Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks (FHBP) works to protect the natural beauty and wildlife resources of the Orange County coastline and its inland waterways. Learn more at: www.FHBP.org

Don Thomas (1933 - 2013)

Sometimes we are lucky enough to have a new person cross our life's path and bring not only good ideas, good laughs, a great friendship and moments that translate themselves into smiles and determination.
Don Thomas is such a person for me. We met in 1997 as we tried to decide what to do in the aftermath of the County’s laying off of its Harbors, Beaches and Parks Director, Bob Fisher. Although we decided to create a new countywide organization (Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks – FHBP), it likely would not have lifted off the ground without Don’s good nature and steadfast willingness to take on the job of “treasurer.”

That was not the only thing Don wanted to do but someone had to do it. What he wanted to do was essentially rebuild our minds and will stay there as we continue to carry out his clearly articulated message — save the animals and their habitat, teach the children, and live within your means both ecologically and financially. My appreciation of Don is deep as I remember his abiding wisdom and total integrity in running a non-profit organization. In articles he wrote for our newsletter I found phrases that exemplify his mindset. He loved our Orange County parks. In a 2015 article he began with “Orange County residents are fortunate to have one of the finest park systems in the country” and ended with “We need to elevate the position of Harbors, Beaches and Parks in the County’s hierarchy of vital infrastructure components. The amenities of parks, open space and historical and natural features of the County are what ameliorate the quality of life here, encourages people to see this as a place to care for, not as a place to work and then abandon for greener pastures.”

Don has been honored by the Board of Supervisors’ 1999 Volunteer of the Year Award, Sea & Sage Audubon Conservation Area, and FHBP’s Green Valley Award. He is the personification of what FHBP is all about. To honor his life, we will create a tangible tribute to him to acknowledge his gifts, love of the outdoors and kinship with children.

By: Jean Schlachter

If you live in or near wildlands and have experienced a fire there, you know what it is like to wake up to a new world together that you are most vulnerable on days with high winds, high temperatures, and low humidity (that siphons moisture from preventively treated structures) and you have learned that we no longer can depend on the dry summer months, instead, it is you ‘round.

Additionally, as climate change impacts are felt, fire frequency will increase with more extreme weather events. Because you know this, you won’t worrywhy decision makers keep preparing houses deeper and deeper into the rural areas of the county. With so much of the windblown streets cut into Orange County, developers have set their sights on building in steep rural canyons served by winding two lane roads. They often plan sites on sites that are ‘Columbus axes’ — thinking the entire world is flat. Infrastructure costs are high so the build up the risk of increasing numbers are simple to create with pads with views.

Often developers are not required to improve these two lane roads because the county are red flagged - - considered too “hazardous.”

This typical planning scenario escalates the danger for existing and future residents for two main reasons. First, most fires in our area are human-caused and they start in canyon bottoms, where the roads are, and then race uphill putting ridge top homes at risk. Most natural fires (lightning strikes) ignite at ridge tops and progress more in the saddles. Second, ridge top developments are often to house older homes, in fact, most are reclassified after a fire and then used to develop new housing that can re classified after a fire.

The City of Orange has become a model for educating the community on fire prevention with its partnerships with “If you live in or near wildlands and have experienced a fire there, you know what it is like to wake up to a new world together that you are most vulnerable on days with high winds, high temperatures, and low humidity that siphons moisture from preventively treated structures” and that we no longer can depend on the dry summer months, instead, it is you ‘round.

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Orange County. Learn more at: www.FHBP.org

Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks Winter 2013

Who Are We

Laguna Canyon Foundation
Friends of the Great Park
Citrus Heights SPCA
Sierra Club, Orange County
Surfrider Beach Chapter
Beach Cities Sea Watch
St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church

Advisory Board

Marian Burgers
Connie Boardman
Row D Boyle Bays
Louise Cohen
Debbie Cook
Sandy Geits
Tom Harmon
Enders Hart
Jack Kesting
Stephanie Pucchio
Bob Perry
Matt Rayl
Claire Schlachter
Vicki Swanson
Dick Zembal

Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks

OUTDOORS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Suggested Recycling

-Recycling
-Reduce
-Reuse

Tips for managing waste

-Organize recycling centers.
-Use recycling bins in common areas.
-Encourage residents to recycle.

