<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	western mastiff bat	FSC, CSC	Primarily arid lowlands, especially deserts. Open, semiarid to arid habitats including conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, annual and perennial grasslands, palm oases, chaparral, desert scrub, and urban.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Leporidae</b>		<b>Hares and Rabbit Family</b>		
<i>Lepus californicus bennettii</i>	San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit	FSC, CSC	Open brushlands and scrub habitats between sea level and 4,000 feet elevation.	Bonelli Park (1992)
<b>Heteromyidae</b>		<b>Pocket Mice and Kangaroo Rat Family</b>		
<i>Perognathus longimembris brevinasus</i>	Los Angeles pocket mouse	FSC, CSC	Coastal sage scrub, and grasslands, desert cactus, creosote bush and sagebrush habitats.	Potential where habitat occurs
<b>Muridae</b>		<b>Mice, Rats, and Vole Family</b>		
<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i>	San Diego desert woodrat	FSC, CSC	Chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and pinyon-juniper woodland.	Potential where habitat occurs

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## 9. REGIONAL BIOLOGICAL VALUE

The proposed Santa Monica Mountains SEA meets several SEA designation criteria and supports many regional biological values. Each criterion and how it is met is described below.

*Criterion A: The Habitat of Core Populations of Endangered or Threatened Plant or Animal Species.*

This SEA contains habitat which supports a core population (and the only known population) of the federally threatened California gnatcatcher, in the eastern San Gabriel Valley. This population has been recently observed in coastal sage scrub at two locations in the area, Bonelli Park and Buzzard Peak. At both locations surveys over multiple years indicate that this population has been increasing in numbers. Currently, it is believed that there are between ten and fifteen pairs of gnatcatchers in this population.

*Criterion B: On a Regional Basis, Biotic Communities, Vegetative Associations, and Habitat of Plant or Animal Species that are either Unique or are Restricted in Distribution.*

Several plant communities within this SEA are CDFG highest inventory priority communities due to their restricted distribution in the Southern California region. These communities include: oak woodland and walnut woodland which are scattered throughout the components of this SEA; oak riparian woodland which is best expressed within the Walnut Creek drainage; isolated stands of willow woodland along many of the drainages in the Bonelli/Walnut Creek Parks and Buzzard Peak components; freshwater marsh and open water found primarily in association with Puddingstone Reservoir; and coastal sage scrub, which also serves as the habitat for the California gnatcatcher, found in scattered patches over hillsides within the South Hills, Bonelli/Walnut Parks, Via Verde and Buzzard Peak components.

*Criterion C: Within Los Angeles County, Biotic Communities, Vegetative Associations, and Habitat of Plant or Animal Species that are either Unique or are Restricted in Distribution.*

All of the plant communities and habitats indicated above as restricted in distribution on a regional basis, are also restricted in distribution within Los Angeles County.



*Criterion D: Habitat that at some point in the Life Cycle of a Species or Group of Species, Serves as Concentrated Breeding, Feeding, Resting, or Migrating Grounds and is Limited in Availability either Regionally or in Los Angeles County.*

Any relatively large body of water with pockets of natural lakeside vegetation along its shoreline potentially meets this criteria, particularly within the context of an arid to semiarid environment, characteristic of Los Angeles County. Although subjected to boating activities and shoreline recreational use, Puddingstone Reservoir serves as an important habitat for migrating water fowl and water birds, evident in the high diversity of birds recorded at the park over the past several years.

*Criterion E: Biotic Resources that are of Scientific Interest because they are either an Extreme in Physical/Geographical Limitations, or Represent Unusual Variation in a Population or Community.*

The SEA does not contain biotic resource that are clearly an extreme in physical/geographical limitations, or represent unusual variation in a population or community and therefore does not meet this criterion.

*Criterion F: Areas that would Provide for the Preservation of Relatively Undisturbed Examples of the Original Natural Biotic Communities in Los Angeles County.*

The proposed SEA does not contain areas that would provide for the preservation of relatively undisturbed examples of the original natural biotic communities in Los Angeles County.

In conclusion, the area described in this report is proposed to be an SEA because it contains: 1) the habitat of core populations of endangered and threatened plant and animal species; 2) biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitat of plant and animal species that are either unique or are restricted in distribution in Los Angeles County, or regionally; and 3) concentrated breeding, feeding, resting, or migrating grounds which are limited in availability in Los Angeles County.

## **10. RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

Proposed new development within the proposed Puente Hills SEA should be designed to be highly compatible with the continued ecological function of the component biological resources described above; retention of existing natural biotic resources should be ensured. Although a comprehensive evaluation of all possible future land uses within this SEA cannot be made here, a general approach is outlined below and is recommended for use on a project specific basis. In order

to preserve the integrity of the SEA, the proposed comprehensive management practices described in the *Los Angeles County SEA Update Study 2000 Background Report* are recommended. These practices address:

- Core habitat
- Habitat linkages and wildlife corridors
- Fire management
- Public access and recreation
- Infrastructure
- Wetlands, riparian habitats, and streambeds
- Non-riparian/upland woodlands

In addition to the comprehensive management practices the following proposed management practices are recommended specifically for the proposed East San Gabriel Valley SEA:

- Limit development densities to one residential unit per ten acre parcel, and constrain development design, where feasible, to cluster dwelling configuration along existing roadways in order to minimize clearing associated with fuel management, and to reduce the need for grading, fencing, and other habitat disturbances.
- Maintain the habitat of core populations of listed species including the federally threatened California gnatcatcher.
- Retain rare communities with adequate buffers so as to allow for the long term viability and integrity of plant communities as a whole. Rare communities include: oak woodland, oak riparian forest, walnut woodland, willow woodland, and coastal sage scrub.
- Retain connectivity and linkage values through this SEA as an island hopping linkage between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente Hills. Maintain lines of sight between components at or near their existing borders. To the greatest extent possible, existing distances between the components should be maintained rather than increase through intense uses at their perimeters.

Additionally, proposed development should be reviewed when required by federal, state, or local laws before implementing plans which may impact biotic resources and/or sensitive species. Potential impacts to listed species or wetland areas require permitting in accordance with applicable laws.

## 11. SOURCES

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