



# A Bridge Across Time

Connecting people with wildlands

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas  
Master Plan  
2008



## Introduction

The concern for the health of our environment has finally permeated mainstream America. Climate change, urban sprawl, beach closures, flora and fauna extinctions, all affect the physical and mental well being of our loved ones and ourselves. We all have wanted to do the right thing, but somewhere along the way we failed to connect the impacts of our actions with the health of the environment that shapes our lives. The time has come to change behavior and look at things in a different way.

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is taking on that challenge. A collaborative effort has been launched to reunite people with nature, empower them with knowledge, and provide them with opportunities to improve the environment. Individual actions do matter, and together we can embrace what the future will bring to make our world a better place. So please join us as we cross the bridge to becoming better stewards of the Earth.

– Debbie Bruschaber,  
Mountains Restoration Trust

## Acknowledgements

Many talented people have touched this plan and I wish to thank Jessica Hall and Restoration Design Group for synthesizing the prior work of Doug Campbell of Campbell and Campbell, Jan Dyer and James Dean, Steve Craig and Charles Rowley. Thank you to Florie Gilbard for her writing and Tom Gamache for his photography. Special thanks to John Low for his artwork.

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## Headwaters Corner at Calabasas: Collaboration for Education and Land Stewardship

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is a collaborative venture with the explicit goal of creating a unique educational center that will generate a population of future land stewards dedicated to protecting and preserving the biological diversity of the Santa Monica Mountains. The Headwaters Corner property, owned by the City of Calabasas, is managed by Mountains Restoration Trust, a local community based land trust. Together, the two partners, collaborating with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and other resource agencies, are committed to integrating the interests of residents, schools, businesses and government into the ever-evolving Headwaters Corner at Calabasas.

### **City of Calabasas**

The City of Calabasas was formally incorporated in 1991 by a group of citizens dedicated to the preservation of the Santa Monica Mountains' environment in which they live. From the start, environmental stewardship and protection of open space was a major aspiration for this city which shares its edges with the natural environment as well as the City of Los Angeles. Calabasas is a gateway to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the largest expanse of southern California's protected lands. Headwaters Corner, nearby land purchases and land stewardship represent Calabasas' ongoing commitment to partnering with Mountains Restoration Trust and other resource agencies to assure that its residents enjoy a continuing, mutually beneficial relationship with the natural world surrounding them.

### **Mountains Restoration Trust**

Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT), in 2008, celebrated its 27<sup>th</sup> year as a nonprofit, grass roots organization dedicated to protecting, preserving and educating about the natural and cultural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains. MRT's past and present projects

include: land purchase, land and ecosystem management and restoration, education, and cooperative work and agreements with other private organizations and public agencies to preserve and restore natural resources, and increase the public's awareness and understanding.

### **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area**

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) stands out as a jewel among the urban parks of the National Park Service. Established in 1978, the park has been gradually pieced together through the acquisition of small land parcels and existing city, county and state parks. It is designated an urban park because it surrounds and borders on many densely populated residential communities. SMMNRA focuses on science-based management of the land and resources of the Santa Monica Mountains region and partners with MRT, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and communities like Calabasas in numerous land stewardship and educational programs.

## History & Accomplishments

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is the realization of a ten year old dream that gave birth to the collaboration between the Calabasas and MRT. Calabasas wanted to purchase the land in order to improve the water quality of the stream. MRT wanted to preserve the purple sage and centuries old oak trees and their offspring, restore the stream, and help nature recover from over a century of inappropriate land use practices. The landowner wanted generations of children to enjoy the beauty of nature, sit under oak trees, play in a clean, healthy stream, and see the native animals who live on this land.



In 2001, MRT acquired a two acre undeveloped, but disturbed, property along the creek. Three years and three million dollars later, the effort resulted in the purchase of ten additional acres of streams, oak woodlands, coastal sage, annual grasslands and two residences, one dating back to 1890's.

Sadly, the natural resources had been degraded by many years of misguided human attempts to tame nature. Stream banks were filled with concrete and asphalt. Motorcycles had torn up the grassland, leaving exposed bedrock where soil had once been. Additionally, non-native weeds blanketed the land, hindering the growth of natives that are crucial to the ecological health of the area.

Beginning in 2004, public programs including youth classes, special events, and community building meetings have taken place. Ecosystem restoration plans for the stream, oak woodlands, grassland and coastal sage were prepared. By 2007, over 2,000 volunteer hours and \$750,000 had been spent to restore Dry Canyon Creek, build three bridges, remove tons of non native

weeds, and plant thousands of native plants and hundreds of oak acorns.

Today we see a stream reborn, wetlands emerging and purple sage expanding. Animals live here, and the stewardship by people has become an integral factor in keeping the land healthy for future generations. MRT and Calabasas proudly look back at these accomplishments, and now, look forward to continuing to realize the dream of creating a significant and unique environmental educational center at Headwaters Corner at Calabasas.

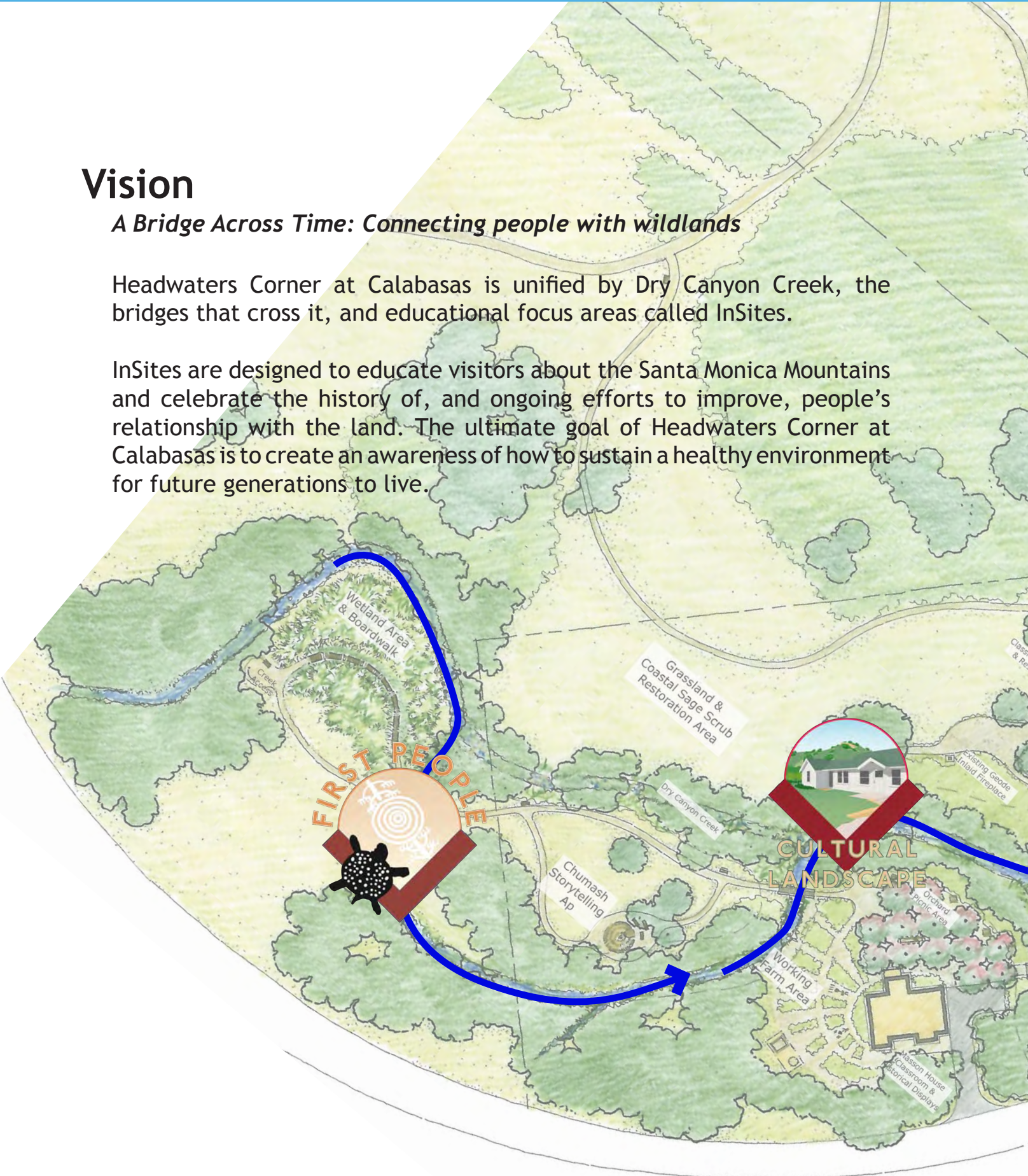


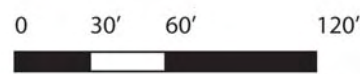
# Vision

## *A Bridge Across Time: Connecting people with wildlands*

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is unified by Dry Canyon Creek, the bridges that cross it, and educational focus areas called InSites.

InSites are designed to educate visitors about the Santa Monica Mountains and celebrate the history of, and ongoing efforts to improve, people's relationship with the land. The ultimate goal of Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is to create an awareness of how to sustain a healthy environment for future generations to live.





# Headwaters Corner at Calabasas

## Master Plan Vision

*A Bridge Across Time: Connecting people with wildlands*

Dry Canyon Creek unites the Headwaters Corner site, crossing through four time zones or InSites, representing significant eras in the history of the Santa Monica Mountains. These four InSites are used to celebrate the relationship between people and wildlands. Following the stream, outdoor learning InSites are being created to represent: Foundations in Nature, Native American Footprints, Ranching, Farming and Suburban Footprints and Foundations for the Future. The site plan is organized around the four InSites. They are bridges across time that engender wildlands literacy in the present and lead to land stewardship in the future.

### Natural Landscape: Foundations in Nature

Since the Santa Monica Mountains began erupting from the ocean floor over 15 million years ago, land, water and climate have come together to create a mediterranean ecosystem of boundless natural variety. This InSite encompasses the time before human beings set foot on the land.



### First People: Native American Footprints

The earliest signs of man's presence in the Santa Monica Mountains are currently estimated at 9 to 10,000 years ago. Later, Chumash and Tongva Indians lived here, and their tribal lands once converged at Headwaters Corner on a common trade route. This InSite indicates the rich heritage of Native Americans in the region.



