



IRVINE-LAGUNA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Connecting Habitats from Mountains to Coast

A PROJECT OF LAGUNA GREENBELT, INC.

CORRIDOR TOUR GARNERS SUPPORT FROM LOCAL & STATE OFFICIALS



The most recent tour of the Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor was a major success. Led by John Leonard, FivePoint V.P. of Engineering, attendees included environmental advocates, Irvine Mayor Farah Khan,

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representatives from Orange County, state, and federal agencies who learned about the current progress of the Corridor. The tour served as an opportunity for those in attendance to highlight the work done in establishing the Wildlife Corridor while addressing key remaining obstacles, such as the I-5 freeway.

Mayor Farah Khan shared her thoughts with the rest of the group. “This Corridor was so critical in establishing a route for our natural habitat. I want to thank FivePoint for their forethinking and working with the City in such a unique way to ensure we could build [the Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor] as we were building out the Great Park neighborhoods. [I am] super excited for the [30x30 initiative project recognition].”

Melanie Schlotterbeck, Power in Nature Southland regional group lead, stated in honor of Elisabeth Brown, that she had a very fitting phrase. ‘If you are not at the table, you are on the menu.’ I am so glad to see everybody at the table because we’ve got leadership from the bottom at the local

level all the way to the top at the federal level.”

During the short hike attendees discussed the importance of ensuring wildlife mobility by solving the problem of blockage by the I-5 freeway. This critical portion requires additional solutions to ensure the Corridor functions fully from the Pacific Ocean to the Cleveland National Forest.



A ribbon-cutting ceremony is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2025 to officially announce the completion of this portion of the Corridor and raise awareness of its function to the local community.

Additionally, the group discussed the possibility of building an interpretive and viewing center adjacent to the Corridor to establish a permanent fixture to educate the public about the Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor and its importance to Orange County wildlife.

GREAT NEWS!

On June 25th, the Irvine City Council meeting delivered unanimous support for co-planning a kiosk/educational area alongside the Corridor in partnership with FivePoint and our Wildlife Corridor Working Group. They also agreed to create a resolution in support of 30X30 and sign the Partner Charter!



REMEMBERING DR. ELISABETH BROWN: A FORCE IN CONSERVING OPEN SPACE IN ORANGE COUNTY

Elisabeth 'Liz' Brown, Ph.D., biologist and inspirational Orange County advocate for open space and wildlife habitat protection, died peacefully on July 6 at the age of 81. A beloved figure in the Southern California environmental community, she served as President of Laguna Greenbelt, Inc. from 1985 to 2019. During that time, she played invaluable roles in collaborative efforts and legal battles protecting wilderness around Laguna Beach, establishing organizations to manage those lands, and creating programs for public access.

Dr. Brown was part of an Orange County environmental movement that created the South Coast



Wilderness, 22,000 acres of contiguous open space within the cities of Aliso Viejo, Irvine, Laguna Beach, Laguna Woods, Newport Beach, and unincorporated Orange County. Her passion for protecting Southern California ecology and her ability to help craft complex conservation agreements led to remarkable achievements. When she was reminded of her accomplishments, she was quick to point out, "I didn't do it alone."

Dr. Brown was a key player in the historic fight to protect Laguna Canyon, representing the Laguna Greenbelt, Inc. in months of negotiations with The Irvine Company. Public opposition, including the “Walk to Save Laguna Canyon” in 1989, led the Company to abandon plans for their Laguna Laurel development and sell the land to the City of Laguna Beach. A historic agreement was made to preserve the land which became the heart of the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park. Dr. Brown remained involved throughout the years-long process of land purchase, fundraising, management planning, and park creation. During this exciting time, Dr. Brown worked with many others to craft agreements and establish organizations for the long-term protection and management of the coastal open space.

Elisabeth never lost her drive to work on nature conservation and education, but her dual diagnoses of Parkinson’s Disease and Lewy Body Dementia made it impossible for her to continue. She enjoyed hearing about the ongoing efforts of her former colleagues as well as the keen interest that today’s youth show in protecting the environment.

A memorial for Dr. Brown is currently being planned. Her family encourages donations in her memory to Laguna Greenbelt, Inc.

To learn more about Elisabeth and her many accomplishments, and share your thoughts and memories about her life and contributions, please visit lagunagreenbelt.org

LAURA'S PHOTO CORNER

Photos by Laura Cohen



Bernardino Blue Butterfly, *Euphilotes bernardino*. The Laguna Coast Wilderness Park Dilley Preserve Butterfly Count took place in June led by volunteers Ted and Brenda Edgell. They counted 85 butterflies and found 9 different species!



Red-backed jumping spider
(*Phidippus johnsoni*)



Climbing penstemon (*Keckiella cordifolia*) in red with California everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*) flowering in white and Barbara's Lake in the background



Mallards roosting on a fallen Coast live oak. **Did you know...** Male mallards have yellow bills. Also “males undergo a temporary plumage change called ‘eclipse molt’. They lose their bright feathers & adopt a far more subdued appearance, with a mottled green head that later turns fully brown. This process allows them to blend into their surroundings & keep themselves safe from predators.” - Birdfact

SUMMER EVENTS

Restoration at Upper Newport Bay



August 2 @ 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Join OC Habitats and Project Grow at the Upper Newport Bay salt marsh as we restore the ecological reserve's riparian and salt marsh habitats through invasive plant and debris removal. These habitats are important for resident and migrating species that rely on these habitats for food and shelter seasonally and year-round.

**Follow the link for
more information**

<https://bit.ly/3Wy4FgZ>

Native Plant Hike

August 18 @ 8 AM - 10:30 AM



Come join Laguna Canyon Foundation volunteer naturalists to learn about the seasonal life of California Native Plants with Laguna Canyon Foundation volunteer naturalists on this enjoyable 2.5-mile hike (175-ft. elevation gain) over moderately uneven terrain.

**Follow the link
to register**

<https://bit.ly/4ffyySU>



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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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Donate at:

<https://lagunagreenbelt.org/donate-2/>

Mail checks to
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