

Summer 2006 Newsletter

SAVE CHATSWORTH

"To ensure that all future development remains consistent with the existing rural character and heritage of Chatsworth"

.... A coalition of homeowners and local non-profit organizations, dedicated to saving Chatsworth from excessive, irresponsible development. Save Chatsworth, Inc. was founded in July of 2002.

In this issue... Save Chatsworth receives grant from City of Los Angeles Office of Community Beautification for restoration project in Chatsworth Trails Park, Deerlake Ranch/Vistas at Indian Monitoring Committee holds first meeting...



Save Chatsworth Receives Grant from the City of Los Angeles Office of Community Beautification for the Restoration of Chatsworth Trails Park

Save Chatsworth is pleased to announce that we are the recipient of a matching grant from Los Angeles City, Board of Public Works, Office of Community Beautification, for the restoration and revitalization of a 13-acre Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy park at Canoga Avenue and the 118 freeway in Chatsworth. Our grant funding is for approximately \$8,500.00, and will be matched by donations of money and materials, professional discounts, and volunteer labor. At press time, we are more than three quarters of the way towards making our match!

Save Chatsworth's vision for this natural park area, which is widely used by equestrians and hikers, includes the removal of invasive, non-native plants and weeds, tree trimming and brush clearance, trash clean-up, graffiti removal, the planting of native plants, trees and wildflower seeds, and the establishment of a central rest area with hitching rails, and eventually informative and educational signage about the wildlife and birds that frequent the park. Our goal is to accomplish these improvements in three different phases, over a period of time.



During our Phase I cleanup stage, we have accomplished a lot, due to the much-appreciated help of many volunteers. During the course of five clean-up dates, we have filled 4 dumpster loads of trash, cleared out vacated homeless campsites, filled three green waste roll-off bin with weeds and brush, removed graffiti from rocks, repaired portions of the trail, and planted a small test garden of wildflower seed.

Our spring cleanup culminated in an event, **"Our Own Backyard"**, sponsored by **Chatsworth Hills Academy** for students and their families – we had over 80 volunteers who worked on weeding out invasive, non-native plant material. Dr. Jeffrey Burkhart, Fletcher Jones Professor of Biology from the University of La Verne, gave a lecture-tour about the plant and animal life in the park, discovering all kinds of interesting species along the way, including a rattlesnake! Save Chatsworth is very grateful to CHA for dedicating time and energy to this project.

Work will resume in the fall with dates for planting. Through the summer, we will continue maintenance of the areas that we have worked on, and formulate plans for the future. There will be a meeting in July to discuss plans for planting projects, so please check our website or call our phone line for updates.

For more detailed information on the contents of this newsletter or for a schedule of events, please contact us:

SAVE CHATSWORTH, INC.
21704 Devonshire St., #133
(818) 464-3472
WWW.SAVECHATSWORTH.ORG
INFO@SAVECHATSWORTH.ORG

Save the date...

Wednesday, July 19, 2006
7:00 p.m.

Join us for a community meeting to review and discuss preliminary design plans for fall and winter planting in

Chatsworth Trails Park

Check phone line or website for Meeting Location

COUNCIL PROTECTS NATIVE TREES NEW SPECIES, STRICTER PROTECTIONS ADDED TO NATIVE TREE ORDINANCE

Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti won the unanimous support of his colleagues for a revised and revitalized Native Tree Ordinance that protects Los Angeles' vital forest canopy and regulates the removal of oak, walnut, bay and sycamore tree species. Trees are a vital part of our city's infrastructure. They improve our air quality, help control floods and conserve water and energy. They also raise property values and contribute to a higher quality of life in the city.

Though often caricatured as a "paved paradise", Los Angeles' 700,000 street trees, 800,000 trees in parks, and estimated 20 million trees on private property constitute the nation's largest urban forest. Tree protections help reduce "heat island" effects, preserve ecological balance, and both clean the air and provide oxygen.

After a year of outreach and meetings, the recommended changes to the original Oak Tree Protection ordinance approved in 1980 include:

- extending protection to the Southern California Black Walnut, the Western Sycamore, and the California Bay species;
- requiring a permit for protected tree removal/relocation on all property in Los Angeles;
- reducing the threshold of trunk diameter from 8 inches to 4 inches;
- calculating the required replacement mitigation utilizing a value formula;
- allowing small trees to be used as replacements if they will have a greater chance of survival than the larger sizes; and
- including civil penalties, such as withholding permits for development of property if the protected trees are removed without a permit.

