

THE CANYON CONNECTION

from the Santa Clarita Valley Sierra Club
a group of the Angeles Chapter

<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/scg>

Winter 2007



How Reliable is Water from the North?

by Lynne Plambeck, Conservation Chair

Ancient Rome had eleven major aqueducts, built between 312 B.C. (Aqua Appia) and 226 A.D. (Aqua Alexandrina). The longest, (Anio Novus) was 59 miles long. It has been calculated that in imperial times, when the city's population was well over a million, the distribution system was able to provide over one cubic meter of water per day for each inhabitant, more than we are accustomed to use today.

Today, much of Southern California is supplied by one aqueduct comprised of 662 miles of canals and pipes. Like the ancient Roman aqueduct, the water is fed for the most part by gravity, but 17 lift stations pump the water over higher ground. These pumps are the biggest single users of electricity in the entire State. The largest of these stations is the Edmonston pumping station that brings the northern California water over the Tehachepis into the Santa Clarita Valley and Los Angeles.

The fall of Rome had many causes: corrupt politicians and invasions by the Gauls among them. But the collapse of the aqueduct system contributed. By 600 AD, only one aqueduct was functioning, and the population of Rome had dropped to a mere 10,000. The water system did not approach its former glory again until Pope Sixtus restored it during the Renaissance.

Today, our reliance on an even more intricate water delivery system has given many people cause for concern. Snowfall from the Sierras moves through a system of natural rivers and dams into the Sacramento Delta. From there, huge pumps lift the water into the California Aqueduct for delivery south.

So, first problem: if it doesn't snow in the Sierras, there is no water to deliver to the south. With increasing concerns over global warming, this scenario appears more and more likely. Planners have tried to address it by building reservoirs and the ground water banking facilities, but also by urging Southern Californians to understand they're desert-dwellers and must conserve water.

The State urges local agencies to calculate how much water they receive based on a model of past deliveries. This model is based only on the last 72 years, and there is evidence that far greater periods of prolonged drought have occurred in the past. However neither this fact, nor a reduced snow pack from global warming is included in the model, causing some experts to worry about the future accuracy of the model projections.

There are other ways to increase reliability, such as storing water underground or building huge dams, like Metropolitan's Eastside Reservoir. Since our local Saugus Aquifer is polluted with ammonium perchlorate (rocket fuel), we cannot store water underground in the Santa Clarita Valley, and we currently have only very small storage rights in Castaic Lake (water in the lake belongs to the Metropolitan Water District. Local

Who Wants to Hike in the Santa Monicas?

by Mary Ellen Dittmore

Sunday was a beautiful sunny day. We got up early and met at the carpool point at Towsley Canyon. It took just over an hour to reach the trailhead for Sandstone Peak. At 3,111 feet, it's the highest point in the Santa Monica Mountains.

We met one more hiker from West Los Angeles at the parking lot and then were off up the dirt road to the Mishe Mokwa trail (5 mile loop to Sandstone Peak). The trail is surprisingly shaded most of the way. Extensive chaparral spreads in all directions with interspersed woodland areas.

The red color that appeared everywhere came from the Red Shank that grows well in this area – it is the same genus as Chamise. In addition, we had an excellent view of Balance Rock and some rock climbers. As we came around the final turns of the loop, the Pacific Ocean came into view.

We scrambled to the top of the peak and ate our lunch with a beautiful view of the valleys below. Henry pointed out some places he used to hike in Thousand Oaks.

The Santa Monicas offer many wonderful hikes. I have done hikes in Malibu State Park and Point Mugu State Park, and one of my favorites is the climb to Mugu Peak. I'd like to see our group do more hiking in that area.

If you are interested in hikes in the Santa Monicas, contact me at my email address maedittemore@yahoo.com and we'll schedule more hikes in the beautiful Santa Monicas.

Santa Clarita Sierra Club Group

21827 Parvin Drive
Saugus, CA 91350

Summer 2005

Published
March
June
September
December

Monthly Meeting and Program

2nd Thursday of each month

(except Aug. & Dec.)

Time: 7:30 p.m.

St. Stephen's

Episcopal Church

24901 Orchard Village Rd.,
Valencia

Meeting Room:

Lounge on upper level.

Enter on E. side facing

Rite Aid/Kragen parking
lot (opposite main church
entrance).

Visitors welcome!

