



EST 1919

FIELDREPORT

Pacific Region • Spring-Summer 2022



1,000 Plants and the Start of a New Season

By Sally Garcia

With a new sense of normalcy, our Los Angeles Field Office was able to host its first in-person volunteer event in two years with the National Park Service. A small but mighty group of four volunteer veterans from The Mission Continues and one LA Young Leaders Council member made their way to Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa. Located within the northwest region of the Santa Monica Mountains in Newbury Park, Rancho Sierra was a new park location for many of them.

Volunteers and staff were able to assist the Park Service with their Rewilding California project. Due to years of drought, wildfires and climate change, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area has experienced a significant loss of native trees and plants in recent years. In response to this, the National Park Service has been working with partners and the public to restore its natural areas. One of the main goals of the National Park Service is to plant more than 10,000 plants at the site. NPCA and our volunteers were able to put a dent in that number by planting over 1,000 plants in the span of a few hours.

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Restoring the Mojave One Tree at a Time

By Chris Clarke

A beloved part of Mojave National Preserve was destroyed in August 2020 when the Dome Fire blackened more than 43,000 acres of the fabled Cima Dome Joshua tree forest, killing an estimated 1.3 million trees. News of the Dome Fire struck fans of the preserve hard. The Cima Dome Joshua tree forest was a cherished place. Now it's forever changed, a harbinger of what other Joshua tree woodlands face in our climate-changed world.

But those of us who love Cima Dome aren't just sitting back and mourning. Since fall 2021, hundreds of volunteers, including NPCA's California Desert team, have turned out to replant Joshua trees in those places hit hardest by the Dome Fire. The goal isn't to replace every tree lost in the fire; that would take more volunteers than the preserve could hold. Instead, participants hope to re-establish a few trees in each area where the fire killed all the Joshua trees. That way, 30 or 40 years from now, those spots might just have mature Joshua trees growing in them, flowering and setting seed, and thus producing new generations of Cima Dome Joshua trees.

That's important. Joshua trees are in big trouble throughout their range. Warming temperatures and drier winters in the Mojave Desert mean that Joshua trees,

which need cool wet winters to reproduce, may not still exist by the end of this century in places like their namesake Joshua Tree National Park. But Cima Dome, in the center of the trees' range and reaching about a mile above sea level, still has the kinds of cooler, wetter seasons Joshua trees



prefer. That allows the trees to germinate, and the seedlings to survive their dangerous first few years. That's probably why the Cima Dome forest was the largest forest of Joshua trees anywhere. It's definitely why climate modeling scientists had pointed to Cima Dome as a crucial refuge for the species as we face a warmer future.

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Top: Cima Dome before the August, 2020 Dome Fire ©Studiobarcelona | Dreamstime **Above:** Joshua trees after the Dome Fire ©Wirestock | Dreamstime

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Spring-Summer 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR REGIONAL DIRECTOR

By Ron Sundergill

In this issue of the Field Report, we detail efforts to create a César Chávez and Farmworker Movement National Historical Park, which would be in addition to the existing Cesar E. Chavez National Monument. This effort is among several pending new park projects that will be coming up for consideration over the next few years. The effort to create new historic and cultural parks is part of NPCA's overall effort to make sure that the National Park System covers all histories, including the history that often is ignored, such as the that of farmworkers or other social movements.

Other new park projects that are on the horizon include a park in San Francisco that would cover the history of the LGBTQ community, with a base at Harvey Milk's iconic Castro Camera store. Others in development include a multi-island Hawaii park that would cover the history of the Hawaiian cowboys known as Paniolo, who predated the emergence of cowboys on the mainland of the United States. A third one is the development of a park in Oakland,



Calif., that would cover the history of the Black Panther Party, which had and continues to have a major impact on our society. In that case, Rep. Barbara Lee has requested a reconnaissance survey by the National Park Service, which is scheduled to be completed this year. We are also exploring a national immigration/migration park in Los Angeles that would cover the emergence of the cultural mosaic of that dynamic city. Lastly, we are interested

in exploring the possibility of creating an Obama Boyhood Home National Historic Site on the Island of Oahu. That one is more aspirational, as those boyhood home sites in Honolulu are not likely to be available for acquisition in the short term.

