

The Conservancy NEWS



Incorporating



ON TRACK newsletter #91

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April 2009

Tippi Hedren tops Endangered Species Day Conference panel, May 15

Antelope Valley Conservancy's 4th Annual Endangered Species Day Conference will be held Friday, May 15, at Antelope Valley College (Room SSV-151).

Tippi Hedren, actress, conservationist, and founder of the Roar Foundation and Shambala Preserve, will grace this year's panel, along with elected officials from Lancaster, Palmdale and Rosamond, representatives from the US Forest Service, National Park Service, Edwards Air Force Base, California State Parks, Los Angeles County Parks, the Exotic Feline Breeding Compound, and more. Tickets are \$5 at the door, and the application for free student tickets is now posted on the web site Events page, at www.avconservancy.org/Events.htm. For information call (661) 943-9000 or email avconservancy@yahoo.com.



Earth Day Cleanup April 18 needs you, at Saddleback and Sanctuaries

Calling all scouts, school clubs, church groups, and employee groups! We need a lot of volunteers to expand our 15th annual Earth Day Cleanup. Each year we remove blow trash from Saddleback Butte State Park, but this year we are expanding to include two Los Angeles County Flower Sanctuaries: the Alpine Butte Sanctuary and the Butte Valley Sanctuary. Every volunteer should wear work gloves that fit, especially children, wear a hat and sturdy shoes, and bring a refillable bottle of water. Volunteers will meet at 9 a.m., inside the north entrance of Saddleback Butte State Park, on East Avenue J, just east of 170th Street East. Bags and refill water are supplied. Lunch for the volunteers will be served at noon, after the Cleanup.

Please RSVP to let us know if you are coming, so we can plan lunch and supplies.

Registration now open for May 16 13th Annual Leona Valley Bicycle Ride

Register now for our 13th Annual Leona Valley Bicycle Ride, Saturday, May 16th.

This ride is not to be missed whether you are an experienced bicycling enthusiast or just getting into bicycling. The scenery is gorgeous and ride support is excellent, with support personnel and food stops providing delicious food and water replenishment that some riders have called "the best."



The registration form is now posted on the Events page of our web site, at <http://www.avconservancy.org/Events.htm>. Please contact Elaine at (661) 946-1976 or emac@antelecom.net for more information.

Learn about chloramines

Learn all sides of the chloramines issue at www.watershedissues.com.

Climate Change and Water Conservation *What's the Link?*

By Melinda Barrett and Viki Yip, LA County Waterworks

Did you know that in California delivering water is the major use of electricity, accounting for almost 20 percent of all electricity generated? Much of the Antelope Valley relies on water imported from Northern California through a series of dams and aqueducts. Several years of drought have reduced Sierra snow pack and lowered reservoir storage levels, requiring even more energy to pump and deliver the water to us. Using water efficiently now will not only help us weather the current drought, it can help to slow down the global climate change process. In fact, each 100 cubic feet of water saved prevents 5 pounds of carbon emissions from being released from power plants into the atmosphere. (100 cubic feet = 748 gallons).

Customers of Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40 can do their part to save water and energy by taking advantage of free water conservation programs. The District offers onsite water use evaluations and rebates on water saving devices like high efficiency clothes washers and weather-based sprinkler controllers. For information visit www.lacwaterworks.org or call (888) 987-9473 to schedule an onsite evaluation. If you're not a customer of District 40, contact your water company to see what programs are offered.

Every Valley resident can take these simple steps to save water and reduce our impact on the planet.

- Install water saving devices like faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads.
- Cut shower time down to 5 to 8 minutes.
- Turn off water while washing face, shaving, or brushing teeth.
- Turn off sprinklers in the winter or when it's raining or windy.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to sweep driveways or sidewalks.
- Make sure your sprinklers water the yard, not the sidewalk or street and save 500 gallons a month.
- Fix a leaky faucet and save 2,000 gallons a year.
- Use less energy by setting your water heater to 120°
- Use cold or warm water rather than hot for washing clothes and dishes whenever possible.
- Fill the sink or a bucket with water rather than letting the water run until it gets hot.



AVC Trail Policy

Antelope Valley Conservancy's yearlong collaborative project has developed a Trail Policy for conservancy lands. The policy was adopted by the board at its February 2009 meeting, and is posted at http://avconservancy.org/AVC_Trail_Policy.pdf. Your comments are welcomed, as this is a living document that we hope will improve over time.

A zillion thanks to the volunteers who worked on this project.