### Cultural Landscape: Farming, Ranching and Suburban Footprints

When, in 1862, President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, the West opened to settlers. The unabated flood of residents into the mediterranean ecosystem of southern California began. This InSite embraces the human footprint on the land between the late 19th century and the present.



### Modern Landscape: Foundations for the Future

The fourth and final time zone represents all of the efforts at Headwaters Corner to create a viable and balanced relationship between the Santa Monica Mountains wildlands and the people who live in and around it. Out of the activity in this InSite, the present creates the future.





## Master Plan Vision

### *A Bridge Across Time: Connecting people with wildlands*

Education plays a strong role in the Mountains Restoration Trust mission, and the Headwaters Corner facilitates ample on-site learning.

This Master Plan provides a conceptual basis for expanding existing educational and interpretive programs. Educational activities will be programmed within each InSite.

Interpretive elements expand on experiential learning of the site. Visitors learn to identify and relate the importance of diverse plant



communities of the region through signage cues, shown above. Creative integration of antiques into the site designs reveals the challenges, ingenuity, and sustainability of pre-modern life. Restoration, remodels and new construction demonstrate sustainable best practices in the wildland urban interface.

## Regional Context

### The Santa Monica Mountains

This small corner of the world has global significance as a hot spot for biodiversity. As part of California's mediterranean ecosystem, Headwaters Corner has the distinction of sharing its climate with only three percent of the world's landmass.

In contrast to their small size, mediterranean ecosystems account for sixteen percent of the world's plant species. As desirable places to live, they are also among the world's most altered areas.

Around the globe, mediterranean ecosystems occur only in two narrow bands, located above and below the equator, between 30 and 40 degrees latitude. Hot, dry summers, alternating with cool, wet winters characterize these regions.



### Habitat & Wildlife

Headwaters Corner hosts a varied habitat representative of the mediterranean biome which encompasses much of the Santa Monica Mountains. This natural habitat includes five distinctive plant communities including: woodland, riparian, grassland, coastal sage scrub, and wetland. Non-native plants are also present. The dominant feature of Headwaters Corner is Dry Canyon Creek which flows through the eastern portion of the site and is a headwater tributary to the Los Angeles River.

Animal surveys conducted over time identify numerous animal species living at Headwaters Corner. Among them are: 11 species of reptiles and amphibians, 19 species of mammals including bobcats, foxes, rodents and coyotes, a myriad of insects and arthropods such as dragonflies grasshoppers, butterflies, bees, beetles, and spiders, and roughly 70 bird species including the Cooper's Hawk and Yellow Warbler, both listed as Species of Special Concern.



### **The Wildland-Urban Interface**

For those living on the urban edge – the often-blurred boundary between city and natural environments - understanding their role in the preservation of wildlands is vital. Because a single home impacts five acres of wildland, and entire communities sit within the SMMNRA, residents must understand that their stewardship role cannot be ignored. When it is, natural habitat and animal populations are seriously disturbed, and wildlife corridors are fragmented. Headwaters Corner at Calabasas has been created to advance the educational missions of MRT and Calabasas emphasizing best management practices and sustainability. The Headwaters Corner seeks to teach both adults and children about living on the edge by helping them coexist successfully with the natural world in their own backyards.

# Regional Context

## Dry Canyon Creek is the Los Angeles River

### *The journey downstream*

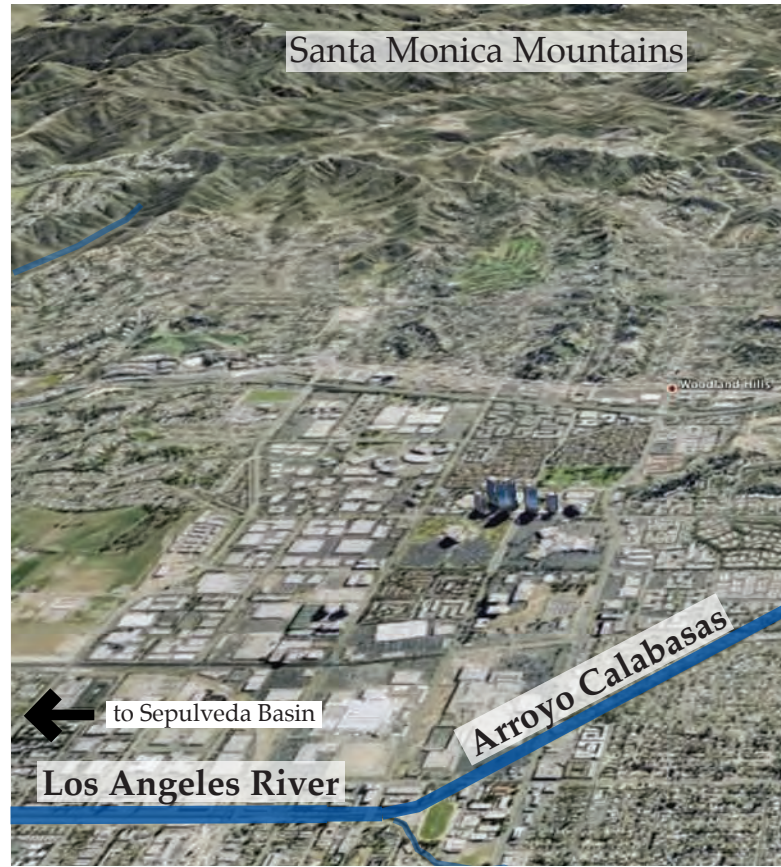
“The River itself has no beginning or end. In its beginning, it is not yet the River; in its end, it is no longer the River. What we call the headwaters is only a section from among the innumerable sources which flow together to compose it.” --T.S. Eliot

The Los Angeles River traces its beginning to countless small streams and creeks fed by the Santa Monica Mountains. Dry Canyon Creek, which flows through Headwaters Corner at Calabasas, is one of them.

The health of not only the wildland near Dry Canyon Creek, but of local communities and the Los Angeles River itself is affected by the health of the headwaters. A vigorous riparian habitat benefits local communities by providing such ecosystem services as: natural flood control, soil protection, water storage, groundwater recharge, pollution and excess sediment trapping, nutrient recycling, and biological diversity creation and maintenance. Finally, headwaters streams sustain downstream ecosystems, like the Los Angeles River through their water storage, filtering and cleaning mechanisms. These streams recharge the San



Restored reach of Dry Canyon Creek



A GoogleEarth image with streams shows the connection between Dry Canyon Creek and the Los Angeles

Fernando Valley aquifer, which constitutes a significant percentage of Los Angeles' drinking water.

Because Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is a demonstration, as well as an education center, the restoration and maintenance of Dry Canyon Creek is significant on yet another level. Outside environmental organizations and government agencies are welcome to study, discuss and observe creek restoration techniques used at Dry Canyon Creek, enhancing their own plans for the restoration of other riparian habitats.



Wetland dependent plants at Dry Canyon Creek filter water that flows downstream to the Los Angeles River



River. The large San Fernando Valley aquifer is also supported by headwater streams like Dry Canyon Creek.



Photo: J.Hall  
Los Angeles River at the Sepulveda Basin

## Regional Context

### City of Calabasas

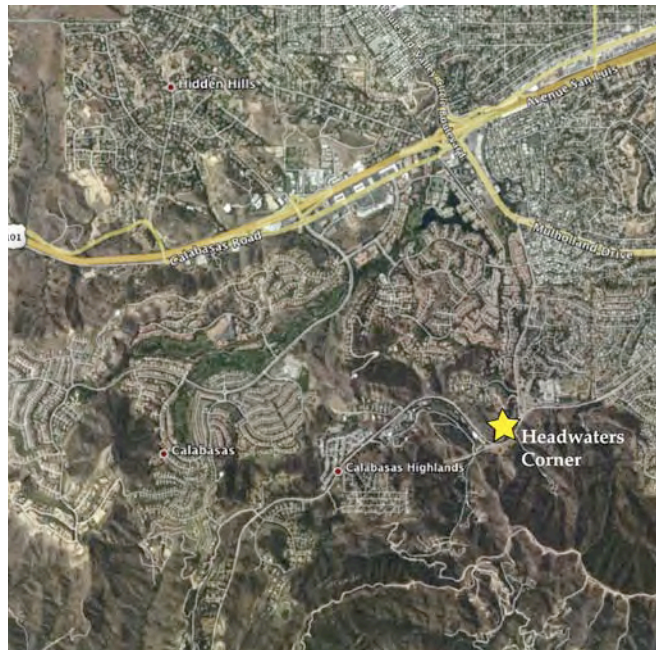
To ensure a viable future for its citizens, Calabasas is taking a leadership role in addressing impacts on the environment. These impacts include air and water pollution, climate change, and habitat loss.

Calabasas takes pride in its stewardship and seeks to further this role by adopting a set of green building standards. These standards will help create high performance, new and remodeled buildings, which will utilize efficient site and building design, sustainable construction and operational practices known to have a lower impact on the environment than conventional methods.

### Connectivity

Sitting atop the Los Angeles River watershed, Headwaters Corner is linked not only hydrologically, but also by trails and roads to surrounding population and recreation centers.

