Canyon News

Black Mountain Park · Del Mar Mesa Preserve
Peńasquitos Canyon Preserve
Friends of Los Peńasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Sep/Oct 2006
Volume 20, No 5

A New Look for the Nighthawk Trail Head

Lori Charett, Senior Park Ranger

Anybody that knows me will tell you that I do not like guardrail in open space parks. In fact, I vehemently detest it. I cannot think of a more unsightly, unwelcoming entrance to a beautiful open space park. With that said, admittedly, it does serve a purpose and that is, it has effectively kept off-roaders from destroying our parks natural resources over the years. However, today- there are better and more aesthetically pleasing alternatives that are effective. Since I was assigned to Black Mountain Park nearly five years ago, I have thought of the guardrail at the Nighthawk trailhead to Black Mountain Open Space from the Hilltop Recreation Center as an eye sore. The guardrail was installed many years ago to keep unauthorized vehicles/off-roaders from entering. Today, this area is a popular access point to the network of trails Black Mountain offers for hiking and biking.

The idea of removing the guardrail and installing peeler pole fencing came to me many years ago. However, many of our projects on our "wish list" inevitably have to wait until a volunteer group or Scout contacts us and offers to

See *Nighthawk* p. 7 for more

Sr. Ranger Lori Charett with Rotary Club and Westview High School volunteers in front of their newly installed peeler log fencing at Black Mountain Open Space Park.

Highlights Inside

Hike Calendar	2
Updating History Ruiz Adobe	4
Friends Annual Meeting	7
Directory	8

How are bats doing in PQ?

Bats in the Night Sky

Mike Kelly

[All of the facts in the following article are gleaned from the publication: Bat Inventory of the Multiple Species Conservation Program Area in San Diego County, California, 2002 - 2004. Published in late 2005, this study was prepared for the County of San Diego and the California Dept. of Fish and Game by the San Diego Field Station of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Photos can be found at http://www.werc.usgs.gov/bats/batstudiessouth.html, the U.S.G.S. web site. Visit this site to see more pictures of other species of bats. Visit the Friends' site to see photos of all 7 species studied in our Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.]

As we approach Halloween, there will be many images of bats appearing in the popular media. Old horror films with bats will resurface. Once again, stubborn, untrue myths about bats will be uttered. In truth, there are only two species of

See *Bats* p. 5 for more

Fall is upon us …..

As we get deeper into our fall season, we can expect gradually cooling days and evenings, but punctuated by the occasional Santa Ana winds, sometimes called the "devil winds". Santa Ana conditions, of course, bring high fire conditions, as we all know from the Cedar Fires. However, fall will also bring colors to some of the canyons, especially as we get deep into October. López Canyon with its mighty California sycamore trees is a good place for fall colors. Also the portion of Peñasquitos Canyon about 1/2 mile west of the waterfall, around the aptly named Sycamore Crossing. We might also see our first rainfall in October, as we did in 2004.

All hikes are free to the public. If you are 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.

For maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Park, visit www.penasquitos.org.

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 Maria 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 AM - 12:30 PM Saturdays, 12:30 - 2:30 PM Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

September

Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committees
Thursday, September 21
7:00 PM
Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. There will be a special presentation on the Draft Carmel Mountain & Del Mar Mesa Resources Management Plan. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Canyon Favorites Hike
Saturday, September 23
3:00 - 5:00 PM
Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing and the waterfall and back. Chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring insect repellent, water and wear hiking boots.
Thomas Guide p. 1188 (J7).

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors
Tuesday September 26
7:00 PM
Members are 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).

October

Arch in the Park
Saturday, October 7
10:00 - 3:00 PM
The *San Diego County Archaeological Society* presents an educational day of Archaeology and Fun at the Ranch House in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the shade. Fry bread, snacks, and sodas will be available for purchase. For more information, call: 858-538-0935 or e-mail us at: *sdcas@email.com*

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks
Saturday, October 14
8:00 - 10:00 AM
Tracker/naturalists from the Friends' Tracking Team lead two walks, one suitable for beginners (children welcome!) and an intermediate. 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., right on Black Mtn. Rd. and first left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.

