Protecting wildlife and wild places along California's Central Coast

Patagonia's Salmon Run
November 6

Don’t miss the 18th annual Salmon Run! Participants follow a ‘migratory path’ along the Ventura River, upstream from Patagonia’s Great Pacific Iron Works, looping back and finishing at the starting line where prizes, refreshments, entertainment, raffles, a silent auction, and fun booths from local environmental organizations await. Details at www.LPFW.org

Los Padres ForestWatch
Join us!

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Carrizo Plain Defending Day
November 19

We are sadly nearing the end to our defending work on the Carrizo! If you haven’t been out with us before, be sure to join in on one of the final trips to open up space for the pronghorn to roam.

Contact suzanne@LPFW.org to reserve your spot on this first trip, and stay tuned for more opportunities in the upcoming months.

Ojai Wild! Creekside BBQ
March 31 - Save the Date!

Mark your calendar for the fifth annual Ojai Wild! on Saturday, March 31, 2012. Don’t miss this ever-popular creekside BBQ at The Thacher School’s beautiful Diamond Hitch Camp!

Interested in planning, donating to, or otherwise participating in this fun event? Contact diane@LPFW.org or call 805.617.4610 ext 2

Los Padres ForestWatch
Protecting wildlife and wild places along California’s Central Coast

Wilderness Campaign • Cherry Creek Cleanup • Upcoming Events • Peregrine Falcon
Backcountry Journal • Salmon Run • Southern Mountain Buckwheat • Wilderness Map

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper
This year, three graduate interns from UCSB’s Bren School of Environmental Science and Management contributed their skills to ForestWatch, gaining first-hand experience in nonprofit land conservation. Let’s thank them for their hard work!

Andrea Blue is a California native who spent nine months with ForestWatch. She helped us identify key stakeholders for our wilderness project, while finishing up her Master’s group project to prevent the spread of invasive species on Santa Cruz Island.

Sarah Clark grew up in Maine and, among her many talents, is an amazing singer and a crazy-mad GIS technician. Sarah helped us record precise locations in the field using a hand-held GPS unit, and then took that data to create some eye-popping maps, and documenting their wilderness qualities. We’ve met with landowners, farmers, ranchers, local businesses, faith organizations, schools, and forest users, listening to their ideas about how to best protect these majestic lands.

The result – a proposal to add an additional 200,000 acres to the Santa Barbara and Ventura backcountry to the National Wilderness Preservation System. It’s our region’s largest land conservation effort in the last two decades.

We’ve already made great progress, but it’s going to take a herculean effort to protect the nation’s largest land preservation area. Today, right now, our communities have an opportunity to build on this rich wilderness legacy. There are many places in the Los Padres National Forest that are worthy of the protection afforded by the 1964 Wilderness Act – places like Condor Ridge on the Gaviota Coast, White Ledge Peak, and untold other places that don’t even have names but are worthy of protection in their own right. We’ve spent countless hours in the field ground-truthing these areas, pouring over maps, and documenting their wilderness qualities. We’ve met with landowners, farmers, ranchers, local businesses, faith organizations, schools, and forest users, listening to their ideas about how to best protect these majestic lands.

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We’ve already made great progress, but it’s going to take a herculean effort to turn this vision into reality. Following in the footsteps of our local wilderness heroes – and with the support of our dedicated members and volunteers – we can, and will, add yet another chapter to our region’s rich wilderness legacy.

Cassie DeShawn hails from Las Vegas and loves hiking in unbearably hot weather. So we sent her out to the Cuyama badlands this summer to document illegal off-road vehicle trespass in the Chumash Wilderness. Cass also researched several Los Padres trailheads that have been closed over the years.

TRUSTEE RECOGNIZATION

Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director

Our local back-country has a long history of residents working tirelessly to defend it. Because of these efforts, the Los Padres National Forest is blessed with ten wilderness areas that are forever protected from development, from the mighty Ventana Wilderness in the north, to the equally impressive Sespe Wilderness in the south.

