

CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

Volume 13, Issue 4

November 2015

cirweb.org/newsletters.htm



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Conserving the "Cloud Forest" on Santa Rosa Island

2

Upcoming Trips to San Nicolas Island

4

REI Funds Restoration Trips to Anacapa Island

4

CIR Stewardship of the San Marcos Foothills

5

CIR Provides Service Learning Trips to Elementary School

6

CIR 6th Annual Holiday Party December 11th

6

Who Helps CIR When We Donate Our Time?

7

CIR Membership Levels and Benefits

8



View of the spectacular wetlands of Mugu Lagoon in Point Mugu Naval Air Station.

NEW WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT STARTS AT POINT MUGU NAVAL AIR STATION

CIR is excited to announce a new project with the U.S. Navy, this time it will be on the mainland! CIR is currently growing plants for a restoration project at Point Mugu Naval Air Station. We will install up to 5,000 native plants in buffer areas between roads and wetlands. This will provide habitat for native animals and will provide soil stabilization, which will help protect the wetlands from erosion.

CIR will work in partnership with Naval Base Ventura County and Tetra Tech, Inc. on this project. The plants will come from seed collected at the Mugu Lagoon, and most will be grown at the new CIR nursery in Camarillo. This is the third project

(Continued on page 3)

CIR CONSTRUCTS NATIVE PLANT NURSERY IN CAMARILLO



CIR is proud to announce that we have completed construction of a nursery in Camarillo that will be used to grow plants for our mainland restoration projects, including the project at Point Mugu Naval Air Station. This is the third native plant nursery CIR has constructed (the other two are on Anacapa and San Nicolas islands). The new facility is located at the home of Kelle Green, who manages the nursery on San Nicolas Island for CIR.



Top: New CIR nursery in Camarillo. Bottom: Volunteers pose in front of a holding pond at the Camarillo nursery

The nursery consists of a shade house that is 42 feet long by 20 feet wide. Inside there are two 32 foot long benches that are about six feet in width. Water is delivered to the plants by an overhead misting system through 16 individually controlled sections on automated timers. Outside there are four 16 by 6 foot tables where plants will be held after they have matured to harden them off prior to planting. We have also constructed holding pods used for growing wetland plants. The ponds are excavated into the ground, lined with pond liner and surrounded by cinder blocks and gravel. The nursery is built to the highest standards and is designed to prevent the plants from being infested with invasive species that are common in the nursery industry. The total construction cost for the facility was just under \$6,000.

(Continued on page 3)



CONSERVING THE “CLOUD FOREST” ON SANTA ROSA ISLAND

Outstanding efforts were made this fall by CIR staff and volunteers, partnered with Channel Islands National Park, to begin restoring the unique “Cloud Forest” of Santa Rosa Island! CIR coordinated seven restoration trips to Santa Rosa Island, and 50 volunteers contributed their hard work and diligence to assist on this important restoration project.

The project goals are to slow erosion on the island and replace the lost fog-water-harvesting vegetation, such as the rare island oak trees. During the volunteer trips, erosion control devices were built and installed in areas on the island that have been severely impacted by the overgrazing of non-native species. Volunteers sorted, loaded and transported multiple stake bed truckloads of wood to the restoration sites that were used in the construction of check dams and silt fences in eroded gullies. Volunteers pounded in rebar and posts as structural support for the dams and material silt fences. Organic-fiber wattles and rock bags were filled and assembled, transported, and installed on the island’s ridges and around groves. Staff and volunteers put in long but satisfying hours, knowing they were assisting in a unique and vital restoration project, and enjoying the spectacular island setting and work group comradery.

