



# Canyon News

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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## Save the Village of Ystagua

Lynne Christenson, PhD

[**Editor's note:** the Friends are helping to form a coalition with archaeology groups and others to save what remains of the Indian village of Ystagua in Sorrento Valley. Dr. Christenson is a long-time member of the Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee and an archaeologist by training. Call me at 858-566-6489 if you want more information or how to get involved — Mike Kelly, conservation chair.]

The Village of Ystagua is an archaeological site that has been continuously occupied for the over 5000 years. It is located in the Sorrento Valley area of the City of San Diego, adjacent to Los Peñasquitos lagoon, Peñasquitos creek and straddling Carroll Creek. It's a very large site, covering more than 50 acres. In 1978 the initial site area was recognized as significant and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since that time, its boundaries and importance have expanded greatly. The geographic extent of the site was identified slowly and thus it has 5 different archaeological reference site numbers (SDI-4513, the Rimbach site; SDI-4609; SDI-5443; W-654; and E:4:18.)

In addition to the main village area, many smaller sites known as activity areas can be found within one mile of the village. Numerous excavations have taken place on the site as more and more of it has been developed. In some areas the site is over 10 feet deep.

The Village of Ystagua is one of the five most significant archaeological sites in the County of San Diego, and one of the top three within the City of San Diego. The other two San Diego City sites have been significantly im-

See p. 9 for more

Tracker's Corner

## Looking Back at 2000

Barry Martin

[**Editor's note:** The following article is adapted from a report Barry Martin recently sent to the *Keeping Track* group. The latter non-profit has pioneered community-based wildlife surveys with volunteers. The Friends have been affiliated with this group for several years now.]

Over the past year we've had a lot of new and exciting developments and it has been fun to see our program blossom. We continue to run a sequence of classes to keep the volunteers coming . . . . we start with a volunteer training day where we cover the basics of tracking and our protocol. This happens quarterly about a week before that quarter's transect period begins. These volunteers are then asked to sign up for the transect or transects of their choice, where they get to accompany an experienced transect leader/tracking team member on one of the 40 transects we now have.

Fortunately we continue to have a good response to our volunteer training due to an emphasis on PR. We have one of our team members doing a great job with this — Lois Warburton who was at the conference last year. She makes sure there are notices in the paper and occasional articles done detailing our team's activities. This has proven to be quite valuable since attendance has averaged around 20 and we had about 50 people at our last volunteer training day with over 80 being our record.

Also, with help from team members, Gretchen Nell, Ann Hunt and Uli Burgin we have an outreach program that really works. They have a little

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**Preserve Open House**  
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Friends' Annual Meeting

## Walking San Diego

Slide show and talk

Friday, February 23

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Peñasquitos Ranch House

Author and naturalist Barbara Moore will be the featured speaker at the Friends' Annual Meeting. Be sure to mark this date and time on your calendar since Moore will show slides featuring some of her favorite places to take nature walks, along with the wildlife and plants that live in them.

Moore is the co-author of *Walking San Diego*, which has just been reissued in a newly updated edition. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and autographing at the meeting.

Moore is Program Director for the Chula Vista Nature Center, a member of the Board of Directors of the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, active in the Bird Atlas project, teaches natural history walking classes, and when not otherwise busy (!), leads nature walks for the Friends in López Canyon.

Free refreshments will be served and a brief, 5-minute business meeting to elect new Friends' officers held at the beginning of the meeting.

## Hike Schedule

## Winter (ha!) Activities

Believe it or not, winter time in the Preserve brings flowers with it! Start looking for *Fuschia* flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) to leaf out in a bright green, then explode with deep red blossoms. Look for this shrub on either the north or south side trails east of Black Mountain Road. A related shrub, Winter currant (*Ribes indecorum*) will unfurl white blossoms. Good places to see it are on the south side trail of the main canyon, just west of the Sycamore Crossing (below the waterfall) and in López Canyon in the first open finger canyon east of Camino Santa Fe off the south side. Blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) will be thrusting skyward. A good place to see these is along the trail that runs north from Park Village Dr. between the elementary school and Darkwood St. Depending on the rain, many more may begin blooming in late winter.

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

## January &amp; 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 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.

## January

**Birds of Crest Canyon Open Space**

Sat., Jan. 13th at Crest Canyon Open Space Preserve. We will investigate coastal sage scrub and coastal lagoon habitats. Meet on the north side of the preserve at the gate on Race Track View at 8:00 a.m. 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 Jimmy Durante Blvd. to San Dieguito Lagoon Rd., turn

left onto San Dieguito Lagoon Rd. Follow San Dieguito Lagoon Rd. to Race Track View Dr. and meet at the gate next to the preserve. If you have any questions please call Park Ranger Dan Bylin at (858) 538-8082.

**Historic Stagecoach Walk**

Sat., Jan. 13, 9 a.m. Join Mike Kelly to learn about the old Stagecoach route in the Preserve, the old Immigrant Trail route and the first transcontinental mail route. Walk actual portions of the old route. Learn about the campaign to designate this route as nationally historic. 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.**

**Nature Hike with emphasis on small things: lichens, liverworts, and mushrooms from Mercy Road**

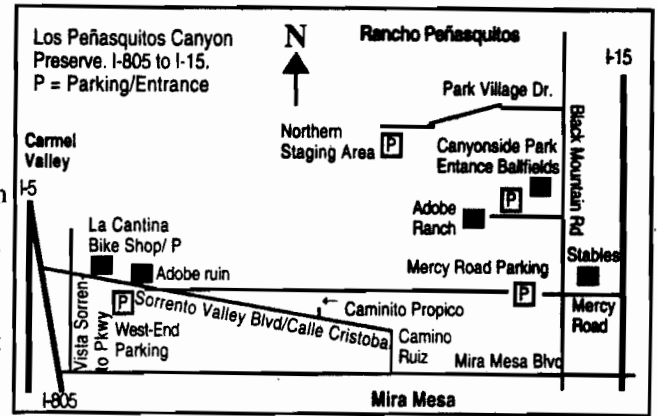
Sun., Jan. 14, 9 a.m. Join Les Braund, president of the San Diego Mycological Society for a leisurely look at the Preserve's smaller things. Les will point the most common lichens, mushrooms and a few liverworts, although much depends on rain between now and then! **Please bring a 10 power hand lens if possible!** Braund will also discuss the best available Lichen and mushroom books. Meet in 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.

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Jan. 20, 7:30 - 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Uli Burgin, 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.

**Open House at the Preserve**

Saturday, January 20, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Please join us at our "Open House" to be held at Rancho Los Peñasquitos. Ranger staff will talk on their goals and future projects in the preserve, while various volunteer groups will lead walks, give dem-



onstrations and talk about their goals and projects in the preserve. See the Friends' Web site for more detailed information.

- 10:00 Historic Ranch House Tour Exhibits, including Track Team
- 11:00 What's happening at Rancho Los Peñasquitos — County Ranger Reneene Mowry
- 11:30 Overview of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve — City Ranger Bill Lawrence
- 12:30 Bring a picnic lunch. Coffee, lemonade & brownies will be provided Live Bird of Prey demonstration
- 1:00 Ranch House Tour Nature Walk by Friends

Preserve maps will be available for free.

**Nature Meditations Hike**

Sat., Jan. 27, 3-4:30 p.m. Join Will Bowen, PhD and learn to use nature as a path into meditation. Practice sky, earth, and tree meditations. Improve the quality of your direct experience and mindfulness of the natural world. Bridge any distance between yourself and nature and open up to more friendliness and concern for nature. Find healing in nature. 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.**

**Nature hike from Northern Staging**

Sat., Jan. 27, 3:30 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk to the waterfall and back, about 4 miles. 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.

**Geology Hike**

Sun., Jan. 28, 9 - noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at Caminito Propi-

See p. 3 for more

**(Calendar cont'd)**

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.

**February****Birds of Black Mountain Park**

Sat., Feb. 10, 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 at 858-538-8082 if any questions.

**Nature Meditations Hike**

Sat., Feb. 10, 3-4:30 p.m. Join Will Bowen, PhD and learn to use nature as a path into meditation. Practice sky, earth, and tree meditations. Improve the quality of your direct experience and mindfulness of the natural world. Bridge any distance between yourself and nature and open up to more friendliness and concern for nature. Find healing in nature. 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.**

**Tracking Walk from Ranch House**

Sat., Feb. 17, 7:30 - 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Uli Burgin, 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.

**Walking San Diego: Slide show and talk**

Fri., Feb. 23, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Peñasquitos Ranch House. Author and naturalist Barbara Moore will be the featured speaker at the 'Friends' Annual Meeting. Moore will show slides featuring some of her favorite places to take nature walks, and the wildlife and plants that live in them. Moore is co-author of *Walking San Diego*, which has just been reissued in an updated edition. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and autographing at the meeting. Moore is also Program Director for the Chula Vista Nature Center, a member of the Board of Directors of the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, active

in the Bird Atlas project, teaches natural history walking classes, and when not otherwise busy (!), leads nature walks for the Friends in López Canyon. Free refreshments will be served and a brief, 5-minute business meeting to elect new Friends' officers held at the beginning of the meeting. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 858-484-3219 for directions.

**Vernal Pool Walk**

Sat., Feb. 24, 9 a.m. Join Mike Kelly for a leisurely look at vernal pools. Learn about this unique ecosystem with its endangered plant and animal species that so few San Diegans have ever seen. These species are able to endure cycles of extreme temperature and water variation that most plants and animals can't survive. Learn about their unique adaptations to these conditions and why so few are left in San Diego or elsewhere. The pools are so sensitive we are limited to 15 people and therefore have to ask for you to RSVP to Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489.

**Nature hike from Northern Staging**

Sat., Feb. 24, 4 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk to the waterfall and back, about 4 miles. Chance to see early wildflowers, 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.

**Geology Hike**

Sun., Feb. 25, 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.

**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 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.**

**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.**

**(Meditations cont'd)**

The following meditation comes from the Chinese Taoist tradition. It was taught to me by Master Share K. Lew, who studied for many years at the Yellow Dragon Taoist Monastery which is located in the mountains near Canton, China.

Stand close to a tree. Place your right palm on the tree trunk at a comfortable height, perhaps chest level. Place your left hand on a part of your body that need healing. Thus if you have problems with your stomach you would place your left hand upon it. Close your eyes. Breathe in the tree energy for a slow count of five. Hold the breath for a count of five. Then exhale out for a count of five. Repeat this breathing at least six times. Walk

## 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, January 6th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 3rd  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 3rd  
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 January 20, 9 a.m. Call Cindy at 619-421-5767 or email her at cindy-burrascano@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, January 27th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 24th  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 24th  
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.

### Peñasquitos Lagoon Restoration

Sunday, January 21  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Help remove Giant reed (*Arundo donax*), an invasive plant that is destroying wildlife habitat. This is the third year of restoration work by the Friends' Special Weed Action Team in this area and we're almost finished!

Meet behind the buildings at 11494 Sorrento Valley Road in Sorrento Valley, a few blocks north of the Coaster Station.

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.



**(Tracker's corner cont'd)**

travelling show with displays and everything you need to peak interest whenever there is a conducive event somewhere around town.

From these initial class participants we draw people into our Tracker/Naturalist weekend class series. We do Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels. At the end of this series we look at who survived the process and we invite them to become apprentice Tracking Team members. When we all agree they are ready, they are assigned as transect leaders and full fledged Tracking Team members.

Since we are committed to educating folks on the importance of maintaining open space, we feel a special obligation to kids. Last year was the first year of our Children's Program where we conduct outdoor education courses for school classes, scout groups and church youth groups. The City of San Diego has awarded a matching grant to us for this highly successful program. This has turned into a valuable facet in a many pronged approach to community outreach. Lee Kirchhevel and Steve Romeo are the Tracking Team members in charge of running our Children's Program.

We've developed our program over nearly 9 years now and have come to the realization that community support and acceptance are essential to our success. So we emphasize these education programs and PR to provide a large volunteer base from which to work on the data collection end of our work.

Speaking of data collection, we have been working with Jon Young and the Wilderness Awareness School folks on development and adaptation of the Louis Liebenberg Cybertracker program to our data collection procedure. This has been spearheaded by team member Steve Romeo who has adapted the program to our protocol. The beauty of the Cybertracker system is that it is highly adaptable to whatever your situation and regional protocol differences may dictate. We now have the generic North American program which is a great training tool, and the Peñasquitos, San Diego version which we use for our surveys. The way the system works is that you have a palm pilot wired to a hand held GPS. Your

observations are recorded along with GPS coordinates, then at the completion of the transect you transfer your data from the palm pilot to the computer and combined with the TOPO mapping program you have instant access to mapped data. We have completed one transect using this with a paper back up and will continue to ensure all the bugs are worked out in the weeks to come. We expect to begin using this system in earnest in the spring and summer transect seasons ahead. Our data entry man Doug Hansen will appreciate not having to do all that manual entry in the future.

Steve has been a busy guy this year, he has also set up a web site for us at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org) where you can click on Tracking Team to access more info on all we are doing. There is a link to the Cybertracker e-groups site which Steve also set up, where you can get more info on how all this cybertracker stuff works. We are confident that the melding of the latest technology with the ancient art and science of tracking will enhance our credibility.

Credibility is very important when you consider that we are constantly seeking to influence public planning policy. One of our goals is to ensure that linked habitat is preserved and enhanced. If the veracity of our findings comes under question we stand ready to back it up. We also are very serious about the integrity and quality of our training. As a result of this reputation, we have become partners with Conservation Biology Institute as the main monitoring agency with regard to San Diego's controversial Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Under this plan approximately 173,000 acres in and around the SD region is designated off limits to development. This is linked habitat and the whole plan has its roots in the work of Dr. Michael Soule, et al. It also was attractive to developers because it was seen as a way to circumvent the Endangered Species Act (ESA) with its single species by species approach. The bottom line is that there is still a lot of arguing over the program as to corridor width, edge effect factors and more. Where we come in is as concerned "citizen scientists," to use a Susan Morse term. We are monitoring key areas within the MSCP

and corridors that will help us determine whether or not this program is working. We are also picking up information concerning shifts in prevalence of certain species in response to development in adjacent areas. Our work has caught the attention of the California Department of Fish and Game and our data is being taken seriously in several arenas. Recently we have had some effect on the question of whether or not a road, which cuts through a major wildlife corridor, will be reopened. We are having an impact, however I must admit that in the midst of the current development orgy we often feel like the little dutch boy with the finger in the leaky dike.

We also have people working on more focused studies such as Rick Botta doing studies on the mule deer herd. He's also incorporating remote cameras into our work. I believe we have 12 cameras now and a few of his photos are included on our web site. Rick has worked long and hard on this project, doing night spotlighting counts and now the City of San Diego biologist has gotten on board with grant money to fund more extensive deer research involving some radio collaring. Personally I find that to be too invasive, so we'll see on that. We have had and continue to have interns and graduate students from several San Diego area colleges working with us on various monitoring projects.

Another of our goals is to keep improving ourselves as Tracker/Naturalists. We try to take advantage of whatever opportunities our work and family obligations will allow. Accordingly, Chris Bader and Lee Kirchhevel attended the wolf tracking expedition last summer put on by Jon Young's group. I attended a weekend of classes with Susan last March, a Tom Brown class last summer and have initiated a move toward setting up a tracking class opportunity with a local tracker of some note named Ab Taylor, formerly of the border patrol, now retired, heck, anything to improve the skills!

We have also set up a Tracking Team library, thanks to team member Uli Burgin. We are collecting as many reasearch papers, articles and various

**(Tracker's corner cont'd)**

books as we can to fill up our library so that team members or volunteers can do their own study to become better tracker/naturalists.

We are also committed to maintaining links to as many other like minded organizations as we can such as *Keeping Track* so that we can exchange info and methods that work. Why reinvent the wheel? With that in mind, we've joined a new organization called the "International Society of Professional Trackers." I got to travel to Colorado last month with team mates Chris Bader and Steve Romeo where we gave a presentation to the second annual gathering of the ISPT. We met James Halfpenny and several other prominent Trackers there. One purpose of this organization is to foster the exchange of information on tracking protocols and methodology. I strongly believe that if we are to curb rampant poorly thought-out development, then a concerted grassroots effort must be apparent. If we have tracking teams such as *Keeping Track* all over the country using commonly accepted protocols we can be formidable in our efforts to exert influence in the right places.

When this started years ago I never would have thought we would be involved in so many things as a result. It really takes a firm commitment and resolve to proceed as a volunteer with something like this. It would not be possible if it were not for guys like Dean Woods, our transect administrator and consummate organizer, along with the people mentioned above, and all those who have come and gone over the years, such as Lani and Eric Noreke. When you can capture the enthusiasm of committed people you have the recipe for success. We have a lot of areas where we need to improve but it is that willingness to improve that will save us all!

That pretty well sums it up, I hope everyone is still awake by the time you get to this point. Please visit our web site: [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org) if you would like to find out more about what we are doing. We welcome dialog on anything that may have spurred your interest in the verbage above, my e-mail is [barrymart@compuserve.com](mailto:barrymart@compuserve.com)

Best wishes and Keep Tracking,

**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 Diego 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.

### Fund Drive Results in Next Issue!

We've been so busy we haven't tabulated all the contributions to our annual fund drive — and they're still coming in! So, we'll acknowledge those contributions in our next newsletter.

**(Rancho Roundup cont'd)**

brand new Tracking Team tee-shirts; tapes and CD's of authentic early California music by Los Californios; and colored note card sets featuring our rancho pepper trees by local artist June Lynch. As of this writing, the Peterson Field Guide for Animal Tracks is still on backorder; however, the publisher expects to receive it any day, so be sure to call and check — we just might have it! And, don't forget that members of the Friends of the Preserve get a 10% discount on La Cocina merchandise.

### You can be a ranch house docent or ranch hand!

If you would like to become a part of the volunteer team at beautiful Rancho Los Peñasquitos, come to the next docent and ranch hand training. This is your opportunity to learn more about the colorful history of this area, to network with fellow history buffs, and to share your knowledge and appreciation of the wonderful old rancho with other park visitors. The five-session training will begin with an orientation at the Ranch House on Saturday, February 3, at 9:00 a.m., followed by a video of Dr. Lynne Christenson speaking on Native Americans. In subsequent sessions, the Mission period, Mexican period, Early American period, recent history, architecture of the ranch house, and archaeology will be covered.

Ranch House Docents give an average of one tour per month or participate in La Vida del Rancho, the 3rd and 4th grade school program, which is conducted on Wednesdays. Ranch Hands do not give tours, but help out at the Rancho by gardening, working in the gift shop, and lending other skills that are needed. Both docents and ranch hands assist with special events. For more information or to sign up, call me at 858-484-7504 or Head Docent Kathy Jenkins at 858-505-0446.



# Nature Meditations

Will Bowen, Ph.D.

## INTRODUCTION

Two Tibetan monks were sitting together at a table under a tree in a garden. They sat together in silence for a very very long time. Finally, one monk turned to the other, pointed at the tree, and exclaimed, "They call that a tree." Whereupon both monks broke out into a very hearty laugh, rolling around in their seats and almost falling over.

The point of the story is that the name of a tree or knowing the name of a tree does not do justice to knowing it in the full vividness and mystery of its existence. Often people on my plant hikes would ask the name and family of a plant. Once they had memorized that name or perhaps a description of the plants' qualities, such a serrated leaves, pinnately compounded, or could place it in a taxonomy, or identify it in the field, they felt that they had grasped the plant or knew it.

But, on the other hand, there is a whole other approach to knowing plants or any other aspect of the natural world that focuses more on the quality of our direct or immediate perception of that natural object. It involves a way of direct knowing that is beyond discursiveness or our thoughts or conceptualizations about a natural object. This way of knowing stresses an openness or absorption or an embracing of the vividness of that object. We become open to letting it in, letting it effect us, or move us. This is a very important thing that can lead to a better connection to and concern for or compassion and caring for the natural world.

## Nature meditations

One method or path to improve this way of direct knowingness is to meditate upon nature thus improving our mindfulness of and ability to directly experience it. The overarching aim is not just enhanced perception but to develop caring for nature. To perceive nature better we need to bring forth a lucid and stainless attention. To do this we have to clean the mind, remove mental clutter and discursive grime which are the obscurations that stand

in the way of bridging the distance between ourselves and nature. This distance is, in reality, a sign of our limitations. We can work wholeheartedly to open to nature and the freshness of the moment which never happens twice. Opening to nature can be very healing to our mind and to our body. When the distance between our self and nature is bridged, caring develops naturally.

## Sky meditation

A very nice meditation that comes from the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition involves staring at the open sky—especially blue sky. This meditation really helps to clean and clear the mind and open it to spaciousness. The expansive and spacious quality that you experience when you look up at the open blue sky makes it hard for your mind to chatter. Clearing mental chatter opens us to a more immediate experience. There is nothing in the way—no stains hindering perception.

Besides, we rarely look up at the sky for any length of time. Blue open sky is the best to stare at, without blinking, but a cloudy sky works ok if you think that blue sky is behind the clouds. Staring at the sky allows us to "relax with presence." In this "spontaneously self-perfected pure presence" we can watch the magical display of the mind. We watch with a "luminous clarity similar to a moment of surprised astonishment." In this pure primal awareness, unsullied by discursive thoughts, we can "relax into things just as they are."

You can do sky meditation standing or seated on a rock or the ground or tree stump. Turn your gaze upward, let your eyes relax and your vision spread out. Let go of any thoughts or just watch your thoughts come up without any evaluation or judgment. You may want to focus on your breathing as you do this. Four times in and four times out the nose, four times in the nose four times out the mouth, four times in the mouth four times out the nose, and four times in and out of the mouth. After that, choose the breathing pattern that's most comfortable for you.

## Earth meditations

While we rarely ponder or contemplate the expansiveness of the sky we even more rarely feel the earth under our feet. It is like the earth is obscured by our current environment and concerns. The purpose of earth meditation is to open our body and energy channels to nature. This meditation is very good for self healing. You can use it to treat pain in the body. It is also good for developing mental quiescence, known as "shamatha" through one pointed concentration of the mind. Earth mediation helps us be aware of the energy centers on the palms called "lao gung" or palm energy chakra, "yong chuan" or the bubbling springs points on the bottom of the feet, and "ming men," the Gate of Life, which is the lower back energy center.

Find a nice area, spread out your legs to the sides in a wide comfortable stance, bend down and touch your palms to the earth. Focus on a pebble, a bit of earth, or a single grain of sand or dirt on the ground in front of you. Begin to breath in earth energy up through the palms and the soles of the feet to the lower back. Let this energy clean the channels of the legs and arms. Let it push out bad energy, visualized as black smoke, leaving from the lower back. Continue to focus on the bit of earth or grain of dirt in front of you, feel the earth, let yourself become one with it. Take twenty-one breaths to start and then stand up and walk around and feel for changes in your body and your relationship to the earth.

## Tree meditations

Tree meditations are very good for self healing. Tuning into a tree is very powerful and helps us appreciate the plant kingdom much more. Different trees have different energies and thus different effects upon us. The arroyo willow is very good for dispelling negative emotional energy, the sycamore helps to clean out the lungs, oaks can give us strength, while cottonwoods heal our bones and joints.

# RANCHO ROUNDUP

Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry

Thanks to all for another great year!

As I look back on 2000, I am once again amazed at the accomplishments and dedication of the almost 200 volunteers that have helped out at Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve over the past year. There are too many to list; but, from my perspective, here are some of the highlights (see Tracking Corner for more):

- SDCAS purchased a portion of former historian Mary Ward's books for their library at the ranch house. As a consequence, a local philanthropist donated a complete set of the original works by the noted historian Hubert Howe Bancroft to their library.
- Fifty-one boxes of archaeological artifacts (that had been sitting in the barn for years!) were inventoried, repacked, labeled, and sent to the Iron Mountain Repository for safekeeping. (SDCAS).
- The 1912 Mohnike barn was replastered, repainted, and rededicated. (NCCC).
- The City of San Diego granted \$75,000 for roof repairs and stabilization of the Mohnike Adobe..
- Extensive research (Mike Kelly, Lynne Christenson, Pete Nelson, Mike Volberg, Don Hoffman and Rob Hutsell) established that the road that ran through the canyon in the 1850's was not only the first east-west public road in the county, it was also the route used by the first transcontinental stage line to San Diego.

## Props 12 & 13

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who campaigned and voted for Propositions 12 and 13. Because of you, both the County and City Parks and Recreation Departments are busily acquiring sensitive habitats and wildlife connectors that would, otherwise, have been lost to development. Also, both agencies will be adding additional staffing to help manage these new acquisitions, so if you have always wanted to be a ranger, there will be some job opportunities coming up.

Christmas Party Starts Off with a Bang (Well, Maybe It Was a Swoosh!)

We were blessed with a beautiful, balmy evening for this year's Volunteer Christmas Party at the Adobe.

The luminarios were glowing softly in the twilight, and the first guests were arriving, when we heard a strange noise--like a big swoosh! The noise became louder (too loud, I thought, for it to be the ranch house ghost). Suddenly a large, colorful ball appeared over the barn, swooshing its way to the ground as it drifted to the east. You guessed it! It was a dreaded hot air balloon, with burners blazing as it landed in the dry vegetation of the preserve. I was first on the scene (not looking too official in my Christmas regalia), and Ranger Bill (also in party attire) joined me shortly afterward. Fortunately, we were able to take care of business and get back to the party before all the food was gone!

