

# CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

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## San Nicolas Island: Planting Thorny Natives



So far this season, Channel Islands Restoration has installed 2600 nursery-grown native plants on San Nicolas Island with several thousand more to go! Starting in December, our first volunteer planting crew put in plants that would augment habitat for the Island Night Lizard. This species is endemic to only three of the eight Channel Islands. The lizard was recently removed from the endangered species list because of conservation efforts led by the Navy on San Nicolas and San Clemente Islands, and by the Park Service on Santa Barbara Island. Navy staff

on San Nicolas have designed a project to enhance the habitat of the lizard by planting species the lizard is known to favor. This includes California box thorn and two species of native cactus. In the wild, these thorny plants grow in impenetrable thickets that protect lizards from predators. The plantings have also been designed to help control erosion.

Volunteers wore heavy leather gloves and handled these thorny species mindfully, using hand tools such as tongs to gently position the cactus.

*(Continued on page 3)*



## FREE CIR SPRING MEMBERSHIP EVENT—MARCH 28, 2015 11AM-3PM

**Join CIR and attend our 2015 Spring Membership Event as we Enjoy a BBQ Lunch and an Exploration of the Western End of the Santa Monica Mountains!**

**Saturday, March 28th  
Camarillo Grove Picnic Area**

**Geology of the Conejo Volcanics  
with Tanya Atwater**

CIR members will join geologist Tanya Atwater in an examination of the Conejo Volcanics. These are representative of the volcanic rocks found in Southern California, including on many of the Channel Islands! Gain a deeper understanding of how the ancient landscape was broken up and reorganized through volcanic action.

**Fire Ecology at CSU Channel  
Islands with Wayne Ferren**

The tour will then proceed to the campus of California State University Channel Islands where we will visit the recent burn areas and learn about fire ecology with Wayne Ferren. Wayne will share

enlightening insights into the coastal sage scrub communities, and discuss plants endemic to the region.

**Point Mugu Lagoon Vista  
Point with Wayne Ferren**

Our tour will then move to a vantage point overlooking the Point-Mugu Lagoon, situated on the Naval Base, where Wayne will discuss the unique vegetation of these local wetlands.



**All CIR Members are invited to our 2015 Spring Membership Event and YOU can become a CIR Member for a minimum donation of \$35!**

**All contributions are tax-deductible!**

<http://www.cirweb.org/donate/>

## Late Winter Rains Keep CIR Busy at Mainland Restoration Sites

This winter has blessed us with several well-needed rain storms that have brought a bright green hue back to our local hills and valleys. Although still in a state of drought, the rains have triggered an explosion of plant growth that is impacting CIR's restoration sites across the mainland. Invasive plants and annual weeds are proliferating at a very fast pace, threatening the native plantings we are committed to protect. In response, mainland volunteer events are plentiful and CIR staff are enlisting a volunteer army to do battle against these weeds! Now is the time to join in the fight against invasive species. Volunteers engaged in this hands-on battle directly support CIR's mission to restore native habitat and gain the personal satisfaction of giving back to our environment. Not only does this enhance one's appreciation of our local natural resources, but it directly improves the habitat value for the native plants and animals that call these wild places "home." So please grab some gloves and join us on our mainland restoration projects! We could not fulfill our mission without the help of our valued volunteers!

### Mission Canyon: Eradicating a Nasty Weed



In January of this year, CIR became involved in a new mainland restoration project to help eradicate a growing population of an extremely invasive plant, Carnation Spurge (*Euphorbia terracina*). This plant was recently discovered spreading through a residential area of Santa Barbara's Mission Canyon, adjacent to the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens, and its proliferation has exploded with the late winter rains. CIR has teamed up in partnership with the County of Santa Barbara, the Los Padres National Forest, and others to eradicate this noxious weed that has been making its way throughout Southern California, and to stop it before it spreads even further. Staff and volunteers have been working hard to control this non-native plant, and most of the work is being done by basic hand removal, pulling out seedlings that are shooting up fast. There will be additional volunteer opportunities to help stop this invasive plant before it's too late, and after volunteering, participants will receive free admission to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden!

### Refugio Creek Mouth: First Year for Native Plantings

The Refugio Creek Mouth habitat restoration project is located at the mouth of the creek at Refugio State Beach. In partnership with South Coast Habitat Restoration and California State Parks, CIR has joined forces on this project to increase the habitat and ecological value of the estuary. After the removal of non-native flora from the creek banks, a variety of native riparian and wetland species were planted. Starting in January 2014, hundreds

of native plants were installed with the help of a multitude of volunteers. Today, these "yearling" plants are doing remarkably well, and the native habitat along the Refugio Creek banks is blossoming with beauty and diversity. The native plants provide improved forage and nesting habitats for birds, as well as shade and cover for aquatic animal species in the creek. As the native plants strive to become established, the annual



weeds are threatening, but CIR and partners along with enthusiastic crews of volunteers continue to stay on top of the invaders. The Refugio Creek Mouth Restoration project is made possible with funding from the Earth Island Institute and support from the California Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, and Southern California Edison.

