

Help Save Rattlesnake Canyon

The Friends' Board of Directors unanimously decided to support a campaign to save Rattlesnake Canyon. Never heard of or visited Rattlesnake Canyon? Outside of the local residents, it's a gem of a three-canyon system in eastern Poway, best known by lucky locals. It's a little visited part of our Peñasquitos Creek watershed. Rattlesnake Creek is one of the tributaries that flow into Poway/Peñasquitos Creek and eventually Peñasquitos Lagoon. As you drive Poway Road east past Espola Rd. and climb the Poway Grade towards SR67, it's the canyon system to the north of Poway Rd. and east of Espola. Its ridges run all the way to SR67, opposite Iron Mtn.

Tyler Suttle, a long-time resident of Rattlesnake Canyon (his home is down the street from the major trailhead in) will lead a hike for the Friends in the canyon this coming March. We'll put out a special notice about it. Tyler made an extensive presentation to our Board, noting how many parcels in the canyon system are still privately owned and at risk of development. Houses already populate the rim of one of the three forks of the canyon. Recently Tyler made a presentation and plea to the Poway City Council to spend some of their surplus funds to purchase additional parcels as open space. Other Poway residents were there to support Tyler.

Rattlesnake Canyon has an impressive diversity of plants and animals and, during wet years, one of the most impressive displays of wildflowers I've seen anywhere in San Diego. We'll let you know in coming months what you can do to help in this campaign, but start by attending the March walk or visiting it on your own.

- Mike Kelly, editor

Quick Links

[More on Us](#)

[Volunteer Opportunities and Hike Schedule](#)

[Trail Maps](#)

[Canyon Videos](#)

[Contacts](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Membership](#)

[Volunteer](#)

[Current Newsletter](#)

For More Information

[San Diego Tracking Team](#)

[San Diego County Archaeological Society](#)

[California Native Plant Society, San Diego](#)

[California Invasive Plant Council](#)

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Upcoming Events

[Wildflower Hike on Doug Hill. Sat. March 5, 10 a.m. Join Native Plant Society member Beth Mather for this wildflower hike on the biologically diverse Doug Hill in Black Mtn. Open Space Park. Hike is about half a mile and involves one good hill, but will be slow paced. Meet in the northeast corner of Black Mtn. Ranch Community Park on Black Mtn. Park Way at 14700 Carmel Valley Rd., Rancho Peñasquitos, SD 92129.](#)

[Tadpole & Fairy Shrimp Hike. Sun., March 13, 4-6 p.m. Look for and learn about fairy shrimp, and tree frog, spadefoot toad, and western toad tadpoles - the short term inhabitants of the ephemeral vernal pools and road puddles of early spring on the Carmel Mountain mesa top. Learn about their life cycles, behaviors, and current status.](#)



Volunteers Beth Mather and Cecile Cowan harvest cactus pads for Cactus wren restoration sites in the Santa Luz grasslands of Black Mtn. Park. Photo by Mike Kelly.

Trail for All People Underway

Jas Arnold

After many years the Trail for All People is under construction! The site is located off the parking-staging area for Black Mountain Open Space Park, off Carmel Valley Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. The trail affords great vistas to the east, north, and west. When finished later this year the trail will accommodate wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, etc.

The trail is a collaboration of the Open Space Division of City Parks and Recreation, the Black Mtn. Citizens Advisory Committee, the Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, and the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board. Friends' member donations provided the original seed money.



Meet at the Carmel Mountain Trail Head at 4730 Fairport Way at Shorepoint Way, San Diego. 92130.

Birding with all Your Senses. Sat., March 19, 8 a.m. Join 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, 12350 Black Mtn. Rd., San Diego, 92129, then 1 block west up the drive to the sign at the beginning of the white ranch house fence.

Restoration Overview Santa Fe Valley. Sat., March 19, 9 a.m. Restoration Overview Santa Fe Valley Sat. Mar. 19, 9 a.m. Join restorationist and Calif. Native Plant Society member Arne Johanson for an overview of restoration projects and techniques in the Santa Fe Valley and Black Mtn. areas. Meet in the parking-staging area on San Dieguito Rd opposite Montien Road in Santa Luz

El Cuervo Adobe History Hike. Sun., March 20, 4-6 p.m. Hike out into the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon for a close-up look at the ruins of the adobe built by Diego Alvarado, the compadre of Presidio commandante Francisco Ruiz, who gave him his Peñasquitos land grant. Learn how adobe bricks were made and the architecture of Spanish and Mexican period haciendas. Examine Norwood Brown's - the last of a long line of Peñasquitos cattlemen - old roundup corral and discuss the impact of cattle grazing

Vernal Pool Walk. Sat., March 26, 1 p.m. Join naturalist Mike Kelly for a walk through San Diego's most endangered habitats, the vernal pool. See and learn about the extremophiles, the endangered plants and animals that live in or around these short lived pools. Visit the pools every few weeks with us to see the amazing changes in plants and critters. Meet at 11101 Taloncrest Way, San Diego 92121 (off Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa).

