



# Canyon News

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

Jan/Feb/Mar 2009  
Volume 23, NO 1

## Restoration Projects:

# Helping Hand for the Cactus Wren

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair



**Cactus Wren** — Photo courtesy of James Gallagher, *Sea and Sage Audubon*.

The Friends need volunteers to help with a project to create habitat for a highly endangered bird species. We will be partnering with the Open Space Division of the City of San Diego's Parks & Recreation Dept. in a challenging project to implement a habitat restoration grant. The grant is about \$76,000 and will be used to begin a 10-year project, the creation of Cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) habitat out of the highly disturbed, non-native weedy grasslands of the new Santa Luz addition to Black Mountain Open Space Park. The grant was written by the Friends and submitted by the City to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

The grant was funded as part of a competitive grant program to restore old agricultural lands, which Santa Luz is well qualified for, after more than a century of grazing and crops that didn't end until 5-6 years ago! Additional grants will be sought to expand the initial acreage. The Coastal Cactus wren is listed as a California State Species of Special Concern and Cleveland National Forest Sensitive.

### The role of cacti

Our Coastal Cactus wren is a songbird that favors coastal sage scrub as its preferred habitat, specifically a sage scrub with a large proportion of cacti, especially

See **Wren** p. 6 for more

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## Eagle Scouts in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Senior Park Ranger

Gina Washington

Eagle Scouts have been busy in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve during the month of November. Three Scouts completed three different projects at different locations around the Preserve. Eric Smith reconstructed a trail from Park Village Road into the canyon floor. The trail was severely eroded because there was not sufficient drainage. Eric received a large donation of fill sand-30, a type of trail material, from Vulcan to cap the trail. Eric supervised upwards of 20 volunteers during two days to create drainage and out-slope the trail. A couple of neighbors offered Eric their hoses and water to get good compaction on the new trail surface. The new trail work held up well during the first real rain of the season.

Garrett Murawsky built a pergola, shade structure, for the picnic area in the west end parking lot on Sorrento Valley Blvd. Garrett's project was two phased;

See **Scouts** p. 10 for more

## **Upcoming Hikes/Events**

Winter is here again and with that the possibility of rain. Remember that the trails may be closed due to recent rains and accumulation of water. That said, be sure to bring adequate water and sunscreen as you prepare for your hikes. All hikes are free to the public. If you're bringing an organized group, please call (858) 484-3219 to make arrangements.

### **Rain cancels hikes.**

Visit [www.peñasquitos.org](http://www.peñasquitos.org) if it's been raining recently as the parks are sometimes closed due to flood damage.

Be sure to wear hiking boots and bring water, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail!

## **Every Saturday & Sunday**

### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Ranch 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.

## **January**

### **Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Board Meeting**

Tuesday, Jan 6, 7 P.M.

Members are welcome to attend this meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

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

Thursday, Jan 8, 6:30 P.M.

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Canyonside Rec-

reation Center, 12350 Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

### **Geology walk through time**

Saturday, Jan 10, 9-11 A.M.

Walk through time with geologist Don Albright. Hike will take you through hundreds of millions of years of geology, visit the waterfall, and see a rare fossil. Wear good footwear for steep trail. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, one long block east of Camino Santa Fe. **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

### **Volunteer Habitat Restoration at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

Saturday, Jan 10, 9 A.M.— 1 P.M.

Help plant native plants in Black Mtn. Park to create coastal succulent scrub habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren songbird. This is our first full fledged restoration areas on the Santa Luz portion of Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J5).**

### **Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training**

Saturday, Jan 17, 9:15 A.M.

This free training includes basic track, sign, and habitat recognition, as well as details on the implementation of survey protocol, and is required for survey volunteers. No registration required. Bring a sack lunch. Meet at the historic adobe ranch house. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain /Rancho Peñasquitos**

Saturday, Jan 17, 8-10 A.M.

Join naturalist David Robertson for a hike along the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Should be a good flower

show this year. Meet at the Parking Staging area off the new extension of Carmel Valley Rd. at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (E7) or call 858-342-8856.**

### **Hike Black Mountain**

Sunday, Jan 18, 8 A.M.

Hike to the top of Black Mountain in Rancho Peñasquitos. Significant elevation gain. Wear hiking boots and bring water. Meet at the end of Laurentian Dr. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D2).**

### **Volunteer Habitat Restoration at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

Saturday, Jan 24, 9 A.M.— 1 P.M.

Help plant native plants in Black Mtn. Park to create coastal succulent scrub habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren songbird. This is our first full fledged restoration areas on the Santa Luz portion of Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J5).**

### **Carmel Mountain Vernal Pool & Flower Walk with Diana Gordon**

Saturday, Jan 24, 9 – 11A.M.

Visit vernal pools, one of San Diego's rarest habitats. Good chance to see wildflowers. From Carmel Valley take El Camino Real south. At its intersection with Carmel Mountain Road, proceed straight on what has become Carmel Mountain Road. Go up the hill several blocks to East Ocean Air Dr. Go left and park at Fairport and Shorepointe. Wear hiking boots, bring water and sun protection. Moderate hill to climb. **Tho-**

**mas Guide p. 1208, C2 or call 858.484.3219.**

### **Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon**

Sunday, Jan 25, 9 A.M.— Noon  
Trash pickup in López Canyon. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

### **Lopez Homestead History Hike**

Sunday, Jan 25, 3 — 4:30 P.M.  
Hike out into Lopez Canyon to learn about the Old Lopez Homestead, a small turn-of-the-century dairy farm. Visit the orchard, the Old Road, and see the remains of the barn, house, and milking station. Find out about the importance of the Lopez family in early San Diego history. Start: West End Parking Staging Area.

## **February**

### **Pierre Bovet Adobe History Hike**

Sunday, Feb 1, 3 — 4:30 P.M.  
Hike out to explore Carroll Canyon and visit the ruins of the Pierre Bovet Adobe. Find out why many such adobes of San Diego County were left to deteriorate. Learn about Pierre Bovet and his family and their place in San Diego history. Understand why this area should someday be part of the larger Preserve. Start: Meet at Fire Station near the corner of Scranton and Carroll Canyon Road.

### **Volunteer Habitat Restoration at the waterfall in Peñasquitos Preserve**

Tuesday, Feb 3, 9 A.M.— 2 P.M.  
Join volunteers from the hotel Grand Del Mar in planting native plants at the waterfall in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet at the

Ranger Headquarters in the equestrian center off Black Mtn. Rd. at Mercy Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

### **Geology walk through time**

Saturday, Feb 7, 9 — 11 A.M.  
Walk through time with geologist Don Albright. Hike will take you through hundreds of millions of years of geology, visit the waterfall, and see a rare fossil. Wear good footwear for steep trail. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, one long block east of Camino Santa Fe. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

### **Carmel Mountain Vernal Pool & Flower Walk with Diana Gordon**

Saturday, Feb 7, 9 – 11 A.M.  
Visit vernal pools, one of San Diego's rarest habitats. Good chance to see wildflowers. From Carmel Valley take El Camino Real south. At its intersection with Carmel Mountain Road, proceed straight on what has become Carmel Mountain Road. Go up the hill several blocks to East Ocean Air Dr. Go left and park at Fairport and Shorepointe. Wear hiking boots, bring water and sun protection. Moderate hill to climb. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208, C2 or call 858.484.3219.**

### **Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike**

Sunday, Feb 8, 3 P.M.  
Join naturalist Linda King for a 4-mile moderately paced loop hike. Good chance to see wild flowers. Bring sun protection, water, and good footwear. Meet at the end of Park Village Dr., next to #7107) in Rancho Peñasquitos at the white barricades. Good views. **Thomas Guide p. 1188-89 (J7).**

### **Tracking Walks**

Saturday, Feb 10, 8 – 10 A.M.  
Everyone is invited to join us for an easy tracking walk to learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in. Wear shoes that are good in mud. Suitable for both beginners and intermediate levels. 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. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.**

### **Volunteer Habitat Restoration at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

Saturday, Feb 14, 9 A.M.— 1P.M.  
Help plant native plants in Black Mtn. Park to create coastal succulent scrub habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren songbird. This is our first full fledged restoration areas on the Santa Luz portion of Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J5)**

### **“El Cuervo” Adobe History Hike**

Sunday, Feb 15, 3 — 4:30 P.M.  
Hike into the West End of Peñasquitos Canyon for a intimate look at the ruins of the “El Cuervo” Adobe. Become familiar with the controversy about who built it when. Find out about Francisco and son, Diego Alvarado — the probable builders. Includes a short side hike to examine Norwood Brown's old roundup corral and to discuss the impact of cattle grazing in the Preserve. Start: Parking Lot: 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard.

### **Tracking Intensive Class**

Saturday, Feb. 21, 8 A.M..  
Fee and Prerequisite required. Email lptt@cox.net to register or Go to www.sdtt.org for details and registration information.

### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain /Rancho Peñasquitos**

Saturday, Feb. 21, 8 – 10 A.M.  
Join a naturalist for a hike along

See **Hikes** p. 4 for more

**(Hikes cont'd from pg 3)**

the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Should be a good flower show this year. Meet at the Parking Staging area off the new extension of Carmel Valley Rd. at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 E7 or call 858-342-8856.**

**Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon**

Sunday, Feb 22, 9 A.M.— Noon  
Trash pickup in López Canyon. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

**Volunteer Habitat Restoration at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

Saturday, Feb 28, 9 A.M.— 1 P.M.  
Help plant native plants in Black Mtn. Park to create coastal succulent scrub habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren songbird. This is our first full fledged restoration areas on the Santa Luz portion of Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J5).**

**March****Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Board Meeting**

Tuesday, Mar 3, 7 P.M.  
Members are welcome to attend this meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

**Geology walk through time**

Saturday, Mar 7, 9 — 11 A.M.  
Walk through time with geologist Don Albright. Hike will take you through hundreds of millions of years of geology, visit the waterfall, and see a rare fossil. Wear good footwear for steep trail. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, one long block east of Camino Santa Fe. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

**Carmel Mountain Vernal Pool & Flower Walk with Diana Gordon**

Sunday, Mar 8, 9 — 11 A.M.  
Visit vernal pools, one of San Diego's rarest habitats. Good chance to see wildflowers. From Carmel Valley take El Camino Real south. At its intersection with Carmel Mountain Road, proceed straight on what has become Carmel Mountain Road. Go up the hill several blocks to East Ocean Air Dr. Go left and park at Fairport and Shorepointe. Wear hiking boots, bring water and sun protection. Moderate hill to climb. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208, C2 or call 858.484.3219.**

**Black Mtn Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee**

Thursday, Mar 12, 6:30 P.M.  
Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Canyonside Recreation Center, 12350 Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

**Volunteer Habitat Restoration at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

Saturday, Mar 14, 9 A.M.— 1 P.M.  
Help plant native plants in Black Mtn. Park to create coastal succulent scrub habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren songbird. This is our first full fledged restoration areas on the Santa Luz portion of Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn.

Ranch Community Park at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J5)**

**Tracking Walks**

Saturday, Mar. 18, 8 — 10 A.M.  
Everyone is invited to join us for an easy tracking walk to learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in. Wear shoes that are good in mud. Suitable for both beginners and intermediate levels. 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. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.**

**Beginner Tracker Naturalist Class (Part 1)**

Wednesday, Mar 18, 7 P.M.  
This two-part class is devoted to developing tracking and awareness skills, with an emphasis on wildlife physiology and habits, how to move in nature, and techniques for recognizing habitats and associated flora and fauna. Go to [www.sdtt.org](http://www.sdtt.org) for more information.

**Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

Thursday, Mar 19, 6:30 P.M.  
Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

**Beginner Tracker Naturalist Class (Part 2)**

Saturday, Mar 21, 8 A.M.  
This two-part class is devoted to developing tracking and awareness skills, with an emphasis on wildlife physiology and habits, how to move in nature, and techniques for recognizing habitats and associated flora and fauna. Go to [www.sdtt.org](http://www.sdtt.org) for more information.

### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain /Rancho Peñasquitos**

Saturday, Mar 21, 9 – 10 a.m.

Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a hike along the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Should be a good flower show this year. Meet at the Parking Staging area off the new extension of Carmel Valley Rd. at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 E7 or call 858-342-8856.**

### **Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon**

Sunday, Mar 22, 9 A.M.— Noon

Trash pickup in López Canyon. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

### **Volunteer Habitat Restoration at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

Saturday, Mar. 28, 9 A.M.—1 P.M. Help plant native plants in Black Mtn. Park to create coastal succulent scrub habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren songbird. This is our first full fledged restoration areas on the Santa Luz portion of Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact Mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or 858-342-8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J5)**

## **April**

### **Geology Walk Through Time**

Saturday, Apr 18, 9 — 11 A.M.

Walk through time with geologist Don Albright. Hike will take you through hundreds of millions of

years of geology, visit the waterfall, and see a rare fossil. Wear good footwear for steep trail. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, one long block east of Camino Santa Fe. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

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## **Directions**

### **Carmel Mountain Trail Head**

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

### **Mercy Rd Parking-Staging Area**

In Mira Mesa. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Rd. and straight across intersection into parking lot. Meet on upper level. **Thomas Guide p.1189 (D7).**

### **Northern Parking-Staging Area**

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill, left on Park Village Drive, about 1 mile to Camino del Sur. Left on Camino del Sur and park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p.1189 (A7-B7).**

### **Park Village Drive Meeting Area**

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill, left on Park Village Drive and take it all the way to the end at the white barricades and park entrance. **Thomas Guide p.1189-1188 (J7).**

### **Ranch House Walks/Tours**

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain. Left at first light, Canyonside Park Dr. Go past ball fields to the white-fenced parking lot. Left into the lot. Walk up path to the ranch house. **Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).**

### **Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Blvd in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road. **Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).**

### **West-End Parking-Staging Area**

South side of Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, 1/2 mile east of intersection with Vista Sorrento Pky. From east take Mira Mesa Blvd. west to Camino Santa Fe. Right on Camino Santa Fe, then left on Sorrento Valley Blvd. to bottom of the hill. Entrance is on the left. From the west, Take I-5 or 805 to Sorrento Valley. Take Sorrento Valley Blvd. East, pass last building on the right. Preserve entrance is on right. **Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).**

**Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).**

**(Wren cont'd from pg 1)**

Prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp.) and/or Cholla (*Cylindropuntia* spp.) in tall, dense clusters. They raise their young in nests built in the cactus. This affords them protection against many predators. For food, they hunt insects in the other shrubs such as California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) present in the sage scrub. This specific habitat type is often called succulent sage scrub.

**Habitat loss**

Although there are currently no Cactus wren in Black Mountain Park, the area was once well connected north to Lake Hodges and the San Pasqual Valley — home to significant populations of the bird, and south to López Canyon where the birds also nested. Much of the bird's habitat in Southern California has been lost to development. The Santa Fe Valley, part of which is now called Santa Luz and 4-S Ranch, was no exception. Grazing and agriculture converted some of the native habitat as far back as the 1870s when the Luzardi Family first settled in the valley. Later, the development of 4-S Ranch, Black Mountain Ranch, Santa Luz, and other developments caused the loss of yet more habitat.

**Fires**

Compounding the loss of habitat have been the massive fires in Southern California in the past 15–20 years. The Cactus wren populations have declined throughout its range. Some of the birds are directly lost to the fires themselves, while others succumb to the lack of suitable habitat in the fires aftermath. While many of the shrubs typical of coastal sage scrub come back relatively quickly after a fire, the cacti are slower to



recover. When fires burn an area more than once in, say a decade, there can be a permanent loss of much of this habitat to invasive, non-native grasses and thistles, not suitable habitat for Cactus wren or many other species.

**Mobilizing help**

The Nature Conservancy, the Nature Reserve of Orange County, the Conservation Biology Institute, and the Audubon Society have been some of the leaders mobilizing a growing coalition of non-profit conservancies, federal and state agencies such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the California Dept. of Fish & Game to try to bring this songbird back from the brink of extinction. At a recent meeting hosted by the Zoological Society of San Diego at the Wild Animal Park, representatives of many groups and agencies joined with experts on this bird and its habitat to map out a strategy for restoring its habitats.

People came from Ventura, Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, and San Diego counties, all home to Cactus wren populations. I represented the Friends at this meeting.

Several Cactus wren post-fire restoration projects won grant funding through the San Diego Association of Government's TransNet Program, a program set up to mitigate the environmental impacts of local road projects. These include projects in the San Pasqual Valley, Chollas Creek, and other areas. This mitigation program was negotiated with SANDAG as part of its 2004 ballot measure by the Endangered Habitats League ([www.ehl.org](http://www.ehl.org)) and the San Diego Conservation Resources Network ([www.sdcrn.org](http://www.sdcrn.org)), a coalition of 25 land trusts and conservation groups in San Diego County.

**Creating habitat in Santa Luz**

As a condition of development and a ballot measure supported by the voters (Proposition K) the owners of the Black Mtn. Ranch property are deeding over about half their property, over 2,000 acres, to the City of San Diego Open Space Park Division to be conserved in perpetuity as part of an expanded Black Mtn. Open Space Park. At least half of this land is non-native

See *Wren* p. 8 for more

## **Volunteers Wanted**

### **Grant for Outreach Coordinator**

The Friends just learned that we are one of five local conservation non-profits to win a competitive grant for an outreach coordination program. The announcement came from the San Diego Conservation Resources Network (CRN at [www.sdcrn.org](http://www.sdcrn.org)), a coalition of San Diego County land trusts and conservancies. The grant totals \$19,591. Other organizations that won grants were the Endangered Habitats Conservancy, the Back Country Land Trust, the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation, and the Volcan Mountain Reserve.

This is the second year in a row that an anonymous foundation chose to regrant funds through CRN. This same national foundation, in partnership with The San Diego Foundation helped underwrite the launch of CRN several years ago ([www.TSDF.org](http://www.TSDF.org)).

The grant will underwrite a half-time outreach coordinator position. This person, The Friends' first paid staffer, will oversee a revamping of the Friends outreach materials such as the newsletter, mission brochure, north city trails map and other ways to reach the public with our conservation measure. In addition, this staffer will rebuild our volunteer program which has declined



**Senior Ranger Gina Washington and volunteers stand on newly constructed bridge over Peñasquitos Creek. Trail building and restoration are common volunteer activities."**



**Volunteers are shown planting native bunch grass in a restoration project in López Canyon. The new outreach coordinator grant will help the Friends involve more such community members in land stewardship.**

in recent years. This means rebuilding a contact system with the many scout, school, church, and community organizations in our north city area. Geographically, this program will focus on Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Del Mar Mesa Preserve, Carmel Mountain Preserve, and Black Mountain Open Space Park.

Public participation in conservation activities such as interpretive hikes, habitat restoration projects, wildlife surveys, trail building, and the Friends' Board of Directors have slipped in recent years. Stewardship of our natural and cultural resources here in the northern part of our city has always been a strength of the Friends. In fact the Friends have often blazed the trail for new volunteer activities such as volunteers being trained and allowed to

use power tools (chainsaws et al) on park projects, doing generating data from endangered plant and animal surveys used by conservation land managers, managing invasive weeds, and other activities now considered expected of a new startup canyon Friends' group.

If you have any ideas or would like to help with this new outreach effort, please contact Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com).



## **Why Preserve Closes Rain & Floods in PQ Preserve**

Miguel Fuentes

Do you wonder why Senior City Ranger Gina Washington and Senior County Ranger Paul Kucharczyk close the Preserve during or after rain events? Take a look at the graphics accompanying this article to see what happens to the creek and floodplain, and by extension, to the trails that are in the floodplain during and after these rainfalls. These graphics are from the USGS web site on water ([http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ca/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=11023340](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ca/nwis/uv/?site_no=11023340)) and are based on real time data gathered at a flow station on Peñasquitos Creek about a 1/4 mile east of Black Mtn. Rd. on the southern side of the creek.

These graphics cover just the fall/winter of 2008. Data from other, wetter years, especially when we've had the intense storms that dump a lot of water in a shorter period of time than this season's storms, would show even more dramatic changes in Peñasquitos Creek.

### **Dangerous waters**

Peñasquitos Creek can, like many other creeks and rivers, become dangerous to people. The graphics representing the cubic feet of water flowing in the creek don't convey this danger as well as the graphic showing the height of the water flowing in the creek and over its banks. Our creek went from a summertime low flow of 1-1.5' in height to almost 8' during our storms!

Flows like this wash out our bridges and make once passable fords impassable. Where you could hop across the rocks at the waterfall in the summer months you will find a raging torrent of water high above the rocks during and after a big rain event. You might say, well, I'll stay away from

strong, strong enough to knock some people off their feet and that wasn't during the height of the flow!

During high water events the creek has been high and full enough for kayakers to run it, something that can't be done outside flood season.

### **Easily damaged trails**

Once the creek tops its bank, it flows into secondary, seasonal channels; but once they're full it starts flowing across the canyon. Back during the "miracle march" rains in the 1990s people actually saw the water cover the canyon from toe of the slope on the south to the toe of the slope on the north side of the creek!

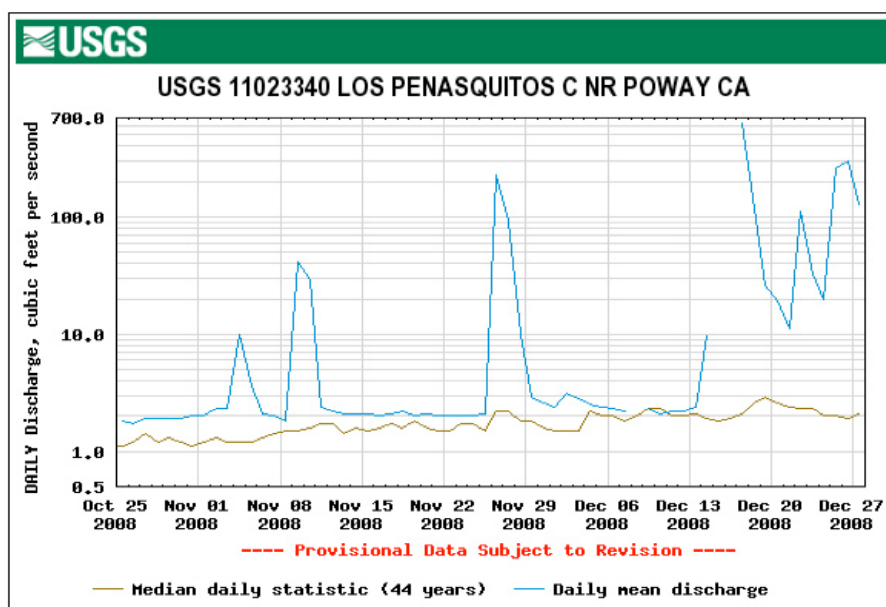
This water is highly erosive, often washing out large sections of trails. During one storm in the 90s retired Senior Ranger Bill Lawrence witnessed a flash flood in the canyon. A storm cell stalled in place over Poway and dumped

inches of rain in a matter of hours. Peñasquitos Creek rose so fast a flash flood occurred, sending a wall of water Bill estimated at 5 feet high racing down the creek.

The force of this water was so great that it punched out of the riparian forest above the waterfall and scooped out a hole above the falls, sending more than 80,000 cubic yards of trees, shrubs, and soil downstream. (Mike Kelly and some interns measured the hole.) A portion of the trail on the north-east side of the waterfalls was taken out as well. A new stream channel was established in this new hole, in addition to the old channel. Subsequent flood events broadened and elongated the channel and took more of the trail with it.

