



A Brief History of Water and the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians in the San Jacinto Valley

By Jenny Gagnon

Prior to Mexican and American settlement, the ancestors of the Soboba people lived and farmed in the area now known as the San Jacinto Valley. Their water sources included the San Jacinto River, Poppet Creek, Indian Creek, and more than forty perennial springs. This allowed the community to be virtually self-sufficient.

In approximately 1815, Rancho San Jacinto was established by the Mission San Luis Rey as their furthestmost cattle ranch. In 1842, the San Jacinto Rancho Viejo was granted to Jose Antonio Estudillo with the stipulation that he not in any manner prejudice the Indians who are established on the land. He and his son respected the rights and well being of the Soboba Indians, but in 1868 the heirs of the Estudillo family began selling portions of the Rancho and by 1880 most of the land had been sold. The

Continued on next page



Hermit Thrush at the SJWA.

Photo by Rosedith Marx

Uncommon and Rare Birds Seen in 2014

By Rosedith Marx

Some of these uncommon and rare birds stayed a few days to a few weeks. Others were seen just one day. Uncommon: specie that is seen every year, but there maybe one or very few birds of that specie. Rare: may have made only one visit to the Wildlife Area.

The following list was compiled from 2014 records for San Jacinto Wildlife Area: Bald Eagle, Bank Swallow, Bell’s Sparrow, Bell’s Vireo, Belted Kingfisher, Black Tern, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blue-winged Teal, Brant, California Gnatcatcher, Canyon Wren, Cassin’s Vireo, Common Golden-eye, Common Merganser, East-

ern Phoebe, Forster’s Tern, Fox Sparrow, Franklin’s Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Grasshopper Sparrow, Gray Flycatcher, Greater Scaup, Hermit Thrush, Hermit Warbler, Hooded Merganser, Horned Grebe, Hutton’s Vireo, Lark Bunting, Lazuli Bunting, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Long-eared Owl, Marbled Godwit, Merlin, Mew Gull, Nashville Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Oak Titmouse, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Orange Bishop (not per record - which are escapees or released birds), Palm Warbler, Pine Siskin, Prairie Falcon, Purple Martin, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Sabine’s Gull, Sandhill Crane, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Spotted Towhee, Swainson’s Thrush, Swamp Sparrow, Thayer’s Gull, Varied Thrush (first recorded sighting in the valley), Vermilion Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Western Grebe, Western Scrub-Jay, Willet, Willow Flycatcher, Wilson’s Warbler, Wrentit, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

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Soboba Water

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Soboba people were left with no legal claims to their land or water.

It was during this time that Matthew Byrne of San Bernardino was awarded 700 acres on the northeastern side of the San Jacinto Valley, including the village of Soboba, its cultivated fields and all the water. He threatened to evict the Indians unless the U.S. Government paid him for his 700 acres. On June 19, 1883, President Arthur established the Soboba Indian Reservation, a 3,172-acre tract that included the Soboba village and adjacent hills, but the President was limited to only setting aside public lands and had no authority to take private land. Thus the Soboba village and the cultivated lands and major springs belonged to Matthew Byrne.

In Nov. 1883, an eviction order was given by the San Diego Superior Court. An appeal was filed and on January 31, 1888, the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Soboba people. Unfortunately, that decision was reversed a year later. Litigation continued until 1903 when the land was seized by the State of California for non-payment of taxes. The land was then sold to the federal government for \$775. The deed was recorded on September 11, 1911, and the title was held in trust for the Sobobas by the Department of Interior.

From 1865 to 1891, upstream diversions of the San Jacinto River and its major tributaries by new settlers eliminated nearly all river surface flow through the Soboba Reservation land. The Tribe's gravity-flow irrigation system became useless by 1899. In 1909, the U.S. Indian Service constructed a well system, tapping into an underground aquifer beneath the Reservation. However, by the 1930's, the wells became largely useless because the Reservation's water table had dropped due to intensive withdrawals by non-Indians who had also constructed



Photo of San Jacinto River in 2011 from Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Tribal Environmental Department, epa.soboba-nsn.gov/

wells utilizing the same aquifer. The Reservation continued to rely on some water from the springs and wells in the upland parts of their land, but these springs and wells soon disappeared with the construction of the San Jacinto Tunnel.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California began construction of a tunnel through the San Jacinto Mountains as part of the Colorado River Aqueduct. This tunnel is 16 feet in diameter and nearly 13 miles long. It passes within 3.5 miles of the Soboba Reservation and is substantially below that of most of the reservation land. During the six years it took to complete the tunnel, enormous quantities of water gushed into the tunnel from the surrounding mountain mass. From 1933 to 1939, when the tunnel was finished, Metropolitan calculates that more than 155,000 acre-feet of underground water was drained. As a result, many perennial springs on the Soboba Reservation ceased to flow by 1937.

