

#176

COMPLETE

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Page 1

Q1 Name of your organization.

Laguna Canyon Foundation

Q2 Grant #

20160820

Q3 Grant Period

12/1/2016 - 11/30/2017

Q4 Location of your organization

City	Laguna Beach
State	California

Q5 Name and Title of person completing evaluation.

Theresa Karasek, Operations and Communications Manager

Q6 Phone Number:

949-497-8324

Q7 Email address.

theresa@lagunacanyon.org

Page 2: Key Outcomes and Results

Q8 Total number of clients served through this grant funding:

Approximately 500,000 park users per year

Q9 Describe the project's key outcomes and results based on the goals and objectives. Use the following format: State the Goal: State Objective 1: Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 1: State Objective 2 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 2: State Objective 3 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 3:

Goal: To restore and protect native habitat and establish a safe, enjoyable, and sustainable multi-use trail in Laguna Coast Wilderness Park.

Objective I: Complete the closure and rehabilitation of the old, badly-eroded alignment of Laguna Ridge Trail in LCWP.

The old trail alignment has been fully closed, erosion control is in place, has been planted with native container plants, seed and cactus pads, and is well on its way to becoming fully revegetated as native habitat.

Objective II: Complete fine-tuning on the 0.3 mile roughed-in reroute and address emergent threats to trail and habitat resulting from this summer's wildfire in the area.

The reroute has been fully completed and fine-tuned. It has held up remarkably well to the heavy rains we received this winter and to the heavy use it is receiving, demonstrating that it is much more sustainable than the old trail alignment. Through a combination of targeted erosion control and weed surveying and management, the burned area is returning to intact, healthy habitat. In addition, the dozer scar left from fire suppression activities has had erosion control installed, has been planted with native container plants, seed and cactus pads, and is also well on its way to becoming fully revegetated as native habitat.

Q10 Please describe any challenges/obstacles the organization encountered (if any) in attaining goals & objectives.

Although the clear majority of feedback on this project was positive, there was a small group of mountain bikers who were unhappy that the old, deeply-eroded trail alignment was obliterated because it provided them with a type of riding challenge that was otherwise not available in this park.

Q11 How did you overcome and/or address the challenges and obstacles?

We waged a lengthy campaign on social media to attempt to explain the reasons for doing what we did and the process we went through with OC Parks to develop our plan. We also held a public Trails Forum to provide an in-person arena for public feedback and participation. Through this process we have learned important lessons and made more connections with this small but important user group—a few riders who were initially critics of our work on Laguna Ridge Trail are now involved in our volunteer program, and one has become a member of our Trails Committee.

Q12 Describe any unintended positive outcomes as a result of the efforts supported by this grant.

A large infestation of Sahara mustard, a highly-invasive nonnative plant, was identified during weed surveying and through a combination of OCCC and volunteer labor, over 65 bags of this weed were pulled and removed from the burned area.

We successfully responded to a small group of mountain bikers unhappy with the trail reroute (see Question 10). As a result of our outreach efforts, we successfully opened lines of communication with the mountain biking community, strengthening our relationship, improving the way we talk about and publicize our trail improvement efforts, and achieving buy-in from key members of this group. This buy-in and focus on communication and partnership will lead to improved relations between Laguna Canyon Foundation and the mountain biking community in the future, resulting in an engaged, enthusiastic community and making our work easier in the future.

Q13 Briefly describe the impact this grant has had on the organization and community served.

The newly-rerouted trail has been fine-tuned, is holding up well to user- and weather-related impacts, and has received positive feedback from user groups. The area burned in the fire is revegetating quickly with native species, and further erosion damage from weather, new trail construction and shortcutting has been minimized. Native vegetation is re-establishing on the old trail alignment and the dozer scar.

The rerouting of the trail will result, long-term, in improved habitat, reduced erosion, and improved user experience. By closing the eroded trail and fine-tuning the reroute, we have created a safe, sustainable trail that will hold up to heavy use for years to come while reducing habitat impacts and erosion of both the trail itself and the surrounding landscape. Brushing and planting native species on the old trail alignment, unauthorized social trails, and burned area will discourage users from going off-trail, giving the habitat a chance to recover from both the fire and human impacts. Revegetating with native species and responding quickly to the initial infestation of invasive Sahara mustard will also help ensure the recovery of native wildlife habitat, rather than a bare landscape overrun with invasive species, as may have happened if we had not worked to establish native species. This grant allowed us the funding to quickly respond to the fire damage and complete a successful trail reroute. The long-term outcome of this work will be a healthy, resilient native ecosystem, robust wildlife habitat for a variety native species, and a safe, sustainable, and fun trail able to withstand heavy use by both hikers and mountain bikers.

Q14 Please provide a budget expenditure report of the approved line items. Include a brief narrative on how the funds were used to fulfill grant objectives.

Our budget vs. actuals has been sent separately to info@thecommunityfoundation.net. Our final expenditures were approximately in line with our proposed budget. Decreased costs for equipment and signage allowed us to expend slightly more than proposed on salaries for the Restoration Director and Executive Director, which funded their time preparing for and hosting a public Trails Forum and meeting individually with leaders in the mountain bike community, as well as completing additional hours on trail work and project management. Additional support from other funders and in-kind support from our dedicated volunteers almost fully covered our remaining expenses on this project and allowed us to fulfill our objectives of rerouting Laguna Ridge Trail and rehabilitating the surrounding habitat. Though our staff expenses were higher than we budgeted for, we were able to fund these expenses through additional donor support.

In addition to personnel expenses and signage, this grant also allowed us to purchase nursery materials, supplies, and equipment. The reciprocating saw and circular saw kit purchased with grant funds enable us to construct check dams out of raw materials, protecting trails and the surrounding wilderness from erosion, and will also be utilized on future trail restoration projects. The supplies and nursery materials, including seeds and container plants, allowed us to fulfill our objectives of protecting the trail from erosion and restoring the surrounding landscape to healthy, native wildlife habitat. The signage itself informed trail users about the trail reroute and helped us protect the newly planted vegetation by ensuring that visitors stayed on the trail.

We are extremely grateful to the S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund and the Community Foundation for their support of this project and their investment, through a trail equipment line item, in our future trail restoration projects.

Page 4: Success Stories

Q15 Please relate a success story:

Trail work (including drainage improvement, building structures, tread improvement, sign installation, brushing and naturalization) was accomplished with a combination of staff and volunteer labor totaling over 200 hours of labor. This work paid off, resulting in a new trail that held up remarkably well to the heavy rains the area received over winter and spring. The erosion control also succeeded in preventing runoff from the new trail from damaging the burned area while it revegetated and recovered from the fire damage.

Q16 Please relate a success story here:

Laguna Canyon Foundation staff members used a truck-mounted water tank, water pump and hoses to keep all the container plants watered from the time of planting last spring throughout the hot summer months until the rains returned in the fall, resulting in a survival rate of over 75%.

Q17 Please relate a success story here:

Respondent skipped this question

Page 5: Organizational Information

Q18 Which category best describes the organization.
Please choose only one.

Environmental

Q19 What is the organization's primary program area of interest?

Environment/Environmental

S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund

Q20 Percentage of clients served through grant in each ethnic group category. Total must equal 100%

Respondent skipped this question

Q21 Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each age category.

Respondent skipped this question

Q22 Approximate percentage of clients served with disabilities from grant funds.

Respondent skipped this question

Q23 Approximate percentage of clients served in each economic group.

Respondent skipped this question

Q24 Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each population category.

Respondent skipped this question