

NEWS

From County Supervisor Paul
Biane

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Residents Invited to Explore the New North Etiwanda Preserve

RANCHO CUCAMONGA – San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Paul Biane invites residents to explore the North Etiwanda Preserve on Saturday, Oct. 3 during a community event to mark the completion of a \$1.6 million enhancement project at the foothill habitat preservation area.

A dedication ceremony is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. at the preserve entrance located at the northern terminus of Etiwanda Avenue in Rancho Cucamonga. Afterward, residents can venture into the North Etiwanda Preserve to get a firsthand look at new signage, shade areas, trail improvements, informational kiosks and more.

“Our goal is to educate visitors about the preserve and its unique habitat so they understand this is a special place that deserves our protection,” said Biane, who spearheaded the effort to expand and enhance the North Etiwanda Preserve with the San Bernardino County Department of Special Districts.

The project aims to accommodate passive use of the preserve’s trails in order to prevent illegal and damaging uses such as off-road vehicles, shooting, and illegal dumping.

“The presence of visitors who care about protecting this area will help weed out unlawful uses that have damaged the preserve over the years,” Biane said. “Visitors are going to be our eyes and ears when it comes to defending the preserve against detrimental activities.”

Some of the North Etiwanda Preserve's unique features include the remnants of an early water delivery system, a stone chimney once part of an early settler's home, a freshwater marsh, an antique water pumping station, an old U.S. Geological Survey water gauging station, and an area where the Sierra Madre fault line is visible.

The Preserve also includes a Native American interpretive area overlooking Etiwanda Canyon. The County Special Districts Department worked closely with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Tribal Government to provide visitors with information about Native American culture and first peoples of the region.

"In recognition of shared ancestral lands between the Serrano and Gabrielino-Tongva people, it is important to preserve this pristine area of San Bernardino County for all people who call this place home," San Manuel Tribal Chairman James Ramos said.

The North Etiwanda Preserve was established as a habitat preservation area on February 10, 1998, when the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors accepted 762 acres of mitigation land from San Bernardino Associated Governments for impacts related to construction of the 210 Freeway.

The original 762 acres acquired for the North Etiwanda Preserve consists primarily of Riversidian Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub and was purchased by SANBAG to be preserved as natural habitat for impacts to the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and similar habitat consumed by the development of the freeway.

About 440 acres have been added to the North Etiwanda Preserve since then. At the direction of Supervisor Biane, a new open space district known as County Service Area (CSA) 120 was created to encompass the entire 1,200 acres so it can be maintained by the San Bernardino County Department of Special Districts. CSA 120 also allows the addition of more land to the North Etiwanda Preserve.

"My goal is to create a habitat corridor that stretches over four miles and encompasses 3,000 acres or more across the northern foothills, connecting the preserve to the San Bernardino National Forest," Supervisor Biane said. "This will limit future development in areas north of Rancho Cucamonga, and it will provide a huge expanse of habitat for species in the preserve."

A conservation easement, management plan, and cooperative management agreement between SANBAG, San Bernardino County Special Districts, Caltrans, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were adopted to ensure ongoing protection of this rare habitat and its inhabitants.

The North Etiwanda Preserve Commission, which holds public meetings on a quarterly basis, oversees management of the preserve.

The North Etiwanda Preserve has been fully coordinated with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and complies with all of the rules set forth during the creation of the preserve.

The project was the subject of an environmental study that fully complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and was reviewed by both U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the California Department of Fish and Game. An official from Fish and Game toured the preserve to monitor and provide advice during the County's enhancement project.

In addition, the county began conducting wildlife surveys in the North Etiwanda Preserve in 1990 to track and study species and habitat. County biologists have also used the preserve to learn more about the impacts fires have on the habitat and species there.

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