

# Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve  
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Sept. & Oct. 2004  
Volume 18, No.5

## Goodbye to Ranger Rick Trail Changes in the Preserve

Ranger Gina Brown

It's nearing the end of another summer in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Many things have happened; perhaps you've noticed and enjoyed some of the changes. The most significant change is the reclassification of the trails in the northwest quadrant of the Canyon. For many years mountain bikes were prohibited from using the trails on the north side of the creek west of the waterfall. This was a source of difficulty for both the users and the Ranger staff. However, with the renewal of the Trails Committee of the Citizens' Advisory Committee, representatives from all the users groups got together and worked out a

See p. 7 for more



Spotted bat on rock. Photo courtesy of Bat Rescue.

## Nov. 6 Hold the Date! Bats Declining Worldwide

Date: Sat., Nov. 6

Time: 7 pm social

7:30 pm Talk

Join us for our annual meeting at the Historic Adobe Ranch House in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Our featured speaker will be Dick Wilkins of Bat Rescue. He will present a slide show and will probably have a live bat with him. The program is free.

Learn why the decline of Bat species and populations worldwide should be a cause for great alarm. Wilkins will describe the different types of

See p. 4 for more.

### Highlights Inside

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## San Diego Tracking Team Update

[Editor's note. Although the Friends spun off the San Diego Tracking Team (SDTT) as a nonprofit in its own right, the Friends still have a Peñasquitos Tracking Team, which is one of six teams that make up the SDTT.]

### Wildlife Corridor Victory for Preserve Calavera

After 2 years of work, Preserve Calavera had a major victory this June when the Rancho Carrillo Homeowner's Association (HOA) approved a wildlife crossing under Palomar Airport Rd. This will provide the critical wildlife linkage from their core area to the south — contributing to the health of the ecosystem and mitigating for the adverse effects of building a high speed road through critical habitat. Diane Nygaard, President of Preserve Calavera, contributed much time and effort to educate the HOA board about the issue. Also critical to the success were LeeAnn Carranza with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Barry Martin with the San Diego Tracking Team who presented findings based on SDTT data to the HOA board, and Preserve Calavera Tracking Team leader Karen Merrill who has led all the transects in the Carlsbad area.

See p. 4 for more



Eagle Scout Andy Steiner and fellow scouts installed two kiosks in Los Peñasquitos Canyon.

## Still Hot Out There!

We're heading into our hottest time of the year, so take plenty of water to avoid heat exhaustion and stroke. You might plan your walks for the shadier portions of the preserve, such as the east end and visit during the cooler early morning or early evening hours. And join us on one of our evening walks listed in the schedule below.

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. Be sure to wear hiking boots and bring water 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, 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. **La Cocina Gift Shop Hours:** 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Sundays. The Ranch House is located on Canyonside Drive off Black Mountain Road near I-15 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

### September

#### Night Wildlife Walk with Mike Kelly

Thurs., Sept. 9, 7–9 p.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for this after dark walk. Good chance to see wildlife, enjoy the different smells of the preserve at night. Bring a flashlight and insect repellent. Meet at Camino Ruíz and Park Village Drive in Rancho Peñasquitos. **See Thomas Guide p. 1188–1189 (J7).**

#### Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Sat., Sept. 11, 8–10 a.m. Tracker/naturalists from the Friends' Tracking Team will lead two walks, one suitable for beginners (children welcome!) and intermediates. Learn how to track animals

and discover the natural environment they live in. Wear shoes that are good in mud. 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.**

**Black Mountain Trail Work Party** Sat., Sept. 18, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Join a Black Mtn. Park Ranger and help restore public trails. Meet at the Parking Staging area above the old dirt Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 E7** or call the Rangers at 858-538-8082.

