Have you seen these Condor Call issues? If not, we don’t have your email address and you’re missing out. Send it to Condor John, editor at CondorJohn@gnusman.com
State of chapter is a busy state

By John Hankins
Editor, Condor Call

Lately, the chapter’s Executive Committee was busy working up a State-of-the-Chapter document for review by National, which includes questions on our major priorities and objectives, political actions and endorsements, partnerships with other groups, events and outreach.

Compiling a lot of input, the ExCom reiterated its major priorities of opposing oil and gas development in favor of alternative sources, additional protections for the forest and ocean, restoration of the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach areas (Ventura County), opposing leap-frog development along the Gaviota Coast (Santa Barbara County) and actively supporting and endorsing environmental candidates.

In the course of compiling the information, the ExCom noted the chapter has ongoing relations with at least 20 environmental groups and about a half-dozen with outdoor recreation organizations. These range from the legal arm represented by the environmental Defense Center to wilderness groups, marine sanctuaries and climate change activists. Local organizations range from Audubon to SB-CAN in Santa Barbara County and the Environmental Coalition in Ventura County.

Actions taken over the summer represent such activism. Key votes included:

- Approved a grant application to help maintain and repair three trails, the Condor, Backbone and Scenic Overlook trails.
- Supported designating the Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains as a National Recreation Trail, which is an upgrade in status and potential funding.
- Passed HR 3153, the Castaic Wilderness and St Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act of 2015.

New outings guy got grit

By Fran Farina

The People’s Climate Movement and environmental groups including the Sierra Club have designated October 14 as a day of action to pressure the National, which includes questions on our major priorities and objectives, political actions and endorsements, partnerships with other groups, events and outreach. To change everything, it takes everyone... Everywhere.

So far locally on Oct. 14 is a Central Coast Sustainability Summit taking place at UCSB with many of the local environmental players. Keynote speaker is a retired Navy Rear Admiral followed by panel discussion hosted by Rep. Lois Capps (3:30pm). For details: www.sustainability.ucsb.edu/centralcoastsummit

November 30 leading up to the December 11th Paris Climate Conference, there will be a range of actions and opportunities. Sign up for updates at: ActinParis

A straight-lined wave along the Gaviota Coast, lapping upon a land beset by a recent oil spill and pressure from ongoing leap-frog development projects. Lately this area has been a hotbed for intense environmental activism.

Our new Outings Chair Stephen Bryne may sometimes be hard to find as he treks into the wilds on Hundred Peaks and Gaviota Basics trips, but that’s his strength, passing on his expertise learned on the land to others. See his account about the “San Gorgonio Greats” on page 6. (Photo by Catherine Rossbach)

Oil’s past and future a haunting, daunting task

By Fran Farina

Sierra Club continues to be actively involved with multiple oil issues both locally and in Sacramento. Here’s the latest:

- Three major bills that were introduced after the R e f u g i o Oil Spill await Gov. Brown’s signature...

Senate Bill 295 requires annual oil pipeline inspections by the State Fire Marshal. SB 414 seeks to make oil spill response faster and more effective. Both bills are by Senator Jackson. Assembly Bill 864 introduced by Das Williams requires an operator of an oil pipeline along coastal and ecologically sensitive areas to use the best achievable technology including automatic shut-off systems to reduce the amount of oil released in an oil spill.

Also, SB 788 by Sen. McGuire to protect California’s coast from new offshore oil development near Vandenberg Air Force Base died in an Assembly committee. However, McGuire promises to continue with this effort and — perhaps because of the nationwide publicity about the spill last May — VAFB has decided not to proceed with any oil exploration activity “at this time.”

Summerland Beach was the first area in California with offshore oil drilling. Dating from the late 1880s and without any governmental regulation, over 400 wells were drilled and abandoned. Byre legacy wells have caused repeated problems with leaks that the State Lands Commission has addressed over time but never in a comprehensive manner.

During this summer, the episodes became more frequent to the point where County Health Department closed the beach! We have been working with local residents to file incident reports that resulted in the Commission authorizing $1.8 million in funding to identify the location of one of the known wells and assess the cost of remediation, expected in October. Supervisor Salud Carbajal and staff were helpful in marshalling resources.

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- The chapter also supported designating the Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains as a National Recreation Trail, which is an upgrade in status and potential funding.
- Supported the Castaic Wilderness and St Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act of 2015.

The motto is: “To Change Everything it Takes Everyone... Everywhere.”

