



Santa Rosa Plateau and Multi-Species Reserve Riverside, California

Protecting Wild California in the Heart of Suburbia

Balancing visitor impacts with management goals on sensitive lands is a daily challenge for resource managers. In 1999, The Acorn Group was commissioned by the County of Riverside to develop interpretive master plans for two sites protecting some of the most sensitive and fragile habitats in southern California: the 8,400-acre Multi-Species Reserve and the 8,300-acre Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, where visitation can exceed 1,000 on peak weekends. At both sites, the plans call for colorful, interactive exhibits designed to reach adults and children before they venture onto Reserve trails and help them appreciate the fragility of the wonders they are about to visit.

Key to the success of this project was our understanding of sensitive habitats, the psychological links between visitor knowledge, attitude, and behavior, and our ability to work creatively within the budgetary and spatial constraints of our client.

This project was governed by a multi-agency taskforce comprised of the County of Riverside, The Nature Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.