

OSA Outlook



Coyote Valley Provides Safe Passage for Wildlife

The Open Space Authority, Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have released the *Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study* that confirms wildlife species are using the Coyote Valley floor to move between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. Located between San Jose and Morgan Hill, Coyote Valley is one of only two remaining regional land linkages in the South Bay allowing for wildlife passage between these mountain ranges.



The study concludes that the valley is an essential travel route for a variety of wildlife species, ranging from small to large mammals. Coyote Valley's importance as a regionally significant wildlife corridor supports the need for coordinated efforts among the City of San Jose, Santa Clara Valley Water District, conservation and resource management agencies, transportation agencies, and private land owners. The recommendations of the *Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study* will inform state, regional and local land use planning, development projects and restoration efforts. See pages 4-5 for photos and more details on the wildlife in Coyote Valley.



Open Space Authority Partners With Children's Discovery Museum on Bridge to Nature Project

The Authority's Board of Directors has authorized its first major Measure Q Urban Open Space project with a \$308,000 award to the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose. The Authority's funds will support *Bridge to Nature: Bill's Backyard*, an innovative nature play space, which will be located on the Museum's campus, next to the Guadalupe River in the heart of downtown San Jose.



Bridge to Nature will promote unstructured outdoor play and interactive nature experiences for kids and families, with a dry creek bed, raised and vertical growing beds, native and drought tolerant plantings, water catchment systems and areas to observe birds and insects. A trailhead-style information kiosk will introduce families to surrounding local natural areas, parks and open spaces, where they can explore and connect with nature.

Marilee Jennings, Children's Discovery Museum Executive Director, said, "We are thrilled with this major investment by the Open Space Authority and honored to be the first recipient of Measure Q funding for an urban project. These funds will allow *Bill's Backyard* to become a safe learning environment for urban families to come learn about and connect with nature."



Bay Area Wilderness Training

On March 5th, in the wind and the rain, twelve teachers, youth workers, and naturalists headed out to Rancho Cañada del Oro to learn how to lead hikes for youth. While they huddled under some pop-up shade structures, staff from Bay Area Wilderness Training and the Open Space Authority warmed up the group with games and lessons on maps and *Leave No Trace*. Over the course of the next eight hours the group grew from relative strangers into a close-knit community of educators and outdoor

leaders. Each participant had an opportunity to lead the group during the course of a four-mile hike. While some leaders shared their favorite trail activities for youth, others honed their group management skills to keep the group on track. With support from Latino Outdoors, the group participated in dialogue and reflection on the importance of culture and connection with nature. Participants



ended the day with new tools, tricks and tips for how to plan and lead a hiking trip for youth. This spring, Bay Area Wilderness Training will be offering two more Hiking Leadership Training courses for teachers and youth workers in Santa Clara County. For

more information about these and other courses please visit www.bawt.org/training or contact the Program Director, Aaron Gilbert at aaron@bawt.org.



Special Thanks

The Open Space Authority would like to recognize and thank the Shrader family for their generous cash and land donation this year. This significant contribution supports the Authority's mission of conserving the natural environment, supporting agriculture, and connecting people to nature. Proceeds from this gift will fund trails and public access projects in Coyote Valley and other open space preserves.

who
am I
?

From tip to tip, I'm the size of a tall man. My favorite dish is rabbit or squirrel, although I have been known to dine on bigger, or even dead, critters. I live in a fine home built high in a tree or on a cliff — it can be wider than 5 feet. My mate and I raise about two babes a year there. One final clue: My kin are found in many parts of the Northern Hemisphere and I'm even the national bird of several countries, including Mexico and Germany. Thanks to conservation efforts, my numbers have been on the upswing!

Community Offers Ideas for Open Space Projects in Neighborhoods



Members of the Open Space Authority's Board of Directors and Citizens Advisory Committee, along with Grant Administrator Megan Dreger, took the Urban Open Space Grant Program on the road last month and held seven community meetings throughout the Authority's jurisdiction. Hundreds of community members attended and shared ideas for the types of outdoor experiences they would like to have in their own neighborhoods.



