



Our Chance to Save Rubio Canyon

IF YOU HAPPENED TO GLANCE UP RUBIO CANYON as you tooted by in your Model T on a Friday in, say, the summer of 1909, it wouldn't have come as a surprise to see people hiking in the canyon, or gentlemen checking their pocket watches as they waited for the Mt. Lowe railway to ferry them to one of the resorts in the San Gabriel Mountains for a weekend getaway. People congregated in the canyon to escape the bustle and heat of the city, admiring the scenery and enjoying spectacular views of the orange grove-strewn San Gabriel Valley below them.



Help Push Us Over the Top!

Imagine being able to hike along a near-continuous trail from Lake Avenue to Eaton Canyon, through land that would be preserved forever for people and wildlife. That dream is within reach—but it won't happen unless you help the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy save Rubio Canyon.

The Conservancy is relying on grants for the great majority of the funds required to purchase the remaining private property in the canyon, but we need you to help push us over the top. Please make your contribution today.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, together with Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy recently awarded AFC funds for about one third of the total purchase price, which enabled us to purchase the first parcel (see map on page 3).

Visit www.arroyosfoothills.org for more information, and to make a donation. Or, mail a check to: Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy, P.O. Box 3, Altadena, CA 91003.

Above: Tim Wendler, Robert Staehle, Nancy Steele, John Howell, and Sameer Etman, hiking on the Rubio Canyon parcel.



Hikers in Rubio Canyon walk along the right-of-way trail for the former Mount Lowe railway in Rubio Canyon.

A century later, the railroad has gone the way of the orange groves. People still hike into Rubio Canyon, but many trails have fallen into disrepair because the land has long been in private hands.

Now, the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (AFC) has a chance to conserve the canyon and restore those trails, preserving it as undeveloped natural land forever—but we can

only do it with your help. Property owner Sameer Etman, who in November 2009 sold 20 acres in the canyon to the Conservancy, has now agreed to put a development plan on hold and sell the remaining 21 acres to AFC, if we can come up with the funds.

“Opportunities like this don't come along often,” said Nancy Steele, president of AFC's board of directors. “We're very happy that Mr. Etman decided to offer his land to us, and we think it will be a real resource for the community once it's conserved.”

Continued on page 3

Jan Masaoka, an inspirational leader and nonprofit director of Blue Avocado, came to Pasadena in July and talked to nonprofit leaders about how we keep on going and replenishing our stores of energy. She suggested that in these times when we are being urged to do more with less, we remember that we can only do what the community supports and we should scale our ambitions accordingly. Here at the Arroyos & Foot-hills Conservancy, we've been trying to do what the community supports now for just over ten years. We have taken a big leap in the past six months in an effort to live up to what you want us to do—preserve open space lands. While it seems counterintuitive to enter into an agreement to purchase land in these economic hard times, that's just what we've done—and we think it is the best of times for a number of reasons.

In our last newsletter, you heard about our purchase of 20 acres in Rubio Canyon in August 2009 for an incredible bargain price. Since then, we have celebrated our tenth anniversary, hired former board member John Howell as our first executive director, and signed option agreements to purchase the remaining 21 acres of land in Rubio Canyon. Why is this the best time to buy this land? Well, first of all it is for sale. We have waited years for this land, a major priority of our Altadena Conservation Plan, to become available for purchase. The owner, Sameer Etman, is also willing to sell for a discount below the appraisal, if we can act fast. If we aren't successful, the land will be marketed for development. If this isn't enough motivation, you'll read about many other reasons to move forward on Rubio elsewhere in this newsletter.

But I have a very personal story I want to share with you. A little over ten years ago, the AFC was founded by a small group of your neighbors. I was privileged to be one of the founders along with Lori Paul, Astrid Ellersieck, and Dianne Walters. Astrid was the spark that ignited the Conservancy, with her positive attitude, "Just do it!" which inspired and motivated us through our early formative years.

Astrid lived with her husband Heinz in a house at the mouth of Rubio Canyon and she was passionate about preserving Rubio Canyon for its historical and biological treasures. Heinz (also a past AFC board member) still lives on the property, but Astrid passed away in December 2002. Signing the paperwork gave me the chills, as I thought back to Astrid's inspiration and resolve. I'm determined to preserve Rubio Canyon to honor my memories of Astrid and all of her many contributions to this community.

I also think about the importance of preserving land for our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren into the future. As I walk on the land, I feel the connections flowing backwards and forwards in time. As John F. Kennedy said: "It is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours."