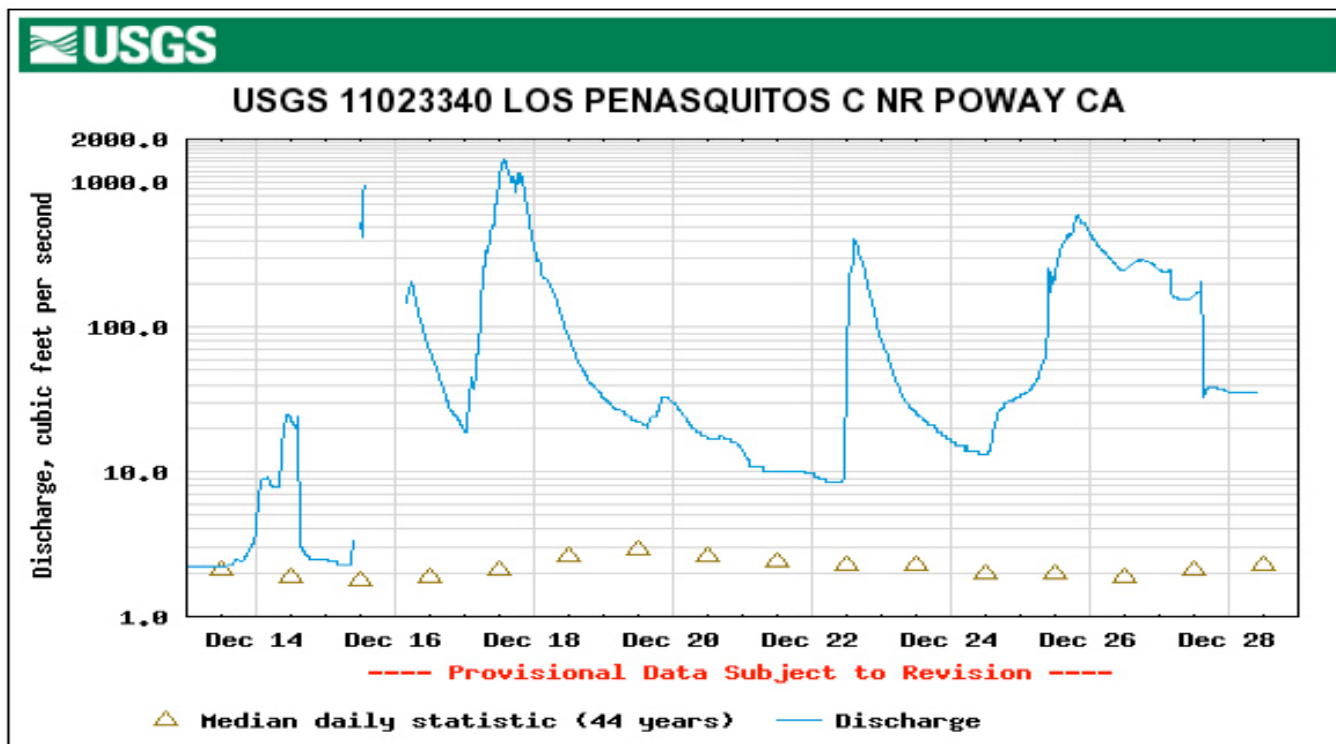
### **Trail users can damage trails**

Another type of damage that can occur after trails are flooded is from users. It can be a Ranger in a security vehicle, a contractor in a



*The flow volume of Peñasquitos Creek is shown for the last two months. Notice the spikes in volume during and after rain events.*





**Peak Flow:** A more detailed of a portion of the previous hydrograph above shows the flow changes over a matter of hours.

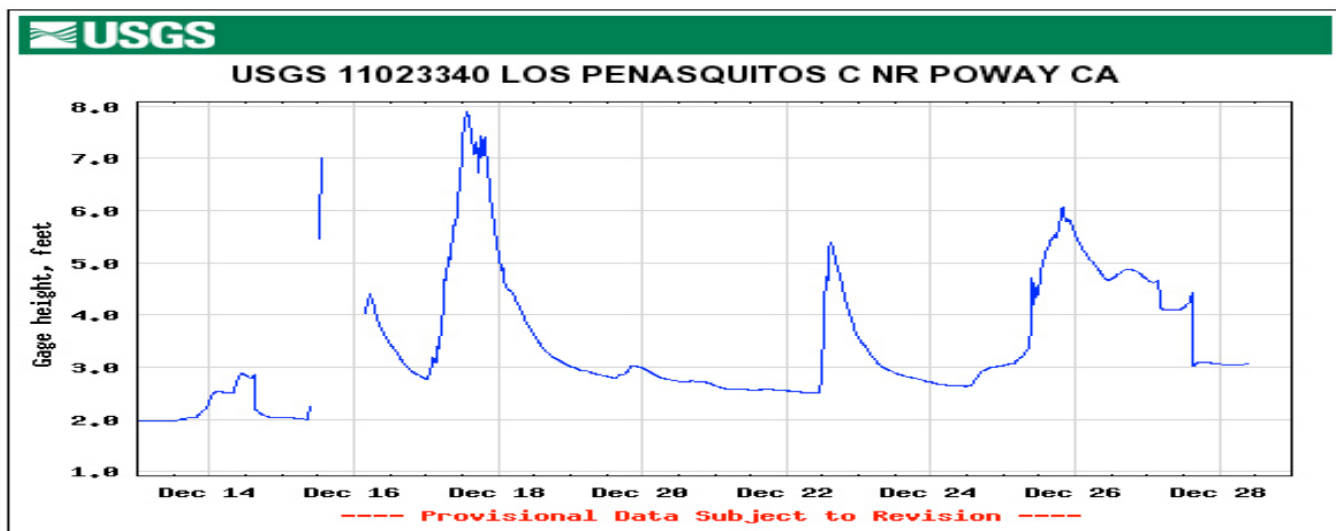
vehicle, horses, bikes, or feet of hikers. Ruts are easily made in wet trails. Trails get seriously widened when park users skirt the muddy sections and take to the vegetation on either side, eventually killing plants off and widening the trails. This is one reason the

Preserve is closed to users, to reduce damage to the trail tread.

Another reason the Preserve is closed after heavy rains is that emergency vehicles can't traverse the canyon without getting stuck. Even 4-wheel drive vehicles get stuck. That means an injured bicy-

clist or equestrian can't be easily transported out of the Preserve. Such injuries occur several times a year.

So, the next time you see a closed sign at a park entrance, it's closed for a good reason. See page 11 for two recent examples.



**Water Flow:** The graph above measures the height in feet of the creek as it passes the flow station. Note the increase from December 16 to 17, 2008.

**(Scouts cont'd from pg 1)**

the first day was spent putting in the supports. The second day was spent installing the actual structure. The pergola is phase one of the picnic area improvement. The second phase involves laying a compacted decomposed granite trail to and flooring under the pergola.

Andre Crabb installed many hundred feet of peeler log fencing to close illegal trails that have been created off of Sorrento Valley Blvd. The trails go through grasslands which are nesting habitat for the Northern Harrier. Andre's project consisted of installing the peeler log fence on the perimeter of the preserve and split rail fence closing the interior portion of the trail. He then used a Rotor-Tiller to loosen the soil of the trail so it will become re-vegetated over the next year.

All of these young men did a tremendous job of coordinating their projects and completing them on time. They are all a real asset to the resources that make Los Peñasquitos Canyon such a great place to visit.

## Join the Los Peñasquitos Volunteer Patrol

Erik Basil, Treasurer, LPCP-CAC Member,  
LPCP Volunteer Patrol

The Los Peñasquitos Volunteer Patrol is an ongoing cooperation between members of the Preserve community and Rangers Gina Washington and John Garwood. Members ride and walk the Preserve to assess current conditions, interact with visitors in the manner of a "trail docent" and to provide assistance, first aid and emergency response in coordination with the Ranger(s) and local agencies. If you're already visiting our Preserve, it's a fun way to ensure others' experience is as good and safe as it can be and, if you're not regularly visiting Los Peñasquitos, the Patrol is a great "excuse" to visit!

The Volunteer Patrol is looking for more participation in 2009, and we're looking for equestrian, hiking and cycling volunteers. Participation requires each volunteer to have/maintain both CPR and First Aid training, to complete a course in procedures and radio protocol, and to demonstrate a commitment to cheerful interaction as an "ambassador of the pre-

serve". One must also be over 18 years of age.

Anyone reading this that is interested in becoming a member of the LPCP Volunteer Patrol should contact Ranger Washington to indicate your interest. ( gwashington@sandiego.gov ) If we get enough response and interest before the New Year, there's a great possibility that the City will put on a group training day for the First Aid/CPR certifications many will need to earn/renew (and you might find a motion at the CAC asking to fund it for a few bucks). What a great way to get First Aid/CPR training "for free"!

You don't have to be a member of the CAC (or any other committee) to participate, but CAC members who complete the courses and participate in at least one "patrol ride/hike" will win a Cup of Coffee, donated by me (and brewed at a time coincident with its award, fear not)! Heck, I will extend this generous offer to any new member of the Patrol. Contact Ranger Washington now!



## People to Know: Don Albright

Vice President,  
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc

Don is a retired geography-history teacher from the San Diego City Schools. His retirement job is doing geology activities for the San Diego Natural History Museum classes, field trips, and Baja expeditions. He's also a former Engineering Geologist for the Bridge Dept., California Division of Highways (now Caltrans). He's a long-time Baja explorer with a passion for exploring its mountains, canyons, deserts, and natural history. Another of Don's careers was

as a park naturalist for the California State Parks system.

He divides his leisure time between Southern California, Baja, Arizona, New Zealand, and Australia. He is a founding member of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and leads regular geology walks in the Preserve. Don currently lives in Lakeside.

**Letter to the Editor & Response**  
**Some Corrections, Mt. Carmel Ranch Addendum**  
 John Northrop, PhD

In the Oct/Nov/Dec issue of Canyon News, Mike Kelly and Anne Harvey wrote that the bathrooms the Stephens added did not affect the historical designation because they did not alter the outside of the original building. However, they were added as an annex, or wing, to the west side of the original house as shown in Figure 1. Thus, the outside of the house was indeed altered so the Historic designation was affected [see accompanying photo].

**Mike Kelly answers:**

While Jack Northrop is correct on the placement of the bathroom, it did not affect the building and property's status as a 'Historical Landmark.' If you visit the City's website you will find a list of "Historical Landmarks Designated

by the SD Historical Resources Board. Mount Carmel Ranch is still listed as Historic Resources Board (HRB) # 391 as Anne Harvey and I reported. The "Designation Criteria" for this property was based on 3 major factors: A (for Historical Person); B (Architecture); and C (Cultural Landscape), for the period of 1899-1945. The Historic Individual referred to here was its association with the "Sisters of Mercy," of course. The Cultural Landscape designation was because of its functioning at one time as "a working farm, retreat and homeless shelter." Repairs and even changes to historical sites are often necessary to allow their continued use, whether it be as a landmark visitors come to or a residence still lived in. In general, such repairs and changes are permitted if they are consistent with or



don't substantially change the original character of the landmark.

Having said this, I join with others in the community who do worry that there is too little review of historic landmarks after their designation and that some, if not many, of them are being changed enough to warrant revisiting their historic designations. This issue has recently received some attention in our local press.



**Work around trail**, shown above, used to avoid muddy spot in trail. — Photo by Senior Ranger Gina Washington.

**Why Trails Are Closed**  
**Recent Examples**

**Blown out portion** of trail, shown below. — Photo by Senior Ranger Gina Washington.





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

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

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### Friends' Directory

**Officers**

President: Brian Swanson 760.739-5451  
Vice President: Don Albright 619.443-5937  
Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858.538-2527  
Secretary: Rick Botta 858.672-0584

**Other Members of the Board of Directors**

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

**Walk Leaders**

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

**Committees**

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

### Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$10 Individual \$15  
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Corporate \$250 Life \$1000  
Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I / We are interested in the following:

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

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

April May June

Volume 23, No. 2

## Passing of an Icon Jack Northrop

Mike Kelly

Jack Northrop passed away Saturday, March 28 of this year. Jack was a charter member of the Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve who was passionate about saving the Preserve from development. He served many years on the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force, a joint City and County committee that has oversight of the park.

Jack was no stranger to these pages, including articles just a couple of months ago. He wrote about the geology of the area, wildlife, the last cattle

See p. 3 for more

## SDMBA Effort Del Mar Mesa Cleanup

Mike Kelly

The San Diego Mountain Bike Association ([www.sdmba.com](http://www.sdmba.com)) organized a tremendous cleanup of the eastern part of the Del Mar Mesa, and the "Tunnels" portion of Deer Canyon (see p. 6 for pictures). In my recollection, the 93 volunteers that turned out for this event is only second to the Coastal Cleanup in the Preserve of 2 years ago.

Senior Ranger Gina Washington had this to say:

*THANK YOU, THANK YOU,*

See p. 6 for more

### Highlights Inside

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## Cactus Wren Project Underway

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

Our multi-year Cactus wren project — detailed in the last *Canyon News* — is well underway thanks to the more than 60 volunteers who have helped out so far. They have helped plant almost a 1,000 native prickly pear and cholla on one of the Cactus wren sites.

Many of the volunteers have come from the Mt. Carmel High School Key Club, while others have come via the Westview High School Advocates for a Better Environment organization.

Regular volunteers who have made most if not all of the volunteer work parties include Friends' Board member Edward DiBella and Janet Nelson. They have helped immensely with the preparation and organization each time.

Do to the warm weather and lack of irrigation on the site, we will not plant anymore until next winter's rains start. We will restart our tamarisk (saltcedar) control program again, beginning in May and continuing into June. See our Calendar in this issue for details.

We had exciting news recently when Senior Ranger Ed Christenson reported sighting Cactus wren on Lu-

See p. 7 for more



**Jack Northrop, PhD** on his horse, a familiar site on the trails of Peñasquitos Canyon, the Del Mar Mesa, and Carmel Mountain Preserve.

## Free Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

It's spring and the wildflowers are out. The yellow blooming shrub on the south and west facing slopes is probably California sunflower (*Encelia californica*). In other places you can see a plant 12-18" tall with white, pearl shaped buds, a flower aptly called Pearly everlasting (*Gnaphalium californicum*). It's also one of our strongest smelling native plants, a sweet smell some liken to maple syrup! The wonderful smelling sages are also beginning to bloom. If you visit Black Mountain Park or López Canyon you can still see and smell some purple flowering mountain lilac (*Ceanothus tomentosus*). Mariposa lilies (*Calochortus splendens*) are blossoming out while the Blue dicks (*Dichelostema capitatum*) are fading. Don't miss seeing our wildflowers and don't forget to smell them!

Hikes are free. Be sure to wear good trail sneakers/boots, sun protection, and bring plenty of water as the weather heats up. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m.: May 14, July 9, Sept. 10, & Nov. 12**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mtn. Rd. and Canyonside

Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thursday, May 21, July 16, Sept. 17, & Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m.**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

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

**May. Call for date.**

**July 7, Sept. 1, Nov. 3.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Saturday, May 9, June 13, July 11, Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, 8 a.m.**

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the historic Ranch House on Canyonside Dr., Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., 8 – 10 a.m. June 20, July 18.**

Hike the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 E7.**

##### **Volunteer Trash Pickup López Canyon**

**Sun., 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: May 24, June 28, July 26, Aug. 23, Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22.** Trash pickup in López Canyon. Volunteers needed!

Community service credits available. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245

**Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).**

Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger Garwood at 858-538-8066 for info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3).**

#### Other events:

### May

##### **Volunteer Tamarisk Bash at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz**

**Sat., May 9, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Help remove the highly invasive Tamarisk (Saltcedar) in Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or 858.342.8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park, 14700 Carmel Valley Rd., near Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D1).**

##### **Beginning Tracker/Naturalist Program**

**Wed. May 13, 7 p.m. & Sat., May 16, 8 a.m.**

This class is devoted to developing tracking and awareness skills, with an emphasis on wildlife physiology and habits, how to move in nature, and techniques for recognizing habitats and associated flora and fauna. Email to register or go to [www.sdt.org](http://www.sdt.org) for more information.

##### **Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike**

**Sat., May 23, 4 p.m.** Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

##### **Herb Walk in López Canyon with Will Bowen**

**Sun. May 31, 5-6:30 p.m.** Learn to identify the different trees, plants, and shrubs of López Canyon used for food and medicine by Native Americans, Spanish, and American settlers. Meet at 4300 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 D5.**

## June

### Volunteer Tamarisk Bash at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz Sat., June 13, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Help remove the highly invasive Tamarisk (Saltcedar) in Black Mtn. Park. Bring water, sun protection, and gloves if you have them. Contact mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or 858.342.8856 for more info. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park, 14700 Carmel Valley Rd., near Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D1).**

**Herb Walk in Peñasquitos Canyon Sun. June 21, 5-6:30 p.m.** Join Will Bowen to identify the different trees, plants, and shrubs of Peñasquitos Canyon used for food and medicine by Native Americans, Spanish, and American settlers. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, San Diego.

## Trails Day

Volunteers Needed  
Saturday, June 6, 10-2  
Help staff the Friends' booth #133. Email Mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or Pat at pwatkins2008@gmail.com

## Northrop cont'd

drive on "the Peñasquitos," trails, and the history of some of its buildings and residents.

Following are remarks on Jack's passing by Brian Swanson, president of the Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. They were in response to the email sent by Bunny Clews, a long-time friend of Jack's, notifying us of his death.

*I'm sorry to hear about Jack. Jack was a pioneer in the efforts to preserve Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and surrounding open spaces. For many years he was on the Friends' Board of Directors, as well as the Peñasquitos Citizens Advisory Committee (he still held a CAC seat). He was a bridge to the earlier times, and with his decades of experience riding in the area, he had many stories to share with those who took the time to listen. Jack will be missed. Brian.*

Jack was 86 when he died at his home in La Jolla. One of the earliest times I can remember knowing Jack was during the last cattle drive on the Peñasquitos. He and some other equestrians cowboyed up to help Norwood Brown corral his Black Angus cattle to

move them out of the canyon. With development all around and the fencing increasingly vandalized, the cattle would get out on area streets, creating a nuisance. So Brown's leasing of the canyon for his cattle came to an end. It actually marked the end of almost two centuries of grazing in the Preserve. I would meet Jack out on the trail, often on the Del Mar Mesa and Carmel Mountain, two of his favorite places to ride. In fact, he bordered his horse at the Clews Ranch in Carmel Valley. He used to ride the trails when Sorrento Valley and Carroll Canyon were still connected to Peñasquitos Canyon and when Brown had a boarding stable for horses in Sorrento Valley. Try to imagine that as you pass through this heavily developed area now!

Helping work the cattle allowed Jack to indulge one of his passions in life, his horses and riding. He knew all of the trails in our north city area, rode them and wrote about them in a booklet he published.

Jack was a man of many interests and accomplishments. During World War II he served as a flight instructor in the Navy. After the war, he received a bachelors' degree in geology at Princeton. A master's came from Columbia, and his PhD from the University of Hawaii. Marine geophysics and acoustics in the marine environment were his specialty.



**Volunteers from the Grand Del Mar Hotel** pose in front of a restoration site they planted at the waterfall. The hotel is a neighbor on the Preserve's northern border.. The hotel generously paid for the more than \$1,000 worth of plants.

## PQ Fiesta Day

### Volunteers Needed

Sunday, May 3, 10-5.

Help staff the Friends' booth and displays and pass out literature at this annual street fair in Rancho Peñasquitos. Always a fun outing. Email Mike at mkelly1@san.rr.com or

Pat: pwat-

kins2008@gmail.com



**National Trails Day  
Rancho de los Penasquitos  
Adobe Ranch House**

If you didn't know this historic adobe was hiding over near Black Mountain Road, come find this San Diego treasure! Lots happening the whole day.

**Saturday June 6th, 2009  
10:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

**Free**

**Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve**  
(off Black Mountain Rd)  
12020 Black Mountain Road  
San Diego, CA 92129  
(858) 484-7504

The first Saturday every June is designated National Trails Day (NTD) in the United States. On that day every year more than a million hikers, bikers, equestrians, and others take part in thousands of events nationwide in celebration of America's trails. These events include new trail dedications, workshops, educational exhibits, equestrian and mountain bike rides, rollerblading, trail maintenance, and hikes on America's favorite trails. <http://usparks.about.com/cs/hikingtrails/a/trailsday.htm>

San Diego County's first Mexican land grant includes an 1823 adobe ranch house constructed by the Commandante of the San Diego Presidio. In 1846, Rancho los Penasquitos was the first place of rest for General Stephen Watts Kearny and his Army of the West after the Battle of San Pasqual. Enlarged in 1862 as the gracious home of a celebrated Yankee river boat captain and his wife, the niece of California's last Mexican governor, Pio Pico, the building and site comprise a National Historic and Archaeological District. The beautiful canyon locale within a 3700-acre open space preserve offers hiking, biking and equestrian trails.

<http://earlysandiego.org/FT00sites.html#6ranchopena>



# San Pasqual Open Space Park Restoration Projects

Senior Ranger Ed Christenson

{Black Mountain Open Space Park Rangers also manage other parks in the north city area including Crest Canyon, San Pasqual, Clevenger Canyon, and Mt. Woodson. Visit the City Parks website to see trail maps and enjoy these additional places to hike, bike, or ride your horse.—Editor.]

In late December I was contacted by Jason López, Resources Manager, of the San Dieguito River Park who told me that the San Diego Urban Corps was working under a FEMA grant to do restoration work of areas that were damaged in the 2007 wildfires. The Urban Corps is a non-profit that trains at risk youth and adults in job skills. He offered me the use of up to 3 crews for up to 6 weeks to address any fire-related repair work I might have in the Santa Ysabel River valley. After a hike to assess the trail conditions and identify other potential projects, we got to work on January 5th. For 5 weeks Ranger Joel Tracey and I led crews in a major restoration effort of the San Pasqual Open Space Trail system. The trail system currently has 4.9 miles of open trails that traverse

slopes which average 30 degrees or more. The elevation change from the trailhead to the highest points on the north and south side is approximately 1,100 feet. Ranger Tracey focused on repair and construction of trail features such as stone retaining walls, rock steps, and traditional water bars. I focused on trail tread repair and restoring proper outslope, contouring switchbacks, building drain dips, and constructing one puncheon bridge.

The total work accomplished is as follows:

- Trail Restoration: 4.9 miles of trail covered. A significant portion of the south trails were worked on, the north trail didn't need as much attention, but portions of it were addressed from the trailhead to the top lookout near the end of the existing trail. One 13 foot puncheon bridge was built. Some 35 drain dips were established, 51 water bars installed, 1.8 miles of trail cleared of vegetation along its corridor, and 32 other check dams installed.
- In addition, 12 stair sections with 60 rock steps were built and 20 rock retaining walls totalling 3,000 cu. ft. were built.

- Other projects we finished were installing fencing in the north lot, generally cleaning the trailheads and raking dried, dead vegetation from the area to open up walkways, repairing damaged failing fence, installing signage along the trail, and brushing the trail corridor. Previous fire related projects in the area included building 2 puncheon bridges and installing fence around the south lot.
- On February 20, 2009 Ranger Tracey and Ranger Allen were flown by the San Diego Fire Dept. in their helicopter to the most remote portion of San Pasqual north to flag the former trail bed / trail corridor which had not been maintained regularly and mostly disappeared in the fires. The great majority of the Santa Ysabel Plateau within our property boundary was severely burned. Using GPS technology and georeferencing the old map data to align with current aerial photographs Ranger Allen imposed the trail on to a new map. Our focus for this day was to find the old trail and flag the route so it will be visible upon our return. My goal is to again establish a useable hiking trail within our property that will allow for public access to this gem of an area. Situated near a section of the Cleveland National Forest, this is one of the wildest units of the San Diego Open Space system.

Rangers spent an estimated 384 work hours on this project and the cost savings with Urban Corps through the grant was approximately \$48,000 dollars. New brochures for the area are in the works from Leslie Wollenwebber with SDRP. Rangers are providing feedback for development. Rangers remapped the upper trails at San Pasqual North in preparation for re-opening the upper trail system that has fallen out of maintenance.



**Urban Crew at work on trails in Clevenger Canyon**

*THANK YOU to the 93 people that came out today to clean up DMM Preserve. We spent 5 hours with 3 teams of people and filled one and a half 40 yard dumpsters.*

*Special thanks to SDMBA for coordinating this effort. There were three pickup loads of crates hauled out of Deer Canyon. Chairs and weight sets from the mesa top, countless pounds of broken glass, yards of old construction and other debris. I don't think we could have been more successful if we had been planning this for a year.*

*Thanks again and I look forward to seeing all of you again on the trail.*

**Photos by Marvin Gerst.** Right, 1-1/2 40-yard dumpsters were chock full of trash. Bottom left, some of the 93 volunteers. Bottom Right, innovative use of poles to carry trash loads out of the canyon.



## Cactus wren cont'd

zardi Creek, the first such sighting in recent memory.

Cactus wren prefer a coastal sage scrub habitat dominated by cactus, either the prickly pear or the cholla. They like it at least 3' tall and dense. This provides protection from predators for the nests they build in these thickets of cactus.

This song bird forages for insects in the shrubs and other plants making up the chaparral, plants such as California sagebrush (*Artemisa californica*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum californica*), Blue dicks (*Dichelostema capitatum*), and others.



**Mt. Carmel High School Key Club volunteers** take a break from planting cactus at the Santa Luz restoration site for the Cactus wren.



**Mike Kelly leads a walk along Miner's Loop Trail on Black Mountain. Walks are conducted monthly.**

# Black Mountain Park Update

Senior Ranger Ed Christenson

Trail work was a central focus of our work in Black Mtn. Open Space Park, but not exclusively, this past quarter. Ranger staff, the Urban Corps, and volunteers:

- \* Opened the connector trail with SD Mountain Bike Assoc. The trail was lightly brushed, signed, tread work completed and one puncheon installed.
- \* Installed an upper set of stairs installed for a grant. The stair run was completed and vertical supports cemented in the ground. They are not yet open for public use.
- \* Restored 4.81 miles of trail tread on the north and south trails (Re-established outslope, repaired erosion gullies, installed 50+ drain lenses, check dams, water bars)
- \* Constructed 12 sets of rock steps (60 steps) where needed.
- \* Built 20 retaining walls (3000 cu/ft) on the south trail east branch.
- \* Assembled 1 13' puncheon bridge on the south trail.
- \* Improved trail signage.
- \* Cleared dead vegetation around the trailheads and removed litter.
- \* Reinforced older fence with hardware and installed 7 lengths of new fence at the north trailhead.
- \* Brushed the trail in tight locations and cleared sight lines.
- \* Installed trail intersection signs.
- \* Mowing trails along Lusardi loop.
- \* Worked with voluntee in two events to improve Cactus Wren Habitat through a grant.
- \* Organized one volunteer event to remove 60 cu. yards of non-native weeds.
- \* Hosted a trail run in the Lusardi Loop with 260+ runners.



