

TO: Those Working on the Hahamongna EIR
August 21, 2012
FROM: Christle Balvin

I am writing in response to the request for comments on the Environmental Impact Report related to Hahamongna Watershed Park.

Over recent years, the City of Pasadena has encouraged development, much of it multi-family. As more people come to live in the City and more open land is converted to condominiums and other development projects, parks and other recreational areas are becoming scarce. That is why the **City's last great open space area** in the Hahamongna/Arroyo Seco watershed area is so important. But its importance goes far beyond the people who live here and their needs. Hahamongna and the watershed are equally, if not more important, to the wildlife and native plants that rely upon its unique configuration of soils, water and temperatures to thrive. But they cannot do so if the park becomes more commercialized with larger roads, additional parking lots and night lights for evening soccer games. If the City of Pasadena is to sustain all that is so special about Hahamongna and the watershed, it must join with its citizen users to achieve and protect that special balance between human needs and those of the wildlife that calls the Arroyo home. Additional soccer fields at Hahamongna skew that balance.

My comments are as follows:

1. **“Yes” to additional soccer fields but “No” to additional fields in Hahamongna:**

Because open space within the city is rapidly diminishing, locations for additional soccer fields for the growing youth soccer movement is difficult to find. In an effort to assist the City in locating potential new sites, community volunteers worked with the City to recommend several locations not at Hahamongna. That list was submitted to Michael Beck, Pasadena City Manager, in July of 2010. Because no real action took place during that year, some of those potential locations no longer exist. But they show the commitment of the community to working cooperatively with the City to find alternative (not Hahamongna) sites for additional soccer fields.

2. **“No” to enlarged parking lots and paved roads designed to accommodate increased traffic into Hahamongna because of additional soccer fields.**

For those who have been following developments at Hahamongna for many years, if not decades, it can not help but be noticed that repeatedly the City seems to put forth plans for enlarged or paved roads. In the current document, there are several references to roads. But the information pertaining to them is inaccurate or as yet unsubstantiated. It is also not clear what their purpose is and whether or not they will be paved. In an effort to prevent increased commercialization of Hahamongna, particularly given the lack of clarity about the roads, they should be stricken from the EIR until the public clearly understands their number, route and composition.

3. **Give special consideration to traffic as a result of work on soccer fields when the County of L.A. is also clearing away dam sediment.**

It appears that the Hahamongna EIR is operating independently of other projects scheduled for the Hahamongna area such as the sediment clean-up to be conducted by LA County Public Works. Should the soccer fields move forward (which I sincerely hope will not happen), there will be increased work-related traffic that should be factored into this Hahamongna EIR. Not only will traffic increase but noise should become a major issue, not something conducive to promoting a healthful environment for birds and wildlife.

4. **Do not remove natural habitat in order to replant it later.**

It has never made any sense to me to remove habitat from Hahamongna in order to accommodate roughly 27-acres of fill needed to create the raised area for the soccer fields. By finding an alternative location for the soccer fields now planned for Hahamongna, the City and its residents can continue to

enjoy the wonderful natural world that exists at Hahamongna. As the grandparent of two young children who attended Tom Sawyer Camp, I know that the habitat scheduled to be removed to accommodate the elevation of the fields, was used by children for camps and forts. One of my grandkids is an avid soccer player who vehemently opposes the habitat removal which she finds impossible to understand. "Why take out what already is there and is loved by the children if you are going to have to replace it later" she asks?

5. Do not impose nighttime lighting in a natural wildlife environment.

The \$1 million grant from the State to be applied to the soccer field project requires nighttime lighting up to 7:00 p.m. This interferes with the natural cycle of the animals, particularly nighttime predators that rely upon the cover of darkness to hunt and sustain themselves. We are placing the needs of one % of our population, its soccer players, above the wildlife that is one of the main reasons people love Hahamongna.

6. Do not use grant money from the State or IRWMP to fund projects for which the grants are not really intended.

Over the years, Hahamongna has seen widespread community opposition to plans to convert its essentially natural parkland to more establishment park-like standards or uses (tot lots, lit fields, larger parking lots, paved roads). After innumerable meetings where the community continues to ask that Hahamongna remain natural, it is clearly time for the wonderful and conscientious staff of the City to go before the Council and request that the community be heard. It is time for an amendment that asks that staff be directed to find an alternative location for the soccer fields now scheduled for Hahamongna. Also, any intention to use Hahamongna for satellite/shuttle Rose Bowl parking should be eliminated once and for all. By resolving the issues of parking, roads and soccer fields, the City can avoid spending more money every so many years on yet another Hahamongna revisionary plan or request. Let's save the City money, save the staff time that could be spent more productively and avoid any future legal problems related to the misappropriation of grant money.

Thank you for considering my comments.