

Nikita & the Lonely Hearts Club by Melody Malmberg



On a hot August night the tawny and sinuous puma we call Nikita, poetry in motion, glides by our cameras. It's part of her routine as she looks for food, water, shelter, and her mate. At midnight, the temperature is a sweltering 80 degrees, and she is panting to keep cool.

The very next day the massive La Tuna Verdugo fire breaks out, eventually burning 7,194 acres - almost half of Nikita's home range. About two weeks later, the cameras capture Nikita lying down, calling disconsolately, perhaps for her mate, P-41. They have produced three litters of cubs in the past; none survive here, victims of inbreeding, or freeways, or other hazards. Still Nikita comes back night after night, always calling for her mate.

But P-41 will never come to Nikita again. In October, a park service biologist confirmed that P-41 was found dead on the edge of the Verdugo Mountains, near Shadow Hills - probably trying to find an escape route to the Angeles Forest.

Now Nikita is trapped, without a mate, in her burned-over range, hemmed in by the 210 Freeway to the north and to the west where the spine of the range narrows. To the east, the 2 Freeway cuts off her escape route to the San Rafaels, the Arroyo Seco and the San Gabriels beyond.

How can we help Nikita survive, thrive and give birth to robust cubs with a fighting chance of survival? By establishing the 20-mile Hahamongna to Tujunga Wildlife Corridor. Securing passageways and linking corridors among the Verdugos, the San Rafaels, Griffith Park and the San Gabriels will create a natural conduit for animals to move, to mix and to mate. AFC's strategies include not just land acquisition but education, ultimately creating a network that links physical space with passionate nature lovers and conservation advocates.

If we are successful, Nikita - and new mates for her, and their offspring - will be able to move safely among these connected areas, living the lives they were meant to live. We must ensure the health of pumas, themselves essential to a healthy ecosystem.

Help love find a way, [click here](#) to support AFC's goal to establish the Hahamongna to Tujunga Wildlife Corridor.

Small Ripples Become Big Waves

Sometimes, small ripples grow into big waves. This is such a story.

John Babcock first learned about AFC when he came to our Rubio Canyon property with a group of Pasadena Polytechnic School alumni to remove invasive plants. Lyle Hatridge was teaching science at Poly and bringing small groups of seventh graders to Rubio Canyon to make scientific observations. Years before, Lyle had worked under Mike (Alexander) Babcock, who was headmaster of Poly. Also, John is Mike's nephew.

Mike was managing an 11-acre natural property in the Linda Vista area of Pasadena for its owners, who include the great grandchildren of Robert A. Millikan, Nobel Prize winner and founder of CalTech. Mike happened to mention to both John and Lyle that the Millikan family was getting ready to sell the property. Since John and Lyle both knew of AFC's mission through their visits to Rubio Canyon, they both urged Mike to call AFC. He did.



"It only took three of us!" John Babcock (on left)

The next day Mike took AFC Advisor Mickey Long and CEO John Howell to visit the property. They were intrigued by its potential. By that evening the whole Millikan crew shared our excitement and wanted the land preserved in its natural splendor. Those eleven acres are our prized Cottonwood Canyon property that we will own shortly.

Once we had been introduced to Cottonwood Canyon we realized that a potential wildlife corridor runs smack dab through it. Cottonwood Canyon can help to connect the San Gabriel Mountains at Hahamongna Watershed Park to the San Gabriels at Big Tujunga Wash. It could bring to life 2,400 acres of habitat in the San Rafaels and 11,000 acres in the Verdugos by connecting them with the 700,000-acre Angeles National Forest. Wildlife could then live in these urban hills with ready access to others of their species in the

abundant range of the San Gabriels, assuring genetic diversity.

Without the initiative shown by John Babcock and Lyle Hatridge, Cottonwood Canyon might well have been listed and fought over by developers. The Hahamongna to Tujunga Wildlife Corridor, as we call it, might never have seen the light of day. Because of their efforts, our Hahamongna to Tujunga Wildlife Corridor project is now in full swing.

AFC gives its heartfelt thanks to John and Lyle. They started a ripple that has been gaining momentum and size to carry AFC forward on a momentous journey.

My Experience as an AFC Intern

by Liz Pliego



Interns Roshni (left) and Liz table at Longfellow Elementary

I became an intern with Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy (AFC) last fall, 2017. As an environmentalist I was intrigued with AFC's mission and enthusiastic to learn about "camera trapping". I was specifically curious to discover what's out there. What I discovered is that AFC is composed of wonderful people that are knowledgeable in different fields.

