

OSA Outlook

See inside for special section on Urban Farming and Community Gardens in San Jose!

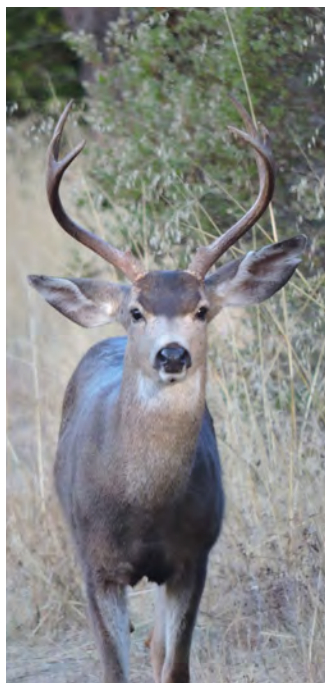


FALL 2016



Fall: A Time of Preparation

Every evening, the sun slips behind the Santa Cruz Mountain Range a bit earlier. Shorter days and golden, parched hills mean winter is coming — it's time to prepare. Animals and birds are fluffing up, growing thicker coats to stay warm and dry. Amphibians have mating on their minds, they'll soon emerge from their summer hideouts to gather in ponds and streams to breed. Male deer are also preparing to mate — a period called rut, they spar with other males, vying for females (or does) in their territory.



Visitors to Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve, by the Llagas Meadow, or to Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve might spot a creature that is also found on dinner plates at this time of year: turkeys. California's wild turkeys were introduced by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the 20th century for hunting. Now, some fear these non-native birds are displacing other California critters. Nonetheless, they can be fun to watch — as long as you keep a safe distance.

JOIN US!



Celebrate Urban Farming and Enjoy Delicious Food!

FREE ADMISSION

Saturday, September 10 | 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve
550 Palm Ave., Morgan Hill, CA 95037



Featuring:

Family Entertainment | Kids Crafts & Activities
Cooking Demos | Craft Food Workshops

Community Partners:

Veggielution – La Mesa Verde – Garden To Table

Sponsors:

BayAreaParent™



Peninsula Open Space Trust

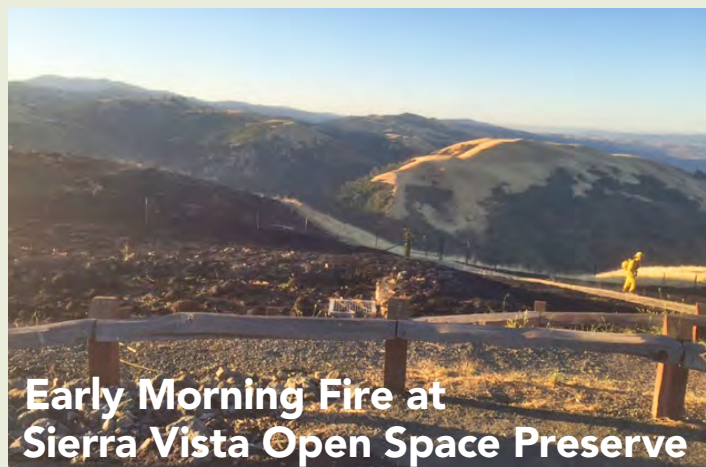
Preserve Open Space Close to Home

American Ag Credit

Register for this free event:

