

## Consider an End of Tax Year Donation to TECC

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-deductible charity. Your end-of-year donation of cash, property or assets would provide a lasting legacy in the protection of open space in the Escondido Creek watershed.

Call Geoffrey at the office to discuss giving options in confidence or refer to the coupon on page 4 of this newsletter. Thank you, and Happy New Year!

## Gifts from Foundations

TECC wishes to recognize the generosity of the following foundations for their significant gifts in support of TECC's mission:

- ❑ Charles H. Stout Foundation, October 2005: \$2,500 for trails and enhancement project on the Elfin Forest Preserve
- ❑ Citizens Against Rural Exploitation (C.A.R.E.), July 2005: \$30,000 for general support
- ❑ The Jack and Jill Campbell Fund at The San Diego Foundation, August 2005: \$250.00 for general support
- ❑ The Land and Watershed Conservation Fund and an Anonymous Donor of The San Diego Foundation, July 2005: \$25,000 for core operational support
- ❑ Citizens Against Rural Exploitation (C.A.R.E.), July 2005: \$30,000 for land acquisition.

We thank these foundations, and the support of all of our donors, for your confidence in TECC's programs.

## Mission Statement

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to the preservation and protection of the natural open space within the Escondido Creek watershed. We support educational programs and compatible outdoor recreation within the watershed for the benefit of all residents of the area.

## The Escondido Creek Conservancy Officers

|                         |           |                                          |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------|
| June Rady.....          | President |                                          |
| Brent Alspach.....      | Secretary |                                          |
| Tim Costanzo.....       | Treasurer | TECC Office.....760-471-9354             |
| Steve Barker.....       | Director  | Email.....information@escondidocreek.org |
| Everett DeLano III..... | Director  | Website.....www.escondidocreek.org       |
| Jerry Harmon.....       | Director  | Geoffrey D. Smith.....Executive Director |
| Jack Olmstead.....      | Director  |                                          |
| Jeff Swenerton.....     | Director  |                                          |
| Leonard Wittwer.....    | Director  |                                          |

*The ESCONDIDO CREEK*  
Conservancy

P.O. Box 460791 Escondido California 92046

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# Watershed Voice

*The ESCONDIDO CREEK*  
Conservancy

**Please join in our conservation efforts by becoming a member.**

A Publication of The Escondido Creek Conservancy

WINTER Edition 2005

## CALL TO ACTION:

## Sewer System Proposal for 'Harmony Grove Village' Development

Discord in Harmony Grove! Will 'Harmony Grove Village' bring sewer system to Harmony Grove? The project's developer, New Urban West (NUW), thinks so!

After first promoting its project as a 742 single-family detached home development on 468 acres using a 'package sewer' system, we now find NUW before the Escondido City Council requesting hookup to the Hale Avenue Resource Recovery Facility (HARRF.) By 4 – 1 vote in September, the Escondido City Council approved a \$587,000 'capacity study' to consider the use of City sewer facilities by a project that lies completely outside of not only the City's limits, but also outside of its 'sphere of influence.'

Approximately two years ago, the community asked that the project area be removed from the sphere, thereby placing the project 100 percent under the

jurisdiction of the county of San Diego. This 'de-sphering' was approved by the LAFCO commission. (The San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is a regulatory agency with county-wide jurisdiction to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local government agencies essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well-being of the state.)

The current proposal to establish a 'sewer maintenance district' in the county and connect to the city's sewer system is not only a shameful 'end run' around the wishes of Harmony Grove residents to retain the rural character of their community – it is also of questionable legality under Government Code 56133, which prohibits a local agency from providing sewer services outside its jurisdictional boundary.

