



The Roadrunner

Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley

www.northfriends.org

February 2011

HELP PROTECT THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA WITH A TAX DEDUCTABLE DONATION

Dear Friends:

Last year, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors approved the largest ever specific plan in the county's history—the Villages of Lakeview (VOL), 11,000 dwelling units on the southern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. It will forever change the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the rural communities of Lakeview and Nuevo.

As a member of the Friends, we are sure you understand the value of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) both to the county of Riverside and also to the residents of the state of California:

The SJWA is considered a Significant Natural Area by the California Department of Fish and Game; it is a known resting point on the Pacific Flyway; the northern San Jacinto Valley and Mystic Lake are considered Important Bird Areas by the National Audubon Society; it also has several threatened/endangered species.

The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley is a volunteer organization. We have spent many years taking part in the approval process for the VOL project. Our members attended public meetings on the project; we submitted lengthy comments; we met with four County Supervisors to express our concerns.



“Preserve the San Jacinto Wildlife Area”



“Prevent Urban Sprawl”

Some of the most significant impacts are:

- **Increased air pollution and loss of air quality
- **Increased Global Warming impacts to the drought/flood patterns of the San Jacinto River/Mystic Lake and severe water shortages to CA and to the SJWA
- **Traffic impacts from 33,000 new residents with 15,000 daily commuters
- **Loss of prime agricultural lands, lands that produce food for the county, loss of forage areas for raptors, tri-colored blackbirds
- **Increased light and noise pollution possibly causing a 1,000 acre “dead zone” within the SJWA
- **Trespassing by feral dogs & cats; trespassing by humans on foot or off-road vehicles.

We know that you are concerned about these issues and the effect they will have on the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley and the San Geronimo Chapter of the Sierra Club and Center for Biodiversity/San Bernardino Valley Audubon filed complementary lawsuits in April 2010 to vacate all of the Specific Plan and General Plan approvals for the VOL (VOL) project. Despite having such wonderful partners, Friends have carried the entire cost of hiring attorneys to make comments and to file and pursue this lawsuit. After the trial this fall, we will carry the additional burden of an appellate brief, regardless of who prevails. Check out our website for the date, time and location of the hearing and come join us to see your donations in action!

The Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley continues to demonstrate its strength, ability and devotion to protecting the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. **Your tax deductible donation today means more than ever towards winning this important lawsuit.**

Susan Nash

FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN SAN JACINTO VALLEY V. DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME (DFG)

by Sue Nash: The Friends are back in the Court of Appeal on this case and filed our Appellant's Opening Brief on January 26, 2011. Friends fully expect to prevail once again. As Friends read the 2009 Court of Appeal decision, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) was ordered to prepare a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document before completing the San Jacinto Wildlife Area Wetlands Restoration Project. The trial court agreed with the DFG that the Court of Appeal did not really mean what they said. The Friends will continue to try and work with the Department of Fish and Game for the benefit of the SJWA in ways that do not involve litigation. The Friends are improperly being denied our rights to access public officials and documents because of our current litigation with DFG.

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME REFORM

by Tom Paulek: Last year Assemblyman Jared Huffman introduced legislation to reform the Department of Fish and Game. AB2376 was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger and requires the state Resources Agency to develop a strategic vision for reform of the Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game Commission. Under the bill a blue ribbon task force and stakeholder advisory group will seek to enable the state of California to better meet its public trust responsibilities for fish and wildlife and to address 21st Century challenges to wildlife stewardship. Assemblyman Huffman deserves our kudos for this forward thinking legislation.



Ramona Duck Club, No Trespassing Sign, April 30, 2010

THIS PROPERTY IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

by Tom Paulek: The state Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) will consider purchase of a Conservation Easement (\$390,000) on the 92 acre Ramona Duck Club on February 24, 2011. A paramount impact of concern to the Friends regarding this acquisition is the Ramona Duck Club's blockade of public access to hundreds of acres of public land. These public lands were previously purchased in fee by the WCB for purposes of wildlife conservation and public recreation. The gate and forbidding **NO TRESPASSING** signage

depicted above has been erected on San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) lands included in the 2001 WCB Walker acquisition and also forbids public use of hundreds of acres of additional public lands acquired by the WCB subsequent to the Walker acquisition. The Friends will oppose the acquisition of this Conservation Easement until the iron gate is removed, the private/public lands are surveyed and permanently delineated, and public access is restored to all the public lands comprising the SJWA.

COMPOSTING FACILITIES ON BRIDGE STREET

by Sue Nash and Tom Paulek: On January 11, 2011 the Riverside County Board of Supervisors denied the Friends Appeal on this project and approved Conditional Use Permit 3627. This facility processes organic green waste and manure into fertilizer and soil amendments and is located on the southeast corner of Bridge Street and Gilman Springs Road adjacent to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and the San Jacinto River. To those attending the public hearing, Supervisor Ashley appeared to agree that no legally complete and adequate Mitigated Negative Declaration was submitted to the public, the Responsible Agencies, the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors to review and comment on. Also significant water quality concerns of the Santa Ana Regional Quality Control Board were not addressed in the conditions of approval. Despite these concerns the Board approved the project, claiming these issues would be addressed within 90 days or when the Regional Board issued their permits for the project.