The San Jacinto Tunnel continues to

drain ground water. By 1946, the drainage had lowered the water table sufficiently to dry up the rest of the springs and the surface stream flow of Poppet and Indian Creeks. It is calculated that from 1940 to present, approximately 280,000 acre-feet have come from basins directly or indirectly tributary to the Soboba Reservation. The loss of the water caused the Soboba people to no longer be able to support their once thriving agricultural way of life.

In 1950, the Soboba people filed litigation in the Indian Claims Commission against the United States for its failure to protect the Reservation's water resources. Following the commission's 1976 determination of the United States' liability to the Tribe, the parties commenced extended negotiations, which finally resulted in a 1991 compromise settlement of the claims against the Federal government.

Starting 1991, the people of Soboba attempted to negoti-

ate their water rights and claims with the two principal holders of competing claims in the San Jacinto Valley: Eastern Municipal and Lake Hemet Municipal Water Districts. Metropolitan was not directly involved in the settlement discussions, because it holds no water rights in the Valley. Little progress was made and in both 1998 and 2000, Soboba invited Metropolitan into direct negotiations, but Metropolitan declined both times. As a result, Soboba filed suit against Metropolitan for the San Jacinto Tunnel drainage.

Negotiations spanned the following decade and included the Soboba Band, the United States, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Eastern Municipal Water District, and Lake Hemet Municipal Water District. This ultimately quantified the Tribe's prior and paramount water rights at 9,000 acre-feet per year, and provided for the construction of water projects to facilitate Soboba's rights. This is where we stand today. Notes taken from www.soboba-nsn.gov



A Closer Look at Tumbleweeds

By Carly Baker

You may have noticed an increase in tumbleweeds on the roads and in fields these past few months. Tumbleweed, or Russian thistle, has been an environmental problem since it came to the United States in the 1870s in shipments of imported grain. The annual plant breaks off at the stem base when it matures in winter and forms a ball, dispersing its seeds—as many as 250,000 — as the wind rolls it along. Aggregates of tumbleweeds can clog ravines and stacking up against anything in their path.

In dry years, the population sometimes soars. After a few good rains, it subsides again. Three years of drought have triggered an infestation of tumbleweeds across Southern California. Like many invasive plants, the tumbleweed thrives in disturbed habitats like roadsides and areas with loosened topsoil. The battle to eradicate it has been spotty and mostly ineffective. Revegetation of infested areas, along with the removal of disturbing factors like overgrazing and fire, is the best way to repair lands infested with this weed.

Wanted: Newsletter Submissions

Friends welcome articles and photos for the newsletter, subject to the Board's approval, regarding any and all issues relating to the SJWA. We want to know your concerns, a great birding day, book or movie reviews about the environment, poems, photos, etc. Submit to northfriends@northfriends.org.

An aggregate of tumbleweeds at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. *Photo: Carly Baker, January 2015*



Tumbleweeds stacked up along a fence on Davis Road. *Photo: Carly Baker, January 2015.*

Interested in Helping Friends Create a Map Brochure?

We are always interested in new members and volunteers. We are especially interested in making a map/brochure for people to pick up as they enter the wildlife area which will clearly map the public lands which currently appear to be private duck clubs. We need new walk leaders and ideas about where we should best focus our efforts. Our Board meetings are the second Tuesday of the month, usually. Please let Sue know if you are interest in helping in any way, or joining the Board. snash22@earthlink.net

Information about these cases can be obtained by going to this link <http://www.courts.ca.gov/4dca.htm> and entering the case number or name.

Paulek v. Department of Water Resources

(Riverside Court of Appeal E060038)

In this published opinion, important new law was made regarding standing. The Riverside Appellate Court held a person can appear and “object” to a project by asking questions showing their concern about the project, without actually using the word “object”. The court ruled against us on the issue of removing the Emergency Outlet Channel and (in) adequate response to comments.

Paulek v. Department of Fish and Game (now Wildlife)

(San Diego Court of Appeal D0652780)

The San Diego Appellate Court held the Ramona Duck Club’s reservation of the right to construct sporting clay facilities on the entire 90 acre conservation easement was speculative and neither the presence of lead ammunition, rare plants and sporting clays was a significant impact on the environment, in this



unpublished opinion. We believe the court ignored both the facts and the law, as previously stated by both parties. Our petition for rehearing was denied. We did not ask for Supreme Court review, as they only take up published opinions affecting issues of statewide concern.

