

## Conservancy Produces 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Music Festival in support of Land Conservation

**F**or the ninth year, the Ventura Hillsides Conservancy will present its annual Music Festival, on Sunday, September 25, 2011. The show will once again unfold in beautiful Arroyo Verde Park and solidify its place as a family-friendly, community tradition. All proceeds will support the Conservancy open space and conservation projects.

Featured performers include the **Chris Robinson Brotherhood**, **Blind Boys of Alabama**, the **Fabulous Thunderbirds**, and **David Lindley**.

The popular Black Crowes guitarist heads up the **Chris Robinson Brotherhood**, a solo project he formed while the Crowes are on hiatus. Almost within moments of the closing chords of the "Say Goodbye to Bad Guys" tour in San Francisco, lead singer Chris Robinson made public his new venture. Featuring Neal Casal on guitar, Adam MacDougall on keyboards, George Sluppick on drums and Mark "Muddy"

Dutton on bass, the Brotherhood has been working on new songs that, Robinson states via the band's website, "will be digging deep into what is happening." Arroyo Verde Park is the perfect spot for Robinson's brand of passionate jam-based folk-rock, and he invites you to "come with your good vibes" to share with other Crowe faithful.

From the beginning, 30 years ago, **The Fabulous Thunderbirds** have been led by one of a kind vocalist / harmonica player, Kim Wilson. The group's distinctive and powerful sound mixes Texas blues and southern rock with harmonica laced swamp blues and R&B. Because of their peerless musicianship and unique vocals, they have a huge worldwide fan base and have always been favorites of top

musicians, leading to world tours with The Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton.

**The Blind Boys of Alabama** are recognized worldwide as living legends of gospel music. They are celebrated by The Grammys and The National Endowment for the Arts with Lifetime Achievement Awards, and inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. They have sung for two presidents in the White House and won five Grammy® Awards. They have attained the highest levels of achievement in a career that spans over 70 years and shows no signs of diminishing.

Multi-instrumentalist **David Lindley** performs music that redefines the word "eclectic." Lindley, well known for his many years as the featured accompanist with Jackson Browne,

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CHRIS ROBINSON BROTHERHOOD

## VHC HELPS TO LEAD STUDENT EFFORT TO CLEAN UP VENTURA RIVER

For the fourth year in a row, the City of Ventura has partnered with California Lutheran University to provide a day of service learning for incoming freshman and transfer students. Over 600 volunteers reported for duty on August 30<sup>th</sup> and descended upon the Ventura riverbed in an effort to remove trash and litter from homeless encampments that populate the watercourse from the Main Street Bridge all the way to the river's mouth. This is the second year Conservancy Trustee Brooke Ashworth and staff members Derek Poultney and Lee Sherman were invited to participate as team leaders. The students were divided into



VHC Staffer Lee Sherman mixes paint while his team uses rollers to cover graffiti.

groups of 20 and assigned one of 30 sites to work on. We used gloves, grabbers, bags and barrels to haul trash to dumpsters placed at intervals along the levee. For the first time the project also included a beautification component: painting over the copious graffiti scrawled beneath the Main Street Bridge and the Highway 101 overpass. Overall, we removed 11.3 tons of trash that could have been washed downstream into the ocean. The Conservancy is honored to be one of the many community partners involved and we applaud the hundreds of students who gave their time, effort and energy. Let's go for 12 tons next year!

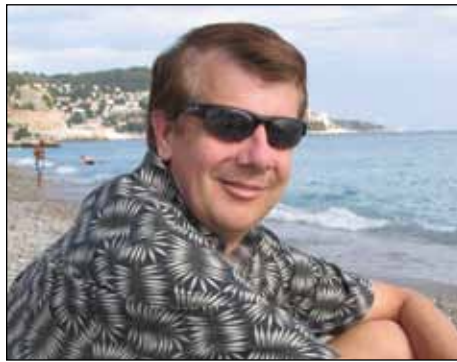
## Two New Trustees Join the Board



Tim Coonan

At its May 2011, meeting, the VHC Board appointed its two newest Trustees: Tim Coonan and Gerhardt Hubner. Each will serve a three-year term, which is renewable one time before the VHC's policy instituting a cycle-off provision is invoked.

