

2 Sunland — Tujunga — La Crescenta
Sun Valley — Burbank. Thursday, February 5, 1981

La Tuna Braves First Storm; Suffers Some Flood Damage

A crosswalk guard at Vinedale Elementary School in La Tuna Canyon has filed hit-and-run charges against the owners of a portable outdoor restroom that slammed into her car as it was swept by raging floodwaters Thursday on La Tuna Canyon Road.

Yvonne Jackson had taken refuge from the rising water of muddy water in her car parked in front of the school during the noon downpour. A city-owned portable sanitation toilet — reported as an "Andy Gumper" — positioned on La Tuna Canyon Road for use by county flood control workers hurtled into

her car, sending her and the car spinning westward down the road.

She was not injured but the car was damaged.

She filed hit-and-run charges because the "outhouse" was mounted on wheels and had a license plate. She is arguing that the City's sanitation department should have anchored the unit to a tree or telephone pole.

"At first she thought it was kind of funny," a friend said. "But then she thought if it had struck one of the children at the school it could have killed him."

Jackson's encounter with the

water-borne outhouse was the closest reported personal injury during Thursday's storm which dumped almost two inches of rain on Sun Valley.

However there was considerable damage to vehicles and property during the hour-long downpour that triggered some flooding and mudslides.

The Elben Way area of La Tuna Canyon was hardest hit in Sun Valley. Residents in and below the Elben Way hillside neighborhood had prepared for the onslaught of floodwaters from two canyons above. But torrents ripped through a

canyon to the east, sent mud over at least one of the yards of at least five the road below.

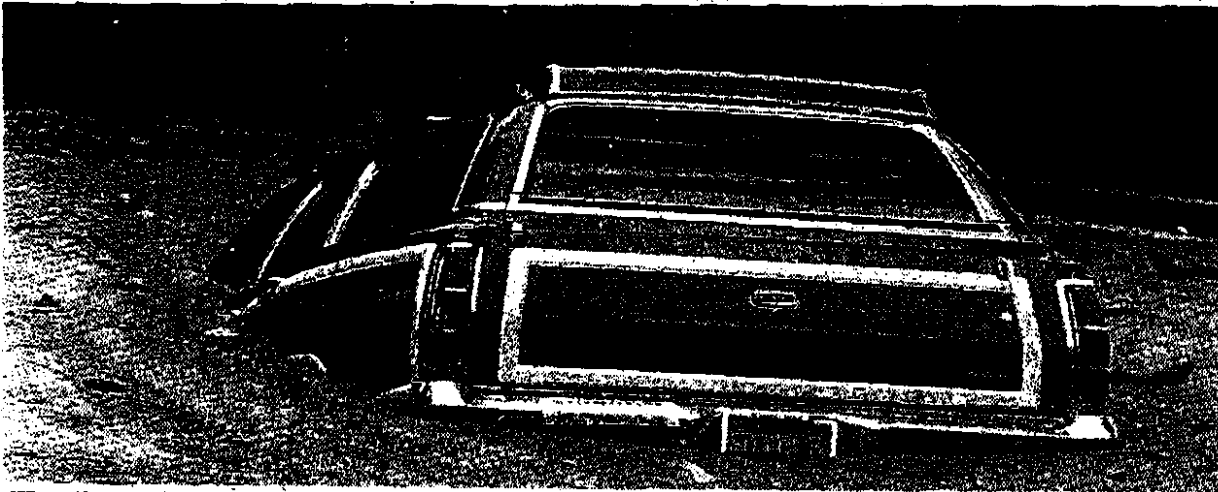
City Street Maintenance worked throughout Thursday and the weekend to clear through to Sunland-Tujunga.

The greatest amount of debris that tumbled down Boulevard in neighboring Canyon from a 23-acre in earlier rains had a swimming pool and live Shirley Appel.

The Appels had built a block wall along the canyon month to divert the flood house. By Thursday at channel was brimming with wall, dangerously close the house again.

Unable to get assistance crews, the Appels had to have the debris hauled.

The two rail and timber in the canyon above the in La Tuna — both built old — held 12 feet of mud back from the homes would have certainly been even in this light storm. To complicate matters storm drains along the Freeway at the Rosemead overpass prompted a line impeding traffic through afternoon. There were injuries reported.