SAN JACINTO VALLEY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Tom Benson, San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society: On December 28, 2010, 23 participants counted birds in the San Jacinto Valley and environs. The weather was much improved from the previous Tuesday (the original date), and resulted in a total tally of 153 species, our highest total since 2002 (also 153). Highlights of the count included: Cackling Goose—1 in Moreno Valley in a flooded basin near the intersection of John F. Kennedy Drive and Oliver Street. Western Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Thayer's Gull, and Glaucous-winged Gull—all at the chicken ranch along Ramona Expressway and/or Lake Perris. Lapland Longspur—1 heard flying over the duck clubs and 1 (possibly the same) seen with Horned Larks in the field at the north end of the auto loop at San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Palm Warbler—2 south of the San Jacinto River at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Swamp Sparrow—1 at the Sanderson sewage ponds near the education/visitor's center. Other species of interest seen on the count include Greater White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Horned Grebe, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, multiple Ferruginous Hawks, Merlin, Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, Western Screech-owl, Burrowing Owl, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hutton's Vireo, Barn Swallow, and Mountain Bluebird. We were unable to find any Mountain Plovers, Long-eared Owls, or Short-

eared Owls this year. Thanks to all who participated and made this such a successful count.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE:

The Riverside County General Plan Update (GPU) will significantly impact all of us within this county and many adjacent lands. The GPU could cause major problems for the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) as well as you and your family when it develops its elements on Land Use and Sprawl, Global Warming and Preserving Natural Resources, Air Quality and Water Reliability, and also Noise and Open Space. Towards the end of 2011 Riverside County will consider approving the GPU.

George Hague and Ann Turner-McKibben are the Environmental Community's Representatives to the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). They both have given input into the process, but many of their important votes are on the losing end of this committee which is dominated by those connected to development interests. The GPAC has not met for 17 months and will not meet again until this Spring.

Following that GPAC meetings, the County plans to release the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).



SJWA/Walking to the Reclaimed Water Ponds

SAN JACINTO RIVER LEVEE PROJECT: For a number of years the city of San Jacinto has proposed extending the San Jacinto River levee from State Street to Sanderson Avenue. Extending the river levee would allow the filling of approximately 2,000 acres of flood plain along the river and the lands could then be used for development. The \$25 million cost of the levee would be split between the city and the Riverside County Flood Control District. The Friends are concerned that the project will impact the San Bernardino kangaroo rat, burrowing owl, least Bell's vireo, and riparian habitat values. We are also concerned the alteration of the river hydrology will adversely impact Mystic Lake plant and animal habitats. Flood plains allow groundwater recharge, slow the flow of flood waters and provide a less expensive method of managing flood waters while preserving open space and wildlife habitat and protecting those who are downstream from flood risks.

The draft environmental impact report for the project will be released sometime this spring and the Friends will submit comments. The links below challenge the prevailing thought that levees are the best flood control solution.

http://www.floods.org/PDF/ASFPM_Levee_Policy_Challenges_White_Paper_021907.pdf

<http://rs.resalliance.org/2009/12/18/reconnecting-floodplains-to-rivers-to-reduce-systemic-flood-risk/>

WEBMASTER NEEDED—PLEASE VOLUNTEER:

As you are aware, more and more communications are taking place through the Internet, social networking sites, Twitter, and blogs. The Friends currently have a web site at: www.northfriends.org You can read our past newsletters and if you misplace this one, you can go there to check the dates and times of our upcoming walks. **The Friends want to update the design of their current web page and are looking for a volunteer who has experience designing and maintaining web sites to help us make those changes.** With an expanded web site we can keep each other informed about the wildlife observed at the SJWA, nature walks, road conditions, public hearings on land use and transportation issues, litigation news and other information. Also, members and friends would be able to make monthly, yearly online donations to support the Friends' work. If you would like to donate your talents or know of someone who could help the Friends make this step, please contact us at: northfriends@northfriends.org or call Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710. ***If you could help the Friends set up Facebook and Twitter accounts, please contact us at northfriends@northfriends.org***

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS! The Friends sincerely appreciate all of the generous donations we received during our October Fund Appeal. We also appreciate your longtime support of the Friends' work as all of us work together to protect and preserve the San Jacinto Wildlife Area.

LINKS:

Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley:

www.northfriends.org

San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society:

www.sbvass.org

Rare Bird Alert:

<http://listserv.arizona.edu/archives/birdwest.html>

(Southeastern California RBA) or

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/inlandcountybirds/>

Bird Photography by Dave Furseth:

<http://www.davesbirds.com/> Lovely photographs.

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

March 5, 2011, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon BIRDING & BLUEBIRD BOX NATURE WALK

The SJWA has approximately 45 bluebird boxes. They were placed at the wildlife area by the Santa Ana Watershed Association to help provide habitat for bluebirds and other bird species that have lost nesting habitat due to rampant urbanization in the inland counties. Bewick's wren and tree swallow are some of the species that have been found using the boxes. Join us for this interesting bird walk as we learn more about the importance of bird boxes at the SJWA and see how many species of birds we can find while birding. Leaders: Samantha Dempster, Dan Lacey, Sue Nash.

