Sierra Club’s New Vision for National Parks

S

since its founding with the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, the National Park System has grown not just in size but also in scope. Initially established to protect areas of unique natural qualities, it has expanded to set aside areas that represent significant historical events, and to provide recreational opportunities for many areas of the country. In the 21st century, national parks need to assume even more important functions.

For all their spectacle and scenic beauty, national parks are also representative of the world around them—affect and affected by the same influences. Protecting the parks is inextricably bound with protecting the worldwide environment.

By monitoring the natural ecosystems found in national parks we can observe how native species are responding to changes created by climate change and other human impacts. Fortunately, capable government scientists are studying what is happening in national parks and extrapolating their discoveries to broader areas outside their boundaries. National parks are like the proverbial canary in the coal mine, giving us an advance warning of what is to come in the broader world.

Bold New Plan to Save Our State Parks

T

he Sierra Club has endorsed a proposed statewide ballot measure to save our State Parks and Wildlife Preserves. From the terrible neglect they are now suffering. The San Gorgonio Chapter has agreed to help gather signatures to place this measure on the ballot. We urgently need you to volunteer to help gather these signatures between now and April.

For many years our State Parks and Wildlife Preserves have suffered continuous budget cuts. Deferral main-tenance has climbed to more than a billion dollars. This year even more drastic cuts have resulted in partial closures of State Parks and many state wildlife habitat preserves.

Problems in our State Parks, due to inadequate funding, are endless. Most serious are partial closures, which exclude the public from their own parks. Next year’s additional budget cuts will undoubtedly result in even more partial closures and even permanent closures.

Perhaps worse, in the long term, is inadequate main-tenance. This is obvious when run-down restrooms, shabby campgrounds, overgrown trails, and a lack of ranger activities make a visit to a State Park a less than satisfying experience.

Chapter Awards

T

he San Gorgonio Chapter has four awards that are presented each year to deserving Sierra Club members. The Joe Momeyer Conservation Award is given for outstanding contributions to the conservation effort over a number of years. The Marjorie & Clark Jones Service Award is given for outstanding contributions in any and all chapter activities over a number of years. The Alice Krueper Service Award is given for long-time service to a non-Sierra Club entity in the name of the Sierra Club. The Ralph Salisbury Outings Award is given to someone who has demonstrated a long-time commitment and made outstanding contributions to the Sierra Club outings by organizing, leading and supporting the outings program.

It is time again to look at those deserving conservationists around us and nominate these people for the upcoming awards. Please help us identify those people who have given generously of their time, talents, energy and resources for the continued work of the Sierra Club and the environment. You can make these nominations to anyone on the Awards Committee. Joan Taylor, Gail Seeksins, Ed Wallace, George Hague, Dave Barrie, Dean Shimok, Bekke Estes or Carol Wiley. If you have any questions you can contact Carol Wiley, Chair of the Awards Committee at (760) 245-8734 or desertyl1@verizon.net.

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Membership Meetings

Tuesday, January 5
Mt. Hood and More
San Gorgonio Chapter member Keith Watson presents Portland, Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helen: A 33-minute slide show with music. Keith created this program from his five-day backpacking trip around Oregon’s Mt Hood on the Timberline Trail and from other hikes in the area. This show includes spectacular views of Oregon’s highest peak, glaciers, waterfalls and wild flowers, a climb up to the crater of Mount St Helen and two of the many shorter hikes in the Columbia River Gorge. Three San Gorgonio Chapter members who recently moved to the Portland area hosted Keith’s trip. (See related photo on Page 10.)

Tuesday, February 2
Great Palm Springs Area Hikes
Author Philip Ferranti will present a slide program from his regional number one best-selling book: 140 Great Hikes in and Near Palm Springs. The program will cover Joshua Tree National Park, the Mecca Hills, the Orocopia Mountain Wilderness, the Palm Springs Indian Canyons and the Santa Rosa/San Jacinto Mountain National Monument. Philip has hiked the American and Canadian West for over 35 years. He specializes in the greater Palm Springs area, as well as Southern Utah and Colorado’s Front Range. He has written ten books, seven regional best sellers and one nationally acclaimed title. He is a noted hiking guide, public speaker and the founder of Transformation Seminars. See his web site at www.philipferranti.com. (See related photo on Page 10.)

Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands (California St. exit off 10 Fwy)

Palm and Pine
A publication of the San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club
Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

Volume 40 Number 1
Protect America’s Environment For Our Families For Our Future
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2010

For many years our State Parks and Wildlife Preserves have suffered continuous budget cuts. Deferred main-tenance has climbed to more than a billion dollars. This year even more drastic cuts have resulted in partial closures of State Parks and many state wildlife habitat preserves.

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Perhaps worse, in the long term, is inadequate main-tenance. This is obvious when run-down restrooms, shabby campgrounds, overgrown trails, and a lack of ranger activities make a visit to a State Park a less than satisfying experience.

Other problems threaten the ecological viability of our Parks even more. Invasion by non-native plants pushes out threatened and endangered plant and animal species, which are found in large numbers in our Parks and Wildlife Preserves. Inadequate patrols result in highly destructive and

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Sierra Club, California Wilderness Coalition, and Northwest Wilderness and Parks Conference are the principal planning organizations, and also represented on the planning committee are The Wilderness Society, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Desert Survivors, Audubon California, Tuleyome, and Californians for Western Wildness. Although the event will take place in California’s San Francisco Bay Area, wilderness organizations and advocates from all twelve western states, including Alaska, are involved, and wild lands advocates from all those states are enthusiastically invited to participate in this grand event.

