

An Environmental Affair

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The City of Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department was established in 1990 to advise the city on environmental issues and provide a centralized source of environmental information. The Environmental Affairs Department seeks to protect and enhance the environmental quality of life for residents, workers and visitors in the City of Los Angeles.

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L.A. City Brownfields Program Awarded Grants



Left to right: EPA Region 9 Administrator Wayne Nastri; EPA Administrator Daniel Weissman; EAD Materials and Waste Resources Division Director Wayne Tsuda; and EPA Brownfields Coordinator Noemi Emeric.

Another successful national brownfields conference, Brownfields 2006, wrapped up in Boston last month and EAD had much to feel good about. Foremost, EAD and the City's Brownfields Program received two new grant awards from US EPA and also will take part in a new revolving loan fund coalition in California to debut in early 2007.

The awards were presented at the EPA Region 9 Open House ceremony (pictured). One grant will enable the cleanup and reuse of a blighted former oil well site into a small community park west of downtown. The other grant will fund the environmental assessment of the Washington Boulevard corridor along the Metro Blue Line south of downtown. This assessment will enable more effective redevelopment of the area. Lastly, the City will be a member of a coalition, along with the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the City of San Francisco, which will provide low cost cleanup loans to deserving brownfields projects throughout the state.

Overall, the conference presented a wealth of educational and networking opportunities. The Brownfields Program is excited to come back and put their new ideas into practice here in Los Angeles.

For more information, visit <http://www.brownfields2006.org>.

Green Roofs: Greening Your Home and the Environment

A "green roof" refers to a permanent roof-top planting system that allows for the sustained presence of live plants covering a significant portion of a building's roof. Irrigated via rainwater, and supplemental irrigation in drier climates, plants can grow in a way that supports the design of a conventional garden or a coverage area that would be accessible solely for maintenance purposes. Green roofs are becoming increasingly popular for home owners, building managers, and city governments as an effective way of improving the thermal insulation of the building, improving aesthetics, and contributing to the betterment of the environment.



Green roofs provide a host of potential benefits to building owners and the

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An Environmental Affair is produced monthly by the EAD to inform residents about environmental issues and activities in Los Angeles. For questions, or to update or cancel your free subscription, call the Environmental Information Center Hotline at (213) 978-0888, send an e-mail to: eadinfo@lacity.org, or visit our website at <http://www.lacity.org/ead/>. TDD (213) 978-0899. You can also reach us by fax at (213) 978-0893. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services and activities.

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New GoSolarCalifornia Website Helps Residents Interested in Solar Energy

At the Solar Power 2006 Conference and Expo in San Jose last October, state officials, the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the California Energy Commission revealed a new website — www.GoSolarCalifornia.ca.gov — to encourage California residents to move toward producing renewable “green energy” for themselves. The GoSolarCalifornia website is a one-stop information center for new or existing home owners, businesses, schools, public buildings, farms, and others to learn about solar power and how to switch over to solar living.



As part of California’s Solar Initiative, state officials have set a goal to create 3,000 megawatts of new, solar-produced electricity by 2017. This goal will move California toward a cleaner energy future and help lower the cost of solar systems through state incentives for the installation of solar technology. California is offering nearly \$3 billion in incentives for its residents and businesses to invest in their

own solar power. The Los Angeles Department Water and Power also offers an incentive program. To find out more, visit <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp000787.jsp/>. To learn more about California’s Solar Initiative, visit the California Public Utilities Commission’s website at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/energy/solar/implementingsolar.htm>.

Businesses and Environmental Groups Work Together to Protect Elusive Birds



When executives at Whiteface Mountain, a state-run ski resort in the Adirondacks, decided to expand their trail system, they got a crash course on a species of bird that few had even heard of: Bicknell’s thrush. Although not listed as endangered or threatened, the state of New York classifies it as a “species of special concern” due to its limited breeding habitat.