"We asked people what barriers they face in accessing open space in their neighborhoods," said Megan Dreger, the Authority's Grant Administrator. "Several common themes came out of these meetings such as the distance to local parks and lack of transportation, financial barriers such as entrance fees and parking, and safety was a concern for some. We saw a lot of enthusiasm around the ideas of community gardens, local trails for biking and commuting to school and work – and one participant came up with the idea of a tool lending library so residents could work together to keep their neighborhoods well-maintained." If you didn't get a chance to attend a meeting, you can still give your ideas by taking the survey at openspaceauthority.org/urban.

The Urban Open Space Grant Program is funded with proceeds from Measure

Q, a \$24 parcel tax which voters passed with 68% of the vote in 2014. The Authority estimates that Measure Q will generate \$2 million per year for urban open space projects and \$1 million will be available for the Urban Open Space Grant Program for the next fiscal year.

Urban Open Space Grant Program Details

The draft grant guidelines will be finalized in June 2016. Public agencies, non-profit organizations, schools and school districts within the Authority's jurisdiction are eligible applicants for the grant program.

"We expect to award between 10 and 15 grants, aiming for a diversity of project types including Environmental Stewardship and Restoration, Urban Agriculture/Food Systems, Environmental Education, and Parks, Trails, and Public Access," said Megan.

