



# SLO STEWARDS

A PUBLICATION of *EcoSlo* and the CITY of SAN LUIS OBISPO

S L O C I T Y ' S N A T U R A L R E S O U R C E S

## A NEW BEGINNING

STORY by  
NEIL HAVLIK, Ph.D.

Natural Resources Manager,  
City of San Luis Obispo

### *A healthier budget means more assignments for Natural Resources staff*

**A**fter a very successful 2006, 2007 has turned out to offer many new challenges to City of San Luis Obispo Natural Resources staff. Why? In November 2006 the citizens of San Luis Obispo voted in favor of Measure Y, adding a one-half cent sales tax within the City in support of general government activities.

During the City Council's budget hearings in early 2007, citizens spoke loudly about the projects and programs they wanted to see these additional funds used for. The City Council responded by allocating some \$775,000 of mostly new funding into the Natural Resources Protection Program for the 2007-2009 budget cycle.

These are the first significant new funds for the program since 2003.

In 2006 the City completed several long-term projects, making way for a new round of projects for community benefit purposes. Some of our expectations are:

**1. New easement or fee acquisitions.** City staff are working with several area landowners to acquire more open space lands for habitat conservation and passive recreation, and to conserve farmlands utilizing agricultural conservation easements. A cooperative effort with the Nature Conservancy and Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is a major aspect of the program.

**2. Adopt Johnson Ranch Open Space Conservation Plan for Public Use.** City Natural Resources and Ranger staff are in the process of completing the Conservation Plan for the 242-acre Johnson Ranch, available for public review in October.

Upon adoption of the Johnson Ranch Open Space Conservation Plan, staff will begin activities necessary to open the property for passive recreational use in late 2008 or early 2009.

“The passage of Measure Y has given us many opportunities to move forward on projects our citizens want to see.”

**3. Continue Wetland and Riparian Mitigation.** City staff are working on the mitigation of wetland impacts from City projects by continuing the development of the

riparian corridors along Orcutt and Acacia Creeks at the Damon-Garcia Sports Fields, along SLO Creek, and at the Calle Joaquin wetlands. This involves wetland creation and enhancement and riparian habitat.

see *A New Beginning*, page 2



[www.slocity.org/naturalresources](http://www.slocity.org/naturalresources)

# Rearing Whale Rock Trout

STORY BY  
FREDDY OTTE

Whale Rock Reservoir is located in the hills behind Cayucos and constitutes a portion of the City's municipal water supply. The City of San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly, and the California Men's Colony are partial owners of the reservoir, with the City having the largest percentage.

The Whale Rock Commission is a group of members from the three organizations which oversees operation of the reservoir.



When the dam was installed on Old Creek in 1961, the Department of Fish and Game ruled that, due to the impacts to Steelhead trout in Old Creek, the Commission has to plant 17,500 trout in the reservoir annually.

These fish are a valuable resource, and efforts to preserve them have been supported by numerous agencies. The reservoir was opened to public fishing in the 1980's and a trapping and rearing operation was started to ensure enough fish would be planted.

Non-native Western suckers were illegally introduced into the reservoir some time in the 70's and may be competing with the trout in the reservoir. Control programs are being investigated to deal with them. The Commission is getting all the permits and equipment ready for spring.

Rearing has been infrequent, and the last trapping effort occurred in 2004 due to a lack of locations where fish can be reared. Lone Pine Nursery in Nipomo has a small hatchery facility and we are also looking into getting the trapping and spawning project running again next spring.

The fish in the reservoir share the same migration patterns as their anadromous counterparts, the steelhead salmon, moving into the tributaries of the reservoir in early spring to spawn.

A weir trap is placed in the cove where a tributary flows into the reservoir, and the fish are trapped in a large floating net-pen. Once the fish are ready to spawn, the eggs are collected and fertilized and raised in troughs until the fall, when they are put back into the reservoir.

Stay tuned for the next update.

*A New Beginning by Neil Havlik... continued from front page*

## 4. New Open Space and Trail

**Signage.** Creation and installation of interpretive signage at entry points into City open space lands and points of interest along trails. A more complete guide system for the City's open space lands is also being developed.

