



The Roadrunner

Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley

www.northfriends.org

February 2008

Fall and winter rains have soaked the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and hopefully there will be a good show of flowering plants and wildflowers to see this year. There are many wonderful scenic views to see from the wildlife area: Mt. San Jacinto in the distance, green hills in The Badlands and adjacent Lake Perris State Recreation Area. We urge you to take time and visit the wildlife area, enjoy the views, the wildlife, and the solitude.

While you are visiting take time to remember that even though there is a slump in the housing market, Riverside County, Moreno Valley and other cities are working to approve housing and commercial development which will encroach on the wildlife values of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley have been working since 1991 to comment, meet with, and encourage local decision makers to respect and value the wildlife area. Putting developments on the boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area will significantly reduce its value as a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan reserve, Stephens' kangaroo rat reserve, and mitigations lands for the State Water Project. Please take time to read our articles and reflect on how important it is to protect this wonderful habitat.

NOTE: Please check our on-line version of the Friends' newsletter, *The Roadrunner*, for the more articles. Due to limited space we had to leave out a number of articles, and our solution was to post them in the on-line version.

SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA News:

SAN JACINTO LAKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, December 2007 by Tom Benson, Compiler, San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society: The San Jacinto Lake Christmas Bird Count was held on Tuesday, December 18, 2007. The total tally was 147 species with one party not yet reporting. Highlights included: Common Loon (Lake Perris), Horned Grebe (Lake Perris), Snow, Ross', and Cackling Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle (San Jacinto Wildlife Area), Bald Eagle (San Jacinto Wildlife Area), Lesser Yellowlegs, Marbled Godwit, Thayer's and Glaucous-winged Gulls (Lake Perris), Gray Flycatcher, and Eastern Phoebe (San Jacinto Wildlife Area west of Davis Road). Thanks to all who participated and made this a successful count.

ONGOING EFFORTS FOR THE BURROWING OWL by

Ginny Short: The Statewide Survey for Burrowing Owls was concluded last year. We expect to hear from the Institute for Bird Populations at any time regarding their results. Thanks to everyone who participated. You can go to: <http://www.birdpop.org/> for more information. We will be doing burrowing owl surveys on the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and hopefully Lake Perris. Anyone interested in volunteering for this ongoing effort can contact Ginny Short at: (562) 706-7510 or e-mail her at: birdwhisper@wildblue.net Surveys will be conducted from May through July. The drought last year had a drastic effect on breeding, so hopefully we will

see some improvement this year. If you find burrowing owls anywhere on the wildlife area or anywhere in Riverside, please contribute to our burrowing owl database. We need to know where (coordinates are best, or clear description), how many, and when (date and time). Please forward any information to Ginny as above. Happy Owling!

UPDATE ON BLUEBIRD BOXES by Sue Nash: Fourteen of the original fifteen bluebird boxes placed at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area are still in place. The Friends will continue to clean and monitor them this spring. Last year the boxes were basically not used because of the drought. We hope our next newsletter will include reports of many nests, baby swallows, and fledging birds. Join us on our March 15 walk to personally inspect them. More information on the walk can be found on page 4.

FRIENDS' NEWS & PROJECTS:

UPDATE ON CEQA LAWSUIT FILED BY FRIENDS REGARDING THE SJWA WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT by Sue Nash: The lawsuit filed by the Friends in August 2007 has a court hearing set for February 22, 2008. The events which occurred at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area which precipitated our filing the lawsuit stem from: a lack of good management of the wildlife area by Department of Fish Game (DFG) and the failure of DFG to avail themselves of the accumulated knowledge of the SJWA of Friends, other local environmental groups, and biologists. It appears that for DFG (the agency entrusted with protecting our wildlife resources) the mere appearance of compliance with the laws found in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Fish and Game Code was sufficient.

