

THE MOUNTAINS EXPERIENCE

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25 Years
of Service
1981 - 2006

This year, MRT celebrates its 25th anniversary! In this commemorative newsletter, we'll share the story of our journey. Your financial and volunteer contributions have enabled MRT to become a progressive leader in land acquisition, stewardship and educational programs in the Santa Monica Mountains.

MRT's trail of success is based on the same principles that also govern the ecosystems that it protects: sustainability based on community, connectivity and continuity. This issue will highlight continuity—the bridge from what we have accomplished in the past and how it will help us with the challenges ahead in our efforts to continue the mountain experience for generations to come.



Toyon and sagebrush adorn the Cold Creek Preserve slopes.

Celebrating 25 Years of Stewardship

Mountains Restoration Trust is a nonprofit land trust in the Santa Monica Mountains that serves in a unique stewardship role, offering timely and progressive approaches in conservation and the urban-rural issues challenging the mountain range. "Ecosystems evolve," explains Executive Director Steve Harris for MRT. "The goal is not to prevent all change, but to be sure the change supports the ecosystem and has a positive impact."

During the last 25 years, MRT established a strong foundation in strategic areas of effective land stewardship. A staff of experts in diversified fields encompassing acquisition, restoration and environmental education focus on stewardship programs that offer a proactive approach to lessen the urban impact occurring in ecologically rich mountain areas. Fellow environmental agencies also seek the services of MRT. "Forging the needed partnerships to accomplish the challenges

that lie ahead is the strength of MRT. No one agency can do it alone," says Executive Director Joe Edmiston of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

What are the immediate goals and challenges in making the human impact lighter on natural lands to preserve the mountain experience?

Land Acquisition: Wildlife & Recreation Network

To establish a healthy wildlife and recreation network within the Santa Monica Mountains, parklands must link coastal and inland areas. While recent accomplishments in acquiring such areas as Ahmanson Ranch and King Gillette Ranch (acquired from SOKA University) have made great gains to this goal, 30,000 acres remain on the park agency's wish list. Superintendent Woody Smeck for the National Park Service's Santa

Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, explains how over the years the development of an environmental database (which MRT has helped to develop) containing geography and hydrology maps, resource inventories, scientific research results, and endangered species lists, has assisted in the master planning effort. "The database allows us to effectively identify the properties needed to create self-sustaining wildlife corridors. It's very doable."

MRT works closely with the National Park Service to negotiate with willing sellers who would like to assist in developing the planned network. However, in an area where real estate is prime, to acquire these lands usually takes multiple funding sources as well as professional negotiation. Private support and grant dollars are vital revenue streams that MRT actively pursues as well as assisting in the land negotiation transactions and facilitating

land donation gifts from generous civic-minded owners. "MRT contributes greatly to our ability to raise funds and negotiate these land sales. They are not a bureaucracy so they can act quickly to acquire them," explains Smeck. "Once the lands are gone, they are gone forever."

These 30,000 identified acres would add to the current 78,000 acres of city, county, state and national parkland, as well as link MRT's 2,100 acres of biologically diverse preserves in the Cold Creek, Tuna, and La Sierra watersheds to form one of the largest urban recreation areas in the nation. However, development is continuing to expand into the mountains at a rapid pace. "Developers view the mountains as prime residential and commercial property and we must stay vigilant in protecting these areas," says Edmiston. "In addition to losing the land permanently for parkland, these developments will border significant natural areas and disturb wildlife, close historic trails and impact adjacent areas with non-native plants, erosion and other vector problems."



Brandon Pratt and Danae Evans measuring photosynthesis and transpiration on chaparral plants at Cold Creek Preserve (Pratt, et al. 2007a; 2007b). Photo courtesy of Dr. Stephen D. Davis, Distinguished Professor of Biology, Pepperdine University.

The Cold Creek Canyon Preserve and the Cold Creek Valley Preserve, protected and managed by MRT, is integral to the east-to-west wildlife corridor. Riparian rich resources provide an inviting wildlife haven and inspirational retreat with its year-round creek, clean water, species diversity and shaded trails. The Cold Creek area was selected by naturalists in the 1960s to study the unique chaparral biome. MRT continues to offer the rare chaparral setting as an outdoor laboratory for student

education and academic research. MRT plans to continue expanding the Preserve for both wildlife and public enjoyment.

