The Los Angeles Urban Rangers is an interdisciplinary collective of local writers, artists, planners, architects, geographers, scientists, environmental historians, and educators. In conjunction with the gardenLAB experiment, the Los Angeles Urban Rangers will offer a series of interpretive programs to address notable aspects of urban ecology in Los Angeles. Please join us at Art Center's South campus (a.k.a. the Wind Tunnel), at the Campfire Circle, on Saturdays throughout the exhibit. Sample Campfire programs are described here. Please be sure to check www.gardenlab.org for the most up-to-date schedule of events.

Los Angeles Urban Rangers

Therese Kelly

Toxic Tourism in Los Angeles
Ranger Donna Houston explores the toxic history of Los Angeles from the perspective of environmental justice. Participants will learn about the history and politics of environmental justice activism in Los Angeles as well as become acquainted with some important sites of environmental struggle via a toxic tour of the city. Toxic touring is a way of reclaiming landscapes blighted by industrial pollutants and wastes as places of community and cultural memory. Toxic touring involves developing different strategies for ‘walking in the city’ in order to recover histories suppressed through the often violent reorderings of L.A.’s urban and industrial landscape.

Sustainability vs Sprawl: Revisiting Banham’s Four Ecologies
Long maligned as the poster child of smog, sprawl and unsustainable development, Los Angeles has in the past few years surprisingly emerged as a leader in “green” urbanism. The three “greenest” buildings in the U.S. are located in Los Angeles, pioneering efforts in integrated watershed management throughout the L.A. River basin, locally-based efforts to reclaim abandoned industrial lands for parks, gardens and open space, and innovations in transit planning in the L.A. region are just a few of the growing number of important “green” designs, plans and policies shaping the city. Join Ranger Alan Loomis as he explores the beaches, the foothills, the landscapes to spark discussion on their current state and provide a forum for participants to share their own reactions and visions. AlleyCAT is a world away right behind our homes, a lesser-explored touch-point between public and private urban space. Please check www.gardenlab.org for sign-up and schedule for this tour.

Thoreau Goes to Los Angeles
How can we write about nature in L.A.? Why have nature writers shunned this megalopolis? Why should L.A. in fact be a mecca for nature writing? Why would an interest in cities save nature writing from being so terribly boring? Ranger Jenny Price explores these questions and more as she surveys a wide range of urban nature stories that this literary genre has entirely ignored. Join her as she describes our connections to nature in L.A. through such topics as mangoes, body whips, murdered chihuahuas, the social geography of L.A.’s air, and the saga of the L.A. River – which is arguably the most important L.A. nature story of all.

Los Angeles and the Nature of Time
How we experience time in Los Angeles is structured by everything from cell-phones, which seek to minimize it, to movies featuring natural disasters in town, which seek to maximize it. Both are examples, however, of living only in the present. Ranger Bill Fox will help us rediscover time across a longer spectrum in Los Angeles – from the La Brea Tar Pits to the Forest Lawn Memorial Parks to the Mt. Wilson Observatory. Along the way we’ll delver into the human neurophysiology of time, how to make lava for Hollywood, and why Los Angeles has the largest collection of four classical Italian sculpture in its gardens.

Industrial Habitat: The Baldwin Hills
Did you know that the only canine that can climb trees lives in the very heart of Los Angeles? Ranger Therese Kelly will share the story of the rare Gray Fox who’s crazy feats also include living amongst 450 bobbing oil derricks in a massively degraded habitat. The Baldwin Hills – heavily industrial yet ecologically fragile – is set to become the largest urban park in state history. Rising 500 feet above the L.A. basin, the Baldwin Hills command impressive views to the Santa Monica Bay, the San Gabriel Mountains, the whole of developed Los Angeles, and even Point Dume. Come learn about this fascinating brownfield site in the middle of the city, which supports a rich array of native plants, insects, and animals.

End Landscaping: Los Angeles Freeway Gardens
Everyday, countless Angeleños whiz along the freeway at many miles per hour without noticing the landscaping at their side. Join Ranger Emily Scott to learn more about who manages these edgy green spaces, which plants cover the more than 8,000 acres of swervy freeway “gardens” in Los Angeles and Ventura counties, why various flora are chosen for their ornamental value and/or abilities to endure drought, buffer sound, control erosion, resist weeds, and even counterbalance auto emissions. Discover also, the wonderful world of “transportation art”, intended for maximum community pleasure and minimum driver distraction. Finally, consider how and why these areas – first pitched as ideal picnic stops for leisurely Sunday afternoon excursions – are now almost entirely access controlled, or off-limits to embodied exploration and occupation.

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Hunting and Gathering in the Big City
Often when we think of hunting and gathering, ancient or “traditional” cultures come to mind. In many of America’s greatest cities, however, the urban poor still forage for wild and domestic food simply to meet their daily calorie needs. These resources are not just limited to discarded trash, but include wild and feral urban animals such as birds, cats and dogs, fish, and rodents. In cities like Los Angeles, those without daily food security may also be forced to trespass onto private property in order to collect fruits, nuts, and other edible plants. Join Ranger Pete Alagona as he explores L.A.’s networks for finding, collecting, sharing, and preparing these urban foods. How do these foraging activities change traditional notions of human ecology, hunting and gathering, and ecological resources in the urban environment? And what do these practices – and our reactions to them – say about urban America today?

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Los Angeles Urban Rangers

The Los Angeles Basin
Los Angeles County is an 834-square-mile multiple-use area. Its beaches, mountains, and flatslands offer a great abundance and diversity of opportunities for dwelling, working, foraging, shopping, socializing, mating, and recreation.

Getting Here/ Getting Around
The L.A. basin is easily accessible by car and aircraft; bus, train, and boat; motorcycle and scooter; foot, bicycle, and boat; and public transit. The L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (MTA’s) website has useful information on the public transit system. The L.A. basin is served by five major freeways: I-10, I-110, I-5, I-405, and I-101. There are 465 miles of river in the Los Angeles area.

The Landscape
The L.A. basin is a mosaic of geological zones, as well as ecological zones that include chaparral, coastal scrub, riparian areas, wetlands, oak woodlands, and grasslands. These zones have been overlaid by a territorial grid of city and county jurisdictions, as well as a transportation grid, a land-use grid, and a grid of shifting socioeconomic zones. These systems all interact in complex ways that can be difficult to predict. L.A.’s inhabitants have also translated the landscape of identity, with key zones that include the Valley, Pasadena, Long Beach, Downtown and Silver Lake, East L.A., South L.A., and the Westside.

Did you know?
CAR FACTS
The City of L.A. is made up of 6,500 miles of streets, 160 miles of freeways, and 40,000 intersections. 1897 marked the first known automobile siting in Los Angeles. Edward Doheny dug the first oil well in Los Angeles in 1892. The first gas station in Los Angeles opened in 1912.

Today, the 10,103,000 Angelenos in L.A. County drive a total of 9,853,340 automobiles, which consume 3,669,186,000 gallons of gas (627 per car) per year.

Did you know?
WATER FACTS
The Los Angeles River falls farther in its 51-mile course (795 ft) than the Mississippi River does in 2350 miles (650 ft).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers used two million tons of concrete to line the L.A. River and its tributaries. The greater L.A. area accounts for one-third of the beach closures in the United States.

Los Angeles Urban Rangers

The Wind Tunnel
Art Center College of Design
580 S. Raymond Avenue
Pasadena, California
September 7 - October 16, 2004

Los Angeles Urban Rangers

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