For information:
Henry 284-5613



Notes from the Chair

by Dave Morrow



The year is rapidly coming to a close, and I want to thank all of you who have volunteered your time and energy to the Santa Clarita Group, working to make our valley a better place. As usual, there are many of you and I hope I haven't forgotten anyone. Forgive me if I have. Thanks go to Lynne Plambeck, Henry Schultz, Isaac Lieberman, Melinda Arrendondo, Ken Kerner, Sandra Cattell, John Skelley, Sydell Stokes, Gaylon Rodin, Ian Swift, and Katherine Squires. You are a strong presence in the community and your message is heard. Thank you very much.

Our outings program continues to be, in my opinion, the best in the Angeles Chapter, due in large measure, to the efforts of our Outings Chair, Ray Lorme, and hike leaders Henry Schultz, Melinda Arrendondo, Ken Kerner, Gaylon Rodin, Ed Benison, Donica Wood, Gerri Lorme, Matthew Lax, Mary Ellen Dittimore, and Mary Patterson.

Special thanks to Carla Swift who makes our newsletter, *The Canyon Connection*, a reality, and to Louise Schultz, our webmaster. View our website at angeles.sierraclub.org/scg.

On a sad note, we recently lost two Santa Claritans who were great allies of the environment, Frank Havore and Carole Lathrop. They are greatly missed. Let's keep up their good works.

For those of you who receive our newsletter and have an interest in getting involved with our local activities but haven't done so yet, please come to our monthly meeting on the second Thursday of the month. Several major issues, some old and some new, are coming up in 2007, and we need your help. These include proposals for Newhall Ranch and Tejon Ranch, a new Santa Clarita open space initiative, and the Cemex mine. Or come on one of our local hikes; they are amazingly scenic and always fun.

Election buzz: By the time you read this the November elections will have come and gone. I have high hopes this year some sanity will return to our political system. A political pundit observed recently that American politics needs more philosophy and less ideology. For too many years our government has been hijacked by ideologues who are convinced they know the truth. Discussion is suppressed and disagreement is deemed unpatriotic. But I believe the pendulum is swinging back. This can only be good news for the environment. Most people I know in the Sierra Club are philosophical, their positions framed by discussion and reason. And good science helps too. If we stay this course, then our future is bright.

Be sure to attend our annual holiday celebration in December. If you haven't attended before you are in for a treat. Happy Holidays! --Dave

It was a beautiful day for a hike into Elsmere Canyon, although we feared the damage we'd find from a fire which raged through the canyon a couple of years ago. But nature has a way of mitigating these fears. Coast Live Oaks, although clearly burned, were alive and well and provided shade. Even the natural spring seemed more bubbly than usual. Higher up the canyon, signs of moisture increased, the damp ground indicating water below. Surface water appeared at La Puerta, the narrow dividing wall splitting the canyon.

True to our natures, we went left, encountering myriad tree frogs scampering hither and yon away from our marauding boots. Water-loving scarlet monkey flower littered the streambed, a contrast with the large flowering moth mullein at lower levels. Hopping boulders, avoiding the now running stream water and side stepping natural oil seeps, we finally reached our goal – a 15 foot waterfall. Growing above us on rocky slopes were welcoming sprays of native goldenrod. Relaxing in the ambience, we gorged on our pack goodies. The trip back reflected our now relaxed Elsmere Canyon wilderness mood, and we vowed to come back for more of nature's bounty.

Ken Kerner's annual Mine Gulch Trail hike began at Vincent Gap in the San Gabriel Mountains and proceeded nine miles down and back along the source waters of the San Gabriel River's East Fork. The high altitude chill disappeared as we hiked, and we had a gorgeous day. Ken took us on a side tour of Charlie Vincent's restored cabin; we noted the serious hike from there to get water—a tough way to live.

As we descended into the canyon, fall colors appeared everywhere: Big Leaf Maples in full yellow extravaganza color along with White Alder, Bay Laurel, Canyon Oak, Sycamore and Cottonwood. The trail hugged the east wall of the gorge, wandering in and out of river bottom. Crawling over and ducking through fallen trees became commonplace, and running water became more frequent. We ate and rested under the shade of a giant canyon oak along the riverbed, and started back up the trail with new vigor, encountering wonderful specimens of White Fir, Big Cone Douglas Spruce and Jeffrey Pine. Near the top we were treated to the antics of a nuthatch, running up side of a large Jeffrey Pine and back down, headfirst – one of the typical engaging features of the nuthatch. We were charmed, and energized to finish our trek. A wonderful hike indeed.