#### Del Mar Mesa & Waterfall Walk

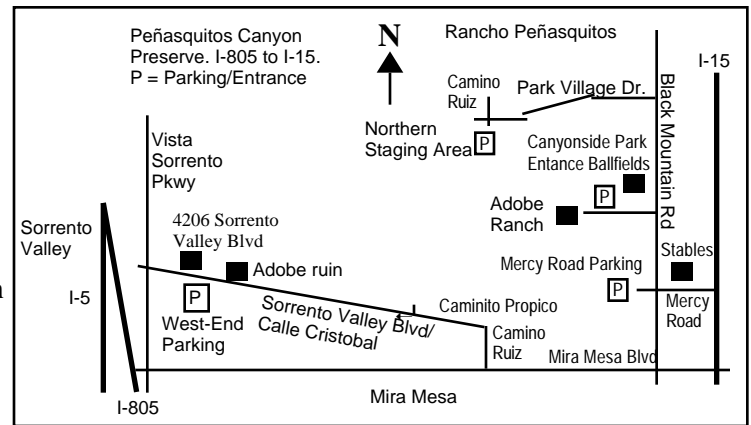
Sat., Sept. 18, 4–6 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk up on the Del Mar Mesa, then on to Walden Pond and the Waterfall. Meet at the end of Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and water. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).**

#### Black Mtn. Park Citizens Advisory Cte.

Mon., Sept. 20, 7 p.m. Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at Canyonside Recreation Center at Black Mountain Rd and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D7).**

#### Black Mountain Nature Walk

Sat., Sept. 25, 9–11 a.m. Join a Black Mtn. Park Ranger and see native flowers, wildlife, and great vistas. Meet at the Parking Staging area above the old dirt Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 E7** or call the Rangers at 858-538-8082.



**Explore the Riparian Forest from Mercy Road Sun., Sept. 26, 8:30 a.m.** Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Explore little known trails that take you through the riparian forest. Learn your native trees. Enjoy Peñasquitos Creek. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging area, upper level at the junction of Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads in Mira Mesa. **Thomas Guide p. 1189** or call **858.484.3219** for directions.

**Geology Hike with Don Albright** Sun., Sept. 26, 9 a.m.–noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at the intersection of Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, in the cul-de-sac on the south side of Calle Cristobal. Wear good boots for steep trail and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

#### Sensory Discovery Walk

Sun., Sept. 26, 4–5:30 p.m. Experiment with discovering the canyon through the senses. An opportunity to explore and experience some of the myriad fragrances, textures, sights, sounds, temperatures, tastes, and feelings that make up the canyon. Bring a flash light. Meet at the west end parking-staging area off Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/3 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road, **Thomas Guide 1208.**

#### Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Bd. of Directors

Tues., Sept. 28, 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 Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189-C7.**

## October

**Night Wildlife Walk with Mike Kelly**  
Thurs., Oct. 7, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for this after dark walk. Good chance to see wildlife, enjoy the different smells of the preserve at night. Bring a flashlight and insect repellent. Meet at Camino Ruíz and Park Village Drive in Rancho Peñasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1188–1189 (J7).**

### **Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks**

Sat., Oct. 9, 8–10 a.m. Tracker/naturalists from the Friends' Tracking Team lead two walks, one suitable for beginners (children welcome!) and an intermediate. Learn how to track animals and discover the natural environment they live in. Wear shoes that are good in mud. Meet at the historic ranch house. Take Mercy Rd. exit off I-15 west to Black Mtn. Rd., right on Black Mtn. Rd. and 1st left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.**

### **Del Mar Mesa & Waterfall Walk**

Sun., Oct. 10, 3–5 p.m. Join Pat Watkins for a moderately paced walk up on the Del Mar Mesa, then on to Walden Pond and the Waterfall. Meet at the end of Park Village Dr. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and water. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).**

### **Black Mountain Trail Work Party / Peñasquitos**

Sat., Oct. 16, 8 a.m. –12 p.m. Join a Black Mtn. Park Ranger and help restore public trails. Meet at the Parking Staging area above the old dirt Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (E7)** or call the Rangers at 858-538-8082.

