



# The Roadrunner

Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley

[www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org)

February 2007

Although promised rains have not materialized in inland southern California this winter and spring, we are fortunate to have scenic views of the local mountain ranges and valleys. From the San Jacinto Wildlife Area the line of view is truly beautiful. The geologic features are striking in the northern San Jacinto Valley as you look east to The Badlands and see how the line of faulting that borders the valley has caused the hills to ripple and rise.

As the Friends work to preserve the integrity of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, we are reminded that our elected officials and developers will also cause 'ripples' on the northern and southern borders of the SJWA. The County of Riverside plans to release the Draft Environmental Report for The Villages of Lakeview during the 'third quarter' of the year. As we have mentioned previously, the specific plan for the project plans to put 12,000 homes on 3,000 acres in the communities of Lakeview and Nuevo. Three thousand homes and apartments are planned on 350 acres on the southern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area—urbanization (noise, light pollution, feral animals, a school, traffic, unauthorized entry) all within 175 feet of Riverside County's cornerstone reserve in their Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

It cannot be argued that this is good land use planning nor is the project the result of visionary thought. Common sense tells us that in the future the integrity of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area will be severely compromised if this plan is approved.

The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley are dedicated to preserving the wildlife area. We have worked hard to meet with elected officials, decision makers, and developers to make sure that our vision for the valley is heard. Join us as we continue to work to protect the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and ask for appropriate and transitional land uses on its boundaries.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS:** The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley is an all volunteer nonprofit organization. We are dependent on the generosity of our members and friends for financial support. Thank you to all of you who took time to write a check and make a donation to the Friends this fall. Your donations, whatever amount, allow us to continue our work and we deeply appreciate your support. Again, thank you.

## **SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA News:**

**San Jacinto Lake Christmas Bird Count, December 2006 by Tom Benson, Compiler, San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society:**

The San Jacinto Lake Christmas Bird Count was held Tuesday, December 19, 2006. We thank the 17 participants who braved the cold but otherwise nice

weather to help us count birds. Highlights from the tally include: 1 Green-tailed Towhee and several Whimbrel (new for the count) on private property east of Bridge Street; Mountain Plover in the sod fields along the east side of Bridge Street; 1 Short-eared Owl and 2 Long-eared Owls at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area; 3 male Eurasian Wigeons, 2 Ross' Geese and 7 Snow Geese on private property near Nuevo; 1 male Eurasian Wigeon and 1 Golden Eagle near Lake Perris; Horned Grebe, Common Loon and 1 first winter Mew Gull on Lake Perris; and 28 Greater White-fronted Geese and 5 Marbled Godwits at Mystic Lake. Unfortunately we were not able to relocate the Eastern Phoebe despite several efforts by numerous people. The San Jacinto Lake Christmas Bird Count includes the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Lake Perris, and surrounding valley areas.

## **San Jacinto Center for Environmental Education by Sue Nash:**

The center has now received its full state and federal tax exempt status and is moving forward in its grant application process. As always, we are looking for teachers who would like to bring their students to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area for several hours of activities. The curriculum focuses on the many wonders of the SJWA and is specifically written to comply with California State Standards for Science, Math and Reading by Susannah Buchannan, our Executive Director and fifth grade GATE teacher in Moreno Valley. If you would like to be a board member, be a volunteer to work with the children or to participate in any other way, please contact Sue Nash at: [snash22@earthlink.net](mailto:snash22@earthlink.net) or (909) 228-6710.

## **SPRING UPDATE ON BURROWING OWL SURVEY by Sue Nash:**

The state-wide burrowing owl survey will be conducted again this spring by Ginny Short. If you are interested in participating in the survey, please contact Ginny at: [gabby.short@email.ucr.edu](mailto:gabby.short@email.ucr.edu) for more information. The area covered is generally western Riverside County but will be different random blocks than were covered last year. We will find out what blocks near the wildlife will be covered in the coming weeks.

## **BLUEBIRD BOXES AT THE SJWA by Sue Nash:**

This season volunteers helped clean out all fifteen bluebird boxes at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area after attending the Beginning Bird Walks. Unfortunately, we have yet to see a western bluebird on the wildlife area. However, at least 12 of the boxes contained swallow nests. Since we removed the old nests and any wasp (mud or paper) nests, we hope to again find swallows in the boxes this spring. We will let you know what the results are. Anyone wishing to join us in cleaning and surveying the boxes, please contact Sue Nash at: [snash22@earthlink.net](mailto:snash22@earthlink.net) or (909) 228-6710.