Even CIR volunteers on the mainland assisted with the “Cloud Forest” project! Channel Islands National Park hosted two volunteer events in October and November to help assemble and roll wattles to be installed on Santa Rosa Island during the volunteer trips. Kathryn McEachern, Research Plant Ecologist from the U.S. Geological Survey, who led the volunteer events wrote, *“Thanks to everybody who helped roll erosion control wattles for the Santa Rosa Island Cloud Forest Restoration project, on October 31 and November 14! About 50 folks helped (some came twice!), and we made about 150 20-foot long wattles in a little under 7 hours of work over the two weekends. Those made on Halloween are already at work on the slope above the ancient oaks at the Soledad Ridge on Santa Rosa Island.”*

Funding for these restoration trips was provided by a grant through the National Park Service, which covered boat transportation through the NPS boat and Island Packers, and lodging at the Santa Rosa Island Research Station operated by CSU Channel Islands. CIR has been grateful to work with so many amazing volunteers and organizations to help restore the natural environment of Santa Rosa Island in Channel Islands National Park.



*New Wetland Restoration Project Starts at Point Mugu Naval Air Station
(Continued from page 1)*



CIR has with the U.S. Navy, the other two being our restoration work on San Nicolas Island and our invasive plant removal projects on San Clemente Island. Volunteers will have many opportunities to participate in this project, including helping grow the plants over the next several months and installing them in the spring.

Mugu Lagoon is Ventura County's largest wetland and wildlife sanctuary and provides habitat for more than 250 bird species, as well as many species of migratory birds. The lagoon is also one of the few breeding grounds in the county for harbor seals and other pinnipeds. Stewardship of the lagoon is a high priority for the U.S. Navy, who has protected the area for nearly 70 years. Many rare wetland species are found at the Mugu wetlands, and many plant species reach their northern or southern limits at the Lagoon.



Access to the base is extremely restricted, and this project will present a special opportunity for volunteers to visit the area, which is closed to the general public. In fact, CIR will need to apply for navy passes for participants to gain access onto the base and the restoration site. However, no passes are needed to help us grow the plants at our new Camarillo nursery! CIR is grateful to our partners in the Navy and at Tetra Tech for this opportunity to help restore the Mugu Lagoon ecosystem. We look forward to working with our partners and our volunteers!

Photos:

Top: Harbor seals haul out at Mugu Lagoon. **Bottom:** Kelle Green, CIR Nursery Manager, and CIR volunteer, Helen Fitting, transplanting wetland plants to be later installed at Point Mugu in 2016.

*CIR Constructs Native Plant Nursery in Camarillo
(Continued from page 1)*

This nursery was the brainchild of Kelle Green (volunteer extraordinaire for Channel Islands National Park and the CIR San Nicolas Island plant propagation guru). Having worked in the other nurseries constructed by CIR, Kelle dreamed of having access to a similar facility in (literally) her own backyard. About the same time, CIR was chosen to work on a restoration project at Point Mugu Naval Air Station, which included supplying 5,000 plants. CIR staff and our Board of Directors decided the time was right for us to construct our first mainland nursery to grow the plants for Mugu and for other restoration projects on the mainland. In addition to the plants for Point Mugu, CIR is currently growing plants for the San Marcos Foothills, and we are welcoming proposals to grow plants for other restoration projects.

Most of the funding for the construction cost was made possible by a generous gift from a CIR donor. Several volunteers contributed their time to construct the facility. Dave Edwards and Gordon Hart (both CIR Board members) plus John Reyes were again our lead construction team, spending many hours in the hot autumn sun working on the project. These three were also instrumental in the construction of the other CIR nurseries. Also, Barry Dydyk, Bob Nicholas, Dr. Dave Perlmutter and Kelle Green all spent many hours working on the project.

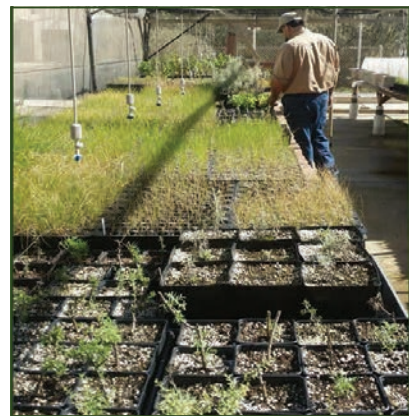


Left: Volunteers install shade cloth and build hardening tables at the new CIR Camarillo nursery. **Right:** Completed nursery and hardening tables.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER TRIPS TO SAN NICOLAS ISLAND

CIR, in partnership with the U.S. Navy, has two upcoming multi-day planting trips to San Nicolas Island in January 2016. CIR will be recruiting a select number of volunteers for the chance to visit the most remote of the Channel Islands, and the hardest for civilians to visit!