www.CoyoteValley2016.eventbrite.com

OPEN SPACE ROUND-UP



Early Morning Fire at Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve

Cattle Grazing Prevents Spread of Grass Fire

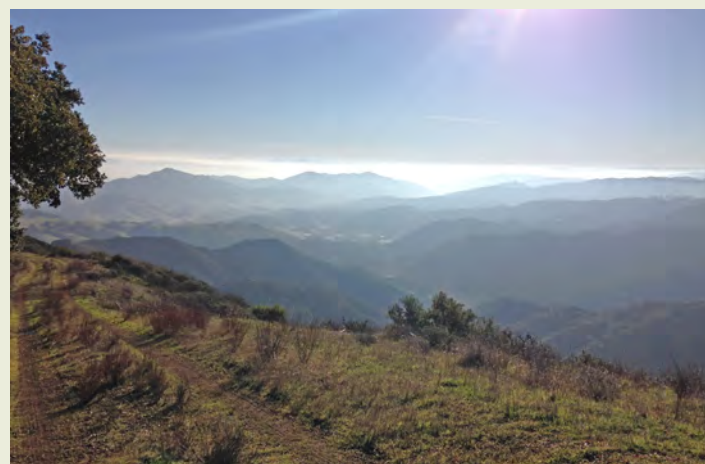
A grass fire broke out on July 14 at about 2:30 a.m. at Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve. Thankfully, there were no injuries and due to quick response times by the San Jose Fire Department, CalFire, and the Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department, the fire was contained to about five acres on the preserve. The cause of the fire was attributed to fireworks, according to Fire Captain Chris Salcido.

Megan Robinson, Lead Open Space Technician, was onsite at Sierra Vista early on the morning of the fire and said, "We're grateful that the San Jose Fire Department, CalFire and the Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department responded to this fire so quickly — it could have been a much more serious incident. We're also grateful to our grazing operators as we believe our grazing practices at Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve helped to reduce fuel loads and prevented the fire from spreading more rapidly."

The Authority's team of Open Space Technicians immediately cleaned up the fire residue and made minor repairs to the cattle enclosure. The preserve was able to open the same day of the fire.



Authority Acquires Pristine Acreage in Southern Santa Cruz Mountain Region



The Authority has finalized its purchase of 50 pristine acres located in the foothills of the Southern Santa Cruz Mountains, west of Bailey Avenue and McKean Road in south Santa Clara County. The land will become part of Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve, which comprises nearly 4,000 acres with more than 8 miles of trails winding through woodlands, meadows and meandering creeks.

The property is part of the Llagas Creek watershed, where it serves the vital role of capturing rainfall and conveying it to surrounding streams and downstream reservoirs. The property also features stunning views of Uvas Canyon to the southeast and rolling hills and ranchland to the northeast. The Authority purchased the 50-acre property for \$100,000.

Open Space Authority Grants Funds to City of Santa Clara for Urban Open Space and Community Garden

The Authority's Board of Directors has approved allocation of \$425,000 from its 20% Funding Program to the City of Santa Clara towards development of a 3-acre city park on land adjacent to the trailhead for the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail. The park will serve as a buffer between the busy San Tomas Expressway corridor and the trailhead, as well as enhance outdoor education and recreation opportunities in this park poor, heavily urbanized area.

who
am I
?

Don't be alarmed if you spot me on the trail: I'm not eager to hurt you. If you give me plenty of space, we'll get along fine. Watch where you step if you're off trail, though — I don't take kindly to close encounters. On hot days, I do like to bask in the sun, but in cooler weather, I'm likely to curl up under a rock or in a hole. I'm identifiable by my triangular head and distinctive tail.



COYOTE VALLEY FAMILY HARVEST FEAST



Annual Family Harvest Feast to Focus on Urban Farming and Community Gardens

"Urban Agriculture" is the theme of this year's Coyote Valley Family Harvest Feast. This annual feast celebrates the harvest, the agricultural heritage of our region, and highlights the many benefits of our remaining farmlands and open spaces. Local urban farming innovators — Veggielution, La Mesa Verde and Garden to Table will help create a fun, hands-on learning experience and a family-friendly celebration for the greater community.

Fresh Food, Farms... and Cities?

Go out for a walk or a bike ride near downtown San Jose, and you might be surprised by what you find tucked into a formerly vacant lot or beside a freeway overpass — rows of corn, tomato plants, and sunflowers. Chicken coops and bee boxes. Farm stands selling freshly harvested foods. Fields of green among the concrete and asphalt.

There's a growing movement in cities around the world to create these kinds of spaces, an idea known as 'urban agriculture'. Urban agriculture comprises a variety of initiatives within developed cities to grow and sell locally-harvested food, including community gardens, farmer's markets, backyard/roof-top/indoor gardens, school gardens, commercial food-growing operations, neighborhood fruit harvesting, beekeeping — and even raising small animals like goats, rabbits and chickens.

