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WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

Join us in San Luis Obispo
 Spanos Theatre, Cal Poly Campus
 6:30 p.m. Reception, 7:30 p.m. Films



The Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival has become an eagerly anticipated annual event drawing its audience from all along the central coast.



The chosen films not only highlight environmental concerns but also provide solutions, and include entertaining adventure and children films as well.

The event begins with a reception and exhibitor fair, including non-profit and sponsor information booths, local wines/beer & exciting raffles. Then

settle in for an evening of motivating and exciting films.

Tickets are only \$10/adult and \$5/students & children and available at www.LPFW.org, at 805-617-4610 ext 2, or at the Spanos Theatre. The Film Fest will raise awareness & entertain – all while benefitting ForestWatch! See you there!



LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES ALONG CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
 CARRIZO LAWSUIT P.2
 UPCOMING EVENTS P.3
 BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL P.4
 MAP P.5
 PEOPLE P.9

SUMMER/FALL 2010



BEAR VICTORY

California Fish & Game Commission withdraws proposal to allow first-ever bear hunting season in San Luis Obispo County

In another victory for our region's wildlife, State officials cited their inability to respond to widespread opposition as the reason for scrapping the proposal for bear hunting in San Luis Obispo for the third time in two years.

"Not only was the Department unable to respond to the overwhelming amount of public opposition to its proposal, but the agency's environmental document was scientifically and legally deficient," said Jeff Kuyper, executive director of Los Padres ForestWatch.

ForestWatch led efforts to defeat this proposal, demanding for the last two years that state biologists conduct a scientifically-adequate population study before allowing any bear hunting in San Luis Obispo County.

Continued on page 2...

SAVE MATILIJA

Landowner shuts off public access to popular Matilija Falls trail near Ojai - help us keep it open!

In April, the U.S. Forest Service announced that a landowner with extensive holdings in Ventura County is denying public access through his property in Matilija Canyon. The popular trail, which has been used by the public for more than a century, leads to swimming holes, unique geologic formations, and the beautiful Matilija Falls in the Matilija Wilderness Area of the Los Padres National Forest.

For more than a year, the landowner has been approaching trail users along the Middle Fork Matilija Trail and notifying them that they are no longer welcome to use the trail. While the falls are on public property roughly two-thirds of the pathway to reach them is on Mr. Bonsall's property. The Ojai Ranger District issued the following statement to clarify the issue for trail users:

For many years, recreation users have enjoyed hiking in the Matilija drainage

including trails the North Fork, Middle Fork and Murietta Canyon. Buzz Bonsall owns property in the Middle Fork. He has informed the Forest Service that he is denying public access through his property. If you hike up the Middle Fork to the falls, you will be trespassing unless you have an agreement with Mr. Bonsall. The Forest Service has not had an easement through his property.

ForestWatch has swung into action in response, helping to form Keep Access to Matilija Falls Open, a coalition of organizations intent on preserving public access to the falls. While we hope



Matilija Falls, photo Blair Edwards

to reach an agreement with the landowner resulting in a deeded easement to ensure the public's continued access to the trail, we also are ready to file suit if necessary. Forest visitors have been using this trail for more than a century, and this creates a "prescriptive" right to continued access under long-standing laws governing public access in California..

ForestWatch now needs your help! If you hiked this area prior to 1972, please contact us at info@LPFW.org. Your information may help keep this well-loved trail open!



PROTECTING PUBLIC LAND

ForestWatch is dedicated to doing what it takes to get proper protection for public lands

Throughout this newsletter you will read about the different ways ForestWatch is working to protect, honor, and restore the wild lands of California's Central Coast

Continued from page 1...

The proposal would have allowed the first-ever bear hunting season in San Luis Obispo County. The regulatory package would have also expanded bear hunting into Lassen and Modoc counties in northern California; allowed hunters to use high-tech tracking devices; and would have lifted all numerical limits to black bear hunting statewide!

The Department received more than 10,000 comments on the proposed changes and the accompanying draft environmental document, most opposing the changes and criticizing the scientific and legal inadequacies of the environmental review. In addition, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution opposing bear hunting in the County.

"We will continue to track any future attempts to allow bear hunting in San Luis Obispo County, and Fish & Game will continue to face overwhelming public opposition if they fail to give our county's bears the protection they deserve," said Kuyper.

