

# Wanderings

*The latest from the NAI members of Southern California and Clark County, Nevada*

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## Dear Wild West Interpreters

These last six months have been tumultuous, to say the least. We all have seen our fair share of hardship, discomfort, and for some, incredible loss. With all of the heaviness that has surrounded us, our region, the mighty Wild West, has come together in ways that it never has before. We have hosted a myriad of virtual gatherings, professional development webinars presented by Wild West members, multi-region virtual get-togethers, seen a revitalization of our newsletter and website, and so much more! We are building our community to be strong, supportive, and together, at a time when we are physically torn apart.

We are pleased to announce that through our donation based webinars, we have raised enough money to support two scholarships to the National Conference, including a one-year membership to NAI for a brand new member! With the new leadership team of the Wild West Region being less than a year old, we have bounded together to help bring more to this incredible region of NAI. At a time when we need positivity more than ever, your regional board is filled with gratitude for our Wild West members, and is hopeful for the future of both this great region, and our wonderful NAI community as a whole. Be strong, stay safe, and know how we are here to serve you, now, and into the future.

➤ Erin Gates (*Director*) & Blythe Wilson (*Deputy Director*) ◀

## Welcome Vaqueros, or Cowboys

### Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park Upgrades Interpretation—Outside and In

Familiar with temporary interpretive panels that hang on for a few years? It happens. [Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park](#) has been upgrading its interpretive exhibits—a refresh—since opening in 2003.

The City of Carlsbad-operated park is designated as a local, State and National Historic Landmark. Its 27 acres lies in the heart of Leo Carrillo's Rancho de Los Quiotes, or Ranch of the Spanish Daggers. Throughout, interpretation honors the mid-century stage and screen actor, Leo Carrillo, and his legacy as Mr. California—an ambassador for California conservation and preservation.

Most visitors have never watched Leo co-star as Pancho in *The Cisco Kid*—the first television series filmed in color in the early 1950s. And, many are unfamiliar with the word *vaquero*, Spanish for cowboy, in everyday life.

Artefact Design, an interpretive design studio, was contracted to write an Outdoor Interpretive Plan and later, the delivery for all-new outdoor interpretive panels on the ranch.

The design team began to prioritize how to present the park's relevance for visitors born after the 1950s, and who didn't grow up roping cattle—meaning everyone can find value in their touring experiences.

In the panels, ranch terminology is italicized and defined so that the words and feelings are relatable: from *hacienda*, the estate house to *majordomo*, head of the estate.

One by one, the worn interpretive panels were replaced with low-key, stylized panels set in the ground and apart from structures to allow for unobstructed views and photography.

Leo's life as a descendant of one of California's founding Spanish families is woven into the stories of relevance today—how he saved public beaches, or even when he served as an ambassador in parades on his palomino horse, Conquistador.

Bilingual exhibit guides are being produced for outdoor interpretive exhibits and the additions of two indoor ranch history exhibits. The next interpretive overlay will present audio tours in several languages, where visitors can hear new stories about Leo Carrillo, the people, peacocks, celebrities and life on the original 1,750-acre ranch.

These upgrades reveal a park team that cares about interpreting its legacy by telling its stories, and communicating the importance of preservation so that what was back then, feels very present today.

By **Tanya Bredehoft** - *Principal of Artefact Design & Lydia Cobb* - *Interpretive Writer*



## Important Upcoming Dates

**November 10th-13th:** NAI National Virtual Conference ([Registration required by October 25th](#))

**October 14th:** Wild West national scholarship extended application Date ([Apply here](#)).

**October 21st:** October edition of Wild West Webinar Wednesday (Reoccurring on the third Wednesday of every month)

## California State Park's Dual Language Virtual Junior Ranger Adventure Series

California State Parks is proud to announce its new Dual Language Virtual Junior Rangers Adventure video series with associated activities. Junior Rangers is a statewide program for children age 7-12 years old. The topics addressed in this series are *Geology, Tidepools, California Tribes: Chumash, Weather and Climate, Native Plants, and Native Animals*. Each video is in English and Spanish. Activities can be found on the [State Parks Junior Rangers webpage](#). Participating Junior Rangers will get a digital badge for each virtual adventure completed.

