



SAVE OPEN-SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2011

SOARusa.org

SOAR Launches Trail Run Series To Support SOAR Renewal

PATAGONIA PARTNERS IN 5-YEAR CAMPAIGN

SOAR is joining forces with Patagonia and three other local races to launch the SOAR Trail Run Series this fall. This series of five great off-road trail runs will include the 7th annual SOAR Run Through the Orchards on October 9 and the Patagonia Salmon Run on November 6.



This year's SOAR Run Through the Orchards will expand to include a 10K race as well as a pre-race Audubon-led bird walk.

In addition to Patagonia, other partners in the SOAR Trail Run Series include Inside Track, CompeteGreen.com, and Josh

Spiker. Each has committed a portion of the proceeds from their races to support SOAR's work and heighten awareness of the upcoming battle to renew the SOAR boundaries, most of which will expire in 2020.

Those who participate in the complete series will receive special awards for supporting SOAR and trail running in Ventura County. There will also be performance-based awards for those who accumulate points over the course of the series. We hope to see many SOAR members participating.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Join the greatest volunteer crew on Earth this fall by helping out at the October 9 SOAR Run Through the Orchards. With our expanded 5K/10K format we'll need more volunteers than ever this year, and we'll need help before the 9th as well. Email us at volunteer@SOARusa.org to let us know you'd like to be on our team!

Prime Farmland Threatened

The SOAR boundaries effectively safeguard much of Ventura County's agricultural land from sprawl development. But farmland inside of urban boundaries can be developed by a vote of just three or four people on a city council. Read inside about two such projects where city councils are paving the way for development of the last remaining pieces of farmland in their urban boundaries - and **join SOAR** to help us continue to be Ventura County's most effective organization for fighting to preserve agricultural resources!



SOAR
TRAIL RUN SERIES

OCTOBER 2

European XC Challenge 5k/10k

Olivas Adobe Park, Ventura
CompeteGreen.com

OCTOBER 9

7th Annual SOAR 5k/10k Run Through the Orchards

Tierra Rejada Valley, Moorpark SOARusa.org

OCTOBER 23

Camarillo Off-Road 5k

Mission Oaks Park OffRoad5k.com

NOVEMBER 6 **patagonia**

18th Annual 5k Salmon Run

Ventura River, Ventura
patagonia.com/salmonrun

NOVEMBER 20

Aloha Turkey Roundup 4k/8k

Arroyo Verde Park, Ventura
InsideTrackVentura.com

REGISTER FOR ALL RACES AT:



or visit RunSOAR.org



THE CONEJO CREEK PROJECT: A VISIBLE TIPPING POINT FOR COUNTY FARMLAND

What proposed project is larger in land mass than Oxnard’s River Park development and would build more housing units than the failed Hidden Creek/North Park development or Adams Canyon project? Answer: The Conejo Creek Properties development proposed to be built on one of the most viewed pieces of farmland in the County.

The project received an initial thumbs up by all members of the Camarillo City Council, and now the developer and the City are working to release the project’s EIR (Environmental Impact Report) this fall in anticipation of future City Council hearings.

The 740 acres of farmland located at the base of the Conejo Grade that the development would pave over would be a visible tipping point for our county’s agricultural roots. Additionally, the 2,500 residential units and 100 acres of industrial development slated for the land would add over 25,000 car trips each day to already congested roads.

Compounding concerns for the project’s location, creeks surround the proposed development site on three sides and the land is also in a floodplain right at the confluence of the Conejo and Calleguas Creeks. Both creeks currently flow naturally into one of the largest coastal salt marsh estuaries in Southern California, Mugu Lagoon. Urban run-off is known to be the single greatest cause of estuary degradation, and urban runoff from the Conejo Creek project will impact both the Lagoon’s critical brown

pelican nesting sites and its viability as a stop-over for thousands of migrating birds.

In addition to creating a precedent-setting loss to prime farmland, and generating excessive traffic, increasing the potential for flooding, and impacting Mugu Lagoon, the Conejo Creek project would also bring urbanization closer to Naval Base Ventura County.

If approved, the project would be the first to leapfrog across Pleasant Valley Road towards the Naval Base. Bringing “sensitive receptors” -- i.e., people living under flight paths-- would create noise and safety concerns that the Base would have to address. Military air stations with their flight training operations have seen base reductions and/or closures throughout the country due to encroaching urban development. The Conejo Creek project would bring similar concerns to Naval Base Ventura County which is our county’s largest employer (16,000 jobs).

There are many reasons to join SOAR’s Rapid Response team, not the least of which is so you can be notified when you can comment on the Conejo Creek project. By all of us joining together our voices will be heard loud and clear. Adding your voice with hundreds of other SOAR members will help protect farmland and open space countywide, and be a greater resource to help in your own part of the county, too.