We had some very special door prizes this year, thanks to the generosity of some of our local businesses. Mimi's, Oscars, and Rubios (in the new shopping center at I-15 and Mira Mesa Blvd.), Fin's (Mira Mesa), and Starbucks (the one up the hill, in Rancho Penasquitos). Another local business, Mira Mesa Copy Center (next to Burger King), gave us a very generous price break on printing the invitations. I hope you will patronize these businesses and let them know we appreciate their support. Door prizes were also donated by the San Diego County Parks & Rec. Dept., San Diego County Park Society, and La Cocina Gift Shop. Special thanks to Jaime and Lee Mendez, who brought all the beautiful poinsettias that highlighted the room. And last, but not least, thanks to the LPCP Citizens' Advisory Committee for covering the other expenses. Stop by my office if you would like to see pictures of our amazing pampas grass Christmas tree!

## Open House at the Preserve

Please join us at our "Open House" to be held on Saturday, January 20, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Ran-

cho Los Peñasquitos. The park rangers will bring you up-to-date on what's going on around the rancho and in the preserve and what's targeted for the future. A member of the tracking team will demonstrate their new, state-of-the-art palm pilot, which will be used in upcoming tracking surveys. And, hopefully, the notorious exotic plant basher, Mike Kelly, will be present to explain to you what NOT to plant in your yard if you live near the canyon or any other native habitat area. There will also be representatives from the LPCP Volunteer Patrol, San Diego County Archaeological Society (SDCAS), Ranch House Docents, Ranch Hands, Park Hosts, and the LPCP Citizen's Advisory Committee on hand to explain the roles they play in protecting the natural and cultural resources in the preserve for you and future generations to enjoy. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to find answers to any questions you have about the preserve, register any concerns, and learn how you can be a "good neighbor."

Scheduled activities will include nature walks and ranch house tours at 10:00 and 1:00. The rangers will speak between 11:00 and 12:30. Games will be conducted to occupy the children (ages 6-11) concurrently with the ranger talks, and there will be a live bird-of-prey demonstration at 12:30. You are welcome to bring a picnic lunch, or purchase a corndog or soda from the Rancho Chuckwagon. Complimentary coffee, lemonade, and herbal tea will be provided. RSVP'S (858-484-7504) are appreciated but not necessary.

## New Items at La Cocina Gift Shop

For those of you who have not visited La Cocina lately, we have several new items in stock, including the recently released 200 years of Historic California Cooking, which contains original and updated recipes from the descendants of the real Californios; the



**(Ystagua cont'd)**

pected. While the amount of information obtained through mitigation efforts over the years is significant, and the artifacts and data recovered demonstrate the site's unique character, buildings, sewers, railroads, roads and freeways have impacted or destroyed most of this site. In addition, frequent looting and vandalism have damaged the entire site. A small but very important portion of the site along Roselle St. remains undeveloped and it is crucial that this last remaining parcel be preserved. It has recently changed ownership and the new owners are advertising it as a "build to suit" site.

The Kumeyaay Indians are known as the primary inhabitants of this site. In July of 1769 Father Juan Crespi, Miguel Costanso, and Lt. Pedro Fages rode north from the newly founded San Diego Presidio and encountered a group of Kumeyaay living at a village called Ystagua. Father Crespi and company followed Indian trails as they surveyed the area for Father Serra. The Kumeyaay were friendly and hospitable to the newcomers. The Spanish noted that the grasses in the area of the village were lush and looked as though they had been planted in rows. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Kumeyaay had lived at this site for many centuries.

The artifacts discovered show that a wide variety of activities took place at Ystagua. A picture of life in a Kumeyaay village may be possible based on the abundance of artifacts and the varieties recovered at Ystagua. Many similar artifacts are found at other sites, but seldom do archaeologists find this large a number of artifacts as well as this diversity at one site. Daily activities of both men and women can be reconstructed based on the presence of numerous arrowheads (points); pieces of Tizon brownware pottery, introduced into San Diego by the Kumeyaay; groundstone (manos and metates) used to grind seeds, acorns and bones; fishhooks made from shell and bone awls used to make baskets. Decorative items recovered included steatite (soapstone) beads, bone beads, and shell beads, pendants, and rings. Music was made with bone whistles or

flutes, pieces of which were found throughout the site, while remnants of turtle shell rattles were also found. These rattles may have been used during ceremonies or to accompany singers during celebrations. Other items recovered that could have been used in ceremonies were quartz crystals, ceramic pipes, and sucking tubes. Trade items discovered included such items as obsidian from Obsidian Butte in the Imperial Valley, and shards from desert ware pottery. Chert tools were uncovered and this is another type of stone that is not found locally. Food remains from deer, rabbit, bighorn sheep and numerous types of fish were found. Also recovered were many different types of shellfish, which were used for food. Cooking hearths were

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**The Village of  
Ystagua is one of the  
five most significant  
archaeological sites  
in the County of San  
Diego, and one of the  
top three within the  
City of San Diego.**

---

recovered intact during excavations. Blood residue analysis shows that some arrowheads and stone tools were used to cut deer and rabbit. Glass trade beads recovered undoubtedly were given to the Kumeyaay by the early Spanish.

Twenty-one different surveys or excavations have been conducted at the Village of Ystagua since 1972. These scientific projects demonstrate not only the richness of this site, but the fact that it has suffered minimal disturbance prior to recent developments. Its stratigraphy is intact. This means that the information contained underground is in the same location where the original inhabitants deposited it. In San Diego, where ground squirrels and gophers abound, this situation is highly unusual, adding another dimension to the significance of the Ystagua.

The Village of Ystagua is a highly

complex and significant site that has been drastically impacted by development of the Sorrento Valley area. Its presence on the National Register of Historic Places is indicative of the unique nature of the site. Based on the numerous excavations and surveys conducted in the past 30 years, the part along Roselle Street yielded the largest amount of artifacts and ecofacts as well as the most valuable information. The 7 acres remaining undeveloped are the last remnant of this unique and most notable Kumeyaay village. No other site within the City of San Diego from this period of time has this wealth of information and importance to the Kumeyaay people.

And, no other prehistoric Kumeyaay village site has produced as many significant artifacts that indicate the everyday lives as well as the rich ceremonial lives of its inhabitants within San Diego.

Consequently, The Village of Ystagua deserves to be preserved for the people of San Diego.

### Friends' Web Site

Visit the Friends web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org). The site is undergoing a big expansion with more Friends and related activities.

**(Meditations cont'd)**

around and feel for any changes in the area you have been working on.

**Conclusion**

In this article I have shown three different meditations upon nature. Sky meditation is very good for cleansing and healing the mind. It opens our mind to a clear perception of nature. Earth meditation opens our body and energy channels to nature and helps us appreciate the earth better. Tree meditations improve our connection to the plant kingdom and help us heal specific aches and pains. Taken together all the meditations allow us to be more immediate in our experience of nature. Caring and compassion develop naturally for something we are so close and which nourishes us so completely.



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 858-484-3219

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## 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: \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2001

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

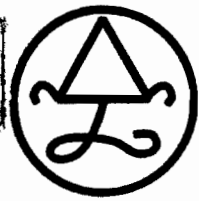
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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.



Giant Lighting Issue for Wildlife

## Have You Driven by López Ridge Park Lately?

Deborah Jones

I drive Calle Cristobal every day, but there's one day I won't forget — the day I saw the newly erected light poles at Lopez Ridge Park. I couldn't believe how many there were: 32 safety light poles and 9 stadium floodlight poles — all crammed onto a small bit of land directly above López Canyon.

Despite the daytime eyesore, the effect on the adjacent canyon's nocturnal critters concerned me most. Dr. Robert Fisher, Conservation Scientist at SDSU's Biological Field Stations, notes that artificial lighting (i.e., lighting above moonlight-level) can negatively affect wildlife by increasing predation rates, which in turn affects their ability to forage for fear of being caught. Affected wildlife include not only rodents but also reptiles, according to Dr. Fisher. I even found a study published in the journal of Animal Behaviour which showed that adult scorpions forage less in bright moonlight. The ones that did venture out into the light were determined to be low on energy. I'd say they then became perfect targets for predation because they were weak and desperate for food.

Let's put this into perspective. In a natural situation, the moon is only bright enough to increase the risk of predation a few days out of the month. However, according to Joe Henderson, Area Manager for the City's Parks and Recreation Department, the López Ridge Park floodlights will be on every night from dusk to 8:30 p.m., except during the summer, unless the marine layer requires the lights to be

See p. 8 for more

538 Acres

## Montana Mirador Saved

Mike Kelly, Chair

Black Mountain Open Space Park

Did you know that the prominent ridge on the north side of Black Mountain, highly visible from I-15, had an approved development of 800 homes on it? Under the gun of this approved project, community leaders persuaded the City Council three years ago to vote to take an option to buy this pristine ridgetop and slopes of 538 acres from the owner, Terrabrooke Development. This development would have been yet another terrible eyesore all too familiar to those of us who travel the I-15 corridor. It would also have compromised plans to retain as much as possible of the biological integrity of the Black Mountain complex of hills and valleys. Today, that is no longer a threat.

It was announced the last week in February that the Wildlife Conservation Board would contribute some \$3.4 million to match the County Water Authority's \$4.4 million. The County Water Authority buys mitigation credits for future project impacts its facilities will have elsewhere in the County.

Once the sale is finalized next month, this acreage will be added to our Black Mountain Open Space Park, bringing us to a total of over 1,000 acres. At the same time, the Paraiso Cumbres property, acquired several years ago as open space, will also be formally added to the Black Mountain Park.

Former Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board chair Kevin McNamara, along with former Councilmember Harry Mathis, deserve most of the

See p. 7 for more

### Highlights Inside

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Flooding at the west end

## A Walk on the Wild Side

John Northrop, PhD

The morning of January 11, 2001 brought a major winter storm to San Diego that caused flooding in the west end of Los Peñasquitos Canyon. The morning news featured road closures in Rozelle St. and Sorrento Valley. Fearing the worst, I drove to the parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Road, donned my waders and picked up a stout wading stick prior to crossing López Creek which was a raging current flowing over the normally dry causeway at the entrance. On topping the nose of López Ridge, I was astounded to see the waters from Peñasquitos Cree boiling over the brand new, supposedly all weather road, and emptying into the newly dug basin south of the trail! (The water normally flows through buried culverts from López Creek into Peñasquitos Creek.

The entire west end of the Preserve was under water from the trails junction to the old adobe. I also saw a pile of sand bags near the trail junction that had apparently been dumped there for use in preventing a scene such as I was observing. However, they had not been deployed, so the flood waters poured over the new road unabated, making a

See p. 9 for more

## Hike Schedule

# Expect Lots of Flowers on Walks

With recent rainfalls we're going to have some good wildflowers. The vernal pools in the Preserve are shaping up to have a good year. Black Mountain is already beginning a good wildflower show there. Join us on one of our nature walks and I'm sure you'll be introduced to a good variety of our flowering plants.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded informations or visit our web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).

## March & 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 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.

## March

### Tracking Walks from Ranch House

Sat., March 17, 8 a.m. Two walks, one for beginners and the other for intermediate trackers are offered. Join an experienced naturalist / tracker & learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

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

Sat., March 17, 8 a.m. Meet Ranger Bylin at the North Clevenger Canyon Trail parking lot for this guided bird walk and explore riparian woodlands. No birding experience necessary. Meet in the North

Clevenger Canyon Trail Staging area. Call Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082 for more info.

### Nature Walk from Mercy Road

Sat., March 17, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in 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.

### Vernal Pool Walk

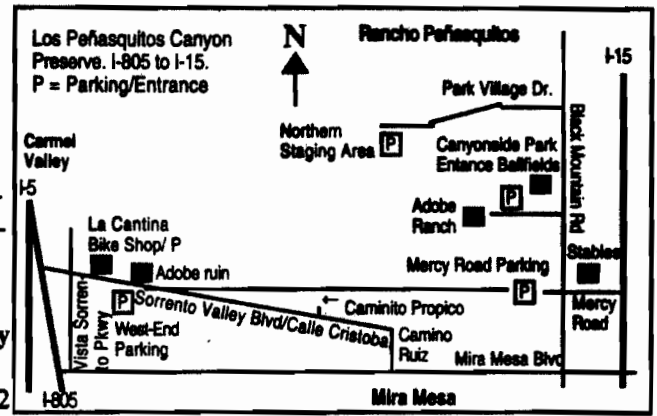
Sun., March 18, 3 p.m. Join Mike Kelly for a leisurely look at vernal pools. Ample rain in February stimulated the birth of numerous Fairy Shrimp and Tree Frogs. Mesa mint is up and many native forbs are doing their flower thing. Learn about this unique ecosystem with its endangered plant and animal species that so few San Diegans have ever seen. These species are able to endure cycles of extreme temperature and water variation that most plants and animals can't survive. Learn about their unique adaptations to these conditions and why so few are left in San Diego or elsewhere. The pools are so sensitive we are limited to 15 people and therefore have to ask for you to RSVP to Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489.

### Mystery Tree Walk from Mercy Road

Sat., March 24, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join Pat Watkins for this moderately paced nature and historical walk. Visit a grove of old oak trees with a Mexican era sign map carved into them and learn the legend of the Mystery Trees. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, by the benches 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.

### Wildflower Walk on Black Mountain

Sun., March 25, 10 a.m. ( 2 - 3 miles) Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a walk in the Black Mtn. Open Space Park. There will be many flowering plants to see, including Mountain lilac, Calif. buttercup, blue-eyed



grass, Blue dicks, Fuschia flowering gooseberry, Mountain misery, Calif. violets, Monkey flower, native bunch grass, and more. Moderately strenuous. Meet in the Black Mountain Park staging area off the old dirt Black Mountain Road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1169, E-7**.

### Geology Hike

Sat., March 31, 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.

### Dusk Frog Hike

Sat., March 31, 5 - 6:30 p.m. Around dusk the male tree frogs begin to gather in a semi-circle around pools and puddles in order to sing their "ribut ribut" mating call. Soon, as it darkens, females slip into the pools for mating. Come and learn about the frogs and toads of San Diego county and why they are important in the overall ecological scheme. Look for frogs eggs, tadpoles, and froglettes. Bring a flashlight, shoes that can get wet, and warm clothes. Meet in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

## April

### López Canyon Nature Walk with Barbara Moore

Tues., April 3, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Join Barbara Moore, co-author of "Walking San Diego" for a walk in López Canyon, part of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. It's a good chance to see raptors and their nests, wildflowers and much more. Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south

See p. 3 for more



**(Calendar cont'd)**

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.**

**Birds of Crest Canyon Open Space**  
Sat., April 14, 8 a.m. at Crest Canyon Open Space Preserve. We will investigate coastal sage scrub and coastal lagoon habitats. Meet on the north side of the preserve at the gate on Race Track View at 8:00 a.m. If you have any questions please call Park Ranger Dan Bylin at 858-538-8082.

**Tracking Walks from Ranch House**  
Sat., April 21, 8 a.m. Two walks, one for beginners and the other for intermediate trackers are offered. Join an experienced naturalist / tracker & learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Plantas Medicinales Hike**  
Sat., April 21, 10 – 11:30 a.m.  
Learn about the medicinal plants used in the Spanish humoral tradition of herbal medicine. Learn the Spanish, English, and Latin name of a plant and how it has been and is used for medicine. Plants and trees of the coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and wetlands will be covered. Meet in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

**Vernal Pool Walk**  
Sat., April 21, 3 p.m. Join Mike Kelly for a leisurely look at vernal pools. Ample rain in February stimulated the birth of numerous Fairy Shrimp and Tree Frogs. Mesa mint is up and many native forbs are doing their flower thing. Learn about this unique ecosystem with its endangered plant and animal species that so few San Diegans have ever seen. These species are able to endure cycles of extreme temperature and water variation that most plants and animals can't survive. Learn about their unique adaptations to these conditions and why so few are left in San Diego or elsewhere. The pools are so sensitive we are limited to 15 people and therefore

have to ask for you to RSVP to Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489.

**Mystery Tree Walk from Mercy Road**  
Sun., April 22, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join Pat Watkins for this moderately paced nature and historical walk. Visit a grove of old oak trees with a Mexican era sign map carved into them and learn the legend of the Mystery Trees. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, by the benches 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.

**Nature Walk from Mercy Road**  
Sat., April 28, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in 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.

**Geology Hike**  
Sat., April 28, 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.

## DIRECTIONS

**Black Mountain Open Space Park, Rancho Peñasquitos** From I-15 taken SR 56 (Ted Williams Parkway) west to Black Mountain Road. Go right (north) on Black Mountain Road and follow it all the way until you see the last houses on the right and open space beyond. Look for a dirt road to the right and take it. Proceed about 1 mile, going beyond the bare hanging area on the right and down a hill to a big curve and a sign for the park and paved road on the right. Proceed up the road to the staging area.

**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.**

**Clevenger Canyon Staging Area**  
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 there.

**Crest Canyon Staging Area**  
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 Jimmy Durante Blvd. to San Dieguito Lagoon Rd., turn left onto San Dieguito Lagoon Rd. Follow San Dieguito Lagoon Rd. to Race Track View Dr. and meet at the gate next to the preserve.

**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 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.**

# Spring Volunteer Activities

## Black Mountain Open Space Park

**Saturday, April 7, 8 – noon**

Come join the park ranger and other volunteers from your community while we work on finishing the Minter's Loop trail. There will also be many wildflowers to see.

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 Ranger Dan Bylin at (858) 538-8082 for directions or more details.

Remember to bring 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.

## San Pasqual Valley / Clevenger Canyon

**Saturday, March 24, 8 – noon**

**Saturday, April 28, 8 – noon**

Come out and join the gang this spring as we improve a public trail in the beautiful Santa Ysabel Creek area within Clevenger Canyon.

Meet 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. Bring plenty of drinking water, sun screen, hat, and wear sturdy shoes, long pants and clothes you don't mind getting wet and dirty.

Questions? call Ranger Dan Bylin at (858) 538-8082.



## Peñasquitos Plantings

**Sunday, March 11, 9 – noon.**

**Saturday, March 17, 2 – 5 p.m.**

March 11, join with us & the Jewish Community Center to revegetate a disturbed slope and wildlife habitat with native plants. No experience necessary! Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for location.

March 17, Join us and help restore native plants to the Mercy Road area of Peñasquitos Canyon. This is our second year of planting native plants to restore this area.

Meet at the Ranger trailer headquarters at the Equestrian Center off Black Mountain Road. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take the next right into the Equestrian Stable area and look for the Ranger trailers to the right.

Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more details on either project.

## Peñasquitos Lagoon Restoration

**Sunday, April 29, 9:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove invasive plants that are destroying wildlife habitat in Peñasquitos Lagoon. This is the fourth & final year of restoration work by the Friends' Special Weed Action Team in this area.

Meet at the corner of Flintkote and Estuary Way in Sorrento Valley. 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 info.

## Fiesta de los Peñasquitos Street Fair

**Sun., May 6, in Rancho Peñasquitos**

The Friends need help staffing a booth with information on projects in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Park. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 to sign up for a shift.

## Tracking Classes

**April 28 : Earth Philosophy One**

Earth Philosophy One is a one-day introduction to the connection existing between ourselves and the Earth on both the physical and spiritual levels. It consists of both lecture and outdoor exercises. Contact Steve Romeo at 760-942-1620 for additional information and registration.

**May 5 - 6: 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.

Class will be May 5 - 6, running Sat. 8 to 8 and Sun. 8 to 4:00. Bring 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 858-672-0584 for cost and registration.

## Endangered Plant Surveys

**April – June**

If you'd like to help survey the endangered San Diego Thorn mint, or Willowly Monardella or Variegated Dudleya, call Mike at 858-566-6489. Times and locations vary.

# Plantas Medicinales

Will Bowen, Ph.D.

## Introduction

The earliest human inhabitants of Peñasquitos Canyon were Native Americans. They were followed by Spanish-speaking Euroamerican settlers. The Spanish-speaking settlers included Francisco Ruíz, the Alvarado family, the López family, plus various Spanish vaqueros (cowboys) and ranch hands.

These Euroamerican settlers were subject to the usual illnesses, cuts, scrapes, bites, bruises, burns, wounds, and broken bones that were common to frontier ranching and farming. Since doctors were rare and a ways a way, Ce., not nearby, but down in Old Town, the settlers undoubtedly utilized self-treatment whenever they could. Most of their medicine probably came from the local plants that grew in the canyon.

Generally, Spanish-speaking settlers in California embraced a "humoral" or "hot and cold" system of illness explanation and treatment. Humoral medicine dates back to the Roman physician Galen and has always been very popular in the Spanish-speaking countries of the world. In humoral medicine, a hot illness like hives or fever would be treated with a cold or cooling medicine, like the herb plantain (*Plantago* spp.), which grows in the cool ground near water, so as to balance the system and restore health. Conversely, for a cold illness, a heating medicine would usually be applied.

In Hispanic humoral medicine, there are also certain culturally-specific illnesses such as "empacho" (stomach blockage), "mal ojo" (evil eye), "susto" (soul loss due to fright), "mal aire" (bad air or wind), "magna" (anger), "maldad" (sorcery), "biles" (bile disorder), and "Pablo" (whole body shaking with fever and cold), that are unique to this cultural world view and that are not found in Anglo medicine.

These, too, are usually treated with "plantas medicinales" (medicinal plants) or "yierbas" (herbs). The medicinal plants are drunk as a "te" (tea), using the "flor" (flower), "hoja" (leaf),

"cascara" (bark), "palo" (wood), "semilla" (seed), "raiz" (root), or "aceite" (oil) of the plant. The "yierbas" are also applied externally as washes, poultices, plasters, or powders.

The tradition of Hispanic herbal medicine which developed in the New World is very great and unique. It continues to this day in Mexico, Latin and South America, as well as the American Southwest, and really rivals Western scientific medicine in terms of resort to cure.

Knowing about the "plantas medicinales" that are found in Peñasquitos Canyon helps us to better understand and appreciate the ongoing interaction of plants and people in the canyon. It also helps to more clearly illuminate the possible lifeways of the early Spanish-speaking settlers.

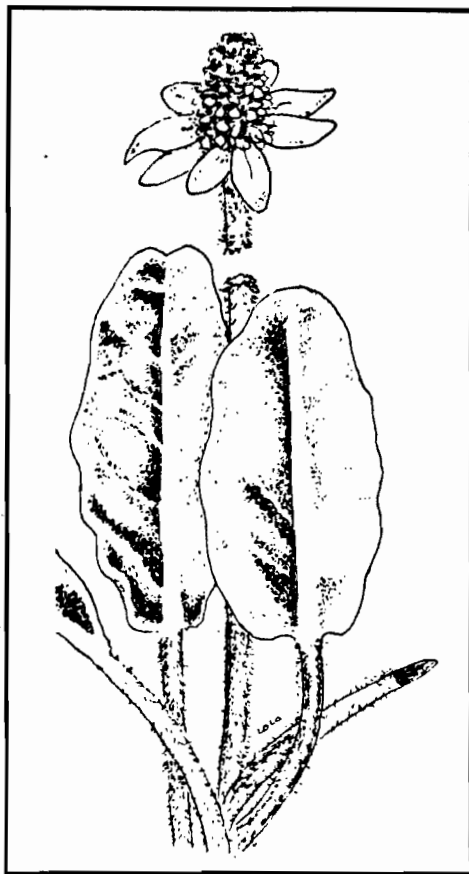
## Arboles Medicinales (Medicinal Trees)

Probably the most frequently utilized medical tree that grows in Peñasquitos Canyon is Willow (*Salix* spp.) We have several species in the canyon growing along the creek. The Spanish name for willow is "JARITA." Jarita is used as an astringent gargle for sore gums and throat. It is also taken as a tea for fever and headache.

The Cottonwood tree (*Populus fremontii*) which grows nearby the creek and which is making a big comeback in the canyon now that the cattle, which ate its young saplings, are gone is called "ALAMO." The bark of Alamo is used for fevers. The large leaves are soaked in hot water and tied on to sprains of the limbs.

Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), known as "FLOR SAC," has yellow flowers which are used as a tea for colds and fever. The flowers also make a good face wash for acne and pimples. The inner bark is used as an emetic to make you throw up. Tea of the inner bark was used to stimulate a daily cleansing, of up to 26 days, by vomiting in cases of rabies.

Tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), perhaps more of a tall shrub than a



Yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*)  
Illus. by Dr. Elberta Fleming

tree, is called "PUNCHE." Punche was introduced from South America by the Spanish. The leaves are applied externally for arthritis and muscle pain; powdered, then soaked in olive oil and used to massage sore muscles; combined with yerba mansa and applied for hemorrhoids; and made into a wash which is applied to help when you are pulling out ticks. The tiny black seeds are put up next to a toothache, called a "dolor de mule."

The Eucalyptus tree (*Eucalyptus globes*), called "EUCALIPTO," which was introduced to San Diego from Australia in the 19th century, is boiled in water to make a steam inhalant or drunk as a tea for bronchitis, asthma, and laryngitis.

The Pepper Tree (*Schinus molle*), first introduced as a gift from Spanish sailors to the Franciscan Fathers, and

**(Plantas medicinales cont'd)**

often found near Spanish and Mexican period adobe because it is drought tolerant and considered a spiritual tree, is called PERU or sometimes, "PIRUL," or "ARBOR DE PERU." The resin, fruit, and leaves were made into a wash for cataracts. The leaves are chewed to tone up the gums and made into a tea for bronchitis and as a lung decongestive and expectorant. In larger amounts, Peru is very dangerous and can cause severe vomiting and diarrhea. A sprig of Peru was also used in spiritual healing to treat the evil eye and swept over the body in a ritual cleansing called a "limpiada."

The "PITA" or "MAGUEY" plant (*Agave americana*) which was planted in López Canyon looks like a tree but is actually a desert plant. It grows a really tall flowerstalk which falls across the upper López trail every year it blooms. Water from the soaking fibers is used as a diuretic and as a scalp disinfectant. It appears to have antibiotic qualities and is hence used to treat gonorrhea and syphilis.

Finally, I want to mention the Apricot tree which was planted by the López family in their orchard in López Canyon. The apricot tree is called "ALBARICOQUE." The ground kernel from the fruit is mixed with water to make a paste and applied to the inside of the nostrils when they are dry or cracked. The paste is also applied to goiters.

