

Stewardship in the Santa Monica Mountains



Instructor
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Course Start and End:

02/29/2024 - 04/27/2024

Course Location:

Thursday Evenings on Zoom
Saturday Morning Fieldtrips

Course Schedule:

See Handout

Course Overview

The UC California Naturalist Program (CalNat) seeks to foster a committed corps of volunteer naturalists and community scientists trained and ready to take an active role in natural resource conservation, education, and restoration. The UC California Naturalist course will introduce you to the wonders of our local ecology and engage you in the stewardship of California's natural communities. The course will combine a science curriculum with guest lecturers, field trips and project-based learning to immerse you in the natural world.

Instructional Methods

The course will integrate a range of instructional methods that promote active adult learning such as experiential learning, inquiry-based approaches, and transformative learning. Instructors are strongly encouraged to build on the participant's prior knowledge and experience, promote peer-to-peer discussion, hands-on activities, and other approaches.

Fieldwork and Observation

Students will participate in field trips and hands-on activities, including habitat restoration, native seed collection, native seed propagation, plant surveys, and ecological data collection, to apply their acquired knowledge.

Specifics to the Santa Monica Mountains

This UC California Naturalist Course will concentrate on topics pertaining to the natural history and ecology of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Participants will acquire a profound understanding of the local environment, encompassing its ecosystems, flora, fauna, and cultural history. The course will cover:

- **Ecosystems of the Santa Monica Mountains-** Participants will learn about the diverse ecosystems in the area, including chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak woodlands, riparian areas, and more. They will study the plants, animals, and ecological processes defining these ecosystems.
 - **Native and Invasive Species-** Students will gain knowledge about the native flora and fauna of the Santa Monica Mountains and the challenges posed by invasive species. This includes discussions and fieldwork focused on the impacts of invasive species on the local environment and efforts to manage them.
 - **Wildlife and Biodiversity-** Participants will explore the diverse wildlife species inhabiting the area, encompassing mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, along with conservation efforts for these species. This includes information about the impact of anti-rodenticides on urban wildlife and how such poisons create a chain of impact in wildlife populations.
 - **Cultural History and Indigenous Knowledge-** An integral aspect of California Naturalist programs involves learning about the cultural history of the region, including the history and knowledge of indigenous peoples who have inhabited the area.
 - **Conservation and Stewardship-** Participants will be introduced to the importance of conservation and preservation efforts in the Santa Monica Mountains, as well as how they can contribute to local stewardship initiatives.
 - **Habitat Restoration and Fire Ecology-** Develop an understanding of habitat restoration and fire ecology in the Santa Monica Mountains to effectively manage ecosystems, fostering biodiversity and resilience in the face of recurring wildfires.
 - **Local Environmental Challenges-** The course delves into current environmental challenges facing the Santa Monica Mountains, such as habitat loss, wildfire management, and the impacts of climate change.
 - **Citizen Science-** This course will motivate participants to engage in citizen science projects, actively contributing to ongoing research and conservation efforts.
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Course Policies

Homework Policy

Homework will be to spend 1 hour working on field journal and/or notebook recording observations and completing Stewardship Capstone project.

Attendance Policy

Participants must complete a minimum of 40 hours of instruction during the class. If any class session is missed due to an emergency, participants can request a make-up session or assignment from their instructor. Because of the unique aspects of field trips, participants need to attend all field trips. In the case of an emergency and the field trip is missed, participants may be able to arrange an alternative option at the discretion of the instructor.

Cancellation Policy

Absolutely no refunds for any reason.

Statement on Inclusion and Accommodations

Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please make such requests in writing as early as possible by contacting Deanna Armbruster at deanna@samofund.org. We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate with ample notice.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Hopeful participants are required to compose an essay of no less than 250 words explaining why they are applying, what draws them to the Santa Monica Mountains and the study of its wildlife, flora, and cultural history, and what they hope to accomplish in this course.

There is no cost for this program. However, only a very limited number of applicants will be accepted, and you will need to commit to the full schedule of classes and field trips. Selected individuals will be notified via email of acceptance.

All participants are responsible for providing their own transportation for field trips.

Additional Reference:

- [CalNat Website](http://calnat.ucanr.edu/) <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/>
- [Registration](http://www.samofund.org/calnat) <http://www.samofund.org/calnat>

CLASS AND FIELDTRIP SCHEDULE

CLASS SCHEDULE*

Zoom Meetings will take place on Thursday evenings according to the class schedule. The Zoom link for each session will be emailed in advance.

*subject to change

DATE AND TIME	TOPIC SUBJECT	SPEAKER
Thursday February 29 5pm to 8pm <i>NOTE: Extended Class Period for first session only</i>	Introduction to California Naturalist Program The Santa Monica Mountains: An Archeological Perspective	Deanna Armbruster, Executive Director, Santa Monica Mountains Fund Nicole Kulaga, National Park Service, Archeologist, with a Representative from the Chumash community
Thursday March 7 6:00pm to 7:30pm	Introduction to Interpretation, Opportunities to Engage in the Santa Monica Mountains	Razsa Cruz, National Park Service Ranger
Thursday March 14 6:00pm to 7:30pm	Restoring an Endangered Species: Red-legged Frogs	Katy Delaney, Ph.D., National Park Service
Thursday March 21 6:00pm to 7:30pm	Innovative Strategies for Ecological Renewal	Katherine Pakradouni, Manager, Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Nursery
March 28 No Class	N/A	N/A
Thursday April 4 6:00pm to 7:30pm	The Pollinators: Monarcas y Abejas (Monarch Butterflies and Bees)	Special Guest

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CLASS SCHEDULE*

Thursday April 11 6:00pm to 7:30pm	Restoration and Invasive Species	Joseph Algiers, Ecologist, National Park Service Ranger
Thursday April 18 6:00pm to 7:30pm	Restoration, Impact of Climate Changes and Fire Ecology	Joseph Algiers, Ecologist, National Park Service Ranger
Thursday April 25 6:00pm to 7:30pm	Wildlife Living on the Urban Edge	Cathy Schoonmaker, National Park Service Ranger

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE*

Detailed schedules provided the week prior to each field trip.

*subject to change

DATE AND TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER	LOCATION
Saturday March 2 9am-12pm	Flintknapping Workshop: Nicole Kulaga, National Park Service, Archeologist, with a Representative from Chumash community	Satwiwa, Newbury Park
Saturday March 9 9am-12pm	Film History at Paramount Ranch: Razsa Cruz, National Park Service Ranger and Mike Malone, Retired NPS Interpretive Ranger	Paramount Ranch, Agoura Hills
March 16 No Field Trip	Capstone Course Planning, Self Nature Journaling	N/A
Saturday March 23 9am-12pm	Katherine Pakradouni, Manager, Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Nursery, and tour of Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing	Wildlife Crossing Nursery, and Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing, Agoura Hills

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE*

March 30 No Field Trip	N/A	N/A
Saturday April 6 9am-12pm	Pollinators in the Santa Monica Mountains	TBD
Saturday April 13 9am-12pm	Joseph Algiers, Ecologist, National Park Service Ranger	Rancho Sierra Vista Native Plant Nursery, Newbury Park
Saturday April 20 9am-12pm	Joseph Algiers, Ecologist, National Park Service Ranch	Restoration Site TBD, Agoura Hills
Saturday April 27 9am-1:30pm <i>NOTE: Extended program for graduation</i>	Cathy Schoonmaker, National Park Service Ranger, Join City Nature Challenge Capstone Presentation and Graduation	Paramount Ranch, Agoura Hills

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California Naturalist Program