Historic Adobe Ranch Tours. Every Sat. at 11 a.m. and Sun. at 1 p.m. San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa Maria de los Peñasquitos. See an historic Mexican 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 12020 Black Mountain Rd., San Diego 92129 between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

Training: Intermediate & Advanced Tracker/Naturalist. Wed., March 16, 7-9 p.m. Part I. These 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 topics include: advanced gait interpretation, additional species, and further study of track-debris-substrate interaction and track aging.

Every Two Months Friends' Board of Directors Meeting Tues., Mar. 1, May 3, July 5 at 7 p.m. Friends's members are welcome to attend these planning meetings for our varied activities. At the ranch house at Canyonside Park Driveway off 12020 Black Mtn. Rd., San Diego 92129. Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee Thurs., Mar. 10, May 12, at 6:30 p.m. Public is welcome to attend these planning meetings which advise Park officials on park matters. Meet in the Canyonside Rec. Ctr.

New Links

Tracking Team makes front page of The Reader, February 24, 2016:
<http://content.yudu.com/Library/A3yw92/SanDiegoReader022216/resources/index.htm?referrerUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sandiegoreader.com%2Farchives%2F>

For news on our Lake Hodges Oak Woodland Restoration visit the new website of the Del Dios Habitat Protection League: <http://www.ddhpl.org/>



Trail for All People Conceptual Design.

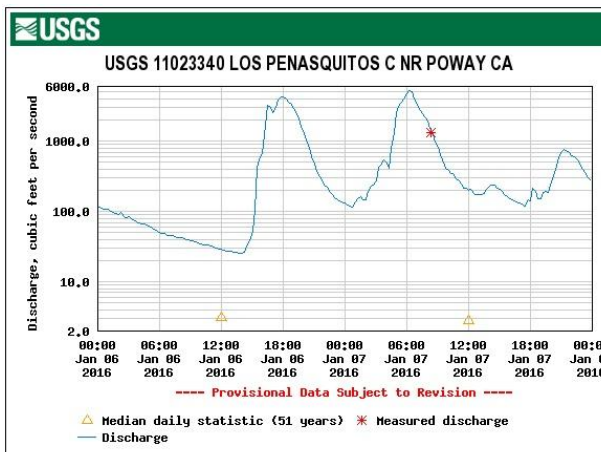
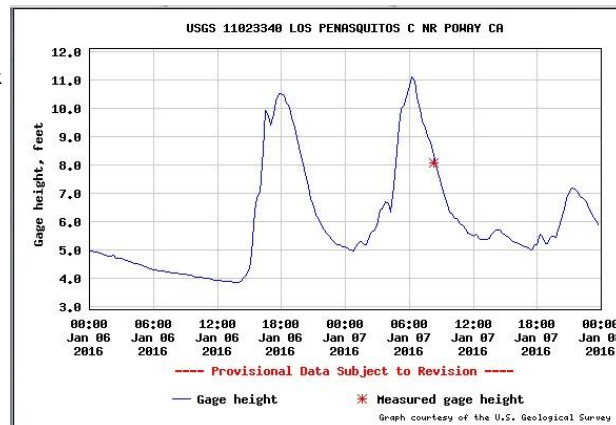
Big Flows in Creek

Tyler Suttle

[Peñasquitos Creek has one of the few U.S. Geological Survey Gauging Stations in our County. It's located about 1/4 mile east of Horseman's Park, just below Mercy Road. You can see graphs and data of current and historical creek flows and heights. The link for the January 6-7, 2016 storm is: http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?cb_00060=on&cb_00065=on&format=gif_default&site_no=11023340&period=&begin_date=2016-01-06&end_date=2016-01-07. - editor's note.]

I went for a hike to different parts of the creek in Poway and Sabre Springs during peak downpours. By the Poway City hall it was running bank-to-bank and at high levels (see graph above) - a river, not a creek. The creek reached 11 feet at its peak. Checking on the lower confluences where Rattlesnake and Chicarita Creeks meet Peñasquitos

Creek I saw the water roaring down onto the rocks. The sheer volume of the flows was amazing. The flow went from 3 cubic feet per second to a whopping 7,580 in a few hours (see graph below)! At 6 p.m. that night our creek had as big a volume as the San Diego River at the same time.



It was thrilling to watch the movement of water and observe how much runoff was increased/alterd by every small manmade alteration to the land, roads, trails, a devegated area, etc. The waterfalls up higher in the canyon were roaring with chocolate-brown water. I was actually pretty alarmed at how much sediment, both coarse and fine, was coming down from thjve drought-scorched slopes.

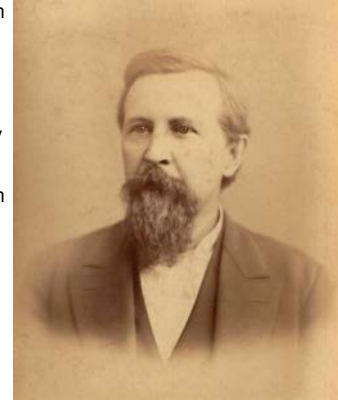
A Special Hike in Soledad Valley

Will Bowen, PhD

Saturday, December 12, 2015, I led a special Soledad Valley hike. The hike participants included Vykkii Mende-Gray, David Swarens, and Janet Martini, members of Los Californios, a musical group consisting of violin, accordion and guitar, who play and sing the songs of early California, such as those of the fandangos that took place at Spanish and Mexican period adobe homes. Also on the hike was Jonathan Parker, the great great grandson of Superior Court Judge Edwin Parker, who bought an important piece of land in Soledad Valley in the late 1800s.

