



Supplement to the January 2008 *Southern Sierran*

TIDELINES

News from the Long Beach Group, Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club

January-February 2008

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have agreed to drastically reduce the emissions caused by diesel trucks and have even set a timeline to accomplish the task. What's missing is any strategy for eliminating the dirty trucks. This despite the fact that plans have been submitted, but under the threat of massive lawsuits have been summarily discarded.

There were plans for a container fee, which continue to languish in the legislature; there were plans to shift the burden of replacing old trucks to the shippers. The debate comes down to a clash of values. The primary concern of the commercial interest is the profits derived from the unimpeded movement of goods through the ports. The primary concern of the people who live in "The Diesel Death Zone" surrounding the ports is the threat to their health.

Which do we value most? Which should have top priority?

The Bush Administration's U.S. Maritime Administrator Sean Connaughton makes no secret about where their values lie: "Any governmental effort at the local level to restructure this important industry is fraught with legal and economic risk" Connaughton writes. There is no mention of health risk or the right of local government to protect the welfare of its people.

It is time we began to think less about economics and more about governance. Governance seems to have fallen out of favor in recent times, but the need for it has never been greater.

Rudy Vietmeier
Chair, Long Beach Group
Angeles Chapter Sierra Club



Last summer, Long Beach Leader Gary Novotny hiked the length of the John Muir Trail in a remarkable 11 days (excluding two layover days). These are excerpts from his trail journal, edited for length. Last issue, we left Gary at Red's Meadow, wondering if he had gained weight. If he did, it couldn't have stuck around for long! If you don't want to wait for part 3, you can read his entire journal online at: <http://www.angeles.sierraclub.org/wtc/pdf/jmt.pdf>

JOHN MUIR TRAIL RECAP (PART 2)

By Gary Novotny

Day 4 (Thursday)

At 5:00, I got up to enjoy the hot spring at the bathhouse. After breakfast, it started to rain again. It was only 5:45 and I already had to put on my rain gear. By 6:15, I was heading down the trail. The further I went, the harder it rained. I kept my head down, and trudged along, mile after mile. I passed many tents along the trail that housed hikers waiting for the storm to pass. At 11:30, the rain stopped and I had a quick lunch. By 11:40, it had started up once again. I was wet and cold. Since I could see my breath during lunch, I estimate the temperature to be in the mid 30's. I continued. More rain, more miles pounded out. I can't describe Lake Virginia, Tully Hole or Cascade Valley since my head was always looking straight down to keep the pounding rain from hitting my cold face. The one piece of good news was that there was no lightning, so I made it up and over Silver Pass without any safety issues. Left foot placed in the puddle in front of the right foot, right foot placed in the puddle in front of the left foot. This went on for hour after hour. At points, I had to lift the heel of my boot to my back to allow the standing water to drain out. At 6:00, the skies cleared and I was finally able to remove my rain gear. I set up camp at the junction to Mott Lake. Since there was nothing to do but keep hiking the entire day, I was now only an hour and 20 minutes from the water taxi pickup point at Edison Lake. As I pulled gear out of my bag, I discovered that everything was wet, even though I had a pack cover on my pack the entire day. The only item that was still dry was my down sleeping bag, which was in a ditty bag, within a plastic bag, within my pack, under the pack cover. Due to wearing my backup footwear in constant rain, I have started to develop several blisters. After setting up camp, I devoured my freshly baked pizza and quickly went to bed on my wet pillow. **Daily total: 26.2 miles (a full marathon), 6000 feet of gain.**

Day 5 (Friday)

At 5:00 sharp, my wake up call came in via a tremendously loud "KA-BOOM!!!!" Once again, thunder and lightning awaited me.

