



# Canyon News

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

Winter, 2015  
Volume 29, No. 1

## New Rangers Join Black Mountain Open Space Park

### Joe DeWolf

Park Ranger Joe DeWolf joined Ranger Ed Christensen in September 2014 and serves Black Mountain Open Space Park, Crest Canyon, Gonzales Canyon, Mt. Woodson, and San Pasqual Open Space.

Joe is a native of Encinitas and is excited to serve San Diego's northern Parks and Open Spaces. He studied Horticulture at Mira Costa College and graduated from San Diego State University with a degree in Anthropology. After college, he has worked as a Gardener for the City of San Francisco, a Backcountry Ranger at Yellowstone National Park, and a Gardener at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas, formerly known as Quail Gardens.

Joe is a member of the California Native Plant Society, and has already started several restoration sites around Black Mountain and Lusardi Creek. He looks forward to protecting and developing the natural resources within the City of San Diego Open Spaces. In his free time, Joe enjoys surfing, playing basketball, exploring San Diego County, and hanging out with his 5 month old son.



New Ranger Joe DeWolf helping build a new trail connector on Black Mountain.

### Carey Goldstein

Ranger Carey Goldstein joined the Black Mountain Open Space staff in November, 2014. Prior to working for the City of San Diego Carey worked for the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management as well as two non profit park agencies.

In his eleven years as a park ranger Carey has worked at Sequoia National Park, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Joshua Tree National Park, and Imperial sand Dunes National Recreation Area.

He is an interpretive specialist and has presented programs on topics including botany, geology, archeology, biology, and history. Carey has also headed habitat restoration projects, provided emergency medical services, assisted with regulation compliance, and managed park naturalists and concessions operations.



On the left is City Ranger Melanie Fontana, assigned to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. On the right is City Ranger Carey Goldstein, assigned to Black Mtn. Open Space and other parks.

A native of Southern California, Carey received a BA in Radio, Television and Film Production from Cal State University, Northridge and worked in the entertainment industry for twenty years. Carey's lifelong love of the outdoors and his desire to connect the public to our natural resources led him to a career as a park ranger. In his free time Carey enjoys hiking, photography, snorkeling, snowboarding, and other outdoor adventures.

### Highlights Inside

Hikes and Volunteer Opportunities	2-3
Trail for All People Update	3
Two Rare Songbirds	4
Lilac Trail Rebuild	5
Saving the Torrey Pines	6
Suburban Oases	6
Readers Opinion	7
Trail for all People	8
Membership Form	8
Friends Directory	8

## Activities, Hikes, and Volunteer Opportunities

All of our hikes are free. There is a fee for some of the Tracking survey classes. See below for details.

Wear good trail sneakers or boots and sun protection (hat, 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.

#### Monthly:

##### **Introduction to Wildlife Tracking**

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

Join a knowledgeable San Diego Tracking Team instructor for FREE informal "dirt time" lessons in the art of wildlife tracking. All experience levels are welcome. Learn how to identify the tracks and scat of coyotes, bobcats, raccoon, deer and other wildlife in the area! Information at [www.sdt.org](http://www.sdt.org). No reservation necessary. Rain cancels.

NOTE: The tracking walk will be combined with the quarterly Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training for the first two hours. Both are free! Anyone who is interested is welcome to stay for the rest of the training day (ends at 3:00 pm)! Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Drive and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

#### Every two months:

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. Jan. 8, Mar. 12, 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 Mountain Road and Canyonside Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos.

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

**Thurs. 6:30 p.m. Jan. 15, Mar. 19, May 21, July 16, Sept. 17, Nov. 19**

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.

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

**Tues. 7 p.m. Jan. 6, Mar. 3, May 5, 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 Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos.

