



President's Message



Mark your calendars for the Community Wide Forum co-hosted by REC on Saturday, April 13th at the Malibu Conference Center at Calamigos Ranch. It's time we started fighting back with a bigger army. With the Coastal Commission virtually banning horses in Malibu; with the County's recent attempts to do the same; with the Park Service, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management closing trails and public access; we need to develop a broad coalition to preserve our equestrian and recreation rights.

On April 13th representatives of Homeowner Associations, Realtor organizations, Labor groups, Farmers, Ranchers, individuals and outdoor enthusiasts will gather to develop a broad strategy to effectively resist these anti-recreation efforts and change the attitude of our public officials.

We need your support and input. Please tell your friends and neighbors to also save the date.

Ruth

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Malibu Land Use Plan

In a move that was no surprise to equestrians, the Coastal Commission has recommended adoption of a new land use plan for the City of Malibu that all but bans horses. By limiting the amount of area that can be disturbed (graded), they have eliminated most horse facilities. By creating ESHA's (Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas) and mandating ESHA buffers, they have banned horses and livestock and agriculture from most open areas in the mountains. By confining horses and horse facilities to the "irrigated fuel modification zone", they have restricted them to areas where the health and safety codes do not allow horses at all. By eliminating the formula for calculating the number of animals allowed on a parcel, they have made that decision wholly subjective and up to the whims of any coastal staff member.

The plan also makes approximately one half of the homes in Malibu "non-conforming", which will require extensive downsizing and removal of improvements when homeowners attempt to remodel.

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Malibu Land Use Plan (continued from Page 1)

This new plan, which has something in it for everyone to hate, is the fantasy of the social engineers toiling in the bowels of the Coastal Commission bureaucracy. While the Coastal Commission complains bitterly about the full days they sarcastically call “Malibu Days”, when they have to decide permits for residents of Malibu, they seem to have no problem requiring the City Council to decide permits for improvements which have never before needed permits.

Visit the Coastal Commission web site www.coastal.ca.gov and review the plan for yourself. There is still time to write the Commission and express your opposition to the plan.

Recreation Defense Fund

After being battered by rules, plans and regulations that limit public access to recreation and open space areas and curtail equestrian activity on private property, REC has decided to fight back vigorously. We have requested that papers be prepared to form a Recreation Defense Fund. Its sole mission will be to use the administrative and legal system to defeat the adoption of these onerous rules, plans and regulations; and it will be funded separately from REC. It will utilize the talents and resources of consultants, lawyers and advocates to press the case for expanded public and private recreational opportunities.

The Recreation Defense Fund will immediately examine the ban on horses adopted by the California Coastal Commission for the City of Malibu. They will also look closely at the impacts of LA County’s new “Protected Tree Ordinance” and the new Coastal Plan being written by LA County for the unincorporated area surrounding Malibu.

The time has come to utilize whatever tools are necessary in the fight to protect recreation and public access to public lands.

New Planning Commissioner

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich has appointed Patrick Modugno to the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission to replace George Pedersen, who is retiring after three years of service on the Commission. Modugno has served three terms as a Planning Commissioner in the City of Santa Clarita; he has been elected to the San Fernando City Council and held the office of mayor for two terms; and he has also served as a Director of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Protected Tree Ordinance - A Disaster for Homeowners

After last year's disaster with the Woodlands Ordinance, the County Regional Planning staff has prepared a new draft "Protected Tree Ordinance" which will add walnut and sycamore trees to the list of those requiring a permit before pruning or removal. The new ordinance proposes several significant changes. First, it will require many more permits to be reviewed as the result of the added trees and the reduction in trunk size from 8 inches to 6 inches for trees needing a permit. Second, the proposal eliminates the grandfathering of already approved projects. Third, it would make the need to remove oaks sufficient reason to deny a permit, which is not currently a cause for denial. Fourth, it establishes around all trees a protected zone which may not be disturbed or encroached upon. Fifth, the proposal calls for an in-lieu fee in addition to replacement trees. There is also a "loophole" allowing resource conservation districts to identify additional trees for protection. It would appear that the ordinance carefully incorporates a "Catch 22" which will preclude a property owner from using the property under their own trees by requiring "alternative development plans" and not being able to meet the County's very subjective "burden of proof." The County wants to control your everyday use of YOUR OWN PROPERTY. Why were there only 2 workshops, one at 9 am on a workday & one at a difficult to find location in Topanga, for a county-wide ordinance?

Your comments on this ordinance are important. Contact the County at lstark@planning.co.la.ca.us.

Sullivan Canyon

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority lost their first-round legal battle to force the Los Angeles Unified School District to follow State law in the sale of the Old Ranch Road School site in Sullivan Canyon. Appeals and a request for a writ are underway.