CARRIZO LAWSUIT

ForestWatch has filed suit to protect the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve from severe environmental degradation - stay tuned!

Linking the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument, the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve covers more than 30,000 acres of ecologically sensitive habitat in southeastern San Luis Obispo County. The Reserve provides habitat for rare and imperiled wildlife like San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizards, burrowing owls, Tule elk, and pronghorn antelope.

The Reserve was established in 2004 using funds from clean water and habitat protection state bonds and the California Department of Fish and Game was named the managing authority. Two years later the Department of Fish and Game entered into a lease agreement authorizing livestock grazing on 12,000 acres for a three-year term. The lease was recently renewed on August 26, 2009. Both the original 2006 lease and the 2009 lease renewal were issued without any public notice or environmental review. They supposedly set forth several terms and conditions designed to ensure that grazing is compatible with the protection of the Reserve, but ForestWatch's visits to the area told a different story.

During our visit, we observed significant environmental degradation, in express violation of the terms and conditions of the lease. Specifically, we observed severe overgrazing across much of the Reserve, fencing in disrepair, trampled wetlands and springs, and cattle trespassing into areas where the lease expressly prohibits grazing.

In response to these unsettling conditions, ForestWatch authored a letter to the Department in October 2009, and several other organizations signed the letter as well. That letter asked the Department to remove all livestock from the Reserve, to recover compensation from the lessee for the ecological damage he caused, and to move forward expeditiously with preparing a management plan for the Reserve. The Department's response to this request was inadequate, so in February 2010, ForestWatch filed suit against the Department.

Our lawsuit asks officials to prepare an environmental impact report to evaluate ways to reduce the damage caused by excessive levels of livestock grazing, and to seek input from the public, outside wildlife agencies, and independent experts. In the meantime, the lawsuit also demands that the Department complete a land management plan for the Reserve, a plan that is now more than 5 years overdue under California law.



Overgrazing on the Carrizo

BASE CAMP



Jeff Kuyper, ForestWatch Executive Director

I'll be the first to admit that our "quarterly newsletter" has not been very "quarterly" since we first started publishing it six years ago. Our little local group has no production department, no PR manager, no team of writers, and no investigative reporters. We have to do this all ourselves, and often - at the end of the day - we're still working furiously to protect our local wild places and wildlife.

However, now, I'm excited to share with you in this inaugural edition of our new-and-improved membership journal. Welcome!

First and foremost, we're now in full color, allowing us to vividly showcase the areas that we're working to protect. Now we can capture those rich greens of chaparral, those deep purples of distant mountain ranges, and the crimson red of a condor's head—all worth a thousand words themselves. Over time, we'll add new features like member profiles, adventure stories, and tributes to some of the unique places we work to protect.

ForestWatch continues to realize and seize new opportunities, even as we focus on becoming more efficient. We've hired two new full-time staff persons, a testament to how conservation and jobs can go hand-and-hand. With a larger staff, we're able to launch several new programs that seek to permanently protect some of the last remaining wild places in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain.

I'm proud of how our organization continues to tackle the tough issues facing our region's magnificent public lands, issues that no other groups dare touch. And I'm proud that you're here standing with us among our circle of supporters - we couldn't do it without you.



ForestWatch volunteers near the Sespe Condor Sanctuary

JOIN US!

Ventura Hillside Music Festival, September 25

1 ForestWatch is proud to participate in the Ventura Hillside Music Festival for the last five years in a row! This year offers the musical talents of Emmylou Harris, Gin Blossoms, and Colbie Caillat, as well as the opportunity for ForestWatch to meet some of the over 3,000 concert goers and tell them about our mission. Buy your tickets today, and stop by our booth on the 25th!

www.VenturaHillside.org

Carrizo Plain Defencing Day, October 16 - 17

2 Miles and miles of barbed wire fences remain on the Carrizo Plain National Monument from years of former ranching. These relic fences act as barriers to the movement of pronghorn antelope, inhibiting their escape from predators and contributing to their decline. ForestWatch is collecting a group of volunteers dedicated to taking down a couple miles - will you join us?

Email suzanne@LPFW.org

Wild & Scenic Film Festival, October 22

3 ForestWatch is bringing the third Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival to San Luis Obispo - an eagerly anticipated annual event drawing its audience from all along the Central Coast.