Continued on p. 2

Since I was so close to the Vermilion water taxi pickup point, I decided to wait out the storm. At 6:00, the rain stopped and I exited my tent. About an hour into my hike, I found a sign prominently placed next to the trail. It stated that due to low water level at Edison Lake, the water taxi would be coming in 1 mile further south on the opposite side of Mono Creek. The water level was so low, the shore of the lake had receded by many hundreds of yards. I looked at my watch and noticed that the taxi would not arrive for 1 1/2 hours. I looked across the lakebed and could see Vermilion, so I decided to hike instead. I headed west, keeping my eye on the location of the resort since it was off of my map. After 30 minutes, I was approaching a cliff descending into the lake water. Was there a way to climb around the obstacle, or would I have to backtrack? As I got close, it didn't look good. I could not find a way to climb around the cliff. At the base of the cliff, however, I noticed that there was a ledge about a foot wide that was only an inch under the water surface. I hugged the cliff and made it past the 10-foot section. The remainder of the trek was uneventful other than the fact that it was actually 6 miles across the lake! I made it to the resort about 15 minutes before the water taxi pulled in from the pickup point. Mental note: next time, wait for the water taxi. The cabin that we had reserved was warm and dry – a very nice change. This year, these “lakeside” accommodations were actually over a mile away from the water, due to the lack of winter snowfall. I pulled out all of my gear and set it out to dry on our picnic table. My camera, which had been in my waterproof pocket of my rain jacket, still had a pool of water inside of it. I hung it over the heater in the cabin in hopes that it would start working again before I left. Kay, Alexander, and I spent the two days at Vermilion playing Scrabble, darts, cards, and catching up on the news in the outside world. The satellite TV reported that on Thursday, the moisture from hurricane Dean traveling north met a low pressure system traveling south to create a “perfect storm” centered over Fresno, just west of my hiking location. I would later find out that a hurricane affects the weather in the Sierras about once every 9 years. Boy, was I lucky. **Daily total: 9 miles, 300 feet of gain.**

Day 6 (Saturday)

No need to get up and start hiking – what a glorious concept! Today consisted of more games, more time drying out my equipment and more time relaxing. In the afternoon, my camera was actually dry enough to start taking pictures again, although the LCD was still not working. Vermilion has a huge BBQ every Saturday night, so the timing of our stay was impeccable! Tri-tip, ribs, and chicken were all part of the menu for the night. I decided on the tri-tip and a freshly baked pumpkin pie – heavenly! Now I know for sure that it is not possible to lose weight while hiking on the JMT. I had a great time here with my family. I would heartily recommend a stay at Vermilion for any hiker doing the JMT. During dinner, I met up with the English gents that I saw on day 2. The one that had altitude sickness did not get better in Tuolumne, so he went to a doctor in Mammoth. The doctor informed him that there was a problem with a muscle in his heart, so he was sent back to England while his buddies continued on their trek. It was a good thing that they did not decide to try to take him over Donohue pass - who knows

what might have happened? After dinner, it was time to repack my backpack. I would need my larger bear canister, a Jet Boil instead of my Backpacker's Oven, 2 canisters of fuel and 8 additional days of food. I would not be stopping at Muir Ranch, so this would be my last food drop. Since my feet were not in the best of shape, I also added more bandages, blister packs, and duct tape. After adding my water, I weighed my pack. The grand total with all consumables came in at 36.5 pounds. I had been talking to other hikers leaving Vermilion, and most were leaving with 50 – 60 pounds. At 9:00, it was time to spend my final night in a real bed. **Daily total: 99 yards, 5 feet of gain.**

Day 7 (Sunday)

Kay and Alexander would stay at the resort for another night and then head home. I was now on my own. From here on out, it would become a little more difficult doing the daily grind on trail. Instead of taking the water taxi across the lake to the JMT, Jim, the owner of Vermilion, suggested that I instead take the Bear Creek Trail out. I headed east following the creek uphill. It was a beautiful trail full of picturesque waterfalls, cascades, and many hundreds of lizards.



Gary Descending Muir Pass

Sally Keyes Lakes and found a great spot south of them to camp. I had vermicelli with pesto sauce for dinner. Due to my previous blisters, I had been walking a little funny on this leg of the trip. This funny walk was causing more blisters to form. However, there was some good news – I believed I was going to remember this as the most beautiful leg of my entire trip. While lying in bed, I review my notes for the next day. I see that Piute Pass and Muir Pass are on my list for tomorrow. I fall asleep knowing that I will have to do my second double pass day.

Daily total: 19 miles, 4700 feet of gain.

Day 8 (Monday)

Once again, a sunny morning greeted my hiking day. I quickly reach the cutoff for Blayney Meadows. I remember to bypass this, although most through hikers will go this way to pick up their final supplies. I continue down the San Joaquin River, until I reach a junction. To the left is Piute pass, to the right is Kings Canyon. I quickly head left for the first of my two passes. I attack the pass aggressively. Piute Pass is a real bear. It is VERY steep and has stair step blocks going up and up and up. After about 1 1/2 miles up, I have to rest. Sweat is even dripping from the tips of my fingers. I take out my map to see how much further I still have to go – only to find that Piute Pass is not shown on my map. This was not a good sign. I discovered my problem – on my trail profile, I wrote down “Piute Pass” instead of “Piute Pass Trail Junction.” I was never scheduled to do Piute Pass. Mental note: always double-check my map at every junction. Down the trail I go, with my sore quads

