

OPEN SPACES



**Thank you
OVLC mem-
bers for your
overwhelming
response to
our research!**

Sometimes you don't know what you don't know. After a number of years in this land conservation business, certain patterns emerge. Most of these are predictable, but not all. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy was lucky enough to engage a talented marketing consultant, Steve Miller who generously donated his time to conduct a "market assessment" to help us understand how our members and others feel about us and our work.

There are a few results that I found interesting. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is well respected in the community, but not that visible. Did you know

that OVLC has completed eleven land/trail protection projects in our history? The Ventura River Preserve and Ojai Meadows Preserve were for the most part the only two properties that registered for people. We also learned that, in order to earn the support of the community, it was exceedingly important for an organization to be viewed as relevant, beneficial and effective. Clearly there is an opportunity to better communicate our work to the community.

Speaking of better communication, the market assessment revealed that the words we use (e.g. "open space", "land protection/preservation") mean different things to different people. Some people thought protecting wildlife habitat and allowing recreational use may be in conflict. We feel that we achieve a balance in our work, but the assessment suggests we need to better communicate this. Overall, we found that the community greatly appreciates what we do, and I am thankful for that, and your continued support.

Best Wishes, Greg Gamble
OVLC Executive Director

ENHANCED TAX BENEFITS IN 2011

There is an enhanced tax benefit for land protection through December 31st. The U.S. Congress doesn't seem to agree on much, but one thing that they did agree on in the tax bill that passed a few months ago was an extension of the enhanced deductibility of donated land preservation agreements. This enhanced deductibility applies to donations of "conservation easements" and "agricultural conservation easements" through December 31, 2011, and provides a significant financial incentive for landowners to preserve their land. These easements are voluntary land preservation agreements in which the landowner commits to keep their property undeveloped or available for agricultural use. The landowner maintains ownership, management and control of the land.

Tax Benefits continued on page 3

OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

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Office location • 370 Baldwin Rd. A-4
Tel. 805.649.OVLC • Fax 649.8913
info@ovlc.org

www.ovlc.org

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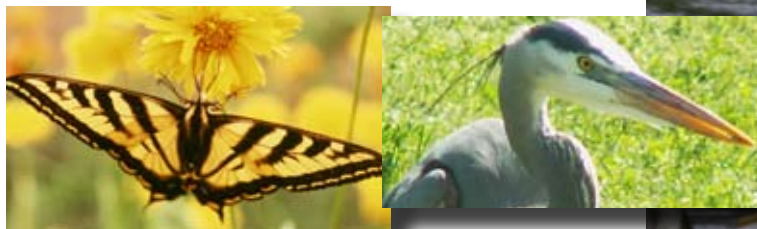
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Greg Gamble, *Executive Director*
Rick Bisaccia, *Preserve Manager*
Darcy Gamble, *Development Director*
Marti Reid, *Office Manager*
Brian Stark, *Conservation Director*
Tom Swetek, *Restoration Technician*



ANNUAL SPRING MEMBER DRIVE - RENEW TODAY!

When the flowers start blooming and spring is in the air it is time for you to renew your annual membership. Some people renew the same time each year, some renew online, some renew every December, and some used to respond to membership renewal letters that are no longer mailed. **If you do not have a personal predetermined time for your renewal then the time is now.** We save stamps, paper, and staff time when you renew every spring. **RENEW FOR THE WILDLIFE!**



PRESERVE MANAGER'S JOURNAL

Written by Preserve Manager Rick Bisaccia

Spring's Arrival Brings Changes To Preserves

You really know things are changing out there and that the days are warming up when you get reports that rattlesnakes are on the move! I often hear people from the east coast say that we don't have seasons here, but I disagree. This year's Western Sycamore's fall colors were the best I have ever seen at the Ventura River Preserve. You know it's winter and spring when water is running and you pretty much know it's summer when the non-native grasses turn green. This season more and more different species of birds are showing up on the Ojai Meadows Preserve including Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Gadwalls, and Buffleheads. The Turkey Vultures have returned to their roost in the Valley Oaks and the Red Willow and Black Cottonwoods are budding with new growth. Frogs are croaking everywhere where there's water. The seasons are shifting. Join us at 8:30 a.m. each first Saturday of every month at the Ojai Meadows Preserve Highway 33 parking pull out for a one hour tour to learn about the animals that are returning to this dynamic living system.



