



LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES ALONG CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

CENTRAL COAST HERITAGE PROTECTION ACT ■ OIL DRILLING ■ OJAI WILD!

SAN LUIS OBISPO FOUNTAIN THISTLE ■ SAN EMIGDIO BLUE BUTTERFLY ■ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

FALL 2014



Unnamed Drainage in Proposed Sespe Wilderness Addition

Eldon M. Walker; emwalker.net





Red Rock, Santa Ynez River

Craig R. Carey

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Jeff Kuyper,
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This summer, ForestWatch turned 10. From our small beginnings, we've grown to become an effective force for the conservation of land, water, wildlife, and the great outdoors.

As I reflect on our accomplishments over the last decade, I'm amazed by two things in particular. First, I'm overwhelmed by what you and I – working together – have been able to accomplish. Any time development and industrialization have threatened our local backcountry, we've been there to stop it. We've educated and inspired tens of thousands of local residents to become more involved in how our public forest lands are managed. And our volunteer crews are relentless – they've cleaned up 12,000 pounds of trash, surveyed and removed tamarisk from 30 miles of mountain streams, and removed 15 miles of abandoned barbed-wire fencing.

I'm equally as inspired by the breadth, diversity, and dedication of our members, supporters, volunteers, and friends in the community. From the central coast and beyond, you're the backbone of our organization. You've attended our events, written letters to decision-makers, donated, volunteered, and offered to help us every step of the way.

Just think of what all of us will be able to accomplish over the next decade. As I look at the places we've protected, and when I look at the people who have made it happen, I am hopeful that our children – and the generations to follow – will look across this landscape and thank us all for the efforts we took to protect these precious lands.

Here's to the next ten years, and beyond.

For the forest,

GET ON YOUR GLOVES! UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have some great volunteer opportunities in the coming months - see below for details! Upcoming projects include clean-ups at the Tar Creek trailhead, shooting areas on the West Camino Cielo above Santa Barbara, and two projects on the Carrizo Plain.

Tar Creek Clean-up

Saturday, 13 September 2014

Join us Saturday, 9/13/14 at 9a for a clean-up at the Tar Creek parking area on the edge of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary above Fillmore. Expect a ~1.25-hour drive from Santa Barbara.

RSVP to team leader Jeff Hunter at jscotthunter@gmail.com if you can join and for additional details.

National Public Lands Day on the Carrizo Plain

Saturday, 27 September 2014

On the remote Carrizo Plain National Monument, volunteers will be helping BLM staff with a project replacing dead shrubs, fixing the water lines, and general cleanup. Lunch will be provided by The Friends of the Carrizo Plain.

Contact Ryan Cooper, 661-391-6048, racoper@blm.gov or John Kelley, 661-391-6088, jtkelley@blm.gov if you can join and for additional details.



Photo courtesy Grace Carey

West Camino Clean-up

Saturday, 11 October 2014

Join us Saturday, 10/11/14 at 9a for a clean-up at the Eastern Tecolote Canyon shooting area along the West Camino Cielo above Santa Barbara. Expect a ~45-minute drive from Santa Barbara.

RSVP to Craig Carey at craigrcarey@gmail.com if you can join and for additional details.

Explore and Serve on the Carrizo Plain

Sat-Sun, 15-16 November 2014

Pronghorn antelope will not jump fences to escape predators but rather attempt to crawl under. Our service on Saturday will either remove or modify several sections of fence to facilitate this mobility. Sunday will be, at the choice of the group, either a hike in the Caliente Range or else a tour of popular viewing areas in the plains. This is an opportunity to combine car-camping, day-hiking, exploring, and service in a relatively unknown wilderness.

RSVP to Craig Deutsche at craig.deutsche@gmail.com if you can join and for additional details.



STELLAR SUPPORT

Support for ForestWatch comes in numerous forms — be it advocacy, membership, or getting on the gloves and joining our field crew.

In the case of long-time ForestWatch supporter and monthly donor Carol Ecklund, it's "all of the above!"

