At the end of December, the OVLC will bid a fond farewell and happy retirement to our long-time office manager Marti Reid. Marti joined the OVLC in November 2009, as our part-time bookkeeper, and over time assumed the larger role as the organization’s office manager. While the organization will deeply miss Marti, we are excited for her to begin her next adventure.

Over the past nine years, Marti has handled thousands of financial transactions and reports, been our entire HR department, served as our copy machine whisperer, fed our staff, volunteers, and donors at events, organized numerous educational events, and been ever-present at our outreach events. She also organized our docent program and brought the California Naturalist certification program to Ojai.

Throughout her time here, she has formed lasting relationships with our volunteers and helped many people contribute to the OVLC and our local conservation mission. Being at the center of the office, both literally and figuratively, Marti was always an important part of our evolving organization. We have always admired her ability to grow with the changes and adapt with a smile. As the face of the OVLC at many of our community events and in the office, she helped give the OVLC a friendly and familial atmosphere. If you have ever joined us for an office mailing party you would know that she makes delicious banana bread!

Marti is looking forward to retirement and spending time with family and friends. She also plans to volunteer with the OVLC and other worthy causes in town. These causes will be lucky to have her as her skills are invaluable and she will be a great asset to any organization.

A Fond Farewell to Marti!

Trail Building Continues

The progress continues on building the newest OVLC trail in the Ventura River Preserve. As of October, we’ve had 108 people, both volunteers and staff, working on the Allan Jacobs Trail. So far, we have created 791 feet of trail! This averages out to about 1.94 feet of trail built per person per hour. Why is this trail building process taking so much time considering that there isn’t much full grown chaparral slowing us down?

While the chaparral branches may be gone, the root wads sure aren’t. Anywhere on the trail that we encounter the burned husk of a chaparral plant, we have to dig into the soil, cut the roots, and pry the wad out of the ground (don’t worry, no oak trees will be harmed in the making of this trail). Unfortunately, we can’t just flush cut the stumps down to the soil level because over time, erosion from trail use and rain water would expose the underlying root system. This would create future problems like tripping hazards that would cause hikers to go around the root wad and expand the trail beyond its acceptable size.

So, we dig, we hack, we pry and we build on! It doesn’t help our speed that we are currently in the most complicated section of the trail, building through a large drainage and constructing switchbacks up a steep hill. The more technical features we have, like the switchbacks, the longer it takes to build them. Fortunately, there aren’t too many spots like this on the 6,600-feet of this new trail that we have yet to build.

Do you know what really helps us get through difficult areas and increases our trail output? Volunteers! And even better - returning volunteers! We have community volunteer days once a week and have had dedicated volunteers coming back again and again. It’s through the efforts of all of our volunteers that we’ll get this done. Though this might be a slow build, the work completed so far is unquestionably great and constructed with high standards. This community is building a wonderful trail in honor of Allan Jacobs and we can’t wait until you can take a hike on this trail.
Major Property Donation to the OVLC

In August 2018, the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy received its largest asset gift ever with a donation of property in the City of Ojai. The property is an undeveloped one-acre parcel in an Ojai neighborhood that was donated with the intention that it be sold to generate funds to support local land conservation. The story of this generous donation started decades ago with a prominent local conservationist and ends with a contribution that will ensure the permanence of open space in the Ojai Valley.

Ojai was not always the community it is today: it is today that eschews large scale development in favor of protecting agricultural lands and stunning open spaces. Rather, it was the frequent target of land-use proposals that threatened to despoil the valley as we know it today. That was, until Patricia “Pat” Weinberger and her husband Larry moved to Ojai in 1967. Dismayed by expansive offens to develop the Ojai Valley’s natural resources, Pat got to work mobilizing the community. She was also involved in preserving the wetlands at Ormond Beach and the creation of the Teague Memorial Watershed consisting of 3,500 acres near Lake Casitas.

Pat passed away in 2016, at the age of 93, but her efforts are often credited with keeping the Ojai Valley the idyllic place it continues to be today.

Johnny Johnston was a long-time friend of Pat Weinberger and has many stories to tell of her determination and the impact she had on the Ojai Valley. Upon Pat’s passing, he managed her affairs and was involved in the undeveloped parcel of land adjacent to Pat’s old house. He felt it would be fitting of Pat’s legacy to donate the property to the OVLC in her honor of her commitment to environmental protection.