In brief, we first allege that before approving a project to move 650,000 cu. ft. of soil on 500 acres to create hunting ponds, the Wildlife Conservation Board (a division of DFG) was required by law to have a CEQA document before them which identified and mitigated the many significant negative environmental impacts of the project. Second, the negative declaration prepared by DFG was prepared months after the project was approved and failed to identify, let alone mitigate, any of the significant negative environmental impacts of the project. Third, DFG failed to even investigate or enforce apparent violations of the F & G Code which resulted when burrowing owl nests were buried and no streambed alteration permit was obtained.

The Friends' complaint and opening brief can be found on our web page: www.northfriends.org Also, updated information on the results of our court hearing will be posted on our web page.

TWO NEW USES OF RECLAIMED/RECYCLED WATER AT THE SJWA by Sue Nash:

1) On November 30, 2007 the California Department of Public Health sent a letter regarding the use of recycled water on the San Jacinto Wildlife Area to the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board and to

Eastern Municipal Water District and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District. Until this letter was written, recycled water could NOT be ponded on the SJWA in the flood plain during the flood season. This was in order to protect the quality of drinking water in Canyon Lake. Now, recycled water may be used on all locations on the SJWA, year round. The letter will be posted on our website www.northfriends.org

Friends are not necessarily opposed to this action, but we are concerned that EMWD denied the existence of this letter after several inquiries were made by the Friends after the November 30, 2007 date. In addition, the public was **NOT** notified about this change and a CEQA document was not prepared, even though there potentially could be significant impacts to water quality and public health.

2) In January 2008, a private consultant, K. S. Dunbar Associates, issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Program EIR for Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (but not for Department of Fish & Game).

The Friends and the public generally were not notified of this document. One of the three projects is the San Jacinto Wildlife Area Recycled Water Storage Project. Eastern proposes to construct a 200 acre lined pond, 20-30 ft. deep, on the SJWA. The Friends will be making comments on this project and the NOP and our comments will be posted on our web page at: www.northfriends.org

RIVERSIDE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN 2008 UPDATE by

Sue Nash: The Riverside County General Plan, which was enacted in 2003, is required to be "updated" every five years. When we searched the County web page for information on the General Plan Update, the only reference we could find regarding the "update" was a Notice to Landowners. It stated that those seeking a Foundation Component Amendment to the General Plan must submit a written request to the Planning Department between January 2, 2008 and February 15, 2008 (along with a general plan amendment application and \$8,000.00). If this process proceeds unquestioned, the Villages of Lakeview and other projects surrounding the San Jacinto Wildlife Area will be able to smoothly proceed with their EIR without incorporating a publicly reviewed General Plan Amendment to change much of their land from agricultural to high density residential.

The Friends e-mailed the County Planning Director Ron Goldman regarding the lack of a public input process for the general plan update and the need to include a Global Warming and an Environmental Justice component to the update. The Friends have not yet received a response, but we will continue to pursue this question with the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and the Planning Director.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN EIR FOR THE LAKEVIEW/NUEVO AREA MASTER PLAN FOR WATER, SEWER AND RECYCLED WATER by Sue Nash:

In October 2007, the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) issued a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to install a water, sewer and recycled water system in the Lakeview/Nuevo area. This system, if built, would install the pipes and other facilities to supply the Villages of Lakeview (VOL) project (and other projects in the area) with all of its water, sewer and recycled water needs. The Friends wrote comments objecting to the project on the basis that EMWD only considered the impacts of the physical pipe being laid; EMWD failed to consider the cumulative and growth inducing impacts of the thousands of homes that will easily be built once the pipes are in place. Many of the homes in the Villages of Lakeview project are located on the southern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (within 150 feet).

The proposed housing project will have a significant negative environmental impact on the SJWA and the approximately 140 species which the SJWA is supposed to be protecting. (The San Jacinto Wildlife Area is a cornerstone reserve in the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, a county wide system of reserves which, in theory, are supposed to protect Riverside County' endangered plants and animals. Under the MSHCP developers pay for lands to protect endangered species and are in turn allowed to destroy habitat on the land they develop.) Therefore, any piece of any project which will impact the SJWA in the long term, must legally take those impacts into account in its EIR analysis.

