



OJAI VALLEY GREEN COALITION

Newsletter Issue 1

January 2008

Coalition and Community

The Coalition was not idle during the holidays. It is but a postage stamp or two away from the all important step of 501c3 nonprofit status for itself and thanks the Ojai Foundation for working with the Coalition under its nonprofit umbrella during our start-up phase. Also, our new website www.ojavalleygreencoalition.org is up & ready for action.

The Coalition further announces the coming of its Monthly Program Series.

Action committees will rotate speakers and presentations throughout the year to share and enlighten us as a community. Watch for press releases & website notices. A few details still to be worked out but here's a preview.

**The Ojai Valley Green Coalition
Presents
Ecology and Community
A Monthly Social to
Educate & Engage
Presentations
'Naturally Building Our Future'
'What Is a Watershed'
'Food, Farm and Eco-Eating'**

Naturally Building Our Future presentation explores the sustainability and economics of our choices in housing and community design. See examples of beautiful buildings built with strawbale, adobe, cobb and more. Learn how individuals and communities have adopted healthier building practices that improve property value, increase affordable housing options and demonstrate community environmental and social responsibility. All of this brought to you by our Building Committee.

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In and Around Town

Slide show & signing David Wann, author *Simple Prosperity*. Free on February 5, 7pm, Oak Grove School
Info Sara Benjamin 895-1241 or
February 7, 7pm, Art Barn, Ventura
Info Lynn Okun 653-0817

February 13, 3pm, VCREA Plan Room, Ventura. Greening Your Project thru Energy Efficiency Workshop. www.vcenergy.org

February 23, 10am Ojai Community Garden, Plant Propagation Workshop. www.ojaigarden.com

February 25, 6pm Patagonia Fire House, GBCVC Presentation Navy & Sustainability. www.gbcvc.org

February 26, 10am and 28, 3pm, Tour Navy Energy & Sustainable Demonstration Building. Free. Info at www.gbcvc.org

March 8 and 9, Ojai Trees
Tree planting, Linda 640-0381

March 12, 3pm, VCREA Plan Room, Ventura. Greening Your Project thru Energy Efficiency Workshop. Info at www.vcenergy.org

April 13, Oak Grove School
Annual Earth Day Celebration.
Stay Tune for Coalition Info

www.ojavalleygreencoalition.org

Indoor Air Quality & Good Ole' Fashion Cleaning

The EPA consistently ranks indoor pollution among the top five risks to public health. And major culprits are the chemicals in cleaning products. These chemicals aren't just a threat while they are being used. The carbon-based gases known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released by common cleaning products can hang around in the air for days, even weeks. Able to cross the blood-brain barrier, VOCs can depress the central nervous system, irritate eyes, nose and throat, reduce pulmonary function and increase the risk of developing or worsening asthma. Long term exposure can contribute to a variety of

cancers. These simple, nontoxic and cheaper cleaning products may be in your cabinet now.

White Vinegar: This pantry staple cuts grease, eats lime deposits and destroys odors. It's good for washing windows and kitchen counters, shining bathroom fixtures, and sanitizing toilets and floors. Mix with a few drops of olive oil to polish wood.

Borax: Got mold? Combine equal amounts of borax and white vinegar to banish mold and mildew from hard surfaces. This natural mineral can also clean your toilet. Pour 1 cup into the toilet bowl and let sit for a few hours before scrubbing.

Waste: A 21st Century Resource

Trash is a major contributor to global warming. Solid waste landfills are the single largest man-made source of methane gas in the United States. Methane (CH₄) is a powerful greenhouse gas that is 23 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than the most prevalent greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (CO₂). Ton for ton, recycling reduces more pollution, saves more energy and reduces GHG emissions more than any other activity besides source reduction.

Californians currently throw away millions of tons of recyclable materials every year. According to the California Integrated Waste Management Board (source for facts & figures herein, www.ciwmb.org), over 60 percent of the 'garbage' in California landfills can be composted or recycled. Perhaps the most important first step is a shift in people's minds of looking at the byproducts of consumption as waste rather than resources.

California communities have been mandated by the state to divert a minimum of 50% since 2000. The city of Ojai and the county have not met this 'resource' diversion rate.

From 1995 to 2005 the city averaged 40% diversion, peaking in 2000 at 47% but standing at only 35% in 2005 the last official available statistics. The county area averaged 45.5% in the same time frame, peaked in 2000/2001 with both years at 58% and dropped with Ojai to 41% in 2005. However, the state continues to give 'good faith effort' status and extensions rather than fining the city and county. National Recycling Coalition director, Kate Krebs points out national recycling growth rates were flat in 2006 and "the reality is that most of the 80% of Americans who recycle do so only on an occasional basis".

