



LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

SPRING 2019



Carrizo Plain National Monument Superbloom 2019

Rebecca August



SALINAS
MONTEREY
Carmel River
CARMEL VALLEY
BIG SUR
Big Sur River

FORESTWATCH LAUNCHES ROOM TO ROAM
Wildlife are an integral component of our local ecosystems. From mountain lions to badgers to deer, they all have an important role in healthy functioning of the ecosystems we rely on for clean air, water, and places to recreate. That's why we've launched a program that specifically focuses on protecting these wildlife across the region. Through these efforts, we'll ensure that wildlife have a fighting chance at survival across our local landscapes that are becoming increasingly fragmented and developed. Learn more about Room to Roam on page 2.

KING CITY
Arroyo Seco River
San Antonio River

FOREST SERVICE BANS TARGET SHOOTING FOR ONE YEAR
Back in 2005, the Forest Service adopted a permanent ban on target shooting at undesignated sites throughout the national forest—but they never implemented it. Since then we have been pressing the agency to implement the ban. Trash has accumulated at over 100 sites across the forest, much of which is comprised of toxic electronic waste. Last year we filed a lawsuit against the agency for not implementing the ban, and they have since agreed to ban target shooting for one year while the issue is sorted out. Read more on page 4.

VISITORS TREATED TO ANOTHER CARRIZO SUPERBLOOM
The 2017 Superbloom on the Carrizo Plain was one for the record books. We didn't think another one would come so soon, but this year the national monument was alive with color once again! Goldfields, tidy tips, fiddlenecks, phacelia, and poppies among other wildflowers have been covering the plain and mountainsides in a stellar display since late March. If you get to catch the bloom, be sure to read our tips to avoid landscape damage on page 8.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

WILD CONDOR CHICK FLEDGES IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
Last year we were dismayed to learn that condor 526 had been shot just outside of the Los Padres. However, some good news came just after that when it was announced that condor 933 had fledged in the Santa Barbara backcountry. Wild condors have been fledging successfully for years, but this was the first time it had happened in Santa Barbara County since the species was completely removed from the wild to begin breeding and reintroduction. Welcome to the flock, condor 933!

Cuyama River Carrizo Plain

SANTA MARIA

NEW CUYAMA

Sisquoc River

VOLUNTEERS ERADICATE TAMARISK ALONG SANTA YNEZ RIVER
We were awarded a large grant to remove invasive tamarisk from along the Santa Ynez River in the Los Padres National Forest last year. Since then, our volunteers have helped remove nearly 50 infestations along an 11-mile stretch of the river below Gibraltar Dam. The project is continuing in 2019 as well. Check out page 7 to read more and see photos.

SANTA YNEZ

Santa Ynez River

SANTA BARBARA

FORESTWATCH LEADS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY HIKES
ForestWatch has been leading hikes across the forest and other Central Coast public lands as part of a new initiative to get diverse communities out into nature. So far we have led hikes at Mt. Pinos, Horn Canyon, Sisar Canyon, the Playground, Arroyo Hondo Preserve, and Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes. We have also led hikes with elected officials such as Assemblymember Monique Limón and Congressman Salud Carbajal. You can read more about these wonderful outings on Page 6.

LOOKING ACROSS THE FOREST

AN UPDATE ON HOW WE'RE PROTECTING YOUR REGION

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FOREST SERVICE APPROVES FIRST COMMERCIAL LOGGING PROJECT IN DECADES

In late 2018 the agency approved the first commercial logging project in the Los Padres National Forest in decades at the base of Mt. Pinos. ForestWatch and its partners have been working extensively to get the commercial logging component of the project dropped. An analysis of the Forest Service's own tree data shows that the basis for the project is flawed, yet the decision was still made to log large mature trees. An adjacent commercial logging project has yet to be approved, but could impact nearly 50 California condor roosting sites. Visit LPFW.org for more information about these projects.

