

Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study

Technical Resources Program

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Upper LA River Watershed Area

Project Lead: Save Elephant Hill

Presenter Name: Elva Yanez

Previously Awarded TRP: No



Project Overview

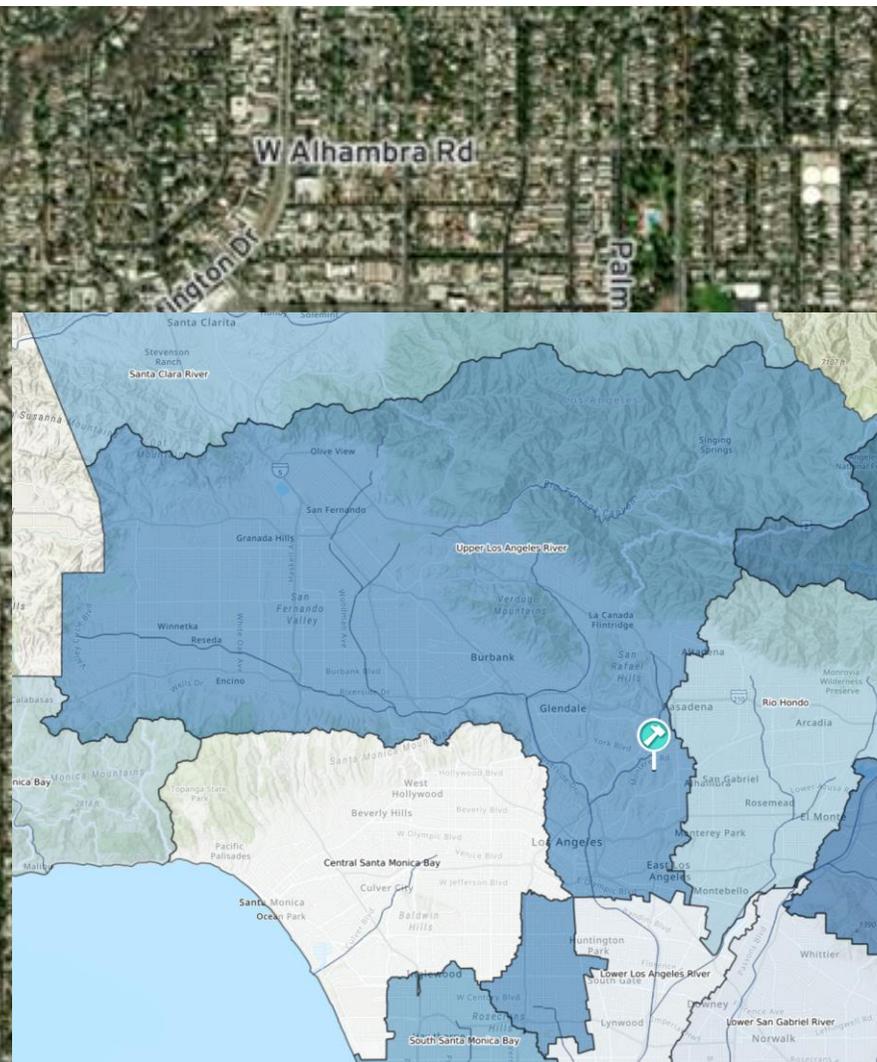
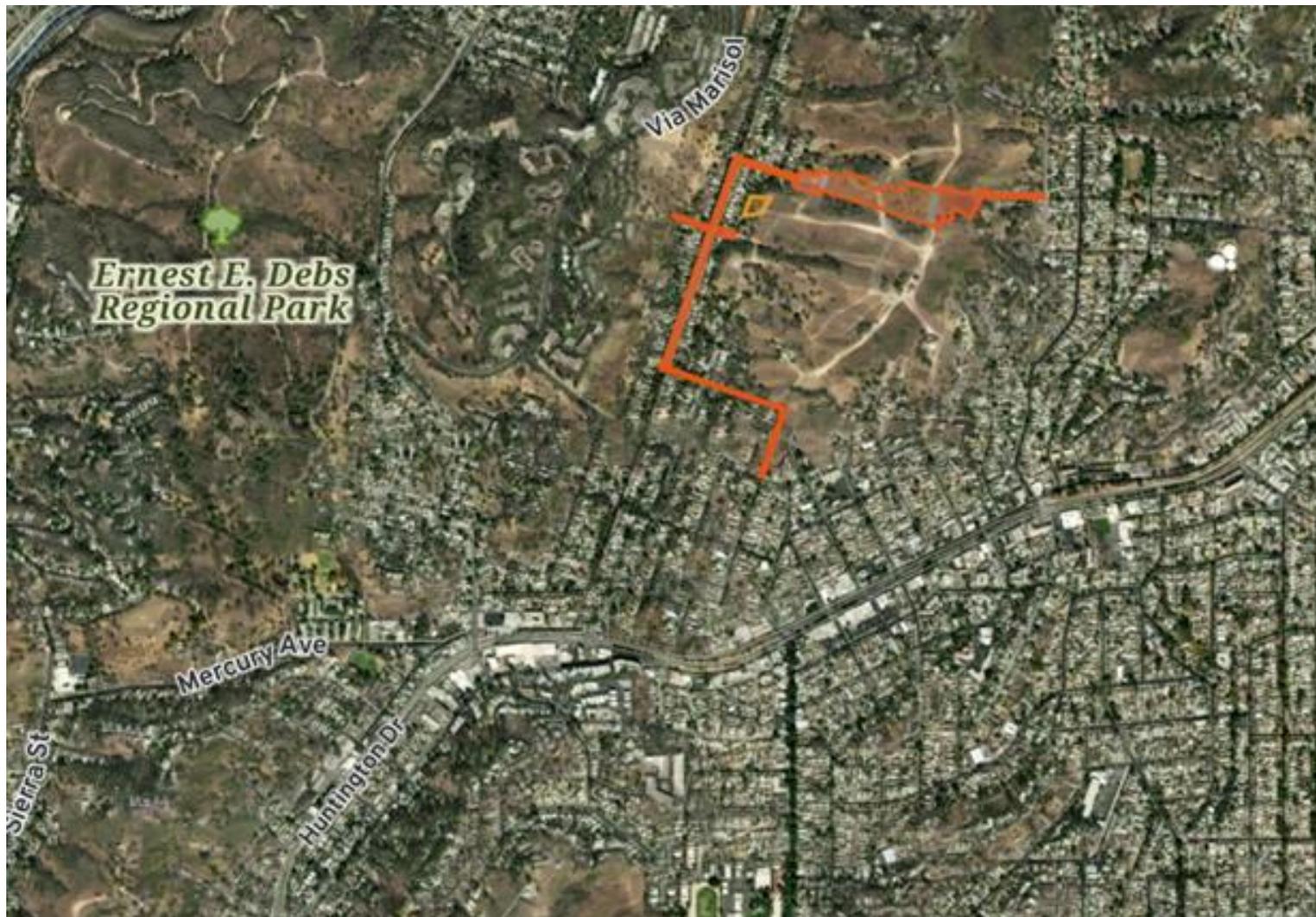
Prioritize nature based solutions, protect a natural spring, improve water quality and enhance open space for community benefit.

