

Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Nov./Dec. 2005

Volume 19, No. 6

Fire on the Mountain

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

Labor Day, Sept. 5, 2005, saw a 150-acre fire burn the southern flank of Black Mountain Open Space Park (see overview photo on p. 4). The fire was reported by the Fire Dept. to have been started by teenagers playing with a "potato gun" next to the grassland where the fire began.

Although understandably frightening to local residents, no houses were burned. As the photo reveals, the Fire Dept. had a series of paved and dirt roads and trails from which to fight the fire, which they did effectively. Of course, Santa Ana winds would have changed the whole situation against

See p. 3 for more

Scout Projects in the Preserve

County Ranger Autumn Acker

On Saturday, October 15th, two Eagle Scout projects went into full swing here at Peñasquitos Canyon. In the staging area, at Mercy and Black Mountain, scout Daniel Riley began installing the first four of ten new hitching posts for our equestrian visitors while scout Connor Poole began the restoration process of the trail from the Ranch House to Ranch House crossing. On Sunday, Connor also tackled the single track trail from Ranch House crossing, to the main south trail. It was a flurry of activity that resulted in some striking improvements for our many park visitors.

A few months back, the hitching

See p. 6 for more

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Restoration Planting

Sunday, Nov. 13, 1 - 4 p.m.

Join the Friends and local scouts in planting native plants in our multi-year project along the Trans-County Trail. Meet at the Ranger Headquarters by the trailers in the Equestrian Center at the junction of Mercy and Black Mountain Roads. The trailers are located on the northeast corner of this intersection.

Bring your own personal tools and gloves if you prefer, or let us supply them for you. Bring sun protection and water and a snack.

The Trans-County Trail will one day stretch from Torrey Pines Beach all the way to the Anza-Borrego Visitor's Center! The scrub oaks, lemonadeberries, giant wild rye, and other natives will make hiking, cycling, or horseback riding along the trail a more enjoyable experience.

If you need service hours for your school or church be sure to bring your paperwork with you.

Call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 or email him at mkellysd@aol.com for more information.



Scout Daniel Riley installed the hitching post pictured above, one of two recent scout projects in the Preserve.

Cool Weather Fine for Hiking Any Time of the Day!

Cool weather means we no longer have to seek the shade of the forest or cooler times of the day to hike. Enjoy our fall colors, especially in López Canyon or the Sycamore Crossing part of the main canyon.

All hikes are free to the public. If you're bringing an organized group please call 858.484.3219 to make arrangements. Rain cancels hikes. Be sure to wear hiking boots and bring water, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail.

Every Saturday & Sunday

Historic Adobe Ranch Tour

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**.

November

Black Mtn. Park Citizens Advisory Cte.

Thur., Nov. 10, 7 p.m. Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Rd and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D7)**.

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Sat., Nov. 12, 8–10 a.m. Tracker/naturalists from the Friends' Tracking Team will lead two walks, one suitable for beginners (children welcome!) and intermediates. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in. Wear shoes that are good in mud. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7**.

Canyon Favorites Hike

Sun., Nov. 13, 3–5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing and the waterfall and

back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rcho Peñasquitos. Bring insect repellent, water and wear hiking boots. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7)**.

Peñasquitos Preserve Citizens' Advisory Comm.

Thurs., Nov. 17, 7 p.m. Public is welcome to attend this business meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House on Canyonside Driveway, past the Canyonside Rec Center. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D7)**.

Beginning Tracker /Naturalist Class

November 17th & 19th. (Class is one weeknight, 7 pm - 9 pm and one Saturday, 8 am - 6 pm.) Love wildlife & nature? Learn the art and science of mammal tracking and nature awareness skills! The class is sponsored by the San Diego Tracking Team. No experience required! Cost: \$50.00. Call 760-715-4102 for information and registration. See website for updates and info: www.sdtt.org.

Nature Walk from Mercy Road

Sun., Nov. 20, 9 a.m. Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging area, upper level at the junction of Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads in Mira Mesa. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189**.

