

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE CENTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NAPLES: The Fight Continues

Naples

Gaviota Plan

Steelhead

Ormond Beach

Tranquillon Ridge

Venoco

Oil Moratorium

Ocean Acidification

*CINMS Management
Plan*

OPEN Project

*Buy Fresh Buy Local
Food Guide*

EDC Community

EDC Events

On November 20, 2008, the EDC joined the Surfrider Foundation and the Naples Coalition in filing a lawsuit challenging Santa Barbara County's approval of the Santa Barbara Ranch Project. The County's action authorized the construction of 71 mansions along the entry to the Gaviota Coast, threatening the tranquil rural scenery and opening the door to leapfrog development up the coast. The Gaviota Coast is one of the rarest bioregions in the world, due to its location within the ecological transition between northern and southern Mediterranean systems. An estimated 1,400 plant and animal species exist here, including 24 endangered and threatened species.

In the lawsuit, we point out that the County failed to comply with several environmental protection laws, including the California Environmental Quality Act, California Coastal Act, Planning and Zoning law, Williamson Act, and the State's Development Agreement statute. The overall goal of the lawsuit is to compel the County to reconsider its approval, and to consider alternatives that will protect the natural, scenic, cultural and agricultural resources of the Naples property.

EDC will also appeal the County's approval to the California Coastal Commission. The appeal will be based on the project's violation of several important provisions of the Coastal Act, including those that discourage sprawl and conversion of agricultural lands, as well as those that require protection of environmentally sensitive habitat, scenic views, cultural resources, and public access to the ocean. The County submitted a package of materials to the Coastal Commission on October 31, 2008, however, this submittal has been rejected three times by Coastal Commission staff for being incomplete.



On January 5, EDC and our co-counsel (Law Office of Marc Chytilo) filed a demand that the Board of Supervisors reconsider a critical portion of its decision that was made in closed session. This decision bifurcated the project approval, allowing the developer to proceed with some construction inland of Highway 101 prior to receiving final approvals from the Coastal Commission. Not only did we object to the secrecy of the vote, but we raised the concern that the bifurcation was illegal under the Coastal Act because key infrastructure and mitigation measures in the coastal zone are necessary to support inland development.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Environmental Defense Center protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy and legal action.

FOCUS: Since 1977 we have empowered community-based organizations to advance environmental protection. Our program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health. We primarily work within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties.

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Christina McGinnis *O.P.E.N. Consultant*
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Brian Trautwein *Environmental Analyst*
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From the Desk of David Landecker

On January 29, the California State Lands Commission denied approval of the Tranquillon Ridge settlement agreement negotiated by EDC with PXP on behalf of our clients, GOO! and CPA. Although we appreciate the condolence calls, it is hard for EDC to be too upset about a “loss” resulting in denial of an offshore oil development project. Our “disappointment” is to have lost an opportunity for a permanent end to four offshore oil platforms and two processing facilities.

The stated rationale for defeating the plan was that neither the state nor the parties could bind the federal government to follow the agreement. All four subject platforms are in “federal waters,” and recent history exudes federal contempt for the efforts by California to improve our own environment. Anticipating this objection, EDC had negotiated for the oil company to transfer all the on-land oil processing facilities associated with these platforms to the public, forever, along with surrounding land totaling almost 4,000 acres. Despite convincing efforts to ensure enforceability, the distrust between state and federal agencies had become too bitter to overcome.

The challenges posed to the Obama administration are evident:

1. The nation must have a clearly articulated energy policy that discourages fossil fuels and favors clean, alternative energy sources;
2. Reinstating the federal oil moratorium should be a high priority;
3. Government leadership must support, not undermine, innovative local efforts to engage energy producers as partners in the transition from oil to new energy solutions;
4. The “feds” need to be a major driver of the solution, or will be blamed for being the problem.

EDC actually finds the ruling encouraging in our efforts to stop new oil development projects off Carpinteria and Ellwood. We will also continue working to save the Gaviota Coast from development, to save the steelhead trout from extinction, to protect blue whales in our channel, and to make sure that urban sprawl does not consume our open spaces. With your support, our work will continue unabated.

