



Planting the Seeds of Change

We're always inspired by the energy and enthusiasm of young people in this community. Recently our Emerging Naturalists got some hands-on experience with native plants at LA State Historic Park. Learn more about the re-launch of the Emerging Naturalists program in the highlights below.

Highlighting Indigeneity

We acknowledge the land on which CNC operates as the unceded ancestral lands and home of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples, original stewards and custodians of this territory. We recognize their continuing connection to land, waters and culture, and we

pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

"When the land calls, you listen."

— Katherine Paul (Black Belt Eagle Scout)
from her album *The Land, The Water, The Sky*



Clockwise from top: Black Belt Eagle Scout, Tanya Tagaq, and Jessa Calderon.

It's springtime and melodic sounds are in the air. Music fans in southern California know April is a time when concert-goers flock to the Coachella Valley

for the eponymous arts festival in Indio. You might be less familiar with the inhabitants of the land on which Coachella takes place. The land now commonly known as the Coachella Valley is Cahuilla territory and home of nine federally recognized bands of Cahuilla Indians.

Traditional Cahuilla land stretches from the Borrego Desert to the San Bernardino National Forest, and from modern-day Riverside to the Colorado River. The Cahuilla people have lived in this region for thousands of years. Learn more about the history of the Cahuilla people and their land [here](#).

While many up and coming artists find the spotlight on stage at Coachella, Indigenous musicians are often excluded from mainstream festivals. Their culture and artistic expression is still very much alive, especially in music. Here are a few Indigenous musicians that we are listening to lately:

- [The Halluci Nation](#) – hip-hop, trap, dubstep
 - Formerly known as A Tribe Called Red, Halluci Nation is the collaboration of Tim "2oolman" Hill (Mohawk, of the Six Nations of the Grand River) and Ehren "Bear Witness" Thomas (Cayuga First Nation).
- [iskwē](#) - pop, electronic
 - iskwē – short for waseskwan iskwew, meaning "blue sky woman" – is an award-winning Cree singer and songwriter, and citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation.
- [Supaman](#) - rap, hip-hop
 - Supaman is Christian Takes Gun Parrish, a Native American artist, dancer, and member of the Apsáalooke Nation.sáalooke
- [Black Belt Eagle Scout](#) - alternative rock
 - Black Belt Eagle Scout is the musical project of Katherine Paul, a Swinomish/Iñupiaq woman and Portland-based artist. You can see her [performing live at the Echo](#) in LA on May 4th!
- [Tanya Tagaq](#) – throat singing, folk
 - Tanya Tagaq is an Inuk artist and author from Ikaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay, Nunavut), renowned for her improvisational,

avante-garde style.

- [Jessa Calderon](#) – hip hop
 - Jessa is a Tongva & Chumash singer, songwriter, and emcee. In addition to creating art, Jessa works as a Water Protector for the [Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples](#).



Clockwise from top: The Halluci Nation, Supaman, and iskwē.

Message from the Executive Director

Loving yourself, and all of your identities, is a necessary prerequisite to being a part of any movement.

Like a lot of species on this planet, I see and feel the negation, scarcity, violence, and fear propagated by people subscribing to a narrative and practices rooted in cis-white-heteropatriarchal, racialized, colonized, theocratic based capitalism. Like a lot of species on this planet, I hold many identities. It is not a coincidence that many of us don't know that concept. The conspiracy is the result of a long and lucrative ploy promoted by the aforementioned folks to enforce marginality, increase political profit, and elevate fictitious religious standing.

Who has and continues to benefit from the falsehood that I, and other species, can't possess a multitude of identities? Who has benefited from the lies told about all species that the only 'real' part of us were the identities they defined for us so they could sell, commodify, and or profit from them? Those that have done so and continue to try and benefit, fail to see the tragedy of trading the actual accountable magic found here on mother earth in all our identities for a myth about specialness and hetero-normative fairy tales.

