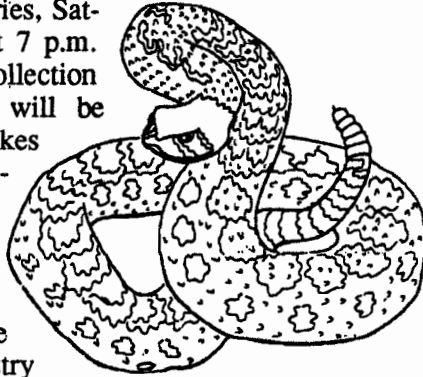




## Evenings at the Ranch Lecture: Reptiles and Amphibians

Richard Ploch, Ph.D., president of the Herpetological Society of San Diego, will kick off the Friends "Evenings at the Ranch Lecture series, Saturday, September 29, at 7 p.m. Mr. Ploch, who has a collection of some 150 reptiles, will bring several of his snakes to the meeting for everyone to meet. He reports being bitten once a week by his pets, which he also breeds! Ploch holds a doctorate in theoretical chemistry from Yale University.



He'll talk about the reptiles and amphibians of Peñasquitos Canyon, but also about the broader issues concerning these animals. Ploch will detail their vital role in the environment, especially to farmers, and the threats to their survival. He'll also go into myths about snakes, the reality of rattlesnake bites, Rattlesnake roundups, the Reptile Defense Fund, snakes as pets, frogs, toads, and much more.

The program is free to members and the public and begins with an informal social from 7-7:30 p.m. with refreshments. The program itself will run from 7:30-9 p.m. and includes a question period. Kids are welcome.

Future programs will feature lectures on the diverse plants and wildlife of the area and broader environmental themes — reminding ourselves that we are part of a much bigger struggle for survival. If you're interested in working on the publicity or organizing of this series, leave a message on our phone machine at 484-3219.

### Attention Rancho Peñasquitos Residents:

## Camino Ruíz Hearings

by Mike Kelly, president

The Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board is planning a series of hearings, beginning in October, on the issue of whether Camino Ruíz should cross Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The first will probably take place at the regular meeting of the Board, Oct. 3, at the Carmel Highlands Country Club in the Burwick Room. Call Board President Kevin McNamara at 484-5132 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489

➡ p. 7 for more

## Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

### SEPTEMBER

#### DUSK WALK

Sat., Sept. 8, 6:30 pm (2 hours). Meet at the gate leading into the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Take Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mtn Rd Good chance to see animals. Last dusk hike of season. Bring flashlight.

#### BIRD WALK

Sat., Sept. 15, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. With 146 species of birds identified, Peñasquitos Canyon is a great place for both beginner and experience birders. Bring binoculars and bird book if possible.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Sept. 15, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. See 5,000 years of history: Indian & settler artifacts, authentic adobe ranch house, and more.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., Sept. 16, 9 am (2 hrs). Meet under big power lines on Calle Cristobal on López Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruíz north to C. Cristobal. Go left to power lines.) Learn area's geology and see Preserve's only known fossil near the waterfall. Good picnic spot for lunch for those wanting to stay.

#### FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., Sept. 18, 7:30 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Anyone wanting to become active with the Friends is welcome to attend.

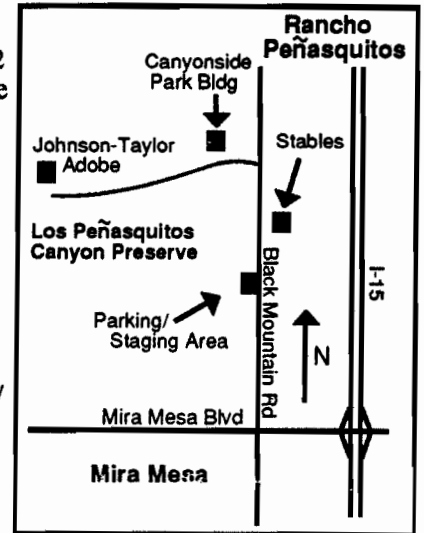
#### CLEAN UP PENASQUITOS PRESERVE!

Sat., Sept. 22. Outward Bound, I Love A Clean San Diego and the Friends. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Parking-Staging area.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Sept. 29, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

➡ p.8 for more



## Unauthorized Balloons & Other Vehicles in the Preserve

by Brian Swanson

[The following was received as a letter to the Friends. The problem of balloons in the Preserve is a real one. They frighten deer and other animals. One balloon started a fire in the Preserve several years ago and their vehicles tear up the ground.]

August 9, 1990

Mike Kelly, President

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Dear Mike,

While I was hiking in the Preserve after work Monday, August 6, I had an unpleasant experience. It seems that the hot air balloons coming from Del Mar are landing adjacent to, and in some cases, within the Preserve.

There are two things that bother me about this landing in or near the Preserve. The first is a concern that perhaps a fire might occur (the jets of flame were very evident as the balloons drifted closer to earth). The second, and more pressing concern I have is the impact of the recovery vehicles on the Preserve.

There were better than a dozen balloons in the air that evening, and a half-dozen landed within a stone's throw of the Preserve. One actually was within the boundaries. The recovery trucks, trailers, etc. race around on adjacent streets seeking to make contact with their counterparts floating to earth. In the process, at least some of them

drive down the landscaped embankments, across PVC irrigation lines, and into the Preserve to use the dirt road.

As I understand it, all unauthorized motor vehicles are prohibited within the Preserve. The damage they can cause is the reason. In their haste to 1) Pick up the balloons, 2) Do this before darkness falls, and 3) Get finished so they can go home, the pick-up vehicles rush every which way, over any property.

I watched a truck with the name Pacific Horizon Balloon Company drive down a landscaped embankment (with an irrigation pipe on it), through the scrub, into and through the Preserve to access the balloon which had landed adjacent to the Preserve. I took a photo of it preparing to drive into the Preserve.

I seldom hike this side of the creek, (northwest of the ranch house), and I suspect what I witnessed is in fact daily activity on the part of the balloonists.

I feel this is a significant, ongoing problem which needs to be addressed. These vehicles can drive over curbs and banks, and the drivers are being irresponsible in damaging property. I don't have an answer, unless it might be to post a person with authority to cite these vehicles. Then, perhaps a letter to the entire group of commercial balloon companies might help also. Please bring this to the attention of the Friends at the next meeting.

Brian D. Swanson

8708 Perseus Rd., San Diego, CA 92126

## Birds of Los Peñasquitos Canyon — The California Gnatcatcher

by Claude G. Edwards

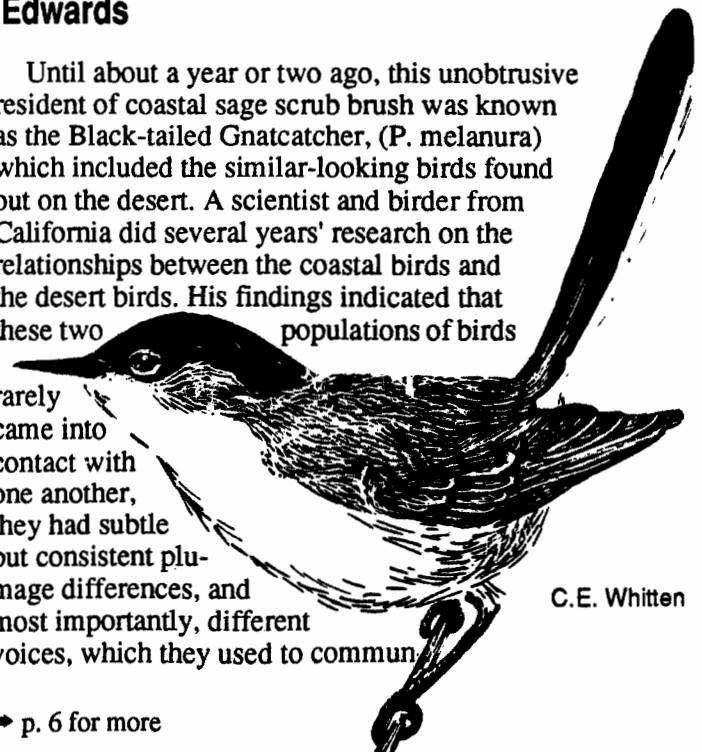
Those of us who enjoy being in natural settings and taking in the peace and vitality of the life around us usually also enjoy the simplicity of things, sky, wind, trees, leaves, flowers, fragrance, stream, insects, trails, dust, etc. Things are pretty much as they seem, barring disturbance, disruption, and distractions.

To most of us, birds are usually pretty straight forward, big, small, flying, perched, loud, quiet, singing, eating, and engaging, to behold. Some of us choose to go into a deeper study and awareness of birds, bothering to distinguish between wrens from sparrows from hummingbirds from hawks, etc. Again, most of the birds that we encounter are fairly easy to look at and eventually identify.

Every so often though a bird comes along that may be difficult to find, or to see, or to distinguish. On top of that, certain nameless and faceless so-called experts all the way across the country will make a decision to rename a bird, combine two different populations into one species, or even separate two groups into whole species. This is where the diminutive California Gnatcatcher (*Poliottila californica*) comes in.

Until about a year or two ago, this unobtrusive resident of coastal sage scrub brush was known as the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, (*P. melanura*) which included the similar-looking birds found out on the desert. A scientist and birder from California did several years' research on the relationships between the coastal birds and the desert birds. His findings indicated that these two

populations of birds rarely came into contact with one another, they had subtle but consistent plumage differences, and most importantly, different voices, which they used to commun-



➔ p. 6 for more

# Bird Habitats in Peñasquitos Canyon

by Barbara Zepf

Did you get to see the Mourning Dove we talked about last month? I hope so. That's one down, and 100 or so to go. Anything is possible! Well, maybe not a Flamingo. But that's because the canyon doesn't provide the proper habitat for a Flamingo. Proper habitat is the most important requisite for attracting certain birds to certain places.

## Habitat

Habitat is simply a place where a bird lives and where we would likely go to see it. Proper habitat provides the bird with all it needs to survive — food, water, shelter and a safe place to nest and to reproduce in sufficient numbers to perpetuate its kind. Peñasquitos Canyon provides many different habitats: riparian habitat along the creek, chaparral on the hillsides, mixed woodlands, open grassy fields and marshy areas at the western end.

When habitat changes, the bird's life changes. There are fewer hawks and Black-shouldered Kites in the canyon now because housing has encroached on the hillsides and open fields where they used to hunt. The creek has silted up and has more cattails due to runoff from lawns and streets, so there are fewer ducks around. Also, the canyon has more human traffic now, and that makes for fewer birds. Some birds only nest in dead trees. So don't cut down or haul off those dead snags in the Preserve. Don't pick the flowers or "weeds" or fruit. Maybe that's the main food source for a certain species.

Most birds like to live in only one type of habitat. Learning about different habitats is a great aid in knowing where to go to look for a particular bird. If you are looking for a Belted Kingfisher, head for the water where it catches fish. In the mood for sparrows? Check out those grassy fields. Go look for the Red-winged Blackbird in the reeds. After you bird for a while, you'll recognize different habitats and will learn what to expect there, even if you're visiting a town several hundred miles from home.

## Mixed-Oaks Woodland

With its mixed-oak woodlands, Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve provides good habitat for several species of birds. One of these is the Acorn Woodpecker. What an enjoyable bird! They are not as prolific in the canyon as the Mourning Dove, but you should be able to spot one on any given trip to the canyon. Hear that loud raucous "whack-up, whack-up, whack-up" or "ja-cob ja-cob"? You've found it! It almost sounds like it's laughing. It's a noisy bird, and you'll probably hear it before you see it. It has a clownish-looking face with a black chin, yellowish throat, white cheeks and forehead, black bill and red cap. Both sexes look almost alike, but the male's bill is larger than the female's. His red cap extends from his forehead to the back of his head. The female's red cap is smaller, with the crown being black.

Acorn Woodpeckers are about nine inches long, with a wingspread of 17 inches. It has a black back, breast and

feet., but a white abdomen. Its long and sticky tongue with a barbed tip is used for catching ants or for licking sap from a tree. Its white rump and small white wing patches are very conspicuous, especially when flying. Their flight is undulating, sort of like a mini-roller coaster. Acorn Woodpeckers have whitish eyes, unlike other woodpeckers.

## Acorn Woodpeckers are very sociable

The most social of all the woodpeckers, they live in closely-knit groups. It's a resident bird in Peñasquitos Canyon, living here year round. In the U.S. Acorn Woodpeckers live only in the western states.

The Acorn Woodpecker is so-called because, of course, it loves acorns, both green and dried. Its pantry is open for your inspection in the canyon. It's a storage tree full of holes, each stuffed with an acorn. Have you seen one of these storage trees? Amazing, aren't they? These "graineries" can be used for generations. The woodpeckers can store thousands of acorns in the holes they dig in the bark of oaks and sycamores. The holes are not deep enough to harm the tree. Sometimes they will drill a hole in the wooden sides or roof of your house to store their goodies!

They feed on acorns from fall until spring. During the summer, they eat mostly insects. Sometimes they even catch them on the wing, like a flycatcher does. They will also eat fruit and the sap from small holes they drill in the branches of live oaks.

Both sexes — often the whole clan — assist in digging the nest hole in an oak, cottonwood, sycamore or large willow tree — even a telephone pole! They lay four or five white eggs in the spring. They occasionally have a second brood in the fall. The whole social group helps to feed the young. In fact, cooperation seems to be the key word for Acorn Woodpeckers. In addition to being communal nesters, they also take turns digging the holes, collecting, storing and guarding their acorn cache.

Acorn Woodpeckers only weigh about 2-1/2 ounces. But pound for pound (or ounce for ounce), they've got to win the prize for having one of the strongest heads in the avian world. Their thick-walled, strong muscular skull, sturdy beak and thick bill help to absorb the shock of the relentless pounding their body takes while digging their nests and storage holes. Different species of woodpeckers drum out different patterns. Acorn Woodpeckers have a loud, rather slow drumming pattern.

About the only competition for nesting holes the Acorn Woodpeckers has in Peñasquitos Canyon are the Starlings. Several years ago, I noticed lots of Acorn Woodpeckers nesting in the canyon. Last year, the Starlings took over many of their cavities, and their numbers were down. Now this year the Acorn Woodpeckers seem to be winning again.

Let's hope these clowns of the bird world stay around the canyon for a long time — always ready to provide comic relief on even the dullest of days. Good Birding!

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# Earthquake Hazards in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

by John Northrop, PhD  
Consulting Geophysicist

The west end of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is only 2-1/2 miles from the Rose Canyon Fault, San Diego's most potentially dangerous fault. It comes ashore at La Jolla Shores, extends south through Rose Canyon and the Morena district through East Mission Bay and Loma Portal to San Diego Bay. Recent studies in Rose Canyon by San Diego State Geologists indicate that this fault may still be active. A recent 50-year study (1934-1974) of earthquakes in San Diego by Dick Simons placed 10 earthquakes along the Rose Canyon Fault with magnitudes ranging from 2.3 to 3.7 on the Richter Scale. Prognostications for future earthquakes along the Rose Canyon Fault by SDSU's Tom Rockwell and UCSD's John Anderson and Duncan C. Agnew range from a magnitude of 6.2 to 7.0, with a recurrence rate of about 300 years.

The last big quake in San Diego occurred on Friday, May 27, 1862. Because instrumental recordings were not made in those days, no precise epicenter or magnitude data are available. However, the quake was widely felt in San Diego and descriptions of local damage, earth movement, landslides on Pt. Loma and sand geysers in Loma Portal indicate the epicenter was in San Diego with an equivalent magnitude of about 6.5 plus or minus 0.5. This was the quake that caused a marked increase in water flowing from the well at the Johnston (now Johnson-Taylor) Ranch leading Capt. Johnson to refer to it as "the good Friday earthquake."

Because many of the 1862 earthquake-related phenomena reported by citizens centered around Loma Portal, there is a good possibility that this quake occurred along the Rose Canyon Fault near where it enters San Diego Bay. Should another earthquake of similar magnitude occur in San Diego, it would cause significant damage to the Preserve, mostly from slumps and rockslides along the steep north-facing slopes of both Peñasquitos and López Canyons. There is also a real possibility of damage to the newly constructed Calle Cristobal both by liquification of saturated sediments under the causeway on the edge of the wetlands at the west end of the Preserve and by rockfalls on López Ridge where the road hugs the edge of the cliffs.

## Landslides and slumps

There are three slump structures on the south wall of López Canyon, between the new Parking-Staging area and the Old López Road, and one landslide area on the south wall of Peñasquitos Canyon east of the Falls. The slumps in López Canyon present the most potentially damaging ones because the base, or "sole," of the slumps are on the Ardath Shale, an expansive soil, which makes a "glide plane" for the slump. These slumps, which are moving very slowly all the time by a geologic process called "creep," terminate at the edge of the López Trail where the "toe" of the slump can be seen encroaching on the road-

side. The largest of these slump structures occurs directly south of the new parking-staging area, where the SDG&E power lines are located. In the event of a large earthquake along the Rose Canyon Fault, slumped material from earthquake triggered seismic shaking could slide right down over the parking-staging area and onto Calle Cristobal. Slumps further up the canyon would be less catastrophic but would block off the service road there and possibly damage the sewer and/or water lines in the canyon's floor.

The slump structure in Peñasquitos Canyon, which is several orders of magnitude larger than any of those in Lopez Canyon, extends from the SDG&E power lines down to the Falls, a distance of about half a mile. This slump poses less of a hazard to the preserve because the slopes are less steep and the "toe" of the slump abuts a wide meadow. Furthermore, the "sole" of this lump lies on thin clay layers of the Scripps Formation, rather than on the Ardath Shale.

## Rockfalls

Peñasquitos Canyon is rimmed with a thin (10-ft thick) layer of erosion-resistant conglomerate (called the Linda Vista Formation) that forms the rim rock from which the canyon got its name (Peñasquitos, literally means "Little Cliffs"). The steep, and in some places overhanging, north facing slope of López Ridge is replete with numerous rock slides and talus slopes that were formed when the sandstones and shales of the underlying Scripps Formation eroded out leaving the rim rock as overhanging ledges which eventually collapse. Small rock falls occur on the canyon's rim periodically and, indeed, are part of the "retreat of the cliffs" mechanism of canyon widening first espoused by John Wesley Powell in 1869 to explain the Grand Canyon. It is the mechanism by which Peñasquitos Canyon was widened during the last million years or so.

A prominent slide that occurred on the north facing slope of López Ridge in 1987 is still plainly visible (see Fig. 18 of Reference 1). The biggest rock falls are clustered near there because of the east-west fault at the base of López Ridge at that location (Refs. 1 & 2). López Ridge is so narrow that Calle Cristobal was built very close to the cliff edge at the east end of the Monarch Estates, and is in danger of being wiped out in the event of a future rock fall and recession of the cliffs in that area.

## Liquifaction

Liquifaction, a process by which saturated sediments lose their thixotropy (or strength) from shaking and turn into a jello-like mass, was the most likely cause of the collapse of the Nimitz Freeway in Oakland following the San Francisco Earthquake of October 17, 1989. A similar sce-

## Bobcats Still Live in the Preserve

by Mike Kelly



Day was just passing into dusk when we saw it on the trail in front of us.

The walk of a cat was unmistakable. It turned briefly to look at us, then hurried out of sight. Sighting the bobcat got our dusk walk off to a great start. This was Aug. 22.

Another bobcat sighting occurred Peñasquitos Park Day, May 19.

While leading a hike for the Friends I was cataloging the mammals of the Preserve when two of the hikers interrupted me. They thought they had just seen a mother bobcat and its baby near the spring house at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch. Was this possible, they asked? You bet. In fact, several other people saw the same bobcats that day. There's a bobcat family that hangs out near the Ranch. The rangers who work out of the ranch have seen them on numerous occasions.

Several weeks ago one of our hike leaders, Mike McCormick, startled an adult bobcat just off the main trail in the Preserve. He was just as startled as the bobcat by the close and unexpected meeting. I've seen a bobcat sitting on a side trail quietly watching people go by on the main trail. Because they weren't paying attention to their surroundings, they never saw it!

### Should you be afraid?

When you mention bobcats (*Lynx rufus*), many people react with fear. They have this image of deadly beasts stalking them or their children, ready to drop down from the tree limb above. It's an unnecessary fear. Probably the only way anyone will have a nasty encounter with a bobcat is by threatening one of its babies. Like any wild animal you want to respect it and keep a safe distance, especially if you see baby bobcats.

Because they can be tall, bobcats are sometimes mistaken for mountain lions, especially in poor light. While their total length may be as much as 39 inches, their height to 30 inches (to the top of their pointed, tufted ears), and weight to 33 pounds, they are still considerably smaller than a lion. The simplest way to differentiate the two is by the tail. The bobcat has a short, white-tipped tail, hence the "bob" in its name, while the lion has a very long tail (up to 2-1/2 feet). The bobcat's coat is spotted while the lion's is a uniform light brown. The bobcat's ears have a distinctive tuft, while its whiskers are quite broad. The male bobcat I've seen was strikingly tall, especially through the legs.

### What they eat

Bobcats are opportunistic eaters, eating what ever is at hand, rather than searching for a preferred food. It kills rabbits, squirrel's, small birds and reptiles and, rarely, deer.

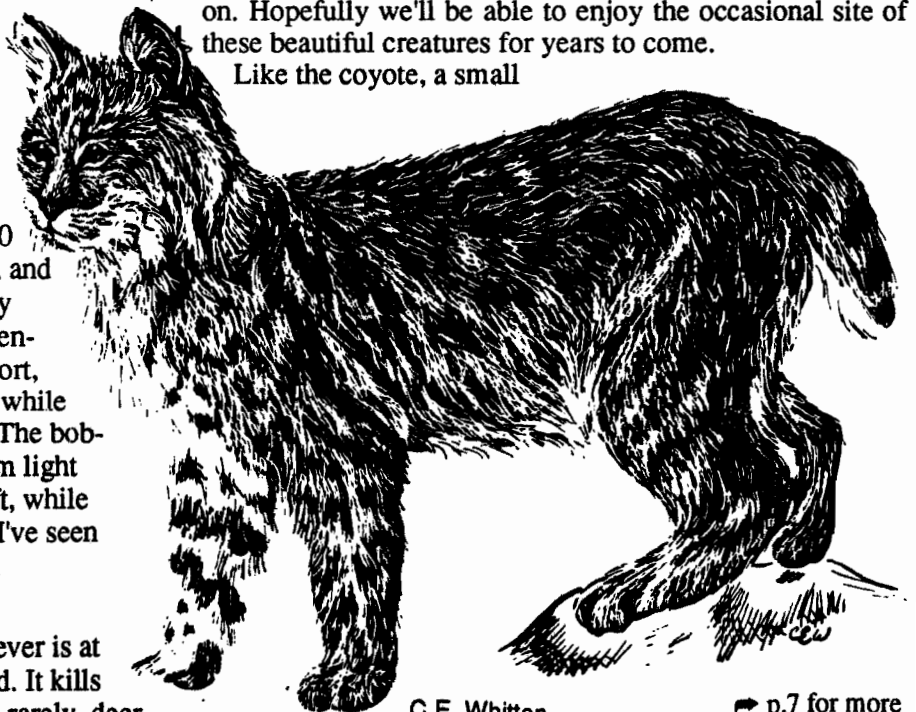
Back east they eat more deer because the deer are smaller and the bobcats themselves bigger, than here in the west. Occasionally they will attack a sheep or other farm animal.

At the Johnson-Taylor Ranch, one of the volunteer rangers reports that the bobcat got one of their chickens recently. In fact, bobcats have often been seen and heard on the roofs of the buildings of the ranch. This illustrates the fact that the bobcat is a lot bolder than the mountain lion. Lions will give people and their buildings a wide berth generally. In contrast, several of my neighbors who live on the rim of the canyon have woken up in the morning to sounds on their back decks. Looking out, they have been treated to the sight of an adult bobcat on their deck curiously looking in! On the trail, a bobcat won't always run away upon sighting you. Often it will look at you and then casually saunter off as if it hasn't a care in the world.

### Bobcat babies

Bobcat mothers give birth to a litter of one to six kits, usually in the spring, but later in the summer -- if the first mating wasn't successful. We've seen babies several years running now. Four years ago one of our board members discovered a bobcat's den on a canyon slope in thick brush. When we checked it out we could hear at least two kittens meowing inside. But we also heard a deep growl from mom and backed off! How well these bobcat families and the others seen in López Canyon and up on the Del Mar Mesa will hold up under the pressures of development we'll have to see. We've already lost at least two, and perhaps more, bobcats in the last two years in road kills on Black Mountain Rd. The amount of territory they can roam and the game they can find is steadily being encroached on. Hopefully we'll be able to enjoy the occasional site of these beautiful creatures for years to come.

Like the coyote, a small



C.E. Whitten

➔ p.7 for more

# Monarch Estates Wins Approval After Concessions

by Mike Kelly

Monarch Estates, the biggest project on López Ridge, received final approval, but in an amended form, at a meeting of the full Planning Commission in August. An earlier decision to approve the development at the Sub-division Review Board level had been appealed by the Sierra Club, an appeal supported by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

Both groups accepted the fact that the development couldn't be stopped since it was a replan of a project that already had received approval and the entire ridge top had already been graded. Both also agreed that the replan was an improvement over the original project. The number of units was cut in half, perimeter fencing was changed to be less obtrusive, the houses were pushed back further from the canyon rim and the profiles changed to lessen the impact on people using the Preserve's trails below.

In addition, the developer, BCH, with Barry McComic, Inc. being the majority partner, agreed to revegetate the wildlife corridor to make it more attractive to mule deer. They also agreed to plant the new bridge linking Sorrento Valley Blvd. to Calle Cristobal on López Ridge. In a letter to the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force, they committed to a contribution towards the financing of a future visitor center, a

contribution towards the salary of a new full-time Senior City Ranger for the Preserve, and to buy a 4-wheel jeep for the ranger.

Despite these improvements, the Sierra Club and the Friends were still worried about one key issue. This was the potential impact on the viewshed of the houses. In other words, would people walking the trails below see houses lining the rim as has happened with other area projects? This destroys the wilderness experience so many come to the canyon to find. For this reason, the two groups had been asking for clear language in the final environmental impact report and map guaranteeing that landscape screening combined with the greater setbacks and other measures would prevent any significant impact on this viewshed. Although there was oral agreement from the developer, it didn't find its way into the final documents, even at the first hearing at the Sub-division Review Board level — hence the appeal. Before the full Planning Commission, BCH agreed that such language and a performance bond to guarantee it be a condition of approval of the project. After this agreement, the vote was unanimous to approve.

The Friends wish to thank the Sierra Club and especially its Land Use Chair, Linda Michael, for their aggressive defense of the Preserve.

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(Gnatcatcher cont'd)

icate with others of their species.

The decision was made and authorized to treat and consider the two populations of gnatcatchers as whole separate species. So now, we who keep track of such things can add one more bird to our lists!

The California Gnatcatcher is a small and slender insect-eating bird, 4-1/2 inches long, half of which is tail. Its tail is all black except for a narrow white outer edge to the outer tail feathers, and a little white at the tip. Their plumage is drab gray, somewhat browner on the lower back and wings, paler gray below with softer beige or buff on the belly. The male sports a shiny black crown during the breeding season while the female lacks the crown but has a thin white eye-ring.

Their diagnostic whining, kitten-like, buzzy "meeew" call is one of several other similar vocalizations. They seem to prefer plants such as California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) and Flat-topped Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) as primary habitat to forage in and maintain themselves. Unfortunately, this is, or was the most-widespread vegetation found over what is now San Diego and its rapidly-growing suburban areas.

Although not considered officially endangered yet, this wonderful little bird has received a good measure of attention from environmental professionals and consultants since its designation as a full species. Much is yet to be

learned about what will ensure its future, but it has a loyal following to see it does survive.

### *The California Gnatcatcher*

Where has all the sagescrub gone,  
where once they stood now there is none,  
to hold me close and keep me safe,  
where I can live and find escape?

© 1990 Claude G. Edwards

## Office Furniture Needed

Our office at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House is badly in need of the following items:

- wood (simulated ok) desk
- a desk-type chair
- wood bookcases or similar shelving
- wood display cabinets

If you can donate any of these items to the Friends, please call Mike Kelly at 566-6489. We'll be glad to arrange a pickup.

**(Camino Ruíz cont'd)**

to confirm this date. Please plan to attend these hearings and let your community leaders know your opposition to this plan. The hearings are being held because the City's Traffic and Engineering Department has released a preliminary traffic study purporting to show the need for another north-south freeway between Peñasquitos and Mira Mesa.

As you know from past newsletters, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group, and the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board have all taken positions against the building of this road across the Preserve.

There are two ways to approach the question of Camino Ruíz. One is simply on the traffic issues. Would building Camino Ruíz across the Canyon significantly reduce traffic problems in Peñasquitos? Remember that only two miles further east, the north-south Black Mountain road is being widened to 6 lanes from its current two into Mira Mesa; that Westview Parkway, coming off Black Mtn. Rd., is opening to Mira Mesa Blvd; that the eastern end of Route 56 will open up another ramp to I-15, not to speak of the eventual linking up with Route 56 to the west.; that the light rail line is coming up I-15.

The second approach is to recognize Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve as an benefit that overrides any incremental need for another road. The Friends feel that our rapidly dwindling open-space and natural resources city-wide make Peñasquitos Canyon too precious a resource to further damage. A road across the center of the Preserve would destroy it's integrity.

Development to date has been largely kept out of the greenbelt, wetlands, and other bottom land. You can still take a walk for several miles in parts of the Preserve and not see man-made structures. A bridge would forever change that. It would also seriously impact the wild animal and bird populations we still enjoy in the canyon.

In our increasingly crowded and polluted city, this is one of our few and best places to get away from it all — whether on foot, on a bike, or on horseback. We feel it's part of what makes living in Mira Mesa, Scripps Ranch and Peñasquitos special — it's an essential part of the character of our communities.

Other communities in the city have rejected road changes that promised to relieve some congestion or make it more convenient to get from point A to point B in order to preserve the special character of their area. Hillcrest, North Park, La Jolla and University City come to mind. Are our communities too young to have or recognize those special characteristics that help explain why we like living here? We don't think so. New residents to the area are always amazed when they first visit the canyon. They thought you had to go far away to enjoy a walk in the wild, to smell the flowers and trees, to see a mule deer or bobcat, to forget about the hustle and bustle work-a-day world.

To have it in your own backyard is something we think is worth fighting for. Even if it might mean accepting a little more congestion, another minute or two to get to work.

**(Earthquake cont'd)**

nario is present in wetlands at the west end of the Preserve which is fed by groundwater. Therefore, that portion of Calle Cristobal that crosses the wetlands between the Ruíz Adobe and the bridge across López Creek is a likely place for liquefaction to occur. That is one reason why the contractors placed 600 cased holes in the roadbed there last year. Porous casings were pushed down about 60' through the saturated mud to the top of the underlying sandstone in an attempt to "dry out" the wetlands. Nevertheless, the roadway sunk about 5 feet after it was first put in and is even now being dug up for rebuilding. There is a very real possibility that part of the roadway would be damaged by seismic shaking from a large earthquake along the Rose Canyon Fault. The section of the roadway closest to the west end of the López Creek Bridge is the most likely site for potential earthquake damage in the Preserve.

Reference 1. *Geology of Los Peñasquitos Canyon*, by John Northrop, Windsor Associates, P.O. Box 90282, San Diego, CA 92109 (1989).

Reference 2. *Geology of the San Diego Metropolitan Area, California*. Bulletin 200, California Division of Mines and Geology, 1416 9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 (1975).

**(Bobcat cont'd)**

dog or cat wandering outside may sometimes fall prey to a bobcat. I hope our new neighbors bordering the canyons of the Preserve will realize that losing an occasional pet is a normal price to pay for choosing to live next to a "wild" area and not raise a panicky hue and cry about the "wild" animals.

Early mornings and dusk are the best times to see bobcats. Join the Friends on one of our upcoming dusk walks and you might be lucky enough to see a bobcat. We've already seen deer and other wild animals on each walk.

---

## Biologist(s) Needed

A person with a background in biology or a student well along in their studies who can volunteer their time will be a great help in some of the Friends upcoming activities.

As developments are planned for areas adjacent to the preserve we must do biological surveys to identify plant and animal species, especially endangered or threatened ones. We have a team of eager amateur naturalists waiting to work with experienced people.

Another project is to finish a biological survey of the preserve begun by our deceased founder, Dr. Elberta Fleming. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 if you can help.



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 619-484-3219 566-6489

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**Outings (cont'd)**

**OCTOBER**

**BIRD WALK**

Sat., Oct. 6, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. With 146 species of birds identified, Peñasquitos Canyon is a great place for both beginner and experience birders. Bring binoculars and bird book if possible.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Oct. 6, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. See 5,000 years of history: Indian & settler artifacts, authentic adobe ranch house, and more.

**WATERFALL WALK WITH BARBARA MOORE**

Sun., Oct. 7, 11 am - 2 pm. The co-author of *Walking San Diego* will lead this special walk to the waterfall in the Preserve. Meet at the Carmel Valley Park and Ride. Bring water and a lunch.

**NATURE WALK**

Sat., Oct. 13, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. We'll look for flowers and plants that the Indians and Settlers used while living in the canyon.

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**FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING**

Tues., Oct. 16, 7:30 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. If you're interested in helping the Friends educate about and protect the Preserve come to the meeting.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat., Oct. 20, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

**HALLOWEEN GRAVEYARD WALK FOR KIDS**

Sat., Oct. 30, 7 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Halloween eve join us for our 2nd annual Halloween Walk for kids. We'll visit a grave in the Preserve and perhaps encounter the ghoul of Peñasquitos. Kids must be accompanied by adult.

**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10  
 Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100  
 Corporate \$250 Life \$1000  
 Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.





## Camino Ruíz Hearing Inconclusive

by Mike Kelly, president

Rancho Peñasquitos' Planning Board held an inconclusive hearing on the fate of Camino Ruíz Oct. 3 at its monthly meeting. As our readers know, the City's Transportation Planning Division wants to build Camino Ruíz across the Canyon despite opposition by Planning Boards, community groups, and City Council members from both districts.

As this agenda point opened we learned that the results of the "final" traffic study were postponed once again. Planning Board president Kevin McNamara, expressing the frustration of the Board at what has quickly become an "old" story, questioned the City's representative sharply as to when they could realistically expect the report. The answer wasn't satisfactory. Despite the absence of a city report, there was a discussion of the impact Camino Ruíz would have on Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Sentiment on the Board and among the many Rancho Peñasquitos residents in attendance was clearly against allowing Camino Ruíz to divide the Preserve.

No vote was taken since it was explained that the notice for the meeting hadn't made it clear that Camino Ruíz was to be a voting item. It was decided to put the issue of Camino Ruíz on the Nov. 7 Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board meeting agenda as a voting item, regardless of whether or not the city's traffic study results are ready. As several Board members expressed it, the Peñasquitos Preserve is an overriding benefit to the community that shouldn't be violated no matter what a future traffic study might show.

Preserve supporters shouldn't feel that this matter is settled. Several people in attendance (one a builder with a project in the area) want Camino Ruíz to cross the preserve and vowed to mobilize people in support of their position for the next meeting. This meeting will be a critical one for the future of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Peñasquitos residents should plan to come and make your voices heard. Mira Mesa residents will have a similar opportunity at a future meeting of the Mira Mesa Community Planning Board. Call me at 566-6489 if you want more information.

## "Give Something Back"

By Mike Kelly, president

Sat., Sept. 22, more than 30 volunteers spent a half day cleaning up 9 major areas of the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. From I-15 west to the Waterfall area and south to

➡ p. 6 for more

## Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

### OCTOBER

#### BIRD WALK

Sat., Oct. 6, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. Bring a bird book and binoculars. Beginners & experienced birders welcome!

#### KyXy WALK

Sat., Oct. 6, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. KyXy Radio, The Picnic People, and S.D. County Parks are sponsoring a walk in Peñasquitos Canyon.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Oct. 6, 11 am and noon (45 min. each). San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House, Canyonside entrance (off Black Mtn. Rd.) to the Preserve. See Indian, settler artifacts, authentic adobe ranch house.

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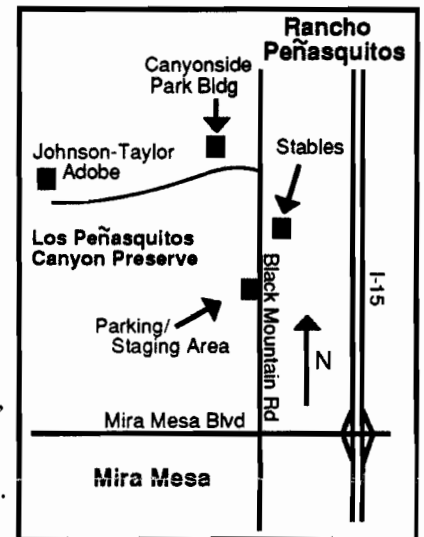
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➡ p. 10 for more



# Roundup of Environmental Bond Measures on Nov. Ballot

by Mike Kelly

This November's election ballot offers us a rare opportunity to make big decisions concerning the future of our environment, locally and statewide. There are initiatives on the San Diego City, San Diego County and State of California ballots that deal with environmental issues. Don't let the thickness of the ballot "pamphlet" (more like a book) discourage you from voting. Take the time to at least read the initiatives of most interest to you. And take the time to vote. Our newsletter doesn't have the room to even begin to print just the environmental initiatives, so what follows is just a brief overview of some of the key measures.

## San Diego City — Proposition E 1990 Park and Open Space Bond Measure

Proposition E is the 1990 Park and Open Space Bond Measure. If passed, it will provide \$100 million for park purchase and enhancement. It is similar to past measures passed by San Diego voters, including Prop 70, another bond measure that was used to buy open-space lands, including parts of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

\$70 million of the funds would be spent on local parks and park enhancements. This would include tot lots, recreational equipment, resodding of playing fields, rest rooms in inner city parks and other improvements in the existing urbanized areas of San Diego. A citizens committee appointed by Mayor O'Connor and the City Council spent many months taking public testimony in order to draw up a list of some 179 potential park sites or enhancements throughout the entire city.

Two new regional parks would be the focus of land purchases with the remaining \$30 million. \$15 million would go towards such purchases in the San Dieguito River Valley and \$15 million in the Tijuana and Otay river valleys.

How will the \$100 million in bonds be paid? The annual cost to the average homeowner would be \$16 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. — less than a month's cable TV bill.

Support for the bond measure is as broad as you can get. Groups urging a "YES" vote on Prop E include: the Sierra Club, the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the entire City Council, the Construction Industry Federation, C-3, the San Diego Audubon Society, the San Diego League of Women Voters, etc.

Protection is built into the bond measure to prevent "bail outs" of developers by buying land they can't develop anyway. It won't be a substitute for sensitive lands protection measures. A citizens watchdog committee will make sure abuses don't take place.

To help out or donate to Prop E call or write:

San Diegans for Parks and Open Space  
1010 Second Ave., Suite 150B, #16  
San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 696-7545

## Dr. Seuss Scheduled for Prop E Rally

Saturday, Oct. 13, at 11 a.m. there will be a rally in support of Prop E, the 1990 Park and Open Space Bond Measure, at Robb Field in Ocean Beach (Take I-8 West all the way to Ocean Beach).

Dr. Seuss has donated one of his famous prints to the Parks cause and, health permitting, is scheduled to appear at the rally, along with many well-known political leaders and celebrities.

## San Diego City and County — Props. D & M Traffic Control and Comprehensive Growth Management Initiatives

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, the Sierra Club, Prevent Los Angelization Now (PLAN), Save Miramar Lake, San Diegans for Managed Growth and numerous elected officials have all decided to call for a "NO" vote on both Props D (County) and M (City).

Despite the seductive title, these propositions are not true Traffic Control or Growth Management Initiatives. In fact, both were initiatives funded by the building industry and would better be described as Props "Deceit and Manipulation," or "Developers and Money."

Read the entire initiative, not the summary being circulated by the builder financed San Diego 2000 committee. The summary is **not** an accurate account of the full initiative.

I've studied these entire initiatives and have spoken before planning and community groups and a city council against them. I find 5 important things wrong with them. And, I might add, I'm joined in opposing them by the County Board of Supervisors, the Mayor of San Diego and all but one member of the San Diego City Council, and elected officials from most of the area City Councils.

1. The more attractive elements of D and M that deal with "Water Quality Assurance Plans (III.A.5)," "Air Quality Assurance Plans (III.A.4)," "Protecting Future Water Supplies (III.A.2)," and "Public Facility Concurrent with Need (III.A.7)" are mere window dressing. In the full text these sections have no teeth, no enforcement or implementation mechanisms, sometimes even no standards to meet. They only call for *studying* these problems. This is the all-time champion cop out of people who don't want to take action. You form a study committee and study it to death.

2. "Sensitive Lands and Habitat Conservation" would "require the City . . . to acquire land which supports rare or endangered species of animals or plants" from developers. This is a bailout of land speculators who bought sensitive lands that they can't develop under our Resource Protection Ordinances anyway! I don't know about you, but I'm tired of bailouts. The "S & L" bank bailout is already too

## Poison Oak Vaccine on the Way? Leaves of Three, Let It Be

Christine E. Whitten MD

Three plants that definitely should be seen and not touched are poison oak, poison ivy, and the East Coast's relatively rare poison sumac. Unrelated to normal ivy and oak, these plants are members of the cashew family and are related to the cashew, the mango, and the Asian lacquer tree. By the way, Lacquer made from the sap of the lacquer tree can also cause a rash in susceptible people.

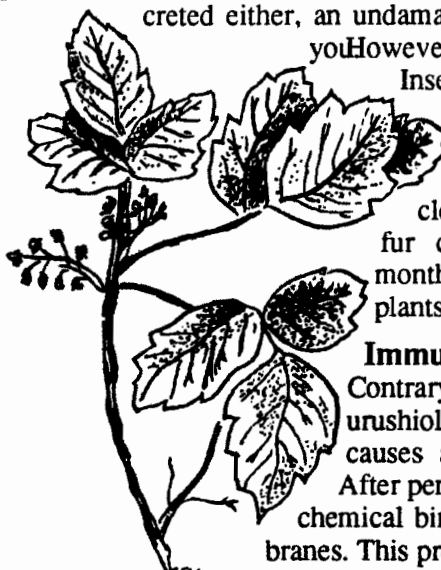
Poison oak abounds in Peñasquitos Preserve and causes problems for the unwary. Judging from the many uses the local Indians had for poison oak — including eye washes and a cure for warts — it's thought that most, if not all, were probably immune to the effects. While some 25% of the latter day American population is apparently immune, at least 110 million are sensitive to the chemicals they contain. Some 23 million are so sensitive *that brief exposure to a single leaf may cause severe dermatitis and the need for medical care.*

### Poison oak is an occupational hazard

These plants are more than just a nuisance for hikers. They're a major occupational hazard, causing 10% of the work related injuries of the Forest Service and of firefighters. Breathing smoke from burning poison oak or ivy can cause fearsome effects, including head-to-toe dermatitis, fever, pneumonia, and even death if the throat swells shut. I remember my own cousin, bedridden and unable to open her eyes for days, after simply walking through the smoke from a small burning pile of brush.

All three plants contain a heavy oil called urushiol. It's so strong a pinhead amount can cause rashes in 500 sensitive people. The chemical lasts a long time. Botanists have gotten rashes from samples of plants stored away for over 100 years. And a Chinese lacquer jar, in one case, caused a rash after being buried for 1,000 years!

It's impossible to get the rash by standing near the plants. Urushiol doesn't vaporize. In fact, since it's not secreted either, an undamaged plant won't hurt you. However, the leaves are easily bruised.



Insects release the chemical when they eat the leaves. In addition, contaminated clothes, tools and pet fur can cause the rash months after touching the plants.

### Immunity may not last

Contrary to popular belief, urushiol is not a poison. It causes an allergic reaction. After penetrating the skin, the chemical binds to the cell membranes. This prompts the body of an

allergic person to attack and destroy its own skin cells as foreign invaders! No one knows how many exposures it takes to cause the first response, but from then on traces of the chemical trigger the reaction. You can become allergic at any time in your life so *it's best to avoid the plants even if you think you're immune.*

### Vaccine may be coming

A skin test will be out in the next year or so to identify people at risk. In addition, Scientists are hard at work on a new pill to protect sensitive individuals. The pill contains urushiol, and when taken internally, desensitizes the body's immune response to the chemical. It works successfully in animals and is soon to start human trials. This lends credence to the "old-wive's tale" of preventing poison ivy by drinking milk from goats that have dined on the plants. Such goat's milk contains urushiol and probably works the same way. However, I would not recommend lunching on poison ivy to see if it works!

Under scrutiny, other historical preventives and cures haven't fared so well. In the past people bathed in horse urine or bleach; cleaned their skin with gunpowder, gasoline, marshmallows, even strychnine; or applied Lysol, hair spray, meat tenderizer, mustard or dozens of other home remedies! Some of these were very dangerous "cures."

### Precautions and treatments

The best way to avoid the rash is to watch where you walk. Teach yourself and your children to identify them. All have *shiny* leaves in groups of *three*. Poison oak can be a low shrub, a big bush or a vine climbing the Preserve's trees. They may have small white flowers. Poison oak and ivy produce a beautiful red display in the fall. This fall display convinced English visitors to bring it home to England where it was planted in gardens! Women gardeners who first developed the rash were dismissed as "hysterical."

Wash yourself and your clothes well after any trek through the brush. If you wash the oils off before they can penetrate the skin you can prevent the reaction.

The rash consists of small blisters on red, swollen, itchy skin. First aid is a thorough cleansing with soap and water. Don't intentionally break the blisters because they can contain urushiol and spread the rash. Over-the-counter Benadryl, 25mg every 6 hours for an *adult*, and twice daily applications of topical hydrocortisone cream should help the itching. Cool compresses of *dilute* epsom salts, boric acid, or even table salt can dry a weeping lesion and promote healing. Severe reactions, especially those in small children, should be treated by a doctor. Remember,

Leaves of three, let it be,  
for poison oak it just might be!

[Based on research reported in "Science has got its hands on poison ivy, oak and sumac," *Nature*, October 1989.]

## Birding Field Guides

by Barbara Zepf

While leafing through my field guide trying to decide which bird to talk about this month, it occurred to me I should say something about selecting a field guide. This is a very personal decision. What you think is the perfect choice might not be someone else's selection. As a beginning birder, one certain guide may be the most helpful. Later on, a different field guide may be what you prefer.

Some field guides use photographs, and some use artist's renditions. Usually, the ones which use artists are preferable. A photograph only captures the bird at one certain moment. An artist can show all of the identifying marks in one drawing that may not occur in a photo of any given specimen. Every bird you see may not have all these marks, but the more clues you have to work with, the better your chances are of identifying the bird.

For the most part, water birds are in the first half of the field guides and land birds in the second half. Usually, the books follow the "natural" or evolutionary avian order from the most primitive to the more advanced bird families.

I'll write here of four different field guides. The first is *The National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Right now, this is my first choice. Be sure you purchase the "second edition." Many field guides are updated and the newer editions are, for the most part, an improvement over the older ones. As more is learned about birds, the guides change: maps are altered, birds' names change, new birds range to North America, etc..

