

CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

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SAN NICOLAS ISLAND: PLANTING RARE SAND DUNE NATIVES

January brought another busy planting season on San Nicolas Island for Channel Islands Restoration! In just one month, over 1,000 nursery-grown native species were planted to help with erosion control, expand populations of rare plants, and benefit the endemic island night lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*), found only on Santa Barbara Island, San Nicolas Island, and San Clemente Island.

Volunteers installed native plants in four locations: two upland areas that expand on plantings that had been done the previous year, and two areas in the sand dunes near the ocean. Species planted in the upland areas include the California boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), coastal prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis* v. *littoralis*), needle grass (*Stipa* sp.), and island sagebrush (*Artemisia nesiotica*). In addition to erosion control, the thorny boxthorn and prickly pear are beneficial to the night lizard because over time they create a dense thicket that protects the lizard from predators. Near the coast, beach morning glory (*Calystegia soldanella*) and woolly seablite (*Suaeda taxifolia*) were planted in the dunes, along with other rare species. Realizing the critical importance of unique island species, we are actively working to increase the rare plant populations on San Nicolas Island, and we plan on scheduling several more planting trips later on in the season for larger dune planting efforts. If you are interested in joining the efforts, watch out for upcoming volunteer announcements!



Above: Armed with restoration gear, CIR volunteers head out for another day of planting on beautiful San Nicolas Island.

Channel Islands Restoration Spring Membership Party

Sunday, April 10th from 11:00 am—3:00 pm

Become a CIR Member & join us at our 2016 Spring Membership Party! Enjoy a BBQ lunch and guided tours of Goleta Beach and Slough!

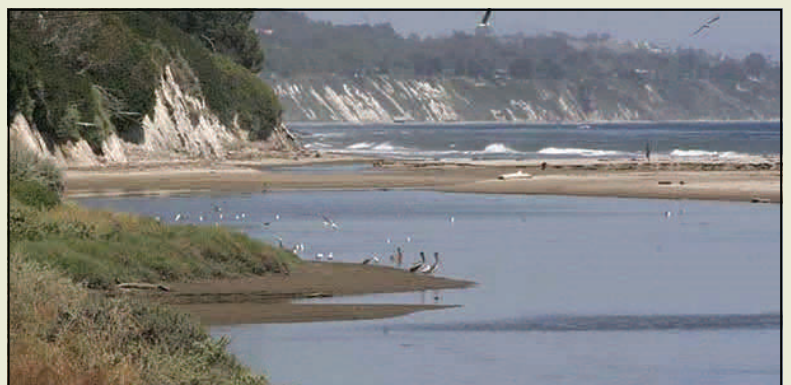
Sunday, April 10th, 2016
11:00 am—3:00 pm at Goleta Beach Park

Geology of the Monterey Formation

Geologist and CIR Board Member Tanya Atwater will describe and demonstrate the Monterey Formation, whose rocks form most of our local beach-cliffs, including those around Goleta Beach. Besides being the source of most of our oil, these unusual rocks hold the keys to understanding many aspects of our geological history and are responsible for many quirky local phenomena.

Ecology of the Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve

CIR's Senior Ecologist, Eliyahu Gevirtz, will take CIR members on an educational tour of the Goleta Slough, with an emphasis on examining the various parts of the



slough, including a variety of types of wetlands, willow forest, coastal sage scrub and oak woodland, endangered plants and animals, and bird nesting areas. Members will also take a close-up look at a habitat restoration site in the western portion of the estuary that Eliyahu has been overseeing for nearly six years. Eliyahu will also speak about the cultural history of the slough.

Become a CIR Member for a minimum donation of just \$35!

All donations are tax-deductible!

cirweb.org/donate

CAMARILLO PLANT NURSERY OFF TO A GREAT START!

Since its construction in November last year, CIR's new native plant nursery in Camarillo has been filled with volunteers and growing native plants! We have had over 100 volunteers so far donate their time and help kick-start operations at the nursery in preparation for our new mainland restoration project at Point Mugu Naval Air Station (Pt. Mugu NAS). Once the nursery was built, CIR staff and volunteers collected seeds from Mugu Lagoon to grow in the nursery, and then the propagating, transplanting, and potting and re-potting of wetland plants began full-force! Volunteer tasks vary greatly, from delicate work with tiny seedlings to watering and maintaining native plants, and there is something for everyone to enjoy and take part of.

