



# Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

January / February 2000

Volume 14, No. 1

## Wildlife Survey Equipment Grant

Rick Botta

As you'll recall from articles in the this Newsletter, our 1999 Fund Appeal raised over \$3800 for the purchase of equipment to augment our wildlife surveys. We then applied for a matching grant with the City of San Diego to supplement these funds. I'm happy to announce that we were awarded this grant in early November. The Tracking Team now has over \$7,500 to purchase much needed, and long awaited, wildlife survey equipment!

Most of the funds will be used to purchase remote monitoring cameras. These operate using infrared technology, taking photos of any animals passing through the infrared beam. We recently completed our evaluation of various models of cameras, which included discussions with wildlife biologists who have used remote sensing cameras in their studies. After the first of the year, we'll purchase 8-10 cameras and begin using them in conjunction with our quarterly wildlife surveys and focused Mule Deer study.

Our initial use of the cameras has received much attention, as evidenced by recent articles in the North County Times and the Corridor News. During our evaluation period, we used the cameras to collect additional data for our focused Mule Deer study. Using our photos, we are beginning to get a better idea of specific use areas within the preserve, deer movement times and frequencies, and additional data for our deer herd composition estimates.

Once again, the entire Tracking Team would like to thank everyone who contributed to last year's fund appeal. Your generosity has allowed us to expand our wildlife surveys to new and exciting locations.

### Volunteers Needed

## Nature Program for Kids in 2000

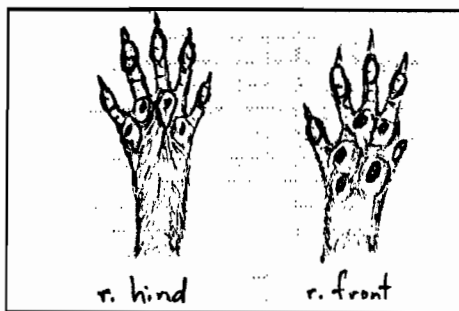
Lee Kirchhevel

The anticipated grant for our kids' program has been confirmed! We're moving forward with the scheduling of programs to begin in February. A mailer will be sent to San Diego area schools as well as scout groups. We plan to conduct programs once a week, beginning February 18, 2000 through May 19, 2000. Most programs will be on Fridays, but we hope to be flexible.

The program is built on a hands-on experience. Kids will explore the use of their senses in a safe, fun, and educational setting. With activities such as a discovery hike, ecology scavenger hunt, native plant uses, sensory awareness, and ecological games from Project WILD and Joseph Cornell, we can customize each group's program.

We'll have a safety message with every program. Kids will learn about rattlesnakes and poison oak, while hopefully becoming comfortable with sharing nature with all of its creatures.

A special training session for those interested in volunteering in this program will be held at the Ranch House on Saturday, February 5. Anyone interested in sharing their love of nature with kids should call me for more information. Call (619) 294-9618 or email [lee@tmisnet.com](mailto:lee@tmisnet.com) for program reservations or to volunteer.



Whose tracks are these? See p. 6

### Highlights Inside

Hike calendar	2
Volunteer Schedule	4
Ranger roundup	5
Call for birders	6
Winter (Restoration) time in the Preserve	6
Rodents, rodents everywhere	7
Wildlife Track & Sign Survey	9
Deer survey	9
Track Team Calendar	10
Fall Wildlife survey	11
Bird Festival	11
Old López House	12
>5000 Volunteer Hours	13
Directory	14

## Community Saves Preserve from Roads

Mike Kelly, president

Thanks to an outstanding effort by our neighbors in Rancho Peñasquitos, especially in the Park Village area, and in Mira Mesa, the proposal to resurrect the canyon crossings of Camino Ruiz and Camino Santa Fe has been defeated. The Save the Preserve Committee formed by residents of these communities gathered more than 1,000 signatures on a petition and brought as many as 200 people to the City Council and SANDAG (San Diego Association of Government) hearings.

At the San Diego City Council's Land, Use and Housing Committee November meeting, Councilmember Harry Mathis made a motion to reaffirm that Camino Ruiz and Camino Santa Fe are not part of the City's General Plan and should not receive any further study. The vote was a unanimous 5 to 0 for this motion.

See p. 5 for more

## Hike Schedule

# Winter Rains (?) Will Bring Spring Color

For plants in San Diego's mild mediterranean climate, winter is just a brief period sometime in December that occasionally extends into January! Our Winter currants (*Ribes indecorum*) are already budding out and will be blooming in January. Fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) should be flowering in February, if not sooner, along with shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii* ssp. *clevelandii*) and many other plants. "Winter" months in San Diego are really what folks elsewhere would call spring, as spring colors abound. Look for ceanothus species (Lilac) to begin blooming along the coast in late January or so. Why not join us on a walk and enjoy the flowers.

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

## January

### Historic Adobe Ranch Tour Every Saturday & Sunday

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Adobe Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Birds of Crest Canyon Open Space Preserve

Sat., Jan. 8, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin to explore the birds of the coastal sage scrub and coastal lagoon habitats. Take I-15 to Via de la Valle. Go west on this towards Fair Grounds. Turn left (south) onto Jimmy Durante Blvd. Follow this to San Dieguito Lagoon Rd., turn left onto San Dieguito Lagoon Rd. Follow this to Race Track View Dr. and meet at the gate next to the Preserve. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

### Bird Walk near the Ranch

Sat., Jan. 8, 9-10:30 a.m. Join Brian Swanson for a bird walk. Meet in paved parking lot just east of the Ranch House. Depending on the amount of rain the Preserve has experienced, we will either bird around and behind the ranch house, where various raptors and flycatchers are commonly found, or move across the bridge into the riparian woodlands with their cornucopia of bird species. On our last walk we were "fogged out" but had the pleasure of seeing a mule deer buck and a barn owl. Actual rain cancels. Call Brian at 760-749-5453 from 6-7 a.m. the day of the hike if in doubt regarding rain cancellation. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for directions.

### Tracking Walk from Ranch House

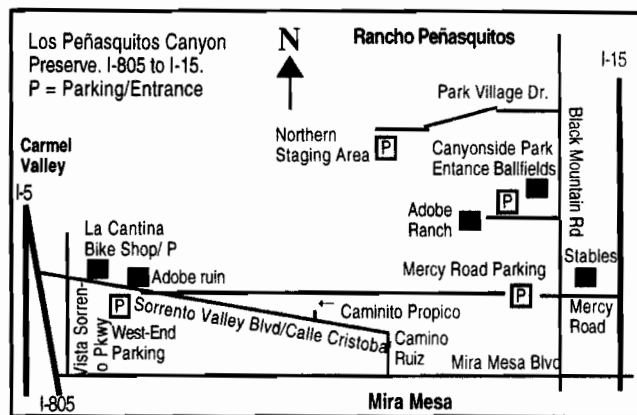
Sat., Jan. 15, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in with Chris Bader. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., right on Black Mtn. Rd.; take 1st left into Canyonside Dr.; proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park; walk west on trail to ranch house. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for directions.

### Medicinal Plant Hike

Sat., Jan. 15, 3-4:30 p.m. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen. 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 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Mystery Tree & Wildflower Walk

Sun., Jan. 23, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). As featured on Ken Kramer's TV spot, *About San Diego*, 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. Also lots of wildflowers. 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 Pat Watkins. **Thomas Guide p. 1189**



### Geology Hike

Sun., Jan. 23, 9-noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Steep trail. Bring water. sun protection. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore

Sun., Jan. 23, 1-3 p.m. Join Barbara Moore, naturalist and co-author of recently updated *Walking San Diego*, for a look at the critters and plants of Lopez Canyon. Meet in the west-end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the I-5/I-805 merge in Sorrento Valley. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Full Moon Hike

Sun., Jan. 23, 7:30-9 p.m. Explore the canyon at night. Observe the moon and stars. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of the I-5 and I-805 merge. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

## February

### Historic Adobe Ranch Tour Every Saturday & Sunday

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Adobe Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

(Calendar cont'd)

**Bird Walk near the Ranch House**

Sat., Feb. 5, 8-9:30 a.m. Join Brian Swanson for a bird walk. Meet in parking lot just east of the Ranch House. Depending on the amount of rain the Preserve has experienced, we will either bird around and behind the ranch house, where various raptors and flycatchers are commonly found, or move across the bridge into the riparian woodlands with their cornucopia of bird species. Called Brian at 760-749-5453 from 6-7 a.m. the day of the hike if in doubt regarding rain cancellation. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

**Vernal Pool and Wildflower Walk**

Sat., Feb. 5, 10 a.m. – noon. Join Limited to 15, so call to **RSVP** and for directions to Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489. Vernal pools are one of San Diego's most unique habitat types and one of its most endangered. Learn how these pools function and about the endangered species of plants and animals that inhabit them.

**Birds of the Chaparral & Grasslands at Black Mountain Open Space**

Sat., Feb. 12, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin to explore birds of the chaparral/ grassland habitats on the north slope of Black Mountain. Take I-15 to SR56 and go west. Turn north (right) onto Black Mountain Rd. Follow this north until it turns to dirt (on the right). Follow dirt road 2 miles. Turn right on paved road with the Black Mountain park sign and follow it up to the parking lot to meet. See **Thomas Guide p. 1169, E-7**. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

**Medicinal Plant Hike**

Sat., Feb. 12, 3-4:30 p.m. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Led by Will Bowen. 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. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Geology Hike**

Sun., Feb. 13, 9 –noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore**

Sun., Feb. 13, 1-3 p.m. Join Barbara

Moore, naturalist and co-author of recently updated *Walking San Diego*, for a look at the critters and plants of Lopez Canyon. Meet in the west-end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the I-5/I-805 merge in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p.1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Feb. 19, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Chris Bader. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Driveway and proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, then walk west on trail to ranch house. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

**Mystery Tree & Wildflower Walk**

Sat., Feb. 19, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). As featured on Ken Kramer's TV spot, *About San Diego*, 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. Also lots of wildflowers. 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 Pat Watkins. **Thomas Guide p. 1189**.

**Full Moon Hike**

Sat., Feb. 19, 7:30-9 p.m. Explore the canyon at night. Observe the moon and stars. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of the I-5 and I-805 merge. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**DIRECTIONS**

**Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

This intersection is located in Mira Mesa. From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe St. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **Thomas Guide p. 1208**.

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in hanglider parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley. 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208**.

**Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

**Northern Parking-Staging Area at Camino Ruíz and Park Village Drive**

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

**West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. 3/4 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right, past the curve. **Thomas Guide p. 1208**.

---

## Meeting on Eucalyptus Removal

Monday, Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. there will be a meeting at the Canyonside Recreation Center off Black Mtn. Rd. and Canyonside Drive to discuss the removal of invasive Eucalyptus trees on both sides of the County Water Authority Aqueduct crossing of Peñasquitos Creek at La Tortola St. in Rancho Peñasquitos (opposite Kika Court in Mira Mesa). The Friends have been thinning out the Eucalyptus trees over the last ten years since they are highly invasive and displace native trees and shrubs more beneficial to wildlife. Native cottonwoods, sycamores, oaks, and willows will be planted in the area, although many native trees are already present. The project will be carried out by the Calif. Civilian Conservation Corps. The Eucalyptus wood will be made available to area residents on the site. Mike Kelly of the Friends and representatives of the County Water Authority will be present to answer any questions you might have. If you have questions or concerns, please attend or call Mike at

# Winter Volunteer Opportunities North City Area

Winter time is a busy season for our volunteers since the rainy season is the only time we can plant native plants in our restoration sites. It's also the beginning of the new weed season for many areas. We welcome groups and can schedule your own date.

Students needing community service hours are welcome to join us and we'll be happy to sign off the paperwork.

For more information on any of these projects call Michelle at 619-224-4192 or Mike at 858-566-6489.

Tools are provided and gloves are available if needed. Wear sturdy boots, sun protection and bring water.

## **Sunday, Jan. 9, 9-1: Peñasquitos Lagoon Wildlife Habitat Restoration**

Meet at the corner of Flintkote and Estuary Way in Sorrento Valley.. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**. This month project is removing invasive tamarisk and other weeds.

## **Saturday, Jan. 15, 8-noon: Black Mountain Open Space**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (**Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7**). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## **Sunday, Jan. 16, 9-1: Peñasquitos Canyon Bird Habitat Restoration**

Meet in the west end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the Coaster Station in Sorrento Valley.. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**. Team will be removing Eucalyptus trees and planting cottonwoods and sycamores.

## **Thursday, Jan. 20 & 27, 9-11 a.m.: Canyonview Elementary School Restoration Planting**

Adults are needed to help these kids plant native plants in the Preserve in the Park Village area. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for details.

## **Saturday, Jan. 22, 8-noon: Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley)**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in removing the exotic *Arundo donax* (Giant reed) to restore wildlife habitat along beautiful Santa Ysabel Creek. Some hiking and boulder hopping necessary. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## **Saturday, Jan. 22, 1-4 p.m. Peñasquitos Canyon Narrows Plantings**

Meet in the west end parking lot off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the Coaster Station in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**. We'll be planting native grasses and other plants.

## **Tuesday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m. Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

## **Saturday, Jan. 29, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Peñasquitos Canyon Waterfall Area Plantings**

Meet at the end of Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos by the gate. We'll be planting native grasses and other plants on both sides of the waterfall and near Carson's crossing.

## **Sunday, Jan. 30, 9-1: Lake Hodges Arundo Control**

This session will finish our 2-year Arundo removal project on the Lake. We'll take boats to remote locations and cut down this invasive Giant reed. Call Michelle at 619-224-4192 for directions. **Must RSVP.**

## **Saturday, Feb. 5, 8-noon: Black Mountain Open Space**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black

Mtn. Rd. (**Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7**). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## **Sunday, Feb. 6, 9-1: Peñasquitos Canyon at Mercy Road Plantings**

Meet at the Ranger's HQ in the Equestrian Center at Black Mtn. and Mercy Roads to help put native plants in the ground.

## **Saturday, Feb. 26, 8-noon: Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley)**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in removing the exotic *Arundo donax* (Giant reed) to restore wildlife habitat along beautiful Santa Ysabel Creek. Some hiking and boulder hopping necessary. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## **Tuesday, Feb. 29, 7 p.m. Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

---

## Equipment Wish List

If you have a copy of PageMaker for the PC or Mac you're not using we could badly use it for our newsletter.

Also, if Santa brought you a new computer, please consider donating your old one to the Friends if it's still working. Monitors and printers are also needed.





# RANCHO ROUNDUP

Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry

## Oh, Christmas Tree!

As the first newsletter of the new millenium went to press, we were busy preparing for the Rancho Christmas party. As many of you know, we traditionally decorate an exotic pest plant to serve as the official Christmas tree. We have had palm trees, eucalyptus, tamarisk, and even a brazilian pepper! In 1999, the honoree was not a pest plant but was just as unique--we selected the stalk of an agave plant. Despite the 12' ceilings in the conference room, the stem was so tall that we had to cut off an additional three feet before we could erect it. The docents and park staff transformed the rather homely plant (P.J.'s son, Logan, called it a big stalk of asparagus!) by placing a star on top, stringing miniature lights around its stem, and adorning the stubby "branches" with old-fashioned ornaments. When we finished, all agreed it was a sight to behold, and most fitting to serve as the last tree of the millenium. If you were not invited to the 1999 party, just join one of Mike's work parties, the Volunteer Patrol, a Tracking Team survey, the Ranch House Docents or Ranch Hands, and you, too, can be part of the Year 2000 Christmas gala!

## Santa Comes Early to Rancho Los Peñasquitos

County Supervisor Pam Slater played Santa to Rancho Los Peñasquitos by authorizing an award of \$15,000 from Community Reinvestment Funds. The funding comes from taxpayer money that is being reinvested in local communities for projects deemed by the Board of Supervisors as of great benefit to the public. The Los Peñasquitos money is earmarked to go toward interpretive signage and interpretation of the archaeology at the site. A portion of the grant will go to Dr. Steve Bouscaren, the archaeologist who supervises the City College dig each spring, to have artifacts they have unearthed radiocarbon tested.

## It's Springtime at the Rancho

Spring has sprung at Rancho Los Peñasquitos! A few days after the last earthquake, park host Pete Nelson, was out on his morning walk and found standing water over part of the trail in the front meadow. I checked the park water lines to be sure they weren't leaking and then called City Water Utilities to see if they had any waterline breaks in the area. They investigated and found none, but curiosity got the best of them, and they were back the following day with a chlorine-testing kit. They took a sample from the water bubbling out of the ground and told us that if it turned pink, the water was chlorinated. All eyes were riveted on the sample as we waited for it to turn color. It remained clear, and at that point, we officially declared it a new spring. For a while, we thought a lake was forming in the front yard; however, the flow has slowed down and the surface water has decreased. If you want to see our new spring, just peek behind the lush, green willow in front of the ranch house!

## Well, Well!

Veteran Volunteer Patrol members, Steve and Mary Randall, were riding their mules through the preserve one recent Saturday when they came across the old concrete building (between Canyonside Park and Peñasquitos Creek) that some of you have seen and asked me about. As they looked across the meadow, they noticed an old rusty bucket resting upside down on the ground. They dismounted, picked up the bucket, and found, to their amazement, a long, vertical pipe in the ground underneath it, with water at the bottom!

It appears that it could be an old well casing, but it could also just be a hole with water in it. I measured the pipe, which looks like cast iron, and it is 10" in diameter. The remains of an eroded concrete platform and some rusty hardware are nearby. Ironically, a gentleman who used to play with the rancher's children back in 1959-61, had come by for a visit and was talking to me when the Randalls reported their find. He didn't remember the pipe, but recalled there were two large piles of cattle horns stacked beside the concrete building, which he and his friends used to play with. We have never been able to determine how the concrete building was utilized. If you can shed any light on this mystery, please let me know (858-484-7504). Oh yes, and rest assured that the County Parks maintenance crew will be welding a cover over the pipe so no small beings (people or animals) can fall in!

## A Rare Treasure Is Uncovered

It was a dream-come-true for the ranch house staff and docents when Ellen Sweet, who has been overseeing Mary Ward's research archives, presented us with a portrait of the rancho's matriarch, Estefana Alvarado Johnson. Ellen has been doing research to augment the data that Mary was gathering for the revision of her book about the rancho before her death earlier this year. She came upon the full-figure portrait at the Seaver Center for Western History Research, which is located within the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. Lois Barber, our vintage clothing expert, dated Estefana's dress as circa 1869, which would make Estefana approximately 29 years old when the photo was taken. Previously, our only picture of Estefana was a very poor copy from her obituary in a Los Angeles publication. We are elated to have our beautiful señora once again gracing Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos.

## A Call to All Birders

# Volunteers Needed for Survey Project

Ranger Dan Bylin

**Black Mountain Open Space /  
Pasqual Valley Open Space Parks**

I'm putting out a call to any birders who may be interested in assisting me on monthly bird surveys at Black Mountain and San Pasqual Valley Open Space Parks. The purpose of the long-term surveys will be to collect data on the bird life found within these two very important open space areas. The data collected will be used to compile a species list for both locations. We'll also record abundance levels, breeding activity, and distribution or locations of any rare and sensitive species.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate, but it will help if you have some prior knowledge of the local bird life and you feel confident in your observation skills. It will all depend on how much interest I receive in the project, but I'm hoping to survey each Park once every month, or once every other month. If you're interested in becoming a team member for this project please contact me at 858-538-8082. Thank you for your interest and I look forward to birding with you!

## Inaugural Canyon Campaign Fund Dinner January 24, 2000

Mission Cafe, 2801 University Ave., Corner of 28th in North Park, Monday, Jan. 24, 6:30-8:30. Post dinner slide show; minimum contribution \$30 per person, RSVP to Sierra Club 3820 Ray St., SD 92104; 619-299-1741 by Jan. 18. Funds will be used on behalf of the Canyon Campaign; An evening to foster fellowship and promote awareness and protection for San Diego's Canyons.

## Winter (Restoration) Time In The Preserve

Senior Ranger Bill Lawrence

'Tis the season — for restoration projects that is. Rangers and restoration volunteers hosted Vista High students for the fourth annual restoration of native habitats. This year 180 youths installed 1,120 pots of Purple needle grass (*Nasella pulchra*) in two days at the head of the Old López Trail, in this the fifth year of restoration efforts in this area. Thanks to Jorja Austn, Mike Kelly, and Pat Watkins for their help.

The Preserve's Special Weed Action Team (SWAT) removed 68 Eucalypts trees from the Fish and Wildlife Foundation Riparian Restoration Grant site on one Sunday. SWAT proudly goes where others fear to tread. These people now travel anywhere to eradicate exotics. They've been reported in Lake Hodges, El Capitan, S.D.S.U. Ecological Reserve on the Santa Margarita River, upper Peñasquitos Lagoon, and Mission Valley Preserve in recent months.

The week of Dec. 13-17, a Ameri-corps\*NCCC team planted Cottonwood and Sycamore trees in the above restoration site and installed additional retaining wall on the Trans-county Trail. These teams have contributed thousands of hours for restoration and trail projects over the past four years.

Canyonview Elementary School Fourth grade science classes are planning a restoration project near Peñasquitos Creek Park. The rangers are working with teacher Renie Martin to organize this event, set for January 20 and 27. If you can help supervise 60 4th graders plant shrubs, contact Bill Lawrence at 858-538-8066 to sign up.

## Y2K Fund Appeal

As we go to press, donations are still coming in for our Year 2000 annual fund appeal. We currently stand at about \$3,250 and are well on our way to our goal of \$4,000. If you haven't already sent in a donation, please consider it now. We'll print a list of contributors in our next newsletter.

(Roads cont'd)

Councilmember Barbara Warden made a motion at the SANDAG's Regional Transportation Hearing Nov. 19 to permanently delete both Camino Ruiz and Camino Santa Fe across Peñasquitos Canyon from SANDAG's Regional Transportation Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

County Supervisor Pam Slater aggressively defended the Preserve and opposed both road crossings. She has also taken the lead in opposing the Camino Santa Fe crossing of the San Dieguito River Valley, another bad idea.

The Union-Tribune editorialized in its Nov. 19 edition opposing the extension of Camino Santa Fe across the Preserve and across the San Dieguito River Valley.

Thanks to the following businesses which allowed petitions against the roads to be placed in their stores:  
Albertson's on Carmel Mtn. Rd. Cycle Centre on Black Mtn. Rd.  
Cycle World on Sorrento Valley Rd.  
Golden Bagel on Black Mtn. Rd.  
California Cutts on Black Mtn. Rd.  
Mountain Bike Whse. on Santa Fe St.

## In Memoriam

# David Pacquin

The Black Mountain Open Space Park advisory committee was saddened to learn of Dave Pacquin's passing. As the President of the Southern California Border Mining Association, a member of the Western Mining Council, he was enthusiastic about supporting preservation and interpretation of the old Black Mountain Mine. Dave was instrumental in opening a small chapter of the Western Mining Council in San Diego County and supported local efforts on behalf of small and large mine operators as well as recreational prospecting groups. He believed the Black Mountain Mine preservation project could provide a centralized site where diverse interests (especially those of the young) would benefit from natural science interpretive events and displays. We will miss you Dave. Rest in peace!

# Rodents, Rodents, Everywhere!

Barry Martin

As I wander the open spaces I constantly scan for sign of mammal activity. After some practice it's pretty easy to see tracks and other sign of the larger mammals such as deer, coyote and bobcat. What about the smallest of the mammals, the rodents? What part do they play in the overall ecology of an ecosystem?

The aware tracker/naturalist is always looking at the smallest detail, ever questioning and always learning. This being the case, he or she can't possibly overlook the tremendous impact rodents have in the web of life. In fact, some folks would be very grossed out if they knew to what extent rodents proliferate. In other words, rodents are everywhere!

This was made surprisingly obvious to me at a quite young age. I recall being in the third grade at the time, we lived in a wooded area outside Seattle. It was one of those beautiful Seattle days, mid-spring, with the sky so clear and deep blue that the greens of the trees was incredibly rich and vibrant against that blue sky back-ground. Everything seemed alive and blooming, birds were busy and boisterous, it was a Saturday morning and I was looking for adventure, headed out across the back yard toward the trail that went into the woods. I don't know why I stopped about halfway across the back lawn, maybe it was just to savor the gorgeous morning, or perhaps some birds caught my eye. I recall looking up at the trees and while standing there I realized something was moving in the grass down by my left foot. I looked down just in time to see a tiny field mouse running over the top of my shoe and up the inside my pant leg! I'm pretty sure I jumped completely out of my skin and did two or three earth orbits before realizing the mouse was long gone, probably way more startled than me. Evidently the mouse was running from something and I provided what it thought was a hiding place as I stood there with my foot straddling one of its little tunnels through the grass.

## Rodent Facts

Rodents are small plant eating, placental mammals, of the order *Rodentia*. Two upper and two lower curving, chisel-like incisors that grow continuously characterize these interesting creatures. The incisors have hard enamel only on the front surface. As the rodent gnaws, the back surface of the tooth wears away faster than the front, thus keeping a chisel sharp edge on the teeth.

Rodents number more than 3,000 species which makes them the largest order of mammals. Three factors account for their remarkable worldwide distribution: intelligence, small size and rapid rate of reproduction.

Most rodents, including mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, rats and squirrels are quite small. There are larger rodents such as prairie dogs, porcupines, and beavers. Many people probably wouldn't have guessed that prairie dogs or beavers were rodents! The largest rodent is the South American copybara, which grows up to 4' long.

## What about around here?

Around San Diego, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in particular, we commonly find several different rodent species. The most obviously visible and perhaps the largest (I hope) is the California Ground Squirrel of the family *Sciuridae*, genus *Citellus*. The scientific name is *Citellus beecheyi*.

I should interject here that within the class of mammals you have several orders, one of which is *Rodentia* (rodents), and within that order there are several families. The families are broken into genus and finally species. So the California Ground Squirrel is of the genus *Citellus* and it's specifically the species *beecheyi* within that genus. You always capitalize the genus name and the species name will be in lower case. Then you either italicize or underline the two names to comply with traditional convention. Whew!

The California Ground Squirrel is often out and about where you can see him. With its bushy tail and distinctive-ly quick movements they are easy to

identify. Take a closer look though and you'll notice this animal has very attractive coloring and patterns with a brownish head, brown body flecked with buffy white, its sides of neck and shoulders whitish with a dark triangle on its back between the shoulders providing a contrast to its buff colored belly. Also, look for the whitish eye ring.

You'll find signs of these squirrels around rocky ridges, slopes with scattered trees or bushes, pastures and grain fields. They're also found around dwellings of all kinds. Ranger Reneene has especially grown fond of their presence around the ranch house! Their range is only about 150 yards across. These rodents are colonial, building tunnels/burrows sometimes extending hundreds of feet long on slopes. There will be many openings throughout the network. The nest, deep inside will be lined with dried vegetation.

Offspring can occur in the spring, summer, or fall, but usually spring around here. The gestation period for the California Ground Squirrel is only 25-30 days, babies will stay underground about 6 weeks. They will store food in the den, and they eat a variety of green vegetation, seeds, acorns, mushrooms, fruit, berries, birds eggs and insects.

The squirrel's tracks are distinctive, with 4 toes showing on the front feet and 5 on the rear feet. They have long toes and claws that show as well. See the illustration for the foot and gait pattern drawings.

## What about the small guys?

If the squirrels are the rodents you most frequently see around here, what about mice and gophers and the like? Have you ever been hiking through the preserve and noticed in the grasses little tunnels down among the stalks. If you would take the time and get down and part the grasses in many areas you will find an amazing network of little trails only an inch or two wide, tunneling through the grasses.

