

The Conservancy NEWS



Incorporating **ON TRACK** newsletter #89

Issue 7
September 2008

Rift Zone momentum growing

Grants and community partnerships are building momentum to preserve Antelope Valley's Rift Zone wetlands. Two AV Conservancy grants have been approved for the Una Lake wetlands, from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. A pending grant for \$1.28 million would seed funds to extend the preservation effort eastward.

Geological processes along the fault line form springs, sag ponds, and wetlands. Rift Zone sites on the north slope of the San Gabriel Mountains include the Una Lake/Barrel Springs wetland corridor and the western lakes "where nature is your neighbor."

Wetlands offer nesting and foraging for native wildlife. Located in documented wildlife corridors, wetlands are necessary components of forest animals' habitat range, and essential to migratory birds. They are also significant to watershed function, community character, the historic trail system, and historic cultural resources.

County designation as Significant Ecological Areas offer an extra layer of scrutiny before development, but SEAs are not preserved lands. The State Water Resources Board is drafting policy to increase wetlands protections, but it remains incumbent on local communities to preserve their wetlands.

Rural residents and other landowners are great partners to Antelope Valley Conservancy's efforts. Antelope Valley College is excited its Outside Classroom in Palmdale may adjoin functional habitat. Letters of support came from Senator Dianne Feinstein, Palmdale Council Member/Water Resources Board Director Mike Dispenza, Dept. of Fish and Game, Los Angeles County Regional Planning, and many more. If you want to help, thank them for their support, and provide a letter of support yourself, or from your organization.

Joshua woodland acquisition delayed

Budget difficulties at Sanitation District 20 (Palmdale) have stalled AV Conservancy's acquisition in the Joshua Tree Woodland Significant Ecological Area. AVC commends District staff's work to implement ecologically significant mitigation locally, and hopes the District proceeds while the land is still available. District 20's Directors are LA County Supervisor Yvonne Burke, Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford, and Palmdale Mayor Pro Tem Steve Knight.

On Track and *Conservancy News* newsletters join

With this issue, AVTREC's *On Track* newsletter is being absorbed into *The Conservancy News*. Now all our readers will get all our news. Issues are available via email or US mail.

Antelope Acres trails GPS complete

AV Conservancy's GPS mapping of the Antelope Acres trail system was finally completed in May, and provided to Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation for the trail plan update.

Our gratitude to Bill Swanson, trails representative for the Antelope Acres Town Council, who acted as trail guide for this undertaking, and Nathan Krumm, who has faithfully learned the GPS procedures and assisted Bill to GPS the Antelope Acres trails.

Trail Maps are posted at www.avconservancy.org.

CONSERVANCY SOCIAL

Saturday, Sept 20, noon

Fresco II

1983 West Avenue L

Get acquainted, get talking,
get involved

Trails Not TrashSM campaign: 14th Annual Earth Day Cleanup Saddleback Butte State Park

The 14th Annual Earth Day Cleanup at Saddleback Butte had good participation and beautiful weather. In the morning, conservancy director Elaine Macdonald served up cookies for the volunteers, then led a group of 15 for the cleanup.

The park looked trash free at first, but looks can be deceiving. Volunteers hiked through the park and its perimeter, and picked up many small plastic bags that stuck to the branches of the creosote bushes. The most common items found were fast food packages of the six dollar burger, cigarette packages, and plastic and glass bottles. A tire was found in the center of the park. By noon, a tire and 24 large trash bags filled the back of Ranger Mark Dupont's truck.

Boy Scout Troop members helped this year. Volunteers were given AV Conservancy's Trash Not TrailsTM buttons, and each child volunteer was given a pencil and booklet as a memento from the California State Parks. Everyone had a good time, and the weather was cool and clear. No snakes were sighted.

