

Daley Ranch News

Friends of Daley Ranch

Spring 2026

Learn all about pollinators! Daley Ranch Discussions With Friends Sunday, April 12 at 11 a.m. at the Ranch House

Bumble bees are the photogenic insects that highlight the vast array of native pollinators that call Daley Ranch home. Join expert Jennifer Radkey for a free presentation on Sunday, April 12 at 11 a.m. at the Ranch House, for Daley Ranch Discussions With Friends. Guests may hike up or take a complimentary shuttle. RSVPs are required at daleyranch.org by April 5.

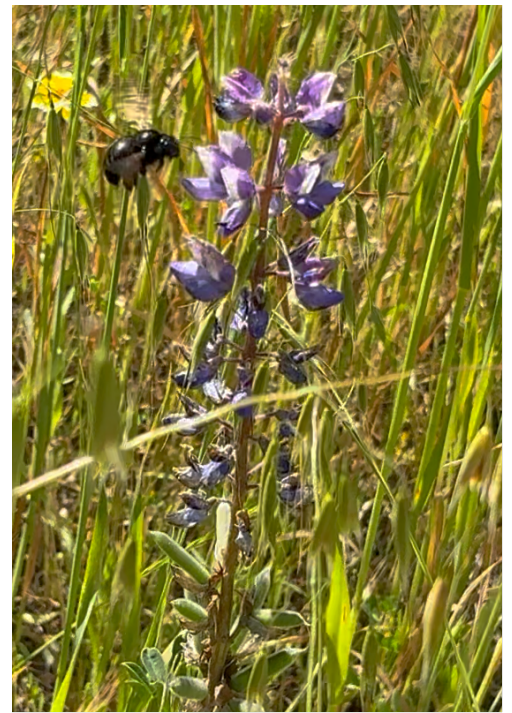
Besides bumble bees, native bees are the most effective pollinators, but many other insects also visit flowers for nectar or pollen, or to eat the flower visitors. This fascinating system is critical for the conservation of the native plant communities that make Daley Ranch such a beautiful place to visit.

Jennifer will discuss the initial results of bumble bee surveys along with the potential for long term management of these important creatures. She will also discuss other native pollinators, their conservation and how you can give back locally to ensure that our natural systems endure and thrive. Jennifer is a biologist trained in ecology and evolutionary biology with a passion for restoring functional systems in California.

She strives to understand the interconnectedness of the plants and animals in our



natural areas to promote restoration and conservation. Jennifer is hopeful that so many people are interested in nature and seeks to inspire curiosity in others. Jennifer channels this passion by volunteering as a teacher, leading the Small Animal Station of the 7th Grade Outdoor Education Program sponsored by The Friends of Daley Ranch.



Mountain lions in Southern California face shrinking habitat, fewer corridors; UC Davis researchers helping!

Mountain lions were the topic at the January 11 Daley Ranch Discussions With Friends, led by James Bourdon. The Ranch House was at capacity for his riveting and fact-filled presentation, which included viewing the carcass of a fully-grown mountain lion that had been killed on I-15 years earlier and kept in cold storage for research. FODR was very impressed with the project to monitor and encourage mountain lion populations, and we donated \$500 to Bourdon's team. We also asked the U.C. Davis researchers to summarize their work for this newsletter, which follows below along with photos of the team in action.

If you would like to learn more and possibly contribute, visit their website at <https://whc.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/programs-projects/carnivores>.

By Fernando Nájera DVM MS PhD

Mountain lions are an essential part of Southern California's ecosystems, but their survival depends on reconnecting fragmented landscapes.

One of the most significant barriers to connectivity is Interstate 15 (I-15), which separates the small and genetically vulnerable Santa Ana Mountains (SAM) subpopulation from the larger Eastern Peninsular Ranges (ePRs) population. For decades, I-15 has functioned as a near-complete barrier to movement. As a result, mountain lions in the Santa Ana Mountains have experienced limited gene flow, reduced genetic diversity, and increased risk from extirpation.

