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Condor Call



Journal of Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club

Serving Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties

IN THIS ISSUE: WBC begins...our fire within...where to see wildlife...quagga threats...
winter outings...open trail, closed trail...river walks and chautauqua talks.

© Photo by Larry Wan

Condor Call

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COVER PHOTO

The natural beauty of Ormond Beach, dunes and wetlands is marred by industrial development and an EPA Superfund site, but efforts are ongoing to accomplish a vision of a world-class tourist attraction where literally hundreds of birds live and visit during migrations. Many people have dreamed of this vision, such as Peter Brand (see story on page 3) and the photographer who captured the rainbow there. (© Photo by Larry Wan)

Next issue of

Condor Call

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condorjohn@gnusman.com

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Questions? Call 452-2885

EAVESDROPS

"Normally, you never live that long."

~ Dave Garcelon of the Institute for Wildlife Studies, commenting on the 'special circumstance' of delisting the Channel Islands fox from the Endangered Species Act. The fox is doing quite well in the 10 years since it was listed as endangered.



Here's looking at you, kid.
(from the internet)



Condor Call

Journal of Los Padres Chapter Sierra Club
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So much progress here by a bow-tied man

By Mike Stubblefield

Without the expertise of the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), our efforts to save, protect and restore the natural world would be difficult, if not impossible.

For the last two decades, SCC Project Manager Peter Brand brought the skills that it took to get the job done. He recently retired to spend more time with his family in Oakland.

EAVESDROPS

"... It's exactly because our world is now so dominated by people that it's so important to have places where we let nature be."

~ Peter Landres of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, quoted in National Geographic in a September feature. Read the full article and see amazing photos at: <http://tinyurl.com/50YearsOfWilderness>

Those of us who worked with Peter were always impressed with his ability to juggle Ventura County projects with his work elsewhere. All told, Peter Brand's various projects have brought about \$60 million in SCC funding to Ventura County, acquired 6,000 acres and preserved another 1,900 acres.

For this tribute, Peter wanted to thank all the community leaders, agency partners and elected officials

who encouraged and supported these projects from the beginning. He couldn't have done it without them, nor could they have done it without him!

Without his leadership, the following projects in Ventura County might have faltered.

Farmland Preservation

The Oxnard Plain, with rich soil hundreds of feet thick, and (prior to the drought) a steady supply of water from nearby mountains, is one of the richest agricultural regions in California. But about 20 years ago, descendants of some old farming families started selling farm land to developers and soon, 2000 acres a year of prime agricultural land were vanishing under housing developments and shopping centers. The situation was clearly unsustainable.

Peter began working with local farmers and communities to stop the loss of Oxnard's prime land. He conducted workshops for farmers; then produced a landmark study, *The Value of Agriculture to Ventura County*.

That study analyzed the fiscal costs of sprawl compared to farmland preservation and calculated its extraordinary productivity. It influenced the creation of the Save Our Agricultural Resources (SOAR) initiative, which has guided development in Ventura County for the last two decades. It requires public approval before any land

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WBC begins



Our annual Wilderness Basics course starts in February, and it's not too early to sign up as the slots will fill up. The class could be a holiday gift for a loved one, too. Many of our students are now hike leaders and volunteers, so be forewarned, hiking in the wilderness can be addictive. Details are on page 5. Here's one of our car camp events from last year. (Photo by Andy King)

A fire within propels club

By Jim Hines

The official theme of the Sierra Club's Council of Club Leaders conference in late November was "Celebrating Wilderness," the year-long event which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

But there was so much more, giving us a perspective of the club's work locally, nationally and internationally.

Our 3-day gathering included sessions on Sierra Club policy, social media, finances, energy policy, Our Wild America Campaign, ethnic diversity, climate change, Beyond Coal Campaign, the new political climate in Washington DC, leadership building and volunteer recruitment.

Representatives from every Sierra Club chapter in the nation

were joined by Sierra Club Canada, our chapter in Puerto Rico, our international campaign and the club's Board of Directors, Trustees of the Foundation and staff.

The three days were filled with networking, discussions, debates, disagreements, laughter and a coming together of people from all walks of life who are using their

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So much progress...

continued from page 3

outside its City Urban Restriction Boundary lines can be developed for urban purposes.

Ormond Beach Vision

Peter's involvement with Ormond Beach began in the late-1990s, when he began working closely with the late Roma Armbrust and Jean Harris, two retired school teachers who spent 35 years working to save Ormond Beach from developers, and founded the Ormond Beach Observers in 1983, which brought together activists and environmentalists.

In 1993, Oxnard created the Ormond Beach Task Force (OBTF), which brings together all stakeholders. After Peter became its Chair in the late 1990s, the task force refocused its efforts from private land use planning and defense of remnant wetlands to an ambitious program of public acquisition and restoration of the historic wetlands and habitat.

Here's a highly abbreviated summary of Peter's

How'd we do in November?

Despite a bleak assessment of the country's direction after the November elections, locally the Sierra Club endorsements cast a brighter picture.

Rep. Lois Capps won reelection in the Santa Barbara area, and Rep. Julia Brownley also won a congressional seat representing parts of Ventura.

In the Assembly, Das Williams won reelection (37th District, Santa Barbara into Ventura), and Jacqui Irwin slid into the contested 44th District (Eastern Ventura area - LA). But the climate change

accomplishments at Ormond Beach:

~ He acquired 265 acres from SoCal Edison, provided funding to The Nature Conservancy to acquire 276 acres from the Municipal Water District and prepared a restoration plan for 1,000 acres of wetlands.

~ After the aluminum recycling plant Halaco declared bankruptcy, Peter lobbied to secure Federal funding to clean up the pollution by designating it an EPA superfund site.

~ He was instrumental in stopping BHP Billiton from building an onshore Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) processing facility at Ormond Beach. BHP then proposed a floating LNG processing facility south of Anacapa Island, but that scheme was torpedoed by the State Lands Commission.

~ Peter also helped lead the fight to shut down the Ormond Beach and Mandalay Bay power plants, restore nearby dunes and wetlands and promote a replacement facility at an inland site.

candidate Heidi Harmon (35th District, San Luis Obispo – North Santa Barbara area) could not overcome a well-known politician; but at least she made the environment an issue.

The worst defeat was Measure P in Santa Barbara, which would ban fracking in county areas. It was trounced, 61 to 38 percent, mostly due to North County voters.

Our endorsements for Goleta Water District candidates were split, with most votes going to Meg West, while Chuck McClure was not elected.

~ He persuaded the Oxnard City Council and local leaders to redirect planning at Ormond Beach from development threatening the wetlands to more appropriate development on 235 acres of private property north of the restoration area. He then hired architects and economists to work with the community at planning and design workshops that identified compatible uses.

~ After Peter persuaded the University of California to look at the same site as a major public research and education center, it is now considering acquiring up to 175 acres of this privately owned land. This will make it much more likely that SCC can afford to acquire this final major piece of property so that TNC can complete restoration of the Ormond Beach Wetlands. A conceptual master plan was enthusiastically endorsed by the Oxnard City Council on October 21.

S Clara River Parkway

In 2000, Peter conceived a project to acquire and restore the Santa Clara River from the county line to the ocean. The project had three goals: to restore the river's former habitat, mitigate flooding by allowing the river to flow along its natural floodplain and to create a continuous trail along its full length.

He received \$10 million in special state funding for acquisition, and then persuaded TNC to partner with SCC, committing the Conservancy to finance the effort in partnership with other government agencies. Thus far, the project has acquired 16 miles of river plus seven miles of river corridor.

Recent initiatives include



Peter Brand's the one wearing his signature bow tie, participating in one of the many Ormond Beach Task Force workshops in 2014 which resulted in presenting an ambitious vision of what it could be to the Oxnard City Council. (Photo by Dan Pinedo)

identifying alternative locations for the McGrath State Beach campground to remove it from the estuary, restoration of Parkway lands in the estuary, and trail planning for the estuary and the Newhall areas.

Ventura River Parkway

Peter worked closely with the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy to prevent development of the Farmont Ranch, and provided a grant to acquire this 1,600 acre area, now known as the Ventura River Preserve. He also initiated planning and acquisition for the "Ventura River Parkway," a project since carried forward by his colleagues.

Camarillo Regional Park

When Peter learned that the 260-acre Camarillo Regional Park was being targeted as a potential site for a 16,000-seat commercial amphitheater and two golf courses, he alerted the

Environmental Defense Center of Santa Barbara, the California Native Plant Society and the National Park Service, which had granted the land to the county many years before.

Peter worked with the County to transfer the park to Cal State University Channel Islands. The funding he raised for the park will finance restoration of its habitat as an outdoor classroom for students and as access to the Santa Monica Mountains.

Historical Ecology

Peter hired the San Francisco Estuary Institute to conduct a *Historical Ecology Study of the River Valleys and Coastal Wetlands of Ventura County*.

This in-depth study has become the foundation of subsequent restoration projects and an excellent resource for the education and inspiration of the communities of Ventura County.

We teach back pack skills for safety, fun & thrills

By Irene Rauschenberger
WBC Staff

When was the last time you did something for the first time?

The Sierra Club's Wilderness Basics Course makes it possible to do exactly this, going into the backcountry with confidence and skills learned from seasoned hike leaders. These WBC leaders give you the opportunity to break away from the ordinary ... and enjoy liberating hike experiences in good company.

People who are already hikers benefit as well, increasing their proficiency and sharing tips and tricks around a warm evening fire or in WBC's dynamic classes.

Like any new venture, there are risks when facing hot, cold, wet or windy weather, but with WBC skills your worries are minimized, leading to memorable hiking adventures. To demonstrate, let me share a personal experience of alpine backpacking I took with seasoned hikers some years ago, before I enrolled in the Los Padres Chapter's WBC course.