March 26, 2011, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon SJWA BIRD WALK

Belted kingfisher, common yellowthroat, white-faced ibis, northern harrier, osprey, savannah sparrow are just a few of the 250+ species of birds found at the SJWA. Although you may not see that many species in one morning, it is a worthy challenge to see the wide range of birds that make the SJWA their home, overwinter or stop on their migration. Join us for a fun morning of exploration and birding at the SJWA. Leaders: Joyce Schwartz, Rosedith Marx, Sue Nash.

April 16, 2011, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon SJWA PLANT & WILDFLOWER WALK

Wetlands, upland grasslands, & riparian woodlands are found on the SJWA and provide a wide range of habitat to explore and enjoy. Join us as we learn about native plants, why non-native species hamper their growth, what part soils play in hosting plants, and coping mechanisms plants have to survive drought conditions. And we will be watching for birds and keeping tabs on how many plants and birds we find. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Leaders: Dave Bramlet & Patrick Temple

May 14, 2011, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to Noon SJWA BUG WALK

Bugs. We love them, loathe them, and they are our 'friends'. Join us while we learn about the importance of bugs and how valuable they are in the cycle of life. This walk is excellent for kids and adults who are curious and want a hands-on experience. Butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, beetles, ants and many others are some of what we will see. Once again we will also identify birds and see how many species of bugs and birds we can find. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Leader: Gordon Pratt, Sue Nash.

BEGINNING BIRD WALKS:

The San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society organizes and sponsors Beginning Bird Walks (BBW) at locations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Please

check their web site at: www.sbvas.org to verify all information on dates, time and locations for all of their Beginning Bird Walks. Or call Cathy Tobin at (951) 684-9613.



SJWA Nature Walk, February 6, 2011/Margie Breitzkreuz

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.

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

WAIVER FORM: All walk participants need to sign waiver of liability form. Please be aware that minors (under the age 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 Sue Nash at (909) 228-6710 or e-mail her at: snash22@earthlink.net

TO VISIT THE SAN JACINTO WILDLIFE AREA:

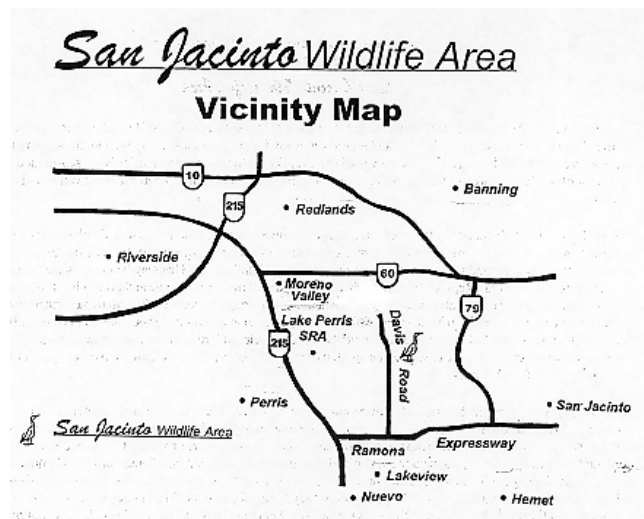
Hours: The wildlife area is open seven days a week from Dawn to Dusk. You are welcome to visit on your own at any time. There is an Information Kiosk on the east side of Davis Road adjacent to the parking lot.

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.

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 office hours (6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) to ask about road conditions.



OTHER NEWS:

E-MAIL ADDRESSES: Please consider including your e-mail address on your membership/donation form so that we can send you updated information about the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. We do not share or sell names, mailing addresses, or e-mail addresses with other organizations or individuals.

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



Palm Warbler, Nov 30, 2010, SJWA/Rosedith Marx

THANK YOU to Shari Ardill, Margie Breitreuz, Beckie Hynds, and Ann McKibben for folding, labeling, and sealing our fall newsletter.

UP-COMING EVENTS:

April 2, 2011 (Noon to 4 p.m.) & April 3, 2011 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.), 2010 - SPRING PLANT SALE, UCR Botanic Gardens. Information: (951) 784-6962. www.gardens.ucr.edu
MAY 7, 2011 (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.) - DUCK DAZE, Hidden Valley Nature Center, 11401 Arlington Avenue, Riverside. Information: (951) 785-7452. www.hiddenvalleynaturecenter.org

FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEER: The individual would work to raise money and find volunteers to help us expand Friends' web page and newsletter. **NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** The Friends need someone who is familiar with publishing & editing software who can help produce our newsletter. Contact us at northfriends@northfriends.org

FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN SAN JACINTO VALLEY

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

e-mail: northfriends@northfriends.org
web page: www.northfriends.org

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 the Friends' board.

The Roadrunner, February 2011
FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN
SAN JACINTO VALLEY
P.O. Box 9097
Moreno Valley, CA 92552-9097

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MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM – I would like to become a 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 _____

Please consider sharing your e-mail address; we do not sell of share our membership list.

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.

I would like to volunteer for the Friends