#### San Diego Tracking Team:

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

**Sat. 8 am-3 pm Jan. 10, April 11, July 11, Oct. 10**

This FREE class prepares you to participate in surveys that monitor the wildlife in major open space preserves and other critical areas. Learn about basic track and scat identification animal gaits, habitat fragmentation, survey transects, data collection protocols, and conservation. At the end of the class, you can sign up to join experienced trackers on some of SDTT's wildlife surveys throughout the San Diego area; please bring calendars to class. Preregistration is requested to reserve your spot. Dress prepared to spend time outdoors and bring a sack lunch and water. More information and preregistration at [www.sdt.org](http://www.sdt.org). Email [info@sdt.org](mailto:info@sdt.org) or call 760.715.4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

##### **Beginning Tracker/Naturalist Class**

**Class: Wed. 7- 9 p.m. Feb 18, Mar 18, Sept. 16, Oct 14**

**Field Sat. 8 am- 4 pm Feb 21, Mar 21, Sept 19, Oct 17**

The Tracker/Naturalist series of classes provides you with information and skills to identify tracks, scat, and other sign from wildlife that inhabit our local nature preserves. Classes involve one weekday evening of classroom instruction and one Saturday in field for "dirt time" instruction. Beginning class topics include: levels of tracking, the six arts of tracking, sensory awareness, journaling, the process of track identification, common species encountered locally, and introduction to gaits. Cost \$50 (\$10 discount for SDTT members). Preregistration required. Payment is due by

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

Friday before the classroom session. More information at [www.sdt.org](http://www.sdt.org). Email [info@www.sdt.org](mailto:info@www.sdt.org) or call 760-715-4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos

##### **Tracker Intensive Dirt Time**

**Sat. 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Mar 7, Aug 15**

Enhance your tracking skills with an experienced SDTT tracker. This free-form dirt-time will focus on advanced tracker/naturalist concepts with topics depending on what type of sign is found. Topics we hope to cover: small mammals like mice, voles, shrews; reptile or amphibian sign; gaits; various bird species; skull identification; and possibility some trailing. This dirt-time session is for new trackers, apprentice trackers (counts toward continuing education requirement), and seasoned trackers alike, and should help anyone who is planning to take a CyberTracker Track & Sign evaluation. End time is approximate, so bring a lunch and be prepared to spend the day outside. Attendees are encouraged to use the SDTT Facebook Group to coordinate ride sharing: [tinyurl.com/olrkmr3](http://tinyurl.com/olrkmr3). Cost: \$10. More information at [www.sdt.org](http://www.sdt.org). Email [info@www.sdt.org](mailto:info@www.sdt.org) or call 760-715-4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos

##### **Intermediate and Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Class**

**Class: Wed. 7 – 9 p.m. May 13, Nov 4**

**Field: Sat. 8 am – 4 pm May 16, June 20, Nov 7, Dec 5**

The Tracker/Naturalist series of classes provides you with information and skills to identify tracks, scat, and other sign from wildlife that inhabit our local nature preserves. Classes involve one weekday evening of classroom instruction and one Saturday in the field for "dirt time" instruction. This classroom session combines both intermediate and advanced tracking topics. Intermediate class topics include: beyond the track--connecting the track to the animal, speculative tracking, advanced aspects of track identification, additional species, and introduction to track-debris-substrate interaction and track aging. Advanced class topics include: advanced gait interpretation, additional species, and further study of track-debris-substrate interaction and track aging. **The field sessions for the first class are: Intermediate: Saturday, May 16, 8 am – 4 pm. Advanced: Saturday, June 20, 8 am – 4 pm. The**

field sessions for this class are: **Intermediate: Saturday, November 7, 8 am – 4 pm. Advanced: Saturday, December 5, 8 am – 4 pm.** Cost: \$50 (\$10 discount for SDTT members). Includes combination classroom session and Intermediate field session. More information at [www.sdtt.org](http://www.sdtt.org). Email [info@www.sdtt.org](mailto:info@www.sdtt.org) or call 760-715-4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyonside Park Drive-way and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

## Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

### January

#### Black Mountain Open Space Restoration Work Party

**Sun., Jan. 25, 12 - 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for a restoration work party in Black Mtn. Open Space Park. We'll be planting native plants in an area that burned in last year's Bernardo Fire. No experience needed. Community service credits available for students that need them. Call Mike Kelly for more info at 858-342-8856 or email him at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com). The work site is next to Black Mtn. Community Park, at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Gather in the northeast corner of the park. Should be good parking there.

#### Lopez Homestead History Hike

**Sun., Jan. 25, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

Hike into Lopez Canyon with Will Bowen, PhD, to learn about the Ramon 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. Discover the importance of the Lopez Family in early San Diego history. Meet at the West End Parking Staging area. 4300 Sorrento Valley Road.