Mulholland Highway and Old Topanga Canyon Road, major arteries running through the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, also connect Headwaters Corner to the San Fernando Valley to the



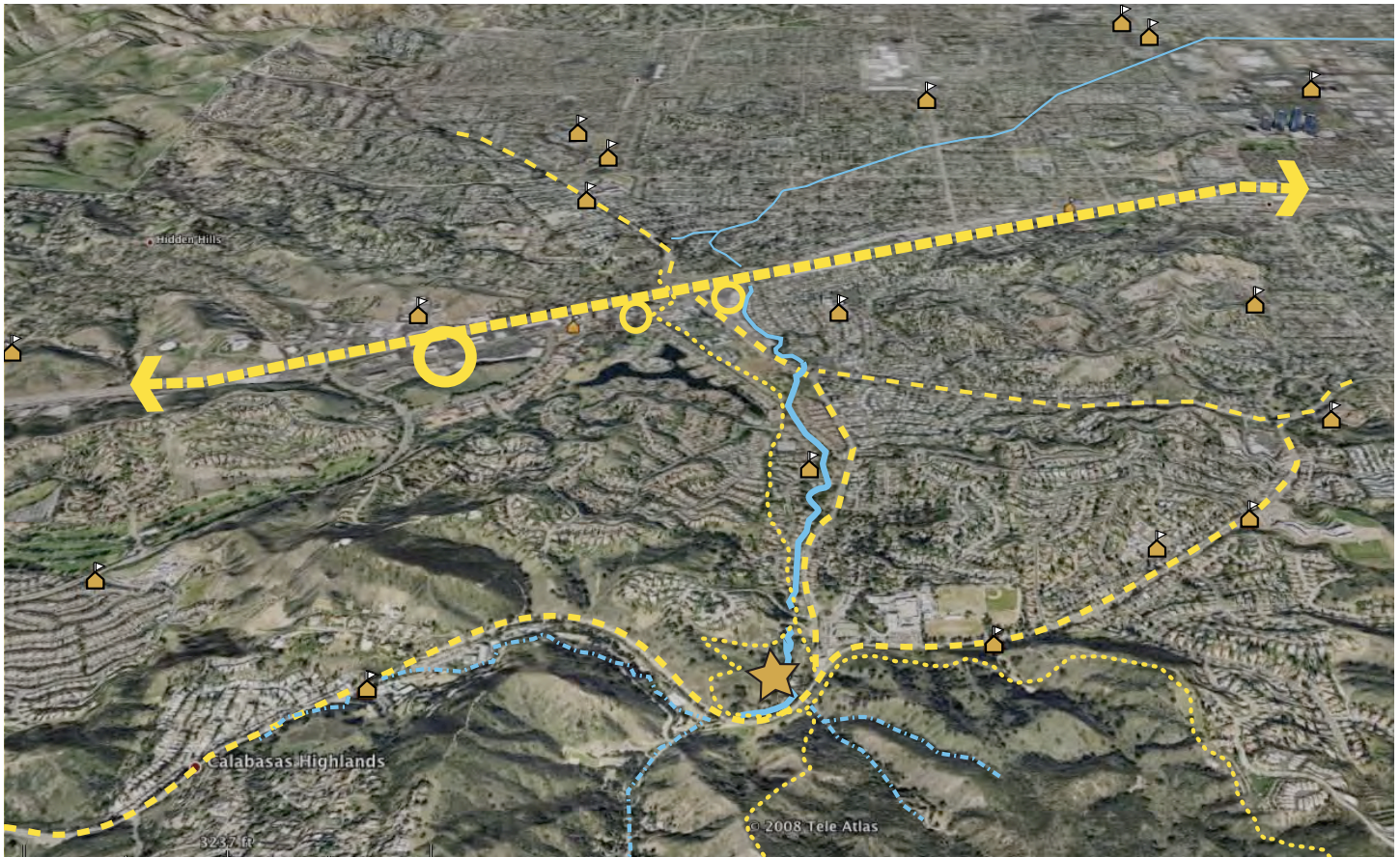
GoogleEarth image showing Calabasas with Headwaters Corner on the edge of the wildland-urban interface



north, Malibu and Santa Monica to the south and the Conejo Valley to the west.

These thoroughfares also connect the Headwaters Corner to numerous public








## Connectivity Diagram



GoogleEarth image with a variation of a Lynch Diagram analyzing connectivity between Headwaters Corner and area destinations. Headwaters Corner is accessible to the larger metropolitan Los Angeles Region, and is also locally accessible through Calabasas' trail system. Riparian corridors provide important connectivity for wildlife.

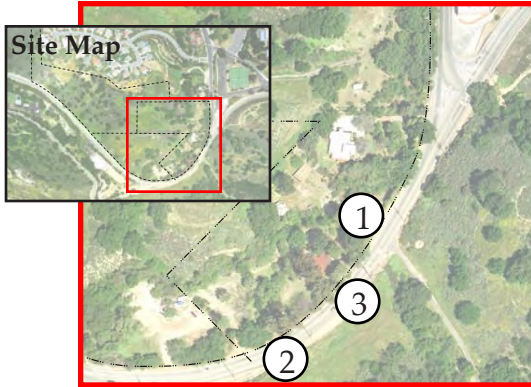
and private schools within a 15 mile radius. The city's regional trail system, including Headwaters Corner's Calabasas-to-Henry Ridge Trail, connects communities along the 101 Freeway to the Santa Monica Mountains. Finally, the protected wildlands at Headwaters Corner are part of a vast open space preserve that shelters birds and animals, and maintains a wildlife corridor running from the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills to the Santa Susana Mountains. This linkage is essential to the preservation of genetic diversity in southern California's wildlife populations.

### Connectivity Diagram Key

-  Headwaters Corner
-  Public gathering areas
-  Schools
-  101 Freeway
-  Highways and Streets
-  Trails
-  Streams

# Site Characterization

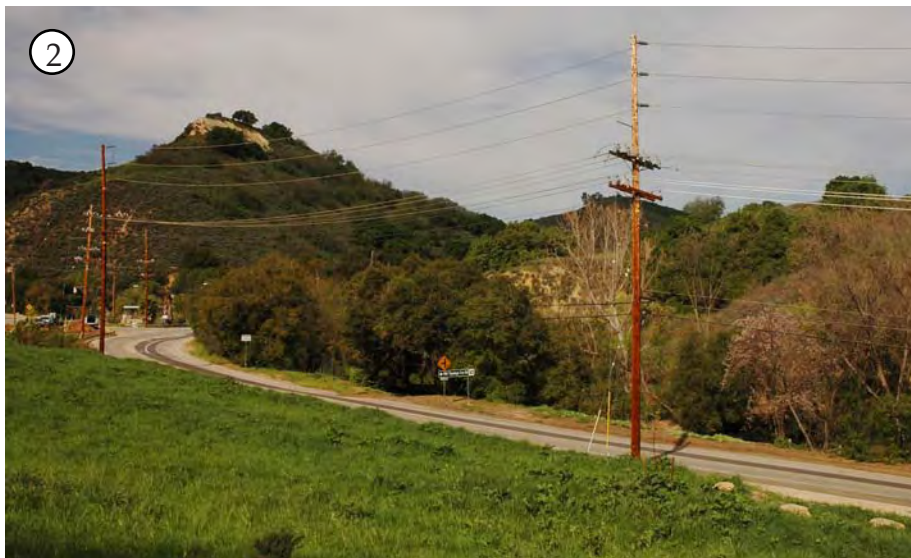
## A Photo Tour



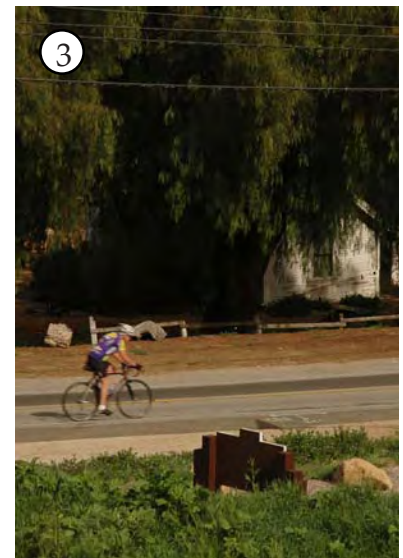
Headwaters Corner comprises different habitats and states of development. Years ago, while mostly wildlands, low-lying areas were altered for farming and development. MRT's restoration activities are evident when touring the site, with more to come through implementation of the Master Plan. The following section reviews opportunities and constraints. Resolution of these challenges will be integrated into the Master Plan design.



View looking down onto main entry to Headwaters Corner. Visitors park on a mulch pad and cross the newly constructed bridge over the restored reach of Dry Canyon Creek or cross another bridge to the Masson House. Mulholland Highway can be seen in the background.

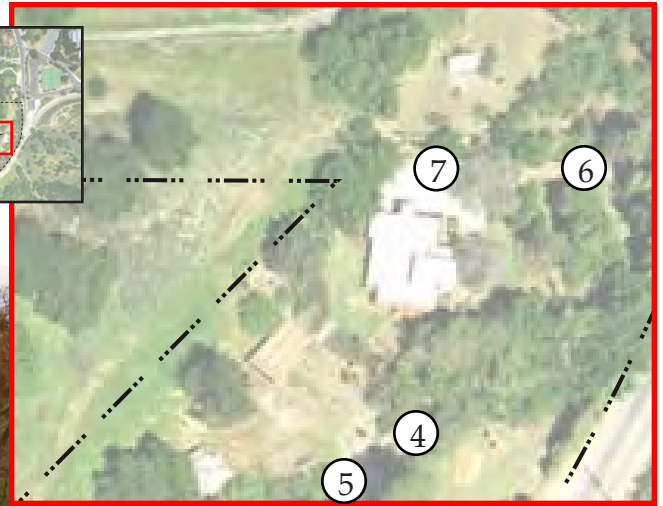
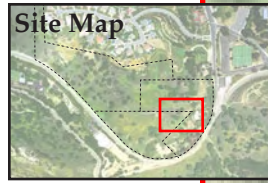


Mulholland Highway near Old Topanga Canyon Road. Many commuters pass this location.



Bicyclists are frequent users of Mulholland Highway.





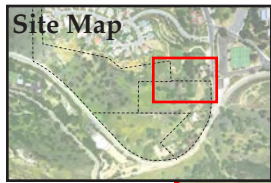
4  
New pedestrian bridge over Dry Canyon Creek leading to an undeveloped area backed by a hillside covered with native aster and coastal sage scrub. Visitors to the MRT office also take this route.

5  
Dry Canyon Creek restoration area with MRT office in background. Restoration removed concrete and asphalt and implemented soil bioengineering of streambanks with willow cuttings.



6  
View from new vehicular bridge looking towards MRT offices.

7  
Adapted re-use of residence now serves as MRT's offices. Lawn has been replaced with wood chip mulch around the office except for the parking area.