## 5. Gateway Enhancements.

Natural Resources and Parks and Recreation Department staff will be working on two gateway sites into the City, one along Highway 101 near Los Osos Valley Road, the other at Highway 1 and Highland Drive. These sites will include significant new landscaping and entry signage welcoming travelers to our City

## 6. Bob Jones Trail Development.

After several years of frustrating delays, City staff will finally get construction of the Bob Jones Trail

section from Prado Road to Los Osos Valley Road underway this fall, including a significant native tree planting program. This section of trail is anticipated to be open to the public in mid-2008.

## 7. Union Pacific Railroad

**Property.** With the transfer of the 315-acre former Union Pacific Railroad Properties from the Land Conservancy to the City in June, planning for the use, conservation, and enhancement of that open space will begin in late 2007. Its rare plants, Sargent cypress groves, springs, other water sources and popular mountain bike trails, will be the primary focus.

The passage of Measure Y has given us many opportunities to move forward on projects our citizens want to see. The staff are cognizant of the responsibility placed upon them to faithfully and expeditiously carry out the wishes of the community expressed in the City budget, and the Natural Resources staff is no exception.

We are excited and a little daunted by the ambitious goals set out for us, but we look forward to tackling them all, and to continuing to provide our citizens with a model program, beautiful and healthy surroundings, and opportunities for enjoyment and education in those surroundings.



## HELP US PLANT NATIVE TREES THIS FALL!

On Saturday, November 10, 2007 from 9 am to Noon, join ECOSLO and the City of SLO for a **SPECIAL FALL TREE PLANTING ALONG THE BOB JONES BIKE TRAIL.** Bring sturdy shoes and gloves. Water and snacks are provided. Directions to the planting site are on page 4. Please contact ECOSLO to RSVP at 544-1777 or [info@ecoslo.org](mailto:info@ecoslo.org)



## SLO City Parks & Recreation Ranger-Led Hikes

Ranger-led events are free and take place on **SUNDAYS** starting at 1 PM. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water to drink. For more info call the SLO City Parks and Recreation Department at 781-7302.



## Natural San Luis Docent Hikes

All Natural San Luis Docent-led events are free and take place on **SATURDAYS** starting at 9 AM. For more info call ECOSLO at 544-1777 or SLO City Natural Resources Department at 781-7211.

**Cerro San Luis**      **South Hills**      **Bishop Peak**      **Irish Hills**

**Bishop Peak**      **Guidetti Ranch**      **Lemon Grove Loop**      **Irish Hills**

🌿 November 11    🌿 December 9    🌿 January 13    🌿 February 10    🌿 November 24    🌿 December 15    🌿 January 19    🌿 February 16

Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Road just before the southbound 101 Marsh Street on-ramp.

Take South Street to Exposition and follow Woodbridge. Look for the City Open Space sign. Trail is rocky; wear sturdy shoes! All fitness levels are welcome. 1-2 hours; bring water.

Highest of the nine Morros with 360° views of coastal valleys and the other Morros. Take Foothill west, turn right at Patricia Dr. Trailhead is on the left just past Patricia Court.

Meet at Prefumo Cyn trailhead. From Hwy 101, take Los Osos Valley Rd. north, go left at Prefumo Cyn. Road and continue for one mile. Trailhead is on the left after bridge.

To reach the trailhead, take Foothill Blvd. west and turn right onto Patricia Dr. Continue north on Patricia and turn left onto Highland Drive ending at trailhead.

The meeting place is at the Food 4 Less parking lot @ 3985 S. Higuera, San Luis Obispo. We will caravan to the ranch, which is located off Buckley Road.

To reach the trailhead and meeting place from South Higuera, take 101 southbound Marsh Street on-ramp, but turn right on Fernandez Road just before the onramp enters the freeway.

Meet at the Prefumo Canyon trailhead. From Hwy 101, take Los Osos Valley Road north, then turn left on Madonna Rd. Follow the street to the end and park on the street.



Take only photographs.  
Leave only footprints.

## S L O S T E W A R D S T R A I L W O R K



### SLO Stewards Trail Work

SLO Stewards maintain trails, creeks and open space. Work parties take place **SATURDAYS** from 9am to 1pm. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes. Tools, water and snacks provided.

**Irish Hills**      **Cerro San Luis**      **Reservoir Canyon**      **Cerro San Luis**      **Cerro San Luis**      **Bishop Peak**      **Cerro San Luis**      **Irish Hills**

🌿 November 3    🌿 November 17    🌿 December 1    🌿 December 15    🌿 January 12    🌿 January 26    🌿 February 9    🌿 February 23

Meet at the Prefumo Cyn trailhead. From US 101, take Los Osos Valley Road north, turn left onto Prefumo Canyon Road and stay on it for one mile. The trailhead is on the left after the bridge crossing.

Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Road just before the southbound 101 Marsh Street on-ramp.

Meet at the Reservoir Cyn trailhead. Take Hwy 101 north out of San Luis Obispo, past City limits one mile and turn right onto Reservoir Canyon Road (2nd road past City limits). Road will end at trailhead.

Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Road just before the southbound 101 Marsh Street on-ramp.

Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Road just before the southbound 101 Marsh Street on-ramp.

To reach the trailhead and meeting place, take Foothill Blvd. to Patricia Dr. Turn left on Highland Dr. and continue on Highland Dr. will end at the Bishop's Peak Trailhead.

Meet at the Cerro San Luis Natural Reserve trailhead. To access the trailhead, turn right onto Fernandez Road just before the southbound 101 Marsh Street on-ramp.

Meet at the Prefumo Cyn trailhead. From US 101, take Los Osos Valley Road north, turn left onto Prefumo Canyon Road and stay on it for one mile. The trailhead is on the left after the bridge crossing.

PHOTOS BY Meg and Keith Evans



# Slo STEWARDS

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# FALL is TREEPLANTING TIME! Plant a NATIVE Tree

STORY by DAVID KIRK  
PHOTO by NEIL HAVLIK

Here on the Central Coast, fall is the time of year to plant trees around your home. While their most obvious benefit is their contribution to the natural beauty of our neighborhoods, trees also improve air and water quality, conserve energy, and lead to healthier communities when planted in a proper site.

Choosing the right place to plant your trees is critical to their survival and maximizing their benefits.

When choosing a site keep in mind the tree's ultimate size and make sure it is planted far enough away from your home, overhead or buried utility lines, and other structures. Plant deciduous

trees on the south side of your home to lower your energy bill. In the summer, the trees will shade your home but they will still allow winter sun in when the leaves fall.

The next step is to choose the proper species. Native trees will require little water to get started and are almost guaranteed to flourish once established.

Planting native trees is important because exotic trees can spread and invade other areas, crowding out native plants and harming natural ecosystems. If you are unsure about which species to choose, ask your local nursery.

Once you've selected the right species and location, it's time to plant. Follow the instructions at right to make sure to give your new tree the best chance for survival.

Your native tree should only need occasional watering for the first winter until it is established. Water slowly and thoroughly so the water can penetrate deep into the soil.

A properly planted tree can live hundreds of years. This fall, plant a tree with friends or family, and let it become a symbol of your friendship and love for generations to come.

## SPECIAL FALL TREE PLANTING ALONG THE BOB JONES BIKE TRAIL

Join ECOSLO volunteers and the City of SLO

Saturday, November 10, 2007 from 9 am to Noon

**Directions:** From 101, take the Madonna Road exit.

Go east, turn right on S. Higuera and right on Prado Road.

Turn left onto Access Road and follow the ECOSLO signs through the facility. Please park on right side of road.

Wear sturdy shoes and gloves. Snacks provided.

RSVP at 544-1777 or info@ecoslo.org

## TREEPLANTING TIPS to help your native tree grow well:

1. Dig a hole twice as wide and a bit deeper than the root ball. Roughen the sides and bottom of the hole with a pick or shovel so that roots can penetrate the soil. This is very important if your soil is clay or the sides of the hole are slick.
2. Tap the bottom and sides of the container until the root ball comes loose. If roots are growing in a circular pattern around the root ball, gently loosen and uncurl the roots. Take care not to cut or tear the roots. If the tree is badly rootbound, cut root ends using a sharp knife or clippers.
3. Place the root ball in the hole, spreading the roots. The top of the root ball should be even with the ground. As you add soil to fill around the tree, lightly tamp the soil to collapse air pockets, but don't pack. Form a basin around the tree to encourage water penetration.
4. Mulch around the tree with wood chips or compost to keep water from evaporating.
5. Staking supports the tree until roots are established. Use gardener's tape to tie the tree to the stake. Wire ties can cut into a growing trunk and eventually kill the tree. Once the tree is established, remove the stake and ties.

Here are some suggested local native trees for your garden:

Sycamore	o	Monterey Cypress
Coast Live Oak	o	Western Red Bud
Coast Redwood	o	Madrone
Silk Tree	o	Toyon

