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August 26, 2014

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## **Two New Groups Join Lawsuit Against Brea**

**Brea, California**—Two new public interest groups, the Sierra Club and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), have joined the lawsuit challenging the City of Brea's approval of the Madrona housing tract. The original lawsuit was filed in early July by Hills For Everyone and Friends of Harbors Beaches and Parks after the Brea City Council approved the 162 unit project in June.

Eric Johnson, Chair of the Puente Hills Task Force of the Sierra Club, remarked, "When dangerous land use decisions are made that will destroy natural lands, waste our precious drinking water, and put people at risk, those decisions must be challenged. The Sierra Club is proud to be part of the group that is seeking to overturn this irresponsible decision."

Citing concern over the loss of 1,400 oak and walnut trees and their associated habitat as well as the precedent set by the City's Madrona decision, Celia Kutcher, Conservation Chair of the Orange County Chapter of CNPS stated, "We've found that pursuit of this lawsuit is necessary and proper in order to protect the legal rights of its members that relate to CNPS' public benefit mission and goals."

The Madrona project (formerly Canyon Crest) has been troubled for 14 years, with the developer stopping and starting the approval process. Just before a final decision could be made by the Brea City Council in 2008, the project site burned down in the Freeway Complex Fire. The original developer was then foreclosed on by the deed holder, Old Standard Life Insurance, itself in bankruptcy. The State of Idaho appointed a trustee to pursue final approvals.

Opponents testified about numerous traffic impacts that cannot be mitigated on the often congested Carbon Canyon Road, the only road in and out of the project area. They also documented about public safety as the ridge top site has burned four times in 30 years. The project requires grading over nine million cubic yards of dirt, "fixing" three major landslides, and using five times the water of an average Brea household to maintain irrigated slopes. This land is also foraging ground for golden eagles, one measure of the wildness that remains in the region.

Hills For Everyone, the non-profit organization that established the 14,100 acre Chino Hills State Park, took the lead in filing a lawsuit in Orange County Superior Court earlier this summer alleging that the project approval violates state and local planning laws and the California Environmental Quality Act.

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For more than 35 years, **Hills For Everyone** has worked to preserve the unique and disappearing landscapes of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor.

Learn more at: [www.HillsForEveryone.org](http://www.HillsForEveryone.org) or [www.StopMadrona.org](http://www.StopMadrona.org)