As a novice, the fact that the Mt. Langley summit is 14,042-foot high was not a concern. The mountain is considered one of the easiest of California's Fourteeners (mountains of at least 14,000 feet); nonetheless respect for the weather and high altitude is critical, as we found out.

Because we had favorable weather at hand, the prospect of it turning adverse or the hikers affected by altitude-related sicknesses, treatment, and prevention had not been clearly discussed, much less conditioning or carrying the Ten Essentials. In all fairness there were many years of experience among the group with the expectation of this knowledge.

The group filtered to the trailhead and base camp the first day. Early the second day, with little time to acclimate and the *assumption* all persons had appropriate gear, we quickly moved on. Everyone was in good form as we ventured forward past beautiful scattered lakes and long narrow rocky switchbacks

to the summit.

Then, unexpectedly, a sunny warm day had quickly become very cold with snow on the ground as we approached a plateau. Despite wearing a down vest, inappropriate cotton sweat pants over thermals, I managed to stay warm, but others wearing shorts were not so fortunate..

As we reached the foot of the summit (which required a class 3 scramble up a steep exposed slope with massive boulders), everyone scattered to reach the top crest of Mt. Langley, where we reunited, elated.

However, because of high winds and the increasing cold, some suffered varying degrees of discomfort and it demanded a resolve to appreciate the experience.

The knowledge and skills learned from WBC could have eased the problems and discomfort we encountered on Mt. Langley. If the weather had turned more extreme, the training could actually save your life and others. It's designed to help you learn how to be prepared, overcome fears and, to quote John Muir: "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings."

It is a challenge we welcome and we'll have a lot of fun doing it with you.



Learn to Backpack Los Padres Wilderness Basics Course

We offer thorough training for adults and teens of various levels of fitness who want to explore and enjoy the wilderness in safety and good company. A dedicated staff of leaders will share their skills and stories in eight classroom sessions and during several exciting outings in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.



Training classes are held from 7-9:30 p.m. in Ventura, February 4 through March 25. Local experts will demonstrate hiking techniques, equipment, outdoor clothing, navigation, wilderness first aid and safety, weather, water filtration, cooking and wilderness ethics, among other important topics. Students will apply this wisdom by participating in day hikes, camping and backpacking trips in our beautiful mountains.

Join us and the many people who have found new insights, enjoyment and adventure in the outdoors. Warning: it could change your life.

Class starts February 4, 2015

lospadres.sierraclub.org/wbc

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2015 Los Padres Wilderness Basics Course

Name: _____ Age (if under 18): _____
(Teenagers under 18 years of age must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian)

Address: _____

Email/Phone: _____

Course Fees:

Sierra Club Member: \$160/single, \$285/couple Member # _____
Non Member: \$175/single, \$315/couple
Student: \$135 (with student ID)

Send your check made payable to: Los Padres WBC, PO Box 3165, Ventura CA 93006-3165

Get out by Getting in

Join the Wilderness Basics Course by filling out the application in this *Condor Call*. For questions, call 524-7170, or email

LosPadresWBC@gmail.com

For up-to-date details, also check out our website and Facebook:

www.lospadres.sierraclub.org/wbc

www.facebook.com/lospadreswbc

Our fire within...

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passions and commitment to protect our planet.

We were also moved to tears, when our international division honored "The Fallen Rangers of Virungia National Park", the home of the world's last population of mountain gorillas. In the past two years 150 wildlife rangers have been killed in the line of duty protecting

these majestic yet endangered gorillas. We were moved and inspired to action by the words at our Thursday evening banquet by award winning author Terry Tempest Williams, who "speaks out eloquently on behalf of an ethical stance toward life," according to her bio. She talked about a "burning fire within" us all to protect wildlands. She called on us to start a "public lands revolution," protecting the great wild places we all love and care for and which she writes



Speaking of the "fire within," attorney Linda Krop of the Environmental Defense Center has kept the spark alive for 25 years, fighting international oil companies, developers and people who violate environmental laws, often with the Sierra Club as a client. In honor of her 25th year, EDC has launched a fundraiser in which supporters have promised to match any donations up to \$50,000. Go to www.edcnet.org for details. And from our Los Padres Chapter: thank you so much, Linda, lots of love and respect to you. (Photo with dog Josh contributed)

so eloquently about in her books, such as "Finding Beauty in a Broken World."

A great deal of discussion focused on the results of the November 4th election. Yes, indeed our environment took a real hit, but as our executive director Michael Brune reminded us, "these are the times which the Sierra Club was formed for ..." He insisted we will not let our environment down.

I was also given time (as was each chapter) to tell those gathered about our chapter, what makes us unique and our campaigns to protect the environment. I was so honored to stand before the audience and not only share with them the great natural areas within our chapter, but also about our aggressive campaigns to stop dirty energy, protect wildlife corridors, save marine mammals and protect entire ecosystems.

EAVESDROPS

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."
~ John Muir, author and founder of the Sierra Club.

We also had a chapter-by-chapter slide show about the events each of us held to celebrate the Wilderness Act. Our photos were of the SCAPE artists' event held in September in Santa Barbara and organized by Mike Stubblefield.

I was so proud and honored to represent our chapter at this great event. I came away moved, inspired, invigorated and even more committed to protecting our planet.

GREETINGS FRIENDS

See the wildlife across our region

By Jim Hines

The many unique ecosystems which make up the Los Padres Chapter region are outstanding places for wildlife viewing from endangered species to marine mammals, from the high county to the seashore.



Let's take a wildlife viewing trip across the ecosystems within our chapter:

Want to see snowy plovers gliding across the sand or view up close sea lions hauling up on the beach? Visit the Nipomo-Guadalupe Dunes National Wildlife Refuge where the Santa Maria River enters the Pacific Ocean. This unique coastal dune ecosystem is home to a number of endangered species as well as marine mammals offshore.

How about the living symbol of our chapter, the endangered California condor? Well I've always enjoyed taking a trip to the top of Mt. Pinos where the U.S. Forest Service has a condor viewing point. On a good day one can observe quite a few condors in flight as they seek food in the low land meadows below.

While you are up on Mt Pinos take a side trip to the Chumash Wilderness area in the northwest corner of Ventura County where you will find the burrows of the valley kit fox, who actually use burrows in the ground as their homes.

Spend some time in the open

meadow areas surrounding Lake Casitas where deer are numerous during the morning and evening hours.

And of course who isn't thrilled by the largest creatures among us, the big blue whales where you can get fairly up close and personal by taking a whale watching trip from either Santa Barbara or Ventura into the Channel waters where you will also observe sea lions, sea otters, basking sharks and Leatherback Sea Turtles.

There is nothing more cute and furry than the Island fox which makes its home on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands. Just take a walk along one of the island trails and the foxes will find you.

Looking for majestic birds of prey? Then the Cheeseboro Canyon Preserve in the far southeast portion of Ventura County next to Agoura Hills will allow you to see numerous species of birds-of-prey ranging from falcon, hawk, kites, owls and eagles in flight. This preserve, with its abundance of small mammals and rodents, has one of the largest concentrations of birds-of-prey of any wild area in southern California.

You may also observe deer herds in this preserve as this area is part of a natural wildlife migration route. Mountain lions are often seen in the Cheeseboro Canyon Preserve as well.

There is so much more, but this short introduction should get you going.

STEERING COMMITTEE

~ Usually meets the fourth Thursday of every month in Carpinteria. Email Chair Gerry Ching for the agenda and details: gching@cox.net

ARGUELLO GROUP

~ Board meets first Monday of most months often with a program. All information on this North County Santa Barbara Group from Jerry Connor, 928-3598 or email: Connor.gd2@verizon.net. Volunteers are needed as hike leaders and to monitor issues; your talents could make a difference.

CONEJO GROUP

~ Get all information on this southern Ventura County Group from John Holroyd, 495-6391 or backpacker2@earthlink.net. On the web: <http://lospadres.sierraclub.org/conejo/index.html>

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

~ Get the latest updates on events and issues of this South Coast Santa Barbara area at www.SBSierraClub.org; also join our email list by contacting Stephen@lospadres.sierraclub.org

VENTURA SIERRA CLUB

~ Up-to-date information about the northern Ventura County group at www.VenturaSierraClub.org **ALSO ON FACEBOOK**

SANTA BARBARA GROUP

SB meet schedule changed

The Santa Barbara Group meeting dates are set for 2015 and while they are normally the first Monday of the month, some are off that schedule due to either holidays or event conflicts.

Also the last meeting of 2014 is at 5:30pm Monday, Dec. 8 at Alex Pujo's home/office at 2425 Chapala St.

The usual meeting place returns next year, which is the Union Bank Community Partners Building at 15 East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, at 5:30 p.m. The 2015 dates are:

January 5, February 9, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1, July 13, August 3, September 14, October 5, November 2, and December 7.



Don't let the classroom fool you, most of the training of our hike leaders (for Outings and/or Wilderness Basics Course) happen outside, feet on the ground, but books on the desk are also useful. Read adjacent story. (Photo by Kurt Preissler)

Group leaders reelected

Editor's note: All of our three groups which had ballots in the last issue are apparently satisfied with their officers as none of them had challengers. We welcome these leaders for another year.

Santa Barbara Group

Martha Sadler won most of the votes followed by Catherine Mullin and Jim Balter. There were no write-in votes, so the three are now helping to lead the Santa Barbara Group.

Martha declared that it takes "eternal vigilance" for a healthy Earth, Catherine noted "the Sierra Club does indeed make a difference," and Jim said it was "vital to educate people and get them involved."

Arguello Group

Ken Naylor and Dean

Thompson were reelected to our North Santa Barbara County group and both will be serving as at-large officers.