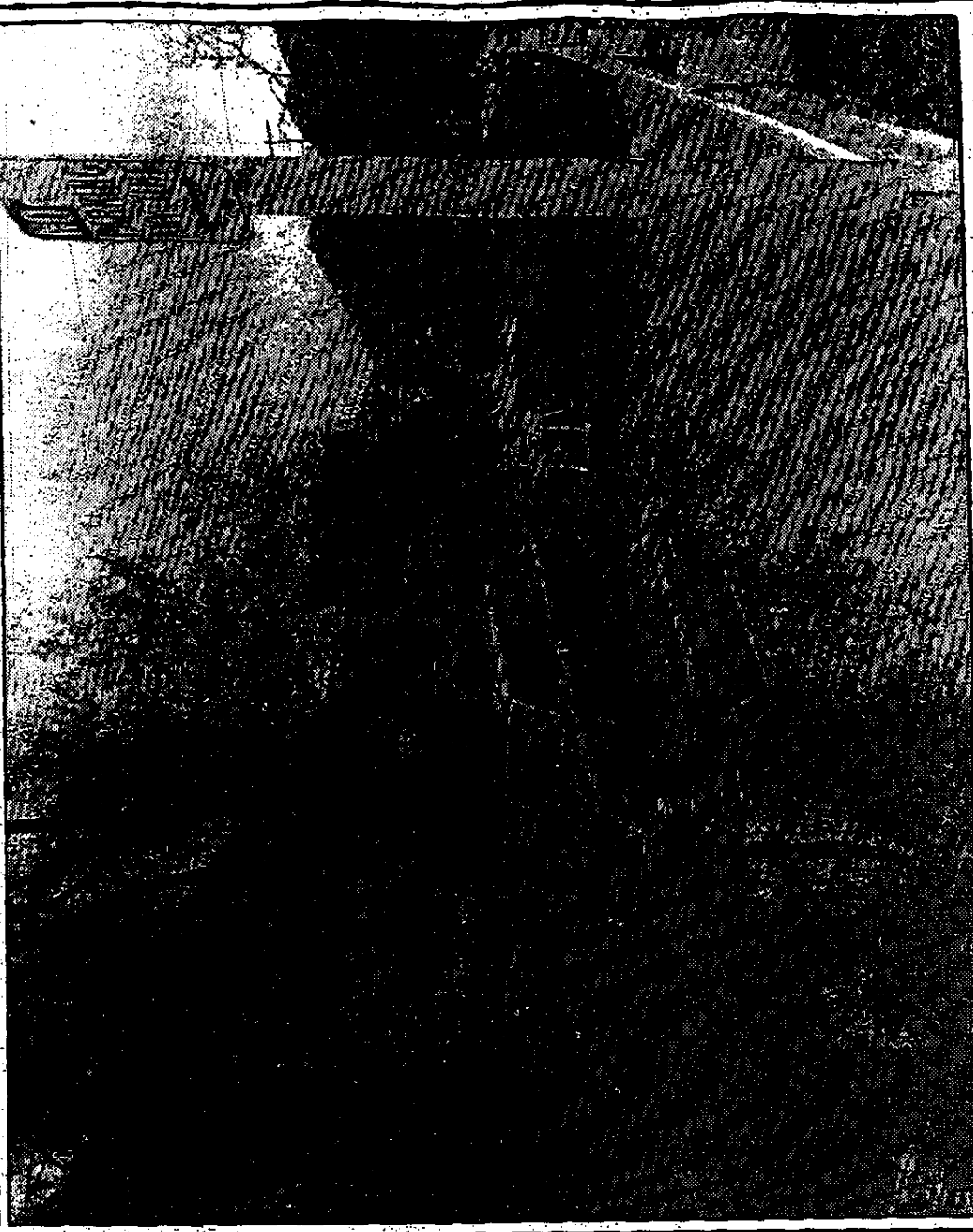


THIS 1970 FORD STATION WAGON, owned by Kathleen Hamlin, was buried in La Tuna Canyon when floodwaters swept through a canyon just east of Elben Way.

Scene Photos by John Simonson

1/25/81

Record-Ledger M-10 Wednesday, March 9, 1983



GROUNDING — A landslide on La Tuna Canyon Road closed for a while last week as cleanup operations buried this truck up to its bumpers. The road was completed.

Staff photo by Jay Ham

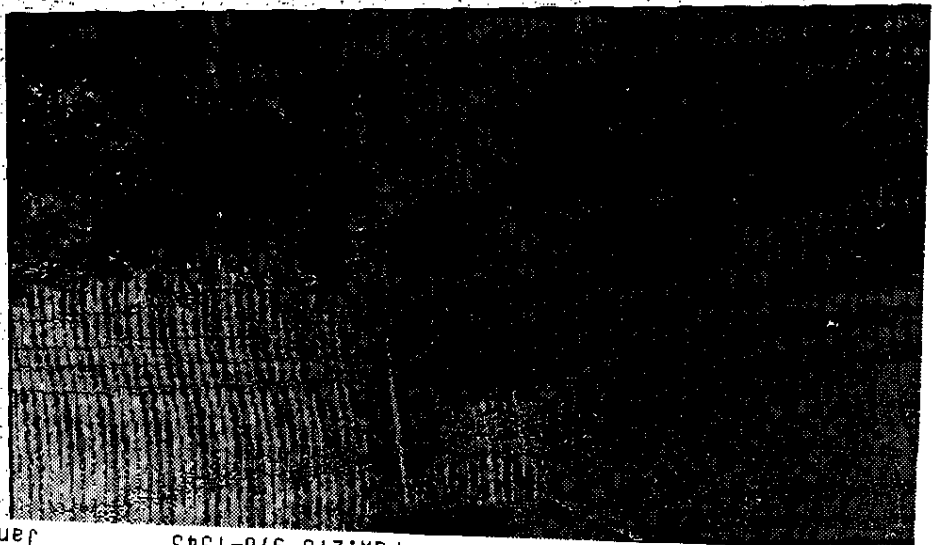
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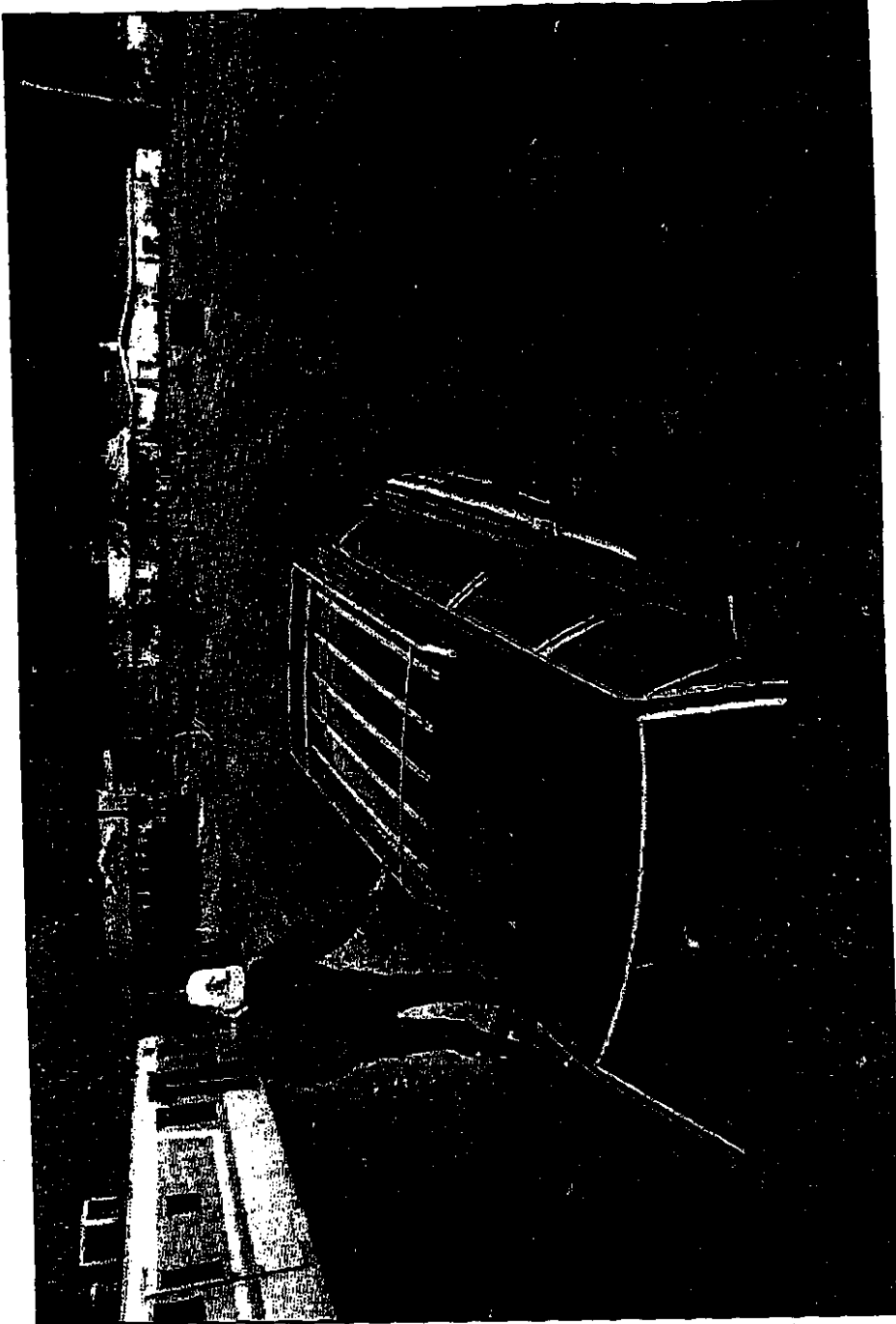
P. 20

