

Guide to the Enrico Bongio Papers, 1952-1993



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Enrico Bongio Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title:

Enrico Bongio Papers, 1952-1993 (bulk 1983)

Collection Number:

MS 124

Creator:

Bongio, Enrico, 1922 -

Abstract:

This collection contains papers and photographs relating to the environmental activism of San Luis Obispo resident Enrico Bongio. The collection contains correspondence with state and federal agencies, and local environmentalists, minutes and agendas of local non-profit environmental groups; articles and newspaper clippings; photographs and slides of the Eastern portion of San Luis Obispo county Kern County adjacent.

Extent:

2 Hollinger boxes

Language:

English

Repository:

Special Collections, Robert E. Kennedy Library
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, California 93407-0605

On deposit from:

The Environmental Archives of San Luis Obispo County
PO Box 8601
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Administrative Information

Provenance:

In 1995, Enrico Bongio donated his papers to the Environmental Archives of San Luis Obispo County, which was founded at Cuesta College in the summer of 1992. The collection is housed in and administered by Special Collections at Cal Poly under the terms of a depository agreement.

Access:

Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page.

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Preferred Citation:

[Identification of Item]. Enrico Bongio Papers, San Luis Obispo County Environmental Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Abbreviations Used:

BLM: Bureau of Land Management
c.: circa
l.f.: linear feet
n.d.: no date
n.p.: no publisher

Funding:

A generous gift from Harold Miossi funded the arrangement and description of this collection.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects:

Bongio, Enrico, 1922-

Carrizo Plain National Monument

Cholame Township Sportsmen's Association

Conservationists – California – Biography

Land use – Environmental aspects – California – San Luis Obispo County – History

McMillan, Ian I., 1905–1991 – Correspondence

Natural history – California – San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) – History

San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) – Biography

San Luis Obispo Sportsmen's Association

Sportsmens Council of Central California

Genres and Forms of Material:

Correspondence

Research notes

Photographs

35mm slides

Newspaper clippings

Related Materials

Related Collections:

Guide to the Kathleen Goddard Jones Papers, 1933-2001 (MS 119)

Guide to the Harold Miossi Papers, 1942-1990 (MS 112)

Guide to the Ian McMillan Papers, 1925-1990 (MS 111)

Guide to the Lee Wilson Papers, 1956-1989 (MS 113)

The Environmental Archives of San Luis Obispo County was founded in the summer of 1992 when environmental activist Harold Miossi invited leaders in local environmental causes to gather and discuss how best to preserve "the letters, writings, photos, publications, and thinking of . . . prominent [local] conservationists for present students and for posterity." Miossi further proposed that the archives be established at Cuesta College, as "a fitting repository since the College District embraces all of San Luis Obispo County." Cuesta College president Grace Mitchell approved the project, stating, "Cuesta College is proud to make this contribution to our county's future." The Cuesta College Foundation agreed to sponsor the project, and Miossi contributed the first major gift to the Cuesta College Foundation for the new archives.

The principal mission of the Environmental Archives of San Luis Obispo County is as follows: "To collect, preserve and make available for research the writings, documents, and photographs dealing with the history and development of the environmental movement in San Luis Obispo County." The archives include the papers of five local activists: Harold Miossi, Ian McMillan, Lee Wilson, Enrico Bongio, and Kathleen Goddard Jones.

Biographical Note

Enrico Bongio was born to Vincenzo and Maria Bongio on March 23, 1922, in Shively, Humboldt County, California. He attended Fortuna Union High School and graduated in the class of 1939. By this time, fishing and hunting and conservation of our natural resources had become an important part of his way of life.

Majoring in Industrial Arts Instruction, Bongio enrolled at Humboldt State College in Arcata, California. World War II interrupted his college career when he was drafted for the U.S. Army and inducted on January 5, 1943. He was trained as a radio operator and was a member of the 321st Signal Company Wing, providing communications for three fighter plane groups, starting with the invasion of Normandy and ending the war located in Konegstein, Germany. He was discharged as a sergeant on October 23, 1945.

