

SAVE OPEN-SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

NEWS & VIEWS

Spring 2007

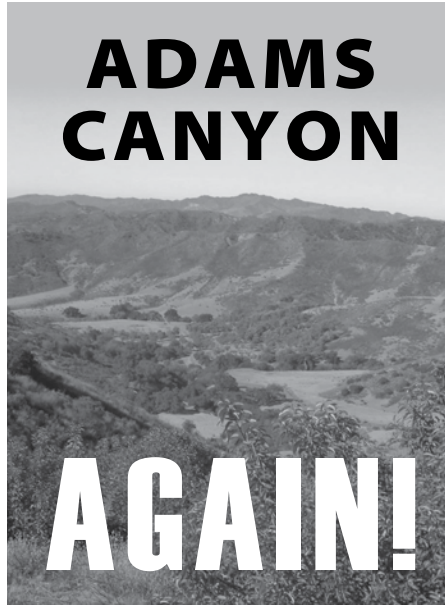
www.soarusa.org

This spring Santa Paulans will be asked to vote again – for the fourth time – on whether to allow development to occur in Adams Canyon.

This spring, again, SOAR will be the only organization to stand up with Santa Paula citizens to try to stop this sprawl development campaign.

Last time the election was extremely close. We won by just 86 votes, and you can bet that SOAR's volunteers, donations, and campaign experience made a difference on those 86 votes.

Coming back just 13 months after the last election is part of the strategy to wear out communities and wear down voters' resistance. But we're not wearing out. The countywide SOAR organization is here, and we know that stopping sprawl development proposals will require our continued



vigilance and hard work.

That's what SOAR provides to communities like Santa Paula that are under siege from pro-development forces. We hope that you can help again.

Why SOAR Is Fighting Adams Canyon – Again

It's wasteful sprawl – again.

6,500 acres, or 10 square miles, for the benefit of just 495 luxury homeowners. The project would double the landmass of the City of Santa Paula and open the door to additional large-scale development in the remaining greenbelt and farmlands between Santa Paula, Ojai and Ventura.

It's the wrong place for growth

– **again.** It's a remote canyon and wildlife corridor that is disconnected from the existing city. There are a number of alternative growth areas currently being proposed that would make more sense for building a sustainable community, revitalizing the downtown core, and providing affordable housing. Santa Paulans shouldn't have to settle for a project that meets none of these community goals.

It's the wrong process – again.

Once again, there are no plans and no safeguards in place. No Environmental Impact Report has been done. No Development Agreement has been negotiated. The developer claims dubious benefits but offers no documentation and no guarantees. If the initiative passes, the community will have given up their right to an informed vote on whether this development proposal is right for Santa Paula.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

VOLUNTEER

Santa Paula SOAR needs all the support we can muster from every corner of the county. If you can volunteer any time between now and May 8 to stuff envelopes, make phone calls, or distribute campaign literature, please email SOARSantaPaula@soarusa.org or call Chuck Spink at 805-421-9230.

DONATE

We expect to be vastly outspent once again, but once again your donations will make a difference. We will make the most effective use possible of every dollar you contribute to get the message out to Santa Paula voters. Use the enclosed return envelope or call Karen Schmidt at 805-421-9230.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION TO SUPPORT WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Save Our Ring of Green (SOROG) and Save Open Space (SOS) will be holding an Earth Day Celebration on **Saturday, April 28, 1-4pm**, at Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks to raise funds to protect the Mount Clef Ridge wildlife corridor.

**SAVE
OUR
RING
OF
GREEN**



SOS
Save Open Space

The special event will feature former State Assemblymember Fran Pavley, SOAR co-founder Richard Francis, and mountain lion expert Dr. Ray Sauwajot, and will include a luncheon buffet, raffle, and silent auction.

Over the last three years SOROG has lobbied successfully to save 19 acres

of this corridor between Thousand Oaks and the Santa Rosa Valley. But the City of Thousand Oaks recently approved a 7,700 square-foot luxury home in the middle of the corridor that would create an even tighter choke point for animals to pass from the Santa Monica Mountains to the national forests. SOROG has filed suit against the City and is hopeful that a resolution will be achieved so this vital wildlife corridor can remain undeveloped.

For information and tickets go to www.saveourringofgreen.com or call (805) 493-5089.



Soar 5k Run Through The Orchards Returns October 7

The 2006 SOAR 5K Run Through the Orchards was another great success, with nearly 300 participants and dozens of SOAR volunteers and sponsors turning out for a spectacular morning at the Walnut Grove in Tierra Rejada. The 2007 event will take place on Sunday, October 7, and will include a one-mile walk/fun run, a new t-shirt design and, as usual, lots of great prizes. Mark your calendars, start getting in shape, and encourage your friends and neighbors to participate in one of Ventura County's most appealing 5K walk/run events!



PIRIT OF THE WILD

SOAR member Janet Wall took this photo of 18-month-old Spirit, who is being raised in captivity and featured in programs on mountain lion conservation in the Santa Monica Mountains.



An adult male lion's home range covers some 150 square miles. Protecting habitat, providing safe corridors over or under freeways, and controlling poisons in the environment are critical to ensure mountain lion survival in our local mountains. If you have photos that illustrate what you and SOAR are working to protect, we encourage you to share them with us!

AT RISK REPORT COMING SOON

Stay tuned this spring for the release of a new SOAR report, "At Risk: Ventura County's Open Space and Farmlands a Decade After the Creation of SOAR". Modeled after an influential series of publications by the Bay Area's Greenbelt Alliance, the At Risk report will include a map of open space areas at high risk of development in the coming years and a discussion of key issues and hot spots in each subregion of the county.