### February

#### Black Mountain Open Space Restoration Work Party

**Sun., Feb. 8, 12 - 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for a restoration work party in Black Mtn. Open Space Park. We'll be planting native plants in an area that burned in last year's Bernardo Fire. No experience needed. Community service credits available for students that need them. Call Mike Kelly for more info at 858-342-8856 or email him at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com). The work site is next to Black Mtn. Community Park, at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Gather in the northeast corner of the park. Should be good parking there.

#### Black Mountain Open Space Restoration Work Party

**Sun., Feb. 22, 12 - 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for a restoration work party in Black Mtn. Open Space Park. We'll be planting native plants in an area that burned in last year's Bernardo Fire. No experience needed. Community service credits available for students that need them. Call Mike Kelly for more info at 858-342-8856 or email him at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com). The work site is next to Black Mtn. Community Park, at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Gather in the northeast corner of the park. Should be good parking there.

#### Pierre Bovet Adobe History Hike

**Sun., Feb. 22, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

Visit the ruins of the Don Pedro Bovet Adobe in Carroll Canyon. Pedro Bovet, a noted chef and wine-maker of early San Diego was married to Ramon Lopez's (of our Lopez Canyon) sister. One of his daughters married into the Crosthwaite family of Rancho Poway and another married the son of Diego Alvarado (of the Peñasquitos El Cuervo Adobe). Meet at the corner of Youngstown Way and Carroll Canyon Road.

### March

#### Black Mountain Open Space Restoration Work Party

**Sun., Mar. 15, 12 - 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for a restoration work party in Black Mtn. Open Space Park. We'll be planting native plants in an area that burned in last year's Bernardo Fire. No experience needed. Community service credits available for students that need them. Call Mike Kelly for more info at 858-342-8856 or email him at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com). The work site is next to Black Mtn. Community Park, at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Gather in the northeast corner of the park. Should be good parking there.

#### Tadpole and Fairy Shrimp Hike

**Sun., March 15, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

A hike to look for and learn about fairy shrimp, tree frog tadpoles, and spadefoot toad tadpoles – the short term inhabitants of the ephemeral rain pools and road puddles of early spring on Carmel Mountain mesa top. Learn about their life cycles and behaviors. Meet at the Carmel Mountain Trail Head.

#### Birding with all Your Senses

**Sat., Mar. 21, 8:00 a.m.**

Join Field Ornithologist Jeanie Anderson on a path in the canyon with many birds both visible and calling. Bring sturdy shoes, binoculars and cover-ups. Handouts and checklists will be provided. Meet at the west end of Canyonside Park Driveway, 1

block west of Black Mtn. Rd. at the Preserve sign at the beginning of the white ranch house fence. 12350 Black Mtn. Rd. Rancho Peñasquitos

#### Black Mountain Open Space Restoration Work Party

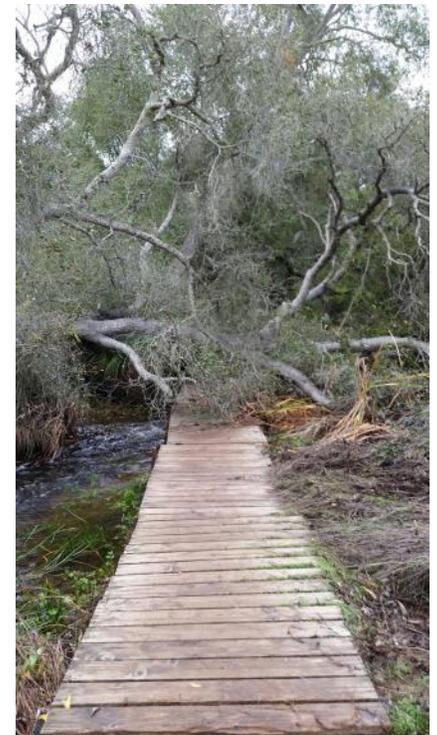
**Sun., Mar. 29, 12 - 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for a restoration work party in Black Mtn. Open Space Park. We'll be planting native plants in an area that burned in last year's Bernardo Fire. No experience needed. Community service credits available for students that need them. Call Mike Kelly for more info at 858-342-8856 or email him at [mkelly1@san.rr.com](mailto:mkelly1@san.rr.com). The work site is next to Black Mtn. Community Park, at 14700 Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Gather in the northeast corner of the park. Should be good parking there.

