

# PAW PRINTS

Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates

## Docent /Member Calendar

### BAG LUNCH MINI-INSERVICE:

Bag Lunch will be on hiatus indefinitely

### ECNCA Board Meetings

ECNCA Board Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm via zoom. If you are interested in joining a meeting, please send an email to [eatonmember@gmail.com](mailto:eatonmember@gmail.com) at least 2 days prior to the meeting.

### Public Calendar

#### ■ Pasadena Audubon Society

For meeting info see their website:  
[www.pasadenaaudubon.org](http://www.pasadenaaudubon.org)

#### ■ California Native Plant Society

For meeting info see their website:  
[www.cnps-sgm.org](http://www.cnps-sgm.org)

#### ■ Pasadena Group Sierra Club

For meeting info see their website:  
[www.sierraclub.org/angeles/pasadena](http://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/pasadena)

#### ■ We Explore Earth

For meeting info see their website:  
<https://weexploreearth.com/>

## Paw Prints Production

**Editor:** Amanda Getty

**Graphic Designer:** Diana Gonzalez

**Contributors:** Elaine Brown,  
Lindsay Bremner

**Paw Prints** is a monthly publication of the ECNCA. The deadline for submissions to the April 2026 issue is March 20, 2026. Send submissions to [ajgetty@gmail.com](mailto:ajgetty@gmail.com).



**PARK IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**



Some of the hundreds of plants at the Landscape Recovery Center.

## Progress in the Canyon by LINDSAY BREMNER

Eaton Canyon Natural Area and surrounding trails remain closed through at least the end of 2026. But as we wait for nature to heal the scars from the fire, progress is being made to restore infrastructure in the canyon.

Within the Eaton Canyon Natural Area, SWCA Environmental Consultants completed an initial study of the main wash, the side canyons, and the “plateau” area west of the wash using the California rapid assessment method (CRAM). This is a tool used to assess the geomorphology and ecological integrity of wetlands—yes, the wash is a wetland, despite being rather dry much of the time!

The results of the study provided welcome news: Although the morphology of the main wash became simplified in the wake of February 2025’s powerful storms, with less braiding of the stream channel, it is predicted to resettle within 2–5 years. The plateau is not endangered by the new stream course or other post-fire geomorphological changes, and the wash does not need engineering.

The design of the new Nature Center is still at the conceptual stage and subject to change. However, it will almost certainly be in a new location, likely in the flat area of the plateau to the north of the parking lot, which would make it unmissable from the main trail. Many aspects will affect the new design, including how wind might impact the building. A substantial portion of the funding has been secured, but a shortfall of approximately \$19m remains.

And what of the site of the old, beloved Nature Center? Plans remain in flux here, too, though one possibility is to convert the area into an outdoor classroom.

More concrete changes can be seen at the south end of the ECNA *Continued on page 2*

*The new office and picnic benches at the Landscape Recovery Center (LRC).*



*Oak trees at the LRC, waiting for placement in fire-damaged parks across the region.*



*Continued from page 1*

in the former equestrian area, thanks to a grant from the Recovery and Emergency Support for Trails, Open Space, and Recreation (RESTORE) program run by the LA County Regional Park and Open Space District. This grant has funded phase 1 of the Landscape Recovery Center (LRC), which now houses a nursery of 200 trees and other plants that will eventually be planted in parks affected by fires—including Altadena Golf Course, Charles White Park, Farnsworth Park, Castaic Park, and Eaton Canyon Natural Area.

Down the line, it is hoped that a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy will enable the LRC to move into phase 2, with goals of plant propagation

and expanding the scope to include streets and homes in Altadena.

In addition to the purchase of trees and plants, the initial grant also covered the restoration of water and power and a new office, enabling County staff to be back on site. This has had the knock-on effect of making it easier for other staff, such as park superintendent Richard Smart and County biologist Cristhian Mace, to check in on the canyon and survey its recovery.