There are systems in place within the county that seem to be working relatively well. Oxnard and Ventura both have had a 60% or higher diversion rate since 2000. Note: 2006 and 2007 figures will not be available for quite awhile. The state collects the raw data, gives it to the respective cities and counties, who then write the reports to give back to the state.

The Coalition Waste Management committee hopes to lead the way to better citizen education and participation

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Baking Soda: Substitute it for scouring powder to scrub sinks without scratching. It's also excellent for wiping down and deodorizing the fridge. Combine with an equal amount of vinegar to freshen drains and prevent clogs.

Salt: Useful for cleaning that grungy oven, this natural abrasive is just as terrific for soaking up fresh carpet stains like red wine, coffee or ink. ▲

From Ellen Sandbeck, author of *Organic Housekeeping* and Kim



Classifieds

Bringing the OVGC together with the community.

Are logistics your thing, the gift of gab? Consider joining the OVGC Resource committee to raise funds and bring in other valuable resources. Please contact Linda at lhart412@adelphia.net.

Coalition members do you have a 'Guerilla Green' story? Committee chairs or members can you write an article on specific committee actions? Contact Deborah at deborah.rssc@sbcglobal.net.

Wanted: Technical person(s) to run audio visual equipment for events. Projectors and screens, sound system and mics, films, videos, camera equipment etc. Contact deborah.rssc@sbcglobal.net.

'Guerrilla Green': *to undermine the enemy in the hue lying between yellow and blue.*

Joining the Coalition and the waste management committee has prompted me to new levels of reduce, reuse and recycle. You'll see me at meetings with file folders made from converted cereal boxes now. Once I started doing this, I got to eyeballing the wax bag liners that come inside the cereal box. I've discovered they make great freezer bags, sandwich bags and partnered with rubber bands they can wrap just about any thing.

I often make a sandwich for my husband when he'll be away from our home office and he always eats while driving. The first time I used a wax bag to wrap his sandwich, I explained to him it might not be a good idea to eat while driving because of maneuvering rubber bands and the wax paper is kind of awkward to unfold unlike saran wrap. He then says with a straight face "so not only should I not drive but I should hide when I eat." Maybe you had to be there, but I chuckled about that for a couple of days. And the cereal boxes turned file folders? His only comment, "please don't make me."

Member Column: Deborah Pendrev

"To waste, to destroy our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed." Theodore Roosevelt, Seventh Annual Message, December 3, 1907



Coalition Action Committees

"Knowledge is Power, When Put into Action"

Building & Construction will be presenting a Sustainable Building Plan to the city and is addressing existing building codes. A few areas of focus are approval of strawbale construction, gray water usage, improving construction site recycling and going beyond Title 24 requirements. Meetings Feb 5 and 26, 7pm, Room 6 OUSD*.

Energy is evaluating Valley solar, electric, propane and gas usage, payer rates, and top energy consumers and will focus on (1) working with the largest energy users to reduce their consumption; (2) working with HELP of Ojai (particularly West campus) and other NGO's to help them reduce their usage; (3) developing educational materials for distribution and learning. Meeting Feb. 26th 7 pm, Chaparral High School auditorium.

Environmental Health will focus on home, businesses and schools indoor air quality through cleaning products, building supplies and furnishings. Outdoor air quality and watershed affected by lawn care products. Water quality and transportation issues will also be addressed. Personal health as it relates to personal care products, baby products, and EMF (electromagnetic frequencies). Meeting Feb 13, 6:30pm, Location TBD, please check in later at website.

Food & Agriculture has created 3 subcommittees to focus attention: food security (mapping Valley food & water resources), eco-eating (educational campaign), and local food production (eco-farm & edible garden tours and mapping Valley harvests). The committee is also looking at the potential of partnering with Ojai Trees on a 'Fruit Tree Project' - gleaned fruit from private orchards. Meeting Feb 14, Noon, Farmer & The Cook.

Transportation is pursuing meeting with the City and School District to discuss issues of: increasing carpooling and other modes of transportation through incentives, starting an 'Idle Free' campaign, improving traffic flow and air shed, and conversion of government/school fleet to biofuels or replacing them with more trolley like, multi-purpose vehicles. Meeting Feb 11, 7:30pm, Room 6 OUSD*.

Waste Management is researching what recycling programs are already in place for homes, businesses, haulers and government agencies. They have made a comprehensive outline of issues & entities to focus on. Members Marcia & Celeste have just taken off with Marcia's battery recycling program. She has taken over 1,400 pounds of batteries for recycling since September 07. Look for them at the Sunday Farmers Market to drop-off or get list of locations. Meeting Feb 7, 7pm, Oak Grove School, Main House.