Like a lot of species on this planet, I hold many identities that enable wonder and awe. They are tightly braided and woven into the plethora of interconnected communities that I am a part of. The vastness of possibilities cannot be contained by binary thinking. I am still unlearning the coping mechanisms I created and used when I thought I was impossible within myself. When I learned that I was not the only one of my kind, all I wanted was to do was build with others like me. When we tap into any of the identities that exist within us despite the capitalists, the politicians, and religious zealots saying they don't....we embody a real power and magic beyond the dominant paradigm.

Where my identities freely congregate is in the Just Transition framework. In these spaces, my identities have found allies, accomplices, and conspirators in collectively weaving these multitude of identities into a new fabric and vision centered on cooperation and care. Included is a snippet from Movement

Generation's Zine on what a Just Transition encompasses and the various identities, queerness being one, that need to be interwoven and braided together in order for a reorganized future to emerge.



FROM BANKS AND TANKS TO COOPERATION AND CARING

A Strategic Framework for a Just Transition



The passage below has been
reprinted from Movement
Generation's Zine:

“From Banks and Tanks to
Cooperation and Caring: A
Strategic Framework for a Just
Transition”!

(Page 13, published 2017)

"To Achieve a Just Transition, we must Queer our movements. Queer, trans, and gender non-conforming folks live the daily, active embodied resistance to enclosure by refusing to conform to the violently-enforced binaries that dictate that everyone is either man or woman, and that these identities are mutually exclusive and come with a universal set of behaviors, temperaments and roles. By exercising the right to be free in body and spirit, queer and trans people confront the foundational myth of the heteropatriarchal gender binary, a system that disconnects people from a right relationship with their bodies. This system defines not just the experiences of Queer and Trans folks, but of all of us, demanding either our subordination to or complicity with the violence. Queerness is an explicit rejection and questioning of this normalized violence, offering up opportunities for us to ally in rejecting these foundational systems of the extractive economy.

Trans folks, particularly poor, trans people of color, experience overlapping systems of oppression, putting them at the frontlines of incarceration, deportation, violence, land dispossession, and vulnerability to climate change. Yet, as with other frontline communities, this vulnerability is also a critical vantage point that provides insights that we must uplift if we are to strive for total liberation. For instance, Two-Spirit communities embody resistance to the colonization of both land and body, and are reclaiming their unique ecological knowledge. As we imagine navigating the large economic and cultural transition with a vision of justice, we must honor this wisdom and uplift those whose lived experience is one of the struggle for a just transition for

their own lives and bodies, against the system of hetero-patriarchy. We have an opportunity to learn from the leadership of this community that transition is a process that is not linear and not entirely predictable, but is one that can be made with fierce love, pride and justice.

To achieve a Just Transition, we must also queer our movement theory. Intersectionality, complexity, fluidity, multiplicity, non-linearity, emergence, transformation and love beyond borders are critical contributions of radical queer analysis and leadership. If the crisis of our times is the eradication of biological and cultural diversity, and diversity is our best defense, then in this moment we must embrace queer and trans liberation as a key frontline struggle to advance a radical rejection of conformity and uplift diversity as necessary for our collective survival and liberation.”

A lot of the language and essence of my story is pulled from [Alexis Pauline Gumbs: UNDROWNED--Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals](#), Chapter 11 – “Respect your hair”.

- To learn more about Movement Generation, click [here](#).
- To learn more about what a Just Transition is, click [here](#). (English language)
- Para obtener más información sobre qué es una Transición Justa, haga clic [aquí](#). (Lengua española)

--Delaney Alamillo, Executive Director

Program Highlights

Emerging Naturalists

Through the support of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), Community Nature Connection is excited to announce the re-launch our Emerging Naturalists program!

This spring, we have twelve Northeast LA middle and high school students developing their naturalist and outdoor skills through hands-on field trips and a

culminating camping trip. One focus of this spring's program is to focus on nature in our students' own neighborhoods. To counter the narrative that one must drive out to the mountains or coast in order to experience nature, many of the Emerging Naturalists' field trips will take place near their schools and homes at local parks such as Elyria Canyon Park and Rio de Los Angeles State Park and focus on topics like urban ecology and climate change resilience.