A Growing Movement in San Jose & Silicon Valley

Urban agriculture is a major priority here in Santa Clara County. The City of San Jose listed increasing agricultural land use as a policy objective in the Envision 2040 General Plan. In June 2015, the County Board of Supervisors, with leadership from Supervisors Yeager and Wasserman, approved a resolution for cities within Santa Clara County to adopt Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones, pursuant to Assembly Bill 551. The Open Space Authority identifies agricultural preservation as a key strategy in the *Santa Clara Valley Greenprint*, the agency's 30-year conservation visioning document. Here are some of the reasons our community has embraced urban agriculture:

- **Healthy, affordable & accessible foods:** Urban farming initiatives provide a way for all community members to have a source of fresh, healthy, and affordable food.
- **Jobs & economic opportunity:** Urban farming initiatives create jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, and potential cost-savings for landowners.
- **Community-building & conservation education:** Urban farms and gardens provide spaces for the community to meet and opportunities to teach kids about healthy eating and the importance of nature, the environment, and open spaces.



GROWING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY



The Open Space Authority is excited to partner with three leading urban garden and farming organizations in its jurisdiction. They are transforming the way that families and communities in the Bay Area and beyond think about food and nutrition, while nurturing social interactions and building strong, healthy communities.

Veggielution

San Jose, CA | veggielution.org



“It’s not about pounds of food produced, but rather, about the connections that are created among people and the leadership that emerges from the community.”

Veggielution is a thriving 6-acre urban farm in Emma Prush Farm Park in East San Jose. In its eight years, the organization has grown to become part of the fabric of the Eastside community, with a busy farm stand, community classes and hundreds of volunteers doing everything from planting, cultivating, weeding and harvesting.

Cayce Hill, Veggielution’s executive director, believes that good food, local community, and social networks — the old-fashioned kind with real people —

are what make us all healthy and strong. “Veggielution provides a sense of place, community voice, ownership and stewardship. Food becomes the platform for bringing people together in a public outdoor space,” said Cayce. “It’s not about pounds of food produced, but rather, about the connections that are created among people and the leadership that emerges from the community.”

Garden to Table

San Jose, CA | garden2table.org



Garden to Table promotes access to healthy foods by harvesting surplus fruit from local trees and distributing to low-income neighborhoods. They promote public policies that support the growth of urban agriculture, such as AB234 which allows sales of backyard produce to food businesses. The organization also operates Taylor Street Farm, a lush 1-acre urban farm and farm stand near downtown San Jose.

Zach Lewis, Garden to Table’s executive director, helped start Garden to Table when he was an urban planning graduate student at San Jose State University alongside a group of grassroots activists. Zach wanted to connect people with the source of their food, and has said, “If you put a seed in the ground and pull a carrot out, you’re going to have a very different perception of your food than if you buy that carrot at the store.”

Zach sees a direct connection between urban farming and the local economy, and said, “We have very a specific intention to understand the local food economy, and how that can be leveraged to create more opportunities for the local food system, both in terms of creating good jobs, and also unlocking the potential of vacant lots and neighborhood fruit trees to better provide low-income neighborhoods with fresh, healthy food at a lower cost.”

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La Mesa Verde, Sacred Heart Community Services

San Jose, CA | sacredheartcs.org



La Mesa Verde (LMV), a network of urban gardeners based at Sacred Heart Community Service of San Jose, was created in September 2009 after the economic downturn to provide all materials necessary to low-income, working poor, and long-term unemployed residents in growing organic vegetables in their own backyards. The network has improved access to fresh food and supported low-income families in taking charge of their food choices by growing healthy and organic produce at home. LMV members are currently organizing around the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone ordinance in San Jose to create incentives for turning vacant lots into gardens so families without yards can also grow their own food.

La Mesa Verde’s Organizing Director, Jamie Chen, says La Mesa Verde helps “people draw their personal ‘food maps’ and identify the path of food from farm to the table.” She believes gardening is especially beneficial for those who are sick or healing from illness or injury. “Gardening becomes a way for people with illness or recovering from illness or injury to gain power over their food and health and meet their personal nutritional needs in an affordable way. Plus, the act of gardening can be transformative. Just looking at a plant growing can be a source of healing.”

