

Outdoors

in Orange County

Cleveland National Forest

Aliso Viejo - At the End of the Road...

How Decisions in the Inland Empire will Impact this Orange County City

By Honorable Karl Warkowski, Aliso Viejo Mayor

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) plan to construct one or more major new transportation corridors connecting the two counties. Over the last 18 months the RCTC and OCTA, in conjunction with the Foothill Transportation Corridor Agency, conducted a Major Investment Study. This study selected several locally preferred alternatives, which will be looked at further. Though the project's alignment has yet to be determined, a few of the proposed routes include:

- a new six-lane tunnel and road through the Cleveland National Forest connecting Interstate 15 to the existing 133 and 241 tollroads;
- building a new freeway parallel to the existing 91 freeway; and
- adding capacity on the 91 freeway (by adding reversible lanes, widening or double-decking the freeway).

As Mayor of one of Orange County's southern cities, Aliso Viejo, I am concerned that our local streets will be hard hit by traffic generated from the Inland Empire. The proposed road through the Forest would add between 85,000 and 135,000 vehicles on the 133 (Laguna Canyon Road). The creation of this new corridor would be a direct impact on one of the only routes into Aliso Viejo and our city may not be able to recover from such catastrophic traffic jams.

If the tunnel is chosen, there are many reasons commuters wouldn't drive it. First, to finance the tunnel an estimated \$20 one-way toll would be required, destroying public lands for the benefit of the wealthy. Second, commuters would be in a high-risk situation should an accident occur with no way to easily escape. Third, this tunnel would be the second longest in the world and may be targeted for a terrorist attack. Finally, there is a



Photo: Melanie Schlotterbeck

Coming soon to an intersection near you.

seismic safety hazard since the Elsinore Fault, capable of 7.5 magnitude quake, lies below this mountain range. Would you want to be 700 feet underground in an 11-mile tunnel when that temblor hit?

One of the major problems with transportation planning is that agencies are only planning for getting commuters from the Inland Empire to Orange County (point A to point B). What they aren't looking at is what will happen to that traffic after it reaches point B. The commuters will inevitably need to use the 133, 405 or 5 freeways. Orange County's, let alone Aliso Viejo's, arterials would not be able to handle the additional traffic since there is no plan or funding to improve adjoining streets.



IN THIS ISSUE...

THE IMAGINE SERIES

GREEN VISION
PROJECT RECAP

GREEN VISION MAP &
PROJECT UPDATES

There is an inevitable but rarely used link between land use planning and transportation planning. There are dozens of concepts available that would relieve congestion and some don't even require an investment in the transportation system. Here are a few examples of how we could eliminate the need for an inter-county transportation corridor:

- A 2% change in Riverside County's land use to include mixed use, commercial and industrial employment centers would eliminate the need for another east-west transportation corridor.
- In Vancouver Canada, planners have implemented a sky rail system to transport people to and from work. Wouldn't that be fun?
- If employers allowed a 9-80 workweek or telecommuting fewer cars would be on the road. This would open up our freeways and allow us to spend more time with our families.
- If the top 200 employers in Orange County opened satellite offices in Riverside County, there wouldn't be a need to commute to our job centers.

It is clear to me that you can't build your way out of congestion. Orange County residents shouldn't have to suffer for bad land use decisions in other counties. I encourage you to get involved - tell the OCTA how you feel and support the use of alternative concepts to create traffic solutions. Call 877-SR91-FWY or write to: P.O. Box 14184, Orange CA 92863-1584.

FHBP President Jean Watt Receives Leadership Award

By Greg Gauthier, Wetlands Recovery Project

Jean Watt, President of Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks and co-chair of the Orange County Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Task Force was presented with WRP's Leadership Award. The award was presented at the H2O Conference held in Orange County in October.

Presenter and Orange County Supervisor Tom Wilson (shown right with Jean), said that "Jean Watt is an outstanding environmental leader committed to the acquisition, restoration and enhancement of wetland resources throughout Orange County and Southern California.