HISTORIC PROTECTIONS FOR WILDLIFE CORRIDORS ADOPTED IN VENTURA COUNTY

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted new protections for critical wildlife corridors that connect the Los Padres National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in a historic 3-2 vote in March. This ordinance is the first of its kind in California, and it's already being looked at as a potential model for other counties to do the same. ForestWatch was instrumental in securing passage of the ordinance. You can read more about this incredible development for the future of our region's iconic species such as mountain lions, bears, and bobcats on page 2.

UPCOMING 12TH ANNUAL OJAI WILD!

Join us on Sunday, June 2 at The Thacher School's Upper Field for our 12th Annual *Ojai WILD!* This fun event will feature a gourmet dinner, local craft brews and wines, live music, and exciting auctions. Reservations are going quickly, so be sure to buy yours today. For more information about the event or to purchase tickets, visit ojaiwild.org. We hope to see you there!



BASE CAMP



FORESTWATCH BOARD

ALLAN MORTON, President
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ETHAN STONE
Santa Barbara

SAM THOMAS
Thousand Oaks



Jeff Kuyper
Executive Director

Reflecting on our work over the past few months, I'm reminded about the importance of all the tools in the conservation toolbox.

We must educate. We need to communicate the importance of our public lands and the threats and challenges facing them. This is especially true amongst youth and underserved communities.

We must advocate. We need to monitor the agencies that manage our public lands, praise them when they do well and raise a ruckus when they don't. We need to enforce environmental laws in the courts, and demand that decisions are science-based.

We must rejuvenate. We need to restore degraded lands to improve wildlife habitat and make them better places for all of us to visit. With volunteer crews, we can clean up trash, remove abandoned

fencing and equipment, and stop the spread of invasive weeds.

We must recreate. We need to get ourselves, our families, and our friends outside to explore the wonders of nature. We're more likely to protect an area if we've hiked it, camped it, pedaled it, run it, ridden it, fished it, swam it, or even just admired it from afar.

ForestWatch consistently and effectively uses all of these tools. We stop environmentally-destructive projects. We introduce kids to the wonders of nature. We organize hikes, promote sustainable outdoor recreation, and highlight the benefits of having a healthy network of protected landscapes right here in our own backyard.

We can use these tools individually to grow our impact even more. Write a letter to decision-makers. Volunteer. Donate. Introduce a friend or family member to the great outdoors. And never lose hope that all of us working individually and collectively can make a difference. Thank you for taking an active role in the protection of our region's wild places and wildlife.

COMINGS AND GOINGS



JODY BROWN

We're excited to welcome Jody Brown as Membership and Grants Manger. Most recently, Jody served as the Associate Executive Director/Activities Director at HELP of Ojai. Her background also includes over 28 years of experience at world renowned Patagonia Inc., in Global Inventory and Supply Chain Management. As a sixth-generation Californian, she holds a huge appreciation for all things natural and wild and is passionate in protecting our public lands for generations to come.



LINDY CARLSON

We're thrilled to announce the addition of Lindy Carlson, Events Manager to our team. With a B.A. in Physical Education, Lindy lives an active lifestyle including running and hiking front country trails. Her background includes experience leading horse and rafting programs in Los Padres and Sequoia National Forests, work with Patagonia's environmental grants program, and 25 years at Carpinteria Seal Watch protecting harbor seals and their rookery, managing volunteers and educating the public.



CYNTHIA GRIER

We bid a fond farewell to Cynthia Grier, who managed our two WILD! events in 2018. It's not easy throwing a party for 300 people but Cynthia did it—twice—while working long hours behind the scenes to tend to every detail. Cynthia continues to assist ForestWatch on a contract basis while organizing other events in her hometown, like Ojai's Earth Day festival. Thank you, Cynthia!

FORESTWATCH STAFF

JEFF KUYPER
Executive Director

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GRACIELA CABELLO
Director of Youth and Community Engagement

JODY BROWN
Membership and Grants Manager

LINDY CARLSON
Events Manager



ROOM TO ROAM

PROTECTION OF OUR REGION'S ICONIC WILDLIFE

Bears, mountain lions, bobcats, deer, elk, coyotes, and pronghorn serve as symbols of our region's wilderness. They once roamed freely across the landscape in large numbers, but today their survival is threatened by a confusing network of roads, fences, blinding lights, and urban sprawl encroaching further and further into their habitat.