Recognizing that youth have already been engaging with nature in their neighborhoods, the Emerging Naturalists program aims to accompany our students as they develop their naturalist skills and discern if a career in the outdoors could be a good fit for them. To that end, this spring's program will incorporate collaborations with CNC's Transit to Trails program and the Akuutet Learning Nursery internship in order to share opportunities about how to continue engaging with the outdoors after the program. Guest presenters will also speak to youth not only about their careers in the outdoors but also the ways that they can feel empowered to take those steps into the field themselves.

Above all, we're excited to facilitate outdoor education for youth who are

curious about engaging more with nature and nurturing that into a lifelong source of wellness and community.

William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom

Through the WODOC program at Franklin Canyon Park, CNC aims to make field trips accessible and engaging for a wide variety of student groups, from pre-k to high school. Students from South Park Elementary, Southeast Middle School, and Beulah Payne Preschool all visited this year to explore the park and nature center.

Teachers and educators looking to book a trip to Franklin Canyon can contact WODOC@communitynatureconnection.org for details on fall field trips.



After heavy rains closed parts of Franklin Canyon this winter, field trips were paused. However CNC has begun offering in-school presentations to substitute for the missed trips. The WODOC team held their first in-school presentation with Camellia Avenue Elementary's kindergarten and first graders, discussing the plants and wildlife of Franklin Canyon as well as the history of the park.

Volunteers are a vital part of CNC public programming and school field trip support. A new cohort of Volunteer Naturalists is currently being onboarded for the spring 2023 season and we're so excited for them to join the CNC team! Interested in joining CNC as a volunteer this summer? [Email us](#) today for more information!

Transit to Trails

The Transit to Trails team has been very active this spring, engaging community groups to help inform in-person programs and hosting coastal access trips with local partner organizations. Explore the Coast trips included two outings to Malibu Lagoon State Beach with [Koreatown Youth + Community Center](#) (KYCC). The Libraries to Trailheads initiative took participants from Chinatown Branch Library to Abalone Cove and community members with [SEACA](#) to Malibu Lagoon, where they learned about the importance of tidepools and watersheds.

Akuutet Learning Nursery at Elyria Canyon

The Akuutet Learning Nursery internship is halfway completed, and 14 interns have been trained on skills such as herbarium techniques, line-transect surveying, and plant species identification.

Interns transplanted 48 Black Sage seedlings and sowed 300 Black Walnut seeds. In early March, the interns went on a camping trip to Malibu Creek State Park and explored the National Recreation Area's Visitor Center at King Gillette Ranch.



Next the interns joined a field trip to Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa to learn about large-scale habitat restoration and fire ecology. These outings allowed the group to experience urbanized camping, explore the Santa Monica Mountains, and increase team building and camaraderie.

Some of the youth participated in a California Naturalist certification course and received an introductory presentation on Plants, Habitat Restoration, and Plant Adaptations delivered by CNC's Nursery & Restoration Coordinator.

The internship wraps up this spring, culminating in a nursery open house on May 6th which will celebrate the interns and all that they have accomplished.



Outdoor & Coastal Access Leadership Institute

The Outdoor & Coastal Access Leadership Institute (OCALI) is a hybrid learning course for folks interested in outdoor and coastal access issues and projects. OCALI staff is currently collaborating with the Elyria Canyon team to facilitate four virtual sessions and two educational field trips for the Akuutet Learning Nursery internship program (ALN). Interns will share lessons learned through interactive presentations at the open house on May 6th.

The sessions included an introduction to floods and wildfires, historical barriers to the outdoors (particularly redlining and its role in preventing BIPOC communities from accessing nature), interdependency of green space connectivity, and fire ecology. Interns were introduced to the case study of mountain lion P-22 and the symbolism he holds for habitat restoration in Los Angeles and the necessity to prioritize increased green spaces. They also learned about the Woolsey Fire and its ecological and infrastructural

impacts on the landscape as well as the consequences of human-caused climate change.



Training Institute

CNC celebrates a new crop of certified California Naturalists!