Coonan is a wildlife biologist for the National Park Service at Channel Islands National Park, where he has led the park's island fox recovery program since 1999. He has studied island foxes and other fauna on the islands since 1992. Prior to his island post, he worked in Death Valley National Park, and in Arizona and Texas. Coonan completed his undergraduate work at Notre Dame and graduate work at Northern Arizona University. He has served for over two years as a VHC Advisor, focusing on



Gerhardt Hubner

biological studies on the Conservancy's 16 acres of Ventura River properties.

"Ventura has long supported influential grassroots-type environmental groups, such as the local Surfrider chapter," says Coonan. "In this tradition the Ventura Hillside Conservancy has developed considerable momentum in its short tenure, and has the potential to be the primary conservator of wild lands in and around Ventura. I look forward to helping the Conservancy realize that goal, as it focuses on stewardship opportunities in the Hillside and the Ventura River."

Hubner is a Professional Geologist with over 20 years experience in surface and ground water resource assessment, protection, and management. Since November 2005, he has worked for

the County of Ventura, Watershed Protection District, as Deputy Director of Public Works overseeing the Water and Environmental Resources Division. Prior to that Gerhardt worked for the State of California Regional Water Quality Board on surface and groundwater water quality programs, including streams, lakes and reservoirs, wetlands, and coastal marine/estuarine ecosystems from Ventura through San Luis Obispo counties. He currently is Chair of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Program, a Commissioner on the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) Commission, and a Director on the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) Board. Gerhardt is a resident of Ventura, married with three children.

"I believe I can positively assist the Ventura Hillside Conservancy with the ongoing challenges of land acquisition and stewardship, strategic plan development, opportunities for partnering within the Ventura River watershed, and financial management and accountability," he says.

We look forward to the leadership these two professionals bring to Ventura's land trust. ☘

# 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Music Festival

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and leader of his own band El Rayo-X, has long championed the concept of world music. The David Lindley electro-acoustic performance effortlessly combines American folk, blues, and bluegrass traditions with elements from African, Arabic, Asian, Celtic, Malagasy, and Turkish musical sources. Lindley incorporates an incredible array of stringed instruments including but not limited to Kona and Weissenborn Hawaiian lap steel guitar, Turkish saz and chumbus, Middle Eastern oud, and Irish bouzouki. The eye-poppingly clad “Mr. Dave’s” uncanny vocal mimicry and demented sense of humor make his onstage banter a highlight of the show.

As in past years, seating for the event will be festival-style, using the contours of the grassy hill in Arroyo Verde Park as a natural amphitheatre. The Festival will afford a rare opportunity to enjoy superb live music in one of Ventura’s most beautiful outdoor settings. The venue opens at 11:30 AM, to allow for full enjoyment of the food, booths, and kids’ play area. The music begins at 1:00 PM.

General admission is \$45. Tickets are still available at Salzer’s Records, Great Pacific Iron Works, Simone’s Coffee & Tea, Pete’s Breakfast House, and The Wine Rack in Ventura, and on the Conservancy’s website: <http://www.venturahillsides.org>. Special \$150 Gold Circle and other special ticket packages

## Ventura Hillsides Conservancy Outlook



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*Story submissions and ideas welcomed.*

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**BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA**



**THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS**

are available only on the Conservancy’s website.

