

Spring Tours

2012

2012 SPRING NATIVE HABITAT TOURS: SUSTAINABILITY FOR A GREENER FUTURE

Join The Toll Roads for the 12th Annual Native Habitat tour series. Don't miss your opportunity to hike through the significant areas of open space protected through regional open space planning efforts, including Orange County's public toll road system. This year's tour series will focus on The Toll Roads' sustainability efforts that come from extensive long-term environmental planning and restoration. These guided hikes offer a glimpse into Orange County's habitat areas that few people have ever seen, so reserve your spot quickly!

STRAWBERRY FARMS RESTORATION SITE

Restoration and bird watching hike
Date: March 3 • Time: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

This **mild to moderate two-mile hike** gives participants an inside peek at our newest conservation area. The 15-acre site is located within the City of Irvine Open Space Preserve, adjacent to the Strawberry Farms Golf Course. Participants will learn about the restoration of coastal sage scrub and cactus and how the site is important to expand habitat for two target species of regional significance. The hike will be led by a restoration ecologist who will explain the methods used to restore habitat for the federally threatened California gnatcatcher and cactus wren.



UPPER CHIQUITA CANYON

Natural growth process and bird watching hike
Date: March 17 • Time: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

This 1,182-acre conservation area located near Coto de Caza was set aside with construction of the 241 Toll Road. A **moderate to strenuous six-mile hike** gives participants a peek at an area rich with coastal sage scrub, oak woodland, grassland and natural drainage habitats. Specific techniques that were used to restore this popular site and soil and slope-forming processes due to heavy rains will be the focus this year. The tour, which includes some vigorous hills, will be led by a restoration ecologist and an ornithologist. Walking sticks, sturdy hiking shoes and binoculars are highly recommended.

SADDLE CREEK SOUTH/ LIVE OAK PLAZA

Open space and wildlife connectivity hike
Date: April 21 • Time: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Combined, these two conservaton parcels comprise over 100 acres of permanent open space. OCTA's 84-acre conservation area located on the south side of Live Oak Canyon near Rancho Santa Margarita is part of OCTA's Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program areas through Measure M2. Saddle Creek South lies between the Santa Ana Mountains and Live Oak Canyon/ O'Neill Regional Park and conservation of this area will protect wildlife movement through these areas. TCA's 23-acre Live Oak Plaza property was acquired in 2005 to be preserved as part of the connection to the Cleveland National Forest, with restoration of native habitats also planned for the property. A **moderate to strenuous two-mile hike** will lead participants through chaparral, grassland, riparian, woodland and scrub oak vegetation. The focus of this tour will be on the methods used to maintain wildlife connectivity, and conserve vegetation and core populations of species such as the cactus wren, bobcat and mountain lion. A restoration ecologist will lead this tour.



SR 73 SLOPES/ UPPER LAUREL CANYON

Wildlife undercrossing hike
Date: May 5 • Time: 8:30 a.m. – 1p.m.

This **strenuous six-mile hike** begins in the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and leads participants up through an oak woodland canyon, toward the 73 Toll Road. It continues through a wildlife undercrossing where participants can look for tracks and identify wildlife using the crossing. The hike reaches a scenic point overlooking Shady Canyon, Laguna Canyon and beyond. Restoration techniques used to create sustainable habitat for the California gnatcatcher, a threatened songbird will be described. Come prepared to hike along steep and sometimes narrow trails. This tour will be led by a restoration ecologist.

Please call (949) 754-3405 or email lmorgan@thetollroads.com to reserve a space on a tour. Space is limited. Confirmation of reservation and driving directions will be sent via e-mail prior to each tour. The Spring Tours series is designed for participants over age 12.

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