



Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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Living with Mountain Lions

by Barry Martin

This is the first in a series of articles on larger mammal species common to the Los Peñasquitos Preserve. Due to the recent interest generated by the behavior and subsequent killing of the mountain lion in Cuyamaca, it would be appropriate to begin this series with a discussion of the mountain lion or "Felis Concolor." This magnificent animal has also been called cougar, puma, panther, painter, and catamount. Known for its stealth, grace and adaptability, the cougar was once the most widely distributed mammal in North America. They are still found in habitats ranging from swamps and deserts to mountains above 10,000 feet.

Physical data

The maximum known lifespan of the cougar has been recorded at 19 years. Average size of a male cougar is about 6 1/2 feet from nose to tip of tail and about 130 pounds. Females average about 6 feet and 90 pounds. However, depending on the age and conditions in which it lives, sizes can range from 6 to 9 feet in length and weights from 60 to 230 pounds. It's a tawny



➡ p. 2 for more

Help Still Needed

Gnatcatcher Survey Begins Jan. 15

by Brian Swanson

The Friends first annual California gnatcatcher survey will begin Jan. 15. This will be the "first cut" survey to confirm general gnatcatcher locations in the Preserve system. More intensive surveys will be conducted during the spring breeding season. Veteran birders will be paired with new volunteers in teams to scout specific territories.

One training session has already been held and another will be scheduled for new volunteers. At the session, birding expert Claude Edwards, along with study organizer Brian Swanson, discussed the gnatcatcher, its life history and its habitat. An excellent video on the gnatcatcher by Jim Karnik productions (Encinitas, Ca., 436-2308) was shown. The video gives a good overview of the bird and the vegetation that makes up its habitat. The closeups of the bird and the good quality of the sound of its typical call will help new volunteers as they search for its territories in the Preserve.

The gnatcatcher is officially listed as "threatened" under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Only about 2,000 pairs of the pair are thought to remain in their only habitat, coastal sage scrub found in Southern California. Data gathered in this survey will prove invaluable for tracking the health of our local populations. It will also help in evaluating wildlife corridor proposals and the possible impact of future impacts abutting the Preserve.

To help call Brian Swanson at 695-2209.

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Wildlife Workshop Jan. 29

Volunteers Still Welcome
by Barry Martin

As we reported in our last issue, we will be beginning a comprehensive, ongoing survey of different wildlife species in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. For those who have already volunteered or those who would like to, a workshop will be held January 29 from 9 a.m. to noon at the historic ranch house in the Preserve. Classroom instruction in how to interpret common mammal tracks will be followed by a tracking field trip during the same session. No experience will be needed.

Once trained, volunteer teams (families welcome!) will take responsibility for a small study area or "station" where they will collect tracking and other data for the survey. We have many easy-to-reach stations available.

For more information, please contact Barry Martin via the Friends' hotline at 484-3219 (leave your name and number and the best time to track you down on the recorder) or write to Barry Martin at 12774 La Tortola, San Diego, CA 92129-3071.

(Lions cont'd)

gray/brown animal with a long tail that appears nearly as long as its body (although it is not really that long) and is usually held so that it nearly touches the ground. There is a black tip on the tail, but no black elsewhere.

Cougars are very solitary and secretive and will avoid open areas, preferring cover. They avoid people if at all possible and will not attack them unless cornered, injured or diseased, and even then attack is unlikely.

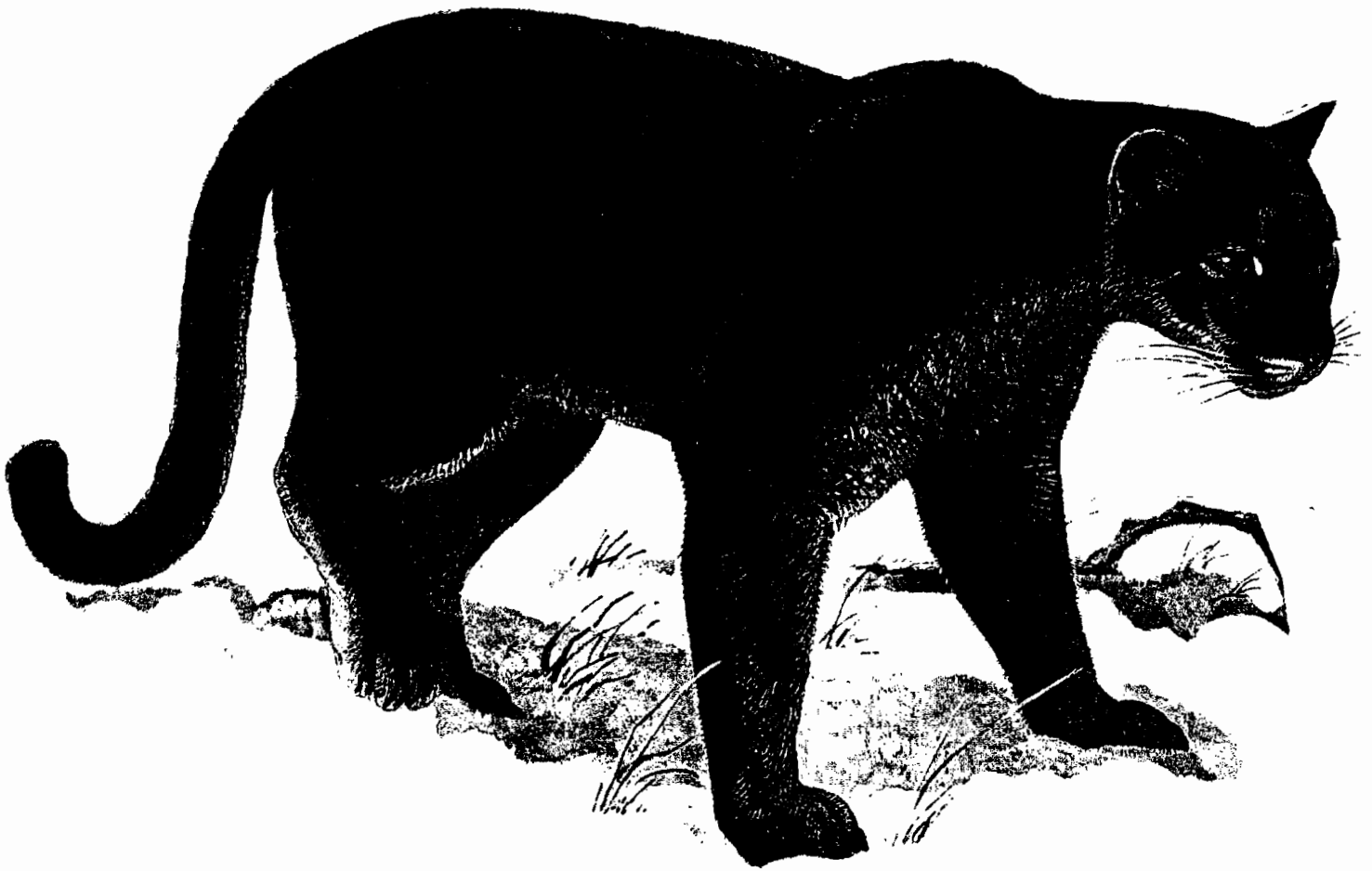
During a study of cougars in the Santa Ana Mountains there was a cou-

gar which ran from April, 1988 through Feb. 1, 1993, 19 female and 13 male cougars were radio tagged and observed. None of these animals keyed on humans or human related picnic trash. Some keyed on farm livestock; however, this was rare.

Lion attacks

After researching all known cougar attacks on humans throughout the U.S. and Canada since 1890, researcher Paul Beier concluded that being attacked by a cougar — much less killed by one — is statistically less likely than being killed by lightning or a

Still it should be emphasized that cougar attacks are rare. Beier reports that "There were 11 deaths in over a *century* which is far less than the *annual* total of people being killed by lightning, rattlesnake bites, or bee stings. Attacks are especially rare when one considers that cougars forgo thousands of opportunities to attack humans. In my own work, I have documented cougars bedded for the day a few feet off a well used park trail. The cougar doubtless was aware of the hikers, the hikers were completely unaware of the cougar and therefore were at risk of being ambushed."



gar that had been hit by a car. After the accident this cougar lived for several months in dense brush below a row of houses in Orange County. His hip socket was destroyed, but he managed to survive on possums and other small game. No homeowners were ever aware of his presence, and no domestic animals were consumed as prey (Beier/Barrett '93). During this study

black widow spider. However, rare things happen and it seems there have been a slightly higher number of human/cougar encounters in the recent past. This is most likely due to the continued encroachment of humans upon dwindling habitat areas. More people "heading for the hills" increases the likelihood of encounters.

What to do in case of attack

Beier points out that even though attacks are extremely rare with only one attack per decade resulting in death, the risk is still greater than zero. So when confronted with a threat I have found that knowledge is often the best tool for minimizing that threat. My response when someone asks what

to do in the unlikely event of being approached or attacked by a lion is based on the most current research. According to data from actual incidents, the most common factor noted to have dissuaded attacking cougars was noise and vigorous action. Standing to your full height, waving arms, yelling, whistling, throwing a rock or stick. Whatever you do, *don't play dead*. The natural instinct is to drag the animal that has been killed to a safe area, then eat it. It's not wise to play dead with a cougar; maybe with a bear, but *not a cougar*.

Some dietary surprises

Speaking of eating, the cougar's primary meal of choice is deer. However, as we will see, many other animals contribute to their diet. They will bring down a deer on average once every 10 days. It attacks from behind, first quietly waiting or stalking until within range of its prey. Then, in a tremendous explosion of power, the cougar will charge after the deer like a locomotive, bounding onto the deer from behind, biting the back of the neck, severing the spinal column. From the kill area, the mountain lion drags the carcass to a safe place.

The cougars under study in the Santa Ana Mountains generally followed a very predictable pattern of prey consumption.

1. Cougars spent 3-4 days consuming a deer, and usually ate the entire carcass, often including the brain and some bone marrow. Generally the heart, lungs, and liver were eaten immediately after the kill, and major muscles were eaten over the next few days.
2. Deer were usually dragged a short distance from the kill site to the site where they were consumed; these sites were generally cool canyon bottoms with good hiding cover.
3. Prey consumption was almost entirely at night. Deer carcasses were usually covered with leaves and twigs at dawn and left covered all day. The deer's rumen (major stomach) was almost always buried in a separate leaf mound several feet away from the carcass; the rumen was never consumed.
4. The cougar usually bedded down

for the day near the carcass, but sometimes up to 1.5 km away.

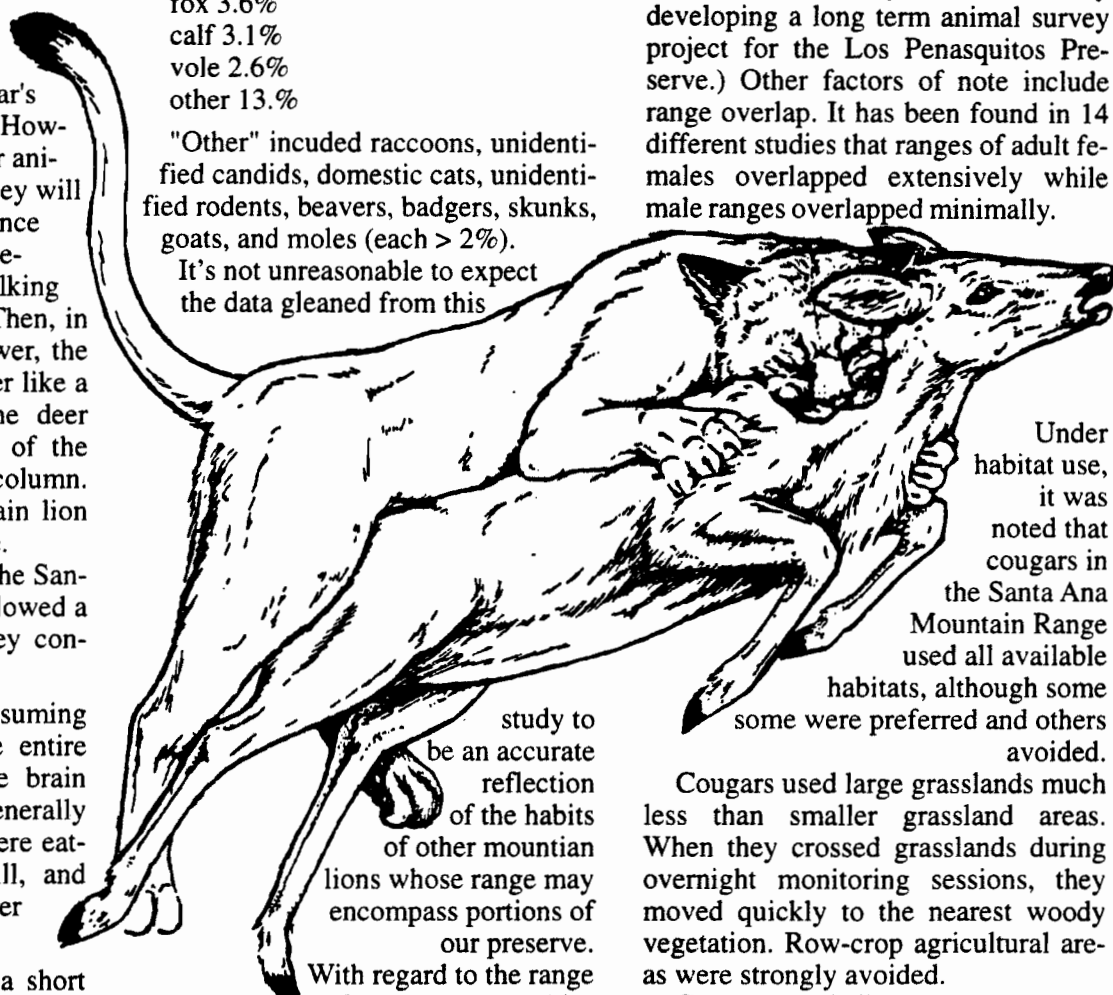
5. Smaller prey, like opossums, raccoons and skunks were usually consumed in 3-5 hours: sometimes these carcasses would be covered also.

Overall, deer accounted for 53.4% of their diet. Other prey:

opossum 10.4%
 coyote 9.3%
 gopher 4.7%
 rabbit 4.7%
 fox 3.6%
 calf 3.1%
 vole 2.6%
 other 13.0%

"Other" included raccoons, unidentified canids, domestic cats, unidentified rodents, beavers, badgers, skunks, goats, and moles (each > 2%).

It's not unreasonable to expect the data gleaned from this



study to be an accurate reflection of the habits of other mountain lions whose range may encompass portions of our preserve.

With regard to the range of a cougar, several interesting facts emerged as a result of the Santa Ana study:

Habitat range

Home ranges of adult females averaged about 220 square km calculated over a full year. Male home ranges were about 4 times the size of female ranges. It took about 7 months for an adult cougar to use most of its home range. Only a fraction of it was used in any given week or month. An adult female cougar typically used less than a third of her home range in any given

month. Which leads me to a very important point that the study made . . . "This finding has implications for using tracks or other sign to detect cougar presence. For example, such sign is often used to determine whether the site of a proposed project is being used by cougars. No sign for a 200-day sampling period would be strong evidence that the site is not a normal part of any cougar's home range. However, shorter efforts could well fail to detect the presence of a resident cougar." (This is one good reason for why we are currently developing a long term animal survey project for the Los Penasquitos Preserve.) Other factors of note include range overlap. It has been found in 14 different studies that ranges of adult females overlapped extensively while male ranges overlapped minimally.

Under habitat use, it was noted that cougars in the Santa Ana Mountain Range used all available habitats, although some were preferred and others avoided.

Cougars used large grasslands much less than smaller grassland areas. When they crossed grasslands during overnight monitoring sessions, they moved quickly to the nearest woody vegetation. Row-crop agricultural areas were strongly avoided.

Cougars used all types of terrain, including the steepest slopes and rock outcrops. During long distance movements cougars seemed to prefer the scour in the bottoms of larger canyons. Dirt roads that paralleled these zones were used as the cougar alternated between the wash and the road. Ridgetops were also favored travel routes, especially when a dirt road or hiking trail created an easy path through chaparral.

Cougars were found to have cate-

(crayfish cont'd)

gorically avoided denser (housing) areas although they would skirt those areas within 100 meters of the peripheral homes. Cougars tolerate 1 dwelling per 40 acres if the areas are adjacent to unpopulated areas. Paul Beier estimates that the transition from habitat to non-habitat occurs at about 1 dwelling per 20 acres.

Because cougars have large home ranges and do not reach high population density, habitat must be either contiguous with or connected to at least several hundred square miles of suitable habitat.

Loss of connectivity is the main factor threatening to cause many wildlands to cease being cougar habitat (as well as habitat for many other species). That is to say — *viable wildlife corridors* are necessary to support the diversity of species once abundant and now on the decline in Southern California.

In the Santa Ana study 5 criteria determined cougar habitat;

1. The vegetation was predominantly native.
2. There was some woody vegetation.
3. The area had ample prey, especially mule deer.
4. There was a low density of buildings and human dwellings.
5. The area was contiguous or connected to the main block of cougar habitat.

Sound familiar? Our preserve fits the criteria as an extension of a greater area of lion habitat to the north, east and south. Unfortunately Miramar access is cut off to the south due to development. Recently the completion of Pomerado road without regard to inclusion of a viable wildlife corridor has cut us off to the east. The "merge" — I-805 and I-5 has cut us off to the west. The north is all that is left and we need to stay on top of plans for this area with a keen sense of urgency.

Reliability of sightings

We have had several folks indicate to us over the past several months that they have sighted a mountain lion within the preserve or up to the north toward the Carmel Mountain area. These reports sound valid and have

been given by reliable, experienced people. However it may be worth mentioning some interesting observations on the subject of sightings by Paul Beier. He states, "In our experience during 1988-1992, at least 75% and perhaps as many as 95% of the routine sightings were cases where the observer has misidentified a bobcat, coyote, domestic dog, domestic cat, raccoon, or deer."

After reading in his report of several examples illustrating that even people with extensive experience with animals mistakenly identify other animals as cougars, I have learned to be skeptical when told of a sighting. However, I am very interested in any sighting and would like to be notified immediately via the Friends answering machine or Rangers Bill Lawrence or Reneene Mowry. We would like to take castings of tracks if possible as a part of our wildlife study/survey. Quick notification of the sighting is of paramount importance because of the fragile nature of tracks in the type of soils found in the preserve.

Tracks take careful study

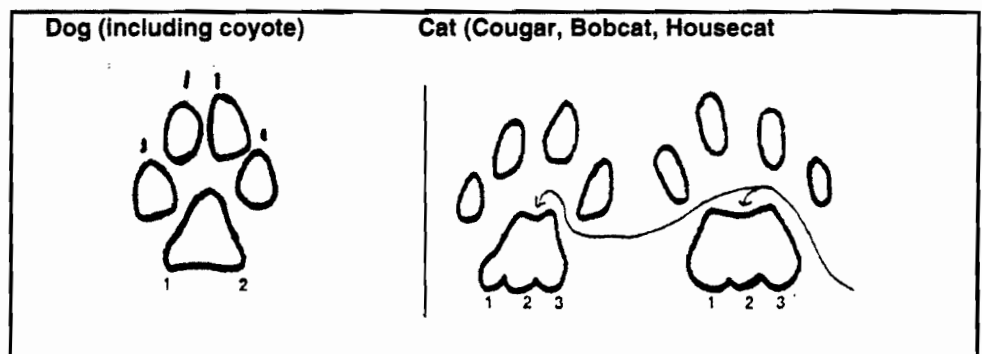
How can you identify a cougar track? First, if the cougar walked in a dirt trail it will almost always leave tracks. Next, with a track identification guide in your hand check everywhere within a 1/4 mile of the sighting area. Then, keep in mind these key points about cougar tracks; to distinguish between dog tracks and cougar tracks, size is worthless as a criterion. Some dog tracks are larger. If you see claw marks it is a dog track. However

tracks without claw marks can also be dog tracks. The critical field marks relate to *track shape*: a dog track has a roughly triangular "heel" pad with two lobes at rear, and near perfect symmetry (you can rarely tell right from left). The "heel" pad of a cat track has 3 lobes at the rear margin and a dimple in front. A cat track is also asymmetric: you can tell right from left. If the heel pad of a cat is over 37mm (1.5") wide, it is a cougar track; if narrower, it is a bobcat or housecat.

Also, recall the description at the beginning of this article. If you see an animal that in your mind fits the description of a mountain lion — without a doubt — and you can confirm the sightings with tracks, you are indeed fortunate. Call us right away, then reflect on the fact that you have seen one of nature's most magnificent creatures in the wild.

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Tracks: Size is worthless as a criterion: some dog tracks are larger than cougar tracks. If you can see claw marks, it is a dog track; however, tracks without claw marks can also be dog tracks. The critical field marks relate to track shape: A dog track has a roughly triangular "heel" pad with 2 lobes at rear, and near-perfect symmetry (you can rarely tell right from left). The "heel" pad of a cat track has 3 lobes at the rear margin and a dimple in front. A cat track is also asymmetric: you can tell right from left. If the heel pad of a cat track is over 37 mm (1.5") wide, it is a cougar track; if narrower, it is a bobcat or housecat.

Alien Species

by Carla D'Antonio & Tom L. Dudley

[We reprint this article from *Pacific Discovery* to provide the background necessary for our members to understand the importance with which the Friends treat the problem of invasive plants and animals in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Pest plant illustrations are our own. Mike Kelly, president of the Friends, was recently elected State Secretary of the California Exotic Pest Plant Council, a group he helped form along with Carla D'Antonio and other professionals in ecology and natural resources, co-author of this article — editor]

In 1958, Oxford ecologist Charles Elton outlined the ecologically devastating effects of invading species in his book, *The Ecology of Invasions by Plants and Animals*. Elton stated that "we are living in a period of the world's history when the mingling of thousands of kinds or organisms from different parts of the world is setting up terrific dislocations in nature. We are seeing huge changes in the natural population balance of the world." Although he warned that invasions were increasingly widespread, the threats they pose to natural ecosystems did not come to the full attention of the scientific community and the general public until the last decade.

Even today, 35 years after Elton's warning, we have not taken the gravity of the situation to heart; while major environmental threats such as global climate change attract more and more of our national attention and research dollars, the invasion of our ecosystems by plants and animals from around the world is every bit as insidious and important.

It is almost impossible to find communities that have not been affected by invading organisms. In the western United States, we have been almost overrun by grasses and herbs from Europe and Africa, clams from Asia, or even less distant immigrants from the eastern United States such as bullfrogs, cowbirds, and sunfish. Exotic organisms are proving to be costly threats to private enterprise, taxpayers, and natural ecosystems. As urban and

agricultural development expand, the value of wildlands as repositories of biological diversity and as symbols of our natural heritage has increased. Along with land-use change and habitat fragmentation, introduced species present another front on which these wildlands are being attacked.

For instance, throughout coastal California, the Hottentot fig, a succulent more commonly known as highway iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), with its brilliant pink or yellow flowers, carpets roadsides, suburban gardens, and ocean bluffs. This attractive and seemingly useful groundcover plant introduced into California from



Artichoke thistle (cardoon, desert artichoke)
Cynara cardunculus

South Africa about 70 years ago is actually anything but innocuous, and has become a major frustration for land managers and biologists.

The iceplant has become a problem species in wild dune, grassland, and scrub communities on the Pacific Coast from Baja California to the Oregon border. It invades natural habitats far away from where it was planted because rabbits and deer eat the fruits and disperse its seeds. When the iceplant takes hold it can out-compete the native species, acidify the soil beneath it, and is difficult (and costly) to eradicate. Without amendment or modifica-

tion, the decline in soil fertility is slow to reverse even after the iceplant's removal. Similar stories are repeated throughout the world with different complexes of introduced and native species.

Most plants and animals can disperse naturally into new habitats, and still today, invasions such as the colonization of North America by cattle egrets from Africa, occur without human intervention. But the most destructive invasions are invariably those facilitated by people, and they have been going on around the globe for centuries. The builders of empires were accompanied by other species from the lands of the conquerors, imposing what historian Alfred Crosby calls "ecological imperialism." Native ecosystems have been subjected to oppression similar to that experienced by indigenous peoples.

Many introductions were intentional. Sheep and swine were released onto islands in the New World to provide food for returning colonists. Eucalyptus and tamarisk trees were introduced for lumber and windbreaks, while European and African grasses were brought for livestock fodder. And there are many cases of biological control projects gone awry, such as the mongooses which were brought to Hawaii to control introduced rats but instead became predators of native birds.

Other introductions have been accidental. These are particularly common around trade centers where ships release their ballast along with cysts and seeds of foreign species. This was the source of the Eurasian zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*), which now clogs water facilities in the Midwest and the Great Lakes, as well as many of the weeds we now pull from our gardens. The chestnut blight fungus, which has caused the near-extinction of American chestnut trees throughout the eastern United States, was a hitchhiker on Asian chestnut plants brought to this country around the turn of the century.

Not every introduced species in per-

(Aliens cont'd)

nicious. Agriculture in the United States, as elsewhere, depends on introduced species, and in gardens, parklands, and managed natural areas it is common to find introduced species that do not spread into wildlands. So what qualities made an introduced species a pest? First, if it reduces biological diversity by affecting the survival of native species, either through predation, or from competition or disease. Second, if it causes change in the resource supply and so influences the composition of the community at large. Third, if it alters the rate or type of disturbances, such as changing the frequency and severity of fires.

In addition, for an introduced species to be a real danger, it must reproduce and spread on its own. For instance, eucalyptus trees clearly inhibit the growth of other plants, and to many people they are a nuisance. Yet because they spread little from their original planted areas they are not difficult to control in California. Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), on the other hand, does invade widely and illustrates why many exotics reproduce and disperse so successfully: it lacks the natural controls found in its native lands. There are 38 known herbivores that eat broom in Europe and only eight broom eaters in the United States.

Sometime in the 1940s or early 1950s brown tree snakes (*Bioga irregularis*) from Australia or New Guinea were accidentally transported to Guam. Free from both predators and competitors, these snakes flourished. Today Guam has tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of these snakes. They have destroyed almost the entire native avifauna. Nine native forest bird species have become extinct, and others are likely to follow.

Likewise, on Santa Catalina Island grazing by introduced goats and sheep caused the elimination of an estimated 48 native plant species, several of which were endemic to the Channel Islands. Work by Berkeley graduate student Sarah Kupferberg suggests that the introduced bullfrog competes with native frogs and may be a primary cause of their decline in northern California rivers.

Cases of invaders altering resources often involve plants which reduce the quality or supply of nutrients and water to native assemblages. In addition to the highway iceplant species, the crystalline iceplant (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*) alters soil resources by taking up salts from deeper soil levels and concentrating them in leaf tissue. When these annuals die, they deposit salt on the soil surface leading, over successive years, to its salinization.

Salt cedar or tamarisk, native to the Mediterranean, was planted as a windbreak throughout the arid western United States. At least one species, *Tamarix ramosissima*, has proved extremely invasive and now infests many stream and river corridors. This tree transpires enormous quantities of wa-



Pampass grass
Cortaderia jubata

ter. It draws the water table so far down that previously permanent ponds and streams disappear, and the plant communities and the animals that depend on them are jeopardized.

Both plant and animal invaders can alter the abundance of other species indirectly by modifying the natural rate of disturbances. Throughout western U.S. rangelands and in dry tropical forests of the Hawaiian islands, Central America, and Australia, introduced grasses primarily of European or African origin have increased the frequency and intensity of fire. Before the invasion of Idaho rangeland by European cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), fires burned through this Great Basin desert every 60 to 110 years. Since the grass invasion, these same sites burn every three to five years, decimating native woody species which do not recover well from frequent fire. Grass-fueled fires typically encourage even more abundant growth of introduced grasses at the expense of native plant species and the animals that have depended on them. In Hawaii, fires fueled by alien grasses have converted thousands of acres of native dry forest to exotic-

dominated savanna.

In many cases we see not a single problem species, but an "invasions complex." One invader takes hold, alters the physical habitat, and soon other exotic species are finding a new home. The European wild boar, which now roams over much of the United States including Hawaii, rototills the soil in native communities in search of bulbs and insects. It can destroy native understory vegetation and opens up space for invasion by introduced plants. Also in Hawaii, introduced fruit-eating birds disperse seeds of the introduced fire tree *Myrica faya*. This nitrogen-fixing tree is enhancing the rate of nitrogen accumulation and altering plant and animal succession in young volcanic soils.

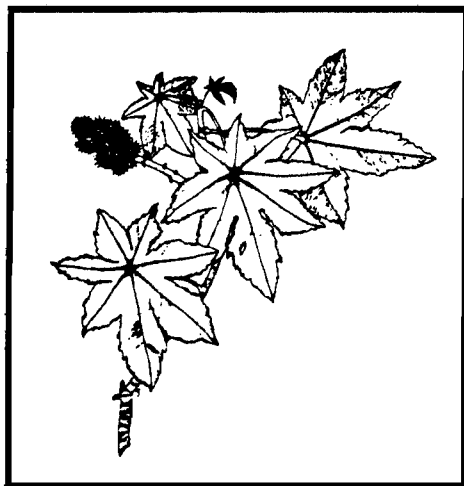
While invasions do occur in intact ecosystems, more often it is human land-use changes, such as livestock grazing, forest practices, fire suppression, and regulation of stream flows which create the conditions that allow large-scale invasion. Once invaders are established, it is difficult, if not impossible, to recreate the natural processes that supported the original biota.

The economic consequences of invaders can be far-reaching and costly. In Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, where over 66 percent of the plant species are introduced and wild pigs disrupt many of the native ecosystems, the Resources Management Division spends 80-90 percent of its annual budget on eradication efforts, according to park vegetation specialist Tim Tunison. Channel Islands National Park in California has spent more than \$725,000 to eradicate feral pigs from Santa Rosa Island. To date 1,200 pigs have been removed. "These were very expensive pigs," points out wildlife biologist Carmen Lombardo, "but eradication was essential to the ultimate restoration of these sites."

Mainland parks and reserves also suffer from alien species problems. Everglades National Park spent \$16,500 an acre eradicating the aggressive Christmas berry (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) from a 60-acre site. They had to remove every inch of the rich topsoil left over from past farming operations. Only the native plants could take root in the sterile soil below.

Habitat restoration projects frequently become mired down by introduced species problems. After a pipeline was installed in Santa Barbara County, California in the mid-1980s introduced plants soon dominated the disturbed land, preventing the regrowth of native species. Removing these weeds absorbed a large part of the restoration budget.

In some parks, reserves, and agricultural habitats, introduced species have been controlled through manual, chemical, and biological techniques to simulate the elements which regulate populations in native landscapes, both state and federal agricultural departments have long been involved in introducing predators or pathogens to



Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)

control earlier-introduced pests. A European weed, tansy ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), was successfully controlled on range and agricultural lands in northern California and Oregon and in Redwood National Park using two insect species from Europe, a flea beetle and the cinnabar moth. Scale insect pests on citrus fruit in California are also controlled with host-specific parasitoid wasps from Asia.

Unfortunately, very little biological control research has been done on plants and animals that are not agricultural pests. Control of ragwort in Redwood National Park was only pursued because it also threatened nearby rangelands. The research is expensive, time-consuming, and complex and is not within the budgets of most parks and reserves. Consequently, wildland managers have had to rely on manual and chemical removal methods.

Their success has been proportional to the degree of the invasion at the time when removal began. At Channel Islands National Park, invasion by pampas grass and yellow star thistle, introduced plants that are serious problems elsewhere because removal and subsequent monitoring began while populations of the invaders were still limited. Other exotic plants that already covered large areas and had built up extensive seed banks have yet to succumb to control.

In the last decade, citizen groups and public agencies have begun to combine their efforts to identify and control problem species. Concern over the spread and negative impacts of the Australian tree *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, which has been estimated to be spreading through the Florida Everglades at a rate of 15,000 acres per year, led to the formation of the Exotic Pest Plant Council. This group is funded by several state and federal agencies and has members educating the public and land managers about threats posed by exotic species. In west Marin County, California, a number of groups, including the Friends of the Coyote Bush, are systematically tearing out the French broom which has engulfed hillsides once covered with wildflowers. A chapter of the Exotic Pest Plant Council has now formed in California and is in the process of identifying the introduced species that pose the greatest threats to our wildlands.

In Southern California, local, state, and federal agencies have banded together to form the *Arundo Donax* Task Force to control the spread of this invasive and fire-promoting giant reedgrass. Because wildland and reserve boundaries are not obeyed by introduced species, this type of multi-agency and public cooperation is essential to long-term control of exotic organisms. Throughout California and the West, The Nature Conservancy and other volunteer organizations also sponsor programs in which citizens assist with exotic species eradication.

