



THE ISLAND INSIDER

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A PUBLICATION OF CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION



HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE HELPED HAPPEN

As some of our top donors, we're truly grateful to you, and we want to say thank you for everything you've helped us do. Unfortunately we don't have room for that in this small newsletter. However, we do want to call out just a few of our more exciting projects in the field right now. Keep in mind that this doesn't include events like the *Evening with Tanya Atwater* (which you can find at www.cir.tv), classes about recreation opportunities on the Channel Islands at REI, or lectures on island endemic plants for the California Native Plant Society. It also doesn't include our work with at McGrath State Beach, or our restoration plan for the Gaviota Creek, or any of the grants and new projects we've been working to acquire. We don't have room for any of that, but we hope that what we have here can show that we're using your money to carry our mission out to the fullest extent possible. These are just brief descriptions of each project, but you can expect a full in-depth newsletter to come at the end of the year in November. Until then, thank you so much for your support



ERADICATING TAMARISK ON THE SISQUOC RIVER

Channel Islands Restoration is working to eradicate non-native invasive Tamarisk species in the Sisquoc River and Manzana Creek. The objective of the project is to restore and maintain habitat for riparian dependent species such as the federally listed arroyo toad, California red-legged frog and steelhead trout. After over a year of planning and then waiting for the fall season where we won't risk impacting nesting and breeding activities, we're ready to go. We'll scour nearly 60 miles of the Sisquoc River over the course of two trips in late October and November to find and eradicate this devastating invasive plant.

ENDANGERED BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION AT BURTON MESA

Our Senior Ecologist conducted a botanical survey of an abandoned road on the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve and then prepared a Habitat Restoration Plan for the road. The purpose of the plan is to restore and enhance habitat that is suitable for the endangered El Segundo blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides allyni*). The entire life cycle of El Segundo blue butterfly is closely tied to seaciff buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*). This past year we cleared areas of an abandoned dirt road that were dominated by annual grasses and installed more than 200 native plants and an irrigation system. The plants are thriving, and we are continuing to maintain the site.



Courtesy
Flickr user Stonebird



ERADICATING JAPANESE DODDER IN LOMPOC

Japanese dodder (*Cuscuta japonica*) is an invasive parasitic vine. It is listed as a noxious weed in the State of California. Like our native chaparral dodder (*Cuscuta californica*), dodder parasitizes host plants and receives the nutrients it would otherwise create with photosynthesis. With no need to photosynthesize, dodder lacks the green chlorophyll that most plants have and instead is completely orange. Unlike our native dodder which has adapted to not killing its host and only means of survival, Japanese dodder grows unabated. Infestations of Japanese dodder can become so severe that they can kill and topple oak groves. We're working with the Resource Conservation District of the Upper Salinas Las Tablas Region to eradicate it from the City of Lompoc.

CONTINUING WORK AT THE SANTA ROSA CLOUD FOREST

We're continuing to restore the Santa Rosa Cloud Forest this fall. This work will entail the construction of erosion control waddles, installation of irrigation systems, planting of natives, and maintenance of all of the above. Expect a full report in our November issue. The focus of the project is on restoring the unique "Cloud Forest" habitat atop Mt. Soledad on Santa Rosa Island. It is called the "Cloud Forest" because it is comprised of rare island oaks and other vegetation that have adapted to collect fog on their branches and leaves. The accumulated moisture drips down and naturally provides water for the forest and the rest of the island below.



ENDANGERED SPECIES RESTORATION AT THE CONEJO OPEN SPACE

A population of over 100 individuals of Braunton's milkvetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*), an endangered species, was found on a site after the site had been approved for development of new homes. With the proper permits, we were hired to dig up and relocate the plants to our Camarillo Nursery and then collect the topsoil to capture the rest of the seed bank. We are successfully transferring the endangered species to a new location owned by the Conejo Open Space Conservation Association (COSCA). We have also been working with COSCA to eradicate Russian thistle from some of their other preserves.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 22nd - CIR Fall Social: All donors \$100 and up are invited to come with a guest to join us for drinks and upscale hors d'ouvres at Tanya Atwater's home.

