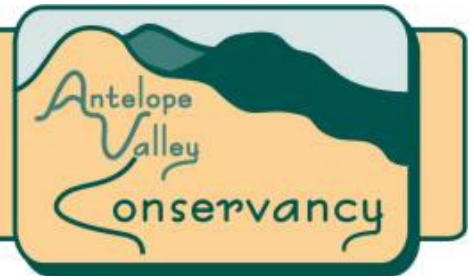


The Conservancy NEWS



Issue 4 --- July 2007

AV Conservancy hosts 11th annual Leona Valley Bicycle Fun Ride

On May 19, AV Conservancy sponsored the 11th Annual Leona Valley Bicycle Fun Ride, starting at the Leona Valley Community Center and winding along the Portal Ridge. The event is an annual fundraiser for the AVTREC trails committee.

Thirty-two riders attended, including seven riders who were first timers, and two riders who had ridden our Fun Ride four times. The majority were repeat riders who said they enjoyed the scenic route and the attention provided by the AVTREC crew.

Early morning wind encouraged most riders to finish the 43-mile route instead of the metric. As always, Debbie Stevens' oatmeal cookies



were a big hit at the food stops. After the ride, participants and crew enjoyed good conversation and a delicious barbeque beef lunch. Fun and good exercise was had by all, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

AV Conservancy hosts 2nd annual Endangered Species Day press conference

Antelope Valley Conservancy sponsored its second annual Endangered Species Day Press Conference on May 18, attended by representatives from 15 agencies and organizations involved in endangered species preservation.

The event was opened with the reading of a letter from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who wrote:

"For more than thirty years, the Endangered Species Act has served as the nation's safety net for wildlife, saving many plants and animals from extinction and putting many more on the path of recovery. On this day, I encourage everyone to appreciate our biodiversity, increase ecological awareness and take action to preserve our environment. Each of us bears a great responsibility for the future of our world, and by working together, we can blaze a trail of sustainability that many will follow." (see *Endangered*, page 3)

Earth Day 2007

Antelope Valley Conservancy volunteers put on work gloves and helped to plant trees and pick up trash to honor the 38th Earth Day.

At Ocatillo School in Palmdale, volunteers helped fifth-graders plant 150 trees and shrubs.



At Saddleback Butte State Park, volunteers picked up enough trash in three hours to fill a pickup truck.



Volunteer Carolyn Mitchell

In conservation, small efforts add up to big results. Little things—like refusing plastic bags, turning off lights, fixing drips, unplugging chargers, and turning off faucets while brushing teeth or soaping—add up to big conservation.

Palmdale open-air arena announced

Commemorating California Trail Days, Mayor Jim Ledford announced on May 3rd that a Los Angeles County grant of \$160,000 will fund construction of an equestrian arena at Tejon Park, along Barrel Springs Trail.

The open-air arena will be 150 feet by 300 feet. Use will be free of charge for group events. The arena is badly needed, as fees at the fairgrounds became cost-prohibitive for local groups, and the new fairgrounds has reduced equine facilities.

Trail and arena uses and the surrounding rural community support preservation of natural lands. Rural communities tend to live in harmony with indigenous species. Without streetlights or block walls, rural communities buffer natural areas. Area residents attending the May 3rd press conference voiced appreciation of the mountain lions and bobcats that sometimes cross their rural properties.

Some residents voiced concern about residential development or park development at Una Lake, now privately owned. Human activities would impact wildlife uses, possibly increase human/wildlife encounters at Lake Palmdale, and increase the existing pollution and trash problems. Before fencing was erected, even old cars were dumped in the lake. The tiny lake is fragile, and it is felt that it would not survive such impacts.

The City of Palmdale is negotiating with the new landowner at Una Lake to allow development in exchange for dedication of parklands. A \$265,000 restoration grant is available from the California Resources Agency's Rivers and Mountains Conservancy division, but there are no "species identified for protection" in ICE-posted project documents. State funding usually mandates broad public access.

As reported in the first issue of *The Conservancy News*, the Una Lake area is important to conserve for wetlands and our watershed, for archaeological and historical value, for wildlife habitat and both resident and migrating birds, such as for the endangered least bell's vireo.

According to California Department of Fish and Game Warden Martin Smith, mountain lions, bobcats, and other wildlife rely on the area to access water at Una Lake, Lake Palmdale, and the Aqueduct. While intermittent trail and arena uses are compatible with preservation of these habitats, unlimited public use is not.



