

UC Santa Barbara

Newsletters

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NCOS News - June 2019

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UC SANTA BARBARA

North Campus Open Space Restoration Project

NCOS NEWS

June 2019



The latest aerial view of NCOS and Devereux Slough by Bill Dewey. This was taken on May 11, before the two surprise May storms, so there is now more water in the slough than what you see in this photo!

UPDATES & EVENTS

Breeding Western Snowies are Back!

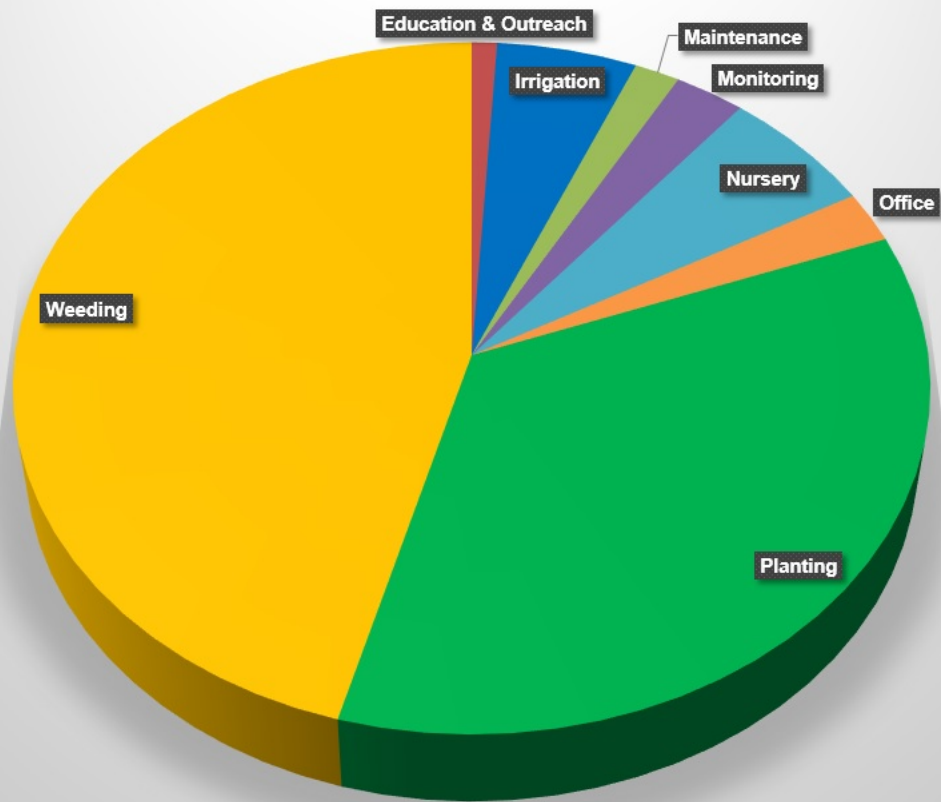
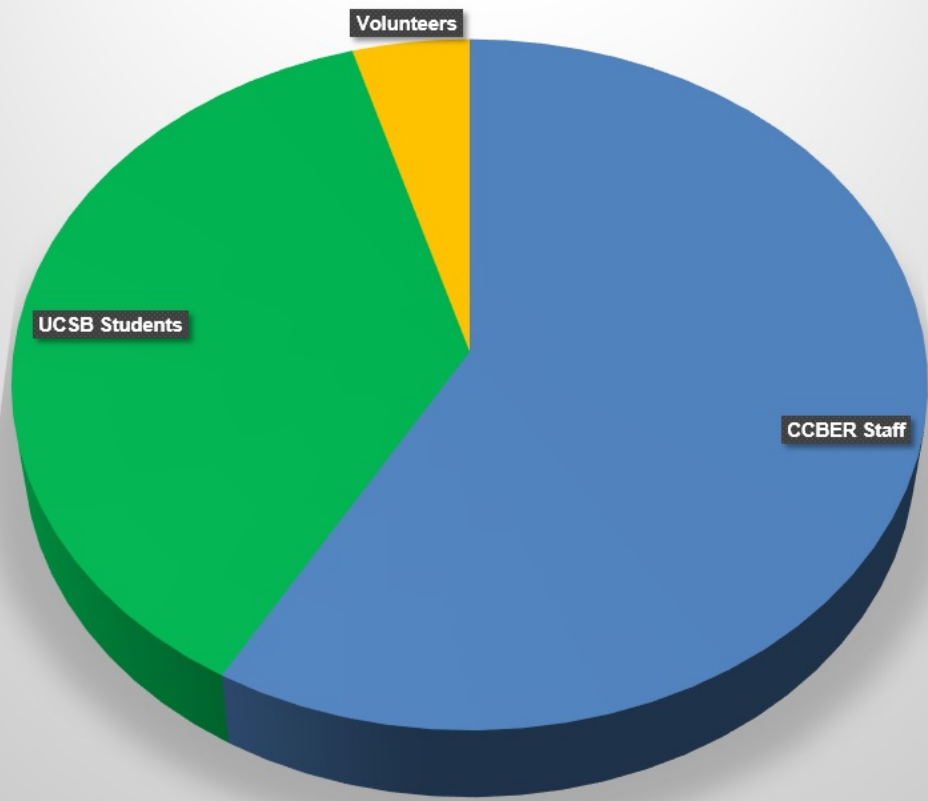
Last month's bird survey sighted a copulating pair of Western Snowy Plovers at NCOS, and just last week a nest was found! To help create an attractive nesting habitat for the plovers, we scattered pieces of dried kelp, rocks, shells and other debris around the sandy flat at NCOS. These items help disguise the nest, and it is likely that more of this debris washed up from the high tides and waves that reached into the upper slough this winter.