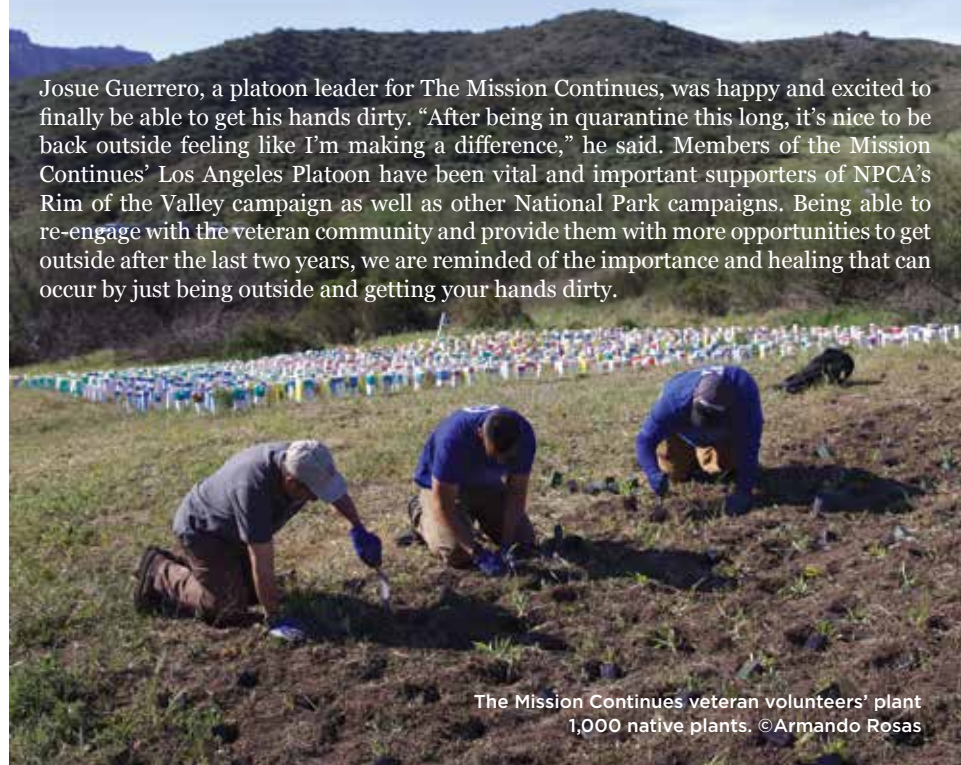
If you would like to become involved in any of these efforts, or if you have questions about these new park efforts, please get in touch with me at rsundergill@npca.org.

I hope that you have a wonderful summer, hopefully spending some quality time in the national parks.

Above: Ron Sundergill

1,000 Plants and the Start of a New Season

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Josue Guerrero, a platoon leader for The Mission Continues, was happy and excited to finally be able to get his hands dirty. "After being in quarantine this long, it's nice to be back outside feeling like I'm making a difference," he said. Members of the Mission Continues' Los Angeles Platoon have been vital and important supporters of NPCA's Rim of the Valley campaign as well as other National Park campaigns. Being able to re-engage with the veteran community and provide them with more opportunities to get outside after the last two years, we are reminded of the importance and healing that can occur by just being outside and getting your hands dirty.

The Mission Continues veteran volunteers' plant 1,000 native plants. ©Armando Rosas



Aerial Tours Critical to Promoting NPCA Park Campaigns

By Dennis Arguelles

The crosswinds over the San Fernando Valley are a little rough today, but the Cessna aircraft handles it with ease as pilot Bruce Gordon starts a wide left turn giving passengers a bird’s-eye view of the Rim of the Valley, a landscape containing some of the last native habitat, wildlife corridors and open spaces in the Los Angeles area. By expanding the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include these chaparral-covered hillsides, oak groves and verdant watersheds, the Rim of the Valley promises to leave a significant conservation legacy for future generations—if lawmakers pass the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act. Today’s flight is a key part of getting that done, as the tour’s participants include two important policymakers whose support is critical to convincing Congress to pass the bill: U.S. Rep. Mike Garcia (CA-25th) and City of Santa Clarita Mayor Laurene Weste.

While both officials are strong advocates for the Rim of the Valley, the aerial tour provided by NPCA’s partner, EcoFlight, is critical to helping strengthen their resolve and building broader support for the campaign. In fact, in the past year alone, EcoFlight has partnered with NPCA to conduct multiple flights over the Rim of the Valley and, for more than a decade, it has provided flights to support

NPCA’s conservation efforts in the California desert and other landscapes across the West. In February, members of NPCA’s LA Young Leaders Council and military veterans were among the passengers of a flight and would go on to bring attention to the Rim of the Valley through photos and messages posted to their personal social media. NPCA’s current efforts to create the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument, which would protect critical desert habitat and indigenous cultural sites in the eastern Mojave Desert, also benefitted from strategic aerial tours provided by EcoFlight.

