



# LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

**PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES ALONG CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST**

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WILDERNESS & OHV LEGISLATION ■ FRAZIER MOUNTAIN PROTECTED ■ OJAI WILD! ■ CALIFORNIA WHITE FIR  
SKIING IN THE SESPE ■ STEELHEAD RECOVERY PLAN ■ OIL DRILLING STOPPED ■ KERN PRIMROSE SPHINX MOTH

WINTER 2012

5th Anniversary

OJAI  
WILD!



**FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OJAI WILD! MARCH 31**

Photo courtesy of Stephen Lee Carr





# BASE CAMP



**Jeff Kuyper,**  
*Executive Director*

Throughout the history of the Los Padres National Forest, the public has played a pivotal role in shaping the way our region's public lands are managed – submitting letters to forest officials, attending

public hearings, volunteering out in the field, and filing appeals and lawsuits when all other efforts fail.

But in recent months, politicians in Washington D.C. have whittled away at the public's right – both yours and mine – to participate in decisions affecting the Los Padres. In the waning days of 2011, Congress passed a one-paragraph law that was buried within a 487-page federal budget bill called the Consolidated Appropriations Act.

The new law eliminates the public's right to appeal the approval of most development and resource extraction activities on national forest lands. For years, the appeals process has provided a way for the public to sit down with forest officials and ask them to reconsider a particular decision. In many cases, this appeals process successfully resolved the public's concerns, reduced environmental impacts on the ground, and avoided costly lawsuits.

Now, without this appeals process in place, groups like ForestWatch will need to become even more vigilant in monitoring forest projects and plans.

The role that you and I play in protecting these magnificent lands has just become more critical than ever before. The health of our local forest is at stake, and your continued support will ensure that the public has a voice in how our region's public lands are managed and protected for future generations.

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### LOS PADRES WILD HERITAGE CAMPAIGN WILDERNESS & WILD RIVER PHOTO CONTEST



ForestWatch is pleased to announce our first ever Wilderness and Wild River Photo Contest. All levels of photographers are invited to head out into the Los Padres National Forest to capture images of existing and proposed wilderness and wild rivers.

The three eligible categories include landscape image, wildlife image (both flora and fauna), and images containing people. The shots must be taken in or of existing or proposed wilderness areas or wild rivers within the Los Padres National Forest. Each category will be judged by website vote (People's Choice) and a panel of judges (Judges' Choice), creating six different awards. The judges will also award a "Best in Show" for the best overall picture in any category.

Submissions may be made through July 27, 2012. Winners will be announced in our September newsletter.

Visit [www.LosPadresWild.org](http://www.LosPadresWild.org) for additional information.

# WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Federal legislation is introduced to expand wilderness and off-road vehicle recreation in the Los Padres National Forest

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In February, Congressman Elton Gallegly (R-Simi Valley) introduced legislation to extend the current boundaries of federally-protected wilderness areas in the Los Padres National Forest. The bill is already generating a stir of local controversy because it would also open new areas of the forest to motorized off-road vehicles, and would kick-start a controversial exchange of land between the U.S. Forest Service and a local water district near Lake Piru.

Since 2010, ForestWatch and a coalition of wilderness advocates have been working on an ambitious campaign to formally designate more than 200,000 acres of the Los Padres National Forest as wilderness and to protect 124 miles of backcountry streams as "wild and scenic" rivers. While the wilderness provisions in the bill represent a good first step towards realizing this vision, the relatively small amount of wilderness in the bill – coupled with the extent and magnitude of the unrelated and environmentally damaging provisions – leave us with mixed emotions.

The bill – dubbed the Los Padres Conservation and Recreation Act of 2012 (H.R. 4109) – applies only to national forest land in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The main provisions of the bill include:

- Extending the current boundaries of the Sespe, Matilija, and Dick Smith wilderness areas in the heart of the Los Padres National Forest, increasing the size of these areas by 63,576 acres (20%);
- Establishing the 18,520-acre Condor Ridge Scenic Area along the crest of the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County;
- Protecting 89 miles of backcountry rivers and streams under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers system, including Mono and Indian Creeks in Santa Barbara County and the upper Sespe and upper Piru creeks in Ventura County;

- Establishing two officially-sanctioned "OHV Areas" in the Ventura backcountry totaling 65,833 acres, where off-highway vehicles such as dirtbikes, ATVs and four-wheel drive vehicles would be encouraged;

- Opening 69 miles of remote forest roads that have been closed for several decades due to law enforcement and public safety concerns, wildfire risk, and protection of sensitive resources, and authorizes the construction of three new OHV routes in remote areas of the forest; and