Jan 2 2004 9:53

Fax: 213-978-1343

PLANNING/SUB/ENV





Debris flow, La Tuna Canyon, 1984

WHAT YEARS?

RECORD-LEDGER/SCENES

First Storm; Good Damage

A homeborne outhouse was the reported personal injury during Thursday's storm which dumped two inches of rain on Sun-

never there was considerable damage to vehicles and property during the hour-long downpour that created some flooding and slides.

The Elben Way area of La Tuna was hardest hit in Sunland-Tujunga. Residents in and below the Elben Way hillside neighborhood were prepared for the onslaught of waters from two canyons. But torrents ripped through a

canyon to the east, sending tons of mud over at least one car and into the yards of at least five homes on the road below.

City Street Maintenance crews worked throughout Thursday night and the weekend to clear the road through to Sunland-Tujunga.

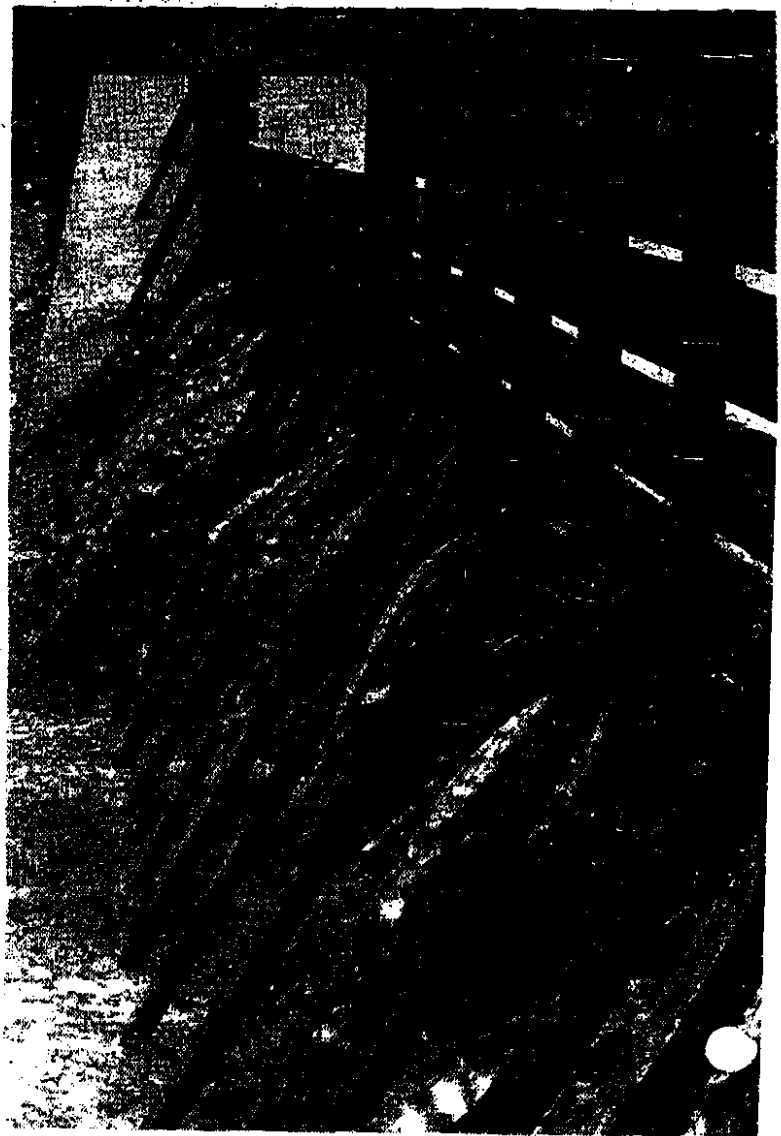
The greatest amount of mud and debris that tumbled down Roscoe Boulevard in neighboring Chandler Canyon from a 23-acre canyon that in earlier rains had claimed the swimming pool and living room of Shirley Appel.

