



Restoration, Regeneration, & Resiliency at Akuutet Learning Nursery

“...Our destiny as human beings is to become nature-conscious as well as self-conscious, living in loving relationship and in balance and in harmony, not only with one another, but with the entire natural world.”

- Murray Bookchin

Through the support of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), Community Nature Connection has the opportunity to restore Elyria Canyon Park’s native plant nursery to an operational state that will consist of flourishing local shrub

and tree species. The canyon is a hidden gem located in the middle of the neighborhood Mt. Washington and is characterized by beautiful chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and threatened walnut woodland communities. Elyria Canyon Park is frequently visited by community members of Northeast Los Angeles and is easily identifiable by the Red Barn that houses the future of Akuutet Learning Nursery [image above]. Currently, the nursery is being managed by Nursery and Restoration Coordinator, Tawny De Guzman, and Nursery Technician, Javier Rodriguez.

Though the canyon is unique in representing diverse plant communities that are native to California, its value is only amplified by the strong community voices that fight for and tend to it. Crucial efforts intersecting community activism and climate action are currently underway by local organizations such as Coyotl + Macehualli, The Regenerative Collective, North East Trees, and NELA Alliance. Just as much as our native landscape needs protection, so do the people that have resided with it. Simultaneously, BIPOC communities and native plant communities are experiencing displacement by housing developers that are attempting to take over major Northeast LA neighborhoods and valuable native land cover. The nursery will contribute to counteracting this displacement by growing important native species for local restoration projects and providing a safe space for community gathering and event planning.

To further involve the community, the nursery will host paid internships for local high school students who hope to gain more experience in native plant nursery work and restoration work. High school students will be able to gain professional development and work experience while being able to connect to the land and their own communities—opportunities that are evidently rare for those impacted by socioeconomic barriers in urban Los Angeles. In addition to hosting interns, the nursery also hopes to be a regular site for CNC's other interpretive and educational programs, such as the Outdoor & Coastal Access Leadership Program led by Kya Le and the Emerging Naturalists Program led by Maya Morales. Through these programs, the rich history and ecology of Elyria Canyon Park will reach an even wider audience who may not know of its existence. Once the nursery has reached a stable operational state, volunteers will be recruited and will have the opportunity to contribute to local restoration projects through propagating, planting, and maintaining fire-resilient native plants.

“Akuutet” is the Tongva word for “butterfly”. In honor of the Tongva stewards and caretakers of the land, the nursery has adopted the name Akuutet Learning Nursery (ALN). The nursery will be producing species such as Narrowleaf Milkweed that will support the declining butterfly populations throughout the state. Additionally, the butterfly represents journey, resilience, and growth, all of which are characteristics that define the communities of Northeast Los Angeles. Currently, the nursery is on its way to becoming Akuutet Learning Nursery. ALN will only be actualized through community engagement, relationship building, and flourishing California native plants, through a mutualistic and loving relationship between communities and nature.

If you have any questions, you can contact CNC’s Nursery & Restoration Coordinator, Tawny De Guzman, at tawny@communitynatureconnection.org.

Indigenous Solidarity

We acknowledge the land on which CNC operates as the unceded ancestral lands and home of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples, original stewards and custodians of this territory. We recognize their continuing connection to land, waters and culture, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



Moving Beyond Performative Action

Land acknowledgments have become more common in recent years as a way to recognize that we are living on stolen land. Community Nature Connection, for instance, operates on occupied Tongva, Chumash, and Tataviam territory. While this is a step in the right direction, it is only the start of a collective movement to right the wrongs this country has inflicted upon Indigenous People.

In the ongoing struggle against colonization, we must think beyond land acknowledgments by entering into restorative relationships and supporting Indigenous sovereignty and repatriation efforts. The recent [reclaiming of ancestral lands by the Tongva people](#), led by the [Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy](#), is a good example of what successful land back movements can look like in [Tovaangar](#), the region encompassing greater Los Angeles.

As this [Land Reparations & Indigenous Solidarity Toolkit](#) points out, there is no single blueprint for reparations to the Indigenous People of this land, but education and action are critically important. Non-Indigenous folks can create and renew their commitments to supporting Indigenous Peoples every day.

