



LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT

November 2011





LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

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LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

Intent and Purpose

The La Verne Wilderness Area Management Plan (“Management Plan”) was prepared to address the resolution of public access, flood control and wildlife conservation issues in an integrated program. By doing so, with community involvement, the resulting vision, goals, and objectives for use of the area is intended to benefit the residents of the City of La Verne (“City”) and the surrounding cities.

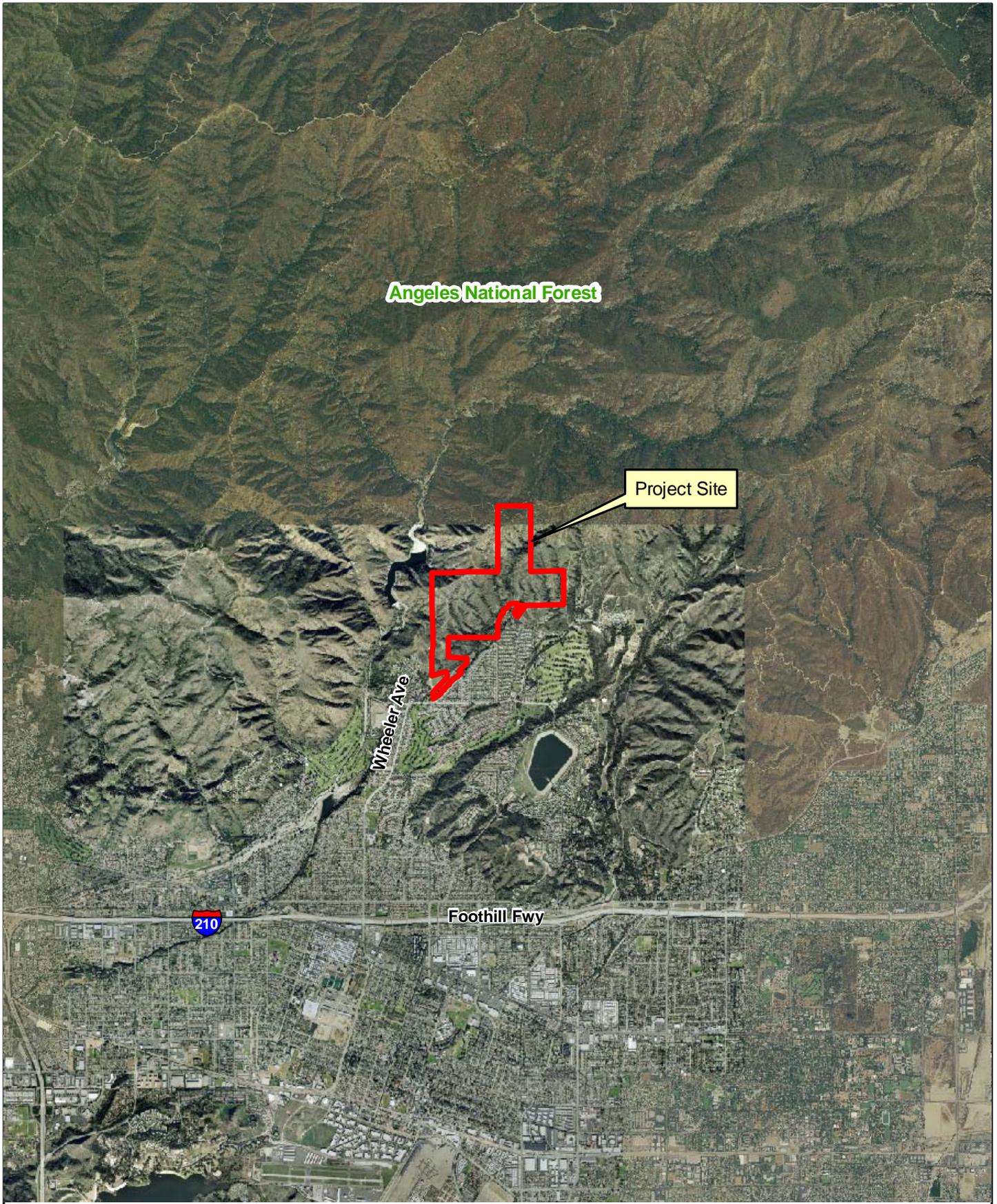
Background

In early 2006 the City, through State grant funds obtained in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land and the La Verne Land Conservancy, acquired 208 acres in north La Verne adjacent to 150 acres already owned by the City, which are collectively referred to in this report as the “Wilderness Area” (see Figure 1, *Location of La Verne Wilderness Area*, and Figure 2, *Aerial Photograph Showing Wilderness Area Boundaries*). The grant funds were specifically dedicated to acquire and conserve wildlife habitat. Nonetheless, the City desired to explore opportunities for uses compatible with conservation and the resolution of public safety hazards as part of its stewardship responsibilities.

Planning Issues

In the course of first analyzing the opportunities and constraints facing the City in developing a management strategy for the area, three key issues emerged. First, was the issue of public access. Whereas public use and enjoyment of the Wilderness Area’s natural setting could be a community-wide benefit, neighbors expressed strong concerns about the increased potential for wildfires and the interruption of their own quiet enjoyment of backyard environments. Thus, the extent to which the Wilderness Area would be opened and developed to encourage and facilitate public use was in question.

Second, the Wilderness Area consists of vacant, natural open space encompassing several relatively small, but steep, canyons that drain into a single unimproved



Source: USGS Topographic Series (Glendora); PCR Services Corporation, 2008.

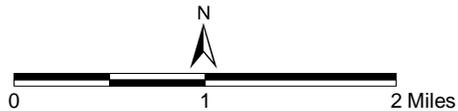
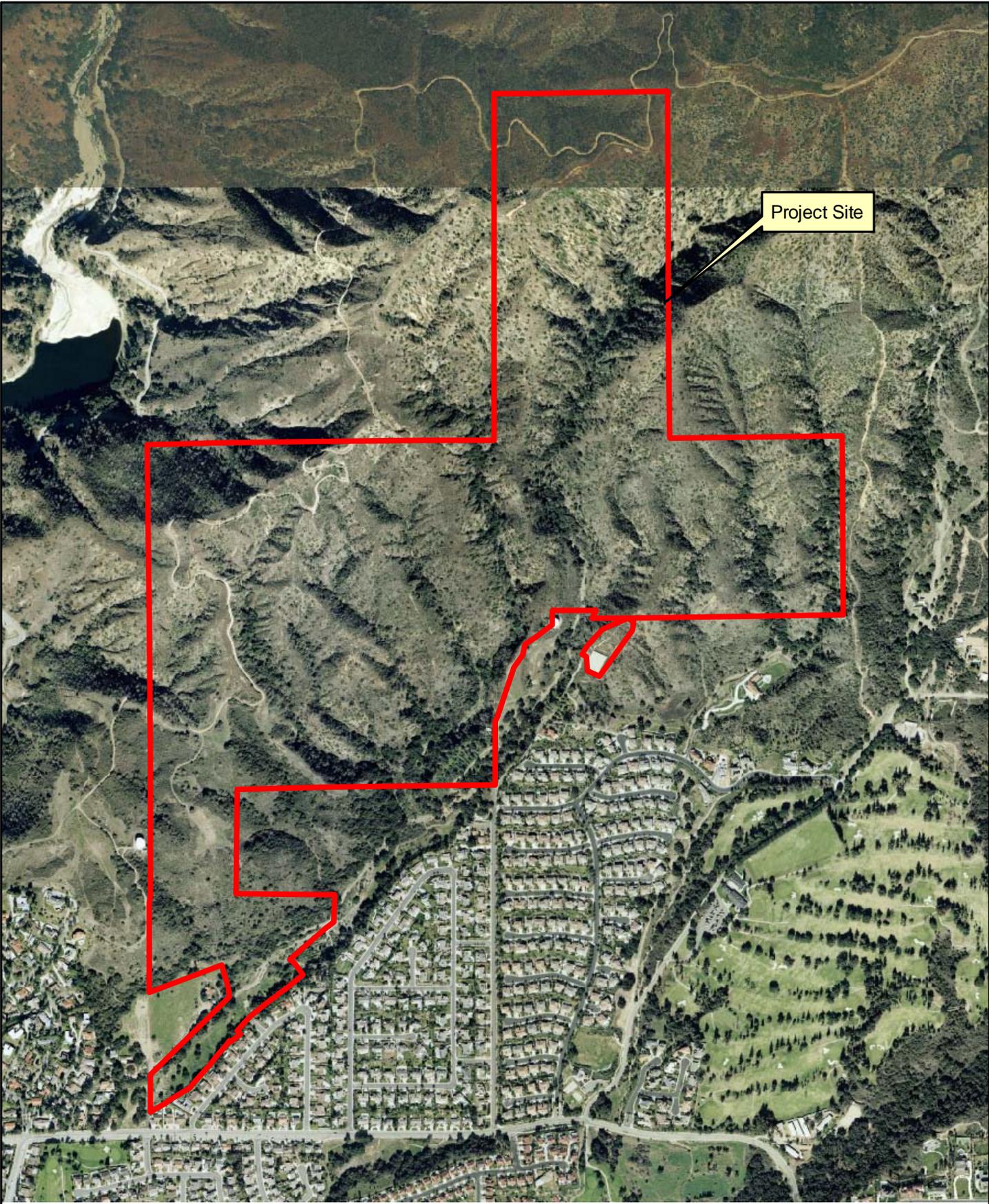


Figure 1
**Location of La Verne
 Wilderness Area**



Source: USGS Topographic Series (Glendora); PCR Services Corporation, 2008.

