

# THE CONEJO OPEN SPACE FOUNDATION NEWS

## Autumn of 2018

[www.cosf.org](http://www.cosf.org)

### Fall is Almost Here!

Thank you for being a supporter of our local open space. We hope you will find this newsletter informative, interesting, and helpful, and we welcome article ideas, submissions, photos, and queries from all of our readers. You can contact us with your comments here: [newsletter@cosf.org](mailto:newsletter@cosf.org).

**Donate**

**Volunteer**



Photo Credit: Chris Rowell,  
Prickly Pear Trail



### 2018 Conejo Open Space Challenge

#### Conejo Open Space Challenge 2018 By: Steve Bacharach and Janna Williams

This past spring COSCA volunteers organized the 6th Annual Conejo Challenge. Over 170 people completed at least 1 of the 10 trails over the 3-month period of the Challenge, and 64 people finished all of them. These numbers were both more than twice the previous records for the event. At the post-party where prizes from event sponsors were raffled off, the venue was overflowing with scores of trail enthusiasts. Many participants commented on how excited they were to discover new trails even though they had spent years exploring COSCA open spaces. Others enjoyed completing the Challenge so much that they requested the trail

lists from previous years so they could do those too. The most gratifying comments, though, were from those hikers that used the Challenge as an opportunity to spend more time with family and friends, sharing the outdoor experience with loved ones.

Last year we added an Instagram contest where we encouraged participants to post pics and tag our sponsors. This year, the contest really took off and we had over 120 Instagrammers sharing their photographs. Follow us @COSChallenge! Some of the pictures in this newsletter are a few of the favorites...

### **Thank You, SAGE!**

SAGE Publications, a local publishing company, is working with COSCA and COSF to coordinate a series of volunteer days to improve local open space areas. In each case, a team of 10 to 15 SAGE volunteers spends half of a work day working on local trails and trail heads under the supervision of rangers and trail team leaders. The first event was held September 13, 2017, and 15 volunteers helped with the Rancho Potrero Open Space trailhead beautification (see photo). A second event occurred on June 13, 2018, where SAGE volunteers widened and finished a trail in the new Sapwi Park that had been rough cut during last autumn's Trail Work Day. The next 2 dates are already scheduled for September 19 and October 10. What a great way for a local company to build team spirit and help out! Thank you SAGE!



### **Looking for local hikes?**

A reminder that there are monthly CRPD Open Space Appreciation hikes, which are intended to introduce beginning and intermediate hikers to local trails. Hike leaders safely lead hikers on 12 different hikes each year, covering most of COSCA's 151 miles of trails over a 2- to 3-year cycle. Our next hike will be held Sunday, September 9th at 8 am. Hike information can be found here:

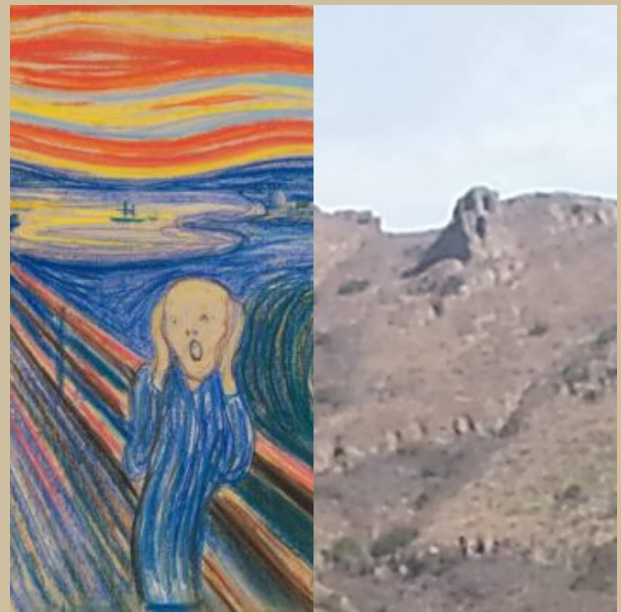
[http://www.conejo-openspace.org/assets/2018\\_osa\\_hikes.pdf](http://www.conejo-openspace.org/assets/2018_osa_hikes.pdf) Come join us!