Special Announcements



Eric Cardenas

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Eric Cardenas for his nine years of commitment, enthusiasm, and determination in his work at EDC. As Program Director for EDC's Central Coast Environmental Health Project, Eric worked with farmworkers, farmers, health care providers, elected officials, government agencies and others to address pesticide conflicts at the ag/urban interface. We wish Eric the best in his new position managing the local procurement and infrastructure aspects of the s'Cool Food initiative at the Orfalea Foundation.



Joan Hartmann



Christopher Hahn

We are proud to announce two new additions to our Board of Directors: Christopher Hahn and Joan Hartmann. Both Chris and Joan join us with ample experience working with non-profits and a passion for protecting the natural resources of California's Central Coast. We look forward to the expertise they will bring in fulfilling our mission.

We would also like to thank Michael Hanrahan for his past commitment to EDC's Board of Directors. Michael Hanrahan Although Michael will no longer be a member of the board, we look forward to his continuous involvement and support on our Outreach and Marketing Committee.



Gaviota's Rural Regional Plan: Planning Department's Highest Priority



Gaviota Coast. Photo courtesy of Jessie Altstatt/Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

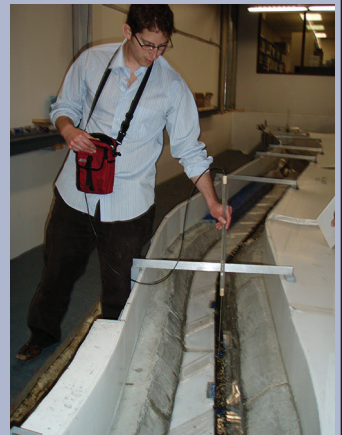
The long-term protection of the beautiful Gaviota Coast has always been a priority of the EDC. Exciting progress has recently been made towards realizing that goal. The County of Santa Barbara has begun preparing a plan that will apply specifically to land uses on the Gaviota Coast. During the February 4, 2009 meeting of the Planning Commission, the proposed "Rural Regional Plan" for the Gaviota Coast was named as one of the Planning Department's highest priority short-term projects (behind only preparation of a Climate Action Strategy).

The Gaviota Coast Rural Regional Plan will be a project of the County's Long-Range Planning Department if accepted by the Board of Supervisors. Once the planning process begins, there will be significant opportunities to provide input on how to protect this important undeveloped coastline, one of the world's hotspots for

biodiversity. The EDC will be intimately involved in the planning process (as will OPEN project staff; see related article on page 6), seeking to ensure achievement of our goals of preserving and protecting the coast's open space, agricultural heritage, urban boundary lines, and ecological vitality.

Steelhead: Coming Soon to a Creek Near You!

Southern steelhead – perhaps the most endangered species in our region – may soon be swimming freely up Santa Barbara City's largest creek thanks to the City of Santa Barbara and EDC's Mission Creek Steelhead Recovery Project. For more than ten years EDC has worked to restore steelhead to their historic spawning grounds. Steelhead measure up to 3 feet long and are as shiny as polished steel. But for more than 50 years ocean-going steelhead have been blocked, unable to complete their life cycle in Mission Creek. During storms, water flows too fast through the flat, mile-long concrete flood control channel between Carrillo and Mission Street. Steelhead can swim 21 feet per second for short bursts but even these tenacious and powerful salmon cannot navigate the concrete channel to access upstream spawning areas near the Museum of Natural History and Rattlesnake Canyon. Our project moved a big step closer to construction when a scaled model of the project was successfully tested last fall. EDC and the City are actively pursuing funding to complete the design this year and restore Mission Creek so people can experience the joy and wonder of witnessing the rarely seen Steelhead Trout.