As an intern I learned how to set up motion sensing cameras. The tricky part is finding where the animals go but that is what also makes the experience fun. We've noticed that most animals like to take the easy path and will take a trail just like we do. A typical day consists of hiking in the beautiful mountains around Altadena and checking

cameras deployed to document the wildlife on AFC properties. The most exciting part of this internship is looking at the footage. We've captured images of mountain lions, raccoons, bears, bobcats, squirrels, opossums, deer, coyotes and much more.

I assure you hiking will never be the same once you see what's out there. Just because you can't see them doesn't mean they don't see you!

Did you know...

you can generate donations to AFC while you shop? If you shop with Amazon, we are excited to tell you about a new AmazonSmile promotion. Amazon is tripling the donation amount to 1.5% when customers make their FIRST eligible smile.amazon.com purchase from March 12 - 31.

Go to smile.amazon.com and select AFC from their menu as your charitable organization of choice one time, and Amazon will donate a small percentage of all future eligible purchases to AFC. You will automatically generate cash for us from Amazon with no additional cost to you. All things work together. Thanks for thinking of us this way, too!

Native Plant Garden at Cleveland Elementary



Part of AFC's mission is to spread conservation education in each community we serve. For our Program Administrator, that means developing relationships with local schools and providing outdoor education that inspires the next generation of conservationists.

While not always possible to bring classrooms of students up into the foothills, we can bring a piece of the foothills down to them! To accomplish this AFC helped install a native plant garden at Cleveland STEAM Elementary School in Pasadena. Dedicated on Earth Day 2016, the garden serves as a living laboratory; a piece of local native habitat available on campus for

demonstration and education.

Last month, we returned to Cleveland to educate Olivia Tu's 4th grade class about the habitat value and ethnobotany of the coastal sage scrub garden on their very own campus. The plants were lush and blooming, and the students were excited to be outdoors and gained a new appreciation for their own ability to change the landscape for the better.



Wildlife Spotlight



Every wonder how big those "big cats" really are? Check out this side by side comparison done by AFC partner photographer Johanna Turner!

Events & Volunteer Opportunities with AFC!

Rosemont Preserve

Habitat Restoration Days

2nd Saturday of every month,
9am-11am

Join us in removing invasive plants and replacing them with natives plants along with some light trail work.

Open Gate Days

1st Sunday of every month, 9am-11am
Come visit the Preserve at your leisure, take a stroll...Count the deer and enjoy this beautiful open space in your backyard.



Fire and Flood Resilience of Native Plants with Cassy Aoyagi

Saturday, March 24, 9am-11am

Join FormLA Landscaping President, Cassy Aoyagi, for a tour of the Preserve focused on fire and flood resilience and how native plants can make a difference in protecting your home.

Spring Equinox Celebration at the Rosemont Preserve

Sunday, April 15, 3-5pm

Bring the whole family for hands on games, art projects and learning about native plants, animals, and local Native American heritage at the Preserve. We will also offer a scavenger hunt and docent-led walks!

Teranga Ranch Visits the Preserve with Dana Stangel

Saturday, April 28, 9am-11am

Join Wildlife Educator Dana Stangel of Teranga Ranch as we learn more about our coyote neighbors. Dana is a credentialed Biology teacher and an urban wildlife specialist. She has been working with both domesticated animals and wildlife for over 20 years.

We'll explore natural history of the urban coyote and we'll talk about the current situation regarding coyotes, pets and backyards. We'll also demonstrate various humane hazing techniques and we'll have some backyard wildlife deterrents on hand for show and tell.

Join "Guerilla Gardener" Roger Klemm to Learn How to Include Native Plants in Your Garden

Saturday, May 26, 9am-11am

Take a tour of the Preserve with the "Guerilla Gardener" Roger Klemm. Roger is a native plant expert, passionate about restoring native habitat one garden at a time! Roger will describe the native plants at the Preserve and tell us all how to include more native plants in our own gardens

Native American Healing Tour at the Preserve with Dr. Jim Adams

Saturday, June 23, 9am-11am

Discover nature's medicine cabinet right in your own backyard and enjoy a leisurely morning stroll. Join us for a tour led by Dr. Jim Adams, Associate Professor of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences at USC. Dr. Adams studied healing with Chumash medicine woman Cecilia Garcia, and is an expert on herbal remedies, antioxidants and human drug metabolism. He is the co-author of *Healing with Medicinal Plants of the West*.

The Rosemont Preserve is located at the top of Rosemont Avenue in La Crescenta ([Map](#)). Parking is limited so please park at Two Strike Park, 2 blocks south of the Preserve.

