

UC Santa Barbara

Newsletters

Title

NCOS Newsletter - June 2017

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UC SANTA BARBARA

North Campus Open Space Restoration Project



NCOS NEWS

June 2017

PROJECT UPDATES

- Want to take a tour of the restoration site? CCBER will be offering a one-hour tour of the project site on Sunday June 18th at 4:30, or Monday June 19th at 5:15. Please RSVP to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu. Meet at the parking lot at 6925 Whittier Drive and be prepared for rough terrain by wearing appropriate shoes.
- Grading of the eastern arm is going well and should be complete by the end of July. Grading work will then move to the northwest and will finish on the southern edge of the project in late Fall or early Winter.
- Later this summer the bridge contractor will be drilling the piers for the bridges and boardwalks.
- Planting of portions of the eastern buffer areas could begin as early as July. More than 100,000 plants are ready to go!



Native plants at the CCBER Greenhouse and Nursery, ready to be transplanted to NCOS.

FEATURE STORY

Supporting Wildlife at NCOS - Birds, Bees, Fish and Reptiles, Oh My!



One of the main goals of the NCOS restoration project is to enhance habitats that support a broad range and diversity of wildlife. The restoration plan includes features designed to benefit groups of wildlife such as birds and reptiles, as well as features designed specifically for important endangered species.

[This feature story is continued on page 7.](#)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



CCBER Greenhouse Associates

Join the CCBER Greenhouse Associates Thursday mornings (9:00 – 12:00)! Come transplant seedlings, learn about restoration, get to know your neighbors and CCBER staff, and help maintain native plants and their nursery! To join, please send an email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu

COMMUNITY FORUM & PHOTOS

The NCOS Endowment

Contributing to the NCOS Endowment provides a special opportunity to name a bridge, trail, boardwalk or habitat feature! Contact us about the opportunity to support the long-term management of the site and diverse student learning opportunities.

Photos

A community member sent us these fantastic photos to share of a Red-shouldered Hawk perched on the temporary construction fencing, and after just catching a rat! This hawk is one of the parents of chicks that successfully fledged from the nest near the northern boundary of the NCOS site. We included a CCBER staff photo of an adult and chicks in the nest.



© Mark Sherman



© Mark Sherman



Want to see your photos on a future newsletter? We welcome submissions of photos from the Ellwood-Devereux area to share with NCOS News readers. Please email a photo you would like to share, along with a brief description to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.

Received this email from a friend? [Click here](#) to subscribe to our mailing list.



**For more information on the
North Coast Open Space Restoration Project, [Click here](#), or email ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu**

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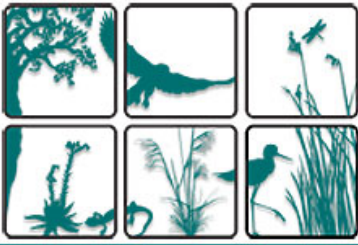
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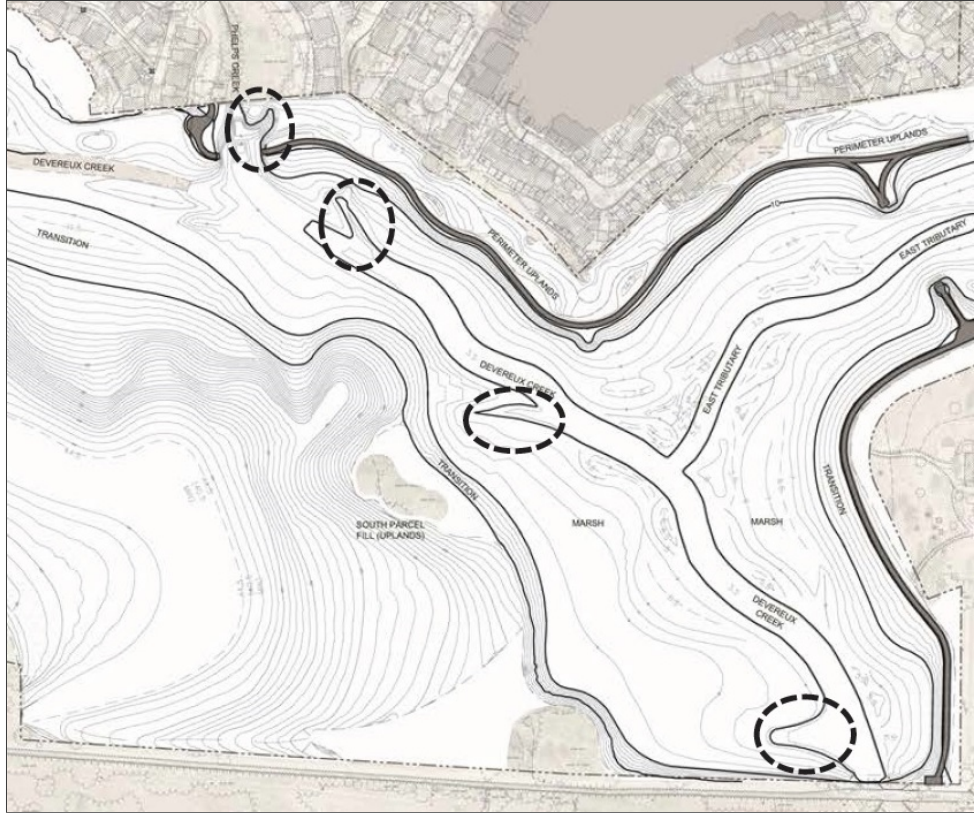
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SUPPORTING WILDLIFE AT NCOS - BIRDS, BEES, FISH AND REPTILES, OH MY!