Types of waste

-Plastic
-Glass
-Paper
-Cardboard
-Compost

Lessons Learned

Emerging studies by fire scientists are breaking down stubborn myths. Reducing fire risk in our area usually focuses on fuel reduction projects that have resulted in our native chaparral and coastal sage scrub. There are two problems with this. When native vegetation is removed, non-native grasses flourished. These dry season, ignite easier and spread faster than native vegetation. Additionally, cleared areas and fire breaks, have proven to be ineffective in Santa Ana wind conditions unless fire fighters, at great risk, are present on the firebreak. After all, the Freeway Complex Fire jumped the 14 lane wide I-5 (Riverside Freeway).

Fire resistant building construction is another focal point for reducing risk. Many of the homes in Orange County’s canyon and foothill areas have been there a long time, long before we knew better. Individual homesteaders in these areas must accept responsibility for reducing the risk to their homes: removing ladder fuels, installing a fire resistant roof and vents, clearing leaf debris in gutters, etc. For newer homes, boxed eaves, and spindles (in the attic) can also help. But preventative measures are only as strong as the weakest link. Pool modification zones get overgrown. Leaf debris left on a roof tile can smoulder in flame when fanned by winds. A瓦is actually concedent open ink can ignite a house that then ignites other houses.

Rural land use planning discussed as a way to reduce fire risk. Common sense and repeated catastrophic experience show that you need to keep homes farther away from exposed rural canyons and bottoms, where the roads are, and then race uphill putting ridge top homes at risk. Most natural fires (lightning strikes) ignite at ridge tops and progress more in the saddles. Second, ridge top developments are often to house older homes, in fact, most are reclassified after a fire and then used to develop new housing that can reclassified after a fire.

City of Orange

City itself is requiring a “green” roof on the Sea Terrace Park maintenance building to complement the solar panels on the nature and community centers.

Huntington Beach

The City’s approach to adopting a form-based code specifically one that identifies two transportation corridors (Beach and Edinger) in Huntington Beach was awarded recognition by the Orange County Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) and the California Chapter of the APA for the project’s streamlined approval process and incorporation of mixed use developments. The City has also added sustainable features in its specific plans and projects including LEE standards, water efficiency, energy efficiency, and materials and resources. In addition, Huntington Beach has a long-standing commitment to the environment, demonstrated by its 40-year-old Environmental Board which advises the City Council on environmental threats and opportunities.

San Clemente

The City of San Clemente was honored for excellence of updating its General Plan and will hire two new professionals that will work in tandem with the community intensively. First, the City incorporated a Health Wellness Services section that focuses on livable communities and features that promote walkability. Second, the City has required a new program that takes into account the city’s commitment to sustainability with meaningful public input that creates a road map and timeline to incorporate green opportunities and actions in a work plan. The City has taken significant action on a host of other sustainable topics such as diverting 65% of solid waste (with an initial goal of 75%) and developing a Climate Action Plan as part of the General Plan. The City has achieved a 30% energy savings by installing 11 HVAC units and switching the lights to LED units.
Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks (FHBP) seeks to provide the needed voice and funding to protect the natural parks and beaches of Orange County. Learn more at: www.FHBP.org

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ FriendsofFHBP

Don Thomas (1933 - 2013)

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Don Thomas was such a person for me. We met in 1997 as we tried to decide what to do in the aftermath of the County’s laying off of its Harbors, Beaches and Parks Director, Bob Fisher. Although we decided to create a new countywide organization (Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks - FHBP), it likely would not have lifted off the ground without Don’s good nature and steadfast willingness to take on the job of “treasurer.”

That job was the least of what Don wanted to do but someone had to do it. What he wanted to do was everlastingly embellish our minks and still wear them. We continue to carry out his dearly departed message — save the animals and their habitat, teach the children, and live within your means both ecologically and financially.

I am proud of Don’s deep, personal understanding of the environment and his long-standing admiration and total involvement in running a non-profit organization. In articles he wrote for our newsletter I found phrases that exemplify his mindset. He loved our Orange County parks. In a 2005 article he began with “Orange County residents are fortunate to have one of the finest park systems in the country” and ended with “We need to elevate the position of Harbors, Beaches and Parks in the County’s hierarchy of vital infrastructure components. The amenities of parks, open space and historical and natural features of the County are what enhance the quality of life here. Encouraging people to see this as part of the job, not as a place to work and then abandon for greener pastures.”