The National Geographic Society guide is a compilation of many artists' works. I like this guide because it shows both male and female plummages, mature and immature birds and summer and winter plummages, if any of these differ. Descriptive paragraphs and range maps are directly opposite the illustrated birds. This book covers all North America, so a different book is not needed when birding in the eastern states or where east and west overlap.

One disadvantage is size. It's large and heavy to carry. I also find the index a bit difficult to use quickly.

Next is *A Guide to Field Identification Birds of North America* by Robbins, Bruun and Zim — the "Golden" Field Guide. Again, be sure to purchase the second edition. This covers all North America. This guide was my first choice as a beginning birder. It's inexpensive, easy to carry and has crisp, definitive illustrations. All the art work was done by one man, Arthur Singer — mind-boggling, isn't it? This is still one of my favorite field guides. There are several pages which make it a superb guide. There are two comparison pages of spring warblers, two of fall warblers and two of sparrows. These are a gigantic help. I use them so much that I bought an extra copy of this field guide just for these six pages. I cut them out and pasted them in the back of *The National Geographic Field Guide* which I presently use.

One of the things I dislike about this book is the way it identifies the birds' songs. It uses sonagrams — a graph de-

scription of pitch and note intervals, which I find very hard to interpret. Since we often identify a bird by its song, I prefer a field guide which describes the song in words. "Jacob ja-cob" identifies the Acorn Woodpecker for me, faster than I can decipher a sonagram.

The next field guide to consider is Roger Tory Peterson's *Western Birds*, third edition. This is a vast improvement over his two previous editions. It's a family effort. The text and illustrations (now on facing pages) were done by Roger. The maps were done by his wife, Virginia Marie Peterson. This field guide illustrates the "Peterson Method," which he invented. This method is based on patternistic drawings with arrows that pinpoint the key field marks. Voice descriptions are good, and the silhouettes of similar birds are an excellent means to help separate like species. This field guide is excellent when trying to identify a bird which is very similar to another bird. The "arrows" point out which distinguishing feature to look for.

I see two disadvantages to this book. First, the maps are at the back of the book, not usually a big problem. Second, this guide only covers the birds of western North America. There is a companion book for eastern North America.

The last field guide I wish to comment on is *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds-Western Region* published by Alfred A. Knopf. This is my least favorite book. The pictures are photographs instead of drawings. The male and female of the same species aren't on the same page. Descriptions are separate from the photos. The range of birds isn't depicted in map form (which is quicker to decipher). I find the index very confusing. In my opinion, these disadvantages add up to it being a poor *field* guide.

However, this is an excellent *reference* book: voice descriptions are good; the habitat of each bird discussed; nesting for each bird described and general information provided about each species. A good book for many reasons, it's just not an easy book to use in the field.

One final suggestion which you will be sorely tempted to ignore (as I did, and I came to regret) — don't use your field guide as your first means of identifying a bird. Most beginning (and some advanced) birders make this mistake. Scenario: you see a bird you can't identify. It's small and yellow. You frantically start looking at every yellow bird in your book. You finally find one that resembles it. The book says the bird has a faintly streaked breast. You look back to check its breast, and . . . it's gone! What's worse — it never comes back, even though you wait for 15 minutes.

Study your field guide at home before you set out on your birding trip. Learn what to look for. Does the bird have an eyeline, or wing-bars, or a thin beak or black legs? Does it flick its tail? Live near water? Travel in flocks? All these things, and more, help narrow the field of identification.

But you have to *see* these things *first!* When you come

## The Birds of Los Peñasquitos Canyon

# The Black-Chinned Hummingbird

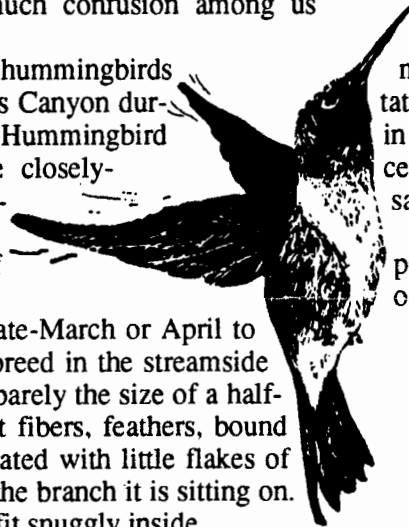
by Claude G. Edwards

Everyone is captivated by the aerial maneuvering and antics of those little feathered powerhouses, the hummingbirds. They can flap their wings at more than 100-200 beats per second, hover, fly straight up, and backwards. Hummingbirds are well known for their pugnacity, chasing off birds many times larger than themselves, or other hummers while at their favored feeding spots.

They're covered with metallic, iridescent feathers, reflecting sunlight at a given wavelength that lets us "see" certain colors, be it red, purple, blue, or green, which is the color most hummingbirds are seen in. Males are normally the more highly-patterned of the sexes, while young birds generally resemble the females. In poor light or at certain angles, hummingbirds appear dull, blackish, or incompletely-colored. This causes much confusion among us hummer-watchers!

Of the five or six species of hummingbirds that can be found in Peñasquitos Canyon during the year, the Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) is one closely-associated with the willow-cottonwood-sycamore-oak woodland that runs the length of the canyon.

They appear in our area in late-March or April to spend the summer season and breed in the streamside vegetation. Their soft nests are barely the size of a half-walnut, made up of fluffy plant fibers, feathers, bound up with spider webs, and decorated with little flakes of lichen, camouflaging it against the branch it is sitting on. Their two pea-sized white eggs fit snugly inside.



Black-chinned Hummingbirds find daily sustenance among the abundant nectar-producing flowers blooming in the canyon, fortified with small insects which are found in the flowers, or even caught out of mid-air, such as in a cloud of gnats.



The male and female both have glittery-olive green upperparts, slightly paler underparts, and a white upper breast. In addition, the male has a rounded throat which is truly black except for a narrow purple border along the lower edge, seen up close in certain angles. The male's tail is all-black and each feather is pointed, appearing forked when folded, while the female's is rounded and tipped with white on the outer feathers.

The interesting courtship dance performed by the male is conducted within the protective foliage of vegetation. He sways back and forth in flight in a shallow "U" in front of the female, fanning its tail, producing a discernable course buzzing with its wings, and giving its nasal calls. This performance is seldom witnessed.

Most of the time, these little birds are to be seen ziping by as a blur, often pursuing another hummingbird, or being pursued!

### *The Hummingbird*

You may think that I eat a little  
but facts would through you into a dither  
when you learn that if I were you  
I'd eat enough for a baseball crew!

© 1990 Claude G. Edwards

### (Field guides cont'd)

upon a new bird, resist the temptation to open your field guide right away. Look at the bird! Start at the head. Most experts can identify a bird by the head alone. (I can't yet, but I'm working on it.) Notice the beak. A sparrow's beak will not look like a warbler's beak. Look for eye rings, eye-brows and ear patches. Look at the lores. Notice the color of the chin. Is the bird's crown streaked or crested? Follow through checking as much as the bird as you can *before* it flies. Is the breast streaked? Does it have wing bars or wing patches? Note general size by comparing it to a bird that you know. When you've studied the bird as much as you can — *then* look in your field guide. You'll have many more clues to work with. If you're lucky, the bird will still be there when you look back up. But, even if it isn't, you'll know what detail to look for the next time you see him.

### Bushtits

I've spent so much time talking about field guides, that I haven't left much room for discussing a particular bird. So I'll pick an easy one to describe. How about the Bushtit?

It's a tiny bird with a long tail, only about four inches long — not much bigger than most hummingbirds. But it's easy to identify because of one habit — it rarely travels alone. They usually feed in large, busy, twittering flocks. They sound like a bunch of tinkling bells or, as one friend describes it: "a bowl of Rice Krispies." They're constantly on the move, sometimes hanging upside down to feed. When one bird flies to another bush, the whole gang follows.

They're gray above, paler below, have a short black bill and no distinguishing plumage, except for a brown crown (the coastal variety that we get in Peñasquitos Canyon). The males and newly-hatched young have dark eyes. Adult females have light cream-colored eyes.

They are sociable, friendly towards each other and towards humans. They eat insects, spiders, wasps, caterpillars and some fruit, among other things. Their hanging gourd-shaped nest is very large for their tiny size — about seven to ten inches long. They lay five to seven white eggs. Bushtits live year-round in Peñasquitos Canyon, and they always add a cheery note to the scene. Good Birding!

(Cleanup cont'd)

the Old López Trail head and Montongo Street detention basin we pulled out mattresses, tires, shopping carts, old fencing, and a lot of paper, filling an industrial size dumpster.

### Outward Bound Initiated Cleanup

The idea for the cleanup started with Outward Bound. This non-profit outdoor experience-based program is designed to enhance personal development and effectiveness for ages 14 and up. The organization, now in its sixth year in San Diego, serves more than 1,000 professionals, students and teachers each year.

Participants learn problem-solving skills and team work as they learn the basics of backpacking, climbing, campcraft, and first aid. A typical 4-7 day course is in Joshua Tree National Monument in the winter or Idyllwild in the summer. One-and two-day courses in San Diego take place in the Julian area, Peñasquitos Canyon or Mission Gorge.

Since they use Peñasquitos Canyon for their training courses, they decided it would be a good idea to give something back to the Preserve. They approached I Love a Clean San Diego with the idea of mobilizing some of their alumni in a cleanup effort.

I Love a Clean San Diego touched base with San Diego City Parks and Recreation's Open-Space Division who in turn contacted The Friends. It was decided to have the cleanup the same day as the statewide cleanup day.

Outward Bound mobilized about 2/3 of the people. The Friends scouted out areas that needed cleaning, and provided knowledgeable people to guide the cleanup crews to the right locations, as well as helping out with the actual cleanup. I Love a Clean San Diego provided plastic bags and the dumpster and the City the trash "pickers," two pickup trucks with drivers, wire cutters and other tools.

### Every day Cleanups

Interestingly enough, the dirtiest parts of the Preserve were not the trail areas. The trails are relatively clean. This is due to the diligent effort of some of the people who use the Preserve. A good number of you are in the habit of picking up trash as you walk the trails. In the future we'll probably find less trash, as much of the trash was dumped there by people in previous years when the Preserve was less used and access with vehicles was easier.

### An Apology

We apologize to the individuals and groups who expressed an interest in helping in the cleanup but who couldn't be used. It became clear we would have too many people if we publicized it much or if we accepted all the offers to help. For next winter/spring we do have several other projects that volunteer help will be needed with. Contact us and we'll reserve a project for you.

Thank you Outward Bound, our own members, I Love a Clean San Diego, and City Parks and Recreation Dept. for collaborating in this successful effort.

If you're interested in Outward Bound's program call 236-8481 for a free information packet.

## Penasquitos Welcomes Holidays on Horseback

by John Northrop

The internationally-known outfitters "Holidays on Horseback," based in Descanso, has started a satellite operation out of Horseman's Park. They use Missouri Fox-trotters and Tennessee Walkers exclusively on their rides. These horses, which give the "smoothest ride in the world," walk a bit faster and are more comfortable to ride than other breeds. They are magnificent animals and should be a great addition to riding activities in the Preserve.

There are about 35 miles of riding trails in Penasquitos Canyon (see: J. Northrop, *Riding 'Round Penasquitos*, Windsor Associates, P.O. Box 90282, San Diego, CA 92109). In addition, two old trails are being cleared; one east of Horseman's Park to Poway, and the other north of the Rufz Adobe to Sorrento Hills. The former connects with the Poway Trails System (one of the best in the State), and the latter with the dedicated "Power Lines Trail" past Torrey Pines High School to San Diequito River Park, the Polo fields, Rancho Santa Fe and beyond.

For those interested in taking daylight rides in the Preserve, call Holidays on Horseback at 445-3997.

Happy Trails!

### Thanks for the Furniture

Thanks to the folks who answered our appeal for furniture for our office at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. We were offered everything we asked for.

### Reptile and Amphibian Show and Sale

Saturday, Nov. 17 and Sunday, Nov. 18

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Del Mar Fairgrounds

- Live Amphibian & Reptile Exhibits
- Educational displays
- Animals and Animal-care products, books, art, t-shirts, jewelry, and more

Admission: \$2.00 adults; \$1.00 Children under 12

For further info call 755-1796

### San Diego Herpetological Society

P.O. Box 4036

San Diego, CA 92164

755-1796

(Ballot cont'd)

much to stomach without adding a local "builder bailout" to the bills we have to pay. If you or I invest in "gold coin futures" or pick a bad stock as an investment, is there anybody to bail us out? Why should speculative land investments be different?

3. "Curbside Recycling Program." This actually sets goals *lower* than the city and state goals. The builders propose to recover only certain *targeted recyclables* whereas the city and the state aim at recovering a bigger percentage of the *entire waste stream*. This would be a step backward from the recycling our communities are clamoring for.

4. At the risk of offending an occasional reader, it's necessary to say that key sections of D & M use technical lawyer language that only land use experts would understand. Most of the propositions sections would only apply to so-called "discretionary" projects. Basically, these are projects *not yet in the pipeline*. We estimate that this lets 80% of future San Diego projects off the hook. Even in the Urban Reserve area near Peñasquitos more than 85% of the 12,000 acres already have maps filed on them and fall outside the "discretionary" category!

You only have to look at the last public campaign filing of this S.D. 2000 committee to see why they are being so generous to projects already in the pipeline — even when the land is still untouched. More than 95% of the funds for the committee came from the 26 largest developers in Southern California. These mainly Los Angeles developers have crafted a sweetheart proposition for themselves.

In case this wasn't enough, they built in a safeguard for their friends who might not have put their projects in the pipeline. The measure doesn't take effect for 180 days after its passage! Do you know any landowner in their right mind who won't file a tentative map before that deadline to avoid the "discretionary" provisions?

5. Most importantly, we have the cap on environmental protection built into Section III.A.1.a, the "Completion of the Regional Transportation System: Comprehensive Transportation Impact Fee. Knowing that the City Council was about to impose a fee on new development based on the impact it would have on the environment and area resources, the builders put in a lower fee in Props D and M.

They place a cap of \$200 per average daily trip (ADT) generated by new development in an area. This would be paid when a developer pulled a building permit — *maybe*. It's not clear from our studies if other language in the measure might not make even this provision invalid, and thereby let them off the hook for *any* fees.

The City Council did decide Oct. 1 to impose a fee schedule based on the principle that new development should pay its fair share towards the mass transit, roads, utilities, and public facilities their projects would require. This fee is higher than the developers cap of \$200 per ADT. This reflects the fact that the D and M \$200 fee at best would raise \$643 million, when the City Manager estimates we really need \$1.9 billion, 3 times as much, to meet the demand for new facilities generated by new projects.

If D and M pass, the lower fees prevail. And guess who gets to make up the difference? Either it comes out of our taxpayers' pockets or we once again find our transportation network, parks, fire stations, police stations, etc. lagging far behind our population growth. Meanwhile, the builders build out and move on to their next profit center, having reaped their profits subsidized by taxpayer dollars.

If you would like to find out about an upcoming public forum on D & M in your area or want to help defeat Props D and M, call or write:

Beat the Builders Coalition  
9160 Kearny Villa Road, Suite 220  
San Diego, CA 92123-1121  
(619) 292-5767

## Forums on Props D & M

Oct. 22, Scripp Ranch, Jerebek El Sch, 10050 Avenida Manifica, 7:30 pm Highlight: Susan Golding; Sierra Club rep, Community leader, coalition leader: Prop D & M

Oct. 23, R Bernardo, Westwood School, 17449 Matinal Rd, 7 pm, D & M, speakers to be announced,

Oct. 24, RP, Mt Carmel HS 9550 Carmel Mtn Rd, 7 pm, Abbe Wolsheimer,

Oct. 30, MM, MMHS, 10510 Reagan Rd., 7 pm, auditorium, City Council member Linda Bernhardt, environ leaders, community leaders.

### State — Prop. 128: Big Green

You're seeing lots of ads on TV concerning "Big Green." Briefly, among other things it:

- phases out all pesticides known to cause cancer or birth defects by the end of 1996;
- prevents offshore oil drilling except in the case of a national emergency;
- reduces "greenhouse gases" with a plan that will bring about a 20% decrease of carbon dioxide by 2000 and 40% by 2010;
- phases out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), chemicals that destroy the protective layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere;
- protects ancient redwoods by providing a \$300 million fund to purchase stands of ancient redwood trees threatened with logging;
- increases farmworker protection from exposure to dangerous pesticides;
- creates a new, elected state office, the Environmental Advocate, charged with enforcing the environmental laws.

Against Big Green, the agricultural, pesticide, and logging industries put another initiative, #135, dubbed "Big

(Ballot cont'd)

**Brown**" on the ballot. Despite lots of window dressing, this measure ratifies the status quo for the giant industries supporting it and includes a "killer amendment" to nullify Big Green if both should pass. A sense of "color" will help on these two measures! For more information, contact:

Council of Environmental Organizations  
2232 Sunset Cliffs Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92107  
(619) 222-5393

### State — Prop. 130: Forest Forever

This initiative is supported by the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Planning and Conservation League, and many other groups. It would raise \$742 million for acquisition of 3,000 acres of ancient "headwaters" forest. It would also ban clearcutting of ancient forests and

of the currently allowed 120 acre clearcuts. It also mandates sustained yield, so that no more can be cut than is grown, protects streams and ends the timber industry domination of the Board of Forestry.

In opposition, the timber industry financed an opposing initiative, #138, dubbed "Big Stump." Big Stump provides no money for acquisition of old growth forests, and permits clearcutting of ancient forest if it is replaced with 4 inch seedlings! It claims to reduce clearcutting, but substitutes other equally destructive logging practices, including "overstory removal" and "seed tree removal." It would freeze weak logging rules in place and allow one-time approval of massive logging plans of 200,000 acres or more and ban future public review of same. Contact the same Council of Environmental Organizations listed on page 7 for more information.

## "Things that creep and crawl"

Richard Ploch, president of the Herpetological Society of San Diego kicked off the Friends' 'Evening at the Ranch' lecture series before a standing room only crowd Sept. 29. About 80 people, including many kids, packed the meeting room at the historic Adobe Johnson-Taylor Ranch House to hear the talk on Reptiles and Amphibians and meet some of Mr. Ploch's snakes.

In fact, some of the kids brought *their* snakes and lizards to meet Mr. Ploch. One youngster walked in the door with his pet python curled like a bracelet about his wrist! As the meeting progressed, more and more kids made their way to the front of the room and sat on the floor directly in front of the snakes in their cages. Every movement of the snakes immediately fixed their attention.

And no wonder they were captivated by the snakes. Everyone marveled at the brightly colored reptiles, including a milk, pine snake, red whip, and other snakes. The pine snake, a relative of our gopher snake, put on quite a show, hissing menacingly to the delight of the audience.

Ploch covered a lot of ground in his talk, from defining the differences among reptiles such as the snake versus the alligator, to the differences from amphibians. He discussed the beneficial role most reptiles play in the ecology and in our economy. The average snake, for example, saves a farmer \$50 - \$75 a year by reducing the rodent population that would otherwise feed on the farmer's grain crops.

### What's happening to our Amphibians?

Perhaps the most important fact Ploch imparted to the audience this night was a recent alarming development with amphibians. It seems that all over the world, frogs populations are declining rapidly. No one has yet been able to prove why this is happening. Speculation is that the moist skin of the frog and the water-based habitat it inhabits makes it particularly susceptible to pollution in the air, particularly in the form of acid rain. What is now being recognized is that frogs are an *indicator species*, one that signals

the health, or distress, of a whole ecosystem.

One problem with this recently observed phenomena is that few good census of reptiles or amphibians exist around the world. Bird census, butterfly counts, big horn sheep counts, deer densities, etc. provide a baseline from which to measure the status of these creatures. Hence, the decision by Herpetological Societies around the world to being a census of reptiles and amphibians. You, our readers will be able to help with this census in several ways. First, to do a census, you have to know where a likely place is to look! For example, when counting endangered desert big horn sheep you do it over the July 4th weekend when the weather forces them to come to the few water-holes available in Anza Borrego. For reptiles and amphibians, the Herpetological Society wants help in identifying likely count places. Then, they will select certain locations to focus on for a yearly count.

To begin with, they would simply like to hear from members of the Friends and other organizations when we see a local reptile or amphibian. They will soon provide a form that interested people can fill out to report a sighting. We will publish this form in our newsletter when it is available. Write and let us know if you would like to help out in this effort in Peñasquitos Canyon.

### Rattlesnake roundups must be stopped

Ploch called our attention to a very dangerous cultural event that occurs annually in the U.S.: the "Rattlesnake Roundup." As if it isn't bad enough that reptiles are suffering great declines in numbers through destruction of their habitat, over collection by collectors, and other problems, but they have to face "roundups."

Roundups attract tourists and tourists pump dollars into the local economies. The end result, however, is that the balance between rodent and serpent is destroyed and some species of rattlesnakes are in danger of extinction. For more information on this inhumane and stupid practice, write: Reptile Defense Fund, 5025 Tulane Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70808.



## Open Letter to Bernhardt Recallers

[Members and other friends have been asking us what our opinion is concerning the attempt to recall Fifth District City Councilmember Linda Bernhardt. Bernhardt has been known as a long-time supporter of the efforts to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve against developer encroachments — before and after her election to the City

September 28, 1990

At its September Board of Directors meeting, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve voted unanimously to oppose the recall campaign against City Councilmember Linda Bernhardt. We oppose the recall because we're pleased with her actions on key issues facing her district and the city as a whole. These issues include:

- managing our growth and working to bring needed community facilities up to speed;
- pushing for mass transit solutions to traffic congestion;
- strengthening the "Resource Protection Ordinances" to protect sensitive lands and open-space;
- protecting the Urban Reserve from premature development, an issue voters affirmed several years ago;
- pushing to see that the Prop C landswap approved by the voters to add land to the Peñasquitos Preserve goes through despite the attempt by Newland California to back out of it;
- fighting the attempt by City Traffic and Engineering to extend Camino Ruiz across Peñasquitos Canyon despite votes by the Planning Boards in Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos against this road;
- helping forge an agreement that brought both the Save the Lake Committee and McMillan Development together on the issue of Mira Mar Lake.

Is she guilty of an "arrogant lack of interest toward citizens who placed her in office" (Kathy Gaustad, *S.D. Union*, 8-26-90)? Quite the opposite. My own experience — and even that of community leaders who didn't vote for her — is that she has been quite accessible and interested in our concerns. Jay Powell, her aide to Mira Mesa Community groups and environmental groups citywide, is highly thought of. We don't always win, but we do get answers and action when we raise concerns.

If anybody should be upset over the issue of developer money, it should be the environmentalists. After all, we watched developer money at work destroying our dwindling natural resources. Bernhardt promised during her campaign not to accept contributions from developers, but

Council. A number of members of the Friends also played prominent roles in her successful campaign effort.

At its September meeting, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose the recall effort and directed the President to make this position public. The following letter was sent to the area media.]

since the campaign she has. Yet the criticism of this has come, not from any environmental group that I know, but from people not known to be champions of the environment. An opportunistic issue for them?

Personally, I contributed during and after the campaign to help retire her debt. The fact is, Bernhardt's supporters, including many environmentalists, couldn't contribute enough to pay off her debt. Realistically, I think she had to accept donations from developers to retire her debt. My only criticism is that she should have been frank about changing her position and not try to wriggle away from it like most politicians. I don't assume any quid pro quid is involved, nor a sellout. Is this a recallable offense? I don't think so. The test for all the members of the City Council, including Bernhardt, will be how they vote on the big issues listed above.

How about redistricting? The recallers are upset that her new district doesn't include Scripps Ranch and Mira Mesa. The Friends, too, aren't happy it was our communities dropped from the district. But, given the nature of redistricting, some communities had to change districts. We're upset, however, because we're losing someone good and responsive on the issues facing us.

Was the redistricting process ugly? Yes. Of course, I've never seen a redistricting fight that wasn't a brass knuckles affair on both sides, with winners and losers. Could it have been handled better? Probably. Would the losers have screamed just as loud? Absolutely. Is it a recallable offense? I don't think so.

We're confident that we can continue to enjoy Bernhardt's support for Peñasquitos Canyon, on the issue of Camino Ruiz, and on important city wide issues of resource protection, mass transit, and growth management. That's why we say NO to the recall effort.

Mike Kelly  
President, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 619-484-3219 566-6489

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**Outings (cont'd)**

**GEOLOGY WALK**

Sun., Oct. 21, 9 am (2 hrs). **Steep hill** involved. Meet under big power lines on Calle Cristobal on López Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruiz north To C. Cristobal. Left. to power lines.) Learn area's geology and see Preserve's only known fossil near the waterfall.

**HALLOWEEN GRAVEYARD WALK**

Mon., Oct. 29, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 hours). Our 2nd Annual Halloween Walk for kids. Free, but call 484-3219 to **make reservations**. We'll visit a grave in the Preserve and perhaps encounter the Ghoul of Penasquitos Past. Kids must be accompanied by adult.

**NOVEMBER**

**FITNESS WALK**

Sat., Nov. 3, 8 am. This 10K brisk walk will be led by Dr. Jaya Perryman to the waterfall and back. Bring water. Meet at the Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Nov. 3, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. See Oct. 6 for details.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat., Nov. 10, 8 am (2 hours). See Oct. 20 for details.

**BIRD WALK**

Sat., Nov. 17, 8 am. (1-1/2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. See Oct. 6 for details.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Nov. 17, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. See Oct. 6 for details.

**FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING**

Sat., Nov 17, 7:00 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Program to be announced. If you're interested in helping the Friends educate about and protect the Preserve come to the meeting.

**GEOLOGY WALK**

Sun., Nov. 18, 9 am (2 hrs). See Oct. 21 for details.

**NATURE WALK**

Sat., Nov. 24, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. See Oct. 13 for details.

**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10  
 Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100  
 Corporate \$250 Life \$1000  
 Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



## R. Mitchel Beauchamp Noted Plant Expert to Speak

R. Mitchel Beauchamp, well-known San Diego botanist and author of *A Flora of San Diego County, California*, will be the featured speaker at the Friends annual meeting. The meeting is scheduled for Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House, reached by using the Canyonside Park entrance to the Preserve off Black Mtn. Rd, between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

Mr. Beauchamp is also known for his successful drive to put the Mesa Mint, *Pogogne abramsii*, on the Federally Protected Endangered Species list. This tiny plant is found in San Diego vernal pools and no where else in the world.

His topic will be "Vegetation and Interesting Plants of the Region." Mr. Beauchamp runs a biological consulting business, Pacific Southwest Biological Services, and a native plant nursery, Pacific Southwest Nursery.

The evening begins with free refreshments, followed by a short election of new officers for the Friends, and Mr. Beauchamp's presentation at 7:30. The program should adjourn about 9 p.m. after a question and answer period. The entire meeting is open to members and the general public, although only members will vote for the new officers.

## Camino Ruíz Vote Set for Nov. 7 by Mike Kelly

Wednesday, Nov. 7, the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board has scheduled further discussion and possibly a vote on the fate of Camino Ruíz. The 7:30 p.m. meeting will take place in the Berwick Room at Carmel Highland Country Club on Peñasquitos Drive.

We urge residents of Rancho Peñasquitos who want to prevent further damage to the Preserve to turn out for the meeting. We suggest that concerned residents from Mira Mesa *not* attend this meeting. You'll have an opportunity to voice your opinions at a meeting of the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group. The date is not yet set for the Mira Mesa meeting. Call me at 566-6489 for more information.

The City of San Diego's preliminary traffic study is out and continues to make a case for extending Camino Ruíz across Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. They claim it will significantly relieve traffic congestion in Rancho Peñasquitos by providing another north-south access for residents during the rush-hour commute. However, most of these commuters would be heading right into one of the three busiest in-

## Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

### NOVEMBER

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., Nov. 3, 8 am. 10-K brisk walk will be led by Dr. Jaya Perryman to waterfall and back. Bring water. Meet at Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Nov. 3, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Meet at Johnson-Taylor Ranch House, Canyonside entrance off Black Mtn. Rd. See Indian, settler artifacts, authentic adobe ranch, archaeological dig.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Nov. 10, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock. Meet at the Parking-Staging area.

#### BIRD WALK

Sat., Nov. 17, 8 am. (1-1/2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring a bird book and binoculars. Beginners welcome.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Nov. 17, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. See Nov. 3 for details.

#### FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING

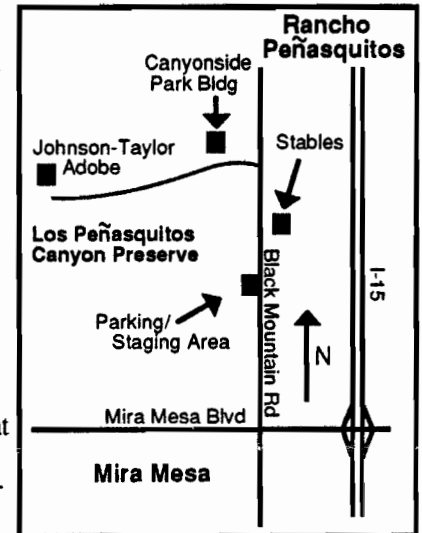
Sat., Nov 17, 7:00 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. See article on this page.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., Nov. 18, 9 am (2 hrs). **Steep hill** involved. Walking stick helpful. Meet under the power lines on Calle Cristobal on López Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruíz north to C. Cristobal. Go left to power lines.) Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil

#### NATURE WALK

Sat., Nov. 24, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Look for flowers and plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.



# Peñasquitos Riders Brush Out Old Wagon Trail

by John Northrop, Member  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee

A group of trail riders from Peppertree Farms brushed out the old wagon road that was part of the original north-south "Road to San Diego" before U.S. 101 and I-15 were built. According to Frank Knechtel, a life-long resident of Carmel Valley, the road came down from the north and crossed the San Dieguito River where Lake Hodges is now, went south across Gonzales Canyon near Rancho Ballamar and crossed Carmel Valley Road at Clark's Ranch, near Evergreen Nurseries. From there, it continued south across the upper reaches of McGonigle and Deer Canyon to the North Rim of Peñasquitos Canyon where it turned west toward to what is now Del Mar Mesa. It then skirted the North Rim of Peñasquitos Canyon westward to Sorrento Hills, where it went down the west side of a tributary and into Peñasquitos Canyon near the Rufz Adobe and on to the Sorrento railroad siding. This is the section of the trail that was brushed.

Mr. Knechtel said the old wagon trail was washed out during heavy rains in the winter of 1916 (the Hatfield Flood) and has not been used since! He also said that, in his youth, he overheard some of the teamsters talk of having driven four-horse team down the trail with loads of grain and hay. He said he walked it "about 40 years ago" and that the wooden bridge across a narrow ravine had either washed out or rotted out by that time. Long-time Peñasquitos Rider, Claudie Jackson, says that wooden timbers of the old bridge are still there at the bottom the ravine.

At present, there are two washed out places in the trail; one near its western terminus in Peñasquitos Canyon, the other about halfway up where the old bridge was located. When riding this trail, the lower washout can be bypassed

by entering the old roadbed just above it, and the upper one can be ridden around. Two sections of the trail, one below the big washout and one above it, have been cleared and horses are now moving again along the old wagon trail for the first time in 74 years.

A sense of nostalgia and timeless tranquility assails the senses as one rides this historic trail and hears the horses' footfalls echoing along the canyon's walls. Caution, this ride should not be attempted in rainy weather because there is a slide area about a third of the way up that would be treacherous when wet.

## Special "Old Wagon Trail" Walk Set

Sat., Dec. 15, at 9 a.m., Dr. John Northrop, the author of *Riding "Round Peñasquitos"*, will lead this walk back into history. Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance. Steep hill.

## Maps Available

### Peñasquitos Canyon

A 12" x 17" trail map of Peñasquitos Canyon and surrounding area is available from Dr. John Northrop. This map shows the "Old Wagon Trail" to the Rufz Adobe and other area trails. Cost is \$5.00. Write or call 7015 Vista Del Mar Ave., La Jolla, CA 92037 — 454-6570.

### Carmel Valley

The Carmel Valley Trail Riders Coalition produced a 12" x 17" color-coded map of riding trails in and around Carmel Valley. Cost is \$5.00. Write 7015 Vista Del Mar Ave., La Jolla, CA 92037

## Where Did Camino Ruíz Get Its Name?

Dr. Jaya Perryman

Haven't you ever wondered where Camino Ruíz got its name? It's named after the venerable Captain Francisco María Ruíz, the commandante of the Presidio of San Diego and also the first recipient of a Mexican land grant in San Diego County.

Captain Ruíz was born in 1754 in Loreto, the capital of Baja California. Young Francisco lost his father to a mountain lion and was raised by Jesuit missionaries, although the influence of the "good fathers" was not always conspicuous in his life. At the age of 26 he enlisted in the army. Ruíz was known as a man of violent temper and strong opinions, and apparently did not always adhere to army regulations. Even so, he was popular with his soldiers and rose rapidly through the ranks. He was a sergeant at Santa Barbara, became a lieutenant in 1805, and was transferred to San Diego, where he became a captain

and eventually the commandante of the San Diego garrison. Ruíz remained the commandante of San Diego on and off for 20 years until he retired at the age of 73.

Ruíz never married and seemed to enjoy the freedom of a bachelor's life. An officer of the Department of San Blas wrote in a letter praising the captain, he often assembles his soldiers, ordering them to play, dance, drink and shout Viva Spain! Viva Fernando VII! Long Live the Governor! Viva! Viva! Viva-a-a-a!" After the revolution, and the collapse of the Spanish empire, Ruíz apparently had no trouble transferring his festive brand of patriotism to the Mexican government. He was in such favor with the new regime that, on June 15, 1823, the first Mexican governor of California, Luís Antonio Argüello, granted Ruíz the first private rancho within what is now San Diego County. The

➡ p.3 for more

(Ruíz cont'd)

grant of Rancho de los Peñasquitos consisted of 2 square leagues, the old Spanish measurement, usually staked off by men on horseback with lariats of a certain length, or the equivalent of 8,486 acres.

This was land claimed by the mission at San Diego and the fathers protested the benevolence of the Mexican government in giving away what they thought of as their property. The privatization of lands would continue, however, despite the objections of the church. Rancho Peñasquitos was one of the first tracts of a great deal of land that would be transferred to private ownership over the next decade as a result of secularization.

Captain Pablo de la Portilla described the day that Ruíz took over his rancho, ". . . I took Señor Ruíz by the hand and led him over it and made him take real and personal possession of said tract which he did take quietly and peacefully. [and uncharacteristically?] I did cast stones to the four winds and made other acts of real possession."

Ignoring the controversy surrounding his property, Captain Ruíz wasted no time in building a large adobe on the west end of the canyon, the ruins of which can still be seen today near the entrance to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve at Sorrento Valley Boulevard. He began stocking the ranch with livestock, but did not spend much time at Peñasquitos. He was an old man when he received his grant and he preferred to stay in town with the Alvarado Family.

In 1837, a short time before his death, Ruíz transferred ownership of Los Peñasquitos to his friend Don Francisco Maria Alvarado, in compensation for his board and care during his last years. Captain Ruíz died in 1839 at the age of 85.

Ruíz was described in one letter as ". . . as old American, one of the few true men met with in America of the world. He may have some faults as all men have, but all are outweighed in the balance against his natural honesty; by the justice that in the midst of his great popularity with his soldiers he deals out so as to make himself respected by all . . ."

Viva Ruíz. Viva-a-a-a!

### Suggested Reading

All these titles are out-of-print, but available in area libraries; the best single source is the Ward book):

Moyer, Cecil C., *Historic Ranchos of San Diego*, The Union-Tribune Publishing Co.

Pourade, Richard F., *The History of San Diego: The Silver Dons*, The Union-Tribune Publishing Co., San Diego, CA.

Pourade, Richard F., *The History of San Diego: Time of the Silver Bells*, The Union-Tribune Publishing Co., San Diego, CA.

Ward, Mary, *Rancho de los Peñasquitos: On the Road to Yuma*. San Diego County Parks and Recreation Dept. Out-of-Print, but available in area libraries. New edition being worked on by author.

## Letters

[The following letter was sent to the Friends (and gratefully received) this October. Thanks to everyone at Canyon View Elementary!]

### Canyon View Elementary School PTA

9225 Adolphia St.  
San Diego, CA 92129

Friends of Los Peñasquitos  
Canyon Preserve  
P.O. Box 26523  
San Diego, CA 92196  
Attention: Mike Kelly, President

October 18, 1990.

Dear Mr. Kelly,

During the last school year the students at Canyon View Elementary School voted to donate a portion of the proceeds from the annual Jogathon to your organization. Many of the students have enjoyed visiting the canyon on field trips or on weekend visits with their families, and they hope this donation will help you to continue providing the high quality educational programs you now offer.

I am enclosing a check for \$466.40  
Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,  
Marina L. Sterling  
Treasurer, Canyon View PTA

### Reptile and Amphibian Show and Sale

Saturday, Nov. 17 and Sunday, Nov. 18

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Del Mar Fairgrounds

- Live Amphibian & Reptile Exhibits
  - Educational displays
  - Animals and Animal-care products, books, art, t-shirts, jewelry, and more
- Admission: \$2.00 adults; \$1.00 Children under 12  
For further info call 755-1796

### San Diego Herpetological Society

P.O. Box 4036  
San Diego, CA 92164  
755-1796

## Vote for Environment '90

[In our last newsletter we wrote about the various environmental initiatives on the ballot Nov. 6. Here is a summary of these measures.]

### San Diego Ballot

#### Vote Yes for:

**Prop. E.** This is the \$100 million bond measure to buy open-space park lands, finance inner city parks, and upgrade existing recreational parks. To be spent in San Diego only.

#### Vote No for:

**Props D & M.** These are the County and City initiatives sponsored by the Development Industry to attempt to transfer costs of services required for new developments from builders to the taxpayers. Deceptively called "The Traffic Control and Comprehensive Growth Management Initiative."

### State Ballot

#### Vote Yes for:

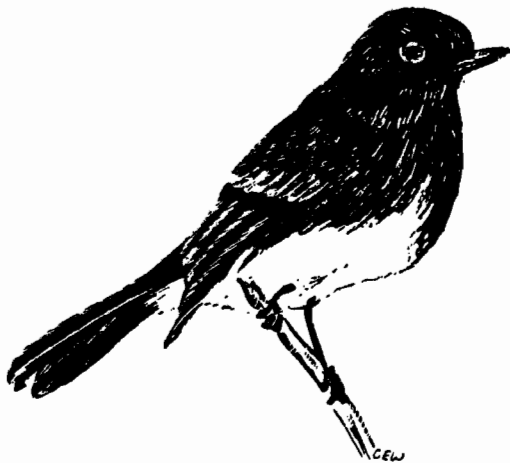
**Prop. 128 — Big Green.** This Environmental Protection Initiative will phase out the 20 pesticides known to cause cancer. Mandates the phasing out of ozone depleting chemicals. Under heavy attack in the media by the Chemical Industry.

**Prop. 130 — Forests Forever.** Will stop the clear cutting of our redwoods and old growth forests and provide for the purchase of remaining redwoods on private land. Heavy advertising against this by Timber Industry.

#### Vote No for:

**Prop. 135 — Big Brown.** This is the "Killer" initiative designed to kill key provisions of Prop. 130, Big Green. It would make it harder to ban cancer causing pesticides.

**Prop. 138 — Big Stump.** This is the timber industry's "killer" initiative to "Forests Forever." Would reverse any gains in Prop. 130.



Black Phoebe. C.E. Whitten

## The Birds of Los Penasquitos Canyon The Black Phoebe by Claude G. Edwards

I have had the pleasure of leading quite a few bird walks over 15-plus years. There are always participants who complain that they cannot tell one bird from another, or how I could do it so apparently easily. Well, as in life, you cannot do or know it all.

To offer a bit of encouragement, let's talk about a species which is on sight instantly identifiable, not to be easily confused with other species. It is present throughout the year in our canyon, and differs in minor points between male and female and immatures. There are several such species, California Thrasher, Acorn Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Scrub Jay, Plain Titmouse, and the Black Phoebe.

Phoebes belong to the Tyrant Flycatcher family, Tyrannidae, which range throughout most of North and South America, comprising the largest single family within the Order Passeriformes. The term 'tyrant' generally refers to the personality or style of the members of this family. When it comes to protecting territory, escorting unwanted avian, and domestic pet, interlopers, and when seeking out food to eat, they can be down right bossy, pushy, aggressive, and persistent.

Black Phoebes (*Sayornis nigricans*) are fairly typical as flycatchers go. Both male and female resemble one another, being blackish on the head and breast, fading to dark gray over the back, rump, wings, and tail. The lower breast and belly are unmarked white, sharply demarcated along the lower breast.

Young birds are similar to adults, differing only in that they have broad grayish edges to their wing feathers and rounder heads. Both sexes have slightly crested heads as adults, and grow to approximately 6 inches in length. One distinctive behavior they have is that they frequently flick their tails while perched, or after they land on their perch.

Black Phoebe occur in a variety of habitats, adapting here and there to suburban garden and park settings. They actively feed on insects which they catch in flight, or occasionally on the ground. They're bold birds, perching out in the open on fences, posts, branches, wires, and even buildings. Although they can live away from open water, they're usually associated with moister areas within a dry region.

Their nests are made of plant fibers and mud, placed under bridges, culverts, cliffs, and eaves of buildings. Three or four young are raised at a time.

Their distinctive song is a pleasant conversational chatter, "chi-kee, chee'ker," which they repeat, alternating the phrases. They give their call-notes throughout the year, and eventually becomes familiar with practice.

#### Black Phoebe

Oh my life is trouble-free  
above this creek where I can seek  
a tasty bite that happens by  
that I can have "while on the fly!"

# Birding in Peñasquitos Canyon — A Magical Place . . .

by Barbara Zepf

Peñasquitos Canyon can be a magical place, given the right day and time. Several years ago, I took a birding class at U.C.S.D. Extension taught by Claude Edwards. I learned so much in that class, and I have continued to learn even more from Claude in the ensuing years. He taught us how to identify birds and how to write a professional description of them. He encouraged us to experience birds in different ways — sketching and painting them, writing poems about them, etc. Since I can hardly draw a stick figure, I tried my hand at poetry. I don't know if I was any better at this endeavor, but I definitely enjoyed it more. I wrote many poems about specific birds.

Then, I experienced one of those magical days in the canyon. Remember, this was years ago. It was a weekday, and I spent the entire day there — from before sunrise until after sunset. Bicyclists hadn't discovered the canyon yet. Few joggers were seen. On this particular day, I only saw one horseback rider and one hiker the entire day. I had the canyon to myself. It truly was a magical day. It was so peaceful. The only homes visible from the canyon floor were about a dozen on the south side of the canyon as you entered. After a half-mile or so, you saw no more signs of civilization. All the cares of the world disappeared, and I just immersed myself in the life of the canyon. When the day was over, I felt overwhelmed by the experience. That night I wrote the poem "Life and Death."

The canyon isn't the same anymore, but life goes on. There are still magical times in the canyon; we just have to look harder. There are still some jewels to be found there — "feathered jewels," as they are called — hummingbirds.

## Feathered jewels — the Hummingbirds

Of the at least 5 different kinds of hummingbirds found in the canyon, the most common is the Anna's. They live in the canyon year round, frequenting many trees and plants. They also love dry, brush-covered hillsides. One definite way to see them is to walk the road to the ranch house on the north side of the creek. Look in the tree tobacco on the left side of the road (that tall, loosely formed "tree" with the drooping yellow flowers). The Anna's loves these flowers. Another good place to see them is in the parking lot on the left side of the road that you reach before you get to the ranch house. They're always around there.

Hummingbirds are the smallest birds in the canyon, the Anna's is only 3-1/2 to 4 inches long. They have a bright, metallic green back and tail. This green extends to the head on the female. The tail is slightly forked (noticeable when perched). The male's head and throat are deep rose red, the color extending a short distance onto the sides of the neck. Give yourself a chance to see this bird in the right light. Sometimes the head will appear black until the bird turns just the right way. And, then, magic! That brilliant jewel-like color appears. It's dazzling! The female's throat usually shows red flecks, often forming a patch of color. Both sexes have grayish underparts, washed with

### Life and Death

Silence — deep, unending blackness enshrouds  
the slumbering earth below.

Softly — from out of nowhere, rosy fingers  
part the inky curtain.

Tiny pinpricks of light penetrate the blanket  
of night.

An errant breeze rustles among the lifeless  
leaves.

Soft murmurings from hidden, folded wings  
bestir the day.

Rising, the flame is growing now.

The smoldering globe explodes upon the universe.

Shafts of sunlight ignite the treetops and  
all the stirring life within—

The day begins.

Breeding, nesting, hatching, fledgling, feeding,  
chirping, preening.

The busy hum of life emerges in a frantic  
rush towards survival.

The cantilevered wings reach out and soar.

While deep in the forest and all across  
the valley floor — life teems.

The rushing waters of the stream give up  
their bounteous treasures to the winged creatures.

Unnoticed — the pace abates. The air grows  
drowsy. The eyelids lower and time seems slower.

The sounds grow dimmer, the ball is fading,  
the fire is dying, and suddenly —

Silence — and deep, unending blackness  
enshrouds the slumbering earth below.

varying amounts of green. The female's tail is broadly tipped with white. The immatures resemble the female; the immature males usually shows some red on the crown. Juveniles lack red on the throat.

The Anna's is the only U.S. hummer with a red crown, and is the only one commonly found in California in mid-winter. Named after the Duchess Anna Massena (1806-1896), wife of the Duke of Rivoli, they're called hummingbirds because of the droning noise of their wings in flight.

Their common call note is a sharp "chick." Their chase call is a rapid dry rattling. The male's song is a jumble of high squeals and raspy notes. The Anna's Hummingbird is the only California hummer with a real song.

The Anna's rarely sits still. It was thought that they lived entirely on the wing, but, of course, this isn't so. After feeding, it will perch on an exposed twig and turn its head constantly from side to side or preen its feathers. It never walks or hops on the ground because it has weak feet.

Nesting from mid-December to mid-August, its nest is tiny. You may be standing only inches from one and not see it. It looks like a tiny cup made out of cotton, covered with plant material. The nest is made from soft, strong materials

# Arbor Day 1990 — A Plea For Trees

By Pamela (PJ) Piburn  
Volunteer, S.D. County Parks & Recreation

Autumn is tree planting time in San Diego. You may be considering planting a tree to help improve our environment, or to beautify your yard. In fact, just this summer, Ranger Reneene Moury, myself, and the junior rangers planted eleven oaks and two sycamores near the entrance to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Working in 110°, we felt hot and tired when we got done. Just four months later, the trees are showing signs of healthy growth, the weather is cooler, and I feel like a proud parent each time I water them.

The usefulness of trees is many fold. They stabilize the soil and reduce the force of wind. Trees act as natural water filters, absorbing water from deep beneath the earth's surface and releasing it from the leaves to the atmosphere. They also remove carbon dioxide from the air and thus help reduce pollution.