Check the conference website: www.westernwildness.org

Here are the main goals of Western Wilderness Conference 2010:

• To launch and promote (for those already launched) at least one dozen new wilderness campaigns throughout the West.
• To inspire interested new advocates to help preserve our nation’s remaining wild places.
• To re-inspire long-time dedicated wilderness advocates to vigorously new advocacy with renewed motivations, based in part on changing prospects for the Western and even the global environment.
• To offer a forum for discussion and debate about timely wilderness-related topics, particularly as they relate to changes noticed or anticipated due to global warming. For example:
  – How does climate change re-prioritize efforts to set aside undeveloped land from urban/residential/industrial/recreational development?
  – How can a “Resilient Habitats” initiative be used to establish broad connected protected wildlife habitat corridors to facilitate movements of wildlife affected by changing climate?
  – How much human interference is justified within designated wilderness to mitigate impacts on wildlife of changing climates?

• To involve like-minded land management agency personnel and share concerns and solutions about managing wildlands in an age of global warming;
• To explore topics not traditionally included in wilderness discussions.

For example:
  – How to involve new communities, such as westerners of Hispanic or Asian background, in wilderness efforts;
  – How to incorporate the traditional land ethic and historic cultural values of Native Americans into wilderness discussions and wilderness proposals;
  – How to get attention to a new area of wilderness: ocean wilderness – protecting significant marine reserves offshore – because our oceans and their wildlife are gravely threatened;
  – To highlight the historical background of land-preservation efforts, to remind us of a new generation of advocates of the important work that came before them and the rich tradition on which they can build the future.

To work with Quiet Recreation groups to empower them to assert positively the rights of quiet recreationists over motorized users in potential wilderness areas.

To promote programs to connect children to Nature; to get children outside into wild places!

To promote and publicize “green business” efforts.

To offer training sessions for activists to help them become more effective advocates for land preservation.

And to have fun! Speakers, plenary sessions, workshops, music, meals, outings! It’s all part of the celebration of the West’s wild places. Berkeley, California. April 8–11, 2010.

Who’s invited: Long-time wilderness advocates, both professionals and volunteers, as well as new advocates; Native American leaders, academic and agency personnel, outings leaders, individuals, representatives of organizations working on quiet recreation and on varied types of land-preservation efforts, decision makers at different levels of government. We will conduct special outreach to attract college students and members of minority communities and organizations, such as National Hispanic Environmental Council.

Where will they come from: geographic focus is California, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Wyoming, with outreach as well to Western Canada and Mexico.

April 8–11, 2010, at the University of California, Berkeley.

Save the date now! For anyone who cares about the wild places of the West – this is the one event not to miss!

Note: Our San Gorgonio Chapter is an official sponsor of this conference.

Western Wilderness Conference 2010

Palm and Pine

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There is a membership coupon in this issue. You can also contact the Membership Chair (see Chapter Executive Committee Directory this issue) or the Sierra Club office in San Francisco (415) 977-5663.

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Volunteers who enjoy fundraising activities and working with people, call the chapter at 951-684-6203 or contact Rick Estes at rickestes92595@gmail.com for our 2010 activities.

Palm and Pine Advertising
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E-mail copy directly to palmpine@att.net
Send payment to Sierra Club, San Gorgonio Chapter,
4079 Mission Inn Ave, Riverside, CA 92501. Please note that payment is for Palm and Pine advertising and make Attn: Ladd Seekins. Payment must be received by treasurer prior to deadline. Allow at least two (2) weeks.

Preserve The Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering the Sierra Club in your will.

There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter. For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

John Calaway
Director, Gift Planning
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 993-4270
planned.giving@sierraclub.org

S
the county area outside the Town of Apple Valley. You can view the draft EIR at the San
with parcels ranging from 5, 20 and 40 acres to 3,114 residential units on 1,557 acres in
Hacienda at Fairview Valley Project:

change the quality of life for many in the Victor Valley. Perhaps not for the better:
by 100 volunteers. Please continue to write your letters to the OHMVR commission and
OHV trespass and destruction of the recent National Public Lands Day clean up efforts
an historical site in Wonder Valley was invaded over the Thanksgiving weekend with
some BLM "limited use" lands. There was one lone BLM "limited use" sign that said
this staging began miles before the entry to the OPEN Area, on private property and
thousands of people camping and riding every imaginable OHV all around. Trouble is,
see the calendar section.

Uncontrolled off road riding continues to damage public and private lands throughout
the desert. I visited Stoddard Valley OHV open area on the Friday of Thanksgiving
weekend. Entering via Stoddard Wells Road from Apple Valley, I found hundreds, if not
tons of people camping and riding every imaginable OHV all around. Trouble is,
this began staging miles before the entry to the OPEN Area, on private property and
some BLM "limited use" lands. There was one lone BLM "limited use" sign that said
"no camping" and "no country travel" which was totally ignored. The only evidence
of the actual entry to the Open area was a white carbonate marker which proclaimed the
"Open Area Boundary." Stoddard Wells Road, as far as I can tell is a street legal
vehicle only county road, but every type of vehicle with drivers of all ages were speeding
up and down this road, with a terrific amount of dust obscuring one’s vision. Once in

the Open Area boundary, although the traffic on Stoddard Valley Road continued, there
was a significant decrease of camping/staging! On Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, I led
a hike into Arroyo Canyon and there noted several groups of motorcycle riders on every
open and closed routes, doing illegal hillclimbs, and creating new trails. I just heard that
an historical site in Wonder Valley was invaded over the Thanksgiving weekend with
OHV trespass and destruction of the recent National Public Lands Day clean up efforts
by 100 volunteers. Please continue to write your letters to the OHMVR commission and
also to the new National BLM Director, Mr. Bob Abbey, Director, Bureau of Land
Management, 1849 C St, NW, Room 5655, Washington, DC 20240 about these and any

The family requests not to make a donation in Grady’s memory to the SC foundation
or his home group.

T
he Mojave Group looks forward to see some good winter hiking in the desert, and
our Outings Chair continues to include some Youth in the Desert hikes. Please
see the calendar section.

Grady Parks, a long-time member of the Los Serranos Group, died on Friday,
November 27, 2009, after a long battle with cancer. He had a wonderful sense of
humor; he was always ready with a good comeback or a joke and — oh, how he enjoyed
a good debate! He was well read on a myriad of subjects, although his favorite reading
subjects were the Civil War, Genealogy, and Biblical History.

