



# NEWS FROM NATURE

NEWSLETTER OF CHINO HILLS STATE PARK INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

WINTER 2008



Melanie Schlotterbeck

## ENJOY ONE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S JEWELS

Dear Friends,

In this day and age, who can argue that our lives are often made easier by our modern lifestyles and our quick access to information and entertainment? With our modern city living, we can simply jump into our cars and not have to travel far to buy our food, clothes, and other basic necessities that we all need to live day to day. We are often a quick freeway trip away from our favorite restaurant, movie theater or our other favorite place of entertainment. With all the technology entering our homes, we can listen to our favorite music, chat with friends anywhere in the world, and watch movies on demand.

Even though I enjoy all these modern conveniences and have grown used to them, I often feel rushed, pressured, and pulled in a thousand different ways. I am quite sure I am not the only one who often grows wary of this fast paced and hectic world we live in. For this reason, I often seek out an "escape" and go to places that are quiet, peaceful, and where I can feel close to nature.

Millions of others, who live in California, also seek the respite of the natural environment for these same reasons.

With the help of the State of California and the State Park system, residents have access to our wonderful resources — resources that have been preserved for us to enjoy. The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity (plants and animals), protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

If you live in Southern California and have a favorite State Park that is easy to get to you should feel extra fortunate. For whatever reason, a bias has been created against establishing State Parks in Southern California compared to other parts of the state. In fact, there are twice as many State Parks, Reserves, and Recreational Areas north of Fresno, as there are south of Fresno.

Which brings me to our local treasure. If you live in Chino Hills or any of the surrounding communities, you are fortunate to have Chino Hills State Park (CHSP), literally in your back yard. CHSP not only preserves rare and unique plants and animals, but it is also the most expensive State Park in California. In fact, CHSP is an important anchor in the well-known Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor that extends over 30 miles and across four Southern California counties.

So it is important for all of us to try to remember that Chino Hills State Park, and all the State Parks, are here for the primary purpose of creating healthier lives through the preservation of our natural resources. I hope to see you in the Park sometime soon or at our next event in March!

Sincerely,

Tom Greene  
President CHSPIA

# THE STORY BEHIND CHINO HILLS STATE PARK

By: Claire Schlotterbeck



Throughout the 1970s a coalition of cities in Orange County looked to Chino Hills as the perfect site for an international - LAX type airport. Studies were done, maps were drawn and a Joint Powers Authority was formed to

pursue the plan. No one stood up to oppose the bulldozing of the hills until Dave Myers did in 1977. By founding the citizen's group Hills For Everyone he pulled together a coalition of interested groups and individuals including homeowner associations, horseback riders, environmentalists, and concerned city council members.

Under his leadership, volunteer biologists inventoried the natural resources of the hills. Their results piqued the interest of the California Department of Parks and Recreation because of the wide diversity of habitats and wildlife that existed in a relatively small area. The Department's mission is to protect representative slices of California so that future generations will be able to recreate in



Dave Myers

and enjoy the beauty of nature that exists throughout the state. Creation of parkland in Southern California had long been neglected so this citizen-led effort to establish a park close to so many people provided an opportunity for the Parks Department to begin to remedy the historic neglect.

Over the next 30 years, Chino Hills State Park was pieced together like a quilt, with 34 separate acquisitions. Funds derived from multiple voter approved Park Bond Acts was used to buy the land from willing sellers - many of whom were very pleased that their family land was preserved for everyone to enjoy.

Although it has been the most complicated and expensive set of acquisitions in state history, this State Park also lies within an hour's drive of half the state's population. From the beginning, park planners were concerned about the impacts of the urbanization that surrounds the Park. To protect urban weary visitors from the sights and sounds of city life, the Park was designed along ridgeline boundaries so that once inside the Park, visitors were relatively free from the sights

and sounds of civilization. Chino Hills State Park is intended to be a refuge for people and for wildlife.

However, as our understanding grew about the physical needs and space requirements of wildlife we came to realize that the Park was not big enough to

accommodate the needs of the suite of species that live in the hills to sustain their presence. There is only so much disturbance and human activity that many species can tolerate before they



Dr. Jeff Hansen

can't breed and eventually die out. So park supporters joined forces with citizens and decision-makers across the western side of the hills (near Whittier) to work to protect the backbone and backdrop of open space known as the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor. It has been featured in National Geographic and Discover Magazine. The keystone success was the addition of Coal Canyon to the State Park along the 91 freeway - allowing movement for wildlife and plants between our hills and the mountains of Cleveland National Forest.

Even though the Park was officially established in 1986, proposals for other uses within the Park boundaries continue to plague the Park: three water reservoirs, a sewer plant, a dump, at least seven roads or freeways and most recently new huge electric transmission lines. The parkland seems to be looked at by some local cities as empty land instead of protected and precious land. Most of these land use battles have been won and the



Dave Myers

Park protected because others have believed, like Dave Myers did, that human beings need access to nature for their spiritual, physical and emotional health. And that the ecological health of natural lands will determine the health of our future as well.

