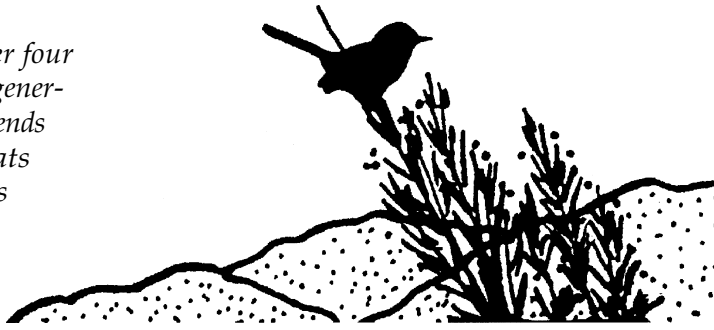


We publish this newsletter four times a year to inform the generous supporters and other friends of the Endangered Habitats League about our activities in the ecoregion.



ENDANGERED HABITATS LEAGUE NEWSLETTER

If you are not yet a member of the Endangered Habitats League, please join us in the ongoing effort to preserve and protect the Southern California ecoregion's irreplaceable plants, animals and places.

Conservation successes across the Ecoregion—San Diego, Orange & San Bernardino Counties

Proctor Valley parcels to be purchased—a conservation “dream come true”

In the early 1990's, the massive **Otay Ranch** development plan in southern **San Diego County** missed crucial opportunities to protect unique habitat lands. **Proctor Valley** was among the lands approved for development — its gentle terrain made this quintessential Southern California landscape susceptible to development. Vernal pools, coastal sage scrub, perennial grasslands, and oak woodlands—and endangered species such as the California gnatcatcher, quino checkerspot butterfly, and San Diego fairy shrimp—all contribute to its biological richness. Proctor Valley, totaling over 3,000 acres, is adjacent or nearby to San Diego's major conservation building blocks — the **Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)**, the **Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve**, and the **San Diego National Wildlife Refuge**. Proctor Valley is essential to complete the picture.

After years of quiet advocacy, EHL was pleased to support the **Wildlife Conservation Board's** acquisition of strategic parcels totaling 1,446 acres. Late last year, state and federal funds were used to buy the land from cooperative willing sellers. Other parcels should now follow. Long years of commitment from state and federal wildlife agency personnel led to this success. We particularly commend the leadership of **Diane Jacob, District Supervisor**. The **Conservation Land Group** ably facilitated the transaction.



Proctor Valley is home to a population of the endangered quino checkerspot. Photo courtesy AEI-CASC Cos.



It takes 30-50 years to go from an acorn to a mature, magnificent woodland oak.

© FINCH CREEK GAZETTE

Barham Ranch Saved

Due to years of intensive, creative, and plain determined effort, **Save Barham Ranch** has succeeded in its goal of protecting these Orange County wildlands. **Barham Ranch** is 508 acres of coastal sage scrub, chaparral and oak woodland in central Orange County adjacent to **Santiago Oaks Regional Park** and the **Nature Reserve of Orange County**. In fact, Barham Ranch was identified as a top priority acquisition to enhance the **Central-Coastal Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP)**. Unfortunately, the owners of the land, including the **Orange Unified School District**, made plans to sell it to a developer.

However, the developer had not reckoned with Barham Ranch stalwarts from the local community. First, **Save Barham Ranch** filed suit to block the land transaction, due to circumvention of the **California Environmental Policy Act**. They then undertook a campaign to convince the owners to sell this property at fair market value to the **County of Orange**, which had offered to buy it. Confronted with a school district board biased in favor of the developer, **Save Barham Ranch** did what so few environmental groups ever try, let alone succeed in: They persuaded voters to elect better officials. Even after this incredible grassroots effort, **Save Barham Ranch** had to fend off last minute threats to the sale.

EHL was pleased to assist and support the **Barham Ranch** effort at various points along the way. We all need to take some pages out of their playbook!

Legal settlement will lead to protection of rare San Bernardino alluvial fan

Lytle Creek in **San Bernardino County** is one of the few remaining, functional “alluvial fans” in Southern California. Here, adjacent to the I-15 freeway at the base of the **San Bernardino National Forest**, are scenic washes and floodplains that support the endangered **San Bernardino kangaroo rat** and specialized alluvial fan sage scrub. Given that the **County of San Bernardino** has not had the political leadership to implement a multiple species plan, and has traditionally approved development in alluvial fan habitat, conservation of these areas has been very problematic.