### **Plantas de la Chaparral & Sage Scrub**

The drier areas of the canyon, including the chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitat provided medical plants for use by the Spanish-speaking settlers of the canyon. Common all over the canyon in these habitats in the spring is the smallish, dark green-leaved herb Filaree or Storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*) which is called "AL-FILERILLO." It is taken as a tea for bladder infections and used as a wash for scratches. Storksbill has those sharp pointed spiral seeds that actually bore themselves in the ground as the dew on them dries in the morning sun. Another plant seen all over the canyon is the introduced "AVENA" or Oat Straw or Wild Oats (*Avena* spp.). It's

steeped in hot milk and drunk when convalescing from an illness. When infused in vinegar, it helps to ease pains in the flanks.

The very foul smelling "CALABAZILLA" (*Cucurbita foetidissima*), also known as Coyote Melon or Stinking Gourd, produces orange tubular flowers, usually filled with bright yellow and black beetles, and beautiful yellow-green gourds. The gourds are broken open and the pulp and seeds used to wash the hair and clothes. The fragrant Sagebrush, which should not be confused with Sage (*Salvia* spp.), is called "CHAMOIS HEDIONDO" (*Artemisia tridentata* in the great basin, *A. californica* in San Diego). It provides a very good tea which is drunk cold as a bitter tonic. This plant also makes a good skin wash and will stimulate a sweat to break a fever when steeped in brandy and taken as a hot tea. Another valuable plant in the *Artemisia* family which is equally fragrant is "ARTEMISIA" (*Artemisia douglasiana* in San Diego) or Mugwort. This plant is used as an anti-epileptic drug and will also help to regulate menstruation.

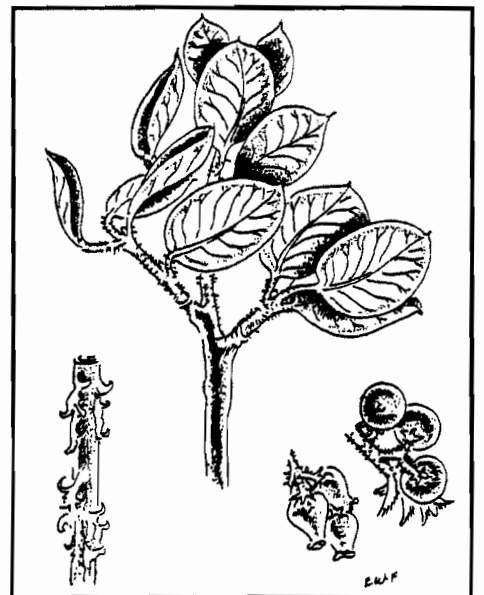
"MARRUBIO" (*Marrubium vulgare*) or Horehound is taken as a tea for cough. The concentrated extract is mixed with honey to make a cough syrup. Marrubio is also used for weight loss. The Spanish writer, Wilfred Bode, in his "El Medico del Hogar" (The Home Physician 1922) stated: "toda persona que quiere adelgazar sin perjuicio papa la salud dab tomar cada dia un litro de cocimento de marrubio." Which translates as: "Every person that wants to lose weight safely for health reasons should drink a liter of horehound tea every day." The seeds of the sweet smelling introduced exotic Fennel plant (*Foeniculum vulgare*) known as "HINDO," are boiled to make a tea for stomach cramps or gas. Hindoo is also used to stimulate milk flow in mothers and build up the blood in anemic children.

An infusion of "MALTA" (*Malva parviflora*) or Cheeseplant is gargled for sore throat and applied as a wash for thrush, diaper rash, and poison oak (called YEA). MILD-EN-RAJA or Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is used to stop bleeding. It's especially effective for bleeding hemorrhoids. The shrub with beautiful red bark called

PINGUICA or Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pungens*) produces leaves which are made into a tea to reduce temperature in a fever, soothe the bronchioles, and decongest the "riñones" (kidneys).

AMOLE (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) or Soap Plant has a hairy brown root which can be lathered up and washed over burns. In Spanish and Indian times it was also thrown in creeks to stupefy fish (apparently it doesn't effect frogs, though!). The Castor Bean plant (*Ricinus communis*), which is an escaped introduced exotic, is called "HIGUERILLA." The oil or aceite from the seed is used to help regulate the bowels. Careful, it's quite poisonous when taken to excess. "NOPAL" (*Opuntia* spp.) is the prickly pear cactus. The juicy pulp from the pads was put on abscesses and applied as a tonic for the hair.

"ESTRAMONIO" or "TOLOACHE" (*Datura* spp.), also called Jimson Weed, can be identified by its large white fragrant tubular flowers, which will bloom at night. The leaves and flowers were made into a bath for arthritis. A dried leaf can be lit and inhaled to treat asthma while the ground up seeds soaked in kerosene are used to kill body lice. The fresh leaves may be bruised and applied to the temple for headaches and a poultice of the leaves can help to remove cancerous growths if applied in early stages of the disease.



**Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*)  
Illus. by Dr. Elberta Fleming**



## Fund Appeal 2000 - 2001

Just over \$4,000 was raised from our annual fund appeal. Once again you, our members have come through to generously fund our special programs.

We want to recognize two especially generous donations from:  
Camille Armstrong & Geof Smith  
Beth Williams

also donating were:

Sandy Amison  
Michael Balderas  
Luanne Barrett  
Lee & Roxane Benvau  
Steffi & Allan Bokser  
Lynne & Larry Carleton  
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Fern Siegel  
Don Steele  
Richard R Tom  
Greg Vines  
Waltz & Associates  
Phil White  
Beth Williams  
Toni & Frank Wong

## Conks, Oaks, and Woodpeckers!

Les Braund, president  
San Diego Mycological Society

Did you know that there is a connection between Oak Conks (*Phellinus gilvus*), a common shelf fungus, found locally on Oak and Sycamore trees and Acorn Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)?

Oak Conks are usually brown shelf fungus easily seen growing on oak and sycamore trees. They're usually very hard and difficult to remove. Conks are heart rotters. More specifically they're trunk rotters. That means they attack the entire heartwood of a tree from the ground up. There are other fungus which attack only the base and root system (*Phaeolus*) and top rotters (*Fomitopsis*) which inhabit only the tops of affected trees.

Conks attack the heartwood of trees by penetrating through wounds made by a number of natural and unnatural environmental insults. Once established heart rotters soften the heart wood, allowing the Acorn Woodpecker to create cavities in the trunks, especially of Sycamore trees. Acorn Woodpecker cavities are typically 1-1/2 inches in diameter at the entrance and 8-24 inches deep. They generally nest in groups from two to as many as fifteen. The average nesting group is about 6 birds.

Granaries or storage trees are the most obvious way Acorn Woodpeckers make use of the softened wood. Often hundreds of acorns are stuck in the small cavities made by the woodpeckers. These granaries provide sources of food in lean times.

### Friends' Web Site

Visit the Friends web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org). The site is undergoing a big expansion with more Friends and related activities.

(Montana Mirador cont'd)

credit for making this deal and keeping the pressure on to find the monies necessary to buy it. However, without decisive help from former Mayor Golding and her staff, the funds might never have been found. The City's option was only months away from expiring.

Thanks to current Mayor Murphy and District 1 City Councilmember Scott Peters for following through on this important community priority.

Already, City Ranger Dan Bylin, who manages Black Mountain Park, has been surveying the trails and habitat on Montana Mirador to plan trail improvements and public access while blocking off the dangerous and illegal off-road vehicle intrusions that cause so much damage to this and other areas in the Black Mountain Park area.

## Welcome New Members

Hope to see the following new members on the trail!

Rich Gibbons  
Jon Labaw  
Carmel Lozano  
John Maroux  
Fern Siegel  
Mario, Nancy, Alex & Tony Trejo  
Shea Valero  
Kirsten Winter



### (López lighting cont'd)

turned on. Mr. Henderson said that the floodlights would be turned on for a maximum of 742 hours per year (barring marine layers), with 43% of those hours per year being between October and December. He also told me that the field's size limits users to those 12 years old and under who play organized soccer, softball, and Little League. In terms of maximum activity, the field can be divided into four practice soccer fields or three game fields; however, if the field is only half reserved, half of the floodlights will be turned on — the half away from the canyon. The reason why I bring this up is the possible, and highly probable, noise factor. Not only will López Canyon's wildlife be impacted by bright lights night-after-night, but also by the typical noise levels associated with this type of activity. Finally, let's not forget our precious canyon flora: Consider, "like a moth to a flame." Yes, pollinating moths will be attracted away from the preserve's plants and animals by the floodlights, another impact that cannot be ignored.

### How did we get here?

The full effect of the park's floodlights and related field activities won't be realized until March 2002; however, one has to ask how they got approved in the first place. In 1991, the park's original design did not include floodlights mainly because they were opposed by key environmental groups in the area, including the Friends.

However, according to Bruce Brown, current Treasurer of the Mira Mesa Recreation Council, the park's design still had a provision for "stubbed" lighting just in case a lighted field was needed in Mira Mesa at a later date. The park was scheduled for completion in 1992; but, before construction started, Mira Mesa's infrastructure funds were diverted to a project aimed at relieving the congestion at the I-805 and Mira Mesa Blvd. junction. Soon thereafter, the recession hit and area housing construction stopped causing the Facilities Building Assessment (FBA) fund to dry up. Without getting into too much detail, the FBA consists of monies assessed on every new house or condo built in Mira

Mesa specifically for community infrastructure such as parks, libraries, schools, etc. No money in, no money out. Finally, it was pointed out to me by Mr. Brown that since all Mira Mesa parks are funded by FBA funds, they must serve the entire community; so even if lighted fields seem inappropriate for the neighborhood surrounding López Canyon, they benefit the community of Mira Mesa.

Between 1996 and 1997, the FBA was growing again, plans for López Ridge Park were resurrected and new issues affecting the park were addressed. They included the expiration

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## Letters / Emails Needed

Please send letters or emails demanding the removal of these stadium lights from López Park. Address them to Councilmember Brian Mainshein at: 202 C St., San Diego, CA 92101 or email: m8H@cd5.sannet.gov

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of the original Environmental Impact Report (EIR), compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, storm drain hookups for drainage according to California Title 24, and protection for a pair of the endangered California gnatcatchers observed near the park.

Above all though, was the reevaluation of the community's park needs: The population had grown at the same time the number of usable acres for parks decreased dramatically. Most notably was Winterwood Park (recently renamed Christa McAuliffe Park) where 21 flat and usable acres earmarked for a community park, complete with lighted fields, a pool, and recreation center, were reduced to 7 after vernal pools were "re-discovered" on the property. [Both the school district and Parks Departments knew pools with endangered species were present, but had kept quiet about them.] It was because Mira Mesa lost park acreage that the idea of a lighted

ball field came up at the May 1997 Mira Mesa Recreation Council (MMRC) meeting. The amended park plans were approved by the MMRC at the October 1997 meeting after what some call a pitiful notification effort which is fast becoming the one of most contentious issue surrounding the park. After the requisite EIR process, construction began in May 2000 and the lights installed at the end of the year.

### Was the public adequately notified?

I saw a copy of the 1997 flyer that was dropped off at neighboring homes and can see why it's causing such a stir. It had a map on the top part and then a "What, When, Where" format to announce the meeting. What's wrong with that? Well, although it was an official notification by the City of San Diego, it wasn't printed on City letterhead. Also, the map merely showed where López Ridge Park is in relation to Calle Cristobal, Camino Santa Fe and a few residential streets to the east, instead of a map of the park and its proposed design, including the floodlights. There was no description of the proposed park facilities whatsoever. A similar complaint about the City's notification process was made by Geoffrey Smith of the Los Penasquitos Canyon Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). He writes, "City staff maintains that Sierra Club and the CAC both were on the mail notification list, but I personally never saw the notice back in 1997 to reconsider the lighting decision." Although he admits that the internal notification systems of both the Sierra Club and the City are not perfect, ". . . given that these lights shine directly into the Lopez Canyon, I maintain that City Staff should have taken specific action to contact the CAC."

### Is it too late?

Once the lights were erected, adjacent homeowners didn't waste any time in voicing their opposition, including at the most recent MMRC meetings. Geoffrey Smith, representing both the CAC and the Sierra Club, was also given time to speak. Regard-

**(López lighting cont'd)**

less, the MMRC voted unanimously at their February 13th meeting to keep the floodlights. Consequently, affected residents are pressuring their elected officials to overturn the MMRC decision and remove the floodlights.

Also, the Sierra Club's Conservation Committee has launched a letter writing campaign to the area's representatives, including City Councilman Maienschein, and County Supervisor Slater, who sits on the Preserve's task force. In addition, a petition to have the floodlights removed has been circulating and I've heard over 250 people had signed it. This public outcry could be loud enough to have the lights removed, but I believe the strongest leg we have to stand on is proving an unmitigatable MSCP impact. That's because, according to Bernie Turgeon of the City of San Diego's MSCP Department, the floodlights were approved on the condition that there is no significant impact on Lopez Canyon.

Well, if any of you saw the floodlight tests (February 1st and 20th), you'll agree that it is next to impossible for those lights not to shine into the canyon. During the testing, a number of us stood at the park's edge (a.k.a., the canyon rim) and waved our hands; we were amazed at how strong our shadows were on the adjacent finger canyons, even with existing shielding on each of the lights. Just as amazing however was hearing the City's environmental specialist state unequivocally at the MMRC's February 13th meeting that the lights make no significant impact on the canyon. A point accepted by the council when they voted that night to keep the floodlights. What we need now is an independent evaluation of the surrounding canyon, preferably with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the State Dept. of Fish and Game, both of which are supervising agencies for the Multiple Species Conservation Program, which includes López Canyon.

**Reference**

Skutelsky, Orit (1996). Predation risk and state-dependent foraging in scorpions: effects of moonlight on foraging in the scorpion *Butus occianus*. *Animal Behaviour* 52: 49 - 57.

**(Flooding cont'd)**

small lake on the south side of it.

Grasping my walking stave firmly, I proceeded to walk down (west) the new, and now flooded, roadway towards the old adobe ruins. The farther I went, the deeper it got and the faster the flood roared around me until I reached a veritable set of rapids as the combined flood waters of both López Creek and Peñasquitos Creek raced on past the very walls of the old adobe, across the new roadway and back into the channel of Peñasquitos Creek. I barely made it because the deepest part of the raging torrent was at the base of the iron fence around the adobe, where the manhole cover is located. West of that, the trail emerged to dry land near the old pepper tree. I was pleased to see that the hitching posts, which we put up about 15 years ago, were above the flood waters.

Returning to the parking area via Sorrento Valley Road, I realized that I had witnessed an example of what is called *avulsion*. This is a sudden change in a stream channel, because the stream flow had in fact reversed the flow of the two creeks, sending Peñasquitos Creek *up* López Creek, instead of the reverse. I had also seen the level of water higher at the old adobe foundations than ever before in my 30 years of monitoring the area. What is even more threatening is that this may happen again after another heavy rain, and the old adobe foundation will crumble.

I urge that some of the funds allotted for the preservation of El Cuervo be used to dig a trench around the old adobe, the foundation be sprayed with a tar-based coating, and the trench be lined with waterproof plastic and filled with gravel.

One might think that all we had to do was increased the height of the new roadway and thus keep Peñasquitos Creek within its own channel, but is at the level of the trunk sewer line manhole covers right now, and they *can not* be buried.

**[Editor's note:** Ranger Bill Lawrence investigated this situated so well described by Dr. Northrop and found that the contractor for the new wetlands and road realignment had not yet installed new, larger culverts under the new road. The road must first be in

place and the earth compacted and allowed to settle before culverts can be properly installed. The old culverts have been buried and useless for carrying López Creek waters through the area. Lawrence also ordered the sand-bagging of the old adobe to protect it from future flooding. Dr. Lynne Christenson, the archaeologist who volunteers on our Citizens Advisory Committee, and I inspected the adobe last week and confirmed the sand bags are in place. She is working with an archaeologist Ranger who specializes in protecting adobes to plan a longer term solution to this very real threat Dr. Northrop identified.

---

## New Officers

Mike Kelly

At our annual meeting held Friday, Feb. 23, those members in attendance nominated and elected new officers for the Friends' Board of Directors. We also were presented with a wonderful slide show and talk by naturalist and long-time Friends' member, Barbara Moore. Barbara took us on a tour of some of her favorite nature places. She also autographed copies of her "Walking San Diego," now out in its second edition.

**Our new officers are:**

Brian Swanson was elected as the Friends new President.

Don Albright was elected Vice-president.

Pat Watkins was re-elected Treasurer.

Rick Botta was re-elected Secretary.

Brian and Don have been members of the Friends from our inception and bring a wealth of knowledge about the Friends and the Preserve with them. As many of you know, Brian has been leading bird and nature walks for many years, while Don has been leading our geology walks.

Besides recording our minutes, Rick is the organizer of our Deer Spot-lighting surveys and a member of the Tracking Team. Besides guarding our treasury, Pat also leads most of our scout walks and several of our nature walks. What a great group!

Congratulations to all.



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 858-484-3219

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## Check Your Label

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

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson 760-760-749-5453  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619-443-5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858-672-0584

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Chris Bader, Mike Kelly, Barry Martin

### 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  
 Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
 Stream Survey Committee: open  
 Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
 Volunteer Coordinator: Jill Kozeluh, 858-271-1814  
 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: \_\_\_\_\_ 3/2001

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.



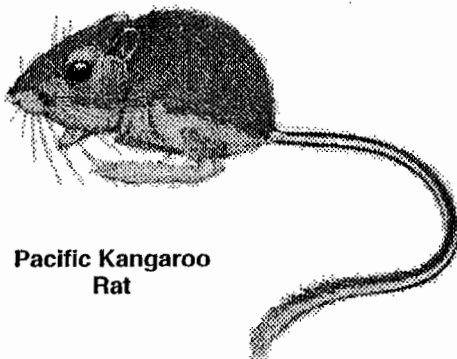


## Preserve Small Mammal Survey

by Cheryl Brehme

I'm a graduate student in the ecology department at S.D.S.U. and am currently working on a thesis project on the behavioral and population responses of small mammals and herpetofauna to roads in coastal sage scrub ecosystems. This past summer, I conducted a small mammal survey for the preserve. In this article, I'll discuss the diversity of mammals that I found, the importance of small mammals to the ecological integrity of the preserve, and recommendations for maintaining this diversity into the future.

What do I mean by small mammals? Well, for the most part, they are primarily rodents (mice and rats). Small insectivores (or shrews) are also typically included in this category. Most small mammal biologists study rodent populations because they're easy to capture, study, and typically have abundant populations for collecting data on population ecology, landscape ecology, and life history traits (reproductive biology, home ranges, dispersal, etc.). There are over 2,000 species all over the world, with at least 25 species of small mammals endemic (found nowhere else) to San Diego County. Some are generalists, some



Pacific Kangaroo Rat

See p. 6 for more

## Sorrento Valley Road Victory

Mike Kelly

After a two-year campaign by environmental and community activists, the San Diego City Council voted 7 to 1 to keep Sorrento Valley Road closed. District 1 Councilmember Scott Peters made the motion. The sole vote in favor of reopening the road came from District 5 Councilmember Brian Maienschein.

Sorrento Valley Road was partially closed from the Carmel Valley park and ride south almost to Carmel Mountain Road due to construction of the State Route 56 flyover lanes. While closed, the closed section became popular with bicyclists, hikers and those out for a nature walk. There was concern that reopening it would have a negative impact on wildlife, particularly several endangered bird species such as the Clapper rail.

Pushing for the reopening had been a number of hi-tech companies located in Sorrento Valley and Sorrento Mesa who saw it as a traffic relief measure, providing another work around the "merge" of I-5 / I-805. Activists, however, pointed to the existence of the Carmel Mountain Road work-a-round and the new Vista Sorrento Parkway which is under construction parallel to the "merge" and the future widening of I-5 and I-805 at this point as providing traffic relief.

Peters second motion passed unanimously directs the City Manager to study other options for the road. One option is to improve and open it for pedestrians and bicyclists with access for emergency and maintenance vehicles. The second was to open it during daylight hours to one way traffic for all vehicles, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians, similar to Father Serra Trail in Mission Trails Regional Park, where speed bumps restrict traffic speeds.

### Highlights Inside

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Tracking Team

## Scientific Advisory Board Meets

As Barry Martin reported last year in these pages, the Peñasquitos Tracking Team has expanded countywide as the San Diego Tracking Team, dedicated to organizing community-based tracking teams all over the county. These teams, once trained, will conduct the same type of wildlife surveys that have become the norm in Peñasquitos Canyon, Peñasquitos Lagoon, the Del Mar Mesa, and Black Mountain areas.

As part of this expansion, the Tracking Team has organized a Scientific Advisory Board. The new board held its first meeting May 2 at the historic adobe ranch house.

Agreeing to sit on the advisory board were the following people:

Kevin Crooks, wildlife biologist, professor, U. of Wisconsin

Keith Greer, Planner, City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon

Dave Lawhead, Assoc. Wildlife Biologist, Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game

Jerre Stallcup, Conservation Biologist, Conservation Biology Institute (CBI)

See p. 5 for more

## Hike Schedule

## Great Weather for Walks

It's been — and still is — a good season for flowers. Check out the north side of the canyon from Peñasquitos Community Park west to the waterfall and beyond. You should see California sunflower (*Encelia californica*), Golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), Mariposa lilies (*Calochortus splendens*), Popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* spp.), Blue-eye grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), and others.

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded information or visit our web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).

## May &amp; June

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.

## May

## Geology Hike

Sun., May 6, 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.

## Dusk Star Gazing Hike

Sun., May 6, 7:30-9 p.m. Join Will Bowen for this dusk hike & look for owls and deer. Contemplate the stars, constellations, and the moon. Bring a flashlight. Meet in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sor-

rento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

Beginners' Tracking Walks  
from Ranch House

Sat., May 19, 8-9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Uli Burgin, a member of the Friends' Tracking Team.. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

## Advanced Tracking Walks from Ranch House

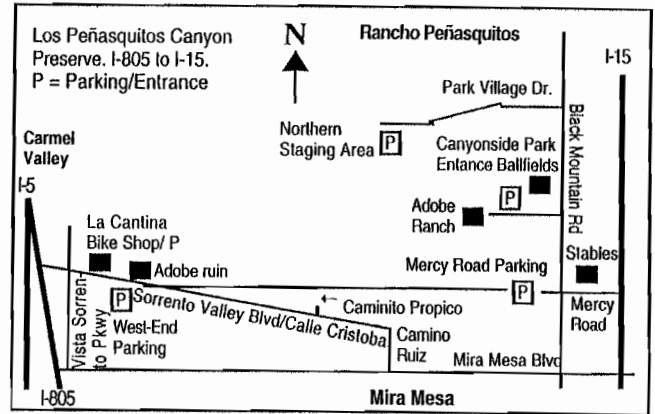
Sat., May 19, 8-9 a.m. Lee Kirchhevel will lead this advanced tracking walk. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

## Mystery Tree Walk from Mercy Road

Sun., May 20, 4 p.m. ( 2 miles) Join Pat Watkins for this moderately paced nature and historical walk. Visit a grove of old oak trees with a Mexican era sign map carved into them and learn the legend of the Mystery Trees. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, by the benches 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.

## Nature Walk from Mercy Road

Sun., May 27, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in 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.



## June

## Dusk Star Gazing Hike

Sat., June 2, 7:30-9 p.m. Join Will Bowen for this dusk hike & look for owls and deer. Contemplate the stars, constellations, and the moon. Bring a flashlight. Meet in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

## Old Stagecoach Road Hike / West End

Sun., June 3, 3-5 p.m. Mike Kelly will take visitors along the old Stagecoach Road and share what we know about this history making trail . Meet in the west end parking/staging area on the south side of Sorrento Valley Blvd in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway, just past where the business district ends. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

## Mystery Tree Walk from Mercy Road

Sat., June 9, 4 p.m. ( 2 miles) Join Pat Watkins for this moderately paced nature and historical walk. Visit a grove of old oak trees with a Mexican era sign map carved into them and learn the legend of the Mystery Trees. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, by the benches 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.

## Beginners' Tracking Walks from Ranch House

Sat., June 16, 8-9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Uli Burgin, a member of the Friends' Tracking Team.. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st

(Calendar cont'd)

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.

#### **Advanced Tracking Walks from Ranch House**

Sat., June 16, 8-9 a.m. Lee Kirchhevel will lead this advanced tracking walk. 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 from Mercy Road**

Sat., June 30, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. See wildflowers and learn native plants and their uses. Meet in 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.

### **DIRECTIONS**

**Black Mountain Open Space Park, Rancho Peñasquitos** From I-15 taken SR 56 (Ted Williams Parkway) west to Black Mountain Road. Go right (north) on Black Mountain Road and follow it all the way until you see the last houses on the right and open space beyond. Look for a dirt road to the right and take it. Proceed about 1 mile, going beyond the bare hangliding area on the right and down a hill to a big curve and a sign for the park and paved road on the right. Proceed up the road to the staging area.

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal**

**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 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.**

## **Good Bye Ranger Dan**

Mike Kelly

We're sad to have to report that Senior Ranger Dan Bylin is leaving the City Parks program to take a position with the Humboldt County Parks system up north.

Dan was Black Mountain Open Space Park's first and only ranger. Be-

# **Volunteer Activities**

## **Peñasquitos Lagoon Restoration**

**Sunday, June 10, 9:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove invasive plants that are destroying wildlife habitat in Peñasquitos Lagoon. This is the fourth & final year of restoration work by the Friends' Special Weed Action Team in this area.

Meet in the parking lot of the first building on the left side of Sorrento Valley Road, 1 long block north of the Coaster Station in Sorrento Valley. Remember to bring the following: plenty of drinking water, a snack, hat, sun screen, and sear sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and tough old clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 for info.

