

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE CENTER

Saving Our Seas

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EDC Events

We are fortunate to live, work and play in one of the most biologically rich places on the planet. The convergence of cool northern and warm Pacific southern waters, combined with a deep outer continental shelf, nutrient upwelling and protected channel, creates the highest level of biodiversity in the mainland United States.

In recognition of the importance and vulnerability of this area, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) and Channel Islands National Park (CINP) were established in 1980. In 1986, the United Nations recognized the Sanctuary as a Biosphere Reserve. Many endangered and threatened species rely on the Sanctuary for their survival, including blue, humpback and sei whales, southern sea otters, and the California least tern.

Despite the significance of this area, the marine resources of the Santa Barbara Channel have been impacted by pollution, overfishing, oil drilling and international shipping. At the same time, rising ocean temperatures are stressing the very foundations of the Channel's ecosystem, and mounting human pollutants like carbon dioxide (CO₂) are altering the ocean's basic chemistry.

For the past 33 years, the EDC has been a local leader in coast and ocean protection. Since 1998, we have represented the conservation community on the CINMS Advisory Council and chaired the Council's Conservation Working Group (CWG). In 2009, the CWG received the National Marine Sanctuary Partner of the Year Award for our work on ocean acidification (see below).

EDC's Coast & Ocean program deals with such pressing issues as water quality, underwater noise, aquaculture, offshore oil development, liquefied natural gas and marine reserves. This article focuses on our current efforts to protect blue whales and sea otters, and to address threats such as shipping and rising ocean acidification.

SAVING BLUE WHALES FROM SHIP STRIKES

Blue whales, the largest animal to have ever lived on Earth, were driven to the brink of extinction by whaling in the mid-20th century. Whales continue to be threatened world-wide from hunting, ship strikes, entanglement, pollution, and low to mid-frequency noise. Within the United States, blue whales are listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The Santa Barbara Channel provides important feeding grounds for the blue whale, and hosts the largest seasonal population of blue whales on the planet each summer. The Channel also poses serious threats to blue whales, as evidenced by the fact that at least four blue whales were killed by ship strikes in 2007. Two more blue whales were killed along the California coast in 2009.



Blue Whale spotted in the Santa Barbara Channel. Photo by Linda Krop

EDC is working with the CINMS Advisory Council to implement measures that can help protect blue whales from ship strikes, including consideration of speed limits, moving the shipping lanes, and increasing education and awareness.

(continued on page 4)

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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Nathan Alley *Staff Attorney*
Gloria Campa *Accounting Manager*
Brina Carey *Administrative Assistant*
Karen Kraus *Staff Attorney*
Deborah Lott *Development Associate*
Christina McGinnis *O.P.E.N. Consultant*
Kristi Birney Reiman *Marine Conservation Analyst*
Brian Segee *Staff Attorney*
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edc@edcnet.org | environmentaldefensecenter.org
906 Garden Street | Santa Barbara, CA 93101 | 805.963.1622



From the Desk of David Landecker

This issue of EDC's newsletter highlights our Coast and Ocean programs.

Despite loving our ocean views, walks on the beach, boating, kayaking, surfing, pelicans and dolphins, it is easy for us to forget that the ocean is an entirely separate environment. As on land, a multitude of sea-dwelling plants and animals are vitally affected by the ever-increasing intrusion of human-induced impacts into their world, which few of us ever see.

It is said that the modern environmental movement began with the 1969 oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel. It led to the formation of EDC and some of our long time client groups with whom we have fought for a generation to end oil drilling. Our much publicized work on PXP's Tranquillon Ridge project for the past many years has been entirely in pursuit of that critically important goal.

But industrial uses of the ocean today also include the impact of scores of cargo ships speeding through our channel each day, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture (fish and seaweed farms), potential wave and wind energy plants, Liquefied Natural Gas facilities, military activities, mining and more. EDC's work on all of these issues has received much less attention, but is of equal importance.

