



Canyon News

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

Jan/Feb 2007
Volume 21, No 1

Lopez Canyon Willowy Monardella Project 2001 to July 2006

Mike Kelly & Cindy Burrascano

[For ten years, the Friends and the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society have used several grants along with funds donated by Friends' members, to work to protect the Lopez Canyon population of the Willowy monardella. This is the final report of the last five years of this

project. The appendices mentioned can be read at www.penasquitos.org]

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) awarded a grant to the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Can-

See *Willowy* p.4 for more



Section of Lopez Canyon with Camino Santa Fe connecting Sorrento Valley Blvd. south to Mira Mesa Blvd. All of the naturally occurring and transplanted Willowy monardella plants are scattered on terraces next to the wintertime channel. The "white" ribbons are the scoured and cobbled channels. Prior to the 1970s, this canyon bottom was fully vegetated. Development in Mira Mesa led to rain runoff being sent through storm drains into the canyon, resulting in heavy erosion and loss of the Monardella plants. Other photos show erosion control measures.

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News Notes

Election Outcomes

California voters passed Proposition 84, the Clean Water, Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, for a total of \$5.4 billion. The Friends had recommended a Yes vote for Prop 84.

Specific benefits of Proposition 84 for the San Diego area include:

- ◆ \$27 million to clean up and protect the San Diego Bay and its watersheds;
- ◆ \$91 million for integrated water management efforts in San Diego;
- ◆ \$36 million for the All-American and Coachella Canals Lining programs;
- ◆ \$7 million to implement the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species plan; and
- ◆ \$47 million for the Salton Sea Restoration.

In addition to these dedicated funds, San Diego area interests can also apply for additional funding within the Integrated Regional Water Management category (total of \$1 billion), Safe Drinking Water funds (total of \$240 million) and would indirectly benefit from investments made in statewide wa-

See News Notes p.3 for more

Upcoming Hikes/Events

The new year is here and with it, some rainy days. Remember when planning your visits that there may be days when the Preserve is closed due to rains. 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, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail!

For maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Park, visit www.penasquitos.org.

Every Saturday & Sunday

Historic Adobe Ranch Tour

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Ranch Santa Maria de Los Peñasquitos at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds.

January

Black Mtn. Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committees

Thursday, Jan 11, 7 – 8:30 p.m. Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. There will be a special presentation on the Draft Carmel Mountain & Del Mar Mesa Resources Management Plan. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyon-side Driveway.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Saturday, Jan 13, 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 first left into Canyon-side Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.

Volunteer Tamarisk Bash at Black Mtn. Park / Santa Luz

Sunday, Jan 14, 9 – 1 p.m.

Join Mike Kelly to eradicate the invasive shrub, tamarisk. Wear boots suitable for outdoor work, bring water and sun protection. We will provide the tools. Meet at the parking-staging area off San Dieguito Road, about 1/2 mile from its intersection with Camino del Sur in Santa Luz. See Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J6) -1169 (A6). Take SR56 east from I-15 or west from I-5 to Camino del Sur. Go north on Camino del Sur about 1.5 - 2 miles to intersection with San Dieguito Road. Left on San Dieguito. Look for small turnout and kiosk on the right. Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more info.

Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committees

Thursday, Jan 18, 7 – 9:00 p.m.

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. There will be a special presentation on the Draft Carmel Mountain & Del Mar Mesa Resources Management Plan. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyon-side Driveway.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Carmel Mountain Vernal Pool & Flower Walk with Diana Gordon

Sunday, Jan 21, 9 a.m.

Visit vernal pools, one of San

Diego's rarest habitats. Good chance to see wildflowers. Meet at the Carmel Mountain Trail Head at Fairport and Shorepointe streets in Sorrento Hills. Wear hiking boots, bring water and sun protection. Moderate hill to climb.

Thomas Guide p. 1208, C2 or call 858.484.3219.

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors

Tuesday Jan 23, 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 Canyon-side Driveway.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Lopez Homestead History Hike

Sunday, Jan 28, 3—4:30 p.m.

Hike out into Lopez Canyon to learn about the Old Lopez Homestead—a small turn-of-the-century dairy farm. Visit the orchard, the Old Road, and see the remains of the barn, house, and milking station. Find out about government land grants and the importance of the Lopez family in early San Diego history. Meet at West End Parking Staging Area.