The Summer Learning Program usually includes in-person camping experiences, field trips and visits from park staff to schools for various partners, including LA's Best, Think Together, Boys and Girls Club and other local organizations for youth. Due to COVID-19 concerns, Orange Coast District Regional Interpretive Specialist Blythe Wilson was able to pivot and develop this 100% online program geared to the same audience with the goal of expanding access to California state parks through the creation of virtual dual language (Spanish/English) opportunities available any time of year. The project aims to provide online adventures that inspire visits to and stewardship of California State Parks.



This collaborative project, made possible by funds directed to the California State Parks Summer Learning Program, was filmed at various California state parks, including Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, Crystal Cove State Park, San Onofre State Beach, Malibu Creek State Park, Tijuana Estuary Natural Preserve and Pismo State Beach.

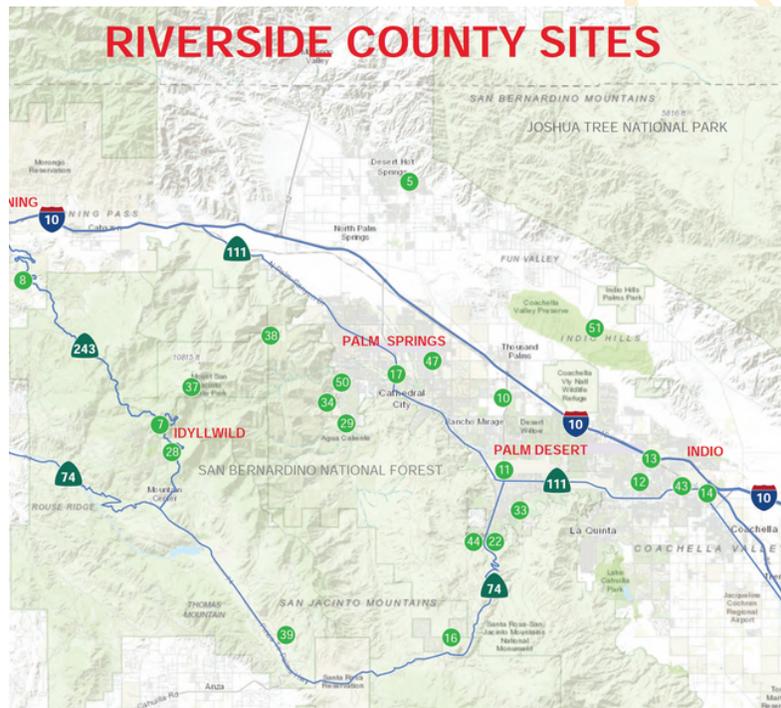
The virtual Dual Language State Park Junior Ranger Program can be accessed throughout the year by visiting the [State Parks Junior Rangers webpage](#) and [Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students \(PORTS\) webpage](#).

By *Anne Marie Tipton - Education Coordinator at Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve* & *Blythe Wilson - Regional Interpretive Specialist at Orange Coast District*

### WE WANT YOU! To volunteer for the Wild West Region

The regional board is looking for amazing volunteers to help with operations and projects within the Wild West region. On our [website](#) you can apply for positions for such tasks and committees as awards and scholarships, membership, social media and communications, fundraising, regional workshops, and events and webinars.

## Environmental Learning Resources from Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District



The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) has developed the award winning Environmental Learning Resources Guide (ELRG) for the Environmental Education Collaborative (EEC) of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The "ELR" was awarded two EPIC Awards from the California Association of Public Information Officers.

The ELRG was developed to help people find local sites and programs about natural resources, agriculture, and environmental topics. The 32-page booklet includes a directory of environmental and agricultural learning sites and programs for San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The guide provides information about programs for all ages: from early childhood through adult, as well as professional training opportunities.

The guide's center (pages 16-19) includes county maps that designate locations of the educational sites.

To get your hands on this wonderful resource you can:

- Visit [RCRCD](#) and [EEC](#) websites
- Use the [Interactive GIS Story Map](#)
- Or if you would like a physical copy of the ELRG mailed to you, please send your name and address to [snyder@rcrcd.org](mailto:snyder@rcrcd.org), or leave a message at (951) 683-7691, Ext. 207.

Submitted by **Diana Ruiz** - Public Affairs Manager at Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District

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### Wild West Webinar Wednesdays

Join us on the third Wednesday of every month on Zoom for unique webinars on a variety of helpful topics. These webinars are provided as a **FREE** service by members, for members. **Donations** for these webinars are greatly appreciated and accepted to support workshop and conference scholarships for our NAI Region 8 members.