Ken is a hike leader and activist, "supporting local conservation issues such as fighting oil companies efforts to drill using fracking ..." which is an unpopular stance in an area full of oil fields and conservatives. Dean has a special interest in hiking, is Arguello's hospitality chair and runs the computer and projector during programs.

Conejo Group

There were four positions open for the group that represents the eastern portion of Ventura County, and four candidates. Without any write-in action, all were elected; they are: John Holroyd, Joanne Sulkoske, Melanie Ashen and Stephanie Scher.

Five trained to lead

Sierra Club hike and backpack leaders don't simply walk ahead of a group, they all go through extensive training.

On a beautiful October day in Middle Matilija Canyon, five Sierra Club instructors from our Los Padres Chapter trained five students on the important aspects of leading backpacks, and the students took turns leading and assisting on the hike.

We covered topics such as leader responsibilities, checking equipment and screening participants, Leave No Trace, hike and camp management, hiking safety, Sierra Club insurance, liability waiver and incident reports, using maps, interpersonal leadership skills, trip planning, the overnight procedure, equipment problems,

harassment, search and rescue, and problem participants.

The students completed a trip planning homework assignment in preparation for the class.

The five students -- Jim Danza, Andy King, and Irene Rauschenberger from the Ventura Sierra Club, Murray Ruben from the Santa Barbara Group, and Hugh Warren from the Conejo Group -- will be leading their provisional backpacks in the coming months, which will each be evaluated by an experienced backpack leader. At the trailhead, we presented their certificates.

The instructors were Alisse Fisher, Suzanne Tanaka, Stephen Bryne, Pete Scifres, and Teresa Norris.

-- Teresa Norris

Eat Jan. 3 for funds

Eat at the Panda Express Chinese Kitchen on Jan. 3 and 20 percent of the bill will go to the Ventura Sierra Club as a fundraiser.

The restaurant will accept coupons from 11am to 9:30pm on Saturday, Jan. 3. It is located at 1722 Victoria Ave. Space C in Ventura.

Part of the deal is you must show the coupon when you order, and Panda does not allow passing out the coupons on site or in the parking lot. So ensure you print out the coupon before arriving at: <http://tinyurl.com/PandaJan3Fundraiser>



EAVESDROPS

"We are the Sierra Club and we do not give up."

~ Reaction to the November elections by our Ventura Conservation Chair, Jim Hines, who noted that the new Republican majorities in Congress seriously threaten the environment, such as pressure to gut the Endangered Species Act and weaken land protection measures. That could include less chance of Rep. Lois Capps' local bill to add wilderness designations to the Los Padres Forest.

Our contributors make it possible

Contributions to our local chapter have been coming in all year since our annual March Appeal, and below is this year's list of generous donors ... so far.

A heartfelt "thank you" to all those who contributed, whether or not through money or time.

The donations support the incredible work our volunteers are doing in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, which includes hundreds of free outings per year and first-class activism keeping our air and water safe from threats

like pollution, fracking, off-shore oil drilling and unrestrained development.

To add your name to the list, simply send your contribution to: Los Padres Sierra Club, PO Box 31241, Santa Barbara, CA 93130-1241.

There are two ways to contribute: To support our effective action programs (not tax-deductible), make a check out to "Los Padres Sierra Club," and for a tax deductible donation, make it out to "Sierra Club Foundation."

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From the mountains to the coast, the ocean and the islands, the Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club is working hard for our quality of life and that of the flora and the fauna. While we have scores of volunteers, it does take money to do this labor of love, and so we thank those who contribute to the cause. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

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Lynn Mayeda
Phillip McLendon
Linda McNeel
K. Mead
M. Susan Mellor
Gene Merlino
Cherie Mignone
James Munroe Jr.
Brad Nelson
Norene & Greg Nims

Helen C. Olson
Beatrice Oshika
Frances O'Sullivan
Edith Ott
Grace Romero Pacheco
Alexandros Papavasiliou
P. Parcher
Pauline Paulin
Edward Pevny
William & Dolores Pollock
Marjorie Popper
Marilee Quinn
Eleanor Rasnow
Curtis B. Roads
Sharon Rose
Edward A. Rose
Heather Sanders
Joyce Sattler
Martha Saxe
A. & D. Schmalenberger
Jerry Shannon
Lanny & Holly Sherwin
Norm & Sharon Simmonds
Barry Simmons

Mr/Mrs Harry D. Sims II
Louis Skiera
Terry Smith
Lynne Stark
Frank & Kay Stevens
K. M. & E. Stevenson
Natalie Swan
E. Swanson
Barbara N. Swetek
I. Talamantez
Patricia D. Tanner
Nancy Taylor
Eleanor Thomas
R. Totheroh
Earl & Marcia Wakelee
Joan Walker
Mary H. Walsh
Jeff Waxman
Lornie White
Barry Wolin
Hiroko Yoshimoto
Robert & Katy Zappala
G. Slaff & D. Zurawski

Chaparral needs help

Our chapter's letter for more protection of the chaparral ecosystem in Santa Barbara County is the way to go to stop harmful clear-cutting.

"Recent aerial photographs show an increase in grading and clear-cutting of the chaparral ecosystems within the Goleta and Gaviota area," noted the Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter's letter.

But the Santa Barbara County Fish and Game Commission disagreed that the county's land use plan should include chaparral in 'Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas' (ESHAs). Their opposition will now be passed on to the Board of Supervisors for action, and the public should fight for more protection, not less, when the issue comes to the board for action.

Jim Hines, Ventura Conservation Chair strongly with the commission's action: "We got this ESHA designation for the Santa Monica Mountains in the recent adoption of the coastal plan," he noted.

Brian Trautwein of the Environmental Defense Center said "the public support from individuals and groups like the Sierra Club will make a difference in the debate."

The chaparral is "important wildlife habitat and streambed habitat for steelhead trout," the chapter wrote, and an ESHA would help preserve the county's watershed.

To get involved go to EDC link: <http://tinyurl.com/EDCchaparral>

there would be "a black eye on the industry." He also emphasized the industry needs to be transparent by disclosing the chemicals used in fracking.

~ The most fracking (95 percent) in California is in Kern County, Quast said, and asserted it's better to produce oil locally than import it, which reduces overall emissions and provides jobs. Citing "a lot of misunderstanding," an industry-wide effort is underway "to gain trust."

Stern, an attorney whose specialties are energy and the environment, said "it's an exciting time in the state." Energy tends to be invisible, but "fracking put our oil use front and center; California is aggressively pushing for a clean economy" via alternative energy sources.

"We're the hub of innovation," he concluded.

To find out more about the educational series, go to: www.ojaichautauqua.org

EAVESDROPS

"Dick Cheney had inserted (into the 2005 Energy Policy) what's known as "the Halliburton loophole," which exempted fracking from the federal oversight and regulation to which it had hitherto been subjected ... since then, vast fortunes have been made ..."

~ The SB Independent's Angry Poodle, Nick Welch, bringing the national controversy home, asserting "If it weren't for Cheney... Santa Barbara's county supervisors would never have been forced to put a countywide fracking ban on the November ballot."



Panel members at the Ojai Chautauqua event on fracking are (from left): Don Clarke, (petroleum geologist), Craig Nicholson (geophysicist at UCSB), Henry Stern (aide to State Sen. Fran Pavley), Dave Quast (California director of Energy In Depth) and Brian Segee (attorney, Environmental Defense Center). (Photo by John Hankins)

What the frack is going on?

By John Hankins
Editor, Condor Call

Not so long ago, reporters writing about fracking used the proper name 'hydraulic fracturing' and defined it in detail, but now it's a one-word progeny, like Oprah, Voltaire, Enya or Bono.

The word was picked up by comedians (Stephen Colbert: "It's like giving the earth an Alka Seltzer.") and a science fiction series as a substitute for swearing. Despite its common use, do we really understand it?

The Ojai Chautauqua decided it needed more information and was worthy of its mission "to engage Ventura County in civil discourse about controversial and highly passionate subjects."

So it gathered a panel of experts on Nov. 9 to wrestle with it, including an attorney (Brian Segee, Environmental Defense Center), petroleum geologist (Don Clarke), geophysicist (Craig Nicholson) of

UCSB), an oil advocate (Dave Quast, director of Energy in Depth) and a legislative aide (Henry Stern from State Sen. Fran Pavley's office).

Moderated by local journalist Kit Stoltz who also took questions from the audience, here's some of what we learned:

~ When the movie 2010 documentary "Gasland" came out "we got calls," Stern said. Wanting to know more about the effects of fracking (which was fueling a major oil boom nationwide), Pavley's office asked the state Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) what it knew.

DOGGR said "we don't know," Stern related, "and we decided it needed a regulatory framework" that included impact reports. It resulted in SB4, passed in 2013 and now in process of analyzing and governing the activity. The bill set it up that "DOGGR is the place to go (for information) and Frack Facts dogs

them."

www.cafrackfacts.org

~ "Every time you frack, you are creating an earthquake, but they're all small," asserted Nicholson of UCSB. "Fracking has never been big in California because of natural fracking," he added (due to the state's geology), but in the Midwest, quake activity is increasing.

~ There is "a gigantic lack of detail" about fracking, Segee said, noting that 100 wells have been drilled along Ventura Avenue in the last few years, and "ninety percent of oil here happened without environmental review." SB4 will help and since oil/gas extraction "is an inherently dirty industry ... inspections are a critical part of the equation."

~ There is "a large list of chemicals" involved in fracking, noted geologist Clarke, and he believes "most of the wells are safe." There is a "big effort" by oil companies to do no harm otherwise

BE AFRAID

The quaggas are coming

By Mike Stubblefield

If you have Midwest roots, you might already know about a scary, invasive species known as quagga mussels that wreak havoc on our water supplies and fish habitats, but now they're here, notably in Lake Piru and Lower Piru Creek.