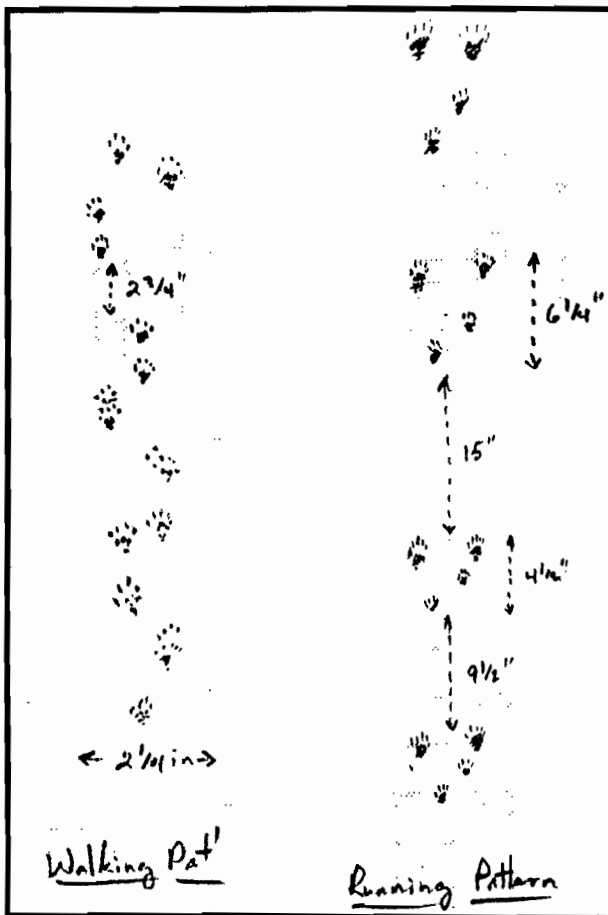
In our area we have a variety of pocket mice and kangaroo rats in the

family *Heteromyidae*, with the pocket mice in the genus *Perognathus* and two species of kangaroo rats listed under the genus *Dipodomys*. Long names for such small animals!

I've listed in my journal 5 pocket mice species that may be found in our San Diego area, they are Desert, San Diego, California, Bailey and Little pocket mice. There are two species of kangaroo rat, *Pacific* and *Merriam*. *Pacific* is the species of kangaroo rat most common to our coastal area.

Several characteristics are found in this family; they're very small with fur-lined cheek pouches, front feet tend to be weak back feet strong and well developed, their tails will be as long as their head and body, front incisors are grooved (except in genus *Liomys*), they don't need water, they burrow in ground for nests and they are nocturnal. The kangaroo rats are larger with extremely long hind legs, belly always white, underparts pale yellow to dark brownish. The tail is very long, dark above and below with white side stripes and a crest of long hairs on the terminal end.

Pocket mice also have crested tails



Calif. ground squirrel (*Citellus beecheyi*), tracks on p.1, here, track patterns.

but tend to be darker colored than the kangaroo rats. They'll also have spine-like hairs on their backs. These feed mainly on seeds and green vegetation. Trails emanate out from the den to feeding areas.

### There are more!

Another family is called *Cricetidae*, which includes mice, rats, lemmings and voles. We don't have lemmings here (other than what you see driving up and down I-15) but we do have five different genus listed for our region. The genus with the most species is *Peromyscus*, which includes the Cactus, California, Canyon, Deer, Brush and Piñon mice. Most well known of this bunch is the Deer Mouse, the one with the infamous distinction of being a vector or carrier of the Hanta virus. The *Microtus* genus also inhabits our region, in this genus we have one species called *Microtus californicus* common name, California vole. The *Microtus* genus, or vole group, is the most widespread over America from Mexico to the Arctic than any other mouse group. I think (in my humble opinion) they are key indicator species of the health of many of the ecosystems throughout their range.

Another genus under this family that is prominent in our area is *Neotoma* or the woodrat species. We have the Dusky Footed and Desert Wood-rats in San Diego County. These are larger than the other genus, and very industrious, building huge domes made of sticks and other debris to house their nests.

We musn't forget the gophers. *Thomomys bottae* or the Valley Pocket gopher is known to inhabit our range. You certainly have seen the mounds of dirt it creates as it digs down into its burrow. These guys are solitary, active day and night throughout the year, seldom seen above ground feeding on roots and tubers for the most part. I recall seeing a gopher poke its head out of the ground nearby one day at the ranch during one of our tracking classes we were holding out at the

picnic tables. To me, it seemed as though the little critter was trying to see what all the commotion was up topside. It didn't seem to care too much that it was so exposed, and it was one of those rare opportunities for us to actually view an animal that is not often seen.

### Ecosystem concerns

All these little animals are very prolific, especially when conditions are conducive. For example, a healthy grassland will support a lot more mice and voles than a stressed one. When an area is supplying plenty of food for the rodents, there will be plenty of rodents, which is good for hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes, bobcats and of course another group everyone loves, snakes! So if you love to watch the White-tiled kites (*Elanus leucurus*) hovering, the Red Tails (*Buteo jamaicensis*) soaring or the Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) kimming along, you probably understand the connection. You know that these birds go where the food is, and much of their diet consists of rodents, so if there are no mice, voles, rats or gophers, then not too many of these birds or other animals will frequent the area. There is more to it than that, of course. For example, when an event such as a fire or some sort of development activity occurs, there'll be a shift in population dynamics of that habitat's species causing a ripple effect in populations throughout the connective areas. The long term effect of a fire may be ultimately beneficial to an ecosystem. Once you replace or alter an ecosystem with a subdivision you may have either (at worst) totally wiped out the system or altered it into something completely different. For example, the species make-up along the edges of a development is significantly different than that of predevelopment habitat. This disrupts rodents.

### Around the house

The discussion here has been oriented more toward rodents in the open space areas. What about around the house? We may see evidence of many of the species mentioned above around our homes, especially if you live near the preserve or other open space areas. But there are species of rats such as the Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*).



Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

## Wildlife Track & Sign Survey

The purpose of this study is to monitor the wildlife of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and other critical habitat in San Diego County through the use of periodic track and sign count transects. This study will allow the determination of the following:

- the presence or absence of certain rare species and other target species which can reflect the health of the ecosystem;
- substantial changes in wildlife populations over time;
- the use of different habitats by the target species which could lead to the identification of critical habitat areas and corridors.

Volunteers (high school and older, please) are needed to help with this quarterly survey.

### Volunteer Training Saturday, January 15, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Training will include basic track, sign, and habitat recognition as well as details on the implementation of the survey protocol. Please bring a sack lunch, be prepared to spend much of the day outdoors, and be ready to take notes. The training will be held at Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House, located behind Canyonside Community Park near the intersection of Black Mountain and Mercy Roads. Please call 858-484-3219 for directions to the training. If you have participated in last quarter's survey and do not wish to participate in the training again, you may come by between noon and 2 p.m. to sign up for your transects.

### Winter 2000 Survey January 22 through February 6

At the training, volunteers will be asked to sign up for a transect team which will survey a transect during the morning hours one day during the survey period. Thirty-two transects are available, allowing volunteers to choose one (or more) convenient to their schedule. Transects are segments of trails of approximately one mile in length which are distributed throughout Peñasquitos Canyon, Mission Trails, Woodson & Iron Mtns., Crest, and other critical open spaces. These transects are surveyed quarterly, during a period of fifteen days, beginning one week after the Volunteer Training.

If you are unable to participate in this quarter's survey but would like to participate in the future, or if you would like more information, please call (858) 672-1120 for updates.

## Deer Survey Completes Year 2

Rick Botta

The Friends' Tracking Team completed the second year of our Mule Deer survey with a week of spotlighting in November. Begun in 1997, this survey is designed to provide baseline data on the deer within the Preserve and, over time, help us identify trends within the herd. Specifically, we hope to answer questions such as:

- How many deer do we have?
- What is the ratio of bucks to does and fawns to does?
- Where are the primary use areas at different times of the year?
- Is the deer population being impacted by the surrounding development?
- Are Mule Deer a good indicator species of habitat fragmentation?

This year we introduced remote monitoring cameras as an additional method to help answer these questions.

Data collected over the two years indicates slightly less than 20 bucks per 100 does and nearly 40 fawns per 100 does. The Preserve's total population Preserve is at least 60. (Estimates per 100 does are used for consistency with the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game (DFG) and other resource agency reporting methods). 1997 DFG deer composition estimates for San Diego County show 28 bucks per 100 does and 59 fawns per 100 does.

The Preserve's buck to doe ratio would have been higher had it not been for the recent loss of 2 bucks — one a road kill at Black Mountain and Mercy Roads; the other died of unknown causes. In spite of this, we're encouraged by the number of bucks and fawns counted this year in comparison to previous years.

Data for 2 years provides us with a solid set of baseline information. As we continue and expand this study with additional data collection methods, we'll be able to monitor the Preserve's deer population and answer questions such as those posed above.

Thanks to those who assisted in the spotlight counts: Chris Bader, Randy Botta, Drew DeShaso, Dion Heller, Rob Hutsel, Mike Kelly, Bill Lawrence, Tarja Sagar and Pat Watkins.

## Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team

**Year 2000 Calendar of Events**

Jan 15 Winter 2000 Wildlife Survey Training (see p. 8)

Jan 22 - Feb 6 Winter 2000 Wildlife Survey (see p. 8)

**Mar 4 - Mar 5 Beginner Tracker/Naturalist Program**

A weekend devoted to learning the skills of tracking and awareness with an emphasis placed on techniques for learning habitats and associated flora and fauna, wildlife physiology and habits, concentric ring philosophy, movement in nature and establishment of a pattern of awareness. This course offers the opportunity for one to acquire the tools to become proficient in the art and science of tracking animals, people and most anything that leaves a mark on the landscape. Your powers of observation will improve tremendously as will your overall awareness. Exercises in journaling, track and sign age determination, discerning concentric rings, track/sign identification, gait patterns and awareness philosophy will round out this busy weekend.

The class will be held Mar 4-5 running Saturday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and Sunday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. Bring a bag lunch both days, dinner will be provided Saturday evening. The class will meet at the Adobe Ranch House in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve off Black Mountain Road. Be prepared to take notes, do some hiking and have fun. Bring water, hiking attire, sun protection, something warm for the evening activity and a desire to learn. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Apr 15 Spring 2000 Wildlife Survey Training (see p. 8)

Apr 22 - May 7 Spring 2000 Wildlife Survey (see p. 8)

**Jun 3 - Jun 4 Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist Program**

A weekend of delving into the finer details of tracking, awareness and the philosophy of living in harmony with nature. The skill of reading concentric rings will be dealt with in detail, as will the practical use of reading pressure releases. Tracking problems in differing substrate types will be explored from soft sand to grass to hard dirt and rock. Many different exercises will be introduced and/or expanded upon such as track and sign aging, detection of movement via concentric ring interpretation and study of track character via debris interaction.

Deeper study of awareness factors will be explored to include 6th sense or inner vision exercises. See Beginner's Class for times and other details. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Jul 15 Summer 2000 Wildlife Survey Training (see p. 8)

Jul 22 - Aug 8 Summer 2000 Wildlife Survey (see p. 8)

**Sep 16 - Sep 17 Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Program**

The Advanced Tracker and Naturalist Class is an intensive weekend class devoted to in-depth track analysis and interpretation. The nuances of macro and micro pressure releases, track character in variable substrate, various tracking situations mostly involving animals will be examined but other exercises including lost person and speed tracking will be covered. Further development of intuitive skills relating to tracking and awareness in nature will also be covered. See Beginner's Class for times. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Oct 14 Fall 2000 Wildlife Survey Training (see p. 8)

Oct 21 - Nov 5 Fall 2000 Wildlife Survey (see p. 8)

**Nov 10 -Nov 12 Beginner Tracker & Nature & Wilderness Survival Program**

This Friday night through Sunday afternoon includes those topics covered in the Beginner Tracker Naturalist Program but expands to cover the topics of fire preparation/creation, edible plants, finding water, survival shelters, and other survival techniques. We plan to present this program at a mountain retreat over the weekend. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*) and the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) in the family *Muridae*, known as Old World rats and mice. These species came over on the old sailing ships from Europe; all occur close to human structures such as warehouses, farm buildings, or wherever food is stored. They're considered detrimental in the wild, and having been unknowingly released in this country the results of their introduction is a lesson in the bad consequences of such a release of foreign species.

Once, while on a run in Central Park in New York City, I spied a cat on the trail up ahead. As I got closer I realized it wasn't moving like a cat, closer yet and I saw it's tail and realized with shock that it was actually the biggest rat I'd ever seen!

So what about keeping these guys away from your house? Well, the best thing is to keep things clean. Don't keep pet food in places that a rat could get to. If you have fruit trees make sure you harvest ripe fruit and pick up fallen fruit right away. Please use traps, not poison. One of our neighbors lost a beautiful Airedale dog after it nailed a rat that had been poisoned by someone in the neighborhood. Rats will not instantly die after eating poison and may crawl into the space between walls before succumbing. Soon you're wondering what that horrible smell is!

### Always more to learn

This has been an overview of rodents of our area and as with all aspects of the natural world there is so much more to learn. The more you know about something the less threatening that something tends to be. So as you are out hiking the preserve, seek out signs of our little rodent neighbors. Are there hawks above, signs of coyote or fox? These are indications that there is a thriving rodent population in the open space you're in, and that's a good thing. Look for the woodrat domes, those big piles of sticks hidden among the bushes, often your only clue that there is one near is a well worn trail about woodrat size. Look closely at that trail and you may see the small distinctive footprints of the woodrat. Always look for the smallest details, ask questions, use the

# Fall Wildlife Survey

Dean Woods

The Tracking Team has again expanded the number of transects being surveyed each quarter from 28 to 32. Three new transects are located in Mission Trails Regional Park and monitor the movement of wildlife through three key north-south wildlife tunnels and underpasses beneath Highway 52. This area is being monitored by the Tracking Team at the urging of the Rangers at MTRP and Ranger Luane Barrett has taken an active role in participating in the surveys. An additional transect was added in the Iron Mountain area near the intersection of Pottery Road and Highway 67.

We have been able to expand our outreach due in part to the addition of seven new members to the Tracking Team. Doug Hansen, Ann Hunt, Gretchen Nell, Kevin Oliver, Steve Romeo, Vince Skandunas, Mike Volberg, and Lois Warburton each have participated in at least 60 hours of track and sign identification and training as well as countless hours supporting quarterly surveys. Each new member brings a lot of new talents to the Team and we are all looking forward to working together as we continue to grow and expand our capabilities.

The Fall Survey was successfully completed in early November. We continue to monitor the presence and movement of mule deer, coyote, bobcat, grey fox, raccoon, opossum, and weasel moving through the key wildlife corridors in PQ Canyon and the other survey sites around the county. There appeared to be a notable increase, this survey, in the level of activity among all species. This is possibly due in part to the increase in construction activity in various areas and the very dry summer we have experienced this year. Wildlife is forced to move further and more frequently in search of water.

---

fieldes to get answers, the *Peterson Field Guides to Mammals and Animal Tracks* among others will help you. See you (or your tracks) on the trail, Happy Tracking!

The survey went smoothly thanks in large part to our enthusiastic group of volunteers. We want to thank the following for contributing their valuable time and energy toward helping protect our wildlife and other natural resources; Luane Barrett, Dave Bilak, Cheryl Brehme, Roni Breike, Steve Carroll, Anne Dank, Jan Farmer, Doug Hansen, Dion Heller, Pat & Leo Holland, Susan Jack, Denise Kamenzind, Harry Manning, Sonja Mason, Charan Masters, Gretchen Nell, Kevin Oliver, Bill Orvash, Carissa Pender, Steve Romeo, Kevin Oliver, Tarja Sagar, Robin Sielaft, Robin Silverstein, Ann Sixtus, Vince Skandunas, Damian Valdez, Mike Volberg, Lois Warburton.

Tracking Team leaders are: Chris Bader, Rick Botta, Uli Burgin, Lee Kirchhevel, Barry Martin, Dean Woods. Ann Hunt and Julie Savory lead the Mt Woodson and Iron Mountain transects.

## Bay Bird Festival January 27 – 30, 2000

Annual festival will feature field trips, exhibits and classes. For info call or write: Nature Festivals of San Diego County, POB 4326, San Diego, CA 92164-4326; 877-763-5483.

Classes include: Owls Quiet on the Western Front. Nature Photography with the Nature Nut, Bats in Your Belfry, Introduction to Gull Identification. Parts 1 and 2, How to Replicate Mother Nature's Bird Garden in your own Yard, Wintering Shorebirds of San Diego Bay, Introduction to Pelagic Birds, Protecting Sensitive Bird Species, Gardening for Birds and Butterflies, Those Fiesty Flycatchers.

Field trips include: Birding Baja California Norte, Beastly Business, Behind-the-Scenes Tour at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, Have-a-Hoot Owlwing Trip, Raptors of Santa Maria Valley, Hometown 100 Birding Trip, Birding Near the Mexican Frontier, Nature Walk with the Nature Nut.

Keynote address by John Acorn on

# The Old López House

Will Bowen, PhD

## Introduction

In the last issue of the newsletter I discussed the history of the old López house and the genealogy of the López family who lived there. In this issue I want to cover the physical layout of the house site, known in the archaeological literature as, CA-SDI-8120H, describing what is left and what the house probably looked like when it was functional. I also want to highlight some interesting details associated with the house, such as the writings on the cement walls and steps.

## Background

I think that the López house was built of wood in the 1870s by José Ramon López, who was the son of Bonafacio López, a significant figure in the early history of San Diego and Old Town. José Ramon ran the López farm or ranch until his death in late 1931 after which his son Ramon López, Jr. took over.

If you were to search through the López ruins you would find some old square nails with many modern round ones indicating that the earliest work on the house dates back over a hundred years, helping support a claim of a founding date in the 1870s. The mixture of nail types suggests that the house was built upon over the years. The cement porch, bathroom, and steps, with dates in the 1950s written in the actual cement, adds to the notion of house being built upon or built up over the years. The earliest part of the house was built back near the slope of the hill that runs up to López Ridge. It measured 42' x 21' deep providing 882 ft<sup>2</sup> of living space. The walls of the house were framed with 2 x 4s and the floor was constructed of wood. I'm not sure if the roof was flat or sloped but it had a type of tar paper tacked upon it at some point in time. A screendoor was also placed. A piece of the screen still remains on site. In its heyday, the house would have supported José Ramon, his wife, and three children.

In the 1950s, a cement porch measuring 42' x 9' was poured. The porch had two sets of steps up to the wooden house. At the same time, a 8' x 11'

bathroom with piping was also added.

The house was vacated by 1956 or 1957 after Ramon, Jr. and then his sister Enriqueta, who lived with him, died. The house probably fell in a fierce storm in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

## The López House now

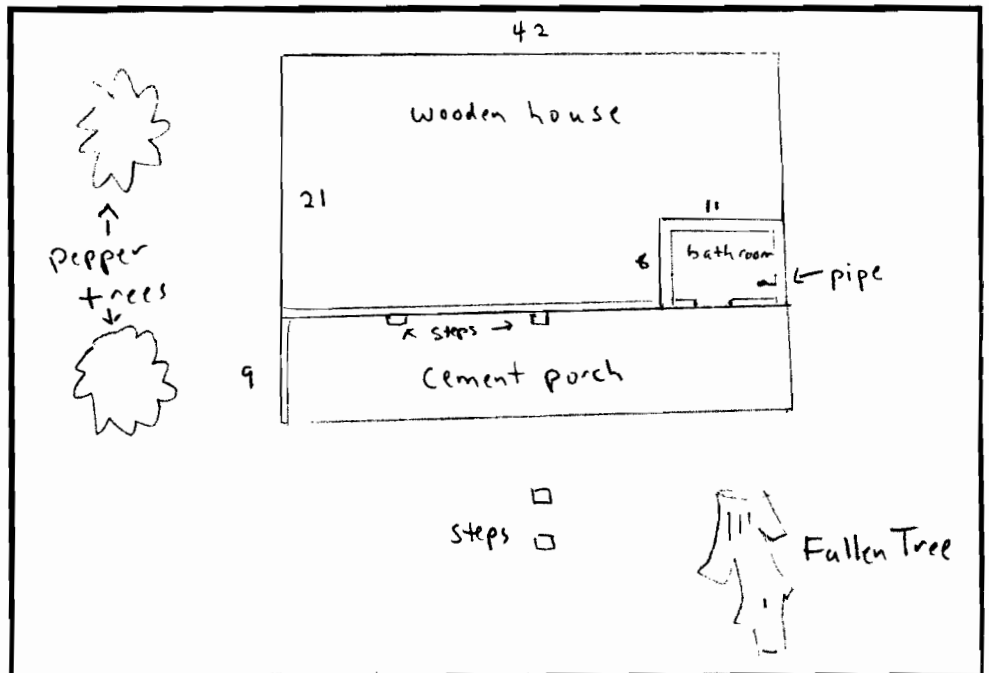
If you visit the López house now what you will see is dependent upon the season and the amount of rain we have had. Some years the ruins of the house become totally obscured by tall grasses and mustard plants. Only when the vegetation dries back and then falls to the ground will you be able to see the piles of wood and the cement porch, which are all that remain.

On the west side of the house are two pepper trees which provided a little shade and a little wind block. In

have been buried or carried away down to the creek. One large pile of wood remains to the front of the tree along the hillside, however. An elderberry tree has begun to grow up in the midst of this pile of fallen wood.

## López House 10 years ago (1989)

I first started to visit the López house about ten years ago in 1989. I have a set of color slides of the area which were taken in August or September of that year. One thing you notice from the slides is how dry and barren the area around the house is and how close cropped the grasses are (cattle were still being grazed in the Preserve then). The only thing growing around the site were the two pepper trees and the tall eucalyptus in the gully. The slides show that the wood piles



front of the house to the right as you walk up to it is a large fallen tree which has hits limbs cut back. Near the tree is a metal bed frame which is rusting away.

Off to the north east in a gully is a large eucalyptus tree. This area is being steadily eroded away by run off from the rains. A dry rivulet now cuts through the gully. Almost all of the historic materials which once were here, such as animal and bird pens,

were a little higher and the steps leading up to the porch were more clearly defined. You can also see some kind of small wooden structures in the gully which are now gone.

As I recall there was a lot more debris and items of historic and archaeological interest around the house in 1989. I distinctly remember picking up and looking at old car parts and pieces of metal. I think that everytime I went there I discovered at least one new in-



teresting item. One of my slides shows an old rusted skelton key lock that had a doorknob which had broken off. In the gully to the north east of the house I recall seeing the remains of wire and wood pens and other noteworthy items.

### Physical Layout

The cement porch, the inside of which is speckled with small cobbles is 9' wide and 42' long. It probably had a overhanging roof and would have been a nice place to sit on a warm summer evening and look up at the stars in the southern sky.

Nine feet in from the west end of the porch is a step. Another step, to the main door, is at 21' in. At 30' in, there is the a squared off area slightly raised above the porch on the level the wooden house floor, that was probably designed to be a bathroom. There is a pipe coming in and up, which looks like it may have gone to a toilet or a sink. The pipe, with the open end facing ard, is set at 27" in and 9-1/2" out from the east wall.

The bathroom area measures 8' x 12' and has 8" thick cement walls about 2' high all around which were then finished with wood. The bathroom has a three foot doorway. The back wall has a rusted bolt on top of it and a 2" thick piece of wood underneath it. The doorway also has a bolt near it. It looks like the wood part of the bathroom was bolted or hammered into the cement, perhaps when it was still a little wet.

Directly to the side and behind the bathroom, and a step above the porch is the main part of the house which was built first. You can still see the wooden floor above the dirt.

### Writings In The Cement

José Ramon Lopez's son, Ramon, Jr. built the porch. He probably had help. I think that the person who helped him had the initials JPEC, as these letters are written into the cement wall of the bathroom next to Lopez's name. We can only guess as to who JPEC was.

Ramon López signed his name into the bathroom wall to commerate its building. His name is placed within a banner-like shape that looks like a whale's tail. Within the banner is "López Ramon Octber 1953." Note the misspelling of the month October

(Spanish: Octubre), which may well indicate that Ramon was not very well educated, although he was proud of his his accomplishments. Ramon's father may have had more schooling than him because the father attended school in Old Town as a youth.

Ramon López also wrote his name on one of the cement steps leading up to the house. The step below the one with his name has the word "etienmdie" with a date of "27 De 1952" following. It looks like the steps up to the house were built right after Christmas in 1952, if the "De" is short for December.

Then, the following Fall, or in October 1953, the bathroom was built. Perhaps the steps and porch were built together, then the bathroom was put in.

But what does the word "etienmdie" mean? I looked in several Spanish dictionaries and could not find this word. I think it is a misspelling deriving from the Spanish verb "entender," meaning to understand or to be able or skillful. The related adjective, "entendido" also means well informed, skillful, or wise. I first thought Ramon, who appears to have been very proud of his physical skillfulness was trying to say something like, "skillfully built, by me, December 27 1952."

However, I asked a friend of mine, Richard Falcon, who has been on many hikes in López Canyon and who was born in Mexico, what he thought the word, "etienmdie" could possibly mean. Falcon also thought the word was a misspelling of a conjugation of the verb "entender." He thinks Ramon was trying to say, "Understand me." Falcon suggested that there might be a third step that read, "Please God."

Hence, "Please God, understand me, Ramon López De 1952."

Falcon said that this was is a common enough Spanish saying. He thought such a statement would have been made by a maverick or a hermit or someone who saw himself as outside the norm. Perhaps this is how Ramon López viewed himself.

### Conclusion

In the writeup of a recent archaeological site survey of the López house, made by Ralph Giles, Jr., the author stated that he thought that it would be important to excavate the house because this has the potential to give us

some excellent information about a turn of the century farm or ranch house. I agree with this. A thorough study of this site would offer information valuable to the Preserve and our overall knowledge of early San Diego.

I think we should give this project a high priority. We've already lost a large amount historic materials such as locks, car, house and pen parts through weathering, pot hunting, and erosion. Each year the rains uncover new items, such as in last years El Niño torrents. I know that there are important materials that will be uncovered once excavation is begun.

## > 5000 Volunteer Hours!

The Friends volunteers donated well over 5,000 hours of their time on a wide variety of our projects during 1999. Thanks to all of you who were part of these efforts!

In November and December our volunteers led interpretive hikes, deer spotlighting and wildlife tracking surveys (*see this issue*), vernal pool surveys, exotic surveys on the Santa Margarita River, and habitat restoration projects in Peñasquitos Canyon and Lagoon, Lake Hodges, and Mission Valley Preserve. Those participating included.

Don Albright	Michelle
Rick Botta	Murphree
Will Bowen	Gretchen Nell
Cindy Burrascano	Linda Pardy
Drew Deshazo	Bill Reich
Edward DiBella	Jhonser Rojas
Donna Duniver	Liz Rozycki
Lili Green	Carrie Schneider
Waltern Herrern	Mary Slupe
Melanie Howe	Dixie Stansell
Rob Hutsel	Ben Stevenson
Mike Kelly	Maureen Strauss
Dee Kennedy	Brian Swanson
David Kimball	Glenn Torbett
Larry Klassen	Pat Watkins
Marilyn Mirrasoul	Dean Woods
Barbara Moore	



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

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
858-484-3219

**Address Service Requested**

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
POWAY, CA  
PERMIT NO. 286

RENEWAL DATE 01/00  
CHERYL S. BREHME  
7032 OSLEN ST  
SAN DIEGO CA 92111

## Check Your Label

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

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Mike Kelly 566-6489  
Vice-President: Dean Woods 672-1120  
Treasurer: Pat Watkins 538-2527  
Secretary: Edward DiBella 748-5276

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Don Albright, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Barry Martin,  
Rick Botta, Brian Swanson

### Walks Leaders

Brian Swanson, Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike  
Kelly, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Pat Watkins

### Committees:

Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman  
Newsletter: Melanie Howe  
Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
Stream Survey Committee: Mike Kelly  
Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
Volunteer Coordinator: Michelle Murphree (224-4192)  
Wildlife Survey Organizer: Dean Woods

## Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2000

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call **858-484-3219** or **858- 566-6489** for more information.



# Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

March / April 2000

Volume 14, No. 2

## Support Props. 12 & 13 on March 7

Tuesday, March 7, two important propositions deserve your support on the election ballot. These are Proposition 12, the \$2.1 billion Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Act, and Proposition 13, the \$1.97 billion Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Bond Act. Proposition 12 provides the first opportunity in more than 12 years for the voters to approve new funding in parks.

Support for both Bond measures is broad. Newspapers endorsing the ballot measures include the San Diego Union Tribune, San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, San Jose Mercury News, Fresno Bee, Oakland Tribune, Bakersfield Californian, San Francisco Examiner and many others.

Environmental groups supporting the measure include the statewide Sierra Club, Audubon, and California Native Plant Society. Locally, many groups in San Diego, including the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve support these.

Both the San Diego City Council and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors have voted to support both measures.

### The Park Bond (Prop. 12)

If passed, this measure will provide funds for open space acquisition critical for building our Multiple Species Habitat Program (Naturelands) here in San Diego. Without these funds the likelihood is that we would lose critical wildlife corridor linkages between our open space parks, linkages vital to the wildlife in our preserves. The measure also provides for the first time in a Bond measure, funds for renovation and development of local and regional parks, restoring and cleaning

See p. 4 for more

## Wildlife at Risk with Premature Road Opening

Mike Kelly

Wildlife, including deer, bobcat, coyote, fox and smaller critters will suffer unnecessary deaths if the plans to prematurely reopen Sorrento Valley Road go forward. The City of San Diego recently announced plans to resurface and reopen this road that runs parallel to I-5 on its west side, from Carmel Valley Road into Sorrento Valley Road. The road closed about 4 years ago in order to give Caltrans room to build the nearby State Route 56 flyover ramps to I-5. The road was a popular local short-cut around the "merge" (I-805, I-5) interchange in Sorrento Valley.

While closed the City decided it wanted to redesign the road to make it wider and safer when it did reopen and began an environmental review process that is due to deliver a report with different alternatives this spring. Meanwhile, however, area businesses have been pressuring the City to not wait for the results of the environmental review and to quickly resurface and reopen the existing road. This would be a disaster for wildlife that now cross this at-grade road to go under I-5 into Carmel Valley.

### Reopening wildlife corridor

While also building the flyover, Caltrans reopened the underpasses of I-5 in Carmel Valley, making it possible for wildlife to pass under I-5 between the lagoon and Carmel Valley for the first time in over 10 years. The underpasses had become silted in and unpassable, as while as being blocked by other obstructions. Fixing this old wildlife corridor was a required miti-

See p. 11 for more

### Highlights Inside

Hike calendar	2
Volunteer Schedule	4
Volunteer Accomplishments	5
Hike Leader Training	5
Ranger roundup	6
City Ranger Report	7
Elberta Fleming Educational Collection	7
New Members	7
San Diego Tracking Team	8
Fund Drive Over the Top	9
Web Site	9
Welcome Back Cottonwoods	9
Annual Meeting	10
Directory	12

## Stagecoach Research Help Needed

The Friends are researching the old stagecoach roads that used to run through Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. We intend to apply for historic designation status for those old segments of the stagecoach roads we can identify. If you have information on these, where the original roads can still be seen in the Preserve, where they crossed the creek, old maps or historical accounts, please call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489. Help is also needed in searching old sources of information such as the San Diego Historical Society or the County Archives.

Historic designation will make preserving them easier and will lend itself to interpretative signage and informational displays.

Dr. Lynne Christenson of San Diego State and Friends volunteer Rob Hutsel have already worked with Mike to identify sections of the road and to begin the research effort at the S.D. Historical Society.

## Hike Schedule

# Rains Finally Bring Up Flowers

We've finally had enough rain to begin bringing up the wildflowers. By the end of March and certainly in April we should be seeing numerous plants and shrubs flowering. Ceanothus (Mtn. Lilac) species are beginning to bloom as we enter March. Mission Trails, Black Mountain Open Space Park, and Goodan Ranch are all good places to see shows of lilac.

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

## March

### Historic Adobe Ranch Tour Every Saturday & Sunday

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Adobe Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Ranger Dan's Bird Watching in San Pasqual Valley Open Space, Clevenger Canyon North Trail

Sat., March 11, 8 a.m. Explore the riparian woodlands of little known Santa Isabel Creek. Take Hwy 78 about 6 miles east of the San Diego Wild Animal Park. Turn left onto Clevenger Canyon trailhead parking lot. Meet the Ranger in the parking lot. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

### Geology Hike

Sun., March 12, 9 -noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Alternative Futures: Reserve Design Impacts on Reptiles & Amphibians of Coastal California. Slide show & talk at Annual Meeting.

Fri., March 17, 7 p.m. at the Adobe Ranch House. U.S. Geological Survey Research Biologist Robert Fisher, PhD will discuss the status of reptiles and amphibians in southern coastal California based on his more than 5 years of research. He'll detail which species have already disappeared from places such as Torrey Pines State Reserve and Pt. Loma and which are now at risk and what kind of Preserve designs and monitoring it will take to protect the species remaining. The Friends Annual meeting with an election of officers will take about 15 minutes at the beginning of the evening. The ranch is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

### Tracking Walk from Ranch

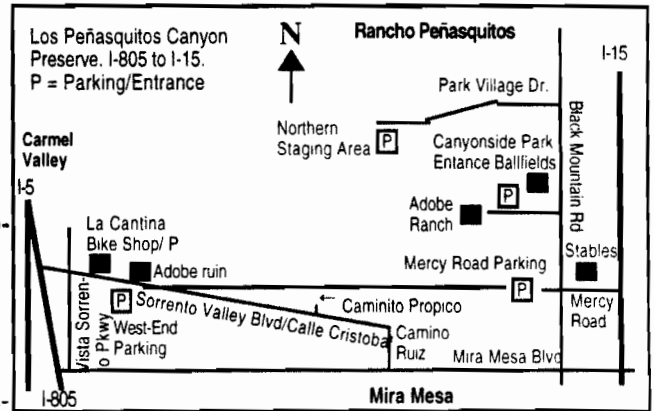
Sat., March 18, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Chris Bader. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr. and proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, then walk west on trail to ranch house. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for directions.

### Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore

Sun., March 19, 1-3 p.m. Join Barbara Moore, naturalist and co-author of recently updated *Walking San Diego*, for a look at the critters and plants of Lopez Canyon. Meet in the west-end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the I-5/I-805 merge in Sorrento Valley. **See Thomas Guide p.1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

### Spring Equinox Hike

Sun., March 19, 3-4:30 p.m. Welcome the beginning of Spring with a leisurely afternoon hike. Look for new growth, wildflowers, and other signs of spring. Bring a drum, rattle, or a song if you wish to celebrate the reawakening of nature. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet in the west-end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the I-5/I-805 merge in Sorren-



to Valley. **See Thomas Guide p.1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

### Full Moon Frog Hike

Sun., March 19, 7:30-9 p.m. Learn about the frogs and toads of San Diego. Look for tadpoles and listen for calls. Bring a flashlight. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of the I-5 and I-805 merge. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

### Wildflower Walk on Black Mtn.

Sat., March 25, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Naturalist Mike Kelly for a walk in the new Black Mountain Open Space Park. Should see a great Mountain lilac show, blooming sages, San Diego Mountain Misery, California bee plant, native grasslands, sages, orchids, blue-eye grass, checkerbloom, violets, Hedge nettle and others. Rugged terrain, so wear good hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. Take Black Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos all the way north to the barricades, where it turns and becomes a dirt road on the road. Follow this about 1-1/2 miles past the hang-glider flying site down the hill to a big curve to a sign for the park. Go right and up this paved road to the parking lot. **See Thomas Guide p. 1169, E-7.**

### Mystery Tree & Wildflower Walk

Sun., March 26, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). As featured on Ken Kramer's TV spot, *About San Diego*, 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. Also lots of wildflowers. 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 Pat Watkins. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**



**(Calendar cont'd)****Wildflower Walk at Goodan Ranch**

Sun., March 26, 9 a.m. - noon. Join Naturalist Mike Kelly for a walk in this new County and City of Poway Park in east Poway. Chance to see Chocolate lilies, Mtn. Lilac, Willowly mint and many other flowering plants. Hike will pass through Oak Riparian zone as well. Wear good boots, bring water and sun protection. Take Poway Road east to Garden Road. Go right on Garden Road to Sycamore Canyon Road. Go right on Sycamore Canyon Road all the way to its end at the gates to the park. **See Thomas Guide p. 1191, C6 or Call Mike at 858-566-6489.**

**April****Historic Adobe Ranch Tour  
Every Saturday & Sunday**

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Geology Hike**

Sun., April 2, 9 -noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Birds of Crest Canyon Preserve**

Sat., April 8, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin to explore the birds of the coastal sage scrub and coastal lagoon habitats. Take I-15 to Via de la Valle. Go west on this towards Fair Grounds. Turn left (south) onto Jimmy Durante Blvd. Follow this to San Dieguito Lagoon Rd., turn left onto San Dieguito Lagoon Rd. Follow this to Race Track View Dr. and meet at the gate next to the Preserve. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if questions.

**Vernal Pool and Wildflower Walk**

Sat., April 8, 9-11 a.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a guided tour of vernal pools, one of San Diego's most endangered & unique habitat types. Chance to see endangered wildflowers and animals,

such as fairy shrimp & spadefoot toads.

Learn how these pools function and about the endangered species of plants and animals that inhabit them. Limited to 15, so call to **RSVP** and for directions to Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., April 15, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Chris Bader. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Driveway and proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, then walk west on trail to ranch house. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

**Full Moon Frog Hike**

Sun., April 16, 7:30-9 p.m. Learn about the frogs and toads of San Diego. Look for tadpoles and listen for calls. Bring a flashlight. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of the I-5 and I-805 merge. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Mystery Tree & Wildflower Walk**

Sat., April 22, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). As featured on Ken Kramer's TV spot, *About San Diego*, 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. Also lots of wildflowers. 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 Pat Watkins. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

**Earth Day Hike**

Sat. April 22, 3-4:30 p.m. A hike to explore and celebrate our connection to the earth through sensory and meditative exercises. Bring a drum or a rattle, a song or a story. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet in the west-end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the I-5/I-805 merge in Sorrento Valley. **See Thomas Guide p.1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore**

Sun., April 30, 1-3 p.m. Join Barbara Moore, naturalist and co-author of recently updated *Walking San Diego*, for a look at the critters and plants of Lopez Canyon. Meet in the west-end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 3/4 mile east of the I-5/I-805 merge in Sorrento Valley. **See Thomas Guide p.1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Full Moon Hike**

Sat., Feb. 19, 7:30-9 p.m. Explore the canyon at night. Observe the moon and stars. Led by Will Bowen, PhD. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of the I-5 and I-805 merge. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**DIRECTIONS****Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

This intersection is located in Mira Mesa. From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe St. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in hanglider parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

**Northern Parking-Staging Area at Camino Ruíz and Park Village Drive**

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill. Left on Park Village Drive, about 1 mile to Camino Ruíz. Left on Camino Ruíz and park. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

**West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 3/4 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right, past the curve. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

# Spring 2000 Volunteer Activities for the North City Area

Spring time is when we swing into our endangered plant and animal surveys and exotic weed control projects. Students needing community service hours are welcome to join us.

For more information on any of these projects call Michelle at 619-224-4192 or Mike at 858-566-6489.

Tools are provided and gloves are available if needed. Wear sturdy boots, sun protection and bring water.

## March

### **Saturday, March 11, 9-1: Restoration**

#### **Plantings with Mt. Carmel Key Club**

Help the Key Club plant Cottonwood, sycamore and oak trees in east end of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Meet at the junction of La Tortola & Cabezon Sts. next to Ridgewood Community Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring gloves, water, sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189, F6** or Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for info.

### **Saturday, March 11, 9-1: Cleanup of Lower San Diego River, south side**

Help the Friends of the Mission Valley Preserve cleanup trash and restore bird habitat. Meet at the entrance to Sefton park ballfields. Take Hotel Circle North exit and go west until you see Hungry Hunter Restaurant. Stay to the right of restaurant and proceed along Hotel Circle Place to ballfield gates. Bring gloves, water, sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1268, G4**, or Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for info.

### **Sunday, March 12, 9-1: Peñasquitos Lagoon Wildlife Habitat Restoration**

This month's project is removing invasive exotics such as *Arundo*, *Myoporum*, Castor Bean, Eucalyptus. Meet in parking lot of 1st building on the west side of Sorrento Valley Road in Sorrento Valley, 1 block north of Coaster Station. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208, B5**, or Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for info.

### **Saturday, March 18, 8-noon: Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley)**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in removing the exotic *Arundo donax* (Giant reed) to restore wildlife habitat along beautiful Santa Ysabel Creek. Some hiking and boulder hopping necessary. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into

the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Saturday, March 18, morning: Tamarisk Bash at San Dieguito River Park**

Join Ranger Jason Lopez to remove the highly invasive Tamarisk from a part of the River Park. Call Cindy Burrascano at 619-421-5767 for details.

### **Saturday, March 25, 8-noon: Black Mountain Open Space**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (**Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7**). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Tuesday, March 28, 7 p.m. Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

## April

### **Saturday, April 1, 8-noon: Black Mountain Open Space**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (**Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7**). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Sunday, April 2, Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Peñasquitos Canyon**

Help restore grassland habitat for the rare Northern Harrier (Marsh Hawk) and White-tailed kite by removing invasive Fennel. Meet at west parking lot of Preserve, south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/2 mile east of Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide, p. 1208, D5** or call Mike at 858-566-6489.

### **Sunday, April 9-1: Peñasquitos Lagoon Wildlife Habitat Restoration**

Meet at the corner of Flintkote and Estuary Way in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208, A5**. This month's project is removing invasive tamarisk and

other weeds.

### **Saturday, April 22, 8 - noon: Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley)**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in removing the exotic *Arundo donax* (Giant reed) to restore wildlife habitat along beautiful Santa Ysabel Creek. Some hiking and boulder hopping necessary. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Tuesday, April 25, 7 p.m. Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

**DIRECTIONS: See previous page.**

**(Bonds cont'd)**

streambeds and rivers, clean-fuel vehicles for park facilities, and tree planting. In addition, it provides safe recreational activities for youth and funds for at-risk-youth to participate in the conservation corps and to learn skills that will provide them with later employment opportunities. Funds are specifically earmarked for youth soccer and baseball facilities. Playgrounds, community centers, improved access for the disabled to parks, swimming pools and campground upgrades are just some of the uses the Bond funds will go towards.

### **The Water Bond (Prop. 13)**

Passing this will assure funding for safe and reliable drinking water measures, including conservation measures to increase the available water supply, flood protection, restoring fisheries and wildlife habitat along rivers and streams by restoring the streams themselves, developing non-point source pollution and watershed improvement programs. Coastal wetlands will also receive improved protection under this program.

# Winter-time Volunteer Accomplishments

January and February were busy months for Friends' volunteers. Our quarterly wildlife survey was expanded to some 32 sites around the County (report in our next issue). Our plant photo/slide collection was updated. Our Special Weed Action Team (SWAT) carried out weed eradication work not only in the Preserve, but also on Lake Hodges (Year 2), Peñasquitos Lagoon, and in the east end of Tecolote Canyon. This was also a busy time for our restoration plantings in the Preserve since the rainy season is the best planting season for San Diego. One team began the process of slowing the erosion in Lopez Canyon that threatens the Willow mint (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *viminea*) by planting over 80 willow cuttings.

Most of the more than 2,000 plants put in the ground this season were grown from seed by volunteers such as Liz Rozycki, Rick Botta and Mike Kelly. Others planted more than 1,000 germinating acorns from Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) for use in projects for next fall.

We were lucky to be joined by special groups on several of these projects. They included:

## Canyonview Elementary School

Four classes of 4th grade students, about 120 kids, their teachers and over 20 parents joined Ranger Bill Lawrence and Friends' volunteers to plant about 300 native plants on three restoration sites in the Preserve off Park Village Drive. Still photos and video of the events were posted on the school's web site! They planted Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), Goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii*), willows (*Salix* spp.), and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*).

Ranger Bill Lawrence made presentations in their classrooms, then, at a later date, Pat Watkins led them on short nature hikes; finally, the kids joined us in the field for enthusiastic plantings. A dirty and good time was had by all. We hope to see them again next year!

## Scripps CHPS

Graduate student volunteers from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Committee for Humanity and Public Service joined Friends' volunteers two weekends in a row to enhance four restoration sites. This is the 4th year in a row that they've helped out. In fact, they had worked on all of these sites in previous years. This is always a hard working crew not afraid of getting dirty and, despite hard, rocky "soils," they put some 500 plants in the ground. Species included: California spine bush (*Adolphia californica*), Dudleya, cactus (*Opuntia* spp.), Goldenbush, native bunch grass (*Nassella pulcra*), Laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Calif. sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), Calif. Bee plant (*Scrophularia californica*), Lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and Calif. buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Grant Site

Ranger Dion Heller continued to lead crews, including the National Civilian Community Corps, to this site just west of Sycamore Crossing to remove one of the few remaining stands of the invasive exotic Eucalyptus tree. Volunteers also planted native cottonwoods, sycamores, oaks, willows and other plants. This two-year project is almost finished. One more work session will probably do it!

**Special thanks to the Mt. Carmel H.S. Key Club** who joined cub scouts and other volunteers in planting part of the Mercy Road slope next to the under construction Trans County Trail.

And, of course, thanks to our hike leaders who turn out on such a regular basis to lead the wide variety of interpretive walks the Friends lead.

Volunteers who helped on restoration projects and hikes (wildlife projects and their volunteers will be covered in our next issue) included:

Don Albright	Chris Bader
Will Bowen*	Rick Botta*
Cheryl Brehme	Uli Burgin
Cindy Burrascano*	Mehlen Burrascano
Lynne Christenson*	Drew DeShazo*
Terry Gaughn	Mel Howe*
Rob Hutsel*	Mike Kelly*
Tahirih Linz	Dorothy Mitchell
Barbara Moore	Michelle Murphree

Beth Rosenberg	Liz Rozycki*
Carrie Schneider	Mark Shepanski
Linda & Don Tibor	Dan Vilotti
Pat Watkins*	

\*Came out multiple times.

Scripps CHPS included:

Bede Alexander	Tegan Blaine
Ted Foss *	Micah Gearhart
Nora Ghbeish *	Chris Janousek
Catherine Johnson	Yi-li Kao
Katherine Kim	Jessica Lundquist
David McMillan	Maria Mendez
Lodaru Mollel	Grahm Mortyn
Rob Rhew *	Christine Saloman
Jeff Severinghaus	Narriman Sheridan
Jason Smott *	Aaron Sweeney *
Mark Wang	

## Hike Leader Training

Brian Swanson

Want to follow in Kit Carson's steps? Carson was a well-known guide of the mid-1800s. He guided many expeditions throughout the southwest, including that of General Stephen Watts Kearney when the latter led his Army of the West through Peñasquitos Canyon on the way from the battle of San Pasqual to San Diego.

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve are offering an interpretive walk program, and seek volunteers for its training program. Participants will meet Saturday mornings in May in a classroom setting, where they'll learn about interpretive techniques, Native Americans and history, plant and animal communities, geology and birds.

After each talk participants will go into the field to obtain some "hands on" experience to enhance their classroom training. Brian Swanson, a Friends director and interpretive naturalist and City Ranger Dion Heller, are coordinating this program. If you have questions or would like an application, please call Ranger Heller at (858) 538-8066, leaving daytime and evening telephone numbers. Graduates will be asked to lead one hike (more if they want) each month for one year.

# Rancho Roundup

Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry

## Arch in the Park 2000

For those of you who have nostalgic memories of the now defunct "Park Day", I have good news! ARCH IN THE PARK, an annual event sponsored by the San Diego County Archaeological Society (SDCAS), has been growing each year and is becoming more and more reminiscent of PARK DAY! This year's event will be held on April 29th and will be a kick-off for Archaeology Month (May). We plan to have a broad spectrum of archaeological groups, including SDCAS, The San Diego Archaeological Center, local colleges and universities, and private archaeological consulting firms, represented at the event. There will also be flintknapping demonstrations, lectures by noted archaeologists/historians, tours of the City College archaeological dig site, ranch house tours, children's activities, nature walks, and tracking activities. Maureen Abare, from the County Parks Environmental Education Office has agreed to bring at least two of her raptors (probably a barn owl and American kestrel), and Lee Kirchhevel will demonstrate the Native American flute. La Cocina Gift Shop will be open (don't forget your 10% discount!), and the Ranch House Chuck Wagon will be serving delicious and reasonably-priced B-B-Q beef and/or carne asada plates. Mark your calendars-you won't want to miss this event!

## Spring House Is Honored

We are excited and proud to receive the news that the Rancho Los Peñasquitos Spring House was chosen for the "2000 Preservation Design Award in the Craftsmanship/Preservation Technology" category, given by the California Preservation Foundation. Historic architect Wayne Donaldson accepted the award in Hollywood the latter part of February. A large color display of the spring house restoration will be shown across the country, along with the other award winners, over the coming year.

## Former Residents Return to the Rancho

Former residents Sally Truitt and her daughter, Melody, from Grants Pass, Oregon, stopped by the rancho this month for a visit. They lived at Los Peñasquitos during the Sawday-Peavy period (1950's) and believe they have photos of the barn that used to stand in the front meadow. Melody remembers playing around the old concrete bunker I mentioned in a previous article. She said it was full of ammunition and grenades (hopefully, deactivated). The children made trails of gunpowder from the shells and lit them for entertainment!

## City College Returns to the Rancho

The City College archaeology class, under the direction of Dr. Steve Bouscaren, returned to the rancho for this semester. They'll continue digging on the knoll behind the ranch house where they have exposed pipes from an old water system and many prehistoric artifacts. You can come by and check out what they are doing any Friday (except for April 21) through the month of May, from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## An Unwelcome Visitor

We are fortunate to have such an abundance of wildlife here at the Rancho. It is truly a privilege to look out across the meadow and see a pair of coyotes rollicking or a red-shouldered hawk soaring overhead. Park host Joan Rahman, delights in watching the deer at dusk from her front yard and the lizards which slip in under the door of the gift shop in search of a warmer spot on cool days. Joan manages the gift shop. One day recently, she was busy cleaning, rearranging merchandise, and adding her own artistic touches to the displays. As she was finishing, she picked up a pot right by her feet and, much to her surprise, discovered a baby rattlesnake nestled under it! Speechless, she eased her way to the door, then ran into the courtyard and hollered, "Help!" Park host Guy Relaford answered her cry, captured the feared serpent, and transported it down the canyon. You can rest assured that there will be no rattlesnakes, or lizards, in the gift shop the next time you visit. Joan has insisted that we close the gaps under the doors!

**Note:** I presently have one park host position opening and anticipate a second opening at the end of the month. You must have your own trailer or RV and work 20 hours a week under my supervision. In exchange, you receive a free campsite with electricity, water and sewer hookups, plus close encounters with our wildlife! Contact me (858-484-7504).



# Elberta Fleming Educational Collection

Mike Kelly

The Friends are pleased to announce that the San Diego Archaeological Center has accepted a collection of Native American artifacts, including a variety of stone tools and a replica of a weaving loom, that belonged to the late Dr. Elberta ("Bert") Fleming. Dr. Fleming was a founding member of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and a driving force behind the fight to preserve the natural and cultural resources of Peñasquitos Canyon.

The collection will be shared with the Collection Management Program at San Diego State University. Known as the "Elberta Fleming Collection," it will be used for educational purposes both on and off site. This will include classroom presentations to school children. Those of us that were lucky enough to know and work with Bert remember her strong emphasis on teaching and reaching children with conservation education.

Personally, this move pleases me a great deal. Since taking over the presidency of the Friends many years ago, I've felt we weren't doing enough educational work with children. For Bert this seemed to come naturally and she was wonderful with it. Although the Friends continue to lead school children and scout groups on natural walks, we haven't had the focused type of educational program that Bert carried on. With this artifact collection being actively used by the Archaeology Center and the new "Nature Program for Kids in 2000" designed by our Lee Kirchhevel (*Canyon News*, Vol. 14, No. 1) I feel we're once again carrying on an important tradition of conservation education with the youth.

Thanks to Dr. Lynne Christenson, director of Collections Management for SDSU and a long-time member of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, for her help in making this collection available for education.

# City Ranger Report

Senior Ranger Bill Lawrence

## Restoration planting help needed

The Key Club, a community service organization at Mt. Carmel High School, will be coming into the Preserve near Ridgewood Community Park in Rancho Peñasquitos Saturday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to about 1 p.m. to plant almost 500 trees and shrubs. This will be their second project in the Preserve this season. Several weeks ago they helped plant native flowers and shrubs along a slope below Mercy Road near the equestrian center.

March 11 they'll be planting some 400 Lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*) and Laurel Sumac (*Malosma laurina*) shrubs along the County Aqueduct right-of-way that needs revegetation on the hill above the community park. This hill is part of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

They'll also be planting native trees along the creek as the second phase of the restoration project that began with the removal of about 200 Eucalyptus trees in this same area. The latter was done by the California Conservation Corps (CCC) on behalf of the County Water Authority. The Authority owed this restoration as mitigation for impacts to creek areas along the route of the new San Diego Aqueduct..

The Key Club will be planting trees such as Cottonwoods ( *Populus fremontii*), California Sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*), willows (*Salix* spp.). If

you can help supervise and work with the volunteers please call the Rangers at 858-538-8066.

The Key Club has indicated they would like to take on a stewardship program in the Preserve on a long-term basis, beginning next year and involving the community.

## Natural & Cultural Resources Workshop

The City Dept. of Parks and Recreation will be hosting a 3-day workshop on "Building Connections Between Resources and People" May 3-5. The workshop is co-sponsored by the National Park Service, California State Parks and the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Dept. and will cost about \$50 per registration. It will offer two tracks, one on interpretation, cultural and historical resources and the other on natural resources management. Field trips will be offered at several sites on May 5, including in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Call Bill Lawrence at 858-538-8066 for more information.

## Trails conference

For those interested in trails issues and information a conference will be held March 24-25 with two workshops. Call Marryanne Vancio at 619-563-5025 or contact her at SDCTC@aol.com for information or applications.



Poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)  
Illus. by Elberta Fleming

## Welcome New Members

- Janet Anderson
- Gerard Antekeier
- Susanna Ball
- Tom & Gina Christenson
- Michael DeBell
- Edith Frampton
- John Glascock
- Mary Kathryn
- Gerald Rowley
- Gustav & Irene Segade
- Fern Siegal

# Forming a San Diego County–Wide Tracking Team

Barry Martin

In this issue I'd like to give you a brief update on the activities of the tracking team and announce the formation of a county-wide Tracking Team. If you're interested in learning more about the outdoors and the ancient skills of the tracker/naturalist, then read on; perhaps you'll be moved to come on out and participate in some of these activities.

