

Hart, Jared

From: Michelle Waters [michelle@michellewatersart.com]
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2007 10:46 AM
To: Boyd, Darryl
Subject: Wildlife of Coyote Valley

Dear Mr. Boyd,

I am writing out of concern for the wildlife of Coyote Valley. I am a wildlife rehabilitator who sees directly the effects of development on the animals that come in to the center where I work. After reviewing the plan for Coyote Valley it is obvious to me that the plan will not accommodate continued use of the area by wildlife. It is crucial that this situation be remedied because of Coyote Valley's importance as one of two areas where wildlife can migrate into and out of the Santa Cruz Mountains bioregion from the Diablo Range. Coyote Valley is the last best place in Santa Clara County for wildlife to move between two key habitat areas so that Santa Cruz Mountains wildlife populations do not become isolated and thus susceptible to extinction.

My first concern is that since less than 50% of the land in the planning area was accessed by DEIR consultants the DEIR absolutely does not give an all-encompassing and correct view of the environmental effects that the development of Coyote Valley will have. In order to have any value at all much more of the area needs to be accessed and studied.

The DEIR incorrectly assumes that only smaller animals use culverts. This is an incorrect assumption as it has been shown in other areas that mountain lions and other large mammals use culverts. The DEIR also does not meet the standards of the CA Natural Communities Conservation Act. The proposed development will result in increased road kills of badger, bobcats and coyote unless mitigations are put in place. Wild animals need riparian areas and there is too much development proposed adjacent to Coyote Creek for wildlife use.

The northern edge of the valley is an ideal location for a wildlife corridor to protect species such as the badger and the red-legged frog, yet the City proposes to put lighted ball fields there. Lighted ball fields are incompatible with wildlife use. These seasonal wetlands provide important habitat to migratory birds. On Friday, June 15 the Mercury News ran an article in the local section that stated that migratory bird populations are plummeting due to development of their habitat - http://www.mercurynews.com/healthandscience/ci_6147090?nclick_check=1 . We have an opportunity here to not contribute to the demise of migratory bird populations by scrapping the plan to put lighted ball fields in the Laguna Seca and instead keeping this area as wetlands for wildlife use.

Finally, I am very concerned that the project will eliminate existing habitat for the burrowing owl, a species that has taken a beating in the Silicon Valley from development. There is such a tiny amount of burrowing owl habitat left in this valley, and the DEIR calls for paving over most of what is left. As a wildlife rehabilitator and citizen who is greatly concerned about what we are leaving for future generations I find this unacceptable.

Please go back to the drawing board on Coyote Valley and provide more consideration for the wildlife values of this important area, including a wildlife corridor in the northern part of the valley.

Sincerely,
Michelle Waters

art and web design at...
www.michellewatersart.com
www.michellewatersart.blogspot.com
(408) 353-5803 (home)
(831) 359-1219 (cell)