Her calm and determined skill at building truly collaborative approaches to protecting open space, rivers, beaches and other habitats critical to our quality of life is an inspiration to all who join in her



Photo: Betsy O'Neill

efforts. From the Orange Coast River Park and Orange County Green Vision Project, to her work with the many components of the Wetlands Recovery Project she sets the highest standard for dedication and vision."

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Introducing the Imagine Series

a Before & After Look at Orange County's Treasures

By: Jean Watt, President FHBP

My encounter with the word “imagine” associated with parks and open space in Orange County came in 1998 when I was called upon to serve as a Public Advisory Committee member on a new endeavor, the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project - “an alliance to acquire, restore and expand wetlands along the coast and in coastal watersheds.”

Imagine that, I thought. The governor’s office has set up a 17 agency partnership to include local government and non-profit folks and focus on restoration of wetlands in a five county coastal area, from Santa Barbara to San Diego. After years of grassroots scrambling to save Upper Newport Bay and Bolsa Chica wetlands, now the need to save and restore these vital resources has arrived at the threshold of science and government institutions. They are worthy of statewide interest. I am glad to help with that!

Mary Nichols, then California Resources Secretary, chaired the group and said, “Restoration is a breathtaking concept. When a community commits to it - when people commit to the notion they can make things whole again - it opens immense possibilities.” And sure enough, once the group began to meet and form itself into county task forces, everyone’s imagination took over. *Imagine* restoring creeks and channels allowing all the beneficial uses to prevail - to clean the water, to provide habitat and restore some of the water oriented visions and experiences city folk long for. *Imagine* re-creation of stream access for steel head trout. *Imagine* saving some of the remaining great open spaces that still have natural streams



Before...

Photo: DP Myers, Photo Morph: Melanie Schlotterbeck



After

and habitats. *Imagine* creating a River Trail along the Santa Ana River with a five mile naturalized stretch even open for rafting.

Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) was fortuitously formed just one year before the Wetlands Recovery Project came into existence and so was the logical non-profit group to provide leadership in Orange County for this project. Natural evolution of thought about how to proceed called for maps showing where needed open spaces, acquisition and restoration projects should occur. Thus the Green Vision Project evolved. Now we have our maps, our projects identified and some have already been completed. We also have coordination of groups and agencies working toward the completion of our Green Vision. *Imagine* that!

FHBP has made a commitment to our County’s park, open space and wetland needs, as well as to educational opportunities to make sure this commitment thrives and continues. We encourage you to let your imagination run free and help make Orange County’s future green and healthy. **Breaking News - The Trabuco Creek fish ladder has been funded. *Imagine* that!**

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GREEN VISION PROJECT: SHAPING THE COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE FUTURE

BY: TERRY WATT, GREEN VISION PROJECT MANAGER

IN 2000, FHBP LAUNCHED ITS ORANGE COUNTY GREEN VISION PROJECT, WITH THE SPECIFIC MISSION OF INCREASING FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR PARKS, WATER QUALITY AND OPEN SPACE THROUGHOUT ORANGE COUNTY. THE GREEN VISION PROJECT PROVIDES THE IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK - MAPS, DATA, OUTREACH - NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH FHBP'S OVERARCHING MISSION. THE CENTERPIECES OF THE GREEN VISION PROJECT INCLUDE THE GREEN VISION MAP, AN ASSOCIATED PROJECT MATRIX AND A FUNDING OPTIONS REPORT HIGHLIGHTING THE BEST APPROACHES TO FUNDING THE VISION.

PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT IS THE GREEN VISION'S OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMPONENT. LED BY THE GREEN VISION MANAGEMENT TEAM AND ITS 36+ MEMBER WORKING GROUP, IN 2005,



Workshop attendees debrief the group after break-out sessions.

