

# OPEN SPACES



## New Growth on the Ojai Meadows Preserve

*by Brian Stark, Conservation Director*

Visitors to the Ojai Meadows Preserve may notice some new activity near the Highway 33 trailheads. The OVLC is starting a new phase of restoration along the floodway channel that runs through the site to drain water from Maricopa Highway. The project involves planting an additional 500 trees and shrubs to help shade the water, keeping it cool for aquatic creatures. They will also be homes for birds and other wildlife adapted to stream-side habitats. Weed removal has been done and the area is ready to plant.

Because we are planting in the warmer...ok...hotter part of the year, we need some extra water. We have built an irrigation system capable of carrying high volumes of water to nurture the plants through their first summer. On the upside, the plants will grow rapidly in the warm months and reduce the area available for weeds to grow next spring.

Later this year, we'll plant over 1,000 native plants on the channel downstream from the wetland.

### Want to get involved?

We need some hardy volunteers to help with the planting and maintenance of these plants through the summer. Volunteering on this project will be a great way to get out in the sunshine with other OVLC-friendly people and make a big difference in the success of our work.

Another fun volunteer activity is helping at the OVLC Nursery at the Meadows Preserve. After lying dormant for a year, the Ojai Meadows Restoration project greenhouse has been re-started with the help of intern Allegra Roth. At the nursery we grow native plants from local cuttings and seeds that will eventually be planted on our preserves.

Restoration work has long been part of the OVLC mission and we have so much to show from our efforts over the last few years. Please contact the office if you would like to be involved, it really does take a community to make these projects successful.

**OVLC  
welcomes  
summer  
intern  
Allegra  
Roth**

Allegra Roth is our new summer intern responsible for managing the OVLC's on-site nursery at the Ojai Meadows Preserve. Allegra is a recent graduate of Cate School and will be starting college in the Fall at U.C. Davis. Allegra's interest in environmental horticulture and agriculture provides a strong link with OVLC's nursery program. She will be heading up a volunteer crew to collect native cuttings and seeds and begin the growing process at the OVLC nursery. The plants will then be planted at OVLC preserves. We appreciate Allegra's willingness to take on this responsibility.







## Restoration Program Welcomes Tom Swetek

The OVLC habitat restoration program team welcomes Tom Swetek. Tom is a long-time Ojai resident with great experience in restoration project installation and care. Over the last few years he has worked with both the CREW and Channel Islands Restoration on projects to remove non-native plants and re-plant native habitats. Having Tom onboard will help accelerate our restoration plantings as we adopt a year-round restoration presence on our preserves. His experience with native plants and their care will surely improve the effectiveness of our planting programs.

## Special Thanks to Charley and Sandy Sledd

The Sleds are Ojai Valley Land Conservancy members, friends and volunteer archivists. There are so many pieces to our history, and we are thankful to Charley and Sandy for the countless hours they have given to help put them all in order.

## New Faces and an Old Friend join the OVLC Board of Directors

### MARGOT GRISWOLD

A resident of the Upper Ojai Valley since 2003, Margot loves spending time in the Ojai sunshine with her "adopted grandkids" Henry and Phoebe.



Margot has a background in agriculture and currently works as a Senior Restoration Ecologist for New-Fields Agricultural & Environmental Resources specializing in native habitat restoration. She is past president for SERCAL (California Society for Ecological Restoration) and currently serves on the board of Los Angeles Audubon where she directs local science education projects. She is also a member of the Los Angeles County Environmental Review Board. Margot has been involved with OVLC restoration projects throughout the last several years as a volunteer consultant. She is dedicated to ecological education and land conservation and is pleased to join the OVLC Board.

### BRIAN HOLLY

A third generation Ojai resident, Brian is a conservation biologist with BioResource Consultants, an Ojai based environmental consulting firm.



Brian has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science-Conservation Biology from UC Santa Cruz and brings extensive experience in ecology, wildlife biology, ecosystem management, environmental policy and natural resource planning. For over ten years, he has been working on ecological restoration projects in watersheds throughout Southern California. He also serves as an active member of the Ventura County Search and Rescue Team.

Brian and his wife Camille spend much of their free time rock climbing, backpacking, fly fishing and mountain biking throughout the western United States.

### OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

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### ROGER ESSICK

The Board of Directors is pleased to welcome Roger back as President Elect.



An Ojai resident and avocado and citrus farmer for 36 years, Roger has enjoyed raising his family of two grown children and four grandchildren in the Ojai Valley. He lives in the east end of Ojai on a large avocado ranch with his wife Pat, a Topa Topa school teacher, who shares his love of the Ojai Valley.

Roger has a long history with the OVLC after having served several times on the board since it was founded in 1987. He served as Board President during his previous term. He looks forward to helping to preserve Ojai's natural places for generations to come.

## Volunteers Help Cut New Trails on the Ventura River Preserve



Special thanks to Doug & Leanne Campbell, Tom Esensten, Mimi Gottlieb, Mike Gourley, Kay Martin and Rob Young who helped clear an additional 2.5 miles of trails for a connection to a new Ventura River Preserve trailhead. Currently

the Riverview and Oso trailheads provide access to the northern and central areas of the preserve. The new trailhead will provide a third connection to the Ventura River Preserve's twenty miles of trails just off Hwy 150 at Old Baldwin Road.

The new trailhead is funded by a Proposition 50 grant from the California River

Parkways program, so that Ojai Valley residents and visitors may enjoy additional access to hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and wheelchair access to recreational trails along the southern part of the Preserve. New signs, maps and trail markers are currently under development. In addition to general and horse trailer parking, two designated ADA parking spaces and an adjoining 1,600 foot-long wheelchair accessible trail will make it possible for more people to enjoy the area.

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District in partnership with the OVLC will enhance recreational opportunities by building the new trailhead and amenities. OVLC will maintain the trailhead.



## Trailhead Hosts Greet Over 400 Visitors

Under the leadership of dedicated volunteers, Stefanie Coeler and Ernie Rischar, the Ventura River Preserve Trailhead Host program started up again this spring. Trailhead hosts and leaders collectively gave many hours each weekend to be at Ventura River Preserve trailheads to greet and survey nearly 400 visitors.

This year's trailhead hosting effort provided interesting information for the Ojai Valley Land

Special thanks to Ernie Rischar, Stefanie and Willi Coeler, Rodger Embury, John & Christine Kuney, Jill Foreman, Harold Glenn, Angie Heald, Allan & Janet Jacobs, Mike Jauregui & Susan Olsen, Julie Rischar and Charley & Sandy Sledd for their time and willingness to help enhance the visitor experience for so many.

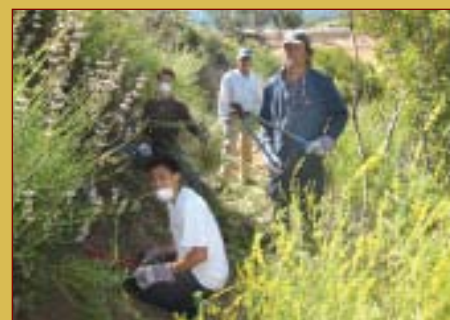
Conservancy. Trailhead hosts asked questions about people's preserve knowledge and membership status. Approximately 70% of users knew that the preserve is OVLC property supported by donations and membership, yet just over 30% of users are OVLC members.

Some responders reported that they weren't sure if their memberships were current. By converting

membership to an annual spring drive, it will be easier for members to track the status of their memberships. Members are always welcome to call or email the office to check on the status of their membership.

About half of the visitors surveyed said they knew of the Ventura River Preserve from having lived in Ojai for a long time and most visitors reported that they use it more than once a month. The Preserve provides respite and recreation for hundreds of people each week and keeps them coming back for more. We encourage you to introduce friends and family to the wonders of this place, and to invite them to become a part of what makes it possible by becoming OVLC members. We, like you, are happy to provide residents and visitors to Ojai with this wonderful place to enjoy Ojai's views, trails, water and wildlife.

The Trailhead Host program helped provide users with valuable information about the preserve, offering an important service to the community. We plan to repeat the program each spring and would like to expand it to include summer months. If you would like to participate as a trailhead host please contact Lynn Malone at [lynn@ovlc.org](mailto:lynn@ovlc.org) or call 805 649-6852.



