



# LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

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

OIL DRILLING ▪ DAM REMOVAL ▪ 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ▪ NO NEW WILDERNESS?  
TULE ELK ▪ MATILJIJA FALLS TRAIL ▪ VOLUNTEER RECAP ▪ ENDING GRAZING ON THE CARRIZO

SPRING 2015



Temblor Sunset, Carrizo Plain National Monument  
*Bill Bouton*





California Poppies, Big Sur Coast

Tanner Yould



# BASE CAMP



**Jeff Kuyper,**  
*Executive Director*

More than a century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt established the foundation for our country's network of public lands, proclaiming that "our people should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children's children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred."

But these places that we hold so dearly are struggling today in the face of declining budgets, climate change, and mounting pressure to open these lands to development and resource extraction. While there are no easy solutions, the Congressional leadership in Washington DC seems to think that the best solution is to simply sell off our public lands to the highest bidder.

This is a wake-up call. There are many interests trying to get their hands on our public lands, and some of our leaders are willing to let them.

That's why organizations like ForestWatch are so important. From the halls of DC to the backroads of the Central Coast, we're fighting every day to make sure that our public lands stay protected...and, well, public. We write letters, attend hearings, gather data in the field, investigate and report environmental crimes, and hold our decision-makers accountable.

Our members and supporters make this work possible. You give us the tools, resources, and inspiration we need to serve as a voice for your public lands, the people who enjoy them, and the benefits they provide to our local communities. Thank you for your ongoing support as we seek real, achievable, and meaningful solutions to protect our public lands for generations to come.

For the forest,

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## COMINGS AND GOINGS

We're thrilled to announce that **Tanner Yould** has joined the ForestWatch team as our Conservation Associate, and will be taking on the roles of volunteer and outreach coordination. Tanner comes to us with experience leading hiking and backpacking trips throughout the Los Padres National Forest, leading volunteer creek cleanups



with the Environmental Defense Center in Santa Barbara, web development for Isla Vista Surfrider, and is even an alumnus of ForestWatch's Conservation Internship.

Tanner will be filling in for **Craig Carey**, our Director of Outreach, Education, and Volunteer Programs, as he leaves to pursue his teaching degree. During his time at ForestWatch, Craig has led more than 30 volunteer projects, culminating in thousands of pounds of trash removed from our forest, dozens of acres cleared of invasive plants, and miles of relic fencing on the Carrizo plain retrofitted. Though Craig may be leaving ForestWatch, he will continue to support our efforts, and you may even see him on a future volunteer event!

# OIL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE LOS PADRES NEWS FROM AROUND THE FOREST

## Report on Fracking Impacts in CA

In January, state oil regulators released a long-awaited report revealing several “significant and unavoidable” environmental impacts caused by hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) and oil drilling throughout California. The report also takes a detailed look at three oil fields and concludes that fracking in the Sespe Oil Field poses serious hazards to the Los Padres National Forest and to the small rural community of Fillmore downstream in Ventura County.

The statewide fracking report identifies seven “significant and unavoidable” Class I impacts caused by fracking in the Sespe Oil Field, including air pollution, odors, safety hazards involving transport of oil, pipeline leaks, and spills of hazardous fracking fluid. The report also identifies an additional 12 potentially significant impacts from fracking in the Sespe Oil Field, including impacts to California condors and other wildlife, wetlands, Native American cultural sites, and greenhouse gas emissions.

The lands in and around the oil field provide important habitat for endangered California condors, including the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, and the Sespe Wilderness. The headwaters of several mountain streams originate in the Sespe Oil Field before emptying into Sespe Creek. ForestWatch submitted comments on this 1,000 page technical document, and will review the final report when it is released this summer.

## Punchbowl Trail Threatened

Unhindered by the findings of this report, a company is seeking permission to nearly double the size of its oil drilling operation along the boundary of the Los Padres National Forest between Ojai and Santa Paula in Ventura County. The drilling site is located along Santa Paula Creek and is bisected by one of the most popular recreational trails in the forest.

The oil wells would be located on the historic Ferndale Ranch adjacent to Thomas Aquinas College, a quaint campus in a picturesque, remote canyon that serves as a major gateway into the Los Padres National Forest. The area currently contains 17 oil wells, along with a network of pipelines, storage tanks, and other infrastructure. The first well here was drilled in 1971, and over time, several

wells were approved, often with minimal or no environmental studies.