What The Preserve Manager Does From Day To Day

Preserve users who see me out and about often wonder who I am and what I do. In short I deal with just about everything having to do with Ojai Valley Land

Conservancy's lands and trails. Sometimes I tell them that in my job I am variously a "handyman, naturalist and cop." That might be simplifying things a bit, but it is a good summation. Besides making sure Conservancy trailheads and trails are maintained and safe I also run restoration activities under the supervision of our Conservation Director, Brian Stark. I work alongside the Conservancy's restoration technician Tom Swetek and some dedicated volunteers including Trevor Marshall and Roger Dickens who help us out on a consistent and continual basis. We are often out planting native shrubs, trees and grasses; and weeding, watering and mulching at the Ojai Meadows, Ventura River and Confluence Preserves. Feel free to stop and introduce yourself next time you see us working. We could use your help keeping the Preserves in good condition - call us today for details.

Keeping OVLC Preserves Open And Safe

There is also seasonality in the activities that take place at the preserves. With warm weather comes increased swimming in the river and a certain number of problems with homeless camps, campfires, partying, vandalism and graffiti. To keep the preserves operating safely and legally I sometimes have to work with law enforcement agencies. At times I pursue restitution for damages caused when I can catch someone, which sometimes happens with the help of a select group of volunteer "eyes and ears." Sometimes lawbreakers wonder "how I knew." That's when I show them my cell phone and binoculars. Mine is a wonderful job because I get to serve our members and the public to keep our preserves in good order and open for people to enjoy. Your Ojai Valley Land Conservancy membership keeps these special places open for the community to enjoy.



Doriane Raiman, an 18 yearold photojournalism major at Brooks Institute teamed up with Preserve Manager, Rick Bisaccia for a day out on the preserves where she took photos of a typical workday in the field. On the way to the shoot Doriane got in an automobile accident which totaled her car and that of the other person. It was the only day she could do the shoot, and wanted to do it anyway in spite of a minor cut and bump on her head. She said, "If I'm going to be a photojournalist, this will just be part of a normal day--it's good training!" Over the next several issues of the OVLC newsletter Dorian's photos will appear as part of the Preserve Manager's Journal.

Above: Doriane's documentation of Rick Bisaccia.
Right: Doriane on the trails.



Ojai Valley Inn & Spa Brings Muscle to Ventura River Preserve

For years a steep and eroding trail section in lower Rice Canyon has been a danger and an aggravation to Ventura River Preserve trail users. The first part of this trail maintenance project involved removing a pipe and corrugated metal structure and ended with re-routing the trail entirely. The Ojai Valley Inn had offered to "loan" OVLC some of their maintenance staff from time to time for specific projects. The Preserve Manager needed strong backs to get rid of the structure, and so three employees from the Golf Course Maintenance Department arrived and removed and hauled out all the materials including old barbed wire and fence posts. With the structure gone Rick, the Preserve Manager and the volunteers cleared the trail and over a period of several days, put in new signage, blocked off the old trail and replanted it with several species of native plants. They also built a new trail that switchbacks to the north and re-enters the mouth of the canyon.

Tax Benefits continued from page 1

The financial incentives for donating a conservation easement may include reductions in income, capital gains, and estate taxes. It is possible that property taxes could also be reduced under certain circumstances. For 2011, Congress has extended the enhanced deductibility of the value of the conservation easement for federal income tax purposes. Through December 31st, this new law:

- Raises the deduction donors can take from a max. of 30% of their income to 50%.
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income.
- Increases the number of years over which donors can take the deduction from 6 to 16.

In past years, this enhanced deductibility for donated conservation easements has driven a substantial increase in land conservation across the country. In the Ojai Valley, we have benefited from this incentive which has been used by local residents. For additional information about this financial incentive, to determine if your land may be eligible, or to get more information about how conservation easements work and other land protection options, contact the OVLC office or attend the class offered on March 31st (see below), and visit us at www.ovlc.org/make-an-impact/preserve-your-land. Your membership support keeps the doors open and the staff working to leverage every membership dollar for \$10 in grant funding for our work protecting Ojai's views, trails, water and wildlife.