The goals for the two restoration trips will be to install 1,000 native plants (which includes two dune species) and replenish the island with native and island-endemic vegetation. CIR collected seeds on-island and grew the plants in the island nursery that was rebuilt by CIR staff and volunteers in 2012. CIR nursery manager Kelle Green and volunteers has been tending the native plants in the nursery, and they are



almost ready to be planted. One of the dune species is Beach spectaclepod (*Dithyrea maritima*) a California rare and threatened species.

Volunteers fly out of Point Mugu Naval Air Station to the island where they will stay in motel housing while working on this important restoration project. Each volunteer will pay for their own single-occupancy room (\$68 per night). Because of holiday flight schedules, the trips are five and six days in length. This allows more time for volunteers to enjoy an extraordinary experience and beautiful island views. CIR staff and volunteers will be kept very busy planting and caring for these precious island plants in the coming months. Watch for the upcoming volunteer announcements!

Upcoming Volunteer Planting Trips:

Thursday, January 14 – Tuesday, January 19 & Friday, January 22 – Tuesday, January 26

Above: CIR volunteers maintaining the native plantings that were installed early this year.

Left: Plants growing at the San Nicolas Island nursery including needle grass, box thorn, and cactus.

REI FUNDS RESTORATION TRIPS TO ANACAPA ISLAND

For the third year in a row, outdoor retailer REI has supported the Anacapa restoration project by providing a grant to CIR for native plant installation on the island. The funds were granted to Channel Islands Restoration, which works in partnership with the National Park Service on the project. Over the course of six trips, 30 volunteers planted several hundred plants including sage brush alkali rye grass and coastal prickly pear cactus.

The volunteers who helped on these trips were all associated with local conservation groups or were employees or members of the local REI stores. Participating groups includes Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Ventura Surfrider Foundation and the Santa Barbara Zoo.

Most of the trips were led by Kelle Green, the CIR nursery manager and all around NPS volunteer. The groups worked hard, and also had an opportunity to take a short walk on the island following the restoration work. CIR thanks all the volunteers and REI for making these trips possible!



Top and Left: Volunteers from the Santa Barbara Zoo plant natives near the historic lighthouse on Anacapa. Right: A young volunteer plants cactus!

CIR STEWARDSHIP OF THE SAN MARCOS FOOTHILLS

In addition to maintaining our current restoration projects and planning new ones for the years ahead, CIR adopted a more active stewardship role for the San Marcos Foothills Preserve. In 2015, we now provide educational programs and have produced materials that educate visitors about protecting wildlife while we all enjoy the 210-acre Preserve, located between Santa Barbara and Goleta.



This year CIR organized three educational walks at the Preserve, including two bird watching events with biologist Mark Holmgren and a plant walk with Ken Owen. All of these events were popular and were attended by nearly 60 people. CIR also created a web guide to the Preserve that highlights the plant and animal life, geology and history and more. We continue to develop a docent program for the Preserve, which will train volunteers to lead educational walks.

As CIR takes on new responsibilities at the Preserve, we're mindful of our previous successes there. Since 2010, CIR has partnered with several non-profit organizations, businesses and County government to restore portions of the Preserve. Our restoration sites along Cieneguitas and Atascadero Creeks have been spectacular successes. Even during this dry year, in the middle of the worst drought in history, many of our plants continue to bloom well into autumn. The sites attract butterflies that feed on nectar from the flowers, and they attract birds that collect seeds and insects from the plants. In a generally dry and brown landscape, our restoration sites are some of the only green spots in the Foothills. The success of the restoration sites is due to our dedicated staff and the help of more than 1,000 people who have volunteered with CIR at the San Marcos Foothills since we began our work.