Hundreds of events will be organized by local grass roots climate advocates in cities and towns throughout the nation under the umbrella of the Movement, which coordinated last year’s historic march of over 400,000.

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While all good things like the Environmental Defense Center’s TGIF come to an end (there’s one more this season on Oct. 9) it’s only seasonal; it’ll be back again next year. Our Sierra Club helped sponsor two TGIFs this year. (Photo by Elisabeth Lamar)

By Elisabeth Lamar


deeP Happies at TGIF

ticked our ears and devoted vo-
turists and help out during the
haves, please RSVP with your e-
ment.  People who wish beer
Creek Road) and follow it for
Thus, Ridge Runner will be
• Carpooling

A must party Oct. 17

The Ventura Sierra Club will celebrate fall with an Oktoberfest party at Camp Comfort near Ojai on Saturday, Oct. 17, from 2-5 p.m. Sierra Club members and their friends are cordially invited to attend.

The Club will grill hot dogs for its guests and will also provide condiments, drinks, paper plates, cups, napkins and plastic eating utensils. Vegetables which wish beer or wine should bring their own.

Guests will also have the opportunity to participate in a raffle for some environmentally themed gifts. Any profits will support the Ventura Sierra Club's environmental work.

Each attendee or couple should bring a dish to share with four or five other guests, plus appropriate serving utensils. German cuisine, such as sauerkraut or German potato salad, is encouraged but not mandatory.

If your surname begins with the letters ‘A’ – ‘G’ bring a dessert; ‘H’ – ‘M’ bring hot drinks or ices; ‘N’ – ‘R’ bring salad; and ‘S’ through ‘Z’ a vegetable dish. The Ventura Sierra Club is requesting a $7 donation per adult guest and $4 for each child under 12 years. Because Camp Comfort charges $4 per vehicle for parking on weekends, partygoers are urged to carpool.

To reach Camp Comfort take Highway 33 towards Ojai and turn right onto Creek Road (not Old Creek Road) and follow it for about four miles to the entrance at 11690 North Creek Road.

For more information, call Carol Marsh at (805) 984-3590, or contact her by Email at carol.marsh@cox.net. Also contact Carol if you are willing to help with setting up before the party, cooking the hot dogs, or cleaning up afterwards.

This party should be a lot of fun! Please come and bring your friends.

New MeetUp a hit!

If you build it they will come? Well if it’s a webpage offering nearby hikes, get-togethers, and environmental volunteering, yes they will … and did. Ventura Sierra Club launched its official meetup group under new administration on November 13. In just 24 hours of opening over 100 folks signed up. You can to, at: https://www.meetup.com/VenturaSierraClub/.

Seems there was an unmet demand … the meetup group is anyone to join and is a super handy calendar of the local Sierra Club official outings. Check out their website for more information.

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Oil caught thwarting own climate reports

By Katie Davis

On Sept. 9 when news broke that one of the key provisions of state climate bill SB-350 was dropped, it was from pressure from the influential oil lobby, the Director of Sierra Club California, Kathryn Phillips, had this to say:

“The oil industry declared war on humanity more than a decade ago when it began its efforts to deny climate change. This year, they have spent untold dollars to try to defeat a reasonable goal to reduce our dependency on oil in the transportation sector and continue our transition to cleaner fuels and more choice in travel.”

She has a point. According to a recent Inside Climate News report, oil companies have known about the risks of climate change for decades.

“There is general scientific agreement that the most likely manner in which mankind is influencing the global climate is through carbon dioxide release from the burning of fossil fuels,” a senior company scientist named James Black told Exxon’s Management Committee back in July 1977. Exxon conducted early scientific research on climate change and could have used this knowledge to help the world solve this existential challenge. Instead, they have engaged in a long campaign of disinformation and deceit.

It is one thing to pursue oil development, it is quite another to interfere politically to undermine efforts to address climate change. One is just business. The other is a threat to us all.

The failure of the climate bill provision, which would cut petroleum use in half, as well as the failure to extend SB-32, California’s existing greenhouse gas reduction law, illustrates the problem with Gov. Brown’s wish to have it both ways – to increase oil production in the state while denying climate leadership. The oil industry spent $38 million for lobbying and campaigns in California in 2014, a 129% increase from 2013. They are the strongest and campaigns in California in 2013. They are the strongest

Nancy Pedros project denied

In a victory for the coast, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to deny the Las Varas Ranch proposal in September, underscoring the community’s interest in protecting the integrity and natural resources of a working Gaviota Coast ranch. The County Planning Commission had recommended in April that the Board deny the Project.

