

Michael C. Long  
 6128 No. Reno Ave.  
 Temple City, California 91780

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ENVIRONMENTAL  
 UNIT

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**Comments on Canyon Hills Development DEIR  
 Biological Sections**

The following comments are provided following the review of the biological portions of the Canyon Hills Draft EIR:

**Appendix G (Section 1 and 2) Biological Technical Report:**

Sensitive Biological Resources, Pg. 2:

The Orange-throated Whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*) is well out of range, has never been recorded in Los Angeles County, and should not be expected on the site. The Coastal Western Whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris multiscutatus*) would be the expected *Cnemidophorus* on site (as listed in Table, Pg. 16). Likewise, the "Northern Red-diamond Rattlesnake" (properly spelled Red Diamond, no hyphen) does not occur north of Orange County. These species and other reptiles and amphibians are mapped and described in the several standard references used by biological consultants throughout California, but not cited in the references in the DEIR. These are, at a minimum, Jennings, M.R. and M.P. Hayes 1994, Amphibian and Reptile Species of Special Concern in California, California Department of Fish and Game and Stebbins, R.C. 2003, A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Houghton Mifflin Co.. In addition, work in the Verdugo Mountains should also utilize Schoenherr, A.A. 1976 (1996 reprint), The Herpetofauna of the San Gabriel Mountains, Los Angeles County, California, Southwestern Herpetologists Society. Inclusion of the above species in the focused surveys list and/or expected species list suggests either careless use of range maps, literature or a lack of knowledge of reptile distributions.

9-1

Mitigation p. 4:

The loss of 232 Oaks and 27 sycamores in a natural open space setting is highly significant and is **not** mitigated by plantings in rows or artificial clusters along "entryways", road right-of-ways", "parks and common areas", "detention basins", "flood control", "fuel modification areas", "private lots" and "equestrian trails". These plantings, in and adjacent to heavy disturbance do not replace the full ecosystem support of the wild oaks and their understory. The presumably narrow, strip plantings along entryways, right-of-ways, etc. and vehicle, human recreational and flood control maintenance disturbances in these proposed sites greatly reduces the ecosystem value of the trees. The statement in Significance After Mitigation paragraph, suggesting that planted trees will provide "seed production" to "compensate fully for the loss of mature trees" is **false**. Seedling oaks will not regenerate under planted oaks on artificially manicured and disturbed human-use sites listed. Mitigation for this loss needs to be

9-2

**Comments on Canyon Hills Development DEIR (Cont.) Michael C. Long**

completely reconsidered. How will the native plantings under oaks be protected from adjacent recreational disturbances?	9-2
Pg. 16 Table of Sensitive Species	9-3
“Logger-Head Shrike” should read Loggerhead Shrike.	
Pg. 18: While Cactus Wren was listed in the Table on page 15, it was not mentioned here as a survey species, during surveys for other sensitive Coastal Sage Scrub-obligate avifauna.	9-4
Pg. 19: Again, focused surveys for Orange-throated Whiptail, a species completely out of range here, is foolish.	9-5
Pg. 20: The limitation mentioned of rare plant surveys conducted during a year with about 30% of normal, annual rainfall <u>should require a re-survey in the next Spring season with closer to normal rainfall.</u>	9-6
Pg. 26: Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest: The Jepson Manual, a cited reference, lists no such species as California Buckwheat ( <i>Eriogonum californicum</i> ).	9-7
Pg. 27: Reptiles – Coastal Sage Scrub: Gilbert’s Skink would not be expected at this location nor elevation. It is a mountain or desert species not recorded from the Verdugo Mtns.	9-8
Pg. 28: Birds – Scrub Communities: A number of birds listed as expected to use the site as migrants, during winter, are not found in winter in southern California (Black-chinned Hummingbird) or are more likely year-round resident (Song Sparrow), summer resident (Orange-crowned Warbler) or strictly migrants (spring and fall, i.e. Allen’s Hummingbird, Costa’s Hummingbird, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Ash-throated Flycatcher)	9-9
Woodland and Riparian Communities: The “plain titmouse” was re-named “oak titmouse” and scientific name changed, a number of years ago (American Ornithologists Union).	9-10
The Rufous-crowned Sparrow is a resident species, not migratory as listed. Suggests a weak knowledge of bird distribution by the consultants.	9-11
Pg. 41: <i>Dudleya densiflora</i> actually occurs from “300-520 m” (Jepson Manual), far below the “4000-9300 ft.” stated; but is restricted to the San Gabriel River area and would certainly not be expected in the Verdugo Mountains.	9-12
Pg. 51, Pg. 65: Orange-throated Whiptail is again considered, and while not detected is treated as if “it likely occurs within areas of suitable habitat, which occur in small pockets throughout the study area.” As mentioned above, this species does not occur in Los Angeles County.	9-13