- Primary Objective: Receive technical assistance through the Technical Resources Program (TRP) to assess the feasibility of the project opportunity and community priorities
- Project Status: TRP request
- Total Funding Requested: \$ 300,000.00





Project Location



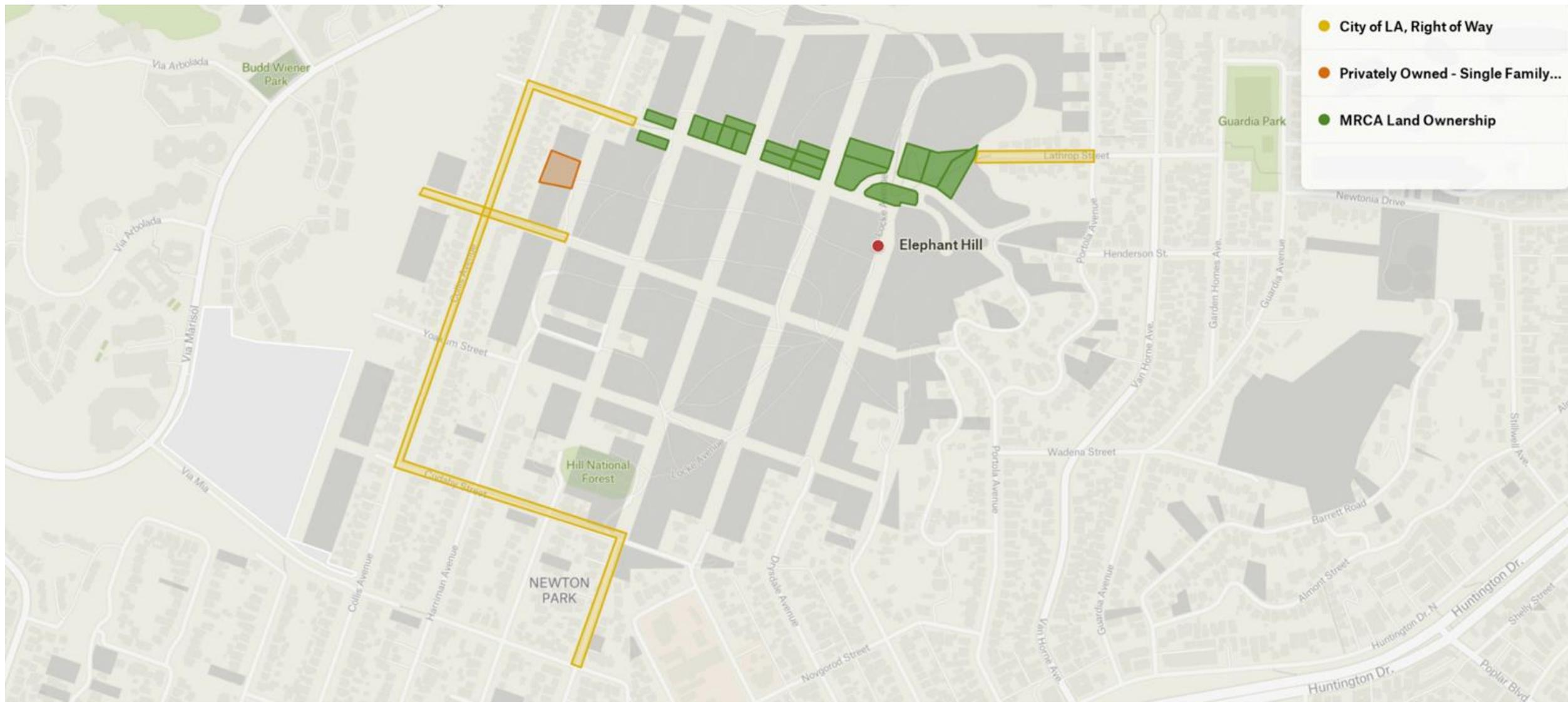


Project Location





Project Location





Project Background

1. Why was the Project Location selected?

Opportunities

- Presence of an intermittent underground stream and spring that flow during wet seasons
 - Opportunity to restore the underground stream which runs eastward and pools in an intermittent spring, located near the Pullman entrance
- Stormwater infrastructure improvements through nature-based stormwater capture, retention, filtration and biofiltration interventions on the hillside and surrounding streets
 - Opportunity to capture and retain stormwater at various points in the study area, some of which are located on undeveloped open space, others located on public streets and rights of way adjacent to residential homes
- Community benefits through enhancing and restoring the park space and habitat on MRCA-owned parcels located between two east-west ridges on Elephant Hill



