



Ecological Concerns Inc.

Restoring the habitats that sustain us

and
Central
Coast
Wilds
Nursery



"Our mission is to nurture ecological relationships, cultivate community partnerships and build sustainable business practices in order to protect and restore biological diversity."

Summer Solstice is upon us and we have a busy summer ahead at the nursery and in the field. ECI has launched a new website that highlights our full scope of services. Let us know what you think. Any feedback is welcomed, and more changes are in store.

--ECI and CCW Team

DESIGN

Bobby Markowitz Receives LEED Platinum Award

Salinas Gateway Senior Apartments was awarded LEED Platinum certification by U.S. Green Building Council. Bobby Markowitz, ECI's Sr. Landscape Architect, designed and oversaw installation of the rainwater system, which was one of many sustainable features in the affordable senior apartments. The LEED Platinum award is the highest award to achieve.

First Community Housing was building affordable housing apartments for seniors when they considered rainwater harvesting for their irrigation system. There is about 9,000 sqft of roof that collects, filters and stores 21,000 gallons of water that is then used in the dry season to irrigate all of the site's landscaping including a living roof. There are four 5,000 gallon rain barrels in the parking garage under the building (as seen below). From there the water is pumped throughout the entire site's irrigation system. In any overflow events the water is diverted into a bioswale area with boulders and water loving plants.



Bobby inspecting the tanks after their installation



After their installation Bobby trained building maintenance how to operate the tanks.

GROW

Plant of the Quarter

Blue Elderberry, *Sambucus nigra* subsp. *caerulea*



Name/Species: Blue Elderberry, Sambucus

Range: From Canada to Mexico and west from Texas/Montana

Description: This shrub or small tree typically grows from 6 to 12 feet tall, but can reach heights of up to 24 feet in the most ideal conditions. The leaves are pinnately compound with 3 to 9 leaflets positioned opposite each other. The flowers can be found from March to July and are creamy-white and sit in clusters on a flat-topped inflorescence. These flowers eventually become blue edible berries during the summer before the plant loses its leaves for the winter.

Garden Use: Elderberry makes an excellent addition to a sunny streamside where it will stabilize the soil and shade the water. It also works well just about anywhere sunny with a little moisture. It can tolerate a wide variety of soil types but favors a soil that is slightly acidic.

Habitat Value: The many branches of Elderberry provide cover for squirrels and the berries provide an ample food source for many types of birds. Bees and butterflies pollinate the flowers; an endangered insect, the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, uses the tree to lay eggs and protect its larvae.

Food & Medicinal Values: Both the flowers and fruit of Blue Elderberries are edible. The flowers are often used in tea and can also be added to many foods such as pancakes or fritters where they add a light fragrance. Because the raw berries contain hydrocyanic acid, which can cause nausea, it is not advisable to eat large quantities of the berries raw. Cooked, however, the berries can be made into delicious jams, syrups, pies, wine, you name it. Along with being delicious these berries are a great source of vitamin C.

BUILD

Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority Awards ECI with 3 Year Habitat Maintenance Contract

Ecological Concerns Incorporated (ECI) recently began work on a three-year restoration maintenance contract for the Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA). Why is a habitat restoration business working for a Transit Authority? The answer lies in the respective missions of each organization.

