OVLC Receives National Accreditation

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy was among 38 land trusts across the United States to achieve accreditation, or to have accreditation renewed in August, and is the first local land trust in Ventura County to earn the distinction.

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is a community-based non-profit organization that works to save the places people love by strengthening land conservation across America. The alliance represents more than 1,100 member land trusts supported by more than 100,000 volunteers and five million members nationwide. The alliance is based in Washington, D.C., and operates several regional offices. More information about the alliance is available at www.landtrustalliance.org.

The OVLC undertook the accreditation process because our local community deserves an organization that is dedicated to the highest professional and ethical standards. It is our community that founded our organization, funds much of our work, and they have placed their trust in us to protect and steward our open spaces. We take this trust seriously. Accreditation represents the highest bar for standards and ethics in land conservation, and we would settle for nothing less.

About The Credititation Commission

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation organization. The commission recognizes conservation excellence by awarding the accreditation seal. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission inspires excellence, promotes public trust, and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing organizations that meet rigorous quality standards, and strive for continuous improvement. The commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of landowners and communities that founded the organization, funds much of our work, and they have placed their trust in us to protect and steward our open spaces. We take this trust seriously. Accreditation represents the highest bar for standards and ethics in land conservation, and we would settle for nothing less.

Why We Undertook Accreditation

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Accredited land trusts stand together, united behind strong ethical standards, ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever.

The OVLC is proud to announce that we have earned national accreditation—a mark of distinction in land conservation. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that the OVLC’s lands will be protected forever.

Accreditation demonstrates the OVLC’s commitment to permanent land conservation and organizational excellence. The process required a top-to-bottom review of the entire organization and ensures that we are meeting the highest professional and ethical standards. We’re a stronger organization for having gone through the rigorous accreditation program, and this strength will help ensure our permanence, and make the Ojai Valley an even better place to live, work, and play,” says Brian Stark, OVLC Executive Director.

The OVLC is a community-based non-profit organization dedicated to the highest possible professional and ethical standards. It is our community that founded our organization, funds much of our work, and they have placed their trust in us to protect and steward our open spaces. We take this trust seriously. Accreditation represents the highest bar for standards and ethics in land conservation, and we would settle for nothing less.

Nationally, almost 15 million acres of farms, forests and natural areas vital to healthy communities – an area about the size of the state of West Virginia – are permanently conserved by accredited land trusts. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has protected 2,300 acres in the Ojai Valley, and manages the properties for the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats, the scenic character of the valley, and public recreation opportunities. OVLC preserves include approximately 25 miles of public trails and over four miles of the Ventura River, and we have partnered with local storm water agencies to use preserve lands for natural flood water management projects that also create new habitats for birds and wildlife.

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The conservancy now joins the more than 350 accredited land trusts that demonstrate their commitment to professional excellence through accreditation, helping to maintain the public’s trust in their work. Each accredited land trust meets extensive documentation requirements and undergoes a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation application. The process is rigorous and strengthens land trusts so they can help landowners and communities achieve their goals. “It is exciting to recognize the OVLC with this distinction,” said Tammara Van Ryn, Executive Director of the commission. “Accredited land trusts stand together, united behind strong ethical standards ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever. This network of land trusts has demonstrated fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership and lasting stewardship of conservation land.”

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OVLC Named Easement Holder on Matilija Falls Trail

The parties to a long-simmering disagreement over public trail access to Matilija Falls have reached a compromise that will permanently grant public access to our local natural wonder. The settlement will result in construction of a new trail and the removal of unauthorized campsites located on private property. The OVLC has accepted a permanent new trail easement and will work with the landowner and other interested parties on trail routing, construction, and signage. Pictured above: Ojai area resident Chris Danck of KAMFO (Keeping Access to Matilija Falls Open) pointing to a portion of the new route along the former Bald Hills Trail in Matilija Canyon.