Most community members are only vaguely aware, if they know at all, that the Santa Barbara Channel Islands contain a National Marine Sanctuary and the most comprehensive network of Marine Reserves and Protected Areas in the continental United States. EDC has, for more than a decade, chaired the Conservation Working Group of local public interest groups that advise Sanctuary management on protecting this unique environment. We have worked closely with commercial interests on the Sanctuary Advisory Committee to address new challenges as they arise or are identified. Most have been resolved cooperatively.

National agencies are finally taking leadership on the subject of "Marine Spatial Planning," which, like zoning on land, determines what regions of our national waters are appropriate for what kinds of human activities. This work is overdue and welcome. EDC is actively involved.

Enjoy reading this issue. We hope it encourages you to support our efforts in whatever way you can.



Her Honor, HARRIET MILLER, served as a member of EDC's Board of Directors from 2007 – 2009. Her personal mission on our Board was to remind us that unnecessary conflict could often be avoided, and positive results obtained through education and outreach. Harriet's legacy may be that she institutionalized the concept that the most important business of Santa Barbara (the city she served as a city councilmember and mayor for 14 years) was and is the quality of our environment. Her "no-nonsense" leadership promoted the importance of our natural resources as the magnet that attracts not just tourism, but business leaders and their companies, promoting "green" economic growth. Today, that is pretty conventional wisdom.

We will miss Harriet's insights and sly laugh, but the impact of her leadership lives on.

Special Announcements



Eric Cárdenas

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome two new additions to our EDC Board of Directors, Eric Cárdenas and Neil Dipaola. For nine years, Eric worked for EDC as the Program Director of our Central Coast Environmental Health Program. Currently he is working at the Orfalea Foundation as a Manager of the S'cool Food Initiative. Neil is the Chief Executive Officer & Managing Partner of Mesa Lane Partners, a Santa Barbara real estate investment and development firm. We look forward to the unique expertise and the dedication they bring to helping EDC fulfill our mission.



Neil Dipaola



Sharyn Main

We would also like to thank Sharyn Main and Christina Mahon for their past commitment to EDC's Board of Directors. In addition to serving on our board of directors, Sharyn and Christina also served on our Outreach and Marketing Committee, playing a significant role in EDC's branding and messaging efforts, the development of our new website, and the success of our past media campaigns. They will both be missed!



Christina Mahon

A Plan for the Gaviota Coast

The Gaviota Coast is a 54-mile stretch that represents approximately half of the remaining undeveloped coastline in all of Southern California. It is recognized as one of the most important “hot spots” for threatened biodiversity in the world, both in its marine and terrestrial environments, which harbor some 60 threatened and endangered species and literally thousands of other varieties of flora and fauna. The Gaviota Coast also supports a rich variety of farming and ranching operations on land that has, in many cases, been in active agricultural use for generations.



Looking South from El Capitain at the Gaviota Coast.
Photo by Erin Feinblatt

The Gaviota Coast Plan brings landowners, government officials and environmental advocates (among other stakeholders) together to develop mutually acceptable management policies for this irreplaceable region. The Plan is intended to maintain and improve existing rural zoning designations and strengthen policies to protect the natural resources of the Gaviota Coast, while providing landowners with clear guidance on permissible uses of their land.

The County’s Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee (GavPAC) will receive community input and make recommendations that will be used by County staff to draft the Gaviota Coast Plan. The GavPAC may also provide an advisory function to the County regarding development projects that affect the Gaviota Coast Plan area.

EDC will facilitate the success of the Gaviota Coast Plan process with effective community partnerships and respectful dialogue among the many conservation-minded stakeholders in our area. We will ensure that the conservation community remains informed and engaged in the development of Gaviota Coast policies. Members of the community are encouraged to attend GavPAC meetings and provide comments on the Gaviota Coast Plan.

Ormond Beach Oxnard Wants to Hear More About It

Confronted with considerable public opposition, Oxnard’s City Council delayed taking its scheduled final action on the 2030 General Plan on February 9, 2010, pending more outreach and discussion about Ormond Beach and other issues. Hundreds of people sent letters to the City Council and attended the public hearing to express their dismay that the 2030 Plan still authorizes significant industrial land use in Ormond Beach, including on currently undeveloped land needed for wetland restoration efforts.