Restoration: Tending to the Mountains

With a better understanding of the ecological systems as compiled in the environmental database, MRT has begun to correct the damage that has dramatically changed certain mountain ecosystems. "Much of the mountains' pristine beauty and sustainability has been lost because native plants are easily taken over by hardy non-native species such as yellow star thistle that thrive on disturbance and become dominant invaders that we consider to be bad neighbors. Additional invasive plants and animals are being introduced when the ecosystem balance is disturbed," expresses Program Director Jo Kitz for MRT, who has been recognized by several state-wide agencies for her restoration efforts. "Habitat restoration is not landscaping for aesthetic satisfaction but is essential for sustaining a healthy ecosystem. Native trees and plants provide homes to insects, birds and wildlife as well as producing important food sources. We have to reestablish many of the species, such as the oaks, and once we do, the natives will be able to flourish in their natural climate and take care of themselves." Restoration programs within the parklands are already producing the needed self-sustaining habitat regions.

Stream bank restoration and water quality management are other significant resource areas, particularly as ongoing drought issues face the arid region. MRT is developing public outreach programs for The Las Virgenes Creek Restoration Project, funded by public clean water acts of 2000 and 2002 with matching funds provided by the City of Calabasas. Currently, 400 feet of Las Virgenes Creek is being restored to its natural habitat by removing 3,600 square yards of concrete installed in 1977 for flood control measures.



The Restoration team of Outward Bound Adventures, Inc. weeding soap plants on a Cold Creek Valley Preserve hillside.

Education: Awareness & Living Lightly

With the growing population in the mountain region, the development of public awareness and educational outreach programs are essential to land conservation and a healthy environment. Pollution and contamination as well as habitat damage are all growing concerns for the fragile ecosystem. As more people move into the mountain environment, lifestyle changes need to be introduced to preserve the natural habitat. "We've compiled the databases to understand what we need to do," says Edmiston, "but you have to get people to care."



MRT Program Director, Jo Kitz, helps a budding young horticulturist at Malibu Creek State Park in the Tu B'Shevat Oak Grove.

Since 2003, MRT has partnered with the City of Calabasas to develop Headwaters Corner at Calabasas, strategically located at the interface of the urban and wildlands environments. MRT is continuing to expand its outreach programs and events pertaining to mountain stewardship and passive recreation. These programs will also cover the cultural and historical resources of the area. On the 12-acre site is the turn-of-the-century Masson Homestead House with remnants of an original homesteader's cabin, which MRT plans to use as a museum. "What is evolving at Headwaters Corner is very exciting," says Smeck. "The educational programs and environmental studies are key areas we need to invest in to help protect and preserve the Santa Monica Mountains."

Through workshops, programs and publications, MRT encourages residents and visitors to live lightly in the mountains by implementing nature-wise concepts to help maintain the area's beauty. Topics include how to plant natives to help restore and preserve the indigenous mountain habitat while creating a haven for wildlife; proper brush clearance methods; understanding correct water drainage and runoff methods; and proper refuse and disposal practices.



A training session for the citizen water quality monitoring team directed by Erick Burres, Clean Water Team Coordinator, State Water Resources Control Board, was held at the Masson House, Headwaters Corner at Calabasas.

"People move to the mountains because of its beauty," Kitz expresses. "They need to understand the role they play in preserving the setting."

With the continuing development of an interpretive center at Headwaters Corner, MRT is expanding its youth education programs. "Studies indicate children have become nature deficient," reports Edmiston. "Educational programs are essential to get them reconnected to the outdoors." MRT conducts weekend, summer and after school programs to help reconnect children and teens to the outdoors and provide projects where they can also earn community service credits while discovering the wonders of nature.

