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JOIN US!
UPCOMING EVENTS

ForestWatch Members' Gathering
July 12

Join us for some tasty appetizers, wine and beer, and an opportunity to meet local backcountry fan Craig R. Carey - author of the new book *Hiking and Backpacking Santa Barbara & Ventura*.

This event is FREE to ForestWatch members; come by and be entered to win a Patagonia jacket!

Contact **diane@LPFW.org** to RSVP

Benefit Artist's Reception
September 6

Don't miss an Artist's Reception at The Sojourner Restaurant & Cafe featuring the beautiful work of plein air painter Jeremy Harper. This free event is open to the public in conjunction with the Downtown Organization's 1st Thursday evening of art and culture.

Half of all art sales will be donated to support Los Padres ForestWatch.

Wilderness Photo Contest Deadline
September 15

Head out into the forest to capture images of both established and proposed wilderness and wild rivers in support of the Los Padres Wild Heritage Campaign!

Three categories will be judged, landscape, wildlife, and images with people. The "Best in Show" Category winner will be featured on the cover of our Fall 2012 Newsletter. Details at **LosPadresWild.org**

LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH

PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES ALONG CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

FORESTWATCH TRAILS REPORT ▪ SONGBIRDS PROTECTED ▪ BLUNT-NOSED LEOPARD LIZARD ▪ PHOTO CONTEST
FIRE LOOKOUTS OF THE SOUTHERN LOS PADRES ▪ HAPPY CANYON GRAZING ▪ NORTHERN GOSHAWK

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

ForestWatch report - *Ten Lost Trails of the Los Padres* - highlights widespread loss of public access to the Los Padres National Forest

Keith Vandevere

Hiking the Big Sur coast circa 1975

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OJAI WILD! THANKS!

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BASE CAMP

Jeff Kuyper,
Executive Director

The July 4th holiday gives us cause to celebrate freedom and independence, gathering with family and friends at barbeques and picnics, celebrating the history and traditions of our country.

Wilderness is just as much a part of this tradition as fireworks and corn-on-the-cob. For me, wilderness has always been the ultimate symbol of freedom and liberty. Our drive, our ruggedness, and our sense of adventure are all rooted in the challenges of wilderness – a place where we can go and set ourselves free from the confines of civilization, even if only for a few hours.

I feel most free when I'm in wilderness. It's a place where we can be self-reliant, where we can pursue our wildest adventures and be beholden to nothing except the forces of nature and a healthy dose of leave-no-trace ethics.

This concept of wilderness and freedom is not a new one. President Theodore Roosevelt wrote about the freedom of wilderness, and in as essay titled Freedom and Wilderness, the late Edward Abbey wrote, "We can have wilderness without freedom… but we cannot have freedom without wilderness, we cannot have freedom without leagues of open space beyond the cities."

It's a concept that lies at the core of the ForestWatch mission. As you and I continue to work together to protect wildlife habitat, free-flowing rivers, scenic vistas, and outdoor adventure opportunities, we preserve a landscape where freedom and nature collide and thrive, right here in our own backyard.

WILDERNESS PHOTO CONTEST

"Best in Show" will be featured on the cover of our Fall 2012 Newsletter

Los Padres ForestWatch has kicked-off our first ever Wilderness and Wild River Photo contest in support of the ongoing Los Padres Wild Heritage Campaign. The photo contest seeks to bring attention to special places, diverse wildlife, and those enjoying our local backcountry in existing wilderness areas or areas that are proposed for new wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest.

Three categories will be judged: landscape, wildlife, and images with people. In addition to the "Judge's Awards of Excellence," presented by the judges panel, there will also be awards given for a "People's Choice" – determined by online popularity vote. Additionally, the judge's panel will award a "Best in Show" prize for the best overall picture in any category.

Joe Christianson

The contest goes through September 15, 2012, and award winners will be announced on the **LosPadresWild.org** website and in ForestWatch's Fall newsletter, with the "Best in Show" category winner being featured on the cover of the newsletter.

Contest prizes include gift certificates, photo development, camera equipment, and outdoor gear, from some great local sponsors including: The Brooks Institute, CamelBak, Color Services, Dexter's Camera, Hooper Camera and Imaging, Lumnos, Patagonia, Russ Bishop Photography, and Samy's Camera.