## **FRIENDS NEWS AND PROJECTS:**

### **Proposed Villages of Lakeview Project (SP342) by Sue**

**Nash:** The Draft Environmental Report (DEIR) for the Villages of Lakeview Project is scheduled to be issued for public review in the third quarter (July, August, September) of 2007. The general plan amendment for the project will be issued at the same time. The most disturbing new information about this project is that its construction start date is a complete mystery. Because of the dramatic decline in home sales, Lewis Development Corp. simply wants to obtain all county approvals and general plan amendments now and wait until the housing market improves before selling its building approvals to others. This would astronomically increase the value of the property. High land prices would make it financially more difficult if, for instance, the county wanted to create an agriculture preserve in the San Jacinto Valley. Also, it would freeze the land use in this specific plan and would prevent other development plans which might be envisioned by the current members of the Nuevo/Lakeview community. We believe the county should stop approving specific plans which are not going to be built in the foreseeable future. Only approving plans which are going to be built immediately is simply good planning practice. If you are interested in commenting on the draft environmental impact report for this project when it is issued, please e-mail us at: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org) or visit the Friends web page at: [www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org) where we will be posting information as it develops. Our web page includes our comment letter on the notice of preparation for the project.

### **Proposed McAnally Enterprise Chicken Ranch (CUP3512) by Sue Nash:**

As we reported in the October Roadrunner, in order to build the proposed Villages of Lakeview project, a chicken ranch in Nuevo must be relocated. The proponents of the project propose to relocate the chicken ranch to the corner of Gilman Springs Road and Bridge Street which is located on the southeastern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. (In turn another local chicken ranch would be merged with the Nuevo ranch creating a mega-chicken ranch.) The relocation of 2.25 million chickens next to the wildlife area would certainly have serious implications for the spread of avian flu. Thousands of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds using Mystic Lake could facilitate the spread of an influenza virus from wild birds to this enormous domestic chicken population. Also of concern are water quality issues since the project will be located adjacent to the San Jacinto River floodplain. The timeline for issuing the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) has not been determined. But if you are interested in commenting on the draft environmental impact report for this project, please e-mail us at: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org) or visit the Friends web page at: [www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org) where we will be posting information as it develops. Also our comment letter where we made detailed comments on the project is posted on our web page.

### **Moreno Highlands Project by Sue Nash & Ann**

**McKibben:** In 1991 the city of Moreno Valley approved the Moreno Highlands Specific Plan. The project planned to put 7,000+ homes on the northern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. With the downturn of the economy in the 1990s the original developers abandoned the project and nothing was built. Since the approval of the original specific plan, the California Department of Fish and Game purchased 1,000 acres of land within the specific plan area and added it to the northern portion of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. In recent years a new company, called Highland Fairview

Properties, has been working to restart the Moreno Highlands project. (Highland Fairview is currently building the Aquabella project on the former UCR Agriculture Field Station property in Moreno Valley.) As we understand it, the project proponents have conducted geotechnical studies on the specific plan project lands. The information will help them formulate development plans before they submit an amended specific plan to the city of Moreno Valley. The city of Moreno Valley hired a third party to do field peer review of the geotechnical studies. No information is available on when the city's peer review report will be available to the public. (The Highland Fairview company has also pushed to rename the eastern portion of Moreno Valley (92555 ZIP code) to Rancho Belago. The city of Moreno Valley approved the name change at their February 20, 2007 council meeting despite residents' requests to deny the change.) The Friends are monitoring when an amended specific plan will be submitted to the city. If you are interested in commenting on the draft environmental impact report for this project, please e-mail us at: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org) or visit the Friends web page at: [www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org) where we will post information as it develops.

### **Mid County Parkway by Sue Nash and Ann McKibben:**

Plans have been in place for a number of years to expand the Ramona Expressway from the city of San Jacinto to Corona. The notice of preparation (NOP) was issued for the project, but the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) had to reevaluate the project alternatives once the state of California declared the Lake Perris Dam was unstable due to seismic concerns and the lake level needed to be lowered. Federal regulations will not allow a transportation corridor to be built in front of the Lake Perris dam. The RCTC said it will reissue the notice of preparation (NOP) but the date is not in place. The RCTC also plans to issue the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the project in the fall of 2007. If you are interested in commenting on the draft environmental impact report for this project, please e-mail us at: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org) or visit the Friends web page at: [www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org) where we will be posting information as it develops.