**Rangers prepare to board SFD helicopter to survey fire stricken parkland.**

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson	760.739.5451
Vice-President: Don Albright	619.443.5937
Treasurer: Pat Watkins	858.538.2527
Secretary: Rick Botta	858.672.0584

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

### Walk Leaders

Brian Swanson, Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike Kelly, Pat Watkins, Linda King, Arne Johanson, David Robertson.

### Committees:

Newsletter: Mike Kelly at 858-342-8856.

Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta,  
858.672-0584

Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.342.8856

Webmaster: Beth Williams

Wildlife Surveys: Patrick Campbell, 760.471.9197

# Trails Controversy

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

A bitter controversy has erupted over trails in Deer Canyon. This canyon separates Rancho Peñasquitos from the Del Mar Mesa to the west. It trends south to north, beginning at Carmel Mountain Road near SR56 and ending at its joint mouth with McGonigle Canyon in the eastern end of Carmel Valley. The controversy is over the number and location of trails and who gets to use them, pitting bikers against equestrians and user groups against conservationists and the regulatory agencies (Cal. Dept. of Fish & Game and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

At issue is what balance should be struck between recreational use of the preserve and adjacent open space such as the Del Mar Mesa and Deer Canyon by bikers, equestrians, and hikers and protecting the sensitive plants, habitats, and wildlife that our open space is designed to protect in perpetuity as part of the Multi-Species Conservation Plan.

The dispute has degenerated into a bitter personal one between several people, with accusations, finger-pointing, and name calling, leading to a poisonous atmosphere in the discussion, especially in the email exchanges this writer has read. The dispute has spilled over into the public arena, in listservs, online magazines, Channel 10 TV, and the community newspaper in Carmel Valley, as first the biking groups, and later the equestrians, tried to gain an advantage by inviting outside coverage they hoped would bolster their side. Of course, once the outside media is involved, truth tends to get left further and further behind! The Friends have been caught up in this dispute since our President, Brian Swanson is our representative to the Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee and to its trails subcommittee. One biker group has criticized Swanson for not supporting their particular position on this issue.

One Friends' member even contacted me, asking me to help remove Brian as the Friends' representative to the CAC, believing Brian wanted to favor the equestrian side and bar bikers from the "tunnels."

See *Bike Magazine* (bikemag.com),

February 2009 for some good pictures of the "tunnels" and an account that gets some, but not all of the key facts correct. Perhaps we can sort some of these out here. See files, pictures, postings at LPCPCAC@yahoo.com as well for other points of view.

## "Tunnels"

The focus has been on the groups of trails and connections known as the "tunnels." These single-track (i.e., narrow) trails resemble tunnels through the taller scrub oaks and other shrubs that are part of the habitat of Deer Canyon, having overhead canopy and close-in "walls" of vegetation. It's a different atmosphere from most trails and became a quiet favorite of the biking community in past several years. The controversy erupted at a Citizens Advisory Committee meeting in 2008 when the City of San Diego presented a final draft of the master plan for Carmel Mountain and the Del Mar Mesa.

The plan included a trail system for the Del Mar Mesa that didn't include Deer Canyon. The plan is years late in the making and is meant to guide management of the Carmel Mountain Preserve and the Del Mar Mesa Preserve, extensions of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve to the north that are home to some of the most sensitive habitat left in coastal San Diego.

Worried that the lack of mention of the "tunnels" trails in the plan could lead to their being closed, Erik Basil of a group calling itself the Multi-use Trails Coalition mobilized — as is their right of course — a sizeable contingent of bikers to attend the CAC meeting where the latest draft of the plan was being presented. Unfortunately, the person presenting the plan wasn't familiar with it, being a new employee and not having been part of the team that guided the plan through the Parks and Planning Depts. internal processes or the public process in the early years. The knowledgeable people had left City employment, leaving a person who wasn't able to explain basic facts about the plan or to answer questions.

The CAC agreed that more time was needed to study the "tunnels" trails is-

sues and asked the City to come back to a future meeting for more public discussion. The City agreed to do this and subsequent meetings continued the discussion. The existence of the "tunnels" was news to many, if not most, of the CAC members.

The Friends representative, along with other conservation minded people was concerned about the location of the trails through very sensitive habitat, this sensitivity now accepted as fact by most in the discussion. The Trails Sub-committee of the CAC, composed of representatives of the biking, equestrian, and hiking user groups, decided to visit the "tunnels."

## Enter the 'Regulators'

As the controversy erupted publicly, the regulatory agencies including the Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, took notice. They have some jurisdiction because the City developed the Multiple Species Conservation Plan under sections of the Endangered Species Acts on both the Federal and State level. These agencies are the permitting agencies because of the presence of species of plants and animals listed as Federally or State Threatened or Endangered. They proved to be extremely concerned about the unplanned and unsupervised trails through sensitive habitats, both in Deer Canyon and on the adjacent Del Mar Mesa with its vernal pools. Both agencies own parcels with sensitive habitat on the Del Mar Mesa. They pressured the City Parks Dept. to close off the trails until the matter could be studied by them. The City did so, going so far as to station a Ranger with ticket-writing authority in the area.

About this time someone did some significant enlarging of the "tunnels," principally up. Although not proven, the charge — with some logic behind it — was that equestrians had cut them overhead to permit their passage on horseback. The original trails had been too low to allow mounted equestrians to pass through. For the first time, horse sign appeared in the "tunnels." Finger-pointing of bikers and equestrians as to

who had done what illegal cutting in which decade became common.

For the regulators, Parks Dept. and conservation minded members of the CAC the issue became, ok, there are trails now in an area where there were supposed to be none — what do we do? These lands were and are recognized as extraordinarily sensitive in the master community planning encapsulated in the Future Urbanizing Area process of the last 30 years.

### Future Urbanizing Area

Long story short, the voters passed Proposition A in 1985, the first and only growth management proposition to win a majority of votes in San Diego. Prop A put 12,000 acres of relatively undeveloped land, mostly (but not all) in the northern part of the City of San Diego, off limits to urban development without master planning and a vote of the people. This land was called the Future Urbanizing Area. Prop A was put on the ballot by a coalition of environmentalists appalled by the ‘leap-frog’ development and subsequent strain on city finances and the loss of open space occurring with development in the north city area of San Diego

The FUA was divided into 5 Subareas. The Del Mar Mesa was in its own Subarea V. Deer Canyon was in Subareas III (Pacific Highlands), IV (Torrey Highlands) and V, complicating any trail designation different from the plans for each of these areas. The master plans for Subareas III and IV went on the ballot and were approved, with environmentalist support, by the voters.

The master plan for Subarea V, which proposed less than urban level densities and set aside about 60% of its land for open space, was part of the “Del Mar Mesa Specific Plan,” a type of master planning under the City’s regulations. After a big public fight and many compromises it was finally passed by the City Council and later amended as recently as 2000.

All three of these master plans were the subject of extensive public review including multiple Environmental Impact Review documents, public meetings at area planning groups, and on numerous occasions at the City’s Planning Commission and the San Diego City Council. I attended most of these and sat on various committees in-

involved in these planning efforts. Why do I emphasize this? Because, significantly, while trail systems were included in all 3 plans, **not one of these plans proposed a trail for Deer Canyon or the eastern portion of the Del Mar Mesa. None is shown on any of the trail maps.** Were they forgotten, an oversight as some in the discussion seem to suggest? No, it was in recognition of the biological importance of the few hundred acres comprising the eastern portion of the Del Mar Mesa and Deer Canyon.

In the many public meetings and documents for each of the 3 plans and the ballot fights not one person or group involved in the current fight over trails came forward to propose these trails at that time. The fact that Deer Canyon falls into all three FUA subareas: northern half in III, eastern rim in IV, and southern half in V **poses a legal vulnerability for those proposing trail changes to the plans. It suggests the need for consensus to avoid court dates!**

### Biological significance

The Del Mar Mesa Specific Plan (1996, 2000) highlights this sensitivity:

*The Del Mar Mesa is considered a high value core habitat area ... The City of San Diego and a number of wildlife conservation groups and wildlife agencies have identified the Del Mar Mesa as an important area that allows for wildlife movement connecting Los Peñasquitos Canyon with Deer Canyon, McGonigle Canyon, Carmel Valley, and open space areas to the north, west, and east. Corridors and habitat linkages are important in the maintenance of viable wildlife populations and biological diversity ... Deer Canyon has been identified as a major corridor due to its relative isolation from disturbance and its water sources.*

During the 1990s the City finalized another planning effort, the Multiple Species Conservation Plan, a master plan for protecting some 86 Threatened and Endangered Species and their habitats under special provisions of the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts. These plans were the subject of a more than 10 year public planning ef-

fort that involved developers, the local communities, conservationists, user groups, city planners, regulators and others. The result was an integrated plan that seeks to maintain viable connections between multiple “core habitat preserves” within the City to other open space areas outside. The habitat and trails plans for the Del Mar Mesa and Deer Canyon and this MSCP are consistent with each other. Again, no one came forward during this very public process to propose trails in Deer Canyon. This inaction stands in marked contrast to the approach the Friends used to propose recognition and establishment of wildlife corridors and linkages in these same plans.

### Friends’ wildlife corridor mapping

In the 1980s the Friends became concerned about habitat fragmentation when we saw Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve cut off from good connections to Beeler Canyon and the east by the new Scripps Poway Freeway at Pomerado and other plans. I formed a team of scientists to map wildlife corridors in the north city area to identify corridors so we could protect them as future planning developed. Dr. Alan Pepper, our then Conservation Chair and a Salk Institute geneticist and plant scientist; Dr. Mike Conrad, former head of the Peñasquitos Planning Board, geneticist and owner of a Biotech company; Dr. Will Bowen, anthropologist; and Dave Hogan, biologist with the then Southwest Center for Biodiversity and vernal pool expert; joined me in a year-long effort to map existing and potential wildlife corridors and linkages. But we didn’t stop at mapping.

We invited and paid the way for Dr. Mike Soulé, the founder of Conservation Biology and an expert on habitat planning and corridors, to come and ground truth our maps. On a field trip with more than 30 biologists from many agencies we toured our corridor locations, receiving a great tutorial from Soulé along the way. He told everyone the maps were good and the corridors had the potential to work as we wanted.

We next put together a “dog and pony” show as we used to call them (PowerPoint now?) and made formal

presentations to the environmental staffs at the City and Caltrans and to a coalition of developers and property owners in the north city area. Our goal was to have our mapping integrated into the planning process early on. We were successful. We weren't perfect. We missed two corridors, one a big one (Carmel Mtn. Rd.). The second we were able to identify and incorporate at a later date (Camino del Sur).

### **SR 56, Deer Canyon & trails**

Historically, the biggest threat to Deer Canyon was the middle alignment of State Route 56. The original alignment, if my memory serves me correctly, came from the master state route map drawn up and approved by the legislature in the 1930s. Yes, it's way back then that a whole system of state highways was envisioned. SR56 was a line on a map then that came down Deer Canyon, what came to be known as the central alignment.

Thank goodness SR56 wasn't built all at one time. Due to funding, ballot measures, and urban planning issues, it was built in three sections: the western or coastal portion starting at I-5 and running east to about the current Carmel Valley Rd. exit, the eastern section, from Black Mtn. Rd. east past I-15, into Sabre Springs, and the middle section connecting the two, the last to be built. This 'split' personality of the highway gave the community the opportunity to push the alignment out of Deer Canyon, our last undisturbed coastal canyon.

The middle portion wasn't built until last for two reasons. First, it fell within the Future Urbanizing Area boundaries of Proposition A (see above) and the backers of Prop A didn't want it built until master planning for the entire area was approved. Second, the money for SR56 was coming from a sales tax that was part of a package of transportation measures going on the ballot for voter approval (TransNet I). To win a majority vote, the TransNet proponents, led by a prominent San Diego and state politician, needed the environmental vote. A deal was cut that the environmental groups involved in the FUA wouldn't oppose TransNet if funding for the middle portion of SR56 was precluded from the transportation measure, which it was.

### **Saving Deer Canyon, a new alignment for SR56**

As the City and developers moved forward with plans to build the middle portion of SR56 down the middle of Deer Canyon, in 1997 the Friends took the lead in forming a coalition of conservation and community groups to oppose this alignment, instead proposing an alignment up out of the canyon and onto the disturbed tomato fields east of the canyon. This is where SR56 now runs.

I spent a lot of time in the 1980s and 1990s surveying Deer Canyon for its biology and the impact the highway would have on it. On several occasions in the 90s we had field trips with public officials, officials from the regulatory agencies, conservationists, city planners, and others. I remember standing with then City Councilman Harry Mathis and others on the edge of Deer Canyon surveying the planned and alternative routes we had asked to be flagged by Caltrans to visualize these impacts. Craig Adams, then Conservation Chair of the Sierra Club, was the one who actually drew on a map what was to become the "northern" alignment where 56 is today.

At that time, it was plain for all to see that neither the "tunnels" nor any other trail went up Deer Canyon. The only thing to cross it in any fashion was a utility road for SDGE's utility corridor that came off the Del Mar Mesa and crossed it from west to east more or less. The trails were to come later.

### **Who built the "tunnels" & when?**

Part of the debate is who first created the "tunnels" trails. There's a video circulating among the bikers that purportedly shows a giant migrant camp in Deer Canyon, thus arguing that the migrants did it. The *Bike Magazine* article mentioned earlier claims 800 migrants were living in Deer Canyon at their peak numbers.

Nonsense. I hope this is an honest error by the narrator and the magazine writer and not an outright lie. Anyone that knows the topography can recognize that the camp depicted is in McGonigle Canyon. It even had a name, El Diablo. And it did have 700-800 people and small *tiendas*, a small church area, a prostitute center, and

more. This was well documented in all of the media over more than a decade.

At one point Councilwoman Abbe Wolfsheimer, whose District I the camp was in, arranged to have porta potties and potable water delivered to the site, a site on private property. Eventually, years later, the camp became such a nuisance that public pressure forced its dismantlement. When the dozers rolled in, many of the migrants dispersed to other areas, including the nearby Deer Canyon, but not nearly in the same numbers.

It's clear the migrants built some of the initial trails, which were improved and expanded by the bikers, later by the equestrians. *But, ultimately, what does it matter who built them?* No one is being prosecuted. If you don't catch someone in an illegal act, there's not much you can do.

New trails require an extensive environmental review process just like a development would. This was the case with the recently approved trail down from Camino Ruiz Park into the Preserve. Building or improving and expanding a trail system and then presenting it as a fait accompli to get around this review process can't be allowed or it will be happening all over. The equestrians did this in Little Shaw Valley several years ago, through southern maritime chaparral, and we denounced it then and put a stop to such illegal trail building.

The "tunnels" are going through such an environmental review now. Will it be necessary to publish an EIR? It might be made legally necessary if a consensus on how to move ahead isn't reached.

### **Balancing priorities, then & now**

The Friends have always stood for an appropriate balance of recreational trail usage and protecting the environment. This is no exception. In the 1980s and 90s the Friends and the CAC helped develop a Master Plan for Peñasquitos Preserve. We also worked to have this plan reflected in the plans of the adjacent communities. For example, early drafts called for a trail all the way up López Canyon and a trail from Calle Cristobal through the Thomas Hayes finger canyon to the south side trail. The Friends convinced the CAC and later the City that the trail in López should only go as far as

the Old Man López Road, thus leaving the rest of the upper canyon as a wild-life refugium, being good deer habitat. We made the same case to leave the Thomas Hayes Canyon in the main canyon a refugium for wildlife during the daytime.

On the other hand, we approved many miles of trails for all users throughout the rest of the Preserve. When I headed up the Trails Committee we opened and improved trails as well as closing redundant or dangerous ones. We had a consensus of all the user groups when we did this.

We need to approach the Del Mar Mesa and Deer Canyon the same way. Even before the "tunnels" trail system was built there was an illegal trail through the Caltrans, now CDFG, Vernal Pool Preserve on the mesa. Despite chainlink fencing, concrete barriers, gates, locks and no trespassing signage for 30 years, trucks, motorcycles, bikers, equestrians and hikers have routinely used this trail through actual vernal pools. I and some other conservationists wanted to stop these incursions but realized it was impractical for many reasons and that the practical alternative would be to create a legal trail through less sensitive habitat, then closing off the sensitive area trail. I'm still open to exploring this possibility.

So why the extraordinary turmoil this time around?

### **Bad history, toxic personalities?**

I know of no other park in the County where the feelings between equestrians and bikers get so ugly — ugly to the point we had them calling each other out to a fist fight at one of the trail committee meetings! I think we have two dynamics at work here.

First, historically, Peñasquitos was known as an equestrian canyon well before it ever became a park. The rancher owners and lessees welcomed riders in the old days. I've listened to equestrians argue it was "their" canyon in the good ol' days before bikes. I've heard a deep resentment toward bikers expressed by a couple of them.

When the park was formed and bikers became commonplace in the 90s the single-tracks were open only to hikers and equestrians, but many bikers were on these trails anyhow, despite the signage. There were some

early incidents between the two, generally with the horses being spooked by the bikes. In my opinion this fanned the existing resentment. The Preserve is known to have many "weekend," and often inexperienced equestrians and is also well known as a "beginner" canyon for bikers. Not a good mix in the early years. Trail etiquette was often non-existent, but has come a long ways now.

When Erik Basil and his Multi-use Trails group came on the scene and argued to open all single-tracks up to bikes there was resistance among the equestrians due to the history of conflict and lack of trail etiquette. About the same time a then (now former) equestrian member of the CAC was telling equestrians in Carmel Valley that the bikers were out to ban all horses from the Preserve. Some chose to believe this assertion (lie?), from a person known to be deeply disturbed, one of several people I call "toxic" personalities in this saga.

Unfortunately, exaggerations and demagoguery on the part of several people and their followers on both sides have sometimes drowned out the reasonable people I found to work with, some of whom might still be around.

### **Side note: do equestrians run the CAC?**

*Bike Magazine's* writer and some bloggers state that a majority of the CAC for the canyon is made up of equestrians and that this is why bikers are being discriminated against. This is one of those lies that get repeated enough until someone believes it. I say lie because the membership is public and who represents who is well known to all. Before I left the CAC years ago, a period when it was reorganized, there were 3-4 members out of the 17 who rode or owned horses. Today I understand it's 3.

Having said this I will note that the person replacing Geof Smith (a hiker and biker) as head of the CAC is Marvin Gerst, an equestrian. We're reprinting his election statement where he commits to an even handed leadership of the CAC and I'm sure all will be ready to hold him to this promise! His positive treatment of the recent biker led cleanup of the mesa (see this issue) was a good first step.

## **Gerst Statement**

Marvin Gerst, PhD  
Chair, Los Peñasquitos Canyon  
Citizen Advisors Committee

I anticipate a lively year.

Some of the issues that are facing the CAC include:

- \* Responding to and working with the State and Federal wildlife agencies and City of San Diego staff to finalize the DMM/CM Resource Management Plan. We anticipate a revised draft will be released soon.
- \* Similarly, working with the surrounding community and recreational organizations to implement the final recommendations of the Resource Management Plan.
- \* Continuing attempts to insure that all legitimate user groups (i.e. human foot powered, mountain bicyclists, equestrians) can fully enjoy the preserve in the ways uniquely associated with their mode of movement.
- \* Continuing attempts to close illegal "trails" and prevent new vandalisms.
- \* Support and expand our newly reactivated volunteer patrol under CAC member Erik Basil's leadership.
- \* Continuing the work of protecting the flora and fauna of the preserve as detailed in the Master Plan while allowing compatible recreational access.
- \* Activate a program of boundary enforcement against property owners who have encroached onto Preserve land with plantings, fences, hot tubs etc., and prevent any future encroachment attempts.
- \* Task Force. The Preserve is owned by the City and the County. The entity which we advise and which oversees our activities is a "Task Force" composed of the City Council members and the County supervisor of the districts bordering the preserve, i.e. Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, and city Council members Sherri Lightner (district 1) and Carl DeMaio (district 5). In the past, we have had difficulty in arranging task force meetings. I will meet with the staff of each office to work out an arrangement assuring a minimum number of task force meetings.



**Long-time Friends' hike leader Will Bowen** poses with recent hike participants near the 'Old López Homestead.' Will has done lots of research into the López Homestead, the López Family, and the ruins still there.

## Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

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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 **858.342-8856** for more information.



**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. 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.





# Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

July / Aug. / Sept.  
Volume 23, No. 3



**Now, if we only had a middle! Stairs under construction in Crest Canyon.** Black Mountain Open Space Park Senior Ranger Ed Christenson also manages the Crest Canyon Preserve, on the south side of the San Dieguito River Valley, west of I-5. **See inside for completion photo.**



**Volunteers pose in front of a new Kiosk.** Left to right Jason, Eric Smith, Brent Haws, Stephen Peterson, Ben Adams, Rachel Peterson, Daniel Cass, Andrew Edgar, Thomas Peterson, Brennen Perry, Michael Woo, Nathan Omega, Louis Cárdenas, Alejandro Rubbia, Albert Tat, Alex, Michael Peterson, Whitney Peterson, Mark Sutherland, Stephen Miller, and Jeff Winter.

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## Park Village Kiosk

Thomas Peterson

My name is Thomas Peterson. I am a Life Scout and working on my Eagle Project. I am seventeen years old and I am a senior attending Westview High School. I was born in Utah, but moved to San Diego at a young age, so I only remember living here in Rancho Peñasquitos where I have lived for 16 years. As part of my Eagle Project, I had to lead a community service project. My project took place at the Los Peñasquitos Preserve Trailhead at the very west end of Park Village Road.

Before my project, the Trailhead was in a state of serious disrepair. Vegetation had grown onto the street, non-native plants infested the area, the brow ditches (drains) on either side of the road had been completely filled with dirt and other debris, and the fence blocking off the trail had been broken due to reckless driving. The Park Ranger Gina Washington and I decided to help out by: (i) getting rid of all plants on the road, (ii) cutting back the native plants, (iii) getting rid of the non-native plants, (iv) rebuilding the wooden fence, (v) sanding and painting the metal gate and the wooden fence, (vi) clearing out the brow ditches, and (vii) erecting a Kiosk to

See p. 3 for more

## Free Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

It's hot weather time, which means our hikes are usually during the cooler hours, including some evening ones.

Hikes are free. Be sure to wear good trail sneakers/boots, sun protection, insect protection, and bring plenty of water as the weather heats up. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m.: Sept. 10, Nov. 12** Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mtn. Rd. and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m., Sept. 17, Nov. 19** Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

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

**Tues. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 1, Nov. 3.** Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mtn. Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Saturday, Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, 8 a.m.** Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the historic Ranch House on Canyonside Dr., Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., 8 – 10 a.m. July 18, Aug. 15, Sept. 19.** Hike the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 E7.**

#### Other events:

### July

##### **Carson Crossing Waterfall Hike**

**Sun., July 26, 4 p.m.** Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

##### **Nighttime Hike w Mike Kelly**

**Fri., July 31, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.** Join naturalist Mike on this moderately paced loop walk to Carson's Crossing. Good chance of encountering Mule deer, owls, bats, and more. Meet at kiosk at Camino del Sur (old C. Ruíz) and Park Village Rd., Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).**

### August

##### **Carson Crossing Waterfall & Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike w L King**

**Sun., Aug. 16, 4 p.m.** Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

**Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).**

**Night Time Spider Walk in Peñasquitos Canyon w Will Bowen Sat., Aug. 22, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.** In late summer and early fall you can't predict exactly when in the early hours of evening the Orb Spiders build huge, beautiful webs across the trail. Chance of meeting other spiders and possibly bats and owls. Bring flashlight. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 D5.**

##### **Nighttime Hike w Mike Kelly**

**Fri., Aug. 28, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.** Join naturalist Mike on this moderately paced loop walk to Carson's Crossing. Good chance of encountering Mule deer, owls, bats, and more. Meet at kiosk at Camino del Sur (old C. Ruíz) and Park Village Rd., Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).**

### September

##### **Carson Crossing to Waterfall Hike**

**Sat., Sept. 12, 4 p.m.** Join naturalist Pat Watkins on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

##### **Nighttime Hike w Mike Kelly**

**Fri., Sept. 18, 7 - 9 p.m.** Join naturalist Mike on this moderately paced loop walk to Carson's Crossing. Good chance of encountering Mule deer, owls, bats, and more. Meet at kiosk at Camino del Sur (old C. Ruíz) and Park Village Rd., Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).**

##### **Intermediate Tracker Naturalist Class**

**Wed., Sept. 16, 7 p.m. & Sat., Sept. 19, 8 a.m.**

This class will delve into the finer details of tracking, awareness, and the philosophy of living in harmony with nature. Two day Event. Email to register or go to LPTT Website for more information.