Many California lakes already have boat quarantines, especially for the big water reservoirs such as Lake Casitas in Ventura County and Lake Cachuma in Santa Barbara County. Statewide, there are 33 locations where quagga and zebra mussels have invaded; in our Los Padres Chapter region, at Piru lake and creek, but none in Santa Barbara County.

Quaggas first entered the Great Lakes region via ballast water from European commercial ships using the St. Lawrence Seaway. From there, they quickly spread throughout the

Midwest via major rivers and began clogging water intake pipes, screens and valves; covering docks, seawalls, buoys and beaches; contaminating water supplies; and wreaking havoc on fish populations by consuming plankton and phytoplankton, both of which are critical components of the diet of most fish species.

It's difficult to comprehend the magnitude of the damage caused by quaggas until you actually see it.

They are a tiny (0.8 inches in diameter) creature which is a prolific breeder: a mature female can produce up to a million eggs a year. Once they infest a body of water, they are extremely difficult to eradicate because they replicate so quickly.

A year ago, few folks in our Los Padres chapter region gave much thought to quaggas invading one of our critical local sources of water. Now, it's happened: a year ago



QUAGGA MUSSEL

in December 2013, United Water Conservation District (UWCD) discovered quagga mussels in Lake Piru.

Quaggas migrate from one recreational reservoir to another by attaching themselves to fishing boat hulls. They can live out of water for about 30 days, so they're often still alive when a boat is put into the water at another lake. This is sobering news to water districts, especially since quaggas can also hitch a ride inside boat motor cooling systems, which were initially overlooked. Some water districts like Casitas now blow residual water out of boat motor cooling systems, then force hot water through the system.

In Ventura County, Casitas Municipal Water District imposes a 35-day quarantine on all fishing boats wanting to enter Lake Casitas. In Santa Barbara County, the Lake Cachuma quarantine is similar, at 30 days.

When local environmentalists contacted the United district to learn what it was doing about the quagga invasion at Piru, we were told that they were "studying" the problem. One option is to poison the quaggas with a commercially available product known as Zequanox.

Instead, we urged the district



Here's Liz Mason Gaspar, Park Naturalist, Santa Barbara County Parks, modeling sunglasses that were in Lake Mead and covered with the dreaded quagga mussel. (Photo contributed)

to simply drain the Piru reservoir – right now at 25 percent of capacity because of the drought -- and allow the lake bottom to dry out for at least a month or more before the rainy season arrives.

If only it were that simple. Lower Piru Creek, immediately below the San Felicia dam, is home to steelhead trout, which are protected by the Endangered Species Act. So when United applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to renew its permit to generate electricity, the National Marine Fisheries Service mandated that the district must deliver seven cubic feet per second of water from Lake Piru into Lower Piru Creek every day.

Few of us want to kill members of an endangered species. But the steelhead below the Piru dam are

not the only steelhead trapped inland, miles from the ocean, by the current drought ☐. And if the drought continues, their fate is sealed, because soon enough there will not be enough water in Lake Piru or Lower Piru Creek to sustain them, and the quaggas will kill off their food chain, whichever occurs first.

But even if the steelheads at Piru die, other landlocked steelhead populations will survive. Yet neither UWCD nor FERC seems able to make the tough decision to either poison the quaggas or drain the lake.

So, despite all of these serious threats, neither UWCD nor the Federal government seems to be making any progress in averting what is shaping up as an environmental disaster. If you are concerned about this threat to your water, contact your County Supervisor.

Wilderness art extended

The Wildling Museum has extended its "Celebrating 50 Years of Wilderness" exhibits.

They include Jeff Jones' "Preserving Santa Barbara's Wild Lands" (ends Jan. 5), "Painting the Wilderness" (ends Jan. 5) and the whimsical outdoor art of Charley Harper (ends Jan. 19).

Through Dec. 15, the Wildling is featuring Plein Air Artists of the Central Coast in the Museum Store.

Founded in 2012, PACC's, select members are based in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties and their varied media, techniques, and styles explore California's

regional landscape, from ocean to mountaintop.

The Wildling features Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo County artists through a rotating program in the Museum Store, every eight weeks. Photo and art workshops and other events are also offered; for details go to:

www.wildlingmuseum.org.

**Ask a friend
to join**

www.sierraclub.org

SANTA CLARA RIVER

Let's help the river get well

This year the Ventura Sierra Club increased its involvement for protection of the Santa Clara River, ranging from outings, to testimony at hearings and collaboration with other advocates.

There are now monthly outings along the river "which have steadily built local awareness and support for river protection," said Nina Danza, the Ventura Sierra Club's key representative for the

Santa Clara River. They are listed in our Outings (see details on Jan. 25 date).

There will also be opportunities for Sierra Club volunteers to help with river ecology work in partnership with Friends of Santa Clara River and the UCSB Marine Science Institute Riparian Restoration program. The first work project is at 9 a.m. Sunday, December 7 in the Hedrick

Ranch Nature Area, Santa Paula. The project will likely repeat in February and may be bi-monthly. To take part or get on the list for the future, contact Nina at 901-1679.

"We (UCSB) were awarded \$2 million (from Prop 84) to restore up to 200 acres of riparian habitat. We need to provide \$800K in matching costs, so volunteer time goes toward this and we can use all the help we can get. We have a separate grant for restoration in the Santa Clara River through the SCR Trustee Council and we are in our fourth year of this work. We are working on Arundo control and revegetation on 18 acres for this grant," explained Adam Lambert of UCSB's Marine Science Institute.

To learn more about these projects, go to:

www.rivrlab.msi.ucsb.edu

There is also a newly formed Stormwater Task Force, under the Watershed Coalition of Ventura County. While there is no specific project identified to collaborate on yet, Danza is advocating for projects that have more than one benefit.

The club has also been active in presenting comments on Ventura County's Groundwater Well Ordinance and a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report on the eastern portion of Santa Paula, which affects the Santa Clara River.

Interested in advocating for the Santa Clara River? Get on our Santa Clara River Campaign by sending an email to info@venturasierraclub.org



A South Mountain ridge hike, a unique area that is generally closed to the public, but the Sierra Club has permission to lead hikes there. (Photo by Nina Danza)

Shhh... 'secret gardens' open

By Nina Danza

Like a ticket to the Academy Awards or an invite to give a TED talk, going on the Santa Clara River Mission Rock Road trail is an exclusive privilege, but now you can join the Sierra Club for a "Journey Through a Secret Garden."

The first one coming up in 2015 is from 9 a.m. to noon on Jan. 25; details are listed in Outings. The hikes will usually be monthly, so check the Outings for the monthly schedule. Call me at 901-1679 to take part.

The trail lies inside a thousand-plus acre preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy earmarked for the Santa Clara River Parkway, which is a long range plan to provide continuous public access along the entire River length within Ventura County.

Not yet open to the public,

traveling the Mission Rock Road trail takes you over one or more water crossings, passage through great meadows of native plants, and a climb onto the ridge of South Mountain. The experience isn't unlike what Father Junipero Serra encountered centuries ago arriving in the region.

The Sierra Club, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, has been given permission to lead guided hikes on the Mission Rock Road trail. Members and guests have the opportunity to observe wildlife species, immerse in the seasonal changes, and learn about the ecological value of the area.

Come see this largest natural wash left in Southern California and learn of the host of competing interests that threatens to piecemeal its resources. This treasure right in your backyard awaits.



The Santa Clara River is getting a lot more love these days from an increased effort by the Ventura Sierra Club, thanks to activist Nina Danza. She is not only leading hikes there (see adjacent "secret gardens" story) but fundraising and leading cleanups. (Photo by Nina Danza)

Lion Creek dam removed

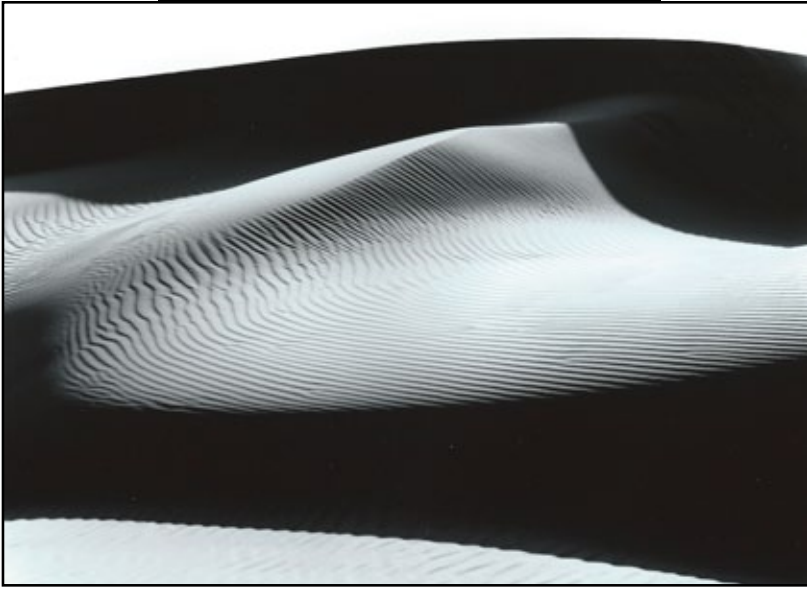
The U.S. Forest Service removed a small dam (3-4 feet tall and 25 feet wide) across Lion Creek above Ojai.

The removal in October is the first step in a court ordered settlement against the Forest Service by the Sierra Club to

improve the health of the Upper Ventura River Watershed for protection of the endangered steelhead trout.

The service has also hired a fisheries biologist to monitor the Los Padres Forest region for steelhead protection.

