

## **Mary Benson**

Mary Benson is a third-generation San Fernando Valley native who spent her youth riding horses in Hansen Dam and its surrounding areas. In 2000, she played a pivotal role in preserving the interior of Hansen Dam to protect the native endangered species. Mary was instrumental in founding the Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council and actively contributed to both Foothill Trails and Sun Valley Neighborhood Councils. In 2002, she facilitated a meeting between elected councilmembers Wendy Greuel, Alex Padilla, and prominent members of the equestrian community. By 2004, Mary had drafted Standards and Specifications for trails, utilizing available materials. Her collaborative efforts in 2007 led to the establishment of the City's Equine Advisory Committee (EAC). Mary's advocacy extends beyond local initiatives; she is listed as a contact in the California State Trails Manual for the Rim of the Valley Trail. Carrying on the legacy of Marge Feinberg, as an advocate for a natural surface trail and greenway system, not only for equestrians and other trail users but as a permanent and safe wildlife corridor linking the last remaining open spaces in the City of Los Angeles.

As the newly elected President of the EAC, Mary continues to champion the preservation of equestrian trails and open spaces, ensuring their accessibility and safety for all trail users and wildlife.