The Earth Day Cleanup has been an annual event for 14 years, but as of 2008, AV Conservancy is starting to sponsor and co-sponsor additional annual cleanups in its Trash Not TrailsTM Campaign, such as Martin Luther King Day in January and Make A Difference Day in October. Keep informed of our events at www.avconservancy.org/Events



Thank you, Earth Day volunteers!

Trails Policy Project enters second phase

The Trails Policy Project is developing a policy and procedures manual for Antelope Valley Conservancy lands and easements.

The second phase is now underway. The volunteers have finished reading their variety of trails documents published by state, county, and local agencies, and other trails experts. Information gathered by all the readers is being compiled, to determine which issues have broad agreement and which need to be discussed further.

The project is being conducted by a group of 12 volunteers, including a consultant under grant from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Parks Service, Jim Donovan. The volunteers reflect various abilities and perspectives, of walkers, runners, bicycle riders, equestrians, trail managers, and landowners.

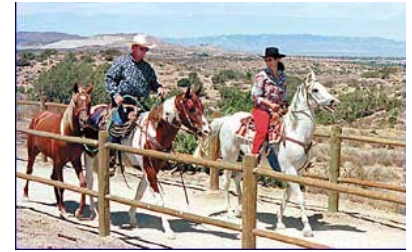
Donate for free?

With Yahoo's GoodSearch.com search engine, you can donate for free. It's easy, and you don't have to sign up or provide information.

I just select Antelope Valley Conservancy, and whenever I use the search engine, Yahoo donates, about a penny per search. Our pennies add up for preservation in the Antelope Valley.

GoodSearch
YOU SEARCH WE GIVE

Palmdale Trails Highlights from bimonthly meetings with trail stakeholders and the City of Palmdale by Elaine Macdonald



Progress in trail connectivity at Ritter, Lazy-T and Lauren.

AV Conservancy's AVTREC trails committee meets bimonthly with other trails organizations, Palmdale Planning Director Asoka Herath, Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation trails representative Patrick Reynolds, developers, and other stakeholders. AV Conservancy applauds the City of Palmdale for its fine job of working with community stakeholders. Palmdale Planners have developed cooperative relationships with a variety of user groups, essential for the future planning of trails and pathways. The primary concern for a successful network for trails and bicycle paths is connectivity.

Progress has been made concerning the Ritter Ranch (Sun Cal) Development. The negotiations with Bob Barjam have been somewhat successful, and he has committed to revising his plan to accommodate equestrians by building a south trail, west of Ranch Center Drive. The original plan included bicycle trails, and hiking trails and a horse trail along Lake Elizabeth Road. The Lake Elizabeth trail would be impractical to riders wanting to reach the mountain trails; besides, the Lazy-T ranch folks have historically used a south trail to reach riding paths in the mountains.

Some time ago, Marcy Watton used a global positioning (GPS) unit to map the south trail connection and the information was handed in to LA County. At the October trail meeting, Patrick Reynolds delivered the map with the south trail location to Bob Barjam. The GPS mapped trail will be helpful to SunCal engineers in redesigning the trail connection on the Ritter Ranch plan.

The second negotiation was the trail connection from Ritter Ranch to the Lauren Development with developer John Allday. The developers did come to an agreement where the trail connection should cross Bouquet Canyon to their respective developments. Reynolds explained that developers will give the easements for the trails, and LA County will take responsibility for building them. At this time LA County has a dedicated trail that is proposed all along Elizabeth Lake Road that will accommodate, bicycles, hiking and horse riding. It was decided not to align the trail along Bouquet Canyon Road due to safety.

Trails at Joshua Ranch: Antelope Valley Cyclists-Bike Access Committee were invited to attend the January meeting with Palmdale Planning staff, and they gave input on bike paths and trails in the Palmdale area. A big concern was the Joshua Ranch development behind Highland High School.