EDC, on behalf of our clients the Los Padres Sierra Club and the Environmental Coalition of Ventura County, is leading efforts to ensure that the 2030 Plan and other City decisions do not undermine the State Coastal Conservancy’s ongoing restoration efforts. Ormond Beach is already a vital wildlife habitat. The Conservancy’s plan would make it one of the largest coastal wetland areas in southern California. The Conservancy’s plan also envisions interpretive facilities, a trail network, and wildlife overlooks, which would also make Ormond Beach an amazing destination for the community and out of town visitors.



Logo by Unscribbled
www.unscribbled.com

Naples Project Stalls on Highway 101

In 2009, the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors rescinded an ill-conceived development agreement between the County and the owners of Santa Barbara Ranch. The plan to build a McMansion subdivision on the Gaviota Coast will be reviewed by the Coastal Commission later this year. Meanwhile, the lawsuit that EDC, Surfrider and the Naples Coalition filed in 2008 moves forward.

Save Our Seas *(continued from page 1)*

We also sent a formal notice to the National Marine Fisheries Service on behalf of EDC, Friends of the Earth, Pacific Environment, and Center for Biological Diversity, demanding that the Service take immediate action to implement its 11-year-old Blue Whale Recovery Plan. The Recovery Plan includes key action items to minimize threats caused by ship strikes, pollution, and other harmful activities, and to improve the agency's limited knowledge concerning blue whale populations and habitat needs.

EDC SUES TO PROTECT SEA OTTERS

On September 30, 2009, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of The Otter Project and EDC, urging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take steps to eliminate the "no otter" zone from Pt. Conception to the Mexican border. The southern sea otter, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), once ranged throughout the California coast. Over the years, however, the otters have been largely restricted to the central coast. Expansion of their range into historic southern California habitats is recognized by the Fish and Wildlife Service as one of the single most important actions necessary to recover the species.

Sea otters are the smallest of the marine mammals in North America, known for their charismatic faces, use of tools, and thick coat of fur. Otters are keystone species, which means they are extremely important to the health of the environment and other species.

In 1987, the Service decided to reintroduce, via "translocation," sea otters from central California to San Nicolas Island in southern California, so they would be protected from an offshore oil spill. The proposal engendered significant opposition from the shellfish industry, and as a result the Service issued a "compromise" rule allowing the translocation but prohibiting otters from all other southern California waters.

The translocation effort was plagued with difficulty, however, and by 1991 only 10 percent of the 140 translocated otters remained at San Nicolas Island. The remaining otters died during translocation, attempted to swim back north, or moved into the "no otter zone" and were removed. Although the Service stopped translocating otters in 1991, and issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2005 concluding that termination of the "no otter zone" is the preferred action to protect sea otters, nothing has been done to officially change the rule.

Accordingly, once otters swim into the "no otter zone" they are no longer fully protected by the ESA, which means that they become more susceptible to harassment, illegal killings, and other harmful actions. We filed our lawsuit because we believe that prompt action is necessary to protect this important keystone species.



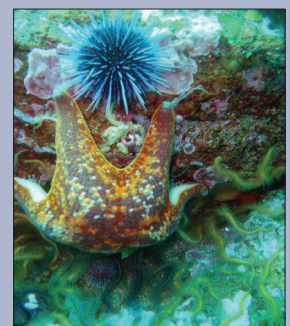
Southern CA Sea Otter, Gaviota Coast. Photo by Erin Feinblatt

EDC'S WORK HIGHLIGHTS OCEAN ACIDIFICATION THREAT

For the past several years global climate change has been a hot topic at every level of government. What most people aren't aware of, however, is that CO₂ emissions in the atmosphere are also wreaking havoc on the environment and our lives by raising the acidity of our oceans.

Often referred to as the "other carbon dioxide problem," ocean acidification is a process that is making the oceans more corrosive. As the ocean becomes more acidic, calcifying marine creatures such as corals, coralline algae, urchins, lobsters, abalone, and planktonic organisms have difficulty developing their shells. Losing these organisms will have a negative ripple effect throughout the entire food chain.

