

Open Space and Green Space

Making the Case for
Preserving and Enhancing the Environmental
Quality of San Pedro Neighborhoods



Because a livable community is
about more than housing, schools,
and cell phone reception

People get riled up about changes that happen suddenly



Not so much, though, about changes that happen more gradually—like the steady disappearance of open space and green space

Historical background:

The way things are now isn't the way they've always been, or the way they have to be.

The City is, in principle, moving toward a greener model—but progress is at times disjointed and inconsistent, and is sometimes administered by personnel with insufficient resources for the policies and programs they're managing.



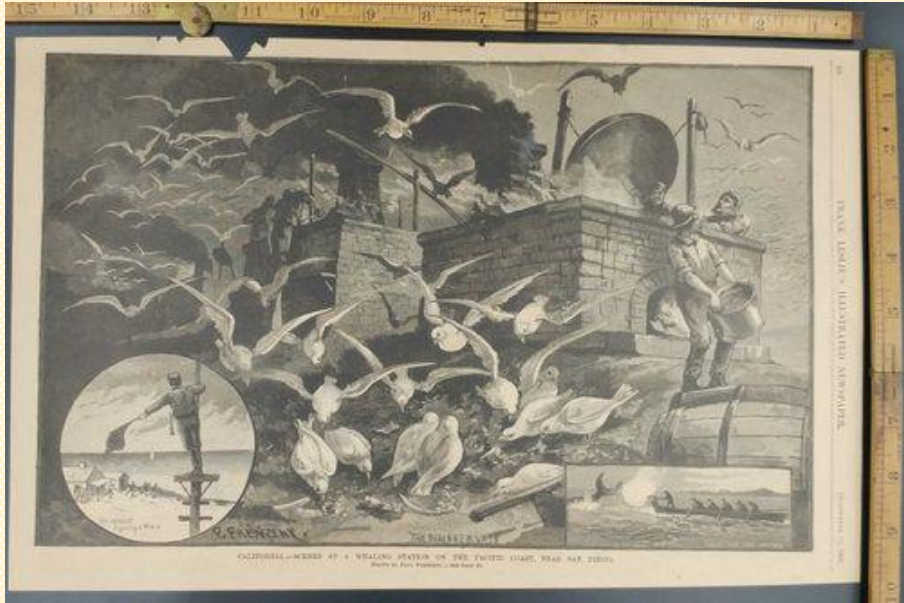


10,000 years of
sustainable
native land
management,
scheduling
resources for
seasonal
harvesting

Spanish and Mexican
land tenure: Rancho
San Pedro and
Rancho Palos Verdes:
Livestock, weeds, and
diseases



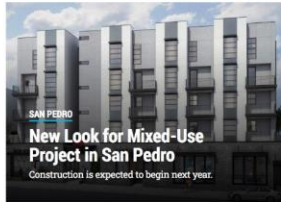
Yankee California: Whaling and trade in livestock hides and tallow—resulting in overgrazing, removal of woodlands, and sharp declines in native habitat and wildlife.



The modern era: haphazard growth, “reclaiming” wetlands, paving streambeds, dumping pollutants, eradicating wildlife, with little real urban/regional planning until comparatively recently.



Today: SB 9 and other state and local bills intensify pressure for more intensive development, in spite of zoning and land use plans adopted by local communities—such as the San Pedro Specific Plan—which will cause further loss of open space and green space, eroding our quality of life.



Current development projects: Where do the children play? Where is the open space for recreation and exercise? Where is the green space for a healthier environment?

Costs of Open Space/Green Space

Acquisition: from zero to millions per acre

Improvements: depending on intended uses—playgrounds, dog parks, athletic fields/exercise facilities, natural areas, community gardens, etc.

Maintenance, security, and other operating costs.

Benefits of Natural Open Space



Economic benefits: enhanced property values—especially for passive-use green space





Just having a view of nature increases productivity, working memory, and concentration.