While the network has impressive outcomes including doubling vegetable intake and substantial financial savings by families, Jamie asserts that the most important outcomes are not so easy to measure, “La Mesa Verde has eight volunteer committees and a leadership structure that empowers people and leads to individual and collective self-sufficiency. We want to create a food justice movement that is inclusive — not specific to creed, class or race.”

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Ways you can get involved:

- **Come to the Family Harvest Feast on September 10** — Learn from these local urban agriculture leaders and organizations how to create your own home and community-based gardens. Whether you live in an apartment or on a 1/4 acre lot — you will learn how to grow your own fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables and create a bit of the Valley of Heart’s Delight in your own neighborhood.
- **Buy local at a farm stand or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** — Both Veggielution’s and Garden to Table’s Taylor Street farm stands are open every Saturday through the summer season. Stop by to pick up fresh, healthy, and locally-grown food.
- **Bring the kids** — Learning how food is grown has the power to change children’s lives. Every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Veggielution offers a Youth Garden program, featuring an all-ages family-friendly garden tour, crafts, games, and a chance to visit the chickens (advance reservations needed: <http://veggielution.org/youth-garden>).
- **Volunteer on the farm** — Both Veggielution and Garden to Table host free public work days where you can volunteer to help with planting, weeding, farm maintenance, and more.
- **Volunteer to harvest unwanted fruit** — Garden to Table seeks volunteers to help coordinate their program to harvest donated fruit from neighborhood trees. To find out more and volunteer, go to: <http://garden2table.org/neighborhood-harvest-leader>.
- **Donate** — Veggielution, Garden to Table, and La Mesa Verde (through Sacred Heart Community Service) are all nonprofit organizations that appreciate your financial support to grow their programs. Find out more and donate on their websites.
- **Get informed** — Learn about federal, state, and local policies that affect urban farming. In San Jose, local urban agriculture advocates hope the city will pass the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone ordinance, already passed by Santa Clara County, which would enable local landowners to get a tax break for allowing people to farm on vacant land.



Coyote Valley: Our History and Our Future

Long before the region was called “Silicon Valley,” Santa Clara Valley was one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world. Fruit orchards filled the valley, growing apricots, cherries, prunes, berries, and nursery crops. The region was nicknamed the “Valley of Heart’s Delight,” inspired by the abundance of local produce. People of diverse ancestry came from around the country and the world for a chance to enjoy this prosperity — including farmers and farm workers of Mexican, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Italian descent.



We can still glimpse this important Bay Area history by visiting the Coyote Valley, a 7,500-acre stretch of open space between San Jose and Morgan Hill. The Coyote Valley has valuable water resources, exceptional recreational opportunities, farm and ranchland, and anchors a critical wildlife linkage between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. As the last remaining vestige of the *Valley of the Heart’s Delight*, Coyote Valley is arguably the most important agricultural and natural landscape remaining in the South Bay. The Open Space Authority will work with agriculture, development, and environmental interests to re-envision and re-invent the Coyote Valley as a productive environmental and economic asset, capitalizing on and investing in Coyote Valley’s abundant natural assets.



Last year the Open Space Authority celebrated the grand opening of the Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve, 348-acres of rolling, oak-studded hillsides, and four miles of new trail for hikers, equestrians and bicyclists. It’s a great place to visit and way to explore this important local region.

Come See for Yourself!



Join us on **September 10, 2016**, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., for the Coyote Valley Family Harvest Feast, a celebration of healthy, delicious, and farm-fresh food.

This family-friendly festival will include:

- Free admission
- Home gardening demonstrations
- Cooking demonstrations led by expert local chefs
- Food trucks featuring locally-grown ingredients
- Music & entertainment from around the world
- Kid-friendly activities, including crafts
- Guided hikes through the scenic Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve.
- Free parking on-site
- Free shuttle bus service from San Jose and Milpitas

Register for this free event:

www.CoyoteValley2016.eventbrite.com

Community Assessment for Parks and Open Space Identifies Six Neighborhoods with Significant Barriers to Open Space Access

The Authority’s recently released *Understanding Our Community: A Community Assessment Project* provides a detailed assessment of the Authority’s jurisdiction which comprises about 1.4 million residents. The report and its findings is a first step leading towards deeper and richer engagement with the diversity of individuals, communities and organizations that represent the many backgrounds, ages, and experiences that the Authority is so fortunate to serve.