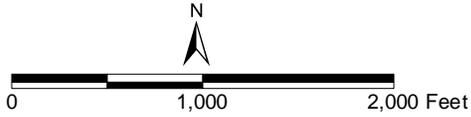


Figure 2
Aerial Photograph Showing
Wilderness Area Boundaries

watercourse. As a consequence, the Wilderness Area itself and downstream have been subject to flooding during heavy rain events. Moreover, following a wildfire in 2002 that denuded portions of the Wilderness Area, significant and destructive debris flows occurred during the winters of 2002/03 and 2003/04. Based on local hydrology studies it was suggested that, prior to any development in the canyon, a system of debris basins be constructed to protect homes and existing development downstream.

Third was the need to protect wildlife habitat which was the basis for the State grant funding. Based on the City's interpretation of conditions contained in the funding agreement, no flood control improvements are allowed in the 208-acre portion of the Wilderness Area purchased using grant funds. That is, the City could be liable to refund the State monies if it were to use any portion of the 208-acre portion for flood control facilities.

Planning Process

In order to respond to the needs of a management plan for the area, a consulting team was retained consisting of: 2M Associates who are specialists in park, recreation, trail, and open space planning and design for public use; Rivertech Inc. who are professional engineers who specialize in hydraulics, hydrology, and sediment engineering; and PCR Services Corporation who provided expertise in wildlife habitat conservation. City personnel were also participants in the study, including representatives from Parks and Community Services, Community Development, Public Works, and the City Engineer's office. Combined, this team provided the necessary historical knowledge and technical expertise to address the comprehensive needs of the study in the integrated manner required.

Key to the responsiveness of the Management Plan to the overall needs of the surrounding community was the involvement of the public in three community workshops. Workshops were noticed and convened at strategic points in the study process to present milestone study findings and receive comments and input for subsequent focus in the planning program. As such, each community workshop was organized around a central theme for presentation and discussion purposes.

The steps followed and community outreach program are summarized in the work program outlined below.

Step 1 – Convene Kick-off Meeting: The study was initiated on October 11, 2007 with a kick-off meeting including the consultant team and representatives from involved City departments. The purpose of the meeting was to confirm the study objectives, introduce points of contact for information exchange, and identify sources of relevant information outside the City.

Step 2 – Collect, Review and Assimilate Existing Information: Immediately following the kick-off meeting, existing information was reviewed to characterize baseline conditions for biological resources and flood hazards in the Wilderness Area, as well as existing informal public uses of the property. Specific needs for additional data gathering as input to the planning process were also identified at this time.

Step 3 – Conduct Community Workshop #1; Issues Identification, Vision and Goals: A community workshop was conducted on November 7, 2007 for the purposes of introducing the project and planning process, presenting the preliminary findings of data assimilation efforts, receiving input on the issues to be resolved, and identifying community goals for access, recreation, resource conservation, and flood control.

Step 4 – Conduct Field Reconnaissance: Based on data gaps identified during the review of existing information and the input provided by the community as to the issues, vision and goals of the Management Plan, field reconnaissance was conducted. The purpose of this reconnaissance was to verify previously reported baseline conditions and to gather additional information, as appropriate, to fill information gaps. In particular, mapping of biological resources using current aerial photography, site relationships and context relative to public access, trail use and potential interpretive facilities, and hydrologic conditions were characterized in the field.

Step 5 – Conduct Community Workshop #2; Resource Analysis & Alternatives: The second community workshop was held on January 8, 2008. The primary purpose of this workshop was to present and discuss alternative approaches to habitat conservation, public access, and flood control that respond to the previously identified issues, vision, and goals for the Management Plan by the community. As part of the presentation and discussion, management opportunities and constraints within a potential framework (i.e., the vision and goals) for management alternatives were addressed.

Step 6 – Determine Opportunities and Constraints: Having reviewed and synthesized existing information, filled information gaps as appropriate, and received

input from the community, realistic and integrated management alternatives for each of the key management issues were formulated. These included:

- Management practices designed to restore, enhance and sustain biological resources and systems, create and enhance habitat to promote use by wildlife, and ensure compliance with federal, State and City regulations and ordinances.
- Public access alternatives using feasibility criteria that included the relationships with neighboring land uses, potential environmental impacts, capital improvement costs, annual operating and maintenance costs, types of use, estimated use levels, and capabilities of potential steward entities (e.g., City, La Verne Land Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service).
- Conceptual Plans to manage storm water, sediment and debris that controls\ both localized flood hazards and significant erosion and sedimentation downstream.

Step 7- Conduct Community Workshop #3; Preferred Alternative: On March 18, 2008 the third community workshop was conducted to present and discuss the preferred alternative. Elements for discussion included natural resource management, flood and fire hazard management, public access and use, costs, and the phasing/implementation strategy.

Step 8 – Refine Preferred Alternative: During this step of the planning process a draft Management Plan was prepared based on the input and feedback received from the immediate neighborhood, community, and involved City departments. The draft Management Plan is presented in outline form below.



LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

VISION

The Wilderness Area is a place where natural resources are managed for diversity. Through controlled public access it offers a sense of tranquility where individuals and small groups can safely visit to experience, enjoy, and learn. It is a benefit to the City as a whole and its neighbors.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL #1: Manage stormwater, sediment, and woody debris

Objective: Discourage woody debris from moving downstream
Action: Construct 3 woody debris barriers

GOAL #2: Provide wildfire hazard management

Objective: Clear brush and modify fuel load
Action: In cooperation with other agencies, prepare a local *Brush and Fuel Load Vegetation Management Plan* within one year of the Area opening to the public; review every six (6) years

GOAL #3: Preserve and enhance wildlife habitat corridors and diversity

Objective: Enhance all habitat areas
Action: Remove all abandoned facilities
Action: Remove non-native tree species

Objective: Enhance Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub
Action: Remove non-native shrubs and trees
Action: Revegetate with appropriate native species

Objective: Preserve existing, and where appropriate, enhance Northern Mixed Chaparral/Coast Live Oak Woodland
Action: Remove non-native shrubs and trees
Action: Revegetate with appropriate native species

Objective: Revegetate disturbed areas
Action: Rip and grade abandoned roads and social trails where appropriate
Action: Hydroseed with native erosion control mix
Action: Limit public access during establishment period

GOAL #4: Provide a tranquil and safe visitor experience

Objective: Develop limited use facilities
Action: Develop 10-foot-wide loop trail / maintenance access route (ADA accessible) off Monterey Street (no access from Brydon or Golden Hills)

*LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN
Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Actions*

- Action: Provide different trail loop options of 1/8 mile and 1/4 mile lengths
- Action: Provide up to five benches at key locations where there is shade
- Action: Provide interpretive signs at key locations
- Action: Provide safety signs at entrance about presence of mountain lions, bear, and rattlesnakes
- Action: Prepare detailed design plans with input from immediately adjacent property owners

- Objective: Provide and manage access to Sunrise Ridge Road
 - Action: Encourage, coordinate with, and assist Los Angeles County to develop a trail staging area and access from San Dimas Canyon Road
 - Action: Amend public access plans to plateau area if San Dimas Canyon Road access route is developed

GOAL #5: Provide controlled public access

- Objective: Provide for public safety

- Action: Close area to public access during potential rain periods
- Action: Close area to public access between May and September and during periods of extreme fire danger (red flag warning days)
- Action: Establish Wilderness Area as a no-smoking area

- Objective: Provide single access point
 - Action: Develop neighborhood access entrance on Monterey Street
 - Action: Limit parking
 - Permit parking only
 - Management Option: Provide limited parking
 - Management Option: Redesign existing Via Vista spur road and redevelop as Wilderness Area entrance
 - Action: Monitor parking on Monterey Street
 - Action: Open / lock Monterey Street gate
 - Between May and September and during periods of extreme fire danger (red flag warning days)
 - During periods of rain
 - Weekends / daily if use patterns warrant

- Objective: Designate Wilderness Area as pedestrian access / day use only (no overnight use)
 - Action: Install lockable gates at all entrances
 - Action: Install use and regulatory signs at all entrances
 - Action: Limit Wilderness Area use from 1 hour after sunrise to 1 hour before sunset

- Objective: Limit use to individual and small-group trail-related activities
 - Action: Provide no picnic or restroom facilities
 - Action: Require groups over 10 individuals to obtain a special use permit
 - Action: Clearly inform the public / post all prohibited uses (see handout list)

- Objective: Protect habitat areas and enhancement programs
 - Action: Install public access control fencing along selected locations of Sunrise Ridge

*LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN
Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Actions*

Road and sign "Habitat Management Area - No Public Access"
Action: Install public access control railings in wash area and sign "Habitat Management Area - No Public Access"

Objective: Protect adjacent private property
Action: Include 100-foot buffer between any public access trails and existing backyard property lines
Action: Install secure property line fencing parallel to Monterey Street where not already existing
Action: Install railings within drainage on other property lines and sign as "Wilderness Area Boundary"
Action: Encourage adjoining neighbors to control access to Wilderness Area through their properties (including from Brydon and Golden Hills)