As in past years, current, new, and renewing members who took advantage of the July pre-sale will gain early entry to the festival grounds at 11:00 AM for prime seat selection. Gates open for the public at 11:30 AM, and the entertainment commences at 1:00 PM. Parking will be provided at Ventura College with free shuttle buses to the Festival grounds. Concertgoers are encouraged to walk, bicycle, carpool, or even skate to the event, and to refrain from parking in residential

neighborhoods near Arroyo Verde Park. The Festival will again offer a secure-park bicycle and stroller corral. Concertgoers are encouraged to bring low-back beach chairs, cushions, and blankets.

Food and beverages will be available at the concert. Picnics and small coolers are welcome but glass, alcohol, and pets are not permitted. No cameras or recorders are permitted in the Festival grounds.

*Additional Information about this year’s Music Festival on page 8*

## OUR NEW

# Ventura River Property

*Story and Photos by Bob Chianese and Stephen Svete*

**T**he Conservancy received a 17-acre portion of Ventura River riparian land from owner Buz Bonsall through a court decision. The property stretches north just above the Ventura wastewater treatment plant, which is west of Highway 33 and above Canada Larga Road. From there it extends north-northwest in a long irregular, narrow parallelogram on the west side of the Ventura River / Ojai Valley Bike Trail. The river is mainly invisible from the trail due to dense vegetation.

That thick vegetation along some of the banks makes this river land quite inaccessible now, with plenty of

native brush, sycamores, oaks, and willows, with some poison oak, and of course invasive arundo donax. The far western edge has active avocado and lemon orchards for partial borders on higher tableland. The river itself and surroundings are wild looking and varied, and the water this August is deep, quick moving, and clear, with bright green algae floats in calmer portions. Tiny black fish fry lead the river walker down stream. Herons complain about disturbing their solitude.

At the upper portion of the property, the river flows south in one broad channel, about four feet deep and thirty feet



**1. BROAD UPPER CHANNEL** — This wide channel near the north top of the property — the deepest part here about 4 feet — is walled with curtains of dense brush and tree growth on either side.



**2. STONY BOTTOM** — Swept-clean river rocks seem placed as smoothed pavers on the bottom.



**5. STONE FIELD** — A large stone or cobble field comprises the main center section of the property, obviously flooded during high water.



**6. VEGETATION** — Dry riparian vegetation covers some of the hot exposed stone field.

Aerial view and boundary area of acquired property.



wide, with the bottom seemingly paved with medium sized stones. The long central portion of the land has a very large open boulder field, where the river fragments into small and medium channels fed by numerous cross-flows. The land obviously drops in elevation here as these narrow flows are swift and forceful. In the bottom portion of our property the river merges into one channel again, with a deep green pool at the end of a long cascade.

These features can be seen quite distinctly on close-up maps on Google Earth. The top of the wastewater plant is a good marker for locating its south edge. The accompanying photos depict some of these riparian features.



**3. CROSS-FLOW AND CHANNEL** — A side flow cuts straight across a smaller channel and sluices it to a larger channel below.



**4. CROSS FLOW** — These cross-river causeways pour fast moving water over large rocks and then reform the main channel below.



**7. CASCADE** — Waters coming together from the fragmented center section of the river rush down together to form an elegant cascade.



**8. DEEP POOL** — A deep green pool—about 8 feet deep in center—edged with rock marks the south terminus of the property.

ONE OF OUR  
*Quality Sponsors*

At VHC we are big fans of Firestone Walker Brewing Company. The folks there not only craft great brews locally; they have supported VHC at the Ventura Hillsides Music Festival for going on eight years.

Many people don't realize that when we pour Firestone Walker at the festival, every ounce sold benefits the Conservancy. Firestone Walker has always donated all the beer, and the recyclable cups, too. It's a treat for us to offer craft beers that are freshly brewed locally in the Tri-Counties. And these aren't just any brews, but three-time Beer World Cup champion beers.

