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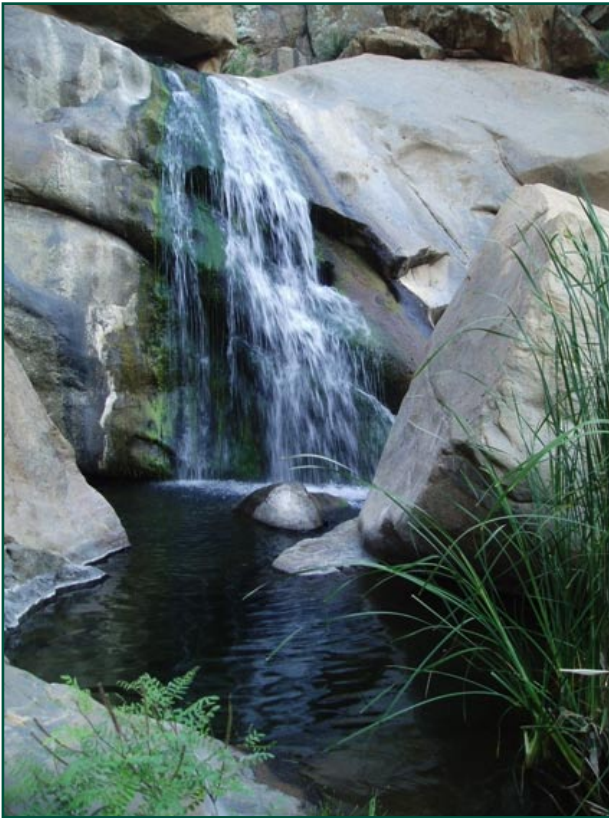
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Now Is The Best Chance Ever To Preserve Our Forests Forever!

by Cindy Buxton, Chair Forest Committee



(Photo by Nathan Weflen)

The Cleveland National Forest published an unprecedented Land Management Scoping Document last spring which proposed many areas for protected wilderness status. The final public interface to this process, the Draft Land Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement is now available for public comment. The document, maps, and instructions for submitting comments are at:

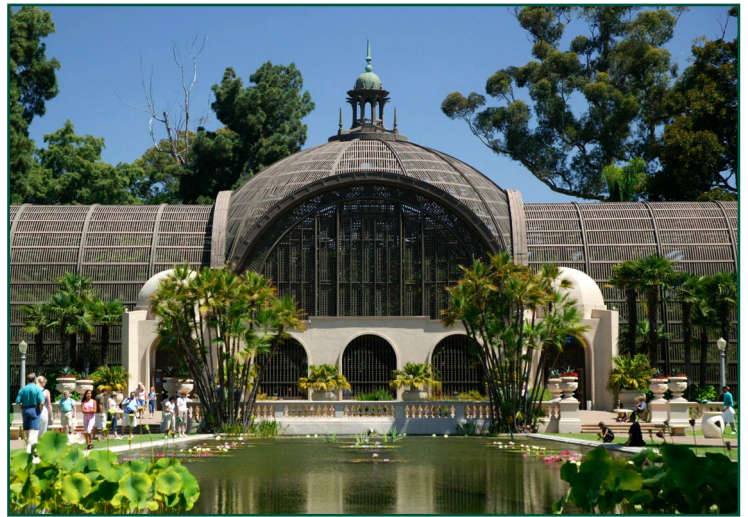
<http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php?project=35130>

We need you NOW! This is one of the single most important comment periods of our time for ensuring the lasting pristine beauty of our backcountry forests for all of time.

Ten minutes of your time can make an important differ-

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SOHO Wins! Balboa Park is Saved!



After a two-year battle, Save Our Heritage Organisation is ecstatic about its major legal victory made final when Superior Court Judge Timothy Taylor ruled today that the City Council violated municipal law and used faulty logic last July in approving the Plaza de Panama Committee plan to build a massive bridge and freeway-style road off the iconic Laurel Street/Cabrillo Bridge, modernize acres of parkland, fill canyons, and introduce paid parking into Balboa Park through the building of a new parking structure against the backdrop of the majestic Spreckels Organ Pavilion.

Judge Taylor, in a detailed ruling, held that the City “abused its discretion” in approving the project in violation of its Municipal Code and that “SOHO is entitled to a writ of mandamus directing the city” to set aside the project’s required Site Development Permit. In order to approve the permit under the Municipal Code, the City was required to find that the project site would otherwise have “no reasonable beneficial use.” The judge held that “the critical finding by the City Council is so lacking in evidentiary support as to render it unreasonable; it must therefore be set aside.”