LAND PROTECTION OPTIONS CLASS

March 31, Thursday, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Speaker: Greg Gamble, OVLC Executive Director/ at OVLC headquarters, 370 Baldwin Road, Ojai/ RSVP to Darcy at 649-6852 ext 6 by March 29.

SPECIAL PRESERVE MANAGER LED HIKE AT OVLC'S ILVENTO PRESERVE

April 28, Thursday, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Guided by Rick Bisaccia, OVLC Preserve Manager and naturalist. Location: Meet at Horn Canyon Trailhead at The Thacher School. See www.ovlc.org/preserves/ilvento for directions. Limited to 14 people. Primarily a nature hike, you will also see points of interest from view spots on this 80 acre Preserve - OVLC's first Preserve. No dogs or small children please.

RSVP required to Darcy at 649-6852 ext 6 by April 15.

Old Baldwin Trailhead Progressing To Completion

Despite rains which slowed work, the County's contractor Smiley Engineering of Ventura, is working diligently to complete the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy's (OVLC) Old Baldwin Trailhead on the lower Ventura River Preserve. Funded by The California Natural Resources Agency, the grant is being administered and the design and construction led by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VC-WPD). Partners in the project are

VCWPD, the Ventura County Resource Conservation District and OVLC. The trailhead will be operated and managed by the OVLC. A new information kiosk, trash enclosures, mutt mitts and signage are all being provided and installed by the OVLC. The trailhead will open sometime in mid March and include 2.5 miles of new trails in the lower part of the Ventura River Preserve which link up with the other twenty miles of trail. Another first for the OVLC and something we are thrilled about is a wheelchair accessible trail that includes a viewing area. An opening ceremony will likely take place in April. The invitation will go out via email so let us know if we need your email address.



Pictured from left to right are: Salvador Garcia, James Adcock and Marco Antonio Martinez.



Above: Compacting road base on new horse trailer and staging area at new trailhead with Topa Topa bluffs in far background.

CONSERVATION CORNER

A WORD FROM BRIAN STARK

LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO AROUND AND THE WILDFLOWERS GROW

As a professional in the habitat restoration field, I have come to accept a basic routine for restoration projects. We start by looking at the site conditions such as soil types, hydrology, existing native vegetation, weed threats, landforms, solar aspect, and water availability, and then determine logistical needs such as labor requirements, site access, permits, contracts, and budgets. **Through all these processes, it is easy to get bogged down and miss the magic of nature and the outdoors!**

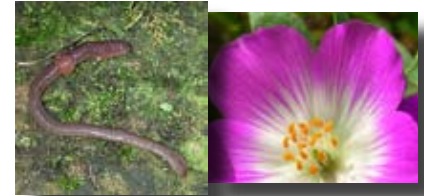
Fortunately, there are special classes that can help us re-discover the magic of local habitats. These special classes are called sixth grade, and I just got a chance to sit in. This last week **I had the opportunity to work with over 100 sixth graders through a local partner program called "Once Upon a Watershed."** Together, we planted native plants along the Ventura River at the OVLC's Confluence Preserve. It was clear from the beginning that the way the kids see restoration work or our local environment is different than the way I have come to see it and I re-learned some things from their point of view.

Mainly, I re-learned about little things, like how cool worms can be. Few things were as exciting as finding worms in our

planting pots or the soil at the site. We got to talk about the role of worms in between the expressions of excitement and disgust. "I touched a worm!" Like the worms, bugs were very exciting and worthy of sharing with others. Potato Bugs (*Stenopelmatus* for us science people) brought much fanfare. These poor creatures get a bad rap as one of the scariest looking creatures on earth. Did you know the Native American word for the Potato Bug is "Woh-tzi-Neh" (old bald-headed man)? We also found various spiders and even a small scorpion. The children's excitement over these findings got me more interested in the smaller life forms on our sites.

Remembering the importance of small things is something we can all practice.

Next time I plan a project I won't just think about fish, birds and mammals. The habitats we produce through our work are much more than that. Maybe next time I'll bring a magnifying glass.



2010 End of Year Match

Thanks to our generous friends who offered \$20,000 in matching funds if we hit that amount or more in our end of year giving - **WE MADE IT!** And thanks to our generous members who made it happen by contributing

over \$20,000 in end of year gifts. There are two organized opportunities to support the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy each year. One is the annual spring membership drive and the second is our end of year giving campaign. Thank you everyone for helping the Land Conservancy protect the Ojai Valley.



