



LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES ALONG CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

ROADLESS AREAS PROTECTED ■ UPCOMING EVENTS ■ SOUTHERN HONEYSUCKLE ■ DESTRUCTIVE GRAZING HALTED
BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL ■ OJAI WILD! APRIL 2 ■ CAMATTA CANYON AMOLE ■ PROTECTING PRONGHORN

SPRING 2011



VENTANA WILDERNESS, LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

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The Los Padres National Forest encompasses nearly two million acres of public lands right in our own backyard. It's a big chunk of the California landscape, and you and I have the ability to shape these lands into whatever we want them to be. These lands are, after all, public lands. So, what do you want in your forest?

In my forest, I want a natural landscape where I can hike, ride, pedal, float, or drive. And on the days I don't do any of these things, my forest is there to flourish for its own sake.

In my forest, I want wildlife, and I want a lot of it. I want condors and hummingbirds, fish and fairy shrimp, snakes and worms, mountain lions and chipmunks and the thousands of other species that make our region one of the most biologically diverse "hot spots" on the planet.

In my forest, I want free-flowing rivers that provide clean water to our local farms, clean water to our homes, and clean water to our oceans.

In my forest, I want redwoods and big-cone Douglas firs and mighty oaks that provide shade on a hot summer day. And I want healthy chaparral, sagebrush, grasslands, and crazy wildflowers that paint the hillsides purple, yellow, orange, red, and white.

And in my forest, I want the public to have a stake in how it's managed. I want my friends and neighbors to volunteer their time in making the forest a better place, and to teach their kids why it's so important to protect places like this.

These are the things I want in my forest. What do you want in yours?

Ojai Wild! Creekside Barbeque, April 2



Join ForestWatch at the fabulous Diamond Hitch Camp at The Thacher School for the fourth annual Ojai Wild! Read more on page 9,

or email Diane Devine for details at diane@LPFW.org

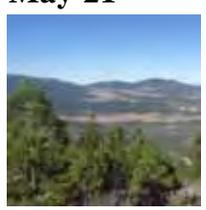
Earth Day Festivals, throughout April



Come celebrate Earth Day with ForestWatch and learn about some of our latest and greatest projects and volunteer opportunities. We'll be in

Santa Barbara April 16-17, and Ojai and San Luis Obispo on April 23.

Frazier Mountain Cleanup, May 21



Save the date for the return of micro-trash cleanup season! We're starting with a bang - Frazier Mountain lookout, 8,000 feet above the beautiful eastern

ranges of the Los Padres. To join us, email suzanne@LPFW.org

ROADLESS VICTORY

ForestWatch lawsuit succeeds in protecting more than 600,000 acres of southern California's national forests

The Los Padres National Forest will benefit from an agreement announced this winter between conservationists, the state of California, and the U.S. Forest Service to protect more than 600,000 acres of roadless areas in Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo, and Kern counties from development.

The deal resolves a federal lawsuit brought by ForestWatch and other conservation groups in 2008 challenging Forest Service management plans for four Southern California national forests. The challenged plans opened up 900,000 roadless acres for possible road building or other development across the four forests, including 600,000 acres in the Los Padres. In 2009 a federal district court agreed with the groups, ruling that the plans violated the National Environmental Policy Act. After that ruling was issued, the parties agreed to negotiate a settlement.

The agreement brings us one step closer towards securing the permanent protection of our region's wild places. It promotes healthy wildlife populations, pristine open spaces, clean water, and outdoor recreation opportunities for our local communities, all of which are facing increasing pressures from urbanization and development.

The agreement mandates these following key points:

- By December 2012, the Forest Service will complete a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) in which they will propose rezoning 37 priority roadless areas as Recommended Wilderness, the highest level of protection set forth in the management plan.



Photo: Chuck Graham

- Until the agency completes the SEIS, all roadless areas will be protected from harmful activities.

