

# OCH NEWS

*First Quarter 2020 (Jan-Mar)*

## Quarterly News

### Featured Partners

## Project Grow

by Matt Franklin

OC Habitats has forged relationships with other like-minded organizations since its inception in 2017. This section is dedicated to highlighting these organizations, the work they do, and the devoted people that work for them. **Matt Yurko** is the Restoration Education Program Manager for the California Coastal Commission's Community-Based Restoration and Education Program and has been with the program since 2005. With a BS in Biology from Loyola University Maryland and an MS in Environmental Education from Lesley University Matt enjoys sharing nature with everyone he meets and thinks Orange County is an excellent place for appreciating the natural world.



What is Project Grow's Mission?

We grow healthy ecosystem by developing knowledgeable and inspired people.

What is your role within Project Grow?

I am the Program Manager. As the only paid staff person, I manage all aspects of the program: educational content and programming, restoration and field work, and administrative duties such as fundraising. I also train and manage interns as "Environmental Leaders" who assist our programs, which helps us build capacity to

## Volunteers of the Month

January 2020



As we wrap up 2019, we also bid farewell to our longest standing intern, Sheen Sidhu. Sheen has working hard for our organization as an intern since January 2019. Her passion, drive, and eagerness to learn were well noted and, therefore, she is our OCH Volunteer of the Month. Sheen came to us as a college freshman studying to earn her degree in environmental policy and joined OCH to learn more about the nonprofit and environmental industry. She took on every task in her intern agreement and more. Her eyes sparkled at the idea of taking on challenging projects and she thrived under these circumstances. She learned how to monitor, to be a naturalist/environmental educator, and how to organize and lead a restoration project. She became more and more comfortable with speaking events and ended speaking at three or more events this last year. She also earned the position of Lead Intern as she showed excellent leadership skills in her intellect, her reliability, and attention to detail. She helped our newer interns get settled in our program, acted as a support to them, and helped to organize a variety of projects that we were working on. Sheen worked hard on our habitat video project and was an integral part of getting this off the ground as well as providing OCH with her invaluable Adobe skills. Sheen leaves us to pursue the rest of her college education and degree at USC in Los Angeles, her dream school. We will miss her greatly for so many reasons but do hope she will keep in touch and visit us when she comes back to see her family.

take on more volunteers at our events.

What is the most memorable positive feedback that you have received from students or volunteers?

The feedback I enjoy the most is when participants come back after a period of time away and they still remember having a positive experience. Better yet, they're still motivated by a connection to a place (that they developed with our program) to keep learning more and applying what they learn to restore more habitats at the bay or elsewhere.

What are the different stations that Project Grow offers during ROOTS events? Are these offered during every ROOTS event or do they vary based on weather and group size?

ROOTS events will vary mostly base on the season and the restoration work that is prioritized at the time of the event. In general, we provide opportunities to learn more about the ecosystem—it's plants and wildlife, how the water flows through it etc.—as well as understand how humans have used and impacted these ecosystems. The contextual information increases the understanding and motivation of the volunteers to make a difference on site.

How does Project Grow's location enhance the learning experience?

At the Upper Newport Bay (and particularly around the Back Bay Science Center) We have access to salt marsh, riparian, and coastal sage scrub ecosystem. This variety of ecosystems, and the interplay between them, provides an endless supply of landscape to explore and understand better. The location lends itself to an enjoyable one-time visit or repeated visits by volunteers. Plus it's a beautiful place to visit and work during the restoration events.

What groups/schools does Project Grow serve?

We are open to the public but most of our volunteers are high school and college age students, retired persons, and community volunteers including corporate groups, faith based groups, and scouting groups.

By the end of Project Grow ROOTS events, what do you expect students and volunteers to have learned.

First, I hope each person has had a positive experience in nature. The basis for all future relationships with the environment has to be a positive interaction. Then I hope they remember one of the plants or wildlife they have encountered such that, if they see it again, they'll remember it almost as "friend" that they want to see again. Finally, I expect that they have a greater grasp of the direct impacts humans have on the environment and how there is hope, particularly through ecological restoration, for our society to find greater balance between our needs and the needs of a healthy environment.

How does OC Habitats contribute to Project Grow?