Project Background

1. Why was the Project Location selected? (continued)

Threats

- Destructive and undesirable activity that destroys habitat, damages soil and creates 'wild west' conditions
 - Dangerous off-roading activity damages soil and habitat, poses public health and safety threats
 - Illegal dumping of trash, construction debris, etc.
 - Unauthorized land uses including unpermitted grading, encampments, farm animals
 - Etc.



Project Background

2. How was the Project developed?

- Save Elephant Hill has engaged and mobilized the residents of El Sereno and other NELA communities for 20 years to secure environmental justice protections.
- Elephant Hill's intermittent stream and spring was activated and highly visible in the winter of 2023.
- Contacted CWH ULAR Watershed Coordinators about stormwater conditions
 - Coordinated with City of LA, MRCA, Neighbors, ARLA and other organizations



Project Background

3. Which regional water management plan includes the proposed project?

- The Technical Assistance team will confirm the inclusion of the project into a regional water management plan, i.e. IRWMP regional plan and/or Upper LA River EWMP

4. Description of benefits to municipality/municipalities

- The project site holds promising opportunities to prioritize nature based solutions and implement water quality, water supply, and community benefits.
- The feasibility study will assess whether:
 - The volume capture will trap pollutants, including bacteria, metals, toxics and trash, preventing their discharge over a network of neighborhoods and streets, running into the Los Angeles River and adding to the impairment of that water body along with the harbor and estuary.
 - The project site can support efforts to attain essential water quality goals and targets in the Upper LA River watershed.



5. Description of benefits to Disadvantaged Communities

- Elephant Hill is surrounded to the east, south and west by low income, predominantly Latino neighborhoods defined as Disadvantaged Communities by CES 4.0.
- These neighborhoods have been heavily impacted by gentrification over 5 years
- Planting trees and native plants at the hillside will provide community members with the desired recreational space and will help slow down, spread, filter and retain runoff, and prevent communities at the bottom of the hill from flooding.
- This project could serve as a site to educate the El Sereno community about stormwater issues and best management practices in action.



Partners

1. Who are the partners already identified?

- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA)
- City of Los Angeles

2. What communities or groups have expressed support for the project?

- Barrio Action Youth & Family Ctr.
- El Sereno Community Land Trust
- El Sereno Organizing Committee
- Heroes of Elephant Hill
- Natural History Museum
- Test Plot – Elephant Hill
- Coyotl + Macehauilli
- El Sereno Historical Society
- Homeowners / Pullman-Harriman
- MRCA
- North East Trees
- The Nature Conservancy



Partners

3. Have you received a letter of concurrence from the municipality (if needed)

Yes.

- Secured support from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to apply for a Feasibility Study of their parcels on Elephant Hill.
- Letter of Non-Objection is currently moving through the approval process by the City of Los Angeles. Recommendation of approval provided by the City of LA Administrative Oversight Committee and LA Sanitation and Environment Safe Clean Water Implementation Division.

4. Have you received a letter of concurrence from the Flood Control District (if needed)

Not required for TRP.

5. Have you yet engaged the appropriate vector control district about the project concept?

Not required for TRP.



Project Details



Project Schematic/Site Plan

What?

- Prioritize nature based solutions
- Water quality and water supply
- Community benefits

How?

- Native gardens
- Trees
- Bioswales
- Rain gardens
- Water storage tanks
- Storm drain inlet filters
- Enhancing trails, benches, drinking fountains and interpretive signage.