On behalf of the CWG, EDC authored a comprehensive report on ocean acidification, and the potential ramifications for our region [available on our website]. The report includes recommendations to the CINMS for research, monitoring, education and leadership. Because ocean acidification is a global issue, our report was also presented at the National Marine Sanctuary Summit in May 2009, and has been endorsed by all thirteen of the sanctuaries. A West Coast Regional Task Force was recently established to coordinate research and education efforts amongst the five west coast Sanctuaries.



Bat Star Urchin.
Photo by Claire Fackler,
NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries

Paredon Oil & Gas Initiative Goes to June 8 Ballot

The immediate future of Venoco's proposed Paredon Project will be decided at the ballot box on June 8 in Carpinteria. If it passes, the Paredon Oil & Gas Drilling Initiative (Measure J) would allow Venoco to construct a 175 foot rig on the bluffs above the Carpinteria harbor seal sanctuary. Publicly available reports from the City describe numerous threats that would result from the oil project.

Venoco first sought drilling permits in 2001, but the company's application was deemed incomplete by the California State Lands Commission. A second application was rejected in 2004. Venoco submitted a third application in 2005, and a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared by the City of Carpinteria in 2007.

EDC commented on the Draft and Proposed Final EIRs on behalf of the Carpinteria Valley Association, Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs, Get Oil Out! and the Los Padres Sierra Club. In May, 2008, the City's Environmental Review Committee asked for further study and a revised EIR. But before the new document could be made public, Venoco put its application on hold and prepared a special voter initiative.



Carpinteria Bluffs overlooking the Harbor Seal Rookery and the Channel Islands. Photo by Gail Osherenko

The City challenged Venoco's initiative in court, in part because it violates provisions of the California Constitution. A Court of Appeals will hear the case some time close to the June election. EDC intends to submit an amicus curiae brief in support of the City – allowing a private developer to manipulate the local initiative process and circumvent appropriate public review may set dangerous precedent for the entire California coastline.

Individuals in Carpinteria have formed a ballot measure committee to educate voters about the real dangers associated with Venoco's proposed drilling project.

For more information about Paredon, visit EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org, and citizensagainstparedon.org.

Tranquillon Ridge: An End to Offshore Oil

The EDC and our clients, Get Oil Out! and Citizens Planning Association, continue to work on a new settlement agreement with oil development company PXP designed to end oil drilling offshore northern Santa Barbara County. The plan commits PXP to shut down all drilling from four oil platforms, each of which is a likely site for new slant drilling into undeveloped oil fields, and hundreds of onshore oil wells. Never before has an oil company agreed to an end date to oil drilling.

After opposing the Tranquillon Ridge project for 10 years, EDC and our clients reached an agreement that provides the following benefits:

- Shut down four platforms that are currently drilling offshore California;
- Remove two onshore processing and support facilities;
- Prevent the use of these platforms and onshore facilities to support new or expanded drilling;
- Conveyance of approximately 4,000 acres of valuable land for permanent preservation;
- Full mitigation of all direct greenhouse gas emissions from the project.

The plan has been strengthened to address concerns raised last year by the State Lands Commission (SLC) and assures greater enforceability, transparency and accountability. The new plan will need to be approved by the SLC and other agencies to become effective.

Protecting Our Watersheds, Creeks, and Rivers

When we protect our watersheds, we protect ourselves. Protecting watersheds protects water supplies, reduces erosion and flooding, preserves our scenic views, and preserves wildlife and fish.

EDC is on the frontline, ensuring our watersheds remain healthy and pollution-free.

- Santa Ynez River – EDC and CalTrout are approaching the culmination of 20 years of work to restore the Santa Ynez River steelhead run – once numbering 30,000 fish, it has dwindled by 99% since Bradbury Dam was built. We are defending the Public Trust in hearings before the State Water Resources Control Board.