**Comments on Canyon Hills Development DEIR (Cont.) Michael C. Long**

Pg. 52: The Mountain Yellow-legged Frog was listed as Federally Endangered in 2002. Concur that it probably is absent from the Study Area. 9-14

Pg. 65: The Ashy Rufous-crowned Sparrow was recorded at four locations and all mapped sites on the Sensitive Species Location Map are impacted directly by the proposed development grading. The species was apparently not located anywhere else in the open space areas of the property. Thus the statement that "Although some construction will occur in or near areas where this species was observed foraging, sufficient habitat would be preserved on the project site for the small number of birds observed, and, as such, a less than significant impact would occur." is wishful thinking at best or patently false at worst. This resident, non-migratory subspecies is very habitat specific, occurring where there are openings in coastal sage scrub/chaparral, often on rocky slopes with grasses. No mitigation to avoid the direct impact to this species is indicated. 9-15

**Appendix G (Section 9) – Biology**

**Appendix A – Faunal Compendia**

The listing of Speckled Rattlesnake, *Crotalus mitchellii* (misspelled in list), in the Faunal Compendium as "likely to occur on site" is another indication that consultants lack knowledge of reptile distributions. This species is restricted to the Mojave Desert region and mountains and deserts to the south of Los Angeles County. 9-16

The Western Meadowlark is in the Family Icteridae, not Emberizidae as listed. 9-17

The Vascular Flora list, while quite extensive, needs proofreading for spelling errors. At least 10 were noted in Scientific and Common Names. 9-18

The Vegetation Map and site photographs clearly indicates that virtually the entire property and proposed project site is in natural, remarkably undisturbed condition with dense mixed chaparral, coastal sage scrub and oak woodlands. The proposed project would cause significant impact to this large, intact and undeveloped portion of the Verdugo Hills. There is insufficient information that a biological constraints analysis was performed prior to project planning, to avoid impacts to resources. 9-19

6128 No. Reno Avenue  
Temple City, California 91780

Home: (626) 285-8878  
Office: (626) 398-5420  
Fax: (626) 398-5422  
E-mail: mlongbird@earthlink.net

**RESUME**  
of  
**MICHAEL C. LONG**

**OBJECTIVE:**

**WILDLIFE BIOLOGY** - Field surveys; habitat assessment; non-game and endangered species programs; ornithology.  
**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS** - Biological assessments; ornithology; rare plants.  
**ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION - NATURAL AREAS**

**EXPERIENCE:**

1971 to present LOS ANGELES COUNTY NATURAL AREAS AND NATURE CENTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
Eaton Canyon Natural Area Park  
Pasadena, California

**REGIONAL PARK SUPERINTENDENT II (NATURAL AREAS ADMINISTRATOR)**

Since 1971, experience as a County biologist in wildlife management, environmental education and interpretation, floral and faunal surveys. Natural Areas Division operates and maintains the twenty wildlife sanctuaries and nature centers throughout Los Angeles County for the Department of Parks and Recreation. Responsibilities currently involve supervision and operation of all twenty Natural Area Parks, Nature Centers and Wildlife Sanctuaries (total over 6000 acres) with staff of 10 full-time, 40 part-time employees and over 200 active volunteers.

Responsible for:

supervising personnel and operation of all County natural area parks. Monitoring and managing resources, wildlife, and plants on County wildlife sanctuaries and natural areas; enforcing County and State wildlife regulations as authorized County Fish and Game Warden.

performing field work, assessing biological impact, writing, and reviewing floral and faunal surveys for Environmental Impact Reports throughout Los Angeles County for county departments, state and federal agencies.

advising in land-use planning for Department of Parks and Recreation and development of new nature centers, including architecture, interpretive display design and programming.

providing environmental interpretation for the general public, school groups, other organized groups including conducting interpretive lectures, walks, writing brochures and developing natural history displays. Training of volunteer naturalists to conduct programs.

developing, maintaining reference collections of live and preserved plants and animals for public and scientific study.