Starting in April and May this year, we will be installing up to 5,000 native wetland plants that were grown in the nursery in buffer areas between roads and wetlands at Pt. Mugu NAS. These efforts will help provide habitat for native animals and provide soil stabilization, which will help protect the wetlands from erosion. This is our third project with the U.S. Navy, and those who volunteer at our nursery will get experience with wetland plants and will be considered first to get Base Access passes to volunteer at the restoration site in Pt. Mugu!

CIR has several opportunities to volunteer in the plant nursery in March, and you can check out the scheduled dates and sign up to volunteer on our Calendar of Volunteer Events webpage at <http://www.cirweb.org/calendar.htm>.

Top right: A bright day at the nursery in Camarillo as Kelle Green, CIR Nursery Manager, takes great care of native plants. **Bottom right:** A great group of warrior volunteers at the nursery who worked diligently through one of the recent rain storms, all with smiles on their faces!



VOLUNTEER WITH CIR AT EARTH DAY FESTIVALS IN SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA!



Earth Day is just around the corner, and we're excited about celebrating at the upcoming festivals in Santa Barbara and Ventura! We are eager to share the importance of native habitat restoration and to engage the community in our work, and Earth Day presents the perfect opportunity. Once again, we are honored to sponsor the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival, and we'll be setting up a booth for both days, April 16-17th, as well as in Ventura on April 23rd.

Many of you might not know this, but Earth Day has special roots in the Santa Barbara area. In 1969, our community and precious coastline suffered a devastating blow when Union Oil's Platform A blew-up and spilled over 80,000 barrels of crude oil into the Santa Barbara Channel. The spill was a wake-up call for many, including Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson. To help avoid such an atrocity from occurring again, Senator Nelson wanted to create a "national teach-in on the environment" and, on April 22, 1970, about 20

million Americans banded together and demanded a healthy, sustainable environment for all. The tradition continues today, and CIR is proud to take up the cause.

CIR has participated at the Santa Barbara Earth Day for almost ten years. One of our main goals is to educate the public on the amazing landscapes, plants, and wildlife right in their backyard, and we prominently display maps, photos, and informational materials to give people a glimpse into this world. We talk to hundreds of people at these events, and many learn about the Channel Islands for the first time. Indeed, a handful of our dedicated volunteers were once curious passersby that decided to pop into the CIR booth.

Earth Day events are incredibly important to us, but they are a lot of work! We increasingly rely on volunteer "ambassadors" to help us staff the booths. Being a CIR ambassador at Earth Day is a wonderful opportunity to share your island stories and encourage the public to get involved and experience the magic of the Channel Islands themselves. For those who have only begun volunteering with CIR, fear not! We always make sure to pair less experienced volunteers with long-term volunteers, or CIR Board members, so no one will feel overwhelmed.

Become a CIR Earth Day Ambassador!

Please sign up to volunteer with volunteer@cirweb.org:

Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival at Alameda Park

Saturday, April 16

Sunday, April 17

Ventura Earth Day Ecofest at Promenade Park

Saturday, April 23

SHOULD DOGS BE ON LEASHES IN A WILDLIFE PRESERVE?



Many people enjoy hiking in our local natural areas, and a lot of those people bring along their furry, four-legged canine friends to join them in the experience. In recent years, "off-leash" recreation has become popular, and many parks and open spaces allow dogs to run free without a leash. Where laws require leashes, enforcement is often spotty, and many people simply ignore the law. Channel Islands Restoration has become the new Project Manager for habitat restoration and stewardship at the San Marcos Foothills Preserve (SMFP) which is located between Santa Barbara and Goleta. We have been struggling with the issue of dog-owners who refuse to leash their pooches while visiting the Preserve. We are interested in your view about how appropriate leash laws are in open spaces that contain a lot of wildlife, particularly in wildlife preserves.

In 2010, CIR began working with the County of Santa Barbara to restore habitat at the SMFP. Since then our role has expanded to include stewardship and education. The Preserve had been donated to the County to ensure that the property would be preserved as open space for its biological, scenic and archaeological resources. All this came about after years of advocacy by conservationists, who saved the property from development with the idea of conserving it as a primary goal, but also allowing for *low-impact recreation* that would be friendly to the wildlife.



