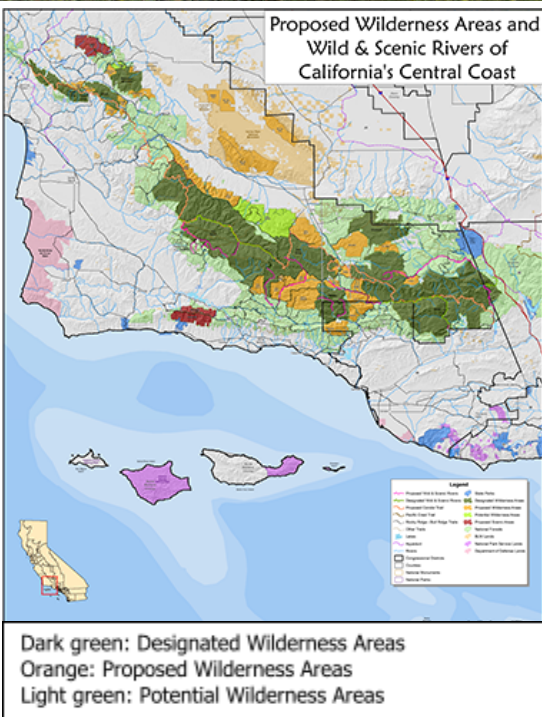


Pass the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act



As noted in this issue's Chapter Chair Chat, Rep. Salud Carbajal reintroduced the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act in April. This legislation would designate more than 245,000 acres of wilderness and 400 miles of the Condor National Scenic Trail, create two scenic areas encompassing 34,500 acres, and safeguard about 159 miles of wild and scenic rivers.

The bill is the product of years of discussion and negotiation, involving business leaders, conservationists, elected officials, ranchers, mountain bikers, and other stakeholders interested in the use and well-being of these iconic lands.

Senator Alex Padilla has introduced a companion bill in the Senate to ensure that certain places will be safeguarded from new oil and gas development. The Los Padres is the only national forest in the state with active oil development, and Carrizo

Plain National Monument is bordered by some of the most intensive oil development in the country. A new oil well and pipeline were proposed within the monument boundary during the former administration. Future oil drilling will be prohibited on all lands in both regions that are protected by the bill.

Both the Los Padres and Carrizo Plain are home to Native American cultural sites and an incredible diversity of plant and animal life. The Los Padres, California's second largest national forest, rises from the Pacific Ocean to over 8,800 feet in elevation and provides habitat for 468 species of wildlife, including the endangered California condor and the southern steelhead. The Carrizo Plain contains one of the largest concentrations of threatened and endangered species in the U.S., such as the San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

For Central Coast cities that have limited parks and open space, the bills protect public lands and rivers that are close by and will increase equitable access to the outdoors.

"With outdoor recreation often privatized, this legislation is a step in the right direction in protecting open spaces and securing everybody's right to the outdoors," said Rebeca Garcia, Santa Maria Policy Advocate with Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE). "Accessible outdoor spaces are a crucial contributor to improving the overall health of our working class and immigrant families. Communities of color are also often most at risk of unsafe living conditions, and this act will ensure our communities have clean air and water from Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument."

[Watch: Congressman Carbajal highlights the importance of the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act.](#)



Daniel Rossman of The Wilderness Society and Sue Harvey, Conservation Chair of the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter, with Congressman Salud Carbajal (right) on the Carrizo Plain, April 8. Photo by Carole Mintzer