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Sarah Clark grew up in Maine and, among her many talents, is an amazing singer and a crazy-mad GIS technician. Sarah helped us record precise locations in the field using a hand-held GPS unit, and then took that data to create some eye-popping maps, including the one in the centerfold of this newsletter.

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Thank you, Sarah, for your hard work!
The American peregrine falcon can be seen soaring through the sky throughout the Los Padres National Forest. These magnificent birds have wingspans up to 46-inches (almost 4 feet) and fly at speeds up to 60 mph. When diving down (a.k.a., "stooping") for their prey, they can top speeds of over 200 mph, making them the fastest animal that inhabits earth, facilitating the spread of invasive weeds, and scar the landscape – and open up areas for more intensive development activities like mining and oil drilling.

The Los Padres contains more than 660,000 acres of inventoried roadless areas. This ruling may go down as one of the largest conservation victories in history, unless Congress steps in. Dubbed the “Great Outdoors Giveaway,” this proposal was introduced to eviscerate the Environmental Protection Agency’s long-standing mission to protect wilderness areas like the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and require an act of Congress to take effect. Wilderness Act. H.R. 2852 would force the federal government to give away 30 million acres of federal public land, and H.R. 1126 would force the U.S. Forest Service and other federal agencies to dispose of “excess” public lands in ten western states for “deficit reduction.” Similar proposals are on the books to eviscerate the Environmental Protection Agency’s landmark environmental protection laws like the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Water Act.

ForestWatch will continue to work with our coalition partners at the state and national levels to ensure that none of these bad bills become law. But in this Congress – with its partisan rancor and polarization – anything is possible, and we cannot let down our guard.

CRITTER CORNER

The current proposal for the Los Padres National Forest includes 14 additions to existing wilderness areas such as the north slope of the Sierra Madre Mountains, the lower half of the Mono Creek watershed, and White Ledge Peak, Santa Lucia, Obispo portions of the and Surf. The current proposal for the Los Padres National Forest that we all can support. These meetings helped us fine-tune our proposal and incorporate new ideas about how best to protect these magnificent lands and streams. Landowners, local businesses, farmers, ranchers, wildlife advocates, elected officials, land conservation organizations, chambers of commerce, faith organizations, schools, forest users, and others share our vision for adding to our region’s rich wilderness heritage.

For more information about the wilderness project, visit www.LosPadresWild.org or contact one of our wild places campaign coordinators: in Santa Barbara County, call Michael Summers at (805) 617-4610; in Ventura County, call Matt Sayles at (805) 861-8170.
Mountain bikes are prohibited in wilderness areas, our coalition took great effort to initially exclude more than 100 miles of trails from the wilderness proposal so that mountain bikers could continue to use them. After gathering input from mountain bike groups, we modified our proposal even further. Popular mountain bike trails like Chorro Grande, Tequepis Canyon, and the Buckhorn Trail will remain open to mountain bike use. There are approximately 22 miles of trails in our proposed wilderness areas, but they receive little or no mountain bike traffic. We are also working to identify new areas for multisite trail construction.

**Mountain Bikes**

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**Trail Stewardship**

Power tools are generally prohibited in wilderness, so trails must be maintained using hand tools. ForestWatch and other coalition members are seeking ways to implement a new trail stewardship program that focuses on wilderness trails while also partnering with existing trail groups. Wilderness and trail stewardship go hand in hand, and we’re proud to do our part to help keep our backcountry trails open.

The Forest Service can approve the use of power tools and activities in wilderness areas, in certain circumstances. An example would be the use of chainsaws to clear a trail of many large downed trees after a storm, or to blast away a landslide or a boulder. Normally, the Wilderness Act would only allow a trail crew to use hand tools for trail maintenance, but if it can be shown that using power tools is necessary to accomplish the task, and can be done in a way that minimizes disturbance, then those exceptions can and have been granted.