A widower, he was a dedicated “papa” to his three sons, six granddaughters and one
grandson. He had a towering presence, a dapper mustache, and an enviable head of
white hair. He was easily recognized by his wide suspenders. He was always ready to
help a friend in need at the drop of the hat. Grady was not only an avid hiker, but also a
long time Excom member and as an over ten years "Treasurer, "a conscientious keeper of
LSG finances.” He was such a good
two friendly, kind, considerate — a very special man. He was a
dear man. I remember Grady as a
wonderful, steady person, ExComm member, and an avid hiker. Another attribute was his glorious singing voice to
add to LSG musical programs.

Memorial services for this former Marine were held at the Riverside National
Cemetery on December 29, 2009. Due to
this time of war, the service was short and
held in a shelter at the cemetery.
Grady’s friends who contributed their memories to this article were Letty French,
Mary Ann Ruiz, Karen Chapman, Doris
Aschke and Marian Nichols. He was truly a “treasurer” and will be missed by Sierra Club
members, Los Serranos Group members, and Audubon Society members.
This article was composed by Doris Aschke [dorinsicucat@charter.net], and Marian Nichols [marianinupland@hotmail.com].
The family requests not to make a donation in Grady’s memory to the SC foundation
or his home group.

In August the Group gathered at Shady Cove Group Campground for its annual summer
car camp. Members set up camp on Friday and enjoyed a campfire after dark. On
Saturday four people hiked a 9-mile round trip on the Exploration Trail from the bottom.
Back at camp, after a Group ExCom meeting, more people arrived for our potluck dinner
and remained until after dark to attend the campfire. On Sunday those who stayed overnight
feasted on pancakes in the morning. After breaking camp, they walked the Children’s
Forest trail nearby.

On the first Saturday of October, Heather Sargeant led 17 people to the summit of
Sugarloaf Mountain (elev. 9,952). The trail from the north side passes through green
riparian areas before ascending the drier upper slope. We had a rest stop when we reached
the ridge where the trail joins with two others leading to the peak. As we started on the
trail to the summit, we passed by several magnificent, large, old Western Juniper trees.
Then we saw some unusually large Mountain Mahogany trees, some growing out of
rock outcropping. The trail seemed to go on forever, dipping down into a saddle before
the last climb to the top. To make it more challenging, walking along a large portion of
this upper section was like navigating a dried streambed, filled with golf ball sized rocks.
After we got to the summit for lunch. The descent on the rough upper portion of the trail
was a bit tedious. The weather was clear, cool and windy. It was quite agreeable. When
we got to the bottom, we saw large clouds of smoke over Baldwin Lake, smoke that was
drifting from a fire at Lytle Creek.

On the following Saturday, Bill Engs led a hike on the Pacific Crest Trail to Holcomb
Camp. Bill checked maintenance needs along the four miles to Holcomb Creek.
The weather was pleasant. We had lunch along the creek and noticed a generous flow of
water. We found yellow Rabbit Brush, red California Fuchsia and purple Mountain Asters
still in bloom.

Then on the next Saturday, Billie Wolff led a group along the Pacific Crest Trail in the
other direction to Devil’s Hole. Again the weather was pleasant and we enjoyed splendid
views of yellow foliage on trees bordering Deep Creek below.

In November Billie led a hike up and down the Exploration Trail on Keller Peak. The
trail was constructed by young people of the Children’s Forest and is a favorite hike for
the Mountains Group. Seventeen hikers showed up to enjoy a beautiful day. Happy voices

Los Serranos Group
by Doris Aschke and Marian Nichols
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Mountain Group
by Dave Barrie

The County of San Bernardino, County of Los Angeles, and the Cities of Adelanto,
Victorville, Apple Valley, Lancaster, and Palmdale have formed a Joint Power Authority
(JPA) to develop a new freeway/expressway from SR14 to I-15. The City of Victorville
has received federal funds to develop a portion of this corridor from US395 to H15 and on
through to SR18 and preliminary engineering and environmental studies are underway.
Visit the City of Victorville website for details. (http://ci.victorville.ca.us/Site/
CityServices.aspx?id=310). The JPA will combine the many separate efforts currently
underway into one combined project. Status of the project can be found on the web at
http://www.sbcounty.gov/jpw/transp/High_desert_corridor.asp and by attending
a variety of public and technical advisory meetings and JPA board meetings (to
be announced?). The High Desert Corridor/E220 is officially designated in Section 1305
of SAFETEA-LU (money available to provide for truck parking-see below) as a High Priority
Corridor on the National Highway System from Los Angeles to Las Vegas via Palmdale
and Victorville.

One site I visited suggested that Victorville’s work on the section that would run
through Apple Valley might start as soon as 2012. This would make a freeway connecting
I-15 to I-15 to Hw 18 near Dead Man’s Point. This looks more and more like a freeway
to accommodate ever increasing truck traffic through our communities, and less and less
like a project that will ease congestion for the commuter and local traffic. I find no
evidence to evaluate alternatives for moving goods such as rail, even though there seem
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January–February 2010

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evidence to evaluate alternatives for moving goods such as rail, even though there seem
to be railway corridors that might be used.
The Riverside County Planning Commission approved the Villages of Lakeview Specific Plan 342 at their December 2 meeting with a vote of 4-1. The only no vote was from Commissioner John Roth who represents District 1, Supervisor Bob Buster’s district. Complaining that they had been criticized for holding five public hearings on the project, the four commission members, who voted yes on the project, touted the attention to detail and quality of design of the project by Lewis Operating Corp. The chair of the commission chided the public for complaining that the county planning department had not advocated for the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. After all, housing densities had been reduced by 200 units for the portion of the “planned” community on the southern boundary of the SJWA. Yes, 1,785 units as opposed to 1,985 units is quite a reduction and a sacrifice on the developer’s part.