Paulek v. Riverside Conservation Authority

(Riverside Court of Appeal E0591133)

We will let you know when the final opinion in this case is issued. We are guardedly optimistic that the court will rule that the MSHCP Criteria Refinement is not Exempt from CEQA

POTENTIAL NEW LITIGATION

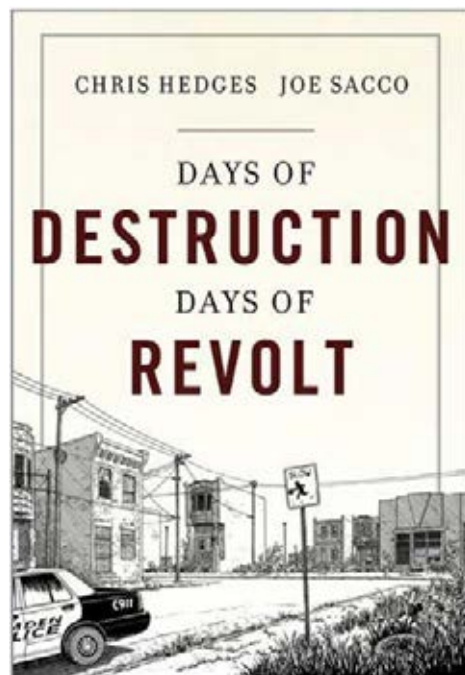
The Mid County Parkway, the Villages of Lakeview and the World Logistics Center DEIR, as well as the County General Plan update DEIR are all due out in 2015. From what we have heard, they will all be in favor of unsustainable development. It seems insane. Friends will continue to make comments on these projects and determine whether and how to become involved in litigation.

BOOK REVIEW

Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt

By Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco

The authors take a look at the sacrifice zones, those areas in the country that have been offered up for exploitation in the name of profit, progress, and technological advancement. They show in words and drawings what life looks like when the marketplace rules without constraints, where human beings and the natural world are used and then discarded to maximize profit. They look at what the ideology of unfettered capitalism means for families, communities, workers and the ecosystem. They visited Pine Ridge, South Dakota; Camden New Jersey; Wetch, West Virginia; Immokalee, Florida; and Liberty Square, New York City. Although the future looks grim, the authors hold out hope those, like the Occupy movement that be-



gan on September 17, 2011, who do not trust in the reformation of our corporate state and recognize that those who govern are deaf to public demands and suffering, will find another way, outside corporate capitalism, to be heard and to build a society. For instance, energy needs to be diversified so people can have their own energy on their roof and become energy producers. We must, nonviolently, stop the accelerated destruction of the ecosystem that sustains the human species. We cannot kill the ecosystem on which the lives of our children and our children’s children depend. This is not an easy book to read, but if you do, look around in Riverside County and see if you recognize any “sacrifice zones.”

What Will the Lead Ammunition Ban Mean for SJWA Upland Game Hunting?

By Carly Baker

In North America, federal regulations prohibit the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting. The State Fish and Game Commission is now considering new regulations that effective July 1, 2015 non-lead ammunition will be required when taking all wildlife on state Wildlife Areas and Ecological Reserves, including upland game at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. By 2019 there will be a complete ban on lead ammunition for hunting anywhere in California.

Spent lead shot is rarely removed from the environment, except at some large shooting ranges. Discharged lead pellets remain intact for decades and disintegrate very slowly (10,000 years in temperate climates), during which time they can be ingested from the soil by wild birds by mistaking them as grit while feeding in areas where lead pellets are deposited. The ingestion of >10 lead pellets causes birds to die within a few days.

Multiple studies have shown that the soil environment is significantly altered by the presence of lead ammunition. When lead ammunition contacts with soil, it



Hopefully, after July 1, 2015, spent shotgun shells that contain lead pellets will be a rare sight at the San Jacinto Wildlife upland game hunting areas.

Photo: Carly Baker, January 2015

corrodes, similar to a car rusting. The corrosion products are able to dissolve into the soil water, and the soil soaks up some of the lead. Research has shown

that at heavily contaminated sites (like a shooting range) earthworms ingest lead compounds, which are bio-accumulated in higher consumers of food webs. Likewise, some raptor species (e.g., hawks, eagles, and condors) are “secondarily poisoned” by consuming animals that either ate or were shot with lead ammunition.