In the past this area was heavily used by recreational trail users, especially mountain bicyclists. Palmdale said that a connector main trail will be built starting from the eastern edge of the property, to connect to Warnack Nature Park. The trails surface will be decomposed granite for horses and hiking, not necessary for bicycling. It is a private street but the trails will be open to the public. Palmdale is negotiating with the Department of Water Resources (Aqueduct) for permission for bicyclists to use the aqueduct service road to access the Warnack Park. The Joshua Ranch developer affirmed that the trails will be multiuse, for hiking, mountain bicycling and equestrians.

Amargosa Bike Path: Palmdale Planning Director Asoka Herath said that there is a new bike lane on Amargosa Creek for recreational purposes. The path along P-8 is not yet open for riding. The path continues to the north side of the Amargosa Creek at 20th Street West to the back of the Amargosa shopping center, and proceeds to 10th Street West to south on P-8 Technology Drive.

Avenue S Bike Path: The Bicycle Group asked for Palmdale planners to plan for continuity along the Avenue S bicycle path. Many sections of the path end without signage indicating which way to proceed.

3rd Annual Endangered Species Day Conference

Antelope Valley Conservancy hosted its 3rd Annual Endangered Species Day Conference in May, featuring presentations by conservation leaders from the Desert Managers Group, Edwards Air Force Base, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Game, California State Parks, Desert Tortoise Preservation Committee, Mountain Lion Foundation, and Antelope Valley Conservancy. A student from the Joe Walker School Environmental Club won a button for knowing that predation by housecats causes the extinction of many American songbird species.

Preservation of open space

When development is approved because it saves open space, what is being saved? Is it functional habitat?

When we spend \$200 at the market and the cashier says, "You saved \$8 today," have we saved or have we spent? When a development project is approved because it saves open space, are we really saving or are we developing?

Ed Skinner, AVTREC cofounder



The Antelope Valley has lost Ed Skinner, a tireless trail advocate and cofounder of the Antelope Valley Trails, Recreation & Environmental Council.

A soft-spoken gentleman, Ed Skinner was well liked in the community. He lived in Juniper Hills, next to the picturesque San Gabriel Mountains, and his home "Ranchito Arabe" was nestled in evergreen and Joshua trees. Ed was grateful to live next to the forest, with more than 70 miles of hiking and riding trails.

Ed served on the AVTREC board for more than 20 years, and was an active volunteer with AVTREC until age 85. Ed's hobby was breeding Davenport Arabian horses, whose Bedouin bloodline traces back to the 1700s, but his mission in life was preserving Antelope Valley's trails. He would always say, "Use Em or Lose Em."

Ed Skinner will be missed.

Illegal Dumping Awareness Senior Project Award

By Ann Vanino

The Antelope Valley Illegal Dumping Task Force launched its Illegal Dumping Awareness Senior Project Award in 2008. Cash prizes were awarded to high school seniors completing the best senior projects to raise awareness about the impacts of illegal dumping.

First Prize went to a team from the Law and Government Academy at Highland HS. Team members Crystal Gudino, Lupe Ikahihifo, Evy Monge, Shannen Motter, and Cherish Vaught created a MySpace page to encourage recycling and provide recycling bins. They made tee shirts to raise awareness of illegal dumping issues, led school "teach-ins", and conducted trash cleanups. Their work coordinated with Waste Management Inc. and other Task Force members. Each student was awarded \$100.

Honorable mention and a prize of \$50 went to Nancy Marquez at Knight HS for a GPS mapping project of illegal dumping sites. Nancy worked closely with Laura Been, a task force member.

Applications for the 2009 Illegal Dumping Awareness Awards will soon be available. Contact Vickie Nelson at 942-2198 for information.

REPORT
DUMPING (800) CLEANLA
NUISANCE WATER (800) 675-HELP

The 12th Annual Leona Valley Bicycle Ride

Wow! What a day! The weather was perfect for a bicycle ride in the perfect environment of Leona Valley. The countryside was dotted with colorful wild flowers. There were large ranches on each side of the rolling Lake Elizabeth road. Views of horses, goats and llamas grazing on the hillsides made the ride interestingly picturesque.

