

# SLO STEWARDS

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SLO City's Natural Resources

A PUBLICATION OF *EcoSlo* AND THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

## A HISTORY OF GENEROSITY

Photo by Meg and Keith Evans

by Neil Havlik, Ph.D.  
Natural Resources Manager  
City of San Luis Obispo

**C**ONGRATULATIONS San Luis Obispo! Our community has successfully raised the \$60,000 needed to purchase 310 acres of Froom Ranch Open Space. Due to an unexpected reduction in funding from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the City of San Luis Obispo and the Land Conservancy of SLO County needed to raise an additional \$10,000 beyond the original \$50,000 that was assumed to be necessary. Citizens of San Luis Obispo rose to the occasion, and on May 25, 2010, a large donation helped us reach our goal! The City is now working on the final details of the Froom Ranch Open Space transaction with completion expected in July.

The City of San Luis Obispo is known for this kind of community support. Over the past fifteen years the City has completed twenty-five open space transactions, varying in donation type, size, and amount. Of those twenty-five transactions, seven have been outright donations of land. These wonderful donors received only the gratitude of the community in return for their generosity. Seven others open spaces have been "dedications" of land to the City of San Luis Obispo as part of an

agreement allowing development on a portion of the property. Four more have been "bargain sales," where the land is sold to the City below the market value. Therefore, the seller gives the City a portion of the funds as a gift. And finally, five of the transactions involved significant fundraising within the community, the most recent being the Froom Ranch transaction.

Local fundraising for City Open Spaces has been a triumph. In 1998 the citizens contributed \$45,000 for the Bishop Peak transaction. Over \$130,000 was contributed in 2000 for the Johnson Ranch transaction, including a \$100,000 gift from Bert and Candee Forbes. During the Brughelli Ranch and UPRR projects (conducted jointly between the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County and the City of San Luis Obispo), a total of \$175,000 was raised, including \$75,000 from Dean and Patti Morgridge and another \$35,000 from Bert and Candee Forbes.

Hundreds of donors contributed amounts that they could afford, and a total of more than 1,000 contributors (some donations came from as far away as Los Angeles and

## SPECIAL THANKS

### BARGAIN SALES:

1998: Bishop Peak  
2001: Johnson Ranch  
2006: Brughelli Ranch easement  
2008: Stenner Ranch easement  
The value of the gift portion of these sales exceeds \$600,000.

### DEDICATIONS:

2000: DeVaul Open Space, 182 acres  
2001: Prefumo Homes, 360 acres  
2001: Froom Ranch easement, 150 acres  
2003: Bowden Ranch Open Space, 27 acres  
2005: Boysen Ranch wetland, 30 acres  
2005: Congregation Beth David wetland, 63 acres  
2006: Calle Joaquin ag land, 12 acres  
Two more dedications totaling 19 acres are anticipated in the near future.  
The value of the dedications exceeds \$2 million.

### DONATIONS:

2001: Bowden Ranch Easement, 185 acres  
2003: John Kuden donation, 2 acres  
2004: Rob Olson donation, 1 acre  
2005: Bowden Ranch fee donation, 185 acres  
2007: John King easement donation, 71 acres  
2007: Land Conservancy donation of former UPRR property, 315 acres  
2008: Elks Lodge easement donation, 3 acres  
The value of these gifts exceeds \$2 million.

**HISTORY** continues on page 2

STEELHEAD TROUT  
*Oncorhynchus mykiss*

# SUMMONING THE STEELHEAD

by  
**Freddy Otte**  
City Biologist

**A**S SPRING GRADUALLY warms to summer, our thoughts are drawn to the cool creek water that winds through our City. And while this winter was especially wet, the number of native Steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) residing in the creek does not yet reflect the increase in creek water.

The large storms in October helped push murky sediment and entangling debris downstream, allowing better passage for migrating adult fish. This stormwater is also recharging the groundwater aquifer, ensuring surface water persists longer this summer. However, the reports of Steelhead trout are few and far between. This spring only three adult fish were reported in the San Luis Obispo Creek watershed. Reports of adult steelhead sightings came from just below City limits, Cuesta Park, and Stenner Creek. With all the beneficial rain, why is the watershed not teeming with fish?

Three years of drought, unfavorable ocean conditions, and human impacts may be to blame for the small returning population.

Drought impacts the ability of new smolts (fish that leave freshwater to spend their adult life in the ocean) to leave freshwater

## WHY IS THE WATERSHED NOT TEEMING WITH FISH?

in good shape. Larger, healthy smolts survive better in the ocean, where they feed until they are strong enough to return to their natal stream for reproduction. Salmon and Steelhead are anadromous, meaning they live in saltwater and breed in freshwater. It is necessary for small Steelhead smolt to enter the ocean to complete their life-cycle. If conditions are not favorable fish will embark on a journey to better conditions, and will not proceed to the ocean.