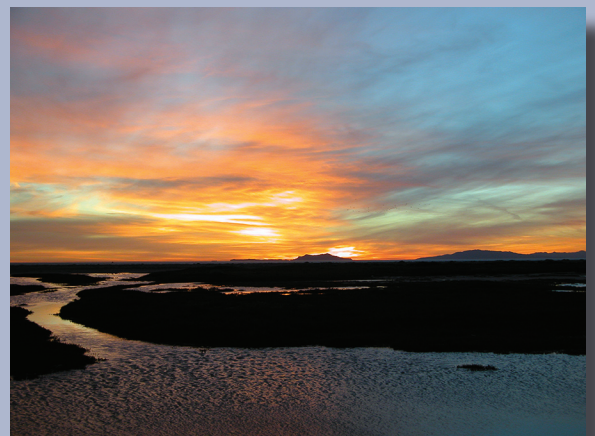
EDC and SB City successfully test a 1:20 scale model of the Mission Creek project. Photo by: G. Johnson

Last Stand for Ormond Beach Wetland

The Ormond Beach wetland area, located in the City of Oxnard between the Port of Hueneme and the Point Mugu Naval Base, supports many rare plants and hundreds of species of migratory birds, including the endangered California least tern and Western snowy plover. Unfortunately, like many Southern California wetlands, this area has been severely degraded and fragmented by human development.

The City of Oxnard is currently considering residential and commercial development projects near the Ormond Beach wetlands. The proposed projects include commercial uses, light industry, and residential development of up to 1,200 units, marking a dramatic departure from the current agricultural land uses for which the area is zoned. If approved, the projects would further degrade the wetlands and would also significantly interfere with efforts to restore and expand the wetland area.

In the summer of 2008, EDC represented the Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club before the City of Oxnard regarding its draft assessment of environmental impacts of the projects. The City of Oxnard is expected to make a final decision about these projects in early 2009. EDC will continue working with our Ventura County partners to protect and restore the Ormond Beach wetlands.



Looking at Anacapa Island from Ormond Wetlands
Photo by Al Sanders

Tranquillon Ridge Project Comes to an End

On behalf of Get Oil Out! and Citizens Planning Association, EDC negotiated a landmark agreement last year that would have required Plains Exploration and Production (PXP) to shut down the four platforms it operates offshore Santa Barbara County. The County approved the project in October, and the California State Lands Commission considered the proposal on January 29. After a lengthy hearing, with more than 300 supporters present, the Commission denied the project 2-1.

While we are very disappointed that the Commission rejected our agreement, we are pleased that the reason for the denial was that the Commission chose to maintain a very strong anti-oil position. We look forward to another opportunity in the future when we may be able to convince the Commission that the agreement will advance the state's interests by terminating existing production that will otherwise continue indefinitely. In addition, our agreement would have reduced the threat of new federal leasing by shutting down the infrastructure (platforms, pipelines and onshore processing and support facilities) that is needed to develop such leases.

Finally, the agreement would have resulted in the conveyance of 3,900 acres of land for public conservation purposes and funding for greenhouse gas emission reductions. We are grateful to the 25 groups that supported us in this effort and to The Trust for Public Land (TPL) for assisting us with the land conveyance agreement.

Venoco: The Message Has Been Sent

The State Lands Commission rejection of the Tranquillon Ridge project should send a strong message to Venoco that the state will likely deny its two oil development proposals at Ellwood and Carpinteria. EDC represents the Sierra Club, Get Oil Out!, Carpinteria Valley Association, Citizens for the Bluffs, Citizens Planning Association and Citizens for Goleta Valley in opposing these proposals, which would allow a new drilling facility near the Carpinteria Bluffs and Seal Sanctuary, and expanded development from Platform Holly.

Perhaps seeing the writing on the wall, Venoco recently announced its intention to bypass the City of Carpinteria's review of the Paredon project, and instead submit the matter directly to the voters by initiative. The city filed a lawsuit challenging this move because it would avoid environmental and public review. In addition, the initiative violates the California Constitution because it improperly benefits a private party, something that is not allowed through the initiative process. We and our clients believe that a fair public review process is necessary to ensure full compliance with environmental laws and City policies.

We are also gearing up for final hearings on Venoco's Ellwood Full Field Project. Venoco wants to drill into a new area, that is currently part of the California Coastal Sanctuary, from Platform Holly. Venoco's plan would threaten the ecological integrity of the University of California's Coal Oil Point Reserve, which is home to thousands of migratory birds and the endangered snowy plover.



