

# CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

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## CIR BUSY ON SAN NICOLAS ISLAND

CIR is working in partnership with several organizations on four distinct restoration projects on San Nicolas Island. Starting in February, CIR started growing up to 7,000 native plants in the island nursery. The nursery was constructed by CIR staff and volunteers in 2012 to grow plants for an erosion control project. The latest batch of plants will be used to enhance habitat for the island night lizard and also to mitigate the impacts from a wind generation construction project. The nursery is now filled to capacity with thousands of plants covering all three of the huge nursery tables. An expansion of the nursery space is in the planning stages.

The island night lizard (restricted to just three of the Channel Islands) was recently removed from the endangered species list, because lizard numbers have increased markedly with conservation efforts led by the Navy and the Park Service. To help insure that the species continues to thrive, Navy staff on San Nicolas have designed a project to enhance the habitat of the lizard. CIR is growing several plant species that the lizard is known to favor for habitat including, box thorn and three species of cactus. In the wild, these plants grow in impenetrable thickets that protect the lizards from predators. The plants will be installed with the help of CIR in the fall.

CIR recently welcomed Sheri Mayta to our staff to oversee the nursery on San Nicolas. Sheri has over nine years of experience in native plant nursery management and native plant propagation. She owns

*(Continued on page 3)*



## GRANTS AWARDED FOR BIRD REFUGE

Channel Islands Restoration and the Santa Barbara Zoo have been awarded two grants to continue restoration of the Andree Clark Bird Refuge along Zoo property. Starting in 2010, both agencies (plus the City of Santa Barbara) partnered on the first phase of the restoration project, which involved removing large stands of invasive *Myoporum* trees and hundreds of other invasives, and the planting of over 900 natives. Nearly 400 volunteers helped out with the project, which restored almost an acre of refuge. What started out as a dark and dingy invasive-choked area was transformed into an open wetland habitat thriving with native plants, birds and other animals.

The second phase of the project will restore the remaining 1.5 acres of the Zoo property along the refuge margin. We will plant 1,200 natives and remove many more *Myoporum* trees and other invasives will also be removed. About \$60,000 in grant funding has been awarded to the project, half from the County of Santa Barbara's Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund, which is a partial mitigation of impacts from the Point Arguello, Point Pedernales, and Santa Ynez Unit oil projects. The other half will come from the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project, which also funded the first phase of the project.

The Zoo project has been very popular with CIR volunteers. On our first volunteer day, more than 100 people showed up to help out! One of the reasons that the project is so popular is because volunteers are offered free admission to the Zoo at the conclusion of the work day. The Bird Refuge is also a very scenic location, and the restoration sites are located in areas that the public do not normally have a chance to visit. Watch for announcements seeking your volunteer help in the fall!



Above: a section of the Zoo project before restoration. Note invasive *Myoporum* trees and cape ivy. Below: the same view after restoration.



CIR MEMBER PARTY & NATURAL HISTORY WALKING TOURS—FUN & EDUCATIONAL

In March, CIR members were treated to a gorgeous day for our annual membership appreciation party at Rincon Beach Park in Carpinteria. Each available picnic table was filled to the brim with the smiling faces of CIR members snacking on chips, salsa, and Duke McPherson’s delicious homemade guacamole, not to mention whole fruit and granola bar baskets to tease the appetite, in anticipation of the feast to come.

As festivities got underway, everyone enjoyed the delightful sounds of musician, Lawrence Wallin and the Glendessary Jam, who generously donated their tunes, talents, and time in exchange for helping themselves to the pot-luck buffet and barbecued fare. With a sighting of coastal bottlenose dolphins from the pavilion, outstanding ocean views and sunny skies, one couldn’t have asked for a better setting.

One entire twelve-foot picnic table was absolutely overflowing with pot-luck goodies from salads, sides, and snacks to delectable desserts—it truly was an impressive turnout of culinary contributions that satisfied everyone. After the feast, which featured marinated chicken and veggie burgers provided by CIR and barbecued to perfection by Mr. President himself, Duke McPherson, we all enjoyed a presentation given by Executive Director, Ken Owen, during which he crowned Ron Nichols the first-ever CIR volunteer of the year! Ron was applauded and awarded a commemorative wooden plaque, as well as a brand new Anacapa Island t-shirt and CIR cap.

Following the picnic, CIR members took a short drive to the Carpinteria Bluffs Preserve where Wayne Ferren was the first to speak about the ecology and the plant communities of the area. Members were then treated to a talk with Tanya Atwater on the beach about local geology, as well as a docent-led program at the Carpinteria Harbor Seal Sanctuary. The final tour was a visit to the Carpinteria Tar Pits Park. Here, members were addressed by Wayne Ferren, Tanya Atwater, and John Johnson of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History about the history of the tar pits and the ancient flora and fauna that had been preserved there.



Above: Ron Nichols received an award as CIR’s first “Volunteer of the Year” at the CIR Membership Party. Ron has participated in dozens of CIR volunteer events on the Channel Island and on the mainland.

Top: CIR Membership Party at Rincon Beach Park. Middle: CIR Board President Duke McPherson and Gretchen Ingmanson prepare BBQ chicken. Bottom: The Glendessary Jam making great music!