Geology Hike with Don Albright

Sun., Nov. 20, 9 – noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at the intersection of Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, in the cul-de-sac on the south side of Calle Cristobal. Wear good boots for steep trail and bring water and sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**.

Soledad Canyon: Then and Now Walk with Will Bowen

Sun., Nov. 20, 10 – noon. Take a walk in a beautiful, rarely visited canyon. Learn about habitats, native plants, invasives, and needs for restoration. Find out about the history of the canyon—as pueblo land, the coming of the railroad, and early adobe dwellings. End up at the ruins of the Pierre Bovet adobe and explore around. Meet near the Fire Station at the corner of Scranton and Carroll Canyon in Mira Mesa.. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (E7)**

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors

Tues., Nov. 22, 7 p.m. Members are

Map of Preserve is available at www.penasquitos.org or go to www.cityofsandiego.com & navigate to the open space park link & Los Peñasquitos.

welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**.

December

Geology Hike with Don Albright

Sun., Dec. 4, 9 – noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at the intersection of Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, in the cul-de-sac on the south side of Calle Cristobal. Wear good boots for steep trail and bring water and sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**.

Lopez Canyon Homestead Hike with Will Bowen

Sun., Dec. 18, 10 – 12 p.m. Hike out into Lopez canyon to visit the ruins of the Lopez Homestead -- a turn of the century dairy farm. Find out about the Lopez family and their place in early San Diego history. Explore the ruins of the old house, barn, milking station, and smoke house. Learn about how and where they grazed the cattle and how they got the milk to market. Meet at West End Parking Staging Area. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C/D 5)**.

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DIRECTIONS

(Fire cont'd)

Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area

In Mira Mesa. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Rd. and straight across intersection into parking lot. Meet on upper level. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D7).**

Northern Parking-Staging Area

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill, left on Park Village Drive, about 1 mile to Camino del Sur. Left on Camino del Sur and park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).**

Park Village Drive Meeting Area

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill, left on Park Village Drive and take it all the way to the end at the white barricades and park entrance. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 – 1188 (J7).**

Ranch House Walks/Tours

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain. Left at first light, Canyonside Park Dr. Go past ballfields to the white-fenced parking lot. Left into the lot. Walk up path to the ranch house. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

Sorrento Valley Meeting Area

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

West-End Parking-Staging Area

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right. **Thomas Guide p. 1208, (D5).**

the firefighters. Santa Ana winds were the driving force behind the Cedar Fire.

Biologically, the fire did little or no harm and may have helped our habitats. The fields where the fire started were a mix of native and non-native grasslands. The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve have been using some grant money obtained from a toxic spill fine to control invasive weeds in these very fields for the past two years.

The invasive weeds in these fields included Artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*), Sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Wild oats (*Avena* spp.), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) and others.

Native species include the perennial bunch grass (*Nasella pulcra*), the beautiful bulb, Blue-eye grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malvaeflora* ssp. *sparsifolia*), the spectacular magenta Canchalagua (*Centaureum venustum*), Blue dicks, also known as Indian potatoes because of their food value (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), Mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendans*), and other species.

Fire impacts

These native species all do well with fire. It clears away thatch and opens up the ground surface for the seed of these species to grow new plants. The bunch grass and bulbs were below ground during the fire and untouched by it. The ash from the fire provides vital nutrients and robust growth for a couple of years after the fire.

But, and it's a big but after fires, when invasive weed seed is present in what we call the "seed bank" in the soil these weeds can explode after fires, swamping native seed. In areas that burn frequently we have seen wholesale conversions of native habitat to non-native weeds. An explosion of weeds after a fire has two negative impacts. First is the loss of native habitat. In Riverside County, for example, we've already seen a significant loss of native habitats to increased fire frequency. Second, and this might surprise our readers, is fuel for subsequent fires.

When weedy species dominate after a fire they increase the likelihood of future fires. How does this work?