ForestWatch has launched Room to Roam, an exciting new project aimed at securing a safe future for our region's iconic wildlife. We'll evaluate roadkill data and examine ways to ensure that wildlife can cross highways and roads safely. We'll investigate state and federal wildlife depredation programs that authorize the killing of thousands of animals each year. We'll work directly with landowners in areas with high concentrations of human-wildlife conflicts to explore non-lethal alternatives. And we'll enact policies and programs to protect core habitat areas and the corridors that wildlife use to travel across the landscape—pathways that are increasingly important to protect as we grapple with wildfires and a changing climate.

Just two months into our campaign, we're already accomplishing big results. ForestWatch and other wildlife advocates recently convinced officials in Ventura County to approve a suite of new protections for the pathways that

wildlife use to move across the landscape.

These new protections—the first of their kind in the West—were added to the county's zoning ordinance and will serve as a model for other areas seeking to preserve healthy animal populations. The new rules encourage wildlife-friendly fencing, limits on outdoor lighting, and less development near streams — practices that science has shown can significantly increase the health of our region's wildlife populations.



ROOM to ROAM

ForestWatch participated in a two-year stakeholder process along with other wildlife advocates, landowners, agricultural producers, and ranchers. The process involved tradeoffs resulting in an ordinance that balanced wildlife protection and the needs of landowners.

Opponents attempted to derail the ordinance earlier this year, but ForestWatch mobilized a rapid response to show overwhelming public support for our region's wildlife. Our members and supporters sent more than 750 emails to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in the final days leading up

to their historic vote. It was enough to overcome the opposition's well-funded misinformation campaign, and at the end of an eight-hour hearing, the Board voted 3-2 to approve the wildlife protections.

We have an obligation to give wildlife an edge in their fight for survival across the increasingly-fragmented landscape. Large expanses of native habitat have been criss-crossed by roads, cities, farms and oil fields. If we don't act now, these last remnants of wildness will be lost forever.

Our Room to Roam project will help preserve our area's unique natural heritage for generations to come. Our children and their children will get to experience the wonder of seeing a bobcat dashing off into the bushes or a fox on the prowl for ground squirrels. These animals provide countless other benefits to us as well. For example, they help maintain healthy ecosystems in and around our communities. We need these natural areas for clean air and water, pollinator-supporting plants, recreation opportunities, and the iconic aesthetic that makes our region such an amazing place to live.

When we protect wildlife and their habitat, we protect ourselves.

Visit our website at room-to-roam.org to learn more.

OIL

Fracking, Pipelines, & Wastewater Dumping

Determining the future of local public lands.

Of all the threats to public land, oil development is now the most catastrophic and existential. Its impacts on wildlife, water, air, recreation, and public health extend well beyond lines on a map and well into the future. The decisions made about oil development today weigh against the future survival of animals and ecosystems, the availability of clean water and air for generations, and the climate they inherit.

An Assault on Public Lands

One of the Trump administration's hallmarks has been its efficient handover of public lands to extractive industries. It has gutted the Environmental Protection Agency, issued executive orders that openly prioritize oil companies over human health and the environment, and undertaken an assault on keystone environmental legislation like the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. Meanwhile, certain members of Congress have proposed a constant barrage of legislation friendly to the oil industry.

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) plan to open over one million acres of public land and mineral estate across the central coast to oil drilling and fracking will determine new oil development in the region for the next 30-100 years. Last summer, area residents sent more than 8,300 letters expressing concern over the proposal during the project's scoping period. The Trump administration has imposed an arbitrary time limit of one year to complete environmental studies and has restricted the length of environmental reports to 150 pages for all projects. Under these restrictions, there is grave concern whether the impacts of fracking across a network of delicate ecosystems and hydrologic and geologic systems as complex as is found throughout the Central Coast region will be adequately addressed. The Draft Environmental

Statement is due to be released at the end of April or early May of this year with a 45 day public comment period and several hearings or workshops. The study is expected to be completed in August, one year from when it started, according to the new policy.

