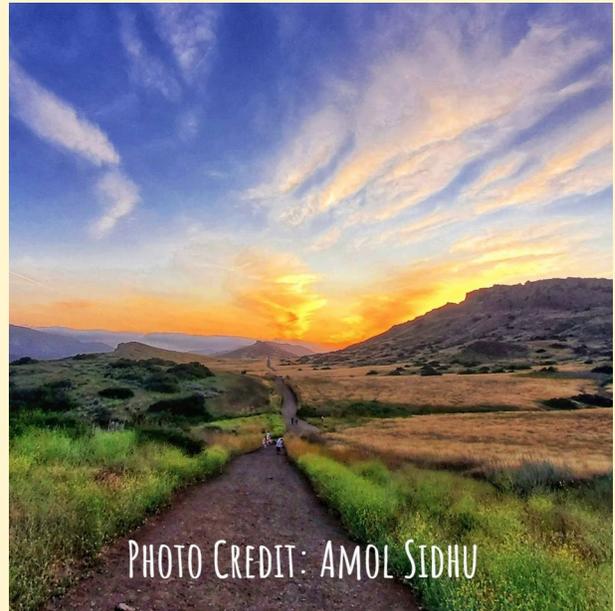


### **An important message from the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency**

COSCA has been able to safely manage our open space and trail system with a small dedicated staff for 40 years because of your community support, outdoor ethic, and good trail etiquette. This special relationship has been built on our shared community values of respect for the land and each other, not enforcement and citations. We know the last few months have been a challenge for all of us, and that there have been times when our open space has not been able to accommodate all that people want to do there. We also know that high numbers of visitors have tested the patience of our neighbors. Throughout this time, we have worked hard to protect the land and create a safe environment in the areas that have reopened, and we are committed to doing this with the least impacts on visitors and our neighbors. We know that these open spaces are important to you, so here are a few things you can do to help in the coming weeks and months.



1. Paradise Falls is still closed for recovery, so please take advantage of the remaining trails throughout our community.
2. Drive slowly, park legally, and respect the land at all open space areas.
3. Please respect our neighbors by keeping your voices down at trailheads and parking in COSCA parking lots.
4. Make smart decisions about health. Do not use trails if you are sick. If you arrive at a trailhead and it is busy, consider going to a less crowded trail. We are all responsible for managing our contact with others to protect ourselves, our families, and the vulnerable in our community, and safety starts before you park the car.
5. Our trails are attracting a lot of new users. If you are among the new users, welcome! To best enjoy your experience, be prepared for the outdoors before heading out. We have had a higher than usual number of rescues and assistance calls. These can be avoided if you: start slow to avoid over-exertion, wear sturdy footwear, check weather and avoid the heat, bring plenty of water, a snack, hat, and sun screen. These will make for a more enjoyable

experience.

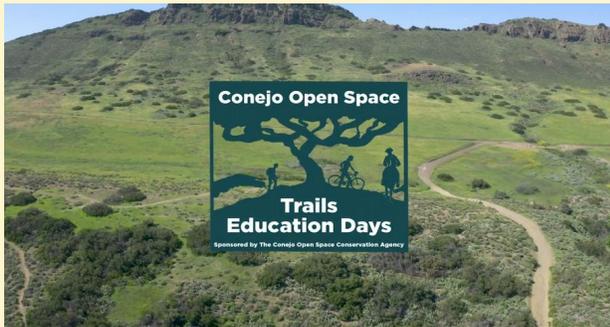
6. Please keep our trails and nearby neighborhoods clean by taking all trash with you. Our visitors and our neighbors deserve better than a pile of trash.

7. Finally, with the 4th of July coming up, it is crucial that no fireworks are used anywhere near open space. It just takes a spark to destroy the majestic beauty of our open space, destroy wildlife habitats, and endanger homes. Please report use of fireworks near open space.

Thank you all for your support during challenging times!