The tracking team was initially formed about 6 years ago in an effort to study the wildlife inhabiting the preserve. Our stated goals were to find out what animals were where, approximate populations, seasonal shifts in ranges and what connections to other areas outside the preserve there were. We wanted to know their food sources and most of all, we were wondering about the general health of the preserve's ecosystem as reflected through the animals.

Since its inception the team has maintained the highest standards in wildlife monitoring and volunteer training. We have jumped some major hurdles to get to the point we find ourselves today. We've sought advice and training from some of the most prominent specialists in tracking and wildlife monitoring in the country. We have a strict protocol and have been accepted and taken seriously by planners, EIR (Environmental Impact Report) writers, other volunteer groups, biologists and fellow tracker acquaintances from throughout the country.

In order to enable volunteers to act as "citizen scientists" in this monitoring effort we've set up a training system that helps volunteers become proficient in tracking. Since you don't acquire this skill overnight we've developed a multifaceted training program. For people who are interested in participating as transect volunteers we hold a quarterly one day class that serves as an introduction to the tracking and awareness skills needed. This encourages them to get outside and start acquiring "dirt time" while assisting with data gathering during the transects of their choice.

## Additional Learning Opportunities

What about learning more? Many really "get the bug" and want to go farther. We offer a series now that will help guide these people toward becoming tracker/naturalists in the native tradition. With the Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Tracker/Naturalist classes we provide three weekend intensive courses spaced at intervals throughout the year. Through these classes and the quarterly wildlife monitoring we're melding ancient skills with modern science. The ultimate purpose being the preservation of nature's diversity through maintaining open space. By proving that animals are using particular open space areas and identifying corridors between open spaces we've been effective in helping to keep these corridors and open areas open. During the classes we offer we look upon motivated people who go through the series as potential tracking team members and transect leaders. As our monitoring program spreads around the county, we find that more team members are needed so as to have enough transect leaders.

## Forming the San Diego Tracking Team

Accordingly, we've come up with the concept of forming the San Diego Tracking Team. We'll assist other preserves and open space "friends" organizations with the set up and training of their respective tracking teams which will then be a part of this overall San Diego Tracking Team effort. We've begun implementing this concept and hold high expectations for its success.

## Other Classes

The tracking team's vision, in part, has been to develop and foster deeper awareness and understanding of our natural environment among our community. Even though we emphasize the monitoring programs as our big priority, the reality is that we see these programs as opportunities to further

our vision. If we can inspire people to learn about the outdoors while gathering meaningful information then we are being doubly effective. Our first formal class offering years ago included tracking, nature and survival skills. This class was very well received and ran Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. It was done two and sometimes three times a year. Since we have had a pressing need to enhance our monitoring efforts we came up with the three classes in series mentioned above and have decreased our frequency on the class that includes survival skills. We do have plans to offer that class in the fall this year and will again seek to conduct the class at Lost Valley Scout Camp as we did in 1998. The Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Tracking Team has grown and with that growth has come more flexibility. We have been able to add more class opportunities including a children's program. Tracker philosophy and awareness classes are being tested now and we are considering adding occasional one day survival skills workshops. These are a few of the things we've been working on lately. A lot has been going on and with all the development pressures we feel a sense of extreme urgency. We are heartened by the fact that we do make a difference however slight it sometimes seems in the face of what some call "progress." We have many exciting projects in work and invite you to get involved! We'll see you (or your tracks) out on the trail!



Yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*)  
Illus. by Elberta Fleming

## Fund Drive Top

Our Year 2000 fund appeal netted \$4,070 to date, putting us over our goal of \$4,000. As you've been reading in recent issues, your past donations have been well spent on wildlife survey equipment, children's educational programs, and endangered species protections. We promise to do the same with this year's monies. Thank you to the many members who contributed to this year's campaign. We want to note the especially generous donations from the Fleming Family and Phil White. Contributors included:

Lawrance Alison	Andzelm Family
Luanne Barrett	David Bilak
William & Mona Beaumont	Gerald & Carol Blakley
Lynne & Larry Carleton	Ralph Carolin Dr. Sheri Cole
Kathleen Crampton	Lenore Edidin
Louise Eifert	Marcus Frampton
Jim & Karuna	Gordon Kaitlin
Meadows Gould	George Gray
Jim Hannan	Kathryn Heaney
Leo and Pat Holland	Brian & Debra Jones
Claudia Kay	Marilyn Kolender
Mike Kelly	Bill Lawrence
Alison Lawrance	Rob Leiter
Suzann & Bill Leininger	David Luthrin
Hans Leenhouts & Christine Audette	Barry Martin
Janice Miller	Jill Mc Carty
Richard & Nadine Misiaszek	Andrea Morin
Peggy Quinlan & George Soares	June Munnecke
Mary & Erwin Rose	Joanne Odenthal
Carrie Schneider	Mr. & Mrs. George W. Reynolds
Melvin & Ellen Sweet	Kelly and Al Sakoi
Pat & Paul Watkins	Gustav & Irene Segade
Francisco Wong	Greg Vines
Jacqueline Weatherly	Philip White
	Dean Woods

### Friends' Web Site

Our new web site should be up and running around April 1st. Visit us at [penasqui-](http://penasqui-)

## Welcome Back Cottonwoods

Mike Kelly

[The Friends and City Parks will be joined by the Mt. Carmel High School Key Club, a service organization, on Saturday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in planting about one hundred sycamores, oaks, willows and cottonwoods along this stretch of the creek. Feel free to join us! We'll be meeting at Ridgewood Community Park at the southern end of La Tortola Street in Rancho Peñasquitos. This is next to the Preserve. About five years from now there should be the beginnings of a lovely show of fall colors in this section of the creek.]

Western Cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*) are once again popping up in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. I've taken to calling this the Cottonwood Revival. Every restoration project in the Preserve that involves our riparian (creek) corridor is being planted with cottonwoods as one of the trees being restored to the canyon. While a San Diego newspaper of the 1860s described Peñasquitos Creek as a "Cottonwood-Willow" riparian, this certainly wasn't the case in the 20th century — it will be in this 21st Century.

Cottonwoods were a soft, easy to harvest tree and were quickly cut down in many of our river valley bottoms. And when cattle were grazed in these same valleys, as was the case in Peñasquitos Canyon, regeneration of cottonwoods was rare. Cattle like young cottonwoods, willows, oaks and other trees, making regeneration less likely for all of these. By the late 1980s when the last cattle left Peñasquitos Canyon, only a handful of quite old Cottonwoods could be found in the Preserve.

As we began removing non-native invasive trees such as Eucalyptus, Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Mexican Fan Palms (*Washingtonia robusta*), and Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*), we made planting cottonwoods in their place a high priority. For example, in the 1990s Caltrans was required to do a restoration project in our Preserve as mitigation for State Route 56 construction impacts. The Friends suggested removing a dense grove of Eucalyptus trees near the Ranch House Crossing just west of Black Mountain Road. We also suggested that cottonwoods be one of the native species restored to this area.

Despite a lot of controversy at the time, the project was supported by the City and County Parks Departments and the City Council. It went ahead and today you can visit this area and see a wonderful variety of cottonwoods, sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*), Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and many understory natives. This area quickly became a favorite of our Mule Deer as soon as it was planted, which was the whole idea: restoring the variety of natives that should have been there, providing food and homes for wildlife.

From the Sycamore Crossing (about 1 mile west of the waterfall) west to the narrows, volunteers have been removing non-native trees again, mainly Eucalyptus, and planting native trees in their place. This is being done under two different grants, one from the State and one from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Already, some of the cottonwoods planted two years ago at the crossing are more than 15 feet tall. At the County Water Authority's Aqueduct crossing of the creek, California Conservation Corps team members are just finishing up removing invasive, exotic trees including Eucalyptus and palms from a one acre stretch of the creek. This is mitigation for the impacts of their construction of San Diego's newest aqueduct to bring water into the City, hence the tree planting mentioned above.

Cottonwoods are one of my favorite trees. I love the quaking of the leaves in the slightest breeze, their wonderful shade of green, and their symmetry of shape. And when they turn yellow in the fall it's downright spectacular. Welcome back cottonwoods!

## Annual Meeting

# Alternative Futures: Reserve Design Impacts on Reptiles & Amphibians of Coastal California

**Friday, March 17, 7 p.m.**

**Penasquitos Canyon Ranch House**

**Slide Show & Talk by Robert Fisher, PhD**

Fisher will talk on the current status of the herptofauna — the reptiles and amphibians — of 5 Southern California coastal counties: San Diego, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles. Fisher has conducted live trap and release studies over the last 5 years in all 5 counties. He has captured and identified 46 different species from among the 40,000 individuals captured. In his talk he'll detail:

- which species are relatively stable; which are declining; which are in dire need of help;
- the suite of species that could be adequately protected if park reserve designs are done right and the kind of monitoring that will be needed;
- the 7 species of snake no longer found in Torrey Pines State Reserve
- which 12 of 19 historically known species are still present on Pt. Loma and which can't be found.

Fisher has conducted or is currently conducting studies in the following local areas:

- Wild Animal Park
- Torrey Pines State Reserve
- Camp Pendleton
- Elliot Reserve (next to Miramar)
- Mission Trails
- Borderfield State Park (Tijuana Estuary)
- Chula Vista natural areas
- new Otay/Sweetwater Wildlife Refuge

Learn what factors account for the decline or local extinction of many of these species.

Fisher received his B.S. degree in biology from U.C. Irvine and his PhD in population biology from U.C. Davis. He is currently employed by the U.S. Geological Survey, as a Research Biologist and is also an Adjunct Faculty at San Diego State Univ. in biology.

The Ranch House can be reached by taking I-15 to Mercy Road exit. Mercy Road west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mountain Road 1 block to Canyonside Drive. Left on this. Proceed past ballfields up to white-fenced parking lot on left. Park & walk up to ranch house.

At the beginning of the meeting the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve will conduct our annual business meeting with an election of officers.



### (Sorrento Road cont'd)

gation for impacts to habitat caused by the road building.

As soon as construction was finished and the underpass cleared of silt wildlife began reusing it. The Friends' Tracking Team, in collaboration with Torrey Pines State Park staff, established a wildlife survey transect running from Carmel Valley and the underpass south to the underpasses of I-5, I-805, the railroad and Sorrento Valley Road. This too is a wildlife corridor from the lagoon to the outside world, this time to Penasquitos Canyon Preserve.

### Corridors are critical

Starting about 120 years ago, Penasquitos Lagoon and Torrey Pines State Reserve, of which it is a part, have become relatively isolated from other natural habitat areas due to a series of barriers bisecting the area. The railroad that crosses the Lagoon from north to south was the first of the important barriers to go up late in the last century. There is a tremendous "road" kill along its length in the lagoon. Wildlife biologists report finding as many as 3-4 deer carcasses next to the tracks when doing surveys.

Highway 101 is another barrier that produces a lot of roadkill of wildlife and makes it difficult for many species, especially snakes and other herpetofauna, from accessing adjacent areas. Interstate 5 was yet another. These barriers and the development ringing the State Park have led to a serious decline of wildlife.

### Local extinctions

For example, the latest wildlife survey done in the park by wildlife biologist Robert Fisher, documented the absence of 7 snake species since the last surveys were done in the 1940s-50s. All are presumed to be locally extinct. The mule deer herd doesn't appear to be big enough to maintain a healthy breeding population. This is due to both the high mortality due to roadkills in and adjacent to the park and to the lack of new genes being brought into the population from adjacent deer herds on Carmel Mountain and Penasquitos Canyon. Such genetic diversity is critical to many animal species, but especially so to mule deer which can easily

succumb to inbreeding problems.

Wildlife corridors that allow animals to bypass the barriers to widespread movement thus become critical to maintain. The already tough situation in the lagoon became critical when a good functioning corridor across Sorrento Valley Road and under I-5 from the lagoon east to Carmel Mountain and the Del Mar Mesa and Penasquitos Preserve became a six-lane freeway (Carmel Mountain Road).

### Tracking data

These concerns are the reason the Friends' wildlife surveys focus so much attention on these corridors. The data can help inform decisions about these and other corridors. For example, our data over the last 1-1/2 years clearly demonstrates continual usage of this newly reopened corridor at Carmel Valley and makes it possible to safely project a significant mortality can be expected of area wildlife if the old road is reopened without the substantial design changes envisioned in the environmental review process (bridge with underpass instead of at-grade crossing, fencing to keep animals off bridge, etc.).

Such data helped convince planners for the Multiple Species Conservation Plan that the "merge" corridor was a functioning corridor despite the many lanes of freeway, roads and railroad tracks the wildlife had to pass under. It's not an optimal corridor because of the tendency to become choked with vegetation and silt, but is important to keep open. When the City was considering flood control measures in Sorrento Valley, the Friends recommended the City dredge out that lower end of Penasquitos Creek to reduce the vegetation and silt, thus allowing wildlife freer passage through these underpasses. This was done. When the railroad folks bought J&W Redwood to create parking for the Coaster Station in Sorrento Valley, their plans had to incorporate design changes to avoid impacting wildlife movement. The Friends, using our tracking data, and City staff, made concrete suggestions about lighting, brush cover and other issues that were made part of the design.

### Public access

While closed the road has also become a popular hiking, biking and

wildlife viewing trail around the eastern edge of Penasquitos Lagoon. Many of these folks don't want to see the road reopened so they can continue to enjoy walking or riding it. The City's proposed plan for redesigning the road will apparently include several alternatives. In any case, the area near the I-5 underpass requires a new, higher bridge be built to match the height to the SR-56 flyover. This is because the current low, at-grade road is a barrier to flood waters there and causes a siltation build up. Caltrans requires a bridge there no matter whether the road is ever reopened or not.

One alternative will be to straighten dangerous curves, build the bridge, and add bike lanes to a two-lane design to be open 7 days a week, i.e., as in the past. Another alternative is to make the same physical changes, but only open the road during the week for commuters, closing it weekends for recreational use. Yet a third alternative would be to not reopen the road, to keep it permanently closed. Many activists feel the depth and breadth of support for reopening the road from the hi-tech companies in Sorrento Valley and Sorrento Valley makes reopening the road under alternatives 1 or 2 a likely proposition. However, they feel that this rush to reopen the existing road just a month or two before the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is due out would lead to unnecessary wildlife mortality. This is true. The wildlife that have become accustomed to crossing the old road to the underpass will suffer heavy losses with a premature reopening. At least with alternatives 1 or 2 or a redesigned and rebuilt road, wildlife could be ensured safe passage via wildlife "wing-tip" fencing and the bridge underpass.

If you share these concerns, please let your elected representatives know how you feel. Let them know the road shouldn't be reopened before the environmental review process is finished. If you would like to donate funds to help a legal challenge being prepared, call Cheryl DeWitt at 755-1796. She's a member of the Sierra Club's Wildlife Corridor Committee and is helping coordinate this campaign.



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

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196

858-484-3219

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
POWAY, CA  
PERMIT NO. 286

**Address Service Requested**

## Check Your Label

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

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Mike Kelly 566-6489

Vice-President: Dean Woods 672-1120

Treasurer: Pat Watkins 538-2527

Secretary: Edward DiBella 748-5276

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Don Albright, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Barry Martin,  
Rick Botta, Brian Swanson

### Walks Leaders

Brian Swanson, Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike

Kelly, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Pat Watkins

### Committees:

Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman

Newsletter: Melanie Howe

Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki

Stream Survey Committee: Mike Kelly

Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins

Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)

Volunteer Coordinator: Michelle Murphree (224-4192)

Web Master: Steve Romeo

Wildlife Survey Organizer: Dean Woods

## Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$10 Individual \$15

Family \$20 Sponsor \$30 Patron \$100

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We are interested in the following:

**Volunteer** to help the committee (call to discuss)

Hikes

Indian Culture

Educational Workshops

School, Family, Youth Programs

Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ **3/2000**

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.

Call **858-484-3219** or **858- 566-6489** for more information.



# Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

May / June 2000

Volume 14, No. 3

## Stream Survey Volunteers

Many of you have been saying you want to work on the next set of stream surveys. Well, now's your chance. Edward DiBella, the Friends' new president, is anxious to survey the several tributary streams that flow into Peñasquitos Creek upstream where it begins in the foothills of Poway. If you would like to help survey and map the native habitat, exotic species, and water quality conditions this summer, call Edward at 619-594-1650.

## Monardella Survey

In June we'll be doing our annual survey of the endangered Willowly mint (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *viminosa*). Call Mike at 858-566-6489 if you'd like to help count this plant.

## Home Gardeners Needed

If you would like to help the Friends grow native plants for our restoration projects call Mike at 858-566-6489. We'll supply the seeds, pots and advice if you can supply some yard space, watering, soil, and TLC! These plants will be started over the summer and planted next winter in the Preserve.



## Kelly Gets the Boot!

Mike Kelly

Well, not quite, but it was time for someone else to take the helm and Edward DiBella stepped up to the plate. At the Friends' Annual Meeting held Friday, March 17 at the ranch house, DiBella was elected the new President of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. DiBella has been active with the Friends for several years, especially with the restoration team. For the last year he held the position of Secretary for the Friends. He also serves as the Vice-chair of the Friends of Goodan Ranch. He's also active with population control groups. One of his priorities will be to revive the Stream Restoration Team to continue mapping, and restoring our upstream watershed. Edward lives in Poway.

Dean Woods was reelected Vice-president of the Friends. Dean is a leader of the Friends Wildlife Survey effort and active in our exotic weed control and native revegetation efforts. Dean lives in Rancho Peñasquitos.

Rick Botta was elected Secretary of the Friends. Botta heads up the Friends Deer Spotting surveys, is active in other wildlife surveys, and, with his wife, Liz Rozycki, operates one of the Friends' Native Plant Nurseries (i.e., in their backyard!). He and Liz have germinated and grown more than 25 native species for Friends' projects. Rick lives in Rancho Peñasquitos.

Pat Watkins was reelected Treasurer of the Friends. Besides ably carrying out the Treasurer duties, Pat leads interpretive walks on a monthly basis, specializing in walks to the Mystery Trees and the Waterfall. She also leads many walks for school groups, girl scouts and cub scout groups.

And Mike Kelly? I'm just fading into the sunset. NOT! I'm now the Friends' Conservation Chair.

## Highlights Inside

Hike calendar	2
Volunteer Schedule	4
New Members	4
House Cat & Coyotes	5
Tracking Team Calendar	8
Fund Drive redux	8
Volunteer Accomplishments	9
Directory	10

## Restoration Wrap

City Ranger Dion Heller

Reflecting back on this past restoration season, two things really stand out. For the first time, a majority of the plants that we put in the ground were from seed collected from the Preserve and grown by our own volunteers. In past years, we've only supplemented a small portion to the predominately nursery bought plant stock. What we've observed is that our own plants are surviving much better than those that were brought in from other nursery locations. I'm not just talking a few percentages, more like 20 - 30 percent increased survival. We're not quite sure why. Could it be that the genetics of our own seed has adapted specifically to the Preserve's environmental conditions? Could it be that they're grown up more closely to the conditions that they find when they're planted here? By no means do they get babied. Maybe we'll never know, but what really matters is that all the hard work of our volunteers is really paying off at restoration sites are looking great!

The second thing that really stands out and really gives me a good feeling inside is how the local youth got involved this past season. No better crowd to get involved and take stewardship than future caretakers. It will eventually be their decisions down the road

See p. 9 for more

## Hike Schedule

# Still Some Spring Flowers To See

April showers were enough to bolster this year's flower show. Mountain lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.) is putting on a great show on the north side of Black Mountain, in Lopez Canyon and at the Goodan Ranch (E. Poway). Red and orange Monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*) is robustly blooming in a number of areas, particularly on the east side of Peñasquitos Canyon, in Lopez Canyon, and on the north side of Black Mountain. Yellow flowering Golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum* var. *confertiflorum*) is in good numbers along many trails in both canyons. Enjoy the show now before the summer heat arrives!

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded informations.

## May

### Historic Adobe Ranch Tour Every Saturday & Sunday

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 P.M. Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219 for directions.**

**Mystery Tree & Wildflower Walk** Sun., May 7, 9 a.m. (1-1/2 hours). As featured on Ken Kramer's TV spot, *About San Diego*, 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. Also lots of wildflowers. 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 Pat Watkins. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

### Birds of Black Mountain Park

Sat., May 13, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this guided bird walk. We'll explore the native chaparral and coastal sage scrub communities found on the north slope of Black Mountain. No birding experience necessary. Take Black Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos north to where the pavement ends at barricades. Turn right on the dirt road and follow it approx. 1 mile to park sign and paved entrance on the right. Proceed up to parking lot. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

### Geology Hike

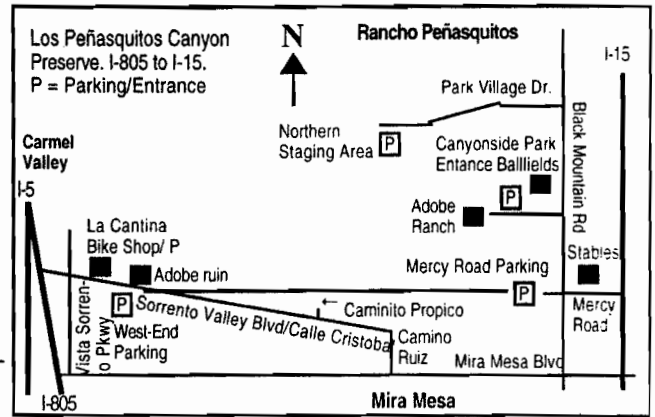
Sat., May 13, 9 - noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Park in cul-de-sac on south side of Cristobal. Steep trail. Bring water, sun protection. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.**

### Mother's Day Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon

Sun., May 14, 8-10 a.m. Take your mother for a nature walk in Lopez Canyon with naturalist Barbara Moore. Barbara is the co-author of *Walking San Diego* and often has books available for sale and autographing with her. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water and join Meet at the West-End Parking Area off Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.**

### Tracking Walk from Ranch House

Sat., May 20, 8 a.m. Learn how to



track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Chris Bader. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219.**

### Medicinal Plant Walk

Sat., May 20, 10-11:30 a.m. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

### Flying Shadows: moonlight owl walk

Sat., May 20, 7 - 9:30 p.m. Join naturalist Brian Swanson for an owl walk in the preserve. Los Peñasquitos preserve is a special place, especially at night. We've all heard strange sounds as we venture out into the darkness. Come learn hoo makes some of those sounds on this easy 3-mile hike. If we're lucky we'll also see one or more of the three resident species of owls and maybe a critter or two. Flashlights and sturdy shoes required. Adults and children over 8, please. Group size limited. Call Brian at 760-749-5453 to RSVP

### Nature Mountain Bike Ride

Sunday, May 21, 9-11:00 Join Ranger Dion Heller on a leisurely ride to the waterfalls. Learn about the plants, animals, and history of the Preserve. Families are encouraged.

**(Calendar cont'd)**

Helmets will be required. Ride will be approx. 6 miles in length. Bring water and sunscreen. Met at the Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area. Call Ranger Dion Heller at (858)538-8066 for further questions.

**June****Ranger Dan's Birds of Clevenger Canyon**

Sat., June 10, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Bylin on the guided bird walk at Clevenger Canyon. We'll explore the chaparral covered slopes & riparian woodlands of Santa Isabel Creek. Open to birders of all levels. Hike is moderate, with steep grades and creek crossings. Take Hwy 78 about 6 miles east of the San Diego Wild Animal Park. Turn left onto Clevenger Canyon trailhead parking lot. Meet the Ranger in the parking lot. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

**Medicinal Plant Walk**

Sat., June 10, 10–11:30 a.m. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D. Learn about plants our Indian and settler ancestors (and people today) used for medicinal purposes. Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., June 17, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Chris Bader. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Nature Mountain Bike Ride**

Saturday, June 17, 9-11 a.m. Join Ranger Dion Heller on a leisurely ride to the waterfalls. Learn about the plants, animals, and history of the Preserve. Families are encouraged. Helmets will be required. Ride will be approx. 6 miles in length. Bring water and sunscreen. Met at the Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area. Call Ranger Dion Heller at (858)538-8066 for further questions.

**Waterfall Dusk Hike from Northern Staging Area**

Sat., June 17, 5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a cool, evening hike in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, about 2.5 mile loop trail. Good chance to see wildlife. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Flying Shadows: moonlight owl walk**

Sat., June 17, 7 – 9:30 p.m. Join naturalist Brian Swanson for an owl walk in the preserve. Los Peñasquitos preserve is a special place, especially at night. We've all heard strange sounds as we venture out into the darkness. Come learn hoo makes some of those sounds on this easy 3-mile hike. If we're lucky we'll also see one or more of the three resident species of owls and maybe a critter or two. Flashlights and sturdy shoes required. Adults and children over 8, please. Group size limited. Call Brian at 760-749-5453 to RSVP.

**Nature Walk from Mercy Road**

Sun., June 18, 9 a.m. (2 miles). Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in the Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, at the junction of Mercy Road and Black Mountain Road in Mira Mesa. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Father's Day Nature Walk with Barbara Moore — Lopez Canyon**

Sun., June 18, 5–7 p.m. Take your father for a nature walk in Lopez Canyon with naturalist Barbara Moore. Barbara is the co-author of *Walking San Diego* and often has books available for sale and autographing with her. Bring binoculars, sun protection, water and join Meet at the West-End Parking Area off Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Wildlife Tracking Event at Fund for Animals in Ramona**

Sun., June 25. 9 a.m.– noon. Meet at 18740 Highland Valley Rd., Ramona. Sponsored by Mt. Woodson WL Trackers, and Peñasquitos tracking team. More info Julie Savary. 760-

789-8136. Informational talk on local wildlife by Chuck Traisi, Mgr for Fund of Animals; displays and literature on tracking; training in track identification. Self tour of Fund for Animals Wildlife Facility. Goal is outreach to intro people to tracking; wildlife conservation surveys; to involve people in wildlife surveys.

**DIRECTIONS****Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

This intersection is located in Mira Mesa. From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe St. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in hanglider parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

**Northern Parking-Staging Area at Camino Ruiz and Park Village Drive**

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

**West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. 3/4 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right, past the curve. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**



# Spring 2000 Volunteer Activities for the North City Area

Spring time is when we swing into our endangered plant and animal surveys and exotic weed control projects. Students needing community service hours are welcome to join us.

For more information on any of these projects call Michelle at 619-224-4192 or Mike at 858-566-6489.

Tools are provided and gloves are available if needed. Wear sturdy boots, sun protection and bring water.

## May

### **Black Mountain Park Work Party**

**Sat., May 6, 8-noon**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Peñasquitos Lagoon Wildlife Habitat Restoration**

**Sun., May 14, 9-1:**

Celebrate Mother's Day and bring her to help restore wildlife habitat! Meet at the corner of Flintkote and Estuary Way in Sorrento Valley. See Thomas Guide p. 1208, A5. This month's project is removing invasive tamarisk and other weeds. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more info.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Monthly Bird Surveys**

**Thur., May 18, 8 a.m.**

Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 23, 7 p.m. .**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Trail Repair**

**Sat., May 27, 8-noon**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in repairing this beautiful trail along Santa Ysabel Creek. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## June

### **Black Mountain Park Bird Survey**

**Thurs., June 1, 8 a.m.**

Monthly bird survey. Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Sat., June 3, 9-1: Habitat Restoration in Mission Valley Preserve**

Help the Friends of the Mission Valley Preserve remove exotic weeds, pickup trash and restore bird habitat. Call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 for meeting place. Bring gloves, water, sun protection.