Hydrogen Sulfite gas is a dangerous biproduct of oil production. Preventing new oil development in Carpinteria will preclude this public health threat. Photo by: L. Krop

The Oil Moratorium and the Future of California's Coast

The federal ban on new offshore oil leasing expired last fall, when Congress failed to renew it after more than 20 years of protection. As a direct result of the expiration of the moratorium, the Bush Administration released a new 5-Year Leasing Plan that includes several areas along the California coast, including the Santa Barbara Channel. EDC and other groups are working with our federal representatives to push for reinstatement of the moratorium, either through Presidential or Congressional action. We are also asking the new Obama Administration to withdraw the 5-Year Leasing Plan and to instead develop a strong energy policy that helps us move from fossil fuels to clean energy alternatives. On February 10, Obama's Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced that he had set aside the Bush Administration's timetable and would take a fresh look at offshore energy planning. Salazar extended the public review period by six months.

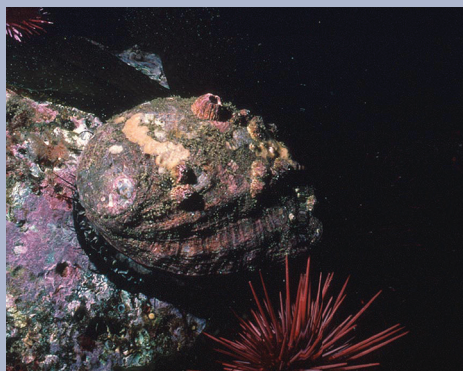
Naples: The Fight Continues

(continued from page 1)

The County agreed to cure any Brown Act inconsistencies and schedule a new hearing on this issue. However, on February 5, the developer informed the County that he had terminated a 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that governed processing of the Santa Barbara Ranch project, and that he had withdrawn his application for 16 homes on the coast south of Highway 101. Although the developer intends to proceed with development of 55 homes north of the Highway and sell individual lots south of the Highway on Santa Barbara Ranch, we believe that the termination of the MOU and withdrawal of the coastal portion of the project may prevent him from proceeding with any development at this point in time.

Ocean Acidification: EDC Presses On for Regional Action on “The Other Global Warming”

The climate-disrupting effects of human carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are well-known. Unfortunately, oceanographers have discovered that global climate change is only the first half of the cascade of problems caused by CO₂ emissions. We now know that the oceans absorb more than 25% of the CO₂ humans emit into the atmosphere every year; while this provides an important buffer against global warming, it portends grave changes for marine ecosystems.



Channel Islands urchin and abalone are extremely vulnerable to ocean acidification. Photo by Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

When CO₂ mixes with seawater, it forms carbonic acid. As continuously more anthropogenic (human-created) CO₂ is absorbed, oceans become increasingly acidic, corroding the shells and skeletons of marine organisms.

This process not only threatens familiar shell-building animals of the California coast like corals, abalone and urchins, but also an array of single celled planktonic species that form the base of many ocean food chains. Consequently, if anthropogenic CO₂ emissions continue at current rates, entire marine ecosystems will be jeopardized.

After release of a detailed report on the local effects of ocean acidification in September 2008 (available at http://bit.ly/EDC_OceanAcidification), EDC is continuing a campaign to raise awareness of ocean acidification and its causes, for local communities and federal decision-makers—and spark action to address it.

You can help reduce the severity of ocean acidification and global warming by using less electricity, eating less meat and reducing fossil fuel use in your car and home.

Updated Sanctuary Plan Released

Regional Collaboration Yields Improved Protection for the Channel Islands Marine Environment