### Key Issues:

The Escondido Creek Conservancy opposes the project as currently proposed for the following reasons:

- The 742 home density is too high for the area
- The proposed package sewer system is likely not feasible for a development of this size
- Connecting to the City of Escondido sewer system is of questionable legality



without annexation, and would set a dangerous precedent for future high density development in the watershed

- The County would likely require widening Harmony Grove Road, Country Club Drive and construction of SC1375 across Escondido Creek and through the preserved Derbas lands, to support the development
- A major road across Escondido Creek connecting to Citricado is proposed, significantly altering traffic flow in that neighboring community
- The environmental impacts to Escondido Creek by a project of this size are yet to be determined

### What You Can Do:

**Continued on Page 2**



## Up and Down the Creek *By Geoffrey D. Smith, Executive Director*

We all know that we live in a disposable society. To really understand what this means, try collecting trash along a road sometime. That's what Pat and Frank McCulloch have been doing along Harmony Grove Road – for nearly 20 years!



Donning bright orange vests for safety, Pat and Frank team up twice a month to walk the length of Harmony Grove Road from Elfin Forest Road to Kauana Loa Drive – a distance of 4.5 miles – and fill up bag after bag (after bag) of carelessly discarded trash.

Frank, a retired elementary school teacher, and Pat, a retired nurse, have lived along the creek for over 30 years. Their commitment to maintaining the aesthetic health of this little stretch of paradise has earned them the rank of Escondido Creek Icon.

While tirelessly grabbing at cigarette butts, beer bottles and bits of plastic foam one recent weekday morning, Frank never

misses the opportunity to stop and wave a friendly 'Hello' gesture to the passing motorists. Most drivers wave back. All of them have so far given Frank and Pat a wide berth on this perilously narrow and windy road.

In spite of the trash and increasing traffic pressures, Frank is quick to note the intrinsic beauty of this creek gorge. "It's really beautiful out here when the cars go away."

Thank you, Pat and Frank. You are TECC's Adopt-a-Road heroes. I'll see you on the trail!



Frank McCulloch waves to motorists.

## Conservancy Teams with the Santa Ysabel General Store

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) has teamed up with the Santa Ysabel General Store to raise money for the Conservancy.

Vintage items are donated to TECC and then consigned with the General Store, which is across from Dudley's Bakery.

The store sells a wide range of vintage items - furniture, jewelry, farm and garden tools, kitchen and household items, western and Old California collectibles, books and many

other antiques and collectible objects dating from the early 1800s through the 1960s.

The Santa Ysabel General Store, which is open Wednesday through Sunday, is located in Santa Ysabel in the original general store built in 1884.

The Escondido Creek Conservancy will eagerly accept your generously donated items to be placed on consignment.

Please contact Claudia Costanzo at 760-744-9052 to make your donation.

**PAGE 1 PHOTOS:** The left photo at the top of the page is a photo of fence and poppies from Summer 2005 issue, credited to Evelyn Alemanni. The second photo at the top is of Frank McCulloch, picking up trash along Harmony Grove Road. The picture of the chicken ranch indicates the site of the proposed 742 home Harmony Grove Village development, currently a chicken ranch factory farm at the intersection of Harmony Grove Road and Country Club Drive. Photos of McCulloch and the chicken ranch credited to Geoffrey Smith.

## What You Can Do *Continued from Page 1*

You are urged to write to your elected officials to express your views in opposition to this project as currently proposed. Jurisdiction for the development project falls under the Board of Supervisors, County of San Diego. Oversight for the Contractual Sewer Services Agreement proposed between the City of Escondido, County of San Diego and New Urban West falls under LAFCO. Please call or write today – the LAFCO Commission will discuss this matter at their meeting on December 5:

Michael Ott, Executive Director, LAFCO, 619.531.5400, 619.557.4190 fax, mike.ott@sdcounty.ca.gov

### LAFCO Commissioners:

- Supervisor Bill Horn, 619.531.5555, bill.horn@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Supervisor Dianne Jacob, 619.531.5522, (619) 696-7253 fax, dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Councilmember Patty Davis, City of Chula Vista,