**Explore the Riparian Forest from Mercy Road** Sun., Oct. 17, 8:30 a.m. Join naturalist Linda King for this moderately paced nature walk. Explore little known trails that take you through the riparian forest. Learn your native trees. Enjoy Peñasquitos Creek. Meet in Mercy Road Parking-Staging area, upper level at the junction of Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads in Mira Mesa. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

### **Black Mountain Nature Walk**

Sat., Oct. 23, 9–11 a.m. Join a Black Mtn. Park Ranger and see native flowers, wildlife, and great vistas. Meet at the Parking Staging area above the old dirt Black Mtn. Rd. in Rancho Peñasquitos. Wear hiking boots and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 E7** or call Rangers at 858-538-8082.

### **Geology Hike with Don Albright**

Sun., Oct. 24, 9 a.m.– noon. Join geologist Don Albright for a walk through geological time, including the Preserve's waterfall and a rare fossil. Meet at the intersection of Caminito Propico and Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa, in the cul-de-sac on the south side of Calle Cristobal. Wear good boots for steep trail and bring water and sun protection. **Thomas Guide p. 1208.**

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Tues., Oct. 26, 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 Mountain Road and Canyonside Driveway. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.**

### **Sensory Discovery Walk**

Sun., Oct. 31, 3–4:30 p.m. Experiment with discovering the canyon through the senses. We'll have the opportunity to explore and experience some of the myriad fragrances, textures, sights, sounds, temperatures, tastes, and feelings that make up the canyon. Bring a flash light. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd., 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road, **Thomas Guide 1208.**

## DIRECTIONS

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

From I-15 take SR 56 (Ted Williams Parkway) west to Black Mountain Road. Go right (north) on Black Mountain Road and follow it all the way until you see the last houses on the right and open space beyond. Look for a dirt road to the right and take it. Proceed about 1 mile, going beyond the bare hangliding area on the right and down a hill to a big curve and a sign for the park and paved road on the right. Proceed up the road to the staging area. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 (E7).**

**Caminito Propico & Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa.** From the west (I-5/I-805 merge) take Sorrento Valley Boulevard east. It becomes Calle Cristobal as it passes Camino Santa Fe. The next street is Caminito Propico. From the east, take Mira Mesa Boulevard to Camino Santa Fe. Go right on Camino Santa Fe, then right on Calle Cristobal to Propico. Park in cul-de-sac on either side. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 (H3).**

### **Canyonside Park Staging**

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain. Left at first light, Canyonside Park Dr. Go past ballfields to parking lot on their (far) west end. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

### **Carmel Mtn. Meeting Place**

From Carmel Valley take El Camino Real south. At intersection with Carmel Mountain Road, proceed straight on what has become 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. **See Thomas Guide p. 1208 (C2).**

### **Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area**

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

### **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 ballfields to the white-fenced parking lot. Left into the lot. Walk up path to the ranch. house. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

(Calendar cont'd)

**Sorrento Valley Meeting Area**

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 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.**

bats around the world and here in San Diego.

Did you know:

- a single little brown bat can catch 1,200 mosquito-sized insects in just one hour;
- that 20 million Mexican free-tails from Bracken Cave, Texas, eat about 200 tons of insects nightly;
- that some bats fish for their food;
- that many imported foods from the wild such as bananas, mangoes, dates, cashews, figs and others depend on bats for pollination and seed dispersal;
- that your Tequila is produced from agave plants whose seed production drops to 1/3,000th of normal without bat pollination;
- an anticoagulant from vampire bat saliva may soon be used to treat human heart patients;
- More than half of American bat species are in severe decline or are already listed as endangered;
- Nectar-feeding bats are primary pollinators of giant cacti, including the famous organ pipe and saguaro of Arizona;
- Bats are not blind, do not become entangled in human hair, and seldom transmit disease to other animals or humans;

As is our custom, we will have a brief annual meeting and election of our officers for 2005.

Volunteers Needed

## Quarterly Wildlife Survey Training

**Date:** October 16

**Time:** 9:45 a.m. until 4 p.m.

**Location:** Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

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. Bring a sack lunch, be prepared to spend much of the day outdoors and to take notes.