BLACK BEAUTIES



The dawn of photography was in black and white, captivating literally millions of people to the outdoors. While the art primarily focuses on color these days, there are a few who love the texture and depth that only black and white can convey. One of them is Robert G. Smith, a retired Brooks Photography teacher who volunteers at Ventura College. Here he shares his shots of the Oceano Dunes and Yosemite Valley Floor. (© photos by Robert G. Smith)

Ormond power plants stymied

By Mike Stubblefield

Oxnard's coast has been subjected to more than 45 years of power plants, and now that residents know our two old plants are nearing the end of the line, an overwhelming majority of us strongly support tearing down both of them.

That's why several hundred people packed Oxnard's city council chambers on July 1 to say "enough is enough." It's not enough for the power companies; however, as SoCal Edison in November listed Mandalay Bay as a preferred site for a new peaker plant arguing it replaces the old one.

And tearing down the old plant at Ormond Beach is especially supported because the site is on land which the Nature Conservancy and the California Coastal Conservancy have

been working for decades to save, restore and protect.

There are all kinds of arguments against siting any more power plants on Oxnard's beaches (or any beach), such as air pollution, quality of life and a blight on the coastal landscape. But the strongest argument against any new coastal power plant is the incontrovertible fact that it will likely be threatened or inundated because of climate change as the ocean rises.

Oxnard Mayor Pro Tem Carmen Ramirez phrased this concern best: "Why in the world would anyone want to have a critical facility that produces power for the entire region – not just Oxnard – within the coastal flooding zone? It doesn't make sense."

So, despite a slick but self-serving presentation by energy behemoth NRG



-- the current (and fourth!) owner of the two plants -- Oxnard's City Council responded to the will of the people and voted unanimously (5-0) for a 45-day moratorium on all new power plant construction on the beaches. NRG's tired mantra of the "benefits" of yet another new power plant at Mandalay Bay (some temporary construction jobs, then a couple dozen employees to run the plant), simply didn't outweigh the negative impacts.

Later in July, council again voted unanimously extending the

moratorium for a full year to give planning staff the time to rewrite Oxnard's Local Coastal Plan, making coastal power plants a thing of the past.

Unfortunately, on Nov. 4, NRG's proposal to build yet another new power plant, this one a relatively modest 262-megawatt unit at the site of its old plant at Mandalay Bay, was one of several new project proposals selected by SoCal Edison as part of a plan to generate 2,221 megawatts of "peaker" power available as needed

when demand soars in the summer.

This decision speaks volumes about the low regard for Oxnard by power companies since the proposal is not "coastal dependent;" that is, it won't need sea water for cooling. It's too early to predict what will happen next. This decision must still be approved by the California Energy Commission (CEC). Oxnard will likely fight this decision, but the CEC can, and has been known to, disregard the wishes of local jurisdictions.

Stay tuned.

Naples access really is open

Editor's note: An email to the Condor Call from David Natal asked: "A fellow Sierra Club member said he had heard that Naples can now be legally accessed via a road or trail through part of Dos Pueblos Ranch to the north. Do you know how I could get more information regarding a trail to Naples?"

Hike leader Robert Bernstein answered that Mike Lunsford from the Naples Coalition took a group hike to prove it was indeed open access, despite "that there were contradictory signs on the gate indicating it is open and others

saying no trespassing!"

That's true, Lunsford said, and explained why.

"When First Bank foreclosed on the loans it had made for the Naples project, it knew that the Naples Coalition had been collecting data from people surfing, fishing, and hiking the area in preparation for an implied dedication of public access legal action.

"As a defense, the bank filed a Civil Code 813 notice granting permission for the public to use the property for recreation and access to the beach. They posted signs as required by the statute,

but failed to remove the old "No Trespassing" signs. In addition, a person connected to the Schulte family at Dos Pueblos Ranch began putting illegally obtained Sheriff's Department Warning of Violations on cars parked there. We were able to stop that activity, but the old signs still create doubt in people's mind who would like to visit Naples.

"I can assure you that the public has a right to use the property in accordance with the authority above," Lunsford said.

Lunsford also said that the place to park is along Dos Pueblos Canyon Road near the 101 southbound on-ramp. Drivers coming from the South Coast should exit 101 northbound at Dos Pueblos Canyon Road, drive under the freeway, and turn left at the stop sign. Hikers can easily walk around to the left of the first gate near the on-ramp, and may have to climb over other gates near the railroad, but, of course, all gates should be left in the condition found; open if found open and closed if found closed.

"It goes without saying that respectful use of the property is encouraged," Lunsford concluded.



Mike Lunsford of the Naples Coalition shows a map that details access to the beach in a blufftop area that landowners have long sought to develop west of Goleta. There is still confusion among many about legal access (yes, it's open), no doubt exacerbated by the conflicting signs above. (Photos by Robert Bernstein)

water sports bicycle accessories clothing hiking

Got gear getting dusty?

How about a chance to get equipped for less \$\$\$?

COME TO THE VENTURA SIERRA CLUB

GEAR GRAB



DATE: SATURDAY JAN 31

LOCATION: 175 S. VENTURA AVE.
WAV (WORKING ARTIST VENTURA) COURTYARD

TIME: 10:00AM – 2:00PM

BUY & SELL

SELLER RULES & INSTRUCTIONS

Seller agrees to receive 70% per item sold, 30% donation to Ventura Sierra Club
All sales made through Sierra Club cashier, payment to seller will be made approx..2 weeks after the event

1. Bring gear in good condition 9am-10am
2. Tag EVERY ITEM with: NAME, PRICE, PHONE, EMAIL (no stick-on tags)
3. Place Items in Designated Areas

DO NOT LEAN ANYTHING ON THE WALLS

4. Retrieve all unsold items at 2pm

ANY ITEMS LEFT WILL GO TO CHARITY SAME DAY

Questions: call Nina 805-901-1679

foot wear rock climbing outdoor cooking boating

Buy or sell your outdoor gear

Got gear getting dusty? Want to try out some new outdoor sport without spending a bundle? We got you covered with our Gear Grab, a rare chance to sell or buy.

The Ventura Sierra Club Gear Grab is open from 10am-2pm Saturday, Jan. 31 at the WAV Building Courtyard, 175 S. Ventura Ave.

This is a unique event to get equipped for a new sport inexpensively, or just snag gear you

need at huge savings.

To sell, bring used outdoor gear in good condition between 9-10am. Sellers will receive 70 percent of sold item price and allow Ventura Sierra Club to keep 30 percent as a donation.

Most outdoor gear accepted, especially camping, hiking, backpacking, water sports, bicycling, winter sports, and associated clothing and footwear. Tag every item with

name/price/phone/email (no stick on tags allowed).

We will provide a central cashier; sellers will be paid about 2 weeks after the event. All unsold items must be retrieved at 2pm at day of the event as there is absolutely no storage for items.

Come browse and bring others who want to get out and play. Contact Nina with questions at prettycheapjewelry@gmail.com

Take a Hike!

LOS PADRES CHAPTER

Updates at <http://lospadres.sierraclub.org>

Panoramic photo by Robert Bernstein

WELCOME HIKERS

The public is welcome at all outings listed, unless otherwise specified. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Study footwear is recommended. If you have any questions about a hike, please contact the leader listed. All phone numbers are area code 805, unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 14. A frequently updated on-line listing of all outings can be viewed at the chapter's website:

<http://lospadres.sierraclub.org>

December 5

SADDLE PEAK FROM STUNT HIGH ROAD: Moderate 8+ mrt hike to Saddle Peak surprise. Bring water, food to share and wear hiking boots. Meet in parking lot near Freddy's on Hampshire Road before Shell Station in Thousand Oaks no later than 8:30am for carpooling. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (CJ)

December 6

MISTLETOE HIKE: Collect some mistletoe on this stroll in a wooded mountain area. Children with supervision welcome. Easy 4 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. VICKI 563-4850 (SB)

PALO COMADO - CHEESEBORO LOOP: Moderate 7 mrt hike with beautiful oaks and vistas. Bring water, food and wear lug-soled

shoes. Meet 8:30am at trailhead. From 101 Freeway go north 2.1 miles on Kanan Road, turn right on Sunnycrest, go 0.8 miles to the third Public Recreation Trail sign, just past Oak Springs Drive. JOANNE SULKOSKE 492-3061 (CJ)

December 7

JESUITA TRAIL TO INSPIRATION POINT: Walk through woods and meadows to a scenic view point. Moderate-strenuous 7 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. CHRISTINE 963-2347 (SB)

PEACE ON EARTH GOODWILL TO NATURE ~ RESTORATION DAY. 9am - noon. Holidays too commercial? Give something money can't buy: critters

Outing Notes

Key to outing locations (noted in parenthesis at the end of each listing)

AR - Arguello Group

(Northern SB County)

SB - Santa Barbara Group

(Southern SB County)

VEN - Ventura Network

(Northern Ventura County)

CJ - Conejo Group

(Southern Ventura County)

LA - Los Angeles Chapter joint hikes

The public is welcome at all outings listed, unless otherwise specified. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Study footwear is recommended. If you have any questions about a hike, please contact the leader listed. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805, unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 14.

A frequently updated on-line listing of all outings can be viewed at: <http://lospadres.sierraclub.org> This website also contains links to Group web pages and other resources.

a better place to live during plant restoration at Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA). You will be collecting willow and cottonwood cuttings and planting them at one of the restoration sites near HRNA. Long pants and closed shoes required. Bring water, gloves, sun protection. All ages welcome. High school teens get community service hours. Directions: Hwy 126 E to Santa Paula, exit 10th St. and turn left (go under freeway), turn right on Harvard, turn right on 12th St. (cross Sta Clara River bridge), go 3.7 mi to 20395 S. Mountain Rd, turn left onto dirt road to the end (about 1/2 mi). Heavy rain cancels. Contact: NINA 901-1679 (VEN)

December 8

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am at 45 Alto Drive, Oak View, to do trail to Creek Rd. and return. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

PLAN YOUR OUTINGS: Take a break from your holiday shopping to plan your outings for the next Condor Call outings schedule. It will cover Feb-May plus 2 weeks into June. Then get your writeups to your Group Outings Chair. Questions? Email Gerry Ching (gching@cox.net).

