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Preserving natural habitats, watershed resources, and trails

THE ANTELOPE-FREMONT WATERSHED ASSESSMENT AND PLAN (AFWAP)

Antelope Valley Conservancy's ***Antelope-Fremont Watershed Assessment and Plan*** (AFWAP) is a yearlong project to develop a prioritized plan for the conservancy's acquisitions, and ensure the sustainability of preservation sites in light of changes to the watershed.

The AFWAP project is funded under a grant from Edison International, the parent corporation of Southern California Edison. "Our partnership with the Antelope Valley Conservancy reflects our shared value of protecting the environment," said Catherine Hart, the Southern California Edison region manager for the area.

Located in the southern Mojave Desert of California, the Antelope-Fremont Valleys Watershed (USGS 18090206) spans portions of Kern and Los Angeles Counties. The Antelope-Fremont Valleys Watershed is a closed basin, surrounded by mountains, and rainfall drains to the dry lakes.

Watershed health is essential to water quality and water supply, as well as to sustainable functioning habitats. The Antelope-Fremont Watershed offers several habitats, from alkali sinks where lichen and fairy shrimp support bird migrations, to spring-fed wetlands in the foothills where black bears and mountain lions still roam.

The AFWAP project will analyze watershed function, document existing hydrologic and ecosystem data and the region's existing land use plans and pending projects, to identify and prioritize habitat and watershed preservation opportunities for Antelope Valley Conservancy.

"The Antelope Valley has an historic opportunity to preserve functional habitats and watershed resources for future generations," says Wendy Reed, AV Conservancy president, "We are grateful to Edison International and Southern California Edison for making this project a reality."

Letters of support from Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and Palmdale Water District acknowledge that AFWAP will provide valuable science for all water agencies, and a regional benefit by reconciling existing data and filling in gaps. The Antelope Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan designated AFWAP a high-priority project, to fulfill Plan elements of conservation and of regional land use planning (see Draft Plan, *www.avwaterplan.org*).