MAJOR LARGE-LOT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL BLOCKED

On February 13 the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, on a 3-2 vote, rejected what could have become a major, precedent-setting proposal to carve up over 2,000 acres of ranch land into ten-acre estate lots – the minimum lot size allowable without a SOAR vote.

SOAR supporters and others came out in force to voice opposition to the General Plan amendment being proposed by the owners of the historic Rancho Temescal in Piru. The proposal would have changed the General Plan designation on 2,478 acres from Open Space 80-acre minimum lot size to Open Space 10-acre Minimum Lot Size.

Because of SOAR, county lands designated Open Space, Agricultural, or Rural cannot be rezoned for residential or commercial development without a vote of the people. But under the County General Plan, the Board of Supervisors may authorize the subdivision of Open Space lands down to parcels as small as 10 acres, with one residential dwelling per lot. Large-lot subdivision or “parcelization” in rural areas is consuming agriculture and open space lands throughout the United States, and is a growing threat in Ventura County. It is a highly inefficient land use that fragments wildlife habitat and reduces the productivity of farmland.

Supervisors Bennett and Parks recently tried to stop this growing trend by raising the minimum Open Space parcel size to 20 acres. The motion lost on a 3-2 vote of the Board.

A push to increase the open space minimum lot size is needed to stem the tide of rural sprawl in Ventura County. Until that happens, we can expect to see more proposals like this one to come before the Board, and we'll need to continue exercising our vigilance and grassroots strength to turn them back.

Many thanks to all of you who made a difference in this case with your phone calls, emails, and public comments.

TIGHTENING OUR GREENBELTS TIERRA REJADA VALLEY

Tierra Rejada, an area of open space and farmland between Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, and Moorpark, is experiencing rampant rural sprawl in the form of large-lot estate development that is fragmenting natural habitat and farmlands, disrupting wildlife corridors, and increasing ag-urban conflicts.

County Open Space land can be subdivided down to 10-acre lots without triggering a SOAR vote. Tierra Rejada is covered by a Greenbelt Agreement between the three surrounding cities, but as with other such agreements around

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FARM BUFFERS MAY BECOME LAW IN VENTURA COUNTY

Farmers often find when a neighbor's field turns from growing crops to growing houses that tractors, dust, pesticide spray, and noise will all get complaints from the new neighbors. They may also experience trespassing and some stolen crops.

Now there is an opportunity for some relief. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors will consider adopting a Farm Buffer ordinance on April 3. The new ordinance would require developers (not the farmers) to provide a 300' buffer between their development and neighboring farmland. Some exceptions will allow for reductions in the required buffer size, but overall the ordinance will help to minimize the ag-urban conflicts that are inevitable when school playgrounds, houses, and even open water reservoirs are dropped into the middle of agricultural land with no buffer or transition area.

To support the Farm Buffer Ordinance, speak up at the Board of Supervisors' hearing on Tuesday, April 3, 1:30pm at the County Hall of Administration, 800 South Victoria, or email or call County Supervisors to encourage their yes vote. Experience has shown when you speak out, we all win!

How to Contact the Ventura County Board of Supervisors—

Supervisor Steve Bennett (805) 654-2703 steve.bennett@ventura.org

Supervisor John Flynn (805) 487-6331 john.flynn@ventura.org

Supervisor Peter Foy (805) 582-8010 supervisor.foy@ventura.org

Supervisor Long (805) 654-2276 kathy.long@ventura.org

Supervisor Linda Parks (805) 373-2564 linda.parks@ventura.org

Having a war chest on hand was absolutely critical to our success in Santa Paula last year. **We need 100 \$250 donors to rebuild our war chest in preparation for this next battle.** A strong SOAR organization is insurance for your family's quality of life. Invest in your future – invest in SOAR!

Yes! *I want to keep SOAR healthy, strong, and ready to battle the next sprawl campaign.*

Enclosed is my contribution of: \$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other _____

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

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Form of Payment: Credit Card Visa / Mastercard Only Check: Please make checks payable to: SOAR, Inc. Mail to: SOAR, P.O. Box 7352, Ventura, CA 93006

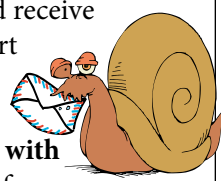
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SOAR Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Because of our effective grassroots campaigning and advocacy work, contributions to SOAR, Inc. are not tax-deductible. For more information or to make a tax deductible gift to The SOAR Fund, contact us at 805.421.9230 or info@soarusa.org.

Your support is essential to keep SOAR winning!

WHAT'S WITH THE SNAIL MAIL?

We received several calls last month from concerned SOAR members who got an action alert postcard about the Board of Supervisors hearing on Rancho Temescal (see story, page 3) after – in some cases well after – the February 13 hearing date. This was partly owing to the limited time we had to get the word out, and partly owing to unusually slow bulk mail delivery by the US Postal Service. Fortunately, many did receive the postcard in time, and many others got the action alert even more quickly by email.



If you're an email user, **we encourage you to provide us with an updated email address** so that we can get this kind of late-breaking news to you as quickly and cost-effectively as possible. **We do not share your personal contact information with anyone** and your name and email address are not disclosed to others when we send out group emails. Send your email address to us at info@soarusa.org.

TIGHTENING OUR GREENBELTS (cont.)

the county, the Tierra Rejada agreement is not binding on its signers.

An effort is underway to turn the Tierra Rejada Greenbelt Agreement into an ordinance that would require a four-fifths vote of the three city councils and the County Board of Supervisors to change. The ordinance would also potentially include heightened protections of the lands around the Reagan Library, preservation of major wildlife corridors, and a ban on any new proposals for high-powered lighting at night.

If successful this will be another important tool for keeping our greenbelts and farmlands intact.



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