

June 29, 2011

Sediment Management Strategic
Plan Team
Los Angeles County Public Works
900 S. Fremont Ave.
Alhambra, CA 91803

Dear Strategic Plan Team:

I am writing on behalf of the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants (TPF) to oppose the use of natural spaces for debris basin clean-up deposits.

The Payne Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving the flora and natural landscapes of California. Our founder was a British Horticulturist who came to CA in 1893 and fell in love with California wildflowers and native plants. Mr. Payne recognized that our native landscapes were rapidly disappearing and introduced more than 430 native plant species and varieties into the nursery trade by his retirement in 1958. Well into his 90's Mr. Payne spoke passionately about the need for preservation. Our organization has carried on his legacy for more than 50 years.

The Board of the Payne Foundation opposes the destruction of native habitat and urges the Los Angeles County Public Works and Board of Supervisors to seek alternative solutions. The Foundation's non-profit nursery and education center that carry on Mr. Payne's legacy are located in Sun Valley, not far from the proposed La Tuna Canyon Sediment Disposal Basin. Our concern is not only for this site, but for all the natural areas put at risk by the Sediment Management Strategic Plan.

We urge you to minimize destruction of natural areas in the relocation of sediment and instead preserve native habitat to the greatest extent possible. This would include protecting drainage areas and streams, minimizing habitat fragmentation, preserving not only centennial oaks but also a diversity of plant communities, and examining fully and professionally any area proposed as a sediment holding area. The cumulative damage as well as site specific impact must be assessed.

We fully acknowledge the need to protect public safety and property and the challenge that faces the department and the county. The Station Fire was a catastrophic event that left steep hillsides unprotected from heavy rains. The

erosion that followed has brought us to this point. However, we urge you to seek solutions that protect ecologically diverse and valuable open space.

The Sediment Management Strategic Plan Team and County Board of Supervisors are to be cautiously commended for their efforts to seek less destructive means for protecting public safety. The success of this effort is far from certain, but a hopeful beginning has been seen in the strong showing of public support for habitat protection, the formation of a multi-faceted Steering Committee and the re-direction to look upon the sediment as material to be utilized rather than disposed of.

California is a biodiversity hotspot, with as many individual plant species as all of the other continental states combined. From north to south, ocean to desert many endemic species occur, found no where else on the planet. This means that our actions with regard to native landscapes in California require an extra burden of care and that each area is a unique part of a fragile tapestry.

Mr. Payne was a pioneer in recognizing the exceptional beauty and diversity of California native plants and landscapes and the need to preserve them. This appreciation of our natural inheritance is now widely shared and has more urgency than ever due to rapid climate change. California has been a leader in environmental protection, and we urge the Strategic Team and Supervisors to show such leadership now for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely,

Lynnette Kampe
Executive Director
Theodore Payne Foundation
for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

cc: Supervisor Michael Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Councilmember Paul Krekorian