PROPOSED VILLAGES OF LAKEVIEW (SP342) by Ann

McKibben: The Villages of Lakeview Specific Plan is still making its way through the Riverside County planning process. The applicant hopes to release the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) by mid-summer and are hoping for a mid-October 2008 hearing on the project. As a reminder, the VOL project proposes to locate approximately 11,000 units (homes, high density apartments) in Lakeview and Nuevo. Approximately, 3,000 units will be located on 350 acres on the southern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. A school will be located adjacent to the floodplain between the wildlife area and the Ramona Expressway. Seasonal hunting takes place in the southern portion of the wildlife area and field training for hunting dogs also takes place along the north side of Marvin Road. Both of these uses will be significantly impacted if this project goes forward. Also, Riverside County is planning on expanding the Ramona Expressway to a six to eight lane highway through Lakeview and Nuevo so the northern portion of this project plans to squeeze 3,000 dwelling units of this project, a school, freeway entrances and exits between the Ramona Expressway and the southern boundary of the SJWA.

If you are interested in commenting on the DEIR for this project when it is issued, please e-mail us at: northfriends@northfriends.org or visit the Friends web page at: 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. Planner for the project is Matt Straite, (951) 955-0545 or MSTRAITE@rctlma.org

PROPOSED McANALLY ENTERPRISE CHICKEN RANCH (CUP3512) by Ann McKibben:

In order to build the Villages of Lakeview project a chicken ranch in Nuevo will have to be relocated. This project proposes to merge the ranch with a chicken ranch from another location and relocate the enterprise to the corner of Gilman Springs Road and Bridge Street which is located on the southeastern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The location is adjacent to the floodplain of the San Jacinto River and also Mystic Lake. It would house **2.25 million chickens**. This 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 project is still active and going through the planning process. Planner for the project is Matt Straite, (951) 955-0545 or MSTRAITE@rctlma.org

MOTTE RANCH (Specific Plan 366) by Ann McKibben:

The Motte Ranch SP hopes to locate 2,200 homes between the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the Ramona Expressway

and is located east of the Villages of Lakeview project along the Ramona Expressway. Dwelling units will be placed adjacent to the floodplain; the project area has serious geotechnical issues such as large ground cracks, soil compaction and proximity to the Casa Loma Fault. The project is active and it is proceeding through the Riverside County Planning Department. Planner for the project is Matt Straite, (951) 955-0545 or MSTRAITE@rctlma.org

HIGHLAND FAIRVIEW LOGISTICS CENTER NOP ISSUED

by Sue Nash: In November 2007 the city of Moreno Valley issued a Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Highland Fairview Logistics Center. The proposed warehouse project site is located on 266 acres in the city of Moreno Valley adjacent to and south of Highway 60 between Redlands Boulevard and Theodore Street. (It is located just north of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and Lake Perris State Recreation Area.) At build-out, the project would include 2.42 million square feet of warehouse area and 200,000 square feet of commercial/retail area. It would accept 276 incoming cargo containers seven days a week and have approximately 560 outbound truck trips per week. The Friends commented that the project will cumulatively degrade the ability of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area to function as a viable Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) reserve and that a full and detailed analysis of those impacts was required under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Friends are particularly concerned about: air pollution, night sky light pollution, toxic run-off, availability of water, drainage onto the SJWA (water quality issues), global warming and cumulative impacts of this project. The project would be located a short distance from Moreno Valley's new High School #5. This project is one of three truck distribution centers the city of Moreno Valley is considering to locate along Highway 60 in eastern Moreno Valley. And there is a distinct possibility that the former Moreno Highlands project lands may be converted to commercial/distribution centers. Along with the distribution centers planned for the I-215 corridor, Moreno Valley risks becoming another Mira Loma, an area with major diesel particulate pollution. Planner for the project is: Mark Gross, (951) 413-3222.

