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SAN GABRIEL RIVER  
DISCOVERY CENTER AUTH.

Ms. Valerie Shatynski  
San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority  
100 North Old San Gabriel Canyon Road  
Azusa, CA 91702

San Gabriel River Discovery Center  
Draft Environmental Impact Report  
SCH No. 2006081154

Dear Ms. Shatynski:

I have been asked by the Docent-Naturalists of the Whittier Narrows Natural Area to send to you the attached letter addressed to SEATAC dated October 29, 2007.

Please enter the letter with its attachments A-D into the record for the San Gabriel River Discovery Center project. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jack L. Bath, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus  
Biological Sciences Department  
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona  
Pomona, CA 91768

Attached letter to SEATAC + attachments

Naturalists of the Whittier Narrows Natural Area  
c/o P.O. Box 3522  
South El Monte, CA 91733-0522

October 29, 2007

Significant Ecological Area  
Technical Advisory Committee  
Department of Regional Planning  
Hall of Records, Room 1385  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Biological Analysis for the  
Proposed "San Gabriel River  
Discovery Center" in the  
Whittier Narrows Natural Area

Dear Committee Members:

We, the undersigned Naturalists serving at the Whittier Narrows Natural Area, are grateful to have this opportunity to call to your attention an important issue about the proposed San Gabriel River Discovery Center ("Discovery Center") at the Whittier Narrows Nature Area ("Natural Area"). In our collective opinions, the Mountain Lion (Puma concolor) utilizes and intermittently migrates through the Natural Area.

Mountain Lion Sightings/Signs

A mountain lion sighting, and tracks of two mountain lions, have been observed by a visitor to the Whittier Narrows Natural Area. Tracks were first sighted on October 11, 2005, about 150 feet from the current parking lot, in the area of the proposed Discovery Center parking lot. The tracks were seen by docents Grace Allen, Socorro Barajas, and Leatha Malcom. These tracks were photographed by Socorro Barajas (see Attachment "A"). The tracks were 4 1/4" wide. Staff of Whittier Narrows Nature Center, Mickey Long, and representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California State Fish and Game, and the Mountain Lion Foundation were informed of the sighting. The following day, Grace Allen found tracks (over 2" wide) of a young cat in the same area. A couple of days later, Grace Allen, Eileen O'Hern and Jean Casselman found tracks and scat (larger than a coyote's, and hard-packed with fur). Pictures of the scat were taken; pictures and skat were given to the Nature Center staff.

On the following Friday night (October 14, 2005), after 2 a.m., Nature Center volunteer naturalist Dallas Malcolm and a FedEx driver both observed a mountain lion with two young cats cross the Peck Road bridge, and go down off from the north end of the bridge into the east end of the Natural Area property.

On Saturday, Nov. 26, 2005, tracks of both a large and a young cat (with tracks the same size as those seen on October 12) were seen. The tracks showed that the cats had been walking side by side, on the road along the Zone 1 Ditch. Claw scratch marks have been seen frequently in the general area to this date. For example, see Attachments "B" and "C", pictures that were taken October 4, 2007. It should be noted that in picture "B", the shoe in the picture was 4" wide x 11" long.

During the winter of 2005/2006 Nature Center staff discovered a large dead dog, partly eaten and cached under trash, in the equestrian area (across the San Gabriel River from the Nature Center). Mountain lions are known to conceal their prey with brush or other matter. Approximately three years ago, frequent visitor Lou Orr reported to staff

that he had seen the carcass of a partially-eaten deer in the raptor area between Siphon Road and Rosemead Blvd.

On December 28, 2005, an article appeared in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune about mountain lion sightings in the Whittier Narrows area. See copy of the article's text Attachment "D".

June 18, 2006 at 11 a.m., a mountain lion was observed by visitors (an experienced hunter and his two teen-age sons) to the Natural Area in a tree eating an unknown small prey. This sighting was reported to Grace Allen and Edward Barajas who in turn reported it to Nature Center staff.

#### Thoughts on the Discovery Center's Impacts on Predators

Not only is vegetative cover needed for the mountain lion's migration but also to provide habitat for its prey and other Natural Area animals. Approximately 36 acres of ground cover will be destroyed for the Discovery Center building and its related parking, outdoor classrooms, maintenance building, wetlands areas, and future projects identified in the Schematic Design.

The creation of the false-bottomed wetlands area and the proposed future "Lario Creek" (approximately one-mile long) will function as substantial water barriers to block and/or interfere with the migration of the lion and other animals.

The projected 150,000+ visitors per year to the center (tripling the current 50,000 per year; parking lot will increase from 30 to 150 spaces), will also have an adverse impact on the wildlife migration, especially that of large predators. Evening meetings, which are planned for the Discovery Center, will also create noise and light-from cars and people, at a time of day when predators are active. Safety is another issue that must be addressed. The mountain lions may continue to migrate through the Natural Area, thus creating a dangerous situation for users, especially at night.


