

# Crafton News

*The Newsletter of the Crafton Hills Open Space Conservancy*

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2000

## What's in the News?

Hear ye! Hear ye! Read all about the Crafton Hills in the all new *Crafton News!* In this and subsequent issues of the News, we will keep you informed about events concerning the Crafton Hills. Find out about proposed developments that are encroaching on the Hills and what you can do about them. Mark your calendars for upcoming field trips, presentations, or other events of interest. Learn all about the natural history of the Hills and impress your friends and associates with your knowledge about local trivia. For example: did you know that horned lizards eat mostly ants? You'll find their little ant exoskeleton droppings on our hikes! Or that the woolly California lilac, *Ceanothus tomentosus olivaceus*, reaches its northernmost location in the world on the north-facing Crafton Hills? Impressed?

Read on! Find out! Join us in action to conserve and enjoy the Crafton Hills!

## Our Mission

From its inception in 1989 and formal incorporation as a non-profit, tax exempt corporation in 1992, the Crafton Hills Open Space Conservancy (CHOSC) was created to protect and preserve the natural open space of the Crafton Hills. We strive to protect in perpetuity the natural environment of the area for its significant watershed, ecological, recreation and aesthetic values.

## Changing of the Board

The Board of the CHOSC is comprised of fifteen members: two members each representing the Cities of Redlands and Yucaipa, and San Bernardino County, as well as representatives of Crafton Hills College, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Tri-County Conservation League and other members-at-large. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Larry Harvill, past-Chairman and long-time CHOSC supporter, who is retiring to Arizona; and to Bill Cunningham, who represented the City of Redlands for many years. Dr. Ron Boatman, a geography professor at Crafton Hills College, has been nominated to replace Dr. Harvill, and Gary George, Redlands City Councilman, will replace Mr. Cunningham. Welcome, Ron and Gary!

Chairman	Dr. Tim Krantz
Vice-Chairman	Dr. Harold Hill
Secretary	Viola Slade
Treasurer (Yucaipa)	Ingrid Lagerlof
City of Redlands	Gary George
	Jan Sherman
City of Yucaipa	Dr. Allan Drusys
County	Kevin Thomas
	Dianne Copelan
Other representatives,	Scott Klemm
members-at-large	Gertrude Hagum
	Edward Rea
	Jennifer Mendoza
	Jim Morris
	Dr. Ronald Boatman

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Changing of the Board
- 1 What's in the News?
- 2 East Branch Project Under Construction
- 2 Hampton Heights Threatens West Hills
- 3 Santa Ana Regional Trail To Link To Hills
- 3 Hikes and Bikes
- 4 Membership
- 4 Nature Notes

page 1

## East Branch Pipeline Under Construction

The East Branch Extension Project involves installation of a pipeline to deliver State Water Project water from the Devil Canyon Powerplant north of San Bernardino to the communities of Yucaipa and Cherry Valley. The project includes installation of 13.5 miles of new 54- and 36-inch pipeline, construction of a reservoir and pump station in the east Crafton Hills, and pump stations in Cherry Valley and Greenspot. From Mill Creek Road (Highway 38) at the northeast end of the Crafton Hills, the pipeline extends to the southeast along the eastern flank of the hills to the Crafton Reservoir, then to Bryant Street and south through the City of Yucaipa to Cherry Valley.

The Crafton Reservoir will cover about 5 acres and provide 70 acre-feet of usable water storage. The CHOSC Board has negotiated with the California Department of Water Resources to include the following mitigation measures:

- The DWR will purchase and convey to the Conservancy approximately 140 acres of habitat as compensation for direct impacts of the pipeline project and reservoir;
- Disturbed areas will be revegetated using a seed mix of species native to the Crafton Hills;
- Seepage from below the reservoir will provide important wildlife habitat values for the area;
- And any oak trees greater than 2" dbh that must be removed along the corridor will be replaced.

Hampton Heights Project

## Threatens Western Hills

A proposal to construct 507 residential units and an 18-hole golf course on both sides of Sand Canyon Road is moving forward. The Hampton Heights Planned Development was filed with the San Bernardino County Planning Department. The County has required that the applicants must prepare an Environmental Impact Report.

The project is proposed for development on 463 acres, situated on both sides of Sand Canyon Road, extending west to Overcrest Drive. The project includes 8.8ac designated as "lodging/senior residential", which allows up to 123 additional units or resort hotel rooms.

Project proponents made a presentation to the CHOSC Board in September, 1998. At that time, they presented a development plan showing a layout of fairways and residential lots on both sides of Sand Canyon Road. Access between the fairways on either side of Sand Canyon would be provided via an "overpass" for golf carts and pedestrians.