## **Tracking Classes**

**May 5 - 6: 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. Offers the opportunity to acquire the tools to become proficient in the art and science of


 RANCHO ROUNDUP

# Archaeology in the Park Open House

Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry

Saturday, May 12 join us for our annual "Arch in the Park" day. The following schedule was tentative at press time, and certain events may occur at different times. You can pick up flyers with an updated schedule at the Ranch House.

10:00	Tracking Walk/Latina Dancing (children)
10:00-12:00	Children's Activities (adobe brick-making, mock dig, silver concha-making, rock art, roping, planting geraniums, P.J.'s heritage chickens)
10:45	Opening Cermonies
11:00	Ranch House/ Archaeo Dig Site Tour / Story-telling Rancho Chuck Wagon Opens
11:30	Flintknapping / Atlatl Demonstration
12:00	Mohnike Adobe Restoration Lecture by Historic Architect Paul Johnson
12:45	Raffle Prize Drawings
1:00	Ranch House/Archaeo Dig Site Tour
1:00 - 3:00	Children's Activities (see above)
1:00 - 3:00	Tours of Mohnike Adobe - \$5 donation
1:30	Flintknapping / Atlatl Demonstration
2:00	Nature Walk
3:00	Closing Comments/Event Ends

There will also be exhibits and Spanish guitar music, and La Cocina Gift Shop will be open all day. The Rancho Chuckwagon will serving up barbecued bratwurst (or soy sausage) sandwiches with grilled onions and bell peppers, and there will be hotdogs for the kids. Come and join us for a day of good, old-fashioned fun!

## The Third Adobe

How many of you know that there are actually three adobes in the preserve? You may have observed the ruins of El Cuervo (formerly the Ruiz-Alvarado) at the west end of the preserve; and, hopefully you have visited the beautifully restored Los Peñasquitos Ranch House. However, you may not be aware that there is a third adobe located behind the City Rangers' Office at the equestrian center. This adobe, called the Mohnike Adobe, was built circa 1912 by Charles Mohnike, who also lived at Los Peñasquitos and built the large adobe barn there. Fortunately, the City of San Diego has set aside funding to restore the deteriorating Mohnike Adobe. Historic Architect Paul Johnson will be discussing the restoration at this year's Archaeology in the Park event, which will be held on May 12. Following his talk, there will be an opportunity for the public to tour the old house, which presently serves as the residence of the caretaker of the stables. This is the first time the house has been open to the public, and it will most likely be the only time before the restoration. There will be a \$5 donation for the tours, which will be held from 1-3 p.m. Tour signups will be at the information table at "Arch in the Park". They will be on a first-come basis; so if you are interested, be sure to arrive early!

## Rancho La Vida School Program Needs Help (It might be you!)

John Marcoux, the wonderful gentleman who conducted the nature walks for our third-fourth grade school program, has moved out of the area; and we are looking for a replacement. We have had to eliminate this portion of the program, which was one of the highlights of the children's visit to the Rancho. If you are interested in sharing your knowledge and love of nature with our local school children, give me a call (858-484-7504). The programs are held on Wednesdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



# Plantas Medicinales Part 2

Will Bowen

## Plantas de la Tierra Mojada (Wetlands Plants)

Plants growing along or nearby streams or marshy areas were also utilized for medicine. For instance, "LANTEN," or Plantain (*Plantago major*) produces a spike and root that are taken internally as a lubricating laxative. The crushed fresh leaves are cooling and relieve pain when applied to the temples for headache or put directly on insect bites. The bruised leaves can also be soaked in olive oil and applied to boils, inflammation, and swellings.

The roots of LENGUA de VACA or Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*) can be chewed for loose teeth and inflamed gums while the leaves are used to make a blood purifying tea. I believe that this plant is effective because it contains a significant amount of Vitamin C. The Cocklebur plant (*Xanthium strumarium*), called "CADILLOS," has burrs which are boiled as a tea for diarrhea. The nutlets inside the burrs can be eaten or made into a wash for saddle sores. "PEONIA" or Nutgrass (*Cyperus esculentus*), a kind of rush, seen sporadically through out the wetlands has light green helicopter blade-like leaves. The tuber is used as both a diuretic and to help sweat out a fever. The many-colored splattered flowers of "RABANO" or Wild Radish (*Raphanus sativus*), another runaway introduced exotic, are a common enough sight nearby the creek. The fruit of this plant helps digestion if a cup of tea is taken after eating.

Our local fragrant and beautiful pink-flowered Rose (*Rosa californica*) called "ROSA de CASTILLA" produces leaves and flowers which can be used as a wash for inflamed eyes. A dried flower can also be lit and the smoke past over the eyes with a similar effect. The flower petals made into a tea are useful for "empacho," diarrhea, colic, and sore mouth. The petals can also be rubbed on the limbs to help bring down a fever. "CONCHA l'AGUA" or Canchalagua (*Centarium venustum*) is another very beautiful pink-flowered plant that grows near

the vernal pools. It was used to induce a better appetite in the Old Spanish times.

Probably the most important wetland plant in Spanish tradition of herbology is "YERBA DEL MANGO" or Yerba Mansa, also called Swamp Root (*Anemopsis californica*). A tea of the leaves and roots is good for arthritis and will purify the blood and build up the heart as well as treat gum and throat infections. The bruised leaves can be applied to painful joints and the powdered roots can be applied to cuts, scraps, and wounds.

## Conclusion

Peñasquitos Canyon is home for many "plantas medicinales" which have been and are used in the Spanish humoral medical tradition. It seems very likely that the early Spanish settlers in the canyon used many of the herbs in similar ways. Hence, a nice addition to the Johnson Taylor Ranch House collections of historic materials might be a collection of Spanish-named medical plants that were probably used by canyon residents. This collection could include specimens, photographs, and probable uses. It could be filed under heading of "Medicine, or Health and Healing, in the Canyon."

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### (Advisory Board cont'd)

Mark Webb, Senior Park Mgr., County Dept. of Parks & Recreation  
Clark Winchell, Biomonitor, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Mike White, Conservation Biologist, CBI.

The advisory board will help guide the Tracking Team's expansion in the County in order to help maintain the scientific integrity of the wildlife surveys being conducted. It's expected that other types of wildlife surveys — in addition to the track and sign transects and deer spotlighting counts the team currently conducts — will be necessary as the plan for the 176,000 acre Multiple Species Conservation Program is assembled.

# Volunteer Accomplishments

It's been awhile since we thanked our many volunteers for their many hours of donating their time and labor in a wide range of projects. Thanks to the following people who helped out — often frequently — leading hikes, restoration projects, cultural resources and plant surveys:

Chris Bader  
Rick Botta  
Will Bowen  
Les Braund  
Uli Burgin  
Cindy Burrascano  
Lynne Christenson  
Cub Pack 623  
Drew DeShazo  
Edward DiBella  
The Dingeman Family  
Terry Gaughn  
Mel Howe  
Rob Hutsel  
Debra Jones  
Mike Kelly  
Linda King  
Jill Kozeluh  
Barbara Moore  
Gretchen Nell  
Steve Romeo  
Liz Rozycki  
Carrie Schneider  
Brian Swanson  
Pat Watson  
Bill Witzel

## Welcome New Members

Hope to see the following new members on the trail!

Irene Harper  
David Jacobson  
Jill & Joe Kozeluh  
Deborah & Jeffrey Larrimore  
Mt. Carmel H.S. Ecology Club  
John Mullen  
David & Norilee Sherwood  
Wallace & Karen Tucker

## (López lighting cont'd)

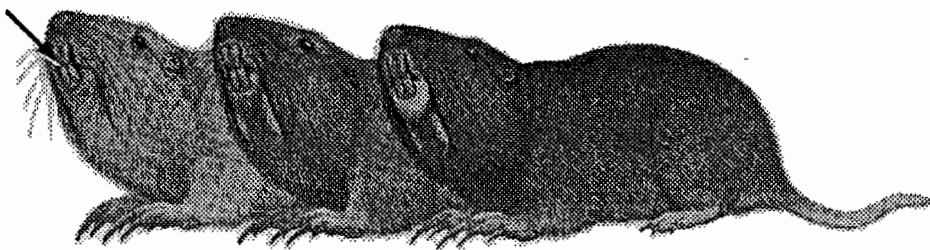
are specialists, and they've adapted to almost every ecological niche available throughout the world. They're nocturnal (active in the night time and diurnal (active in the daytime), live above and below ground, and eat everything from fresh vegetation, seeds, arthropods, bird and reptile eggs, small reptiles, amphibians, and other small mammals.

**Ecological role of small mammals**

Small mammals are incredibly important to ecosystem health. Here in San Diego, they're a primary food source for most of our favorite animals. These include all of our beautiful raptors (including hawks, kites, and harriers), owls, all of the larger snakes (including rosy boas, rattlesnakes, gopher snakes), as well as the larger mammals (weasels, bobcats, foxes, coyotes). Since these larger animals have a wide array of feeding strategies, habitat use and activity patterns, their diversity ultimately depends upon a high diversity of small mammals in size, habitat, and activity patterns. Besides providing food, many small mammals provide shelter for other animals. Small mammal burrows and woodrat houses are used for shelter by many species of arthropods (spiders, insects, ticks, mites, etc.), reptiles, and amphibians. Finally, they also have a large impact on vegetation communities. This is due to selective seed predation and seed dispersal. Studies have shown that when rodents are selectively removed from an area, the vegetation community drastically changes over time—typically becoming more dense and thick with understory plants and forbs.

**Summer survey**

Okay, on to the survey. I surveyed



Pocket gopher: light phase, brown phase, dark phase

the preserve from June to August of 2000. I set out Sherman small mammal live traps (about the size of a child's shoe box) in linear transects, about 1 yard between each box. The process was as follows. In the afternoon, the trap doors are set open with food placed inside. When an animal enters the trap, the door closes and "TAH DAH"—a live animal waits inside the box. The next morning, I get to check the traps. When I find one closed, it is like opening a present — waiting to find out what is inside. At this point, I remove the animal, weigh it, measure it, determine its sex, identify it to species, and release it. Identification can be very tricky in some cases, but can be determined by variations in tail length, foot length, and color patterns.

I set out approximately 600 traps throughout the reserve in 19 distinct areas. Traps were typically opened every day for three consecutive days. The areas surveyed covered many plant communities including coastal sage and adolfia scrub, chamise, manzanita, and oak scrub, oak woodland, riparian woodland, oak chaparral, freshwater marsh, native and non-native grassland, as well as several "disturbed" areas (high human use/non-native plants).

Out of 1,736 trap-nights (1 trap/1 night = 1 trap night), there were 174 captures representing 115 individuals. Species captured were the Western harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*), San Diego Pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax*), Cactus mouse (*Peromyscus eremicus*), Deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), Brush mouse (*Peromyscus boylii*), California mouse (*Peromyscus californicus*), Dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*), Desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*), and the Pacific Kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys simulans* — previously

known as *D. agilis*). Burrows and signs were further used to identify habitats of the pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*).

**Mice**

There were four species of white-footed mice, genus *Peromyscus*, captured. These mice are grey to brown in color, with white fur on their undersides and feet, and have large membranous ears (very cute!). They are typically generalists, feeding on fresh vegetation, seeds, and insects, depending upon season and availability. The species differ in size and habitat affinity. The California mouse (*P. californicus*) is the largest, almost like a small

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Overall, the small mammal diversity of Los Penasquitos Canyon is very impressive.

This is likely due to the many habitat types and mosaics of vegetation communities within the preserve.

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rat, and is abundant in riparian & oak woodlands, and chaparral. The cactus mouse (*P. eremicus*) is abundant in the more xeric (drier) coastal sage and adolfia scrub. The brush mouse (*P. boylii*) is known to live in a variety of chaparral and woodland habitats, but was only found in the oak woodland of the preserve, approximately 1 mile west of the east entrance. The deer mouse (*P. maniculatus*) is also known to occur in a wide variety of habitats, but is also known as a disturbance specialist. It was captured in the highly disturbed area near the Lopez wildlife tunnel.

One species of pocket mouse was found in the coastal sage scrub and manzanita scrub plant communities in the canyon. This is the San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax*). These are fairly small grey/brown mice with very small ears and large outside cheek pockets. The outside cheek pockets are a physiological adaptation to dry environments. These

### (Small mammals cont'd)

mice forage primarily on small seeds and temporarily store them in their cheek pockets. Because they don't have to open their mouths to keep adding seeds, they decrease evaporative water loss. When they collect enough seeds, they go to their burrows and eat them or store them for "lean" times in caches under the ground.

In the canyon's freshwater marsh, the Western harvest mice (*R. megalotis*) prevail. These are very small (~2-3 inches) grey/brown mice with large membranous ears (very, very cute!). They are easily distinguished from other mice by their grooved incisor teeth. They don't live in underground burrows, like all of the mice mentioned thus far, but build their nests in thick grass and eat primarily small seeds and fresh vegetation.

### Woodrats

Now the woodrats! These guys are awesome- and can be quite the fighters in hand! There are two species in the reserve — the desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*) and the dusky-footed woodrat (*N. fuscipes*). They are large (~6-8 inches, not including tail), grey/brown rats with large membranous ears. The dusky-footed woodrat is mostly associated with riparian and oak woodland, as well as chaparral habitats. They're frequently seen climbing trees. They build very large houses (I have seen them up to five feet tall!) out of sticks, trash, bones, or anything they can find. Their houses can be on the ground or up in large oak trees and often have several specialized rooms connected by tunnels with at least 3 to 4 entrance/exit holes. They eat a varied diet including seeds, vegetation, bird eggs, and arthropods. The desert woodrat is found in more xeric habitats, such as the coastal sage scrub and rocky outcrops in the reserve. Their houses are typically smaller (a few feet in height) and are frequently built in prickly pear cactus patches or in rock crevices. Woodrat houses are passed down from generation to generation and can be up to 10,000 years old! Many paleontologists study woodrat houses to learn about the history of vegetation in many areas. They're able to do this because the urine of the woodrat, which is used as

a "glue" for house building and maintenance, perfectly preserves the plants and sticks for thousands of years!

### Kangaroo rat

Last, but not least, is the Pacific kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys simulans*— frequently still called *agilis*). They're large rats with big eyes, small ears, large hind legs and short arms. They're a cinnamon brown color with white undersides and a large white band which crosses their thigh and extends to the tip of a long tufted tail. They are absolutely beautiful! They are in the same family as the pocket mice and also have fur-lined cheek

---

. . . the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) and the roof rat (*Rattus rattus*), were not detected. This may indicate that the preserve is still relatively undisturbed and harbors a natural biota composition.

---

pouches (but not external). They eat primarily larger seeds and are associated with xeric habitats with loose soils. They, like the pocket mice, have many physiological adaptations for saving water and store food in underground caches for "lean" times. They're also one of the few rodent species that run on two hind legs — very fast! These animals were only captured on the north mesa rim of the canyon in manzanita/oak scrub with loose red clay soils. Their tracks are easily seen along the dirt roads up there. Unfortunately, the construction of Del Mar Mesa may be a threat to their continued existence within the preserve. It's not known whether the amount of mesa top habitat left after development will be sufficient to sustain the population over the short or long term. If you have time, go up and look for there large characteristic "hopping" tracks, with a tail drag right between. The LPC tracking team will undoubtedly collect very important data on the abundance of these animals as time and development progresses.

### Gopher

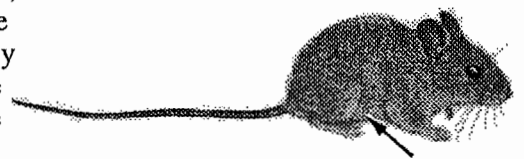
Pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*)

holes and burrows were found in all vegetation types except oak woodland and chaparral, where a thick layer of leaf litter covers the ground. They're fossorial (live underground), the only diurnal species discussed thus far, and primarily eat roots and fresh vegetation. These animals undoubtedly play a large role in soil aeration and fertility, as well as vegetation composition throughout the preserve.

Overall, the small mammal diversity of Los Peñasquitos Canyon is very impressive. This is likely due to the many habitat types and mosaics of vegetation communities within the preserve. Small mammals associated with humans such as the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) and the roof rat (*Rattus rattus*), were not detected. This may indicate that the preserve is still relatively undisturbed and harbors a natural biota composition. Continued management of non-native vegetation and minimization of human disturbance will help to ensure continued survival of these species.

Continued monitoring of the small mammal fauna is recommended. The addition of pitfall trapping would be beneficial to monitor mammals that are not easily caught by Sherman traps (shrews & voles), as well as for documentation of the herpetofauna of the reserve. For more information on the survey, a detailed report is available at the Peñasquitos Ranger station.

I'd like to thank the Los Peñasquitos Canyon rangers, Bill Lawrence and Dion Heller, for their input and support. Thanks to Dr. Lee McClenaghan for providing the traps. James Orsulak II, Tarja Sagar, Jennifer Duggan, and Jennifer Turnbull for providing support in the field. Thanks to Tarja Sagar for GPS and field support. Thanks to Trent Robertson for creating all transect maps using GIS software and, finally, to Michelle Heller and Mike Kelly for introducing me to Los Peñasquitos Canyon in the first place!



Western harvest mouse



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

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson 760-760-749-5453  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619-443-5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858-672-0584

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Chris Bader, Mike Kelly, Barry Martin

### 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  
 Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
 Stream Survey Committee: open  
 Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
 Volunteer Coordinator: Jill Kozeluh, 858-271-1814  
 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: \_\_\_\_\_ 5/2001

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

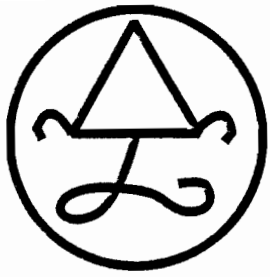
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 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196

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





# Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve  
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

July / August 2001  
Volume 15, No. 4

## Cattle at Rancho Penasquitos

Pete Nelson, Ranch Volunteer

Despite the devastation of disease, drought and down-turns in the market, cattle-raising was the chief industry of California's agricultural economy in the Nineteenth Century (Pulling 1965).

When did cattle-raising at Rancho Los Peñasquitos begin to include beefy breeds and good milk-producers? Such was not the case when Francisco Maria Ruíz, retiring commandant of the San Diego Presidio, acquired Los Peñasquitos as the area's first Mexican land grant in 1823. At that time, less fleshy, so-called Spanish cattle, or Criollo, roamed the ranch. This was the type of animal brought to California from Mexico by Serra, DeAnza, and other early arrivals of Spanish descent (Rouse 1977).

Until the mid-1800s, the cattle of the Eastern seaboard remained almost entirely separated from the cattle of Hispanic North America. The beefier cattle of the East were largely from the British Isles, the wiry crooked-horned Criollo having originated on the Iberian Peninsula (Rouse 1977).

By the later 1800s, beefy breeds had become available to Californians. Some of these cattle came with pioneers who had learned to circle the wagons to protect their herds. In addition to the stock of these pioneers, animals came on cattle drives, steamboat shipments and later by rail.

In Texas in the mid-1800s, the famous Longhorn had evolved from the Criollo. Eastern cattle had come as far as Missouri. Now cattle from both are-

See p. 8 for more

## Goodbye Floodlights

Deborah Jones

Surrounding residents of López Ridge Park of the two-legged, four-legged, winged, and scaled variety will be pleased to hear that the controversial floodlights recently installed above our beautiful canyon preserve will be relocated to Waggenheim Park in approximately three to six months. Still within the community of Mira Mesa, Waggenheim Park is much less sensitive to sports lighting problems than López Ridge Park. It's located south of Mira Mesa Boulevard on Black Mountain Road with schools on either side and faces Hour Glass Field Park and Recreation Center, which is already lit for adult sports activities that last until 10:00 pm versus an 8:30 pm restriction at López Ridge Park.

In addition, the field at Waggenheim will be commissioned earlier which means local youth sports teams will be able to use the field as soon as this winter; plus there is room for an additional field at Waggenheim so more than one team can use the area and for more than one type of sport. Only the back side of the park is adjacent to homes, but none face the park.

Regardless of how exposed the homes are to the lighted fields however, everyone involved in the López Ridge Park fiasco agreed to make notification of the surrounding neighborhood a high priority to allow them to provide comments and express their concerns. According to Rob Knudsen at Councilman Maienschein's office, the notices were mailed on June 12th and the public's concerns will be addressed at the next Mira Mesa Recrea-

See p. 9 for more

### Highlights Inside

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## Friends and City Win \$500k Grants

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

Between the Friends, the Conservation Biology Institute and the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), over \$500,000 has been received in grants for projects involving the Preserve. In summary the grants are:

Blasker-Rose-Miah Fund of the San Diego Foundation, \$24,500 for Flower-field Restoration in Peñasquitos Preserve.

Blasker-rose-Miah fund of the San Diego Foundation for: Los Peñasquitos Creek Hydrology Study, \$14,750.

State of California: Peñasquitos Lagoon Watershed Master Plan, \$200,000.

Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game and City Attorney's Office for Chicarita Creek Toxic Spill / Restoration, \$43,000.

State of Calif., U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Friends matching monies for: López Canyon Erosion Control / Monardella Restoration, \$220,000.

See p. 5 for more

## Hike Schedule

## Watch for Wildlife

Wildlife baby time is here. Now is the time to begin seeing mule deer fawns, bobcat kittens, and coyote pups. Dawn and dusk are two good times to see wildlife. If you walk quietly and listen carefully, who knows what you might see around the next corner? Look around as you walk, especially in the meadows and where the understory vegetation isn't too thick. Attending one of our dusk walks is also a good way to see wild animals, especially deer. If you're wondering what that yellow bloom is on many of our slopes around San Diego now, it's a native Tarweed (*Hemizonia* spp.).

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 484-3219 for recorded informations or visit our web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).

## July &amp; August

**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.

## July

**Medicinal Plant Hike**

Sat., July 14, 9-10:30 a.m. Join Will Bowen and learn how the plants of the canyon were used for medicine by Native Americans, the Spanish, and early European settlers. Meet in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

**Quarterly Wildlife Survey Training**

Sat., July 14, 9:45 am. - 4 p.m. Free training to volunteers who want to learn basic wildlife track and sign techniques to help

monitor wildlife in the Preserve and elsewhere in the wildlife survey that kicks off the week after the class. Class is free. Bring a bag lunch. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Nature Walk from Mercy Road**

Sun., July 15, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, at the junction of Mercy Road and Black Mountain Road in Mira Mesa. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Black Mountain Park Citizens Advisory Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting**

Mon., July 16, 7 p.m. Public is welcome to attend this business meeting at the Canyonside Recreation Center off Canyonside Drive off Black Mtn. Rd. between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

**Beginners' Tracking Walks at Ranch**

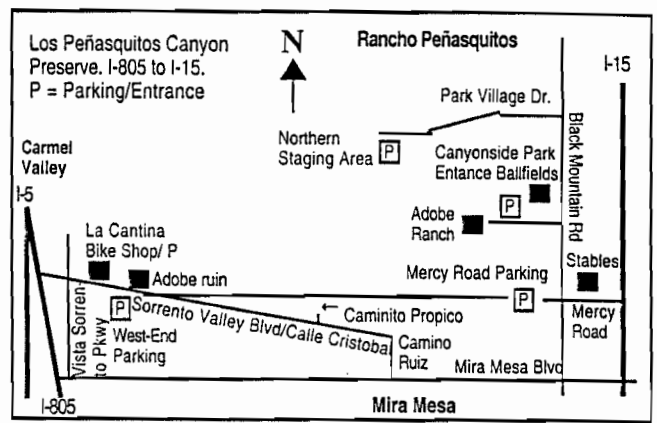
Sat., July 21, 7:30-9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Doug Hansen, a member of the Friends' Tracking Team.. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Advanced Tracking Walks at Ranch**

Sat., July 21, 7:30-9 a.m. Lee Kirchhevel will lead this advanced tracking walk. 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.

**Dusk Hike from Northern Staging**

Sat., July 21, 6 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a



moderately paced walk to the waterfall and back, about 4 miles. 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 Wildlife Walk / Northern Staging**

Mon., July 23, 7:30 p.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a moderately paced wildlife walk, about 4 miles. 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.

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

Tues., July 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.

**Birds and Beast of López Canyon**

Sat., July 28, 7:30-9:30 a.m. The morning preserve is alive with creatures who adapt their habits to avoid not only the heat of the day, but also the many human visitors who visit on the weekends. We'll watch for the signs of some of our elusive creatures, with a possibility of having some excellent sightings. Meet Friends' president and hike leader Brian Swanson at West End Parking-Staging Area off Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**.

**Richard Carrico on the Harris Archaeological Site**

Sat., July 28, 7:30-9 a.m. Learn about one of San Diego's most important archaeological sites, the Harris site, which is the type site for the Digueno Culture. Come

See p. 3 for more

**(Calendar cont'd)**

early, 6 p.m for a docent led tour of the historic adobe Ranch House The San Diego County Archaeological Society will provide free coffee, sodas, and dessert. There is no charge! Bring a folding chair for the outdoor program, a warm wrap and a picnic supper if you want to dine beforehand in the courtyard! 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.**

**August****Full Moon Hike**

Sat., Aug. 4, 7:30-9 p.m. Hike the canyon and observe the full moon. Learn about the moon's importance in ancient and historic cultures. Bring a flashlight. Meet hike leader Will Bowen in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

**Nature Walk from Mercy Road**

Sat., Aug. 12, 9 a.m. ( 2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, at the junction of Mercy Road and Black Mountain Road in Mira Mesa. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219 for recorded directions.

**Beginners' Tracking Walks at Ranch**

Sat., Aug. 18, 7:30-9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from Uli Burgin, a member of the Friends' Tracking Team.. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Advanced Tracking Walks at Ranch**

Sat., Aug. 18, 7:30-9 a.m. Lee Kirchhevel will lead this advanced tracking walk. 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.