Born in Minneapolis, Carol's grade school years were split between homes in Virginia and Melbourne, Australia as her parents both were in the employ of the US Department of State. She thoroughly enjoyed her time in Australia — "we camped out near the Great Barrier Reef where a kangaroo crashed through our tent one night," Carol remembers. Koalas, platypuses, and the varied flora of the continent captured her imagination. "All those experiences as a young girl gave me a profound respect for the diversity and wonders of our natural world."

Upon her return to Virginia, she and schoolmates hiked stretches of the Appalachian Trail in the Blue Ridge Mountains. "My favorite spot is the Little Stoney Man Mountain Nature Trail Overlook where three of the seven bends of the Shenandoah River can be seen."

After receiving her degree from George Mason University, Carol was employed by the Department of the Navy, and trained as an electronics technician. One of her jobs was to install circuits on Santa Cruz Island, and she marveled as the efforts of the Nature Conservancy helped return much of the island's original fauna — "it made me realize how important preserving our natural heritage really is," Carol says.

Now retired, Carol revels in her ability to take an active role in such efforts. "I find that I can indulge my passion for volunteering in support of environmental causes, and I ask myself—what can be more important than protecting our earth? Not just for the humans who inhabit it, but for other living creatures. I want our children to be able to see the glorious natural beauty I've seen."

A fixture at many of this year's volunteer programs, Carol happily observes that "LPFW volunteers are on the move protecting our natural environment. I feel honored to be one of those volunteers and hope many of you will come join us in our projects. We work hard, but we have fun!"

We appreciate Carol's hard work, and look forward to having her infectious attitude at future field projects!

VOLUNTEER SUCCESS!

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

Over the course of this past spring and the first half of this summer, ForestWatch volunteers have been busy across the Los Padres. “2014 has been a great year for ForestWatch volunteer projects,” said Craig R. Carey, LPFW’s Director of Outdoor Programs. “It’s only August and already we’ve conducted more than 20 projects ... with more to come!”

In early April, our team braved soggy conditions for a day of tamarisk eradication along Rancho Nuevo Creek, at the edge of the Dick Smith Wilderness boundary. Tamarisk grows rapidly and can reach heights of twenty feet, and its taproot can extend more than one hundred feet underground. The plant provides poor habitat for native bird species, smothers native willows and other plants, and consumes large amounts of water from adjacent streams, leaving greatly-reduced water supplies for fish and wildlife.

The same month, a team of Patagonia volunteers joined us for another day of tamarisk eradication, this time along an unnamed drainage of the Sespe where we’ve been working for nearly a year removing tamarisk and cleaning up an illegal target-shooting area.

In May, our volunteers embarked on a series of microtrash clean-up projects along high-elevation condor roosting areas, hauling 150 lbs. of litter and debris from atop McPherson Peak, Frazier Mountain, and Cerro Noroeste. Microtrash — those small bits of trash littering many mountaintops — poses a serious threat to the endangered California Condor. Small bits of glass, nails, bottle caps, and other refuse is attractive to the curious birds and often ingested by the chicks, resulting in their death.

June saw our volunteers team up with Forest Service officers for a day of invasives removal along the far West Camino Cielo, between Refugio Canyon and Gaviota Peak. Yellow star thistle and veldt grass were the two main targets that day, and the volunteers enjoyed unique views from a rarely-visited stretch of the forest. Shortly thereafter,



Rancho Nuevo tamarisk eradication



Sespe watershed tamarisk eradication



Frazier Mountain microtrash clean-up

OJAI WILD! A WILD SUCCESS!

In April, a capacity crowd of 250 ForestWatch supporters gathered under the oaks at Diamond Hitch Camp in Ojai for the 7th annual *Ojai Wild!* benefit auction and barbeque. It was our most successful event ever, raising more than \$56,000 to support our local forest protection work.

On this picture-perfect Spring afternoon, attendees enjoyed wine, beer, and appetizers while bidding on more than one hundred silent auction items amidst live music from The Murphy Family Band. Then we all enjoyed a fantastic gourmet barbeque dinner prepared by Chef Richard Maxwell and his crew, followed by dessert and a lively auction. It was all orchestrated marvelously by our Master of Ceremonies Geoff Green.