*Be well,
Nancy L. C. Steele, President*

California Conservation Corps Awards AFC Grant for Trail Work in Rubio Canyon

The property AFC is working to acquire "is very important for the trail system," said Paul Ayers, a local trail expert who is working with the conservancy to restore existing trails, and build new ones. "It would take some of the pressure off the existing Rubio trailhead, and it would allow faster access to the east side of Rubio Canyon."

Restoring trails on the land would help to close a gap in the Altadena Crest Trail, allowing hikers to follow a continuous trail from Eaton Canyon to Lake Avenue. Rubio Canyon represents the largest of four gaps across the four-mile trail system, which begins in the west at Hahamongna Watershed Park.

Please see the map (page 3) for existing and proposed trails in relation to the Rubio Canyon parcels.

The trail that Paul is most excited about, however, is a 12-foot-wide tractor road, cut in 1926 by Southern California Edison, that heads due east from the mouth of the canyon and connects to trails in the Angeles National Forest that lead ultimately to Inspiration Point. With minimal work, a connection could also be made from the tractor road to the Altadena Crest Trail in the west. The road could accommodate equestrians, bicyclists and joggers, though connecting trails would have to be established to lead people to the road.

"It's a very, very nice trail, better than the current (Altadena Crest Trail)," Paul said. "It's one of the most important trails in the Altadena foothills."

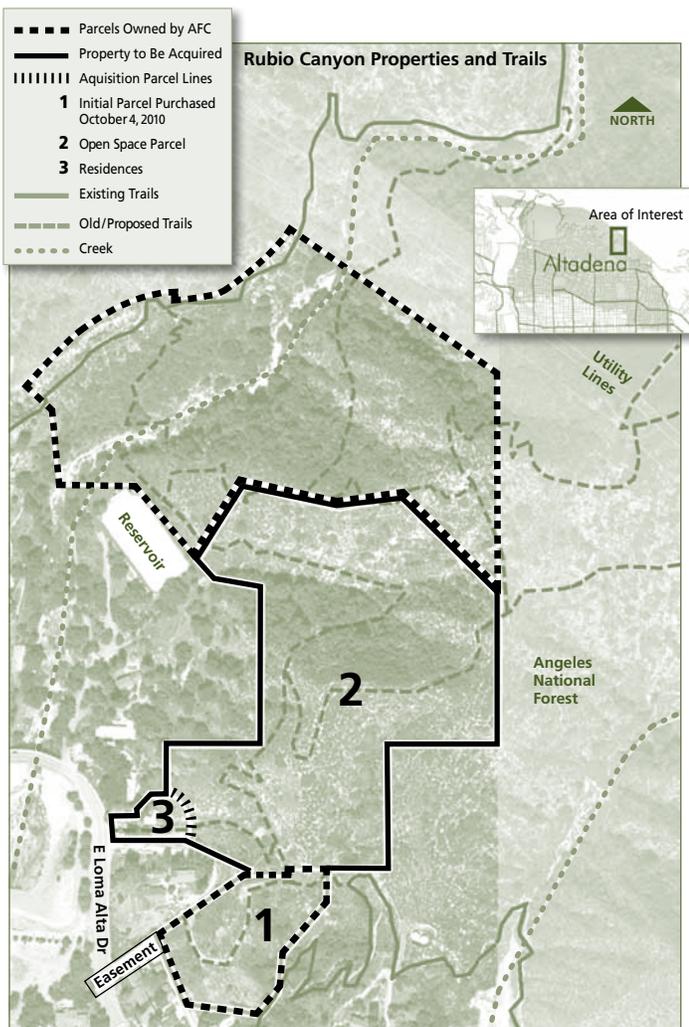
New trails would connect to the existing (and well-used) Rubio Right-of-Way trail along the western edge of the canyon. The trail follows the path of the old Mount Lowe railroad to the site of the former Rubio Pavilion Hotel, the Rubio Incline, and a waterfall.

Continued from page 1

If AFC and the community succeed in opening the entire canyon to the public, the land could once again provide a gateway into the foothills, as it did at the turn of the last century. The Conservancy plans to restore an un-maintained east-west trail to close a large gap in the Altadena Crest Trail, enabling hikers to walk along a nearly complete trail from Eaton Canyon to Lake Avenue at the Cobb Estate. A new trailhead at Loma Alta Drive could provide a convenient entrance into the foothill trail system.

Conserving the land won't be easy. It will require the support of people who value the foothills, and are ready to work to maintain them as open space. The Conservancy is seeking donations, in addition to government grants.

After the land has been purchased, the real work will begin: building and restoring trails that could possibly accommodate joggers, bicyclists and equestrians, in addition to hikers; making it easy for everyone to access and enjoy the foothills. Opening the entire canyon to the community, it should be noted, would be no small feat: The canyon has been in the hands of private landowners since 1867, when Jesus Rubio began farming it.