Watershed will be drafting policy change ideas for presentation to Ojai City Council & Watershed Protection District while developing a watershed committee vision document & getting existing documentaries into local TV programming. Direct actions include signs identifying waterway areas, supporting Ojai Trees projects, creating a watershed website, legislation to outlaw the sale of invasive plants, and ocean friendly/drought-tolerant demo gardens in Ojai. Meeting Feb 7, 7pm, Auditorium OUSD*. ▲

Our Mission Statements:

Coalition: to bring together community organizations, governments, schools, businesses, and citizens of all ages to make Ojai Valley a model green and sustainable community.

Building & Construction: transform the way buildings in the Ojai Valley are designed, built, and operated by educating the public and policy makers about the benefits of Green building, and by supporting the adoption of Green building codes.

Energy: guide the Ojai Valley toward energy independence, conservation, and greenhouse gas neutrality. *Education *Production *Efficiency *Economic Vitality

Environmental Health: increase awareness of how everyday environmental toxins affect our health and daily lives. We believe that through personal, conscious choice of healthier eco-friendly products we can save trees, oil, land and water; we can reduce pollution..... and positively affect our health.

Food & Agriculture: develop greater valley-wide awareness of the environmental impact of our food choices, and to reduce our carbon footprint by encouraging a "Buy Fresh, Buy Local, and Eat Less Meat" fruits and vegetables campaign.

Waste Management: encourage all people and businesses in the Ojai Valley to reduce, reuse, recycle and intelligently dispose of waste materials. To promote integrated waste management, composting and sustainable living practices in the Ojai Valley through education, example and advocacy.

Transportation: promote transportation options that result in reduced air pollution, traffic congestion, and reliance on petroleum as a primary fuel source. Our goal is to make Ojai a model walking, biking, and alternative transportation friendly community.

Watershed: balance and integrate people and living systems through a healthy sustainable watershed. Our target audiences will be the general public, policy makers and school children.

Meeting dates also online

*Ojai Unified School District (OUSD) is at 414 E. Ojai Ave.

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What Is a Watershed reminds us that water and land use define the Ojai Valley and the Ventura River watershed. Our Watershed committee will lead you through the steps of where our water comes from and how land use affects water supply and water quality. Then learn ways we can protect our watershed as we become better stewards of our precious resources to ensure a sustainable future.

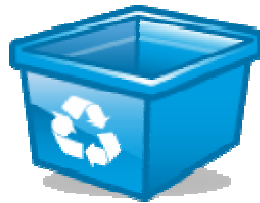
Food, Farm and Eco-Eating will educate us on what food resources exist within the Valley through a Food Security Assessment. Then learn more about Local Food Production and a new Community Supported Agriculture (C.S.A.) program. The environmental impact of livestock production and Eco-Eating ideas will also be shared. ▲

CHECK IT OUT: The U.S. EPA has a WaterSense label program. It provides a way for customers to identify high-performance, water-efficient products for their homes. Bathroom sink faucets have just been added and had to use 30 percent less water than conventional models to qualify. For a list of products featuring the WaterSense label, visit the agency's website www.epa.gov/watersense. ▲

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along with our government entities and businesses in the Ojai Valley.

One of their first endeavors is improving e-waste recycling: see the notice at bottom of page. In the meantime Valley residents have the Ventura County Pollution Center Program. All Valley residents should have received this year's collection calendar last week. It does require an appointment but you can combine e-waste with other hazardous waste recycling at the same location. Call 658-4323 for residential appointments & 987-0717 for small business appointments & information. Collection events are held on the fourth Saturday of each month, with the exceptions of May, November, and December due to holidays during those months. The Collection Events accept paints, solvents, cleaning products, lawn & garden products, photographic chemicals, oil, anti-freeze, car and household batteries, light tubes, electronic wastes and more. For more options in Ventura County go to www.wasteless.org. ▲



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- City of Ojai
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- Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Ojai Valley Youth Foundation
- Oak Grove School
- The Ojai Foundation
- Design + Vision, Inc.
- The Pure Body Institute
- The Ojai Post
- Symphony of Life Spiritual Center

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www.ojaivalleygreencoalition.org

Events and Waste Management members have formed a subcommittee to work on educational info markers. In the course of working on an e-waste list, they found a company willing to provide weekly pick-up service to our community. The great part is they refurbish electronics first for those in need and then recycle what can't be salvaged. Electronics are not brokered overseas. It is recommended you do this yourself but hard drives are destroyed or wiped clean of data by the company. **Are you an employer or employee with a company willing and able to be a collection site?** It is also hoped to combine cell phone and ink/laser cartridge collection as a fundraiser for the Coalition. So start saving these items too! It is illegal for any tech 'trash' to be placed in the trash destined for the landfill. Please contact Deborah at deborah.rssc@sbcglobal.net if you can help or have ideas. Paradox Community Technologies www.paradoxct.com. based in Fillmore, thank you for your good work.