After reviewing the company’s proposal, County planning staff concluded that no additional environmental impact report is necessary. Instead, they merely prepared a 9-page addendum to a 30-year-old EIR. That 1985 EIR only addresses truck access to and from the drilling sites, and doesn’t address a series of new information and changed circumstances that have occurred at the site over the last three decades.

The County’s Planning Division conducted a public hearing on the matter, which ForestWatch attended, provided testimony, and submitted a detailed 14-page letter outlining our concerns with expanded oil drilling in this area, after reviewing thousands of pages of County records regarding the drilling operation. The Planning Director approved the wells without preparing an EIR. ForestWatch immediately appealed the decision to the County Planning Commission, where the matter will be scheduled for a new round of public hearings this summer.

ForestWatch will continue to track this project to ensure that the trails and wildlife in Santa Paula Canyon are protected from the expansion of industrial oil development.

## Piru Canyonlands Saved

Elsewhere in the forest, in response to appeals by conservation groups, Ventura County officials announced that an oil company has cancelled its controversial proposal to drill two exploratory wells and reopen an abandoned oil field near the town of Piru, the Los Padres National Forest, and the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge.

The Ventura County Planning Commission approved the wells in September. Following that approval, three nonprofit organizations – Los Padres ForestWatch, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Citizens for Responsible Oil and Gas – filed an appeal of the decision. The groups argued that the commissioners erred by approving the wells without first preparing a full Environmental Impact Report to evaluate the impacts of the oil operations on endangered California condors, water pollution, earthquake risk, and truck traffic and health impacts to residents of the nearby rural community of Piru.

Los Padres ForestWatch first learned of the company’s plans to reopen the abandoned oil field in 2013. We reviewed the detailed project proposal and preliminary environmental studies, attended and provided testimony at two separate hearings, submitted hundreds of pages of detailed comments and recommendations, and filed two formal appeals, all urging the company and the County to prepare a full Environmental Impact Report due to the significant environmental impacts that the drilling would cause.

The most recent appeal was filed with the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in October. The appeal was originally scheduled before the Ventura County Board of Supervisors on December 16, but that hearing was indefinitely postponed. Days later, the oil company – DCOR LLC – notified county officials that it was withdrawing its application for the two test wells.

Thanks to all of our supporters, we have stopped this misguided effort to expand oil drilling near the forest. Modelo Canyon is safe from the drill for now.





Image courtesy of Bert Katzing

# WILD THINGS

## Tule Elk

Tule Elk are the largest animals within the Los Padres National Forest with full grown males weighing about 500 pounds and females about 400 pounds. Tule Elk live throughout the Los Padres National Forest in open, brushy habitats on gently sloping hills. These areas provide good opportunities for forage and also provide cover for newborn calves who hide amongst the brush for the first 18-20 days after being born. Tule Elk are grazers and browsers and consume grasses, herbs, woody shrubs, and trees in the areas they live. Adult males will often consume around 15 pounds of food every day!

Of the 22 Tule Elk herds in California, 3 reside on and adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest. One of these herds, the Pozo-La Panza herd, is the largest herd in the state, containing around 600 animals. This herd ranges from Pine Canyon in the La Panza Range east to the Carrizo Plain. The other two of these herds inhabit Fort Hunter Liggett in southern Monterey County and Camp Roberts near the Salinas River. Smaller herds also reside within the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge and the Wind Wolves Preserve. Go check them out!



Image courtesy, Jill Goodell

# LION CREEK DAM REMOVED

## Forest Service removes long defunct dam in Lion Creek

Late in October, a small team consisting of representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, NOAA, and the California Conservation Corps opened up an additional seven miles of spawning habitat for steelhead trout by removing a small concrete barrier on Lion Creek, a tributary of Sespe Creek. The dam was originally constructed in 1940 to provide water for the nearby Middle Lion Creek Campground, but sedimentation has rendered the dam defunct for decades now.

This tributary is one of the few remaining places in the forest that still has water, and is among the most important watersheds in our area. A study by Stoecker Ecological found that the Sespe drainage (Lion Creek included) should receive the highest level of protection and rehabilitation, making this a highly important dam removal despite its size. As a testament to this, before work began, California Department of Fish and Wildlife found 65 young trout in pools below the dam, which had to be moved further downstream and out of the demolition zone. After sensitive species were moved from the area, demolition took place by hand, and the team had to wheelbarrow

debris back to Middle Lion Campground which was nearly half a mile away.

