



**Michele Zack** Wed, Jul 29

toventura,

Dear Ms. Ventura,

I'm writing to comment on the draft EIR for the **Arroyo Seco Canyon Project**.

First, there have been no public meetings to explain this project to communities surrounding it, and none are planned. I object!

It also appears no serious investigation was conducted on how historic resources might be affected by this project, therefore the draft negative declaration of such impact was arrived at improperly. Native Americans had a seasonal acorn depot that is well-documented at the outlet of Millard Canyon within the study area, and the existence of a more permanent encampment very nearby has also been posited by archeologists. Many artifacts were found in this area, and the earlier lack of study beforehand caused the burial of an unknown number of Native American historic resources during the building of nearby La Vina. A (possibly deliberate) bulldozing of historic materials in the area has *already* occurred and the City needs to be especially vigilant to avoid more loss of Native American resources.

Moving closer to our historic times, and also in the study area for this project, is the mouth of "El Prieto" trail from the Arroyo Seco, which follows the canyon of that name (earlier called Church Canyon for the first American in Los Angeles, Joseph Chapman, who logged it around 1818-19 and carried out timber to build the Plaza Church, still standing, in Los Angeles.) The same canyon was later called Negro or N\_\_\_\_\_ Canyon, named for Robert Owens, a former slave arriving from Texas in the 1850s who bought his freedom and was among the first prominent African Americans in Los Angeles in the pre-Civil War Era. He lived and worked in this canyon after securing a contract to supply firewood and construction materials to the US Army in this significant period. His son Charles Owens married the daughter of Biddy Mason, who founded Los Angeles's first AME Church. The gravesite of Owen Brown, son of John Brown, overlooks this canyon as well, but I'm not sure if it is within the project study area, or just outside it.

Beyond possible impacts on historic resources, I question the efficacy of this plan because the current spreading grounds usually sit unused, left derelict and empty, and don't appear to function as intended. They are ugly, and enlarge the area of the Arroyo Seco that has "de-natured" *without any clear public benefit*. There are better ways to improve water resources and reliability while protecting, not denigrating, the rare resource of Hahamongna. I urge the City of Pasadena to follow recommendations from the Arroyo Seco Foundation which include nature-enhancing elements such as:

- a minimum environmental flow for fish and aquatic species of 3 cfs in the Spring;

- no "engineered" stream material, and
- using a living river and natural stream hydrology to allow the water to percolate into the groundwater basin rather than spreading basins.

I look forward to a response from the City of Pasadena on each of the issues I raise in this letter.

Respectfully,  
Michele Zack

Author of *Altadena: Between Wilderness and City* (2004) and *Southern California Story* (2009)

Consultant/Partner at Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West (2006-2013)

Board member (emeritus) of Altadena Heritage (2009-2020)

Best Advocate of the Arroyo Seco

Altadena Citizen of the Year