

CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

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NURSERY IN FULL PRODUCTION ON ANACAPA

Nearly 10,000 native plants have been grown in the Anacapa Island nursery, and planting has already begun in areas where iceplant has been removed. Among the plants growing in the nursery are two kinds of grasses, Coreopsis, yarrow, morning glory, wild cucumber and even some prickly-pear cactus

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Nearly 10,000 native plants have been grown in the Anacapa Island Nursery jointly built and operated by Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands Restoration. Restoration planting begins this winter.

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CIR LEADS TWENTY SEVEN SCHOOL FIELDTRIPS TO THE ISLANDS IN 2011

Over 930 students and adult chaperones joined CIR on 27 school fieldtrips to the Channel Islands so far this year, with funding raised primarily by our staff and board members. Most of these students are from low-income districts that cannot afford the costs for this type of fieldtrip, and our program gives cash-strapped schools a chance to visit the Channel Islands and students a chance to participate in important restoration projects.

Our program this year targeted primarily 5th grade classes from Ventura County districts, but schools from Los Angeles and Santa Barbara also participated. The trips were to Anacapa Island and San-



ta Cruz Island where the students helped CIR with invasive plant removal and helped propagate native plants. Some of the schools paid the cost of the boat and transportation, but the vast majority benefited from grant funding that CIR staff and board members raised from Federal, State and private sources.

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CIR Receives Grant for Santa Cruz Island

The Southern California Wetland Recovery Project (SCWRP) recently awarded CIR a grant to remove invasive plants on Santa Cruz Island. The project will target the removal of *Vinca major* (periwinkle) in Cañada del Puerto, the largest riparian area on the island, which is on Nature Conservancy property. Although periwinkle makes an attractive garden plant, it spreads aggressively in creeks, creating large mats that smother and kill native vegetation.

Many large stands of *Vinca major* once infested all of Cañada del Puerto, and CIR has been working to eradicate these for several years. Now only a few small patches remain, and this project is meant to find and work on these remaining patches.

Starting in November volunteers will have a chance to participate in these trips, which will be four days in length. We will stay at the UC Reserve Field Station in the island's Central Valley. Volunteers will be treated to evening educational presentations and will have a

chance to visit parts of the island not normally open to the public. The interior of Santa Cruz is lush with oak woodland, chaparral and perennial streams, and these trips offer a rare opportunity to visit this part of the island.

The SCWRP grant will pay for island housing and rental costs for vehicles, plus restoration supplies and CIR staff. Volunteers will be asked to help with some of the costs, including for their transportation on Island Packers' boats. The Nature Conservancy is providing logistical support to this project.

Cañada del Puerto is the largest riparian area on the Island and is rich with riparian and oak woodland vegetation. Several endemic animal and plant species can be found in the creek, including the state listed endangered plant, Santa Cruz Island silver lotus (*Lotus argophyllus* ssp. *niveus*) which is directly threatened by the weeds targeted by this project. Several rare and/or endemic birds are found in Cañada del Puerto, including the Pacific-slope flycatcher and the Santa Cruz Island scrub jay. An endemic salamander (Channel Islands slender salamander) is also found in Cañada del Puerto.

A multi-day volunteer trip to the Central Valley of Santa Cruz Island is truly a special opportunity that few people have a chance to experience. CIR is glad to offer hard-working and energetic volunteers the opportunity to visit this extraordinary part of the island and to participate in this important restoration project.

For more information, visit the project web site: <http://www.cirweb.org/wsci.htm>



The western end of Santa Cruz Island from the Ridge Road.



Dinner at the Field Station



Left: The U.C. Reserve Field Station where volunteers stay while visiting the Central Valley. Right: Students remove *Vinca major* on Santa Cruz Island

CIR Leads Twenty Seven School Field Trips to the Islands in 2011
 (Continued from page 1)

CIR staff visited most of the schools before the trips to provide comprehensive PowerPoint presentations highlighting the special nature of the Channel Islands and the Marine Sanctuary and background on the restoration projects. Special effort was made to highlight the connection between mainland watersheds and the health of the marine ecosystem. This included examples of what happens to storm water runoff and how pollution in city streets can end up in the ocean. For the 5th grade classes, this instruction was specifically designed to address elements in the school curriculum. As a requirement of some of the grant funding, the students were tested before and after the trip to gauge how much they had learned about the islands, marine sanctuary and conservation issues.

