



President's Message

Summertime is rapidly approaching, and I'm sure everyone is making plans to enjoy the great outdoors with their family and friends. Here in Southern California, we have a great deal to enjoy with the diverse recreational opportunities available in our community. I hope you will take full advantage of using the trails, campgrounds and parklands to recreate.

Remember that REC is committed to its important role in helping to preserve the recreational opportunities for everyone in the region. It is a mission we take very seriously.

Further, we want to expand those opportunities. Along with other community members and organizations, REC strongly supports a long-promised equestrian campground at Malibu Creek State Park, a promise that was made 24 years ago. ETI Corral 63, coordinators of this project, recently met again with the representatives of State Parks. Let's think good thoughts and look to the dream finally coming true, hopefully located at the Reagan Ranch.

We could use your encouragement to State Parks with a letter of support addressed to: Superintendent Russ Guiney, Angeles District, California State Parks. For more information, please contact me. If you will mail, fax, or email your letter to me at the sites on the back of this newsletter, I will make a copy for our records and give it to him. Thanks so much for your support of the campground. Don't forget to renew your REC membership for this year.

Ruth Gerson

Sullivan Canyon

Efforts of the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association are inching forward with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Senator Shelia Kuehl has endorsed the need to preserve this important equestrian facility in Brentwood. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has agreed to take the lead in negotiating with the school district. The community has even offered a \$100,000 endowment to ensure the ongoing outdoor programs for inner city youth and disabled children. The involved parties are still millions of dollars apart on the price, but at least the negotiations are underway.

Special points of interest:

- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Draft General Management Plan
- SEA Update
- REC Mission Statement

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Planning Commissioner Resigns

Planning Commissioner Cheryl Vargo, appointed by Supervisor Don Knabe, has submitted her resignation effective the end of May. Cheryl will be sorely missed. She has been a voice of reason and moderation on the Commission. She clearly understood the importance of recreation and the need for access to public recreation lands. We are very grateful for the support and assistance that we received from Cheryl on behalf of outdoor recreation in Los Angeles County.

Effective June 1, Wayne Rew, a former city councilman for the City of La Mirada, will serve on the Planning Commission.

County Launches New Attack on Backyard Boarding

Continuing their efforts to promote a solution where there isn't a problem, the Board of Supervisors, led by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, have asked the Planning Department staff to draft an ordinance amending regulations for the boarding of horses in the A-1 zone. Up until now, the only people with a problem with the current ordinance are those who want to eliminate horses.

The Board's motion is drafted to make it sound like this new ordinance will make things simpler. However, it proposes that boarding be subject to "Directors Review". You can translate that as expensive filing fees, expensive consulting fees, and a legitimate way for your neighbor or your local politician to move horses out of your neighborhood.

Prepare for a BIG county-wide fight on this issue.

Envirohorse Has the Answers

Looking for sound technical and scientific information on horses and the environment? Try this resource. Envirohorse has published research papers refuting the anti-horse activists who claim that horses pollute, pose a threat to human health and impact the environment. They also provide information on "Best Management Practices" for manure management and the latest information on Certified Weed Free Feed. Check out their web page at www.californiastatehorsemen.com/envirohorse.htm

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area - Draft General Management Plan

There is still time to submit your comments to the National Park Service on their proposed General Management Plan (GMP) for the SMMNRA until May 30th. If you do not have a copy, call 805-370-2300 or visit the web site at www.nps.gov/samo. The Park Service **NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

REC has prepared extensive comments highlighting the following points:

1. The Plan does not accommodate future demand for use of the recreation area. With a 12% annual visitor increase to the SMMNRA, more access and more facilities are needed, not less. There should be an increase of trails, trailheads, trail camps, campgrounds, and restrooms.
2. The Plan does not even mention the contribution of the private recreation providers, such as camps, schools, picnic & fishing facilities, riding stables, restaurants, conference facilities, etc. Even more visitor serving facilities are needed, such as horse and bike rentals.
3. The Plan proposes to reduce usage of the park at over 60% of the most popular locations. The plan effectively takes the word “recreation” out of its name, with the visitor access drastically restricted. The terms habitat preserve, riparian area, sensitive resource, compatible recreation, as well as road and trail closures, are invisible fences to keep the public from enjoying the open spaces purchased with their hard-earned, taxpayer dollars.
4. The Plan ignores the historic and cultural contributions of the farms, ranches and land grants that were fundamental in preserving the large expanses of land now under Park ownership. Some of the places are alive today in the names of Trippett Ranch, Will Rogers Ranch, Roberts Ranch (Solstice), Sampo Ranch (Hope), Reagan Ranch, Cheseboro, and Danielson Ranch.
5. The Plan violates the commitments made in the original legislation that created the National **Recreation** Area.

For more details on the impacts of the plan, read the March edition of this newsletter on the REC website at www.gotorec.org.