- 619.691.5044, (619) 476-5379 fax, pattydavis@chulavista.ca.gov
- Councilmember Donna Frye, City of San Diego, 619.236.6616, (619) 236-7329, donnafrye@sandiego.gov
- Councilmember Betty Rexford, City of Poway, 858.748.6600, brexford@ci.poway.ca.us
- W.D. 'Bud' Pocklington, Chairperson, South Bay Irrigation District, 619.427.0868
- Andrew Menshek, Padre Dam Municipal Water District, 619.448.3111
- Andrew Vanderlaan, Vice-Chairperson, At Large, 619.531.5400

### Very important to contact as well:

- Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, (619) 531-5533, (619) 234-1559 fax, pam.slater@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Gary Pryor, Director, County Dept of Planning and Land Use, (858) 694-2960, gary.pryor@sdcounty.ca.gov
- Ivan Holler, Staff, County Dept of Planning & Land Use, (858) 694-3789, ivan.holler@sdcounty.ca.gov



## Lagoon Day Fun for Everyone

TECC staffed an information booth the San Elijo Lagoon Day event on Oct. 8. TECC was a co-sponsor of the event together with the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy.

Hundreds of adults and children participated in a day of hikes, treasure hunts and natural science education at the county of San Diego's visitor center on Manchester Avenue.



Here, booth visitor Doug Wescott (left) looks over the map of the Escondido Creek Watershed in the TECC booth, while members of a local Girl Scout Troop (right) get a 3-D tactile impression of the watershed from the 15'-long scaled relief map of Escondido Creek on permanent display there. Photos/Geoffrey Smith

## Construction Dirt Won't Help Rebuild Our Beaches

By Maggie Houlihan, Councilmember - City of Encinitas

A Sept. 6 column, "One man's dirt becomes another city's sand," by Michael Pattinson, president of builder Barratt American and former president of the California Building Industry Association, oversimplified important quality of life issues and deserves a clarification.

In his column, Pattinson complained about \$450,000 in fines levied against a developer and the city of Escondido for illegal discharge into Escondido Creek in

**Our quality of life is dependent on clean ocean water, sandy beaches, and healthy watersheds.**

violation of the Clean Water Act. He argued that the developer's discharged dirt is what the creek needs to be able to send sand to the coast and help prevent the construction of massive sea walls to protect homes.

While sand on our beaches is the single best defense against beach erosion, releasing construction site dirt into the watershed does nothing to solve the

problem.

Unfortunately, much development in San Diego County has been done at the expense of wetlands and watersheds. California has already lost more than 90 percent of its historic wetlands to development. Most rivers and streams have been channelized, dammed or altered in other significant ways to accommodate development. This has eliminated natural river processes resulting in blockages to natural river flows and elimination of most flood plains.

San Elijo Lagoon, which is the receiving body of Escondido Creek, has been listed as "303(d) impaired" for sedimentation, nutrients, and bacteria by the State Water Quality Control Board, due to the impact of man-made barriers and discharges.

Contrary to Mr. Pattinson's assertions, "dirt" does not equal sand. Dirt that enters Escondido Creek will not restock the beaches. Although approximately 30,000 cubic yards of sediment enters the lagoon each year, only about 10,000 cubic yards passes through.

This sediment is made up of fine silts and clays, not pristine beach sand. This sediment clogs the creek and lagoon,

covers habitat and raises the floodplain. This changes the habitat type from wetlands to uplands and eliminates native flora and fauna.

Escondido Creek is not viewed as a major supplier of sand to our beaches. It does not have the hydrological force to contribute significantly to coastal sand.

Any support it might offer is lost due to the blockages from infrastructure such as railroad trestles and other man-made structures, which drastically alter the San Elijo Lagoon's circulation.

Since man has modified nature, we have lost nature's natural mechanisms. We must work together to repair what has been lost and restore our watersheds.

We must follow the law or pay the consequences. Our quality of life is dependent on clean ocean water, sandy beaches, and healthy watersheds.