BASEMAP BY GREENINFO NETWORK

Ninarose Mayer Makes Major Donation to AFC

The Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy's campaign to save Rubio Canyon has received a big lift from Altadena resident Ninarose Mayer.

Ms. Mayer recently donated \$10,000 to help the Conservancy acquire the remaining private land in the canyon. In 2009, she made a major gift on behalf of her late brother, Dale Harbour Champion, that enabled the Conservancy to purchase 20 acres in the canyon.

"We are so grateful for Ninarose's generosity," said John Howell, AFC's executive director. "Her spark is contagious, and so is her commitment to conservation. She and her brother have been instrumental in our efforts to preserve Rubio Canyon, and she has provided us with a great foundation as we work to finish the job."

Ninarose is a 15-year docent in Eaton Canyon, a member of the Audubon Society, and an avid hiker. She has lived in Altadena for nearly 50 years.

Wildlife Shelter

RUBIO CANYON

THE 2009 STATION FIRE devastated much of the Angeles National Forest last fall, destroying habitat for wildlife and forcing animals closer to urban areas. The fire did not, however, reach Rubio Canyon—a fact that heightens the canyon's importance for plant and animal life.

The canyon now serves as a critical buffer zone and shelter for wildlife displaced by the fire. Completing its acquisition would protect an existing east-to-west corridor for wildlife movement across Rubio Creek, which passes through the canyon before feeding into the Rio Hondo River.

Rubio Canyon provides habitat for several wildlife species, including mule deer, bobcats, grey foxes, ring-tailed cats, Cooper's hawks, western screech-owls, wrentits, canyon wrens and other



A black bear roams Rubio Canyon, near Loma Alta Drive.

songbirds, along with several bat species. It supports a variety of native vegetation as well, including a mosaic of southern oak woodland, chaparral and coastal sage scrub, in addition to stream-side woodland and warm freshwater wetlands. Pockets of southern sycamore and a few California black walnut trees can also be found in the canyon. Annual wildflowers decorate the canyon in years with enough rainfall.

Anniversary Party Marks New Phase for AFC

Some 150 people gathered in the garden of Claire Bogaard and Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard in early May to help the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy celebrate its first 10 years—and to mark a new phase in the Conservancy's development.

PEOPLE ENJOYED food provided by Whole Foods, Porto's Bakery, and Peet's Coffee, participated in a silent auction, and enjoyed beer donated by Pasadena's Craftsman Brewing Company.

When attendees weren't listening to the jazz stylings of The Plenntet, they were hearing about some of the projects the Conservancy completed during its first 10 years—and about its lofty ambitions for the future. The Conservancy had recently broadened its area of interest and changed its name to reflect that broadened area of interest.

"We were heartened that so many conservation-minded people came to celebrate with us," said Board Member John Howell, who was



AFC President Nancy Steele (left) presents to Ninarose Mayer, with then Board Member John Howell (left, now executive director) and Board Member Lori Paul behind them.

AT THE EVENT, Nancy Steele, board president, and Tim Wendler, board member and the master of ceremonies for the night, presented Ninarose Mayer, shown above, with a framed photo in appreciation for a large donation from the estate of her late brother, Dale Harbour Champion.

The silent auction featured over 60 items, including native plants, a lithograph of the Arroyo Seco Bridge, a basket of local honey and beeswax, and framed photographs. Fittingly, the most popular item was a night at Barry Wetherby's cabin on the west fork of the San Gabriel River.

IN ITS FIRST 10 YEARS, the Conservancy has preserved 20 acres in Rubio Canyon and 16.5 acres on Chaney Trail, developed a demonstration pocket park in a low-income neighborhood, produced an educational film about the history of water and the development of local communities in the 19th century, and commissioned a plan for an open space and trail corridor known as the Emerald Horseshoe.



AFC Board Member Robert Staehle (left) shakes hands with Paul Ayers, an expert on local trails.

hired as the Conservancy's first executive director in July. "As we step up our efforts to acquire land and build trails, it's reassuring to know that the community is behind us."

Special Thanks

THE PARTY ITSELF required the largesse of local people and businesses, as well as hours of volunteer work, spearheaded by Tim Wendler.

Bill Meurer provided and set up the lighting system, and Assemblyman Anthony Portantino provided the sound system.

VOLUNTEERS included Ara Davis, Mary Cross, Anna Howell, Sally Howell, Marietta Kruells, Leslie Lowes, Timothy Martin, Daniel Miller, Taylor Plenn, John Runnette, Marcia Schmitz, Bruce Steele, Jeanette Stirdivant, Ted Stork, Larry Underhill, Nico Walsh, and Joanne Wendler.