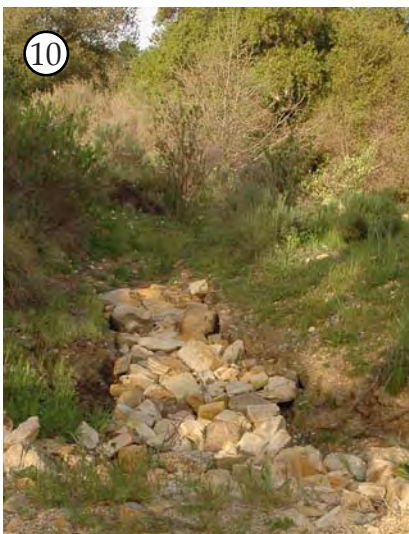
## A Photo Tour, continued



Access to the trails of Headwaters Corner from Old Topanga Canyon Road uses this bridge, built in 1995 from recycled materials: flatbed railcars, oil casing pipe, WWII landing mat and used railroad track. View is towards Old Topanga Canyon Road.



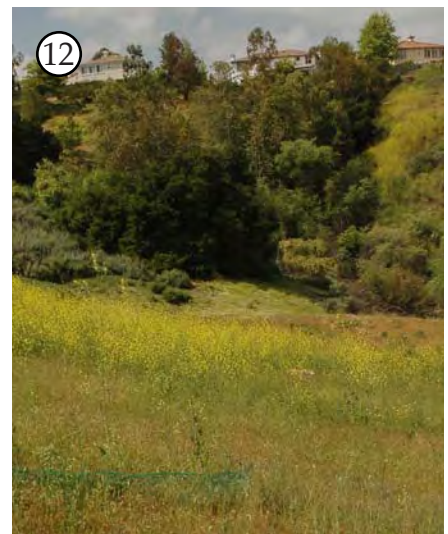
Grassland, coastal sage scrub and oak woodland restoration. Area used for years as an informal motorcycle playground.



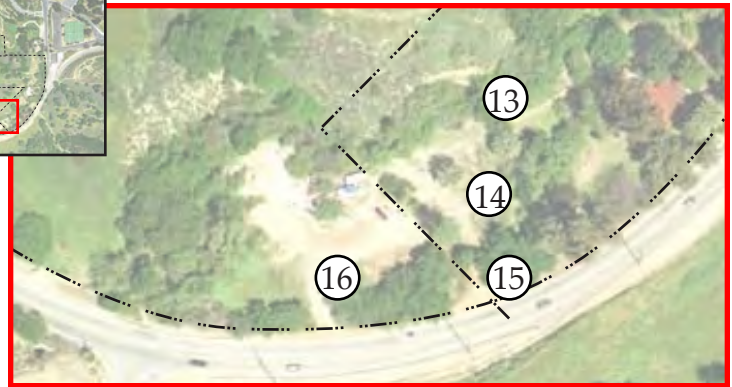
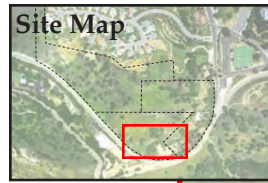
Ephemeral stream undergoing restoration. Water flows only a few days of the year.



Benches and signs are on the trail that follows the ephemeral stream.



Invasive weeds such as mustard prevent natural restoration so volunteers are needed to restore habitat and assure sustainability.



13  
 Dry Canyon Creek's channel was relocated to the base of a steep slope in the early 1950s. This straightened the stream and also shortened its length. The slope is bare and at risk of eroding into the stream.



14  
 Historic floodplain and terrace of Dry Canyon Creek which is partly owned by MRT and will be acquired from a private party when funds become available. The historical creek meander will be restored.

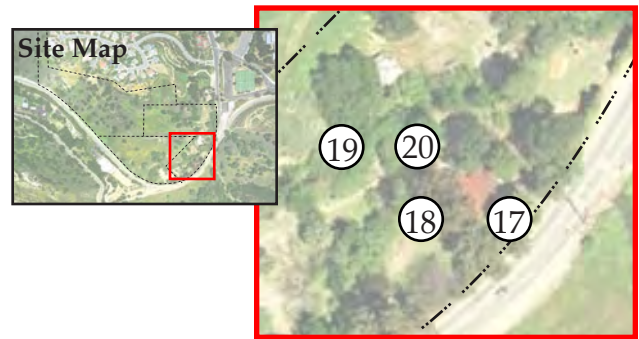


15  
 Road drainage creates a dry channel, a potential wildlife crossing if connected under Mulholland Highway.



16  
 Historic meandering stream channel is in sharp contrast to relocated channel (photo #13 on this page).

## A Photo Tour, continued



Masson House, more than a century old, is the old homestead of Headwaters Corner. The house is used for educational activities and is in need of restoration. Antique farm equipment is in the foreground.



Photo: J.Hall  
Bridge over historic stream channel connects degraded floodplain terrace and Masson House.



Photo: J.Hall  
Irrigation dam from the early 1900s. The dam is used as a footbridge connecting a trail from the Masson House to MRT offices.

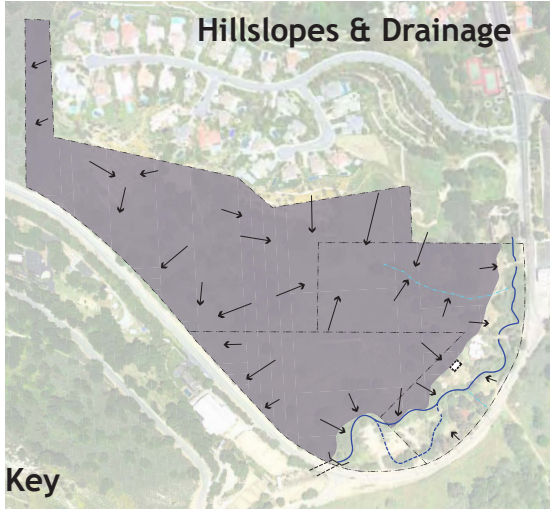


Photo: D.Bruschaber  
Open space for outdoor learning and picnicking behind the Masson House, adjacent to Dry Canyon Creek.

# Site Characterization

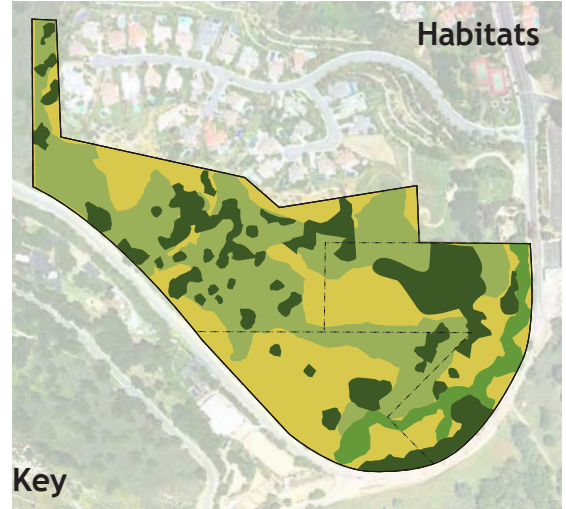
## Site Analysis Diagrams

These diagrams graphically depict important site features in their current state.



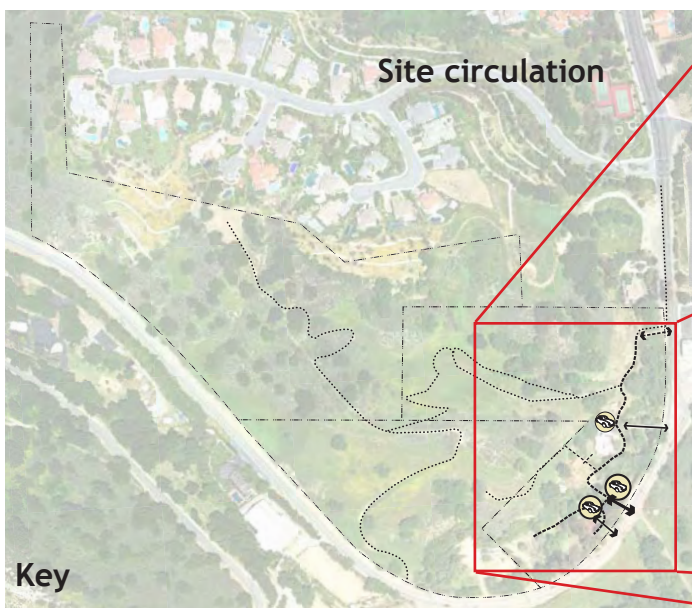
Key

- Hillslopes
- Perennial stream
- Intermittent/ephemeral stream
- Former stream channel
- Drainage direction



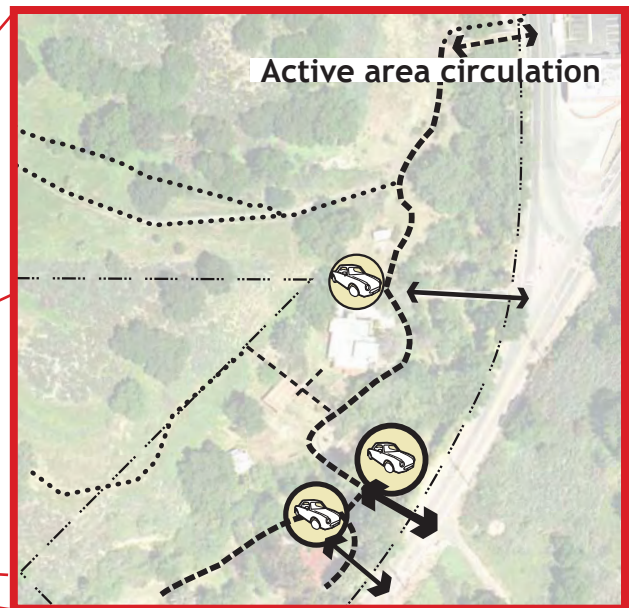
Key

- Grassland: native & non-native grasses, and annual wildflowers
- Coastal sage scrub
- Oak woodland
- Willow riparian