### **Black Mountain Park Work Party**

**Sat., June 3, 8-noon**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Monthly Bird Surveys**

**Thur., June 15, 8 a.m.**

Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild

Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Trail Repair**

**Sat., June 24, 8-noon**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in repairing this beautiful trail along Santa Ysabel Creek. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 27, 7 p.m. .**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

**DIRECTIONS:** See previous page



## Welcome New Members

John Bradley & Family  
David T. Cooper  
Jim Powers  
Nancy Taetzsch  
Kirsten Winter

Tabby Go Home

# House Cat & Coyote Interactions in Southern California Habitat Remnants

Kevin Crooks

[**Editor's Note.** — Two years ago, Kevin Crooks gave a slide show presentation at the Friends' Annual Meeting, where he described his studies on a number of San Diego's isolated canyons and how the wildlife were doing there. We thought our readers would be interested in this related information, also touched upon by Kevin at the meeting. Adapted with permission of the author from an article that appeared in the WINTER 1997/98 issue of Wild Earth. Wild Earth is published quarterly by the Cenozoic Society, Inc., POB 455, Richmond, VT 05477. The Cenozoic Society is a non-profit education, scientific, and charitable corporation. Membership is open to the public and includes a subscription to Wild Earth. Subheads added by Canyon News.]

The logical effects of human beings go beyond the direct impacts of our species. As human populations explode, so do populations of our pets, extending our already far-reaching influences. The collective impact of an estimated 400 million domestic cats (*Felis catus*) worldwide (Jarvis 1990) is especially devastating. Fed and cared for by humans, cats are maintained at numbers up to 100 times or more the typical abundances of wild cats and other mid-sized predators (Churcher and Lawton 1987, Coleman and Temple 1993). These superabundant, exotic felines can wreak havoc in ecological communities that border human developments.

## Ecological impacts of Cats

Cats are recreational hunters that kill for fun, even if they are nutritionally subsidized by humans (Davis 1957, George 1974, Warner 1985). Consequently, even when prey reach dangerously low levels, cats will continue to hunt and kill, sometimes decimating local populations of birds, small mammals, and reptiles. In contrast, native predators often switch to

alternate prey as a preferred species becomes scarce. The numbers can be staggering. Pet cats in an English village (Churcher and Lawton 1987) brought home an annual average of 14 prey each, 35% of which were birds. In Michigan, one rural cat killed over 1600 mammals and 60 birds in 18 months (Bradt 1949). A cat predation study on native prey in Virginia tallied 28 kills per urban pet cat and 91 kills per rural pet cat (Mitchell and Beck 1992). In rural Wisconsin, the 1.4 - 2 million free-ranging outdoor rural cats could be destroying an estimated 7.8 million or more birds, along with a far

---

***I estimate that outdoor cats surrounding the typical, moderately-sized canyon kill nearly 1000 rodents, over 500 birds, and over 600 lizards per year. These figures, although only rough approximations, are also surely underestimates . . .***

---

greater number of other creatures, each year (J.S. Coleman and S.A. Temple, unpublished data).

When introduced to islands, cats can be particularly damaging, especially when preying upon animals that have not evolved adequate defenses to such efficient hunters. Incredibly, 375 cats on Macquarie Island near Australia were able to kill an estimated 56,000 rabbits and 58,000 ground-resting seabirds each year (Jones 1977). On Marion Island in the sub-Antarctic, five cats were introduced in 1949; by 1975, the population of about 2,000 cats killed approximately 450,000 burrowing petrels (a seahird) annually and were suspected to have

driven another petrel species to local extinction (Bloomer and Bester 1992). In the most infamous and perhaps most extreme example known, the lighthouse-keeper's pet cat on Stephen Island, off the coast of New Zealand, arrived in 1894 and within one year completely exterminated the Stephen Island Wren (Stiling 1992).

## Study of Cats in San Diego

I am currently studying the ecology of cats, as well as of native predators, in urban coastal southern California. Exponential population growth and intensive development in this region over the past century have destroyed most of the native coastal sage scrub and arid chaparral habitats. The massive human disruptions of ecosystems, combined with the existence of many species of plants and animals that don't occur elsewhere (endemic species), have helped create a "hot-spot" of endangerment and extinction in the region (Myers 1990, Dobson et al. 1997).

Some patches of habitat still remain, however. The San Diego region generally consists of large coastal mesas dissected by steep-sided ravines. These so-called "canyons" are generally too steep for development: as islands of habitat immersed in the urban sea of Southern California they are important refugia for wildlife. A series of scientific surveys over the past decade has recorded a diverse array of native species in the canyons including plants, insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds, small mammals, and mammalian predators, some of which are of conservation concern in the region (Soule et al. 1988, Langen et al. 1991, Soule et al. 1992, Bolger et al. 1997).

Are these household pets affecting the fate of the native birds, mammals, and reptiles? To find out, I distributed thousands of questionnaires to people living on the edges of canyons in the San Diego region, asking cat owners about the sex, age, reproductive condi-

tion, numbers, and activity patterns of their household cats, as well as how often their cats brought back prey items to the residence. Second, willing owners were asked to collect all the returned prey so I could identify which species, both native and exotic, cats were killing. Third, baited track stations and remotely-triggered cameras allowed monitoring of the movements of cats, as well as of native predators, in the canyons. Lastly, I radio-tracked pet cats to provide detailed data on their spatial and temporal movements both in habitat fragments and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

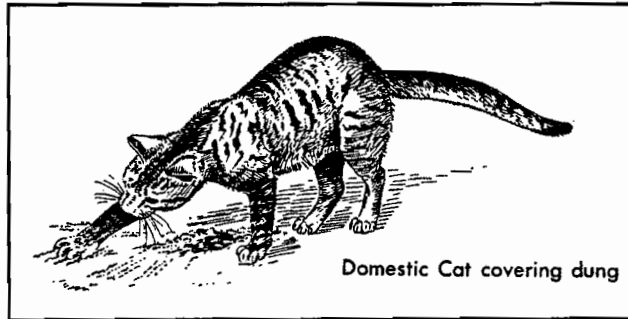
Questionnaire responses indicated that nearly one-third of residents bordering canyons own cats; these households, on average, had 1.7 cats, and about three-quarters of cat owners let their pets outdoors. Thus, depending on the size of the canyon, there are likely to be tens to hundreds of outdoor cats with access to each urban habitat fragment. In comparison, the canyons often harbor only one or two pairs or family groups of native predators such as coyotes or foxes.

What do these pets eat, and what is their impact on prey populations? Roughly 85% of outdoor cats brought back kills to the residence. Cats did occasionally kill non-native species, such as house mice and black rats, which could be beneficial since these exotic rodents are considered urban pests and can themselves compete with and prey upon native species. Unfortunately, though, many of the cats' prey were natives, including a wide variety of birds, rodents, and lizards. Survey respondents reported that on average, each outdoor cat that hunted returned about 24 rodents, 15 birds, and 17 lizards to the residence each year.

Using these estimates, as well as data on cat ownership from my questionnaires, I estimate that outdoor cats surrounding the typical, moderately-sized canyon kill nearly 1,000 rodents, over 500 birds, and over 600 lizards per year. These figures, although only rough approximations, are also surely underestimates since cats certainly do not bring back all prey that they kill. Indeed, one researcher suggested that only 50% of kills are actually returned to residences by cats, with the other half eaten by the cats or scavenged by

other animals (George 1974). Thus, the actual number of prey killed may be higher than the above figure.

We must remember that populations of native species in these urban habitat remnants already can be quite small. For instance, population sizes of some scrub specialist birds likely don't exceed 10 individuals in the smallest San Diego canyons (Bolger et al. 1991). Such small populations are particularly vulnerable to extinction from a variety of demographic, environmental, and genetic factors. So, even a modest increase in predation from subsidized predators may tip native species, especially rare ones, over the extinction brink.



### Coyotes and cats

In the face of such predation pressures by exotic felines, prey species have an unlikely ally — the coyote (*Canis latrans*). I have found that coyotes can modify the behavior of both cats and their owners in the San Diego area. Coyotes certainly kill domestic cats, as evidenced by cat remains both in the canyons and in the scat of coyotes. Track surveys, camera monitoring, and radio-telemetry all indicate that domestic cats seldom visit the interior of large habitat remnants where coyotes occur.

Since cats primarily frequent canyon edges and neighboring yards, cat predation can be considered one of the many edge effects that emanate from human developments. Consequently, the impact of cats on wildlife populations will intensify as natural landscapes become increasingly fragmented. It seems that experienced cats learn to avoid canyons when coyotes are present, whereas naive pets who do venture into the canyons where coyotes occur often meet a violent end.

### Cat owners

Although coyotes directly affect

cats, perhaps the strongest impact of coyotes is on the behavior of cat owners. About two-thirds of questionnaire respondents realized that coyotes had attacked or killed their cats. Further, cat owners in coyote country, especially those that had previously lost pets to predation, were less likely to let their cat's outdoors; two-thirds of all cat owners who believed coyotes to be in their canyon somehow restricted their cat's outdoor activity. Methods of restriction included keeping the cat as an indoor pet, letting the cat out only during the day, restricting the cat to a patio or fenced yard, and even leashing the cat when out. This is encouraging — just the threat of native predators in the neighborhood is enough for some people to restrict their cats' wanderings.

Consequently, the presence of coyotes in urban natural areas may benefit small, native species by reducing the numbers and activity of these non-native and super-abundant felines. Coyotes may act

as a "keystone predator" in such regions. The disappearance of top predators can cause an ecological imbalance that ripples down the food web through small predators to smaller prey. Unfortunately, of all the wildlife affected by urban development and habitat fragmentation, it is the larger predators that are most vulnerable to local extinction due to their relatively large home ranges, low densities, and "control" (eradication) by their human neighbors. Unless strong reasons exist to do otherwise (such as coyote predation on threatened or endangered species), conservationists should oppose the control of large carnivores in these systems.

It is also essential that urban habitat fragments maintain connectivity to larger natural areas that currently support source populations of coyotes and other large predators. Where functional movement corridors are not retained across the urban landscape, many wildlife populations, particularly carnivores, will eventually disappear.

How can we curtail predation on wildlife by domestic cats? Collar bells don't necessarily work because native wildlife may not associate bells with

being stalked, and declawed cats can still kill prey (although admittedly bells and declawing are likely better than no protective measures at all). A number of animal welfare organizations and local governments have recently advocated reducing feral cat "colonies" by trapping, sterilizing, vaccinating, and then returning cats to where they were found, to be fed thereafter by humans. Although such programs are certainly well-intentioned and may even reduce numbers of feral cats in some circumstances, they are also generally misguided. Even a few reproductive cats in a population, or a continuing source of newly abandoned cats, are sufficient to maintain populations of cats, and even sterilized, vaccinated, and well-fed

Education is the key to gain public support for the control of free-ranging cats (May 1988, Proulx 1988). Most people are unaware of the damage caused by domestic cats, as well as the threats faced by pets that are left outdoors. In southern California, the majority of cat owners bordering natural areas let their cats outdoors, and less than half of respondents believe that cats are a major predator in the urban habitat fragments.

Education of risks both to cats and native species may increase public concern. Further, we must foster more positive attitudes toward native predators, especially in urban settings where human-carnivore interactions are intensified. Kellert et al. (1996) provide general recommendations to increase

public acceptance of carnivores. They emphasize that rather than simply providing more factual information on a species, education should directly target negative attitudes or perceptions concerning carnivores. For instance, in southern California we could focus on the public's negative, and often exaggerated, beliefs

concerning the threat of predators to humans and pets. Potential educational options include information dispersed through the local media, distribution of pamphlets and flyers to residents bordering natural areas, and the development of local school programs. Kellert et al. (19%) also stress that education must emphasize all values represented by these species. Although the importance of predators is often couched in terms of their presumed ecological or economic significance, we must emphasize also the many aesthetic, visceral, and even spiritual values provided by these charismatic animals.

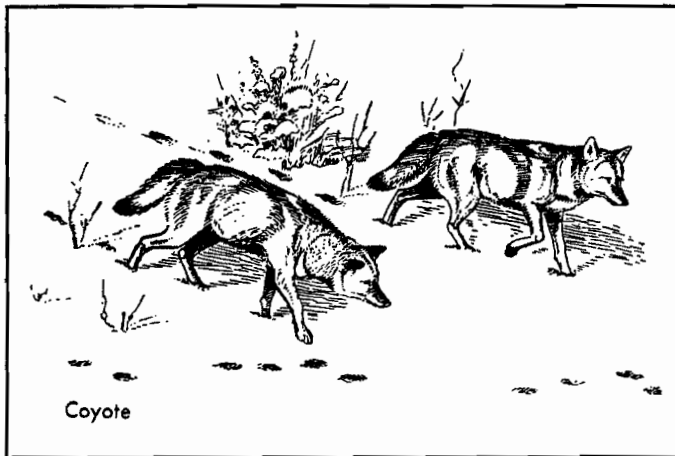
Encouragingly, the questionnaires I distributed to southern California citizens generally indicated that the majority of residents enjoyed wildlife, including mammalian carnivores, in adjacent wildlands and were concerned for their protection. Although many residents realized that coyotes were a threat to pets, more than 90%

of respondents wanted coyotes in neighboring natural areas. Residents also demonstrated considerable knowledge of the wildlife in their backyards — their reported observations corresponded well to our field surveys on the actual distribution and abundance of carnivores in the area. The domestic cat has been a household pet, a cherished companion — indeed, a member of our extended family — for literally thousands of years. Understandably, we are hesitant to blame them for the extirpation of native fauna, but the unfortunate truth is that large numbers of outdoor cats can imperil wildlife, particularly in small natural areas surrounded by developed land. Perhaps we are even more hesitant, however, to implicate ourselves for the integral role we play in this ecological crisis. Although labeled as "feline delinquency" (May 1988), it is our own negligence that should be of greatest concern. Indeed, only through legislative and educational programs aimed at limiting delinquency of cat owners, not of cats themselves, can we best protect both our pets and our native biodiversity.

[Kevin Crooks received his Ph.D. in the Biology Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz (95064). His research investigates the effect of habitat fragmentation of carnivores in Southern California. Specifically, Kevin is evaluating how the decline of top predators such as coyotes results in increases of smaller predators such as domestic cats.]

### Literature cited:

- Bloomer, J.P., and M. N. Bester. 1992. Control of feral cats on sub-Antarctic Marion Island, Indian Ocean. *Biological Conservation* 60:211-219.
- Bolger, D. T., A. Alberts, and M.E. Soule. 1991. Occurrence patterns of bird species in habitat fragments: sampling, extinction, and nested species subsets. *The American Naturalist* 137:155-166.
- Bolger, D.T. A. C. Alberts, R.M. Sauvajot, R. Potenza, C. McCalvin, D. Iran, S. Mazzoni, and M.E. Soule. 1997. Responses of rodents to habit fragmentation in coastal southern California. *Ecological Applications* 7:552-563.
- Bradt, G.W. 1949. Farm cat as predator. *Michigan Conservation* 18:25-26.
- Churcher, J.B., and J.H. Lawton. 1987. Predation by domestic cats in an English village. *Journal of Zoology (London)* 212:439-456.
- Coleman, J.S., and S.A. Temple. 1993. Rural residents' free-ranging domestic cats: a sur-



cats still hunt and kill. It is also important to realize that cats themselves often suffer when left outdoors. Cars, coyotes, dogs, other cats, and even sadistic humans are all deadly threats. Further, outdoor cats, through contact with wild animals and other pets, are exposed to infectious diseases such as feline leukemia, feline distemper, and rabies. Cats themselves can also infect native animals, other pets, and humans with parasites such as ringworm, hookworms, and toxoplasmosis (Proulx 1988). In sum, outdoor cats require more medical treatment, are more at risk, and live shorter lives than do indoor cats.

### Mitigation Measures

Enforcement of leash laws, compulsory registration of cats, incentives for spaying and neutering, and eradication of feral cat colonies would all help to alleviate the problem. Such measures, however, are controversial.



- vey. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 21:381-390.
- Coleman, J.S., and S.A. Temple. 1996. On the Prowl. *Wisconsin Natural Resources Dec.* 1996
- Davis, D. E. 1957. The use of food as a buffer in a predator-prey system. *Journal of Mammalogy* 38:466-472.
- George, W. 1974. Domestic cats as predators and factors in winter shortages of raptor prey. *The Wilson Bulletin* 86:384-396.
- Jarvis, P.J. 1990. Urban cats as pests and pets. *Environmental Conservation* 17:169-171.
- Jones, F. 1977. Ecology of the feral cat, *Felis catus* on Macquarie Island. *Australian Wildlife Research* 4:249-262.
- Kellert, S.R., M. Black, C.R. Rush, and A.J. Bath. 1996. Human culture and large carnivore conservation in North America. *Conservation Biology* 10:977-990.
- Langen, T. A., D. T. Bolger, and T. J. Case. 1991. Predation on artificial bird nests in chaparral fragments. *Oecologia* 86:395-401.
- Mitchell, J.C., and R.A. Beck. 1992. Free-ranging domestic cat predation on native vertebrates in rural and urban Virginia. *Virginia Journal of Science* 43:197-207.
- Myers, N. 1990. The biodiversity challenge: expanded hot-spots analysis. *The Environmentalist* 10:243-256.
- Proulx, G. 1988. Control of urban wildlife predation by cats through public education. *Environmental Conservation* 15:358-359.
- Soule, M.E., D.T Bolger, A. C. Albens, R. Sauvajot, Wright, M. Sorice, and S. Hill. 1988. Reconstructed dynamics of rapid extinctions of chaparral-requiring birds in urban habitat islands. *Conservation Biology* 2:75-92.
- Soule, M.E., AC. Alberts, and D.T Bolger. 1992. The effects of habitat fragmentation on chaparral plants and vertebrates. *Oikos* 63:39-47.
- Stiling, R 1996. *Ecology: Theories and Applications*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Warner, R. 1985. Demography and movements of free-ranging domestic cats in rural Illinois. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 49:340-346.

(Brochure cont'd)

## Fund Appeal

Thanks to those members who remembered our annual fund appeal at tax time! They were:

Brian & Alicia Gittings  
 John & Alice Greene  
 Doug Hansen  
 Donald & Martha Kimball  
 Fred & Linda Kramer  
 Christine & Gregg Miller  
 Jim & Barbara Peugh

## Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team

# Year 2000 Calendar of Events

### Jun 3 - Jun 4 **Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist Program**

A weekend of delving into the finer details of tracking, awareness and the philosophy of living in harmony with nature. The skill of reading concentric rings will be dealt with in detail, as will the practical use of reading pressure releases. Tracking problems in differing substrate types will be explored from soft sand to grass to hard dirt and rock. Many different exercises will be introduced and/or expanded upon such as track and sign aging, detection of movement via concentric ring interpretation and study of track character via debris interaction. Deeper study of awareness factors will be explored to include 6th sense or inner vision exercises. See Beginner's Class for times and other details. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Jul 15 Summer 2000 Wildlife Survey Training ( 858-672-1120)  
 Jul 22 - Aug 8 Summer 2000 Wildlife Survey

### Sep 16 - Sep 17 **Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Program**

The Advanced Tracker and Naturalist Class is an intensive weekend class devoted to in-depth track analysis and interpretation. The nuances of macro and micro pressure releases, track character in variable substrate, various tracking situations mostly involving animals will be examined but other exercises including lost person and speed tracking will be covered. Further development of intuitive skills relating to tracking and awareness in nature will also be covered. See Beginner's Class for times. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Oct 14 Fall 2000 Wildlife Survey Training  
 Oct 21 - Nov 5 Fall 2000 Wildlife Survey

### Nov. 10 - 12 **Beginner Tracker/Naturalist Program**

A weekend devoted to learning the skills of tracking and awareness with an emphasis placed on techniques for learning habitats and associated flora and fauna, wildlife physiology and habits, concentric ring philosophy, movement in nature and establishment of a pattern of awareness. This course offers the opportunity for one to acquire the tools to become proficient in the art and science of tracking animals, people and most anything that leaves a mark on the landscape. Your powers of observation will improve tremendously as will your overall awareness. Exercises in journaling, track and sign age determination, discerning concentric rings, track/sign identification, gait patterns and awareness philosophy will round out this busy weekend.

The class will be held Nov. 10 - 12. The class will meet at the Adobe Ranch House in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve off Black Mountain Road. Be prepared to take notes, do some hiking and have fun. Bring water, hiking attire, sun protection, something warm for the evening activity and a desire to learn. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.



## (Restoration cont'd)

that will be the life or death of this special place. I'd like to offer them a very special thank you on behalf of the Ranger staff, the Preserve volunteers, and all the park patrons and to let you know that we greatly appreciate your commitment. Mt. Carmel Key Club and Vista High School spent two project days each this past season. Canyonview Elementary School spent two project days of their own. The graduate students from Scripps Institute of Oceanography logged two days and Girl Scout troops 8369, 8131, and 8439 did plantings as well. Take into account the 500+ non-native plants removed by the Ca. Conservation Corps at the San Diounty Water Authority mitigation site and the 250+ exotic plants removed from the Fish and Wildlife Grant site, it was just a great restoration season and the Preserve is just looking better and better.

Restoration season 2000 – 2001 is gearing up and promises to be even better. Three large scale mitigation projects are in the works for this next season. The El Cuervo Wetlands Site at the west end should get started in the fall. This project will remove the man-made dikes that contain the creek and will allow it to return to it's original meander. This widening of the flood plain will help restore a large portion of this low lying area that was once used for agriculture.

The last large stand of eucalyptus trees located just to the west of the narrows are scheduled for removal, then followed up with replanting this fall as well. And last but not least, the sewer ponds project just west of the Ranch House on the north side of the creek are planned to be restored. The man-made containment ponds have been high on everyone's list for restoration. Work could start as early as this spring or summer which will entail removal of the containment diking system and expansion of the willow riparian into that area.

There are a lot of positive changes taking place in the Preserve these days. What it boils down too is the quality of life for all the park residents from the bobcat, to the the horned lizard is improving, not to mention the release that this special place provides for so many of us. See you in the park.

# Spring Volunteer Achievements

Mike Kelly

**Hike Leaders.** Thanks to Brian Swanson, Chris Bader, Mike Kelly, Will Bowen, Pat Watkins, Don Albright, Barbara Moore for leading our interpretive walks in the Preserve this season.

**Newsletter.** Thanks to the Dingeman Family, Mel Howe, and Mike Kelly.

**Tracking Team.** Thanks to the Tracking Team members for all their hard work on the wildlife surveys, public displays, and tracking training. I'd list their names here if the team leaders would ever get them to me (hint, hint)!

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Grant Site Restoration.** Thanks to the National Community Conservation Corps (NCCC) for their many days of help in removing the invasive Eucalyptus trees from this site just west of the Sycamore Crossing. Thanks also to Kelly & Associates for that company's volunteer help in removing other exotic trees from the site. Other Friends' volunteers who helped remove eucalyptus and replant native cottonwoods, sycamores and others included: Rob Hutsel, Terry Gaughn, Mike Kelly, Dixie Stansell and Debra Jones.

**Historic Stagecoach Research.** Thanks to the Rob Hutsel, Lynne Christenson, and Mike Kelly for their continuing efforts to document these historic routes.

**Cottonwood Revival.** Thanks to Mt. Carmel High School's Key Club, Girl Scout Troops 8369, 8131, and 8439, Mike Kelly, Rebecca and Pat Watkins for planting hundreds of native trees and other plants on the County Water Authority Aqueduct Planting Site.

**Upper Peñasquitos Lagoon.** Rob Hutsel, Terry Gaughn, Cindy Burrascano, Mike Kelly, Dorothy Mitchell, Gretchen Nell, John Schulte, Doug Fenske, Carrie Schneider and Beth Stephenson all turned out to help remove exotic weeds from the lagoon, restoring wildlife habitat there.

**Lake Hodges Restoration.** Cindy Burrascano and Mike Kelly enjoyed helping out a great bunch of volunteers removing Saltcedar and Giant reed from the Green Valley creek area.

**Goodan Ranch.** Mike Kelly and Cindy Burrascano turned out for year 4 of eradicating artichoke thistle, exotic palms, saltcedar, and other weeds from this scenic park. We're making real progress here.

**Black Mountain Park.** Terry Gaughn and Mike Kelly helped Ranger Dan Bylin control artichoke thistle in native grasslands in this park. It's looking quite good in this 4th year of control efforts.

**Northern Harrier habitat restoration.** Rob Hutsel and Mike Kelly controlled exotic fennel and thistles on this hillside, improving the nesting and hunting opportunities for the Northern harriers and White-tailed kites that like to frequent this area. The fennel changes the height structure of the native grasslands which makes hunting rodents more difficult for these raptors.

**Monardella weed control.** Cindy Burrascano spent many hours surveying and controlling exotic weeds threatening the endangered Willowly mint (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *viminea*) in López Canyon.

**Arch in the Park.** Thanks to Chris Bader, Lee Kirscheval, Gretchen Nell, and Les Braund for leading walks and staffing the displays at this annual Archaeology in the Park event.

**Thorn mint annual surveys.** Cindy Burrascano, Pat Watkins, and Mike Kelly joined the Multiple Species Staff of Keith Greer and Holly Boessow from the City to conduct the annual surveys of San Diego thorn mint (*Acanthomintha ilicifolia*) in Peñasquitos Canyon, Black Mountain, and Sabre Springs.



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

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
858-484-3219

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
POWAY, CA  
PERMIT NO. 286

**Address Service Requested**

### Check Your Label

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

### Friends' Directory

**Officers**

President: Edward DiBella 619-594-1650  
Vice-President: Dean Woods 858-672-1120  
Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
Secretary: Rick Botta

**Other Members of the Board of Directors**

Don Albright, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Barry Martin, Rick Botta, Brian Swanson

**Walks Leaders**

Brian Swanson, Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike Kelly, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Pat Watkins

**Committees:**

Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman  
Newsletter: Mike Kelly  
Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
Stream Survey Committee: Edward DiBella  
Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
Volunteer Coordinator: Michelle Murphree (224-4192)  
Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly  
Wildlife Survey Organizer: Dean Woods

### Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ 5/2000

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call 858-484-3219 or 858- 566-6489 for more information.



# Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

July / August 2000

Volume 14, No. 4

## Proposed Name Change for Jurassic Rocks at the Falls

John Northrop, Ph.D.

Rocks exposed at and below the falls in Peñasquitos Canyon (map in Northrop 1989) are Jurassic in age, i.e., they were deposited 151-142 million years ago as shown by marine invertebrate fossils contained therein (Fife 1967). Thus they are the oldest sedimentary rocks exposed in the San Diego area and were first described by M. A. Hanna (1926) who gave them the name Black Mountain Formation. However, that name had already been used elsewhere and these San Diego formations were renamed Santiago Peak Volcanics after similar rocks found on Santiago Peak in Orange County (Larsen 1948, Kennedy and Peterson 1975).

More recently, Dr. Pat Abbott (1999) wrote that "recent radiometric-age analyses by Dave Kimbrough and Chuck Herzig at San Diego State University indicate that the Santiago Peak Volcanics were formed 128-117 million years ago, making them early Cretaceous instead of Jurassic in age." Thus, the present moniker for rocks at the falls is a misnomer and should be changed. Dr. Abbott goes on to say, "If geologists decide to assign them to a new formation, it should likely refer to the rock exposures in Los Peñasquitos Canyon between Interstates 805 and I-15; this area would make a good reference or type section because it lies in a protected City of San Diego park (the other four canyon locations are all private property and may be altered or destroyed by future development)."