Fine fuel for future fires

Weedy species like those listed above die each year and form what's called a "flashy" fuel. Flashy fuels are easy to ignite fuels. Dry grasses are the quintessential flashy fuel. The weedy species listed earlier are bigger and more substantial than the native species found in a grassland. They die each year and stand upright, making a quick to burn fuel. By contrast, the native species also die back, but with the exception of bunch grass, they are in-substantial and lay down flat on the ground and wither away. They don't make a good dry season fuel. Even the native bunch grass stays green longer than non-native grasses and requires a higher temperature to ignite it.

Prevention

The work the Friends have overseen for the last two years in these grasslands has significantly depleted the seed bank of weedy species. And, since the fire, the Friends have sent their contractor into the area twice to spray emerging weeds. This intervention against the weeds should push the grasslands more towards native species and away from flashier non-native weed species.

In the rest of the burn area to the east, most of the coastal sage scrub and chaparral shrub species will resprout from their crowns. New growth is already emerging around the bases of the burned shrubs. From a distance it looks like a wasteland, but up close you can begin to see the signs of rejuvenation, the bright green of new growth in sharp contrast to the blackened stumps.

This winter and spring you'll see lots of flowers emerge in the space between these shrubs, most of them not present in recent years because the canopy of established shrubs prevented their emergence. We may even see some "fire followers," plant species that require a fire to cause their seed to germinate. They bloom for 1 – 3 years after a fire, put seed into the soil seed bank, and may not be seen until decades later! The Friends will organize a hike in this area this spring. Join us!

**To see the Friends'
newsletter in color,
visit
www.penasquitos.org!**



Penasquitos fire of Labor Day, Sept. 5, 2005. About 150 acres burned. The fire began next to the dirt road that runs on the east side of the Mt. Carmel High School playing fields and burned east and north along the southern flank of Black Mountain. Photo by City Ranger Lori Charett

California Wild Rose

Will Bowen, PhD

Most of us enjoy a fragrant showy rose. We plant them in our gardens. We give them as gifts. They are an important part of our culture and an important symbol for us.

I wonder if you know that we have a native rose bush growing right in our own canyon. It is called the California Wild Rose or *Rosa californica* (*rosa* is the ancient Latin name for rose). It has small pink flowers, is very fragrant (pink roses are supposed to be the moist odiferous!), and it produces an abundance of nutritious rose hips.

The California Wild Rose grows below 6000 feet, often in canyons near moist places, through out the state, west of the Sierra. It is a sprawling bush or shrub ranging from 3-6 feet in height. You can view examples of this plant in a long stand near Wagon Wheel Crossing in Penasquitos Canyon or just to the left of the portable restroom at the West End Parking Staging area.

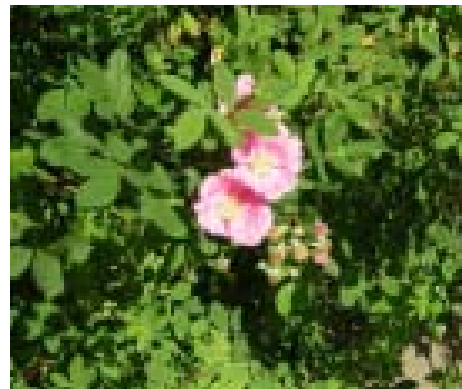
The California Wild Rose bush looks like an amorphous tangle of branches, stems and leaves. It is a favorite hiding place for rabbits and wood rats. The leaves are light to dark green with a reddish tinge on the margins. They are alternative compound, with 5-7 leaflets, oval in shape, and have fine teeth along the edges. The stems are a red-brown with the older thicker branches looking more like wood bark. The stems have down turned thorns which Munz calls "recurved prickles." The flowers resemble the cultivated rose but are smaller and have only 5 petals. They range from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Sometimes the California Rose has white flowers but I have only seen pink flowers in our canyon. The flowers bloom May thru August with fruit following. The rose hips or seed bearing fruits are a deep shiny red and urn-shaped, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.