Most of the 50 cyclists rode the 24 mile route to Lake Hughes and back to the Leona Valley Community Center. About 15 hearty riders took the challenge of 47.6 miles to Highway 138 and back. Some enjoyed each other's company while others enjoyed the beauty of nature riding in solitude.



Only a few cyclists completed the metric century known as the "Three Canyons Loop." The Loop route passes through the scenic town of Green Valley, and has steep climbs and screaming downhills. After descending into small community of Green Valley, there is a steep climb out on the other side. On reaching the top, riders encountered the most awesome view of the Bouquet Canyon before completing the loop.

Back at the Leona Valley Community Center, there was plenty of good food and camaraderie. Cyclists took pleasure in roast beef sandwiches and cold drinks, and sharing ride stories. It was a great day!

The mishaps were few: one rider had a flat tire, and another lost a cleat from his shoe. There were many first-time riders who indicated that this was their first group ride. There were also many repeat riders who return each year because of support on the road, friendly volunteers, and, particularly, Debbie's homemade cookies! According to Mike Saccoman, "the Leona Valley Bicycle Ride has the best food on the bicycle ride circuit, and the best of everything! It is a very nice, well organized ride."

Kevin Walsh learned of the ride that morning, so rode his bicycle 25 miles to the Community Center, completed our metric century loop, and rode home! Kevin is well known in the cycling community for his avid riding skills, and has competed in the Furnace Creek 508 and the Race Across America.

Gene Royal is an avid cyclist, though peddling with one leg. He rode his three-wheeler in the Leona Valley ride, sporting his customary grin.

Volunteers are special and are appreciated: Debbie Stevens, Linda and Bob Pluss, Arnie Wilenkin, Mrs. Miranda, Connie Leshin, Joan Howard, Wendy and Wendal Reed, Elaine and Bob Macdonald.

Thank you, sponsors, for your important role in making this event possible: Bicycle John's Acton-Mike Grace, Stater Bros., Albertsons, Vons Antelope Valley, Costco, Wal-Mart, and Staples.



Antelope Valley Conservancy is expanding its Board of Directors from 5 directors to 7. Individuals with relevant background are encouraged to express interest and get involved.

Historic U.S. Route 6

By Fred M. Hann

U.S. Route 6 is the longest contiguous highway in America. It stretches 3,256 miles, through 14 states, from the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach, California, to the Atlantic Ocean at Provincetown, Massachusetts (Cape Cod). It passes through our area as Sierra Highway, parts of State 14, and State 395.

US 6 was originally a patchwork of highways, unpaved west of Colorado. It was named the Roosevelt Highway, after President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1958, 20 years of effort by sons of Civil War veterans (Union Army) culminated in renaming US 6 the Grand Army of the Republic Highway.

In 1965, the State of California removed the highway's transcontinental status. The US 6 signs were removed from Bishop to Long Beach when the 14 Freeway was completed. We older folks remember them being removed. Yet signs remained in the other 13 states, from Cape Cod to Bishop.

In 2001, three high school students in the state of Washington were seeking an idea for a senior project. They consulted Russ Lombard, who suggested they try to make Route 6 a historic highway. They accepted the challenge and founded the US Route 6 Tourist Association.

While researching Route 6, I was referred to Russ Lombard, and I was soon appointed Executive Director of the Route 6 Tourist Association for California. Various organizations and agencies I met with became members, including the cities of Santa Clarita, Palmdale, and Lancaster.



Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich unveils a new sign on June 11, 2008, as Fred Hann looks on.

State Assembly Member Sharon Runner helped to pass a resolution authored by Brian Hann, granting permission to place Historic US 6 signs on the state portions that were changed to State 14 and 395.

Thanks to Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, signs are now replaced along Sierra Highway, and from the I-5 to Kern County.