## Ilvento Preserve Trails Cleared

Thacher School students Charlie Sun and Chase Smith went above and beyond on their first morning back on campus after the school's week-long outdoor outing. They joined OVLC Preserve Manager Rick Bisaccia and Thacher faculty members, Julie and Bo Manson for a morning of trail clearing on the Ilvento Preserve.

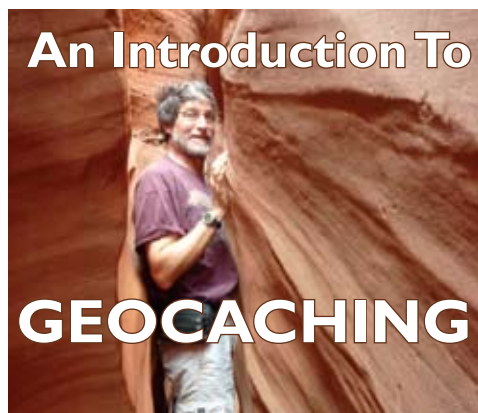
The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy looks forward to a growing partnership with Thacher School. Thanks Charlie, Chase, Bo, and Julie!

Please contact Rick Bisaccia at [rick@ovlc.org](mailto:rick@ovlc.org) if you would like to join a team of volunteers who help keep trails clear for all to enjoy.



## WILD ABOUT OJAI

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING SERIES - SUMMER SESSION



On the VENTURA RIVER PRESERVE with Steve Clark and Brian Stark

**SATURDAY, JULY 24th at 8am**

Meet at the Oso Road Trailhead at the intersection of Oso Road and Meyer Road. This walk will be on flat, uneven ground and last about 2 hours. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and bring water and sunscreen. Kids over 7 welcome. Please leave pets at home.

### RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!

Participation will be limited to 25 people, so make your reservation today. Call 649-6852 ext. 2 or email [info@ovlc.org](mailto:info@ovlc.org).

## OJAI MEADOWS CLOSED FOR 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS

For the protection of sensitive habitat and to help prevent fires the Ojai Meadows Preserve will once again be closed to the public between the hours of 6:30pm and 9:30pm on July 4th. OVLC staff, volunteers and professional security will be at all entrances and inside the preserve to watch for fire and trespassing.

Please help us spread the word that the preserve will be closed on the evening of July 4th.

Our presenter, Steve Clark is a hiking, mountain biking and geocaching enthusiast. He has been geocaching for almost two years and has already found nearly 3000 caches and has deployed 200 for others to find. Steve organizes and leads hikes for OutdoorsClub.org and Meetup.com, including occasional "Introduction to Geocaching" hikes. His website, VenturaCountyTrails.org is dedicated to helping outdoor enthusiasts find trails they would enjoy exploring, whether for geocaching, hiking, or biking.

Brian Stark, OVLC Conservation Director and geocache hobbyist will join Steve as a co-presenter. Brian and Steve will lead us on a walk along the east side of the river from the Oso trailhead in search of caches as they introduce the fun, skills, technology, safety and environmental aspects of geocaching.

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped

with GPS devices. Cachers locate hidden geocaches outdoors and then share their experiences. Geocaching is enjoyed by people from all age groups, with a strong sense of community and support for the environment.

The Ventura River Preserve has over 70 geocaches located throughout the property, so participants who want to take this new-found hobby to the next level will never tire of looking for caches.

**Reservations are a must!** We will limit the group to 25 people in order to keep it fun for participants. If there are more people interested, we will take sign-ups for a second walk to be scheduled this summer.

Wild About Ojai programs are free for Ojai Valley Land Conservancy members, a \$10 donation is requested from all others. Join today to receive this and other quarterly programs for you and your family. Membership starts at only \$35 per household annually.

FREE for OVLC members, \$10 for non-members. Become a member today!

**RESERVATIONS - 805 649-6852 or [info@ovlc.org](mailto:info@ovlc.org).**

## Ojai Cub Scouts Enjoy A Day On The River

Cub Scouts from Pack 3502 descended to the Ventura River Preserve where they learned about outdoor preparedness, horse trail safety, spring wildflowers, and how to have a great time swimming in the river. The scouts and their families were led

by Ojai Valley Land Conservancy preserve docent Art Vander. Dr. Vander, a former Professor, was dynamic and

patient. Cub Scout Mom Carolyn Vondrisk said, "It was so helpful



for the kids to have an expert along to answer questions and to describe all that we were seeing. Everyone had a lovely time.... It was a magical experience!" Pack Master, Jim Pfleging said, "Getting the boys outdoors

is so important. It's a great opportunity to teach the outdoor code of safety & respect for nature."





