



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### First Nature Podcast in OC

#### *Technology makes it easier to connect people with nature*

**Irvine, CA (October 21, 2010)** — In a first for Orange County outdoor recreation, the City of Irvine, in partnership with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, launched a virtual-tour program of the Quail Hill Loop Trail. This exciting virtual program lets outdoor enthusiasts explore and discover the wonders of this scenic open space, which is part of the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, at their own pace and from any location 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

The new self-guided tour is an expansion of the existing Quail Hill audio tour, which was previously only available for use on cell phones. Now with a visual component, visitors have greater access to Irvine's open space and can download the virtual tour for use on computers, iPods or other MP3 players.

"In addition, by providing alternative ways to connect with nature, more people of all ages can bond with this amazing landscape that is in the midst of our urban surroundings," said Brian Hughes, a naturalist with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy who helped create the new tour program. "We are very excited about this tour and hope to implement it in other areas of the Natural Landmarks."

Similar to the audio tour, the Podcast features recorded narratives by naturalists and researchers as they discuss all aspects of the preserved land that comprises Quail Hill, including its biology and history, as well as trail etiquette. Visitors will learn about the ecological complexities and significance of seasonal or "vernal" pools. They will observe, and hear about, non-native plant species such as artichoke thistle and mustard plant and the major threats they pose to Southern California's fragile native habitats such as those found at Quail Hill.

**-more-**

The technology that provides the foundation for this tour comes from Guide by Cell, a San Francisco-based company that offers a suite of mobile technology products used by museums and cultural institutions nationwide. For more information about Guide by Cell, visit [www.guidebycell.com](http://www.guidebycell.com).

To connect to the Podcast, visit <http://apps.guidebycell.com/gbc/http/Podcast.jsp?phone=9497435943>. To learn more about Quail Hill and other areas of the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, visit [www.irlandmarks.org](http://www.irlandmarks.org).

**City of Irvine**

*The City of Irvine has a population of more than 217,000, spans 65 square miles and is recognized as one of America's safest and most successful master-planned urban communities. Top-rated educational institutions, an enterprising business atmosphere, sound environmental stewardship, and respect for diversity all contribute to Irvine's enviable quality of life. This family-friendly city features more than 16,000 acres of parks, sports fields and dedicated open space and is the home of the Orange County Great Park – the first great metropolitan park of the 21st century. For more information, please visit [cityofirvine.org](http://cityofirvine.org).*

**Irvine Ranch Conservancy**

*Irvine Ranch Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-advocacy organization created in 2005 to protect the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks and enhance the public's connection to them, while helping partners and landowners with all aspects of stewardship. It offers a variety of free, guided outdoor programs for all nature enthusiasts including hiking, mountain biking, horse-back riding and much more. For more information, visit [www.irlandmarks.org](http://www.irlandmarks.org).*

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