Maggie Houlihan is an Encinitas City Council member and chairwoman of the Escondido Creek Watershed Alliance.

*The above article is reprinted courtesy of the North County Times.*

## Escondido Union High School District Favors Dorn Property Elfin Forest Preserve Threatened

It has been brought to our attention that during the month of October, high school district officials have been meeting with county of San Diego and city of Escondido officials to lobby for support of the Dorn property for its new high school and to discuss road improvements that could be made to mitigate traffic concerns.

The Dorn site is located adjacent to the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve's recently acquired Derbas property, and immediately west of the intersection of Del Dios Highway and Via Rancho Parkway.

As a result of these secret meetings, it would appear that the high school district has decided to focus all of its efforts on acquiring Dorn. Apparently this decision is being privately supported by a majority of the high school trustees as well as by

a majority, if not all, of the Escondido City Council.

In a letter to the School Board dated Jan. 31, 2005 – nearly one year ago -- TECC stated: "To introduce a comprehensive high school on this site would be contrary to the collective vision and planning that has been long supported and nurtured by regional authorities and would create intense, negative impacts to the site itself as well as to surrounding preserves, habitat and endangered species that are in such close proximity to this property."

So we're back to square one, with the high school district now focusing all of its efforts on a site that was publicly rejected months ago due to the vocal objections of community members, agencies and community groups. A high school situated on the Dorn site would threaten the

integrity of the recently acquired Derbas property that TECC played a major role in protecting.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Your calls and letters to school board members are needed. Educate them about their need to focus their school placement efforts elsewhere and preserve these sensitive lands for our children.

### Contacts:

- ☞ School Board web: [www.euhsd.k12.ca.us/districtinfo/board\\_education](http://www.euhsd.k12.ca.us/districtinfo/board_education)
- ☞ Charlie Snowden, [mwvcontr@aol.com](mailto:mwvcontr@aol.com)
- ☞ Pam Grosso, [pgrosso@sdcoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:pgrosso@sdcoe.k12.ca.us)
- ☞ Dr. Kurt Marler, [kurtkath@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kurtkath@sbcglobal.net)
- ☞ Jon Petersen, [jonpetersen@cox.net](mailto:jonpetersen@cox.net)
- ☞ Tina Pope, [tina.pope@pph.org](mailto:tina.pope@pph.org)

## Elfin Forest Resident, Educator Jeff Swenerton Joins TECC Board

We are pleased to announce that Jeff Swenerton has joined the TECC Board of Directors.



Jeff and his wife Carolyn have been Elfin Forest residents since 1978.

He is fond of camping, skiing and fish-

ing, and particularly enjoys family hiking on trails in the Elfin Forest area.

As an active member of the community, Jeff has served on the Elfin Forest Town Council, as a captain of the volunteer fire department, and, most recently, as a member of the board of Citizens Against Rural Exploitation (CARE) - an organization that has supported the Elfin Forest Community, including TECC's

preservation efforts, with funds resulting from a legal settlement with the San Elijo Hills Development.

Professionally, Jeff worked as an educator, including 18 years as an elementary school principal, and 15 years as an elementary school teacher.

Jeff retired from public schools in 2004, and we are very glad to have him join the TECC Board.

## Watershed Stewards' Training

Jan. 5, 6, 7 (Thurs., Fri., Sat.)

Learn about water quality monitoring and join a team of citizen monitors! This free training will take place from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day, with meeting location to be announced - somewhere in North County.

Monitoring the water quality of the Escondido Creek is fun, and a great way so support stream restoration efforts. This watershed monitoring program is funded by the San Diego Foundation, sponsored by the Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation, in collaboration with the Carlsbad Watershed Network and University of California Natural Reserve System. Contact: Merle O'Neill - 760-598-7783 or [merlon99@aol.com](mailto:merlon99@aol.com).

## NOTES

### Your talents are needed.

TECC currently has opportunities for ...