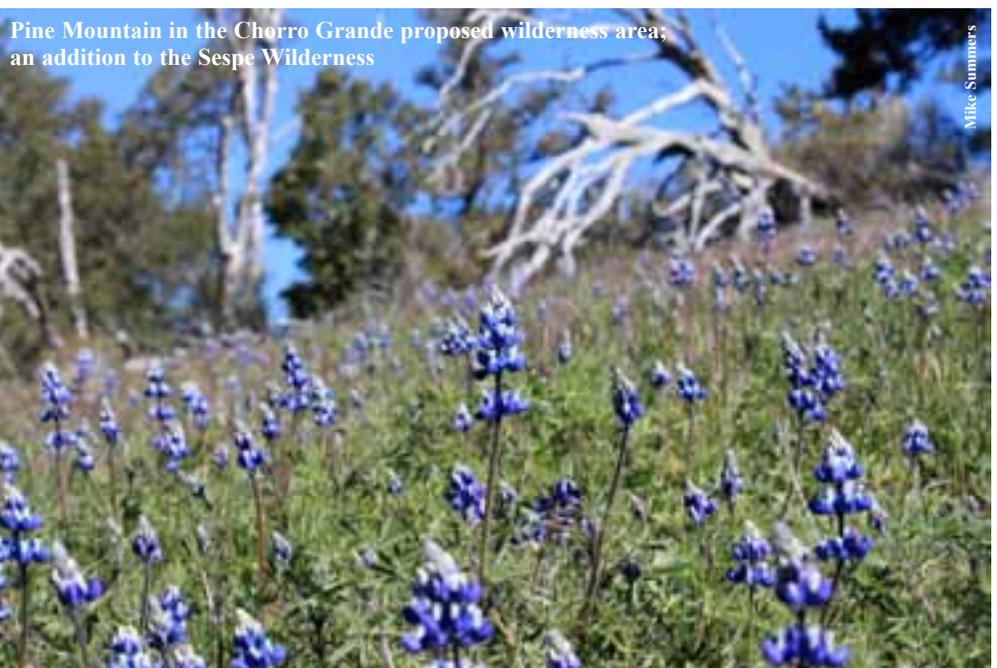
- Requiring the Forest Service to trade several hundred acres of public land around Lake Piru in Ventura County to a local water district.

While ForestWatch supports the wilderness and river provisions in the bill, we share grave concerns with other conservationists, forest users, and community members about several of the other unrelated provisions. Allowing expansion of OHV areas when the Forest Service doesn't have the resources to properly manage current use is irresponsible, and the proposed new trails

would bring a host of law enforcement, wildfire prevention, public safety, and resource protection issues. Pushing the Forest Service into an inequitable trade of lands that could result in the loss of protections for steelhead trout is another provision we strongly oppose.

This bill doesn't become law until it is approved by the House, the Senate (where changes to the bill would likely be made), and the President. ForestWatch will follow this process every step of the way to demand that a clean wilderness bill emerges without all of these unrelated damaging provisions. In the coming months and years, ForestWatch will work with our members of Congress to ensure that any wilderness bill for the Los Padres National Forest fulfills the vision set forth in the 1964 Wilderness Act to 'secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.'

The bill summary, full text, a map, and ForestWatch's position statement are on our website [www.LPFW.org](http://www.LPFW.org). We have also included a map in the center of this newsletter.



Pine Mountain in the Chorro Grande proposed wilderness area, an addition to the Sespe Wilderness

Mike Summers



# CRITTER CORNER

One of three species of sphinx moths, the **Kern primrose sphinx moth** occurs on the Carrizo Plain National Monument, in the Cuyama Valley, and in the Walker Basin of Kern County. It was originally thought to only occur in Kern County (hence the name), but other populations were recently discovered. Two populations are now known to exist on the Los Padres National Forest, near Ventucopa in the Cuyama Valley.

The Kern primrose sphinx moth is a day-flying moth with a wingspan of 1-3 inches. Its hindwings have a distinct white band, and the top surface of its antenna have white scaling. The moth is usually found along sandy washes, in which the sand has the proper compaction and moisture content for burrowing larvae.

The Kern primrose sphinx moth was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act in April 1980. The moth relies almost solely on evening primrose as a host plant, and therefore is particularly vulnerable to habitat destruction. Such habitat degradation can be caused by cattle and sheep grazing, pesticides and herbicides, off-road vehicle trespass, road maintenance, and development.

A new recovery plan needs to be completed for the moth to incorporate important new findings, including the expanded population distribution. An oil drilling plan approved in 2005 (and successfully challenged by ForestWatch in court) would have destroyed at least one population of this moth. ForestWatch will continue to monitor each federal agency's work surrounding the protection of the Kern primrose sphinx moth, and will work to see that this rare moth continues to call central California home.