The Villages of Lakeview project proposes to build approximately 10,000 residential units in the communities of Lakeview and Nuevo. Approximately 1,800 units are planned on the southern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA), a 19,000 acre Department of Fish & Game facility. The SJWA is a cornerstone reserve in the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan reserve system which is, in theory, supposed to preserve and protect the county’s threatened and endangered species in perpetuity.

The major concerns regarding this project have always been its location next to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, the high density of dwelling units in the area next to the SJWA and the Ramona Expressway, and the need to plan compatible, transitional land uses next to the wilderness area. Riverside County set up the MSCHP to set aside lands to preserve the county’s rare and endangered species and still allow development. Apparently, having high density developments next to the MSCHP reserves is not a problem, is good planning and should be encouraged.

Light pollution, air pollution, damage to wildlife areas lands which would harm rare and endangered plant and animal species, building adjacent to the flood plain of the San Jacinto River, collapseable soils, and loss of prime agricultural lands, economic viability of the project are some of the other concerns regarding this project. The alteration of the existing rural communities of Lakeview and Nuevo by dropping 10,000 residential units into this rural area is another major concern.

One of the new issues revealed in the public hearing process was the county planning director’s presentation of the Lakeview Nuevo area became a new city in the future. The map displayed at one of the public hearings outlined a future new city and it included wildlife area lands. Not answered satisfactorily were concerns about lack of local jobs, inadequate roads, air quality, availability water, light pollution, feral animals, and illegal entry by residents (and their motorized toys), destroying the rural atmosphere in the communities of Lakeview and Nuevo. Also missing were transitional, compatible land uses adjacent to the homes and ranches of those who have lived in Lakeview and Nuevo for many years.

Community members from Lakeview and Nuevo, George Hague for the Sierra Club, Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley made comments at the public hearings and asked the commission to reject the project. Only one person (a developer) spoke in favor at the December 2nd hearing. A public hearing on the Villages of Lakeview project was scheduled to be held before the Riverside County Board of Supervisors on December 15, 2009.

Aendas for the Riverside County Board of Supervisor meetings can be found at: http://rivcocob.com/board-agendas/

Project planner is Matt Straite, Riverside County Planning Department at (951) 955-8631. You can e-mail the Moreno Valley Group at: movallgroup@yahoo.com or the Friends at: northfriends@northfriends.org if you would like more information.

If you would like to make a donation to help fight this project, make your check payable to the Sierra Club. Your donation will be used only for the expenses related to fighting this project. No amount is too small. Mail your check to the Sierra Club; P.O. Box 1325; Moreno Valley, Ca 92563-1325. If you wish to have your donation remain anonymous, please indicate that and we will respect your wishes. Thank you for your help.

The Moreno Valley Group held their executive committee elections last fall and the excom members for 2010 are: Chair, Mike Millsphaugh; Conservation Chair, George Hague; Secretary, Ann McKibben; Membership, Theresa Carson; Treasurer, Ellen Absher. There are a number of ‘issue’ positions open: Fundraising Chair, Program Chair, Volunteer Coordinator, Environmental Justice, Parks/Refuges, Waste, and Wetlands. Anyone interested in volunteering for our group can e-mail us at: movallgroup@yahoo.com or call George Hague at (951) 924-0816.

Outings Chair Theresa Carson and outings leader Dan Clark have planned some fun hikes and outings for the new year. There is a Mount Russell Hike on January 1, Conditioning Hikes on January 27, a Full Moon Hike on January 31. To see the complete schedule, please check the group web site at: http://sangorgonio.sierraboard.org/moreno-valley/index.html and the January February issue of the Palm & Pine. You can also contact Theresa at: (951) 660-7246 or tcarson22@msn.com and Dan Clark at (951) 924-2454 or dancliek@roadrunner.com

The Moreno Valley Group is looking for a volunteer to organize an effort to collect signatures for the State Parks initiative which we hope will be on the ballot in November. Please call George Hague at (951) 924-0816 for more information.

Chapter needs a volunteer from the Moreno Valley Group to help chair project Rick Estes develop fundraising projects for the Chapter. Call George Hague at (951) 924-0816 if you can help.

Due to state budget cuts, the hours and days of operation for Lake Perris State Recreation Area (LPSRA) have changed. From November 1, 2009, through March 31, 2010, the park will be open Thursday through Monday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. only. It will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, and no camping Monday through Wednesday. Please call LPSRA at (951) 940-5600 if you have questions. Please call the Ya’i’eki’ Regional Indian Museum at LPSRA at (951) 940-5656 for their new hours.

The city of Moreno Valley released the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the West Ridge Commerce Center (formerly the Ridge Property Trust project) on October 1, 2009. A public scoping meeting was held on October 28, 2009. The city has the NOP at their web site: http://www.moreno-valley.ca.us/ There is no information on when the draft environmental impact report will be issued. For more information contact Planner Jeff Bradshaw at (951) 413-3224. Also, there is no new information on the ProLogs Project, a 2 million square feet warehouse project proposed between Moreno Beach Drive and the Quincy Channel on the south edge of Highway 60. Planner for the project is Jeff Bradshaw at (951) 413-3224.

The city of Moreno Valley has already approved the 1.8 million square foot Highland Fairview Corporate Center (between Redlands Boulevard and Theodore Street). The Sierra Club has sued the city over the project. Project planner for the Highland Fairview project is Mark<br>
CALENDAR SYMBOOLS
D DAILY: Monday through Friday (or specified days)


F FESTIVALS: Carnival, St. Patrick's Day, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Eid-Al-Fitr, Eid-Al-Adha, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve

M MEETINGS: General meeting, newsletter meeting, board meeting, committee meeting, chapter meeting, regional convention, national convention, state convention

O OUTINGS: Hike, climb, bike, paddle, run, etc.

F FUNDRAISERS: Auction, raffle, sale, gala, fundraiser, benefit

P PUBLICATIONS: Newsletter, magazine, book, report, Web site

R RECREATION: Camping, paddling, hiking, cycling, skiing, etc.

