



COSF is thrilled to present our first-ever Native Plantpalooza & Eco Fest on October 1 at Conejo Creek North Park. Please join us! See details in story below.

A Few Words from Our President

Welcome to Fall! It's going to be a busy season....

- **Join us for the COSCA Fall Trail Work Day** at Westlake Community Park on Saturday, October 15! We will be repairing trails and cutting back brush to improve the Wishbone Trail. Sign in begins at 7:30 a.m. and works starts at 8:00 a.m. There will be a free lunch provided by COSF at noon for all volunteers and a prize raffle. If you're interested in attending, [please register](#).
- We are thrilled to **welcome new board member Bill Miller**, a long-time resident of Thousand Oaks. Bill manages training and development for internal and retail staff at bicycle manufacturer Giant Group USA, which is headquartered in Newbury Park. Learn more about Bill in "Spotlight," below.

- We were also happy to report that we recently **won a \$1,000 grant from the Coalition for Clean Air** to recognize California Clean Air Day. The money will help fund our inaugural Native Plantpalooza & Eco Fest. Please show your support by taking the [Clean Air Pledge](#) now!

Hope to see you at Plantpalooza, Trail Work Day, and outside enjoying the open space!



President, Conejo Open Space Foundation

We Couldn't Do It Without You

COSCA relies on volunteers to help build and maintain trails, act as extra eyes and ears for the rangers, carry out educational programs and support the open space in many other ways. Please consider volunteering for a program that interests you.

COSF depends on open space supporters for donations that help fund COSCA volunteer programs and so much more. We greatly appreciate your generosity.

Donate

Volunteer



Master gardener Laura Pasetta will speak at Native Plantpalooza & Eco Fest about native California plants with healing properties. She joins 3 other garden experts. (Story is on next page.)

Join Us for Our Free Plantpalooza Fest Oct. 1!

On Saturday, October 1, the Conejo Open Space Foundation will present a free educational event featuring dozens of eco-related exhibitors and fun activities for kids. Native Plantpalooza & Eco Fest will be held rain or shine at the Lakeside Pavilion area in the Conejo Creek North Park in Thousand Oaks from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The first-time festival exhibitors include butterfly experts from Betina's Little Farm and Butterfly Garden, beekeepers from the Los Angeles County Beekeeping Association, noted wildflower painter and author Stacy Ruda Best, the garden clubs of Westlake Village and Conejo Valley, Poison Free Conejo, California Wildlife Center, REI, National Wildlife Federation, Conejo Recreation & Park District, National Park Service, Athens Services, City of Thousand Oaks Sustainability Division, and many more.

Exhibitors will have native plants and other eco-related goodies for sale, as well as plenty of freebies.

In addition, there will be four free 30-minute seminars, starting on the half hour at 9:30 a.m. Presenters will be:

- Laura Pasetta, master gardener and naturalist, Wild Rootz, on Discovering the Wisdom of Native Plants at 9:30 a.m.
- Jenn Rodriguez, horticulture scientist, Growing Works, on How to Attract Bees, Birds, and Butterflies at 10:30 a.m.
- Antonio Sanchez, nursery manager, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Meet Your Native-Plant Neighbors at 11:30 a.m.
- Steve Savage, beekeeper, Los Angeles County Beekeeping Association on To Bee or Not to Bee: The Joys of Backyard Beekeeping at 12:30 p.m.

Attendees who [preregister and donate](#) to support COSF get a small free drought-tolerant plant to take home.

The ribbon-cutting for raptor-pole installations included Poison Free Agoura Director Carolyn Trocino, Annandale II HOA President Jenni Campbell, Agoura Hills Mayor Deborah Klein Lopez, and City Council candidate Jeremy Wolf. (Story is on next page.)