“Kitty and I wish to honor and perpetuate the work of conservation giants like Pat Weinberger, and John Broesamle who followed her, and the many unsung heroes who do their part to preserve The Ojai,” says Johnny Johnston. “We chose to donate the land to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy because this extraordinary organization has a proven record of acquiring, protecting, and maintaining open space in our community for the generations of today and of tomorrow.”

“The OVLC is proud to be the recipient of this substantial gift on behalf of the communities of the Ojai Valley. The Johnston’s could have done anything with the property, but they chose to dedicate it to the protection of open space. We think that is something very special,” says Roger Essick, President of the OVLC Board of Directors.

“A gift of this magnitude will make a significant impact for the OVLC,” says Brian Stark, Executive Director of the OVLC. “We have always depended on our community to support local conservation today and into the future. Significant gifts of land and other bequests are essential to building the reserves and endowment funds to steward our preserves forever. These gifts also provide opportunities to react quickly to conservation opportunities. We are beyond grateful for the Johnston’s donation and Pat’s conservation leadership.”

In addition to contributions made to realize financial resources, the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has also received gifts of land that are held for conservation purposes. The largest conservation land donation was made in 1997 by the Ilvento Family to create the Ilvento Preserve adjacent to Thacher School. Other notable land donations include a conservation easement donated by John and Ginger Wilson and the San Antonio Creek Preserve donated by Betty McCurley.
UPCOMING EVENTS

December 1
California Naturalist Open House

December 1–31
Early Bird Registration for the California Naturalist Certification class

December 8
All About Ojai: Winter Migration Bird Walk with Jesse Grantham at the Ojai Meadows Preserve

December 22–23
Holiday Benefit Show with Firestick Pottery Studio

January 12
All About Ojai: Grizzlies—Past, Present & Future with Dr. Peter Alagona, USC

February 1–March 9
California Naturalist Certification Class

February 16
All About Ojai: The Buzz About Bees with Dr. Ruben Alarcon, CSUCI

For the most up-to-date information about OVLC events visit ovlc.org/events

Mountainfilm 2018

Our Friday event, Under the Open Sky, was pure magic. It was amazing to have such an intimate and beautiful experience with the films. All of our incredible sponsors made this event possible.

Thank you so much to Lorraine Lim Catering for the incredible food, service, and for sponsoring the event. Thank you to our drink sponsors Ventura Spirits, Topa Topa Brewing Company, and Old Creek Ranch Winery. Thank you to our event sponsors Greyfox Investors LLC and Ventura Rental Party and Events, and to our design sponsor Johanna Bjork.

Thank you to the 1,700+ people who came out to our Saturday event, Mountainfilm on Tour and made it such a success! We had such an awesome time and we hope you did too!

Vaughn Montgomery and the chillz did a fabulous job entertaining us—many compliments! Topa Topa Brewing Company—thank you for donating such incredible beer—and Salmon Creek for sponsoring the wine—you rock! The beer and wine garden was a hit.

Thank you to all our Wild About Ojai partners and Business Sponsors who came out to support us. Thank you to the Ojai Valley Green Coalition for running our bike valet and thank you to everyone that biked to the event!

A huge thank you to all of the businesses that donated to our raffle—it was a wildly successful year thanks to you.

Thank you to the food trucks for coming out and supporting the OVLC. Many thanks to BōKU Super Food and the Ojai Valley Inn and Spa for generously providing parking. Pro Outdoor Movies, your projection and giant screen were amazing, and MTS Audio the sound was outstanding. We can’t wait to have you both back next year!

Volunteers—we could never pull off an event like this without you! From working in the office to set-up and clean-up, we are so grateful to work with such caring and dedicated people. Thank you for all the hours, not only at big events but also throughout the year.

Ojai Valley School Alumni Association—thank you for providing a fabulous venue and another perfect Ojai night! We can’t wait to do it again next year!

SAVE THE DATE!

UNDER THE OPEN SKY – FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
MOUNTAINFILM ON TOUR – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Join us next year for a film screening (or two!) packed with inspiring tales and adventure. The second annual Under the Open Sky event is an evening of feast and film at our beautiful Steelhead Preserve. The fifth annual Mountainfilm on Tour event is sure to be another fantastic event. Join the OVLC for live music, food trucks, a beer and wine garden, and of course—your favorite outdoor adventure films.