The fatal poisoning of wild birds by spent lead shot has been known in Europe and North America for well over a century. Worldwide, the vast majority of lead shot contamination and poisoning of wildlife is caused by recreational activities. The negative consequences of these sports will continue to reduce their sus-

tainability. Despite the obvious awareness of the harms of lead shot contamination regulatory action has been slow. This is due to hunters opposing the use of non-toxic substitutes, and reluctance to see themselves as the source of the problem. Friends’ happily awaits the lead ammunition ban in California to take effect.

BIRDS OF PREY WALK

Saturday February 21,
9 am - 12 pm

San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) is truly a phenomenal, extraordinary location to view birds of prey. Few places in California can top the over twenty-two species of raptors, including six species of owls found on the wildlife area. This is the best time of year for raptor viewing. We won’t see all 22 species, but we will surely see a bunch. Saturday, February 21, 9 am-12 pm; meet at the SJWA parking lot. BYOB ... (Bring Your Own Binoculars).

—Tom Paulek



Juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk.
Photo by Rosedith Marx

Donate

We welcome donations. To make a tax-deductible donation to Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley online, please go to <http://www.northfriends.org> and click the Donate button.

Sign up for our Newsletter

To receive the Friends newsletter twice a year via email, just send us an email with the request to Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley, northfriends@northfriends.org

Calendar of Friends and Audubon Walks at the SJWA & Lake Perris

All walks are free and open to everyone. No reservations are needed. Children are welcome. Binoculars and birding books provided. To all walks, wear comfortable shoes, hats and sunscreen and bring water, snacks and binoculars, if you have them. We hope you can join us and invite your friends and family to learn more about all aspects of nature and how we are connected to and dependent upon the well being of our environment for our own well being. All Friends walks are free and open to all. Children are welcome. (See Audubon's student policy <http://www.sbvass.net>)

Board Meetings

We do not have regular public meetings at this time, but if you think you might be interested in joining our board, the meetings are second Tuesday at 6pm, every other month. Call or send Sue Nash an email to confirm we are meeting and location. 909-228-6710, snash22@earthlink.net



Juvenile Bald Eagle.
Photo by Rosedith Marx

BIRDS OF PREY

**Saturday February 21,
9am to 12 noon.**

Meet at SJWA Parking Lot.

Come and Join Tom Paulek and Rosedith Marx to search the wildlife area for raptors and other wildlife. Over 22 species of Birds of Prey, also called raptors, including six species of owls, can be found on the Wildlife Area. Call (951) 368-4525 for more details.

BIRD NESTING BOXES

Saturday March 14, 9am to 12 noon.

Meet at SJWA Parking Lot.

Samantha Dempster, naturalist and bird nesting box specialist, will be taking us to some of the 45 nesting boxes on the area and show us how to inspect, clean and survey the boxes. Information will be provided on how to install and maintain nesting boxes and attract a variety of cavity nesting birds to your yards. Contact Sue Nash 909-228-6710.

PLANTS AND WILDFLOWERS

Saturday April 11, 9am to 12 noon.

Meet at SJWA Parking Lot

David Bramlet and Patrick Temple, botanists and rare plants of

Bird Checklist for Beginning Birders

Rosedith Marx has shortened the exhaustive list of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area for beginning birders which shows 175 of the over 350 birds on the exhaustive list prepared by Doug Morton and others. Both lists can be downloaded at www.northfriends.org before you come on our walks.

Overview Schedule of Walks & Events

Date	Event	Time
2015		
Feb. 10	Board Meeting	6-8 pm
Feb. 21	Raptors/Birds of Prey	9am - noon
March 14	Bird Boxes	9am - noon
April 11	Plants	9am - noon
April 14	Board Meeting	6-8 pm
April 18	Butterflies/Dragonflies	6-9 pm
Apr. 26	Audubon	7am-dusk
May 9	Lake Perris	9-11am

the SJWA specialists, will introduce you to the main plants of the coastal sage scrub, grasslands, riparian and wetland habitats of the SJWA. We hopefully will see the San Jacinto Crown-scale, Spreading Navarretia and Threadleaved Brodiaea, all rare plants hard to find outside of the SJWA. Contact Sue Nash 909-228-6710.

BUTTERFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES

**Saturday April 18,
6pm to 9pm.**

Meet at SJWA Parking Lot
Gordon Pratt, entomologist and butterfly specialist, will help you identify the butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and moths which you can see on the SJWA, and then take you around the wetlands to capture



Photo by Gordon Pratt

(with nets, lights and sheets) and observe them close up. This walk is excellent and students of all ages who want hands on experience. Bring hand lens and butterfly net if you have one.