OVLC Roundup

Preserve Trails Continually Improved

Our trails volunteers are constantly improving and maintaining preserve trails. Two recent improvements were a long-needed reroute on Chaparral Crest Trail, and a trail realignment in lower Rice Canyon. Pictured above: Volunteers Rob Young and Jim Kirchner carve out new tread on the Chap Crest reroute. Left: Lower Rice Canyon Trail gets a new trail turn realignment.

July 4th Volunteers Turn out to Protect the Ojai Meadows Preserve

Each July 4th over twenty OVLC volunteers station themselves around the preserve for several hours before and after the fireworks display to keep the public out for the protection of the preserve, including fire safety. Pictured above: Mike and June Juett watch over a portion of the Ojai Meadows Preserve.

OVLC Volunteers Make a Difference in Lower Libbey Park

Lower Libbey Park was in need of a tune up, so we partnered with the city of Ojai to clean it up using OVLC volunteers. Our members raked, trimmed trees and bushes, and cut dead brush, while the Public Works Department created garden beds, and added walkways and new trash cans. This fall, with more help from OVLC volunteers, we will install native plants. Pictured top: OVLC volunteers (clockwise from left) Phil Bradley, Jerry Jacobs, Jim Kirchner and Don Jackson weed and clean up debris. Middle: City of Ojai Public Works Department workers create new planting beds. Left: Tapa Topa 4th grader Jeremy Kirchner loads leaves during the cleanup.

Thank You to our OVLC Business Sponsors
Welcome to the 114 new OVLC members!!

Adam Newman
Adam Schneider
Adriana Goddard
Alexandra Grittlefeld
Alison Dernbach
Amanda Canty
Andrea J. Caines
Andrew Taggart
Anna Julian
Annat Provo
Bart Bonime
Beatrice Battier
Benedikt Winkler
Betsy Held
Betsy VanLeit
Bianca & Channon Roe
Bob & Heather Sanders
Bob Velez & Michele Kostenski
Brittany Sanders
Brittney Liston
Caleb Bartel
Caleigh Waldman
& Kit Dillon
Candace Alonso
Cate Frost
Charles & Jo Spence
Charles Slosberg
Cherie Benthin
Christine Bednar
Christine Larios
Christine McNally
Clare Bland
Dana Stephens
Danielle Yacconelli
Dave, Hilary, & Lucas Romero
David Kepner
David Wilson
Debbie Harmon
Dennis Allison
Dennis Ryan
Douglas Wood
Duncan Wallace
Dusty Breeding
Ed Auman
Ed Brooks
Elizabeth Smith
Erik Feinold
Estelle Bussa
Gary Lowery
Gerri French
Gina Picerno
Grace Lin
Greg Constantakis
Hadley English
Heather Grant
Heidi Hamilton
Herb Smith
Howard & Irene Hoos
Janet LeCroy
Jeanette Robinson
Jeff & Debbie Frank
Jerd Hobaugh
Jessica Mendiola
Jillian & Kevin McLeod
Joan Blaxter
Jodi Womack
Kendall Hassemer
& Rhett Jacobi
Kendra Yoes
Kevin Buddhu
Julie Gerard
Juliet Long
Justin Shipp
Jysuy Swan
Kai Borer
Kate Curtin
Katherine McClelland
Katherine Regester
Kathryn & Jason Headley
Keilan Meertens
Kelli Butler
Ken Delbo
Kevin Buddhu
Maxine Tsang
Michael & Nita Cahn
Michael Boggs
Mike & Carrie Rubalcava
Nancy Currey
Nic George
Patricia Barton
Pattie Ridenour
Paul DeLapa
Paul Gibbons & Heather
Mohan-Gibbons
Paul Hendricks
Peter Masy
Rachael Jacobs
Richard Pizzorno
Roxana Llano
Ruby Qureshi
Santa Gallegos
Sophia Bilkowski
Strohm Lippert
Sue Cooke
Susan Caplan
Susan Goodman
Susan Griffin
Suzette Brown
Thomas Macias
Tom Roth
Tyanna Blaschak
Virginia & Ted McConnell
Wendy Hubbell
Wow – what a night! Thank you to the 1,000+ people that came out to the Mountainfilm on Tour event September 23, and made our event such a success. We had such an amazing time and we hope you did too!

