

# Santa Fe Science Café for Young Thinkers

## **“Conserving Otters of the World”**



**Melissa Savage**  
**Four Corners Institute**

**Wednesday, April 30**  
**6:00-7:30 PM**

**Georgia O’Keeffe Museum**  
**Education Annex**  
**123 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe**

Otters are top carnivores in river ecosystems and wetlands throughout the world. There are 13 species worldwide, in almost every habitat, from Alaska and Siberia to the Amazon and Congo basins. In places where their populations have declined, because of hunting or pollution, those aquatic ecosystems have become unbalanced and unhealthy. Top carnivores maintain ecosystem stability by regulating food chains, maintaining trophic cascades. The case of the fall and rise of sea otters off the coast of California illustrates the role of otters as a keystone species. But otters are resilient animals, and where they have been restored, they thrive. We will discuss three successful otter restoration projects: the sea otter, the North American otter and the giant otter of the Amazon.

**Admission is Free.** Youth (ages 13-19) seating a priority. Light refreshments will be served.

Melissa is a retired professor of ecology from UCLA and Director of the Santa Fe nonprofit Four Corners Institute. She is an officer of the Otter Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and a partner in the Himalayan Otter Network. She worked with conservation partners to restore otters to their native habitat in the Rio Grande River in New Mexico, and recently completed the first survey for otters in the Himalayan country of Bhutan.

*Sponsors: Santa Fe Alliance for Science; Santa Fe Public Schools; Georgia O’Keeffe Museum; Santa Fe Institute. Call 603-7468 for more information.*