### **FRAMED MYSTIC LAKE POSTER RAFFLE by Sue Nash:**

We are excited to be able to offer framed 16" x 24" prints of the same slide of Mystic Lake used to make the post cards Friends have been offering since 1999. The photographer, Kay Stockwell, spent months making the prints perfect so that the Friends could use them to bring attention to the importance and beauty of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Each of the archival copyrighted photographic images is stamped on the back with Kay Stockwell's personal stamp. The photo is a view of Mystic Lake from the Badlands to the Bernasconi Hills taken on March 12, 1995. It has been published in *California's Wild Gardens, A living Legacy* (1997) and *California's Wild Gardens, A guide to Favorite Botanical Sites* (2005). All donors to Friends will receive as a gift one raffle ticket for the framed Mystic Lake poster for each \$5.00 of donation. A drawing will be held when 100 raffle tickets have been given out. We look forward to having a drawing at our first nature walk next fall. (Need not be present to win). Contact Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710 or [snash22@earthlink.net](mailto:snash22@earthlink.net) for tickets.

**NEW BOOK PUBLISHED:** *FLORA OF THE SANTA ANA RIVER AND ITS ENVIRONS WITH REFERENCES TO WORLD BOTANY* by Oscar F. Clarke, Daniella Svehla, Greg Ballmer, Arlee Montalvo: Many of you have had the pleasure

and honor to attend a plant walk guided by Oscar Clark. His encyclopedic knowledge of natural history is certainly inspiring to all of us who are interested in nature. Now you have the opportunity to buy his newly completed book on the flora of the Santa Ana River. Please check with local book stores to purchase a copy. The book is also available on Amazon.com. According to a Press-Enterprise note, the Riverside Public Library will celebrate Earth Day on April 21, 3 p.m. by presenting the book. Oscar and Arlee Montalvo will be on hand to identify plants and answer questions. For more information, contact Marion Mitchell-Wilson, Riverside Public Library at (951) 826-5713.

#### RECOMMENDED LINKS:

Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley:

[www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org) ;

San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society: [www.sbvas.org](http://www.sbvas.org) ;

San Jacinto Center for Environmental Education:

<http://sanjacintocenter.blogspot.com/> ;

Rare Bird Alert:

<http://www.birder.com/birding/alert/index.html> (Click on 'California'; scroll to San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society, click on a date.)

San Jacinto Wildlife Area:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/lands/wa/region6/sanjacinto.html> for map and species lists.

## NATURE WALKS AND FIELDS TRIPS AT THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA:

### April 15, 2007, Sunday, 9 a.m. to Noon

*The California Native Plant Society—Riverside/San Bernardino Chapter with the Southern California Botanist group will hold a field trip at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area.*

Field Trip Description: The CDFG San Jacinto Wildlife Area is well known for a diverse alkali playa-grassland flora and a number of sensitive plant species, especially the San Jacinto Valley crownscale (*Atriplex coronata* var. *notator*). The alkali habitats are assumed to be very dry this year, and large wildflower blooms would not be anticipated. However, we will search for a number of species that are sensitive or unique to these alkali communities. These may include the Davidson's saltscale (*Atriplex davidsonii*), vernal barley (*Hordeum intercedens*), and the smooth tarplant (*Centromadia pungens* ssp. *laevis*). Bring your western Riverside checklist, hand lens, water, and sack lunch. The trip will consist of some light walking around the SJWA. Please contact Dave Bramlet (714) 549-0647 or [debramlet@earthlink.net](mailto:debramlet@earthlink.net) for further information.

### April 28, 2007, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon MYSTIC LAKE NATURE WALK

As you may have read, the lack of rain this year is being called another "drought". Except for the above normal winter rains during the winter of 2004-2005 which filled Mystic Lake, we believe this is the ninth dry year we have had at the SJWA. Our usual spring plant walk will be confined to the edges of Mystic Lake which still has some water in it along with many wonderful birds. And we will also visit the ponds, marshes and riparian areas which are kept green with reclaimed water. Some of the very flat marshy areas have been flooded to grow some of the plants found only in the San Jacinto Valley, such as the San Jacinto Salt Bush and the Spreading Navarretia. We will be birding as we look for

plants so bring binoculars to enjoy the wide variety of natural life at the SJWA. We hope to entice Oscar Clarke and Greg Ballmer to help us with this walk and bring their newly published book, *Flora of the Santa Ana River*, with them. Leader: Sue Nash, (909) 228-6710.