Based in Aspen, Colorado, Ecoflight’s mission is to educate and advocate for the protection of remaining wild lands and wildlife habitat using small aircraft. Its aerial perspective and educational programs encourage environmental stewardship and connect people across a broad spectrum of interests and partisan alliances. As president and chief pilot, Gordon has provided aerial perspectives related to critical issues on our Western landscapes for over 30 years. He has flown over 10,000 hours of conservation missions in multiple countries, in bush and mountainous conditions, and often counts among his passenger’s governors, senators, members of Congress, scientists and students of all ages. Bruce and EcoFlight have received numerous



awards, such as the Conservation Hero Award and Best Business Award in Conservation.

NPCA’s work is only possible through broad support from the public and because of strategic partners like EcoFlight. Together, we are working to protect the nation’s last wild and historic places, and we look forward to a productive relationship for many more years.

Top: EcoFlight tours provide unique perspectives on threatened and endangered landscapes, such as the Santa Susana Mountains just north of Los Angeles. Photo courtesy of EcoFlight **Middle:** Congressman Mike Garcia references a map while on a recent flight over the Rim of the Valley. Photo courtesy of City of Santa Clarita **Bottom:** Los Angeles-area park advocates pose with EcoFlight pilot Bruce Gordon after a Rim of the Valley aerial tour. ©Dennis Arguelles

Restoring the Mojave One Tree at a Time

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And that's why the National Park Service embarked on an ambitious three-year campaign to make sure Cima Dome has reproducing Joshua trees in a hundred years. Preserve botanist Drew Kaiser just happened to have 3,000 Joshua tree seedlings grown from seeds collected on Cima Dome waiting in a nursery at the nearby Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Intended for other projects, these trees instead have been drafted into a project that may be pivotal to the long-term survival of the Joshua tree.

"We got about 960 of those trees planted in the first season," Kaiser told NPCA. "Just shy of 1,000." With summer already looking to be a scorcher, this first batch of seedlings will be put to a tough test of survival. Preserve staff will assess survival rates and see if planting methods need to be adjusted for the 2022-23 planting season. We at NPCA are proud to have played a role in the effort so far. If you're interested in putting a few baby Joshua trees into the ground later this year, contact us and we'll hook you up.

Top Left: This burned interpretive sign is a stark reminder of what was lost. ©Chris Clarke
Top Right: A desert tortoise looks for food and water amid the aftermath of the Dome Fire ©Chris Clarke
Middle Left: A baby Joshua tree seedling ©Chris Clarke
Bottom: A healthy stand of Joshua trees. ©Kkist101 | Dreamstime



Farewell NPCA!

By Nicole Spooner

I announce with great sadness that effective Friday, Aug. 5, I will no longer be the Senior Coordinator for NPCA's Pacific Region. While I have thoroughly enjoyed working for NPCA (especially in the Pacific Region) these past six years, it's time for me to do what God created me to do and that's to work full time for him, in ministry as an evangelist/exhorter and in business as a life coach, using my testimony and the Word of God to help women from across the world release the trauma they have bottled up inside them. In 2019, I started GottaVent2Live, a transformational life coaching business created to help women release their past, create their future, transform their minds and be the women that God created them to be. It is time for me to do what I coach women to do, and that is to do the very thing that fulfills



them. I am scheduled for a new season, and that new season is now.

It truly has been a blessing to work under Ron's leadership and alongside my colleagues for the last six years. It is because of NPCA I visited my first national park, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and soon developed a love for them. This love for national parks did not stop at me but



overflowed onto my family. I will always remember my time in the Pacific Region with affection.

To my colleagues in the best region, the Pacific Region: Do what makes you most happy, you only have one life to live! I love you all!

With affection,
— Nicole

Top Left: Nicole and her daughter, Kaili, at Grand Canyon National Park © Kaili Spooner
Top Right: Nicole and family at Joshua Tree National Park © Kaili Spooner

Recognizing Cesar Chavez and the Farmworker Movement

By Dennis Arguelles

i Si Se Puede! (Yes, It Can Be Done!), the motto of the United Farm Workers (UFW), was the brainchild of Dolores Huerta, a key leader in the struggle for farm worker rights. Now, nearly a decade since the National Park Service completed its César Chávez Special Resources Study, the vision of a multistate park celebrating the labor and civil rights icon, as well as the broader farm worker movement, is closer to becoming a reality. This Spring, U.S. Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-36) and California Sen. Alex Padilla plan to introduce legislation that would create the César Chávez and Farmworker Movement National Historical Park.