GOAL #6: Cooperate with other agencies in management of the Wilderness Area

Objective: Transfer ownership and management of that portion of the Wilderness Area (within the Federal jurisdictional boundary) to the U.S. Forest Service
Action: Negotiate with Forest Service terms and conditions of transfer
Action: Execute agreement

GOAL #7: Provide sufficient on-site presence to manage the Wilderness Area

Objective: Coordinate with other agencies / trail groups / volunteers / neighbors to complement City staff presence
Action: Evaluate management contract with Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Ranger Staff
Action: Initiate a weekend volunteer watch program for the Wilderness Area
Action: Establish a neighborhood watch hot line

GOAL #8: Update the Management Plan to reflect changes in surrounding use and ownership conditions

Objective: Assure the Management Plan remains current as conditions change
Action: Update plan as necessary

GOAL #9: Obtain sufficient funds to assure full implementation of the Management Plan
(in addition to City programs)

Objective: Secure funds for resource management
Action: Subsequent to any Wilderness Area Plan requirements (as established by subsequent CEQA documentation), consider resource management actions as potential for City project mitigation, or mitigation by others
Action: Apply for funding from watershed and wildlife enhancement grant programs

Objective: Secure funds for capital improvements
Action: Apply for funding from watershed, watachable wildlife, and park/open space grant programs

Vision, Goals & Objectives

Vision

The La Verne Wilderness Area is a place where natural resources are managed for diversity. Through controlled public access it offers a sense of tranquility where individuals and small groups can safely visit to experience, enjoy, and learn. It is a benefit to the City as a whole and its neighbors.

The vision set forth above captures the intent of the City to resolve the various and potentially conflicting issues associated with uses of the La Verne Wilderness Area, based on input received from City departments responsible for its management, potential users of the area from the City and surrounding communities, and the immediate neighborhood who would be the most affected by management decisions.

Goals & Objectives

For the purpose of this Management Plan, stated goals are specific physical improvements or management policies that would implement the Vision for the Wilderness Area. Objectives are subcomponents of the goals that couple the intended improvements into actions to be taken. To the extent practicable and allowable by physical, biological, and social constraints, the City is committed to the realization of nine overall management goals with specific associated objectives for the Wilderness Area. These goals and objectives are outlined below along with brief summaries of their need as expressed by the community and the opportunities / constraints discovered in the study process. A summary of the community comments and questions regarding vision, goals, and issues is provided in Appendix A.

Flood and Fire Hazard Management

The goals that address existing flood problems and the potential for increased fire hazard are based on considerations of issues primarily raised by immediate neighbors to the Wilderness Area. In the case of resolving existing flood hazards, it was requested that the City explore and pursue the construction of a flood control / debris basin somewhere in the Wilderness Area, as part of the Management Plan, to alleviate the flood hazard on-site and downstream. At the same time, concerns were expressed regarding the City's ability to adequately budget for the capital improvements and on-going maintenance costs of such a structure. The City's ability to respond to this issue is

constrained by the State grant funding instrument that does not allow such improvements within the 208-acre portion of the Wilderness Area. Further, the topography and potential location of such a structure on the 150-acre portion of the Wilderness Area is prohibitive and would be ineffective to control stormwater, respectively. However, the City is committed to exploring the possibility of installing and maintaining woody debris racks at across three tributary drainages to Marshall Creek for purposes of reducing the amount of woody debris that could be carried downstream during heavy rain fall, particularly following wild fires in the upstream watershed.

To address the potential for increased fire hazard associated with public use the City is committed to programming and implementing fuel modification activities necessary to protect nearby neighborhoods from wildfires. In addition, as discussed further below, the City will provide rules for use of the Wilderness Area that close the area during periods of high and extreme fire danger, prohibit fires of any kind, and limit the number of access points for the public to enter.

Goal #1: Manage stormwater, sediment, and woody debris.

- **Objective** – Discourage woody debris from moving downstream.

Goal #2: Provide wildfire hazard management.

- **Objective** – Clear brush and modify fuel load as needed to protect neighbors.

Wildlife Habitat Conservation

The Wilderness Area is located in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and supports native vegetation characteristic of the region, including chaparral and oak woodland over the majority of its extent and patches of alluvial fan sage scrub and cactus scrub vegetation occur in localized areas (see Figure 3, *Vegetation*). In addition, annual grassland is scattered on ridgelines and in the canyon bottom where disturbances cleared native vegetation at some point in the past. This mosaic of vegetation types provides a varied habitat structure for wildlife populations which are expected to be relatively abundant and diverse.

In particular, oak woodland is an important habitat for many wildlife species that require trees for roosting and nesting and acorns as a food source. This importance, combined with its restricted distribution, often makes oak woodland a habitat targeted for

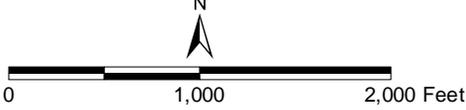
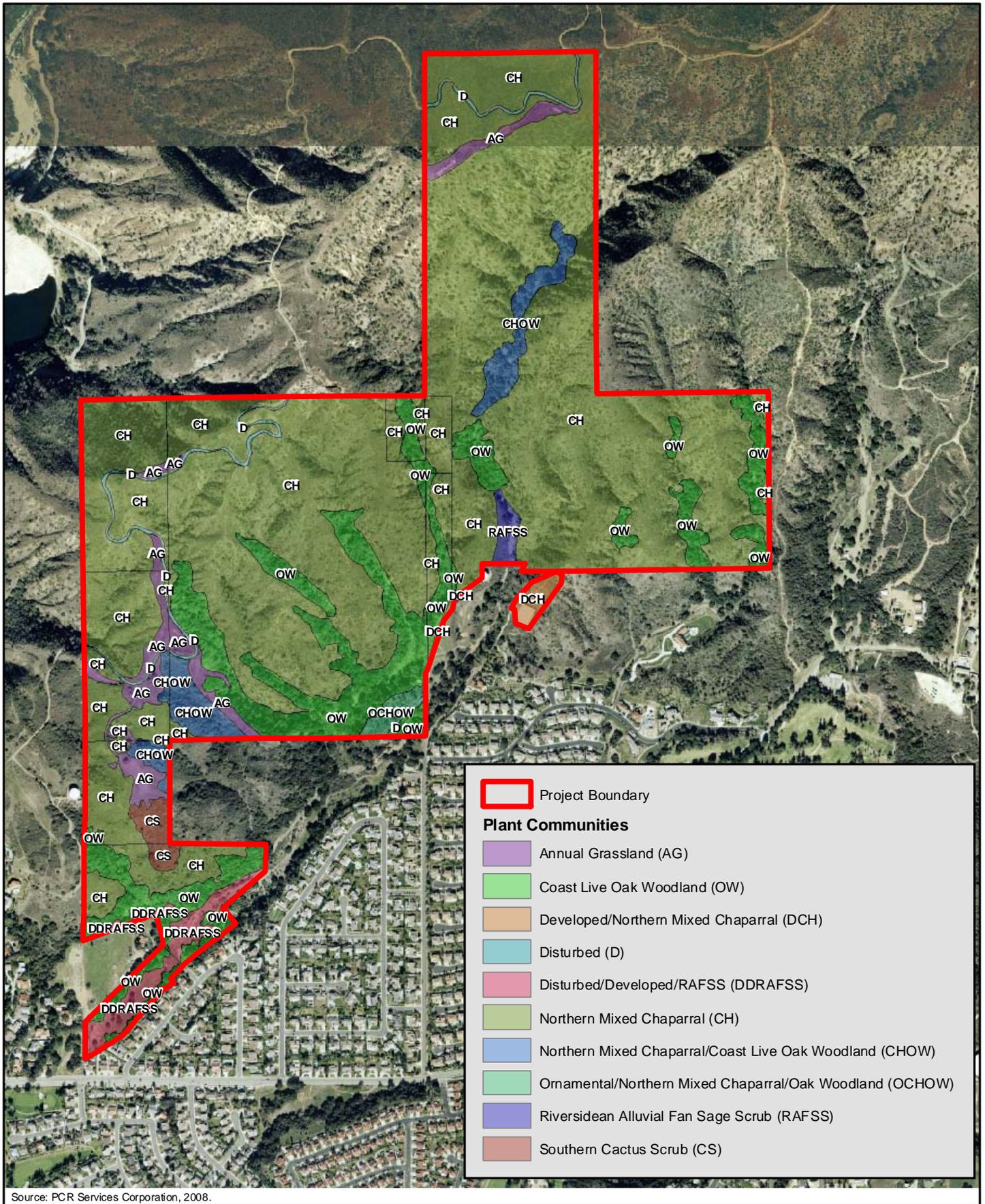


Figure 3
Vegetation

conservation in southern California. Under the City Preservation, Protection, and Removal of Trees Ordinance (No. 999), the City of La Verne protects native trees. Other regulated biological resources that occur on site are drainage features that fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Game. These resources are found in the Marshall Canyon bottom and most of the tributary drainages.

Protection of the watershed, wildlife, and general biological diversity in the Wilderness Area was made part of the vision and goals that were developed in concert with community input. Therefore, it is appropriate that multiple objectives were identified under a preservation goal.

Goal #3: Preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, movement corridors, and diversity.

- **Objective** – Enhance all habitat areas.
- **Objective** – Enhance alluvial fan sage scrub habitat.
- **Objective** – Preserve existing, and where appropriate, enhance mixed chaparral and oak woodland habitats.
- **Objective** – Revegetate disturbed areas with native habitats.