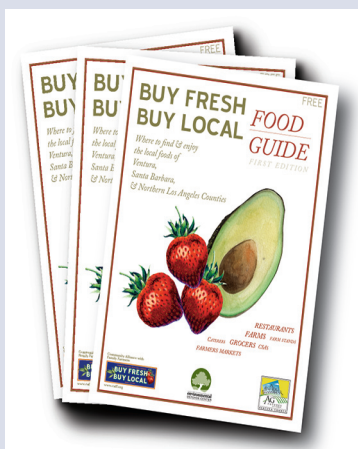
- Steelhead Restoration – EDC and the City of Santa Barbara's Mission Creek project will restore passage for endangered steelhead through a mile of concrete flood control channel to upstream spawning habitat. EDC is also helping facilitate a plan to restore steelhead habitat in San Jose Creek in Goleta.

- Hydromulch - After identifying shredded plastic, foil and other pollutants in the hydromulch applied after the Gap Fire, EDC worked to ensure that only uncontaminated hydromulch was applied following the Jesusita Fire. We also convinced the County to study effects of hydromulch so that future applications control erosion while also protecting wildlife and native plants.

- Creek Water Diversions – EDC is investigating and reporting illegal water diversions which threaten creeks and rare species like steelhead and red-legged frogs.



Maria Ygnacio. Photo by Brian Trautwein



Eat Wisely.

Buy Fresh Buy Local Food Guides Still Available!

The Buy Fresh Buy Local Food Guide, released in 2009, makes your ability to eat responsibly very easy! Pick up a FREE copy of the Buy Fresh Buy Local Food Guide for Santa Barbara, Ventura and northern Los Angeles Counties today! 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. Remember, your food choices do have an impact on the health of our families, our environment, and our local economy. For a list of distribution venues or to download a copy of the guide visit www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org.

Agricultural Buffer Policy: A Collaborative Effort

After more than a year of hard work and discussion, the groundbreaking Agricultural Futures Alliance (AFA) has completed a draft of an agricultural buffer policy for consideration by the County of Santa Barbara. The AFA comprises a wide cross-section of both the environmental and agricultural community, including farmers and ranchers, the County Farm Bureau, UCSB representatives, League of Women Voters, SB CAN, a real estate developer, the Orfalea Foundation's S'cool Food Representative, and EDC's OPEN Program. The policy was crafted by the group after reviewing every buffer policy throughout the State of California and gleaned the most useful policies and implementation measures. After determining that San Luis Obispo County has the most comprehensive and progressive program, we toured various properties in SLO to determine how buffers function (or not) "on the ground." Based on lessons learned from the site visit, the AFA's buffer policy was then refined through a collaborative process over the course of the last year. The completion of AFA's draft buffer policy will assist County agricultural planners in preparing their policy. Once adopted by the County, an agricultural buffer policy will hopefully help to increase compatibility with land uses that abut agricultural land, and help farmers and ranchers continue their agricultural practices.

EDC's 17th Annual Benefit Auction & Environmental Hero Awards



EDC supporters making their bids at the 2009 auction. Photo by Erin Feinblatt

Please make your plans to join us on Sunday, June 6, 2010, 2:00 to 5:30 pm at Rancho La Patera and the Stow House in Goleta. You'll enjoy an afternoon of live music, wine, hors d'oeuvres, live and silent auctions and our 2010 Environmental Hero Awards presentation.

This year we are delighted to honor actor Ed Asner, a passionate supporter of diverse environmental efforts worldwide. Our local hero is Paul Jenkin, a Ventura activist, organizer and leading force behind innovative watershed based environmental planning along the Ventura River, beaches and coastline. Also being honored is New Belgium Brewing Company, a thriving business strongly committed to progressive sustainability practices and many years of generous "in kind" support of EDC's events. Our Youth Award will recognize six students from Oak Park High School, whose efforts are known collectively as the Whale Migration Project. These students have developed a peer education program about the issue of whales and ship strikes in the Santa Barbara Channel.

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

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY-"Dine Out" to Benefit EDC

Celebrating your community commitment to a healthy environment doesn't get much easier than this! In conjunction with the 40th Anniversary of Santa Barbara Earth Day, we are partnering with several local restaurants to host "Dine Out for the Earth". Gather your friends and family and make a lunch or dinner reservation for Thursday, April 15. 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 and email Messenger for the list of participating restaurants and help us by having a great meal!