What does this look like? Here are some actions that allies can take right now:

- Support the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians with an [Acknowledge Rent](#) payment, or find out whose land you occupy [here](#).
- Amplify Indigenous voices. Check out these podcasts:
 - [The Red Nation Podcast](#)
 - [Indigeneity Conversations](#)
 - [This Land](#)
 - [Indigenous Vision](#)
 - [All My Relations](#)
- Read from Indigenous authors. A few recommendations:
 - *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
 - *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
 - *Our History is the Future* by Nick Estes
 - *As Long As Grass Grows* by Dina Gilio-Whitaker
- Get involved with the [NDN Collective](#) and [Land Back](#) movement

- Educate yourself and others on current issues facing Native communities and how history impacts their contemporary lives
 - [Crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women](#)
 - [Stop Line 3](#)
 - [Protect Mauna Kea](#)
-

A Message from the Executive Director

Different Interpretations of CNC Within Our Environment

If you didn't hear that Community Nature Connection hired a new Executive Director, then let me be the first to introduce myself. My name is Delaney Alamillo. I am a transwomyn, second generation Mexican American, parent of two kids, striving to make this polycentric, diverse county (Los Angeles) a better place to live and thrive for all species, including people, than the one I was raised in.

At CNC, I hope to build an inclusive vision that focuses on providing transformative outdoor programming, leadership development, workforce experiences, and community engagement to all Angeleno youth and families to inspire and foster their sense of wonder, discovery, and interest in both the natural environment and urban parks with the hopes that they become the next generation of dreamers, leaders, storytellers, and agents of change.

For this vision to be successful, and for us to meet our mission's intent—'to increase access to the outdoors for communities impacted by racial, socio-economic, and disability injustices by eliminating existing barriers through advocacy, community centered programming, and workforce development.'-- then a fundamental challenge needs to be confronted. This challenge is acknowledging and identifying the systemic racism, cis-heteropatriarchy, racial capitalism, and white supremacy found in the framing of the environmental movement, which include historic and present practices of anti-blackness, anti-indigeneity, colorism, sexism and genderism, ableism, and class issues to name a few.

If CNC is to be relevant and connected to the Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA, and differently-abled communities found within Los Angeles, then we need to readily and regularly talk about, in our programs and interpretive work, how these past ideologies and practices continue to 1) manifest themselves in today's environmental movement, 2) impact the built environment where Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA, and differently-abled communities live, and 3) act as barriers for engaging the outdoors, parks, and nature.

Engaging in the practice of acknowledging and identifying facilitates our organization's step toward community partnerships, movement building, and accompliceship. This will require that our work and organizational ideology be steeped in inclusive histories, emergent strategies, restorative practices, regenerative actions, just transitions, mutual-aid, reparative and indigenous initiatives, solidarity economies, decolonized learning, revolutionary mothering, and liberatory mindsets so that we can begin to repair and heal our connections to ourselves, to one another, to our communities, and to the earth. As Adrienne Maree Brown states in *Pleasure Activism* "We need to learn how to practice love such that care—for ourselves and others—is understood as political resistance and cultivating resilience."

Doing this work while navigating the contradictions and paradoxes of the non-profit industrial complex will be difficult but very necessary.

The essence of my story is pulled from Dorceta Taylor's "The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection."

Program Highlights

William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom

This fall CNC hosted several programs at Franklin Canyon Park. Thanks to the Redwood Connect Grant, participants had an opportunity to experience first-hand and learn about Coast Redwoods within the urban cityscape of Los

Angeles. Participants also engaged in discussions about climate change and its effects on the redwoods located in Franklin Canyon.

Public Programming has also started back up at the Sooky Goldman Nature Center. Movie Magic, Story Time & Nature Walks as well as Full Moon Hikes are all held once a month. Registration for these programs can be found on [our website](#).

Due to COVID- 19 it has been over two years since students have been able to visit Franklin Canyon in person. We're excited to host school field trips again starting this fall and get students back into the park. Field trips are available at no cost for all Title 1 schools. If you would like more information regarding school trips, contact us at WODOC@communitynatureconnection.org.



Community Engagement

We also collaborated with MRCA to host three community engagement meetings for the park designs at Reseda Park Triangle. Currently, the 5 acre grass field is shaded by over 130 enormously tall trees where dog walkers, soccer players, and family parties like to gather. One of the three sides of the proposed site is directly aligned with the Paayme Paxaayt, or the LA River, which offers visitors a front seat to connect with a concrete channel set to

undergo many future transformations.