The training will be at Los Peñasquitos Adobe (Ranch House), located behind Canyonside Community Park near the intersection of Black Mountain and Mercy Roads. If you have participated in last quarter's survey and do not wish to participate in the training, you may come by between noon and 2 p.m. to sign up for your transects.

It's expected that trainees will also participate in at least one wildlife survey in the weeks following the training. A survey usually averages 4 hours at locations around San Diego County. Trainees will be paired with experienced surveyors for the transects.

**Note:** Pre-registration for the training class is not required. You can just show up.

**Purpose of the surveys**

These wildlife surveys have provided important data on the presence or absence of certain species of wildlife such as mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, mule deer, etc., as well as their frequency in a given area. The data has been used in policy making decisions concerning wildlife tunnels, linkages, undercrossings, road opening/closures and more. Your help is needed to expand these surveys to more places in the county. Join us!

If you have questions, please contact us via email at: [barrymartin@san.rr.com](mailto:barrymartin@san.rr.com) or call (619) 892-7620

(Tracking Team cont'd)

**SDTT Receives Two Grants**

2004's been a busy year for Barry, Ann, and Lani. Besides all the usual activities, we've applied for six grants: two with the San Diego Foundation, one with the San Diego Women's Foundation, one with the Tides Foundation, and two with the San Diego Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission.

We received the Tides Foundation's California Wildlands Grassroots Fund grant. This was for \$5000 for administration of the SDTT's expansion project. It's been our goal to increase the number of tracking teams active in San Diego County.

We received the "Blasker" grant from the San Diego Foundation for \$18,100 for analysis of our wildlife survey data. This will be performed by a graduate student, Shea Valero, under the direction of Dr. Mike Wells from the Univ. of San Diego, and there are also funds available for data entry, database modification, and administration.

We're very excited about this because it will vastly increase the usefulness of our eight years of wildlife survey data. With this expertise, we hope to be able to examine issues such as trends in population, seasonal variation, and fire induced changes. We also hope to find out if we can streamline our survey (frequency and number of transects) without losing information and optimize placement of future transects. On a broader scale, interpretation of our data will increase the value of MSCP/MHCP monitoring and thus facilitate planning that would improve the quality of MSCP/MHCP protection.

Publication of this analysis will increase the visibility of volunteer-based monitoring and thus increase the likelihood of monitoring being performed

**Advanced training date set**

Friday, September 24 and Saturday, September 25: Advanced Tracker Naturalist Class, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm Friday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturday at the Peñasquitos Ranch House. This class is open to everyone who has completed our Intermediate class (or equivalent), even if it was a while ago. Contact Rick Botta (858-672-0584, [rmbotta@earthlink.net](mailto:rmbotta@earthlink.net)) to sign up as a student or to help out.



# Pack Rats on Carmel Mountain

John Northrop and Jayne Haines

## Introduction

Carmel Mountain (Carmel Mtn.), an ancient marine terrace about half a mile east of the present Pacific Ocean shoreline (I-5 at SR56), is a unique habitat that supports pack rats as well as some rare flora and fauna. Carmel Mtn. is one of the few marine terraces and mesas in San Diego that hasn't been developed and thus sports a good population of these dusky-footed or large-eared pack rats (*Neotoma fuscipes*).

