



Altadena Foothills

www.altadenafoothills.org

CONSERVATOR

Newsletter of the Altadena Foothills Conservancy

Number 6 June 2004

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are finally using our small grant from the Metropolitan Water District's Community Partnering Program, taking a great weight from our collective shoulders. You would think money would be easy to spend. But AFC experienced a few problems in finding a contractor to carry out our vision, so we split the project. As you will read in the letter accompanying this newsletter, we need additional funds for the watershed education project. We hope you see the value of watershed education and creating local, place-specific lessons for our children and send in your tax-deductible donation.

Since I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, and moved to Los Angeles County in my teens, I have never experienced a "White Christmas," nor "Jack Frost nipping at my nose," at least not for more than an hour or two in the morning, or on a mountain vacation. One of my pet peeves is how much of the curriculum, especially in elementary school, centers around these kinds of themes and points of view, which most LA children never experience.

Thus, our project on watershed education uses local history—from the point of view of Alice Eaton, wife of Benjamin Eaton—as a mechanism to teach children about water and watersheds. We want them to really understand water in Altadena and the larger Los Angeles River watershed. Then they can make the connection to conservation and watershed preservation. We think that is important, and hope you do too.

Nancy L. C. Steele, D.Env., President

LAST YEAR THE ALTADENA FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY (AFC) RECEIVED A GRANT OF \$15,000 from the Metropolitan Water District Community Partnering Program to conduct watershed education and watershed improvement. When the first potential contractor fell through, the Board decided to separate the projects and issue two small grants.

The purpose of the first contract is to investigate and map the extent of invasive non-native plants and animals in our local water-producing canyons. AFC signed this contract with Rick Fisher, who has been working with the San Gabriel Mountain Regional Conservancy on similar projects.

Conservancy Signs Contracts for Watershed Education and Invasive Plants Research

The purpose of the second contract is watershed education. Author Michele Zack will produce an educational lesson on our local watershed, incorporating history, science, and humor. Last year Michele took a class called Watershed U, put on by NorthEast Trees and the Arroyo Seco Foundation, which sparked her interest in watershed education. She recently joined the Altadena Town Council and Land Use Committee, and has established a water subcommittee.

With these two small contracts, AFC is planting the seeds for future work. Michele is also going to work with AFC to secure follow-on funding for education so we can build on this initial effort to reach out to children and adults in our area. And AFC will be looking for additional funding for watershed improvement. If you have non-native invasive plants in a creek or stream on your property that you'd like to have assistance in identifying and removing, contact AFC for more information.

Project Reports



Chaney Trail Corridor

Robert Staehle, Project Leader

At the end of December 2003 AFC made the final payment to Andrea Wilson for the land we have been calling the "Wilson Triangle." We now own it free and clear. Payoff was made possible by a matching grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. It's nice to see a few of our tax dollars come back to protect our environment and watershed. This land requires annual brush clearance because of its proximity to houses. Also, sometimes trash is thrown down the hill. Thank you to everyone who volunteers for brush clearance and trash removal. A big thank you to Heinz Ellersieck, AFC Board member, who has been methodically removing poison oak in the brush clearance zone so that when we do wholesale removal, it will be safer.

The names of some in-kind contributors to AFC's campaign to purchase the Wilson Triangle were left out of the last newsletter. Some very important work by volunteers, providing materials and services, helped get the job done. Contributing everything from artwork to maps to photos to signage to hosting a neighborhood meeting and more, they were: Bonnie Callahan, Ching Lee, Don Clary, Greg R. Homel, Irmi and Peter Maunu, Jeffrey George, John Sweeney, Kyle Kemp, Lori Paul, Nami Olgin, Nan Sandford, Santiago Oliverrez, Sue Dadd, and James Griffith.

We also want to thank our brush clearance volunteers in 2003: Ann Evhard and Domi, Bruce Steele, Ching Lee, Elliot Gold, Heinz

Ellersieck, Jennifer Kutner, Joan Kaplan, Lori Paul, Rex Mayreis, and Rick Carron. Alice and Randy Wessen couldn't attend the "brush party," so they sent their gardeners a week or two later. Some others may have helped as well; please let us know if we missed you in our records.