All of the grant funding targeted low-income school districts, and few of the students had ever visited the Channel Islands or even ever been on a boat before. The boat and bus transportation, plus modest staff costs for an average size class, cost around \$2,400, so a great deal of

grant funding is needed to fund so many trips. Funding for this type of program is highly competitive and the grants are difficult to administer, but the results are more than worth it. The kids are always eager to help with the restoration project, and they make a valuable contribution to our work.

This is the fifth year of the CIR school program, and our busiest yet! CIR staff worked hard to arrange dates with the schools, book the transportation, and organize the complicated paperwork required for a trip of this kind. These trips would not have been possible without a great deal of logistical support from the Park Service and a discounted rate from Island Packers. CIR plans to raise additional funding from private sources for the 2012 school year.



Students from Ventura pose by their handiwork on Anacapa



Holy Cross School students receive instruction on Santa Cruz Island

Schools/youth groups participating in CIR island trips:		
School	City	Trips
Caesar Chavez Elementary	Oxnard	6
EP Foster Elementary	Ventura	2
Holy Cross School	Ventura	1
Meiners Oaks Elementary	Meiners Oaks	3
Mira Monte Elementary	Ojai	1
Oak Grove School	Ojai	1
San Antonio School	Ojai	1
Santa Barbara Charter School	Santa Barbara	1
Sheridan Way Elementary	Ventura	2
Sun Valley High School	Los Angeles	1
Sunset Elementary	Oak View	3
Topa Topa Elementary	Ojai	2
Unitarian Society Teen Group	Santa Barbara	1
Ventura Charter School	Ventura	2



Inge Rose

Fifth graders from Meiners Oaks Elementary volunteer on Anacapa Island. Over 930 students and adults participated in the CIR school program this year.

Nursery in full production on Anacapa Island
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and volunteers are helping make it happen.

As part of its goal to restore the native plant communities of the island, Channel Islands National Park (NPS) has partnered with Channel Islands Restoration (CIR) to establish the nursery and grow the plants. CIR helped initially raise funds for the project with a grant from the Ventura Patagonia store and with donations from our Board of Directors. CIR Board member Gordon Hart (with help from fellow board member Dave Edwards and others) supervised the construction of the nursery in close cooperation with NPS staff. The project is now chiefly funded by the NPS, and CIR has recruited hundreds of



Native plant nursery on Anacapa Island. Nearly 10,000 plants have been grown in the nursery.

volunteers to staff the nursery. Sarah Chaney (NPS restoration biologist) provides overall leadership of this important project.

For more than five years, CIR has brought volunteers to Anacapa Island to remove invasive plants, and now volunteers are helping to grow native plants to restore the cleared areas. Since January, 802 adults and school children have volunteered for CIR on Anacapa Island and more people are needed now to plant the natives.

Anacapa provides critical habitat for seabirds, pinnipeds and several endemic plants and animals. It is home to 16 plants endemic to the California Channel Islands, 2 of which are unique to Anacapa. The island's prolific and dense vegetation was once dominated by the showy Giant Coreopsis, which provided shelter and perches or nesting habitat for seabirds and land birds. The prolific seeds provided abundant food for many animals. The island's vegetation was devastated by sheep grazing and rabbit browsing and by facility and road development by the U.S. Coast Guard during construction and manning of the Anacapa Light Station. Only small patches and individuals of native plants remained.

The Coast Guard planted two types of iceplant on East Anacapa Islet: red-flowered iceplant (*Malephora crocea*) and sea fig, aka 'freeway iceplant' (*Carpobrotus edulis x aequilaterus*). Both species have rapidly spread on the island, further threatening the valuable habitat that native plants provide.

The NPS has set a goal of removing iceplant from all of Anacapa Island by 2016, in time for the nationwide National Park Service Centennial. In response to this challenge, CIR has partnered with the NPS to bring adult volunteers, school groups and professional restoration staff to the island to work on the project. We now hold twice-monthly restoration trips to Anacapa. These trips happen on Wednesdays, when the NPS provides transportation, but occasional Saturday trips are being planned!