Working with academic and government agencies, MRT will continue to advance the understanding of restoration needs in the mountains and establish volunteer programs to execute effective conservation techniques in preserves and parklands. "Getting everyone



A water quality monitoring regional training session was held at Headwaters Corner at Calabasas, in Dry Canyon Creek.



Turning Point fourth graders learn about natural cycles with Nancy Helsley of the Cold Creek Docents. The Docents have taught children about the Santa Monica Mountains ecology and early Native American culture for over 26 years!

involved helps build a constituency and a long-term investment in preserving the outdoor experience," says Harris. "Involvement brings a sense of ownership and responsibility. Humans are an essential component in the mountain ecosystem."

Protecting a mountain range bordered by one of the largest urban centers on Earth takes partnership and public support. With the ongoing support of donors and members, MRT will continue to broaden the scope of environmental protection. "MRT brings so many areas of strength to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area," says Smeck, "They were once best known for land acquisition but their stewardship role has expanded and advanced into science and education. MRT is becoming our conservation think tank."

The Mountains Restoration Trust would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported our efforts throughout the past 25 years including our Board of Trustees past and present, members and donors, our outstanding volunteers, colleagues and partners.

As we begin our year-end appeal this anniversary year, we look forward to your continued support so that we may continue our efforts in land acquisition, educational and recreational programs, stewardship and research. Together we can protect and preserve the natural beauty and ecology of the Santa Monica Mountains for generations to come.

AH, SWEET MEMORIES!

By Nancy Helsley
Cold Creek Docent Coordinator
& MRT Board Member

"Wow, I didn't know you could learn science from nature!"

"This is the best \$5 bucks my parents have ever spent on a fieldtrip!"

"My students have never been to the mountains."

"Where are the lions and elephants?"

College student: "So, THAT'S what erosion is!"

Teacher: "This is such a phenomenal program!"

These are just a few of the comments the Cold Creek Docents hear as they teach all grade levels at the UCLA Stunt Ranch Reserve in the Cold Creek area of Calabasas. The Cold Creek Docents, one of the outdoor environmental education sections of the Mountains Restoration Trust, have been serving public and private schools of greater Los Angeles basin for over 26 years. Four-hour programs are held three days per week on the MRT's Cold Creek Preserve trails and at the beautiful UCLA Stunt Ranch Reserve (an 1880 homestead) under a lease agreement with the University, a living "laboratory" for students to conduct ecological research and to study environmental impacts.

What makes Cold Creek Docent programs different from other docent groups is that what is taught is tied to the California Department of Education's "State Framework," the concepts that students need to know to be proficient at different grade levels. Teachers can select from a variety of hands-on experiential programs for their students: Chaparral Ecology, Early Chumash/Tongva Culture, Rocks Amazing Rocks, The Magic of Soils, Keeping Our Watersheds Healthy, and Natural Cycles & Communities.

On the Cold Creek Preserve's trails, for example, students may study plant communities, discovering that chaparral plants have evolved with certain structures adapted to fit the climate. Many inner city students exclaim a wonderful "Ooooh!" at observing pollination in action with seeds as the end product. On the trails they witness many different earth processes and features that help them make connections to other aspects of their school work and lives. They are fascinated by the yucca plant that provided cordage and food to the Indians, and that can only be pollinated by the yucca moth. Their varied experiences allow them to apply aspects of the scientific principles of questioning, hypothesizing, testing, observing, analyzing and evaluating. On the trails, book learning becomes real!

The Docent's accomplishments over the years have been many. About 78,000 students have participated in Docent programs over a 26-year time span! Docents have won 2 major awards: the 1993 Governor's Historic Preservation Award, and State Park's 1994 "Take Pride in California" award. Public workshops have been held on many aspects of nature. Other activities and accomplishments include numerous fundraisers such as a 'Pioneer Day' living history event, annual docent training classes, creation of the 'Kay Spensley' Nature Center, participation in environmental fairs, development of a Coyote Corps research project, taxidermy of numerous road-killed animals; led three-mile hikes and nature programs for Las Virgenes Unified School's Outdoor Education program for eight years, and developed the first bilingual environmental education program in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Currently, the Docents are holding their annual docent-training classes to run through November, and are completing revision of the Docent training notebook. On-going projects include outreach to schools and teachers, an average of two public monthly interpretive hikes in the Cold Creek Preserves, an annual Pancake Breakfast for supporters; funding 2 public portable trailhead toilets, grant writing, and re-establishment of a fund to taxidermy animal specimens.