This year at the Music Festival on September 25<sup>th</sup>, Firestone Walker will feature three brews: their wildly popular flagship British-style bitter Double Barrel Ale; the summertime fusion wheat brew Solace with its citrusy spice nose; and Pale 31, their crisp medium pale ale named after our home state of California. If you are 21 or older, you can pick up a Ventura Hillsides Music Festival "Six Pack" ticket offer from our website—six general admission tickets bundled with six free Festival beer coupons.

We send a giant thank you to our friends at Firestone Walker for their enthusiastic support of the Conservancy and its mission. It's a partnership we treasure.

---Brooke Ashworth



## Ventura Audubon Society Welcomes Opportunity to Count Birds at the Conservancy's New River Acquisition Site

Every December, the Ventura Audubon Society counts every species of bird along selected sites on the Ventura River for the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). We usually tally about 80-90 separate species in one day, including those from the estuary. Last year, we found 89 species and nearly 4,300 individuals. The complete list of Ventura birds seen on the 2010 Christmas Bird Count can be found at <http://www.venturaaudubon.org/>.

However, it has been difficult to access the River below the Foster Park Bridge because of its status as private property.

Now that the Conservancy has acquired this land, Audubon citizen-scientists hope to bird this area freely come every December, to assess the status of wintering ducks, wading birds, and songbirds that prefer a riverine ecosystem. This secluded area may contain additional species. In the spring and summer, it is likely that Least Bell's Vireo, an endangered species, may nest along here, since they have been found along nearby Canada Larga Creek.

Ventura River Birds highly sought during the Christmas bird count are: Hooded Merganser, Red-Breasted Merganser, and Green-Winged Teal; the Egrets: Snowy, Great, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron; Hawks: including Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Ferruginous, Cooper's Hawk, Kestrel, and Merlin; wintering warblers that frequent the streamside willows, including Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned, and Common Yellowthroat; the difficult-to-find Marsh Wren that hides among the cattails; Kingfisher; and Woodpeckers



that enjoy the scattered Sycamores in the floodplain.

Thanks to the Ventura Hillsides Conservancy for preserving riverine habitat, great habitat for birds.

— Kay Register,  
*Sector One Leader, Christmas Bird Count, Ventura Audubon Society*

### Top 10 Species observed in the Ventura River Watershed

Location: Ventura CBC SECTOR 1

Observation date: 12/18/10 **Number of species: 89**

1. Western/Clark's Grebe - *Aechmophorus occidentalis/clarkii* (1750)
2. Western Grebe - *Aechmophorus occidentalis* (315)
3. Sanderling - *Calidris alba* (258)
4. Willet - *Tringa semipalmata* (214)
5. Brown Pelican - *Pelecanus occidentalis* (203)
6. Bushtit - *Psaltriparus minimus* (146)
7. Western Gull - *Larus occidentalis* (142)
8. Heermann's Gull - *Larus heermanni* (109)
9. American Crow - *Corvus brachyrhynchos* (104)
10. Pacific Loon - *Gavia pacifica* (100)

## Ventura Hillsides Conservancy

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gary Bednorz, *President*  
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William B. Smith, *Secretary*  
Brooke Ashworth  
Tim Coonan  
Gerhardt Hubner  
Jamie L. King  
Stephen Svete  
Tom Weisel

### — OUR MISSION —

*To preserve the hillsides, canyons, and open space that contribute to the natural environment and unique character of the City of San Buenaventura and the surrounding region for the benefit of present and future generations.*

VHC is a proud member of the Land Trust Alliance  
Visit [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).



## Board of Trustees bids adieu to Ken Merideth and Pat Perkins

Charter trustees Ken Merideth and Pat Perkins have cycled off the Board effective upon the close of its June monthly meeting. The Board immediately appointed both men to its Advisors group. Ken and Pat both served for over eight years since VHC's founding in April 2003. The change followed the Conservancy's adopted accession and succession policy. Both men are retired, and will continue traveling and visiting children and grandchildren in faraway places, including the Bay Area and Nicaragua.



