

Watershed Voice

The **ESCONDIDO CREEK**
Conservancy

Please join in our conservation efforts by becoming a member.

A Publication of The Escondido Creek Conservancy

WINTER Edition 2005

CALL TO ACTION: Sewer System Proposal for 'Harmony Grove Village' Development

Discord in Harmony Grove! Will 'Harmony Grove Village' bring sewer system to Harmony Grove? The project's developer, New Urban West (NUW), thinks so!

After first promoting its project as a 742 single-family detached home development on 468 acres using a 'package sewer' system, we now find NUW before the Escondido City Council requesting hookup to the Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility (HARRF.) By 4 - 1 vote in September, the Escondido City Council approved a \$587,000 'capacity study' to consider the use of City sewer facilities by a project that lies completely outside of not only the City's limits, but also outside of it's 'sphere of influence.'

Approximately two years ago, the community asked that the project area be removed from the sphere, thereby placing the project 100 percent under the

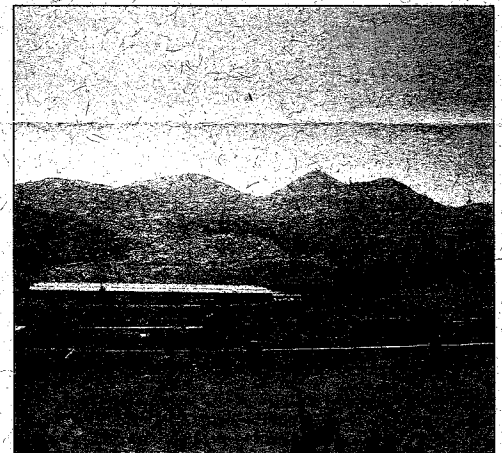
jurisdiction of the county of San Diego. This 'de-sphering' was approved by the LAFCO commission. (The San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is a regulatory agency with county-wide jurisdiction to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local government agencies essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well-being of the state.)

The current proposal to establish a 'sewer maintenance district' in the county and connect to the city's sewer system is not only a shameful 'end run' around the wishes of Harmony Grove residents to retain the rural character of their community - it is also of questionable legality under Government Code 56133, which prohibits a local agency from providing sewer services outside its jurisdictional boundary.

Key Issues:

The Escondido Creek Conservancy opposes the project as currently proposed for the following reasons:

- The 742 home density is too high for the area
- The proposed package sewer system is likely not feasible for a development of this size
- Connecting to the City of Escondido sewer system is of questionable legality



without annexation, and would set a dangerous precedent for future high density development in the watershed

- The County would likely require widening Harmony Grove Road, Country Club Drive and construction of SC1375 across Escondido Creek and through the preserved Derbas lands, to support the development
- A major road across Escondido Creek connecting to Citricado is proposed, significantly altering traffic flow in that neighboring community
- The environmental impacts to Escondido Creek by a project of this size are yet to be determined

What You Can Do:

Continued on Page 2



Up and Down the Creek *By Geoffrey D. Smith, Executive Director*

We all know that we live in a disposable society. To really understand what this means, try collecting trash along a road sometime. That's what Pat and Frank McCulloch have been doing along Harmony Grove Road – for nearly 20 years!

Donning bright orange vests for safety, Pat and Frank team up twice a month to walk the length of Harmony Grove Road from Elfin Forest Road to Kauana Loa Drive – a distance of 4.5 miles – and fill up bag after bag (after bag) of carelessly discarded trash.

Frank, a retired elementary school teacher, and Pat, a retired nurse, have lived along the creek for over 30 years. Their commitment to maintaining the aesthetic health of this little stretch of paradise has earned them the rank of Escondido Creek Icon.

While tirelessly grabbing at cigarette butts, beer bottles and bits of plastic foam one recent weekday morning, Frank never



misses the opportunity to stop and wave a friendly 'Hello' gesture to the passing motorists. Most drivers wave back. All of them have so far given Frank and Pat a wide berth on this perilously narrow and windy road.

In spite of the trash and increasing traffic pressures, Frank is quick to note the intrinsic beauty of this creek gorge. "It's really beautiful out here when the cars go away."

Thank you, Pat and Frank. You are TECC's Adopt-a-Road heroes. I'll see you on the trail!



Frank McCulloch waves to motorists.

Conservancy Teams with the Santa Ysabel General Store

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) has teamed up with the Santa Ysabel General Store to raise money for the Conservancy.

Vintage items are donated to TECC and then consigned with the General Store, which is across from Dudley's Bakery.

The store sells a wide range of vintage items - furniture, jewelry, farm and garden tools, kitchen and household items, western and Old California collectibles, books and many

other antiques and collectible objects dating from the early 1800s through the 1960s.

The Santa Ysabel General Store, which is open Wednesday through Sunday, is located in Santa Ysabel in the original general store built in 1884.

The Escondido Creek Conservancy will eagerly accept your generously donated items to be placed on consignment.