Photo: Melanie Schlotterbeck

FHBP SPONSORED THREE GREEN VISION WORKSHOPS. THESE WORKSHOPS PROVIDE A MEANS OF SHARING INFORMATION, LEARNING ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD, MANAGE AND OPERATE THE COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM, AND TO COORDINATE PARTICIPATION BY THE WORKING GROUP IN THE ONGOING DIALOGUES CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF ORANGE COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM. THE WORKSHOPS HAVE FOCUSED ON:

1. THE GREEN VISION OUTREACH STRATEGY, LEARNING THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH/POLLING TO SHAPE MESSAGING AND STRATEGIC ACTION.
2. OPEN SPACE POLLING COMPLETED BY FAIRBANK, MASLIN, MAULLIN & ASSOCIATES FOR FHBP AND ITS WORKING GROUP.
3. THE ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY'S PROPOSED RENEWAL OF MEASURE M (A TRANSPORTATION TAX) AND THE COUNTY OF ORANGE'S STRATEGIC PLAN, WHICH WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE.

AS A RESULT OF THIS YEAR'S WORK:

* THE BASE OF POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS AND COLLABORATORS FOR THE GREEN VISION HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDED AND DIVERSIFIED;

* THE GREEN VISION PROJECT, FHBP AND ITS WORKING GROUP ARE STRATEGICALLY POSITIONED TO PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE IN DETERMINING THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTY'S WILDLANDS AND WILDERNESS PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT THEREOF;

* REFINEMENTS AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE GREEN VISION MAP AND MATRIX FACILITATED BY THE PARTICIPATION OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS AND NEW PARTNERS HAVE IMPROVED THE BASE OF INFORMATION NECESSARY TO DRAW SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR OPEN SPACE PROTECTION. THE MAP HAS BECOME THE CENTERPIECE OF THE COUNTY'S STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORT AND MAY GUIDE THE EFFORT;

* FHBP AND ITS WORKING GROUP MEMBERS SUPPORTED POLLING COMPLETED BY JOHN FAIRBANK'S FIRM. IT SHOWED THAT THAT 69% OF THOSE POLLED ARE WILLING TO PAY HIGHER TAXES TO SUPPORT BOTH A STATE AND LOCAL CONSERVATION MEASURE.

Birds of a feather...

Be a part of Friends of Harbors, Beaches & Parks.

Help our practical, realistic projects make Orange County a better home for all of us.

Your help, large or small, is deeply appreciated.



Yes! I want to help Friends of Harbors, Beaches & Parks!

FHBP contributions are tax-deductible. Donors receive newsletters and other information on our conservation activities. Please check the category you wish:

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Please clip and mail to: FHBP, P.O. Box 9256, Newport Beach, CA 92658

Resource Conference a Hit!

FHBP, Local Government Commission and Institute for Local Government hosted a regional Resource Conservation Conference. With over 230 participants, speakers from around town to around the state, and sponsors representing a variety of facets - the daylong event was hugely successful. Dr. Dick Jackson, former State Public Health Officer humorously armed the audience with statistics about health and our environment. Assemblyman Tom Harman was the afternoon keynote, and the day's panelists included experts on water rates, land use and acquisition, community design, state bonds and other funding sources.



Tom Harman

Visit www.lgc.org

Orange Coast River Park Grant

FHBP was one of 47 grassroots groups awarded the national Kodak American Greenways Grant providing seed money to spark creativity in outdoor recreation, conservation and trail and greenway development. The grant will help the River Park team with their Trails & Interpretation Master Plan - an outreach effort for design and development costs of the OCRP entry gates - which will evolve out of a youth design contest. According to the grant administrator and President of The Conservation Fund, Larry Sleser, "The projects selected this year represent some of the best grassroots conservation and greenway development efforts in the United States."



