New Trails Adopted

Two of Ojai’s favorite trails and trailheads will now be getting the love they deserve. The OVLC recently adopted the Pratt Trailhead and the Pratt Trail up to the Foothill Trail, and the Gridley Trailhead and the Gridley Trail up to Fuelbreak Road Trail. This is in addition to previously adopted sections of the Foothill Trail which provide access to the OVLC’s Valley View Preserve above Shelf Road.

Maintenance of these Los Padres National Forest trails and trailheads will now be coordinated by the OVLC and undertaken by the conservancy’s volunteer trail crew; the same group that keeps the OVLC trails in prime condition year-round. This is all possible because of the OVLC’s participation in the U.S. Forest Service Adopt-A-Trail program, which engages local individuals and organizations to help maintain trails and trailheads.

Federal funding for trail maintenance has declined over many years. The Adopt-a-Trail program helps stretch federal budgets and encourages local communities to get involved in the care of outdoor areas. The OVLC has a long-standing partnership with the Forest Service and they have cooperated on numerous projects over the years.

“There has been a significant improvement since OVLC has adopted the trail segments and associated trailheads, including new signs, trail maintenance, and trash clean up.

We have a great partnership that increases our capacity to serve the public,” said Diane Cross, Assistant Recreation Officer, Ojai Ranger District.

Ojai is a frequent destination for outdoor travelers, and our local trail systems are one of the region’s biggest draws. They are also part of what makes the Ojai Valley a special place to live. These newly adopted trails and trailheads were selected for their importance in connecting local hikers to the trails on the OVLC’s existing preserves, as well as providing connections to the Ojai backcountry trails. It also brings the total length of OVLC-managed trails to 27 miles.

“The Los Padres National Forest offers so much to our community in terms of access to unique and wild places. Sharing our experience in volunteer management, trail construction, and trail maintenance ensures that our community will continue to benefit from these resources,” said Rick Bisaccia, the OVLC’s Stewardship Director.

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OVLC Welcomes to the Board

The OVLC welcomes Bret Bradigan and Wyatt Harris to our Board of Directors. The OVLC is governed by an all-volunteer board. Read more about our board members at ovlc.org.

Recent Local Grant Projects

The OVLC was recently awarded a Rotary Club of Ojai grant to collaborate with Nordhoff High School’s 2017/18 9th grade science class. Under the guidance of OVLC nursery manager Ron Singer and 9th grade science teacher Greg Lepine, the Ojai Meadows Preserve will serve as a living laboratory for the students to learn all about California native plants and their pivotal role in our local ecosystem. By learning about the role a land conservancy plays in a semi-rural community like Ojai, students will be better equipped to move freely.

REI also recently awarded the OVLC a grant to help cover the costs of stewardship and trail maintenance on the Ventura River Preserve. The Ventura River Preserve, our largest preserve, has 1,583 acres and over 20 miles of trails. Together, the Stewardship Director, the OVLC field crew, and our volunteers keep the preserve and the trails in impeccable condition for the hundreds of hikers, mountain bikers, children, and equestrians that use the preserve each day. This REI grant will help us uphold this standard in the coming year and because of these efforts, this preserve will remain one of the best open spaces in the Ojai Valley.

Upcoming Events

May 29
Memorial Day Nature Hike to El Nido Meadow with Ojai native plant guide Lanny Kauffer

June 3
“Restoration of a Wetland” at the Ojai Meadows Preserve with Art Vander & John Pavelko

Opening July 4
The Ojai Valley Museum will host an interactive display about the OVLC and what the outdoors means to the communities of the Ojai Valley.

Save the Date!
September 23, 2017
3rd Annual Telluride Mountainfilm Festival

Climate Change and the OVLC

Most people agree that climate change is the defining environmental issue of our time. As a result, OVLC’s mission in the Ojai Valley is more important than ever.

Climate change is a symptom of the rapid increase in greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, which act to hold in heat. The resulting changes in global temperatures have wide-ranging effects on local and regional weather patterns, which in turn impact local habitats and ecological niches that have formed over thousands of years.