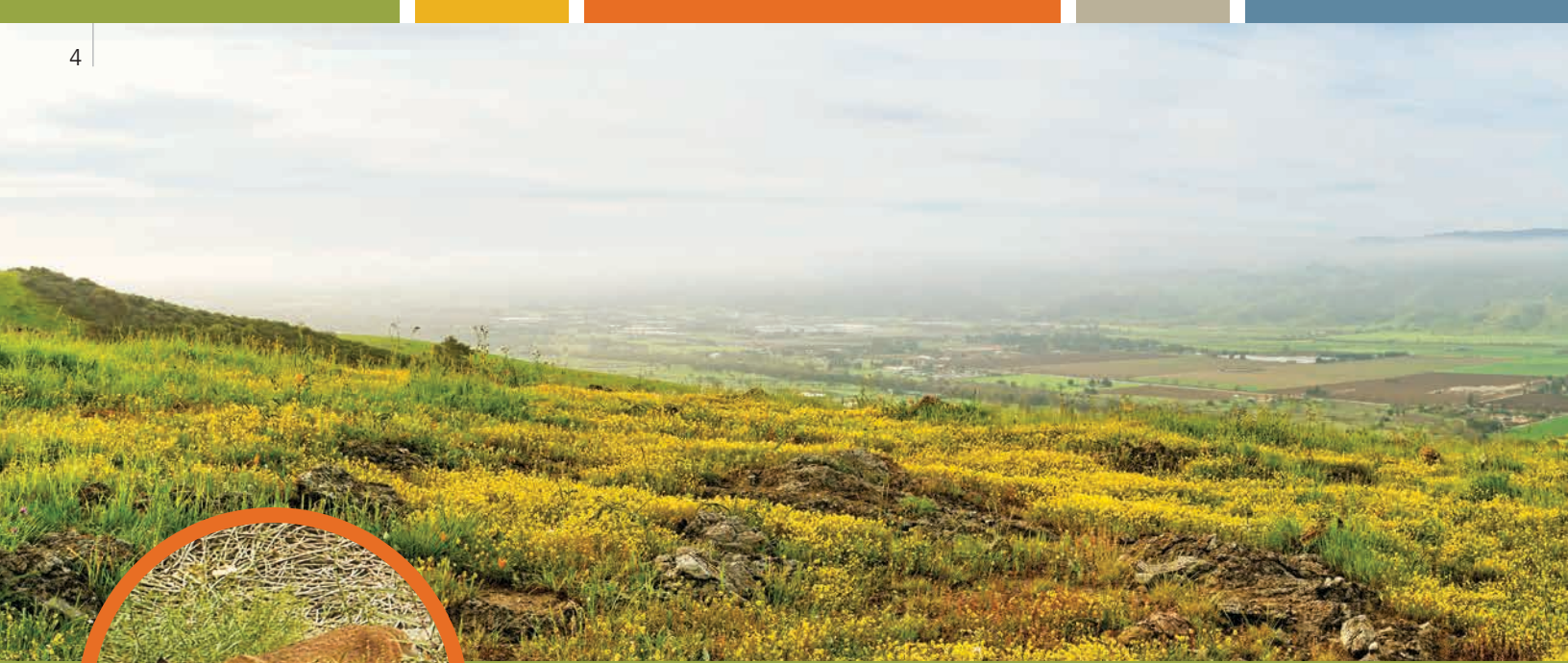


Grants will likely range from \$2,500 - \$250,000.

Desirable project elements include:

- Strong public support
- Implementation through partnerships/collaboration
- Benefitting underserved communities
- Featuring sustainable materials, systems and practices
- Achieving multiple conservation benefits
- Leveraging multiple funding sources

Final grant materials are expected to be released in July 2016. The Authority will hold a Public Workshop for potential grant applicants to provide an overview of the Program, including how to apply for grants. To receive email updates, sign up on our website at: openspaceauthority.org/urban.



B R I D G I N G T H E G A

Species Extinction is Accelerating on a Global Scale

The issue of habitat destruction and fragmentation in Santa Clara County mirrors a global phenomenon that is impacting species all over the world. According to the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), scientists estimate we are now losing species at thousands of times the natural rate, with as many as thirty to fifty percent of all species heading toward extinction by mid-century. CBD states that ninety-nine percent of currently threatened species are at grave risk due to habitat loss, invasive species, and climate change impacts – all caused by human activities.

Conserving Local Populations Essential for Long-term Wildlife Species Survival

The Center for Biological Diversity contends that most benefits of biodiversity occur at a local level, and conserving local populations is the only way to ensure the genetic diversity that is critical for a species' long-term survival. Healthy wildlife populations comprise a natural community of multiple, interdependent species, that includes plants, trees, animals, insects, fish and amphibians. This biodiversity helps ensure the resilience of ecosystems, upon which all human communities depend.

“Wildlife habitat in the Santa Clara County region is becoming fragmented due to construction of roads, housing and other types of buildings – which puts wildlife such as mountain lion, bobcat, badger and coyote at risk of becoming geographically isolated and eventually dying out. The study findings confirm the importance of Coyote Valley to wildlife movement and inform actions that must be taken to prevent local extinction of these species and ensure their viability.”

GALLI BASSON, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST, OPEN SPACE AUTHORITY





P F O R W I L D L I F E

Study Validates Use of Coyote Valley as Corridor for Safe Passage of Wildlife

"The purpose of the *Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study* was to identify active wildlife pathways across the valley floor," said Tanya Diamond, wildlife ecologist and co-principal of Pathways for Wildlife, who conducted the study. "We set up cameras to document wildlife movement and found that deer, bobcats, coyotes, gray fox, and skunks are consistently moving throughout the valley floor on a regular basis. Another component of the study is collection of scat and hair for genetic sampling to determine if genetic flow or isolation is occurring for two study species — the bobcat and ground squirrel."

The cameras documented several pathways that animals are using to travel between the Santa Cruz Mountain foothills across the Coyote Valley floor, to Coyote Ridge and the Diablo Range on the east side of Highway 101. Both large and small animals, including bobcat, deer, coyote, gray fox, raccoon, and ground squirrels were sighted along the creek systems, which indicates that both Fisher and Coyote Creeks serve as important linkages. Cameras also recorded bobcats traveling from central to northern Coyote Valley with the potential to reach Coyote Ridge from below Highway 101 through several tunnels, or culverts. This study was produced by the Open Space Authority, Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Barriers Prevent Ease of Wildlife Passage

The study found that major physical barriers to wildlife passage exist at six sites within the study area. These barriers include fencing at several locations and culverts that are filled with debris or blocked by concrete slabs which restrict or prevent wildlife movement and passage. Several areas with high instances of roadkill were found to correlate with these blocked culverts and fencing.