These are encouraging signs, but the rate of human-caused invasions continues to far exceed efforts to stem them. Unless there is a popular awakening to the seriousness of the problem, local and regional diversity will

continue to shrink, and the world's biota will become increasingly homogenized, threatening our economies and irreversibly impoverishing our natural heritage.

Carla D'Antonio, an assistant professor of plant ecology at the University of California at Berkeley, studies plant invasions in California and Hawaii.

Tom L. Dudley is a biologist at the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security in Oakland, California.

Meetings Scheduled

Route 56 Advances

by Mike Kelly

Planning for the future alignment of Route 56 is advancing rapidly. This highway will connect I-15 at Rancho Peñasquitos to I-5 in Carmel Valley. The east end has been completed west to Black Mountain Road, while the west end east from I-5 is under construction. Still to be decided is the exact alignment of the middle portion.

The alignment of this middle portion and financing issues are the focus of the Route 56 Citizens Advisory Committee. I represent the Friends on this group. The Friends are concerned about the alignment since 56 will pass through the Future Urbanizing Area, the undeveloped land on the Preserve's northern border. The freeway will cross important wildlife corridors. Beginning three years ago the Friends helped identify and map sensitive habitats and wildlife corridors in the north city area. Preserving these is vital for the future of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, to prevent its isolation from other open-space systems.

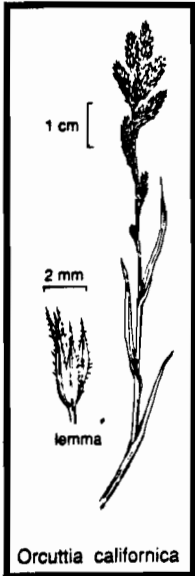
Community meetings will be held in Rancho Peñasquitos Wednesday, Jan. 5, at 7:30 in the Berwick Room of the Doubletree Resort off Carmel Mountain Road and Tuesday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. at Carmel Del Mar School in Carmel Valley. Caltrans will present alternative routes at these meetings and discuss the environmental, financial, engineering, traffic and other issues involved. Plan on attending.

New Endangered Species Listings for Southern California

by Dave Hogan, The Southwest Center for Biological Diversity

Vernal pool species listed

On August 3, 1993, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed four southern California vernal pool species as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Found only in vernal pools in San Diego and Riverside Counties, the Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), San Diego button-celery (*Eryngium aristulatum*), and the Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus wootoni*) are all threatened with extinction in the near future. The listing of these species, along with four others presently undergoing review by USFWS, could potentially protect hundreds of acres of incredibly rich vernal pool habitat in San Diego and Riverside Counties.



Designated as Candidate 1 species on

December 15, 1980 (species for which the Service has sufficient data in its possession to support a Federal listing proposal as endangered or threatened), the three plants were then placed in the dungeon category of "warranted but precluded" for the next twelve years. During that time, at least half of the remaining populations of these species were destroyed by residential and agricultural development. A petition by the San Diego Biodiversity Project, and an out-of-court settlement on a legal complaint brought about by the Biodiversity Legal Foundation finally forced the USFWS to act on these critically imperiled species.

Discovered as a species only in 1985, the Riverside fairy shrimp is likely one of the most endangered known invertebrate in southern California. All populations are threatened by residential development in River-

side and San Diego Counties, and Baja California Norte.

All Four species are entirely dependent on vernal pool habitats in southern California. Vernal pools are unique temporary aquatic ecosystems found isolated from creeks and streams, and are formed after winter and spring rains on the coastal sandstone mesatops of San Diego County, and on clay soils of the inland valleys of Riverside County. Because they are nearly always found on flat topography valued as prime real estate within the sunbelt of California, vernal pools have been reduced to *less than 3%* of their original numbers throughout the State.

Southern Maritime Chaparral proposed listings

On October 1, 1993, USFWS proposed endangered status for four plants, and threatened status for two others under the ESA. Found entirely within the southern maritime and southern mixed chaparrals of Orange and San Diego County, and Baja California Norte, all six plants including the Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*), Encinitas baccharis (*Baccharis vanessae*), Del Mar sand aster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia* var. *linifolia*), Orcutt's spineflower (*Chorizanthe orcuttiana*), short-leaved dudleya (*Dudleya blochmaniae*

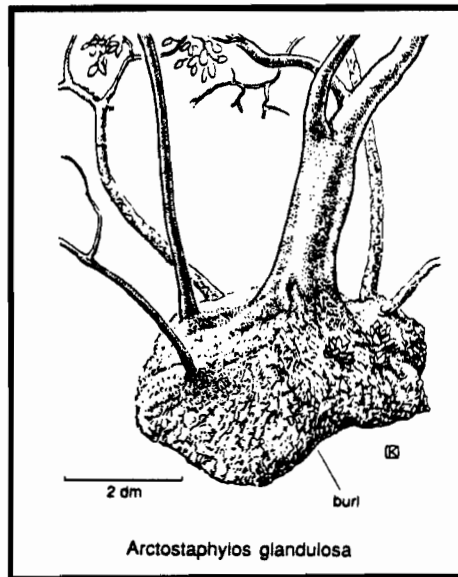
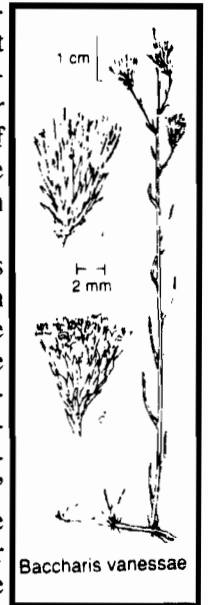
ssp. *brevifolia*), and the big-leaved crown beard (*Verbisina dissita*) are threatened by the ongoing destruction of coastal chaparral habitats for residential and agricultural development.

The big-leaved crown beard and the Del Mar sand aster are only proposed for threatened status and not endangered status due to the presence of extensive crown beard populations in Baja, and disturbance tolerance by the sand aster. The listing of these species, along with the listing of the California gnatcatcher last spring, could potentially protect the *fewer than 1500 acres* of southern maritime chaparral remaining in existence.

Like most species under consideration for listing by the USFWS, most of the above proposed species have been languishing on the "warranted but precluded" list for years while habitat critical to their continued existence has been obliterated.

A petition by the San Diego Biodiversity Project, and an out-of-court settlement on a legal complaint brought by the Biodiversity Legal Foundation finally forced the USFWS to act on these critically imperiled species.

All six species are dependent on the unique fog and marine layer associated with the southern maritime chaparral plant community of Orange and San Diego Counties, and Baja California Norte. This chaparral is also home to the well known Torrey Pine, one of the rarest conifers in the world. Fewer than 1500 acres of this habitat remain, and of that, only half is found in fairly large, contiguous blocks. Besides direct destruction of habitat, the elimination of the fire regime on the southern California coastline is probably the most serious threat to the six species.



Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon January/February Events Schedule

Winter Rains Presage Spring

Several light rains were enough to stimulate the growth of grasses — including blue-eyed grass — and other plants in the Preserve. Fuschia flowering gooseberry will be blooming soon, presaging the parade of flowers that will begin in the winter and extend into spring and summer.

With the ground saturated or close to it, vernal pools will probably start filling during the next rain. Then we begin our annual vernal pool walks!

Our 1992 fire area on Lopez Ridge will provide us a living laboratory for several more years of the ecology of fire and the biodiversity that follows. Again this year we'll take visitors into the fire area. On one walk alone last year we identified 67 flowering native plants in one gully in the fire area! Join us for these walks and discover the diversity of Peñasquitos Canyon.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

Volunteer Work Parties

Several events in our schedule are volunteer work parties to help control invasive weeds that kill off our native plant species (see article this issue). No experience is needed, just the willingness to work for a few hours cutting and removing different weeds. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for more details.

JANUARY

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., Jan. 8, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See winter-colors. Learn about the concept of biodiversity. Led by Les Braund.

Geology Walk

Sun., Jan. 9, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Park legally. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sun., Jan. 9, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She has copies available for purchase and autographs.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Sun., Jan. 9, 3-5 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

California Gnatcatcher Survey

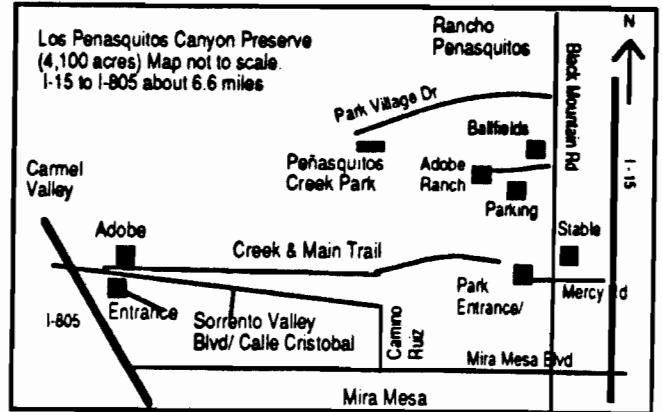
Sat., Jan. 15, 8-12:30. This is the first of several surveys for this endangered bird in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Amateurs are welcome as well as experienced birders. We will be working in teams in different zones in the Preserve. To participate and/or attend a training session, call Brian Swanson at 695-2209.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Jan. 15, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Wed., Jan. 19, 7 p.m. at Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields all the way to the red barn. Meeting is in the north wing of the adobe ranch house.



Bird Walk from Ranch House

Sat., Jan. 22, 8-9:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. Bring bird book and binoculars. Many different birds. Led by Brian Swanson.

Volunteer Work Party: Arundo donax control

Sat., Jan. 22, 2 - 5 p.m. Help us remove this invasive weed and protect our native bio-diversity. No experience needed. Only need gloves. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left.

Wildlife Workshop at Ranch House

Sat., Jan. 29, 9-12 p.m. Volunteers who want to participate in our wildlife surveys by monitoring a "station" in the Preserve will receive classroom and field instruction in reading tracks during this workshop. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch.

Volunteer Work Party: Arundo donax control

Sat., Jan. 29, 2 - 5 p.m. Help us protect our native bio-diversity. See Jan. 22 listing for details.

January/February Events Schedule Continued

Night Walk

Sat., Jan. 29, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve — when its mammals are most active. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

FEBRUARY

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Feb. 5, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Vernal Pool and Fire Ecology Walk

Sat., Feb. 5, 9 - noon. We combine these walks because the vernal pools were in the 1992 fire area. Learn about vernal pools, their interesting plants and animals, some endangered, and of the threats to them. In the fire area learn about the vital role fire plays in our ecosystem. See many flowering plants and resprouting vegetation after the fire. The greatest biodiversity of plants in the Preserve is now in the burn area. Wear old clothes, boots and bring water. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. If full, go west on Cristobal until see fence on right, park on shoulder off road below it. Hike will begin there. Park legally. Led by Mike Kelly.

Volunteer Work Party: Vernal Pools

Sat., Feb. 5, 1 p.m. After the vernal pool walk listed above we'll be doing some light weeding in the vernal pool area to control exotics threatening the native endangered plants in the pool area. Hands and knees, trowels and gloves if you have them. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for more details.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Sat., Feb. 12, 3-5 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento

Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Geology Walk

Sun., Feb. 13, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Wed., Feb. 16, 7 p.m. at Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields all the way to the red barn. Meeting is in the north wing of the adobe ranch house.

Nature Walk

Sat., Feb. 19, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See winter-colors. Learn about the concept of biodiversity. Led by Les Braund.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Feb. 19, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See Feb. 5 listing for details.

Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sun., Feb. 20, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs.

Volunteer Work Party

Sat., Feb. 26, 9 - noon. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for location.

Night Walk

Sat., Feb. 26, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve — when its mammals are most active. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

“Bert” Fleming Honored

Canyonside Park Dedicated

Saturday, Nov. 20, the new community park at Canyonside was officially dedicated. The park is just off Black Mountain Road north of the Preserve's main entrance and opposite Rancho Peñasquitos Equestrian Center. The park is for active sports and includes a new recreation center and accompanying ballfields and playing courts. The project took many years to complete in a process spearheaded by a very dedicated Rancho Peñasquitos Recreation Council.

The late Dr. Elberta Fleming, a co-founder of the Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, was a member of the Council for a number of years. Although her main involvement was with the Friends and protecting its natural resources she was a strong believer in educating the youth to become tomorrow's environmental conscious citizen.

At the dedication ceremony Dr. Fleming's memory was honored with the dedication of the courtyard in her name. The entrance and courtyard were done with a native habitat theme and are quite attractive. Bill Fleming, her husband, and her son Alex attended the ceremony. Alex gave a short presentation on the appropriateness of honoring his late mother's name in this fashion, citing her long-time involvement with the Canyon Preserve, but especially her work with the youth.

News Updates

CALPAW '94 qualifies for ballot

The California Parks and Wildlife Initiative '94 (CALPAW '94) has been officially certified for the June 1994 ballot. If passed by the voters some \$2 billion in bond monies would be available for the purchase of parklands statewide. Twenty projects in San Diego County would benefit, most of them open-space parks. The Preserve would benefit from one project to improve the lagoon and another to purchase part of the Del Mar Mesa as open-space to be connected to our Preserve.

Preserve expansion

This fall the San Diego City Council voted approval for the purchase of two more parcels of land, about 50 acres in total, to be added to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Both are adjacent to the future land swap trade property that lies north of the waterfall in the middle of the Preserve.

In addition, 209 acres of open-space in Sabre Springs is expected to be dedicated as park land by Council action at its January 3, 1994 meeting. This land will be connected to the Preserve via the Mercy property. This latter parcel is immediately east of the I-15 bridge at Mercy Road where the Preserve currently ends. Negotiations are underway by another City Department which should result in the acquisition of most of this property.

Members who have attended one of our Sabre Springs walk will remember an oak riparian habitat in good condition with lots of water. There is also a patch of the State-listed endangered species, the San Diego thorn mint. It is still a good wildlife area. Unfortunately, no safe, viable wildlife corridor currently connects from Sabre Springs east to Beeler and Sycamore Canyons. Pomerado Road and the new Poway Freeway effectively block wildlife passage.

Kelly honored

The Friends' president, Mike Kelly, was honored by the San Diego Sierra Club at its annual fall awards dinner as "the conservationists' conservationist." He was honored along with other volunteers, including Save Our Forest's organizer Duncan McFetridge.

Friends Board Directory

Officers

President: Mike Kelly 566-6489

Vice-President: Don Albright 271-9216

Treasurer: Rena Kerwin

Secretary: Les Braund 566-3958

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Vicky Ausen, Trinity Gabriel, Tom Hopp, Ph.D., Barry Martin, Alan Pepper, Ph.D., Brian Swanson

Walks and Committees Leaders

Bird Walks & Gnatcatcher Survey Committee: Brian Swanson 695-2209

Conservation Chair: Alan Pepper, Ph.D. 586-7123

Geology Walk Leader: Don Albright 443-7982

Hike Committee: Trinity Gabriel 672-0229

Medicinal Plant & Night Walks: Will Bowen 452-7091

Nature Walk leader: Les Braund 566-3958

Newsletter Committee: Mike Kelly, Carla Scott, Vicky Ausen

Vernal Pool, Mystery Tree, Fire, Stage Coach & Dusk Walks: Mike Kelly

Wetlands Restoration Committee: Don Albright, Tom Hopp, Susan George, Marcus Spiegelberg, Trinity Gabriel, John Northrop

Wildlife Survey Committee & Tracking Walk: Barry Martin 484-4007

Abbe Leaves

by Mike Kelly, president

The Preserve lost a good friend when Abbe Wolfsheimer, San Diego City Councilmember representing the first district, left office this month. Those members who worked on a day-to-day basis with Preserve issues know Abbe was always there, ready to go to bat for the Preserve. Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the San Dieguito River Valley had a special place in Abbe's heart and it showed.

True to form, in the final weeks of her term, Abbe doggedly followed through on an issue that has been plaguing us for years, siltation from nearby developments into the Preserve. Her inquiries and pressure helped push the City to require the Park Village developers to take a series of remedial measures to stop future siltation and undo past damages.

Abbe is being replaced by Harry Mathis, who beat out Peter Navarro for the 1st District seat. Barbara Warden is replacing Tom Behr, who represents the Fifth District, the Mira Mesa side of the Preserve. We look forward to working with both of these new members of the City Council.

Thanks Volunteers!

Arundo Donax Control: Les Braund, Mike Kelly, Melanie Howe

Gnatcatcher Committee organizing: Brian Swanson, Mike Kelly, Barry Martin

Pampass Grass Control: Mike Kelly

Tamarisk Control: Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Vicky Ausen

Wildlife Survey Committee Organizing: Barry Martin, Mike Kelly

In Memoriam

In memory of Bruce McClure, MD., Eileen Connolly, Carrie Gonzales and J.J. Murray of the Labor and Delivery staff at Mercy Hospital made a donation to the Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Dr. McClure, an avid equestrian user of the parkland, passed away earlier in the year.

In memory of Mrs. Leda Dunlap, Native Daughter of the Golden West, San Diego Parlor No. 208, Ellen M. Kendall made a donation to the Friends. Mrs. Dunlap was a regular supporter of the Friends' activities.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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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

1/93

Hikes

Indian Culture

Educational Workshops

School, Family, Youth Programs

Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

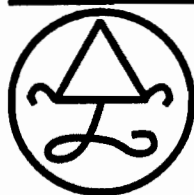
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Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

March/April 1994
Volume 8 No. 2

Future Urbanizing Area Debate

by Mike Kelly, president

An important debate is occurring within the environmental movements over the North City Future Urbanizing Area (FUA). The Friends have taken a position not shared by some environmental groups. We want to share with you our thinking on this position.

As we have reported over the years, the FUA is a block of 12,000 relatively undeveloped acres of land bordered by Peñasquitos Canyon on the south, Rancho Peñasquitos on the east, Carmel Valley on the West and Fairbanks Ranch on the north. About half the area has been farmed. Nurseries occupy part of it, while a number of residences at low density occur scattered about it. Perhaps one-third to one-half of the acreage is of high quality habitat.

The FUA is of vital importance to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve because the only viable wildlife corridors that connect the Preserve with other open-space areas are north from the Preserve through the FUA. In addition, the Friends successfully proposed another core preserve of about 500 acres on the Del Mar Mesa — part of the FUA — for the June 1994 California Parks and Wildlife ballot proposition (CALPAW).

In 1985 Proposition A was passed by the voters. This put the FUA off limits to any urban level development until the voters themselves voted again to allow such development through a "phase shift" vote. Development at the underlying zoning of A-1-10, agricultural or estate level zoning, was still permitted. The San Diego City Council later decided that development was allowed at one unit per 4 acres, which would allow

Cont'd on p. 6

Wildlife Study Underway

by Barry Martin

The Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve's Wildlife Study got underway January 29 with a training and organizational meeting at the Adobe Ranch. There was a tremendous turnout of enthusiastic outdoor oriented people. Tim Dillingham, from the State Department of Fish and Game, introduced participants to some of the basics of tracking and how to create and maintain tracking stations.

Teams were organized and assigned to zones within the preserve. These teams will be doing initial zone examinations to become familiar with terrain, vegetation, topography, main trail orientation and obvious signs of animal activity within their respective zones. Upon completion of these initial examination we will begin systematic checking of stations within each zone for signs and tracks. The information gained from these observation will become the basis for our wildlife data base. Future techniques of information gathering will include night observation opportunities. We look forward to an interesting and enlightening experience learning about our neighbors; the animals who live in the preserve.

Our thanks to the following people who have volunteered for this study:

Kirsten Ashby, Vicky and Melinda Auben, Chris Baden, Rick Berg, Rick Botta, Will Bowen, PhD, Brad Buffutt, Itchung Cheung, Susie Cole, Trent Colville, Mike Dorais, Elizabeth Dunnigan, Mike Gonzales, Patty Hayden, Tom Hopp, Phil Ireland, Sara and Tarja Jacobsen, Kate Johnson, John Keating, Mike Kelly, Lee Kirchhaval, Lindsay Kramer, Jaime Lawrence, Joan Matlock, Tim McDonough, Lee Mendez, W.E. Moore, Richard Nguyen, Lan and Erik Noreka, John Northrup, PhD, Mike Pfeifer, Susan Potts, Brian Swanson, Sandy Symington.

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Gnatcatcher Survey

by Brian Swanson

The Friends Gnatcatcher survey is well underway. Our volunteers have been making repeated forays into their respective territories to locate and count the gnatcatcher population in the Preserve and adjacent areas. Once into the breeding season volunteers will seek to identify the location of the breeding pairs. The study is being done under a permit from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Thanks go to each of these volunteers involved in this important project: Margaret and Bert Mac Intosh, Keith Greer, Dick Barber, Henry Snowden, E.J. Johnson, Sandy Symington, Debra Hager, Jerry Hooper, Melanie Howe, Brian Swanson, Mike Kelly, Barry Martin

Thanks to Alan Pepper for providing map training to assist them in their efforts.

Volunteers

Thanks to the following volunteers for helping remove *Arundo donax* (Giant Reed) from Sabre Springs open space and the Preserve. This invasive plant was rapidly destroying habitat in the area. Cindy Burrascano, Christine Ohanian, Gregg, Joan Matlock, Paul Micheletti, Rob and John Hutsel, Marcus Spiegelberg, Judy Stafford, Melanie Howe, Mike Kelly, Trinity Gabriele, Les Braund, Michele Clark

Norwood Brown

Last of the Cattlemen of the Peñasquitos

by William Bowen, PhD

Introduction

Norwood Brown sits in a comfortable leather reclining-chair in his home on the top of Mount Soledad. His head is tossed back and his eyes are closed. He is deep in thought, considering his 40 years of cattle ranching in Penasquitos Canyon. "Now that is probably some of the prettiest scenery in all of Southern California," he says with a broad smile and obvious delight.

"Yes sir-ree Bob," he continues, "Everytime I rode in the canyon I always took the time to stop and just look around."

"I guess I realized that those beautiful rolling green-covered hills were going to disappear someday."

"But what do you mean 'Penasquitos Canyon' he asks, sitting up abruptly, his eyes narrowing, "Its not a canyon, its a valley."

"Anyway," he states, settling back in his cozy chair, "in the old days we just called it 'The Penasquitos'."

Norwood Brown, now retired, and his partner Ray Witwer, were the last individuals to actively ranch cattle in what is now known as Penasquitos Canyon Preserve. Brown and Witwer are heir to a long line of cattlemen ranching the Preserve, dating back to Captains Ruiz and Alvarado (1823).

In November 1993, I interviewed Mr. Brown in the hopes that he might be able to shed some light on the recent ecological past of the Preserve.

Mr. Brown's Personal History

Norwood Brown was born in Colorado but grew up in Wyoming and later Oregon. His family came to California when his father accepted a job as head miller, then superintendent, at Capitol Mills in Los Angeles. As a young man, Brown took undergraduate courses at USC for three years, eventually earning a degree in Economics (which he calls the "dismal science") from Oxidental College.

After graduation from college, Brown was offered a job as assistant to the Dean of the Department of Education at

Harvard University. His wife, however, reminding him of his responsibilities to his budding family, encouraged him to get a stable job as soon as possible. He declined the Harvard offer and accept a post as a teacher and head of the science department at La Jolla High School.

However, indoor work teaching did not suit Brown's constitution and he found himself suffering from chronic colds that would last months on end. Because he felt that outdoor work left him "fit as a fiddle" and since he had always wanted to be a farmer or a rancher he decided to quit teaching and go into the cattle ranching business. In fact, Mr. Brown does seem to be a romantic of the old sort, having an air of the old time rugged west about him, which is aptly reflected in his statement, "You know, the west was built on men and muscle power, not technology or damn machines."

For 40 years (1949-89) Norwood Brown raised cattle in Penasquitos Canyon. It was never his intention to make a lot of money and cattle ranching on the small scale is not a lucrative profession. However, as chance would have it, Brown did make his "lucky strike". The 8 acres in Sorrento Valley Brown had bought for \$21,000 were later sold for a small fortune to Neil Hoberman. But Brown says that he had never in his life tried to get rich and, indeed, never thought he would become rich.

Brown's Cattle Ranching

Mr. Brown began to ranch cattle in Penasquitos Canyon around 1949, renting space from the larger outfit of Sawday and Sexton, who, based out of the Mohnike adobe house ranch, controlled some 14,000 acres. In 1962 after selling their property to the developer Irving Kahn, Sawday and Sexton moved their cattle up to Julian. Brown continued on in the canyon, renting space from Kahn, then from the City of San Diego, which had assumed responsibility for that part of the massive Penasquitos spread which had been set aside to become a preserve.

Brown paid rent to the city in the amount of \$6.00 a month for each head of cattle he ranched. Since he averaged about 114 head at a time, this amounted to \$684, paid monthly to the city. The city in turn was supposed to use the money to improve the canyon, but Brown says they never did.

The cattle Mr. Brown ranched were a breed known as Charolais, which are a handsome yellow work cow. The Charolais were originally imported from France to Canada and later brought down into the United States. Interested parties can see examples of this type of breed grazing across from the tack & feed store near the intersection of Olivenhain Road and Rancho Santa Fe Road in Encinitas. Brown also experimented with a cross or hybrid breed of Charolais and Hereford. He describes both these varieties of cattle with pride, calling them "vigorous" and "good little cows".

Brown's partner Ray Witwer introduced a herd of 35 Black Angus into the canyon in the late 1970s, which quickly grew in number. These are the cattle I remember seeing in the canyon when I first started walking its trails several years ago. One would see Black Angus cattle lying under sycamore trees or scrub oaks or swaying leisurely down the main trail. They always seemed content and very passive. However, I always did feel a little nervous around them, fearing I would meet up with an overprotective mother or a raging bull.

Although I do not remember seeing any bulls in the canyon, Norwood says they were present and that in mating season they got downright nasty, as they fought each other to establish a pecking order of access to the female cattle.

Mr. Brown raised his cattle for their calves. Each year he reaped about 80 newborns. The heifer or female cows were kept while the steers or the males were sold for 20 cents a pound to the Talony Packing House in Escondido. The price he received was about 1/2 of what the meat would bring on the open market.

During the rainy season when the canyon flooded and water covered the whole valley, Norwood's cattle would scamper up into the hills and high places where they would stay there until the water receded. Before it was grubbed, I saw an example of a beautiful little cow trail or cattle path near Carmel Mountain. It was worn about 18-24 inches into the ground and it wound up to the mesa top through

Mr. Brown says that he saw at least 15-20 deer walking up the paths into the hills surrounding the canyon every day.

Brown also claimed that a watchman down in the canyon told him that he heard a mountain lion howling every night. Norwood also recalls seeing lots of skunks walking around in the canyon and remembers one especially big bobcat that haunted Sorrento Valley.



Working the "squeeze gate" during a roundup in Penasquitos circa 1982. Note calf making a hasty exit from the chute. Lila Jenkins, riding "Moony," was one of the regular roundup riders.

the most exquisitely lush vegetation peppered with wildflowers. Although it's gone, a victim of developers, I would say that it was the best trail I have walked in the Penasquitos area. It grieves me that you will not be able to walk it as I once did.

Norwood Brown's ecological reminiscences

Mr. Brown said that he went fishing for sunfish and bluegill in Penasquitos creek a couple of times and that he knew of a 21 inch bass had been caught on the West End (this author has caught them to 14 inches). More often Brown caught crawfish. He would tie a piece of bacon on a string and toss it into the creek. The crayfish would grab the line and not let go. It was thus easy to pull them up. They were kept in water in old tin can until it was time to eat them. Brown says that they had to be boiled alive because they were poison if you ate them after they were dead. Norwood thinks that they got into the creek from some pond in San Diego back country.

Some interesting anecdotes

Norwood once borrowed a bull from the next valley over to mate with his cows. Unfortunately the bull would not cooperate. Brown says that apparently the bull would not do anything because his "pecker" had gotten sore from brushing against stickers and thorns growing along the canyon paths.

Norwood says that he never understood all the hub-bub about the Del Mar Mesa Mint, a rare and endangered plant that grows near vernal pools. As he said, "I just never understood why they made such a big ta-do about that puny little plant!". To help quiet the fuss he once road up to the vernal pools with a hoe and hoed the mesa mint under.

Toward the end of his tenure in the canyon Norwood had problems with a group he says was the "Earth First" organization. He claimed they opened his gates, cut his fences, and herded his cattle out of the canyon because they had decided that cows should not be in the canyon. Norwood says he could recog-

nize them because they all wore "mohawk" haircuts. When he went to court over the incident he told the judge that they next time he was going down to the canyon with a rifle. The judge did not say anything back.

Brown never went down and talked to the Lopez family who lived in Lopez Canyon. He did however stand up upon the hill and look down on their place, and every year he went into the Lopez orchard and collected some apricots. He says that they tasted excellent.

Norwood claims that Senor Lopez was a superb rider but that he was hoodwinked and cheated by a man in La Jolla who talked him into transferring over the title of his land.

Mr. Brown regrets that he let his cows go into the Ruiz Adobe. He says that it was in pretty good shape but that his cows got in and rubbed on the walls and made a mess of it.

What we have learned about the recent past

The Ruiz Adobe was apparently in fairly good shape up into the 1950s-60s when the cattle and weather began to take a serious toll. As last year, the canyon has flooded during rainy seasons. The creek appears to have had larger and more numerous bass, as well as populations of sunfish and bluegill. Crayfish were probably more numerous and there were more skunks and deer in the canyon. The bobcat population does not appear to have changed very much and, as today, there were one or two mountain lion in the canyon. Of course, there were swarms of big black horse flies preying on the cattle that you do not see today and less abundance of exotic grasses that once served as cattle browse.

From my perspective, I'd say that since Brown and Witwer's cattle have gone there is more vegetation, including sapling trees, no more cow pies, and less evidence of cow trails. The cattle were very colorful, especially when seen grazing with their heads down from a distance, but a little scary up close. It is probably good they are gone because eventually one of the now more numerous canyoneers would have gotten hurt.

I think it would be a nice idea to have a few examples of the different breeds, such as Charolais, Hereford, and Black

Mints, Frogs & Fairy Shrimps

San Diego's Vanishing Vernal Pools

Dr. Elberta Fleming

[The late Dr. Fleming, one of the founders of the Friends, wrote this article just before her death. She delighted in introducing people to the wonders of vernal pools. Why not join us on a vernal pool walk this spring? — editor]

Dark clouds forecast the winter and spring rains that annually nourish the mesas in San Diego County. Accompanying the constant raindrop's patter are the frantic mating calls of the frogs. Their chorus continues incessantly day and night. Then, suddenly, all is quiet—for the frogs have fulfilled their mating instincts. Soon, clumps of frog eggs appear in the rain-filled shallow pools.

The drizzle and downpours provide a life-giving fluid to quench the earth's thirst. Seasonal rains sometimes contribute to disastrous flooding in the lowlands and valleys. In unstable hilly areas the moisture-drenched clay soils cause mud slippage, and in some areas homes are destroyed.

On one of the oil-slicked highways drivers race back and forth to work through the rain squalls. They do not realize that the mesas they pass through hold the secrets of a natural phenomena of spring that is peculiar to San Diego County and only a few other places in the United States.

During the summer and fall seasons the mesas appear as a semi-arid environment of chaparral coastal sage scrub vegetation. During this time span the mesas are experiencing a period of semi-dormancy. To the highway traveler it appears as a dull drab landscape. The clumps of olive-green Chamise, Toyon, and grey Yerba Santa are most uninteresting.

With the annual cycle of winter and spring rains the mesas begin to awaken, and soon rain puddles appear. These small pockets of water that dimple the surface of the mesa are known as vernal pools. They are the phenomena of the winter and spring rains.

vernal means "pertaining to, or occurring in the spring."

Vernal pools do not occur just anywhere. They need certain soil conditions and seasonal rainfalls. The San Diego mesas have a terrain of small mounds known as mima mounds. The depressions between the mounds are comprised of hardpan—a dense, water impervious soil formation. Rainwater accumulated in the depressions does not filter through



Mesa mint (*Pogone abramsii*)

the impermeable adobe-like soil. It gradually disappears through evaporation and absorption of the plants. The pools are ephemerical and in this temporary state their life expectancy is a few weeks for the small pools to several months for the shallow ponds.

The driver on the highway could be less interested. To most commuters the mesas are just flat wastelands with puddles of rainwater, so why should they get excited about vernal pools? Aren't there more important things to worry about these days?

Vernal pools, however, are important. The big controversy about vernal pools in San Diego County is serious. The

pools are fast disappearing under the ravaging bulldozer. There is continuous destruction of the land—and the pools—where they exist despite government regulations which protect some of the rare species that exist in the pools.

The mesas where the pools occur provide some of the most desirable land in San Diego County. This is prime land in San Diego since the developers do not have to flatten mountains or fill in canyons. However, some areas should have been saved.