**Wildfires and Other Emergencies**

In an emergency situation such as fire, search and rescue, and law enforcement emergencies, the Wilderness Act allows for the use of power tools and motorized travel. All forest supervisors are given the power to allow firefighters to use chainsaws and fire retardant to fight fires, and prescribed fire. Even the use of heavy machinery such as bulldozers is allowed for by the Wilderness Act. One rule guides the fighting of fires on public lands, whether in wilderness or not – preservation of life and property comes first.

The Salmon Run is also an official run of the SOAR Trail Run Series. S.O.A.R. (Save Open-space and Agricultural Resources) is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to making Ventura County a better place to live by limiting urban sprawl, protecting open space and agricultural lands, and promoting livable and sustainable communities in Ventura County. The SOAR Trail Run Series is a collection of five great trail runs around Ventura County; visit RunSoar.org to learn more and join in for the last couple runs of the year.

To register for Patagonia’s Salmon Run, and thus support all the great work that Los Padres ForestWatch does in your local backcountry, visit the event’s webpage at Patagonia.com/SalmonRun.
They were too far away to determine what they were, but I had a hunch. Eyes straining through my crusty binoculars, they looked too big to be pronghorn. I was hoping they were Tule elk, but I couldn’t be sure. About 40 of them were grazing at a steady pace moving west along the base of the Caliente Mountains in the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The foothills were rolling green and the plain below was carpeted in tidy tips, wildflowers. I dropped my binoculars and the story continued with their feeding. A full dumpster’s worth of trash was hauled away at the end of the day.
This addition to the Dick Smith Wilderness fills in a gap between the existing San Rafael and Dick Smith wilderness areas, protecting the headwaters of Gibraltar Reservoir in the Upper Santa Ynez River Valley.

The area includes the headwaters of Mono and Agua Caliente creeks, and protects a series of unique grassy meadows called porteros. Mono and Indian Creeks – proposed for “wild and scenic” protection – also flow through and around this remote area of our local backcountry.

The northern face of the Sierra Madre Range serves as a unique ecological transition zone, providing unique habitat for rare animals like the San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard. It’s also a primary flyway of the California Condor, and contains Lion Canyon, where unique rock formations served as a release site for endangered California condors.

Evolving the desert terrain often depicted in old westerns, this arid landscape is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodlands, dry sandy washes and innumerable narrow, deep and eroded canyons with freshwater springs.

These lands along upper Pina Creek are characterized by unique sandstone outcrops, scattered pine forests, and high-elevation meadows. The upper reaches of Pina Creek – proposed for “wild and scenic” status – flows through this striking landscape.

These additions to the Matilija Wilderness provide excellent views of the surrounding mountains, the Channel Islands and the Pacific Ocean. The area also contains the Matilija Escarpment, a 1,500-acre exposed sandstone formation and the Dry Lakes Ridge Botanical Area, where seasonal ponds provide habitat for a diverse array of unique plant life.

This area forms the majestic southern slopes of Pine Mountain and Reyes Peak. Steep sandstone cliffs and canyons interspersed by dense stands of pine and fir give way to chaparral and the unique white rock formations in the adjacent Sespe Wilderness. Upper Sespe Creek – proposed for “wild and scenic” status – flows through this area.

Forming either side of Pine Mountain summit, these lands contain some of the best old growth pine and fir forests in the Los Padres, and herald the long descent down into the Cuyama Valley.
The foothills were rolling green and the plain below was carpeted in tidy tips, owl’s clover and other vibrant spring wildflowers. I dropped my binoculars in my truck, affixed my 300mm lens to my oldest tenured Canon camera and took off running, heading south between the morning sun and a still unconfirmed Tule elk herd.

The sun was my ally keeping those warm morning rays at my back and in the eyes of my potential subjects. I then had the luxury of locating a very shallow gully. I covered about 1.5 miles before turning west toward what I now knew as a Tule elk herd. After countless trips to the Carrizo Plain, there have been many moments when the historic grasslands lived up to its moniker as “California’s Serengeti,” but spotting a solid herd of elk was a highlight.