aching all of the way. At the bottom, I cross the steel bridge over the San Joaquin River and head off into Kings Canyon National Park. I am now surrounded by the grandeur of the Evolution Valley. I pass through a paradise of green in Evolution, McClure, and Colby Meadows. In the late afternoon, I reach Evolution Lake. When I arrive, there are hordes of people camped on the north side of the lake (hordes are a relative term on the JMT). I don't readily see other campsites further south, so I squeeze into a small area behind two other tents. I meet a couple of groups that I had met at Vermilion. We catch up on the news of our individual adventures. I find out that the largest group of tents belongs to a huge group brought in by 12 mules. The mules are currently still at the lake. After dinner, we all witnessed a terrific sunset. The orange in the puffy clouds was spectacular! It was now obvious that the mules were not leaving. They had been set free to roam the area and each one had a cowbell attached to its neck to help find them in the morning. I slept fitfully, and woke often to the sounds of clanking cowbells and mules braying at each other. Mental note: perhaps earplugs would have been worth the extra half-ounce in my pack. **Daily total: 22 miles, 4300 feet of gain.**

Day 9 (Tuesday)

I wake up at 5:05 and exit my tent. There are 2 mules grazing within feet of me (clang, Clang, CLANG). I quickly eat breakfast and exit this manger. As I head south along the lake, I see many additional spots to camp. Mental note: always look for other sites when confronted with a mule pack. I now head up to Sapphire and Wanda Lakes, two very pretty examples of alpine lakes. Muir Pass now looms a few miles in front of me. At 11,955 feet, it is over 1000 feet higher than any of the previous passes. Slowly but surely, I make my way up to the top. At the summit, I crawl over some rocks to my left and I am presented with a magnificent view of Helen Lake and the valley below. Descending into LeConte Canyon, I meet a group of 12 women. They are headed to Evolution Lake for the night. She takes out her map to show me where they were planning on camping. There is a red "X" right on top of the spot with the mules. They decided to follow my advice and camp on the south side of the lake. It has been a couple of days since I took a shower at Vermilion, so I was beginning to even offend myself. I looked at my map and found a small lake at the entrance to the canyon a half mile off the trail. A man and a woman were fishing in the lake. I wandered around to a more discreet location. After admiring this lake, the clothes start flying off. I put my right foot into the lake. 1/1000 of a second later, my eyes were bulging out past my nose. I look at the stream feeding the lake and follow it up, and up and up – right to the melting glacier. Mental note: when the color of a lake is a vivid aqua blue, look up. Inch by inch I sink into the water. When I reach my waist, I take a big breath of air and dive in. As my upper torso felt the 32.0001° water envelop it, all of my air blew out my mouth from the shock. I rose to the top and was gasping for air. Mental note: it is better to go inch by painful inch. After I had become so numb that I couldn't feel the pain of the cold water, I enjoyed a brief swim around my area of the lake. The warm sun quickly dried me off. After passing Big Pete and Little Pete Meadows, I took a small side trip to the LeConte Ranger station for a current weather forecast. He informed me that there was a possibility that another hurricane would cause rain on Saturday (my expected Whitney summit day). Wow, am I lucky, two hurricanes on one trip! He also told me that he was glad to see that I was still doing the JMT as many through hikers had bailed after the Thursday deluge.

I thanked him for the information and continued to my camp destination at Deer Meadow. This is not the classic meadow envisioned by most people. It has ample tree coverage and is tilted uphill. I camped at an existing site near a stream that also had a fire ring. After dinner, I built a fire for the first time on my trip. This provided a warm sense of comfort while situated days away from civilization. Tonight's dinner entrée was Stove Top® stuffing with added almond slices and raisins. **Daily total: 21 miles, 2700 feet of gain.**

Find out more about Gary's feet, um, feat, next issue!

Duck Feeding Discouraged

By Adrea Stoker

After a serious die-off of ducks at the El Dorado duck pond in Long Beach, 5th District Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske formed the Lakes, Ponds, and Wetlands Taskforce to help assess the condition of the water in all of Long Beach's public bodies of fresh water. Their first order of business was the Councilwoman's presentation of various theories about the cause of the ducks' demise at El Dorado, chief among which were (1) the build-up of bacteria in the water from the fecal matter from too many birds and (2) by-products from fermentation of bread in the water, the result of a long-standing practice in East Long Beach of letting children feed ducks by throwing bread into the water, where some of it inevitably escapes the bills of the eager ducks.