Soon after the resort announced its plan to extend the trails at Whiteface by seven miles, several environmental advocate groups expressed concern about the effect of the expansion on the thrush’s habitat. Ski resort officials agreed earlier this year to implement major changes in the configuration and design on the new ski trail to take into consideration its habitat. The new trails are to be laid out so that they avoid prime Bicknell’s thrush habitat; tree-cutting and other construction work will be avoided during the thrush’s active nesting cycles from mid-May to the beginning of August. Population monitoring will also be effect. Informational kiosks about Bicknell’s thrushes will be placed on Whiteface Mountain to expand public knowledge about conservation issues. Visitors can learn about what steps are being taken so that people and nature can coexist through environmental management.

Similarly in California, Audubon California and the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society reached an agreement with a farmer in Riverside County last May to help protect Southern California’s largest colony of rare Tri-colored Blackbirds. Audubon paid a San Jacinto area dairy an undisclosed amount to delay the harvest of 13 acres of wheat where the blackbirds have set up a dense nesting colony. In return, the landowner voluntarily agreed not to harvest for 30 days.

For more information on Whiteface Mountain, visit www.whiteface.com. More information about the Tri-Colored Blackbirds can be found at www.audubon.org.

Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel to Reach Market

Last October, a revolution in highway fuel technology was achieved in that a wide majority of buses and trucks will now be able to fill their tanks with a diesel fuel that contains only 3% of the sulfur content of previous fuels. Under federal clean diesel rules, consumers can now purchase the Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) at most gasoline stations. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Tier 2 Vehicle and Gasoline Sulfur Program mandates the use of more improved engines in vehicles by 2010, with EPA extending the rule toward off-road equipment such as tractors and construction vehicles. With a cleaner diesel fuel available, many companies are signaling the future development of high-mileage diesel-fueled automobiles for personal use. From a health perspective, it is estimated that the reduced particulate emissions will help prevent 8,300 premature air-quality related deaths per year.



The burning of sulfur generates air pollution which can have severe health consequences to those exposed over time. Additionally, sulfur clogs the workings of fine-tuned pollution control devices, holding back the effort to produce cleaner-burning engines. Leading to the development of cleaner diesel engines, the creation of low-sulfur fuel is estimated to eventually cut lethal particulate emissions from diesel vehicles by as much as 85 percent.

In the nineties, diesel-powered trucks made up only 3 percent of the total quantity of vehicles on the road, but were responsible for producing 43 percent of the smog and particulate forming nitrous oxides, and more than two-thirds of the total soot in the air. The new fuel contains only 15 parts per million of sulfur, a decrease from the current standard of 500 parts per million, due to an improved refining process. Old diesel engines that adopt the new fuel will produce 10 percent less of the dangerous particulate emissions associated with sulfur; new engines, employed with improved pollution control technologies, will cut the amount of particulate emissions by a standard engine by more than 85 percent.

The City of Los Angeles has been purchasing ULSD fuel since November 2001. Since that date, only ULSD has been used City-wide in all diesel applications. The City originally purchased this fuel to accommodate Verified Diesel Emission Control Systems (VDECS) being installed on many of the City's heavy-duty diesel vehicles. A total of over 800 partially grant-funded VDECS have been installed on its heavy-duty diesel fleet.

Fires Bring Unwanted Heat to Desert Ecosystems

More than 90% of the Pipes Canyon Preserve was consumed in the Sawtooth blaze that ran through the Mojave Desert, only one of six fast-moving fires last summer that totaled more than 65,000 burned acres of the Mojave Desert. An increase in the apparent frequency and intensity of fires in the area has fueled debate over whether the desert is burning more frequently and violently, possibly as a result of such factors as invasive weed species, smog, development, and climate change.