- The agencies and groups will work together to identify illegal roads and trails that are degrading roadless areas, and will prioritize these roads for decommissioning and restoration by July 2011. The Forest Service estimates that 318 miles of roads have been constructed in "roadless areas" over the years in the Los Padres National Forest;

most of these roads have never been formally approved and do not meet official standards.

- The Forest Service will identify and apply for federal, state, and private sources of funding to carry out priority decommissioning and restoration projects in the four forests.

- The Forest Service will increase public disclosure about which proposed development activities will affect roadless areas.

- The Forest Service will evaluate ways to improve how it monitors the impacts of land uses on the national forests. The Forest Service will summarize the results of its monitoring in a report made available to the public

each year.

Between now and when the SEIS is finalized, ForestWatch will work with other organizations and state and federal officials to identify illegal roads in roadless areas that are harming the environment. ForestWatch will help identify which roads to prioritize for decommissioning, and will work to identify funding sources to carry out the work.

Stay tuned for updates as this exciting and long-awaited effort unfolds.



CRITTER CORNER

Southern honeysuckle, *Lonicera subspicata*, is endemic to California, and found from the bay area to the U.S./Mexican border. An evergreen viney shrub that usually climbs on other plants for support, southern honeysuckle is quite common on dry chaparral slopes below 5000' and in shaded woodlands, blooming with white to yellow flowers from April to June. While some species of honeysuckle have mildly poisonous berries, those of the southern honeysuckle are edible and were a food source of the native Chumash. They turn red in the fall and are then ready for picking.

If you are hiking along the Santa Barbara backcountry and stumble upon a honeysuckle with leaves that are 3-4 times longer than wide, it is probably the *subspicata* variety, also called Santa Barbara honeysuckle and found almost exclusively in Santa Barbara County. Other southern honeysuckle leaves are usually only twice as long as wide.

Consider planting honeysuckle in your garden this spring, the vines are easy to grow, vigorous, heat-tolerant, and nearly indestructible. The flashy and fragrant flowers will attract hummingbirds and butterflies all summer long. The resulting fruit of the honeysuckle flower will provide a fall treat for your local songbirds as well. The most common use is to allow it to grow along a trellis, fence, arbor, or other framework, but honeysuckle can also be grown without support as a ground cover or used for erosion control. Once established they need minimal watering unless a summer is particularly dry. You can plant honeysuckle now (as a general rule as soon as frost danger has passed), and then mulch the plant with heavy cover of leaves to protect the roots and to conserve moisture as the plant becomes established.

CARRIZO PROTECTED

Cows moo-ved off severely overgrazed Ecological Reserve; State of California to complete new Management Plan

ForestWatch, the State of California, and a livestock operator finalized a formal agreement in early 2011 that will protect the 30,000-acre Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve from severe livestock overgrazing. The legal agreement mandates removal of all livestock from the Reserve until environmental studies are completed, and calls for the preparation of a long-term management plan for the Reserve, which is located between the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument in southeastern San Luis Obispo County.

The agreement resolves a lawsuit filed in February 2010 by Los Padres ForestWatch and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club. The suit was brought after visitors to the Reserve witnessed and reported excessive livestock grazing and severe environmental damage. In some areas of the Reserve, improperly managed livestock had removed nearly

all vegetation from hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat, trampled natural springs, and caused terracing and severe erosion on hillsides. In addition, fences were in disrepair, allowing livestock to enter areas specifically off-limits to grazing.

The California Department of Fish and Game – the agency charged with managing the Reserve – issued the grazing lease in 2006, and renewed it in 2009, allowing 3,600 cows on the Reserve each year through 2012. The Department issued and renewed the lease without notifying the public or preparing any environmental studies, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The lawsuit also alleged that the Department violated state law by failing to prepare a legally-mandated management plan for the Reserve.

Under the terms of the legal agreement, the grazing lease was terminated and livestock removed from the Reserve - no livestock grazing will be allowed on the Reserve until the proper CEQA process is complete. The Department must also make a good faith effort to prepare a draft Land Management Plan for the Reserve by August 2011 and a final plan by March 2012.