Don has been honored by the Board of Supervisor’s 1999 Volunteer of the Year Award, Sea & Sage Audubon Conservation Awards and FHBP’s Green Valley Award. He is the personification of what FHBP is all about. To honor his life, we will create a tangible tribute to him to acknowledge his gifts, love of the outdoors and kinship with children.

Freeway Complex Fire

On a hot, dry and windy November morning of 2008, a vehicle ignited brush near the Green River Extending along the 91 freeway in Corona. Almost two hours later a fire started eight miles northeast in Bosque. Again, fire fighting resources were already stretched thin because of other fires in Southern California. With the aid of capricious winds, over the next 24 hours the two fires merged into the Freeway Complex Fire. Nearly 300 homes and buildings were damaged or destroyed and 97% of Chino Hills State Park burned. With the fast moving flames and the closure of the 14 freeway, residents in Yorba Linda faced complete girdlock as they self-evacuated. Some residents reported it was safer and faster to flee by foot, because of the traffic chaos. Others reported that they nearly buried to death in their cars. This same evacuation girdlock also kept firefighters from getting in. The main area’s proved they could not accommodate a massive and simultaneous evacuation from the hills during the fire.

After evaluating this fire storm, officials realized there were many things that went wrong during the Freeway Complex Fire. The weather forecast was so accurate that women were blocked because no one had a key to the locked gate. Second, a booster pump station shutdown due to the heat thereby depriving fire fighters of water. Third, fire free zones efforts could keep up with the fire's ember storm which was carried by 60 mile per hour winds. In fact, many of the houses that were still standing were on the interior of the community as opposed to the edge nearest the burning wildlands. These relentless embers got into attics or were sucked in through running air conditioners subsequently burning the house down. Some residents sometimes moved hundreds of miles after the fire front passed. At one point, the fire was spreading so fast it became uncontrollable by 60 mile per hour winds. In fact, many of the houses that were still standing were on the interior of the community as opposed to the edge nearest the burning wildlands.

Lessons Learned

Emerging studies by fire scientists are breaking down stubborn myths. Reducing fire risk in our area usually focuses on fuel reduction which has resulted in our native chaparral and coastal sage scrub. There are two problems with this. When native vegetation is removed, non-native grasses flourish. These dry grasses, ignite easier and spread faster than native vegetation. Additionally, cleared areas and fire breaks, have proven to be ineffective in Santa Ana wind conditions unless fire fighters, are at great risk, are present on the job front. After all, the Freeway Complex Fire jumped the 14 lane wide 91 (Fresno’s) freeway.

Fire resistant building construction is another focal point for reducing risk. Many of the homes in Orange County’s canyon and foothill areas have been there a long time, longer than we knew before. Individual homeowners in these areas must accept responsibility for reducing the risk to their homes: removing ladder fuels, installing a fire resistant roof and vents, clearing leaf debris in gutters, etc. For newer homes boxed eaves, and spindrels (in the attic) can also help. But preventative measures are only as strong as the weakest link.

Fuel modification zones get overgrown. Leaf debris left on a tile roof can emberize in flame when fanned by winds. A naturally occurring roof accidentally left open can ignite a house that then ignited other structures damaged or destroyed.

Orange's Measure FF - PASSED

Diana Point

Diana Point is one of the few Orange County cities that has taken a stand against both the dced plastic bag and Styrofoam and launched its zero waste campaign. To reduce waste the City has also incorporated an environmental purchasing policy. For residents and businesses the City has adopted a flat rate for the installation of PV cells for solar energy. They’ve also created interpretive programs focused on tidal resources and a comprehensive water quality program that includes 14 elements on the excellence rating. The City itself is requiring a “green” roof on the Sea Terrace Park maintenance building to complement the solar panels on the nature and community centers.

Huntington Beach

The City’s approach to adopting a form-based code specific to the City’s two transportation corridors (Beach and Edinger) in Huntington Beach was awarded recognition by the Orange County Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) and the California Chapter of the APA for the project’s streamlined approval process and incorporation of mixed use developments. The City has also added sustainable features in its specific plans and projects including LEED standards, water efficiency, energy efficiency, and materials and resources. In addition, Huntington Beach has a long standing commitment to the environment, demonstrated by its 40 year old Environmental Board which advises the City Council on environmental threats and opportunities.