Owen Brown Gravesite

Shari Asplund and Rick Carron, Project Leaders

The owner has returned and brought more stuff, along with a disabled RV, onto the land. Local residents and hikers have been making complaints to the County, not only about the unsightly littering, but also about the high fire danger caused by the activities on the property. AFC has again spoken with the owner and offered to purchase the land. He has so far, however, turned down our overtures. The owner has also been posting "No Trespassing" signs, so be careful if you hike up there. The situation is volatile.

Millard Canyon

Lori Paul, Project Leader

The owner of the parcels in Millard Canyon that are north of Canyon Crest Road has been conducting clean-up of the property in response to his violations discovered last year. We met with the County in April to discuss the status and learned that the owner has made no applications for permits, nor would any be considered until all of the violations are corrected. Supervisor Antonovich's deputies promised AFC that they will notify us when any application for work is made.

The Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group (ACTRWG) has been meeting twice a month for over a year now, with both community members and LA County representatives working hard to create a continuous trail from Eaton Canyon to the Arroyo Seco. Several AFC Board members regularly attend the ACTRWG meetings and recently Robert Staehle accepted the position of meeting chair when Paul Ayers stepped down. Sameer Etman is the new trails chair. So far, the group has had some successes and some setbacks.

The year has not gone smoothly, as anyone who has been working on trail development could prob-

Trails Update

ably have predicted. County staff vacated a section of the trail on private Devonwood Road in favor of a landowner who wanted to build two houses. The owner was supposed to relocate the trail prior to demolishing the existing trail, but instead he bulldozed the trail and put up "No Trespassing" signs. After a flurry of e-mails, calls, and letters, along with several tense meetings of the Trails group, the County has decided it will require the developer to restore the trail, but in a new location. The Board of Supervisors adopted a plan in May with conditions on the landowner to rebuild the trail, thus the trail has been preserved.

On the positive side, the ACTRWG has made a lot of progress. The group has identified and the County has mapped (using GPS) a section of the trail in the Rubio Canyon area to provide a non-road closure to the "Rubio gap." The ACTRWG presented its work at a community meeting on May 20th. Coming up, they will have a Trails Day event on June 12th in Loma Alta Park Equestrian Center, 8:30 am to noon.

Calendar

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Altadena Trails Day, Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group— From 8:30 am to 12 noon at the Loma Alta Equestrian Arena, W. Loma Alta Dr. and Sunset Ridge Rd., Altadena. For information visit www.altadenatrails.org

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

On the Edge: People and Wildlife Program— Presented by the Mountain Lion Foundation and the Mountains Restoration Trust. Meet



your wild neighbors (our native wildlife) and learn about ways to reduce wildlife conflicts on the urban edge. Program at

7 pm. in the Altadena Community Center, 730 E. Altadena Dr., Altadena. No children under 12, please. For more information call 818-591-1701 or visit www.on-the-edge.org

THURSDAY, JUNE 3

Southern California Forest Plan Revision, USDA—Meeting at Foothill Christian Center, 242 West Baseline Ave., Glendora, from 5 pm to 9 pm.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5

Southern California Forest Plan Revision, USDA—Meeting in Creveling Lounge, 2nd floor of Campus Center building, west end of Pasadena City College campus, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Tell Us What You Like About the Altadena Foothills

Everybody has a favorite spot, experience, place to look at, or thing to do. If you have something you'd like to share with us about our community's foothills, send us a note or an e-mail message; we'd like to hear about it. We'll try to post some of the best items on our Web site, or maybe in the next newsletter.



Tell us about your favorite spot, experience, place to look at, or thing to do. Was it when you spotted that mountain lion, bobcat or black bear? What about the mariposa lilies last year, or the ubiquitous yuccas? Have you been to Owen Brown's grave, or any of the old stone foundations of what used to be houses; or to the Mt. Lowe Railway? Have you seen the the view from

Echo Mountain, or "Cougar Rocks" above Millard? Have you heard a songbird or noticed an unusual butterfly or had other kinds of encounters while walking your dog? What about thunderstorms? What electrifies you about Altadena's foothills? The rest of us would love to hear. Send your e-mail to rob@altadenafoothills.org. Thank you!