Agoura HOA Conducts Poison-free Study

Carolyn Trocino, the director of [Poison Free Agoura](#) and cofounder of Cities Against Rat Poisons (CARP), shares her experience below about working with an Agoura Hills HOA to go rodenticide-free in their battle against gophers and ground squirrels. The Poison Free groups focus on minimizing the use of rat poison so that it stays out of the wildlife food chain.

In April, **Poison Free Agoura and Annandale II HOA** President Jenni Campbell began a year-long study focused on repelling and deterring gophers and ground squirrels on the HOA's property. We created a plan based on the advice of our project advisor, wildlife biologist Cathy Schoonmaker of the National Park Service.

We are testing repellents that contain castor oil and a blend of castor oil, garlic, and pepper. The process involves breaking up burrows and tunnels and applying the repellents down the holes. We then mark the holes and count them. There is a control site where we don't use anything. In addition, Wilmar Mejia of Tree of Life Rodent Control installed three raptor perches to encourage hawks and owls to perch and hunt rodents at the test sites. Each seasonal study block involves four weeks of treatment. We're excited to start our third block next month.

For the project's launch, we had a fun kick-off party and ribbon-cutting ceremony. Armed with giant scissors, Agoura Hills Mayor Deborah Klein Lopez cut the ribbon between two raptor perches. Poison Free Agoura funds the project with the help of grants from the City of Agoura Hills, Los Angeles Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, and individual donations. We're also grateful for the support of Agoura Hills Councilmember Illece Buckley Weber and the tireless work of volunteers Sally Bartel, Jeremy Wolf, Michelle Woodward, Dana Stangel, and Silvia Berg.

Thanks to efforts of board vice president Michelle Woodward, the **Eagle Ridge HOA** in Thousand Oaks has eliminated the use of rat poison as well. Jenni Campbell, [Poison Free Conejo Valley](#), and Cragoe Pest Services, helped out.

For the last two years I've focused efforts at my own home on repelling and deterring ground squirrels that were burrowing underneath the tack room and wash rack. We break up the burrows and apply a pepper-based product in and around them. With the help of Cathy Schoonmaker, we installed two raptor poles and now have rodent-control assistance from Olivier, the great-horned owl, and Olive, the red-shouldered hawk.

Poison Free Agoura and the poison-free networking group of Cities Against Rat Poisons will continue their efforts to make the world a safe place for people, pets, and pumas! Working together makes us all better!—*Carolyn Trocino*



Supervising park ranger Kory Prindle sits outside the newly refurbished Cameron Center, which now serves as the COSCA rangers' headquarters.

COSCA Rangers Make Move to New HQ

In mid August, the COSCA rangers moved into their new headquarters at the Cameron Center at 288 Greenmeadow Drive in Thousand Oaks. The historic ranch house is surrounded by the Los Robles Greens golf course, but, more important, it is within a block of Los Robles Trail system trailheads and a 10-minute drive from Wildwood Park.

The move began with COSCA staff researching locations and determining that the Cameron Center was an ideal option, given its space for offices, fleet vehicles, tool storage. After negotiations, the City of Thousand Oaks agreed to lease the facility to COSCA

Supervising ranger Kory Prindle says that the rangers did much of the renovation of the property themselves, starting in January: "We did most everything with our own ranger power," he reports, including installing new drywall. And they got a lucky break when Amgen provided free carrells, desks, and ergonomic desk chairs that the company no longer needed.

Having moved from very cramped quarters, the rangers are thrilled now to have a comfortable space. And there's even room for the four new rangers who will be joining COSCA later this year. "I'm happiest about being able to have everyone together," says Prindle.

The surroundings of the building have been spruced up as well and made more fire resistant, with a decomposed granite safety zone around the edge of the wooden structure and native and drought-tolerant plantings and mulch beyond that. Newly planted pollinator-friendly plants and shrubs include narrowleaf milkweed, which was already attracting monarch butterflies when we visited.



Spotlight on...