Public Access

Considerations for public access and use resulted in a wide range of prospective options. These varied from no public access at any time to development of an almost “park-quality” experience. Expressed issues varied considerably but generally fell into one of the following topical areas: public safety; increased fire hazard; limited, controlled access versus uncontrolled access; parking at entry points; expansion of trail network and connectivity to adjacent Forest Service lands versus no or limited new trails; provision of public convenience facilities; and security and maintenance costs.

In order to address these various perspectives it was necessary to formulate a number of goals and objectives for the Management Plan. These represent a balance among the many interests for the use of the Wilderness Area. Overall, these goals and objectives are aimed at providing an enjoyable outdoor recreation experience with no or minimal impact to the environment and the neighborhood. Additionally, specific goals and objectives are provided which will act to minimize capital improvement and maintenance costs, but call for sufficient funding for Management Plan implementation.

Goal #4: Provide a tranquil and safe visitor experience.

- **Objective** – Develop limited facilities.
- **Objective** – Provide and manage access to Sunrise Ridge Road

Goal #5: Provide controlled public access.

- **Objective** – Provide for public safety.
- **Objective** – Provide single access point.
- **Objective** – Designate Wilderness Area as pedestrian access/day use only.
- **Objective** – Limit use to individuals and small-group trail-related activities.
- **Objective** – Protect habitat areas and enhancement programs.
- **Objective** – Protect adjacent private property

Goal #6: Cooperate with other agencies in management of the Wilderness Area.

- **Objective** – Transfer ownership and management of that portion of the Wilderness Area within the Federal jurisdictional boundary to the U.S. Forest Service.

Goal #7: Provide sufficient on-site presence to manage the Wilderness Area.

- **Objective** – Coordinate with other agencies / trail groups / volunteers / neighbors to complement City staff presence.

Goal #8: Update the Management Plan to reflect changes in surrounding use and ownership conditions.

- **Objective** – Assure the Management Plan remains current as conditions change.

Goal #9: Obtain sufficient funds to assure full implementation of the Management Plan.

- **Objective** – Secure funds for resource management.

- **Objective** – Secure funds for capital improvements.

The following section organizes and describes, in conceptual form, the guidelines and actions recommended to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives outlined above.

Management Guidelines & Actions

In order to achieve each of the goals and meet the objectives of the Management Plan one or more actions will need to be taken. Here, again, these are presented according to the major planning issue they are intended to address.

Flood and Fire Hazard Management

Three alternative designs were examined to manage stormwater, sediment, and woody debris movement through the Wilderness Area into downstream areas where they have caused property damage in the past (see Appendix B, *Integrated Management of Stormwater, Sediment, and Debris Conceptual Planning*). These were: 1) construct a single stormwater, sediment and debris management basin; 2) construct a stormwater and sediment management basin with upstream woody debris racks; and 3) construct an extension of an existing culvert within and from the most downstream portion of the Wilderness Area. Based on considerations of cost, assumed liability, use of private property, and restrictions contained in the State grant funding agreement, it was determined that only the construction of upstream woody debris racks was feasible at this time.

- **Action** – Construct three woody debris racks / barriers upstream where feasible.

The recommended location of these racks is shown in Figure 4, *Recommended Locations of Woody Debris Racks*. A schematic diagram showing their conceptual design is provided in Figure 5, *Conceptualized Woody Debris Rack*. It is important to note that in their design and construction these racks are intended to be minor facilities with minor impact to drainage features. They are not intended to detain water flow and they have only minimal capability to detain sediment transport. Rather, they are intended to prevent larger woody debris from reaching downstream areas where the debris could become lodged in the channel or at culvert entrances to “block / dam” water flow and cause it to flood adjacent properties.

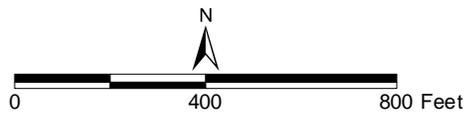
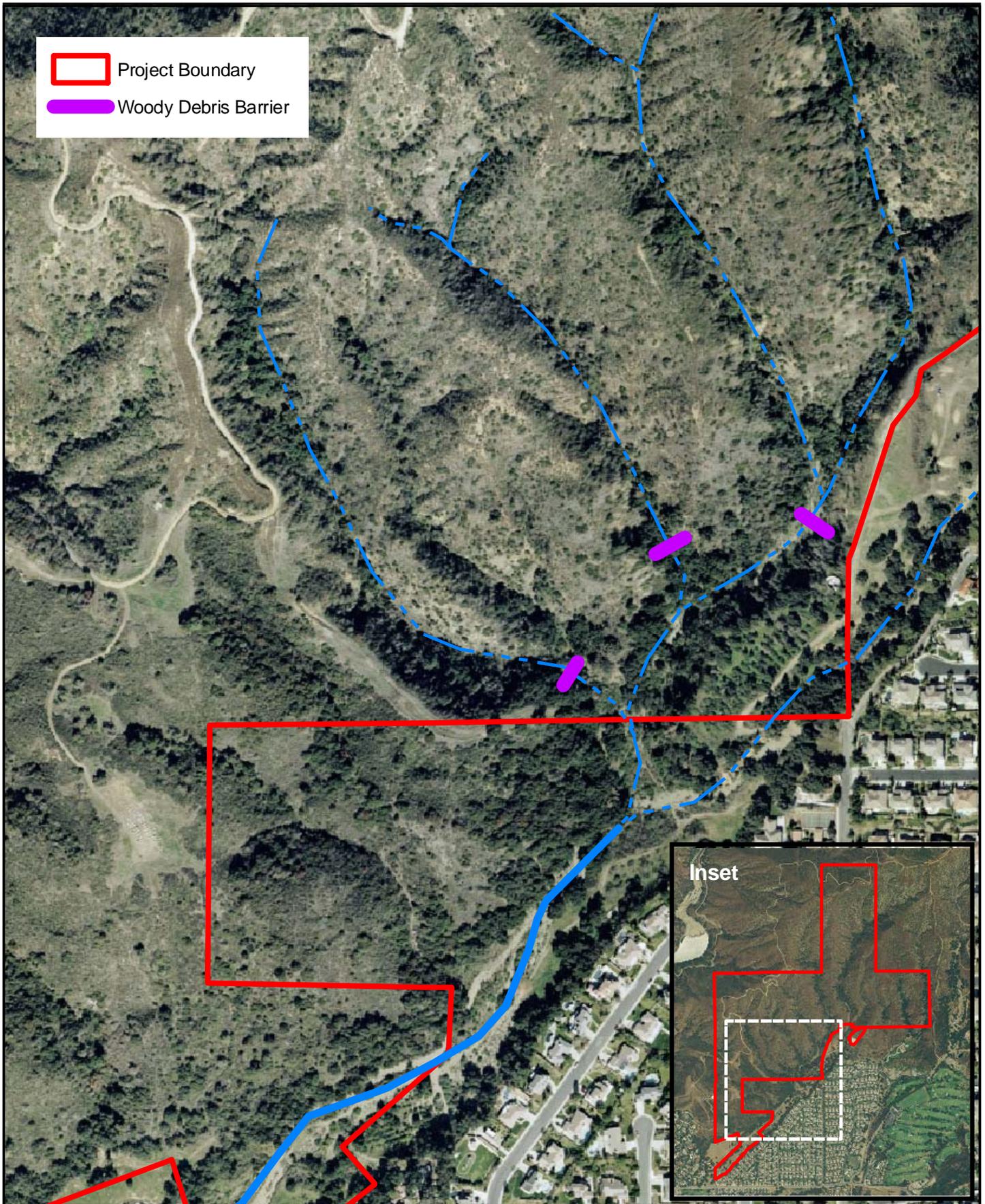