Poaching is another action resulting in the small returning Steelhead population. Department of Fish and Game staff

encountered a transient fishing in San Luis Obispo Creek behind the DMV. The man had poached three Steelhead fish but fled the area before being arrested.

City staff will begin conducting electrofishing surveys to watch trends in the population from different areas of the creek. The City hopes to determine how management of resources can help the delicate population recover.

### **HISTORY** *continued from back page*

San Francisco Bay Area) have supported Open Space acquisitions by the City over the years. This tradition continues with the current Froom Ranch Open Space transaction, which has just passed \$60,000 in contributions and has reached its fundraising goal. The City Council and City staff offer their deepest thanks to the many citizens who have made these contributions which have been so critical to the success of the City's Greenbelt Protection Program.

**THANK YOU!**

## Natural San Luis Docent HIKES

Events are free and take place **SATURDAYS** at 9AM. Please bring water and wear sturdy shoes.

For info call ECOSLO at 544-1777, or SLO City Natural Resources Dept at 781-7211

**7/17 RESERVOIR CANYON**  
Meet at Reservoir Canyon trailhead. Take Highway 101 north. Go about a mile past city limits and, right onto Reservoir Canyon Rd. This road ends at trailhead.

**8/21 ISLAY HILL**  
Heading east from From Tank Farm/Orcutt Rd turn on Spanish Oaks Dr, turn left on Sweet Bay Ln. Trailhead is at the end of Sweetbay Lane.

**9/18 JOHNSON RANCH**  
Take Higuera St until it turns into South Higuera St. Meet at turnout located at the intersection of South Higuera St and Ontario Rd. Trailhead is on the right, just off the freeway.

**10/16 GUIDETTI RANCH**  
For the Guidetti Ranch hike meet at the Food for Less/Trader Joe's parking lot on South Higuera. Park towards South Higuera and carpool to the trailhead.

**11/20 WEST CUESTA RIDGE**  
Leaving San Luis Obispo on HWY 101 north, turn left almost at the top of Cuesta Grade. Meet in parking area on the west side of the highway to carpool to the trailhead.

## SLO City Parks & Rec Ranger-Led HIKES

Events are free and take place **SUNDAYS** at 1PM. Please bring water and wear sturdy shoes.

For info call: SLO City Parks and Rec at 781-7302. Visit: [www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation](http://www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation)

**7/11 STENNER SPRINGS**  
Take Highway 1 towards Morro Bay. Less than a mile outside of town, turn right onto Stenner Creek Rd. Follow Stenner Creek Rd for about 2-1/2 miles to the end.

**8/22 SOUTH HILLS**  
From US 101, exit Madonna Rd and go East. Left on Higuera St and right on South St. Turn right on Exposition Dr. Road will turn into Woodbridge St. The trailhead is on the right.

**9/12 BISHOP PEAK from Patricia**  
To reach the trailhead, take Foothill Blvd west and make a right turn at Patricia Dr. The trailhead will be on the left, just past Patricia Ct.

**10/17 IRISH HILLS from Prefumo Canyon**  
Take Los Osos Valley Rd north and turn left on Prefumo Canyon Rd. Follow for 1 mile. Trailhead is on the left after bridge crossing.

**11/14 CERRO SAN LUIS**  
Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Rd just before the southbound 101 Marsh St. on-ramp.

## SLO Stewards TRAIL WORK

Workdays are **SATURDAYS** from 9AM-12PM. Please wear long pants and sturdy shoes. Water and snacks provided.

For info call City Ranger Desk at 781-7302. Visit: [www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation](http://www.slocity.org/parksandrecreation)

**7/17 IRISH HILLS from Prefumo Canyon**  
Take Los Osos Valley Rd north and turn left on Prefumo Canyon Rd. Follow for 1 mile. Trailhead is on the left after bridge crossing.

**8/14 BISHOP PEAK from Highland**  
To reach the trailhead, take Foothill Blvd west and turn right at Patricia Dr. Continue of Patricia Dr and make a left on Highland Dr. The trailhead is at the end of Highland Dr.

**9/4 RESERVOIR CANYON**  
Meet at the Reservoir Canyon trailhead. To reach trailhead, take Highway 101 north. Go about a mile past city limits and, right onto Reservoir Canyon Rd. This road ends at trailhead.

**9/18 CERRO SAN LUIS**  
Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Rd just before the southbound 101 Marsh St. on-ramp.

**10/9 IRISH HILLS from Prefumo Canyon**  
Take Los Osos Valley Rd north and turn left on Prefumo Canyon Rd. Follow for 1 mile. Trailhead is on the left after bridge crossing.

**10/23 STENNER SPRINGS**  
Take Highway 1 towards Morro Bay. Less than a mile outside of town, turn right onto Stenner Creek Rd. Follow Stenner Creek Rd for about 2-1/2 miles to the end.

**11/6 BISHOP PEAK from Patricia**  
To reach the trailhead, take Foothill Blvd west and make a right turn at Patricia Dr. The trailhead will be on the left, just past Patricia Ct.