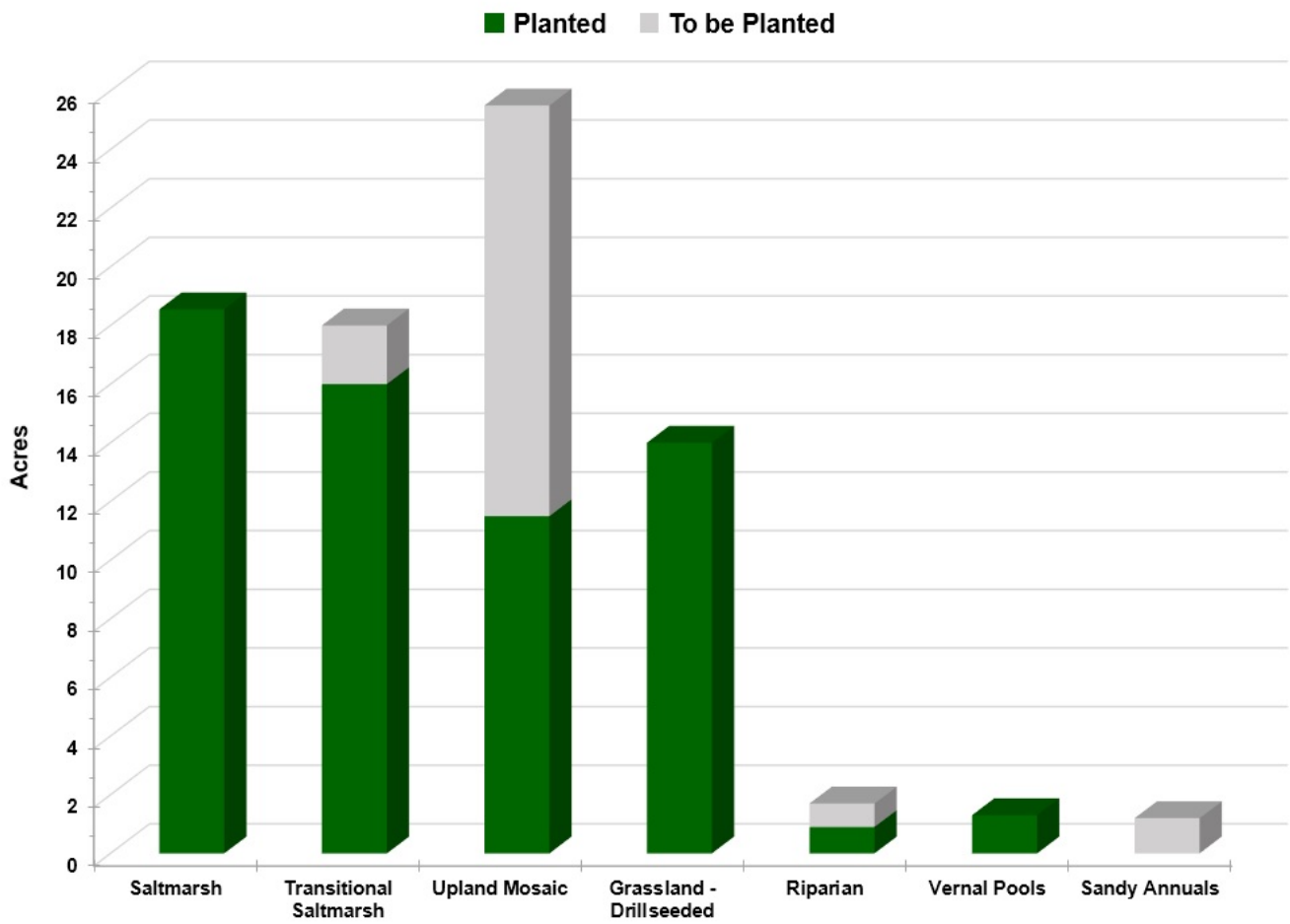


Left: a Western Snowy Plover pair copulating (photo by M. Holmgren); Right: a well-camouflaged nest.