The project proposed to reconfigure the existing lots on the 1800 acre agricultural Las Varas and Edward’s Ranches and create 2.5 to 5 acre residential “development envelopes” on each lot with driveways and water systems in order to maximize the land’s value for future residential development.

While proponents of the Project argued the lot reconfiguration would not increase development potential, county staff confirmed at the hearing that it would shift residential potential from the inland side of Highway 101 onto the much more sensitive and valuable coastal zone south of the Highway.

Las Varas Ranch has a significant history, including service as a prisoner of war camp during WW II, with a remnant of the camp’s water tower still visible from Highway 101. The views across the Ranch’s pastoral lands are extraordinary, while the creeks, grasslands and coastline each have high natural resource values.

Gaviota Coast Conservancy

Artists & activists join for great event

An important panel discussion on “Saving Naples and the Gaviota Coast” is part of the Center for Lifelong Learning’s curriculum that is open to the public. It starts at 6pm Wednesday, Oct. 13.

The peaceful and rural agricultural land of the Gaviota coast is threatened not only by oil, it’s also threatened by creeping urbanization. This high-level panel will explore the issues and talk about the groups involved in saving it, notably the Gaviota Coast Conservancy and Naples Coalition, both of which are supported by the Sierra Club.

Panel members include Environmental Defense Center lead attorney Linda Krop,

Kayaktivists

Ask a friend to join

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Ongoing Outings

VOUNTING with a Mandala Morning EASY WALKS: Join Pat, Jim or 9:30 a.m. every Monday morning for easy walks in several areas. A walk that ranges from one hour to several hours, the group gossips as coffee for after walk. Call PAT at 643-2070.

Ventura Every Wednesday: URBAN EVENING HIKE: Weekly hike in Ventura marks across the streets from the Mission of 6:45 p.m. £8.00 (includes dinner), Registration is due 10 days before date. (805) 643-2070.

Santa Barbara, Friday, Wednesdays and Weekends:
SACRED RV ECO HIKE: Starting Friday evening walks will be held in the Santa Barbara foothills, the back roads near Montecito, or the Carpinteria Channel Islands and the area. It continues throughout the foothills, down to the base of the river, and then along the hilltops, offering walks along the creek, beautiful walks comfortable. Contact Great UMT PRESCID 843-0032.

On Lynn Road next to Dos Vientos parking lot (entrance on Via Goleta). obscure road, opened up by the 2013 fire, traverses the south side of the other Sycamore Canyon. Bring water, food and wear lug-soled shoes. Meet at parking lot (on Via Goleta on Lynn Road next to Dos Vientos in 5 minutes. PARK WARREN 341-6925 (SB)

October 8-10

Outing Notes

Key to outing location (noted in parenthesis at end of outing)

Key:

LA – Santa Barbara Group (SB)

VC – Ventura Network (NVC)

CJ – Conejo Group (CJ)

LA – Los Angeles County Joint Group

This website also contains links to Group web pages and other resources.

La Times... No two trails are the same

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October 8-10
How can you help out tattered trails

Los Padres Forest Association: Bryan Conant 405-8628 or info@LPForest.org
Ojai District Los Padres Forest: Heidi Anderson, 646-4348 or handersen@fedfed.com
Los Padres Fieldway: Tanner Yould, 617-4610 or info@lpfw.org
Los Padres National Forest:
Santa Barbara Trails Council: http://ab volonteers.com
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area:
Craig Sap: (818) 880-0396; crag.sap@rnpix.com
Mary Ann Webster: Task Force (310) 733-7042; mwebster184@vcsolutions.com
Jerry Mitchals, Trails Council (818) 806-1269; jeremyj Mitchals@netscape.com

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 24 through April 20. 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 knowledge by participating in day hikes, camping and backcountry trips in our beautiful county.

For more information or to register, please contact
Greg Pascual, 805-644-0005, x 15
or send your check made payable to Los Padres WBC, PO Box 3165, Ventura CA 93006.

Class starts February 24, 2016
facebook.com/lospadresWBC
lospadresWBC@comcast.net (805) 524-7170

 Learn to Backpack

Even if you are not up for a hike, Al Sladké and friends invite you to enjoy the good company and some adventure you won’t forget. Next ones are Oct. 9, Nov. 13 and Dec. 11. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)

There’s more to do after the outing

By Robert Bernstein

Al Sladké has been leading Friday night Sierra Club hikes for over 40 years. What happens after the hikes is often even more interesting!