**11/20 IRISH HILLS from Madonna**  
Take Higuera St south, take a right on Madonna Rd. Follow Madonna to the very end. Trailhead is at the far side of the roundabout, up walkway.



CONTACT ECOSLO TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE  
**805.544.1777 • INFO@ECOSLO.ORG**



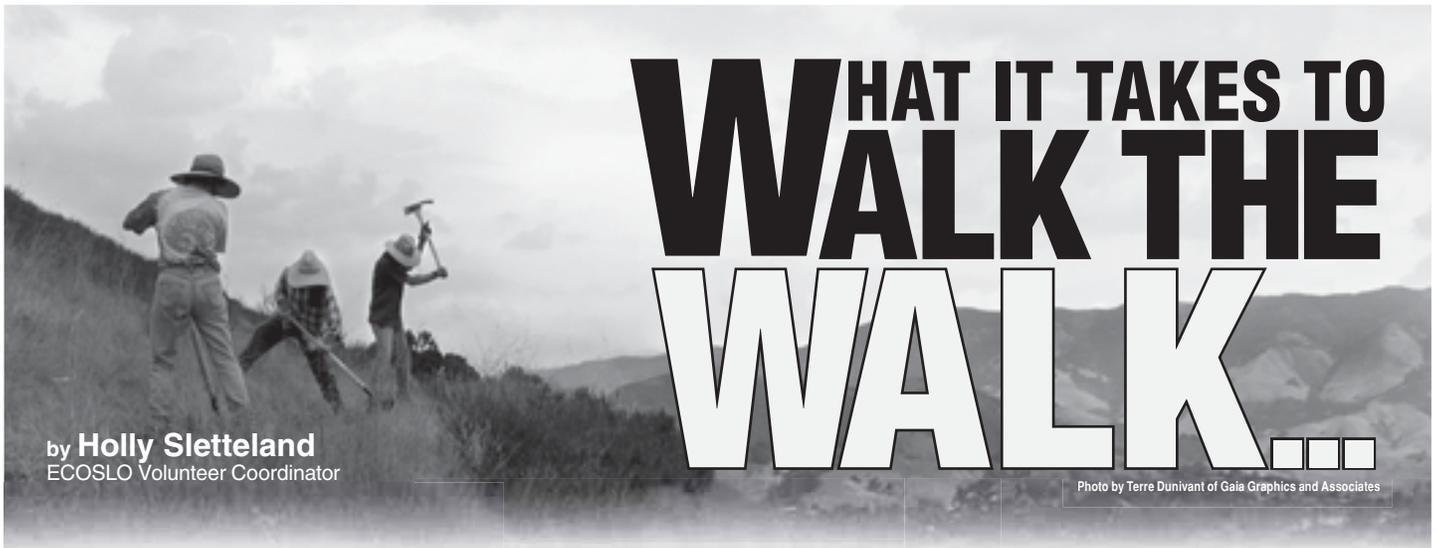
*SLO* STEWARDS

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by **Holly Sletteland**  
ECOSLO Volunteer Coordinator

# WHAT IT TAKES TO WALK THE WALK...

Photo by Terre Dunivant of Gaia Graphics and Associates

**I** WOULD HOPE THAT everyone reading this newsletter has had a chance to get out on the trail this spring. Over the past few months, we have been treated to the visual delight of fields awash with shooting stars, lupines, buttercups, poppies, and a parade of other

many of you also stopped to appreciate exactly what it takes to make and maintain the trail you walked on, the bridge that helped you cross the creek, the sign that allowed you to get your bearings or the bench that allowed you to rest and take in the view. It's easy to take these things for granted, but they don't come easily.

that money alone can't buy. All our parks and open spaces depend heavily on volunteers to keep them in good shape. They depend on you and me.

## IT'S EASY TO TAKE THESE THINGS FOR GRANTED, BUT THEY DON'T COME EASY

wildflowers against a backdrop of lush green grass and shrubs. We have relearned the art of avoiding puddles and navigating rushing creeks. And we recaptured the sense of awe at seeing sunlight glinting off of brimming lakes.

It has truly been an amazing spring with much to appreciate. But I wonder how

Funding for the acquisition of open space upon which to create trails is very difficult to come by. Fortunately, the City of San Luis Obispo has overcome the obstacles time and time again and put together a truly remarkable greenbelt around the City. But acquisition is only the beginning. Next comes stewardship, and that is something

Many of our daily lives are filled with seemingly endless commitments, and just finding the time to break away to have fun may seem hard enough. Mustering the time, energy, and effort required to volunteer may appear to be way over the top, but it doesn't have to be. The nice thing about SLO Stewards is that you can participate as much as you want. The parks and open space will benefit and the community will benefit. But you may also be surprised to find you walk away from a stewardship activity feeling like you were the greater beneficiary of the day's efforts. You'll find that helping with SLO Stewards will teach you new skills and introduce you to fun, like-minded people, all while making the world a better place. I hope you'll join us soon on a trail work day.