Find more information about upcoming webinars and links on our [website](#) & [Facebook](#)

Past webinar recordings available on our [Youtube playlist](#).

## A Coyote is So Much More Than a Cat-Eating Canidae

### Interpreting the Misinterpreted

Coyotes adapt easily to living near people. In fact, the [Alaska Department of Fish and Game's](#) coyote profile states, "In the wake of man's relentless expansion into wildlife's domain, few species have been able to coexist and even expand their range as well as the coyote."

Resembling an underfed German shepherd, coyotes are generally nocturnal, secretive creatures and avoid human contact. That's why even though coyotes roam throughout our parks and neighborhoods we rarely see one. Therefore, for me, it is thrilling to catch a glimpse of one darting across a trail. When I do see one, I think, "how cool."

On the other hand, if such an encounter takes place during an interpretive program, a guest may spew vitriol about a coyote eating his or her cat. Having lost a cat to a coyote, I empathize, but again, I think, "how cool, a teachable moment."



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My reaction to a coyote sighting often sets the tone for how my guests perceive an encounter. Therefore, when I see a coyote, I exclaim, "A coyote, how cool is that?" Then, I listen to my guest's story about a coyote snatching a pet. I have discovered that often guests just want to be heard, and once heard, are more receptive to learning how humans need coyotes more than they need us.

### Ecological Role

"Coyotes play an important ecological role by keeping other wildlife in check," I explain to guests. "If we eliminate coyotes, our yards and gardens may be damaged by rodents, rabbits or raccoons. They also eat squirrels, skunks, raccoons, snakes and feral cats that eat eggs and baby birds. As scavengers, coyotes also clean up animals hit by cars, die naturally or left behind by other predators. In short, coyotes are our friends if we manage our coyote interactions."

[Projectcoyote.org](#) offers a variety of educational [resources](#) to download and distribute to your visitors.

### Howls, Yips and Yaps

Humans' fear of coyotes is rooted in the folklore of the American West and magnified by:

- their stealthy nocturnal behavior
- their [high-pitched howls, yips and yaps](#)
- news reports of rare attacks on humans
- movies portraying coyotes as marauding packs.



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My guests often find it surprising to learn coyote attacks on people are rare. According to the [Humane Society of the United States](#) "more people are killed by errant golf balls and flying champagne corks each year than are bitten by coyotes." The thought of airborne corks and wayward golf balls usually elicits laughs from my guests and lightens their moods as we continue down the trail.

**By Aleta Walther, CIG, ATG, CTA**  
*Aleta spends summers leading interpretive hikes in Alaska and winters in Southern California.*

## How is the Wild West board keeping their cool in 2020?

**Erin** - I am focused on finding my connection to my inner child, and honoring it. It is probably one of the most important things we can do to show ourselves love, and allows ourselves to manifest our own happiness.

**Blythe** - I like to focus on being grateful for the positive things in my life like my family, my pets, my friends, my job. When I feel stressed I do something outside or listen to music to help me feel grounded.

**Marissa** - I am practicing being compassionate with myself.

**Ian** - I keep reminding myself that it's okay to drop the ball sometimes. Just know which balls are plastic, and which are glass. Sure, if you drop a glass ball, it can shatter. But if you drop a plastic ball, it will bounce — no harm done.



**We're inspecting and counting Sea Lions (including pups) prior to educating the public of them. When are you visiting?**

Park Rangers Araceli Dominguez and Tiffany Swerderski at Point La Jolla in San Diego, California.

Submitted by Ara Celi

**Snail: "When there is a will there is a way."**

I came across this fella, still alive, while volunteering with the restoration team at Orange County Park's Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve, Newport Beach, California. What is amazing is this common garden snail was at the top of the prickly pear, about three feet off the ground. A perilous journey.

Photo by Aleta Walther, CIG, ATG, CTA



**As if the summer heat wasn't tough enough on its own.**

Stay safe out there folks, and hats off to the dedicated fire crews hard at work.

Smoke from the Apple Fire over Covington Flats in Joshua Tree National Park

Submitted by Ian Chadwick - Regional Secretary

Photo by NPS / Emily Hassell

