



Watershed Voice

Please join in our conservation efforts by becoming a member - application form on page 6 ...

Let's Count Our Blessings by Steve Barker, TECC Board President



How lucky are we to live where we do??? I'm not talking about the fact that it's 70 degrees outside when most of the country is covered in ice or that we can surf year round. That's certainly an advantage to living in Southern California. I'm talking about how lucky we are to live here in Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove and that we live in the epicenter of a globally recognized hotspot of biological diversity and conservation value. When you look out of your kitchen window at these hills realize that you are appreciating one of the last intact and connected tracts of an ecosystem so rare that's it's now considered one of the most threatened on the planet.

Federal, State and County agencies have recognized and appreciate what we may take for granted and that's why they have spent millions to try to buy up from willing sellers many large tracts that were slated for development before the recent collapse of the real estate market. TECC is working hard with these groups to bring agencies and sellers together in an effort to save this precious area now before the government money runs out or the market returns and the bull dozers fire back up.

Imagine a Special Place

Imagine a special place.

Imagine a special place that's home to the rarest plants and animals on the planet.

Imagine this special place where the days of warm sunlight and nights of cool sea air produce, a climate so unique that it's the only place on earth that these plants and animals thrive.

Imagine that people come from all over to study this place.

Imagine that this place is shrinking and may soon disappear.

Imagine that people from all over are working together to save this special place.

Imagine you live in this place and that you love this place too.

Imagine what you'd tell your children you did to save this place.

Imagine this is a place called Elfin Forest or a place called Harmony Grove.

Support TECC with a donation and save this special place before it's too late.

Steve Barker

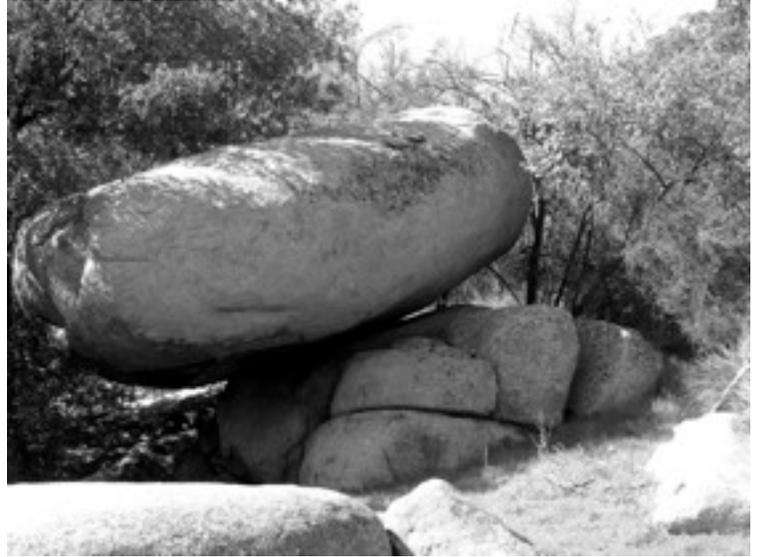
What this means for local residents is the incredible good fortune to live next to and surrounded by a park with trails, open spaces and natural vistas all purchased and maintained by other peoples money. Yes Marge, that means our property values are sure to soar when the market returns.

So I'm asking you, neighbor, to help us make this all continue to come true by becoming a member or increasing your TECC membership. A \$100 donation or more to TECC is one of the best investments in the value of your home you'll ever make.

Thank you, Steve

LAND ACQUISITION UP DATE

In our last newsletter we mentioned the 120 acre Family Stations parcel, directly across Harmony Grove Rd. from the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (EFRR), was slated to be acquired. We are happy to report that this acquisition is done and an additional 120 acres of rare Coastal Chaparral has been preserved. TECC would like to recognize Ann Van Leer of Land Conservation Brokerage for her hard work, patience, and determination, in seeing this deal through for TECC. TECC would also like to thank the County of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department for stepping up and acquiring the parcel as open space for all residents of San Diego County to enjoy. The support of Supervisor Bill Horn and the County Board of Supervisors for recognizing the value of this habitat is also greatly appreciated by TECC, for in the end, without their support and financial commitment, this acquisition would not have been possible.



TECC continues to work on several other acquisitions in and around the EFRR. Recently a slate of parcels adjacent to EFRR was identified by the County of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department, as prime for acquisition for preservation. These parcels total an additional 200 acres that could be set aside by the middle of 2010. TECC remains active in assisting with this project.

TECC continues to search for funding for the Council Ridge Project, a 400 acre combination of parcels on the west side of Daley Ranch.