Friends Annual Meeting & Social
Reptiles in San Diego
Saturday, October 14
7:00 - 9:00 PM
Bradford D. Hollingsworth Ph.D, Curator of Herpetology, SD Natural History Museum
Join us for an ice cream social and brief election of Friends' officers from 7- 7:30 p.m. From 7:30 - 8:30 PM meet some live reptiles under the care of Brad Hollingsworth, Reptile Curator at the SD Natural History Museum. He will also give a talk on the status of reptiles in San Diego County. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn.

Rd., right on Black Mtn. Rd. and first 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
Saturday, October 21
3:00 - 5:00 PM
Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing and the waterfall and back. Chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring insect repellent, water and wear hiking boots.
Thomas Guide p. 1188 (J7).

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors
Tuesday, October 24
7:00 PM
Members are 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).

Halloween Evening Sensory Walk w Will Bowen
Sunday, October 29
4:00 - 5:30 PM
Halloween always signals some unique changes in the Canyon. Early falling darkness, cool air, eerie orange sunsets, clear starry nights, and the feeling that ghosties are afoot always makes for a pleasant and tantalizing evening walk. Come for a stroll and savor the qualities of this special seasonal juncture. Meets at West End Parking Staging Area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway in Sorrento Valley.
Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Directions

Carmel Mountain Trail Head
From Carmel Valley take El Camino Real south. At intersection with Carmel Mountain Road, proceed straight on Carmel Mountain Road. Go up the hill to East Ocean Air Dr. Go left and park at Fairport and Shorepointe. Wear hiking boots. Bring water/sun protection. Moderate hill to climb.
Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).

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 ball fields 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 Blvd 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).

Updating history

Will the Real Ruíz Adobe Please Stand Up?

New book will shed light on mystery

Mike Kelly

Readers read a letter from Dr. John Northrop in the last issue of this newsletter (*Canyon News* V. 20, No. 1, July / August 2006) criticizing Dr. Will Bowen's article on the history of Sorrento Valley that appear in an even earlier newsletter (*Canyon News*, V. 20, No. 1, Jan/Feb. 2006). Northrop quoted Mary Ward, the late County Historian to the effect that the adobe ruins in the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve had been built in by Comandante Francisco Maria Ruíz, Commandant of the Presidio, after he received the first San Diego County land grant in 1823. In fact, there is a sign to this effect in front of these very ruins. Bowen said the adobe had been built by Francisco Maria Albarado and his son between 1830 and 1850.

Northrop cited Ward's "Rancho de los Peñasquitos, on the Road to Yuma", County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation, p. 1. (1984). I have this out-of-print document on my own shelf. It is still an excellent reference for matters concerning the history of our Preserve.

However, what is not yet widely known is that Mary Ward and other researchers, principally archaeologists, after the publication of her book, found evidence that her own book and our common wisdom about who built which adobe in the Preserve and when were wrong! I have in my possession an unpublished manuscript authored by Mary Ward that reveals the findings of new historical research, indicating that the first adobe in the Preserve was built close to what we now know as Black Mountain Road. About the same time as Ward's discovery, Dr. Susan Hector and a team of archaeologists were monitoring the tear down and extensive restoration of the ranch house we always called the "Johnson-Taylor Ranch House". This ranch house was believed to have been built in the 1850s by Captain George Johnson and his bride, Estefana Alvarado, then later added on to by Jacob Taylor, better known as the founder of Del Mar. Hector and company made an astounding discovery in the ranch house. They found evidence of an older adobe inside the bigger adobe, buried within its walls! This older adobe dated to the Mexican, not the American settler period.

To readers who yearn to learn more about these and many more historical and archaeological discoveries, I have the following exciting news to share. I am currently editing and producing a book describing the fruits of the research by Mary Ward, by historian Steve Van Wormer, Ph.D, and three archaeologists who have led digs at the ranch House: Susan Hector, Ph.D., Lynne Christenson, Ph.D (the current County Historian), and Steve Bouscaren, Ph.D. I hope to have this book to the printer before the end of the year. The County has graciously made a grant that will cover the printing of the book, complete with illustrations.

(Bats cont'd from pg 1)

blood sucking (i.e., "vampire" bats) in the world, and they're both in South America. The rest of the hundreds of species of bats eat fish, insects, fruits, or nectar. Did you know they're mammals, giving birth to live young as we humans do? It turns out we know relatively little about bat species, particularly our local species. Even as five of these species are listed as "of concern" by the regulatory agencies, we find so much we don't know about them.