There are many books available to assist you with the choice of the right tree and to help you properly plant and care for your new trees. Environmental support groups, such as **TreePeople** and **People for Trees**, are able to aid neighborhoods contacts for both in organizing community tree plantings. Another resource is people at local nurseries. Evergreen Nursery publishes a buyer guide you can purchase or use while picking out your trees. It covers everything from available varieties and descriptions, to a diagram and instructions on how to plant a tree. They also have prepared a pamphlet containing a list of drought tolerant trees for use in water efficient xeriscape gardens.

I went over the dirt road and through the woods to speak with Charles Magana at the Evergreen Nursery on Black Mountain Road about the proper way to plant trees. "I would tell you that 95% of the problems we have with box trees is when they get planted they are planted either too high or too deep. Out of the 95% most are too deep."

To avoid planting your tree too deep, you will need to carefully prepare the planting hole. Books vary slightly in hole preparation techniques, but the basic idea is the same. Dig the hole twice as wide and one and one-half times as deep as the original root ball or container the tree comes in.

The most common size tree comes in a 5 gallon or 15 gallon container. A 5 gallon tree requires a hole approximately 22 inches wide and 22 inches deep. A 15 gallon tree requires a hole approximately 36 inches wide and 31 inches deep. Check the hole for drainage by filling it with water. It should empty completely in 12-24 hours. If not, you may need to use a post hole digger and gravel to create a drain in the bottom of the hole. James Crockett gives a good description of this procedure in his book, *Trees*.

The soil taken from the hole must now be amended by mixing it with mulch. The general recommendation is two parts soil to one part mulch. The mulch can be commercially prepared or homemade compost. Mary Duffield suggests peatmoss, grass clippings, or composted forest products.

Use the amended soil to fill about 6 inches in the bottom of the hole and tamp it down. This gives the root ball a firm

base to sit on and prevents it from sinking when you add water. If the bottom isn't tamped down, two things can happen. According to Mr. Magana. "With lots of room in the hole the water will go around the root ball and never penetrate the root ball. The tree goes dry. The other thing is once it skins below ground level, if the ground has a lot of holding retention, that hole will fill up like a glass without draining. What happens is it suffocates down there. It actually becomes waterlogged." Surrounded by the cool green potted ferns in his office, Mr. Magana leans back in his swivel chair and continues, "Basically, what we recommend is that before they plant the tree they water it real good. Let it sit maybe for a day before actually planting it. Then when you go to plant it you leave the root ball about 2 inches above ground level to accommodate for any settling that'll happen."

Prior to filling in the dirt around the sides of the root ball it's usually necessary to place stakes on either side of the tree to support the trunk until it can support itself (usually within 3 years). Remove the stake that came with the tree and use rubber or another non abrasive material to tie the tree loosely to the new stakes. Wire can damage the trunk. Charles says, "a 24 inch tree should have at least an 8 foot stake sunk 2 feet. As they (the trees) get older the stakes should be replaced by bigger ones."

I asked Mr. Magana how he felt about feeding newly planted trees. "Some people say that by putting tablets in you encourage a tree to grow faster. A lot of people recommend that you plant a tree in its native soil mixed with mulch. After the tree is established, in 60-90 days, you go out along the drip line and put 4-8 two foot deep holes with a bar and actually fill them with fertilizer." James Crockett recommends mixing bone meal with mulch and soil to stimulate strong root growth.

Once in the ground, it's important to make sure the root ball has plenty of water for the first couple of weeks. Then, water deeply once or twice a month during dry weather for the next year or two until the tree is well established.

In order to ensure sufficient watering, a rim of dirt should be formed around the perimeter of the root ball to hold water. After the first couple of weeks, a second rim should be placed a foot or so larger than the first. This will create a moat which allows watering of the roots but keeps water from sitting around the root of the tree. During heavy rainfall, the basin should be opened to keep roots from becoming waterlogged. To water the trees in the staging area, I set the hose on very low flow and allow the basins to fill completely. It takes about 15-30 minutes for each tree.

Planting trees grown in containers is only one method of planting trees. In a future article I'll discuss other alternatives such as seed and bare root planting.

Mark December 1st on your calendar. **People for Trees** needs volunteers to help plant trees to celebrate Arbor Day. Call 231-3713 if you want to help.

➡ p. 7 for more



(Arbor Day cont'd)

Special thanks to Charles Magana for his assistance and generosity in supplying information for this article.

**Further reading**

Crockett, James Underwood, Time Life Books, *Trees*  
 Crockett, James Underwood, Time Life Books, *Evergreens*  
 Duffield, Mary Roses & Warren D. Jones, *Plants for Dry Climates*  
 Evergreen Nursery, 7150 Black Mountain Road, San Diego, CA 92130, 578-8001 or 481-0622  
 Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nation, *Tree Planting Practices for Arid Zones*  
 People For Trees, 1549 El Prado, number 4, San Diego, CA 92101, 231-3713  
 Schmidt, Marjorie G. . . *Growing California Native Plants*  
 Sinnes, A. Cort . . . *Easy Maintenance Gardening*  
 Sunset Books and Sunset Magazine, the Editors of *Western Gardening Book*  
 TreePeople with Andy and Katie Lipkis, *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree*, 1-800-TREE GEO  
 Waldron, Patricia . . . *Trees of San Diego*

## In Memory of Sorrento Hills

### San Diego Biodiversity Project

As home to several sensitive species and habitats, the area known as Sorrento Hills in the planning books, and Western Del Mar Mesa by those of us who've cared for this place for years, was a wondrous place. Western Del Mar Mesa, making up the northern slope of Peñasquitos Canyon, and cut down the center by a winding valley, was one of the last truly wild areas on the immediate coast.

On my last visit to this special place, I surprised a herd of deer just after sunrise, as they grazed quietly in the central valley. Disturbed by their flight, a Meadow-lark called. The upper reaches of this valley were ideal for an afternoon nap among the giant chaparral shrubs. In the spring, the greens and blues of the native grasses were such that a rainbow would pale by comparison.

In a biological survey completed in 1984, a list of sensitive species was compiled that included the California Gnatcatcher, the San Diego Cactus Wren, the Coast Horned Lizard, the Orange Throated Whiptail Lizard, and several rare plants species. However, these species and their rapidly vanishing habitats, including vernal pools, coastal sage scrub, and native grassland were given scant attention when permits were granted that same year.

Insects will never again buzz, nor flowers bloom in this place. In July of this year, American Newland's bulldozers graded most of Sorrento Hills Planning Area.

By the time grading equipment was discovered, most of the initial destruction had been completed. The decision was made by several committed individuals not to go ahead with plans for civil disobedience, planned as far back as 1987. For more information as to what you can do to help protect the remaining Western Del Mar Mesa area (Carmel Mountain), contact:

San Diego Biodiversity Project  
 POB 1944 Julian, CA 92036

## Carmel Mountain Update

### San Diego Biodiversity Project

Carmel Mountain, part of Western Del Mar Mesa, is currently threatened with massive development. This area, home to 17 sensitive species and 5 threatened habitats has long been known to the biological community as one of the most sensitive pieces of land on the San Diego Coast.

Carmel Mountain, located just south of Carmel Valley Road (due south of the small cemetery a couple of miles east of I-15 on your left), due to its incredible diversity of species and habitats, has been the highest protection priority for two years by the San Diego Biodiversity Project.

The development situation that exists for Carmel Mountain is a strange one. PARDEE, owner of the entire mountain, has proposed neighborhood 8A, a project that would destroy approximately 90% of all on site sensitive resources. As stated by RECON consulting firm in their initial biological survey for this site, most impacts to sensitive resources would be unmitigable. This means that the San Diego City Council will have to approve construction with a statement of overriding considerations.

After researching several options, we feel that the best methods for the protection of this red mountain lie in the Endangered Species Act, the City of San Diego's Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO), and Proposition 70 funds under jurisdiction of the California Dept. of Fish and Game.

Language in RPO states that projects can not encroach on sensitive lands more than 20%. The entire 8A area is made up of what are now defined as sensitive lands. If applied RPO could eliminate 80% of this proposed development. Even so, The San Diego Biodiversity Project feels that a 20% encroachment standard is too high. Write all City Council Members (202 "C" St., SD 92101) and state that you want RPO passed with little or no sensitive lands encroachment allowed.

As for the Proposition 70 funding, after being alerted to the uniqueness of this area, the State Dept. of Fish and Game showed real interest in the protection of Carmel Mountain. The site was visited by myself, other Biodiversity Project members, and two Fish and Game employees including the southern California regional director last June. After this tour, they felt that we should definitely go for Prop. 70 fund to protect at least a small piece of this unusual area. (Needless to say, land value at this site is high, and the owner is probably not going to want to sell). The biodiversity Project is in the process of creating an Acquisition Evaluation for submission to the lands acquisition committee. We need letters of support from the conservation community to make the Prop. 70 funding a reality. Send a short note stating that you support the purchase of Carmel Mountain due to its high sensitivity to the San Diego Biodiversity Project (address the letter to:

Earl Lauppe, California Department of Fish and Game  
 330 Golden Shore Dr. Suite 50, Long Beach CA 90802.  
 We will submit letters when we send off the form..  
 S.D. Biodiversity Project, POB 1944 Julian, CA 92036

# The Little Things that Run the World

by Mike Kelly

As I sit at my computer I'm looking out the window and watching a beautiful black and yellow butterfly flit from blossom to blossom on my scarlet bougainvillea. It's an invertebrate. On a recent dusk walk we saw a huge wasp slowing circling a grassy area. We watched it find a small burrow in the early and drop into it. It was probably a tarantula killing wasp that found a tarantula's burrow and was going in for the kill. It too is an invertebrate.

I often talk about the tendency for most of us to focus our attention on spectacular wonders of nature and on certain animal species with "sex appeal." When it comes to conservation time, effort, and money, this focus often means that some of nature's smaller wonders are ignored. Nowhere is this more true than with the invertebrates.

## 300 million year success story

Insects are the most numerous invertebrates. To ignore them is to ignore 95% of the animal life on our planet. While there are about 9,040 bird species and 4,000 mammal species, the number of insect species runs into the tens of millions!

On an expedition to the Peruvian Rain Forest several years ago, biologists studied the life in just one of the giant trees there. In that one tree they catalogued over 10,000 different species of insects. And the tree next to it didn't simply duplicate the same insects, but had yet more different species!

The insects we see around us today represent over 300 million years of evolution. Okay, you say. So there's a lot of them. Big deal.

Insects and other invertebrates are no less vital to our terrestrial world than plankton, algae, and krill are as the base of the food chain in the world's oceans. Insects, for example, are not only an important food supply for many birds and mammals. They also play a pivotal role in pollinating our agricultural and non-agricultural plant species.

Dr. E.O. Wilson, president of the Xerces Society and a Professor of Science at Harvard University says it well:

"Quite simply, the terrestrial world is turned by insects and a few other invertebrate groups: the living world would probably survive the demise of all vertebrates [mammals, etc.], in greatly altered form of course, but life on land in the sea would collapse down to a few simple plants and microorganisms without invertebrates."

## Enter the Xerces Society

Despite their vital role in our economy and survival, insects and other invertebrates are a neglected area of study. And when they are studied it's often how to kill them when some of them threaten a particular crop or a rose bush in our garden. Conservation time and money flows to bigger animals and those with public appeal. To help direct attention to the invertebrates, concerned scientists founded the Xerces Society in 1971.

In the beginning, the Society focused on conservation efforts aimed at endangered butterfly species. The Monarch Project that studies the monarch butterfly migration system is a good example of this. With time they broadened their conservation focus to all invertebrates. They are encouraging conservationists to think more of ecosystems. Because of the sheer numbers of difference species and their small size, this is the only realistic way to study and preserve the invertebrates.

If you'd like to learn more about the fascinating world of insects and other invertebrates and support a good cause, join The Xerces Society. They have an excellent magazine, a wonderful Monarch Migration video, and a good list of publications. Write to them at 10 Southwest Ash St., Portland, Oregon 97204 (503-222-2788).

### Rare and Endangered Butterflies of San Diego County

Thanks to Les Braun, Secretary to the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, for providing this list of rare and endangered butterflies of San Diego County. Besides working with the Friends, Les is also involved in environmental issues concerning Mira Mar Lake and Otay Mesa. Investigating the potential impact of future developments in these areas led to the discovery that, in the case of Otay Mesa, at least one of our county's rare butterflies is found only on Otay Mountain. Of course, the proposed off-road vehicle reservation and other development projects would severely impact on the habitat of this butterfly.

The butterflies are:

Pima Orange Tip  
Western Sulfer  
Hermes Copper  
Loki Hairstreak  
Silver Banded Hairstreak

The Loki Hairstreak is the one found only on Otay Mountain. The caterpillar stage feeds on Tecate cypress (*Cupressus forbesii*). The Hermes Copper winters over on the stems of buckthorn (*Rhamnus crocea*) and takes nectar from California buckwheat, the caterpillars host plant, found in the Otay Mesa area. For pictures and more information on these butterflies see the Audabon Guide to Butterflies.

**(Camino Ruíz cont'd)**

tersections in San Diego at Camino Ruíz and Mira Mesa Blvd. It's hard to see how either Rancho Peñasquitos or Mira Mesa residents would benefit from this.

Efforts to relieve the congestion in Peñasquitos are already underway. The widening of Black Mtn. Rd. is underway. Westview Parkway is expected to open the final link to Mira Mesa Blvd. before the end of December. A rerouted Black Mtn. Rd. west through Fairbanks Ranch will open up access to I-5. East 56 will open up new access to I-15. In addition, I-15 is expected to be widened and an light rail line will also be constructed along it.

**Camino Ruíz threatens the Preserve's integrity**

I see no greater threat to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve than extending Camino Ruíz across it. None of the development we see on the rim of the canyon threatens it the way a road through the heart of the canyon would. Our families still enjoy a wilderness experience here in our neighborhood. We can still walk for miles and escape the hustle and bustle of the city amid the trees of the Preserve. A road/bridge will destroy this respite from the city's pressures.

The road/bridge would loom as a visual sore on the horizon to remind you you haven't left the city behind. The noise of the passing cars would be carried throughout the Preserve by the natural echo effect the canyon produces.

Camino Ruíz would damage the creek area and further stress the mule deer, coyote, bobcat, raccoons, birds, and other species making Peñasquitos Canyon their home. For some it will reduce their required habitat below the critical threshold that sustains a viable population.

I hope those who know and enjoy the Preserve will decide it's part of what makes living where we do special and turn out at your respective community meetings to defend it. Can't we say we'll forgo another road to preserve a modest 6 mile by 1/2 mile of open-space sanity in our urban chaos?

**What else you can do**

Let your City Councilperson know your opposition to Camino Ruíz. Write Abbe Wolfsheimer (First District) or Bruce Henderson (Fifth District) at:

202 "C" St., San Diego, CA 92101.

Please send a copy of any letter to the Friends at:  
P.O.B. 26523, San Diego, CA 92196.

**(Magical Place cont'd)**

such as spiderwebs and other fibers. The interior is lined with down, feathers, lichens, fur, moss, strands of hair, etc., and is flexible enough to expand as the babies grow. Anna's usually lay two tiny, less than 1/2 inch, eggs. Although small, the eggs they may weigh 10-20% of the female's own weight. Imagine a human baby that large in comparison to the mother's weight! The female does all the incubating and feeding of the young. They usually have two broods a year.

Hummingbirds eat mostly nectar from blossoms (and feeders). Anna's also eat many spiders and small insects. They eat sap from the bleeding bark of injured trees and from holes drilled by sapsuckers. Since they only weigh

about 1/8 to 1/5 oz., it's amazing how much they eat in a day. Supposedly, they must eat at least once every 15 minutes or die. In a controlled experiment, one male was found to need the nectar from over 1000 blossoms of a bush a day to survive! No wonder they're so feisty about defending their feeding territory. Hummingbirds don't feed after dark. They practice energy conservation by lowering their body temperature, heart rate, breathing rate and metabolism. They become torpid. In the past, they were often mistaken for dead.

Hummingbirds can hover, fly straight up or backward, sideways and even upside down. The Anna's has an amazing courtship display. The male flies upward until almost out of sight. Then it shoots vertically downward at tremendous speed toward the female sitting quietly in a tree or bush. At the bottom of the plunge, it spreads its tail feathers and produces a loud "pop" or "bonk." Some say this is a vocal sound; some say it is caused by wind action in the feathers. I have heard the bird make this sound vocally while sitting still in a tree. This display flight can also be used as an intimidation display toward other birds.

Hummingbirds are so territorial one bird can fend off many other birds while striving to keep its food supply to itself. They often use their long, slim bills to "sword fight" with each other.

Their most spectacular feature is their brilliant jewel-like crown and gorget (throat patch). Only the top third of each feather is iridescent. The barbules (the edges of the webs along the side of the feather shaft) have minute elliptical structures of varying sizes called platelets. These colored granules have air bubbles contained within them. The thickness of the platelet itself and the amount of air inside determines the specific color seen. The sun, the viewer and bird must be aligned properly to see the sparkling plumage at its best. That is why different angles seem to produce different colors. When no light shines on them, they appear black.

The Anna's molts (replaces old feathers with new ones) from roughly late May to early September. They can be a pretty scruffy looking lot at this time. They look like they've been caught in an eggbeater. But the end result is the feathered jewel we've come to expect.

Hummingbirds appear to have no fear of humans. If you are between them and the feeder — watch out! But they do have enemies. Frog and even bats are known to drag them underwater. They are killed by hawks, kestrels, roadrunners and orioles. Even dragonflies, spiders and praying mantises prey on them. They've gotten trapped in thistles, spider webs and even the tiny holes in screens and have died of starvation before they can escape. I've never seen one die. I've only enjoyed their splendor as they zip by me or sit perched for me to view in all their glory. They are truly one of the "magical moments" in Peñasquitos Canyon.

We should do all we can to protect this "jewel box." It may not be the same as it was years ago, but we can help to keep it from degrading further. Treat the canyon gently; fight to preserve it; enjoy it! Witness your own "Life and Death" day down there. It's still a magical place, given the right day and time! Good Birding!



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
619-484-3219 566-6489

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**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Outings (cont'd)**

**DECEMBER**

**MCGUIRE NATURE WALK**

Sat., Dec. 1, noon. Paul McGuire will lead a nature walk from the Horse's Head trail to McGuire Canyon (about 2 hours). Meet at the intersection of Calle Cristobal and Camino Ruíz in Mira Mesa. New neighbors from Canyon Ridge, Canyon Meadows, Canyon Country West will find this a good introduction to the preserve. Learn about future plans for Camino Ruiz, Camino Park.

**BIRD WALK — López Canyon**

Sat., Dec. 8, 8 am. (1-1/2 hours). **New location:** Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve. Bring a bird book and binoculars. Beginners welcome.

**GEOLOGY WALK**

Sun., Dec. 9, 9 am (2 hrs). **Meeting place to be announced in next newsletter** (or call 484-3219 the week before). Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil

**HISTORIC WAGON TRAIL WALK**

Sat., Dec. 15, 9 a.m. Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve. Dr. John Northrop, author of *Riding 'Round Penasquitos* will lead this walk back into history. Steep hill involved. Walking stick helpful.

**CHRISTMAS PLANT NATURE WALK**

Sat., Dec. 22, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. See our own native Christmas mistletoe and holly, as well as plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
- Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



### Special note:

This issue of our newsletter is for both December and January to give our contributors and editors a break over the holidays.

## Want to Get Involved?

As the new year approaches maybe it's time to do what you've been thinking of doing, getting involved with the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. As you can see from our newsletter and the activities you've participated in with us, we're very active with a whole range of concerns. And we often have a lot of fun doing it.

Our concerns range from educating about the unique natural and historic resources of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve with weekly walks, our newsletter and our "Lectures at the Ranch" to the political battles to limit the intrusion of developments and roads in and around the canyon.

We have a lot of ways you can help us out. We'll teach you how to lead a walk in the canyon. We're always looking for articles for the newsletter and we'll help you learn the craft of writing if you are a beginner. Several of our contributors are first-time writers. You can help put the newsletter together once a month or help organize our lecture series at the Ranch House.

Or perhaps conservation projects interest you. We have a number coming up in 1991. Canyon watch activities are also interesting, involving visiting various parts of the Preserve to check out problems people report to us. This sometimes involves taking pictures. Or perhaps you'd like to represent us at City Council or Planning Commission hearings when certain issues come up. We often don't have anyone available when these daytime meetings occur. We'll help you prepare your remarks for these occasions.

Why not give us a call at 484-3219 and/or come to a monthly meeting? Our monthly meetings are the third tuesday of the month, at 7 p.m. at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Our next meeting is December 18.

## Community Groups Vote Down Camino Ruíz by Mike Kelly

Nov. 7 the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board voted 10 to 7 against extending Camino Ruíz across Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This vote was followed by a unanimous vote in the Mira Mesa Community Planning Board Nov. 19,

➡ p. 9 for more

## Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

### DECEMBER

#### BIRD WALK — López Canyon

Sat., Dec. 8, 8 am. (1-1/2 hours). **New location:** Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve. Bring a bird book and binoculars. Beginners welcome. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., Dec. 8, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles round-trip) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Meet at Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., Dec. 9, 9 am (2 hrs). Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park. Take Black Mtn. Rd. north from Mira Mesa, south from Rancho Peñasquitos, to Park Village Dr. Go west to the well marked park. Bring water. Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil. Led by former CalTrans geologist, Don Albright.

#### HISTORIC WAGON TRAIL WALK

Sat., Dec. 15, 9 a.m. Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve. Dr. John Northrop, author of *Riding 'Round Peñasquitos* will lead this walk back into history. Steep hill involved. Walking stick helpful.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

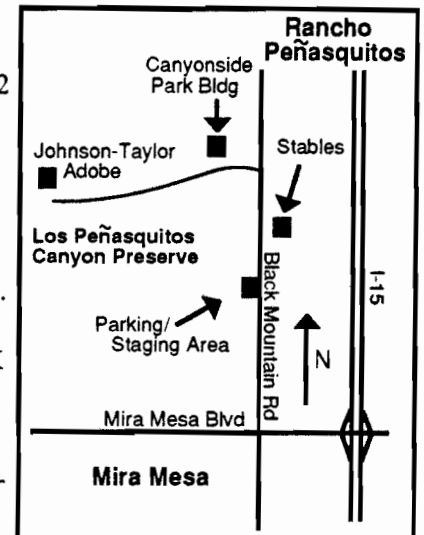
Sat., Dec. 15, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Take Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mtn. Rd. and drive up to parking lot near ranch. Visit historic adobe and see settler and Indian artifacts.

#### FRIENDS' MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., Dec. 18, 7 pm, at Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Take Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mtn. Road and proceed up to Ranch. Business meeting, new members welcome.

#### CHRISTMAS PLANT NATURE WALK

Sat., Dec. 22, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. See our native Christmas mistletoe and holly, and plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon. Led by Les Braun.



➡ p.10 for more

# The Birds of Los Penasquitos Canyon — The Hutton's Vireo

## by Claude G. Edwards

Large, deep-green, grand, evergreen oaks make up much of the woodland that fills our beloved canyon, nearly from Route-15 to Interstate 5, often 40 feet and more tall and as wide. Most of us take these wonderful trees for granted, satisfied to gaze upon them or rest under the welcome shade created by their muscular limbs.

Living amidst these and nearby trees are a number of fairly inconspicuous animals, including owls, foxes, tree-frogs, and Hutton's Vireos. These nondescript insectivores are year-round residents in Penasquitos Canyon, usually found by mistake or when one isn't trying to find them.

The Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*) is indeed a cousin of the widely-known but endangered Bell's Vireo (*V. bellii*) which occurs only in willow woodland from March to August, retreating to Mexico to spend the winter.

Hutton's Vireos are about 4-1/2-5 inches long, deftly rummaging through the coarse foliage of the Coast Live Oaks in which they live. Caterpillars, grubs, moths, and beetles make up their diet, which they seek out under leaves, along twigs, and in cracks in the bark.

When one is seen in good light its dull olive-gray upperparts and pale-gray underparts can be more easily distinguished. Its fairly large head is highlighted by a bold eye-ring connected by pale lores to the bill, but broken above the eyes. Two bold whitish bars cross each wing, and its bill is thicker than that of a warbler with a slight hook at its tip.

In fact, the Hutton's Vireo is frequently mistaken with and compared to a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) to which it bears a strong resemblance. It can also be confused with the Pacific Slope Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*), formerly known as the Western Flycatcher

(*E. difficilis*), in poor light. The kinglet appears in our canyon during the winter months, while the flycatcher occurs and breeds during the spring and summertime.

The most-distinctive feature about the Hutton's Vireo is its song. It sings a fairly loud, nasal, buzzy, hoarse, monotonously-repeated phrase such as "chwee", "cheer", "zu-weeo", or "zheee", often with a rising or falling reflection. Once this song is learned, it gives away the vireo's presence. They sing primarily during the spring and summer months.

Being sometimes bold and inquisitive, they can be coaxed into view by "pishing" or kissing the back of your hand. Try it the next time you visit the canyon, when no one else is around!

### The Hutton's Vireo

You may not notice as you go that I spy on you from branches low and round-about in thickets green where I can sing out and may not be seen!



## Floating Causeway Built Across the Preserve Will It Survive Quake?

by Dr. John Northrop, Registered Geophysicist

When Calle Cristobal was first designed, the section between the Ruíz Adobe and López Creek was slated to go straight across the middle of the wetlands area at the West end of the Preserve. Because of environmental concerns, the road was realigned so that it skirted the southern edge of the wetlands most of the way.

However, about 100 yards of the roadway still crossed the wetlands. After the roadbed was laid with rip-rap, strain gauges were placed alongside this section of the road to see if it sank due to loading. Subsequent engineering tests of these strain-gauge records showed that the roadbed sank about five feet the first year after it was built.

Contractors then piled five more feet of material on top of the roadbed to compensate for the sinking. This makeshift plan backfired, however, because the added load caused the road to sink a couple of feet more!

In attempting to remedy the situation, contractors drilled 600 4-inch diameter holes in the road, 300 in the eastbound lanes and 300 in the westbound lanes. When drilled to bedrock, about 36 feet down, the holes were cased with perforated pipe. The idea was that water would seep into the cased holes through the perforated pipe and evaporate, thus draining the wetlands so the road wouldn't sink! Since the wetlands are fed by groundwater, this plan didn't work either and the road continued to sink.

In desperation, contractors dug up three of the four lanes this summer and replaced them with layer upon layer of horizontal slabs of reinforced concrete about 100 yards long, three feet thick and about 30 feet wide. This "stack" of concrete slabs now stands about 30 feet high so that the

➡ p.9 for more

## Birding in Peñasquitos Canyon Christmas in the Preserve

by Barbara Zepf

To paraphrase an old song, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, all around the canyon." The toyon is in bloom now. This 6-10 foot tall shrub has thick, leathery, glossy dark green leaves with bristly, pointed teeth. From November to January, it sports bright red cluster berries. This plant is also called Christmas Berry or California Holly. In fact, Hollywood was supposedly named after it.

Another canyon "Christmas" plant, mistletoe, is "planted" by birds. Birds swallow the berries whole. While digesting them, a very sticky substance forms around the seed. When the bird passes the seed, it sticks tight to the branch or twig on which it's dropped, dries instantly, and a new mistletoe plant grows from that branch or twig.

No bird in the canyon is more closely associated with the mistletoe than the Phainopepla (FA-NO-PEP-LA). While not a member of the regular Flycatcher Family, it belongs to a family called the Silky Flycatchers — birds with soft, sleek plumage and agility in catching insects on the wing. Phainopeplas remind me of a dark Cardinal. They have a distinct crest, long tail and red eyes. They are about 7-1/2 inches long. The male is shiny black all over with a conspicuous white wing patch, usually only visible in flight. Females and immatures are gray with an even paler gray wing patch. Phainopeplas are slender, elegant looking birds with an upright posture.

While I've seen Phainopeplas in the canyon during any given month, their numbers fluctuate widely. This July, the pepper trees in the parking lot on the way to the ranch were just loaded with them. As summer turned to autumn, they seemed to disperse throughout the canyon. In the winter large numbers are found at the oases in the Anza-Borrego Desert. They like desert scrub, mesquite, oak foothills, mistletoe and pepper trees. They seem to favor hot country, ranging from central California, through southern Arizona and Nevada, to western Texas. They also live south through the arid areas of Mexico. Usually seen singly or in small flocks. They like to live around watercourses.

Their flight is slow and graceful. They hold their wings high and flit and zigzag around like a huge butterfly.

They breed in March or April in the desert. Then they may migrate in April or May into the chaparral and riparian communities of wetter areas. In June or July, they may have a second brood here. Their nest is built almost exclusively by the male. In the canyon, they might nest in cottonwoods, sycamores or willows, anywhere from four to fifty feet above ground in the crotch of a tree. They also sometimes nest right in the mistletoe plant. They lay 2-4 eggs. The new hatchlings are fed crushed berries and tiny insects.

In addition to eating mistletoe berries Phainopeplas often eat other berries, including elderberries and pepper tree

berries. They also eat many insects. They like to perch on the very tops of tall trees, from which they make short flights to catch their meal "on the wing."

Their call is a soft low "wrup." They also have a short warbled song which is rarely heard.

Since it's Christmas time, I'll give you an extra bonus this month, and talk about a second bird — the Cedar Waxwing. It is distantly related to the Phainopepla. It is truly a gorgeous bird — better than any man-made ornament on a tree! They get their name from the the bright red, dropshaped, wad-like material that forms on the tips of adults' wing feathers. The Cedar Waxwing is a sleek, crested, brown bird about 7 inches long. Their crest can be either raised or lowered. They have a pale yellow belly, and they are white under the tail. They have bright yellow tips to their short tails. They have a black mask on their face and a black chin. The young are grayer, with indistinct streaking below.

They are seldom seen alone except when nesting. They are very gregarious; they fly and feed in compact flocks. In the winter, flocks may number in the thousands! They incessantly call, turn and twist in flight, and frequently all land in the same tree.

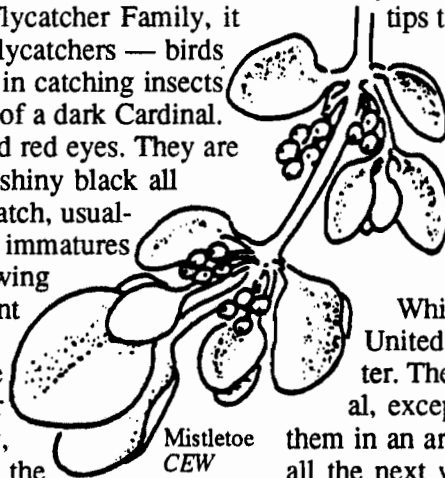
While they breed in Canada and the northern United States, they usually come south for the winter. They are very nomadic and not strongly territorial, except at the nest. There may be large flocks of them in an area, such as the canyon, one year and none at all the next winter. Their wanderings seemed to be governed by the availability of food. They eat many kinds of berries and small fruit. A few years ago, a flock of them stripped the pyracantha bush in my yard in a matter of days. Gorged birds may be so stuffed, they are barely able to fly. Sometimes they even get drunk from overripe fruit. At other times, they will sit in a row and pass a berry from one bird to the next, until the last bird eats it. They are fascinating to watch. In the spring and summer, they also eat flower petals, insects and flowing sap.

Sometimes the first way you know that they are around is by their call. It is a very high thin monotone that sounds like "zeee" or "see-e-e" (sometimes slightly trilled).

They do not nest in the canyon, preferring the coniferous and birch forests of the North. They lay 3-5 spotted eggs in a bulky shallow nest in late summer. The nestling's diet consists mostly of insects for the first few days. Later on they, too, will be fed berries.

If we're lucky, we'll get to see both the Phainopepla and the Cedar Waxwing adorning the trees in the canyon this Christmas. But, if not, there's always next year!

Merry Christmas and Good Birding!



Mistletoe  
CEW

## Your Eyes Are Needed! Have You Seen These Animals Lately?

### Indicator species

In our October newsletter we reported an alarming development with amphibians. All over the world, frog and toad populations are declining rapidly. No one has yet been able to prove why this is happening. Speculation is that the moist skin of the frog and the water-based habitat it inhabits makes it particularly susceptible to pollution in the air, particularly in the form of acid rain. What is now being recognized is that frogs are an *indicator species*, one that signals the health, or distress, of a whole ecosystem.

One problem with this recently observed phenomena is that few good census of reptiles or amphibians exist anywhere in the world. Bird census, butterfly counts, big horn sheep counts, deer densities, etc. provide a baseline from which to measure the status of these creatures.

### Let's count

Herpetological Societies around the world decided to



### San Diego Horned Lizard

Have you seen the San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*) recently in the San Diego area? Its population has been steadily dwindling.

#### Observation Record

Name of Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Weather \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

begin a census. They want to determine the population status and range of local reptiles and amphibians. Our readers will be able to help with this census. To begin with, the Herpetological Society would simply like to hear from members of the Friends and other organizations when we see a local reptile or amphibian.

Please copy the pictures and the form on this page and record your sightings as best as you can. After a sighting send in the form to:

**San Diego Herpetological Society  
Conservation Committee  
P.O. Box 4036  
San Diego, CA 92104.**

For better pictures than these, buy a copy of *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians* by Robert C. Stebbins, one of the Peterson Field Guides series, available at bookstores and museum shops.



### California Toad

Have you seen the California toad (*Bufo boreas halophilus*) lately? Once common in San Diego, their numbers are in sharp decline. The recent drought has been a significant factor in this decline. We need to find out if other factors such as habitat loss, increased pollution and pesticide levels are also contributing to this population drop.

#### Observation Record

Name of Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Weather \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Stop Jackson Drive Extension

by Robert Radlow and Peter Andersen

[Here's late-breaking information that came in after this article was written. In the last week of November, the San Diego City Council voted 5 to 4 to extend Jackson Drive through Mission Trails Regional Park. Voting to *save* the regional park were Abbe Wolfsheimer, Linda Bernhardt, Ron Roberts, and John Hartley. Voting to *sacrifice* the park were H. Wes Pratt, Judy McCarty, J. Bruce Henderson, Mayor O'Connor, and Bob Filner. McCarty's district includes the park and she has pushed hard for the extension through the park.

Commenting on the issue, Henderson said that wilderness has no place in the city. It belongs out in the country! The surprise vote for the road extension was Filner, who pledged in the months prior to the vote his opposition to the project. The City Council will have its second reading of the proposed law Dec. 10. Readers are urged to call Mr. Filner's office, as well as the other members of the Council who voted for the road, to let them know you want Mission Trails left untouched. Ask Filner to reconsider his vote. Call

**Bob Filner 236-6688**

Mayor Maureen O'Connor 236-6330

Wes Pratt 236-6644

Bruce Henderson 236-6616

Judy McCarty 236-6677

Or write them at:

202 "C" St., San Diego 92101

If Council confirms its vote for the road, a coalition of groups plans to challenge the decision in court and through a referendum. Numerous requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) were violated, not the least being inadequate public notification of the vote. The coalition will have 30 days to gather the signatures of 5% of the registered voters of the City to force a referendum of the Council's vote. There is a possibility the referendum will also take up the issue of the urban reserve (see related article this issue). The referendum will be expensive and donations are needed. If you want to help or donate, call Peter Andersen at 582-0304 for details. — *editor*

## Jackson Drive Extension is not needed

Proponents say that the extension will alleviate traffic on residential streets in Allied Gardens and San Carlos. San Diego City hired the experts (traffic engineers from SANDAG) who concluded it won't do that. Local traffic will

not decrease, it will increase. Jackson Drive Extension will pull traffic from Clairemont Mesa, Santee, Spring Valley, Lemon Grove, La Mesa, and El Cajon into San Carlos. The streets of San Carlos will be much more congested than they are now, but without helping Allied Gardens.

**SR 52 makes Jackson Drive Extension unnecessary**  
Route 52 will be completed soon and will terminate at Mast Boulevard in Santee. Traffic engineers hired by the city of San Diego tell us that SR 52 will provide really major traffic relief for Mission Gorge Road. Residents of San Carlos or Allied Gardens would have to drive 2-1/2 miles further to get on Route 52 at Mast Boulevard than if the Jackson Drive Extension were built, a trip that should take less than 3 minutes! Is that little detour worth \$80 million?

## Jackson Drive Extension costs too much

Jackson Drive Extension will cost more than \$80 million (and still counting). Even in times of inflation, that is a lot of money. This money *should* and can go to widen and improve our roads, repair our streets, extend and improve trolleys and buses, and leave plenty over to build *appropriate* access roads into the park. Proposition A money must be spent on transportation, and we need it, but not here!

## Jackson Drive Extension will destroy the park

The proposed Jackson Drive Extension — a major four-lane arterial freeway with a wide median strip permitting maximum speeds — would slice through the western part of Mission Trails Park. It would include the eighth largest bridge of its type in the North American continent — higher than Coronado Bay Bridge! This project would create noise, pollution, and destruction. It would also make much of the park unusable as parkland. Would you enjoy hiking or camping with a five-lane superhighway roaring over your head? Dare we ruin this precious legacy for future generations?

## Do not be fooled!

Those pushing this extension do not have our best interests at heart! Developers and builders will reap the profits from this project while we will pay the price in both dollars and destruction.

**Citizens Against The Jackson Drive Extension**

Robert Radlow, 265-8538

Peter Andersen, 582-0304

## Bird Walk Leader Profiled

**Brian Swanson** has been leading our bird walks in the canyon this past year and we thought it time to formally introduce him to our readers. He's a paralegal in the law department of SDGE, and attends Western State University School of Law evenings. He's been a resident of Mira

Mesa since 1979, and a resident of San Diego for over 30 years. As a child he spent much of his spare time on the mesas and in the canyons around Clairemont. His high

## Friends Honored at Annual Meeting

November 17 the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve held our annual meeting and elected new officers. This year's officers, unanimously elected, are:

**President**, Mike Kelly; **Vice President**, Jaya Perryman; **Treasurer**, Mike McCormick; **Secretary**, Les Braun

The Friends' Board of Directors includes, not only our officers, but also other members who volunteered to be active in the Friends. These include Brian Swanson, Don Albright, Trinity Gabriele, and Kathleen Zaworski-Burke.

Also present at the meeting were old friends such as Marilyn Mirrasoul, aide to Deputy Mayor Abbe Wolfsheimer and Jay Powell, aide to Councilwoman Linda Bernhardt.

Jay Powell told the meeting that Councilwoman Bernhardt introduced a resolution before the City Council to recognize Nov. 17 as "Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve" Day. We reprint that proclamation on this page.

Nov. 17 is particularly appropriate for the Friends since

it was one year ago on this date that we lost our founder and inspiration for many years, Dr. Elberta Fleming. She would have been pleased to see long-time supporters like Abbe and Linda represented at the meeting.

One of the things that pleased her greatly only weeks before her death were the results of the City Council elections of November 1989. She was at election central the evening of the elections and was estactic to see a staunch supporter of the Canyon re-elected, Abbe Wolfsheimer, and environmentally minded people elected for the first tim: Linda Bernhardt and John Hartley. She knew that future decisions concerning the canyon would be made by this Council. She was right. Their help has been invaluable this past year, on the City Council, the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force, and on a day-to-day basis working with the city's various departments.

### Resolution of the City Council City of San Diego "Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve" Day

**WHEREAS**, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was established to preserve and protect all natural habitat, flora and fauna, cultural resources and the overall environmental integrity of this canyon system; and

**WHEREAS**, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was formed to provide education about the unique natural and historic resources in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve; and

**WHEREAS**, through the dedication, commitment and expertise of its members, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve have succeeded in providing a heightened appreciation of this special place; and

**WHEREAS**, the Friends continue to provide information about the Preserve in newsletters, hikes, interpretive talks and forums and in presentations and testimony before regulatory agencies and jurisdictions; and

**WHEREAS**, it is important to acknowledge the contributions of citizen volunteers in promoting and protecting the irreplaceable resources which enhance and sustain our quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve are observing their Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 17, 1990 at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House in the Preserve; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of The City of San Diego, that this Council, for and on behalf of said City, hereby proclaims Saturday, November 17, 1990 as "Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve" Day in recognition of the organization's considerable contributions to the City of San Diego, and hereby expresses its appreciation to the membership for their continuing dedication and commitment to public education and resource protection.

*Maura O'Connor*  
Mayor

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## Urban Reserve, RPO, Fees City Steps Back from Growth Planning by Mike Kelly

### Avoiding "leapfrog" development

Urban reserve lands are large blocks of undeveloped lands the voters set aside from development through the 1985 Managed Growth Initiative, popularly called "Prop A." When voters approved this initiative, they approved the concept of planning our city's growth in order to avoid the crisis in city services Mira Mesa, Rancho Penasquitos, Rancho Bernardo and other communities face.

Included in this concept was the desire to avoid "leapfrog development" which puts the severest strain on city hookups, roads, mass transportation and services. The idea was to create a "reserve of lands" that would not be developed until the city had run out of other developable lands. At that time, the best use of the land would be decided by prioritizing through zoning changes. Until that time, any change in the zoning away from the 1 unit per 10 acres or agricultural zoning, would require the vote of the people.

The precedent for this pattern was set with the Torrey Pines Reserve, where a series of projects were approved by the voters over the decades.

### Council Policy 600-29 — a loophole?

In the case of the urban reserve, however, Mayor O'Connor and Councilmembers Pratt, McCarty, Roberts, and Henderson found what they believe is a loophole in the law. They say that since Council Policy 600-29 was in effect before Prop A was passed, they are allowed to permit the 1 unit per 4 acres development they passed November 19 without submitting it to a vote of the public.

They ignore the provision of Prop A that directed the city to bring all existing city policies and ordinances into consistency with the Managed Growth Initiative. Conveniently, the pro-development Council did not do this in the five years since this vote of the people.

### To plan or not to plan . . .

The issue isn't low-density multi-million dollar estates and golf courses versus higher-density middle income and affordable housing. The issue is planning and the will of the people. There should be a master plan of development, open-space recreation areas, and city services before approving development in the urban reserve. Not to plan is to exacerbate our growth crisis. The communities that will be

most affected by this lack of planning will be Rancho Penasquitos and Rancho Bernardo.

### Environmental fig leaf

In a sop to the environmental movement, the Council majority decided not to approve specific developments for six months, during which time city staff is supposed to map the sensitive lands in the area. This "environmental fig leaf" is a sham. No serious observer expects the city's Planning Department — with about 38 vacancies at this time — to be able to complete this mapping. Meanwhile, developers may continue to submit and process their applications to the city during this six months.

### Prop A — another vote of the people to be disregarded?

Ignoring the will of the people by looking for technical loopholes in our votes is a pattern we're seeing statewide. We passed the insurance reform law, Prop 103, only to have both the state bureaucracy and the insurance industry deny us any reforms. We passed Prop 140 this November to limit state legislators terms to make them more accountable to us. Barely was our vote over when the legislators rushed to find a way to ignore our will.

### At least they're consistent

The urban reserve vote is consistent with other recent votes. First the City Council voted a package of growth impact fees to make new development pay its fair share of services. Then they nullified this package and put off impact fees into the future. The Resource Protection Ordinances (RPO), designed to limit development on sensitive lands, is being weakened as it moves through the Council and city staff. Clearly, the City Council is once again caving in to pressure from the developers at the expense of managing our growth in a rational way.

### Had enough?

A law suit to test the Council's vote versus Prop A and a referendum on the vote are being seriously considered. What do you think? Are you fed up enough with having your votes ignored? Get involved. Volunteer your time and/or make a donation. Call us for more information.

## CalTrans Mitigation in Preserve

CalTrans recently presented a mitigation project before the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force and to the Task Force itself. Since CalTrans will be destroying a small piece of wetlands in the path of the eastern part of Route 56 in

Peñasquitos East, they are required by law to "mitigate" this with a project elsewhere in the area.

CalTrans proposed to mitigate in this instance with the "Peñasquitos Creek Restoration Project." Large areas of

# Over Collection and the Rosy Boa

by Mike Kelly

Endangered species in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve aren't as protected as you think. Although safe from much of the habitat destruction that is reducing their numbers outside our parks, there are still other problems that threaten their existence. A recent animal visitor prompted this concern.

## Should we call Animal Control?

My wife and I live on the rim of Peñasquitos Canyon. Recently, a neighbor called me out to see a snake that worried her. She asked if perhaps we shouldn't call Animal Control? I assured her it wasn't a rattler, but was a coastal rosy boa (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*). It's a snake listed as of "special concern" by the State of California. It's in danger of extinction, but exact numbers are hard to come by. Snakes are harder to count than deer or coyote (see page 5 for an article about this problem). This one is 3 feet long and won't grow much bigger. It has three broad brown stripes against a bluish gray ground color. Their range is confined to Southwest California and Northwest Baja California.

## One sick puppy, er . . . snake

Because it was next to the road, I picked the rosy boa up from where it lay and moved it closer to the canyon's rim. The next morning it was still there, vulnerable, lethargic and its mouth permanently open. Normally, I let nature take its course in the wild.

However, in this case, because its numbers have declined so dramatically, I took it to a vet. Dr. Jenkins in Mission Valley, someone who treats exotic animals, said the diagnosis was "mouth rot." Yes, snakes can get colds, pneumonia, and bacterial infections such as this — just as we do. The prescription? I have to give her daily baths in an antibacterial, Betadyne, and daily injections of an antibiotic. He showed me how to sex a snake. "It" is a she. And she's my guest until spring. Dr. Jenkins explained that she can't safely hibernate now. Friends ask me if I'll keep her as a pet.

---

(CalTrans cont'd)

Peñasquitos Creek are infested with Eucalyptus, a weed tree from Australia.

Eucalyptus grows all over San Diego. Developers like it because it adapts well to our climate and grows extremely fast. Enthusiasm is waning a bit now, however, because of the threat of lawsuits over the tree's propensity to drop limbs on vehicles, structures, and people unexpectedly. That's one of the reasons you see Eucalyptus in new developments being cropped on their tops.

Eucalyptus pose a serious threat to native California plant species. The Australian import produces a *phytotoxin* that poisons the soil to native species of trees and other plants. The result is that you see relatively little growth under Eucalyptus. They literally kill off the "understory" of

## Over collection

Over collection is one reason I won't keep her. Her species is declining from habitat loss to new developments, but also because too many people collect them. They're sweet tempered, easy to keep and a favorite of kids, who are always bringing these slow moving reptiles home. I want to continue to see rosy boas and other endangered species in the wild.

Another species that has been over collected is the coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), discussed on page 5. I was near the rim of the canyon last spring when I looked down and spied one hiding among the wildflowers. With its pronounced scales and two horns on its head it looks like a miniature dinosaur, one of the reasons it too has been over collected. It's found in California and Baja California. It's so primitive and slow moving, I was able to watch it for 10 minutes. It's a state protected species.

## "Trick or treat"

Many of us of the "older" generations aren't as "densitized" to snakes, tarantulas and other animals as are the children of today. Our first instinct is fear, even though the snake or tarantula is less harmful than a bee (excepting rattlesnakes, of course). Halloween night illustrates this.

I decided to test the "trick or treaters." I waited for the doorbell to ring. I answered the door with the rosy boa coiled in one hand and some candy in the middle of the coils. What would the reaction be? I opened the door to three kids, about 8 years old, two girls and one boy. Instead of shrieks of fright, the two little girls exclaimed how "pretty" the boa was and, without hesitation, reached out to touch and pet it. The little boy was just a bit hesitant, but joined in! I'm in more need of densitization than they are.