The Appels had built a 50-foot-long block wall along the channel last month to divert the flow from their house. By Thursday afternoon the channel was brimming the 6-foot wall, dangerously close to flooding the house again.

Unable to get assistance from city crews, the Appels had to pay \$600 to have the debris hauled away.

The two rail and timber structures in the canyon above the Roundhouse in La Tuna — both barely 48 hours old — held 12 feet of mud and debris back from the homes below, which would have certainly been damaged even in this light storm.

To complicate matters, clogged storm drains along the Golden State Freeway at the Roscoe Boulevard overpass prompted a 10-car collision impeding traffic throughout the afternoon. There were no serious injuries reported.



BARELY 48 HOURS OLD, this rail and timber structure finished Tuesday afternoon worked to design, releasing water pressure and holding back tons of mud and debris 12 feet deep from roaring down on the home below on Fire Road West in La Tuna Canyon.



Just east of Elben Way.

Photos by John Simonson

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PLANNING/SUB/ENV

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The City will not dig you out, and soupy mud is real heavy on the shovel. The widow at the corner of Moy Lane & Glenties Lane was trapped although her garage was only a foot away from the portion of the street that the bulldozers cleared. She couldn't even get her gate open so that she could walk out and take care of the mud. On the other side of Glenties Lane, the fire road (which seems to have been renamed "Woodward" was a complete wash-out. Enormous gulleys were created and much of the mountainside was washed downhill. Across the valley in the wash, the Tujunga River was full of angry fast-moving brown water from bank to bank. You could not imagine it unless you saw it. Homes, people and horses were washed away. The bodies of most of them were never found. The cemetery above Parson's Trail had been washed it. Bones and casket pieces were found spread out willy-nilly in the streets, and in people's yards. Some of them washed nearly to Foothill Blvd. There were gristly souvenirs in Vons's parking lot. It was difficult to get back into the Sunland-Tujunga area once you traveled out of it. There was no freeway. . La Tuna Canyon was washed out, Sunland Blvd turned into a healthy streambed, the bridges at Foothill in the wash were gone, and Wentworth was flooded out. The only clear approach was from the east.

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It was after that terrible flood, and mainly because of that day, that the citizens pushed for a hillside ordinance. The thought was that if you had a big enough piece of property on the steep slopes, hopefully you would have enough land to position the home away enough from the edge of the building pad so that you could lose a bit of that land in a downpour without having to lose your whole house. When houses come off of the side of the mountain, not only is there a sliding house, there is also a house right below it receiving incoming hillside & house. That was the main reason that the **hillside density ordinance** was passed. It was put into effect to **save property and lives**.

Unfortunately, as humans, we seem to need reminders to make us take care of ourselves. The recent tragedy in Waterman Canyon. Yes, it can happen even to you. What a horrible way to die. We mock their death for the sake of a few dollars of immediate profit if we do not insist that houses built on steep slopes are not safe in earthquakes, hard rains, floods, and landslides. The soil that is still on the side of the mountains has proved to be resistant to stresses by virtue of still being on the side of the mountain. Tinkering with the lay of the land may prove to be disastrous to the homes in

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the new subdivision, and disastrous to the people living below them. The price tag on a beautiful view can be high indeed.

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4. Which brings me to the next reason that I think that this development is a mistake. These people are not going to be the La Tuna Canyon kind of people. They are going to have great big houses on teeny-tiny lots. Houses like that were allowed into Tujunga, just below the National Forest. They look so stupid, and so out of touch with the surrounding neighborhood. They all are covered with beige stucco, and they are so close together that they look like a wall. One of the local descriptors for the development is: "rich man's ghetto." Why on earth would anyone in La Tuna Canyon want a development like that in the middle of our scenic drive up the canyon? This is a horse-keeping area with very large lots. This area appeals to a certain kind of person, and those tacky-tacky house dwellers just aren't going to be that kind of person. We have paid darn good money to be in an animal keeping area. All across the San Fernando Valley, horse neighborhood after horse neighborhood has been overcome by developments. The South Sunland neighborhood that I used to live in had horses all up and down the street in 1975. There were even horses tied up in front of Peppy's Pets Supplies. I seem to remember a hitching post. Soon after the freeway was built, the deer began to starve out, and there was nowhere to ride a horse anymore. Well, you could still ride up all the way to the cross. Whoopie! Horse people gave up their horses, boarded them somewhere, or moved. Also, like I said, the deer began to starve out. One emaciated doe left her dead fawn right in the middle of the street, right in front of our driveway. The doe wandered off into the neighborhood. I hope that she found some green food before the dogs discovered her. **I have already lost one horse neighborhood**; I don't want to loose another. My friend Kelley bought a home in Sylmar so she could keep her horses on her property. So many developments have gone in that Kelley was forced to board her Paso in Lakeview Terrace. It isn't safe to ride on a public street with a horse. People who are not animal people don't know that if your honk your horn because a horse is in the way, you can quite literally kill someone.