The film festival showcases inspirational and exciting films, an environmental fair, raffles, refreshments, and special guests. All proceeds go to benefit ForestWatch's work in the Los Padres National Forest. Tickets can be purchased in advance on our website at www.LPFW.org.

17th Annual Salmon Run, November 7

4 Stretch your legs for salmonids at the 17th Annual Patagonia Salmon Run in Ventura on Sunday, November 7. This fun 5K run (3K walk) is the largest running event in Ventura County with just shy of 400 runners last year. The day will feature an environmental fair, raffle, and a great course "upstream" for all participants. ForestWatch will be on site - we'll see you there! Details at www.Patagonia.com/SalmonRun

Fraizer Mountain Clean and Camp, November 13 - 14

5 Say goodbye to Daylight Savings Time in the beautiful Los Padres. ForestWatch is planning an overnight microtrash collection event at Fraizer Mountain. A high-elevation dirt-road trip from Chuchupate ranger station is required for this one, but your reward is stunning vistas AND the chance to remove trash from a remote peak frequently visited by California condors. Welcome Fall to the Central Coast with a day spent amongst a conifer forest of massive ponderosas, sugar pines, and Douglas-firs! Email suzanne@LPFW.org



ForestWatch continues to advocate for the protection of our region's bears.

BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL

Stories from the backcountry that inspire the preservation of these unique wild lands

Personal stories instill a sense of place and help capture that wonder and excitement that we have all experienced when in an amazing natural setting. Share your personal accounts of time spent in the wild with us at info@LPFW.org

KEEP IT WILD

Tim Fuhs recalls an amazing night beyond Figueroa Mountain in the San Rafael Wilderness.



I was 16, it was the weekend, and my good backpacking friend and I decided to dart into the San Rafael Wilderness for an overnigher. It was mid-winter in '77, and the rainfall had been significant thus far in the season. We packed for a cool day and night with rain gear as my Dad told us rain was expected.

Early Saturday morning was like all of the other days that we had gathered our gear and made the hour and a half drive to Nira campground - **the sky was blue and the streams were flowing** at a decent but not hazardous rate. Before long we were on the trail from Nira, seeking a place somewhere to spend the afternoon and night in the back country.

After about 3 hours had passed, we noticed that the blue sky had given way to clouds, and a light rain had begun to

fall. Knowing that rain was eminent, we decided to make camp on a knoll near the Manzana River. Within an hour of making camp, **the wind had rose steadily from strong and gusty to a fierce roar, ripping our tent from it's stakes.** Not being able to re-fasten our shelter, we hastily packed our camp and made our way further into the backcountry towards a cave that we knew from our previous trips.

We hiked as the rain began to pour at a steady rate, filling the stream and dry washes with flowing water. We made it to the area of the cave, luckily finding it on the first attempt. The empty cave was cold but dry and out of the wind. We hastily made dinner and got ready for bed as the rain pelted the ground.

Some hours after dark, thunderstorms accompanied the rain, lighting the cave and surrounding forest. The power of the moment was thrilling and very terrifying. Strange crashing and other odd sounds kept my friend and I awake most of the night. As the lighting flashed during the ink black night, the cave came alive with thoughts of Chumash huddled for protection in this very same spot. **Their beautiful art adorned the cave which gave testimony to their presence.** My friend and I sat and talked about how amazing it was that this cave and it's paintings were still here to speak to us.

The morning came very slowly, with light creeping in behind broken clouds. The rain, which lasted 11 hours, had dissipated. We ate a quick breakfast and

began our hike out to Nira. Our exhilaration from the night began to quickly fade as we realized that the small tributary streams to the Manzana River were gushing with ferocity. When we gazed down at the Manzana River near Lost Valley camp, we couldn't believe our eyes. The clear and docile creek from the day before was a muddy torrent of swirling water. As we made our way to the Nira crossing, we knew that this was going to be anything but easy. My friend and I loosened our pack waist belts and used two sturdy branches as braces as **we slowly side stepped across the swirling torrent facing downstream.** We made it across without incident, and arrived at our pickup tired but exhilarated.

It is a comforting feeling to know that over 30 years later, **people can have similar experiences in such a wild and beautiful place.**



View of the San Rafael Wilderness near Figueroa Mountain.

VOLUNTEER WRAPUP

ForestWatch supporters improve habitat and have fun!