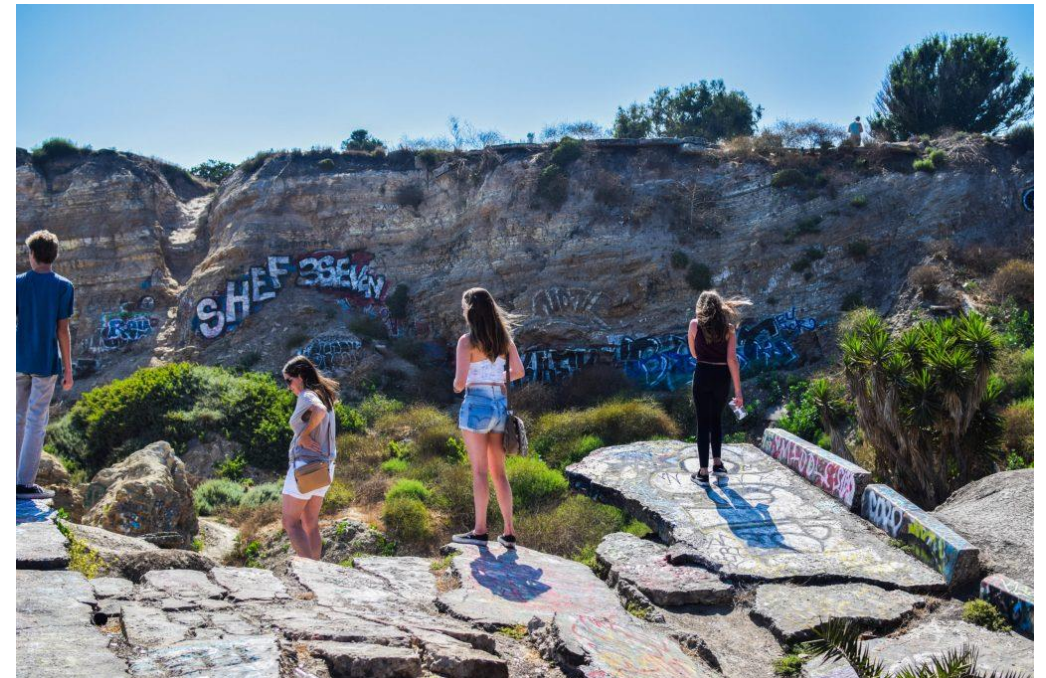
Aesthetic and spiritual benefits of natural spaces



Where do we seek—and find--
Peace and Happiness?



Health benefits

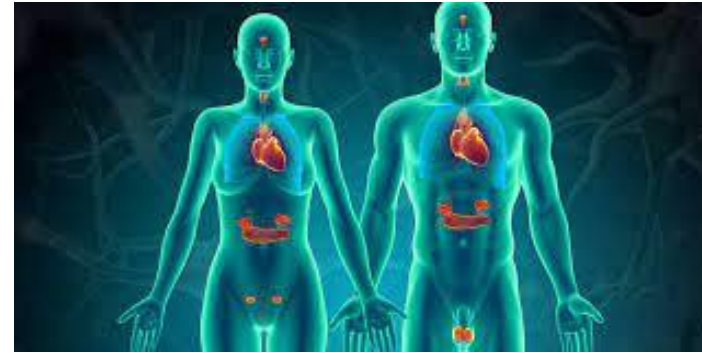




Listening to birdsong and observing animals in nature promotes wellbeing, reduces stress, improves mood, and reduces attention fatigue.



Increased exposure to plants and animals is correlated with reduced rates of heart disease, diabetes, and a range of other pathologies.





Psychological Benefits

Improved mood and cognitive function, reduced levels of stress hormones—resulting in improved performance at work or play.



Improved learning

Better concentration, memory, engagement with others, and performance on assignments. Reduced dependence on drugs to control mood and behavior.



Social and cultural benefits:
increased community engagement



Environmental benefits: Open spaces



provide sites for vegetation—which provides habitat for wildlife. Many

plants and animals have been here for tens of thousands of years, since long before humans arrived. California has more **biodiversity** than any other state or province in North America.



