



SAVE OPEN-SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2010

www.soarusa.org

Recent Triumphs Give SOAR Momentum

YES — PARKS RE-ELECTED

SOAR does not endorse candidates for elected office. However, we are rejoicing at the overwhelming victory of SOAR Board member, Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks this past June 8th.

From the standpoint of the long term protection of our county open spaces this was the most important Supervisors race in Ventura County's history.

Linda is one of Ventura County's most effective proponents of open space protection and SOAR. Her opponent, Audra Strickland, benefitted from huge contributions from pro-development advocates. Those contributions funded the most expensive campaign for a seat on the Board of Supervisors in Ventura County history.

To turn back the attack campaign of relentless and false accusations, grassroots citizens had to once again mobilize for a massive effort in support of Parks. With SOAR expiring in 2020, Parks' victory kept momentum from shifting to opponents of SOAR during this critical next decade.

Zaragoza, Bennett and Parks Vote to End Ag Commissioner's Development Loophole Effort

Supervisors John Zaragoza, Steve Bennett and Linda Parks took decisive action Tuesday July 13 to turn back efforts to make it easier to develop homes on agricultural land.

Over the last two years the Agriculture Commissioner has been trying to change the CEQA (EIR) guidelines. His changes would have banned County Supervisors from even analyzing whether there will be an impact on agriculture when large parcels are subdivided down to their minimum size.

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SAVE OUR CITRUS!

SOAR joins the Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy, the Agricultural Commissioner, the Board of Supervisors, and many others in Ventura County to ask residents to **be on the lookout for a tiny insect that could wipe out California's citrus industry** — and with it, every lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit and mandarin tree in every urban and suburban yard.

This tiny insect, known as the **Asian citrus psyllid**, carries a deadly bacterial disease that is harmless to humans but inevitably fatal to all varieties of citrus. There is no treatment or cure. The disease has already destroyed millions of trees in citrus-producing regions around the world, including Florida.



The pest has been found in San Diego, Imperial, Orange and Los Angeles counties, and is expected to reach Ventura County this year. The disease is not far behind — infected trees have been found in western Mexico, and the disease is moving steadily closer to California.

The only way to stop this plague is to quickly find and kill the insect pest whenever it reaches a new area. If you have citrus trees in your yard, inspect them often. The insect feeds on the new leaves and stems of all citrus varieties. Twisted, stunted new growth is a sign your tree may be infested by the psyllid (SIL-lid), which looks like a small, brown grain of rice. You may also notice the tiny nymphs feeding on tender young growth. Look for sticky white secretions, like honeydew, or sooty mold clinging to the leaves.

If you think you have spotted this invasive pest in your trees, report the sighting immediately by calling 1-800-491-1899.

For more information about the pest and the disease it carries, call the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force at 805-535-8641, or visit farmbureauvc.com/pest.html.

Ventura Eyes Canada Larga Once Again

At a meeting to look at possible future expansion in the North Avenue area, the Ventura City Council on a narrow 3-3 vote rejected the option for now, to expand into the Canada Larga Valley.

SOAR Board member and Ventura Councilmember Brian Brennan made the motion to reject the expansion in leu of concentrating the study area on parts of the 33 corridor for possible future economic development. Citing the award winning General Plan that places a major emphasis on infill development opportunities before expansion, Brennan encouraged the Council to follow the blueprint it has already adopted.

Expansion into the Valley has been thwarted for the time being but the threat is still immanent in that all it takes to revisit the expansion area vote is a policy consideration by 2 Councilmember.

Councilmembers Fulton and Morehouse supported Councilmember Brennan. His motion was opposed by Councilmembers Andrews, Tracy and Wier. Expansion would have been considered if Councilman Monahan, who spoke in favor of the expansion, did not have to abstain because of a conflict of interest on the issue.