COSF board member Bill Miller moved to the Conejo Valley in 2008 to join Giant Bicycles in Newbury Park and his wife, Joanie Burns, followed two years later once their house in the Midwest sold. Bill is now a manager on the [Giant Group USA](#) marketing team and has had a lengthy career in the bicycle industry, working around the world in roles that ranged from retail to manufacturing and product innovation.

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Growing up on the front range of Colorado, the outdoors has always been part of my life. Riding horses, stream fishing and skiing at a young age led to falling in love with riding mountain bikes. I have been married to Joanie 22 years and we both enjoy getting out and enjoying where we are. Thousand Oaks is where we work but it has become our home because of the community and open spaces.

When did you join the COSF board and why?

I joined the board in July 2022 and the simple fact is that I want to give back to this amazing community. Having such great access to open space is something that makes this community

unique, especially in such a populated area. We all need to work together to preserve and maintain it and I want to help do what I can.

Why is open space important to you?

I am a regular user of the open spaces, parks, and facilities in the Conejo Valley and surrounding areas. I'm grateful for the access we have and I'd like to see it survive or even grow for future generations. Finding serenity, focus, good times, and making new friends while out in our open spaces is something everyone should be able to experience.

What advice do you have for open space visitors to get the most out of their time there?

Outside of being prepared for the adventure they envision, I'd say take off the headphones, listen to the breeze, see the birds, and enjoy the views. I like to stop now and then just to take it all in and I've not yet found a place that wasn't worth a few moments.

What do you like to do in the open space?

Well, primarily I ride mountain bikes with Joanie, friends, and solo. To me, it's like a great meal; of course it can be enjoyed alone but it's always better with friends and loved ones! Joanie is a big hiker and we like to take the pooch out on the trails as well.



COSF contributed \$6,000 to help fund two water stations that COSCA installed recently at Wildwood Park. The water stations are intended to encourage visitors reduce their use of single-use plastic water bottles.

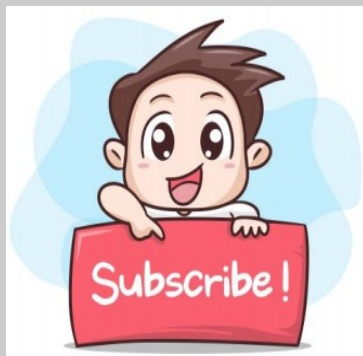
News In Brief

- **Get a \$250 grant through the Conejo Valley Audubon Society (CVAS) to replace your lawn with native plants!** The CVAS Lawns To Habitat Program is offering \$250 grants, plus free landscape design and gardening advice to help you convert your lawn to wildlife-friendly habitat. Reduce water use, save money, beautify your yard, and

provide habitat for birds, pollinators, and other animals. [Apply today!](#)

- There were **two documented mountain-lion sightings in early August, both in Hill Canyon**. The puma in question (most likely the same cat) is not radio collared and thus is not part of the long-running National Park Service study on area mountain lions. Both sightings were daylight encounters and no harm resulted to either the people or the puma.
- **COSF is grateful for multiple donations in Bill Kenney's memory**. The retired microbiologist was an early Amgen employee. His longtime-companion, Evryl Swanson, requested that Bill be remembered with contributions to benefit the open space he enjoyed for many years.
- Congratulations to the winners of our most recent “Where in the Conejo” contests! Our knowledgeable entrants correctly identified the Santa Rosa Trail, a bee-predator-butterfly mash-up, and the Triunfo Canyon Trail in the July, August, and September competitions. This season’s winners of a \$25 gift card are: **Christine Elowitt, Alicia Di Rado, and Maryann Thomas**. If you would like to be added to the “Where” contest email list, go [visit our website](#) and sign up.

Have a comment, correction, story idea or other **input for the newsletter**? Let us know!_Email us at news@cosf.org



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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](#)
- [Bike Bell Box Replenishment](#)
- [Trail Watch Program](#)

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

- [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.

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