Figure 4
**Recommended Locations of
 Woody Debris Racks**

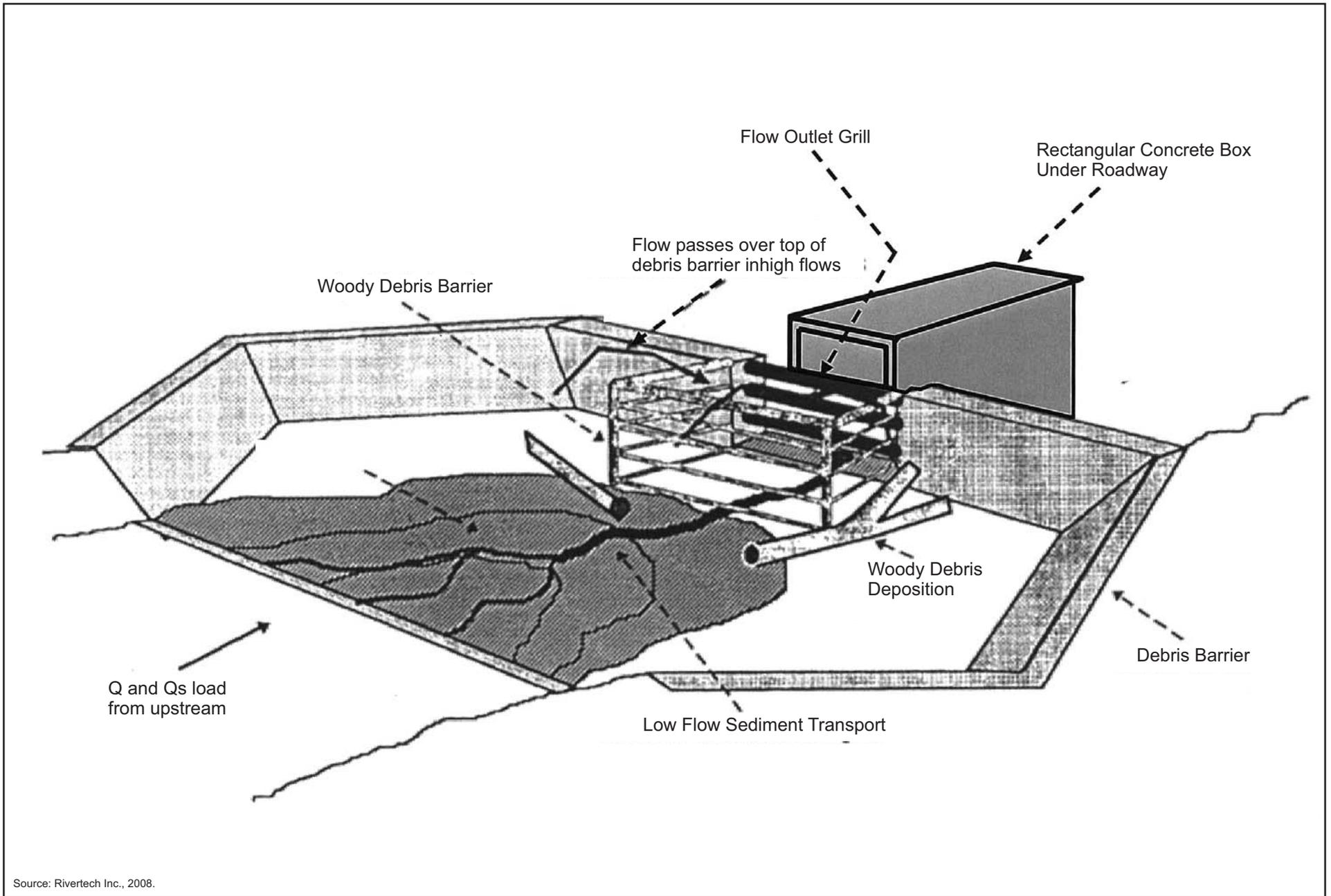


Figure 5
Conceptualized Woody Debris Rack

Fire hazard management can be achieved through means already provided for by standard fuel modification practices for residential structures adjacent to areas of native scrub and chaparral. However, public use of the Wilderness Area may require more specialized treatment, to be determined by fire authorities.

- **Action** – In cooperation with the La Verne Fire Department and other fire authorities, prepare a local *Brush and Fuel Load Management Plan* within one year of the opening of the Wilderness Area; review every six years.
- **Action** – Hydroseed disturbed lands within the Canyon bottom with a native erosion control mix and mow annually (not disk) for wildfire management purposes.

The plan should address fuel modification for adequate distances from the adjacent residences, fuel modification along trails (if necessary), and appropriate methodologies (mechanical clearance, hand-tool thinning, goats, etc.). In any case, the aim would be to provide adequate protection without compromising user experience or causing undo environmental impacts.

Wildlife Habitat Conservation

Several objectives are identified for the goal of preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat, corridors, and diversity. Each entails taking two or more actions, some of which are common among the objectives. For all objectives aimed at enhancing habitats in general (and particularly alluvial fan sage scrub, chaparral, and oak woodland), these are related to restoring disturbed areas.

- **Action** – Remove all abandoned facilities and structures.
- **Action** – Remove non-native shrubs and trees.
- **Action** – Revegetate with habitat-specific native plant species.

In order to restore more highly disturbed areas, such as abandoned roads and undesirable trails, more effort may be required.

- **Action** – Rip and recontour abandoned roads and undesirable trails to conform to surrounding soil and topographic conditions.

- **Action** – Hydroseed with native erosion control mix and container stock for shrubs and trees.
- **Action** – Restrict public access to restored areas during the establishment period.

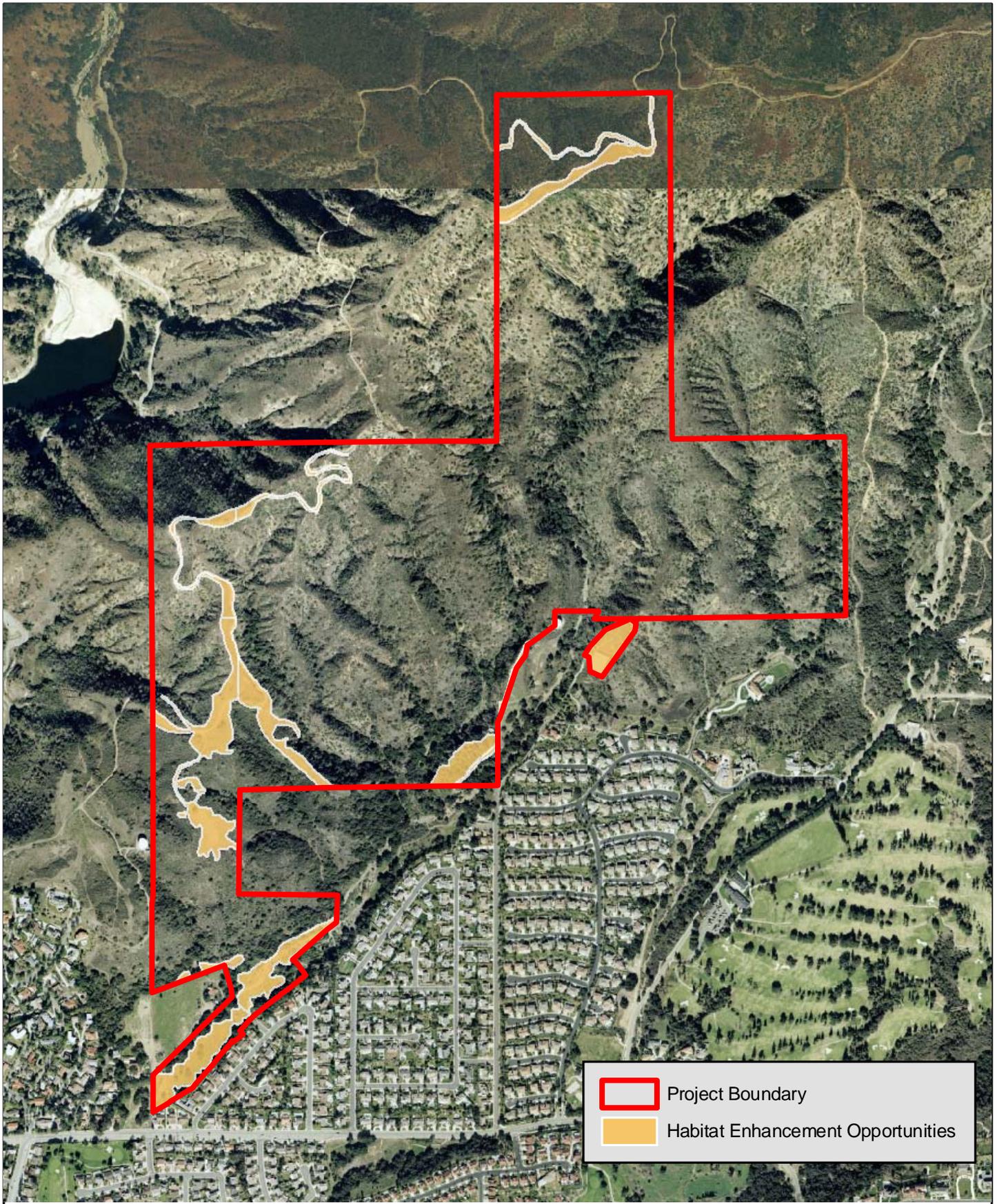
Localized areas where habitat enhancement will be focused are shown in Figure 6, *Habitat Enhancement Opportunities*. The City will also consider the use of community volunteer activities and outside funding for enhancement programs, and, such programs as a means of mitigation for private and public projects. That is, use of the Wilderness Area restoration and enhancement actions could be tied to conditions of approval at the local (e.g., compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act), State (e.g., compliance with California Department of Fish and Game Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements), or federal (e.g., compliance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permits) levels.

Public Access

There are a number of actions required to meet the objectives and achieve the goals for public access to the Wilderness Area. This is due to the stated desire to provide an enjoyable, safe user experience with minimal disturbances to the adjacent neighborhood and with affordable improvement and maintenance costs. Diagrams of the conceptual public access features are provided in Figures 7, *Public Access – Canyon Bottom* and Figure 8, *Public Access – Plateau Area*.

Several Actions are recommended to achieve the goal of providing a tranquil and safe visitor experience while limiting facility development.

- **Action** – Develop a 10-foot-wide loop trail / maintenance access road (ADA accessible) off of Monterey Street (no access from Brydon or Golden Hills to be provided).
- **Action** – Provide trail loop options of 1/8 and 1/4 mile lengths.
- **Action** – Provide up to five benches at locations along the trail where shade is available.
- **Action** – Provide interpretive signs at key locations where surrounding resources and Wilderness Area features are conducive to outdoor education.



| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
|  | Project Boundary |
|  | Habitat Enhancement Opportunities |

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2008.