As advocates for responsible public use of public lands, we have expressed our profound disappointment with the lack of vision presented by the draft plan. Surely, NPS can do much better for the benefit of the public in this great land of opportunity. The public deserves more than a cookie-cutter, look-but-don't-touch plan by the National Park Service. This unique National Recreation Area begs for a unique vision to match its unique character and location.

We are eager to assist in the considerable work necessary to redraft this document into a realistic, visionary plan; and we are willing to take the time and energy required to do it right! We hope that NPS will give us that opportunity.

PLEASE WRITE TO NPS WITH YOUR COMMENTS.

SEA Update

REC submitted extensive comments on the newly proposed Significant Ecological Area designations prepared by the Department of Regional Planning. The proposal would designate virtually all of the unincorporated area in the County as an SEA. Then, of course, there would be an additional and unnecessary level of review for all land use applications; and it would probably eliminate most backyard equestrian activities.

The County staff seemed surprised at the overwhelming opposition that was generated from nearly every corner of the County. The fact that there was very little science to support their conclusions should have been their first sign that the proposal was in trouble.

At this point, they are taking the matter under submission. They are planning to drastically rewrite the proposal and to circulate a revised document sometime next year.

Did You Know That...

Did you know that some of the folks in charge of Parks & Recreation in the City of Thousand Oaks believe it's not healthy for local wildlife if you enjoy running a marathon along the Los Robles Trail? A few years ago one of our citizens organized the "Tough as Nails" trail marathon, which turned out to be a big success. Local runners, once they discovered the breathtaking beauty of the Los Robles Trail, invited friends from out of town to come and enjoy the thrill of a trail marathon in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Permits were secured. Huge ransoms were paid to secure them. Rangers were hired. Rules were followed. The trail was marked. The race was run. Winners were elated. Finishers were proud. A wonderful time was had by all, and it was ordained that the run would become an annual event.

Or so they thought!

When the organizers went to lock in the date for the following year, they received the stunning feedback that Parks & Recreation officials weren't "too thrilled" that "outsiders" had come to run on "their trails". The unbelieving organizers, seeking to placate the implacable force behind them, tried to explain the demographics of the running group; how the average age of the 100 or so runners was around 40, how they ranged in age up to 60; how they were sober, conscientious, hard working, nature loving ordinary people, who were content to just run along quietly through the parkland, who loved running marathons and half-marathons on open trails; and what the heck was going on?

Believe it or not, the response from our swell civil servants at Parks & Rec. in the City of Thousand Oaks was: "No, we cannot issue you a permit at this time, and we don't think that we ever will. We're going to have to think very seriously about the long term psychological effect this run had on the wildlife."

Yes, you read that right. They were going to have to study the wildlife to see if any of them saw any humans running by, and if so, did that horrible sight cause them to suffer long-term psychological effects.

The organizers tried unsuccessfully to disengage this mind-set, but to no avail. The Tough as Nails runners were no match for the Hearts of Stone park rangers, and the marathon was never held again.

Its time to wake up folks. The lunatics are running the asylum, and it's only because we're letting them.

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 _____
 Newsletter _____
 Other _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

Individual \$25 _____
 Family \$50 _____
 Organization \$100 _____
 Business \$250 _____
 Donation _____
 REC Cap \$12 _____

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.

Time to Join and Renew Membership in REC

Now is the time to send your annual dues to REC. Your contribution will enable us to promote recreation and equestrian activities throughout the County, to monitor anti-equestrian zoning and policies, to continue providing a monthly newsletter, and to organize our rides and events. Remember that there is a national movement to restrict the public's access to publicly owned lands. We need your support to resist these efforts in our National Recreation Area. A membership form is provided for you to renew, to join, or to add a friend to REC.

The list of issues important to equestrians and recreation enthusiasts has grown remarkably. If you would like to help monitor and research any of the issues, please contact us and maybe plan to attend our meetings. They are casual, friendly, humorous, informative, and held usually on the second and fourth Monday nights at 7:30 pm. Call to confirm in case of changes 818-991-1236.

We have made great progress so far with only a handful of volunteers. We welcome anyone who is willing to help promote our recreation agenda.

ACTION ALERT - PLEASE RESPOND

REC
*Recreation & Equestrian
Coalition*
P.O. Box 245
Agoura Hills, CA 91376

How to Contact REC

Phone (818) 991-1236; fax (818) 889-4540

Email <ruth@gotorec.org>

P.O. Box 245, Agoura Hills, CA 91376

Visit REC's website at:

www.gotorec.org

How to Contact the Planning Commission

Regional Planning Commission

320 West Temple Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Fax: (213) 626-0434

Email <lstark@planning.co.la.ca.us>

How to Contact the National Park Service

401 W. Hillcrest Service

Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

(805) 370-2300 Phone

(805) 370-1850 Fax

To visit the Plan: www.nps.gov/samo

email: samo_gmp@nps.gov