When the County approved the **Lytle Creek-North** development in the fan last year, EHL and other groups—**Center for Biological Diversity**, **San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society**, and **Spirit of the Sage Council** (the latter of which settled separately)—quickly filed suit under **CEQA**.



Lytle Creek in San Bernardino County—one of the few functional “alluvial fans” in Southern California—supports at least two endangered species.

Prior to our court date, a concerted effort was made to settle the dispute, not only for the **Lytle Creek-North** parcel, but comprehensively for the landowner's other holdings in the vicinity. The settlement provides for over 1,200 acres of permanent habitat conservation, thus protecting much of the highest quality habitat from any development. In addition, the agreement includes options to purchase nearly the entire holdings—totaling over 2,500 acres—for conservation. It is expected that all future litigation will be eliminated, providing certainty to all parties.

We commend the excellent collaboration from the landowner, **Lytle Development Co.**, and their commitment to a comprehensive solution. While it will be a challenge to raise the necessary funds, these are high priority lands for the state and federal wildlife agencies. We look forward to making conservation a reality.

The law firm of **Johnson and Sedlack** represented EHL.

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EHL in the News

On December 2, 2002, in an article titled, “*Dissent Growing Over the Rancho Mission Viejo*,” the **Los Angeles Times** reported on the development proposed in this **Orange County** biodiversity hotspot. The strong public support for preservation was described and the assessment of EHL’s **Dan Silver** was quoted. Remaining optimistic, he said, “I believe there’s a win-win [solution] out there for everyone.”

On the same subject, a letter-to-the-editor from Dan was published by the **Times** on December 8, 2002. It stated, in part, “We have a unique opportunity with **Rancho Mission Viejo’s** remaining 23,000 acres to protect south Orange County’s history, scenic landscapes and natural treasures, and clean air and clean water. We can preserve these last remaining special lands—home to many rare plants and animals, and water sources.”



© GILBERT GOODLET

Delhi Sands flower-loving fly

Silver was also on live national television (**Fox Cable News**) on December 2, 2002, defending the endangered Delhi Sands flower-loving fly. In response to hostile questioning, he explained how the fly represented a larger ecosystem whose preservation would contribute to the long-term quality of life in western **San Bernardino County**,

where remaining open space is vanishing rapidly. Unfortunately, the program’s format offered little opportunity for a meaningful discussion of these complex issues.

Back in Orange County, Silver was quoted at length in a piece by **Dana Parsons** on January 3, 2003. Parsons compared the potential loss of 500 oak trees in the Saddle Crest and Saddle Creek developments to the “tree-sitter” occupying a single magnificent oak tree slated for removal in **Los Angeles County**. Silver noted that, compared to Los Angeles, “[Orange County] still has a chance to do things much better.”

News from Around

Our Southern California Ecoregion

Orange County canyons under assault

Residents of rural **Silverado** and **Trabuco Canyons**, at the base of the Santa Ana Mountains, worked long and hard to put a good community plan in place. Unfortunately, County government has supported developers in gutting the plan through major, piecemeal, land use amendments.

EHL has once again been forced to litigate the ill-conceived **Saddleback Meadows** project—a previous approval for this development was thrown out by the courts. Of greatest concern to us is the obstruction of a critical wildlife corridor between central and southern Orange County. We are co-plaintiffs with the **Vedanta Society of Southern California**, whose tranquil monastery would be severely impacted by the project, and with **Sea and Sage Audubon Society**. **Conner, Blake and Griffin** are representing us. We will also oppose the nearby **Saddle Crest** and **Saddle Creek** projects which, through major grading, would take out hundreds of oak trees. These luxury housing projects are strongly and actively opposed by the local community.



Trabuco Canyon is still largely rural and unspoiled. Residents are fighting hard to keep it that way.

© J. WILLIAMS

Tollroad rider stopped, at least for now



Sen. Barbara Boxer



Sen. Dianne Feinstein

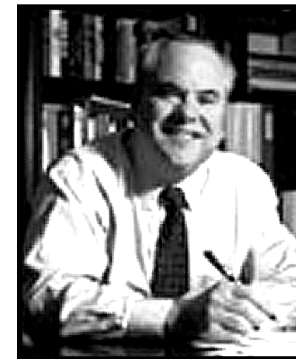


Rep. Loretta Sanchez

Due to a concerted effort by **Endangered Habitats League**, **Sierra Club**, **Friends of the Hills**, and others, a sordid rider attached to federal legislation by the **Transportation Corridor**



Rep. Susan Davis



Bill Lockyer, Atty. Gen.

