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JANUARY 19

40 acres added to Hellhole Canyon Preserve



After years of effort by the Friends of Hellhole Canyon Preserve the 40-acre Hell Creek Headwaters parcel has been added to the Preserve.

The 40 acres include 34 acres of creek, meadows and foothills, as well as land judged to be critical wildlife corridor.

The process included two public hearings before the Board of Supervisors at which Fifth District Supervisor Bill Horn applauded County support now that escrow has finally closed on the 40-acre Hell Creek Headwaters, championed by the Friends of Hellhole Canyon.

Horn commented: "I believe public lands should be enjoyed by the public. It's always great to see additions and improvements to Hellhole Canyon Preserve for hikers, horseback riders and campers. I appreciate the tremendous cooperation we have had for many years at this special North County site from community leaders and County Parks' staff."

"A key link protecting wildlife and habitat connectivity of the Preserve to open space lands to the east has been preserved!" said Friends president Rick Landavazo, once the acquisition was made final.

The Friends Board of Directors worked with County Parks staff, the property owners and the community to assure conservation of the land, which expands the conservation footprint of the Preserve and creates new hiking and trails opportunities.

The 40-acre parcel was subdivided so that the undeveloped pristine, 34-acre portion could be added immediately to the Preserve. "Because of the long relationship of trust and collaboration we have nurtured with the County Parks staff we were able to economically and efficiently work out complexities surrounding the acquisition" Landavazo said.

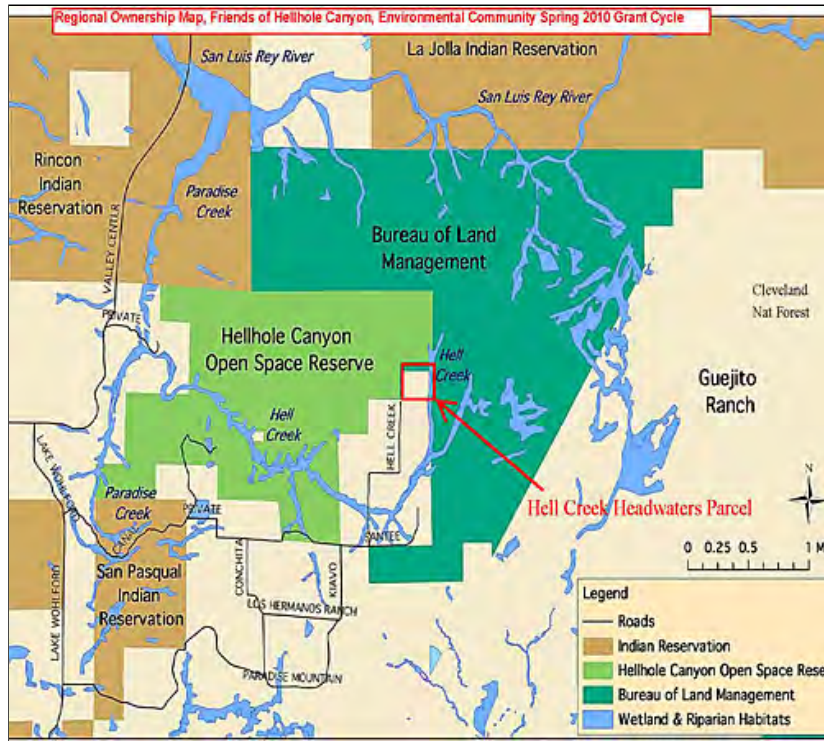
The 34-acre subdivision was paid for with County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) funds, the remaining six acres, which contains a home site, outbuildings and an orchard, was acquired by the Friends.

The Friends' plans to convert the home site into a nature and community center have been put aside due to the high costs of use-permitting and road maintenance. According to Landavazo, the Friends have always operated out of their members' homes and can continue that for now. The home site will be put on the market as a single family residence and sale proceeds from it will replenish the Friends' acquisition fund so that they can respond to future conservation opportunities.

"It is a good example of the government collaborating with local residents and community organizations to preserve open space for wildlife, our rural atmosphere and quality of life," Landavazo told *The Roadrunner*.

Since its founding in 2000 the Friends have raised or leveraged over \$1.5 million dollars for acquisition of 230 acres of open space adjacent to the Preserve.

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