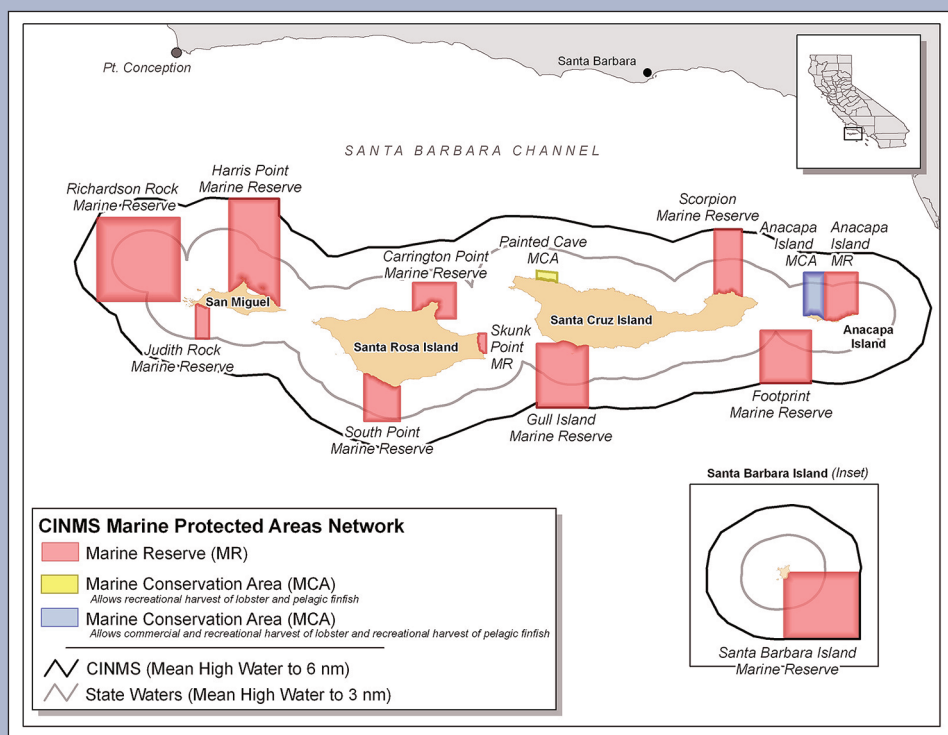
In January of 2009, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary released its long-awaited Final Management Plan, a comprehensive, strategic guidebook that replaces an existing management plan nearly 30 years old.

EDC, in concert with regional allies like Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and The Ocean Conservancy, worked closely with Sanctuary officials as they developed the Management Plan. Collectively, our input strengthened natural resource and water quality protection, and helped ensure regulatory updates that empower the Sanctuary to respond appropriately to today's threats.

For example, Sanctuary regulations now prohibit pollution of any kind from cruise ships, require that vessels of all sizes properly treat or hold sewage on board rather than discharge it within the Sanctuary, and protect the seabed habitats of the Sanctuary from any form of human alteration or destruction.

EDC congratulates Sanctuary staff for their years of hard work to complete the Management Plan, and their tremendous effort to integrate public input.

Learn more at www.ChannelsIslands.NOAA.gov



Map Courtesy: NOAA

EDC's OPEN Program Weighs in on Community Planning Efforts

EDC's newest project, the Open-Space Preservation Educational Network (OPEN), provides a proactive approach to assessing General Plans and the planning process throughout Santa Barbara County. Made possible from a grant from the Gildea Foundation, the purpose of the OPEN project is to engage all interested sectors of our communities in a dialog about developing policies and programs to protect agricultural and open space lands and the urban-rural interface. The OPEN project staff conducts outreach to community groups, agriculturalists, environmentalists, and land use experts to discuss the best approaches for protecting open spaces and agricultural lands in unincorporated



Yankee Farm Garden, Goleta. Photo by Callie Bowdish

Santa Barbara County and share information related to those goals. A comprehensive review of other jurisdictions' policies and programs in California is also underway to see if successful agricultural and open space protection methods used in other areas can be applied in our region. This information, combined with OPEN's independent analysis, is then shared with all interested segments of the community to help foster community awareness and education on these important issues.

the process of recommending specific solutions to address threats to our agricultural lands and open spaces has begun. The OPEN project has already provided information to decision-makers on several community planning efforts, including the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, Los Alamos Community Plan, City of Lompoc General Plan, and others. The EDC website now includes an OPEN link <http://www.environmentaldefensecenter.org/ProgramPages/OPEN.html> that contains comment letters prepared thus far for the project, and will be constantly updated as new analyses are available. The next big challenges will focus on recommendations for the upcoming Gaviota Coast Rural Regional Plan effort, and the Goleta Valley Community Plan update, which are already underway.

We are pleased to announce that we have hired a talented intern, Melissa Gomez, to assist with the OPEN project (see sidebar for a profile of Melissa). Please feel free to contact EDC for additional information or to schedule a meeting with OPEN.