#### El Cuervo Adobe History Hike

**Sun., Mar. 29, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

Hike into the West End of Peñasquitos Canyon for an intimate look at the ruins of the "El Cuervo" Adobe build by the Alvarado family. Includes a short side hike to examine Norwood Brown's old roundup corral and to discuss the impact of cattle grazing on the Preserve. Meet in the Parking Lot: 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard.



Peñasquitos Creek Crossing bridge with fallen tree blocking it after the severe storms in December. But the new bridge survived!  
Damage like this is one reason the trails are closed after any significant rains.

## Two Rare Song Birds

**A species of bird, which has been at Lake Hodges for thousands of years, could disappear without creating a connection to other habitat.**

By Jason Lopez, Resources and Trails Manager, San Dieguito River Park.



Female Coastal Cactus Wren, Bernardo Mountain 2014.  
Photo Courtesy of Ken Weaver.

There are two important song birds that live, year round, along the North Shore Trail. They live and breed just off trail in the sparsely vegetated south facing slopes of Bernardo Mountain, which is located on the North Shore of Lake Hodges. One species has proven to be resilient and the other fragile.

*Coastal Cactus Wren* and *California Gnatcatcher* have been formally studied at Bernardo Mountain since 1981. A current survey of the birds revealed a disturbing downward trend in the cactus wren population. The population decline has been exacerbated by the 2007 Witch Fire and several years of drought. A new fire would be devastating and could result in the loss of the entire population. More study is needed, but there may only be 6-8 birds remaining in the entire Lake Hodges area.

Conversely, the *California Gnatcatcher* population seems to be stable. Although the current numbers are generally low, this seems to mirror past population fluctuations according to biologists. The fire and drought have made life difficult for all terrestrial birds on Bernardo Mountain. The study also demonstrated that the restoration efforts of the San Dieguito River Park (SDRP) have helped the gnatcatchers of Bernardo Mountain immensely. The rehabilitated habitat helped the fire survivors to not only survive the drought but to become a dominant bird species of the preserve.

The River Park is fortunate to have partnered with biologist Clark Mahrtdt and Ken Weaver to conduct the 2014 study. Both biologists have a long history of working in the area. Clark has been studying the habitat and wildlife at Lake Hodges and Del Dios Gorge for over 35 years and has been a River Park volunteer since the early 1990's. Ken Weaver first started document-

ing cactus wren at Lake Hodges in 1981 and is considered to be an expert for this species. Clark and Ken are dedicated to the conservation of *Coastal Cactus Wren* and *California Gnatcatcher*.

The purpose of the study was to provide an update on the fate of the bird populations of Bernardo Mountain including comparing the results of previous surveys. The post-fire restoration, that was designed to provide immediate benefits to wildlife, was also evaluated.

Just after the 2007 fire, referring to the Lake Hodges area, Jerre Stallcup from *Conservation Biology Institute* wrote:

*We are facing the very real potential for local extirpation of populations of gnatcatchers and cactus wrens, 2 of the 3 focal species initially prioritized by the State of California's Natural Community Conservation Program (NCCP) in Southern California.*

In response to the desperate need for action, the River Park embarked on a restoration project to create *Coastal Cactus Wren* and *California Gnatcatcher* habitat on Bernardo Mountain. The 67-acre restoration project occurred on land owned by the City of San Diego, the San Dieguito River Park JPA, and the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy.

Prior to the 2007 Witch Fire, Lake Hodges is believed to have supported the largest population of *California Gnatcatcher* in San Diego County. In 2014, the biologists detected 12 pairs of gnatcatchers on Bernardo Mountain. The general distribution of territories was similar to the results of a 2008 study which identified the survivors of the Witch Fire. Eleven of 12 pairs were utilizing burned areas that receives some level of restoration by SDRP after the fire. Six of the pairs had more than half their territories located within the SDRP restoration sites.

Unfortunately, the results of



SDRP restoration site March 2011

the study demonstrate the dire outlook for the survival of *Coastal Cactus Wren* at Lake Hodges. Only 3 pairs of cactus wren were observed and apparently Bernardo Mountain contains the only population remaining at Lake Hodges. Cactus wren require mature cactus patches, which is reasonable considering they must contend with predators like the *Greater Roadrunner* and *Coopers Hawk*. The cactus planted in the 2008 post fire restoration work is not yet tall enough to provide nesting habitat and will not be for 2-4 more years. The cactus wren may be utilizing the restoration sites for foraging. For the current survey, only one nest was found to definitely contain young.