The flatland coastal mesas of San Diego consist of the oldest soils in the county. At one time the mesas were very abundant and were dotted with vernal pools. Rapid urban sprawl has caused them to gradually vanish. The few local pool areas of importance that remain are found on Mira Mesa, Del Mar Mesa, Kearney Mesa and Otay Mesa.

However, almost overnight huge tracts of this land disappear as armies of bulldozers scrape the land for the construction of immense housing tracts or industrial and commercial parks accompanied by the necessary road and sewer construction. In some areas the mesas have been cleared for tomato fields. Where mesas have not been destroyed outright some of the vernal pools have become deeply furrowed ruts from off-road vehicles. Other areas are convenient collection pits for dumping trash and fill. Native vegetation has been destroyed where cattle trampled the pool areas while grazing.

All of these factors contribute to the adverse impact on the rare flora and fauna of these unique biotic communities. With the destruction of the native vegetation the pool areas are invaded by aggressive weedy species of plants.

Why should some of these vernal pools be preserved? If the mesas that still have existing vernal pools are completely eradicated an important area of biological and geological history will be erased forever, along with some rare and endangered species of plants—one which grows nowhere else in the world.

What is a vernal pool?

According to the dictionary the word

Rare and endangered species cluster in and about the pools

Vernal pools and their immediate surrounding areas are small biological islands which provide valuable research laboratories for scientists in learning about organisms found in this unusual ecosystem. The plants and animals that are established in these ephemeral habitats must develop to maturity in less than six months.

By April or May the shallow pools are dry. During the long summer and fall drought period—the plants have to be able to continue their existence. Their ability to adapt to a wide range of physical and chemical restrictions has enabled them to survive a harsh environment over thousands of years.

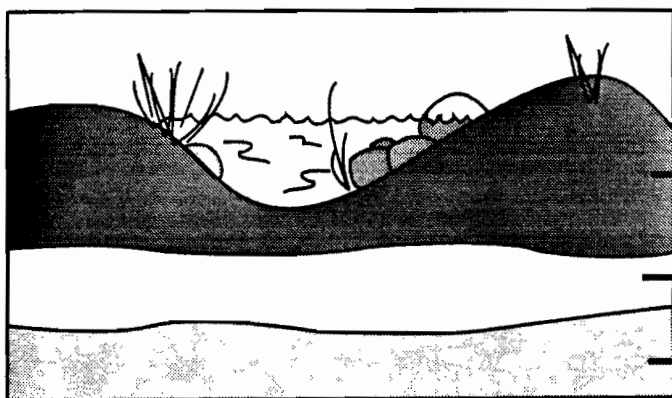
The rain-filled pools provide a habitat for small aquatic animals which feed on microscopic plants and animals. One of the most interesting is the fairy shrimp. This delicate tiny creature swims on its back, propelling itself along in the shal-

low water using leaf-like gill-feet which seem to ripple along. These gill-feet are combined swimming and respiratory organs. After mating, the female's eggs are deposited in the vernal pool. As the pool dries up the eggs can remain dormant until conditions are just right for hatching, and a new generation appears.

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When conditions are favorable the areas surrounding the vernal pools will be accented with sunny Goldfields and blue Downingias covering the chaparral like a patch work quilt. Yellow Brass-Buttons decorate the pools edges with a definite pattern. Pink Owl's Clover carpet large areas, interrupted occasionally by clumps of Blue-eyed Grass.

As spring advances towards early summer the pools dry up and the tiny Mesa Mint comes into bloom. This tiny purple flower covers large areas where the vernal pools existed. It scents the air with its minty fragrance. One has to look down very closely at the perfect flower to appreciate its beauty. Found in the vernal pools in San Diego this fragile plant has been found no where else in the world; and so has been placed on the Federal Endangered Species Act List of plants to be protected.

The pink Owl's Clover is still blooming, and other mesa flowers like the Brodiaea and Mariposa Lilies can be found throughout the grassy areas of the chaparral. These are just a few of the chaparral flowers growing in and around the vernal pools.

How many have watched the beautiful progression of the vernal pool?

To witness the rapid change in this succession of a flowering paradise, the observer has to return weekly during the brief transitional period in the spring months. It's a rare, unusual experience. Yet how many people in San Diego have watched the miracle of vernal pools? Most residents don't understand the im-

portance of preserving some of this rare heritage which makes San Diego an unusual place to live.

Once the openness and beauty of the San Diego area is destroyed it won't come back. With it will go the rare species that existed from early geological times. The land preserved in this decade is all that will ever be saved.

Yet the big question is—how long will the few still existing pool areas remain safe from developers who continually thwart the governmental agencies assigned to protect San Diego's unique heritage of natural history? Resource preservation as required under state environmental quality laws as a local government's civic duty has consistently been neglected.

Join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in fighting to preserve the vernal pools and other endangered habitats of Peñasquitos Canyon for future generations to know and admire.

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Thanks to our generous donors, several important projects have been funded for 1994. The include:

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(FUA continued)

ranchette sized development. In 1990 the City Council decided it was time to develop a plan for the entire area. Two Citizens Advisory Committees (CAC) were set up, including environmental groups such as the Sierra Club. The CAC and the Planning Dept. came up with a "Framework Plan" which the Council adopted as part of the City's General Plan in 1992. This Framework Plan laid out a general concept of what the area should look like, including an open-space system (environmental tier), wildlife corridors, the number of dwelling units, commercial development units, roads and utilities.

When adopted, the Council set a June 1994 date for when the phase shift vote would go before the voters. Prior to the phase shift, subarea plans were to be submitted to the Planning Dept. and City Council. These plans were to provide the detail lacking in the Framework Plan.

By December 1993 the 160 landowners in the FUA decided that they couldn't have the subarea plans ready before the June 1994 ballot measure deadline. The reasons they gave were that the subarea plans being required were the equivalent of the project level plans, including Environmental Impact Reports, required in non-FUA development and that the time allotted was too short. They also cited the fact that the alignment for Route 56, due to go through the FUA, was still to be decided and that there was a real possibility that the alignment would be different from the one identified in the Framework Plan. Such a drastic change meant putting detailed planning on hold.

Underlying all of this was the fact that many of their lenders were leary of pouring millions of dollars more into the planning process without any assurance of a positive decision on whether urban level development would be allowed anytime soon. So they opted to ask the City Council to allow the phase shift vote to go ahead without the subarea plans being completed. The Council voted 8-1 to allow the process to develop ballot language to go ahead. Councilman Harry Mathis was asked to set up a committee of the landowners, area planning groups and various environmental groups to debate this phase shift vote and possible ballot language. I represented the Friends in this process and ended up heading up a subcommittee on the environmental part of the ballot.

By the time the ballot measure came back to the City Council March 1 the Sierra Club, Citizens Coordinate for Central 3 (C-3), the League of Women Voters and several other organizations decided they would oppose putting the phase shift before the voters in June 1994 and if it were to be placed on the ballot, would urge a no vote against it, i.e., not to allow any development except the current estate level development going on there. They argued that this was just another maneuver of the developers and that since you can't trust the developers this whole proposal must be bad.

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve's Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve putting the phase shift vote before the voters this June and approved the ballot language.

We voted thusly for two reasons. One, we believe the ballot language ensures that the open-space system and wildlife corridors envisioned in the Framework Plan will be preserved. This amounts to over 6,000 acres of open-space, about one-half of the entire FUA. Most importantly, it's not isolated habitat, but interconnected, including wildlife corridors between Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and San Dieguito Valley Park Open-Space and Black Mountain Open-Space. All but the Del Mar Mesa Acquisition Area of about 500 acres would be donated as part of the development process. The remaining 500 acres is to be bought with the CALPAW funds. **Wildlife Corridors that currently don't exist through Carmel Valley to the north would be restored and revegetated through this plan.** In addition, we got included in the language an agreement that these "environmental tier" lands will be included in the future multiple species conservation program. On top of this, the ballot language affirms that subarea plans still must be completed prior to pulling building permits and that all these developments are subject to full environmental review.

Second, we believe that the economic and planning issues raised by the developers are accurate. If the Phase Shift doesn't go forward we believe that several of the landowners will lose their financing. Some of our environmental friends say this would be "great." They mistakenly think this means development would not go forward. If no other developers waited in the wings this might be true. However, the opposite is the

case. When Home Federal pulled the plug on Barry McComie & Co. on Lopez Ridge and the land went to auction, who bought it? Pardee. The bulldozers still rolled.

If the Phase Shift vote is not allowed, or is voted down in June, we believe that the entire Framework Plan with the 6,000 acres of open-space and our wildlife corridors will be placed in jeopardy by the economics of the situation. We believe that Potamic Investors will probably lose their financing and their 3,000 acres will be bought at auction and planning will start all over with the real possibility we'll lose valuable connections through this property. We see smaller landowners selling their land to people who will develop estate homes permitted without a phase shift. All it takes is two or three such developments to cut off our wildlife corridors. Unlike wetlands or gnatcatchers, wildlife corridors have no protection under the law, there is no way to compel their protection — it must be negotiated — which we have done for the ballot measure.

For some environmental groups, I believe, this is too abstract an issue, just another fight with the evil developers. For us, however, it is vital to the future of our Preserve. Without these connections, our Preserve will become isolated. Unlike them, we have walked these lands, mapped the wildlife corridors, and know the plants and critters in them. We believe the best opportunity to protect these habitats is to ensure the Framework Plan remains intact with a Phase Shift vote in June and a Yes vote on the measure.

(Norwood Brown continued)

Angus, that have been in the canyon, grazing in a contained area near the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. This would lend color and help preserve the flavor of an important component of the history of the canyon.

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- Ward, Mary 1984 *Rancho de Los Peñasquitos: On the Road to Yuma*. San Diego: Parks & Recreation.

(March/April Calendar continued)**Night Walk**

Sun., March 27, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

APRIL**Rancho Santa Maria De Los****Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour**

Sat., April 2, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Mystery Tree & Flower Walk

Sat., April 9, 9 -11 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Learn about mysterious Mexican era symbols on ancient oaks in the Preserve. Also a good area for wildflowers. Tour a little visited park of the Preserve. Easy walk, one stream crossing, might get feet a bit wet. Led by Mike Kelly.

Volunteer Work Party: Tamarisk Bash in Sabre Springs

Sat., April 9, 1- 4 p.m. Help us remove this invasive tree and protect our native bio-diversity. No experience needed. Only need gloves. Hundreds of acres of open-space park lands in Sabre Springs will extend the Preserve's system east from I-15 to the Poway border. Take I-15 to Poway Road. Right on Poway Road to the first light. Go right here on Sabre Springs Parkway and travel about 1 mile to the barricades and bridge. Park & meet here. Bring brush saw or chain saw if you have one. Help restore this pretty riparian (stream) area. Unchecked, tamarisk, an invasive from the middle-east, will replace native plants and reduce the habitat value for critters as it has done to countless desert riparian systems.

Bird Walk from East End

Sun., April 10, 8-9:30 a.m. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Spring is an excellent time to see many different birds, their nest and young. There's a good chance of seeing great horned owls on their next on this day. Bring bird book and binoculars. Many different birds. Led by Brian Swanson.

Geology Walk

Sun., April 10, 9 a.m - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Sun., April 10, 10-12 a.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., April 16, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See spring flowers and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds, their nests and perhaps their young. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., April 16, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See April 2 listing for details.

Wildflower Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sun., April 17, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Excellent time to view spring blooms. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs.

Vernal Pool and Fire Ecology Walk

Sat., April 23, 9 - noon. We combine these walks because the vernal pools were in the 1992 fire area. Learn about vernal pools, their interesting plants and animals, some endangered, and of the threats to them. See the beautiful and aromatic endangered Mesa mint. In the fire area learn about the vital role fire plays in our ecosystem. See many flowering plants and resprouting vegetation after the fire. The greatest biodiversity of plants in the Preserve is

now in the burn area. Wear old clothes, boots and bring water. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. If full, go west on Cristobal until see fence on right, park on shoulder off road below it. Hike will begin there. Park legally. Led by Mike Kelly.

Volunteer Work Party: Tamarisk Bash in Sabre Springs

Sat., April 23, 2- 5 p.m. Help us remove this invasive tree and protect our native bio-diversity. No experience needed. Only need gloves. Hundreds of acres of open-space park lands in Sabre Springs will extend the Preserve's system east from I-15 to the Poway border. Take I-15 to Poway Road. Right on Poway Road to the first light. Go right here on Sabre Springs Parkway and travel about 1 mile to the barricades and bridge. Park & meet here. Bring brush saw or chain saw if you have one. Help restore this pretty riparian (stream) area. Unchecked, tamarisk, an invasive from the middle-east, will replace native plants and reduce the habitat value for critters as it has done to countless desert riparian systems.

Deer Lake Walk

Sun., April 24, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. About 7-9 miles roundtrip, some rugged terrain. See Deer Canyon, most pristine canyon left in San Diego and visit Deer Lake. Much of this area should become dedicated open-space in the future, connecting to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Meet at barricades at western end of Carmel Mtn. Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take Carmel Mtn. Rd. exit off I-15. west. Led by Trinity Gabriel.

Night Walk

Sun., April 24, 7:30-9 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Date and time changing this month, call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for new date and time. Held at Rancho Santa Maria de los Penasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields all the way to the red barn.



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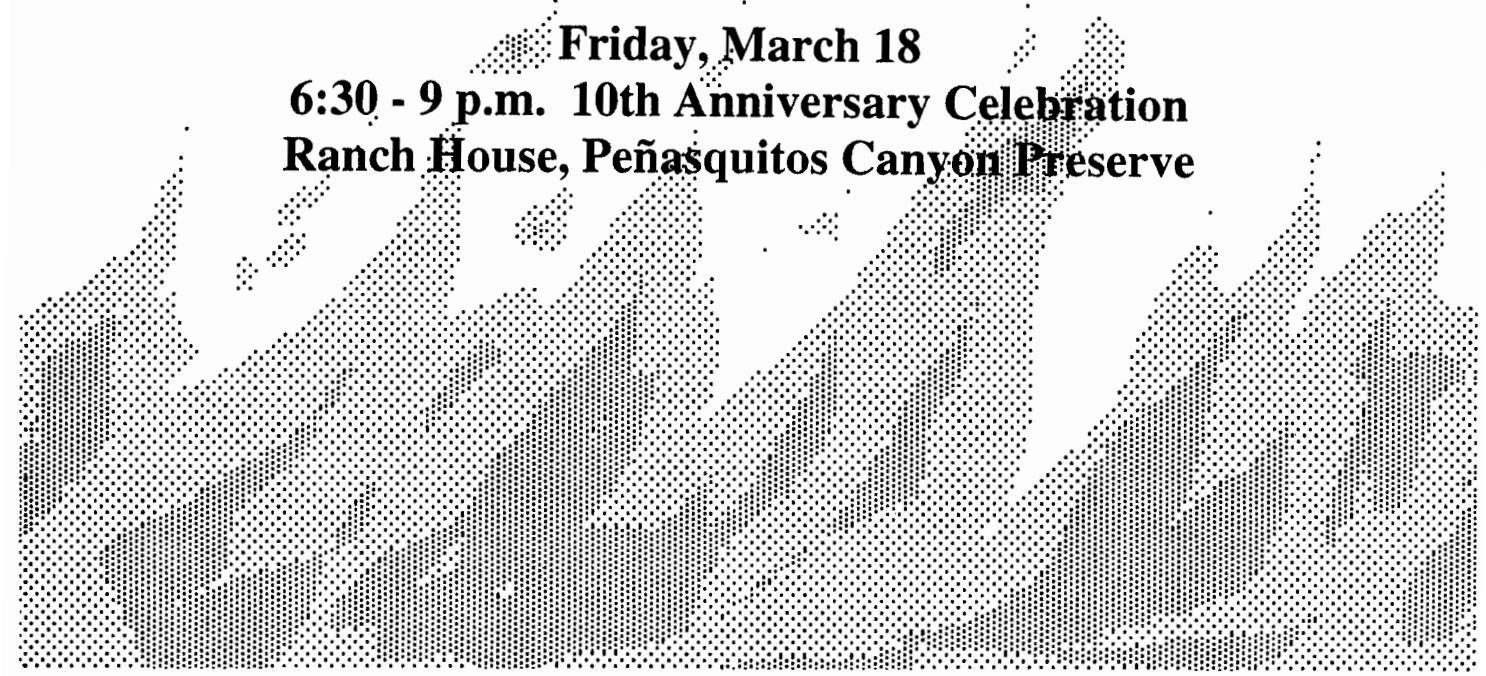
Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve 10th Anniversary Meeting with Lecture & Slides

The Ecology of Fire

Robin Wills, M.S.
Fire Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy, California

Friday, March 18
6:30 - 9 p.m. 10th Anniversary Celebration
Ranch House, Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

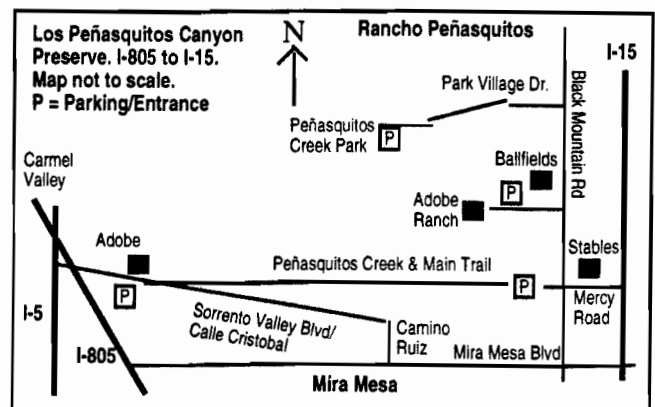


Wills will discuss and illustrate with slides the role of fire in the ecology of California's natural ecosystems, the problems that occur when the natural cycle of fire is suppressed by people and what happens to plant and animal communities during and after a fire. He'll also discuss the role of fire in restoring native biodiversity, especially with native bunchgrasses at the Santa Rosa Plateau. He'll also speak on the controversy over reseeding after a fire.

Besides being the Fire Ecologist for The Nature Conservancy in California, Wills is also the manager for the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve of The Nature Conservancy, Murietta, California. He received his B.S. in Forest Biology from Ohio State University, his M.S. in Fire Ecology from Humboldt State, and is currently working on his Ph.D. in Fire Ecology. He is doing research projects for his Ph.D. using the Laguna, Guejito and other Southern California fires of 1993 for his thesis.

Program for 10th Anniversary Meeting

- 6:30 - 7:30 pm: Social Hour, free refreshments, exhibits
- 7:30 - 7:45 pm: Election of Friends' Officers
- 7:45 - 8:00 pm: Brief overview of Friends' projects
- 8:00 - 9:00 pm: The Ecology of Fire talk & slides





Spring Blooms Brightest in Fire Area

This year we expect to have our best and most diverse bloom of flowering plants in the site of our 1992 burn, on Lopez Ridge. Our Vernal Pool/Burn area walks are the perfect opportunity to learn about the ecology of fire and see how fire can contribute to biodiversity. You'll also visit several vernal pools, learn what makes them special and observe some of the critters and plants that depend on them. In the late spring we'll see the endangered Mesa mint, a beautiful and aromatic mint that is a federally listed endangered species.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

Volunteer Work Parties

Several events in our schedule are volunteer work parties to help control invasive weeds that kill off our native plant species. No experience is needed, just the willingness to work for a few hours cutting and removing different weeds. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for more details.

MARCH

Nesting Hawks & Owls with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sun., March 13, 1-3 p.m. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She has copies available for purchase and autographs.

The Ecology of Fire Lecture & Slide Show: Friends' 10th Anniversary!

Friday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. at Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields all the way to the white fence and parking lot on the left. Meeting is in the north wing of the adobe ranch house. Robin Wills of The Nature Conservancy will speak and show slides on the role of fire in the natural ecology of California. Question and answer period af-

ter his talk. The program:
6:30 refreshments/exhibits
7:30 Election of Officers
7:45 Overview of Friends' projects
8:00 Ecology of Fire

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

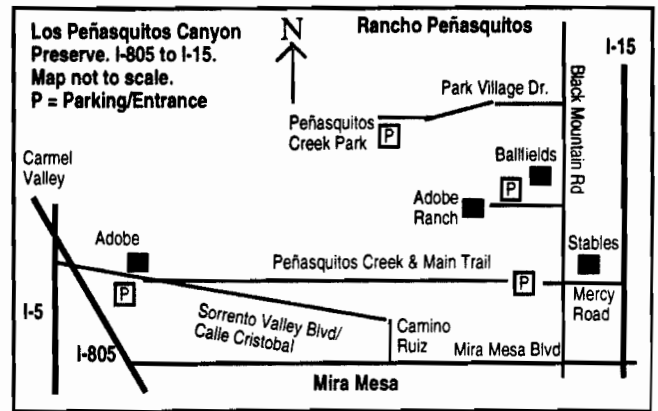
Sat., March 19, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Vernal Pool and Fire Ecology Walk

Sat., March 19, 9 - noon. We combine these walks because the vernal pools were in the 1992 fire area. Learn about vernal pools, their interesting plants and animals, some endangered, and of the threats to them. In the fire area learn about the vital role fire plays in our ecosystem. See many flowering plants and resprouting vegetation after the fire. The greatest biodiversity of plants in the Preserve is now in the burn area. Wear old clothes, boots and bring water. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. If full, go west on Cristobal until see fence on right, park on shoulder off road below it. Hike will begin there. Park legally. Led by Mike Kelly.

Volunteer Work Party: Tamarisk Bash in Sabre Springs

Sat., March 19, 2 - 5 p.m. Help us remove this invasive tree and protect our native biodiversity. No experience needed. Only need gloves. Hundreds of acres of open-space park lands in Sabre Springs will extend the Preserve's system east from I-15 to the Poway border. Take I-15 to Poway Road. Right on Poway Road to the first light. Go right here on Sabre Springs Parkway and



travel about 1 mile to the barricades and bridge. Park & meet here. Bring brush saw or chain saw if you have one. Help restore this pretty riparian (stream) area. Unchecked, tamarisk, an invasive from the middle-east, will replace native plants and reduce the habitat value for critters as it has done to countless desert riparian systems.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Sun., March 20, 10-12 a.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., March 26, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See spring flowers and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds, their nests and perhaps their young. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund.

Geology Walk

Sun., March 27, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Park legally. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.



Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

May/June 1994

Volume 8 No. 3

Parks & Wildlife Vote Yes on Prop 180

See the special article on the California Parks and Wildlife Initiative, Proposition 180 (June 1994 State ballot), on pages 3 and 4 of this issue. The San Diego projects include \$10,000,000 for the Del Mar Mesa (northern rim of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve), \$300,000 for Peñasquitos Creek/Lagoon, \$10,000,000 for San Dieguito River Valley, among others.

It is expected this will be the last opportunity to pass a bond measure to purchase open space until after the year 2000. Don't miss this opportunity for us and future generations:

- Vote Yes on 180 in June;
- Help out with CalPAW phone bank, 434-5874.
- Send a donation to CalPAW.

CalPAW
5520 Ruffin Road, Suite 203
San Diego, Calif.

Future Urbanizing Vote Yes on Prop C by Mike Kelly, president

In our last issue we ran a lengthy article explaining why the Friends, unlike several other environmental groups, decided to call for a Yes vote on Proposition C (Prop C). Prop C, if approved, would allow the shift from the "Future Urbanizing" category to "Current Urbanizing" category of land use for the North City Future Urbanizing Area. This "phase shift" would allow urban level development to begin in this 12,000 acre area north of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. We don't intend to repeat the detail of that article which is still available by calling 566-6489. Instead, we would like to summarize why we call for the Yes vote.

Planning on a grand scale

A Master Plan — called The Framework Plan — for these 12,000 acres

➡ p. 2 for more

Wildlife Volunteers Still Needed by Barry Martin

We still have several zones where we need volunteers for our wildlife tracking survey. If you are interested in learning how to read animal tracks and gather data on the Preserve's critters, call me at 484-4007.

We're having lots of fun, seeing lots of wild animals (deer, bobcat, coyote, fox, skunk, etc.), and getting valuable information.

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Still Time to See It Spectacular Wildflower Show

Put aside your morning May 7 or May 15 for our last wildflower walks of the season — it's spectacular out there! In the desert this year nature called off the wildflower show — disappointing those of us who are in the habit of traveling east to see it. In compensation, however, you'll find a great display of flowers closer to home. For the second year in a row, the burn area in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is carpeted with millions of flowering plants.

Amongst the bushes blackened by the September 1992 fire (southwest of the waterfall), you'll find the greatest diversity of flowering plants in the area.

On a recent walk through the area we counted more than 50 different flowering species at one time, ranging from a few dozen specimens of some species to millions of others.

We start each walk in the vernal pool area where you can see (and smell!) the endangered Mesa Mint, then proceed to roam the burn area itself. A surprising variety of flowers and valuable lessons in the ecology of fire: all in one outing.

See our schedule for details.



(Prop C cont'd)

was approved by a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the City Council a little over two years ago. The Sierra Club and Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (C3) were on this CAC and voted for this Framework Plan.

The Framework Plan for the North City Future Urbanizing Area (NCFUA) is the type of plan many of us wish our own community plan had been. This planning effort was a good step towards managing the future growth of the north city area.

The Framework Plan recognizes that hundreds of thousands of people will be added to our population in the coming decades as our children begat our grandchildren (and need housing) and as other folks move into San Diego for our wonderful climate. This generates needs for housing, places to shop, schools, buildings for those future businesses and so on. On the other hand, our children and our new neighbors want a quality environment to live in. They want green belts that buffer one community from another, open space parks where they can walk, ride a horse or bike, open space where they can see the plants and wild critters that are a part of San Diego and developed parks for active recreation for Little League, Soccer and other sports.

A balanced plan

The Framework Plan (and Prop C) for these 12,000 acres offers the type of balance between these sometimes competing needs (building houses means a loss of open space) that many other communities in San Diego lack. It sets aside more than half the 12,200 acres in an environmental tier of interconnected open space, developed parks, and several golf courses.

The Framework Plan identifies where future housing and commercial areas will go and sets limits on the density for the area. The average density in the whole area will be far less than that of the surrounding communities of Rancho Peñasquitos, Carmel Valley, and Rancho Bernardo. Prop C puts an absolute density cap of 17,000 units on the whole area. If Prop C is approved by the voters this June, this density cap could only be changed by a future vote of the people — not by the San Diego City Council.

Self financing required

The Framework Plan and Prop C require that the North City Future Urbanizing Area be self-financing, that the infrastructure and facilities required there (fire, police, sewer, water, schools, etc.) be paid for out of development impact fees that will be levied (as they were belatedly in other communities) on every building permit that is pulled for that area. The development impact fees for this area are expected to be the highest of any community in the city. This is aimed at avoiding placing a general burden on the city as a whole for opening up this area for development.

In addition, Prop C goes beyond the Framework Plan in committing to build the missing middle portion of the east-west Route 56 that will connect the east and west ends of this road already built or under construction in Rancho Peñasquitos and Carmel Valley. For those of us who live in Mira Mesa and surrounding communities and suffer the headaches and congestion of east west traffic in our neighborhoods, this building of 56 spells big relief.

Quality open space is planned

Of the more than 6,000 acres being set aside at least 5,000 will be resource-based open space. It is being dedicated to protecting sensitive habitat for plants and wildlife. This open-space system will include wildlife corridors to connect Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to the San Dieguito River Valley Park and the Black Mountain Open Space Park. These corridors do **not** now exist as through connections. The heavy agricultural uses of past decades and the roads, fences, nurseries and equestrian centers already built, especially in the northern half of the NCFUA, are a completely effective barrier to the movement of wildlife north. Prop C guarantees that viable wildlife corridors will be restored throughout this area. Restored is a word that will have to be used a lot in connection with the NCFUA and requires we demystify an erroneous vision many people in the environmental movement who have never walked the area hold.

The myth of virgin habitat

Many of our friends in other envi-

ronmental groups haven't made it on any of the nature walks and biology surveys the Friends organized in the NCFUA over the past four years or so. If so, they would learn what we did. Of the 12,200 acres, somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 are pristine. These acres are to be found beginning on the Santa Monica Ridge and moving south and west. Much of this acreage is what we call the Del Mar Mesa. It includes Deer Canyon, perhaps the last largely pristine coastal canyon in San Diego. The Del Mar Mesa already includes a Caltrans Vernal Pool Preserve. More pools will be added to this complex and connections to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve protected in perpetuity.

However, the land to the east, next to Peñasquitos, to the west towards Carmel Mountain and north of the Santa Monica Ridge is disturbed land, not habitat for the most part. It's all been plowed and planted over the decades. This means that several thousand acres will have to be revegetated with native plants and wildlife corridors restored to reach the goal of over 5,000 resource-based acres. This restoration is part of the developer agreements planned for this area. It is the only way this habitat will be restored.

Without the restoration of these wildlife corridors and associated habitat, the future of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is biologically bleak. While it would remain a nice place to walk or ride it would become a declining habitat biologically, due to its isolation. We are already isolated to the east, west and south due to poor planning in the past. To the north is our only hope for avoiding isolation and the consequent genetic isolation that leads to a die off of many species.

The danger of a No vote

The opposition to Prop C is comprised of three constituencies. One group calls for a No vote in order to block any urban level development of the area. Primarily centered in Carmel Valley and Del Mar, they're the same folks who opposed Route 56 going through to Interstate 5 and proposed routing it either in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve or along its rim, through the Vernal Pool Preserve (the so-called

YES ON PROPOSITION 180



CALPAW '94 — California Parks and Wildlife Initiative

Proposition 180 would protect specific lands throughout the state including wildlife areas, urban parks, greenbelts, prime agricultural land, old-growth forests, rivers and streams, wetlands, and other lands treasured by Californians. Funds are also allocated to each local park and open space district for their own recreational and land-protection programs.

Lands will be purchased and recreational facilities developed by state and local agencies such as the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and local conservancies. The California Native Plant Society strongly supports this initiative.

San Diego County Projects:

Santa Margarita River—\$6,000,000 for riparian habitat and natural lands acquisition along the river.

San Luis Rey River—\$5,000,000 for acquisition and restoration of natural lands along the river.

Carlsbad Multiple Species—\$3,000,000 to acquire and preserve sensitive lands, including coastal sage scrub and California gnatcatchers in the City of Carlsbad.

Carrillo Ranch—\$1,500,000 to restore the Carrillo Ranch as parkland in the City of Carlsbad.

Encinitas Creek and Batiquitos Lagoon Watersheds—\$6,500,000 for acquisition of sensitive habitat and lands important for the maintenance of bio-diversity, and links to other established habitat areas in the Encinitas and southern Carlsbad areas.

San Dieguito River Valley—\$10,000,000 for acquisition and restoration of additional natural lands

San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve/Escondido Creek Ecological Reserve—\$10,000,000 for acquisition, restoration and enhancement of natural lands in and adjacent to these two reserves.

Del Mar Mesa—\$10,000,000 to acquire about 500 acres of coastal sage scrub and other sensitive habitat, north of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This would protect the last undisturbed coastal mesa top in San Diego and vital wildlife corridors north.

Peñasquitos Creek—\$300,000 for capital outlay projects to

reduce erosion threatening water quality in Peñasquitos Creek and coastal wetlands in the watershed of Peñasquitos Creek.

Soledad Open Space Park—\$1,000,000 for expansion.

Famosa Slough—\$500,000 for restoration and enhancement of the slough.

Sweetwater River Regional Park and Open Space Preserve—\$5,000,000 for land acquisition, development and enhancement.

Otay River Valley—\$10,000,000 for acquisition and restoration of land within the Otay River Valley.

Tijuana River Valley—\$10,000,000 to acquire and restore wetlands, uplands, and archaeological and cultural resources.

Rancho Cuyamaca State Park—\$2,000,000 for acquisition of the Kuerbis Ranch to expand the Park and complete the trails system. North of Descanso, this is prime riparian and oak woodland habitat.

Lake Cuyamaca—\$5,000,000 for acquisition of natural lands in the vicinity of Lake Cuyamaca that contain some of the highest densities of rare and endangered plants and animals in the county..

Rutherford Ranch at Pine Hills—\$8,000,000 for acquisition of one of the most pristine Engelmann oak woodlands in the county. It is adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest.

Volcan Mountain—\$10,000,000 for acquisition of natural lands.

Palomar Mountain State Park—\$1,000,000 for acquisition of the culturally significant Nate Harrison and other sites.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park—\$16,000,000 for acquisition of inholdings and adjacent lands.

PLEASE VOTE ON JUNE 7. See other side of page for ways YOU can help.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY San Diego Chapter

CalPAW—Proposition 180 NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The California Parks and Wildlife Initiative (CalPAW '94) set a record for signatures gathered to qualify for the primary election ballot—over 750,000—more than twice the number needed. Now known as Proposition 180, this initiative would provide nearly \$2 billion in general obligation bonds to acquire, protect, and enhance parkland, wildlife habitat, coastal areas, river habitat, and other resources. The measure will be approved or rejected by voters on June 7.