As more and more people enjoy Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve the danger is that the plants and animals there, particularly the endangered ones, will be over collected to extinction. So, why not join me in not keeping them, but enjoying them in the wild?

---

plants we associate with our native oaks, willows, cottonwoods and sycamores. They also aren't very hospital to a large variety of insects and hence don't serve as a food supply for birds and animals. Some birds like to use its branches, but can't utilize them as a source of food as they do other trees.

CalTrans proposes to replace three acres of eucalyptus groves on the eastern end of the Preserve, between the Johnson-Taylor Ranch and Black Mountain Road, with a sycamore-cottonwood-willow woodland. The understory will be comprised of mule fat, San Diego marsh elder, Palmer's mugwort, and Douglas' mugwort. In addition, annual flowering plants would provide ground cover and contribute to the overall native plant diversity of the area.

More on this in our next issue.

**(Camino Ruíz cont'd)**

also against extending the road through the Canyon. In effect, both groups were confirming earlier positions they had taken. These votes are a big step towards stopping Camino Ruíz.

At each of the community meetings the Friends had a good turnout of our members from that community. **Thanks to all of you!** Mike Kelly, president of the Friends, spoke at both meetings, as did Mark LaBree, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force.

Also voicing opposition to the crossing was the San Diego County Parks Advisory Committee in a letter to City Manager John Lockwood signed by the Committee's Chair, Adrian Marine.

At its meeting of Nov. 28, the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force voted to recommend to the City Council that the city not draw out the process of eliminating Camino Ruíz any longer, but move to delete the road from the city's Master Plan by amendment. If this is not done, the issue could drag on until the individual community master plans come up for adoption.

Previously, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force voted against the road. Former City Councilmember Ed Struicksma, current Councilmembers Wolfsheimer and Bernhardt, Mayor O'Connor and former Mayor Hedgecock have all come out publicly against it. May 14, 1990 the City Council unanimously voted its intent to take Camino Ruíz out of the City's Master Plan when the community plans come before it for a vote. In fact, the council voted that there should be no expenditures of funds for further planning or building the extension of Camino Ruíz across the Preserve.

**Keep the pressure on**

The vote on Jackson Drive (see article this issue) reminds us that, despite the victories to date, we must keep the pressure on if we are to protect Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Here's what you can do.

1. Let city officials know your opposition.

Write to the entire City Council by sending a letter addressed to the Council to the City Clerk's office at **202 C St., San Diego 92101**, and ask that it be circulated to all council members.

Make a special effort to send a separate letter to City Councilman Bruce Henderson, whose new district borders the Preserve. We don't know where he stands on this issue.

Please send us copies of your letters.

2. Write letters to the editor of your community paper: *Mira Mesa Sentinel* POB 600600, San Diego 92160.

*Peñasquitos News* 13247 Poway Rd., Poway 92064.

3. Get friends and neighbors involved and writing letters. If they haven't visited the Preserve, take them. Or encourage them to come on one of our walks.

4. Get on our mailing and phone lists for Camino Ruíz. We'll let you know when important meetings are coming up.

**(Causeway cont'd)**

roadway is now "floating" on the wetlands! That's why the exposed north side of the road embankment is vertical and covered with tar paper at the present time.

**Enter the Rose Canyon Fault**

When completed, more rip-rap and sedimentary fill will be dumped there and the slope vegetated. Thus we have a floating causeway over the wetlands, a hazardous situation indeed, because the area is a scant three miles from San Diego's most dangerous fault, the Rose Canyon Fault. Seismologists estimate slippage along the Rose Canyon Fault could cause a 6.0 to 7.0 magnitude earthquake with a recurrence rate of 100-300 years. The last big one was in 1861, so we are just about in the center of the recurrence window.

Should an earthquake of such magnitude occur on the Rose Canyon Fault, there is a very real danger that the floating causeway would sink into the mud by a process known as liquefaction, whereby saturated sediments lose their thixotropy, or strength, from seismic shaking. Liquefaction was what caused the Oakland freeways to collapse during the October 1989 San Francisco Earthquake. Soil tests show that saturated sediments in the fine sand and slit categories are most susceptible to liquefaction, and that is exactly the kind of sediment present in the wetlands.

Only time will tell how well the floating causeway will hold up during a large earthquake on the Rose Canyon Fault. Meanwhile, San Diego now has the only floating causeway in California, as far as I know, a phenomenon of rather dubious distinction in a state known for its destructive earthquakes! If the roadbed does collapse, Calle Cristobal would end in a cul-de-sac east of Lopez Creek, which is what it should have done in the first place.

**(Bird Walk Leader cont'd)**

school friends thought he was crazy when he shared tales of shrimp and bobcats living on Mira Mar Naval Air Station and nearby mesas and canyon.

Well, there are fewer canyons and vernal pools, but the wild things which sparked his curiosity are still to be found. It's a bit more difficult to see them though. Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is home to many important plants and animals which deserve our protection. This is why Brian became involved with the Friends. He feels each of us can make a difference by doing our part.

Brian considers himself a naturalist, with wide ranging interests related to our natural history. He provides a wealth of information concerning the reptiles, birds and early Indian inhabitants of this special canyon. The bird hikes he leads, which he describes as "practically a stroll," provide him an opportunity to share his love of the canyon.

Brian has been a Board member for the past two years.



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**

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**Outings (cont'd)**

**JANUARY**

**NATURE WALK**

Sat., Jan. 5, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Look for flowers and plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Jan. 5, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. See Dec. 15 for details.

**FITNESS WALK**

Sat., Jan. 12, 8 a.m. 10-K brisk walk. See Dec. 8 for details.

**OLD LOPEZ ROAD WALK (Mira Mesa)**

Sun., Jan. 13, 10 a.m. Meet at the viewpoint/ trailhead of the Old Lopez Trail in Mira Mesa. Mira Mesa Blvd to Pacific Heights Blvd.; go North until Pacific Mesa Blvd.; take a right and go until it dead ends at the sign for the Preserve. Steep hills. Visit a beautiful, but largely unknown part of the Preserve. Led by Mike Kelly, president, Friends PQ...

**WATERFALL WALK WITH BARBARA MOORE**

Sat., Jan. 19, 9 a.m. Walk to the Preserve's waterfall with Barbara Moore, co-author of *Walking San Diego*. Meet at Carmel Valley Park and Ride at intersection of Carmel Valley Rd. and I-5. We'll carpool from there to starting point. Moore will autograph copies of her book for those who bring her book. She'll also have copies available there.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Jan. 19, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. See Dec. 15 for details.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat., Jan. 26, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock. Meet at the Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. Led by Mike McCormick, the discoverer of the tree map.

**GEOLOGY WALK**

Sun., Jan. 27, 9 a.m. (2 hrs). See Dec. 9 for details.

**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
- Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Volunteer to help the committee
- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



## Fightback: Parks and Wildlife Protection Initiative

by Mike Kelly, president

### Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

In our last newsletter I wrote about the setbacks the environmental movement suffered at the hands of a slim majority on the City County. These setbacks included weakening the Resource Protection Ordinance, ignoring the people's right to vote on development of the urban reserve (Prop A, the Managed Growth Initiative), and rescinding fees on new development. Robert Radlow and Peter Andersen also reported on the Council's vote to allow Jackson Drive to be built across Mission Trails Regional Park. If left to stand, these decisions would represent a decisive defeat for the environmental and managed growth movements. It would hurt our ability to protect our parks, our natural resources and our quality of life from further degradation from development. Each local battle with developers in our communities would be made more difficult.

#### Fightback time

These defeats have led a coalition of environmental and managed growth groups to support a "Parks and Wildlife Protection Initiative." San Diegans for Managed Growth (SDMG) is circulating the draft of a new initiative to amend the City Charter to protect and preserve city parks and the Urban Reserve.

#### Volunteers and funds needed

Your help is needed to succeed both in placing this initiative on the ballot and then campaigning for it. It will take some 120,000 signatures to place the initiative on the ballot. It is estimated that as much as \$75,000 will be needed for this petitioning part of the campaign.

You can circulate petitions among your friends and in your neighborhoods. You can also join us on weekends (or whenever you have the time) to petition outside area supermarkets and malls. You have to be a registered voter in San Diego to circulate a petition and the signers must also be registered voters.

To help circulate petitions and/or to donate funds call me at 566-6489 and I'll be glad to give you details.

#### Closing the "loopholes"

The "Parks and Wildlife Protection Initiative" would close two loopholes the City Council found in the City Charter and the City's Progress Guide and General Plan that permitted the recent 5 to 4 votes.

Voters in 1985 voted that "No property shall be changed

➡ p.9 for more

## Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

### FEBRUARY

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., Feb. 2, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles round-trip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Meet at Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Feb. 2, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Take Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mtn. Rd. and drive up to parking lot near ranch. Visit historic adobe and see settler and Indian artifacts.

#### NATURE WALK

Sun., Feb. 10, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Look for early wildflowers and plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Feb. 16, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. See Feb. 2 above for details.

#### BIRD WALK — LÓPEZ CANYON

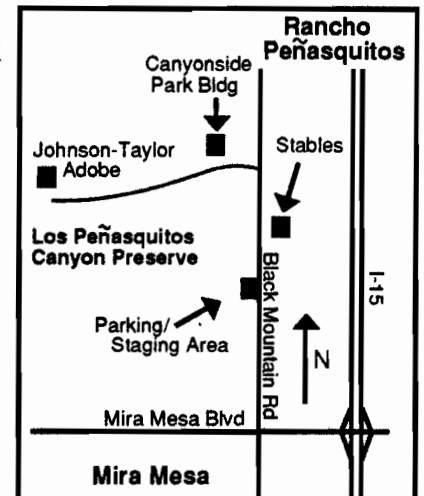
Sun., Feb. 17, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve. Bring a bird book and binoculars. Beginners welcome. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### WESTERN DEL MAR MESA WALK

Sun., Feb. 17, 9 a.m. (2-3 hours). Carmel Valley Road east from I-5, right on Carmel Creek Road. Look for homes in the flood plain. Park near the three old Sycamore trees. Tour the most biologically sensitive lands on the San Diego coast. See coastal maritime chararral, vernal pools, Torrey Pines, and the endangered short-leaved dudleya. Begins with steep hill. Led by Dave Hogan of the San Diego Biodiversity Project.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Feb. 23, 9 a.m. (2 hrs). Meet at the Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock. Led by Mike McCormick or Mike Kelly.



➡ p.10 for more

## Those Who Lived Here Before Us

by Les Braund

[The Harris site described in this article is in danger of being obliterated by proposed Highway 680. The site is internationally recognized as holding the key to the beginnings of human life here in Southern California. The road is being strongly pushed by the Rancho Santa Fe, which wants to shift commuters traveling east and west out of their estate community onto the 680 bypass — editor.]

People have lived here in San Diego County for thousands of years. The first people to call San Diego home are referred to as the San Dieguito Paleo-Indians. They occupied what is now San Diego County 10,000 years ago and possibly longer. These people were game hunters and used simple stone tools. Typical of the stone tools used are stone scrapers, knife points, "horse-hoof planes," and choppers. They made only minimal use of native plants. Evidence of their existence has been found in the San Dieguito River Valley at a site referred to as the Harris site.

The San Dieguito people evolved or were assimilated into the La Jolla Culture about 7,500–8,000 years ago. The La Jolla people varied from the San Dieguito people by developing skills and knowledge of local plants. The La Jolla culture is known as a milling and grinding culture. They relied on manos and metates for the preparation of various seed plants as food sources. They also made extensive use of local marine resources such as clams, mussels, and fish, while continuing to hunt game.

During the approximately 8,000 year period when the La Jolla culture existed major environmental changes took place. Large fluctuations in sea level occurred, inun-

dating many of their villages that existed along the coast. The best example is a sight found underwater near the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. The result of these fluctuations was that the Indians had to learn to make better use of the terrestrial flora and fauna. The La Jolla culture remained unchanged until they were visited by more developed migrating Yuman and Shoshone tribes.

The influence of more developed tribes led to a growing reliance on acorn gathering, the use of relatively unadorned pottery, more finely worked stone tools and weapons and possibly the use of clay hearths. These people flourished and spread across the county. We now refer to these people as Dieguenos, the word having Spanish origins. The northern Diegueno (Ipai) and the southern Diegueno (Tipai) vary by dialect. Ipai (pronounced e-pie) and Tipia (pronounced t-pie) are derived from the native language.

The Indians who occupied Los Peñasquitos Canyon were Ipai Indians. There are two locations in the preserve which were used as encampments. The first is at the west end of the Preserve. This site has surface evidence of a midden (dump) of various shells gathered from the marsh, which in the past may have been a salt water estuary.

The second site is under the Johnson-Taylor Ranch house. This site benefits from a continuous supply of fresh water from the artesian spring that exists to this day.

The number of Indians who occupied the canyon was probably small. Typically the Ipai Indians lived in bands not exceeding 30 individuals. It's believed that the total number residing in our canyon was probably no more than 30.

## Update on the Santa Rosa Plateau

by Les Braund

In our August Newsletter I reported on the fight to save the spectacular Santa Rosa Plateau from development. Located west of Temecula, this area has even been recognized for its uniqueness and beauty by the United Nations.

I'm happy to report some good news. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in the January 6th 1991 edition that negotiations between The Nature Conservancy and the developer, RANPAC, aided by the Preserve Our Plateau committee have been successful. The 3,825 acre RANPAC parcel will be added to the Nature Conservancy's 3,100 acre existing preserve on the Santa Rosa Plateau.

The plateau is approximately 15,000 acres and supports 41 rare and endangered species. The Plateau is home to mountain lions, golden eagles, bald eagles, badgers, the rare Engelman Oak tree and native prairie.

The final agreement reached between RANPAC, Riverside County, the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), and The Nature Conservancy requires the MWD and the County of Riverside to contribute \$30.1 million. The MWD must acquire open space to offset the loss of open

space as a result of the construction of a new reservoir in Riverside County. Their contribution will be the largest share of the money. The Nature Conservancy will contribute \$300,000 and \$5 million will be coming from the State of California habitat acquisition fund.

This acquisition, added to the existing preserve, will protect 6,925 acres of the 15,000 acre plateau. More work must be done to acquire the remaining properties in the plateau. However, the threat of development on the other properties is not as pressing as was the case with the RANPAC property. Preserve Our Plateau and The Nature Conservancy will continue to work for the preservation of the remaining properties.

Congratulations to the Preserve Our Plateau committee, The Nature Conservancy, County of Riverside, MWD and RANPAC for a job well done! Good luck in the future.

For a wonderful day outing, why not do as I have and visit the plateau. Take I-15 north past Temecular and exit at Clinton Keith Road. Turn left (west) and drive 5 miles to a hard right turn and you're there.



## Native Trees from Seeds (Part 2 of 2)

by Pamela (PJ) Piburn

Volunteer, County Parks & Recreation Department

"Platanus seeds need to be fresh. The fresher they are, the better the germination," Jeanine DeHart, owner of Weber Nursery in Encinitas, explains. Ms. DeHart specializes in plants native to California. She collects and prepares many of the seeds herself. "You can find people that have some of these trees and collect seeds from them. Sometimes, you can go out in the chaparral, where they're not on the reserve or in the preserve, and collect seed. You can collect a handful of platanus or populus seed and have enough for a forest of trees. I get my cottonwood and sycamore that way because they put out a lot of seed."

### Six native species in peñasquitos canyon

There are six types of trees native to Peñasquitos Canyon: Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Willow (*Salix hindiana* or *Salix lasiolepis*), Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and along the coast, at the extreme west end of the canyon, Torrey pine (*Pinus torreyana*). Depending on its size, Toyon may be considered to be a shrub or small tree. Scrub oaks (*Quercus dimosa*), technically shrubs, can also grow to be quite large. You might consider planting these along with your trees, since they are a great source of food for birds and animals.

Preparation of acorn seeds for planting is basically a simple procedure. First, they should be rinsed in a bucket of water. Jeanine recommends that, "any seeds that float should be thrown away. Acorns are given to a lot of predation. If the insect had gotten in there and eaten the embryo, they'll float because they're not dense enough to sink." Sycamore seeds must be taken out of the bur prior to planting.

Torrey pine seeds require a slightly more complicated procedure called stratification. "They need to be mixed with peat and perlite and put in sandwich bags, not freezer bags." Ms. DeHart turns to the small brown refrigerator next to her desk, takes out a small bag of seeds for me to feel, and continues, "keep them evenly moist, not wet, in the fridge for 90 days."

Once the seeds are ready, they can be planted into tiny pots. Jeanine says, "The rule of thumb is to cover all seed twice it's thickness. Except an acorn, and you want to leave an acorn somewhat exposed (placed on side, 2/3's covered)." Most potting soils are satisfactory for germinating the seeds. If seeds are to be planted directly into the ground, they must be protected from animals or else they will probably be eaten.

### Transplanting

The next phase is transplanting. "As soon as pine and oak seeds germinate (send up little water leaves), I take them out of the pot and snip off the end of the tap root (see diagram). Then plant it up into a gallon pot." Ms. DeHart explains this procedure while walking easily among rows of small pots containing bushy green Torrey pines. The

ground was soft under our feet from layers of mulch, the air, heavily scented with moist earth.

Some trees are more readily started from cuttings. "I grow all my Cottonwood and Willow from cuttings," says Jeanine. "I just cut off the semi-green wood, it's not too limber and not too woody. It's about year-old growth." You can obtain rooting compound from most local nurseries. Make sure you check to see it is the proper type for rooting woody growth.

### Water needs

Seedlings require water according to their needs. Ms. DeHart suggests, "If they're a drylands plant, like Toyon, water deeper than the roots at any one time, and then allow to dry out completely before they're wet again. If they're a wetlands plant, like Sycamore or Cottonwood, then they need to be kept evenly moist all the time." Trees can receive slow release food after one year. In general, seedlings don't require staking. Be patient. Seeds can take from 3 days to 1 year to germinate. You can find information on particular species at the library, the San Diego Natural History Museum, or from local nurseries. It's best to use botanical names when inquiring about trees, to make sure you obtain the correct species.

I highly recommend you visit Weber Nursery to see the kind of beauty native plants can provide. There are a few local nurseries from which to obtain seeds. Because they are wholesale dealers, any seeds purchased must be in large quantities. You can receive a free seed coupon if you buy *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree*, by Andy and Katie Lipkis, available through many local bookstores.

### For further information:

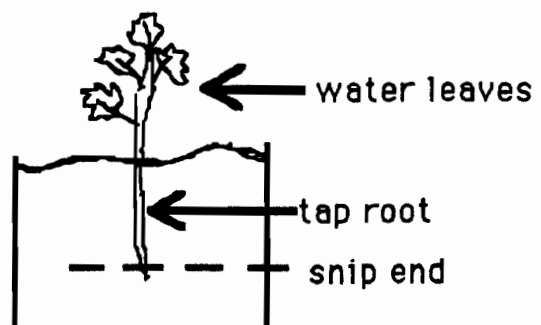
Albright Seed Company, 2464-A S. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92084 — 619-598-0190 (Cal. 1-800-423-8112)

Carter Seeds, 475 Marvista, Vista, CA 92083  
619-724-5931

GEO. 1-800-TREE GEO

Pacific Southwest Nursery — 619-477-5333

Weber Nursery, 237 Seeman Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024  
619-753-1661



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# What Was that Masked Animal?

by Mike Kelly

On an evening last summer, dusk was long gone as we made our way back to the parking-staging area. The Friends' dusk walk had already turned up 6 or 7 mule deer, including several fawns. We walked on the main trail as quietly as possible, our flashlights extinguished, using only moonlight to guide our steps. Only occasional whispers betrayed our presence.

As always, I listened for the sound out of the ordinary, the one that might break out of the background of crickets and bullfrogs. Rounding a bend, I heard a rustling in the brush to our left, perhaps 50 yards distant. We shined our flashlights towards the sound. Suddenly, I had two animals in my light, climbing a tree.

From a distance I thought they were cats, perhaps feral ones — domestic cats gone wild. As we drew closer, however, their very long tails marked with prominent dark rings became evident. Ringtails, sometimes called Ringtail cats, immediately came to mind. These small carnivores, cousins to the Raccoon, are found in our state, but haven't been reported in our area.

## Mistaken identity

As is often the case with a first impression in poor light, I was wrong. As I drew closer the animals split up. One dropped to the ground and disappeared into the brush. The other, however, climbed higher in the tree. Now under the tree, shining my light up, I discovered its true identity. The



Raccoon tracks

dark mask around its eyes made it unmistakable — raccoon. From the size of the animals I guessed them to be juveniles, probably siblings from the same litter. Until this time, I had only seen their slender, hand-like tracks in the mud

along the creek.

Several weeks later, I encountered what I think were the same raccoons. One evening, from my balcony overlooking the Preserve, I heard a sound below our fence. Always curious, I took a flashlight, quietly slipped out of the house and down to the fence. I expected to find a deer or coyote in my beam of light, a common sight near my house.

I found nothing. I turned the light off and the sounds started up again. Light on, I swept the slope. Nothing again. This pattern repeated itself several times. Finally, I focused on a scrub oak. The sounds were definitely coming from the oak. I moved under the oak, yet it still took several minutes of lighting the tree to find them.

In my light I could see they were holding acorns in their flexible front paws. Apparently frightened, one of them "tinkled" a bit. Unfortunately, my head was directly beneath it! I beat a hasty retreat.

## Effects of the drought

The acorns in the scrub oaks near my fence are bigger and more plentiful than those of most scrub or live oaks in the Preserve. This is because the drought, now in its fifth year, is severely impacting our countryside. Penasquitos Preserve is no exception. Although Peñasquitos Creek continues to flow continuously, it sustains a rather narrow band of lush life. Once you get 20 or 30 yards away from it, you can see the impact of the drought. Beyond this riparian corridor, the plants are dependent on rainfall.

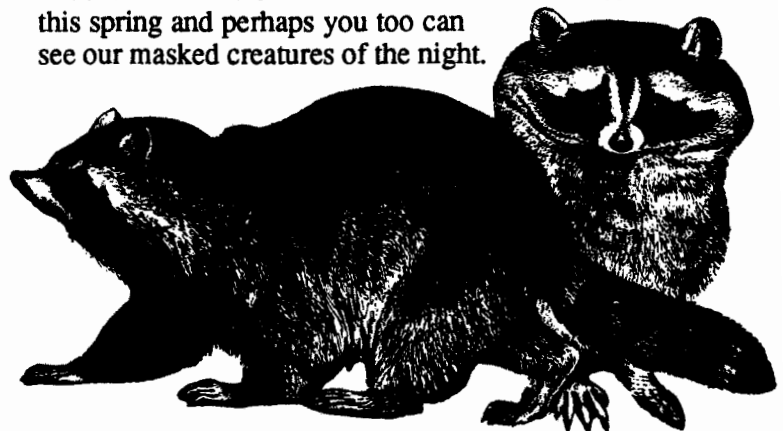
Inadequate rainfall means less grass and slower growth of other plants animals are dependent on. It also means fewer and smaller acorns that both birds and animals are dependent on. Lemonade berry bushes tried, unsuccessfully, to produce their berries twice last year, another food lost to the animal inhabitants of the preserve. This declining food supply may explain why the rabbit population is noticeably down and the coyotes and bobcats that feed on them as well.

In California's Sierra mountain range, blue tongue disease is taking a toll of mule deer. In adequate water and poor fodder to eat weaken them and lower their resistance to disease. Birds too are affected. Many birds in our area have stopped double clutching as the drought has dragged on. In other words, they're only having one clutch of eggs where they often had two in good years.

Raccoons are luckier than some of these other animals in that they enjoy a wider diet. As carnivores, they eat crayfish and frogs from the creek, mice and small birds. But they also eat a variety of fruits, nuts and berries. True to folklore, they do wash their food before eating it, if the water is nearby. In fact, their scientific name, *Procyon lotor*, includes the latin word "lotor," which means "one who washes."

Raccoons mate in late winter and produce a litter of three to six, often born in a den in a hollow tree or log in the woodlands, swamps, marshes, or creeks they prefer to live in. They are quite sociable, often remaining together through the first year.

Join us for one of our dusk walks when we resume them this spring and perhaps you too can see our masked creatures of the night.



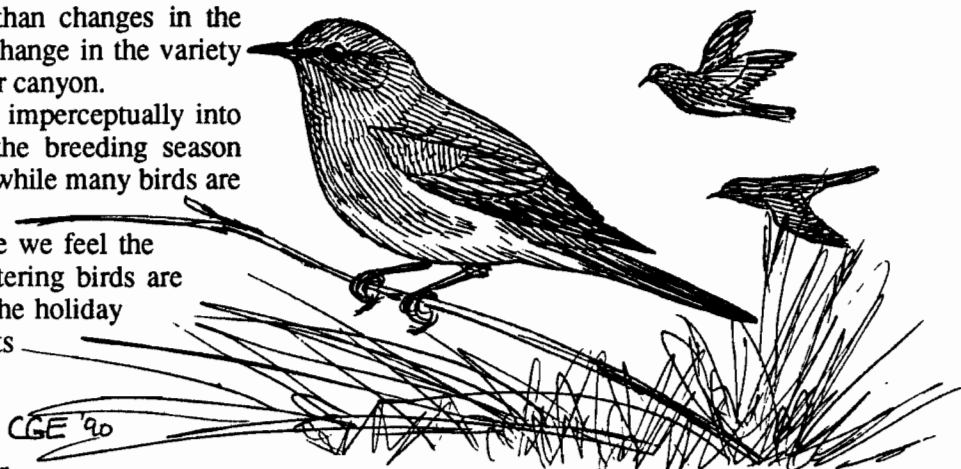
## The Birds of Los Peñasquitos Canyon The Mountain Bluebird by Claude G. Edwards

The passing seasons bring more than changes in the weather and vegetation, they herald change in the variety of the birdlife which we can find in our canyon.

Actually, the seasons blend almost imperceptually into one another. Spring migration and the breeding season overlap with the end of winter. Then, while many birds are still fledging young, southbound fall migrants begin to appear. By the time we feel the slightest chill in the air, our overwintering birds are moving in. And, just as we get over the holiday season, the earliest northbound migrants are passing through!

Many of you are acquainted with our more abundant and conspicuous wintering birds. Species such as Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped warbler, and White-crowned Sparrow are typically encountered almost everywhere you go from October to March. My guess is that not many of you are familiar with another of our regular, if uncommon and localized, wintering birds, the Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*).

It has been said that Mountain Bluebirds are "pieces of



the sky that came down to earth." Indeed, their pastel shades of turquoise and gray and beige and white are like pieces of the high country sky and some of the puffy clouds. They really are very beautiful to watch and see in good light at close range.

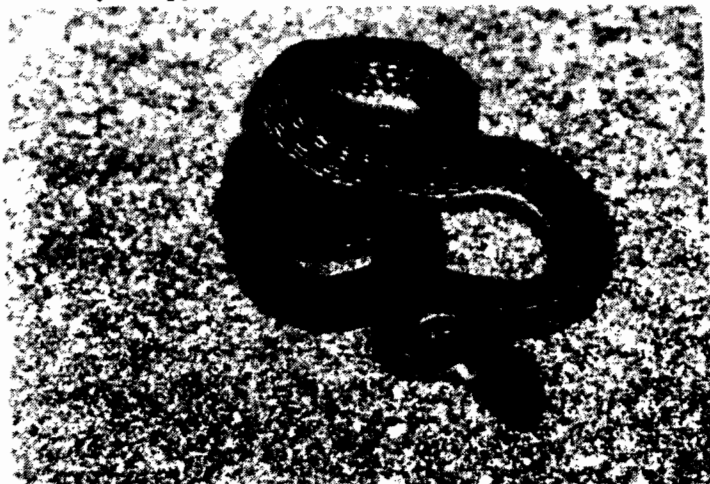
➔ p.7 for more

## Have You Seen This Snake?

In our last newsletter we reported on the efforts of the San Diego Herpetological Society to identify populations of reptiles and amphibians that seem to be in danger of disappearing. This is part of a worldwide effort. You can help by using the form below to report any sightings of this snake and returning them to the Society:

**San Diego Herpetological Society**  
Attn: Jim Sherman  
P.O. Box 4036  
San Diego, CA 92104.

For better pictures than we can reproduce in this newsletter, buy a copy of *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and*



*Amphibians* by Robert C. Stebbins, Peterson Field Guides series, available at bookstores and museum shops.

### Two-Striped Garter Snake

In 1949, C.B. Perkins, curator of reptiles at the San Diego Zoo called the two-striped garter snake one of the commonest snakes in San Diego County (*Snakes of San Diego County*). Today, their population has undergone a drastic decline. The main cause is habitat destruction.

### Distinguishing features

Found near permanent water sources from the coast to desert foothills. Average length 18-36 inches. Upper surface plain, dark colored, no dorsal stripe. Lateral stripes present, but faint, yellow in coloration.

### Observation Record

Name of Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Weather \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat Description \_\_\_\_\_

# Storm Drains and 100-year Floods in López Canyon

by Dr. John Northrop, Consulting Geophysicist

## History

In 1967, the Army Corps of Engineers published a report on the 100-year floodplain in the Peñasquitos drainage basin<sup>1</sup>. Other investigators believe the Corps' report, and accompanying map, give an underestimate of the 100-year floods in Peñasquitos<sup>2</sup>. For example, there have been several very large floods in San Diego since the coming of the Anglos. Two of them, in the winters of 1891 and 1915, are well documented.

During the '91 flood, railroad cars in Sorrento Valley were washed out to sea, landslides covered other railroad cars and washed out the tracks. Indeed, the California Southern's Surf Line (predecessor of the AT&SF) went bankrupt afterwards. The 1916 even, called the Hatfield flood after the city-hired rainmaker, Mr. Hatfield, was also very large and probably extended beyond the Army Corps' 100-year limit.

More recently, the floods of 1968, 1978 and 1983 caused considerable damage to the Sorrento Valley Industrial Park. Since then, developments on López Ridge, the Lusk Business Park and Park View Estates in Mira Mesa have increased the runoff by an estimated 25%<sup>2</sup>. Flooding in Peñasquitos Canyon proper is largely taken care of by the mature flood plain that surrounds the creek bed. Water overlapping this plain eventually drains off and leaves some of its sediment load behind, thus building up the flood plain. López Canyon, on the other hand, is a much younger canyon and has no flood plain in its upper reaches and only a nascent one further downstream where the López family had their ranch. Therefore, it isn't surprising that López Canyon has suffered a marked amount of erosion since the development of Mira Mesa in the 1970s. A comparison of air photographs taken in 1972 with those taken in 1985 shows a dramatic change in the upper part of López Canyon. Indeed, that section of the once pristine canyon floor has been turned into a cobble-strewn dry wash that is an ecological desert, as anyone who has hiked or ridden up there well knows.

Questions remain concerning how this came about and what can be done about it. A good place to start is to estimate the amount of flood flow in the canyon before and after development.

## Estimating the flood flows

Since the construction of the Montongo Street detention basin, developers have put in 35 storm drains, of 18"-84" diameter, in López Canyon downstream from the basin. The combined diameter of all these drains is 816 inches, or 68 feet (34 foot radius)! Therefore, the combined area ( $\pi r^2$ ) of all storm drains is:

$\pi \times 36 \times 36$ , or 3631 square feet ( $\pi = 3.1416$ )

Rounding down to 3500 sq. ft. we get a volume ( $\pi \times r^2 \times h$ ) in of 3500 cu. ft., when  $h=1$ . Estimates of the velocities of flood flows ranges from 1 to 10 ft./sec.<sup>2</sup> in open

channels, the larger values being associated with the bigger floods. Since flows in pipes are slower than in nature, because of constriction and friction, we can take the lower value and compute approximately the amount of discharge for the combined storm drains in López Canyon below the Montongo Street basin as 3500 cubic feet per second (CFS). This estimate is probably too high because there is only a remote probability that all the storm drains would be full at the same time. By way of comparison, reference 2 gives a value of 3270 CFS for flood flows in López Canyon, after development.

The reason the canyon is being eroded so badly is that the city engineers based their runoff study on data for 10-year floods only! A recent letter<sup>3</sup> from the Deputy City Manager Severo Esquivel states that "The Basin (at Montongo Street) was then designed such that during a ten-year storm, enough water would be held back such that the drainage introduced by future storm drains in López Canyon did not cause a "net" increase in the rate of flow at the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Canyons." Clearly, they underestimated the amount of flow by using a 10-year storm, instead of a 100-year storm for reference.

The problem is compounded because storm drains concentrate the runoff at the drains' outlet which becomes a "point source" where turbulent flow, rather than laminar flow, occurs. Also, the "lag time" (time between rain storm and peak runoff) is much shorter for the post-development storm drain scenario than for the natural conditions where soil and vegetation soak up much of the precipitation. Therefore, flooding in López Canyon in the post storm drain era is of the flash-flood variety and occurs, almost coincidentally, with the storm. This is exactly what happened in December 1989, when flash floods in López Canyon overtopped the causeway at the Parking/Staging area and deposited extensive debris (including 25-foot sections of telephone poles (!) in the wetlands area at the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Canyons.

## Summary and conclusions

(1) Historically, several large floods have probably exceeded the Army Corps of Engineers estimate of 100-year flood flows in Peñasquitos Canyon Drainage Basin. (2) The City of San Diego estimated the runoff in López Canyon from 10-year, instead of 100-year, flood data. (3) There are 35 storm drains in López Canyon below the Montongo Street Basin, and only 4 upstream from it. (4) Flood flows (estimated from 3200 to 3500 CFS) enter the canyon below the basin and cause rapid erosion of López Canyon and debris deposits downstream.

## Recommendations

A field and modeling study of 100-year floods in López Canyon, like that recently completed for Carmel Valley

➡ p.9 for more

# San Diego Biodiversity Project Update

by David Hogan, S.D. Bio-diversity Project

[For hikes led by SD Biodiversity Project — see our hike listings on Page 1 — editor]

Greetings Peñasquitos Friends . . . We've been pretty busy over the last year watchdogging the activities of Biological consultants, leading hikes, and writing lands acquisition proposals. We've seen some victories, and some losses. And we've done a lot of growing. At the end of the update you'll note our plea for funds. The Endangered Species listing proposals took many dollars and more is needed if we are to continue to fight. Help if you can!

Over the last year we've shifted the focus of the project away from physical activities such as restoration projects and garbage cleanup on local wildlands. A small group of folks has been continuously monitoring as many large scale development proposals and commenting on as many Environmental Impact Reports as possible in an effort to keep track of and (hopefully) slow down the loss of biodiversity in San Diego County.

But the hands on part of our project was extremely effective. For example, after the closure of Del Mar Mesa Vernal Pool Preserves to traffic through the choice placement of refuse at each fence opening, CalTrans finally closed the gates. These work parties could start again, with your help in organizing. We need more people to take an active role in organizing meetings, sending out notices, and finding good places for the work parties.

Besides focusing on San Diego issues, we've helped to form a L.A. Biodiversity Project, and are looking to establish groups in each Southern California county.

## Carmel Mountain

In June, the regional director of the Dept. of Fish and Game for Southern California was given a tour of Carmel Mountain in an effort to bring attention to this area as the most biologically sensitive land in coastal Southern California. His suggestion was that we create an acquisition evaluation for their lands acquisition committee proposing the protection of the site. Carmel Mountain will now be considered at their next meeting in January.

### (Mountain Bluebird cont'd)

Not truly birds of mountainous terrain, they are usually found in open grassland and pasture habitats, over a wide area of San Diego County. A small group often finds its way to Peñasquitos Canyon every winter. Most reports come from the breezy grassy slopes along the western end of the canyon, and in adjacent López Canyon, often from the bicycle trail. They are fairly tame, allowing good looks as they fly into the incoming breezes or flutter softly low over the ground in search of insects.

Their relationship to thrushes is hinted at only while in immature plumage, as they then wear a vest of soft beige and white spots. By the time they arrive to visit with us,

## Poway vernal pools

The City of Poway was caught by the Biodiversity Project trying to get away with vernal pool creation as mitigation for the loss of some of the last Poway vernal pools. Pool creation **does not work**, so we got the attention of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S.F.W.S.) in an effort to get, at least, adequate mitigation for the loss of these pools. Poway is now considering the purchase of pools around the existing pool preserves on Del Mar Mesa. This is now a requirement for their project in Poway.

## Chula Vista vernal pools

In Chula Vista, a consulting firm hired by McMillan Development had their opinion challenged by our project concerning the number of pools occurring on a project site. The consulting firm grudgingly admits to 1 pool in an area surveyed as part of the San Diego Regional Pool Survey. The survey, completed in 1986 by Dr. Ellen Bauder, found three pools on this site. The Biodiversity Project is seeking further mitigation for these pools, possibly on Otay Mesa.

## Endangered species listing

Over the last six months we've petitioned the U.S.F.W.S. to list 14 species as Endangered in San Diego County. Many of these species occur in and around Peñasquitos Canyon. This has been extremely hard, expensive work, and we need your help to continue.

## Funds and volunteers needed

The work on the Endangered Species petitions has left us financially drained. We also expect to be hit with some large phone bills in the coming months. Please send any donation you can spare so that we can keep our fur coats and fancy cars! (Make checks out to David Hogan, San Diego Biodiversity Project, and send to P.O. Box 1944, Julian, CA 92036.

If you have time to spare for library research, press work, or any other kinds of organizing, give me a call at 765-1459. There's plenty to do . . .

they have assumed their unmarked adult plumages.

Mountain Bluebirds are not very vocal, only occasionally making soft "phew" call-notes while foraging or in contact with one another. But that is OK, because once you see one, or several, it will still take your breath away!

### The Mountain Bluebird

*I like being me as I flutter on high,  
look not in a tree, but up in the sky,  
in wide grassy places where soft breezes blow  
that make me feel happy wherever I go.*

## Birding in Peñasquitos Canyon

# Bird Alarm Calls

by Barbara Zepf

Happy New Year to all of you! I can't believe 1990 is already over. As a new year dawns in the canyon, one of my resolutions is to go down there at least once a week to keep a running tally of the birds that I see. That way I'll know what to expect next year at the same time.

### Numbers are down

While all the disturbance in the canyon doesn't seem to have drastically affected the kinds of birds found there, it certainly has affected their numbers. Numbers are way down. And there are some species that I haven't seen for awhile — Loggerhead Shrikes and Black-shouldered Kites come to mind.

I, for one, hope that Camino Ruíz never goes through the canyon. Regardless of what it would do to the ecology of the canyon (the results would be horrendous for the east end of the canyon), it would be equally devastating to the personal tranquility down there. Somehow a bridge or road crossing the creek could never compare to a coyote or a deer in the same place. The relative peace would be replaced by whizzing cars, tailpipe exhaust and man-made noise, in general.

### Alarm calls

As I sit here writing this column, I am listening to the din of a neighbor's car burglar alarm going off. It has been blaring for 15 minutes now, so obviously the owner is not at home. Maybe I'll write my column down in the canyon next month! As I listen to this alarm, I realize that the canyon has alarm calls of its own. Just as man relies on alarms to tell him when someone is encroaching on his territory (i.e., his home or car), so, too, does the animal world county on their own warning calls.

Birds, in particular, use the alarm call every day. Because most birds are preyed upon, they have developed alarm notes to signify the presence of a real or possible predator. Each species has one or more of its own alarm notes. Some alarm calls indicate a predator in the air — a hawk, for example. Some warn of a predator on the ground — a coyote or even man. Many birds respond to alarm notes from a species other than their own kind.

### Scrub Jays

One of the loudest alarm calls in Peñasquitos Canyon comes from the Scrub Jay. Their loud, raucous calls not only alert other jays of possible danger, but other species of birds as well. Even the deer and squirrels heed their calls.

Many times I have been quietly approaching a small bird to get a better look. Just when I am in the right position, a Scrub Jay (who has been watching me all the while) lets me know that I have come close enough. His loud "shreeeep" or "check-check-check" warns everything in sight that I am around. But I can't blame him. After all, it

is I who am intruding on his territory. And his cry is a lot more pleasant to listen to than a car alarm.

The Scrub Jay, who lives all year in the canyon, is a very noticeable bird. Not only is he brilliantly colored, but he is very vocal, as well. The Scrub Jay is a member of the Crow Family. They are some of the most bold, aggressive, active and noisy of all the birds. They are also the most highly intelligent of all the birds. The sexes are outwardly alike. They are about 12 inches long, but their large, strong bill and long tail make them appear larger. The head, wings and tail are blue. Their back is a dull brown and underparts are light gray. Scrub Jays are the only jay with the sharp contrast between the blue crown and the brown back. They have a narrow white stripe over a dark eye patch. They have a white throat with a blue necklace. Their body is long and slender. People who come to California from the eastern United States invariably call the Scrub Jay a Blue Jay. But, even though they are related, the Scrub Jay is a different bird. Among other differences, it does not have a crested head like the Blue Jay.

The Scrub Jay flies with an undulating flight, ending in a long glide. It is strictly a western bird, except for a small population in Florida. The western Scrub Jay is territorial and only moderately social. They have been known to be nest robbers, but they mainly eat acorns, nuts, oats, fruit, wasps, bees, butterflies, termites, ticks, mites, spiders, etc. They even eat turtles and snails.

They nest from February to June in a bulky stick nest. They lay 4–6 ground colored eggs, streaked with various hues. The female does all the incubating (while the male feeds her on the nest) for 16 days. The young leave the nest about 18 days after hatching. The juveniles look very much like the adults, but they are grayish above, with blue tails and wings.

### Mobbing an intruder

Being the alarmists that they are, the Scrub Jays will even point out other things for you to notice. If you hear a bunch of them screaming at once, check it out. They may be mobbing an owl or a coyote. I once got the greatest look of my life at some immature Great Horned Owls in the daytime because some squawking Scrub Jays were dive-bombing them.

So take a walk in the canyon the next time you have a few spare moments. There is a lot to see down there. Drop me a line, in care of this newsletter, if you have any questions about birds; or call me at 271-5261. I'll do my best to find the answers for you. Also, let me know if you have any unusual sightings or notice any unusual behavior of the birds in the canyon. If you have anything about birds that you would like me to discuss in future columns, let me know. Good Birding!

**(Parks Initiative cont'd)**

from the 'future urbanizing' land use designation in the Progress Guide and General Plan to any other land use designation and the provisions restricting development in the future urbanizing area shall not be amended except by majority vote of the people voting on the change or amendment at a City wide election thereon." Voters also directed "The City Council . . . to take any and all actions necessary under this initiative measure . . . to carry out the intent and purpose of this initiative measures. Said actions shall be carried forthwith."

The City Council and Planning Commission ignored this latter provision and failed to bring zoning ordinances into conformity with the "future urbanizing" land use designation which restricts development to A-1-10 levels. A-1-10 is agricultural zoning permitting 1 unit per ten acres of development. One of these old ordinances permits a higher density of 1 unit per four acres, which the Council broadened to include "clustering" of units, thus achieving a higher density on the usable land. This is the loophole they will allow the bulldozers to pass through without a comprehensive plan and without a vote of the people.

This new initiative to the City Charter would explicitly lock the Urban Reserve into the A-1-10 holding zoning. Projects with densities higher than one unit per ten acres could be approved in several ways: as part of a comprehensive plan for the whole Urban Reserve; as part of a comprehensive plan for a region within the Urban Reserve; or as part of a "phase shift" zoning change for an area or project. Once the City Council approved any such plan, voter approval would be needed to ratify the phase shift involved.

**Providing for future parklands**

This method of coming to the voters proved reasonable in the case of projects in the Torrey Pines Reserve in the recent past. The result is better planning of scarce natural and fiscal resources and more attention to setting aside parklands for the public than when the City Council, under the influence of developer contributions, approves projects.

Such planning is the only way that needed parklands can be realized from the Urban Reserve; parks that make logical connections with open space and wildlife corridors to other regional parks, including Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

**Protecting established parklands**

The Jackson Drive vote shows that creating parks isn't enough. They have to be protected afterwards. The new initiative would require voter approval before roads wider than 30 feet could be put through parklands. It would also require voter approval before parklands could be converted to non-park uses. This is supposed to be the current situation, but the Charter leaves a loophole for the City Council to convert parkland if it's in the "public interest."

This will enable the voters to decide whether or not major highways should be built across important regional parks such as Mission Trails, Peñasquitos Canyon, Tecolote, Mission Bay, Balboa Park — all threatened by proposed roads. It's unlikely voters would approve a major highway or other project that would compromise such parks.

**People's right to decide**

Decades of kowtowing to well-financed developer interests by the City Council led disgusted voters to overwhelmingly vote in favor of Prop A, the Managed Growth Initiative. Our intention, now ignored, was to force the type of overall planning, of **managing** growth in the urban reserve to avoid the growth-induced problems other high growth communities without adequate planning faced.

The "Parks and Wildlife Protection Initiative" simply wants to reaffirm the people's right to make these important decisions on future development in our impacted city and on our parklands. These decisions are too important to our future to be left to City officials influenced by developer lobbyists.

By the time you read this the initiative should have been published as a public notice. SDMG plans to begin circulating petitions about Feb. 8 and is shooting for the ballot next fall. If you want more information, want to donate to the effort, or help circulate petitions call the Friends number, the Sierra Club, or SDMG.

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**Volunteers Needed**

We always need help. If you have access to a Macintosh or IBM compatible computer you could help with this newsletter by typing and proofreading (perhaps editing a bit, if you know how) articles submitted to us.

We also need someone who can check our phone answering machine daily for messages and change our weekly notice message on the machine. You can do it from your home if you have a touch-tone phone.

Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 if you can help.

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**(100-year Floods cont'd)**

should be made by a competent hydrological Engineering firm. The study should incorporate the effects of turbulent flow, point-source discharge and flash flood conditions. Following the results of this study, a reexamination of the detention basin requirements for López Canyon should be made and additional sediment traps be required before the floor of López Canyon (which was purchased at a cost of about \$60 million for inclusion in the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve) is washed away.

**References**

- <sup>1</sup>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "Flood Plain Information, Los Peñasquitos Drainage Area, San Diego, California," (1967).
- <sup>2</sup>California Coastal Commission, "Stream and Lagoon Channels of the Los Peñasquitos Watershed, California, with an Evaluation of Possible Effects of Proposed Urbanization," Karen A. Prestergaard (1979).
- <sup>3</sup>Culverts/Storm Drains Adjacent of Los Peñasquitos Preserve, City of San Diego Memorandum, S. Esquivel/Wolfsheimer, August, 1990).
- <sup>4</sup>Leedshill & Herkenhoff, Inc., Carmel Valley Drainage and Sedimentation Master Plan (1985).



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 619-484-3219 566-6489

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**Outings (cont'd)**

**VERNAL POOL WALK — DEL MAR MESA**

Sun., Feb. 24, 9 am (2 -3 hours). In Rancho Peñasquitos, take Carmel Mountain Road west until it ends. Visit some of the finest vernal pools remaining in San Diego. Led by Dave Hogan of the San Diego Biodiversity Project.

**MARCH**

**NATURE WALK**

Sat., Mar. 2, 9 a.m. (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd., between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. Look for wildflowers and plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Mar. 2, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Take Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mtn. Rd. and drive up to parking lot near ranch. Visit historic adobe and see settler and Indian artifacts.