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the Ojai Valley*

OVLC EARTH DAY RESTORATION & OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY APRIL 23RD, 2011 FROM 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM AT THE OJAI MEADOWS PRESERVE
& EARTH PLAY FROM 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM AT OAK GROVE SCHOOL

A Community Earth Day Celebration

Join the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy staff and volunteers for a work day on the Ojai Meadows Preserve. Led by Conservation Director Brian Stark, you and your family are guaranteed to have fun taking care of Mother Nature at the Meadow.

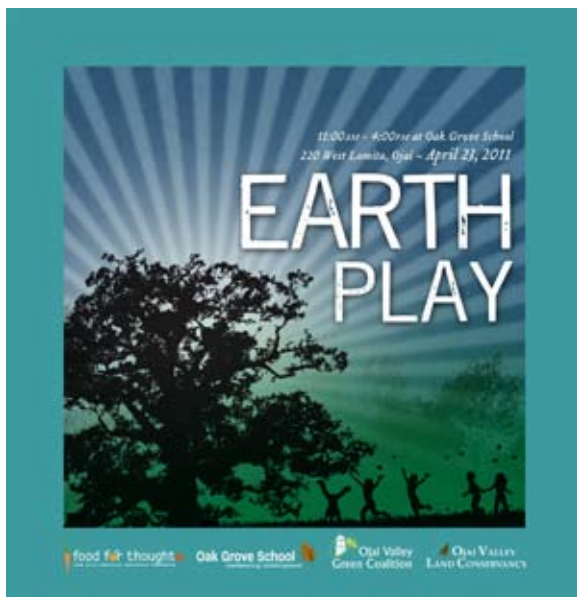
Show up with hats, water, and sunscreen prepared to do wildflower site preparation work. Work alongside your friends and family in a festive and celebratory atmosphere!

8:30 Preserve wildflower vision by Brian Stark. Meet at the big pond.

8:30 Ojai Meadows Preserve tour led by OVLC docent. Meet at the parking turn out off Highway 33 in front of the Preserve.

8:45 Wildflower site preparation (just bring your willingness to work).

10:00 OVLC open house with a presentation by the Executive Director, Q & A time, and a second Preserve tour. Meet at the fallen log near the Eucalyptus grove.



www.ojaiearthday.com

Calendar of Events

Land Protection Options Class

March 31, Thursday, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Speaker: Greg Gamble, OVLC Executive Director

Location: OVLC headquarters, 370 W. Baldwin Road, Ojai

Kindly RSVP by calling Darcy at 649-6852 ext 6 by March 29th

End of Life Directives

April 12, Tuesday 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

(See details at the bottom of this page)

Estate Planning 101

April 14, Thursday, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

(See details at the bottom of this page)

Earth Play at the Ojai Meadows Preserve

April 23, Saturday, 8:30 am to 11:00 am

April, 23, Saturday 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at Oak Grove School

(See page 4 of this newsletter or ovlc.org for details)

Special Preserve Manager Led Hike at Ilvento Preserve

April 28, Thursday, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

(See page 3 of this newsletter for details)

Tour of the Ojai Meadows Preserve

May 7th, Saturday, 8:30 am to 9:30 am

Tour Guide; Barbara Washburn, Chair of OVLC Docents

Location: parking pull out just west of Nordhoff off Hwy 33

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING SERIES - SPRING SESSION WILD ABOUT OJAI



Wild About Ojai: Wildflower Walk on the Ventura River Preserve April 2, Saturday, 8:30 am to 10:30 am

Guide: Cricket Twichell, OVLC Board Member

Location: Riverview Trailhead just south of El Roblar off Rice Road

Wild About Ojai events are FREE for OVLC members,
\$10 for non-members. Become a member today!
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED PLEASE! 805 649-6852
or marti@ovlc.org.

Part One of OVLC's 2011 Estate Planning Series: End of Life Directives & Estate Planning 101



WHO ARE OUR SPEAKERS AND WHY ARE THEY UNIQUELY QUALIFIED?

ALLAN JACOBS is a CPA and Attorney at Waite, Jacobs and Atkinson, Attorneys-at-Law in Ojai. The Jacobs family has been in the Ojai Valley since the 1930's. Allan is currently on the Board of Directors of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. He is an avid fisherman and dedicated Rotarian.