Project Details

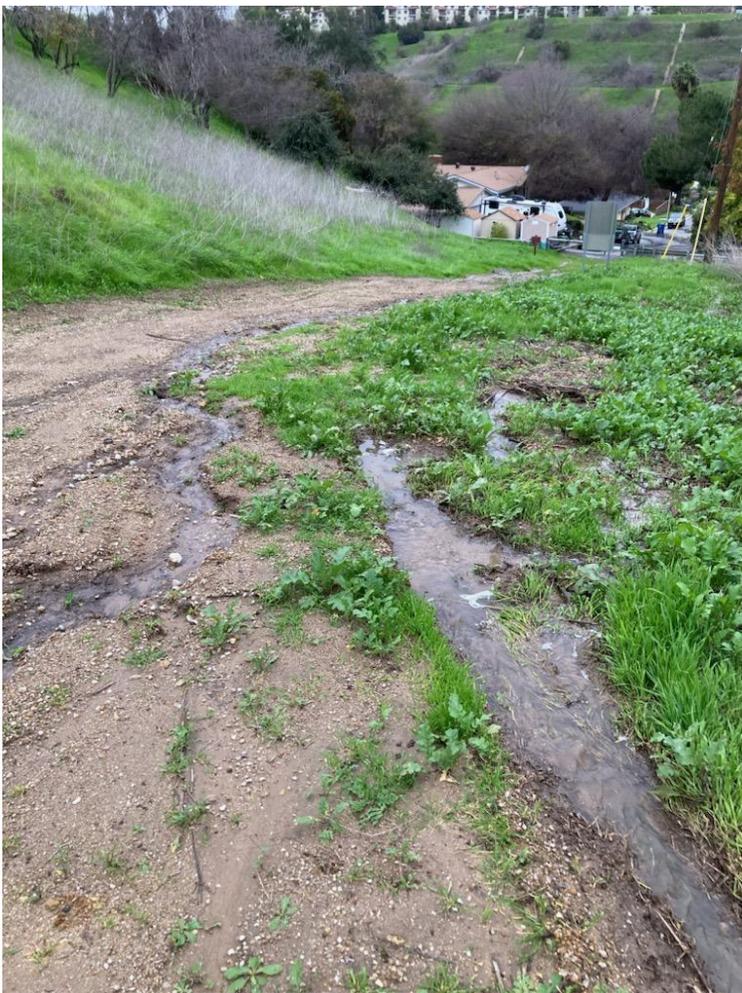
2.1. Current site conditions - View of site looking south and north





