

## 10/10/2010 AV Bag Exchange

Antelope Valley Conservancy coordinated a reusable shopping bag give away, in observance of the 10/10/10 Global Work Party for carbon emission reduction. Volunteers from the community, Girl Scouts, Brownies, and Easter Seals teams gave away reusable shopping bags at local stores, asking, "If I give you this reusable bag, can you stop using plastic bags?"

1,500 bags were donated to us by AmeriGreenBag Company and Macy's Inc. Volunteers also sewed beautiful bags for the giveaway. Girl Scout Troop 2112 made really cute bags from tee-shirts. Some shoppers exchanged the plastic bags they were carrying for the reusable bags, and Brownie Troop 6832 amassed a huge pile of plastic bags.



What did we learn from the project? Many people forget their bags in the car. Most people are unaware that plastic is made from petrochemicals. 14 plastic bags contain enough petrol to drive a car a mile.



People don't seem to know the problems plastic bags are causing in our oceans. We are consuming a million plastic bags a minute, less than 6 percent are recycled. We dispose of 380 billion tons of plastic bags and wraps each year—which never biodegrade. Plastic breaks down into small pieces, which birds and sea life mistake for food. They

and their offspring can starve to death because their gullets are filled with plastic.

It is a serious problem, but there is a fairly easy solution. Giving up plastic bags is fairly easy, and it makes a world of difference.

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## Event calendar set



The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Earth Day Cleanup will be held Saturday, April 16. Come out to remove windblown trash from Saddleback Butte State Park and Los Angeles County Wildflower Sanctuaries.

The Antelope Valley Bicycle Ride Day will be Saturday, May 7. This great ride, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, offers legal Aqueduct access and 20, 30 and 60 mile routes,



plus a mountain bike route. Then, back at Lane Park,

there are free bike activities for youth, Obstacle Course, Sheriff's BEAR Program, a free bicycle will be raffled, and much more. Bring all the kids you know! Contact the conservancy for booth space.

Saturday, May 21, AVC will host

Endangered Species Day. Learn about our region's habitats and species.



AVC's second "Nature and the Arts" exhibit will host an opening and conservancy anniversary Friday, July 15, at Antelope Valley College Art Gallery. The exhibit will run through July 28 Art and photography related to nature will be displayed.

## Illegal dumping co\$ts

By Chris Mowry, Acting Superintendent I  
Wildlife and Wildflower Sanctuaries

Alpine Butte Wildlife Sanctuary, in the Lake Los Angeles area, is regularly hit with illegal dumping. Late this summer, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation removed tons of broken concrete that was dumped onto the sanctuary.

The cost of illegal dumping may only receive a fleeting glance. It should be known and actively fought by all. When the dumping is on public lands, the burden falls to the taxpayer, and the cost of a big cleanup is pretty jaw dropping.

For this cleanup, the Department filled and dumped 39 dump truck loads, a diesel fuel bill of \$4,050. About \$5,900 in salaries were paid, and the disposal fee for the 39 loaded dump trucks was \$423 per truckload, or \$11,421. Total bill for the cleanup was \$21,371.



That \$21,000 could have purchased sporting good supplies for Jackie Robinson Park, or stocked Apollo Park's lakes with fish, but instead had to go toward cleaning up someone else's concrete that they decided to burden taxpayers with.

Ecologically there is good news. Plants adapted to sand dunes are used to shifting sands, and the bare patch will fill back in quickly.

## Petition for Whittier Narrows



Least Bell's Vireo  
Photo: Lou Orr

The Whittier Narrows Natural Area and Nature Center wildlife sanctuary was founded in 1939 on the San Gabriel River in east Los Angeles County. A proposed museum and meeting hall are being opposed as environmentally destructive and a bad way to spend \$22 million of taxpayers and ratepayers' moneys. The petition is available at:

<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-whittier-narrows-natural-area.html>



## CYCLOCROSS:

December 5, 2010, the So Cal Prestige Series of Cyclocross comes to Pelona Vista Soccer Park in Palmdale. Course builders and other volunteers are needed, and sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Paul Avila at 818-974-2297 or [deeporbit@gmail.com](mailto:deeporbit@gmail.com).

### Weekly Bicycle Ride:

Bicycle Johns Lancaster hosts a weekly ride, NO ONE LEFT BEHIND. See Facebook/Bicycle Johns Lancaster, and [highdesertcyclists.com](http://highdesertcyclists.com) for schedule.

## Gloria Gossard

Gloria Gossard, an AVTREC founder, passed away on September 11<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 83. Gossard was an author and historian. She wrote about regional trails, Joshua trees, and horses. She was active in the Lakes communities, Antelope Valley, and Tehachapi, worked with the Palmdale Chamber of Commerce, and served on the first AVTREC board of directors.



## Visionary volunteer: Jane Pinheiro



Imagine the pristine beauty that Jane Seymour Pinheiro saw when she moved with her husband to the Antelope Valley in 1940.

Pinheiro was inspired to paint the Joshua trees and wildflowers she saw, and she documented hundreds of species of plants in very accurate botanical representations.



