

Spring has Sprung!

Thank you for being a supporter of our local open space. We hope you will find this newsletter informative, interesting, and helpful, and we welcome article ideas, submissions, photos, and queries from all of our readers. You can contact us with your comments here: newsletter@cosf.org.

Rainbow photo credit: Elayne Haggan



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[Volunteer](#)



Spring Trail Work Day

Want to volunteer to help build a new trail? COSCA's 2018 Spring Trail Work Day will be on Saturday June 16th. We'll be building a new trail connecting the Westlake Village Park & YMCA with the Bowfield and Saddle Pass trails. Approximately 1.2 miles of new trail will be built by volunteers, rangers, and trail team leaders. Food and fun will follow!

Interested? Meet at 31107 TO Blvd at 7:30 am. We hope to see you!

Trails Education Days 2018

Trails Education Days 2018 brought more than 1,100 CVUSD 4th grade students, 45 teachers, and about 100 parents to Wildwood Park during the last week in April. The weather was ideal, and the 27th annual program was a great success!

COSCA, NPS, and MRCA rangers demonstrated tools they rely on to do their jobs involving trail building and maintenance, fire suppression, and search and rescue operations. Animal Actors of Hollywood displayed and described their turkey vulture, great horned owl, opossum, squirrels, and porcupine to the students. Mark Langton and his band of mountain bikers, equestrians, and hikers with dogs enacted a skit to impart safety and courtesy lessons: They demonstrated what NOT to do on the trails, and the students enjoyed telling them what they did wrong. New and loyal long-term volunteers led the nature hikes, took part in the workshops, and helped with coordination. Some volunteers participated all five days, and others filled more than one role on different days. The Foundation raises funds to pay for this and other Conejo Open Space programs. Trails Education Days could not exist without an army of dedicated volunteers. If you are interested in participating next year, please visit <https://cosf.org/events/trails-education-days/>.



Come Hike with Us!

Are you looking for a hiking companion or hiking group? Are you looking to explore a new trail? If so, you should know that CRPD sponsors a monthly Open Space Appreciation Hike. These hikes are free, with no pre-registration required (just show up!), and they are intended to introduce beginner and intermediate hikers to 12 different trails per year. The hikes are held the second Saturday or second Sunday of each month, and they are (very safely) led by a team

of 4 hike leaders. So far this year, we've had groups of 20 to 30 hikers for each trek, so you'll have lots of people to talk with along the way!

The CRPD Open Space Appreciation Hikes are advertised in The Acorn, on the CRPD website, and on COSF's events calendar: <http://cosf.org/events/> . The June hike will be a 5-miler in Conejo Canyons / Western Plateau, and is described here:

<http://cosf.org/trails/conejo-canyons/conejo-canyons-moderate-hike-western-plateau-loop-from-conejo-center-dr/>

Hikers should be sure they can hike the posted distance, and everyone should come with closed-toe shoes or boots, plenty of water, sunscreen, a hat, and a snack. A responsible adult

must accompany hikers under 18. Rain or fire cancels. Questions? Contact the hike leaders via: newsletter@cosf.org

Trail Trivia: Trash or Treasure?
Written By: John Kross

The Rancho Potrero Open Space is located in Newbury Park off of Lynn Road, just east of the intersection with Rancho Dos Vientos. There are a number of trails in this open space:

Grasshopper, Palomino, Lupine, and on the west end is the Olympia Farms trail. The latter is named after the farm that once stood where today there are piles of old building materials that at first sight look like construction debris. However, you may be surprised to know that they are actually a Ventura County historical point of interest, designated as such in May of 1986. Hopefully in the near future a more appropriate space can be found to display these materials, but until that day comes they will remain as a reminder of a not so distant past.



Spotlight on...

Who: Brian Stark, COSF board member, COSF Secretary.

Day job: Executive Director, Ojai Valley Land Conservancy - I've worked in the land conservation field for 24 years, starting as a volunteer with the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County. In short time I joined the staff and stayed for 16 years; eventually serving five years as Executive Director. I've been with the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy since 2010.

Why is open space important to you? I can't really remember a time when I didn't feel something special in the outdoors. I grew up in a family that camped when we traveled, and I was what they now call a 'free range child' Just be home by dinnertime. I grew up in Santa Monica, but spent many summers of my youth on the family cattle ranch in northwest Nebraska. The chore load was light, so I'd head out exploring with my brother and sister, fish for trout in the creek, and scramble the sandstone bluffs with paleontology students from the university looking for dinosaur bones. I discovered backpacking in the Scouts and that was all she wrote. Land is more than dirt, plants, and rocks. All wild places are special because people have created stories and memories there. They are part of our culture, and when our stories are all combined, they define our community. Yes, open space is important.