W WORKSHOPS: Seminar, workshop, class, training, education

Special Events: Art exhibits, theater, concerts, festivals, fairs, parades, pageants, carnivals, etc.

CALENDAR OF OUTINGS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER EVENTS
JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2010

January 5 (MON) 7:00 PM LOS SERRANOS GROUP MEETING

January 6 (TUE) 7:00 PM SAN GORGONIO CHAPTER EXCOM MEETING

January 7 (WED) 7:00 PM SANTA MARGARITA GROUP MEETING

January 9 (THU) 9:00 AM SANTA ROSA ECOTOURISM COMMITTEE

January 10 (FRI) 6:00 PM RIVERSIDE MT. RUBIDOUX ONE HOUR FITNESS WALK

January 11 (SAT) 9:00 AM HIDDEN SPRINGS CONDITIONING HIKE

January 11 (SAT) 9:00 AM CALICO PEAK AREA HIKE

January 11 (SAT) 9:00 AM SAINT JUDE HOLIDAY WALK

January 11 (SAT) 9:00 AM MONTE CASSINO WINTER HIKE

January 13 (TUE) 7:00 PM MEETING COMMITTEE

January 13 (TUE) 7:00 PM CHAPTER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

January 13 (TUE) 7:00 PM poursuit et de comment les sites de laboratoire pour suivre l'activité des animaux. Le biologistes peuvent ainsi préciser l'importance de ces sites et pouvoir évaluer l'impact de différentes activités humaines sur l'environnement. Les scientifiques utilisent des outils sophistiqués comme la géolocalisation et la biologie moléculaire pour comprendre les écosystèmes marins et leur fonctionnement. Les données collectées dans ces études contribuent à la compréhension des systèmes naturels et à la prise de décisions éclairées pour la conservation et la gestion durable des ressources marines. Ces recherches sont essentielles pour assurer la pérennité des océans et pour les générations futures.
**FEBRUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 21**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 8 – FEBRUARY 14**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 15 – FEBRUARY 21**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 7**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 8 – FEBRUARY 14**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 15 – FEBRUARY 21**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 7**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 8 – FEBRUARY 14**

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**FEBRUARY 15 – FEBRUARY 21**

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**FEBRUARY 8 – FEBRUARY 14**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

**FEBRUARY 15 – FEBRUARY 21**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings. (Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)
**FEBRUARY 22 – FEBRUARY 28**

Please read "LIABILITY WAIVER" preceding these listings.

(Also refer to Weekly Reoccurring Outings & Activities)

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**MAR 2 (THUR)**

SB MOUNTAINS GROUP

**3-8 PM**

MEETING

The public is welcome. MEET: Sycamore Canyon Parking Area on the south side of Central Ave. Between Canyon Crest Drive & the 215 Freeway. RECORDED IN ORCHESTRA

**3-7 PM**

SAN GORGonio GROUP

**PROJECT PROGRAM. See for more information.** Always an interesting evening to catch up on the latest news & developments of the board. MEET: 3rd Floor at 401 E Indian St. 92588. RECORDED IN ORCHESTRA

**6-7:45 AM**

GHOST TOWN EXPLORATION

Come with us to this spectacular landscape near Death Valley to visit the historic miners’ town. MEET at 8:00 AM at the intersection of State 178 & State 190. MEET at 7:30 AM.
Continued from Page 7 . . .

JAN 3 (TUE) 4:30 PM RIVERSIDE CONTRA DANCE DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  PACIFIC RIM FOLK SOCIETY BUILDING 2343 E. Nopal St., Riverside. LEADER: STEVE FREEDER & SUE NASH. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 5 (THU) 6:30 PM Marvelous Monthly Film Festival: Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour INDOOR DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SAN GORGONIO WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION 17738 Francesca, Victorville 7 p.m. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 6 (FRI) 6:30 PM SAN GORGONIO WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION 17738 Francesca, Victorville 7 p.m. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 8 (SUN) 10:40 AM INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  UC RIVERSIDE FOLK DANCE CLUB SALVADOR JIMENEZ 951-788-5229 11100 Magnolia, Riverside. LEADER: THOMAS HAYASHI. INFO: CHRISTY FLOYD-MACLEAN <mccollom@verizon.net> Miles McDonald Folk Dance Workshop Website: <http://www.hayashikids.com/milesmcdonald.html>

JAN 9 (TUE) 4:30 PM JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA BIRD WALK BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT UC RIVERSIDE BIRDING CLUB 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 10 (WED) 6:30 PM INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  UC RIVERSIDE FOLK DANCE CLUB SALVADOR JIMENEZ 951-788-5229 11100 Magnolia, Riverside. LEADER: THOMAS HAYASHI. INFO: CHRISTY FLOYD-MACLEAN <mccollom@verizon.net> Miles McDonald Folk Dance Workshop Website: <http://www.hayashikids.com/milesmcdonald.html>

JAN 12 (FRI) 4:30 PM RIVERSIDE CONTRA DANCE DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  PACIFIC RIM FOLK SOCIETY BUILDING 2343 E. Nopal St., Riverside. LEADER: STEVE FREEDER & SUE NASH. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 14 (SUN) 9:00 AM SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 16 (TUE) 4:30 PM RIVERSIDE CONTRA DANCE DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  PACIFIC RIM FOLK SOCIETY BUILDING 2343 E. Nopal St., Riverside. LEADER: STEVE FREEDER & SUE NASH. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 18 (THU) 4:30 PM SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 20 (SAT) 3:30 PM SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 22 (MON) 9:00 AM SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 24 (WED) 9:00 AM SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 26 (FRI) 4:30 PM RIVERSIDE CONTRA DANCE DANCE NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  PACIFIC RIM FOLK SOCIETY BUILDING 2343 E. Nopal St., Riverside. LEADER: STEVE FREEDER & SUE NASH. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>

JAN 28 (SUN) 3:30 PM SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST BIRDING NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENT  SJWA BLUEBIRD BREAKFAST 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. LEADER: BRIAN WELLS. INFO: SANDY GOSSELIN <sandygosselin@riversideca.gov> Riverside Folk Dance Club Website: <http://bees.ucr.edu/riversidedance/cdclink.html>
ranged out through the forest as the group hiked up the trail. At the top near the Children’s Forest, the group broke for lunch before starting back down to the starting point.