The Docents are a spirited group who feel deep inner satisfaction in seeing a child's enthusiasm and response when they are doing nature exploration rather than just being passive recipients of knowledge. However, the biggest challenge for the Docents is finding enough grant funding to maintain the Docent corps. With additional funding, the program could expand to 5 days per week. Also, the Docents are seeking to create more ethnic diversity among themselves which can be a problem due to travel time and transportation problems for potential Docents. At the same time, both of these challenges have become the main opportunities for growth. In an age when children are more and more removed from experiences with the natural world, even such simple experiences as holding and watching the backyard hose erode the soil can open doors to new horizons. With fewer science classes offered in many schools, students need outdoor experiences.

Docent programs such as these are absolutely critical to "grow" future citizens who are informed enough to make earth-healthy decisions and to learn to think critically about the thousands of experiences of daily life.

If you would like to visit one of the Docent's school programs or are interested in becoming a Cold Creek Docent, please call 818-591-1701 ext. 130.



Cold Creek Docent, Jan Rutiz, showing students from Mission College how the Chumash used a pump drill to make holes in wood.

New Acquisitions

MRT is actively working on the acquisition of several prime properties that protect the mountains' habitat and pronounced beauty.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky recently announced that MRT was among the groups included in a \$2.32 million competitive grant award under the 2006 Competitive Natural Land for Trails Grant Program for the Third Supervisorial District funded through Proposition A, a park and open space measure approved by county voters in 1996. The grant funds are earmarked for trail projects in the Santa Monica Mountains to expand the county's hiking and equestrian trail system. MRT was awarded \$500,000 towards the acquisition of 99 acres on the Cold Creek High Trail, an east-to-west trail between Stunt Road and Cold Canyon Road. The trail properties are included in the Cold Creek Restoration Plan approved by the California Coastal Conservancy.

The Natural Land for Trails Program awarded \$300,000 to County Parks to complete the acquisition of a 2.86-acre parcel on the Cold Creek Trail. The property will be managed by MRT as part of the Cold Creek Preserve.



Cold Creek flows clear and free through the 2.86 acre addition to the Cold Creek Preserve adjacent to a section of the Cold Creek Trail.

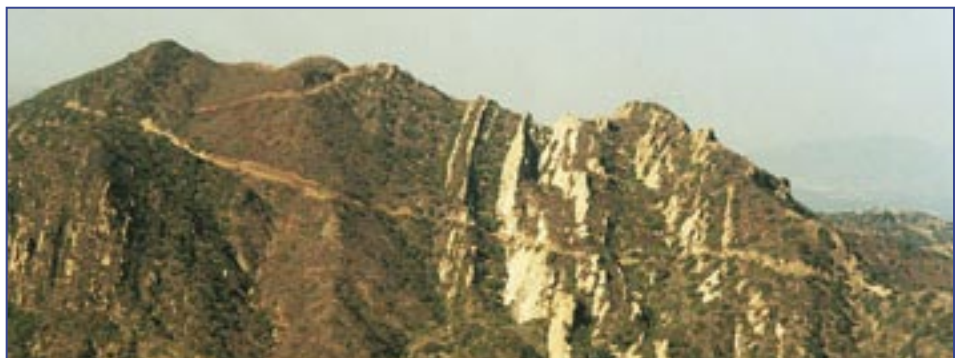


This oak grove is one of the outstanding visual experiences along the Cold Creek High Trail and is a proposed addition to the Cold Creek Preserve.

In 2005, MRT and Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation working in partnership to preserve trails and resources in Cold Creek acquired 120 acres on Calabasas Peak, a visual landmark known for its striking outcroppings, abundance of rare species, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities. The County, spearheaded by County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, added \$500,000 from Proposition 40 grant funds to the \$1 million raised from grants written by MRT to purchase the land from Ty Sisson for \$1.5 million. The 120 acres of Calabasas Peak is not only a visually striking addition to the Cold Creek Preserve but also contains a segment of the 17-mile Calabasas/Cold Creek Trail.