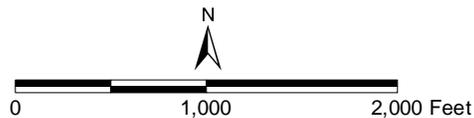


Figure 6
Habitat Enhancement Opportunities

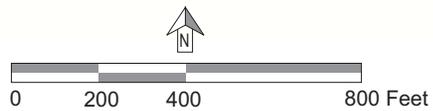
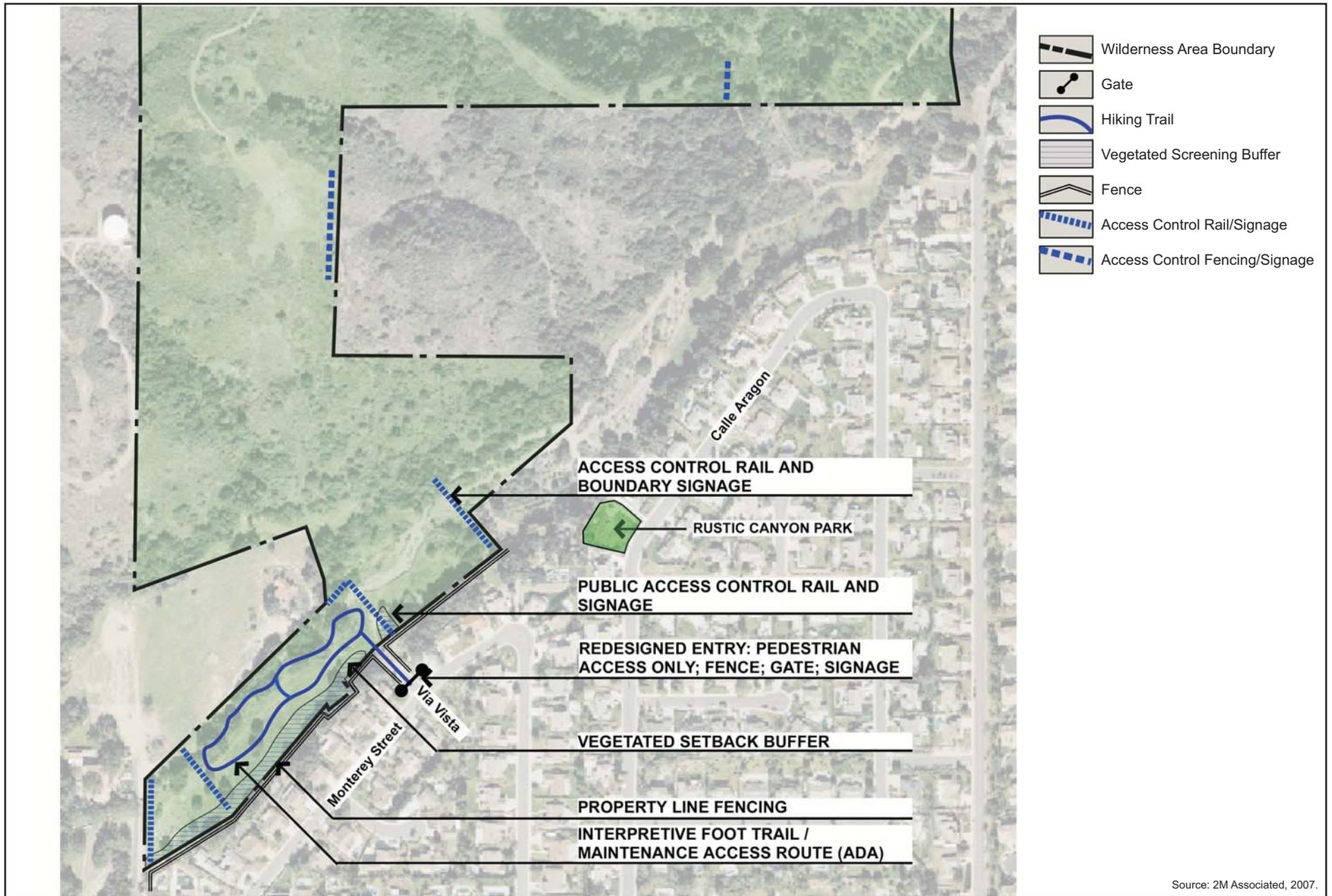
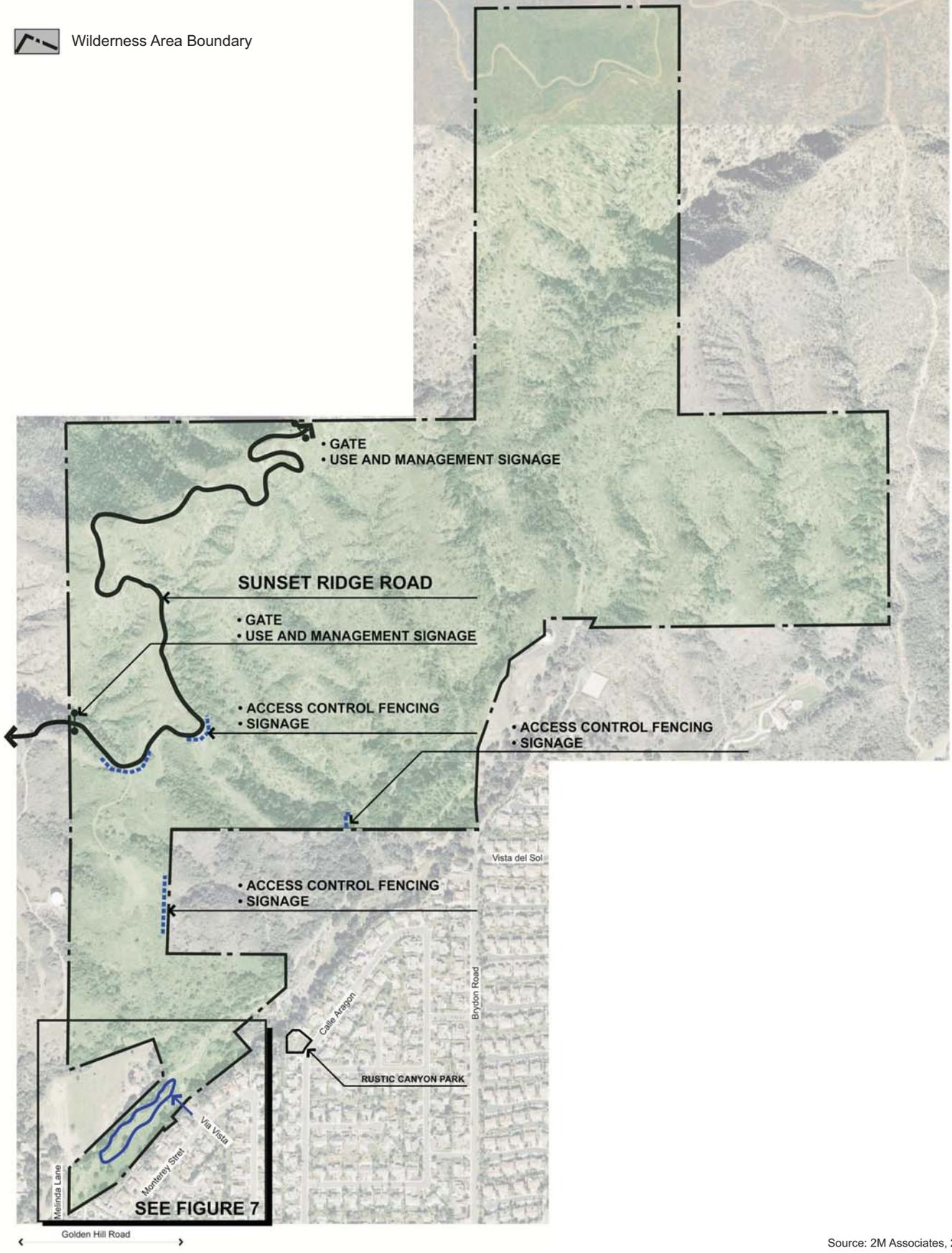


Figure 7
Public Access - Canyon Bottom



Wilderness Area Boundary



Source: 2M Associates, 2007.

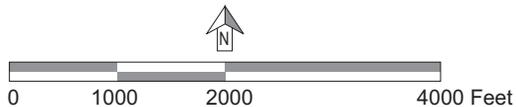


Figure 8
Public Access - Plateau Area

- **Action** – Install safety signs at the public entrance to the Wilderness Area about the presence of mountain lion, black bear and rattlesnakes in the area.
- **Action** – Prepare detailed trail and entrance design plans with input from immediately adjacent property owners.
- **Action** – Encourage, coordinate with, and assist Los Angeles County to develop a trail staging area and access from San Dimas Canyon Road to Sunset Ridge Road.
- **Action** – Amend public access plans to the upper portions of the Wilderness Area (Sunset Ridge Road) if a San Dimas Canyon Road access route is developed.

A conceptual layout of the loop trail is shown in Figure 7, *Public Access – Canyon Bottom*. In actual design, the trail should be aligned to avoid the removal of native vegetation as much as possible. It should also be designed to bridge drainage features entirely so as not to cause environmental damage and / or trigger permitting by State and federal resource agencies.