## Night Time Spider Walk in Peñasquitos Canyon w Will Bowen

**Sat., Sept. 26, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.** In late summer and early fall you can't predict exactly when in the early hours of evening the Orb Spiders build huge, beautiful webs across the trail. Chance of meeting other spiders and possibly bats and owls. Bring flashlight. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 D5.**



**Who says hikers, bikers, and equestrians can't work together?** Pictured are Friends' president Brian Swanson (hiker) with loppers, steadied while trimming back tree branches by an equestrian and biker during a trails cleanup.

## Western Short-horned Walkingstick

**Answer to photo question on back cover: Western Short-horned Walkingstick.** This insect is a member of the Mantid family. The praying mantis is a better known member of this family. Unlike its carnivorous cousin, the Mantis, the Walkingstick is herbivorous, feeding on native vegetation. We are believed to have only three species of them in our region. Unlike the vast majority of their family, they are stick-like and without wings. They can be found in the chaparral and in tall grass and herbaceous plants, usually in hilly areas. Their color and form make them cryptic and thus hard to see. They look just like the twigs of the plants they live on!

## (Kiosk project cont'd)

provide information to all bikers and hikers who use the Trailhead.

My project was quite aggressive in size. As a result, the planning and execution of my project took many hours. I called local stores asking for donations. My friends and I created and passed out fliers around the community asking them to help contribute to the community with donations. Many of the donations were two and three dollars, some were more, but the majorities were small donations. I received some discounts from local businesses, but the real money came from our own community including a very generous donation of \$400 from the Friends of the Peñasquitos Reserve. Thanks to the generous donations of neighbors and the Friends of the Peñasquitos Preserve we were able to collect all the money we needed for my Eagle Scout Project.

Part of my project involved building the massive Kiosk



**Top. Finished Crest Canyon staircase. Bottom, Rangers Ed Christenson and Joel Tracy with Urban Corps members who the new stairway at Crest Canyon.**

## National Trails Day A Beehive of Activity

Brian Swanson

The preserve was, literally and figuratively, a beehive of activity on Saturday, June 6th. For weeks county park staff had been making plans to celebrate National Trails Day with an energetic work party consisting of Marine Corps members, high school students, the military YMCA, Boy Scout troops, a local LDS group, and many other small groups and individual park users of all ages. Mother Nature, however, tried to throw a monkey wrench into the event. Late Tuesday or early Wednesday, two large trees toppled when one fell into the other, blocking the main trail south of the creek, just east of Penasquitos Crossing. County staff, led by Supervising Ranger Paul Kucharczyk, sprang into action to open the road. There was only one hitch. One of the old, hollowed-out trees, was home to a very large, thriving beehive. Staff worked around this by donning protective gear, and soon the trees were cut up and the road was clear.

It took the bees a few days to get the message that they needed to relocate, but by Saturday morning there were just a few stragglers visible as about 40 of the more than 160 volunteers passed by on their way to one of the work sites. The honeycomb inside the hive looked tempting, but we all decided that we didn't want to mess with the bees.

There were so many volunteers that a few of the experienced were gladly recruited to lead work teams. After a welcome from Ranger Paul, the workers performed a variety of tasks. Large piles of decomposed granite had been strategically placed near some of the eroded trails. Many truckloads of mulch were spread around the ranch house orchard. Workers were divided up into groups of 10, and given wheel barrows, hoes, rakes, shovels, and assorted tools and gloves. While some filled holes, others pulled or cut invasive plants such as Canary Island date palms, black mustard and Italian thistle. Staff used Gators and trucks to distribute soil, tools and cold water. Huge piles of invasive plants turned into stuff sacks, that park staff hauled out.

Afterwards, workers were treated to a feast of chicken and carne asada tacos, and lively music courtesy of Trails and Rails. There were free pony rides for the kids, and informative booths manned by the San Diego Tracking Team, REI, the San Diego Mountain Biking Association, and Outdoor Outreach. Raptors were presented by Supervising Ranger Maureen Abare from Goodan Ranch/Sycamore Canyon Open Space Park. The courtyard was filled with shade-covered tables occupied by tired but happy volunteers. For a few hours Saturday, the courtyard reminded me of what it may have been like back in the Days of the Dons, when the Alvarados lived at the rancho.

Mark your calendars and join us again next year on the first Saturday in June.



**Above. Ranger Paul Kucharczyk** orients the many (160+) volunteers who turned out in the Preserve for National Trails Day. **Below. Supervising Ranger Maureen Abare** from Goodan Ranch/Sycamore Canyon Open Space Park shows off a Kestrel to the volunteers. Several raptors are in Ranger Abare's care since they are unable to survive in the wild because of injuries sustain in the past. They are used for educational purposes.



**Below. Friends' hike leader Will Bowen** with attendees at one of his herb walk hikes.



## Friends' Annual Meeting

# Officers Elected, Bylaws Changed

June 16, 2009 the Friends annual meeting was held at the Preserve's historic ranch house. This was an especially important meeting since the Bylaws were changed, officers elected, and reports given.

First, the election results, based on a unanimous vote:

Brian Swanson was reelected as the Friends' President

Don Albright was reelected as Vice-president

Edward DiBella was elected Secretary

Pat Watkins was reelected Treasurer

Unanimously voted to the general seats on the Board of Directors were:

Maria Ruiz, Mike Kelly, Anne Harvey and Les Braund.

Maria is new to the Board. The mother of two teaches Spanish at the University of San Diego and has enjoyed hiking in the Preserve and participating in interpretive walks.

There were several changes to the bylaws. The most important one was to change the election procedure. Up until this meeting the bylaws required that officers and directors be elected at an annual meeting. With declining attendance over the past few years at annual meetings the outgoing Board of Directors recommended having a mail ballot election that, hopefully, would involve more members in the election process.

A number of reports were given, including two that highlighted an important evolution in the Friends activities.

Senior County Ranger Paul Kucharzyk reported on the recently held National Trails Day (see article in this issue) and other activities held in the park.

Senior City Ranger Gina Washington gave a similar report, highlighting the completion of the Camino Ruiz Trail on the south rim of the Preserve, the installation of the multi-million dollar wetlands restoration projects at the west end of the Preserve, the repairs to the Mohnike Adobe and the new picture book on the Preserve by high school volunteer Steve Pye.

Treasurer Pat Watkins provided a report on the status of the Friends finances. The Friends' finances are solid with current assets totalling \$141,691, most of which is grant monies earmarked for specific projects.

### Land and land easement acquisition

President Brian Swanson delivered two important reports reflecting a big change in the Friends' activities and mission. He reported that the Friends agreed to receive 8 parcels of land east of Deer Canyon in Rancho Peñasquitos. These parcels are coming via a Bankruptcy Court proceeding of the defunct "The Environmental Trust," was a nominally non-profit organization that received open space parcels that the City and County of San Diego didn't want from developers. These parcels came with endowments to manage these lands in perpetuity. But TET was known for low-balling their bids to acquire these properties, meaning they weren't charging the developers enough to cover the actual costs of managing these lands, eventually leading to actual neglect of the land itself and bankruptcy. These 8

parcels should close escrow shortly and the Friends will begin active management to preserve and restore them.

Swanson also reported that the Friends were in the process of accepting 21 conservation easements on 21 parcels of land, mostly around Lopez Ridge and Canyon at the request of the Coastal Commission. The Friends accepted a similar easement from the CC several years ago. State law allows the holding of such easements on parcels coming through the CC's jurisdiction for a limited number of years. Then the CC has to find a non-profit entity to hold the easements or the control over the land under these easements reverts to the property owner. Such easements cover a variety of restrictions or permitted activities in the public interest. An example of a CC easement would be one that provide for public access to beaches otherwise blocked by development.

What the land acquisition and holding of land easements reflect is the evolution of the Friends to actually holding and managing lands in our geographic area of influence not owned by the City or County. The Friends expect to receive future land as a result of the development process within the City, including parcels on the Del Mar Mesa.

### Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

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

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Hikes

Indian Culture

Educational Workshops

School, Family, Youth Programs

Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ **7/09**

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 **858.342-8856** for more information.

# The Bat . . . So Misunderstood Story

Petra Koellhoffer, Trail Guide

[This story and pictures are reprinted from the June 2009 issue of Trail Talk, the newsletter of the Trail Guide volunteer group at Mission Trails Regional Park.]

As the sun begins to set in the western sky and the heavens kiss the clouds with hues of pinks and reds, the



night creatures begin to stir. All around me I can feel my brethren beginning to wake and take flight into the darkening skies. I, too, let loose of my hold in the rock crevice to join them in their flying aerobics. I am a bat.

We are mammals in the order of Chiroptera. Our forearms developed as wings and we are the only mammals that can actually fly. The word Chiroptera comes from the Greek word cheir "hand" and pteron "wing" as the structure of our open wing is very similar to an outspread human hand with a membrane between the fingers that also stretches between hand and body.

I am one of over 1,100 species of bats, 23 species in San Diego County alone, and we make up almost one quarter of all mammal species. It is so hard to understand why people are so afraid of us. Did you know that we play a very essential role in keeping the multitudes of nightflying insects in check? One of our little brown bats will eat more than 1,000 small insects in just one hour!

Another cousin of mine, the big brown bat, in a colony of about 150, helps farmers by eating up to 33 million root worms each summer. Our neighbors to the southeast have 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats that take flight from Bracken Cave in Texas. They eat almost 200 tons of insects

nightly. Not to mention the fruit bat that plays a valuable role in plant pollination and seed dispersal.

The smallest bat, which is also the world's smallest mammal, comes from Thailand and is called a bumblebee bat. He weighs less than a penny. The giant flying fox is my largest cousin. They reside in Indonesia and can have a wingspan of up to six feet. We are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction as our mother bats usually only have one 'pup' per year. The pups are left to roost while mom goes out to feed, though pups can cling onto the fur of their mothers to be transported. The females with pups often form nursery roosts with other females from the same area. Mother bats are amazing as they can find their pup in colonies of millions of young! If a mother's milk goes dry, pups have been seen feeding on other bat moms that still have milk. The male does not get involved with the raising of the pup. The female has sole responsibility of rearing the young. Although we are born with

wings, depending on the species, they can take up to four months to fully develop and be strong enough for flight. Our life span can be 20 years or more, which is unusually long for animals our size.

There are a lot of myths about us, and this is probably why people are so afraid of us bats. Let me try to set the record straight on some of these myths. Bats are not flying mice. We have our own order, as mentioned above but we are grouped with primates and lemurs in a grand order called Archonta.

Bats are not blind, in fact we can see just as well as you humans can. Fruit bats can see in color! Bats do not become tangled in your hair. Actually, insect eating bats are equipped with a built in sonar system that allows them to navigate at break neck speed through total darkness. If a bat swoops toward you, it is most likely after the mosquito that is hovering just above your head.

Bats are not ugly or dirty. Some of us resemble deer, rabbits and even Chihuahuas. We spend hours grooming ourselves to make our coats soft and silky. Not all bats are vampires. Out of the 1,100 plus species, only 3



# Ravens Black as Night Story

Lyn Olsson, photos by Wendy Esterly, Trail Guides

What do you think of when you hear the word Raven? Do you think of Edgar Allan Poe's narrative poem, "The Raven"? Once upon a mid-night dreary . . . or maybe "The Raven" by Brothers Grimm, or maybe even the 1935 horror film starring Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi called . . . "The Raven." Ravens have been the subject of all kinds of lore, myth, religious belief, glee and anger. Ravens with their wily ways fascinate people for many reasons. They are incredibly intelligent (the "Einsteins of the bird world"), resourceful, beautiful, and individualistic.

The Common Raven, *Corvus corax*, was the one Poe wrote about in "The Raven" when he lived at the Commons at the University of Virginia. There is another species of Raven in the United States called the Chihuahuan Raven as it lives in southwestern US and Mexico. And, there are eight subspecies of *Corvus corax*, two of which inhabit North America. They are part of the larger family of corvidae, which includes jays, magpies and crows; about 100 total.

*Corvus corax* is a common resident in California and much of North America. They occupy more and varied habitat types than any other California bird. They also inhabit the Arctic, Eurasia to the deserts of North Africa, and to islands in the Pacific Ocean. They are common in Scotland, northern England, and the west of Ireland.



They are the most widely distributed of the corvids.

Ravens are omnivores, eating arthropods, seeds and grain, but most of their diet is meat. As scavengers they keep our world cleaner, as they frequent road kill sites, landfills, rubbish piles. They do prey on rodents, other bird nest-

lings and eggs, but many other birds do too. It is unfortunate that they also prey on baby desert tortoises in the Mohave Desert – a source of much anger for desert naturalists.

They start courting when still juvenile, but do not pair bond and breed until they are two to four years old. The pairs are monogamous and will stay together for life. They live about ten to fifteen years in the wild, up to fifty in captivity. Allopreening is an important part of their male-female bonding.

The female lays four to seven eggs (five to six is normal), and she incubates the eggs for about twenty days during which time the male feeds her. He also helps to raise the brood to adulthood. The young leave the nest after four to seven weeks but stay close for another week or so to gain confidence, and still stay close for about another six months. Ravens make their nests in tall trees. Look for the telltale white droppings below a likely roosting spot (this may take a while, and use binoculars) and you may find Raven nesting activity, or at least an old nest.

Mated pairs of ravens are territorial, protecting their food sources and normally stay away from other ravens. But they do come together for the occasional family gathering during which time they put on spectacular aerial shows, diving, barrel

(Bats cont'd)

species are vampire bats and they reside in Latin America. Vampire bats are very small (about the size of an M & M's pack) and do not attack humans or suck their blood. The approximately 1,097 remaining species of bats eat insects, fruit, nectar and pollen. A few of our species eat fish and frogs.

Bats do not carry rabies. Like all mammals, we are capable of catching the disease. Less than one-half of one percent of bats actually contracts the disease. In reality, more people die annually from contact with household pets than have died from contact with bats in all recorded history. But we bats are wild animals and should not be touched or handled. We may bite out of fear or self defense. If you find a bat 'grounded', it is most likely sick and should never be rescued with bare hands.

Bats are shy, gentle and intelligent creatures. Our populations are declining. Half the bats in the US are listed as rare, threatened or endangered.

So, as you look up towards the sky as the sun is setting and you see us doing our aerial dances, do not be afraid, but be appreciative by what we contribute to the world we all live in.

References: Bat Conservation International, Bat World, Wikipedia, Bats of San Diego County

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rolls at 500 feet, and dropping objects from on high and then swooping down to grab them before they hit the ground. This is also courting behavior. Of course large groups do come together at particularly good feeding sites such as a large carcass or at a landfill. A very interesting book about their feeding practices in Vermont, which probably can be applied to other populations as well, is by Bernard Heinrich called *Ravens in Winter* (New York: Summit Books, 1989). It describes how young ravens, which don't have their own territories yet, will form loose flocks and will mob a particular meal to keep the adults from driving them off.

By the way, ravens produce pellets like raptors do (hawks, falcons, eagles, owls) and it would be interesting to see what's inside a raven-produced one.

# Can You Name Me?



**Can you find and name the critter in this photo?**  
See p.3 for the answer. Photo by Brian Swanson



**Red Diamond rattlesnake recently photographed by Steve Pye** in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Note the “coon” tail, the alternating bands of white and black. This characteristic is a more reliable way to distinguish the Red Diamond from the Southern Pacific, a sub-species of the Western Diamondback, than by color alone. The two species can overlap in color characteristics, making it a less reliable distinguishing character. Our “Reds” are becoming uncommon, perhaps even rare in our coastal zone. This is thought to be due to two factors. One is the simple loss of their habitat as much of our coastal zone is developed. Second is the fact that Reds have a much bigger geographic territory they slither through than the Southern Pacific’s. This makes them vulnerable to being killed by vehicles, becoming road-kill. Thi and many other photos by Steve are available in his new book available at: <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/754363>



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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. 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.





# Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Oct., Nov., Dec. 09  
Volume 23, No. 4

## Volunteers Clean Up Carmel Mtn. Preserve

Karen Billing, *The Carmel Valley Leader*

Volunteers at Carmel Mountain Preserve for the 25th annual I Love A Clean San Diego cleanup were kept plenty busy on Saturday.

A crowd of 80 people came to the cleanup site, organized by Qualcomm employees, and found a car hood, an old refrigerator, hardened bags of cement and creosote-laden telephone poles.

Some of the collected trash has been there for 30 to 40 years, said cleanup leader Anne Harvey – proved by a bounty of rusted cans of beer from a beer company that no longer exists and by the antique nature of the refrigerator.

"It's really important to get the trash out of here so we can all enjoy the pristine environment," San Diego City Park Ranger Gina Washington said.

The preserve is accessed off East Ocean Air Drive, adjacent to the soon-to-be-opened Ocean Air Park. Volunteers like the Florez family came from as far away as Murrieta to participate in the cleanup.

Clean-up group leaders Harvey, Dave Hogan and Dr. Oliver Ryder were all involved in saving the preserve years ago.

"It's a miracle that this property was saved," Hogan said, noting the planets must have aligned in the right way for environmentalists and developers to come to an agreement.

See p. 4 for more

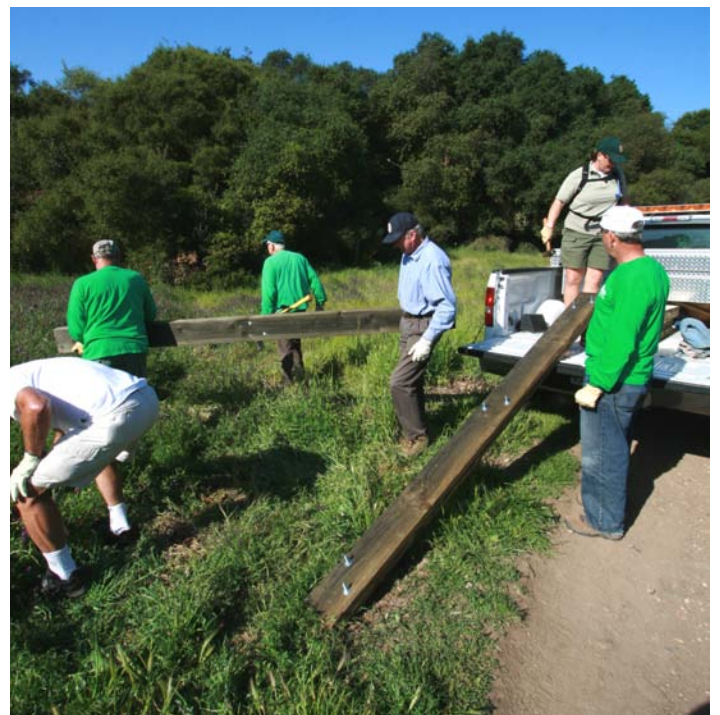


Qualcomm and other volunteers load trash into dumpster on Carmel Mtn. Trash as old as 50 years old was found and removed. This may have been the first comprehensive cleanup of the area ever. Photo by Anne Harvey

## Grand Trail Opening

Brian Swanson, president

Saturday morning, August 7th, a small crowd of excited people gathered at the Camino Ruiz Neighborhood Park, on the south rim of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, for the long-awaited grand opening of the Camino Ruiz Trail. This



Senior Ranger Gina Washington and volunteers working on the Camino Ruiz trail. Photo by Steve Pye.

See p. 6 for more

### Highlights Inside

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## Free Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

While spring and its rain bring us the color of wildflowers, the cooler weather of fall and winter bring us the color of changing foliage. Sycamore, willows, and cottonwood trees change their colors, generally the yellows. Good places to see fall foliage are Lopez Canyon below Camino Santa Fe and Sycamore Crossing west of the waterfall. Poison oak (see the photo in this issue) leaves change from green to red this time of the year and are quite pretty. Some people, intent on gathering colorful fall foliage unknowingly pick up red poison oak!

Hikes are free. Be sure to wear good trail sneakers/boots, sun protection, and bring plenty of water as the weather heats up. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every two months:

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

**Tues., Nov. 3, 7 p.m.**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mtn. Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

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

**Thurs. Nov. 12, 6:30 p.m.**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mtn. Rd. and Canyonside

Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thurs., Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m.**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Sat. 8 a.m.: Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9**

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the historic Ranch House on Canyonside Dr., Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., Nov. 21 & Jan. 16, 8 – 10 a.m.**

Hike the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 E7.**

#### Other events:

### October

##### **Volunteer Restoration Project at the Waterfall**

**Sat., Oct. 31, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.** Help expand the native plant restoration at the waterfall. Weeding, mulching, and planting are the order of the day. No experience necessary. Community Service credits eligible. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. Call Mike Kelly at 858-342-8856 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

**Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).**

### November

##### **Explore Trans-County Trail in the east end of Peñasquitos Canyon w Mike Kelly**

**Sat., Nov. 7, 9 - 11 a.m.**

Explore the underappreciated east end of Peñasquitos Canyon (see article this newsletter). Walk about 2 miles of the 100+ mile Trans-County Trail on an oak shaded trail. See centuries old oaks, the Oak Memorial Garden for Victims of Violence, the Kumeyaay inspired Rock Art walls, and the old Stagecoach Road in Sabre Springs. Meet on the corner of Mercy and Black Mtn. Rds in Mira Mesa. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D1).**

##### **Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike**

**Sun., Nov. 8, 8 a.m.** Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

##### **Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Program**

**Wed. Nov. 18, 7 p.m. &**

**Sat., Nov. 21, 8 a.m.**

This class is devoted to developing tracking and awareness skills, with an emphasis on wildlife physiology and habits, how to move in nature, and techniques for recognizing habitats and associated flora and fauna. Email to register or go to [www.sdtt.org](http://www.sdtt.org) for more information.

##### **Shamanic Hike with Will Bowen**

**Sun. Nov. 22, 3 – 5 p.m.** A short hike to a power spot where we will explore shamanic traditions of the indigenous people of the Americas. We'll learn about saging, calling the directions, creating sacred space, and harnessing the energies of nature for healing, insight, and wisdom. We'll also do some healing work, sharing and storytelling, and make some shamanic art. This is a good opportunity for self-healing and to connect with the spirit of the

holiday season through nature. Please bring a blanket to sit on and a drum or rattle. Meet in West End Parking Staging area, Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 D5.**

## December

### Nature Walk from Mercy Road

**Sun., Dec. 6, 8 a.m.** Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Chance to see Mistletoe and California Holly, yellow sycamores, and red poison oak. Learn native plants and their uses. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging area, upper level at the junction of Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads in Mira Mesa. See **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

### Shamanic Hike with Will Bowen

**Sun. Dec. 20, 3 – 5 p.m.** A short hike to a power spot where we will explore shamanic traditions of the indigenous people of the Americas. We'll learn about saging, calling the directions, creating sacred space, and harnessing the energies of nature for healing, insight, and wisdom. We'll also do some healing work, sharing and storytelling, and make some shamanic art. This is a good opportunity for self-healing and to connect with the spirit of the holiday season through nature. Please bring a blanket to sit on and a drum or rattle. Meet in West End Parking Staging area, Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 D5.**

## January 2010

### Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training

**Sat., Jan. 16, 9:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.** This free training includes basic wildlife track, sign, and habitat recognition, as well as details on the implementation of survey protocol, and is required for survey volunteers. No registration required. Bring a sack lunch. Meet at the historic adobe ranch house on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7).**

### Del Mar Mesa & Waterfall Walk with Linda King

**Sun., Jan. 17, 8 a.m.** Join naturalist Linda King for this loop walk up to the Del Mar Mesa over to Walden Pond and down to the waterfall. Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd., at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 (J7).**

### Lopez Canyon Homestead Hike with Will Bowen

**Sun., Jan. 31, 3 – 5 p.m.** Hike out into Lopez canyon to visit the ruins of the Lopez Homestead – a turn of the century dairy farm. Find out about the Lopez family and their place in early San Diego history. Explore the ruins of the old house, barn, milking station, and smoke house. Learn about how and where they grazed the cattle and how they got the milk to market. Meet at West End Parking Staging Area. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C/D 5).**

## Restoration Projects Ramp up Again

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

Cooler temperatures mean we're heading into planting weather. We'll be focusing on native plant restoration projects in both Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Park.

In Peñasquitos Canyon we'll be continuing a planting project on the north side of the waterfall. That will be our focus this fall. Then, from January on we'll turn to our Cactus wren restoration project sites in Black Mtn. Park.

We can use all the help we can get since we have a 5-year, 5-site project underway to provide habitat for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren bird in Black Mtn. We can accommodate both individuals and groups. Contact Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or 858-342-8856 for more information or to sign up. Coming up:

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**Saturday, Oct. 31, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
**Peñasquitos Waterfall**  
**Meet at 7107 Park Village Rd.,**  
**at Celome Way in Rancho**  
**Peñasquitos.**

**&**  
**Saturday, Nov. 21, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
**Call/email for details.**

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**Poison oak in both its green and red phases, toxic in either case! Remember the limerick: “Leaves of three, let it be, for poison oak it just might be.**  
**Photos by Janet Nelson**



**(Cleanup cont'd)**

Ryder, of the San Diego Zoo's Institute for Conservation Research, said that the preserve in Carmel Valley's backyard is an incredibly special piece of land.