December 10

HOLIDAY POTLUCK & DIGITAL PHOTO SHOW: The Cameron Center will be the site of our potluck and photo show. Bring your favorite digital photos or prints to share. Digital photos must be submitted to Walt Zabriskie at least 10 days prior to potluck. Bring your most tempting dish and favorite drink for a Holiday Celebration. Come early (6:30pm) to help setup. The party will start at 7pm. JOHN HOLROYD 495-6391, JOANNE SULKOSKE 492-3061 (CJ)

December 12

OLD CABIN SITE - POINT MUGU STATE PARK: Moderate 8 mrt hike with 700'

Fee free days

"Fee Free" days are offered each year throughout Southern California on the Los Padres, San Bernardino, Cleveland, and Angeles National Forests. Also known as the Adventure Pass, the fee is waived at other national forests too and does not affect other costs such as campground, reservation and group site charges.

Those days in 2015 include: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan. 19), Presidents' Day (Feb. 16), National Get Outdoors Day (June 13), National Public Lands Day (Sept. 26), and Veterans' Day (Nov. 11).

elev. gain. Visit waterfall (seasonal). Bring water, ethnic snacks to share and wear lug-soled shoes. Meet at Wendy Drive trailhead at intersection of Potrero Road in Newbury Park no later than 8:30am. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (CJ)

continued next page

EAVESDROPS

"Sunlight is a great disinfectant. The more information, the less paranoia there is."

~ Stanford geophysicist Mark Zoback, an expert on fracking who told the L.A. Times that the oil/gas industry "benefits very little from keeping things proprietary."

Ongoing Outings

Ventura Every Monday Morning

EASY WALKS: Join Pat Jump at 8:30 a.m. every Monday morning for easy to moderate walks in the Ventura and Ojai areas. A long-time tradition, the walks will last about two hours and the group sometimes goes for coffee afterward. Call Pat at 643-0270.

Ventura Every Wednesday

URBAN EVENING HIKE: Weekly hike in Ventura meets across the street from the Mission at 6:45 p.m. for a 4 1/2-mile walk up to Father Serra's Cross for spectacular scenic views of Ventura, the Channel Islands and the sunset. It continues across the hillside, down to the ocean, to the end of the pier, then along the promenade looping back to the Mission. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Contact KURT PRESSLER 643-5902. (VEN)

Santa Barbara Fridays, Wednesdays and Weekends

SOCIAL HIKE every Friday evening for an easy-to-moderate 2-4 mile roundtrip evening hike in the Santa Barbara front country, beach or back roads. Meet at 6 p.m. at the Santa Barbara Mission; we leave at 6:15 sharp. Bring a flashlight; optional potluck or pizza afterward. AL SLADEK, 685-2145. (SB)

STRENUOUS 5-10 mile roundtrip evening hike on Wednesdays. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Santa Barbara Mission; bring water and a flashlight, preferably head lamp. Hike is designed for conditioning. For details, contact BERNARD MINES, 722-9000.

MODERATE AND STRENUOUS hikes at 9 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Meet at Bank of America at State St. and Hope Ave.

Monthly Programs

ARGUELLO GROUP offers slide shows, speakers and movies, the third Friday of each month. Call for details: 928-3598.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Help keep Highway 1 beautiful. Adopt-a-Highway trash pickup from the Lompoc 'Wye' to the Base boundary. Meet at Vandenberg Village Shopping Center parking lot at 9 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of odd-numbered months. Rain cancels. Contact CONNIE: 735-2292.

Hiking during all seasons

"I came to know that country, not in the way a traveler knows the landmarks he sees in the distance, but more truly and intimately, in every season, from a thousand points of view."

~ *N. Scott Momaday, The Way To Rainy Mountain (1976)*

By Jack Elliott

I have heard talk of a "hiking season" in the southern Los Padres National Forest, as if walking is akin to hunting and only legally permitted for a short time during a select period of each year.

The reasoning, I presume, is that summertime temperatures in the backcountry tend to be hot, upwards of one hundred degrees. The land and creeks and rivers are dry or stagnant. The forest is swarming with pesky nostril and eyeball loving flies and campfires are prohibited.

These conditions differ greatly from spring when the streams tend to flow, the temperatures are mild, the flies have yet to emerge and a rippin' good fire can be freely kindled.

Self-imposed limitations, however, necessarily result in limited experiences, and in turn a narrow understanding of the land, its plants and animals. It may also, perhaps, result in a more limited appreciation for the forest than might otherwise be afforded the person who visits the woods during all seasons and conditions.

A mountain field carpeted in poppies and lupine for a few weeks during the mild temperatures of

April is a remarkable sight, but it is all the more striking and incredible when one knows what the field looks like in August during 100 degree heat. (see photos at: [Seasonal Change In Wildflower Fields of Figueroa Mountain](#)).

The dynamic and lively sound of a rushing creek filling a canyon is likely not appreciated as much by those who have never heard the same canyon dead silent during late summer when the creek has gone dry.

I wish to know the forest and everything there within during all seasons, when it's hot and when it's cold, when it's dry and when it's wet or frozen, when skies are blue and when they are cloudy, when it is not raining and again when it is pouring, when the days are long and when they are short, when the shadows are long in early morning and late afternoon and when they are short at midday.

For during each span of time a world of difference can be found resulting in a greatly varied collection of experiences which all hold in themselves their own unmatched value, and when the various pieces are combined the puzzle is put together and the picture complete.

~ *Editor's note: Catch 'Jack Elliott's Santa Barbara Adventure' features at <http://yankeebareno.com>.*

Sign up for his mailing list so you won't miss any adventures.



Mapmaker extraordinaire Bryan Conant hiking off-trail along a ridge above upper Piru Creek, taking the good advice that every season offers a worthy experience. (Photo by Jack Elliot)

Outings...continued

December 13

GIBRALTAR ROCK VIA RATTLESNAKE TRAIL: Hike up a wooded canyon with scenic views to Gibraltar Rock. Moderately Strenuous 5.5 mrt. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 685-1283(SB)

EAGLE ROCK - TOPANGA STATE PARK: Moderate 4 to 7 mrt with up to 900' elev. gain depending on hikers abilities. Rock formations and great valley views. Bring water, food and wear lug-soled shoes. Meet in parking lot near Freddy's just before the Shell Station on Hampshire Road in Thousand Oaks at 8:30am for carpooling or at the Trippet Ranch parking lot at 9am. Leader will provide

free parking for those who do not have parking passes. WALT ZABRISKIE 497-1775, MELANIE ASHEN 497-6773 (CJ)

TOPA TOPA CHRISTMAS POTLUCK HIKE: Join us for this annual Ventura Sierra Club tradition, a strenuous 14-MRT hike with a 4500-foot elevation gain. Starting at the Sisar Canyon trailhead (1867 feet), we'll hike to the summit (6367 feet). Bring clothing for cold, wind, rain or snow. Bring hat, gloves, sunglasses, sunscreen, extra socks, your first aid kit and 10 essentials. And bring something yummy to eat! We'll feast on the summit, with breathtaking views of the Channel Islands, the coastal range, the Santa Monicas, the Channel Islands and the San Gabriels. It's the Big Social Event of the holiday hiking season. Be

at Sisar Canyon trailhead by 7:30am for the moderate pace group or 8am for the fast pace group. Warning: The last quarter mile of the Sisar Canyon fire road is really beat up so drive a vehicle with plenty of ground clearance. Otherwise, park down at the water tank and walk up the last little stretch. RAIN CANCELS. MIKE STUBBLEFIELD at 216-2630 or KIM COAKLEY at 661-242-2591. (VEN)

December 14

WEST FORK COLD SPRINGS TO WATERFALL: Hike along the trail then do some rock-hopping up the creek. Difficult 3 mrt. Some climbing. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ALEJANDRO 898-1240 (SB)

continued next page

Outings...continued

December 15

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am at Oak View Community Center to walk north on bicycle trail. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

December 17

LANG RANCH LOOP: Moderate 4 1/4 mrt hike with 750' elev. gain and views of Simi Valley and Lang Ranch Open Space. Bring water, food and wear lug-soled footwear. Meet at the far end of Lang Ranch Parkway off of Westlake Blvd. at 1:30pm. Rain cancels. EUGENE BABCOCK 499-3487 (CJ)

December 19

NORDHOFF PEAK: Up Gridley/Fuelbreak trail to Nordhoff Peak then down Cozy Dell Trail; strenuous, 13 mi one-way hike ending at Cozy Dell TH, approx. 3500 ft of gain/loss, about 6.5hrs at moderate-to-brisk pace. Meet at 8am at Ventura carpool (Seaward and Harbor in Ventura). Ten essentials, hiking boots and poles, 3 qts of water, and snack/lunch required. Sunblock and hat, rain jacket recommended. Rain cancels. PHIL 218-2103 (VEN)

OJAI VALLEY LOOP: Up Gridley/Fuelbreak trail and looping back on Shelf Road: Moderate - 6.5 mi loop, about 900 ft gain/loss, moderately-paced hike of about 3.5 hrs total. Meet at 8am at Ventura carpool (Seaward and Harbor in Ventura). Ten essentials, hiking boots and poles, 2 qts of water, and snack/lunch required. Sunblock, hat and rain jacket recommended. Rain cancels. LORA 218-2105 (VEN)

BEACH WALK - POINT DUME - EASY HIKE SERIES: Easy to moderate 6 mrt hike with 250' elev. gain. Hike along the beach, up to the bluff & down to tide pools and to Paradise Cove, if tide permits. Tide 4.0' at 9:30am. Tide 1.9' at 11am. Peace will flow into you with the waves. Bring water and food. Meet in parking lot near Freddy's on Hampshire Road just the before Shell Station in Thousand Oaks no later than 8:30am for carpooling. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (CJ)

December 20

SAN MARCOS FOOTHILL PRESERVE: This is an easy-moderate 4 mrt hike across the San Marcos Foothill Preserve, part of our County Parks system. We'll explore the parts of the current trail system. Bring water and a light lunch. Sun protection is recommended as there is limited shade. Meet 9am at the Bank of America parking lot, Hope & State St. GERRY 964-5411 (SB)

December 21

FLORES PEAK VIA RATTLESNAKE TRAIL: Hike up a wooded canyon with scenic views to a peak above Gibraltar Rock. Some difficult rock climbing takes us up to a small peak with beautiful views. Strenuous 6.5 mrt. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. TONY 682-8290 (SB)

EAVESDROPS

"... It's exactly because our world is now so dominated by people that it's so important to have places where we let nature be."