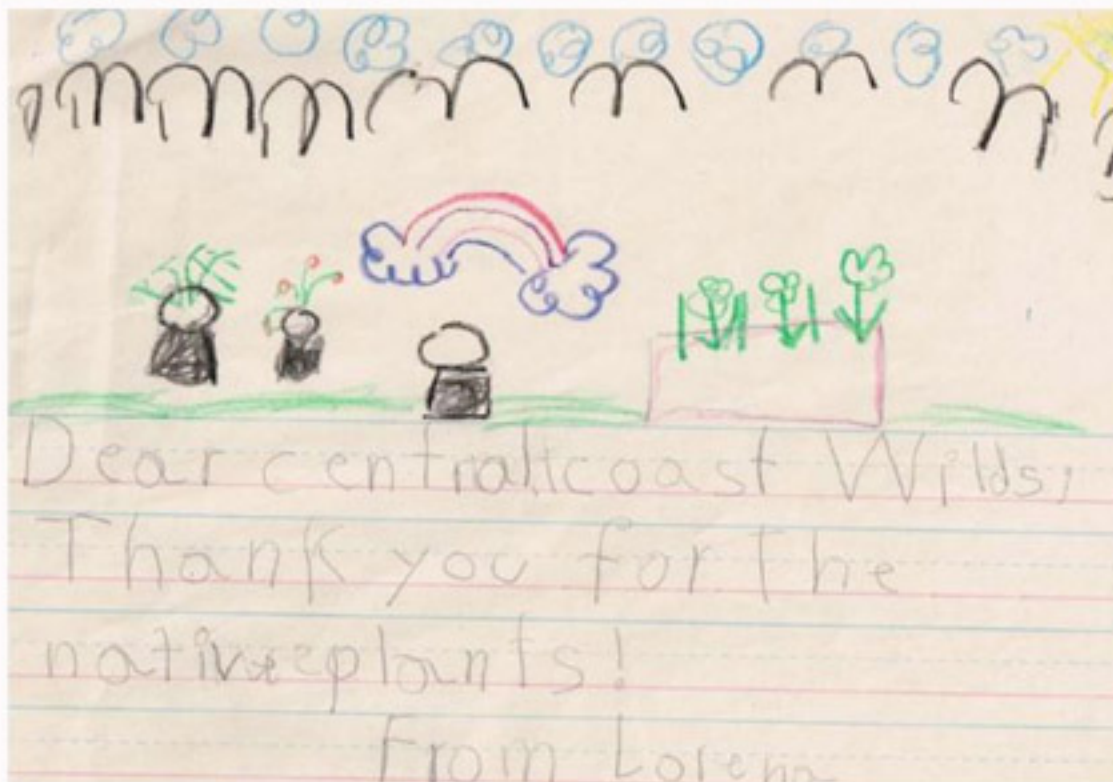
VTA designs highway, transit, and facilities projects and works to minimize negative impacts to habitats that are essential for the survival of special status animals and plants. When impacts are unavoidable, VTA mitigates or compensates for the loss of habitats by preserving, enhancing, restoring, or creating habitats near the project site.

Enter ECI. ECI's work is motivated by the continuing loss of biodiversity, native species extinction, and the desertification of Western U.S. bioregions. It works to reverse these trends by applying ecological principles to land-use planning and management and has years of experience doing so throughout Northern California. VTA planted two sites in East San Jose and oversaw one year of plant establishment. Subsequently, ECI was hired to perform landscape maintenance and habitat restoration work which includes operating and maintaining irrigation systems; hand watering; controlling general and noxious weeds; protecting plantings from human and animal damage through the use of foliage cages and mesh; installing and maintaining mulch; removing trash and debris; and erecting, updating and maintaining signage.

In addition to the maintenance work described, ECI has designed a program for monitoring the two sites. The resulting data will be used to inform what is called an "adaptive management process" whereby maintenance activities are regularly modified based on information collected. This enables ECI to ensure that the goals of the restoration are achieved

Central Coast Wilds Donates California Natives for the San Juan School

Central Coast Wilds made a large donation of native plants to the San Juan School in San Juan Bautista. They were installed by students and volunteers in the gardening club, and are part of the school's beautification program. The natives are now providing valuable habitat for highly mobile insects and birds, and teachers are integrating the new landscapes as part of their environmental science classes.



Thanks for reading! Don't forget Ecological Concerns and Central Coast Wilds for any of your garden, consulting or landscape needs. We are a full service, CONSULT - DESIGN - GROW - BUILD - MAINTAIN ecological landscape company.

Please email any questions or inquiries.

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