Plains All American Pipeline hopes to replace the pipeline that leaked almost 150,000 gallons of crude oil on the California coast from Refugio to Newport Beach. Whether it is successful will bear on the future of three Exxon platforms off the Gaviota Coast as well as future development. The proposed new route will roughly follow the path of the original pipeline, traversing the Los Padres National Forest, Carrizo Plains Ecological Preserve, Carrizo Plain National Monument, Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and Gaviota State Park. Through these environmentally sensitive areas, a 50-100' swath will be kept clear of vegetation over the length of the pipeline, with the constant threat of spills and leaks. Because the BLM must adhere to the Administration's one-year environmental study rule, it appears to be holding off on starting the clock as Santa Barbara County prepares its environmental impact report to comply with state laws.

Carrizo Plain National Monument

The appeal to stop the Trump Administration approval of a new oil well in Carrizo Plain National Monument, filed last year by ForestWatch and the Center for Biological Diversity, is still pending. ForestWatch continues to monitor and advocate for bills—including the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act and the ANTIQUITIES Act—that would increase the protection of the Carrizo Plain.

Los Padres National Forest

There are 240 active oil wells in the Los Padres National Forest, the only national

forest in California where oil drilling occurs.

In April of this year, Ventura County supervisors voted to consider a moratorium on new steam injection well permits pending consideration of findings by Scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey of thermogenetic gasses found in local groundwater. The contamination is suspected to be attributed to cyclic steam injection, the most common form of new oil extraction in the central coast region. This decision will affect future oil drilling near the forest.

An oil company caught dumping oil waste into the Sespe aquifer beside the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act, is one step closer to legitimizing its activities. In January, the State Water Resource Control Board approved the company's application to exempt the aquifer—just one-half mile from Fillmore's only drinking water source—from protection. If the Department of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR), agrees, the final decision will rest with the EPA District 9 Director, Mike Stoker, a former oil company representative. ForestWatch continues to fight for the protection of the Sespe aquifer.

On April 10, 2019, a judge heard an appeal filed by ForestWatch and its partners against a Ventura County Superior Court judge's decision to allow 19 new oil wells and the continued operation of 17 existing wells along the Santa Paula Canyon Trail, a popular hiking trail that serves as a gateway to waterfalls, swimming holes, and backcountry campsites. The lawsuit urges the court to place the drilling project on hold until a review is conducted to disclose all of the risks and damages of drilling. The decision is expected by mid-July 2019.

Visit LPFW.org/oil to read more.

TARGET SHOOTING BANNED!

Last year we made the decision to file a lawsuit against the Forest Service for not implementing a ban on target shooting at undesignated sites throughout the Los Padres National Forest that was first announced in 2005. In the years since that ban was announced, we documented over 100 undesignated target shooting sites across the southern Los Padres that were still being used. These sites continued to be littered with toxic electronic waste, broken glass and plastic, and bullet-riddled native vegetation, and they posed serious hazards to wildlife and recreationists alike.

The lawsuit alleges violations of the National Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act and seeks to enforce a permanent ban on unmanaged target shooting that the Forest Service approved in 2005, but never implemented. ForestWatch is represented by the Earthrise Law Center in Portland, Oregon and the Environmental Defense Center in Santa Barbara, California.

This year, ForestWatch and the Forest Service reached an agreement approved in U.S. District Court that will finally address this longstanding vandalism and environmental damage. Under the agreement, the Forest Service will ban target shooting at undesignated, unmanaged sites while the agency prepares detailed studies and consult with federal wildlife agencies to reduce

the impacts of target shooting on rare and endangered plants and animals such as California condors. The ban will stay in place for one year and may be extended until the studies and consultations are completed.