Photos will be judged on originality, technical excellence, composition, overall impact and artistic merit. The judges' panel includes:

- Jeff Jones, Lumnos Wilderness Photography

- Ralph Clevenger, Professor at Brooks Institute of Photography, Ralph Clevenger Photography

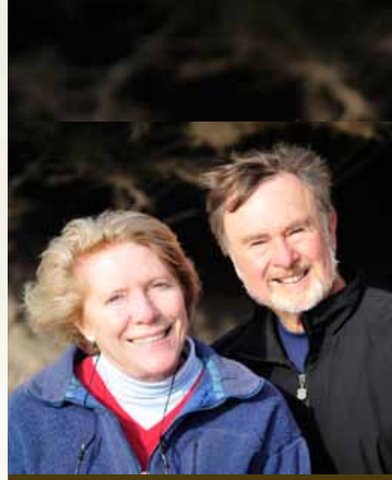
- Russ Bishop, Russ Bishop Photography

- Tim Davis, Photo Editor for Patagonia, Inc.

- Los Padres ForestWatch staff

Details, prizes and wilderness maps can be found at **LosPadresWild.org**

Derek Gulden



STELLAR SUPPORT

CHARLOTTE & RONALD WILLIAMS

Having lived in the same Santa Barbara home since they were married in 1971, and raised one son, Charlotte and Ron Williams have grown to appreciate their surroundings more and more over the years. They "feel fortunate to have landed in a location where wilderness is close by."

Charlotte, a native Californian, moved to Santa Barbara to attend UCSB in 1958, and Ron arrived in 1962 from Michigan. Following graduation, Charlotte began a 30-year teaching career. After working as a physicist, Ron earned a PhD in economics in 1974 and since then has been a principal investigator in research projects focusing on public health.

Outdoor activities have always been an integral part of their lives, and they have taken their early appreciation of the outdoors and turned it into action by supporting a number of initiatives over the years to preserve open space in Santa Barbara County.

It was at ForestWatch's annual event, Ojai Wild! in 2007, where Charlotte was first introduced to Los Padres ForestWatch. The Williams' have been supporting our work ever since, including a 2009 benefit photography show of Ron's work entitled "Wildflowers of Los Padres National Forest."

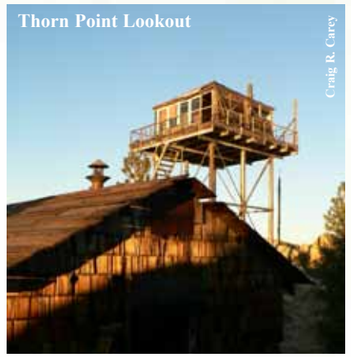
When asked why they support ForestWatch, they said, "In our younger days we made the assumption that governmental agencies would fulfill the public trust by protecting federal lands, but our many travels in the Los Padres National Forest have shown this is not always true. So we endorse LPFW's advocacy for the public lands that should be protected."

BACKCOUNTRY JOURNAL

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

LOOKOUT!

Craig R. Carey, author of *Hiking and Backpacking Santa Barbara and Ventura* (Wilderness Press, 2012) ponders the view from on high



From a network once 25 strong, now stand only a handful.

Drive through Ojai along the 33 or 150, and — if you know where to look — you can see the superstructure of one. Above Interstate 5 and Pyramid Lake — largely unnoticed by the hurried and distracted drivers or recreational boaters below — looms another. Hike through the eastern Sespe Wilderness and the burned-out frame of yet another can just be made out atop Topatopa Peak. Peakbaggers the forest over seldom realize the concrete footings or detritus scattered about their benchmarks are testaments to a rich tradition.

The fire lookouts of the Los Padres offer a fascinating glimpse into a largely forgotten part of the forest's history. They're something in which I've had a particular interest since my grandmother told me of afternoons spent as a spotter above San Pedro during World War II, and of spotters used high atop fire towers.