Now within about 100 yards of the elk, my first encounter had been a memorable one. I fired off a few frames, when several of the lead cows raised their heads, looking my way while munching those moist blades of grass. That was the end of the road for me. Once they were aware of me that was my cue to back away and let the herd of elk continue with their feeding.

I slowly backpedaled continuing to use the gully to conceal my presence. I waited until the entire herd was feeding again before spinning around and trotted back to my truck to continue exploring the Carrizo Plain.

Heading up Cherry Creek

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Southern mountain buckwheat is a threatened plant species found in the San Bernardino and Los Padres national forests. Specifically in the Los Padres National Forest, it has been found around Lockwood Valley and the Thorn Meadow-Matt Phantom Run Loop area. Identification can prove difficult, but this subspecies is distinguished from similar buckwheat by its long, thin leaves and light rose colored flower clusters. It typically occurs in “pebble plains” — characteristically open, open spaces at elevations above 5,000 feet.

Major threats to the species include development, off-highway vehicle trespass, mining, or other activities affecting surface hydrology, and the invasion of competitive nondomestic plant species, like Cheatgrass. Livestock grazing and wildland fires also have potential to negatively impact the Southern mountain buckwheat and its limited pebble plain habitat.

Southern mountain buckwheat was federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act on September 14, 1998. In 2004, conservation organizations were forced to negatively impact the Southern mountain buckwheat and its limited pebble plain habitat.

**PROHIBITED IN WILDERNESS**

No developments, roads, or extractive industries are allowed in wilderness, making wilderness the strongest protection available for federal public lands. However, reasonable exceptions are made for existing activities, such as livestock grazing and mineral or other property rights. The other defining feature of wilderness is that no motorized vehicles or mechanized equipment is allowed — this extends to off-road vehicles (like dirtbikes and ATVs) as well as mountain bikes and power tools.

We carefully crafted our wilderness boundaries to avoid existing legal roads in the forest, including parking areas, turnouts, and established ORV routes and areas. This ensures that the public is still able to easily access these areas.

**MOUNTAIN BIKES**

While mountain bikes are prohibited in wilderness areas, our coalition took great effort to initially exclude more than 100 miles of trails from the wilderness proposal so that mountain bikers could continue to use them. After gathering input from mountain bikers and other groups, we modified our proposal even further. Popular mountain bike trails like Chorro Grande, Tequepis Canyon, and the Buckhorn Trail will remain open to mountain bike use. There are approximately 22 miles of trails in our proposed wilderness areas, but they receive little or no mountain bike traffic. We are also working to identify new areas for multiuse trail construction.

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**WILDFIRES AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

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**18TH ANNUAL SALMON RUN**

Patagonia’s popular 5K to benefit Los Padres ForestWatch

Don’t miss the 18th annual Salmon Run! Join Patagonia, Real Cheap Sports and a long list of co-sponsors for a 5K run benefiting Los Padres ForestWatch in our efforts to protect the Los Padres National Forest and other public lands.

The Salmon Run is a certified 5K course along the Ventura River. Participants follow a migratory path along the river, upstream from Patagonia’s Great Pacific Iron Works, loop back and finishing at the starting line where prizes, refreshments, entertainment, raffles, a silent auction, and fun food from local environmental organizations await.

ForestWatch is proud to have been chosen by Patagonia as the 2011 event beneficiary, and will be receiving the funds generated through race registration.

The Salmon Run is also an official run of the SOAR Trail Run Series. S.O.A.R. (Save Open-space and Agricultural Resources) is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to making Ventura County a better place to live by limiting urban sprawl, protecting open space and agricultural lands, and promoting livable and sustainable communities in Ventura County. The SOAR Trail Run Series is a collection of five great trail runs around Ventura County; visit RunSoar.org to learn more and join in for the last couple runs of the year.

