

SAVE OPEN-SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2012

SOARusa.org

Waterway Befriended...

Ventura River Gains Powerful Allies

Like the Sespe Wilderness and the Santa Clara River, the Ventura River boasts a passionate and organized advocate in the newly invigorated Friends of the Ventura River.

Building on a successful effort to halt major development plans for the Cañada Larga Valley in 2010, this broad coalition of community groups (including SOAR), businesses, and government agencies is actively working to support restoration and permanent protection of the Ventura River waterway as a functioning ecosystem and as publicly accessible open space.

Stretching from headwaters in the Santa Ynez Mountains through the Ojai Valley and down to the sea along Ventura's western flank, the Ventura River is home to a multitude of native plants and wildlife including the endangered steelhead trout. The river is dammed in two but is nevertheless one of the last remaining wild coastal rivers in Southern California. To learn more and get involved visit friendsofventurariver.org.

Hundreds of Acres of Oxnard Plain Threatened

...But Who Friends Farmland at Risk?

The SOAR initiatives protect thousands of acres of farmland in Ventura County by requiring a vote of the people in order to rezone protected areas for development. But not all farmland in the county is protected by a SOAR initiative. The city councils of Oxnard and Camarillo control the fate of significant portions of the fertile Oxnard Plain that lie inside their urban boundaries.

Much of the farmland in these jurisdictions has already been paved over, and more development looms:

- **Sakioka Farms** – Oxnard recently approved 430 acres of industrial development on this land south of the 101 between Del Norte and Central Avenues.
- **Springville interchange** on the 101 was recently completed, paving the way for 1,440 houses and commercial and industrial development on the strawberry fields in Camarillo.
- **Conejo Creek Properties** – Camarillo continues to move the planning process forward for a 2,500 housing unit and 100+ acres

continued on page 2



Camarillo Sustainable Growth shines light on the proposed Conejo Creek Properties project that would eliminate 740 acres of prime farmland and floodplain at the base of the Conejo Grade.

Making Connections:

How Can the Local Food Movement Support Ventura County Agriculture?

SOAR joined the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance (AFA) and a host of community, agricultural, and business organizations in February at a countywide summit on the future of agriculture in our region. The summit brought together more than 250 agricultural stakeholders to consider how burgeoning interest in locally grown food can be turned into strategies to keep Ventura County agriculture economically viable and sustainable for the long term.



Since the summit, work has been underway to identify and address regulatory barriers to agricultural viability and to assess opportunities for development of a regional food hub to aggregate and distribute fresh local produce to schools in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. For more information contact us at kschmidt@soarusa.org.

Who Friends Farmland?

continued from page 1

of industrial development on 740 acres of prime farmland at the base of the Conejo Grade.

- **Oxnard Union High School District** is pursuing two proposals to build new schools on prime farmland outside the SOAR boundaries, utilizing SOAR's built-in exemption for schools and other kinds of public projects.

Stopping development of farmland inside the urban boundaries will require vigilance and dedicated and informed action, project by project, on the part of each city's residents.

In Camarillo, SOAR board member Merrill Berge's non-profit

Camarillo Sustainable Growth (CSG) is researching and communicating the impacts of the Conejo Creek Properties development on the farmland at the foot of the Conejo Grade, an expanse that for many marks the gateway to Ventura County's rich agricultural heritage and future. For more information and to get involved visit camarillosustainablegrowth.org.

Action Alert!

Review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Conejo Creek Properties Specific Plan now at:
www.ci.camarillo.ca.us.

NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY:

Jobs and Open Space Go Hand in Hand

In April of 2011 Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) hosted a land use forum to begin a discussion with neighboring Ventura County communities regarding coordinating land use policies to ensure the long term operational viability of the naval installations in Ventura County. As a follow up to that forum, a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is being initiated, with the Ventura County Transportation District serving as the Study Sponsor.

The goal of a JLUS is to develop land use policies that preserve the ability of a military installation to perform its assigned mission, thus ensuring its future viability, by preventing the encroachment of incompatible land uses. In addition, a JLUS is meant to better protect the public health, safety and welfare of the communities surrounding an air installation.

Noise and safety concerns are the two factors most affecting Military Air Installation operations nationally. As development encroaches, a Base becomes increasingly concerned with, and limited by, the noise and safety impacts of its flight operations.

Fortunately for Ventura County and the NBVC, agricultural land is the most compatible land use to surround an air installation. Our Oxnard Plain farmland best protects against the possible closure or downsizing of the largest employer in our County. NBVC employs over 19,000 civilian and military personnel and pumps nearly \$2 billion into our local economy.

Agriculture and the NBVC are two critical, and compatible, Ventura County economic engines. The preservation of Ventura County's farmland will help to ensure the future viability of our NBVC. It is a win-win situation for us all.

Practice Safe Citrus!

Ventura County's citrus industry and backyard citrus trees are at risk of invasion and decimation from an incurable Asian bacteria making its way north from Mexico that has already devastated citrus crops in Florida and elsewhere.

The Huanglongbing (HLB) or citrus greening disease is carried by a tiny aphid-like insect called the Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP). ACP has been detected in isolated instances in Ventura County, and HLB has been found as close as a backyard citrus tree in the San Gabriel Valley, prompting a regionwide quarantine on movement of citrus trees and foliage.

The Ventura Ag Commissioner, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, industry groups, and the Ventura County ACP/HLB Task Force, of which SOAR is a member, are hard at work on strategies to prevent and contain the spread of ACP/HLB but they need help from all of us.

ACP/HLB are difficult if not impossible for most people to detect with the naked eye. The spread of ACP/HLB may be virtually inevitable, but there are some things you can do to help thwart its movement, giving researchers more time to find viable means of containment.