Presence of Young Animals Signals Hope for the Future

The study's findings also showed the presence of juvenile deer, coyote and bobcat traveling with their parents. This finding highlights the significance of Coyote Valley as critical habitat in that it provides food and water resources, breeding and birthing habitat and also allows the young offspring to establish their own ranges — thereby setting the stage for future generations.

To download a copy of the report, visit openspaceauthority.org/preservation/wildlifelinkage.



Measure A: Santa Clara County Park Charter Fund Extension

Voters will weigh in on extending the Santa Clara County Park Charter Fund on the June 7, 2016 ballot. The Park Charter Fund measure would renew this funding for 15 years and provide approximately \$53 million from existing County revenue for



County Parks on an annual basis. The Ballot Measure states the funds would allow County Parks to continue protecting and preserving local parks, improving access to natural areas, open space, trails and recreational opportunities, keeping restrooms and facilities clean and

safe, and maintaining, operating, acquiring and improving local parks. The funds would be allocated at 10% for property acquisition, 10% for park development and improvement and the remainder for park operations. To stay informed and read more on Measure A, visit www.sccgov.org/sites/parks/Whats-Happening/Pages/investing-Parks.aspx.

Measure AA: San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention, and Habitat Restoration Program

The \$12 per year parcel tax measure slated for the June 7, 2016 ballot, also known as the Clean and Healthy Bay Ballot Measure, earmarks revenue for the restoration of wetlands surrounding the San Francisco Bay. The tax would generate approximately \$25 million per year, totaling \$500 million to fund shoreline projects to protect and restore San Francisco Bay.



Measure AA funds would be provided as grants to restoration projects throughout the Bay Area. Projects will be funded in all nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority's jurisdiction, prioritized based on their positive impact on the San Francisco Bay as a whole. To learn more about Measure AA, visit <http://www.sfbayrestore.org/>.

OPEN SPACE ROUND-UP

Happy Volunteers, Happy Preserves

At the heart of the Open Space Authority are the volunteers who bring our outreach to life through the amazing work they do, but without someone to orchestrate these efforts, there would be no way to get involved. That's where Dana Litwin comes in, our volunteer programs administrator who has grown this program tremendously. Dana's great accomplishments not only shine in the agency but nationwide too, as she was asked to present her insights at this year's National Conference on Volunteering and Service. We asked her to share a sneak peek with us:

Q: In your opinion, what is the most important part of the volunteer program?

I consider the mutual benefits to be the 3 C's of Happy Volunteers: Connection, Convenience, and Comfort. The biggest being connection; volunteers are the best advocates for the agency in the community, and inspire others to join or support in other ways, while expanding the capacity of OSA's work. They keep the legacy of the agency alive, while making new friends and reaping the rewards of doing meaningful work! Convenience means volunteer tasks are flexible, self-scheduled, or easy to get to. Which in



turn puts less stress on staff resources and greatly increase the capacity of the agency's mission. Comfort refers to volunteers and staff having good rapport, understanding they are highly valued in the agency, and feeling physically and emotionally safe with each other and in their assigned tasks because they have the proper training and equipment to do their jobs.

Q: What opportunities do you see in the future?

We're expanding all volunteer programs, and I'm especially excited about our new youth engagement policy, and setting up roles for teens to connect with nature and develop into future conservation leaders.

Open Space Authority Receives Merit Award at the 2016 California Trails & Greenways Conference

Each year, the California Trails and Greenways Conference celebrates groundbreaking work in parks and recreation. This year's Merit Award honors the Open Space Authority's hard work, unique partnerships, and social responsibility that contributed to acquiring the newly-protected Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve.

"The Conference Awards Committee was very impressed with the purchase of this important property and by the dedication of the Open Space Authority in their multi-year effort to preserve the area for its natural values and trail opportunities," said Charlie Willard, Chair of the California Trails and Greenways Conference Awards Program.