During the engagement sessions, we posted several concept boards with different park designs, created by SWA Group. Local residents and park visitors voted on elements from each concept board that they would like to see in the final concept for park improvement. To see established parks done by MRCA, please visit Lewis MacAdams Riverfront Park, formerly Marsh Park in Frogtown (2944 Gleneden St, Los Angeles, CA 90039), or Vista Hermosa Natural Park in Downtown LA (100 N Toluca St, Los Angeles, CA 90026).



Starting at the beginning of next year, we will launch the Outdoor and Coastal Access Leadership Institute (OCALI). With the success from the inaugural group of OCALI, this year's program will focus on outdoor skills, recreational experiences and strengthen community relationships to the extensive network of access advocates and leaders. Specifically designed for youth adults, ages 18-24 years old, the program will be hybrid, online sessions with in-person field trips. Be on the lookout for more information in January 2023.



Transit to Trails

Dynamic and vibrant, the California Coast is the home to a diverse community of flora and fauna. This summer CNC's Coastal Transit to Trails program set out to connect our communities by providing free transportation and interpretative programming to local organizations such as Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA), Compton Junior Equestrians (CJE), and Happy Trails for Kids.

On a visit to King Gillette Ranch and Temescal Canyon Gateway Park, we learned about the geological and historical past of the Santa Monica Mountains. Through our hikes, we observed and imagined the incredible changes that have occurred, and how we are a part of the long story of humans coexisting with this unique and mesmerizing landscape.

In our efforts to connect people with the coast, we uplift the importance of outdoor access, coastal education, and oceanic protection. Much like the interconnectedness of marine fungi on the ocean's surface and beneath coral crevices, we hope to spark curiosity between program participants and the environment so they might have a lifelong bond with our every changing oceans.

Transit to Trails offers opportunities to learn about our connection to the earth, including Indigenous perspectives, in hopes of developing an understanding of stewardship, sustainability, and wellness. We'd like to extend a special thanks to the California Coastal Conservancy, California Coastal Commission, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for their support of this program.



Emerging Naturalists

With new seasons come new changes, and in the context of our programming at Community Nature Connection, our use of language evolves. Naturalist Explorers has been the title and name of our primary, career focused, youth program for some time. It's classic. People know what to expect from the name. Youth on a Community Nature Connection program called Naturalist Explorers will probably "become naturalist explorers."

While we hold the program in high esteem, especially considering how much fun youth participants might have while engaging with the natural world, we also want to hold to our visions and values intrinsically. "Explorers" can be a term that might push away hopeful participants, and does not align with the visions that this program has for its future.

So it is with this new perspective and insight that we have changed the name of the program to Emerging Naturalists. It is with much hope that this program will be reinstated in 2023, filled with more opportunities for youth to engage with nature and community.

In the next year, we look forward to collaboration across all CNC programs, meetings with youth participants regarding civil action plans about the environment, guest presenters who speak to youth not only about the careers in the outdoors but also the way that they can feel empowered to take those steps into the field of Natural Resources.

But above all, we're excited to support education for young participants who might at first have a passing interest in a park, or public space, that is nurtured into a passion for uplifting themselves and their communities.

Create Lasting Impact

Soon the season of giving will be upon us and Giving Tuesday is right around the corner! We hope that you'll consider a donation before the end of 2022 to help facilitate meaningful outdoor experiences for folks across LA County.

Supporting CNC is quick and easy with PayPal. Any amount is meaningful and helps to sustain our community-based programming. Show up for outdoor equity with a contribution today!

Donate with PayPal

Want to make an even bigger impact? Set up a [recurring monthly donation](#) on our website!

Welcome New Staff

We're delighted to formally introduce our newest team members! Janice, Jovi,

Tawny, and Javier bring invaluable experience, knowledge, and passion to their roles at CNC. [Learn more here](#)

JANICE MAGUIRE

Director of
Operations



JOVI NIETO

Lead Naturalist



TAWNY DE GUZMAN

Nursery and
Restoration
Coordinator



C. JAVIER RODRIGUEZ

Nursery
Technician



Training Institute

WASHOE LAND | Earlier this month, staff from Community Nature Connection, Nature for All, Pacoima Beautiful, and Coalition for Engaged Education traveled together to Tahoe City, California to participate in the Statewide California Naturalist Conference. Highlights of the conference included learning from cultural practitioners and indigenous stewards Don Hankins of the Plains Miwak tribe and Rihana Jones and Mark Lara of the Washoe Environmental Protection Department about co-management and traditional fire practices in a contemporary context.