William S. Brown's 1945 history of the Los Padres — written when many of the lookouts now gone or crumbling still sported fresh paint — related how the first standard lookout in the Los Padres (then the Santa Barbara National Forest) was constructed atop Frazier Mountain in 1917 (replaced by the current structure in 1934). It was a largely "homemade affair," its cost totaling $590.

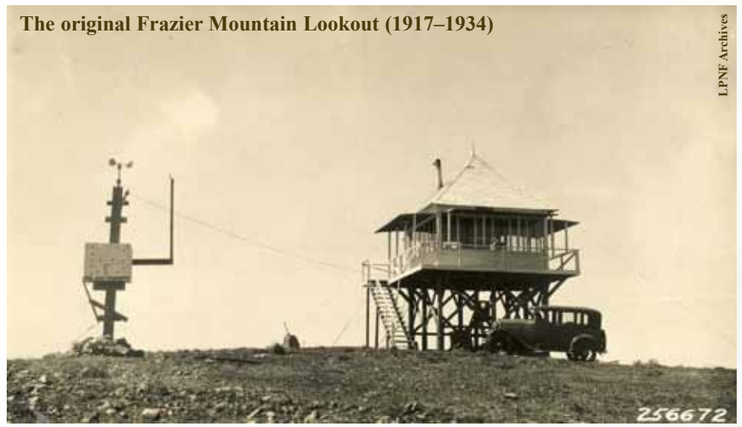
In the spring of 1941 — with war looming — the US Army established the Aircraft Warning Service, a civilian arm of the Ground Observer Corps. Given the Los Padres NF's proximity to the Pacific, its fire lookouts made superb vantage points for those watching for Japanese aircraft, and numerous AWS cabins were built near the lookouts (the cabin at Thorn Point and Black Willow Spring [originally Salisbury Potrero] as well as the remains of those atop Cuyama Peak and Caliente Mountain stand as some of the few remaining examples).

The short-lived AWS was disbanded in the weeks before the Allied invasion of Europe. In post-war years, the AWS cabins fell into disrepair and numerous lookout towers were dismantled by the Forest Service to accommodate radio and radar facilities (e.g., Santa Ynez and McPherson Peaks), or removed due to general disrepair and/or vandalism (West Big Pine).

In the southern districts, the list of lookouts lost reads like a litany of history lost: McKinley Mountain, Topatopa Peak, Reyes Peak, Santa Paula Peak, Mt. Pinos, West Big Pine, Santa Ynez Peak, Madulce Peak … atop some of the most notable peaks in our forest once stood these servants to security and fire prevention. In a twist of irony, some of the most iconic — notably the Reyes Peak and Topatopa Peak lookouts — were lost as a result of fire (the 1932 Matilija and 2006 Day Fires, respectively).

Brown's tome briefly chronicled the cost and creation of the earlier (pre-New Deal) lookouts, but "the balance of the primary lookout plants on the Forest were built between 1934 and 1936." He notes the unique nature of the Topatopa Peak lookout, built in 1938. "Some experts considered it impossible to build this structure on Topa Topa [sic] since it was a long day's pack trip, going and returning, between the spire-like summit and a spring six miles down the mountainside."

Nearly forgotten because of its remote location and (later) its position deep within the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, the Topatopa Peak lookout stood for years as the best-preserved of the lookouts. When the Day Fire roared across the sanctuary, another of these last sentinels of the southern Los Padres was lost.



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**

MARCH 24, 2012

What: Microtrash Cleanup
Where: Middle Sespe Trailhead
Who: 22 volunteers

This cleanup was our final push at Middle Sespe Trailhead in hopes of keeping the situation from getting too insurmountable, and it has worked! More than three months after this cleanup the area remains cleaner than it has been in years. Target shooters had been at the trailhead (the old Beaver Camp) indulging in bad behavior - i.e. leaving behind vast amounts of spent bullets, shotgun shells, and obliterated targets - but ForestWatch organized a series of cleanups of the area to get the situation under control. We will keep an eye on the area to make sure it remains respected and cared for.

MAY 5, 2012

What: Defencing
Where: Carrizo Plain National Monument
Who: 18 volunteers

As part of the efforts to restore pronghorn antelope on the 200,000-acre national monument, ForestWatch volunteers have been working tirelessly to remove fences that restrict pronghorn movement and make them more vulnerable to injuries and predators.