The recent fires in the area are supportive evidence toward the shift of Southwest deserts away from ancient native pine, shrubs and cacti, toward young – and highly flammable – weeds and grasses. Although fires are a necessary part of forest life-cycles, that is not the case for desert ecosystems. The sparsely vegetated desert is not meant to burn frequently, but fires have been occurring at a rate never before observed; in this year's summer alone, there have been five fires in Joshua Tree National Park, whereas the norm for the last 50 years has been a single fire every few years.

("Desert Fires" ... Continued on page 7)

\$ \$ \$ **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** \$ \$ \$

Visit <http://www.lacity.org/ead> for more grant opportunities.

The Outdoor Classroom Grant Program

provides outdoor, hands-on science education to students in grades K-12 and assists schools in enhancing their core curriculum in all subjects. This school year, the program will award grants of up to \$2,000 to at least 100 schools. In some cases, grants for up to \$20,000 may be awarded to schools or school districts with major outdoor classroom projects. The grants can be used to build a new outdoor classroom or to enhance a current outdoor classroom at the school. All K-12 schools are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit <http://www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=pg&p=AboutLowes/outdoor/index.html>. The application is due **December 31, 2006**.

The Captain Planet Foundation funds projects that promote understanding of environmental issues through hands-on involvement of children and young adults. Promotion of group cooperation and interaction, as well as the development of planning and problem solving skills, is highly encouraged. Grants awarded range in value from \$250-\$2,500. For more information, and to submit your online application, visit their website at <http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/grants.html>. The deadline to submit an application is **December 31, 2006**.

The Acorn Foundation supports projects dedicated to building a sustainable future for the planet and to restoring a healthy global environment. The Acorn Foundation is particularly interested in small and innovative community-based projects which seek to preserve and restore habitats, advocate for environmental justice, and prevent or remedy toxic pollution. Grants range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. For more information, visit <http://www.commoncounsel.org/pages/foundation.html#acorn>. Applications must be received by **January 15, 2007**.

The KIND Kid Award, funded by the Human Society of the United States, encourages children in grades K-6 to submit a description of their individual efforts to help animals. The winner of the competition receives \$100. For more information and to submit a story, visit http://www.kindnews.org/kids/KIND_Kid_Hall.asp. The deadline is **January 15, 2007**.

The Carolyn Foundation funds grants addressing environmental issues, with a focus on renewable energy programs. Proposals must address root causes of global issues while creating systemic and sustainable solutions and changes on a local level. Developed and implemented solutions combine the collaborative effort of varying institutions and individuals within the community, and should be replicable in other areas. For more information, visit <http://www.carolynfoundation.org/guidelines.html>. Submitted applications must be postmarked by **January 15, 2007**.

The Home Depot Foundation makes grants to 501(c)3 tax exempt public charities in the United States. Preference is given to proposals that result in community engagement that incorporates the strategic use of trees and landscape to strengthen neighborhood infrastructure and reduce utility bills. Additionally, citizen education and engagement concerning the importance of trees to the health, economics success, and social well-being of communities is a key quality of successful proposals. For more information, visit <http://www.homedepotfoundation.org>. Applications must be received by **January 15, 2007**.

The Wild Oats Gardening with Kids Award will give 10 schools and youth organizations supplies to establish kitchen gardens, and provide tools and training for preparing nutritious meals with the resulting produce. Applicants should demonstrate a youth-centered plan that emphasizes hands-on lessons in gardening and food preparation, community involvement, and the link between gardening and good nutrition. For more information and to download an application, visit <http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/2007-wild-oats.asp>. Applications must be postmarked by **January 15, 2007**.

The Toyota Tapestry Grants for Science Teachers Program recognizes outstanding educators by awarding grants of up to \$10,000 for innovative K-12 classroom projects that enhance science education in the school and/or school district. For more information and to complete the online application, visit their website at <http://ecommerce2.nsta.org/toyota>. Applications must be received online by **January 18, 2007**.

DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ONGOING:

(EAD recommends contacting event sponsor prior to event)



Whalewatch/ Naturalist Training

Observe Pacific Gray Whales on their migration along the Southern California coast. Whalewatch boats are scheduled daily from December 26, 2006 through March 2007. Go to sea on any day to observe gray whales on their migration along Southern California's coast. Whalewatch volunteers, trained by Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and the LA Chapter of the American Cetacean Society, lead two-hour boat trips from various landings. Fees vary by landing. To find out more, and join the fun, call Whalewatch at (310) 548-8397, Tuesday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 1 pm. Sponsored by the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and the LA Chapter of the American Cetacean Society.



The Southwest Museum

holds one of the nation's most important collections related to the American Indian and offers a variety of entertaining and educational events. There are special interest lectures every fourth Saturday, and family activities take place the first and fourth Saturday of each month. On the second Saturday of each month, families can take part in "Dig It! Family Style," a hands-on archaeology program. The museum is open Saturdays and Sundays, 12 pm to 5 pm, free of charge. The museum is located at 234 Museum Drive, Los Angeles. Visit <http://www.southwestmuseum.org>

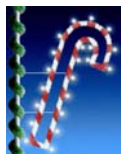
www.autrynationalcenter.org/southwest/ or call (323) 667-2000 for more information.



Discovery Carts for Kids

On Saturdays, 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm, kids of all ages can explore the world of nature every Saturday at The Huntington. "Discovery Carts," located at the Lily Ponds in the Japanese Garden, welcome budding young botanists with a variety of hands-on learning activities. On the first Saturday of each month, Nature Crafts are also offered near the Entrance Pavilion. No reservations required. Free with museum admission (children under 5 enter free). For more information on this and other programs at the Huntington, visit <http://www.huntington.org>.

The 2006 LADWP Annual Holiday Light Festival



is one of the largest of its kind in LA. The event will feature a mile-long stretch of lighted displays depicting various seasonal messages **through December 29, from 5 pm to 10 pm.** Free. Enjoy it from within a vehicle or during a casual walk. Located in Griffith Park alongside Crystal Springs Dr., Los Angeles. For more information visit www.laparks.org, or call (888) 527-2757.

Reindeer Romp at the LA Zoo

With days growing shorter and the holidays just around the corner, it's time to start getting into the spirit of the season at the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens' Reindeer Romp! From November 23 through the New Year, reindeer guests are in town visiting the Zoo. Be sure to stop in to say hello, chat with reindeer

The EAD website, located at www.lacity.org/EAD, contains updated information on this month's events. To ensure your event is included in our monthly newsletter, submit information to the editor by the 10th of each month prior to publication. After the 10th, events can be entered into our website calendar only.

The EAD reserves the right to edit all submittals and does not necessarily endorse the events listed. All events are subject to change, so call listed event contacts to verify information.

City of Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Commission Meetings

The City of Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Commission (EAC) meets the third Thursday of each month in City Hall, 200 N. Spring Street in Los Angeles. The General Public is invited to attend. Commission Agendas, minutes, meeting times and places are posted at http://www.lacity.org/EAD/EADWeb-NewsEvents/updateagenda_&_minutes.htm

Commissioners:

Misty Sanford—President
Alina Bokde—Vice President
Maria Armoudian—Member
Teresa Villegas—Member
Joyce Perkins—Member

keepers, and enjoy holiday stories and crafts. Santa and friends will also be stopping by on weekends, so pause for a photo op (nominal \$5 fee). The LA Zoo is located at 5333 Zoo Drive in Los Angeles. For more info, visit www.lazoo.org or call (323) 644-4200.

THIS MONTH:

(EAD recommends contacting event sponsor prior to event)

Sat, Dec 2

Silent Night Hike Sometimes it's good to hike and enjoy the sounds of nature. Join others from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on a silent hike in the night at Franklin Canyon Park, located at 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr. in Beverly Hills. Participation and parking is free. For more information call (310) 858-7272 ext 131. Sponsored by the Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority.