This dam removal follows the recently approved Southern Steelhead Recovery Plan, which emphasizes the removal of dams and other impediments around the Los Padres National Forest to restore steelhead access to native spawning grounds. Furthermore, in order to better comply with the standards of the recovery plan, the U.S. Forest Service has hired a new fisheries biologist to help lead and inform future barrier removals.

Dam removal does not only benefit the steelhead. Removing dams means healthier streams and more resilient habitat, and in light of this current drought, higher habitat resilience means more options for species like steelhead trout and red-legged frogs when things start to dry out.

ForestWatch is incredibly excited to see the Forest Service and its partners carrying out this project, and will continue to work with stakeholders to identify other priority barriers for removal.



Lion Creek pre dam removal (above) and post dam removal (right).



# CELEBRATING TEN YEARS

On Sunday, November 16, 2014, a sold-out crowd of 250 people converged upon the Toad&Co courtyard to celebrate our collective success in 10 years of protection for Los Padres National Forest. Thanks to your outpouring of support, this was our most well-attended event ever!

On this picture-perfect Sunday afternoon, attendees enjoyed wine, beer, and appetizers while bidding on more than one hundred silent auction items amidst live music by Erin English and Jennings Jacobson. After speeches from our very own board and staff, we received recognition from Congresswoman Lois Capps, Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, Assemblymember Das Williams, Supervisor Salud Carbajal, and Mayor Helene Schneider, along with several accolades from Toad&Co's Gordon Seabury and Patagonia's Lisa Myers. Afterwards we finished off the night with a fantastic 3D condor cake prepared by Kristen Soria, granddaughter of the late Dick Smith.

Thank you to the volunteers from ForestWatch and the Santa Barbara Rotaract for your tireless work in keeping the event running smoothly. And lastly, a huge thank you to our attendees for coming out and supporting the event, for buying tickets, for bidding on auction items, and for making this event fun and worthwhile and we hope you enjoyed the event as much as we enjoyed having you!

*Sincerest thanks to*

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## STELLAR INTERNS

### Taylor Reinman

Taylor is in her senior year at UCSB, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with a minor in Business Communication. Taylor's appreciation for and connection with the local environment began in Ojai, where she grew up right across the street from the Los Padres National Forest. The countless days she spent hiking up trails, swimming in waterholes, and hopping rocks in the Los Padres are what inspire her to work hard today to conserve local lands and wildlife.

She has held positions in UCSB's Environmental Affairs Board and The Green Initiative Fund, she has as a Restoration Intern with Coal Oil Point Reserve, and she embarked on an exciting six week journey to Belize with the Wildlands Studies, studying the great diversity of ecosystems and cultures in the small Central American country. All of these experiences have helped Taylor's personal goals in conservation evolve. "There is a lot of work to be done, but whenever I step onto the soil of a place like Los Padres, I am re-inspired to do everything in my power to protect the wildlands and wildlife that surround us. I am honored to learn from such a dedicated and passionate team how to truly make a difference through conservation."

### Dominick Burnham

Dominick is ForestWatch's GIS specialist, and he prepares maps and other spatial data that helps support our work. He is a senior at UCSB pursuing a major in Geography with a GIS emphasis, and a second major in German. When he's not studying for school or making maps for ForestWatch, Dom is usually working on musical projects or performing in downtown Santa Barbara venues with one of the many bands he is a part of, but he also appreciates the chance to walk or bike along the spectacular coast of Santa Barbara.

Over the past three years of his residence in Santa Barbara, Dom has quickly grown to appreciate the Los Padres National Forest and is excited to be working to protect it by utilizing GIS software. "I have found myself very fascinated by GIS and its capabilities in my years at UCSB. Applying it to environmental conservation is very rewarding for me and I hope to continue using cutting-edge technology for such meaningful projects in the future."