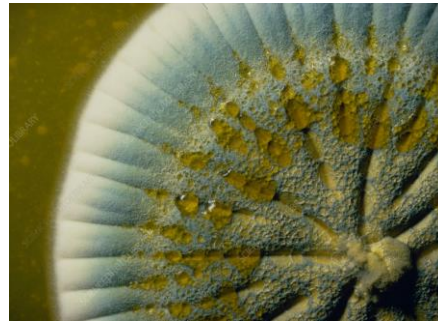


California is recognized as one of the most biologically diverse regions on Earth. There are several threatened and endangered species right here in San Pedro! Even small plantings of native plants can be beneficial.

Essentially all of our food supply comes from living organisms with wild ancestors, and wild species continue to be tapped regularly as a resource to improve crops and livestock.

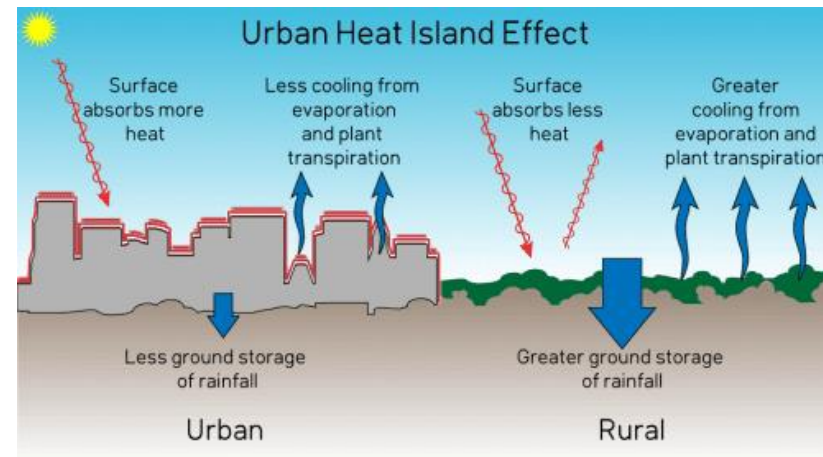
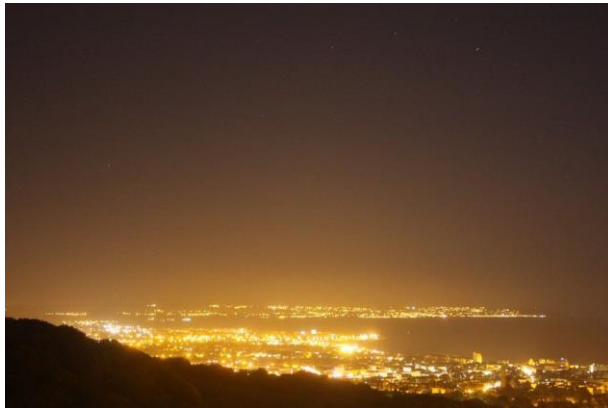


Nearly half of our pharmaceuticals derive from biochemical innovations first created in other living organisms; extinguishing species eliminates these potentially life-saving resources.



We extract a surprising array of useful materials from plants and animals!





Vegetation can filter and improve air and water quality, mitigate the “heat island” effect of urbanization, and reduce the intensity of anthropogenic noise and light pollution.



As most people agree, wildlife has as much right to a home as we do. And, conserving biological diversity is good for us!

Conditions Today: Disappearing open space, declining green space and wildlife.



Open space and green space are key quality of life indices for our neighborhoods. They're under assault from measures like SB 9.