Its high promontory with ocean views is something that in other communities might have become all hilltop homes. Instead the trail winds through heavy brush, giving hikers, runners and mountain bikers a quiet, peaceful trip with amazing views.

"It's phenomenal what this community has done to ensure that centuries from now people will be able to see what the land looked like," Ryder said.

On Saturday, volunteers arrived to see a brand new wooden post at the entrance to the preserve that reads: "Land set aside for habitat protection" with space to post maps and other information.

Rangers also built a new bridge across a small ravine at the preserve's entrance. A trail runner on Saturday morning said a quick hello to Ranger Washington before flying right over the new bridge on his way up the hill.



## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson 760.739.5451  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619.443.5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858.538.2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858.672.0584

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

### Walk Leaders

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

### Committees:

Newsletter: Mike Kelly at 858-342-8856.  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta, 858.672-0584  
 Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.566.6489  
 Webmaster: Beth Williams  
 Wildlife Surveys: Patrick Campbell, 760.471.9197



**Above: Dave Hogan and Ollie Ryder, pictured on the right in the group of four, were co-leaders of the cleanup teams. Carmel Mountain Preserve has some of the greatest diversity of plants and animals in San Diego County. The fight to preserve it took 15 years and countless volunteer hours. In the winter and spring, naturalist Diana Gordon leads nature walks to view vernal pools and wildflowers on the 'mountain.'**  
 Photo by Anne Harvey

**Left: San Diego Coast horned lizard, an endangered reptile that lives on Carmel Mtn. Photo by Steve Pye.**

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_ **10/09**

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 **858-342-8856** for more information.

# Orb Weavers and Black Widows Spider Hike Report

Will Bowen. PhD

I started a new series of hikes this last summer called “The Night Time Spider Walk.”

These hikes grew out of the regular night hikes that Mike Kelly and I have led in the summer months for many years. On the night hike we usually look for deer, owls, bats, and night blooming plants and sometimes we contemplate the stars and constellations. Even if we don't see any critters it's just really nice to be out in the canyon at dark when it's cooler and when the senses other than vision, such as hearing and smell, are more enhanced.

## Orb Weavers

Last year on one of the night hikes some spider enthusiasts introduced me to the orb weavers' large, beautiful and symmetrical webs, which in many places crossed the trail. I remembered that and decided I would look for them again this year. I wasn't exactly sure when they would start to show up, just sometime near the end of summer and the start of fall.

The first spider hike was scheduled for August 22nd. I went down in the canyon a few days beforehand and could not find any webs, so I was a little anxious that we might not find any on the hike. I knew we would find black widow spiders though, because we have a large colony that live under the road barricades where Sorrento Valley Blvd heads up the hill to become Calle Cristobal.

Luckily we found two small orb weavers right away on a metal sign post along the sidewalk. We dusted one of the webs with cornstarch to see the web better. There are many different kinds of orb weavers and some have not even been described by science. Every evening in the first hours of dark during the late summer they make a new web.

## And Black Widows too!

Right after the first orb weavers, we explored our black widow spider colony. From the parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd all the way up to the path down to the canyon gate there were black widow spiders – mostly large, black females with a red hourglass markings on their belly. We also saw some males which are different colored and some juveniles. The black widows hide up under, where wood of the post meets the metal railing, during the day and come down at night, repairing and adding to their web.

In contrast to the uniform and symmetrical two dimension web of the orb weaver, the web of the black widow is

really a mess! It's an orderly disorder which one hike participants described as “looking like fractals.” It's three dimensional and cube shaped with no apparent pattern, but it traps insects well. We were careful not to reach down there because although they don't usually bite, the female will if she thinks you're going after her egg sac. The egg sac looks something like a white cottony marble.



Orb weaver spider on its web. Photo by Will Bowen

That night we walked pretty far into the canyon before we found more orb weavers. We discovered two side by side crossing the trail. One of the orb weavers was orange and the other a mottled yellow color. The amazing thing was that the orange weaver had attached a leaf as a counter weight to hold the web in place which dangled over the trail. A tiny grey spider of a different species had even built a small web on the hanging leaf. This was no accident because on the next hike we found another leaf counter weight on a web.

My second hike took place on September 26. We had a lot of people attending that night and a ton of kids who are really great to have on a hike because they seem to all love spiders and bugs much more than adults – they haven't lost their wonder or awe at nature.

I remember asking one little girl. “Do you like spiders?” And she replied, in a very mature and adult-like fashion, “Well, I don't know. I am here to find out more about them so I can decide!”

That night we didn't see any deer, owls, or bats, but we found all kinds of orb webs. It was just amazing to see them crossing the trail or hanging high between the trees. We watched them building and rolling down their strands. Many people took pictures.

Orb weavers are such great architects and artists. Native Americans of the Southwest, such as the Navajo and Hopi, say that they learned to weave their rugs from watching orb weavers. You can see why.

I started to wonder – what if man could somehow harness the spider strand for our own purposes? Or make a similar material for building.

I think the search for orb weavers and spider webs is a great addition to the summer night time repertoire and I hope all the Friends get a chance to see these spiders.

I know I am looking forward to doing the Spider Walk again next year.

## Funds Still Needed

# Trail for All People Status Report

Jas Arnold

Friends members have been hearing about this trail for several years now. It has remained a pie-in-the-sky with the concept established, yet the path to the finished product unclear. This murkiness is diminishing. The immediate goal is to achieve City of San Diego approval (entitlement). City staff will review the project for design, environmental issues, and other factors that may impact the region. This will entail the payment of City processing fees, the creation of conceptual drawings, and the shepherding of the project plans through the City Bureaucracy.

The anticipated costs for the above-described work is \$30,000. Contributions made by many of you will help to defray these costs. Recently, a \$300 grant was made to the Trail for All people project in the name of the Friends from the Rancho Peñasquitos Town Council. The RP Planning Board will be approached in the next couple of months for a donation coming from developer fees. With an entitled project, the raising of the funds necessary to actually build the trail should be much easier. Friends, thank you for your support. A wonderful project which will benefit *All* will soon be a reality.



## (Camino Ruiz trail cont'd)

0.6 mile section of trail winds beneath a shady canopy of scrub oaks and other mature chaparral, and includes three small bridges. It's the first official trail connection between the community of Mira Mesa and Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This hiker and biker trail has been many years in the planning under the careful stewardship of Open Space Trails Manager (and former PQ senior ranger) Rick Thompson. The canyon which the trail winds through is home to a vibrant wildlife community. Users should be sure to obey the Preserve's leash law and clean up after their pets.

Foothill Associates (biological consultants) biologist Dick Rol performed biological surveys and helped site the trail around sensitive plants and habitats. City Park Ranger staff and volunteers put in 420 hours of labor constructing the trail. Senior Ranger Gina Washington directed the volunteers, most notably master trail builders Bill Witzell and Jim Snyder, aided by Terry Gaughen, Dennis Driscoll, Jim Rehoreg and Steve Pye.

Among the 50 or so people present for the dedication were San Diego City Councilmember Carl DeMaio and his community representative John Ly, numerous city and county open space parks staff including Sr. Ranger Gina Washington, Ranger John Garwood, County Supervising Ranger Paul Kuczarczyk, County Ranger Rusty Rhodes, City Deputy Director of Open Space Chris Zirkle and Steve Haupt, along with Boy Scouts. Eagle Candidate Ryan Olmstead built the trailhead kiosk which the Friends and Multi-Use Trails Coalition funded. Also in attendance were los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens' Advisory Committee Chair Marvin Gerst and CAC Board members Anne Harvey, Erik Basil, Pam Stevens, Dean Kirby, and Brian Swanson, Trails Committee member Bobbi Remnant, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve president Brian Swanson and Board members Anne Harvey and Les Braund, San Diego Mountain Biking Association representatives, Mira Mesa Recreational Council Chair Joe Fritchtel.

Councilmember DeMaio reminded us that it's not just our sun, beaches and bays that draw residents and tourists to San Diego, but also our canyons and trails. For trails like this to happen, we must balance habitat needs with public access. Sometimes preserving intact habitat is appropriate, while other times a well designed and placed trail may be appropriate. Partnerships between the city and user groups, such as here, are essential to bring projects from the planning to the implementation stage, especially during these times of shrinking budgets. After several other brief speeches, the ceremonial scissors were used to cut the yellow ribbon, and a swarm of bikers and hikers headed out to explore this gem of a trail. Be sure to check it out on one of your next visits to the Preserve!

## New Book Updates the Record Preserve Logo Wrong

Mike Kelly

The logo the Friends use on the front of this newsletter and other literature and also used by the City and the County on Preserve signage is not what we all thought it to be: the cattle brand of the Peñasquitos Ranch in the 19th century. We were all wrong. Prior to her death the former County Historian Mary Ward documented the discovery in 1983 of the brand below, the Circle A brand. For the full story of this mixup of brands and who the old logo brand belonged to pick up the soon-to-be published *Pieces of History: Prehistory & History of Rancho Peñasquitos*, co-edited by me and the current County Historian, Dr. Lynne Newall Christenson. The book should be available the first of the new year. The illustration is by Charles Faust.



**Above right the ‘Oak Memorial Garden.’ More than a hundred oak trees have been planted by and for families of victims of violence. The garden was established in honor of Cara Knott, a young woman slain nearby in a crime that has become infamous in San Diego’s modern history. Right, a pond along the trail. Photos by Janet Nelson.**

### (Underappreciated trails cont’d)

County Trail?” Its name comes from the fact it runs from Torrey Pines State Reserve all the way to the visitor’s center at Anza Borrego State Park, over a 100 miles! One access is at the juncture of La Tortola St. and Paseo Mateo St. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Cross the creek to the south side



via the stepping stones and turn left on the trail. Second is from the Ranger Station at the equestrian center at Mercy and Black Mtn. Rds. The trail begins to the south of the Ranger Station, next to Mercy Rd. Third is from the County’s Mercy Rd. parking-staging area. Access the trail at the undercrossing that goes *under* Black Mtn. Rd. and follow the directions from the Ranger Station.

The caption with the picture describes the trail to the Oak Memorial garden. From there it goes up the hill above the pump station and picks up the old stagecoach road that heads east and merges with the Sabre Springs trail system, which in turn takes you to the Poway City Line near Springhurst St. Along the way you’ll pass by the Wildlife Refuge area at Springbrook Way. I’ve encountered joggers, bikers, and equestrians on this beautiful trail.

### Stagecoach Road

Once on the Stagecoach Road periodically check over the edge of the trail down the hill and you’ll see free-standing, mortarless walls typical of the 19th century. At points you can look across the canyon where the trail curves and see some of the retaining walls. Historically, rather than connecting with the Sabre Springs trail system, the Stagecoach Road dropped down the hill and across the creek where the cattle stock pond is now.



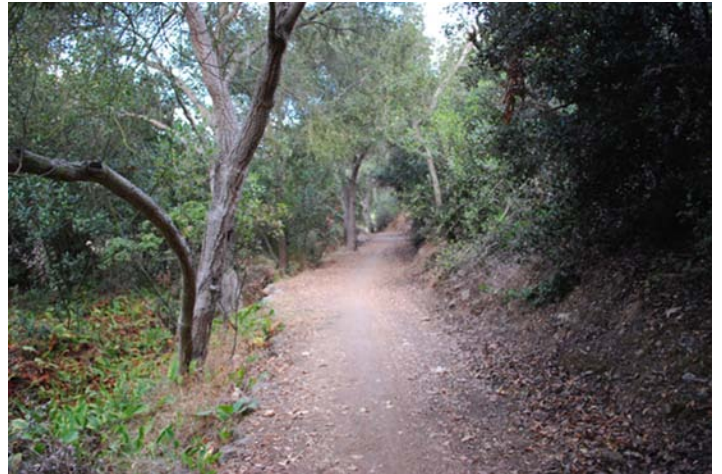
# Underappreciated East End Trails

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

How many of our Friends and the hiking public have *never* hiked a trail to the east of Black Mountain Road? Most – I suspect – from who I see on the trails. In the old days Mike McCormick and myself led ‘Mystery Tree’ walks from Black Mtn. Road east to the stream crossing at Ridgewood Community Park, adjacent to the preserve. Damage to these trees with the Mexican era sign map on them led to our discontinuing these walks. Since then, however, the trail has been continued east of Ridgewood all the way under I-15 to the San Diego Poway city boundary line. “New” natural, historical and cultural features are now accessible for your viewing pleasure! I’m detailing some of them in words and pictures in this article.

## Access

First, how do you find this trail, called the “Trans-  
See p. 7 for more



***Above, trail passes through Coast live oaks. Three bridges across Peñasquitos Creek brings you near the picturesque (est. 300+ years) oak shown left. Continuing under I-15 brings you to a colorful wall inspired by Kumeyaay art at Metropolitan Wastewater’s facility. Photos by Janet Nelson.***



**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. 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.





# Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Jan., Feb., Mar  
Volume 24, No. 1

## Scar Repairs on Black Mountain

Sr. Ranger Ed Christensen

In early November Park Rangers worked with Urban Corps staff to cover the highly visible scars near the glider port with Jute netting. This habitat destruction is a remnant of off road vehicles driving up the slopes. The scars have remained for years. The thin topsoil in the area was disturbed before the netting was laid down. Local seed will be spread over the netting and hopefully will take root with winter rains. The goal is for the jute netting to better hold seed, topsoil and organic material on the steep slope and allow plant communities to repopulate the area. If this method proves to be successful, Rangers will continue using it for future restoration projects in Open Space Parks.



Urban Corps and City Rangers place jute netting over major scar.

## Volunteer Restoration Projects

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

Cooler, rainy weather means it's the ideal time for planting native plants. This is the second of our five-year Cactus wren restoration project. We're taking degraded agricultural land in five sites in Santa Luz part of the City of San Diego's Black Mountain Open Space Park and restoring it to native habitat.

We're planting cactus, California sagebrush, Black sage and other plant species to create a type of coastal sage scrub that will provide a suitable home for the endangered Coastal Cactus wren (see below). This songbird needs dense patches of cactus to provide a safe nest for its young and other coastal sage scrub plants for its foraging.

We can accommodate both individuals and groups. Contact Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or 858-342-8856 for more information or to sign up. Projects will be every second Saturday, weather permitting, through May 2010.



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## Volunteer Dates/ Times:

**Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Jan. 30,**

**Feb. 13, Feb. 27,**

**March 13, March 27,**

**April 10, April 24,**

**May 8, May 22.**

**Meet** in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park (NOT the main Open Space Park parking lot) at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos, one block east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. **Thomas Guide, p. 1168 (J5).**

## Free Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

Although it's winter, such as we know it here in the temperate coast, it's still the time for flowers. This is the best time to see the bountiful and delicate flowers of the Mission Manzanita. Locally there are two good places to see them. One is Carmel Mountain Preserve (access opposite 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way, San Diego) and the other is Black Mountain Park, along the East Rim Trail (accessible from Ave. Maria or Ave. Lob Lobos in east Rancho Peñasquitos. Alternatively, you can hike to the East Rim Trail from the South Point View Trail or Little Black Trail from either Sundevil Way or Hilltop Community Park). For a downloadable map of Black Mtn. Park visit [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org). White flowering Winter Currant can be encountered on the Trans County Trail under the I-15 Bridge or off the south side of the main road/trail on the south side of the Preserve, about 1 mile in from the West End Parking-Staging Area.

Hikes are free. Be sure to wear good trail sneakers/boots, sun protection, and bring plenty of water as the weather heats up. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Quarterly

##### **Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training:**

**Sat. 9:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Jan. 23, Apr. 17, July 17, Oct. 16.**

Wildlife survey volunteers are invited

to attend a free one-day training conducted by the experienced tracker/naturalists of the San Diego Tracking Team. Training includes basic track, sign, and habitat recognition and details on the implementation of the survey protocol. Following the training, volunteers are expected to accompany a transect leader on at least one survey transect. After completing this training or equivalent (including any of the LPTT's Tracker/Naturalist classes), volunteers are welcome to practice their skills by assisting with future surveys.

Pre-registration is not required for individuals but requested for groups. Please bring a sack lunch, water, and be prepared to spend much of the day outdoors. Also, please bring your calendar so that you can sign up for transects. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m.: Mar. 11, May 13, July 8, Sept. 9, Nov. 11.**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mtn. Rd. and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m.: Jan. 21, Mar. 18, May 20, July 15, Sept. 16, Nov. 18.**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

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

**Tues., 7 p.m.: Mar. 2, May 4, July 6, Sept. 7; Nov. 2. Members are**

**welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities.**

Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

**Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Sat. 8 a.m.: Feb. 13, Mar. 13, Apr. 10, May 8, June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11.**

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the historic Ranch House on Canyonside Dr., Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

##### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., 8 – 10 a.m.: Feb. 20, Mar. 20, Apr. 17, May 15, June 19.**

Hike the Miner's Loop Trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Rd., about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 E7.**

##### **Volunteer Trash Pickup**

##### **Lopez/Peñasquitos Canyons**

**Sun., 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, Apr. 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, Aug. 22, Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 26.**

Trash pickups in Lopez & Peñasquitos Canyon.

Volunteers needed! Community service credits available. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3).**

#### Other events:

### January

##### **Vernal Pool & Flower Walk on Carmel Mountain**

**Sat., Jan. 30, 9 – 11 a.m.** Tour one of San Diego's newest nature preserves with Diana Gordon. Learn about rare Southern maritime chaparral. See last of the spring flowers and learn about vernal pool lifecycles. Meet at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way in San Diego. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208 C2.**

### **Lopez Canyon Homestead Hike with Will Bowen**

**Sun., Jan. 31, 3 – 5 p.m.** Hike out into Lopez canyon to visit the ruins of the Lopez Homestead – a turn of the century dairy farm. Find out about the Lopez family and their place in early San Diego history. Explore the ruins of the old house, barn, milking station, and smoke house. Learn about how and where they grazed the cattle and how they got the milk to market. Meet at West End Parking Staging Area. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C/D 5).**

## **February**

### **Vernal Pool Walk on Lopez Ridge Sat., Feb. 6, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Join naturalist Mike Kelly and explore rare vernal pool habitats. Meet the ‘extremeophile’ plants and animals that live in this challenging environment. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3).**

### **Vernal Pool & Flower Walk on Carmel Mountain w Diana Gordon Sat., Feb. 13, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Tour one of San Diego’s newest nature preserves with Diana Gordon. Learn about rare Southern maritime chaparral. See last of the spring flowers and learn about vernal pool lifecycles. Meet at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way in San Diego. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208 C2.**

### **Black Mountain Peak Hike**

**Sun., Feb. 21, 8 a.m.** Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced hike from Laurentian Dr. Enjoy early wildflower show, great vistas. Meet at 9600 Laurentian Dr. at Mediatrice Lane. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D2).**

### **Vernal Pool & Flower Walk on Carmel Mountain w Diana Gordon Sat., Feb. 27, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Tour one of San Diego’s newest nature preserves with Diana Gordon. Learn about rare Southern maritime chaparral. See last of the spring flowers and learn about vernal pool lifecycles. Meet at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way in San Diego. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208 C2.**

**Pierra Bovet Adobe Tour with Will Bowen / Sun., Feb. 28, 3–5 p.m.** Hike out to explore the beautiful riparian habitat of Carroll Canyon. End up at

the ruins of the Pierra Bovet Adobe. Find out how and why it deteriorated. Learn about Bovet, his extended family, and their place in San Diego history. Find out how the Bovet homestead is related to our own Lopez Dairy Farm and El Cuervo Adobe. Meet at Fire Station near the corner of Scranton & Carroll Canyon Road. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (E7).**

## **March**

### **Vernal Pool Walk on Lopez Ridge w Mike Kelly**

**Sun., March 7, 9 – 11 a.m.** Join naturalist Mike Kelly and explore rare vernal pool habitats. Meet the ‘extremeophile’ plants and animals that live in this challenging environment. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3).**

### **El Cuervo Adobe History Hike with Will Bowen**

**Sun., Mar. 7, 3 – 5 p.m.** Hike into the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon for a close-up look at the ruins of the El Cuervo Adobe. Learn about its history and the Alvarado family who once lived there. Includes a short side hike to examine Norwood Brown’s old roundup corral and to discuss the impact of cattle grazing in the Preserve. Meet at parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C/D 5).**

### **Frogs, Toads, Tadpoles, & Fairy Shrimp Hike with Will Bowen**

**Sun., Mar. 21, 4 – 6 p.m.** Hike out to look for and learn about the frogs, toads, tadpoles, & fairy shrimp in the road pools and puddles of Carmel Mountain. Learn to identify different types of tadpoles and tell the male and female fairy shrimp apart. Wear shoes that you can get a little wet! Meet at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way in San Diego. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208 C2.**

### **Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike**

**Sun., March 28, 8 a.m.** Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall, Sycamore Crossing & Kit Carson’s Crossing. Meet at the kiosk near 7107 Park Village Rd. at Celome Way in Rancho Peñasquitos, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 J7.**

## **April**

### **Vernal Pool Walk on Lopez Ridge Sat., April 3, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Join naturalist Mike Kelly and explore rare vernal pool habitats. Meet the ‘extremeophile’ plants and animals that live in this challenging environment. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3).**

### **Herb Walk with Will Bowen**

**Sun., April 25, 4 – 6 p.m.** Learn to identify different plants & shrubs of Carmel Mtn. Nature Preserve. See plants such as the colorful Bush monkey flower, fragrant Black Sage, and nutritional Chia. Find out how the plants here were once used for food & medicine by Native Americans, Spanish, and Anglo American settlers, and end up with a grasp of the native flora. Meet at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way in San Diego. See **Thomas Guide p. 1208 C2.**

## **Trail Repair Volunteers Needed PQ Trail Closures**

Senior Ranger Gina Washington put out an official notice closing Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve due to storm damage to the trails. She expects the closure to be a long one due to the volume of rain that fell in our area. Our core valley is low, the water table high, and the soils will be saturated and shedding water for weeks to come. Trail use by any means – bike, foot, horse – on saturated trail soils.

The Rangers were forced to evacuate their trailers due to flooding! She also said “. . . check out this website to see how the creek flow changes: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?11023340> This newsletter (January 2009) printed hydrographs showing previous storm driven flow changes. In a matter of hours during major rain events Peñasquitos Creek can easily rise 8 or more feet!

If you are willing and able to help, Ranger volunteer crews work Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. They meet at the Ranger office next to the Canyonside Stables (equestrian center) on the east side of Black Mountain Road.

# Ranch Hands Welcome Chickens to Los Peñasquitos Ranch House

County Ranger Rusty Rodes

On a balmy, late November afternoon, county park staff and our newly established Ranch Hands welcomed a flock of eight chickens to Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House. After months of planning and organizational breakfast meetings, our Ranch Hands are finally in full operation and nestling in.

These hybrid chickens (a mix of Leg Horn and Rhode Island Red) were donated by the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health. They immediately brought a lively and productive energy to the otherwise tranquil historic ranch house barn yard. In the first 24 hours, our haughty hens laid 5 large brown eggs.

The flock can be viewed daily at the ranch house from 8 am to 4:30 pm. The



chicken coop is located near the north entrance of the historic red Mohnike barn. Last summer, county park attendants Felipe P. Franco, Sr. and Dave Kaufman completed an expansion of the existing chicken coop. The original structure was constructed as an Eagle Scout Project in 2006 by Nicholas Joseph Sowa, Boy Scout Troop 680.

Ranch Hands currently include four local residents (Ranch Hand Ann is pictured) and their children ranging in ages from 3 to 18. Care and maintenance of the chickens takes about an hour each day and is completed according to a daily volunteer schedule. Ranch Hand duties include checking the

chicken feed and water supply, cleaning the coop and, best of all, collecting freshly laid eggs for safe keeping in a nearby refrigerator. Ranch Hands also share in the chicken feed costs which was approximately \$40 in the first month.

As a reward, participating volunteers receive a distribution of eggs on a monthly basis. In the first full month of operation, Los Peñasquitos chickens have laid approximately 12 dozens eggs- or 3 dozen eggs for each volunteer. In addition to communicating via email, Ranch Hands conduct a monthly breakfast meeting to share stories, concerns and the bounty of eggs. The December Ranch Hand breakfast also featured an added benefit – a fresh spinach quiche made with our fresh eggs. As Ranger Paul remarked, “the chicken feedback was “egg-ceptional.”

For interested parties or to request a volunteer application, please contact Cheryl Wegner DPR Volunteer Coordinator at 858 966-1335 or Cheryl.Wegner@sdcounty.ca.gov

## People to Know Pat Watkins

*[Another in a series of our short profiles of long-time Friends' volunteers – editor.]*

Pat Watkins is a Midwest/East Coast transplant, arriving at her present home in the Park Village area of Rancho Peñasquitos in 1994. She began volunteering for the Friends in 1997, starting with restoration activities and leading hikes, which led to serving on the Board of Directors as Treasurer.

This past January 2009, she became the Outreach Coordinator, which is the Friends' first paid position due to funding from a grant through the San Diego Conservation Resources Network. In this position, she has worked to widen connections with local school volunteer groups, update outreach materials such as brochures and trail maps, and increase hike publicity. You may have seen a hike announcement signs at trailheads around the preserve and at Black Mountain Open Space Park. These, as well as upcoming new brochures and trail maps are tangible evidence of the improvements this grant has allowed the Friends to accomplish.