On November 21st Bill led the Fall Lake Gregory bird walk. Seven of twelve people came up from the valley below. We identified 25 species—excellent for this time of year. Unexpected were sightings of a Red-breasted Sapsucker and a Bald Eagle.

On October 24th we participated in the 350.org International Day of Action. Also participating were three other local environmental groups. Our Energy Chair, Sue Walker, organized the 350 Climate Rally and Walk (around Lake Gregory in Crestline) [see photo below], connecting with 350.org and inviting State and local officials to join us. Those officials were noticeable by their absence. We did have a letter from Jerry Lewis to share. Sue did a great job organizing the event (one of more than 5200 worldwide) and Bob Sherman and Steve Farrell provided information about climate change and how it could affect our local environment.

And while I’m naming names, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Mountains Group Excom for another year of outstanding service. Well done! Bill Engs, Steve Farrell, Marta Hethmon, Sherry Noone, Bob Sherman, and Sue Walker! Also needing special mention are the tireless efforts of Heather Sargeant, making sure that the Mountains Group has the funding it needs to fight the good fight here in our mountains. She sells calendars (lots of calendars) and oversees the Mountains Group crew at The Thrift Shoppe in Blue Jay, slowing down only to lead outings. Heather was ably assisted at the Thrift Shoppe in 2009 by Maria Campos, Marta Hethmon, Marti Machwinney, Jack Witt, Crystal Riseley, Nancy Taylor, Frank Ellis, Paula Day, Francis Zeitmeier and Billie Wolf. Thanks to you all!

2010 looks to be a challenging year for our Group and we are looking forward to it! Bill Engs provided Outings information for this report.

Tahquitz Group
by Joan Taylor and Buford Crites, Vice Chair, Friends of the Desert Mtns.

Sand to Snow National Monument: Where Southern California and Northern California Meet

It’s been a long trek up from Baja along the spine of the Peninsular Ranges with the desert always far below to the east. Finally, in the last 24 hours I’ve dropped a mind-numbing eight thousand feet in elevation off the icy flanks of Mount San Jacinto down to hot sands and biting winds in San Gorgonio Pass. Getting a quick drink at Snow Creek then crossing under Interstate 10, in a few more miles I’ll finally make it back to blissful running water and shade at Whitewater River.

Who am I, and where am I bound? I could be one of hundreds of Pacific Crest Trail “thru hikers” on their way from Mexico to Canada every spring, trying to navigate this daunting stretch of the great trail in the narrow window of opportunity when the winter snow along mountain ridges has the melted enough to be passable, but before the desert stretches become unbearably hot. Or I could just as likely be a mountain lion, a bear, a pocket mouse, or one of many wild creatures that for millennia have moved back and forth between the Peninsular Ranges, which start in Baja California, and the Transverse Ranges which create the great Mojave Desert of upper California. Many diverse species depend for their long-term health on the transmission of genetic material in this way from one population to the next, and San Gorgonio stands as the highest peak in Southern California, and it feeds the perennial streams of Whitewater River, Mission Creek, and Big Morongo and Little Morongo Creeks.

Rugged and trackless, the upper reaches of northe, Whitewater River have hundred foot high waterfalls, with dramatic terrain and vegetation reminiscent of Nepal for the intrepid few who venture there. On the southern slopes of the San Gorgonio Wilderness you’ll find some of the finest big game habitat in the state.

Through the center of the proposed national monument runs the ecotone between the Sonoran and Mojave deserts, namely, the Big Morongo Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Big Morongo ACEC is not only one of the best birding areas in California, it constitutes the critical wildlife link to Joshua Tree National Park. Thus, the Sand to Snow ties the Peninsular Range ecosystem to not only the Transverse Ranges but also to the great Mojave Desert. Encompassing approximately 162,000 acres with over 90% conservation ownership, creation of the Sand to Snow Monument will bring permanent protection and visibility to an evolutionary hotspot and an area of remarkable biological diversity and scenic beauty.

Earth Share of California

One Environment . . .
One Simple Way to Care for it.

Join us in protecting the future by doing your share today.

How can you choose between the eagle and the buffalo? Between the elephants and the whales?

Between drinking clean water and breathing clean air? Between parks and beaches? How can you choose? Would there be a right choice?

Now there’s a way to help not just one, but all these things. It’s called Earth Share of California – the world’s leading environmental and conservation charities working together.

Through Earth Share of California you can make a one-time gift, or a payroll deduction donation that helps every day to preserve and protect the environment – locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Earth Share is not part of your employer’s workplace giving campaign? We’d like to do something about that. Call Ladd Seekins at 909-488-0161 weekdays or 909-825-4427 evenings and weekends. Address e-mail to lwfladd@eee.org.
Not even half the major natural areas of the United States are currently represented in the National Park System. Further, most of our national parks are located in the West, not easily available to much of our population. The Sierra Club proposes establishing national parks to represent each of the rest of the nation’s ecoregions. That way people will not have to travel long distances to experience and enjoy national parks. By expanding our system of national parks we can save fossil fuels and reduce our carbon footprint. For example, how about establishing a tallgrass-prairie national park? In addition to preserving a sample of a vanishing and neglected—and historically important—ecosystem, and creating park access in a region now without national parks, it would provide a unique research location for the ecology of this ecoregion and the ecological threats to it.

National parks should also be models of energy efficiency, of places we can live in harmony with our natural world. Facilities in national parks should be net-zero consumers of electricity, using solar and (when properly designed and located) wind to produce the energy the parks need. People should be able to experience the wonders of national parks that do not generate climate-changing gases.