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

February

Carmel Mountain Vernal Pool & Flower Walk with Diana Gordon

Saturday, Feb 10, 9 a.m.

Visit vernal pools, one of San Diego's rarest habitats. Good chance to see wildflowers. Meet at the Carmel Mountain Trail Head at Fairport and Shorepointe streets in Sorrento Hills. Wear hiking boots, bring water and sun protection. Moderate hill to climb.

Thomas Guide p. 1208, C2 or call 858.484.3219.

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Saturday, Feb 10, 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 first left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.

Pierre Bovet Adobe History Hike

Sunday, Feb 11, 3-4:30 p.m..
Hike out into Carroll Canyon (aka. Soledad Canyon) to visit the ruins of the Pierre Bovet Adobe. Find out how and why so many such adobe of San Diego County deteriorated. Learn about Pierre Bovet and his family and their place in San Diego history. Find out why this area should be part of the Preserve. Meet at Fire Station near the corner of Scranton and Carroll Canyon Road

Canyon Favorites Hike

Sunday, Feb 18, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.
Join Linda King for a moderately paced hike to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing, the waterfall, and back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring water and wear hiking boots.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).

"El Cuervo" Adobe History Hike

Sunday, Feb 25, 3—4:30 p.m.
Hike out into the West End of Peñasquitos Canyon for a close up look at the ruins of the "El Cuervo" Adobe. Discuss the controversy about who built it and when. Find out about Francisco and Diego Alvarado--the probable builders. Includes a short side hike to Norwood Brown's old corral to discuss cattle grazing in the Preserve. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard.
Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors

Tuesday, Feb 27, 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).

(News Notes cont'd from pg 1)

ter planning (surface storage planning & feasibility), water quality and flood protection/levee improvements in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta.

Voters turned down Prop 90, also as the Friends had recommended. This ballot measure was quite deceptive, a give-a-way program for the developers under the guise of limiting eminent domain.

Volunteers Needed for Mapping

If you would like to join the Friends Invasive Mapping Team to help map invasive plant infestations in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Black Mountain Park, and areas in between, contact Mike Kelly at mkellysd@aol.com or call 858-566-6489.

Volunteers will receive free training in how to use the hardware and software involved. They will also be exploring parts of our lands

Wanted!

Calling All Gardeners, Farmers and Ranch Hands

The rangers at the Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House are looking for "Ranch Hands" that can volunteer a little time to help bring our historic rancho back to life. Restored to its 1860s-1880s vintage, we want to share what life was like in the 19th century. From gardens and courtyards to chicken coops and livestock pens, opportunities abound for those interested in supporting a true piece of history.

This rancho was the first Mexican land grant given in all of southern California. Since 1823, this land raised vineyards, orchards, and livestock. The County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation has worked hard to restore this beautiful adobe ranch house. But, what is a ranch without the sights, sounds and smells of an earlier time? Today, kids think eggs come from a grocery store. We want them to know how kids

back in the 1800s had chores that included taking care of the chicken coop, for instance. Our award winning 4th grade education program, "La Vida Del Rancho" emphasizes what life was like for children their age with hands-on activities including pumping water, making Tussy-Mussies, and experiencing lessons in an 1860s classroom led by docents in period attire.

With your help, the garden plots could come alive with heritage crops, herbs and flowers. Our chicken coop is vacant, waiting for folks to tend the flock and harvest the eggs. Angora goats would be a welcome addition to an empty stall. "Heritage" is the theme, and "Living History" is the goal.

If you have any interest whatsoever, - questions, comments, etc...please contact julie.osborn@gmail.com

(Willow cont'd from pg 1)

yon for a cooperative project (FWS Agreement #14-48-0001-5250) between USFWS, California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG), Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon, City of San Diego, and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) to enable performance of work to improve the knowledge and status of Willow monardella (now Monardella viminea see Appendix 1). The initial work performed to meet the obligations of the grant were detailed in a report to USFWS dated March 21, 2001 (Appendix 2). At the time of completion of the report, there were two outstanding tasks associated with the grant and this report documents the completion of those tasks with the installation of A-Jacks structures to protect Willow monardella clumps from erosion and the outplanting of material grown from seed previously collected from each of the then remaining 7 clumps of Willow monardella in Lopez Canyon.