MRT has also acquired 91 acres off Mulholland Highway east of Kanan Road to establish the La Sierra Preserve to protect both state- and federally-listed rare, threatened and/or endangered plant and animal species.

The La Sierra Preserve is north of the Los Angeles County designated La Sierra Canyon Significant Ecological Area (SEA) and continues the protection of biologically-diverse and riparian-rich features including La Sierra Lake and the perennial La Sierra Creek that tumbles 2,824 feet from Castro Peak, providing a clear, clean water source for the area. This unique nature preserve and watershed purchase was a collaborative effort of Los Angeles County, The Habitat Conservation Fund, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Polk Brothers Foundation.



The 120-acre Calabasas Peak acquisition is a visually striking addition to the Cold Creek Preserve and contains a segment of the 17-mile Calabasas/Cold Creek Trail.

Scouts Donate Dues for Land Acquisition

On an early summer morning, a group of five young boys surveyed a property off Stunt Road in Calabasas. Despite a lack of rain this year, the retreat-like setting featured a lush mountainside with water trickling from rock crevices as well as an oak grove. Overall, they thought the land selected by Jo Kitz, Program Director for Mountains Restoration Trust, was pretty cool. "What you've done is very special," Kitz told the boys, ranging in age from 9 to 12. "You're helping us acquire this spectacular trail to be enjoyed by the public for generations to come."

Cub Scout Pack 3732, the Trailblazers Den of Agoura Hills, selected the nonprofit land trust to receive their year's worth of dues for the acquisition of more open space in the Santa Monica Mountains. The six scouts, Joseph Boyle, Cedar and Zion Christensen, Ryan Marangola, Kip Roberts, and Dustin Trisler, recently completed an 18-month Webelos program through Boy Scouts of America, hiking the entire 60-mile Backbone Trail through the Santa Monica Mountains. The scouts also spent a year learning about the mountain environment before tackling the trail system that runs along the mountain ridge connecting the parklands located throughout the range.

Trailblazers Den leader Annette Trisler, a resident of Cornell, says that project dues usually go toward a trip or special reward after completing major projects but her nature-oriented pack had a different idea. "Along the trail, the boys saw expansive pristine open space. They were also concerned about the



Trailblazers Den Pack 3732 donated their dues towards the acquisition of the 99-acre Cold Creek property. The adventurous scout group spent 18-months learning about the Santa Monica Mountains and hiking the entire 60-mile Backbone Trail!

urban sprawl that threatens and is overtaking so much of the Santa Monicas," she said, explaining how the trek over a three-month period led to the donation of their dues toward long-term land protection.

After researching the various local organizations, the Trailblazers Den selected Mountains Restoration Trust, known for its stewardship efforts throughout the Santa Monica Mountains. The den personally presented to MRT their collection of dues acquired over their 18-month project: \$162 in small bills and coins.

MRT Executive Director Steve Harris, Program Director Jo Kitz, and the scouts walked the property where their funds will be used to expand Cold Creek Preserve. Kitz took the boys on an informal nature tour of the property pointing out highlights and explaining why their support is so important. "You can take pride in knowing you are helping to buy this land. I hope that you'll return one day with your own children and tell them how you helped preserve it."

Kitz also explained to the scouts how they helped leverage additional funding by showing community support, which agencies often look at for their own financial contribution. The prime piece of land adjacent to Cold Creek Preserve, is a \$3M parcel that will expand the 1,500-acre protected preserve.

"These youngsters are contributing more than a gift of money," says Harris. "They are role models demonstrating that we all own these mountains and protecting them is not just the responsibility of government or other agencies. Even at their age, they understand that it is a community effort. The mountains inspired them to become an inspiration to their community."

At the end of the site visit, the adventurous Trailblazers Den appeared to want more from the deal. When Kitz asked if they had any questions, they asked her if they could come back and help build the trail.