Agency (TCA) to push through the Foothill tollroad’s southern extension was blocked by **Senators Boxer and Feinstein**, **Congressmembers Loretta Sanchez and Susan Davis**, and **Attorney General Bill Lockyer**. The Foothill tollroad would bisect the finest remaining natural lands in Orange County and destroy most of **San Onofre Beach State Park**. The rider would have exempted the tollroad from California laws.

We urge the TCA—which is made up of local elected officials—to operate in an open way and to respect state laws, rather than utilize riders attached to unrelated legislation. We also hope that **Congressman Ken Calvert** will reconsider his support for this approach.

Riverside County

Riverside Integrated Project advances

Riverside’s momentous, \$35 million **Integrated Project**, with land use, transportation, and habitat components, begins hearings before the **Board of Supervisors** in March. EHL has several goals. First, we seek improvements in the **Multiple Species Conservation Plan** to better protect several species and close loopholes. Second, only acceptable and least environmentally damaging transportation routes should be selected. Finally, the new **General Plan** must achieve several key objectives in order not to repeat business-as-usual sprawl. It should retain the progressive features supported by stakeholders—the higher density and livable “community centers” and the innovative “Transit Oasis” framework for non-automotive mobility. It should also preserve rural areas from inappropriate residential development, and should safeguard against future, piecemeal amendments.

To these ends, EHL and its consultants have submitted extensive comments and will participate in the hearing process. We will also continue to fund an outreach specialist to educate the public and local businesses of the value of the community centers. However, the project’s leader, **Supervisor Tom Mullen**, retired from office at the end of last year. Unless other Board Members pick up his vision and commitment, this vital effort could falter.



Tom Mullen

San Diego County

Regional Comprehensive Plan at SANDAG

Over the next year, the **San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)** is undertaking to create a **Regional Comprehensive Plan**. The plan ultimately may provide an umbrella for regional transportation objectives and priorities and work to integrate land use and transportation planning.

One concept is to take the power of the purse—SANDAG allocates and prioritizes transportation dollars throughout the region. Currently SANDAG uses only its “bully pulpit;” they could create economic incentives for the Smart Growth objectives they have championed. Looking ahead and listening to the people who experience the current quality of life everyday is key to responding to public priorities and making this “the people’s plan.” First up on the schedule are regional roundtables for local officials and the public. These meetings will help both groups to become informed and weigh in on this plan.

SANDAG invites all San Diego County residents to lay the foundation for the region's future by providing input on the Regional Comprehensive Plan at one of six upcoming public workshops planned for January, February and March. Attendees can participate in problem solving exercises involving issues pertinent to the San Diego region: the housing crisis, planning and land use, the environment, transportation issues, and the regional vision.

The creative outcomes of these public meetings will be used to formulate the Regional Comprehensive Plan. By participating in the process, residents can expect a Regional Comprehensive Plan that will strengthen the integration of local and regional plans for land use, transportation systems, and infrastructure needs and foster coordination of our plans with Southern California and the Northern Baja California region.

**Regional Comprehensive Plan
Roundtable Schedule
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
unless otherwise noted below**

**El Cajon Community and Senior Center
Wednesday, February 19**

**Encinitas Community Center
Thursday, February 20**

**Southwestern Community College
Student Union East
Wednesday, February 26**

**City of San Diego City Hall
Council Chambers
Wednesday, February 26
2 to 3:30 p.m.**

**San Marcos Community Center
Monday, March 10**

RSVPs are requested. To RSVP, or for more information, please call (619) 595-5316, visit www.sandag.org/rcp, or e-mail rcp@sandag.org

Conservation-minded people need to attend and so that their call for more open space and parks, more transit and less suburban sprawl into our rural agriculture lands are heard as people discuss what they want for San Diego in the next century. EHL's Lynne Baker was named to the Stakeholders Working Group and will be working with other stakeholders to focus on a few key quality-of-life objectives that can be accomplished within the ambitious agenda and short time frame.

Email her at lynnebaker@cox.net to weigh in, ask questions, and learn how you can participate further to help make this a plan full of what we value.

SAN DIEGO RESIDENTS PLEASE ATTEND!

Los Angeles County

The Palos Verdes Natural Community Conservation Plan, or NCCP, continues to languish. Although there has been basic agreement as to the configuration of the eventual habitat reserve for some time, issues relating to a critical habitat corridor and funding remain to be resolved. On the positive side, the NCCP preserve will preserve most of the remaining open space in the canyons and on the peninsula's hillsides. However, the cost of land is very high, as is to be expected in an affluent suburban community—especially for property with choice views, however "unbuildable" it may be. Substantial local funding appears available, but whether the balance can be found remains unknown.

