

Transition Habitat Conservancy



2023 Year-end

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Website: www.TransitionHabitat.org



Above: This year's Monarch Waystation and Pollinator event was a real hit. Participants left with 1-gallon milkweed plants to start their own Waystations at home. Participants will receive follow up calls to determine the success of their habitat gardens. Included was a planting demonstration, an educational display, and a self-guided nature trail for people to enjoy.

Below: Guests enjoyed the Annual Garden Party at the home of Bert and Jill Bays. Wildlife prints donated by Johanna Turner and Dan Potter were auctioned off, along with a variety of donated silent auction items including a week's stay in Whitefish, Montana and a vacation rental in Wofford Heights, California. Thank you to all the donors and participants at both events. We could not do it without your help!



2023 ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY FUN



Message From Sam Easley, Executive Director

THC recently acquired 1,077 acres of Joshua tree woodland and essential foraging habitat for the threatened Swainson's hawk. Amidst rapid industrial development in the region, our conservancy is acting swiftly to preserve these critical habitats. These acquisitions are the key links in creating wildlife corridors, ensuring species can move across the landscape. This network of connected lands is essential for the genetic dispersal between ecosystems, ensuring that populations remain healthy and resilient.

We have already begun initial management and restoration activities on these new properties to improve foraging habitat and reduce the fire risk from excessive fuel loads. We are utilizing grazing animals to reduce populations of invasive plants to ensure that native species can prevail. Volunteers are helping us plant 700 Joshua tree sprouts on our land that burned in the 2020 Lake Fire. An AmeriCorps crew is helping us respond to a myriad of management needs after a historic year of weather at our Portal Ridge Wildlife Preserve.

We are so grateful for our community as we continue this critical work of safeguarding nature for native species for the enjoyment of future generations. This project brought THC over 10,000 acres owned and managed as an organization, a remarkable rate of approximately 1,000 acres per year for the last decade! Please consider supporting Transition Habitat Conservancy so that we can continue to achieve milestones like this. Together, we're creating a legacy of protected natural spaces across the Mojave Desert.



AmeriCorps Lends a Hand!

Our AmeriCorps Gold 5 team arrived in the beginning of November and will be with us until December 18th. They have not only worked on repairing storm damage at the Portal Ridge Wildlife Preserve, but have also prepped, and watered the new Joshua tree sprouts that were planted by volunteers. Additionally, they planted 200 more trees on some of our property that was previously used for agriculture prior to our ownership. Their work is at the forefront of the Joshua tree restoration program and is directly contributing to the preservation of a state candidate threatened species. Their work will also improve habitat for other native species on the preserve by creating places to hide, forage and nest as the trees grow.



The Land Trust Alliance Rally was held in Portland, Oregon this year and several THC representatives were able to attend. THC was acknowledged for their renewal as an Accredited land trust. From left to right, Deputy Executive Director, Carol Hill, Wildlife Biologist, Sarah Berryman, Land Steward, Wesley Skelton, and Executive Director Sam Easley.

Restoring the Western Joshua Tree

In 2020, Portal Ridge Wildlife Preserve burned in the Lake Fire. This fire started on the other side of the Angeles National Forest and made its way completely over the mountain to our Preserve. Many acres of prime Joshua tree woodland burned, BUT it has been making a comeback due to the rain and snow we have received over the last two years. To help the woodland recover further, Transition Habitat Conservancy has been permitted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct restoration work in the Joshua tree woodlands on our lands.

On Saturday, November 18th, over 40 volunteers and volunteer groups came to the Portal Ridge Wildlife Preserve and helped us realize a plan that was 3 years in the making. They planted 400 Joshua tree sprouts grown by our Board member Gina Charpentier! These sprouts will be tagged and monitored as well as receiving some supplemental water.

Our staff will be monitoring the trees over the coming years, and conducting studies to see what techniques might be more helpful for future Joshua tree restoration endeavors. The idea of restoring Joshua tree woodlands and the related work is a newer field of study. The best techniques are not yet known, so this valuable information will be shared with other agencies and other organizations conducting this restoration work to help this species recover across its range.