We awarded Jan Hamber our annual Wilderness Legacy Award for her life-long commitment to protecting endangered California condors. And with ForestWatch celebrating our own 10th Anniversary, we were honored to receive certificates of recognition from Congresswoman Julia Brownley and Assemblymember Das Williams during the event as well.

Our biggest fundraiser of the year, *Ojai Wild!* was a huge success – thanks to all of our friends, supporters, volunteers, and sponsors. We are grateful to all of you who made the event possible and we look forward to seeing you next spring!

Sincerest thanks to

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... and all our silent and live auction donors for their support!



Photo courtesy Dave Clendenen

SUMMER INTERNS

Lexi Journey & Matt Plummer

This summer, Los Padres ForestWatch has the good fortune to have two interns helping with our conservation efforts — Lexi Journey and Matt Plummer.

Lexi’s devotion to wildlife motivated her to earn a B.S. in Ecology, Evolution and Behavior at UCLA. Afterward she went on an ecological exploration and studied bird populations in the Virgin Islands, Ecuador, the Adirondacks, and Maui. Her journey confirmed her belief that more people are needed on the frontlines to protect natural places.

This awareness is what brought her to work at Los Padres ForestWatch while she earns a Masters in Environmental Science and Management at the Bren School at UCSB, specializing in Conservation Planning.

At ForestWatch, Lexi is realizing her dream of protecting wildlife (she drafted and submitted our petition to list the San Emigdio Blue butterfly as a sensitive species within the Los Padres), has attended meetings with the Forest Service and advocates for the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, and is currently researching the presence of Western Spadefoot toad within the Los Padres and the efficacy of numerous dams across the Forest.

“It feels so good to have found an organization that shares my core values. I get to do exactly what I want here — help protect the forest and its wildlife.”

Matt is a senior at UCSB, majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Spatial Studies. An avid camper, surfer, and hiker, Matt is pulling double duty this summer — he’s also a research assistant with the Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology Department at UCSB, where Matt’s team is studying vegetation community conversion in Southern California.

“I feel fortunate to have been brought up in an incredibly beautiful and diverse region of California, and to have been able to go to college and work in another that is equally, if not more, amazing,” Matt says.

Over the course of the summer, Matt has leveraged his GIS training to analyze the Sespe Oil Field, worked with the California Natural Diversity Database to study the status and locations of rare plants and animals, and analyzed watersheds impacted by damming.

“I’m passionate about using technology to protect our natural resources in order to preserve them for future generations.”

NORTHERN LOS PADRES



SAN CLEMENTE DAM
In the Spring, the major phase of dam removal at San Clemente Dam got underway. The largest dam removal to-date in California, the project is a huge step to restore steelhead migration into the Los Padres National Forest.