Our Mission

SOAR's mission is to make Ventura County a better place to live by limiting urban sprawl, protecting open space and agricultural lands, and promoting livable and sustainable communities in the county and surrounding regions.



Oxnard Plays Catch-22 with Jones Ranch and Ormond Beach

The City of Oxnard is continuing its efforts to divide and conquer a community that doesn't want to see development of either Jones Ranch or the agricultural lands that buffer the important Ormond Beach wetlands.

Oxnard officials contend that a major, SOAR-busting urban expansion at Jones Ranch is needed to provide the funds that will enable the purchase of property vital to long-term preservation of Ormond Beach.

But these funds would only be needed if the property near Ormond Beach, which is currently zoned for agriculture,

were upzoned for development in the current Oxnard General Plan update, thereby significantly increasing the property's purchase price.

Rather than driving up the purchase price of the land around Ormond Beach by upzoning this area, and then paving over more farmland at Jones Ranch to pay for it, the win-win solution for the community would be for Oxnard to simply not upzone the property near Ormond Beach so that the higher purchase price is not required. SOAR strongly supports the protection of the Ormond Beach wetland area, and strongly opposes urban expansion onto the Jones Ranch area.



Join the SOAR Rapid Response Team

It is important to have a SOAR rapid response team ready to comment on proposals before the Board of Supervisors or City Councils. Sign up for the rapid response team by emailing us at rapidresponse@soarusa.org.

SOAR SUPPORT EARNS VICTORY ON ASSEMBLY USES IN OPEN SPACE

Using a federal exemption for religious institutions, pro-development forces were preparing to force the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to approve massive development projects on open space lands. While one project slipped through the exemption, strong opposition from SOAR's rapid response team led the Board of Supervisors to adopt a new ordinance that closes the federal loophole.

This is another example of the steady and creative pressure pro-development forces will apply to get around the SOAR restrictions on urban sprawl. It is a reminder of how important it is that we stay alert with our rapid response team and we need County Supervisors who support SOAR in both word and action.



Development Loophole

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A 500-acre farm zoned open space could be subdivided down to fifty 10-acre lots ready for ranchette development with the absurd contention that there will never be a significant loss of agricultural production, so no analysis is even allowed by the Board of Supervisors.

With this restriction, the Board could not even consider any mitigation for the loss of agricultural land.

Plain and simple, this rule change would have encouraged subdividing land down to its minimum parcel size and encourage ranchette development of prime agricultural land in Ventura County.

Profits for subdividers would have gone up while agricultural acreage would have gone down.

The 3-2 vote of the Supervisors transferred the authority to make rule change recommendations on this issue from the Agricultural Commissioner, who has demonstrated a significant lack of objectivity on this issue, to the Planning Department.

SOAR members should monitor this issue as pressure has already started to try to reverse this important narrow victory. ■ ■ ■

SB375 Climate Action Moves Forward

Last fall SOAR convened a countywide summit to look at the connections between land use, open space and farmland protection, climate change, and sustainability in Ventura County. Participants discussed how the recently passed state legislation, SB 375, could help Ventura County support the statewide mandate to slash greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, meaning a 30% cut from expected emissions growth.

SOAR board member and County Supervisor Linda Parks represents Ventura County on the oversight committee that will help identify emissions thresholds for the Southern California region. These thresholds will be reached through implementation of a regional Sustainable Community Strategy plan integrating elements of transportation, land use, and house with greenhouse gas reduction targets.

We are glad to have Linda at the forefront of this effort to safeguard



both the economic and the environmental interests of Ventura County.