Thanks to a grant from outdoor retailer REI this year, CIR also removed invasive plants along trails and at a freshwater spring, where several species of wetland plants grow. The REI grant paid for the cost of a staff person to lead the 16 volunteer days and for the cost of recruiting the 278 volunteers who participated. Thanks to REI and to the Volunteers!



Photos:

Top: Volunteers pose at the San Marcos Foothills Preserve following a day of invasive plant removal near a natural freshwater spring. This project was made possible by a grant from outdoor retailer REI.

Middle: Biologist Mark Holmgren leads a CIR bird watching walk at the Preserve.

Bottom: Common buckeye butterfly collecting nectar on California buckwheat plants installed by Channel Islands Restoration at the San Marcos Foothills Preserve. This plant was in bloom over the Thanksgiving weekend when this picture was taken.



Check out the new San Marcos Foothills Preserve Web page:

www.sanmarcosfoothills.com

CIR PROVIDES SERVICE LEARNING TRIPS TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As we reported in May, CIR provided field trips to Santa Cruz Island for all of the sixth graders at Cleveland Elementary School in Santa Barbara, thanks to contributions from several generous donors. In addition to the island experience, CIR Board members provided the students with natural science lessons in topics including GPS mapping and the near decimation of the island foxes, making the learning process interesting for the students.

The CIR school program is designed to reach kids from low-income families, and eighty-two percent of students attending Cleveland qualify for the school lunch program. The students removed the flowering heads off of thousands of non-native oyster plants (*Tragopogon porrifolius*) thereby helping to prevent that non-native, invasive weed from spreading in Scorpion Canyon. Nearly 60 kids participated on the trip. Costs for the boat, bus and staff to organize and lead the trips were mostly provided by one individual and a small service group.



Left: Students learn about Santa Cruz Island from CIR Board member Karen Telleen-Lawton. Right: Students remove invasive oyster plant on the island.

Join CIR for Fun, Food, & Festivities at our 6th Annual Holiday Party!



*Complimentary wine, beer, soft drinks,
fun raffles with great prizes,
and our 3rd Annual CIR
Natural History Photo Contest!*

**Friday, December 11, 2015
7:00-9:00pm**

Come enjoy the good times with CIR staff and Board Members as we celebrate the holidays. Our 6th annual holiday party will, no doubt, be as popular and festive as our last five! We had such a blast with the raffles last year we are doing them again and will be raffling off some outstanding prizes! We will also host our third annual "CIR Natural History Photo Contest," with excellent prizes! If you would like to enter the contest, please see the guidelines here... and start submitting!

Location: Carpinteria Library

5141 Carpinteria Avenue
Carpinteria, California

Please RSVP! volunteer@cirweb.org or 805-448-6203

Photo Contest

Who Can Enter: Open to amateur photographers of any age.

Deadline: Photos accepted until 5:00PM, Thursday, December 10th

When & Where to Submit Photos: Photos will be accepted Mon-Fri, 9AM to 5PM at the CIR Office, located at 928 Carpinteria Street, Suite #3, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

Suggested Themes: Fauna, Flora, Landscapes, Waterscapes, People in Nature, Volunteers in Action!

Guidelines:

1. Minimum size for photographs is 5"x7"; maximum is 16"x20".
2. Only submit photos you have taken yourself.
3. Choose your best shots and please limit submissions to 4 prints.
4. Each photo must be ready to hang. Suggestions: a single pre-cut mat or foam mounting board with wall mounting tabs in the corners. A frame is also fine, but please remove the glass.
5. On the back of each print, place an arrow at the center top indicating the direction of the photograph. List your photo's title, where it was taken, your name and contact information.
6. All possible care will be exercised in the handling of photographs, however CIR is not responsible for lost or damaged submissions.

WHO HELPS CIR WHEN WE DONATE OUR TIME?

Who helps fund the un-fundable restoration projects? Who takes on the orphan projects? Who pays for environmental education work when funding runs out? Channel Islands Restoration is a non-profit organization, and donating time and services is what sets us apart from the for-profit corporate world. But, contributions from individual donors and members make pro bono work possible.