Key

- Main pedestrian path
- Trail
- Vehicular access
- Parking area



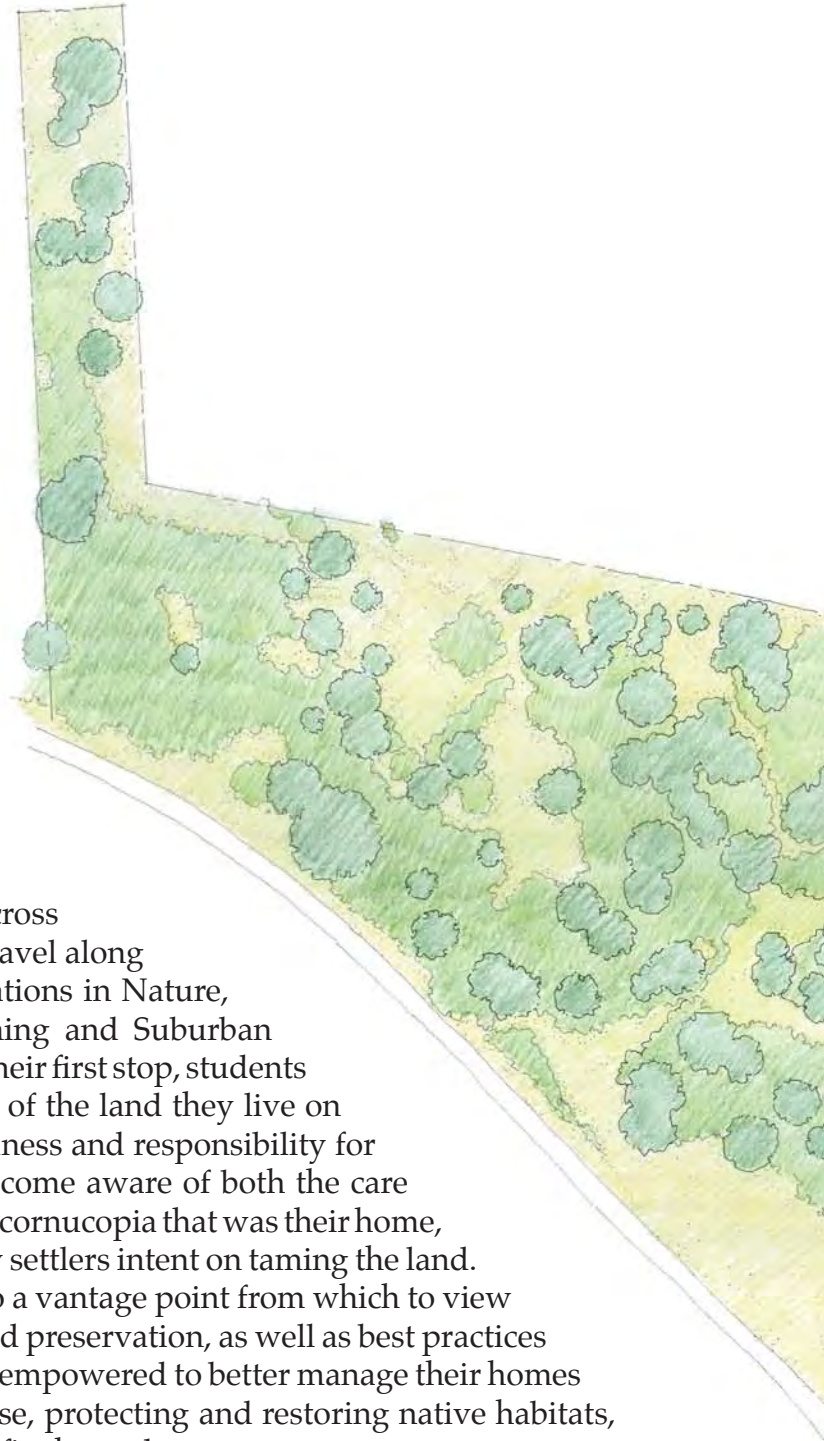
## Master Plan Overview

### *A Bridge Across Time: Connecting people with wildlands*

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas is an ideal location for an educational center designed to teach those living on the wildland-urban edge about the Santa Monica Mountains mediterranean ecosystem. Uniting the site are Dry Canyon Creek, its bridges and a trail system that radiates and loops throughout. The 15 million year history of this land, its ecology and the humans who have lived on it provide the basis for activity centers, called InSites, at which visitors are taught to coexist with the wildlands now and become its stewards in perpetuity.

The Headwaters Corner at Calabasas Master Plan is a landscape narrative of “A Bridge Across Time.” The story is told as visitors of all ages travel along Dry Canyon Creek to the four InSites: Foundations in Nature, Native American Footprints; Ranching, Farming and Suburban Footprints, and Foundations for the Future. At their first stop, students learn about the geological and biological basis of the land they live on and love. Their sense of understanding, rootedness and responsibility for the land increases. Then, they walk on and become aware of both the care with which Native Americans treated the living cornucopia that was their home, and its degradation by successive waves of new settlers intent on taming the land. Finally, visitors arrive at the present that is also a vantage point from which to view the future. They learn about land restoration and preservation, as well as best practices they can adopt on their own property. They are empowered to better manage their homes and landscapes by reducing imported water use, protecting and restoring native habitats, managing storm water runoff and minimizing fire hazards.

The journey on “A Bridge Across Time” grounds visitors in a comprehensive history of their slice of the Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem. It also prepares them to become dedicated land stewards, educators and creators of the future that the Master Plan envisions, not only for Headwaters Corner, but also for the entire Santa Monica Mountains and Los Angeles region.



**Key**

1 Dry Canyon Creek

2 Visitor parking

3 Completed trails & signage

4  Native American Footprints

5  Ranching, Farming and Suburban Footprints

6  Foundations for the Future

7  Foundations in Nature



# The InSites

## Natural Landscape: Foundations in Nature



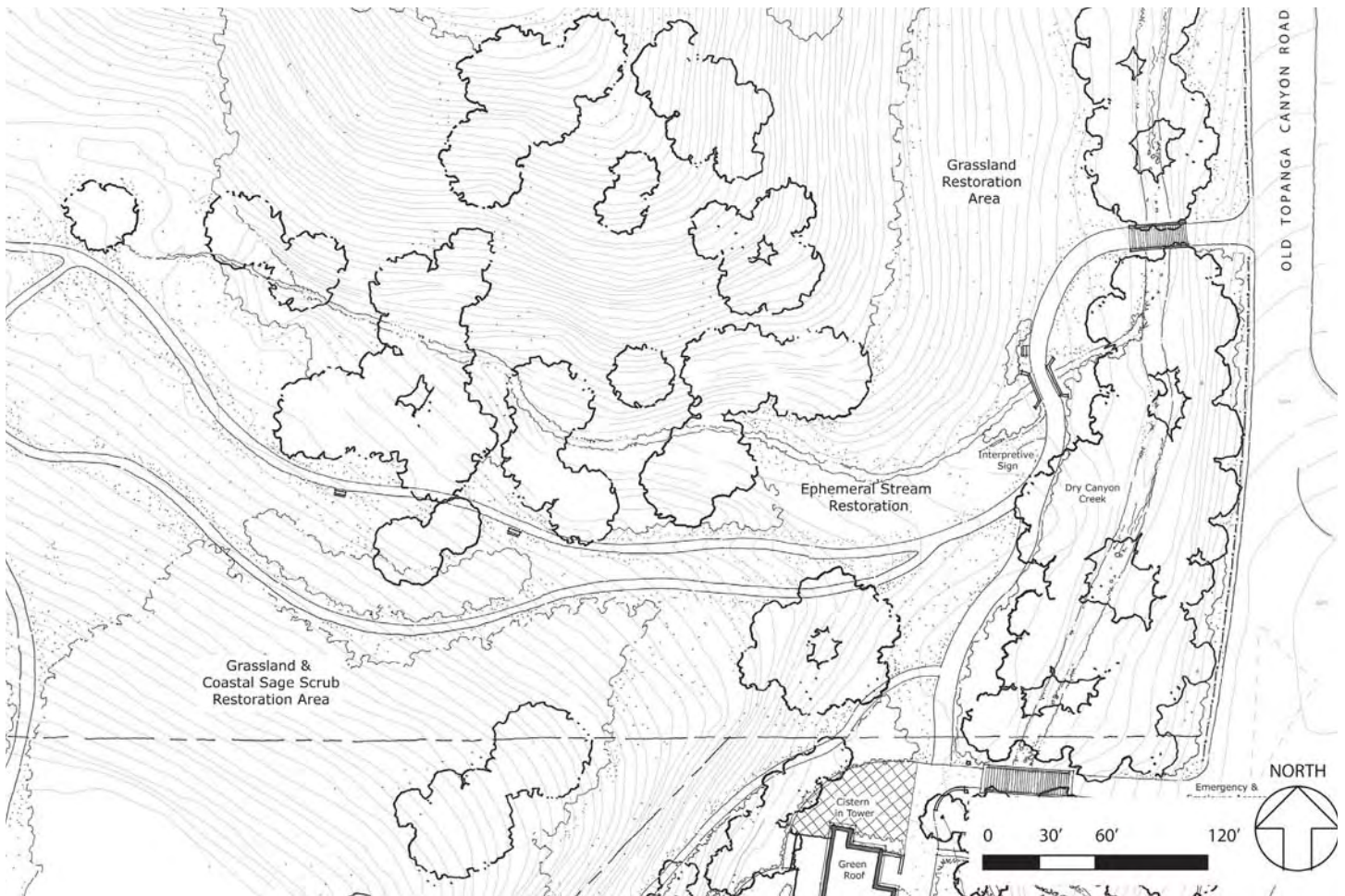
The extraordinary and fragile Santa Monica Mountains mediterranean ecosystem that we enjoy today has come a long way over the past 60 million years. If we go back that far, just a short geological sprint from the extinction of the dinosaurs, broad plains extended from central California to the Pacific Ocean. Los Angeles and the land to the north and south of it were an ocean floor that continuously seeped molten lava through vents in the earth's surface. 15 million years ago, this lava built underwater formations that would eventually become the Santa Monica Mountains and the Channel Islands. The volcanic eruptions became explosive, and the Santa Monica Mountain range rose above the ocean. It would continue to grow for another three million years. At its peak of 10,000 feet, the range was three times taller than it is now. Even though uplift continues at a rate of 1.7 inches a year, it can't keep up with the wind, rain, climate, flood and fire that wear the landmasses down, shaping the waterways, valleys, canyons and beaches we recognize as our own Santa Monica Mountains.

