



*Securing, protecting and stewarding  
our precious open spaces*

*Spring Newsletter 2017*

## **Disney Conservation Fund Announces AFC Grant Award!**

We're honored and delighted to report that the Disney Conservation Fund just awarded AFC a \$25,000 grant as part of the Fund's focus on reversing the decline of threatened wildlife around the world. The conservation grant recognizes our efforts to protect the threatened mountain lion population in the Los Angeles area through our Hahamonga to Tujunga Wildlife Corridor project.

The Disney Conservation Fund focuses on reversing the decline of wildlife and increasing the time kids spend in nature. Since its start in 1995, DCF has provided \$45 million to support conservation programs in 115 countries.

Our mountain lions travel in good company -- the Fund also made grants in this cycle to help Andean cats in Argentina, cheetahs in Botswana, snow leopards and fishing cats in India, jaguars in Mexico, African lions in Tanzania, lions and leopards in Uganda, cheetahs and lions in Zambia, and more mountain lions near Stinson Beach, California.

AFC's Hahamonga to Tujunga Wildlife Corridor project will link the mountains above Hahamonga Watershed Park in Pasadena to those above Tujunga Canyon by creating a passage for wildlife through the San Rafael Hills and the Verdugo Mountains. We seek to provide safe passage under or over freeways at crucial choke points to prevent vehicle encounters and to help connect isolated genetic pools of animals.

## **AFC Welcomes Back Nancy Steele**

Some of you may remember me from my service from 2000 - 2012 to the cause of land conservation and AFC. I've been away for five years and I am so pleased to be back, albeit in a new capacity.

Perhaps a re-introduction is in order for those of you who don't remember me. In 1996 my family made a small move with big consequences. We had lived in Altadena for twelve years when we moved up the hill about two miles away onto Alzada Rd. Place matters and this place changed my life in ways I couldn't have imagined.

Within a week or two of moving in we saw and heard our first bobcats. What we heard that December day was the loudest cat fight imaginable. For a few minutes I assumed it was two house cats fighting. Then I did a mental double-take (that sound!) and I ran outside and up the hill to see

one bobcat, large and swaggering, walking up the canyon and second, smaller cat, sitting up a large sycamore tree. Was it a mating? That's what I assumed and indeed we saw a mother and kitten that spring.

Fast forward a couple of years and many wildlife sightings later to 1998/99 and a series of neighborhood meetings that resulted in the formation of the Alta dena Foothills Conservancy. Alzada Road was unique in being a private road with a large, 15-ac block of vacant land in the middle. This land, we learned, was owned by developers who had placed it on the market. Looking at a map, we could see that this parcel was the SE corner of a larger block of land already federally owned and part of the Angeles National Forest. I and several other people on the street resolved to buy this land and see it protected.



After several months of educating ourselves and looking for allies throughout Alta dena, we signed the paperwork in 2000. Never imagining what I was getting myself into, I agreed to be the president of the new land trust. I thought I would do this for four or five years, then move on. Instead, AFC took over my life, in a good way. And those 15 acres? They became our first deal. The developers were interested in leaving a legacy and we worked with Trust for Public Land to bring that parcel back into federal ownership as part of the national forest.

You know this organization as the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy, which has been its name since 2009. The story about how and why we changed the name will have to wait for another day. Suffice it to say, once I had led the AFC through the name change (with the fortuitous initials being the same as the old name) and hiring of our first executive director, I felt that my work on the board was done. I resigned as president in 2011 and from the board in 2012.

I have come back to the AFC now, five years later, for many reasons, none of which matter except for this: I believe strongly in the mission and AFC is a healthy organization with capable leadership. And John asked me back, which counts for a lot. I have so much respect for this organization, much of it due to John's leadership, vision, and savvy negotiating skills. Land conservation is more important than ever as we work to preserve our remaining wildlands and I'm excited to be a part of this fine organization, once more.

## Westridge School Visits Rubio Canyon

Over 60 students and teachers from Westridge School volunteered at Rubio Canyon on March 23rd as part of their 7th grade interdisciplinary "Soil Unit." The students, led by AFC Program Administrator, Tim Martinez, pulled invasive grasses and mustard plants along the trail as part of their service project to contribute to the health of a local ecosystem.

