



*Celebrating*  
**50 YEARS**  
*of*  
**EARTH  
DAY**

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**APRIL 22, 1970**  
*to*  
**APRIL 22, 2020**

## Happy Earth Day!

For the first time in 50 years, nearly all of us are celebrating Earth Day at home instead of in the great outdoors. By staying at home we are all doing our part, and it seems to be making a difference in California.

So in honor of Earth Day, we're publishing a special longer edition of our monthly newsletter, including updates on our conservation work, some good news for wildlife, and the latest on some of our new projects.

## AFC APRIL NEWSLETTER

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Land acquisitions continue + AFC's remote operations
- California cougars gain new protected status
- AFC launches virtual field trip program

- Celebrate Earth Day from home
- Keep your eyes open and your camera ready!
- CARES Act includes new provision for charitable donations



## AFC CONTINUES REMOTE OPERATIONS & LAND ACQUISITIONS

**AFC is continuing its operations undaunted - although certainly adjusted in light of our current situation!**

**HERE ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Since all 50 field trips that were on the books cancelled, we are instead creating a **virtual field trip** for use at home and, when school starts up again, in the classroom (more on this below!).
- We just submitted an application to acquire another **tax sale parcel** and are evaluating others.
- We continue to pursue other **acquisition opportunities**.
- Our **Descanso exhibit** slated for this summer will be rescheduled and we are continuing our preparations.
- We are **developing strategic partnerships** with other local scientific and

research institutions to further our reach and impact in conservation, including the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens; Caltech; SeedLA; and the Carnegie Observatories.

- We are **focusing on the most promising wildlife crossings by generating drone video** for Tony Clevenger, a biologist specializing in wildlife bridges, underpasses and other devices, to advise remotely on the most practical means for wildlife to surmount barriers. He is one of the experts who has led work in Canada, including the famous Banff wildlife bridge (*pictured below*).

LEARN MORE ABOUT WILDLIFE BRIDGES



**GREAT NEWS FOR CALIFORNIA COUGARS**



## **California mountain lions now have Endangered Species Act protections thanks to a proposal endorsed by AFC and other conservation groups**

**ADAPTED FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS:**

California wildlife regulators voted Thursday, April 16th, to move forward on a proposal to give state Endangered Species Act protections to certain mountain lion populations that have become vulnerable because of development and other human activities.

This is great news for AFC, as our entire conservation area, as well as the mountain lions we regularly see on AFC properties, like Nikita and P-22, are all covered by this new status.

The state Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously in favor of a petition to start a one-year review to determine whether six lion populations in Southern California and on the Central Coast should be formally protected. The act's protections apply during the study period.

Currently, California's mountain lions are not considered threatened or endangered. They are legally classified as a "specially protected species" under a voter-approved 1990 ballot measure that makes it illegal to hunt the big cats, according to the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The killing of mountain lions is only allowed when a depredation permit is

issued to target a specific cougar that has been killing livestock or pets, to preserve public safety or to keep protected bighorn sheep safe.

The proposal to include the six puma populations in the Endangered Species Act was made last year in a petition by the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity. Tiffany Yap, a biologist at the center and primary author of the petition, called the vote “a historic moment for California’s big cats.”

The center points to research showing the populations are threatened because of genetic isolation caused by roads and sprawling development that impedes movement as well as low survival rates due to being struck by vehicles, poisonings and sanctioned depredations.

According to the center, researchers believe mountain lion populations in the Santa Ana and Santa Monica mountains could become extinct within 50 years without protection, and there are similar concerns for pumas in the Santa Cruz, San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains.

*For more on the benefits of this new status, see this editorial from the LA Times endorsing the proposal:*

READ THE LA TIMES EDITORIAL



## AFC LAUNCHES VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP PROGRAM



## Social distancing? "No problem!" say AFC educators

AFC's free field trip system has always been a great way to introduce students to

wildlife and natural open spaces, and to instill some of the core principles of conservation. These field trips provide an interactive experience that allows students to engage with nature firsthand, and to understand the unique qualities of our biodiverse habitats. At the beginning of 2020, AFC had 50 field trips scheduled for the remainder of the school year. Sadly, all 50 had to be cancelled.