Modern mankind first set foot in the Santa Monica Mountains region about 11,000 years ago during a period of climatic warming following the last great glaciations. As temperatures rose and rainfall decreased, tree-like plants retreated. Oak, walnut, juniper and extensive grasslands took hold in the region. By 7,000 years ago, as the arid climate approached today's conditions, this vegetation and scrub chaparral had spread and become firmly established. A later warming period with decreased rainfall invited desert plants and herbs into the region. The mediterranean climate, which we know today, was established about 2,000 years ago creating an ecosystem now divided into 11 distinct vegetation communities. Each of these communities supports its own characteristic plant and wildlife populations. This cornucopia of life in the Santa Monica Mountains includes 1000 plant species and over 500 animal species including: birds; coyotes; cats including mountain lions, bobcats and ring-tailed cat; mule deer; small mammals such as the grey fox, rabbits, skunks, raccoons, squirrels, weasels, badgers, bats and rodents; reptiles; amphibians; insects and fish.

Without its Foundations in Nature, Headwaters Corner's "A Bridge Across Time" would, of course, collapse. The project's commitment to ongoing restoration and maintenance of the diverse mediterranean ecosystem of the Santa Monica Mountains cannot be overstated. The land stewards who will be educated at Headwaters Corner are the foundation of the region's future.



## The InSites: Natural Landscape



The Natural Landscape enables visitors to traverse a restored range of typical, but increasingly threatened, southern California plant communities: wetland, riparian woodlands, oak woodlands, coastal sage scrub, and native grasslands. Each of these plant communities were once common in the region. This zone provides a valuable template for visitors to understand the relationship of these habitats to topography, slope, aspect, and each other.



Plant material and habitat structures are revealed. Here perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams flow with restored channels and floodplains, demonstrating healthy riparian systems. A trail system provides universal access and interprets this information.

Trails along Dry Canyon Creek are universally accessible and provide exposure to a range of plant communities.

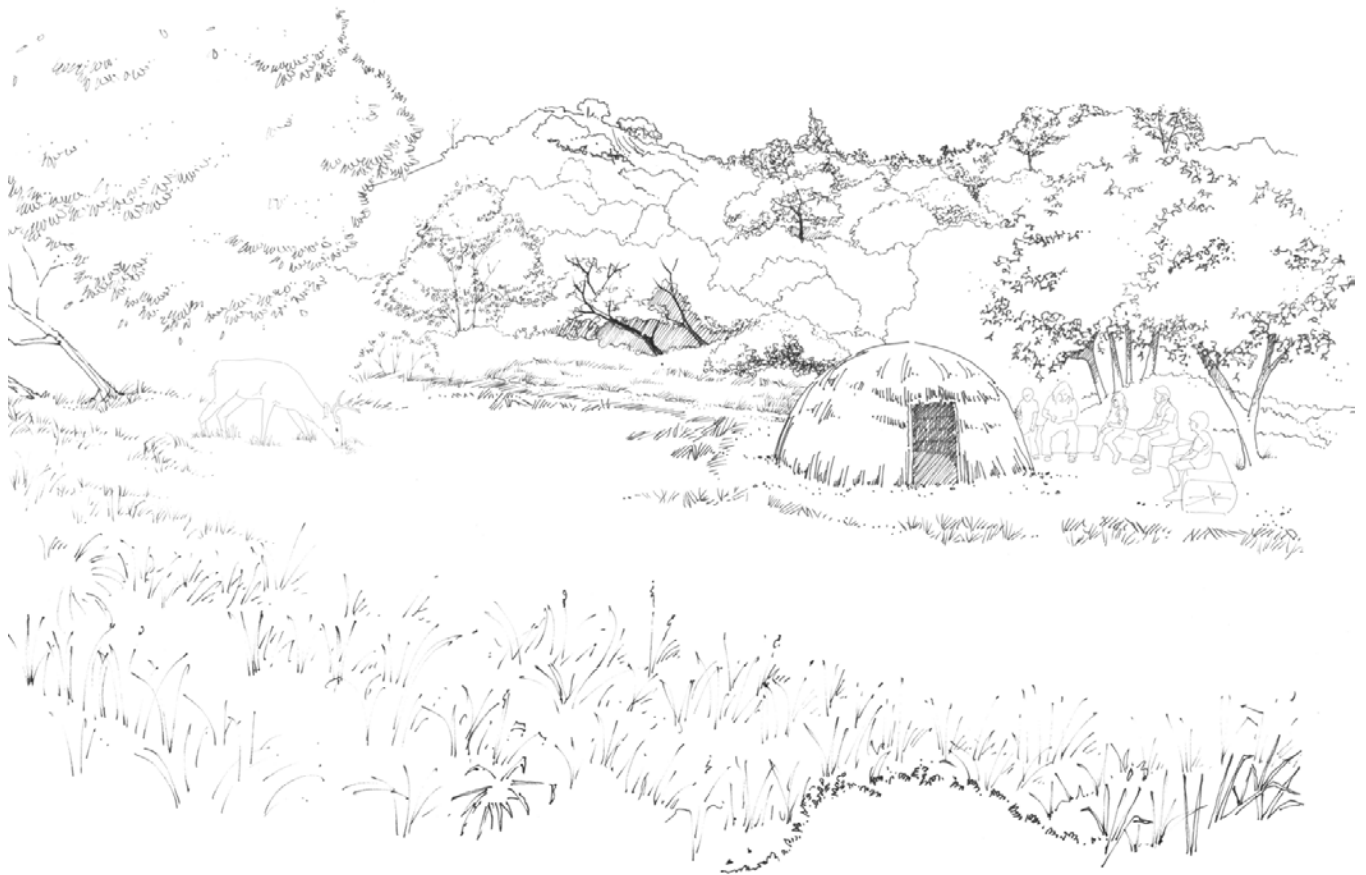
# The InSites

## First People: Native American Footprints



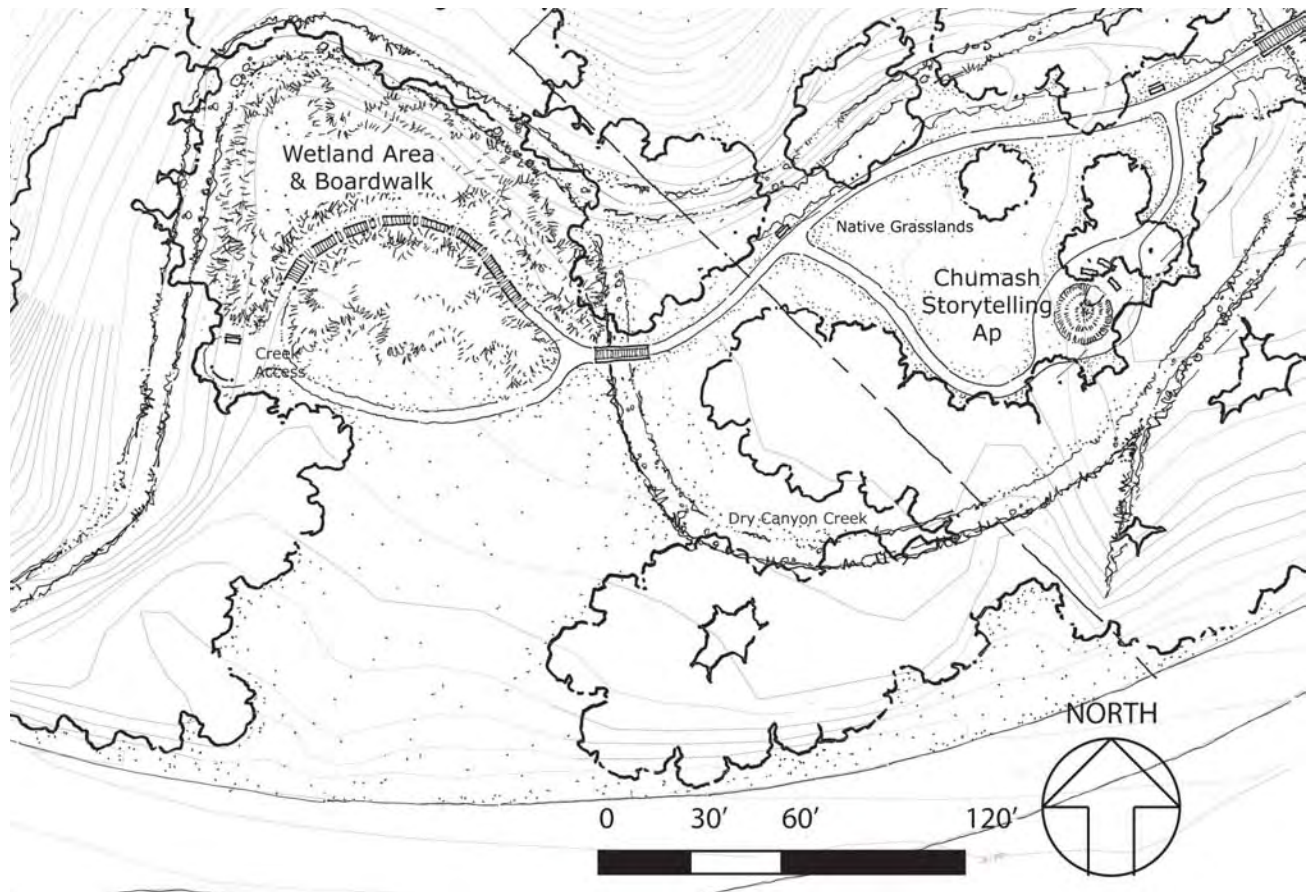
Humankind's presence in the Santa Monica Mountains dates from before 11,000 years ago. The First People were primarily hunters and gatherers, relying on the rich biodiversity of the mountains for food. The Chumash Society began over 9,000 years ago. The Tongva people, inhabiting mountain regions to the east and south of the Chumash, arrived around 2,500 years ago. Essentially peaceful societies, both are unique in their development of maritime fishing, land management, and manufacturing. Their political, economic, social and religious systems are complex and maintain respectful relationships with their environment and community. History indicates the Chumash and

Tongva people bridged their societies in the area we now call Headwaters Corner at Calabasas, coming together to trade goods and socialize. Native American Footprints tread lightly on Headwaters Corner "A Bridge Across Time," and they can teach us to lighten the impact of our passage across these fragile lands.



View of a Chumash *ap* and storytelling area, as seen over restored native grasslands.

## The InSites: First People



Indigenous grassland management is the educational focus of this InSite. Restoration of the stream's original meander and geomorphic floodplain will provide increase the wetland and grassland flora and fauna that the Chumash depended upon. The First People's use of native grasslands, wetlands, and riparian plant materials for domestic uses such as basketry, clothing, medicine, and the construction of an *ap*, their home, will be interpreted.