Project Details

2.1. Current site conditions - Evidence of underground spring





Project Details

2.1. Current site conditions - Stormwater impacts





Project Details

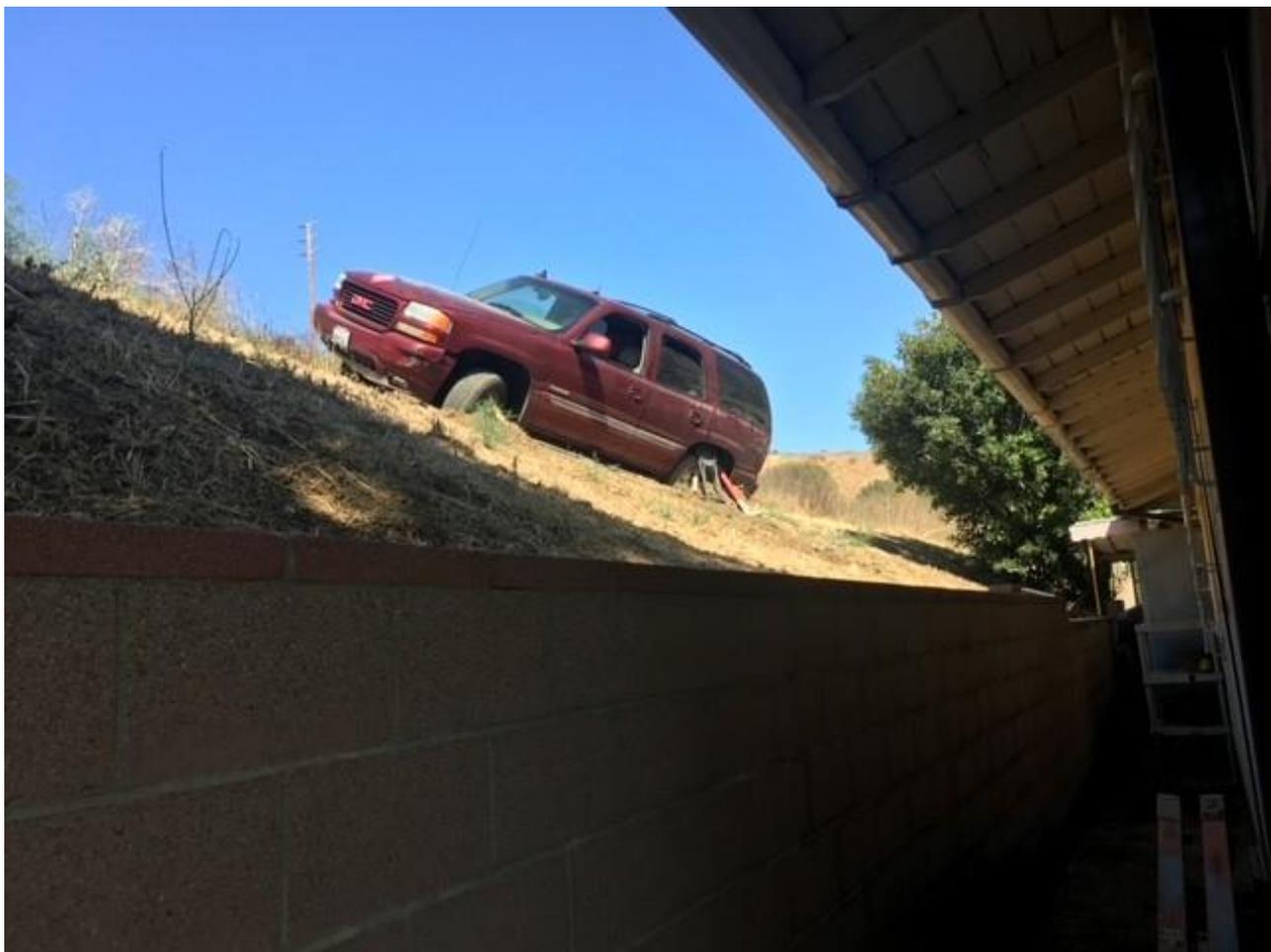
2.1. Current site conditions - Dumping





Project Details

2.1. Current site conditions - Off-roading threats to environment & community





Project Details

2.1. Current site conditions - Unauthorized land uses





2.2. Description of current site conditions and completed studies/analysis



2007 Hydrological Report

A 2007 hydrological report by BlueGreen Consulting confirmed that there is an **intermittent, if not permanent, spring and natural drainage and/or water course present at the proposed project site**. The report suggests that there can be permanent presence of groundwater in the lower valley deposits, that feeds the spring by groundwater stored in the surrounding clayey and silty bedrock.



Project Details

2.3 Description of current site conditions and completed studies/analysis



2008 and 2021 Ecological Assessments

Two Ecological Assessments of Elephant Hill by Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc. documented:

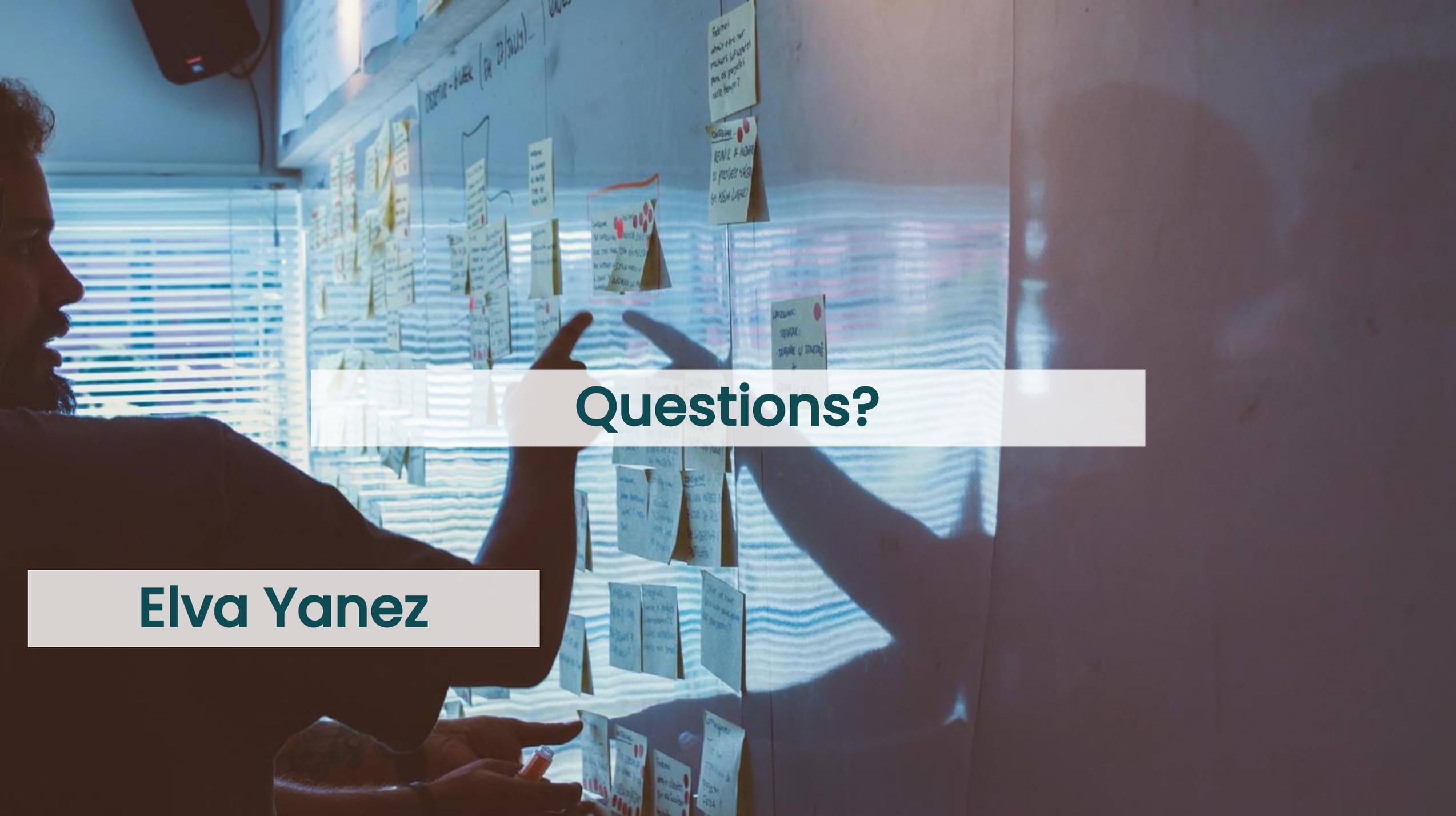
- Five sensitive vegetation communities; two special-status bird species; 14 species of butterflies; 4 herptiles species; local species of lizards, mammals, and invertebrates.
- The northern portion of Elephant Hill was identified as noteworthy for its species richness.
- Documented off roading damage to land using Google maps over time.
- Provided land management recommendations.



Funding Request

Year	SCW Funding Requested	Phase	Amount
1	TRP	Feasibility Study	\$300,000.00

Estimated Capital Cost Breakdown	
Construction Cost:	\$ 988,568.00
Planning and Design Cost*	\$ 290,112.00



Questions?

Elva Yanez