Playing Cowboys with the Big Boys

By Kimberly Dwight

We only get two television stations, so while in Pomona for the Equine Affaire, I enjoyed watching the Extreme Cowboy Race on RFD-TV. Then we ran into Gary Lubbin, Acton Chamber of Commerce President, and learned he was planning an Extreme Cowboy Race in Acton.

I asked if I could participate, and if there would be a Wimpy Women's division. When he stopped laughing he said, "It's called an Extreme Cowboy WHAT?"

Gary put on a practice Extreme Cowboy Challenge (not Race) in May, and I was there. It was invitation only and I was invited (maybe it was my weekly emails). I took Chip. He's only 28. We could do this. Just a run through the arena. But had Chip ever run with me riding him? We do Trail Trials, a competition judged on safety and control, on a trail, and all done at a walk.

The Extreme Cowboy Challenge did have a novice class. We dragged a dead branch instead of a ten-foot railroad tie. What we lacked in speed, Chip and I made up in finesse and horsemanship. These are things we do well.

There were about 15 obstacles, including a dismount and moving a heavy-duty pylon. Chip stood perfectly still while I moved it and remounted from the block. Stand is his favorite gait.



Thank you!

VOLUNTEERS

Wendy Reed, Elaine Macdonald, Gary Moll
Jennifer Matos, Ruben Gutierrez, Alissa Cope
Wendal Reed, Bob Macdonald, Nathan Krumm
Marcy Watton (GPS Leader), Mark Stiver
Joseph Glynn, Jay Tremblay, Debbie Stevens
Mike Gross, Linda Pluss, Bob Pluss, Brian Fuller
Arnie Wilenkin, Mrs. Miranda, Connie Leshin
Joan Howard, Bill Swanson, Christine Wilkins
David Wilkins, Charles & Megan Avila, Joshua Reed
Terry Mullens, The Schear Family, Boy Scouts
The Musengwa Family, Mary Thurston, , Larry Skaja
Amanda Kaschube, Doug Mullens, Mollyann Tretter
Katie Fohrenkam, Steve Citron, Carolyn Mitchell

DONORS & GRANTORS

Nevel Burke, Kaye Bruns
Robert & Linda Pluss, Constance Leshin
Ann Gregg, Virginia Stout, Cheryl Kuhlins
Adrian & Carolyn Mitchell
John & Barbara Foltin
Gary & Sandra Blackmore
Morgan Horse Ranch
Allan & Donna Bickel
Vance & Juanita Kirkpatrick
Valle View Orchards
Larry & Louise Levin
Jane Benefiel, Janda Arabians
L.F. & Karin Wells

SPONSORS



(Acton) The Grace Family



Your support makes a world of difference. **THANK YOU!**

Supporters

Summer 2008

Name: _____

Address (if changed from label): _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email (please print clearly): _____

Please provide newsletter by email by US mail no newsletter

I would like to make a contribution.

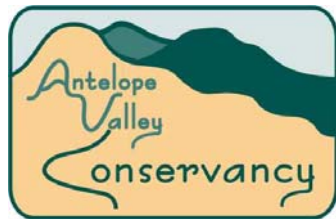
(1) Amount of my contribution:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Ecosystem Steward | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Conservation Champion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Use Em or Lose Em | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Habitat Hero |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Nature Lover |

(2) How I want my contribution applied:

Please apply \$ _____ to land conservation work
\$ _____ to trails work
\$ _____ to the sustaining endowment

Antelope Valley Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation.
EIN 20-3349581. Credit card contributions accepted through GuideStar.org.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Conservancy NEWS



published by

Antelope Valley Conservancy
P.O. Box 3133, Quartz Hill, CA 93536
(661) 943-9000
www.avconservancy.org.

Subscriptions available
via email or US Mail.

The Conservancy News incorporates the
AVTREC ON TRACK newsletter.

Editors:

Wendy Reed and Elaine Macdonald

According to the Land Trust Alliance, lands preserved in the next 18 years will be the last lands preserved on earth. This work is critically important to our future and our community, and your help is critically important. Thank you for your interest and support.