EDC's O.P.E.N. Intern

Melissa Gomez

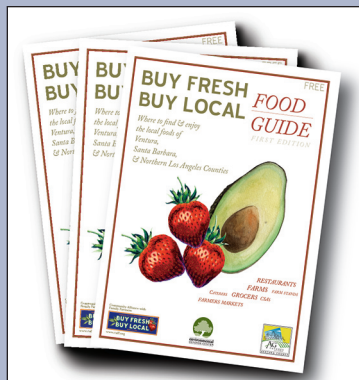


Melissa is currently working towards her Masters Degree at the Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at UCSB. She is specializing in Conservation Planning and hopes her internship at EDC will give her an awareness of environmental planning issues in Santa Barbara County. She will primarily work as a policy researcher for the Open-Space Preservation Education Network.

OPEN project director Christina McGinnis has completed an inventory of County planning documents with the potential to affect OPEN issues, particularly at the "urban-rural" interface. Policies that could be strengthened have been assessed, and

Eat Wisely! Buy Fresh Buy Local Food Guide Hits the Streets

Your responsibility for and commitment to eating and buying fresh local foods has been made much easier. The greatly anticipated Buy Fresh Buy Local Food Guide for Santa Barbara, Ventura and northern Los Angeles Counties has hit the streets and can be picked up in a store near you, free of charge!



In efforts to raise awareness of local agriculture and food sustainability, EDC worked in cooperation with the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance (VCAFA) and Davis-based Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) to produce this guide. As issues of our food system make headlines, individuals are becoming more aware of the impact that our food choices have on the health of our families, our environment, and our local economy.

In addition to identifying local farmers, food artisans, farmers markets, restaurants, and retailers who feature locally grown products, this guide also stands as a resource for information on farm-to-school programs, edible landscapes, CSAs (community-supported agriculture), seasonality charts, and more.

50,000 copies of the food guide have been distributed throughout Santa Barbara, Ventura and northern Los Angeles Counties. Pick up your copy today! For a list of distribution venues or to download a copy of the guide visit www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org

Santa Barbara Youth Presents Check to EDC



Josh Benson and EDC Staff.

For his seventh birthday, Santa Barbara local Josh Benson decided to give a significant gift back to his community. Instead of presents, Benson asked his friends and loved ones to make a donation to the Environmental Defense Center, recognizing the important role EDC plays in protecting our local environment. While presenting his check to EDC staff, Benson was asked if there was a specific program area he would like his contribution to be allocated towards. "For all of the Earth, because I want the Earth to be clean," Benson replied.

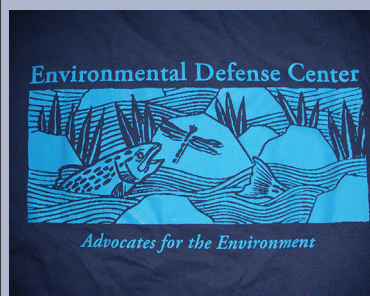
Well-known throughout the environmental community, Benson is often seen assisting at EDC's Thank Goodness It's Friday mixers, socializing at Santa Barbara's Earth Day festivities, and doing his part as a grassroots advocate. Next time your birthday comes around, consider following Benson's lead. As he demonstrated, it's never too early to step up and contribute to the conservation of the extraordinary natural environment in our tri-county region.

The EDC staff and board of directors offer our sincere thanks to Josh Benson for his generous contribution!

EDC STYLIN'

Get Your EDC Merchandise Today

Now is the time to stop by EDC's office and pick up that perfect gift for your friend or loved one. Our tote bags, made of organic canvas, are ideal for loading up on fresh produce from the farmers market or a run to the grocery store. Also available are men's and women's organic cotton t-shirts. For just \$10 you could have a thoughtful gift while supporting the work of EDC in protecting our local resources.



We Want You...to "Walk on the Wild Side"

New for 2009, EDC is test-launching a new program of public events, all under the series title "Walks on the Wild Side". The goal of these events is to engage the general public, as well as past and current EDC supporters, and get them out to actually experience and enjoy places that EDC has been instrumental in helping to preserve. Aiming for a family-friendly, free experience to introduce EDC to those who may not be familiar with our work, the first two of these events were deemed very successful!