SOUTHSHORE AND THE NEED FOR VOTER APPROVAL

On a 3-2 vote, the Oxnard City Council recently approved a 1,545 unit housing project called SouthShore on farmland near the Ormond Beach wetlands. Unfortunately this stretch of farmland is inside the City of Oxnard’s urban boundary limit so a SOAR vote was not required. Instead of tens of thousands of voters

having a say on this significant intrusion into farmland, just three people on the city council decided the farmland’s fate, over the objections of residents concerned with traffic congestion, loss of farmland, impacts to sensitive ecosystems, and water overdrafting. The housing project, which also needs approval by LAFCo, is currently headed to court in a suit filed by opponents.

Before SOAR laws sunset in 2020, we will be looking at a



**COUNTYWIDE SUCCESSES,
COUNTYWIDE CHALLENGES**

new initiative to extend their duration, and we will also be reviewing all the existing SOAR boundaries. Your opinion matters. Please contact us with your thoughts at www.SOARusa.org.

CAÑADA LARGA DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL TURNED BACK

VENTURA RIVER PARKWAY PROPOSAL ADVANCED

SOAR joined a coalition with a number of other environmental groups to successfully oppose inclusion of the Cañada Larga Valley in the City of Ventura's Westside development proposal.

Adding the pristine valley to the development proposal was originally approved on a 4-3 vote of the Ventura City Council (Andrews, Monahan, Tracy, and Weir in favor; Brennan, Fulton and Morehouse opposed). Following the coalition's vigorous and effective community organizing, the city council voted unanimously to limit the Westside revitalization effort to the area inside the existing city boundaries.

The coalition partners are now focusing energy on a long-term project to develop a Ventura River Parkway. The ultimate goal is continuous public open space from the headwaters of the Ventura River all the way to the ocean, reconnecting residents with the river and protecting sensitive areas in the floodplain.

Thank you to our SOAR Rapid Response Team members whose emails and testimony helped win this victory for Ventura.

JONES RANCH DEVELOPMENT REMOVED FROM OXNARD GENERAL PLAN

Following two years of strenuous community opposition, and faced with the daunting prospect of a SOAR vote, the City of Oxnard has dropped a proposal to annex nearly 500 acres of farmland between Oxnard and Ventura from its 2030 General Plan. The Del Norte Community Extension area, also known as Jones Ranch, would have replaced SOAR-protected fields with more than 2,500 homes in the area north of El Rio.

MOORPARK PROTECTS PART OF TIERRA REJADA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

The small City of Moorpark stepped up big time when their City Council voted to purchase 80 acres of open space outside its city limits. The land is part of the Tierra Rejada Valley which is one of the last linkages left for wildlife that travel between the Santa Susana Mountains, the Simi Hills and the Santa Monica Mountains. This is the City's largest purchase of open space to date and was facilitated by a fee the City received from developers. Councilmember Roseann Mikos, a SOAR member, tells us the City is exploring potential additional open space

purchases, in collaboration with other entities. These will not only help ensure wildlife passage and keep coyotes, bobcats, deer, mountain lions, etc. out of residential areas, but will also help buffer the city from development with permanently protected open space.

LOS ANGELES TRASH TO FUND OPEN SPACE PURCHASE!

Millions of dollars for the purchase of natural open space will be made available from a fee that came with the approval last month of the expansion to the Simi Valley Landfill. The "Sustainability Fee" imposed by the Board of Supervisors will place a surcharge on out-of-county trash as a means of sustaining more landfill capacity for

Ventura County. The Board has verbally agreed to set aside 40% of the proceeds (expected to net over \$100 million over the life of the permit) for open space acquisition, county parks, and recycling. A formal vote on the distribution is expected in September. If you haven't already done so, join our Rapid Response team and support the open space fund when it comes up for a formal vote.



Cañada Larga Valley stays undeveloped

Photo: Carrie Vonderhaar / Aerial support from LightHawk

Our Mission

SOAR's mission is to make Ventura County a better place to live by limiting urban sprawl, protecting open space and agricultural lands, and promoting livable and sustainable communities in the county and surrounding regions.

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AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

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SOAR FOUNDATION CIRCLE MOMENTUM GROWS

Join now to secure your spot on the 2012 Foundation Circle!



Two years ago we called for 50 SOAR supporters to step up to the plate with an annual donation of \$500 or more to provide the funds needed to keep SOAR at the forefront of the fight to stop urban sprawl and protect open space and farmland in Ventura County.

SOAR members have generously answered that call, and now for two straight years we've met our target. We celebrated in May with our 2nd annual Foundation Circle "Brunch on the Riviera." Foundation Circle and SOAR board members participated in a lively discussion about the future of SOAR and Ventura County while enjoying a delicious locally grown meal prepared by chef, Ventura city councilmember and SOAR board member Brian Brennan on a beautiful deck overlooking the Pacific at the top of the Ventura Hills.

To join our core financial supporters and secure your spot at the 2012 Foundation Circle event, fill out and return the enclosed envelope today.

Thank you to everyone who joined the 2011 SOAR Foundation Circle with their donation of \$500 or more:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
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