

Be a Friend to Your Neighborhood Creek

Do you live or work near a creek that has meaning for you? Do you enjoy being near the creek, watching it rise and flow with the seasons? Do birds, deer and coyote enjoy the creek's habitat?

Is your creek free flowing or channelized? Do you know where it starts and where it ends? Does your creek have a name? Do you care about the creek? Does your creek have a friend?

YOU can be that friend. Call the TECC office today to learn more about your neighborhood creek and how you can help. The Escondido Creek Watershed is comprised of many beautiful and unique tributary creeks, each with it's own story and each in need of a friend.

We can work with you to form a 'Friends' group for your

favorite tributary creek or direct you to an existing friends group for that creek.

As a member of the Escondido Creek Conservancy, you have access to valuable organizing resources that can support your efforts.

Call or write today! Your friend is waiting. Call 760-471-9354 or e-mail us at teccsters@yahoo.com.

*The ESCONDIDO CREEK
Conservancy*

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

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*Watershed
Voice*

*The ESCONDIDO CREEK
Conservancy*

Please join in our conservation efforts by becoming a member.

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SUMMER Edition 2005

Spread the Word so the Seeds of This Invader Don't ...

By Ranger Todd Nordness

Last year in the staging area of the EFRR, I noticed a plant I had never seen before. I referred to my "bible" of invasive plants: Invasive Plants of California Wildlands. Not being able to find it in there, I assumed it was an acceptable plant. This season, I kept an eye on the plant as it tripled in size and had recently flowered.

Just the other day, Joyce from The Carlsbad Watershed Network called to inform me that there was a noxious plant in the reserve that was of some concern.

We determined the location of it and identified it as my "mystery" plant. I asked her what it was, and she identified it as Onion Weed (*Asphodelus*.)

She explained to me that it was of concern as it is a new invader in the area. She told me that it should be pulled right away and said "that she wouldn't be surprised if it had seeded already." This prompted me to go and investigate the area. In the immediate vicinity there were no seedlings. I looked further in the downwind direction to discover a 30-foot-by-20-foot patch of the plant. I now had a new project to eradicate this new invader.

As I embarked on this mission, it did not seem to be that daunting of a task. Once I was engrossed in the project, I realized that there were literally hundreds of bulbs needing to be pulled. Four hours and 10 Hefty bags later, I still did not have the area completely cleared.

That being said, in all my years of dedication to the eradication of invasive plants, unscientifically, I have never come across such an intrusive invader.

My next plan of action was to do some research on the Internet. Apparently, its origins are from the Mediterranean region, western Asia to northern India. At the turn of the last century, Australia was inundated with it. It is said to have originated from contaminated animal feed. Dispersal come in the usual methods such as: vehicles, machinery, animals, clothing and waterways.

So if you are not familiar with this invader, I wanted to share



A large patch of Onion Weed, a new invader plant.

this hands-on experience. Attached is a picture to aid in the identification.

If we don't already have our hands full with the "usual suspects," let's keep our eyes open for this new invader.

Smith Hired as New Escondido Creek Conservancy Director

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) has hired Geoffrey D. Smith as Executive Director, effective June 1, 2005.

A 35-year resident of San Diego County, Smith has been involved in a variety of efforts devoted to environmental preservation and education, including serving more than 15 years as chairperson of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee.

Smith has worked most recently as Imperial County projects director for the Desert Protective Council and staff volunteer coordinator for the USDA Forest Service Cleveland National Forest.

Following a 20-year career as a software engineer, Smith served for two-and-a-half years as conservation program coordinator for the Sierra Club, San Diego chapter until 2003. Smith possesses a BA in Biology from University of California San Diego and an MA in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from the University of San Diego.



Geoffrey D. Smith

"Geoffrey brings to TECC a clear vision for partnering and growth that will serve the Escondido Creek watershed well as we embark on significant membership growth, land conservation and restoration activities from the mouth of the creek at San Elijo Lagoon to the headwaters in Bear Valley above Lake Wohlford," said June Rady, president of the Board of TECC. "We are very excited about this new chapter in TECC's history of successful land conservation work."

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Proposed Developments Threaten Escondido Creek Watershed

The mission of our Conservancy is to protect the watershed through strategic response to proposed development projects, whether through the public review process or through negotiations directly with the owner. Several projects currently are being proposed, which TECC staff and volunteers are actively monitoring:

Cielo Azul. 100 acres, 30 residential lots originally proposed. Located south of Harmony Grove Road, immediately west of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. Status: A project redesign has been completed with fewer lots. The developer is working to establish rights of way across adjoining properties to provide multiple access points to this ridgeline development, a contentious issue because of potential environmental impacts on the privately-owned Escondido Creek Preserve and an onerous encroachment upon the 'Way Up Trail,' a favorite North County hiking/biking trail that runs through the Elfin Forest Reserve.

Telsa Gray/Harmony Grove Meadows. 112 acres, 224 single family homes proposed on 5,000 sq. ft. lots. Located south of Country Club Drive and immediately south of TECC-owned Quarry property and adjacent to the Derbas Open Space Preserve. Status: The County Dept. of Land Use received this project in May 2005. The applicant is requesting a general plan amendment for increased density over what is proposed in the GP 2020 update. Since no sewer service is currently provided to this area, the developer is proposing to build a self-

contained sewer treatment plan to serve this residential development. A project of this size would likely be used to push the case for construction of SC 1375 connector road from Del Dios Highway, which TECC opposes. This project will be heard on Sept. 15, 2005 by the San Diquito Planning Group.