We'd love to have you on our next volunteer mission to create on-the-ground change along California's Central Coast. Stay in the loop by emailing suzanne@LPFW.org

SEPTEMBER 2010

What: Four Microtrash Cleanups
Where: Area around Cerro Noroeste Rd., and "Punchbowls"
Who: 11 volunteers
Why: 100 lbs. of trash removed

In a major push to cleanup the wild after a busy Summer, ForestWatch volunteers tackled high priority sites identified by U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The results were substantial - over 100 lbs. of trash removed!

AUGUST 2010

What: Microtrash Cleanup
Where: Near the Sespe Condor Sanctuary
Who: 21 volunteers
Why: 75 lbs. of trash removed

This volunteer event will be featured in the upcoming documentary *Shadow of the Condor* - keep an eye out for it!

JULY 2010

What: Microtrash Cleanup
Where: Whitaker Peak
Who: 8 volunteers
Why: 45 lbs. of trash removed



ForestWatch volunteers hard at work on a fence removal project in the Carrizo Plains.

Special thanks to the students from Ojai Valley School who traveled to the edge of Los Padres National Forest to help clean one of the persistent trouble spots. Microtrash ingestion is one of the leading causes of California condor death in the wild, removing it has a significant impact on condor recovery efforts.

MAY 2010

What: Defencing Project
Where: Carrizo Plain
Who: 10 volunteers
Why: 2 miles of fence removed.

See below for a photo of our hardworking volunteers. Fence removal is tough work, but opening wildlife corridors is well worth it.

OCTOBER 2009

What: Defencing Project
Where: Carrizo Plain
Who: 14 volunteers
Why: almost 2 miles of fence removed.

This event was a joint effort between the Sierra Club, ForestWatch, Desert Survivors, and the California Department of Fish & Game. Thanks to all of our volunteers for giving pronghorn the freedom to roam!



CRITTER CORNER

Arroyo toads have perhaps the most specialized habitat requirements of any amphibian found in California. They once lived throughout the coastal rivers and streams from Monterey to Baja California, but today it is the Los Padres National Forest that contains some of the best remaining habitat, and holds most of the viable populations of arroyo toads that exist. Uniquely, the toads the toad burrows in the sand along river banks during the winter.

The arroyo toad was added to the federal endangered species list in 1994. Unfortunately the amount of habitat set aside for special protection has not met the toad's needs. In 2000, federal biologists initially proposed designating 478,400 acres of "critical habitat" (land that scientists deemed essential to the survival and recovery of the toad.) However, after bureaucratic pressure and a lawsuit by developers, the critical habitat was slashed to only 11,695 acres, a 98% decrease from the initial proposal! The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has since announced that it would reevaluate the critical habitat designations since this reduction was based on politics, not science, however over 16,800 acres of critical habitat in and near the Los Padres still sits unprotected today due to the decision in 2000.

Los Padres ForestWatch is actively promoting the adoption of specific guidelines to protect critical arroyo toad populations during fire suppression activities, and we will also continue to track the federal government's revised critical habitat designation to ensure that protections are restored for the toad's habitat on the Los Padres National Forest.