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**LOS PADRES OUTFITTERS**

Since 1969 Los Padres Outfitters has been the ‘woodes of nature to young and old alike on horseback.

Graham Goodfield, Los Padres Outfitters’ Owner and Principal Operator, landed his first job with Outfitters at age 13 and since then has been hands-on in all aspects of its operations. Graham says, “outfitting is very rewarding — being able to show people the back country and let them discover what they’re missing. With horses, mules and good food; my clients get a taste of what it used to be like here in California.”

Each trip with Los Padres Outfitters is customized to suit the group. Outfitters’ participants ride down tranquil and unspoiled trails, cross rivers and creeks, enjoy a comfortable removal of “roughing it” while having excellent food prepared for them in the solitude of wilderness campsites.

Outfitters also provides pack support work for trail maintenance being done in the Los Padres National Forest. This includes building material, tools and provisions for remote projects in the Los Padres.

Los Padres Outfitters has also supported Los Padres ForestWatch over the years. Since Ojai Wild began, they have generously donated a special group horse pack trip each year and will be extending this generosity once again at the 2012 Ojai Wild auction. We value their commitment to our work and to the protection of our region’s wild lands and wildlife.

We encourage you to experience our local forest with Los Padres Outfitters. To learn more about their outings, call them at (805) 331-5252 or visit their website at www.LosPadresOutfitters.com.

**CRITTER CORNER**

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**What is wilderness and what does it mean to me?**

Wilderness is an indispensable part of American history. In 1964 our nation’s leaders formally acknowledged the benefits of wild places to the human spirit and fabric of our nation. That year, in a nearly unanimous and bipartisan vote, Congress enacted the Wilderness Act to permanently protect lands “where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man.”

Shortly after passage of the Wilderness Act, Congress passed the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 to protect our nation’s “sustainably remarkable” rivers, and to preserve them “in free-flowing condition.”

**ALLOWED USES IN WILDERNESS**

Wilderness areas are devoted to recreation, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historic use. Wilderness areas provide opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, including hiking, paddling, climbing, horseback riding, camping, fishing, hunting, and other. Other permissible activities include grazing, access to private lands, fish and wildlife management, protection of (and access to) Native American cultural sites, and the control of fire, insects, and disease. Once an area is designated as wilderness, it must still be actively managed so that its wilderness qualities are preserved.

*Wildland fire protection is the highest priority in the wilderness. Fire is used to clear a trail of many large downed trees after a storm, or to blow away a landslide or a boulder. Normally, the Wilderness Act would only allow a trail crew to use hand tools for trail maintenance, but if it can be shown that using power tools is necessary to accomplish the task, and can be done in a way that minimizes disturbance, then those exceptions can and have been granted."

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The American peregrine falcon can be seen soaring high in the sky throughout the Los Padres National Forest. These magnificent birds have wingspans up to 46 in (almost 4 feet) and fly at speeds up to 60 mph. When diving down (a.k.a. “stooping”) for their prey, they can top speeds of over 200 mph, making them the fastest animal that inhabits the Los Padres.

The Los Padres contains more than 600,000 acres of inventoried roadless areas. This ruling may go down as one of the largest conservation victories in history, unless Congress gets its way. Dubbed the “Great Outdoors Giveaway,” the H.R. 581 was introduced earlier this year and would explicitly revoke all of the protections offered by the Roadless Rule. It would also undo protections for Wilderness Study Areas on lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt summed it all up during a recent Congressional hearing, calling H.R. 581 “the most radical, overreach- ing attempt to dismantle the architecture of our public land laws that has been proposed in my lifetime.”