**Dusk Hike from Northern Staging**

Sat., Aug. 18, 5:30 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk to the water-

fall and back, about 4 miles. 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.

**Birds and Beast of López Canyon**

Sat., Aug. 18, 7-9 p.m. The evening preserve is alive with creatures who adapt their habits to avoid not only the heat of the day, but also the many human visitors who visit on the weekends. We'll watch for the signs of some of our elusive creatures, with a possibility of having some excellent sightings. Moderate walking involved. Flashlight, boots or sports shoes, and water required. Group size is limited. Call Friends' president and hike leader Brian Swanson after Aug. 4 for required reservation and secret meeting location (760.749.5453).

**Dusk Wildlife Walk / Ranch House**

Wed., Aug. 22, 7 p.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a moderately paced wildlife walk, about 4 miles. Chance to see wildlife! Wear hiking boots and bring insect repellent & water. 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 house. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call 484-3219.

**Angelica Decoq on "Anasazi Mortuary Practices."**

Sat., Aug. 25, 7:30-9 a.m. Learn about one of Southwest's most enigmatic Indian cultures, the Anasazi, presented by Arizona archaeologist Angelica Decoq. Come early, 6 p.m for a docent led tour of the historic adobe Ranch House The San Diego County Archaeological Society will provide free coffee, sodas, and dessert. There is no charge! Bring a folding chair for the outdoor program, a warm wrap and a picnic supper if you want to dine beforehand in the courtyard! 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.**

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

Tues., Aug. 28, 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**

**Black Mountain Open Space Park, Rancho Peñasquitos** From I-15 taken SR 56 (Ted Williams Parkway) west to Black Mountain Road. Go right (north) on Black Mountain Road and follow it all the way until you see the last houses on the right and open space beyond. Look for a dirt road to the right and take it. Proceed about 1 mile, going beyond the bare hangliding area on the right and down a hill to a big curve and a sign for the park and paved road on the right. Proceed up the road to the staging area.

**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 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.**

**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 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.**



## RANCHO ROUNDUP

# Summer Evening Programs Resume

Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry

### Evening Programs Commence in July

Now that summer has rolled around, and those boring reruns are on TV, its time to get out of the house and enjoy a balmy San Diego evening in the courtyard at Los Penasquitos Adobe Ranch House. The first of the traditional "Summer Evening Lecture Series", sponsored by the San Diego County Archaeological Society (SDCAS), will kick off with a talk by archaeologist, Richard Carrico. Carrico will be discussing the Harris Site, which is located along the San Dieguito River between Lake Hodges and Rancho Santa Fe. It is one of the most important archaeological sites in San Diego County and serves as the type setting for the San Dieguito culture. This program will take place on Saturday, July 28. Picnicking and a docent-led tour of the Rancho commence at 6:00 p.m., and Carrico's talk will begin at approximately 7:30. La Cocina gift shop will be open for shopping and wine-by-the-glass for \$1.00 before the talk, and SDCAS will provide free coffee, sodas, and dessert.

Bring a folding chair, warm wrap or blanket and picnic supper (if you want to dine in the courtyard). There is no charge for this event. Our August 25th speaker is Angelica Decoq from Arizona speaking on "Anasazi Mortuary Practices."

For updates or more information, call SDCAS at (858) 538-0935.

### Courtyard Deer Are Busted!

We finally did it! We found a way to keep the resident deer population from chomping on our heritage roses and other courtyard plants. On a recent visit, Bambi Relaford, who works for State Parks, told us that they use a product called a "Deer Buster" to keep deer away from areas they want to protect. This ingenious device is a

motion detector, which emits an ultrasonic sound when something enters the field of its sensor. We received firsthand evidence the device does, in fact, work shortly after it was installed by Bambi's father, park host Guy Relaford. Guy, his wife Aggie, and P.J. Piburn were looking out the office window about dusk when they saw a doe approach the courtyard. It got up to the row of pepper trees, and suddenly jumped back, as if it had hit its head on a limb. A few minutes later it again approached the courtyard. This time it started, then ran off, and didn't return. We have bravely removed the bird netting from the roses (a special deer delicacy) and, so far, so good. Help us keep our fingers crossed!

Incidentally, we will be selling organic produce (zucchini, tomatoes, and basil) from the Rancho gardens, on an "as available" basis, at La Cocina Gift Shop during normal weekend hours and at the summer evening programs.

### Attention History Buffs

Unfortunately, former County historian Mary Ward was unable to finish the revision of her book on Rancho Los Peñasquitos, titled *On the Road to Yuma*, before her death. Fortunately, County Parks volunteer Ellen Sweet, who has been overseeing Mary's historical archives in the absence of a permanent historian, has undertaken the task of filling in the holes of Mary's research so that the out-of-print book can be republished at a future date. After working on the research for more than two years, she has come up with some very interesting items about former Rancho residents Francisco Maria Ruiz, Francisco and Tomasa Alvarado, and George and Estefana Johnson.

Her most recent discovery was a letter, in Estefana's handwriting, which

she found on microfilm in the San Diego Historical Society archives. Ellen has compiled three large display boards, which include many of her findings and which are now on exhibit in the Rancho conference room. You are invited to stop by and look them over. I promise that you will learn at least several new and interesting items about the Rancho's early residents.

### Firemen to the Rescue!

We all know what a wonderful job the firemen do in rescuing people, pets, and sometimes, even horses and livestock. I doubt, however, that they often rescue turtles! Our local firecrew was out doing their daily physical training in the preserve one warm June day, when they espied something moving in the brush. Upon checking it out, they were amazed to discover a turtle, about 10" in length, waddling along. Concerned that it was where it shouldn't be, they did what any self-respecting citizen does--they took it to the ranger! I quickly confirmed it was a red slider, which is non-native to the preserve. Jeannie Anderson, a rescue worker with the Turtle and Tortoise Society came to take it off our hands. She was happy to receive it and said there was someone on their waiting list that wanted to adopt a turtle. (I did not know such a service existed.)

If you want to learn more about turtles and tortoises, the T&T Society will be holding its annual show at Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 101, on August 25 & 26. The free event runs from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. There website is:

[www.sdturtle.org](http://www.sdturtle.org).



## (Grants cont'd)

Here are the details on the grants and the projects they're funding.

### 1. Flower-field Restoration

The Blasker - Rose - Miah Fund Grants are managed by the San Diego Foundation. Their purpose is to advance "new and innovative work in science, engineering, and medicine, including fields of scientific study as yet unknown, and supports and encourages San Diegans in these fields to reach their full potential."

The Flower-field Restoration project is a partnership between the Friends and the Soil Ecology and Restoration Group (San Diego State University and the U.S. International University). Representing SERG, Prof. Dave Bainbridge approached the Friends about partnering in researching why native grasses and flowers have been difficult to restore. It's generally accepted that we know how to restore riparian (streamside) areas and coastal sage scrub habitat (at least the shrub component). What has largely eluded restorationists is how to restore species diverse native grasslands. Bainbridge and SERG have already carried out one important experiment in the Preserve: testing different soil treatments in attempting to establish transplanted populations of the highly endangered species *Am brosia pumila*.

Native grasslands in California now are probably only 1% of what existed prior to European settlement of California. These grasslands were a diverse combination of perennial bunch grasses, flowering bulb species, and annual flowers. Most of the grasslands we see today in San Diego, or all of California for that matter, are made up of non-native, exotic Mediterranean grasses and other exotic weeds. To date, efforts at restoring native grasslands in anything resembling their original diverse nature, have met with little success. SERG believes the problem lies in the basic soil ecology, that the once native soils have been radically changed through the impact of cattle grazing (often overgrazing) and agriculture (plowing, tilling et al.).

Analysis of local soils usually reveals that there are deficits of certain minerals such as zinc and magnesium

and too much of others such as nitrogen. Such an imbalance favors Mediterranean exotics such as black mustard. It can utilize excess nitrogen, typical of weeds that evolve along with Mediterranean agriculture. Native plants in Southern California evolved in nutrient poor soils for the most part and are unable to utilize such excess nitrogen.

The project will develop restoration plots on highly degraded soils in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to test the efficacy of various soil amendments such as mulches and fertilizers that are intended to correct the imbalances agriculture and grazing have wrought on the soils. Native grass and flower species, collected from seed by the Friends and SERG, will be grown on some 200 test plots. The results will be published for all involved in restoration to learn from. Hopefully, these experiments will identify soil treatments that will increase our chances of success in restoring our lost native grasslands.

### 2. Peñasquitos Creek Hydrology Study

The Conservation Biology Institute is a non-profit group that has been playing a big role in developing the biological survey and monitoring side of the ambitious Multiple Species Conservation Program's attempt to protect more than 80 endangered species in San Diego County. They received a grant to "produce a computer-based map of changes in the distribution of vegetation communities along Los Peñasquitos Creek. The map will also be used to evaluate changes in runoff patterns along Los Peñasquitos Creek that may be associated with urban development along the watershed." This study will tie in nicely with another of the grant programs, the watershed plan.

### 3. Peñasquitos Lagoon Watershed Management Plan

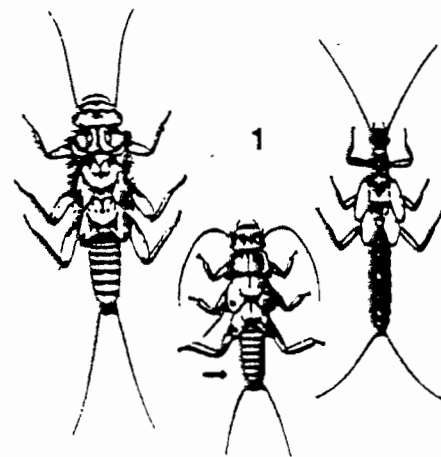
Peñasquitos Lagoon is a highly degraded lagoon, negatively impacted by a century of ecological insults. The watershed is between 95 - 98 sq. miles in size, comprised of the three sub-watersheds of Carmel Valley, Peñasquitos Canyon, and Carroll Canyon. Roads and railroads have closed

most of its openings to the ocean, leading to frequent episodes of eutrophication or "die offs" because of the unhealthy character of the trapped waters. In addition, development in the watershed, especially since the 1970s has sent an overload of silt and fresh water into the lagoon, leading to an artificial enlargement of fresh water riparian habitats at the expense of the rarer salt marsh habitat types. This watershed study will analyze the changes going on in the watershed, the many users of the watershed and their needs, the ecological functioning of the lagoon and its watershed and many other issues to come up with a management plan for the lagoon watershed.

The City's MSCP staff applied for and received this grant. They will announce the formation of a "stakeholders' advisory committee and meetings to oversee this plan's development.

### 4. Chicarita Creek Toxic Spill / Restoration

On February 17, 1999 a toxic spill occurred on Chicarita Creek in Sabre Springs. This creek is a tributary of Peñasquitos Creek beginning in Rancho Bernardo and running south through Sabre Springs until it reaches Peñasquitos Creek just west of the intersection of Poway Road and Sabre Springs Parkway. Historically it was the site of an important Native American village. Bedrock grinding stones are protected in one of the green belts in

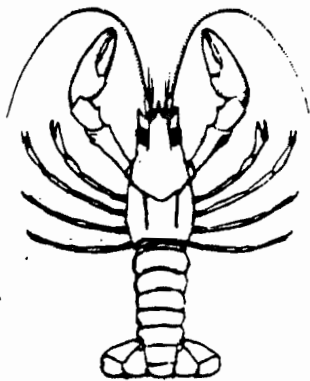


**Stonefly: Order Plecoptera.** A pollution sensitive organism found in good quality water. Illus. taken from Save Our Streams.

## (Grants cont'd)

the developments that occurred there in the last decade. The creek, despite its relative narrowness and short length (about 1 mile), has a diverse riparian area and some associated grasslands and coastal sage scrub that support a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, and native plants, including the endangered California gnatcatcher (*Poliopitila melanura californica*). The creek also supports trails for residents and day visitors from nearby businesses.

The Chemical Transfer Company was making a delivery of a hazardous substance — ammonium hydroxide, ammonium chloride, and ammonium carbonate — when a spill of approximately 200 gallons occurred. The substance entered a storm drain that emptied into Chicarita Creek at Evening Creek Drive south. Poor practices and outdated equipment apparently led to the accident, for which the company was found culpable.



**Crayfish: Order Decapoda.** Somewhat pollution tolerant organism can be in good or fair quality water. Illus. taken from Save Our Streams.

Robin Lewis, Environmental Specialist with the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game inspected the creek shortly after the spill. His specialty is toxic spills. Lewis found that the spill had apparently killed all of the small animals that live in the water, many of them the small insects, mollusks, and other organisms that make up the base of the food chain that birds, turtles and others eat.

On December 19, 2000 the San Diego City Attorney, with the approval of the California Dept. of Fish and Game (CDFG), entered a "Stipulation for Entry and Final Judgment" in the case against Chemical Transfer Company.

This settlement required the Chemical Transfer Company to fund three restoration projects at Chicarita Creek in the total amount of \$43,000.

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, having received and administered other grants and being heavily involved with restoration efforts in Peñasquitos Canyon, were chosen to receive and administer the \$43,000. The CDFG had already identified three restoration projects they felt would be of biological benefit to Chicarita Creek. Outside contractors experienced in each type of project have already been mutually agreed upon and contracted with. The Friends will act as oversight for all 3 projects and receive about 10% of the fine monies for administration and overhead.

### Bioassessments

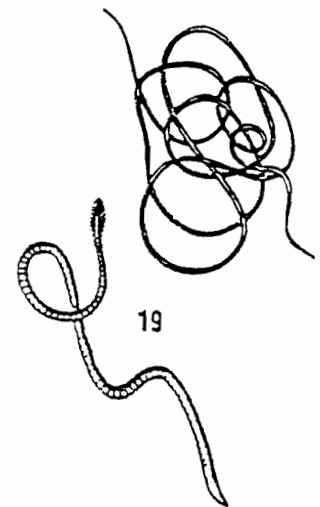
One project is a two-year bioassessment of Chicarita, Beeler and Peñasquitos Creeks. Like Chicarita, Beeler comes out of northeast Poway and flows into Poway Creek which is the upstream name for Peñasquitos Creek. A bioassessment is one of two scientific methods for determining water quality. Chemical analysis is the one most of us are familiar with, where the pH, turbidity, nitrogen, phosphate, Total Oxygen Demand, Dissolved Oxygen and other physical qualities are measured. Increasingly, this method is being supplemented by bioassessments. The small organisms (see accompanying illustrations) that inhabit our creeks, especially the creek bottoms, are assessed for their diversity and quantity. Generally, the greater the diversity of these organisms, the higher the quality of the water. Several organisms are particularly sensitive to certain types of pollutants and serve as "canaries in the mine shaft" for testing purposes. The State Regional Water Quality Control Board's local office has taken an interest in this project and is cooperating with the lead scientist, entomologist Andre Macedo of the City of San Diego's Metropolitan Wastewater Dept. Their hope is that high quality work here will become a model to be used for other rivers and creeks in San Diego.

An additional benefit of including Beeler Creek is that this bioassessment will give a "before" baseline of the

condition of the creek before a new development, Rancho Encantada, is built in the hills above it. This will give an invaluable before and after "snapshot" of Beeler Creek, revealing some of the impacts — or lack thereof — of development on our waterways. The Regional Board expects to see such bioassessments required of other water bodies in the future.

### Western Pond turtle

A second project is a study of the suitability of the pond on Chicarita Creek, found just before Poway Road, for the endangered Western Pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata*). Western Pond turtle expert Dan Holland will



**Aquatic Worm: Class Oligochaeta.** A pollution tolerant organism can be in any quality water. Illus. taken from Save Our Streams.

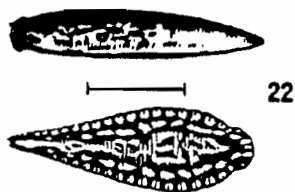
survey the pond and creek to see if the turtle is present or not. His team will also survey for one of the major predators of the turtle, the exotic introduced bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*). The frog has proven to be a voracious predator on the turtle young and are a major reason the turtle is in sharp decline throughout much of its range. On Camp Pendleton, Holland is in year three of a study of the impact of removing bullfrogs from turtle habitat and establishing the effectiveness and costs of such a control program. Western Pond turtles have been identified historically in Peñasquitos Creek, but not for the last ten years or so. However, in many respects the creek has excellent habitat for the turtle.

(Grants cont'd)

### Exotic Plant Removal

Kelly and Associates, this author's habitat restoration company, was contracted with for the third project, controlling the many exotic invasive plant species along Chicarita Creek. Invasive weeds such as saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*), artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*), and many other weeds tend to reduce the biological diversity of the areas they invade, to the detriment of not only the native plants, but also the native wildlife dependent on the greater diversity of the native habitats. This project began in the spring of 2001 and will conclude in the spring of 2002.

All of these projects are under formal permits called Streambed Alteration Agreements, with the CDFG.



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**Leech: Order Hirudinea.** Found in Peñasquitos Creek! A pollution tolerant organism can be in any quality water. Illus. taken from Save Our Streams.

### 5. López Canyon Erosion Control / Monardella Restoration

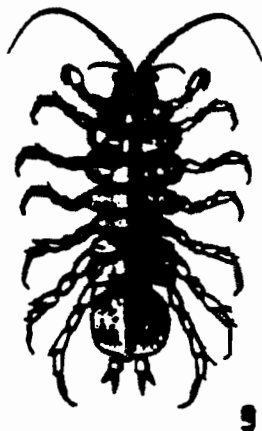
Every since development occurred at the head of López Canyon in the 1970s a process of erosion has been underway in the canyon. Development causes larger quantities of rainwater to pour into our canyons, since the once permeable soils that soaked up a lot of that rain are now paved over. The greater quantity of water traveling downhill also causes the water to run faster. This combination of increased quantity and velocity increase the historical normal "background level" of erosion to increase dramatically. Other projects, such as the building of the Camino Santa Fe bridge over the canyon exacerbated this process. The results has been the loss of much of the topsoil and vegetated terraces over more than a mile of the canyon. What is left is often bare cobble (rocks) with just enough soil to support invasive exotic annual flowers

such as Garland chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*). Along with native shrubs such as Mountain mahogany and Holly-leaf cherry, the endangered Willowly mint (*Monardella linoidea* ssp. *viminea*) has also been washed away. Its population has plummeted in the Canyon.

Beginning with appeals to our members — who donated some \$7,000 — the Friends and the MSCP began to amass additional grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of California to study this erosion problem and develop and implement plans to reduce the erosion and reand protect the remaining *Monardella* and restore its numbers.

The funds, now totalling about \$220,000 will be used to launch this project this summer 2001.

The Friends and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) have already partnered to reduce other threats to the mint, including controlling exotic weeds and caging it to prevent herbivory of the rare flowers and seed by wildlife. In addition, both groups have been conducting annual censuses of the plants for about 7-8 years now. The City's MSCP staff has joined the groups in surveying these plants in the last several years. In addition, the Friends and CNPS have helped survey other known and potentially new populations of this plant on the County's Goodan Ranch, the City's General Dynamics open space, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and the Otay area. in order to get a handle on the exact status of the species.



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**Sowbug: Order Isopoda.** Somewhat pollution tolerant organism. Illus. from Save Our Streams.;

## Volunteers Keep On 'truckin

Many thanks as always to the volunteers who do so much for our Preserve. Many of the folks listed volunteered more than once this past season. Wouldn't you like to add your name to our next list?

Rick Botta  
Will Bowen  
Les Braund  
Uli Burgin  
Cindy Burrascano  
Lynne Christenson  
Patti Colburn  
Edward DiBella  
The Dingeman Family  
Terry Gaughn  
Bob Greenamyre  
Mel Howe  
Rob Hutssel  
Debra Jones  
Mike Kelly  
Linda King  
Marilyn Kolendar  
Jill & Joe Kozeluth  
Barry Martin  
Debbie Larimore  
Gretchen Nell  
Lynne Preisser  
Steve Romeo  
Andrea Rope  
Marty Rosen  
Liz Rozycki  
Carrie Schneider  
Linda Tipton  
Brian Swanson  
Pat Watson  
Bill Witzel  
Maryanne Young

### Welcome New Members

Hope to see the following new members on the trail!

Bill & Christi Papworth  
Ann & John Richards  
Tim & Deborah Tweeten

(Cattle cont'd)

as began to reach the West Coast. In 1852 alone, it was reported that 90,000 cattle bound for the Pacific had left the Midwest (Cleland 1964).

At the time of Peñasquitos ranchers George Alonzo Johnson (1860s and 1870s) and Jacob S. Taylor (1880s), both could have been raising predominantly beefier breeds. No evidence that Johnson did so has been found, but a newspaper article in 1881 reported that Taylor had put Durhams on the ranch (Ward 1984).

It seems likely that Johnson, too, raised the more modern breeds. Certainly, as a racehorse breeder, Johnson was among the forerunners. Other factors that lead to the belief that Johnson was up-to-date in cattle-raising include: (1) his leadership of the county agricultural association, (2) his use of the steamboat for shipping, (3) his acquaintance with railroading, (4) his opportunity to select from breeds brought in by pioneers and cattle drovers and (5) the practice of contemporary cattle breeders (Elliott 1965).

This article deals with only the beginnings of ranching at Los Peñasquitos. Further information on cattle-raising from the Johnson era and down through the years is being sought. The last cattle did not leave the ranch until 1989.

If you have knowledge of cattle-raising at Los Peñasquitos or ranches of the area, please call Pete Nelson at (858) 538-8998. Also, if you have contacts that might be useful, please pass on that information.

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- Elliott, Wallace W. *History of San Bernardino and San Diego Counties* (Reprint of 1883 volume). Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1965. Herein are pictured ranches of the era, including the nearby San Dieguito ranch, with its Jersey cows.
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## Take a Hike!

Brian Swanson, president

The Friends have been offering interpretive walks from the beginning—for over 16 years. For much of that time I've been leading bird walks, usually early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Whatever the topic, the Friends' walks are always informative. They generally proceed at an easygoing pace. The only strenuous walks would be walks to the Preserve's waterfalls, a six mile roundtrip hike if started at Mercy Road, and one would need to be in shape for these outings. Among the wide variety of walks offered you can find bird walks, general natural history walks, mystery tree walks, tracking walks and interesting "New Age" walks such as full moon walks.

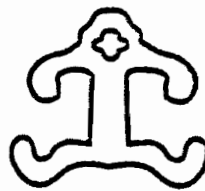
Seasonal and occasional walks include vernal pool and owl walks. Very few of these walks require a reservation, and our newsletter provides directions and parking locations, so unless a reservation is required, if at the last minute you want to get out of the house with your summer visitors, please join us. I guarantee you that you won't be disappointed.

You may ask yourself "who will my companions be on the walk?" Besides an experienced leader, there are likely to be a small group of adults and possibly a couple of children. What will you see? There are few guarantees, but you'll certainly see a varied and beauti-

ful habitat, populated by a rich diversity of wildlife. Mule deer, bobcats, skunks, bats, and various birds and reptiles are frequently encountered. You might see a trapdoor spider's home, a rattlesnake or an owl. Luck, the time of the day and location in the preserve, and the quietness of the group, all help determine what will be encountered. As in any outdoor activity, there are potential hazards, which you can ask your leader about. We've yet to lose anyone! In fact, most people have so much fun that they keep coming back. Remember to wear footgear suitable for uneven terrain, and bring a hat, water and perhaps a snack.

In conclusion, if you haven't done so in a while, I encourage you to "take a hike" with our many experienced and interesting hike leaders. They come from a variety of backgrounds, each bringing unique skillsets to the job. These hikes, or walks, offer you the opportunity to explore the preserve at various times of the day, in different locations, and from varying perspectives. One of my goals as president is to further round out my knowledge of the preserve by going on each of those hikes which I haven't yet gone on.

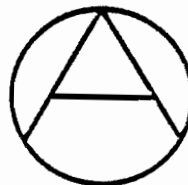
I encourage you to take advantage of the unique opportunity available to you by joining me on one of our hikes. I hope to see you on the trail!



Peñasquitos 1823-1875



López 1826-1948



George Alonzo Johnson  
1859-1881



Norwood Brown 1876-1986

Some of the cattle brands used in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve over the centuries. Research courtesy of Dr. John Northrop.

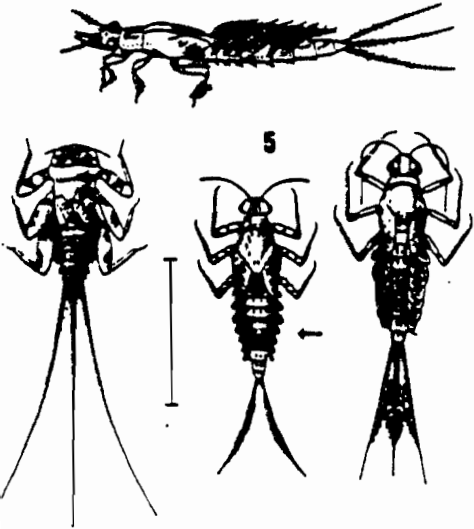


tion Council's meeting (July 10th). In addition, before the lights can be relocated a joint use and maintenance agreement must be written between the City's Parks and Recreation Department and the school district. Relocation costs will be covered by Mira Mesa's Facilities Building Assessment or FBA for the López Ridge Park project.

For months, the diligent homeowners who overlook López Ridge Park complained about the floodlights to Councilman Maienschein, the MMRC and even the Mayor, but when they found an alternative site: Waggenheim, things really turned around quickly. Councilman Maienschein announced his decision at the end of April that "the right thing" for the community was to relocate the floodlights, even complimenting the local residents on an effective grassroots effort. In as far as getting the City to re-address the potential impacts to canyon wildlife that would have been caused by the stadium lighting, I received a pass-the-buck letter from the Environmental Review Manager of Development Services, not the MSCP Program Manager to whom I wrote my letter. Just when I was about to pursue it further, the homeowners announced their fantastic news!