The rose has been important to people since ancient times. The Romans associated the red rose with Jupiter, king of the gods, and the white rose with Diana, the goddess of the moon. Returning Roman heroes were often given wreaths of roses to wear. When

Cleopatra invited Mark Anthony to her palace she had the floors covered with rose petals to help create an atmosphere conducive to love.

According to Christian legend, the rose grew thorns only after Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden of Eden. Christians associate the white rose with Mary and the red rose with the blood of martyrs. Some believe that Jesus' Crown of Thorns was made from rose stems.

Over the years in western society the red rose as a symbol has evolved to stand for love and devotion while the white rose now means silence and



discretion. Regarding the white rose, the legal profession has the term "sub rosa" meaning under the rose, referring to the white rose that was painted on the ceilings of certain meeting rooms. The meetings or negotiations which took place in these rooms were meant to be kept confidential.

References to the rose are found throughout literature. Do you know who uttered the famous line, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" or "My love is like a red red rose..." (Answers at end of article).

The rose has been used throughout the world as an herb. The Romans used rose as a cure for dog bite. Avicenna, father of Arabic Medicine, used rose petals and almonds in almost all of his herbal remedies. In ancient Persia, rose petals were mixed with honey for stomach pains. In China, rose petals were used to blacken eyebrows and for cooling fevers. In Scandinavian, rose hips were used to make medicinal soups.

North American Indian braves gathered rose petals for rubbing on the hair of their brides, making it shiny and black. Rose petals were also used by Native Americans to treat colds as a tea and were made into a salve to sooth sores in the mouth. An eye wash made from petals soaked in rainwater was used for sore eyes. The powder from dried crushed petals was applied to blisters and the inner bark was decocted to make a wash for boils.

The local Digueno Indians made a tea of the seeds for upset stomach or muscular pains, a tea of the petals for babies with fever, and a tea of the tender root shoots for colds. Sometimes they also mixed in elderberry blossoms with the rose petals. The old straight wood was fashioned into arrow shafts and the fiber from the bark was used to make twine.

The early Spanish Californians ate the rose hips raw or made a jelly out of them after the first frost had rendered them soft. Obviously, the early Spanish sailors should have gathered rose hips to treat the scurvy they often suffered from. In modern Mexican folk medicine, rose petal tea is used as a gargle for mouth inflammation and sores and to treat diarrhea as well as intestinal parasites and infections.

In Euro-American folk medicine, rose petals were mixed with peppermint, lemon peels, and linden flower to make a tea for arthritis. Rose petal tea was used to help dissolve gall stones, treat diarrhea, as an eye wash for sore or red scratchy eyes, and as a gargle for sore mouth. Inhaling rose oil was said to help regulate the menstrual cycle and to have calming effect on the mind. Rose water was splashed on rough dry skin because the astringent and cleansing properties had benefit for the skin. Dried rose petals were also used to make potpourri, perfumes, and sachets of a pleasant odor. During WW II, in England, rose hip syrup was used as a substitute for rarely available citrus fruits and helped save the lives of many undernourished babies.

Scientists have discovered that rose

See p. 6 for more

(Scout projects cont'd)

posts in the staging area were found to be rotted out after approximately 20 years of use. Scout Daniel Riley stepped up to the project of replacing the old posts with brand new ones. Digging the ten, three-foot deep holes necessary to begin posed quite a challenge, but ultimately they were dug with the help of a heavy duty excavator. On Saturday, Daniel and his fellow scouts carefully installed four new hitching posts and secured them with four to five 90 lb. bags of cement at each base. On Saturday, October 22nd, Daniel will return to complete the remaining six. These hitching posts will put the icing back on the cake of our equestrian friendly lower parking area.