**GEOLOGY WALK**

Sun., Mar. 3, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruíz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil. Led by former CalTrans geologist, Don Albright.

**FITNESS WALK**

Sat., March 9. 12, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Meet at Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat., Mar. 16, 9 a.m. (2 hrs). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock. Meet at the Parking-Staging area off Black Mtn. Rd.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Mar. 16, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. See Mar. 2 above for details.

**VERNAL POOLS — LÓPEZ RIDGE**

Sat., Mar. 23, 10 a.m. (2 hours). From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruíz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines. Plant or flower books handy.

**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10  
 Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100  
 Corporate \$250 Life \$1000  
 Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.





## Signature gathering underway for Park protection initiative

By Mike Kelly, president

The Parks and Wildlife Protection Initiative is now on the streets in the hands of volunteer circulators. The petition being circulated is different from the initial draft of the petition I reported on several weeks ago in this column.

Several recent court decisions concerning initiatives and a lot of feedback from the many people who reviewed the draft led to significant changes, mainly in the part affecting the Urban Reserve. Here's what the final initiative, if approved by the voters, would accomplish.

### Protect parklands from highways

The City Council's 5 to 4 vote approving the construction of Jackson Drive extension through Mission Trails Regional Park led to this portion of the initiative. Many other parks are also threatened by highways. Penasquitos Canyon Preserve, Tecalote Canyon, Mission Bay Park, Balboa Park and others are either currently threatened by roads or have been in the recent past. Are any of these roads important enough to damage one or more of these parks? Perhaps. But many voters don't feel comfortable leaving the decision up to a City Council that has shown itself so easily influenced by developer contributions and pressures.

After passage by the voters, the initiative amends the

➡ p. 5 for more

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## Friends Position on the Election

by Mike Kelly, president

Members of the Friends may have noticed that Les Braund, our Secretary, is running in the April 9th 5th District City Council election. Given the danger that Linda Bernhardt was going to be recalled in the first part of the ballot in that election, Les decided to offer the voters an environmental and managed growth alternative to the developer candidates on the second part of the ballot. All voters get to vote on both ballot parts. Although many of us, myself included, are endorsing Les, making contributions, and walking precincts with him, we do this as individuals.

As a non-profit organization we can not support candidates. This is the case with many organizations and is the reason you will usually see this notice after the name of a person endorsing a candidate: "\*Organization listed for identification purposes only."

If you are one of those people who want to support Les, be sure to call his campaign headquarters (292-5986) and not the Friends' numbers.

## Outings Schedule

See Page 6 for a new convenient "hangup" format.

## Chaparral — San Diego's Original Water Conservator

Lecture-Slide Show with Dick Schwenkmeyer

March 16, 7 p.m., Johnson-Taylor Ranch House

Canyonside Park (between Rcho Penasquitos and Mira Mesa)

Learn about San Diego's fast-disappearing chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitat. Find out which plants are part of these communities, their geographical distribution, evolutionary significance, adaptations to low water availability, and seasonal differences.

Dick Schenkmeier is a well-known biologist who has led Natural History Museum trips to Baja California (Mexico) and other parts since 1950. He is a native San Diego who earned biology degrees from San Diego State and the University of Montna. He taught biology, specializing in natural history, for 22 years at San Diego's Mesa College. He has also worked for the reptile departments at both the San Diego Zoo and the Natural History Museum.

Directions: Take the Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road (north), then take first available U-turn, back down the hill, then right into the Canyonside Park entrance to the Penasquitos Canyon Preserve. Drive past the ball fields to new parking lot near the gate and sign for the Ranch House. Park there and walk up to the ranch house.

7:00 p.m. — Social. Free refreshments

7:30 p.m. — Program begins.

8:30 p.m. — 9:00 or whenever, question period.

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## Upcoming Activities Require Volunteers

We need help staffing our tables at several upcoming events including the March 30 Spring Fling at Canyonside Park, Rancho Peñasquitos; the April 21 Earth Day at Balboa Park; and circulating the Parks and Wildlife Initiative (see the article on this page).

If you can help out for even an hour or two, call us at 484-3219 or 566-6489 and leave your name and phone number and when you're available. We'll get back to confirm to you.

## Action Alert — Letters Needed

Your help is urgently needed. In September 1990, the San Diego Biodiversity Project petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the California Gnatcatcher and the San Diego Cactus Wren as endangered species. To date, no action has been taken. At least part of the reason is that the development industry has conducted a letter writing campaign against the endangered species listing of these two birds. They know that the government is required by the Federal Endangered Species Act to protect birds and their habitat if they are listed as endangered. This would effectively block a number of developments, especially in Southern California. We must counter this campaign with our own letters.

There are fewer than 400 cactus wrens and 300 gnatcatchers in San Diego County. A small gray bird with a long tail, the California gnatcatcher exists only in San Diego, Orange, Riverside and Los Angeles counties, and Baja California, Mexico. The thick brush that once dominated the coastal foothills in Southern California is the primary habitat for numerous plant and animal species including the gnatcatcher. As much as 70 percent of their coastal sage scrub habitat has been lost to development. Wildlife experts say each mating pair of gnatcatchers needs 10 acres of scrub to survive. Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the adjoining undeveloped lands to the north are among the declining lands still supporting these birds.

Take a minute now to write to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to demand that they list these two birds and their habitat as endangered. A sample letter is attached; if you'd like you can sign the bottom of the sample and send it on to U.S.F.W.S. Together we can make a difference.

Mr. Marvin Plenert, Regional Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Eastside Federal Complex  
911 N.E. 11th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-4181

Dear Mr. Plenert:

As an ecologically-concerned resident of San Diego County, I am writing to you to request that the California Gnatcatcher and the San Diego Cactus Wren be added immediately to the growing list of endangered species. There are fewer than 400 Cactus Wrens and 300 Gnatcatchers now left in San Diego County. In order to save these species, it will also be necessary to declare all coastal Sage Scrub as Critical Habitat.

I ask this knowing that the San Diego Biodiversity Project requested this designation in September, 1990 and to date, nothing has been done. We believe action must be taken now or it may be too late to save these birds and their habitat.

Thank you.

## Sierra Club Plants Trees

by JoAnne K. Ringer

On February 2nd, Sierra Club members from the San Diego area, including some San Diego State and UC-San Diego students, came into the Preserve to plant 12 trees. These trees were two native types — cottonwood and sycamore. The planting was done in the upper portion of the Preserve near I-15 and Mercy Road (Staging Area).

Although the trees used in this project were acquired from a nursery that was closing, the Sierra Club also works with a prison program that grows trees from seed. These trees are then donated to communities and organizations. In the San Diego area, several thousand trees have been planted by the Sierra Club or the organizations to which they were donated. Recently 1200 of these trees were donated to the Tijuana area for planting.

Ruth Duemler of the Sierra Club told me, "Even though we have a drought, it is important to have trees planted to combat the effects of global warming." Reneene Mowrey, Ranger at the Preserve shares this viewpoint.

The Sierra Club has trees available for schools, parks, preserves, community groups, etc. If you would like more information on this important program, you may call Ruth at 461-7400.

I'm sure all the members of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon join me in thanking the Sierra Club for our new trees which will help perpetuate the integrity of the Canyon.

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## Wetlands — What's the Big Deal?

by Mike Kelly

Two months ago I wrote about the CalTrans riparian rehabilitation project in Peñasquitos Canyon. CalTrans will be taking out a patch of Eucalyptus trees and replanting the space with natives species of trees and understory plants. This will occur along a meander of Peñasquitos Creek. The area of vegetation immediately on either side of a creek is a riparian corridor. This project is mitigation required of CalTrans because it will be destroying a small piece of wetlands when it constructs the eastern part of Route 56. They can't start this part of 56 until they finish the first stage of this rehabilitation project.

I focused on why removing the Eucalyptus is good for the native species of plants and wildlife in the Preserve. Why do wetlands deserve this kind of attention?

### Wetlands in the desert

Our desert is relatively barren of life in comparison with other parts of our country. The difference lies in the amount of rainfall and the types of drying wind patterns over each. In our arid deserts, water is concentrated in a small number of seasonal and year-round streams, creeks, and rivers.

These sources of water are so important in the ecology of the West that it's estimated some 80-85% of all native

➡ p. 8 for more

# Hickman Elementary School Ecology Club

By Kathryn Wild, Ph.D.

Will it really be the children who save the planet? We have worked diligently for a generation to teach non-violent problem solving and respect for the Earth. Today the children are holding us to it.

Regardless of your personal perspective on the Gulf War (or any war), you cannot argue the fact that it is wreaking havoc with the environment. When television brings war into the playroom, it can be an unsettling and sometimes horrific experience for young minds. The children can identify with the powerless, gentle creatures of the desert and the gulf waters. As parent coordinator for the Hickman Elementary School Ecology Club, I am trying to relieve the abominations of war by reminding the students that Nature can heal itself. It may take 1 year, 10 years, or even a million years; but the Earth will heal. I urge them to focus on our local issues, issues that empower children because they *are* making a difference.

Hickman Ecology Club was started from the inspiration of my daughter Lani Wild, then age 6. Having grown up next to the mesa mint endangered habitat at the west end of New Salem Street in Mira Mesa, Lani has been instrumental in teaching the value of "letting Nature be." By the end of our first year, the club joined forces with Lani's teacher, Beverly Ward Trust. Through Mrs. Trust's work in environmental education, Hickman Elementary School has been asked to be a model school site for Southern California through Senate Bill 885 in the "Adopt-an-Endangered-Species" program through the California Dept. of Education. Our Hickman Ecology Club has approximately 50 students who are working hard to save our local mesa mint.

The Sierra Club learned of our work last year and invited us to participate in their "Children's Anthology on Endangered Species." One of our student's art work will be featured on the cover page and our essay on the local vernal pool habitats is included. We have been written up in the San Diego edition of the LA Times and the San Diego

Union. Tim Flannery of Channel 8 spotlighted us and Lani received the Channel 10 Leadership Award in November for her work in the Ecology Club. So far we have had Paul Zedler, Ph.D., Chuck Black, Ph.D., and Ellen Bauder, Ph.D. from San Diego State's Bio-Ecology Dept. come educate us on the mesa mint. Last month (January 1991), Robert Caughlan of the State Dept. of Fish and Game learned of our club and flew out from San Francisco to catch our meeting.

We started by inviting conservation groups to speak to our entire school (Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Mountain Lion Preservation Foundation, I Love A Clean San Diego, followed by an aluminum can drive to raise money for the groups. Then the Souplantation gave us free "Healthy Kid Meal" certificates which inspired more cans. We take seasonal clean-up groups to the vernal pool area and are now seeking legal advice on how to keep this area natural forever. We're trying to maintain our membership in the conservation groups, but our top priority now is to purchase signs to post in the area to educate the neighborhood about our local "vacant lot."

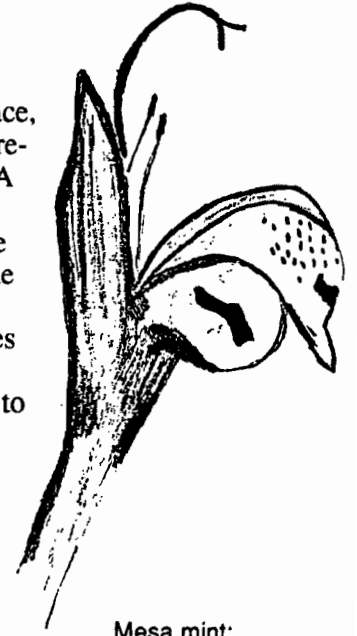
Although two laws were recently passed to prohibit development of the mesa mint area forever, several years ago Fieldstone (the development company which owns the property) planted eucalyptus into the banks surrounding the vernal pools where the mesa mint grows. The trees are now reaching into the pools. We are now working with the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, so as to preserve this fragile area. Ultimately we would like to see Fieldstone donate the area "To the Children of San Diego" so we can make a self-guided nature tour of the area.

I'm proud of our enlightened children. They work hard to protect this area. They have done it all without being swayed by fame. When I see them salvaging cans from gutters to add to our can drive, I know there's hope for the planet.

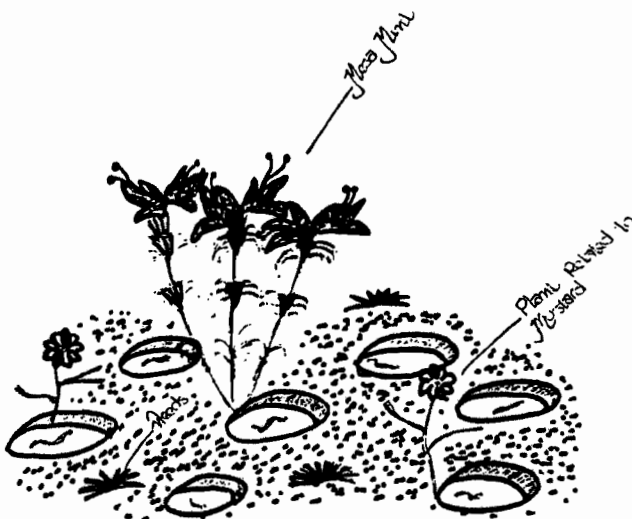
## Eva Sadok, Grade 2

The Ecology Club is a place that tells you stuff about the Earth. And we are learning about the mesa mint and we want to save the mesa mint.

And I think you would like to join the Ecology Club. And almost all the kids joined so why don't you? So that's why I think you should join, but I'll tell you it's a very nice



Mesa mint:  
Joanna Johnson/Grade 6



Mesa Mint: Vi Nguyen/Grade 6

## Birding in Penasquitos Canyon

# Canyon Food Chain and the Red-tailed Hawks

by Barbara Zepf

When I first started writing this column, I told you I never left home without my binoculars, not even to go grocery shopping. This still holds true. While I live in Mira Mesa, I shop for groceries in Peñasquitos. I think there is an unconscious desire on my part to pass the canyon, at least once a week. I always buy my lunch in Peñasquitos and stop by the canyon on the way home to eat it.

While munching on my sandwich the other day, I was thinking how easy it was for modern man to participate in the food chain. You buy it — you eat it! Lunch is not such an easy affair for the creatures in the canyon. The food chain is too easily interrupted. The "grocery store" may be out of what you need (and it's too far to go to another one). Predators may be lurking overhead (or on the ground). It may be too dry (making your food die back or disappear altogether).

### Food chains in operation

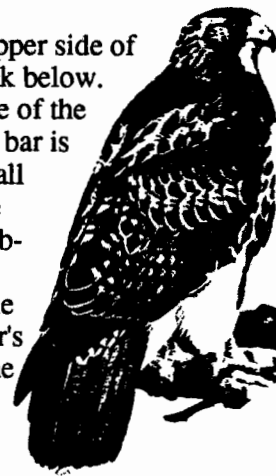
I had the pleasure of watching two food chains in operation last week. A crayfish was skimming for food along the bottom of the creek. A Belted Kingfisher dove in for a quick bite for lunch — end of crayfish — full belly for the Kingfisher. A Valley Pocket Gopher kept peeking out of his burrow at me. Finally he got brave enough to make several short trips out in the open to closely crop the vegetation nearby and drag it below ground for his snack. Both the Kingfisher and the Pocket Gopher are not at the top of their particular food chain. Overhead soared the ultimate members — two Red-tailed Hawks. While I did not see the food chain completed that day, I did have the pleasure of watching those two hawks — magnificent!

### Red-tailed hawk characteristics

The Red-tailed Hawk is the largest hawk that regularly occurs in Peñasquitos Canyon. Some of them undoubtedly migrate; some are year-round residents. The Red-tailed Hawk is a member of the Buteo Family — the soaring hawks. They circle overhead and drop on their prey in a steep dive. They have broad, rounded wings, a thick-set body, and broad fanned tails. The sexes usually look alike, with the female being somewhat larger. The reason for this is unknown, but one educated guess is that the female's larger size gives a bigger bulk for incubating the eggs (which is usually her exclusive domain). The smaller size of the male gives him more maneuverability for hunting to feed the female and young and for warding off intruders at the nest.

The Red-tailed Hawk is a large bird. It ranges over all of North America. It has a wider ecological tolerance of habitats than any other North American hawk. It's 19–25 inches long with a wingspread of 46–48 inches. The adults are dark brown above, their eyes are brown and their legs and feet are yellow. They are white below with brown streaks on the lower neck and a broad band of dark streak-

ing across the white belly. The upper side of their tail is chestnut red, light pink below. The leading edge of the underside of the wings is black or dark. This dark bar is a reliable identification mark on all Red-tailed Hawks. It is called the *patagial bar*. The bird just described is the typical plumage. *Many* variations occur in this bird. Some Red-tailed Hawks, like the Krider's form, are very pale; others like the Harlan's form are totally dark. There are many gradations in between. The Red-tailed Hawk usually has variable mottling on his back.



Red-tail Hawk

The immature look somewhat different. Their eyes are a lighter color (gray-brown-yellow) and their tails are gray-brown with many blackish bands. They are heavily spotted and brown-streaked below.

### The Anything Diet

Red-tailed Hawks will eat just about anything — mice, grasshoppers, rats, squirrels, gophers, rabbits, moles, skunks, crayfish, etc. Their main prey is rodents. They have phenomenal eyesight (binocular vision) that enables them to see prey at a great distance, usually from a perch in a tree or pole near fields. They take off with powerful wingbeats, then glide to snatch prey from the ground with sharply curved talons.

### Mating and nesting

I have had the delight of watching Red-tailed Hawks nest in the canyon for seven years. They are thought to mate for life, or until one of the pair dies. For five years, I saw the same two hawks nesting. Two years ago, the male appeared with a new (very dark) mate. I have seen three active nests in the east end of the canyon. I know there are more elsewhere that I have not observed. They tend to use the same nest year after year. This same nest is sometimes used by the Great Horned Owl earlier in the year. The nest is a large, bulky affair, 2 1/2–3 feet across. It's made of sticks and twigs, lined with bark, often decorated with some green sprigs. In the canyon, the hawks build nests up 15–70 feet or higher in the sycamore or eucalyptus trees. They lay 2–3 eggs from February to June.

Last week I watched my favorite pair, circling overhead as they screamed — their call is a harsh, descending "keeeer." Their acrobatics are a joy to observe. The male will dive suddenly from a great height at the female. She will turn over in the air and present her claws to him in mock combat. They will tumble towards the ground, eventually parting. Then they will swoop to a perch in a tree

# Do Apples Grow on Oaks?

by Dr. Elberta Fleming

[This article on oak galls by our deceased founder, Dr. Fleming, is as timely as ever — *editor*]

The mystery of *Galls* presents questions that are inevitably brought up on almost all the hikes conducted by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, as the hikers pass through the oak woods. Someone usually discovers a red and yellow round ball resembling a ripe apple. But apples don't grow on scrub oaks. What are these odd formations attached to the branches?

This unusual plant growth found on oaks, especially on the scrub oaks, is known as an oak apple or plant gall. While these mysterious odd natural structures are fascinating to discover: what is the explanation for their existence?

Close examination of the oak apple introduces you to nature's miniature world of master architects. The oak apple is only one kind of diverse variety of plant galls which range in a broad spectrum of color and hundreds of queer shapes and textures.

Galls are tumorlike growths composed of wild plant cells that produce an object greater in size than normal plant cells. Usually they are found on branches or leaves. Sometimes it is the fruit or bud whose development or growth has been altered. One good example is the willow gall. The weird and fantastic shapes that evolve from the otherwise normal plant cells "gone astray" is a phenomena that puzzled scientists for centuries.

What really causes these abnormal growths? Unfortunately, not enough research in the irritant-producing gall formation has been conducted to know the precise operating mechanism of most gall organisms, and there are still theories which need further verification to unravel one of nature's best kept secrets.

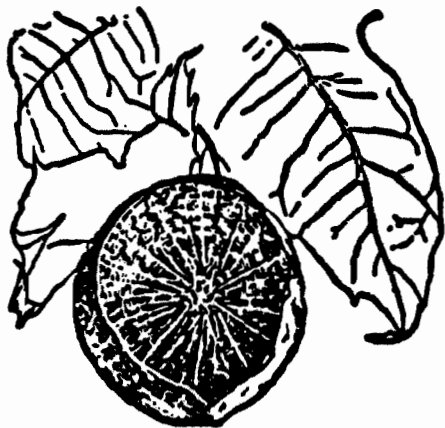
Plant galls are abnormal growths of plant tissues produced by a stimulus external to the plant itself. This stimulus may result from a mere mechanical irritation or some substance secreted by an insect in the many types of galls.

"Stranger than fiction" are the life histories and habits of insects who stimulate the plants to create an "insectean living environment" that furnishes the insect with everything necessary, including abundant food supplies and protection from enemies.

Oak apples are created by the larvae of small 1/16 inch long wasps of the family Cynipidae. These "tiny" wasps are less well known than the strange and unusual growth they produce.

If an oak apple is opened, the large gall is filled with fibrous among which may be a cell in the center cradling the larva of the Cynip wasp.

The larval wasp inside the oak ap-



Cross-section of an oak gall.

(Parks Initiative cont'd)

City Charter to require voter approval of any road greater than 32 feet in width that would go through a City park. This is wide enough to allow a two-lane road with adjacent bike lanes to be built. This would allow normal park access roads, fire roads and the like to go through area parks.

For a highway greater than 32 feet, such as Jackson Drive or Camino Ruíz, whose purpose has nothing to do with the park, voter approval will be necessary. Road proponents will have to convince the voters that the highway is of such overriding benefit to the region that damaging an open-space park such as Mission Trails or Penasquitos Canyon Preserve is worth the price. Jackson Drive, for example, will serve no such regional need. The final extension of Route 52 or the extension of Tierrasanta Blvd. will serve regional needs in the area, just as Route 56 will in North County. Jackson Drive is a convenience road that will save some local residents 5 minutes of driving time over Route 52. Several area developers also want it.

The central issue is: why spend hundreds of millions of dollars to acquire this land for open-space and recreation only to turn around and put a highway through it? Isn't the concept of a park to get away from the noise and pollution of city streets? Let the road proponents bring their case to the voters, not a City Council responsive only to special interests.

## Private versus public parks — the Urban Reserve

Many environmental groups wanted to tackle the entire issue of the premature opening up of the Urban Reserve areas of the city by last fall's 5 to 4 vote of the Council (in contradiction to the spirit of the voter-approved Managed Growth Initiative of 1985, Prop A). It was finally decided by the coalition supporting this initiative that it was too big an issue and ran the danger of a court challenge as violating the single-issue initiative rule.

The initiative now focuses only on protecting the public's interest in the future parklands promised in the Urban Reserve by both the City Council and the developers. It requires that the "Environmental Tier" will be finalized in law before new development beyond the agricultural zoning currently in force is allowed. This "Environmental Tier" will map sensitive lands and future parks in the area.

It also requires that the sensitive lands identified become public parklands and not simply "private preserves" for the future estate owners in the area that would also be subject to possible future development. In exchange for the parklands the developers would be allowed their 1 unit per 4 acre with clustering densities.

If you want more information, want to donate to the effort, or help circulate petitions call the Friends at 484-3219 or San Diegans for Managed Growth at 280-3448.

ple transforms into a pupa, and eventually into an adult wasp. After emerging from the gall and mating, the female will lay her eggs in oak twigs, stimulating the growth of other oak apples. Some galls become insectean condominiums as there are many different types of gall wasps.

## Friends April and May Outings Schedule Rains Make it Flower Time in the Preserve

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or to organize a group hike, call 484-3219 for recorded information. .

### APRIL

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., Apr. 6, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Apr. 6, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### VERNAL POOLS & CHAPARRAL— DEL MAR MESA

Sun., Apr. 7, 9 a.m. (3 hours). In Rancho Peñasquitos, take Carmel Mountain Road west until it ends (careful, the road is confusing, it makes a right turn!). Visit some of the finest vernal pools remaining in San Diego. See many wildflowers.

#### WILDFLOWER WALK

Sat., Apr. 13, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Look for wildflowers; also plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., Apr. 14, 7:30 a.m. (2 hours). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book, binoculars. Beginners welcome. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., Apr. 16, 7 p.m. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Apr. 20, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Apr. 20, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Visit historic adobe, see settler and Indian artifacts.

#### EARTH DAY 1991 FAIR — BALBOA PARK

Sun., Apr. 21, all day. Many environmental groups, displays, shows, demonstrations, etc. Details will be in daily papers. Call 566-6489 to help the Friends in our booth at the Fair.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., Apr. 28, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruíz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology and visit waterfall.

### MAY

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., May 4, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., May 4, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### CANYONWALKABOUT — ROUND TRIP

Sun., May 5, 9 a.m. (5-6 hours). Join Trinity Gabrielle in a 13 mile stroll through Penasquitos Canyon, an end-to-end round-trip! Must bring water, sun shade, lunch. Includes stop at waterfall. Easy pace. People who want to just walk from one way to the other end, about 6.5 miles, can arrange their own pickup at the far end. RSVP, 566-6489. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, then right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### NATURE WALK

Sun., May 12, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Look for wildflowers, learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

#### VERNAL POOL & CHAPARRAL WALK — DEL MAR MESA

Sun., May 18, 9 am (2-3 hours). In Rancho Peñasquitos, take Carmel Mountain Rd west until it ends. Visit some of the finest vernal pools remaining in San Diego. Should see wildflowers.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

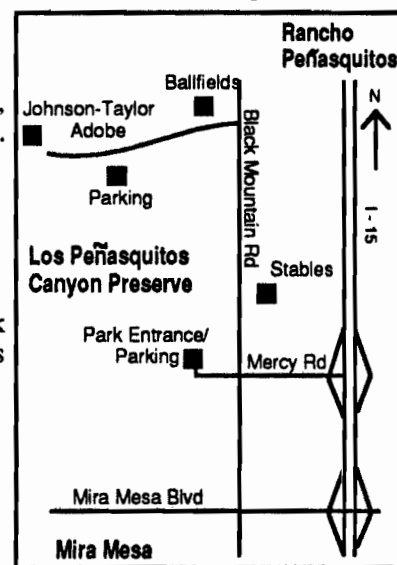
Sat., May 18, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), SD County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., May 19, 7:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars. Beginners welcome. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., May 19, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruíz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal.



## Geology Walk Leader Profiled

**Don Albright** leads the Friends' popular Geology Walk. He knows the San Diego area geology extremely well, having been one of 4 members of the first class of geology majors to graduate from San Diego State University in 1956. After graduation he went to work for the California Division of Highways (CalTrans today), in the bridges department. He worked on many of the freeways bridges we see today in San Diego and Los Angeles.

After a stint of 3 years with the U.S. Army in Germany as a photo-intelligence specialist, he became a naturalist with the State Park System. He was a Park Ranger Naturalist at Cuyamacka State Park, Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Emerald Bay State Park in Lake Tahoe and worked in district headquarters in both Stockton and Sacramento helping to set up interpretive programs for new parks, including Bodie Ghost Town Park.

Don was born in Chula Vista, grew up in Mission Bay and attended La Jolla High School. During his college days he spent summers in the Sierra Nevada and has six first ascents in these mountains of peaks over 12,000 feet.

His passion is exploring Baja California (Mexico), which he has done steadily since 1952. He is currently a geography and history teacher in the San Diego Unified School District, winning additional degrees in the physical sciences and his teaching credentials from SDSU.

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### (Hawks cont'd)

and mate. The mating behavior that I witnessed that day didn't quite come to completion, but as I left, they were starting the whole routine over. I hope to see them on the nest the next time I visit the canyon.

Once they nest, you have plenty of opportunities to observe them. From incubation to fledging is a long affair. The female will incubate the eggs for 28-32 days, and it will be another 45 days or so before the young leave the nest. Even then, they tend to perch in a spot nearby waiting to be fed by the parents for a few more weeks. Sometimes they even return to the nest to bed down for the night. Listening for the incessant calling of the young for food is one good way to find a hawk's nest. Those babies seem to have an insatiable appetite!

Some young may be very tame, and therefore, easily approached. Adults fear man; they have even been known to attack a man as he was climbing to their nest. Most people fear the Hawk's large hooked beak, but those razor-sharp talons are the real threat.

I hope the Red-tailed Hawks will return to nest in the canyon this year. It is such a thrill to watch the young flapping their wings in the nest, getting ready for the big day when they finally launch into the air for the first time. Some manage only a few feet, but most seem to soar effortlessly after a rather ragged takeoff. As I watch with bated breath, my heart soars with them!

Good birding!

### (Hickman cont'd)

place to be. I'll tell you that so come and join to save the Earth and the environment. So almost all the teachers like it so join and I'll be very happy.

#### **Nikol Kim, Grade 2**

Save the Mesa Mint!

Dr. Wild and her daughter Lani Wild started the Ecology Club in the year 1990. They started it because a lot of people were throwing trash in the vernal pools where the mesa mints grow. They didn't like what was happening so they started the club to save the mesa mint. The mesa mint is a small violet flower people can easily step on it. When we go to the vernal pools to visit the mint, we be careful not to step on any kinds of plants. The mesa mint smells like mint. The mesa mints are important because only a few are living with us and maybe when we grow up our kids might want to see them also.



Mesa mint: Brian Caasi/Grade 6

#### **Jennifer Powell, Grade 6**

The Hickman Ecology Club is a group of students from Hickman Elementary that meet about once a month in Room 23. The members are from grades 1-6. The leaders of the club are Mrs. Trust, the teacher of Room 23 and Kathryn Wild. At the meetings the members talk about the mesa mint, a plant that only lives in the vernal pools and is almost extinct. The club has aluminum can drives to raise money to buy signs to put up in the vernal pools to try to keep people from going in the pools and hurting some of the plants and animals in the pools. The Hickman Ecology Club hopes to help save the vernal pools and they hope they will help.

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### (Wetlands cont'd)

Black mustard. These last four aggressively displace native species of plants and over time would eliminate many native species from the Preserve. Penasquitos Creek has also been diverted from its historic channel, evidenced by the dike on the north side of the creek near the Ruiz Adobe.

CalTrans will be rehabilitating a small three acre part of our riparian habitat in an attempt to strengthen the presence of native plants and the birds and animals dependent on them. In line with the Master Plan for the Preserve, in the future, other agencies and developers will undoubtedly pay for rehabilitation of other portions of the Preserve. We'll never succeed in eliminating all the non-native species of plants in the Canyon. Hopefully we can succeed in restoring a better balance and help to protect our biodiversity.



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**

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**(Wetlands cont'd)**

animals and plants here center around this water. So do we. We haven't yet struck a balance between our human needs and the needs of native flora and fauna.

**Wetlands are disappearing**

Our economy uses both the water and the fertile lands surrounding them to the detriment of the native plants and animals. River volumes decrease as water is drawn off for drinking, commercial and agricultural uses. Streams flow a shorter distance and the riparian zone decreases in size.

Pollutants poison many rivers and cause a plant and animal die-off. Streams diverted for agricultural purposes often disappear entirely as they flow through geologic strata that soaks them up to a greater degree than their historic river beds did.

Fertile floodplains are plowed of their native trees and plants to make way for crops, further causing a decline in plant and animal populations. Marshlands, particularly along our coast, are and filled for development with similar devastating impact on historic species.

More than 80% of our riparian corridors and other wetlands are already destroyed. Many species of plants and animals are already extinct. The extent of this destruction and the belated recognition of the importance of preserving biological diversity have led to two types of actions.

**Preserve and rehabilitate**

First, when development is allowed that will damage or destroy some of these riparian or other wetland areas, mitigation is usually required. Mitigation sometimes requires the developer to buy other wetlands and donate them to a public agency as parklands to protect them in perpetuity. In other cases, the developer may be required to help rehabilitate wetlands that were previously damaged, but are now in the public trust.

CalTrans finds itself in a similar situation in San Diego. Penasquitos Canyon Preserve will soon be dedicated parkland. However, it has been damaged historically by agriculture, cattle grazing, and the introduction of non-native species of plants. The latter include Eucalyptus trees, Russian thistle (tumbleweed), Desert artichoke, and

➡ p. 7 for more

**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10

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Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

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- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.





## Parks Petition Delayed by Mike Kelly

Just as petitions for the Parks and Wildlife Initiative had begun circulating in San Diego they had to be stopped. Although the coalition sponsoring the measure followed the written instructions handed out by the City Clerk's office, it turns out these instructions were wrong. San Diego has failed to update parts of its election code having to do with amending a City Charter by initiative in light of recent court decisions. In the absence of updated laws and requirements, the City decided that the coalition had to follow State law on such initiatives.

Since State law requires that a state-written summary be appended to any initiative, the Parks and Wildlife Initiative had to be resubmitted to the City Clerk and City Attorney for this summary. The first summary done by the City Attorney's office was rejected by the coalition as being inaccurate. A new summary is being prepared.

Although this delay has hurt our momentum, it hasn't cut into the time we have to circulate the initiative. The

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## Volunteers Needed for the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Volunteer Patrol

The County and City of San Diego have established a volunteer group of equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers to patrol Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Duties of patrol members include providing visitors with information on canyon facilities, trails, points of interest, and rules and

➡ p. 5 for more

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## Flooding Closes Park

The Preserve has been closed during and after the recent rains for the reasons explained in the following letter. As of April 4th it has been opened for foot traffic only. Bicycles and horses are still excluded. Although the creek is receding to a more normal level and the canyon is drying out now, several problems still remain that necessitate allowing only people on foot.

➡ p. 2 for more

## Outings Schedule

See Page 6 for a convenient "hangup" format.

## Thanks Spring Fling Volunteers

Thanks to Susan Zepf, Kate Johnson, Brian Swanson, Trinity Gabriele, and Mike Kelly for staffing the Friends information table at Peñasquitos Spring Fling community celebration in Canyonside Park. About 4-5,000 attended!

## Earth Day and Park Day Volunteers Needed

We still need help staffing our tables at the April 21 Earth Day at Balboa Park; Peñasquitos Park Day June 1; and circulating the Parks and Wildlife Initiative.

If you can help out for even an hour, call us at 484-3219 or 566-6489 and leave your name and phone number and when you're available. We'll get back to confirm to you.

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## Henderson Opposes CalTrans Mitigation Calls Rally To Save the Trees by Mike Kelly

For several months now you've been reading about the CalTrans mitigation project in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Thursday, March 28, Bruce Henderson, the new City Councilman for the 5th District called a news conference in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to announce his opposition to the project. The news conference was covered in the *San Diego Union*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Peñasquitos News*, *Mira Mesa/Scripps Ranch Sentinel*, on KSDO and on Channel 10 TV. At a Mira Mesa Town Council meeting April 1 his representative announced a rally to "save the trees" to start at 11 a.m. April 13 at the parking-staging area of the Preserve. He and anyone who comes will march to one of the eucalyptus groves for his rally.

Councilman Henderson is not known as a champion of the environment. Quite the contrary. He won a "bulldozer" award from the Sierra Club in their report card on how the

➡ p. 7 for more

**(Park closed cont'd)**

A number of large potholes remain a danger to anyone on horseback or a bicycle. In addition, the trails are badly strewn with cobble size rocks making them unusable in many instances and even hazardous. In fact, the rangers have received a number of complaints from bicycle riders recently that the rock-covered trails were unridable. The

City plans to bring in heavy equipment to regrade the main dirt road trail. They will fill the potholes and remove the cobbles to make the trail safe and comfortable once again.

The following is a letter sent to the City and County authorities concerning the closing of the park.



## Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

April 2, 1991

Doug Ruth  
County District Park Manager  
5201 Ruffin Rd., Ste P  
San Diego, CA 92123

Don Steele  
City Open Space Division  
3770 Highland Ave., Ste. 5  
San Diego, CA 92105

Dear Doug and Don:

The Friends appreciate the steps your divisions took in closing Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to visitors during and after recent rainstorms. Your quick actions may have prevented injuries and certainly helped protect the Preserve itself.

As I watched the floodwaters rise in the canyon (at one point from the access road on the south side to the access road on the north side at the east end), I worried about the safety of people who might try to use the Preserve. As you know, flooding can create a series of hazards in a canyon area such as our own.

Peñasquitos Creek is normally a fairly shallow and not difficult to cross stream. After these storms, however, the water runs deeper and much faster both during and for several days after the rains. Attempting to cross a rain-swollen stream can be dangerous and deadly. An area such as the waterfall becomes very dangerous, since crossing there requires hopping across wet rocks above deep pools and boulders. I particularly worry about the large number of children who now use the Preserve. It would be so easy for them to misjudge the strength of the current and be swept away. I worry too about the many bicyclists who like to cross the creek at the falls and in some of the other creek crossings.

As I watched the television news and saw the number of people who drown or who had to be rescued in Mission Valley and other areas of the city, I was thankful the Preserve was closed. As is, the police had to close the northbound lane of Black Mountain Road during one of the storms since it was underwater!

Although the creek is the most obvious potential hazard, the slippery trails also have to be reckoned with. I'm thinking of that one trail, in particular, on the north side. This illegal trail that runs above a gorge is so dangerous that at least three bicycle riders have been injured seriously enough to be lifelighted out over the last 16 months or so. And this was when the trail was dry! If only they had respected the signs they wouldn't have been injured. Unfortunately, as has undoubtedly been reported to you, a small number of bicyclists ignored the "Park Closed" signs during the recent rainy period and insisted on sneaking into the park to ride this dangerous trail.

Potholes opened up by the surging water also creates traps for the unwary bicycle or horseback rider, particularly those moving fast. When filled with water, their depth can be deceptive.

Besides the safety concerns, however, there was the protection of the Preserve itself. Many people don't stop to think (and a few don't care) of the damage that hikers, but especially bicycles and horses, do when the trails are wet and muddy. The trails can quickly become deeply rutted and unusable when they dry out later. It remains to be seen, when the Park is dry and open again, how much damage the few dozen bicycle riders and hikers who slipped into the canyon past the "closed" signs did with their inconsiderate actions.

Ignore the "yahoos" — the people who don't respect the Preserve and its wild plants, animals, and habitats — who complain about their "right" to use the Preserve anytime they choose. Your actions and the presence of Rangers Mowry and Lawrence to enforce them helped prevent possible injuries and protected the Preserve from unnecessary damage.

Regards,

Mike Kelly, president

# Chaparral Talk Good Intro to Area Plant Communities

Mike Kelly

Our lecture-slide show on Chaparral with Dick Schwenkmeyer at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House was well attended March 16. About 30 people came to learn about San Diego's fast-disappearing chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitat. Dick Schwenkmeyer is a well-known biologist who has led Natural History Museum trips to Baja California (Mexico) and other parts since 1950. He is a native San Diego who earned biology degrees from San Diego State and the University of Montana. He taught biology, specializing in natural history, for 22 years at Mesa College.

Les Braund, our Secretary, introduced Schwenkmeyer to the audience by explaining how he, Braund, was first inspired to become a naturalist when he attended one of Schwenkmeyer's classes more than 15 years ago. Braund says he still has a thick pile of notes from that class and refers to them constantly. After listening to the speaker it was easy to see why.

One of the volunteer Rangers who brought her children to the talk and I were surprised how interested they were. We thought it would be too academic and they would be restless. But the speakers' presentation was lively and well illustrated. Humor and some animal slides interspersed with the plant slides were appreciated by all.

## Four plant communities

According to Schwenkmeyer, we have four major plant communities in our area. These are chaparral, coastal sage scrub, riparian/coastal (our canyon bottom) and herbacious, annual wildflowers. Schwenkmeyer spent as much time on sage scrub habitat as chaparral since the two coexist in our area and are often intermingled.

Riparian plant communities grow along water courses. Walk near Peñasquitos Creek in the Canyon and you'll see sycamores, cottonwoods, California live oaks, willows, mulefat and other typical riparian plants. The eucalyptus on the east end are *not* typical riparian plants.

Our herbacious wildflowers are blooming now and will continue to do so through the spring. You'll find some tucked away in these other plant communities, but most are in relatively open meadow and hillside areas with direct sun. Come on one of our walks to see them.

## Chaparral, chaparro

Chaparral comes from a Spanish word *chaparro*, which means scrub oak, one of the dominant plants found in our chaparral. Our chaparral plant community is typical of Mediterranean climatic zones around the world. According to Schwenkmeyer, if you blindfolded a person, put them on a plane to certain parts of Chile in South America, took the blindfold off and asked them where they thought they were, they would guess somewhere in Southern California. It would appear to be the same.

Closer inspection, however, would show that although the plants look similar from a distance, up close the plants in Chile or other Mediterranean zones elsewhere in the world

are different species. They evolved similar adaptations to the climate. Mediterranean climates occur where a high pressure area of relatively warm air sits on top of the land, constantly pressing down, causing friction and drying out the land. As it moves constantly down, it pushes other weather out.

If you're a chaparral shrub you only get rain in the winter months, often not much, and then you have to go without a drop of water for 8 – 9 months. Plants in this community have adapted their form to these conditions. They are generally evergreen, crowded, uniform in height, have stiff, rigid branches and simple, small leaves with a thick waxy covering. This is an example of *convergent evolution*.

Well-known plants besides the scrub oak in this community are chamise (the dominant plant on our mesa tops), toyon (California holly, Christmas berry), laurel leaf sumac (a relative of the oak), lemonaidberry (a relative of the sumac), Mojave yucca (Spanish dagger, Spanish bayonet), and ceanothus (California lilac or wild lilac).

Most of these are early bloomers. I've seen them in bloom over the last two months. The Spanish dagger is about to bloom. I always confuse this with Our Lord's Candle, which is more typical of our back country and has a much taller bloom. It dies in the year it flowers. Spanish dagger was an important source of fiber for the Indians. These are the curly fibers you see curling off the leaves.

Ceanothus has a number of varieties, including both blue and white flowering bushes in our area. The flowers can be crushed in water to create a bit of lather, hence another name for them — soap bush. Ceanothus makes an excellent, easy-to-grow and attractive shrub for your garden.

Chamise, a member of the rose family, is also found among the sage scrub, is putting on a good show now with its white flowers. Chamise comes from *Chamiso*, Spanish for brush or firewood. It in turn comes from the Portuguese *Chama*, "a flame." This is appropriate since this plant, also known as greasewood, accounts for much of the thick black smoke we see in our brush fires, coming from oils stored in the wood. You'll often see a bald area around some chamise. This is because it contains a germinating inhibitor that stops other seeds from sprouting. Fire counteracts this inhibitor, hence we see many other species pop up after a fire in an area previously dominated by chamise. These new plants hold the nutrients in the ash from the fire until the chamise itself starts to come back. This is one plant that may be meant to burn, it seems to play such a vital role in the life cycle of this and other plants.

The toyon, also found among the sage scrub, produces a sweet and spicy berry that's a favorite of a bird, the cedar waxwing. The Indians used it, both boiling and roasting it.

The scrub jay is a good index species of chaparral, darting among the trees. Other birds that like chaparral areas include quail. I've heard a band of them quite a bit lately in the

➡ p. 9 for more

## Birding in Penasquitos Canyon Rain, Floods and Birds in the Canyon

by Barbara Zepf

The biggest news in the canyon this past month was the rains. Hallelujah! I was down in the canyon (umbrella, boots, and all) during much of that time. What an awesome sight. Water everywhere — the creek resembled a river — wide and rushing. In the east end of the canyon, the creek extended from the main road to the road in the Canyonside Park. In the west end, it stretched from the hills on the north side to the main road. The barbed wire fence along the creek on the west end was under water, with the creek almost reaching the highest marker line on the water level pole. Even the drainage ditch along Black Mountain Road was a roaring stream, complete with small waterfalls.

The high winds kept most of the wildlife hidden, but some feathered friends were very visible. Hundreds of Red-winged Black birds and Tricolored Blackbirds were wheeling around in huge, wind-buffed flocks. They could find very few places to land because their usual habitat was under several feet of water. The reeds were smashed flat under the roaring stream. I counted over 50 Killdeer on the grass near the ballfields. Many Mallards were standing alongside the creek just watching the water whiz by. Apparently there are more Mallards living in Penasquitos Creek than I thought; only the floods brought them all into view at the same time.

### Spring-cleaning time

The creek really needed the scouring out that it got. It was getting so overgrown with reeds and cattails. Nature has a way of doing its own spring-cleaning. The water was very muddy; I hope when all the silt settles, the creek isn't clogged more than it was before.

I even went to Penasquitos Lagoon. The mouth of the lagoon was definitely open to the ocean. Waves were crashing under the bridge and sending water up to the restrooms on the parking lot. The lagoon was lapping at the edges of Carmel Valley Road and Sorrento Valley Road. With this high tide and the torrential rains, hopefully the whole ecosystem was renewed.

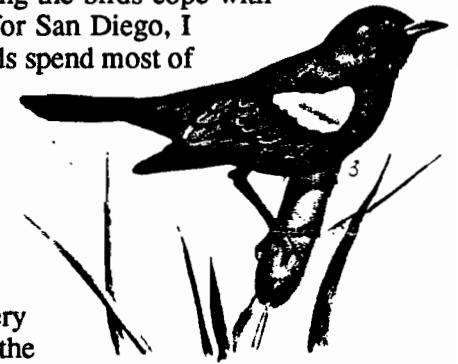
As I watched all of the birds stranded by the high, rushing waters, I wondered if any Mallard or Blackbird nests had been lost to the stream. When I went home, I looked up the egg dates for these two species. The dates generally start near the end of March, so I hope it's safe to say that nesting hadn't started yet for these two species.

### Pickup absurdas and other rare sights

One rare sighting at the west end of the canyon was a Virginia Rail. These birds are so secretive that you usually only get a glimpse of them by calling them out with a tape recording of their voice. I don't like to use tapes, so I seldom get a good look at one down in the Canyon. Another "rare sight" in the west end was a Toyota pickup truck stuck halfway into the rushing waters. I wonder what it was doing in the canyon in the first place?!

On the weekend, I went back with my husband, Paul, to share with him this watery, rare vision of the canyon. By then, the water had subsided, but you could still see plenty of evidence of the storm. The park gates were closed. I was so glad! The preserve would have suffered much damage from traffic in there while the land was so soggy. You could still get great views from the sidewalk on Calle Cristobal and from the road to the ranch in the east end. We did notice that someone had cut the barbed wire fence next to the gate on the west end, and bicyclists were going into the canyon, despite the fact that a sign on the gate said "Park Closed." What a shame! Maybe education will help some people to see what damage can, unthinkingly, be done to the canyon. Or maybe some people are illiterate and can't read signs — that still points to a need for education — literacy education!

While I was watching the birds cope with this unusual weather for San Diego, I thought how some birds spend most of their lives in the water (the Mallards), and some spend most of their lives on land (the Killdeer). The Blackbirds are classified as land birds, but in the canyon, they have a very close association with the reeds. They breed in the reeds directly above it.



Tricolored Blackbird (Male)

I once saw a Yellow-headed Blackbird at Penasquitos Lagoon, but there are only three Blackbirds that occur in the canyon itself — Brewer's, Red-winged and Tricolored Blackbirds.