CIR Busy on San Nicolas Island (Continued from page 1)

and operates Estero Natives, a native plant nursery in Carpinteria. She worked for Coastal Restoration Consultants (CRC) as a senior restoration ecologist and nursery manager. With CRC she managed the production of up to 50,000 plants per year at on-site nurseries. Sheri was raised in Ventura, Ca. where she currently resides with her two children.

In addition to growing plants, CIR is helping to eradicate invasive plants that are a priority for the Navy, who owns the island. Several CIR staff and volunteers have also been helping to eradicate two invasive plants that are particularly troublesome, ecologically. Sahara mustard (*brassica tournefortii*) was introduced to the island several years ago and is a highly invasive species that has devastated the ecology of many areas in our mainland deserts. Carnation spurge (*euphorbia terracina*) has recently spread to many new areas throughout California, and several populations have been found on San Nicolas. The Navy is working with CIR and other contractors to eradicate both of these highly invasive plants before they spread any further on the island.

## IT'S "GULL SEASON" ON ANACAPA!

The month of May finds Western gulls busy incubating eggs in their nests dotted all over Anacapa—nests that the parents fiercely defend in the presence of island visitors. Because working around nesting gulls in their native habitat is extremely disruptive to the birds, CIR volunteers are taking a pause from the Anacapa restoration project so that this seasonal rite of passage can play out. Work will resume in late summer after the new generation of chicks go from egg, to hatchling, to fledgling! Before gulls began sitting on nests, CIR accomplished a succession of self-funded volunteer group trips this spring. Utilizing Island Packers for transportation, volunteers helped cover their trip costs for the opportunity to be of service.

These volunteer groups included students from the UCSB Community Affairs Board (CAB) and a group of corporate employees from Tera-dyne, Inc. of Agoura Hills. We also worked with a student group from California Lutheran University. Their trip was preceded by classroom presentations given by CIR Executive Director, Ken Owen, who visited two ethics classes at their Thousand Oaks campus. Ken offered his beautifully illustrated PowerPoint slideshow and a talk featuring the ethics of removing invasive species—a sensitive topic. Both classes were fully engaged and inspired to volunteer. Following each volunteer group this spring, the CIR Administrative office thoroughly enjoyed receiving volunteer trip reports filled with positive feedback about island experiences, and the personal satisfaction achieved in restoring Anacapa!

Despite this year's drought, seedlings did pop up all across Anacapa, with iceplant sprouting amongst natives, and plant identification became a job for skilled volunteers. With much of the mature ice-

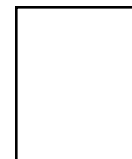
plant already removed, some aspects of the restoration project are now requiring more detail-oriented work and are best suited to volunteers with more experience. A select few were enlisted to help NPS Restoration Ecologist, Sarah Chaney, as members of the newly designated "Anacapa Field Team." This is a group of experienced, specially-trained volunteers to tackle sensitive restoration tasks and oversee the volunteer groups that visited the island this spring.

CIR continues to partner with NPS, and to help accomplish restoration goals, we've written and have been awarded grant funding from the UCSB CAB Foundation and REI, the outdoor company. With this backing, we will coordinate a series of volunteer group trips after gull season for these organizations. CIR will also begin planning trips that will extend opportunities to experienced volunteers as well as new volunteers who wish to participate on the Anacapa Island restoration project. Weekend trip dates will be available, and with a reasonable fee to help offset trip costs, these self-funded outings will offer individuals the chance to volunteer on Anacapa—now a rare opportunity! The Park's intention to declare Anacapa "iceplant free by 2016," is clearly manifesting, with so much of it already gone, and the revegetation of native plants so fruitful. Under the guidance of Sarah Chaney, the project has progressed and relies on her continual assessments to ensure that no harm is done in the recovery process of native plants. The evolution of this project is indicative of its success, as the alien red-flowered iceplant from South Africa is no longer the clear and obvious threat it once was to the island's native plant communities. Overall, the Anacapa project has triumphed, due to the diligence of NPS staff, the contributions of CIR, and the many years of service provided by thousands of volunteer hands.





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**CIR Blogs:**

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

[cirweb.blogspot.com](http://cirweb.blogspot.com)  
[anacaparestitution.blogspot.com](http://anacaparestitution.blogspot.com)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**White Mountains Natural History Tour**

**Channel Islands Restoration**

**Oldest Trees in  
the World!**

**July 4 - 7, 2014**

*Enjoy 4 days of geology, wildflowers, ancient trees, and birds in this majestic wilderness in Inyo National Forest, on the eastern edge of the Owens Valley.*

**LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE.** For information and to register, visit: [www.cirweb.org/whites](http://www.cirweb.org/whites)



**Tel: 805-448-6203**



**CIR is recruiting a  
skilled Office Volunteer!**

One day per week, 2-3 hours per day to assist with computer tasks and data entry. Our administrative office is located at: 550 Maple Street, Unit F, Carpinteria

**Channel Islands Restoration**

**Tel: 805-448-6203 or Email: [volunteer@cirweb.org](mailto:volunteer@cirweb.org)**