[Donate](#)

[Volunteer](#)



### **Trails Education Days Update**

**By: Elayne Haggan**

Because Trails Education Days was cancelled this year, COSF produced a video to offer CVUSD fourth graders a virtual nature hike. Naturalist "Tracker Rob" Remedi focused on many fourth grade curriculum science concepts as he made his way down the Wildwood Canyon Trail. The video also will be useful in

future years for students who are unable to attend their field trip, and it will be a valuable training tool for new volunteer hike leaders.

Rob Remedi has been selfless with his time as the Trails Education Days lead naturalist through more than two decades. He has played a major role in the program's success and will continue to do so in future years. As always, we thank Rob for his dedication to educating people young and old about the wonders of our natural world.

COSF thanks Ranger Ryan Stead, Park Superintendent Matt Kouba, Head Ranger Bruce Pace and Ranger Nick Ferrari for their help in making the video possible

Most of all, we greatly appreciate Ian Robertson for his skill and vision. Ian created the video from the planning phase to the final credits, and the results speak to his high level of professionalism. Thank you, Ian!

Check out the video here: <https://cosf.org/news/a-video-summary-for-students-who-missed-trails-education-days/>

## Trail Trivia: Lake Eleanor

By: John Kross

COSCA's Lake Eleanor along with the Lake Eleanor Dam (also called Banning Dam) and its surrounding 529 acres of open space has been named City of Thousand Oaks Historical Landmark #9. Although not a major dam, Banning Dam is among the oldest still standing in the state. This artificial lake was first constructed in 1889 and it may be the first concrete arched dam built in California. The dam is 37 feet high, and 140 feet long at its crest. You can see it as you are driving down Decker Canyon or from Lake Eleanor Open Space, accessed from Denver Springs Drive or Highgate Road. (Please note: the actual dam and the surrounding open space area are NOT open to the public). See: <http://conejo-openspace.org/lake-eleanor.html>



### Spotlight on...



**Marcella Ketelhut** is a very active, enthusiastic, and energetic individual. She is one of those special people who seems to "do it all". She is a realtor, attorney, wine maker, and on the advisory board of James Storehouse (anon-profit serving our local foster children), along with our board at the Conejo Open Space Foundation. Marcella is so generous with her time and talent. We are very grateful for her service to our local open space!

**Tell us about yourself (your day job, hobbies, how you spend your spare time). When did you join the COSF board and why?**

So, my day job changes every day—I'm a local attorney and realtor, so my BEST days are spent trying to match a property to a client. I love the challenge of the hunt for just the right

place and I love being a part of people's journeys. I also own a winery, vineyards and orchards, and so I spend a lot of time working the land—we are all organic and sustainable, and I teach about eating in season, cooking, baking, preserving, as well as urban and suburban farming. Additionally, I'm a nonprofit attorney, and work for local youth, foster, environmental, food, senior & police causes. I joined the COSF Board because I wanted help preserve and promote

the jewel that is the Conejo—truly one of the only places in California with this much open space.

### **Why is open space important to you?**

Once land is gone, it's gone. Living in proximity to Los Angeles, that is a given. Open space is an imperative—we can all find a connection, greater perspective, and community and familial bonds on the trails and in the parks. It's crucial to protect it; to promote it, and to steward it wisely.

### **What skills do you bring to COSF and/or the Conejo Open Space?**

I love fundraising. I've been doing development for nonprofits for about 30 years, most of that in the Conejo Valley. I also love planning and executing events, and we are beginning to ramp up our events—speaker series, film series, collaborative partnerships with local businesses and entities—this is my sweet spot.

### **What do you like to do in the open space?**

I hike. I take a million photographs (which is why my hikes are always super long!). I like to sketch and identify new plants each time. My nephew introduced me to geocaching, but I save that for when he comes to visit!

### **What are your hopes for the future of COSF and/or the Conejo Open Space?**

Considering the recent pandemic, I think that the open space has become even more of a treasure to our residents, and, actually, to all of Los Angeles and Ventura County. We recently saw a lot of great and not so great behavior on trails. I would hope to see every resident of Thousand Oaks get involved to some degree with our open space...it's something that belongs to all of us, and why most of us moved here, so with great gifts come great responsibility—each person doing their part adds up very quickly.