JEFF LOEBL graduated from Northwestern University with a B.A., and earned a J.D. and LL.M. from McGeorge School of Law. He is currently working toward a Masters Degree in Bioethics from Loyola University Chicago. Jeff practices law in Ojai. His practice includes

April 12, 2011, Tuesday 5:30 to 6:30 pm

Your Life, Your Final Say: End of Life Directives

Want to make sure you have the final say about your life, medical care and death? This session will tell you how to preserve your autonomy with the proper estate planning tools. Advanced Directives, POLST and clear statements regarding the care you want and do not want will help you be treated as you wish. What are all of the documents used for? Who is your surrogate? What should you tell your doctor, friends and family? Why not just wait until closer to the end and let someone else, anyone else make decisions for you? Can planning ahead reduce the stress on family members? Leave this session with a roadmap to getting your end of life directives in place. *Speakers: Jeff Loebel, Betsy Smith & Marty Pops*

April 14, 2011, Thursday 5:30 to 7:00 pm Basic Estate Planning

This session will include a discussion of the following 1) basic estate planning documents; 2) probate and whether it should be avoided; 3) wills vs. "living trusts" and the pros and cons of each; 4) trusts for spouses, children, and grandchildren; and 5) establishing, modifying and terminating living trusts. The last 30 minutes will be used for question & answer time. *Speaker: Allan Jacobs*

trust administration, asset management, estate planning and end of life care.

MARTIN A. POPS, M.D. is serving as Chairman of the Community Memorial Health System Board of Trustees, having joined the Board in 2005. Dr. Pops received his M.D. degree from the University of Chicago and completed his training in internal medicine and gastroenterology at the UCLA Medical Center. He joined the faculty at UCLA and was Professor of Medicine and Dean of Students in the medical school.

BETSY SMITH is the Executive Director at The Gables of Ojai. Ms. Smith is uniquely qualified to speak to end of life issues as they relate to real life scenarios.

SERIES HELD AT OVLC OFFICE

370 W. Baldwin Road in Ojai at
(HELP of Ojai's West Campus)
RSVP to Darcy at 649-6852 ext 6 by 4/5.
Members only please; Annual rate \$35.00.
Maximum class size 25.

ROGER ESSICK, OVLC BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It's great to return as President of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy's Board of Directors. I feel proud of what we have accomplished and excited about our future. We have a twelve member Board of Directors who together represent hundreds of years of



Ojai living. As a Board we care deeply about the Ojai Valley and the characteristics that make it a special place to live, retire, raise a family, run a business and work. To that end we are, with a talented experienced staff, working diligently on numerous projects to benefit you and future residents of the Ojai Valley.

Having been an Ojai Valley farmer for forty years I have a real appreciation for this special place. My roots are deep. My mom lives here and my children and grandchildren were born here. If you feel moved to do something to protect this special place we all treasure, please consider supporting the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy with

a gift or inclusion in your estate planning. We have always been and continue to be a grass roots organization that thrives only because of your support and goodwill.

Thank you for helping to protect the Ojai Valley. If you have any questions about our work, how to protect your land, or where to take a hike, please give us a call at 649-OVLC .

Get out and enjoy our preserves and I hope to see you on the trails.

Roger Essick
President, OVLC Board



BECOME AN OVLC SPONSOR
ovlc.org/join-us/business-sponsors
online or call Darcy at 649-6852 x 6
for a detailed list of benefits.

THANK YOU OVLC FRIENDS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!
IN THE FUTURE, MEMBERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & GIVING LEVELS WILL ANNOUNCED ONCE A YEAR AND WILL BE BASED ON CUMULATIVE.

NEW MEMBERS

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Jerry & Linda Bruckheimer
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Renate Collins
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Stefanie Roth
Ingo & Leslie Schreiber
Ron & Arlynn Stark
Henry Tarmy
Brian von Dedenroth
Sheila Zutavern

GIFTS IN HONOR OR MEMORY

From Don & Sheila Cluff and
Harry & Ann Oppenheimer
In honor of John Broesamle's Birthday
From Lori Corradi & Roy Hulsebus
In honor of Ventura County Pastel Artists
From Lucy & Peter Read
In honor of Oliver Wilson & Kaarina
Tienharra

WE SUPPORT THE OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY BECAUSE...

