

CSD Changes Meeting Schedule

By Michael Palecki

The Phelan Pinon Hills Community Services District (CSD) has changed the sequence of its twice-monthly meetings. Formerly held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month-the meetings will now be held on the first and third Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.. The change was made so that CSD General Manager-Don Bartz, could attend the Mojave Basin Area Watermaster meetings on the fourth Wednesday.

In order to accommodate this change, CSD meetings for the month of March, were held back-to-back on March 11 and March 18. This article features important decisions made at those meetings. The new schedule will start in April and continues on the first and third Wednesdays of every month.

As part of the change, CSD committee meetings have also be rescheduled. The Street Lighting & Parks

Committee will meet on the first Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. The Building Committee will meet on the second Wednesday at 5:00 p.m., followed by the Engineering Committee at 6:00 p.m. The Finance Committee will meet on the third Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are held in the Phelan Community Center and are open to the public.

At the March 11 meeting, Jill Bays-President of Transition Habitat Conservancy (THC), approached the board to request CSD objection to the inclusion of two parcels of land in the upcoming SBC delinquent tax auction. The two parcels are situated within the boundaries of the proposed 1,000-acre parkland to be funded by the state.

Provisions of Chapter 8 of the tax law, allow governmental agencies, non-profits organizations and land conservancies to purchase parcels for back taxes owed and forego the bidding of a land auction. The process to

remove defaulted properties from the auction must be approved by County Supervisor Mitzelfelt. Bays asked the CSD to write a letter to Mitzelfelt requesting the parcels be removed from the auction and sold to THC.

In the long term, THC hopes to purchase all of the 1,000 acres of Puma Canyon and Upper Sheep Creek Wash, as it becomes available. After that, the conservancy would like to transfer title of the parklands to the CSD-where fee title is involved. The State Water Quality Control Board has recognized the headwaters of Sheep Creek, Puma and Quail Springs Washes, as having beneficial uses for groundwater recharge to the Oeste Aquifer-where all the drinking water for 35,000 residents comes from.

Later on, Don Bartz addressed a five percent "Ramp Down" in water production proposed by the Mojave Basin Area Watermaster. The ramp

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Conservancy Stable In Objectives

By Al Morrissette, correspondent

On March 9 and 10, Jill Bays of the Transition Habitat Conservancy spoke to over 100 participants at the 2009 Stream Naturalization Tour and Workshop. On the March 9 they toured urban sites of the Oro Grand and Mojave Rivers, such as near the Victorville Mall.

"We saw first hand the problem associated with flood control with man made restrictions," said Bays, "That led us to the next days discussions of stream naturalization and ephemeral stream conservation."

She was one of several speakers that included John Izbicki (USGS), Professor Neville Slade (VVCC) and Ann Riley (State Water Board). "The tour showed us that everything we know about flood control needs to be rethought,"

said Bays. Her subject was undeveloped headstreams and utilized her research of the Sheep Creek Wash as her focal point.

Sharing information about natural watershed and stream development is not the only means she uses to get the message out. While horse riding with friend, Roberta Dewy in the Sand and Puma Canyon area of Pinon Hills, they discussed and implemented the formation of the Conservancy. Through basic mentorship from David Myers of the Wetlands Conservancy, they have developed a viable means to preserve local watershed and promote parklands in the Phelan and Pinon Hills communities.

They are in process of gaining a \$10 million grant through the State Department of Fish and Games. This 987-acre project could preserve the

Sand and Puma Canyon area. They are also working towards purchasing headwater land in the Sheep Creek Wash. "This is the primary area for natural recharge of the Oeste Aquifer," stated Bays.

Recently Bays spoke at a Phelan Pinon Hills Community Service District Board Meeting. She explained how the CSD could work with the conservancy on mutual projects.

The conservancy recently hired a Mitigation Consultant to develop means of utilizing mitigation funds for the purchase of property and the possible use of funds for park and recreation development.

To learn more about the Transition Habitat Conservancy you can view their website at transitionhabitat.org. They are also holding a fundraiser on March 25 at the Red Mango Restaurant starting at 6pm.