

# Watershed Voice

SUMMER 99

A Publication of The Escondido Creek Conservancy

## Cadencia Park Renovations

TECC supports educational programs and compatible outdoor recreation within the watershed for the benefit of all residents of the area. Our Escondido Creek Student Community Action (ESCA) educational programs for grades K to 12 teaches students the value watersheds provide to communities giving them the knowledge and expertise to become responsible land stewards. Wendy Slijk, a TECC director is chairperson of our Educational Committee.

By Jennifer Bokoch

It's nowhere near lunchtime. The lunch tables are crowded with elementary and high school students at the local elementary school, but there's not a crumb in sight. Instead, ninth grade students from La Costa Canyon high school are working together with second graders at La Costa Heights to paint colorful tiles of insects and bugs to decorate the benches of a local park.

Burrowed in between houses in La Costa valley lies Cadencia Park. There's a nice swing set and jungle gym that's visible to the public, but beyond that, the park dips down to a lower level where native plants grow. Unfortunately, the plants were being overtaken by other non-native species that had been brought in with mountains of mulch deposited carelessly with no use at all. That began to change when the students came in to help.



"I think it's a really good idea for the students to get involved," said high school student Allison Dankberg enthusiastically. Led by Wendy Slijk, a Biology and Earth and Space teacher at La Costa Canyon, the students set out to remove some of the mulch and distribute it to teachers at La Costa Heights for class gardens. Each high school student was required to have ten hours of community service at the park per semester; so naturally, other projects sprang up as well.

One project was tile painting with the second graders at La Costa Heights. During school hours, the high schoolers

paid a visit to the elementary school and joined the second graders at painting tiles to cover the drab gray stone benches at Cadencia Park. This activity served a double purpose to encourage students to interact with kids in other age groups. The students from La Costa Canyon got a chance to be big brothers and sisters for a few hours, and the second graders enjoyed their company.

"It's a good experience for the little kids because they can take their parents or friends [to Cadencia Park] and show them what we've accomplished," said a La Costa Canyon Earth and Space student.

# LAND WANTED:



Steve Barker

**E**scondido Creek Watershed, preferred natural acreage. Coastal sage, oaks, and riparian a plus. Buyer motivated, will pay cash for fee title, conservation easement or option

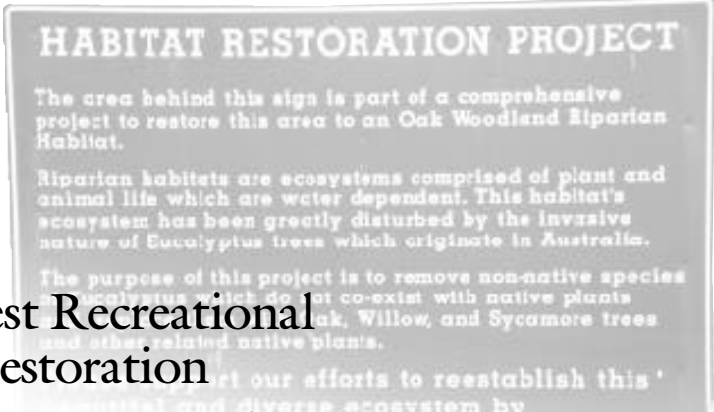
to purchase. Motivated sellers contact Leonard Wittwer, Land Preservation Coordinator for The Escondido Creek Conservancy (760) 471-9354.

It's true! TECC is in the market to buy land, thanks to the generous contributions from anonymous donors at the San Diego Foundation. Don't get the wrong idea, our funds are still very limited, but we now have sufficient money to purchase some land, easements or options and we're actively looking for land to further our goal of preserving a contiguous open space corridor through the length of the watershed.

By adding land acquisition to our ongoing mitigation efforts with developers, we can move much faster to proactively protect key threatened parcels. Don't stop sending your contributions, though. Our recent donation represents a fraction of the millions it's going to take to save sufficient open space to provide a sustainable and diverse natural corridor.

But what our new money brings is "hope". That hope is fundamental to inspiring the community of North County to say "yes, we can do this." If we can build thousands of homes, schools, new businesses, roads and hospitals, then yes, we can find a way to preserve the land, the natural hillsides, the creeksides and the open space of the Escondido Creek area for our community and our children's children. We can do this!