The UC Davis Wildlife Health Center California Carnivores Program uses GPS collars, field investigations, mortality analyses, and landscape connectivity modeling to understand how mountain lions attempt to move across this heavily urbanized region. By identifying crossing hotspots and priority linkage zones, our data help inform wildlife crossing design, habitat protection, and science-based management decisions aimed at restoring connectivity between SAM and ePRs.



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UC Davis Carnivore Project monitors local cougars

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In recognition of these mounting threats, Southern California mountain lions were recently granted protection under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). This designation is significant. CESA status strengthens protections against habitat loss, increases oversight of development projects that may further fragment critical linkages, and prioritizes conservation actions to reduce mortality and restore connectivity. It also elevates mountain lion recovery planning to a state-level conservation priority.

Connectivity is more than a landscape concept. It is the foundation of long-term population health. When mountain lions can disperse, find mates, and exchange genes across regions, they are more resilient to disease, environmental change, and human pressures.

With continued research, collaboration, and public support, we can work toward reconnecting Southern California's wild landscapes and securing a future for mountain lions.

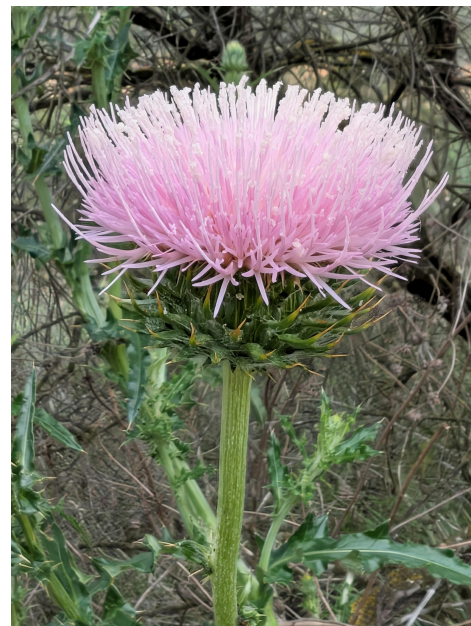


The UC Davis scientists follow strict guidelines for keeping lions safe while under anesthesia. The team works quickly to check heart and all body functions. They take blood samples for analysis and specifically for genetic information. All specimens are collared and are quickly released after the exam.



This new kiosk at Cougar Pass was an Eagle Scout project partially funded by FODR as part of the Escondido Community Foundation grant.

Species of the Season



Cobweb thistle

(*Cirsium occidentale*) is a native thistle growing up to 5ft tall and is a crucial plant for bees and pollinators during spring time.

Our Mission

The mission of the Friends of Daley Ranch is to support and promote the City of Escondido's efforts to protect and maintain Daley Ranch Conservation Bank habitats and wildlife. Our goals are to:

- * Educate the next generation of Environmental Stewards and provide service-learning opportunities that supplement our educational programming.
- * Develop and implement enhancement projects that support the conservation of Daley Ranch.
- * Cultivate relationships with sister organizations and encourage responsible recreational opportunities at Daley Ranch.

Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Greg Gould at 760-839-4345 to volunteer for Bike Patrol, Foot Patrol, Horse Patrol, or Trail Maintenance.

Hike Schedule

Call Ranger Station at 760-839-4680 for the hike schedule. Hike information is also available at <https://daleyranch.org/news-events-2/> No sign up required.

FODR Membership: Renewals & Donations

FODR is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Your donation is tax deductible. You may join and donate online at daleyranch.org or mail this form with a check to FODR, PO Box 461173, Escondido, CA 92046

Name:

Address:

City, State ZIP

Email:

We will go green and email your newsletter unless you check this

Phone (optional):

\$25 Student/Senior \$50 Sponsoring \$100 Contributor

\$250 Corporate \$500 Benefactor \$1000 Lifetime

What do you love about Daley Ranch?

FODR Executive Board

- President: Jerry Harmon
- Vice President: Donna Leon
- Secretary: Dave Roberts
- Treasurer: Rick Mercurio
- Social Media: Brocade Wu Harmon
- Webmaster: Chris O'Donnell
- President Emeritus: Fred Woods

FODR email: info@daleyranch.org

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