I duly sent a thank you note to the Councilman, and encourage others to do the same:

bmaienschein@cd5.sannet.gov



**Mayfly: Order Ephemeroptera.** Pollution sensitive organism found in good quality water. Illus. from Save Our Streams.

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Wildlife Survey Training

**Saturday, July 14, 9:45 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

The Friends' Tracking Team will offer a free training to volunteers who would like to help monitor our wildlife for our quarterly summer survey. Monitoring takes place in Peñasquitos Canyon, Black Mountain Open Space, the Del Mar Mesa, Peñasquitos Lagoon, Crestridge, Mission Trails and other areas.

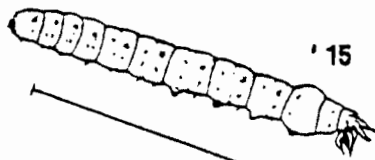
In the six hours of class lectures and slides and hands-on field training volunteers will learn some of the basics of how to track several species of wildlife. Volunteers are then asked to sign up for 1 or more surveys in the following weeks, with both weekdays and weekend dates available. Each new volunteer will be paired with an experienced tracker.

Bring water, a sack lunch and good boots. Meet at the historic adobe ranch house in Peñasquitos Canyon. 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.

## Endangered Willowly Mint Survey

**Early July. Weekday evening. Flexible in Scheduling. Last survey of the year for endangered species**

Help search for and count the endangered Willowly mint (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *viminea*) in López Canyon. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for details. Survey will take 2-3 evenings, but volunteers can help out just once if they want. Volunteers will be shown the plant and paired with experienced volunteers. Wear long pants and bring a hat and water.



**Crane Fly: Suborder Nematocera.** Somewhat pollution tolerant organism. Illus. from Save Our Streams.

## Peñasquitos Lagoon Restoration

**Sunday, July 15, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove invasive plants that are destroying wildlife habitat in Peñasquitos Lagoon. This is the fourth & final year of restoration work by the Friends' Special Weed Action Team in this area.

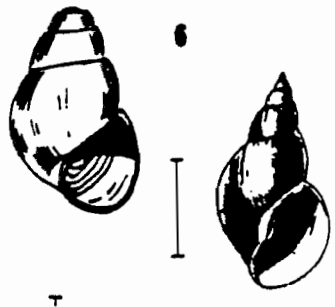
Meet at the intersection of Flintkote Rd. and Estuary Way off Roselle St. in Sorrento Valley. Remember to bring the following: plenty of drinking water, a snack, hat, sun screen, and sear sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and tough old clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 for more information or directions.

## Peñasquitos Canyon Cottonwood Restoration

**Sunday, August 19, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove the last remaining invasive *Eucalyptus* trees from the Preserve. After 10 years only one significant population of this exotic tree remains. Once removed, native trees including Cottonwoods, will be planted during the next rainy season. Already, in other parts of the Preserve Cottonwoods are once again becoming abundant as they were 150 years ago.

Meet in the Parking-Staging area at the intersection of Mercy and Black Mountain Roads. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirt, hat, sunscreen and bring water and a snack. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more information or directions.



**Gilled snails: Class Gastropoda.** Pollution sensitive organism found in good quality water. Illus. from Save Our Streams



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 858-484-3219

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## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson 760-760-749-5453  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619-443-5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858-538-2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858-672-0584

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Mike Kelly, Jill Kozuleth

### 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  
 Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
 Stream Survey Committee: open  
 Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
 Volunteer Coordinator: Jill Kozeluh, 858-271-1814  
 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  
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 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: \_\_\_\_\_ 7/2001

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

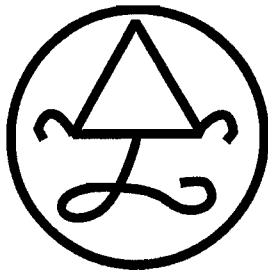
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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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

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Sept. / Oct. 2001  
Volume 15, No. 5

## Report on Sewer Access in San Diego's Canyons

Carrie Schneider

[Editor's note: the presence of sewer lines in Peñasquitos Canyon and Lagoon has been a history of sewer spills and shoddy maintenance practices that have negatively impacted the native habitats. Roads to access sewer lines have become sources of exotic invasive weeds and severe erosion. A proposal by the City's Metropolitan WasteWater Dept. to expand the number and size of these roads into many other canyons exploded citywide as an issue in 2000. Activists such as Carrie Schneider, supported by the Sierra Club, led a fight that resulted in a citizens review committee, the Sewer Maintenance Task Force, to be formed. The results of over a year of meetings is detailed below.]

The Natural Resources and Culture (NR&C) Committee of the San Diego City Council on July 18 voted unanimously to approve the City Manager's Report to the Sewer Maintenance Task Force. The Report hewed closely to the recommendations of the Task Force and the full text can be found at [www.canyonsewer.com](http://www.canyonsewer.com).

The Report recommended adoption of two new policies on access to sewer lines in canyons and other environmentally sensitive land. The first policy has guidelines for determining whether redirecting a canyon line into a street line (and abandoning the canyon line) is economically feasible. The NR&C agreed that if a redirection project cost less than 35% more than the life-cycle cost of leaving the lines in

See p. 4 for more

### Special Joint Public Meeting

## North City Open Space Plans

If you'd like to learn about the plans to expand both Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the Black Mountain Open Space Park and how they will connect with each other and to the San Dieguito River Valley Park to the north, plan on attending a special meeting Thursday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in the historic ranch house off Black Mtn. Road in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This will be the first time the Citizens Advisory Committees for Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the Black Mountain Open Space Park will have met jointly. The public is welcome to attend. The agenda will focus only on park expansion plans.

A representative of the City of San Diego's Multiple Species Program (MSCP) will give a presentation with maps on the plans to acquire more habitat lands to the north of Peñasquitos Canyon, including the Del Mar Mesa and the Santa Luz (old Black Mountain Ranch) project area.

An invitation has also been extended to Taylor-Woodrow Co., developer of the Santa Luz project north and west of Black Mtn. Open Space Park. About 1,900 acres of open space are expected to be preserved as part of this development, helping to link Black Mtn. Park to the San Dieguito River Valley Park to the north.

The future trail system linking all these parks will also be discussed at the meeting. To reach the ranch house, take the Mercy exit off I-15 and go west on Mercy to Black Mtn. Rd. Turn

See p. 7 for more

### Highlights Inside

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## Welcome to the New Ranger



Gina Brown is our new Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Ranger, replacing Ranger Dion Heller, who resigned in late 2000. Gina moved to San Diego in May 2001 from Northern Oregon and began working in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in July 2001. Previously, she worked in the Columbia River Gorge for Oregon State Parks and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She has experience in both interpretation and maintenance. As a first time Ranger, she "welcomes any information or help people have to offer." Welcome aboard Gina!

[www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org)

# Activities Schedule

Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 858.484.3219 for recorded information or visit our web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).

## September & October

### 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 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 **858.484.3219** for directions.

## September

### Birds and Beasts of López Canyon

Sat., Sept. 8, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. The morning preserve is alive with creatures who adapt their habits to avoid not only the heat of the day, but also the many human visitors who visit on the weekends. We'll watch for the signs of some of our elusive creatures, with a possibility of having some excellent sightings. Meet Friends' president and hike leader Brian Swanson at West End Parking-Staging Area off Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

### Beginners' Tracking Walk at Ranch

Sat., Sept. 15, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into

Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219**.

### Advanced Tracking

**Walks at Ranch Sat.,** Sept. 15, 8 a.m. A member of the Friend's Tracking Team will lead this advanced tracking walk. Must have completed beginner and intermediate training. 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 **858.484.3219**.

### Four Directions Hike

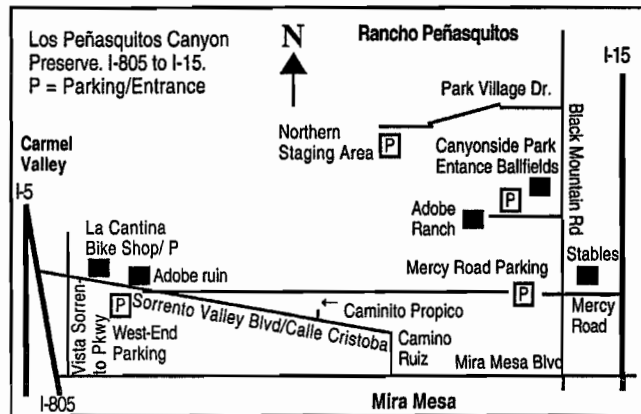
Sat., Sept. 15, 7:30 – 9 p.m. Join Will Bowen on this hike to observe the stars and moon. Learn about the importance of the Four Directions of the Medicine Wheel in Native American culture. Learn how to use the Directions for prayer, healing, and guidance. Drums and rattles are welcome. Meet in Sorrento Valley parking area at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in parking lot on the north side of the road. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

### Dusk Wildlife Walk / Northern Staging Area

Sun., Sept. 16, 6:30 p.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a moderately paced wildlife walk, about 4 miles. 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 **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

### Black Mountain Park Citizens Advisory Committee & Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee Special Joint Meeting at Ranch House

Thurs., Sept. 20, 7 p.m. For the first time these two citizen groups will hold a joint meeting to review the open



space and trails plans for the north city area. The City of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program will detail future park expansion plans and timetables. 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 **858.484.3219** for directions.

### Geology Hike

Sun., Sept. 23, 9 a.m. – 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. Steep trail. Bring water and sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858-484.3219** for recorded directions

### Dusk Hike from Northern Staging

Sun., Sept. 23, 5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk to the waterfall and back, about 4 miles. 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 **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

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

Tues., Sept. 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.



(Calendar cont'd)

### **Roger Showley Presentation at Ranch House**

Sat., Sept. 29, 7 p.m. Last of the summer evening programs. Showley, well-known writer for the Union-Tribune and book author will give the annual Mary Ward Historical Lecture. Call 858.484.7504 for more details. Come early, 6 p.m. for a docent led tour of the historic adobe Ranch House. The San Diego County Archaeological Society will provide free coffee, sodas, and dessert. There is no charge! Bring a folding chair for the outdoor program, a warm wrap and a picnic supper if you want to dine beforehand in the courtyard! 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**.

## **October**

### **Geology Hike**

Sun., Oct. 7, 9 a.m. – 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. Steep trail. Bring water and sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions

### **Quarterly Wildlife Survey Training**

Sat., Oct. 13, 9:45 am. – 4 p.m. Free training to volunteers who want to learn basic wildlife track and sign techniques to help monitor wildlife in the Preserve and elsewhere in the wildlife survey that kicks off the week after the class. Class is free. Bring a bag lunch. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.672.1120** for more info.

### **Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee**

Mon., Oct. 15, 7 p.m. Public is welcome to attend this business meeting to plan park activities.

Meeting is at the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219** for directions.

### **Beginner's Tracking Walk at Ranch**

Sat., Oct. 20, 8 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219**.

### **Advanced Tracking Walk at Ranch**

Sat., Oct. 20, 8 a.m. A member of the Friends' Tracking Team will lead this advanced tracking walk. Must have completed beginner and intermediate training. 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 **858.484.3219**.

### **Power Animal Spirit Guide Hike**

Sat., Oct. 20, 7:30-9 p.m. Hike and observe the stars and moon. Learn about power animals and spirit guides in Native American culture. Find out how to invoke and befriend the energies of animals such as the deer, bobcat, eagle, snake, or frogs. Discover your secret Indian name. Drums and rattles are welcome. Meet hike leader Will Bowen in Sorrento Valley in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

### **Nature Walk from Mercy Road**

Sun., Oct. 21, 9 a.m. (2 miles) Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, upper level, at the junction of Mercy Road and Black Mountain Road in Mira Mesa. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

### **Dusk Hike from Northern Staging**

Sun., Oct. 21, 4:30 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk

to the waterfall and back, about 4 miles. 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 **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

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

Tues., Oct. 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.

### **Birds and Beasts of Peñasquitos Canyon**

Sat., Oct. 27, 7:30 – 9 a.m. Join Friends' president and naturalist Brian Swanson for this early morning walk. The preserve is alive with birds and animals early in the morning, allowing quiet observers the opportunity to see such animals as mule deer and coyotes. Meet in the parking lot for the historic ranch house. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

## **DIRECTIONS**

### **Black Mountain Open Space Park, Rancho Peñasquitos**

From I-15 taken SR 56 (Ted Williams Parkway) west to Black Mountain Road. Go right (north) on Black Mountain Road and follow it all the way until you see the last houses on the right and open space beyond. Look for a dirt road to the right and take it. Proceed about 1 mile, going beyond the bare hangliding area on the right and down a hill to a big curve and a sign for the park and paved road on the right. Proceed up the road to the staging area.

### **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 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.**

## Recent Donors

Thanks to these folks who remembered the Friends at tax and rebate time!

Dave Bilak  
Doug Hansen  
Linda Henning  
Deborah & Brian Jones  
James & Maria Thayer  
The Vilotti Family  
The Watkins

**(Sewers cont'd)**

the canyon, then the engineers can proceed with the project without needing Council permission for the increased expense. Several of us tried, during the Task Force meetings, to get the "multiplier" to be closer to 100% instead of 35%, but many felt that the Council would simply reject that. To compromise, we insisted on language stating that financial considerations must not be the only value considered when deciding how much to pay for a redirection project. If costs are 35% higher to redirect than to leave lines in canyons, citizens are going to have to speak up and demand it and the issue will go to the council to decide.

Realizing that many lines will stay, another big focus of the report is appropriate access to lines that remain in canyons. The previous management had not cleaned and inspected these lines for years. When the inevitable emergency backup or break happened, they brought in the heavy machinery to do a fast fix-it, with very little review by biologists, and none by hydrologists. Then they filed for after-the-fact permits and paid some money for mitigation. Actual restoration of the damage was almost never done and I can show you dozens of places to prove it.

The second policy outlines the expected management of sewer facilities located in environmentally sensitive lands, including reducing damage in the first place and restoring and mitigating damage that does occur. Such management would include developing access plans that avoid sensitive areas, expanding the equipment fleet to include vehicles capable of traveling over difficult terrain, taking care to stabilize areas to prevent erosion, and implementing timely restoration.

Notably, the City Manager recommended creating a work unit within Parks and Recreation for the purposes of managing Open Space lands, including lands acquired under the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Also recommended is the formation of a Canyon Management Committee, composed of staff representatives from various departments (for example, Storm Water, Metro

WasteWater, Parks and Recreation, Planning Dept., a citizen representative, and so on) that would coordinate and monitor work on environmentally sensitive lands. This would ensure that the departments communicate with each other to avoid situations, for example, where a storm drain imperils a sewer line, and provide a forum to discuss system-wide problems and ways to improve.

The task force also recommended that the City be allowed to hire contractors by using criteria other than "lowest bid." This recommendation would require a change in the City Charter before it could be implemented. This proposal will come before the entire City Council at some date in the future. Please contact your representative and let them know what you think about these proposals. In particular, please let them know that you want the recommendations to apply to new development as well, a statement that Councilmember Donna Frye added to the motion. New developments such as Rancho Encantada (south of Poway) call for as many as six access roads through MSCP Preserve land to service the sewer lines required for the project. Each road consists of a 315-foot-wide all-weather "maintenance road" and a "20-foot easement." We need to ask whether redirection is feasible or if there are other ways to reduce this impact on our Open Spaces.

**Cleaning of canyon sewer lines commences**

My second topic regards the plans by Metro Wastewater to check and clean lines in canyon areas. The recommendations of the Task Force made so much sense that Metro WasteWater and the Water and Wastewater Facilities are already adopting many of them as work practices.

Most of you know that, regardless of statements made by the former Director of Metro Wastewater, many of these lines have not been maintained or cleaned in years. The deterioration of lines and accumulation of debris that causes sewer spills has resulted in more than \$4 million in fines to the City in the last two years. Chris Toth, the new Deputy Director of WasteWater Collections Division, has recently released a schedule for maintenance

## (Sewers cont'd)

on the now-notorious 32 canyons with difficult access. He has grouped the canyons by watershed, starting first with those that lead to Mission Bay; the first on that list is the line in Tecolote Canyon which was the site of a 1.1 million gallon spill this last Spring. Every month, he expects crews to start work on another problem-access canyon, taking 21 months to start all the projects.

Mr. Toth is fully informed of the proposals by the Task Force and is making strides to implement many of the ideas as work practices. As a first step the department has procured three tractors on a lease-to-own program. The crews are working on ways to adapt the vehicles to carry televising and cleaning equipment. Next, Mr. Toth invited members of the Task Force to discuss with the crew leaders the goals of low-impact access, including how to minimize erosion and damage to vegetation. In July the crews took the equipment to Tecolote for a trial run to see if the tractors could carry the equipment and navigate the terrain. Two members of the Task Force, Jim Peugh – a champion of low-environmental impact, and Walt Shaw – equipment guru, were on hand to help brainstorm. Note that this access is entirely “temporary” and that a permanent access solution will need to wait until the required EIR is certified. Any damage must be mitigated and we did not lose an opportunity to point out to staff that a reduction in damage equals a reduction in mitigation and restoration expenses.

Mr. Toth says: “We are going to access as many manholes as possible so as to assess the condition of the City's sewerage infrastructure in Tecolote Canyon. We may be able to avoid taking mechanical rodding equipment to each manhole, based upon the conditions of the pipe sections that we do rod/clean. Some very sensitive areas we may be able to rod through or avoid by using a manhole for access that is upstream/downstream from a very sensitive area. We plan to utilize existing pathways whenever possible. We plan to use multiple access points from nearby paved streets to access

groupings of manholes using existing pathways whenever possible, rather than trying to create a new pathway through the entire canyon. In this way we believe our crews now are performing their work in the true spirit of proposed policies that the Canyon Task Force has recommended for our City.”

“The mitigation work for the February road will commence when we have finalized our maintenance work and will be conducted in accordance with City policies and procedures based upon recommendations from consultants and City environmental planning staff.”

Having met with Mr. Toth several times now, I believe that his statements are sincere. In fact, I have been greatly cheered by the attitude of the new management of Metro Wastewater. They bring a “can-do” attitude towards getting these lines cleaned and repaired in order to reduce the threat of sewage spills to our waterways. And they are taking to heart our requests to find ways to reduce the impact of their access, something that much of the previous management insisted just couldn't be done. Although the Task Force came up with some possible solutions, we realized that we didn't have the total answer, and that achieving our goals would depend on intelligent problem-solving by the City engineers and crews.

Metro WasteWater staff will present their plans at the appropriate planning group meetings. We all agree that this is a new process for Metro WasteWater and that there's no doubt that they will get better as they do more of this. You can help — your intelligent participation in this process and suggestions are useful and welcome.

Carrie Schneider is a member of the Canyon Coalition and is reachable at: [cschneid@n2.net](mailto:cschneid@n2.net).

## Volunteers Accomplishments

Mailing parties, wildlife surveys, restoration planning meeting, invasive weed work parties, historical file reorganization, and nature walks are just some of the volunteer activities the following folks participated in. Wouldn't you like to add your name to our next list?

Rick Botta  
Will Bowen  
Les Braund  
Uli Burgin  
Cindy Burrascano  
Lynne Christenson  
Patti Colburn  
Matt Deig  
Edward DiBella  
The Dingeman Family  
Terry Gaughn  
Mel Howe  
Rob Hutsel  
Debra Jones  
Mike Kelly  
Linda King  
Marilyn Kolendar  
Jill & Joe Kozeluth  
Barry Martin  
Gretchen Nell  
Steve Romeo  
Brian Swanson  
Pat Watson  
Selena Wilson  
Bill Witzel  
Dean Woods

### Welcome New Members

Hope to see the following new members on the trail!

Charles & Nancy Anderson  
Melissa Sherrod  
James & Marieke Thayer

## Letter to Canyon News

## More on "Cattle at Rancho Penasquitos"

Dear Editor:

I congratulate you and Pete Nelson for publishing the article on cattle ranching in Peñasquitos Canyon in the 19th century (Canyon News, Vol. 15, #4, July-August, 2001). In the 20th century, a veritable litany of cattle barons acquired the property and grazed their herds there. Most people don't realize it, but the fact that Peñasquitos Canyon was the site of private ranches for 165 years has kept the canyon free from development, although several developers, including Adolf Levi in 1903, tried to develop it. When Levi's plans failed to materialize, he leased the property to the first of several cattle ranchers, Charles F. Mohnike, for a 3-yr, 6% mortgage of \$100,000<sup>1</sup>. Mohnike and his family, who lived in the ranch house just west of Black Mountain Road, at first ran about 800 head of horses and 1200 Hereford Cattle in the canyon. When the ranch house was damaged by fire in 1909, they built another adobe east of Black Mountain Road and continued to ranch for 20 years. He not only raised cattle and horses there but also tried to farm the flood plain and rebuilt the original ranch house for living quarters for his ranch hands. However, he found farming Peñasquitos unprofitable, and moved to the Central Valley.<sup>2</sup>

Through the 1920s, the ranch was owned by Francis Everett<sup>2</sup> and changed hands again in 1932 to Wirt and Magdalene Bowman and George and Emily Sawday. In 1937, the Sawdays acquired the property<sup>2</sup> and it became part of the San Diego cattle barons' Sawday and Sexton, Inc. "empire" that ran cattle there for several decades. By the late 1950s, from 2000 to 7000 head of cattle were on the ranch. Cattle grazed from Chicarita Creek on the eastern end of the Ranch (present day Sabre Springs) to Sorrento Valley at the west end<sup>2</sup>. They had a foreman named Russell Peavey, who later took over the operations, lived in the Mohnike Adobe, and again used the original adobe for his cowboys' bunk house. Peavey and his family ranched the property until the 1960s when encroaching urbanization made it unprofitable. The final blow came when he found one of his favorite horses and some cattle had been shot at the west end of the canyon by poachers. The Peaveys are remembered as having the last family owned cattle ranch in San Diego.

In 1962, developer Irving Kahn bought the ranch in Peñasquitos Canyon for a reported \$15 million<sup>2</sup> and planned to put a road through the middle to serve housing tracts and a golf course. However, when City engineers pointed out that the canyon floods badly and they wouldn't allow a road through it, he liquidated his Peñasquitos, Inc. properties.

In about 1970, the City of San Diego got control of the property and opened it to the public as an open space park. That's when Horseman's Park was started at the former Peavey place and Norwood Brown got a contract to graze cattle at the west end of the Canyon. His herd of Charlions (French) beef cattle varied from about 75 to 150 head<sup>3</sup> but averaged nearly 100 head. Until 1989 he paid the City \$5/head/month for grazing rights. It was during those years I was fortunate to have partaken in the spring and fall roundups in Peñasquitos Canyon along with many other riders from Sorrento Valley, Del Mar Mesa and Horseman's Park (now Canyonside Stables). His cattle roamed the entire canyon (in fact, one cow was killed by a car while crossing Black Mt. Road. Barbara Gerrior, then manager of Horseman's Park, saved her orphaned calf). In order to

round them up, we rode the full length of the Canyon and drove the cows and calves (the bulls were left alone) down to the holding pens next to the El Cuervo (formerly Rufz) Adobe.

About 1985, Norwood took a partner named Ray Whitwer who grazed Black Angus beef cattle that roamed in López Canyon and López Ridge<sup>4</sup>. During the ensuing roundups, another group of riders was sent up López Canyon to drive them down toward the corrals. The Black Angus were then kept in a holding pattern at the mouth of López Canyon by a few riders, while the others tried to herd Norwood's big Charlions cattle into the corral. That's where the fun began! One after another of the animals would bolt out of the herd and race across Peñasquitos Creek to "safety" on the north side where cowboys on their fleet quarter horses chased them at full gallop, eventually driving them back to the corrals. After several such forays, most were eventually driven into the holding pen where bedlam ensued. The air was rent with the sound of cows mooing, calves bawling and dust spiraling into the sky. One big old cow jumped the 5-ft high corral fence and ran off across the creek!

The herd was eventually separated by a swing gate into groups of heifers, calves and cows for branding and/or attaching numbered ear tags and a tally was made. Then the cows and heifers were vaccinated and released through a squeeze gate (that gate, which belonged to Norwood Brown, was later bought by Bob Loftin and is now at his horse ranch on Del Mar Mesa). The calves were then driven into the squeeze gate where they were vaccinated, castrated and tagged by the veterinarian before being released. Next, the Black Angus cattle were driven into the holding pens and the same procedure repeated. Afterwards, Norwood hosted a BBQ made of Black Angus beef donated by Ray Whitwer. It was the best hamburger I ever had!

All this came to an untimely end on June 24, 1989 because the cattle had begun to wander up the Old López Road to Mira Mesa in search of grass, which they found in abundance along the irrigated shoulders and median strip of the newly constructed Mira Mesa Boulevard. Knowing full well what a collision of a speeding car with a large bovine would entail (smashed windshield, dead cow, injured driver etc.) Brown and Whitwer had a round-up which ended in all the cattle being loaded into large stock trailers and moved off the property to a feed lot. This "Last Round Up" was covered by local TV Channels. I have a composite of these film clips and will make it available to interested parties for the cost of reproduction (\$12)<sup>5</sup>.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. John Northrop, Charter Member  
Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve

### References

- <sup>1</sup>Ward, Mary "Rancho de Los Penasquitos: On the Road to Yuma, San Diego", County of San Diego, 1984
- <sup>2</sup>Ferris, Johnson & Perkins, "Mohnike Adobe, Historical Structure Report", Ferris, Johnson and Perkins, 3776 Front St., San Diego, CA 92103., 1999.
- <sup>3</sup>Christian Clews, personal communication
- <sup>4</sup>Northrop, John "Riding 'Round Penasquitos", Windsor Associates, 4655 Cass St., San Diego, CA 92109, 1992
- <sup>5</sup>San Diego County Park Ranger Reneene Mawry has a copy of this video.