Orange Coast River Park

Visit www.fhbp.org

Got River? Workshop

The Santa Ana River Watershed Alliance, a project of Earth Resource Foundation, hosted the first in a series of workshops to promote protection and restoration of the Santa Ana River. Dr. Fraser Shilling of UC Davis presented useful information on watershed assessment and visioning. Two panels were organized, the first included local experts on river parkway plans and they helped the audience learn how conservation groups and counties are protecting the river. The second panel educated participants on methods cities and citizens can employ to conserve water. Supervisor Correa offered his vision for the River and updated the group on threats.



Santa Ana River

Visit www.SantaAnaRiverWatershed.org

El Morro to Be Open to the Public

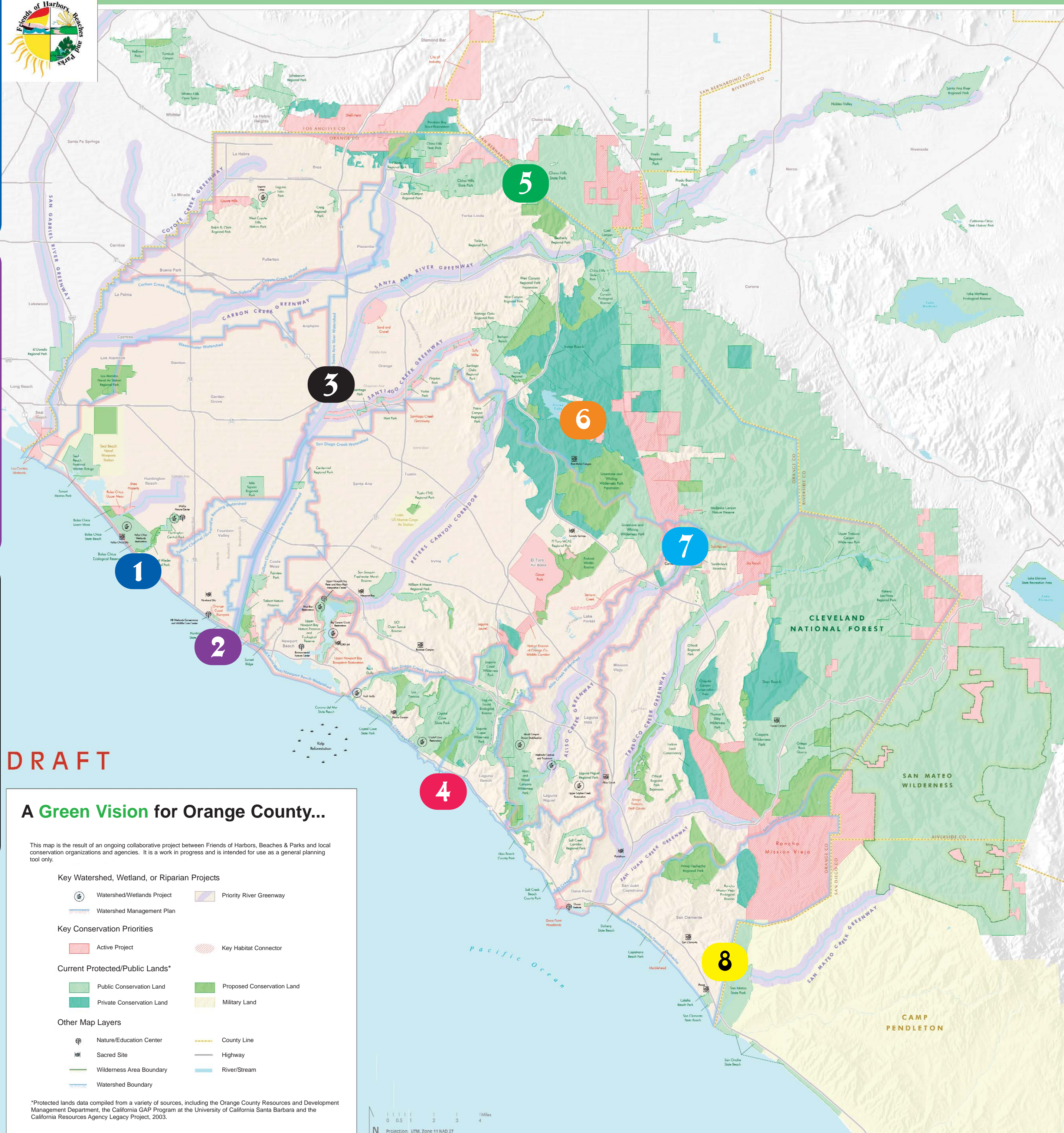
The public has waited twenty-seven years for access to the El Morro portion of Crystal Cove State Park - the wait will soon be over. Trailer tenants who have been living on the site and sued repeatedly to remain there, have finally agreed to leave March 1, 2006. Once the trailers are removed and when the site is cleaned and restored the public will have access at long last to this beautiful canyon. Soon thereafter overnight campgrounds will be built. Unfortunately, the delay created when the tenants refused to leave, escalated the cost of building the campground. Consequently, State Parks will need to cut back on some of its plans to keep the project within budget.