Our first stop was the Don Pedro Bovet Adobe ruins in Carrol Canyon. Of special interest to our group were the two pomegranate tress growing on the east side of the adobe. Pomegranate trees can live to be almost 250 years old. It is thought that the seeds for these trees may have come from the pomegranate trees of Andrew Cassidy, San Diego's first tide keeper, who had a ranch in Soledad Valley about two miles to the west.

Andrew Cassidy was very fond of introducing the pomegranate to the people of San Diego. Pomegranate does well in this area because they are drought tolerant. Cassidy's foreman, and father of his second wife, Albert Smith, used to ride his horse up the valley to have dinner at the Bovets on a regular basis and may have brought some of Cassidy's pomegranates with him, the seeds of which were later planted.



From the Bovet Adobe, we caravanned over to Flintkote Road, near the entrance to General Atomic, which is west of the Sorrento Valley trolley station. It was here, near the confluence of Carrol and Penasquitos Creeks, that Old Town cattle regitor (arbitrator of cattle disputes) Bonafacio Lopez built his country adobe. Andrew Cassidy later acquired this land and built his ranch on top of the López Adobe foundation. Judge Edwin Parker eventually purchased lots 26 and 27 of the Cassidy property and soon after sold part of his land to Grace Diffendorf's father. Grace Diffendorf was the author of a somewhat fictionalized autobiography of growing up in Sorrento Valley called *The Long Lane*, which is excellent source material for knowing about life in the valley before the modern period.

We ended up at a coffee house nearby where we looked at old maps, deeds, and photographs, plus Judge Parker's gold watch and the door knobs from the old Superior Court building that Parker had removed before the building was demolished many years ago.

Our group consensus was that even though the city of San Diego currently is not big on putting up historic markers, both the Bovet Adobe and the general area of the López Adobe/Cassidy ranch should have historic markers indicating their significance.

Glider Port Restoration

SDHGPA

January 10 the San Diego Hanglider and Paraglider Association held a restoration work party at the Black Mtn. gliderport. Some 20 pilots planted natives, installed trail signage, and repaired trails. SDHGPA donated the 100 or so native plants, trail signage and time to block 30 trail cuts and repair washouts of the legal trail. Water divets were added to discourage future washouts. The scars on the western flank of the mountain are testimony to the decades of erosion that have taken place.

Did you know that glider pilots have been flying off "Little Black" as our mountain has been affectionately dubbed since the 1930s! Visit the Friends website at www.penasquitos.org to watch the 5-6 minute video on the history of flying from the mountain.



Ranger Station Open for Business



The new Ranger Station is now up and operating at the corner of Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads. The old Ranger station, two trailers, were down in the flood plane at Horseman's Park and subject to flooding. Both Peñasquitos and Black Mtn. Rangers. Photo by Mike Kelly

Election Results

Thanks to all of you who submitted your mailed in or e-ballots in our Officers election. You re-elected Les Braund as President and Don Albright as Vice-president. You elected Mike Kelly as Secretary and Jeannie Anderson as Treasurer. Voted in as Directors-at-large were Pat Watkins, Mary Leuking Anne Harvey, Edward DiBella, and Brian Swanson.

We're always looking for new Board members, so if you'd like to help plan and implement the Friends' plans contact Mike Kelly at mkelly1@san.rr.com and plan on coming to the next Board meeting!

What Have Volunteers Been Doing?

Mike Kelly, Secretary and Conservation Chair

This is our 32nd year of volunteering to save and enhance Peñasquitos Canyon and adjacent open space areas. What kind of volunteer activities are the Friends engaged in?

In the arena of public policy we're launching a new campaign to save Rattlesnake Canyon, part of our watershed in Poway, from imminent developments (see above). This will probably be a 15-20 year campaign. It will be our younger and future Board members that will witness its culmination!

Our hikes continue to be popular with the public. Will Bowen, myself, Brian Swanson, Pat Watson, Jeannie Anderson, and Arne Johanson, and this weekend, a new hike leader, Beth Mather, lead walks for us.

Restoration work parties have a string of successful sites behind them. Hundreds of volunteers have turned out for this very physical, but satisfying, work.

Arne Johanson, a resident of 4-S Ranch is leading a walk (see hike schedule) to show an overview of his restoration work in the Santa Fe Valley (north flank of Black Mtn. Open Space Park). He has been leading weed control volunteers for many years now, focusing on both the Santa Fe Valley and the Del Dios Gorge.



***Volunteers, including students from 4 local high schools,
planting natives at the Santa Luz Grasslands restoration site
Feb. 28, 2016.***