*Photos courtesy of Dave Clendenen*

# NORTHERN LOS PADRES



# SOUTHERN LOS PADRES



**CUESTA RIDGE CLEANUP**  
 In March, ForestWatch volunteers teamed up with the USFS and CCCMB to remove hundreds of pounds of microtrash from an illegal shooting site in the mountains above San Luis Obispo. (PAGE 7)

**GRAZING BANNED**  
 The CDFW has decided not to renew a long standing grazing lease. For the first time in decades, commercially grazing will not be allowed anywhere in the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve. (PAGE 10)

**TAMARISK SURVEY**  
 In December, ForestWatch surveyed nearly 10 miles of Santiago Creek for invasive tamarisk to assist the Wind Wolves Preserve in creating a restoration plan.

**MATILJA ACCESS**  
 ForestWatch and partners filed a lawsuit in Ventura County Superior Court seeking to restore access to Matilija Falls, a popular recreation destination in the Los Padres. (PAGE 7)

**POT GROW SITE CLEANUP**  
 During the winter months, ForestWatch volunteers helped remove hundreds of pounds of trash from a pot grow site in the foothills about Lake Cachuma. (PAGE 7)

**LION CREEK DAM**  
 In October, a collaborative effort, opened up seven miles of spawning habitat for steelhead trout by removing a small concrete barrier on Lion Creek, a tributary of the Sespe Creek. (PAGE 3)

**FRAZIER PARK**

**WEST CAMINO CLEANUP**  
 In October, ForestWatch volunteers removed several hundreds of pounds of trash and debris from an illegal shooting site along the West Camino Cielo. (PAGE 7)

**10TH ANNIVERSARY**  
 In November, a sold out crowd of 250 ForestWatch members converged on the grounds of Toad&Co to celebrate ten years of conservation victories! (PAGE 4)

**OIL WELLS APPEALED**  
 In January, ForestWatch appealed the addition of 19 new wells along Santa Paula Creek and a popular access point to the Sespe Wilderness. (PAGE 2)

**OIL DRILLING CANCELLED**  
 In January, in response to appeals by conservation groups, an oil company has cancelled its controversial proposal to drill two exploratory wells and reopen an abandoned oil field near the town of Piru, the Los Padres National Forest, and the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (PAGE 2)



Jeff Hobbs

# LOOKING ACROSS THE FOREST

AN UPDATE ON HOW WE'RE PROTECTING YOUR REGION

# VOLUNTEER SUCCESS!

ForestWatch volunteers get boots on the ground to protect wildlife and watersheds

Twenty-fourteen was our best year yet for volunteering. At the year's end, we had completed 25 volunteer projects, ranging all throughout the Los Padres National Forest, culminating in the removal of 4,427 pounds of trash, hundreds of invasive plants, and miles of fencing, thanks to the 1,489 hours of volunteering.

Despite Craig leaving to pursue his teaching degree near the end of the summer, our new volunteer coordinator, Tanner, was able to come in and finish the year strong and lead us into the new year.

In early October, ForestWatch volunteers ventured out on West Camino Cielo in Santa Barbara to clean up an abhorrently trashed shooting range. Our team found thousands of bullet casings, glass shards, and other shrapnel, as well as an oil drum, a washing machine, and even a harp from an upright piano. That day, volunteers loaded up hundreds of pounds of trash into the back of the

present pickup trucks until they could fit no more, and piled up the rest for later removal by the Forest Service.

Early in November, a sizable team of ForestWatch volunteers teamed up with US Forest Service rangers and law enforcement to clean up an abandoned marijuana grow site in the foothills of Figueroa mountain near the Santa Ynez Valley. While the plants themselves had been removed months earlier, huge pockets of trash remained throughout the site. They were able to remove hundreds of pounds of trash and hundreds more yards of irrigation tubing, and while our team made a sizable dent, our work was not over.

Early in December, our team was back at the marijuana grow site to remove what more of the refuse they could, resulting in yet another full truckload of trash and irrigation tubing.

In 2015, amidst the sea of grant proposals and event planning, we hosted

our first ever volunteer event in San Luis Obispo on March 14th! Local ForestWatch volunteers teamed up with the Forest Service officials and volunteers from CCCMB to remove hundreds of pounds of microtrash from an extensive illegal shooting site on West Cuesta Ridge.

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To stay informed on all of our volunteer opportunities be sure to sign up for our monthly newsletter online, or by contacting Tanner by emailing [tanner@LPFW.org](mailto:tanner@LPFW.org) or by calling (805) 617-4610x3.