In the meantime, homeowners' groups from throughout the area are endorsing the preservation of this equestrian open space and are expressing their support to Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski, who may ultimately have to decide the future use of the site if it is acquired for development.

The importance of this site cannot be over emphasized. With the Coastal Commission's pending ban on horses in Malibu, and with the State Park's eviction of horses from Will Rogers State Park, Sullivan Canyon remains as the last equestrian location for the entire west side of Los Angeles. If you would like to support the effort to save the site, contact Mary Sweeney at 310-454-3216. Letters to Councilwoman Miscikowski would also be helpful. Her e-mail address is Miscikow@council.lacity.org.

County Horse Boarding Ordinance

It appears that the County has made very little progress in the development of a new boarding ordinance as instructed by the Board of Supervisors last October. The Regional Planning Department staff has indicated that they are preparing to schedule community meetings in the spring. REC has requested a county-wide meeting at a reasonably central location for all interested equestrians. If you, your organization, or anyone you know would like to attend this meeting, please let us know so we can be sure that you are notified of the date and place. Contact us by phone, fax or email.

RS 2477

In 1866, Congress enacted a mining law which, among other provisions, reserved for Congress the sole right to vacate “routes” over federal land. This little known provision, RS 2477, has gained considerable importance as numerous federal departments have attempted to close trails, roads, paths, waterways rail right-of-ways and access points to publicly owned lands. The provision was amended in 1977 when Congress passed the Federal Land Management Policy Act. However, Congress made sure that all routes showing on maps prior to October 21, 1976 remained RS 2477 routes and could only be vacated by Congress.

In order to protect these RS 2477 routes, you must petition your local government to file a blanket assertion. The process is gaining significant momentum throughout the nation. For more information, type RS 2477 in your search engine and it will take you to the San Juan County web page where forms and information can be found. You can also access www.publicland-publicuse.com. This may be the solution to preserving everything that existed prior to 1976.

Will Rogers State Park Evictions

California State Parks Director, Rusty Areias, in a recent editorial in the Los Angeles Times made a feeble attempt to defend his unilateral decision to evict all boarders at Will Rogers State Park.

Claiming that a park visitor recently hurried away because he thought the boarding area was private and off limits, Areias implies that this false impression is widespread and inappropriate for a public facility and somehow justifies his actions. His decision has contributed to the significant equestrian dislocation which is currently taking place throughout west Los Angeles.

What Mr. Areias fails to recognize is that horses are as much a part of Will Rogers’ legacy as his ever present rope. Glossing over the State Park’s poor management and maintenance of the Rogers estate and attempting to blame all the problems on the equestrians is just passing the buck and not taking responsibility for their oversight position. Let’s hope that Mr. Areias’ new Equestrian Advisory Committee takes a good long look at the existing General Plan and assesses the implementation before they decide to take years in starting over. Judge Freidman, Superior Court in Santa Monica, issued an alternative writ to return to court March 8. For further information contact Kelly Harrison <equizotica@aol.com> 310-440-8743.

Chatsworth Reservoir

A battle appears to be brewing over public access to the Chatsworth Reservoir, which hasn’t actually held any water since the 1971 Sylmar earthquake. This 1300-acre site is the largest undeveloped parcel of land remaining in the San Fernando Valley. The City Council set the site aside originally as a preserve in 1997. However, no one has been selected to operate the site, and it has remained locked to public access by the DWP (Department of Water and Power). REC has been monitoring the process to ensure that appropriate trail and equestrian access is provided. Comments should be sent to Councilman Hal Bernson (bernson@council.lacity.org) and the DWP Commission (Commission@ladwp.com).

Forest Plan Update - Future Generations Need Your Help Today

In recent Forest Plan Update meetings, it was quite clear to many recreationists that the only proposals on the table were to restrict recreation, not to enhance it. Several extreme environmental groups are seeking to move areas from former "open" status to restrictive designations of "Wild & Scenic Rivers", "Wilderness Areas", "Research Natural Areas" and "Special Interest Areas". These designations have regulations that restrict use, restrict entry, restrict fire fighting, and restrict trail and road maintenance. Once in effect, they are impossible to reverse.

Organized attacks on Recreation are a very real and present danger. An example is Big Tujunga Canyon in the LA River District of the Angeles National Forest (ANF).