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Once we allow developers to build big houses on tiny lots in the Canyon, our way of life is over. Gee, Maude, how many ways do you think that we could split up this old ranch and make a fortune?

165-5

5. Allowing a development in the Western Verdugos would be **destroying a beautiful, surprisingly untouched natural area.** It is untouched, because it is extremely steep, and difficult to reach. Take, for example, the wedge of land between the 210 Freeway and La Tuna Canyon. As far as I can figure out, the only way to get access to it would be to go 'way back down the Canyon, find the last house, and ask the property owner if you could walk across his property, so you could walk up the streambed. There is a very nice riparian area there. Just standing on top of the cliff by the beehives, I spotted two different kinds of dragonflies. One was huge, three or four inches. One was small. He had picked a perch, and was making sorties off of it to capture juicy bugs, just like a flycatcher would. I wish that the biology people who inspected the project area had looked at the insect life a little more thoroughly. I know that it takes a long time with continuous water to grow dragonflies. I saw a checker spot butterfly, but I don't know what kind. **Checker spot butterflies are endangered all up and down the Pacific coast,** because they like the same kind of area that the developers do.

165-6

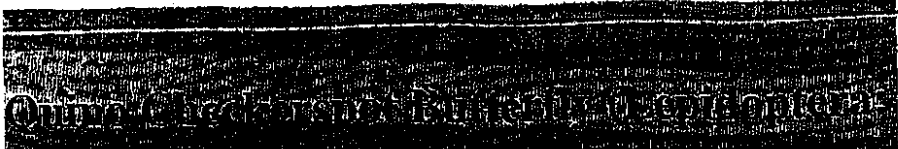
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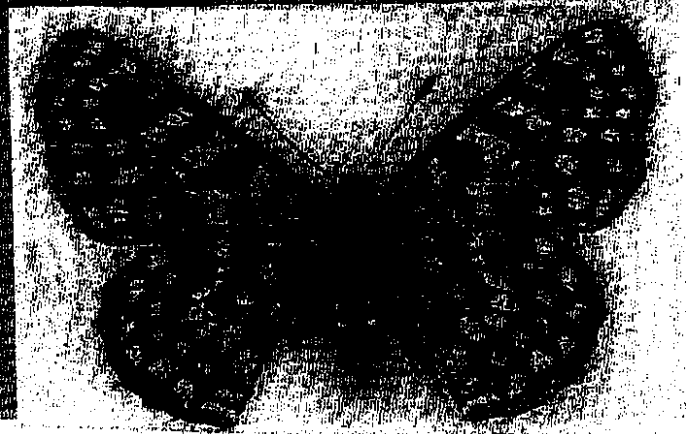
A different ecologist should be chosen to inspect this site because it is obvious to me that the biologists that were chosen really weren't into lifecycle issues. A diseased oak tree seems to be a cause for celebration, because surely we won't object to them cutting diseased trees down! Sycamores are viewed as being useful only as a place for a bird to build a nest... Hey, guys, wake up! They are all part of the food chain. Western Tiger Swallowtail caterpillars need sycamore leaves to feed on. No sycamore. No butterflies. No oaks. No acorns = no blue jays & squirrels. Diseased trees can produce a lot of food and shelter while they take their very long times to die. The biologists identifies many oaks with cavities & calluses indicating possible heart rot. There, however, is no mention as to whether or not they looked into any of the cavities to see what kind of creature would be out of house and home once the tree was chopped down. While the tree is dying, the insects are all over it, making sure that the tree is turned into

165-8

INSERT 5A



(Nymphalidae)



Scientific Name: *Euphydryas editha quino*
Date of listing: January, 1997
Federal Status: Endangered
State Status: None

The Quino checkerspot is the second subspecies of the widespread butterfly *Euphydryas editha* to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (The Bay Checkerspot, *E. e. bayensis*, being the other). This subspecies has undergone a relatively rapid decline. In previous years it has been considered an abundant and fairly widespread subspecies occurring widely in coastal sage scrub habitat in southern California and northern Baja California. However, its range is now limited to a few populations in Riverside and San Diego Counties.

The Quino Checkerspot is a medium sized butterfly with a wingspread of about 3 cm. The wings are a patchwork of brown, red and yellow spots. The Quino checkerspot tends to be darker and redder than other subspecies. Its biology is similar to that of the Bay checkerspot. Adults emerge in the early to mid-spring, mate and lay eggs. The eggs hatch about a week and a half later and the larvae begin feeding. The larvae may use either *Plantago erecta* or *Castilleja exserta*, both of which may be common in meadows and upland sage scrub/chapparal habitat. These plants are annuals which die back in the summer and the larvae thus have a period of summer diapause (physiological inactivity) during which they do not feed. In the late winter and early spring as the plants appear again, the larvae commence feeding again and then enter a short pupal (chrysalis) phase.

The main factor responsible for the butterfly's disappearance is clearly development. Much of the historic sage-scrub habitat has been built over. In areas where the habitat persists there are severe threats posed by grazing and the invasion of exotic plants. There are presently approximately 8 populations of the Quino Checkerspot known, at least one of which occurs in Baja California. All but three are extremely small and are thus at risk of extinction due to natural fluctuations. Of these three, two occur in areas already scheduled for housing development. There are presently plans in place for the management of only a single population, in Riverside County, where its distribution overlaps with that of the endangered Stephen's Kangaroo Rat. However, whether one population can ensure the persistence of the Quino checkerspot is highly debatable.