What skills do you bring to COSF and/or Conejo Valley open space? I wanted to serve my local community and was fortunate to come across the Conejo Open Space Foundation. Having worked in the non-profit sector for my entire career, I wanted to bring some of these

skills to my new town. I'm interested in helping with fundraising and ensuring that the Foundation will always be here to support our open spaces.

What do you like to do in open space? I'm mostly a hiker these days but occasionally break out the old mountain bike. I am a plant nerd and enjoy seeking out wildflowers and native bloomers throughout the year. I'm pretty good with my native plants, but I still get surprised around here now and then. I also enjoy getting out to the more remote areas.

Where's your favorite place in to be in Conejo open space? I have a lot of regular trails I enjoy, but keep heading out to the Oakbrook Vista trail to get on top of Simi Peak. Recently I've been spending time out in the Dos Vientos trails. The flowers last longer there and if you time it right you can have the trails to yourself.

What are your hopes for the future of COSF and/or Conejo Valley open space? COSF is an important group because our community needs to look after our open spaces and make sure they serve future generations the way they do now. Over time, all communities are faced with challenges and changes in community values. One value we can't afford to change is our caring for the outdoor places that bring us wild experiences, solitude, stress relief, places to exercise our bodies and minds, and places to share a sunset. These are the places that bring us life, and there always has to be a group that will champion these places. My lasting hope is that our community will build a long-term endowment to always preserve our open spaces, and the Foundation is a great option to do that.

Any other thoughts or words of wisdom? I hope someday that everyone who uses a local open space area will contribute somehow to the longevity and care of these places. In the long run, it will always take more than our tax dollars to ensure a future where everyone has an opportunity form a relationship with the land. A great place to start is by supporting the Conejo Open Space Foundation.

COSCA, COSF, COSTAC . . . Alphabet Soup?

We know there is sometimes confusion about these three entities. Here's a brief summary.

COSCA (Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency)

- Government oversight of open space
- Owns, acquires, manages, maintains, and preserves open space
- 2 City Council members, 2 Conejo Recreation & Park District board members, and 1 public citizen make up the COSCA Board of Directors



COSTAC (Conejo Open Space Trails Advisory Committee)

- Citizen input and involvement
- 11 volunteer community members: hikers, trail runners, equestrians, and mountain bicyclists. Appointed by COSCA
- Advises COSCA on trails and open space issues
- Coordinates the COSCA Volunteer Corps

COSF (Conejo Open Space Foundation)

- Charitable and educational foundation
- 501 (c)(3) non-profit
- 11 volunteer board members
- No paid staff
- Raises funds and accepts donations to support Conejo Valley open space and trails programs and projects

If you wish to donate to the Conejo open space, COSF is the tax-deductible channel for you to do so.

What Are The Volunteer Programs and What's Involved?

Trail Watch EASY

- Volunteer hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians file quick online reports to let rangers know trail conditions and activity
- Act as additional eyes and ears for rangers
- Provide directions, maps, and information
- Agree to volunteer at least once per month

Adopt-a- Trail EASY

- Volunteers (individuals, organizations or groups) visit a specific trail frequently, report any issues to rangers, and do minor maintenance
- Agree to volunteer at least 8 times/year



Trail Patrol EASY

- Volunteers hike or ride Conejo trails in uniform with ID badges, communication devices and first aid packs
- Provide added safety for trails users
- Requires certification, set up by COSTAC
- Agree to patrol at least 4 hours/month

Trails Education Days EASY TO HARD

- 'Crash Course' in environmental education for Conejo Valley Unified School District fourth graders
- Involves 80 - 90 volunteers and 1,100 to 1,400 students over five days every April
- Volunteers lead nature hikes, participate in trail safety workshops, and help with planning and coordination
- Time commitments vary from a few hours to a full week each year

Resource Management EASY TO HARD

- Volunteers remove invasive non-native plants
- Replant plant native species
- Turn native plant seeds, planting soil, clay, and water into 'seed balls'
- Spread seed balls to in open space areas

Trail Work Days HARD - But Fun!

- Volunteers build new trails and do maintenance on existing trails at annual spring and fall events
- COSCA rangers schedule smaller projects as needed throughout the year

If you wish to volunteer for any of these programs, please go to:

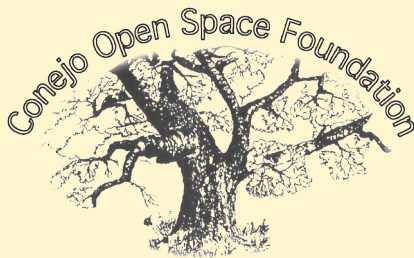
www.cosf.org/volunteer or www.cosf.org/contact-us

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.

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