**BEGINNING BIRD WALKS:** San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society organizes and sponsors Beginning Bird Walks (BBW) at various locations in Riverside County. Please check their web site at: [www.sbvas.org](http://www.sbvas.org) for information on dates and locations for all their Beginning Bird Walks. Or call Cathy Tobin at (951) 684-9613.

**FOR INFORMATION** on the Friends walks, call Ann McKibben at (951) 924-8150 or Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710. Our walks are free and open to all. Children are welcome and you do not need to be a member of the Friends to join us on any of our walks.

**WHERE TO MEET:** All nature walks meet at the appointed time in the parking lot of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area headquarters at 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. There are picnic tables and restrooms available if you want to spend the day.

**FOR ALL WALKS:** Bring binoculars, camera (if you are interested), non-toxic insect repellent, sturdy walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, plenty of water, lunch, snacks, and wear appropriate clothing for the weather.

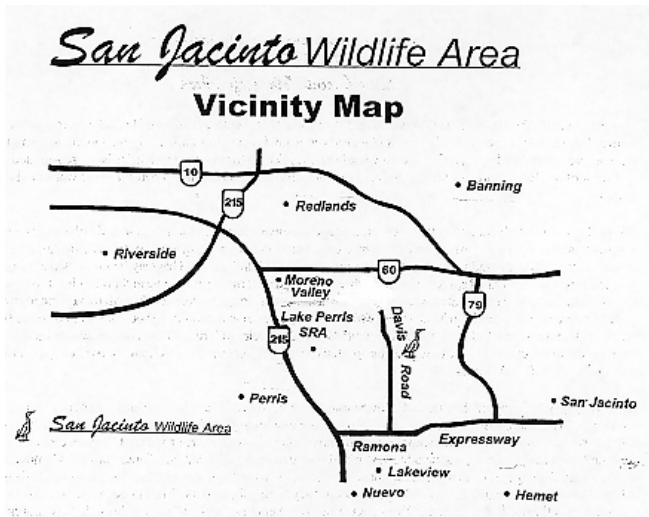
#### TO VISIT THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA:

**Hours:** the wildlife area is open seven days a week from Dawn to Dusk. You are welcome to visit on your own at any time. There is an Information Kiosk on the east side of Davis Road adjacent to the parking lot.

#### DIRECTIONS TO THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA:

San Jacinto Wildlife Area, 17050 Davis Road, Lakeview. Telephone: (951) 928-0580. **DAVIS ROAD IS CLOSED FROM MORENO VALLEY.** Please use one of these alternate routes to visit the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. *From Moreno Valley:* go south on Perris Boulevard to the Ramona Expressway; go east on the Ramona Expressway to Davis Road in Lakeview; go north on Davis Road 2.3 miles to the headquarters. *From Hemet/San Jacinto Area:* take the Ramona Expressway east to Davis Road in Lakeview; go north on Davis Road 2.3 miles to the headquarters.

**PLEASE USE CAUTION WHILE DRIVING ON DAVIS ROAD IF THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT RAINS.** During the rainy season, you may want to call the wildlife area headquarters, (951) 928-0580, during regular work hours for updated access information and road conditions.



Nature Walk, SJWA, January 21, 2007



Beginning Bird Walk, December 2006



Scenic View, December 2006

**THANK YOU TO OUR NATURE WALK LEADERS:** Dave Goodward, Doug Karalun, Tony Metcalf, Sue Nash, Jennifer, Michelle & Cathy Tobin. We had another wonderful season of nature walks at the wildlife area this fall and winter. We appreciate our volunteer leaders and all the time they spend sharing their knowledge with wildlife area visitors!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS:** The Friends realize that we are fortunate to have supporters who continue to make donations to our organization year after year. Thank you for making it possible for the Friends to go forward with their work!

**Waiver Form:** The Friends will be asking all walk participants to sign waiver of responsibility forms. Please be aware that minors (under the age 18) cannot sign the waiver. The signator must be a parent of other responsible adult. If you will not be with or are dropping off a minor at one of the Friends' nature walks, please call Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710 or e-mail her at: [snash22@earthlink.net](mailto:snash22@earthlink.net) for a copy of the form so you can sign it and have the minor bring it with them. The form can also be found on our web page.