Determined to keep educating, and to help both teachers and parents who are home-schooling, AFC Land & Program Administrator Tim Martinez came up with the idea of providing "virtual field trips" for AFC properties. Recognizing a great idea when we hear it, we jumped into action! With support from our grantors, teachers, and volunteers, we've adapted our 3rd grade Native Plant as well as our 6th grade Earth Science curricula. **Filming is underway, and content will be live and online soon.** Plans are in place to expand to other grade levels, and to include a Wildlife Corridors curriculum that will be one of the first of its kind.



CHECK OUT A SAMPLE OF AFC'S VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP



**EARTH DAY 2020**



## 24 HOURS OF ACTION

### Here's how to take some Earth Day action from home

As we mark the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, we remember that every day is Earth Day. And so, Earth Day Live is presenting 24 hours of actions - 24 different things that you can do to help the planet right now, from your own home.

From measuring air quality to harnessing your artistic creativity to cleaning up plastic, this list is sure to inspire at least one action you can take as we celebrate #EarthDayAtHome.

DISCOVER 24 HOURS OF ACTION IN HONOR OF EARTH DAY



## HELP US DOCUMENT WILDLIFE

### Calling backyard conservationists!



We've already heard stories of more wildlife visible now that traffic is down - maybe you've noticed it yourself!

We look forward to what our cameras will show - and yours - during this unique time. Keep your eyes open for plants, animals, birds, and other species you see in and around your yard; if you have a chance, capture

them on film!

If you have images to share, send them to us at [arroyosfoothills@gmail.com](mailto:arroyosfoothills@gmail.com), or share them on Facebook or Instagram and tag us (@ArroyosFoothills). We'll share and repost as many as we can!

# CARES ACT INCLUDES SPECIAL CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION DEDUCTION FOR TAXPAYERS

## Special provision for charitable giving in recent legislation benefits nonprofits

Congress passed, and the President signed, the \$2 trillion CARES Act. As you've probably seen, it's intended to help modest wage earners, businesses and nonprofits through these difficult times, by supplementing unemployment insurance, providing direct payments to individuals, and sending much needed money to hospitals and healthcare systems.



As soon as it became available, AFC submitted an application for support under the terms of the CARES Act, and that application was approved last week.

What you might not have seen is that **the bill also includes an above-the-line deduction that applies to all taxpayers for charitable contributions up to \$300** (Title II, Section 2204). The CARES Act temporarily creates something nonprofits have long sought: a “universal charitable deduction,” also known as an “above-the-line” deduction for donations. That means taxpayers can easily claim the deduction on their tax forms without having to go through the extra step of itemizing it. (Other above-the-line deductions include student-loan interest and retirement-plan contributions, for example.)

This is great news for many nonprofits in these challenging times. Congress knows that donations to nonprofits will slip and wants to help make up for it.

[CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT AFC DIRECTLY](#)



**THANK YOU, AND STAY SAFE!**



From all of us at AFC, we wish you a happy Earth Day and hope you can take a moment to go out into your backyard or take a socially-distanced walk around the neighborhood. And if your neighborhood is anything like ours, you'll see that plants and wildlife everywhere are celebrating the joy of spring - like these bluebells from the Rosemont Preserve.

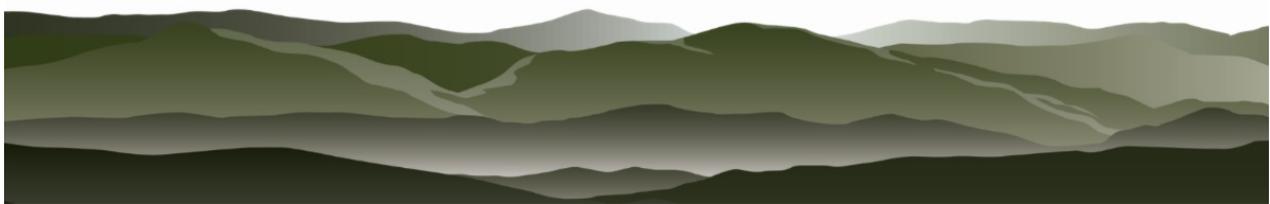
Take heart in their celebration of the continuity of life, and know that we will all get through this together.

Until next time,

*The Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy*



*Securing, protecting, & stewarding our precious open spaces.*



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