... "I attended high school in Ojai and live in Camarillo. I'm a proponent of land conservation and thought your organization would be a good one to support. Ojai has done the best job throughout Ventura County of preserving rather than paving over the land, and I believe your organization has helped to that end. Keep it up."

... "Both of us are excited about being involved with your organization. Since moving to Ojai a few months ago, we have been impressed with what we have read and seen regarding the work that the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has been doing. I grew up in Ojai and am thrilled to see the Open Spaces being preserved. Part of my family still lives here and when my husband retired a few months ago we decided to move back to Ojai. It is great to be home!"...

Art for OVLC

The talented Dianne Bennett is making art for the environment. Prints are available of birds found on the Ojai Meadows Preserve and a portion of the proceeds will come to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. Check out her beautiful work beforeourveryeyes.com or call (805) 640-8751.



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Carmel and John Whitman owners of the Old Creek Ranch Winery are celebrating 30 years. **Happy Birthday Old Creek Ranch Winery.** If you

haven't tried their wines you should. And take a tour of their historic ranch while you are there. See oldcreekranch.com to plan your picnic there or just drop by for a tasting.

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STAFF CHANGE

Welcome full time Marti Reid!

Marti has been promoted from our very part time book keeper to our new Office Manager. She comes to us with years of non profit experience, most recently as the Business and Fund Development Manager at the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation.



Marti Reid

Congratulations Lynn Malone!

Lynn served as OVLC's Membership Director for the past 4 years. She recently went to work for the Humane Society. Her exceptional talents and hard work ethic will be missed. Good Luck Lynn!



Lynn Malone

Tax Incentives For IRA Gifts

There is a new charitable IRA rollover provision. On December 17, 2010, President Obama signed the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010, which includes an extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover. The extension allows individuals 70½ and older to donate up to \$100,000 from their IRAs tax-free to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. This special opportunity lasts through December 2011.

The provision permits distributions from traditional IRAs or Roth IRAs to qualified public charities such as OVLC. Whereas such distributions were previously taxable, they are now excludable from gross income, eliminating the income tax penalty for such charitable gifts.

This is good news for **people who want to make a charitable gift during their lifetime from their retirement assets**, but have been discouraged from doing so because of the income tax penalty. The current provision is effective through the 2011 tax year only. Contact your advisor for more information. We can help if you do not yet have an advisor.

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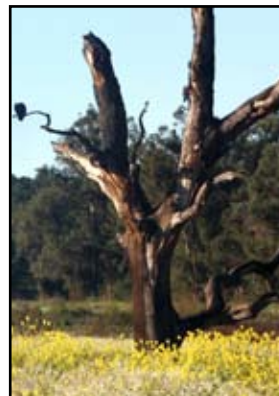
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

- * Save a tree! Opt out of paper news by sending an email with your request to info@ovlc.org.
- * We need a late model pick up truck to use for our restoration work . Please contact brian@ovlc.org.
- * **We have groups of people who want tours and we need docents.** We provide training for 1 hour and 2 hour tours on the Ojai Meadows Preserve and the Ventura River Preserve. Contact marti@ovlc.org.
- * Ojai Community Bank donates \$25 to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy if you name us on your newly opened account.

Yes! I want to help preserve Ojai's views, trails, water and wildlife!

Thanks for your support!

- Please renew my membership
- I would like to become a member
- I have made provisions for OVLC in my will

Annual Membership Levels

- \$35 - \$99 Member
- \$100 - \$249 Sustaining Member
- \$250 - \$499 Donor
- \$500 - \$999 Benefactor
- \$1,000 - \$1,999 Friend of the Ojai Valley
- \$2,000 - \$4,999 President's Circle
- \$5,000 and up Heritage Donor

Member benefits are enjoyed at every level. All members receive newsletters and/or e-news and FREE Wild About Ojai programs.

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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My check is attached, made payable to Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

Please charge my (circle one) Visa Master Card American Express

Card # _____ Exp. date _____

Amount authorized \$ _____ Signature _____

Please mail with your contribution to:

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Ojai, CA 93024

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your membership at
www.ovlc.org*

For more information, please call 805 649-6852 or email info@ovlc.org