

NEWS RELEASE -- 2/20/04 --For Immediate Distribution

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LAWSUIT SETTLEMENT REACHED FOR ARROYO SECO CONSERVATION – *Helps Clear the way for NFL at the Rose Bowl*

Pasadena based conservation organization, Spirit of the Sage Council, has announced that the group reached a mutual settlement agreement with the City of Pasadena over the disputed amount of permanently protected habitat needed for the Arroyo Seco. The City and the nonprofit Sage Council have been at odds for over a decade on the proposed Arroyo Seco Master Plan. The City's plan included the entire 1,000 + acre length of the Arroyo Seco watershed and the Rose Bowl region. Sage Council filed a lawsuit against the City on May 14, 2003.

The lawsuit contended that increased commercial and recreational uses from the Angeles National Forest/Oak Grove Park areas in the north, to the southern area of the City of South Pasadena and Rose Bowl areas, that “the Environmental Impact Report, prepared by the City of Pasadena lacked adequate environmental analysis and specific conservation measures that were needed or otherwise required by law,” said Craig Sherman, attorney for the Sage Council.

According to the terms of the settlement, the City at a minimum must permanently conserve one acre of habitat for every one acre impacted by the various Master Plan projects. The upper east side of the Arroyo, known also by the lands indigenous name, “Hahamongna,” will remain substantially undeveloped and designated as a “Natural Area.” The existing Johnson Field will not be expanded and the periphery will be revegetated. The existing Frisbee Disc Golf area at Oak Grove Park will be relocated further south so as to lessen or eliminate negative impacts to the heritage oaks habitat and to provide revegetation. Prior to the relocation of the disc golf course, and any new impacts to other sensitive habitats throughout the entire Arroyo Seco, the City has agreed to consult with state and federal permitting agencies to ensure that there is adequate conservation of habitats and any endangered animal or plant species.

“The Arroyo Seco watershed sustains a vast amount of biodiversity.” States Leeona Klippstein, executive director of Spirit of the Sage Council. “Over 300 known plant and animal species, including several threatened and endangered, truly need all the habitat that can be protected -- from the golden eagle to the southwestern arroyo toad. Migratory birds, such as the southwestern willow flycatcher and least bells vireo desperately need the riparian mule fat vegetation, especially since the wildfires have occurred throughout the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountain foothills. It is not an easy job to revegetate sage scrub, riparian and other alluvial habitat types. There has been little success according to expert botanists with government agencies. Knowing that the City of Pasadena will have to go through consultation with public trust agencies such as

California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and receive their approval, Sage Council believes this was a very important aspect of the settlement requirements.” Said Klippstein

In order for the Sage Council to get greater conservation measures for the Arroyo Seco, the group agreed not to file any additional lawsuits pertaining to the Arroyo Seco Master Plan, including the Rose Bowl, other than monitoring the terms of the settlement and ensuring that the federal and state agencies carry out their oversight obligations.