



The Clear Print

The San Diego Tracking Team Newsletter

Presenting the Mission Trails Tracking Team

By Joe Bochiechio

After four years of working with members of the San Diego Tracking Team on monitoring critical wildlife corridors in Mission Trails Regional Park, the Mission Trails Tracking Team (MTTT) has been born!

What started as a data-gathering mission to help insure proper wildlife protection in the event of future widening of Hwy. 52 along one of Mission Trails borders, has blossomed into a thirty-two person (and growing) team of enthusiastic trackers chomping at the bit to hit the trails, learn new skills and make a difference. We have a strong core of dedicated trackers (the majority being new to tracking but experienced Trail Guides) who bring an unbridled enthusiasm to our team that should help us expand from three transects to many throughout our ever-growing park. This is a critical time for Mission Trails with open space expansion plans and land acquisition in high gear. Now is the time to get it all in place to have a baseline from which to monitor future changes.

The MTTT program brings people from all walks of life with a common love of California's unique habitats and wondrous critters together to learn and then share their knowledge with park patrons from all over the world. Tracking skills only enhance their insatiable curiosity.

With the support of the San Diego Tracking Team, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Tracking Team, Barry Martin, Ann Hunt, Dean Woods and the other terrific transect leaders, we have had guidance and encouragement throughout these years of development. We excitedly look forward to our now "official" partnership with San Diego Tracking Team and envision a great adventure ahead of us!

Proposition A is a Balanced Remedy For San Diego's Growing Traffic Congestion Crisis

By Mike Kelly, San Diego Conservation Resources Network Manager & SDTT board member

This November, San Diego voters will have a chance to confront the region's traffic congestion by approving Proposition A, delivering over \$14 billion in highway, local road and transit improvements over the next few decades -- without increasing taxes.

Proposition A renews the existing local TransNet program that has helped finance every major highway, transit improvement and street repair in San Diego County since 1987. It will generate an additional \$4.8 billion in federal matching funds that will become available for the major highway/transit projects.

Proposition A means:

- Improvements to bus and trolley transit service including major investments in bus rapid transit routes along the coast, I-15, City Heights, and Chula Vista.
- Major upgrades to key arterial routes commuters depend on every day.
- Construction, improvement and maintenance of bike trails and pedestrian paths including a significant smart growth program that provides incentives to local jurisdictions willing to approve smart growth projects.
- Major improvements to I-5, I-15 and I-805, the I-5/I-8 interchange, the I-8/163 interchange and many more key freeway pressure points to ease congestion for local residents and visitors alike.
- Additional improvements on State Routes 52, 54, 56, 67, 76, 78, 94, 125, and 905.
- Pothole repairs and synchronized traffic signals.

In addition, Proposition A generates \$880 million for environmental mitigation. The measure commits highway and road mitigation funds for acquisition of key open space lands and perpetual maintenance of MSCP/MHPA preserve lands. As a result Proposition A offers an unprecedented opportunity to ensure implementation of the MSCP/MHPA programs, the precedent setting habitat conservation program pioneered by the City and County.

As a measure that provides significant environmental benefit and makes important investments in mass transit and smart growth, Proposition A has earned the endorsement of Alliance for Habitat Conservation, Buena Vista Audubon Society, Conservation Biology Institute, Endangered Habitats League, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Anza-Borrego Foundation, Back Country Land Trust, Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation, Friends of Goodan Ranch and Sycamore Canyon Open Space Preserves, Friends of Hellhole Canyon Open Space, Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve, Lakeside River Park Conservancy, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, San Diego Tracking Team, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, Tierra Miguel Foundation, Volcan Mtn. Preserve Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, California Oak Foundation, and the San Diego Conservation Resources Network (CRN).

It has also received endorsements from the League of Women Voters of San Diego County, the Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA), and the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce as well as over 300 other individuals and civic organizations. It is also supported by the San Diego County Taxpayers Association because of its fiscal safeguards and because it requires no tax increase.

It is supported by police and fire chiefs – including the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association – who say it is needed to ensure that gridlock doesn't delay response to emergencies. It is supported by most environmental organizations in the county because of its environmental safeguards.

In 1987 it only required a majority to pass the first Proposition A. Now it takes two-thirds voter approval to renew the program. That's a tough hurdle in any election. But with the help of the

SDTT and other organizations, local supporters have organized San Diegans for Congestion Relief to conduct the campaign to pass Proposition A.

A two-thirds vote is within reach. Polling shows that if we can let voters know the details of Proposition A—how it will affect their lives and what projects are planned for their community—we can win in November. We can win, however, only if we can get our message out

Your support is critical to the success of the campaign and ultimately to the future of transportation in San Diego County. Get involved. Go to www.sdcongestionrelief.com to see how you can help pass Proposition A.

Tracks of all Sizes

By Shirley Moore

I went on an overnight habitat works project and, while there, came across an odd set of tracks. I've only been to the introductory tracking workshop (held at the Fund for Animals in Ramona a few months ago), so I didn't have much to go on, and I just couldn't figure out what little animal had left these tracks. They were everywhere and crisscrossed themselves in several places. The dirt was like talcum powder so the tracks were very well defined (as were the tracks of several other animals).

Walking away curious and a bit frustrated, I stopped for a traveling stinkbug and watched him leave. As he walked across the road, he created the same odd tracks I had just been worrying over. Mystery solved!

Anyway, I have always been interested in tracking and love being out in the wild any chance I can get. Just wanted you guys to know how much I appreciated your class; that little bit of training has heightened my awareness and enjoyment of my outdoor forays greatly. Thank you!

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 9: Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels offered. This is a great opportunity to introduce people to tracking, so tell your friends.

Saturday, October 16: Fall Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training at the Ranch House in the Peñasquitos Preserve, be there by 9:45 to register, class runs from 10:00 until 4:00, bring a bag lunch, water and dress as for a hike. This is an introduction to tracking, essential for transect volunteers. All experienced trackers are welcome to attend and you are invited to come and help set up (look for tracks), assist with instruction or just review. Experienced trackers who do not wish to attend the training may sign up for transects by contacting Lani (858-513-0359, lani.noreke@tapestryolutions.com.)

October 4, 2004

Wednesday, November 10 and Saturday, November 13: Beginning Tracker Naturalist Class, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm Wednesday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturday at the Peñasquitos Ranch House. Contact Rick Botta (858-672-0584, rmbotta@earthlink.net) to sign up as a student or to help out.

Saturday, November 13: Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels offered.

Please send submissions to the Clear Print to Lani Noreke at lani.noreke@tapestryolutions.com.