## Trail Trivia: "The Scream" Trail

By: John Kross

Trails are nicknamed based on features that usually the rangers notice on the trail. We have the Lichen Trail, the Outlaw Trail, the Hidden Ridge Trail, etc. One of the last trails we built in the fall of 2016 is The Scream Trail. The name comes from a rock feature visible from the trail that resembles the famous painting, The Scream, by Edvard Munch (1893). See above a picture of The Scream Trail and the rock formation that resembles the painting!



### Spotlight on...

**Who:** Kira Krukowski, COSF board member, COSTAC committee member.

Kira Krukowski is an inspiration to many of us here in Conejo Valley! She is a teacher at Westlake Elementary School, an ultra-distance runner and marathoner, and a huge contributor to open space initiatives here in Conejo Valley:

she's a major financial donor to COSF, she's a trail adopter, and she files approximately 100+ Trail Watch and Adopt-a-Trail reports annually. She's a great example of how easy it is to turn a simple open space experience (a daily trail run) into valuable volunteer work (a Trail Watch report) that helps the Rangers oversee COSCA trails and open space.

**Day job:** I am a Teacher at Westlake Elementary School. I currently teach first grade, but I have also taught kindergarten and 8 th grade Spanish. I love seeing how the kids grow and learn so much in such a short amount of time. I take my students on many field trips so that they can experience the outdoors regularly. When I read "The Last Child in the Woods" by Richard Louv, it strengthened my resolve to give kids as much time in nature as possible. After school you can find me running in the Conejo Open Space, playing with my dog, Patches, and learning about nutrition and plant-based eating.

**Why is open space important to you?** I feel a strong connection to the outdoors. When I am hiking or running on a trail, it is my "happy place." It is where I go to decompress and feel free. I have always felt a responsibility to protect the open space and animals, even when I was a child.

**What skills do you bring to COSF and/or Conejo Valley open space?** I learned about the Conejo Open Space Foundation when I first started trail running and wanted to get information about how I could help. As an elementary school teacher, I am very organized and efficient. I also regularly work with kids, which is something we do a lot of through the Foundation, especially with fourth graders during Trail Education Days in the spring. It is my dream to get some kind of trail education for kids of all grades in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

**What do you like to do in open space?** I love to run and hike on the trails and explore places I have never been. I always feel like I know all the trails and then I come across someone who knows a shortcut or another way to get somewhere, which is always exciting for me!

**Where's your favorite place in to be in Conejo open space?** All of them! It depends on the day, but I especially love Angel Vista in the Los Robles Open Space and Elliott Peak in the Western Plateau.

**What are your hopes for the future of COSF and/or Conejo Valley open space?** I would love for kids of all ages to have regular outdoor education in the open space. I feel it is so important for kids to be away from the screen and experiencing "real life" in nature. My hope is for everyone to participate in the open space in one way or another... by being out in nature, by donating to the cause to protect it, by learning about our local plants and animals, and/or by serving during volunteer opportunities (like trail work days in the fall and spring each year). We are so lucky to have the amount of beautiful open space here in the Conejo Valley!

**Any other thoughts or words of wisdom?** I love the story of "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss, and in his words, "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot. Nothing is going to get better. It's not." So I hope everyone considers volunteering and/or donating to the open space both locally and beyond.

### **Check Out Our Website Updates!**

COSF board member, Steve Clark, has recently made many updates to the Foundation's website. Continuing Georg Winkler's excellent work, Steve is keeping our website up-to-date, exciting, and vital. You can use the site to find maps, hike suggestions, open space rules, videos, a calendar of events, our newsletter archive, information about our flora and fauna, and opportunities to donate and volunteer. Please take a look!

<https://cosf.org/>





## TOTV Video on Trails Education Days!

Watch this short video by TOTV about Trail Education Days last April. We truly appreciate all of our wonderful volunteers! We could not do this amazing event without their help. If you are interested in helping in the next T.E.D. (Trail Education Days), mark your calendars for March 25-29, 2019.



