



# The Hellhole Canyon Gazette

## ***Hell Creek Headwaters Land Acquisition and Conservation Campaign Underway***

### **Program on Bats by Project Wildlife**

General Meeting Jan 23, 9am,  
At the VC Library

At the quarterly meeting of the Friends of Hellhole Canyon, the speaker will be Cynthia Meyers from Project wildlife who is a member of their bat team. She has been rehabing and rescuing bats since 2002.

Meyers will present a power point slide program which will cover the importance of bats in our area, as well as a study of the bat species in general. She will discuss local habitats for bats as well as the diversity of their species. San Diego County can claim 23 species of bats.

She will also discuss safety issues in handling bats, provide photos of many of the bats that Project Wildlife has rehabilitated, and at the end of the presentation she will exhibit a Mexican free tailed bat. This is a very shy species, but an example of local bats that can eat an unbelievable amount of insects every night.

Bats are probably one of the most misunderstood and maligned species on

*(See Bats, Continued on page 2)*



Dear Friends,

I am excited to announce that our Board of Directors has recently completed successful negotiations for a purchase option of 40 acres of open space adjacent to the Preserve. These lands, in the Upper Hellhole area, east of the Preserve, are the site of the headwaters of Hell Creek and are essential to maintaining habitat connectivity and open wildlife corridors between the Hellhole Canyon Open Space Preserve and Cleveland National forest and Rancho Guejito to the east of the Preserve. This property includes a building with an open floor plan that will make an excellent nature/community center and base of operations for the community and the Friends .

We have assembled nearly three quarters of the funds needed to complete this land acquisition. We are working closely with the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department which will commit half of the purchase price using dedicated land conservation funds. From prior open space conservation campaigns the Friends will also contribute to the purchase and conservation of these lands, but, approximately \$105,000 remains to be raised to make the acquisition happen.

We will attempt to raise these additional funds by the summer of 2010. This is an ambitious goal but I know we can do it with your help and the help of your friends and neighbors. You've helped us before with the 155-acre Brown acquisition and supported the 40-acre Pulver acquisition. Plans are underway now for additional grant writing, mail solicitations, fund development events and solicitations of key gifts from families and individuals—all the elements of a capital campaign that will help us reach our goal. Will you pitch in now to help? They are many ways you can participate but here are just three for now:

1. Join our Acquisition Committee and assist with organizing events we already have on the drawing board,
2. Help with grant research and writing of grant applications,
3. Visit our website at [www.hellholecanyon.org](http://www.hellholecanyon.org) and make a contribution towards our goal of \$105,000.

If you can contribute or assist in any way please call me! With your help I am sure we will succeed! Thanks.

Sincerely, Rick Landavazo, President 760 751-1443

Friends of Hellhole Canyon  
 Open Space Preserve  
 PO Box 221  
 Valley Center, CA 92082  
 Website: [www.hellholecanyon.org](http://www.hellholecanyon.org)  
 760 749-5320

The Hellhole Canyon gazette is published quarterly, in Valley Center, CA.

#### Board of Directors

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#### Board of Directors Meetings

are held monthly, on second Fridays. Call 760 751-1443 for location and info.

Bookkeeping provided pro bono by Roxanne Greene, Business Services

**The Friends is a nonprofit land trust and environmental education. We are dedicated to protecting natural open space at the Preserve and in our community.**

County of San Diego Parks Staff  
 Ranger assigned to Hellhole Canyon:  
 Dave Holt, Supervising Ranger

Nick Sloan, Ranger

Offices at Wilderness Gardens Preserve  
 Phone (760)742-1631  
 Cell (760) 212-5549  
 14209 Highway 76  
 Pala, Ca 92059



## Friends Meetings

The Friends hold public general meetings once per quarter. The meetings feature an educational program on some natural or environmental topic and committee and officer updates.

The Friends' July 2009-June 2010 is posted on the website, [www.hellholecanyon.org](http://www.hellholecanyon.org). For up-to-date info on events and activities check [www.HellholeCanyon.org](http://www.HellholeCanyon.org).

## Docent Led Hikes

Hikes are led monthly on every 3rd Saturday, 9am from the Preserve parking lot. For information call us at 760-749-5320 or visit our web-site at [www.hellholecanyon.org](http://www.hellholecanyon.org)

For a great and safe hike, we suggest you bring the following: lots of water, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen, long-sleeved shirt and pants, sturdy hiking shoes, snack foods, binoculars, camera, tails guide books. Please note that the Preserve can get warm and then hot quickly compared to the earlier morning start times. Be Safe and See you

(Bats.... Continued from page 1)

earth. Visions of Dracula's mystical transformation or a winged creature attaching itself to a person's neck rise in our minds. Chilling thoughts of blood being sucked from a body or long teeth settling into a vein cloud our vision.

Yet, in reality, bats are an important part of our environment and essential to the creation of our world. For example, the little brown bat can eat up to 1000 mosquitos an hour and can live for 40 years. You do the math as you plan your next barbeque.

These creatures, which are often small enough to fit into the palm of your hand, are also essential to the production of tequila. The Mexican long tongued bat is necessary to the pollination of the agave plant. So the next time your barbeque involves margueritas, send a thank you to the bats.