What You Can Do:

- Eat local! Don't move citrus fruit, tree cuttings, or potted trees from your yard or neighborhood to other areas.
- Chop up any citrus tree trimmings and leave them under your tree rather than putting them in the yard waste bin.
- Talk to your neighbors, gardeners, grocers, and farmstand vendors to make sure they're aware of ACP/HLB and are taking action to help prevent its spread.

Reagan Library Wins One for the Greenbelt

All's well that ends well: what once was the Cornerstone Church's proposal to fill in five solid acres of open space-zoned land with buildings and enough parking to serve the Ventura County Fair grounds, has now become a scenic preserve for the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.



Reagan Library greenbelt purchase protects important wildlife corridor as well as views.

The 2007 proposal included a bible college, church, amphitheater, administrative offices and a food distribution warehouse – all uses generally not allowed on land zoned for open space. However, Cornerstone Church invoked a federal law that provides

some exemptions for religious land uses, and received partial approval for development.

Fortunately, after development rights had been transferred to another church, the Presidential Library purchased the 140-acre greenbelt parcel from the church this spring. In addition to preserving the views from its Air Force One Pavilion, the purchase also protects a vital link in the county's most critical wildlife corridor, connecting the Santa Monica Mountains with the Simi Hills.

ANNOUNCING THE
SOAR TRAIL RUN SERIES

5 GREAT TRAIL RUNS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING SOAR AND TRAIL RUNNING IN VENTURA COUNTY

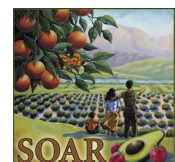
Sep. 16	Camarillo Off-Road 5k Mission Oaks Park, Camarillo OffRoad5k.com
Oct. 7	European XC Challenge 5k/10k Olivas Adobe Park, Ventura CompeteGreen.com
Oct. 21	19th Annual Salmon Run 5k Ventura River, Ventura patagonia.com/salmonrun
Nov. 4	SOAR Run through the Orchards 5k/10k Tierra Rejada Valley, Moorpark SOARusa.org
Nov. 11	Aloha Turkey Roundup 4k/8k Arroyo Verde Park, Ventura insidetrackventura.com

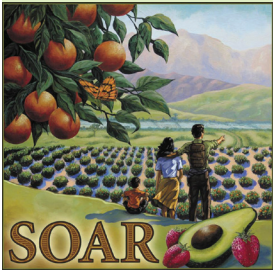
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT RunSOAR.ORG

JOIN
DONATE
VOLUNTEER

Share this newsletter
with your friends

SOARusa.org





**SAVE OPEN-SPACE AND
AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

P.O. Box 7352
Ventura, California 93006

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Presorted Std.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oxnard, CA
Permit No. 1691

SOAR FOUNDATION CIRCLE GROWS



Thank you to everyone who joined the 2012 Foundation Circle with their donation of \$500 or more:

Join our core financial supporters and secure your spot at the 2013 Foundation Circle event by filling out and returning the enclosed envelope today.

For the third year in a row SOAR members answered our call for 50 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.

We celebrated in April with our 3rd Annual Foundation Circle “Brunch on the Riviera,” held this year in the atrium of the historic Ventura City Hall. Foundation Circle and SOAR board members engaged in a timely discussion on the economy, politics and keeping agriculture viable in Ventura County.

Use the enclosed envelope or visit www.SOARusa.org to secure your spot at the 2013 Foundation Circle event today!

Richard Abbott
Al and Marilyn Adam
Anonymous
Patricia Feiner Arkin and Edward Arkin
Charles Bauman
John and Lorraine Beley
Steve Bennett and Leslie Ogden
Steve and Diane Bentz
George Berg and Gail Topping
Merrill Berge and Jay Clancy
Bonnie Biddison
Claudia Bill-de la Pena and Ron de la Pena
Wolf Breiman and Debbie Diamond
Brian Brennan
Debra Bruschaber
Mark and Penny Burley
Marlynn and Lamar Bushnell
Kevin and Linda Cannon
Chapala Cafe
Malinda and Yvon Chouinard
Mindy Cooper-Smith and Robert James III
Marjorie Herring and Gary Cramer
Joseph Connett and Elzbet Diaz de Leon
Marcia Edwards
Bernadette and David Eyre
Kate and Bill Faulkner
Jim and Jeannette Flynn
Donna and Ken Gold
Janet and Joel Goldberg
Carolyn Greene
Denise and Todd Helfstein
Steven and Marsha Hively
Java Frost
Gordon and Suzanne Johnston
Jay and Linda Kapitz

Edward and Diane Keay
Robert and Janet Liberman
Alan and Peggy Ludington
Gene and Sally Mabry
Brian MacPolin
Paul and Christine Magie
Steven McCloskey
Barbara Meister
Dr. Roseann Mikos
Leo and Vieno Molitor
Frank and Isabella Muscarella
Neptune’s Net Seafood
Robert and Enid Nimmons
Sharon and Mark Noel
Lowell L. Novy, D.V.M.
Sherry and Bob O’Hollaren
Nancy and Larry Older
Linda and Al Parks
Betsy Patterson and Al Stroberg
Wilma Poe
Clyde and Joy Pratt
Louise and Mike Roberts
Brian Rocheleau
David Ross
Laurie and Walter Rutledge
Lisa Cordova Schwarz and Craig Schwarz
Daniel Silver, M.D.
Hank and Sue Stoutz
Chuck Thomas
Jane Tolmach
Craig and Sara Jane Underwood
Steve and Ginette Watson
Tom and Kerry Weisel
Jason and Jodi Womack