The saying that "many hands make light work" was evident as the



Westridge students pull invasives

pulled grasses piled high and the native plants gained room to breathe. The 7th grade science students learned the benefits of mulching, composting, and reducing the soil's seed bank of weeds, all while having fun and singing songs.

Once their hours of service were complete, many did not want to leave! Students and teachers alike commented on the great beauty of Rubio Canyon, and marveled at the results of their work. We would like to thank Westridge School for their tremendous service to the ecosystem of Rubio Canyon. They are welcome anytime!

## Did you know...

Every year AFC publishes an Annual Report with the names of our generous donors for the previous fiscal year, which is July 1 - June 30. This list includes our Foothills Society members; those donors who make a three year pledge to AFC. We will be extending the opportunity to become part of the Foothills Society in May. For those who are not already members, we encourage you to make your pledges before June 30, 2017 to be recognized in this year's Annual Report. We love to publicly thank you for your dedication and continued support of AFC!

## Recent Mountain Lion Sightings



Millard Canyon, September 2016



**Rosemont Preserve, March 2017**

## **Events & Volunteer Opportunities with AFC!**

### **Rosemont Preserve**

#### **Habitat Restoration Days**

**2nd Saturday of every month, 9:00-11:00am**

Join us in removing invasive plants and replacing them with natives.

#### **Open Gate Days**

**1st and 3rd Sunday of every month 9:00-11:00am**

Come visit the Preserve at your leisure, take a stroll. Count the deer and enjoy this beautiful open space in your backyard.

#### **Upcoming Docent-led Tours**

**April 22nd, 9-11am:**

Dana Stangel, Executive Director of Teranga Ranch, will discuss how to coexist with wildlife in the community.

**May 27th, 9-11am:**

Roger Klemm, "Guerrilla Gardener" and native plant expert, will describe the native plants on the Preserve, and how we can include more native plants in our gardens.

**June 24th, 9-11am:**

Join Johanna Turner for an animal tracking tour on the Rosemont Preserve.

**Please RSVP** to RosemontFriends@gmail.com

#### **Special Events**

**April 23rd, 3-5pm: Spring Equinox Celebration.**

Bring the whole family to the Rosemont Preserve for games, treats and tours. This is a great opportunity to have some family fun and enjoy the beauty of the Preserve in Spring!

**May 7th, 3:00-5:00pm: Take it Outside California.**

This event welcomes everyone to come visit the Rosemont Preserve and enjoy the land we



and our partners have preserved. Visit booths of local organizations, go on a scavenger hunt, and join guided tours of the Preserve.

No RSVP necessary for Rosemont Preserve events. Rain cancels.

## **Rubio Canyon**

### **Big Sunday Volunteer Day**

**May 20th, 9-11am:** Join us at Rubio Preserve as we pull weeds and improve the historic trail. Learn to identify the plants of the San Gabriel Mountains and their uses. Meet at the intersection of Rubio Vista Road and Pleasant Ridge Drive in Altadena, CA. The trail begins between the two houses (1351 and 1342) on the corner.

### **Guided Hike**

**June 3rd, 9-11am:** Join us for a guided hike through Rubio Canyon. Docent TBA. Meet at the intersection of Rubio Vista Road and Pleasant Ridge Drive, Altadena, CA.

## **Old Marengo Park**

### **Old Marengo Gardening Day**

**April 15th, 9am-11am:** Join us as we beautify Old Marengo Park! Help neighbors and friends bring nature back into the city. Old Marengo Park is located at the intersection of Marengo Ave and Woodbury Rd in Altadena, CA.

### **Old Marengo Gardening Day**

**May 6th, 9-11am**

### **Old Marengo Gardening Day**

**June 17th, 9-11am**

## **Cottonwood Canyon**

### **Guided Meditation**

**April 9th and April 23rd, 2-4pm:** Join Dr. Ling O'Connor for a guided meditation focusing on movement, chanting, and breath. Connect with nature beneath the serene oak canopy of Cottonwood Canyon. Bring a yoga mat! Cottonwood Canyon is located between 1950 - 2010 Linda Vista Ave, Pasadena 91103.

If you would like to volunteer with AFC [click here](#).




## **Legacies & Bequests**

You can create a legacy that commemorates your commitment to AFC's mission. By making a gift through your estate or naming AFC as a beneficiary of your retirement or insurance plan, you will ensure that our

work of protecting the land and the wildlife on it will continue. If you would like to learn more, please contact us at 626.796.0782.

**Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy**  
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