

2021
Summer



RECALL BY FRINGE GROUP TARGETS SUPERVISOR LINDA PARKS

SOAR Boardmember and County Supervisor Linda Parks is the target of a recall from a fringe group who fought COVID public health orders. However, while a small group of extremists began the recall effort, larger forces are stepping in to use it as an opportunity to take out the strong environmentalist.

We know Supervisor Parks as a director of SOAR leading the grassroots effort to protect open space and agricultural lands. She has dedicated her public service to open space preservation, including helping to save the 3,000-acre Ahmanson Ranch. She also created a first-of-its-kind wildlife corridor zone and authored the County requirement to plant 1,000 trees a year to combat climate change. As a leader in clean energy, Linda brought the Clean Power Alliance to our county overseeing its growth to becoming #1 in the nation for

the most 100% clean energy customers. If the petition drive is successful it would force a special election that will cost taxpayers \$470,000, despite the fact that Parks will be termed out next year.

Supervisor Linda Parks is a director of SOAR leading the grassroots effort to protect open space and agricultural lands. She has dedicated her public service to open space preservation.

Since recalls have no contribution limits, we can expect high-stake interests including developers, oil companies and anti-SOAR forces to wage a million-dollar campaign to recall Linda.

Because there are those who try to personally profit at the cost of the public's health, safety and well-being, it's critical we have advocates like Supervisor Parks in office. If the recall is successful, her removal will have ripple effects on the use of low turnout recall elections with unlimited spending to replace elected officials who stand up to special interests.

We know the power of grassroots in preserving open space. Grassroots is also essential in getting and keeping good people in office. We wish Supervisor Parks the best fighting off this destructive recall. ☆



Ventura County Supervisor and tireless SOAR champion Linda Parks faces costly recall effort.

Saving Pristine Ventura County Coastline

SOAR and several other organizations have written letters of support to the US Department of Interior endorsing the acquisition of the Mansdorf property by the National Park Service. This property is approximately 1,100 acres of open space in Ventura

County near the Los Angeles County line. The scenic property comprises 2.7 miles of pristine undeveloped oceanfront. It is the last largest coastal landholding in private ownership in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. ☆

SOAR supports the National Park Service's effort to protect one of the last, largest stretches of undeveloped coastline in Ventura County that remains in private ownership. Photo credit: Tim Brehm.

On a Wing & A Prayer



Ventura County plays a key role in the preservation of Western Monarch Butterflies. Photo credit: Xerces Society, Point Lobos, 2010.

As our climate heats up, the stress on the planet and its inhabitants becomes more apparent and one of this year's most impacted species is the beautiful Western Monarch Butterfly. Butterflies of all types were abundant before climate change, urbanization and neonicotinoid insecticides took their toll. Now the iconic Monarch butterfly population that numbered in the millions in the 1980's has precipitously declined

to less than 2,000, something a few hungry birds could finish off. But there is still a chance we can stop the extinction of the species.

The Xerces Society, named after the Xerces blue which is believed to be the first American butterfly species to become extinct as a result of loss of habitat caused by urban development, lists what we can do to save Monarchs: Stop developing in their habitat, plant pesticide-free native milkweed, preserve and enhance the tree groves in coastal areas where they overwinter on their migration, and eliminate the insecticides commonly used in agriculture that kill Monarchs.

Ventura County's coast is the geographic center of the Western Monarch's migration from Canada to Mexico. That is why the Ventura County Board of Supervisors recently approved a policy to begin planting milkweed and protecting and enhancing overwintering groves on County properties. They also voted to support efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that found Monarchs are "warranted but precluded" from Federally listing as an Endangered Species. The Board supports their being listed Endangered since the Monarch's extinction is likely within the next twenty years, and supports the reversal of a recent conclusion that insects cannot be on the Endangered Species list. ☆

Love Birds Shine a Light

On Ormond Beach Flyway

Congratulations to Shirley and Larry Godwin for winning Ventura County's Earth Day Award for their work saving the treasures of the Ormond Beach wetlands, an important stopover for more than 200 species of migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway.

With more than 90 percent of California coastal wetlands having been lost to development, it is a glowing testimony to the effectiveness of dedicated advocates that this wetland is now targeted for preservation. Since first discovering Ormond Beach on their honeymoon in 1962, Shirley and Larry realized the value of this important natural resource and began advocating for public access and protection. In bestowing the Earth Day Award to the Godwins, Ventura County Supervisor Carmen Ramirez noted



Shirley and Larry pictured with Dr. Jane Goodall at Ormond Beach.

these two leaders also fought two proposals 30 years apart to site dangerous and unnecessary liquified natural gas terminals off Ormond Beach. Now the Godwin's focus is on its restoration including removal of toxic waste dumps. In recognition of their award, Supervisor Ramirez praised the Godwins, saying "Without their advocacy and organizing efforts, this coastal treasure belonging to all of us and to the endangered species there, would have been destroyed." Thank you Shirley and Larry, you are a treasure to all of us too! ☆

Wildlife Bridge Gets \$25 Million Challenge Grant



The proposed 101 Freeway crossing will be the largest of its kind in the world, creating an open space linkage critical to the survival of mountain lions, deer, bears and other wildlife populations.

In a tremendous boost for realizing the vision of a wildlife bridge over the 101 freeway at Liberty Canyon, **the Annenberg Foundation has offered up a \$25 million matching grant.** This largest donation yet looks to closing the gap in funding for what will be our nation's and the world's largest wildlife bridge. Spanning ten lanes of freeway as well as Agoura Road to the south, the bridge will link core areas of open space in an area where wildlife – from mountain lions to deer to even a bear – have been killed trying to cross the 101 freeway.

Considered an essential component for the survival of mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains,

the National Wildlife Federation has already raised \$27 million for the bridge. Once the challenge grant is matched, the bridge construction will begin. Development plans are moving forward with anticipated construction as soon as November 2021 if full funding is realized. We can't say enough for the National Wildlife Federation, our State and Federal natural resource agencies and Caltrans, donors, and voters who approved bonds specific to habitat and wildlife preservation. Not only will the wildlife bridge help save threatened species and make the freeway safer, it will also show the world the importance we place on protecting nature. ☆



PO Box 7352
Ventura, California 93006-7352
www.soarvc.org

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Back to the Future of Ventura County's Open Spaces

Like all nonprofits, SOAR needs and welcomes donations to keep our organization strong. SOAR's funding needs are unique because the SOAR law passed by the voters largely protects Ventura County's open spaces and agricultural lands until 2050. We need to ensure that voters in the future extend the SOAR protections before they sunset in 2050.

We need to amass significant funds to counter well-funded development interests who will mount a multi-million dollar campaign in the future to stop SOAR from getting renewed by voters.

To that end, we need to raise money for use nearly 25 years in the future! Donations to SOAR can be made as part of our Planned Giving Program. Gifts in your Will or Trust or part of your estate are ideal for this purpose!

If you are interested in contributing to this forward-thinking effort where your funds will help the environment long into the future, please contact SOAR Board member Van Royce Vibber at 310-883-4537, vroycevibber@gmail.com. Or contact SOAR directly at info@soarvc.org. We will be happy to sit down and talk with you.

** We acknowledge that it can be a bit difficult to imagine what the shape of the world will be 25 years from now. But there's a good chance it will be more crowded, and preservation versus destruction of open space will still be a top priority/conflict.