Samples of the water were taken from several places in the lakes and duck pond at El Dorado. Tests confirmed that the duck pond contained significantly higher counts of E. coli and Enterococcus bacteria than the lakes north of the duck pond. Councilwoman Schipske, her staff, and the taskforce all agreed, therefore, that the most important controllable cause of contamination was the feeding of the ducks by visitors to the pond.

Concerned park visitors have also reported less familiar birds, like pelicans, approaching people, apparently in expectation of being fed. Aside from the overpopulation of birds in El Dorado Park and the resultant water pollution, too much familiarity with people is regarded by all wildlife experts and amateurs alike as a threat to the welfare of wild birds and is to be discouraged.

The taskforce decided to try to control these problems by posting around the duck pond a number of signs available from U.S. Fish and Wildlife. These signs read "Feeding waterfowl is harmful." Above the warning is a picture with a red slash through it of a human hand holding out food to a duck. The taskforce expects the signs to be posted soon. Information about the new policy will also be offered at the entry kiosk to El Dorado Park.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR

By Brett Beck

JANUARY

5 – Volunteer Meetings at El Dorado Nature Center

Looking for volunteer opportunities and/or service hours? Join us for an orientation meeting to learn about all the opportunities available. We look forward to meeting you January 5 or February 2 from 9:00 - 9:30am. For more information, call 562-570-1745. **E**

5 – 1st Saturday Stewards at El Dorado Nature Center

10am - noon. Be prepared to get your hands dirty! Join staff and dozens of other volunteers in cleaning the stream, clearing the trails, pulling weeds, or painting the benches. Give us a call to let us know you are coming so we'll be sure to have enough rakes and shovels. An adult must accompany youths under 16. For more information, call 562-570-1745. **C**

5 – The 44-Minute Downtown Long Beach Trash Pick-Up

First Saturday of every month, 10:00 - 10:44am. Meet at The Creative Design Lab, 441 E. 1st St. (at Linden Avenue). Come join us as we pick up trash along Elm, Linden, and Atlantic Avenues. Gloves and trash bags provided, plus light refreshments, and coffee from the Village Grind Coffee Shop next door to where we meet. For more about the 44-Minute Trash Pick-Up, call 562-570-2876. **C**

5 - The First Saturday Tour at Bolsa Chica

This program offers an exceptional on-site presentation of the Bolsa Chica Story. On the first Saturday of each month from 9:00am to 10:30am, docents gather at the south lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, across the street from the main entrance to Bolsa Chica State Beach. Tours are stationed on the footbridge, a truly magnificent focal point of the entire reserve and lowland. Beginning every 15 minutes, five areas of interest are included in the presentation: history, birds, endangered species, ecology, and restoration. Free: first come, first served. This is a wonderful opportunity for vacationers, students, small groups, and local citizens to visit our valuable resource. **E/C**

8 – Family Nightlife at the El Dorado Nature Center

Escape the stresses of life and bring your family closer together by sharing a TV-free evening at the El Dorado Nature Center. 7 - 9pm, \$3/person. **E**

12 – Alamitos Beach Cleanup

9:30-10:30am, 2nd Sat. of the month, meet at the beach below the Villa Riviera, free parking. This event is a collaborative effort with Alamitos Beach Neighborhood Association. Meet us near the parking lot behind the Villa Riviera on the

beach. Contact timmay25@verizon.net for more information. **C**

12 - Estuary Explorations

We will explore the Colorado Lagoon together and see what finds us! Meet at the Education Center near the corner of Appian Way and Colorado Blvd. Rain cancels. 10am-noon. **E**

19 – Smart-Gardening, Vermiposting & Composting Workshop

10:30am – 12:30pm. Long Beach Energy Environmental Services Bureau, 2929 East Willow Street. Learn how to turn your lawn and yard trimmings into a beneficial soil amendment. *Please call to enroll:* 562-570-4694. **E**

19 – 30 Minute Beach Clean-up

Meet on the 3rd Sat. of each month at 10 a.m. at 1 S. Granada Ave. @ Ocean Blvd., in Belmont Shore, to help rid the beach of trash and debris. Free parking. Also on Sat., Feb. 16. **C**

26 – Neighborhood Clean-up

The Fourth Saturday of every month with the exception of December, 8am – Noon. Location varies. Area boundaries are 10th Street north to PCH and Cherry Avenue East to Redondo. Please call to find out exact clean-up location. Sponsor: City of Long Beach and WESCA (West East Side Community Association). All supplies are provided. JOIN IN to help neighbors remove tons of trash from alleys and streets in the 4th District. Free bar-b-que for all volunteers. Contact: Jill Hill, (562) 570-2895, Jill_Hill@longbeach.gov **C**