Additional funds were provided by the CDFG Local Assistance Program (\$183,000, not all expended), Coastal Conservancy Wetlands Recovery Project Small Grant Program (\$15,000), Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve (\$4500), ARCO (\$2500) and the CNPS San Diego Chapter (\$1000) to complete the erosion control efforts and the propagation of Willow monardella for outplanting. Volunteer assistance, approximately 760 hours, was provided by members of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA (NRCS), California State Parks, Recon, and the California Native Plant Society.

Funds were predominantly used on remedial erosion control work in Lopez Canyon and involved purchase and installation

of A-Jack concrete structures to protect specific clumps of plants in two locations, one east of the Camino Santa Fe Bridge up a side canyon of Lopez Canyon and the other well downstream of the bridge to armor an island area (see map, Appendix 8) that supported three of the then remaining clumps of Monardella viminea. As noted in the 2001 report, extensive gabion/weir dam construction is needed to adequately deal with erosion problems associated with upstream development in Lopez Canyon. The level of funding provided by the grant and its match, allowed installation of the A-Jacks to armor banks that would protect remaining clumps of Willow monardella but were not sufficient to deal with the base issue of water entering the system from the upstream residential development.

As discussed in the Fremontia article by Greer and Chong (Appendix 3), alternative design work donated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was generated that would have used rock berms to

protect the Willow monardella. A pre-project meeting with the resource agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, showed that permitting that type of project would have been a very time consuming process. Under contract, Nolte Engineering designed an alternative plan using the aforementioned A-Jacks to create concrete structures that would armor vulnerable banks and an island supporting Monardella. The California Coastal Commission agreed to the work at their May 7, 2003 meeting (Application 6-03-39), issuing an emergency permit. The bulk of the labor for installation of the A-Jacks was provided by the Urban Corp under contract, although a small portion involved volunteer labor. A-Jacks installation was completed in 2004 and is documented in a Fremontia article. Installation was managed and overseen by Kelly & Associates under contract with the City of San Diego.

Rains in the 2004-2005 season were extensive and unfortunately, the main channel changed course near the downstream A-



Urban Corps crew pose in front of Ajacks, erosion control structures made of concrete. The crew worked with Mike Kelly to install these in 90 F temperatures. Hard work! Although made of concrete, heavy floodwaters busted through the concrete and swept away part of this terrace with its Monardella plants.

Jacks work, eliminating part of the island that supported the *Monardella* (see Appendix 9). One of the clumps was lost due to erosion. Without the erosion control work performed, it is likely the island supporting the species would have been completely eliminated, whereas only the back portion of the area was lost with the A-Jacks protecting the nose of the island. As discussed in the *Fremontia* article, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) proposed cobble that would direct flow away from the back side of the island but there was concern about a nearby sewer line and the potential for further delays in the project so the berm work was not part of the final plan. The A-jacks structure up the finger canyon east of Camino Santa Fe did a good job of protecting the *Monardella* from heavy flood flows that in previous years had caused extensive damage. It should be noted that the road work done by the City for sewer line access is done on an annual basis and contributes to a build up of rocks that resulted in the change in flow to the back side of the island which was largely unarmored.

In 2004, seed was grown for outplanting into Lopez Canyon by Recon Environmental, Inc., per CDFG Research Permit 99-07, and paid with CNPS funds. Seeds from the 1999 collection were initially sowed into flats and germinated seedlings were transferred to rose pots for growing. Plants grew slower than expected due to cold weather, delaying planting did not occur until the end of February and the month of March 2005 due to the small size of the plants. Due to the continued downstream erosion problem, the plans were changed to outplant upstream of the Camino Santa Fe bridge. Areas were sprayed with herbicide to kill

weeds initially. Using many volunteers on multiple days, 920 rose pot plants were placed in the ground in 5 different general locations. GPS readings were taken around the circumference of the planting areas and number of plants were recorded (Appendix 4). The planting work parties were widely advertised and were covered in local newsletters, major newspapers, and by local tele-



A transplanted Willow monardella seedling flowering in its first year in the ground. Volunteers gathered the seed from naturally occurring plants in Lopez Canyon and later planted, weeded, and watered them in the first year.

vision stations per the educational component of the Coastal Conservancy grant (Appendices, 3, 5, 6, & 7). The City of San Diego also produced a video about the project for the City's television channel.