2 Years In - An Update on the Restoration Numbers

With the on-the-ground restoration work at NCOS approaching a full 2 years this summer, we tallied up some of the restoration numbers through mid-May. Since we began tracking our efforts in August 2017, CCBER staff, students and volunteers have put nearly 35,600 hours into restoring NCOS! That amount of effort has helped get more than 230,000 plants in the ground and more than 62 acres (76 %) of the total project area planted! Check out the two pie charts below to see how these hours are divided up by worker type and task, followed by a chart showing the acreage planted and to be planted for each habitat type.





Top and Middle: pie charts of effort (hours) by worker type and task. Bottom: chart of the acreage planted and to be planted of each habitat type at NCOS.



USFWS Feature Story About NCOS

For a short summary of the NCOS project with a focus on wildlife, check out a [short article](#) by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, one of the key sponsors of the project.

FEATURE STORY

[New UCSB Graduates Reflect on Their NCOS Experiences](#)



With the end of the school year upon us, we have a number of graduating students who have worked on the NCOS project for some time, including before the project broke ground. We asked some of these students to reflect on their experience at NCOS and how it has influenced their lives. [This feature story is continued on page 10.](#)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



"Second Saturdays" at NCOS

This month: June 8, 9:30 - 12:30

Please RSVP to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu

**Help us restore and create NCOS with plants and more!
Meet at 6975 Whittier Drive at 9:30 am. Bring water,
sunscreen, and wear a hat, clothes and shoes suitable for
garden work.**



Saturday Tree Plantings

See in you in the Fall!

You can help Your Children's Trees plant oaks and other saplings at NCOS! Please contact [Your Children's Trees](#) for more information and to RSVP.



Thursdays - CCBER Greenhouse Associates

Come help transplant seedlings of native plants with the CCBER team from 9:00 - 12:00. To join, please send an email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.



Group Volunteer Opportunities

We gladly welcome local business, non-profit, school and other community groups to come out to NCOS to help with planting and other activities. For more information, please send an email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.

COMMUNITY FORUM & PHOTOS

We are interested in any observations of wildlife activity on NCOS, such as the recently observed Long-tailed Weasel and Peregrine Falcon taking an American Coot. Please send your observations, with or without photos, to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu. Thanks!

Butterflies & Baby Birds

Wildlife from butterflies to breeding birds are taking advantage of the habitat and other resources being restored at NCOS, as evident in this month's community photos. Thank you to the community members who provided their photographs!



A painted lady butterfly feeding on purple sage at NCOS. Photo courtesy of K. Lunsford.



A pair of Mallard ducklings under close watch by mom at the Phelps Creek pool. Photo courtesy of M. Holmgren.



Canadian Goose goslings are guided and protected by a pair of adults at NCOS. Photo courtesy of A. Linn.



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

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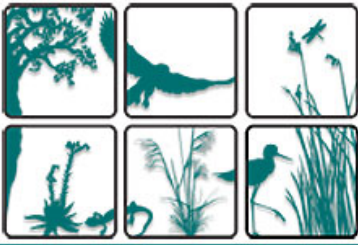
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NEW UCSB GRADUATES REFLECT ON THEIR NCOS EXPERIENCES



A primary goal of the North Campus Open Space project is to create a place where students can learn and gain hands-on experience with restoring and managing our local natural environment, ecosystems and wildlife. Since its inception nearly eight years ago, students have been involved in almost every aspect of the NCOS project, such as research and monitoring, collecting and processing hundreds of thousands of native seeds, helping grow and expand CCBER's natural history collections, getting K-12 kids excited about nature and ecology, and not to mention the many, many hours planting seedlings at NCOS while keeping invasive non-native plants at bay! Students are the backbone of NCOS, and the project would not be where it is today without them.

With the end of the school year upon us, we have a number of graduating students who have worked on the NCOS project for some time, including before the project broke ground. We asked some of these students to reflect on their experience at NCOS and how it has influenced their lives.



NCOS student restoration workers Bella (left), and Brian (right).

In terms of what the students have learned in their time at NCOS, plants largely take the spotlight. For example, Lesley has “learned to appreciate plants in a new light, and I get excited now when someone else shares that passion.” For Brian, “Learning about and handling so many native California plants also allows me to appreciate them when I see them outside of NCOS.” Thomas explained “I did not even know that I was passionate about plants until I started volunteering with CCBER. My interest had only grown and I have learned many native and exotic species while at work. Through my work out at the site, I have learned so much about plants, as well as myself and my interests.” And for Cole, “NCOS was my first introduction to learning about plants, and it’s really what got me interested. Almost everything I have done since then has been plant focused, and that’s not going to change any time soon.”