After our extremely wet rainy season last year, many of our trails were flooded and washed out. Scout Connor Poole set out and completed a major trail restoration project which included both sides of trail from Ranch House crossing. The day before his project, 26 tons of aggregate were dropped off in order to fill the many ruts in the trail as a result of last years rain. Connor's team pruned back the foliage along the trails to accommodate both equestrian use and emergency vehicle use. They also distributed the aggregate with wheelbarrows to the appropriate areas, successfully filling two major wash outs and improving the trails overall usability.

These two projects are successful examples of the hard work and dedication that our local Eagle Scouts put into this canyon. Just in the past few months, the following projects have been completed: new mile markers were installed on both the north and south trails; two scouts each installed 150' of split rail along the entrance to the south trail in order to discourage new trails into the preserve; an equestrian kiosk has been installed in the staging area; the picnic area has been greatly improved with new split-rail, fresh paint on the tables, and a layer of DG on the ground; and an orange grove has been planted at the Ranch House as a symbol of the orchards once planted here. We thank our local scouts for all of their hard work. We will continue to work with and support their projects in the future.



Scout Connor Poole completed a series of improvements to fix flood damaged trails in the Preserve.

(Roses cont'd)

hips contain more Vitamin C, calcium, phosphorus, and iron than oranges. Rose hips also contain Vitamin E, B, and K. We know that Vitamin C helps to prevent cold, strengthens the body's healing function, and is good for the collagen. Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling thought lack of sufficient Vitamin C was behind many heart conditions and other afflictions. Kachina Kutenai, the Apache medicine woman, suggested that rose hips are good for glaucoma and cataracts. The bioflavonoids in rose hips would definitely improve the health of the little capillaries that feed the eye.

It is always amazing to me how many different uses people have found for plants. It seems like we have lost this knowledge, which once was common. I grew up in suburbia thinking plants were for decorating the exterior of homes. As I learned about herbs and went on herb walks, I soon discovered what plants have meant to people throughout the ages. I hope next time you view this plant you will consider its many values to mankind.

[Answers: (i) Juliet in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (ii) The Scottish poet Robert Burns]



Above. The tractor/ dozer pictured above is a SWECO tractor. Designed for trail work, the SWECO will be shared by the City and County Parks Departments. Funds to purchase it were found due to the great efforts of County Supervisor Pam Slater and City Councilmembers Brian Maienshein and Scott Peters. Trails here we come!

Below. Pictured on the Miners' Loop Trail in Black Mountain Open Space Park are, left to right, with grubby clothes and jaw 'a flappin,'" Mike Kelly, chair of the Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee; City Senior Ranger Lori Charett-Gerbach, Scott Manley, Archaeologist and William Manley, Architectural Historian, the latter two with ASM Affiliates. ASM is providing professional services to develop a Cultural Resources Management Plan for the park. The group had just climbed out of a canyon with an old mine in it that will be a focus of future interpretive plans for the park. Photo by Samir Mahmalji, project planner with the City Dept. of Parks and Rec.



Beginning Tracker/ Naturalist Class

Nov. 17 & 19th

Love wildlife & nature?
Learn the art and science of
mammal tracking and nature
awareness skills! The
class is sponsored by the
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No experience required!
Cost: \$50.00. Call 760-
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and registration. See web-
site for updates and info:
www.sdtt.org.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$10 Individual \$15
- Family \$20 Sponsor \$30 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

- Volunteer** to help the committee (call to discuss)
- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Other: _____ 11/2005

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to:

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.
Call **858.484.3219** or **858.566.6489** for more information.

Friends' Directory

Officers

- President: Brian Swanson 760.739.5451
- Vice-President: Don Albright 619.443.5937
- Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858.538.2527
- Secretary: Rick Botta 858.672.0584

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

Walk Leaders

Brian Swanson, Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike Kelly,
Pat Watkins, Linda King and Barbara Moore.

Committees:

- Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman
- Newsletter: Mike Kelly
- Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki
- Stream Survey Committee: open
- Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins
- Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta, 858.672-0584
- Volunteer Coordinator:
- Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.566.6489
- Webmaster: open
- Wildlife Surveys: Patrick Campbell, 760.471.9197