Many new pack rat dens have been built there adjacent to fire breaks where plenty of dead branches, cut by firemen in 1986, line the edges of the fire breaks. These breaks pass through the rare southern maritime chaparral that is dominated by woody shrubs such as wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), Del Mar Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) and others. This unique assemblage of plants is found in a 5-acre swatch on the north-south trending ridge along the crest of Carmel Mtn. at elevations of between 400 and 427 ft. and affords an ample supply of "lumber" for the 50-plus stick huts we found (Ref 1). Carmel Mtn. is now protected from development and is under the oversight of Rick Thompson, the Senior Park Ranger for Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

## Environmental setting

Carmel Mtn. is a former shore line that was formed in the Quarternary period about half a million years ago (Ref. 2) and is now an uplifted marine terrace consisting of a hard cap rock (the beach facies of the Linda Vista Formation (Qlb) replete with marble sized iron-titanium (*fe, ti*) concretions which the pack rats "pack" into their stick huts to make a firm flooring. (Indeed, they are called pack rats because they literally pack anything small and/or shiny into their huts.) It is the combination of well drained, iron-rich soil supporting the woody shrubs of the southern maritime chaparral that enables the dusky-footed pack rats to thrive on Carmel Mtn. today, much as they have for thousands of years.

## Dusky-footed pack rats

These wood rates are rodents about the size of a gray squirrel or a bit smaller, have a long bushy tail, and belong to the *Vole* family. They have a bluish color but are rarely seen in daylight because they are nocturnal. Their pups return to the parents' huts generation after generation and some stick houses in California are so ancient that they have been examined by paleoclimatologists to find out what kind of vegetation flourished there in the past (the plant remains can be dated accurately by Carbon 14 techniques).

In Southern California, the breeding season lasts all year. Gestation period is 33–39 days so dusky-footed woodrats have several litters a year, usually 2–6 in a litter. They have a rather unusual social order too. Recent research has found that when the female gets pregnant, she kicks the male out by biting and scratching his face (Ref. 3). The male then either goes on to cohabit with a different female or builds a new stick house nearby to attract another female. Pack rats have few natural enemies, although coyotes have been known to tear down the stick huts to get at them or their pups. Rattlesnakes also hunt them. Wildfires are their worst natural enemy because their huts are incinerated when the brush fires go through, as happened in the October 2003 firestorms in San Diego. Carmel Mtn. is in its natural state and has never been farmed, plowed, chained, cultivated, or even grazed (cattle won't eat the woody plants).



**Dusky-footed pack rat (*Neotoma fuscipes*) held by researcher. Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey**

## Stick houses

The dusky-footed wood rates are very good engineers as attested by the rugged construction of their stick houses which range in size from modest brush piles to those up to 5 ft. tall (see photo below). The biggest ones have been there for generations; some with successive generations having their own entrance level.

The huts are made of sticks ranging from finger size to branches over 2 ft. long. The larger sticks are of manzanita and the smaller ones of chamise or ceanothus; the smaller ones being woven into the larger ones to make a very strong, conical shaped hut. The larger huts are usually (on Carmel Mtn.) built around a ceanothus or chamise bush which the pack rats use to support the roof of their huts. Each fall, the in-



**(pack rats cont'd)**

habitants renew the roof material of their stick houses. They then urinate on the inner walls to form a sort of plaster that makes them waterproof! Since there is no water on Carmel Mtn., the animals have to drag their building materials through the brush and not float them like beavers would.

**Types of stick houses**

There are basically three types of stick houses we observed: large 5-ft cones with several entrances; medium size 1–3-ft tall; and freshly built huts. We found about fifty-five dusky-footed pack rat huts, or stick houses, in the higher elevations (over 400 ft) in a roughly rectangular area measuring only 220 ft wide by 950 ft. long (about 4.8 acres) on the north-south trending crest mentioned earlier.

The population of the dusky-footed wood rats on Carmel Mtn. appears to be increasing today, perhaps due to their rapid breeding, apparently fewer natural enemies, but also because the surrounding area is being developed and Carmel Mtn. is now a refugia for these interesting nocturnal animals. It would be interesting to test our belief that the density of pack rats on Carmel Mtn. is positively related to the distribution and density of the wart-stemmed ceanothus that dominates this 5-acre area on the ridge.