OC Habitats has been a wonderful partner contributing volunteers and their hard work for our programs. Additionally, OC Habitats has provided tours and restoration opportunities in ecosystems where

## February 2020



Kristi Caldwell has been with OC Habitats for over two years. She has been a dedicated monitor for several of our monitoring programs over the last two years: 1) OCH Coastal Dune Habitat Surveys, 2) EONS (Bolsa Chica Tern and Plover monitoring), and 3) California State Parks Tern Preserve (Tern and Plover monitoring). Kristi was involved in our education programming in the early going and helped with some of our administrative tasks but had to scale back when she took a job that had less flexibility. Kristi likes to be outdoors, loves to learn, and has a passion for all creatures, big and small. Her love for the earth makes her a perfect fit as a crew member of OCH. In addition to helping out with many of our weekly tasks, she also has attended many of our events like our Annual Bird Tours and Classes to continue to learn and sharpen her habitat and species identification skills. Even though she has been busy working full-time and recently pregnant with her first child, she continued to take habitat segments till right before the birth of her daughter. Kristi is still on maternity leave from OCH but will return once she gets her new mom routine nailed down. We look forward to her return as she is a valued member of our organization and her passion for the planet, her hard work and reliable data are an important OCH resource.

## March 2020



we don't usually get to work (such as coastal dunes). Finally we look forward to partnering in fundraising so we can build upon our collective efforts to educate people and help make habitats healthy.

## Environmental News

### The State of the Fullerton Arboretum

by Olivia Richardson

In spring last year, there was talk of the Fullerton Arboretum, located at California State University Fullerton, being at risk of closure. As a student who was attending CSUF during this time, I was confused and shocked along with many other students on why the security of the arboretum was at jeopardy. Despite the concerns, the arboretum stands today to celebrate its 40th anniversary. So if the arboretum is fine and well today, what was the concern and how did it become such a big topic of discussion among students, faculty, and Fullerton residents?



The Fullerton arboretum's mission is to give visitors "the opportunity to gain knowledge and appreciation of the plant world through collections that preserve and promote stewardship of worldwide plant diversity and regional agricultural heritage and also to serve faculty, students and the broader community through education and scholarly activities". It is one of three arboretums in California to receive Level IV accreditation, which means that qualified tree scientist conduct research, conserve collections, and are active with their tree conservation via the Global Trees Campaign. The 26-acre botanical garden not only works to have a space for diverse plant life, but a location for academic field work, cooking classes, and other community events. For students, the arboretum also provides internship and volunteer opportunities.

Being around for 40 years, the arboretum has had a special

Sydney came to OC Habitats over a year ago and has brought an amazing work ethic, a strong academic environmental background, and a drive that doesn't quit. She is a graduate from USD in Marine Biology and did some exciting marine research on the East coast during her undergraduate work, which she has been able to incorporate with her work at OCH. Upon her graduation, Sydney returned to the OC and jumped right in with OCH by learning all about the coastal dune habitat, getting fully trained in shore species, and taking on segments in our monitoring program. She has been an important part of our educator team and has helped to create interesting and relevant curriculum as well as teach at schools and habitat locations like the Little Corona Tide Pools for students from kinder to high school. Sydney is a natural when it comes to education and children, they are drawn her style and appreciate her knowledge, approach, and passion for the environment. Sydney has also taken the role of Beach Clean-Up Coordinator with OCH. She has led several events and continues to do so in 2020, with her next event in March! In addition to Sydney's work with OCH, she also works with Laguna Ocean Foundation, another great habitat conservation nonprofit in Orange County, and is thriving there. While Sydney continues to be a busy young woman, she is one to continually challenge herself and is currently planning her next academic and professional steps. She will be entering her graduate program at UCSB this coming Fall and will, surely, be FANTASTIC and greatly missed!

## What's New

### 2019 Annual Report

Check out our 2019 Annual Report to see what OCH has been up to the past year.



<https://www.ochabitats.org/annual-reports>

place in the hearts of Fullerton residents, so when the Fullerton Observer posted an article titled “Is the Arboretum in Jeopardy?” in March 2019, people were not pleased. The article, written by Jesse La Tour, spoke about concerns regarding the arboretum with information given by CSUF faculty member Scott Hewitt. Hewitt said that the CSUF administrators were inquiring how faculty members would feel if the arboretum was gone or diminished to make room for dorms. This was alarming because a funding agreement between the city and University was about to expire in 2020. The university was ready to make new plans for their campus for the next few years, leaving people to feel that their beloved botanical oasis was out to be demolished. Despite there being no official statement or plan released from the school confirming the arboretum's demise, the public was quick to fight back. In this article alone, there are multiple replies discussing their love for the arboretum, their distaste for the University, and the politics in taking away greenspaces for more urban development. These comments were not limited to this article: multiple Facebook posts shared concerns and at least two petitions were made to stop the alleged destruction of the arboretum.

A year later, the arboretum is celebrating its 40th anniversary with an exhibition to highlight its four decades. We won't know if the arboretum's destruction was seriously being considered, but the reaction of the people affirmed its value regardless. The amount of heartwarming comments speaking of the arboretum's importance to the community shows how important greenspaces are in urban environments, and that it won't be taken away from them without a fight.