On the second Friday of each month Al organizes a potluck dinner and a slide show. The dinner usually gets started at 8:30pm and the slide show begins when we are done setting up. Slide shows vary widely. Some are far-flung hiking treks in the Himalayas or even the Arctic or Antarctic taken by members. Others are travel photos to more traditional destinations accompanied by usually with some unusual twist. We even once had a program on how the Arlington Theater began and was built by hundreds of local volunteers.

Joan Leinik is a senior member of the group who is not as active in her younger days. But she has many amazing adventures to share from those young days. Even if you are not up for a hike, come on over and enjoy the good company and some adventure you won’t forget. For the schedule, which include programs on Oct. 9, Nov. 13 and Dec. 11, go to:
http://www.sierrasertpuck.org

Condor Call

Since the Arlington Theater opened in 1929, hundreds of artists have performed there. But if your vehicle has insufficient clearance, leave it at the water tank and walk up the last little stretch, or hitch a ride with one of us. RAIN CANCELS.

November 4
L A N G R A N C H R I D G E: Moderate 5 mnt hike along Lang Ranch Ridge. Bring water, food and lug-soled shoes. Meet at trailhead on Lang Ranch Parkway across from Park on left (one block south of Westlake Drive). Do not drive to end of Lang Ranch Parkway. JOANNE BILUKOSE 492-3081 (SB)

November 7
ROMERO CANYON LOOP: Hike up a trail with trees and a small stream and then down an abandoned road with a beautiful view. Moderate 8 mnt hike. Bring lunch and water. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. CHRISTINE 963-2347 (SB)

November 8
ARROYO BUERRO TRAIL - SANTA BARBARA SIDE: Hike up Jesus Trail to Arroyo Buero Trail and continue on a circular power line clearing. Great views of Santa Barbara and Goleta, some wildlife viewing possible. Moderate 5 mnt hike with one strenuous 1/4 mi climb. Bring snack, plenty of water and sturdy shoes. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. RAIN, camels, MURRAY 805-967-8770 (SB)

December 5
FRAZIER PARK-MT PINO CAMPGROUND TO SAWMILL MOUNTAIN and back: Moderate, 6 miles round trip, with approximately 1,500 feet of gain. Hike in Mount Pinos parking lot and is pretty simple and quick on the old road to Sawmill Road. Begin at Sawmill Road near Fredy’s just before the LA Castle Road intersection. The LA Castle Road intersection is 1000 feet higher than the Sawmill Road intersection at 8:30pm for carpooling. LILLIAN TREVISAN 498-1623 (SB)

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SUGAR FREE MORNING: 8am. NOW: Work off the Halloween candy doing hands-on environmental restoration in a part of Ventura County rarely visited. Sierra Club is partnering with Friends of the Santa Clara River and UCSC Riparian Restoration Program to build a riparian area on the banks of Santa Clara River at Hodrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA) near Santa Barbara. The project seeks to long term sustainable ecological condition. This preserve is home to endangered bird species, rare plants and is a safe haven for aquatic species, rare butterflies and more. Repeat ONE MORNING WALK: 9am at 9am at Mission Plaza to walk to Harbor on trail and return. For info, call 805-632-0270 (VEN)

continued on page 6

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Even if you are not up for a hike, Al Sladké (center) and friends invite you to enjoy the good company afterward. Just come with a potluck dish and enjoy program adventures you won’t forget. Next ones are Oct. 9, Nov. 13 and Dec. 11. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)
Shy sheep spied near peaks

By Stephen Bryne

Outings Chair

A summer trip to the San Bernardino Mountains was full of historical lore of early explorers and even earlier stories of Indian creation amid a home for the shy and barely seen Bighorn Sheep.

This trip was led by Peter and Ignazia Dockett of Sierra Club’s Hundred Peak Section (HPS) along with ten other people, the maximum allowed on the Wilderness Permit. We gathered at the Mill Creek Ranger Station to begin this epic day in the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area, important habitat for the remaining Desert Bighorn sheep.

Our route took us up the维金峰 Trail and then cross-country, first to Dobbs Peak and then to Jepson Peak, on the way to San Gorgonio Peak.

Dobbs Peak (10,459 ft) was named for a guide for the 1904 George Grant party. A herd of Desert Bighorn sheep were some of the last to reach the summit and a bolt of lighting struck Dobbs and knocked him senseless, while another bolt killed another member of the party. Dobbs had to be restrained until help arrived and when he regained his senses but not his memory.