**References**

- 1 Northrop, John, Ph.D. 1989. *Geology of Los Peñasquitos Canyon*. Windsor Assoc., POB 90282, San Diego CA 92169.
- 2 City of San Diego. 1988. Environmental Impact Report, Carmel Valley Neighborhood 8A, Development Services Dept., 1222 First Ave., MS501, San Diego CA 92101.
- 3 Thompson's Interactive Encyclopedia. CD ROM



**Desert pack rats (*Neotoma lepida*) are also found in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. They are often found in close proximity to the dusky-footed pack rat where their habitat types overlap. Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey**



**Jack Northrop documenting a pack rat nest on Carmel Mountain, part of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Dusky-footed pack rats are found in coastal sage scrub, chaparral, riparian woodland, and oak woodland habitats, all found in the Preserve! Photo by Jayne Haines.**



**(Black Mountain cont'd)**

solution. Several volunteers spent many hours getting the trails into shape, improving the line of sight and width of the trails so they could be easily shared. It was decided that in a few areas the users would be split allowing for better movement and safety, as is the case in the trails going to Del Mar Mesa near the pond. Horses travel on the east side trails whereas bikes go to the west, joining each other in a few places, of course hikers can use any trail. To aid users in navigating the new system three kiosks were installed at strategic locations. Two of the kiosks were built and installed by Andy Steiner, an Eagle Scout. The other was donated by the San Diego Mountain Biking Association.

**New bridges**

Creek crossing has always been a challenge with the ever changing stream channel; really the challenge is staying dry. Two gentlemen, frequent visitors to the Preserve, found this to be especially true at Peñasquitos Creek Crossing. They wanted to do something about it so they approached the Ranger staff to find out how they could help. Mike Sockel and Steve Schmidt contributed the funds and their time to help the Rangers and volunteers to build the new bridge at Peñasquitos Creek Crossing. A few improvements were also made at Sycamore Crossing. Plans are being made to install a bridge at Wagon Wheel Crossing in the near future.

**Trail closure at I-15**

Starting September 7, 2004 the trail east of Black Mountain Road at Branicole to Kara Way will be closed. CalTrans will begin the widening of Interstate 15. This will be an active construction site until December 2005. This project has been anticipated for many years and though it will cause some inconvenience during the construction we are sure everyone will cooperate with the closure for their own safety.

**Ranger Rick promoted**

Another major change at Los Peñasquitos is that we are losing Senior Ranger Rick Thompson. He has been promoted to the position of City Wide Trails Coordinator. This will ultimately benefit the City and Los Peñasquitos, but we are sad to see him go, he has been a great asset to the Preserve.

# New Sign on Black Mountain

Ranger Tom Miller

Earlier this year we were very fortunate to have a new wooden sign installed at the entrance to the staging area parking lot on the north side of Black Mountain. This was accomplished by Eagle Scout Alan Moss along with other 6 scouts and volunteers. The new sign replaced an old, battered metal sign.

Alan took on this project with great enthusiasm. He moved very quickly to get all the approvals, design, materials, and volunteers organized for the project.

Right at the time the sign was to be built and installed, Alan was suddenly called on to leave out of state for several days to help a family member. This meant working long hours to complete the sign before he left, and then installing it as soon as he returned.

We appreciate not only the new sign, but also the act of kindness and consideration for others. He is an excellent example of a true Eagle Scout.

On Black Mountain, we have several projects that are available to Eagle Scouts who are interested. For more information, call Tom Miller at 858-538-8021.



Thanks to Diana Gordon for submitting this recent photo of a mule deer doe that she saw in the north end of Peñasquitos Lagoon.





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

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

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**Address Service Requested**

### Check Your Label

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



### Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

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

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

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

I/We are interested in the following:

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

Hikes

Indian Culture

Educational Workshops

School, Family, Youth Programs

Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/2004

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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

Call **858.484.3219** or **858.566.6489** for more information.

### 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: Mike Kelly

Plant Nursery Director: Liz Rozycki

Stream Survey Committee: open

Voice Mail System: Pat Watkins

Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta, 858.672-0584

Volunteer Coordinator:

Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.566.6489

Webmaster: open

Wildlife Surveys: Patrick Campbell, 760.471.9197