Although invasive species remain an issue, native plants are thriving post-fire, with Mace reporting high levels of biodiversity and an explosion of scale broom across the wash. A partnership with the Theodore Payne Foundations

is in the works, to collect and propagate the native seeds. Mace has also partnered with Kristen Ochoa of the Chaney Trail Corridor Project to install five trail cameras in strategic locations, and these are picking up the return of wildlife in the canyon, including gray fox, skunk, and a plethora of deer.

Lastly, on the Chuck Ballard Memorial Bridge at the mouth of the canyon, the City of Pasadena Department of Public Works recently replaced the burned wooden railings with new galvanized steel ones. Plans for future work in the bridge area include slope stabilization to address fire-related erosion and improved drainage to reduce future washout risk.

*New railings in place on the Chuck Ballard Memorial Bridge.*

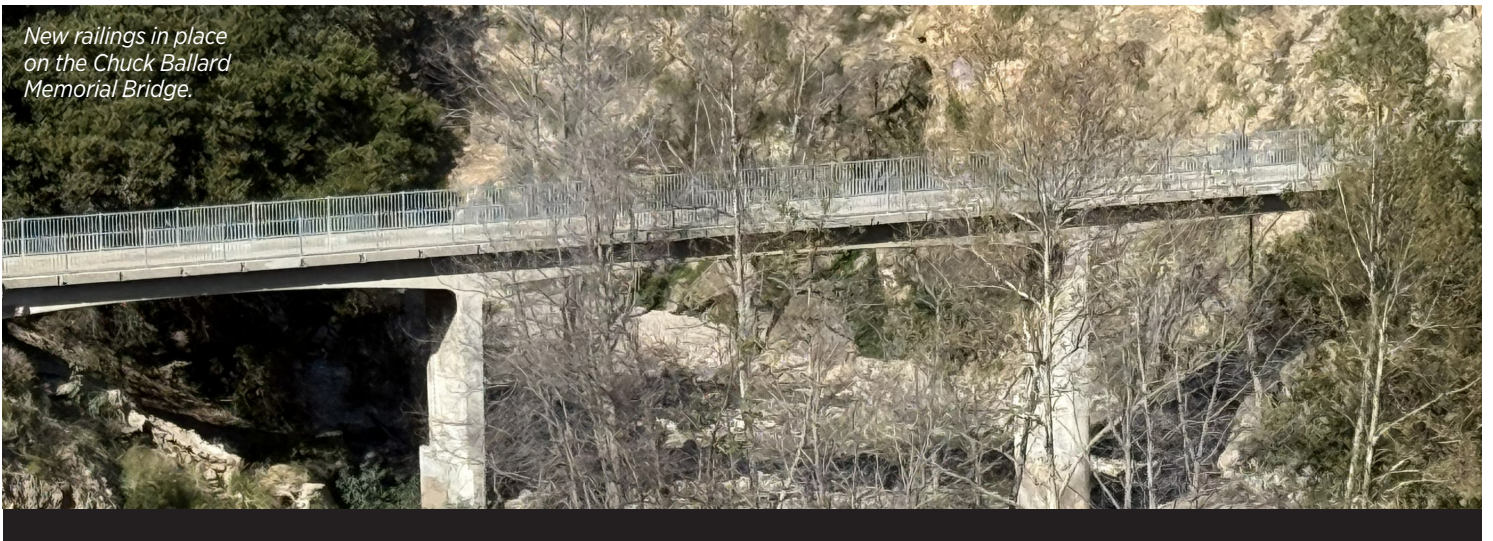


Photo: Diane Lang



He sports a groove on the underside.

## Not a worm, not a snake —a Legless Lizard! by DIANE LANG

While digging to rebuild our Altadena house, one of the workers presented me with a bit of local wildlife—a legless lizard!

But it looks just like a worm! Why isn't it one? It's not slimy and has very tiny scales, bones, and vestigial legs under that skin. It also looks like a very small snake. Why isn't it one? It has eyelids and can blink. It also has, unlike a snake, external ear openings, a fused mandible, and is able to drop part of its tail, like many other lizards.