Under the Open Sky images courtesy of Photography by Marc Alt. marcalt.com / @marcalthpoto

For the most up-to-date information about OVLC events visit ovlc.org/events

ovlc.org
Together, our community will help protect Ojai’s open space for everyone to enjoy, forever.

Thank you to our Wild About Ojai partners who help make this possible. Visit a participating business today and take part.

A Taste of Ojai
Aloha Creations
Awhai Pottery
Axxess Ventura
BeCalm of Ojai
California Solar Electric
Chamber on the Mountain
Char Man Brand Hot Sauce
Dogs Fly Design
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
Noah Crowe, Sunrun Home Solar Consultant
Ojai Quarterly
Parker Jellison Realtor
Rawie Vain
Sai Haus Design
The Southern Los Padres Trekking Company
Tobias Parker, General Contractor
Tonya Peralta Real Estate Services, Inc
Watercolors by Patty Van Dyke

Your legacy gift, with many others like yours, will keep the Ojai Valley’s views, trails, water, and wildlife protected for future generations. Inspire and influence others by letting us know about your planned gift today. You can join or update your preferences online at ovlc.org/pup

We are David Sinclair and Fereshta Zamani-Sinclair, a husband and wife team living in beautiful Ojai, California. Ojai holds a special place in our hearts as it is the town where we had our first date 13 years ago and now we call it home. The Aloha spirit of Hawaii and Ojai’s magical charm and beauty inspire us to create our handmade goods and we want to share that with the world. We believe in OVLC’s mission and vision for the Ojai Valley and want to contribute.

The OVLC is moving forward with the replacement of the burned bridge over the Casitas canal at Rice Canyon. The OVLC and Casitas Municipal Water District will partner together to design and construct a replacement bridge that will provide access to Rice Canyon and Kennedy Ridge Trail on the Ventura River Preserve. We’ve made improvements to the new bridge—it will be made with fire proof metal stringers so that even if the decking were to be burned, the skeleton of the bridge will be in place and ready for repairs. Hopefully we’ll never be without a bridge for this long again. Stay tuned for news in the spring for how you can help!
New Signs on the Preserves

When the Thomas Fire burned through the preserves, it cooked quite a few of our trail-junction signs and caused damage to some informational kiosks as well. The fiberglass on the trail signs warped, melted, and became a hazard to clean up. We have cleared most of the old, burned, and destroyed signage off of the preserves and have already begun to replace the signs with new metal ones.

Thankfully help has come our way for this sign replacement project. Grants from REI and the American Hiking Society’s National Trails Fund have helped purchase new posts and metal signs. While these signs cost quite a bit more than the old fiberglass signs, they are worth the investment because they are much more fire resistant. Of course, we haven’t just had financial help, we’ve had plenty of volunteers give us a hand as well. A local boy scout troop repaired one of the kiosks that was wrecked when a burned tree came down upon it. Meridian Design and Construction of Ventura donated lumber and skilled labor to help lead community volunteers in building the kiosk at Oso Trailhead. Currently, we are working with community volunteers to replace dozens of trail junction signs throughout the Ventura River and Valley View Preserves.

All of these signs, from the trail-junction signs to the informational kiosks, help us manage our preserves. Our signs help you find your way on the trails and educate you about the landscape, wildlife and restoration efforts of each one of our amazing preserves. So while it may seem like a small project, replacing and upgrading our signs is vital to your experience and we’re incredibly grateful for all of the help we’ve received in our continuing recovery from the Thomas Fire.

Pictured Top Left: One of the many signs burned in the Thomas Fire. Right: One of the newly installed fire-resistant replacement signs. Middle: A new kiosk donated by Meridian Design being installed at the Oso Trailhead. Bottom: Volunteers and OVLC field crew working on the kiosks.

There is always work to be done in the office, on our trails, and at events. Interested in getting involved? Visit our website at ovlc.org/volunteer for more information and to fill out an application.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
from the staff and board of
The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

Recovery of land is a slow process, but every time our wildlife camera snaps a picture at the watering hole we know that our collective efforts are paying off.

We have been through so much together this past year and we are stronger because of you.

As we look towards the future, and all that we still have to do, we ask you for a special year-end gift to ensure the recovery of the lands that make Ojai such a special place to live, work, and play.