Strawberry Peak, named for its shape, can be discerned clearly from the Santa Clarita Woodlands and Mission Peak. From La Canada it is a long twisty ride up Highway 2 to Red Box. We donned our gear and began the gradual climb to the first saddle where the trail follows the contour another 2.3 miles to the second saddle. Pretty easy so far, and the sign said only 1 more mile to the top. That would be one LONG mile. The ascent was steep, with ups and downs as we climbed the ridge. As hike leader Gaylon Rodin had warned, plentiful yucca and chaparral whitethorn bushes crowding the "trail," provided multiple puncture wounds. Clambering up slippery inclines and climbing intervening rocks challenged us, but was worth it. At the summit we were treated to a 360 degree view of the San Gabriel Range. Because Strawberry is an isolated internal peak, it allows a unique perspective of the rugged, steep and varied topography, all covered with dense chaparral. We easily identified

Winter Hike Schedule

Wed, Nov 1 Mission Peak by Moonlight 7PM
Conditioning Hike

Ldrs: Gaylon Rodin (263-0568), Henry Schultz (284-5613)
 Moderate 5 mi, 1200' gain to view San Fernando Valley. Meet 7 PM trailhead (take 405 Fwy to 118 Fwy W, exit Balboa N, 2 mi to Sesnon, W 1 mi to Neon Way, R to end of street). Bring water, lugsoles, flashlight.

Sun, Nov 5 Jackson Lake To Vincent Gap 8AM

Ldrs: Ken Kerner (251-5156), Henry Schultz (284-5613)
 Moderate 9 mi, 1200' gain/700' loss from Jackson Lake to PCT and on to Vincent Gap. Beautiful mountains, forested area on northern slopes of San Gabriels. Meet 8 am Cyn Country ride-share pt. Bring 2 qts water, lunch, lugsoles, fsp. Heavy rain cancels.

Thur, Nov 9 Monthly Meeting 7:30PM

Speaker to be announced.

Sat, Nov 18 Pacifico Mtn (7124') 9AM
To Granite Mtn #1 (6600')

Ldrs: Mary Patterson (818-363-3040), Geraldine Lorme (296-0246)
 Moderate 9 mi, 1500' gain from Mill Creek Summit via little know trails to top of Granite. Meet 8 am Cyn Country rideshare pt or 9 am Mill Creek Summit trailhead. Bring water, lugsoles, lunch, fsp. Rain cancels.

Sun, Dec 3 Placerita Cyn Loop 9AM

Ldrs: Ed Benison (254-7517), Mary Ellen Dittmore (254-8543)
 Moderate to strenuous 8 mi loop, 1600' gain in the western end of the San Gabriel Mtns. Excellent views of Santa Clarita and San Fernando Valleys and possibly Santa Catalina Island. Meet 9 am Placerita Cyn Nature Center (take I-5 N to 14 Fwy N [Antelope Valley Fwy], exit Placerita Cyn Rd, R 2 mi to park). Bring water, lunch, lugsoles. Rain cancels.

Sun, Dec 10 HOLIDAY BRUNCH 10:30AM – 2:00PM

Our annual holiday get-together will be at the Schultz's. RSVP to Sydell at 254-6750 and sign up for a dish to bring. There will be plenty of mimosas and good cheer.

Don't miss the good times!



Mon, Jan 1 New Year's Calorie Burner, 12PM
Los Pinetos Trail

Ldrs: Ray Lorme (296-0246), Geraldine Lorme
 Join our annual calorie burner up the Los Pinetos Trail. Moderate 6 mi, 1400' gain to ridge between San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys. Outstanding view of the two valleys. Meet 12 PM Walker Ranch entrance of Placerita Cyn Park (take I-5 N to 14 Fwy N [Antelope Valley Fwy], exit Placerita Cyn Rd, R on Placerita passing main entrance to park, continue 1 3/4 mi to gated entrance to Walker Ranch [do not block gate]). Bring water, snack, lugsoles. Serious rain cancels.



Thur, Jan 11 Monthly Meeting 7:30PM

Santa Clarita Mayor Marsha McLean will give a "State of the Environment" overview and talk about current local issues in our well-established annual tradition. Come, listen, and bring your questions. Find out what's happening in the SCV!

Sun, Jan 14 Sawmill Mountain via PCT 9AM
Wilderness Heritage Hike

Ldrs: Henry Schultz (284-5613), Gaylon Rodin (263-0568)
 Moderate 8 mi, 1000' gain/1800' loss hike with car shuttle. Lower Shake to Lake Hughes Rd. Meet 9 am entrance to Ed Davis/Towsley Cyn State Park (take I-5 N, exit Calgrove, W to The Old Rd, S to park entrance, park outside main gate). Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, fsp. Serious rain cancels.