Title Due Diligence Course

On November 13, thirty-four people showed up to a Title Due Diligence course taught by Shelton Douthit and sponsored by Transition Habitat Conservancy. Shelton and his staff have assisted with the protection of over 800,000 acres of land and have performed thousands of Environmental Site Inspections and Baseline Reports. The class, which covered two days of instruction was held in Wrightwood.



Wildlife Conservation Board Tortoise Grant Award

THC recently received \$1.9 million dollars from WCB for a project with a comprehensive strategy to halt the decline of California's threatened desert tortoises by targeting key survival challenges: predation by ravens, invasive species, and drought. THC will be collaborating with Hardshell Labs to do the work on the ground. Utilizing innovative technologies like raven deterrent lasers, remote egg oiling, and rainfall concentrators, the project aims to bolster the tortoise population at critical sites. Its significance lies in its multifaceted, scientifically driven approach, which not only offers immediate relief to the tortoises, but also equips conservationists with valuable data and tools to address the broader impacts of climate change on vulnerable desert ecosystems.

"In response to the ongoing decline of desert tortoises, the Desert Tortoise Conservation Innovations project will apply for a wide array of cutting-edge conservation actions with long-term monitoring to assess their effectiveness," said Tim Shields, Founder and CEO of Hardshell Labs, Inc. "Tortoises in the study area will benefit from habitat enhancements and raven predation reduction but, more importantly, the innovative combination of actions will serve to inform tortoise conservation efforts across the range well into the future."



Tim Shields and Jill Bays on a recent excursion with Geary Hund, (not pictured), to discuss conservation strategies in and around desert tortoise hotspots. We love field days!

SAVE THE DATE!

- **DESERT TORTOISE HABITAT RESTORATION March 2024- Date to be determined** This very popular event allows participants to do restoration work on the ground to improve desert tortoise habitat. It is common to see live tortoises during the two-day event and a training session is included. Camping is available.
- **PORTAL RIDGE WILDFLOWER WALK April 13, 2024-Tentative dependent on conditions** Come enjoy wildflower enthusiasts on a choice of several wildflower hikes at the Portal Ridge Wildlife Preserve.
- **BUTTERFLY MIGRATION MAPPING AND WAYSTATION EVENT June 8, 2024, from 9 am to 12** Planting demonstrations, self-guided nature walks, and signups for the Monarch Migration Mapping project. Each household that signs up will receive (3) one gallon milkweed plants while supplies last. Location: Roberta Dewey Discover Center with parking at 1681 Hillview Road, Pinon Hills, 92372.
- **GARDEN PARTY October 5, 2024, from 2pm to 5 pm** Tickets must be purchased in advance. The cost is \$35 per person or \$60 for two. Children under 10 are free. Location: The Wrightwood Place 770

Please RSVP for THC events through our website at www.TransitionHabitat.org and click on "Upcoming Events." You can also call (760) 868-1400 or email us at info@TransitionHabitat.org. NOTE: Website registration may not be open until 2 months prior to the event.



Founder and Board President, Jill Bays received a Certificate of Recognition from Thomas Lackey, Assemblyman, 34th District for her efforts to protect 5,000 acres of Significant Ecological Areas in the Western Antelope Valley.

Have you considered a Donation Directly from your IRA?

HOW IT WORKS-

You direct distributions in the amount of your choosing, up to an annual limit set by the IRS from your traditional or Roth IRA to THC (other types of retirement plans are not covered by the law).

The distributions go directly to THC and are NOT subject to federal income tax.

MAKING YOUR GIFT-

Contact your IRA custodian and ask them to send the check for a "Qualified Charitable Distribution" to Transition Habitat Conservancy to the attention of the Treasury IRA at the following address:

Transition Habitat Conservancy
P.O. Box 721300
Pinon Hills, CA 92372



Please request that your IRA custodian reference your name and address.

YOUR DONATION HELPS!

- \$35 INDIVIDUAL Thank you for your support! Please choose a donation level to the left and fill out the form so we can keep you updated with future newsletters. You can also set up recurring donations or other amounts on our website at: www.TransitionHabitat.org **PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY**
- \$50 FAMILY
- \$100 SPONSOR Mail to: **Transition Habitat Conservancy P.O. Box 721300 Pinon Hills, CA 92372**
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