



IRVINE-LAGUNA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Connecting Habitats from Mountains to Coast

A PROJECT OF LAGUNA GREENBELT, INC.



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UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF FIRE

By Giovanni Di Franco

As the persistent heat of summer has battered Southern California with weeks of 90-degree days, we must be mindful of the impact this weather has on our local environment. During our dry months, plants must find ways to ensure their survival until the rainy season. Many of our native coastal sage scrub flora such as *Encelia californica* and *Artemisia californica* are drought deciduous, meaning they drop their leaves to limit water loss. Other species, such as non-native plants introduced to our ecosystem,

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are not adapted to tolerate drought, reducing their chances of survival in our brutal summers. This includes many ornamentals planted in home gardens like hydrangeas and camellias which would die if it weren't for regular watering. Additionally, some non-native and invasive annuals like *Brassica nigra*, which grow rapidly and die just as quickly leave large patches of dry brush that contribute to fuel loads for wildfires.

Coastal sage scrub habitats have many plant species that are also adapted to fires. Burns occurring every 30 or more years can be beneficial for these habitats to encourage new growth, improve nutrient cycling, and remove dense layers of vegetation. Unfortunately, climate change has exacerbated periods of drought and fires are occurring too frequently, disturbing the communities prior to their ability to become established climax communities.

(Below) *Brassica nigra*, commonly known as Black mustard, can grow up to 6 feet tall and has small yellow flower inflorescence.



Southern California residents have become all too familiar with fire season. Historically spanning from July to October, some researchers have stated that climate change has extended the season to be year-round. With the threat of fire constantly looming we must plan for ways to mitigate and reduce the potential impacts of wildfires.





It is disheartening when fires harm homes and whole communities. There are emotional and financial impacts that take time to recover from. But let us not forget that these fires affect our local wildlife as well.

A solution that could assist wildlife in times of crisis is corridors that

reduce habitat fragmentation and improve connectivity between natural areas. Corridors allow animals to leave the area during a catastrophic event, and return when it has passed in order to repopulate the area. This animal movement, along with the way animals help move plant seeds to new areas, gives the land a boost as it recovers from wildfire.

In Orange County, the Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor could function as a pathway for animals to safely travel through urban areas. Whether there is a threat in the Laguna Coast Wilderness or the Cleveland National Forest, access to more resources would assist their ability to combat climate change-induced stressors, bringing more resilience to the region.

(Below) Image of residential developments near foothills of Santa Ana Mountains.



JEAN WATT: CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Please join us in celebrating the wonderful life and accomplishments Jean Watt has had in the greater Newport Beach community. As her impact has been felt by many, we ask that you please RSVP to ensure proper accommodations are present at the time of her celebration. To join in Jean's celebration of life and learn about the legacy she created, go to: <http://bit.ly/JeanWatt>

Join Us to Celebrate Jean Watt

**Family, friends, elected leaders,
community, activists, and
non-profits will assemble for a
Celebration of Life for Jean H. Watt.**

Date: Saturday, October 14, 2023
1 - 4 PM

Location: Newport Beach Venue
RSVP to get venue details**

RSVP

<https://bit.ly/JeanWatt>



SUMMER EVENTS

Family Hike

August 27 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM



Come and enjoy an easy, 2.5-mile family hike over moderate but uneven terrain (45-ft. elevation gain). Starting at the James Dilley Preserve, we will hike one of the most diverse areas of the park to Barbara's Lake and back. The hike is led by Laguna Canyon Foundation naturalist volunteers.

<https://lagunacanyon.org/event/family-hike/2023-08-27/>

**Follow the link to
register & see
other events**

Naturalist Nights: Estuary Ecology & Endangered Species



September 7 @ 6:00 PM

Join local biologist and endangered species expert Dick Zembal to learn about the ecology of the Upper Newport Bay estuary and some of the special endangered species that we find in and around it.

**Follow the link
to register**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/naturalist-nights-fall-2023-tickets-692849721167?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>



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Laguna Greenbelt, Inc. works to preserve open space and support wildlife that depend on local habitats to thrive.

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