A huge thank you to UCSB's Coastal Fund for sponsoring our summer and fall volunteer events. The Coastal Fund is a student initiative dedicated to the conservation of the UCSB coastline, and so keeping the watersheds above Santa Barbara and the Central Coast thriving are an integral part of that. We're honored to do our part!



# FOREST SERVICE ISSUES FINAL DECISION REJECTING NEW WILDERNESS

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In November, the U.S. Forest Service finalized amendments to the management plan for the Los Padres National Forest. The amendments reject any new wilderness protections for the Los Padres National Forest and outline a slough of development activities that will be allowed in sixteen roadless areas spanning 421,000 acres in the Los Padres National Forest in Santa Barbara, Ventura, Kern, and San Luis Obispo counties.

Despite widespread public support for more wilderness protections in the Los Padres National Forest, the decision does not protect any new wilderness areas here – in stark contrast to the other three national forests in southern California, where the amendments include new recommendations to designate an additional 86,583 acres as wilderness.

The decision comes less than one month after Regional Forester Randy Moore – the top forest official in California – ordered the Los Padres National Forest to reconsider its no-new-wilderness policy. The Regional Forester’s order was issued in response to a formal objection filed by several conservation organizations, including Los Padres ForestWatch, Center for Biological Diversity, The Wilderness Society, Western Watersheds Project, Keep Sespe Wild Committee, California Native Plant Society, California Chaparral Institute, and California Wilderness Coalition.

While falling short on wilderness protections, the decision does prohibit motorized vehicles across more than 300,000

acres of forest land. Instead of recommending these lands for wilderness protection, the Forest Service classified them under a less-protective Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM) category that still allows for oil drilling, communication towers, road construction, sale of public land, wood harvesting, and vegetation clearing.

These development activities are all allowed on BCNM lands, but they are prohibited in areas recommended for wilderness designation.

Recommending areas for wilderness designation is the first step towards securing permanent protection for these lands under the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act is America’s strongest land conservation tool, wilderness lands are forever protected from development, while camping, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, and hunting are all allowed to continue in wilderness.

Wilderness protection ensures that we can continue to enjoy clean mountain streams, wildlife habitat, and the great outdoors without threat of development. As the rest of the country celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, we’re disappointed by this missed opportunity to build upon our region’s rich wilderness legacy.

We are carefully reviewing the Forest Service’s decision to determine our next steps.

Dry Lakes Ridge, Courtesy of Jeff Jones



## WHY PROTECT WILDERNESS?

In 1964, Congress passed into law the Wilderness Act, which gives Congress the authority to permanently designate the highest level of protection for any of our existing public lands. With wilderness designation, the traditional threats to our wild lands such as road building, oil developments, mining, off-road vehicle use, logging, and more, are no longer allowed in that designated area. We can still enjoy those lands via hiking, backpacking, camping, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding, but the idea is that we visit, and then leave it as we found it.

In addition to congressionally-designated wilderness, there are other means by which an area can be managed as wilderness, but they are not without issue. Public land management agencies (such as the Bureau of Land Management) can determine land to be a “wilderness study area,” and a president can designate “proposed wilderness areas” in preparation for legislation passing to make the designations official. While designated as potential wilderness or a wilderness study area, the land is managed as though it was already awarded legal designation. However, these designations are not permanent and the protection can be revoked. For example, on January 28, 2015, Senate attempted to pass an amendment to the Keystone XL bill that would have stripped protection from 27.4 million acres of designated wilderness study areas and proposed wilderness areas – including areas of the Los Padres like the Carrizo Plain. While the amendment was unsuccessful in passing, without congressional legislation those management designations remain temporary and at risk of being stripped of their protection.

ForestWatch is proudly working to add wilderness areas throughout the Los Padres and Carrizo Plain. Along with our Central Coast Wild Heritage coalition partners, we are continuing to gather support for the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act. This bill will protect 245,500 acres of the Los Padres and Carrizo Plain as wilderness, safeguard 159,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers, and establish the Condor Trail, a 400-mile national recreation trail running through the central coast.