Sat & Sun, Dec 2 and Dec 3**Holiday Treats for the Animals**

Guests at the Aquarium of the Pacific can see Scuba Santa dive with sharks and watch the animals receive their special treats and enrichment gifts during the Holiday Treats for the Animals weekend. Families can enjoy holiday

music, crafts, special presentations, unique photo opportunities, shopping, and more. Free with aquarium admission. For more information, visit the Aquarium's website at www.aquariumofpacific.org, or call (562) 590-3100. The Aquarium is located at 100 Aquarium Way in Long Beach.

Thurs and Fri, Dec 7 & 8**Los Angeles Green Roofs Design 101 & 201 Workshops**

This introductory training course on green roof infrastructure design presents many of the tools and techniques needed to meet green roof project objectives on schedule, to specification, and within budget. To learn more about the course, visit www.greenroofs.net/index.php. The workshops are sponsored by Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. Both workshops will be held in downtown LA, from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Cost for a one-day workshop is \$345. For more information, contact Anna Sergeyeva, at (416) 971-4494, ext. 228, or by sending an email to asergeyeva@greenroofs.org.

Sat, Dec 16

Morning Bird Hike Join fellow bird enthusiasts in a stroll through Towsley Canyon from 8-10am to birdwatch throughout the area. The park is located at 24255 The Old Road in Newhall. For more information call (661) 255-2974.

Sat, Dec 30**Star Party** Free public star parties are held monthly with the assistance of the Los Angeles Astronomical

Society and the Los Angeles Sidewalk Astronomers at the Griffith Observatory from 2 pm to 10 pm. For more information, visit the Los Angeles Astronomical Society at <http://www.laas.org>. The Griffith Park Observatory is located at 2800 East Observatory Road in Los Angeles. No public parking or drop-off. Shuttle reservations required. Visit www.lacity.org/rap/observatory/vshuttle.html, or call (888) 695-0888 for more information. Shuttle requires a fee.

The Alternative Car and Transportation Expo

Presented by the City of Santa Monica

December 9 & 10 from 9am-4pm at Barker Hangar,

Santa Monica Air Center

FREE ADMISSION!



Come to the **largest presentation ever** of electric, hydrogen, natural gas, biodiesel, ethanol and high MPG cars. There also will be presentations concerning mass transit, transportation planning, cycling options and much more!

Events include:

- A "Ride & Drive" lot for an experience with all technologies.
- Continuous seminars and panels discussing and debating alternative fuel technologies, tax credits, transportation solutions and more.
- A contest for transportation solutions.

For information regarding attending, exhibiting, or entering the contest, call (310) 390-2930 or visit <http://www.altcarexpo.com>.

(Green Roofs...Continued from page 1)

surrounding community. During warm weather, green roofs are cooler than conventional roof surfaces, thus helping to reduce energy consumption for air conditioning and mitigating the urban heat-island effect that produces higher temperatures in core urban areas (where most surfaces are covered by concrete and pavement) than in surrounding, less developed areas. Like other forms of vegetation, green roofs also help filter pollutants such as fine particulate matter and toxic gases from the air, and their cooling effect can help reduce the formation of ozone pollution, or smog. They prevent water pollution by filtering polluted runoff and greatly reducing the runoff amount that reaches the storm drains. Other benefits include longer roof life, habitat creation, sound absorption, and aesthetics.

The City of Los Angeles is currently updating its Energy Climate Action Plan, a program that estimates the CO₂ emissions from City of Los Angeles government operations and sets forth mitigation measures to reduce such emissions. Given their value in reducing energy consumption and hence the burning of fossil fuels, and their potential as a carbon sink, green roofs could be considered for inclusion in future plan updates. The Environmental Affairs Department is working with the City's Bureau of Engineering to identify City buildings that may be appropriate for a green roof demonstration project. The Department expects to report to City Council with their findings, including the potential for grant funding, in December or January.