PROLOGIS PARK NOP ISSUED by Ann McKibben: The city of Moreno Valley issued a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for ProLogis Park, a 2,244,419 square foot industrial center along Highway 60 in eastern Moreno Valley on January 28, 2008. The proposed project is west of the Highland Fairview Logistic Center (HFLC) and would be accessed via Moreno Beach Drive and Redlands Boulevard. The Friends have similar concerns regarding this project as with the HFLC and will be submitting comments to the city. Planner for the project is: Jeff Bradshaw, (951) 413-3224.

QUAIL RANCH NOP ISSUED by Sue Nash and Ann McKibben: The city of Moreno Valley issued a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Quail Ranch development on January 31, 2008. The proposed project would place approximately 1,500 units on 1,263 acres of land. The project site is located along Gilman Springs Road, north of Jack Rabbit Trail and is about three miles south of Highway 60. It is outside the city limits but within its sphere of influence. The project area is directly across the road from the north end of Mystic Lake and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA). The Quail Ranch Golf Course will be redesigned so the golf course is placed in the Alquist-Priolo Zone of the Claremont Strand of the San Jacinto Fault along Gilman Springs Road.

The Friends commented that this project will cumulatively degrade the ability of the SJWA to function as a viable MSHCP reserve and that a full and detailed analysis of those impacts was required under CEQA. The Friends are particularly concerned about: night sky light pollution, water supplies and water quality issues, toxic run-off and drainage onto the SJWA and into Mystic Lake, leap frog development, and cumulative impacts when this project is considered with others. Planner for the project is: Chris Ormsby, (951) 413-3229.

MID COUNTY PARKWAY by Ann McKibben: Plans have been in place for a number of years to expand the Ramona Expressway to a six to eight lane highway 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. (Federal regulations would not allow a transportation corridor to be built in front of the Lake Perris dam.) Because the project alternatives had to be altered, the RCTC reissued the notice of preparation (NOP) in the summer 2007. The RCTC plans to issue the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the project in April 2008. Some of the concerns the Friends have regarding the project are: impacts on designated MSHCP lands at the SJWA (take of Stephens' kangaroo rat), loss of prime agricultural lands, air & night light pollution, and impacts to the San Jacinto River where the project crosses the river. If you are interested in commenting on the draft environmental impact report for this project, please e-mail us at: northfriends@northfriends.org or visit the Friends web page at: www.northfriends.org where we will be posting information as it develops. RCTC contact for the project is: Cathy Bechtel, Project Manager, (951) 787-7141; www.midcountyparkway.org

SJWA BIRD CHECKLIST UPDATE by Ann McKibben: A number of years ago the Friends began the process of updating the bird checklist for the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, at list which was last issued in April 1989. Information was gathered from local birding experts and then the long process of updating and refining the information began. Doug Morton took on the project of compiling the list and now we can say that the checklist has been updated and also includes birds at Lake Perris State Recreation Area. Major contributors to the compilation are: Gene Cardiff, Cin-Ty Lee, Chet McGaugh, Bob McKernan, Greg Morton, and especially John Green.

The Friends have posted the updated list (which also incorporates birds from Lake Perris State Recreation Area and the Potrero Canyon Unit) on our web site at: www.northfriends.org The list is in text form and not formatted into a checklist form yet, but we wanted to make the new list available for everyone to use. Eventually, the Friends will produce an annotated list containing detailed information on where the birds can be found, food sources, etc.

A huge **Thank You** to Doug Morton for all the work he put into the project and thank you to all of those who contributed information!

FUNDRAISING EVENT—PERSONAL BIRDING TOUR OF THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA by Sue Nash and Ann McKibben: The drawing for the PERSONAL BIRDING TOUR of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area will be held at the Friends' nature walk on March 15, 2008. The tour (for up to four people) will include snacks for breakfast and lunch, a birding book, and fancy binocular straps. The Birding Tour

will be led by expert birders from the Friends' Board and will include information about the geology of the SJWA and surrounding areas plus information about the ecology of the area from the retired manager of the SJWA. Mostly, this will be a wonderful opportunity to see as many birds as possible (we have found 100 on a super day) and visit all of the many habitats in which they live. The tour will take place in the spring of 2008 on a day selected by the winner and the Friends. The last date on which tickets can be **received** by the Friends is March 1, 2008.