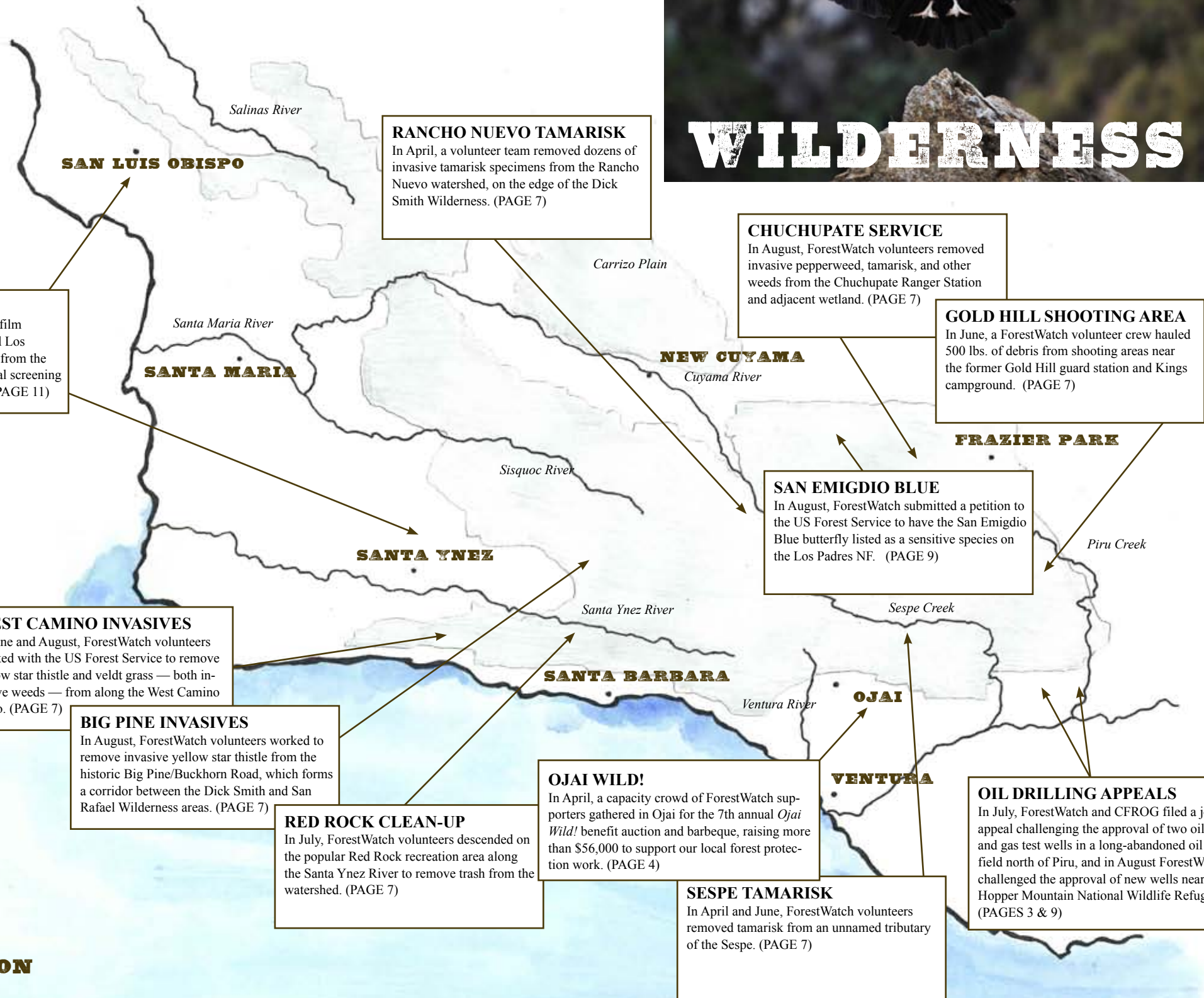
DAMNATION
Our screenings of Patagonia's new film *DamNation* in San Luis Obispo and Los Olivos were met with rave reviews from the sold-out crowds. Join us for the final screening in Santa Barbara this September! (PAGE 11)

WEST CAMINO INVASIVES
In June and August, ForestWatch volunteers worked with the US Forest Service to remove yellow star thistle and veldt grass — both invasive weeds — from along the West Camino Cielo. (PAGE 7)

BIG PINE INVASIVES
In August, ForestWatch volunteers worked to remove invasive yellow star thistle from the historic Big Pine/Buckhorn Road, which forms a corridor between the Dick Smith and San Rafael Wilderness areas. (PAGE 7)

RED ROCK CLEAN-UP
In July, ForestWatch volunteers descended on the popular Red Rock recreation area along the Santa Ynez River to remove trash from the watershed. (PAGE 7)

SOUTHERN LOS PADRES



RANCHO NUEVO TAMARISK
In April, a volunteer team removed dozens of invasive tamarisk specimens from the Rancho Nuevo watershed, on the edge of the Dick Smith Wilderness. (PAGE 7)

CHUCHUPATE SERVICE
In August, ForestWatch volunteers removed invasive pepperweed, tamarisk, and other weeds from the Chuchupate Ranger Station and adjacent wetland. (PAGE 7)

GOLD HILL SHOOTING AREA
In June, a ForestWatch volunteer crew hauled 500 lbs. of debris from shooting areas near the former Gold Hill guard station and Kings campground. (PAGE 7)

SAN EMIGDIO BLUE
In August, ForestWatch submitted a petition to the US Forest Service to have the San Emigdio Blue butterfly listed as a sensitive species on the Los Padres NF. (PAGE 9)