### **Any other thoughts or words of wisdom?**

The open space isn't just about hiking or running or biking or horseback riding--it's about making memories. Making connections. Finding a place of solace and peace. Engaging all the senses. Finding some clarity in a world that's sometimes confusing. Creating new and lasting friendships. I truly believe open space is one of the great equalizers—in a divided world, we can leave behind politics and pandemics—we can find a place of agreement and connection in ways you can't always in the office or elsewhere. It's a place to find the core of those who hike or bike or run beside you. And in this wonky world, something like that is rare and precious. So, it's up to all of us to preserve this for the generations. That is our legacy.

### **Social Distancing on Trails**

Thank you to Ezra Dweck who created this video about using the trails in times of social distancing. We appreciated the practical advice and the humor included.



## The Conejo Open Space Challenge is extended to July 31

### 2020 Conejo Open Space Challenge



If you are online, Click on the trail name below to display a map with the trail highlighted:

Conejo Canyons, [Lichen Trail](#)

Conejo Canyons, [Plateau Rim Trail](#)

Dos Vientos, [El Rincon Trail](#)

Dos Vientos, [Sierra Vista Trail](#)

Lake Eleanor OS, [Lake Eleanor Trail](#)

Lang Ranch, [Alapay Trail](#)

Lang Ranch, [Beargrass Trail](#)

Lang Ranch, [Hidden Meadow Trail](#)

Los Robles, [Ceanothus Trail](#)

Los Robles, [Triunfo Canyon Trail](#)

If you are offline, maps are available at [cosf.org/openspace/maps/](http://cosf.org/openspace/maps/) and [cosf.org/trails/other-trails/easy-lake-eleanor-open-space-hike/](http://cosf.org/trails/other-trails/easy-lake-eleanor-open-space-hike/).

**July 31, 2020**

**The 9th Annual Challenge runs March 1 – ~~May 31, 2020~~**

7/31/20

Hike, run, or ride (bike or horse) each trail from 3/1/20 to ~~5/31/20~~. Share your photos via Twitter or Instagram with tag [#coschallenge](#) or email them or a link to a GPS track to [coschallenge@gmail.com](mailto:coschallenge@gmail.com) for validation.

Win prizes donated by our awesome **sponsors** (give them shout-outs with your photos) by completing all 10 trails, which enters you in the raffle. Attend the post-event party (more info to come) to see if you won.

Follow all posted rules, do not hike/run/ride when trails are muddy or closed, and stay safe. This is not a race, so take your time and enjoy the experience.

There is no fee to participate in the Challenge. You can support the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) by making a tax-deductible donation to the Conejo Open Space Foundation (COSF) at [cosf.org/donate](http://cosf.org/donate). COSCA is the agency entrusted with preserving, protecting, and managing the open space resources in the Conejo Valley, including management and maintenance of the trails in this Challenge. For more information about COSCA, visit [conejo-openspace.org](http://conejo-openspace.org) or [facebook.com/ConejoOpenSpace/](https://facebook.com/ConejoOpenSpace/).

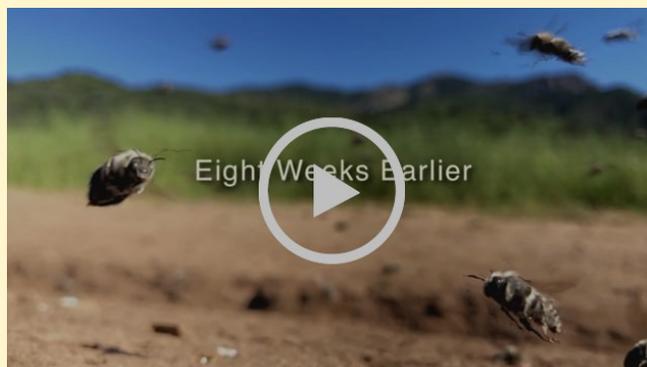
**Our Challenge Sponsors:**



Click [here](#) to see the flyer with working links to the challenge trails! Note the new deadline of July 31, 2020 due to the trail closures in March.