Acting on his suggestion, I have contacted the North American Commission on Stratigraphic Nomenclature and will submit a proposed name change.

### References.

- Abbott, P.L. 1999. The Rise and Fall of San Diego. Sunbelt Pub., San Diego, Ca.  
 Fife, D.L., J.A. Minch, and P.J. Crampton. 1967. Late Jurassic Age of the Santiago Peak Volcanics. Calif. Geol. Soc. Am. Bull. vl.78. p.299-304.  
 Hanna, M.A. 1926. Geology of the La Jolla Quadrangle. California. Univ. of Calif., Dept. of Geol. Sci. Bull., V.16. p.187-246.  
 Kennedy, M.P. and G.L. Peterson. 1975. Geology of the San Diego Metropolitan Area. California. Bull. 200, California Div. of Mines and Geol., 1416 9th St., Sacramento, CA 95814.  
 Larsen, E.S. 1948. Batholith and Associated Rocks of Corona, Elsinore, and San Luis Rey quadrangles, southern California. Geol. Soc. Am. Memoir 29.  
 Northrop, J. 1989. Geology of Peñasquitos Canyon. Windsor Assoc., San Diego, CA.

### Highlights Inside

Hike calendar	2
Volunteer Schedule	4
New Members	4
Rancho Roundup	5
City Ranger Report	6
Tracking Team Calendar	8
Volunteer Accomplishments	7
Directory	8

## New Mammal Studies Launched

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

Two new wildlife studies are underway in the Preserve. Both should provide information vital to managing the Preserve for the benefit of its animal inhabitants.

Cheryl Brehme, a biologist and graduate student at San Diego State University (SDSU) is conducting one of the studies. Another biologist, Sierra Hadden, is conducting the second study under the direction of Dr. Kevin Crooks, a wildlife biologist employed by Conservation Biology Institute (CBI) a non-profit consulting firm carrying out biology surveys for the City of San Diego's Multiple Species Con-

See p. 7 for more



## Hike Schedule

# Beat the Heat with Evening Walks

We're in for a hot summer once again, so here are some tips for beating the heat while enjoying the Preserve. For your walks or rides stick to the early morning hours, 6 – 9 a.m. should be quite nice or late afternoon and early evening, say from 5 – 8 p.m. There's more trails in the shade available on the east end of the park from Mercy Road to the waterfall. Farther west and it becomes very exposed. Always wear sun protection, including a wide brim hat, and bring plenty of water. Rangers and volunteers encounter people without enough water, some suffering from heat exhaustion.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded informations.

### July

#### Historic Adobe Ranch Tour Every Saturday & Sunday

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñas-quitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 P.M. Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñas-quitos. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

#### Birds of Crest Canyon Open Space

Sat., July 8, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this guided bird walk and explore the native coastal sage scrub and coastal lagoon habitats. No birding experience necessary. Meet on the north side of the preserve at the gate on Race Track View. Take I-15 to Via de la Valle. go west of Via de la Valle (towards the Del Mar Fair Grounds). Turn left (south) onto Jimmy Durante Blvd. Follow this to San Dieguito Lagoon Rd., turn left onto this and follow it west to Race Track View Dr. and meet at the gate next to the preserve. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

#### Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore

Tues., July 11, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Join naturalist Barbara Moore to meet the critters and plants of López Canyon. Barbara is the co-author of the recently updated *Walking San Diego* and often has books available for sale and autographing with her. Binoculars recommended. Meet at the West-End Parking Area off the south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Blvd, just past the business district. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

#### Tracking Walk from Ranch House

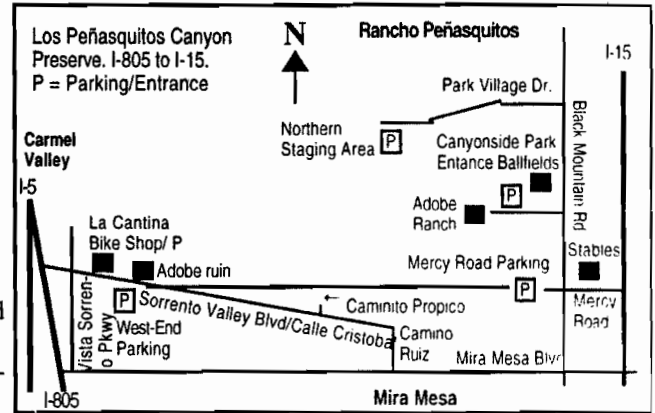
Sat., July 15, 7:30 – 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

#### López Canyon Birding

Sat., July 15, 7:30 – 9 a.m. Join naturalist Brian Swanson for an easy stroll as we seek such typical summer visitors as black headed grosbeak, yellow breasted chat (more often heard than seen) and blue grosbeak). The feathered inhabitants of this riparian canyon are full of energy early in the day. No experience is necessary. Binoculars are recommended. Meet at the West-End Parking Area off the south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Blvd, just past the business district. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

#### Art in Nature Hike

Sat., July 15, 9 – 10:30 a.m. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D. and Helen Moutes and learn to use natural objects to make your own art project. Put love into your work. Then bury your art work to fill the earth with your love. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**



#### Waterfall Dusk Hike from Northern Staging Area

Sat., July 15, 5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a cool, evening hike in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, about 2.5 mile loop trail. Good chance to see wildlife. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

#### Dusk Walk from Peñasquitos Creek Park

Thurs., July 20, 7:30 – 9 p.m. Participants often see deer, coyote, bats, and other critters of the night on these evening walks led by Naturalist Mike Kelly. Bring flashlight and insect repellent. Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Peñasquitos, at the intersection of Camino Ruiz and Park Village Drive. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

#### Mary Ward Memorial Lecture Evening At the Ranch

Sat., July 29, at the Adobe Ranch House. As in years past, there will be a ranch house tour at 6:00 p.m., picnicking in the courtyard beginning at 6:00, and a featured speaker at about 7:30. The July 29 program will the Mary Ward Memorial Lecture with Ron Quinn, Professor Emeritus, SDSU. There is no charge for the event, and SDCAS provides dessert, coffee and soft drinks. Bring a folding chair, flashlight, and warm jacket or blanket. Call me for dates and speakers after July 1st (858-484-7504) or check the Corridor News for details.

### August

#### Birds of Black Mountain Park

Sat., August 12, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this guided bird walk and explore the native chaparral and grassland habitats. No birding experience necessary. Take Black Mountain Road in Rancho Pe-

**(Calendar cont'd)**

nasquitos north to where the pavement ends at barricades. Turn right on the dirt road and follow it approx. 1 mile to park sign and paved entrance on the right. Proceed up to parking lot. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

**Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore**

Tues., Aug. 15, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Join naturalist Barbara Moore to meet the critters and plants of López Canyon. Barbara is the co-author of the recently updated *Walking San Diego* and often has books available for sale and autographing with her. Binoculars recommended. Meet at the West-End Parking Area off the south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Blvd, just past the business district. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Aug. 19, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219.**

**Nature Walk in López Canyon with Barbara Moore**

Tues., Aug. 15, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Join naturalist Barbara Moore to meet the critters and plants of López Canyon. Barbara is the co-author of the recently updated *Walking San Diego* and often has books available for sale and autographing with her. Binoculars recommended. Meet at the West-End Parking Area off the south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Blvd, just past the business district. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Waterfall Dusk Hike from Northern Staging Area**

Sat., Aug. 19, 5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a cool, evening hike in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, about 2.5 mile loop trail. Good chance to see wildlife. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Nature Walk from Mercy Road**

Sun., Aug. 20, 9 a.m. (2 miles). Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in the Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, at the junction of Mercy Road and Black Mountain Road in Mira Mesa. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Dusk Wildlife Walk to Waterfall from Peñasquitos Creek Park**

Thurs., Aug. 24, 7:00 – 9 p.m. We'll walk about 4 miles, to the waterfall and back. Bring flashlight, insect repellent and dress warm if evening is cool. Good chance to see deer and other wildlife. Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Peñasquitos at the intersection of Camino Ruiz and Park Village Dr. The park is on the left. Meet on corner of the two roads. Led by Naturalist Mike Kelly.

**López Canyon Birding**

Sat., Aug. 26, 7:30 – 9 a.m. Join naturalist Brian Swanson for an easy stroll as we seek such typical summer visitors as black headed grosbeak, yellow breasted chat (more often heard than seen) and blue grosbeak). The feathered inhabitants of this riparian canyon are full of energy early in the day. No experience is necessary. Binoculars are recommended. Meet at the West-End Parking Area off the south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Blvd, just past the business district. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 or call 484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Tree Spirit Doll Hike**

Sat., Aug. 26, 9 – 10:30 a.m. Join Will Bowen and Helen Moutes and learn to use fallen leaves, branches, and other objects to make a Tree Spirit Doll. The doll is a symbolic manifestation of some aspect of your inner world. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**DIRECTIONS****Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

This intersection is located in Mira Mesa. From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe St. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in hanglider parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley. 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

**Northern Parking-Staging Area at Camino Ruiz and Park Village Drive**

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

**West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. 3/4 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right, past the curve. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**





# Summer 2000 Volunteer Activities for the North City Area

Despite the summer heat we'll still have a few volunteer opportunities for those of us who need frequent "restoration" fixes!

For more information on any of these projects call Michelle at 619-224-4192 or Mike at 858-566-6489.

Tools are provided and gloves are available if needed. Wear sturdy boots, sun protection and bring water.

## July

### **Black Mountain Park Trail & Habitat Restoration Projects**

**Sat., July 1, 8-noon**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Black Mountain Park Bird Survey**

**Thurs., July 6, 7 - 11 a.m.**

Monthly bird survey. Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **El Capitan Dam Restoration Project**

**Sat., July 8, 8 a.m. - noon.**

Help restore wildlife habitat below El Capitan Dam on National Forest Service land by removing invasive exotic plants such as Arundo and Saltcedar. Call Cindy Burrascano at 619-421-5767 for details.

### **Peñasquitos Lagoon Wildlife Habitat Restoration**

**Sun., July 9, 9-1:**

Help restore wildlife habitat! Meet at the corner of Flintkote and Estuary Way in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208, A5**. This month's project is removing invasive Catalpa and Eucalyptus Trees and other weeds. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more info.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Monthly Bird Surveys**

**Thur., July 20, 7 - 11 a.m.**

Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon**

#### **Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 25, 7 p.m.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Trail Restoration Projects**

**Sat., July 22, 8-noon**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in repairing this beautiful trail along Santa Ysabel Creek. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## August

### **Black Mountain Park Bird Survey**

**Thurs., Aug. 3, 7 - 11 a.m.**

Monthly bird survey. Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Black Mountain Park Trail & Habitat Restoration Projects**

**Sat., August 5, 8-noon**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black

Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Monthly Bird Surveys**

**Thur., Aug. 24, 7 - 11 a.m.**

Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Trail Repair**

**Sat., August 26, 8-noon**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in repairing this beautiful trail along Santa Ysabel Creek. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon**

#### **Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday, Aug. 22, 7 p.m.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

## Welcome New Members

Simon K. Lawrance  
William Porter  
Beth Stephens  
James & Marieke Thayer  
Richard R. Tom




# Rancho Roundup

## Supervising Park Ranger Reneene Mowry

### **A Good Time Is Had at Arch in the Park**

An estimated 200 people attended and seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves at this year's "Arch in the Park," sponsored by the San Diego County Archaeological Society (SDCAS). On this beautiful spring day it was particularly rewarding to see so many smiling faces as youngsters and oldsters alike took advantage of a full gamut of children's activities, exhibits, nature walks, and docent tours. We received a thank you note from Betty Taylor, on behalf of Daisy Troop #4034, who stated: "... Our Daisy Troop really enjoyed themselves! Everyone was friendly and helpful, and the event was well-organized and informative! Thanks to you and all who helped to make "Arch in the Park" a success!" Perhaps one of the reasons activities were so well-received is that three of them involved dirt (adobe brick-making, a mock dig, and planting rose-geranium cuttings in a cup). P.J. Piburn taught visitors how to tie a proper knot to secure their horses and let them feel the "hot feet" on her heritage chickens. The atmosphere was enhanced by the soulful sounds of Lee Kirchhevel playing his Native American flute and the aroma of Park Host Laura O' Quinn's burritos cooking in the kitchen. I would like to extend my thanks to Friends members Mike Kelly, Lee Kirchhevel, Gretchen Nell, Les Braund, and Chris Bader for their participation and support of this event.

### **Coming Attractions: Summer Talks at the Ranch**

Yes — SDCAS will be having those fantastic summer evening programs this year — again on the last Saturday of July, August and September. As in years past, there will be a ranch house tour at 6:00 p.m., picnicking in the courtyard beginning at 6:00, and a featured speaker at about 7:30. The July 29 program will be the Mary Ward Memorial Lecture with Ron Quinn, Professor Emeritus, SDSU. There is no charge for the event, and SDCAS provides dessert, coffee and soft drinks. Bring a folding chair, flashlight, and warm jacket or blanket. Call me for dates and speakers after July 1st (858-484-7504) or check the Corridor News for details.

### **Exciting News on the Archaeological Front!**

Just as City College's spring dig at the Rancho ended, we received an exciting bit of news — nine items that had been sent in for radio-carbon dating (paid for by grant funds from Supervisor Pam Slater) checked out to be between 6,000 and 7,200 years old! This means that the archaeological site on the knoll behind the ranch house defi-

nately dates back to the La Jolla period. An unusual, smooth stone artifact with etching on its surface was uncovered by students shortly before the dig ended, and organic materials found directly above and below it were also sent in for dating (stone is inorganic and cannot be dated). Hopefully, the results will confirm Dr. Steve Bouscaren's theory that the artifact is a La Jolla stone pendant, a very rare find.

### **Docent Training Starts in July**

The next docent training will begin on Saturday, July 8, at 9:00 a.m., here at the Ranch House. The seven session training will cover rancho history (three sessions), ranch house architecture, Native Americans and archaeology, interpretation, and tour techniques. Anyone interested in becoming a docent, ranch hand, or a participant in the "La Vida del Rancho" school program should plan to attend the training. Hike leaders are also welcome to come and increase their knowledge of our historic canyon. Please call me or head docent, Kathy Jenkins (858-505-0446), to sign up.

### **The Marines Have Landed in the Preserve!**

At approximately 8:30 p.m., on May 30, 2000, the United States Marines invaded Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve! The "invasion" was in response to a forced landing by one of their big double-bladed helicopters. The Marine Police, as well as SDPD, the Marine and San Diego Fire Departments, and a parade of assorted vehicles from the local media, all converged on the East-end staging area, cut the lock on the gate, and went roaring down the main trail in search of the missing chopper. In the meantime, Park host Chris O' Quinn drove over to the north side of the creek and was the first to locate the downed craft, about a mile and a half west of the Park Village/Camino Ruiz entrance. He said that it blended into its surroundings so well that it took him a while to spot it. Once he verified that there were no injuries or fire, he radioed the information into SDPD. (Although he was off duty at the time, Chris just happens to be an SDPD officer!) The pilot reported that the hydraulic system was not functioning properly, and he had opted to land in the preserve rather than risk having the helicopter fail over heavily-populated Mira Mesa. With both SDPD and Marine helicopters circling overhead, and armed marines and news media rushing to the scene, it must have been a sight worthy of an Arnold Swartzenhager thriller!

## Volunteer Patrol Training Coming Up

# Things Could Be A Changing!

City Ranger Dion Heller

The face of the Preserve could be changing in the near future. With the huge amount of building that is taking place to the north, west, and east of the Preserve, only time will tell how all this is going to impact the park. Those of us that have been around for a few years have already witnessed what the increased urban runoff has done to Lopez Canyon or to the nice wetland that used to be located above the Falls, that is no longer there — scooped out by a flash flood several winters ago.

Another concern of the rangers is the large increase of park users that is inevitable going to come with all this building. Future park users that might not know the sensitive state in which the park now sits. As rangers, we feel that the education of these possible newcomers is going to be crucial if this Preserve is going to survive, as well as all the critters that make it their home. In many cases, this education process starts with a contact between the park visitor and our Volunteer Patrol. Hopefully, the information that is conveyed by the patrol will help convince the park visitor to treat the Preserve and its residents with the respect and sensitivity they deserve.

To make a long story short, there is a chance for you to get involved and help in this crucial process. The Preserve will be holding a recruitment and training on August 12th and 19th. Some of the topics that will be covered will include natural and cultural resources, radio communications, rules and regulations, verbal judo, and hands-on scenarios to name a few. It's a chance for you to join in preserving one of the rapidly dwindling open spaces in which can find refuge from the noise, hustle, and bustle of our hectic lives. Come join a group of proud, dedicated people that have been educating and protecting the Preserve for what will be a decade in May of 2001. Call the City rangers at (858) 538-8066 for more information on the training and/or an application.

## Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team

# Year 2000 Calendar of Events

### Wildlife Surveys

Jul 15 Summer 2000 Wildlife Survey Training (858-672-1120)

Jul 22 - Aug 8 Summer 2000 Wildlife Survey

### Sep 16 - Sep 17 **Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Program**

The Advanced Tracker and Naturalist Class is an intensive weekend class devoted to in-depth track analysis and interpretation. The nuances of macro and micro pressure releases, track character in variable substrate, various tracking situations mostly involving animals will be examined but other exercises including lost person and speed tracking will be covered. Further development of intuitive skills relating to tracking and awareness in nature will also be covered. See Beginner's Class for times. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

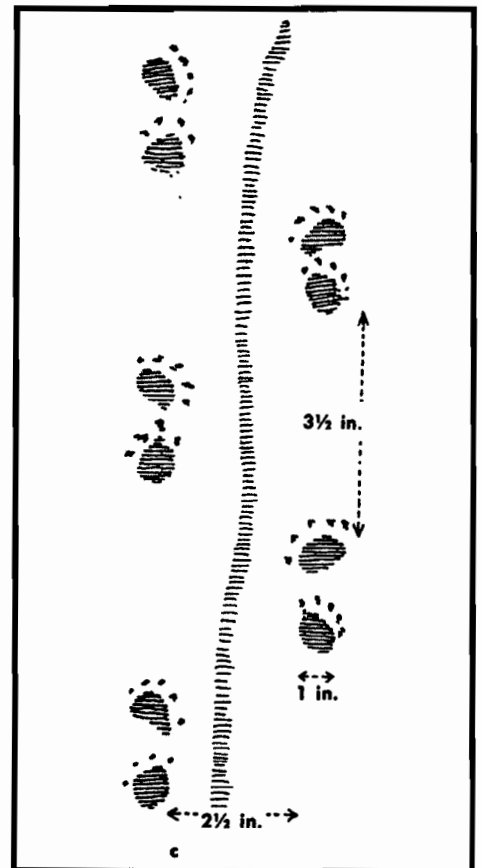
Oct 14 Fall 2000 Wildlife Survey Training

Oct 21 - Nov 5 Fall 2000 Wildlife Survey

### Nov. 10 - 12 **Beginner Tracker/Naturalist Program**

A weekend devoted to learning the skills of tracking and awareness with an emphasis placed on techniques for learning habitats and associated flora and fauna, wildlife physiology and habits, concentric ring philosophy, movement in

nature and establishment of a pattern of awareness. This course offers the opportunity for one to acquire the tools to become proficient in the art and science of tracking animals, people and most anything that leaves a mark on the landscape. Your powers of observation will improve tremendously as will your overall awareness. Exercises in journaling, track and sign age determination, discerning concentric rings, track/sign identification, gait patterns and awareness philosophy will round out this busy weekend. The class will be held Nov. 10 - 12. The class will meet at the Adobe Ranch House in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve off Black Mountain Road. Be prepared to take notes, do some hiking and have fun. Bring water, hiking attire, sun protection, something warm for the evening activity and a desire to learn. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.



Turtle tracks (Murie, O. 1982. *Animal Tracks*. Peterson Field Guides.

## (Restoration cont'd)

ervation Program (MSCP).

Brehme, who has volunteered with the Friends in the past on habitat restoration projects, will be documenting the biodiversity of small mammal populations in the Preserve. Her goals are to develop a species list of these mammals and to determine species composition of these mammals in various distinct vegetative communities, including native and non-native grasslands, coastal sage scrub, oak woodland, chaparral, marshes, etc.

She will use Sherman live traps in her capture and release program. Traps will be placed in likely locations indicated by burrows, runs and scat, for example, and baited with bird seed and rolled oats. We look forward to Cheryl's report on her results.

Hadden's study will focus on the larger mammals and their movement patterns, particularly through habitat linkages and wildlife corridors. Her study area will extend all the way from Beeler Canyon in Poway through Sabre Springs into Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to the I-805/I-5 merge. This route is supposed to function as a wildlife corridor from Peñasquitos Canyon into the mountains to the east. The Scripps Poway Freeway and new Pomerado Road form a formidable barrier to wildlife movement from Poway into Sabre Springs. Whether animals are successfully making it through this area is an important issue for the habitat value of this corridor identified as a critical linkage in the City of San Diego and the City of Poway's MSCPs.

Hadden will also be studying corridors from Peñasquitos Canyon to the north across the Del Mar Mesa and through McGonigle Canyon to the Black Mountain area. Much development will be occurring to the north of the Preserve and this will provide some additional baseline data for future comparisons.

The Friends' Tracking Team has been and will continue to work with Hadden. The Friends' data from years of wildlife track and sign transect surveys in and around the Preserve will be integrated into this new study. Remote sensing cameras, both the Friends' and Hadden's will be utilized to document wildlife movement.

# Spring Volunteer Achievements

Mike Kelly

**Hike Leaders.** Thanks to Brian Swanson, Chris Bader, Mike Kelly, Will Bowen, Pat Watkins, Linda King, Don Albright, Barbara Moore for leading our interpretive walks in the Preserve this season.

**Newsletter.** Thanks as always to the Dingeman Family and Mike Kelly.

**Tracking Team.** Thanks to the Tracking Team members for all their hard work on the wildlife surveys, public displays, and tracking training. I'd list their names here if the team leaders would ever get them to me (hint, hint, again)!

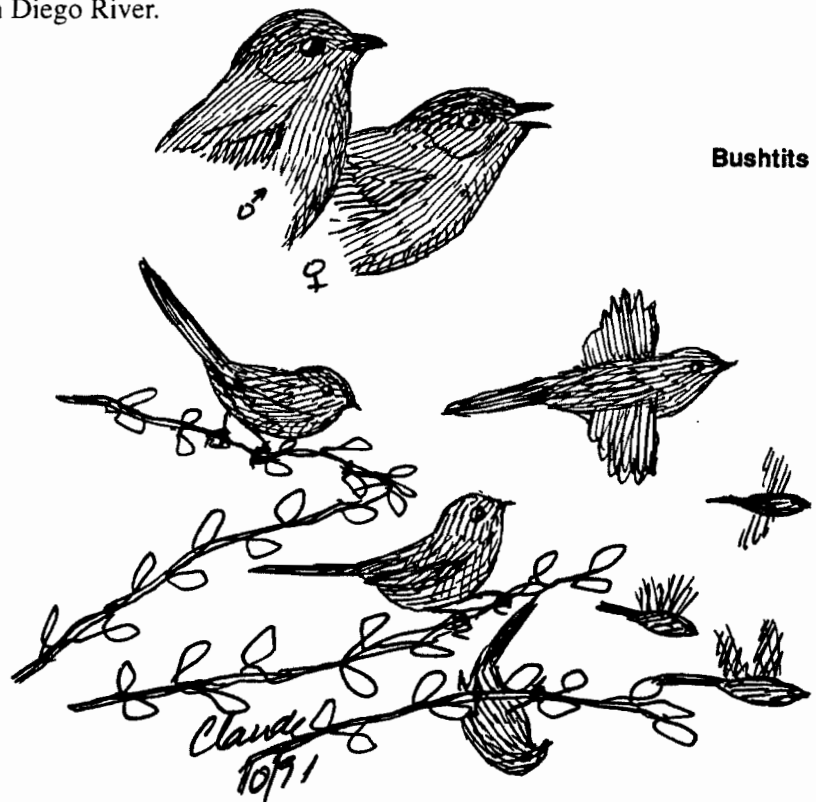
**Upper Peñasquitos Lagoon.** Rob Hutsel, Terry Gaughn, Mike Kelly, Ingrid Lin, Grace Cheung, Cindy Burrascano, and Linda Parady all tackled exotic vines, grasses, shrubs and trees in this two-year old effort to restore the upper lagoon in Torrey Pines State Reserve. Cindy and Mike turned out several additional times to do "clean up" runs in older work areas.

**Goodan Ranch.** Cindy Burrascano revisited this park to cleanup some exotics work done during the spring. She reports good progress is being made on eradicating invasive exotics such as Artichoke thistle, Italian thistle, palms, and tamarisk.

**Black Mountain Park and Ranch.** Terry Gaughn, Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Rob Hutsel and Drew DeShazo, and Carrie Schneider all pitched in to control Artichoke thistle in the established Open Space Park and on the privately owned Black Mountain Ranch, much of which will become future parkland.

**Monardella weed control.** Cindy Burrascano again spent many hours surveying and controlling exotic weeds threatening the endangered Willowly mint (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *viminea*) in López Canyon. Cindy also spent many hours spraying exotic fennel, mustard and Italian thistles in restoration areas near the old López trailhead.

**Mission Valley Preserve.** Rob Hutsel, Mike Kelly, Ben Stevenson, were joined by a dozen employees of Tetra Tec, a Mission Valley based consulting company in removing the last big stand of *Arundo donza* (giant reed) on the lower San Diego River.



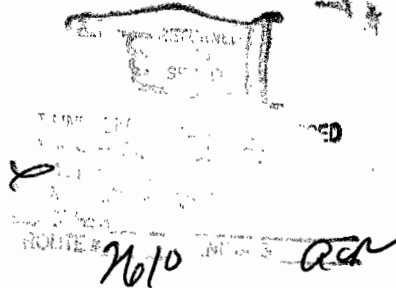


**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
858-484-3219

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
POWAY, CA  
PERMIT NO. 286

**Address Service Requested**



RENEWAL DATE 01/00  
QUENTIN NUNNERY  
8869 MENKAR RD  
SAN DIEGO CA 92126

**Check Your Label**

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

**Friends' Directory**

**Officers**

President: Edward DiBella 619-594-1650  
Vice-President: Dean Woods 858-672-1120  
Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
Secretary: Rick Botta

**Other Members of the Board of Directors**

Don Albright, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Barry Martin, Rick Botta, Brian Swanson

**Walks Leaders**

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

**Committees:**

Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman  
Newsletter: Mike Kelly  
Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
Stream Survey Committee: Edward DiBella  
Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
Volunteer Coordinator: Michelle Murphree (224-4192)  
Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly  
Wildlife Survey Organizer: Dean Woods

**Membership Application**

Membership category? Circle below:

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ 7/2000

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call 858-484-3219 or 858- 566-6489 for more information.





## Citizens Group Undergoing Reorganization

Geof Smith, chair,  
Los Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens  
Advisory Committee

Twenty years ago, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was created by action of the County and City of San Diego, based initially on a donation of river valley land from the Genstar Co., which had purchased the property from Penasquitos, Inc.

Since 1978, the Citizens Advisory Committee, or CAC, has functioned as an appointed group of citizens representing both local community and user groups, responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Preserve, and for making policy recommendations to the Peñasquitos Canyon Task Force.

The Task Force consists of the elected representatives from City Council districts 1 (Harry Mathis) and 5 (recently vacated by Barbara Warden), and County Supervisor District 3 (Pam Slater).

In the year 2000, some exciting changes are in store!