Not only do they pollinate, but are also involved in seed dispersal in rain forests, helping to insure the health of these very important areas. But perhaps their most useful help is as predators of flying insect pests.

The negative legend and myth of the bats has resulted in the killing or discouragement of bat populations. San Diego is lucky enough to house 23 species of bats. Because they are so misunderstood by people, organizations such as Project Wildlife receive calls frequently to remove a stay bat that has landed on someone's patio wall.

These callers do not know that bats have good eyesight and echolocation so they rarely become caught in a person's hair. They also rarely transmit disease to other animals or humans. However, bat organizations strongly suggest that individuals do not pick up bats with their bare hands, because the bat can bite in self defense.

The niche of the bat cannot be underestimated, as 1100 known species of bats exist. That is about 25% of all mammal species. The momma bat only produces a single pup per year and bats are the slowest reproducing mammal on earth for their size.

Because of this slow reproductive cycle, 40% of American bat species are endangered or threatened. For information on how to help our bat population contact Bat World, the California Bat Conservation Fund, or Project wildlife.



## Member Commentary: Nuisance Wildlife Dumping at the Preserve Must Stop!

There is a big difference between Project Wildlife's reintroduction of rehabilitated wildlife and neighbors dumping of nuisance pests into Hellhole Canyon Preserve.

If anyone hasn't noticed, there is no shortage of nuisance wildlife around our homes in Valley Center, including squirrels, cottontails, possums, rattlesnakes, raccoons, mice, gophers, and rats. These local animals have achieved enormous success, not by living off of the natural chaparral environs such that exists in Hellhole Preserve, which has a limited carrying capacity, but from skimming off the bounty of human inhabitation, which provides a great many food options. The wildlife who live in the canyon that do not rely not human freebees, such as spilled grain from yard or garden, are very special. Therefore their life and survival must be protected.

California Fish and Game Laws, arcane as they are, require DPR approval for release of wildlife back into the wild for a reason, however rarely enforced. The intention of these laws are actually in part to protect free-ranging wildlife populations from diseases. Diseases are spread by unnatural relocation by well-intentioned "have a heart" traps from "urban" wildlife into truly wild populations. Unlike illegal dumping of your nuisance wildlife, organizations like Project Wildlife require veterinarian health checks on animals released into the wild. Sick animals are brought to necropsy to diagnose wildlife diseases. Rabbits often carry leptospirosis, local squirrels carry plague fleas, possums can be transmitters of encephalitis to horses, birds can carry heavy loads of west Nile virus, without immediately showing symptoms. So the lazy animal that walks into your trap at home just may not be a good thing to drop off at the preserve, despite your best intentions for saving "wildlife."

It is very un-neighborly to bring your nuisance wildlife down to the entrance and boundaries to the preserve and expect that they are going to "run free like the wind." Animals caught in your yard are often not behaviorally "wild," but dependent on human-rendered foodstuffs. If you think you are saving them by dropping them off, you are wrong, because placing wildlife into an unfamiliar environment puts them at a serious disadvantage. Studies show most animals dropped off in a new environment usually suffer a torturous death either from territorial disputes or trying to return to their home range without cover. Lucky ones may survive because they have learned that its much easier to pick up spilled grain near someone's livestock or hunt

mice near the load of hay than to make a go of it in the real wilderness. So, if the creatures you drop off are able to survive down by the preserve, they may end up in your neighbors' yard to be a nuisance to your neighbors, in some cases endangering their livestock, and otherwise being a nuisance for the same reasons you wanted the wildlife removed from your yard.

So please, be neighborly, fence to keep wildlife away from feed and clean up spilled grain to avert attracting dependent wildlife. Call an organization like Project Wildlife that is qualified to remove and relocate wildlife. If you must, then please humanely dispatch your nuisance rodents on your property, and/or call someone who is licensed to do so. Please stop dropping your wildlife at the entrance and the boundaries of the preserve.

*Tracy Ellis, Geraldine McHugh, Kathleen Oliver*

### **Welcome Supporters, New and Renewing Members!**

We would like to thank all of our returning and new members. If you have not renewed your membership yet, remember that you can do so online at [www.HellholeCanyon.org](http://www.HellholeCanyon.org).

Thomas W. Andrews	Daniel & Deborah McSwain
John Martinoff Auzin	Arlene Meadows
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Friends of Hellhole Canyon Open Space Preserve  
PO Box 221  
Valley Center, CA 92082

Friends Annual Meeting Saturday 1/23/10 at 10am, at VC County Library! Don't miss our program with specialists from the Project Wildlife! More inside!

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Don't Miss the Friends General Meeting coming this Saturday, Jan 23rd, 10am, at the VC County Library. Come hear a talk by specialists with Project Wildlife. Meet Wildlife! All are welcome, coffee and treats served!

**The Friends have new Hellhole Canyon T-shirts for Sale! Designed by artist and board member Debi McSwain they feature a stylized version of the Friends logo on front. For the first time our t-shirts come in women's and men's sizes and cuts. Made of soft organic cotton in 5 earth tone shades we know you can't be without yours! Friends T-shirts will be on sale at our General Meeting! Come get your Hellhole T-shirt and get stylin!**