Amazonia SOS

On February 8, 2009, a news item appeared that tens of thousands of people were rallying in the Amazon region. Representing 35 indigenous peoples, they were sending an SOS to publicize tragic events in their ecosystem where lands and waters have been polluted by oil. Neither native species nor crops survive in the oil-saturated soil, and people are starting to die of cancers.



But it was a small news item, gone from the Yahoo! News listing in an hour or so, replaced by the top story of the day and the days thereafter, that a pop singer had been assaulted by her boyfriend, and neither had appeared at their scheduled Grammy performances.

Destruction of the Wetlands

Destruction of the wetlands area along Barrel Springs Road seems senseless to people working hard to preserve the area. Since the rains, off-road trucks and cars have trespassed and used the area, across from the City of Palmdale's equestrian arena, for sliding and playing in the mud. This private property is designated for a wetlands restoration project and is now stripped of wildlife habitat. A large rock was moved to blockade access, but trespassers now drive over the road berm.



Graffiti, illegal dumping, gang activity, and even dog fighting, are a growing problem. The AV Mounted Patrol has added the area to their patrol list and will communicate violators to their dispatch. We applaud the local watch groups and Barrel Springs Trail users who photograph and report vandals to the Sheriff at 272-2400. Thank you to everyone who is taking responsibility to protect this precious area.

King Day of Service Sierra Bike Trail Cleanup great success

Thirty-five volunteers turned out to clean the Sierra Bike Trail, in honor of City of Lancaster's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.



Thank you to all of the volunteers: Greg Ebbert, Maricelia Gonzalez, Hope Gorman, Karin Grace, Eagle Scout Bryan Grace, Mike Gross, Kevin Kazoyan, Brennan Landreth, Jim Landreth, Paul Lee, Michael and Nancy Lemos, Carol Little, Elaine Macdonald, Marina Montoya, Erica Montoya, Jordan Nave, Cheyenne Nave, Jonathan Nave, Mark Nevarez, Alfredo Nevarez, Wendal and Wendy Reed, Tracey Ruzicka, Nicholas Ruzicka, Emily Ruzicka, Dylan Smith, Michael Smith, Mark Stiver, Craig Yanagidate, Tiffany, Camden, and everyone else.

Thank you! Your Good Searches are adding up!

Thank you, to all of you who are using Yahoo's GoodSearch.com for AV Conservancy. The pennies are really adding up.

If you're not Goodsearching yet, just go to goodsearch.com, select Antelope Valley Conservancy or AV Conservancy as the charity, and Yahoo donates a penny for each search. The pennies add up!



THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Ann Vanino
Bill Rini
Bill Schiller
Bob Large
Cathy Hart
Debbie Stevens
Ermanno Vanino
Laura Been
Mary Cooper
Ricardo Montijo
Sean Ponso
Susan Zahnter

THANK YOU, DONORS!

Bonnie Duecker
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Charlene Lane
Adrian Mitchell

Donations now accepted for the
SUSTAINING ENDOWMENT.
Call or email for more information.

TEJON developments to impact Antelope Valley

By Jan De Leeuw, Ph.D.

Jan de Leeuw is distinguished professor and chair at the Department of Statistics, University of California at Los Angeles. He is an elected fellow of the American Statistical Association, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, and the Royal Statistical Society, and editor in chief of the Journal of Multivariate Analysis.

The agreement between Tejon Ranch Company and the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Audubon California, and Planning and Conservation League (which I will refer to as “the groups”) claims to be a conservation victory, but let us look at the facts before and after the agreement. (Note: full agreement text is posted at www.tejonpreserve.com/summary.php.)

Before the agreement, Tejon planned to develop Centennial (23,000 homes, apartments, condos, public facilities, and commercial units), Tejon Mountain Village (3,500 homes), Tejon Industrial Complex (warehouses, Foreign Trade Zone, truck stops, motels), and up to 10,000 homes at the bottom of the Grapevine. After the agreement, Tejon’s development plans are the same.

What has changed is that the groups promised not to oppose any of these plans. Tejon agreed to sell, through 2010, at market value, 62,000 acres for a park. It also agreed to preserve 178,000 acres as development progresses, through conservation easements and designated open space. Much of this land is undevelopable and some will be used as mitigation for development impacts. These will be managed in accordance with a Management Plan to be developed by Tejon, with the new conservancy that Tejon funds and controls. Preservation at Tejon will continue to allow farming, sand and gravel mining, oil and gas extraction, grazing, game management (hunting), and filming.

What did the groups give up?