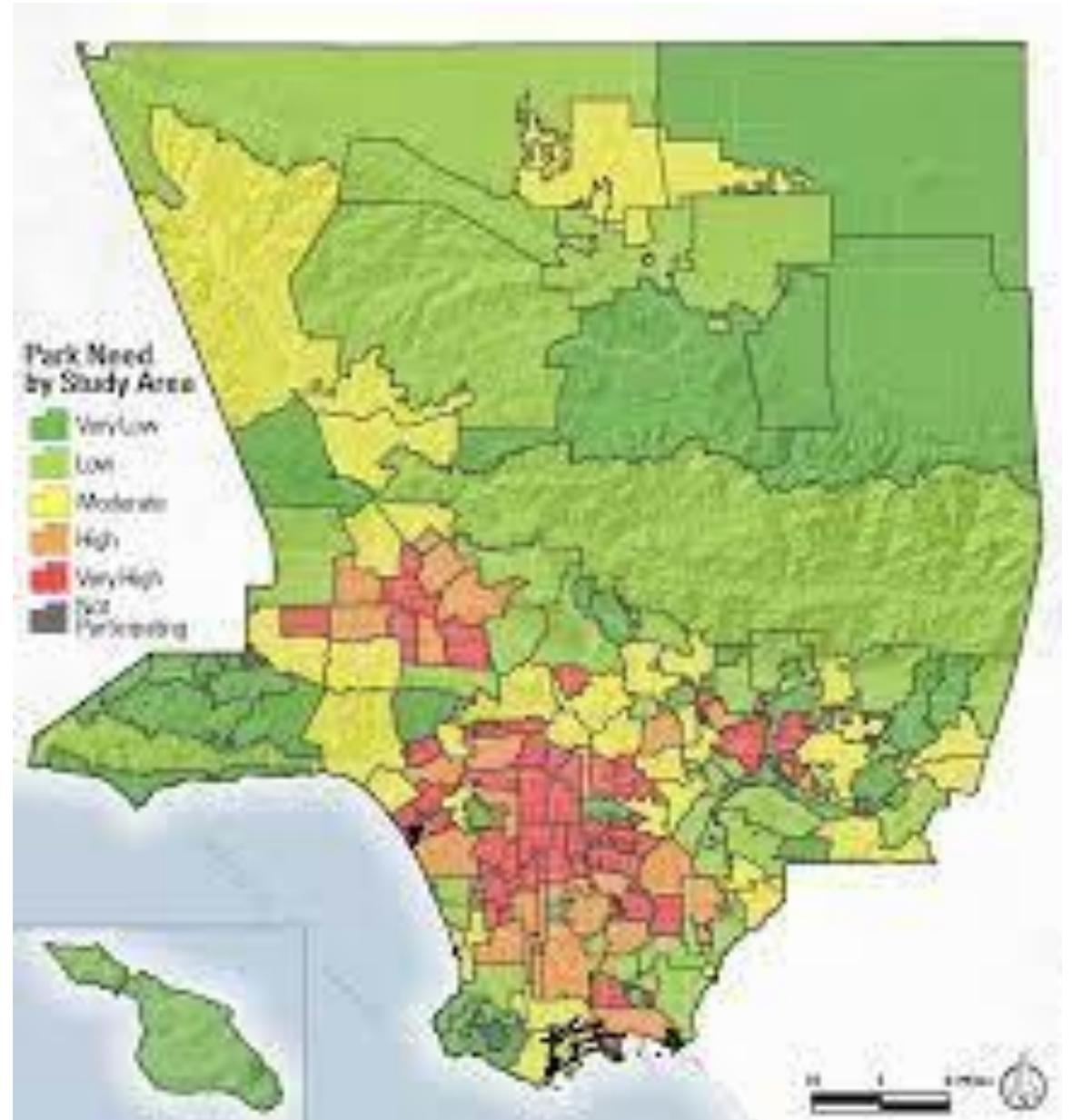
Organizations like the Trust for Public Land—
TPL--can help communities preserve and
restore open space and parkland.



TPL ranks LA 71st among the largest 100 cities in the U.S. for park access. Over a third of Angelinos have no parks within a ten-minute walk.



Parkland
in Los Angeles
is heavily
concentrated in
wealthier, whiter
neighborhoods



Next Steps:
Proactive
or
Reactive?





- + Define and prioritize goals;
- + Identify existing NC and City rules, standards, and policies;
- + Provide oversight to ensure that City personnel are appropriately educated and trained to effectively implement standards;
- + Identify key partners;
- + Identify funding sources.