OJAI WILD!
In April, a capacity crowd of ForestWatch supporters gathered in Ojai for the 7th annual *Ojai Wild!* benefit auction and barbeque, raising more than \$56,000 to support our local forest protection work. (PAGE 4)

SESPE TAMARISK
In April and June, ForestWatch volunteers removed tamarisk from an unnamed tributary of the Sespe. (PAGE 7)

OIL DRILLING APPEALS
In July, ForestWatch and CFROG filed a joint appeal challenging the approval of two oil and gas test wells in a long-abandoned oil field north of Piru, and in August ForestWatch challenged the approval of new wells near the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. (PAGES 3 & 9)



Jeff Hobbs

LOOKING ACROSS THE FOREST

AN UPDATE ON HOW WE'RE PROTECTING YOUR REGION



CRITTER CORNER

In August, Los Padres ForestWatch submitted a formal request to the U.S. Forest Service to place a critically threatened butterfly – the San Emigdio Blue – on the forest’s list of sensitive species. If our request is granted, it would be only the second butterfly species to appear on the list of sensitive species in the Los Padres National Forest, and would ensure that its habitat is protected from a variety of threats.

The San Emigdio Blue butterfly (*Plebejus emigdionis*) is a unique species found only in Southern California. It is unique in that females will only lay their eggs on three different species of saltbush when a particular species of ant (*Fornica pilicornis*) is present. The ant protects the caterpillars from being eaten by other ants and wasps, and in return, the caterpillar secretes sugar and amino acids for the ant to eat.

Activities threatening the survival of this species include water diversion, off-road vehicle trespass, livestock grazing, vegetation clearing, land development, road work, and spread of invasive species, and entomologists and butterfly enthusiasts are concerned about its survival. After much research, ForestWatch gathered confirmation that populations of the rare butterfly do indeed occur within the Los Padres (throughout the Mt. Pinos Ranger District in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties) and the viability of the populations are highly threatened. We also discovered that while the San Emigdio Blue butterfly appears on sensitive species lists for several other forests in California, it is noted as not occurring in the Los Padres National Forest and as a result populations within the Los Padres have no protection from many actions threatening the butterfly’s habitat.

The addition of the San Emigdio Blue butterfly to the “Los Padres National Forest Sensitive Species List” would help protect San Emigdio Blue populations in the forest by confirming that any potential impacts to the butterflies or their habitat are evaluated and mitigated. It would also ensure the utilization of the best and most current information to inform land management decisions throughout the region.

FORESTWATCH CHALLENGES APPROVAL OF NEW OIL WELLS NEAR HOPPER MOUNTAIN NWR

This past August, Los Padres ForestWatch filed an appeal seeking to halt the drilling of two new oil wells in a remote canyon near the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge and a known nesting site for the endangered California condor.

The wells are located approximately one mile from the boundary of the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, a 2,471-acre sanctuary for endangered California condors. Federal biologists use the refuge as a field base of operations for the California Condor Recovery Program. The refuge contains condor release sites, holding pens, feeding stations, and condor nesting, roosting, and foraging areas. The wells are also located a mile away from a known condor nesting site just outside of the refuge boundary.

The Ventura County Planning Division approved the wells earlier this month without any public notice or hearing, and without any environmental review. Instead, the County signed off on the wells by issuing an over-the-counter zoning clearance, a routine process typically reserved for home remodels, patio cover construction, and swimming pool installation.

California condors are particularly susceptible to oil drilling operations, and exposed oil and other toxic fluids pose a hazard to condors and other wildlife. In addition, condors can find microtrash – small bits of trash including wires, washers, nuts and bolts, glass, and plastic – on oil pads. Several young condors and condor chicks have recently died after ingesting large amounts of microtrash. Citing these risks, federal condor biologists with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service concluded in a 2011 report that “[t]he combination of condors and well pads creates a difficult management challenge for the California Condor Recovery Program.”