## FORESTWATCH FILES LAWSUIT TO RESTORE PUBLIC ACCESS TO MATILIJA FALLS

In January, ForestWatch led a coalition of local conservation organizations and trail users, called Keep Access to Matilija Falls Open, in filing a lawsuit in Ventura County Superior Court seeking to restore public access to Matilija Falls, which has been a popular recreation destination in the Los Padres National Forest for the past 100 years. The legal action comes after years of negotiations with an adjacent landowner failed to produce any formal commitment to allow public access to resume in the area.

The popular route leads to swimming holes, unique geologic formations, and the beautiful Matilija Falls in the Matilija Wilderness Area of the Los Padres National Forest. The public has traveled the route for nearly a century, and it was popular with visitors who arrived by stagecoach beginning in the last century and remains one of the best wilderness access points in this part of the Los Padres National Forest. The trail has long appeared in hiking guidebooks and on maps produced by the U.S. Forest Service and others dating back to the 1930s. A postcard from 1905 shows people enjoying the falls, evidencing the long history of public access to one of our region’s most spectacular natural wonders.

However, in 2009, Buz Bonsall, whose family acquired the parcel next to the forest in 1979, began to aggressively confront hikers and took steps to prohibit public access in the area. He also advised hikers, as well as representatives of the U.S. Forest Service, of his intent to have hikers cited for trespassing.

Matilija Canyon has a rich history of public access dating back nearly one hundred years. National forests are a public resource that should be accessible to all of us. We want to make sure that families and outdoor enthusiasts can once again enjoy the natural beauty and tranquility of Matilija Falls.

The lawsuit asks a judge to declare a permanent public easement through the property, so that the public can continue to access the falls in perpetuity. Based on long-standing California law dating back to the 1850s and affirmed several times by the California Supreme Court, a public right-of-way exists if five or more years of continuous public use can be shown predating 1972.

The public has used this area for many decades to access the National Forest for hiking, fishing and enjoying the great outdoors. We are confident that a judge will rule in our favor and recognize the public’s long standing use of this area.” “At the time the property was purchased in the late 1970s, the trail across the property had been used for many years and the Bonsall family knew or should have known that this long standing use was taking place,” said Bill Slaughter, a local attorney whose firm Slaughter & Reagan LLP is representing the coalition. “The public should not be punished just because a landowner fails to do his due diligence.”

The lawsuit – Keep Access to Matilija Falls Open v. Bonsall – was filed in Ventura County Superior Court. Keep Access to Matilija Falls Open (KAMFO) is an unincorporated association consisting of ForestWatch and other local conservation organizations and Ventura County outdoor enthusiasts.



Image Courtesy of Roy Randall

## THE END OF AN ERA COMMERCIAL GRAZING BANNED ON THE CARRIZO PLAIN E. R.

For the first time in decades, commercial livestock grazing will not be allowed anywhere in the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, a 38,900-acre wildlife preserve in San Luis Obispo County adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument.



*Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve  
Image Courtesy of the Chimineas Ranch*

The California Department of Fish & Wildlife – the agency charged with managing the reserve – has decided not to renew a long-standing grazing lease after it expired last month. With no lease in place, grazing is indefinitely suspended on the Reserve, and Department officials have vowed to not allow grazing to resume until they first complete an overarching management plan for the Reserve.



*Overgrazed area (left) and ungrazed area (right) on the  
Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, October 2009.*

The Reserve includes features ecologically sensitive habitat linking the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument in southeastern San Luis Obispo County. It contains rare blue oak woodlands and native grasslands as well as some of the region's only populations of Tule elk and pronghorn antelope. The Reserve also provides habitat for at least 26 sensitive, threatened, or endangered species including burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, southwestern pond turtle, California red-legged frog, grasshopper sparrow, California jewelflower, and tri-colored blackbird.

But wildlife throughout the Reserve has suffered from years of intense overgrazing. A ForestWatch survey in 2009 discovered severe overgrazing across much of the

Reserve, fencing in disrepair, trampled wetlands and springs, cattle trespassing into areas where the lease expressly prohibits grazing, and other unsatisfactory conditions resulting in severe environmental degradation of lands that were supposed to have been set aside for the protection of rare wildlife.

ForestWatch then filed a lawsuit challenging the Department's practice of approving grazing leases on the Reserve without first conducting environmental studies and without having a land management plan in place. As a result of the lawsuit, the Department agreed to prepare such studies and to finalize a management plan by 2012.

