

August anniversary

By Wendy Reed, President

Early in August I came across the *Minutes of Meeting to Discuss Formation of Antelope Valley Conservancy*. Reading it again seemed a good way to recognize our fourth corporate birthday.

After months of fruitless attempts to get existing organizations and agencies to serve as a conservancy in our area, the decision to form a conservancy had been made. Founders and stakeholders formulated a mission statement, a scope of activities, and began to develop the conservancy's operational guidelines.

The mission statement they formulated continues to serve us well:

“Antelope Valley Conservancy’s mission is to preserve and steward land for the public interest. We acknowledge future generations’ interests in land resources that maintain community character, scenic beauty, and representative native habitats, and we acknowledge the right of nature to retain territory, particularly functional habitats and connectivity for native plants and animals.”

We have continued to focus our operations as prescribed at those early meetings. The minutes say:

“It was concluded that obtaining and managing lands, obtaining funds, and maintaining communication with stakeholders are our primary roles.”

Through myriad stakeholder relationships, participation in regional studies, workshops and planning efforts, garnering of over \$300,000 of public grants, and sponsorship of our nearly complete AFWAP ecosystem study, Antelope Valley Conservancy continues to fulfill the plan of action outlined at that formation meeting. The minutes read:

“(1) establish a nonprofit corporation devoted to land conservancy; (2) establish a network of public support and stakeholder participation; (3) identify endangered, threatened, diminishing, or impacted areas or species local to our region; and (4) identify and pursue opportunities for land acquisitions.”

The structure we have erected is strong, rooted in our community regionally supported, and it will serve for many generations. We are making tremendous progress, even though we often cannot publicize what we do because it jeopardizes our ability to acquire land. Thank you, so very, very much, to all the volunteers, supporters, and mentors, who contribute to the conservancy's growth and success.

Directors Corner

Elaine Macdonald has been a leader in the conservation of natural lands and preservation of our regional multiuse trail system for 25 years. She led the Antelope Valley Trails Council, transitioned the organization into the Antelope Valley Trails Recreation and Environmental Council (AVTREC), absorbed the Antelope Valley Heritage Foundation along the way, and brought AVTREC onto Antelope Valley Conservancy.

Macdonald is responsible for the mapping of hundreds of miles of trails, maintenance of rugged forest trails, dozens of cleanups at state parks and preserves, and inclusion of trail plans in the General Plans of Palmdale, Lancaster, and Los Angeles County. The meetings, negotiations, trail work days, desert cleanups, and events must number in the thousands.

Macdonald leaves our board this year, but will continue volunteering. She is handing the reins of the AVTREC committee to Gary Moll.

Thank you, Elaine, for all you have done and continue to do.



Macdonald, who led 14 annual Earth Day Cleanups, holding a “treasure” removed from Saddleback Butte State Park.

Springing into action!

Antelope Valley Conservancy volunteers stay busy all year, but they really spring into action each spring. Earth Day and Trail Days bring a host of invitations to events, along with three annual events the conservancy sponsors: the Earth Day Cleanup, the Endangered Species Day Conference, and the Bicycle Fun Ride.

All year long conservancy volunteers attend meetings of the Integrated Regional Water Management Stakeholders, Antelope Valley Illegal Dumping Task Force, Trails Stakeholders, and Councils, and this spring conservancy volunteers also attended a CEQA/NEPA Workshop, an Ephemeral Stream Workshop hosted by the Water Resources Control Board, the California Trails and Greenways Conference, and a Conference on Conservation Easements.

In March, we taught a workshop at the **Youth Environmental Leadership Conference**, an annual event sponsored by the Mojave Environmental Education Consortium (MEEC). In this free day of training for 3rd through 12th grade students from the Antelope and Victor Valleys, students rotate through workshops on environmental subjects. This year's keynote speaker was 17-year-old Sophia Angeles, a "Climate Champion" from the Alliance for Climate Education.

Conservancy volunteers Laura Been, Bob Large and Wendy Reed conducted "Habitats and Healthy Communities" workshops for junior high and high school students. They created the workshop curriculum, focused on sustainable communities and individual choices, with help from Ann and Ermano Vanino.



Students collaborate to prioritize carbon footprint reduction

In April, AV Conservancy sponsored its 14th annual **Earth Day Cleanup** at Saddleback Butte State Park. This year the event expanded to clean up at two Los Angeles County Wildflower Sanctuaries.

Sixty-five volunteers from the community turned out to help. Groups came from Lockheed Martin, Girl Scout Troop 6472, Dimondale Adolescent Care, Granite Construction, and California State University Bakersfield. People brought their grandchildren.

Lockheed Martin support helped to publicize the effort and, along with Vons of Antelope Valley and Captain Tony's, provided refreshments for volunteers. California State Parks provided dumpsters. And, because the landfill was already closed for the day, Tire Store saved the day by taking an entire truckload of retrieved tires.



Girl Scout Troop 6472 at Earth Day Cleanup

Then, Ann Vanino and Richard Montijo hosted the conservancy's table at **Earth Day at Edwards Air Force Base**. At our booth, children of all ages colored drawings of desert plants and animals they care about. They learned about species of our area from Montijo, who has been the conservancy's Chief Biologist for several years and is our newest board director. Montijo's focus is ornithology, and he has provided specialized work for EAFB habitat restoration and bird strike prevention.

In May, the conservancy joined the Jethawks at Clear Channel Stadium for **Go Green Day**. Kaboom drew his favorite desert creature, a hawk of course!



Forty riders participated this year, including 25 first timers. Paul Lauer, Linda Pluss, Bob Pluss, and Bob Macdonald are to be recognized for attending eight years in a row.