### San Marcos Foothills Preserve: Keep it Wild!

At the San Marcos Foothills Preserve in Santa Barbara, CIR maintains two prominent restoration sites: one at Cieneguitas Creek and one at Atascadero Creek. Both of these sites are currently abuzz with new plant growth and unfortunately, a lot of what's flourishing are fast-growing non-native species. These must be removed to allow native plants to thrive. Tall-reaching stalks of invasive radishes and mustard species can grow up to 7 or 8 feet, blocking out sunlight and sucking water and nutrients from the soil, effectively stealing them from natives trying to survive in their shadow. The native plants at these project sites, such as the local endemic Santa Barbara Honeysuckle, have exhibited a high survival rate and much of this success is due to the restorative efforts of CIR. To compete against aggressive non-native species and do well, native plants must be nurtured and supported on an ongoing basis. Through CIR's diligent monitoring and the work of dedicated volunteers, native plants in the San Marcos Foothills Preserve are showing a tremendous resurgence. The benefits to native birds and other wildlife is observable, as recently CIR has helped coordinate a Winter Bird Walk near the Cieneguitas Creek site where coyotes and bobcats have also made an appearance!



Hover Fly on an *Encelia californica* flower at the San Marcos Foothills Preserve. Channel Islands Restoration is leading habitat restoration projects on the Preserve, a County of Santa Barbara open space. The *Encelia* plant was installed by CIR in 2010 at the Cieneguitas Creek restoration site.



(Continued from page 1) San Nicolas Island Planting



CIR propagated these native plants from seed in the island nursery that was rebuilt by CIR staff and volunteers in 2012. Our latest round of plant propagation was performed under contract with the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and a Navy contractor. CIR nursery manager Sheri Mayta and our dedicated SNI field team of volunteers including: Carol Gravelle, Doreen Jones, and Dennis Kulzer have been tending the nursery and watching over the plants as they matured. Now that they are being planted in lizard habitat, our field team has expanded to include Kelle Green and Jon Huber, and will help to keep them watered and weeded as they become established. CIR staff and volunteers will be kept busy planting and caring for these precious island plants in the coming months. Watch for upcoming volunteer announcements!

(Continued from page 2) CIR Busy at Mainland Restoration Sites

**Santa Barbara Zoo: Restoring Bird Refuge Habitat**

CIR and the Santa Barbara Zoo joined forces in 2010 on a restoration project at the beautiful 42 acre Andree Clark Bird Refuge that is home to 228 bird species. Staff and volunteers successfully removed many invasive plants and replaced them with native flora. Since the beginning of Phase II of the project in November 2014, volunteers helped install 1200 native plants, and 600 more are to be planted by the end of March 2015. While CIR staff eradicated the non-native mature Myoporum trees in the area during the first and second phases of the project, countless amounts of Myoporum seedlings are sprouting and now threatening to smother the native plants that were recently planted. Watch for email announcements regarding volunteer opportunities at the Andree Clark Bird Refuge. CIR relies on the tremendous help from volunteers to assist in this restoration project. At the end of the work day, participating volunteers can visit the Zoo free of admission.



Volunteers helping Channel Islands Restoration plant natives along the Andree Clark Bird Refuge at the Santa Barbara Zoo. To date we have installed 1200 native plants including oak trees, willows, sage brush, giant rye grass and many more marsh and wetland plants.

**Volunteer with CIR at Earth Day Festivals**



Join CIR and hundreds of other environmentally-friendly organizations at any of the many Earth Day celebrations happening in April in Santa Barbara and Ventura County. The Earth Day celebrations are CIR's best opportunity to reach out to members of the public who want to become involved with environmental conserva-

tion. In fact, many of our volunteers first heard about CIR at an Earth Day event.

Earth Day began when Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson witnessed the ravages of the 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara. The first event took place in 1970 when 20 million Americans all over the country demonstrated for the environment. It has since become a global event, held on weekends and centering on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the anniversary of the first Earth Day.




CIR has participated at the Santa Barbara Earth Day event since 2007, and our booth has evolved from a couple of simple displays into a showcase of habitat restoration work on the Channel Islands and mainland. We prominently display maps and photos of the Channel Islands and talk to hundreds of visitors throughout the two-day event. CIR Board member Cindy Kimmick provides a fascinating display of vertebrates for young people and adults alike, and many people learn about the Channel Islands for the first time at these events.

The Santa Barbara event features two full days of live music, speakers, family activities and interesting exhibitors, including many envi-

ronmental non-profits. CIR has become a contributing "sponsor" of this very worthy event.

Since these events keep us very busy, we increasingly rely on volunteer "ambassadors" to help us staff the booths. We pair less experienced volunteers with experienced ones or CIR Board members, so no one will feel overwhelmed. Being a CIR ambassador at Earth Day is a lot of fun, and it's a great opportunity to share your experiences of the islands and environmental volunteerism with the public. We even provide soft drinks and snacks to those who help out.

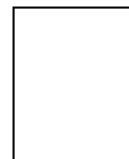
**Become a CIR Earth Day Ambassador!**  
Please contact us if you'd like to volunteer at these events:

-  **April 4:** Oxnard
-  **April 18-19:** Santa Barbara
-  **April 25:** Ventura





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To:



Stay in touch with CIR  
with our innovative blogs  
and social media tools!

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Follow us on Facebook for informative posts, announcements, and photos! We have more than 5,000 people following our educational posts and CIR news!

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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 3 - 6, 2015**

*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 looking for Hospitality Volunteers**

*Do you like helping out at parties and social gatherings? CIR is looking for 1-2 volunteers to help at membership events. Please contact us if you have experience!*

**Channel Islands Restoration**

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