Artwork courtesy of Dianne Bennett



## EarthPlay on the meadow

A community Earth Day celebration

Co-hosted by

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

Oak Grove School, Ojai Valley Green Coalition

Ojai Rotary West and the Rotary Club of Ojai

A family fun filled day was had by over 500 visitors to the Ojai Meadows Preserve on April 24th. Participants enjoyed activities focused on nature, green living, and learned about the Preserve as well. Oak Grove School provided the music, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition and other Ojai environmentally responsible groups displayed their services. A drawing for an electric bike was sponsored by the Ojai Rotary Clubs.

That evening, the Household Gods and Smitty West and Julija Zonic entertained the crowd, and participants came out to support the work of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy at our live auction.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped and to the many donors of auction items. We couldn't have done it without you!

*Photos courtesy of Holly Roberts*



## SPRING WALKS on the OVLC Preserves

Thanks to the generosity of Ojai Community Bank, nearly 200 Ojai Valley Land Conservancy members and guests enjoyed a series of walks on OVLC preserves this spring. Special thanks to walk leaders John and Kathy Broesamle, Cricket Twichell, Barbara Washburn, Art Vander, Jesse Grantham and Allen Bertke who's passion for nature was enjoyed by participants.



Wildflower walk on the Ventura River Preserve with Cricket Twichell.



A baby owl greets bird walkers on the Ojai Meadows Preserve.



The view from the top of the Ilvento Preserve.

## Members Make a Difference

Thank you to so many who already renewed your membership.

You spoke, we listened. In response to many member requests, the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy moved to a once a year membership drive this year. The change will help members remember when their memberships are due. The new spring membership drive is going well so far. About 50% of our members have sent their membership dues and we're hoping to receive more this month.

While we hope all our members will renew during our membership drive, gifts at other times of the year qualify for membership as well. And of course we always welcome extra end of year gifts too.

Because so many of you were generous in 2009 we have accomplished

so much. Over the last year, your support enabled OVLC to protect one third of a mile of an important tributary of the San Antonio Creek – and one third of a mile of the gorgeous drive into Ojai on Creek Road.

Your support helps us continue to protect the Ventura River, Ojai Valley vies, habitat for endangered species, trails for people and water for our community. This year thanks to your help, staff was able to secure a grant that could help fund the protection of approximately one mile of the Ventura River all told. We are also -currently negotiating the permanent protection of roughly 500 acres of Ojai Valley land.

Your generosity also helped jump-start critical habitat restoration work on our preserves under the leadership

of our new Conservation Director Brian Stark.

Grants for land acquisition and restoration cannot be used for day to day operations, so your membership support is especially critical. It is only through your membership dollars that we are able to continue to seek public funding for these important projects and steward them into the future.

There is so much more to do and together we can make a difference. Please renew your membership today if you haven't already this year and invite a friend or neighbor to become a member too.



## THANKS TO OVLC FRIENDS FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM JANUARY 1 THRU JUNE 15, 2010

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Thanks goes to Adam & Helen Tolmach of The Ojai Vineyard for generously donating wine for our Howling at the Moon concert.

Adam Tolmach has been hand making wine under The Ojai Vineyard label since 1983. Available around town, at some of the best restaurants across the country, and through [www.ojaivineyard.com](http://www.ojaivineyard.com), the wines will also be available soon at a new tasting room. On July 15th The Ojai Vineyard is opening a tasting room in the historic Firehouse at 109 S. Montgomery in Ojai.

To contact the winery about the tasting room or to purchase some wine now please call them at 805.649.1674 or email [info@ojaivineyard.com](mailto:info@ojaivineyard.com).

Thank you Adam and Helen Tolmach and staff at The Ojai Vineyard for your support.

Please do all you can to support The Ojai Vineyard, bITvision and other OVLC business sponsors as they give back to the protection of the Ojai Valley's views, trails, water and wildlife.

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