



The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

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Completing the Picture: Current CWC Projects

By Suzanne Thompson,
President, CWC

It is a treat to hike through Johnson's Pasture on a crisp morning and enjoy the clean air and a chance for a glance of a wild critter. But most mornings, my route starts to the east and south of the pasture in the flatlands where Pomello crosses the Thompson Creek flood channel.

I follow the road across the creek and look for the acorn woodpeckers who have appropriated a telephone pole as their communal acorn storage unit. It is spring so the flashy orange and black Bullocks' orioles and their close cousins, the hooded orioles, have returned to hold raucous conversations in the treetops and set up nesting territories.

The road ends abruptly at a high cobbled-up gate and a no trespassing warning. House wrens, California quail, and common yellowthroats are singing beyond this point and I know from before the gate appeared that the road wanders into a fine little canyon lined with wildflowers and from there climbs to the west to Johnson's Pasture.

Like me, many of you know this land and have walked it with your family or friends in the past, so you can appreciate the opportunities it offers for walking, biking, and exploring nature.

From a map of the Claremont hillsides, you get another perspective: The hillsides look like an almost-completed giant jigsaw puzzle. The property beyond the gate is one big missing piece that is needed to finish the southeast edge of the hillsides and give another route into Johnson's Pasture.

CWC is working with the Trust for



Photo: Beverly Speck, New Sage Images

Italian Stone Pines stand tall in Johnson's Pasture on a recent spring day. The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy is currently working to preserve two more parcels of hillside land.

Public Land to buy the 158-acre piece and complete this part of the hillside picture. Like the quest for Johnson's Pasture, it won't be a quick or easy process. We'll need a willing seller, an agreed-on purchase price, and the biggest challenge—the money to buy the land. We are currently exploring state, county, and federal sources, and hope to get parts of the funding from several agencies.

Just to the south of the land behind the gate is a much smaller puzzle piece, but one with historical significance for Claremont. The five acres with an existing building would make a fine educational and interpretive center for visitors to the Claremont Wilderness Park. We have started a conversation

with the owners of this property with the hope of eventually getting the funding to purchase this piece as well. When we succeed in adding these two properties to the Claremont Wilderness Park, the gate will come down and we can enjoy walking in the canyon and accessing Johnson's Pasture from the east. Even better, we will have saved more of a scarce commodity: rapidly vanishing native habitat in Southern California.

Your generous support and donations in the past made our work to acquire Johnson's Pasture possible. With your further support, we will continue to have the community backing and financial resources to bring these two new projects to a successful conclusion.

La Verne Expands Its Preserved Open Space in Foothills

By *Georgeann Andrus*

Our neighbors to our west, led by the La Verne Land Conservancy and Executive Director Kathy Winsor, have been working with the Trust for Public Land, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles River and Mountains Conservancy and the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy to preserve open space in their foothills since 2002.

They have received \$6.5 million dollars from the Wildlands Conservation Board and additional money from LA County to purchase land, adding some 40 acres to the already established Marshall Canyon Regional Park and, more recently, significant new acreage that bridges between Webb Canyon to our northwest and Marshall Canyon.

These purchases help establish a contiguous corridor across our northern wilderness area from our Wilderness Park to the San Dimas Area and beyond.

The city of La Verne is currently developing a Management Plan for

the land they have received in these acquisitions. The community has participated in the development of this plan through a series of three public meetings. By having the connections between the wilderness areas of our communities, opportunities are created which allow for regional trails to be developed, ultimately connecting into the National Forest north of our wilderness areas.

In developing their Management Plan and proposing new hiking trails, LaVerne has faced some of the same issues recently experienced in Claremont, where parking concerns

it represents a significant effort toward achieving the goal of a continuous wildlife corridor and watershed access for the hillsides from Claremont's Wilderness Park on the eastern margin of the San Gabriel Mountains across those foothills to the west.



Photo: Beverly Speak, New Sage Images

Wild oats shine in the late afternoon sun.



Photo: Beverly Speak, New Sage Images

Stinging lupine emerges from the morning dew.

have raised questions which could jeopardize access to the publicly owned wilderness areas.

Although from the air the acquired open space in our region may appear, as the Trust for Public Land described, as a "patch-work quilt" of protected space,

HELP US SAVE THE CLAREMONT HILLSIDES

Instead of charging annual dues, CWC relies on your continuing generosity to fund our work to save the Claremont hillsides.