To read more about this project, visit the CIR Anacapa Restoration blog: <http://anacaparestitution.blogspot.com>



Left: teenagers help grow plants in the Anacapa Island nursery. Right: Americorps volunteers remove iceplant from around native species on the island. Since January, 802 adults and school children have volunteered for CIR on Anacapa. The NPS partnered with CIR to establish the nursery and grow the plants. CIR helped initially raise funds for the project with a grant from the Ventura Patagonia store and with donations from our Board of Directors.

First Phase of San Marcos Foothills Project Completed

CIR staff and volunteers planted more than 3,000 natives at two restoration sites on the San Marcos Foothills, a County open space located between Santa Barbara and Goleta. Almost 350 volunteers helped spread mulch, plant natives and remove invasive plants at the sites that total about 6 acres in size. CIR is partnering with the San



Left: restoration plantings at the San Marcos Foothills Atascadero Creek site. Right: Emma Robinson plants giant rye grass at SMF.

Marcos Foothills Coalition on these projects, which are funded by the Goleta Valley Land Trust.

A diverse array of volunteers participated including students, church and corporate groups and many individuals from our email list. On more than a dozen occasions teenagers from the Santa Barbara County Alternative Detention Program (ADP) worked on the projects. ADP provides an alternative to incarceration for teens convicted of non-violent crimes, and they made a significant contribution to our work. CIR is proud to work with these kids, since habitat restoration provides a wonderful outdoor learning experience for at risk youth. More planting will happen at the Foothills in coming weeks, and YOUR help is needed!

Update on the Carpinteria State Beach Project

More than 200 volunteers, including many high school students, helped make the Carpinteria State Beach iceplant removal project a smashing success! CIR partnered with South Coast Habitat Restoration to eradicate iceplant at the mouth of Carpinteria Creek with a grant from the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. The iceplant was eradicated with a technique called “solarization” where the iceplant was covered with black plastic, which heats it and deprives it of light. After about three months at least 95% of the iceplant had died, and more than 1,000 native plants were installed at the site. The natives quickly thrived at the site, and they provide much more habitat diversity than does the iceplant. This project would not have been possible without the help of volunteers. Additional planting will happen in coming weeks!



Left: volunteers remove black plastic uncovering dead iceplant. Middle: west side of creek soon after planting. Right: same view two months after planting.



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New Projects and Updates

San Clemente Island Iceplant Removal

Twenty CIR volunteers and staff volunteered for five days on San Clemente Island in October helping the Navy remove non-native iceplant from sensitive habitat of the San Clemente Island sage sparrow, a threatened bird that is endemic to the island. Our first ever volunteer trip there was an unqualified success, as we cleared an estimated 41 acres of hundreds of small patches of iceplant.



Volunteers remove iceplant on San Clemente

San Clemente Island is owned by the U.S. Navy, and staff from the Navy and from San Diego State University worked with CIR to arrange the trip. CIR donated all staff time for the trip, and volunteers paid for their own housing and meals. The volunteers departed for the island by plane from the North Island Naval Air Station on Coronado Island in San Diego. Once on San Clemente Island, the group checked in at the guest housing complex, which is reminiscent of a Motel 6. Low-cost meals were provided at the base commissary.

Every volunteer worked hard pulling the iceplant and placing it in large piles. During breaks island personnel took the volunteers to great view spots and led the group on a hike featuring endemic plants and great scenery! We are very proud of our first volunteer trip to San Clemente and we hope to hold more trips, perhaps starting this spring. For more details on this project, visit our blog at: cirweb.blogspot.com



Volunteers remove mustard on San Nicolas

San Nicolas Island Sahara Mustard Removal

CIR worked on San Nicolas Island in early 2011 assisting the U.S. Navy removing Sahara mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*) a highly invasive weed that has severely disrupted the ecology in the southwest deserts. Much of the mustard is growing in habitat of *Cryptantha traskiae* (Trask's Cryptantha) a rare plant that grows on only two of the Channel Islands. The mustard is notorious for its ability to quickly invade and crowd out native species, so it's a priority of the Navy to remove it before it spreads further on the island.

CIR brought two small groups of volunteers and staff to the island on two four day trips. We flew to the island from Point Magu Naval Air Station. Accommodations were similar to that of San Clemente, except that housing space is far more limited on this island. As a result, fewer volunteers are able to visit the island on these kinds of trips. We plan to arrange a few more trips in 2012, so there may be opportunities for some of our other volunteers to visit the island.