You will receive a raffle ticket for each \$5.00 of your regular membership donation. You can make a membership donation by filling out the membership donation form in this newsletter. All items for the tour are being donated by Sue Nash, Tom Paulek, Ann McKibben and Mike McKibben.

WINNER OF FRAMED MYSTIC LAKE POSTER by Ann McKibben: The Friends held their drawing for the framed Mystic Lake poster at the December 2nd Beginning Bird Walk at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The lucky winner of the framed poster is Jean Durick of Glenwood, Iowa. Jean and her husband Roger live part of the year in Iowa and part in southern California. Jean had been a long-time supporter of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the Friends. Congratulations to Jean on winning the framed poster! If you are interested in purchasing an unframed poster, please contact Sue Nash at: (909) 228-6710 or e-mail at: snash22@earthlink.net

WEST NILE VIRUS: Please remember to use non-toxic insect repellent while visiting the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, especially during early morning hours and around dusk when mosquitoes are present.

FRIENDS' WEB PAGE: Please check out the Friends' web page at: www.northfriends.org for information about our nature walks and updated "Take Action" information where our comment letters are posted.

LINKS:

Friends NSJV: www.northfriends.org
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society: www.sbvass.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.

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

February 24, 2008, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to Dusk SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRDING FIELD TRIP

This trip is with San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society. Join us for a day of birding in the northern San Jacinto Valley where we will be looking for wintering birds of prey and waterfowl. It is possible to see 100 species on the winter trip so we'll see if we make our goal this year. This is a good walk for new birders and families. Leader: Gene Cardiff. For more information check the SBVAS web site at: www.sbvass.org

March 15, 2008, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon BLUEBIRD BOX AND BIRDING NATURE WALK

For a number of years there have been bluebird boxes at various locations within the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The boxes were placed there by the Santa Ana Watershed Association to help replace nesting habitat for bluebirds, swallows and other birds which has been lost due to rampant urbanization in the Inland Counties. Samantha Dempster works for SAWA and has been the person in charge of locating the boxes. The SJWA boxes have provided wonderful nesting sites for swallows (tree), but we have yet to see any bluebirds using them. Join us on this interesting walk as Samantha explains the value of providing these nesting boxes for the 'birding public'. We'll also be bird watching during our walk. Leader: Samantha Dempster. For more information on SAWA, check their web site at: www.sawarcd.com

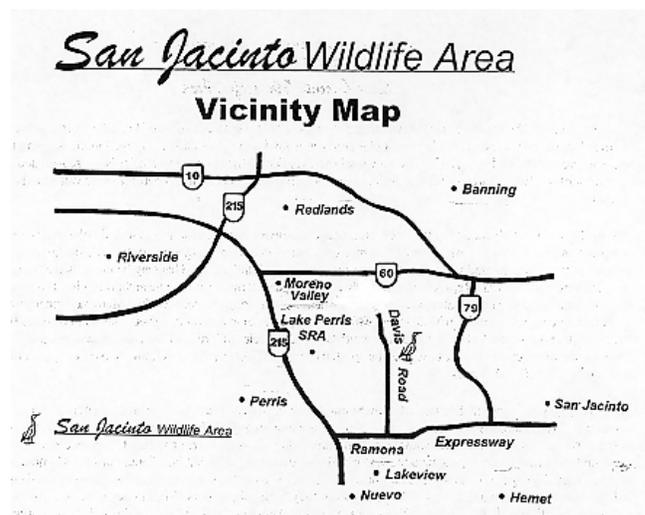
April 26, 2008, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon SJWA PLANT AND WILDFLOWER WALK

Dave Bramlet is a leading expert on the plants of the San Jacinto Valley. With the generous rains we have had this year we hope to see all three of the rarest plants found on the SJWA: San Jacinto Saltbush, Spreading Navarretia, and Thread-leaved Brodiaea. The San Jacinto Wildlife Area is the only chance for many of these rare plants to survive. Unfortunately, the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) allows most of their habitat to be destroyed by development. Leader: Dave Bramlet.