To reduce these risks, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has recommended 23 measures to protect endangered condors from oil drilling operations. These recommendations were outlined in a letter from the Service’s Ventura Field Office to the Ventura County

Planning Division in 2013, and include measures such as:

- keeping pads clean of all trash and other hazards;
- undergrounding or retrofitting power lines;
- installing anti-perching devices on equipment;
- educating oilfield employees on best management practices; and
- prohibiting wells and other infrastructure within 1.5 miles of known condor nesting sites.

The County Planning Division did not apply any of the 23 condor protection measures to the two new wells, placing condors in the area at serious risk of harm. The proposed well location is less than one mile from a known condor nesting site, according to data provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

In addition, the proposed drill site is approximately 70 feet from Hopper Creek, a tributary to the Santa Clara River. Endangered southern steelhead historically spawned and reared in Hopper Creek, and – according to a 2005 report – it contains some of the best steelhead habitat in the entire Santa Clara River watershed. The County’s zoning ordinance requires oil wells and other infrastructure to be placed at least 300 feet from the edge of bank to protect watercourses and stream habitat.

The appeal asks the Ventura County Planning Commission to overturn the Planning Division’s approval of the two wells, and to require a more thorough review of the risks and harms posed to California condors and water quality in Hopper Creek. The matter will likely be scheduled for a hearing before the Planning Commission later this year.



WILDERNESS LEGISLATION ANNOUNCED FOR LOS PADRES & CARRIZO PLAIN

This past May, Rep. Lois Capps announced legislation that would permanently protect key wilderness areas, preserve free-flowing rivers, and promote hundreds of miles of recreational trails throughout Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo counties.

The legislation would expand and connect the existing network of wilderness areas in the southern Los Padres National Forest. It would also designate new scenic areas, wild and scenic rivers, a national recreational trail, and establish the first wilderness areas in the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

“This effort to protect the lands and waters in the Los Padres and Carrizo Plain is the culmination of a groundswell of local support throughout the central coast,” said Matt Sayles, Wild Heritage Coordinator for Los Padres ForestWatch. “Representative Capps truly deserves heartfelt appreciation for helping ensure the vitality and viability of these public lands for generations to come.”

Specifically, the bill – dubbed the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act – would:

- Designate 180,000 acres of wilderness adjacent to existing wilderness areas in the Los Padres National Forest, including the Sespe, Matilija, and Chumash wilderness areas in Ventura County, the Dick Smith and San Rafael wilderness areas in Santa Barbara County, and the Santa Lucia, Machesna Mountain, and Garcia wilderness areas in San Luis Obispo County.
- Propose an additional 41,000 acres adjacent to the San Rafael Wilderness Area in Santa Barbara County for future wilderness designation. The bill encourages the construction of a long-awaited connector trail that, once built, will restore historic public access to an existing network of trails in the Cuyama Valley. Once the trail is constructed, the forest land will automatically revert to wilderness.
- Designate 61,000 acres as wilderness in the Carrizo Plain National Monument, a vast landscape adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest in southeastern San Luis Obispo County. Known as “California’s Serengeti,” the Carrizo Plain is home

to Tule elk, pronghorn antelope, and the highest concentration of rare plants and animals in California. The wilderness areas outlined in the bill include Caliente Mountain, the Temblor Range, and the Soda Lake area.

- Establish two protected Scenic Areas totaling 34,000 acres, including Condor Ridge along the crest of the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County, and Black Mountain in the La Panza Range in San Luis Obispo County.
- Add 158 miles of pristine mountain streams to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers system, forever protecting them from dam-building and preserving their free-flowing condition. The protections would extend to upper Piru Creek, upper Sespe Creek, and Matilija Creek in Ventura County, and Mono Creek, Indian Creek, Manzana Creek, and other tributaries of the Sisquoc River in Santa Barbara County.
- Formally recognize the Condor National Recreation Trail, the central coast’s first thru-hiking route that would span 400 miles of existing paths in the Los Padres National Forest. The long-distance trail would begin at Lake Piru in the south, travel

through the backcountry of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, and terminate on the Big Sur coast.

More than two decades have passed since the last wilderness bill for Los Padres National Forest was signed into law. Congresses and Presidents from both sides of the aisle have created or expanded wilderness areas in our region in 1968, 1978, 1984, and 1992. There are currently 8 wilderness areas in the southern Los Padres National Forest; Capps’ legislation would expand them all.