Pinheiro was also inspired to volunteer in the community, helping to establish the Antelope Valley Hospital Medical Center, the Feather Water District that evolved into AVEK Water Agency, the Allied Arts Association, and the Wildflower Information Center. Pinheiro lobbied the State Assembly for preservation of the 2700 acre Joshua tree preserve, now Saddleback Butte State Park, which was dedicated in 1960.

In the next four years, eight more wildlife and wildflower sanctuaries were established.

Around 1970, the California Natural Resources Agency published a study recommending the area of Fairmont Butte as the best preserve site for the state flower, California poppy. Pinheiro and the Lancaster Woman's Club inspired a statewide "Pennies for Poppies" campaign. With pennies collected by schoolchildren, and help from corporate and conservancy contributions, about \$350,000 was raised to purchase land. The Poppy Reserve was dedicated in a Bicentennial ceremony, in April 1976.



The area around the Poppy Reserve is currently proposed for solar and wind plants. Just north of the Poppy Reserve, the Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park racetrack is proposed, with a nightclub and other commercial businesses. The project proponent appeared with his attorneys and consultants at a Regional Planning Commission Hearing last year, held at the LA County Library on Lancaster Boulevard. They were unaware that they were seated around a statue of Jane Pinheiro (see photo at right). Imagine what Jane Pinheiro would have thought of all this.

## Racetrack property sold — no racetrack!

The email came the afternoon of November 18<sup>th</sup>, as this newsletter prepared to print. Norm Hickling, Deputy to Supervisor Antonovich, wrote Margaret Rhyne of PRMDIA:

"I have been informed this afternoon the property where the Fairmont Motor Sports park was proposed to go has been sold to another buyer. The buyer is using the property as mitigation land and open space. The Racetrack is no longer a concern as County Regional Planning has been told to stop all work on the project."

Residents from across the region had planned to attend yet another Planning Commission Hearing on the matter on December 15<sup>th</sup>. What a great holiday present for our region!

One of the conservancy's Facebook friends said it best: "That seems like it should have been the obvious choice all along."



Above, land north of the Poppy Reserve proposed for the development. Below, the investor and his consultants ironically seated around a statue of Jane Pinheiro.



## California universities chosen for Southwest Climate Science Center

According to the US Department of the Interior, “climate change is affecting every corner of the American continent. It is making droughts drier and longer, floods more dangerous, and hurricanes more severe. The glaciers in Montana’s Glacier National Park are expected to disappear in the next two decades. Rising seas are consuming the world’s first wildlife refuge—Florida’s Pelican Island—which President Teddy Roosevelt set aside in 1903.”

DOI has selected six universities to co-host the **Southwest Climate Science Center**: UCLA, UC-Davis, UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography, U-Arizona, U-Colorado, and the **Desert Research Institute in Reno, Nevada**. UC Merced and other research entities will partner. The CSCs will extend the work of the US Geological Service’s National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center, established by Congress in 2008, to study impacts of climate change on natural and cultural resources and deliver technical support to resource managers.

Visit: <http://www.doi.gov/whatwedo/climate/index.cfm>



The threatened California black rail relies on salt marshes and will be impacted greatly by sea-level rise. Photo: D. Tsao.



Creosote scrub habitat (one type of preferred desert tortoise habitat) in the Mojave Desert. Photo: Ken Nussear, USGS.

## Thank you, Wonderful Volunteers!

A giant THANK YOU to all the volunteers who helped our conservancy this fall: Susan Zahnter, Susie “Moxie” McMahon, Mark Stiver, Geoffrey Levitt, Leah Levitt, Tom Howell, Cindy Breor, Melissa Montoya, Dan Morgan, Mark Simon, the Hollands, Cindy Balar, Kellie Barbour, Stacy Baker, Nicole Triplett, Ceira Sponenburg, Kaylee Sponenburg, Sandra Lopez, Nicole Lopez, Lizzie Wade, Alliza Wade, Ayana Wade, Cynthia Baker, Jessica Balenger, Serena Castillo, Emily Cera, Marissa Belenger, Paula Mazaniejo, Abigail Baca, Destinee Mazaniejo, and the Easter Seals team, Shalondra, Alex, Gerardo, and Phillip, and Scotti Jo Seuthe. Thank you!

## Renewable energy, blessing and curse

Across the Mojave Desert, thousands of acres of industrial sized “renewable energy” projects are being fast-tracked by federal incentives and Governor Schwarzenegger’s Executive Order. Californians want cleaner energy for homes, cars and businesses, but the destruction of core habitat is decidedly not “green”.

Energy companies are targeting remote and fragile Mojave Desert habitats, and even public lands are being permitted for massive energy plants.



Photo: Chris Clarke

At Ivanpah, “The project hemorrhages the very heart of the biologically rich eastern Mojave Desert, where plant diversity rivals that of the primeval coastal redwood forests of the Pacific Northwest,” said Jim Andre, Director of the University of California’s Granite Mountains Desert Research Center. “This area is treasured by scientists throughout the world for its unparalleled pristine quality among deserts, one of the last functional ecosystems left on Planet Earth.”