The Great Outdoors Giveaway
Roadless Rule Upheld by Court, but Congress Seeks to Unravel Protections

Last month, a federal appeals court rejected the final legal challenge to the 2001 Roadless Rule—a decade-old reg- ulation that protects nearly 50 million acres of “inventoried roadless areas” in national forests across the country. With the court’s unanimous ruling in place, the Roadless Rule is firmly estab- lished as the law of the land. The rule prohibits roadbuilding and was designed to protect the last remaining unroaded areas in the country, recog- nizing that these areas are valuable for their outdoor recreation opportunities, clean water supplies, and intact wildlife habitat. Roads, on the other hand, send sediment into streams, fragment wildlife habitat, facilitate the spread of invasive weeds, and scar the landscape—and open up areas for more intensive devel- opment activities like mining and oil drilling.

Conservation groups from around the country are rallying to stop this bill, arguably the most damaging anti-public lands bill that Congress has ever consid- ered. In May, ForestWatch joined more than one hundred other land conserva- tion organizations in formally opposing the Great Outdoors Giveaway.

While public attention focuses on the economy, legislators have quietly initi- ated a broad attack on other environ- mental protection laws, too. H.R. 1505 would give control over all public lands, including national forests and monu- ments, within 100 miles of the Mexican, Canadian, and maritime U.S. borders to the Department of Homeland Security. H.R. 2834 would allow motorized vehi- cles in designated Wilderness Areas, and would unravel the protections in the 1964 Wilderness Act. H.R. 2852 would force the federal government to give away 30 million acres of federal public land, and H.R. 1126 would force the U.S. Forest Service and other federal agen- cies to dispose of “excess” public lands in ten western states for “deficit reduction.” Similar proposals are on the books to eviscerate the Environmental Protection Agency and landmark environmental protection laws like the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Water Act.

ForestWatch will continue to work with our coalition partners at the state and national levels to ensure that none of these bad bills become law. But in this Congress—with its partisan rancor and polarization—and anything is possible, and we cannot let down our guard.

CRITTER CORNER

The American peregrine falcon can be seen soaring high in the sky throughout the Los Padres National Forest. These magnificent birds have wingspans up to 46 in (almost 4 feet) and fly at speeds up to 60 mph. When diving down (a.k.a. “stooping”) for their prey, they can top speeds of over 200 mph, making them the fastest animal that inhabits the Los Padres.

The Los Padres contains more than 600,000 acres of inventoried roadless areas. This ruling may go down as one of the largest conservation victories in history, unless Congress gets its way. Dubbed the “Great Outdoors Giveaway,” the H.R. 581 was introduced earlier this year and would explicitly revoke all of the protections offered by the Roadless Rule. It would also undo protections for Wilderness Study Areas on lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt summed it all up during a recent Congressional hearing, calling H.R. 581 “the most radical, overreach- ing attempt to dismantle the architecture of our public land laws that has been proposed in my lifetime.”

Conservation groups from around the country are rallying to stop this bill, arguably the most damaging anti-public lands bill that Congress has ever consid- ered. In May, ForestWatch joined more than one hundred other land conserva- tion organizations in formally opposing the Great Outdoors Giveaway.

While public attention focuses on the economy, legislators have quietly initi- ated a broad attack on other environ- mental protection laws, too. H.R. 1505 would give control over all public lands, including national forests and monu- ments, within 100 miles of the Mexican, Canadian, and maritime U.S. borders to the Department of Homeland Security. H.R. 2834 would allow motorized vehi- cles in designated Wilderness Areas, and would unravel the protections in the 1964 Wilderness Act. H.R. 2852 would force the federal government to give away 30 million acres of federal public land, and H.R. 1126 would force the U.S. Forest Service and other federal agen- cies to dispose of “excess” public lands in ten western states for “deficit reduction.” Similar proposals are on the books to eviscerate the Environmental Protection Agency and landmark environmental protection laws like the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Water Act.

ForestWatch will continue to work with our coalition partners at the state and national levels to ensure that none of these bad bills become law. But in this Congress—with its partisan rancor and polarization—and anything is possible, and we cannot let down our guard.

Currently the conservation measure of high- est concern on National Forest System lands is protecting cliff-nesting sites from human disturbance, particularly during the nesting season. Additionally, the protection of ripar- ian areas to maintain prey abundance is of importance to the falcon too.