Cactus wren populations are fragile and the bird does not seem to like to travel very far. It is likely that the Bernardo Mountain population may be confined to Lake Hodges. The fate of this song bird, which has lived in the vicinity of what is now Lake Hodges for thousands of years, is up to three remaining pair of cactus wren.

There are cactus wren in San Pasqual Valley, near Safari Park, but connecting the populations is a project that has significant obstacles, including Interstate 15, and if started today, would take 8-10 years before the cactus provided adequate habitat. Although difficult, making the connections to other occupied habitat is ultimately needed for the long term survival of the Bernardo Mountain population.

SDRP will continue to restore habitat on Bernardo Mountain and encourage Park partners to devote time and energy in solving the cactus wren dilemma.

The first SDRP restoration project for these rare song birds began in 2004 and SDRP annually implements a restoration project on Bernardo Mountain. The Park also looks for opportunities for outside funding and partnerships.

In 2014, SDRP worked with the *Institute of Conservation Research (ICR)* to plant 1,000 cactus on Bernardo Mountain to help create more cactus scrub habitat in areas that SDRP identified as important. In addition to cacti, ICR is helping the wildlife at Lake Hodges by installing coastal sage scrub plants, mostly in the Bernardo Bay area.

In 2015, SDRP will enhance the current effort to save cactus wren and gnatcatchers, by implementing a 4-year project funded by a *Natural Resources Conservation Service* grant. The project will help to convert weedy areas into wildlife habitat.

Overall, the restoration projects will help most animals that require coastal sage scrub habitat, including the resident song birds, but cactus grows slow and the clock is ticking for the Coastal cactus wren of Bernardo Mountain.

If you want to volunteer or contribute to the *Coastal Cactus Wren Fund* please visit [www.sdrp.org](http://www.sdrp.org) or call (858) 674-2275.

## Building the Lilac Trail

Rod Simmons, SDMB

San Diego Mountain Biking Association has been working almost every Saturday on the massive project of rebuilding the Lilac Trail on Black Mountain that will eventually link up the trail system from Black Mtn. itself to the Santa Luz grasslands part of the park through an underpass under Carmel Valley Road. It's a big, tough piece of trail system to build. The ranger staff has cleared brush mid-week (and had the Alpha project come in) so that the Saturday crew has raw corridor to start with.



And I cannot express fully in words how delighted I am working with Ed these past years and now with the new hires Carey and Joe. That goes for Gina's new aide at PQ too. Whatever process the city adopted in vetting the new candidates, they hit it out of the ballpark. All smart, motivated and passionate about their work.



So back to subject of trail build. We managed about 30 volunteers on hand these last two Saturdays. Of those present 5-6 are "trail boss" types that are highly skilled/experienced in trail building techniques. Skills acquired via formal IMBA training (training which our ranger staff has (see page 7)

## Saving the Torrey Pines

Darren Smith  
Torrey Pines State Reserve Ecologist

[The beetle mentioned here has recently killed a Torrey Pine at Crest Canyon Park, a small, but beautiful park managed by our Black Mtn. Ranger staff.]

From December 2014 through February 2015, California State Parks will be cutting down as many as one hundred (100) Torrey pines at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. These trees have become mortally infested with bark beetles. Removing these trees will help reduce the infestation in other nearby Torrey pine stands.

The bark beetles (California five-spined engraver beetle and red turpentine beetle) are native insects that in low numbers do not harm the Torrey pine. The sustained drought and higher temperatures have reduced some of the Torrey pine's ability to resist bark beetle infestations.

The problem has been exacerbated by Torrey pine and Monterey pine that were grown with irrigation in the neighboring landscaping. Landscape trees that have been raised with irrigation are larger and do not typically develop root systems that can sustain the trees during prolonged droughts. When irrigation is shut off or reduced these trees support large beetle infestations that spread to wild trees.

California State Parks staff has been relying on non-toxic beetle traps to help control the infestation. Despite this effort we have still lost as many as 100 mature trees, about 2 percent of the current population within the park (about 4580 trees). While we are very concerned about this current infestation, Torrey Pines Natural Reserve has endured larger tree mortality in the past. During the late 80s and early 90s, a severe windstorm and three-year drought resulted in the mortality of about 850 trees (12% of the population) due to bark beetle infestations. A similar program of beetle traps and tree removal helped reduce the tree mortality until several years of average or higher rainfall occurred.