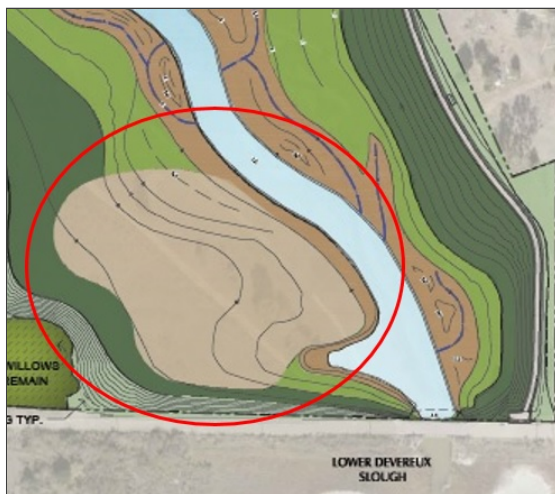
One of the main goals of the NCOS restoration project is to enhance habitats that support a broad range and diversity of wildlife. The restoration plan includes features designed to benefit groups of wildlife such as birds and reptiles, as well as features designed specifically for important endangered species.

A significant part of the restoration project is the expansion of estuarine wetlands, which are beneficial for shorebirds, waterfowl and wading birds, as well as some fish and amphibians. A variety of water levels and salinities will create a mix of niches suitable for different migratory and resident bird species, and the creation of a number of pools will provide refuge for fish, particularly the endangered Tidewater Goby (see map of refuge pools below). Devereux Slough is an intermittently tidal estuary, which means that one to a few times per year, after large rain events or high surf and tide events, the beach berm at the mouth of the slough breaches and most of the water in the slough drains out into the sea in a few hours. The pools and refugia that will lie behind peninsulas in the restored NCOS site will allow endangered gobies and other fish to avoid being washed out to sea during these breach events.



Map of NCOS restoration site showing location of pools and refugia for Tidewater Goby.

Another key species that the NCOS restoration project will support is the Western Snowy Plover, a threatened shorebird. Careful monitoring by Coal Oil Point Reserve has revealed that this species is as succesful nesting on a sand bar along the northern edge of the existing Devereux Slough, just south of the Venoco access road, as they are on the beach. The NCOS project will create a 2.5 acre sandy area on the north side of the access road that will mimic the conditions that currently support nesting on the south side of the road. These inland nesting areas may become more important in the future under projected sea level rise conditions.



Map of NCOS restoration plan with snowy plover nesting area, and picture of sand collection from NCOS site for the snowy plover area.

Other wildlife habitat features in the restoration project design will be made from salvaged materials. The main trunks from the majority of the trees that were removed have been saved to be used as perches for birds and squirrels, and provide other habitat features in the restored landscape. We will drill a variety of holes into these logs to help support a range of solitary nesting bees as well as beetles that make their homes in old logs and under bark. Woodchips from the smaller branches will be incorporated into the restoration project as a way to retain soil moisture and re-incorporate organic matter. In addition, piles of brush will be placed around the landscape to serve as intermediate cover areas for rabbits and squirrels until the restored vegetation provides that cover naturally. The California Native Plant society special status species, Southern Tarplant, forms excellent brush piles with nutrient rich seeds and prickly stems that help protect smaller animals from larger predators.

Conversely, areas of compacted and stable bare ground can provide important open spaces that are excellent for ground nesting bees and foraging by a variety of seed and insect-eating birds and lizards.



Stockpile of tree trunks and willow branches salvaged for creation of habitat features on NCOS.

Newly graded restoration sites lack hideaways that naturally develop in an area over time and can be important habitat for some reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. The NCOS project includes a habitat feature known as a "hibernaculum" to help provide that support. These semi-subterranean features have narrow entrances into a multi-layered underground habitat with a pipe feature that connects the surface to a water reservoir below ground. All around the restoration site, 2 to 4 foot deep holes will be dug and filled with carefully arranged "urbanite" (concrete, wood, tiles, and pipes) and covered with wood chips and soil to create a zone that is thermally stable and inaccessible to predators like skunks, raccoons and hawks. Species that particularly benefit from these features include field mice, snakes, lizards and salamanders, as well as a diversity of insects. The project site will also include burrows for burrowing owls on mounds within the restored grassland, adjacent to the vernal pools, which may enable that species to return to the site.



Hibernaculum construction: pipe supplies water to underground reservoir, and "urbanite" material provides many layers and spaces.



Hibernaculum covered with boulders, twigs, soil and mulch; multiple small entrances keep large predators out.

By incorporating these features into the restored landscape, we will help support the food web from the bottom up: the restoration of native plant communities will provide food and other resources; the creation of various refugia will provide shelter and nesting habitat for invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and the perches will give hawks, kestrels and other species access to prey and opportunities to display their breeding plumage.

Date:

Wednesday, June 7, 2017 - 12:00

Tags:

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