# Special Notices

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## Want to Volunteer?

Tired of being left out of the volunteer excitement? Email Mike Kelly at mkellysd@aol.com or call him at 858.566.6489 to discuss the opportunities and how you can participate.

## Volunteer Patrol & Trail-building Leader Trainings

Rangers Bill Lawrence and Gina Brown will be conducting training classes for both the equestrian-biker-hiker Volunteer Patrol and for Trail building crew leaders. To learn more about either activity, call them at 858.538.8066. Trail crew leaders will direct teams building our link of the Trans-County Trail..

## Ecology & Management of Invasive Plants in the Deserts of Southwestern North America

**Oct. 5, 6 & 7th.**  
**Handlery Hotel, Mission Valley**

Co-hosted by the U.S. Geological Survey and the California Exotic Pest Plant Council. Open to the public. For more information or registration packet, call Mike Kelly at 858.566.6489 for details. Or email: mkellysd@aol.com.

## Native Plant Sale

**Sat., Oct. 13**  
**Casa del Prado, Balboa Park**

Each year the California Native Plant Society holds its annual sale of native plants just in time for the winter planting season. The sale is open to the public. Call 619.685.7321 for details.

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Wildlife Survey Training

**Sat., Oct. 13:9:45 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

The Friends' Tracking Team will offer a free training to volunteers who would like to help monitor our wildlife for our quarterly summer survey. Monitoring takes place in Peñasquitos Canyon, Black Mountain Open Space, the Del Mar Mesa, Peñasquitos Lagoon, Crestridge, Mission Trails and other areas.

In the six hours of class lectures and slides and hands-on field training volunteers will learn some of the basics of how to track several species of wildlife. Volunteers are then asked to sign up for 1 or more surveys in the following weeks, with both weekdays and weekend dates available. Each new volunteer will be paired with an experienced tracker.

Bring water, a sack lunch and good boots. Meet at the historic adobe ranch house in Peñasquitos Canyon. 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 858.484.3219 for directions.**

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## Otay Tarplant Restoration

**Sat., Sept. 15: 8 a.m. – noon**

**Sat., Oct. 20, 8 a.m. – noon**

Otay Sweetwater U.S. Fish & Wildlife Refuge. Help California Native Plant Society and San Diego Zoological Society volunteers protect this endangered plant. Volunteers will cut and remove weeds and sow native plant seed. Meet at Sweetwater Summit County Park in the parking lot before the check-in station. Located off San Miguel / Bonita Road off I-805. Call Cindy Burrascano for more details at 619.271.5767.

## Peñasquitos Lagoon Restoration

**Sun., Sept. 16, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove invasive plants that are destroying wildlife habitat in Peñasquitos Lagoon. This is the fourth & final year of restoration work by the Friends' Special Weed Action Team in this area. Meet at 11230 Sorrento Valley Road (Sorrento Valley Dental Associates) in Sorrento Valley. 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 info / directions.

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## Peñasquitos Canyon Cottonwood Restoration

**Sun., Oct. 14, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove the last remaining invasive *Eucalyptus* trees from the Preserve. After 10 years only one significant population of this exotic tree remains in the Preserve. Native trees including Cottonwoods, will be planted during the next rainy season. Already, in other parts of the Preserve Cottonwoods are once again becoming abundant as they were 150 years ago. Meet in the Parking-Staging area at the intersection of Mercy and Black Mountain Roads. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirt, hat, sunscreen and bring water and a snack. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more information or directions.

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**(Joint meeting cont'd)**

right on this road and then make your first left into Canyonside Driveway and proceed to the white fenced parking lot past the ballfields. Park and walk up to the ranch house.





**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196  
 858-484-3219

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### Check Your Label

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

### Friends' Directory

**Officers**

President: Brian Swanson 760-760-749-5453  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619-443-5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858- 538-2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858-672-0584

**Other Members of the Board of Directors**

Les Braund, Mike Kelly, Jill Kozuleth

**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  
 Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
 Stream Survey Committee: open  
 Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
 Volunteer Coordinator: Jill Kozeluh, 858-271-1814  
 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: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/2001

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

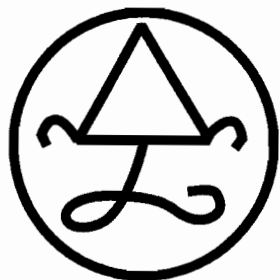
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve  
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Nov. / Dec. 2001  
Volume 15, No. 6

Rangers Coming & Going

## Changing of the Guard

Mike Kelly

It came as a shock to be told that Senior Ranger Bill Lawrence, whom I and the Friends have been working with for about 10 years now, will be transferring to another park. Bill is being transferred to the Otay Regional Park in the southern part of the County. Our relationship with Bill has been a warm collaborative one over the years and we're going to miss him. Bill was very committed to protecting and restoring the natural resources here, as witnessed by the many projects and grants we worked on together. In addition, he played a pivotal role, along with County Ranger Reneene Mowry, in launching the Volunteer Patrol, composed of equestrians, bike riders and hikers that has functioned for 10 years here in the park and has been used as a model for other parks. We hope to have a going away party for Bill, but haven't firmed up the date or place yet. If you worked with Bill and would like to help send him off with our thanks, give me a call for the date, time, and place at 858-566-6489.

### New Rangers

We're actually getting two new Rangers for our area, one for Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the second for the Black Mountain Open Space Park (including Clevelanger & Crest Canyons as well).

Senior Ranger Jeannette De Angelis will be coming from Otay to take Bill's place as our Senior Ranger. Ranger Gina Brown, who we introduced in our last newsletter, will be staying on. Jean-

See p. 4 for more

## Tracking Team Now Forming a SDRP Group

Barry Martin

Tracking Team Founder/Director

The early morning sky was still dark gray with the usual "marine layer," as the small group hiked out from under the I-5 overpass, slowly making their way across a road toward the lagoon. Except for an occasional cyclist or jogger the road, parallel to the freeway, was unused. It seemed these people were searching for something, moving in an unhurried way, with a great deal of attention directed toward the ground. Every so often one would seem to find something of interest and the rest would come over and check it out. All seemed totally absorbed, not just with the ground, but in all that was going on throughout the environment around them, pointing at birds, watching people run or cycle by, looking intently at the lagoon environs and then back at the ground.

One of the people was holding a clipboard and making little notes every so often, another was holding a palm pilot connected to a GPS (Global Positioning Unit).; both making entries each time someone became interested in something on the ground. What was going on here anyway?

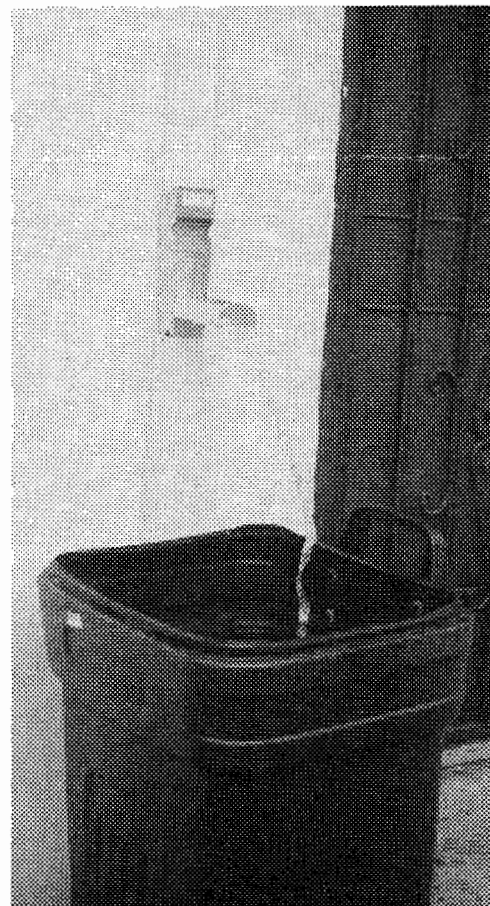
### Quarterly Surveys

This was the scene as Tracking Team members Steve Romeo and Doug Hansen led a group of volunteers on one of nearly 40 quarterly wildlife survey transects established by the San Diego Tracking Teams in San Diego County.

See p. 7 for more

### Highlights Inside

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Rainwater harvesting  
See p. 6 for more

[www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org)

# Fall / Winter Activities Schedule

Autumn brings cooler weather (barring Santa Anas!) and colorful foliage in many parts. Watch for the Sycamores to change to a deep yellow and brown, while Cottonwoods will turn a bright yellow. That shrub in the oak and Sycamore understory with the red leaves is poison oak! Look but don't touch! Mule deer bucks have recruited their harems after the fall mating rut and can often be seen in groups of 4-8 deer. The red-headed Acorn woodpeckers and many other birds and small mammals are storing acorns for the winter — although it's a bad year for the acorn crop. Outings are free. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. For details or group hikes, call 858.484.3219 for recorded informations or visit our web site at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).

## Every Saturday & Sunday

### 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 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 **858.484.3219** for directions.

## November

### Geology Hike

Sun., Nov. 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. Steep trail. Bring water and sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858-484.3219** for recorded directions

### Birds and Beasts of Peñasquitos Canyon

Sat., Nov. 10, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Besides the many deer, bobcats and coyotes that call the preserve home, more than 160 bird species live in or visit the preserve during the year. Join Friends' president and hike leader Brian Swanson to search for signs and sightings of these critters. Binoculars recommended. 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. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

### Beginners' Tracking Walk at Ranch

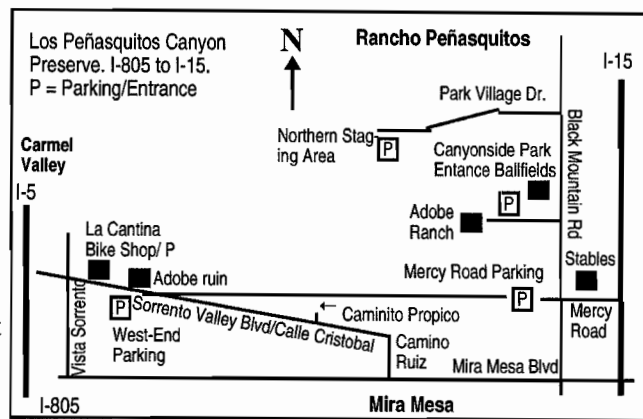
Sat., Nov. 17, 8 – 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219**.

### Advanced Tracking Walks at Ranch

Sat., Nov. 17, 8 a.m. A member of the Friend's Tracking Team will lead this advanced tracking walk. Must have completed beginner and intermediate training. 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 **858.484.3219**.

### Black Mountain Hike Leader Training (open to public)

Sat., Nov. 17, 9 - noon. Naturalist Mike Kelly will begin this series of slow-paced walks leaving from different trailheads around Black Mountain Open Space Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. The purpose is to train new volunteer hike leaders in the different habitats, plants, critters, and



historical aspects of the park. You don't have to plan to be a hike leader to attend and enjoy the walk. Steep hills require good hiking boots. Bring water and sun protection. Meet at the main parking-staging area on the north side of the mountain. Take Black Mountain Road in Peñasquitos north. After passing Maler Rd. on the right, and just before it takes the big curve into the new Carmel Valley Road, look for and take the dirt road to the right. Proceed up the hill past the hanglider area and down the hill until a sign for Black Mountain Park and a paved road appear on the right. Take this up to the parking area. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858-484.3219** for recorded directions

### Nature Walk from Mercy Road

Sun., Nov. 18, 8 – 10 a.m. Join naturalist Les Braund for this moderately paced nature walk. Learn about native plants and their uses. Learn about the smaller plants such as liverworts and others. Bring a hand lens or magnifying glass if possible. Meet in 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 **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

### Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee

Mon., Nov. 19, 7 p.m. The public is welcome to attend this business meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219** for directions.

See p. 3 for more

**Herb Walk with Will Bowen**

Sat., Nov. 24, 10 – 11 a.m. Join Will Bowen on this hike to learn to identify the different plants and trees of the canyon. Find out how they were used for medicine by early Native American, Spanish, and Euroamerican inhabitants of the canyon. Meet in West-end Parking-Staging area off Sorrento Valley Road, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858-484-3219** for recorded directions.

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

Tues., Nov. 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.

**December****Geology Hike**

Sun., Dec. 2, 9 a.m. – 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. Steep trail. Bring water and sun protection. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions

**Birds and Beasts of Peñasquitos Canyon**

Sat., Dec. 8, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. Besides the many deer, bobcats and coyotes that call the preserve home, more than 160 bird species live in or visit the preserve during the year. Join Friends' president and hike leader Brian Swanson to search for signs and sightings of these critters. Binoculars recommended. 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. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

**Beginner's Tracking Walk at Ranch**

Sat., Dec. 15, 8 – 9 a.m. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in from a member of the Friends' Tracking Team. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15

west to Black Mtn. Rd., go right on Black Mtn. Rd. and take 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219**.

**Advanced Tracking Walk at Ranch**

Sat., Dec. 15, 8 – 9 a.m. A member of the Friends' Tracking Team will lead this advanced tracking walk. Must have completed beginner and intermediate training. 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 **858.484.3219**.

**Black Mountain Hike Leader Training from Hilltop Park (open to public)**

Sat., Dec. 15, 9 - noon. Naturalist Mike Kelly will continue this series of slow-paced walks leaving from different trailheads around Black Mountain Open Space Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. The purpose is to train new volunteer hike leaders in the different habitats, plants, critters, and historical aspects of the park. You don't have to plan to be a hike leader to attend and enjoy the walk. Steep hills require good hiking boots. Bring water and sun protection. Meet at the main parking-staging area on the north side of the mountain. Take Black Mountain Road in Peñasquitos north to Oviedo St. Take a right on Oviedo until it splits. Take the right split on Oviedo Way and go to Hilltop Park at the top. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858-484.3219** for recorded directions

**Rock People Hike with Will Bowen**

Sat., Dec. 15, 3 – 4:30 p.m. Join Will Bowen on this hike to examine the rocks, stones, pebbles, and cobbles of the canyon from an intuitive, spiritual, and sensory perspective. Learn how stones have been used for divinations, wisdom, and healing by so-called "primitive" peoples. Meet in West-end Parking-Staging area off Sorrento Valley Road, 1/2 mile east of its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway in Sorrento Valley. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208** or call **858-484-3219** for recorded directions.

**Holiday Break Hike from Northern Staging**

Sun., Dec. 16, 3 p.m. Take a break from the frantic holiday pace and join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk to the waterfall and back, about 4 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 **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

**Holiday Walk from Mercy Road**

Sat., Dec. 22, 8 – 10 a.m. Join naturalist Les Braund for this moderately paced nature walk. See mistletoe, California holly & more. Learn about the smaller plants such as liverworts and others. Bring a hand lens or magnifying glass if possible. If it rained by then mushrooms will become a focus of the walk. Meet in 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 **858.484.3219** for recorded directions.

**DIRECTIONS****Black Mountain Open Space Park, Rancho Peñasquitos**

From I-15 taken SR 56 (Ted Williams Parkway) west to Black Mountain Road. Go right (north) on Black Mountain Road and follow it all the way until you see the last houses on the right and open space beyond. Look for a dirt road to the right and take it. Proceed about 1 mile, going beyond the bare hangliding area on the right and down a hill to a big curve and a sign for the park and paved road on the right. Proceed up the road to the staging area.

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

### **(Rangers cont'd)**

nette is a very capable Ranger with whom I've worked for several years in Tecolote Canyon and other parks. She has a special place in her heart for our neck of the woods, having grown up in Rancho Penasquitos, and haunted our hills and canyons as a youth.

Filling the vacant Ranger position at Black Mountain (vacated by Ranger Dan Bylin several months ago), is Senior Ranger Lori Charette. Lori is coming to us from Mission Bay Park and is quite enthusiastic about her new position. We look forward to getting to know and work with both of these new Rangers.

## Rancho Roundup

# Docent Training

Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry

### **New historian appointed**

I'm extremely pleased to announce that the County Parks & Recreation Department has hired Dr. Lynne Christenson to fill the long-vacant historian position. Many of you know Lynne, who is no stranger to Rancho de Los Peñasquitos. She has served on the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens' Advisory Committee for a number of years and has taken a lead role in developing an interpretive master plan for El Cuervo, the deteriorating adobe at the west end of the preserve.

An archaeologist and former teacher at San Diego State University, Lynne has supervised several archaeological field schools at the rancho. She has also generously shared her wealth of knowledge on archaeology and local Native American culture with the Ranch House Docents and LPCP Volunteer Patrol at their trainings. Lynne will be giving a presentation on San Diego Native Americans during the upcoming docent training

### **Rancho Los Peñasquitos Docent and Ranch Hand Training**

Members of the Friends are welcome to attend individual sessions, but should call me first to confirm the time and date. Lynne is scheduled to speak on November 7, at 6:15 p.m. Following is a complete listing of classes.

#### Saturday, November 3

- 12 - 12:30 Orientation/Introductions, Kathy Jenkins
- 12:30 - 1:00 Overview of the Preserve, Reneene Mowry
- 1:00 - 2:00 Ranch House Architecture, Reneene Mowry
- 2:15 - 3:30 Intro to the House (Tour), Kathy Jenkins

#### Wednesday, November 7 (evening)

- 6:15 - 7:45 Native Americans, Lynne Christenson
- 8:00 - 9:00 Mission Period/Intro to, Kathy Jenkins  
Mexican Period

#### Wednesday, November 14 (evening)

- 6:15 - 6:45 Intro to Interpretation, Reneene Mowry
- 6:45 - 7:45 Mexican Period, Kathy Jenkins
- 8:00 - 9:00 Johnson Period, Kathy Jenkins

#### Tuesday, November 20 (evening)

- 6:15 - 7:00 Interpretive Techniques, Reneene Mowry
- 7:00 - 9:00 SDCAS Meeting

#### Wednesday, November 28 (evening)

- 6:15 - 6:45 Interpretive Techniques, Reneene Mowry
- 6:45 - 7:45 Taylor/Mohnike, Kathy Jenkins
- 8:00 - 9:00 Recent History, Kathy Jenkins

#### Saturday, December 1

- 9:30 - 11:00 Docent Meeting
- 11:00 - 12:00 Docent Tour
- 12:00 - 12:30 Lunch (Bring a sack lunch)
- 12:30 - 2:30 Docent Do's and Don'ts, Kathy Jenkins  
Evaluations & Practice Tours, Reneene Mowry

This training is a prerequisite for anyone who wants to become a docent, assist with the third and fourth grade school program, or work around the rancho as a ranch hand. If you would like to join our rancho "family," leave a message for head docent Kathy Jenkins, at 858-538-0935, or call me, at 858-484-7504, to sign up.



# Western Toad Tadpoles

Will Bowen, Ph.D.

This past season witnessed the birth of a very large population of Western toad (*Bufo boreas*) tadpoles in the west end wetlands. This is a significant event — the magnitude of which — I've not seen before. Granted, twice in the past, I have found smaller populations of Western toad tadpoles and toadettes nearby in the wetlands area. I've also found a few specimens up at the Del Mar Mesa vernal pools complex in years past. But it's quite a unique event to see so many Western toad tadpoles swimming about in a distinct area together.

Often I have found many Treefrog (*Hyla regilla*) tadpoles in Peñasquitos and López canyons, in road and depression puddles, small pools, and in the López creek bed. Some years there have been large populations of the exotic Bull frog (*Rana catesbiana*) tadpoles in the west end wetlands. But it's much more rare to find Western toad tadpoles. Hundreds, if not thousands, of small jet-black tadpoles filled the depression in the newly restored wetlands which had been cleared, dug out, and revegetated, and which now stood inundated with a shallow layer of rainwater.

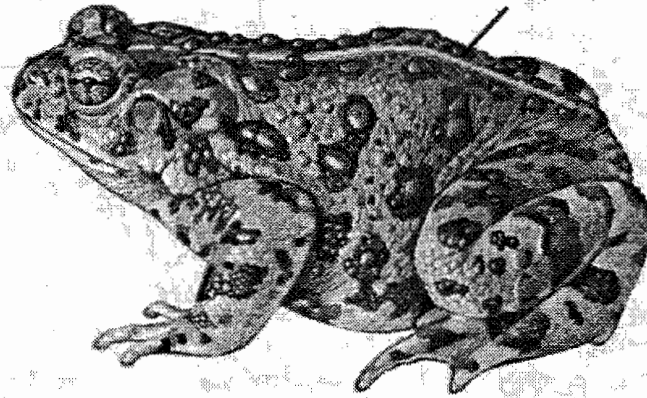
These tadpoles were at first very hard for me to classify. They looked almost like Tree frog tadpoles except that they were much darker, almost totally black. That's what caused me to wonder — the coloration. Although it is true, I have before seen Treefrog tadpoles that were almost that black.

Unfortunately, all these tadpoles died. They were either eaten by birds or they all dried up. Each time I returned there were less and less of their numbers. I did, however, collect some specimens to find out what they were. Soon it became clear that their eyes were on top of their head, indicating a toad, and not on the sides of their head, indicating a Treefrog.

I've often wondered why we don't see more Western toads in the canyon. I myself have only seen one and it is rarely sited by other hike leaders. I believe they were once much more plentiful. I remember as a kid growing up

in Coronado, each year I would find so many little Western toads in the grassy courtyard of the Coronado Motor Inn on Third and Orange Avenue, where I liked to play. They hatched in a little goldfish pond and then hopped all about the grass under a palm tree. Toads used to be found commonly in gardens as well as canyons.

Anyway, I brought some of the Western Toad tadpoles home and watched them grow, feeding them



Adult Western toad (*Bufo boreas*)

goldfish food. Like the Treefrog tadpole, the Western toad tadpole is very delicate and many die in comparison to the ones that survive. In contrast, almost all the Spadefoot (*Scaphiopus hammondi*) tadpoles that I've had survived to adulthood, where they must still face the threat of salmonella.

In the wild, the Western toad and Treefrog tadpoles are easily frightened — the Treefrog will especially fly in a spurt from rest to the thunder of your approaching footsteps. The Spadefoot tadpole is much larger and more oblivious to your presence, they're just too concerned with eating. They're quite the voracious eater, relishing such delicacies as their next of kin, who might have weakened, or even their own feces! They are quite active and the more that are confined together the merrier they get!

Like the Treefrog, the Western toad tadpole transforms into a toadlette at a very small size, the Spadefoot toadlette

is about twice as big. The Western toadlette is very shy, reticent, and pensive, it barely moves at times, preferring to curl up into its self and not move for long periods of time. Even if they do get luckily and grow into a young spurt they're still quite bashful and have a very delicate ego. I do, however, have a unique memory of a happy handful of Western toadlettes sitting under Coyote thistle (*Eryngium aristulatum ssp. parishii*) "umbrellas" basking in the warm sun on a fine spring day at the edge of a vernal road pool.

The Treefrog tadpole will spring into a long distance hop to clutch a twig or aquarium wall with its suction cup feet. The Spadefoot will turn and lean toward you in anticipation or walk in spurts after crickets. The Western toad takes a long time to come out of its shell and can have its feelings easily bruised — they have a tender excite-

ment.

The Spadefoot will, from the get go, burrow or jump at food sometimes almost as large as it self. It will wrestle with crickets, flop on its back struggling with them, play tug of war with another toadlette over a cricket or even bite the whole upper body of another toadlette who has a cricket stuffed half in its mouth. They put their whole body into it.

The Treefrog has a lightning attack with little of the Spadefoot's dramatics. Its watch, strike, and swallow. Over and done! The Western toad on the other hand has a hard time getting motivated to eat. It takes a lot of coaxing and a long while for them to build up their confidence. They're very picky about the right size of food. They only like very small prey, who do not put up much of a fuss. And they get easily discouraged. On the other

See p. 8 for more

# Rainwater Harvesting: a Useful Conservation Practice

Edward Di Bella

I became aware of a serious problem concerning water in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in January of 1998. You'll remember that we were deluged by a powerful series of storms that winter due to the El Niño phenomenon. On a Sunday afternoon, I was standing east of the waterfall, watching a torrent of water roar through a new channel carved out adjacent to the main course of Peñasquitos Creek. With both alarm and dismay, I saw that water carry away oak trees and devastate a large wetland area.

Conservation Chair, Mike Kelly, has explained to me how increased urbanization has contributed to a significant increase in water runoff into the Preserve. In recent issues of this newsletter, Kelly has described the cumulative damage done by storm runoff, such as the destruction of populations of endangered plants like the Willow Mint (*Monardella linoidea* ssp. *viminea*) as well as projects being undertaken to combat this threat. I want to point out that there are actions that residents can take to supplement these efforts.

## Rainwater harvesting

One helpful measure is rainwater harvesting: catching and storing the

your downspouts during a storm. I'm practicing this at home. My aluminum patio cover acts as a rain collector. By attaching flexible hoses to the bottom of the downspouts I was able to catch and store 700 gallons of rainwater this past winter. In doing so, I kept a significant amount of water from pouring down the steep slope in my backyard, lessening the threat of erosion and protecting stands of native plants. I was also able to care for a small garden and ten fruit trees. I didn't turn on a garden hose this year for watering purposes until late June.

This year I'm refining the system by installing galvanized steel rain diverters. These fit into a downspout, and divert water into the top of a barrel. When your barrels are filled, you flip the spout back up and the downspout functions as normal. Although one can purchase very expensive high-capacity barrels, ordinary sanitation barrels will do the trick. Keep in mind that you should not drink unfiltered rainwater, and that you must keep the barrels sealed with lids to prevent problems with mosquitoes.

If every residence began to catch a barrel or two of rainwater during a storm, it would make a dent in the volume of water pouring into our drain

age systems and creeks. This in turn would help reduce the impact upon our streams and riparian habitats, so critical to the stability of local ecosystems and dependent wildlife.

