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RON SMITH

Lancaster City Council

PRESERVE'S SEASONAL NATURE WALK COMING UP

Marissa Belles
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LANCASTER— This Saturday will be a prime time to check out the Prime Desert Woodland Preserve.

Award-winning wildlife artist and Planning Commission chairman Ron Smith is scheduled to lead a nature walk through the preserve beginning at 8 a.m. The public is welcome.

Smith will identify birds in fall migration heading south from Canada and Alaska for winter. He said the desert is a wonderful place to find virtually every type of eagle and hawk, along with a variety of other birds.

“This is the third seasonal walk we’ve done,” said Sean Ponso, the city’s Parks and Recreation supervisor. “The idea was brought to us by Smith to highlight the various birds at different times.”

Ponso said the public has always expressed interest in area birds, but the high turnout rates for the seasonal walks can also be traced to Smith’s charismatic presentation style.

“When you have a person who is both knowledgeable and a good presenter, the interest always spikes,” Ponso said. “Last time we had about 30 people attend, which is pretty good for an early walk.”

Smith has watched birds since childhood. His paintings of birds have won several awards, including grand prize in 1993 in an annual calendar contest sponsored by the Gift Foundation of Antelope Valley Hospital Medical Center.

His work has also been exhibited at the Pacific Rim Wildlife Show, as well as in an exhibit of bird artists at UCLA’s Kirchoff Gallery.

“I’ve always had an interest in both art and science, which seems for some an unusual

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Continued

combination,” Smith said. “Combining nature and art has really allowed me to exercise that dual interest.”

The walk is geared toward beginning bird watchers, who are asked to bring their own field guides and binoculars.

All nature-adventure talks are free and take place at the preserve’s Elyze Clifford Interpretive Center on the corner of K-8 and 35th Street West. For details, call (661) 723-6077.