In addition to her volunteer and paid work with the Friends, Pat also enjoys spending time with family, hiking wherever she goes, and vegetable gardening (ask about her wicked homemade hot sauce!). Her three daughters all graduated from Mt. Carmel High School and attended California Colleges.

**Below**, Pat (on the right!), is pictured with her husband Paul on a recent hike in Lapland.



# Fund Appeal Results

Pat Watkins, Treasurer

A big thank you to the following Friends' members for their generous contributions for our projects in 2010. We'll let you know how the money is spent!

Nancy Jo Acevedo\*  
 Norman Anderson\*  
 Luanne Barrett  
 John and Linda Bradley  
 Shirley Bruno  
 K. Buco  
 Yunhui Chae-Banks\*  
 Jeffrey and Christine Codling  
 Carolyn Cooper\*  
 Charles and Kathleen Crampton  
 James and Patricia Daley  
 Robert and Gaye Dingeman  
 H.G. and Jeanne Dunham\*  
 Lenore Edidin  
 Josan Feathers  
 Alex Fleming (in memory of Bert and Bill)  
 Paul Gaughen\*  
 Marvin Gerst\*  
 Charlene Glacy\*  
 Benita Gray  
 Harmon Greening  
 Gail Hanna  
 Sinclair Hatch  
 Leo and Patricia Holland\*  
 Linda Johnson  
 Peggy Keating\*  
 Mike Kelly\*  
 Alan and Judith Kiraly  
 Suzanne Leininger  
 Robert and Linda Leiter\*  
 Patricia McFarland  
 Neil Meyer\*  
 James and Louise ONeill  
 Harvey and Cyndy Payne  
 David and Jeanette Poole\*  
 Jim Powers  
 Roy and Edwina Riblet\*  
 Robert Schmidt and Faith Barnett\*  
 Harry Schnepf  
 Barry Snyder\*  
 Jeffrey and Pam Stevens  
 Melvin and Ellen Sweet  
 Mary Toomey  
 Paula Pullenza and Greg Vines\*  
 Francisco and Antoinette Wong  
 \*contribution of \$100 or more.

# Monday Morning Mating Mantids

Story by Jeanne Raimond, photo by Wendy Esterly,

Mission Trails Regional Park Trail Guides

[We reprint this article from the newsletter of the Trail Guides. Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is also home to this species of Mantid – editor.]

As we returned to our cars after a morning bird walk at the Old Mission Dam, one of our members spied an interesting insect creeping along a willow twig. At first we thought it was a walking stick, but on closer inspection the large, spiny front legs revealed this to be a praying mantis (order: *Mantodea*, family: *Mantidae*, species: *Stagmomantis californica*). This slender male soon mounted a nearby female mantis with a rather bulbous abdomen, and soon the creation of a new generation was underway.

Although we wanted to see if the occasional behavior of the female biting the head off of the copulating male would occur, we let our discretion dictate that we allow them their privacy. Even if the male's head is bitten off, copulation continues due to special ganglia located in the male's abdomen. When mating is complete, the female may finish eating the male. This cannibalistic behavior is more prevalent if the insects are in a confined space.

Mantids may be green, brown, or a combination of both and blend in with their surroundings. They are generalist ambush predators that can be viewed as either helpful or harmful. They are polyphagous predators meaning they eat more than one type of living thing, being efficient at capturing and eating a wide variety of insects (flies, aphids, moths, butterflies) and other small prey including small tree frogs, lizards, small mice, and unsuspecting hummingbirds. In the wild, mantids get all the water they need from their diet or from dew collected on leaves.



The two front legs are highly specialized. When hunting, mantids assume a "praying" posture with their muscular, spiny front legs folded under their head. The spines fit into a groove on the lower parts of the legs when not in use. They lie in wait and patiently stalk their prey, then strike out and capture their victim faster than the eye can see. The impaled prey is held firmly in place while being eaten, usually the head first.

Nearly 2,000 species of mantids are found in many tropical, subtropical and temperate regions of the world. Over 20 species are found in the U.S. One species, the California mantis, is native to the West coast. Several species of mantids have been introduced into the U.S. from Europe, Africa and Asia as biologic control agents. Being an indiscriminate hunter though they will take helpful as well as harmful insects.

Being in the Insecta class, mantids have 6 jointed legs and 2 antennae, a 3 part body (head, thorax and abdomen) and a hard exoskeleton. An elongated prothorax that looks like a neck increases their head mobility, which can rotate up to 180 degrees. Mantids are usually 2 to 6 inches in length from head to wing tip, with females being larger than males and having heavier abdomens. Two large compound eyes on their triangular shaped heads are capable of seeing images and color and movement up to 60 feet away. Additionally, three simple eyes are

See p. 6 for more

# Update on North City Parks

Mike Kelly

## Budget news

The budget news is grim. The City is requiring that the Parks and Recreation Dept. cut another 27%, \$14.5 million, from the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. The Dept. doesn't expect to have to layoff Rangers, but it does mean several Ranger positions will remain unfilled. Despite this grim picture, the City Rangers at Black Mountain Open Space Park are carrying off a large variety of projects.

## New parks added . . .

You may not know it, but Rangers Ed Christenson and Joel Tracy aren't just responsible for Black Mountain Park. They have also been in charge of the City's portion of Crest Canyon in Del Mar, Mt. Woodson, and Clevenger Canyon Open Space. As if that wasn't enough they recently had Gonzalez Canyon (north of Del Mar Heights Road, south of San Dieguito River Valley), Battle Mtn. (San Pasqual), McGonigle Canyon (south side of SR56), and some isolated parcels on the north side of SR56 in Peñasquitos. Wow! Almost all of these parks have trail systems to maintain, fences that need mending, invasive weeds to control, endangered species to protect, and the list goes on!

## Erosion repairs

Ranger Joel Tracy is heading up a project (see picture and story on page 1) to repair the giant scars on the face of Black Mountain, working with the Urban Corps.

The current rains will do erosion damage to trails and drainages in several of the parks, requiring Ranger attention in the coming months.

## Invasives control in Crest

Crest Canyon is home to an exceedingly rare type of habitat called Maritime succulent scrub. One of the rarest plant species in the world, *Dudleya brevifolia* (short-leaved Dudleya), lives there. If it gets as big as your thumbnail, it's a big one for this species! The San Dieguito River Park also

## (Mating Mantids Cont'd)

arranged in a triangle between the antennae and perhaps tell the difference between light and dark.

Mantids are mostly diurnal, but winged adults, especially males, will sometimes fly to porch lights at night to prey on insects attracted there. Since mantids are territorial, only one mantis will be on a single plant. The mantis may re-main on the same plant as long as food is available.

The breeding season is in the summer. After mating, the female lays 12 to 400 eggs in the fall. The eggs are surrounded by a frothy liquid called an "ootheca" that turns into a hard, styro-foam-like protective shell. This allows the eggs to survive through the winter, with the young emerging in the spring. Mantids go through incomplete metamorphosis. They do not have a larval stage, and newly hatched mantids look like small ants or small, wingless mantid adults.

Often the first meal of a young mantis, or nymph, is a sibling. They also eat leafhoppers, aphids and small flies. It takes an entire summer for mantids to mature to adulthood. With each molt the wing buds increase in size. When the wings are fully developed, the mantid becomes an adult.

The lifespan of a praying mantis in the wild is short, often a year or less. They in turn are preyed upon by birds, bats and spiders. Some species of mantis have hollow chambers in their bodies that allow for the detection of certain frequencies such as from bats, their most feared predator. The mantis will drastically alter its flight path to avoid this predator.

Historically, praying mantises are associated with diverse pharmacologic and religious beliefs. The name "mantis" comes from the Greek word for 'prophet' or 'soothsayer.' The Chinese believed that the mantis could cure anything from impotence to goiter. They believed that roasting the egg cases and feeding them to their children would cure bed wetting.

Mantises are relatively easy to raise in captivity from an egg case collected in the field or purchased from biologic supply companies. They are kept in terrariums and their feeding behavior observed as a classroom activity. Some people have gone so far as to put them on leashes, using a thread tied around the thorax. How undignified! We chose to just enjoy them in the wild when we are lucky enough to encounter them along the trails.

## References

- Eaton, Eric R. and Ken Kaufman. Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America. 2007, Houghton Mifflin Co.  
[www.insecta-inspecta.com/mantids/praying](http://www.insecta-inspecta.com/mantids/praying) Praying Mantis: *Stagmomantis californica*. 2007, Oregon State University Extension Service  
 Praying Mantids: University of Kentucky Entomology.  
[www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef418.asp](http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef418.asp)

owns land there of course and has been quite active with volunteers in removing trash and invasive weeds. More of this invasives work is planned for the coming year. Crest is also home to perhaps the rarest tree species in the world, *Pinus torreyana* (The Torrey Pine).

## Migrant camps

Migrant camps continue to require a lot of attention from the Rangers. I've helped clean up some of these illegal camps and can testify to their negative impact on fragile habitats. Illegal trails through sensitive habitats, trash, including feces, strewn about, fires in tinder dry brush, harvesting of rare barrel cactus to sell on the side

are some of the impacts on the habitat.

## Patrolling

Security patrolling is a core function for the Rangers, making sure park users are safe and stopping violations of important regulations such as dumping. Recently, Ranger Joe caught 2 guys illegally dumping at the glider port on Black Mountain, a recurring problem around Black Mtn. Park. They were issued 'commercial dumping citations.' A few months ago, the Rangers found a dump site, sifted through it and found a name and address where the trash came from! They visited this person and identified and cited the individual and hauled and dumped the trash. Way to go!

Los Peñasquitos Rancho Adobe  
**Docent Profile:**  
**George and Benita Gray**  
 County Ranger Rusty Rodes

George and Benita Gray are long time Rancho Peñasquitos residents and have been docents at the Los Peñasquitos rancho adobe for over 10 years. As a true history junkie, George specializes in early California history and is a member of the Los Californianos, an organization created for the purpose of preserving the heritage of the early Hispanic Californians.

The Grays also volunteer at the Old Town State Park. Currently, George is in training to portray the role of George Washington Eayres, an early 18th century adventurer who sailed throughout Baja and southern California. Benita and George are pictured (right) in period attire as worn in Old Town. The photo was taken by rancho docent Hank Beck on the west porch of Wing "B" at the ranch house.

Visitors can meet George or one of our other docents for a tour of the ranch house. Docent lead tours are conducted twice a week: Saturday at 11 am and Sunday at 1 pm.



### 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: \_\_\_\_\_ **4/09**

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
 Call **858.484.3219** or **858.342-8856** for more information.

### Friends' Directory

#### Officers

President: Brian Swanson 760.739.5451  
 Vice-President: Don Albright 619.443.5937  
 Treasurer: Pat Watkins 858.538.2527  
 Secretary: Rick Botta 858.672.0584

#### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

#### Walk Leaders

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

#### Committees:

Newsletter: Mike Kelly at 858-342-8856.  
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta,  
 858.672-0584  
 Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.566.6489  
 Webmaster: Beth Williams  
 Wildlife Surveys: Patrick Campbell, 760.471.9197



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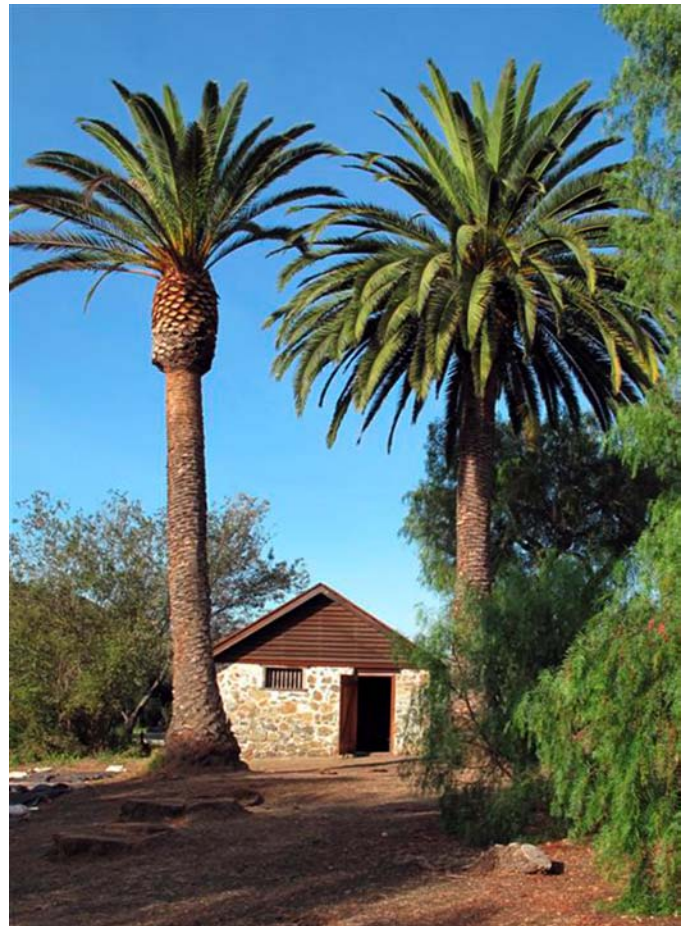
If your expiration date has come and gone please take the time to send in a renewal check for your membership dues and save us the postage of reminder mailings!

## Photo Gallery

**Left:** October 31, 2009 volunteers from the Mt. Carmel High School Key Club and Mira Mesa Troop 642 Boy Scouts weeded, mulched, and planted a variety of native plants at waterfall restoration site. In the bottom row, right most is pictured Friends' Outreach Coordinator Pat Watkins.

**Bottom left:** Nov. 21, 2009 work party featured Troop 642 again and long time Friends' volunteers.

Right: Restored Springhouse is framed by Canary Island date palms on spruced up grounds. *Have you visited the historic ranch house recently? Dozens of new exhibits and period plantings are been added to the buildings. Why not take one of the free weekend tours offered by County docents?*







# Canyon News

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

April, May, June  
Volume 24, No. 2

## Recital at the Ranch House

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

A warm Sunday afternoon in the courtyard of the beautifully restored Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos was the setting for a fundraising recital, the first of many we hope. Hosted by the County Dept. of Parks and Recreation and the San Diego County Parks Society, the event celebrated the restoration of a 19th-Century English upright Piano. The historic rancho adobe is now home to this historic piano.

The piano was built sometime in the 1850s, making it about 160 years old! The restoration was done by Javier Garcia of The Piano Place, the man who also restored an historic piano at the County's Rancho Guajome.

Maggie Atterbury, emeritus music associate at Pacific Beach United Methodist Church, played a potpourri of piano pieces and transcriptions from Bach to Schuman and from spirituals to Stephen Foster. Nick Robinson, currently with the Hillcrest Wind Ensemble, played the Clarinet. A second recital featured Alice Avigal, flutist and music therapist for the San Diego Community College District and Thomas Shanks, pianist and currently the organist at Peace Lutheran Church in San Diego. They treated us to a Sonata in B flat, CPE Bach, flute and piano and a Sonata in E minor, John Loeillet, flute and piano and some Mexican favorites, both flute and piano.

Tasty food from Indulge Contemporary Catering hit the spot for recital attendees.

Dr. Lynne Christenson Newell, the retiring County Historian, delivered some remarks on the role of music, fiestas, and recitals in the Rancho / Settler culture of San Diego in the mid-19th century, including well described fiestas at the Peñasquitos Ranch House.

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Photos: Nicholas Robinson playing the Clarinet (top), Maggie Atterbury, pianist, with historic piano in the background (right bottom). Left bottom: the audience at the recital.

## Upcoming Hikes and Events

Hikes are free. Be sure to wear good trail sneakers or boots, sun protection, and bring plenty of water as the weather is heating up. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Park Driveway off Black Mountain Road between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Quarterly:

##### **Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training: Sat. 9:15 a.m. – 4 p.m. Apr. 17, July 17, Oct. 16**

Wildlife survey volunteers are invited to attend a free one-day training conducted by the experienced tracker/naturalists of the San Diego Tracking Team. Training includes basic track, sign, and habitat recognition and details on the implementation of the survey protocol. Following the training, volunteers are expected to accompany a transect leader on at least one survey transect.

After completing this training or equivalent (including any of the LPTT's Tracker/Naturalist classes), volunteers are welcome to practice their skills by assisting with future surveys.

Pre-registration is not required for individuals but requested for groups. Please bring a sack lunch, water, and be prepared to spend much of the day outdoors. Also, please bring your calendar to sign up for transects. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. May 13, July 8, Sept. 9, Nov. 11**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. May 20, July 15, Sept. 16, Nov. 18**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

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

**Tues., 7 p.m. May 4, July 6, Sept. 7; Nov. 2**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Sat. 8 a.m. May 8, June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11**

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Drive and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

##### **Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez/Peñasquitos Canyons**

**Sun., 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Apr. 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, Aug. 22, Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 26.**

Trash pickups in Lopez & Peñasquitos Canyon. Volunteers needed! Community service credits available. Meet at

**Maps** of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org)

Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3)**

#### Other Events:

### April

##### **Herb Walk with Will Bowen**

**Sun., April 25, 4 - 6 p.m.**

Learn to identify different plants and shrubs of Carmel Mountain Nature Preserve. See plants like the colorful Bush Monkey Flower, fragrant Black Sage, and nutritional Chia. Find out how the plants here were once used for food and medicine by Native Americans and Spanish and Anglo-American settlers, and end up with a grasp of the native flora. Meet at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way in San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C2)**

### May

##### **Geology walk through time**

**Sat., May 8, 9 - 11 a.m.**

Walk through time with geologist Don Albright. Hike will take you through hundreds of millions of years of geology, visit the waterfall, and see a rare fossil. Wear good footwear for steep trail. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, one long block east of Camino Santa Fe. **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

##### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., May 22, 8 - 10 a.m.**

Join hike leader Arne Johansen to hike the Miner's Loop trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Road, about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 (E7)**

##### **Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike**

**Sun., May 23, 8 a.m.**

## Volunteer Opportunities

Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall, Sycamore Crossing and Kit Carson's Crossing. Meet at the kiosk near 7107 Park Village Road at Celome Way, Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 (J7)**

### **Herb Walk with Will Bowen Sun., May 30, 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

Learn to identify different plants and shrubs of Lopez Canyon. See plants like the colorful Bush Monkey Flower, fragrant Black Sage, and nutritional Chia. Find out how the plants here were once used for food and medicine by Native Americans and Spanish and Anglo-American settlers, and end up with a grasp of the native flora. Meet at West End Parking Staging Area. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C/D 5)**

### **June**

### **Nighttime Wildlife Hike with Mike Kelly**

**Fri., June 4, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.**

Join naturalist Mike Kelly on this moderately paced loop walk to Carson's Crossing. Good chance of encountering Mule deer, owls, bats, and more. Meet at kiosk at Camino del Sur (old C. Ruiz) and Park Village Rd. in Rancho Penasquitos. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7)**

### **Geology walk through time**

**Sat., June 5, 9 - 11 a.m.,**

Walk through time with geologist Don Albright. Hike will take you through hundreds of millions of years of geology, visit the waterfall, and see a rare fossil. Wear good footwear for steep trail. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, one long block east of Camino Santa Fe. **Thomas Guide p. 1208**

### **Herb Walk with Will Bowen**

**Sun., June 20 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

Learn to identify different plants and shrubs of Lopez Canyon. See plants like the colorful Bush Monkey Flower, fragrant Black Sage, and nutritional Chia. Find out how the plants here were once used for food and medicine by Native Americans and Spanish and Anglo-American settlers, and end up with a grasp of the native flora. Meet at the parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C/D 5)**

### **Cactus Wren Restoration Site**

**Sat., April 24, May 8, May 22, 9a.m. - 1 p.m.**

We are planting cactus and other plant species to create a coastal sage scrub environment for the endangered Coastal Cactus Wren. We can accommodate both individuals and groups. Contact Mike Kelly at 858-342-8856 or [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) for more information. Meeting location has changed to the public park on Via Azul off Camino del Sur. **Thomas Guide p.1168 (J6)**



### **Fiesta de los Penasquitos Booth**

**Sun., May 2 10 a.m - 5 p.m.**

Help staff the Friends' booth and displays and pass out literature at this annual street fair in Rancho Penasquitos. Email Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or Pat Watkins at [pwatkins2008@gmail.com](mailto:pwatkins2008@gmail.com) for more information.

### **National Trails Day**

**Sat. June 5, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Join in National Trails Day projects including trail restoration and trash pick-ups. Help staff the Friends' booth and displays and pass out literature. Always a fun outing. Email Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or Pat Watkins at [pwatkins2008@gmail.com](mailto:pwatkins2008@gmail.com) for more information.

### **RB Alive! Expo Booth**

**Sun., June 6 9:30 a.m - 5 p.m.**

Help staff the Friends' booth and displays and pass out literature at this annual street fair in Rancho Bernardo. Email Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or Pat Watkins at [pwatkins2008@gmail.com](mailto:pwatkins2008@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black**

### **Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., June 26, 8 - 10 a.m.**

Join hike leader David Robinson to hike the Miner's Loop trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Road, about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mountain Road in Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 (E7)**

As the weather warms up, please remember to bring plenty of water and sun protection (hat or sun screen or both) when you visit the parks and canyons.

Hiking boots or trail sneakers are recommended.



People to Know  
**Dick Stevens**

**Ranger Paul Kucharczyk**

Richard "Dick" Stevens has been a resident live-in volunteer at Los Penasquitos Canyon Open Space Preserve since 2003. He became aware of a county parks live-in volunteer couple that lost everything in the 2003 Cedar Fire. Upon hearing about their loss the Stevens' returned from their residence in Las Vegas, Nevada, with their own trailer in tow for the distraught couple. The couple, most appreciative, occupied this spot for two months before moving on. The Stevens decided to apply for the live-in volunteer position their trailer was on, and they have remained ever since.

The staging area is remote and separate from the rangers' office located on the other side of the Penasquitos Creek and 1/2 mile away. Nefarious types would slide in and out of the staging area until the Stevens moved in. Dick quickly earned his own Motorola MTS 2000 and charger to

stay in contact with the rangers. Between the staging area and the rangers' office, we now have the most active portal into the canyon covered.

Too many times, Dick has alerted the rangers to fires or emergency vehicles entering the canyon, relayed information on injured hikers, mountain bikers & equestrians (including horses returning with empty saddles!), dogs suffering from heat exhaustion, and reports of rattlesnake sightings in public areas. Amy, Dick's wife, is a nurse and has responded to accident victims with her medical bag while we are waiting for medical assistance.

Growing up on a ranch in Wyoming taught Dick many of the skills necessary for maintaining our facility. He offers more than his 20 hour minimum per week to work our tractor over many acres of fields and grade our many dirt roads & trails. His 'horse sense' comes in handy at one of the most actively enjoyed equestrian staging areas. From riders in distress to horses that just won't load into their trailer, he makes sure all's well by the time he locks the gates at sunset. Inevitably, some folks aren't back at closing, and he may decide to conduct a patrol to the falls & back to assist the lost & weary.

Dick refers to all staging area visitors as "customers" and offers to include anyone on his list to receive e-mail on canyon closures & re-openings, as well as events and other pertinent news. Mr. Stevens is a computer wizard and has mentored park staff through the years on new applications that come our way. He creates verbal & picture signs that can then be laminated for the canyon's trails. Truly, Mr. Richard "Dick" Stevens has the heart of a guardian watch dog and never lets the rangers or the public down. He is more than a typical live-in volunteer; he performs more as a Volunteer Ranger.

## Cactus Wren Restoration Site Update

Since January, students from Westview and Mt. Carmel High Schools, along with other student and adult volunteers, have been weeding and planting cactus, California Sagebrush, Black Sage and other plants to create a safe nesting area for the Cactus Wren. Project work days will continue through May, 2010. See page 3 for dates.



# Waterfall Restoration Project

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

More than 20 volunteers from the Grand Del Mar Hotel helped for the second year in a row in restoring 2 sites at the Preserve's waterfall on the north side of the creek. The Hotel is a neighbor to the north of the Preserve, nestled in Shaw Valley. They've proven to be a friendly, hard working group each time. Rangers Gina Washington and John Garwood helped organize the event, as did Friends' conservation chair Mike Kelly.

In a nice gesture, the Hotel paid for the native plants used in the plantings. The plants included the rare scrub oak, *Quercus dumosa*, Blue elderberry, California sagebrush, Black sage, Lemonadeberry, and more. Some of the plants were the large 5-gallon size, giving them a good jump start on establishment.

The site required extensive weed removal done by the volunteers, then digging the holes, planting, mulching and watering. Kelly spoke to the group for a few minutes on the history of the Preserve and that site and warned about the presence of poison oak and rattlesnakes. The latter was confirmed later, when, to the delight of the participants, a rattler was spotted in the middle of the site and was carefully removed by Senior Ranger Washington. One volunteer shot a video clip of the transporting of the large Southern pacific subspecies of the Western diamondback away from the site.