# OJAI WILD!

## The Top 10 Reasons You Should Go to Ojai Wild!

- 10. You don't want to be the only person on the Central Coast who doesn't!
- 9. Get out of those Saturday afternoon chores...it's a perfect way to spend an afternoon with family and friends.
- 8. The Diamond Hitch Camp location along the foothills of the Los Padres National is spectacular.
- 7. Wine will be flowin' and the beer will be pourin'.
- 6. The Ventucky String Band will be there bringing a sampling of classic swing, bluegrass, and honky-tonk... guaranteed to get your feet a tapin'!
- 5. The food is mouth-watering, local and organic. Cooked on a huge Santa Maria style BBQ right before your eyes.
- 4. There's gonna be strawberry shortcake with lavender mascarpone cream for dessert. Enough said.
- 3. Great deals, amazing items, and LOTS of excitement at the silent and live auction.
- 2. Meet Sespe River conservationist, Alasdair Coyne, who will be presented with the 2012 Wilderness Legacy Award.



And the #1 reason to attend the 5th Anniversary Ojai Wild!...

Because you care about protecting the lands, wildlife, waterways, and recreational opportunities in the Los Padres National Forest.

**Don't miss the fun – Don't miss the excitement – Don't miss Ojai Wild!**



5th Anniversary



All photos Tom Franklin

# 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](mailto:suzanne@LPFW.org)

### JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

**What:** Micro (and big) Trash Cleanup

**Where:** Middle Sespe Trailhead

**Who:** 29 volunteers

Middle Sespe Trailhead faces a new threat as target shooters who recently frequented the Cherry Creek unauthorized shooting area up the road now pull off early and indulge in bad behavior here. Unlike the other national forests of southern California which are closed to target shooting, Los Padres National Forest generally allows it throughout its boundaries with just a few places closed to such use when it becomes an issue of misuse (such as just happened with the closing of Cherry Creek.)

In hopes of keeping the situation from getting too insurmountable, ForestWatch has organized a couple recent cleanups of the area. First was a motivated group of Patagonia employees who ventured out on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Another group followed in mid-February, this time a bunch of environmental science students from Cal State Channel Islands. ForestWatch will continue to monitor the problem at Middle Sespe Trailhead and we will also continue to put pressure on the Forest Service to institute a forest-wide ban on target shooting.



Terri Laine



### JANUARY 2012

**What:** Defencing

**Where:** Carrizo Plain National Monument

**Who:** 30 volunteers

Over a decade of work by dedicated volunteers is coming to a close as the final stretches of relic barb wire fencing on Carrizo Plain National Monument come tumbling down. As part of an effort to restore pronghorn antelope on the 200,000-acre national monument, volunteers have been working tirelessly to remove fences that restrict pronghorn movement and make them more vulnerable to injuries and predators.

ForestWatch's latest outing on January 28th was the biggest to date for the 'pronghorn project'; 32 volunteers convened and were split into three groups to tackle some of the last remaining pieces of fence identified for removal or modification. Groups joined back up at the Selby Campground that evening for a fabulous pot luck and campfire. On Sunday volunteers that stuck around were treated to a guided hike out to Painted Rock, an example of rock art regarded as one of the finest in the world. As our days removing fences draw to a close, ForestWatch will continue to work with monument management on other projects that help to restore this treasure.



Terri Laine



Terri Laine



Dick and wife Cheryl on the Carrizo Plain

## HELPING HANDS

### DICK BALDWIN

My outdoor experiences began young with fishing trips on the Colorado River sleeping on a tarp wrapped in a blanket. The Marines introduced me to tents. When my sons were born we moved up to a tent trailer. As I got older, I moved into greater comfort with a "real" trailer.

Throughout the years I have loved the outdoors. When I became an executive with lots of hours and lots of pressure, I took my family each year in our tent trailer to remote places highly populated with wildlife and few people. It was my way of recharging my "family batteries."

About three years ago I discovered the volunteer work of Los Padres ForestWatch, and parts of the Sierra Club, to remove barbed wire fence in the Carrizo Plain. When needed, barbed wire is replaced with smooth wire. Antelope, which were once indigenous there, will not go over or under barbed wire. The result is predators are taking more antelope than the reproduction rate.

At the end of my first defencing day, I saw a buck antelope racing parallel to the road I was on, trying unsuccessfully to get under a barbed wire fence. When he reached a section of smooth wire, he dashed under and disappeared from view in seconds. At that moment I became hooked on defencing. It is hard to describe the sense of satisfaction after a day of defencing looking back to see wide open spaces where fences once ruled.

It's great to get out with ForestWatch and make a difference; I'm proud of the work we can do together.

**THREE NEW OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS**

One of these trails, the McKinley Fire Trail, is an old road that has been closed for several decades due to law enforcement and public safety concerns, wildfire risk, and protection of sensitive resources (including a historic guard station at Santa Cruz Camp.) Another (the longest, located in northern Ventura County) would be a newly constructed trail across a remote piece of the forest that is an inventoried Roadless Area eligible for wilderness protection.