Crystal Cove State Park

Visit www.YourBeach.org

Orange County



Articles: 1, 3 & 8 Melanie Schlotterbeck, 2 Patsee Ober, 4 & 5 Claire Schlotterbeck, 6 Theresa Sears, 7 Gloria Sefton
Photos: 1, 3 & 4 Melanie Schlotterbeck, 2 Patsee Ober, 5 Dr. Jeff Hansen, 6 Helen de la Maza, 7 Kari Kgsarda, 8 Gail Prothero

Map: GreenInfo Network
310-558-3660

Green Vision Map

Celebrating 40 years of LWCF

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Chino Hills State Park

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program celebrated its 40th year and will award its 40,000th grant to Chino Hills State Park. The 13,000 acre State Park, located at the juncture of four Southern California counties, will receive \$4.2 million dollars from LWCF. The grant will be used to pave the now dirt and gravel road through the Park's main entrance in Bane Canyon. In an event held at the end of November by the National Park Service and California State Parks, federal and state staff and representatives, county supervisors and non-profit organizations gathered to enjoy a day in the Park and celebrate!

Visit www.HillsForEveryone.org

East Orange Project Vote

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Irvine Ranch Lands

A six-mile long 4,000 unit tract-house development in the hills of East Orange was approved by Orange's City Council. The Irvine Company project, stretching from Santiago Canyon Road and Jamboree to Irvine Lake, would be built on one of the last large undeveloped parcels in the County. The project does not add any supporting infrastructure to the currently rural region. Citing unacceptable traffic congestion, overcrowded schools and multi-year deficits, a group of concerned residents are working to stop the project. Following the Council's approval last month, the group is exercising all available options to continue the fight.

Visit www.EastOfOrange.org

Canyon Activists Win Court Battle

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Trabuco Canyon

In a great victory for natural resources and open space, the Court of Appeal unanimously held that approvals of two proposed housing projects - SaddleCreek and SaddleCrest - be overturned. The project sites have 600 acres of mainly oak woodland and native chaparral. The court ordered the Board of Supervisors to vacate its approvals and amendment to the Foothill-Trabuco Specific Plan that would have allowed the destruction of nearly 1000 oak and sycamore trees and mass-grading for the 162-unit project. In October, the California Supreme Court denied the developer's and County's petitions to challenge the appellate opinion.

Visit www.SaddlebackCanyons.org

State Parks Commission Meeting

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San Onofre State Beach

A State Parks Commission Meeting was held in San Clemente to hear public testimony on the proposed extension of the Foothill-South Toll Road. In a record breaking turn out over 1000 concerned citizens came to express their opinions on the proposed Toll Road, which would cut through San Onofre campground and San Mateo State Beach. The road proposal would destroy the only remaining intact coastal watershed south of Malibu and ruin Trestles, a world famous surfing beach. The State Parks Commission heard the public comments and passed a resolution that protects the Park from the Toll Road.

Visit www.FriendsOfTheFoothills.org