November 4th - Private Natural History Tour: All donors \$500 and up are invited to join us for a private tour of the Carpinteria Salt Marsh with specialized naturalists as our guides.

TBA - Benefactors' Banquet - 'Island Fox' donors of \$1000 or more are invited to an exclusive and formal dinner with CIR staff. We promise to find something nicer to wear than our field clothes.

December 1st - Holiday Party: All are welcome as we come together to celebrate our collective accomplishments from the past year. Last year's event was way too crowded so expect a new venue



SEARCHING FOR ENDANGERED PLANTS IN THE CARPINTERIA SALT MARSH

Throughout August CIR staff, UCSB students, and community volunteers got down in the marshes to survey for salt marsh bird's-beak (*Chloropyron maritimum* subsp. *maritimum*). Salt marshes provide habitat for many unique species and are important areas for transient birds as well. Salt marsh bird's-beak is extant in just seven coastal marshes between Morro Bay and northern Baja California. The survey comes ahead of our project to remove invasive European sea lavender from the marsh. And understanding of where the two species' ranges overlap is required for us to properly plan to eradicate European sea lavender.

ERADICATING INVASIVES AT COAL OIL POINT RESERVE

Channel Islands Restoration field technicians have been working at Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR) to remove fennel and harding grass from this important marine wetland. Coal Oil Point Reserve is one of many open spaces preserved and managed by the UC system for the purposes of research. CIR has conducted dozens of important and extensive invasive tree and shrub removal projects on the reserve over the last decade and we are proud to continue to collaborate with land managers on the preserve.



HAMMOND'S MEADOW GROW-KILL CYCLES

The meadow has been dominated by weeds for decades and every year adds more invasive seeds to the soil. In order to fully eradicate invasives from the meadow in preparation for planting natives we need to drain the seed bank. We're doing this by coaxing the dormant seeds to grow with irrigation and then culling them with an organic weed killer made from citrus oil before they have a chance to come to seed. It's a tried and true technique in the practice of restoration ecology, but we're being cautious. We set up a number of irrigated plots and control plots and successfully determined the optimal schedule of watering that would allow us to grow seeds while not wasting water or getting overwhelmed by an onslaught of weeds that we can't cull fast enough.

THOUSANDS OF PLANTS INSTALLED ON SAN NICOLAS, MORE TO COME

We remain hard at work on San Nicolas Island. We're just about to finish up propagating a dozen thousand plants or so in anticipation of the winter and spring planting season. Last winter and spring we were able to plant nearly 16,000 plants to restore habitat for the San Nicolas Island Night Lizard and the coastal dune habitat as a whole. This wouldn't be possible without help from our volunteers and donors and we're incredibly grateful for your support.



WORKING FOR THE SANTA YNEZ BAND OF CHUMASH INDIANS

In 2016, we prepared an Invasive Species Treatment Plan for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. The creek supports 161 species of plants, 92 of which are non-native. The plan describes the origins, ecosystem threats, biology and control methods of the five species that are the highest priority for eradication. These species are: Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), Bignleaf Periwinkle (*Vinca major*), Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*), English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Common Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*). We followed this up with the first round of successful treatment in spring 2017, and will be following that up with additional treatments in 2018.

A photograph of a gray fox walking on a rocky shore. The fox is in the lower right foreground, looking down. The background is a rocky beach with many small and large stones in shades of brown, tan, and gray. The sky is a pale, clear blue.

CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

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Channel Islands Restoration protects rare and endangered plants and animals by restoring habitat in sensitive and unique natural areas on the California Channel Islands and adjacent mainland. We educate a variety of groups about the value of native habitat and how to protect it. We recruit volunteers and identify and develop public and private funding sources for habitat restoration programs. We create collaborative relationships within the environmental community. CIR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.