Despite overwhelming public support, passage of CalPAW is by no means a sure thing. Proposition 180, the parkland bond measure, faces tough going on a ballot crowded with other propositions and bond measures. The main challenge is to get our supporters—estimated at 65% of the electorate—to the polls. We are calling likely supporters and asking them to accept Vote-by-Mail applications—a proven strategy for improving voter turnout. The goal is to have 200,000 YES votes “in the bank” by Election Day, June 7.

The California Native Plant Society is committed to this effort along with thousands of other volunteers around the state. Won't you join us in helping ensure the future of California's parks and wildlife? Come help at the CalPAW phone banks. See opposite side of page for more details. Thanks to each and every one of you.

CalPAW Phone Bank

Join us at the phone bank to help get out the vote in favor of Proposition 180—even if just for a few hours. Hours are Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.. Training for first-timers starts 15 minutes before calling begins. The CalPAW phone bank is located at 5520 Ruffin Road, just north of the County Administration Complex, with quick access to Highways 15, 52, 163, and 805. Park and enter at the side or rear of the building and come upstairs to Suite 203.

For more information, call Dan Hammer,
San Diego County Coordinator
(434-5874).



Why the Time is Right for Proposition 180

Since 1928, state parks have been funded almost exclusively through ballot bond measures. The last, Proposition 70 in 1988, was also presented to voters by initiative, and passed with 65% of the vote. Now those funds have run out.

Despite these tough economic times, and perhaps because of them, this is the time to act. Consider the following:

- This is a general obligation bond act. This means that the state will sell bonds only on the approval of the governor and the treasurer, and only if their sale will not impair the state's financial stability. Proposition 180 does not require or impose a tax increase.
- In contrast to the state's annual budgeting process, Proposition 180 provides an orderly, predictable funding source for park and wildlife projects, and allows for rational planning into the next century.
- The population of California increases by 2,000 people every day, 600,000 every year; it is approaching 50 million. This growth is putting tremendous pressure on our remaining open space parkland and wildlife habitat. Wildlife is being pushed to extinction. There is only so much land. If we don't save it now, it won't be there to save later.
- The cost of bonds is at a 25-year low. Due to the recession, land is now more available and less expensive. We can't afford to wait until the recession is over.
- California's state park system, the envy of the world, was launched with bonds sold during the Great Depression, again when land and bond costs were at historic lows. That investment, even during difficult times, provides the foundation for California's one recession proof industry—tourism.
- Based on the current population of California, paying off the bonds over a 20-year period will cost each Californian less than 40 cents per month, paid out of existing general funds. With the inevitable population increase, the actual cost per capita will be far less.
- Spending on land is unlike much of the state's spending. Land remains a capital, as well as a natural, asset for California citizens. Studies show that open space and parks are key to area values. And quality of life is critical for this state's economic recovery.

*Adapted from an article by Jake Sigg
California Native Plant Society-Yerba Buena News*

Tips on Birding in Penasquitos Canyon

By Barbara Zepf

I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts on bird-watching in Peñasquitos Canyon. I classify myself as an advanced beginner bird-watcher. I'm an avid birder (the modern term for bird-watcher). I never leave home without my binoculars, not even to go to the grocery store. You never know what you might see on the way! I've been birding for seven years, ever since the Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon sponsored a series of bird walks in the canyon in the Fall of 1983. I'd never been birding before, but I've always been interested in anything to do with the canyon, every since I first discovered it about ten years ago. I was hooked from that first bird walk led by Jane McNeil.

Be forewarned. Birding is addictive! It can be done anywhere, by anyone, by any age, in any season. There are blind birders, whose sense of hearing is phenomenal. There are deaf birders who can spot the slightest movement in the tree tops. I've met some fairly good birders of preschool age, and there are excellent birders in their nineties. You don't have to be physically fit (I'm definitely not!). And the hobby doesn't require a large outlay of money. A pair of binoculars and a field identification book are a big help. Even these are not necessary, they just add to the joy of birding.

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve has good bird habitats

Peñasquitos Canyon is an excellent place to bird. I've seen 113 species of birds there. Others have seen more. And each trip brings the possibility of adding to that list. Including a riparian habitat (located near a natural watercourse), Peñasquitos Canyon attracts more birds than the commoner dry canyons in San Diego. The best times to bird, I've found, are early morning and early evening. There are fewer people around and these are the most active feeding periods for the birds.

Birding is best done in small groups. Birding done alone probably allows you to see the most birds. But birding in twos helps in the spotting and identification. It also gives you someone

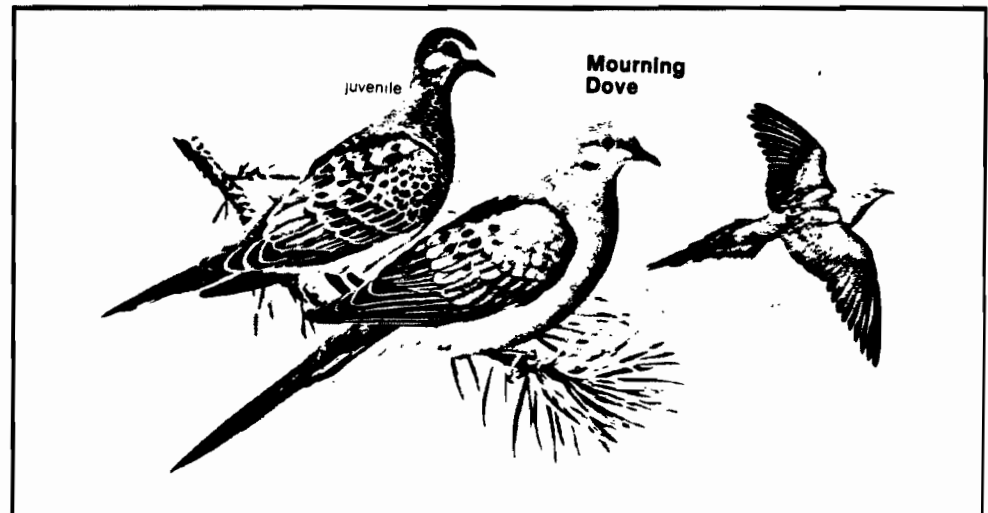
with whom to share the joy. Birding in large groups should best be left to shore-birding or birding in large open areas. Most birds are shy creatures, who don't seem to like much talking or movement from humans. They seem to ignore other wild creatures, unless they are their predators.

Mourning dove most common in canyon?

It's hard to say which is the commonest species in Peñasquitos Canyon. One is the Mourning Dove. Some live in the canyon all year long. You can always see them, usually lining the telephone wires, each time you visit the canyon. They are a member of the Pigeon family. This gray-brown dove has a small head, a small black

normally live not more than 5 years in the wild, longer in captivity.

It's very common, as a beginning birder, to become frustrated. You think that you'll never remember which bird is which; that you'll never know a bird just from the way it flies or from its call — but you will, in time. I've found that the best way to learn birds is to really concentrate on just one bird each time you go out, and file the rest of the birds somewhere in the back of your brain. Study that bird in your field guide when you get home. If you *really* learn just one bird each time you go out, then you can eliminate that particular bird from the list of possibilities when identifying the next new bird you see. Of course there



bill, a long pointed wings and a long, pointed tail with white outer feathers. They fly swiftly with a musical whistling of the wings. They get their name from their mournful low-pitched soft "oo-oh! cooo-cooo-coo" call. They're about 12 inches long and have a wingspan of about 18 inches. They have black spots on their upper wings, a small black spot on each side of the face and a pinkish cast to their underparts. They weigh about 4-1/2 ounces. Their diet consists mainly of seeds. They pick up grit from the roadsides to help grind up the seeds in their gizzard (a muscular part of their stomach). They can breed anytime of the year in the canyon. They lay anywhere from 1 to 4 eggs, averaging 2. They

is always that one bird which will never look like the one in the field guide; but that's what makes birding fun. There is always something new to discover.

There will always be the bird that everyone saw but you. And there will always be the bird that only you saw (and no one else believes you!). But birding is fun! I've never met a birder I didn't like (well, almost never). They are willing to share their sightings, their expertise and their companionship. It's a great lifetime hobby. More next time.

Good birding!

[This article was first printed in our newsletter several years ago, but obviously remains timely for new birders.]

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

by Christine E. Whitten MD

[Editor's note. On restoration projects in the Preserve several volunteers have contracted serious cases of poison oak reactions requiring medical treatment. Volunteers now put some "Ivy Shield" on wrists, necks, ears, or other exposed parts, take a shower after the work project and wash their clothes to reduce the chance of getting a bad reaction. These precautions work. Be careful not to pet a dog that has possibly been running in poison oak!]

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, bed-ridden and unable to open her eyes for days, after simply walking through the smoke from a 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 lurching 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.]

(Prop C cont'd)

Watson alternative). By winning a No vote they hope landowners will only develop their land according to the underlying A-1-10 zoning (agriculture and estates) that is currently allowed. This, as one of their spokespeople commented to me, would leave the area with a semi-rural appearance. That fact that Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve would remain isolated without wildlife corridors, that the environmental tier would never be realized, or Route 56 connected through in our lifetime is irrelevant to them. They're the same folks that sacrificed the most important wildlife corridor in the north city area, the one connecting Carmel Mountain to Peñasquitos Lagoon. The main objection to Prop C from several beach communities is that it will give people living inland greater access to "their" beaches.

A second group, centered in Rancho Bernardo, is concerned that the 17,000 residential units to be built over the next 30-40 years in the NCFUA would mean increased congestion on one or two of their westernmost streets and too many people coming to shop in this area and destroying their quality of life. Language was added to Prop C committing the landowners there to mitigating any negative traffic impacts their construction might have on neighboring communities. This satisfied some of the opposition in Rancho Bernardo, but not all. The fact that building the missing portion of Route 56 would relieve much of the congestion and headaches commuters from Rancho Bernardo and other north city communities cause on Mira Mesa Blvd, Mira Mar Rd and smaller residential streets in Mira Mesa in the absence of 56 seems irrelevant to them.

A third group, mainly the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club and C3 don't oppose urban level development in the NCFUA. They object to Prop C and the "phase shift" it includes as premature. They wanted the phase shift to occur **after** more detailed sub-area plans were available for the whole area. In fact, this was the original process the City Council agreed to when it approved the Framework Plan.

These groups rejected the landowners' justifications for going ahead with the phase shift vote — without subarea plans — at this time. The landowners cited economic pressures from lenders who wanted certainty that development was going to be allowed (the phase shift vote) and the uncertainty as to the alignment of the middle portion of Route 56 — which makes planning next to impossible until an Environmental Impact Report is done and an alignment chosen. The Friends are largely responsible for the uncertainty in the alignment of the middle portion of Route 56 since we proposed a viable alternative to the Framework Plan's alignment along the Santa Monica Ridge. We proposed a route to the north. This was accepted by Caltrans and other agencies for study. Hence, we understand the repercussions of our success: it makes final planning impossible until an alignment is finalized. The landowners/developers are right about the negative impact this had on their planning for this area.

The Sierra Club and others believe that a No vote just means that implementation of the Framework Plan and a phase shift vote is merely delayed for a few more years until more detailed subarea plans are ready, that the status quo of the land in the NCFUA would remain the same. If there were any certainty of this the Friends wouldn't see a No vote as a potential environmental disaster.

However, if the vote is No on C, we see development at the current agricultural level of zoning moving forward as smaller landowners (the average parcel size is 15 acres) drop out of the

Friends' Directory

Officers

President: Mike Kelly 566-6489
 Vice-President: Tom Hopp, Ph.D. 566-4474
 Treasurer: Rena Kerwin 693-3159
 Secretary: Les Braund 566-3958

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Vicky Ausen, Chris Baeder, Trinity Gabriel, Barry Martin, Alan Pepper, Ph.D., Brian Swanson,

Walks and Committees Leaders

Bird Walks & Gnatcatcher Survey Committee: Brian Swanson 695-2209

Conservation Chair: Alan Pepper, Ph.D. 586-7123

Geology Walk Leader: Don Albright 443-7982

Hike Committee: Trinity Gabriel 672-0229

Medicinal Plant & Night Walks: Will Bowen 452-7091

Nature Walk: Les Braund 566-3958

Newsletter Committee: Mike Kelly, Carla Scott, Vicky Ausen

Vernal Pool, Fire Ecology & other walks: Mike Kelly

Wetlands Restoration Committee: Don Albright, Tom Hopp, Susan George, Marcus Spiegelberg, Trinity Gabriel, John Northrop

Wildlife Survey Committee & Tracking Walk: Barry Martin 484-4007

Framework Plan and sell their land to the people who want more nurseries, estates and equestrian centers. These smaller parcels are often in the Del Mar Mesa. We stand to lose our wildlife corridors and interconnected open space. The whole Framework Plan could be called into question if enough landowners, under financial pressure, opt out and go with the underlying zoning. This would be an environmental disaster. Neither a Yes nor a No vote is without risks. But, as I've shown, the No vote isn't the riskless action our friends would have you believe. In this case, we can't afford the risk of the No vote, the consequences of the No vote. **Vote Yes on C.**

Donors Support Volunteer Work

Our thanks go to the following members who generously donated to our fund to buy tools for our restoration volunteers. We recently purchased two "Weed Wrench Tools" with these funds. If you're wondering what these tools look like and do you'll have to come out on a restoration project!

Rod Calverly, Charles Cochrane, Betty Dunn, Louise Eifert, Daniel Gibbs, Gordon Kaplan, Harry Mathis, Victor Munnecke, Wilhelmina Reynolds, Don Steele, Kent Wilson.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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Thanks Volunteers!

Many volunteers have put in a lot of hours this spring helping to remove several invasive pest plants from the Preserve and adjacent habitat. Thanks to their efforts we have removed Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) from the Preserve.

Arundo Donax Control: Robb Hutsel, Paul Micheletti, Christine Ohanian, Gregg , Joan Matlock, Mike Kelly, Melanie Howe, Trinity Gabriele, Cindy Burrascano, Judy Stafford (Thanks for the loppers Judy!).

Tamarisk Control: Robb Hutsel, Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Paul Micheletti, Trinity Gabriele, Kent Lachman, Doug Fenske, Sarah Kellner.

German Ivy Survey: Cindy Burrascano, Trinity Gabriele, Mike Kelly.

Artichoke Thistle Control: Cindy Burrascano, Trinity Gabriele, Mike Kelly, Rena Kerwin.

Gnatcatcher & animal surveys: Thanks to the many volunteers previously mentioned who are participating in these ongoing surveys.

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

5/93

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:

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.

Come See the Wildflowers

The best wildflower show we've seen this year is in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in the area burned in the September 1992 fire: millions of wildflowers are blooming. In one short walk down a major gulley we counted more than 50 *different* flowering plants — in many colors and hues! Join us on one of our fire ecology walks to see this testament to the role of fire in our biodiversity. We expect the bloom to continue and peak about the first two weeks in May. We also visit vernal pools at the same time, since they too were in the burned area. There you can see and smell the endangered mesa mint in full bloom. Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

New birding outing on bikes. See our June calendar listing for details on this new outing.

Volunteer Work Parties

Several events in our schedule are volunteer work parties to help control invasive weeds that kill off our native plant species. No experience is needed, just the willingness to work for a few hours cutting and removing different weeds. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for more details.

MAY

Geology Walk

Sun., May 1, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Wildflower Walk in Burn Area

Sat., May 7, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Great wildflower show in our burn area! Wear old clothes, boots and bring water. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. If full, go west on Cristobal until see fence on right, park on

shoulder off road below it. Hike will begin there. Led by Les Braund.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., May 7, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Bird Walk from West End

Sun., May 8, 5-6:30 p.m. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. There's a good chance of seeing great horned owls on their next on this day. Bring bird book and binoculars. Many different birds. Led by Brian Swanson.

I Love Mira Mesa Day

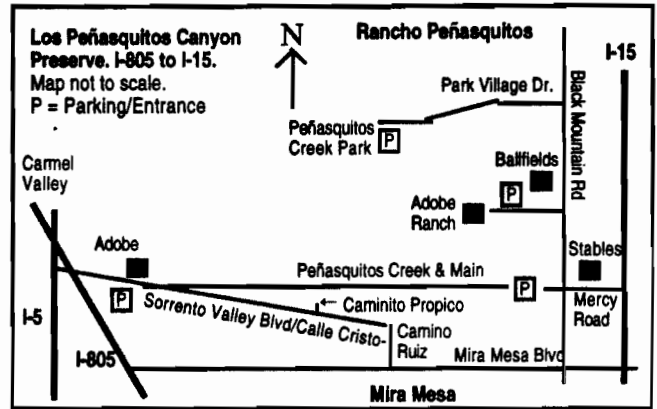
Sat., May 14, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Community Organization Booths, demonstrations et al. Mira Mesa Mall. Join us at the Friends table to distribute literature.

Volunteer Work Party: Tamarisk Bash in Sabre Springs

Sat., May 14, 2-5 p.m. No experience needed. Hundreds of acres of open-space park lands in Sabre Springs will extend the Preserve's system east. Take I-15 to Poway Road. Right on Poway Road to the first light. Go right here on Sabre Springs Parkway and travel about 1 mile to the barricades and bridge. Park & meet here. Help restore this pretty riparian (stream) area. Unchecked, tamarisk, an invasive from the middle-east, will replace native plants and reduce the habitat value for critters as it has done to countless desert riparian systems.

Vernal Pool and Fire Ecology Walk

Sun., May 15, 9 - noon. We combine these walks because the vernal pools were in the 1992 fire area. Learn about vernal pools, their interesting plants and animals, some endangered. See the beautiful and aromatic endangered Mesa mint. In the fire area



learn about the vital role fire plays in our ecosystem. See many flowering plants and resprouting vegetation after the fire. The greatest biodiversity of plants in the Preserve is now in the burn area. Wear old clothes, boots and bring water. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. If full, go west on Cristobal until see fence on right, park on shoulder off road below it. Hike will begin there. Park legally. Led by Mike Kelly.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Mon., May 16, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Wed., May 18, 7 p.m. At Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos adobe. Call Mike at 566-6489 for directions.

Volunteer Work Party: Tamarisk Bash in Sabre Springs

Sat., May 21, 8-11 p.m. See May 14 for details. Note the different time.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., May 21, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See May 7 listing for details.

'Diggin the Past' — Annual Park Day, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos
Sun., May 22, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. This annual event at the historic Ranch House will focus on archaeology this year. There will be dozens of exhibits by archaeological and environmental groups, wild animals from Project Wildlife and the Herpetological Society, Indian Fry Bread from the Native American Students of Palomar College, actual archaeological digs that visitors can help with and much more. Call 484-3219 for a flyer with full details or see article in the Friends newsletter.

Night Walk

Wed., May 25, 7:30-9 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sun., May 29, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wildflowers and nesting birds. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs.

JUNE

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., June 4, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Dusk Walk/Penasquitos Creek Park

Wed., June 8, 7 p.m. Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Penasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road Exit west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mountain Road and up the hill. Take a left at the first light, at Park Village Drive. Follow Park Village Drive to its intersection with Camino Ruiz. The park is on the left. Meet on corner of the two roads. Led by Mike Kelly.

Volunteer Work Party: Tamarisk Bash in Sabre Springs

Sat., June 11, 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. No experience needed. Only need gloves. Hundreds of acres of open-space park lands in Sabre Springs will extend the Preserve's system east from I-15 to the Poway border. Take I-15 to Poway Road. Right on Poway Road to the first light. Go right here on Sabre Springs Parkway and travel about 1 mile to the barricades and bridge. Park & meet here. Help restore this pretty riparian (stream) area. Unchecked, tamarisk, an invasive from the middle-east, will replace native plants and reduce the habitat value for critters as it has done to countless desert riparian systems.

Bicycle Bird Walk

Sat., June 11. Call Brian Swanson at 695-2209 to RSVP and find out time and meeting place. On bikes the group will have a chance to quickly move between good birding locations. Bring binoculars and a bird book.

Geology Walk

Sun., June 12, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Mon., June 13, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Wed., June 15, 7 p.m. Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos adobe. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up to ranch.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., June 18, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See spring flowers and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds, their nests and perhaps their young. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., June 18, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See May 7 listing for details.

Solstice Walk with Barbara Moore

Tues., June 21, 6 - 8 p.m. Enjoy a cool evening in the Preserve and learn about the importance of the solstice in historic and prehistoric cultures. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs.

Night Walk

Thurs., June 23, 8 -9:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

Dusk Mystery Tree Walk

Tues., June 28, 7 p.m. A cool summer evening is a good time to investigate the legend of the Mexican era sign map on trees in the Preserve that describe where the Mission treasure was buried. Visit a Native America grinding site and learn about the plants they used to survive. Meet at the Rancho Peñasquitos Equestrian Center off Black Mountain Road. Take the Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain, then right into equestrian center entrance, park by fence under trees. Investigate the legend of the Mexican era sign map on trees in the Preserve that describe where the Mission treasure was buried. Visit a Native America grinding site and learn about the plants they used to survive. Led by Mike Kelly.

Park Day '94

Diggin' the Past

Archaeology in Penasquitos Canyon

Sunday, May 22

10 am - 3 pm

Adobe Ranch House in
Penasquitos Canyon Preserve



Scottsbluff Point
Illustration by G.A. Zanelli

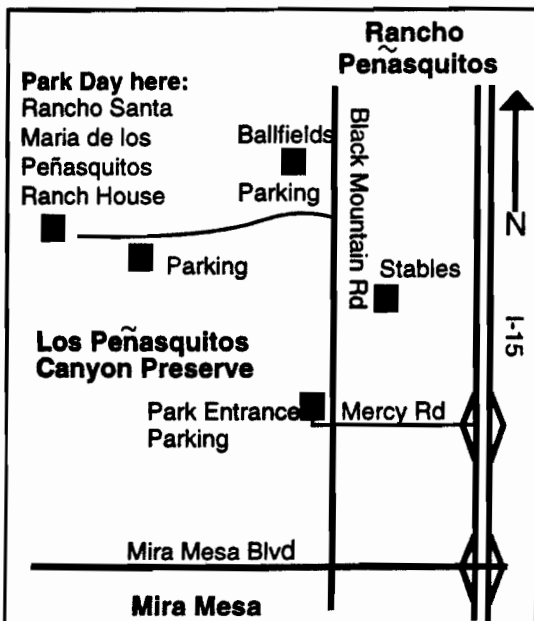
Admission is Free!

- ❖ Tour nearby digs
- ❖ Free Pony rides for kids under six
- ❖ Enjoy music by Los Californios
- ❖ Archaeology, nature, Indian & other exhibits
- ❖ Wild animals
- ❖ Savor Indian fry bread & mexican foods
- ❖ Animal tracking, native plant, other field trips

Pre-ranch Outings

- 8 - 10 a.m. Nature walk to waterfall, back to ranch (6 miles). Meet at Parking-Staging area opposite Mercy
- 8:30 - 10 a.m. Equestrian walking ride to Kit Carson Crossing. Meet at Stables off Black Mountain Road. Bring own horse or rent. Must RSVP to 271-8806.
- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Bike ride led by Cantina Bike Shop to Kit Carson Crossing. Meet at Canyonside Park Ballfields off Black Mountain Road.

All outings will bring participants back in time for ranch festivities.



Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force

Task Force Chair County Supervisor Pam Slater

City Councilmember Harry Mathis

City Councilmember Barbara Warden

join with

The Citizen's Advisory Committee to present Park Day

Diggin' the Past

Exhibits

- Wild animals from Project Wildlife
- Jane Dumas (Kumeyaay elder and herbalist) and native plants, acorn grinding & mush (*tentative*)
- Snakes from Herpetological Society
- Native plants (Calif. Native Plant Society)
- Peñasquitos & El Cuervo artifacts
- Animal tracks (Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve)
- Careers in Archaeology
- S.D. County Archaeology Society
- Museum of Man displays
- Historic Archaeology
- Sierra Club, Audubon, Clean Water Program, People for Trees, County Parks, Cara Knott Foundation, Friends of Rcho Penas. Library & others.

Audiovisual

- Narrated slide shows of Peruvian and Mayan discoveries w. Kaye Miller
- Indiana Jones Videos
- Flintknapping & pottery makin videos
- Video of Los Peñasquitos Ranch House dig
- Underwater archaeology films

Food

Food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the day, including:

- Indian fry bread will be back by popular demand
- Traditional Mexican food

General Activities

- Learn how volunteers can join archaeological digs in San Diego
- Field trip: animal tracking and how animals are important to archaeology
- Field trip: native plants and how they apply to archaeology
- Tours of historic adobe
- Tours of nearby City College archaeological dig sites; watch archaeologists at work
- Corn grinding demos using manos and metates
- Traditional ramada with stone tool making & discussion of Indian/archaeological relations
- Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Volunteer Patrol demonstration

Children's Activities

- Pottery making
- "What room is this?" Boxes with artifacts from various rooms in a house
- Painting of rock art designs
- "Who lives here?" Sorting bags full of trash (cleaned) to learn about the people who threw out the trash
- Sand painting
- Fire making
- Painting animal tracks
- Pony rides for kids under six (6)

Commemorative T-shirts expected to be available at reasonable cost. Proceeds go to Preserve projects.

Schedule is tentative and subject to adjustment as the date approaches. Call 484-3219 the week of May 22 for final details.



Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

July/August 1994
Volume 8 No. 4

Stream Survey Volunteers Sought

Ever wondered what Peñasquitos Creek looks like in those areas trails don't penetrate? Now's your chance. This summer, the Friends are launching our first systematic survey of Peñasquitos Creek. We'll begin in Sabre Springs and work our way downstream.

We will survey a broad range of things, both in the water and on the banks. We want to catalogue the vegetation growing on the banks, including any exotic species that might need to be removed at a future date. In addition, we'll be taking the temperature of the water at different locations and measuring the depth of the stream at regular intervals and marking deeper pools. We might do some water quality sampling as well.

The stream or riparian system is the heart of the Preserve; enhancing our store of knowledge about it is vital to its future. For example, our findings may influence whether we recommend attempts to restore native fish to these waters. Perhaps we can answer the question: where have the pond turtles gone? What exotics threaten to replace native vegetation?

Physically, surveying will involve walking down the stream bed. Hip waders are recommended. We will note our location with a global positioning system (GPS) at our disposal and record our findings on minicassette recorder and on paper. A team of perhaps 3-4 people will be best to efficiently take and note measurements and findings. It will be dirty, wet, and probably hot work (albeit moderated by the shade of the forest canopy). If this excites you, call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 to volunteer. We'll begin late July or early August and do the survey in stages.

Join us!

June Votes Deal Blows to Open Space

by Mike Kelly, president

Voters dealt serious blows — both locally and statewide — to open-space conservation in the June 7 primary ballot. Voters handily voted down both the statewide Proposition 180 and the City of San Diego Proposition C. Let's look at the immediate and long-term impacts of both.

Proposition 180: CalPAW

The California Parks and Wildlife (CalPAW, Prop 180) was a \$2 billion bond measure, largely for the expansion or establishment of open-space parks throughout the State. The initiative qualified for the ballot entirely through the effort of volunteer signature gatherers. Despite a \$2 million campaign and little opposition, it was badly defeated at the polls.

The vote to defeat Prop 180 was not a vote against the environment per se; rather, it was part of a wave of voter rejection of any bond measure that increased the state's debt burden. Even an earthquake relief bond measure for the Northridge quake relief rebuilding failed, in contrast to the one passed several years ago for the San Francisco quake relief effort. With the state still mired in recession voters were in a conservative mood financially.

Prop 180's defeat means some 20 projects in San Diego County will not be funded for acquisition or improvement. Some, although not all, of the land scheduled for acquisition will be developed in the absence of timely purchases. Parks whose future expansion will be hurt by the lack of acquisition funds include Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, the San Dieguito River Valley Park, Tijuana River Valley Park and many others.

Prop C — pyrrhic victory?

Proposition C, the phase shift vote for the North City Future Urbanizing Area, was badly defeated by the voters, with a margin of about 8% separating the yes and no votes.

➡ p. 2 for more

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Blue Sky Ecological Reserve Needs Support

Blue Sky Ecological Reserve is a wonderful park to visit in Poway — if you already haven't. Right now they need your help. As a State Dept. of Fish and Game wildlife reserve, recreational activities are limited to low-impact activities such as hiking and nature walks. This reflects the fact that the purpose of the park is first and foremost preservation of the native plants and animals.

Bike riding is prohibited in all such state wildlife preserves. In Blue Sky, however, this law wasn't enforced until this past May since there hadn't been a state ranger in residence until recently. Once enforcement began the bikeriding community started pressuring the City of Poway and State Fish and Game to reopen the preserve to bikers. As we have seen, bike riding has a serious, negative impact on preserves, witness our own Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. To show public support for keeping Blue Sky as a true nature preserve without bikers, please send a letter — just a brief one — to this effect, to:

Boyd Gibbons
State Dept. of Fish and Game
1416 9th St.
Sacramento CA 95184.

If possible, send a copy of your letter to the Friends of Blue Sky Ecological Preserve at P.O.B. 724, Poway CA 92074.

Don't be shy, it doesn't have to be a polished masterpiece!

(Prop C cont'd)

The defeat was widely heralded by the media as an "environmental" victory, even a victory for "open-space" protection.

As we will explain, the vote was a big *political* defeat for the development industry, but at the same time an unfortunate *defeat* for open-space preservation.

If you haven't read our earlier articles on this issue you might skip to the "Background" section of this article and then come back to this point.

Death of the Framework Plan? Open space, corridors at risk

The Sierra Club's Craig Adams was the main spokesman for the coalition calling for a no vote on Prop C. During the campaign he predicted that there was *no downside* to the no vote, that the no vote was a freebie. He assured other environmental groups and the voters that the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the landowners were wrong in predicting a no vote would lead to piecemeal development of the FUA, the loss of Route 56 in this century, the loss of wildlife corridors and the loss of the environmental tier and master planning for the whole area. In fact, he said that a no vote would give him and the environmental movement *more* leverage with the developers for getting more open space than Prop C guaranteed. He also promised that with a no vote Route 56 would be build by the year 2000. This was, he said, because the developers were lying about their financial straits; they didn't really need the phase shift approval at this time for the comfort level of their financiers. He predicted that they would be back at the bargaining table for a new vote as if this vote never happened. Let's see how good a prognosticator Adams turned out to be.

In the weeks after the no vote the landowners and developers and, in some cases, their financiers, met to assess their situation. According to reports from these meetings, most of the landowners decided that the decisive nature of the vote, 8%, and the type of opposition (see later in this article) make it unlikely that they could *ever* win a future phase shift vote, detailed sub-area plans and new ballot language not withstanding.

To date, Pardee and the landowners in Sub-Area V have formally notified the Planning Dept. that they have withdrawn from the Framework Plan and intend to develop at A-1-10 or A-1-4 (a variant cluster type of development) level densities. Other landowners are expected to follow suit. Financially this makes sense. If you believe you're unlikely to ever get voter approval for higher density development

then the only way to get a return on your investment is to develop at the underlying zoning, A-1-10. This probably means that we have lost the last possibility for developing a master plan for the area as a whole.

Although there are other issues such as traffic, affordable housing, etc., the critical issue for the Friends has always been the open space system and the wildlife corridors connecting Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to Black Mountain Open-Space Park and the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Park. What are the implications of the landowners' decisions for these issues?

Quid pro quid of higher densities

In general, large dedications, i.e., donations, of land and the building of public facilities such as regional roads (56), libraries, neighborhood parks, fire and police stations, a municipal golf course come from developers of big projects with urban level densities. Smaller developers of urban-level densities contribute to such facilities through a Financing and Benefit Assessment District (FBA). There's a quid pro quid involved: the developers get higher density in exchange for dedicating open space and building or financing needed facilities. That's how Mira Mesa, Rancho Peñasquitos, Rancho Bernardo, Carmel Valley, Scripps Ranch and Sabre Springs are being built. It's the density that makes it possible for the developers to be able to afford to the dedications and facilities financing.

Consequently, under the low densities of A-1-10 or A-1-4 the same quid pro quid doesn't work. Although the density that Prop C would have permitted in the FUA was less than half that of the surrounding communities, about 17,000 units, this density is what allowed the dedication of 6,000 acres of open space, wildlife corridors, the building of Route 56, the muni golf course and many other public facilities. Under A-1-10 the most units that would be built would be 1,220. If some of the development takes place at A-1-4 you might bring the total up to 2,100 units or so. You won't get much, if any, dedication of open space and few public facilities, with densities this low. Developer financing of 56 is definitely dead at this point. In fact, the land that they were dedicating for free for 56 will now have to be bought.