National parks are also excellent places to learn about the natural world. In Great Smoky Mountains National Park, for example, about 12,000 species are known, and an all-taxa inventory is expected to bring this number up to around 100,000, many not previously known. Such studies should be expanded to all parks, including parks that need to be added to the system, so that we learn about all the places we live. National parks should reach out to our schools and colleges to demonstrate how the natural world affects our lives. The Internet and robo-cams can be used to allow us to visit our national parks 24/7.

The largest source of diesel emissions in the United States is the National Park System. The Sierra Club proposes eliminating the need for our national parks to generate climate-changing gases.

In exchange for this small fee increase, California vehicles would be allowed free Day Use entry to our State Parks and Wildlife Preserves. Since entry often costs more than the fee, and since many Californians visit a State Park or Beach more than once a year, this is a very fair exchange.

This measure will only appear on the ballot if hundreds of volunteers around the state gather signatures between now and April. The San Gorgonio Chapter has set a goal of 2000 signatures and we need your help to achieve our goal.

Please email Kim Floyd San Gorgonio, Chapter Conservation Chair, at kmfloyd@yahoo.com today, and sign up as a volunteer to gather signatures. Please send your contact information and city of residence. With your participation, California voters will restore our State Park System as the Nation’s best. Thanks for your help.

According to information from the California Air Resources Board, the Inland Empire has the worst air pollution in California. The largest source of diesel emissions in the South Coast Air Basin, which includes Riverside and San Bernardino counties, is the goods-movement industry and its associated warehouse distribution centers. Riverside County is the first in the nation for asthma, heart disease and respiratory ailments.

The city of Moreno Valley Recreational Trails Board is sponsoring a “Hike to Terri Peak” on Saturday, January 23, 2010. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Landmark Middle School, 15261 Legendary Drive, Moreno Valley. Please call (951) 413-3702 to confirm all information on the walk. The Recreational Trails Board sponsors approximately five hikes throughout the year in Moreno Valley.

As the new year starts, there are many wonderful opportunities to see migrating and overwintering birds of prey, waterfowl and shorebirds at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. So pull out your binoculars and hiking boots and take time to come visit the wildlife. The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley nature walks at the SJWA can be found at their web site at www.northfriends.org. In the meantime, if you plan to visit the wildlife area this winter, please remember that there is waterfowl hunting at the wildlife area through February 6. Wetland areas are closed on those days. Hunting is allowed at all state-run wildlife areas and hunting fees help support the acquisition of wildlife habitat throughout the state of California. Please call the wildlife area office during normal business hours (6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) at (951) 928-0580 for more information. Due to State Furfough Days at the SJWA, their office is closed the first, second, and third Friday of the month and the schedule is subject to change. Please allow ample time for staff to return your calls. The wildlife area is north of the Ramona Expressway in Lakeside. Please Do Not Drive on Davis Road if it is muddy or wet.

The Moreno Valley Group has many ideas to follow, and we are looking for more volunteers. Any amount of time you could contribute would be appreciated. For more information on group meetings and volunteering with the Moreno Valley Group, contact Ann McKibben at (951) 924-8150, Theresa Carson, (951) 242-4752 or George Hague at (951) 924-8106 or mail us at: mvvalleygroup@yahoo.com.

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

— John Muir, 1901
Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

ANGELES CHAPTER TRIPS IN 2010
CA’s Channel Islands are Galapagos USA! Marvel at the sight of whales, seals, sea lions, rare birds & blazing wildflowers. Hike the wild, windswept trails. Kayak the rugged coastline. Snorkel in pristine waters. Discover remnants of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. These 3 & 4-day “live aboard” fundraiser cruises are sponsored by Angeles Chapter Political Committee. Depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68-foot Truth. The fee ($590 for May and Sep; $785 for Jul & Aug) includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks & beverages, plus the services of a range/ naturalist who will travel with us to lead hikes on each island and point out interesting features. To make a reservation mail a $100 check payable to Sierra Club to leaders: Joan Jones Holtz & Don Holtz, 11826 The Wye St, El Monte, CA 91732. Contact leaders for more information (626-443-0706; joholtzhln@aol.com) or www.truthaquatics.com

May 7-9; Jul 16-19; Aug 6-9; Sep 10-12

Photo: Joan Holtz

Mojave Group. Continued from Page 3

Mojave Group and PCTA

The Mojave Group outings leaders continue to offer some lovely hikes along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. If you like longer hikes, you have probably enjoyed some with Terrence McCorkle. Those of you who prefer shorter, flatter hikes would like those offered by Melody Nichols. However, we don’t just hike the PCT. Thanks to our Outings Chair Melody Nichols, the Mojave Group is once again partnering with the Pacific Crest Trail Association. Melody has organized outings which encourage us to participate with trail work (see photo below) along Section C. This year we have helped with trail work (mostly tread) in the section between Little Horsefret/Canyon north towards I-15. Many of us love to hike the trail and we are especially lucky in the Victor Valley to have so many trailheads within an hours drive. We can be in the trees near Baldwin Lake or in the rocky Deep Creek Canyon, or hiking above Summit Valley through chaparral near Lake Silverwood or in the trees and mountains near Wrightwood. We are also working on a project to treat the extensive graffiti along the path in Deep Creek Canyon. Instead of using paint, which requires some expert mixing to get just the right color for each rock, and which provides a nice new canvas for more graffiti, we are developing a system using local mud. This seems to be having some success in our dry climate, with some rocks still having an almost imperceptible mud coat 2 years later. While this is not a solution for all rocks along the PCT, we think it may just work in our section, and we will be continuing this experiment throughout the winter months into the spring. For details contact Jenny at JenOlsen@aol.com or 760 220 0730. Other “trail angels” who are authorized to do tread work along the trail, sometimes work individually, like Frank Trujillo from Wrightwood and our friends with the Llamas, Marion and Ray Davison. Countless others pick up trash along the way and remove fallen debris. Even just hiking along the trail with your family and friends helps to keep the PCT in good shape! See you on the trail!