Please contact Claudia Costanzo at 760-744-9052 to make your donation.

PAGE 1 PHOTOS: The left photo at the top of the page is a photo of fence and poppies from Summer 2005 issue, credited to Evelyn Alemanni. The second photo at the top is of Frank McCulloch, picking up trash along Harmony Grove Road. The picture of the chicken ranch indicates the site of the proposed 742 home Harmony Grove Village development, currently a chicken ranch factory farm at the intersection of Harmony Grove Road and Country Club Drive. Photos of McCulloch and the chicken ranch credited to Geoffrey Smith.

What You Can Do *Continued from Page 1*

You are urged to write to your elected officials to express your views in opposition to this project as currently proposed. Jurisdiction for the development project falls under the Board of Supervisors, County of San Diego. Oversight for the Contractual Sewer Services Agreement proposed between the City of Escondido, County of San Diego and New Urban West falls under LAFCO. Please call or write today – the LAFCO Commission will discuss this matter at their meeting on December 5:

Michael Ott, Executive Director, LAFCO, 619.531.5400, 619.557.4190 fax, mike.ott@sdcounty.ca.gov

LAFCO Commissioners:

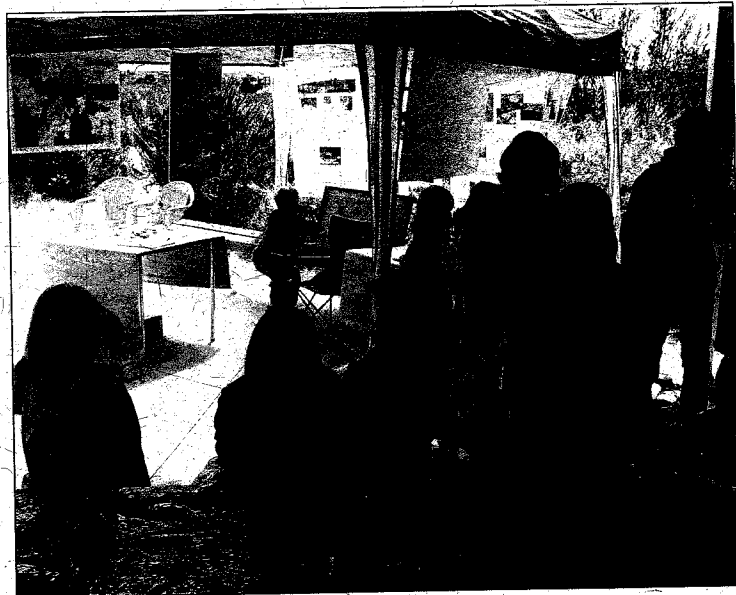
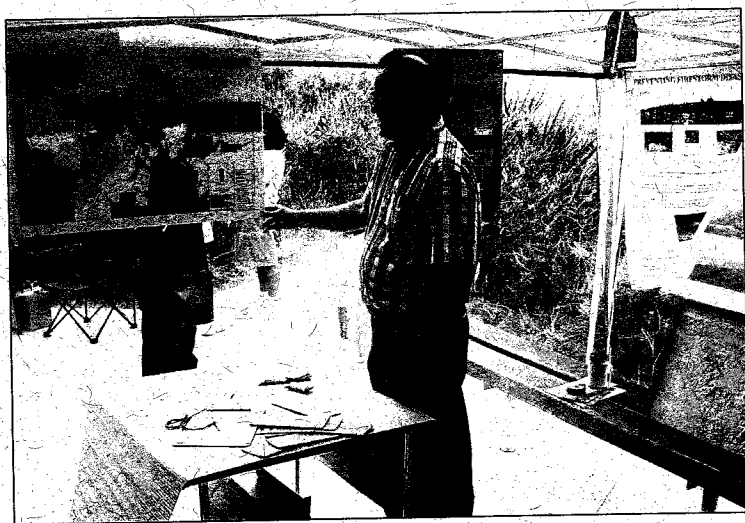
- Supervisor Bill Horn, 619.531.5555, bill.horn@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Supervisor Dianne Jacob, 619.531.5522, (619) 696-7253 fax, dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Councilmember Patty Davis, City of Chula Vista,

619.691.5044, (619) 476-5379 fax, pattydavis@chulavista.ca.gov

- Councilmember Donna Frye, City of San Diego, 619.236.6616, (619) 236-7329, donnafrye@sandiego.gov
- Councilmember Betty Rexford, City of Poway, 858.748.6600, brexford@ci.poway.ca.us
- W.D. 'Bud' Pocklington, Chairperson, South Bay Irrigation District, 619.427.0868
- Andrew Menshek, Padre Dam Municipal Water District, 619.448.3111
- Andrew Vanderlaan, Vice-Chairperson, At Large, 619.531.5400

Very important to contact as well:

- Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, (619) 531-5533, (619) 234-1559 fax, pam.slater@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Gary Pryor, Director, County Dept of Planning and Land Use, (858) 694-2960, gary.pryor@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Ivan Holler, Staff, County Dept of Planning & Land Use, (858) 694-3789, ivan.holler@sdcounty.ca.gov



Lagoon Day Fun for Everyone

TECC staffed an information booth the San Elijo Lagoon Day event on Oct. 8. TECC was a co-sponsor of the event together with the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy.