For more information on climate action in Ventura County and Southern California visit vccool.org and climateplanca.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2010
SOAR *Foundation Circle*

MEMBERS

Al and Marilyn Adam	Manuel Marquez
Anonymous	Gil Michaels
Patricia Feiner Arkin and Edward Arkin	Roseann Mikos
John and Catherine Baker	Leo and Vieno Molitor
John and Lorraine Beley	Sharon and Mark Noel
George Berg and Gail Topping	Lowell Novy, DVM
Steve Bennett and Leslie Ogden	Sherry and Bob O'Hollaren
Claudia Bill-de la Peña	Joseph O'Neill
Wolf Breiman and Debbie Diamond	Larry and Nancy Older
Brian Brennan	Linda Parks
BuenaVentura Blending, Inc.	Virginia Pollack
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Chapala Café	Brian Rocheleau
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Joseph Connett and Elzbet Diaz de Leon	Lisa Cordova Schwarz and Craig Schwarz
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Steven and Marsha Hively	Jane Tolmach
Eric and Donna Johanson	Craig Underwood
Edward and Diane Keay	Tom and Kerry Weisel
Robert and Janet Liberman	Jason and Jodi Womack
Paul and Christine Magie	

Threats to SOAR come every day: new sprawl development proposals, weakening of greenbelt agreements, loss of Williamson Act contracts for farmland, moves to sell off public lands. SOAR has been there to provide a critical layer of protection when government cannot, or will not, halt the conversion of land set aside for open space and agriculture.

SOAR - THE MEASURE THAT KEEPS ON GIVING!



SOAR Fetes Inaugural Foundation Circle Members

Last year SOAR put out the call: we need 50 donors to step up each year with a donation of \$500 to support SOAR's ongoing operating expenses and keep the SOAR organization going strong. We met our goal and thanked our new Foundation Circle of supporters in April with a brunch on the Ventura Riviera hosted and

prepared by SOAR board member and chef extraordinaire, Brian Brennan. Foundation Circle members enjoyed a delicious locally grown meal while renewing old friendships and forming new ones, sharing SOAR anecdotes and memories, and discussing the future with the SOAR board.

SOAR Welcomes Camarillo Activist Berge on Board

Merrill Berge, our newest SOAR Board Member, resides in Camarillo with her family of four. Having grown-up in Snohomish, Washington, an agricultural area filled with small family farms 45 minutes north-east of Seattle, Merrill immediately felt at home when she moved to Ventura County from the San Fernando Valley in 2000.

Her landscaping company, Merrill's Garden Party, allows her to enjoy Ventura's scenic backroads and



small nursery businesses on a daily basis. Merrill is co-founder of the non-profit Camarillo Smart Growth organization and can be contacted at camarillosmartgrowth@gmail.com.

We are thrilled to have her energy and ideas, not to mention her green thumb, working for SOAR.

**Support
SOAR**

BECOME A 2011
**FOUNDATION
CIRCLE
MEMBER TODAY!**

See the enclosed envelope for more information.



WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS!

Do you have a great photo sitting on your computer or phone that captures the beauty of Ventura County's open spaces? Do you have a terrific snapshot that depicts the bounty of our farmlands or the wealth of recreational opportunities that SOAR helps protect? If so, please share it! We are collecting fresh photos to use in our newsletters, website, and for an upcoming SOAR calendar project, and we will happily credit any photographers whose images we use (except in political mailers). Email high-resolution .jpeg or .tif images to photos@soarusa.org. Please include your name, phone number, and a description of the location or subject.



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SOAR 5K RUN

SPREAD THE WORD!

Sunday, October 17, 2010

We need you to help us recruit participants for SOAR's annual 5K run this fall. Our goal is to double our number of participants this year and we need your help to accomplish this. Remember this event is for everyone not just trained runners.

We are adding a treasure hunt for children on the one mile walk course and hope all SOAR supporters will come out, whether to stroll, sprint or volunteer. It is a beautiful location for all of us to gather and enjoy a healthy morning together in celebration of one of Ventura County's most important concepts and most effective tools, SOAR. The run/walk will be Sunday October 17th at our same location, the Tierra Rejada Walnut Grove.



Your sponsorship of this event would also help make it a financial success. See the enclosed envelope for sponsorship information.

Look for **SOAR** on 