SPONSORS AND SILENT AUCTION DONORS included ACRO Energy, Paul Ayers, Alpine Training School, Calin Artimescu, Mary Barrie, Cantaloo, Craftsman Brewing Company, Anita David, Andrea Davis, Diggers Garden Club, Dinosaur Farm, John Howell, Michelle Huneven, Huntington Library, Charles Kohlhasse, LACMA, the Lake Avenue Group at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, Senator Carol Liu, Lynda Lyke, Lawren Markle, Michelle Markman, Mel Morris, MyEvent.com, Pasadena Audubon Society, Pasadena Water & Power, Lori Paul and Robert Staehle, Peet's Coffee, Porto's Bakery, Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens, Roclord Photography Studio, Pamela Rogers, Rose Tree Cottage, Nancy Steele, Mark Stirdivant, Theodore Payne Foundation, Tom Sawyer Camps, Edwina Travis-Chin, Tim Wendler, Whole Foods, Michele Zack, and Linda Zinn.

PHOTOS: MARK STIRDIVANT

Thank you

JANUARY 1 — AUGUST 31 2010

to all the individuals and businesses who gave AFC their generous support, helping us preserve open space land for all generations.

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Phillip Wolf
Dr. & Mrs. Roger Wolf
Linda Zinn

FOOTHILLS SOCIETY MEMBERS

LEGACY

(\$10,000 or greater one-time gift)

Sameer Etman
Ninarose Mayer

ENGELMANN OAK

(\$1,000 annual pledge for 5 years)

Nancy & Bruce Steele
Linda Zinn

COASTAL LIVE OAK

(\$500 annual pledge for 5 years)

Sally & John Howell
Bill Meurer
Marc & Jeanette Stirdivant

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(\$250 annual pledge for 5 years)

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(\$100 annual pledge for 5 years)

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Carla Slepak & Gary Day
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Special Thanks

Jeff George, webmaster
Adriane Jach, newsletter designer

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With your help, AFC continues to preserve open space land. Please join us:

Renew as a FRIEND or — Join as a NEW FRIEND

- I am renewing I am a new Friend
 \$30 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other \$ _____
 Please contact me about a larger gift to AFC.

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ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW.

Thank you for your support.

County Approves New Hillside Ordinance

Development projects in the Altadena foothills will soon be subject to more scrutiny, now that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has passed an ordinance that adds new guidelines for such development.

The ordinance provides for more county oversight of hillside development, and establishes new guidelines to minimize the visual and environmental impacts. A community working group deliberated over the ordinance in dozens of meetings over the past five years. The group included landowners, community members, and representatives from the Altadena Town Council, Altadena Heritage, the Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group, and the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy.



COURTESY ALTADENA BLOG

Members of the group that helped draft the ordinance (from left), Bernice Brunswick, Terry Huntsberger, Michele Zack, Sameer Etman, Nancy Steele, Ken Balder, Mark Goldschmidt, and Patricia Mulligan.

The ordinance balances the need for greater oversight of development with the rights of property owners who want to remodel, build a garage, or rebuild after a natural disaster, according to Michele Zack, who served on the community working group that developed the ordinance. “It was a long and collaborative process that was amazingly successful in building consensus,” Michele said.

At its August meeting, the Altadena Town Council passed a proclamation thanking the committee for its efforts.

join Foothills Society

In addition to making a one-time donation, you can support regional conservation by joining AFC’s Foothills Society. The Foothills Society will provide the backbone to the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy.

The Conservancy formed the Foothills Society when it decided to hire professional staff. The Society’s five-year pledge, starting at \$100 per year, will give us the support base we need.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining this group of donors. Pledges can be made to celebrate special events, and in the names of loved ones as part of a legacy gift.

If you would like more information on joining the Foothills Society, please contact Executive Director John Howell at 626.796.3004 or email, johnhowell@arroyosfoothills.org

Planning to Update Your Trust or Will?

Why not consider making a donation to the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy? You can help preserve land in our arroyos and foothills forever.