There will probably be two basic patterns of development under A-1-10 or A-1-4. In Sub-Area V, the landowners are mainly small, with an average of under 15 acres per parcel. These parcels are expected to come forward a parcel at a time for development by individual owners who want to build a personal house or equestrian center, etc. Most will not go through

the sub-division review process since this occurs when larger parcels must be subdivided for development. Expect no dedication of open space land. This is tragic, since these landowners hold the bulk of the undisturbed, pristine lands — lands that haven't been disturbed by grazing or farming, etc. This is where the sensitive habitat in the FUA lays.

When Pardee or Potomac or other larger landowners come forward it will probably be for development of A-1-10 or A-1-4 for their whole property, 3,000 acres, at one time. This requires the sub-division review process to break the land into 10 acre parcels. There is the possibility of getting some public benefits from this process — but nothing on the scale of the Framework Plan or Prop C.

It is thus unlikely that we will see dedication of open space or preservation of wildlife corridors in the FUA under A-1-10, approaching the level or quality of the Framework Plan — certainly not an interconnected open space system. Some land will be saved through the Endangered Species Act (coastal sage scrub, California gnatcatcher), steep hillside restrictions and various wetlands restrictions (vernal pools on 2-3 parcels). However, these lands are not connected and any saved would likely be isolated parcels. Also, under U.S. Supreme Court rulings, a landowner can't be prohibited from economic use of their land, however minimal, without compensation — even with endangered species present. Hence, you can't realistically prevent a small landowner from building a house on their property, even with gnatcatchers present — unless you're willing to buy the property in a timely manner.

One other way to preserve open space or wildlife linkages is by purchasing the land. This is not likely since existing funds are all but depleted and Prop 180 was defeated. It is unlikely significant bond funds will be available prior to 1996 and perhaps the year 2000 — the voters willing. Some purchases of land for open space may be possible through mitigation monies for projects elsewhere. However, one project that was to generate significant mitigation money directed to open-space preservation in the FUA was Route 56. This highway through the FUA is now considered dead for this century. The most likely date for construction — if any — and therefore mitigation, is about 2008 when future transportation funds next become available.

What is now likely is a steady attrition of the land in the FUA to large acre estate developments for the wealthy, with a consequent loss of possible open space and linkages. It will take only a handful of

small A-1-10 developments to block our three remaining wildlife corridors and to destroy the possibility of a high-quality interconnected open space system.

Recreation in the FUA

For decades now, equestrians, bike riders and hikers, not to mention off-road vehicles, have had the run of numerous trails throughout the FUA and into Peñasquitos Canyon. For the most part, they will probably be closed off now. With few fences and no posting, access to the FUA trails was easy and probably helped create the myth of open space (see below) in the area. As building begins on individual parcels in the FUA we should expect to see the usual fences go up that homeowners use to define their property. These will block some of these trails. In addition, we should expect to see many owners of vacant parcels fencing and posting their land for no trespassing to underline that the property is private and must be acquired by purchase or through the development process to become dedicated trails or open space parks.

The why of the no vote

The no vote had several components to it: distrust of developers, anti-growth sentiment, and preservation of open space areas and anti-traffic/anti-Route 56. As expected, it was an amalgam of opposition, ranging from people with a genuine concern for open space to classic NIMBYs (Not-in-my-back-yard) in Carmel Valley and Rancho Bernardo. It's this very breadth that has convinced landowners they probably can't win a future phase shift vote for the FUA, no matter how much they "sweeten" the deal.

The distrust of developers, born of decades of poorly designed projects and communities and of many broken promises, fueled a large part of this no vote. The sentiment seemed to be, if the developers are for it, there *must* be something wrong with it. Having just one environmental group, the Friends, urging a yes vote was not enough to counter the effect of the Sierra Club, Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (C3) and the Audubon Society being against it. If these groups could have been convinced that this was a good deal for the environment this part of the no vote might have been blunted.

Another unexpected part of the no vote were the people who thought they were voting to preserve existing parkland. I call this the "myth of the open space." One of the TV stations editorialized that a no vote was a vote to protect "parkland" from development. I met many people who also thought this area was already parkland, already dedicated open space. The many

people who have used this area for recreation undoubtedly thought this as well and communicated this to their friends. The fact is that the property being voted on, the 12,200 acres in the FUA was all privately owned. None of it was open space. Only if the voters had approved a phase shift for the area would a part of the land, some 6,000 acres, have become dedicated parkland as envisioned in the Framework Plan. The area isn't even zoned for open space, whether acquired or privately owned. Again, the other environmental groups, if they had understood the issues, could have helped educate away this misconception.

A very big part of the no vote was anti-growth sentiment. This is different from sentiment for *managing* growth. Opposition from Carmel Valley and Rancho Bernardo was strong in their planning boards and in their popular vote. I believe both these communities voted against Prop C to *permanently* stop growth in an area adjacent to them. Sentiment against Route 56 is very much a part of this in Carmel Valley, where groups unsuccessfully sued to stop the construction of their part of Route 56 in the past.

By this they hoped to stop future traffic impacts in their community. It didn't matter how good Prop C was, whether there were sub-area plans or not, or how good the master Framework Plan was, they would have voted it down. In the short run it does mean less traffic on some streets, but in the long run, it merely postpones and moves the traffic around a bit. If residential development doesn't occur at urban levels in the FUA it will simply be pushed further into the County, up the I-15 corridor for example. The burgeoning communities to the north, even into the Fallbrook area, house people who commute down I-15 to San Diego. Personally, this author would rather have urban densities here in the City and preserve semi-rural, rural and wilderness areas in the County. But that's another issue.

Here, the position of the other environmental groups didn't matter. Voters who make up the recognized hard core of about 35-40% anti-growth aren't interested in how well you plan to *manage* growth, or how much open space will be dedicated, how many wildlife corridors will be protected, how many trails will be available for recreation — not if it means accommodating more people in the city.

The voters who swung this vote were the voters who thought they were protecting open space and the manage-the-growth voters who saw this not as a good plan, but a developer scheme to get around planning restrictions. We believe they were wrong, but that's how they and some of

the organizations they respect believed.

What next?

Responsibility. It's an important concept in the Prop C aftermath. This wasn't an advisory vote like the airport vote; the Prop C vote will have short and long-term impacts important on all of us. The Friends Board of Directors deliberated at length taking a position in favor of the yes vote on C. We recognized that we were publicly supporting the landowners and developers position that their economic reasons for needing a vote now were real. We recognized that we were taking responsibility for the ballot language we helped craft, that the promises made there were going to happen. It was an important moral responsibility.

The opposition to Prop C, led by the Sierra Club, holds the moral responsibility for the no vote. The promises they made will be tough to keep. It will take extraordinary leadership to salvage the Framework Plan, get 6,000 acres of open-space, wildlife corridors, Route 56, etc. It means convincing the landowners/developers to come back into the Framework Planning process for a future phase shift vote — since A-1-10, A-1-4 density development won't support the public benefits mentioned.

Leadership will mean taking a hard look at their no vote allies and separating from the NIMBYs who will try to block Route 56 and *any* development beyond A-1-10. For these folks, the open space and corridors are *not* their highest priority (public utterances notwithstanding), which it should be for the true environmentalist or conservationist. The window of opportunity to salvage this open space et al is a narrow one. Every parcel developed at A-1-10 in coming months makes it more and more difficult to master plan the FUA and garner the public benefits the Framework Plan promises.

Politically, the situation requires leadership from the City. Councilmember Harry Mathis can't provide the same leadership he did during the Prop C negotiating process, identified as he is with the yes on C position. Leadership has to come from the no side of the spectrum. A strong intervention by the Mayor, working with the major environmental groups, might salvage at least part of this situation to the public benefit. It will require decisive leadership directed to this goal and not simply an offer to mediate between the opposing sides. Will we see it?

Background

The North City Future Urbanizing Area (FUA in the Press) is an area of about

Biology and Growth Habits of Giant Reed (*Arundo Donax*)

by Gary P. Bell

Southern California Area Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy

[**Editor's note:** Invasive exotic plant species rival development in destruction of native biodiversity, especially in river drainages. For this reason this newsletter carries articles on this problem. *Arundo donax*, the species of concern in this reprint, is a growing problem in San Diego, as evidenced in its spread throughout the San Diego River and other drainages. Giant Reed has the ability to change the entire riparian — stream side — ecosystem. In Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Mission Trails Regional Park, Sweetwater Reservoir, Cottonwood Creek, Famosa Slough, and elsewhere, campaigns are underway to eradicate this species.]

This and the following article are reprinted from the *Arundo donax Workshop Proceedings*, 1993, which contains many articles on the different aspects of this problem species. Also included are menus outlining different methods of eradicating this plant. The proceedings are available for \$5.00 from Nelroy Jackson, 400 S. Ramona Ave., #212, Corona, CA 91719.]

Background

More than 95% of the historic riparian habitat in the southern part of the state has been lost to agriculture, development, flood control, and other human-caused impacts. The greatest threat today to the remaining riparian corridors is the invasion of exotic plant species, primarily giant reed (*Arundo donax*). Giant reed readily invades riparian channels, especially in disturbed areas, is very competitive, difficult to control, and to the best of our knowledge does not provide either food or nesting habitat for native animals. The reed does compete with native species such as willows, mulefat, and cottonwoods which provide nesting habitat for least Bell's vireo, willow flycatcher and other native species.

Ecological value of native riparian systems

Cottonwood/willow riparian forest is a dynamic community, dependent upon periodic flooding to provide substrate, nutrients, and to cycle the community back to earlier successional stages (Figure 1). Periodic floods of large magnitude, and migration of the river channel, are essential to laying down fresh alluvial deposits where seeds of mulefat, willow and cottonwood can germinate and propagules of willow can take root.

Adequate moisture and an absence of

heavy flooding is particularly critical to the survival of the young trees through their first year. As these seedlings mature, the river continues to deposit sediment on the floodplain. This sediment deposition builds the river terraces and, as they are elevated, other plant species colonize resulting in further diversification in the floodplain community.

When cottonwood/willow riparian scrub, which may include such species as mulefat, California grape, California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and creek nettle (*Urtica dioica*), reaches four or five years of age, it begins to exhibit the structural diversity required by breeding least Bell's vireo. Least Bell's vireo, along with the willow flycatcher, yellow-breasted

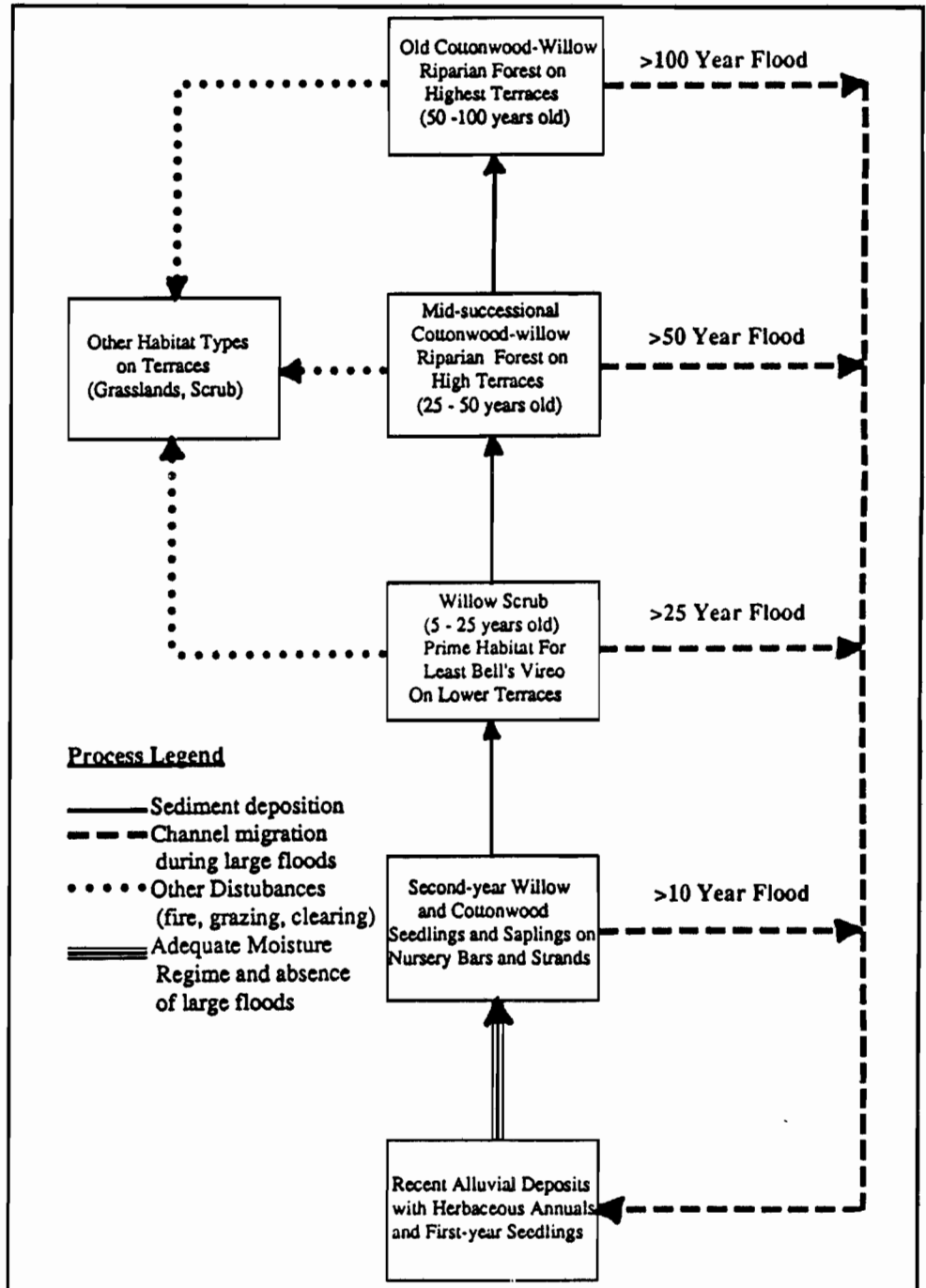


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of successional processes in Southern California cottonwood/willow riparian forest.

chat, yellow warbler, and many other species may continue to use this diverse community for another ten to twenty years. Gradually the canopy of the maturing willows and cottonwoods begins to shade out the diverse understory of vascular plants required by these birds. Older riparian gallery forest will continue to be used by western yellow-billed cuckoo, Cooper's hawk, warbling vireo and other species. But as the stand ages, the diversity of the flora and fauna within the forest declines. Annual flooding and occasional large flood events maintain this cycle of succession and therefore maintains a mosaic of diverse natural communities.

Giant reed

Arundo is a genus of tall perennial reed-like grasses with six species native to warmer parts of the Old World. Giant reed, *Arundo Donax*, is the largest member of the genus and is among the largest of the grasses (Poaceae), growing to more than 25 feet tall. Giant reed is native to Europe, and is found in freshwater in the Mediterranean region. Giant reed was purposefully introduced to California in the 1820s in the Los Angeles area as an erosion-control agent in drainage canals. Giant reed was also used as thatching for roofs or sheds, barns, and other buildings.

Giant reed is a hydrophyte, growing along lakes, streams, drains and other wet sites. It uses prodigious amounts of water to supply its incredible rate of growth. Under optimal conditions giant reed can grow more than three inches per day.

Arundo as a competitor

Within its introduced range, giant reed is an aggressive competitor. Giant reed flowers in late summer with a large, plumelike panicle. Fortunately for California land managers the seeds produced by *Arundo* in this country are seldom, if ever, fertile. As such, spread, and therefore management, of giant reed is essentially an intra-basin and downstream phenomenon. This species is well adapted to the high disturbance dynamics of riparian systems as it spreads primarily vegetatively. Flood events break up clumps of *Arundo* and spread the pieces downstream. Fragmented stem nodes and rhizomes can take root and establish as new plant clones.

Once established this species tends to form large, continuous clonal root masses, sometimes covering several acres, usually at the expense of native riparian vegetation which cannot compete with *Arundo*. Giant reed is also highly flammable throughout most of the year, and the plant appears highly adapted to extreme fire events. While fire is a natural and beneficial process in many natural communities in southern California, it is a largely unnatural and

pervasive threat to riparian areas. Natural wild fires usually occur during rare lightning storm events in late fall, winter, and early spring. Under these conditions the moist green vegetation of riparian areas would normally act as a fire break. Human-caused wild fires, in contrast, often occur during the dry months of the year. Drier conditions in riparian zones at this time of year make them more vulnerable to fire damage. Because it is extremely flammable, once established within a riparian area, giant reed redirects the history of a site by increasing the probability of the occurrence of wildfire, and increasing the in-

tensity of wildfire once it does occur. Giant reed effectively changes riparian forest from a flood-defined to a fire-defined natural community (Figure 2).

Rhizomes respond quickly after fire, sending up new sprouts and quickly outgrowing any native species which might have otherwise taken root in a burned-over site. Fire events thus tend to help push riparian stands in the direction of pure *Arundo donax*. This usually results in significant stands of giant reed with little additional plant species diversity.

➡ p. 6 for more

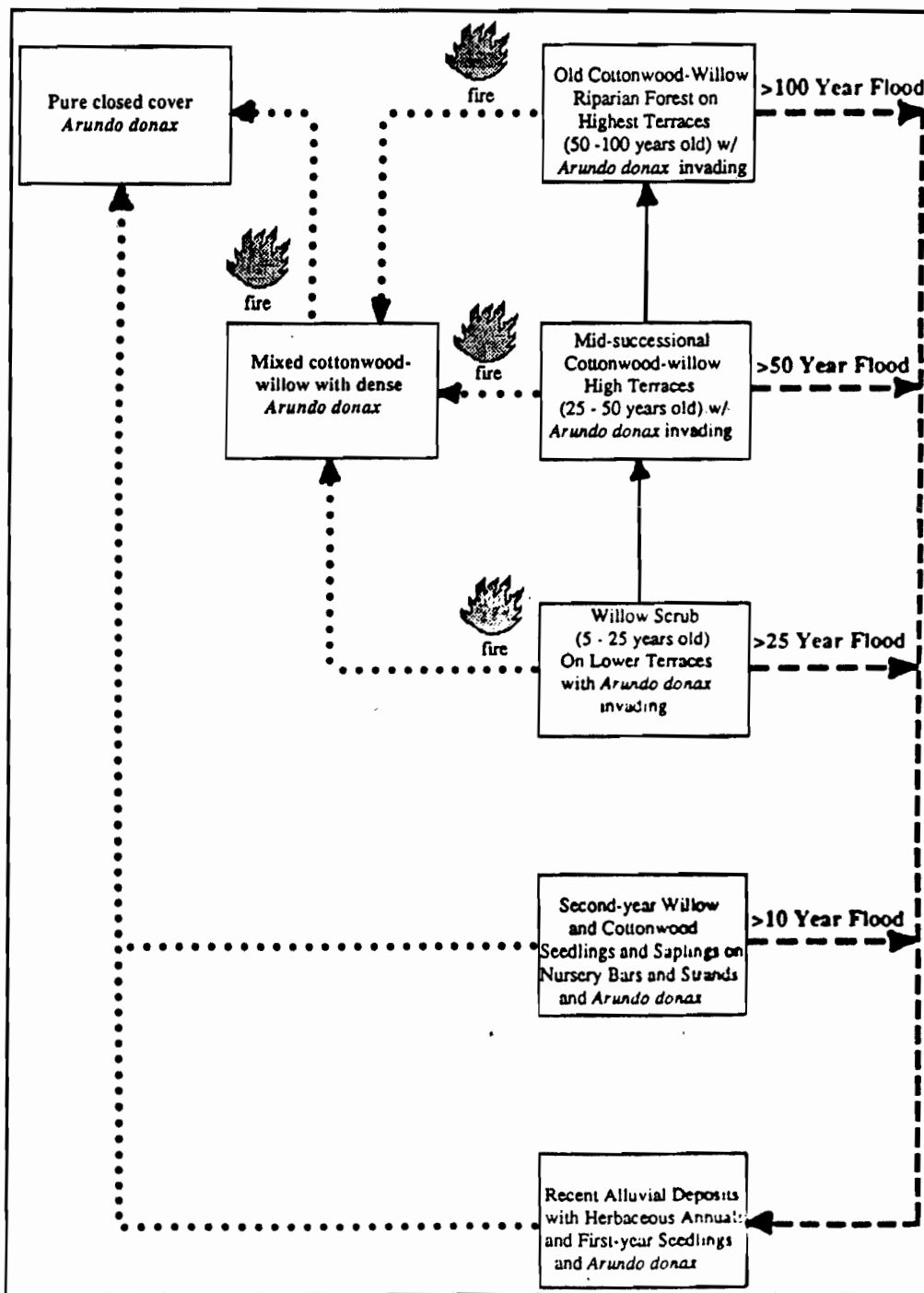


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of successional processes in Southern California cottonwood/willow riparian forest.

(Giant reed cont'd)

Giant reed as habitat -NOT!

Establishment and success of giant reed within a riparian corridor thus results in a decline in the diversity of native riparian plant species -- reed supplants native habitat. All evidence indicates that giant reed does not provide either food or habitat for native species of wildlife. Areas largely taken over by giant reed are therefore depauperate of wildlife. This also means that native flora and fauna do not offer any significant control mechanisms for giant reed. It is uncertain what the natural controlling mechanisms for this species are in the Old World.

Recent studies by SAWPA have indicated that reed also lacks the structure necessary to provide significant shading of bank-edge river habitats, resulting in warmer water than would be found with a native gallery forest of willows. As a result, riverine areas dominated by giant reed tend to have warmer water temperatures and lower diversity of aquatic animals, including fishes. In the Santa Ana River system this lack of streambank structure and shading has been implicated in the reduction of rare native stream fishes including the arroyo chub (*Gila orcuttii*), three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), speckled dace (*Rhinichthy osculus*), and Santa Ana sucker (*Castostomus santaanae*).

Other studies have indicated that in addition to higher water temperatures, this lack of stream-side canopy structure may result in increased pH in the shallower sections of the river due to high algal photosynthetic activity. In turn, high pH facilitates the conversion of total ammonia to the toxic un-ionized ammonia form which further degrades water quality for aquatic species and for downstream users.

Conclusions

By virtue of its growth characteristics, adaptations to disturbance, especially fire, its lack of natural predators and competitors in North America, and its unsuitability as food or habitat for native wildlife, giant reed has established itself as one of the primary threats to native riparian habitats in the western United States.

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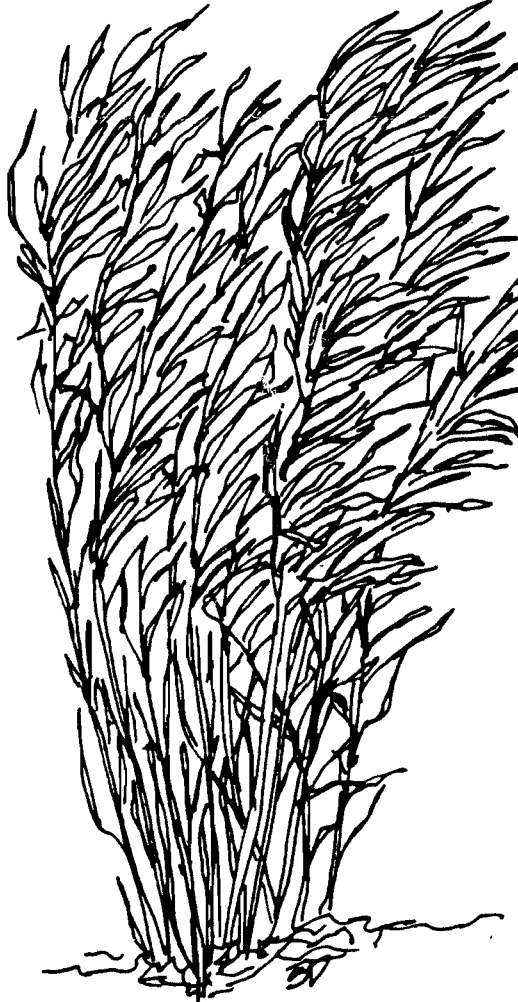
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Arundo donax (Giant Reed)

Arundo donax in the Santa Ana River Basin

by Shelton Douthit

Riverside Land Conservancy

Introduction

The Santa Ana River Basin, estimated to include over 24,000 square miles of drainage area, is considered the largest of the seven river systems that drain Southern California. Originating at springs high in the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains, the Santa Ana River flows to the Pacific Ocean through over 300 miles of natural and straighten river channels.

According to a 1989 United States Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Report (85 7.27) an estimated 46% of these channels (main channel and major tributaries) contain riparian vegetation. This vegetation includes cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), willow (*Salix* spp.), sycamore (*Plantanus racemosa*), and Mulefat (*Baccharis glutinosa*). Increasingly *Arundo donax* is also found invading this once "natural" riparian habitat.

Vegetation Mapping

During the past two years, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has begun mapping streamside vegetation within the Santa Ana River basin. This effort appears to be the first comprehensive riparian vegetation mapping effort ever attempted on the Santa Ana River outside of the National Forests. A preliminary literature search indicates that no other watershed-wide riparian vegetation mapping has occurred, even though numerous biological studies have been conducted. These past studies have been focus on a specific segment of the river and do not attempt to assess vegetation throughout the entire river system.

TNC's initial riparian vegetation mapping efforts have been targeted at the Prado Basin located in western Riverside and southeastern San Bernardino Counties. This mapping has involved aerial photography interpretation and mapping using a computer-based geographic interpretation system (GIS). Initially mapping is at 1:24,000 scale using U.S.D.I. Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) topographic base maps. Currently two U.S.G.S. quadrangles have been completed and provide a startling look at the extent of *Arundo* infestation.

Initial vegetation mapping efforts involve the central portion of the Santa Ana River. This portion of the river is roughly

(Santa Ana cont'd)

22 miles in length and contain the largest contiguous stand of alluvial riparian forest within the entire river system. Most of this riparian forest is located within the Santa Ana River Regional Park, a network of publicly owned lands that include Prado Basin, Hidden Valley Wildlife Area, and Anza Narrows Regional Park. This area is considered to be the "most natural" segment of the main channel of the Santa Ana River below 2000' in elevation, and serves as the last remaining sanctuary for many of the riparian species once found throughout the entire Santa Ana River System.

As of September, 1993, two U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute topo quadrangles have been mapped, the Riverside West, and San Bernardino South. The Corona North, and Prado Dam quads will be completed in late October.

A look at the Riverside West quad provides one with a startling look at the Arundo infestation problem. There is an estimated 1,116 acres of riparian vegetation (including Arundo), of which 535 acres consist of pure stand Arundo. An additional 227 acres are mixed stands of vegetation including Arundo, while 354 acres are relatively natural riparian vegetation. Mixed stands of Arundo are considered to be stands of native riparian vegetation that are actively becoming infested and will eventually become a pure stand of Arundo. With this in mind, of the total 1,116 acres of riparian vegetation, 762 acres are impacted by Arundo. This is roughly 68% of the total riparian vegetation found within this segment of the Santa Ana.

These initial numbers are estimates and do not represent a final assessment of conditions. But this sample does indicate that of the 46% of the Santa Ana River that is still relatively natural and contains riparian vegetation, potentially as much as 50-60% of that vegetation is Arundo, having no habitat value and is actively invading the remaining un-impacted 20% of the river. These numbers are rough estimates, but combined with field sampling, does suggest that the Santa Ana River's remaining natural riparian habitat is in danger of being totally overrun by Arundo.

Initial Sampling of Tributaries

Any attempt to control Arundo must involve its removal and control throughout the watershed. Initial mapping efforts have been focused on the main channel, but field sampling has occurred on many tributaries.

Preliminary sampling consisting of field surveys and the establishment of photopoints currently is underway within three Santa Ana river tributaries located in western Riverside County. The upper San Timoteo and Sycamore Canyon drainages are currently being surveyed, while the Alessandro Arroyo was surveyed early this past summer (July 1993). The results of these surveys indicated that Arundo is found in mixed and pure stands throughout each tributary, even at remote headwaters and springs.

Conclusions

Invasion by Arundo may potentially be the final in a series of impacts that has degraded or destroyed the once extensive riparian forest found growing along the Santa Ana River and its many tributaries. It is actively invading publicly owned and managed ecological preserves and parks that were established to serve as pristine sanctuaries for the many threatened and endangered riparian plants and animals found within the region.

A watershed-wide habitat recovery effort must be carried-out if the remaining riparian habitat within the Santa Ana river basin is to be protected. A component of such recovery effort must involve a comprehensive vegetation mapping and monitoring effort utilizing aerial photography, computer-based Geographic Information Systems and field sampling. Mapping and monitoring are essential for planning of on-the-ground removal efforts and monitoring their effectiveness. Any large scale habitat management and recovery effort should initiate mapping and assessment efforts as early in the planning process as possible. Local colleges and universities can provide low cost mapping and GIS assistance. But all mapping efforts must be accompanied by accurate field sampling so the "ground-truth" interpretations of aerial or satellite images.

Friends' Directory

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Vice-President: Tom Hopp, Ph.D. 566-4474
Treasurer: Rena Kerwin 693-3159
Secretary: Les Braund 566-3958

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Don Albright, Vicky Ausen, Chris Bader, Trinity Gabriel, Barry Martin, Alan Pepper, Ph.D., Brian Swanson,

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Conservation Chair: Alan Pepper, Ph.D. 586-7123
Geology Walk Leader: Don Albright 443-7982
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Wetlands Restoration Committee: Don Albright, Tom Hopp, Susan George, Marcus Spiegelberg, Trinity Gabriel, John Northrop
Wildlife Survey Committee & Tracking Walk: Barry Martin 484-4007

Thanks Volunteers!

Late spring was a busy time for our conservation work in the Preserve. Many people helped in a variety of projects. The following lists don't include the many people working in our ongoing animal and gnatcatcher surveys, folks mentioned in an earlier article in our newsletter. Thanks to all of these very dedicated conservationists !

German ivy removal: Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano
Arundo donax eradication: Mike Kelly, Doug Fenske, Kurt Lachman, Melanie Howe, Cindy Burrascano
Tamarisk removal: Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Kurt Lachman, Doug Fenske
Artichoke thistle wacking: Mike Kelly, Trinity Gabriel, Cindy Burrascano, Rena Kerwin, Chris Bader
Endangered Thorn Mint Survey: Mike Kelly, Rena Kerwin, Pam Van Atta, Bruce Dugmore, Chris Whitten
Endangered Monardella Survey: Cindy Burrascano, Trinity Gabriel, Chris Bader, Les Braund, Pam Van Atta, Reneene Mowry,
Park Day Volunteers: Les Braund, Will Bowen, Chris Bader, Chris Whitten, Mike Kelly, Rick Botta, Rick Moyer, Laura and Scott Olsen, Leslie Hastings, Vicky Ausen, Trinity Gabriel, Barry Martin



Grasshopper

(Prop C cont'd)

12,200 acres of land in the North City area between Rancho Peñasquitos on the east, Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to the south, Carmel Valley to the west, and San Dieguito River Valley to the north. It's zoned A-1-10, agricultural or low-density zoning. Legally approved uses for land zoned A-1-10 include farming, grazing, plant nurseries and greenhouses, equestrian centers and other agricultural related uses. In addition, an owner of land, large or small, is allowed to build 1 dwelling unit per ten acres. In other words, an owner of a ten-acre parcel is allowed to build a home or ranch or barn on this property. Other uses such as schools or churches, can be approved for this area under what are called Conditional Use Permits. Two schools have already been built in this area.

Most of the FUA acreage has already been developed under A-1-10 uses, especially farming and grazing, some of it for decades. Perhaps 3,000 acres have never been grazed or farmed and contain native vegetation.

This land was temporarily put off limits to urban level development in 1985 by the voters. They did this by passing a managed growth initiative called Proposition A. Proposition A basically said that this land should not be developed at urban-level densities until a master plan for the whole area was developed and the voters decided the time was right for developing this area. Contrary to some misinformed people, Prop A did not create or protect any dedicated open space in this area; nor did it protect the area as permanent rural or semi-rural. In fact, recognizing that the area would appropriately be developed at urban-level densities, they called it the Future Urbanizing Area. Under Prop A, A-1-10 level land use and development was allowed to continue. In fact, a number of parcels were removed from the FUA over the years by landowners who built a house or a ranch on their property. This and earlier development gives the area a bit of an odd shape when looked at on a map (which is too big for us to reproduce here).

Framework Plan approved

Several years ago this master planning process, in which environmental groups played a significant role, resulted in a "Framework Plan" for this area being approved by the City Council in 1992. It met with widespread approval because of its balance between environmental and development issues. It called for about 6,000 acres to be set aside in an "environmental tier" of interconnected open space. It also called for the protection of wildlife corridors and the reestablishment of historic ones through revegetation with native

plants in areas that had been in agriculture. It also called for the revegetation of the 3,000 or so acres needed to produce the 6,000 acres of native open space.

