

The Conservancy NEWS



Issue 5 --- October 2007

Trail policy project kicks off, with RTCA help

Preserving multi-use trails in a community requires various efforts, including trails maintenance. Community organizations that adopt trails would like guidelines for what is expected, and landowners who donate trail easements want to know what trail maintenance will involve.

Antelope Valley Conservancy has launched a project to formulate trails policy and procedures for its lands. The resulting document will be available for voluntary adoption by others. Diverse volunteers will develop policies and procedures collaboratively. The group will identify issues, derive best practices from existing policies and texts, then formulate policies and procedures.

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program of the National Parks Service has granted AV Conservancy's application for assistance this year, and will be helping with this project.

If you are interested in volunteering on this project, call us at 943-9000, or email us at avconservancy@yahoo.com.

Mouse pads and holiday ornaments to thank you for your generosity

This giving season, Antelope Valley Conservancy is offering mouse pads and holiday ornaments featuring beautiful photography by Antelope Valley photographer Nevel Burke.

Get a holiday ornament with your donation over \$25, and get a mouse pad with any donation over \$50. Holiday ornaments with gold ribbon, available in round (shown, both sides) or evergreen tree shaped.



With our first land acquisitions in escrow, your donation is needed more than ever. Your donation makes a difference!

Donate for nothing with eScrip

eScrip costs you nothing but adds up to big donations to the Conservancy. It's easy and free to register, and then you can forget about it. It's automatic.

Participating merchants donate a percentage of sales to your choice of charity—they donate, not you. Hundreds of merchants including retail stores and restaurants—even airlines and cruise lines—are in the eScrip program.

Every time you shop you will help preserve Antelope Valley's natural lands. Please sign up today and designate Antelope Valley Conservancy (Quartz Hill 93536).

www.escrip.com

Volunteers needed

- to GPS trails
- to help with events
- to serve on committees

Call 943-9000 or attend November 18 meeting

-- CALENDAR --

**Equine Health & Safety Fair
Saturday, October 27**

**Volunteer Meeting
Sunday, November 18
2:00 p.m.**

at Fresco II, 1983 West Ave. L

Antelope Valley Heritage Foundation to AVTREC to Antelope Valley Conservancy

By Louise Birch Levin

In the Georgia backwoods a young Boy Scout fell in love with the earth. His awe of the land and its creatures was to last a lifetime like his hero John Muir.

Richard "Dic" Downen appreciated beauty whatever continent he visited. He lived by Saddleback State Park from 1973 until his death in 1995, and shared concern for our Earth by teaching science.

What Richard accomplished in his 49 years of life is more than most of us ever will. He promoted the 1990 Earth Day at AV College from which he went on to inspire the Antelope Valley Heritage Foundation.

Twenty of us attended the first meeting March 20th, 1992. Three hours later we were a steering committee with the mission of "establishing a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the natural, prehistoric and historic resources of the Antelope Valley." A list of 25 sites that needed attention was developed. Tours to those areas started May 9th at Munz Ranch and Willow Springs. Our office was in Dr. Bosma's veterinary clinic, equipped through donations of over 100 people.

By July 1992 we'd gone from a committee to a foundation with nonprofit status. The *Heritage Focus* newsletter had printed three editions, and we announced the upcoming *Antelope Valley Reflections* journal that would continue with articles, photographs, interviews, stories and poems for 7 issues through 1996. Our efforts were the toil of many people, but Richard was the driving force and principal fundraiser.

By December 1992 we had held a teachers' geology workshop, had a booth at the AV Fair, were working with the Nature Conservancy on a \$1 a year lease for 40 acres near the Punch Bowl, and sponsored an entomology school assembly.

By 1993 we were alongside the West Antelope Valley Historical Society at the Poppy Festival, held a \$250 members' gala, were entertained by Littlerock High's Band in Devil's Punch Bowl's amphitheater, and had applied for the Cedar Avenue Complex to be granted Historical Site status. Our relationships with other organizations such as AVTREC were strong.

When Richard died in September of 1995, our leadership waned. No one was ready to step into his huge shoes, and so we relinquished our nonprofit number to AVTREC. Our organizations' goals were quite similar, and many of our members were associated with both groups. AVTREC was a good caretaker. Richard would be pleased to know our efforts will continue through the Antelope Valley Conservancy.

Note: In 2006 AVTREC was absorbed as a committee of AV Conservancy. *Antelope Valley Reflections* journals are still available from AV Conservancy and the West AV Historical Society.

Special Thanks To

Volunteers

Amber Burke

David Champagne, MBA

Cindy Breor

Nate Krumm

Bruce E. Nelson

Vanessa Nelson

Philip Saksa

Debbie Stevens

Frank Swiadek

Marcy & Georgia Watton

Thank you, Volunteers!



A good time was had by all on Volunteer Appreciation Day. Volunteers Elaine Macdonald and Debbie Stevens (in photo below), Ginger Stout, Marcy Watton, and Wendy Reed were given appreciation plaques (still in the gift bag in photo)



The *Conservancy News* is published by Antelope Valley Conservancy, P.O. Box 3133, Quartz Hill, California 93586, (661) 943-9000, and is available via email subscription. To subscribe, or for Conservancy information, please visit www.avconservancy.org.

Trail Meetings Update

By Elaine Macdonald

AV Conservancy's Trails Recreation and Environmental Committee (AVTREC) and community equestrian stakeholder groups Equestrian Trails Inc. and Backcountry Horseman are assisting the Los Angeles County Regional Trail Plan update by documenting trail locations with GPS units. The group meets bimonthly with County Parks and Recreation's Patrick Reynolds.

During the summer months, Debbie Stevens and Elaine Macdonald completed GPS mapping of 50 miles of trail in Lake Los Angeles, and provided the data to the County.

Marcy Watton is now completing the trail connection from Lazy T Ranch. Ritter Ranch developer, SunCal, is incorporating the provisions of the Ritter Ranch Development for multi-use trails. As developers changed over the years, trails were designated for hiking only, requiring a ten-mile detour to reach the mountains.

The next GPS meeting is crucial! Developers of projects adjacent to Ritter Ranch and Palmdale Planning staff will attend the meeting to answer trail connection questions.

The GPS process is slow, but essential to the Los Angeles County Regional Trail Plan update, and to assist Palmdale and Lancaster in identifying where residents historically hike and ride local trails.

Not Antelope Valley Conservancy

Since there is still some confusion, please allow us to again clarify that Antelope Valley Conservancy is not a government agency. The Joshua Ranch development and acquisition of tax defaulted properties are not Antelope Valley Conservancy activities.

Antelope Valley Conservancy is a local land trust incorporated in 2005 as a charitable (501(c)(3)) corporation. A year later AV Resource Conservation District (operators of the Nursery) formed a government agency called the Desert & Mountains Conservation Authority. We are told they call the Authority the conservancy in Antelope Valley or the Antelope Valley conservancy, but it is not Antelope Valley Conservancy.

Central Number to Report Dumping: 1-888-8DUMPING

The Antelope Valley Illegal Dumping Task Force requests that reports of illegal dumping, past or in-process, be phoned to 1-888-8DUMPING, regardless of AV location. Information is passed to the appropriate agencies, and status is tracked. Visit <http://www.stopillegaldumping.org/> for more information. AVIDTF meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, 3 PM, at Fire Station 129, 42110 Sixth Street West, Lancaster.

Special Thanks To

Donors

David Erickson
Ruben Gutierrez
Louise Levin
Jennifer Matos, Ph.D.
Cathy Veatch



<http://www.plainolcrafts.com/>

Thank you, Nevel, for donating the use of your beautiful photography for our imprinted items.