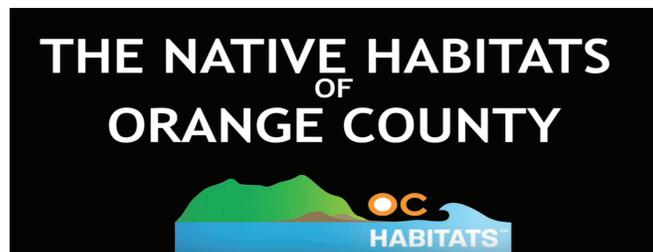
## Earth Day: 50th Anniversary

by Matt Franklin

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, an international celebration focusing on the environment. Founded in 1970, Earth Day rose in the wake of the first environmental protests of the 1960's when environmental awareness was first entering the public eye through Rachel Carson's “Silent Spring” and the fiery imagery of Ohio's Cuyahoga River ablaze. Earth Day was started by Gaylord Nelson, a Democratic Senator from Wisconsin who envisioned a large-scale, grassroots environmental demonstration “to shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda.” On the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans — at the time, 10% of the total population of the United States — took to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment. Events were held in Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and most other

## OCH Habitat Video Launch

OCH recently launch the first of our Habitat Video Series! Check out our first video, The Native Habitats of Orange County. Stay tuned for the next video!



<https://www.ochabitats.org/habitat-types-restoration>

## Earth Day Shirt

Donate \$25 or more and receive our Earth Day t-shirt. Shirt is locally printed and made with 100% organic cotton/



American cities, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. In Washington, D.C., thousands of people listened to speeches and performances by singer Pete Seeger and others, and Congress went into recess so its members could speak to their constituents at Earth Day events.



The first Earth Day was extremely effective at raising awareness about environmental issues and transforming public attitudes. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, “Public opinion polls indicate that a permanent change in national priorities followed Earth Day 1970. When polled in May 1971, 25 percent of the U.S. public declared protecting the environment to be an important goal, a 2,500 percent increase over 1969.” Since 1970, Earth Day celebrations have grown. In 1990, Earth Day went global, with 200 million people in over 140 nations participating. In 2000, Earth Day focused on clean energy and involved hundreds of millions of people in 184 countries and 5,000 environmental groups. Today, the Earth Day Network (EDN) collaborates with more than 17,000 partners and organizations in 174 countries. According to EDN, more than 1 billion people are involved in Earth Day activities, making it “the largest secular civic event in the world.” The theme of Earth Day 2020 is “climate action.” It will be celebrated with The Great Global Cleanup, a day dedicated to removing trash from green spaces and urban centers alike. Over the past 50 years Earth Day has expanded to include not only the week it takes place in, but the entire month of April as well, leading to endless opportunities to get involved in your local community.

OC Habitats will be holding multiple events throughout Earth Week for our volunteers and partners to attend including our April 19th Earth Day Event at Lush Cosmetics in the Irvine Spectrum. You can also find us at our booth during Discovery Cube’s Ocean Quest Citizen Science Day in the Fun Zone in Balboa (peninsula) on the 18th and at Kelp Fest in Laguna on the 25th.

## Join Our Crew



### Volunteer:

- Become a Habitat Monitor
- Join our Habitat Education Team
- Help with Administrative Tasks
- Help with Outreach and Marketing
- Become a Tide Pool Docent
- Work on OCH's Social Media Outreach
- Help with ongoing Restoration Projects
- Work with our Grant Writing Team to secure funding for our organization, programs, and projects.

Click Volunteer above for application.

### Internships:

- College Level Students earn credit through CSUF and UCI
- Gain experience in the conservation field, a grassroots nonprofit, business administration, public speaking, education, and more.
- Become a film or art intern for OCH.

Click Internships above for application.

### Join our Board:

We will soon have two board positions available and are looking for people who are passionate about the environment, specifically local habitats.

## Upcoming Events & Opportunities

### April 2020 (All April and May Events are Tentative )

- Restoration - TBD (due to Covid-19 Crisis)
- Saturday, April 18th - Citizen Science Fair Day
- Sunday, April 19th - Earth Day with LUSH (Irvine Spectrum)
- Wednesday, April 22nd - Earth Day 2020
- Tern Preserve Training with State Parks

### May 2020

- Restoration Program - Date TBD
- Tern Preserve Monitoring Begins

### June 2020

- Sunday, June - Harding Nature Trail Restoration, Irvine Regional Park, 8-11am (Join)

### July 2020

- Restoration - TBD

OCH is continually updating it's events and opportunities . For a current and more detailed list visit our website, [WWW.OCHABITATS.ORG](http://WWW.OCHABITATS.ORG) and check our OCH Events Page.

Submit your resume, references and cover letter to [och@ochabitats.org](mailto:och@ochabitats.org)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Volunteers of the Year

2019



**Crystal Ryan and Trevor Stocking**

2018



**Bianca Borja**