Summer Volunteer Opportunities

Get your hands dirty, restoring and preserving open space lands! No experience required, we provide all the necessary training and tools! Register through our website at openspaceauthority.org.

Trash Clean-Up at Sierra Vista

Sat., June 11, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve

Fence Removal at Sierra Vista

Sat., July 9, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



Family Friendly Outdoors in the Bay Area

Visit Alum Rock Park and Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve on NBC Bay Area's Open Road with Doug McConnell

Tune in Sunday June 12th to join Doug as he tags along on a family visit to Alum Rock Park. Learn about the park's history and multitude of family friendly activities. Then hike with them as they head to Sierra Vista, witness sweeping views of Silicon Valley, and finish the day with a picnic on the Aquila Loop Trail. You won't want to miss these opportunities for family friendly activities in the Bay Area!

Sunday June 12th at 6:30pm on NBC Bay Area



Celebrate & Learn About Urban Farming & Enjoy Local Food

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, Sept. 10
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Coyote Valley
Open Space Preserve

Visit openspaceauthority.org for event updates.

Summer Activities



Starry Nights

Join our astronomers all summer long for amazing views of the night skies!
Rancho Cañada del Oro
Open Space Preserve
June 25th, 9:15 - 10:30pm

Binocular Stargazing

Learn how to use your binoculars to see the stars and even planets!
Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve
July 23rd & August 13th, 8:45 - 10pm
Photo by Bill Adams



Fandango!

Celebrate Hispanic culture and history with games, music, and food!
Santa Teresa Joice Gulnac Bernal
Ranch
August 13th, 5 - 8pm

For more information on our activities, visit openspaceauthority.org/activities

who
am I
?

ANSWER: I'm a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). The gold is found on the back of my neck in adults. You should see me fly: I can zoom more than 150 miles per hour and perform a breathtaking type of "sky-dancing" to mark my territory or find a mate. I live in the Santa Clara Valley year-round and I prefer open spaces, so you're most likely to spot me soaring over grasslands. Although my population is healthy and I'm protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (first passed in 1940!), I face threats from wind turbines, pesticides and habitat loss.





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Women in Nature: Words from Women of Wisdom

Hosted by: San Jose Woman's Club

Wednesday, June 29th, 6:00pm
San Jose Woman's Club
75 S. 11th Street, San Jose

Join us at the San Jose Woman's Club new speaker series, Words from Women of Wisdom. The Open Space Authority's General Manager, Andrea Mackenzie, will be speaking on her vision for open space protection; working at the intersection of urban and open space planning, policy and funding to preserve the region's most significant natural and working landscapes. Her passion is fueled by a deep love of nature, and strong belief in the power of collaboration. She believes that investing in the preservation and stewardship of our natural and working landscapes is essential to ensuring a sustainable future for the Bay Area.



Tickets include light refreshments. Your ticket cost will support the San Jose Woman's Club work with local charities.

Purchase tickets at WordsFromWomen.eventbrite.com



Photo credits: Cover: Map – Jake Smith, Bobcat – Stephen Joseph, Deer – OSA Trailcam, Bill's Backyard – Children's Discovery Museum; Page 2: Training Hike – Aaron Gilbert, Coyote Valley – Ron Horii, Eagle – Peter GW Jones; Page 3: Martial Cottle – Ron Horii, Stojanovich Park, Edith Morely Park, and Albertson's Parkway – Megan Dreger, Megan Dreger with student – Patty Eaton; Page 4-5: Coyote Ridge – Derek Neumann, Animals – Pathways for Wildlife; Page 6: Martial Cottle – SCC Parks, San Francisco Bay – sfbayrestore.org, Matt, Cliff, & Derek – OSA Archive, Dana Litwin & Volunteers – Krissy Graham; Page 7: Volunteers – OSA Archive, Open Road – Derek Neumann, Stars – Bill Adams, Fandango – Ron Horii, Eagle – Peter GW Jones; Back Cover: Coyote Valley – Stephen Joseph, Andrea Mackenzie – OSA Archive.