



# VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZED IN CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT

*"Our mission is to preserve, protect, and defend the urban wilderness of Glendale  
and the Crescenta Valley for the benefit of future generations."*

October 3, 2011

Deborah Deets  
Watershed Protection Division  
1149 South Broadway Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

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WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION

Dear Ms. Deets,

On behalf of Glendale-Crescenta V.O.I.C.E., I am enclosing a copy of the September/October 2011 issue of FORE magazine, published by the Southern California Golf Association. While I realize it's a bit unusual for an environmental organization to be promoting a magazine devoted to golf, I wanted to bring your attention to a very important story which is featured on Page 9.

The article by Eric Noland outlines the current status of the campaign to save the historic Verdugo Hills Golf Course in the Sunland-Tujunga neighborhood in Los Angeles. The golf course is threatened by a proposed 229-unit housing development and members of the community have been fighting to preserve it as a golf course and regional park.

The article goes on to discuss the relationship that V.O.I.C.E. has established with the Southern California Golf Association, one of the nation's oldest and most respected regional golf associations. It also speaks of the value that golf courses have in our community, not only for recreation but as beautiful green open spaces in an increasingly urbanized world.

Finally, the article summarizes the proposal put forth by Councilmember Paul Krekorian to use City of Los Angeles Proposition O funds to save the golf course. Prop. O is the 2004 clean-water bond which could provide funds to acquire the golf course and construct water-related infrastructure for storm water capture and ground water recharge at the site. The proposal will come before the Prop. O Citizens and Administrative Oversight Committees later this year for approval.

I hope you'll take the time to enjoy this very significant article. For more information on the campaign to save the Verdugo Hills Golf Course visit [www.savethegolfcourse.org](http://www.savethegolfcourse.org).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marc Stirdivant,  
Chairman of the Board



# Storm-Water Project Could Save Golf Course

BY ERIC NOLAND

The activists have rallied in a spirited attempt to prevent a Tujunga pitch-and-putt golf course from being turned into a sprawl of residences.

But here's the irony: They aren't avid golfers. Or golfers at all. They simply appreciate the sight of rolling hillsides covered with grass, space that is free of development and adjacent roads that won't be clogged with the vehicles of all those extra homeowners.

It appears they might get their wish. Community members who oppose the housing development at Verdugo Hills GC are hopeful that Proposition O funds can be obtained to turn a 58-acre site (the golf course occupies about half of it) into a storm-water reclamation project.

It could provide a model for other Southern California golf courses coveted by developers.

"It's an important site to the community," said Richard Toyon, president of Glendale-Crescenta VOICE (Volunteers Organized in Conserving the Environment). "It's beautiful. When you enter from the west on the 210 Freeway, that's the first thing you see.

"The golf course is within reach of everybody. It's not an exclusive country club, an out-of-reach place to some people." (Indeed, green fees are \$12 for 18 holes.)

And yet, of the 14 members on the VOICE board, not a one plays golf, Toyon said.

The Southern California Golf Association has been working with VOICE and other community organizations to save the course, including testifying in support of their Proposition O application. The SCGA maintains that the marriage of a golf course



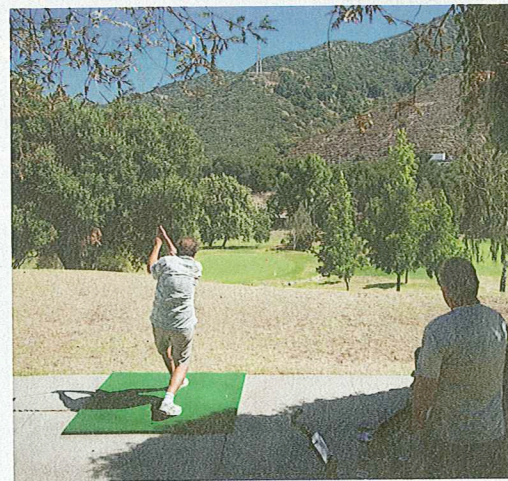
and a watershed project represents an ideal match.

"The groups eventually sought me out precisely because none of them plays golf," said SCGA Governmental Affairs Director Craig Kessler. "They needed someone who could give them information and entrée into the golf world, and answer their questions and give them advice about golf-specific issues."

Proposition O, a clean-water bond passed in 2004, could provide \$20 million for the project, according to City Councilman Paul Krekorian. Some of that could go toward buying the property from the developer that proposes to build 229 homes on it, Toyon said.

At that point, a storm-water treatment facility would be built on the site next to the course, with collection ponds on the layout and the driving range turned into a water-capture system. The water would be used to irrigate the course and enhance the local groundwater system. "It's a wiser use than just allowing it to go down the drain," Toyon said, citing the loss of most of Southern California's storm runoff to the ocean.

On its website, VOICE notes that golf courses are worthy of preserving



because they are "a unique kind of recreation – they are self-sustaining; they can generate revenue."

Even if its activists aren't keen to pick up a club anytime soon.

"While those in the golf industry know that we have close alliances and connections with all sorts of environmental and community groups, this is not publicly understood," Kessler said. "Here is a classic example of a move to identify a golf course for its environmental and community values. The thing I find most resonant is that this powerful statement is coming from someone other than us."

## DIRECTORY OF GOLF IS IN THE WORKS

The popular SCGA *Directory of Golf* is under production and will be mailed out to members right after the first of the year.

For advertising opportunities, please contact Tom Black at (562) 590-5143 or [tblack@scga.org](mailto:tblack@scga.org). The deadline for reserving ad space is Nov. 1.