Santa Barbara Zoo

CIR staff and volunteers planted several hundred natives after removing invasive trees and other plants at the Santa Barbara Zoo, along the margin of the Andree Clark Bird Refuge. We partnered with the Zoo and the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division on this project, which was funded by the Southern California Wetland Recovery project. More than 300 volunteers helped out with the zoo restoration, which literally transformed the refuge margin from a tangled jungle of cape-ivy and *Myoporum* trees to what is quickly becoming willow and oak woodland with a thriving understory of wetland plants. The photos below show part of the site before removal of the invasives and just days after the initial installation of the native plants. Thanks to the Zoo, all volunteers who helped out on the project were treated to snacks and free passes to visit the zoo after work! We look forward to the help of more volunteers as we do some follow up weed removal at the site in the coming months.



Cape ivy and *Myoporum* removal at the Santa Barbara Zoo. Left: Invasive plants filled riparian/oak woodland areas along the Andree Clark Bird Refuge by the zoo. Right: The same spot after removal of invasives and soon after installation of native plants.

CIR Educational Field Trips a Continued Success!

CIR kept busy this spring and summer with two major educational trips, featuring our STAR naturalist/scientist/board members, Tanya Atwater and Steve Junak! In March we visited Death Valley National Park (with stops in the Trona Pinnacles, Mojave National Preserve and Granite Mountains) and in August we held our second sojourn to the White Mountains of Eastern California. We are privileged to be supported by Tanya and Steve, who are so amazingly talented and accomplished. We were also joined on both trips by Santiago Escruceria, an environmental educator with years of experience leading international bird watching trips and birding excursions for the Mono Lake Committee and others. Twenty eight people joined us on the Death Valley trip, and 29 came along on the White Mountains trip.

Death Valley National Park (March 31–April 4)

Our adventure began with a visit to the Maturango Museum in Ridgecrest, highlighting the natural and cultural history of the upper Mojave Desert. Just outside of Ridgecrest we were treated to a spectacular wildflower show and scenery with Steve Junak as our guide. 2011 was an above average rain year, so we enjoyed a generally great wildflower season. We stayed the first night at the Trona Pinnacles, which is one of the most unusual geological features in the California Deserts. The pinnacles consists of more than 500 tufa spires (porous rock formed as deposits over lake bottom springs), some as high as 140 feet (43 m), rising from the bed of the Searles Lake (dry) basin. Tanya Atwater gave us background on the geological history of the region, pointing out that most of the valleys in the area (including Death Valley) contained large lakes during the last ice age. We also enjoyed a wonderful wildflower display at the Pinnacles.

The next day featured many botany and geology stops and a spectacular view of Death Valley from Aguerberry Point. After taking in several



attractions, we set up camp at the Furnace Creek campground. Over the next two days we enjoyed a spectacular drive through Titus Canyon (with great geology and wildflowers) and visits to Scotty's Castle, Ubehebe Crater, Dante's View, Zabriskie Point, Mosaic Canyon, Badwater and the Salt Creek pupfish ponds. Some participants chose to spend an extra day exploring Sima Dome and the Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center.

White Mountains (August 4–7)

Our second trip to the White Mountains of Eastern California was even more fun and educational than the first one! The trip took place in early August, which is the height of spring at high altitudes. We again stayed at the fabulous Crooked Creek research station, which is set in bristlecone and limber pine forest at more than 10,000 feet in altitude. The station buildings are made from logs fashioned by the Lincoln Log company, providing a comfy and rustic feel. Station staff cooked all of our meals, and the weather and wildflowers were just about perfect! On the first night, Tanya provided the group with an excellent presentation on the geological history of the west.

The ancient bristlecone pines are one of the most spectacular features of the White Mountains. These are the oldest trees in the world, and one of them has been dated at nearly 5,000 years old! We had a chance to hike in two of these groves on this trip, and to enjoy the wildflowers, plus the birds and other animals that inhabit these high-altitude ecosystems.

One of the striking features of the White Mountains is how much the geology influences the vegetation patterns of the area. The bristlecone pines grow primarily on the Reed Dolomite, the white rock that gives the mountains their name. Most of the other rock types support sagebrush and other shrubs, producing an interesting pattern of trees on white rocks and shrubs on brown rocks.