~ Peter Landres of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, quoted in National Geographic in a September feature. Read the full article and see amazing photos at: <http://tinyurl.com/50YearsOfWilderness>

December 22

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am at Shelf Road in Ojai to do long circle walk. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

December 23

CHRISTMAS DINNER: Please call Pat at 643-0270 if you plan to attend. (VEN)

December 25

RATTLESNAKE TRAIL: Hike up a wooded canyon with scenic views to meadow. Easy 3.5 mrt. Optional 1.5 mrt steep hike from the meadow to Gibraltar Road, by way of either the trail or the creek bed. Bring lunch and

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water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. BERNARD 722-9000 (SB)

December 27

SAN YSIDRO FALLS: We'll hike past a favorite rock climbing location to a seasonal waterfall, then return to a natural pool for lunch. Unless we receive a lot of rain in December the falls will be dry, but it is still a nice hike along San Ysidro Creek past a number of pleasant pools. Easy 5 mrt. Bring lunch and water. We will carpool from behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. STEPHEN 574-9445 (SB)

UPPER NEWTON CANYON - CASTRO PEAK: Moderate 8 mrt hike. Hike off those holiday goodies! You know you ate too much. Bring water, food and wear lug-soled shoes. Meet in parking lot near Freddy's just before the Shell Station on Hampshire Road in Thousand Oaks at 8:30am for carpooling. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (CJ)

CALIFORNIA WINTER IN MATILIJA CANYON: Enjoy California winter scenery in Middle Matilija Canyon on this slow to moderate paced walk, about 5 miles roundtrip, 600 ft. of gain. Sycamore trees, creek crossings, soaring canyon walls. Bring water, hiking poles, snack, sunscreen, and other 10 essentials. Rain cancels. Meet at 10am at Rotary Park and Ride, Hwys 150 & 33 in Ojai. TERESA 524-7170 (VEN)

December 28

COLD SPRING CREEK LOOP: Half day trek up a short, steep pitch and along canyon rim w nice views to observation point, lunch, then return down a lush canyon with flowing stream. Moderate pace, 5 mrt. Bring lots of water, lunch, sturdy shoes. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. MURRAY 967-8770 (SB)

December 29

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am in the parking lot behind Ventura City Hall for uphill trail to cross and beyond. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)



Mapmaker 'Doc' Caballero is again offering his local hiking maps on CD. Here he noticed that Paradise Falls was one of the few places with water during the summer drought. But he has more tips and insights, such as a new 6.4 mile hike in Wildwood Park in Thousand Oaks with great views of the Santa Rosa Valley (and guaranteed to see a 'fox' and a 'bear'). He has a special price on his CD hikes, see ad below. (Photo by Doc Caballero)

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(805) 485-0160 "Great Christmas Gift" \$25.00

continued next page

Outings...continued

December 29 to Jan 2

CARRIZO PLAIN HOLIDAY SERVICE: We return to this National Monument to celebrate the end of the year and to offer service to the pronghorn antelope. This vast grassland between Bakersfield and San Luis Obispo is also home to tule elk, kit fox, and a wide variety of birds. Welcome hike Dec. 29, 2 ½ days of service modifying barbed wire fencing, and a full day for hiking and exploring. Includes use of accommodations at one of the old ranch houses. Limit 12, \$30 covers four dinners and breakfast on New Year's morning. Contact leader: CRAIG DEUTSCHE, craig.deutsche@gmail.com, 310-477-6670. (CNRCC Desert Committee)

January 1

MONTECITO PEAK: Start the New Year with a hike to Montecito Peak. Seven mile round trip with a 2600 ft. elevation gain, this is a fairly strenuous hike but it is very rewarding. If it is a clear day we will have a panoramic view from Gaviota Coast to Port Hueneme, and possibly even as far as Catalina Island. Depart from the Cold Spring trailhead at 8:30am and should be back around 1pm. STEPHEN 574-9445 (SB)

January 3

MISSION RIDGE: Hike from Tunnel Trail up to near the Rattlesnake Connector and then up a primitive trail to the top of a ridge. Return via Edison Road trail. Primitive trail, steep at times and some boulder hopping. Moderately strenuous 6 mrt. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 685-1283 (SB)

January 4

BUTTERFLY HIKE: Walk on a beach and across an open field in the Ellwood area to see the winter home of the Monarch Butterflies. Children with supervision welcome. Easy 4 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9 am. DAVE 563-4850 (SB)

January 5

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at Mission Plaza at 9am to walk Harbor Blvd to the park and point. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

OUTINGS WRITEUPS DUE SOON: Outings for the next Condor Call are due soon. They should within the period of Feb-May, plus 2 weeks into June. If you haven't gotten your writeups to your Group Outings chairperson, do so NOW!

January 10

DIVIDE PEAK: Very strenuous 12 mrt hike with 3200 feet elevation gain/loss from Matilija trailhead to Divide Peak. Experienced hikers only. Great views of Ojai and Lake Casitas. On a clear day, all 8 Channel Islands are visible. Wear lug-soled shoes, bring at least 3 liters of water, food, and snacks. Meet 8am at Ventura carpool lot (Seaward and Harbor between Chase Bank and Carrows). JIM 479-7063/644-6934 (SB)

January 10

PT. BUCHON- BEYOND MONTANA DE ORO, SLO COUNTY: Moderate 7 mrt with little elevation change. This is a scenic Pacific Ocean bluff trail from the south end of Montana de Oro State Park onto public accessible PG&E property with a good view

of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant at the turn-around end. We will pass a very large sinkhole, several natural rock bridges along the shore and two major points, Buchon and Disney. Sea mammals and birds are usually observed along this section of the coast in SLO County. Bring binoculars, water, lunch, and clothing suitable for the weather. Meet at 0845 for car-pooling in Santa Maria at the north end of Home Depot parking lot at Betteravia and Bradley, just west of freeway 101. Always check with the leader since hikes are subject to re-scheduling, route changes, and other changes. JERRY CONNOR 928-3598 (AR)

January 11

RINCON TO CARPINTERIA HIKE: Cancelled, but see Ted's hike below. SB area residents can meet at the Viola Field ballpark. GERRY 964-5411 (SB)

CARPINTERIA BLUFFS TO BRUNCH: Join us for an easy hike to Carpinteria for brunch. We will meet at the Carpinteria Bluffs parking lot at 8:45am. The park is

located at 6145 Carpinteria Ave., next to the seed company. The hike is about 5 miles roundtrip, and we should be done before 1 p.m. The hike is easy, the views of the ocean, islands and mountains fantastic. Optional carpool from Von's on Seaward at 8:00 a.m. This is a walk along the bluffs, not the beach walk. Take PCH two exits beyond Bates Beach and exit at Bailard Avenue, cross over the freeway and double back southeast less than a quarter mile to the Viola Field ballpark on your right. Trailhead is at the far end of the parking lot. For more info, call TED 985-8963. (VEN)

January 12

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 8:30am at Mission Plaza to carpool to Cozy Dell trail in Ojai. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

January 15

OUTINGS WRITEUPS DUE NOW: Send Feb-May outings writeups for the next Condor Call outings schedule to Gerry Ching (gching@cox.net).