For more information concerning how you can implement a green roof in your home or business, visit the Environmental Affairs Department website at <http://www.lacity.org/EAD> and click on the "Green Roofs Resource Guide" link.

("Desert Fires" ... Continued from page 3)

Many scientists argue that the main culprits behind the increasing fires are two highly flammable, non-native plants, known as red brome and cheatgrass. Researchers say that the weeds capture nitrogen from smog-laden air much more readily than do native plants, eventually gaining the upper hand in the environment.

While some advocates focus on invasive species as the primary concern, others worry about warming temperatures. Along with less winter snow, warmer weather generates increased summer thunderstorms and lightning strikes – which have been responsible for initiating all of the fires within Pipes Canyon Preserve and Joshua Tree National Park this summer. With more urbanization, motorized recreation and military activities as well, a great toll is being taken on the natural desert.

A vocal minority disagrees with the statements concerning invasive species or climate change, stating that there is not clear-cut evidence for such changes. Instead, they attribute the year's fires on the large number of wildflowers that bloomed in 2004, which was the wettest year in 100 years of recorded data concerning the desert. The dried remnants of those blooms would provide 1 to 2 tons of fuel per acre. Additionally, they argue that the recent droughts have caused the invasive red brome to die out, with the potential return of native grasses remaining in natural seed banks on adjoining, unburned islands of habitat. However, ongoing research shows that the volume of wildflowers necessary for such fires has not been observed at burns sites, with the predominant fuel being a mixture of cheatgrass and red brome.

All scientists do agree however that it will take centuries, if not millennia, for the desert to fully recover. Little can be done to repair the damage; many non-native weeds are too far spread to be dug out, and native seeds lack sufficient availability, and would cost millions of dollars to gather and plant. The Bureau of Land Management in Palm Springs is planning on taking a subdued approach to promoting desert regeneration, allowing what is the largest mass of undeveloped land in Southern California to regenerate naturally on its own.

For more information concerning the fires within the Southwest, visit the USDA Forest Service site at http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/research_project_summaries.



HOTLINE CONNECTION

The Environmental Information Center (EIC) serves as a referral source to the community. Our hotline connection offers a list of the most frequently requested numbers. If the number you need is not listed, please contact the EIC at **(213) 978-0888**. You can also visit our website at <http://www.lacity.org/ead> and click on *Environmental Information Center*.

Air Quality

Calidad del aire
South Coast Air Quality Management District
(800) 288-7664

Asbestos

Asbestos
Environmental Hygiene
(626) 430-5100

Bulky Item Pick-up

Recogida de articulos grandes
L.A. City Bureau of Sanitation
(800) 773-2489

Hazardous Waste/e-Waste

Desembolso de materiales peligrosos
L.A. County Dept. of Public Works
(888) 253-2652
L.A. City Bureau of Sanitation
(800) 988-6942

Housing and Building Complaints

Las quejas del construccion y albergar
Housing Code Enforcement
(213) 482-0000

Illegal Storm Drain Dumping

Depositos en los drenajes de desagües
Stormwater Management
(800) 974-9794

Indoor Air or Mold Concerns

Aire interior ó preocupaciones de moho

Environmental Hygiene
(626) 430-5440

Lead Poisoning

Veneno del plomo
National Lead Information Center
(800) 424-5323
Los Angeles County Lead Program
(800) LA-4-LEAD

Leaf Blowers

Sopladores de hojas
Leaf Blower Complaint Line
(800) 996-2489

Mosquitoes

Infestaciones de mosquitos
L.A. West Mosquito Abatement
(310) 915-7370

Recycling

Reciclaje
City of L.A. Public Works Dept.
(800) 773-2489

Smoking Violations

Infracciones de fumar
Office of the City Attorney
(888) 333-0730

Spaying/Neutering Pets

City of L.A. Animal Services
(888) 452-7381

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