MRT Happenings

Cold Creek Preserve Interpretive Hikes

Weather ranges from very hot to very cold – dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes and hat, bring water and snacks. Please call the MRT office for more information or to RSVP at 818-591-1701. Please also visit www.mountainstrust.org for current event information and meeting locations.

First Saturday Walks with the Cold Creek Docents

Cold Creek Valley Preserve
December 1, January 5, February 2,
March 1, April 5: 9:30 am to 11:30 am
Savor a walk-about along a streamside trail through oak woodlands to a gently rolling chaparral basin below craggy sandstone peaks. Meet at Lower Stunt High Trailhead.

Sunday Cold Creek Docent Walks

Cold Creek Canyon Preserve
Meet at Lower Stunt High Trailhead.
November 18, 9:30 am to 12 pm
December 16, 10 am to 12:30 pm
January 20, 10 am to 12:30 pm
February 17, 9:30 am to 12 pm
March 16, 9:30 am to 12 pm

Second Saturday Walks with MRT Nature Interpreter

Cold Creek Canyon Preserve
November 10, December 8, January 12,
February 9, March 8, April 12:
9 am to 12 pm
Enjoy a leisurely interpretive 2-mile walk through one of the gems of the Santa Monica Mountains. The trail passes through oak woodlands and wetlands. Meet at Preserve's lower gate.

Sunset/Moonrise Walks with MRT Nature Interpreter

Cold Creek Preserve
Enjoy views of distant mountain ranges, rugged sandstone outcroppings, the sweep of Santa Monica Bay and the unspoiled beauty of Cold Creek Preserve from the Topanga Lookout site. Bring supper, water and a 'goodie' to share. Meet at the top of Stunt Road.
Sunday, November 18, 3:30 to 6:30 pm
Sunday, December 23, 3:15 to 6:15 pm
Sunday, January 20, 3:30 to 6:30 pm
Sunday, February 17, 3:45 to 6:45 pm
Sunday, March 16, 4 to 7 pm

Cold Creek Meanderings

Milk maids, the first sign of spring bloom along the shaded glens of Cold Creek on this easy 3-mile walk. Meet at the Lower Stunt High Trailhead. Thursdays, January 24, February 28, March 27: 10 am to 1 pm

Annual Holiday Toyon Trek

Christmas Day hike through Cold Creek Canyon Preserve sponsored by the Sierra Club. The Toyon Trek is an easy-paced 6-mile, 1200' gain loop. Bring water, lunch, goodies to share. Rain cancels. Meet at Lower Stunt High Trailhead. For more information, please call 310-822-6848.

Habitat Restoration Days

Individuals and groups are invited to do native plantings, remove invasive plant species, and restore habitat. Bring drinking water and wear sturdy shoes and work clothes. A hat, gloves and sunscreen are suggested. Receive credit for community service hours. Tools are provided. Please RSVP by calling 818-591-1701.

Malibu Creek State Park: Commemorative Oaks Program and Oak Woodland Restoration Days

Sunday, November 18, 9 am to 12 pm
Sunday, December 9, 9 am to 1 pm: With the California Native Plant Society. Work in the Commemorative Oak Grove that commemorates the lives of some awesome CNPS members.
Saturday, December 15, 9 am to 12 pm
Saturday, January 5, 9 am to 12 pm
Saturday, February 16, 1 pm to 4 pm
Saturday, March 15, 9 am to 1 pm

Cold Creek Preserve

Help re-establish the oak and willow woodlands along the creek to create riparian habitat from weedy fields.
Saturday, Nov. 17, 9 am to 12 pm.
Sunday, December 2, 9 am to 12 pm
Sunday, January 27, 9 am to 12 pm
Saturday, February 23, 9 am to 12 pm
Sunday, March 16, 1 pm to 4 pm

La Sierra Preserve

This beautiful area has a remarkable diversity of native plants, but some areas are choked with weeds (invasive non-native plants). We will remove them to allow the native plants to create wildlife habitat.
Saturday, December 1, 9 am to 12 pm
Sunday, January 6, 9 am to 12 pm
Saturday, February 2, 1 pm to 4 pm
Saturday, March 1, 1 pm to 4 pm

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas and Dry Canyon Creek habitat restoration

Come and join the community effort to restore a headwater ecosystem of the Los Angeles River. Special arrangements for groups or individuals/families can be made by calling call 818-591-1701 x205.