### Troupers, one and all

They belong to the Troupial Family, named from the habit of gathering in a large flock or troupe. They have much in common. They are all medium to large birds from 7-1/4 to 8-1/2 inches long. They have heavy, conical, black, sharp-pointed bills. They nest in cattails, rushes or bushes along a creek (Brewer's may nest on the ground), from March to July. They lay from three to five eggs (Brewer's sometimes lay seven). They usually have two broods a year. All the incubation is done by the females. They nest in huge colonies. The Tricolored Blackbird is the most colonial nesting bird with nests sometimes touching each other. The Red-winged Blackbird is the most territorial, but his territory is very small, giving the appearance of a close-knit colony.

They eat insects, small fruits, seeds, waste grain and small aquatic life. They are found during any part of the

**(Save the trees cont'd)**

City Council voted on environmental issues. He recently voted to extend Jackson Drive through Mission Trails Regional Park, where thousands of native trees and plants will be sacrificed for an unneeded road. This is consistent with his failure to protect our dwindling natural resources threatened by private development.

CalTrans is required to do this project as mitigation for destroying wetlands that lie in the path of the eastern part of Route 56 in Penasquitos. Ground can't break on Route 56 until the mitigation is approved and underway.

According to a CalTrans spokesperson, if Henderson is successful in somehow blocking the mitigation project, it will likely delay the construction of the eastern end of Route 56 in Penasquitos by six and perhaps as much as 12 months, because of the need to find another wetlands mitigation. It would also add to the cost of the mitigation, since substantial money and time has already been spent in developing the proposal, writing the environmental documents and in seeking the many permits needed.

**Henderson's claims**

At the press conference Henderson said that he was opposed to this project because it involves "logging" Eucalyptus trees. The 3-acre area where the eucalyptus trees are to be removed is one of the prettiest areas of the Preserve, he said, reason enough not to remove them. In addition, he claimed that they are home to acorn woodpeckers and that this would make them an endangered species in the canyon and drive them from it.

He also claimed that these trees were historic trees, planted by the early settlers here. He also claimed that eucalyptus trees weren't in the same class as other exotic plants he supports removing from the canyon, specifically naming the russian thistle (tumbleweed). The money, he suggested, could be better spent on another project.

**Separating fact from fancy**

As our readers remember, the mitigation project involves removing three acres of eucalyptus trees from the Preserve on the east end. In their place CalTrans will plant native species, including Cottonwoods, Sycamores, and California Live Oaks. They will also plant shrubs including willows and mulefat that are also native to the canyon. Native wildflowers will also be planted. The goal is to begin the process of returning the Preserve to plants that are native to the canyon, to provide a home for plants being wiped out by development elsewhere.

**Fact #1:** The trees aren't "historic." They weren't planted by the Alvarado, Ruiz, Johnson or Taylor families that first settled the canyon. Photos from the 19th century in the historical archives show there weren't any eucalyptus trees here then. These trees are accidents that occurred as Eucalyptus seeds washed down the creek from Poway. You have only to walk east in the Canyon to see their progression. They are relentlessly moving east to west down the canyon.

**Fact #2:** The eucalyptus are in the same class as russian thistle, desert artichoke and other exotic, non-native plants

that are destructive to native species. Eucalyptus exude a phytotoxin that poisons the surrounding soil to other trees or plants. Over time the result is a die-off of other plants. Drive through Scripps Ranch or UCSD to see the result. In whole areas you'll see groves of eucalyptus and nothing but dead leaves under them. In time they'll take over the whole canyon bottom.

**Fact #3:** Acorn woodpeckers have no special affinity for eucalyptus over other trees. They and other birds sit on its branches and sometimes build nests in them. In Peñasquitos Canyon, however, the acorn woodpeckers prefer dead or dying sycamores for their nesting sites, since the wood is easier to penetrate. They harvest their main food, acorns, from the canyon's oak trees and store them in storage trees, usually sycamores. So the woodpeckers won't be pushed out of the Preserve.

**Fact #4:** The money has to be spent on a wetlands rehabilitation by law. CalTrans says they can find no other suitable sites in the community. The money will be spent elsewhere, lost to our community.

**Fact #5:** By their very "empty" nature, eucalyptus groves, devoid of other plants provide no habitat for deer, bobcat and other species of animals. They provide no food for birds. As eucalyptus thrive in an area they drive out the wildlife. Replanting this area with native species will provide more habitat, not less, to the wildlife.

Opposition to removing the eucalyptus first surfaced in the Hi-Sierran, the Sierra Club's paper, in its March issue in a letter from John Northrop. Northrop, who also writes for our newsletter, is a leader of the stop 56 campaign in Carmel Valley. Although the club is opposed to Route 56, they aren't opposed to this mitigation. In fact, leaders of several environmental and community groups called a news conference immediately after Henderson's to support the mitigation project. Speaking in support of the mitigation were myself, Geoff Smith who is both the new chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the chair of the Sierra Clubs' Forestry and Conservation Committee, and Kevin McNamara, chair of the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Group.

**"Born again" environmentalist?**

Why has a politician who hasn't tried to stop the bulldozers from destroying trees in private developments elsewhere in the city suddenly hot to save some eucalyptus from removal as part of a riparian rehabilitation project?

My bet is on the upcoming primary election in September and the opinion polls that show him vulnerable on growth and environmental issues in his new district. My bet is we are seeing a "born-again environmentalist" who seized a likely -to-be-popular issue with an eye on the headlines and future votes.

What's your guess?

April 13 the Friends will leaflet Mr. Henderson's rally if anyone should come with a flyer explaining the true nature of the mitigation and its importance for the Preserve. Join us if you'd like to help.

# Blood Spurting Lizard Highlights Walk

by Mike Kelly

As we knelt on the ground around it we were saddened to see the blood oozing from its eyes. We could clearly see the imprint of a boot heel next to the still form. Apparently someone on the hike had just stepped on it. It was a coast horned lizard.

They didn't see it due to its excellent camouflage. It has adapted its coloration to the surrounding environment. In this case, it was "hunkering" down and blending in with the dirt road we were on.

To see if it was dead I touched it. It moved a bit. Then someone on the hike remembered an important fact about horned lizards. One of their protective mechanisms is to spurt or ooze blood from their eyes! Maybe it wasn't hurt, at least not seriously. Someone picked it up and put it at the side of the road. Suddenly, to everyone's delight, *zoom* — it rocketed into the underbrush.

A mile away and 45 minutes later we were in the area burned by the 1989 fire west of Rancho Peñasquitos and east of the ranchettes at "Hollywood and Vine." There we found another horned lizard, this one with a darker coloration, once again blending in beautifully with the fire darkened soil. Like the earlier one, it had "hunkered" down to the ground to hide from predators.

It obligingly poised for our cameras until someone's shadow flicked across it, startling it into flight. A shadow overhead is often the only warning a lizard or other animal has that a bird of prey or other predator is swooping in for the kill.

The lizard, scientifically named *Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*, is also known as the San Diego Horned Lizard or, more popularly by kids, as a horny toad. There's a coastal species which is what we saw on the Del Mar Mesa, and which I've seen in Peñasquitos Canyon, and a desert species, which I've seen in Little Blair Valley, near Anza-Borrego.

If you haven't seen a horned lizard you're missing a real treat. It looks like a miniature dinosaur with dagger-like head spines. Sharp scales project out along the upper and side parts of its body. Although fierce looking, it's quite passive and easily caught.

## Declining numbers

Development is reducing the available habitat. Over col-

lection also reduces the population in some areas. Although kids love them, they seldom last long in captivity since they require large quantities of ants to survive.

The drought, too, is causing problems for them. They depend on ants for their food and are often found lying in wait outside an ant colony. Since the ant population is declining now due to the drought, this causes lizards and other species that feed on them to decline.

Spurting blood in these lizards comes from a large sinus gland behind their eye. They can roll their eyeballs back in their sockets and break a blood vessel. They can shoot it out from a pore in the eyelid. This spurting can reach several feet and reported is repellant to foxes and other predators. When they are picked up they may also inflate themselves by gulping air and may try to jab whoever or whatever is picking them up with their horns.

In our area they frequent the chaparral scrubland, grasslands, and the woodlands near our streams. They like to be near an open area where they can sun themselves, typical of most reptiles. They also like a loose soil where they can bury themselves. Coastal horned lizards reproduce by eggs, hatching 6-21 eggs from April through June.

I'll be reporting our two sitings to the San Diego Herpetological Society. The reason I'll do this is that they are conducting a census of certain reptiles and amphibians. This census will help determine how much their populations are declining. In the past few years there has been an alarming dying off of these creatures, particularly amphibians.

It's thought that they are being hurt by acid rain and other pollution of the air. But, unlike bird populations which have been the subject of annual census by the Audubon Club for many years, this data isn't available for reptiles and amphibians.



Coast horned lizard

(Petition delayed cont'd)

"clock" starts when the new summary is received and the entire new version of the petition has been published in a local paper again.

On the bright side of things, under State law we are required to gather several thousand fewer signatures and have 200, not 180 days to circulate the petitions.

A reflection of the seriousness of the coalition's effort is the appointment of Jay Powell to the coalition staff to or-

ganize the drive. Jay is well-known as one of the city's environmental leaders and one of the coordinators of the successful 1985 Managed Growth Initiative ("Prop A").

## Volunteers and funds appreciated

Although the petitions can't be circulated yet, there is plenty to do in the way of fund mailings and phone calling that can be done to raise the more than \$50,000 needed to make this a successful drive.

Call Jay at 280-3449 to get involved.

# Flash Flooding in López Canyon

by John Northrop, Consulting Geophysicist

During the storm of February 28-March 1, 1991, flood waters from Lopez Creek overtopped the dirt causeway connecting the new West End Parking/Staging area to Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Much of the causeway was washed away and a great deal of sand, gravel, rocks, etc. were washed down into the wetlands area of the Preserve. The same thing happened last year and the year before: in fact, every year since this causeway was built.

In addition to being a very expensive undertaking to repair this causeway after every flood, there are several other concerns that should be addressed: erosion of López Canyon; sediment filling of the wetlands; flooding of Sorrento Valley Boulevard; and access to the preserve.

## Erosion of Lopez Canyon

Flash flooding in Lopez Canyon, caused in part by a multitude of storm drains emplaced there by developers (there are 35 storm drains of 18" to 84" in diameter, for a total of 816", below the Montongo Street detention basin), carries a "wall of water" that cascades down the canyon and overtops the causeway. Because of the developed slopes and storm drains, the outpouring is nearly simultaneous with the rainfall and carries tremendous erosional power. Thus, the floor of the lower part of López Canyon, also owned by the City, will slowly be washed out and become a cobble-strewn wash like the upper part of the canyon.

## Sediment filling of the wetlands

When the causeway washes away during floods, coarse-grained materials (mostly sands and gravels) are carried down stream and deposited in the wetlands area directly below the causeway (and the finer material dumped into Peñasquitos Lagoon!). Eventually, this process will fill up the wetlands with sediment and there will be a mud flat or sand bar there instead. This process should be stopped at all costs because the wetlands serve as a nursery for young fauna, as well as feeding grounds for birds, and are an environmentally sensitive area.

## Flooding of Sorrento Valley Boulevard

While the floodwaters were cascading over the cause-

way on the morning of March 1st, the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Creeks was awash, the flood gauge beside Calle Cristobal was overtopped and Sorrento Valley Boulevard was so badly flooded it was closed off by Police. In the afternoon, after the local rain stopped, water no longer spilled over the causeway, water at the creeks' confluence had receded, flood levels at the flood gauge dropped about 6 inches and Sorrento Valley Boulevard was reopened. Since the main source of water of Peñasquitos Creek proper is upstream near Poway, and that area received more rain than the area along the coast, I conclude that the flooding was due to a flash flood as water cascaded over the causeway across Lopez Creek.

## Access to the Preserve

The causeway connecting the new Parking/Staging area with Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was impassable to vehicles not only during the period of overtopping but also for long afterward during extensive and expensive repairs. This situation is extremely dangerous to Park users, particularly when emergency vehicles that might try to reach the area from the Black Mountain Road entrance to the Park are also blocked by the floodwaters, as is usually the case.

## Recommendations

What is desperately needed, and in fact, long overdue is more and larger culverts beneath the subject causeway. Currently, there are only three small (about 6" diameter) drains there where 36-inch culverts are required. Also, an additional sedimentation basin is needed in López Canyon between the present one at Montongo Street and the causeway.

My understanding is that the west end complex of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve has not yet been approved by the City of San Diego. Larger culverts and/or an additional sediment basin should be required before the City approves the west end complex. I urge concerned Friends to write or call: Abby Wolfsheimer, City Hall, 202 "C" St., San Diego, CA 92101 (236-6611) to plead for larger culverts and an additional sediment basin in López Canyon to prevent future flood damage to the Preserve and it environs.

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### (Volunteer patrol cont'd)

regulations. The presence of a patrol in the Preserve promotes improved public respect and care for the Preserve and provides a rewarding experience for patrol members.

Patrol members also summon ranger assistance in the event of accidents or other serious problems, and educate the public on the ecology of the canyon. Members are 18 years of age or older and work a minimum of two four-hour shifts per month.

Support is provided by the County and City in the form of workers compensation while on patrol, ranger backup,

and training. The training, which is mandatory, includes: rules and regulations; public relations; first aid; canyon ecology and history; and interfacing with County, City, and San Diego Police Department staff.

The volunteers provide their own horses, bicycles, hiking shoes, and prescribed clothing. The park provides first aid kits, radios, informational brochures and identifying insignia.

If you would like to apply for the patrol, call Supervising Park Ranger Reneene Mowry at 484-7504.

## Friends April and May Outings Schedule Rains Make it Flower Time in the Preserve

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or to organize a group hike, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

### APRIL

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., Apr. 6, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Apr. 6, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### VERNAL POOLS & CHAPARRAL—DEL MAR MESA

Sun., Apr. 7, 9 a.m. (3 hours). In Rancho Peñasquitos, take Carmel Mountain Road west until it ends (careful, the road is confusing, it makes a right turn!). Visit some of the finest vernal pools remaining in San Diego. See many wildflowers.

#### WILDFLOWER WALK

Sat., Apr. 13, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Look for wildflowers; also plants that the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., Apr. 14, 7:30 a.m. (2 hours). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book, binoculars. Beginners welcome. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., Apr. 16, 7 p.m. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Apr. 20, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Apr. 20, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Visit historic adobe, see settler and Indian artifacts.

#### EARTH DAY 1991 FAIR — BALBOA PARK

Sun., Apr. 21, all day. Many environmental groups, displays, shows, demonstrations, etc. Details will be in daily papers. Call 566-6489 to help the Friends in our booth at the Fair.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., Apr. 28, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruíz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology and visit waterfall.

### MAY

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., May 4, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., May 4, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### CANYONWALKABOUT — ROUND TRIP

Sun., May 5, 9 a.m. (5-6 hours). Join Trinity Gabrielle in a 13 mile stroll through Penasquitos Canyon, an end-to-end round-trip! Must bring water, sun shade, lunch. Includes stop at waterfall. Easy pace. People who want to just walk from one way to the other end, about 6.5 miles, can arrange their own pickup at the far end. RSVP, 566-6489. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, then right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### NATURE WALK

Sun., May 12, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Look for wildflowers, learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

#### VERNAL POOL & CHAPARRAL WALK — DEL MAR MESA

Sun., May 18, 9 am (2-3 hours). In Rancho Peñasquitos, take Carmel Mountain Rd west until it ends. Visit some of the finest vernal pools remaining in San Diego. Should see wildflowers.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

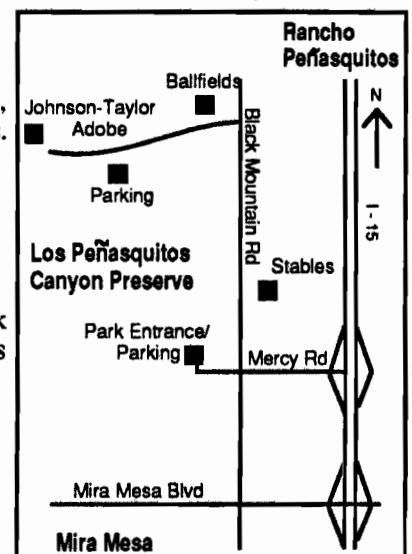
Sat., May 18, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), SD County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., May 19, 7:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars. Beginners welcome. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., May 19, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruíz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal.





## (Chaparral cont'd)

east end of the canyon in the chaparral on the south slope.

One of the prettiest bushes you'll see blooming now is the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry. Its waxy leaves are typical of the chaparral, while its showy bright red flowers attract one species of hummingbird, which depends entirely on this plant during its migratory stop over in Southern California. This bush is always supported by another plant.

Another gorgeous flower now in bloom is the chaparral pea, a small bush. It rarely produces mature fruit.

Schwenkmeyer showed us slides of the coast horned lizard and the common fence or blue belly lizard, both of which are found in the chaparral.

Pack rat (wood rat) nests are a common sight in the chaparral. Our canyon is no exception. Some nests are up to 5' high and have many rooms. This good size rat will occupy a nest for life. The nest is often inherited by another pack rat when the first dies.

**Coastal sage scrub habitat**

As the speaker explained, plants in this community are smaller with more open spacing than chaparral. They are generally soft, succulent, aromatic and some are sticky. Green in the winter and spring, in the summer they look like they have died — hence our brown slopes — but they are hunkering down in a state of dormancy to weather through the hot, dry weather. Our different sage plants and flattop buckwheat are common members of this habitat.

In east-west canyons such as Peñasquitos the chaparral is generally on the south slope facing the north sun. The sage scrub is on the north slope facing the south sun. Given that the sun is never directly overhead in our latitude, the different slant of the sun becomes decisive in how much water is left in the ground on a north facing versus south facing slope and therefore which plant adaptations work best.

Coast sagebrush, a member of the sunflower family, is common in our area and is often confused with black or white sage because it's every bit as aromatic. Black and the less common white sage are true sages and account for the wonderful smell in some areas when there's a lot of them.

## (Birds cont'd)

year in the canyon. Their voices and looks differ, and the sexes differ within the species.

The Brewer's Blackbird is all black with a light yellow eye. In good light, purplish reflections may be seen on the head and greenish reflections on the body. The female is brownish gray, with a dark eye. Their song is a harsh and wheezy "que-ee" or "k-see". Their call is a harsh "chack".

The Red-winged Blackbird is glossy black, with *bright* red epaulets (shoulder patches), broadly tipped with *yellow* (most visible in spring display). In perched birds, only the yellow may show. Females are dark brown above, heavily streaked below, sometimes showing a red tinge on wing coverts or a pinkish wash on the chin and throat. First year males show a reddish shoulder patch. Their song is a liquid, gurgling "konk-la-ree," ending in a trill. They often sound like a broken guitar string. Their most common call

There are two snakes to watch out for that like the sage scrub. One is the red diamondback rattlesnake that likes the Linda Vista geological formation, that's the top edge of the north slope of Peñasquitos Canyon that's so eroded. They like the many little caves up there. The southern pacific is the other rattlesnake. While the former is regarded as fairly passive, the latter has an aggressive reputation, accounting for more serious snakebites than the other.

But, don't despair. You have an ally. The pacific banded kingsnake, a typical member of both plant communities, will squeeze rattlers to death. Their venom has no effect on it. The gopher snake is one of the larger snakes you'll encounter. It won't hurt you unless you pick it up. Then it might give you a non-poisonous bite. Like the kingsnake, it's a super rodent controller.

As the flattop buckwheat matures, you'll often see another bright orange plant crawling over it. This can be spectacular looking as you see a large patch along a country road. This parasite is dodder or witch's hair, a member of the morning glory family. Although it starts as a green plant in the ground, it detaches itself and climbs aboard the flattop buckwheat, its plant of preference and lives off this plant!

One of the most common flowering plants in our area and one that likes recently burned areas, is the yellow-orange deer weed. Deer do like it, as they do many flowers.

The sunflower we often see around the canyon is California encelia or bush sunflower. Growing as high as five feet it has a brown center surrounded by the typical yellow rays. It likes both chaparral and sage scrub habitat.

One of the most curious flowers you'll be lucky enough to see is the fried egg plant, or matilija poppy. The yellow center is surrounded by crinkled, white, papery looking petals. It's a favorite of knowledgeable gardeners.

Some of the flowers you'll see sprinkled about the canyon are goldfields, blue eye grass, owls clover, shooting stars, popcorn flowers, and dozens more.

Why not join us on upcoming walks and see these plants for yourself?

is a "chack" note.

The Tricolored Blackbird is glossy black with *dark* red shoulder patches, broadly tipped with *white*. Females usually lack any red on the shoulders. Their plumage is sooty-brown and streaked overall. The streaking on the underparts is usually more diffuse than in the female Red-winged Blackbird, which tends to obscure the streaks on the lower back and belly. Their song is harsh and unmusical — a braying "on-ke-kaaangh". Their call is a nasal "kemp".

For a real spectacle, visit the canyon some evening just before dusk, when the blackbirds come in to roost in the large trees at either end of the canyon. They wheel around in huge flocks before settling into the trees. Then they take off, en masse, only to settle once again before finally going into the cattails to spend the night.

Good Birding!



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 619-484-3219 566-6489

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**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**(Outings cont'd)**

Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil. Led by geologist.

**FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING**

Tues., May 21, 7 p.m. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat., May 25, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock.

**DUSK WALK**

Fri., May 31, 6 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Groups R.S.V.P. please.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
- Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



## Parks Petition Earth Day Kickoff by Mike Kelly

Last month I reported that the Parks and Wildlife Initiative had been delayed by bureaucratic bungling by several city offices. I'm glad to report now that the Initiative has now been released by the City and supporters are now free to circulate it.

In fact, Earth Day, April 21, at Balboa park gave the coalition supporting the Parks protection measure the perfect occasion to officially launch our petition drive. The Friends, the Sierra Club and the No-On-Jackson-Drive folks, among others, circulated the petition at their respective tables and booths.

As readers will remember, the Initiative, if successful, will propose that the voters add a layer of protection to our open-space parks by requiring a vote of the people before roads such as Jackson Drive or Camino Rufz could be built through our parks. At this time, there are roads or widenings of roads proposed for every one of our major parks, whether it be Balboa Park, Mission Bay, Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Mission Trails Regional Park, Tecolote Canyon or others. What's the point of spending tens of millions of dollars to acquire these parks you might ask, only to turn around and put major highways or other non-park facilities in them? The Initiative would also formalize the process of acquiring park lands in the soon-to-be-developed Urban Reserve area of the city.

### Volunteers and funds appreciated

Although the petitions can't be circulated yet, there is plenty to do in the way of fund mailings and phone calling that can be done to raise the more than \$50,000 needed to make this a successful drive. Your own donation is greatly needed. Call Jay Powell at 280-3449 to get involved.

## Henderson and the Eucalyptus Mitigation Never Let Facts Get in the Way by Mike Kelly

From the first announcement of his press conference in opposition to the Peñasquitos Creek Restoration Project to the taxpayer-financed mailing to registered voters for his "public meeting" that played more like a re-election campaign kick-off rally, Councilmember Bruce Henderson has played loose and fast with the facts about the project and about the Preserve. People of good faith can agree or disagree with the merits of this mitigation project; but we

➡ p. 2 for more

## Outings Schedule

See Page 8 for a convenient "hangup" format.

## Thanks Earth Day Volunteers

Thanks to Kate Johnson, Brian Swanson, Trinity Gabriele, Garrett Beaumont, Les Braund and Mike Kelly for staffing the Friends information table at Earth Day at Balboa Park April 21. Many signatures were gathered for the Parks and Wildlife Initiative at our display and a lot of literature on the Preserve distributed.

## Park Day Volunteers Needed

We still need help staffing our exhibits at Peñasquitos Park Day June 1 (see article below). If you can help out for even an hour or two, call us at 484-3219 or 566-6489 and leave your name and phone number and when you're available. We'll get back to confirm to you.

## Enjoy a "Fiesta at the Rancho" on Park Day June 1 by Pam Stevens

On Saturday, June 1, Peñasquitos Canyon Park Day 1991 will offer a variety of activities for all ages to enjoy and become better acquainted with the natural and cultural history of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

This year, the day's activities will begin with a "Walk in the Park" sponsored by KYXY radio, an easy nature hike from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. The hike starts and ends at the historic Johnson/Taylor ranch, located at the preserve's eastern end just north of Peñasquitos Creek and west of Black Mountain Road.

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. other Park Day activities will take place at the ranch. The theme for this year's event is "Fiesta at the Rancho," celebrating the Mexican heritage of the preserve, a period in history that spans from 1823, when Rancho de los Peñasquitos became the first Mexican land grant in what is now San Diego County, to 1882, when the Alvarado and Johnson families sold their interest in the ranch. The San Diego Archeological Society will conduct tours of

➡ p. 9 for more

(Henderson cont'd)

should do so based on facts and not demagogic vote hustling.

Here are some of Mr. Henderson's erroneous assertions:

- Thousands of eucalyptus trees will be "logged;"
- Acorn Woodpecker's make their home in eucalyptus and will be "endangered" if the trees are cut down;
- These eucalyptus are "historic" trees planted by the "pioneers" and therefore must be saved;
- The money can be spent on other community projects;
- Route 56 won't be delayed if this mitigation project is blocked by Mr. Henderson;
- Eucalyptus trees aren't harmful to native trees, plants or animals the way exotic weeds like tumbleweed is.

Let's correct these mistakes and distortions.

### **What is the CalTrans Peñasquitos Creek Restoration Project?**

Because CalTrans will be destroying wetlands in the path of the eastern part of Route 56 in Peñasquitos East, they are required by Federal and State law to "mitigate" this with a wetlands restoration project in the same area. Such mitigation is required because our wetlands are increasingly scarce, yet very important to our plant, fish, bird and mammal populations.

When the San Diego City Council held public hearings and voted approval for the Environmental Impact Report for this part of 56 they voted approval with the condition that this mitigation be part of the agreement. Mr. Henderson voted to approve this project without any questions about the mitigation. Now, months later, he says that he wasn't paying attention because it wasn't his district at the time.

The mitigation proposal was brought before the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Peñasquitos Task Force, a committee with representatives from the area Community Planning Groups, Town Councils and environmental groups — including the Friends and Sierra Club.

The joint City-County Peñasquitos Canyon Task Force of County Supervisors and City Councilmembers also had a presentation and approved the project.

The project was also written up in the *Mira Mesa Scripps Ranch Sentinel* and the *Peñasquitos News*.

### **Route 56 will be delayed**

In fact, CalTrans has a June 1 deadline to let out the bids for the construction of Route 56. They can't let out the bids until all the permits for the mitigation project have been approved. If they miss the June 1 deadline CalTrans loses \$3 million in SB130 funds for the construction of the road — funds we taxpayers will have to make up. If they are forced to look elsewhere to do the mitigation CalTrans says 56 will be delayed a year or more. This east-west road is badly needed between I-5 and I-15 to relieve the terrible congestion on Mira Mesa Boulevard, the "unofficial" 56.

### **What does the mitigation consist of?**

CalTrans proposes to replace three acres of eucalyptus trees on the eastern end of the Preserve, from the stream crossing just east of the Eichar gravesite running several hundred yards to the west. In place of the eucalyptus they will plant sycamore, cottonwood and California Live Oak

trees. In addition, they'll plant native bushes such as willow, mulefat, San Diego marsh elder, Palmer's and Douglas' mugwort. Annual flowering plants will provide ground cover and contribute to the overall native plant diversity of the area. CalTrans will be required to monitor and maintain the plantings for a period of five years to ensure their stability.

### **What's wrong with eucalyptus?**

Most of us think of the shade that the eucalyptus provide in many parts of the city and enjoy their silhouettes against the skyline. But these imports from Australia have another side to them.

Eucalyptus pose a serious threat to native California plant species. This tree produces a phytotoxin that poisons the soil to native species of trees and other plants. The result is that you see relatively little growth under Eucalyptus. They literally kill off the "understory" of plants we associate with our woodlands. They also aren't hospitable to a large variety of insects and don't serve as a food supply for birds and animals. Some birds like to use its branches, but can't utilize them as a source of food as they do other trees. In other words, these trees are every bit as bad a "weed" as tumbleweed and desert artichoke, two other exotic imports.

Eucalyptus trees are systematically poisoning the soil and killing off native plants and trees in the canyon. It is estimated that in less than 200 more years they will have pushed almost all native species out of the canyon bottom. Drive through Scripps Ranch or UCSD to see the result. In whole areas you'll see groves of eucalyptus and nothing but dead leaves under them.

### **Is it a Preserve or isn't it?**

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is designated as a Preserve for native plants and animals. This is important because San Diego native species are being systematically extinguished or their numbers severely reduced by new development. Our canyon is meant to be a refuge for them.

### **Historic trees?**

The trees aren't "historic." They weren't planted by the Alvarado, Ruiz, Johnson or Taylor families that first settled the canyon. Photos from the 19th century in the historical archives show there weren't any eucalyptus trees here then. These trees are accidents that occurred as Eucalyptus seeds washed down the creek from Poway. You have only to walk east in the Canyon to see their progression. They are relentlessly moving east to west down the canyon.

### **Acorn woodpeckers and eucalyptus**

Acorn woodpeckers have no special affinity for eucalyptus over other trees. They sit on its branches. Sometimes other birds build nests in them. No bird is "exclusive" to eucalyptus, that is, they're perfectly happy with the sycamores, cottonwoods, and oaks in the Preserve. In fact, the acorn woodpeckers prefer dead or dying sycamores for their nesting sites, since the wood is easier to penetrate. They harvest their main food, acorns, from the canyon's oak trees and store them in storage trees, usually sycamores. So the

(Henderson cont'd)

woodpeckers won't be pushed out of the Preserve — *unless the eucalyptus succeed in killing off the other trees and plants which provide them shelter and food.*

### Thousands will be "logged"

Only several dozen large eucalyptus will be removed. In addition, less than 200 eucalyptus saplings will also be cut. The wood is useless as timber or lumber and will be mulched for use on other CalTrans sites where they won't harm native plants.

### Lose or gain habitat?

By their very "empty" nature, eucalyptus groves, devoid of other plants provide no habitat for deer, bobcat and other species of animals. They provide no food for birds. **As eucalyptus thrive in an area they drive out the wildlife.** Replanting this area with native species will provide more habitat, not less, to the wildlife.

### Spend the money on another project?

By law the money has to be spent on wetlands rehabilitation. Other suitable sites in the community such as Peñasquitos Lagoon were investigated but are already "booked up" by other agencies for mitigation well into the future. Wetlands are so scarce, even Los Angeles is mitigating in San Diego County now! This \$420,000 will be spent elsewhere, lost to our community.

### Alternative mitigation?

As we go to press, Henderson's office has put an alternative mitigation proposal on the table. It seems to be taken lock, stock and barrel from a proposal circulated by "Doc" Smith. In fact, it is being circulated by Henderson without analysis is as to what meets the criteria CalTrans must satisfy for its Route 56 mitigation, without regard to what is suitable for the Preserve, and what the cost would be. This "out-of-touch-with-reality" air to it indicates it is more intended as a smokescreen so Henderson can pretend his "save the trees" slogan is not just electioneering in the shadow of the September 6th District Primary election in the city.

Smith's proposal does have merit for future rehabilitation work in the preserve. It's just not suitable or realistic for the current situation. It also has to be analyzed for inappropriate elements which I'll detail. It is a suitable item for discussion by the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Task Force and by the Friends. Acceptable elements of Smith's proposal should be added to the "20-year Needs List" that is being revised by the CAC. In brief, here are Smith's proposals and my preliminary comments on them.

- Restore the Peñasquitos Creek Stream bed to a suitable habitat for fish. Do this by removing the feet of silt and mud now covering the creek bottom — mud and silt washed down from surrounding developments. Good proposal. A conservative price tag for this is \$5 million, perhaps as much as \$10 million, way beyond the scope of this mitigation. In addition, it can't be started until the developments on Mercy Hill, Miramar Ranch North and elsewhere are finished and their slopes stabilized, perhaps in 5 years.

- Use organic mulch from the Miramar landfill to help stabilize bare slopes. The mulch shouldn't be from the landfill — it would contain too many seeds from species not native to the Preserve.
- "Most of the slopes within the canyon rim lack trees," Smith says and therefore advocates planting the "entire watershed inside the canyon rims with the proper trees and brush" by planting seeds of 4 native oak species and others. It's not true that most of the slopes lack trees. Most are covered by native chaparral on the north facing slopes and coastal sage scrub on much of the south facing slopes.

Fire laws require the brush clearance zone and what can be planted for new developments on the rims. The Park Village area which reaches the canyon bottom, however, is a good candidate for trees and landscape screening, both to stabilize the open soil and hide the ugly intrusion of the houses.

Grass covered hills at the west end must first be investigated by archaeologists to determine what grew there historically. It may have been native California bunch grasses rather than trees or chaparral. California Live Oaks and Scrub Oak grow in the canyon, what other two species of oak does he propose?

- Trash pickup in the stream bed. Friends and other groups have organized pickups. One directly in the stream bed is a good idea and feasible for volunteers.
- Sewer spills are a problem. Councilmember Wolfsheimer's office has gotten action to address spills in the past. More definitely needs to be done. Smith's high-tech proposal is worth considering, but details on whether such devices exist and the cost are lacking.

Smith's proposals are a mixed bag of appropriate and inappropriate proposals, but worth serious consideration. None meet the June 1st, \$430,000 cost and wetlands rehabilitation requirements imposed on CalTrans as a condition for Route 56.

### "Born again" environmentalist?

Councilman Henderson is not known as a champion of the environment. Quite the contrary. He won a "bulldozer" award from the Sierra Club in their report card on how the City Council voted on environmental issues. Last year he voted to extend Jackson Drive through Mission Trails Regional Park, where thousands of native trees and plants will be sacrificed for an unneeded road.

Why has a politician who hasn't tried to stop the bulldozers from destroying our natural resources in private developments elsewhere in the city suddenly hot to save some eucalyptus from removal as part of a public riparian rehabilitation project?

My bet is on the upcoming primary election in September and the opinion polls that show him vulnerable on growth and environmental issues in his new district. My bet is we are seeing a "born-again environmentalist" who seized a likely-to-be-popular issue with an eye on the headlines and future votes. What's your bet?

## Birding in Penasquitos Canyon Great Horned Owl Babies a Hit

by Barbara Zepf

It's spring, and a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love — and so does a young (or old) bird's fancy turn. Spring is one of my favorite times to be in the canyon. Doesn't it look great this year? It's so green — the lushest I've ever seen it. The grasses are tall; the bushes are blooming like crazy; and mating activity of the birds has reached fever pitch.

### Of songs and perches

What a delight to the senses. The air is fresh and the perfume of the canyon flora is pervasive. Your sense of hearing is bombarded with stimuli at this time of year. Birds are singing everywhere. While birds have many call notes that they use all year long, it's only at breeding time that most of them burst into song.

Their songs are usually sung from a visible perch, where it makes it easy for us to spot them. The usually reclusive Wrentits and California Quail can now be readily seen on their singing perches. Birds usually sing for one of two reasons — to stake a claim to their territory or to attract a mate. And, while I know it's considered wrong to anthropomorphize about birds, I sometimes think they sing just for the sheer enjoyment of it. When I listen to the little House Wren pouring its heart out, I think maybe it's just as excited about spring as I am.

Spring brings new life to the canyon. Things begin to stir that have been hidden (or absent) all winter. I had my first-ever sighting of a live, huge rattlesnake (in the canyon) the other day — two of them, as a matter-of-fact! I've hiked in the canyon for years, but I've never been lucky enough to see them before, although I've come across many of their discarded old skins. What a thrill! They were quite large, with lots of rattles on the ends of their tails. The Ranger told me that they stayed pretty well hidden during the rainy, gray days. But, now that the days are warmer, you'll begin to see them on the dirt paths and the asphalt, where they come out to warm themselves. So while you're looking up in the trees and bushes for those elusive birds, remember to keep an eye on the ground also. Those sparrows aren't the only thing hiding in the grass.

### Courtship flights beget new avian life

With the rebirth of the grasses and trees comes the birth of new avian life. The Red-tailed Hawks, whose courtship flights I witnessed last month, are now on the nest. As of this writing, I haven't seen the young yet, but I should see them soon.

One set of fledglings that I *have* seen are some of the biggest baby birds in the canyon — those of the Great Horned Owl. They were born during the rainy month of March while the canyon was closed to visitors, so I don't know exactly when the eggs were laid. But, by the middle of April, the fledglings were quite visible on the branches near their nest. I can't say for sure how many babies hatched. You can never be sure you're seeing them all at the same time, unless you can see the eggs or newly hatched chicks before they leave the nest. Estimates on this particular clutch range from 2–4 birds. Since the Great

Horned Owl incubates its eggs from the first day the first egg is laid (2–6 eggs are possible), the chicks don't all hatch on the same day. Siblings can vary widely in size and plumage pattern depending on their place in the order of hatching. Newborns will show only down feathers, while their older siblings may be well on the way to adult plumage.

### Nest "thief"

The Great Horned Owl usually uses nests of Red-tailed hawks or hollows of trees in the canyon. The ones in the east end use nests of Red-tailed Hawks. The ones in the west end have used tree hollows and old hawk's nests. The owls nested late this year, probably because of the drought. Their prey base was down until the rains came. They nest from January to May or June. In the canyon, they usually nest in January.

This way they are finished with the nest before the hawks use it in March. Because of our screwy weather this winter, the owls and

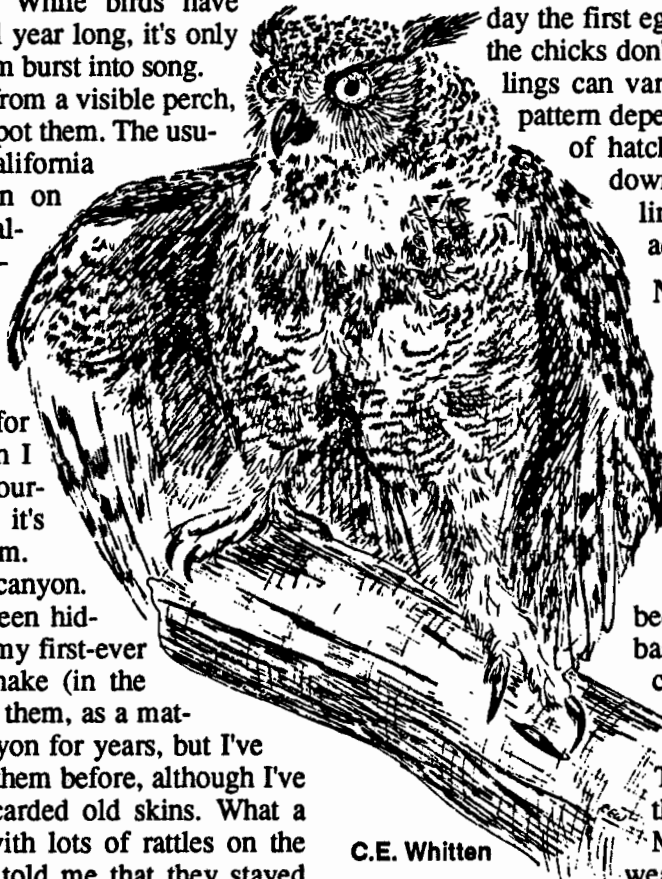
C.E. Whitten

the hawks seem to be nesting at roughly the same time. The Red-tailed Hawks that used this particular nest last year have moved down the canyon a bit to another old nest that they have used in the past.

### Skunk eaters

Great Horned Owls are mainly nocturnal, but they can hunt both day and night. Most days are spent roosting, where they are frequently "mobbed" by crows or jays. They will eat just about anything — birds, reptiles, fish, large insects and mammals. Their main prey are the cotton-tails in the canyon. They're also known to eat skunks!

➡ p.6 for more



# Hang Gliders in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

## by John Northrop, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve's Citizens Advisory Committee

### Historical background

While Peñasquitos Canyon was a Cattle ranch, the perimeter was fenced, all entrance gates were kept locked and the area was patrolled, at first by cowboys and later by jeep. Leo Wilson, former President of the Friends, once had a job driving one of the jeeps; that's how he first got interested in Peñasquitos canyon. During that time, no one was allowed in the canyon and horseback riders using the Black Mt. Stables, near the present parking/staging area, had to ride in the chaparral covered hills of what is now Mira Mesa.

That changed in the late 1960's when the land was acquired by Genstar, a Canadian development firm. In 1972, Genstar gave the canyon bottom, which is a vast flood plain, to the City of San Diego for an open space park in exchange for building rights on the surrounding slopes and mesa tops. Shortly after, the canyon became infested with hunters, poachers, hippies, bikers, motorcycles, off-road vehicles and a few hang gliders. At that time, the hang gliders used the north-facing slope of López Ridge below where the wildlife crossing under Calle Cristobal is now.

Complaints against these groups reached the Citizens Advisory Committee which, in the case of the hang gliders, recommended that such activity not be allowed because of environmental damage, possibility of law suits against the city in case of accident and the accumulation of debris that had built up near the landing site. That's why the sign at the west end of the Preserve states that the Park is "open from dawn to dusk for horseback riding and hiking . . . the following activities are considered detrimental to the environment: hunting, overnight camping, building fires, woodcutting, hang gliding . . ."

However, the City Manager entered an agreement with the Hang Glider Center in Sorrento Valley to use the area near the "nose" of López Ridge for lessons provided they had a current insurance policy, stayed in their assigned area and cleaned up after themselves. Hang gliding thus became legal in Peñasquitos Canyon, in spite of the signs. Unlike the other concession in the Preserve, Horseman's Park, the hang gliders pay no fee for their use of the facilities.

### Current hang gliding activity

Until the winter of 1990-91, the hang gliders used a key to open the vehicular gate next to the Rufz Adobe and drove into the preserve from Sorrento Valley Boulevard. When developers started regrading that road, now called Calle Cristobal, the hang gliders were able to circumvent the construction area, up to a point.

In the fall of 1990, the developers started paving Calle Cristobal, a four-lane divided highway which goes East-West along López Ridge and bisects Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Before proceeding further, they had to dig up the westbound lanes, where the road crosses the wetlands at the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Creeks, because the road bed had sunk five feet into the mud. They re-

placed that part of the roadbed with a "sandwich" of forty, one foot thick slabs of concrete. At the same time, they started grading the roadbed of the westernmost section of Calle Cristobal to where it joins Sorrento Valley Road and regrading the Parking/Staging area. By early winter, they finished the concrete "pancake" and paved the sidewalks and gutters on the sides of the roadbed, laid one slab of concrete at the West entrance to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, and put a gate across the road at the east side of the Calle Cristobal bridge. Then the rainy season came, and all work stopped for the winter.

Because the hang gliders could no longer enter the Park through the main vehicular gate (the paved sidewalks were 3 foot above the roadbed) they got a key to the Calle Cristobal bridge gate and drove eastbound on the westbound lanes to the top of López Ridge, across a large building pad and down the slopes of Peñasquitos Canyon to a site, east of their assigned area, because the latter had been denuded of grass by hang glider activity. Hang gliders were flying from the new (and unauthorized) site after the heavy rains of February 28-March 1, 1991 when the Park Ranger was alerted to the situation.

### What the future holds

During early March, hang gliding was curtailed because the park was closed due to flooding. Hang gliding activities commenced as soon as the park was opened and, since work on the roadway had not yet resumed, they used the Calle Cristobal/López Ridge building pad mode of entry. When the road is finished and opened to traffic (or if the developer fences off the building pad), the hang gliders will have to drive all the way around to the east entrance at Black Mountain Road and back down the entire length of the Preserve to reach their assigned area. There is no way for them to drive from the parking/staging area at the West end of the Preserve to their site as only pedestrian and equestrian access to Peñasquitos Canyon are provided. This route would not only be inconvenient and expensive for the Hang Glider Center, but also would entail use of the main trail by their trucks which is prohibited.

Hang gliders could still hand-carry their kites into the Preserve, or trundle them in wheel barrows, using the sidewalk on the north side of Calle Cristobal to get to the gate and then along the main trail about half a mile to their assigned location.

Thus the hanglider's may be excluded from the west end of the Preserve in the near future. To some park users, this might not seem much of a loss because, as pointed out by the sign at the entrance to the Park, hang gliders do cause environmental damage. Others think hang gliders destroy the quiet tranquility of the preserve, kill the vegetation, disturb wildlife, encourage erosion, frighten the horses and don't belong there anyhow. Nevertheless, hang gliding is a

# Where To See Area Wildflowers

by Mike Kelly

You don't have to travel to far-away mountains to see wildflowers. We have good shows right here in our backyard, in Peñasquitos Canyon and on the Del Mar Mesa.

Our March rainfall is producing a spectacular spring of wildflowers. While the bright expanses of yellow you see as you drive our highways, black mustard, are the most noticeable, there are dozens more varieties of flowers awaiting your discovery.

## Tips for enjoying the show

While many of the flowers can be enjoyed from a distance, others are best appreciated at eye level. Some flowers, especially "belly" flowers, are best seen if you kneel down or even get prone on your belly. What seemed to be an undifferentiated yellow or purple mass of flowers suddenly takes on new character. You discover subtle colors in the individual flower and intricate designs you didn't know were there. This is also the best way to smell the

blossom or the leaves.

One word of warning. This is rattlesnake season. As you walk these roads and trails be on the watch for these. Watch where you go and look before you kneel down. If you see one, give it a wide berth. Don't try to poke it with a stick or drive it off -- it might strike back. Certainly don't kill it. This is its home you're in and it plays a vital role in the ecology of our area. Remember, the small ones are as bad, if not worse, than the adult rattlers.

## Burn area on Del Mar Mesa has great show

Find your way to Carmel Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take it west until it dead ends at Sundance. Either park there or to the right in the cul-de-sac at the end of Sundance. In either case, walk right on Sundance to the barricades. Passing through the barricades you'll see a dirt road. Follow this road as it goes northwest (roughly). You'll start to see wildflowers immediately along the side

➡ p. 9 for more

(Owls cont'd)

They are one of the few predators that don't seem bothered by the smell. They use a regular feeding roost near the nest, to which they bring prey to be torn up and eaten. They eat their food — bones, feathers and all — and then they regurgitate pellets which contain the undigested parts of their meal. You can often find an owl's nest by noticing their pellets on the ground below their feeding roosts.

The Great Horned Owl is present over all of North, Central and South America. Most are not migratory. The sexes are outwardly alike, but the female is larger. They are 18–25 inches long, with a wingspread of 30–60 inches. In flight, they're as large as our largest hawks, but they appear to be "neckless." Their flight is silent, owing to the saw-toothed leading edge of the flight feathers.

In general, the Great Horned Owl is gray-brown above (mottled with whitish-gray), buff below, with dark brown horizontal barring. They have white throat feathers, prominent "ear tufts" (these are not their real ears), set far apart. They have bright yellow eyes and feathered legs, with four toes on each foot. The outer toe of each foot is reversible, enabling the bird to perch with his feet in many different positions. His bill is strong, short and hooked. His head is large and his neck is short. He is one of the largest, most powerful and aggressive of all North American owls. His beak is sharp for tearing food, but his talons are the main weapon for defense.

They have extraordinary sight and hearing. The eyes are very large, with a nictitating membrane (third eyelid) that is opaque. It serves to protect the retina of the owl's eyes from the bright light of day. Since their eyes are frontally placed and fixed in their sockets, they have extensive flexible head rotation. But they cannot turn their head in a complete circle — as some people think.