OVLC’s 2,400 acres of protected open space absorb huge amounts of greenhouse gases, storing them for long periods of time. And by acquiring land that might otherwise be developed, the conservancy is able to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas that would come from the conversion to urban uses. Open space is also critical in helping nature adapt to changing climate by enabling wildlife and even plant communities to move freely.

Climate change is happening now, and the impacts are accelerating. Even if greenhouse gases emissions stopped today, those currently in our atmosphere would continue to change the climate. While we may not be able to stop climate change, taking local actions increases our resilience and helps to protect the natural resources that offer some of our best hopes for limiting the damage.

We at the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy have responded to climate threats by placing an emphasis on conserving larger properties with a diversity of landforms that exhibit intact biological conditions. We have also made it a priority to preserve lands containing critical water supplies to ensure water is available for fish and other wildlife.

Land trusts throughout the country are also following climate science closely, assessing potential impacts, and working on programs to increase climate resilience on their preserves and in their programs. California alone is home to more than 150 land trusts that have protected more than 2.5 million acres throughout every county. Nationwide, land trusts have protected more than 56 million acres, or double the size of all land in national parks within the lower 48 states.

Here in the Ojai Valley, an area known for its variable climate, we have a head start in our adaptive strategies. To learn more about climate change and its potential impacts, we recommend a climate talk scheduled for Saturday, May 20, 3:30 pm at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy. Daniel Swain, a climate scientist from UCLA, will present the latest research on climate change and local impacts. The OVLC is co-sponsoring the event.

Above: The Ventura River Preserve after recent spring storms. Photo by OVLC Field Crew Member Nathan Wickstrum.
The Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA), in cooperation with the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC), has generously made the Ojai Saddle Trails available for the public to enjoy as of March 15, 2017. Global social reformer, Annie Besant, bought this historic property adjacent to the Ojai Meadows Preserve in the early 19th century for the work of J. Krishnamurti. He was one of the greatest philosophical and spiritual figures of the 20th century who held gatherings here for thousands of people from the early 1920s until his death in Ojai in 1986. Symbolically rejoining the landscape that inspired thousands through the work of J. Krishnamurti, these new trails honor the history of the land and bring its beauty to new generations.

Of the grand oak trees on the property, Krishnamurti said: “...By midday its shadow has deepened and you can sit there protected from the sun, never feeling lonely, with the tree as your companion. As you sit there, there is a relationship of deep abiding security and a freedom that only trees can know...” From the book, Krishnamurti to Himself.

“The newly opened trails offer an up-close view of one of Ojai’s signature landscapes along Highway 33, and connects more neighborhoods to the Ojai Meadows Preserve. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with KFA and to welcome the public to this historic place” said Brian Stark, the OVLC’s executive director. “The KFA makes these Saddle Trails available to preserve, protect and enjoy as a source of renewal, beauty, and quiet for people of Ojai Valley and for visitors from all over the world,” said Jaap Sluijter, Executive Director of KFA.

Community members founded the OVLC in 1987 to conserve the open space that makes this valley so special. Today, 30 years later, OVLC protects some 2,400 acres, including vital aquatic habitats along the Ventura River (Ventura River & Steelhead preserves), foothill lands that define the scenic character of the valley and link to public trails in the Los Padres National Forest (Valley View & Ventura River preserves), and beautiful open space adjacent to developed lands where stormwater flows into wetlands that attract over 180 species of birds and other wildlife (Ojai Meadows Preserve). Hundreds of visitors use our preserves every day for hiking, running, dog walking, mountain biking and horseback riding. These lands are a true community resource.

The KFA, founded by J. Krishnamurti, is dedicated to the advancement of understanding and realization of human potential by preserving and making available the works of J. Krishnamurti. KFA operates two campuses in the Ojai Valley: the Oak Grove School for children ages 3-18 in Meiners Oaks and the Krishnamurti Education Center for adults on McAndrew Road.

Mission: The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is a community-based nonprofit organization working with partners to permanently protect the open space, natural scenic beauty, wildlife, habitat, and watershed of the Ojai Valley for current and future generations.
Great things have been happening in San Antonio Creek!