Following the war, he returned to Humboldt State College for one semester before transferring to Chico State College where he graduated in December of 1947. His first teaching assignment was in the Industrial Arts Department of Sonoma Union High School, Sonoma, California.

While at Sonoma, he was recruited by Elgin Knott, head of Industrial Division at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Bongio started teaching Welding Technology courses at Cal Poly in September 1948, while maintaining ties to the welding industry through a variety of jobs.

Bongio's environmental activism began when he joined the San Luis Obispo Sportsmen's Association in 1951. Shortly after joining the Sportsmen's Association, he started attending meetings relating to Fish and Game conservation and it was there that he met Ian and Eben McMillan of Shandon, California. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Bongio served on the Sportsmen's Council of Central California, comprised of clubs in thirteen California counties.

During this time, he also became involved with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and what he perceived as the mismanagement of the vast Temblor – Carrizo Plain–Caliente Area in the eastern part of San Luis Obispo County.

Bongio was especially concerned about the condition of the range and the resulting effects on the quail and chukar partridge populations. After the BLM allowed a major sheep rancher to graze thousands of head of cattle and sheep grazing the area through expand stock –watering troughs, range conditions rapidly deteriorated. Bongio and Ian McMillan battled the BLM's Bakersfield office, using newspaper advocacy and the sportsmen's associations to lobby the local congressman and the BLM in Washington. Bongio and his colleagues were successful: the San Luis Obispo County Supervisors provided funding for fenced test plots in two areas in the Temblor Range.

Because of his interest and activism, Bongio was asked to serve on an advisory committee of the Bakersfield BLM, although he was disappointed to see how slowly the BLM and the California Fish and Game Department moved to improve the condition of this range. Bongio recalled, "Eventually, improvements were

made and the range conditions of today are at last a little better than in those days of total disregard and destruction.”

Throughout his years of activism, Bongio used a 35mm Argus Camera to produce the colored slides in this collection.

Bongio retired from the Industrial Engineering Department of Cal Poly in the spring of 1992.

Source

Enrico Bongio, 2005

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains papers and photographs relating to the environmental activism of San Luis Obispo resident Enrico Bongio. The collection contains correspondence with state and federal agencies and local environmentalists, minutes and agendas of local non-profit environmental groups; articles and newspaper clippings; photographs and slides of the San Luis Obispo area.,

The original order of the collection, which was roughly chronological, has been preserved according to the binders in which the collection was donated. The collection is organized into three series:

1. Activism – Grazing on Public Lands, 1959-1994
2. Access to Caliente Mountain, Carrizo Plain National Monument, 1985-87
3. Litigation – Rudnick v. McMillan, 1993

Geographical locations noted in this guide are assumed to be in California unless noted otherwise.

Series Description/Container List

Series 1. Activism – Grazing on Public Lands, 1959-1994

Contains six subseries:

A. Correspondence, B. Supporting Documents, C. Correspondence, D. Supporting Documents, E. Photographs, and F. 35mm Slides.

A. Correspondence

Contains correspondence regarding environmental effects of grazing on public lands, in the Temblor Mountain Range, Carrizo Plain National Monument. Arranged in rough chronological order, from 1959-1962. 12 folders.

Box 1 Folder 1

Correspondence, January 1959 - February 1960

Box 1 Folder 2

Correspondence, March 1960 – April 1960

Box 1 Folder 3

Correspondence, May 1960 – June 1960

Box 1 Folder 4

Correspondence, July 1960 – August 1960

Box 1 Folder 5

Correspondence, September 1960 – October 1960

Box 1 Folder 6

Correspondence, November 1960

Box 1 Folder 7

Correspondence, December 1960

Box 1 Folder 8

Correspondence, January 1961 – February 1961

Box 1 Folder 9

Correspondence, March 1961 – May 1961

Box 1 Folder 10

Correspondence, June 1961 – September 1961

Box 1 Folder 11

Correspondence, October 1961 – December 1961

Box 1 Folder 12

Correspondence, January 1962 – October 1962

B. Supporting Documents

Contains supporting documents on grazing, including bulletins, minutes and agendas of the Sportsmen's Council of Central California and newspaper clippings, arranged in original order, from 1959-1962. 2 folders.