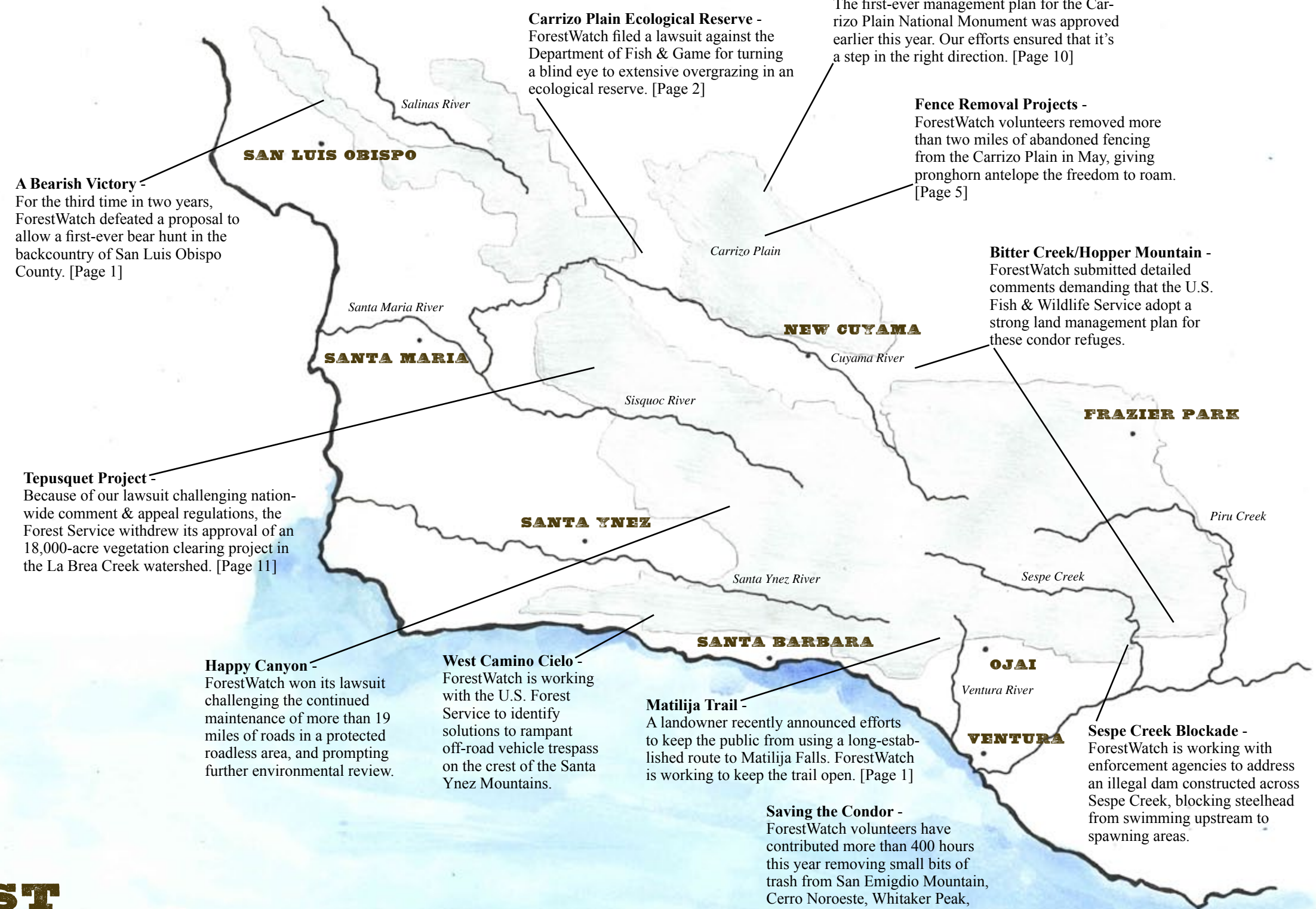
NORTHERN LOS PADRES



Roadside Clearing -
ForestWatch recently filed a lawsuit challenging a roadside clearing project that began in July on the Monterey Ranger District, threatening rare plants and wilderness areas.

Monterey County Drilling -
ForestWatch is working with local groups to stop the expansion of oil drilling east of the Ventana Wilderness.

SOUTHERN LOS PADRES



A Bearish Victory -
For the third time in two years, ForestWatch defeated a proposal to allow a first-ever bear hunt in the backcountry of San Luis Obispo County. [Page 1]

Tepusquet Project -
Because of our lawsuit challenging nationwide comment & appeal regulations, the Forest Service withdrew its approval of an 18,000-acre vegetation clearing project in the La Brea Creek watershed. [Page 11]

Happy Canyon -
ForestWatch won its lawsuit challenging the continued maintenance of more than 19 miles of roads in a protected roadless area, and prompting further environmental review.

West Camino Cielo -
ForestWatch is working with the U.S. Forest Service to identify solutions to rampant off-road vehicle trespass on the crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains.

Matilija Trail -
A landowner recently announced efforts to keep the public from using a long-established route to Matilija Falls. ForestWatch is working to keep the trail open. [Page 1]

Saving the Condor -
ForestWatch volunteers have contributed more than 400 hours this year removing small bits of trash from San Emigdio Mountain, Cerro Noroeste, Whitaker Peak, Valle Vista, and the Sespe Creek watershed. [Page 5]

Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve -
ForestWatch filed a lawsuit against the Department of Fish & Game for turning a blind eye to extensive overgrazing in an ecological reserve. [Page 2]

A Monumental Plan -
The first-ever management plan for the Carrizo Plain National Monument was approved earlier this year. Our efforts ensured that it's a step in the right direction. [Page 10]

Fence Removal Projects -
ForestWatch volunteers removed more than two miles of abandoned fencing from the Carrizo Plain in May, giving pronghorn antelope the freedom to roam. [Page 5]

Bitter Creek/Hopper Mountain -
ForestWatch submitted detailed comments demanding that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service adopt a strong land management plan for these condor refuges.