Friends of Juniper Flats

In 2003 a group formed of concerned residents, land owners and people who like to visit the public lands known as the Juniper Flats Area (many of whom are Mojave Group members). The reason for the group is to help recognize and care for the numerous resources that are found in the area. The Willow Fire burned intensely through the area in 1999 devastating landscape. Resources include numerous seeps and springs that are essential for wildlife, the willful itself, the fabulous views, as well as cultural resources. The area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and is sandwiched between Apple Valley and the San Bernardino National Forest. Today, we have a number of volunteers who work with the BLM, Barstow Office. We monitor the condition of the resources and give regular reports to the BLM. Numerous recreational and business pursuits threaten the integrity of resources in the area. These activities include mining, cattle grazing, transmission lines, communication towers, wind energy projects, target shooting, and off-road vehicle play. During the years that we have been monitoring the area, at least 4 OHV play tracks have been illegally created, and miles and miles of illegal trails are now evident, many of which impact the seeps and springs. In addition to reporting these illegal acts to the BLM, Friends of Juniper Flats volunteers clean up trash & shooting areas, rake fresh off the route vehicle tracks, fix cut fences and provide photos for the BLM. We gather information about the flora and fauna we find in the area, publish brochures about popular hikes, and a quarterly newsletter. As Site Stewards we monitor and report on the condition of cultural sites in the Juniper Flats Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Currently, there are no designated hiking trails in the area, but it is never the less a beautiful place to hike, picnic and...
watch wildlife. There are numerous hills to climb and clusters of large boulders to explore. Check out some of our photos on the Yahoo flickr site: http://www.flickr.com/photos/25273386@N08/collections/7215767706631919. / The area provides an expansive of open space for varied interests including horseback riding, rock climbing, mountain biking, hunting, trail running, photography and 4x4 touring. It also serves as an entry gate to the world known Deep Creek Hot Springs. It also boasts some of the best wildflower displays near the Victor Valley. The area includes Round Mountain, which is listed on the Hundred Peaks Section of the Sierra Club. It is also the gateway for Luna Mountain and Rattlesnake Mountain just over the boundary in the San Bernardino National Forest. The roads are rough dirt and because of the maze of illegal routes, driving for the first time can be confusing. Once a month the Friends of Juniper Flats offer a hike, usually on a Saturday. We also do exploration hikes and monitoring hikes mostly during the week. We welcome you to join us. Contact Jenny Wilder, JensOasis@aol.com or call 760 220 0730. Even if you cannot come out with us to enjoy the area, please consider supporting us by becoming a paid member (only $5). Send contributions to Friends of Juniper Flats, P.O.Box 83, Apple Valley, CA 92307. We are a non profit 501(c) 3 organization with an emphasis on education, and all donations are tax deductible.

Motorsports Racetrack Near the Poppy Reserve
by Katherine Allen, Antelope Valley Group

The staff of the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission has recommended approval of a plan to build a motorsports racetrack next to Fairmont Butte, a mile and a half north of the California State Poppy Reserve in the Antelope Valley. There will be at least one more Commission hearing on the subject, and if approved, it will go to the LA County Board of Supervisors for approval of the required zoning change.

The racetrack could host high performance race vehicles 365 days a year. The noise will affect visitors to the Poppy Reserve, who come there to experience nature. A survey taken during the height of the poppy season indicated that many people would not return to the Reserve if there were a motor vehicle racetrack nearby, even more said that their visits would significantly decrease. Fewer visitors mean decreased revenue for the reserve, funds that are crucial during this time of budget cuts in California.

There are other problems with this project. It requires a zone change from residential/agricultural to industrial/commercial, which would open the door to more development that is incompatible with the rural nature of the area. It will have a negative impact on the property values of nearby residents, and would draw additional illegal off-road activity to the area.

Both this activity and the racetrack itself would destroy prime areas for wildflowers, negatively impact important prehistoric sites on Fairmont Butte, and disrupt a sensitive ecological area for birds of prey.

The next hearing is scheduled for February 6, 2010, 11 am -5 pm at the Regional Public Library, 601 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, CA. For more information and to find out where to write to support a “no” vote on this project, visit the Save the Poppy Reserve website at www.sio2.com/savethepoppyreserve.

Bear Flat Trail
by Aida Taracena

To become an Outings Leader, the Sierra Club has certain requirements that must be met. One of them is to lead two hikes under the supervision of an experienced Outings Leader. I would like to express my gratitude to Joe Whyte and Dean Shimek for mentoring me and for kindly giving their time to evaluate me as an outings leader. After recruiting my friends, without whom this hike would not have been possible, a BIG THANKS to all of you who came out to support me! I chose as my second supervised hike the trail to Bear Flat, an easy trail with a 1,200 foot elevation gain. Starting from Mt. Baldy Village and hiking up a rather steep road is the trailhead to Bear Flat. The trail follows a lovely stream that can be heard from the trail all the way to Bear Flat.

Sunday, November 8th, was a beautiful day and what better way to spend it than hiking? After passing the last cabins along the road, I saw Thad, a dog standing there in his front yard watching the hikers in our group pass him on the road. He suddenly start walking toward the trailhead. When we all gathered at the end of the trail, the dog, who by all accounts looked like he belonged to someone in our group, was receiving much love, attention and of course food from his fellow hikers. As I stood on the sideline watching this well behaved dog solicit food, using his innate ability to be adorably cute, it dawned on me that this was a routine that this extremely intelligent dog practiced frequently. I am convinced that he knew that his fellow hikers would snack at some point and that he would be able to leach food from them. As the hike leader, I thought that it would be appropriate for the dog to sign in, (I was, after all, being evaluated on my skills and everyone must sign in) so I walked over to the dog, grabbed his right leg, rubbed his paw in the dirt and put his paw print on the sign in sheet, which he did quite willingly. When our group descended from the trail, he parted with us and went back home.

I will always have fond memories of this day and I will be eternally grateful to my friends who came out to hike with me. We exercised, had fun, shared food, friendship and laughter in a beautiful forest. Who can ask for more? Keep hiking….life is full of surprises!

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