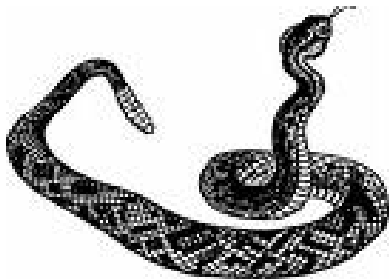
A great box lunch was had by all, courtesy of the chef at the Hotel. Many chose to eat it down by the waterfall itself, sitting on the rocks and relaxing to the rhythm of the cascading waters. Several people commented they hadn't known about the falls and planned to come back with family and friends.

A special thanks to volunteer Bill Witzel. Bill has been volunteering for about 20 years in the Preserve and hangs out with the Rangers a couple of days a week, working on trails, fences, planting — whatever needs doing.

If you'd like to help with weeding and watering of the plants in the coming warmer months, please contact Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com).



Top: Waterfall restoration site prior to work beginning  
Middle: The volunteers hard at work  
Bottom: Waterfall site at the end of the day  
Photos by Mike Kelly



**Please be aware of where you are stepping when out in the canyons. Snakes, lizards, and other wildlife are increasingly abundant as the weather warms.**

## New Funding Possibilities

Brian Swanson, President

One a weekday morning in early February, Friends' Conservation Chair Mike Kelly and President Brian Swanson met with Shea Valero O'Keefe, a biologist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service with offices in Escondido. Shea studied biology at San Diego State University and earned her undergraduate and masters degrees studying mule deer scat and population genetics.

Shea works with land owners to preserve and enhance habitat for important species. Surrounded by people sipping their coffee and browsing the internet, Mike briefed Shea on the eight parcels that the Friends acquired from The Environmental Trust last summer. Several of the Friends' parcels support, or could support, a number of declining or sensitive animal species including the California gnatcatcher and the redwing blackbird. As we toured the parcels, we heard male redwing blackbirds who had staked out their marshy territories in anticipation of the spring breeding season. We also heard Pacific chorus frogs and saw a western fence lizard (blue belly).

Our vernal pool area sported several inches of water and, although we didn't

see any fairy shrimp and it was a little early for tadpoles, there were quite a few tiny little insects swimming around in the pool. The pools were surrounded by non-native grasslands, curlie dock, and a few natives like blue-eyed grass and goldenbush. The vernal pools present an opportunity to restore and improve the habitat and can be a great educational resource for nearby Adobe Falls Elementary School and the surrounding community.

The Friends will draft a short proposal for controlling invasives and restoring coastal sage scrub, then Shea

will submit our project for a grant. Presently the government is seeking private landowners (like the Friends) to partner in protecting key species. Any funds received will greatly aid the Friends' mission of restoring and managing these open space parcels. This will involve our community outreach, educational signage and kiosks, and interpretive walks. We are looking for contacts to neighboring Homeowners Associations so that we can open communication with our neighboring communities. Stay tuned for updates.



Photo: Mike Kelly and Shea Valero O'Keefe check one of the Friends' vernal pools. Photo by Brian Swanson.

## Trail Updates

from Senior Ranger  
Gina Washington

As part of the Ocean Air Community Park construction at the south end of Carmel Mountain Preserve, the **Trail Head at Fairport and Shorepointe** will be closed from April 5 to April 30 while erosion controls are being installed. There will be open trenches, loose surface material and equipment in the area. For your safety, and that of your family and friends, please stay out of this area during these dates, including weekends and after hours.

**The Shaw Valley Trail** (the one that follows along the Golf Course) is overgrown with poison oak. Hikers should avoid that trail and equestrians should be extremely cautious until the poison oak is trimmed back.

For current trail information, please check our website at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org).

## Funds Appeal Update

Pat Watkins, Treasurer

We inadvertently left these donors off the fund drive list from our last newsletter. We apologize to these members for the oversight.

Barbara Bartley  
Cheryl Berkey  
Mark and Kathie Bulley  
Ulrick Burgin  
Ralph Carolin  
Richard and Diana Childers  
Martin Feeney  
Andrea Hall  
Anne Harvey  
Linda King  
James Knott  
Fred and Linda Kramer\*  
H. William Kuni  
Labaw Family  
Steve Lister\*  
Barry and Marti Martin\*

Jeff and Nancy Martin\*  
Robert Paluzzi  
Ann Pogue  
Vivienne Seymour  
Dave and Sherry Smith  
James and Maria Thayer  
Sandra Troyer

\*contribution of \$100 or more.

# Scar Repairs on Black Mountain

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

Those ugly erosion scars on Black Mtn. that can be seen miles away are being addressed. City Rangers Ed Christenson and Joel Tracey are shown in the picture on the right working with a hydroseeding company to start the process of healing the scars. A hydroseed mix is a combination of native plant seed, mulch, fertilizer, and watering agents that are blown by high powered hose guns from a tank truck such as the one pictured.

This particular operation was done a bit late in the season, so it's not clear if the recent smaller rains will be enough to bring the seed up or for it to take if it does sprout. Keep an eye on the scars for signs of life! If it doesn't work, then it will be tried again under more optimal conditions.



## Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

Friends of Los 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 **858.342.8856** for more information.

## Don't be left out!

Want to keep up with all the events sponsored by the Friends of Peñasquitos?

Get all the latest information, and details on last minute events by giving us your email address.

Email your contact information to Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or to Pat Watkins at [pwatkins2008@gmail.com](mailto:pwatkins2008@gmail.com).

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson	760.739.5451
Vice-President: Don Albright	619.443.5937
Treasurer: Pat Watkins	858.538.2527
Secretary: Edward DiBella	619.563.0717

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly, Mary Leuking

### Walk Leaders

Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike Kelly, Pat Watkins, Linda King

### Committees

Newsletter: Janet Nelson, 619.519.3150  
Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta, 858.672.0584  
Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.342.8856  
Webmaster: Beth Williams



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If your expiration date is close or has come and gone, please take the time to send in a renewal check for your membership dues and save us the postage for reminder mailings!

## Frogs, Toads, Tadpoles & Fairy Shrimp Walk



Above: Rescuing tadpoles in a nearly dried vernal pool to move them to a larger, deeper pool are (from left) Delaney and Cassidy Welty with Jack Wisegarver and his mom, Kelly.  
Top right: Hike leader Will Bowen with some of the participants.  
Bottom Right: Can you see the tadpoles that needed to be rescued?







# Canyon News

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

July, August, Sept.  
Volume 24, No. 3

## Wild Springs have Sprung

Park Ranger Rusty Rodes

As Supervising Park Ranger Paul Kucharczyk wryly noted shortly after the April 4, 2010, 7.2 magnitude earthquake, "The Wild Springs have sprung at Los Peñasquitos Rancho Adobe." Today the grounds and wild springs continue to show natural (and sometimes unpredictable) changes taking place at the ranch house.

On that Sunday, Ranger Paul reported the adobe structure shook and trembled for 10-15 seconds. Following the quake, he calmly escorted the Fa-So-La singing group from the conference room to the courtyard. Once safely outside, visitors and staff quickly discovered new wild springs flowing on the grounds just east of the courtyard. During a follow-up property inspection, a substantial increase in the flowing water volume was also observed at the artesian well in the Spring House.

Water measurements taken by USGS officials at the Spring House have confirmed a marked increase in spring water flow from 7 gallons per minute to 35 gpm. Water quality tests have also revealed that the source of the spring water is most likely from a deep underground aquifer, perhaps as

much as 1500 feet below the Earth's surface.

According to historic records, the recent wild spring activity is not unique to the ranch house. A *San Diego Union* article dated April 4, 1872 documented a similar occurrence in wild springs following another earthquake. At that time, Rancho Peñasquitos owner George A. Johnson reported an increase in spring water flow from 13 to 43 gpm just days following a southern California earthquake measured between magnitude 7.6 and 8.0. If history repeats itself, the wild spring may dissipate over time and the wetland area east of the ranch house will dry up.

The wild springs continue to flow at the same increased rate today. Wild spring activity at the ranch house has become "a must see" for a growing number of first time visitors and seasoned regulars alike. To protect the emerging aquatic vegetation and wildlife and safety of park visitors, County staff has carefully placed wooden barriers around the perimeter of the new wetland area.

County staff and consultants continue to monitor and investigate the

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changes unfolding at the ranch house. Noticeable changes in the expansion and growth of aquatic vegetation in the wetland area has occurred between mid-May and mid-June. In the most recent photo (taken 6/16/10), County Park Attendant Felipe Franco is seen inspecting the effects of the wild springs on near-by pepper trees.

## 2010 San Diego Thornmint Survey

Mary Lueking

The annual Los Peñasquitos Canyon San Diego thornmint survey was conducted in early May this year by Friend's volunteers. Four sites were visited including Peñasquitos Canyon, Black Mountain Open Space Preserve, Sabre Springs and a site in Mission Trails Regional Park. In all 10 volunteers performed the surveys.

The San Diego thornmint (*Acanthomintha ilicifolia*) is a very delicate annual plant that grows primarily in heavy clay soils. It is listed by the California Department of Fish and Game as an Endangered Species, meaning that it is in danger of becoming extinct in California. It is also listed as threatened on the federal list published by the U.S. (see Thornmint page 6)



## Upcoming Hikes and Events

Hikes are free. Be sure to wear good trail sneakers or boots, sun protection (hat or sunscreen or both), and bring plenty of water as the weather is heating up. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Park Driveway off Black Mountain Road between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Sat. 8 a.m. July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11**

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Drive and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

##### **Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez/Peñasquitos Canyons**

**Sun., 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. July 25, Aug. 22, Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 26.**

Trash pickups in Lopez & Peñasquitos Canyon. Volunteers needed! Community service credits available. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3)**

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. July 8, Sept. 9, Nov. 11**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. July 15, Sept. 16, Nov. 18**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

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

**Tues., 7 p.m. July 6, Sept. 7; Nov. 2**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Quarterly:

##### **Beginning Tracking for Wildlife Surveys: Sat. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. July 17, Oct. 16**

This class prepares you to participate in surveys that monitor the wildlife in major open space preserves and other critical areas. Topics include basic recognition and identification of animal tracks and other signs, introduction to track patterns and gaits, wildlife journaling, an overview of the survey protocol, and more! Classroom time is supplemented with plenty of time in the field ("dirt time"). This training is required for survey volunteers and also serves as a prerequisite for the Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist class. After this training, students are expected to participate in at least one SDTT wildlife survey. Preregistration is not required for individuals, but requested for groups. The \$25 fee includes a number of valuable reference materials. Dress

**Maps** of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org)

prepared to spend time outdoors and bring a sack lunch and water.

Also, please bring your calendar to sign up for transects. For more information: 760.715.4102 or [www.sdt.org](http://www.sdt.org). Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

### Other Events and Hikes

#### July

##### **Night Time Wildlife Hike with Mike Kelly**

**Sun., July 11, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

Join naturalist Mike Kelly on this moderately paced loop walk to Carson's Crossing. Good chance of encountering Mule deer, owls, bats, and more. Meet at kiosk at Camino del Sur (old C. Ruiz) and Park Village Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Park by the kiosk. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7)**

##### **Night Walk with Will Bowen, PhD.**

**Sat., July 24 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

We start at dusk and walk into the night to experience a different canyon in the dark. Hopefully we will encounter owls, bats, deer, and night blooming plants. The senses other than vision are enriched at night. This is also a chance to contemplate the moon, stars, and constellations. Bring a flashlight and water. You might need insect repellent. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

##### **Owl Walk with Brian Swanson**

**Fri., July 30, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

Learn about the natural history of our owls, bats and other nocturnal creatures that live in our preserve. Join naturalist Brian Swanson for a 2 to 3 mile hike as we search for three species of owls. Wear sturdy shoes and darker clothing, and bring a flashlight. Meet on the west side of Canyonside Park ball fields at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

## Special Event

### August

#### **Night Time Wildlife Hike with Mike Kelly**

**Sat. August 14, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.**

Join naturalist Mike Kelly on this moderately paced loop walk to Carson's Crossing. Good change of encountering Mule deer, owls, bats, and more. Meet at kiosk at Camino del Sur (old C. Ruiz) and Park Village Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Park by the kiosk. Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7)

#### **Night Walk with Will Bowen, PhD.**

**Sat., Aug 28 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

We start at dusk and walk into the night to experience a different canyon in the dark. Hopefully we will encounter owls, bats, deer, and night blooming plants. The senses other than vision are enriched at night. This is also a chance to contemplate the moon, stars, and constellations. Bring a flashlight and water. You might need insect repellent. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

#### **Owl Walk with Brian Swanson**

**Fri., August 27, 7 - 9 p.m.**

Learn about the natural history of our owls, bats and other nocturnal creatures that live in our preserve. Join naturalist Brian Swanson for a 2 to 3 mile hike as we search for three species of owls. Wear sturdy shoes and darker clothing, and bring a flashlight. Meet on the west side of Canyonside Park ball fields at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

### September

#### **Night Time Spider Hike with Will Bowen, PhD.**

**Sat., September 11, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

In late Summer and early Fall you cannot predict exactly when in the first hours of evening the Orb Spiders build huge beautiful webs across the trail. This is a hike to look for and admire these webs. We might find other spiders, like Black Widows, and maybe bats and owls. Bring a flashlight and water. You might need insect repellent. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

#### **Maggie, Nick and Levi sharing Music from the Heart**

**Saturday July 31, 5 p.m.** Los Peñasquitos Rancho Adobe

Please join us for a variety of music featuring piano, clarinet, and vocal selections for a warm summer evening.

Hosted by the County Dept. of Parks and Recreation and the San Diego County Parks Society the evening will feature Maggie Atterbury, emeritus music associate at Pacific Beach United Methodist Church on the piano and Nick Robinson, currently with the Hillcrest Wind Ensemble, on the clarinet.



## Owls in the Preserve

Brian Swanson, President

172 species of birds have been documented in the Preserve, including three species of owls. Being nocturnal, owls are more often heard than seen. The great horned owl is the largest and, perhaps, the most well-known of our owls. Its call is the who, who-who that we hear on numerous cowboy movies. It builds a large stick nest, or borrows one built by a raven or hawk. It eats a variety of rodents, and will even eat skunks or house cats.

The barn owl, with its round face and haunting screech, is often just a flash in front of our headlights as it glides just above a field in search of mice and rats. It nests on ledges or in tree hollows, or even in owl nesting boxes. Our third owl, less common than the others, prefers old oak groves, where it too nests in tree cavities. Its call is more of a soft fluttering sound. It prefers to eat mice, rats, moths and other small critters.

The Friends will host several owl walks this summer. These walks will last about two hours. Please see our hike list for further information.

## National Trails Day

Brian Swanson

National Trails Day was celebrated June 5th at the historic Peñasquitos Adobe, hosted by County Parks Supervising Ranger Paul Kucharczyk and Ranger Rusty Rhodes, and Sr. City Ranger Gina Washington. Over two hundred volunteers, including Scouts and families from Boy Scout Packs 299, 605, 1203, 1205, 1209, and Troops 616, 648, 663, 1212, who were working on their service projects, an industrious team from the Lakeside Community Center, and volunteers from all parts of the county, spent the morning repairing single track trails and related projects on the east end of the preserve. Teams were supervised by County and City staff and experienced volunteers. Nearly a mile of trail was repaired or reconstructed, trash that had been swept in by winter flooding was collected (including 42 softballs!) and brush was removed.

Rewards for the hard work included a pony ride and petting zoo for the kids, western themed music by Rails & Trails, great company, and delicious food. A big "THANK YOU" to sponsors of the event: San Diego County Parks Society, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, San Diego City Parks and Rec Dept., San Diego County Parks and Open Space Department, Vulcan Materials (for the soil/aggregate for trails repair) and the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Congratulations to all for a job well done!

# The Trees of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Mary Lueking

Earlier this year I was asked to lead a hike for the Friends with an emphasis on trees. At the time I thought to myself that this would be an easy task. After all, how many trees can there be in the canyon?

As it turns out, researching the trees of Peñasquitos Canyon was a much bigger job than I had anticipated. There are 28 different tree species that are documented in the canyon. The following list of trees was extracted from the Peñasquitos Canyon Plant List<sup>1</sup>.

Most of the non-native species were introduced as ornamentals or for fruit production, such as the large Canary Island date palms and the apple, pear and apricot trees, all of which can be seen at the adobe ranch house. Others may not have been imported directly into the canyon, but have escaped from the landscapes of homes surrounding the canyon. Many of the non-native species are also quite highly invasive and have been the subject of various extermination efforts over the years. Some of the more highly invasive species include Mexican fan palm, eucalyptus, and peppertrees.

There are twelve species of native trees in Peñasquitos Canyon (Table 1). Most of these trees are found in the riparian zone along the creek. In fact if you take a hike on the south side of the creek on the main road, from the Ranch House crossing to Peñasquitos Creek crossing, you will be able to see at least half of these species (Numbers 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10 on the native tree list).

In addition to the obvious benefits we associate with trees such as shade, trees are an essential component of the ecosystem, providing food and shelter for numerous birds, animals, and insects.

My personal favorite of the trees is the western sycamore. It is deciduous, meaning that it loses its leaves every year and grows new ones in the spring. All winter, the trees are very stark looking but that is a great time to see the many raptors and the clumps of the big-leaf mistletoe. Then in the spring there is a renewal of life as the large leaves unfold to provide shade for the summer.

**Coast live oaks form a canopy or "tunnel" over the trail. Photo by Linda King**





**Left: An acorn woodpecker on a dead snag of a western sycamore tree (*Platanus racemosa*). You can see the numerous small holes the woodpeckers have created for storage of acorns. This is called a granary tree. The larger holes may be nesting sites for the woodpeckers, other birds, or bees.**

**Right: The leaf of the sycamore can grow up to 12 inches across.**



**Table 1. The Trees of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve**

#	Plant Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	
<b>Non-native trees</b>				
1	Anacardaceae (Sumac)	<i>Schinus molle</i>	Peruvian Peppertree	 <p><b>Canary Island date palm</b></p>
2		<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	Brazilian Peppertree	
3	Arecaceae (Palm)	<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>	Canary Island Date Palm	
4		<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Mexican Fan Palm	
5	Fabaceae (Pea)	<i>Prosopis glandulosa var. torreyana</i>	Honey Mesquite	
6	Hamamelidaceae (Witch Hazel)	<i>Liquidambar sp.</i>	Sweetgum	
7	Moraceae (Mulberry)	<i>Casimiroa edulis</i>	White Sapote/Osage orange	
8	Myrtaceae (Myrtle)	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	
9		<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	Lemon-scented Gum	
10		<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	Tasmanian Bluegum	
11	Oleaceae (Olive)	<i>Fraxinus uhdei</i>	Tropical ash	
12	Rosaceae (Rose)	<i>Malus sp</i>	Apple	
13		<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>	Apricot	
14		<i>Pyrus sp</i>	Pear	
15	Simaroubaceae (Quassia)	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of Heaven	
16	Ulmaceae (Elm)	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Chinese Elm	
<b>Native trees</b>				
1	Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle)	<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	Mexican Elderberry	 <p><b>Western cottonwood</b></p>
2	Fagaceae (Oak)	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	Coast Live Oak	
3		<i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>	Canyon Live Oak	
4		<i>Quercus engelmannii</i>	Engelmann Oak	
5		<i>Quercus X acutidens*</i>	Torrey's Hybrid Oak	
6	Juglandaceae (Walnut)	<i>Juglans californica</i>	California Black Walnut	
7	Platanaceae (Sycamore)	<i>Platanus racemosa</i>	Western Sycamore	
8	Rosaceae (Rose)	<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	Toyon	
9	Salicaceae (Willow)	<i>Populus fremontii</i>	Western Cottonwood	
10		<i>Salix gooddingii</i>	Black Willow	
11		<i>Salix laevigata var. laevigata</i>	Red Willow	
12		<i>Salix lasiolepis var. lasiolepis*</i>	Arroyo Willow	

\*Note that *Quercus X acutidens* and *Salix lasiolepis* are generally shrubs, but in some situations they have the form of a small tree.

<sup>1</sup>Peñasquitos Canyon Plant List, updated August 2005. The list was compiled from the Master Plan EIR (Maggie Loy Plant List), Mitch Beauchamp Plant List (Peñasquitos Canyon from I-805 to I-15) and Alan Pepper, Les Braund, Cindy Burrascano, and Mike Kelly.

## Spadefoot Photo Correction

Will Bowen, PhD

The caption on the bottom right photo of the last page of the last newsletter said--"Can you see the tadpoles that need to be saved?" But they aren't tadpoles; they are baby spadefoots. They climb down and hide in the mud cracks. They aren't strong enough to dig down yet but they can climb down in the cracks and look out. Spadefoots spend a lot of time burrowed down once they are strong enough to dig.



You wouldn't believe the contrast between a baby western toad and a spadefoot. Western toads are really active and move about looking for food. The spadefoots are very slow and not very aggressive. The western toad can definitely out compete them. The western toads don't burrow so they have to be always on the go to survive while the spadefoot can just burrow down and come up for short periods to forage--they sleep a lot!

# Trail for All People Status Report

Jas Arnold

We're into the fourth year of creating a trail that will meet the recreational and educational needs of many. Your patience and generosity continues to be greatly appreciated.

The land upon which the trail will be constructed is currently owned by Black Mountain Ranch, LLC. We are only two signatures away from completing the land ownership transfer and making this land part of the Black Mountain Open Space Park and owned by the city of San Diego. The acquisition of these signatures, which has proven to be a challenge, is anticipated within the month. Once the land is transferred and the project is entitled, we will have an approved project and your generous donations and those of other individuals and organizations can be used to actually construct the trail.

The diagram shows the gradients which will be honored when the trail is constructed. The steepest gradients, a little less than 5%, are encountered as the user leaves and reenters the trail from the staging area parking lot. Walkways with gradients of less than 5% avoid the need of ADA required handrails. More importantly, modest gradients of 3 to 4% are easily negotiated in a wheelchair. The region with a 0% gradient shown in Figure 1 is where the viewing pavilion will be constructed. If you get a chance, take a hike along this 1000 foot loop and imagine yourself experiencing the great out-of-doors which was formally inaccessible. Hopefully, my next report will be to inform you that the parcel is now part of the park and the entitlement process is well underway.



## Board Members Inspect Open Space Easements

Brian Swanson, President

The Coastal Commission approached the Friends in 2005, inquiring whether the Friends would be interested in accepting ownership of a number of open space easements adjacent to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Lopez Canyon.

Intrigued, the Board discussed the proposal, and initially accepted six easements. Since then we've accepted ownership on a number of additional easements in the Sorrento Valley/Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve area.

These easements are open space easements, intended to protect the land from encroachment or development (placing sheds, decks or landscaping on the easements). The usual scenario was that, as a condition of development, the developer was allowed to construct a house on a parcel, while dedicating a significant portion of the parcel, especially steep slopes, as an open space easement, required to remain as natural habitat.

Saturday morning, June 12th, Friends Board of Directors members Brian Swanson, Donald Albright, Mike Kelly, and Mary Leuking had a field trip, visiting six easements encumbering approximately fifteen parcels. We were delighted to see the condition of most of the parcels, with most supporting healthy native plant communities, including a number of uncommon plants. It turns out that some of these parcels are owned by the City, and Mike Kelly's habitat restoration business, Kelly and Associates, has been controlling invasives on a number of these parcels. We also noted a small number of invasive plants, including Mexican fan palm, pampas grass and tocalote.

After visiting these parcels, the board member participants started developing a management plan for the easements, so that the Friends can work with the underlying property owners to help ensure that the easements are appropriately managed.



Friends' Board members Mary Leuking, Don Albright, & Mike Kelly survey an easement where the owners have attempted to clear defensible space. Photo by Brian Swanson

## Thornmint (continued from page 1)

Fish and Wildlife Service. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) has the San Diego thornmint in its Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants.

According to Mike Kelly, Friends' Conservation Chair, there are two major threats to the future survival of this species. First is the proliferation of invasive plants. Second is off-road activity that results in trampling of the delicate plants. Historically the artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*) was of primary concern, however more recently annual grasses seem to be invading at an alarming rate. The current management plan includes fencing off the easily accessible sites to prevent trampling and invasive weed control.

Kelly and others first started doing the surveys about 20 years ago to collect baseline data on the Peñasquitos Canyon population. Over the years, the annual survey has expanded to the additional sites and has become the primary means of learning about trends in the plant's population.

The Friends' Mike Kelly was invited to be a member of the San Diego Thornmint Working Group. The group was set up by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address issues challenging this species. Other agencies, including the California Department of Fish & Game and non-profits such as The Center for Natural Lands Management will collaborate to develop monitoring protocols and management recommendations, including how to deal with the threat of invasive weeds.

Results of this year's survey have not yet been published,

but the general feeling is that this was a pretty good year for the San Diego Thornmint. According to Kelly, the population has been highly variable over the years. One year in particular was marked by a catastrophic crash in the population due to a snail infestation. At one of the sampling sites in Sabre Springs, the population dropped from 15,000+ plants to about 14 plants due to the snails.