Our days removing fences are drawing to a close, since all stretches of fence that can be removed have been. ForestWatch will continue to work with monument managers on other projects that help to restore this treasure.

JUNE 2, 2012

What: Microtrash Cleanup
Where: Burro Creek, Highway 33
Who: 12 volunteers

A newly discovered location, Burro Creek is located along Highway 33 north of Ojai, a couple miles south of the illegal target shooting area at Cherry Creek. This is one of the more beautiful locations for a microtrash cleanup, and the volunteers who came out to help on National Trails Day (Saturday, June 2) had a great time removing more than 200 pounds of rubbish from the area.

There's more to do here, so ForestWatch will be back. Stay tuned for the next cleanup event and join us!

ForestWatch volunteers at Burro Creek, Ojai backcountry

HELPING HANDS

EMILY THOMAS

In 2008, I swapped coasts, moving from Maine to California. I moved without a job or knowing anyone, but I wanted something bigger and different. It worked. I love it here and consider it home now. If I'm outside and moving (or eating), I'm happy. My favorite things to do are climb, trail run, and ski in the backcountry. These silent sports simultaneously challenge and calm me, and nowhere else am I afforded the ability to do them so conveniently.

It is terribly sad to see beautiful and dynamic areas get trashed by people who enjoy them irresponsibly. In order to help make amends for my own and others' impacts, and to ensure that these areas are preserved so that we can continue to enjoy them, I volunteer my time and effort in cleanups.

Being involved with the community is important to me, and ForestWatch is a perfect fit for getting involved and having a positive impact on the places that are so important to me. As an added benefit, I get the chance to meet people who share my passion for the outdoors.

Seeing the effect of our work, whether a load of trash hauled out or a trail rebuilt, is inspiring, even though it's an endless task. It's a small price to pay to preserve something so important.

NORTHERN LOS PADRES

SOUTHERN LOS PADRES

SALINAS

Salinas River

MONTEREY

Carmel River

CARMEL VALLEY

BIG SUR

Big Sur River

Arroyo Seco River

KING CITY

San Antonio River

San Antonio River

Nacimiento River

CAMBRIA

MILPITAS MANAGEMENT PLAN
The Forest Service finalized the first-ever management plan for this biologically and culturally rich area, adopting several recommendations offered by ForestWatch.

HAPPY CANYON GRAZING
ForestWatch reviewed the Environmental Assessment for a proposal to authorize livestock grazing near Figueroa Mountain, and prepared a detailed comment letter urging forest officials to maximize wildlife protection and to limit the number of roads and motorized vehicles in this Inventoried Roadless Area.

SONGBIRDS PROTECTED
ForestWatch urged the Forest Service to take immediate steps to protect songbirds and their nests in the Santa Barbara and Ojai backcountry. (PAGE 2)

BLACK MOUNTAIN ROADLESS AREA
ForestWatch urged forest officials to protect scenic views in the La Panza Range by making design changes to a communication facility high atop Black Mountain. The changes will also help reduce the incidence of bird collisions with radio towers, one of the leading causes of bird deaths in North America.

Salinas River

SAN LUIS OBISPO

18 VOLUNTEERS DE-FENCE THE CARRIZO
Nearly all stretches of relic fencing that has ben indentifeied for removal from the Carrizo Plain National Monument has now come down! Forest-Watch has been organizing volunteer crews to participate in the work since 2008, and will continue to work with monument staff on other projects to help protect and restore this treasure. (PAGE 4)

Carrizo Plain

CONDOR REFUGE MANAGEMENT PLAN
ForestWatch submitted comments on a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Hopper Mountain and Bitter Creek national wildlife refuges, adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest. The areas provide key habitat for endangered California condors and other imperiled plants and animals.

Santa Maria River

SANTA MARIA

NEW CUYAMA

Cuyama River

Sisquoc River

FRAZIER PARK

Piru Creek

SANTA YNEZ

Santa Ynez River

Sespe Creek

SANTA BARBARA

Ventura River

OJAI

VENTURA

OJAI WILD!
More than 200 ForestWatch supporters gath-ered at Diamond Hitch Camp to celebrate the 5th Anniversary Ojai Wild! event.