A trail and boardwalk takes visitors through this human-managed grassland ecosystem.

Students, in addition to exploring and learning about grasslands, wetlands, and streams, will harvest seeds, reeds, and other native material to create baskets and build an *ap*.

Dry Canyon Creek's original channel and some of its floodplain will be restored.

# The InSites

## Cultural Landscape: Farming, Ranching and Suburban Footprints

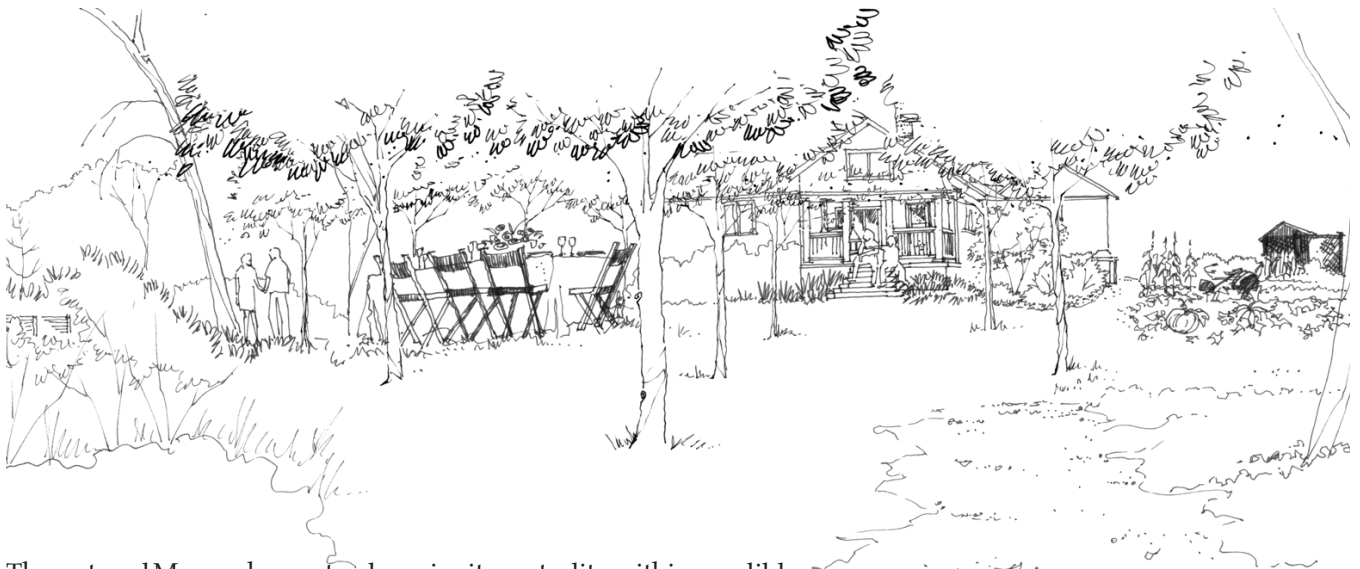


When, in 1862, President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, the West opened to settlers. The unabated flood of residents into the mediterranean ecosystem of southern California began. This InSite embraces the human footprint on the land between the late 19th century and the present. In 1897, William C. Masson emigrated to Calabasas and homesteaded some of what is now known as Headwaters Corner.

Headwaters Corner and the surrounding land has been farmed and ranched for over 200 years. The health of the land was directly impacted by its inhabitants. Settlers coming from the East and Europe brought their own plants, tools and farming techniques. While their intentions to settle and develop the land were admirable, there efforts resulted in a wide variety of disruptions destructive to the mediterranean ecosystem of the Santa Monica Mountains. Streams were altered, plant communities were invaded by non-native plants, and oak woodlands were cut down for the growing city of Los Angeles.

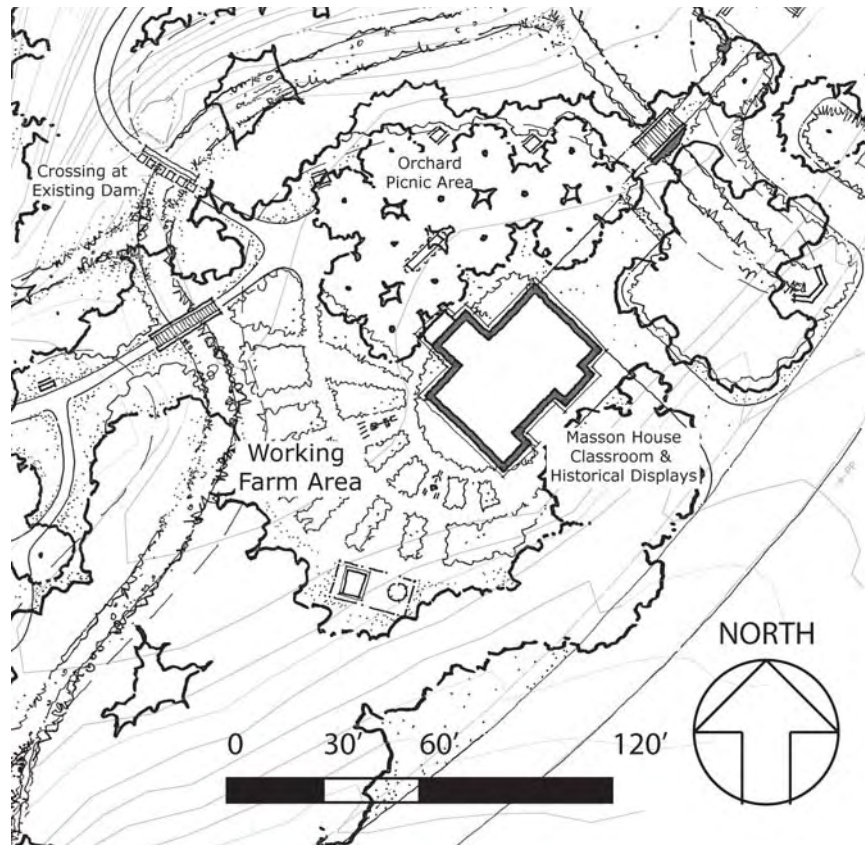
More recently, suburban developments have altered the natural landscape. The natural resources that attract us to live and visit the mountains are most threatened by the people who love and use them.

However, human footprints of the past 150 years can be transformed. The land's natural systems can be restored. Those who cross the bridges at Headwaters Corner will learn to coexist and care for the land that they love. They will walk back out with the footsteps of true land stewards and the empowerment to make a difference.



The restored Masson homestead regains its centrality within an edible agricultural landscape where visitors engage in a direct relationship with the food supply and the surrounding environment.

## The InSites: Cultural Landscape



Preserving and re-purposing the historic Masson House is one of the goals of this InSite, The Cultural Landscape. In its new life as a classroom for the school children who visit Headwaters Corner every year, children will be treated to hands-on learning about the natural and past agricultural landscapes of Headwaters Corner.

The cultural landscape reveals a time before televisions and air conditioning, when settlers related directly to their landscape, and altered it to maximize its productivity. Restoring a back porch, swings, and other amenities demonstrates the simplicity of early leisure activities. Antique farm equipment is integrated into a landscape of agricultural crops typical of the region and era, showing the intensive effort required by pioneers to perpetuate their traditions and livelihoods.

Understanding food production and edible landscapes is also a theme of this area, with tables behind the farmhouse for group lunches and other gatherings. Here the stream's natural channel is restored, but a dam built for irrigation diversions remains, a reminder of how humans alter watercourses for intensive cultural uses.

# The InSites

## Modern Landscape: Foundations for the Future



The fourth and final InSite represents the vision for Headwaters Corner to engender a culture of land stewardship that will result in a balanced relationship between the Santa Monica Mountains natural areas and the people who live in and near it. The activities encompassed by this InSite will drive the present to create a viable future.

The vision for this future begins with the multi-faceted educational center that will teach those living on the wildland-urban edge to coexist safely and harmoniously with wildlife, water resources, and wildlands. Using the five distinct plant communities found at Headwaters Corner, a living laboratory will actively demonstrate best land management and stewardship practices to local school children as well as the community, both advantaged and underserved, at large.



New classroom and outdoor learning center integrates sustainable building technology within a sensitive landscape setting.

Because everything in the biosphere, which sustains us, is interdependent, educational modules and programs will be based on a systems approach to human-ecosystem interrelationship. By combining interpretive exhibits, living demonstrations, educational programs, recreational enjoyment of the natural world, and understanding