Thank you to Project C Photography capturing the evening. Thank you to all our Wild About Ojai partners and business sponsors who came out to support us. Patagonia — your sponsorship made this event happen — thank you.

Little Big Here’s music was a perfect compliment to the pre-show party. Even better, the band was fully powered by California Solar Electric’s Solar Roller. Topa Topa Brewing Company and OBC — thank you for donating all that beer and wine — you rock! Thank you to Ojai Community Bank for sponsoring the beer garden.

Volunteers — we could never pull off an event like this without you!

Ojai Valley School — thank you for providing a fabulous venue and another perfect Ojai night!

Save the date for next year’s event — September 23, 2017 — you won’t want to miss it!

* New Donors from 7/6/2016 – 10/12/16
The OVLC welcomes Sarah Sheshunoff to our board. Though originally from San Diego, Sarah lived in Alaska for 12 years before moving to Ojai with her family. She is involved in her children’s school, many local non-profits, and helped start and organize the Telluride Mountainfilm festival in Ojai as a fundraiser for OVLC. She loves to hike, run, camp, and be outdoors as much as possible. The OVLC is governed by an all volunteer board. Read more about our board members at ovlc.org.

OVLC Board

The Ojai Performing Arts Theater presents:
Grand Hotel – The Musical. The six performances will benefit the OVLC.

“Gala Opening Night”
Friday November 25, 8:00 PM
November 22, 25, 26 and December 2, 3, 4

The Gala Performance includes VIP seating (first six rows of the theater), VIP parking, and a catered meet-the-cast reception two minutes walk to the Pearson Pavilion at the Ojai Valley School. (OVS is where the founding meeting of the OVLC was held.)

Buy tickets online at ovlc.org/events

November 12 – The Chumash in Ojai
10 am – 12 pm
Join us for an exploration of Chumash life through artifacts, art and stories presented by Julie Tumamait.

Nov/Dec – Grand Hotel
The Ojai Performing Arts Theater presents Grand Hotel – The Musical. The six performances will benefit the OVLC. Get your VIP tickets for the Gala Opening Night.

December 3 – All About Ojai: Winter Migration Bird Walk
8:30 – 10:30 am
Winter Migration Bird Walk led by Jesse Grantham

December 3 – California Naturalist Open House
2 – 3 pm
Join graduates from the 2016 OVLC California Naturalist course and learn about the course and their work.

January 14 & 15 – All About Ojai: Wildlife Camera Tracking Workshop
Join David Lee for a two-part workshop on wildlife cameras.

February 4 – All About Ojai: Working Dogs in Restoration and Conservation
10 am – 12 pm
Presented by Katherine Ayres
Visit ovlc.org/events for the most up to date event information.

*2016 Annual Member Celebration*

Thank you to everyone in our conservation community who came out to celebrate with us this October at the Ventura River Steelhead Preserve. It was another perfect Ojai evening. Thank you to everyone that made the evening a success. We hope you will join us next year!

All photos courtesy of Project C Photography — thank you for the great images!

**Gift Memberships**
To Jillian & Kevin McLeod
Alan & Jan Peter
To Leland Fulton
Maya Nerenberg
To Judith Mercer
Susan Mercer

In honor of Tania & Tobias Parker “Speedy recovery to Tobias. Thanks for all you do, Tania!”
Karleanne Rogers & Kevin Berigan

“In memory of my dear friend Carol Toomer Boysen, together we climbed many peaks.”
Kay Regester

“In memory of my dad, Edward Brutschy, who taught me to love the outdoors.”
Betsy Held

In memory of Ernie Rischar
Barbara Ryan
Kat West
Mike & Nancy Krumpschmidt

“Love and sympathy to Julie and family!”
Lind Carr

Special Acknowledgments from 7/6/2016 – 10/12/16

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Are you Wild About Ojai? We are. Welcome our newest Wild About Ojai partners...