Sat, Jan 27 Towsley Cyn Loop Trail 9AM

Ldrs: Melinda Arredondo (298-9024), Geraldine Lorme (296-0246)
 Moderate 5 mi, 600' gain in Ed Davis/Towsley Cyn Park. Meet 9 am entrance to Ed Davis/Towsley Cyn State Park (take I-5 N, exit Calgrove, W to The Old Rd, S to park entrance, park outside main gate). Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, fsp. Rain cancels.

Wed, Jan 31 Mission Peak by Moonlight 7PM
Conditioning Hike

See Nov 1 for description.

Thur, Feb 8 Monthly Meeting 7:30PM

Speaker to be announced.

Sun, Feb 11 Vasquez Rocks Ramble 9AM

Ldrs: Henry Schultz (284-5613), Ed Benison (254-7517)
 Easy 4 mi stroll among rocks carved by wind and rain, once a hideout for the infamous outlaw Tiburcio Vasquez. Meet 9 am entrance to Vasquez Park (take I-5 N to 14 Fwy [Antelope Valley Fwy], exit Agua Dulce Rd N, follow signs, park on street). Bring water, snack, lugsoles. Serious rain cancels.

Sun, Feb 25 Slide Mountain 9AM

Ldrs: Ray Lorme (296-0246), Geraldine Lorme
 Moderate to strenuous 9 mi, 2400' gain to peak overlooking Pyramid Lake. Not recommended for beginners. Meet 9 am entrance to Ed Davis/Towsley Cyn State Park (take I-5 N, exit Calgrove, W to The Old Rd, S to park entrance, park outside main gate). Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, fsp. Rain cancels.

Wed, Feb 28 Mission Peak by Moonlight 7PM
Conditioning Hike

See Nov 1 for description.

Memo To Hike Leaders: Chapter policy stipulates that there be two appropriately rated leaders on every outing. If two leaders are not available at the hike meeting place then the trip must be canceled and cannot be led as an "unofficial" or "private" hike. Hikes canceled before participants leave home can be led as a private hike. (ref: Angeles Chapter Leader's Reference Book, 2002 ed., p. 35) The significance of these rules in regards to liability should be apparent.

-- Dave

FSCR, the Santa Clara River Alliance, environmental legal council and other environmental groups continue to monitor the progress of the Newhall Ranch project. Each agency has pending environmental documents expected to be released for public review during the next 7 months. At this time the entire Newhall Ranch project Specific Plan has begun to take on significant changes. The project now includes four large conceptual areas referred to as: Landmark Village, Heritage Village, Mission Village and Potrero Village.

You Can Still Make A Difference

At this time there are no approvals that allow anything to be built. Your letters and comments at public hearings are crucial in this process. Visit www.fscr.org; request alerts when your participation is needed; volunteer to help where you can.

An Environmental Impact Report is currently in process for Phase I – Landmark Village, which proposes 1,444 homes and up to 1.5 million square feet of non-residential mixed-use space. The Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Game are also currently developing a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report, which will be used to establish needed permits relating to wetlands impacts on the property, as well as river alterations due to such items as bank protection and construction of bridges.

Friends of the River expressed the following concerns in public hearings:

Last Wild River. The Santa Clara is Southern California's last major "wild river." There are few levees and only one diversion dam, so the river channel retains its dynamic nature. For most of its length, it flows through natural and agricultural landscapes, including some of the best remaining riparian woodland in the southland. In contrast, the Los Angeles and Santa Ana Rivers, which rival the Santa Clara in size, were long ago largely converted to concrete channels. The headwaters originate in the Angeles National Forest and flow down steep-walled Soledad Canyon, through a small plain in the Santa Clarita Valley, and into Ventura County where it flows over broad sand and gravel deposits, past extensive citrus orchards and farmland. The small towns in this vicinity do not impinge on the natural, dynamic river.

Impressive Biological Resources. The riparian forest next to the river is home for a host of bird species, including the endangered least Bell's vireo. The unarmored threespine stickleback, a small endangered fish, inhabits the river's upper

Newhall Ranch Project Update

Adapted from Friends of the Santa Clara River website

reaches. The river estuary supports the western snowy plover, least tern and tide-water goby, all federally listed as endangered. Overall, 14 resident bird species are listed as endangered or of special concern; six plant species are endangered or candidates for listing.