The 'offenders' on the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, 2009

VOLUNTEER WRAPUP

ForestWatch supporters improve habitat and have fun!

We'd love to have you on our next volunteer mission to create on-the-ground change along California's Central Coast. Stay in the loop by emailing suzanne@LPFW.org

JANUARY 2011

What: Microtrash Cleanup
Where: Tar Creek Trailhead
Who: 7 volunteers
Why: 42 lbs. of trash removed

The Tar Creek parking area along Squaw Flat Road is one of our most notorious microtrash areas, and because of its proximity to the Sespe Condor Sanctuary we seem to be cleaning pounds of microtrash from it every few months. When Patagonia contacted us in January with a group that was willing to contribute half of their day with us, the Tar Creek parking area was the obvious choice. We spent the morning throwing bullet casings, shotgun shells, and bits of glass and clay pigeons into our buckets - a combined total of over 40 pounds by lunchtime.

ForestWatch is currently working with the Forest Service to implement a more long-term remedy for this important site. Stay tuned for updates and volunteer opportunities.

JANUARY 2011

What: Defencing Project
Where: Carrizo Plain
Who: 14 volunteers
Why: 2.25 miles of fence removed

Our volunteer group pulled down a record length of fence for a day for a group of our size! On Sunday, a day we typically leave open for exploring the wonders of the Carrizo, the group saw a herd of over 60 elk - there's always something surprising on the Carrizo if you have the time to look.

March 2011

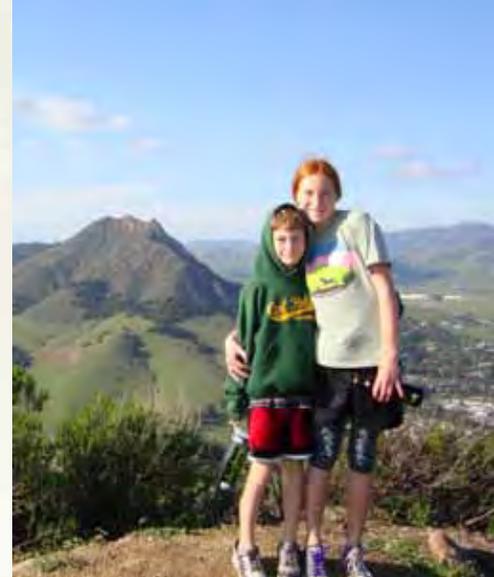
What: Defencing Project
Where: Carrizo Plain
Who: 10 volunteers
Why: 2 miles of fence removed

In March, as a special treat, volunteers were invited to a barbecue feast at the historic Goodwin Ranch following a hard day's work. Good food, drink, and company was had by all around the campfire that evening.



Photo Lara Baxley

It's not *only* hard work taking down barbed wire fence, it's pretty fun too!



STELLAR SUPPORT

THE BAXLEY FAMILY

Hello. We are the Baxley family, Lara and Greg and our kids Sander, 9, and Aleta, 12. We love spending family time together exploring the outdoors. The kids, who have been hiking since they were quite young, have grown to appreciate how fun and peaceful it is to be away from computers and crowds and to discover natural treasures around us. We are very fortunate to live in a place where we are within easy reach of open space where we can hike for miles experiencing the beautiful scenery.

Not only do we enjoy being in the outdoors, we also feel that it is very important to work to preserve and protect open spaces for animals to live and for people to enjoy. This is why, as a family, we support ForestWatch and other organizations that work hard to keep wild spaces wild and return formerly wild spaces to their natural beauty.

In addition to spending family time together hiking and camping outdoors, we also enjoy bonding as a family when we work together to help the land. Participating in activities such as beach cleanups, creek cleanups, removing non-native invasive plants, and removing barbed wire fence on the Carrizo Plain, not only allows us to help the environment, but it also gives us time to talk with each other and keep connected as our kids grow older. It also gives us a chance to visit some areas that we might otherwise not notice.