Bruce Coons, SOHO’s executive director, issued the following statement:

“SOHO is extremely gratified by the court’s ruling. Balboa Park is

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Support Our Environmental Future Chapter Kicks-Off Annual Fund Appeal

San Diego County has a greater biodiversity than any other county in all of North America. Along with the rest of California, it is among the top 10 biodiversity regions on earth. Our mild, Mediterranean climate (hot dry summers and cool, wet winters) combined with varied landforms result in a large number of distinct habitats in San Diego County, including: beaches, salt marshes and lagoons, coastal sage scrub, grasslands, chaparral, oak woodlands, riparian, mixed conifer forests, freshwater marshes and meadows, and deserts. We have many endemic threatened and endangered species that reside here. These are native to our geographic area and are found nowhere else in the world.

Since the Chapter was founded 65 years ago, we have been active in the preservation of our environment. From efforts by members to enlist public support for conservation programs such as the Torrey Pine in 1948, the prevention of power lines invading Anza Borrego State Park in 2008 or the work to address climate change, the San Diego Chapter has played a major role in the welfare of our communities by representing your vision for San Diego - clean air and water, healthy wildlife, and protected special places while promoting livable, walkable, and workable communities.

As you know, fighting for what we value is a huge expense, even though many experts, scientists, lawyers and volunteers provide their services to the Sierra Club for free. That's why we annually turn to our members every March by asking for your financial help, enabling the Chapter to continue our good work.

**Less than \$2.50 of your membership dues
are returned to the Chapter.**

**We depend heavily on generous contributions
directly to the Chapter from
members and friends.**

Now is the time that you can show your appreciation for the work your Chapter does. Your support is an indication of how you value our organization, programs, and the successful work that we do on the local level.

**100% of your gift will go to work right here in
the San Diego Chapter.**

Watch for your fund appeal letter to arrive in the next few days. But why wait? Help us out, right NOW by going to www.sandiego.sierraclub.org and clicking on the Donate Now button. This is a safe, secure, and easy way to contribute. Please donate and we will do the work!

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a rare and extraordinary site, filled with history, culture, and beauty. It would have been nothing short of a travesty to lose this treasure to a remodel better suited for an industrial park. This is a victory not only for the people of San Diego who have venerated Balboa Park as the "People's Park" for generations, but also for the millions of visitors who come to San Diego just to see this international gem. This project embodied broader and darker implications for Balboa Park's future. The plan would have caused significant, irreparable and irreversible harm to Balboa Park's historic structures, its environment, its canyons and roadways. It would have paved the way for what many San Diegans believe would have led to commercialization, privatization, and new construction throughout the park, severely curtailing public access and destroying forever the experience of this singular place. We would like to take this moment to disavow the public of misleading claims made by our opponents during this two-year conflict."

The Plaza de Panama project in no way reclaimed the park from cars. While one small area was to be freed up, the rest of the park was, in fact, designed to be dominated by vehicles in a sea of traffic, new buildings and acres of concrete. It would have turned once tranquil park areas, such as the Alcazar Gardens, into an automobile, bus, and semi-truck delivery zone. Despite dozens of public and several private meetings, there was never any genuine opportunity to find an agreeable compromise. Beyond all reason, the "My Way or the Highway" attitude that prevailed with this project trounced common sense, respect for the public's wishes, and responsible stewardship of our national landmark. Significantly, the judge's decision marks the City Council's second illegal move to advance the proposed Plaza de Panama project. Last year SOHO sued the city in Superior Court over the prematurely approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the city and the project's proponent, who dictated what the project should entail despite widespread opposition from citizens and design, planning, and conservation professionals alike. SOHO challenged the MOU and Judge Judith Hayes agreed and ruled in SOHO's favor.

Today's victory should be seen as a lesson to never allow plutocratic interests to override the wishes of the public. The hard work of the greater San Diego community, which included over 30 organizations, planning groups, neighborhood, environmental and civic groups and multiple historic organizations to fight this project and to protect the park's over 100-year history, has been remarkable. These people, along with the many donors whose contributions helped to fund SOHO's litigation, can all be tremendously proud today. Balboa Park, the People's Park, will now be preserved, making this a monumental victory for the citizens of San Diego and the National Historic Landmark District as a whole. The spirit of innovation, economic development and entrepreneurship that drove the original 1915 Panama-California Exposition will now have a clear path to move ahead with planning for and celebration of its centennial and the future beyond 2015, while preserving the integrity of this national treasure.