Locating a trail in a floodplain can be problematic relative to the ongoing maintenance of the trail. Careful design and choice of materials will be required to minimize any undercutting of the trail and avoid ongoing rehabilitation costs that may be onerous. A cautious approach in trail siting, design, and development will be used. This will start with a trail route composed of natural materials involving minimal grading. After a sufficient annual monitoring period of runoff patterns, the trail location may be modified and the trail tread upgraded as appropriate.

A tentative list of the precautions and rules for the entry safety signage is provided in Figure 9, *Tentative Precautions and Rules for Entry Signage*. As listed, the precautions and rules go beyond addressing visitor safety. Protection of the natural environment, fire hazard management, and quiet enjoyment to preserve the neighbors environment are also addressed.

The potential to work with Los Angeles County and open a designated trail staging area off of San Dimas Canyon Road should be further explored. This recommendation is predicated on community comments (primarily from mountain bikers) requesting access from a City developed entry point through the Wilderness Area to Sunset Ridge Road and beyond into the National Forest. The inclusion of adequate parking and staging at the City entry point was considered to have a potentially serious



LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA

PRECAUTIONS AND RULES

While visiting the La Verne Wilderness Area we ask that you please observe the following precautions and rules (per: code reference):

- The Wilderness Area is open from 1 hour after sunrise to 1 hour before sunset. No after hours use is permitted.
- Without a special use permit, the Wilderness Area will be closed to public use between May and September, during periods of extreme fire danger (red flag warning days), and during periods of rain.
- The cutting, pruning or injury of native vegetation or digging of any ground surface within the Wilderness Area is not permitted.
- Hunting, trapping, or harvesting of any living or dead thing is not permitted.
- The possession or use of firearms, air guns, bows, and arrows, or slingshots or other weapons is not permitted.
- For your pet's protection, dogs must be kept on a leash of less than six feet in length at all times. In consideration of other visitors, please remove your dog's waste products from the trails.
- Glass containers can start brush fires; therefore, they are not permitted within the Wilderness Area.
- Fires of any kind including smoking, camp stoves, flammable liquids or fireworks are not permitted.
- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted.
- Except for emergency and maintenance vehicles and motorized wheelchairs, no motor vehicles are permitted in the Wilderness Area.
- No bicycles are permitted in the Wilderness Area.
- Please take all trash and litter out of the Wilderness Area with you when you leave.
- Stay on designated trails at all times.
- Practice trail etiquette.
- No safe drinking water, trash receptacles or restroom facilities are available beyond this point.
- Groups of 10 or more are required to obtain a special use permit prior to entering the Wilderness Area.

Contact the Parks and Community Services Department at (909) 596-8700
for more information or to obtain special use permits.
(Code Reference)

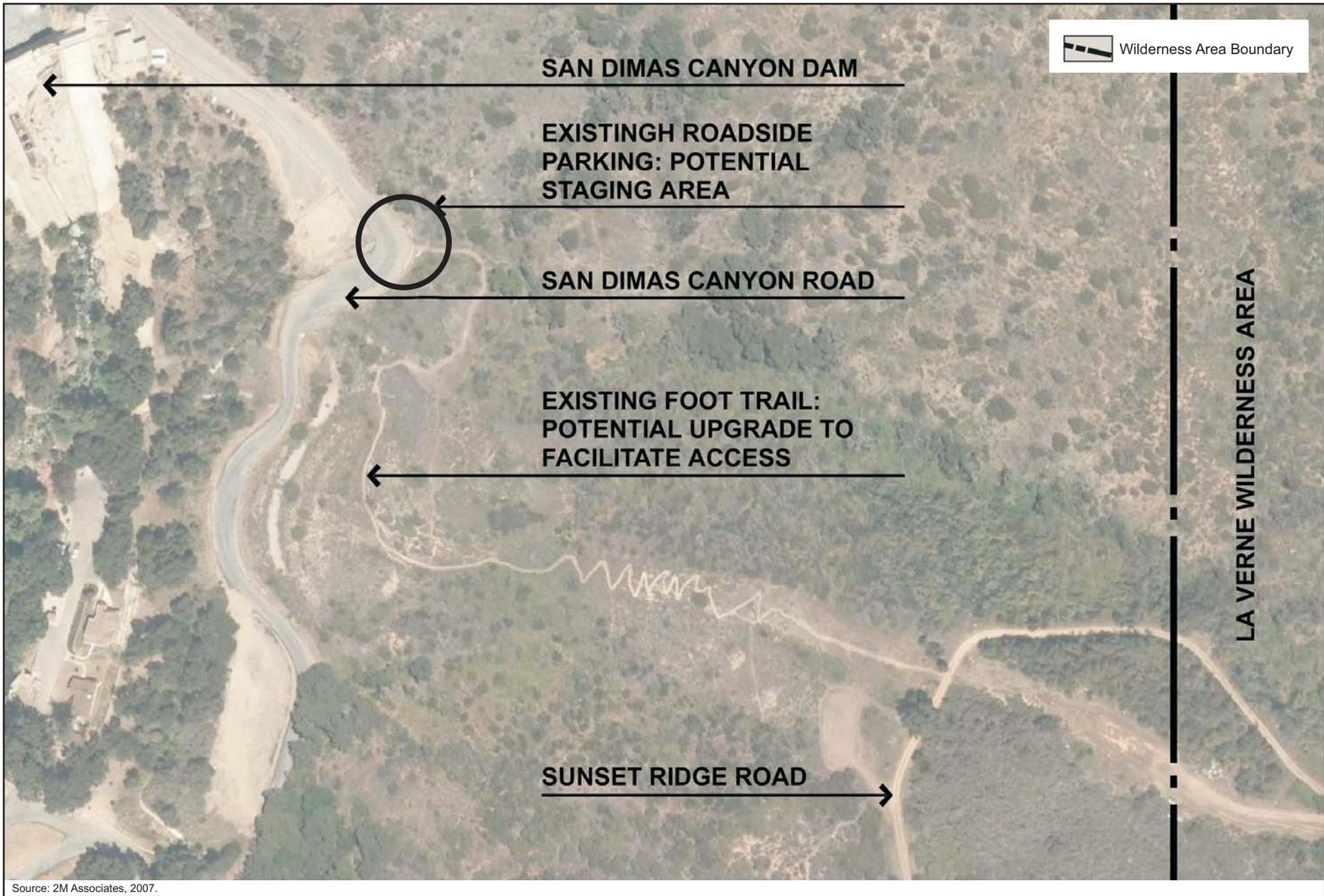
PLEASE NOTE

**USE OF THE LA VERNE WILDERNESS AREA IS RESTRICTED TO LIMITED TIMES.
THIS GATE WILL BE LOCKED 1 HOUR BEFORE SUNSET UNTIL 1 HOUR AFTER SUNRISE.**

negative effect on the local neighborhood and is not a part of the Management plan. However, the location of an existing “unofficial” staging area and access trail leading to Sunset Ridge Road is shown in Figure 10, *Potential San Dimas Canyon Road Access Opportunity*. Based on a preliminary discussion with a representative from Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation, the property being used to stage and leave the road is owned by Los Angeles County Flood Control, and their permission would be needed. Such a facility should not interfere with flood control operations and would require further discussion with flood control authorities (personal communication with Robert Edelman, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, February 2008).

Controlling public access will also require that a number of actions be taken to protect natural resources, provide public safety, and implement a good-neighbor approach to for public use. These are primarily targeted at seasonal closures of the Wilderness Area due to fire and flood hazards, limiting public access to one entry point with lockable gates, limiting use to daytime hours only, and installing adequate fencing and signage to prevent / discourage the public from wandering onto private property.

- **Action** – Close area to public access during potential rain periods.
- **Action** – Close area to public access between July 01 and October 31 and during periods of high and extreme fire danger (red flag warning days).
- **Action** – Establish area as a no-smoking area.
- **Action** – Develop neighborhood access entrance on Monterey Street.
- **Action** – Limit parking.
- **Action** – Monitor parking on Monterey Street.
- **Action** – Install a lockable gate at Monterey Street entrance to be opened and locked based on fire and flood hazard conditions.
- **Action** – Install signage clearly designating rules and prohibited uses at all entrances.
- **Action** – Limit area use from one hour after sunrise to one hour before sunset.
- **Action** – Provide no picnic or restroom facilities.
- **Action** – Require groups of over 10 individuals to obtain a use permit.



Source: 2M Associates, 2007.

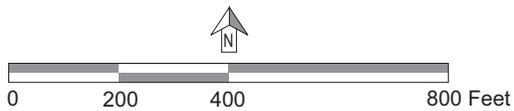


Figure 10
 Potential San Dimas Canyon Road
 Access Opportunity

- **Action** – Install public access control fencing along selected locations of Sunrise Ridge Road and indicate with signage “Wilderness Area – No Public Access”.
- **Action** – Install signage and /or railings along trail restricting public access to restoration areas during the establishment period and to riparian habitat along the Marshall Creek drainage.
- **Action** – Include a 100-foot buffer between public access trails and existing backyard private property lines.
- **Action** – Install security fencing at Wilderness boundary parallel to Monterey Street where not already existing.
- **Action** – Install railings that will not restrict flood waters within Canyon bottom along private property lines with signage indicating “Wilderness Area Boundary”

With reference to limited parking, two options will be considered. Option 1 would be to install street signage which provides curbside parking for only a few visitor vehicles. Option 2 would entail the redesign of the existing Via Vista spur road to provide visitor parking for a few vehicles and a more formal entrance to the Wilderness Area. In either case, it will be important to monitor parking at and near the entrance and police it, as necessary (i.e., ticket any parking violators), to enforce the limited parking called for in the Management Plan.

