

DRAFT

# A History of the Irvine Ranch Open Space

## The History

This history was compiled by Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks to assist taxpayers, conservation groups, OC Parks and the Orange County Board of Supervisors with analysis of the proposed transfer of the 20,000 acre open space lands owned by The Irvine Company to the County of Orange/OC Parks.

### 1991/1992

- Weir and Gypsum Canyons, Limestone, and portions of Loma Ridge were protected as mitigation.
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) develops a stewardship plan for 22,000 acres, including the mitigation lands.
- TNC enters a 15 year management agreement with The Irvine Company to implement resource management and guide public access programs.

### July 17, 1996

- The country's first Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) was established in central and coastal Orange County.
- Portions of the Irvine Ranch are included in the NCCP.

### November 28, 2001

- The Irvine Company dedicates 11,000 acres as protected open space, including Fremont, Blind and Baker Canyons, along with Lomas de Santiago.
- TNC's management agreement was expanded to include public access programs for the 11,000 acres.
- The Bren Stewardship Foundation established a \$30 million fund to support the restoration and management of these wildlands, which includes approximately:
  - \$4.6 million for TNC's easement monitoring
  - \$7 million for environmental enhancement and restoration
  - \$10 million for public access improvements
  - \$4 million for land management

### May 26, 2005

- The Irvine Ranch Land Reserve Trust (IRLRT), a private non-profit foundation, is founded by Irvine Company Chairman, Donald Bren and is wholly controlled by Irvine Company executives.
- Bren announces a \$20 million gift to support IRLRT's administration of the land, improvement of trailheads and creation of new trails.
- The 22-mile Mountains to Sea Trail, from Orange to Newport Beach, is created and later named a National Recreation Trail.

*"My vision is that the Reserve will set a new standard for conservation stewardship ... to achieve this ambitious goal, we must assure that the globally important natural resources of the Reserve will be managed and cared for in perpetuity ... join me in an unwavering commitment to ensure that this precious land is managed, improved and enjoyed forever."*

*Prepared Remarks by Donald Bren*

*Irvine Regional Park, May 25, 2005*

### October 10, 2006

- The federal government designates the Irvine Ranch open space a National Natural Landmark for its rare biological and geological features.

### April 1, 2007

- IRLRT takes over land management responsibilities from TNC.

### September 4, 2007

- IRLRT changes its name to the Irvine Ranch Conservancy.

### April 22, 2008

- The state designates the Irvine Ranch open space as the state's first ever California Natural Landmark.

### September 12, 2009

- OC Parks Commission unanimously approves September 29, 2009 Letter of Intent to transfer 20,000 acres of The Irvine Company owned open space to the County of Orange/OC Parks.