Mother harbor seal with her pup at Carpinteria Bluffs. Photo by L. Krop

On January 25, EDC hosted guests at Ellwood Mesa and Butterfly Preserve and on February 22nd at Carpinteria Bluffs and Seal Sanctuary. As luck (and the calendar!) would have it, the events were able to be timed so that guests could experience the highlights of both areas: the annual return of the Monarch butterflies at Ellwood and the birth of Harbor Seal pups at the rookery at Carpinteria Bluffs.

Attendees at both events were treated to docent and self-guided tours of the areas, as well as a presentation of the overall history of the lands and how EDC came to be involved in their protection and preservation. EDC staff and board are hopeful that we will be able to add additional events to this series as the year unfolds. Look for future event announcements on EDC's website and email Messenger.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

Annual membership contributions provide the Environmental Defense Center with the steady, reliable funding we need to stay on top of issues and allow us to do whatever we can to protect our quality of life on the Central Coast. By supporting EDC, you are also supporting all of the community groups EDC represents. Become a new member or renew your membership today!

Being a member of EDC means:

- Supporting a local organization with a unique role and proven track record in protecting local resources
- Putting your dollars to work in your own community
- Staying informed on issues that affect your environment
- Learning about the actions you can take to help protect our local environment

Your support allows EDC to:

- Be an agency watchdog
- Provide the "last line of defense" in protecting our environment
- Guide local groups through the legal process and advocate on their behalf
- Give citizens a voice in determining the future of their communities
- Level the playing field by allowing citizens to challenge well-funded, powerful interests & make them play by the rules
- Provide much-needed education about pesticides and other issues

Your annual membership donation ensures that you receive:

- EDC's newsletter
- Invitations to special events
- Email Messengers and Action Alerts

TGIF Season Quickly Approaching!

It's what we have all be anxiously awaiting—the time of year when the days get longer, the sun shines warmer and EDC provides an opportunity for the community to gather. EDC's Thank Goodness It's Friday events continue to be one of the best happy hours in town, held in EDC's Courtyard. Mark your calendars now and spread the word. Gather your friends and family and start the weekend off with some live music, scrumptious hors d'oeuvres, fine spirits and good company.

SAVE THE DATE!

EDC's 16th Annual Benefit Auction & Environmental Hero Awards

Please join us on Sunday, June 14, 2009, 2:00 to 5:00 pm at the Stow House in Goleta for live music, wine, hors d'oeuvres, live and silent auctions and our 2009 Environmental Hero Awards presentation.

This year we will honor Jackson Browne and other heroes who help build a healthy and sustainable future for our community. All proceeds from the event will directly support EDC's work to protect our Central Coast environment.

We can also use your help in planning the event! This Auction would not be successful without the help of our dedicated volunteers and supporters. Contact Deborah Lott at 805-963-1622 or dlott@edcnet.org if you are able to participate by:

- Joining the Auction Committee
- Becoming a Sponsor of the event
- Placing an ad in the program
- Donating auction items

Aldo's 10% Tuesdays

During the month of August, 10% of what you spend on lunch or dinner at locally owned Aldo's Italian Ristorante will benefit EDC's many programs. Look for more details during the summer at www.sbalDOS.com or www.EDCnet.org.
Aldo's Italian Ristorante | 1031 State Street | Santa Barbara | 963-6687

Celebrate Earth Day - "Dine Out" to Benefit EDC

Celebrating your community commitment to a healthy environment doesn't get much easier than this! Gather your friends and family and make a lunch or dinner reservation for Thursday, April 16. On Thursday, several of your favorite local restaurants will donate a portion of that day's proceeds to help support EDC's work to protect the local environment. Stay tuned to EDC's website (www.EDCnet.org), and email Messenger for the list of participating restaurants.

Stay Informed

Sign up on our website for our email Messenger and Action Alerts to learn about special events, hearings and more.

CALENDAR

April 16

Dine Out for the Earth

April 18

Ventura Earth Day

April 19

Earth Day at Alameda Park

May 8

TGIF

June 14

16th Annual
Benefit Auction &
Environmental Hero
Awards

July 10

TGIF

August 14

TGIF

August 4, 11, 18, 25

10% Tuesdays at Aldo's



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