- Office support
- Community outreach
- Trash team.

Call the office for more details and to learn about the psychic rewards of volunteering!

### The Watershed Voice has grown!

Beginning with this issue, we now bring you six full pages packed with information and opportunities involving The Escondido Creek Conservancy.

Your generous gifts of time and money have made this possible. Thank you!

*We'd like to share current events and issues with you through our new e-newsletter. Send a quick message to [information@escondidocreek.org](mailto:information@escondidocreek.org), and we'll get you signed right up.*

## Join Us as We Learn About the Escondido Creek Watershed

You are invited to participate in our scheduled outings and service events!

What better way to learn about the watershed, while getting some exercise at the same time? All outings listed in this issue are lead by our executive director, Geoffrey Smith.

Geoffrey is a qualified outing leader with more than 25 years of backcountry outings experience. We look forward to getting to know you on these trips, as we get to know our watershed better.

For more details about these and other activities, please visit the TECC website, [www.escondidocreek.org](http://www.escondidocreek.org).

### Outing sign-up procedure:

Please contact the outing leader at 760-471-9354 or [information@escondidocreek.org](mailto:information@escondidocreek.org) to learn more about each week's destination and to sign up. We need to know you are coming in case there is a change in plans.

### Wednesdays in the Watershed (WW) Series

Dec. 7, Dec. 21, Jan. 4, Jan. 18, Feb. 1, Feb. 15 (1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month)  
9 a.m. – noon

Each week we'll chart a different course through the ever-expanding network of trails in the watershed. Meet at the staging area parking lot of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve on Harmony Grove Road, located about 1 mile north of the intersection with Elfin Forest Road. Each week we'll traverse a new section of trail. Some car shuttling may be involved as we explore different sections of the watershed.

### Weekend Watershed Wanderings (WWW) Series

Headwaters Hike  
Saturday, Dec. 3  
8 a.m. – noon

This morning we'll explore the upper headwaters of Escondido Creek, exploring hiking trails in the vicinity of Lake Wohlford. See the sights around Paradise Mountain and Bottle Peak and enjoy the cool shade of the oak woodlands. Meet at the Lake Wohlford Café at 25484 Lake Wohlford Road, just past the main gated entrance to Lake Wohlford recreation area.

### Elfin Forest Preserve Tour

Saturday, Dec. 17  
Saturday, Jan. 14  
8 a.m. – noon

TECC owns and manages several parcels of land directly along the Escondido Creek in the Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest area west of the City of Escondido. Join us on a guided tour of these areas as we explore them on foot, with possible short car shuttle hops in-between. Meet at the staging area parking lot of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve on Harmony Grove Road.

### Be Prepared! Here's a short checklist of gear to bring and wear on TECC outings:

Clothing: Light weight shirt (nylon is best), light weight pants (nylon is best), hat, sturdy boots, windbreaker, jacket  
Food: 2 quarts water, nuts, fruit, crackers, cheese  
Other: cash, identification, day pack, extra clothes, extra food, first aid kit, whistle, sun screen, sun glasses, hiking staff

### THE ESCONDIDO CREEK CONSERVANCY

I would like to support TECC's efforts and receive the *Watershed Voice* newsletter. Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation:

| Protectors of the Creek           |                   | Friends of the Creek            |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ | <b>Other</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000  | <b>Protector</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500  | <b>Benefactor</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000  | <b>Patron</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 500   | <b>Sponsor</b>    |                                 |

I am interested in donating regularly. Please send reminders  Monthly  Quarterly

Please make your check payable to 'The Escondido Creek Conservancy' or

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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### BE A VOLUNTEER.

Yes, I would like to volunteer to work with TECC. Please contact me with opportunities to serve.

Your Contributions are tax deductible.

☞ You can support TECC with the click of a mouse! Click the 'DONATE NOW' symbol on the [www.escondidocreek.org](http://www.escondidocreek.org) website for secure and efficient donations by credit card.