Harmony Grove Village. 468 acres. New Urban West, Inc., is proposing to build 742 single-family detached homes. Located at the intersection of Harmony Grove Road and Country Club Drive, the site of present-day Ward Egg Ranches and the DeRaadt Dairy. Status: The applicant was successful in obtaining LAFCO's approval for removing this property from the city of Escondido's sphere of influence and placing it under the jurisdiction of the county of San Diego. This project has been submitted to the county as part of its GP 2020 update study.

Since sewer service is currently not provided to the area, the developer has proposed to build a self-contained sewer treatment plant to serve this residential development. As an alternative, the developer has requested this project be connected to the existing Hale Avenue sewer treatment plant within the city of Escondido. In 2004, a written statement was issued by LAFCO reminding all parties involved that Government Code Section 56133 prohibits a local agency from providing sewer services outside its jurisdictional boundary. Legal questions remain unanswered. TECC is opposing this project as it is currently being

processed because (1) the proposed density is too high, (2) construction of a self-contained sewer system, with holding ponds, is not a feasible option to service this residential development, (3) the project is likely to require the widening of Harmony Grove Road and Country Club Drive and trigger the construction of SC 1375 across Escondido Creek and the preserved Derbas lands, and (4) the environmental impacts to the Creek and its tributaries are yet to be determined.

The Bridges at Rancho Santa Fe, Units 6 & 7. 83.5 acres. 35 clustered residential units, sewer pump station and emergency access roads located north and across Escondido Creek from the existing Bridges development. The proposal also includes the realignment and expansion of the golf driving range and the vacation of 9.2 acres of dedicated open space. Status: Draft EIR public review period closes Aug. 13. Major issues are biological impacts, traffic and community character. The entire project is in the core habitat area for California Gnatcatcher, and the elimination of open space that was dedicated 'in perpetuity' just a few years ago is disturbing.

... And this is just in Harmony Grove! Escondido Creek and its tributaries are in the midst of tremendous development pressure, which will result in significant stress to the watershed.

TECC staff and volunteers are working with project applicants and community groups to watchdog these projects. Will you join us?

Berkley Hart to Perform at Annual TECC Benefit Concert

Plan now to spend a summer evening in the watershed Aug. 20, enjoying the company of friends and the acoustic harmonies of the award winning duo 'Berkley Hart.'

We return once again to the country hospitality of Nancy Reed and Jerry Gradisher's Lazy J Ranch in Elfin Forest.

This beautiful outdoor venue overlooks the Escondido Creek and the surrounding hillsides of this unique watershed. Always the perfectionist, Nancy has carefully arranged for a full moon to be rising over our outdoor concert! The concert begins at 6 p.m.

This year a **silent auction** has been incorporated into the evening program.

Please help by offering goods or services for donation and by bringing your wallet to purchase what are sure to be wonderful items.

Contact the TECC office for more details or to offer items for sale at the auction at 760-471-9354.

\$50 per person includes dinner, beer/wine/ coffee and dessert.

Tickets may be purchased at Lou's

The Escondido Creek Conservancy
4th Annual Summer Celebration, Silent Auction
and Moonlit Dinner Concert

Saturday, August 20th, 2005
at 6 pm
Lazy J Ranch,
Elfin Forest

featuring award-winning
acoustic duo
Berkley Hart

\$50 per person includes dinner,
beer/wine/coffee and dessert

Purchase tickets at Lou's Records in Encinitas, at www.escondidocreek.org, or mail check to:
The Escondido Creek Conservancy, PO Box 460791, Escondido,
CA 92048

Information: (760) 471-9354

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Many thanks to our sponsors: Arrow Printing, Henry's Marketplace, MTR Horticulture, Plant-Tek, Inc., Russo's Pasta and Stone Brewing Co.

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

A couple of weeks ago, I had the distinct pleasure spending the better part of a day standing in a local creek – Carmel Creek in Sorrento Valley – with booties on my feet and a specimen collection net in my hand. My mission: To collect data samples of benthic macroinvertebrates ('little bugs' to us neophytes), microscopic organisms whose presence or absence in a water body are an index of biological health for that resource.

Our goal: To find lots of little bugs in this creek and to establish the 'Index of Biological Integrity (IBI)' – an objective measure of stream health. All the science aside, I had a great time standing in the water, experiencing the rhythm of the flow and becoming a part of the riparian habitat in this little piece of paradise. Several of the participants at this workshop, hosted by the San Diego Stream Team, had brought their young children along to join in the fun.

This community of people and creatures somehow felt very right to me. The children were completely engrossed in their

fascination with myriad creatures and plants; the adults were calmed by the ebb and flow and by the rich inflow of knowledge they were gaining; the bugs were doing the things that bugs do.

Everybody was happy, and the stream had found a friend in us. My only regret on the day was the realization that I had allowed nearly 40 years to pass since I last spent the day standing in a creek.

Memories of a day long ago came back to me, when as a 12-year old boy I explored a creek near my home, fascinated by the miracle of water. I'm going back soon.



Geoffrey and friends in the Carmel Creek in Sorrento Valley.

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.