29 – Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust General Meetings

Last Tuesday every other month, 7pm - 9pm, Belmont Shores Mobile Estates Community Center, Loynes Drive between PCH and Studebaker Ave. Tell the Security Guard you are there for the Wetlands Land Trust Meeting. **E/C**

FEBRUARY

2 – El Dorado Nature Center Volunteer Programs (see above) **E/C**

2 – 44 Minute Downtown Clean-up (see above) **C**

5 – Family Nightlife (see above) **E**

9 – Alamitos Beach Clean-up (see above) **C**

9 – Estuary Explorations (see above) **E**

16 – 30 Minute Beach Clean-up & Seal Beach Clean-up (see above) **C**

16 – Smart-Gardening, Vermiposting & Composting Workshop (see above) E

23 – Neighborhood Clean-up (see above) C

BONUS NOTES:

Cancel all those wasteful catalogs for free at www.catalogchoice.org

Catalog Choice is a free service that allows you to decide what gets in your mailbox. Use it to reduce your mailbox clutter, while helping save natural resources. *Catalog Choice* is a sponsored project of the Ecology Center. It is endorsed by the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Defense Council, and funded by the Overbrook Foundation, the Merck Family Fund, and the Kendeda Fund. Our mission is to reduce the number of repeat and unsolicited catalog mailings, and to promote the adoption of sustainable industry best practices. We aim to accomplish this by freely providing the our services to both consumers and businesses. Consumers can indicate which catalogs they no longer wish to receive, and businesses can receive a list of consumers no longer wanting to receive their catalogs. C

Adopt-A-Beach

A great opportunity for groups and organizations to participate in the improvement of their community. Your group commits to cleaning any 1/4 mile stretch of beach four times a year. Bags and gloves will be provided. Call 570-4885 for application. C

Dedicate-A-Tree

Long Beach Parks, Recreation, and Marine offer a unique and thoughtful way to recognize individuals and/or special occasions by having a tree planted in a city park. For details call 570-4897. C

C designates Conservation content

E designates Education content



El Capitan in the Fog—Photo by Sharon Moore



Snow and Roots—Photo by Sharon Moore

TIDELINES BY MAIL?

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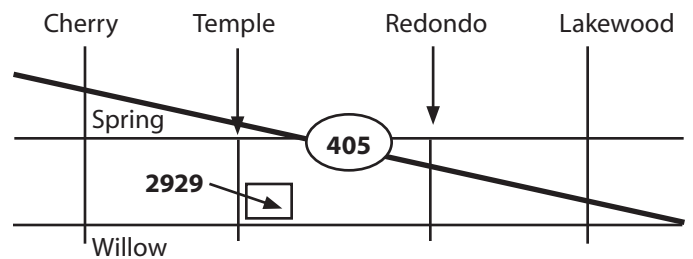


Tidelines Deadlines

Contributions to *Tidelines* are always welcome! Articles, trip reports, and announcements of interest for the March/April issue are due **January 15**. I reserve the right to edit for length and clarity, and to stamp out passive voice wherever I find it. Send to *Tidelines* Editor Sharon Moore at justslm@earthlink.net. Send March/April outings, meetings, and events information to Outings Chair Todd Williams at twilliams2@charter.net by **January 15**. E-mail preferred, but I can also accept CDs and Zip disks. No "floppies," please: my computer does not have a floppy drive. I will use Microsoft Word to edit articles, so .doc, .rtf, and .txt files will work. I can also copy from e-mails. Non-digital photos should be scanned at 300 dpi/ppi, and I have a scanner if needed. Include return postage if we can't arrange to return items in person. Mailing address: Sharon Moore, 4425 Galeano St, Long Beach, CA 90815-2710.

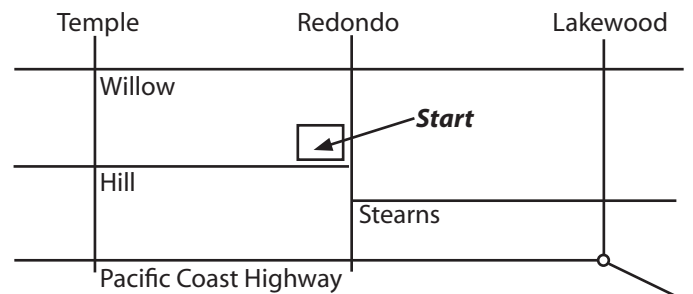
Meetings

Except July, August
City of Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau
2929 E. Willow St.



Signal Hill Hikes

Tuesday, Thursday 7pm; Saturday 7am



Long Beach Rideshare Point @ CSULB

Off Atherton, by Recycling Center