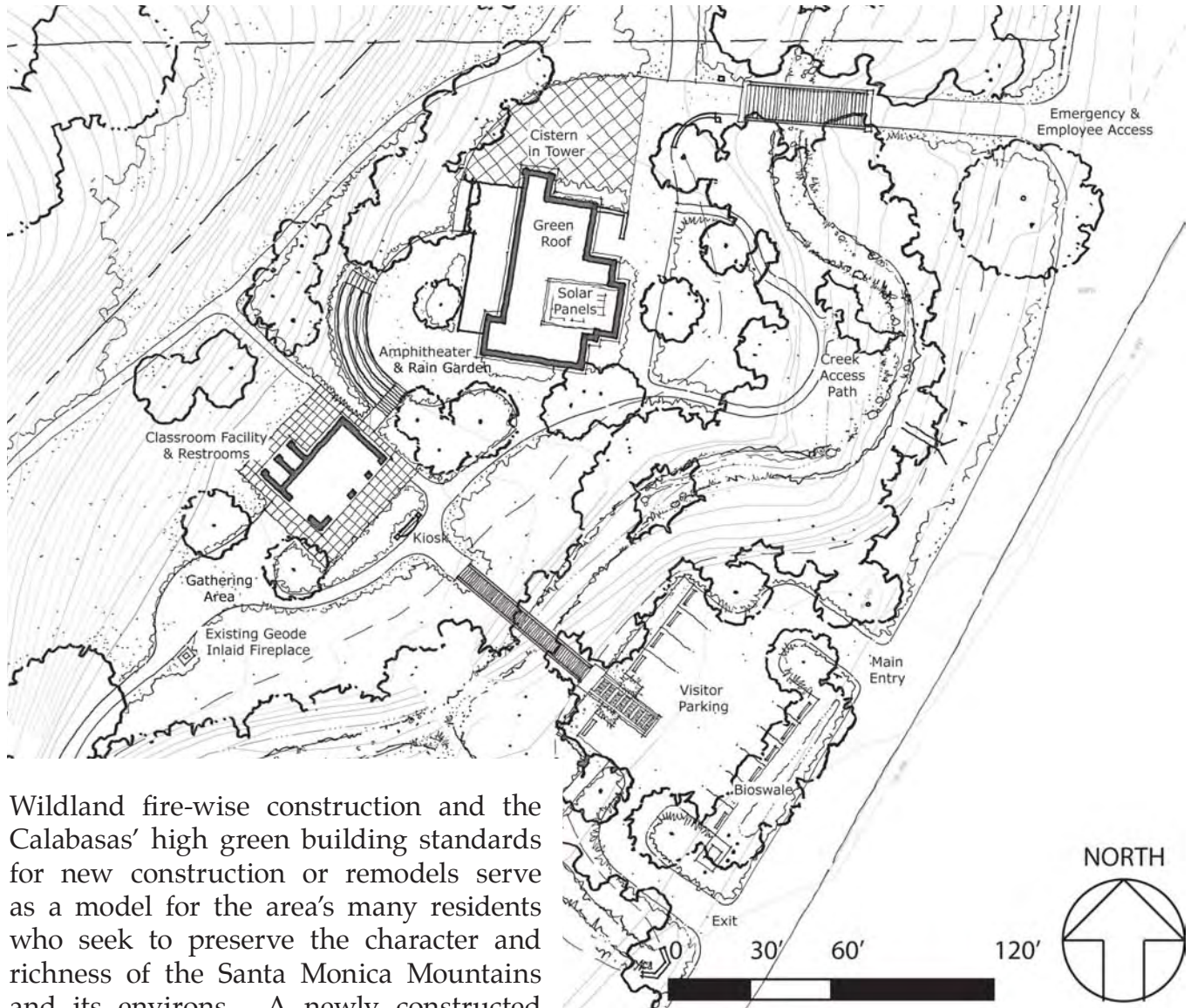
and enjoyment of our mediterranean ecosystem's natural processes, visitors will be motivated to adopt sustainable management practices at their homes and businesses.

The Headwaters Corner "A Bridge Across Time" will not stand for long without a strong, new foundation. What is called for is the creation of a population of modern land stewards - children and adults - who understand the intricate relationships between themselves and all aspects of the mediterranean ecosystem that they inhabit and enjoy. Everything that happens at Headwaters Corner will be designed to accomplish this task by building a human community deeply committed to land restoration and preservation efforts based on an understanding of the ways living systems work and thrive. Ultimately, our engaged citizenry will become the generative force - the living examples and teachers of land stewardship to succeeding generations.



A Welcome Center in the MRI offices opens to an amphitheater and native rain garden for infiltrating runoff.

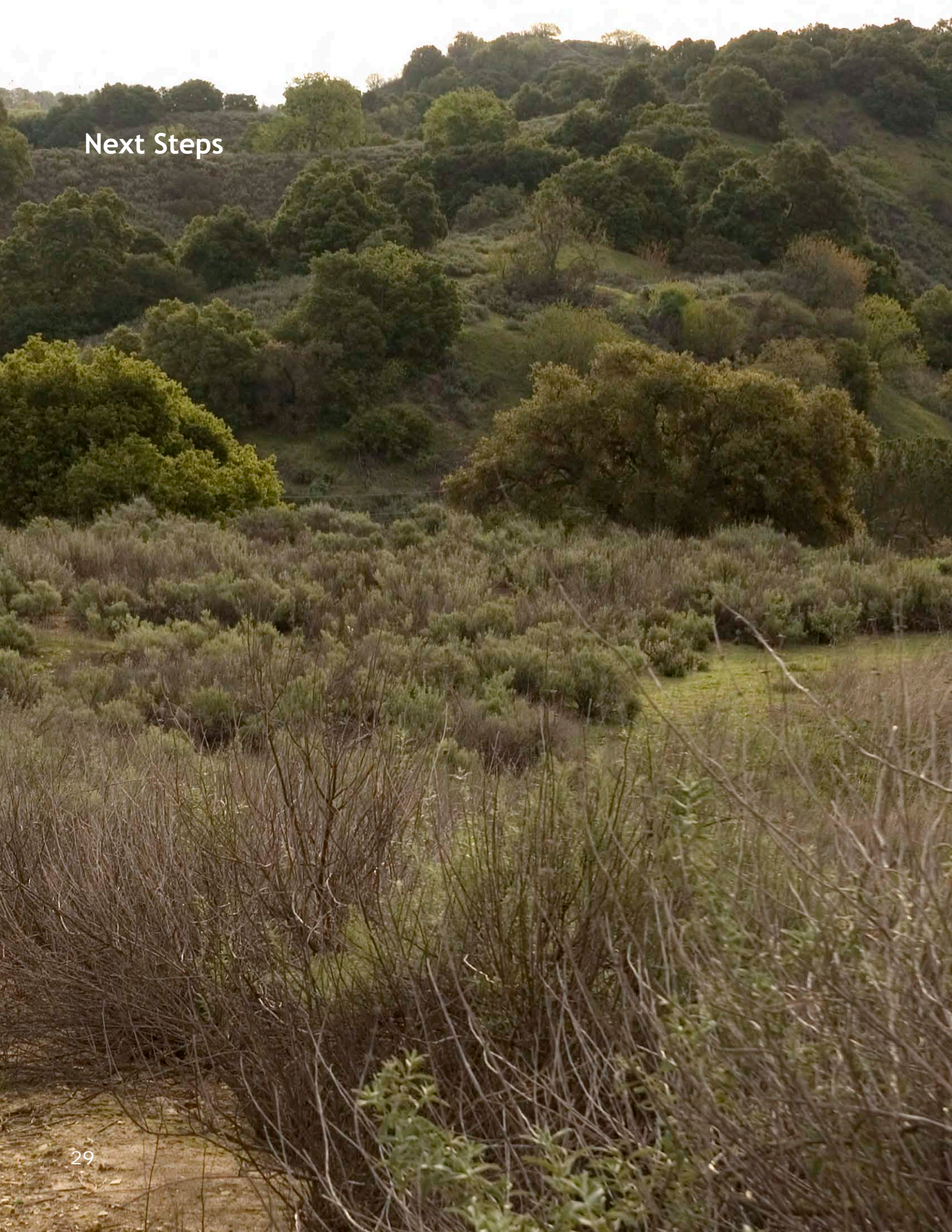
## The InSites: Modern Landscape



Wildland fire-wise construction and the Calabasas' high green building standards for new construction or remodels serve as a model for the area's many residents who seek to preserve the character and richness of the Santa Monica Mountains and its environs. A newly constructed

classroom minimizes impacts to existing habitat and maximizes natural light and ventilation, strengthening a connection between indoors and out. Its patios serve as outdoor play and learning areas, and the native landscape features edibles and suitable plantings for the garden. An amphitheater is outside of the Welcome Center, which shares space with the remodeled MRT offices. The remodel combines solar panels and green roofs for energy efficiency, with a cistern that holds runoff and graywater. Permeable paving and the adjacent rain garden around the building encourages biofiltration into the groundwater table, as does the bioswale and permeable paving in the parking lot. Here the stream is restored – designed for its maximum function and habitat benefit while also fitting within a residential landscape setting.

# Next Steps



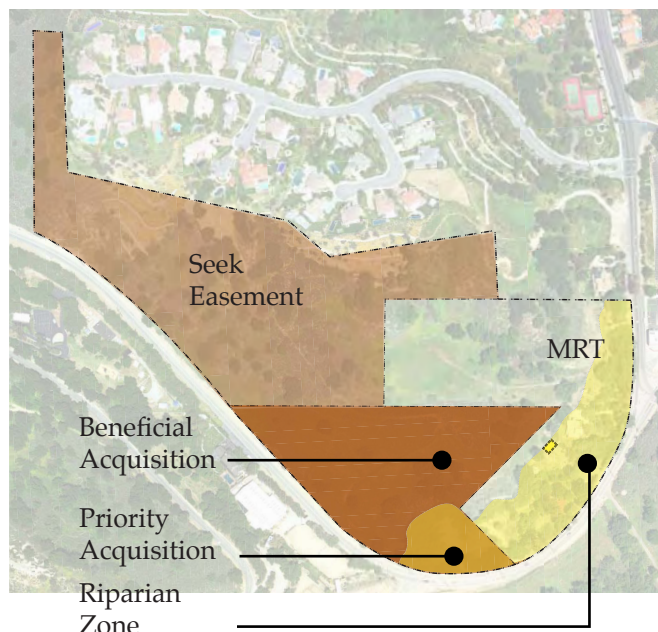


## Priority Actions

Huge strides in creating Headwaters Corner at Calabasas have been accomplished so far. Yet much remains to be done. The following lists priorities as of late 2008.

### Acquisitions

Currently the site contains twelve acres. There are two acquisitions still pending: an 8.5 acre parcel depicted on the exhibit below as Priority and Beneficial Acquisition in Fee, and a 15-acre conservation easement. Completing these acquisitions completes the 35-acre master plan.



### Masson House and Cultural Landscape

The structure is in need of repair, specifically a new roof, upgraded electrical and plumbing. The historical significance of the house and its setting within the environment needs to be enhanced by restoring the old kitchen and back porch, and constructing the surrounding gardens and orchard.

### Parking and Circulation

A bus pull-out, parking area for private motor vehicles, onsite orientation and interior trails for circulation are needed so people can easily get here and once here, know what is available and where to go.

### Interpretive Exhibits and Tools

The Native American living exhibit, native habitats, and displays need to be built.

### Modern Landscape InSite

Learning by example, the most modern structure needs to become green to demonstrate techniques people can use on their own property to minimize impacts to surrounding natural resources. Infiltration galleries and pervious surfaces, wildlife friendly gardens, water and energy conservation, and fire safety all need to be built in this green makeover.

### Habitat Restoration

Representative examples of five ecosystems exist on the site. Coastal sage scrub, woodland, riparian, wetland and grassland habitats have all suffered, and need help to recover.