



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

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 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 or Pat Watkins at 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 or Pat Watkins at 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 or Pat Watkins at 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.

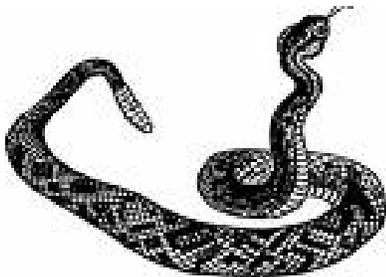
A great box lunch was had by all, courtesy of the chef at the Hotel. Many chose to eat it down by the waterfall itself, sitting on the rocks and relaxing to the rhythm of the cascading waters. Several people commented they hadn't known about the falls and planned to come back with family and friends.

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.



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.

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 or to Pat Watkins at 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



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
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858-484-3219 www.penasquitos.org

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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?