Ken has served as the organization's Treasurer since its founding, and will remain in that post as an Advisor. "I am delighted to see Ventura

Hillsides Conservancy has grown from a dream to a well-recognized organization, recognized by residents, landowners and city and county governments," said Merideth. "I am proud to have helped in this growth and look forward to the leadership of new board trustees."

Pat Perkins was the organization's original Vice President. "I have come to appreciate the tremendous value of VHC's strong, ongoing presence, and readiness to protect these valuable resources when the time comes. I look forward to doing my part as a volunteer and advisor."



Thank you for the countless hours of service, Ken and Pat, and for all you have done to contribute to a bright future for Ventura with healthy, ample and functional open space areas.

## On Steelhead and Land Conservation

By Paul Jenkin — Environmental Director, Surfrider Foundation

Most of us think of land conservation as preservation of the open space and views that make Ventura such a beautiful place to live. But land conservation, in so many ways, is really all about water conservation.

Perhaps the best indicator for how well we are managing our watersheds and coastal resources is the steelhead trout. Steelhead need cool, clean water in the river, and a healthy estuary in which to make the transition to the salty ocean environment. NOAA Fisheries listed the southern steelhead as endangered in 1997, and identified those remaining in the Ventura River as one of the primary core populations for recovery. As a result, we are enjoying increasing support from federal and state agencies for ongoing efforts to restore the ocean-run steelhead that once attracted anglers from throughout California.

While dams, like the obsolete Matilija Dam, are the single biggest obstruction to steelhead populations, everything else we do on land can have an effect. Urban development causes an increase in polluted runoff, and prevents rainfall from recharging the underground aquifers that sustain surface flows. Development in floodplains is especially damaging, as this inevitably leads to the construction of levees that alter the natural river processes necessary for fish migration and over-summer habitat for fish.

Recent progress in developing a 'Ventura River Parkway' provides great hope for the future of our river and the native steelhead. The ultimate goal is to create a continuous greenbelt extending the length of the river. Look for upcoming ways to get involved with the Ventura River Parkway.

### Our Steelhead

by Bob Chianese

A close salmon relative, the steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*),

is a rainbow trout spawned in pools and headwaters of streams and rivers, living there as a "smolt" for a year or so. It then travels down to the sea, feeding on rich ocean nutrients for a few years, and heads back to home base upstream to spawn. This return to fresh water makes it an anadromous ("running upward") creature. Unlike the salmon, it doesn't die after spawning, but swims out to sea again to live another day, and can undergo these cycles again.

These days, only a few steelhead try to make it up our Ventura River each year. Old timers report hundreds running up even the small Prince Barranca by Ventura High during the 1930s. Our conservation of portions of Ventura River land as well as the Ojai Land Conservancy's protection of spawning sites up river go a long way to restoring this amazing creature to our local area.



# 9th Annual Ventura Hillsides Conservancy **Music Festival**

**T**he Ventura Hillsides Music Festival is sponsored in part by a host of community partners including **SAGE Publications, Inc., Patagonia, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Resort, Rewind 95.9, KVTA, L'Acoustics, Rat Sound, Castoro Cellars, Channel Islands Harbor Marina, Firestone Walker Fine Ales, Spencer Makenzie's Fish Company, VC Reporter, Ventura Harbor Marine Fuel/Ventura Harbor Boatyard, and The Wright Family.**

As with the past festivals, the Hillsides Conservancy is dedicated to producing a sustainable event — with biodiesel-fueled generators, biodegradable food and drink containers, and onsite recycling and composting centers. The latest details about the 2011 Festival are available on the VHC website: <http://www.venturahillsides.org/>.

The Ventura Hillsides Conservancy's annual fundraiser provides critical support to fund our conservation work. It has become a popular local celebration of music and conservation that represents the best opportunity to connect with the community about the importance of open space preservation. We hope to see you there and bring your friends and neighbors.

2011 performer **DAVID LINDLEY**  
*(see page 1)*

