**Community Nature Connection**

**UC California Naturalist Course**

**Course Syllabus**

**Course Overview**

UC Environmental Stewards seeks to foster a committed corps of volunteer naturalists and community scientists trained and ready to take an active role in natural resource conservation, education, and restoration. The UC California Naturalist course will introduce you to the wonders of our local ecology and engage you in the stewardship of California’s natural communities. The course will combine a science curriculum with guest lecturers, field trips and project-based learning to immerse you in the natural world. This California Naturalist course will focus on the Los Angeles Area and the interpretation of naturalist concepts for and from diverse perspectives.

**Course Schedule**

April 5 - June 7, 2022

Class meets online every Tuesday from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

**Course Location**

Online

**Instructor Team**

Maya Morales, Lead Instructor Julio Soria, Instructor

Celeste Gasperik, Lead Administrator Kelly Bailey, Instructor Featuring Special Guest Speakers

**Course Registration**

<https://www.communitynatureconnection.org/event-details/uc-california-naturalist-course-22>

**Course Fee**

$300.00 + $35.00 Materials

**Scholarship Application Requirements**

UC Environmental Stewards offers scholarships to attend the UC California Naturalist Course. If a scholarship is received, the normal course fee will be reduced. Upon receiving a scholarship, the recipient will receive a code to register for the course at the reduced fee. The space in the course is not confirmed until the student has registered and paid the reduced course fee. The student is responsible for the purchase of the required course materials: The California Naturalist Handbook ($35.00).

Scholarships are available to individuals who demonstrate financial need or full-time student status. To apply for a scholarship please send a letter as a PDF attachment to [training@communitynatureconnection.org](mailto:training@communitynatureconnection.org) that describes financial need or full-time student status. Please provide evidence of full-time student status or financial need by including proof of student enrollment for full-time students or a description of financial hardship for those with financial need.

**Course Contact Information**

Email: [training@communitynatureconnection.org](mailto:training@communitynatureconnection.org)

Phone: 213-247-1907

**UC Environmental Stewards Website**

<http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Take_a_class/CNC/>

**Learning Outcomes**

* Understand what it means to be a naturalist
* Understand the cultural factors that make California’s natural history and ecology unique, with a focus on the ecosystems of greater Los Angeles and the ecosystem of the L.A. Watershed.
* Demonstrate skills in making and recording natural history observations in a field notebook and on iNaturalist.
* Understand the importance of community science and participate in a community science project.
* Demonstrate skills in communicating and interpreting natural resource information for and from diverse perspectives.
* Apply knowledge of the local ecosystems to regional and global environmental issues.

**Course Requirements**

* Contact Time: Each UC California Naturalist course consists of a minimum of 40 educational hours (online classroom hours and front-loaded independent work), which includes a minimum of 8 independent hours in the field.
* Required Reading: Read the entire book “[The California Naturalist Handbook](https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520274808/the-california-naturalist-handbook)” and complete front-loaded “prep work” before each class.
* Class Attendance and Field Trips: Participants must attend all online classes and complete an independent field trip. If no more than 2 classes are missed, the participant will be expected to complete make-up activities on their own time at the direction of the instructor.
* Stewardship Project: Participants are required to complete a Stewardship Project. The Stewardship Project provides an opportunity for participants to integrate their own personal interests with the in-class material toward the development of an applied work project that could be delivered in conjunction with a natural resource agency or organization. Participants must get pre-approval for Stewardship Projects in the first two weeks of the course. Participants will deliver project presentations (5 minutes long per person) on graduation day. Participants are expected to spend a minimum of 8 hours on the Stewardship project and will add hours spent on the Stewardship Project into the volunteer portal.
* Using a Field Notebook and Journal: All participants are required to keep a field notebook during the course. A field journal will be provided as part of your registration fee. Students will receive journal prompts throughout the course and will have opportunities to share out with other students during class time.
* iNaturalist Observation and Partner iNaturalist Project: Over the course of the UC California Naturalist class, each participant will be responsible for registering for an iNaturalist account (http://www.inaturalist.org/) and adding observations to the course iNaturalist Project. Our iNaturalist Project is:https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/community-nature-connection-spring-2022-calnat-course.
* Class Community Science Project: Each participant must contribute to the community science project adopted by the class. Our class community science project is The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Celebrate Urban Birds Project: <https://celebrateurbanbirds.org/cub/instructions>.
* Evaluation: Completion of the online post-course evaluation survey is highly encouraged. You will be provided with a link to the evaluation survey toward the end of the course.
* [Volunteering and Volunteer Portal (VMS):](https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr) Participants will be provided with an online account to track their volunteer hours, including hours spent on their Stewardship Project. Tracking volunteer hours is an essential way to demonstrate need and impact of a program like UC Environmental Stewards. Participants are strongly encouraged and hopefully committed to volunteering at least 40 hours a year in environmental stewardship, education, program support, or citizen science and recorded all hours of service in the Volunteer Portal. Pins are awarded each year for participants who meet this goal, and the pins differ from year to year. The volunteer portal website is <https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr> . For guidance on using the volunteer portal, visit <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/VP_Help/>.

**Required Text**

* [The California Naturalist Handbook](https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520274808/the-california-naturalist-handbook), Greg de Nevers, Deborah Stranger Edelman, Adina Merenlender. (Must be purchased by the participants.)
* Each class will require students to complete front-loaded prep-work that includes articles, videos, and other activities.