Below: Before and after arundo removal on a section of San Antonio Creek along Creek Road. Right: Property owners have views of the creek again(!) and access to the water, which for many years had been blocked by dense stands of arundo.

Since the fall of 2016, the OVLC has been removing arundo from San Antonio Creek along Creek Road. Arundo, which is native to the Indian sub-continent and looks similar to bamboo, has infested watersheds throughout southern California, including the Ventura River Watershed. Arundo crowds out plants that are native to our creeks and consumes a lot of water—see below. It also creates a major fire threat, increases flood risks, and deprives habitat for wildlife.

The project area spans 4.75 miles from Camp Comfort to the Ventura River confluence near Rancho Arnaz. In total, 21.5 acres of arundo were removed from the creek this winter and an estimated 4 acres will be removed next winter.

This project is a community effort—95 landowners have come together to make this project possible and dramatically improve the health of San Antonio Creek. Removal of the arundo has opened up vistas of our creek, reduced fire and flooding threats, and improved habitat for imperiled wildlife such as fish, birds, turtles, and frogs that call this creek home.

This project also helps to protect the valley’s water supply. Research published by the California Invasive Plant Council states that on average, removal of one acre of arundo results in a net savings of 20 acre feet of water per year. This project will remove approximately 26 acres of arundo. This equates to a total savings of 520 acre feet of water per year, or the amount of water 1,040 average households could use in one year!

Welcome New Donors!

Anonymous        Darlene Patrick & Jim Selman        James Hines
AI Swarts         David & Amy Bramsky        Janis Huerta
Andrew Fredell    DeMoor’s Painting, Inc.    Jesse Ridonour
Ashley Nielsen & Nicholas Mang    Dennis P German    Jessica Donahue
Bernard Martin    Donna Philips    Jo Stalden
Bob & Diane Michaels    Flora Gardens    John Puccetti
Brian Johnson    Gerald & Darlene Carlson    Jay Atrops-Kimura
Cal Piscirillo    Gaea Böttlik    Julie Soke
Carl & Judy Cooper    Glenn Shankay    Ken & Stephanie Jargochan
Carla Carpenter    Gloria Swift    Laura Brown
Cathy Ann Smith    Graham Smith    Laura Ring
Chip Premdrey    Graham & Kate Sisson    Lauren Crow
Cindy Gordan    Greg & Martha Lepine    Marvin & Trina Stevens
Dale Condiff    Guru Prasad    Megan & Scott Pembroton
Daniel Parks & Debra Brittain    Jackie Francis    Michael Zierhut
Darla Brown & Scott Immergott    Yolande LeBelle

New Donors 1/13/2017 - 5/12/2017
Nicole Craig        Patagonia Kid’s Club
Paul Weh        Peter Green
Relash, Inc        Rendina Family
Rob & Antonetta Tev
Robin Hall        Sally Greenwood
Sarah Young        Shaula Hennes
Susan King        Thresa & Melvin Simpson
William Spina        Yolande LeBelle

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Protecting your views, trails, water and wildlife
Are you Wild About Ojai? We are.

Welcome to our newest Wild About Ojai partner!

West Winds Landscape

"I am passionate about the wild places of the Ojai Valley! And I use the trails regularly."

Mike Courley
Owner West Winds Landscape

The Wild About Ojai program supports the stewardship of the trails you love. Together, as a community, we are funding the care and maintenance of our trails just a few cents and dollars at a time. At the same time, we are supporting our local businesses who have committed to making a difference. To learn more about our participating businesses, visit our website ovlc.org—there you will find a page about each one. These local businesses are playing a vital role in protecting and stewarding the open space you love in the Ojai Valley. We invite you to learn about each of them, support them, and thank them for making this commitment to your open space and the trails you love.

Together, our community will help protect Ojai’s open space for everyone to enjoy, forever. Visit a participating business today and take part.