Their ears are truly remarkable. They're openings hid-

den in the round, flattened, tawny "facial disk" feathers which the owl can spread to make a funnel to each opening. Their acute hearing and their large eyes make it possible for them to hunt at night. But, to my knowledge, only Barn Owls can hunt in total darkness.

The Great Horned Owl's voice is haunting. It's deep and resonant — usually a six-noted hoot — "whooh! whooh-whooh-whooh! whooh! whooh!" — of great carrying power. The adults lean forward when hooting, vibrate the white throat feathers and lift their short tails.

I think I'll close my column by offering you my first poem that I ever wrote about birds. It was written after my first sighting of a Great Horned Owl down in the canyon one night just before dark. This owl swooped down within inches of my head and then rose to land on a telephone pole. It was one of those thrills of a lifetime!

### *The Night-Rider*

Swiftly gliding on silent wings  
Down from the ebony sky  
Talons gleaming in the moonlight  
Hunger showing in its eye.

Swiftly pouncing, quickly rising  
Prey encaptured in his clasp  
Treetops looming, gently settling  
Holding sustenance in its grasp.

Mist is rising, eyelids droop now  
Seldom seen by all but few  
Leaves encompass, night is over  
Daybreak comes anew.

Good birding!



## It's Tick Time

by Christine E. Whitten, M.D.

Once again it's the time of year to check for hitchhikers after your hike. Starting in the spring and lasting through summer the local tick population is on the lookout for an easy meal.

There are three different types of ticks, however hard ticks from the family Ixodidae are most likely to parasitize humans and potentially spread disease. The adult hard tick has eight legs and a hard plate on its upper surface. There are four stages in the life cycle of the tick: the egg, larvae, nymph, and adult. The full life cycle takes 2 years in some species and all stages require blood meals. The tick feeds by embedding its head in the skin of the host, usually a deer or other large animal. This process is painless and the tick may remain attached for days until totally engorged with blood.

Ticks of all stages tend to attach themselves to tall grasses and low bushes along animal trails, allowing themselves to hitch a ride as the animal brushes against the plant. Once full, they drop off and await the next meal.

Fortunately humans are infrequent hosts because ticks can transmit bacterial and rickettsial diseases such as Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Q fever among others. They can also cause loss to industries dependent upon domestic animals such as cattle and sheep by damaging the hides and decreasing the animals weight gain.

The typical tick bite causes little more harm than a slightly raised red mark. If part of the head or other foreign matter is left in the wound a persistent, firm itchy nodule called a granuloma can develop. If this persists it may have to be surgically removed to relieve the itching. Rarely, an allergic reaction causing hives and fever can develop.

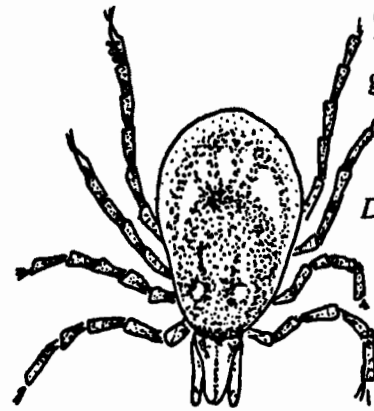
Even rarer is the development of paralysis of an arm or a leg which slowly ascends the limb following a prolonged attachment of 5-7 days. Certain ticks secrete a nerve toxin in their saliva. This paralysis resolves after the tick is removed.

The most common tick-borne disease in the US is Lyme disease, which does occur in the San Diego area although not commonly. The disease affects several body systems. First, at the site of the bite a red papule may develop. When present, this expands into a ring shaped red lesion with a clear center. The rash is called erythema chronicum migrans, or in English, a chronic red rash which moves. Secondary rings sometimes develop months later at sites distant from the original bite. The major risk of Lyme disease, however, is involvement of the internal organs with heart, joint, and nervous system. Typical symptoms are headache, malaise, and fatigue. Often there is arthritis-like joint pain and swelling.

Because of the non-specific nature of the symptoms and the fact that the victim may not know he was bitten by a tick, the disease can sometimes be hard to diagnose. However, once diagnosed it is simple to treat with either tetra-

cycline, penicillin, or erythromycin providing prompt resolution of symptoms.

If you find you have picked up an unwanted passenger, remove it with blunt tweezers, or with your fingers protected by a rubber glove, or paper towel. Grasp the tick as



close to the skin as possible and pull straight back gently and steadily. You may need to lift the tick upward and pull parallel to the skin until it's freed. *Don't* twist or force the tick off as this can leave the head imbedded. Wash the bite thoroughly. *Don't* apply gasoline, alcohol, ether, nail polish or the hot end of a match. These

methods don't work and can cause more damage than the tick did.

Prophylactic treatment with antibiotics after a tick bite is still controversial and currently not recommended. Unless the tick is attached longer than 24 hours the risk of disease transmission is minimal. One study has addressed this issue so far. In it, half of 56 tick-bitten patients received penicillin, half did not. One patient, 3%, developed Lyme disease in the untreated group. One patient (3%) developed penicillin reaction in the treated group. The jury is still out. However, if you develop a flu-like illness after hiking in a tick infested area make sure your doctor knows.

In the meantime, wear protective clothing when you hike, use insect repellents, shower after exposure, and check yourself and your fellow hikers for ticks. Routinely check your children and pets when they come in from playing in the brush. This is one time when picking up hitchhikers is definitely not recommended.

## New Board Member Studies Plant Biology

Alan Pepper, Ph.D., traces his interest in the environment to his childhood hiking in the oak woodlands in the East Bay area of Northern California. Alan holds a bachelors degree in Biochemistry and a Ph.D. in genetics. He is currently a postdoctoral research fellow in Plant Biology at the Salk Institute.

He has experience in riparian habitat restoration and in California forest land acquisition issues. He has worked as a nature leader at a camp for disabled children and adults and as a mountaineering and cross-country ski instructor.

Join Alan for his first hike for us, the "Evening Light" walk June 11.

**(Park Day cont'd)**

the Johnson/Taylor adobe ranch house and grounds. Short nature hikes will be led by members of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon preserve throughout the day.

The "Fiesta at the Rancho" will feature exhibits about the geology, history, plants and animals of this San Diego City/County open space preserve. A special exhibit will focus on the new Volunteer Patrol of hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers who are working along with the City and County rangers to help protect the preserve. Crafts and games for all ages will be led by San Diego County Park Ranger Nancy Dawson Dollard, who is in charge of environmental education for the County.

At noon, there will be an official welcome to Park Day from the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force, which is chaired by San Diego County Supervisor Susan Golding and also consists of San Diego City Councilmembers Abbe Wolfsheimer and Bruce Henderson.

Rancho de los Peñasquitos was the first Mexican land grant in San Diego County, granted in 1823 to Captain Francisco Maria Rufz. Rufz lived at the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon, as did the family of his friend and heir, Francisco María Alvarado. In 1859 Alvarado's daughter, Estefana, married George Alonzo Johnson, an American who made his fame with a riverboat that took goods on the lower Colorado River. In 1862 Johnson began to build the ranch house that bears his name. The Alvarado and Johnson families sold their interest in Rancho Peñasquitos in 1882.

For the "Fiesta at the Rancho" there will be entertainment by a mariachi band, "The Mariachi Buena Vista," and Old Town docents will be on hand wearing costumes of the period. The Rancho Peñasquitos Equestrian Center will exhibit a collection of antique wagons, and "Holidays on Horseback" will set up for demonstrations of horsemanship. There will be free hay ride shuttles from the parking area to the ranch. Mexican food will be provided by El Pollo Asado, and other refreshments will be available, as well as souvenir T-Shirts (for a small donation).

The public is encouraged to attend this free event and enjoy a day in our "wild backyard." Members of the Friends are needed to assist as nature hike leaders or in staffing the Friends exhibit at Park Day between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. — contact Mike Kelly, 566-6489 to help. Volunteers are also needed to help with refreshments, souvenir T-Shirts, and an information table — no previous experience with the canyon is required, simply a willingness to give an hour of your time when you come to Park Day. To volunteer, or for more information about the "Fiesta at the Rancho," call Park Day chair Pam Stevens, 566-2261.

To reach the Johnson-Taylor ranch from Rancho Peñasquitos, take Black Mountain Road south, turn right at Canyonside Park, and follow signs to Johnson-Taylor ranch parking. From Mira Mesa or from I-15 via Mercy Road, take Black Mountain Road north from Mercy Road to Park Village Drive, then make a U-turn to get back to the Canyonside Park turn-off.

Park Day is sponsored by the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee and Task Force.

**(Hang Gliding cont'd)**

lawful operation in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve at the present time and they have a right to be there as long as they stay in their assigned area.

**(Flowers cont'd)**

of the road, including deadly or purple nightshade. It's safe to smell it, but don't eat it! It is a poisonous plant.

You'll approach a large grove of eucalyptus on a hill well worn with the tracks of off-road racing. Keep the hill just on your right. Pass another dirt road going west to south-west, into a small canyon and back up onto the Del Mar Mesa to your left. You should begin to see the area burned out two summers ago. You can either take the fire break trail that bears left or continue on the road straight ahead. In either case, you will reach another dirt road. Go left on this as it drops down into Deer Canyon. You'll see a big, eroding bluff in front of you. Follow the road as it winds up to the left of this bluff.

As you take the road up to the mesa you'll come into a flat area with new beehives and fields of flowers. This whole area is spectacular because the fire two years ago cleared out the dense chaparral and created the right conditions for wildflowers. You'll also see the new chaparral starting to come back. Area Indians used to start burns for just this reason. The new open areas supported more game animals, particularly the mule deer.

Look for bush mallow (pink), deer weed (yellow-orange), deadly nightshade, pearly everlasting (white), spice bush (smell it), chamise, sage in bloom (both black and white, notice the different smells), popcorn flowers (tiny, white), encilias (yellow sunflowers, brown centers), morning glories, and many others.

**Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve**

Two of the best walks go in opposite directions. From Peñasquitos Creek Park (off Park Village Drive), walk down the dirt road on the west side of Camino Rufz and follow the path over to the tree line. Follow this path west towards the waterfall and you'll see many flowers along the way, including stands of bright purple lupine.

From the parking-staging area opposite Mercy Road and Black Mountain, cross the road and walk north on Black Mountain Road past Horseman's park to a dirt utility road on the north side of the creek. Take this road east and you'll see non-stop flowers the whole way, including the rare *Adolphia californica* (tiny, greenish-white flowers covering a spiny bush) and the bright yellow bladder pod. In a month these pods will smell repugnant!

Follow the road to the community park on your left. Go right on a crossing dirt utility road and cross the stream there. Go up this road and pickup a horse trail on your right just below the Mercy Road wall. Follow this below Mercy Road and you'll see many more flowers. This will take you back to Mercy and Black Mountain.

## Friends April and May Outings Schedule Rains Make it Flower Time in the Preserve

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or to organize a group hike, call 484-3219 for recorded information. .

### MAY

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., May 4, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., May 4, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### CANYON WALKABOUT — ROUND TRIP

Sun., May 5, 9 a.m. (5-6 hours). Join Trinity Gabrielle in a 13 mile stroll through Penasquitos Canyon, an end-to-end round-trip! Must bring water, sun shade, lunch. Includes stop at waterfall. Easy pace. People who want to just walk from one way to the other end, about 6.5 miles, can arrange their own pickup at the far end. RSVP, 566-6489. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, then right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### NATURE WALK

Sun., May 12, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Look for wildflowers, learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

#### VERNAL POOL & CHAPARRAL WALK — DEL MAR MESA

Sat., May 18, 9 am (3 hours). In Rancho Peñasquitos, take Carmel Mountain Road west until it ends. Visit some of finest vernal pools in San Diego & see great wildflowers in recent burn area.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., May 18, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), SD County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., May 19, 7:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., May 19, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruiz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil. Led by geologist Don Albright.

#### FRIENDS MEETING

Tues., May 21, 7 p.m. At the Johnson-Taylor Ranch for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., May 25, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate legend of the Mission treasure and Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about plants the Indians used, see Indian grinding rock.

#### DUSK WALK

Fri., May 31, 6 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Groups R.S.V.P. please.

### JUNE

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., June 1, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., June 2, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruiz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil. Led by geologist Don Albright.

#### PENASQUITOS CANYON PARK DAY

Sat., June 1, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch. Tours of the Ranch House, short nature walks, crafts and games for the kids, mariachi music, history, geology, animal and nature displays from many different organizations.

#### VERNAL POOLS & MESA MINT — LOPEZ RIDGE

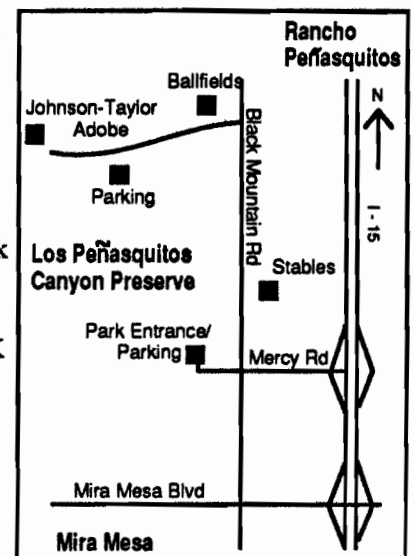
Sat., June 8, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 - 2 hours). In Mira Mesa, take Camino Ruiz north to Calle Cristobal. Left on Calle Cristobal and meet under the big power lines. We should see the endangered Mesa Mint. Bring sun shade, water and optional camera! Led by Mike Kelly.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., June 9th, 7:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### EVENING LIGHT WALK

Tues., June 11, 6:30 p.m. Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Peñasquitos Canyon. Experience twilight in the coastal sage scrub environment and perhaps observe los tecalotes (owls)





**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
619-484-3219 566-6489

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**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**(Outings cont'd)**

and other wildlife. Walk will be paced for unwinding after work and perhaps some photography. Sturdy shoes, water and a flashlight recommended. Led by Dr. Alan Pepper.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., June 15, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

**FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING**

Tues., June 18, 7 p.m. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

**DUSK WATERFALL WALK**

Sun., June 23, 6:30 p.m. (2 hrs). Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park. Take Black Mountain Road north from Mira Mesa, south from Rancho Peñasquitos to Park Village Drive. Go west on this road all the way to the park. Bring water, insect repellent and flashlight. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Groups and families R.S.V.P. please so we can have enough walk leaders.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat. June 29, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
- Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



## Carmel Mountain and Pardee: the Fight Begins

by Dave Hogan, San Diego Bio-diversity Project

The threat to perhaps the largest, most biologically sensitive land on the San Diego coastline — Carmel Mountain — has become a reality. The Pardee Development Co. has applied to the City of San Diego — not for a housing development permit — but for an agricultural permit for this land also known as Neighborhood 8a on City maps.

### Pardee becomes a farmer?

At a recent meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force, a representative of Pardee explained — while keeping a straight face (give that man a raise!) — that the company had decided to become farmers, growing grain crops on the land. The CAC, which views the Del Mar Mesa as a logi-

➔ p. 5 for more

### At the Heart of the Mitigation Debate:

## What Kind of Park?

by Mike Kelly

A vital issue is at the heart of the debate about the CalTrans mitigation in Penasquitos Canyon: what kind of park should this be? As you'll recall, CalTran's building of the eastern end of Route 56 through Penasquitos will destroy some wetlands. Wetlands are protected habitat because they're the source of most life in the arid West. CalTrans must mitigate this damage by restoring wetlands elsewhere. Penasquitos Canyon was chosen as the closest possible site where this could be done.

The restoration of 3 acres of wetlands in the canyon involves removing eucalyptus trees on this acreage, while leaving the sycamores, oaks, willows and other native plants. Eucalyptus are trees imported from Australia, and, like other "exotics" such as tumbleweed, have a negative impact on the environment. Native trees, shrubs and wildflowers found in wetlands will be planted in their place. Eucalyptus don't provide significant habitat, i.e., food or homes, for animals.

In addition, eucalyptus exude a poison that kills off other plant species under them. That's why you have so little growing under them in Scripps Ranch and other areas. This "understory" of other plants is what provides food and

➔ p. 9 for more

## Outings Schedule

See Page 6 for a convenient "hangup" format.

## Thanks Mira Mesa Day Volunteers

Thanks to Trinity Gabriele, Les Braund and Susan Zepf for staffing the Friends information table at Mira Mesa Day May 4. Park Day was promoted and signatures were gathered for the Parks and Wildlife Initiative at our display and a lot of literature on the Preserve distributed. Several people took out memberships as a result of the displays.

## Don't Forget Park Day June 1

Be sure to drop by the Johnson-Taylor Ranch June 1 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. for our "Fiesta at the Park" celebration. There will be exhibits from various environmental groups, including wild animals and birds from Project Wildlife, nature walks, nature crafts and games for kids. For those who would like to start the day with a walk, join the Friends for a 10-K walk to the waterfall and back at 8:00 a.m. or, for a shorter walk, join KYXY Radio for a short walk in the park beginning at 8:30 a.m. Meet at the parking-staging area for both.

Mariachis will provide the music complemented by Mexican food from El Pollo Asado, topped off by ice cream from Ben & Jerry's. A fun day for the whole family. Join us!

## Send In Petition

Last month we mailed our readers a copy of the "Parks and Wildlife Initiative." We hope you took the time to ask your friends, neighbors and coworkers to sign the petition. Only ten signatures are needed to fill it up. If all of our members filled just one petition it would add more than 2,000 signatures to the total gathered to date.

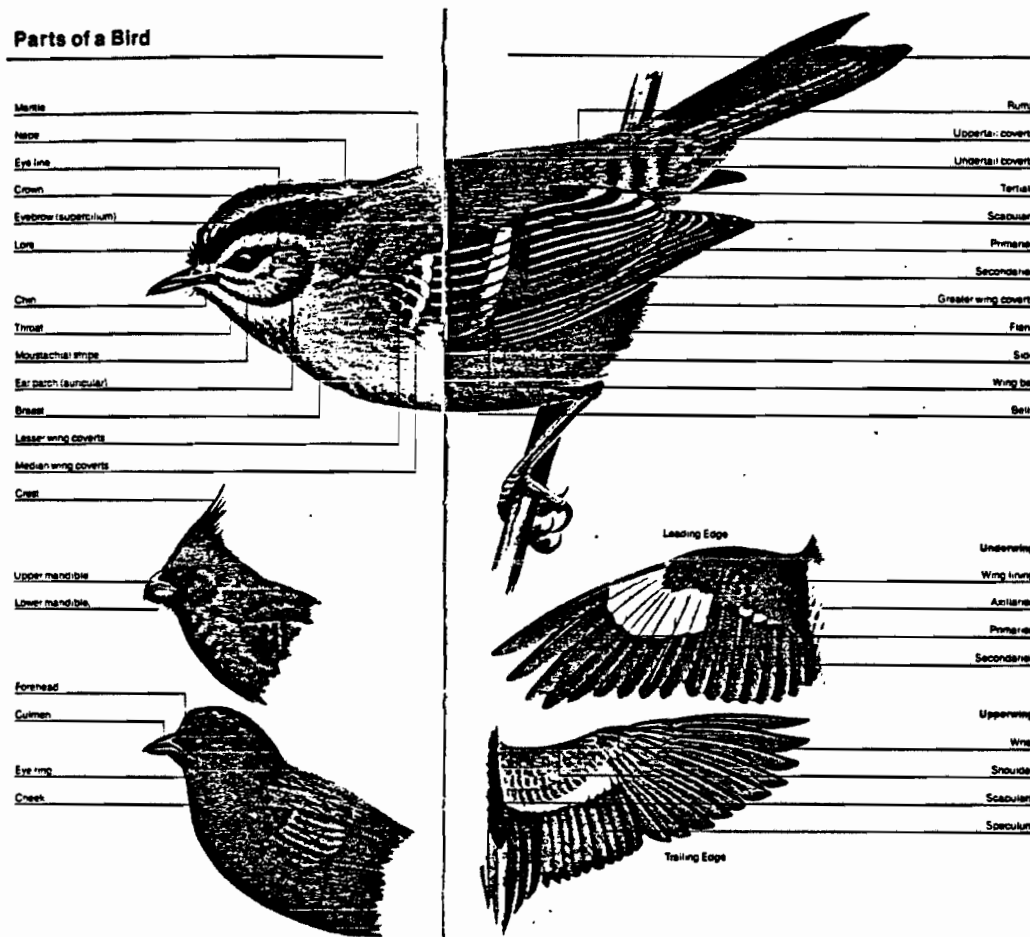
Now is a good time to send in the signatures you do have, either to the Friends' at P.O. Box 26523, San Diego 92196.

The coalition still needs your financial support to successfully complete the signature drive to qualify the Initiative for the ballot. Please earmark checks for the Initiative and make them out to "San Diegans for Managed Growth."

## Birding in Penasquitos Canyon Birds Can Be a Puzzle

by Barbara Zepf

Besides birding, one of my hobbies is doing jigsaw puzzles. Here is a birding jigsaw puzzle for you. Put all of the pieces together and you have identified a bird for yourself. This chart is taken from *The National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America*.



underneath," that isn't near as helpful as saying "its breast was yellow, and its belly was white." Sometimes a small white spot the size of a quarter is the key identification mark on a bird. Knowing the correct terminology for the various parts of the bird will make you concentrate on all those subtle variations that can occur. Also, the "guru" birders won't laugh at you (as they did at me) if you say "I know that bird was a Prairie Falcon, its axillaries were dark," instead of "that bird had black armpits!"

### Northern Oriole

Let's use our newfound knowledge to identify a bird — the Northern Oriole. This is one of the prettiest birds you'll ever see in the canyon — a fiery patch of the sun darting through the trees. The Northern Oriole was formerly considered two species — the Baltimore Oriole (in the east) and the Bullock's Oriole (in the west). When these two species were found to freely interbreed where their territories overlapped, they were "lumped" into one species — the Northern Oriole. In Penasquitos Canyon, we only get the Bullock's Oriole version of the Northern Oriole. Although the Northern Oriole occurs across the 48 states, it is only a summer visitor. It winters south of the border.

Some birds are easy to identify. It's hard to mistake a Brown Pelican for anything else. But some birds can be real puzzles. Trying to separate the different sparrows can drive you insane. Identifying fall warblers has led to many spirited discussions among even the most experienced birders. Some birds are so similar that even when you put all the pieces of the puzzle together, you still don't know what you have. Then you just have to hope that the bird sings or calls, so that you can identify it by its voice. But for most birds, your eye alone can zero in on an identity. By knowing every part of a bird, you can heighten your chances of coming up with a correct identification.

### Unknown birds

When you do come upon a bird whose identification eludes you, you may want to go to a more knowledgeable birder for assistance. Then it is even more beneficial to know the correct terminology. If you say "it was yellow

In the male — the eyebrows, cheeks, breast, belly, uppertail coverts, undertail coverts and outer edges of the tail are bright orange. The crown, back, eyeline (or eyestripe), chin and wings are black. There is a bold white patch on the forewing. The central tail feathers and the tips of the outer tail feathers are black, forming a sort of inverted "T" shape.

The female is an unstreaked olive-gray above with a yellow throat and upper breast and a white belly. Its tail is washed with yellow, and it has thin white wingbars.

The Northern Oriole is a noisy, conspicuous bird, 7-8-1/2 inches long. Its incessant call is a grating, rolling chatter. Its song is loud and clear with flutelike, varied whistles, interspersed with guttural notes and rattles.

About 80% of their food is animal matter — caterpillars, ants, aphids, grasshoppers, etc. The other 20% of their diet consists mainly of fruits — elderberries, cherries, apricots,

# History Springs Up at the Johnson-Taylor Adobe

by Pamela (PJ) Piburn

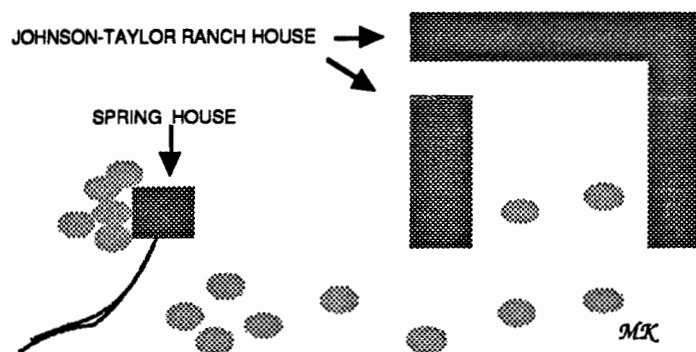
Volunteer, County Parks & Recreation Department

*[Note: You can see this artesian spring for yourself by coming on one of the free tours of the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. These tours are conducted by the San Diego Archaeology Society and are given at 11 a.m. and noon on the first and third Saturday's of every month. To learn more about the geology of the Preserve and San Diego, join one of the Friends' geology walks led by geologist Don Albright. — Editor]*

Peñasquitos Creek winds its way to the ocean through the canyon Preserve. As it meanders, it picks up fresh water from springs along its course. One such spring is the artesian well at the Johnson-Taylor Adobe. From inside a stone building, amongst lush palm trees, cool water bubbles continuously. Water has made its way to the surface through this well for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years.

## Spring or well?

A well can be either a natural spring or a deep, man



Spring house at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House in Peñasquitos Canyon.

made hole. The well at the adobe is a natural spring. It flows freely, at the same rate, year round, independent of the effects of rainfall. Geologist Don Albright, believes this water comes from "considerable depth."

Normally, artesian well water comes from a layer of permeable sand and gravel trapped between two layers of hard rock, fairly close to the earth's surface. I met with Mr. Albright in his Mira Mesa home to discuss the unique features of the adobe well. "Water, whose source is from great depth, rather than from surface ground water, is called primary source water," he told me. "It originates when steam is released from hot rock material deep within the earth." Don removed his black frame glasses. His light brown eyes focused on the table top, as if peering deep inside the earth. "Perhaps the water picks up dissolved iron and magnesium from volcanic material, as it percolates through cracks and fissures, on its way to the surface." The presence of large quantities of iron in the Johnson-Taylor water supports Mr. Albright's suspicion that this well is unique.

How do we know that the water flowing from the spring contains iron? Oxidized iron ore has two forms, hematite, which has no magnetic properties, and magnetite, which is magnetic. Magnetite is black. Hematite contains red pigments. If you look closely at the ground beneath the water you'll notice reddish-brown algae. The continual flow of water provides the wet conditions necessary for algae growth. Algae absorbs iron from the water. When the algae dies, the iron remains and mixes with oxygen (oxidizes or rusts).

A while back, I accompanied Don on a Friend's geology hike to the Preserve's waterfall. He showed us an area that once was probably an artesian well similar to the one at the adobe. The earth was still deeply stained with the red color of oxidized iron and was significantly different than the soil a few feet away. An abundance of iron combined with magnesium is a common feature of substances coming from far below the earth's surface.

## San Diego's volcanic origins

150 million years ago, a time referred to by geologists as the late Jurassic period, it's believed the sea floor went through a period of intense volcanic activity. Many rocks found in the canyon and the surrounding hillsides can be traced back to this period. The stones used to build the spring house around the well are a type called Black Mountain volcanics or Santiago Peak volcanics. Andesite belongs in this group of erosion resistant lava rocks.

Don directed my attention toward the view outside his dining room window. I could see Black Mountain looming in the distance as he spoke. "These lava rocks (and those on Black Mountain) were formed when magma spilled out through an immensely long fissure in the ocean basin floor." They're rich in iron and magnesium and are also abundant in the falls area. To find a well existing amongst these geologic conditions surely supports the theory of its unique nature.

## Historical usage

In what other way is this well historically significant? Over 100 years ago, when George Johnson owned it, the well water was used for irrigating his orchards. It is also believed perishable foods and beverages were stored in the cool shaded spring house built upon the well. Archeological finds suggest Mexican and Indian settlements in the vicinity. A source of clear, constant water in an otherwise arid land was sure to attract inhabitants. Couldn't these same settlers have made use of the red pigments in the hematite rich stones to make paint for their pottery or clothing?

This water source has affected all life in the canyon. If we are very imaginative, we can even speculate on how

# Rattlesnake Season Is Upon Us

by Mike Kelly

Reports of rattlesnake sightings are occurring regularly now. With the warmer weather the snakes are venturing out of winter hibernation and seeking food and mates. Mating now will lead to babies in the fall. I was reminded of the importance of looking where you walk this Memorial Day weekend. On a recent hike I wandered a few feet from a road to look at some wildflowers and pointed in their direction. A friend who was with me said something like, "Oh yeah, look at the rattler," thinking I was pointing at it. I had missed a western timber rattler a foot or so from my boot! Although I wasn't in Peñasquitos Canyon the same thing can happen. We all have to watch where we're stepping. Here's what I've written in the past about encountering rattlesnakes.

Rattlesnakes shouldn't prevent you from venturing outside to enjoy Peñasquitos or other canyons and parks in the city. Although they can be dangerous, your chances of encountering one, not to speak of being bitten, are slim. You and your children are probably in more danger getting into your car for a trip to the corner store. Given that slim chance, however, here are some sensible precautions to take should you encounter a rattler.

## Where To Look

On the main road in Peñasquitos Preserve, it's easy to see when a rattler is in the road ahead. It's tougher if you go on one of the smaller trails. Some people use their walking sticks to regularly tap the trail they're walking or the rocks they're climbing. It's said to be an old Indian practice that warns the snakes and gives them the opportunity to get out of your way.

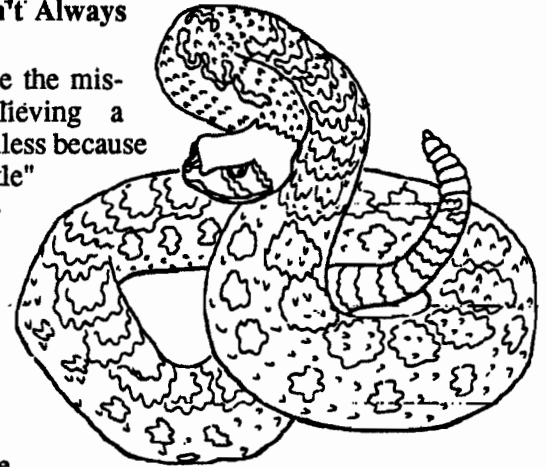
Rocky areas near water are a common place for rattlesnakes to hang out. Three such places in Peñasquitos Canyon are the slopes around Horseman's Park and the creek, the waterfall area, the gorge west of the waterfall, and around the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Rattlers are seen more frequently in these areas than in other places. Don't reach into holes or crevices! And don't climb up rocks you haven't first scouted.

## Freeze!

What can you do when you do encounter a rattlesnake! Agree with your group that when someone yells "Freeze!" you will all stop in your tracks and not push anyone into the snake ahead. Move well away from it. Stamp your feet in case it hasn't seen you. Usually, it will move off. Don't let anyone in your group approach it with a stick to poke at it, because the snake may strike back in self-defense. It can strike very fast! Give the snake a chance to move on and live. After all, we're visiting it in its home, not ours. Also remember the invaluable role rattlesnakes play in our ecology. They are one of the chief predators of mice and rats and help keep the rodent population in check. We need them!

## Rattlers Don't Always "Rattle"

Don't make the mistake of believing a snake is harmless because it doesn't "rattle" at you. Sometimes they don't, especially the young. The Southern Pacific we encountered appeared to be



freshly hatched. It didn't "rattle," despite the fact that we were only three feet away.

Don't think that because it's a baby it's harmless. Quite the contrary. It has a full dose of venom, and like many juveniles, it can be impetuous. It hasn't the maturity and control of an adult snake to differentiate among dangers to it in its environment. It will often strike where an adult warns you off with its "rattle" or even a "dry" bite, with no venom delivered. Also in contrast to the adults, the young snakes have less, if any, control over the amount of venom they deliver with a bite.

## Carry a Snake-bite Kit

A good precaution is to carry a snake-bite kit with you. The Extractor is a popular small kit that fits into a pocket with ease. It's available in sporting goods stores. Study the instructions before your next hike. It uses a vacuum pump device to suck the poison out of a bite and is useful for bee and mosquito bites as well. A nice feature about it is that it can be worked with just one-hand because of its design. Keep in mind, however, that when it's a snake bite you're treating, it's not a substitute for getting the person medical help as quickly as possible. It won't get all the poison out (if it was injected with the bite), and with some people it doesn't take much poison to become seriously ill or die.

Having said all of this, do you know where you're most apt to encounter a rattler? In your back yard, if you're one of the tens of thousands of San Diegans who live on or near a canyon. In my cul-de-sac alone in the past four years, neighbors found two rattlesnakers in garages, two coming out from under the back deck, one on the front deck, and two in the treet. Last summer, I was about to step up on my redwood deck in the back when I heard a "rattle." I looked down to see a rattler two feet away. I'm convinced I broke the outdoor sideways broad-jump record in putting some distance between us. It in turn headed away — under the deck. In the warm weather I try to remind myself to take a good look as I enter the garage and as I step on the decks or walk in the yard.



**(Carmel Mountain cont'd)**

cal extension of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, will be monitoring this development. Members of the CAC were assured by the Pardee official that they needn't be concerned since the company planned environmentally sensitive crops: no irrigation, no pesticides and no fertilizers, thus ensuring the health of the watershed for Peñasquitos Canyon. The CAC, the Friends and the S.D. Bio-Diversity Project want the sensitive lands protected, not plowed.

**An old scam**

Obtaining agricultural permits instead of housing or commercial development permits is an old end-around tactic used by developers. Here's how it use to work. Say your land had environmentally sensitive plants, animals or habitat on it. You expected to lose some of your acreage to save some of these due to the City's environmental protection laws or to have to mitigate damage to these species elsewhere. In other words, your profit margin might suffer.

One "solution" to this problem in the past was to apply for an agriculture permit. Since most large, undeveloped acreage in the city was zoned for agriculture, this usually meant a lenient permitting process, regardless of the sensitivity of the land. You obtained your agricultural permit and contracted with a grower to plow the land and grow some crops. Never mind that the tomato fields or other crops usually didn't make a profit. The grower is believed to have received under the table payoffs from the developer. Plowing the land got rid of most of your "environmental problems." After several years you went back to the

Planning Dept. and asked for a housing or commercial development approval. Both sides would agree that an environmental review was unnecessary since a preliminary survey always showed no native species left!

**What's at stake?**

The California Dept. of Fish and Game recently voted Carmel Mountain as a top priority for land acquisition in an effort to protect the five endangered habitats and their dependent species (see the accompanying article), **but money isn't available at this time for purchase.** Pardee is worried because several of these species are candidates for being listed on Federal or State Endangered Species Lists. If one or more, such as the California gnatcatcher bird, is listed, it will become very difficult for them to develop large portions of the land. Hence their agricultural permit application.

In any case, as environmental consciousness has increased in San Diego, the City Council has been forced to make laws subjecting even agriculturally zoned land to the new Resource Protection Ordinance with its environmental review provisions. However, the Planning Dept., the Planning Commission and the City Council all have the ability to exempt a powerful and generous developer like Pardee from compliance with the law. An endangered species listing would make such an exemption more difficult for them.

The Planning Commission will hold a hearing on this permit June 12 at 10 a.m. on the 12th floor at 202 "C" St., San Diego 92101. Write the commission at this address urging them to reject this application or come down and testify.

## **Background: Carmel Mountain San Diego Biodiversity Project**

**Introduction**

Carmel Mountain, part of Western Del Mar Mesa, is home to 17 sensitive species and 5 threatened habitats and is known to the biological community as one of the most sensitive pieces of land on the San Diego Coast.

Carmel Mountain, located just south of Carmel Valley Road (due south of the small cemetery a couple of miles east of I-15 on your left), due to its incredible diversity of species and habitats, has been the highest protection priority for three years by the San Diego Biodiversity Project.

Del Mar Mesa is the last undeveloped coastal mesa in San Diego County. This alone seems reason enough to set it aside as a preserve. The fact that the mesa contains 17 sensitive species, along with five threatened habitats, elevates its preservation to a number one priority.

**II. Profile of Del Mar Mesa**

**A. Location:** Del Mar Mesa, approximately 3,000 acres, is situated between Peñasquitos Canyon, a major east-west drainage of Sorrento Valley and Carmel Valley, the northern boundary of the City of San Diego. See Appendix A.

**B. Natural History:** Though relatively uninhabited and

undisturbed, sections of Del Mar Mesa have been cultivated in the past and illegal cattle grazing continues at the present time by wandering cows permitted in Peñasquitos Canyon. There are also two small rural settlements, one at the western end called Arroyo Sorrento and another a few miles to the east, near Deer Canyon. There are approximately 50 homes.

**C. Future Urbanization Plans:** The western end of Del Mar Mesa is the most endangered by future development with plans for two large residential/light industrial developments — North City West Phase III and Sorrento Hills (Note: Sorrento Hills was graded in late 1990). These two projects are in the planning and permitting stages at present. The eastern end of the mesa is termed "future urbanization area," with no specific plans for development yet. The eastern end is the most undisturbed portion of the mesa.

**III. High-Interest Species and Habitats**

**A. Plants:** There are two state or federally listed plant species on Del Mar Mesa. The California Native Plant Society and WESTEC Services, Inc. (the consulting firm responsible for preparing the environmental impact report

**(Carmel Mountain cont'd)**

for the Sorrento Hills Project) have determined that the following plants occur on Del Mar Mesa. Records kept by the California Native Plant Society are far more accurate when it comes to the condition of the plant species than government or consultant inventory.

The following California Native Plant Society R-E-D Code is used to determine the status of each individual species. Following this code is the list of high interest plant species on Del Mar Mesa and their corresponding R-E-D codes.

**Rarity**

1-Rare, but found in sufficient numbers and distributed widely enough that the potential for extinction is low at this time.

2-Occurrence confined to several populations or to one extended population.

3-Occurrence limited to one or a few highly restricted populations, or present in such small numbers that it is seldom reported.

**Endangerment**

1-Not endangered.

2-Endangered in a portion of its range.

3-Endangered throughout its range.

**Distribution**

1-More or less widespread outside California.

2-Rare outside California.

3-Endemic to California.

**San Diego Mesa Mint (*Pogogyne abramisii*)**

R-E-D Code: 1-3-2

This federally listed endangered species is found in and around vernal pools on the eastern end of Del Mar Mesa. These pools are owned by CalTrans, bought to satisfy mitigation measures when Highway 52 was built through Kearney Mesa's vernal pool habitat.

**San Diego Coyote Thistle (*Eryngium aritulum*)**

R-E-D Code: 1-3-2

This species is listed as endangered by the State of California and is under review for listing by the federal government. It can be located in all vernal pools on Del Mar Mesa.

**Spine Flower Family (*Chorizanthe: californica, orcuttiana, parryi, procumbens, staticoides*)**

R-E-D Code: none

Spine Flowers are extremely rare, with most of their sandy, mesa top soil already urbanized.

**Del Mar Mesa Sand Aster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*)**

R-E-D Code: 3-2-3

This species is endemic to the Del Mar area and occurs only on brushy slopes and bluffs. It can be found on the western end of the mesa.

**San Diego Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*)**

R-E-D Code:

This species can be found throughout the mesa on dry, south-facing slopes.

**Torrey Pine (*Pinus Torryana*)**

R-E-D Code:

There are only a couple of specimens on the west end of Del Mar Mesa. This may have been the eastern border of Torrey Pines habitat before cattle grazing.

**Del Mar Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*)**

R-E-D Code:

This species occurs from Encinitas to Del Mar. It can be found in mixed chaparral throughout Del Mar Mesa.

**Western Dichondra (*Dichondra occidentalis*)**

R-E-D Code:

This herbaceous perennial grows beneath larger shrubs. It can be found in abundance on rocky slopes after a fire.

**Coast White Lilac (*Ceanothus Verrucosus*)**

R-E-D Code:

This plant is rare in California, but common elsewhere. It can be found throughout mixed chaparral on the mesa.

**Sea Dahlia (*Coreopsis maritima*)**

R-E-D Code:

This herbaceous perennial is found on the coast, stretching from northern Baja to southern Leucadia. It can be located on the western end of Del Mar Mesa.

**Pygmy Spike Moss (*Selaginella cinerascens*)**

R-E-D Code:

This moss forms a grey ground cover in openings and underneath the chaparral on the mesa top and south facing slopes.

**Seaside Calandrinia (*Calandrinia maritima*)**

R-E-D Code:

This species is found on rough, sandy bluff areas on the western edge of the mesa.

Other plants that may occur on Del Mar Mesa:

**Shaw's Agave (*Agave shawii*)****San Diego Sagewart (*Artemisia palmeri*)****Golden Snake Cactus (*Bergerocactus emori*)****Orcutt's Brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcutii*)****Lakeside Ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*)****Summer Holly (*Comarostaphylys diversifolia*)****Short Leaved Dudleya (*Dudleya brevifolia*)****Cliff Spurge (*Euphorbia misera*)****Palmer's Grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palmeri*)****Little Mousetail (*Myosurus minimus*)****Prostrate Navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*)****California Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia Californica*)**

**B. Reptiles:** The San Diego Herpetological Society and the San Diego Natural History Museum have determined that there are two threatened and one endangered species of reptiles occurring on Del Mar Mesa. This status is according to the San Diego Herpetological Society definition.

**Coast Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainuillei*)**

This species' range once spread up and down the southern California coast but rapid development and predation by domesticated species such as cats, have driven it back to very rural or totally undeveloped areas of the county. The Coast Horned Lizard can be found sparsely through-

## (Carmel Mountain cont'd)

out Del Mar Mesa and adjacent Peñasquitos Canyon. Endangered.

**Orange Throated Whiptail Lizard** (*Cnemidophorus hypsigthrus beldingi*)

Same as above. Threatened.

**Two Striped Garter Snake** (*Thamnophis couchi hammondi*)

This snake is found throughout the mesa in water courses, permanent streams, or damp catch basins. Threatened.

**C. Birds:** There are three rare species of birds located on or around Del Mar Mesa. One, the Least Bell's Vireo, is listed by the State of California as endangered. The other two are presently under review for listing.

**Least Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo belli pusillus*)

Historically widespread throughout riparian areas in California and Baja California, it is now reduced to a few hundred pairs. The primary reason for its decline is due to habitat removal and modification with additional aggravation by brood parasites. Although Del Mar Mesa does not satisfy habitat requirements, Peñasquitos Creek would be eligible with riparian habitat rehabilitation and grazing elimination.

**Coastal Cactus Wren** (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*)

This species is commonly found in desert areas, but the species located along the coast is extremely rare. A cholla thicket is required nesting habitat. Cholla thickets can be found throughout Del Mar Mesa, on dry south facing slopes.

**California Gnatcatcher** (*Poliophtila melanura californica*)

Required nesting habitat for the Black Tail Gnatcatcher is coastal sage scrub. Cowbird parasitism and reduction of habitat are causing a severe decline in the species. This coastal sage scrub habitat can be found in abundance on both the western and eastern ends of Del Mar Mesa.

**D. Habitats:** There are a total of six separate habitats occurring on Del Mar Mesa, one of which is seriously endangered. Four others are threatened or rare.

#### Vernal Pools

Now beginning to gain media attention and growing public awareness, vernal pool preservation support is too little, too late. Only 5% of this rare habitat type remain. Protected pools in San Diego usually consist of a one acre preserve in the middle of a parking lot. Vernal pools found on Del Mar Mesa are in good condition, although pools on the western end are impacted by grazing. Pools owned by CalTrans on the eastern end of the mesa will soon be transferred to the California Department of Fish and Game for protection. The vernal pools found on the western end of the mesa are owned by developers and slated for development (i.e., destruction). In 1979, the City of San Diego developed a vernal pool preservation plan which required developers to contribute money into a fund used to purchase other pools when pools on their property are destroyed by their development plans. This fund is a total failure. No pools have been bought and very few remain to satisfy this

criteria. The further destruction of vernal pool habitat cannot be allowed.

#### Riparian Habitat

Riparian habitat is disappearing throughout San Diego County due to rapid development. Preservation efforts in the past have been inadequate. Several species, including the Least Bell's Vireo, depend completely on riparian habitat for survival. This habitat also controls water quality and erosion. Riparian habitat can be found in Deer Canyon, on the eastern end of Del Mar Mesa but will be destroyed when and if Freeway 56 is rammed through to Poway from Interstate 5. McGonigal Canyon, on the other hand, is an overgrazed barren valley to the north and would be a more suitable site for the freeway. This should be seriously studied as an alternative.

#### Coastal Mixed Chaparral

This habitat type, endemic to north coastal San Diego County is in decline. Most coastal mixed chaparral can be located between Carlsbad and Torrey Pines State Park on sandy mesas and is home to several endangered species. The main reason for the declining state of this habitat is urbanization. Coastal mixed chaparral can be found throughout Del Mar Mesa in abundance and is healthiest in the eastern portion.

#### Coastal Sage Scrub

Coastal Sage Scrub is on a rapid decline near the immediate coast. In 1979, it was estimated that 70% of the original coastal sage scrub in the county had been destroyed. This habitat can be found throughout Del Mar Mesa in large openings in the coastal mixed chaparral.

#### Southern California Grassland

This habitat is on the decline also. Grassland on Del Mar Mesa is found intermixed with coastal sage scrub throughout the mesa.

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## Sycamores Hit Hard by Late Rains

If you wondered on your walks through the Preserve if the sycamores didn't look bad and relatively bare of leaves, you were right. But the damage wasn't due to frost, although it may look to be so. While our late winter rains were a boon to most of our plants and animals, they helped killed the young buds and shoots on our Preserve's sycamores.

Blight, or Sycamore anthracnose as it's scientifically known, is caused by *Apiognomonia platani* (*Discula platani* Oud.), a fungus. The fungus depends on rain or dripping fogs for its dissemination. The disease doesn't usually strike San Diego's sycamores this hard since the rains the blight depend on rarely come as late as when the sycamores are budding or in such quantity as this year.

Depending on the weather, some of the trees may try to put out a second set of buds. If not, we'll have to wait until next year to see them recover.

## Friends April and May Outings Schedule Dusk Walks Highlight Beginning of Summer

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or to organize group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

### JUNE

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., June 1, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### PENASQUITOS CANYON PARK DAY

Sat., June 1, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch. Tours of the Ranch House, short nature walks, crafts and games for the kids, mariachi music, history, geology, animal and nature displays from many different organizations.

#### GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., June 2, 9 am (3 hours). Meet in Mira Mesa on Lopez Ridge. From Mira Mesa Blvd., take Camino Ruiz north until it dead ends at Calle Cristobal. Go left on Calle Cristobal about 1-1/2 miles and park under the big power lines (not too close though!). Bring water. Learn area's geology, visit waterfall, and see Preserve's only known fossil. Led by geologist Don Albright.