### Master Plan and Natural Resources Management Plan developed

Over the years, a lot of change has taken place in the Preserve. The CAC reviewed proposals by land-owners and government agencies, for projects that would have a direct impact on the Preserve's fragile ecosystem. The annual Park Day event ran for over ten years, drawing attention to the Preserve and its rich natural and archeological history. Decisions regarding proper use of the Preserve, and estab-

See p. 7 for more

Free Workshop

## Introduction to Tracking

co-sponsored by  
Mount Woodson Wildlife Trackers  
& Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve  
Tracking Team

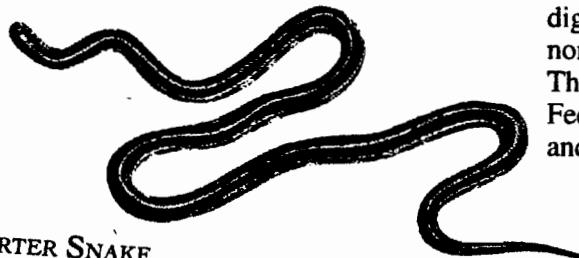
Saturday, September 30, 2000  
Stonelake Ranch, Ramona

This community event is offered to encourage you and everyone to become involved in wildlife and habitat preservation by participating in wildlife surveys throughout San Diego County. Come listen to a fascinating slide-show talk and see tracking displays and demonstrations.

Call 760 789-8136 for registration and directions. The tentative plan for the program:

- 9:00-9:15 Arrival/Displays/Sales of Tracking items
- 9:15-10:15 Introductory Slide Show: Wildlife Corridors of Ramona, Lakeside, & Poway by Fred Sproul  
Tracking Posters
- 10:15-11:15 Sensory Awareness Tracking Stations
- 11:15-12:00 Slide Show: Animal Tracks  
Questions/Conversations  
Displays/Sales
- 12:00 Picnic/ bring your own sack lunch/ Meeting.  
Both teams invited.

Liquid refreshments (coffee, teas, water, etc.) will be provided.



GARTER SNAKE

### Highlights Inside

Hike calendar	2
Volunteer Accomplishments	3
Tracking Team Calendar	4
Volunteer Schedule	4
New Members	4
Rock People / Bowen	6
Wildlife Survey Expansion	7
Directory	8

### Birds, Birds, & More Birds

## Surveys Provide Valuable Data

Dan Bylin, Park Ranger

We've hit the seven month mark of our monthly bird surveys at Black Mountain and San Pasqual Valley Open Space Parks, and we've made some interesting discoveries in this short time. I want to thank everyone who has volunteered and assisted us with these surveys. Volunteers Bryan Sharp, David Kessner, and Doug Fenske have been of great assistance at Black Mountain Open Space Park in the first seven months, and Dick Barber and Christine Rideout of the Palomar Audubon Society have provided their expertise on the surveys at the San Pasqual Valley Open Space Park. Without all of your help the the surveys wouldn't have been such a success.

The species list for Black Mountain Park has climbed to over 70 species and we've added some very important birds to the list. Notable observations include the discovery of a male Least Bell's vireo in the willow woodlands along Lusardi Creek, and a singing indigo bunting that stayed around the north parking lot for a couple of days. The least Bell's vireo is a State and Federally listed endangered species, and this location may be a new site for

See p. 5 for more

## Event Schedule

## Fall 2000

While fall in New England means cool, crisp weather, here in San Diego it means an extended summer, often times with hot, fierce santa ana wind storms. That means it's still best to plan on your outdoor forays in the early morning or evening. On evening hikes you have a good chance of seeing mule deer herds of 7-8 deer as bucks square off and build their harems for fall mating. Watch for places on trees where bucks have scraped the velvet off their antlers earlier in the year.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded informations.

## September

**Historic Adobe Ranch Tour  
Every Saturday & Sunday**

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

**Birds of San Pasqual Valley Open  
Space Park, Clevenger Canyon**

Sat., Sept. 9, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this guided bird walk and explore the riparian woodlands and chaparral habitats. No birding experience necessary. Meet in the north Clevenger Canyon trail staging area at 8 a.m. Take highway 78 approximately 6 miles east of the San Diego Wild Animal Park (towards Ramona). Watch for the trail parking area on the left (north) side of the highway. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

**Historic Stagecoach Walk in Sabre  
Springs**

Sat. Sept. 9, 8 a.m. Walk the historic stagecoach road with naturalist Mike Kelly. Learn about the early stagecoaches and the first transcontinental postal and carriage stagecoach route that went through Peñasquitos Canyon and Sabre Springs.

Walk the "Poway Spur" of another of the stagecoach roads. See old mortarless stone walls. Meet on Sabre Springs Parkway at Springwater St. in Sabre Springs. Take I-15 north or south to Poway Road. Take Poway Road east to Sabre Springs Parkway. Take a right (south) on the parkway and proceed two blocks to Springwater and park. Bring sun protection and water and wear good hiking boots or walking shoes. See **Thomas Bros. p. 1189, H-6.**

**Dusk Walk from Peñasquitos Creek  
Park**

Wed., Sept. 13, 7 - 9 p.m. Participants often see deer, coyote, bats, and other critters of the night on these evening walks led by Naturalist Mike Kelly. Bring flashlight and insect repellent. Meet at Peñasquitos Creek Park in Rancho Peñasquitos, at the intersection of Camino Ruiz and Park Village Drive. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

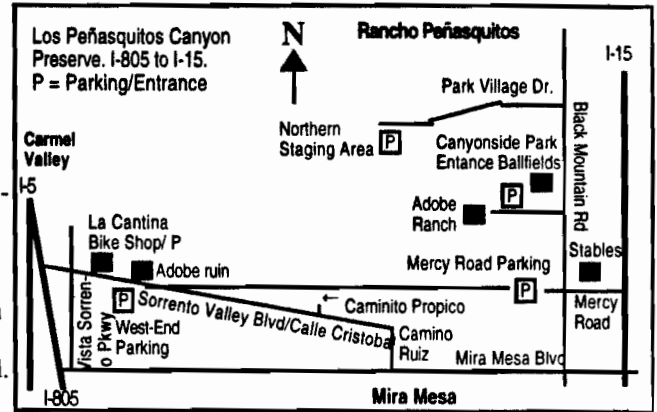
Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 - 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Bird Walk at East End**

Sat., Sept. 16, 8 - 9:30 a.m. Meet Brian Swanson, naturalist, at the upper parking lot Mercy Road parking-staging area, for a bird walk through grasslands and oak woodlands. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Waterfall Dusk Hike from Northern  
Staging Area**

Sat., Sept. 16, 5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a cool, evening hike in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Good chance to see wildlife. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Archaeological Investigations at the  
Camp Hual-Cu-Cuish Site, lecture at  
the Ranch House  
Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m.**

Dr. Lynne Gamble and SDSU Grad. Student Monica Guerrero will discuss their research and findings at this Cuyamacha Rancho State Park archaeological site. Come early and bring a picnic dinner. Dessert and soft drinks provided free by S.D. County Archaeo Society. Optional docent tours of the Ranch House begin at 6 p.m. Lecture is at 7:30 p.m. Free to the public. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

**Rock People Hike**

Sat., Sept. 23, 6 - 7:30 p.m. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D. and look for and examine interesting rocks, stones, cobbles, and pebbles. We will consider how rocks were used as a source of wisdom and healing in ancient cultures. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

## October

**Rock People Hike**

Sat., Oct. 7, 5:30 - 7 p.m. Join Will Bowen, Ph.D. and look for and examine interesting rocks, stones, cobbles, and pebbles. We will consider how rocks were used as a source of wisdom and healing in ancient cultures. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

## (Calendar cont'd)

**Birds of Crest Canyon Open Space**

Sat., Oct. 14, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this bird walk and explore native coastal sage scrub and coastal lagoon habitats. No birding experience necessary. Meet on north side of preserve at gate on Race Track View. Take I-15 to Via de la Valle. go west on Via de la Valle (towards Del Mar Fair Grounds). Turn left (south) onto Jimmy Durante Blvd. Follow this to San Dieguito Lagoon Rd., turn left onto this and follow it west to Race Track View Dr. and meet at gate next to the preserve. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

**Bird Walk at East End**

Sat., Oct. 14, 8 - 9:30 a.m. Meet Brian Swanson, naturalist, at the upper parking lot Mercy Road parking-staging area, for a bird walk through grasslands and oak woodlands. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Waterfall Dusk Hike from Northern Staging Area**

Sat., Oct. 14, 4:30 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a cool, evening hike in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Good chance to see wildlife. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Oct. 21, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**DIRECTIONS****Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

In Mira Mesa. From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe St. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

**Northern Parking-Staging Area at Camino Ruiz and Park Village Drive**

In Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill, left on Park Village Drive, about 1 mile to Camino Ruiz. Left on Camino Ruiz and park. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

**West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 3/4 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky, just 1 block east of last building in Sorrento Valley as you go east on Sorrento Valley Blvd. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Special Events****Techniques and Strategies for Using Native Grasses and Graminoids in Restoration Projects****September 7-8****Canyonside Recreation Center Rancho Peñasquitos.**

cosponsored by Calif. Native Grass Association, Calif. Native Plant Society, Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Parks and Recreation Dept., and others.

For more information contact Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489.

**Wilderness & Wild Rivers Coalition Kick-off Party****Wednesday, October 4**

Mission Trails Regional Park  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Sierra Club Forest & Wilderness Committee

For more info & to RSVP (by Sept. 27) call Camille Armstrong at 858-566-5676.

**Exotic Plants in the Landscape: Processes & Patterns.****October 6 - 8**

Concord, California

Annual symposium of the Calif. Exotic Pest Plant Council

info: Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489.

**Native Plant Sale****Saturday, Oct. 14**

Courtyard, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park.

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Members pre-sale: 9:15 a.m.)

Sponsored by Cal Native Plant Soc.

**Summer Volunteer Achievements**

Mike Kelly

**Surveys for the endangered Willowly mint (*Monardella linoidea* ssp. *viminea*),** research into the historic stagecoach routes, habitat restoration in the Upper Peñasquitos Lagoon and Peñasquitos Canyon, our monthly walks and quarterly wildlife surveys (see separate article this newsletter) meant the following volunteers, many of whom volunteered more than once, kept busy this summer:

Chris Bader, Will Bowen, Les Braund, Cindy Burrascano, Lynne Christenson, Terry Gaughn, Don Hoffman, Mel Howe, Rob Hutsel, Mike Kelly, Linda King, Sharon Klein, Tammy Marren, Barbara Moore, Pete Nelson, Lynne & Alex Prussin, Brian Swanson, Devon Thomas, Mike Volberg and Pat Watkins. Thanks all!

## Fall 2000 Volunteer Activities for the North City Area

For more information on any of these projects call Michelle at 619-224-4192 or Mike at 858-566-6489.

Tools are provided and gloves are available if needed. Wear sturdy boots, clothes you don't mind getting dirty, sun protection and bring plenty of water.

### September

#### **Black Mountain Park Trail & Habitat Restoration Projects**

**Sat., Sept. 2, 8-noon**

Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

**Bros. p. 1169, E-7).**

#### **Black Mountain Park Bird Survey**

**Thurs., Sept. 7, 8 - noon.**

Monthly bird survey. Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info. (Thomas

#### **Peñasquitos Lagoon Wildlife Habitat Restoration**

**Sun., Sept. 10, 9-1:**

Help restore wildlife habitat by removing exotic invasive weeds! For meeting place and directions, call Mike at 858-566-6489.

#### **Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Thurs., Sept. 21, 7 p.m.** The committee's bi-monthly meeting is open to the public and takes place at the Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **484-3219** for directions.

#### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tues. Sept. 26, 7 p.m.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch

House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

#### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Trail Restoration Projects**

**Sat., Sept. 30, 8-noon**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in repairing this beautiful trail along Santa Ysabel Creek. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### October

#### **Black Mountain Park Bird Survey**

**Thurs., Oct. 5, 8 - noon**

Monthly bird survey. Open to any interested birder. Help assist the Ranger survey for spring migrants and resident birds. Some prior birding experience helpful. Meet in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park parking-staging area off Black Mtn. Rd. (Thomas Bros. p. 1169, E-7). Take Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos north to where it turns to dirt; go right for about 2 miles, then right at Black Mtn. Park sign and drive up paved road to parking lot. Trail work, wildlife projects, others. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

#### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tues. Oct. 24, 7 p.m.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting at the Adobe Ranch House off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

#### **Clevenger Canyon (San Pasqual Valley) Trail Repair**

**Sat., Oct. 28, 8-noon**

Join Ranger Dan Bylin in repairing this beautiful trail along Santa Ysabel Creek. Meet in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 about 6 miles past S.D. Wild Animal Park. The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign and be careful when turning into the parking lot. Call Dan at 858-538-8082 for more info.

## Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team Events Calendar

### Wildlife Surveys

Oct 14 Wildlife Survey Training

Oct 21 - Nov 5 Wildlife Survey

Sep 16 - Sep 17

### Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Program

An intensive weekend class devoted to in-depth track analysis and interpretation. Nuances of macro and micro pressure releases, track character in variable substrate, various tracking situations mostly involving animals will be examined, but other exercises including lost person and speed tracking will be covered. Further development of intuitive skills relating to tracking and awareness in nature will also be covered. See Beginner's Class for times. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.

Nov. 10 - 12

### Beginner Tracker/Naturalist Program

Learn the skills of tracking and awareness with emphasis placed on techniques for learning habitats and associated flora and fauna, wildlife physiology and habits, concentric ring philosophy, movement in nature and establishment of a pattern of awareness. This course offers the opportunity to acquire the tools to become proficient in the art and science of tracking animals, people and most anything that leaves a mark on the landscape. Your powers of observation will improve tremendously as will your overall awareness. Exercises in journaling, track and sign age determination, discerning concentric rings, track/sign identification, gait patterns and awareness philosophy will round out this busy weekend.

Be prepared to take notes, do some hiking and have fun. Bring water, hiking attire, sun protection, something warm for the evening activity and a desire to learn. Call 858-672-1120 for cost and registration.



**(Birds cont'd)**

them. The least Bell's vireo was listed as endangered in 1986, when approximately 300 pairs were known to exist in southern California. Since that time their numbers have increased dramatically due to laws protecting riparian woodlands, trapping programs to control the numbers of the nest parasitizing brown-headed cowbirds, and habitat improvement projects occurring in riparian woodlands. Currently it's estimated that Least Bell's vireo numbers have climbed to over 2,000 pairs.

The discovery of the indigo bunting was an exciting addition to our Black Mountain Park bird list. A lone singing male was observed for two days on the north side of Black Mountain near the staging area. Indigo buntings are an extremely rare migrant to San Diego County with only one or two birds being observed each year, so we felt very fortunate to observe this bird. The north slope of Black Mountain consists of thick mixed chaparral, with patches of native grasslands and coastal sage scrub interspersed on the lower flanks of the slope. The thick chaparral has yielded many surprises, including Wilson's warblers, yellow warblers, western tanagers, and possible nesting sage sparrows. The native grasslands and patches of coastal sage scrub east of the north parking lot have yielded grasshopper and rufous-crowned sparrows, both species of special concern.

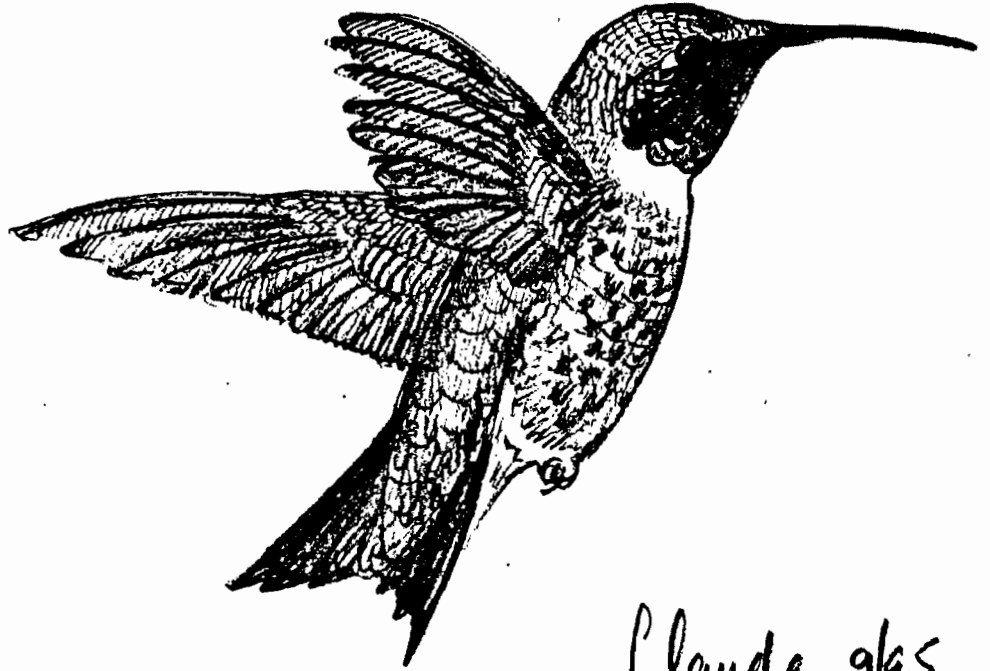
Our surveys have also recorded some interesting data north of the park boundary along Lusardi Creek and in the La Jolla Valley. Two ferruginous hawks were observed through out the winter in the La Jolla Valley, with one bird staying to the late date of April 7th, 2000. We were also lucky to stumble across a lesser hawk on eggs. The nighthawks and poor wills are ground nesting birds, with their nests consisting of nothing more than a scraped area of bare ground. The adult bird and eggs blend in magnificently with the surroundings, so it's very easy to overlook or miss their nesting sites.

The species list for the Clevenger Canyon area of the San Pasqual Valley Open Space Park is quickly approaching 100 species. This beautifully rugged canyon is composed of a variety of habitats, including willow/ sycamore/

alder riparian woodlands, coastal live and engleman oak woodlands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and disturbed grasslands. The riparian woodlands are home to numerous woodland species including Least Bell's vireo, solitary vireo, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, and downy woodpecker. The boulder strewn coastal sage scrub

Valley, and lies adjacent to the agricultural activities occurring in the western areas of the canyon. We will continue to survey the area for cactus wrens the hope of finding some of the birds that have been recorded in the past, but at this point we aren't overly optimistic.

The first seven months of surveys have provided us with some interest-



*Claude 9/95*

and chaparral covered slopes of the canyon are home to an unexpectedly large population of rufous-crowned sparrows. Rufous-crowned sparrows prefer areas of scrub with rocky outcroppings, and the north Clevenger Canyon Trail provides perfect habitat for this year round resident. We have also discovered that the numbers of California gnatcatcher in this area appear to be low. A total of two birds have been observed, one on each side of the canyon. Future surveys will concentrate on the presence or absence of this threatened species in other areas of the canyon.

After the first seven months of surveys a species of concern is the coastal cactus wren. According to historic maps there was a small population of coastal cactus wrens within the prickly pears on the north slope of the canyon. After a number of surveys we have been disappointed not to find any cactus wrens within this area. This small population appears to be isolated from other c wren populations in the San Pasqual

ing discoveries and findings. We hope to expand and adopt more volunteers to help out and cover more areas of both parks infuture. Data being collected now will provide some baseline information for the future. As urban development quickly moves into the La Jolla Valley to the north of Black Mountain Park the data ther today will be extremely important in the future. If you are interested in finding out more about the surveys, or if you are interested in getting involved please give Park Ranger Dan Bylin a call at (858) 538-8082.

## Welcome New Members

Barnes Family  
Fraser Family  
Sierra Hayden  
Richard & Ruth Mellen



# The Rock People

Will Bowen, Ph.D.

If you've walked in Peñasquitos Canyon, you've undoubtedly noticed lots of interesting rocks, stones, cobbles, and pebbles strewn about the trails. Perhaps you stopped to pick one up to admire its great age and physical configuration.

Ancient people were alike in their fascination with rocks and stones. Stones were fashioned into tools and weapons, as well as symbolic and religious objects. Think about Stone Age people working with a Stone Age technology — almost every aspect of their lives dependent on stones for survival. Stones were shaped into projectile points, hammerstones, grinding implements, awls, knives, laid out as markers and as building foundations, as well as turned into human and animal figurines.

In addition to their economic or utilitarian uses, stones were also thought to be the tools of the shaman, healer, medicine man, or religious leader. Stones were viewed as repositories of wisdom, as well as possessing healing energies. The Plains Indians called stones the rock nation or the rock people. Rocks were thought to be our ancestors — the oldest things created and thus our uncles and grandfathers, who as family, would teach us.

Ancient people thought that each stone could speak and had a story to tell. One just had to learn how to listen. A stone was seen as having a particular energy or a magical action. Some even thought that a stone was a living being with a full consciousness. Just as Australian aborigines speak to nature through telepathy, so too can an individual speak to stones.

The Inca people of Peru were very high in their use of stones in their spirituality. They referred to stones as "khuyas," which translates as love or affection. It was like a stone was a gift of love from the divine. What a powerful way to view a rock! The Inca "Paqo," or traveler on the mystical path, was always on the look out for interesting shaped stones, or stones from powerful places, like the "apus" or the sacred mountains of Peru.

In modern times we have remnants of the ancient fascination with rocks, in the form of pet rocks, power rocks, worry stones, and cobbles that have words, symbols, or animals carved on them. Unfortunately, we've lost the deeper mystical connection with rocks.

The way for us to regain the mystical or sacred connection to rocks is to walk the canyon and wait for a rock to call out to us. Let the rock draw or attract your attention. Once you've met or encountered the stone you can have a dialogue with it and become open to its teachings. To facilitate this process it's helpful to enter a relaxed, open, and intuitive state of mind as you study the rock in detail — its shape, color, texture, and weight.

The shape of the rock may help to determine what it has to offer. A stone with a point or protrusion on it may be used to charge up your energy or to extract heavy or bad energy, called "hucha" by the Inca. A rock with concentric circles may facilitate states of mediation. One with a hole in it, called a "torus" stone may possess many powerful secrets. Another with a rectangle or square design on it is thought to be a doorway or portal stone that can be used to travel into different dimensions or time periods. A stone with a face on it — I found one that looks like Caspar the Friendly Ghost — is thought to be guardian or a teacher.

The stone can be held in the hand or placed against the body at the heart, forehead, or navel to absorb its energies. The stone may bring out your deeper or subconscious thoughts. You can also sleep with a stone, perhaps placing it under your pillow, in which case the stone will speak to you in your dreams.

A powerful method is to hold the stone up close to your lips and blow your spirit or breath or prayer on it. Stones also like to be fed regularly with Florida Water or whisky or smudged with sage — this charges them up. After use, it's a good idea to cleanse them in creek water.

To charge a stone up for healing hold it in your right hand and point it

toward the sun. Then bring it down to touch your chest, then take it into the left hand. It can now be used for healing. A stone may be passed over the energy field of the body or actually rubbed on the body or tapped against it. I've often stopped while jogging near Scripps Pier and used cobbles to hit against my sore ankles and calves with excellent results. There is a new massage method out that uses oiled smooth river cobbles for rubbing on the body.

Several different types of stones may be collected into a group. Perhaps you can collect one for each chakra and use them to touch or charge or awaken those energy centers in the body. You can also collect stones that represent your childhood, adulthood, shadow side, your gift, or strength, one for your spiritual masters or ones from powerful places.

A collection of stones is carried in a sturdy piece of cloth varying in size from a handkerchief to a small throw rug. The stones are folded in the cloth — this is called a "mesa." Plains Indians called this a medicine bundle. A medicine bundle has your powerful ritual objects in it.

When you walk on the trail you can add enjoyment and connection to nature by being on the look out for power rocks or stones you can use for learning or healing. I think you might really enjoy trying to speak with the stones. You get better at it with practice and special rocks become more and more important to you. I hope you have a good experience with the rocks of the canyon.



COAST HORNED LIZARD

**(Citizens Group cont'd)**

ishment of trails systems and signage, were among the many important decisions facilitated by the members of the CAC. In recent years, following much effort by CAC members as well as City and County Staff, two plans, the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Master Plan and the Natural Resource Management Plan, were prepared and approved by action of the San Diego City Council. With these two important plans approved and in place, the CAC's original mission has been completed.

Looking to the future, a decision has been made, and approved by the Task Force, to re-organize the make-up of the CAC to more accurately reflect the constituent user groups that regularly use and support the Preserve. Drawing on the energy of a dedicated user community, the newly constituted CAC will be more effective in efforts to further manage and improve this wonderful resource that we all share.

**Membership Restructured**

In August of 1999, the Task Force approved a new membership and charter for the CAC. Efforts are currently underway to enlist the support and participation of the newly identified member groups, and to seat the new committee. The organizations listed below were identified based on their past and continuing direct involvement in the Preserve, both as users of the resource, and advocates for its protection. The list is by no means restrictive – the intent is to encourage participation from as many of these interested groups as possible. These groups are:

**Voting Members**

- Bicycle Organizations
- Trails Coalition Council
- Sierra Club
- Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve
- Equestrian Center
- Equestrian Groups
- Volunteer Patrol
- San Diego Archeological Society

- San Diego Historical Society
- County Park Society/Park Department
- Torrey Pines State Reserve Association
- Native Americans
- Three At Large members appointed by the Task Force

**Non-Voting Members**

- Audubon Society
- Hang Glider Association
- SDG&E representative
- Hot Air Balloon Association
- Scouting representatives (Boy/Girls Scouts)
- Trackers Club
- San Diego County Water Authority (Sewer)
- San Diego Natural History Museum
- Representatives from area businesses/geographic community groups/schools

For further information, contact the CAC Chairperson, Geoffrey Smith, at 858.566.5676, or email to [gsmith@thecomputersmith.com](mailto:gsmith@thecomputersmith.com).

# Wildlife Survey Expansion on Track

Dean Woods

Although the Penasquitos Tracking Team is still active in and around Penasquitos Canyon Preserve, we have grown and also cooperate with other wildlife tracking groups and are working together as the San Diego Tracking Team. As the San Diego Tracking Team, we continue to sponsor Tracker/Naturalist Programs throughout the year and most importantly we continue to execute our wildlife track and sign surveys throughout a growing number of sites around the county.

The San Diego Tracking Team has grown to about eighteen members and the number of transects we survey has expanded to 37 sites around San Diego County. These sites are located in critical wildlife corridors and tunnels, as well as in open space preserves and parks. These areas range from Lake Sutherland and Lake Hodges, to Iron Mountain and Penasquitos Canyon, to Mission Trails Region Park. To survey this growing number of transects requires a large number of volunteers to

participate with transect leaders during survey periods. The Tracking Team would like to encourage anyone who has an interest in habitat preservation or who would just like to know what kind of animal made those tracks, to come to our next Wildlife Survey Training on Saturday, October 14th. See the calendar of events for time and place.