Wilderness CampaIn
ForestWatch launches 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.

Earlier this year, ForestWatch and a coalition of wilderness advocates launched an exciting campaign to for- mally 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. When complete, the campaig- n will ensure the permanent protec- tion of these lands and waterways from development and represents our region’s largest land conservation effort in more than twenty years.

Congress passed the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, to pro- tect federal lands and waterways in their natural state. Today, these designa- tions remain our nation’s highest level of protection for public lands, and require an act of Congress to take effect. Wilderness allows for recreation activities such as hiking, paddling, fishing and hunting, horseback riding, and camping. It pro- hibits motorized or mechanized travel, development, road and dam building, and extractive industries, with limited exceptions. While many wilderness areas seem vast and expansive, less than 3% of all land in the lower 48 states is protected as wilderness, and less than 1% of our nation’s rivers are protected as “wild and scenic.”

The current proposal for the Los Padres National Forest invokes 14 additions to existing wilderness areas such as the north slope of the Sierra Madre Mountains, the lower half of the Mono Creek watershed, and White Ledge Peak Creek. These areas form our upper watersheds that supply our farms and homes with clean water. These areas also provide us with beautiful scenery and healthy places for families to recre- ate near our communities. All of these areas are vulnerable to development, road building, and resource extraction if they are not protected.

Wilderness protection is firmly rooted in the history of our region. The Los Padres National Forest has been the focus of protection efforts going all the way back to the creation of the Wilderness Act. In 1968, the San Rafael Wilderness – in the Santa Barbara backcountry – became one of the first areas added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. In 1964, the community came together to preserve the Dick Smith Wilderness. Eight years later, the 1992 Condor Range and River Protection Act added the Chumash, Sespe, and Matilija Wildernesses while also grant- ing wild and scenic river status to the Susque River, the Big Sur River, and lower Sespe Creek. These efforts also created wilderness areas within the Big Sur and Santa Lucia Obispo portions of the forest as well Ventana, Silver Peak, Santa Lucia, and others.

Over the past several months, we have met with stakeholders around the forest to identify and resolve conflicts and concerns before any legisla- tion is introduced. ForestWatch strives to create, in the spirit of wil- derness efforts of the past, a bipar- tisan proposal for the Los Padres National Forest that we all can support. These meet- ings helped us fine-tune our proposal and incorporate new ideas about how best to protect these magnificent lands and streams. Landowners, local busi- nesses, farmers, ranchers, wine growers, elected officials, land conservation orga- nizations, chambers of commerce, faith organizations, schools, forest users, and others share our vision for adding to our region’s rich wilderness heritage.

For more information about the wilderness project, visit www.LosPadresWild. org or contact one of our wild places campaign coordinators: in Santa Barbara County, call Michael Summers at (805) 617-4619; in Ventura County, call Matt Sylas at (805) 861-8170.
This year, three graduate interns from UCSB’s Bren School of Environmental Science and Management contributed their skills to ForestWatch, gaining first-hand experience in nonprofit land conservation. Let’s thank them for their hard work!

Andrea Blue is a California native who spent nine months with ForestWatch. She helped us identify key stakeholders for our wilderness project, while finishing up her Master’s group project to prevent the spread of invasive species on Santa Cruz Island.

Sarah Clark grew up in Maine and, among her many talents, is an amazing singer and a crazy-mad GIS technician. Sarah helped us record precise locations in the field using a hand-held GPS unit, and then took that data to create some eye-popping maps, and documenting their wilderness qualities. We’ve met with landowners, farmers, ranchers, local businesses, faith organizations, schools, and forest users, listening to their ideas about how to best protect these majestic lands.

The result – a proposal to add an additional 200,000 acres in the Santa Barbara and Ventura backcountry to the National Wilderness Preservation System. It’s our region’s largest land conservation effort in the last two decades.