You Still Have a Chance to "Walk on the Wild Side"

Due to much positive response from last year, EDC is once again offering a series of public events known collectively as Walks on the Wild Side (WOWS). This year's series includes Ellwood Mesa and Butterfly Preserve, Carpinteria Bluffs and Seal Sanctuary and San Marcos Foothills.

The butterflies have flown and the seals may have moved on but you still have a chance to catch the gorgeous spring flora of San Marcos Foothills. This area is beautiful at any time of year but in spring it's nothing short of spectacular! On Sunday, March 28th from 2 pm to 4 pm come join EDC staff and hear about the history of the area and how it came to be preserved for you to enjoy.

WOWS are free, family-friendly, open to the public and a great way for past, present and hopefully future EDC supporters to get out and experience and enjoy places that EDC has been instrumental in helping to preserve. There are 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.



Harbor Seal Rookery at Carpinteria Bluffs. Photo by Erin Feinblatt

EDC Staff and Board are hopeful that we will be able to add additional events to this series as the year unfolds. Stay tuned!

Aldo's 10% Tuesdays

During the month of August, locally owned Aldo's Italian Ristorante will donate 10% of your total tab to EDC. This generous donation will benefit EDC's many programs. Look for more details during the summer at www.sbaldo.com or on our website.

Aldo's Italian Ristorante | 1031 State Street | Santa Barbara | 963-6687



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EDC Events

TGIF! What's Not to Love About Happy Hour?

You have all waited so patiently for this time of year to come back around! At last, the days are longer, the sun is brighter, and EDC is calling on the community to come together! EDC's Thank Goodness Its Friday events continue to be one of the best happy hours in town, held in our downtown courtyard. Mark your calendars now and spread the word. Gather your friends and family and start the weekend off with some live music, tasty hors d' oeuvres, fine spirits provided by New Belgium Brewery and local wineries and good company for just \$10. We will also be offering the TGIF Season Pass again this year. Your \$50 VIP Pass will give entry in to all five TGIFs (including the Fall Feast which includes a full meal and has a \$20 value) and one raffle ticket per event. For more information or to purchase a pass please contact Betsy at bweber@edcnet.org or call EDC. May 14, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8

Save the Date for our Ride on the Wild Side: Oct. 16, 2010

Join EDC for our first-annual Ride on the Wild Side bike event. With two lengths of rides available, all levels of cyclists are welcome. The 10-mile fun ride leaves from EDC's downtown office and takes riders along Santa Barbara's beach front to the Douglas Family Preserve and back. The 39-mile ride follows the bike path to Goleta Beach, stopping at Haskells Beach and then returns to EDC. Each stop will offer an opportunity to learn about the site's history and importance. Guided rides are also available. The ride will be followed by a celebration in the EDC courtyard with food, beverages, a raffle, and live music. Whether you're a family, casual rider, or serious cyclist, take advantage of this great opportunity to enjoy and learn about Santa Barbara's beautiful local open spaces. Registration is now open at active.com!

Are You In Touch? Stay Informed and Take Action!

Helping make a difference in protecting our local environment starts with being an informed citizen. EDC makes it easy for you to stay informed about environmental news, alerts and events in the tri-counties! If you are not already, take a moment to sign up on our website for our electronic EDC Messenger and EDC Action Alerts. The Messenger is sent out every other week and will keep you current on local environmental issues and events. EDC Action Alerts are sent out as needed, to gather direct support for time-sensitive issues. You can also follow EDC on Twitter at twitter.com/EDC_Action or become a fan of EDC on Facebook.



CALENDAR

March 28

Walk on the Wild Side,
San Marcos Foothills

April 10

Earth Day Festival, Oxnard

April 15

Dine Out for the Earth

April 17

Earth Day Festival, Ventura
& Santa Barbara

April 18

Earth Day Festival, Santa
Barbara

May 7

Santa Ynez Valley TGIF

May 14

TGIF

June 6

Auction & Environmental
Hero Awards

July 9

TGIF

August 3

10 % Tuesdays at Aldo's
(all month)

August 13

TGIF

September 10

TGIF

October 8

TGIF

October 16

Ride on the Wild Side