We would like to thank ForestWatch for the great work that you do!

NORTHERN LOS PADRES

Firescape Monterey
ForestWatch attended a public workshop in February designed to gather early public input on how wildfire and vegetation should be managed in the Monterey Ranger District.

Abbott Lakes
ForestWatch submitted comments on a Forest Service proposal to pump water from the Arroyo Seco River, demanding that adequate precautions are in place to protect endangered steelhead.

Milpitas SIA Management Plan
ForestWatch submitted detailed comments on a draft management plan for the Milpitas Special Interest Area, a 9,984-acre area in the heart of the Monterey Ranger District that contains Native American cultural sites, rich biodiversity, and breathtaking scenery.

Monterey County Drilling
ForestWatch worked with local citizen groups to appeal the County of Monterey's approval of nine oil wells in a rural undeveloped area east of the Ventana Wilderness. As a result, an environmental impact report will now be prepared, and Monterey County is considering leveling the playing field for citizen groups to challenge land use decisions countywide.

SOUTHERN LOS PADRES

Fence Removal Projects
ForestWatch volunteers removed more than two miles of abandoned fencing from the Carrizo Plain in January, and another two miles in March. Only about 30 miles left to go! [Page 4]

Carrizo Settlement
A ForestWatch lawsuit has been settled, moving cows off a severely overgrazed Ecological Reserve and mandating that the State of California complete a new Management Plan for the Reserve. [Page 3]

Happy Canyon Roads
In February, ForestWatch submitted detailed technical and legal comments on a second attempt to authorize road maintenance and off-road vehicle use in the De La Guerra Inventoried Roadless Area between Ranger Peak and Figueroa Mountain.

Santa Ynez River Dredging
ForestWatch stopped a last-minute proposal to remove vegetation along 500' of the Santa Ynez River, thereby protecting habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog.

Chaparral Clearing
ForestWatch wrote a letter to Santa Barbara County officials, supporting enhanced regulation and oversight of chaparral removal projects in remote areas.

Gravel Trucks Update
Legislation was introduced in the California State Assembly to ban industrial truck traffic along Scenic Highway 33 through the heart of the Los Padres National Forest.

Benefit Art Show Success
Local backcountry artist Robert Wassell sold 17 paintings at his benefit art show, raising more than \$1,300 for ForestWatch projects.

LOOKING ACROSS THE FOREST

AN UPDATE ON HOW WE'RE PROTECTING YOUR REGION

BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL

Stories from the backcountry that inspire the preservation of these unique wild lands

Personal stories instill a sense of place and help capture that wonder and excitement that we have all experienced when in an amazing natural setting. Share your personal accounts of time spent in the wild with us at info@LPFW.org

KEEP IT WILD

Erik Feldman and a group of friends headed off on a backpacking trip in the Los Padres in summer 2009 that turned out to be more than most of them had bargained for.



Little turtle encountered in the creek

It had already been two days of fun backcountry adventure and we were due home—actually already four hours past when we said we'd be back. My wife was eight months pregnant with our first child and I had promised to be back in time on Sunday to set up the baby's room. Every trip is an adventure and I knew with a kid on the way my time to adventure ratio was most likely about to change, which had only added to my excitement for the opportunity to re-explore this stretch of the Sespe Creek.

We had assembled as a group two days prior, old friends and new, all of us magically with a touch of free time we could spend in the backcountry of the Los Padres National Forest. It was late spring, not too hot or buggy yet, and we were traversing some of the beautiful upper reaches of Sespe Creek. One buddy had actually done some surveying of the creek a few years prior for

a project, so we felt confident with our route and my scheduled time of return. Of course what should have been apparent to all of us who are familiar with the Los Padres is that one year of big rains can change the landscape drastically and quickly. There had been a couple wet seasons since anyone had been in the area, and we soon found that what had been an easy trek a few years prior was now a rock scrambling, creek wading, bush whacking mess of a route. Forcing us to turn the two day trip into now nearly three days' worth of improvisation. One of the dogs we had accompanying us was so tired he had a "dead tail" (have you ever seen this before? It's crazy).