## Volunteer Opportunities

There are many ways that you can volunteer in the Conejo Open Space! One of the easiest is to sign up for the Trail Watch Volunteer Program. Go to <https://cosf.org/volunteer/trail-watch/> to sign up to be an official Trail Watch member. After you meet with Trail Watch Coordinator, Steve Bacharach, you can go online and fill out a report for each trail you hike, run, bike, etc. You will be able to: report your observations to the Park Rangers, pick up trash from the trail, restock map dispensers at trail head kiosks, volunteer for trail maintenance projects, and make a real difference in our open

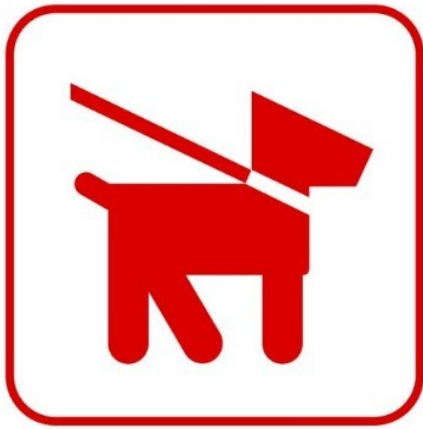
space! Volunteering has an added benefit: The Foundation keeps track of recorded volunteer hours and includes these hours in its grant requests. These grants help the Foundation fund its programs, which help maintain Conejo Open Space and help with public education.

## Thank you, CVC!

For the second year in a row, the Conejo Valley Cyclists made a significant donation to the Conejo Open Space Foundation. CVC, a local cycling club, raised funds from its members at its annual fund-raising ride. In addition to donating to COSF, CVC also made a Silver level donation to the Sapwi Bike Park. Thank you CVC! Your generosity is most appreciated!



## DOGS CAN'T SWEAT LIKE HUMANS.



A friendly reminder to keep your dog safe on the trail during these summer days. Never walk your dog in excessive heat. They are wearing a fur coat, after all! And their paws can get burned, even on dirt surfaces. Watch for signs of heat stroke, which include: excessive panting, failure to respond to commands, or a redder than normal tongue and gums, thick saliva, drooling, panting, diarrhea, and unsteadiness or lethargy. Heat stroke can lead to death if not treated within 15 minutes. Keep dogs hydrated and cool. Always bring enough water for yourself and your pooch, and go hiking with them during the cooler parts of the day.

### Save the Date for our Holiday Party!

It's early not too to save the date! Mark your calendar: The Conejo Open Space Holiday Party will be held on Friday, December 7. RSVP invitations will be sent as we get closer to the date. Thank you for continuing to support our foundation!

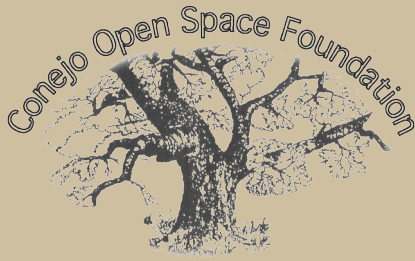
### Want to Volunteer? Here's How!

The COSCA Volunteer Corps has many ways for residents to help maintain and preserve the open space that surrounds our beautiful Conejo Valley. By joining with others, we can make sure that the trails, canyons, and ridgelines will be enjoyed by visitors for generations to come. You can read about the specific volunteer opportunities below, and you can submit a request to volunteer, noting your specific interests, [here](#).

- [Adopt-a-Trail Program](#)
- [Trail Watch Program](#)
- [Trail Ambassador Program](#)
- [Trail Work Days](#)
- [Trails Education Days](#)



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The Conejo Open Space Foundation was formed in 1995 to promote and maintain the open space and trail system of the Conejo Valley and to educate residents as to their roles as custodians and protectors of the open space and the environment. Our [web site](#) illustrates ongoing Conejo Open Space programs supported by the Foundation that help preserve and protect our precious open space.

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