**Accomplishments:**

brought to Natural Areas and refined comprehensive knowledge of biological sciences and acted as principal botanist, herpetologist and ornithologist for the Nature Centers. Promoted from Recreation Specialist Aid to full-time Natural Areas Supervisor.

conducted many thousands of elementary through college level students on environmental education programs over seven year period, instilling knowledge and understanding of ecological and biological principles.

recruited and trained hundreds of volunteer naturalists at all County Nature Centers from 1975 to present.

Federal and State licensed bird bander, conducting marking and recapture studies, and educational programs on birds at all County Natural Areas and other sites since 1985.

coordinated and compiled the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley, 1985-1991. Currently participating annually.

directly participated in negotiations, planning, implementation and management phases of the creation of 150 acres of wildlife habitat with lakes; result of out-of-court settlement of lawsuit against County; involved negotiations with environmental groups, Army Corps of Engineers, County planners and led to Outstanding Achievement Award for nature center.

attached eight months to U. S. Forest Service, Supervisor's Office, Angeles National Forest to develop plan for first Information/Visitor Center for forest and to evaluate forest interpretive plan. Coordinated with forest engineers, field personnel, landscape architect, outside agencies and resulted in construction, operation of first forest Information/Visitor Center.

conducted, participated in over sixty floral and faunal surveys for E.I.R.'s. Included field survey, lab work, writing and typing of final reports. Surveys ranged from one-day to six months duration. Work substantially increased accuracy and credibility of County E.I.R.'s.

taught classes in bird identification and biology, including 6-week and 8-week sessions, 1980 to present.

received the County Department of Parks and Recreation Use of Volunteers Award, 1990, the Valor Award, 1993, the Director's Award, 1995 and Volunteer Involvement Award, 1998. Received Whittier Audubon Society Conservation Award 1997.

Since an October 1993 fire destroyed the Eaton Canyon Nature Center, coordinated the public awareness, fund-raising campaign and design and build project for the new 7600 sq. ft. Center, completed and opened in November 1998.

#### CONSULTING AND CONTRACT WORK

- Numerous Biological Assessments, Biota Reports for Significant Ecological Areas, Wetlands Delineations, Projects involving Fish and Game Section 1601-1603 and Army Corps 404 Permits, as subcontractor to FHA (Frank Hovore and Associates, Environmental Consulting).

#### Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

- Least Bell's Vireo Surveys for lower Arroyo Seco, for City of Pasadena, Gavilan Rd/Harford Spgs. Park, Riverside Co. Public Works.
- Sensitive bird survey (Least Bell's Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat) Hidden Valley Wildlife Area, City of Riverside.
- Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher survey and monitoring, Prado Basin, City of Corona.
- Las Virgenes Creek sensitive bird survey (esp. Least Bell's Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler) for Topanga-Las Virgenes Resource Cons. Dist.
- Habitat Survey for Least Bell's Vireo, Tributary Santa Clara River, City of Santa Clarita
- Wildlife Report, Vegetation and Sensitive Species Reports for U.S. Forest Service, Tujunga Canyon for EA Engineering, Science and Technology.
- Observations on Least Bell's Vireo breeding pair, Whittier Narrows Wildlife Area, So. El Monte (summarized in "Birds of Whittier Narrows" and "Supplement")

#### California Gnatcatcher

- Federal (U.S. Fish and Wildlife) Permit for California Gnatcatcher protocol surveys.
- California Gnatcatcher surveys and monitoring, City of Moorpark, Bonelli Park, Chevron, and Forest Lawn properties.
- Implementing habitat restoration for California Gnatcatcher with Sapphos Environmental, County of Los Angeles, U. S. Fish and Wildlife biologists.
- Conducted California Gnatcatcher biology and habitat sensitivity workshop for Bonelli Regional Park staff, County of Los Angeles.
- Field Studies and rediscovery of California Gnatcatchers at historic locality, Tujunga Wash, Sunland. Field Report form and field observations to CNDDB and Dr. Jon Atwood, Kimball Garrett.

#### Amphibians

- Red-legged Frog population studies, Santa Rosa Plateau, Riverside Co. with Drs. Mark Jennings and Marc Hayes.
- Arroyo Toad Surveying and Monitoring, Castaic Creek, Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power.
- Researched and prepared petition for listing Mountain Yellow-legged Frog submitted to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Ongoing studies of declining amphibians with emphasis on salamanders (*Ensatina*, *Aneides*, *Batrachoseps*, *Taricha*).