June 1994 was agreed to as the date for the voters to have a chance to decide to approve or disapprove the "phase shift" that would kick in the Framework Plan and allow development above the A-1-10 level. Meanwhile, the 160 property owners in the area, four of whom were sizeable (Pardee and Potomac for example), agreed to a moratorium on even A-1-10 level development while detailed sub-area plans for each of the five sub-areas in the FUA were fleshed out between the owners and the City Planning Dept.

In December 1993 the landowners and developers decided they couldn't get the sub-area plans done in time for the June ballot. They said that the sub-area plans being required by the Planning Dept. were far beyond what anyone had envisioned or that could be done in a two-year time frame. In addition, the Framework Plan had identified a route for 56 that all the planning was being based on; the environmental review process for 56 showed this alignment might not be the best one. Not having a firm alignment for 56, they said, makes detailed planning unrealistic.

Instead of postponing the vote, however, they said they still wanted to go to the ballot for the phase shift vote for financial reasons. They said that many of the landowners, including the biggest ones, couldn't keep their financing in place if they had to wait for a 1996 or later election. The phase shift vote could be based on the general guidelines of the Framework Plan and the sub-area plans would still be done after the vote and subject to environmental review and City Council approval. They argued that the 160 landowners couldn't realistically stay in the framework planning process beyond 1994. The Friends thought this was an accurate picture of the economic position of the landowners and developers at this point. Other groups, such as the Sierra Club, disagreed, saying it was just a maneuver and a bluff. Vote them down and they'll be back at the bargaining table posthaste they predicted.

Rumors and slanders — a side note

During the campaign around Prop C, the no vote coalition, "Save America's Finest City," engaged in the negative campaign tactics typical of races involving politicians. Their brochures and media interventions were full of distortions about Prop C and those supporting it. Some of the distortions and outright lies involved our group, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos

Canyon Preserve. Let's put the record straight.

At various times the charge was made that Mike Kelly, president of the Friends, or the Friends as a group were "on the take." Our outspoken support for Prop C supposedly had been "bought." For the record, although some \$2 million was spent in support of Prop C, neither Mike Kelly nor the Friends received a dime of this (or any other) money, either directly or indirectly.

Another charge leveled, including by the coalition's spokesman in a TV interview, is that it was only a lone individual, Mike Kelly, not the Friends who were supporting Prop C. This was a lie and was known to be by this spokesman. A variant on this distortion was that it hadn't been a *real* majority of the Friends' Board for Prop C, that the vote was 3 for, two against, two abstentions! For the record, as our readers know from this newsletter, the Friends Board of Directors voted unanimously to support Prop C. In fact, we believe we had as many people present and voting at the Board meetings as did the much larger Sierra Club, Audubon or C3.

Honest disagreements?

The type of attacks that took place against this author and the Friends reflect an immaturity within the political environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society and the Greens, as compared with other areas we know. Their attacks seemed to reflect an "how dare you take a different position" type of attitude. On the part of the Sierra Club, one of the "nationals," this is nothing new. They always seem to get their "nose" bent out of shape when another group doesn't follow their lead. This type of attitude makes having honest disagreements within the movement difficult. It stifles the type of free-flowing discussions often necessary to arrive at effective positions and to work together on issues you do agree on.

Exotic Plant Symposium Set

The California Exotic Pest Plant Council is holding its 3rd annual symposium in Sacramento Sept. 30-Oct. 1. Biocontrol of exotics and ecosystem level exotics management will be themes of several of this year's presentations. In addition workshops will focus on a range of individual species. There will be field trips to the nearby Consumnes Preserve of the Nature Conservancy. For a free brochure, call Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

Beat the Heat! Enjoy the Preserve during the Cool Hours

Beat the heat this summer by visiting the Preserve during early morning and evening hours. Besides being cooler, it's the best time to see our wildlife.

Summer is also the time of the monthly evening programs of the County San Diego Archaeological Society. These slide show programs are held at the historic adobe ranch house in the preserve. You're welcome to bring a picnic supper and share the company of other folks in the courtyard of the adobe prior to the program.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

Volunteer Work Parties

If you would like to help out with our conservation work call Mike Kelly at 566-6489. We have ongoing animal surveys, invasive weed removal projects, seed collection and planting programs to name a few of our activities.

JULY

Bird Walk in Lopez Canyon

Sat., July 9, 4 p.m. (1-1/2 hours). Meet in new Parking-Staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/2 mile east of Sorrento Valley Industrial Park. Park entrance is on right, going east. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal to Sorrento Valley Blvd., entrance will be on left. Bring bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Mon., July 11, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Rancho Santa Maria de Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., July 16, 11 a.m. & noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S.D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Wed., July 20, 7 p.m. Meet at adobe ranch house. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black

Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch.

Dusk Walk/Peñasquitos Creek Park

Fri., July 22, 7:30 p.m. Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road Exit west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mountain Road and up the hill. Take a left at the first light, at Park Village Drive. Follow Park Village Drive to its intersection with Camino Ruiz. The park is on the left. Meet on corner of the two roads. Led by Mike Kelly.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., July 23, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See spring flowers and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds, their nests and perhaps their young. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund.

Night Walk

Sat., July 23, 8-9:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

Geology Walk

Sun., July 31, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

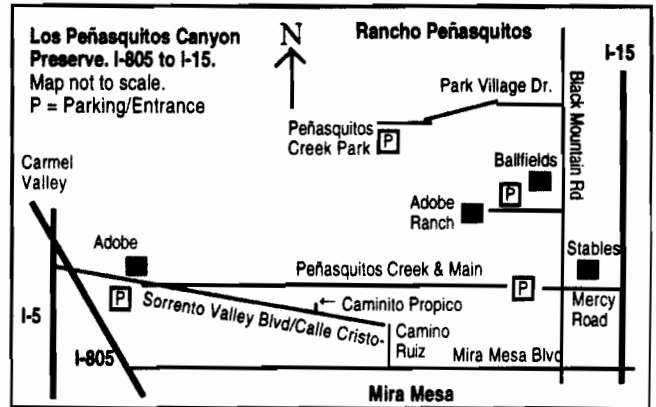
AUGUST

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Date may change this month. Call Mike at 566-6489 for details.

Dusk Walk/Peñasquitos Creek Park

Thurs., August 4, 7:30 p.m. Meet at



Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road Exit west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mountain Road and up the hill. Take a left at the first light, at Park Village Drive. Follow Park Village Drive to its intersection with Camino Ruiz. The park is on the left. Meet on corner of the two roads. Led by Mike Kelly.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., August 6, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., August 13, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See spring flowers and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds, their nests and perhaps their young. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Sat., August 13, 7-8:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Tues., August 16, 6-8 p.m. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the



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west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs.

Bird Walk at Ranch House

Sat., August 20, 8 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the adobe Ranch House in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first legal U-turn at the light at Adolphia & Park Village Drive, come back down Black Mountain Road, right into Canyonside Park; go past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Bring bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., August 20, 11 a.m. & noon (45 min. each), led by S. D. Archaeological Society docents. See August 6 listing for details.

Night Walk

Sat., August 20, 8 -9:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

Summer Evenings at the Peñasquitos Adobe

This is a series of summer evening programs taking place the fourth Saturday of the month hosted by the San Diego County Archaeology Society. Admission is free, and each of the programs begins at 6 p.m. with a docent-led tour of the grounds of the Adobe. Next there's time to enjoy your picnic supper, with beverages and dessert provided by SDCAS. The evening finishes with an informative talk, often with slides and artifacts, on a topic related to the Adobe. The remaining programs are:

Saturday, July 23, 6 p.m.
Claude Edwards, one of San Diego's premier birders will talk on the biology of Peñasquitos Canyon.

Saturday, August 27, 6 p.m.
San Diego County Parks Historian Mary Ward will update us on her recent research related to the Adobe and the people who owned it and worked at it.

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 7/94
 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:
 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.



Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Sept./Oct. 1994

Volume 8 No. 5

Wildlife Survey Producing Results

by Barry Martin

It's been 8 months since we kicked off the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Wildlife study. When we began we stated our goals as follows:

1. Determine accurate census data.
2. Determine seasonal/conditional movement patterns.
3. Determine main food sources.
4. Monitor trends and overall health of the preserve.

Another unstated goal was to just have fun while out tracking. We've done well in achieving these goals so far, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our active volunteers. Mike Gonzales programmed a data base for us and Dave and Susie Cole have begun the input of the field data.

The zone 6 team of Erik and Lani Norreke, Lee and Lindsey Kirchhevel have done an outstanding job in one of the canyon's "hot spots." Their zone contains the wildlife tunnel which connects López Canyon to the main canyon and their northern section is under intense scrutiny by the city planners who are defining exact locations of proposed wildlife corridors in the north city and other areas. Information gathered from these areas is being looked at very carefully and is instrumental to the proper placement of these corridors and tunnels.

Jaime Lawrence and Lee Mendez confirmed the continued survival of a large buck whom we feared had been killed on I-805 several mo. this ago. They also spotted a weasel in their López zone 9 which confirms the existence of a critter we weren't sure was still in the preserve.

Rick Botta and Liz Rozycki have been exceptional in regular report inputs from zone 4 which is a very diverse area.

John Keating and sons have kept us updated on the animal activity in the vicinity of the ranch. Susan Potts, Tarja and Sara Jacobsen set the standard for detail and precision in their reports from zone 7.

Chris Bader and Bill Moore have become active in the administration of this

➡ p. 2 for more

New Sewer Line in Canyon?

by Mike Kelly

Your help will be needed to stop the construction of a new sewer line through the **entire length** of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Ironically, this threat to the park doesn't come from the agency in charge of the project, the City's Metropolitan Wastewater Management Dept. — which supports an alternative outside the park — but from a group of residents in Sabre Springs. The issue is coming to a head now that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the "Peñasquitos Relief Trunk Sewer" is circulating for comments.

The DEIR *rejects* a gravity sewer line similar to the current one in the Preserve

➡ p. 6 for more

Carmel Mountain Biodiversity Under the Gun

Project 8A. It sounds innocuous. It's a proposal to develop a part of the Carmel Valley Community Plan area. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is out and past the comment period for the project. Unfortunately, this area is one of San Diego's least appreciated areas of biodiversity. The Friends have carried articles on this area and the adjoining Del Mar

➡ p. 2 for more

Next Tracking Workshops:
Sunday, Sept. 18, 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 30, 5:30 p.m.
Historic adobe ranch house,
Canyonside Park entrance to
Preserve. For makeup work-
shops call Barry Martin.

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Wildlife Tunnel Controversy

by Mike Kelly

As Barry Martin's article on this page relates, one of the zones being studied in the Friends' ongoing wildlife study includes a wildlife tunnel. Such tunnels are controversial in environmental and planning circles. Our wildlife survey is beginning to bring in interesting data on which animals are using our tunnel and should provide valuable information for the future design of similar tunnels. This tunnel, however, is not without its own controversy, as we shall see.

Tunnels are an integral part of wildlife corridors which are meant to allow animals to safely move from one habitat zone to another. Serious attention is being paid this important need by our own City Planning Dept. and as part of the Multiple Species Conservation and other habitat planning programs underway. Too often in the past planning has resulted in isolated, fragmented habitats that doom animal and plant species to genetic isolation and other problems — and inevitable decline. (San Diego, in fact, has served as a focus for several classic studies by Professor Michael Soule of species decline in fragmented habitats.)

The controversy with tunnels is that in urban and even rural areas, wildlife corridors often must cross roads. At-grade crossings result in a terrible toll of wildlife. Tunnels are meant to prevent this toll,

➡ p. 3 for more

(Wildlife survey cont'd)

project along with training and night observations on top of keeping up with their zones. Richard Nguyen, the Noreke's, Kirchhevel's, Bill Moore, Chris Bader, Jaime Lawrence, Lee Mendez, Kate Martin, Susan Potts and Rick Botta have participated in the evening observation sessions we've done so far.

The information gathered has been very useful and the requests for more have increased. Our study has generated a lot of interest particularly on the subject of wildlife corridor usage or non-usage. We are constantly getting requests for information concerning specific areas. In recent months we have been getting requests to determine if certain rare and endangered species are present in the Preserve, including the red-legged frog, the black-tailed jackrabbit, ring-tail cats, pond turtles, etc.

I would like to stick to the stated purpose of the study as much as possible and yet be responsive to these special requests.

Unfortunately, due to the size of the preserve and the number of volunteers currently active in their zones, we aren't able to maintain total coverage and respond adequately to these special concern areas.

To remedy this we intend to initiate a more active recruiting and ongoing training program which I will outline below. As this program spools up we will concentrate on the specific critical areas we need immediate data on. Accordingly, as an active volunteer, you may receive a call in the near future requesting you to go check out one of these critical areas. With time and more volunteers, this may not be necessary. You'll be able to stick to your own zone. If you prefer variation you may want to be a member of a more flexible "quick response team." More on this later.

First I'd like to explain what we have in mind for the future of the Wildlife Study.

While maintaining the above mentioned goals as the backbone of the study we would like to modify the major purpose as stated previously in the preliminary report. This approach should be effective in attracting additional volunteers.

This study can be looked at as beneficial to the continued existence of our preserve's eco-system of course, but there is much more to it than that. This is a vehicle through which we can learn a lost art while really *doing something* for the preservation of virtually the last of the wild places in San Diego. This can be considered a golden opportunity for you to "walk your talk" when you say "act locally, think globally." Indeed, if we really do this right it could be used as an example for other communities throughout the world! (C'mon it's O.K. to be somewhat idealistic!)

So what is this lost art I mentioned? I'm currently in the process of learning directly from the master tracker himself. You may be familiar with his books. Tom Brown Jr. is one of the pre-eminent tracker, nature and wilderness survival expert in the world. He runs a school in New Jersey, passing on the ancient wisdom of the Apache scout, Stalking Wolf, or "Grandfather" as he was known to Tom and his best friend Rick as they grew up in the Pine Barrens region of new Jersey. I attended his class in July and will be returning in October, then again in the spring. The skills I'm learning are the same skills Tom and Rick learned directly from Grandfather over a 10 year period. These are the universal, time tested skills of the people who could meld and be one with the earth mother, capable of going into the wilderness with nothing but a knife and flourishing without causing a ripple of disturbance.

In fact they enhanced the natural environment they lived in such harmony with.



Can you recognize these tracks? They belong to one of our more numerous and colorful small mammals.

Becoming a master tracker is but a small facet of the total package.

My vision and commitment is to pass along nearly everything Tom teaches me to those who sincerely are interested in learning this lost art. Tom's attitude is that he is teaching teachers and we have an obligation to pass this knowledge along. As I learn and become competent with these skills I will then teach them through the monthly classes we will offer. This will help me learn, since knowing that you will be expected to teach forces you to learn well. Also I'm firmly convinced that the more who acquire this knowledge, the better off the earth will be.

Here is how we'll get this underway:

1. We initially will incorporate monthly training sessions for the Wildlife Study group possibly in conjunction with the

monthly evening observation. See the newsletter schedule for upcoming dates and times. An additional class will be held after 3 to 6 months from now for new volunteers so that there will be a beginning and advanced group. If you miss a class in the first 6 months you may be able to make it up in the next 6 month time block. This is important as you'll see in point three.

2. There will be a new volunteer initiation class every 3 to 6 months depending on the interest shown. This will be timed to coincide with the start of the beginning class.
3. After completion of the first 6 months of classes and regular field reports you will be awarded a special "outdoor" shirt with a distinctive logo designating you as a Los Peñasquitos Canyon Tracking Team member.

4. After completing the advanced classes during the second 6 months and submission of the regular field reports, you get a special Tracking Team hat. You also become eligible for selection as an instructor, and you may become a member of the Special Response Team mentioned earlier. This team may be available for search and rescue operations as well as checking out high interest areas in the canyon.

5. The only requirements for you to meet to become involved in this group if you are not currently involved is membership in the Friends. You'll need to purchase the *Peterson Tracking Guide* and *Tom Brown's Field Guide to Nature Observation and Tracking*. The Friends can help those unable to afford these.

We have a very special place here in Peñasquitos. The preserve gives us opportunities for really tuning in and connecting with nature, the earth and other people. This program will facilitate that while providing valuable information upon which important decisions regarding future development hinge. If you want to get involved call the preserve answering machine and leave your name and phone number (484-3219).

(Wildlife tunnel cont'd)

yet promote effective wildlife travel through them. Too often they fail in the latter goal.

Calle Cristobal and Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Mira Mesa is a good example of the toll of at-grade crossing of wildlife. It starts as Sorrento Valley Blvd. in the Sorrento Valley Industrial area and runs up the center of López Ridge where it becomes Calle Cristobal and continues on into Mira Mesa. In the first few months after it opened, numerous animals, including mule deer, bobcat, coyote, snakes, were killed as they followed their traditional trails from López Canyon across López Ridge into Peñasquitos Canyon and back. The Friends and other groups had failed in an effort to prevent development of López Ridge, precisely because it was such wonderful wildlife habitat.

Wildlife tunnel built

In the planning for the development on the ridge, the developer was required — as mitigation for the loss of the traditional ridge crossings — to build a wildlife tunnel to allow the safe passage of animals under Sorrento Valley Blvd./Calle Cristobal. This tunnel is like a large, open-ended quonset hut, about 13 feet high by 23 feet wide by 150 feet long. In addition, another safe crossing was created by the span of the road bridge over López Creek as it flowed out of López Canyon into its confluence with Peñasquitos Canyon in Sorrento Valley.

In evaluating the success or failure of a corridor, the key indicator species in our eco-system is the mule deer. It is probably the most difficult animal to get through a corridor safely — because it is a prey animal of large carnivores (mountain lion, humans)

and necessarily skittish. It likes to have both freedom of movement, to bolt from a site, yet with ample vegetative cover for hiding. Narrow, dark, constricting places can intimidate deer into avoiding them. Denning predators such as mountain lion, bobcat, coyote and fox aren't as intimidated by dark places such as culverts and tunnels. Too often in the past, wildlife "tunnels" have taken the form of large culverts under a road that have allowed these predators, but not mule deer, effective passage. Many tunnels have been poorly conceived, either in their location or in their design. Hence, there has been a healthy prejudice of biologists and environmentalists in favor of bridges over tunnels. Bridge openings tend to be bigger, more open, more airy and therefore less intimidating to mule deer.

Tunnel design issues

Wildlife tunnel designers face two problems in their work. One is to *prevent* the wildlife access to at-grade crossings in the area, typically where their historic trails were. The second is to design the tunnel itself such that it is — if not attractive to the animals — at least not a *barrier* to their movement. Preventing at-grade access is relatively simple — in a word, fencing. Fences and walls or tall, thick shrubbery can be effective barriers. When the López Ridge project came back for re-planning several years ago the Friends successfully argued for the project to be entirely walled off on the Preserve sides, in order to prevent animal access to at-grade crossing. In a related project next to the one with the tunnel, the Friends succeeded in having an at-grade crossing which had been initially required in the project killed.

The at-grade crossing was to be at the intersection of Camino Santa Fe and Calle Cristobal. We had already had enough road kills in this immediate area to know an at-grade crossing would have perpetuated the slaughter.

Too often, however, fencing or walls are not done because they're considered too expensive. About 75 mule deer a year were being killed along east Interstate 8 because CalTrans and the State hadn't budgeted fencing. Sometimes the fencing is too short, perhaps only 5 feet, allowing many mule deer to clear it.

Locating a crossing, whether a bridge

or tunnel, as close to historic animal trails as possible is important. It makes it easier for the animals to find the crossing.

Length of a tunnel is critical in its effectiveness. The longer a tunnel, the wider and higher it has to be to promote its use by deer. Deer have to worry about being ambushed. Long, dark tunnels don't work with mule deer. Unfortunately, not enough research data has been gathered to allow us to apply a formula of height to width to length that we can apply with confidence. Hence the importance of studying our tunnel and others.

One problem with the López Ridge tunnel the Friends identified was the lack of vegetative cover on the southern approach. There was none. The approach was just a flat, bulldozed pad leading up to the tunnel. As part of the aforementioned project design we succeeded in getting the developer to agree to revegetate this approach.

Tunnel use changes

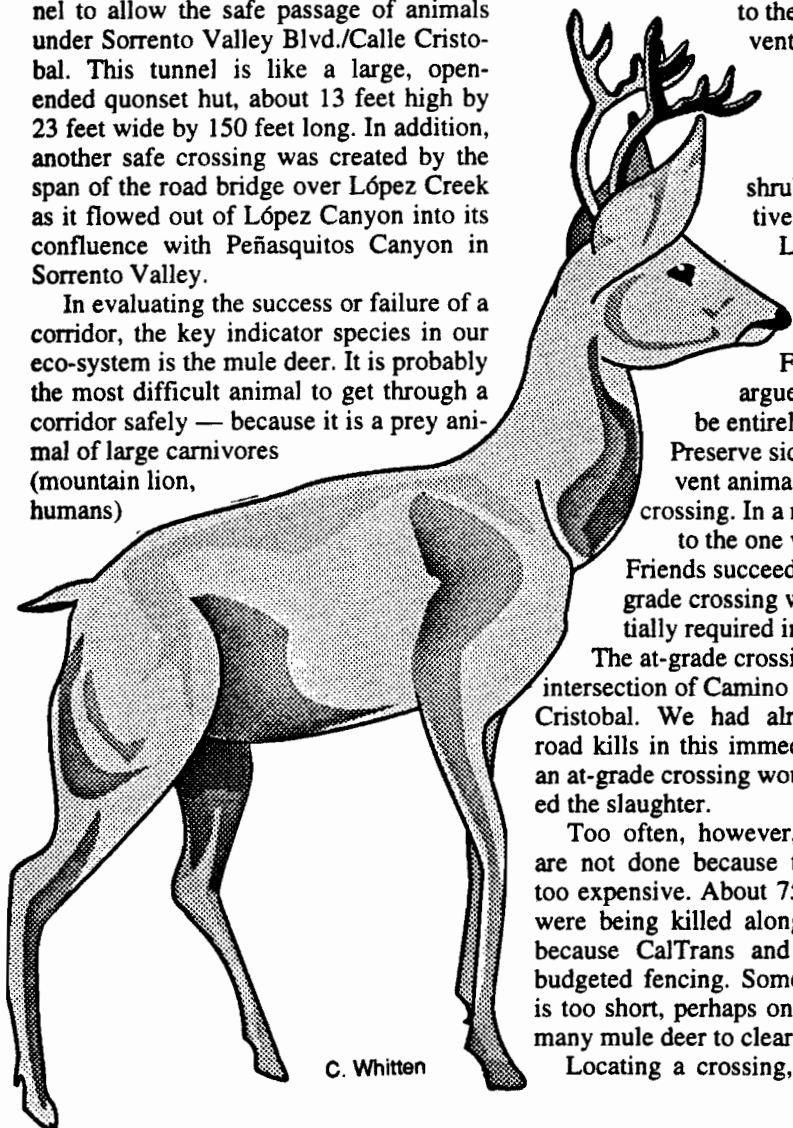
In the five years or so since the ridge was graded and the tunnel was installed, some animals have used it, especially mice, rabbits, a bobcat and coyote. No mule deer were known to have used it. Fellow environmentalists were quick to condemn the tunnel as a failure and expected us to confirm this opinion.

We refused to condemn the tunnel and argued that the true test of the tunnel couldn't begin until the ridge was fenced/walled in and the southern approach revegetated. Those conditions began to be met this summer and use of the tunnel changed correspondingly.

The Pardee Co. bought the land at auction after the previous owner went bankrupt. Pardee put up its temporary wire fencing to guide construction equipment along the bulk of the ridge. They also began construction of model homes and walls, which happen to be near the wildlife tunnels. They also began revegetation of the southern approach.

On recent surveys of the wildlife tunnel our Zone 6 team discovered greatly increased use of the tunnel, including mule deer. Subsequent surveys showed repeated use of the tunnel by several mule deer. Regular use by bobcat and other animals was also noted. In response to this change we plan to increase our surveying to weekly visits, to confirm the pattern and frequency of usage, especially by mule deer.

This usage by mule deer, despite the early character of the revegetation and the still primitive nature of the fencing, points toward the possibility of an effective wildlife tunnel in the future. We won't have to speculate about this however, thanks to our wildlife survey volunteers. We'll have hard data to share with interested people.



C. Whitten

Bird Habitats in Peñasquitos Canyon

by Barbara Zepf

[Editor's note: summer time is an excellent time to see one of the Preserve's most colorful, raucous and sociable birds — the Acorn Woodpecker. To help our readers identify this bird we are reprinting this article from several years ago.]

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 hill-sides, mixed woodlands, open grassy fields and marshy areas at the western end.

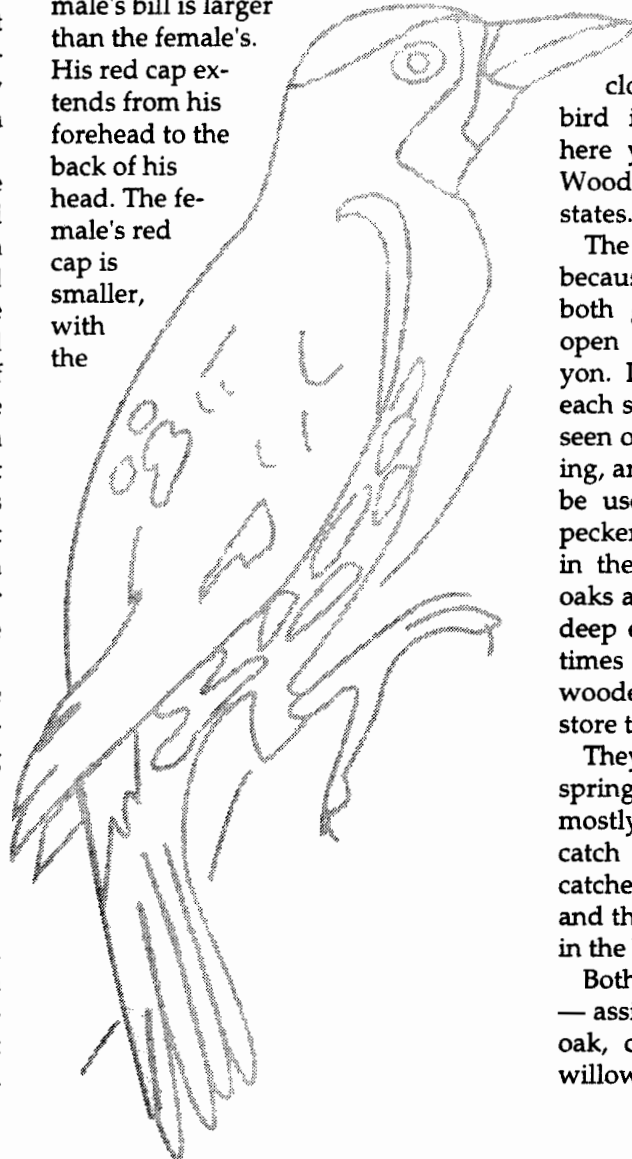
When habitat changes, the bird's life changes. There are fewer hawks and Black-shouldered Kites in the canyon now because housing has encroached on the hillsides and open fields where they used to hunt. The creek has silted up and has more cattails due to runoff from lawns and streets, so there are fewer 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 fly-catcher 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!

Fairy Shrimp Endangered Listing Moves Forward

by Mike Kelly

San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegoensis*) moved closer to becoming an official Federal endangered species with the publication in the *Federal Register* of Thursday, August 4, 1994 of "Proposed Rules." This is an important step in the process of getting a plant or animal on the Federal Endangered Species List. This official notice is done to give interested parties, typically those opposing a listing, to file comments for the official record. The deadline for comments is October 3, 1994. Any requests for official hearings on the proposed listing must be received by Sept. 19, 1994. Unless good scientific evidence or political pressure can be brought to bear against the listing, then the shrimp will become listed and receive the full protection of the Endangered Species Act.

The proposed listing came about as the result of an official petition submitted to the US. Fish and Wildlife Service by Dave Hogan of the San Diego Biodiversity Project and Denton Belk of Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. Our readers will remember an article by Dave Hogan in this newsletter on the petition for the fairy shrimp and other species. Much of the scientific work necessary to substantiate endangered status for this species was done by Dr. Marie Simovich, Dr. Ellen Bauder and others here in San Diego.

If the proposed listing makes it into law it will add an additional layer of protection for vernal pools in San Diego County, at least those pools that have the shrimp present. Currently, vernal pools not populated by an endangered species such as the Mesa mint, are still being sacrificed on the altar of development.

If you would like to see this endangered shrimp you'll have to wait until the winter rains and join the Friends on a tour of vernal pools about the Preserve. Even then, the shrimp have a short life cycle, so short that it's easy to miss their "time in the sun" by a few days.

Following are some excerpts from the *Federal Register* article on the proposed listing.

"The Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to list the San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegoensis*) as endangered throughout its range in southwestern California and northwestern Baja California, Mexico . . . This species occurs in vernal pools and is threatened by a variety of factors including: Habitat destruction and fragmentation from agricultural and urban development, alterations of wetland hydrology by draining, off-road vehicle activity, and cattle and sheep grazing.

The San Diego fairy shrimp is a small and delicate animal with large stalked compound eyes, no carapace, and 11 pairs of swimming legs. Mature males are from 9 to 16 mm (0.4 to 0.6 in) in length and females are 8 to 14 mm (0.4 to 0.5 in) in length. They swim or glide upside down by means of complex beating movements of the legs that pass in a wave-length anterior to posterior direction. The second pair of antennae on the adult female are cylindrical and elongate, but in the male are greatly enlarged and specialized for clasping the female during copulation. The female carries the eggs in an oval or elongate ventral brood sac. The eggs are either released or remain attached to the female until she dies and sinks. The thick-shelled eggs are capable of withstanding high heat, col, and prolonged dessiccation.

The San Diego fairy shrimp occurs in San Diego County from San Marcos and Ramona south to Otay Mesa and at Valle de Palmas in northwestern Baja California, Mexico. The San Diego fairy Shrimp is a habitat specialist and is restricted to vernal pools . . . The prehistorical distribution of this species is uncertain. The majority of the vernal pools in this region were lost prior to 1900. However, based on historical collections (some originally identified as *B. lindahli*) the San Diego fairy shrimp was known from at least 15 locales within San Diego County. . . . The fairy shrimp presently occurs in fewer than 70 vernal pools within 11 vernal pool complexes in coastal San Diego County. Three of the San Diego County populations of this species are on Federal land (all on Miramar Naval Air Station). Two others are, in part, on public land (Del Mar Mesa Vernal Pool Preserve and Mission Trails Regional Park).

Nine of the 11 known populations of San Diego San Diego fairy shrimp in San Diego County are declining because of vernal pool destruction.

At least two populations of the San Diego fairy shrimp occur on Otay Mesa in San Diego County. A minimum of 37 proposed Precise Plans and Tentative Maps for development have been filed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act for this area. These plans encompass about 80 percent of the undeveloped portion of the mesa within the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego and virtually all but four of the remaining vernal

(Woodpecker cont'd)

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. Sev-



Flight pattern of Acorn Woodpecker

eral 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!

pool complexes. Several of these projects will impact the San Diego fairy shrimp. At least one major transportation project has been proposed for Otay Mesa and could potentially impact vernal pools that are occupied by the San Diego fairy shrimp.

The San Diego fairy shrimp's vernal pool habitat is also vulnerable to indirect destruction due to the alteration of the supporting watershed . . . The San Diego fairy shrimp is especially vulnerable to alterations in hydrology.

See page 10 for a picture of fairy shrimp.

(Sewer line cont'd)

(built prior to its being a park) as being too environmentally damaging when compared to the alternative. The alternative proposed by the DEIR is a pump station and force main line. The pump station would be located on the Mercy property just east of I-15. The force main line would run under I-15, down Mercy Road, south on Black Mountain Road, then west on Miramar Road to the new Eastgate Mall reclamation plant. Through previous land negotiations with the owner, the bulk of the Mercy property is expected to be donated to the Preserve, connecting to the Preserve under I-15. Hence, in either case we are looking at direct or indirect impacts to the Preserve in its current or future size from either of the projects. The issue for the Friends is, which will do the least damage to the Preserve?

Current line may overflow

As the DEIR points out, the current trunk sewer line that runs through the Preserve is expected to exceed its capacity in as little as two years. If this occurs, sewage overflows would occur that would end up in Peñasquitos Creek and flow to the ocean. So, something needs to be built. The question is which alternative? To answer this question we need to look at possible impacts of each alternative project on the canyon. As a group dedicated to protecting the canyon, this has to be our focus. However, even the Sabre Spring homeowner proponents of a gravity line also claim to have the best interests of the preserve at heart. They argue that a pump station would have more long term impacts from sewer spills. So let's examine the impacts.

Construction related

Construction of a gravity line through the length of the canyon would require closing large sections of it during the construction. This is due to the use of heavy equipment and the proximity to the main trail system in the park. This would mean a disruption, if not complete denial, of use to park visitors for the 27 months it will take to construct it. This construction will also be a major stressor for wildlife, wildlife already under considerable pressure from nearby development and our many visitors. We consider both to be serious considerations. Gravity line proponents are silent on these issues.