The Spring and Summer Surveys this year have been successfully completed. This was made possible to a great extent by the large group of enthusiastic volunteers. The Tracking Team would like to thank the following people who donated their valuable time to help:

- Rick Bailey,
- Neal Biggart,
- Cheryl Brehne,
- Karen Christey,
- Jill Donley,
- Matt Fowler,
- Sierra Hayden,
- Jill Bailing,
- Dave Bilak,
- Roni Breite,
- Judah Dinnel,
- Paulette Fillion,
- Dean Gould,
- Margaret Hilton,

- Al Hofstatter,
- Deborah Johnson,
- Mike Jungly,
- Toni Kastellic,
- David Kiser,
- John Larmer,
- Kaitlin Meadows,
- Vasko Mitzen,
- Patty Raney,
- Scott Rieker,
- Betty Taylor,
- Mike Wellick,
- Steven Wilson,
- Leo Holland,
- Sharon Johnson,
- Gerald Jungly,
- Mike Kelly,
- Christina Liang,
- Jessica McMaster,
- Rebecca Minifie,
- Cliff Oliver,
- Annie Ranson,
- Carole Rieker,
- Ellen Talbert,
- Benetta Wilson,
- Jerry Woodworth

San Diego Tracking Team members are :

- Chris Bader,
- Uli Burgin,
- Phoenix Von Hندی,
- Ann Hunt,
- Barry Martin,
- Kevin Oliver,
- Tarja Sagar,
- Vince Skandunas,
- June Warburton,
- Dean Woods,
- Rick Botta,
- Doug Hansen,
- Lee Kirchhevel,
- Gretchen Nell,
- Steve Romeo,
- Julie Savory,
- Mike Volberg,
- Lois Warburton,



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 858-484-3219

NONPROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 POWAY, CA  
 PERMIT NO. 286

**Address Service Requested**

## Check Your Label

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

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Edward DiBella 619-594-1650  
 Vice-President: Dean Woods 858-672-1120  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Don Albright, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Barry Martin,  
 Rick Botta, Brian Swanson

### Walks Leaders

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

### Committees:

Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman  
 Newsletter: Mike Kelly  
 Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
 Stream Survey Committee: Edward DiBella  
 Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
 Volunteer Coordinator: Michelle Murphree (224-4192)  
 Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly  
 Wildlife Survey Organizer: Dean Woods

## Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/2000

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
 Call 858-484-3219 or 858- 566-6489 for more information.



# Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Nov. / Dec. 2000  
Volume 14, No. 6

## 2000 Nature Program for Kids a Success

Lee Kirsheval, Tracking Team

Thanks to the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the City of San Diego, The Tracking Team was able to obtain a grant to run our nature program for kids in the spring of 2000. We had 15 hands-on field programs and two outreach presentations, educating 225 students. Most of these kids were first to fourth graders, including two scout groups and one special education class.

Most of the teachers opted for a sensory awareness focus. We had activities that showed how animals see, hear, and walk, and how the kids could learn from the animals. One particular favorite was having mountain lions (the kids) stalking mule deer (blind-folded parents). They learned that it isn't easy to be a mountain lion, or a mule deer. Each group was given a safety talk, including how to act around rattlesnakes.

Every program also included a short discovery hike. On one hike kids witnessed an American kestrel, perched in a sycamore, enjoying a breakfast of mouse. Programs ended with either Steve making fire with a bow drill, or me playing Native American flute.

Many thanks are due to Steve Romeo, who was my very able assistant on most of the programs; Chris Bader, who pitched in to do an outreach program that I couldn't make; and Pat Watkins, who was a terrific help on many of the discovery hikes. These folks really made this program work.

I'm awaiting word on proposed grants for 2001 from the Friends and the City. Already teachers are calling for reservations. I anticipate an even busier schedule next year, starting in February.

## Big Restoration Project Underway at West End

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

Visit the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and you should begin seeing big changes to the riparian (creek) area. This is the "El Cuervo" mitigation, named after the crumbling adobe ruins near Sorrento Valley Blvd. Many visitors to this area aren't aware that Peñasquitos Creek is channelized in this area, that is, it's not in its natural historical channel. It's believed that the dikes that form its current banks (easily seen from high on the hills above) were built in the 1930s to support bean crops being grown in adjacent fields. Pre dike photographs from 1928 show creek meandering in several channels, in what is called a "braided" creek channel.

### Restoring historic channel / flood plain

The El Cuervo restoration project will involve taking down parts of these dikes and excavating the old channel on the south side of the creek to allow the creek to once again flow in a natural fashion through multiple channels. The creek should sustain a much larger wetlands. It should also moderate future flooding in Sorrento Valley a bit during moderate rain events. Over the past decade, even moderate rains have caused flooding in Sorrento Valley. Removing the dikes slows down the water in the creek and allows flood waters to access the flood plain earlier in a rain event and facilitates the retention of more water in the surrounding earth.

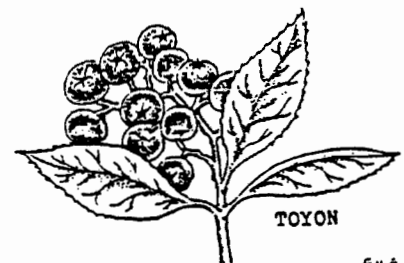
In fact, this project is mitigation for the dredging of accumulated silt from the merge point of Carroll and

### Highlights Inside

Hike calendar	2
3 Grants / New Historical information	3
Volunteer Schedule	4
Enviro Videos	5
Bidding Adieu	6
Board & Committee Members Needed	6
Tracking Team Calendar	6
Bird Habitats	7
Directory	8

## Christmas at the Rancho

Mark your calendars for the annual christmas party for volunteers. It will be held Sat., Dec. 9, from 5 - 9 p.m. in the historic Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House. The festive event will feature a potluck, door prizes, and our traditional "white elephant" game. If you have volunteered in the preserve in any capacity in the year 2000, you're invited! Flyers will be mailed out later in November. Call Ranger Reneene at 858-484-7504 to RSVP and more info. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call



TOYON

EWF

**Toyon or California holly (Heteromeles arbutifolia). Illus. by Dr. Elberta Fleming**

See p. 3 for more

## Hike Schedule

## Enjoy Fall Colors / Holiday Fruits

Enjoy fall colors in López Canyon, where the sycamores are turning nicely and in Peñasquitos Canyon west of the waterfall, particularly around the Sycamore Crossing where both sycamores and cottonwoods are turning yellow and brown. Fall reds can be seen where poison oak dominates (!), especially between Black Mountain Road and the waterfall. Pat Watkins' walks will emphasize fall colors and fall fruits such as California holly (*Toyon* or *Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and mistletoe (*Phoradendrom macrophyllum*).

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded informations.

## November &amp; December

**Historic Adobe Ranch Tour  
Every Saturday & Sunday**

San Diego Archaeological Society docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's oldest residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m., on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting for 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 P.M. Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for directions.

## November

**Birds of Black Mountain Park**

Sat., Nov. 11, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this guided bird walk and explore the native chaparral and grassland habitats. No birding experience necessary. Take Black Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos north to where the pavement ends at barricades. Turn right on the dirt road and follow it approx. 1 mile to park sign and paved entrance on the right. Proceed up to parking lot. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen and sturdy hiking boots. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

**Natural History Walk at Ranch House**

Sat., Nov. 11, 1 - 2:30 p.m. Naturalist Brian Swanson has led interpretive walks at the Preserve for 10 years. Join him as he interprets the variety of plants and animals found within a stone's throw of

the historic adobe ranch house. See Ranch House Walk/Tours directions. also, **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Nov. 18, 7:30 - 9 a.m.

Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Healing Stones Hike**

Sat., Nov. 18th, 4 - 5:30 p.m. Join Will Bowen, PhD and learn to use stones for divination. Make a "mesa" out of stones for opening the energy centers of the body. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Holiday hike from Northern Staging**

Sat., Nov. 25, 3 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a fall colors and holiday plants walk to the waterfall and back, about 2.5 miles. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

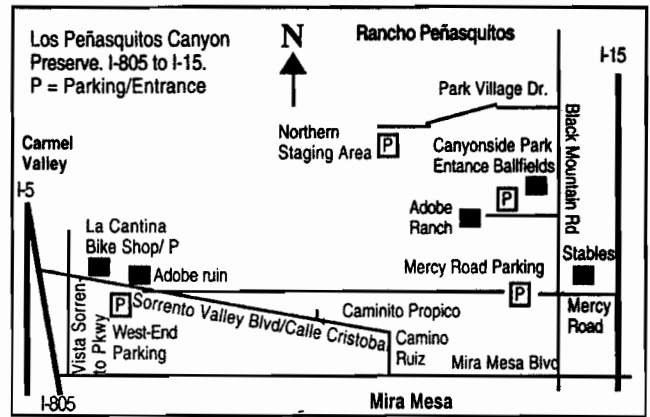
## December

**Natural History Walk at Ranch House**

Sat., Dec. 2, .m. One of the best times to see animals in the Preserve is early in the day. Join Naturalist Brian Swanson for an informative walk to learn about some of the plants and animals found within a stone's throw of the historic adobe. See Ranch House Walk/Tours directions. also, **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Birds of San Pasqual Valley Open Space Park, Clevenger Canyon**

Sat., Dec. 9, 8 a.m. Join Ranger Dan Bylin on this guided bird walk and explore riparian woodlands. No birding experience necessary. Meet in the north Clevenger Canyon trail staging area. Take highway 78 about 6 miles east of the Wild Animal



Park (towards Ramona). Watch for the trail parking area on the left (north) side of the highway, and meet here. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

**Christmas at the Rancho**

Sat., Dec. 9, 5 - 9 p.m. the annual christmas party for volunteers will be held in the historic Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House. The festive event will feature a potluck, door prizes, and our traditional "white elephant" game. If you have volunteered in the preserve in any capacity in the year 2000, you're invited! Call Ranger Reneene at 858-484-7504 to RSVP and more info. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Dec. 16, 7:30 - 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. See Ranch House Walk/Tours directions. also, **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Mistletoe & Holly hike from Northern Staging**

Sat., Dec. 16, 3 p.m. Take a break from holiday shopping and join Pat Watkins for a walk to the waterfall and back, about 2.5 miles. See mistletoe and California holly. Meet at the kiosk at the intersection of Camino Ruiz & Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**End of Year Hike**

Sat., Dec. 30th, 3 - 4:30 p.m. Join Will Bowen and learn to use your "mesa" of stones to reflect on the past year and look into the coming year. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento

See p. 3 for more



**(Calendar cont'd)**

Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**DIRECTIONS****Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

This intersection is located in Mira Mesa. From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe St. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

**Northern Parking-Staging Area at Camino Ruíz and Park Village Drive**

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

**Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in hanglider parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 3/4 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. east, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right, past the curve. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**(West end cont'd)**

Peñasquitos Creeks two years ago. Willow and exotic giant reed (*Arundo donax*) habitat that had grown up on the deposited silts were impacted and had to be mitigated for, under environmental regulations, by a creation or restoration of equivalent or higher quality habitat offsite, in this case, the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The dredging should also reduce flooding during such rain events. The dredging enhanced the water carrying capacity of the creeks at this point in Sorrento Valley and also provided a place for flood carried silts to drop out before reaching Peñasquitos Lagoon where the silt causes great ecological damage.

**Goal in master plan**

The dike removal and flood plain restoration has been a long term goal of the Friends and is part of the Master Restoration Plan for the Preserve. The Ranger Staff, Parks Dept. biologists, the Friends, and the Citizens Advisory Committee have all reviewed and approved the plans. A sister project on the north side of the creek is also being considered as mitigation for wetland impacts that occurred with the building of the middle portion of SR56 and is in the review process now. Since these were old agricultural fields it's no surprise they are 75% or more covered in invasive mediterranean grasses and thistles. Part of the mitigation projects will be removing these exotics and replacing them with native plants that have a higher value as wildlife habitat.

**Trails**

Public access will continue on existing and rerouted trails in the area.. The old, washed out utility road that runs from Sorrento Valley Blvd. past the Adobe ruins is expected to be rerouted on top of the existing sewer line and better culverts run under it to facilitate the flow of López Creek under the road. The project is expected to take 1-1/2 - 2 years to complete, with several years of monitoring and maintenance following.

**New historical information**

See the accompany article on grants for the latest information on why we now call this adobe "El Cuervo."

## 3 Grants To Promote Historical Research & Restoration

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

There was ample good news for the Preserve this month with the awarding of grants and other monies for a variety of projects. The City Parks Dept. has earmarked \$15,000 to support research into the history of the El Cuervo (formerly Ruíz-Alvarado) adobe ruin off Sorrento Valley Blvd. in the west end of the Preserve (see below for more details).

Another \$75,000 has been earmarked for repairing the roof and stabilizing the Mohnike Adobe in the equestrian center off Black Mountain Road. This adobe dates from about just after the turn of the century and is named for the family that built and occupied it. The Mohnike Family owned the Peñasquitos Rancho during this period of time and decided to build and move into the above named after them after a fire destroyed part of the Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House (formerly called the Johnson-Taylor Adobe).

Lastly, the Multiple Species Conservation Program staff at the City announced that they had received a grant totalling \$182,000 for the design and installation of erosion control devices for López Canyon around the Camino Santa Fe bridge area. Erosion in this stretch of the canyon is severe and threatening the endangered and lovely Willowly monardella (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *viminea*). The Friends supported the City in applying for this grant and will add our own \$14,000 raised through a \$7,000 grant from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service matched by funds donated by our members. This long overdue project should be in the ground next summer or fall.

**Adobe history updates**

Many of us first learned our history of Peñasquitos Canyon and the adobe

See p. 5 for more

## Fall/Winter Volunteer Activities

### Black Mountain Open Space Park

Welcome to Black Mountain Open Space Park. Are you interested in helping take care of your park and it's wild inhabitants? If so, let me know. The City of San Diego Park Ranger staff will be leading volunteer work parties this winter, and we need your help. Come join the park ranger and other volunteers from your community while we work on various projects including trail work, wildlife projects, and other projects to help keep the park beautiful. If you are interested in helping out please join us on one or all of the following dates:

Saturday, November 4th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 2nd  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 6th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

We'll meet in the Black Mountain Open Space Park staging area off of Black Mountain Road (Thomas Map Guide page 1169, E-7) at 8:00 a.m. Call the phone number below for directions to the park.

Remember to bring the following: plenty of drinking water, a snack, hat, sun screen, and wear sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and tough old clothes you don't mind getting dirty.

If you have any questions please call Ranger Dan Bylin at (858) 538-8082. Thank you for your interest and support, and I hope to see you at the park!

### Otay Sweetwater Refuge Work Party

Cindy Burrascano of the Calif. Native Plant Society needs volunteers to help restore habitat for the endangered *Hemizonia conjugens* (Otay tarplant) on December 9. Call Cindy at 619-421-5767 or email her at cindyburrascano@home.com

### San Pasqual Valley/ Clevenger Canyon Wildlife Habitat Improvement Projects

Come on out and join the gang this fall and winter as we improve wildlife habitat along Santa Ysabel Creek by removing the non-native and highly invasive plant giant cane (*Arundo donax*). We will be working east of the San Pasqual Valley along beautiful Santa Ysabel Creek within Clevenger Canyon. The City of San Diego Park Rangers will be running monthly giant cane removal projects in the canyon, and we need your help. The location is a little remote and the terrain is rough, but the scenery is beautiful. Be prepared to do some hiking and boulder hopping in the creek bed, and expect to get dirty and wet. If this sounds like fun and you are interested in helping to improve habitat for our local wildlife please come out and join us on one of the following dates:

Saturday, November 18th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 16th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 27th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

We'll be meeting in the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot. Take Highway 78 approximately 6 miles past the San Diego Wild Animal Park (east towards Ramona). The North parking lot is on the left hand side (north) of the highway. Watch for the Clevenger Canyon Trail sign, and be careful when turning into the parking lot.

Remember to bring plenty of drinking water, sun screen, hat, and wear sturdy shoes, long pants and clothes you don't mind getting wet and dirty.

If you have any questions please call Ranger Dan Bylin at (858) 538-8082. Thank you for your interest and support, and I hope to see you at the park.

### Mission Valley Wildlife Refuge Restoration

Sunday, November 19  
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Help remove invasive plants and trash from the South Mission Bay Wildlife Refuge. This marsh and open water wild bird and fish sanctuary extends from the ocean all the way up to I-5 where it abuts the new Mission Valley Preserve. We'll be removing Brazilian peppers (*Schinus terebinthifolia*), Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*). This will be in preparation for later planting of native plants.

Meet at the southwest corner of the intersection of Friars Road and Seaworld Drive. Park in the dirt parking lot on this corner. Access this from an entrance off the west side of Friars Road just before it meets Seaworld Drive.

No experience necessary. Remember to bring the following: plenty of drinking water, a snack, hat, sun screen, and wear sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and tough old clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 for more information.

#### Volunteers Needed

### Vista H.S. Planting in Peñasquitos Canyon

Tues. & Wed., January 16 & 17, 2001  
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. (time approximate)

We need volunteers to work with high school students on both these dates. Each year about 90 Vista High School students come each of two days to help with Preserve revegetation projects. This year the students will be planting hundreds of native plants along the new Trans County Trail below Mercy Road. Our volunteers will help coordinate, demonstrate planting techniques and provide quality control of the plantings. Call Ranger Bill Lawrence at 858-538-8066 or Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 to volunteer.

**(Grants cont'd)**

ranch houses from Mary Ward's account of the canyon and its occupants in the historical account *Rancho de Los Peñasquitos on The Road to Yuma* (published in 1984 by the County Dept. of Parks and Recreation, now out of print). Mary Ward was working on a new, greatly revised edition of this booklet when she died several years ago. Before her untimely death Mary had discovered startling new information about the Peñasquitos Rancho and the age of the well preserved adobe just west of Black Mountain Road.

**Older hidden adobe**

Ward's new information from historical documents was confirmed and amplified by archaeological excavations conducted in the 1980s by Dr. Susan Hector, then working for a private consulting firm, now the Director of the County Dept. of Parks and Recreation.

It was during work to restore the Adobe that Dr. Hector found an earlier adobe embedded in the walls of existing adobe! Excavation revealed construction techniques and details that demonstrated it was built much earlier than the ranch house we see today. Mary Ward's research had turned up historical documents that pointed to an earlier adobe on this site as well.

Until then the "Johnson-Taylor Ranch House" as it was called, was thought to have had its first big section built in the early 1860s by Captain George Johnson and his bride, the former Estefana Alvarado. Johnson was an entrepreneur of his time, earning fortunes in the cattle and steamboat businesses. He ran a steamboat on the Colorado at Yuma. Estefana Alvarado was a member of a prominent California family of Mexican descent. In fact, it was her brother who gifted the newly weds with much of what we call Rancho Peñasquitos today. Rancho Peñasquitos is the oldest Mexican land grant in San Diego County.

It was known that the Johnsons had added on to some existing structure, but this was not thought to have been of any consequence historically. It had been thought up to Hector and Ward's new information that the adobe at the

west end, commonly called the "Ruíz-Alvarado" adobe, was the first adobe and the first structure built in the preserve as required by Mexican land grant laws to vest the property. These laws required a structure and economic activity to be occurring within one year of the granting of the land. Since the land grant was made to Francisco Maria Ruíz, the Comandante of the Presidio for his loyal services (cash was short!) in 1823, it was assumed the west end adobe had to have been built in 1823 or 1824.

Now we know that the first adobe built in the canyon is contained within the walls of the Peñasquitos Ranch House. It is now the *oldest standing residence* in San Diego County!

---

**... serious progress toward unveiling and protecting a unique and powerful part of our heritage.**

---

While the historical and archaeological investigations at the east end turned up new information authenticating the adobe there as including the original land grant building, preliminary investigations of the west end adobe also turned up new information.

An archaeological and historical research project was begun on the west end adobe, but, unfortunately cut short of completion. The evidence seems to indicate this adobe was probably built in the 1850s. It's of a different type of construction technique and artifacts found on the grounds indicate this period as well. It's now believed this adobe was named *El Cuervo* after the old name for López Canyon (that's another mystery for another time, the López Family and its ruins! Stay tuned for more Will Bowen on that.)

The \$15,000 grant reported earlier in this article will support further research and investigation into this adobe.

**New historical archaeology book coming**

The new information on the east end adobe, will be detailed in a new book coming out from County Parks, probably in late 2001. This book,

which I'm helping to publish, will provide a record of the major archaeological investigations that have been carried out over three decades around this adobe ranch house. The three principal investigators were Doctors Susan Hector, Lynne Christenson and Steve Bouscaren. All focused on different aspects of the history of the site. Bouscaren's City College excavations, still ongoing, are providing equally starting new information on the Native American history in Peñasquitos. Radiocarbon dating of artifacts found in his most recent digs push back the known history by thousands of years! For more details I'm afraid we're all going to have to wait for the new book!

Peñasquitos' three adobes offer an unprecedented look back into San Diego's past, reflecting many different epochs in its rich history and whose occupants and owners played typical and prominent roles in this history. One has been restored, one is about to be repaired and stabilized, and the third is to be investigated.

This is serious progress toward unveiling and protecting a unique and powerful part of our heritage.

## Enviro Video Volunteers Needed

Would you like to volunteer on a project that could have an impact on local environmental issues?

We need volunteers to help in the production of a local public access television program. No experience is required. We will be using professional and prosumer equipment. Volunteers are needed as camera operators, sound check, lighting, editing, script writing, scribe, general labor and more. Also needed are people for in front of the camera. News readers and reporters. If you are interested call Les Braund at 858-566-3958.

## Board & Committee Volunteers Needed

Mike Kelly

The Friends need more volunteers to become active at the Board of Director and Committee levels. As you may have noticed, we've expanded our outreach activities, especially in wildlife surveys and restoration projects, into many other areas.

While the Tracking Team is helping to form a county wide group, San Diego County Trackers, the Friends as a whole do not intend to go "county wide."

There are plenty of other good conservation groups in many other places. An exception is to our north. We have expanded our own geographic area of interest to include the Del Mar Mesa and Black Mountain Open Space Parks, both connected to us now through wildlife corridors.

We do want to continue to help other groups develop their new restoration and wildlife survey programs however. This is stretching us a bit thin and we sure could use more help!

### Volunteer coordinator

With Michelle Murphree leaving us (see Bidding Adieu, this page), we have lost a great volunteer coordinator for our restoration (weed and planting) projects. When we had a volunteer restoration project coming up I would email volunteers while Michelle would call those that didn't have emails. Typically this is for 1-2 project a month in the winter months of January - March, and once a month for the rest of the year. She typically spent one evening doing this the week of the project. If you would like to take this over, please call me at 858-566-6489. The Tracking Team coordinates its own volunteer needs and would not be a responsibility of the volunteer coordinator.

### Membership Coordinator

We haven't had a membership coordinator in a while and it's showing up in a stagnating membership level. We'd especially like to reach out to

## Bidding A dieu

Mike Kelly

I'm sad to say the Friends and the park said goodbye to two very good friends: City Ranger Dion Heller and his wife, Michelle Murphree, also the Friends' volunteer coordinator. They decided they'd had enough of big city life and took off for the wilds of northern Idaho.

Anyone who has joined one of our volunteer projects in Peñasquitos or in the new Mission Valley Preserve will recount the boundless enthusiasm of both of these people. Whether chain-sawing down an exotic saltceder (*Tamarix ramosissima*) or planting a native bunchgrass (*Nasella pulchra*) they loved it. Neither was the type of "organizer" who could stand by and "super-vise;" they loved to get just as down and dirty as the hardest working volunteer.

Dion had a genuine enthusiasm for working with volunteer and community groups, an attitude we've been very lucky to enjoy with our professional Ranger staff in this park. It's not always the case.

---

rim dwellers and residents of new neighborhoods such as those on the northern rim in Sorrento Hills or the Del Mar Mesa. We need to publicize our hike schedule better. New members often come from attendees at such events. Again, call me if you want to discuss possibly filling this position.

These volunteers don't necessarily have to join the Board of Directors. It would be nice, but it's not required.

To join the Friends' Board you have to want to play an active (not necessarily big) role in our activities and attend several Board meetings (4th Tuesday of each month except December, 7 p.m. at the Ranch House) before being voted on. Call me to discuss this if you're interested.

Perhaps there's an activity such as education, leading hikes, water surveys or some other you would think the Friends should be doing. If so, let's talk about it and how we can organize it and the role you want to play in it.

Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team

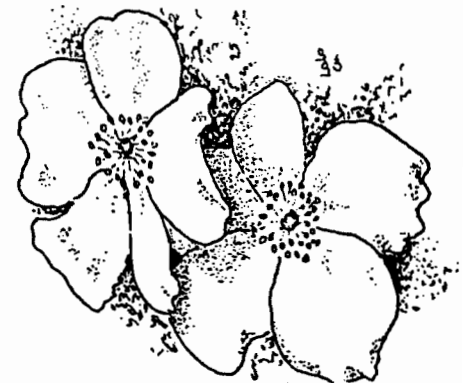
## January Wildlife Track & Sign Survey

Saturday, Jan. 13, from 9:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. the Friends' Tracking Team will be offering a free training to volunteers who would like to help monitor our wildlife in our quarterly surveys. The purpose of the surveys is to monitor the wildlife of not only Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, but Black Mountain Open Space, Mission Trails, San Dieguito River Park, Crestridge, and other areas.

In the six hour class volunteers will learn some of the basics of how to track several species of wildlife, through slide shows, lectures and "dirt time!" Bring a bag lunch. At the end of the class they will be asked to sign up to help on the winter survey, beginning the week after the training and lasting for 15 days. Each participant can decide for him or herself how many survey transects they want to help on, as little as one or as many as they have the time for! Each new volunteer will be paired with an experienced tracker.

The Friends monitor wildlife through quarterly track and sign transect surveys for a number of animal species, including mountain lion, mule deer, coyote, bobcat, weasel, and others. Such surveys confirm the presence or absence of certain rare species (mountain lion, weasel), changes in wildlife populations over time, and the use of different habitats by certain species over time.

Volunteers should be high school and older, please. Call Dean at 858-672-1120 for more information.





# Bird Habitats in Peñasquitos Canyon

by Barbara Zepf

[Editor's note: from time to time we reprint an article written for us earlier by birder Barbara Zepf. Enjoy!]

Proper habitat is the most important requisite for attracting certain birds to certain places.

## Habitat

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

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

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

## Mixed-Oaks Woodland

With its mixed-oak woodlands,

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

Acorn Woodpeckers are about nine inches long, with a wingspread of 17 inches. It has a black back, breast and feet., but a white abdomen. Its long and sticky tongue with a barbed tip is used for catching ants or for licking sap from a tree. Its white rump and small white wing patches are very conspicuous, especially when flying. Their flight is undulating, sort of like a mini-roller coaster. Acorn Woodpeckers have whitish eyes, unlike other woodpeckers.

## Acorn Woodpeckers are very sociable

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

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

deep enough to harm the tree. Sometimes they will drill a hole in the wooden sides or roof of your house to store their goodies!

They feed on acorns from fall until spring. During the summer, they eat mostly insects. Sometimes they even catch them on the wing, like a 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! They lay four or five white eggs in the spring. They occasionally have a second brood in the fall. The whole social group helps to feed the young. In fact, cooperation seems to be the key word for Acorn Woodpeckers. In addition to being communal nesters, they also take turns digging the holes, collecting, storing and guarding their acorn cache.

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

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

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

© 1990 Barbara Zepf





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

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
858-484-3219

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
POWAY, CA  
PERMIT NO. 286

Address Service Requested

### Check Your Label

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

### Friends' Directory

**Officers**

President: Edward DiBella 619-594-1650  
Vice-President: to be filled  
Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
Secretary: Rick Botta

**Other Members of the Board of Directors**

Don Albright, Les Braund, Chris Bader, Barry Martin, Rick Botta, Brian Swanson

**Walks Leaders**

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

**Committees:**

Hike Scheduler: Gaye Dingeman  
Newsletter: Mike Kelly  
Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
Stream Survey Committee: Edward DiBella  
Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
Volunteer Coordinator: to be filled  
Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly  
Webmaster: Steve Romeo  
Wildlife Surveys: Dean Woods: 858-672-1120.

### Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ **11/2000**

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
Call 858-484-3219 or 858- 566-6489 for more information.