

UC Santa Barbara

Newsletters

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UC SANTA BARBARA

North Campus Open Space Restoration Project

NCOS NEWS

September 2017



Aerial image of the NCOS site on August 29, courtesy of Bill Dewey.

PROJECT UPDATES

Planting has begun! On August 28, CCBER staff spent the afternoon planting eight species along the northern edge of the restoration site (see photos below). We will continue to plant in this area, and eventually spread to other areas of the site over the coming months.

Come plant with us! Starting this month, we invite community members to help us make NCOS grow on the 2nd Saturday of the month. To join this month, on September 9th, please send an RSVP email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.

Take a tour of NCOS! As part of Creek week, we are offering a tour of the project site on Sunday, September 24, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Meet at the parking lot on Whittier Drive. More information will be on the [Creek Week website](#).



The three photos above were taken on the first planting day at NCOS, August 28.

Construction Updates:

> The boulders and concrete block and sill structure that separated lower Devereux Slough from the golf course has been removed and the natural connection of lower and upper Devereux Slough has been

restored!





The photos above are before (top) and after (bottom) the removal of the concrete sill structure that separated lower Devereux Slough from NCOS.

> The "bright green stuff" that has just been sprayed on the slopes around the restoration site is a sterile wheat in hydro-mulch that will stabilize the slopes (prevent erosion) during the coming winter, until native plants can be established.



Sterile wheat hydro-mulch being sprayed to help stabilize slopes during the coming winter rains.

- > The old golf course clubhouse has been removed (photos below). The site will become the main gathering and interpretive area for NCOS.
- > A temporary storage structure for plants and other materials has been set up near where the old cart barn used to be. A more permanent maintenance shed structure for this site is currently being designed.
- > Construction of the bridges and trails will begin in October.







The three photos above are before and after the removal of the old golf course club house.

FEATURE STORY

Native Grassland Restoration at NCOS



Although the North Campus Open Space (NCOS) restoration project centers around the expansion of the Devereux Slough salt marsh, a variety of plant communities will be restored throughout the process. One of the largest restoration areas of NCOS, second to the salt marsh community, is the Native Grassland Complex.

[This feature story is continued on page 13.](#)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Second Saturdays - Planting at NCOS

Second Saturday planting days start in September! Help install some of the first plants on NCOS on Saturday September 9th, 9:30 – Noon! T-shirts will be provided to volunteers! Bring water and wear hats and good shoes! Please RSVP to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.

Thursdays - CCBER Greenhouse Associates

Thursday mornings at the CCBER Greenhouse and Nursery are getting into full swing! Come help transplant seedlings of native plants with the CCBER team from 9am - 12noon. To join, please send an email to ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu.



COMMUNITY FORUM & PHOTOS

Have a plant, wildlife, or other photo of the project site you'd like to share? We welcome submissions of photos of the project site and/or the adjacent 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.

Another rare bird sighting! On August 8, an [Audubon Society](#) member spotted a Lesser Nighthawk resting on the temporary fencing around the restoration site for several hours! Sightings of this bird near the coast in Goleta and Santa Barbara in late summer are very rare, usually one per year at most!



Bird activity has been ramping up in Devereux Slough! This photo (below) was taken last week by a

CCBER staff member, shortly after the natural connection of the slough with NCOS was restored.



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

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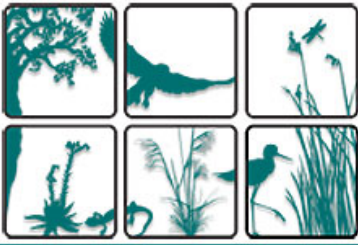
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NATIVE GRASSLAND RESTORATION AT NCOS



Restored native grassland on the upper portion of South Parcel Mesa.

Although the North Campus Open Space (NCOS) restoration project centers around the expansion of the Devereux Slough salt marsh, a variety of plant communities will be restored throughout the process. One of the largest restoration areas of NCOS, second to the salt marsh community, is the Native Grassland Complex. Encompassing nearly 20 acres on the South Parcel Mesa, this complex will primarily be grassland but will also include vernal pools, small colonies of coastal sage scrub species, and patches of upland clay annuals. In addition to the South Parcel Mesa, approximately 2 acres of grassland will be restored along the northern project boundary. As less than 1% of California native grasslands remain today, these restored areas will be especially rare and valuable habitat.



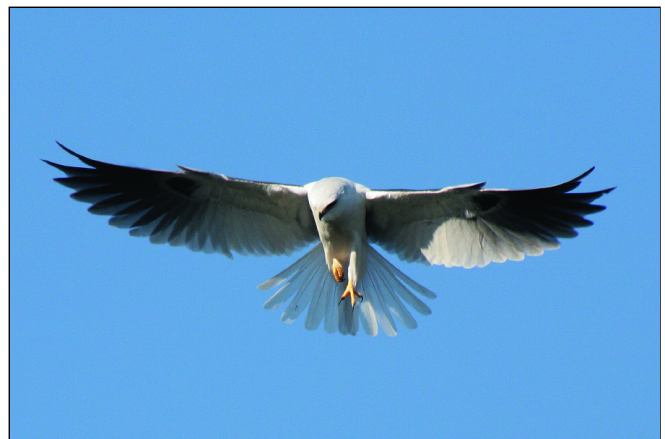
Left image: Purple Needle Grass (*Stipa pulchra*), Right image: California brome (*Bromus carinatus*).

The restored grassland areas on the South Parcel Mesa will be dominated by purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*), the state grass of California, with some areas sparsely vegetated by annual forbs. Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) will be the primary grass along the northern edge of the site. Other native grasses slated for planting include California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*), creeping wild rye (*Elymus triticoides*) and California barley (*Hordeum brachyantherum* ssp. *Californicum*).



Left image: Salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*), Right image: Blue Wild Rye (*Elymus glaucus*).

Native grasslands are important for maintenance of biodiversity and provide host plants for butterfly larvae. These areas also offer habitat for herpetofauna, including lizards and snakes like the California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis californiae*), as well as for small native mammals like the California vole (*Microtus californicus*). Raptors such as the white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*) and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) use grasslands for foraging areas.



Left image: California king snake (*Lampropeltis californiae*), Right image: White-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

A variety of strategies will be employed to achieve optimal grassland restoration at NCOS. In areas with gentle or gradual slopes, machinery assisted techniques such as drill seeding and plug planting will likely be used. Conversely, where the slopes are too steep for machine assistance, broadcast seeding and hand planting of container stock will be implemented.



Drill seeding native grassland on the upper portion of South Parcel Mesa.

For more info on this rare and important California habitat, check out [CCBER's Grassland page](#), which includes more photos of grassland plants and wildlife.

Want to learn more about the NCOS Restoration Project? The [NCOS website](#) has links to the full restoration plan, our [NCOS News page](#) will keep you up to date, and check out these past blogs for more background: [What is a salt marsh?](#), the [hydrology of Devereux Slough](#), and [Wildlife Benefits of NCOS](#).

Date:

Wednesday, September 6, 2017 - 11:45

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