**Friends' Web Page:** Please check out the Friends' web page at: [www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org) for information about our nature walks and updated "Take Action" information. Our "Take Action" section has our comment letters on the proposed Villages of Lakeview Project, the MacAnally Enterprise Poultry Farm, and other information.

#### **OTHER NEWS:**

**WHERE WE'VE BEEN SEEN:** The Friends hosted a table at the January 27<sup>th</sup> Duck Daze event held at the Hidden Valley Wildlife Area in Norco. Sue Nash, Nanette Pratini and Ann McKibben spent the day sharing information with visitors about the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the Friends organization. Sue provided color markers and paper for any children who wanted to draw or color. We met many interesting people and had a great time telling people about the wildlife area.

**SELF-GUIDED AUTO TOUR:** a self-guided auto tour is available for visitors to use at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. These reusable guides follow a series of signs and explain what can be seen at each of the seven stops. You can pick them up from a box which is adjacent to the entrance kiosk. You will find a "return" box for the guides sitting on the other side of the road as you leave the wildlife area.

**TIRED OF OUR NEWSLETTER?:** The Friends would be happy to remove your name from our mailing list if you no longer want to receive our newsletter. Send your name and address to: Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley, P.O. Box 9097, Moreno Valley, CA 92552-9097; e-mail: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org) or call Ann McKibben at (951) 924-8150 to have your name deleted.

#### **UP-COMING EVENTS:**

March 31 (noon to 5 p.m.) & April 1 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.), 2007 – **PLANT SALE**, UCR Botanic Gardens. Information: (951) 784-6962. [www.gardens.ucr.edu](http://www.gardens.ucr.edu)

April 21, 2007 – 21<sup>st</sup> Environmental Expo—"Think and Act Earth Wise!", California State University, San Bernardino, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

June 8 & 9, 2007 (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) – **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION**, Moreno Valley Corporate Yard, 15670 Perris Blvd., Moreno Valley, Information: 1-800-304-2226 or [www.rivcowm.org](http://www.rivcowm.org)

#### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

**Bluebird Box Volunteers:** Please see information in our article about Bluebird Boxes at the SJWA to find out how you can help maintain healthy boxes at the SJWA.

**Nature Walk Leaders:** Do you have an interest in helping others to learn about the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the importance of the wildlife habitat in the northern San Jacinto Valley? Join us as we hold our nature walks. You can assist by helping to lead a walk, helping identify birds, insects or other expertise you may have to offer. Call Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710 or [snash22@earthlink.net](mailto:snash22@earthlink.net) or call Ann McKibben at (951) 924-8150 or e-mail at [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org)

**San Jacinto Center for Environmental Education Volunteers:** Please see our article on the center in this newsletter. The center needs volunteers to help with teaching stations when school classes come to the SJWA. Please contact: Susannah Buchanan at [shiloh58@earthlink.net](mailto:shiloh58@earthlink.net) and (951) 849-8426 or Sue Nash at [snash22@earthlink.net](mailto:snash22@earthlink.net) and (909) 228-6710 for more information.

#### **FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN SAN JACINTO VALLEY**

P.O. Box 9097  
Moreno Valley, CA 92552-9097

e-mail: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org)  
web page: [www.northfriends.org](http://www.northfriends.org)

Board Members: Greg Ballmer, Jane Block,  
George Hague, Ann McKibben, Sue Nash, Tom  
Paulek, Paul Prado

The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley is a local conservation group dedicated to preserving and protecting the northern San Jacinto Valley, San Jacinto Wildlife Area, and Mystic Lake. We are a 501(c)(3) organization.

The Roadrunner comes out twice a year in February and September. It is written and edited by Ann McKibben & Sue Nash.

MEMBERSHIP FORM – Please enroll me as a contributing member of the Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley. I will contribute:

\$10.00    \$20.00    \$50.00    \$100.00    Gift Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley

Mail to: Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley

P.O. Box 9097

Moreno Valley, CA 92552-9097

e-mail: [northfriends@northfriends.org](mailto:northfriends@northfriends.org)

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**SAN JACINTO VALLEY**  
**P.O. Box 9097**  
**Moreno Valley, CA 92552-9097**

**“Return Service Requested”**

**Membership Renewal**