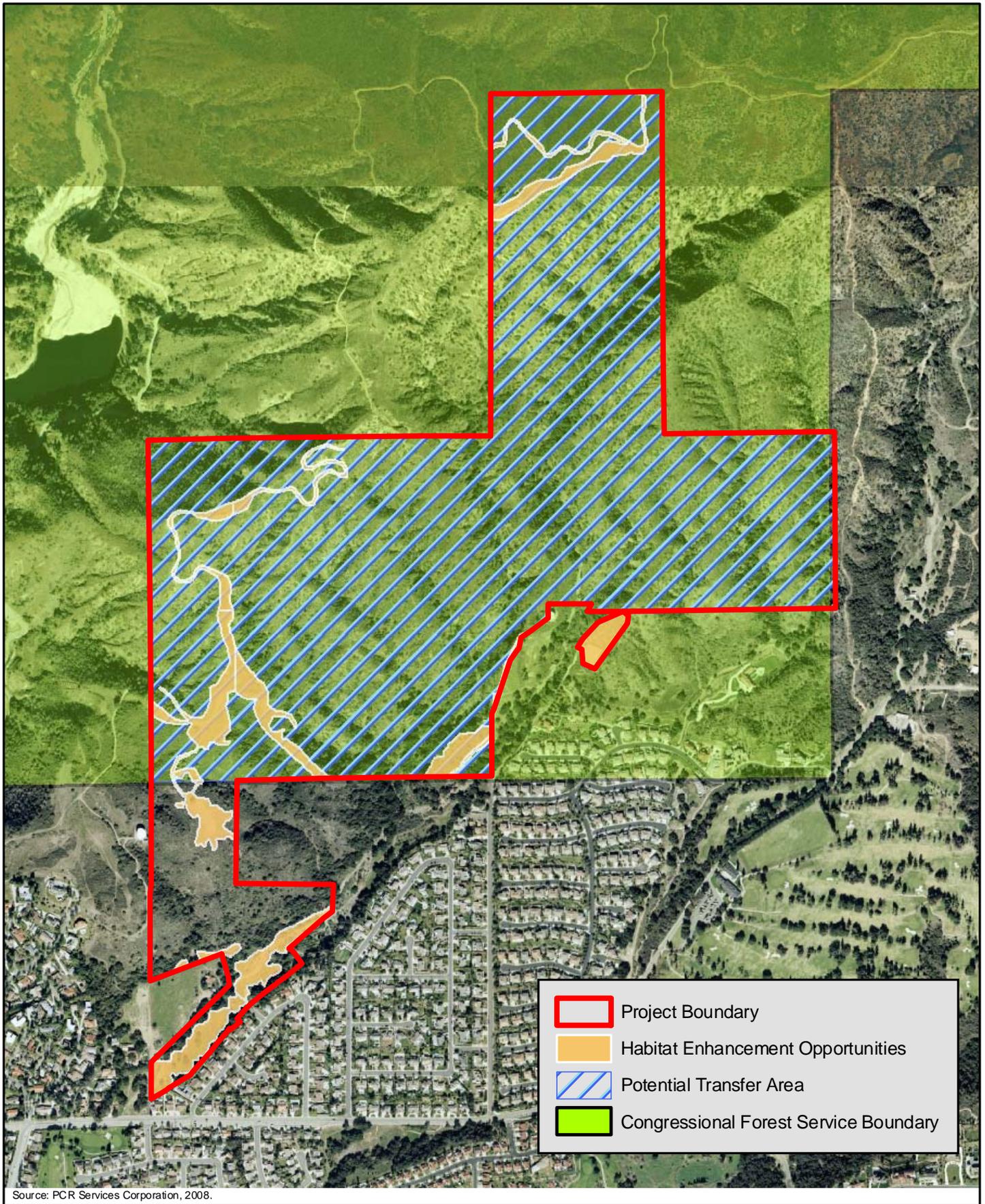
Public access and use of the Wilderness Area will require active management and maintenance, and implies added obligations for the City. To the extent the City can, it will pursue opportunities to share and reduce these obligations and their associated costs. The Management Plan will also be updated based on changes in surrounding use and ownership. Finally, if the City is to implement a Management Plan for the Wilderness, it should assure adequate funding is provided in the City’s budget or by outside sources. The Management Plan does provide for phased implementation as a means to spread out improvement costs.

- **Action** – Actively pursue an agreement with the National Forest Service to transfer that portion of the Wilderness Area property within the federal jurisdictional boundary to its ownership and management responsibility.

- **Action** – Evaluate a management contract with the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Ranger Staff to provide patrol services.
- **Action** – Initiate a weekend volunteer watch / patrol program for the Wilderness Area.
- **Action** – Establish a neighborhood watch program and hot line to report any problems associated with public use of the Wilderness Area.
- **Action** – Periodically review and update the Management Plan.
- **Action** – Consider resource management actions as potential for City project mitigation and / or mitigation by outside parties.
- **Action** – Pursue funding from watershed and wildlife habitat conservation grant programs for resource management elements of the management Plan.
- **Action** – Pursue funding from watershed conservation, “watchable” wildlife, and park / open space grant programs.

Preliminary indications are that transfer of a portion of the Wilderness Area property to the National Forest has merit to pursue (see Figure 11, *National Forest Service Congressional Boundary*). Based on a conversation with a Forest Service representative, the Forest Service is required to consider receiving ownership of non-federal lands within their jurisdictional / congressional boundary (personal communication with Marty Dumpus, U.S. Forest Service Recreation and Lands Staff Officer, May 2008). Moreover, the representative suggested the Forest Service would be interested in receiving the land as a donation. It is not known what, if any, compensation the City could receive from the transfer. This will be the subject of negotiations with the Forest Service.

A representative of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Ranger Staff felt the consolidation of ranger / patrol service between that park and the La Verne Wilderness Area made good sense and could be made to be a workable arrangement (Pam Stevenson, Park Ranger, February 2008). By cost-sharing this service, it is feasible that the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Ranger Staff could also patrol the La Verne Wilderness Area. In order to pursue this option, the City will contact the appropriate entity at the City of Claremont.



Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2008.

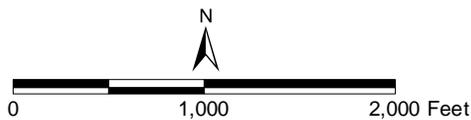


Figure 11
**National Forest Service
 Congressional Boundary**

Implementation

In its implementation of the Management Plan the City must consider any applicable regulatory compliance and the capital improvement and on-going maintenance costs.

Regulatory Framework

The potential exists for implementation of the Management Plan to require compliance with regulatory programs at the State and federal level. At this point, it is assumed the Management Plan's adoption will require compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This will be in the form of the preparation and public review of the appropriate environmental documentation wherein potentially significant adverse impacts are analyzed and, for those impacts determined to be potentially significant, mitigation above and beyond the Management Plan actions are provided for and documented. Following certification of the document by the City, the mitigation measures will be monitored to ensure they are carried out.

The State may also claim its jurisdiction over any drainages and the associated riparian habitat encroached upon by any elements of the Management Plan. At this time, the placement of the three woody debris racks in tributary drainages, any trail crossings of drainages, and restoration / enhancement activities in such areas could trigger the need to obtain a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement with the California Department of Fish and Game pursuant to Section 1600 of the State Fish and Game Code.

Similarly, any alterations to drainages claimed to be jurisdictional by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (normally the area within the ordinary high water mark of a drainage) may trigger federal regulation pursuant to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. Depending on the size of jurisdictional area affected, either a pre-construction notification or nation-wide permit is likely to be required.

Neighbor Involvement

The location and design of boundary line public access control fencing parallel to Monterey Street will be coordinated with adjoining neighbors. Should the City elect to move forward with the redesign of the existing Via Vista spur road off of Monterey Street to provide limited visitor parking, a more formal entrance, and access to the Canyon Bottom of the Wilderness Area that would accommodate the guidelines of the

Americans with Disabilities Act, the detail design of the area will be developed in consultation with immediately adjacent neighbors.

Costs

Projected capital improvement costs to provide flood protection, enhance natural habitat values, and offer new and enhanced visitor experiences consistent with the goals and objectives of the Management Plan are between \$2,000,000 and \$2,500,000 (in 2008 dollars).

Priorities

General implementation priorities for individual goals are presented in the table below.

| General Implementation Priorities for Individual Goals | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| GOAL | PRIORITY | | |
| | Years 1 to 2 | Years 3 to 5 | Beyond 5 Years |
| 1. Manage stormwater, sediment and woody debris | | X | |
| 2. Provide wildfire hazard management | X | X | |
| 3. Preserve and enhance habitat, corridors, and diversity | X | X | |
| 4. Provide a tranquil and safe visitor experience. | | X | X |
| 5. Provide controlled public access | | X | X |
| 6. Cooperate with other agencies in management of Wilderness Area | Ongoing | | |
| 7. Provide sufficient on-site presence to manage Wilderness Area. | Ongoing | | |
| 8. Update Management Plan to reflect changes in surroundings. | | | X |
| 9. Obtain sufficient funds to implement Management Plan | | | |
| Regulatory Compliance (CEQA and permitting) | X | | |

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