**65,833 ACRES OF "OHV AREAS"**

Two officially-sanctioned "OHV Areas" in the Ventura backcountry totaling 65,833 acres, where off-highway vehicles such as dirtbikes, ATVs and four-wheel drive vehicles would be encouraged.

**69 MILES OF REMOTE FOREST ROADS OPENED**

Literally acting as the border to some existing and proposed wilderness areas, these roads will pose a safety risk as well as degrade the forest and detract from the quiet outdoor recreational experience.

**CONTROVERSIAL LAND SWAP**

Requires the Forest Service to trade several hundred acres of public land around Lake Piru in Ventura County to a local water district that could result in the loss of protections for steel-head trout (just off map.)

**89 MILES OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS**

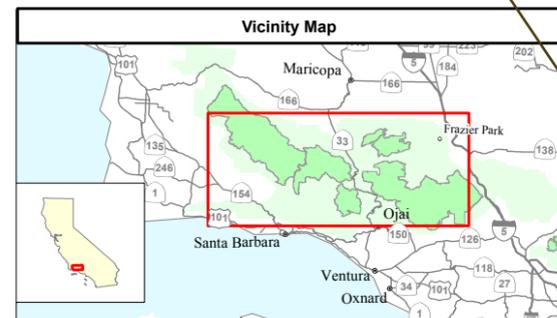
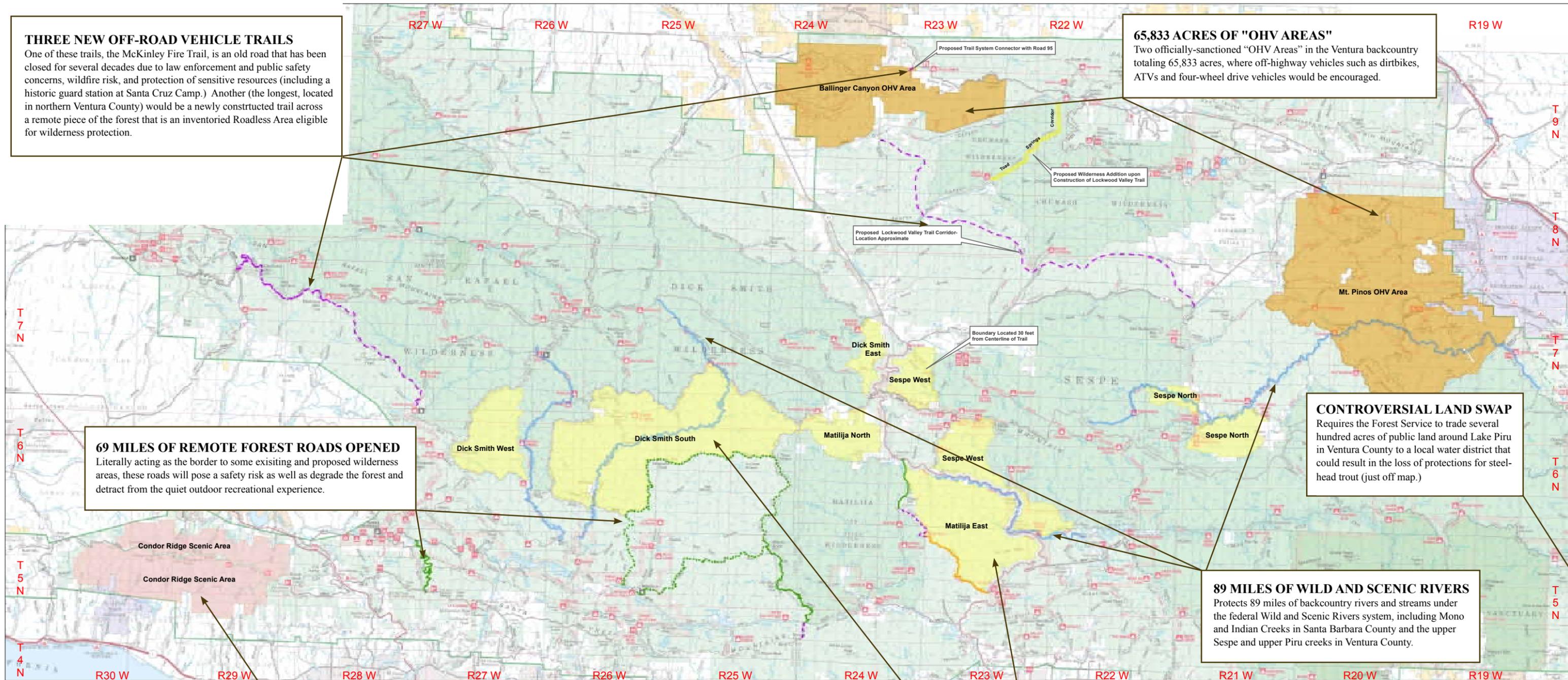
Protects 89 miles of backcountry rivers and streams under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers system, including Mono and Indian Creeks in Santa Barbara County and the upper Sespe and upper Piru creeks in Ventura County.