Although the project proposes 250 acres of "open space", 200 acres are actually taken up by the golf course and landscaped areas. Only 33.5 acres (7% of project site) to the northeast remain as natural open space, to be "offered for dedication to the (CHOSC)." This offer of dedication is further compromised by a single lot accessed by a long cul-de-sac in the middle of the open space parcel. The Board of the CHOSC, by unanimous vote, declined the offer of dedication.

We remain concerned that the project would require substantial grading for the golf course fairways. Furthermore, the development plans did not address regional trail linkages to the Hills; the plans maintained the flag lot and excessively long cul-de-sacs in the northeast; and failed to adequately transition the development to the Crafton Hills open space above the college.

The Notice of Preparation of an EIR was dated September 30, 1999. No further hearings have yet been scheduled. For more information, contact Nancy Sansonetti, County of San Bernardino Planning Division, at (909)387-4147.

Page 2

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

PLACE Yucaipa City Hall, 34272 Yucaipa Blvd., Yucaipa

TIME Friday, February 25, 3:30-5:00 PM

Join us for our CHOSC Annual Meeting, including installation of officers and planning for Spring field trips. Refreshments will be served. Contact Ingrid Lagerlof at (909)797-8550 for more information.

### SPECIAL EVENT! 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL SANTA ANA RIVER RENAISSANCE SYMPOSIUM

PLACE El Prado Golf Course Clubhouse

TIME Friday, March 3, 11:30-4:30

Find out what is going on to restore the riparian wetlands along the Santa Ana River. Afternoon panel discussions will address benefits of greenways, restoration and biology, and multiple use of the Prado Basin. Lunch will be provided by the Wildlands Conservancy. R.S.V.P. by 2/22 at (909)387-2591.

### BIKE TO THE PEAK!

PLACE Crafton Hills College Public Safety Office

TIME Saturday, March 18, 9:00-12:00

Park in the adjacent parking lot and join us on an easy mountain bike trip to Zanja Peak. It's a steady, moderate climb to the summit, and a fun scream back down to CHC! Contact Tim Krantz, (909)389-0079, for more information. Rain cancels.

### APRIL FOOLS HILLS HIKE!

PLACE Yucaipa Regional Park

TIME Saturday, April 1, 9:00

Feelin' foolish and fysicaly fit? Join us for an aerobic (moderate to strenuous) hike up the back side of the Crafton Hills. Ask the attendant at the Yucaipa Regional Park for directions to the trail head. Contact Jennifer Mendoza, (909)794-6214, for more information. Rain cancels.

### Earth Day Wildflower Walk

PLACE Crafton Hills College Public Safety Office

TIME Saturday, April 22, 9:00-12:00

Park in the adjacent parking lot at CHC and shuttle up the fire road to near the summit. Get up close and personal with the Crafton Hills wildflowers and critters, as interpreted by our local experts. Bring snacks, water, and sunscreen, because Dudleyas and wild mustard flowers will only hold one for so long! Contact Tim Krantz, (909)389-0079, for details.

## Drought! Adaptations to a Semi-desert Environment

The Crafton Hills are comprised of chaparral scrub vegetation, characterized by a winter wet-summer dry climate. This "Mediterranean" climate pattern is unique to its namesake region in southern Europe, California, southwest Australia, South Africa, and a small region of central Chile. These are regions of low-to-moderate rainfall of about 15 inches annual precipitation.

As of this writing, the 1999-2000 year is proving to be one of the driest on record, with rainfall at less than 1/50<sup>th</sup> of average annual rainfall for this time of year—0.07 inch since July 1! Even the typically drought-adapted shrubs are shriveled and dessicated compared to usual. How do they survive such hardships?

There are several strategies for survival. The predominant adaptation is sclerophylly—plants with thick, leathery leaves. The upper surface is often evergreen and stiff, with leaves curled under and fuzzy undersides to retain moisture lost during transpiration (air exchange during photosynthesis). Examples of sclerophyllous plants are the live oak and thick-leaved California lilac.

Another means of survival is to be drought deciduous—losing one's leaves in the late summer. Poison oak is a prime example of this, becoming difficult to identify in the fall when its leaves turn red and drop to the ground.

Some plants go through their entire lifecycles in a brief flourish during the winter and spring months, then drop seed and persist until the next year, or even wait several years, until rainfall is enough to trigger a new flush of annual seedlings. These are the "therophytes", and include many species that follow fires in the chaparral. Annual plant species include whispering bells, California poppy, and many species of lupine.

Finally, some plants store water in their stems or leaves. These are the succulents. Many succulents also have special metabolic processes that store solar energy during the day and undergo photosynthesis and transpiration at night. The coastal beavertail cactus and stonecrops are examples of this strategy for survival.

US POSTAGE  
PAID

Mailing Address  
Street Number and Name  
City, State 98765-4321