Tree shelters were used with the initial plantings but were of limited supply and rock mulching was used around the majority of the plants put in the ground. A May 15 census showed that plants with cones seemed to survive better than plants without

cones. Plants with rock mulch tended to survive better than plants with no protection. 508 plants were found alive on May 15, 2005. A subsequent survey performed the week of July 6 showed that 332 plants were still surviving. Some of those plants had little remaining green material and looked likely to die with the summer heat. On an April 13, 2006 survey, 167 plants remained. July 2006 surveys found 138 surviving plants. We will continue to track the success rate of the project.

It was interesting to note that most plants in the first season were still small but there was one plant that had grown to approximately one square foot in size and was found blooming on July 6 in 2005. Ten plants were found to be blooming in the early July 2005 survey although the vast majority of plants showed no evidence of buds. There were a variety of looks to the surviving plants with some being single stems with sizable green leaves, others being short multi-branched plants with small reddish leaves, and a few others being larger multi-branched green leaved plants in that first season of growth. Plants were watered at least one time per month until October 2005.

Additional plants were held over in a nursery as a precaution due to the late planting date and small size of root masses. A few plants that were not planted due to their small size on planting day were also held over at Mike Kelly's residence. Those plants were repotted on November 17, 2005. On January 13, 2006, an additional planting took place of stock that had been held over at Recon Nursery and at Mike's house. Since these plants were mostly from later germinating seed, 5 pots were placed at 4 of the previously planted areas and

See *Willowy* p. 6 for more

Wing C Restoration & Dedication



Wing C during restoration. Water damage to the old foundation required the installation of new drainage, reinforcement of the old foundation, and lots more restoration work. Photo by Autumn Acker.

Dedicating the newly restored Wing C (kitchen) of Rancho Santa Maria de los Penasquitos are, left to right, Tom Lavin of IS architecture, Ranger Autumn Acker, County Historian Lynne Christenson, Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, District Park Manager Jake Enriquez, Mark Sauer of Mark Sauer Construction, Brian Albright, Asst., Dr., County Parks and Recreation, and with the hat, Senior Ranger Paul Kucharczyk. Photo by Autumn Acker.



(Willow cont'd from pg 5)

the remaining 29 plants were placed downstream, west of the Camino Santa Fe bridge on the island that had been previously armored. A total of 49 plants were planted in January 2006. Most plants were still small and in 40 pots but the root masses had developed substantially.

All plants were watered February 4, 2006. March rains were sufficient that we did not do any additional watering.

Weed control work was performed in the planted areas on February 4, March 26, and April 4, 2006 by volunteers with the Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve and the California Native Plant Society. Both hand weeding and herbicide (Roundup) were used in this work. It was

clear in subsequent surveys that additional weed work was needed most particularly for the population of plants that is across the canyon closest to the canyon entry area from Lopez Ridge Park.

On July 20 and 21, 2006 additional surveys were performed to follow up on the viability of the outplantings. There are 138 surviving plants spread out over all areas of planting (see Appendix 4). Survival at the different locations varied from 7 to 28% with an overall survivorship of 15%. Once again, size and status of individual plants was highly variable with three plants looking like they might not make it but with flexible stems while other plants were large and robustly blooming. The majority of plants have or are blooming this year. A notable exception to that statement is the area where the largest number of plants were placed (345

plants with only a 7% survivorship). In that area, 14 out of 25 plants were not blooming. It isn't clear that they will produce flower stalks this year. Alternatively, they may just be late bloomers. We did find evidence of what looked to be 17 fairly well developed dead plants with 12 of those plants having been planted this year. These "dead" plants could have gone into summer dormancy earlier than the rest and may in fact not actually be dead, just dormant. There has been a drop in numbers of living plants located since the April survey but only 29 have been lost since the April survey and a portion of those may just be dormant. We expect the remaining plants with the exception of perhaps three, to continue to flourish based on their July appearance.