After 10 weeks, CNC's California Naturalist Course wrapped up on April 12th. The course included 10 virtual sessions, 2 field trips, participation in a class community science project, and the completion of a capstone project. This spring, the course provided professional development training to 6 CNC staff members and was offered at no cost to 3 Akuutet Learning Nursery Interns and 3 CNC alumni as a leadership development and naturalist training opportunity. The remaining spots in the course were open to the public on a sliding scale equity tier cost structure.

In March, the course hosted 2 field trips on the themes of urban and fire ecology. The course wrapped up on April 12th with the presentation of participants' amazing Capstone Projects which included bilingual native plant

i.d zines, guided nature walks, interpretive programs on outdoor skills, and so many more! Of those surveyed, 100% agreed that the course strengthened their connection to the outdoors through work, volunteering, and/or enjoyment and 100% of respondents agreed that the training equipped them with the knowledge, skills, and naturalist lens to support their path to entering or continuing in the outdoor field. Congratulations naturalists!

Community Spotlight

Tucked away in a little corner of Frogtown, Lewis MacAdams Riverfront Park (formerly Marsh Park) is a hidden gem with easy access to the LA River Greenway Trail.

Fun fact: This park is designed to clean water that flows from city streets before it enters the river. Using bioswales — drainage ditches lined with river rock and native plants — water is naturally cleansed as it seeps slowly into the ground through sand, rocks, and clay.



Park Location: 2944 Glenden St in Los Angeles, near the intersection of the

5 & 2 freeways. There is a large parking lot accessible via either Gleneden St or Rosanna St (1 block south).

Driving directions: From the Golden State Freeway (5) southbound, take exit 140A onto Fletcher Dr then turn right on Ripple St, which will lead directly to the park. From the Glendale Freeway (2) southbound, take exit 13B onto Fletcher Dr then turn left on Ripple St, which leads to the park. From the 5 northbound, take exit 138 to Riverside Dr, turn right on Newell St then left on Ripple St.

Metro Routes: Take the 603 Metro Local Line bus or 182 Metro Local Line bus to the Fletcher / Crystal stop.

Participant Story

CNC community member Michelle Reyes shares a reflection after their first camping trip.



"This picture is significant because I took it before bringing down my tent in the morning. The tent had just gone through the rain in the morning and the bright sun an hour later. That reminded me of being flexible and preparing for changes. I had never built a tent before, and it was relatively easy after Javier and Maddi's demonstration. I remember stopping for a second to appreciate the clear view of the mountains we would see later that day. It turned out to be my favorite hike of all time.

The camping trip was a journey full of great memories. My favorite moments were getting to know everyone better; we all went from strangers to friends. Those long talks around the campfire and the chit-chat while hiking worked for us to bond. I also loved learning camping skills, and seeing how we were all at

different learning points was inspiring. I finally got to connect with nature for the first time. I didn't know I needed it, but I'm glad I got that time to ground myself and shift from the urbanized reality.

I look forward to a future camping trip with the program or my loved ones. I'm also very inspired to keep learning about camping skills as well as nature and our connection with it."

Create Lasting Impact

As we look ahead to 2023-24, we're planning new programming to get more folks out into nature! We hope that you'll consider a donation at this time to help facilitate meaningful outdoor experiences for folks across LA County.

Supporting CNC is quick and easy with PayPal. Any amount is meaningful and helps to sustain our community-based programming. Show up for outdoor equity with a contribution today!

Donate with PayPal

Want to make an even bigger impact? Set up a [recurring monthly donation](#) on our website!

Upcoming Events

Check out our [website](#) and [social media](#) often for the latest trainings and programs!

- [Coastal Transit to Trails](#)
 - Saturday, April 29, 8:30 AM - 5 PM
 - Chinatown Branch Library to King Gillette Ranch
- [Story Time & Nature Walk](#)
 - Saturday, April 29, 10 AM - 12 PM

- Franklin Canyon Park
 - Art in Nature Workshop
 - Saturday, May 13 (Stay tuned to social media for specific time)
 - Franklin Canyon Park
 - Story Time & Nature Walk
 - Saturday, May 27, 10 AM - 12 PM
 - Franklin Canyon Park
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Please note: Some photos included in this newsletter were taken before the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore do not reflect our current safety protocols.



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