AUDUBON SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA

Sunday, April 26, 2015, 7am to Dusk

Shorebirds. We will provide some knowledge about this fascinating bunch of birds, stimulate appreciation and interest in them and mitigate some of the phobias. BRING YOUR OWN SCOPES. Meet Tony Metcalf (951-242-7038) and Chet McCaugh (951-781-3699) at the SJWA parking lot.

LAKE PERRIS

Saturday May 9, 2015, 8am -10 am

Join Rosedith and Joyce on these moderately easy walks of 1-2 hours around Lake Perris. Free with paid day-use or camping fees. Meet Rosedith (951-321-9812) in parking lot 2.

Nesting Boxes for Blue Birds Tree Swallows

By Sue Nash

The San Jacinto wildlife area is home to about 45 bluebird nesting boxes, many of which are occupied by tree swallows. The nesting boxes were placed on the SJWA because appropriate nesting cavities in large trees have been lost to residential and commercial development; highways and agriculture. Wooden fence posts have been replaced with metal posts. All these factors have affected both bluebirds and tree swallows. Habitat loss was compounded by the introduction of the European Starling and House Sparrow, which are both cavity nesters and aggressively compete with blue birds and tree swallows. The most important step we can take to help bring back bluebirds is to provide nesting sites by setting out a bluebird nesting box or start a bluebird trail, as we have done on the SJWA. You can get more information on exactly how to build blue boxes at www.nobluebirdsociety.org and tree swallow boxes at www.treeswallowprojects.com



In addition to our annual Nesting Box Walk (March 14), we are spending several days every winter (first on February 10) cleaning, repairing, replacing and adding to our nest boxes. If you would like to join us contact Sue Nash, 909-228-6710, snash22@earthlink.net.

Last night I streamed Virunga (Netflix production) about the people protecting Virunga National Park in the Congo which contain many of the 880 Mountain Gorillas left in the world. They continue to protect the park despite decades of civil war and oil exploration, even within the park. Many have been killed. One of the things I got out of this movie is that every little thing we do to protect our environment and our fellow beings matters, even putting up a nesting box in our back yards or at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area.



Directions to the SJWA

All walks begin in the San Jacinto Wildlife Area headquarters parking lot, 17050 Davis Road, Nuevo CA. Tel. (951-928-0580) Because Davis (Theodore) Road is closed from Moreno Valley the only access is north off the Ramona Expressway — despite what your GPS may tell you. There is now a traffic light on Davis Rd.

From Moreno Valley: go south on Perris Blvd; east on Ramona Expressway; north 2.3 miles on Davis Rd.

From San Jacinto/Hemet: go west on Ramona Expressway; north 2.3 miles on Davis Rd.

From Interstate 215: go east on Ramona Expressway; 2.3 miles north on Davis Road.

USE EXTREME CAUTION. If raining, call area office for road conditions: (951) 928-0580.

Information About the San Jacinto Wildlife Area

The San Jacinto Wildlife Area is 19,000 acres of wildlife habitat managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Its lands are partial mitigation for the State Water Project, the project that brings water from northern California to southern California so that we can live and work here.

It is a Stephens' kangaroo rat reserve for the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA); it is a cornerstone reserve in the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Agency (MSHCP), the county reserve system which is supposed to protect and preserve the county's endangered ani-

mals and plants.

Tens of thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds winter in the northern San Jacinto Valley. It is a known resting point and/or wintering site for migrating birds traveling the Pacific Flyway. The northern San Jacinto Valley is known for its large number of wintering birds of prey (peregrine falcon, bald eagle, ferruginous hawk, prairie falcon).

The SJWA is considered one of the premier hunting areas in southern California. All state-owned wildlife areas allow hunting. Hunting fees help support the acquisition of wildlife habitat throughout the state of California. The northern San

Jacinto Valley is considered a Significant Natural Area by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The northern San Jacinto Valley and Mystic Lake are considered Important Bird Areas by the National Audubon Society. The San Jacinto Wildlife Area represents an \$80 million investment of the taxpayers' money. The San Jacinto Wildlife Area includes the 10,000 acre Davis Road Unit (includes 2,000 acres of Mystic Lake) plus the 9,000 acre Potrero Creek Conservation Unit. San Jacinto Wildlife Area, 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview; (951) 928-0580; <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/lands/wa/region6/sanjacinto/index.html>

“Return Service Requested”

Membership/Donation Form

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__ \$10 __ \$20 __ \$50 __ \$100 \$_____ Other

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The Friends is a 501(c)(3) organization.

___ I would like to volunteer for the Friends

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