Mary Nelson Skincare and Massage Studio
I joined Wild About Ojai because I’m wild about the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy and the amazing work they’ve done for our valley.
— Mary Nelson

Lorraine Lim Catering
Preserving open space in the Ojai Valley improves the quality of life for all of us. That’s why I support the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy personally, and through Wild About Ojai, encourage our customers to as well.
— Lorraine Lim & Glenn Fout

Jennifer Keeler, Hair Stylist at a Secret Beauty
(Voted best hairstylist in Ojai four years in a row!
I grew up in Ojai, and after 10 years in LA moved back to raise my girls so they could have the same adventures in nature that I had. I really can’t think of a dreamer place for them to grow up. There is nothing we love more as a family than exploring Ojai’s beautiful open spaces together. I joined Wild About Ojai because I am wild about Ojai! And I want to do my part to care for the valley.
— Jennifer Keeler

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.

Who We Are
The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) owns and maintains about 2,000 acres of open space in the Ojai Valley—protecting the views, trails, water and wildlife for all to enjoy. If you’re a hiker, mountain biker, trail runner or equestrian, you’ve probably been on our trails in the Valley View, Ventura River and Ojai Meadows preserves. As a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization, we depend on your donations to help us protect these amazing open spaces. We can’t do it without you.

How Wild About Ojai Works
As a member of Wild About Ojai, participating businesses add a voluntary 1% donation to their sales, or commit to donating 1% of their sales to the OVLC. These funds are used to protect and maintain open space in the Ojai Valley for your use and enjoyment.

How The Money Is Used
It costs over $100,000 a year to maintain OVLC preserves. This includes keeping them clean and patrolled, building and maintaining trails, and providing parking and informational signage. Funds raised through Wild About Ojai help to offset some of these costs.

Who Participates
Businesses of any kind are strongly encouraged to participate. If you sell a product or service to a customer or client, we hope you’ll join the program.

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

UC California Naturalist Certification Course
Spring 2017

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is excited to announce that we will be offering the California Naturalist certification training in spring 2017 for a second year in a row.

If you enjoy exploring and learning about our local ecology, engaging in citizen science and sharing your knowledge with others, this program is for you! The 40 hour course combines a science curriculum with guest lecturers, field trips and project-based learning to explore the unique ecology and natural history of Ventura County. Evenings will be held at the OVLC office, and field days will be held at various locations, including some OVLC preserves.

Program runs March 31 – May 6
Early registration (by January 31) opens December 10, 2016
Open House - December 3 from 2 – 3 pm
Join graduates from the 2016 course at the OVLC office and learn about the course and their work.
For more information and to register, please visit ovlc.org.

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Tobias Parker, General Contractor
Tonya Peralta Real Estate Services, Inc
Suzanne’s Cuisine
Mooney Creative
NatureSprite.com
Ojai Food Taxi
Ojai Pilates and Fitness
Ojai Quarterly
Sol Haus Design
Suzanne’s Cuisine
Tobias Parker, General Contractor
Sonya Peralta Real Estate Services, Inc
Watercolors by Patty Van Dyke
Just by including the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy in your estate plans, you can help protect the beauty of Ojai for generations to come.

A bequest is a simple way to support the OVLC in the future while retaining control of your assets during your lifetime. By making the OVLC a beneficiary of your will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy, or financial accounts, you ensure your values will be passed on after you. The real beneficiary, of course, is Ojai.

You Can Use this Language for Your Gift:

“I give, devise, and bequeath [percentage / amount / description] to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, a nonprofit corporation, located at PO Box 1092, Ojai, CA, 93024, Tax Identification Number 77-0169682.”