**18,520-ACRE CONDOR RIDGE SCENIC AREA**

The Condor Ridge Scenic Area extends along the crest of the Gaviota Coast, between Refugio Canyon and Eagle Canyon, providing majestic views of the Santa Barbara Channel, Channel Islands, and Santa Ynez Valley. It's home to rare plants that are found nowhere else on Earth, and serves as the headwaters for many coastal drainages.

**63,576 ACRES OF NEW WILDERNESS**

Extending the current boundaries of the Sespe, Matilija, and Dick Smith wilderness areas in the heart of the Los Padres National Forest, increasing the size of these areas by 20%. A steep decline in acreage from the proposed 200,000 ForestWatch was hoping for, but a step in the right direction.



**References**  
Map prepared by the USDA Forest Service, Region 5 Geospatial Services at the request of Congressman Elton Gallegly, CA.

**Disclaimer**  
The USDA Forest Service makes no warranty, expressed or implied regarding the data displayed on this map, and reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace this information without notification.

0 2 4 Miles

- Existing Road - Proposed Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only
- - - Existing Road - Proposed Open to High Clearance Vehicles and Non-Highway Legal Vehicles Greater than 50" in Width
- - - Proposed New Motorized Trail - Open to Wheeled Vehicles Less than 50" in Width
- - - Proposed - Motorcycle Only Trail
- Proposed Wilderness Addition
- Proposed Wild and Scenic River
- Proposed Scenic Area
- Proposed OHV Area
- Existing National Forest Wilderness
- National Forest Land

Sheet 1 of 1  
Map Creation Date - February 27, 2012

**GALLEGLY'S  
LOS PADRES  
LEGISLATION**

# BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL

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

## SESPE WINTER WONDERLAND

Chris Nybo shares his love of the Sespe and the many ways he gets to enjoy it



I love winter. I love fresh snow on the trees and mountains, snow days that put a halt to our normal routines, critter tracks in the snow, the low angle light of the winter sun, the quiet and calm that cold and snow bring. I also love exploring the Sespe. I love the forested peaks, remote canyons, and beautiful vistas everywhere you go. When I moved from northern Minnesota to Ventura in the mid 90's it seemed natural to me that I could combine both, but I was steered away. The Sierras were the place to go if you wanted to enjoy winter, "Head to the Sierras, young man". Indeed, there is a wonderful winter landscape to be found in the Range of Light. But I was looking for winter adventure closer to home. During my first year in California, a Thanksgiving storm dropped a load of snow on the TopaTopa Mountains, focusing my attention on the possibility of a ski trip in my own back yard - up in the areas I had begun to get to know from early trips out into the Sespe. My first trip on skis up to the Pine Mountain

ridge opened my eyes to the magic of the Sespe backcountry in winter.

My Sespe ski trips start at the top of Highway 33 just before it drops into the Cuyama Valley, where the gated forest road leads vehicles up to Pine Mountain/Reyes Peak in summer. When the snow is good you can put your skis on right away and follow the road until you reach the forest. From there you can start to turn away from the road and explore the winter landscape laid out before you. The ski along the road through the chaparral is more than just a good workout. It is part of the unique adventure that is skiing the Sespe backcountry. The snow draped over the manzanitas and yuccas, the fresh tracks of a mountain lion or a bear, the views out over the Channel



Islands and of the nearby high country - all delights to take in on the ski up. For most winter storms, the snow gets deeper and fluffier as you gain elevation. If there is not snow at the top of Highway 33, but there is plenty higher up on the ridge, I may bring along my mountain bike and bike up to where the snow begins before donning my skis. I have never had a bad day of skiing on Pine Mountain.

If the storm has arrived from the north and the snow level is low there are good turns off the north side of the mountain. I have enjoyed many "powder" days through the trees and gullies on the north side of the Pine Mountain ridge. If a Pineapple Express from the south has arrived and the snow is wet and sticky, a nice tour is to the top of Reyes Peak with outstanding views over a huge expanse of the Sespe Wilderness. Most often I am skiing up and back in a day. If time and energy allow, wonderful weekends are to be had spent camping out high on the ridge listening to the wind crackle the icy pine needles and whistle over the top of the peak.

You never know how many winter days there will be in a season so when the storms come, it's time to go. One particularly stormy winter gifted me with many days skiing on the mountain. Dry winters may provide only one or two. So far this winter, I have enjoyed just one ski day and that was in November, unusually early. Really big storms close Highway 33 so you need to do some road checking before you go or be content with being turned back. The big snow years turn into brilliant spring days as the snow melts and drains into the Sespe and Piru Creeks providing the water that sustains the backcountry through the dry, hot summer season. During the big snow years of the 90s I got to enjoy that snow twice—first skiing, and then weeks later kayaking the Sespe down to Fillmore after those snows had percolated on down to the creek. Here's to some big storms in 2012 and a chance to experience the Sespe in snow.