©Merlin D. Tuttle, Bat Conservation International

Big brown bat
(Eptesicus fuscus)

Research questions abound

How many of our 23 species in the County are migratory? Where do they go? Where are their roosts? Are they reproducing here? Are their numbers declining, increasing, stable? What are they eating? What's happening with their food supply? When compared with surveys of 20, 30, or 50 years ago, what trends do we find? What are the threats to these local bat species? What can we do on behalf of bats? Do bat boxes work?

In 2002, the USGS began a series of bat inventory studies in San Diego County to begin to answer these questions. The studies were funded by several federal, state, and local agencies including the National Park Service, United States Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the County of San Diego.

Four study areas were being

©Dick Wilkins, Bat Rescue

Western mastiff bat
(Eumops perotis)

surveyed including the Cabrillo National Monument, Descanso district of the Cleveland National Forest, Santa Ysabel Ranch Preserve, and the Multi-Species Planning Area (MSCP) of southeastern San Diego County. The latter includes open space parks, including Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Mission Trails Regional Park, Boden Canyon, and others. Two sites were studied intensively in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, a woodland site and a riparian, open-water site.

Survey methods and timing

Several survey methods were utilized to conduct these bat inventories including 1) use of mist-nets to capture bats at foraging and roosting sites, 2) use of hand-nets to capture bats at day and night roosts, 3) use of acoustic techniques including Anabat bat detectors and audible listening to detect bats at foraging and roosting sites, and 4) use of artificial lights to visually inspect for bats at roost sites and to visually observe foraging bats. Most of the survey effort occurred from May through September, however, surveys are being conducted year-round with a reduced but consistent, almost weekly, effort throughout the fall, winter, and spring.

As of February 1, 2003 a total of 16 of the 23 bat species known from San Diego County had been detected during the USGS bat inventory studies in the study area. Thirteen of these 16 species have been documented by capture at roosting and/or foraging sites, with the remaining species having been detected only acoustically.

The U.S. Geological Survey report referenced above begins to answer some, but not nearly all, of these questions. For example, are the 7 species of previously identified species of bat not found during these surveys extinct in our County? Or, are they to be found in the parts of the county not in these study areas. The latter is quite probable, at least for several of the species, but perhaps not all.

The researchers noted that species might have escaped detection if they arrive later in the night at the

©Merlin D. Tuttle, Bat Conservation International

Western red bat
(Lasiurus blossevillii)

survey sites, when the researchers weren't present, beyond their 3-hour monitoring period. They could be commuting from inland roost sites to bigger open space sites.

The five bat species of concern were all found in the study area. Those species are:

California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*)
Western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*)
Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)
Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)
Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*)

Yuma myotis
(Myotis yumanensis)

Peñasquitos Canyon Findings

Seven species of bat were detected in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. They are:

Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)
Western red bat
Hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)
Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*)
Western mastiff bat
Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*)
California myotis (*Myotis californicus*)

How does our Preserve compare to other areas? We have only a moderate level of diversity with seven species. Mission Trails Regional Park has greater diversity, with nine species. Boden Canyon has 10 species. But the Otay, Tijuana River Valley, and Sweetwater open space areas have the greatest diversity with 13 species. The authors of the report see two factors driving these differences in diversity: the total size of the open space left in a given area and the diversity of habitat types found within each. For example, Mission Trails is perhaps a third bigger than Peñasquitos, but it has more important differences. It has bigger ponds, the bigger San Diego River, and more rocky outcroppings, cliffs, and caves for roosting.

Do bat boxes work?

Yes. The authors found bats in two of the bat boxes in Peñasquitos Canyon. This came as a surprise to this writer, who believed bats weren't using the boxes. The study authors found one California myotis in one of the brown boxes and 10 California myotis in another brown box. None were found in the white boxes.

The authors believe that a different design of bat boxes might attract other species. They advocate building more bat boxes in our open space areas, making sure they're in appropriate habitat, but as far from possible human intervention (houses, trails) as possible.

They also advocate the construction and experimentation with concrete structures for crack / crevice dwelling bats that mimic cliff, rock, and cave type roosting sites.