INSERT 56

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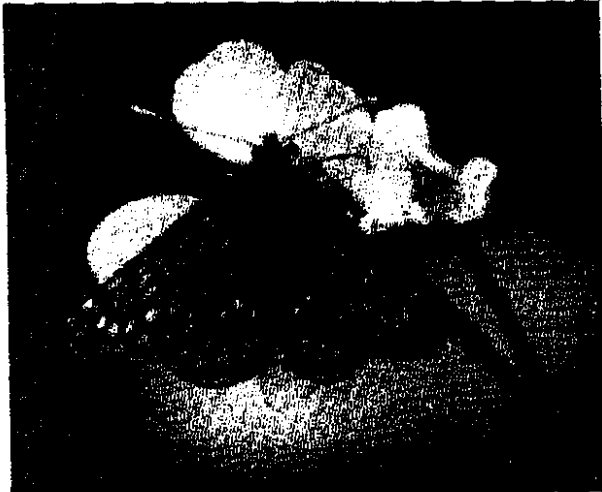


Photo by Eric Hein, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly Proposed as Endangered

News release announcing proposal
(Wordperfect file; click the link then choose
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Photo Gallery

Proposal.pdf
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Proposed Critical Habitat Map

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valuable compost. That gives the insect-eating birds something to eat. Flickers, thrashers, and woodpeckers are really cool birds. I was horrified to discover that these same biologists have actually reduced the value of these trees into dollars and cents. Are we thinking about selling lumber here? The animals don't need dollars and cents. They need a place to live, and the biologists want to cut down 1/3rd of the trees!

165-8

There are lovely colonies of red harvester ants up near the beehives. This is the area where the developer wants to put two bridges. Those bridges will probably need landscaping. Landscaping means irrigation. Irrigation means no harvester ants. Argentine ants will be attracted to the water and kill the harvester ants. No harvester ants equal no horned toads (aren't these **endangered**?) because there won't be anything for them to eat. Horned toads will only eat the harvester ants. There are **horned toads** in the vicinity of the project. Laura Moore, who lived on Glenties Lane in Sunland used to find them every year when the family did their brush clean-up. There was no water there, but the horned lizards were there. She took them into her kindergarten class at Lourdes to show to the children for a few days. Then she would put them back where they belonged. Red harvester ants aren't nearly as dangerous as people think. They are not fire ants. After inspecting the beehive area off of La Tuna, I discovered that an ant had apparently crawled up the inside of my pant legs. He emerged out of my sleeve some 2 hours later. No harm done. There were two cinnamon-colored interesting lizards up by the beehives that I saw, but it was probably too late in the year to find the horned toads out of hibernation.

165-9

It isn't only chain saws and irrigation that will do the natural area in. It's the kids picking up the horned toads, the cats catching and playing with just about everything that lives that is smaller than a cat, and the dogs doing whatever dogs do.

Not to discount what the natural areas inhabitants will do to the people's interests. The coyotes that are displaced by the homes are going to be even more stressed for food and hunting/living areas. They will help to keep the domestic cat population in check. They also get to eat the small dogs. The raccoons will eat the dog kibble in the garage, and cause a ruckus. If someone tries to go after the raccoon with a broom, the raccoon gets to rush the human and at least scare him half to death. If the humans have chickens, the raccoon also gets to tear the chickens apart while they are still alive. Oh, I forgot,

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these aren't going to be chicken people! There will also be children encountering rattlesnakes, which are abundant in the area. That is going to mean a lot of snake deaths, whether the snakes encountered are dangerous or not. We must pray that the humans don't leave the dog kibble out overnight, thus paving the way for more intense forms of interaction. If all of these scenarios seem strange to you, it's because you are a city person who has no experience of living next to a wild area. I lived on the northern slope of the Verdugos for 30 years, and have experienced most of these little dramas. I hope that the city people who are going to move into the huge houses on tiny lots are prepared. I have never had to cope with wild animals living 360 degrees around me! Sooner or later, someone is going to need to call the Animal Control people.

165-10

The **Verdugo Mountains are beautiful**. They among the last natural areas left inside of the City of L.A. One of the last areas of coastal sage scrub and mixed chaparral in the world. They are rugged, and potentially dangerous. They are home to plants and animals of the kind that have been eliminated every where that we have developed.

Developed is a final kind of a word that seems to mean that we can take everything that is there, and use it up. It is developed. Perfect for human use. Finished. The animals and the birds are not going to find another place to live without fighting another creature of their own kind. Just as it is in the world of mankind, all of the good places are already in use. The few trees that are going to be allowed to remain won't have home-making cavities in them to use. There can only be so many coyotes in a restricted space. They are going to be pushed further and further into our neighborhoods. **Foreign predators that thrive upon the presence of man will turn the little remaining undeveloped habitat** on its head. I still remember the kangaroo rats that my cats brought down from the side of the mountain. Another find that they relished was the whole nest of baby king snakes. Most of my cats were dump-offs that people had pushed out of their cars. Surely the cats could make their own way in the mountains. I guess that is what they were thinking. The influence of people oozes out from around their dwellings, changing the ecology permanently for quite a distance around them. . It takes a long, long time in the Southwest for a burned-out house to be slowly reclaimed by nature. That is, if isn't going

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to be rebuilt in the same bad spot and the natural inhabitants of the area haven't been eliminated.

There are so many people who hike into the Verdugos of the eastern side of La Tuna Canyon that it is obvious that people need their wild places to escape to. The parking area has vehicles in it even on a work-week day. The bicyclists enjoy the ride up with the rugged-looking landscape. Where else in the City can you find a little bit of the natural old West? Let the birds, the animal & the plants alone. This area, when coupled with the natural chaparral areas east of La Tuna Canyon, forms a band of natural areas in the Verdugos. A hiking trail would be a valuable addition to the area. Indeed, the fire road on the top of the mountain is supposed to be a part of the **Rim of the Valley Trail**. If humanity absolutely needs that bit of land for some purpose in the future, it will be there. But once the land is developed--it's finished.