A management plan was first envisioned by the legislation establishing the Reserve in 2001, which required State officials to complete the plan by 2004. That plan has still not yet been finalized, and the Department has come under increasing public pressure to limit or eliminate livestock grazing across the Reserve pending the plan's completion.

Due to the ongoing delays in preparing the management plan, along with poor range conditions caused by overgrazing and the ongoing drought, the Department made the right move by indefinitely suspending livestock grazing until the management plan is complete, which is not expected until 2016 or later.

ForestWatch thanks the Department for hitting the pause button on livestock grazing in this ecologically sensitive area, allowing time for the land to recover from years of abuse and providing time to complete the management plan.

We will continue to urge Department officials to make progress on the management plan so that future decisions are guided by strong standards that recognize the important role that the Reserve plays in preserving our region's rich biological diversity.



*Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve  
Image Courtesy of the Chimineas Ranch*



## THANK YOU TOAD&CO

Live well, do good, and keep good company. That's the mantra of Santa Barbara-based apparel company Toad&Co. Their employees understand the importance of protecting and conserving wild places like the Los Padres National Forest right here in their own backyard.

"Our business is inspired by going outside, living well and doing good," said Gordon Seabury, Toad&Co CEO and incoming Chairman of the Outdoor Industry Association. "The Los Padres National Forest is in our backyard. We care about wilderness and make it a priority to give back and volunteer with organizations like ForestWatch that ensure sustainability and protection of our wildlands, keeping open spaces open and available to the public."

The company hosts events for ForestWatch at its headquarters amidst Santa Barbara's beautiful Riviera. They provide us with product donations, invite us to network with their employees over lunch, and offer their employees to volunteer with us at events and work projects in the field. They're also known to throw a party or two, and you might even see a ForestWatch booth at their next Grilled Cheese Smackdown.

Underscoring the company's commitment to social and environmental responsibility, Toad&Co is a member of 1% for the Planet, committing to donate one percent of its sales to conservation organizations like ForestWatch. Toad&Co is also a longtime member of the Conservation Alliance, a coalition of outdoor businesses that give back to the environment. Last year, the company nominated us for a \$35,000 Conservation Alliance grant, which we received earlier this year.

"ForestWatch's mission appeals to local businesses and individuals who share a common goal committed to protecting open space," explains Toad&Co's Seabury. "By forging alliances with local outdoor industry companies throughout the Central Coast, ForestWatch has not only been able to protect our public spaces, but in many cases improve them. We're proud to keep good company with ForestWatch."

Through their commitment to land conservation and sustainability, and their dedication to the work of Los Padres ForestWatch, our friends at Toad&Co sure do know how to keep good company. Thank you for your ongoing support of our work!



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Blenders in the Grass  
Brophy Bros. Restaurant & Clam Bar  
Cachuma Press  
Castoro Cellars  
Channel Islands Outfitters  
Chaucer's Books  
Circle Bar B Guest Ranch & Stables  
Coffee Cat  
Condor's Hope Wine  
Conway's Confections  
Crushcakes Cupcakery  
Danyel Dean  
Deckers Outdoor Corp.  
Demetria Estate

Donn Longstreet  
Elemental Herbs  
Empty Bowl Gourmet Noodle Bar  
Enjoy!  
Figueroa Mountain Brewing Co.  
Foxen Vineyard & Winery  
Giannfranco's Trattoria  
Great Pacific Iron Works  
Halper Fine Art  
Hoka One One  
Hollister Brewing Co.  
Horny Toad Activewear  
Island Brewing Company  
Island Packers  
Island Seed & Feed  
Los Padres Outfitters  
Lumnos Wilderness Photography  
Mac's Fish & Chip Shop  
Mountain Hardwear  
New Belgium Brewing  
Open Air Bicycles

Patagonia, Inc.  
Peet Steinmetz  
Peet's Coffee and Tea  
Persona Italian Pizzeria  
Rancho Oso Guest Ranch & Resort  
Ron Williams  
Sagebrush Annie's Wines  
Santa Barbara Brewing Company  
Santa Barbara Home Improvement Center  
Sanuk  
Saucelito Canyon Vineyard  
Sly's  
Surf to Summit  
Susan Guy  
Suzanne's Cuisine  
Terri Laine  
Teva  
Tim Hauf Photography  
UGG Australia  
Vices & Spices