

February 25, 2016

Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee

Dear Members of the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee:

I am an educator and writer in Hollywood. I have known Nicholas Hernandez for over a year, and I am familiar with his work restoring native plants and habitat at Wishtoyo Chumash Demonstration Village in Malibu. I was delighted to hear that he had been able to carry his incredible knowledge of and love for native plants to the Arroyo Seco. The shortage of native plants and nurseries for restoration projects along the Los Angeles River, for residential and municipal landscaping projects, for drought management, and to protect biodiversity in our region make the Hahamongna Nursery all the more valuable.

I have been traveling from Hollywood to attend Nick's volunteer events since he began holding them last summer. I have walked with Nick through the arroyo to see how mulefat, white sage, and yucca grow. I have learned to float acorns to see which are whole and will produce viable trees. I have helped separate the roots of over 1,500 endangered native grasses and move them to individual four-inch plastic pots, where they thrive today. I have seen attendance soar from just a sprinkling of people to several recent events with over 30 people in attendance, many of whom learned about the nursery from Nick's social media posts. I have made dear friends at the nursery. The volunteers who have gathered around Nick have help generate and maintain the thousands of flourishing new plants in what was, until recently, waste ground. Part of what keeps volunteers returning again and again is the way Nick shares his cultural and personal beliefs about why native plants are precious.

He is a remarkable steward of the park. Please demonstrate respect for his work and the community support he has generated for this much-needed project by allowing the nursery to continue operationing. And, granting access to the two empty, locked sheds at the nursery site would be useful for keeping tender shoots and sprouts overnight, out of the reach of hungry birds and ground squirrels.

I am not able to attend the meeting tonight, but I heard the heartfelt stories of twenty people at the Environmental Advisory Committee meeting. Please protect the nursery, the thousands of beautiful plants growing there, and the community of caretakers and environmentalists forming to take care of the nursery, the park, and the arroyo.

Sincerely,

Julia Wasson, Proud Hahamongna Nursery Volunteer