So we were all exhausted when we came to the final cliff crossing only to remember the 5 mile uphill slog we had ahead to get back to our cars. Needless to say, I knew that my wife was at home with worry turning to anger and probably back again, and I knew we had to press on. The sun was sinking lower, hunger and aches were growing stronger, but still we hung back inspecting the route again and again. Finally one of the crew made those first tentative steps and we were all on our way, inching along the narrowest ledge I could ever imagine supporting my frame. Needless to say I was sweating. And shaking. And basically wondering what on earth I was doing. It just goes to show how adventure grows when nature is involved, there will always be

something unknown or a surprise or a factor you hadn't accounted for.

Even after reaching my limit, I felt privileged for the opportunity to get back to one of my favorite stretches of river. With each pristine bend we rounded we silently thanked groups like Keep Sespe Wild and ForestWatch who work to keep places like this open, free-flowing, and protected.

We saw some beautiful landscapes on the trip for sure - the rock formations of this part of the Los Padres backcountry are truly magnificent. Faster than you can imagine your perspective changes; sometimes you are so dwarfed by the cliffs and boulders, scrambling around you begin to feel like an ant. Time starts to stretch and the infinite scale used to describe geologic process becomes conceivable.... or at least that is what I told my wife when I got home just a touch later than what I had originally planned.



The group heading out along Sespe Creek in the cool morning fog

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

From DC to The LP

A look at how people, policies, and politics are shaping our region's public lands

Singing the Budget Blues

For years, federal land management agencies like the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have suffered from dwindling budgets, inadequate staffing, and overflowing workloads. They now enter their sixth month without Congress approving a long-term spending bill. Each day that goes by without a budget, Forest Service officials are left wondering how much long-term funding they will receive, limiting the agency's ability to hire workers and complete beneficial projects.

Anti-environmental fervor in the House is also reaching levels not seen in years. Proposals abound to defund the Environmental Protection Agency (which protects clean air and water). Other proposals seek to eliminate the ability of groups like ForestWatch to recover their attorney fees when they successfully uphold environmental protection laws in federal court.

Restored Protection for Wild Lands

In February, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar restored the ability of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to temporarily protect wilderness-quality lands until Congress decides whether to formally add them to the National Wilderness Preservation System. This could result in interim protections for several thousand acres in the Carrizo Plain that are currently awaiting formal wilderness designation.

Draft Forest Planning Rules

Also in February, the Forest Service proposed a new set of regulations outlining how the nation's 193-million-acre National Forest System will be managed in the future. Conservation organizations praised some elements of the new rules, but also expressed grave concerns because the new rules fail to spell out clear, strong standards for local forest managers to follow. The new rules are currently open for public comment, and when finalized, would replace standards that have been in place since 1982. It's the agency's fourth attempt since 2000 to revise the regulations governing national forests. Three previous attempts were challenged in court and thrown out because they did not meet mini-

mum environmental standards required by law.

Big Sur Redwoods Saved

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program launched in 1964 to acquire land for the benefit of all Americans. However, in the nearly five decades since, the program has only been fully funded twice. Locally, LWCF funding has helped the Los Padres National Forest acquire several private inholdings along the famed Big Sur coast. In November 2010, the Save the Redwoods League purchased and donated 60 acres to the Los Padres, including old growth redwoods.

DDT: A New Threat to Condors?

As if microtrash, power lines, anti-freeze, habitat destruction, and lead bullets weren't enough, a new threat to California condors has emerged – DDT. Biologists with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Ventana Wildlife Society have been comparing the thickness of eggshells recovered from condor nests, and their preliminary results suggest that eggs from the Big Sur flock are "substantially thinner" because they feast on marine mammals with high levels of DDT. A one-year study is now in the works to determine the exact cause and extent of the eggshell thinning.