# OIL EXPANSION STOPPED, AGAIN

ForestWatch protects condors from runaway oil drilling

In 2005, the U.S. Forest Service approved a plan to expand oil drilling across 52,075 acres of the Los Padres National Forest. The plan threatened popular recreation areas, wild lands, clean air and water, and habitat for several endangered species, including the California condor – a high price to pay for the single day’s supply of oil that the new drilling would produce in its lifespan.

To halt the spread of runaway oil development in the Los Padres National Forest, in 2005 ForestWatch

filed a formal 92-page appeal with the U.S. Forest Service, asking the agency to reconsider its decision. Forest officials were quick to deny our appeal, and the plan was put into effect.

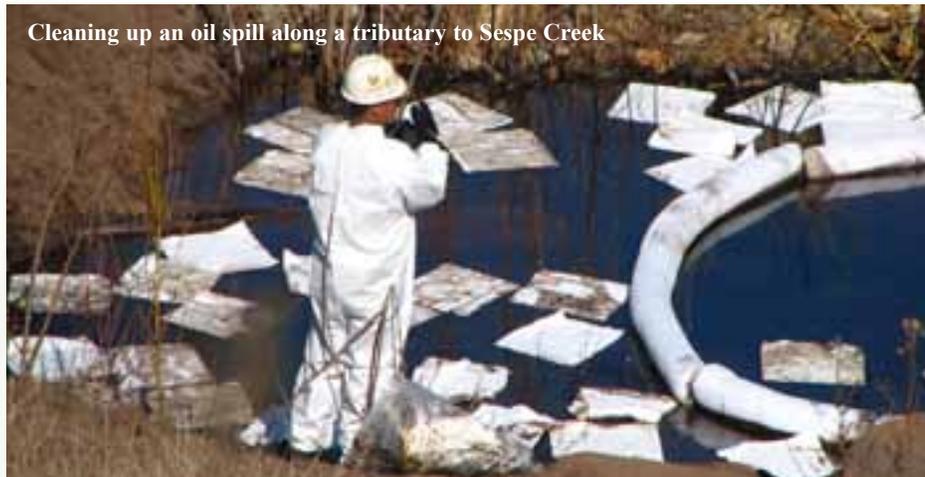
Left with no other option, ForestWatch took the plan to court, asking a federal judge to invalidate the plan because it clearly violated several environmental laws and was not based on sound science. As part of that lawsuit, we also challenged an underlying biological report that authorized the drilling plan to move forward, even though the drilling would have resulted in the “taking” or killing of “a few” California condors – one of the world’s most endangered birds.

As a direct result of our lawsuit, federal condor biologists decided to amend their biological report, putting our lawsuit – and the drilling plan – on hold indefinitely. Late last year, a new report was issued, and while it didn’t authorize the killing of any condors, it did allow the oil companies to use dogs to “haze” condors from oil pads – a form of unnecessary harassment that is prohibited by the Endangered Species Act. The report contained numerous other scientific deficiencies as well.



ForestWatch immediately notified federal biologists of these concerns, and as a result, the agencies involved – the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish & Wildlife Service – agreed to go back to the drawing board once again. The lawsuit – and the drilling plan – are now on hold as the agencies try to get it right a third time.

ForestWatch and our partners Defenders of Wildlife and Center for Biological Diversity have now prevented any expanded oil drilling for seven years, and counting. We will continue to demand accountability, compliance with the law, and the strictest environmental safeguards to protect the Los Padres backcountry from runaway oil development.



Cleaning up an oil spill along a tributary to Sespe Creek

## MCGOWAN GUNTERMANN

Like Los Padres ForestWatch itself, the firm of McGowan Guntermann started off in a very small office with one sole proprietor. Flash forward from those early days back in 1945, and McGowan Guntermann is now a five partner firm, which includes twelve staff members. Their services range from personal financial planning, tax preparation, estate planning and elder care, to business services, including support for non-profit organizations. That’s where ForestWatch comes into the picture.

In 2010, ForestWatch received an e-mail from Patricia Krout, a partner with the firm, and someone with a keen interest in natural resource preservation. Patricia is also a big condor advocate, and had seen an article about ForestWatch and our volunteer micro-trash cleanup efforts in the newspaper, and contacted us offering her services as volunteer. Patricia also noted that she worked for an accounting firm and offered to help us with our accounting needs.

Patricia and the firm of McGowan Guntermann not only now handle all the tax and accounting needs of ForestWatch, but have become Los Padres ForestWatch donors as well through their Community Involvement Fund, whereby the firm allocates a percentage of its profits to employees to donate to area non-profit organizations.