### Ground Bees

Enjoy this short video by James Carey about the ground bees you have probably seen recently around, if you have been on the trails. Mother Nature is always fascinating! 🐝





## **The 101 Freeway Wildlife Crossing By: Elayne Haggan**

COSF will contribute a total of \$10,000 over four years for the future 101 Freeway Wildlife Crossing at Liberty Canyon in Agoura Hills.

Although the crossing will be outside the Conejo Valley, we believe that it is vitally important for our entire region as it will reconnect an ecosystem for all wildlife. The population of cougars in the Santa Monica Mountains has been strained for decades by development and diminishing open space, and many large cats have been killed as they attempted to cross the freeway in search of greater territory. The crossing will minimize those deaths and increase genetic diversity within the species, saving that group of cougars from certain extinction. For more details, visit [lacougars.org](http://lacougars.org).



COSF will make the 2020 donation in memory of Julia Osborn Gourley, our former president and life-long environmentalist. Julie was excited about this project and the benefits it will provide. To add your support, please go to [cosf.org/donate](http://cosf.org/donate), or mail a check to: COSF, P.O. Box 2113, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358.

## **Summer Dog Safety Tips By: Kira Krukowski**

We love spending time with our furry companions, especially on the trails. But please be aware of serious health consequences for your dog if you



PHOTO CREDIT: TASHA SPANGLER

are going out in the heat. As we enter the hottest months of the year, hitting the trail with your pet could have tragic consequences.

Dogs are very sensitive to heat (imagine wearing a fur coat while you are hiking in the summer), and owners sometimes do not realize that their dog is getting overheated. Dogs get dehydrated fast and are more susceptible to heat stroke than humans. Dogs' main sweat glands are on their feet and panting is their way of getting rid of heat. Sometimes the two aren't enough to fight against the heat. In addition, their paws can burn on hot asphalt or hot, rocky terrain. If the ground is too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your dog's paws. If the temperature inside your house is cooler than outside, keep your dog indoors.

If you do take your dog on hikes or walks during hot weather:

- Exercise in the early morning and return before midday.
- Consider your dog's fitness level. Match the trail with his/her endurance in mind.
- Take more water than you think you'll need and a water bowl.
- Take plenty of breaks, preferably in the shade.
- Check your dog's paws regularly to make sure they're not getting burned.
- Watch for signs of dehydration or heatstroke. They can include excessive panting, drooling, vomiting, weakness or bright red gums, refusal to walk further, collapse, shaking, shock and seizures. If your dog suffers any of these symptoms, stop, preferably in the shade, and offer water. Try to cool your dog off by pouring water over them and then take your pet to the nearest vet.

In addition, remember to NEVER leave your dog in a hot car! On an 85 degree day, car temperatures can soar to 120 degrees very quickly.

Dogs look to us to keep them healthy and happy, so please do your part to keep them safe, especially as we head into some of our hotter months.

### **Speaker Series News**

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel or postpone many of our 25th anniversary events, along with our very popular Speaker Series. Thanks to the survey respondents who overwhelmingly supported our offering a virtual talk, we will be having an online presentation on Thursday evening, July 30th by Jessica Sanchez on issues related to the urban-wildlife boundary. More information will be forthcoming soon.



## COSCA Rangers

At the last COSCA Board Meeting on June 24, 2020, COSCA Administrator Brian Stark, had the following remarks for our local rangers: "The COSCA Rangers have done an outstanding job in managing open space, signage, and ensuring visitor safety on COSCA trails. They have been enforcing our closures, and they have been doing all this while still maintaining trails, brushing the weeds back, responding to neighbor issues and concerns... I just couldn't be more proud of the field operations. They've really shown their "can-do" spirit at this time."



Our COSCA Rangers work extremely hard and we are all very grateful for their work as well as their helpfulness and friendliness. The next time you see a COSCA Ranger, tell them how much you appreciate them.

### 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](#)



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.

Follow us on social media



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PHOTO CREDIT: KIRA KRUKOWSKI