If you and your estate planner would like to have a confidential conversation about including AFC in your bequests, feel free to contact John Howell, the Conservancy’s executive director and legal counsel at 626.796.3004 or email, johnhowell@arroyosfoothills.org

Ways to Get Involved with AFC

Do you want to help AFC?
We can use your time and talents,
like if you want to:

- Lead a hike
- Help maintain trails
- Help with trail-building
- Join in brush-clearing
- Remove invasive plants
- Host an informal get-together
- Help with the Emerald Horseshoe plan

Do you have special skills,
experience or knowledge to share?
We can use your talents in:

- Marketing
- Bookkeeping and financial reporting
- Native plant restoration
- Mount Lowe Railway history
- Graphic design
- Signage
- Special event planning
- Community outreach
- Grant writing
- Social media
- Filmmaking
- Biological assessment
- Native American culture
- Local history
- Mapmaking / GIS
- Photography
- Birding
- Geology

John Howell, AFC's executive director, would be pleased to hear from you. Contact him at 626.796.3004 or email, johnhowell@arroyosfoothills.org



AFC Hires First Executive Director

As the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy increased its efforts to acquire land in the foothills over the past year, it became clear that the Conservancy would need to hire a professional staff.

To that end, the Conservancy has hired John Howell to serve as the first executive director in its 11-year history. John, a Pasadena-area native who previously served as a member of the Conservancy's board, will oversee the land trust, work to acquire land, raise funds, manage AFC's properties and administer the organization. He will also serve as general counsel.

"I have felt for a long time that preserving natural open space is one of the most valuable things we can be doing," John said. "I am grateful for the chance to work with so many conservation-minded people in our area. There's plenty of work to be done."

As an attorney, John has represented The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land in numerous transactions. He is a founding member of Open Space Now, a Pasadena advocacy group for natural open space, and a member of the Arlington Garden Advisory Committee. He will continue his real estate and business law practice.

Board Update

AFC Welcomes New Board Member

The Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy is pleased to announce the addition of Laura Garrett to its board of directors.



Laura, who describes herself as a lifelong environmentalist, serves on Pasadena's Open Space and Conservation Advisory Committee. She is also the Conservation Chair for the Pasadena Audubon Society, serving on its board since 2002.

"We're very fortunate to have Laura join us," said John Howell, AFC's executive director. "We wanted her on the board because she works hard for the things she believes in, and conservation is at the top of her list. She's an effective advocate, a good listener, and a great communicator."

Laura's pastimes include camping and hiking with her husband and two children, birding, reading, singing, and gardening. She teaches rhetoric and composition at California State University, Los Angeles.

AFC Board of Directors

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President

Lori L. S. Paul, RVT,
Vice President

Michelle Markman,
Secretary and Treasurer

Laura Garrett

Lawren Markle

Robert Staehle

Marc Stirdivant

Tim Wendler



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Send an email to:

johnhowell@arroyosfoothills.org

and get on the mailing list to receive details about AFC events.

Arroyos & Foothills Conservator

Newsletter of the
Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy

www.arroyosfoothills.org



Volunteer Corner

Big Sunday

Volunteers Help AFC Clear Brush

ABOUT FORTY VOLUNTEERS came out to help clear brush in the Altadena foothills on May 2 as part of the Big Sunday Southern California community volunteer program.

Volunteers spent the morning removing dead twigs and grasses, and planting trees to reduce the risk of fire, on land along Chaney Trail conserved by AFC. Other volunteers cleared a section of the Altadena Crest Trail of invasive weeds to give native plants a better chance to grow. Volunteers were provided with tools and lunch, courtesy of Big Sunday.

The Conservancy is planning another volunteer day this fall planting native California poppies that will liven up the hillside, and help squeeze out invasive weeds.

Contact Board Member Robert Staehle at 626.798.3235 or email, gaboon@sbcglobal.net, for information on how to volunteer.

The new oaks and those we planted in years past grow a little larger each year. Eventually each will shade out a larger area that won't require brush removal. Thanks for starting something that could last the next few centuries!

OUR BIGGEST THANKS GO TO Rose Abbott, Big Sunday, and Parsons of Pasadena, for swelling the ranks of our volunteers to over 40.

THANKS ALSO to the neighbors of this parcel (including two AFC board members) who turned out to help.

IN PARTICULAR, OUR THANKS GO TO (with apologies for any misspelled names): Paul Ayers, Stephanie Bache, Ashley Batyko, Alan Browning, Tim Callahan, Anna Cappazera, Elliott Gold, Jennifer Harris, Jacob and Kurt Hauser, Juliana, Mike and Robert Jorgensen, Judy Kang, Sean King, Hersh Kshetry, Dan Lau, Michael Leung, Leslie Loewes, Ashish Marwah, Adam McFarlane, Shannon O'Connell, Emily Owens, Lori Paul, Henry Peña, Bobby Reinholtz, Masoud Samee, Emily Stork, Josh and Naomi Svensson, Amanda and Brian Trease, Grant Tsugawa, Carlos Uribe, Roberta Valdes, Charles Wendlandt, Stephanie Wright, Joanne Wu, Judy Yoxsimer, and Daniel Zayas.