Elaine Macdonald, AV Conservancy Director and AVTREC Chair, accepts the California Trail Days Proclamation from Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford.

Special Thanks To

Volunteers

Rosemary & Keith Elitzer
Bob Macdonald
Carolyn Mitchell
John & Elizabeth Percy
Linda Pluss
Wendal & Joshua Reed
Larry Skaja
Debbie Stevens
Frank & Gina Swiadek
Marcy Watton
Connie & Robert Williams

Donors

Debbie Stevens/Jaymi McMillian
Wendal Reed
Mark Anzalone in memory
of Barbara Ward
Jane Benefiel
Gary & Sandra Blackmore
Nevel Ross Burke
Amy Chu
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Barbara Foltin
Foothill Associates
Thomas W. Gillespie
Mike & Karin Grace
Ann Gregg
Jessica Harper
Lawrence Juday
Wes & Cheri Kuhlins
Donna Kush
Constance Leshin
Louise B. Levin
Jane McGrath
Ray & Phyllis Tremblay
Karin Wells
Valerie Zera

COSTCO WHOLESALE VONS



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Antelope Valley Conservancy hosted 15 speakers at its second annual Endangered Species Day Press Conference. From left are Camille Gadwood, Exotic Feline Breeding Compound; Christa Kermode, Mountain Lion Foundation; Andrew Mercy, Field Representative for Senator George Runner; Ron Krueper, Superintendent, CA State Parks Tehachapi Division; Mary Root, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Mayor Pro Tem Mike Dispenza, City of Palmdale; Mayor Henry Hearn, City of Lancaster; Wendy Reed, Antelope Valley Conservancy (at podium); Teresa Sue, Wildlife Biologist for Angeles National Forest; Scott Harris, California Department of Fish and Game; Jack Farley, Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation; Becky Jones, representing Desert Managers Group; Mark Bratton, representing Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee; and Mark Hagan, Natural Resource Manager, Edwards Air Force Base. Not pictured: Tara Matthews, Transition Habitat Conservancy. Photos: Larry Skaja.

Endangered Species Day *(continued from page 1)*

Endangered Species Day was proclaimed by unanimous resolution of the US Senate to educate Americans about the importance of protecting endangered species and to highlight everyday actions people can take to help protect our nation's wildlife, fish, and plants.

"It is important to protect diverse species and their habitats or we will end up with streets and development projects named after natural things that no longer exist," said Ron Krueper, Superintendent of the newly created Tehachapi District of California State Parks.

Antelope Valley Conservancy President Wendy Reed spoke about endangered species success stories such as the bald eagle, and believes our region can be a success story. "Antelope Valley has a wonderful opportunity to provide for substantive conservation of habitats and corridors, from our fairy shrimp to our burrowing owls, from our ground squirrels and tortoises even to bobcats, mountain lions and bears. Planned from a regional perspective, conservation helps maintain our quality of life and provides amenities that promote a sustainable community and economy," Reed said.

AV Conservancy sponsors the AV Regional Conservation Roundtable, funds conservation and watershed planning, protects our trail systems, and successfully advocated for the incorporation of AV habitats and corridors in the Southern California Association of Governments' Plan updates and in the AV Integrated Water Management Plan.

"One-quarter of birds in the United States are in decline due to habitat loss. Honey bee populations have dropped 90% due to loss of diverse flowering habitat," Reed said. "If we think about the role they play in pollinating crops that feed us, we start to realize that when we talk about species protection, the species we protect may be our own."

Things You Can Do

With your actions and your choices, you can help prevent species endangerment.

- Respect conservation areas
- Stay on trails
- Report wildlife abuse to CA Dept. of Fish & Game (951) 443-2949
- Prevent pet dogs and cats from roaming. Report loose pets to Animal Control (661) 940-4190
- Dispose of trash and chemicals properly (<http://ladpw.org/epd/>)
- Keep trash cans covered to discourage ravens
- Report Dumping toll-free to (888) 8-DUMPING
- Support land conservation. It is believed that the lands conserved in the next 20 years will be the last lands conserved on earth.



Desert tortoises Tyrone, left, and Paige, who was rescued after being run over by a car, stole hearts at the press conference. Displayed by Ton's Reptile Rescue, both tortoises live permanently at the Bless the Beasts Sanctuary. Reports that the tortoises were "new residents" of the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve were untrue.

Photo: Larry Skaja