*Anniella stebbinsi*, the Southern California legless lizard (one of two local species) is a tiny fellow, about 7" long, and narrower than a pencil. (European and Asian species can grow to two to four feet long!) You'll seldom see one, as they hang out underground, searching for insect larvae, termites, beetles, spiders, and ants. They forage just below the surface, then often take prey underground to eat. They, in turn, are preyed on by snakes, birds, and small mammals.

These reptiles live south of the Bakersfield area and into Baja, living in sandy soil and leaf litter. This one, however, may be living in my front yard. After some enjoyable observations and wishing him (her?) well, that's where I released him. Happy hunting, little guy!

## In Memoriam: Mary Foltyn "A treasured part of our group"

by RAMIE CASE



Longtime ECNCA volunteer Mary Foltyn passed away unexpectedly on December 16 due to complications from a respiratory illness. Mary started volunteering in 2011 when she attended docent training. She served on the bus grant committee and the Volunteer Thank You Dinner committee, she

was the chair of the Bag Lunch program for many years, and with my deep gratitude served as the ECNCA board's vice-president, to name just a few things. She was always willing to help out with events and wherever needed. She was a quiet, very gracious lady who will be missed.

### Here are some of the memories from fellow volunteers:

- "I am so sorry to hear that. What a shock. I knew she had been hospitalized." KAREN MATEER
- "Such a loss. She was a treasured part of our group." DIANE MARCUSSEN
- "So sudden. I am shocked without words. A tragic loss." TERRY GINSBERG

- "I am so very sad to hear this. Thank you for letting us know and keeping us informed with any news about a memorial for Mary. It sure won't be the same without her around." DAVID KRISTOFF
- "Please keep me posted on services for Mary. Sending you positive vibes." BRENDA KYLE
- "Oh God, it just never stops. Thank you for passing this on, but it's just heartbreaking." KATY MANN
- "Oh my god. Heartbreaking." ERICA HAHN
- "Mary was always so gracious and a kind person. I enjoyed her many offerings for bag lunches. My best wishes to her family." CYNTHIA NULL
- "I'm so sad to hear about Mary. I'm blessed to have known her. Please keep us posted when you hear of her arrangements." LORRAINE LAZARUS
- "She did so much for the canyon." ANN REGAN
- "I was so shocked to hear of her passing. I was in the same docent training class with her. Very sad." DIANA GONZALEZ

A western fence lizard in the mouth of a striped racer. Spotted on a recent conservation workday event. The warmer weather has been bringing the snakes out.



**ECNCA Executive Board Members**

**President:** Diane Marcussen  
**Vice-President:** Karen Mateer  
**Recording Secretary:** Sarah Richart  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Mary Veselich  
**Treasurer:** Terry Ginsberg

**ECNCA Appointed Board Members**

Ramie Case  
 Rose Haig  
 Susan Hopkins  
 Brenda Hurst  
 Judy Jenkins  
 David Kristoff  
 Diane Lang  
**Nature Center Director:** Richard Smart  
**NCA President:** Laura Nicholson

Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates (ECNCA) is a chapter of the Nature Center Associates (NCA), a non-profit support group of the natural area park system of Los Angeles County. Founded for educational and scientific purposes, its primary mission is to develop in children and adults an appreciation of the natural world and to preserve Eaton Canyon as a natural area for future generations.

The Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Natural Area Park are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisorial district of Kathryn Barger. The Natural Area and Nature Center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates.



**Become A Member of the ECNCA (Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates)**

To join the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates, visit [www.ecnca.org/become-a-member](http://www.ecnca.org/become-a-member), or fill out the form below and mail with your check, **payable to the ECNCA, 1355 N. Mentor Avenue, Box 40167, Pasadena, CA 91104-9998.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please check appropriate box and mark return envelope "Membership"

- Individual \$30    Family \$45    Senior \$15    Senior Family \$30    Student \$15
- Friend of the Canyon \$75    Sage Saver \$100    Chaparral Contributor \$25    Riparian Guardian \$500
- Oak Woodlands Protector \$750    Wildlands Angel \$1000    NEW    RENEWAL

Enclosed is my MEMBERSHIP in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my additional DONATION of \$\_\_\_\_\_

All contributions are tax deductible.