“[The] announcement is the first step toward securing permanent protection for some of the best wild landscapes, free-flowing rivers, and backcountry trails in our region,” said Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director of Los Padres ForestWatch. “This is a fantastic way to honor the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and our region’s rich wilderness legacy, promote outdoor recreation, sustain our communities, and preserve this landscape for current and future generations to enjoy.”

Unique Geology in Proposed Sespe Wilderness Area; image courtesy Eldon M. Walker





Image courtesy Brad Schrum

CRITTER CORNER

San Luis Obispo Fountain Thistle

One of the prickliest and rarest of plants in the Los Padres National Forest is the San Luis Obispo fountain thistle (also known as the Chorro Creek bog thistle).

This thistle, a habitat specialist, can only grow in springs and stream banks with serpentine soils. These unique habitat requirements have made the plant quite rare and susceptible to extinction. It has only been found in ten different locations in San Luis Obispo County, with isolated localities in the Irish Hills, eastern Los Osos Valley (i.e., above Laguna Lake), and along the coastal front of the Santa Lucia Range between San Simeon Creek and Reservoir Canyon. None of these locations are on national forest lands, but they get quite close, suggesting that the plant might be found in the Los Padres National Forest.

The San Luis Obispo fountain thistle usually lives 2-3 years. During the first year the thistle forms a rosette of leaves, which can be up to 3 feet in diameter. The thistle then develops a flowering stalk which can reach heights of seven feet during its second year. This flowering stalk typically has numerous nodding flower heads, which flower between May and June. After flowering the plant usually dies unless enough energy has been stored to survive another year.



Image courtesy Lynn Robertson

OILFIELD APPEALS & FRACKING VICTORIES

ForestWatch appeals well approvals and sees erroneous permits cancelled

Earlier this month, Los Padres ForestWatch (LPFW) and Citizens for Responsible Oil & Gas (CFROG) filed a joint appeal challenging the approval of two oil and gas test wells in a long-abandoned oil field between Lake Piru, the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, and the Los Padres National Forest.

The approval was issued June 30 by the Ventura County Planning Director, and authorizes DCOR LLC to drill two exploratory oil and gas wells in Modelo Canyon, a remote area 1.5 miles north of the small community of Piru in Ventura County. The permit would also allow the widening of an access road and construction of various production facilities, including storage tanks, pipelines, a flare to burn off excess gas, and a helicopter landing pad.

The two test wells could lead to the re-opening of the long-abandoned Piru Oil Field. The oil field contains 63 wells that were active beginning in the late 1800s until they were abandoned two decades ago. Instead of preparing a full Environmental Impact Report, the County prepared a less-detailed Mitigated Negative Declaration concluding that the project will have no significant impacts. In their appeal, the groups challenge the County's failure to consider and address numerous environmental and public health impacts associated with the project.

The appeal will be considered by the Planning Commission at a hearing on September 25, 2014. LPFW and CFROG are asking the Commission to withdraw the approval of the test wells, and to direct the Planning Division to prepare a detailed Environmental Impact Report. Without the benefit of an EIR, the decision violates the California Environmental Quality Act and other state and federal wildlife

protection laws.

The appeal was just part of a busy season of protecting wildlife and watersheds in the oil fields!

Late last spring, ForestWatch helped the public submit comments to the U.S. Forest Service after the agency unveiled an oil company's proposal to hydraulically fracture eight oil and gas wells on federal public land in Los Padres National Forest. The wells – located north of Fillmore in the Sespe Oil Field – would bring the field's total number of wells fracked to 26 since 2011, making it the highest concentration of fracking along California's central coast between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

In May, ForestWatch notified Ventura County and California's Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) about three proposed fracking operations in the Sespe watershed for which permits had been issued in error. ForestWatch also announced its intent to file an appeal with the Ventura County Planning Commission. Only days later DOGGR cancelled the permits, and the following day, the Planning Division notified the oil company the approvals were nullified.