FRACKING MEETING
ForestWatch attended a hearing in Ventura County and demanded stronger regulations for fracking, a controversial practice that injects unknown chemicals into the ground to stimulate oil production. More than 200 oil wells on the Los Padres National Forest have been fracked and ForestWatch is working to ensure proper public notice and adequate safeguards for drinking water for any fracking that occurs in the future. (PAGE 8)

MIDDLE SESPE TRAILHEAD CLEANUP
ForestWatch's concentrated effort (more than 50 volunteers participated) and numberous back-to-back cleanups made a huge difference for this piece of the backcountry. (PAGE 4)

FRAZIER MOUNTAIN
In May, the Forest Service approved a forest thinning project for Frazier Mountain, impos-ing a strict 10” diameter limit recommended by ForestWatch and leading forest health ex-perts and incorporating other standards in the project to better protect nesting sites for North-ern goshawk and California spotted owls.

LOOKING ACROSS THE FOREST

AN UPDATE ON HOW WE'RE PROTECTING YOUR REGION

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

Alex Wilson

CRITTER CORNER

The **blunt-nosed leopard lizard** is a relatively large lizard with a regenerative tail that is normally longer than the body; the entire lizard can approach a foot long! As the name suggests, the leopard lizard has large dark spots (as well as cream-colored bands) running the length of its body.

While thought to not be found directly on the Los Padres National Forest, the blunt-nosed leopard lizard's range does approach very near the forest boundary in the upper Cuyama Valley, and here it converges with the range of the long-nosed leopard lizard. This makes the area of the forest where these species meet of particular importance scientifically and from a conservation standpoint.

Since the 1870s and the advent of large-scale irrigated agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley, more than 95 percent of the original communities of blunt-nosed leopard lizard have been destroyed. They are one of the first species ever protected under federal law, listed as endangered by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1967 (before the modern-day Endangered Species Act). It was also listed as a "fully protected species" by the State of California in the 1960s and was subsequently listed as endangered in 1971.

The Carrizo Plain National Monument is one of the largest remaining population centers for the lizard; they occupy more than 87,000 acres of the Monument and are the most abundant on the Elkhorn Plain in the southern portion of the Carrizo. ForestWatch volunteer Alex Wilson snapped the above photo of one while working on the Carrizo in May! ForestWatch will continue to monitor the recorded presence of blunt-nosed leopard lizards and their hybrids, and work to ensure their utmost protection.

CITIZENS DEMAND STRONGER PROTECTIONS

More than half of ForestWatch's online supporters took action and emailed the Forest Service with their recommendations

Chumash Badlands

Ronald Williams

In 2005, the Forest Service prepared management plans for all national forest lands in southern California. But unfortunately, the agency failed to recognize the importance of pristine, unroaded areas in providing wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation. The plans allowed several types of industrial development in all of our forest's "Inventoried Roadless Areas". As a result, ForestWatch, our conservation partners, and the State of California appealed the plans and the ensuing legal victory required the Forest Service reconsider protection of these vital areas.

As part of their end of the bargain, the Forest Service is currently preparing a document called the Southern California National Forests Land Management Plan Amendment (LMP Amendment). This document will determine the future management of 39 Southern California roadless areas in the four national forests of southern California. On the Los Padres, the agency is proposing to increase protection of the backcountry by rezoning about 300,000 acres of roadless areas as "non-motorized." These areas are currently zoned for various levels of motorized use and development, and zoning them "non-motorized" will expand protections for the many rare plants and animals found there. It will also safeguard the many other benefits these areas provide, such as clean drinking water, outdoor recreation opportunities, wild landscapes, and scenic vistas to be enjoyed by all.

However, the Forest Service is not recommending any new wilderness areas for the Los Padres National Forest. Not a single acre. As part of our Los Padres Wild Heritage Campaign, ForestWatch recently asked the Forest Service to work collaboratively with our campaign to determine which roadless areas are most appropriate for designation as wilderness, and which rivers and streams can be determined eligible for addition to our nation's wild and scenic river system.

