

Open Space for All

23 October 2015

Dear Editor:

In a recent letter, Jack Sultze suggests that the unforeseen popularity of the Wilderness Park is a problem and the solution is to “restrict access to the park, allowing only Claremont residents to use it.” He says, “We paid for it and should be able to decide who can use it.” This statement is not accurate.

The city acquired the original 1200 acres in 1996 through a development agreement with Pomona College, supplemented by regional and local funds. Today, the park is 2000 acres. The 800 acres added since 1996 have all been purchased by state and regional sources except for Sycamore Canyon, funded by an exchange with a developer, and Johnson’s Pasture, funded by a local bond measure. Of the nearly \$20 million that has been spent on park purchases, approximately 40 percent has come from outside Claremont. This includes monies from three state sources—Prop A, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

As we seek to preserve our hillsides from development and extend the open-space corridor along the San Gabriel foothills, we will undoubtedly continue to depend on non-Claremont revenue sources. The park’s appeal to regional visitors is a major advantage for us in applying for these grants.

The popularity of the Wilderness Park is an asset for Claremont. It is not only fitting but also beneficial for us that we share it with our neighbors.

James Van Cleve
Claremont Wildlands Conservancy