Volunteers for this year's survey included Mike Kelly, Cindy Burrascano, Edward DiBella, Janet Nelson, Melanie Howe, James Vipatapat, Park Ranger Mika Shimada-Vicirelli, Rachele Melious, Kirstin Winter, and Mary Lueking.



### Membership Application

Membership category: (circle 1 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 a committee (call to discuss)

Hikes

Indian Culture

Educational Workshops

School, Family, Youth Programs

Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

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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 **858.342.8856** for more information.

### Don't be left out!

Want to keep up with all the events sponsored by the Friends of Peñasquitos? Get all the latest information, and details by giving us your email address.

Email your contact information to Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or to Pat Watkins at [pwatkins2008@gmail.com](mailto:pwatkins2008@gmail.com).

### Friends' Directory

#### Officers

President: Brian Swanson	760.739.5451
Vice-President: Don Albright	619.443.5937
Treasurer: Pat Watkins	858.538.2527
Secretary: Edward DiBella	619.563.0717

#### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Anne Harvey, Mike Kelly, Mary Lueking, Maria Ruiz

#### Walk Leaders

Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike Kelly, Pat Watkins, Linda King

#### Committees

Newsletter: Janet Nelson, 619.519.3150  
[nelson.janet1@gmail.com](mailto:nelson.janet1@gmail.com)

Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta,  
858.672.0584

Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.342.8856  
Webmaster: Beth Williams



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### Check Your Label

If your expiration date is close or has come and gone, please take the time to send in a renewal check for your membership dues and save us the postage for reminder mailings!

## Rare Plant Find on Black Mountain

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair

A new population of one of San Diego's rarest plants, *Brodiaea filifolia*, Thread-leaf brodiaea, in a mixed (native, non-native) grassland on the southern flank of Black Mountain Open Space Park. It looks to be a good size one, based on over 100 plants counted and this being the tail end of the blooming season. We also have another area to be surveyed next spring that is nearby and looks good for it. .

One of the crew members of Kelly & Assoc. is a biologist who had previously surveyed for the plant on Camp Pendleton and recognized it. Mike Kelly downloaded a key and photos of it and its closest look-a-likes and went back to survey it. Janet Nelson took some good close-ups. Cindy Burrascano sent one on to Fred Roberts, a rare plant expert. Fred confirmed the ID and said it's the southernmost population of the species.

This is a grassland that Cindy and Mike identified years ago and started working as volunteers because of the potential to bring back the natives. Lots of artichoke and fennel, mustard and oats. Kelly & Assoc. has worked there the last 3 years under purchase orders from the City for the open space park. The work is paying off.







# Canyon News

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

Oct., Nov., Dec., 2010  
Volume 24, No. 4

## Let's Finish the Job - Support City of San Diego Proposition C

Anne Harvey

In 1998, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve along with environmental groups, local planning boards, city planning staff and some twenty-five affected property owners, put together a successful City of San Diego ballot proposition, Prop M, which created Carmel Mountain Preserve -- at that time slated for 1200 homes and a shopping center -- set aside much of Deer Canyon, and required almost half of the area stretching from Carmel Valley to Evergreen Nursery, including Gonzales Canyon, to be preserved and eventually restored as natural open space.

The 1,275 acres of open space within Pacific Highlands Ranch itself were planned to provide both

core habitat and wildlife corridors connecting Black Mountain, Del Mar Mesa, Los Peñasquitos Canyon, Carmel Valley and the San Dieguito River Valley.

The big bridges you may have noticed on Del Mar Heights Road and SR-56 crossing apparently empty canyons were mandated by Prop M to ensure safe wildlife movement. And development impact fees from the new homes are paying to build trails throughout the new community and connecting the major open spaces.

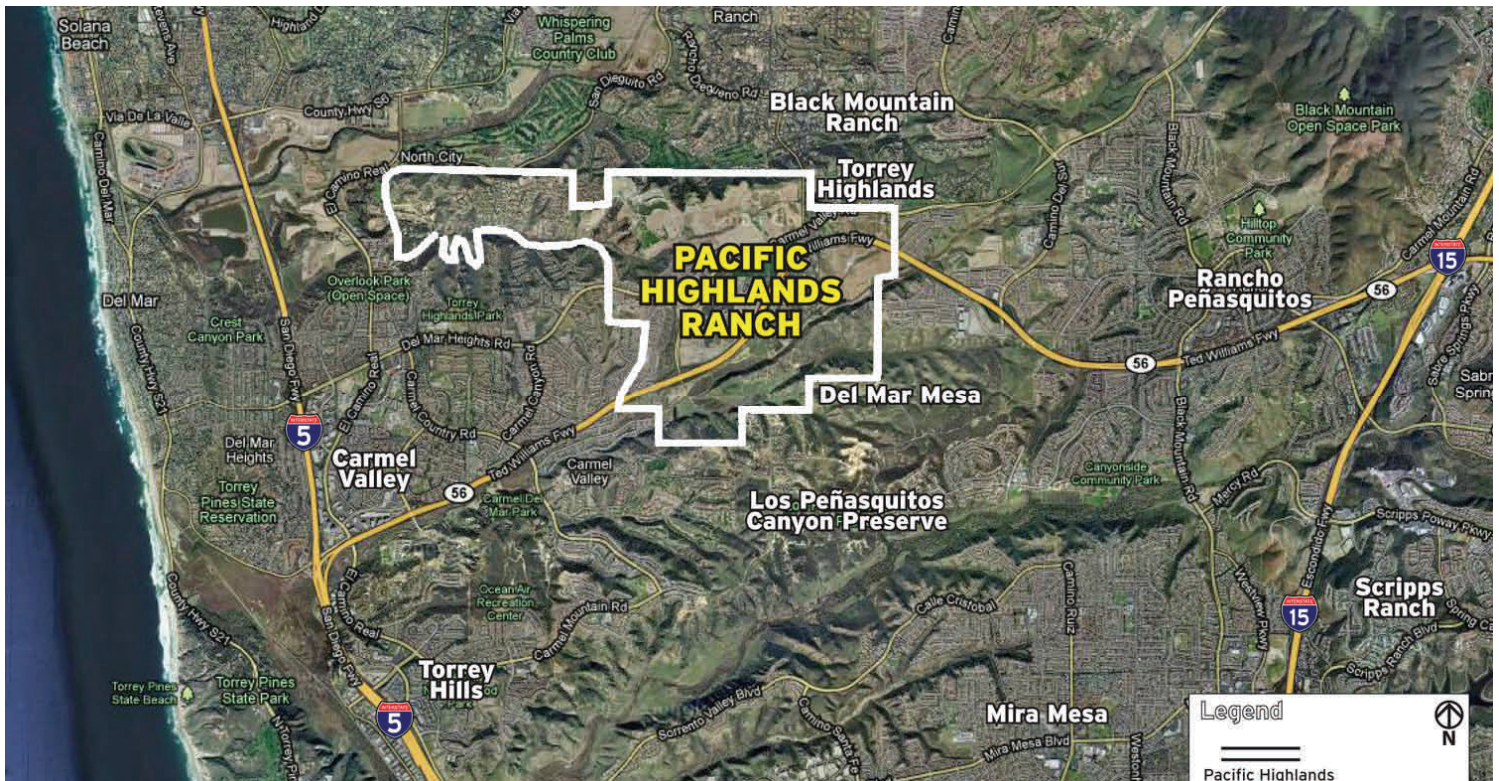
The Friends also negotiated for a management fund that has so far supported the Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa Resource Management Plan, the tracking team's study of deer movements through wildlife corridors,

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and our new project, a complete North City trails map. Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair, is a co-signer for the disbursement of these funds, along with the Sierra Club and Pardee Homes.

In return, Pardee and other property owners were granted approval to build a brand new master-planned community (see Prop C on page 4)



## Upcoming Hikes and Events

Hikes are free. There is a fee for the Beginning Tracking survey class. See below for details.

Be sure to wear good trail sneakers or boots, sun protection (hat or sunscreen or both), and bring plenty of water. **Call 858-484-3219 for more information.**

### Repeating Events

#### Every Saturday and Sunday:

##### **Historic Adobe Ranch Tour**

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María 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. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Park Driveway off Black Mountain Road between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Bros. p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Every month:

##### **Tracking Walk**

**Sat. 8 a.m. Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11**

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Drive and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

##### **Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez/ Peñasquitos Canyons**

**Sun., 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 26.**

Trash pickups in Lopez & Peñasquitos Canyon. Volunteers needed! Community service credits available. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (J3)**

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs., 6:30 p.m. Nov. 11**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

##### **Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. Nov. 18**

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

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

**Tues., 7 p.m. Nov. 2**

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

#### Quarterly:

##### **Beginning Tracking for Wildlife Surveys - \$25 fee**

**Sat. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Oct. 16**

This class prepares you to participate in surveys that monitor the wildlife in major open space preserves and other critical areas. Topics include basic recognition and identification of animal tracks and other signs, introduction to track patterns and gaits, wildlife journaling, an overview of the survey protocol, and more! Classroom time is supplemented with plenty of time in the field ("dirt time").

This training is required for survey volunteers and also serves as a prerequisite for the Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist class. After this training, students are expected to participate in at least one SDTT wildlife survey. Preregistration is not required for individuals, but requested for groups. The \$25 fee includes a number of valuable reference materials. Dress prepared to

## Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon

Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org)

spend time outdoors and bring a sack lunch and water.

Also, please bring your calendar to sign up for transects. For more information: 760.715.4102 or [www.sdtt.org](http://www.sdtt.org). Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7)**

### Other Events and Hikes

#### October

##### **Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park**

**Sat., Oct. 16, 9 - 11 a.m.**

Join hike leader Arne Johansen to hike the Miner's Loop trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the parking staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Road, about 1/4 mile east of the intersection with Black Mountain Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 (E7)**

##### **Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike**

**Sun., Oct. 17, 8 a.m.**

Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall, Sycamore Crossing and Carson's Crossing. Meet at the kiosk near 7107 Park Village Road at Celome Way, Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 (J7)**

##### **Sensory Awareness Hike with Will Bowen, PhD.**

**Sun., Oct. 24 4 - 5:30 p.m.**

A hike to explore the senses as a path to know nature better. We will have the opportunity to experiment with sight, sound, taste, touch, kinesthetic feeling, and fragrance in the field, contemplating and sharing our experience of the colors of the grasses or the sky, the song of a bird, the fragrance of a leaf, the taste of a berry, the texture of tree bark, the feeling of a place, etc. This practice can help one have a more profound and quiet connection with the natural world. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5)**

## November

### Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park Sat., Nov. 13, 8 - 10 a.m.

Join hike leader David Robertson to hike the Miner's Loop trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the Parking Staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Road, about 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Black Mountain Road in Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 (E7)**

### Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park Sat., Nov. 20, 9 - 11 a.m.

Join hike leader Arne Johansen to hike the Miner's Loop trail on the north face of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the parking staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Road, about 1/4 mile east of the intersection with Black Mountain Road in Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 (E7)**

### Shaman's Hike with Will Bowen, PhD.

**Sun., Nov. 21, 3 - 5:00 p.m.**

A short hike to a power spot where we will explore shamanic traditions of the indigenous people of the Americas. We will learn about saging, calling the directions, creating sacred space, and harnessing the energies of nature for healing, insight, and wisdom. We will do some healing work, sharing and story-telling, and make some shamanic art. This is a good opportunity for self-healing and to connect with the spirit of the holiday season through nature. Please bring a blanket to sit on and a drum or rattle. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5)**

## December

### Carson Crossing to Sycamore Crossing Loop Hike Sun., Dec. 5, 8 a.m.

Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall, Sycamore Crossing and Carson's Crossing. Meet at the kiosk near 7107 Park Village Road at Celome Way, Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1188 (J7)**

### Miner's Loop Trail Walk, Black Mountain Open Space Park Sat., Dec. 18, 9 - 11 a.m.

Join hike leader Arne Johansen to hike the Miner's Loop trail on the north face

of Black Mountain Park. Meet at the parking staging area at 14850 Carmel Valley Road, about 1/4 mile east of the intersection with Black Mountain Road in Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1169 (E7)**

### Shaman's Hike with Will Bowen, PhD.

**Sun., Dec 19, 3 - 5:00 p.m.**

A short hike to a power spot where we will explore shamanic traditions of the indigenous people of the Americas. We

will learn about saging, calling the directions, creating sacred space, and harnessing the energies of nature for healing, insight, and wisdom. We will do some healing work, sharing and story-telling, and make some shamanic art. This is a good opportunity for self-healing and to connect with the spirit of the holiday season through nature. Please bring a blanket to sit on and a drum or rattle. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. in Sorrento Valley, San Diego. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5)**

## Special Event

# ARCH IN THE PARK

## Saturday October 16, 2010

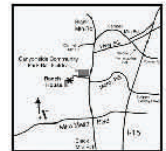
### 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

The **San Diego County Archaeological Society** presents  
an educational day of Archaeology and Fun at the  
**Ranch House in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve**

- ☒ Find out what archaeology is all about; dig in a mock excavation; play games!
- ☒ Discover the history of the Ranch House on a tour of the adobe.
- ☒ Speak to local archaeologists and see archaeology exhibits, demos on stone tool making, basket making, and more!



**DIRECTIONS:** From I-15 take Mercy Rd. west; turn right (north) onto Black Mountain Rd. Take the first left onto Canyonside Park Driveway. Follow the road all the way to the end (past ball fields) to Ranch House. Park in the Visitors lot on the left side of the road. Walk the pathway to the ranch complex



Sponsored By:



For more information call: 858-538-0935  
visit our website: [www.sandiegoarchaeologicalsociety.com](http://www.sandiegoarchaeologicalsociety.com)  
or e-mail us at: [sdcas@email.com](mailto:sdcas@email.com)

**Prop C** (continued from page 1)

of 5000+ single and attached homes, 20% of them affordable, a Town Center with shops and entertainment, a library, a recreation center, a fire station, neighborhood parks and schools, and a small office complex adjacent to SR-56. The development plan itself won awards for its walkability and bike lanes everywhere, its vegetated swales and detention basins to keep urban runoff contaminants out of the storm water system and natural waterways, and its sustainable building options, including energy star appliances, bamboo floors, solar panels and electric meters that ran backwards. Pardee was such a large builder that their new willingness to embrace these features helped to change attitudes throughout southern California.

But here's the rub: Prop M also included a "cap" on development in Pacific Highlands Ranch limiting it to 1900 homes and a small amount of commercial square footage until something called the "direct connectors" -- flyovers that would allow cars to move from freeway to freeway without stopping -- between SR-56 and I-5 were built and operational.

The open space restoration and dedication is phased along with the development -- as a development unit comes online, so does another area of open space -- and so that, too, will soon be stalled at about 40%, with much of the remainder still in use as tomato fields, equipment storage

yards, and access roads.

We all thought the direct connectors would be built by now, and everything, including the restoration of the open space, would be proceeding smoothly. But over time, as freeway design theory and standards have changed, the flyovers have grown on paper until they are now monstrous proposed constructions, 70 feet in the air, costing at least \$86 million and extending out into CVREP and Los Penasquitos Lagoon. It's increasingly unlikely that they will ever be built, and per Caltrans certainly not before 2020.

The San Diego City Attorney has determined that the only way to remove the "direct connectors" requirement and the "cap" from Prop M so that the long-approved development, the restorations, and the trails can move forward is with another successful City-wide ballot measure. So the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board, which now includes residents from Pacific Highlands Ranch, joined with the Torrey Pines Community Planning Board and Sherri Lightner, our District 1 City Councilmember, to craft Prop C and offer it for your vote in November. The Friends' Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the proposition, as did Mike Beck of the Endangered Habitats League.

For more information, to see who else is endorsing Prop C, or to sign up in support, please check out [www.YES4RNP.com](http://www.YES4RNP.com)

## Pacific Highlands Ranch Wetland Restoration



The PHR Wetland Mitigation site underwent a 5-Year maintenance, monitoring, and reporting program. By the third year of this program, all final success criteria had been achieved and the first nesting pair of Least Bell's vireo was observed utilizing the created habitat. Although not a requirement of this project, this finding was significant because there were no documented occurrences of this listed species within Deer or McGonigle Canyons prior to this project. Least Bell's Vireo have been observed in greater numbers each successive monitoring year as well as white tailed kites, raptors, and dozens of other passerine bird species, deer, coyote, woodrats, and more. In early 2009, the USFWS, CDFG, USACE, RWQCB, and the City of San Diego all visited the PHR wetland and approved the site as being successful.

Photos courtesy of RECON.



## Trail for All People Status Report

Jas Arnold

My previous report spoke enthusiastically about the imminence of obtaining the necessary signatures to move the trail parcel over to city of San Diego ownership.

Okay, my optimism was on the high side but we truly are close. I met with the surveyor for the city of San Diego who helped to make sure all of the "i"s were dotted on the deeds which require these signatures. The necessary paperwork is now in the hands of Black Mountain Ranch, LLC for these final signatures.

Let's start talking about the design and features we want to see on the trail. Please visit [trailforallpeople.com](http://trailforallpeople.com) where design/amenity suggestions can be submitted. I will post these suggestions upon the website for viewing and comment.

In my previous report, I provided a graphic that showed the trail gradients. A 4% gradient (1 foot of rise for every 25 feet of run) will be negotiable by most. This illustration shows my portable ramps elevated to 4% as measured with a smart level.



## Trail for All Persons Donation

Pat Watkins

A donation to the Trail For All People fund was made recently as a result of a biking event being held in the Black Mountain Open Space Park. The park is becoming increasingly popular with bicyclists and runners to conduct their activities.

This donation, made in behalf of the park, comes at an opportune time for the Trail For All People fund, as costs have been incurred recently in the process of moving this project from the concept phase towards actual construction. Thanks to Ranger Ed Christensen and the biking group, Racers and Chasers, for making this contribution happen!

## Who Cares if it is a Native?

Mary Lueking

As a hike leader, occasionally I get asked why it is important that we know whether or not a plant is considered native. I always pause when asked because the answer is difficult to express in just a few words. In fact, numerous books have been written on one aspect or another of native plants in the ecosystem. So, how does one answer this question concisely?

In the words of Dave Flietner, president of the San Diego Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPSSD), "Native plants are the foundation of a community of insects, birds, animals, etc. that have evolved with those plants over time. The non-natives do not provide the same habitat values."

Habitat value rates a community based on the availability of food, water, and shelter. Each species has differing requirements for these three things. The requirements for the cottontail rabbit are different than those of the acorn woodpecker which are different than the requirements of the horned lizard. Non-native plants like the mustard replace native grasses and shrubs and do not provide the same nutritional value or shelter potential as the native plants.

Paul Hormick, the head of the CNPSSD Native Plant Walks group, provided some excellent examples of the damage that can be caused by the non-natives. The following is an excerpt from his response:

- Many non-native plants are invasive. They displace natives, which can upset ecosystems. In some cases this can lead to economic damage as well. If you're talking to someone who is from or has lived in the South, mention one word, kudzu, and they'll understand.
- Many non-natives, such as eucalyptus and tamarisk, use more water than natives, which upsets natural hydrology.
- Nonnative grasses and mustard that displace the native coastal sage scrub and chaparral die off early in the year and leave very flammable tinder that increases fire hazard.

According to Hormick, San Diego has more biodiversity than any other county in the 48 contiguous states. As with other natural wonders, like the Grand Canyon, the Everglades, and the redwood forests, this is something wonderful and precious. Every non-native plant displaces natural fauna. Through development and displacing natives with non-natives, we have encroached on and destroyed 90% of the coastal sage scrub ecosystem.

Hormick continued, "We also have more endangered species than any other county. Non-natives make the survival of these species more precarious."

Thanks to our friends at the CNPS, I will now have a more informed answer when I am asked why knowing whether a plant is native is important. I'm still working on the more concise answer.



The California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*), one of the native plants in our preserve, is a late summer bloomer. It is a favorite of the hummingbirds.

## Plant and Bird Lists Now Published on Friend's Website

Mary Lueking

The current plant list for Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve (LPCP) and the surrounding open spaces has been posted on the Friend's website. This plant list contains plants for LPCP, and Black Mountain, Del Mar Mesa, and Carmel Mountain Preserves.

This list was compiled from the Master Plan EIR (Maggie Loy Plant List), Mitch Beauchamp Plant List (Penasquitos Canyon from I805 to I15), and input from Alan Pepper, Les Braund, Cindy Burrascano, and Mike Kelly. Nomenclature follows the Jepson Manual (1993). This list was last officially updated in August 2005.

If you find errors in this plant list, want to propose additions or changes, or want the original excel file so you can search it more easily, please contact me at [mlueking@san.rr.com](mailto:mlueking@san.rr.com).

In addition, the current bird list has also been posted. For questions about the bird list, contact Friend's President Brian Swanson.

To find the lists, go to the Friends website at [www.penasquitos.org](http://www.penasquitos.org). Click on "Links" on the left side of the home page. Then select the header "Plant and Animal Lists" and then select list you want to access.

## Montongo Street Cleanup

Steve Pye

In the summer of 2010, after arriving home from our first year of college, my good friend and local Mira Mesa resident Myles Magallanes proposed cleaning a small canyon in the easternmost portions of Lopez Canyon and organizing the start of a thorough restoration project for an area that desperately needs attention. What has been accomplished already would not have been possible without the guidance and efforts of Friends' Conservation Chair Mike Kelly, and Senior Park Ranger Gina Washington.

Two narrow gaps, one located at the corner of Blythe Road and Zapata Avenue, the other farther down Blythe road, offer the only access points to the hidden vestige that lies east of Montongo Street. From this small stretch of canyon flows the very beginning of Lopez Creek, which provides life to the delicate ecosystem for miles to the west. Two large storm drains mark the headwaters of the creek, which winds between dozens of pepper trees and palms as it descends westward into more familiar native flora. Weekend nights and dense cover offer a haven for illegal drug and alternate crime activity, a problem that effects both nature and man alike.

Hidden away for many years, the canyon had become rife with pollution and invasive plants. Pepper trees, fan palms, wild grapes, various species of thistle, and ash trees engulf the lower reaches of the slopes, preventing native plant life from regaining its crucial place in the area's ecosystem. Scattered among the branches of the pepper trees and palms and in the creek itself, was an unimaginable variety of discarded material. Shopping carts, truck tires, tires filled with cement, plywood boards, paint cans, condoms, plastic bottles, tarps, old clothing, and even couches and lounge chairs lay intertwined among tree roots and half buried in the damp soil.

On July, 10, the day of the cleanup, approximately 30 people aided in the exodus of garbage. Volunteers as young as 15 worked throughout the morning and into the afternoon to remove the debris. So much garbage had been removed by noon that the 40 cubic yard dumpster placed at the canyon's entrance had been filled to the brim. By 1 pm the Canyon had been purged of all the visible discarded material, leaving the crew thirsty and tired, but greatly pleased.



The hard working folks from the Montongo Street clean-up. Steve Pye is wearing a plaid shirt and a black beanie and Myles is wearing a grey T-shirt to his left in the photo.

# Anne Harvey

*Another in a series of our short profiles  
on long-time Friends' Volunteers*

Anne Harvey was born in Iowa. Her father was a USAF officer, and the family grew up all over the place, including the rubble and cemeteries of post-war France, and Cold War Germany.

After stints at the American College in Paris and Reed College, she came to UCSD in 1968, bought a little Appaloosa, and began exploring the canyons and mesas in and around Los Peñasquitos Canyon and what is now Carmel Valley. She fell in love with San Diego's natural lands, became a member of the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board and worked hard to save Carmel Mountain, Deer Canyon, and the western San Dieguito River Valley.

Anne is a landscape architect who understands that it is very difficult to repair or recreate complex, self-sustaining plant and animal ecosystems once they have been thoughtlessly destroyed or damaged. She lives in a house built in 1958 in a neighborhood which chose to forgo development and instead defend its agricultural zoning in order to keep chickens, goats, horses and admirable old cars.



## Membership Application

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Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.  
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## Don't be left out!

Want to keep up with all the events sponsored by the Friends of Peñasquitos? Get all the latest information, and details by giving us your email address.

Email your contact information to Mike Kelly at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com) or to Pat Watkins at [pwatkins2008@gmail.com](mailto:pwatkins2008@gmail.com).

## Friends' Directory

### Officers

President: Brian Swanson	760.739.5451
Vice-President: Don Albright	619.443.5937
Treasurer: Pat Watkins	858.538.2527
Secretary: Edward DiBella	619.563.0717

### Other Members of the Board of Directors

Les Braund, Anne Harvey, Mike Kelly, Mary Lueking, Janet Nelson

### Walk Leaders

Don Albright, Will Bowen, Mike Kelly, Pat Watkins, Linda King, Arne Johansen, David Robertson

### Committees

Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.342.8856  
 Newsletter: Janet Nelson, 619.519.3150  
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If your expiration date is close or has come and gone, please take the time to send in a renewal check for your membership dues and save us the postage for reminder mailings!

## It's possible to see things on Night Hikes in the canyon that you just can't see during the day

Photos provided by hike leader Will Bowen, PhD.



Above: The discovery of a baby snake on Will's night hike.

Far right: A nasty scorpion, ready to fight.

Right: Hikers in search of spider webs.