Cold Creek Preserve Meeting Locations

Lower Stunt High Trail:

On Stunt Road one mile from Mulholland Highway.

Cold Creek Preserve's Lower Gate:

On Stunt Road, 1.2 miles from Mulholland Highway.

Top of Stunt:

On Stunt Road, 4 miles from Mulholland Highway.

Youth Naturalist Program

Headwaters Corner at Calabasas 9:30 am to 12:30 pm (unless otherwise noted)

Programs are designed for 8 to 12 year olds and include an activity, craft, outdoor experience and usually a guest speaker or animal. Pre-registration and nominal fee required. 818-591-1701 x181.

Saturday, November 10 Native American Culture

Children will learn about the Native American people that lived in this area for thousands of years. Come discover what they used for food, clothing, tools, toys, and medicine.

Saturday, December 15, 6:30 to 9:30 pm Astronomy

Children will learn about the night sky with the aid of several telescopes. Guest speakers will guide us through the stars, planets, nebulae and constellations.

Saturday, January 12 Sepulveda Basin Wetland Family Fieldtrip

We will explore the importance of wetlands and why they are vital to our ecological health. In addition, we will learn why animals inhabit this area for days, weeks, or year round. With the aid of microscopes and binoculars we will see the food chain from bottom to top. Please bring water, lunch, sturdy shoes and binoculars if you have them. (Meet at Sepulveda Wildlife Reserve)

Saturday, February 9 Threatened and Endangered Species

Come and learn the many reasons that cause a species to become threatened or endangered and how we can help. There will be a guest speaker who will share animals that are threatened and discuss what she is doing to help.

Saturday, March 15 Birds

Come and enjoy learning about these fascinating and beautiful animals. We will examine owl pellets and the structure of feathers through microscopes. Please bring binoculars if you have them.



Children at the Youth Naturalist Program enthralled in learning about the geology of the Santa Monica Mountains!

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Mission Statement

Working in partnership with the community to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains for the benefit of the environment and for present and future generations through land acquisition and conservation easements; habitat preservation and restoration; and research and education.

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*Young and old alike dig into the dirt to plant native trees and plants during the MRT and City of Calabasas Arbor Day celebration at Wild Walnut Park.
Photo by City Intern Michelle Kim.*

**Saturday, February 16, 8 am to 10 am
Headwaters Corner**

Great Backyard Bird Count

Every year at this time, the public is asked to count the number of bird species in their own backyards. Will you help us count birds in our backyard? All you need are binoculars (we have a few to lend). This important data is then sent to scientists at Cornell Ornithology Lab and to the Audubon Society to highlight this year's trends and findings. Refreshments served. Registration is requested. 818-591-1701 x181.

Saturday, March 15, 9 am to 12 pm

Gates Canyon Park

Arbor Day Celebration

Gates Canyon is a gateway to the Upper Las Virgenes Valley Preserve with a tributary to Las Virgenes Creek. Join the tree planting in celebration of Arbor Day. Call 818-591-1701 x205 for more information.



Mollie Hogan of The Nature of Wildworks with Tara, the red-tailed hawk, gave a presentation at the Stream to Sea Family Fun Day, an Earth Day Celebration.



*Malibu Creek State Park
Oil by J. Alfonso Colocho*

**Saturday, March 30, 11 am to 4:00 pm
Headwaters Corner**

Allied Artists

of the Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore Art Exhibit and Sale

Fifth annual exhibit, reception and sale at Headwaters Corner at Calabasas. Enjoy plein air art in a natural setting. Local artists will present works in all mediums. Co-sponsored by the Allied Artists and MRT. Twenty percent of sales will be donated to MRT. Admission is free. Refreshments will be served. Call 818-591-1701 x188 for more information.