Antelope Valley rural areas are being impacted, from Neenach to Roosevelt to Bouquet Canyon.

In Bouquet Canyon, landowners allege that transmission towers were erected in

(cont'd on pg 5)

## Renewable Energy, cont'd from page 4

violation of the permit, and the height and location now impedes fire fighting planes' flight path to Bouquet Reservoir. They claim that careless construction crews had little concern for children walking home from school, and even less concern for the red legged frogs they encountered in their work.

In Neenach to the north, over 200 acres of Joshua tree woodlands, much of which were located within an SEA, were bulldozed last year without biological review. The agricultural firm that bulldozed the site allegedly ignored a County cessation order. They were reportedly leasing the land from a solar company.

Next door, in the Fairmont Butte area, citizens are defending not only their rural community and home investments, but also the



Poppy Reserve State Park and mitigation lands purchased (with public funds) in the Significant Ecological Area (SEA 57) from being destroyed by thousands of acres of wind and solar plants.

To the east, in quiet rural Roosevelt, 5,000 acres were proposed for a solar plant and transmission line. The size of the proposal has been reduced to 700 acres, but half is pristine Joshua tree habitat, not disturbed lands. The community is opposing the project. "There are plenty of roofs to put solar on", says Roosevelt Rural Town Council President Barbara Firsick, "they don't have to come here to ruin the neighborhood and the birds' habitat."

### What are local residents to do?

Citizens are finding it hard—and expensive—to address concerns or violations. Antelope Valley Conservancy thinks that formation of a citizens oversight committee might be a way to support and provide resources for communities' project responses. At the October 28 meeting of the Association of Rural Town Councils, Wayne Argo proposed a coordinated letter of concerns, and asked the RTCs to submit their concerns (wayneargo@hughes.net). Near Ivanpah, citizens are uniting through Solar Done Right (solardoneright.org). Citizens can visit the DRECP and California Energy Commission web sites, and write letters/emails of comment during the public comment periods.

Film: Make Your Landscape Act More Like A Sponge.  
Watch this film about slowing storm water flow:  
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/stormfilm/>

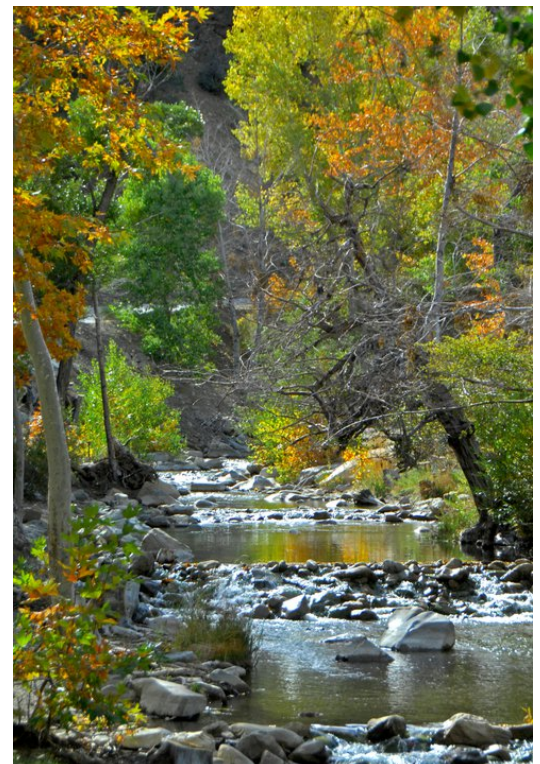
## Letters from you ...

A lot of birds fly into the windows of my house, and I'm concerned it harms them. Is there anything I can do?

Larry Skaja, Littlerock

Birds can be stunned, injured, or even killed from crashing into windows. Windows reflect trees or sky, and birds may not realize the window is a solid barrier. Window screens work well as a deterrent. Decals or other decorations can help. Some people choose raptor shaped cutouts, but any shape decal can help birds focus on the glass, be aware it is there, and avoid it. Exterior tape strips or interior vertical blinds with slats half open are also helpful. Some people soap their windows during migration or nesting season. Thanks for asking, and thanks so much for caring!

## Autumn has arrived



Big Rock Creek at Fenner Canyon  
Photo: Liz Breault

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK**

**YES! I want to preserve habitats with my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_**

- Please designate my donation to a nonwasting Sustaining Endowment.
- Please designate my donation for the AVTREC Trails Committee.
- Please not my donation in memory of \_\_\_\_\_
- My employer \_\_\_\_\_ has a match program.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if changed from label): \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide newsletter  by email  by US mail  no newsletter

**THANK YOU!**

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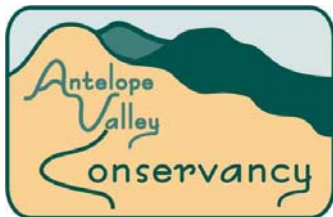
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**TIME REMAINING: 16 YEARS**

According to the Land Trust Alliance, lands preserved in the next 16 years will be the last lands preserved on earth.

This work is critically important to our future, our planet, our community. Your help is critically important. Thank you for your interest and support.



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