Please remember the conservancy in your giving plans. A donation envelope is enclosed. Donations are welcome at any time!

The Post is the newsletter of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy.

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Help City Keep Public Access to Johnson's Pasture

By Jill Benton

The City of Claremont is currently considering a proposal to build a permanent trailhead into Johnson's Pasture on the southwestern side of the Wilderness Park. If approved, the entry will be located at the northern end of Mountain Avenue. Switchbacks for entry will be carved slightly westward around, up, and over the bedrock to an overgrown fire road that rises to the first juncture of roads that make up the gently rolling trails of the pasture itself.

If the proposal is accepted, the trailhead will be constructed by summer's end. Once it's completed, Wilderness Park parking will be permitted on the west side of the north end of Mountain Avenue southward

to the entry of High Point, excluding the curbs bordering two fire hydrants. Some parking will also be permitted on the east side of Mountain above Via Santa Catarina. Craig Bradshaw, the City Engineer, estimates there will be 15 parking spaces for use.

As most know, the Wilderness Park, including Johnson's Pasture, is open daily from dawn to dusk. The city defines "dawn" as a half hour before sunrise and "dusk" as a half hour after sunset. In the city proposal, Wilderness Park parking will be limited to these hours, and tickets will be issued to those parking during the night; i.e., between dusk and dawn. Moreover, the proposal stipulates that no Wilderness Park daytime parking will be permitted on Via Santa Catarina in an attempt to mitigate what Chief of Police Paul Cooper characterizes as "quality of life issues," including noise, loss of privacy, and perceived loss of security.

A special meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Commission (TTC) is scheduled for Monday, June 30th, 2008, 7 p.m., in City Council Chambers for second consideration of the city engineering staff's proposal for

a trailhead and restricted parking policy. The TCC's first discussion on May 22nd was inconclusive. If accepted by the TTC, the policy will be forwarded for approval to the City Council. All of you are invited to attend these hearings. If you have an interest in using Johnson's Pasture and/or believe the Pasture should remain comfortably available to the public, you might consider attending these meetings.

If approved by the TTC, the ordinance may be heard by the City Council on Tuesday, July 8th at 7 p.m. At that time, if the ordinance is approved by the City Council, the public hearing phase will be closed and consideration for final approval will occur 30 days later. For certainty about the Traffic and Transportation Commission and City Council agendas, you are urged to check the CWC website, www.claremontwildlands.org or the city website, www.ci.claremont.ca.us.

The CWC board supports all efforts to maintain public access to Johnson's Pasture, by which we mean sufficient parking and posted trailheads at the southwestern edge of the Wilderness Park.

Be Safe in the Wilderness Park

By Karen Chapman

Johnson Pasture lovers, you can help keep the Pasture safe and wild by reporting any illegal or dangerous actions you observe.

Please call Claremont Police at 626-1296, or use 911 in an emergency. The Police will page park Rangers if they are on duty. We hope many of you carry your cell phone both for your own safety and for others'. Check for reception where you ordinarily hike so you will know the locations where the signal is good and where it is not.

The Wilderness Park is open dawn to dusk. Some groups are given advance permission to hike, but not beyond dusk (see Patty Thorne's article on Sierra Club-offered Moonlight Hikes).

Please be thoughtful as you park along a non-red curb and avoid blocking a mailbox, trash cans or driveways. As temperatures climb there will more active wildlife. Please respect rattlesnakes by quietly withdrawing yourself from their area. My belief has always been that they do not want to be close to me even more than I don't want to be close to them. It has worked well so far.



A coyote pauses as it makes its way through Johnson's Pasture during a recent dawn outing.

Photo: Beverly Speak, New Sage Images

Recently Observed in Johnson's Pasture.....

By Jim Van Cleve

Here is what I have observed on recent visits to Johnson's Pasture:

Swaths of yellow-blossomed and green-stemmed mustard against the backdrop of the now-brown hillsides; assorted tiny flowers along the edges of the trail, including the fringe-petaled Indian Pink (much redder than its name); patches of poppies in the hollows; the usual flitting of the phoebe and twittering of the dove; scrub jays on the power tower and a hooded oriole in a Eucalyptus tree; white-winged cabbage butterflies aplenty in the meadow, along with the occasional painted lady (butterfly, that is); an artist setting up his easel in the early morning sun.



Photo: Beverly Sreak. New Sage Images

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The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the foothills wild and free for all.