Jepson Peak (11,205 ft) was named for W. W. Jepson, UC botanist, who made a study of plant life in the San Gorgonio area about 1914. He was a charter member of the Sierra Club and a lifelong hiker and was known for his books “Trees of California” (1923) and “Manual of the Flowering Plants of California” (1921). At 11,490 ft, San Gorgonio Peak is the highest in the San Bernardino Mountains, as well as the highest in the Transverse Range and in all of Southern California. Since the peak is above the treeline, only rocks are visible on the upper portion of the mountain, giving rise to one of the peak’s names—The Greyback. This peak is surrounded by nine peaks over 10,000 ft in elevation. Moraine deposits near San Gorgonio Peak represent relics of the southernmost glaciation in the United States.

In the creation story of the Serrano Indians, brother gods Pakrotakit and Kukat were parted and split, Pakrotakit moved south with a pure white eagle and made his home on this peak—known as Akyana.

One of our hikers, Susan Kang, revealed to me that earlier this year, while climbing San Gorgonio Peak she had slipped on ice or snow and had fallen down a steep slope, narrowly escaping death while being badly injured. Returning to this spot was traumatic but also cathartic for Susan. Her body and spirit are strong and she is clearly indomitable!

The route to Dragons Head traversed an unusual geological feature called The Tarn. A tarn is a mountain lake formed in a cirque excavated by a glacier. It is formed when either rain or water from a cirque fills the cirque. A moraine may form a natural dam below a tarn.

Approaching The Tarn from San Gorgonio Peak, we spied what appeared to be a herd of Desert Bighorn sheep on the dry lake bed, although it was hard to be certain from about one mile away.

As we got closer, the small herd came into focus: a ram, several ewes, and a lamb. As we approached, the herd ascended the opposite slope, climbing the appropriately named Bighorn Mountain. The ram brought up the rear, keeping a close watch on the human interlopers. This sighting was the highlight of the trip for me, since they are rare.

Dragons Head was named for the summit block that appears to some to be like a reptilian head, as viewed from The Tarn on its east side. Although the peak is not named on either USGS topos or on USFS maps, the HPS has called this peak Dragons Head for several decades. A tricky rocky ascent to a steep slopes on either side, led to the summit.

In all, this hike was some 18 miles and took about 13 hours. All who went were substantially changed by this experience in nature.

Mike Stubfield later commented, “This was one of the toughest, and most interesting hikes I’ve ever done in my life.”

The Sierra Club hikers had to literally climb mountains to catch a long-distance view of the elusive Bighorn Sheep. (Photo by Kim La)
River helpers muscle out trash
By Mike Shubklefiekld
The drought is now in its fourth year. All of us hope for a much-needed El Nino that could well happen in the spring (or not), but we can’t wait for Mother Nature to bail us out.

Starting with this issue of Condor Call, I’ll be writing a column to help you analyze and employ various strategies to mitigate the effects of the drought on your landscape and plants. Here are some resources to help get you started.

**Books to read**

- “Designing with Succulents,” by Debra Lee Baldwin, Timber Press, 2007;
- “The California Native Plants for the Garden,” by Carol Bornstein, Cachuma Press, 2005;
- “Reimagining the California Lawn,” by Carol Bornstein, Cachuma Press 2011;

**Website**

www.apldca.org/ (Association of Professional Landscape Designers)

www.townofpacificbeach.com/ (Incentive programs)

http://mg.ucanr.edu/ (UC Statewide Master Gardener Program)

**Immediate action**

Here are 10 ways to conserve water in your home landscape in San Barbara County:

1. Select water-efficient plants that grow well in your climate.
2. Hydrozone, i.e. place plants with similar water needs - high, medium, low, very low - together, and irrigate them accordingly.
3. Let the roots of established plants dry out between irrigations. Occasionally water them deeply slightly below the root zone.
4. If you don’t use or enjoy your lawn, consider replacing it with drought-tolerant plants. (If you intend to keep your lawn, water it based on UC’s “Lawn Watering Guide,” available at: http://ucanr.edu/orfreepublic/doc/8044.pdf.
5. Mix soil amendments (compost, etc.) evenly and deeply into sandy and clay soils - 40% or more by volume - before planting.
6. Spread a 2-3 inch layer of mulch on top of soil around garden plants and trees.
7. Water early in the morning, when it’s less likely to evaporate.
8. Control weeds. Otherwise, they take water intended for your plants, then they just take over.
9. Avoid over-fertilizing, and try to stick with organic-only fertilizers.
10. Swamp driveways and sidewalks. Don’t hose them off. Instead, you’ll be able to water deep, which will facilitate various strategies for coping with specific challenges created by the drought. If questions arise during your research phase, contact me at: potodog@roadrunner.com.