Please help us!



## Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve Restoration

The first eucalyptus trees were introduced into California in 1856 by William C. Walker who planted the seeds at his nursery in San Francisco. Since then, eucalyptus trees have replaced thousands



of acres of native vegetation and riparian habitats in California. Large birds and raptors commonly nest and roost in

the high branches. Although their lumber has proved unacceptable, these trees have provided abundant firewood, windbreaks for orchards, and a rich source of pollen and nectar for honeybees. They also have kept tree-trimmers and removal crews busy for decades. The silhouettes of these tall and beautiful trees have become such a familiar part of the Southern California landscape that it is difficult to imagine this region without them.

Even if you haven't been to the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve before, it is obvious that something has been happening.

Most of the eucalyptus trees have been removed, and smaller trees and plants have been planted and flagged. As part

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## WE NEED YOUR DONATION!

We need your financial support to replenish our reserves and continue achieving our goals. TECC's volunteer board and part-time staff are playing an important role in protecting Escondido Creek and its watershed. We do this on a shoestring budget, relying on your membership dues and individual contributions and grants to keep us afloat. It is essential that TECC stay active and involved to ensure further protection of the creek. Show TECC your support. Use the enclosed return envelope to make your generous tax-deductible donation today. TECC also accepts gifts of stock - a great way to make a generous gift, receive a tax deduction and avoid capital gains taxes. Give us a call at 760.471.9354 for more information.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send your donation to TECC, P.O. Box 460791, Escondido, CA, 92046-0791.



## Cielo Norte Development Update

The proposed Cielo Norte development was featured in our last newsletter as the latest development proposed along Escondido Creek. Planning efforts for the 588-acre development have been continuing in earnest. After months of meetings with TECC and other interested groups, and several revisions of the project, the developer was scheduled to officially submit his plan to the County Department of Planning and Land Use on June 30th.

The developer has made some concessions to the environmental and open space issues raised by TECC and US Fish and Wildlife. The current plan will preserve 375 acres as natural open space and there will be no homes built on the ridge between Escondido and Misha Creeks. Nearly all the oak trees will be spared as well as about half of the native grasslands. Some off site preservation of coastal sage scrub habitat will likely be required, perhaps as much as 80 acres. TECC hopes to help the developer acquire land that fits into our plan for open space in the watershed.

The current development plan also calls for a three-acre park to be dedicated to the County. According to the planner, the finishing touches were being put on the grading plan, with the building pad on each lot individually graded to avoid the mass grading seen at some developments.

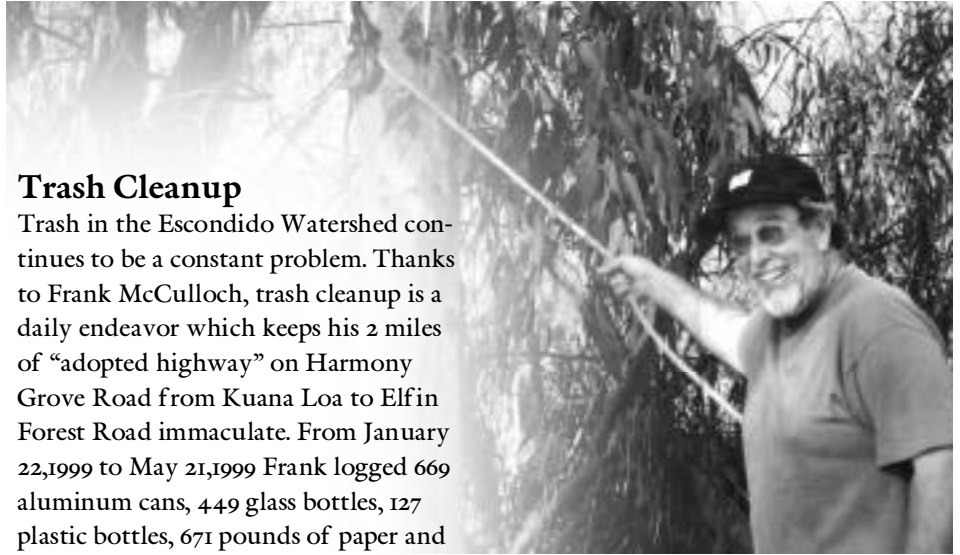
As of press time, TECC, the San Diego Planning Group and The Elfin Forest Town Council had not reviewed the grading plan. The number of proposed houses, currently 186, is another issue that will no doubt be hotly debated as the plan now begins its official journey through the planning process. TECC will continue to stay involved in this major land use decision as it effects the heart of Escondido Creek's southwestern watershed area.