If catching rainwater is impractical for some reason at your residence, there is still something you can do to help. Remember, the problem with excessive runoff is not just volume, but also the speed at which water is pouring off our hardened urban landscapes and into our native habitats. This is where splash blocks become useful.

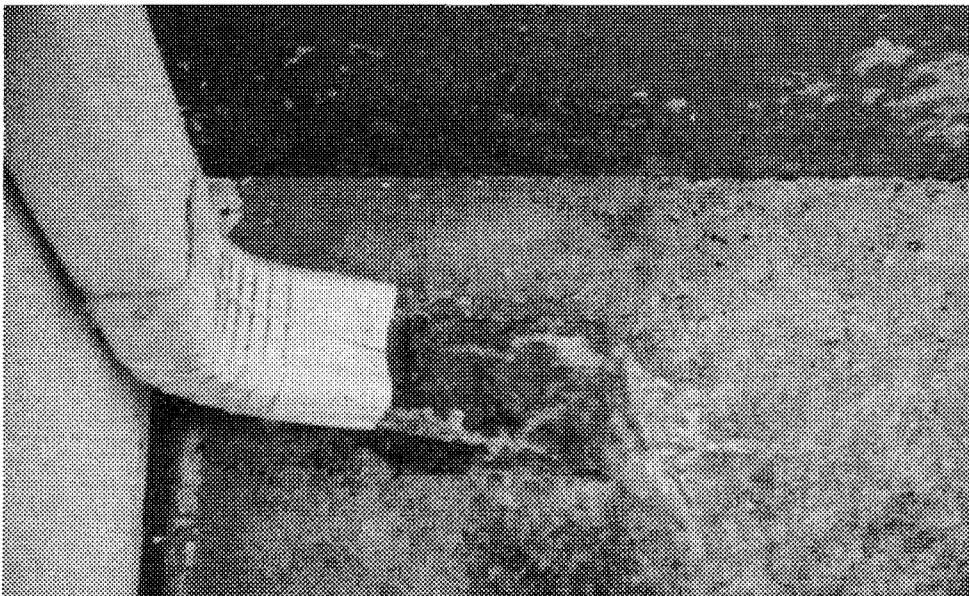
## Splash blocks

A splash block is just some object placed at the bottom of a downspout that diffuses and slows down the stream of water before it enters the street drainage system. A rock or broken brick will do the job. Just make sure the block doesn't redirect water back toward your structural foundations.

I anticipate an objection to the suggestion of rainwater harvesting. Buying rain diverters and storage barrels will cost more than simply using and paying for the equivalent amount of water from the Water Department. That's true—for now. While the price of water is still very low, that will not last forever. It's no secret that increasing water scarcity looms in the years ahead, even without more population growth in this already overpopulated region. Experimenting with rainwater harvesting is a useful preparation for the future. Beyond that, remember that our primary objectives at the moment are to reduce the volume and velocity of storm runoff into the Preserve and other native habitats. Implementing the suggestions given here will help in accomplishing those goals.

To examine products related to this subject, visit the Real Goods web site at [www.realgoods.com](http://www.realgoods.com). If you look in the *Outdoor home* section, click on the link for the recycled rain barrel. There you can check out a rain barrel and diverter system. Links below the photograph take you to descriptions of a useful book and video for those pursuing more information.

Let's get started!



**Splash block, home made!** Even something as simple as a brick placed under a drainpipe can dissipate much of the erosive energy of rainwater in a drainpipe.

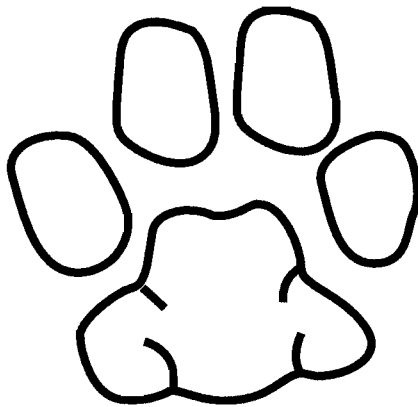
(Tracking cont'd)

The purpose of these transects is to monitor wildlife in open space and the corridors that connect these open space blocks. The data we've collected on these forays has had a significant impact on planning in San Diego, especially in the area mentioned above. If you guessed the Sorrento Valley Road, Peñasquitos Lagoon area from the description above you are right. The Carmel Valley Creek drains into the lagoon after crossing under the I-5 freeway. This has been a major animal corridor for ages; unfortunately when the animals cross under the freeway they have no choice but to cross over the portion of Sorrento Valley Road that cuts along the edge of the lagoon on one side and with the freeway on the other. This road was closed during recent construction projects, much alteration was done through here, however no provision was made for wildlife movement under the road. A battle raged over whether or not this road would be opened, the tie breaker was the data we had been collecting for years on this transect, consequently the road remains closed to cars.

### What Do We Find?

Animals of all sizes frequent these areas. San Diego County is the most biologically diverse county in the U.S. We hope that with proper planning based in part on our findings, we can help keep it that way. While Steve was leading the group across the road toward the lagoon they found an incredible assortment of tracks and sign indicating presence of deer, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, opossum, fox, rabbits and skunks. As he endeavored to stay cognizant of all that was going on around him in the tradition of the ancient master tracker, Steve was testing out leading edge data collection technology with the palm/gps combination. He was drawn toward the lagoon by a combination of emotions, his gut told him something very compelling was waiting for him, yet he felt a certain wariness. The little group slowly moved down a berm into the soft damp soil along the edges of the lagoon, the aromas of the water floating on the slight breeze coming from the west along with the smells associated

with the willow riparian filling their senses. Steve was savoring this moment as his well honed tracker eye caught a glimpse of a relatively deep depression in the nearly overgrown animal run up ahead. His heart skipped a beat as he neared this shape in the ground, three lobes on the trailing edge, two on the leading edge of the big pad, asymmetric shape overall and big! A bit over 3" wide...Lion!! As Steve got to the track he felt chills, this track was still slowly filling with water! The lion had just passed through here mere minutes ago!



**Bobcat track often encountered on wildlife surveys (not to scale).**

### Blending Technology with an Ancient Art and Science

On this day Steve happened to be working out the bugs on a data collection tool we have adapted to our protocol. While Doug backed him up with paper Steve made entries for each observation on the palm pilot. The GPS then feeds a position into the palm pilot to correspond with each observation. After completing the transect the palm pilot goes into the hot sync cradle and all the data is instantly incorporated into the master data base. We expect to have this system up and running by the next winter transect session. Our transect leaders receive extensive training in the art and science of tracking. Tracking has been acknowledged to be the forerunner of the modern day scientific method. Tracking was an essential piece of the survival puzzle for early man, so being good at it was often the difference between life and death.

Today we've got it pretty easy com-

pared to those early folks, but at what cost? Many of us have nearly lost any connection whatsoever to the natural world. Being a good tracker means having a very high level of overall awareness. Being able to look at the world through the "eyes of a native" can enliven your existence to an extreme degree.

### How Does This All Relate to the SDTT and SDRP?

The San Diego Tracking Team (SDTT) vision is "to foster an attitude of stewardship by promoting awareness and knowledge of our natural world." We do this two ways, one is by gathering data that can be used to help in the planning processes of our communities, and the other is through the classes we offer.

We recently conducted one such class at San Dieguito River Park (SDRP). The class was introductory, mainly for the benefit of the park's established volunteers. This one day class was an overview of track recognition, awareness techniques and an explanation of our wildlife surveys. We currently have one transect in the Sycamore Creek area and would like to set up more in key corridor areas elsewhere in SDRP.

San Dieguito River Park is a key link in the overall wildlife movement picture in San Diego's north county area. As such, it should be properly monitored to ensure we have viable connections into and out of this preserve. Without adequate movement capability, adequate gene pool exchange will not occur with most of the major species found in our area. A vibrant ecosystem requires connections to other healthy ecosystems to remain vibrant. If no one is monitoring these ecosystems then how will we know when something is amiss? This is where the Tracking Teams come in.

### How Can I Help?

You can get involved by volunteering to participate during one of the quarterly transect periods, summer, fall, winter or spring. Prior to each transect period we conduct a one day volunteer training at the historic adobe in the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve (where this all started!). Upon comple-

See p. 8 for more

**(Tracking cont'd)**

tion of this class you're asked to sign up for one or more of the many transects we have throughout San Diego.

We also have a series of classes that we call Tracker/Naturalist weekends. There are 3 levels, beginning, intermediate and advanced. Once you've completed the series and have participated in a number of transects, you become eligible to become a Tracking Team member. After a short apprentice period where you acquire more "dirt time" you can become a transect leader.

One of our goals is to have a team in each of the major preserves in the county. This is an all volunteer effort with citizens from all walks of life teaming together to contribute to a higher quality of life. Imagine having an active roll in helping to preserve open space and learning first hand the skills of the native tracker!

Steve Romeo has agreed to work with all interested people to set up a team in the San Dieguito River Park. We look forward to building an active team in this crucial area. Stay tuned for training workshops in the River Park area, or check the Tracking Team website at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org) for dates on upcoming classes.

We started in Peñasquitos Preserve back in 1993. This remains our headquarters, but we have teams all over the county, including the Mt. Woodson Wildlife Trackers, Torrey Pines Trackers, Crest Trackers, Preserve Calavera Trackers, Canyons Network Trackers and others just in the formative stages. We expect to add San Dieguito River Park Trackers to that list soon.

So if you're fascinated by the outdoors and would like to explore the possibility of becoming a Tracker/Naturalist, come on out! If you'd like to help but don't particularly like the idea of getting your knees dirty while pouring over tracks, there are other ways you can help. We need all kinds of help such as communication and PR, volunteer coordination and other support type activities. Don't be shy, this is a great opportunity to get out and do something meaningful on behalf of open space while meeting new like-minded people.

Looking forward to seeing you, or at least your tracks, out on the trail!

**(Tadpoles cont'd)**

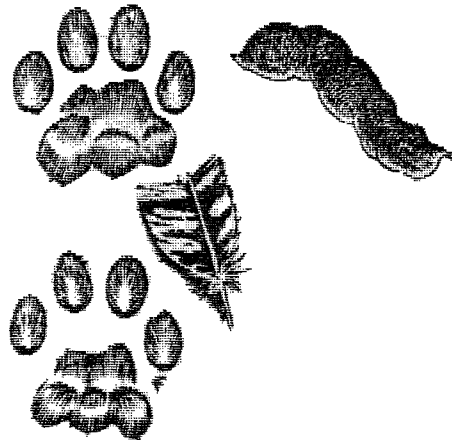
hand, the Spadefoot easily recovers from frustration.

The Western toadlette also requires a critical balance of water, mud, and dry soil. They can be too wet and will get sick or conversely dry up quickly. They do not have the defenses of size, aggressiveness, or burrowing ability like the Spadefoot. They cannot hop up a wall or a branch or hang upside down like a Treefrog. They are pretty defenseless.

As I look into my aquariums on this bright and sunny October morning, four of my Spadefoot toadlettes are out ready to eat, three on dry land, one in the water dish. Another is half-burrowed and still another is completely burrowed. The sole remaining

Western toadlette is curled with his face in the corner and hasn't eaten his crickets. The Treefrog has just jumped from the ceiling splat into the center of his water dish. The Bullfrog tadpole and the Spadefoot tadpoles are all resting, still waiting their morning's feeding.

When I feed them, the Bullfrog tadpole will splash about wildly. The Spadefoot tadpoles will start moving faster and faster, some swimming upside down or tail down like a spyglassing whale. What's really odd is that if a tadpole does not transform on schedule its growth will really slow down and drag out. Those Spadefoots should have transformed into toadlettes months ago.



**Mountain lion track and scat, still to be found in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve (not to scale).**

## Help Needed to Protect el Cuervo Adobe Ruins

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

As we went to press, Dr. Lynne Christenson, the new San Diego County Historian who is also the Vice-chair of the City's Historical Site Review Board, told me of an important project that requires volunteer help. What is needed is to put some flood control/erosion protection at the el Cuervo adobe ruins in the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

The el Cuervo adobe is the set of mostly melted adobe walls with a big ramada style roof located near the westernmost entrance to the Preserve off Sorrento Valley Blvd. In recent years, winter time flooding has worsened, with higher and more forceful waters lapping at the adobe foundations. Development in the watershed means as much as 50% of the formerly permeable surfaces available to absorb rainfall are now paved or built over. This excess water now pours into our storm drains and produces the bigger and more forceful flooding. Direct contact with water and wicking of water up through adjacent soils melts adobe and threatens what is left of el Cuervo. This adobe, contrary to the sign that has stood there for years, probably dates from about the 1850s. It was once thought to be the oldest adobe in the Preserve, but recent research has proven that the oldest is the ranch house just west of Black Mountain Rd.

What is planned is to install sandbags and silt fencing strategically about the adobe before the rainy season. Dudek & Associates, a consulting company working on a nearby mitigation project for the City of San Diego, will help out with materials, but needs volunteers to install the devices. Dr. Christenson hopes the Friends and the San Diego Archeological Society can join together, as we have in the past, to accomplish this. We don't have a date yet, so if you would like to help, give me a call at 858-566-6489 or email me at [mkellysd@aol.com](mailto:mkellysd@aol.com). I'll call you or your group when we nail down a date.



# Darkwood Canyon: Protect Public Access

Karl Moeller

**[Editor's note:** Karl Moeller, a local resident and Mike Kelly, the Friends' Conservation Chair met with City Councilmember Scott Peters staff person, Gina Clark, on site in Darkwood Canyon at SR56 to discuss this public access issue. Clark assured us that Councilmember Peters would support this effort to restore public access to this finger canyon. Kelly reported that the Friends had led public hikes up this finger canyon for many years because of its natural beauty and access to nearby vernal pools on the Del Mar Mesa, emphasizing that fact that the public had enjoyed access to this area for many years. Moeller has put together a useful package of maps and information and can be reached at 619-553-3780.]

## Location

Darkwood Canyon is a finger canyon of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. It extends north from Park Village Drive past Sundance Ave and parallels Darkwood Rd., a street that also extends north from Park Village Drive. Darkwood Canyon is immediately west of this street.

Until fairly recently, a combination of dirt utility roads and single-track paths ran the length of the canyon. Hikers and bicyclists living in the surrounding area have also used this service road and single-track for a variety of recreational and alternative transportation purposes.

Recent construction of SR-56 freeway bridges that cross over Darkwood Canyon has eliminated the north-south dirt service road and trail in the area immediately under the bridges. Current plans call for the construction of a new service road into Darkwood Canyon extending south from Sundance Ave. This new service road will restore MWWd access to that section of Darkwood Canyon which lies north of SR-56. The section which lies south of SR-56 will continue to be accessed from Park Village Ave. According to Caltrans, there are no plans to re-connect the two sections of Darkwood Canyon which are now divided by SR-56, denying the public its historic access.

## Loss of public access has impacts

Loss of a pathway connecting the now-divided sections of Darkwood Canyon results in a number of negative impacts on the immediately surrounding community.

It's no longer possible for citizens living north of SR-56 to access to the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve from Sundance Ave, or to Peñasquitos Creek Park, adjacent to the Preserve at Park Village Drive. It also cuts off people who would ride their bike or hike to Canyonside Recreation Center via the Preserve.

The preserve is an almost 4,000 acre regional park that includes many natural habitats and trails for bike riders, hikers and equestrians. Adjacent community parks include children's play areas, picnic areas, football & soccer fields, and tennis courts. These are prime recreational resources for the citizens who live near it. With the Darkwood Canyon access severed, families living north of SR-56 must drive approximately 3.5 miles in order to use facilities that were previously accessible by foot or bike.

It's no longer possible for citizens living south of SR-56 to access Sundance Ave. from Darkwood Rd. One significant use of this access was by students of Mesa Verde Middle School, which is located only 3 blocks from the canyon. With this access severed, students living south of SR-56 are forced to drive in order to access their neighborhood Middle School. The new Westview High School, which is currently being constructed adjacent to the Middle School, will also draw students living south of SR-56.

In the past, Darkwood Canyon provided bicyclists access to the bike trails in Peñasquitos Canyon. This network of bike trails provided bicycle commuters living north of SR-56 off-road access to the business and transit centers in Sorrento Valley. Darkwood Canyon could also provide bicyclists living south of SR-56 access to the network of trails being constructed on the Del Mar Mesa, future Black Mountain Open Space and on up to the

San Dieguito River Park to the north. When complete, the San Dieguito River Park system will include a continuous off-road trail extending from Solana Beach to Julian. Darkwood Canyon also provides access to the new Trans County Trail, a network of over 110 miles of trail starting at Torrey Pines Beach, through Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to Poway and east into the mountains, ending in Anza Borrego State Park. The Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve portion of this trail is almost completed under I-15 in the eastern part of the Preserve.

The negative impacts resulting from the severing of Darkwood Canyon by SR-56 can be easily mitigated. One solution would be to extend the currently-existing service road which lies south of SR-56 under the bridges. Another solution would be to construct a bike or foot path under the bridges that connects the service roads on either side.

## (Restoration goals cont'd)

school classes and Vista High School students — the latter coming back for their 5 or 6th year of restoration.

Where we have had limited success, however, is restoring the old agricultural parcels to native grass or shrublands. Frankly, our mortality of natives planted is much higher than our survivorship. Not watering enough at the beginning, not mulching enough, animal herbivory are all involved. However, we've come to realize the biggest problem is probably our soils. Agricultural soils have a chemical profile and texture radically different from intact native soils. These "ag" soils promote annual invasive Mediterranean grasses such as wild oats and often aren't suitable for native plants. That's why we're so excited about working with Dave Bainbridge's Soil and Environmental Restoration Group from Alliant and San Diego State Univ. as reported in a previous article. We'll be experimenting with different soil amendments and mulches to restore these soils to conditions suitable for native grasses and wildflowers. Why not join us in these grand experiments?



## Fall / Winter Volunteer Activities

As we head into the cooler and wetter months we will step up the pace of volunteers. Such weather is prime planting time in San Diego. However, until the rainy season actually starts, which can be as early as November or as late as January, we can't set dates for plantings ahead of time. Planting natives before the first saturating rains results in a high mortality since we don't use irrigation on our projects. So, if you would like to help out, call Mike Kelly at 858-566-6489 or email him at mkellysd@aol.com that you would like to be notified of the revegetation volunteer projects.

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### Advanced Tracker/ Naturalist Program

**Nov. 3 – 4**  
**Peñasquitos Ranch House**

The Advanced Tracker/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, and various tracking situations, mostly involving animals, will be examined. Other exercises including lost-person and speed tracking will also be covered. Further development of intuitive skills relating to tracking and awareness in nature will also be covered. The class will meet from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. Call 858-672-0584 for cost and registration.

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### Otay Tarplant Restoration

**Sat., Nov. 17 & Dec. 15 8– noon**

Otay Sweetwater U.S. Fish & Wildlife Refuge. Help California Native Plant Society and San Diego Zoological Society volunteers protect this endangered plant. Volunteers will cut and remove weeds and sow native plant seed. Meet at Sweetwater Summit County Park in the parking lot before the check-in station. Located off San Miguel / Bonita Road off I-805. Call Cindy Burrascano for more details at 619.271.5767.

### Interpretive Hike Leader Training for Black Mtn. Park

**Saturday., Nov. 17, 9 - noon**  
**Black Mountain Parking Area**

**Saturday, Dec. 15, 9 – noon**  
**Hilltop Park Parking Area**

**Saturday, Jan. 12, 9 – noon**  
**Place to be announced**

Open to both those who would like to learn to lead interpretive walks and those who simply want to attend one. Naturalist Mike Kelly will lead this series of slow-paced walks leaving from different trailheads around Black Mountain Open Space Park in Rancho Peñasquitos. Training will focus on the different habitats, plants, critters, and historical aspects of the park. Steep hills require good hiking boots. Bring water and sun protection. Meet at the main parking-staging area on the north side of the mountain. Call for directions since each walk will depart from a different trailhead. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **Mike at 858-566-6489**.

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### Peñasquitos Canyon Cottonwood Restoration

**Sun., Dec. 2, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove the last remaining invasive *Eucalyptus* trees from the Preserve. After 10 years only one significant population of this exotic tree remains in the Preserve. Native trees including Cottonwoods, will be planted during the next rainy season. Already, in other parts of the Preserve Cottonwoods are once again becoming abundant as they were 150 years ago. Meet in the Parking-Staging area at the intersection of Mercy and Black Mountain Roads. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirt, hat, sunscreen and bring water and a snack. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more info.

## Volunteers Accomplishments

Lots of volunteer activities took place in September and October despite the hot weather. Not included in the following list is the dozens of volunteers involved in the wildlife surveys since we couldn't obtain that list as we went to press (hint hint to the Tracking Team!).

Don Albright  
Rick Botta  
Will Bowen  
Les Braund  
Uli Burgin  
Cindy Burrascano  
Patti Colburn  
Matt Deig  
Edward DiBella  
The Dingeman Family  
Terry Gaughn  
Rob Hutsel  
Mike Kelly  
Linda King  
Marilyn Kalendar  
Jill Kozeluth  
Barry Martin  
Gretchen Nell  
Steve Romeo  
Brian Swanson  
Pat Watson  
Bill Witzel  
Dean Woods

### Trans County Trail Building Volunteers

If you or your organization would like help build the Peñasquitos link in the 110+ Trans County Trail, give Ranger Gina Brown a call at 858-538-8066.

# Restoration Goals: How Are We Doing?

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

There are a variety of restoration projects and experiments completed or underway in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Volunteers are playing a vital role in helping to plan them and actually implement many of them. What are our goals with them and how are we doing in meeting them?

## Restoring native habitats

The goals of our restoration projects are to protect and restore our native biodiversity. We define this as the diversity of habitat types, plant and animal species present before European contact and colonization of our area. Why choose this as our goal? Even now, centuries after this contact, San Diego County is a “hot spot” of diversity of native plants and animals. We and many other people value this diversity for a variety of practical, aesthetic, and moral reasons.

Practically speaking, we’re just learning how interconnected our “web of life” is, how losing a seemingly small strand of this web can have a ripple effect leading to big consequences. For example, much is made of the search for new medicines in the biodiversity of the tropics, yet much is still being discovered at home here in North America. The drug Taxol, used to fight uterine cancer, comes from the North American Yew tree, long considered a waste by-product of the timber industry. Important drugs have come out of the bacteria living in the hot springs of Yosemite and so on.

Aesthetically speaking, new comers to the desert southwest often don’t appreciate our native habitats for their innate beauty. Missing their expanses of green forest from back east or wherever, they quickly plant exotics in their yards. Fortunately, many start to travel into our natural areas in the winter and spring when our native habitats put on their show of flowering shrubs and wildflowers. They travel to the desert in a wet year and can’t believe the riot of native color. A friend told me he lived here for six years before he “discovered” how beautiful our native habitats were and came to ap-

preciate them in all their seasons.

For many it’s a moral imperative not to let a species slide into extinction, not to lose the diversity of life without a fight. This can come from one’s religious beliefs about “God’s creations” or from a belief that the presumably smartest species on earth —capable of so much creation and destruction — has an obligation to protect that which has sustained us for millennia.



**Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)**  
The Friends collect acorns in the Preserve and grow oak seedlings for both volunteer and official mitigation projects in the Preserve.

## The threats to our biodiversity

The biggest threat to our biodiversity is the one we all know so well, development; paving over the land. And that is essentially a political struggle that can take the form of “smart growth” initiatives or acquiring and setting aside park lands.

Many people don’t know, however, that the second biggest threat is exotic species of plants and animals. Readers may have wondered why I and so many other volunteers spend so much time controlling or eradicating invasive weeds. It’s not that a certain weed “offends” us because it’s exotic, not from here. Rather, it’s because many of these exotics are highly invasive in our natural habitats and often form monocultures of tens, hundreds and even tens of thousands of acres. These monocultures of one plant are usually at the expense of a variety of native

plants and animals. Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) is currently expanding its range into Southern California. It already covers between 15 and 20 million acres in California alone. It’s poisonous to horses on rangelands, impedes the recreational use of trails by people, wildlife corridors by animals, and displaces many native plants and the animals dependent on them.

Hence the emphasis we place on controlling these invasive weeds. Sometimes it’s enough just to remove the invasive plant for native plants to be “released” and to expand back into their old niche. In other cases we actively plant native plants, as with the Cottonwood tree (*Populus fremontii*). Vigilance is always required since many a restoration project around the city has been lost to invasions of exotic weeds. We’ll never totally eradicate them, but can push most of them back enough to give native habitats a chance to recover and become capable of keeping invasives out on their own.

## Scorecard

Our most successful restoration projects have been in the riparian or creekside areas. Armed with grants to buy equipment, our volunteers have spent thousands of hours successfully removing thousands of invasive trees, shrubs, and other plants including Eucalyptus, Saltcedar, Arundo, Cape ivy, palms, etc. In their place we’ve restored native cottonwoods, oaks, sycamores, elderberry, mugworts, etc. At the Sycamore Crossing about 1/2 mile west of the waterfall you can see 3-4 year old cottonwoods 20 feet tall. They’re now reproducing on their own in the canyon possibly for the first time in over a century.

We’ve successfully closed and revegetated several duplicate trails and utility roads and stopped the erosion associated with them. Just east of the waterfall on the north side, by the utility corridor you can see several of these successful projects. These restorations often involve scout groups, elementary

See p. 9 for more



**Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.**  
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## Check Your Label

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

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson 760-749-5453  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619-443-5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858-538-2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858-672-0584

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Edward DiBella, Mike Kelly, Jill Kozuleth

### Walks Leaders

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

### Committees:

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 Newsletter: Mike Kelly  
 Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki  
 Stream Survey Committee: open  
 Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Barry Martin (484-4007)  
 Volunteer Coordinator: Jill Kozeluh, 858-271-1814  
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I/We are interested in the following:

- Volunteer** to help the committee (call to discuss)  
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Other: \_\_\_\_\_ **11/2001**

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

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