A New Beginning for the Lower American River Parkway?
SVC Works to Protect and Manage Land Near Discovery Park

SVC is partnering with state and local agencies and working with private property owners in the lower American River Parkway near Discovery Park to protect “inholdings”—private property inside the Parkway Plan boundary. (More details to come as these deals move forward in 2013.)

Youth programs, habitat restoration and additional services for Parkway users, including trail and river use, are the goals for this project. Think of the joy and inspiration for a child living only minutes away, but seeing the River for the first time and actually dipping a toe in. We can rejuvenate the heart of the region’s most important natural treasure.

We aim to create a safe and clean environment for water quality, wildlife and people. SVC plans to have an active caretaker presence on site. We actively will engage as a community stewardship group cooperating with the County and City to create a safe environment for youth and Parkway users in an area that is heavily impacted by illegal camping.

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A Day of Hard Work in the Lower American River Parkway
SVC member takes a break from hard work on trails at Deer Creek Hills to enjoy wildlife. Can you find the spider? See article inside.

SRCC member takes a break from hard work on trails at Deer Creek Hills to enjoy wildlife. Can you find the spider? See article inside.

Lucky Seven Ranch Patriarch Celebrates 50 Years
Grazing Deer Creek Hills Since 1962

Dick Harry, the patriarch of the Lucky Seven Ranch family, remembers he started grazing Deer Creek Hills the week before his youngest son, Mike, was born in August 1962. The property was known as “the Rock”, a nickname for Rocque Mirande, a Basque sheep rancher who had previously grazed his stock there.

Dick, his older son Tom, Mike, and Mike’s son Elliott and Mitchell, work in the family business. Mike manages daily operations. Dick is still out from dawn to Noon supervising the unloading of cattle and calves for the 2012-13 grazing season.

Due to the Harry’s grazing practices over the last half century, the Preserve is relatively weed-free and has a good mix of forage for cattle with native grasses and plants thriving in many locations. About 500 cow-calf pairs graze 6,000 acres at Lucky Seven Ranch.

SVC could not protect and manage the blue oak woodlands, creeks, grasslands and vernal pools in eastern Sacramento County without our grazing operators – Lucky Seven Ranch. Jonas Livestock at our Sacramento Prairie Vernal Pool Preserve and Van Vleck Ranching and Resources at the SMUD Nature Preserve. Thanks for all the great years together and those ahead.

Hikers/Riders/Bikers should meet at Latrobe and Stone House Rds (north of Hiway 16 or Jackson Rd. and west of Rancho Murieta). Both roads can be accessed off the spring of 2013. We need and appreciate your help—stay tuned for updates in year-end donation to SVC at the highest level possible for you. Your support makes these projects possible—please consider a year-end donation to SVC at the highest level possible for you. We need and appreciate your help—stay tuned for updates in the spring of 2013.

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Building Trails, Attacking Weeds
SVC Partners with Sac Regional Conservation Corps

SVC and the Deer Creek Hills Preserve have the enthusiastic help of the Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps (SRCC). Since July, SRCC performed needed restoration and maintenance identified in the Deer Creek Hills Master Plan. SRCC provides Sacramento area young adults an opportunity to further their education and get work experience. SVC partnered with the SRCC through a Proposition 84 Grant.

Despite the summer heat, the SRCC crew of about a dozen workers cleaned the south pasture of yellow star thistle and Klamath weed, installed permanent trail markers and began trail maintenance. The labor intensive weed work included hand pulling, weed whacking and disposing of the cut material.

You will see the new sturdy “cattle-proof” 6x6 trail markers along the self guided trail to the North Pond. The SRCC cut and installed eight markers and SVC staff placed new signs on each post.

Trail maintenance work has just begun to stabilize slopes and relocate sections of trail that impacted seeps along the self-guided trail. Eventually the old sections of trail will be decommissioned after the new trail sections are open for hiking.

This fall once the rains begin, SRCC crews will have two additional restoration projects. The first will be to plant native grasses in an area previously over run by yellow star thistle, and the second project will be installing new barbed wire fence at various locations to keep vehicles from eroding the shoulders along Larabee Road.

Thanks to the hard-working SRCC members! The Deer Creek Hills campaign also raised over $50,000 this year to provide matching funds to support SRCC’s work. We need additional matching funds for 2013. Call Aimee Rutledge, Executive Director, 916-425-5879 for how to help.

If You Build It, They Will Come
Looking Back, Rocketing Forward

Looking back over the years SVC realized the phrase, “if you build it, they will come” from the movie Field of Dreams.

Open Space Recreation, Project Y.E.S (Youth, Education and Stewardship) and Local Ranching... since preserving Deer Creek Hills 10 years ago, we have sensitively added recreation and continue to work with Lucky Seven Ranch to control weeds and raise local beef.

New trails and tours in 2013! Come on our February-June for Every Saturday and Sunday Sunset free access hikes with new trails laid out by staff each week, as well as our self-guided North Pond trail. Mountain bike with us June-October on our MondayNine Rides – ride a different trail every week. Check out our new guided birding tours at different locations on the Preserve. See our calendar on the back page and on our website to sign up for these events or just come on out. Season passes are available online and are great holiday gifts, they allow you to attend all SVC’s events at Deer Creek Hills in 2013.

This year the YES program hosted over 600 students from local elementary schools and youth groups. Call Gina Silversand, SVC Outreach Coordinator, for day or overnight trips at 916-612-3719.

Habitat Restoration... Join us for the Saturday, January 12th service day. We’ll be putting together brush piles and fallen limbs creating natural habitat, attracting bird species to Deer Creek Hills. Your support makes SVC possible – please help us with a year-end donation that works for you. Thanks!

Treasures of the Valley... the SVC hosted the 20th Treasures of the Valley in October 2012, with almost 200 guests in attendance for the silent auction and annual event, raising over $70,000. Huge thanks to our sponsors and to everyone who supported the event, including our dedicated volunteers.