Grazing Fees Remain Low

Each February, the federal government sets the price of grazing cows, sheep, and other livestock on public lands. For the fifth year in a row, the BLM and Forest Service will charge \$1.35 per month to graze a cow and a calf on public lands – the legal minimum, and a rate far below what it costs to graze on state and private lands. The fee will apply to BLM's nearly 18,000 grazing permits and leases and more than 8,000 permits administered by the Forest Service, dozens which are on the Los Padres. Conservation groups have petitioned the federal government to revise the way the grazing fee is calculated, but in January the agencies responded that they are too busy to change the grazing formula. A Government Accountability Office report found that the federal government's grazing program cost taxpayers \$115 million per year.



ECOTONES

Creating quality landscapes is the mission of the landscape design and installation business, Ecotones, located in Cambria, California. Established in 1999, Ecotones has completed projects from seaside gardens to inland mountains, forested property to the urban jungle within San Luis Obispo County and beyond.

Owner and Landscape Contractor, Greg Frugoli, a California native, moved to the Central Coast from Marin County in 1992, and began working in the landscape trade while attending Cal Poly. After graduation, his services were in demand, his knowledge of local climate and conditions invaluable, and his service philosophy; to deliver the highest quality possible, apparent in all his projects.

Today Ecotones not only provides design, installation, restoration, rain & greywater systems, and estate management, but has also contributed to the green building movement through its use of California native plants, construction of lawn substitutes, use of organic fertilizers, integrated pest management, and the use of recycled materials.

And while Ecotones works to create quality landscapes, they also work to protect our region's native landscapes through their long-time support of Los Padres ForestWatch. Since 2006, Ecotones has been a dedicated advocate of the work of ForestWatch with their annual and program support, sponsorship of the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival, and as an Ojai Wild! event host.

ForestWatch is grateful for their commitment and dedication to our work and for their care of the environment in all they do. Visit their website at: www.ecotoneslandscapes.com

CARRIZO DE-FENCED



Since 2008, ForestWatch volunteers have taken down almost 15 miles of relic barbed wire fencing on the Carrizo Plain National

Monument. Along with other concerned groups, ForestWatch has made a significant dent in the amount of fencing strung across the Carrizo impeding the movement of pronghorn antelope – we now have only 30 miles left until all relic unused fencing is down or modified to be safe for pronghorn!

Large numbers of pronghorn used to roam the plain but the herds vanished with the advent of dryland cattle grazing and the network of fences associated with it. Ranching continues today, but much of the fencing no longer serves a purpose. Cows no longer graze the plain in areas still crisscrossed with miles of useless rusty fence. Besides the general eyesore factor, the main problem with these relic fences is that pronghorn antelope, the fastest land mammal in North America, become ensnared in them while traversing their historic range.

Pronghorn do not jump fences but rather attempt to crawl under them, snagging their backs on the lowest strand. As a crew, volunteers will either remove an unnecessary fence altogether or modify a fence that is still in use by replacing the lowest strand of barbed wire with smooth wire at the proper height of at least 16" so the pronghorn can successfully maneuver beneath the fence.

To date about 50 miles of these fences have been either removed or modified. A team of 10 people can remove almost 2 miles of fence in a day with bolt cutters, pliers, heavy leather gloves, and a can-do attitude. The sites are the wide spaces far from the busy roads, with sun, sky, and the overwhelming quiet. The closer you look at the Carrizo the more you see, from baby rattlesnakes to kit fox skulls to the smallest, most perfect, little white flowers you've ever seen. There is a surprise around every fence post!

The Carrizo is a unique and interesting place (see sidebar at right) - think about joining us on our next outing to Carrizo Plain National Monument to help the pronghorn antelope!