We also enjoyed hearing from CNC's own board member Bruce Saito about the California Conservation Corps' commitment to practicing cultural humility and institutionalizing inclusive practices.

The Training Institute team is excited to incorporate the learning from the conference into our next California Naturalist Certification Training offering, coming winter 2023.

Community Spotlight

Located on the southwestern slopes of Mount Washington, [Elyria Canyon Park](#) is a 35-acre nature park that provides a glimpse into the native habitat that once thrived in the hills near downtown Los Angeles. A network of trails meanders through fragrant communities of coastal sage scrub, chaparral, grassland and purple needlegrass.

The park also boasts one of the finest examples of California black walnut woodland in Southern California. The trails lead to vistas of the Los Angeles River, Griffith Observatory, and the city.



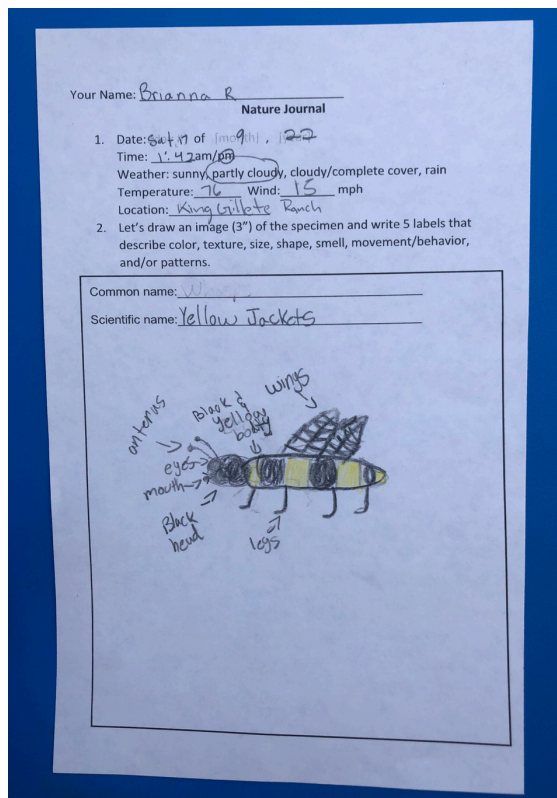
Driving directions: From the Glendale Freeway (2), exit on San Fernando Road. Travel east on San Fernando Road to Division Street, turn left. Go to Wollam Street, turn right and continue to the end of the street and park in the dirt lot. Trailhead signs are posted. You can also use the 5 or 110 and exit at W Ave 26.

Metro Routes: Take the 94 Metro Local Line bus to San Fernando / Division St stop or 90 Metro Local Line bus bus to San Fernando / Eagle Rock stop.

Participant Story

On September 17, Community Nature Connection staff, Zee Zetino and Kya-Marina Lê led a Transit to Trails to King Gillette Ranch with Happy Trails For Kids.

Youth participated on a hike to Inspiration Point and were able to practice the art of nature journaling, while being reminded that our rich communities have a long history of documenting nature.



Calendar of Events

Check our website and social media often for the latest trainings and events!

- [Movie Magic Hike](#)
 - November 5, December 3, & January 7
 - 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - [Franklin Canyon Park](#) - 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr, Beverly Hills
- [Full Moon Hike](#)
 - November 8, December 8, & January 6
 - 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
 - Franklin Canyon Ranch Parking Lot (Lake Drive), Beverly Hills
- [Art in Nature Pressure Printing Workshop](#)
 - November 19 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - Sooky Goldman Nature Ctr. - 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr, Beverly Hills
- [Story Time and Nature Walk](#)
 - November 26, December 17, & January 28
 - 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - [Franklin Canyon Park](#) - 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr, Beverly Hills

Please note: Some photos included in this newsletter were taken before the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore do not reflect our current safety protocols.



Copyright © 2020 Community Nature Connection, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

P.O. Box 31187 Los Angeles, California 90031

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Community Nature Connection · PO Box 31187 · Los Angeles, CA 90031-0187 · USA

