



MONTE NIDO VALLEY



COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



A Dark Sky Community

E-NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2006

National Parks Threatened Once Again

While we've been hearing about proposals to turn over Santa Rosa Island to the Department of Defense for an R&R center, the larger issue is proposed changes to the "operating manual" of the Park Service with respect to resource protection. There is something called the "Organic Act," originally established in 1916, that sets out the way NPS manages resources. This act clearly established resource conservation as the top priority for park management and its principals have been upheld many times in the courts. It was modified in the 1970s to extend the same high standards to National Recreation Areas and other types of park property and there were some minor modifications made in 2001. These proposed modifications to the act that would give park managers a great deal of discretion in balancing (and mitigating the impact of) use with resource protection. While we would always expect park managers to act with the best interest of the resource in mind, local interests could put particular pressure on an individual Superintendent to give certain kinds of uses priority over protection of the park resources. The result may be that a nationally significant resource is managed to serve local interest. An example of this would be local pressure to allow snowmobiles into Yellowstone during the winter months with the potential of unknown impacts on the ecosystem and known impacts (noise, air pollution) on wintertime visitors who come to the park for a quiet winter experience. The Park Superintendent would not have the clear guidelines for finding a balance between resource preservation and use that he has today and may well be forced to give in to the local interests or even concessionaires despite the potential for damage.

While giving park managers discretion over the uses in their parks sounds like a good idea on the surface, it can have the effect of removing the baseline protection we have come to expect for our parklands.

An even more significant issue locally is a major shift in the method of protecting land. Now the primary method is to acquire it and set it aside as parkland. Ahmanson and Soka are prime examples of this. In addition, the park service has a number of other options to protect land, life tenancies for example, and the last resort is usually some kind of scenic or conservation easement. The new rules reverse the order making conservation easements the primary method of land protection and acquisition as the last resort. Today, conservation easements are used when the owners are unwilling to sell and can be somewhat tenuous. The problem is that the Park Service is dependent in part on the good will of the owner to abide by the easement. This usually works fine until the land is sold. The new owner may not have the same sensibility and choose to ignore the provisions of the easement or may not even know about it. There are enough of these in the Santa Monicas that the Park Service may have difficulty tracking compliance and only find out about violations if someone reports a missing trail or a new fence on public land. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation area is particularly vulnerable to this change in policy because it has the largest backlog of property to acquire (30,000 acres) for protection of any unit in the National Park Service.

The proposed changes to the Organic Act are going to be acted on this spring and the public comment period closes on the 17th of February. To learn more about the issue visit the website of the National Parks Conservation Association, a

bipartisan public interest group that has worked to protect our parks for over 80 years. Their web address is www.npca.org.

Parklands are an important asset for those of us lucky enough to live in the Santa Monica Mountains and contribute significantly to our quality of life. If you would like to be heard on this issue letters can be sent to:

Ms. Fran Mainella, Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240 Or,

Mr. Bernard Fagan
National Park Service
Office of Policy
Room 7252 Main Interior Building
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240
-John Low

MNVCA Board of Directors Meeting January 3, 2005

The regular meeting of the MNVCA was called to order at 7:10 p.m. in the home of Yehuda Netanel. In attendance were Board members Rosemary Alden, Marianne Cilluffo, Les Hardie, Cynthia Hodes, Joan Kay, Lisa Lehman, Yehuda Netanel and Heidi Stompe.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Cynthia Hodes provided an overview of the bank accounts. There were a total of 105 paid members of the MNVCA for 2005. The Board authorized a transfer of funds from the Money Market Account to the Checking Account to offset monthly bank fees resulting from the current balance.

Old Business: New Neighbor Welcome Letter – Monte Nido Key Chains and T-shirts have been provided to Rosemary. The Letter, Dark Sky Community information, a brief history of Monte Nido, and an invitation to join the MNVCA are still pending. Colored envelopes will be purchased and used for the completed packets. They will be assembled and delivered by Rosemary Alden and Marilyn Browning to several new neighbors.

Dark Sky Community – An informational article on this concept will be reprinted in the upcoming newsletter. Heidi Stompe agreed to do further research on the Association. A Monte Nido-Dark Sky Block Party was suggested by Cynthia Hodes. More details to follow.

New Business: National Parks Committee – The NPS is considering a new mission statement that may result in changes to various elements of the park areas. Joan Kay, our representative on the committee, will continue to monitor this issue.

Election of Officers – The Board's elections of officers was postponed to the February meeting.