Sespe Creek Blockade -
ForestWatch is working with enforcement agencies to address an illegal dam constructed across Sespe Creek, blocking steelhead from swimming upstream to spawning areas.

LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

AN UPDATE ON HOW WE'RE PROTECTING YOUR REGION



OJAI WILD!

This past March brought us spring rain, spectacular wildflower blooms, and our third annual Ojai Wild! creekside benefit event. With **more than 200 ForestWatch supporters and friends in attendance**, this celebration of our region's wild places was a resounding success.

The Diamond Hitch Camp at Thacher School provided the perfect setting. Naturalist-led hikes into the foothills started off the afternoon, followed by appetizers paired with local wines and beer, a gourmet bbq supper under the sprawling coast live oak trees, and exciting silent and live auctions. With a background of live jazz, guests enjoyed the late afternoon sun and an art exhibit by local plein-air artist Larry Iwerks.

The presentation of our 2nd annual Wilderness Legacy Award was a highlight of the event. The award is designed to honor those who have dedicated their lives to protecting and defending our region's wild landscapes. This year's honoree was the late Dick Smith, and ForestWatch was honored to welcome Dick's family to accept the award in his honor. Dick Smith was a local journalist, author, photographer, and backcountry explorer who devoted his life to protecting our local backcountry. Congress established the Dick Smith Wilderness area in the southern Los Padres in 1984, permanently protecting this magnificent landscape.

ForestWatch raised more than \$29,000

for our forest protection efforts at this year's Ojai Wild!, our most important fundraising event. Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped make this event possible and a special thanks to The Thacher School for hosting the event and for their continued support. Hope to see you at Ojai Wild! ...Spring 2011!

OJAI WILD! SPONSORS

The Thacher School
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Nutiva
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Ojai Valley News
Patagonia
New Belgium Brewing
Rainbow Bridge Natural Foods Store
Santa Barbara FastFrame
Stone Pine Estates Vineyard
William Dewey Photography

OJAI WILD! HOSTS

John and Kathy Broesamle
Thomas and Betty Budlong
Peter Castellanos and Danyel Dean
Jeri Edwards
Ecotones - Greg Frugoli
Bill Hart and Connie Eaton
Kalon and Karen Kelley
Ruth Lasell and Robert Bonewitz
Allan S. Morton and Paula A. Steinmetz
William J. Otto, DVM
Bill and Jill Shanbrom



Ojai Wild! at beautiful Diamond Hitch Camp

Photos: Brian Griswalle

FORESTWATCH PEOPLE

ForestWatch IS the people who love the forest

ForestWatch just celebrated our sixth anniversary - we've made quite a bit of progress from an idea hatched at a picnic table! Our newest Board members and staff are welcomed by existing Board members Brad Monsma (President), Pat Veesart (Vice President), Allan Morton (Treasurer), Ruth Lasell (Secretary), and Louis Andaloro.

NEW STAFF

Check out the newest staff on the ForestWatch team - we're lucky to have great people who make all our great work possible.

SUZANNE FELDMAN Conservation Coordinator

Suzanne works to develop advocacy, public outreach, and volunteer programs with ForestWatch. She was formerly with Santa Barbara's Community Environmental Council where she focused on watershed restoration issues and building the organization's outreach program. Prior to that she worked with a land conservation NGO in Tanzania. Suzanne graduated from the University of Washington and later obtained a Masters in Environmental Management from the University of Melbourne.

MIKE SUMMERS Wild Places Campaign Coordinator

Mike coordinates our southern Los Padres wild heritage campaign, networking with rural landowners, farmers, ranchers, local businesses, and elected officials. He was formerly Fundraising and Outreach Director for the Conception Coast Project, and was also the Conservation Organizer for the California Wild Heritage Campaign in Santa Barbara County. Mike holds an Environmental Studies degree from U.C. Santa Barbara, and a Juris Doctorate from the Santa Barbara College of Law.