Hundreds of adults and children participated in a day of hikes, treasure hunts and natural science education at the county of San Diego's visitor center on Manchester Avenue.

Here, booth visitor Doug Wescott (left) looks over the map of the Escondido Creek Watershed in the TECC booth, while members of a local Girl Scout Troop (right) get a 3-D tactile impression of the watershed from the 15'-long scaled relief map of Escondido Creek on permanent display there.

Photos/Geoffrey Smith

Construction Dirt Won't Help Rebuild Our Beaches

By Maggie Houlihan, Councilmember - City of Encinitas

A Sept. 6 column, "One man's dirt becomes another city's sand," by Michael Pattinson, president of builder Barratt American and former president of the California Building Industry Association, oversimplified important quality of life issues and deserves a clarification.

In his column, Pattinson complained about \$450,000 in fines levied against a developer and the city of Escondido for illegal discharge into Escondido Creek in

problem.

Unfortunately, much development in San Diego County has been done at the expense of wetlands and watersheds. California has already lost more than 90 percent of its historic wetlands to development. Most rivers and streams have been channelized, dammed or altered in other significant ways to accommodate development. This has eliminated natural river processes resulting in blockages to natural river flows and elimination of most flood plains.

San Elijo Lagoon, which is the receiving body of Escondido Creek, has been listed as "303(d) impaired" for sedimentation, nutrients, and bacteria by the State Water Quality Control Board, due to the impact of man-made barriers and discharges.

Contrary to Mr. Pattinson's assertions, "dirt" does not equal sand. Dirt that enters Escondido Creek will not restock the beaches. Although approximately 30,000 cubic yards of sediment enters the lagoon each year, only about 10,000 cubic yards passes through.

This sediment is made up of fine silts and clays, not pristine beach sand. This sediment clogs the creek and lagoon,

covers habitat and raises the floodplain. This changes the habitat type from wetlands to uplands and eliminates native flora and fauna.

Escondido Creek is not viewed as a major supplier of sand to our beaches. It does not have the hydrological force to contribute significantly to coastal sand.

Any support it might offer is lost due to the blockages from infrastructure such as railroad trestles and other man-made structures, which drastically alter the San Elijo Lagoon's circulation.

Since man has modified nature, we have lost nature's natural mechanisms. We must work together to repair what has been lost and restore our watersheds.

We must follow the law or pay the consequences. Our quality of life is dependent on clean ocean water, sandy beaches, and healthy watersheds.

Maggie Houlihan is an Encinitas City Council member and chairwoman of the Escondido Creek Watershed Alliance.

The above article is reprinted courtesy of the North County Times.

Our quality of life is dependent on clean ocean water, sandy beaches, and healthy watersheds.

violation of the Clean Water Act. He argued that the developer's discharged dirt is what the creek needs to be able to send sand to the coast and help prevent the construction of massive sea walls to protect homes.

While sand on our beaches is the single best defense against beach erosion, releasing construction site dirt into the watershed does nothing to solve the

Consider an End of Tax Year Donation to TECC

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-deductible charity. Your end-of-year donation of cash, property or assets would provide a lasting legacy in the protection of open space in the Escondido Creek watershed.

Call Geoffrey at the office to discuss giving options in confidence or refer to the coupon on page 4 of this newsletter. Thank you, and Happy New Year!

Gifts from Foundations

TECC wishes to recognize the generosity of the following foundations for their significant gifts in support of TECC's mission:

- ☐ Charles H. Stout Foundation, October 2005: \$2,500 for trails and enhancement project on the Elfin Forest Preserve
- ☐ The Jack and Jill Campbell Fund at The San Diego Foundation, August 2005: \$250.00 for general support
- ☐ The Land and Watershed Conservation Fund and an Anonymous Donor of The San Diego Foundation, July 2005: \$25,000 for core operational support
- ☐ Citizens Against Rural Exploitation (C.A.R.E.), July 2005: \$30,000 for land acquisition.

We thank these foundations, and the support of all of our donors, for your confidence in TECC's programs.

Mission Statement

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to the preservation and protection of the natural open space within the Escondido Creek watershed. We support educational programs and compatible outdoor recreation within the watershed for the benefit of all residents of the area.

The Escondido Creek Conservancy Officers

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Everett DeLano III.....	Director
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Jack Olmstead.....	Director
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TECC Office.....	760-471-9354
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Geoffrey D. Smith.....	Executive Director

The Escondido Creek
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