As an example, our school program this year was supported mostly by individual donors, members and small-sized service groups. As a result, nearly 60 school kids were able to visit Santa Cruz Island this year and participate in a service project because several individuals supported CIR with generous contributions.

Even when restoration funding is available for a project, it is often designed to last only one year. Habitat restoration is seldom completed on that kind of time scale, so CIR often donates the time of our restoration staff, our Volunteer Coordinator, and our Executive Director when initial funding runs out. There is rarely enough funding to keep the mustard from sprouting, to hold back the cape ivy, to protect rare plants and animals or to take kids to the islands. CIR relies on our friends, supporters and members to fund these important needs when grants are unavailable or run out.

Throughout our history, CIR has also helped kick-off worthy environmental restoration and educational projects by volunteering our services, even when funding was unavailable to cover our costs. Long before there was funding to pull the invasive Sahara Mustard on San Nicolas Island, CIR staff organized trips there to remove the mustard where it was threatening rare plants. On San Clemente Island, CIR donated considerable staff time to remove iceplant from sensitive dune habitat, when funding for restoration projects on the island was used mostly for other priorities. CIR now receives funding to do this kind of work on these islands. CIR removed invasives and planted thousands of plants along creeks at the San Marcos Foothills thanks to grant funding from several private groups. But when funding to maintain these projects ran out, we donated our staff time to nurture the plantings and to keep the weeds from coming back. CIR continues to donate time to organize restoration and education work on the Channel Islands and at mainland locations, with the help of contributions from our members.

CIR staff and our volunteer Board of Directors are highly committed to our mission, but our work would not happen without the support of our members. When you consider giving to a cause or charity as we approach the end of the year, please remember how much CIR relies on you. Your contributions make it possible for us to do the important work of restoring precious habitat and instilling the values of environmental conservation in young people and others. We can only be successful with the help of people like you!



CIR restoration site along Cieneguitas Creek at the San Marcos Foothills Preserve. Long after funding ran out for this project, CIR continued to maintain the plantings at this restoration site.



Cleveland Elementary School students pose on Santa Cruz Island in May. CIR's school program this year was supported chiefly by individual donors, members and small-sized service groups.

Who helps fund the un-fundable restoration projects? Who takes on the orphan projects? Who pays for environmental education work when funding runs out?

Channel Islands Restoration is a non-profit organization, and donating time and services is what sets us apart from the for-profit corporate world. But, contributions from individual donors and members make pro bono work possible.


Your contributions make it possible for us to do the important work of restoring precious habitat and instilling the values of environmental conservation in young people and others. We can only be successful with the help of people like you!



Join Channel Islands Restoration!

~BECOME A MEMBER TODAY~

YOU will receive the satisfaction of doing your part to help restore native habitat on the mainland and on CALIFORNIA'S CHANNEL ISLANDS!

	Annual Memberships		Valuable Benefits
	Island Scrub Jay (Member)	\$35 Year	Individual Invitation to Spring Membership Pot-Luck & CIR Walking Tour with Natural History Experts. 15% Discount on CIR Merchandise. CIR e-Newsletter and CIR Decal.
	Silver Lotus (Contributor)	\$75 Year	All Island Scrub Jay benefits plus a Channel Islands Flora & Fauna Laminated Field Guide. \$15 Discount on one Select Natural History Tour of choice.
	Goldenbush (Supporter)	\$100 Year	All Silver Lotus benefits plus an invitation for two to the Annual CIR Social. Personalized CIR Name Badge. Your choice of a CIR Embroidered Cap or a 100% Organic Cotton T-shirt.
	Island Ironwood (Patron)	\$500 Year	All Goldenbush benefits plus two spaces on an invitation-only CIR Special Natural History Day-Trip.
	Island Fox (Benefactor)	\$1,000+ Year	All Island Ironwood benefits plus an invitation for two to a VIP Banquet with special guests. A Complimentary Space on your choice of a Select CIR Natural History Trip.

Donate through our web page: www.cirweb.org/donate

Donate by check payable to: **Channel Islands Restoration**
928 Carpinteria Street, Suite #3, Santa Barbara, CA 93103