Box 1 Folder 13

Agendas and Meeting Notes, Sportsmen's Council of Central California

Box 1 Folder 14

Newspaper Clippings

C. Correspondence

Contains correspondence regarding environmental effects of grazing on public lands, arranged in rough chronological order, from 1962-1994. 9 folders.

Box 1 Folder 15

Correspondence, October 1962 - December 1963

Box 1 Box 16

Correspondence, August 1968 - August 1969, July 1975

Box 1 Box 17

Correspondence, 1964 - 1968

Box 1 Box 18

Correspondence, 1975

Box 1 Folder 19

Correspondence, May 1975- November 1975

Box 1 Folder 20

Correspondence, October 1975 - April 1991

Box 1 Folder 21

Correspondence, August 1991 - April 1993

Box 1 Folder 22

Correspondence, May 1993 - August 1993

Box 1 Folder 23

Correspondence, November 1992 - September 1994

D. Research Files

Contains Bongio's research files on Temblor Range, including minutes, agendas, newspaper clippings and secondary sources, arranged in original order, from the 1980s. 3 folders.

Box 1 Folder 24

Research on Temblor Range and grazing regulations, 1955, 1962, 1966-67, 1975, 1989

Box 1 Folder 25

Newspaper Clippings, 1963, 1985, 1991-1993 (1993 bulk)

Box 1 Folder 26
Ephemera pertaining to land management resources, undated

E. Photographs

Contains photographic prints of Temblor Range in the Carrizo Plain National Monument, land comparisons of overgrazing from sheep, quail habitat protection efforts, and snapshots of advocates for the Temblor Wildlife and Range Management Project. Arranged in original order, from 1952-1968, 1991. 6 folders.

Box 2 Folder 1
Temblor Range, 1952, 1959-1960, 1968

Box 2 Folder 2
Quail, undated

Box 2 Folder 3
Sheep overgrazing, 1959

Box 2 Folder 4
Quail brush, undated

Box 2 Folder 5
Temblor Wildlife and Range Management Project, undated

Box 2 Folder 6
BLM fieldtrip, 1991

F. 35mm Slides

Contains 74 35mm slides with Enrico Bongio's captions. Slide collection is titled "Our Fight for Wildlife and the Land." Arranged in original order, from 1960-1962. 5 folders.

Box 2 Folder 7
Slide list

Box 2 Folder 8
Slides 1-20

Box 2 Folder 9
Slides 21-40

Box 2 Folder 10
Slides 41-60

Box 2 Folder 11
Slides 61-74

Series 2. Access to Caliente Mountain, Carrizo Plain National Monument, 1985-87

Contains two subseries: A. California Sportsmen's Association Correspondence, and B. Secondary Sources.

A. Caliente Trail California Sportsmen's Association Correspondence

Contains correspondence, articles and research notes regarding the meetings and activities of Sportsmen's Associations in Eastern San Luis Obispo County, arranged in rough chronological order, 1985-1987. 2 folders.

Box 2 Folder 12

Correspondence, Caliente Wildlife Cooperative Area, March 1985- January 1986,

Box 2 Folder 13

Correspondence, Caliente Mountain Access Trail, January-May 1987

B. Secondary Sources

Contains Caliente Access Trail clippings, notes and land management brochures, undated. 2 folders.

Box 2 Folder 14

Newspaper profile on Enrico Bongio, unidentified newspaper, April 4, 1986

Box 2 Folder 15

Caliente Access Trail handwritten notes and research, undated

Series 3. Litigation – Rudnick v. McMillan, 1992-1993

Contains one series: A. Newspaper Clippings and Press Releases.

A. Newspaper Clippings and Press Releases

Contains newspaper clippings and press releases on the libel suit brought by local rancher Marcus Rudnick against rancher Irv McMillan regarding McMillan's 1992 letter to the editor on grazing practices, unarranged, 1992-1993.

1 folder.

Box 2 Folder 16

Newspaper clippings and news releases, 1993