Los Padres ForestWatch is grateful that Patricia Krout reached out to us, and that we are now building a long-term relationship with her firm. Her support has been invaluable. To learn more about the services of McGowan Guntermann, call them at (805) 962-9175 or visit their website at [www.mcgowan.com](http://www.mcgowan.com).

# FINAL STEELHEAD RECOVERY PLAN

Fisheries biologists present a roadmap to restore historic steelhead runs to the Los Padres National Forest

## CRITTER CORNER

The **white fir** is widely found across the mountains of the West. It has a number of geographically distinct varieties, one being the California white fir. A few pockets of the California white fir exist in the Los Padres National Forest, primarily at high altitudes on the Mt. Pinos Ranger District in northern Ventura County.

White fir is commonly found with other conifers, including ponderosa pine, Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, and incense-cedar.

Wildfire suppression has allowed these shade-tolerant trees to mature in greater numbers. As taller conifer species grow old and begin to succumb to disease or bark beetles, white firs grow up to replace them and effectively shade out any new trees attempting to establish themselves under the canopy.

White fir is one of twelve Management Indicator Species ("MIS") on the Los Padres National Forest. MIS are plants and animals that are monitored by the U.S. Forest Service because they indicate the effects of land use activities. There are 3 MIS to evaluate the health of montane conifer forests on the forest and white fir is one of them.

General threats facing the California white fir include wildfire, drought, beetle and mistletoe infestation, and various diseases like root rot and yellow cap fungus. Thin-barked, resin blistered, drooping lower branches makes young white firs highly susceptible to fire.

ForestWatch will continue to work with the Forest Service in monitoring the twelve Management Indicator Species of the Los Padres, which the white fir is one of, to gauge the health of our local forests.



Tagging juvenile steelhead

USFWS

ing grounds higher up in the watershed. In fact 90 percent of historic habitat is located above impassable barriers! Water diversions for household, agricultural, and industrial use also left less water for fish, reducing streamflows and narrowing the window of opportunity for steelhead to complete their life cycle.

Invasive species, road crossings, improperly managed livestock grazing, and oil spills have also caused the deterioration of steelhead habitat in the Los Padres National Forest.

### Recommendations for Recovery

The Plan recommends modifying all major dams and other impassable barriers to steelhead, and restoring streamflows to account for all stages of steelhead life history. This modification to the timing and quantity of water releases from the dams will strive to mimic pre-dam stream flows and allow for improved connectivity between the ocean and historic spawning grounds.

The Plan also recommends the preparation of numerous studies, plans, and monitoring programs to improve steelhead habitat and to reestablish connectivity to historic spawning grounds. It also suggests that the U.S. Forest Service incorporate additional steelhead protective measures in the management plan for the Los Padres National Forest.

The Southern Steelhead Recovery Plan represents an ambitious effort to bring back steelhead to our region's waterways. ForestWatch will work with all stakeholders involved to ensure that the Recovery Plan's priority recommendations are implemented as soon as possible so that steelhead can once again return to their historic spawning grounds in the Los Padres National Forest.

California biologists, farmers, conservationists, and fishermen have been buzzing about the recent release of the Final Southern Steelhead Recovery Plan by the National Marine Fisheries Service in early 2012. Focused on an area from the Santa Maria River to the California/Mexico border, the Recovery Plan will serve as a guide to restore historic steelhead runs in southern California, including several major watersheds in the Los Padres National Forest.

Once numbering in the tens of thousands of fish, southern steelhead populations plummeted in the past several decades. The Recovery Plan is a 'blueprint' that describes the measures that must be taken to bring the southern steelhead back from the brink of extinction.

Los Padres ForestWatch has been involved in the development of the Plan from start to finish, providing the National Marine Fisheries Service with input along the way. The Los Padres National Forest is of high priority when it comes to steelhead recovery efforts because many of the streams providing pristine spawning habitat originate in and flow through the forest.

The largest threats facing the steelhead of the Los Padres National Forest, and southern California as a whole, are impassable barriers such as dams, culverts, and road crossings, all of which prevent steelhead from swimming upstream from the ocean to spawn-

# PROTECTING FRAZIER MOUNTAIN

Forest Service backs off plans for commercial timber sale

Last month, the Forest Service backed off earlier plans for a commercial logging operation on Frazier Mountain in the remote Ventura County backcountry of the Los Padres National Forest. ForestWatch had opposed the logging plan, which would have been the first commercial timber sale in the Los Padres in decades and would have caused significant damage to the mountain's sensitive wildlife and waterways.

The logging project was first announced in 2005 and targeted large conifer trees up to thirty inches in diameter. Forest officials announced their intention to approve the project within sixty days, without preparing an Environmental Assessment or allowing any public appeals.

ForestWatch sprung to action and immediately demanded that forest officials prepare an Environmental Assessment. We also urged officials to scale back the project and to ensure that any "forest thinning" would be done for scientific and ecological reasons, not for commercial profit.