This year featured a new metric ride, adding 22 miles along the Pine Canyon Road-Old Ridge loop. It is a beautiful, untraveled country road, but the climbs were a challenge for even the hardest riders, especially since the wind that is typically at one's back for the return trip, blew from the east. Seventeen riders rode the metric century, 14 rode the 42-mile route, and nine rode the 21-mile loop.



One of the best features of the ride is the lack of stoplights or stop-and-go traffic. The ride is also known for Elaine Macdonald and Debbie Stevens' incredibly delicious shredded BBQ beef and home-baked cookies.

Thank you, Elaine Macdonald, for organizing this fantastic event for 13 years, to volunteers Debbie Stevens, Diana Miranda, Maureen Weston, Wendy Reed, Susan Zahntner, Lynn and Star Long, Bob and Linda Pluss, for all your work, and to sponsors Bicycle Johns of Lancaster, Wal-Mart, Stater Brothers, Vons Antelope Valley, Leona Valley Community Center, and Costco.

The final spring event was a booth at the Green Display of **Thunder on the Lot**. A giant thanks to volunteers who staffed the table, Gary Moll, Mike Woods, Mike Gross, Craig Yanagidate, Wendal and Wendy Reed, and Ginger Stout.

We hope to see you next year at our spring events!

Then, on May 15, the conservancy hosted its 4th annual **Endangered Species Day Conference**.

This year's panel featured Tippi Hedren, Roar Foundation founder, who focused on the tragedy of the endangered species pet trade.



The panel also included Palmdale Mayor Pro Tem Mike Dispenza, Director Kathleen Spoor of Rosamond Community Services District, Forest Service biologist Pete Johnston, Mark Hagan of Edwards AFB Natural Resources, California State

Parks Ranger Thomas Gunther, Camille Gadwood of the Exotic Feline Breeding Compound, and Jack Farley, Sanctuaries Manager for LA County Parks, who brought along Ruth, a rescued barn owl. Attendance was low this year, but discussion between the panel and audience was in depth and interesting. Our gratitude to MEEC and Marie Callenders for supporting this event.



Roar Foundation Founder Tippi Hedren and Antelope Valley Conservancy President Wendy Reed. Photo by Bill Dow.

The following day, May 16, was our 13th annual **Leona Valley Bicycle Fun Ride**, which attracted riders from as far away as Victor Valley and Ventura. The Ride offers three routes through the lakes communities.

Plans in review

In light of dozens of project applications for renewable energy plants, the **Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative** (<http://www.energy.ca.gov/reti/index.html>) has collaboratively developed location criteria, in an effort to protect the integrity of critical habitat areas and wildlife corridors, and increase project efficiency by locating in proximity to existing transmission lines.

The proposed **Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park by the Poppy Reserve** will be considered at a public hearing, September 2, at 9:00 a.m., at the Hall of Records, Room 150, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. For EIR, <http://planning.lacounty.gov/case> and type "Fairmont" in the Search Case box.

Three proposals for new management of the Angeles National Forest have been developed under the **San Gabriel Watershed & Mountains Special Resource Study**, one of which includes the Antelope Valley area of the forest. A public hearing will be held September 15, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Chimbole Center in Palmdale. Information is available at www.nps.gov/pwro/sangabriel.

Los Angeles County Parks Department is facilitating public dialogue to develop Draft Guidelines for locating **new off-highway vehicle facilities**. The department has off-highway recreation funding, and wants its projects to be less controversial and better meet communities' concerns. See www.lacounty-ohv.org.

Talking of controversial, hundreds of citizens attended four City of Lancaster meetings, to oppose **commercial projects by Quartz Hill High School**. The projects required zoning changes from residential to commercial, amendments to the General Plan, Conditional Use Permits to sell alcohol, and use of 6% of the city's emergency water allocation. Planning Commissioner Jonathan Ervin voted against recommending the projects, citing lack of infrastructure for traffic, public safety, water, and other concerns. The projects narrowly passed the City Council vote, 3-2. A lawsuit has been filed by the Quartz Hill Cares neighborhood group, appealing approval of the Wal-Mart project (northwest corner). An appeal of the Lane Ranch approval has not been filed. www.quartzhillcares.org.

Pennies add up, with no cost to you!



If you're not Goodsearching yet, go to **GoodSearch.com**, select AV Conservancy as the charity, and Yahoo donates a penny for each search. Remember, the Poppy Reserve, Prime Desert Woodland, and Saddleback Butte State Park all began by raising pennies. Pennies add up!

Little-Skinner Trail

Antelope Valley Conservancy has written to Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, requesting that the name of Trail #106 be changed to the Little-Skinner Trail, in memory of Paul Little and Ed Skinner. AVTREC cofounder Ed Skinner and his partner Paul Little routed this 6.5-mile trail, and flagged and surveyed the San Andreas Trail, the California Hiking and Riding Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail in the Angeles National Forest.

Firesign Theatre

Conservancy volunteer Maureen Weston is producing ***Forward Into the Past!***, a new live show by Firesign Theatre, at the historic Barnsdall Gallery Theatre in Hollywood, October 14 through 17. Visit www.firesigntheatre.com.



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(661) 943-9000

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Wendy Reed, Editor

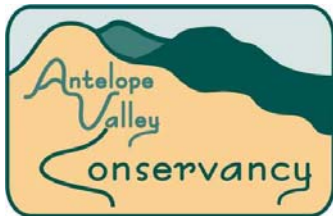
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Antelope Valley Conservancy
P.O. Box 3133
Quartz Hill, CA 93586-0133

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