January 17

GAVIOTA PEAK: Walk past the hot springs, then up to a 2,400 foot peak for lunch and a sweeping coastal view. Long drive. Moderate 6 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DIANE 455-6818 (SB)

January 18

ROMERO CANYON: Moderately strenuous dayhike up a beautiful, mostly shady canyon to the top, near East Camino Ceilo road, 6 mrt, 2100' gain, about 4 hours at a moderate pace with some steep spots and minor height exposure. Intermediate hikers or beginners with cardio conditioning welcome, under 18 must be accompanied by a parent. Bring two liters of water, snacks, sunscreen, and a hat. Rain cancels. Note start time. Meet behind B of A on State St. at Hope Ave. at 8:30am. KRISTI myomy.design@cox.net (SB)

continued next page



Deer spotted along the Santa Clara River, just one of the area's many wildlife opportunities. (Photo by Jim Traina)

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Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org



One of the reasons why portions of the Tar Creek area are closed is to protect the endangered condor habitat. (© photo by James Wapotich; see more of his great photos and adventures at: <http://songsouthewilderness.wordpress.com>)

Outings...continued

January 19
MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet at 9am at Shelf Road in Ojai to do long circle walk. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

January 23
ROSE VALLEY HIKE #1: Lion Cyn Creek to Nordoff Ridge fire road to Reef Trail to White Ledge camp to Sisar Cyn trailhead - strenuous/fast paced one-way 12.5 mile hike starting in Rose Valley, 1900 ft of elevation gain. Meet at 8am at Ventura carpool (Seaward and Harbor in Ventura). TEN essentials, hiking boots and poles, sunhat, 3 qts of water, and lunch required. Rain cancels. PHIL 218-2103 (VEN)

ROSE VALLEY HIKE #2: Lion Cyn Creek to East Fork Lion Camp and waterfall - easy/moderate 6 mile round trip hike starting in Rose Valley on mostly level terrain (600 ft of elevation gain) and some stream

crossings. Moderate pace. If time permits and group agrees we will also hike the WEST FORK waterfall, which adds 1 mi. to total hike mileage. Meet at 8am at Ventura carpool (Seaward and Harbor in Ventura). Ten essentials, hiking boots and poles, 2 qts of water, and snack/lunch required. Sunblock, hat and rain jacket recommended. Rain cancels. LORA 218-2105 (VEN)

January 24
STEVENS PARK - JESUSITA TRAIL: Hike across meadow and up wooded area to an inspirational view of Santa Barbara. Moderate-strenuous 8 mrt. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. TONY 455-4212 (SB)

January 25
GAVIOTA CAVES: Hike up about 500 feet from Gaviota beach and explore the caves and wind tunnels in the ridges above and proceed to overlook. Some rock scrambling and agility required. Light colored long pants

are recommended. Moderate 4 mrt. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 685-1283 (SB)

JOURNEY THROUGH A SECRET 'WINTER' GARDEN: 9am-12noon - Sierra Club has permission this date to explore privately held land, which is part of the future Santa Clara River Parkway. Approximate distance 3 mi with 1000' gain, expect two river crossings and critter sightings. Bring water, snacks, sun protection, and a desire to preserve the largest natural river ecosystem left in the region. Under 18 welcome accompanied by parent/guardian. Meet at south end of Mission Rock Road at the gate posted with The Nature Conservancy sign (126 E to Briggs Rd, right on Pinkerton, left on Mission Rock Road and go straight to gate). Contact: NINA 901-1679 (VEN)

continued next page

Trails open in closed Sespe Sanctuary

By Craig R. Carey and Bryan Conant

In August incoming Los Padres Forest Supervisor Bob Baird issued an order (#14-06) which reiterated the closure of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary to public access with the exception of quarter-mile width travel corridors along Sespe, Agua Blanca, and Alder creeks and Bucksnot Trails.

A disproportionate amount of trespass within the Sanctuary currently occurs along Tar Creek, between Dough Flat Road and the creek's confluence with the Sespe.

The closure is an effort not only to protect the endangered California condor from basic disturbances, but also to

protect the great bird's habitat from the increased visitation and litter.

Social media, Meetup groups, and general word of mouth have only exacerbated the number of visitors to the area, resulting in the predictable litter, graffiti, and general degradation of this beautiful corner of the Los Padres.

"The re-issuance of the closure order is an important step in the continued effort to protect the California condor," says Sue Exline, District Ranger of the Ojai Ranger District. "One of the greatest threats to the condor is micro trash (broken glass, bottle caps, etc.) which condors bring into the nest and feed it to their

young resulting in injury or death."

Long a popular destination, that stretch of Tar Creek has in fact has been closed to public entry for over half a century, as it is within the Sanctuary.

But that didn't stop the traffic of backcountry trekkers, waterfall enthusiasts and weekend revelers, and the exponential uptick in visitors has also resulted in a disproportionate number of rescues. Ventura County Sheriff's search and rescue unit are finding the area a regular destination for everything from injured jumpers to dehydrated and disoriented hikers.

A meeting held in September with numerous stakeholder groups laid out the

initial framework for public outreach, information kiosks, and other means during a period of public information wherein visitors to the area will be notified of (and hopefully adhere) to the closure.

"Sure, it'll disappoint a lot of folks," admits Jon 'RSO' McCabe, a frequent wanderer of the Los Padres backcountry. "I love Tar Creek. But part of our responsibility in using this public land is taking care of it ... [and] if giving up one stretch of the Forest out of all the hundreds of thousands of acres out there is what it takes to give the condors a shot, I think we can live with that."

"There are plenty of even more epic corners of the Los

Padres, which thankfully haven't been publicized so heavily," he adds with a wink. "You have to go find them."



NOTE: Craig R. Carey is the author of "Hiking & Backpacking Santa Barbara and Ventura (Wilderness Press, 2012)" and offers idle musings at www.craigcarey.net.

Bryan Conant is a backcountry cartographer, Executive Director of Los Padres Forest Association, and Director of the Condor Trail Association at www.condortrail.com

Mountain time waits for no one

By Mike Stubblefield
Outings Chair

I recently joined four friends for a one-day hike up and down the 22-mile-long Whitney Portal Trail, an elevation gain of about 6,000 feet! It's not that difficult if you're in good shape; if not, it can be a long day. Typically, folks take 12 to 15 hours to get to the top and back down, which can mean starting – and ending – in the dark, depending on the season.

Though mid-September temperatures in Lone Pine hovered above 90 degrees, we saw our first rain in months. After a fast late-afternoon acclimatization hike up to Cottonwood Lakes, we spent the night in Lone Pine, and then headed up to Whitney Portal Sunday to acclimatize and sleep near the trailhead.

Monday morning we hit the trail at 5 a.m. Our party included two sixty-somethings and three younger whippersnappers in their early thirties to early fifties. I opted to lay back

with the other senior citizen at a more leisurely pace and let the youngsters have at it. As we neared 13,000 foot Trail Crest around noon, the fastest guy met us on his way back down the hill, having summited, by his estimate, two hours ahead of the other two guys, who were still ahead of us.

My hiking partner decided that she felt well enough to push the last two miles along the ridge to the summit. She'd be on top by around 2 p.m. But that would put her – and me, if I stayed with her – back down about 8 p.m. or later.

Then it hit me: One of the other two guys ahead of us had to be at work the next morning, and I was his ride. We hadn't really settled this matter before leaving town, but he had insisted later that he absolutely had to be at work Tuesday morning. Clearly, it was a communication breakdown.

So I knew that if I decided to push on to the top, it would add three or more hours to my arrival back at the trailhead, too late to stay awake long enough to drive all the way back to Ventura County. But by heading back down early I could save some energy to drive home, and maybe take a nap before my passenger arrived back at the trailhead.

It was a lesson learned: When deciding who is driving with whom, always clearly communicate your time constraints. If that's not okay with a passenger, tell him/her to work out a different arrangement.

If you don't communicate clearly before leaving town, then you assume responsibility for getting someone home on time to go to work the next day, even if it means heading turning around and heading back early so that you're not too tired to honor your commitment.



It can be a slog approaching the Mt. Whitney summit with its stone cottage awaiting visitors, but well worth it. (Photo by Catherine Rossbach)



Portrero John Falls during Thanksgiving ... a wonderful place to be. (Photo by Heidi Anderson)

Outings...continued

January 26

MONDAY MORNING WALK: Meet 9am at Alto Dr. in Oak View to walk on trail to horse barns and up through oak trees. For more info, call PAT at 643-0270. (VEN)

January 29-31

DEATH VALLEY WILDERNESS RESTORATION: Join us in restoring wilderness values in this remote and beautiful National Park. We were not able to access the area on the last trip, so the work this time is again the clean up of marijuana grow site. We will gather early Thursday afternoon and work on an as-yet-undecided project, work on the grow site on Friday, and possibly Saturday. Group size limited. Leader: KATE ALLEN, kj.allen96@gmail.com, 661-944-4056. (CNRCC Desert Committee)

January 31

GEAR GRAB BUY & SELL: 10am-2pm - Want to try out some new outdoor sport without spending a bundle? We got you covered! Come to the Ventura Sierra Club Gear Grab. Location: WAV Building Courtyard, 175 S. Ventura Avenue, Ventura (parking across the street in the dirt lot). Many outdoor sports to browse, especially camping,

hiking, backpacking, water sports, bicycling, winter sports, clothing and footwear. Rain or Shine. Sellers invited to bring good condition used equipment 9am-10am (must be tagged with seller name/ email/ phone/ price, no stick on tags please). Sellers will receive 70% of sold item price and donate 30% to Ventura Sierra Club. Great event for groups to use as their own fundraiser. Questions: NINA 901-1679 (VEN)

February 1

ROMANTIC RESTORATION DAY. 9am – noon. Find true love doing plant restoration at Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA). We'll do a variety of tasks such as: collect cuttings from trees and plants, collect seeds, help in the plant nursery, or remove arundo with loppers and apply herbicide. Long pants and closed shoes required. Bring water, gloves, sun protection. All ages welcome. High school teens get community service hours. Directions: Hwy 126 E to Santa Paula, exit 10th St. and turn left (go under freeway), turn right on Harvard, turn right on 12th St. (cross Sta Clara River bridge), go 3.7 mi to 20395 S. Mountain Rd, turn left onto dirt road to the end (about 1/2 mi). Heavy rain cancels. Contact: NINA 901-1679 (VEN)

February 7

SEAWARD BEACH CLEANUP: 10am-noon - Living on the coast means loving the sea! Sierra Club has 'adopted' the beach at the end of Seaward in Ventura and promises to help clean it up every few months. Great way to get high school community service hours, and we invite all locals to come and show the love! No dogs please. High school teens ages 15 to 18 can come without parent/guardian but must bring the signed waiver on the Ventura Sierra Club FB page 'notes' here <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ventura-sierra-club/youth-participant-waiver-english/788718651140480>) NINA 901-1679 (VEN)