Tree removal will be conducted by CalFire and inmate crews with monitoring and technical support from California State Park staff. Workers will fell trees and cut lumber into smaller pieces that will be hand carried to greenwaste roll-off containers. Extreme caution will be taken to prevent expanding the infestation of the beetles.

While some of the views will change once the trees are removed we expect that the remaining sub-adults and seedlings will repopulate the affected areas. Infested areas will be monitored to determine if future reforestation or revegetation efforts are warranted.

Reserve neighbors can help by maintaining healthy pine trees or replace them with non-invasive, drought-tolerant plants.

## Suburban Oases in Northern San Diego

Ranger Carey Goldstein

What do you call beautiful natural spaces surrounded by suburban sprawl? Places where you can escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Places where one can interact with nature, get some exercise or enjoy some outdoor recreation. Suburban oases perhaps? That is how I described the open space parks of Northern San Diego when explaining to friends where I had recently been hired as a park ranger.

These parks preserve vital native resources for the public and give visitors a chance to have wild land experiences close to their homes. It's a unique opportunity to be able to visit places like these especially in one of the largest cities in the United States.

Having spent the past 10 years working in national parks and recreation areas in Central and Southern California I honestly wasn't expecting much of a wilderness experience in San Diego. I was pleasantly surprised and impressed when I began exploring the open space parks that I would be working in: Black Mountain, Mt. Woodson, Clevenger, Crest, and Gonzales Canyons. Who would have thought that one could find stands of trees, unique native plants and wildlife, historic sites and even a beautiful waterfall right here in the city? Not only do these places afford the visitor the solace of a wild land experience but also some amazing recreational opportunities. These include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and birding to name a few.

These suburban oases offer something else as well, a look into the past. There are many sites to explore and much to learn about the historic and cultural resources of the area. American Indian sites, an historic battlefield and glimpses into our not so distant past of mining, cattle ranching and agriculture.

I'm certain that there will always be new experiences and knowledge to be gained in the open space parks of Northern San Diego. I look forward to spending my days in these parks and hope to see you on the trails of these suburban oases.



Mule deer doe, part of a herd of 6-8 that were observed in Peñasquitos Lagoon in November, 2014.

Photo by Dean Woods

**A Reader's Opinion:**

**Destroying Carson's Crossing Tranquil View**  
Cesse Poole



This new elevated footbridge across the beautiful tranquil downstream view from the existing low footbridge is a really bad idea. Not sure who came up with the pseudo environmental junk science to justify destroying this lovely view with an unnecessary elevated footbridge.

Been hiking and enjoying this lovely tranquil place for 20 years and I am extremely upset you would mess up such a lovely place with this eyesore. If you want a raise bridge...put it where the old one is back where it will not obscure this scene.

**Ranger Gina Washington's response:**

I am very sorry you disagree with the replacement of the bridge at Carson's Crossing to its original location, as indicated by the bridge footing on the south side of the creek. The decision to put the bridge back downstream was made based on several real issues:

The low level bridge is causing the banks to erode every time the creek rises during a rain event causing an ever widening of the crossing (bank to bank). Placing an elevated bridge in the current location would require the removal of much vegetation and soil, further exacerbating the erosion problem.

Though it sounds contradictory, the current location is also narrowing (within the creek flow) resulting in a loss of vehicle access which must be maintained according to the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Master Plan and Natural Resource Management Plan. Additionally, the narrowing is causing the equestrians to have to "pick" their way around downstream to avoid the current bridge which is also causing bank erosion and puts them into an unsafe area.

When new visitors come to the crossing they have a fair deal of difficulty finding the two parts of the crossing which are not visible because they are separated by vegetation; relocating the bridge puts the entire crossing in line.

The above point also will assist in helping visitors avoid poison oak by wandering around looking for the foot-

bridge.

Relocating the bridge will also aid in making a more accessible trail system for people without full mobility. Not that the entire Preserve trail system will need to be accessible, but it is a personal goal to help make a portion of the Preserve available for all people.

Your picture shows an obstructed view, however the current footbridge will be removed so a new view will be available both upstream and downstream for all to enjoy. If you have further concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Gina Washington  
Senior Park Ranger

**(Liliac Trail continued)**

also took advantage of) plus years of volunteerism providing free trails maintenance to open space parks in the county over a course of many years.