What's Next

ForestWatch continues to lead the call for strong protection for our forest. In June, we submitted a detailed comment letter to the Forest Service on the LMP Amendment, outlining our recommendations and highlighting pristine areas of the forest that we think deserve formal designation as wilderness. Officials will release a draft LMP Amendment in the Fall, and plan to finalize it in 2013.

You, our members and supporters, let your voices be heard, too - more than 250 ForestWatchers participated in the process, submitting letters to the Forest Service using our new personalized action alert service. Altogether, the Forest Service received several thousand comments demanding the highest level of protection for some of our remaining roadless areas. It's just another way that working together we can truly make a difference in the preservation of our forest!

SONGBIRDS PROTECTED

ForestWatch urges officials to take immediate steps to protect bird nests in the Santa Barbara and Ojai backcountry

ForestWatch has launched a comprehensive effort aimed at protecting several species of songbirds that nest in the Los Padres National Forest. Our initial efforts have already yielded results, with the Forest Service agreeing to postpone two vegetation clearing projects until after the nesting season and ensuring that globally-important bird species can continue to thrive in our region.

Earlier this year, we discovered that a Forest Service contractor was clearing large swaths of native chaparral vegetation in a remote portion of the Santa Ynez Mountains near Santa Barbara's Gaviota Coast. ForestWatch soared into action, hand-delivering a legal notice to forest headquarters and warning the agency that we would file a lawsuit if bird nests and young birds continued to be destroyed. Work stopped.

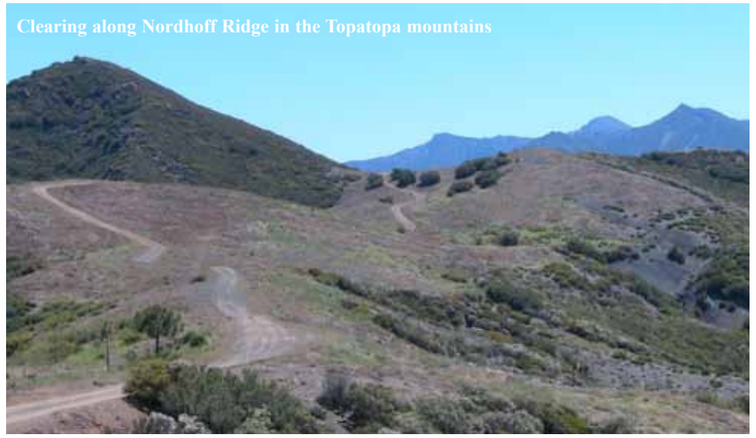
Then, just days after the 20th Anniversary of International Migratory Bird Day, ForestWatch discovered a second clearing project in the Topatopa Mountains overlooking Ojai. It was ironic timing, as the world celebrated one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas – bird migration – the Forest Service continued to disregard the law and mow down bird nests and young songbirds during the nesting season.

Migratory birds are perhaps the most highly valued component of North America's biological diversity, with approximately 1,200 species representing nearly 15% of the world's known bird species. The seasonal movement of migratory birds is one of the most complex and compelling dramas in the natural world. Migratory birds embark twice each year on long-distance journeys between their breeding areas and their wintering grounds, which are sometimes separated by thousands of miles. State, federal, and international law all recognize the importance of protecting migratory bird species from harm.

While some migratory birds are fairly common, others face risks of extinction unless measures are taken to protect their nesting areas. At least eight "high priority" bird species build nests in the Santa Ynez and Topatopa ranges, and several other birds in the area receive protection under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act ("MBTA") and the California Fish & Game Code, both of which prohibit any destruction of nests or eggs of any migratory bird species. Because of these laws, agencies and landowners typically avoid clearing native vegetation from February through August, when most migratory bird species are building their nests and raising their young.

