

2019 Annual Report

Hikes – We led three hikes organized by David Haigh: Golden Open Space in May; Ojito Wilderness In July and Lybrook Badlands in October. We are working toward our first overnight trip, possibly to Ute Mountain Tribal Park in southwestern Colorado where attendees, after a relaxing bus ride, will be able to choose among hikes with varying levels of effort, plus an overnight at the tribal casino hotel for a bit of indoor adventure.

Pipeline Activities – LPA continues to recognize that pipeline safety oversight in Placitas is virtually non-existent. As we have for the last 17 years, LPA is directly involved in trying to protect Placitas from a pipeline disaster. LPA Board members have droned the pipeline route, reported safety violations and worked to obtain answers regarding pipeline safety decisions regarding the three high pressure flammable Interstate pipelines running up Las Huertas creek. The LPA pipeline committee gave Senator Udall's office a list of concerns, approved by the Sandoval County Commissioners in October 2019. We asked Senator Udall to write a letter to both the Inspector General of the DOT and to Karen Lynch of PHMSA requesting answers to our pipeline safety questions. Those questions have not been answered.

Gravel Mining – Working with Pathways Wildlife Corridors, Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association and the Perseveration Trust, we accomplished the introduction of the "Preserve the Buffalo Tract Preservation Act" legislation by Senator Heinrich (co-sponsored by Senator Udall) and Representative Haaland to remove all mineral rights from the Placitas area BLM lands. The Senate bill has cleared the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The legislation withdraws four parcels of BLM lands surrounding Placitas, including the Buffalo Tract and the Crest of Montezuma, from any mineral development, including gravel mining! We continue to work with Representative Haaland to get the markups of the House bill finished, get it out of committee and introduced to the full House for a vote. Adding another large gravel mine to the five we already have in our community poses a significant air quality and health hazard.

The Heart of Placitas: KUPR - The August 2019 Woodstock 50-year Reunion concert was "groovy". More than 200 fans of our local low power public radio station rocked to music at the winery. Memories were recalled plus tie dye lessons and dancing. Don't miss the March concert at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church - they need your support as the station completes renovation and moves into its new home in the spring.

Bees and Pollinators – In December Jade Leyva, artist and local bee activist, presented a talk about how we can protect bees and other pollinators. Bees need protection, as Jade cautions, because their numbers have dwindled by almost half in the last decade. She expressed that we soon will have too few pollinators to sustain our food supplies unless we all take some action. LPA, along with the Santa Ana Garden Center, put together a list of recommended native Placitas wildflowers and a seed selection that will encourage pollinators. Those in attendance are now planting the seeds they purchased for spring and summer arrival.

Placitas Plants and Reference Materials - Michael Crofoot's collection of writings, field notes, and community information was purchased by LPA. We are editing and making available on our website, in lectures and in print much of this information. Michael's expansive collection of writings and field notes on Placitas plants, herbs, geology, native seeds and erosion control will not be lost to the community he loved and worked in. He has retired to the West Coast at an altitude better suited to his health, but his vast library of information about what to plant, where to plant, and why you might want to plant a specific native species will be available to us all beginning with Placitas Wildflowers.

LPA's focus is Quality of Life – the livability and sustainability of this wonderful place we call home is LPA's guiding principle. We work hand in hand with ES-CA on many issues, but ES-CA serves as a liaison between government and the community and has more leeway in lobbying for certain issues. LPA focuses on the grassroots community – reaching out to you to inform and call for action, when needed, to protect what we hold dear. LPA needs your support to continue its work. If you are not already a subscribing member, it's easy. Just go to www.lasplacitas.org and join. You can also just sign up for our newsletter without joining.