The agreement also requires the Forest Service to notify the public about the closure, to post signs at shooting sites, and to take other steps to enforce the ban on target shooting. The ban only applies to unmanaged target shooting. Legal hunting with a valid license is not affected, and target shooting can continue at the Ojai Valley Gun Club and the Winchester Canyon Gun Club, both of which are staffed and operated by nonprofit organizations permitted by the U.S. Forest Service.

Three other national forests in southern California have similar, permanent, bans in place. The Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests have prohibited target shooting outside of formally-designated shooting sites for decades.

According to the Forest Service website, "Law Enforcement Officers will be strictly enforcing this Forest Order in all

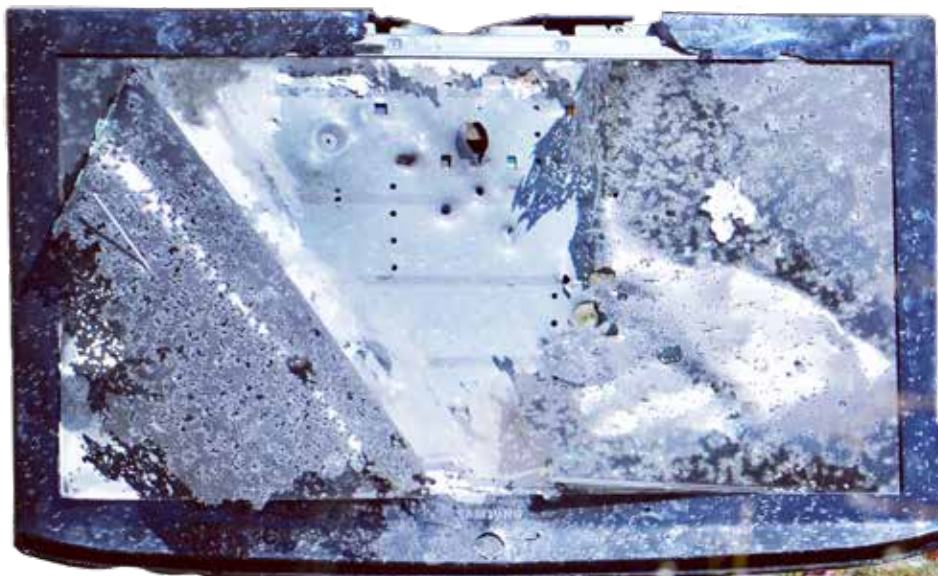


An undesignated target shooting site in the San Rafael Mountains.

areas of the Forest." Individuals cited for violating the ban will face a mandatory appearance in U.S. District Court, where the judge can levy fines of up to \$5,000 and/or six months in jail. Visitors who observe illegal target shooting should immediately contact 311 to file a report that will be relayed to Forest Service law enforcement officers and the local sheriff.

Since 2007, 680 ForestWatch volunteers have spent 3,769 collective hours picking up 17,430 pounds of trash from 39 shooting sites throughout the forest. Everything from household appliances to shotgun shells, bullet casings, and broken glass were found and removed from these sites, but volunteers could not keep up with the rate at which new trash would accumulate. Sites were often trashed days after volunteers cleaned them up. As a result, we temporarily halted the cleanup program until a permanent ban was in place.

ForestWatch—in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and other community organizations—has launched a massive effort to clean up the trash left behind at these informal shooting sites. If you're interested in helping out, email volunteer@LFPW.org to receive notification of future cleanup events.



SANTA BARBARA WILD!



ForestWatch gets WILD! with its 4th annual fundraiser in Santa Barbara!

Santa Barbara WILD! on Sunday, October 22 was a raging success! We welcomed over 300 people, and with the support of our sponsors, guests, members, and volunteers, raised over \$100,000 to support the fight to protect our region's wildlife and iconic landscapes!

