



30x30 is our state’s effort to conserve 30% of California lands and coastal waters by 2030

By JoAnne Clarke
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In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-82-20, better known as **30x30**, with the goal of **conserving 30% of California’s lands and coastal waters by the year 2030**. On August 14, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the Power in Nature Coalition held a summit at the San Diego Natural History Museum for its 30x30 initiative.

30x30 is intended to help accelerate conservation of our lands and coastal waters through voluntary, collaborative action with individuals, public agencies, and land trusts as partners across the state. 30x30 has three objectives: to **conserve and restore biodiversity**, **expand access to nature**, and **mitigate and build resilience to climate change**.

The theme of this year’s summit was **Sustain, Strengthen, Succeed**: *sustain* the progress and momentum of 30x30’s first five years; *strengthen* the partnerships, policies, and innovations needed to achieve our conservation goals; and *succeed* at securing a healthy and resilient planet for generations to come.

California’s 30x30 commitment is part of a global effort to increase biodiversity conservation, including in the US. In January of 2021, the Biden administration issued an Executive Order tackling the climate crisis and committing the United States to 30x30 through its “America the Beautiful” initiative.

The opening plenary of summit was *Building Conservation Legacy*. Dr. Stanley Rodriguez of the Kumeyaay Santa Ysabel Band of the Iipay Nation delivered opening remarks, followed by Assemblymember Tasha Boerner. The keynote speaker was Collin O’Mara of the National Wildlife Federation. My key takeaways: “*build your tent*”; “*when you save wildlife you save yourself*”; and “*when you protect headwaters, you protect watersheds, you protect water*”.

The keynote panel, *Many Paths to 30x30: Listening, Learning, and Leading Together*, was moderated by Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency. Panelists were Valerie Courtois of the Indigenous Leadership Initiative; Exequiel Ezcurra Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Ecology, University of California, Riverside and Director, UC-MEXUS (UC Institute for Mexico & the United States); and Tom O’Shea, of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.

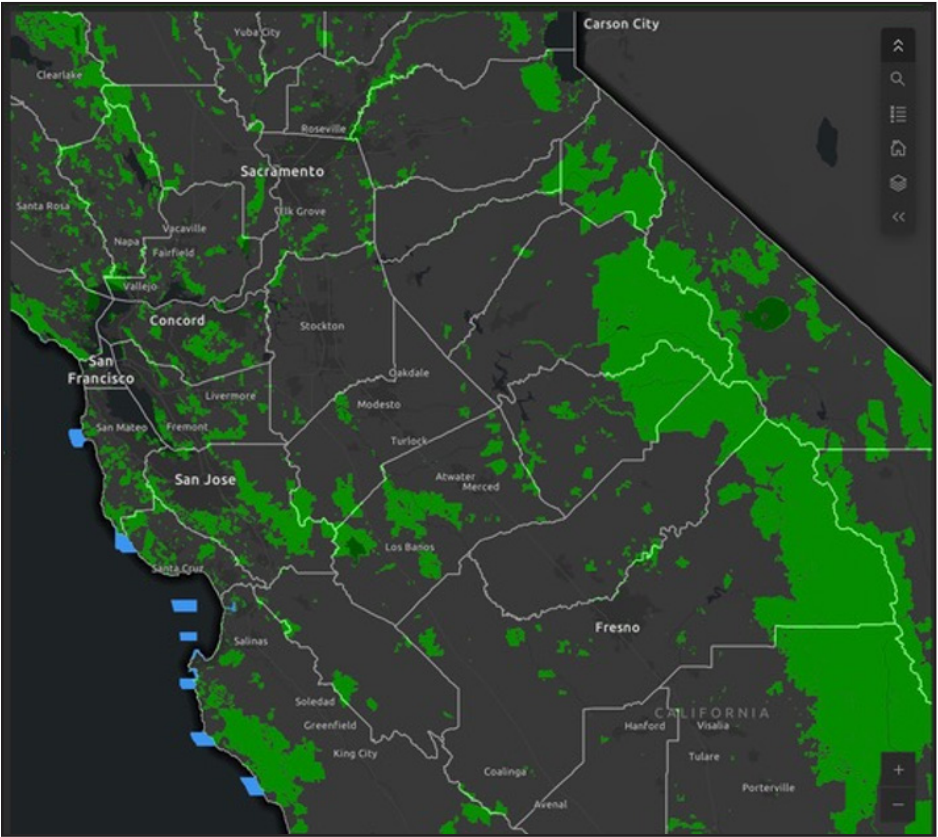
After lunch, I attended *Finding Common Ground in an Uncharted Federal Landscape*. My takeaway was, “**You can’t leave the fight over moral outrage.**” Forget about our differences and focus on common ground. Next was *Think Different: Expanding Views of Ecological Connectivity*, a panel discussion moderated by author Beth Pratt of the National Wildlife Federation in California. Beth wore an oyster suit to bring attention to the declining numbers of oysters.