## Trash Cleanup

Trash in the Escondido Watershed continues to be a constant problem. Thanks to Frank McCulloch, trash cleanup is a daily endeavor which keeps his 2 miles of "adopted highway" on Harmony Grove Road from Kuana Loa to Elfin Forest Road immaculate. From January 22, 1999 to May 21, 1999 Frank logged 669 aluminum cans, 449 glass bottles, 127 plastic bottles, 671 pounds of paper and cardboard and 166 plastic bags. Frank has also collected various types of hazardous, liquid materials such as oil, paint thinner, and gas. These items require special handling and transport to a hazardous waste site.

Frank's stretch of highway also collects its share of large items such as sofas, recliner chairs, mattresses and camper shells. These items prove a bit much for one person to handle since they are always dumped over the steep banks along the road. Frank got help with removal of these items on Saturday, June 12, 1999, when he was joined by Leonard Wittwer, Tim Costanza, and Deborah LeLevier for a six hour watershed cleanup extravaganza. Gerry Boeke lent the group his wonderful, extra-wide, high-sided truck. Many items were pulled up with the aid of a pulley attached to large eucalyptus trees, rope and a lot of manpower.


Also cleaned up that day was Suerte del Este down to the Escondido Creek crossing which is a popular dumping area. That cleanup netted 2 engine blocks, another camper shell, bicycles, a barbecue, books, toys and trash in general. In total, four truck loads packed high were taken to transfer stations in both Escondido and Carlsbad. A community grant pays for the tipping fees but the manpower is volunteer. More volunteers are always needed. If you would like to lend a hand or sight new trash dumps, please call the TECC Trash Hotline at 760-471-9354. Large item cleanups are done two to four times a year. The more help we have, the quicker and easier the job! TECC would also love to see more folks like Frank McCulloch adopt a section of Elfin Forest Road. For information and how to get your own personalized county sign, call the TECC Hotline.



## TECC's Mission

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a non-profit, public benefit corporation dedicated to the preservation and protection of Escondido Creek and the natural open space within its watershed. TECC believes the natural lands within the Escondido Creek watershed are an irreplaceable natural asset with great community value. We support educational programs and compatible outdoor recreation within the watershed for the benefit of all residents of the area. TECC has formed alliances with landowners, government agencies, and education and community groups to increase awareness of the invaluable resources intrinsic to the Escondido Creek watershed. TECC's Board of Directors is comprised of committed local volunteers with expertise in business, science, land use planning, education, recreation, and restoration of natural landscapes.

**Steve Barker** ..... President  
**Leonard Wittwer** ..... Secretary  
**Bruce Hamilton** ..... Treasurer  
**Jerry Harmon** ..... Director  
**Anita Hayworth** ..... Director  
**Wendy Slijk** ..... Director  
**TECC Office** ..... 760-471-9354

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## Thank You



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Christine & Douglas Rideout  
Virginia McManus  
Leo & Wilma Wittwer  
Patricia Todd  
Charlotte Gumbrell

### Committee Members:

We continue to appreciate our fundraising, trail, and land preservation committee experts for their dedication to achieve TECC's mission.



## Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve Restoration

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of the Olivenhain Municipal Water District's Water Storage Project, the District is required by the California Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife Departments to mitigate, or lessen the impact of, all lost plant habitats destroyed by the project itself. A large section of land within the Reserve is the setting that the Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD) is required to vegetate to its native condition. To accomplish this task, OMWD must remove the non-native plant species and replace them with native California species. This removal process includes the tall eucalyptus trees that are prominent to this area. Eucalyptus trees are not native, and they can also pose a threat to visitors as eucalyptus tree limbs tend to break off or even the tree may fall over in strong wind and storms. OMWD understands that seeing so many trees removed proves to be a shockingly barren sight, however; OMWD has taken great care to replant vegetation which reflects the natural plant species found in southern California. These new plantings are marked by the flags found all around the staging area of the park.

P. O. Box 460791 Escondido California 92046

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