As we pointed out in our last newsletter, now is the time to acquire lands for open space. Already there have been signs that our economy is beginning to recover and this may mean the closing of a window of

opportunity to save some of these lands from future development. In the past year your generous donations to the TECC Land Acquisition Fund were leveraged at a ratio of greater to 100 to 1. With some hard work, dedication, and timely donations, TECC could save as much as an additional 1500 acres of land in the Escondido Creek watershed in the coming months.

Kevin Barnard - Land Acquisition Committee Member



WATER QUALITY UPDATE



TECC's Water Quality Committee is actively engaged in two significant ongoing endeavors that concern the health of Escondido Creek. Our most substantial project is the ongoing effort to develop a rescue hatchery for endangered southern steelhead on TECC-owned land along the creek. With letters of support from both the National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish & Game, the committee is pursuing several grants to help subsidize the first two phases of this project, which include the preparation of a master plan for the facility, permitting, the collection of water quality data, and the identification of any possible stream rehabilitation efforts that may be necessary to accommodate the hatchery. As support for this project continues to grow, so too does the excitement over the chance to leverage the open space that TECC has preserved for the additional benefit of actively saving an important historic native species that is severely threatened.



Our second project is helping to facilitate a study of the feasibility and potential impact of de-channelizing Escondido Creek (i.e., removing the concrete) throughout its reach in downtown Escondido. Escondido Councilwoman, Olga Diaz, has successfully obtained support from the Escondido City Council for this feasibility study, which will be conducted by researchers at the California State Polytechnic Institute at Pomona. These researchers selected Escondido Creek in a competitive process as one of several such de-channelization sites to be studied as a part of larger study.

Both of these activities are exciting projects that further TECC's goal of protecting and improving the water quality and natural habitat of Escondido Creek.

Brent Alspach, Chairperson of Water Quality Committee

Docents Needed at the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center Honoring Susan J. Varty

Do you love the outdoors? Do you want to help your community and the environment? If your answer to these questions is yes, then you may want to think about volunteering at the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (EFRR). Right now the EFRR Parks Department is in need of volunteers to help staff the newly completed Interpretive Center which is located in the EFRR staging area (8833 Harmony Grove Rd). Open since June 2009, the Center serves as a focal point of learning and will help to educate the public about the EFRR, and our local natural resources through art, hands on activities and multimedia programs.



Examples of what you could be doing with your donated time at the EFRR may include:

- *Interacting with the public.
- *Learning about our local natural resources and how to protect them.
- *Helping to educate adults and children about how they can protect and preserve their local natural areas.
- *Helping to inform visitors of park rules and regulations.
- *Assisting Park Rangers and staff in developing and administering programs at the center.
- *Be involved with Park Ranger offered training which will help to educate and inform the volunteer on park operations, resource management, and public safety.

To be a volunteer at the EFRR you must fill out and submit an application. In order to obtain an application please visit the OMWD's website at www.omwd.com or by contacting the EFRR office at 760-632-4212. To mail in your application send it to: 1966 Olivenhain Rd., Encinitas CA 92024 Attention: Parks Department.

**Jeff Anderson Parks Department Supervisor Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve
Olivenhain Municipal Water District**

The Elfin Forest Interpretive Center Always Has Something New...

Events at the Center during February and March:

- 2009 Winners of the Annual Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve Photo Contest on display: These new large photos share some of the beauty and unique qualities of the Reserve through the eyes of both adult and child photographers. Thanks to Rangers Jeff Anderson and Ryan Works for coordinating this contest.
- Monthly docent hikes in the Reserve: Come and get in shape for the new year. Scheduled for the third Saturday of each month, pending weather, meet at the Interpretive Center at 8:30. The hike will last approximately an hour and a half. Next one February 20. If rain is in the forecast please call the Ranger staff at (760) 632-4212 to confirm if the Reserve is open.
- Scientist Tom Munnecke at the Center monthly: Bring the kids to explore the microscopic world in a drop of stream water through our video microscope. Dates/times to be announced.
- Speaker Series: Our very successful series of quality speakers on topics relevant to the watershed will begin in March. Dates and times will be announced.
- Our 2010 featured artist, Artist Robert Ferguson, begins his work: As a part of our Art and Nature Program, Robert Ferguson will be painting 8 large oil paintings of scenes in and around the Reserve. Supporting one of our goals at the Center to enhance the appreciation of our watershed through the eyes of an artist, Mr. Ferguson will be display his work during the months of April, May, and June at the Center.