One oversight in this ordinance is that the protection only applies to trees within a project's boundaries. Therefore, neighboring trees that have root systems which extend onto the project property may be endangered – and it will fall upon the property owner who is adjacent to a proposed building site to bring the protection of their trees to the city's attention.

Chief Forester George Gonzalez in the Bureau of Street Services may be reached for further detail on our city's urban forest at (213) 485-5675.



Owl nesting in rocks in Chatsworth Trails Park

Deerlake Ranch Status Report

After an initial organizing meeting in February, the Deerlake Ranch monitoring Committee appointed by Sup. Antonovich met in public session on April 4. It was encouraging to see so many members of the Chatsworth community turn out to hear, question and offer comments to representatives of the developers, the building contractors and the County. [For those unfamiliar with this project, it involves construction of nearly 400 homes in the hills above the 118 freeway between Canoga Avenue and Topanga Canyon Boulevard.] Here are some of the main points from that meeting.

The anticipated mid-April start of construction was pushed back to early June and, as of press time, we understand it has been further delayed until late July. The first activity will be completion of a construction road from the north end of Topanga Canyon Boulevard to the south rim of Devil Canyon and installation of the south pier for the main bridge. Roughly three months later, activity will move to the top of Canoga Avenue, where road widening and installation of a temporary bridge will occur. Grading equipment will then move in to work on the project's roads and housing areas. At the same time, work will begin on the north pier of the main bridge. After one to two years, the main bridge structure will be placed by crane and, once the result is inspected and approved, all construction traffic will be moved off Canoga and onto Topanga Canyon.

Controversy arose on several matters, including the removal of several very large pine trees prior to the official start of construction, the denial of several traffic safety measures by the City's Department of Transportation, the proposed location of construction office trailers on an unrelated property at Canoga and the 118 freeway rather than on the project property, and the adequacy and safety of temporary trails to be open during the construction period. Layered on these was the perception of inadequate and misleading replies to community inquiries by the developer. These concerns were all voiced in no uncertain terms by those in attendance. It seems clear that the people of Chatsworth are going to be watching this project closely, and they will hold the developer, the builder and the County accountable for every promise, every mitigating measure and every avenue for complaint handling to which they committed.

The detailed construction schedule that had been expected at the April meeting will be available, the developer has promised, by the next Monitoring Committee meeting. Originally scheduled for Tuesday, May 23 at the Radisson Hotel (9777 Topanga Canyon Blvd.), we have just learned that this meeting is being deferred to early July at the request of the developer. The tentative date is Tuesday, July 11, but this is subject to County and Monitoring Committee concurrence. Watch the SCI and Chatsworth Neighborhood Council and Chatsworth ECHO Web sites for current scheduling information. Notices and agendas will also be posted at the Depot, the Library and the Twin Lakes Bulletin Board. We encourage all of you with an interest in this high-impact project to attend the upcoming public meeting.

Once construction begins, there will be notice boards posted at the Topanga and Canoga entrances to the project property. On these boards you will find hot-line numbers to call regarding violations, safety matters and other problems that require the immediate attention of the construction manager. Hazard Construction Group, the general contractor, has committed to respond rapidly to such issues reported to them. The involvement of alert neighbors will be a key factor in keeping the adverse impacts of this project to a minimum.

Second Public Meeting for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park Plan

The general plan becomes the primary management document for the State Park System and provides a vision for the park and guidelines for future development. The General Plan Team, comprised of Department of Parks and Recreation landscape architects, resource ecologists, historians, archaeologists and park staff will be present to listen to your opinions. After receiving your input, the General Plan Team will formulate the single plan for the park. The team encourages the public to communicate their visions for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

Meeting information:
June 20, 2006, Tuesday
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Chatsworth Park South
22360 Devonshire Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Questions or comments may be directed to:

California State Parks
Southern Service Center
8885 Rio San Diego Dr., Suite 270
San Diego, Ca 92108
Attn: Santa Susana Pass State
Historic Park Team

Please help us to continue our efforts to preserve the rural character and heritage of Chatsworth and to restore Chatsworth Trails Park! Save Chatsworth is a qualified tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) (3). Donations are greatly appreciated and are fully tax-deductible.

___ \$10.00
___ \$25.00
___ \$50.00
___ \$100.00
___ Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Thank you for your support.