

On March 14 we welcomed landscape architect Robert Rock who gave a presentation on the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing being built across the 101 freeway in Agoura Hills. Joining Rock was Joey Algiers, Restoration Ecologist with the National Parks Service, who is currently managing the on-site nursery growing the plants to be used on the crossing and also to restore some of the surrounding landscape damaged by the 2018 Woolsey Fire.



Photo by: Sabine Steinmetz

Designed by Rock in collaboration with Caltrans, and funded through a public-private partnership, the vegetated crossing at Liberty Canyon will provide a safe place for wildlife to cross the freeway, while enhancing and supporting the ecosystem in the surrounding area. The site was chosen specifically because the area was fragmented a century ago by the road and later the freeway, disrupting the native ecosystems and also natural water channels.

During his career, Rock has focused on integrating infrastructure and ecology through landscape architecture. He told us that in these types of projects the wildlife should be considered the “client” and be the main focus driving the design process. At Liberty Canyon this will include restoring the previously re-routed watersheds, repairing the soil composition damaged by fire, and using a plant palette grown from seed collected within a five mile radius.

Algiers spoke about some of the plants being grown on-site (lupines, milkweed, sages, buckwheats, native grasses) and the stringent sterilization practices used at the nursery to protect plant health and prevent pathogens from being introduced into the surrounding environment. He explained how nursery plants are inoculated through the soil with mycorrhizae to improve survival rates when planted out and how existing plants are fed with mycorrhizal “shakes” to strengthen them.

Both Rock and Algiers talked about how the site also hosts youth and community groups to educate them on indigenous culture, ecology, wildlife and plants. For more information on the crossing, click here to link to the Annenberg website.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

*Video for this program will be posted to our YouTube channel soon.*

IN APPRECIATION

WILDLIFE CROSSING ON-SITE TOUR RECAP

On Saturday, March 16, Rock provided an in-person tour to SCHS members at the Liberty Canyon building site. In addition to experiencing the scale of the project and seeing the surrounding natural environment, Rock provided a progress report on the project and answered attendees’ questions.

Currently the Annenberg Wildlife Crossing is in an early phase of construction, with only the concrete supports along the freeway visible. Rock explained that the entire project is expected to be completed in late 2025 or early 2026, and vegetation will start being planted later this year. While the on-site plant nursery was not a part of this tour, Rock explained in-depth how the plants will be phased in, irrigated and maintained to create a seamless flow with the surrounding hillsides and canyon.

The SCHS thanks Rock, and Algiers, for the insights provided on this meaningful landscaping project. It is already serving as an example for similar projects worldwide that are in the planning stages or already under construction.

✂ S.S.

SCHS HORTICULTURAL PROFILE  
introducing Lucas Carlow

*The SCHS promotes the sharing of horticultural knowledge among our membership, including highlighting the work of up-and-coming horticulturists.*

On March 25, SCHS board members Mardi Caruso, Aprille Curtis and Sabine Steinmetz, along with SCHS’s social media administrator, Alexiz Gomez, were given an inspiring tour of Apricot Lane Farm by their Habitat Restoration Lead, Lucas Carlow. Communications Manager Danielle Powell was also on hand to help answer questions.

Photo by: Sabine Steinmetz



Carlow showed us the various food crops being grown on the property, as well as the areas he is in charge of cultivating. These included an embankment covered in California natives and

selected Mediterranean-climate plants, and a new pond he and his team are currently planting with riparian species to attract wildlife and migratory birds.

In addition, Carlow shared behind-the-scenes looks at the farm’s operations and sustainability practices. The on-site nursery used for in-house propagation, a 40’ vermiculture bin and various livestock that produce manure, provide pest control, or otherwise contribute to the farm’s success were just a few of the highlights!

The SCHS appreciates the time Carlow and Powell spent with us. Look for photos, videos, and more in-depth details of our visit on SCHS’s social media channels.

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*Click here to follow Lucas on Instagram, and learn more about him and Apricot Lane through SCHS’s social media (links below).*

SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

*Whether or not we have April showers, we’ll still have chores!*

- Now is the time to start your tomatos! And other warm season veggies... *Check our YouTube channel for some good ideas and recommendations.*
- Continue planting your warm season annuals and add any perennials now before temps start heating up!
- Prune or shape camellias soon after the last flowers are gone and dispose of all fallen blooms to avoid disease.
- If you haven’t done so already, add a fresh 2” layer of mulch to protect your soil and new plantings.
- Stick to your rose fertilizing schedule and enjoy the season’s first bloom!

*Don’t forget to stop and smell the flowers - there’ll be plenty!*

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

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