In August, ForestWatch was invited to give a presentation to the Ventura County Planning Commission as part of a day-long workshop on oil drilling issues in Ventura County. Our presentation focused on the impacts of drilling and fracking in the Sespe Oil Field and other areas along the forest boundary, and provided recommendations on how the County can improve its oversight of oil fields to protect the environment.



another team descended on our little corner above the Sespe for the fourth push to remove tamarisk in that watershed.

At the end of the month, a team paid a third visit to the site of the former Gold Hill guard station and to Kings campground on the eastern edge of the Mt. Pinos Ranger District, hauling nearly 500 lbs. of shooters' debris from the watershed and hillsides. This area has long be a popular site for unchecked target shooting, and has required constant vigilance.

July saw our volunteers team up with the Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council to help remove invasive cape ivy along Santa Barbara's Mission Creek. The crew uprooted and disposed of nearly 1,600 square feet of the ivy, but there's still plenty more to haul out of there, so additional crews will be assembled for more work.

Later in July, a small crew of volunteers braved the heat and hauled 60 lbs. of trash from the popular Red Rock swimming area along the Santa Ynez River.

August saw teams return to the West Camino Cielo and also tackle the historic Big Pine-Buckhorn Road for more work on the invasive yellow star thistle, as well as an ambitious pepperweed removal project at the Chuchupate Ranger Station.

It's been a great season!

This year, the ForestWatch field volunteer program was fortunate to be the recipient of a grant from UCSB's Coastal Fund. The Coastal Fund is a student initiative dedicated to the conservation of the UCSB coastline, and so the keeping the watersheds above Santa Barbara and the Central Coast thriving are an integral part of that. We're honored to do our part!



Gold Hill and Kings shooting area clean-up



Mission Canyon cape ivy eradication



Red Rock clean-up

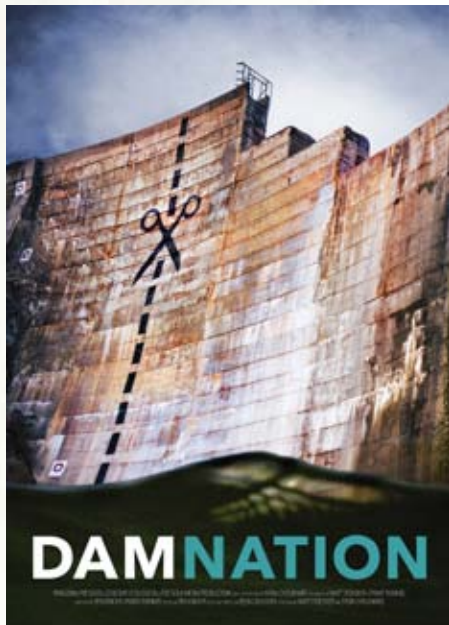


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JOIN US! UPCOMING EVENTS

DamNation
September 20, 2014 • Santa Barbara



Our final *DamNation* screening of the year — and your last chance to see it on the big screen in Santa Barbara — will be held at the Nev Vic Theatre on Saturday, 9/20/2014 and will offer a wine and beer reception before the film, and feature a post-film Q&A with Professor Robert Wilkinson — one of the nation's foremost experts on water policy and a professor at UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science & Management.

Visit LPFW.org/damnation or phone 805 617 4610 x2 for tickets and to learn more.

Wilderness50 Celebrations
Throughout Fall 2014



Join us in marking the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act! ForestWatch is hosting hikes in some of our region's best wilderness areas, followed by a wine-tasting, dinner, or other unique offering. On October 21, wilderness expert Doug Scott shares his perspectives on the Wilderness Act, and on November 12, Marc Muench and Jeff Jones take us through a photographic journey into some of our country's most spectacular wilderness areas. Free, 7pm at the Faulkner Gallery in SB.

Visit LPFW.org/wilderness50 or phone 805 617 4610 x2.

10th Anniversary Bash!
November 16, 2014 • Santa Barbara



ForestWatch turns ten this year — join us on Sunday, November 16 from 3pm-5pm in the Horny Toad courtyard in Santa Barbara as we celebrate our first decade of conservation victories!

Our birthday party features wine and beer, live music, a silent auction, special guests, and stories about our key achievements, all in a beautiful courtyard setting courtesy of our friends at Horny Toad.

Look for your invitation soon!