

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

August 2002

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos

Serving the Indian Reservations of:
Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas

How to Weather Our Record Dry Summer

From sudden summer lightening storms to freak spring snow flurries, East County residents are all too familiar with the challenges of extreme weather.

We know it's unwise to wear dark clothing in the unforgiving August heat just as we know it's important to strip our property of dry vegetation to protect it from fire. This year however, between record low rainfall and years of overgrown brush, East County is facing its most challenging summer yet.

Ask Julian residents who recently witnessed the flames of the Pines Fire tearing across Volcan Mountain. The time is now for families to brush up on seasonal survival skills.

Dangerous brush

County fire officials say they can't remember a drier season than the one we're in now. Back in April, officials from the California Department of Forestry (CDF) warned that they rarely see such bone dry brush conditions in the spring.

Since then, fire officials have stepped up efforts to urge East County homeowners to create defensible space around all homes and buildings. Essentially a buffer between a building and an advancing fire, defensible space is the area around a structure that's been cleared of flammable materials.

Fire officials require defensible space around structures, but this year more than ever, officials recommend clearing 100 feet. Not only does defensible space cut down on the fuel that feeds fire, it creates an accessible zone for fire fighters to surround and protect threatened buildings.

No open fires in parks, wildlands

The County is taking steps to prevent wildfire by prohibiting open fires at campgrounds and parks. Effective immediately, no open fires or charcoal fires will be allowed at any County park including Dos Picos, Lake Morena, Potrero and Lake Jennings. Propane stoves and lanterns will be permitted but smoking outside of vehicles will not.

It is still believed that a cigarette, carelessly tossed from a car window, initially sparked the 10,000 acre Alpine fire in January of 2001. With your cooperation, we can prevent a similar blaze.

The County's new rules correspond to similar bans at campgrounds operated by the State and federal governments.

Much needed help from the State

Though the State hasn't answered San Diego County's pleas for a year-round fire season, State officials have ordered additional firefighting resources for our region and other parts of California.

I recently had the pleasure of joining CDF officials to welcome a new Sikorsky helicopter to Gillespie Field. The chopper

"The time is now for families to brush up on seasonal survival skills."

-Supervisor Dianne Jacob

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Fire and Drought

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holds a nine-member “helitack” crew and can carry a 420 gallon water bucket. It compliments two CDF air tankers now stationed in Ramona. Also, the State has assigned additional firefighters to crews in San Diego County and invested in a new aerial video camera that uses infrared technology to track fire lines through smoke. I appreciate the efforts of State Senator Bill Morrow who championed the County’s quest to bring these extra resources to our region.

Water Woes

At the root of our current fire threat is a severe drought. Across the County, rainfall nudged just above three inches last year compared with a normal 10 inches. While water officials believe we won’t be forced to ration this summer, there are several simple measures your family can take to help our region conserve water.

Landscaping accounts for 40 to 70 percent of the average household’s water use. Outside your home, water officials suggest that you water plants no more than twice weekly, install irrigation systems with automatic timers and consider planting drought resistant trees and shrubs. A modest 10 percent reduction in outdoor water use can save 50 billion gallons of water a year. That’s more than enough water for a city seventeen times the size of El Cajon!

Inside the home, your family is urged to take shorter showers, install low-flow shower heads and low-flush toilets and wait until dishwashers and washing machines are full to wash loads.

Between fire preparedness and water conservation, you can minimize the threat of fire and drought in the Back Country this summer. By helping your family, you’re helping others as well!



Tankers Away: CDF tankers like this S-2T will be joined by a new helicopter to protect the Back Country this fire season.

Supervisor Jacob’s**Community Datelines...**

RAMONA— The rural community of Ramona remains on a short list of potential sites for an international airport, despite repeated requests from residents to remove it. Unfortunately, consultants to the San Diego Regional Airport Authority somehow believe that Ramona is a viable location for a sprawling airport project. Last month, I testified before the Airport Authority and urged members to recognize that the peaceful, agricultural community of Ramona is no place for the roaring jets of commercial aircraft. For more than two years, Ramona residents and I have been working diligently to preserve thousands of acres of pristine grasslands in Ramona for future generations. We’ll work just as diligently to halt an international airport. Next month, the Airport Authority will release a shorter list of possible international airport sites. No one expects to see Ramona on the list.

SPRING VALLEY— Governor Davis and the state legislature have the chance to be heroes to thousands of young people in Spring Valley. The community, which desperately needs a gym and teen center, raised more than \$4 million to build their dream youth complex. Two years ago, the State linked arms with the community and gave \$837,000 to the project. Now, however, the State is taking back its previously committed funds citing the State’s budget crisis. The people of Spring Valley and I have sent a letter to the Governor urging him to do the right thing and to keep his promise to Spring Valley!



1-877-No2Meth: Don't let the illegal dumping of toxic meth chemicals ruin your summertime picnic.

Keeping toxic chemicals out of scenic County parks

The cooler is full of soda and burgers. The weather is perfect, the traffic's not bad and your family is out for a day of fun in the sun. When you arrive at your favorite park or campground, it's full of trash. What could be worse?

What if that litter was poisonous? What if it killed plants, birds, and animals? What if that trash included toxic chemicals that leaked into streams and poisoned ground water?

What if you got sick, just from trying to clean it up? What if somebody dumped leftovers from an illegal drug lab in your favorite spot?

Last year, more than 40 meth labs and dumpsites were found in San Diego County, most in remote rural areas, far from the watchful eye of law enforcement. Most of us will enjoy our Back Country hikes and bike rides and never encounter a meth lab or dumpsite. But it's important to be aware of hazards that are created when meth cookers dump leftovers on public land.

Meth labs and dumpsites are loaded with chemicals, including hydrochloric acid, red phosphorous, iodine, acetone, and other solvents. For every pound of meth that's produced, there are about six pounds of waste material left over. Some of these chemicals can create poisonous gases. Others are explosive or flammable, and could spark a brushfire. That's a huge concern, since San Diego County is experiencing its driest season in history.

The fire hazards and environmental impacts of meth labs and dumpsites can be minimized if those sites are identified and properly cleaned up. Hazardous materials experts have the know-how and the protective gear to dispose of meth chemicals and decontaminate dumpsites. You can keep our scenic parks safe and healthy by reporting suspected dumpsites to law enforcement.

If you think you've encountered a meth dumpsite or a lab, please do not attempt to clean it up. Call the County's meth hotline 1-877-No2Meth.

Join me for Coffee and Conversation...

Friday, August 9, 2002 8:30 a.m.
Wynola Pizza Express
4355 Highway 78, Santa Ysabel

Friday, September 27, 2002 8:30 a.m.
Incredible Cheesecake Company
11555 Via Rancho San Diego Road, El Cajon

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We hope to hear from you soon!

Aug-02

DIANNE JACOB

Supervisor, Second District
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 531-5522
(800) 852-7322 toll free
(619) 696-7253 fax

e-mail:
dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov

website:
www.diannejacob.com

(619)531-5522

The Second District Staff

Shannan Sorrell

Chief of Staff

Mike Kulis

Deputy Chief of Staff

Chimene Adams

Policy Advisor

Teresa Alvarez

Administrative Assistant

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