NEW BOARD

Meet the new board members for ForestWatch! They're a diverse bunch from around the region but all share one love: Los Padres National Forest.

PETER CASTELLANOS

Peter is an investment manager and general partner at Glacier Asset Management in Santa Barbara. "I admire the regional approach that ForestWatch takes," says Peter. "It's the most effective way to protect this landscape, uniting local citizens under a common goal." When he's not trading on the stock market, Peter enjoys flyfishing, hunting, skiing, and exploring British Columbia.

DR. CHRISTOPHER COGAN

Christopher teaches and conducts research on biodiversity and coastal issues at C.S.U. Channel Islands, where he serves as the Faculty Director of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Laboratory. "For most of my life I have been involved with the Los Padres National Forest," says Dr. Cogan. "It has always been clear that citizen and stakeholder groups play a critical role in the successful management of these wild places." He lives in Camarillo, where he enjoys bike rides, photography, and rock climbing with his family.

JERI EDWARDS

For more than twenty years, Jeri has operated her own executive search consulting firm. Jeri is an avid user of trails in the Los Padres National Forest and is often seen volunteering for trail maintenance crews and habitat restoration projects. "ForestWatch is the

only truly proactive organization I know that employs a science-based passion for conservation throughout the greater Los Padres ecosystem," says Jeri. She currently lives in Ventura County, where she regularly enjoys backpacking, biking, hiking, swimming, and all things outdoors.

TERRI LAINE

With a background in graphic design and photography, Terri directs the production of printed materials at Patagonia in Ventura. Terri has hiked and biked many of the trails in the Los Padres backcountry, as well as cycled through most of the West. "Our backcountry is special and I love being a part of an organization whose mission is to protect this incredible resource," says Terri. She lives in Oak View with her husband and two children, and enjoys backpacking, yoga, photography, gardening, and the outdoors.

ALLAN MORTON, Treasurer

Allan has been practicing law for more than forty years. His interest in the Los Padres goes back to the early 1970s when he started hiking and backpacking in the San Rafael Wilderness and around Ojai. "I cherish this beautiful place and want to help preserve it," says Allan. "It is truly a treasure next door." Allan currently lives in Santa Barbara with his wife, where he enjoys the beauty of our natural places, and classical music, theater and art.

BON VOYAGE

ForestWatch would like to thank some of the folks who have been working with us for the good of the forest.

Brendan Curran, a Master's student in Applied Geography at New Mexico State University, served as our Conservation/GIS Intern this summer, producing detailed maps of key areas in the Los Padres National Forest using technical Geographic Information System (GIS) data. He also spent some time in the field, surveying for illegal off-road vehicle routes in wilderness areas (all while juggling the new responsibilities of fatherhood!)

Amanda Cardenas was our 2010 summer law clerk. A second-year law student at the University of Washington, Amanda helped us research legal issues pertaining to water rights, species protection, wilderness, penalties for off-road vehicle trespass, and public access, while also preparing several formal information requests to government agencies.

Kyung Koh, our Conservation Intern during Spring 2010, gathered technical mapping data. Kyung also conducted extensive research for our Black Bear protection program, and researched issues surrounding a significant source of air pollution in the Sespe Oil Field in the southern Los Padres National Forest.

ForestWatch would also like to bid farewell to **Phil Tseng**, our Board Secretary/Treasurer, who moved out of the area earlier this year. Phil served on our Board since 2005, helping us file our first lawsuit (which we won, securing the release of government documents relating to oil drilling next to the Los Padres National Forest). Join us in wishing Phil all the best!

EYE ON CARRIZO

New management plan for the Carrizo Plain National Monument serves as a step in the right direction - ForestWatch will keep it that way.

Heralding another chapter in the **protection of the Carrizo Plain National Monument**, in April 2010 federal officials approved the first-ever management plan for this ecologically sensitive area in southeastern San Luis Obispo County.

Often referred to as "California's Serengeti," the Carrizo Plain is a vast expanse of golden grasslands and stark ridges. Honoring the area's high biodiversity, limited human impacts, and rare geological and cultural features, it was declared a National Monument in 2001, and now includes more than 246,000 acres of public lands - perhaps the largest native grassland remaining in all of California!