San Clemente

The City’s approach to updating its General Plan and will have two new chapters that will provide the community immensely. First, the City incorporated a Health and Wellness section that focuses on livable communities and features that promote walkability. Second, the City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan as part of the General Plan. The City has a 30% energy savings by installing 11 HVAC units and switching the lights to LED starting immediately.
By Claire Schloetterback

If you live in or near wildlands and have experienced a fire there, you probably have vivid memories of those experiences together with a sense that you are now more vulnerable on days with high winds, high temperatures, and low humidity (that spurs moisture from plants). You may also have learned that there is no longer a cold and dry period during the summer months, instead, it is year-round. Additionally, as climate change impacts are felt, fire frequency will increase as a result of the extreme weather events. Because you know this, you wonder why decision makers keep approving houses deeper and deeper into the rural areas of the county. With much of the Santa Ana basin nearly built out, Orange County developers have set their sights on building in steep rural canyons served by winding two lane roads. They often plan sites near to the Columbia axes – thinking the entire world is flat. Infrastructure costs are high so the builders level the ridgelines to increase density and create pads with views. Often developers are not required to improve those two lane roads because the road network is already considered too “hazardous.”

This typical planning scenario outlines the danger for existing and future residents for two main reasons. First, most fires in our area are human-caused and they start in canyon bottoms, where the roads are, and then race uphill putting ridge top houses at risk. Most natural fires (lightning strikes) ignite at ridge tops and progress more slowly downhill. Second, ridge top developments are often too small for fire fighting, yet allow residents (and non-residents) to increase the wildfire urban interface (where nature and homes meet). Two case studies illustrate the dangers of increasing the wildfire urban interface.

Santiago Fire

The October 2007 Santiago Fire Siege was started by an arsonist near Santiago Canyon Road and Silverado Canyon Road, east of Irvine Lake. Other Southland fires already

Wetlands in the San Diego

The City of San Diego has a long-standing commitment to the environment, as demonstrated by the City’s 40-year-old Environmental Plan which advises the City Council on environmental threats and opportunities.

Huntington Beach

The City’s approach to adopting a form-based code specifically focused on two transportation corridors (Beach and Edinger) in Huntington Beach was awarded recognition by the Orange County Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) and the California Chapter of the APA for the project’s streamlined approval process and incorporation of mixed use developments. The City has also added sustainable features in its specific plans and projects including LED streetlights, water efficiency, energy efficiency, and materials and resources. In addition, Huntington Beach has a long-standing commitment to the environment, demonstrated by its 40-year-old Environmental Plan which advises the City Council on environmental threats and opportunities.

San Clemente

The City of San Clemente was one of few Orange County cities that has taken a stand against both the drab plastic bag and Styrofoam and launched its own zero waste campaign. To reduce waste the City has also incorporated an environmental purchasing policy. For residents and businesses the City has adopted a flat rate for the installation of PV cells for solar energy. They’ve also created interpretive programs focused on tidal resources and a comprehensive water quality program that includes 18 chapters on the coast’s wide variety of ecosystems. The City itself is requiring a “green” roof on the Sea Terrace Park maintenance building to complement the solar panels on the nature and recreation centers.

Dana Point

Dana Point is one of few Orange County cities that has a long-standing commitment to the environment, as demonstrated by the City’s 40-year-old Environmental Plan which advises the City Council on environmental threats and opportunities.

City Effects to Go Green

Fullerton’s Measure W – PASSED

Measure W was the people’s referendum on the 2011 Fullerton City Councilreenovation ordinance. Measure W requires that new multi-story housing developments maximize the use of native vegetation in the building and landscaping of a project to achieve a 30% reduction in the use of non-native vegetation, as compared with the baseline condition of the project’s surrounding natural vegetation. It also includes a provision that any non-native vegetation that is removed must be replaced with native vegetation or a 5% non-native vegetation replacement fee must be paid to the City. This measure received 80% from voters and will help Fullerton achieve its Climate Action Plan goals.

Laguna’s Measure CC – FAILED

Measure CC was the people’s referendum on the 2011 Laguna Beach City Council code that would have required developers to build affordable housing with every new housing project. This measure failed to pass the vote by a 51%-49% margin. The City Council has since adopted a new affordable housing program that is working to meet the operating challenges of the measure.

Orange’s Measure FF – FAILED

Measure FF was the people’s referendum on the 2011 Orange County Measure FF, which would have required developers to build affordable housing with every new housing project. This measure received 51% from voters and will help Orange County achieve its Climate Action Plan goals.