One of the most heartening land use planning developments in recent years is the adoption by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works of a policy to deal with water movement from a watershed-wide perspective. No longer is

This story continues on page 4

**Gifts That Honor or Thank
a Friend or Loved One**

**Endangered Habitats League
is pleased to receive gifts that:**

- ✓ Honor someone on a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary or graduation
- ✓ Memorialize someone who died
- ✓ Just say "Thank you!" to a friend or loved one.

Following your instructions, EHL will send a beautiful acknowledgement card to the person honored or to the family of the deceased.

*Please fill out the form below and
mail it with your donation. Please print.*

I/we are enclosing a special gift in the amount of

\$ _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

To celebrate her/his/their _____

To Thank _____

Send the acknowledgement card to _____

Address 1 _____

Address 2 _____

City/State/Zip _____

*Indicate on the acknowledgement
card that this gift is being made by:*

Your Name (s) _____

Address 1 _____

Address 2 _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____ Fax _____

Office phone _____ Fax _____

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Endangered Habitats League

8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., #592
Los Angeles, CA 90069-4267

**EHL seeks a Project Manager for the
Inland Empire.** Please let us know of
candidates with skills in habitat planning,
land use, and transportation (send infor-
mation to: dsilverla@earthlink.net).

*The Endangered Habitats
League is a non-profit organi-
zation. All contributions are
tax-deductible to the full extent
allowed by law.*

Dan Silver Board Member & Executive Director

Jack Bath Board Member & Secretary

Michael Beck ... Board Member & San Diego Director

Jane Block Board Member

Pete DeSimone Board Member

Karen Messer Board Member

Jess Morton Board Member & Treasurer

Lynne Baker San Diego Project Manager

Palos Verdes plan *(continued from page 3)*

flood control a process of moving rainwater and effluent from the mountains and urban landscape to the sea as rapidly as possible. Instead, the County—as are other southern California jurisdictions—is working to integrate elements of water quality, conservation and reuse, habitat enhancement, public education and community needs into programs that improve all beneficial uses of water across entire watersheds.

This change is promoting the growth of collaborative efforts that bring together environmental, industrial, governmental and regulatory groups to solve problems. There are already some impressive results from these efforts, including substantial progress toward the development of open space/park chains along the **Los Angeles** and **San Gabriel Rivers**.

In the **South Bay**, EHL is involved in an effort to solve especially thorny issues in the most heavily urban-industrial watershed in southern California. Despite the unpromising nature of the existing landscape, the potential benefits appear very great, and the result should be a model for other urban watersheds to draw upon.

Cougar killed in Silverado Canyon

From a story by Janet Wilson, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

A mountain lion (cougar) was shot recently in Silverado Canyon, a steep and narrow, historic mining community in the Santa Ana Mountains. The cougar was a young, healthy female weighing 102 pounds, said Lt. Angel Raton, a Fish and Game officer who participated in a necropsy of the animal.

“She was quite fat for her size,” he said. “That’s prime mountain lion habitat there, because of the slope, and the fact that there’s deer and rabbits everywhere.” Raton said there was a good chance that a yearlong drought ... had driven smaller prey down to settled areas.

For a decade the California Department of Fish and Game has overseen a state program ... to protect mountain lions, including the fast-dwindling cougar population in Southern California.



© ELIZABETH ROBINSON

White Point

We drove where
the spa had been,
leaving the locked car
on the new black top
of the parking lot
beside the sleepy sea.

Before the war, she said,
we ran under these bluffs
playing children’s games;
splashed water at one another
in the sweet, soft lap
of the cleansing sea.

Our parents watched us
from the shaded veranda
of the Japanese hotel.
Don’t you recall
how the mineral baths were—
before the earthquake?

Perhaps the sun remembers them.
And how the sea,
its wind-thrown waves thundering,
came into the cliffs
like the sound of heartbreak
thudding at our feet.

But look. Children still play here,
running over the stones,
splashing and joyous in the salt pools
of the hotel’s shelled footings
where sea anemone and limpets
cling to dead men’s dreams.

Untroubled, these bright children
who view only this face of the sea;
their present earth not bound
by the concrete’s transience
lapped by afternoon sunshine
on the locked soul of our world.

Jess Morton

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Endangered Habitats League

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