Many thanks to Savoir Faire who nourished us with a delicious appetizers and dinner, Figueroa Mountain Brewing Co., Beckmen Vineyards, and Solminer Wine for providing the magic elixir, and Ventura Rental Party Center who conjured an elegant environment. Our heart-felt appreciation goes out to our talented emcee Geoff Green, auctioneer Jim Nye, and musician Chris Fossek who thrilled and delighted us, to Delicate Productions and Ed Kish who attended to our every production need, Carol Gravelle for her stellar graphic designs, Ashley Lee for a beautiful program, and to contributing photographer Luke Butcher!

We could not host this event without the tireless dedication of our event committee and volunteers who ignite the event with their enthusiasm, energy, and hard work.

In Deep Gratitude,

The ForestWatch Staff

Thank you!



BIG PINE MOUNTAIN

Yvon Chouinard
Dick & Marilyn Mazess

SIERRA MADRE

Buynak Fauver Archbald & Spray LLP
Carol Gravelle Graphic Design
Delicate Productions
Garden Street Academy
Sonoma Broadway Farms
Savoir Faire Catering
SeaVeas
Solminer Wine Company
Welborn Family
Richard & Paula Whited

SISQUOC RIVER

Rachael & Griffin Barkley
Beckmen Vineyards
Belmond El Encanto Resort
Figueroa Mountain Brewing Company

Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation

Patagonia

Carol & Doc Pierce

PIP Printing, Marketing & Signs

Santa Barbara Independent

Ethan & Hilary Stone

Teva

UCSB Costal Fund

Ventura Rental Party & Events

Jules Zimmer & Carolyn Cogan

HURRICANE DECK

Gourmet Girls on Fire

Sharon Metsch

Allan Morton & Peet Steinmetz

Russell Radom

Renegade Wine Sales & Wine Storage

Signature Parking

The Wilderness Society

MANZANA CREEK SPONSORS

Richard Alberts

Blue Sky Center

Doug & Lee Buckmaster

Lois Capps

Defenders of Wildlife

Carlos Diaz-Saavedra

Peter Ford & Mary Howe-Grant

George Handler & Lila Trachtenberg

Ed & Andrea Kish

McGowan Guntermann

Morris & Garritano Insurance

SBCC Foundation

Kathy Tardy & Kurt Ranslem

Tutti Frutti Farm

Pat Veesart

Yes Yes Nursery

Oran Young & Gail Osherenko

Sustainable Cleaning Services

Tutti Frutti Farms

Vintage Surfari Wagons



OUTSIDE VOICES

With more than 80 percent of the U.S. population living in urban areas, one of our biggest obstacles to the preservation of our natural places is unfamiliarity with the value of public lands and the wildlife we're fighting to protect. We help people emotionally connect to these spaces, and to understand the ecosystems and our dependence on them. This relationship fuels the desire to safeguard the future of species, habitat, and our public lands.

As part of our community outreach strategy, we focus on facilitating outdoor connections to the Los Padres. This includes working with elected officials, underrepresented youth, families,

and diverse stakeholders to connect conservation, time spent in nature, and public lands protection.

We started the year with a community hike with Assemblymember Monique Limón. Limón's team invited constituents for a meet-and-greet on the trail, while ForestWatch staff led an interpretive nature hike for the group. This provided a unique opportunity for participants to discuss local issues in-person with their state representative, learn about native plants in the Los Padres, and get a firsthand introduction to ForestWatch's work.

Over the last couple of months, we've also guided youth groups into the Los Padres through a partnership with Fillmore's One Step A La Vez and the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Barbara. Each outing is intended to tap into the group's natural curiosity, provide a positive space for learning about the ecosystems, and introduce topics of public lands heritage and protection.

In February, we collaborated with the national nonprofit Latino Outdoors to host a snowshoe

outing at Mt. Pinos—the highest point in the Los Padres National Forest. Participants from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles joined us on a snow hike that included a well-balanced mix of recreation, conservation, and community building.

Most recently we helped organize a hike with Congressman Salud Carbajal for the announcement of the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, which would designate nearly 250,000 acres of wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument, and the establishment of a 400-mile long Condor National Recreation Trail, stretching from Los Angeles to Monterey County.