Fullerton’s Measure W

Fullerton, CA

Fullerton’s Measure W is a referendum on a 2011 Fullerton City Council ordinance that would have required developers to build affordable housing with every new housing project. This measure failed to pass the vote by a 51%-49% margin. The City Council has now adopted a new affordable housing program that is working to meet the operating challenges of the measure.

Laguna’s Measure CC

Laguna Beach, CA

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Orange’s Measure FF

Orange, CA

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Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks Winter 2013

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By: Jean Watt

Manny Kiesser

Bob Kanne

Tina Thompson

Mike Wellborn

Jean Watt, Editor

Anchukian, Sea & Sage Chapter

Bobina Canyon Conservancy

Wildlands Park Volunteers

Earth First Foundation

Ecoalliance of Ecosystem Conservation

Great Park Environmental Coalition

Huntington Beach Wetlands

Conservancy & Wildlife

Laguna Canyon Conservancy

www.FHBP.org

Fullerton’s Measure W - PASSED

Measure W was the people’s referendum on the 2011 Fullerton General Plan. The City Council’s new Comprehensive Plan development, the Water Conservation Plan, the Water Quality Plan and the Coastal Plan focused on tidal resources and a comprehensive water quality program that includes 124 diversions on the coastline. The City has achieved a 30% water conservation featuring 18 diversions on the coastline.

By: Angela Lindstrom

Fullerton’s Zero-Waste Campaign

San Clemente

San Clemente’s success of updating its General Plan and will help two new sections that will improve the community immensely. First, the City incorporated a Health and Wellness section that focuses on livable communities and features that promote walkability. Second, the City has already adopted a Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) with meaningful public input that creates a road map and timeline to incorporate green opportunities and actions in a work plan. The City has taken significant action on a host of other sustainable topics such as diverting 65% of solid waste (with an initial goal of 75%) and developing a Climate Action Plan as part of the General Plan. The City has achieved a 30% energy savings by installing 11 HVAC units and switching the lights to LED.
**Cielo Vista & Esperanza Hills (Map #2)**

Two projects are proposed for the hillsides above Yorba Linda in unincorporated Orange County. Cielo Vista proposes 112 homes on 87 acres and Esperanza Hills proposes 340 units on 460 acres. Cielo Vista is currently preparing its Environmental Impact Report (EIR) due out in March 2013, while Esperanza Hills just completed its Notice of Preparation in February 2013. The County of Orange is the Lead Agency for both projects. Concerns about these projects include: limited access (through existing residential neighborhoods), wildfire (the Freeway Complex Fire destroyed both properties and more than 1,400 oak and walnut trees), concerns about liability from other unpermitted actions, the Commissioners never done for a housing project before. Learn more: www.HillsForEveryone.org

**Holtz Ranch (Map #3)**

This 113 acre property is located near Cook’s Corner in unincorporated Orange County. The project applicant proposes 65 houses. The County of Orange is the Lead Agency on this project and it was approved by the Board of Supervisors in October 2012. Community concerns include: lack of conformity (with the Cleveland National Forest), and traffic (the only road in or out is Silverado Canyon Road). Conservation groups, led by the Canyon Land Conservation Fund, are currently determining next steps. Learn more at: www.CanyonLand.org

**Saddle Crest (Map #4)**

This 409 acre property is located is between Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa and Newport Beach at the mouth of the Santa Ana River. The project proposes 1,975 homes, a hotel and commercial space. Newport Beach is the Lead Agency on this project and the City Council approved the project in July 2012. Community concerns include: loss of natural resources (the site is home to several listed species and important habitats), traffic impacts (neighboring streets will have to absorb the more than 13,000 additional cars from this project), and loss of connectivity (the site is a critical piece of the planned 1800+ acre Orange Coast River Park). The Banning Ranch Conservancy has filed a CEQA lawsuit with hearings scheduled for spring. Learn more at: www.BanningRanchConservancy.org

**Shea (Map #6)**

The long fought over Shea property in Huntington Beach was approved for a housing development by the Coastal Commission in October 2012. The developer plans to put 111 homes on the 50 acre site which is adjacent to the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. Though there were significant concerns about the lack of analysis on the cumulative impacts, violations to the Local Coastal Plan and Coastal Act and other unpermitted actions, the Commissioners believed that they had no further recourse and approved the project. Though disappointed by the decision, efforts by the Bolsa Chica Land Trust reduced the project size by one third, with the developer responsible to restore 13 acres of wetlands to the site. Learn more about the Shea project and upcoming Goodell project at: www.BolsaChicaLandTrust.org