#### VERNAL POOLS & MESA MINT — LOPEZ RIDGE

Sat., June 8, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 - 2 hours). In Mira Mesa, take Camino Ruiz north to Calle Cristobal. Left on Calle Cristobal to the power lines where we meet. We should see the endangered Mesa Mint. Bring sun shade, water and optional camera! Led by Mike Kelly.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., June 9th, 7:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### EVENING LIGHT WALK

Tues., June 11, 6:30 p.m. Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Pefasquitos Canyon. Experience twilight in the coastal sage scrub environment and perhaps observe los tecalotes (owls) and other wildlife. Walk will be paced for unwinding after work and perhaps some photography. Sturdy shoes, water and a flashlight recommended. Led by Dr. Alan Pepper.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., June 15, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., June 18, 7 p.m. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### EARLY DAYS IN PENASQUITOS

Sat., June 22, 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. San Diego County Archaeology Society presents their first evening program of the summer. A bring-your-own picnic will take place from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. At 7:30 p.m. E.W. "Swede" Throsen will speak on the early history of Pefasquitos, drawing

on his extensive research into the records and archaeology of the area. Take the Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mountain Road up to the new parking lot for the Ranch House. The program is free.

#### DUSK WATERFALL WALK

Sun., June 23, 6:30 p.m. (2 hrs). Meet at Pefasquitos Creek Park. Take Black Mountain Road north from Mira Mesa, south from Rancho Pefasquitos to Park Village Drive. Go west on this road all the way to the park. Bring water, insect repellent and flashlight. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Groups and families R.S.V.P. please so we can have enough walk leaders.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat. June 29, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock.

### JULY

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., July 6, 8 a.m. 10-K (about 6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Lots of flowers. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., July 6, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### DUSK WALK

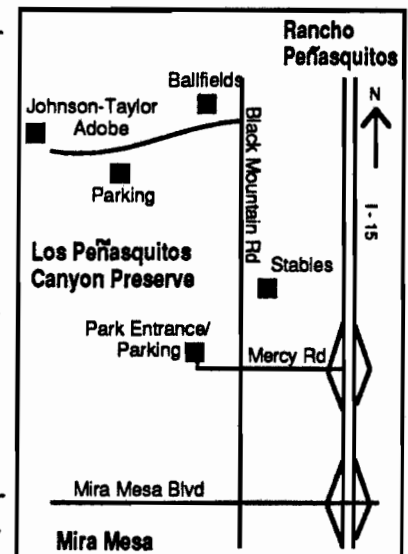
Fri., July 12, 7 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Groups R.S.V.P. please.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., July 13, 8 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars.

#### FRIENDS MEETING

Tues., July 16, 7 p.m. At the Johnson-Taylor Ranch for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right



**(Park Day cont'd)**

shelter for insects, birds, deer and other animals. They also destroy wetlands because they are a "water-spender" species. In fact, developers have been known to plant eucalyptus near wetlands that are blocking development projects. Oftentimes, only 5–10 years of growth is enough to kill off the wetlands.

**Broad support for mitigation**

San Diego City Councilmember Bruce Henderson, some Carmel Valley residents who hope to stop Route 56 and a number of individuals oppose the mitigation. Henderson claims it's a waste of money to cut down eucalyptus only to replace them with native species. Supporting the mitigation are the Friends, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Rancho Penasquitos Planning Group, the Mira Mesa Town Council, the City and County Parks and Recreation Departments and other area community planning groups supporting the mitigation. Numerous public meetings have been held with both sides represented. Votes have been overwhelmingly in favor of the mitigation.

I don't intend to recapitulate the many mistatements of fact and demagoguery on the part of Mr. Henderson and his supporters. The Friends have a fact sheet available for anyone who requests it on these issues. I do want to discuss an issue that underlies the debate: what kind of park should Penasquitos Canyon Preserve be?

**A preserve for native species?**

Penasquitos Canyon Preserve is different from Balboa, Mission Bay, or your neighborhood park. It's radically different from the community park at Canyonside. These latter parks are recreational parks. They're active use parks meant for sporting activities. The primary goal the Master Plan for Penasquitos Canyon Preserve outlines is preservation of our native plants and animals, not recreation. Hiking, horse riding and bike riding are permitted, but as a secondary function of the park. Why is this?

Establishing the Preserve became a goal of the City more than 20 years ago. It was recognized that development was going to wipe out the vast majority of our native plant and animal species as both canyon and mesa top gave way to the bulldozer. The goal was to provide a protected habitat where native species of plants and animals would be protected for future generations to know.

Mr. Henderson flat out disagrees with this preservationist goal. I believe it was on a Roger Hedgecock show he stated that wilderness has no place in the city. He has promised irresponsible elements in the biking community he will champion their "right" to ride any trail in the Preserve irregardless of the damage done to endangered plant species or animals. When this is your position, it naturally flows that you aren't concerned that weed species like eucalyptus are killing off native San Diegan plants and animals. Is preserving a bit of wilderness in the city a worthwhile goal? Can we combine preserving native species with public use of the Preserve? The Friends believe so -- if we educate and win people over to recognizing the importance of the first, preservationist goal of the Preserve.

**(Springs up cont'd)**

this source of fresh water might have affected life under the sea when Peñasquitos Canyon was part of the ocean floor, millions of years ago.

**Spring house restoration**

Presently, the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation is restoring the Johnson-Taylor ranch. In keeping with the theme and style of the 1860's, the spring house will also undergo renovation. Several palm trees that seeded themselves near the spring that have been damaging the walls of the spring house will be removed. The deteriorated roof will be repaired and the stone walls reassembled. One day, we may once again store milk beside the cool well just as the Johnsons did.

Special thanks to Don Albright for his assistance in obtaining geological facts about the well, to Ranger Reneene Mowry, for providing historical information, to Ranger Nancy Dawson-Dollard, for loan of her geology text books, and to members of the Historical Society Archives for their time and patience retrieving old records from the shelves.

**Further reading**

- Babcock, Burt A, "Ground Water Occurrence and Quality, San Diego County, " SDSU geology thesis, 1958.  
 Birkeland & Larson, *Putnam's Geology*.  
 Bishop, Lewis, & Sutherland, *Focus on Earth Science*.  
 Jahns, Richard H. *Geology of Southern California*, Division of Mines, 1954.  
 May, Ron. *A Synthesis of the Known History of Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos*.  
 Sanders, Anderson Jr., & Carola, *Physical Geology*.  
 Sarkissian, Volga Der, "Clay Mineralogy of the Delmar and Friars Formations," San Diego County, California, SDSU geology thesis, 1983.  
 National Register of Historic Places Inventory — Nomination form, filed by Mary Ward.  
 City of San Diego Historical Site Board Resister No. 75, filed by Irvin Kahn, Peñasquitos Association.

**(Birding cont'd)**

figs, etc. They also drink nectar from flowers, and they will come to an oriole feeder in your backyard.

Their nest is truly a marvel. It's an oval-shaped bag, 6 inches deep, attached by the rim of sides to the twigs on the outer edges of cottonwoods, willows or sycamores. Sometimes they nest in mistletoe. The nest is built of fibers and bark and lined with horsehair, plant down, wool or mosses. The Northern Oriole nests from April to June, laying 3–6 eggs. The female does all the incubation for about 14 days. The young fly about 14 days after hatching.

I hope you get to see some of these beauties the next time you are in the canyon. They're usually very noticeable around the stream crossing near the grave and along the north side of the creek. Their noisy chattering gives away their location. Good luck on all your birding puzzles!

Good birding!



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
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**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**(Outings cont'd)**

into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

**NATURE WALK**

Sat., July 20, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Look for wildflowers, learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., July 20, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

**DUSK WALK**

Fri., July 23, 7 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Groups R.S.V.P. please.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat. July 27, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
- Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



## Action Alert

### The Gnatcatcher Wars Heat Up

by Mike Kelly, president

Your help is needed as the biggest battle between developers and the environmental community in Southern California is being joined over the California gnatcatcher and coastal sage scrub habitat. That's why you'll find two reprints in this issue concerning them. One is an overview by George Rawlins, written for the Hi Sierran. It clearly shows what's at stake in this battle for both the developers and the gnatcatcher and coastal sage scrub habitat. The second article is a reprint of an article on the gnatcatcher by Claude Edwards first printed in our newsletter.

As frequent articles in the daily press and stories on the TV news attest, what has been a behind-the-scenes battle has broken out into the open as two key deadlines approach. These are an August 1-2 decision by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) on listing the gnatcatcher as endangered and the September 21 deadline for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do the same.

#### Farmer Pardee and the gnatcatcher

Locally, we reported in last month's newsletter about the Pardee Company's desperate attempt to avoid the implications of a future listing of the gnatcatcher as endangered. They asked for an agricultural permit for their Carmel Mountain property, home to the gnatcatcher and coastal sage scrub habitat. In the past, environmental restrictions were less for agricultural land than for commercially zoned land. At a Planning Commission hearing they were told their permit would be denied since no Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had been submitted for the project. They were given 90 days to submit the EIR. This should put their resubmittal past the deadlines listed above — something Pardee obviously wanted to avoid.

#### What you can do

As these deadlines approach you can help by writing letters urging these respective agencies to list the gnatcatcher as endangered. Here's where to write:

State Fish and Game Commission  
California Department of Fish and Game  
1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento CA 95814

Governor Pete Wilson  
1350 Front Street, 6th floor, San Diego CA 92101

Congressman Bill Lowry  
880 Front St., Suite 6-S-15, San Diego CA 92188

Senator Alan Cranston  
880 Front Street, Suite 5-S-31, San Diego CA 92188

Senator John Seymour  
401 B Street, San Diego CA 92101

## Outings Schedule

See Page 8 for a convenient "hangup" format.

## Thanks to Weed Wackers

Thanks to Will Bowen, Susan Zepf, Alan Pepper, Mike McCormick, Lou Slozar, Kate Johnson, Don Albright and Mike Kelly for their help in a conservation project June 14, 15, 18, 21, 24 and 27. The project involved cutting the seed heads of the Desert Artichoke (*Cynara cardunculus*) to prevent the further spread of this aggressive weed. This non-native plant has completely crowded out native vegetation in some areas. It is penetrating into the riparian (creek) area near the Johnson-Taylor Ranch and into the chaparral west of the Ranch. Our volunteers cut down more than 29,000 plants. By the end of the project we had some expert machete wielders! Since this plant is a perennial that also propagates through its tuberous root system, followup work will be necessary for the next two to three years to completely eradicate it.

## Park Day Success

Thanks to Susan Zepf, Trinity Gabriele, Brian Swanson, Mike McCormick, Les Braund, Linda Hunter, Vera Garrow, Joyce Cunningham, Will Bowen and Mike Kelly for leading nature walks and staffing our exhibits at the June 1 Park Day. We had more people than ever on our walks. The presence of more environmental and nature oriented groups gave this year's celebration a more park-oriented ambience. (In past years some Park Day have seemed more of a celebration of local developers whose projects ring the Preserve, than of the groups who want to protect the Preserve and its natural and cultural resources.)

An exciting moment of the day's program was the introduction of many of the descendants of the Johnson family who owned the Ranch from the 1860s – 1870s. They were introduced by County Historian Mary Ward. Ward also announced to the audience that the second edition of her *Road to Yuma* is in production and will soon be available. Groups exhibiting included the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, the Herpetological Society, Project Wildlife, County Parks Society, CalTrans Biology Division, the County Archaeological Society, the San Pasqual Historical Society, and the Old Town Historical Society volunteers.

Pam Stevens of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force was this year's Park Day organizer. She did a great job of pulling the event together.

## Birding in Peñasquitos Canyon West End Cliff Swallows

by Barbara Zepf

For a change, I'd like to discuss birding in the west end of the canyon. It's different in the west end. It's less crowded. The landscape is more open — large, grassy fields and a wider, slower moving creek. The west end of Peñasquitos Canyon is reached by taking Sorrento Valley Boulevard east to its dead-end at the canyon. Sorrento Valley Boulevard will eventually hook up with Calle Cristobal, which is not completed as of this writing.

The topography and habitat of the west end changes almost daily, as construction continues on the new road. It will be years before the overall results of this disturbance are realized. There are basically two parts to the west end — Peñasquitos Canyon and López Canyon — both reached through the same gate. Just walk along the sidewalk on the north side of Calle Cristobal and look down into the creek. You will soon see a gate where you enter the canyon itself. This area has suffered many disturbances over the years. Until recently, cattle roamed here. They degraded the creek by breaking down the banks of the creek and wallowing in the stream bed. Things look much better in this respect, now that they have departed. However, the building of Calle Cristobal took over where the cattle left off. Valuable marshland has been lost. I hope the Common Snipes (yes, there really are such birds) that use this area remain. The future results of the noise, automobile pollution and runoff from this new road remain to be seen. Some birds are very adaptive when man alters their habitat; some aren't.

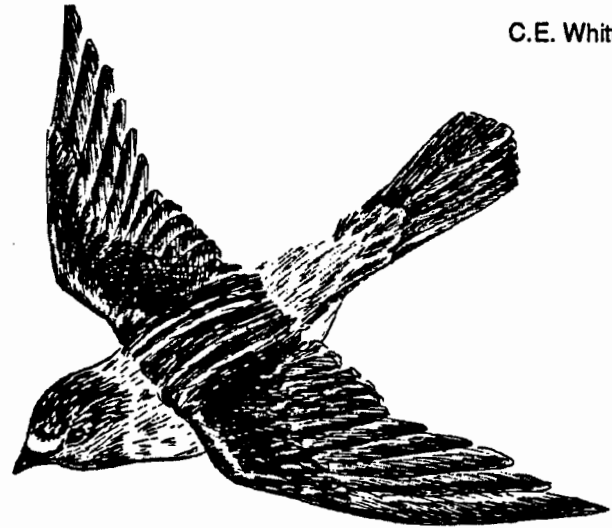
### More water birds

Most of the birds found in the east end of the canyon are also found in the west end, but they are more spaced out. You will also see birds in the west end that you rarely see in the east end — Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Black-crowned Herons (great fun listening to their squawking as they settle down in the reeds at dusk), etc. Since the west end of the canyon is 6 miles closer to the ocean, you will notice more water birds here — coots, ducks, rails, etc. They are fewer in number and more secretive than land birds, but they're always a joy to behold.

### Swallos proliferate in west end

There is one family of birds that is very prolific in the west end of the canyon — the swallows. I have seen five species of swallows here — the Tree Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow and Barn Swallow. Swallows are summer residents and spring and fall migrants in our area. You very rarely see them in winter, as they usually spend their winters in South America.

The species I'd like to discuss is the Cliff Swallow. Just as the swallows return to the San Juan Capistrano Mission every March, they also return to the canyon. They nest all across the United States, except for the southeastern states. They are fascinating birds. They are readily visible during



C.E. Whitten

their stay here. The best time to see them is right before dusk when large numbers of them wheel around in the air, catching their last snack before dark. The easiest place to view them is around the ruins of the Ruiz adobe (easy to find if you stay on the path after entering the gate). It's that partial building surrounded by a wrought iron fence on your right, just a short way down the path. Look under the roof of the building. You can easily see all their nests.

### Cliff swallow well-adapted to people

The Cliff Swallow is one bird that adapted well to people. It actually prefers building its nest on man-made structures — bridges, house eaves, etc. The Ruiz adobe is loaded! The Cliff Swallow nests in colonies, each nest built by a pair. The nest is a marvel in itself. It is shaped like a flask, bottle or cup, made of mud with a narrow entrance on the side. The inside is lined with grasses and feathers. Eggs ( 3 to 6 ) can be laid from April to August . Both parents incubate the eggs and the young fly when they are 23 days old. The Cliff Swallow usually has 2 broods per year.

They're sleek and slender birds with long, pointed wings. They're roughly 5-1/2 inches long with a 12-inch wingspread. They have tiny short bills and legs, and their feet are weak and small. However, they often perch readily on wires, tops of sticks and rooftops. Flocks in fall roost in marshes, clinging to the stems of reeds and grasses.

Cliff Swallows are colorful birds. Their plumage is glossy or iridescent. The sexes look similar. Immatures resemble the adults, only duller in color. Their crown, backs, wings and tail are blue-black; the forehead is dull white to buff; the rump is rusty or buffy. Their back is streaked with white; their face and throat are brown-red (with the throat sometimes looking almost black). Their sides and flanks are gray or gray-brown. The belly is white. Unlike other swallows, their tail is not deeply forked. It appears almost square.



## The Birds of Penasquitos Canyon

# Red-Winged Blackbird

by Claude G. Edwards

Studying birds is a lot of fun. Sometimes we can feel that there is too much to learn and know before we can feel confident enough to go out on our own without someone else to help us.

A lot of birds have names which are difficult to appreciate where they came from or what they mean. For instance, when someone says they observed a Northern Harrier, what does the term 'harrier' mean as it relates to the bird? If a bird is called Northern Rough-winged Swallow, it is reasonable to assume that there is a 'Southern' one somewhere. How do we know why the bird has 'rough wings'? The ones I have seen seem to have normal, slender, pointed, smooth-looking wings!

On the other hand, when you see a male Red-Winged

Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), it is easy to see where it got its name — it makes sense. The male is all-over glossy-black with bright red on its upper wings, usually bordered by orange or yellow. It has a look-alike cousin called the Tri-colored Blackbird, which we will discuss momentarily. Female Red-winged Blackbirds are actually more brownish, patterned with whitish streaks on their head, back, and underparts.

Red-winged Blackbirds nest in large loose groups called "colonies," usually in marshy areas with tall grass such as reeds, sedges, and cattails. These can be around lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Blackbird colonies are always very noisy places with males constantly singing at each other to proclaim and maintain their territories. The females actively call in response to the males and also at other females which frequently invade or trespass on the closely-packed adjoining territories.

Often the whole colony will take off in a seething, wheeling, swirling mass, changing direction in unison, dispersing into a field to feed, then taking off again and landing on adjacent wires or poles or trees, calling and singing. Their nests are made of grass and soft fibers attached to the stalks

of the marsh vegetation. Young birds resemble the females until the males grow up and attain the typical plumage.

Red-winged Blackbirds have a relative which looks almost exactly like it called the Tricolored Blackbird (*A. tricolor*). While the Red-wing ranges over a wide area of the United States and Canada, the Tricolored Blackbird is limited to California, and the adjacent areas

of southern Oregon and northern Baja. The Tricolored Blackbird male

has a deeper-red wing patch with a bold bright white lower border. The female is similar to that of a Red-winged Blackbird, but the streaking is reduced on its plumage. Its lower breast and belly has no streaking at all. The song and calls also differ from that of their widespread cousin.



# Fossils in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

by John Northrop, PhD., Consulting Geophysicist

[Editor's note: While we encourage you to explore the Canyon, we also remind you it is illegal to collect or remove fossils from Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The same rules apply here as with our State or Federal Parks.]

## Micro fossils

There are literally thousands of fossils in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, but they are rather hard to find, principally because of their small size. Indeed, most of them are *micro* fossils, the kind you have to look through a microscope to identify. For example, the outcrop of *Ardath Shale* on the Old López Road contains abundant shells of small marine fauna called *foraminifera*. The foraminifera shells, called *forams* by paleontologists, are used to date the age of the rock where they are found. Those in the *Ardath Shale* are about 40 million years old and were deposited in Eocene time when the area was a shallow marine embayment. Since that time, the sediments have been compacted, consolidated, uplifted and eroded so that they are now exposed on the hillside on Old López Road. This particular site is so rich in fossils it has been designated as the *type locality* for the *Ardath Shale* and is therefore shown on geologic maps.

## Santiago peak rocks at falls

Another good fossil site is below the falls where volcanic, metavolcanic basalts, breccias and agglomerates are interlayered with slates and black shale beds of the *Santiago Peak* suite of rocks. According to Fife, et al, (1967), there are two types of marine fossils, *Belemnoids* and *Buchia Piochii*, present in these rocks and show them to be Jurassic in age (about 140 million yrs. old) — that's before the age of Dinosaurs! Both the volcanic breccias and shales contain fossils, indicating that they were formed on the sea floor. The volcanics intruded the shale layers conformably (i.e. along the bedding planes) and baked them into the "Black Shales" we see there today.

Belemnoids are the ancestors of today's squids and chambered nautilus, found in the world's oceans.

## Ancient sea

After deposition of the sediments and intrusion of the

basalts, the rocks were first buried, then compacted and later tilted 60 degrees to the west. Subsequently, they were submerged and buried by Eocene sediments of the *La Jolla Group* (including the *Ardath Shale*). Later, about 1.5 million years ago, the entire area was submerged again and covered by a shallow sea which later began to retreat as movement along the San Andreas fault caused uplift to the east. As a result of the slow uplift, the shore line was pushed slowly westward and a resistant, cobble-strewn *beach rock* was left behind. This is now called the *Linda Vista formation*. It forms the *rim rock* of Peñasquitos Canyon, for which it is named (Peñasquitos means literally "little cliffs").

## Peñasquitos Creek erodes rock to form falls

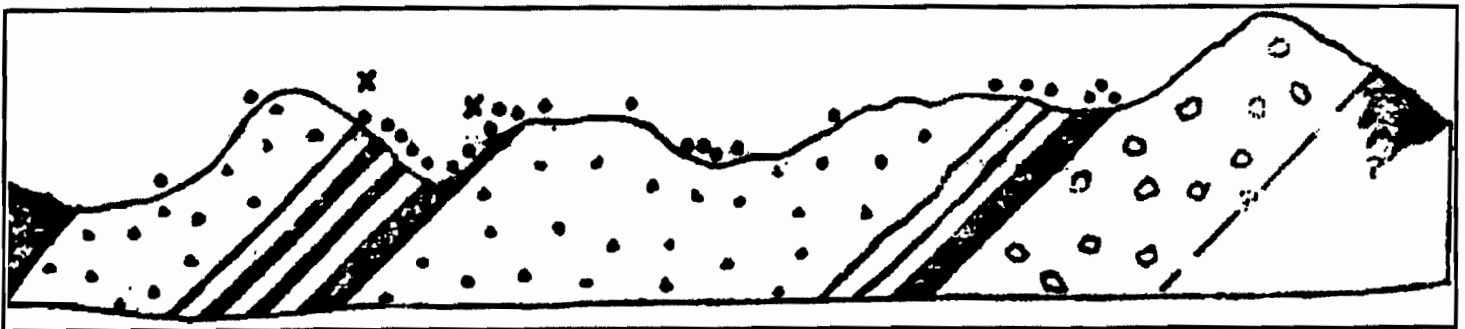
About 1 million years ago, the ancestral Peñasquitos Creek formed on the peneplane formed by the *Linda Vista Formation* and began to erode and cut down through the tough cap rock into the softer sands and clays of the *La Jolla group*. When the stream bed reached the underlying *Santiago Peak* volcanics, it cut down into them, forming the "falls" we see today. Thus the volcanic rocks at and below the falls are exposed in what geologists call a *fenester*, or window, and are surrounded everywhere by much younger rocks (about 100-million years younger).

Those wishing to see fossils should take the Friends geology hike to the area and have the leader point out the bellemnites to you. For further information, see *Geology of Peñasquitos Canyon*, John Northrup, Windsor Associates, P.O. Box 90282, San Diego, CA 92109 (1989).

## Additional references

Fife, D.L., Minch, J.A., and P.J. Crampton, *Late Jurassic Age of the Santiago Peak Volcanics*, California Bulletin Geol. Soc. Am., 78, pp. 299-304, (1967).

Kennedy, M.P. and G.L. Peterson, *Geology of the San Diego Metropolitan Area*, California Bull. 200, California Division of Mines and Geology, 1416 9th St., Sacramento, CA 95814 (1975).



Cross section for Los Peñasquitos Canyon showing volcanic breccias and sandstones (stippled) interbedded with slates and argillites (black) and approximate locations of fossils. Adapted from Fife, et al. (1967).

# Endangered: The California Gnatcatcher and Coastal Sage Scrub

by George Rawlins, Sierra Club Member

Over the last year, a rapidly disappearing wildlife habitat known as coastal sage scrub has become one of the major conservation issues in southern California. At the center of the controversy is a small songbird — California gnatcatcher — that is ecologically restricted to the habitat in San Diego, Orange, and western Riverside counties. At one time, the bird also lived in Ventura and Los Angeles counties, but due to destruction of its habitat by rampant urbanization, it no longer survives there. Coastal sage scrub, with its dramatic views and ocean breezes, is also one of the most attractive landscapes for the building industry. Because the amount of money to be made by developers is enormous, this controversy has the potential to overshadow the much-publicized battle between the timber industry and conservationists over the Spotted Owl and old growth forest in the Pacific Northwest.

The California gnatcatcher does not inhabit all coastal sage scrub, but only that within a particular range — slopes of 25 percent grade and generally below 800 feet above sea level, with the exception of Riverside County, where the populations inhabit higher elevations. Camp Pendleton, for example, includes coastal sage scrub areas, but few gnatcatchers inhabit the area.

Gnatcatchers feed on the insects that are attracted to sagebrush, buckwheat, and cactus patches found in coastal sage scrub. The birds can be seen hovering above cactus pads as they search for insects, or perching on the spines of the prickly pear cactus.

## Not a long distance commuter

Occasionally they move into nearby humid scrub habitat for relatively short periods when this sage scrub becomes dry in late summer. However, the coastal sage scrub is essential to its survival. The California gnatcatcher is a "specialized" species, meaning that it cannot modify its diet or adapt to other habitats if its natural one is destroyed.

This bird sparsely populates its habitat, more sparsely than most other insectivorous birds of its size. This is especially true for inland gnatcatcher populations. An area surrounding San Elijo Lagoon is a highly populated area with four pairs inhabiting 30 acres. In a low density area, which is more common, two pairs inhabit 56 acres. When coastal sage scrub is destroyed, or even when significantly diminished, leaving fragmented areas that are insufficient to sustain them, all resident gnatcatchers die unless there is other coastal sage scrub within its short range.

Other natural terrain can serve as a temporary corridor to other coastal sage scrub. However, this can succeed only if the distance is not too great. The longest recorded flight to a new coastal sage scrub area is only seven miles. The further the distance to other acceptable coastal sage scrub, the lesser the chances that the bird can successfully relocate. Moreover, if the new habitat is already fully populated by other gnatcatchers, the bird may be unable to establish a new territory and will be forced to keep moving,

further decreasing its chances of survival. When areas are graded for construction, most of the birds do not successfully make the transition.

Coastal scrub has been reduced by 90 percent of its former extent by urban development, and is now considered to be one of the most endangered types in the United States. Estimates of remaining pairs of the California gnatcatcher in the United States range from 1200 to 2000, most of which live on privately owned land that is scheduled for development in the next 20 years.

## The listing process

Both the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been collecting evidence to include the California gnatcatcher on the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. However, this is a lengthy process, including numerous studies and reviews. Current regulatory mechanisms and conservation initiatives have failed to protect the California gnatcatcher. Extraordinary pressures are exerted by the California building industry, where median prices for a house exceed \$200,000 and new "planned" communities consisting of thousands of units may spring up in a matter of months.

In Orange County, developers such as the Irvine Company and the Santa Margarita Company, with massive funds to hire full time lobbyists in Sacramento and Washington, are well-financed and organized. They have hired their own researchers, who have come to different conclusions than such conservation groups as the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Manomet Bird Observatory. Not surprisingly, the results of developer-sponsored research are compatible with developer motives. They maintain that the California gnatcatcher is more mobile than conservation groups maintain and that setting aside a parcel of land for a habitat is sufficient for its survival.

In San Diego County, developers such as Baldwin and Pardee, have formed a group called the Alliance for Habitat Conservation to promote their own solutions. They, like developers in Orange County, are proposing that limited parcels of land be set aside, and that development go on around them. However, unless these parcels are large enough and sufficiently connected by corridors so that surviving birds are not isolated, even if some gnatcatchers survive the actual development, the gene pool could become so diminished that the gnatcatcher might eventually succumb to extinction.

If past performance is any indicator, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is unlikely to act in time to save the gnatcatcher through the normal listing process. The bird was proposed as a candidate species in 1982. The status review process began six years later and has yet to be completed. Over that nine year period massive habitat destruction has been allowed to occur. Thousands of acres of critical habitat are scheduled for grading over the next few months as land de-

➡ p. 6 for more

## (Gnatcatcher cont'd)

velopers try to do it before the normal listing proceedings are completed. Even if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does determine that the California gnatcatcher should be granted endangered status, by the time the decision is made, so much of the habitat may be destroyed and fragmented, with tracts being unconnected and of insufficient size, that preventing the gnatcatcher's eventual extinction might be impossible.

At the end of last year, the Natural Resources Defense Council and Manomet Bird Observatory petitioned the Fish and Wildlife Service to grant the gnatcatcher emergency status as an Endangered Species as provided for in the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This provides protection of the bird and its habitat as the normal listing process continues.

Despite the importance of coastal sage scrub as a wildlife habitat, only recently has an organized effort for its preservation begun in the conservation community. Considering the California building industry's power and opposition to coastal sage scrub conservation, an effective mobilization of grass-roots conservation groups is essential. A

coordinating group has been formed, called the Endangered Habitats League, comprising environmental groups, individuals, and scientists throughout southern California. Their conservation efforts will focus on coastal sage scrub — home not only to the California gnatcatcher but to many other plants and animals, many of which are also threatened — and other endangered habitats.

If either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the California Department of Fish and Game grant the California gnatcatcher emergency status, that will be sufficient to protect it during the normal listing process. On Aug. 1 in Newport Beach, the California Department of Fish and Game will decide whether to grant the gnatcatcher emergency protection. The Sierra Club encourages all interested parties to support the effort in Newport Beach, and to write both the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requesting both emergency protection and permanent endangered status.

Reprinted from the *Hi Sierran*, July/August 1991.

## Birds of Los Peñasquitos Canyon The California Gnatcatcher

by Claude G. Edwards

Those of us who enjoy being in natural settings and taking in the peace and vitality of the life around us usually also enjoy the simplicity of things, sky, wind, trees, leaves, flowers, fragrance, stream, insects, trails, dust, etc. Things are pretty much as they seem, barring disturbance, disruption, and distractions.

To most of us, birds are usually pretty straight forward, big, small, flying, perched, loud, quiet, singing, eating, and engaging, to behold. Some of us choose to go into a deeper study and awareness of birds, bothering to distinguish between wrens from sparrows from hummingbirds from hawks, etc. Again, most of the birds that we encounter are fairly easy to look at and eventually identify.

Every so often though a bird comes along that may be difficult to find, or to see, or to distinguish. On top of that, certain nameless and faceless so-called experts all the way across the country will make a decision to rename a bird, combine two different populations into one species, or even separate two groups into whole species. This is where the diminutive California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) comes in.

Until about a year or two ago, this unobtrusive resident of coastal sage scrub brush was known as the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, (*P. melanura*) which included the similar-looking birds found out on the desert. A scientist and birder from California did several years' research on the relationships between the coastal birds and the desert birds. His findings indicated that these two populations of birds rarely came into contact with one another, they had subtle but consistent plumage differences, and most importantly, different voices, which they used to communicate with others of their species.

The decision was made and authorized to treat and consider the two populations of gnatcatchers as whole separate species. So now, we who keep track of such things can add one more bird to our lists! The California Gnatcatcher is a small and slender insect-eating bird, 4-1/2 inches long, half of which is tail. Its tail is all black except for a narrow white outer edge to the outer tail feathers, and a little white at the tip. Their plumage is drab gray, somewhat browner on the lower back and wings, paler gray below with softer beige or buff on the belly. The male sports a shiny black crown during the breeding season while the female lacks the crown but has a thin white eye-ring.

Their diagnostic whining, kitten-like, buzzy "meeew" call is one of several other similar vocalizations. They seem to prefer plants such as California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) and Flat-topped Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) as primary habitat to forage in and maintain themselves. Unfortunately, this is, or was the most-widespread vegetation found over what is now San Diego and its rapidly-growing suburban areas.

Although not considered officially endangered yet, this wonderful little bird has received a good measure of attention from environmental professionals and consultants since its designation as a full species. Much is yet to be learned about what will ensure its future, but it has a loyal following to see it does survive.

The California Gnatcatcher  
Where has all the sagescrub gone,  
where once they stood now there is none,  
to hold me close and keep me safe,  
where I can live and find escape?

# Updates on Penasquitos Canyon Issues

by Mike Kelly

We've talked about a variety of issues affecting Penasquitos Canyon Preserve over the past year. Here's how these issues stand today.

## Camino Ruiz

June 12, SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments) discussed the issue of the planned Camino Ruiz crossing through Peñasquitos Canyon. The discussion was occasioned by a report from SANDAG's technical staff on the Mid-County Transportation Plan. The report analyzed the impact the San Diego City Council's November 1990 decision on the Future Urbanizing Area (FUA, a.k.a. Urban Reserve) would have on traffic forecasts in the area.

Traffic forecasts for the area had been based on a North City West model of density. The council's decision to allow development in the FUA at a density of 1 unit per 4 acres represented a significantly lower density than the projections based on the North City West model. As expected, the lower density means less traffic on area roads around the FUA, i.e., on Rancho Penasquitos, Mira Mesa and Carmel Valley. Taking out Camino Ruiz from the transportation plan for the area will thus have less of an impact in our area than previously thought.

In any case, discussion from SANDAG members and the public, myself included, my clear the broad community opposition to the Camino Ruiz crossing because of the damage it would cause to the Preserve. Councilmember Abbe Wolfsheimer made a motion that SANDAG oppose the Camino Ruiz crossing. Tom Behr, the new City Councilmember from the sixth district spoke in support of the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Not only San Diego, but the cities of Poway, Solana Beach, Del Mar, Encinitas and County Board of Supervisors members Susan Golding and John MacDonald voted for the motion. The final decision on Camino Ruiz lies with the City of San Diego, which should make its decision next fall.

## Caltrans mitigation

The Caltrans mitigation project for the Preserve was debated and approved 6 to 3 by the San Diego City Council June 3 and 4. As you'll recall the mitigation involves restoring wetlands habitat in the Preserve by removing eucalyptus trees and replacing them with cottonwoods, sycamores and other species. The eucalyptus are coming out because they exude a poison that kills off other trees and plants, destroying vanishing animal habitat. The project has now been put out to bid and should begin next fall. This now clears the way for construction to begin on Route 56 east.

## Expanding north: the land swap

Several months ago the City approved concessions demanded by Newland America to win this company's support for following through on a landswap approved by the voters several years ago. When escrow is cleared, Newland's property that runs north from the waterfall area of

the Preserve will become part of the Preserve. In exchange, Newland gets land in the Sorrento Hills area adjacent to I-5. The land in the waterfall area will also be connecting with parcels to the north already owned by the City. In turn, these connect to the vernal pool preserves west of Rancho Penasquitos. This is a big step towards connecting the Preserve with the Black Mountain open-space park to the north.

## Expanding east: Torrey Pines to Anza Borrego Trail

The proposal by the Friends to use remaining Prop C Park Bond funds to purchase a parcel of land between I-15, the current eastern boundary of the Preserve, to the Sabre Springs open-space and the Poway green belt, is moving forward. These in turn link up with a series of parks and trail systems all the way out to Anza Borrego! Beginning at Torrey Pines, you'll be able to hike through the Preserve, under I-15 to the Sabre Springs Trail to the Sycamore Canyon Trail. From there you take the Beeler Canyon Trail through Sycamore Canyon Park on out to Oak Oasis Park to the Lakeside BLM (Bureau of Land Management) public lands, which connects to Cleveland National Forest, Cuyamaca State Park and Anza Borrego. We have some trail building to do, but in several years time we should have the Coast to Desert trail in place.

## New City Ranger and volunteer patrol

William (Bill) E. Lawrence is the new full-time City Ranger you'll see patrolling Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Unlike the County Rangers who are only responsible for the small County portion of the Preserve, he will be patrolling the entire Preserve.

Winning a B.A. in Biology from San Jose State University, Bill went to work as a Park Ranger for the Counties of Santa Clara and later San Mateo. This work involved parks with millions of visitors and large areas of natural vegetation with multiple uses.

After graduate studies in natural resources management he has served as a consultant to the Navajo Tribal Council in natural resources management. He also served as a consultant to the City of San Diego on trail building.

Bill is well prepared for the challenges he faces. The Preserve's natural resources are under tremendous pressure from development on the periphery and an explosion of users in the park itself.

Bill and County Ranger Reneene Mowry, after many months of planning and organizing, have launched the volunteer patrol we've been reporting on. The 24 volunteers who make up the patrol are already coming to the aid of injured park users. With their walkie talkies they are in close contact with the rangers and other volunteers and can quickly summon the paramedics. They are also educating the public on the rules and regulations for the park and are helping to bring things under control in the canyon.

## Friends July and August Outings Schedule

# Medicine Plant Walk Debuts in July, Bike Ride in August

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or to organize group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

### JULY

#### DUSK WALK

Fri., July 12, 7 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Often see animals on these popular walks. Led by Mike Kelly.

#### BIRD WALK

Sun., July 14, 8 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

#### MEDICINAL PLANT WALK

Sun., July 14, 6 p.m. (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Boulevard entrance to Penasquitos Preserve. Watch for signs as you take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. There is some confusion due to road construction. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, medical anthropologist, instructor at local community colleges.

#### WILDLIFE CORRIDOR TUNNEL/HABITAT WALK

Fri., July 19, 6 p.m. (2 hours). Steep slopes. Meet at Sorrento Valley Boulevard entrance to Preserve (new parking-staging area if open). Learn about the impact of development on animal habitats and examine the wildlife corridor tunnel on López Ridge. Led by Alan Pepper, Ph.D.

#### NATURE WALK

Sat., July 20, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Look for wildflowers, learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon. Led by Les Braund.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., July 20, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### DUSK WALK

Wed., July 24, 6:30 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Led by Mike Kelly.

#### FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Thurs., July 25, 7 p.m. At the Johnson-Taylor Ranch for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat. July 27, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the

plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock. Led by Mike McCormick.

**HISTORICAL LAND USE AT JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH**  
Sat., July 27, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. San Diego County Archaeology Society presents Leeland Bibb, land use historian on his research concerning the ranch and how it may affect current beliefs about the Adobe. Tours of the ranch will be conducted from 5:30-6:30. A bring-your-own picnic will take place from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Ranch House. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mtn. Rd, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. The program is free.

### AUGUST

#### FITNESS WALK

Sat., Aug. 3, 8 a.m. 10-K (6 miles roundtrip, 3 hours) brisk walk to waterfall and back. Bring water. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Led by Dr. Jaya Perryman.

#### JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Aug. 3, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

#### NATURE WALK

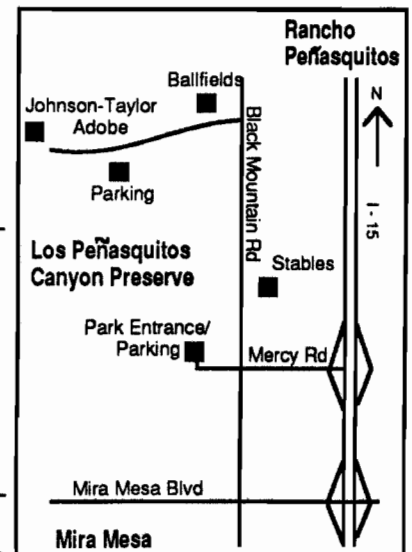
Sat., Aug. 10, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Look for wildflowers, learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in the canyon. Led by Les Braund.

#### FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Call to confirm since day of week is changing. 7 p.m. At the Johnson-Taylor Ranch for our business meeting. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot.

#### MEDICINAL PLANT WALK

Sun., Aug. 11, 6 p.m. (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Boulevard entrance to Penasquitos Preserve. Watch for signs as you take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. There is some confusion due to road construction. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, medical anthropologist, instructor at local community colleges.



# Ticks

by Christine E. Whitten, M.D.

[Recent reports in the press about Ticks and Lyme disease prompt this reprint of our article on ticks. The *San Diego Union* recently confirmed the danger Dr. Whitten talks about with an article on the spread of these ticks. Although the disease has been diagnosed in San Diego, no animals carrying the tick that causes Lyme disease had actually been found. Now, actual ticks and mice carrying the disease have been discovered in San Onofre State Park. Hopefully this will alert doctors in our area to take the disease seriously. To date, many pretend it's not here, aren't up-to-date in their knowledge of it, and misdiagnose it.]

Once again it's the time of year to check for hitchhikers after your hike. Starting in the spring and lasting through summer the local tick population is on the lookout for an easy meal.

There are three different types of ticks, however hard ticks from the family Ixodidae are most likely to parasitize humans and potentially spread disease. The adult hard tick has eight legs and a hard plate on its upper surface. There are four stages in the life cycle of the tick: the egg, larvae, nymph, and adult. The full life cycle takes 2 years in some species and all stages require blood meals. The tick feeds by embedding its head in the skin of the host, usually a deer or other large animal. This process is painless and the tick may remain attached for days until totally engorged with blood.

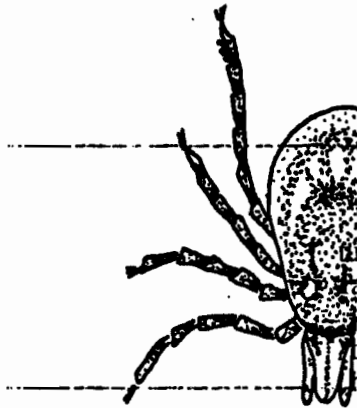
Ticks of all stages tend to attach themselves to tall grasses and low bushes along animal trails, allowing themselves to hitch a ride as the animal brushes against the plant. Once full, they drop off and await the next meal.

Fortunately humans are infrequent hosts because ticks can transmit bacterial and rickettsial diseases such as Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Q fever among others. They can also cause loss to industries dependent upon domestic animals such as cattle and sheep by damaging the hides and decreasing the animals weight gain.

The typical tick bite causes little more harm than a slightly raised red mark. If part of the head or other foreign matter is left in the wound a persistent, firm itchy nodule called a granuloma can develop. If this persists it may have to be surgically removed to relieve the itching. Rarely, an allergic reaction causing hives and fever can develop.

Even rarer is the development of paralysis of an arm or a leg which slowly ascends the limb following a prolonged attachment of 5-7 days. Certain ticks secrete a nerve toxin in their saliva. This paralysis resolves after the tick is removed.

The most common tick-borne disease in the US is Lyme disease, which does occur in the San Diego area although not commonly. The disease affects several body systems. First, at the site of the bite a red papule may develop. When present, this expands into a ring shaped red lesion with a clear center. The rash is called erythema chronicum migrans, or in english, a chronic red rash which moves. Secondary rings sometimes develop months later at sites distant from the original bite. The major risk of Lyme disease, how-



ever, is involvement of the internal organs with heart, joint, and nervous system. Typical symptoms are headache, malaise, and fatigue. Often there's arthritis-like joint pain and swelling.

Because of the non-specific nature of the symptoms and the fact that the victim may not know he was bitten by a tick, the disease can sometimes be hard to diagnose. However, once diagnosed it is simple to

treat with either tetracycline, penicillin, or erythromycin providing prompt resolution of symptoms.

If you find you have picked up an unwanted passenger, remove it with blunt tweezers, or with your fingers protected by a rubber glove, or paper towel. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight back gently and steadily. You may need to lift the tick upward and pull parallel to the skin until it's freed. *Don't* twist or force the tick off as this can leave the head imbedded. Wash the bite thoroughly. *Don't* apply gasoline, alcohol, ether, nail polish or the hot end of a match. These methods don't work and can cause more damage than the tick did.

Prophylactic treatment with antibiotics after a tick bite is still controversial and currently not recommended. Unless the tick is attached longer than 24 hours the risk of disease transmission is minimal. One study has addressed this issue so far. In it, half of 56 tick-bitten patients received penicillin, half did not. One patient, 3%, developed Lyme disease in the untreated group. One patient (3%) developed penicillin reaction in the treated group. The jury is still out. However, if you develop a flu-like illness after hiking in a tick infested area make sure your doctor knows.

In the meantime, wear protective clothing when you hike, use insect repellents, shower after exposure, and check yourself and your fellow hikers for ticks. Routinely check your children and pets when they come in from playing in the brush. This is one time when picking up hitchhikers is definitely not recommended.

(Cliff Swallow cont'd)

Cliff Swallows feed on small swarming insects, whose appearance depends on sunny, dry days. Although their mouths are small, they have a very wide gape to scoop up hundreds of bugs in mid-air. The Cliff Swallow glides, soars and circles more than other swallows.

They call almost constantly — a rolling "churr" note. Their song is a series of squeaking and grating notes given in flight. The birds usually leave their nesting colonies in August, although you may see small numbers up to early October. So now is a good time to check out these avian acrobats! Good Birding!



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**

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**(Outings cont'd)**

**DUSK WALK**

Fri., Aug. 16, 6:30 p.m. (2 hrs). Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. Often see deer and other animals on these popular walks. Led by Mike Kelly.

**JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR**

Sat., Aug. 17, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), S.D. County Archaeological Society. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park, drive past ballfields to Preserve/Ranch sign and new parking lot. See historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

**BIRD WALK**

Sun., Aug. 18, 8 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Bring Bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

**MYSTERY TREE WALK**

Sat. Aug. 24, 8 a.m. (2 hrs). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about the plants the Indians used, see an Indian grinding rock. Led by Mike McCormick.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AT JOHNSON-TAYLOR**

Sat., Aug. 24, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. San Diego County Archaeology Society presents Dr. Lynne Christiansen will present the results of archaeological and historical investigations carried out at the Adobe and Ranch within the last few years. Tours of the ranch will be conducted from 5:30-6:30. A bring-your-own picnic will take place from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Ranch House. Take the Canyonside Park entrance off Black Mountain Road up to the new parking lot for the Ranch House.

**BIKE RIDE TO WATERFALL**

Sun., Aug. 25, 8 a.m. Meet at Sorrento Valley Boulevard entrance to Preserve (new parking-staging area if open). A leisurely ride to the waterfall and back, emphasizing the area's natural history. Led by Alan Pepper, Ph.D.

**Special Notice to First-Time Readers**

If you signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

- Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
- Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
- Corporate \$250 Life \$1000
- Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

- Volunteer to help the committee
- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



# Want to help the Preserve? Here's how.

The Friends are gearing up to protect and enhance Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve with a variety of projects. But we can't do them without your help! Look at what's coming up and see what project interests you most and then send back this form to let us know.

- **Conservation** projects include removal of invasive weed species of plants that threaten to extinguish our native species. Once removed, they'll be replaced with plantings of native species. Definitely very physical work.
- **Cleanups** are just that. We target a part of the Preserve for a cleanup one weekend morning or afternoon. Generally not very physically demanding.
- **Research** projects are quite varied. One just beginning is an inventory and a printed list of all the plants in the Preserve by category and use (if any) to the Indian and settler inhabitants of the Canyon. Other projects include how to encourage the comeback of native bunch grasses in the canyon or other species that were here historically or currently exist in only reduced numbers. Another long-term project is planning the restoration of the creek in areas where it's been damaged by siltation and other impacts and the restocking of the fish species once prevalent in it.
- **Educational** displays need to be developed that feature information on the different geology, habitats, history and species that make our canyon so unique. In some cases this will take the form of educational kiosks. Fundraising will be an important part of this work.

The conservation projects are in full swing right now. The plant inventory listing is just beginning. Cleanups will be a regular feature. A cleanup is particularly suitable for scout, school or other groups wishing a shorter, focused project. Hopefully we can begin work on educational displays later this year. All of these are important projects to maintaining and in some cases, restoring, the integrity of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Won't you help us?

Yes, I'd like to help. Call me about the project(s) I've checked off.

Conservation projects

Cleanups

Research projects

Educational displays

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Separate this form from the newsletter. Fold it so the Friends address is facing out. Place your stamp on the box provided and mail it.

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