The agreement prevents the groups from opposing the impacts of putting 40,000 homes in the west Antelope Valley, Tejon Pass, and Grapevine, which will have major impacts on the residents and the biology of the area. The Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC) of Los Angeles Regional Planning objected to the Centennial plan, in two sensitive areas of the West Antelope Valley.

Tejon has applied for an incidental take permit to take (disturb, harass, and possibly kill) 25 protected and special status species as a consequence of their development. Eleven prominent Condor scientists sent a letter to the Governor outlining the anticipated disastrous consequences of these developments on the Condor Recovery Program. Still, the groups agreed not to oppose this.

The agreement prevents the groups from opposing the impacts on traffic on the I-5 and SR-138, impacts to the already polluted air in the Tejon Pass, or

impacts on the precarious water supply of the Mountain Communities and the Antelope Valley.

To keep Castac Lake full year-round for their resort, Tejon must pump as much groundwater as is used by all the Mountain Communities combined.

Water for 23,000 units and two golf courses in west Antelope Valley to come from AVEK

Tejon’s plan proposes two new golf courses. Water for Centennial will come from AVEK. The groups can’t voice opposition.

More than 18,000 trucks travel the Grapevine daily, yet Tejon plans a Foreign Trade Zone, warehouses, and truck stops, to attract more trucks. The groups won’t oppose it.

They agreed not to oppose placing 100,000 people in an isolated location, subject to fires and earthquakes, as illustrated by the 1852, 1857, 1916, and 1952 earthquakes, and recent fires. These groups previously opposed sprawl, but now cannot object to the Centennial, an extreme example of sprawl.

There are direct impacts on everybody living in the Mountain Communities and the West Antelope Valley. Tejon’s plans have already led to a number of parasitic developments in Gorman and Lebec, of 200-500 homes each, that count on using the resources (schools, shopping malls, medical services and law enforcement) brought in by the big developments.

(continued on page 5)

What else did the groups give up?

They gave up goodwill, community support, and activist members. Several activists stepped down from the executive committees of the local Condor Group and the Kern-Kaweah Chapter of the Sierra Club. Other people will not renew their memberships. The agreement was negotiated by Sacramento staff, essentially without input from the local groups and chapters, and without consulting the involved condor biologists—Tejon hired other biologists. Negotiations with Tejon went on for a year in complete secrecy. None of the participants was supposed to disclose anything before the official announcement.

The developments are far from being approved.

The good news is that the developments are far from being approved. The new US Fish and Wildlife Service administration may be less willing to issue Take Permits for endangered species. Water agencies are taking the water shortage very seriously. Required CEQA reviews are now incorporating sustainability and climate issues, and Tejon's projects would generate a quarter of a million daily automobile trips and 100 mile per day commutes. Several groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, continue to oppose large scale development in the area.

Your awareness and voice are important.

Tejon's 500 million dollars can buy a lot of lobbying, campaign contributions, photo ops, glossy brochures, and empty talk about California's heritage. The agreement blocked many of the resources that could have been used to oppose these developments, and it is entirely unclear what was actually gained.

Keep informed with TriCounty Watchdogs

Keep informed about developments at Tejon through the TriCounty Watchdogs, at tcwdogs.org.

TCW is comprised of local residents of the west valley and mountains, at the convergence of Kern, Los Angeles, and Ventura Counties. They offer an email newsletter.

Look familiar?

Will the Tejon preservation look like the "open space" at Antelope Valley's Joshua Ranch? Will the realignment of Pacific Crest Trail at Tejon look like the realignment of Joshua Ranch Trail, built by Highland High School students with a County grant and now bulldozed and used by OHV riders? Same "conservation" leaders, same back room deals. Same outcomes?

Where's the Green?

Reserve plan from 2006 study by Conservation Biology Institute and South Coast Wildlands (left). Green for nature Reserve, red for development (www.consbio.org/what-we-do/proposed-reserve-design-for-tejon-ranch-a-1)

Actual Centennial plan (right). Green for nature Reserve. (<http://www.tejon.com/centennial/index.asp>)



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Spring 2009

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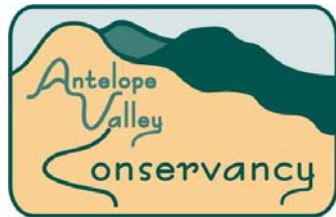
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TIME REMAINING: 17 YEARS

According to the Land Trust Alliance, lands preserved in the next 17 years will be the last lands preserved on earth. This work is critically important to our future, our planet, and our community, and your help is critically important. Thank you for your interest and support.