Balance of volunteers - 20 % rank rookies to trail work with 80% having skill levels requiring little hands on supervision. In general, as skilled a volunteer corps, as one could dream of.



## Trail for All People Update

Jas Arnold

As noted in previous updates, construction may start in the early part of next year. Three informational sign exhibits will be placed along the trail. The content theme for each of these three exhibits are:

- Panorama
- Local Critters. The list includes red diamond rattlesnake, two stripe garter snake, Western Pacific rattlesnake, Western fence lizard, California gnatcatcher, greater roadrunner, California quail, desert cottontail, bobcat, coyote
- Historical Topic such as the arsenic mine.

The signs are at the formulation stage so any thoughts regarding content, location, and size are welcome. Email your thoughts or a request for a better copy of the sign to [ziphel@san.rr.com](mailto:ziphel@san.rr.com).

The construction documents and contract are currently being finalized.

### PLANTS COMMON TO THE BLACK MOUNTAIN OPEN SPACE PARK



**BLACK SAGE** *Salvia arifolia*  
Sage Family / Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral  
Pale lavender flowers bloom in spring and summer. This strongly scented plant is a prominent low bushy shrub that grows up into dark spheres, thus the name black sage.



**LAUREL SUMAC** *Melicope laurina*  
Sage Family / Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral  
In spring and summer, prominent clusters of tiny white flowers develop. On dry hillside, long, lance-shaped leaves persist on overgrown shrubs all year long. On new growth, leaves and stems are red. On old growth, some of leaf undersides (lower) are common.



**CALIFORNIA SAGEBRUSH** *Artemisia californica*  
(Old Man, Coastal Sagebrush)  
Sunflower Family / Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral  
Monocotyledonous biennials follow early winter rains. The shrub is a common nesting site of the California Gnatcatcher. Though it has a strong sage scent, it is not a true sage. After winter storms, leafless summer stems sprout foliage within a week.



**LEMONADEBERRY** *Aztec integrifolia*  
(Huckle)  
Sage Family / Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral  
Large clusters of inconspicuous flowers bloom in winter and early spring. In summer, a hard, fat seed develops inside sticky fruits. A soothing drink can be made from soaking the seed berries.



**CHAMISE** *Adenostoma fasciculatum*  
(Crownwood, Chamise)  
Rose Family / Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral  
On arid of hills, crowded clusters of cream to white flowers bloom in late spring to early summer. Chamise survives summer drought with its water conserving leaves and deep, extensive root system. The robust shrub encourages fire. After fire, buried stumps sprout and seed germination improves.



**TOYON** *Anerosma arbutifolia*  
(Christmas Berry, Holly Berry, Hollywood)  
Rose Family / Habitats: Chaparral, Sage Scrub, Oak Woodland  
In summer, new clusters of tiny white flowers are popular with insects. In winter, red berries are popular with birds. Elongated leaves are holly-like. There is a myth that redwoods, California was named after this shrub.



**COASTAL PRICKLY PEAR** *Opuntia littoralis*  
(Cone, Nopal)  
Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral, Grasslands  
Yellow flowers with green stigmas bloom in May and June. Spreading clumps, other common habitats, are sometimes seen here with flat pads and orange round spines. All cactus species are native to the New World. Pads, fruit and flowers are commonly used as food by the Hummingbird and Mexican Vulture.



**WHITE SAGE** *Salvia spinescens*  
Sage Family / Habitats: Sage Scrub, Chaparral  
White to pale lavender flowers bloom in spring and summer. White sage has a strong scent and is an important honey plant. Fuzzy, near white foliage reflects hot summer sun and protects the same white sage.

## Membership Application

Membership category: (circle 1 below)

Senior (62) or Student \$10	Individual \$15
Family \$20	Sponsor \$30
Corporate \$250	Life \$1000
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I/We are interested in the following:

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\_\_\_\_ Indian Culture

\_\_\_\_ Educational Workshops

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\_\_\_\_ Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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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

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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

Jeanie Anderson, Anne Harvey, Mike Kelly, Mary Lueking, Brian Swanson

### Walk Leaders

Don Albright, Will Bowen, Les Braund, Arne Johansen, Mike Kelly, Mary Lueking, Brian Swanson, Pat Watkins

### Committees

Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.342.8856  
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Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta,  
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