May 10, 2008, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon SJWA INSECT WALK

Greg Ballmer and Gordon Pratt co-taught a butterflies of southern California class through UCR Extension for many years. On this walk they will show us butterflies, California native bees and many other fascinating insects, ones you never dreamed existed or were so interesting. Along the way we will be looking for birds, too. Leaders: Greg Ballmer and Gordon Pratt.

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.

BEGINNING BIRD WALKS: San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society organizes and sponsors Beginning Bird Walks (BBW) at various locations in Riverside County. We are fortunate that a number of the walks are held at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Please check their web site at: www.sbvass.org for information on dates and locations for all their Beginning Bird Walks. Or call Cathy Tobin at (951) 684-9613. **Thank you SBVAS!**

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 west to Davis Road in Lakeview; go north on Davis Road 2.3 miles to the headquarters. *From Highway 215:* take the Ramona Expressway east to Davis Road in Lakeview (traffic signal); go north on Davis Road 2.3 miles to the area headquarters.

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

PLEASE USE CAUTION WHILE DRIVING ON DAVIS ROAD IF THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT RAINS. Do not drive on Davis Road if it is muddy or it is raining. During the rainy season, please call the wildlife area headquarters, (951) 928-0580, during regular work hours to ask about road conditions.

OTHER NEWS:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS: We had a great response from our members and friends this fall during our fall membership appeal. We sincerely appreciate all of your donations and support for protecting the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Once again, thank you for your very generous donations!

THANK YOU Margie Breitreuz, Ann McKibben and Sue Nash for folding, labeling, and sealing our fall newsletter.

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 or call Ann McKibben at (951) 924-8150 to have your name deleted. Our current newsletter is posted on the Friends' web page at: www.northfriends.org

UP-COMING EVENTS:

MARCH 21 & 22; JUNE 6 & 7, 2008 (9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) – HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION, Moreno Valley City Maintenance Facility, 15670 Perris Blvd., Moreno Valley; verify time: 1-800-304-2226. http://www.rivcowm.org/hhw/hhw_schedule.html

APRIL 5 (noon to 5 p.m.) & 6 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.), 2008 – PLANT SALE, UCR Botanic Gardens. Information: (951) 784-6962. www.gardens.ucr.edu

MAY 31, 2008 (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.) – DUCK DAZE, Hidden Valley Nature Center, 11401 Arlington Avenue, Riverside. Information: (951) 785-7452. (*Rescheduled due to cancellation.*)

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. Call Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710 if you would like to help.

Duck Daze, January 31: Can you take part of a day to help the Friends host a table at the Duck Daze event? If we get enough volunteers, we hope to attend from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Join us as we share information about the SJWA.

**FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN
SAN JACINTO VALLEY**
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Board Members: Greg Ballmer, Jane Block, George Hague, Ann McKibben, Doug Morton, 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 & Tom Paulek.

GLOBAL WARMING AND THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA by Sue Nash:

It was exciting to watch the acceptance speeches for the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo on December 10, 2007. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Albert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr. were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change". <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Some of the key findings for the North America chapter of the Third IPCC Assessment Report (TAR) on *resources and ecosystems* are: In western snowmelt-dominated watersheds, shifts in seasonal runoff, with more runoff in winter adaptation may not fully offset the effects of reduced summer water availability.

As reported in the journal *Science*, The Press-Enterprise and the LA Times, scientists are confirming this prediction--as temperatures have increased, more winter precipitation has fallen as rain instead of snow, and the snow is melting sooner. The result is that rivers are flowing faster in the spring, raising the risk of flooding and slower in the summer, raising the risk of drought.