A Wild and Scenic River designation has been proposed for Big Tujunga Creek, which would bring severe restrictive regulations 1/4 of a mile on both sides of the creek. A Research Natural Area has also been proposed for the Condor Peak area, which is contiguous to the Wild and Scenic River area, thus merging one area into another and restricting use in some of the most heavily used areas of the Angeles NF. These two designations would greatly affect picnic areas, campgrounds, equestrian staging areas, and use of trails such as Gold Creek and Trail Canyon, a feeder to the Pacific Coast Trail. At the same time, the Sierra Club, through its California Heritage Wilderness Campaign has proposed to Senator Boxer that Condor Peak area be a Congressionally designated Wilderness. Quite a coincidence!

These and other Special Interest Groups are organized and aggressively playing on User Conflicts to get their agendas passed. **It is time that we all realize that our conflicts are not with each other but rather with those who seek to permanently close our Public Lands to Public Use.**

Can you imagine all of the recreation opportunities that will be lost if these designations are put in place? Just imagine the traffic that the other trails will have to absorb to accommodate these displaced users. With the population of California increasing, the USFS should know that we need MORE Recreation Opportunities...NOT LESS! **No more Special Interest Areas, Research Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and no more Wilderness Areas!**

Remember, when this plan is finalized, it will be USFS Policy for the next 10 to 15 years. **Don't let the extreme environmentalists run you out of Your National Forests!** This Plan Update is for all 4 Southern California National Forests - Angeles, San Bernardino, Cleveland and Los Padres National Forests.

For information call toll-free (866) 252-8846 or visit the USFS website at www.r5.fs.fed.us/sccs

For questions call Skip Willis at (858) 524-0140

GET YOUR OBJECTIONS AND COMMENTS INTO THE RECORD!

E-MAIL, FAX or Postmark by MARCH 31, 2002

E-mail for submitting comments only SoCalForests@fs.fed.us

Fax to (858) 524-0130

Mail: So Cal Forest Plan, 10845 Rancho Bernardo Rd. #200, San Diego, CA 92121-2107

Recreation Providers Survey

REC has given to the National Parks Service the responses received from the private recreation providers who returned the questionnaires distributed throughout the Santa Monica Mountains. The results were very interesting. More than half the facilities began service before the National Recreation Area was formed. Several began operating in the 50's. Only a few have overnight accommodations. Half operate stables in conjunction with other activities. Less than one third indicated their annual visitor count, but the combined number exceeded 35,000 visitors.

The facilities and services provided by the private recreation sector are an invaluable asset to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. REC hopes to see this important information added to the draft General Management Plan being developed by NPS. REC is also looking for the funding to continue the survey and hopes to broaden the participation with more joint efforts with NPS.

Altadena Trail Break

Altadena Equestrian Resources conducted a protest trail ride recently to call attention to the new foothill subdivisions which are blocking historic trails, and are not complying with requirements that provide for reconstruction and rerouting of trails. In particular, they bristle at the LA Vina housing project that severed the Altadena Crest Trail. Over 200 people, including representatives from REC, participated in the ride.

Supervisor Mike Antonovich has called for an "audit" of the La Vina project conditions to determine if the developer has met all of the requirements imposed when the project was approved ten years ago. Congratulations to Amanda Freeman and Tracy Sullivan and their colleagues for organizing this very successful show of support on behalf of recreation and equestrian enthusiasts everywhere.

Monte Nido Attacked by Coastal Commission

Residents of the Monte Nido neighborhood are still reeling from the rash of citations recently issued by the Coastal Commission for equestrian improvements that have been in place for many, many years. In some cases the facilities have been in place for decades. This is only the first of what are expected to be a wave of citations issued in preparation for the release of the Land Use Plan being prepared for the Santa Monica Mountains by the County and the Coastal Commission. That plan is expected to be as onerous as the plan currently pending in Malibu. REC members have been offering advice and assistance to the homeowners. Please let us know if any other neighborhoods are receiving these citations.

REC Newsletter Advertising

REC is now accepting advertising in our newsletters. It will go a long way towards helping to defray the cost of production and mailing. If you would like to advertise your organization or business, please contact Ruth. One-half page ad - \$250, quarter page ad - \$150, business card 1/8 page ad—\$100. All rates are costs per issue, and funds are due at the time the ad is submitted. Rates are for camera ready material.

Save the Date to Ride

Saddle up for Supervisor Michael Antonovich's Trail Dusters Ride on Sunday, May 19, 2002 at Marshall Canyon in La Verne. Early morning breakfast and afternoon barbeque are planned. Details will follow.

Community Wide Forum Planned for April 13th 9 am - 1 pm

A broad based coalition of community groups have joined forces to promote a comprehensive attack on the Land Use Plan recently adopted by the Coastal Commission for the City of Malibu. Please join us on April 13th, from 9:00am to 1:00pm, at the Malibu Conference Center at Calamigos Ranch. Land owners, homeowners, horse owners, outdoor enthusiasts, farmers, ranchers, realtors, labor unions, residents of the local mountains and all citizens concerned about recreation, public access and their property will be there to discuss the horrendous impacts of the proposed plan. Virtually everyone is negatively impacted by this, and we all need to learn what to do to defeat the Coastal Commission here. If the Coastal Commission is successful in imposing these conditions on Malibu, you can expect them to show up everywhere—even in your community. Watch for flyers and future mailers from REC.

