

Information Packet

Purchase and preservation of open space for community by
Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

Crescenta Valley Town Council Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 22, 2011
7 p.m.

Prepared by the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

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Introduction

The Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (AFC), a local environmental nonprofit, is seeking to preserve and steward a 7.75-acre parcel of wilderness land at the top of Rosemont Avenue, in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Acquiring the “Top of Rosemont” would secure the mouth of Goss Canyon, preventing the 7.75 acres from being developed and ensuring habitat for wildlife. AFC would also work with property owners and other stakeholders, including the Crescenta Valley Town Council, to determine how best to provide public access to the land.

To fund the acquisition, AFC is seeking support from community members, foundations, and government agencies, including Los Angeles County.

AFC plans to present the project to the Crescenta Valley Town Council at its meeting at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 22, to introduce the “Top of Rosemont” project to the council and the community. If the council agrees that preserving this land would be desirable for the community, AFC requests that the council send a letter of support to the office of Supervisor Michael Antonovich.

About the “Top of Rosemont” Property: Habitat and Wildlife

The land AFC seeks to acquire is a 7.75-acre parcel of natural open space at the northern terminus of Rosemont Avenue. The property is situated in the mouth of Goss Canyon, a 250-acre area that’s mostly privately owned. The property is bordered by undeveloped mountainous terrain to the north, a utility access road to the west, and residential development to the south. The upper slopes on either side of the property are covered with chaparral, the lower slopes with oak woodland. A stream runs through the property.

The southern half of the property contains thick sediment deposits from a flowing stream, along with a well-developed seasonal wash that supports a habitat made up primarily of sage scrub, interspersed with isolated western sycamores trees (*Platanus racemosa*) and California walnut trees (*Juglans californica*). Oak woodland can also be found near the residences along the southern edge of the parcel. Some of the woodland was burned in the 2009 Station Fire, but is already recovering.

AFC has completed a preliminary biological survey that identified the following plant life on the property: Our lord’s candle (*Hesperoyucca brevifolia*), Laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Western ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachys*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), Mulefat (*Baccharis*), Scale broom (*Lepidospartum squamatum*), Field mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), California croton (*Croton californicus*), Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), White sage (*Salvia apiana*), California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

While AFC has yet to complete a wildlife survey, a preliminary survey of birds indicated that bird life thrives on the property. The survey identified 31 species of birds in the canyon, including the California Quail (*Callipepla californica*), Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*),

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*), House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*), Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), California Thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*), Western Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), and Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*). The survey also identified five species of hummingbird.

AFC plans to carry out a thorough biological study once the property has been secured. Combined with a land management plan, that study would guide future efforts to restore habitat on the property.

Benefit to the Community

La Crescenta is deficient when it comes to open space: the 8-acre Two-Strike Park, only a few blocks south of the Top of Rosemont property, currently represents the community's only public green space.

If made available to the public, the Top of Rosemont would provide 7.75 acres of wild open space. There is a short trail on the property that would be suitable for hikers, bird-watchers, or joggers. A locked gate currently blocks access to the parcel.

To determine how best to provide public access, AFC would work with nearby property owners and other stakeholders, including the council, in a deliberate, transparent process.

This acquisition is independent of the project to develop the La Crescenta Community Trail.

Financial Terms and Fundraising

The total project cost is \$450,000. That includes the cost of the land, costs related to land acquisition, a biological survey, a management plan, habitat restoration and other land stewardship costs, among other things. The property was professionally appraised at \$550,000 in June, 2011.

AFC has the right to purchase the property until 12/30/2011, with an option to extend that time to 4/30/12 by paying \$20,000. If AFC has not acquired the property by 4/30/12, the landowner has indicated that he would market it to land developers.

AFC plans to fund the \$450,000 project budget with support from government agencies, foundations, and members of the local community. One of the agencies from which AFC has requested funding is the County of Los Angeles. Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich has indicated that his office may be interested in helping to fund the project if the Crescenta Valley Town Council affirms the acquisition as a high priority for the community.

If it were to help fund the project, the county would likely do so with the Proposition 'A' bond measure, which provides for the preservation of rural open space and the development of public parks.

About the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

The Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (AFC) preserves wild lands along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, from the western Verdugo Mountains in the west to Eaton Canyon in the east. AFC brings people to those lands by restoring trails, leading hikes, and conducting education projects.

In recent years, AFC has developed a plan for a 25-mile trail system known as the Emerald Horseshoe, preserved the bulk of Rubio Canyon in Altadena, and launched extensive projects to restore habitat and trails in Rubio Canyon.

AFC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

“Top of Rosemont” Map (Acquisition parcel outlined in green)



“Top of Rosemont” Map: Community Context (Acquisition parcel outlined in green)