“Our overall goals in completing this research are to expand and improve the quality and reach of the Open Space Authority’s efforts in connecting communities to Nature and the outdoors,” said Marc Landgraf, External Affairs Manager for the Authority. “The assessment data also helped us to identify six areas of the county that face greater barriers to accessing parks and open space lands. With

this information, we can prioritize these neighborhoods and ensure we are equitably serving all of the Authority’s constituents.”



The report defines Deep Engagement Communities where residents experience barriers to accessing open space that include language, income level, and access to private transportation. Based on the California EPA’s CalEnviroScreen, which was used in the assessment, these

communities have greater environmental burdens that include air and water pollution, traffic density, and solid waste sites and facilities. Together, the Deep Engagement Communities include approximately 205,000 residents, or 15% of the total population in the Authority’s jurisdiction.

“The Open Space Authority works diligently to connect all of our communities with open space and all of the critical benefits they provide,” said Marc Landgraf. “The Authority will launch increased community engagement and form strategic partnerships with community leaders and organizations of Deep Engagement Communities in order to help balance the distribution of parks and open space amenities across the Authority’s jurisdiction.”

Visit www.openspaceauthority.org to review the full report.

August Events

Nature Photography for Beginners

Saturday, August 20, 2016
4–7 p.m. | Ulistac Natural Area

Join nature photographer Ron Horii for this fascinating and engaging learning experience. Bring your own camera, phone, tablet or whatever you like to take pictures with and Ron will give a lecture about the basics of photography followed by a walk to observe nature as a photographer would. Learn how to take engaging pictures from someone who is a passionate nature and community photographer.



Latino Outdoors Wellness Walk

Sunday, August 21, 2016
9:30–10:30 a.m. | Alum Rock Park

Join Latino Outdoors at Alum Rock Park for an easy, gentle hike of about 2 miles along the creek. Meet in the Eagle Rock parking lot inside the park. We will have Spanish speaking co-leaders for this hike.



Urban Open Space Grant Program — Deadline for Grant Applications is August 26, 2016

The Open Space Authority’s grant program will help people connect with nature and gain access to open space such as parks, preserves, and trails in their own neighborhoods. This competitive annual grant program is funded by Measure Q and will provide funding for projects in one or more of these categories:

- Environmental Stewardship and Restoration
- Parks, Trails, and Public Access
- Environmental Education
- Urban Agriculture/Food Systems

Eligible organizations include public agencies, schools and school districts, and nonprofits. The grants range from \$2,500 to \$250,000. Visit www.openspaceauthority.org/urban for details.

who
am I
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ANSWER: I’m a western rattlesnake, the only type of venomous snake found in the Santa Clara Valley. I have a chunky body and a set of rattles on my tail — if I’m shaking my rattles at you, you’re too close. I use my poison to disable a variety of small mammals and birds — yummy! I come in a variety of colors to blend in with my surroundings. Usually, I’m olive, tan or brown with white stripes. Also, I give birth to live baby snakes. You can spot little rattlesnakes (called neonates) between August and November.

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openspaceauthority.org

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Family Fandango!

Co-sponsored with:

Saturday, August 13 | 5 to 8 p.m.
Santa Teresa Joice-Gulnac-Bernal
History Park
372 Manila Drive San Jose, CA 95119



Come and enjoy this fun family event by County Parks, co-sponsored by the Open Space Authority. Celebrate local Hispanic culture and history. Watch performances by the youth of our community in the form of Mariachis and Folkloric dancing. There will be games, arts and crafts and food to eat. Entrance for this event is free of charge. Enjoy the summer evening with games and music!

Coyote Valley Family Harvest Feast



Saturday, September 10 | 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve
550 Palm Ave., Morgan Hill, CA 95037



Celebrate the season with family and friends and enjoy the bountiful harvest of our local farms. Want to start growing fruits and vegetables at home? Learn from expert local chefs, growers, and entrepreneurs. There will be family entertainment, kids crafts and activities, cooking demos, and craft food. Register for this free event:

www.CoyoteValley2016.eventbrite.com.