Threat to River Ecosystem. The largest long-term threat to the health of the river ecosystem is urban development. Ventura County has policies restricting development within existing city boundaries. In Los Angeles County, however, urban sprawl has been accepted. Numerous development projects are in the approval process or partially built in or near the fast growing city of Santa Clarita. These involve about 60,000 housing units.

The proposed Newhall Ranch would encompass nearly 12,000 acres and straddle the river from I-5 to the Ventura County line. It would add 21,000 units and 70,000 people to the area. This "new city" would border the best remaining Santa Clara River woodlands with inadequate provisions for buffer zones around the river. Degradation of the woodlands would follow due to increased human use, including off-road vehicles and predation by domestic animals.

Newhall Ranch would also severely impact the quality of life of Santa Clarita Valley residents, through lost open space, degraded air quality, increased traffic congestion, and increased storm-water runoff. The Santa Clara River valley west of I-5 would be transformed from its current rural/natural setting of open landscapes to an urban zone.

Impact to Ecological Areas. The project impacts two L.A. County Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) encompassing the Santa Clara River and the Santa Susana Mountains. Village centers and residential subdivisions would line the river corridor and sever the natural transition zone from riparian to surrounding upland, with numerous degrading "edge effects" on the river's woodlands. The narrow river corridor and its woodlands require more buffering from urban encroachment than is provided in Newhall's Plan.

Urban Sprawl. Newhall Ranch plan involves the same type of automobile-dependent sprawl which has caused much of California's open space to disappear. A growing array of architects, planners and urban experts point out that for 50 years we have planned for automobiles, not for people. Sprawling communities with separated residential, shop-

ping and office areas joined by feeder roads and divided highways creates traffic congestion, pollution, and a loss of vibrant human-friendly communities. While the Newhall Ranch brochure touts "village centers" which promote walking and cycling, a layout map shows an vehicle-dependent community taking up more space than necessary.

Agriculture Threatened. According to the American Farmland Trust, the California coast is the third most threatened agricultural region in the nation. The long-term protection of these rich farmlands is of great importance to society. Newhall Ranch would wipe out nearly 1500 acres of agricultural land.

Air Quality Decline. Santa Clarita has some of the worst ozone levels in the Los Angeles area. The valley is a natural air pollutant trap. Ozone derives primarily from emissions of nitrous oxides (NOx), and Newhall Ranch would add about 3,000 pounds per day; add to that emissions from 40,000 additional units under development.

Limited Water. Water is generally not available for the projected growth in the Santa Clarita region. Newhall Ranch will get its water from the alluvial aquifer under the Santa Clara River, which is already in an over pumped condition. Supplies of state water, which are not reliable in drought years, continue to be relied on for most development near Santa Clarita. Since state water supplies will fall far short of entitlements in drought years, severe over pumping of both the alluvial aquifer and the Saugus deep-water aquifer under the river are likely to occur.

Opportunities. The degradation of the rural, natural Santa Clara River and river valley is already progressing swiftly in the form of heavy development in the Santa Clarita area. The Newhall Ranch would continue the degradation to the Ventura County line, creating long-term pressure for continued development to the ocean. Insufficient attention to cumulative impacts has allowed disastrous development along most of Southern California's rivers. We have an opportunity to prevent a similar fate for the Santa Clara.

Newhall Ranch must be redesigned with a much smaller footprint, confined primarily to the existing entitlements in the eastern portion of the property. This alternative would utilize the area next to existing urban uses, provide an adequate river buffer zone, and avoid development in the floodplain. It would fully protect the critical riparian woodland and wildlife corridors, as well as avoid a sprawling development along Route 126 area. With the Newhall Ranch proposal, the

A Day in Uganda

By Ed Benison

Seen any mountain gorillas lately? Most will go through life not seeing any, since none reside in zoos. Gorillas in the San Diego Zoo, for instance, are either western or eastern lowland gorillas, a species distinct from mountain gorillas.

I had the great fortune and privilege of visiting these magnificent creatures in July 2006 at the Bivindi Impenetrable Forest in southwestern Uganda, which borders the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo).

What drew me there? Possibly the subtle challenge of an "Impenetrable Forest," or just a desire to see for myself these wonderful animals. A 20-hour flight from LAX delivered me to Entebbe, Uganda's international airport 22 miles outside Kampala, the capital. Our group of 11 came from across the US plus one member from Israel.