Caltrans shared its new mission statement: *safety, equity, climate change, environmental impact, and employee excellence*. The **Safe Roads and Wildlife Protection Act**, signed into law in 2022, requires Caltrans to identify and prioritize wildlife movement barriers when building or improving roadways, as well as to incorporate wildlife passage structures into transportation projects. Through California’s Room to Roam Act (AB 1889) and related legislation, Caltrans aims to improve habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by addressing barriers to wildlife movement.

The showpiece of this initiative is the **Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing**. When opened, this \$87 million project will be **the world’s largest wildlife crossing**, 165 feet wide by 200 feet long. connecting open space on both sides of Highway 101 in Agoura Hills (LA County).



Wallis Annenberg Highway 101 Wildlife Crossing
Credit: Rock Design Associates, National Wildlife Federation

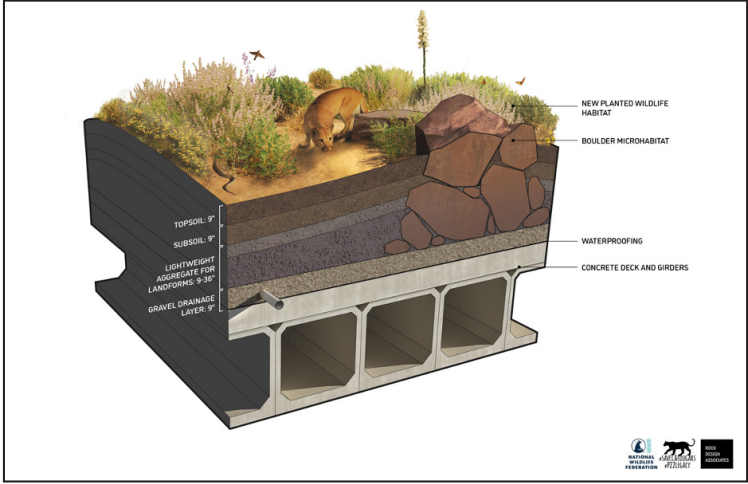


Conservation Areas of California
Credit: CA Natural Resources Agency (www.californianature.ca.gov)
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/83b5c08cae8b47d3b7c623f2de1f0dcc>

Caltrans and partners placed 6,000 cubic yards of living soil on the bridge structure in preparation for planting. The bridge’s design will include over 50 coastal sage scrub plant species native to the Santa Monica Mountains to restore wildlife habitat, both on the crossing and in surrounding open-space areas. To encourage use by wildlife, the overpass will have lush but drought-tolerant vegetation and insulation to quiet the roar of cars. Fencing at each end will help funnel animals onto the crossing.

Spanning ten freeway lanes, the crossing will reconnect a critical Santa Monica Mountains wildlife corridor, saving the region’s cougar population from extinction and restoring ecological vibrancy in the most densely populated urban area in the US. Other species expected to benefit include bobcats, coyotes, gray foxes, birds of prey, skunks, rodents, American badgers, American black bears, fence lizards, and mule deer.

The crossing is named in recognition of the recently deceased Los Angeles philanthropist Wallis Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation, whose long-term partnership supported this history-making project since its earliest phases. The closing plenary, *From Nature’s Notes to Human Hearts: Emotional Connection to the Environment* showed us how music and performance can deepen our emotional bond with the natural world, and featured the Kumeyaay Bird Singers tribal dancers of the Santa Ysabel Band of the Iipay Nation. Lastly, we were treated to exciting acrobatic performances by the San Diego Circus Center, and a reception at the San Diego Zoo completed the summit.



Wallis Annenberg Highway 101 Wildlife Crossing
Credit: Rock Design Associates, National Wildlife Federation

Please join us on **Wed. Oct. 22 at 7:00 PM** at the **Woodward Park Regional Library** to learn more about our local land trust:
the Sierra Foothill Conservancy

The grasslands, foothills, and forests between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks provide land for farms and ranches, a home for native plants and wildlife, and a source of clean water. Sierra Foothill Conservancy honors our natural and cultural heritage by protecting these resources for present and future generations. Tribal Engagement on protected land is a top priority of SFC, and during her presentation, Community Engagement Manager, **Allyson Brooks**, will inform us of a successfully completed “land back” opportunity with the Southern Sierra Miwuk Tribe, as well as restoration projects with local Tribes, Indigenous education opportunities, and more Tribal partnerships.

Allyson Brooks grew up in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Shaver Lake where she developed a passion for everything outdoors; from land conservation and studying biology to physical activity. In her “dream job” at SFC she runs the education, outreach, and volunteer programs, assists in development, and is a land steward.