Erosion could potentially occur into Peñasquitos Creek during the construction of either alternative since each abuts the creek at points. The DEIR proposes a series of mitigation measures that, if followed, should minimize erosion of sediment into the creek.

Loss of habitat

Construction of the pump station would cause the loss of almost 4 acres of habitat versus about 60 lost acres with the gravity line. The 4-acre loss with the pump station would occur on the periphery of the preserve, while the 60-acre loss with the gravity line would occur in the heart of the Preserve — along the main trails and forested area. The gravity line would result in the loss of many mature sycamore and live oak trees, some hundreds of years old.

Proponents of the gravity line argue that much of the habitat could easily be revegetated. Only someone woefully ignorant of our habitats and the history of mitigation and revegetation could say this. We have many years of experience, right here in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, with revegetation of disturbed areas. We have yet to see a successful one that could return a habitat to the way it was pre-disturbance — whether under private or public agency auspices. That doesn't mean we're against mitigation and revegetation — it should be done where needed on either project. However, don't mislead the public and claim the Preserve would be restored to what it was before construction of a gravity line.

Revegetation projects always mean new weeds get established in the areas disturbed by construction. Best intentions aside, these projects can never keep all of the weeds out, many of which then spread into the undisturbed areas nearby. Non-native invasive weeds are already a big problem from previous human-caused disturbances with adding another source.

Aesthetic issues: visual and olfactory

A second gravity line in the canyon will be as much of an eyesore as the existing one is. People come to the park to escape "civilization" and reminders of it. A second gravity line with its many sewer covers protruding above ground would stand in ugly contrast to the beauty of the natural environment around it.

With a second gravity line will also come the smell of sewage as it moves through the line. Walk along the main trail in the early evening hours and, as you pass the existing sewer line, smell the fragrant effluent as it passes parallel to the trail. Do we need another line and more odor? With new pump station technology, however, the area around the pump station should be relatively odor free *except for the sewer lines that bring sewage to it.*

Earthquake faults & sewage spills

One of the leading opponents of the pump station and proponent of the gravity

line, Leo Verguson, has identified an earthquake fault near the pump station site. He cites this as a reason to oppose the pump station and build a gravity line through the Preserve. He neglects to also inform the readers of his voluminous correspondence that this fault is about 163 million years old and that it isn't an active fault and not even considered potentially active. He also neglects to inform his readers and listeners that you can't build anywhere in Southern California without literally being near, if not on a fault. However, out of these thousands of faults, only a small number are active or potentially active.

Perhaps most disengenously, he neglects to inform his supporters that a gravity sewer pipeline can be broken as easily, if not more easily, than a pump station by an earthquake. He claims that a sewage spill from a pump station on the Mercy property would "destroy" Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. His sleight of hand takes place in neglecting to observe that a sewer line break anywhere in the gravity sewer line would dump the same amount of sewage into Peñasquitos Creek. He also neglects to mention that if there is a break in the force main line leading out of the Pump Station, it wouldn't flow into the creek if it occurred on the downhill side of the line, where it moves away from the canyon.

We already have had experience with sewer spills in the canyon from the existing line. They're not pleasant. They contaminate the water and are a danger to public health. Biologically, it takes a very big spill to kill off aquatic life in the type of creek and lagoon system we have. Smaller spills tend to act more as a nutrient source for many organisms. Unlike petroleum products, sewage is relatively easily flushed out of the system by the stream flow. Aquatic systems recover much quicker from a sewage spill than a toxic chemical spill.

Costs

Mr. Verguson has claimed that the gravity line alternative would be cheaper to the taxpayers than the pump station. This is because he uses early estimates of the project that did not factor in the environmental costs of mitigating for the damage the pipeline would do. In our comments on the "Notice of Preparation" of the original DEIR the Friends stated that the gravity line alternative was underpriced for this very reason. Mitigation for the damage this project would do to the Preserve could easily hit the 8-12 million dollar range. For a comparison, the eastern portion of Route 56 impacted 3/4 to 1-1/2 acres of wetlands. CalTrans was required

(Sewer line cont'd)

to spend over \$400,000 to mitigate for this. Take the 60 acres, including sensitive species, to be impacted by this project and it's not hard to project the mitigation figure just cited. Mr. Verguson denies that the mitigation would cost this much, either because he doesn't value the environment to be destroyed high enough or because he's simply ignorant of the reality of mitigation on projects such as these, public or private. The Friends have been involved with enough such projects to know what the true cost is. So do the developers, who can expound at length on the cost of environmental mitigation. It's just not convenient for Mr. Verguson, posing as the taxpayer's champion, to acknowledge this.

Pump station opponents

To date, the opposition to the pump station proposal and supporters of the gravity line alternative seem to be confined to Mr. Verguson and other homeowners in Sabre Springs who live in the area of the proposed pump station. Their chief argument in meetings or person-to-person, one that is for some strange reason not a focus of the written arguments, is that their property values will decline because of the proximity of a pump station.

This is doubtful since the pump station won't even be in sight of any of the houses in Sabre Springs, being hidden by the topography of the land, by hills, and being a quarter of a mile or more downstream. Nor, given the pump station design, a state-of-the-art design, and the nature of the effluent being carried through the feeder pipelines in the area, is there any odor expected to be detectable in the nearest houses. The sensitivity of this issue of property values is a little more understandable when we realize that this project evolved from a project that was proposed for a site directly opposite and visible to these homes.

Property values?

This project actually started several years ago as a proposed water reclamation plant on the site of the closed, but still standing old Poway Sewage Plant on the south side of Peñasquitos Creek. These homeowners are on the north side of the creek, perhaps as close as two hundred yards in some cases. There was much opposition in Sabre Springs and in Poway (to alternative site proposals) by anybody living adjacent to a possible site. This proposal was abandoned for any site because the entire Clean Water Program was scaled back in the wake of the successful Sierra Club lawsuit against the unnecessary edict of the Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) to build a massive, advanced sewage treatment system throughout the City. So instead of a plant that would take raw sewage and treat it on the spot to reclaimed water standards, the project became a simpler flow-through proposal to carry sewage to the Eastgate Mall treatment plant.

What Mr. Verguson neglects to tell the public is that the property values of his and other properties were already discounted, devalued, when they bought their properties. When they bought their properties, there was a huge sign facing the homes on the site of the old sewage plant — which is still standing. It proclaimed the site as the **future** site of a treatment plant. This and the legally required disclosures from the developer selling the homes means the homeowners bought knowing such a facility was planned for the area. We can all empathize with people who are surprised by a new proposal that might affect them and their neighborhood adversely. But they went ahead and bought houses that had already been discounted by the market — in other words had to be priced cheaper than comparable homes not near the proposed treatment plant — because of the proposed project across from the development. In fact, in my opinion, the factor that will most influence future property values for that development is the continued existence of that old sewage treatment plant. It's an easy to see eyesore. Get rid of that site and restore it to open-space like the surrounding acreage and that discounted valuation of the initiate purchases will probably disappear. I don't personally believe that the future pump station is close enough to the development to depress property values by itself.

In my opinion, and it's only that, I don't think there would be as much opposition to the pump station proposal if it hadn't started out as a bigger project proposed for the site opposite this development.

What you can do

If you agree that the pump station alternative would be less harmful to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and that this is good (not everyone appreciates nature, we understand) please make your opinion known. The people who don't value our Preserve the way we do and support the gravity line through the Preserve are well organized, strongly motivated and quite vocal. Although the DEIR supports the pump station alternative, the ultimate decision will rest with the City Council. Councilmember Barbara Warden, who represents the 5th Council District that Sabre Springs and half the Preserve is in will be the key person politically in this debate. We urge you to write or fax her stating

your opinion to:

Councilmember Barbara Warden
202 "C" St.
San Diego, CA 92101

FAX 238-0915

Please send a copy of your letter/fax to:
P.O.B. 26523
San Diego CA 92196

(Carmel Mountain cont'd)

Mesa, articles written by Dave Hogan, John Northrop and Mike Kelly, carried in this paper. The Friends have also co-sponsored hikes on Carmel Mountain with the San Diego Bio-diversity Project to try to acquaint larger numbers of people with the tremendous bio-diversity of this small area. There are probably more endemic species (species found only here) or species whose main population is here, than any other slice of San Diego geography of equal size. Its proximity to the coast and the coastal fog zone play a big role in creating the conditions that support a large number of diverse plants and animals.

The proposed projects, there are four, for the area, don't even propose to provide offsite purchase of habitat to mitigate the loss of these habitats and unique species — despite recognizing the uniqueness and rarity of both. This refusal to mitigate is unheard of. The biggest landowner is the Pardee Company.

Pardee and the other landowners refuse to consider the new Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) in planning the area. They may be forced to do so under pressure from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is pushing the MSCP as the solution to preserving the coastal sage scrub habitat of the endangered California gnatcatcher and other species.

Southern maritime chaparral is one of the rarest habitats left in Southern California and this project proposes to eradicate about 25% of the remaining acreage of this habitat.

The San Diego aster, the Sea dahlia, the wart-stemmed ceonothus (white lilac), vernal pools, the state listed endangered plant, dudleya brevifolia (dwarf duleya) and many other plants and animals will be gravely impacted by this project.

The Friends and many other groups and individuals are speaking out against this travesty of the planning process. Try to join us at the public hearing before the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board September 13 and at the Planning Commission hearing later in the month. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for details. Express your concern to Councilmember Harry Mathis at 202 C St., San Diego, Ca 92101

News Briefs

Gas station voted down

A proposal to site a gas station and mini mart at the corner of Poway Road and Springbrook Drive was voted down by the San Diego City Council this August. Substantial opposition arose within the community of Sabre Springs to this proposal. Residents raised a number of issues of concern with the proposed commercial site. Of primary concern was the fast flow of traffic on Poway Road and the potential for accidents at this corner. The community is sensitive to this issue due to the tragic death of a child trying to cross the busy Poway Road at this intersection. Cars wishing to enter this station would have had to slow down in often heavy, fast moving traffic to enter the station — without the benefit of a right turn only lane.

Another concern was the proposal for a 24-hour operation of the facility in a zone that required shorter hours — due to the proximity of residences. Many homes would have been close to the site.

Yet another issue is why the Friends joined in the opposition to the site. The site is uphill a few hundred yards from Peñasquitos Creek. The potential for a spill of fuel or a leak from fuel tanks, even if years down the road, was real.

Only recently has the cleanup for such a leaking gas station underground tank been completed. This station is in Poway on Rattlesnake Creek. The station in question led fuel into this creek, which in turn emptied into Peñasquitos Creek. The fuel leak killed the aquatic critters living in Rattlesnake Creek and might have done the same in a bigger swath of Peñasquitos Creek if it hadn't been caught. In addition, the leak caused numerous complaints by workers in nearby businesses due to the noxious fumes. The potential for a catastrophic explosion also existed.

It took three years from the time the leak and contamination of the soil, water table and creek were discovered for a cleanup to get underway. The gas station owner declared bankruptcy in order to avoid paying for the cleanup of his toxic spill. Local agencies denied responsibility. The state fund that exists for cleanups of underground fuel tank leaks was too over-extended to be of help. Finally, the Environmental Protection Agency stepped in and took responsibility for the cleanup effort. This site was considered to be San Diego's worst toxic site known to date.

This history was enough to make the Friends' wary of siting an unnecessary gas station/mini mart so close to the creek. A similar complex is already sited at the cor-

ner of Poway Road and Sabre Springs Parkway — a long block or two away — also unfortunately close to a creek feeding into Peñasquitos Creek.

New open space: Paraiso Cumbres

A nice addition of a 237-acre parcel was made to the Black Mountain Open-Space Park July 30, 1994. This parcel was known as the Paraiso Cumbres project and was slated for residential homes. It lies on the east-facing side of Black Mountain in Rancho Peñasquitos. The project was sited high on the mountain and would have been highly visible throughout the I-15 corridor area. Such "skyline" projects probably shouldn't be permitted, but were. They tend to ruin the ambience for many miles around by destroying an important visual amenity: our skyline.

The developer of this property luckily went bankrupt. The government owned Resolution Trust Corp. inherited the land and put it on the auction block. However, a little known provision of the enabling legislation for the Resolution Trust Corp (read Savings and Loan bailout) allows public entities or non-profit corporations to put in pre-emptive bids for such properties, especially for the purpose of creating open space.

Although luck was involved in creating this opportunity, it took a determined effort by the community to bring it to fruition. Local residents had organized even before the bankruptcy to try to save the area as open space. They found a strong ally in the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board and its then chair, Kevin McNamara. Several politicians also played a key role in acquiring the property. Harry Mathis, as a candidate for the first district City Council seat made it a campaign issue and then followed through energetically after his election. Mayor Susan Golding and Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham also played key roles, along with their staffs, in what was an exceptional campaign of cooperation on the community, city and federal level to acquire the property. In the end, the land was acquired for \$610,000 (\$2,652 per acre), very cheap for San Diego. The funds came both from the Rancho Peñasquitos Community funds (FBA) and the City, even though it meant postponing other community projects for the former.

It is expected that further acreage to be acquired from the Montana Mirador project will improve the connections of Paraiso Cumbres with Black Mountain Open Space Park.

Vista Alegre

Vista Alegre is a project scheduled for Rancho Peñasquitos just northeast of the current Park Village Development. It abuts the Caltrans Vernal Pool Preserve on the Del Mar Mesa on the North and the Camino Ruiz wildlife corridor on the east and the Park Village project on the south and west. The land is a combination of already graded land and good habitat.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) came out two years ago on this project. The Friends and the San Diego Bio-diversity Project criticized the DEIR at the time for having missed a number of vernal pools and endangered and rare species of plants. The City of San Diego sent Planning Dept. representatives out to check the site with us and they agree they DEIR was inadequate. The City rejected the DEIR and told the developer to redo it. The developer was then Newland America, now American General Land Development out of Houston, Newland's insurance company financier.

They decided to separate the natural open space, including the vernal pools, from the already portion of the site. They then submitted a scaled down version of the project, largely utilizing only the already graded portion of the site. The native habitat part of the site and the pools would be save as permanent open space and used by Newland/American General as mitigation for other projects.

The original project was scaled down from 87 single-family units on 56.5 acres to 36 single-family units on 14.3 acres. A significant problem remaining with the site in general, but not the responsibility of the developer, is the siting of the northern extension of Camino Ruiz through the eastern boundary of the site. This portion of the road will abut an important wildlife corridor. Unfortunately, significant support for building this part of the road north exists in Rancho Peñasquitos. This is mainly due to the threat of future traffic congestion, since the entire Park Village development is dependent on only one road out of the area, Park Village Drive, to connect them to Black Mountain Road and from there to I-15 or Mira Mesa and its roads, to allow commuters to reach their work places.

In any case, the undeveloped portion of the site will be a welcome addition to the open space system on the Del Mar Mesa, particularly since it includes fast vanishing vernal pools and will act as a buffer for the existing Caltrans Vernal Pool Preserve.

Cool Evenings Still Best Time to Visit

September and October can be the hottest months in San Diego, making early mornings and evenings in the Preserve the best time to visit. We usually enjoy cool breezes sweeping from offshore up our coastal canyon. Early evening also brings out the strongest odors of the native plants, creating a pleasant sensory experience. Why not join us on one of our evening walks.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

Volunteer Work Parties

If you would like to help out with our conservation work call Mike Kelly at 566-6489. We have ongoing animal surveys, invasive weed removal projects, seed collection and planting programs to name a few of our activities.

SEPTEMBER

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Sept. 3, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Dusk Walk to Waterfall

Thurs., Sept. 8, 7:00 p.m. We'll walk about 4 miles, to the waterfall and back. Bring flashlight, insect repellent and dress warm if evening is cool. Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road Exit west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mountain Road and up the hill. Take a left at the first light, at Park Village Drive. Follow Park Village Drive to its intersection with Camino Ruiz. The park is on the left. Meet on corner of the two roads. Led by Mike Kelly.

Bird Walk in López Canyon

Sun., Sept. 11, 8 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). Meet in new Parking-Staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/2 mile east of Sorrento Valley Industrial Park. Park entrance is on right, going east. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal to Sorrento Valley Blvd., entrance will be on left. Bring bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Sept. 17, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See Sept. 3 listing for details.

Geology Walk

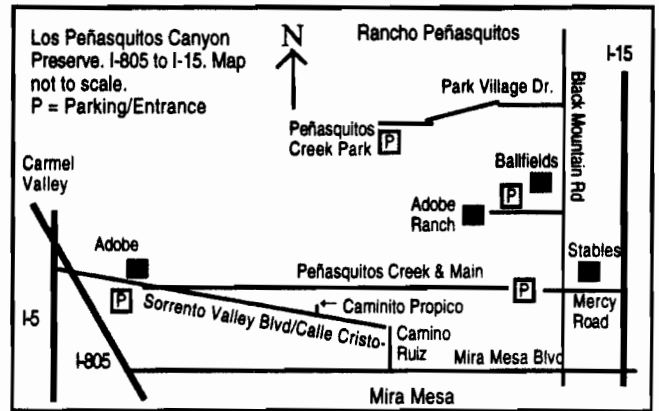
Sun., Sept. 18, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Park legally. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Wildlife Survey & Tracking Workshop

Sun., Sept. 18, 5:30 p.m., at adobe ranch house. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. Led by Barry Martin for participants, new and old, in wildlife surveys in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

Night Walk at West End

Mon., Sept. 19, 7:30 -9 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east



of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm.

Monthly Business Meeting: presentation on watershed management

Tues., Sept. 20, 7 p.m. at Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch house. Jason Jackson from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service will give a presentation on watershed issues. Members are welcome.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., Sept. 24, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See spring flowers and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds, their nests and perhaps their young. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund.

Medicinal Plant Walk

Sat., Sept. 24, 6-7:30 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D.

OCTOBER

Rancho Santa Maria De Los

Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Oct. 1, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts.

Geology Walk

Sun., Oct. 2, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Park legally. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection.

Bird Walk at East End

Sat., Oct. 8, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Meet on upper level. Bring bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson.

Dusk Walk to Kit Carson Crossing

Thurs., Oct. 13, 7:00 p.m. We'll walk from adobe ranch house to Kit Carson crossing and loop back, about 4-5 miles. Bring flashlight, insect repellent and dress warm if evening is cool. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Meet in parking lot. Led by Mike Kelly.

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., Oct. 15, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. Learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds.

Learn about the concept of biodiversity. Led by Les Braund.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los

Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Oct. 15, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See Oct. 1 listing for details.

Medicinal Plant Night Walk

Wed., Oct. 19, 7:30 - 9 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Halloween month means you'll learn about plants used in witchcraft, magic, and shamanism. Bring flashlight and insect repellent. Led by Will Bowen,

Nature Walk with Barbara Moore

— López Canyon

Sat., Oct. 29, 9 a.m. Wildflowers and nesting birds. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs.

Wildlife Survey & Tracking Workshop

Sun., Oct. 30, 5:30 p.m., at adobe ranch house. See Sept. 18 listing for details.

Halloween Costume Night Walk

Mon., Oct. 31, 7:30 - 9 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Expect many surprises. Wear a costume appropriate for Halloween (but include good hiking shoes). Bring insect repellent and flashlight.

Thanks Volunteers!

Despite the summer heat we still managed to put in a lot of hours in volunteer projects. Thanks to all of these very dedicated conservationists!

German Ivy weed wacking: Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano

Arundo donax weed wacking: Mike Kelly, Kurt Lachman, Melanie Howe, Robb Hutsel

Pampas grass weed wacking: Mike Kelly, Trinity Gabriel

Wildlife surveys: see article page 1.

A special thanks to our hike leaders whose volunteer efforts we often overlook because their there month after month offering their own special look at the preserve to hundreds of park visitors.



San Diego fairy shrimp

Exotic Plant Symposium Sept. 30-Oct. 1: Program Set

As our readers know, the Friends spend a lot of time wacking exotic invasive weeds. We do this mainly because these weeds displace our native plants and don't provide an equivalent habitat value in food and other features for our native wildlife. They tend to move our eco-systems from a great bio-diversity towards monocultures. Our interest led us to join with many other organizations to help get the California Exotic Pest Plant Council (CalEPPC) off the ground. It is already proving to be an invaluable clearing house for exchanging information on the control of exotic invasives. If you are someone involved with an open-space park you'll get a lot out of this conference. **If you would like to attend, call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for a registration packet.** Besides serving as the Friends' president, Mike is also State Secretary of CalEPPC.

Friday, September 30

- 7:00 - 8:00 *Coffee & Continental Breakfast*
- 8:00 - 8:15 **Welcome.** John Randall, president
- 8:15 - 9:15 **Ecosystem Effects of Exotic Pest Plants**
Peter Vitousek, Professor, Stanford Univ.
- 9:15 - 10:00 **Biocontrol of Weeds — A National and International Perspective**
Ernest Delfosse, Director, USDA/ APHIS National Biological Control Inst.
- 10:00 - 10:30 *Morning Break (coffee and juices)*
- 10:30 - 11:15 **Biocontrol — Words of Caution**
Peter McEvoy, Professor, Oregon State University
- 11:15 - 11:45 **Planning for Weed Control in a Large Area — Greater Yellowstone Area**
Barbra Mullin, Weed Coordinator, Montana Department of Agriculture
- 11:45 - 12:15 **Planning for Weed Control at the Preserve Level**
John Randall, Weed Specialist, The Nature Conservancy, National Exotic Species Program
- 12:15 - 1:30 *Luncheon*
- 1:30 - 2:00 **Report from Down Under — Weed Control Efforts for Australia's Bushlands**
Judith Rawling, Managing Director, Urban Bushland Management, Inc. (Sydney)
- 2:00 - 2:30 **Effects of Exotic Plants on Three California Ecosystems**
Richard Minnich, Associate Professor, University of California, Riverside
- 2:30 - 3:00 **Nutritional Impacts of Weedy Vegetation on Desert Tortoise Survival**
Harold W. Avery, Wildlife Research Biologist, National Biological Survey, Riverside
- 3:00 - 3:30 *Afternoon Break (coffee and juices)*
- 3:30 - 4:30 **Understanding the Use of Post-emergence Herbicides**

David Bayer, Professor, University of California, Davis

- 4:30 - 5:00 **An Artichoke Thistle Success Story**
Bill Tidwell, Supervisor, Orange County Environmental Management Agency, Public Works Operations
- 5:00 - 7:00 **Poster Session with hors d'oeuvres and no host bar**
- 7:00 - *Evening free!*

Saturday, October 1

- 8:00 - 8:15 **Announcements.** John Randall
- 8:15 - 8:55 **Overview of Statewide Licensing Requirements for Weed Control**
Mac Takeda, Program Specialist; CA Dept. of Pesticide Regulation, Licensing and Certification Program
- 8:55 - 9:35 **Certification for Herbicide Application**
Joel Trumbo, Pesticide Use Coordinator; California Department of Fish and Game
- 9:35 - 10:00 *Morning Break (coffee and juices)*
- 10:00 - 10:30 **Working Group Announcements**
- 10:30 - 11:30 **Working Group Meetings**
- 11:30 - 12:00 *Break (check out and prepare for field trip)*
- 12:00 - 5:00 **Field Trip**



Senecio mikanoides (German Ivy) is an invasive vine that is already a big problem in several parts of California. It threatens to become the kudzu of the west (a vine devastating southern forests). The vine is in San Diego County.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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Don Albright, Vicky Ausen, Chris Bader, Trinity Gabriel, Barry Martin, Alan Pepper, Ph.D., Brian Swanson,

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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:

- Volunteer to help the committee 9/94
- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

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Home Phone _____

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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.



Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Nov./Dec. 1994
Volume 8 No. 6

Volunteers Welcome

First Site Steward Project Identified

Several months ago the Friends announced a site stewardship program was being organized for the Preserve. Several of you volunteered for this and may have wondered why you haven't been called yet. First we had to identify candidate sites and receive approval for them. We're now ready with our first site.

Under the site stewardship program, volunteers become the stewards, the guardians and restorers of a particular site in the Preserve. These are to be sites that need some restoration work such as removing exotic invasive plants and replacing them with native plants to preserve our biodiversity and high wildlife habitat values. In each case, these volunteers will be working with experienced members of the Friends.

The first such site has now been identified. This is a small riparian area north of the historic ranch house at the east end. The site was destroyed by the developer who put in the Park Village development. It was poorly restored by the developer who is now out of business. The site is about two-thirds of the way toward being restored. It has a number of healthy sycamores, oaks and cottonwood trees, as well as juncus grass, cattails, mule fat, blackberry and other native species. It also has weed problems, including fennel and pampas grass — some of which has already been knocked back.

What the site needs now is the dedication of several individuals who will devote 3-4 hours, twice a month to its restoration. The first step will be drawing up a site plan in consultation with one of our site docents. This is an inventory of the species present, the problem exotics and species we want to see. For example, the Friends recently rescued some juncus acutus grass from a developing site in Sorrento Valley. These would be available for this site where appropriate. Native grass is being grown by other Friends members.

➡ p. 5 for more

At Halfway Point Stream Survey Yielding Surprises

by Mike Kelly

[If you would like to participate in the stream survey, give Mike a call at 566-6489, we still have 5 more outings to go.]

The Friends' survey of Peñasquitos Creek is at the halfway mark. We have surveyed the eastern half of the creek in the Preserve and part of the western half. We're having great fun doing it and learning a lot about our riparian (streamside) habitat. Even for a survey member who has been hiking in the canyon for 20 years the survey has yielded surprises as we penetrate "inaccessible" parts of our ecosystem.

Each team consists of from three to five participants. Typically, two of us are in the stream constantly, wearing wet suits now that the water temperature has dropped to the low 60s. Those in the stream measure the pH (acidity/alkalinity) of the water, the temperature, and take depth and width measurements. We also look for aquatic life and aquatic plants. Other team members will be on the banks, hopscotching around the poison oak and impenetrable thickets. They use our handheld Global Positioning System to pinpoint our location at any given time via satellites, take photos of interesting things and record our data into a microrecorder. In addition, we record the dominant ground cover, understory and canopy plants to document our different habitats. We also note any exotic plants

➡ p. 5 for more

**Next Tracking Workshops:
Saturday, Nov. 19, 6 p.m.
Historic adobe ranch house,
Canyonside Park entrance to
Preserve. If you haven't been
to previous workshops, call
Barry Martin at 484-4007.**

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Want To Be a Walk Leader?

If you hanker to lead a nature walk in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, give us a call at 484-3219 and leave your name and number. We are looking for 2-3 more hike leaders who will initially lead walks along a new nature trail at the east end once a month. We will train new hike leaders in the plants, animals and history needed to lead this walk. Later, new leaders can branch out into other areas if they desire.



Poison oak (*Toxicodendron*) is turning red in our oak woodlands. See this and other fall colors on Friends' hikes (p. 9). Even after dropping its leaves, the plant can still cause an allergic reaction, so beware!

The Western Pond Turtle

by Will Bowen, PhD

For an excellent, scholarly work on North American turtles, I recommend the newly issue *Turtles of the United States and Canada* by Carl H. Ernst, Jeffrey E. Lovich, and Roger W. Barbour, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington. Every 20 years the Smithsonian has issued a new turtle book summarizing the latest information available. The book is wonderfully illustrated and makes a great reference. It's on my shelf — Mike Kelly

Introduction

The Western pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata*) is the only abundant aquatic turtle found in California. Usually it's found along streams with deep pools, rocks, and logs that provide basking sites and safe underwater retreats. "Western Pond Turtle" is a misnomer, since they really live in streams, not in ponds. Some authorities call them "Western Stream Turtles."

In recent years there have been only two reports of sightings of water turtles in Penasquitos creek. Unfortunately, these sightings have been at a distance and are unconfirmed as to exact species. No one is sure if it was the native pond turtle or perhaps an introduced, exotic Red-eared slider turtle. The Friends are very interested in establishing if there are pond turtles remaining in our canyon — their number, general locations and community health.

Habitat loss and degradation

The scarcity of this turtle in San Diego waters is due to a number of factors. Habitat has been lost directly to development and indirectly to the impacts of activities such as grazing and farming. Grazing by cattle tends to degrade any stream or creek, making it less suitable for many aquatic species, including turtles. Construction activity in the watershed increases the siltation load in creeks and rivers, also damaging the waters as habitat.

Another problem is overcollection by people who sell them to pet shops or keep them as pets themselves. One article cited a single pet wholesaler who captured and shipped some 500 pond turtles to Europe in a single season. Being easy to catch and reproducing in relatively small numbers make them vulnerable, especially to local extinctions.

Domestic dogs and cats are known to feed on turtle hatchlings. Raccoons, which

tend to increase in numbers when associated with people, also predate heavily on hatchlings. Many turtles are killed by vehicles when crossing roads.

Pollution of waterways is another factor in their decline. (One of the goals of the Friends stream survey currently underway is to assay the water quality of Peñasquitos Creek.)

Of some 55 species of turtle living in the U.S. (including Hawaii), 13 have been officially declared endangered.

Populations of this turtle have declined drastically in southern California, leading to a petition of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to declare them as endangered. Extensive populations exist only in northern California and southern Oregon.

It's the vision of the Friends that as many of the native species exist as possible in our canyon habitat. If there are no Pond Turtles in our stream then it is our dream that at some point in the future, after due consultation with experts regarding the feasibility and ecological consequences, that they be re-introduced.

Southwestern Pond Turtle — *Clemmys marmorata* var. *pallida*.

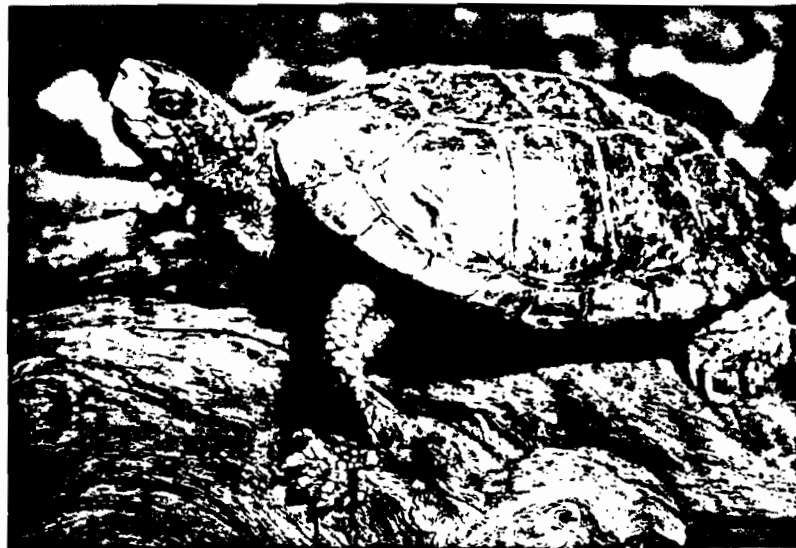
The Pond Turtle ranges from about 3-1/2 to 7 inches long. It's olive, brownish yellow, grayish brown, dark brown, or blackish in color, often spotted or mottled with dark flecks and lines.

The habitat of the Pond Turtle is the streams of Oak Woodland where there are oaks, cattails, and watercress, with logs, rocks, and deep pools. The Pond Turtle is usually found in or near the water but the female will travel overland to lay eggs in sandy soil. They are active all year long except during cold weather.

The diet of the Pond Turtle consists of aquatic plants, fish, invertebrates, such as beetles, crickets, and worms, fish, and carrion. Like crayfish, they help keep the creek clean.

Sex life is little studied

Little is known specifically about the mating habits of pond turtles. In general, turtles mate in the spring. The female stores and carries the sperm, sometimes



Clemmys marmorata

Natural History

Pond turtles are members of the Family Testudinidae. They are a very successful species whose ancestors have been around since before the dinosaurs. The chief structural feature of turtles is their shell. The upper shell is called the carapace and the lower shell the plastron. There are two different varieties of the Western Pond Turtle — the Northwestern and Southwestern — with only slight differences in physical features. The two overlap populations in central California. Ours would be the

for years until conditions are right, then digs a nest and lays her eggs. The eggs are left to hatch and the new hatchlings receive no parenting. The mother never returns to the nest after laying the eggs. Recent studies have shown that turtles are like alligators in that the sex of the soon to be hatchling is temperature-dependent. A certain temperature range will yield more males than females, while another range will yield the reverse! The sex-determined temperature range varies with the species of turtle.

Unfortunately for turtles in the modern era, the late sexual maturity of adult turtles and the high mortality of juveniles makes them quite vulnerable to disruptive human intervention.

History of human usage

The Western pond turtle was a popular food in frontier California of the 1800s and on into the early 1900s. They were trapped with nets and barrel traps or taken with baited lines. In the 1920s, Pond Turtles sold in San Francisco for \$3-6 dollars a dozen.