A Taste of Ojai
Axcess Ventura
BeCalm of Ojai
Bliss Frozen Yogurt
California Solar Electric
Chamber on the Mountain
Char Man Brand Hot Sauce
Dogs Fly Design
East End Restaurant & Bar
Erik Wilde, Coldwell Banker
Gabriela Ceseña, Berkshire Hathaway
The Glass Man Professional Window Washing Company
GoOjai.com
Greyfox Investors
Jennifer Keeler, Hair Stylist
Lorraine Lim Catering
Mary Nelson Skincare & Massage Studio
Mooney Creative
Ojai Food Taxi
Ojai Quarterly
Parker Jillison Realtor
Rawson Vain
Sal Haus Design
Susan K Guy Art
Suzanne’s Cuisine
Tobias Parker, General Contractor
Tonya Peralta Real Estate Services, Inc
Watercolors by Patty Van Dyke
West Winds Landscape

Axxess Ventura
BeCalm of Ojai
Bliss Frozen Yogurt
California Solar Electric
Chamber on the Mountain
Char Man Brand Hot Sauce
Dogs Fly Design
East End Restaurant & Bar
Erik Wilde, Coldwell Banker
Gabriela Ceseña, Berkshire Hathaway
The Glass Man Professional Window Washing Company
GoOjai.com
Greyfox Investors
Jennifer Keeler, Hair Stylist
Lorraine Lim Catering
Mary Nelson Skincare & Massage Studio
Mooney Creative
Ojai Food Taxi
Ojai Quarterly
Parker Jillison Realtor
Rawson Vain
Sal Haus Design
Susan K Guy Art
Suzanne’s Cuisine
Tobias Parker, General Contractor
Tonya Peralta Real Estate Services, Inc
Watercolors by Patty Van Dyke
West Winds Landscape

In Memory of Sara Roxanne Schneider
Your spirit will live on through those that travel these trails.

Alan & Donna Gordon
Barbara Balderman
Brett & Denise Kantrowitz
Brett Schneider
Carol Shore
Chip & Lori Collins
Debra Bradley
Del & Sharon Carst
Dennis & Jennifer Guernsey
Duane Dammeyer & Marty Bonvechio
E Bruce Weiss
Ed & Nancy Dennis
Elizabeth & Wayne Ogden
Ellen Pansky
Fred Coleman
Gayel Childress
Geoffrey McMahone & Deborah Vanderhei
Holly & Paul Woolson
Julie & Bo Manson
Katie Kuhl
Khaled & Sheryl Al-Awar
Larry Smith & Dorothy Don-Smith
Laura Bromberg
Mary Blackwood-Careyette
Michelle Hirschman
Rebecca Agid
Ruth Lasell & Bob Bonewitz
The Baldwin Family

In Memory of Kurt Nicholas William Brown, son extraordinaire!
Bonnie Delperdang Brown

In Memory of my father Peter Triem. He loved the Ojai Valley and nature.
Scott Triem

In Memory of William Bennett
Diana Lauffer
Phil Bardos
Patricia, Joanne & Nancy Connors

In Memory of Eduardo Barvosa Sr.
Edwina Barvosa

In Memory of Ruth Harvey
Edwina Barvosa

In Memory of Carolyn Mae
Jeff & Theresa Ferguson

In Memory of Nancy Main
Jennifer Napoli

In Memory of Coralee Wray
Jennifer Napoli

In Memory of John G. Bee DVM
Susan Bee

In honor of the birth of our first grandson Sean Michael McLeod (12/1/16)
Alan & Jan Peter

In honor of Kay Renius
From her AT hiking friends as a thanks for the wonderful hiking week we all enjoyed in the Ojai area March 2017

In honor of the celebration of Rachel and Karl’s wedding
With love from Jerry & Merry Dunn
Your Support Makes This All Possible

If you’re out on the trails, you might be on Ojai Valley Land Conservancy lands. OVLC manages roughly 2,000 acres of open space, free for public access—five times as much land as is managed locally by the City of Ojai and Ventura County combined. We maintain 27 miles of trails, guide hundreds of visitors and host tens of thousands of school children, hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers and other users each year.

This is all done with donations from you—our community.

Are open space, beautiful views, unobstructed sightlines and trails to hike, run and ride important to you? Please donate now to protect and grow what you love about Ojai.