Donating to AFC

Most of you send us a check when you want to make a donation. We love checks! Here are some other ways you can advance the goal of preserving open space lands in Altadena:

Charge It

If you have an American Express card, you can charge your donation to AFC. Go to: <http://home3.americanexpress.com/cards/charities/donateonline.asp>, click on the link to "contribute to your favorite charities," enter Altadena Foothills Conservancy in the nonprofit name line to search, then follow the directions for donating.

AFC will receive slightly less than the amount you've donated, as the nonprofit that processes the donation, JustGive, takes about 2.5% to cover processing, so please keep that in mind when you make your donation.

Donate Appreciated Assets

Appreciated assets, such as real estate, stocks, bonds, or securities, can be donated to AFC and you will receive a tax benefit.

Donate Your Car

AFC has now received two donations from Cars 4 Causes because Friends donated their cars in our name. You can call 1-800-766-CARE (1-800-766-2273) or for more information, visit their Web site at <http://www.cars4causes.net>.

Leave a Legacy

You can make a future gift to AFC by naming AFC in your will or living trust or listing AFC as a beneficiary of a retirement account or life insurance policy. You should consult your attorney for the exact language, or contact AFC for assistance. If you make one of these arrangements, let us know so that we can thank you today.

Opposite page: Buckeye butterfly (*Junonia coenia*); Top left: Pale Swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio eurymedon*); Top right: Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*); Above: Variable Checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas chalcedona*).

Photos by Lori Paul; Pale Swallowtail photo by Robert Staehle

ALTADENA
FOOTHILLS
CONSERVANCY
MISSION

The Altadena Foothills Conservancy was founded to preserve and restore open, undeveloped lands and associated historic trails and structures located in the foothills of Altadena.

The AFC exists:

- For people all ages
- For both people and wildlife
- For ecological, scenic, and cultural opportunities
- To protect natural resources and watersheds
- To ensure access to trails for recreation

New Board Member, Ross Riggs

Ross Riggs joined the AFC Board of Directors in March 2004. Mr. Riggs spent many younger years raising cattle and horses on his Rocky Mountain ranch. Surrounded by mountains and wildlife he became and remains an avid outdoorsman. Some seven years ago he retired to Altadena and enjoys its always summer climate. He and his wife, Tina, maintain a six horse stable adjacent to the historic Altadena Crest Trail. Mr. Riggs has traveled, camped, hiked and ridden the Western States extensively. He has spent many hours on local trails exploring routes and photographing trail assets. Experienced in technical writing, software design and cartography he is excited about being associated with the Altadena Foothill Conservancy. Mr Riggs views the Altadena foothills as a unique treasure worthy of preservation and hopes to help conserve this beauty for future generations.

AFC Board of Directors

NANCY L. C. STEELE, D.ENV., *President*
LORI L. PAUL, RVT, *Vice-President*
NAMI OLGIN, *Secretary and Treasurer*
SHARI ASPLUND
RICK CARRON
HEINZ ELLERSIECK, PHD
ROBERT STAEHLE
ROSS RIGGS

It's a Boy

Nami Olgin, AFC's Secretary and Treasurer, gave birth to a boy, EMILE, on December 6, 2003. Nami waited until a few hours after the AFC December Board meeting to go into labor!

Join Our E-Mail List

To receive updates and occasional communications from the AFC, send an e-mail to: nsteele@altadenafoothills.org

The Altadena Foothills Conservancy is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization; all donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Altadena Foothills Conservancy, P.O. Box 3, Altadena, CA 91003-0003, Tel: 626-798-3235

ALTADENA FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY'S 2004 ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION DRIVE

Please renew your membership as a Friend of the Altadena Foothills Conservancy or become a new Friend.

- I am renewing I am a new Friend
- \$10 \$30 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____
- Please contact me about a larger gift to AFC.

Mail with your check to: Altadena Foothills Conservancy
P.O. Box 3
Altadena, CA 91003-0003
626-798-3235

Name _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____

Email _____

Thank you for your support.



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