These events allow us to address a variety of conservation principles such as policy, advocacy, stewardship, and science. As we move forward with our work, we will continue to seek mission guided opportunities to reach wider audiences. Some of the strongest conservation leaders have risen from early exposure to outdoor recreation. We must ensure that the next generation has environmental stewards to take the reins to advance the protection of public lands and waters.





STELLAR INTERNS

Each year we're lucky to get the best and brightest interns from local universities. Thanks to the Coastal Fund of UCSB, we have had two awesome students working with us for the past few quarters. Karisma Davis (pictured above, right) is an Environmental Studies and Political Science double major at UCSB who has been doing research and field work as our Conservation Intern. Alicia McCracken (pictured above, left) recently finished as our GIS Intern and graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies from UCSB. Thanks for all of your amazing work, Karisma and Alicia!

TAMARISK REMOVAL

Thanks to a large grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we've been working to remove non-native invasive tamarisk from along the Santa Ynez River in the Los Padres National Forest. Last year we surveyed an 11-mile stretch of the river below the Gibraltar Dam and found over 100 infestations of tamarisk. This plant outcompetes native riparian species and lowers the local water table considerably. So far, we've removed half of the infestations we surveyed with the help of our incredible volunteers from around the community and our friends at Wildscape Restoration. Thank you to everyone who has helped so far! We look forward to continuing this project later this year.



CHAPARRAL UNDER SIEGE

California is home to one of the most unique ecosystems on Earth: chaparral. This vegetation community is one of only a few Mediterranean ecosystems, and our specific native shrublands can only be found in California, southern Oregon, and parts of Mexico. Chaparral has evolved specifically to thrive on the dry slopes of coastal mountains and on inland foothills. Comprised of plants like manzanita, chamise, ceanothus, scrub oak, and many others, the “Elfin Forest” supports countless species of wildlife. Unfortunately, chaparral is still underappreciated, misunderstood, and even feared due in large part to its ancient relationship with fire.

Chaparral is adapted to large, intense fires every 30 to 150 years. Using evidence such as charcoal deposits in the Santa Barbara Channel, chaparral fire ecologists have found that major conflagrations (those larger than 50,000 acres) have swept across our local landscape periodically for at least the last half-millennium. While small fires may have also occurred, they didn't significantly affect the spread of big, wind-driven fires. And when fires do burn in chaparral, they burn intensely, leaving little aboveground vegetation in their wake. Yet, as long as burned areas have at least 30 years to recover, native chaparral species make a full recovery.

Unfortunately, the fact that high severity fires are the norm in chaparral has made this special shrubland ecosystem the target for massive fuel reduction projects. These projects are sometimes even billed as ecological restoration. However, fire science has shown that fire suppression over the last several decades has not allowed for unnatural fuel accumulation in the region. The methods used to reduce fuel—which is a fire-centric term for habitat—are often problematic. Prescribed fire can result in the conversion of chaparral to non-native grasses and weeds. Fuel breaks in



Eleven year-old chaparral in the Santa Ynez Mountains

remote areas far from homes have been demonstrated to be ineffective, especially under extreme weather conditions.

At best, fuel reduction efforts in chaparral are ineffective in mitigating the effects of wildfire, particularly when they're conducted away from communities, and at worst, they can cause irreparable ecological damage. Counterintuitively, they have even been shown to increase



An unused fire break bulldozed through chaparral in the Los Padres National Forest.

an area's fire risk. The non-native plants that these projects tend to proliferate usually form annual ground cover that dries out earlier in the year, ignites more readily, and spreads wildfire more quickly than shrublands.

Over the years we've witnessed countless projects involving complete mastication (think shredding) of swaths of chaparral-covered land in and around the Los Padres National Forest. We've also fought these ill-advised activities, and we continue to do so today. We use the latest fire science to inform our positions. For years we've advocated for more focus to be placed on protecting communities from wildfire directly using proven techniques such as fire-safe home retrofitting, smart defensible space, and ignition prevention rather than undertaking large vegetation removal projects. As chaparral is adapted to fire, we humans that live on this landscape must also learn to adapt.