The oldest fences used juniper branches as fence posts

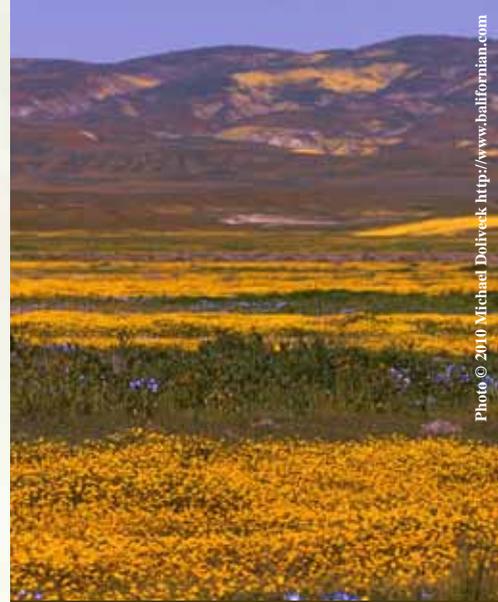


Photo © 2010 Michael Doliveck <http://www.balfornian.com>

YOUR BACKYARD

Carrizo Plain National Monument, adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest, is located between California's central valley and the coast at San Luis Obispo. State Route 166 passes the south entrance to the plain, and State Route 58 the northern entrance. Connecting them is Soda Lake Road, the only dependably passable road through the plain (but even this may become impassable when it rains since the middle portion of it is gravel).

Often called "California's Serengeti," this dry open grassland is uniquely beautiful throughout the year but really turns on the magic in the spring as millions of wildflowers dot the landscape. To the west are the Caliente Mountains, rising to 5000 feet, and on the east the San Andreas Fault runs along the base of the Temblor Range. Although the fault runs through California all the way from Cape Mendocino to just south of Los Angeles, the Carrizo plain remains one of the best places to study it. Its motion has shaped the broad geomorphic features of the valley, creating the ridges and ravines and altering the paths of several creeks. Scattered along the valley floor are relics of earlier ranching and farming days, along with evidence of much earlier inhabitants as shown in the beautiful rock art sites of the native Chumash people. The centerpiece of the valley is Soda Lake, sometimes just a bed of sparkling white salt but during the rainy season a true lake providing habitat for numerous bird species.

The area became a National Monument in 2001, and an approved Resource Management Plan followed in 2010, providing direction to the Bureau of Land Management, managing partners of the Monument along with The Nature Conservancy and California Department of Fish and Game.



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MIKE'S HIKES **OAK CATHEDRAL ON MANZANA CREEK**

Ways to enjoy the backcountry that we all hold so dear

Mike Summers, Wild Places Coordinator for Los Padres ForestWatch, has spent a LOT of time in the Los Padres National Forest. Here he shares directions to a hike that made a lasting impression...

Looking for a beautiful way to spend a springtime afternoon, head to the San Rafael Wilderness in Santa Barbara County backcountry to take in some of nature's splendor. The drive to the hike and the hike itself are at their best during the spring wildflower bloom – late March into May. The trailhead can be reached off of Hwy 154 via Figueroa Mountain Road near Los Olivos or Happy Canyon Road a few miles east of Hwy 246.

It takes about two hours hiking from the trailhead at Nira Campground. A mostly flat, yet wonderfully meandering trail

follows Manzana Creek downstream



as it makes its way to the Sisquoc River. The trail weaves in and out of the riparian canopy, underneath cotton-

woods, alders, sycamores, and oaks, as it crosses Manzana Creek numerous times during the hike. The five mile (10 round trip) hike can be done in a day, but makes a great overnighter as well.

Afternoon sun will filter through immense oaks, throwing down shafts of light as you wander through the lush green grasses and myriad wildflowers of the valley floor. A soft breeze will often make the shafts of light dance across your vision - to experience a place as special and beautiful as this is everything, get out and enjoy your backcountry this spring!