While not without its faults, the new management plan serves as a step in

the right direction. It prohibits the use of off-road vehicles in most areas of the monument, establishes guidelines to protect native plants and animals, and places the highest level of protection on 62,455 acres of the monument, committing to managing those lands to fully protect their wilderness character.

However, the plan fails to use the best available science to improve the management of commercial livestock grazing on the monument. The plan also allows for some levels of oil exploration and possible development in the monument, which ForestWatch vigorously opposes. ForestWatch was instrumental in strengthening the guidelines governing oil and gas development on the monument, making them more enforceable.

More than 15,000 comments were received on the draft plan, the vast majority calling for strong protections for the monument. With the management plan complete, ForestWatch will now closely follow BLM's implementation of the plan to ensure that its objectives are achieved and its standards are followed. We'll do everything possible to make sure that this special place remains wild and undeveloped.



Wildflowers and a vernal pool on the Carrizo Plain.

Photo: Mikaku

YOUR VOICE IN THE FOREST

ForestWatch files a lawsuit to help the public be heard

Earlier this year, ForestWatch filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking to restore the public's longstanding right to participate in land use decisions on National Forests. At the end of the day, ForestWatch was successful in protecting nearly 20,000 acres of native chaparral vegetation in Santa Barbara County, but leaving for another day the dispute over the public's right to comment on and appeal projects on national forest lands.

Before 1992, the U.S. Forest Service consistently allowed the public to review, comment on, and appeal development activities such as timber sales, vegetation clearing, road construction, etc.

But that year, the Forest Service proposed eliminating the public's longstanding right to participate in projects like these. The proposal was widely opposed, and Congress responded by enacting a law requiring that all "proposed actions of the Forest Service concerning projects and activities implementing land and resource management plans" must be subject to public notice, comment, and appeal.

Despite this clear requirement, in 2009 officials with the Los Padres National Forest approved the Tepusquet Fuels Treatment Project in northern Santa Barbara County. That project involved **clearing vegetation across 19,300 acres of forest land using chainsaws, dozers, masticators, and prescribed burning**. Officials approved the project without preparing an Environmental Assessment, and without giving the public any opportunity to review and comment on the details of the project, or to appeal it to higher-level forest officials.

While supporting some elements of the project, ForestWatch and other groups disagreed with some of the components, such as clearing vegetation far away from the wildland-urban interface. Also, the 2009 La Brea Fire burned more than 90,000 acres in and around the project area, calling into question the wisdom of clearing even more native chaparral in this already-disturbed watershed.

In our lawsuit, we argued that if ForestWatch and other members of the public had been permitted to comment on the project, and to administratively appeal it, we could have convinced the Forest Service to prepare an environmental assessment, which may have convinced forest officials to eliminate the project's inappropriate components.

As a result of our lawsuit, the Forest Service decided to cancel the project. While this had the effect of protecting nearly 20,000 acres of native chaparral from unnecessary clearing, it also rendered our lawsuit moot. In the meantime, ForestWatch will continue to track development proposals and land use activities on the Los Padres, sticking up for the public's right to guide the management of our public lands.



Northern Santa Barbara County, some of the area proposed for vegetation clearing

patagonia

THANKS PATAGONIA

Patagonia was founded in 1973 by Yvon Chouinard, and is headquartered along with its Great Pacific Iron Works store in Ventura, CA. Since that time it has become one of the most inspirational and environmentally focused businesses in our region and beyond. Their mission to build the best product while using business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis can be seen in all they do - which includes their support and encouragement for the work of Los Padres ForestWatch.

Patagonia provided ForestWatch with an initial grant in 2005, which helped our fledgling organization find its wings. In subsequent years their environmental giving has helped in so many other ways including the prevention of expanded oil drilling in the forest, protection of the California condor through our microtrash cleanups, and support of our current efforts to establish additional wilderness within the Los Padres. Great Pacific Iron Works has always generously provided us with a variety of items for auction and raffles at our fundraising events, and additional grants from Patagonia have allowed ForestWatch to bring the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival to the central coast for the past three years. Patagonia staff has also demonstrated great personal commitment to the work of ForestWatch through their employee giving program.

Los Padres ForestWatch is honored to be able to call Patagonia our partner in conservation. We value their commitment, their support, and their insights into the issues that we face locally. We look forward to continuing our partnership as we work to protect these areas that we all treasure so profoundly.