**Editor’s note:** Mike, and his wife Janis McCormick, are both UC Master Gardeners. They have taught organic vegetable gardening to MG trainees at the UC Hunger Agricultural Center in Santa Paula for the last three years. And, like you, they’ve had to rethink their entire approach to landscaping at home.

Foothill High’s team of trash bashers helped haul out hundreds of pounds of trash along the Santa Clara River. (Photo by Nina Danza)

Drought, how bad is it? This shot would normally be under water and you’d see boats and anglers. Now the water’s so low an old road and bridge can be seen without scuba gear! (Photo by Gerry Ching)

Drought intolarent

**By Nina Danza**

Take 2 gallons of milk in one hand and a handful of dirt in the other … and that’s about the weight of trash each person took out of the Santa Clara River Gateway before Coastal Clean Up day. Never mind, here’s the math: 56 pounds per person.

A hard working group of volunteers: From Sierra Linda Elementary School (Oxnard) came 5th grade teacher Charlene Bowers with representatives from her class. Their amazement peaked at coming across one of the most unusual items found that day: a Bible. But their energy level stayed high for hours helping to pick up hundreds of thousands of cigarette butts, discarded clothing, food wrappers and a stray car tire or two.

Another group of four from Foothill Technology High (Ventura) walked at least a mile from the signs in table fanning out across an empty lot and dragging out iron rebar, a floodlight, and bags of windblown trash.

“People littering simply are uneducated and don’t understand the terrible impact to the environment,” observed one of the students.

The Santa Clara River Gateway site was run by a partnership of Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy and the Santa Clara River Steelhead Coalition. Normally closed to the public, the site is a riparian ecosystem home to endangered bird species and a wealth of more common biodiversity.

“We saw a snake crossing the bike path,” reported one Foothill upperclassman, “nothing out of the ordinary, a garter snake probably, and we just let it go about its business.”

Personal satisfaction, but thankfully not the dumpster, was overflowing by the end of the clean-up. Big smiles and tired arms and legs headed home after free t-shirts, refreshing cold drinks and fruits were passed out. Want a piece of the action? On Nov. 1 (and repeating Jan 3, Mar 6, May 1) we’ll be wanting volunteers to help to return hundreds of acres on the Santa Clara River at Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA) near Santa Paula to a long term sustainable ecological condition. See the OUTFINGS listing for Nov. 1 for all the details.

And you can also help with next September’s event at the Santa Clara River Gateway site on Coastal Clean Up day.
Ah Wilderness...lands to love

By Jim Hines

The wilderness of the land, wilderness we call it, is a place untouched by the human hand where each of us can go to be in the awe of our natural world.

Wilderness is a natural place to connect with nature and ourselves and has a positive impact on our society. Being in a natural area, whether it be an urban wilderness or in the wilds of far-off Alaska, society needs these areas to reconnect with all which is truly important to each of us, a connection with the planet we live on.

And by the way, our chapter offers a Wilderness Basics Course every year in February to introduce adults and teens of various levels of fitness who want to explore and enjoy the wilderness in safety and good company. For details, go to: facebook.com/lospadresWBC

I was fortunate to be raised in wild country. My family had a large ranch in the western Ojai Valley which bordered the Los Padres National Forest lands, part of our ranch is where Lake Casitas is today. My father spent time taking me daily in the great outdoors, learning from the land, appreciating it and enjoying its great beauty and wildlife.

Every morning I woke up and looked out my bedroom window to the towering 5000 foot White Ledge Peak in the Los Padres forest. Not all people in our society have that privilege as we are an increasingly urban society, and those wild places seem so far off and distant for so many people in our society.

While my family's ranch is now protected as a federal wildlife refuge I still go and seek the connection with nature there. The home is now gone, but the pine grove my father planted lives on a mighty hilltop that is a sanctuary for me. My memories and feelings overwhelm me sometimes as my father is buried there as is my first horse which I rode on endless outings and my dog who wandered with me. To be able to grow up surrounded by over a million acres of federal lands is truly overwhelming. I was molded here by the land, by the wildlife and by my feelings of love and appreciation for all which is wild and sacred.

And now important federal legislation is before the Congress (Central Coast Heritage Protection Act) which if passed by will place a portion of my family's former ranch lands in the federal system.

I love being a part of the living wilderness legacy.