Board Meeting Change – A day change has been suggested for the monthly meetings from the 1st Tuesday of the month to the 2nd Tuesday of the month. This issue will be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

Winter Banquet/Installation Dinner – Cynthia Hodes aptly suggested a Pot Luck Style gathering for this event. The dinner will be held in the home of Rosemary Alden on the evening of either Friday 3/24 or 3/31.

LVMWD Tours – The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District will conduct tours of both the Tapia and Rancho facilities on February 11. Contact dpeters@lvmwd.com for further details.

-Lisa Lehman



The MNVCA Board Has a New President

Officers were elected at the last Board meeting. The new president is Joan Slimocosky and John Low is Vice-President. Both Cynthia Hodes and Lisa Lehman have agreed to stay on as treasurer and secretary, respectively. Good luck and many thanks to them for agreeing to serve this year.

A Note to Dog Owners:

People own dogs to make their lives more enjoyable.

Sometimes dogs do things that bring inconvenience, unhappiness and fear. A dog may be sweet, playful and docile with its owner, but if that is not so with others there is a problem. Dogs that do not bring happiness to strangers need to be contained and restrained.

Everyone deserves to feel happy and safe in their home and on their property, neighborhood, trail and roadway.

It is our duty to do everything possible to cultivate peace and harmony.

If your dog is causing inconvenience, unhappiness and fear to others, peace is not possible.

When there are dog problems, doesn't it make sense to treat your neighbor as you would like to be treated if the tables were turned? We have neighborhood misunderstandings when folks forget to act with kindness and consideration.

Kindness and consideration will make our neighborhood a more joyful place to live.

What are we doing here on earth, anyway? Is it to make our fellow man troubled, scared and unhappy? Of course not!!!

So, Dog Owners.....if things are going wrong between you and your neighbors, Please take dog problems seriously and keep our neighborhood a happy place to be.

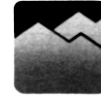
Everyone deserves to be happy and safe in their Mountain Home!

-Rosemary Alden



Ravages of Weather 2006 Style

Stephanie was right on the money with her letter last month. The recent fire in Corral Canyon was a reminder for all of us that brush fires can strike at any time. This year may be particularly hazardous due to the extremely dry and hot conditions we have had. Be prepared. Look for articles in future newsletters, talk to our local firemen, or download Stephanie's book: "What Do I Do with My Horse in Fire Flood and/or Earthquake?" ...on line through the Equestrian Trails, Inc., national website at <http://www.etinational.com> or <http://www.equestriantrailsinc.com>.



MRT Fuel Modification Fire wise Landscaping Demonstration

The MRT is looking for two homes, one in Cold Creek/Monte Nido and another in Lobo Canyon to use as brush clearance demonstration homes. This annual event brings together the L.A. County Fire Dept and homeowners to illustrate proper clearance around the home, but still allowing a livable landscape. The event will be held on April 23rd, for a 2 hour period. If you are interested in allowing your home to be used for this worthwhile project, please contact Susan Haugland at (818) 591-1701 x212.

Calendar of Events

MNVCA Board Meeting

Tuesday March 14th at 7 PM.
at the home of Joan Slimocosky
25632 Buckhorn Dr.
591-1082

Equestrian Trails, Inc., Corral 36

March 14 at 7 PM,
At the home of Melissa Austin
2600 Ladybird Dr., Calabasas. 224-2983
We MUST park on Mulholland and
walk up the drive.

A Course in Miracles Study Group.

Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00AM
Marilyn Browning
222-6362

Zen Meditation

Thursday evenings at 7:30pm
Rosemary Taylor Alden
222-2936

Universal Worship Service:

First Sunday of each month, 10:00AM
Marilyn Browning
222-6363

Winter Banquet and Installation Pot-Luck

Friday March 24th at 7 pm
At the home of Rosemary Taylor Alden
901 Crater Camp
\$10 per person
Bring a Hearty Hors d'oeuvre
RSVP to Joan Slimocosky 591-1082
Or Cynthia Hodes 591-1026

Want to be in the Know?

Send your email address to Lisa Lehman, the devoted MNVCA secretary at mnvca@charter.net, to receive announcements of meetings, community activities and the time and location of our Board meetings.

Contributions to the newsletter including nonprofit events to be listed in the calendar can be made by the 5th of the month to me (the editor) at 856 Wonder View Dr. or by email to mnvcanews@charter.net. *—Marianne Cilluffo*