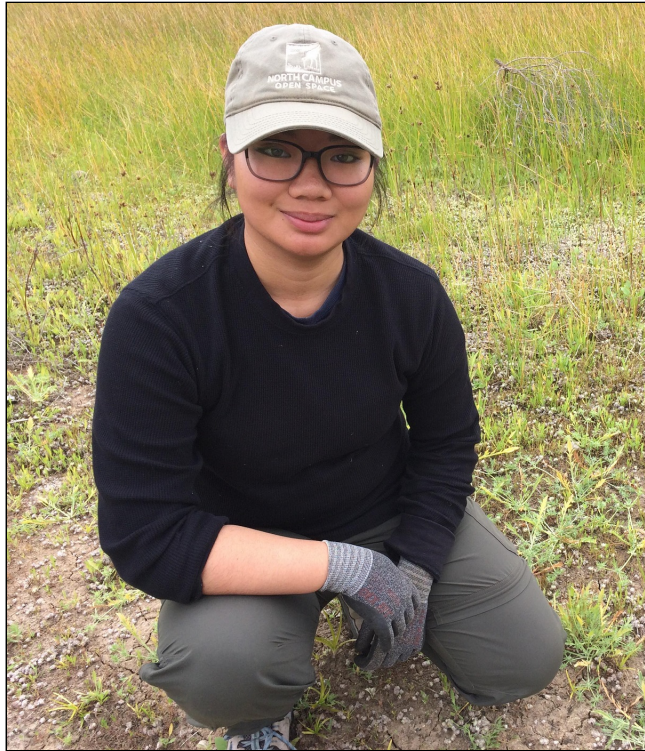
Through plants, some students have gained knowledge of ecology, ecosystems and more. Ethan, who has worked on CCBER’s restoration projects since 2015, has “learned a lot of plants, a lot of things about plants, and ecology and biophysiology in general.” In addition, he has learned how “intricate, complex and interconnected ecosystems are, how to look at and analyze and understand these relationships, and also a bit on how to talk about and teach this topic to a broad range of people.” Cole has “learned so much about the plants, birds, bugs, animals, soil and how they all interact. I love leaving work every day knowing a little bit more than I did when I started the day.” Thomas said that “every time I go out to NCOS I know I am going to learn more about conservation and restoration.” In addition to having “learned to ID tons of native California plants”, Bella has also learned “a lot about the logistical considerations and resource allocation that go into managing such a large-scale project.”



NCOS student restoration workers Cole (left), and Ethan (right).

An outcome of students’ experiences with CCBER and at NCOS that we find particularly interesting is how it has influenced their plans for the future and any other aspect of their lives. In some cases the experience has changed

students' career or educational choices: for Thomas, "Before my work there [at NCOS], I was planning on being a teacher, but my newfound passion has made me want to pursue a career in conservation and working with plants. The skills that I have been taught by my coworkers will also be extremely helpful in any environmental job I have in the future. Overall, this job has given me valuable experience that I will use for the rest of my life." Similarly, for Lesley, "After working at NCOS these past two years, I've decided to pursue a career in habitat restoration, much like the work I do here. It's made me really value working outside. I've learned just how amazing the natural world really is, and how to communicate my passion for environmental work." Brian said that he has "definitely developed a stronger love for plant life from my time at CCBER, and I am now considering pursuing an advanced degree in plant ecology or conservation." Other students described how their experience has influenced their broader view on the natural world and how we interact with it. Ethan has "gotten in touch with the rhythm of the world in a different way working outside consistently, and it's changed the way I see things. The understanding of ecosystems I've cultivated here and how delicate and powerful they are will influence the way I think about things in the future." And Bella explained: "I've loved working with CCBER and seeing how well science and experimental design are integrated into everything from the nature education programs, to restoration at NCOS, to collections curation and hope to carry on this approach in my professional career."



NCOS student restoration workers Lesley (left), and Thomas (right).

When asked what they've enjoyed about working at NCOS, the students all shared a joy and excitement in seeing their efforts help change the landscape over time and benefit the local community, as well as working outside in nature and a gratifying camaraderie amongst CCBER staff and students. Thank you to Bella, Brian, Cole, Ethan, Lesley, Thomas and more than a hundred other students for all of your hard work, dedication and enthusiasm! You have played a significant part in making the restoration of NCOS a success. Congratulations and best wishes for your future endeavors.

Date:

Wednesday, June 5, 2019 - 14:00

[Contact Us](#)

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