



Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group

❖ ACTRWG Steering Committee

Getting our A.C.T. together... from Arroyo Seco to Eaton Canyon

AltadenaTrails.org

Reply to: gaboon@sbcglobal.net

2023 February 18

Kathryn Barger
Supervisor, Fifth District
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
500 W Temple St, Room 869
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisor Barger,

We are writing to convey serious concerns expressed by members of the Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group (ACTRWG) at our open December, January, and February meetings about the plans announced for the acquisition of the Nuccio Nursery property by Polytechnic School of Pasadena.

First, while some ACTRWG attendees live near the Nuccio property, the concerns expressed here are shared by trail users well beyond the Chaney Trail Neighborhood, and extending into adjoining communities whose residents use, enjoy, and benefit from the Altadena Crest Trail (ACT).

Second, the group understands that the Nuccio family has a clear right to sell their land and receive a fair price.

Third, the group strongly encourages alternatives to the Polytechnic School acquisition for a sports center that would conserve and protect the entire portions of the Nuccio parcels that are wild and undeveloped. The ACTRWG asks that you and County staff actively assist in developing and seeking funding for such alternatives, e.g., from State and County sources as part of the means to preserve this area for public benefit and resource protection.

Fourth, the group finds that the proposed stadium, lighting, multiple sports fields, public address system, parking, excess traffic, fire hazard, and other aspects of the proposed sports complex would be incompatible with the immediate proximity of the Altadena Crest Trail that transits across and -- on the East side of the La Vina tract, adjacent to -- the Nuccio properties.

Fifth, the negative impact of Polytechnic's proposed sports complex goes far beyond that of the pre-existing Nuccio Nursery operations, and would represent a serious encroachment on the Altadena Foothills and Arroyos Significant Ecological Area (SEA). In addition to humans, the Altadena Crest Trail is used by a variety of wildlife, including deer, bears, bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes, grey foxes, and raccoons. This use as a wildlife corridor would be seriously impacted by the proposed project, putting greater stress on neighboring natural areas, and chipping away at the existing SEA. Measures likely to be implemented in the name of protecting the hundreds of children, staff, and visitors at the proposed facility would impact local wildlife, including use of turf chemicals, toxic vertebrate poisons, lethal traps, wildlife-excluding walls, and fences. Intense night lighting, amplified sound announcing games and other events, crowd noise, traffic, exhaust fumes, etc., would produce further environmental impacts. Most of these same features will also negatively impact the

pastoral outdoor experiences of the numerous human users of the popular trail, including hikers, dog walkers, trail runners, horse riders, mountain bikers, amateur astronomers, birders, and others.

Sixth, we are highly concerned about the likely negative impacts any major development on the Nuccio parcels could have by impinging on, cutting off, or creating great disturbance to any segment of the Altadena Crest Trail for a period of time during construction, for the safety of children, and/or due to any disputed trail access, blocked viewshed, or easement. One need only recall that the public was promised a public trail through and/or immediately around the La Viña development in the mid-1990s. Only now is the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority building one half (the eastside segment) of that promised trail. Re-establishing connectivity across the so-called La Viña Gap is unlikely to happen within 25 years of when public access was blocked, which resulted in a costly and time-consuming multi-party legal dispute. It was, in fact, the existence of the La Viña Gap that resulted in formation of this Altadena Crest Trail *Restoration* Working Group by the Board of Supervisors in February 2003. We've been working to restore the historic through-trail exactly twenty years now, and the job is nowhere near complete!

Seventh, the near-daily presence of numerous children and young adults inexperienced with living in what CalFire has designated a very high fire danger zone would increase the risk of a fire starting, accidentally or out of ignorance, with consequences we all understand and fear, far beyond the proposed new sports complex. One can imagine a student or two, slipping into the bushes or onto the trail off the immediate campus, to "experiment" with matches or fireworks...

Given the rising incidence of mental and physical health problems here in Los Angeles County and nationwide; and the fact that Altadena has been found to be a high percentage "park poor community" compared to the County's own planning standards, we strongly advocate that you and County staff assist in exploring and implementing an alternative acquisition of the Nuccio land by an entity(ties) that will enhance, or at least maintain, the important conservation values of the nearly 80 acres of largely natural Nuccio property at the important gateway to the Altadena Foothills and Angeles National Forest.

Two nearby improvements to the Altadena Crest Trail advocated by this group to the Department of Parks and Recreation will enhance the myriad public use values of the ACT, including where the historic trail transits the Nuccio parcels:

- Transferring the Shady Lane along Loma Alta from DPW Flood Control to the Department of Parks and Recreation to preserve mature trees and create a new, safer trail connection; and,
- Accepting the offered transfer of the old Crib Trail north of the Loma Alta Park Gymnasium from the La Vina HOA to Parks and Recreation;

We stand ready to assist, advocate, and provide advice to County and other personnel regarding how best to maintain and enhance the value of the Altadena Crest Trail for Altadena, our neighboring communities, and visitors.

On behalf of all ACTRWG participants and users of our trails,
thank you for supporting this valuable community resource,

[e-copy]
Robert Staehle, Chair

[e-copy]
Steve Messer, Vice-Chair

cc:
Sussy Nemer, Field Deputy for Altadena
Altadena Heritage
Altadena Town Council
Altadena Wild
Norma Garcia, LA County Department of Parks and Recreation