*You can learn more about Hills For Everyone and its efforts to protect Chino Hills State Park at [www.HillsForEveryone.org](http://www.HillsForEveryone.org).*



# STATE PARK HOURS & REASONS FOR CLOSURES

By: Neil Connolly

Chino Hills State Park opens at 8:00 a.m. and closes at sundown. The Park is open every day year round except for when conditions in the Park threaten the safety of its visitors. Reasons for Park closures may be:

- **Rain** - The Park is closed 48 hours for every one-quarter inch of rain that falls. The Park may be closed for longer periods depending on how long it takes for the trails and roads to dry/drain. Use of trails after a rain, promotes erosion and is a safety hazard because the clay soils are both sticky and slippery.
- **Wind** - The Park is closed during Red-Flag Warnings (usually during a Santa Ana wind events. Flying and falling debris and the potential fire hazard are safety issues for Park

visitors. Closures will last until the debris is removed.

- **Fire** - The Park is closed until a wildfire is fully extinguished and the Park is safe to enter. Closures may also occur when fires are nearby and have the potential to move into parkland.
- **Construction** - The Park is closed until construction is completed or no longer threatens visitor safety.

For your safety and the safety of others please obey all posted warnings and Park closure signs. If you are unsure if the Park is open, please call the Sector office at (951) 780-6222. If no one answers, dial extension 19 to hear the recording.

Photos by: Melanie Schlotterbeck (1), Park Superintendent Rowe (2), CanStockPhoto.com (3), and Ranger Grant (4).

## OUR NEW BOARDMEMBER

Leandra "Dede" Golden recently graduated from Clemson University in South Carolina with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies. She is now pursuing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning. Throughout her studies, she hopes to gain a better understanding of the relationship between growth in regions and economics, physical and environmental limitations, and social factors. She hopes to then apply this knowledge to help policy-makers make better decisions involving quality of life in urban areas. Her main areas of interests are in

environmental policy and community development. Dede has enjoyed getting involved with Chino Hills State Park due to her appreciation for nature and desire to do volunteer work. She resides close to the Park and enjoys mountain biking and running there.



## CHECK THIS OUT!

Though the Interpretive Association works closely with State Park staff to improve the Park and its educational programs, there are also volunteer opportunities with the Natural History, Bike Assistance and Mounted Assistance Units. In 2007, the Volunteer in Parks Program (VIPP) at Chino Hills State Park contributed hundreds of hours to the Park, including:

- Interpretation,
- Public Relations,
- Special Events, and
- Other Activities.

If you would like to get involved with the Interpretive Association, please call 909-393-9267 or email [info@ChinoHillsStatePark.org](mailto:info@ChinoHillsStatePark.org). To become a VIPP, please call Ranger Poole 714-572-0182 or email [spoole@parks.ca.gov](mailto:spoole@parks.ca.gov).



Melanie Schlotterbeck

# COYOTES - FRIEND OR FOE? TWO EVENTS IN ONE: MARCH 29 & 30, 2008

## A CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

**Time:** 8 PM

**Location:** Rolling M Ranch in Chino Hills State Park

**Cost:** Free to the Public\*

**No Reservations Needed, seating is limited.**

Join the State Park's Interpretive Association to learn about one particular inhabitant of the Park - coyotes - who are increasingly interacting with residents surrounding our open spaces. We invite you to learn about coyote behavior, how to decrease interaction with them, and their importance in preserving the balance of nature. Arrive early with your lawn chairs, blankets, and sing campfire songs with us!

\*There is a required a \$4 Park entrance fee per vehicle. Sale items will be available and all sales will benefit the Interpretive Association.

## AN OVERNIGHT CAMP OUT

**Saturday Set Up:** 4-6 PM through **Sunday** ~10 AM

**Location:** The State Park's Group Campground

**Cost:** \$10 per person\*

**Web Reservations Required, space is limited.**

Join us for an overnight adventure in the State Park to learn about one of the "housekeepers" of Chino Hills State Park and to enjoy the yipping of coyotes in the distance. Camping reservations are required and can be made through our website. Campers must bring all of their own equipment and supplies. We highly recommend carpooling, arriving early to set up camp, and enjoying the sunset.

\*The \$10 covers your entrance and camping fee, apple cider and popcorn before the Campfire program, and coffee in the morning.

Photo by: Dr. Jeff Hansen

**Learn more or register: [www.ChinoHillsStatePark.org](http://www.ChinoHillsStatePark.org)**

## WHO WE ARE

The Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association (CHSPIA) is a non-profit volunteer based organization that assists the California Department of Parks and Recreation in maintaining and restoring Chino Hills State Park. Through interpretive programs and volunteer support designed to enhance visitor experiences, CHSPIA fosters appreciation and the enlightened use of the State Park. All funds raised go directly to CHSPIA to support our interpretive activities, events, and other Park programs that may not otherwise receive funding. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

### Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association

4717 Sapphire Road  
Chino Hills, CA 91709

*This newsletter was printed and mailed via two generous grants from the Norcross Foundation and the California State Parks Foundation.*

**VISIT US ON THE WEB: [WWW.CHINOHILLSSTATEPARK.ORG](http://WWW.CHINOHILLSSTATEPARK.ORG)**