Visit LFPW.org/fire to learn more about these issues.

DON'T DOOM THE BLOOM!

The Central Coast region is exploding with color drawing hordes of wildflower enthusiasts to our public lands. Large crowds in sensitive areas can lead to a lot of unintended environmental impacts. We have a few tips so you can avoid damaging popular and wildflower-covered areas.

1. Stay on the Trail Large bare patches and trampled flowers can have long-term damaging effects. Photos from the trail can be just as good or better than ones taken in the middle of a stand of flowers!

2. Don't Pick the Flowers Wildflowers lead to seed production needed to come back next season. With hordes of visitors each day, even a few people picking flowers can negatively impact an ecosystem.

3. Travel in Small Groups It's easier for a small group to stay on the trail—especially when there are large crowds during a bloom.

4. Mind Where You Drive Roads and parking lots are jammed with wildflower tourists. Driving along the side of roads and parking beyond a designated lot damages plants and wildlife.

5. Respect Park and Forest Rules Call the visitor's center or look up the park or forest's website for posted regulations before you go and obey posted signs.

Now you're ready to go chase some wildflowers! Go out and enjoy all of the incredible sights the Central Coast region has to offer.



STELLAR SUPPORT: SEAVEES

Like a good pair of shoes, there's nothing better than a perfect fit. Our partnership with SeaVees launched last year with a significant donation to ForestWatch, grounded in a shared commitment to preserving the California dream and the beauty of our state for the benefit of generations to come. Since then, we've teamed up with SeaVees to eradicate invasive tamarisk in the Santa Ynez River and cleaned up trash in Santa Paula Canyon. We recently sat down with part of the SeaVees team to learn more about what they do and why they support our region's public lands.



The SeaVees team!

Tell us about SeaVees.

Born in 1964, SeaVees combines the comfort of a sneaker with a modern sophistication suitable for any affair. Our shoes are carefully crafted in small batches through vulcanization - a time-honored footwear construction that dates back more than 100 years. SeaVees is headquartered in Santa Barbara and opened its first brick and mortar retail store downtown this month.

What inspired you to support ForestWatch?

At SeaVees, we are committed to preserving the California dream and the beauty of our state for the benefit of generations to come. We are members of 1% for the Planet which means we commit to donating 1% of our annual net revenue to environmental causes. We decided to partner with ForestWatch because we love what they do to protect and preserve wildlife, wilderness and clean water throughout California. We're committed to preserving and protecting the environment around where we live, work and play.

Why is the Los Padres National Forest important to you?

The Los Padres Forest is California's second largest forest that expands across the state and is accessible to those of us who live throughout California's central coast region. At SeaVees many of us enjoy the beauty, outdoor recreation and backcountry wilderness that it provides.

What is your favorite place to explore?

It's hard to pick just one. Some of our favorite spots include Grass Mountain for hiking, the South Fork in the Ventana Wilderness for camping, Figueroa Mountain during the spring wildflower season, and Big Sur for its stunning coastline and beauty.

We look forward to building an even stronger partnership with SeaVees over the coming year. Check them out online at seavees.com or at their new store at 24 Mason St in downtown Santa Barbara. Thank you, SeaVees, for your stellar support!



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12TH ANNUAL
Ojai Wild!
A BENEFIT FOR LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

Sunday, June 2 · 4:00 – 7:30 PM · The Thacher School · Ojai

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Farm-to-Table Dinner

Exciting Live & Silent Auctions

Delicious Appetizers

Oceanfront Villa on the Mexican Riviera

Local Hand-crafted Wines

4 Nights in Scotland for the Edinburgh Festival

Local Craft Brews

5 Nights in a Cozy Lake Arrowhead Cabin

Live Music Todd Hannigan & Sleeping Chief

and more!

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Santa Barbara WILD!

Sunday, October 20