Malibu Valley Farms Wins Environmental Stewardship Award

Brian Boudreau, owner of Malibu Valley Farms, has been recognized by the County of Los Angeles Public Works Department for "exemplary leadership in the business community through participation in the Smartbusiness Recycling Program." Jim Noyes, Director of the Department, commended Malibu Valley Farms for their contribution and commitment to preserving the environment. The Department cited the farm's management and disposal of waste as a role model for other farms and ranches. Anyone interested in learning more about the Best Management Practices used at Malibu Valley Farms can contact them at 818-880-5139.

• REC usually meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 pm at Ruth's home in Agoura. Members and guests are encouraged to attend and give ideas. Please call in case there is a change in date or place. (818) 991-1236.

Valuable Contacts

Contact REC: Ruth Gerson, President

Phone (818) 991-1236; fax (818) 889-4540 Visit REC's website at:

Email <ruth@gotorec.org>

www.gotorec.org

Contact the Board of Supervisors

Board of Supervisors 500 W. Temple Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012

SUPERVISOR	Phone	Fax	Email
Michael Antonovich	213 974-5555	213 974-1010	fifthdistrict@bos.co.la.ca.us
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Gloria Molina	213 974-4111	213 613-1739	molina@bos.co.la.ca.us

Contact the Planning Commission

Regional Planning Commission
320 West Temple Street Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone (213) 974-6409 Fax (213) 626-0434
Email <lstark@planning.co.la.ca.us> or
smmnap@planning.co.la.ca.us>

Contact the US Forest Service

So Cal Forest Plan
10845 Rancho Bernardo Road #200
San Diego, CA 92121-2107
Email <SoCalForests@fs.fed.us>
Fax (858) 524-0130

California Department of Parks and Recreation

Rusty Areias, Director
P.O. Box 942896 Phone (916) 653-6995
Sacramento, CA 94296 Fax (916) 657-3903
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Phone (818) 596-4141 Fax (818) 596-4150 Email <Assemblymember.Pavely@Assembly.ca.gov>

Contact the National Park Service

401 W. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
Phone (805) 370-2300 Fax (805) 370-1850
To visit the Plan: www.nps.gov/samo
Email <samo_gmp@nps.gov>

Contact the California Coastal Commission

South Central Coast District
89 South California Street, Suite 200
Ventura, CA 93001
Attention Gary Timm, District Manager
Phone (805) 641-0142 Fax (805) 641-1732
Sara Wan, Chairman
22350 Carbon Mesa Road
Malibu, CA 90265
Phone (310) 456-6605

RECREATION & EQUESTRIAN COALITION

Membership Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (home) _____ (work) _____

FAX _____ (EMAIL) _____

I can help with...

Phone Committee _____

Attend Hearings _____

Organize Events _____

Distribute Flyers _____

Other _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

Individual \$25 _____

Family \$50 _____

Organization \$100 _____

Business \$250 _____

Donation _____

REC Hat \$12 _____

Total \$ _____

Please mail your check payable to: REC • P.O. Box 245 • Agoura Hills, CA 91376

REC Mission Statement

The mission of the Recreation and Equestrian Coalition (REC) is to inform the public and policy makers about access to and the use of diverse recreational opportunities available throughout Los Angeles County and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. REC will protect and defend the region's rich natural diversity and promote public/private partnerships to preserve and expand visitor-serving recreational facilities.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Your \$25 annual membership is the primary source of our funds for REC activities. It supports the coordination of efforts to protect public access to public lands, the education of policy makers and the public, and the newsletter for spreading the word about problems and notifying you of hearings and meetings. If you are not yet a member of REC, we hope you will join. Send your street or e-mail address to ruth@gotorec.org or to PO Box 245, Agoura Hills, CA 91376, or leave a phone message at 818-991-1236, and we'll send you a membership application. We appreciate your support by attending meetings, workshops, hearings and events, by sending emails and faxes, and through financial donations - all of which help to preserve our equestrian and outdoor lifestyle.

Do we have your email so we can contact you quickly when urgent issues arise and we need your support? You will still receive newsletters by snail mail.

- REC is a 501(c)3 tax deductible, nonprofit, charitable/educational organization.

Agoura Hills, CA 91376

P.O. Box 245

RECREATION & EQUESTRIAN COALITION

