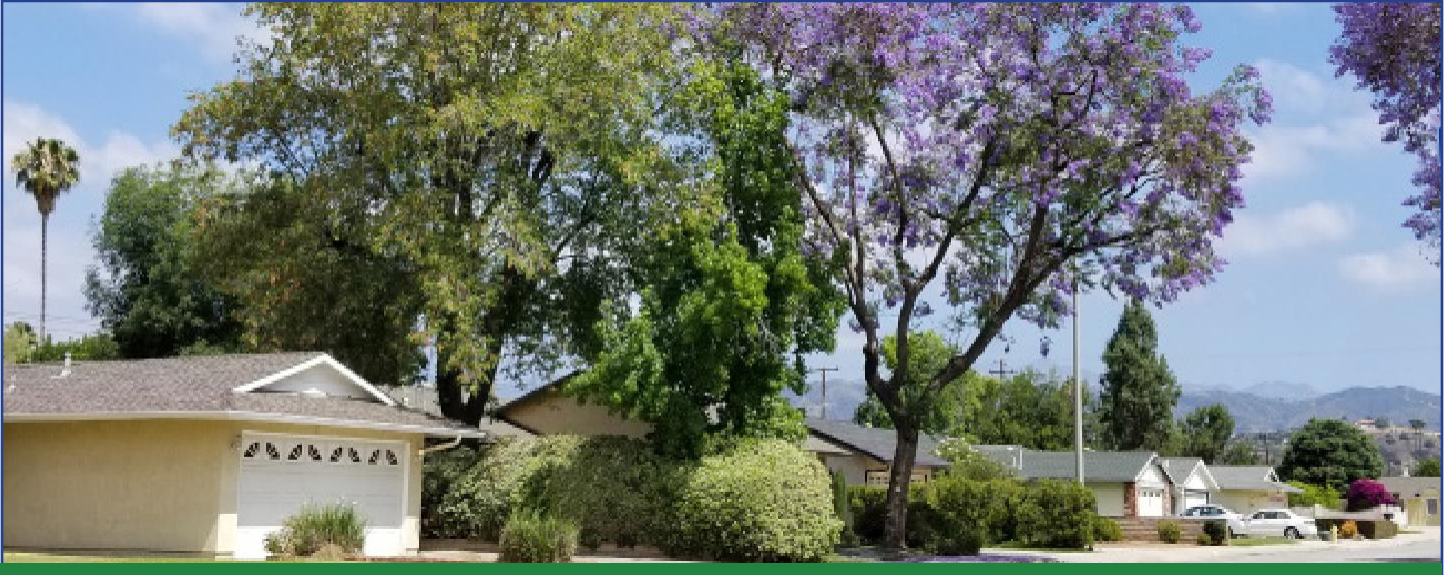




East San Gabriel Valley Area Plan: Draft Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Summary



1. VISION

Protect and preserve the diversity of native habitats across jurisdictions for the benefit of all species, enhance species biodiversity, ensure equitable access to open space, support acquisition of biologically sensitive lands, protect the scenic qualities of hillsides and ridgelines, and direct development away from biologically rich lands and hazard areas.

2. EXISTING RESOURCES

Significant Ecological Areas (SEA)

In Los Angeles County, lands that contains irreplaceable biological resources are designated as SEA. Much of the land in SEAs is privately-held, used for public recreation, or abuts developed areas. Any development or use of privately-owned land or recreational open space must ensure that the ecological function of the SEA is maintained. The ESGV contains 4 designated SEA areas in different parts of the planning region: East San Gabriel Valley SEA; Puente Hills SEA; San Dimas Canyon and San Antonio Wash SEA; and San Gabriel Canyon SEA.



For more information, please visit: planning.lacounty.gov/ESGVAP

Habitat Linkages and Wildlife Corridors

Habitat linkages and wildlife corridors are important resources to ensure a high level of regional biodiversity, species movement, and connectivity that facilitate movement of species between two or more larger areas of habitat. The SEAs contain wildlife corridors and habitat linkages, however they also extend beyond the SEAs onto privately-owned properties. The Puente Hills serve as an important regional habitat linkage connecting to the Chino Hills State Park.