As many as 43 rare or threatened species may be found on the Preserve, including nesting birds and other animals that are vulnerable to disturbance by pets. Birds can abandon their nests if disturbed by people or pets that wander off the trails. Nesting animals often hide in shrubs or grassy areas very near trail edges. A curious dog can easily find and disturb these animals, and the encounter may result in a missed opportunity for that animal to breed. This happens more often than most of us know, and the consequences are measurable: the number of birds are in steep decline in many areas, including at the SMFP.

Off-leash dogs also face dangers from wildlife. We know of two coyote attacks on dogs that were walking off-leash in local open spaces (including at the SMFP) and one of these attacks ended up in the death of a beloved pet. The SMFP also has a large rattlesnake population, and uncontrolled dogs are very vulnerable to snake bite. CIR has been working with the County to educate visitors at the



SMFP about why dogs should be on leashes. Our message: the laws are not arbitrary, and they are mostly designed to protect wildlife. We have posted flyers at the Preserve, and also included information on our web page. The County has posted additional signage making it clear that leash laws are in force. Still, most pet owners who visit the Preserve act as if it is an off-leash dog park (there are six parks that are officially designated as off-leash in the Santa Barbara area). As a result, the County ranger has been issuing tickets, which has caused outrage by many of the pet owners.

We would like to hear from you about this issue!

Do you think it's reasonable to require dogs be on leashes in wildlife preserves like the SMFP? Considering that there are many parks and open spaces that allow off-leash dog-walking, should the leash laws elsewhere be enforced? We know that people have a variety of opinions on this subject, and we would like to hear from you no matter what you think (we will keep your comments confidential).

Please send us an email with your thoughts to:
ken@cirweb.org

HOLIDAY PARTY 2015 PRIZE WINNERS

CIR celebrated the holiday season last year by hosting our 6th annual holiday party open to all members, volunteers, and project partners. In the past, we've held the party in our Carpinteria office, but once we moved to Santa Barbara, we wanted to find another party location in Carpinteria, a nice halfway mark between our friends in Ventura and Santa Barbara. We were thrilled to find the Carpinteria Library's Community Room, with plenty of room for food, drinks, and raffle prizes!

Ten lucky people went home with amazing raffle prizes, ranging from a guided Channel Islands Outfitters kayak tour for two on Santa Cruz Island, REI and Patagonia gift cards, CIR t-shirts and hats, passes to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, a signed copy of *Canyon Voices* by Karen Telleen-Lawton, and a whale-watching tour for two on the Condor Express! Our annual Natural History Photo Contest was another smashing success, too. First place went to

Melinda Angle, for her incredible shot of a juvenile black-crowned night heron. Second place and third place winners Diane Borrelli and Don Mills were close behind for their beautiful landscape photos from Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island, respectively.

Left: CIR Executive Director, Ken Owen, and Rick Marcellin after Rick won the Channel Islands Outfitters kayak tours raffle prize!



Clockwise from top left: 1. CIR Executive Director, Ken Owen, and Volunteer Coordinator, Jane Chong, give a very excited Charlotte Gould her raffle prize with CIR gear and REI and Patagonia gift cards; 2. Lora Werek flashes a big grin as she wins tickets to the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens; 3. First place Photo Contest prize winner Melinda Angle stands by her stunning photo of a juvenile black-crowned night heron; and, 4. CIR party-goers wine and dine and enjoy themselves.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

STAY IN TOUCH!

Don't forget to follow the CIR blogs & social media pages!

CIR Facebook & Twitter Pages

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for news, educational posts, volunteer trips & event announcements, and photos. More than 5,000 people on Facebook are following our updates!

[facebook.com/cirweb](https://www.facebook.com/cirweb)
twitter.com/gothabitat

CIR Blogs

Keep up to date with the happenings at CIR and on Anacapa Island:

cirweb.blogspot.com
anacaparestitution.blogspot.com

CIR Websites

Visit our website at cirweb.org for tons of information on native plants & upcoming volunteer events. For more information on the San Marcos Foothills Preserve, check out sanmarcosfoothills.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

WHITE MOUNTAINS NATURAL HISTORY TRIP

July 22 – 26, 2016



Join us for five days of geology, wildflowers, ancient trees, and birds in the majestic alpine wilderness of the White Mountains, in Inyo National Forest, on the eastern edge of the Owens Valley.

Please watch for the upcoming announcement for more details and to register! Spaces are limited!