The pond turtle was especially popular with the Chinese immigrants, who came to this country after 1848. Locally, the Chinese helped build the railroad through Sorrento Valley, and probably came into the canyon to forage for food items. They both ate the turtle for food and used it as a medicine. Pond turtle shells can be purchased in Los Angeles Chinatown even to this day. They have shown up in archaeological digs, such as the excavation of Riverside's Chinatown.

Medicinally, the lower shell, or plastron, was used as a liver and kidney tonic, and for ringing in the ears, night sweats and aching back and knees. It was taken with wine or vinegar or cooked down into a glue form, which was ingested. Looking even further back into history it was said that "witches," who were often folk doctors, used burnt turtle shell dissolved in wine to cure sores of the feet. Turtle heads, mixed with egg white, have also been used to prevent baldness and to treat hemorrhoids in Anglo folk traditions.

Identification & Tracking

If you are interested in helping the Friends in studying the Western pond turtle and helping to restore its habitat you can participate in our stream survey and/or wildlife survey. Even our tracking teams will get involved in our search for the elusive turtles, either by direct observation of likely habitat areas revealed by the stream survey team or indirectly by finding their tracks. Track marks are often characterized by the foot prints straddling a dragging shell line.

A key feature to look for is a red eye lining, which would establish that it was an introduced Red slider and not a pond turtle.

Conclusion

The Friends are very enthusiastic about establishing conclusively if there are any Pond Turtles currently existing in our Creek. Apparently, they have been spotted recently in the San Dieguito River Park and should or could exist in our canyon. Although there have been turtle sitings re-

cently in Peñasquitos Canyon they are unconfirmed, especially as to which species. If pond turtles are found or re-introduced they can be marked easily without pain or damage. Thus the movement and development of individuals could be traced and we would have a better knowledge of them and thus could offer better stewardship to their population. Marking could consist of filing small notches on either side of the upper shell or carapace. This is similar to the ear notching identification method used at the Wild Animal Park.

If any member of the Friends sees or has seen a turtle or turtle tracks please report it as soon as possible. Have the location, date, time, and any other useful information handy to share. If you have a camera with you then a picture would be valuable. Please try to disturb the turtles as little as possible because we want them to be comfortable so that they have the best chance to thrive.

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Turtle tracks on land

News Briefs

Carmel Mountain (Neighborhood 8a) battle looms

Despite an avalanche of criticism of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for this project, Pardee and the other landowners have refused to make any significant changes to mitigate its horrendous environmental impacts. The Planning Department of the City has recommended denial of the project as it comes before the Planning Commission November 3. If the Planning Commission recommends denial of this insensitive project — not unlikely, it's not certain if Pardee will withdraw and replan the project, or appeal the decision to the City Council and try to get the five votes necessary for approval.

Please write or call Councilmember Harry Mathis' office with your opposition to this project, at 202 C St., San Diego 92101.

For more information on just how sensitive and wonderful the habitats of Carmel Mountain are see our last newsletter and previous articles by Dave Hogan, or call Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

The Ocean Beach Greens are also circulating a flyer to save Carmel Mountain for future generations. You can also give them a call at 523-0899 and ask for Udo Wald if you'd like to help.

Sewer line votes support Preserve

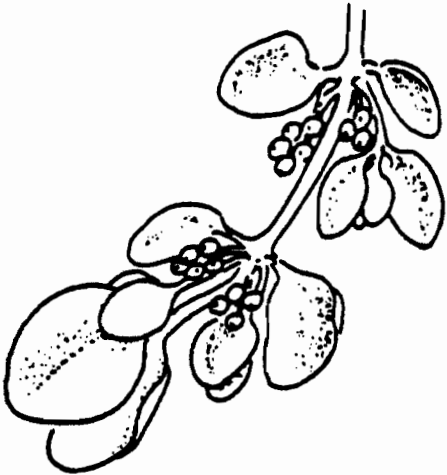
Support is building in area communities to keep the new Peñasquitos Interceptor Sewer Line out of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The Mira Mesa Planning Group, the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Group and the Miramar Ranch Planning Group have expressed their support for the B-2 alternative. This alternative would start with a pump station on the Mercy property east of I-15 and pump the sewage through a force main line down Mercy Road to Black Mountain Road, then south on this Road to Miramar Road, then east on Miramar Road to the new Eastgate Mall Reclamation Plant. This B-2 alternative is the one favored in the Environmental Impact Report for the project. Although the pump station is in the canyon's ecosystem on the Mercy property, it will have a lot less negative impact on the Preserve than a gravity line running the whole length of the Preserve. **Keep up your letters to Councilmember Barbara Warden (202 C St., San Diego 92101)** as this project moves through the process.

Holiday Birding in Peñasquitos Canyon

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 "Christmas" plant is the mistletoe. Mistletoe is "planted" by birds. The birds swallow the berries whole. While they are 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 is dropped. It dries instantly, and a new mistletoe plant grows from that branch or twig.



Mistletoe (*Phoradendron tomentosum*). Look especially in our sycamores for hanging balls of mistletoe. It is illegal to collect this plant in the Preserve

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. Fe-

males and immatures are gray with an even paler gray wing patch. Phainopeplas are slender, elegant looking birds with an upright posture.

While I have 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 number of them are found at the oases in the Anza-Borrego Desert. They like desert scrub, mesquite, oak foothills, mistletoe and pepper trees. They usually seem to favor hot country. They range from central California, through southern Arizona and Nevada, to western Texas. They also live south through the arid areas of Mexico. They are 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's distantly related to the Phainopepla. It's 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.

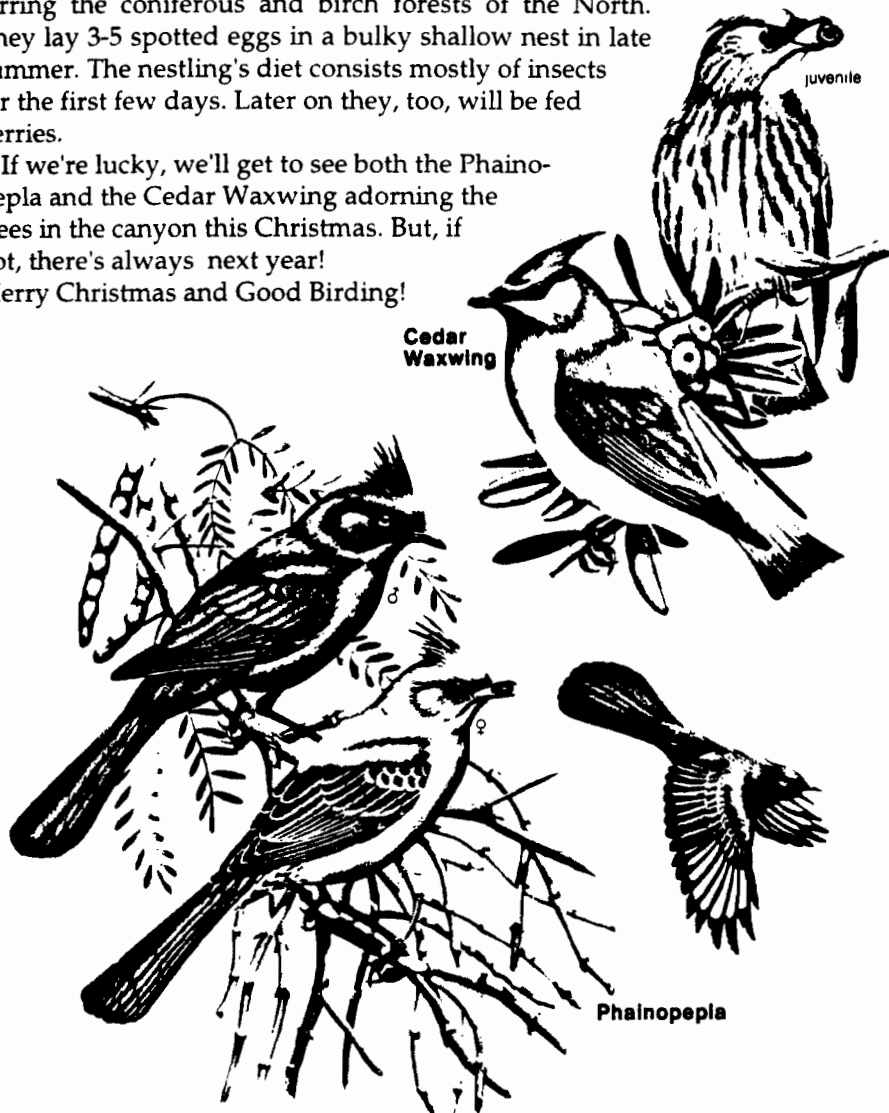
While they breed in Canada and the northern United States, they usually come south for the winter. They are very nomadic and not strongly territorial, except at the nest. There may be large flocks of them in an area, such as the canyon, one year and none at all the next winter. Their wanderings seemed 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 thee 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, pre-

ferring 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!



(Stream survey cont'd)

that might need removal. Rare or endangered plants are mapped for future reference. Animal burrows and trails are examined to see what critters are using them.

Our ultimate goal is to have a good map of the riparian system, quantify the water quality and identify problems and opportunities. Problems might include pollution harming aquatic species, while opportunities might include suitable pools and other areas for reintroducing historic fish species or enhancing habitat for pond turtles (see article this issue).

In the future, we'll return to perform other water quality tests and to identify the many plants that grow in seasons other than the fall.

Surprises we've encountered include the number of deep pools, some over 7 feet deep and covering as much as 4000 - 5000 square feet; the number of large-mouth bass, more than 30 in one series of pools; wonderful stretches of live oak riparian; the large quantity of *iva havessiana*, a sensitive plant; the numbers of Brazilian pepper, one of the exotic trees killing the Everglades; and the sheer number of "magical spots," the areas that take your breath away. We'll report in greater detail to our readers when the survey is complete.



(Site steward cont'd)

This might be suitable for the site.

With a site plan in hand, a management plan and schedule of work can be developed. From time to time, as groups contact us for volunteer work projects, they might be directed to this site to help under the direction of the site stewards of this project. Once stabilized, the site should need occasional monitoring and occasional intervention. The initial phase of this project, stabilization with natives, is probably a 1-2 year project.

If being a site steward interests you, give Mike a call at 566-6489.

Check Your Label

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

Newsletter Submissions

Since we have no paid staffers *Canyon News* depends on our readers for articles. Our articles run the gamut from news about the canyon to poems to animal observations to hard science about a species or habitat and letters. If you would like to submit something for the newsletter here's how to do it.

Ideally we would like to receive your article on a computer disk accompanied by a printout. We can accept either Macintosh or IBM disks, 5-1/4 or 3-1/2 inch. The word processing program you use isn't important.

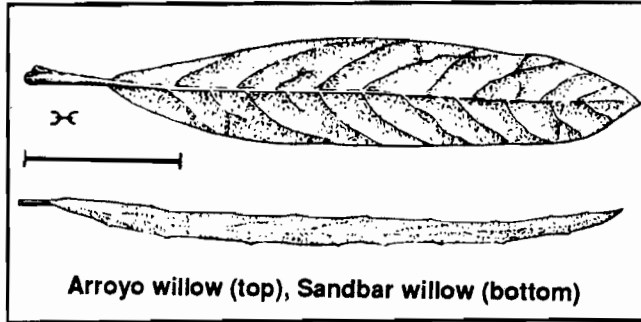
Magical Canyon

by Will Bowen, PhD

Introduction

In many of the world's cultures nature has been used as a vehicle to contact or commune with the spirit or supernatural world. Thus plants, animals, rocks, and natural places have been used to gain insights, visions, dreams, or acquire powers, which were seen as gifts of the supernatural.

In Native American traditions an inter-



play of nature — spirit — and human world was often the world view, with an interdependence, communion, and a cycling of the "soul" from one world to the next. Thus, though I might be a man in this life, in the next I might be a wolf or an eagle. This is, in part, the meaning of the Lakota saying — "Mi taku oyesin" — we are all related. We are not separate but part of everything in the world and we can access that which appears as separate. In a modern sense some might say that the supernatural or transcendent world sought was actually inside the individual's own unconscious mind. What were gifts or powers of the spirit or nature were actually gifts arising from the individual's own mind. Others might counter that the knowledge was outside and needed to be apprehended through special techniques or potions.

Whatever the source, there is actually a survival value in divination or the counsel of the divine as a source of knowledge. Often people, especially "primitive man," were afraid or unsure or lacking complete objective information. They needed to rely on a dream, a vision, a spell, an intuition, a hunch, or a divination when it came to hunting, migration, warfare, or personal problems and decisions. Hence, most cultural groups had ritual specialists, such as shamans, magicians, and medicine men who were expert at such counsel and could offer both physical and spiritual medicine.

Magical plants of the canyon

The Pepper Tree, which is often found

near early Spanish habitation sites, is used in Mexico in the "spiritualist" tradition. A three foot length of leafy branch is brushed over a person's body to cleanse their aura and remove evil influences such as "Mal De Ojo," or the evil eye.

Tree Tobacco, a slender sapling like tree with yellow tubular flowers and tiny blackish-brown seeds, was smoked by Native Americans as a way to contact the spirit world. The smoke was seen as a vehicle upon which a prayer could ride. Tree tobacco was also used in sweat lodges where the idea was the cleansing and purification needed for contact with the divine world. While sweating one would shout or chant and pray to "Spirit."

The pollen from cattail is the most important and sacred of plant materials for the Apache. They sprinkle it on their forehead, palms, and shoes for a blessing.

Deadly Nightshade is said to be the devil's favorite plant. He tends it daily except for one night of the year, called Walpurgis, when he is preparing for the witches sabbath. It was used by European witches in their flying ointments, which were rubbed into the skin. The berries can be fatal if eaten and must be avoided. The common name, belladonna or "beautiful lady" comes from its use by high society women who put drops of the sap into their eyes to beautify them by dilating the pupils. It was sometimes also placed in the eyes before mesmerism.

Mistletoe, growing as a parasite in sycamore trees, was cut by Druid priests with a golden sickle to be used in medicine, fertility rites, to ward off evil, and to welcome the New Year. However, it was bad luck to let it fall to the ground by itself. The tradition of kissing under the mistletoe comes from Scandinavia. Balder, the god of peace was slain by an arrow made of mistletoe. When he was returned to life mistletoe was given to the goddess of love and she declared anyone who passed underneath it had to be given a kiss. Mistletoe ash, placed in virgin parchment and worn as an amulet will make you irresistible to the opposite sex.

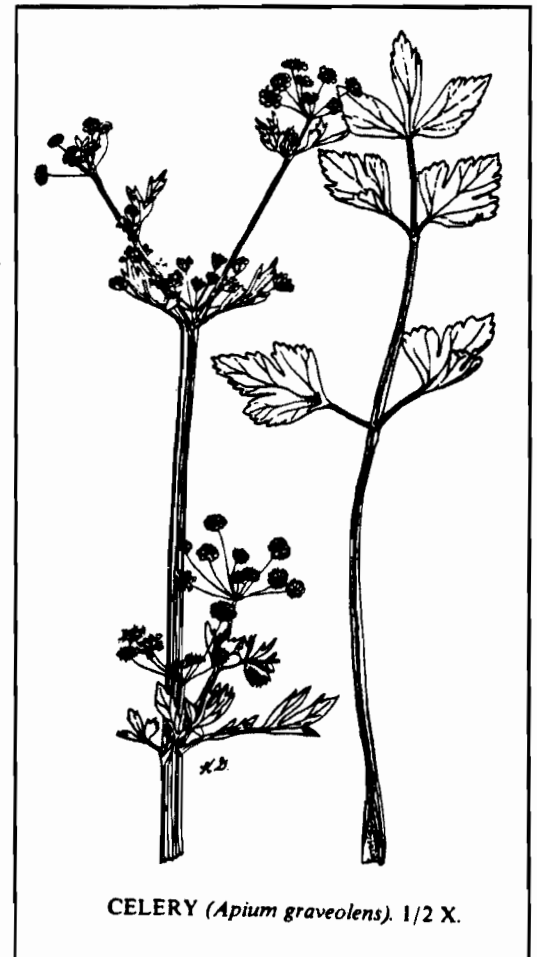
Jimsonweed, also known as tolache, or the Devil's Trumpet, was smoked by

the oracles at Delphi in ancient Greece and has been used in India by thugs to stupefy victims and in sacrificial murders. It has also been used as a pain killer in setting bones and as an aphrodisiac. It is also an ingredient in the witches flying mixture. It was brought to Europe by gypsies who liked to smoke it. Until a few years ago it was still a component in the Indian cigarette called "Bidis".

Tolache, is the Digueno name for the plant. They used it in initiation rites. Historically speaking, in 1676 British troops on the way to attack Jamestown in New England ate the weed and went mad for 11 days — thus saving the colonists. Mark Anthony's Roman soldiers also went crazy from eating it. If you eat it you will go mad too, so don't! It's a strong alkaloid poison.

Sagebrush is used as a smudge where the fragrant smoke is used to cleanse the body and the atmosphere. You can brush the smoke over the body with bird feathers. The odor is slightly intoxicating.

White sage is another scared plant that



CELERY (*Apium graveolens*). 1/2 X.

Cool Walks and Fall Colors

November heralds our fall season in the Preserve. Our Cottonwoods and Sycamores bring us yellows in the canyon bottoms, while poison oak accents our slopes with hues of red. Believe it or not, we still have blooming and fruiting plants at this time of the year. Toyon (California holly) attracts flocks of birds with its bright red and nutritious berries. California fuschia (*Zauschneria californica*, *E. canum angustifolium*) is strutting its startling red blossoms in patches scattered throughout the riparian (streamside) areas. You'll still find Broom baccharis covered with flowers in many areas. December is also a good time to start looking for chaparral currant and fuschia flowering gooseberry to begin flowering (rains willing). The cool weather is just an ideal time to take a little longer hike and get to know parts of the Preserve you might not attempt in hotter weather.

Del Mar Mesa Walks

We'll begin our walks on the mesa again to acquaint people with an important biological area that we hope to add to our park system in coming years. See the December listings for our first walk of the season. We'll follow up with more walks in the winter and spring, especially during flower and vernal pool season.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information.

Volunteer Work Parties

If you would like to help out with our conservation work call Mike Kelly at 566-6489. We have ongoing animal surveys, stream surveys, invasive weed removal projects, seed collection and planting programs to name a few of our activities.

NOVEMBER

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Nov. 5, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Mystery Tree Walk

Sun., Nov. 6, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). Investigate the legend of the Mexican era sign

map on trees in the Preserve that describe where the Mission treasure was buried. Visit a Native America grinding site and learn about the plants they used to survive. Meet at the parking-staging area off Black Mountain Road. Take the Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Cross the intersection and enter the parking for the Preserve opposite this intersection. Led by Mike Kelly. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., Nov. 12, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See Christmas holly berries, mistletoe and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**



Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), also known as Christmas berry, is showing its red berries, a favorite of birds. Look on our chaparral covered hills, generally the north facing slopes to see this shrub/tree.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

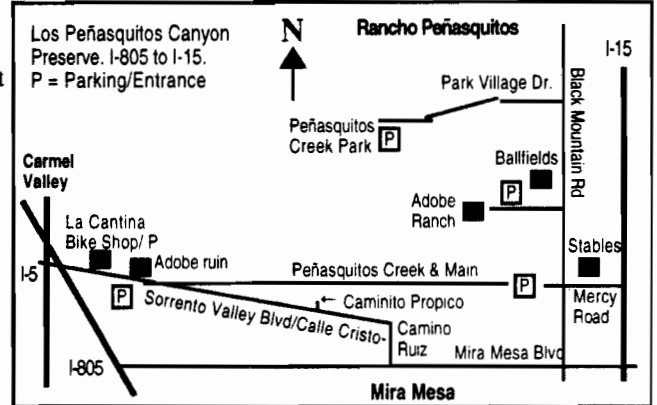
Wed., Nov. 16, 7 p.m. at Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch house. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Nov. 19, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See Sept. 3 listing for details. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Wildlife Tracking Workshop

Sat., Nov. 19, 6 p.m. Open only to participants in the Preserve's wildlife survey. Call Barry Martin at 484-4007 for details.



Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Night Walk at West End

Sat., Nov. 19, 7-9 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D and learn about the nighttime in the Preserve. Look for frogs, crayfish, animal tracks and observe constellations. Bring flashlight and dress warm. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

Geology Walk

Sun., Nov. 20, 9 a.m - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Park legally. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

Riparian Walk

Friday, Nov. 25, 3-5 p.m. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. Learn about riparian (streamside) habitat and the interesting plants and animals living there. Led by Will Bowen, Ph.D. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

Torrey Pines Slide Show and Book Signing Party with Bill Evarts

Wed., Nov. 30, 7 p.m., Free refreshments and book signing; 7:30 Slide Show. Bill Evarts, long-time Friends member and well-known professional photographer, will be autographing his new book *Torrey Pines — Landscape and Legacy*. The book will be for sale at the meeting, so bring your checkbook! There will be free refreshments and the book signing beginning at 7 p.m. Large portraits of Torrey Pines State Reserve will be on display. Bill will narrate a slide show of this unique state park and also explain how he approached the challenge of photographing this area. Nature photographers should hear many tips on techniques. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

DECEMBER

Wildlife Tracking Workshop

Date and time to be announced. Call Barry Martin at 484-4007 for details.

Friends Monthly Business Meeting

Date and time to be announced. Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 for details.

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Dec. 3, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road, make first U-turn, right into Canyonside Park past ballfields to Preserve sign and new parking lot. Walk up path to ranch. See San Diego's oldest residence, an historic adobe, settler and Indian artifacts. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Bird Walk in Lopez Canyon

Sat., Dec. 3, 3:30 p.m. (1-1/2 hours). Meet in new Parking-Staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/2 mile east of Sorrento Valley Industrial Park. Park entrance is on right, going east. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal to Sorrento Valley Blvd., entrance will be on left. Bring bird book and binoculars. Led by Brian Swanson. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

Geology Walk

Sun., Dec. 4, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Geologist Don Albright for a walk through time, including the Preserve's waterfall. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. From the west take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Blvd. to Camino Santa Fe. Right on C. Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Park legally. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

Del Mar Mesa Walk

Sat., Dec. 10, 10 a.m. (3 hours). The Del Mar Mesa is San Diego's last pristine coastal mesa top and a key wildlife corridor and habitat area for the new Multiple Species Conservation Program. It is also part of the controversial Future Urbanizing Area and the June 94 Prop C ballot measure. Wear good hiking boots and bring water. Moderate difficulty. Meet at the western end of Carmel Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos (I-15, Carmel Mountain Road exit, watch it as it makes a right turn!). Led by Mike Kelly. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Nature Walk at East End

Sat., Dec. 17, 8 a.m. (2 hours). Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Parking for Preserve is opposite. See Christmas holly berries, mistletoe and learn about plants the Indians and settlers used while living in canyon. See many species of birds. Learn about the concept of bio-diversity. Led by Les Braund. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Rancho Santa Maria De Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch Tour

Sat., Dec. 17, 11 a.m. and noon (45 min. each), led by docents from the S. D. Archaeological Society. See Oct. 1 listing for details. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

Winter Solstice Dawn(!) Walk and Viewing

Wed., Dec. 21, 5:30 a.m. Join cultural anthropologist Will Bowen, PhD to greet the rising sun of the winter solstice. Learn about the importance of solstice rites in ancient cultures. Meet in parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

Thanks Volunteers!

Despite the summer heat we still managed to put in a lot of hours in volunteer projects. Thanks to all of these very dedicated conservationists!

Stream surveys: Will Bowen, Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Les Braund, Jackson Chang, Trinity Gabriel, Chris Bader, Alan Pepper, Vicky Ausen, Reneene Mowry.

Weed wacking: Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Trinity Gabriel, Melanie Howe.

Wildlife Survey, Zone 9, Lopez Canyon, Jaime Lawrence. San Marcos Elementary After School Wildlife Club. Teacher: Kathleen Linderman; Assistant, Miss Mayer; September 19. Students participating were Erica, Suzanne, Pablo, Marcos, Betsy, Jeannette, Elizabeth. They survey overview, covered Preserve rules, sighted red-tail hawk, found new fawn tracks, discovered deer bedding sites.

Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sat., Dec. 31, 9-11 a.m. Enjoy this walk in Lopez Canyon with one of San Diego's leading naturalists. See early blooming plants and perhaps even the early courtship and nesting behavior of birds. Meet in the west-end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. From Mira Mesa take Calle Cristobal west until it becomes Sorrento Valley Blvd. At the bottom of the big hill the entrance to the west end parking lot is on the left. Barbara Moore is the co-author of the book *Walking San Diego*. She often has copies available for purchase and autographs. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

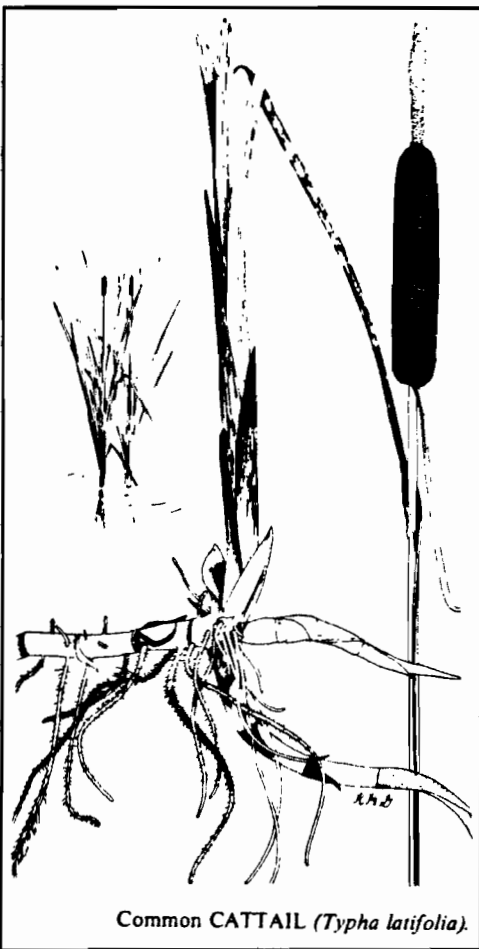
History Walk

Sat., Dec. 31, 3-5 p.m. Join Will Bowen, PhD on a walk of the history of the ruins and other features of the west end of the Preserve. Meet in the parking lot by La Cantina bike shop on north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

(Magical cont'd)

is also burned for ritual purification.

Ferns (such as bracken fern) were thought to confer invisibility in Shakespeare's time. They can also be put in keyholes to open locks. The folk belief was that they went to seed on Midsummer's Eve and that they had no flowers because they had been cursed because they forgot to bloom the day Christ was born. Conversely, an Irish belief is that they have no flowers because St. Patrick cursed it. The Santa Ysabel Digueno used Bird's Foot Fern as a charm. They broke the roots and



Common CATTAIL (*Typha latifolia*).

scattered them around the house and under the table to keep animals and enemies away.

Fennel, with a sweet relaxing licorice smell has been used to ward off witches, while horehound and mallow have been to cast enchanting spells.

Elderberry is probably the favorite tree of witches and should be avoided at night.

Crowns or head wreaths of mugwort can be worn on St. John's Eve (Midsummer's Eve) to protect the wearer from evil possession.

Black Mustard seeds, good luck if carried by an Aries, will cause strife in a per-

son's life if you sprinkle them in front of their door. They can also be used to keep your lover faithful.

Willow is said to be under the devil's protection. If you hold a branch of willow and renounce your baptism the devil will at once confer supernatural powers upon you.

Burning and inhaling wild celery seed will give you the necessary concentration for casting good spells.

Holding plantain in your hand will help you see the future. If you wash the door-knobs of your place of business with Curley dock leaves it will bring good business to your door.

Mayweed, or a version of chamomile, will draw money toward you, or bring good luck in gambling — if you wash your hands in tea made of it. Lonely women can attract a lover if they bathe in wild roses and watercress will cure your de-ranged mind!

Divination, omens, and signs

There are safe ways for hikers in the canyon to access the shamanistic mind set without using plants. One way is to ask or entertain some question prior to going into the canyon and then see if any sight or intuition comes to you from nature as you hike. Many people have told me that the canyon offers them much solace, peace of mind, and insight. Another thing to do is to look is to be on the lookout for omens or signs such as an owl hooting or a crow calling or things out of the ordinary like a pelican in the canyon. These signs are especially auspicious when you are thinking or talking about a particular subject. It is thought that they are a confirmation or a portentous omen from the spirit world speaking directly through the mouthpiece of nature.

Finding "power spots" or places where you feel particularly safe or good or powerful can also be fun. The Chinese also believe in this and have a system called Feng Sui for determining precise locations of powerful energy places.

For divination, plants such as sagebrush, which have very small leaves, can be used. Separate the leaves, hold them in your fist, smell the odor, and make a prayer or ask a question. Then drop the leaves onto a sheet of paper or a flat rock. Then read the patterns as in "reading tea leaves" as psychics do.

Rocks, or river cobbles, called the "living rocks" or "rock people" by Native Americans can also be consulted for intuitions and divinations. One asks a question and looks at each of three faces or facets of rock in sequence. The idea is to use the pattern in each facet to get a different per-

spective on the problem. Patterns in clouds may also be used. The trick is to use the random pattern stimulate your mind in some new way.

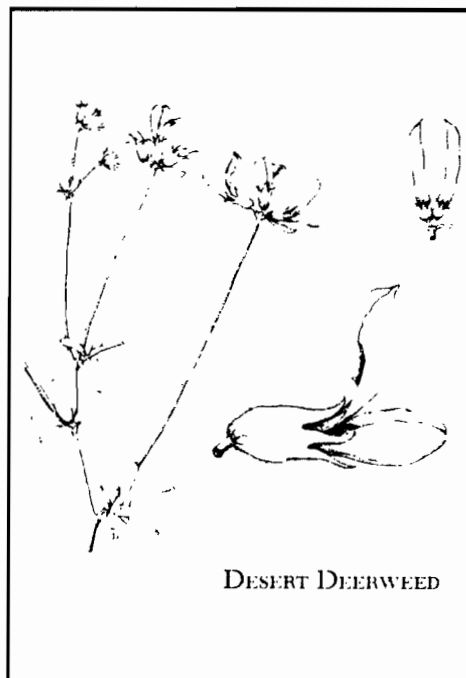
Conclusion

In times past, Peñsaquitos Canyon and its plants, animals, rocks, and power places, may have been used as vehicles to contact the spirit world or as sources of inspiration by aboriginal peoples. At the very least, there are like places and things in our canyon that have been used for spirit communion in other times and cultures. It is our right to share in the collective wisdom of these times and cultures.

It's possible to contact the world of spirit through nature in our canyon. Putting oneself into safe intuitive, divinatory, or shamanistic mindsets or states of mind through our sense of sight, smell or touch alone, through thought, or through awareness, can be an aid to our everyday rational, often critical way of looking at things. When we do so, it offers the possibility of increasing our appreciation and involvement, and participation, making our experience in the canyon all the more rich and meaningful.

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DESERT DEERWEED



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Don Albright, Vicky Ausen, Chris Bader, Trinity Gabriel, Barry Martin, Alan Pepper, Ph.D., Brian Swanson,

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Membership category? Circle below:

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- Volunteer** to help the committee (call me to discuss)
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- Indian Culture **11/94**
- Educational Workshops
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- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

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

Torrey Pines Landscape and Legacy

Slide show & talk

by author/photographer Bill Evarts

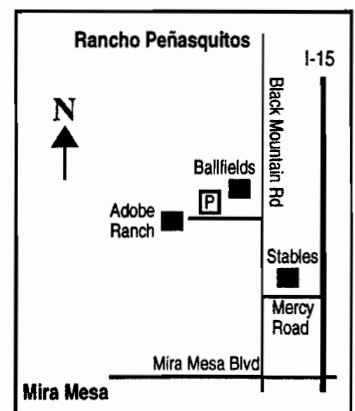
Wednesday, Nov. 30

7 p.m. Refreshments & Book Signing

7:30 p.m. Slide Show / Free to the public

Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos

Bill Evarts, long-time Friends' member and well-known professional photographer, will be autographing his new book *Torrey Pines — Landscape and Legacy*. The book will be for sale at the meeting. There will be free refreshments and the book signing beginning at 7 p.m. The slide show will begin at 7:30 p.m. Large portraits of Torrey Pines State Reserve will be on display. Evarts will narrate a slide show of this unique state park and also explain how he approached the challenge of photographing this area. Nature photographers should hear many tips on techniques. The event is taking place in the historic adobe ranch house, *Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos*, located between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos off I-15. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mountain Road, up the hill and make the first legal U-turn, come back down the hill and turn right into Canyonside Park. Go past the ballfields to the Preserve sign and new white-fenced, parking lot on the left. Walk up path to ranch. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**



Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.
P = Parking/Entrance

Sponsored by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

