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Mission Trails Power Plant is unthinkable

I was astounded to learn that the construction of the Quail Brush Power Plant adjacent to Mission Trails Regional Park here in San Diego is still under consideration. I had thought that the overall inappropriateness of a power plant next to the only open space in the city of San Diego had ended the discussion. Evidently Cogentrix believes they can shove this idea through the official pipeline, and that is deeply offensive to me.

I volunteer thousands of hours every year with Girl Scouts San Diego's backpacking program. We train hundreds of girls and adults every year in our wilderness hiking class, where the afternoon is spent hiking at Mission Trails, the only location within San Diego that remotely resembles wilderness. We are not fortunate enough to live near nationally protected parks like Yosemite or Sequoia National Parks, or the Coastal Redwoods of Santa Cruz or Humboldt, so we make do with what San Diego does offer -- the quietly beautiful and undisturbed chaparral ecosystem of Mission Trails Regional Park.

This park is a treasure for us, especially since it's our biggest resource for outdoor outreach. Introducing girls and adults to the quiet hills, deer in the distance, the footprint of a mountain lion, monkey flowers blooming on the banks of Oak Canyon -- this is a crucial component of learning about the natural world we live in. Teaching Leave No Trace principles in the shadow of a power plant strikes me as a little more than just ironic; it is downright offensive.

We live in a nation where our citizens are so disconnected with the forces of nature that they're taken aback when mud slides down mountains, or oceans wash away cliffs, imperiling lives and homes. The unintended consequences of unenlightened construction affect us all, whether it's logging near communities in Washington State, building homes on beach cliffs or building a fossil fuel plant next to a regional protected open space like Mission Trails.

I exhort you to consider the deficits associated with the power plant, and realize ruining an open space preserve is too high a price to pay for the citizens of San Diego. We have nowhere else to go.

Sincerely,
Valerie Ross