The Whittier Narrows Significant Ecological Area is an essential link between the Puente/Chino Hills, the Montebello Hills, and the San Gabriel Mountains National Forest. Much effort has been undertaken over the past 30 years to establish the wildlife corridors from the Cleveland National Forest to the San Gabriel Mountains for the larger predators and their prey. Therefore, any project in this area should be thoroughly studied to ensure that wildlife migration is not negatively impacted.

Considering all of the above, we strongly recommend that your committee require that the status of migrating predators at the Whittier Narrows Natural Area be determined. The determination should include track and scat surveys, and standard remotely triggered camera surveys. We note that camera surveys are particularly suitable due to narrow trail configurations in the natural area. Also, we urge you to determine the potential and accumulative impacts that the Discovery Center including its future projects will have on predator migration.

Please feel free to contact us at our mail box address if we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Grace Allen, Docent Naturalist

  
Jean Casselman, Docent Naturalist

  
Ed Barajas, Docent Naturalist

  
Socorro Barajas, Docent Naturalist

  
Dallas Malcolm, Volunteer Naturalist

  
Eileen O'Hern, Docent Naturalist

cc:

Col. Thomas H. Magness, IV, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, L.A. District  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jim Donovan, National Parks Service, Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance  
Program  
Hilda L. Solis, 32<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
California Dept. of Fish and Game  
Ron Schafer, California State Parks and Recreation, Angeles District  
Senator Grace F. Napolitano, 38<sup>th</sup> District  
Assembly Member Mike Eng, 49<sup>th</sup> District  
Assembly Member Charles Caleron, 58<sup>th</sup> District  
Supervisor Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Russ Guiney, Los Angeles Dept. of Parks and Recreation  
Joan Rupert, Los Angeles Dept. of Parks and Recreation  
Belinda Faustinos, Discovery Center Authority  
Sierra Club, Conservation Committee, Angeles Chapter  
Sierra Club, California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee  
Mike Sappingfield, Chair, Angeles Chapter of Sierra Club  
California Audubon  
National Audubon Society  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Pasadena Audubon Society  
Whittier Area Audubon Society

**A** photographed on Oct. 11, 2005





B photographed on Oct. 4, 2007





C photographed on Oct. 4, 2007



D

Subject: NewsLibrary Document  
Date: Sunday, August 12, 2007 10:06 PM  
From: NewsBank -- service provider for NewsLibrary Archives  
<newslibrary@newsbank.com>  
To: <icterus@verizon.net>  
Conversation: NewsLibrary Document

San Gabriel Valley Tribune (West Covina, CA)  
San Gabriel Valley Tribune (West Covina, CA)

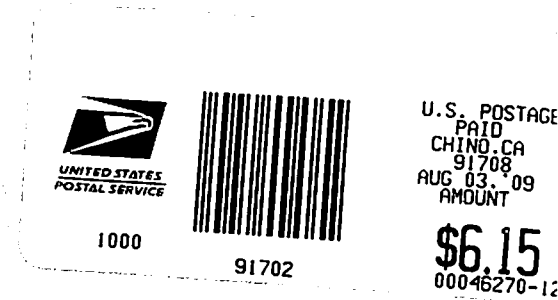
December 28, 2005 Mountain lion seen prowling area

Section: News

Estimated printed pages: 2 Article Text: If she exists at all, she would be deep inside the bamboo groves and dense scrub along the San Gabriel River bed, away from human eyes. A mother mountain lion and at least one cub are reportedly roaming the river bed from the Whittier Narrows Nature Center in South El Monte at least as far south as the gate of the Whittier Narrows Dam in Pico Rivera. The cat was first sighted several months ago by motorists, who apparently came across her late one night on a road near the Nature Center, said Mickey Long, natural areas administrator for Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. Equestrians also report mountain lion tracks and signs of the animal's kills in the sandy banks and trails of the river bed. "We are undecided yet as to whether we have a mountain lion or not," Long said. "Large dogs have not been ruled out." County officials have posted signs in Whittier Narrows warning of possible danger. Long has worked Whittier Narrows since 1971 and has never encountered a mountain lion. "There's never even been a rumor of a mountain lion track," he said. Long said the rumored beast could be a bobcat, although there has never been a bobcat sighting in Whittier Narrows that he can remember. Bobcats are much smaller than mountain lions, but larger than domesticated cats. They have short tails, tufted ears and spotted coats. Their diet is mainly smaller animals, such as birds or rabbits. If a mountain lion is roaming the narrows, it would be a surprise to field biologists like Long. Mountain lions typically don't like to come so close to urban environments, and the game to be had in the river is fairly limited. The place is teeming with rabbits, raccoons, birds and stray dogs, but a mountain lion's preferred meal is deer. Long said deer are few and far between in the narrows. Equestrienne Pat Cravey is convinced a mountain lion and one cub or more have made the narrows its feeding ground and possibly its home. "We've just seen where she's taken her animals, the bones, we've found entrails," Cravey said. But the area is home to packs of stray dogs - some pretty hefty and as capable of killing a rabbit as any mountain lion. The prints could come from a large dog, Long said. One thing Cravey and Long share, though they have never met, is a desire to help the animal. But the first step is finding her - no easy task for a secretive creature with 419 acres to roam. jason.kosareff@sgvn.com



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Chino, CA  
91708



RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED

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