After going back to the drawing board, in 2010 forest officials completed an Environmental Assessment for the Frazier Mountain project. But the Forest Service continued to pursue the commercial timber sale, and ForestWatch continued to oppose it.

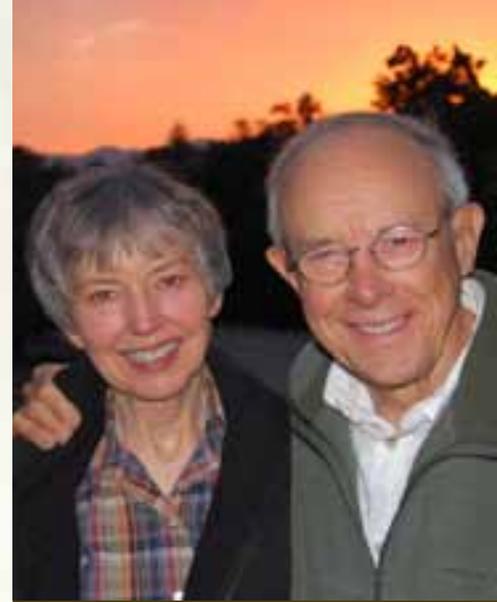
Then, earlier this year, the Forest Service announced that it would scrap the commercial timber sale on Frazier Mountain, and instead focus on a forest restoration project that would only remove small, densely-packed trees less than ten inches in diameter. The project would also contain provisions to protect and restore wildlife habitat on the mountain. At the same time, the agency released a 200-page Environmental Assessment outlining additional ways to protect the fragile ecosystems on Frazier Mountain. This new project was the result of two years of discussions and negotiations between ForestWatch, local residents, and Los Padres forest officials.

ForestWatch recently filed a formal letter expressing general support for the newly-designed project and outlining a handful of additional changes we would like to see incorporated into the final project. The Frazier Mountain area is a sensitive ecosystem harboring rare species like northern goshawks, California spotted owls, yellow-blotched salamanders, and lodgepole chipmunks. The utmost care must be taken not to disturb this ecosystem, and any forest restoration activities must be based on sound science.

ForestWatch will continue to work with forest officials to ensure that this project protects rare plants and wildlife on Frazier Mountain and truly restores forest health.



ForestWatch and forest officials meet on Frazier Mountain



## STELLAR SUPPORT

KATHY AND JOHN BROESAMLE

"Mountains are in our blood," state John and Kathy Broesamle – and indeed their lives are representative of that statement. They met in 1960 working as summer employees in Yosemite National Park. Yet their appreciation for wilderness came at an even younger age spending time in the great outdoors with parents that were avid campers.

Kathy, a Speech Pathologist, and John, a retired Professor of American History, moved to the Ojai Valley in 1987, an area they chose for its natural beauty and openness.

They are now deeply immersed in protecting the greater Ojai Valley through their founding and development of the Ojai Valley Defense Fund, a group working to raise a substantial community chest to provide financial support to those striving to protect and sustain the environmental quality of the Valley.

It is no wonder that the Broesamles and Los Padres ForestWatch found each other. Since joining ForestWatch in 2007, they have worked closely with us to give the local wilderness landscapes and the wildlife that inhabit them a voice. "We regard the Los Padres as a unique resource and, like the Ojai Valley, a unique remnant of California as it once existed," said John.

Along with their two children and three grandchildren, they hike and camp continually in the Los Padres National Forest, and consider themselves uniquely fortunate to live just inside national forest boundaries. And we consider ourselves uniquely fortunate and deeply grateful for their ongoing encouragement and dedication to our work as well.



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 Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

## JOIN US! UPCOMING EVENTS

**Volunteer as Condor Film "Extra"  
March 24**



A French film crew has contacted ForestWatch with an interest in filming a volunteer microtrash cleanup for an upcoming condor documentary. The film will feature the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, LA Zoo, various condor experts, scenery from Big Sur to Baja California, and us!

Contact [suzanne@LPFW.org](mailto:suzanne@LPFW.org) to RSVP

**Earth Day Festivals  
April 21-22 Ojai, SB, SLO**



The season is upon us; Earth Day festivals! Plan on stopping by the ForestWatch booth at your local Earth Day to ask questions, look at maps, or simply say hello.

We'll be in Ojai at Oak Grove School on Saturday April 21, Santa Barbara at Alameda Park both April 21 & 22, and in San Luis Obispo at El Chorro Park Sunday April 22.

**Volunteer Carrizo Defencing  
May 5**



We thought 2011 would mark the end to our fence removal project, but we recently learned about another stretch of fencing that needs to be pulled and have this one last trip on the books for May 5.

Numbers are limited, so if interested please contact [suzanne@LPFW.org](mailto:suzanne@LPFW.org)