We’ve already made great progress, but it’s going to take a Herculean effort to turn this vision into reality. Following in the footsteps of our local wilderness heroes – and with the support of our dedicated members and volunteers – we can, and will, add yet another chapter to our region’s rich wilderness legacy.

Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director

You Make It Possible

2011 was an impressive year of accomplishments for ForestWatch, but we certainly couldn’t do it without you, please consider making a generous year-end contribution today!

Closed down the Cherry Creek watershed to unauthorized target shooting and organized a massive cleanup of the area.

214 volunteers spent 2,255 hours removing nine miles of abandoned fencing on the Carrizo Plain, and picking up over 500 pounds of microtrash from eight different sites around the forest.

Demand stricter accountability in the Sespe Oil Field after yet another oil spill fouled two miles of pristine mountain stream in the Sespe Creek watershed, and our lawsuit compelled the California Department of Fish & Game to protect the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve from severe overgrazing.

Secured increased protections for more than two dozen plant and wildlife species that are threatened with extinction on the Los Padres National Forest, including southern steelhead, California condor, San Joaquin kit fox, and Smith’s blue butterfly.

Los Padres ForestWatch was just a fledgling organization when Martin Stevenson became one of its first major donors back in 2005. Impressed with how ForestWatch identified a void in our region’s conservation efforts, he decided to jump in and help. “I thought that all the needless destructive exploitation that would have occurred if ForestWatch wasn’t around to safeguard the national forest,” said Martin.

In 2006, he met Elizabeth, they married in 2010, and now, together, they continue to support causes that they feel “really make a difference.” Between them they have 4 children, 9 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren. They both feel strongly about the importance of preserving open space for future generations. Elizabeth summed it up this way, “Today’s generation spends so much time inside that they don’t realize the importance of being outdoors, getting away from the city and experiencing nature. I want the Los Padres National Forest to remain protected for future generations so that families can continue to enjoy, appreciate, smell, touch, and experience all that the forest has to offer.”

Retired now, Martin - a former engineer - and Elizabeth - a former chief nurse for a large hospital in Los Angeles - enjoy being together, traveling, hiking, music, and growing lots of their own vegetables.

The Stevensons continue to be staunch ForestWatch supporters. It is because of the longstanding support from individuals like Martin and Elizabeth that ForestWatch is able to continue to be an advocate and voice for our region’s wild lands.
Protecting wildlife and wild places along California’s Central Coast

Patagonia’s Salmon Run
November 6

Don’t miss the 18th annual Salmon Run! Participants follow a “migratory path” along the Ventura River, upstream from Patagonia’s Great Pacific Iron Works, looping back and finishing at the starting line where prizes, refreshments, entertainment, raffles, a silent auction, and fun booths from local environmental organizations await. Details at www.LPFW.org

Los Padres ForestWatch

Join us!

Upcoming events

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Carrizo Plain Defending Day
November 19

We are sadly nearing the end to our defending work on the Carrizo! If you haven’t been out with us before, be sure to join in on one of the final trips to open up space for the pronghorn to roam.

Contact suzanne@LPFW.org to reserve your spot on this first trip, and stay tuned for more opportunities in the upcoming months.

Ojai Wild! Creekside BBQ
March 31 - Save the Date!

Mark your calendar for the fifth annual Ojai Wild! on Saturday, March 31, 2012. Don’t miss this ever-popular creekside BBQ at The Thacher School’s beautiful Diamond Hitch Camp!

Interested in planning, donating to, or otherwise participating in this fun event? Contact diane@LPFW.org or call 805.617.4610 ext 2

Los Padres
ForestWatch

PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES ALONG CALIFORNIA’S CENTRAL COAST

Wilderness Campaign • Cherry Creek Cleanup • Upcoming Events • Peregrine Falcon

Backcountry Journal • Salmon Run • Southern Mountain Buckwheat • Wilderness Map

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Cherry Creek Cleanup, Los Padres National Forest

Photo courtesy of Mike Summers