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Please see insert 6 A-E

(Reprinted from the *Endangered Species Bulletin* * Vol. XXI No. 4)

[Return to the *Bulletin* * Highlights Page.]

GIS Technology and Sage Scrub Habitat

By Peter A. Stine

The coastal sage scrub (CSS) ecological community is distributed within a narrow band along the Pacific coast of North America, from central Baja California north just into southern Oregon. Within this geographic range, it is composed of several different floristic associations, dominated by California sage (*Artemisia californica*) and other drought-deciduous shrub species. The major concentration of CSS is from south of Point Conception, California, to central Baja California. Coastal sage scrub contains a species-rich and relatively unique biota. It occurs in a biogeographic zone of transition, including elements of more temperate climates as well as elements of more subtropical conditions. The California floristic province, of which CSS is a part, is considered one of the ecological "hot spots" of the world. This also happens to be a region where almost 20 million people now live and where population increases in the near future are expected to be significant. Several species of plants and animals found in this region have been listed as threatened or endangered in the last few years and many more are continuing to decline.

The NCCP Program The simultaneous trend of a growing human population and declining

Wildlife Sanctuary and Wilderness Park Proposed for Verdugo Hills

Verdugo Hills will be set aside as a wild life sanctuary and public park if city planners of Glendale and Burbank have their way. Glendale's principal planner, Robert Robertson, has great expectations for the Verdugos. As he views the 8 3/4-mile-long, 3 1/2-mile-wide range:

"It could become another Griffith Park . . . be developed in a very wonderful way. Ribboned with riding and hiking trails, with hidden canyons set aside for camping.

Chief Attraction
"A scenic drive could be constructed, providing a sweeping view to the sea and beyond to Santa Catalina. In our master plan, Glendale's chief attraction has always been the Verdugo Hills."

This 20 square miles of high country surrounded by hundreds of homes is the largest section of undeveloped land close-in to the Los Angeles Civic Center — but eight miles away. Indians cherished the Verdugos during centuries of pre-recorded history. Mother Cabrini, first American to be canonized a saint by the Catholic Church, knew and loved the hills.

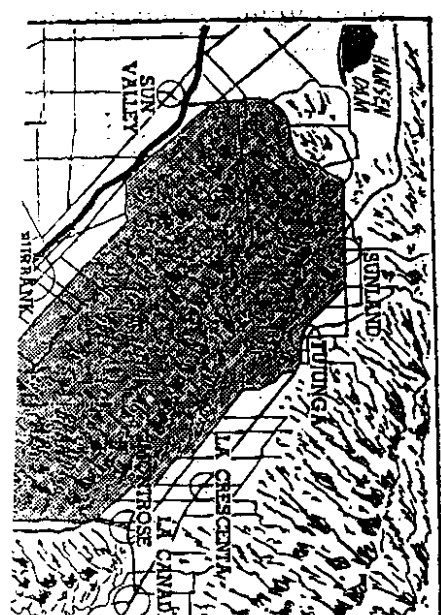
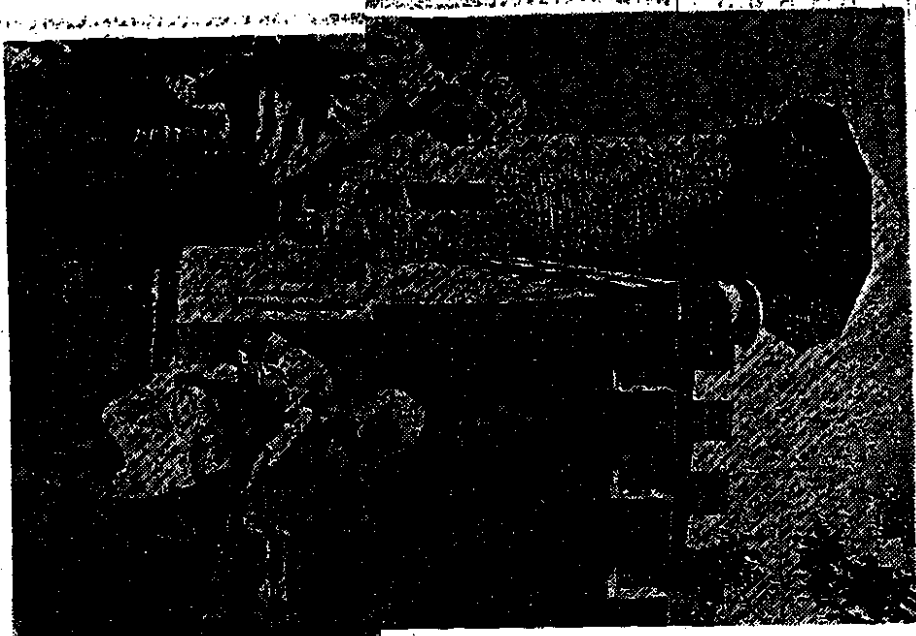
In 1917 this nation's most widely acclaimed nun built a shrine, which still stands, on the highest hill overlooking the orphanage she operated on the slopes of the Verdugo in Burbank.