[Rubio Canyon](#)

Guided Hike with Edward Parker

Sat, April 7, 9am-11am

Join Outward Bound Adventures Field Instructor Edward Parker for a guided hike through Rubio Preserve. Learn the skills of wilderness first aid, map and compass navigation, and how to follow Leave No Trace outdoor ethics promoting conservation in the outdoors. ([Map](#))

Earth Day Native Planting

Sun, April 22, 9:30am-11:30am

Join Altadena Girl Scout Troop 8861 as they put some native plants into the ground this Earth Day! Help water the plants, spread some mulch, and pull invasive weeds along the trail. Restore the habitat of Rubio Canyon for birds, pollinators, wildlife, and future generations. ([Map](#))

City Nature Challenge!

Sat, April 28, 9:30am-11:30am

Over 60 cities will be competing to see who can make the most observations of nature, find the most species, and engage the most people in the worldwide 2018 City Nature Challenge. Take photos of the plants, insects and wildlife you see in Rubio Canyon, then upload your observations to iNaturalist so you can help us document Altadena nature. ([Map](#))

Guided Hike with Tim Martinez

Sat, May 5, 9am-11am

Join AFC Program Administrator Tim Martinez for a hike through Rubio Canyon! Learn plant uses, history, and survival skills of the San Gabriel Mountains. ([Map](#))

Bird LA Day

Sat, May 12, 8am-10am

Bird LA Day celebrates the birds of Southern California and LA's amazing biodiversity. Join our knowledgeable docents for an early morning bird walk through Rubio Preserve - home to a dazzling array of local birds and migratory guests. ([Map](#))

Big Sunday Volunteer Day

Sun, May 20, 9am-11am, 1101 E Loma Alta Dr, Altadena 91001

Volunteers are needed to help restore habitat and reduce fire risk by clearing invasive plants. Please wear pants and long sleeves, and bring water!

[Old Marengo Park](#)

Gardening Morning

Saturday, March 31, 9am-11am

Come help spread mulch to keep the weeds down at Old Marengo Park, located at the intersection of Marengo Ave and Woodbury Rd in Altadena, CA. ([Map](#))

Gardening Morning

Saturday, April 21, 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.

[Cottonwood Canyon](#)

Guided Meditation

Sunday, April 15, 2pm-3pm

Join Dr. Ling O'Connor for a guided meditation focusing on movement and breath. Connect with nature beneath the beautiful and serene oak canopy of Cottonwood Canyon. Please bring a yoga mat!

Cottonwood Canyon is located between 1950 - 2010 Linda Vista Ave, Pasadena 91103. Look for the red chinese lantern at the fenced entrance across the street.

All Saints Church Earth Day

Sunday, April 22, 10am-12:30pm

Visit our table at the All Saints Episcopal Church Earth Day in Pasadena! Speak with AFC interns about the work they have been doing to track and photograph local wildlife. ([Map](#))

Mountain Lions and More: Discovering Wildlife in Los Angeles

Saturday, June 9, 10am-11:30am, [Descanso Gardens](#)

Join wildlife photographer Johanna Turner ([cougarmagic.com](#)) and Tim Martinez from the Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy to learn about their work understanding and protecting the wildlife around us. Free with admission. No registration required.

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.

AFC at Descanso Gardens!

Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy has been invited to play a major role in an upcoming exhibition at Descanso Gardens.

The exhibition, *Growing Habitat: LA's Wildlife and Descanso*, will open in May at the Sturt Haaga Gallery, at Descanso. It will explore the diverse wildlife that co-exists with humans, both in the Verdugo Mountains and beyond in greater Los Angeles, and the importance of Descanso Gardens as wildlife habitat.

"The exhibition is a natural fit for Descanso. Visitors are captivated not only by the diversity of plant collections, but also by the wildlife they encounter here," said Emi Yoshimura, Descanso Director of Education who is curating the exhibition. "The exhibit is

building on people's interest in the animals and the importance of all the things living here together. It's a fuller picture of all the things that make a healthy ecosystem. You can't divorce the wildlife from the Gardens."

AFC will be featured in the "Habitat Heroes" section of the exhibit, which looks at local institutions, nonprofits, and scientists who are conducting research about and advocating for the native plants and animals of the Los Angeles region."

"While some people may see wildlife as a nuisance - or frightening (think mountain lions) - the presence of these wild animals make for a healthier environment, said Barbara Goto, AFC's Director of Operations. "There's a balance in nature. Even those often-vilified coyotes serve an important role by keeping down the rodent population."

The exhibit will be open daily from May 22 through Aug. 19 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. at The Sturt Haaga Gallery. Descanso Gardens is located at 1418 Descanso Dr, La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011. It is near the junction of Interstate 210 and CA Route 2, and accessible using the Angeles Crest Highway exit from I-210. More information about Descanso Gardens is available at <https://www.descansogardens.org>

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