

# STAFF REPORT

## City of Lancaster

CC 16
12/10/2024
TN

Date: December 10, 2024

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Patti Garibay, Community Development Director  
Jocelyn Swain, Senior Planner

Subject: Authorization to Use Biological Impact Fee Funds for the Acquisition of the Alpine Butte Conservation Property

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### Recommendation:

1. Adopt Resolution No. , authorizing the appropriation and use of biological impact fee funds for the acquisition of the Alpine Butte Conservation Property.
2. Appropriate \$1,045,500 from the Biological Impact Fee fund balance to Account No. 41221000.8010, Property Acquisitions.

**G.C. Section 84308:** No

### Fiscal Impact:

As of November 6, 2024, the Biological Impact Fee Account has a balance of \$1,052,784.98 dollars. The purchase of the property would cost \$1,045,500.00, leaving approximately \$7,284.98 in the account. This is money that was paid by developers specifically to offset the cumulative impacts to biological resources from development in the City and greater Antelope Valley. The City would provide the funds for the purchase of the property and will have no financial responsibility with respect to the ongoing maintenance of the property. As such, there would be no on-going fiscal impact to the City.

### Background:

Since October 28, 2005, when the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 848, a Biological Impact Fee has been collected from developers to address cumulative impact and the incremental loss of habitat caused by development in the City. All developers, including alternative energy, industrial, residential, and commercial, pay \$770 per acre towards the Biological Impact Fee. This fee was added to Section 15.66 of the Lancaster Municipal Code. By working with conservation groups

and using funds collected from developers, the City has purchased 871.91 acres of conservation land throughout the Antelope Valley since 2005.

Wildlands, Inc. currently has an option to purchase two parcels totaling 154.4 acres and has presented them to the City to consider for funding of the acquisition. The subject property (Alpine Butte Preserve) totals 154.4 acres, of which the City would fund the acquisition of 123 acres, while Wildlands would fund the purchase of the remaining 32.4 acres. Upon closing of the purchase of the land, a deed restriction would be placed on the property preventing development in the future. Wildlands would own and maintain the property with no further obligation from the City.

The subject property is located just east of the City limits at 130<sup>th</sup> Street East and Avenue M. The property is adjacent to Los Angeles County owned open space, within the boundaries of the Antelope Valley Significant Ecological Area (SEA) and in close proximity to land owned by the Bureau of Land Management and the Los Angeles County Sanitation District. Additionally, several other conservation sites/parks are located in the vicinity, including Saddleback Butte State Park, the Antelope Valley Indian Museum, the Alpine Butte Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Big Rock Wash Wildlife Sanctuary.

Habitat on the subject property consists of a mix of allscale scrub and creosote bush-white bursage scrub and includes western Joshua trees. Several State and federally-listed species are known to occur either on-site or in the immediate vicinity of the site including Joshua trees (onsite; State Candidate), desert tortoise (onsite; State/Federally Threatened), and Swainson's hawk and Mohave ground squirrel (vicinity, State Threatened). Several Swainson's hawk nests and many sightings of the species have been noted within foraging range of the property. Other species with varying levels of regulatory protection found in the vicinity include Prairie falcon, Le Conte's thrasher, American badger, alkali mariposa lily and Parish's popcorn flower.

Acquisition of this property would provide conservation habitat in perpetuity. If the City Council authorizes the funding of this purchase, Wildlands, Inc. would purchase the property and place a deed restriction upon it preventing the property from being developed. Wildlands, Inc. would manage the subject property in perpetuity. With the authorization to acquire this property, the City will have funded the acquisition of 994.91 acres of conservation habitat.

JS/sg

**Attachments:**

- A. Resolution No.
- B. Conservation Analysis
- C. Mitigation Values Purchase and Sale Agreement (Alpine Butte Preserve)
- D. Declaration of Restrictions