John Steven McGroarty, California poet laureate, Times columnist and South-

land lies almost entirely behind locked gates. Hikers for years have explored its ridges and canyons, climbed to the top of the two high points, Mt. Verdugo, 3,120 ft., and Mt. Thom, 2,482 ft. Mt. Thom is in Glendale, so too is Mt. Verdugo. Firemen from Glendale's hill patrol and the city of Los Angeles permit hikers to prove the peaks, slopes and canyons at will, as long as the "No Smoking" rule is strictly followed and there's no hunting. One exception to the latter ordinance occurs late in the year when archers are permitted for limited, supervised hunting. La Tuna Canyon, only hills, is home for scores of families that swear there's no other place as delightful in Southern California. "It's far away" without being far away," confides Mrs. Laura Plund of 8600 La Tuna Canyon Rd. During the late 20s and early 30s, secluded Belmont Country Club, a gorgeous golf course, was nestled in the heart of the canyon. Cascading flood waters washed out the fairways and greens in 1937. The country club became St. Elizabeth Retreat, which was finally razed two years ago to make way for a flood control channel. There's a castle in the canyon and a round house built by a spiritualist who spent his lifetime constructing circular structures. Burbank's Slough Park

1952-ET 6 '53

CASTLE IN THE CANYON—Mr. and Mrs. C. Roy Hansen live at the Verdugo Hills castle in a canyon, which may become a new water conservation project. Times photo



1/25/2004

During the late 20s and early 30s, secluded Belmont Country Club, a gorgeous golf course, was nestled in the heart of the canyon. Cascading flood waters washed out the fairways and greens in 1937.

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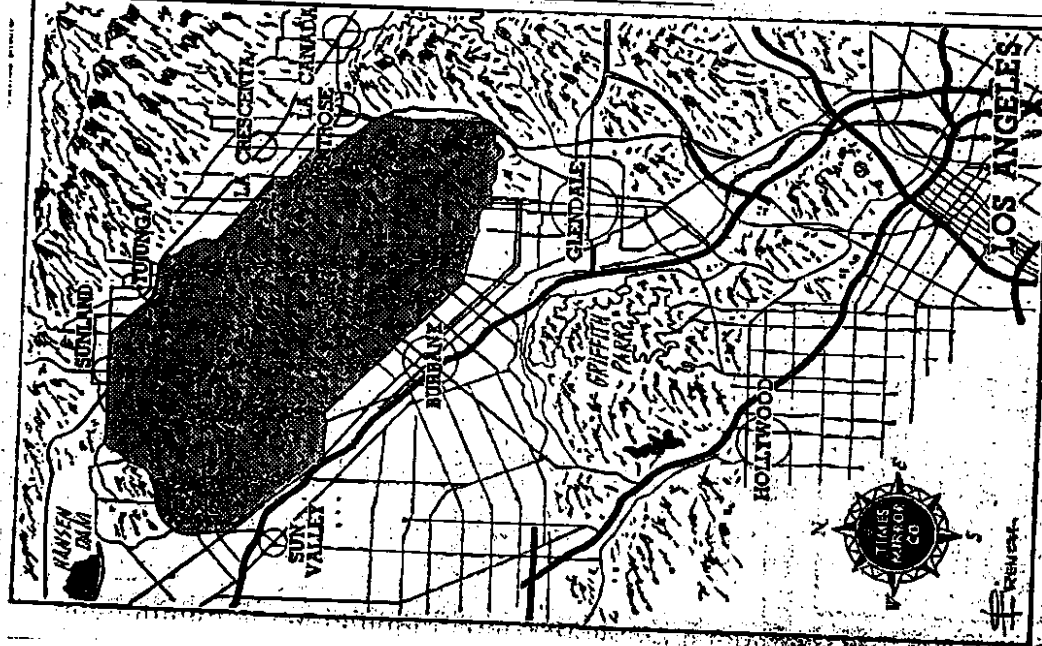
There's a castle in the canyon and a round house built by a spiritualist who spent his lifetime constructing circular structures.

Burbank's Stough Park and De Bell Golf Course, Glendale's Brand Park and Oakmont Country Club are in the lower reaches of the Verdugos.

Leslie C. Brand, known as the father of Glendale, will the city his East Indian mansion, El Miradero

He drives the 40 miles of fire roads in Glendale, and similar roads in the Verdugos of Burbank and Los Angeles each day, checking cisterns, looking for fire hazards and making sure all is well in this wilderness in the heart of the city.

Bill Frownfelter and Bob Keeler of the County Forestry Dept. are kept busy these days widening a network of fire breaks on the mountain.



PROPOSED PARK SANCTUARY—Shaded area located in Glendale, Burbank and Los Angeles may become wildlife sanctuary and park if plans develop. Map by Ollie French.



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REGION'S OPEN SPACES WORTH FIGHTING FOR CONGRESS INTERESTED IN PROTECTING VALLEY MOUNTAINS AS URBAN PARK: [Valley Edition]

Adam B. Schiff and Dianne Feinstein \ Local View. *Daily News*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Mar 31, 2003. pg. N.19

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Abstract (Article Summary)

So they established the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the largest urban park in the nation. This recreation area has served our region well, providing breathtaking vistas, extensive hiking trails and a home for one of the most endangered habitat areas in the world - the Mediterranean Chaparral ecosystem, found only here and in South Africa. This rare habitat and wildlife corridor is teeming with a greater diversity of life than all others but a rain forest.

That is why we have introduced the Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Act, a measure which would call on the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service to study the potential doubling of the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley.

The Rim of the Valley consists of parts of the Santa Monica Mountains, the Santa Susana Mountains, the San Gabriel Mountains, the **Verdugo Mountains**, the San Rafael Hills and adjacent connector areas to the Los Padres and San Bernardino national forests.

Full Text (737 words)

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Adam B. Schiff is a Democratic congressman from Pasadena. Dianne Feinstein is a Democratic U.S. senator from California.

A quarter of a century ago, members of Congress recognized the tremendous potential for population growth in Southern California.

They saw a burgeoning Los Angeles County with millions of new residents flocking to the area to participate in the growing economy, to enjoy the sunny weather, and to be surrounded by the natural beauty of the mountains, forests and ocean.

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