**Recommended Resources**

* [UC Environmental Stewards YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGBYG5ShV4VDiUiRbEmmObg): View videos from UC Environmental Stewards conferences, meetings, and more. The [“Ecosystems of California”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frxWS6bBdkM&list=PLBEIahTDJmdkf-eL6ZQZtvxXFHQUKl0cF) video series with Erika Zaveleta, is also available on the channel. Url:<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGBYG5ShV4VDiUiRbEmmObg>
* [CalNat Mapping Tool](http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/CalNat_Maps/): UC California Naturalist provides a GIS-based map producing tool you can use for both content delivery and logistics. Choose from multiple base maps and layers to explore bioregions, compare and contrast filed sites, create maps to field trips and Capstone/Stewardship projects and more. Url: <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/CalNat_Maps/>
* [Environmental Sewards Volunteer Portal Help](http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/VP_Help/): There are resources available to help you familiarize with the UC Environmental Stewards volunteer portal and commonly used features. Check out our help guides and videos geared toward users and program administrators. Url: <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/VP_Help/>

**Course Materials**

* Required: Reliable internet connection, computer or smartphone and an email account for communication, Google Classroom account, [Volunteer Portal](https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr) access, and iNaturalist.

**Attendance Policy**

Participants must complete 40+ instructional hours. This includes 20 hours of online class sessions and 20+ hours of independent assigned work (prep work). Only 2 class sessions (4 hours) can be missed and participants should watch the recorded class session and email [training@communitynatureconnection.org](mailto:training@communitynatureconnection.org) to request a make-up session or assignment. Attendance and presentation at the final Stewardship Project class is required. One independent field trip is required to occur between weeks 2-10 of the course.

**Cancellation Policy**

Registrants may cancel up to two weeks before the first day of instruction for a full refund, minus a $50 administrative fee. Registrants that can successfully refer another student to replace their spot in the course prior to the first day of class will receive a full refund. Registrants that experience a verifiable medical emergency personally, or in their family, between the two weeks of class before and after instruction has begun may re-enroll in the following year's course at a 50% discounted rate, with priority for early registration. No other cancellations, for any other reason, will result in a refund.

**Instructional Methods**

The course will integrate a range of instructional methods including lecture, presentations, peer-to-peer discussion, small group activities, hands-on and inquiry-based activities, and experiential learning. The course will require participants to sit at a computer screen for up to 2 hours at a time.

**Requests for Accommodations**

Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please make such requests as early as possible by contacting training@communitynatureconnection.org.

**Volunteering and the** [**Volunteer Portal**](https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr)

Volunteering: Participants are encouraged to complete at least forty (40) hours of volunteer service each year in order to maintain their certification. Pins are awarded each year for participants who meet this goal, and the pins differ from year to year.

* Volunteer activities need to relate to California’s natural or environmental history, occur in California, be sponsored by an organization, and be UNPAID.
* Your 8-hour Stewardship Project will count toward your first year’s volunteer hours. You will log these hours into the [UC Volunteer Portal](https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr). A welcome email will be sent to you after instructors add your information to the system. Notify your instructor if you do not receive that email. You will be provided with a username and password in the introductory email after the start of the class.

**Class Schedule**

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| **Week** | **Date & Time** | **Topic** | **Instructor & Guest Speakers** |
| 1 | April 5,  4-6PM | Course Introduction | Maya Morales & Celeste Gasperik, CNC |
| 2 | April 12, 4-6PM | Interpretation for and from Diverse Perspectives | Maya Morales & Celeste Gasperik, CNC |
| 3 | April 19, 4-6PM | Community Science | Maya Morales, CNC |
| 4 | April 26, 4-6PM | Geology, Climate, and Soils | Maya Morales & Guest Speaker |
| 5 | May 3, 4-6PM | Water | Maya Morales & Guest Speaker |
| 6 | May 10, 4-6PM | Plants | Julio Soria, CNC |
| 7 | May 17, 4-6PM | Forests, Woodland & Range Resources and Management | Maya Morales & Guest Speaker |
| 8 | May 24, 4-6PM | Animals | Kelly Bailey, CNC |
| 9 | May 31, 4-6PM | Energy & Global Environmental Issues | Julio Soria, CNC |
| 10 | June 7,  4PM-Close | Stewardship Project Presentations Presentations and Closing | Maya Morales & Celeste Gasperik, CNC |

**Prep-work Policy**

Students are expected to complete assigned front-loaded reading and activities in advance of each class. Prep-work assignments will be listed on Google Classroom.

**Course Credit**

Upon completing certification requirements, participants are eligible for four academic credits through [UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education](https://cpe.ucdavis.edu/subject-areas/professional-development-educators) for an additional nominal fee. Graduates who expressed interest in this opportunity with their instructor will receive a communication from the UC Environmental Stewards program post-course with information on how to obtain the optional credits.

**Statement on Inclusion and Accommodations**

If you have a learning or physical need that will require special accommodations in this class you will need to notify your instructor in writing of your accommodation needs. If possible, please notify at least 30 days prior to the first class if you require any special accommodations. This will allow us ample opportunity to provide suitable accommodations.

**Statement on Financial Accessibility Cost**

Students are responsible for course fees and purchasing the required text. Please see page 1 for information on obtaining a scholarship.