The Forest Service has been on notice about the proper bird nesting season since at least 2009, when ForestWatch and several other local conservation organizations wrote a letter urging them to avoid clearing vegetation during the February through August nesting period. ForestWatch repeated this warning in a February 2011 letter and held face-to-face meetings with forest officials in January and March of 2012, but all communication proved fruitless in getting the Forest Service to rethink the timing for their chaparral clearing projects. They continued using a giant lawnmower-like machine, a "masticator," to clear a 40-mile long, 300 foot-wide fuelbreak along the crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains from Refugio Pass to Romero Saddle and also continued work on a 51-mile fuelbreak extending from Lake Casitas to the Upper Ojai Valley – all during peak nesting season, resulting in the destruction of an unknown number of bird nests

Since receiving our notices, the Forest Service has stopped work in these areas, and birds are now raising their young there unharmed. As outlined in our letters, work may resume after the bird nesting season ends in September. ForestWatch will work to ensure that these projects continue to avoid the needless destruction of bird nests and comply with state and federal bird protection laws. We have also requested that the Forest Service work collaboratively with us to develop a forest-wide strategy to enhance the protection of globally-important bird species in our region.


Clearing along Nordhoff Ridge in the Topatopa mountains

CRITTER CORNER

The **northern goshawk** is found across Eurasia and North America, and is the largest of all goshawk species. In California, the northern goshawk only breeds in the northern mountain ranges and in the southern portion of the Los Padres National Forest around Mt. Abel, Mt. Pinos, Frazier Mountain, and the Tecuya Range in northern Ventura County.

Goshawks build their nests in mature and old-growth forest stands. They are considered sit-and-wait predators, perched on branches scoping the landscape for food, including squirrels, hares, grouse, woodpeckers, and other raptors.

Northern goshawks are monogamous (and solitary outside of the breeding season) with pairs typically meeting at nesting territories by February each year. Active nest sites were last recorded on Mt. Abel and Mt. Pinos in the late 1980s, but these areas have not been surveyed recently. A goshawk family was recently observed on Frazier Mountain in July 2011, indicating that goshawks are nesting on Frazier Mountain as well. In general, populations in California are poorly understood, and comprehensive surveys have not been completed.

The best way to ensure that goshawks continue to survive in the Los Padres National Forest is to protect and restore the mature conifer forest habitats on which the birds depend. ForestWatch will continue to work with forest officials to ensure the highest level of protection possible for this engaging species, and will advocate that surveys are conducted to better understand where goshawks are nesting so that their habitat can be protected as well.

10 LOST TRAILS OF THE LOS PADRES

ForestWatch releases report highlighting the public's loss of access to their national forest

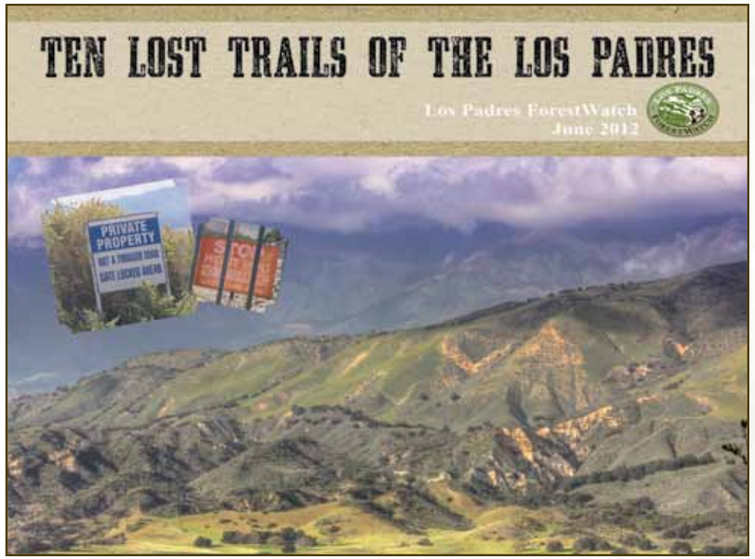
Ten Lost Trails of the Los Padres is a new report from ForestWatch that highlights ten trails across the Los Padres National Forest where historic public access has been restricted.

Over time, as the forest's neighboring land ownership changes, trailheads have been blocked off by gates and "no trespassing" signs, restricting the public's access to public lands and funneling an increasing number of forest users onto a dwindling trail system. These trails have been used historically (in some instances, stretching back to the 1920s or earlier), and under California law the public has a right to continue to access these trails if there is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of historic use.