Eastern Municipal Water District recently told developers of nine major residential and warehouse projects in western Riverside County that it could not guarantee a water supply for the next 20 years. *Friends now question the validity of the letter of assurance (sufficient water for the next 20 years) to the Villages of Lakeview Project.* The water shortage is mainly caused by two factors: 1) a 20-30 % reduction in deliveries to southern California from the Delta to protect Delta smelt from being killed in the water pumps; 2) the Colorado River is the eighth year of a drought. (See more factors: www.calwatercrisis.org)

The IPCC reports concluded that "The resilience of many ecosystems is likely to be exceeded this century by an unprecedented combination of climate change, associated disturbances (e.g., flooding, drought, wildfire, insects, ocean acidification), and other global change drivers (e.g., land use change, pollution, over-exploitation of resources)."

Friends are especially concerned about water supplies to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) which now relies almost exclusively (especially in the increasingly frequent drought years) on reclaimed/recycled water from Eastern Municipal Water District. As was asked in the February 2008 issue of National Geographic Magazine, "The American West was won by water management. What happens when there's not water left to manage?" (www.ngm.com "Drying of the West")

As water becomes scarcer, the reclaimed/recycled water produced by urban dwellers will become more valuable. The cost of reclaimed water may not be as affordable for the SJWA may not be delivered at the time of the year when it is most needed by the many species of birds, plants on other wildlife who depend on its availability year round.

We are concerned that although the State of California is acknowledging the reality and the impacts of Global Warming, our federal and county elected officials, the Riverside County's Regional Conservation Agency (which implements the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan), and the Department of Fish and Game ignore global warming generally and specifically ignore the impacts of climate change on the 140 species protected by the MSHCP and the extremely rare plants found on the SJWA. The management of the SJWA must reflect changing climate conditions if the public's resources are to be protected.

Here is a resource for one of the many ways people can keep track of their (non-vehicle) energy use and carbon

output savings by switching habits and products: <http://www.kilowattours.org/>

MORENO HIGHLANDS SPECIFIC PLAN by Ann McKibben:

Since 1991, the city of Moreno Valley has a specific plan in place for the Moreno Highlands project, a plan to put 7,000+ homes on the northern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Since the approval of the 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. Highland Fairview is the same company that is working to approve a truck distribution center called the Highland Fairview Logistics Center. (See separate article about this project.) Currently, there is speculation that the developer might abandon plans to build housing and instead develop distribution centers on the Moreno Highlands acreage if the HF Logistics Center is approved. The Friends will be following the project to see what happens in the future.

LEGACY HIGHLANDS by Ann McKibben: The city of Beaumont approved the Legacy Highlands development on January 15, 2008 with a 3-2 vote. The project projected to place 2,878 units on 1,600 acres on lands south of Highway 60 (before the 60/10 merge). The project site runs north/south and is north of the Riverside County Lamb Canyon Landfill along SR79 and adjacent to a commercial chicken ranch. Issues of concern include: loss of wildlife habitat, water availability, air quality, traffic, wildfire hazards. The Friends are concerned about the loss of wildlife corridors and their connections to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area.

DISCONTINUED DAILY USE FEE AT SJWA by Sue Nash:

An attempt was made this fall to collect a \$2.50 per day per person non-hunting use fee at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The Friends inquired into the validity of this request. The Department of Fish and Game Region 6 Regional Manager Curt Taucher responded to the Friends' letter of inquiry that because the California Wildlife Campaign annual pass has been discontinued and the \$2.50 daily use fee is being phased out, DFG made the decision to suspend the fee. *The "iron ranger" is still at the SJWA, but you are not required to pay a day use fee; if anyone demands money for a day use fee, do not pay it. There is NO charge to be on the SJWA, unless you are hunting.*

SAN JACINTO CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION by Sue Nash:

This center is temporarily on hold, but we still have our 501(c)(3) and are looking forward to teaching more school youth about the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the effects of global warming.

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

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

The Roadrunner, February 2008
FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN
SAN JACINTO VALLEY
P.O. Box 9097
Moreno Valley, CA 92552-9097

“Return Service Requested”