We began a 250 mile drive to Bivindi on rough roads, with one detour to Queen Elizabeth National Park, world renowned for tree-climbing lions, the only lions known in Africa to do this. It's pure speculation as to why they do it: possibly to get away from the irritating flies in the area or to take advantage of the breezes.

Winston Churchill once referred to Uganda as "the jewel of Africa." After seeing the beautiful green rolling hills and crater lakes on our drive, I have to agree.

Bivindi an established UNESCO World Heritage Site. We found a very strong military presence in the area: AK47s everywhere one looked, attached to Ugandan troops in their camo uniforms. I prayed all the safeties were on. Bivindi borders Congo, and we know how unstable that country has been. Congolese rebels had been crossing the border into Bivindi and using it as a hideout and base for their activity. It reached a crisis in 1998 when two tourists were murdered. The Ugandan army moved in and cleared out the area. They became a little over-zealous and moved out a band of Batwa pygmies as well, leaving them with no place to go. A truly great human being, Dr. Scott Kellerman, from Nevada City, CA, single-handedly established a medical clinic, school and housing on a shoe-string budget, giving hope to the pygmies. He's put up buildings at a cost of \$10 per square foot -- quite a contrast with Newhall Land prices.

Africa has 3 distinct races of gorillas: the western lowland gorilla in the western and central Congo Basin, the eastern lowland gorilla, numbering 14,000, and living west of the Albertine Rift, and the mountain gorilla (Gorilla Gorilla Bivengei), unknown until 1902, numbering 720 and considered highly endangered. They are distinguished by their heavier, more luxuriant coat and greater bulk. Of the 720, about 320 are found in Bivindi. The balance are in the Virunga Mountains of Burundi and Rwanda. Groups of 12 or more, consist of the dominant male (the silverback), several females and young. Of these several groups, only 3 are habituated to humans and contact with them is very regimented and controlled: access is limited to one hour each day, no flash cameras and no touching, for fear of transmitting human-borne diseases. A maximum of eight permits per group is issued daily and these are in great demand and quite expensive.

In the mountainous rainforest there are no trails and the term "switchback" is unknown. It's a struggle, straight up, often through dense vegetation. The trackers constantly swung machetes in an attempt to make it a little easier. Porters carried packs for those who needed help, such as the woman in my group who a few days earlier had sprained her ankle. Determined to see gorillas she hired three porters to assist her.

Our group was fortunate. We climbed only a few hundred yards and found where the group had bedded the night before. We knew we were close since groups don't move more than 1/2 mile each day. Just 300 yards further we found them: a band of 13. Mountain Gorillas are very gentle and docile. They simply ignored us, continuing to eat as if we were not there. While I was trying for a good picture of the silverback, one of the females came within six feet of me. My pulse rate took a quantum leap until I realized she meant no harm. It can be dangerous, however, when one male is challenged by another, whether over a territorial dispute or for group dominance. Then it can become violent, bloody and sometimes fatal. It's wise to keep one's distance during these events, since the silverbacks weigh in at 350 pounds plus and have a large set of dentures that can do a lot of damage.

Two days of tracking ended much too quickly, but I have great memories of this experience. Plus, it makes for great conversation at cocktail parties and happy hour.

Trail - continued from page 2

Mt. Wilson and Mt. Lukens, and several walked down the northwest slope to see where the trail from Colby Canyon arrives at the peak via a Class 3 rock climb. The lunch and rest were well-earned, and we appreciated the mostly downhill trek back. A classic San Gabriels hike.

One final note: Gaylon reports that the fence blocking the last switchback of the Mission Peak moonlight hike has been closed. We now must use the steeper bypass trail.

See you on the trail! – Henry Schultz

Water - continued from page 1

agencies have arranged for storage of water in Kern County and are trying to reach agreements with the Met to store more water in Castaic Lake to address the lack of local storage. Better to be prepared than caught off guard by these potential, but predictable problems.

What can we do for "Drought Preparedness"? Some Answers: Preserve local water reserves by protecting rivers and streams and conserving water at home. Landscape with drought tolerant native plants that survive under local rainfall conditions. Car washes and open space landscaping should utilize recycled water wherever possible. Check out your water district's web site for more tips on water conservation. And we must ensure that huge housing projects, such as Newhall Ranch and others, have an adequate water supply before they are approved.

Newhall Project cont. from page 4

process continues almost to the Ventura County line, creating long-term pressure for continued development toward the ocean. Insufficient attention to cumulative impacts has allowed disastrous development along most of Southern California's rivers. We have an opportunity to prevent a similar fate for the Santa Clara.

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