Each day we took auto tours and short to medium length hikes to the pines and several great view and wildflower spots. We also visited the Barcroft Station, where much of the high-altitude research takes place in the mountains. About half the group climbed to Mount Barcroft at just over 13,000 feet.



Above: Steve Junak leads a wildflower walk near Ridgecrest on the first day of our trip to Death Valley National Park. Bottom: participants hike above the Patriarch Grove of ancient bristlecone pines in the White Mountains of Eastern California. The bristlecone pines are the oldest trees in the world, with one dating to almost 5,000 years old!

WHO PAYS FOR CIR PROGRAMS?

Although CIR staff and volunteer board members spend countless hours writing grants to many different funding agencies, much of the work that we do is completely unfunded by any agency. In these cases, CIR relies on individual contributions to help carry out these important projects. As an example, CIR board members and other individual donors raised a big portion of the funding needed to purchase and construct a shade house on Anacapa Island as part of the nursery project there. Although we are glad to work with our partners in the Park Service and Patagonia to help fund the nursery, individual donors helped make that project possible. Also, CIR regularly contributes staff time (and the associated wages) so that adults can volunteer on the Channel Islands. Contributions from CIR supporters help fund these types of projects.

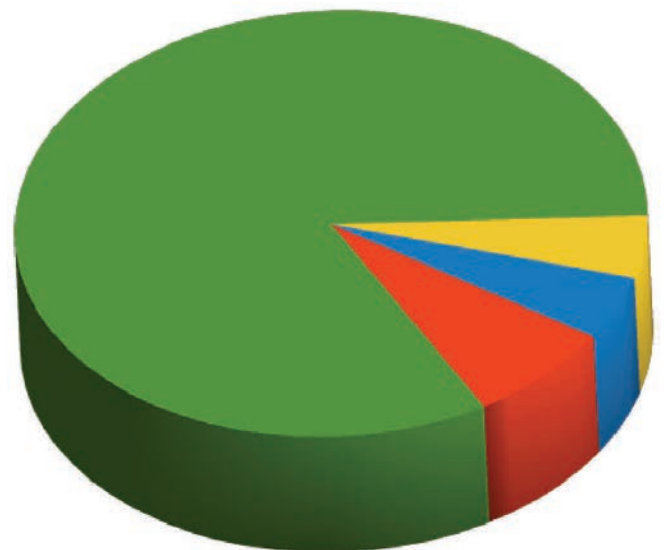


Funding is often available for targeted schools to work with us on the Channel Islands, but many other schools must raise the money for the boat and other costs. In those cases, CIR often donates the pay for our staff person to join the group and lead them in a restoration project.

Although CIR is a non-profit organization, we still need to pay the costs of doing "business" like for-profit companies. The difference is, we operate on a near breakeven basis, and we work on many projects because of their ecological or educational value and not their monetary value.

CIR is required to pay considerable overhead expenses in order to work on all of our restoration projects. These include workers compensation and liability insurance, accounting fees, rent for equipment storage and an administrative office, equipment purchases and maintenance, and staff time to administer a wide-ranging and busy organization. As a percentage of our budget, these expenses are relatively low, but there is no funding available to pay for these costs other than contributions from our supporters.

We are always proud to announce that we have received grants from foundations or other agencies, but it is important to remember that CIR must raise a great deal of our funding from individuals to keep operating. That is why we ask for contributions, and we hope that people who support our work will also support us financially.



Top: CIR volunteers pose by pulled iceplant on Anacapa Island. Left: CIR board member Julie Kummel leads teen volunteers at Lake Los Carneros in Goleta. Right: CIR expenses in 2011. Eighty-three percent of our budget goes directly to support our restoration and educational programs, but we must raise the funds from individual donors to pay for many of those programs and to cover other necessary costs.

PLEASE JOIN CIR AT THESE SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

✓ \$35.00 - Dolphin

✓ \$125.00 - Goldenbush

✓ \$75.00 - Silver Lotus

✓ \$175.00 - Island Fox



Each membership entitles you to:

One CIR organic-cotton T-Shirt (island fox, Coreopsis, heron, or island)

Fox shirt colors: green goldenrod or gray

Members will be invited to our annual appreciation event and will be invited to a local natural history tour!

Donate through our web page:

www.cirweb.org/donate

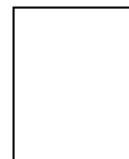
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