Threatened Habitat Areas and Wildlife

The ESGV features riparian habitats, wetlands, and streambeds. Wetlands provide ecological services and contribute to water quality and the overall health of watersheds. They slow water flow, decrease erosion, filter water runoff, and provide habitat for many endangered plant and animal species. It is estimated that the San Gabriel Valley has lost 86% of its historical wetlands.

The ESGV's woodlands are an important resource that provide an abundance of aesthetic, ecological, and economic benefits to residents. Various types of woodlands are found in the ESGV, including riparian woodlands, California walnut woodlands, and oak woodlands. Walnut woodlands are one of the rarest and some of the most endangered plant communities in Southern California.

As little as 10 to 15% of California's original chaparral/coastal sage scrub has survived from its historic levels. One recent study called coastal sage scrub the single most endangered habitat type in the United States, this is largely due to residential development. The Coastal California Gnatcatcher, which is listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act, is found in this plant community with populations existing within SEAs and areas around the SEAs.

3. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Preserving Biotic Diversity

Development continues to be the main cause of species decline in the Southern California region, where approximately 20 percent of the species on the federal Endangered Species list are found. In Southern California, over 400 species of plants and animals are considered endangered, threatened, or sensitive by government agencies and conservation groups. With the increased threat of climate change and development pressures, greater efforts for preservation of biological resources and SEA lands need to be supported.

Habitat Fragmentation and Connectivity

Habitat loss and fragmentation are the leading threats to biodiversity. Roads and development are major obstacles to wildlife movement, encroach into and fragment their habitat areas. There is a need to reduce the impacts of transportation barriers and reconnect larger habitat areas to facilitate species movement for long-term sustainability of the populations.

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Major wildlife corridors in the area, such as the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor should be preserved and protected. There is a further need to expand connectivity for wildlife movement to support the health of native species. This region presents a preservation opportunity as it has some of the largest remaining undeveloped land with significant biological resources in the urban and suburban County areas.

Watershed Impacts and Land Use

Rivers, streams, habitats, wildlife, and people can be adversely affected by poorly designed land uses within a watershed. With urbanization comes impervious surfaces, the straightening and channelizing of water courses, the filling of wetlands, intrusion into flood plains, the loss of vegetation, heat island effects, compacted soils, increased and polluted runoff, eroded streams, and the impairment of surface and groundwaters. This is particularly relevant in the ESGV as water flow from the mountains to the valley in the San Gabriel Watershed provides water storage, infiltration, and drinking water.

Protection of Scenic Resources

In the absence of adequate land use controls, many scenic resources have been lost or degraded by development and sprawl. The Planning Area contains scenic ridgelines, which also function as wildlife corridors. A ridgeline protection and preservation program should be extended through the Planning Area with ridgelines within the County jurisdiction identified in the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills for inclusion in an areawide ridgeline protection program.

4 . RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand Preserved Open Space

The provision of open spaces can be expanded through the acquisition of land that protects biologically sensitive resources, facilitates access to open space areas for recreation and well-being across diverse communities, supports ecosystem services, provides habitat, and increases biodiversity.

Preserve Biologically Sensitive Lands

The County can coordinate with conservation organizations to preserve, protect, restore and buffer biologically sensitive lands from development for the benefit of all species. Develop and implement strategies and programs to enhance preservation and protection of priority ecological sites, supporting sites, and priority species (including, but not limited to SEAs, habitat connections, terrestrial streams, wetlands, and aquatic habitats).

Protect Wildlife Corridors and Linkages

Create, support and protect an established network of dedicated open space areas that provide regional connectivity from the Puente Hills to the Chino Hills. Preserve and protect Sycamore, Brea, Turnbull, Powder, and Tonner Canyons. The high preservation value of these canyons is noted for the rare habitat existing in a largely natural state and for the need to preserve wildlife connectivity to Chino Hills State Park.

Enhance Local Waterways

Local waterways are developed and maintained to mimic the hydrologic cycle, provide ecosystem services, and support

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locally indigenous native and migratory species. Establish management guidelines for local waterways, which balance priorities such as water management, flood risk mitigation, habitat, biodiversity, and community preference.

Protect Scenic Resources

Visual and scenic resources, including but not limited to significant ridgelines, scenic hillsides, riparian corridors, scenic highways and corridors, scenic viewsheds and vistas, natural landforms, and scenic routes along rivers and waterways, among other scenic features in the landscape, should be protected and preserved. Develop and implement regulations for