**Additional Work**

- Rare Plant Survey and Sensitive Species Report for Sawpit Canyon Trail development, for City of Monrovia.
- Plant Community survey and mapping, San Gabriel Canyon pipeline. J.M. Montgomery, Consulting Engineers, (for City of Pasadena Water and Power Dept.).
- Monitoring construction in riparian zone under DFG Sec. 1600 Permit, Casitas Dam/Coyote Creek outflow
- Participant: Bird Census Workshop (Point Counts, Spot Mapping, Banding and Area Survey techniques), Big Sur Bird Observatory, with Dr. Stephen Laymon, et al.
- Independent studies of Coastal Cactus Wrens, Tujunga Wash & Santa Fe Dam, L. A. Co.
- Served on Arroyo Seco Habitat Advisory Committee for City of Pasadena, Environ. Affairs Office.
- Currently serve on Los Angeles County Dept. of Regional Planning, Significant Ecological Areas Tech. Advisory Committee.

1981 - 1984

ACADEMICS DEPARTMENT  
ART CENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN  
Pasadena, California

**INSTRUCTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY AND HUMAN ECOLOGY**

Taught courses in Environmental Biology, Human Ecology and Beginning Ornithology for four years.

1970 - 1972

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY  
Los Angeles, California

**MUSEUM CURATOR - STUDENT ASSISTANT**

Worked for two years while obtaining B.S. degree in Department of Zoology with approximately twenty-five instructors; reported to instructor in Zoology. Responsible for:

Curating University Zoology Museum housing skins and specimens of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.

Performing identification, preparation, cataloging of vertebrate and invertebrate specimens.

1968 - 1970

LAB ASSISTANT - LIFE SCIENCE, EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE  
LIFE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT  
Los Angeles, California

**EDUCATION**

A.A., Biology, 1969, East Los Angeles College

B.S., Zoology, 1972, California State University Los Angeles

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

- California Native Plant Society (Rare Plant Chairman, San Gabriel Mtns. Chapter)
- Southern California Botanists
- Western Field Ornithologists
- Cooper Ornithological Society
- North American Bird Banding Association
- Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory
- Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force
- Los Angeles County Natural History Museum
- National Audubon Society (past President, Conservation Chair, Director, Pasadena Audubon)
- Nature Conservancy
- Sierra Club, Natural Science Section

**PROFESSIONAL PAPERS:**

Food Habits of *Rana muscosa* (Anura: Ranidae), Herpeton, 1970, 5 (1): 8 pp.

Defensive Display of the Desert Slender Salamander, *Batrachoseps aridus* (with A.H.Brame and A.A.Chiri), Herpeton, 1973, 8 (1): 3 pp.

Natural History Notes on the Arboreal Salamander (*Aneides lugubris*) Herpetology, Mar. 1973 (S.W. Herpetologist's Soc) 7:1 pp. 6-11

White Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) Regrowth Following 1968-69 Floods, Crossosoma, 1982, 8(1): 3 pp.

Wildflower Sanctuaries of Los Angeles County, (with R. McKernan), Audubon Imprint, May 1977, 1(10): 3 pp

Birds of the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, Los Angeles County, California 79 pp. 1993.  
Supplement in preparation, 31 pp.

Avian Resources and Land Use in the Whittier Narrows Basin and San Gabriel River Riparian Area in press, in symposium proceedings, Natural Resources of the Puente Hills-Chino Hills Corridor: Implications for Land Use and Planning, Whittier College, Whittier, CA 1996

Anna's Hummingbirds with Hymenoptera Impaled on Bills, Western Birds, 1993, 24: 267-269.

Desert Night Lizard (*Xantusia vigilis*) in Coastal Los Angeles County, California (in preparation).

Edited and published, Herpetofauna of the San Gabriel Mountains, by Allan Schoenherr, 1976, 95 pp.

Two new hummingbird guides (Review) Western Tanager 68(6): 8-9 July/August 2002

#### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Worked while attending college; worked as Leader and Naturalist annually 1974-89 at week-long natural history workshop southern Sierra Nevada; present illustrated talks on natural history subjects to the public and conservation organizations.

#### HOBBIES:

Reading, hiking, camping, birding and nature study, guitar.

#### PERSONAL DATA:

D.O.B.: 7-4-48; married; two children; excellent health

#### REFERENCES AND FURTHER DATA ON REQUEST

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