Update on improvements to the Center in the next few months:

- Beautiful metal sculpture: Gifted metal sculpture artist Jennifer Coburn has been commissioned to construct two metal sycamore trees to adorn both sides of the entrance to the Center. Branches will extend over the upper window and include leaves with embedded fall colored stain glass providing an equally beautiful view from both inside and outside the building.
- Interior columns: Tile work will be completed soon on the two interior columns by James Hubbell and tile artist Dave Ferrin to complement our ceiling mural and handcrafted tile floor design.
- Children's science lab: This is due for completion this spring thanks to the volunteer work of Elfin Forest resident and cabinetmaker Joan Hershfeld. This unique center will always offer our younger visitors an exciting experience upon entering the center with interactive docent directed activities.
- Completion of the photovoltaic building: We will be hooked up to the Sun. Thanks to volunteers Chuck Weber and Tim Costanzo, this building will be complete by spring.
- Native Plant Garden labels: A collaboration of Jennifer Coburn and Tim Costanzo has resulted in artistic plant labels in the shape of native Engelmann oak leaves to identify our native plants in the garden surrounding the center.
- Photo Display: Due to be completed soon, this will enable us to display 16 images and text.

How can I be involved?

- Be a docent: Join our dedicated group of 12 docents. We will train you and shift times are very flexible. Both weekend and weekday times are available (see article by Jeff Anderson on page 3 for further details).
- Earth Day, Saturday, April 17: Save this Date! Mark the Calendar! Most of the mentioned improvements will be completed. Robert Ferguson's paintings will be on display. This will be a great family event celebrating our amazing watershed.
 - The Center is open on weekends, 9:00-3:00 and some Friday mornings. Plan a visit and bring the whole family. We even have a biscuit for your dog.



Jeff Swenerton Chairperson of the Interpretive Center Advisory Committee

LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Three activities completed by the Land Management Committee this past January pretty well describe what we do . . .

First, the paperwork – January is report time. The field notes from our monthly site visits, along with bird and vegetation surveys, and an accounting of monies spent were compiled into a formal Annual Report submitted to the County of San Diego and the wildlife agencies. The reports allow tracking of the onsite natural communities over time and help us fine tune our management practices.

Second, the maintenance work – The Management Committee completed the clean up of the 119 acre Family Stations property to ensure it was in good shape for transfer to the County. We hauled two old vehicles out from a ravine and moved several truckloads of old wood, metal and assorted debris to the recycling center or the dump.

Third, the fun work – TECC hosted the annual OMWD tree planting event on January 23rd. Thirty trees and shrubs (Live oak, Sycamore, and Lemonade Berry) were planted on Conservancy property just downstream from the EFRR parking lot. OMWD rangers organized the trees and volunteers with shovels, we provided the location - an area where Eucalyptus trees were removed several years ago. The time delay allowed the soil to detoxify from the Eucs and for a few existing oaks and sycamores to recover. The planting supplements natural recruitment and will speed the restoration process. It was a fun day and an example of the cooperative relationship we have built with OMWD and others in seeing that the proper stewardship of Escondido Creek open spaces gets done.

If any of this sounds like something you'd like to help out with – please contact the TECC office. There will be on going exotic plant removal work days in 2010 and there is a camper shell or two out in the sage that need to be extracted.

Leonard Wittwer - Chairperson of the Land Management Committee

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to the preservation, enhancement, 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 Board of Directors

Steve Barker	President	Tim Costanzo	Director
Jeff Swenerton	Vice President	Jerry Harmon	Director
Brent Alspach	Secretary	Laura Mitchell Ph.D.	Director
Jon Dummer	Treasurer	Jack Olmstead	Director
Kevin Barnard	Director	Leonard Wittwer	Director

We Need Your Help

The Escondido Creek Conservancy has made great progress during 2009 in the acquisition of many additional acres of preserved open-space land, implemented innovative educational programs, and completed construction of the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center. **Our primary source of funding for our work comes from private donors such as you. Please help us in 2010 with an annual membership donation!** (See below for application form).

Please join our conservation efforts by becoming a member or renewing your membership for 2010

Complete and detach the form below and mail to TECC, P.O.Box 460791, Escondido, CA 92046

Cut here...

Cut here...



Yes! I support TECC's mission of watershed protection. Here's my gift...
Please make checks payable to: The Escondido Creek Conservancy

Membership Levels

- Friends of the Creek - \$50
- Protectors of the Creek - \$1,000
- Advocates of the Creek - \$5,000
- Defenders of the Creek - \$10,000
- Guardians of the Creek - \$20,000
- Other amount - _____

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

My Company will match my gift: _____

_____ I would like to volunteer. Please send information.

_____ I have included TECC in my Estate Plans.

Please charge my credit card: One time Monthly

Visa MasterCard Amex

Credit Card No. _____

Exp Date _____ Sec Code on Back of Card _____

Authorized Signature _____

Name as it appears on card _____

All gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.
Securities area also acceptable-Please contact TECC at
760.471.9354

Mail to: TECC
PO BOX 460791
Escondido, CA. 92046