Building on the existing César E. Chávez National Monument established by President Obama in 2012, which memorializes Chávez's office, home and last resting place, the new park could include up to five sites in Arizona and California that trace significant aspects of Chávez's life and tell other stories. One such sight, known as "The 40 Acres" in Delano, California, served as the first headquarters for the UFW after the merger of Filipino and Mexican American organizing efforts in 1966. Later, a retirement home for aging Filipino farmworkers known as Agbayani Village would be constructed on the site. Today, the site is a National Historic Landmark and continues to be operated by the César Chávez Foundation.



The bill also includes the route of a historic 280-mile march from Delano to Sacramento in 1966 by striking farm workers. The march made its way through numerous towns and agricultural centers in California's Central Valley, and brought national attention to the farm workers' struggle for dignity, better working conditions, fair pay and collective bargaining rights.

"Introducing this bill will forever ensure that future generations do not forget the struggles their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents overcame to provide a

better future. It will remind us all of our social responsibility to serve our communities," said Ruiz, himself a descendent of farm workers. For its part, NPCA supported the creation of the existing monument in 2012 and is pleased to be leading efforts to convene and empower stakeholders, educate the public and build widespread support for the creation of this new park.

Above: The proposed National Historical Park will build upon the existing César Chávez National Monument in Keene, California. ©Zachary Frank | Alamy

Sally Garcia, Los Angeles Outreach Manager

By Dennis Arguelles

We are pleased to introduce the newest member of our PARO team, Sally Garcia. Sally was born and raised in South Central Los Angeles and served as an intern at the Los Angeles Audubon Society's Education Program at the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area upon completing high school. The program— which introduced third and sixth graders to native plants, animals, and birds—helped ignite a fire in her that led to her passion for outdoor education and access to nature for underserved communities. She comes to NPCA with over 12 years of experience in the field, with previous employment as a naturalist for Community Nature Connection and a planning assistant for the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), where she helped connect communities to the Santa Monica Mountains and other natural spaces in the Los Angeles area.

**MEET
THE
STAFF**



Sally started her involvement with NPCA as a member of our Next Generation Advisory Council, a group of young adults from across the country who serve as ambassadors and advise NPCA on its engagement with younger generations. As our Los Angeles Outreach Manager, Sally will connect under-represented communities to our public lands and building a cadre of national park advocates reflective of Los Angeles's, and the nation's, diverse and changing demographics. As an active social media influencer, Sally creates innovative content focused on ecological footprint reduction through mindful consumption, outdoor access advocacy and changing the meaning of what it means to be "outdoorsy." When she isn't working to build a more sustainable planet, you can find her camping or trying out new coffee shops in her neighborhood.

Left: Sally Garcia: NPCA new Los Angeles Outreach Manager ©Sally Garcia



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Lessons From Yosemite's Zero Landfill Initiative

By Mark Rose

Since 2015, NPCA has had the privilege of working on a unique pilot program seeking to reduce waste headed to local landfills and increase recycling and composting rates within Yosemite National Park. Alongside Denali and Grand Teton National Parks, Yosemite was chosen as a prime location for the Zero Landfill Initiative to study national park waste streams and experiment with how the park service can work toward a more sustainable future. In partnership with the National Park Service, Subaru of America and numerous other nonprofits and local businesses, our efforts helped recycle nearly 7,000 tons in Yosemite alone between 2015 and 2021, and close to 10,000 tons at all three pilot parks combined.

This initiative hasn't been without its growing pains. From inadequate infrastructure within parks and at nearby landfills and recycling facilities, to natural disasters like wildfires and the COVID pandemic that made outreach a challenge, the pilot program overcame a number of issues. Thankfully, these problems taught us a lot about what it takes to maintain and grow a program of this



magnitude in a park as large and complex as Yosemite. First, it taught us that infrastructure is key. Making it easy for visitors to make the right choices by replacing outdated infrastructure with new well-sited and simply labeled bear-proof trash, recycling and

composting bins and dumpsters was a much-needed first step to deliver real reductions. Next, we learned that you can never do enough education and outreach to instill good habits, not only with visitors, but also with park employees and in surrounding communities. Our final lesson is that partnership is the most important component to help grow and sustain an initiative like this. Whether it be local businesses catering to park visitors, or nonprofit partners who teach local students about the benefits of being sustainable, we could not have made it this far without the support of dozens of dedicated partners.

Now, with the pilot phase of the Zero Landfill Initiative coming to an end at these three parks, NPCA and our partners are taking these valuable lessons and looking for ways to scale them up to numerous other national parks across the country. Though it is an ambitious goal, our ultimate hope is that one day all our parks will be zero landfill.

Left: New bear-proof trash and recycling bins installed in Yosemite Valley ©NPS



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