California myotis
(Myotis californicus)

Recommendations for improved conservation

Besides the bat box and concrete "cave" recommendations, the study makes a number of other recommendations:

- Saving the biggest blocks of land possible in the habitat plans still coming forward;
- Protect existing roosts, especially those in people structures identified in the study;
- Educating the public about bats and their useful role in the environment is important;
- Reduce bat mortality due to pest control operations by teaching homeowners and pest control companies how to humanely exclude bats from buildings
- Study the relationship between bats and fires. The Cedar and Otay Fires swept through prime bat habitat, but little is known about the effects of this burned landscape on bat species.
- Establish long-term monitoring of bats and the impact of land-use change.

A personal recommendation from this writer is to recommend having the Bat Rescue folks (www.batrescue.com) come to your organization and make a presentation on bats. They'll also bring live bats with them. It's an eye-opening experience.

(*All photographs are by Merlin D. Tuttle of Bat Conservation International.)*

Mexican free-tailed bat
(Tadarida brasiliensis)

Friends' Annual Meeting

Local Examples of the Global Amphibian Decline

Bradford D. Hollingsworth, Ph.D.
Curator of Herpetology, San Diego Natural History Museum

7 – 9 p.m., October 14, 2006
Adobe Ranch House, Peñasquitos Preserve

7:00 p.m. Social. Free ice cream and cookies.
7:30 p.m. Brief business meeting to elect Friends' officers and vote on proposed changes to Friends' Bylaws.
7:45 p.m. Presentation by Brad Hollingsworth, Ph.D.

Rana draytonii. Photo by Bradford D. Hollingsworth, Ph.D.

Global amphibian extinctions have swept across tropical hotspots over the last 5 years. These declines are not limited to remote places on the globe, but are also occurring in our local habitats. From Red-legged Frogs to Arroyo Toads, amphibians serve as indicators to the health of freshwater ecosystems. This presentation focuses on the biodiversity of amphibians from coastal Southern California to the Sierra San Pedro Mártir in Baja California.

Hollingsworth is an expert on San Diego and Baja "herps" (snakes, frogs, toads, salamanders, toads, skinks . . .) and has been on recent collecting expeditions to Baja, California. Expect to see some excellent pictures of our regional "herps" and what's happening to them. **See Thomas Guide, p. 1189 (C7).**

[Nighthawk cont'd from pg. 1

adopt a project. In this case, San Diego North Rotary Club and Westview High School students came to our rescue.

On April 29th, about 20 Rotarians and several Westview students installed a peeler pole (split rail) fence stretching about 192 feet at the trail head to replace the unsightly guard rail; they also removed invasive mustard plants and litter. This was truly a team effort and great collaboration of resources! The City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department purchased the peeler pole fencing and the City staff provided the equipment and training to carry out the tasks. The volunteers started at 8:00 am and finished by 1 pm. The volunteers saved the City of San Diego approximately $2,584.00 in labor. Not only that, we have an absolutely beautiful entrance to our open space now and have plans to complete more enhancement projects, such as a kiosk so park patrons can learn about the local flora and fauna, park rules, trail conditions and safety precautions. The Rotarians and Westview students definitely made a difference to the park and community that will be enjoyed for many years. If it was not for their altruistic ways, hard work and dedication to community service, we could have not accomplished this great enhancement project. We are very appreciative of their efforts!

If you are interested in volunteering at Black Mountain Park or know a group that would like to adopt a project, please contact me at (858) 538-8082. Our wish list is long; we welcome your assistance!

The new peeler pole fencing installed at Black Mountain Open Space Park.

Friends of Los Peńasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196
858-484-3219 www.penasquitos.org

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Diego, CA

Check Your Label

Take a moment to examine the address label on this newsletter. Check to see if your expiration date has come and gone. If so, please take the time now to send in a renewal check for your membership dues. This will enable you to keep receiving our newsletter, recognized as one of the best conservation newsletters in San Diego. That way you'll keep learning about the family walks; the plants and animals that inhabit the Preserve, and the many conservation projects open to you and your family or friends.

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: Carol Cooper
Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta, 858.672-0584
Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.566-6489
Webmaster: Beth Williams
Wildlife Surveys: Patrick Campbell, 760.471-9197

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: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to:
Friends of Los Peńasquitos 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.