ForestWatch's report shares some success stories of trail access restored, some stories of cautious hope as community groups work to save the trails they love, and some stories of tenuous situations where access and trails are on the brink of being lost forever.

Public access to public lands is a deeply-rooted American tradition, and ForestWatch will continue to work so that we can all enjoy these majestic landscapes for generations to come.

Learn how you can help,
Read the report at LPFW.org/trailsreport



FRACKING AND OIL IN YOUR FOREST

ForestWatch protects the Los Padres backcountry from runaway oil and gas exploration

Oil and gas drilling is one of the most imminent threats to the Los Padres, and has the potential to significantly alter our public lands. A recent analysis of government records shows that two-thirds of our natural treasures – like national forests, national wildlife refuges, roadless and wilderness areas, and national monuments – are suffering from substantial amounts of oil drilling and industry control.

ForestWatch fights against any expansion of oil extraction on the Los Padres, and where existing oil drilling is allowed to continue, we promote improved management practices to protect wildlife, recreation, watersheds, and other environmental values. ForestWatch and our partners Defenders of Wildlife and Center for Biological Diversity have now prevented any expanded oil drilling for seven years, and counting!

Recently, in March 2012, the County of Santa Barbara approved a project that proposed using dynamite, helicopters, and all-terrain vehicles to search for underground oil deposits across 23 square miles of the ecologically-sensitive Cuyama Valley. Working with local Cuyama Valley residents, Los Padres ForestWatch and the Santa Barbara-based Environmental Defense Center both filed separate appeals. In response to the appeals, E&B Natural Resources – the Bakersfield-based corporation proposing to conduct the exploration – announced they were withdrawing their application and the project was dead in the water.

At least 16 special-status plant species and 14 special-status wildlife species were protected by stopping this project, including several species of plants and animals protected under the state and federal Endangered Species Act such as San Joaquin kit foxes, blunt-nosed leopard lizards, and Kern primrose sphinx moths.

One of the most controversial aspects of industrialized oil development is a method of oil recovery called hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," which relies on harmful chemicals injected deep into the ground to draw oil up to to the surface In response to a Freedom of Information Act request, ForestWatch has recently learned that nearly all of the 300 oil wells in the Sespe Oil Field on the Los Padres National Forest have been "fracked" since the practice began close to 60 years ago. The Sespe Oil Fields is located within the Sespe River watershed, the single source of fresh water for downstream communities and family farms. as well as critical habiat for endangered steelhead trout.

ForestWatch recently attended a standing-room-only meeting in Ventura about new state-wide regulations that are being drafted for hydraulic fracturing, and we demanded full mandatory disclosure of all chemicals and fluids used in the process, full disclosure of how waste fluids are disposed, and other measures to avoid impacts to the national forest and its clean water sources.

ForestWatch will continue to monitor all drilling sites in the forest to make sure the oil industry is complying with environmental laws.

Oil well near Sespe Condor Sanctuary

THANK YOU!
CAROL GRAVELLE GRAPHIC DESIGN

Carol Gravelle first heard about Los Padres ForestWatch in 2005, when she learned that we were looking for someone to design a logo for our fledgling organization. An outdoor enthusiast and longtime supporter of environmental organizations, Carol took the time to learn a bit more about the work and goals of ForestWatch and then offered her support. Little did we know what a gift we'd been given…

Carol Gravelle Graphic Design, a full service studio based out of Camarillo, California has provided design and illustration services to local and national clients since 1992. Specializing in logo design and print communications, Carol has worked on everything from ads to stationery, websites to trade show spaces – and her influence can be seen throughout the evolution of Los Padres ForestWatch.

Our logo, which graces all our printed materials, was just the beginning. Carol designed our 5th year anniversary annual report, our membership response forms and stationary, and – most recently – our new ForestWatch brochure.

"I've been happy to donate my time and abilities over the years to ForestWatch because of the significant work they do to preserve and protect our local wild lands," stated Carol. "For an organization such as this to survive, thrive and have impact takes community support. And they are super people to work with, which makes it a complete pleasure!"

The pleasure is all ours, Carol. Our sincere thanks!