To see the full report and more photos visit
www.penasquitos.org

**Winter Volunteers Needed
Wildlife Survey Training:
Free!**

**Saturday, January 20
9:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Los Peñasquitos
Canyon Preserve**

Visit www.sdt.org for contact info

Take part in a countywide track and sign survey to monitor the wildlife of major open space areas and other critical habitats. Learn basic track, sign and habitat recognition, as well as details on the implementation of survey protocol. This training is required for transect volunteers. In exchange for this free training, it is expected that trainees will also participate in at least one transect. Pre-registration is not required for individuals but requested for groups.

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.

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

**Sunday, January 14
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Join Mike Kelly to eradicate the invasive shrub, tamarisk. Wear boots suitable for outdoor work, bring water and sun protection. We will provide the tools. Meet at the parking-staging area off San Dieguito Road, about 1/2 mile from its intersection with Camino del Sur in Santa Luz. See Thomas Guide p. 1168 (J6) -1169 (A6). Take SR56 east from I-15 or west from I-5 to Camino del Sur. Go north on Camino del Sur about 1.5 - 2 miles to intersection with San Dieguito Road. Left on San Dieguito. Look for small turnout and kiosk on the right.

Call Mike at 858-566-6489 for more info.

Directions

Carmel Mountain Trail Head

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).

Mercy Rd Parking-Staging Area

In Mira Mesa. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Rd. and straight across intersection into parking lot. Meet on upper level.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (D7).

Northern Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189 (A7-B7).

Park Village Drive Meeting Area

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. From I-15 take the Mercy Road exit west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain Road and up hill, left on Park Village Drive and take it all the way to the end at the

white barricades and park entrance.

**Thomas Guide p.1189-1188 (J7).
Ranch House Walks/Tours**

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

Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).

Sorrento Valley Meeting Area

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Blvd in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road.

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

West-End Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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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.

Friends' Directory

Officers

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

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

Walk Leaders

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

Committees

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

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

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.



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Mar/Apr 2007
Volume 21, NO 2

Burrowing Owl Spotted

Mike Kelly



Burrowing Owls photographed in the Ramona grasslands by Wildlife Research Institute volunteer, Carolyn Dorroh.

A long-absent former resident of our north city open spaces was recently spotted on the Del Mar Mesa extension of the Preserve. It was the Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). It was spotted by John Martin of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Refuges Program. He was surveying parcels of land the Service owns on DMM. According to him and Dave Bittner of the Wildlife Research Institute (WRI) — a non-profit that studies and protects raptors such as the Burrowing Owl — it was probably an over wintering migrant.

These are little owls, about 9.5 inches, (the size of the more common Screech Owl), that live in burrows on the ground! They move into burrows created by rodents such as squirrels. Adults are brown, with bold light colored

spots while juveniles have a buff color on their breasts. With relatively long legs for an owl, they can be seen standing on the ground or on low fence posts. John saw “ours” on a fence post. Personally, the only burrowing owls I’ve seen have been in the Salton Sea area.

Burrowing owls are becoming quite rare throughout, not only in our area, but in all of San Diego County. They’re also becoming rare in many other places in the U.S. Did you know that we’re down to 25-30 breeding pairs in the entire county? They have declined about 90% in San Diego County over the last 30 years or so. According to the WRI there were between 250-300 pairs of

See **Owl** p. 6 for more

Highlights Inside

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Lopez Canyon Cleanup

Sunday, March 18, 9 a.m – 1 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to help pull trash out from wildlife habitat in Lopez Canyon. Community service credits apply. No experience needed! Pickups, especially 4x4s, welcome! Meet at Lopez Ridge Park in Mira Mesa at 7245 Calle Cristobal.

Thomas Guide p. 1208



Branchinecta sandiegonensis, one of the fairy shrimp you might see on Will Bowen’s walk. See our Events calendar on page 2. Photo by Diolinda Parsick and Marie Simovich.

Upcoming Hikes/Events

Remember this time of year there may be days when the Preserve is closed due to rains, so plan accordingly. 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, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail!

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San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Ranch Santa Maria de Los Peñasquitos at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds.

March

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Saturday, Mar 10, 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 first left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.

Nature Walk with Les Braund

Saturday, March 17, 9 a.m.
Join Les Braund for a general nature walk. Learn about the big and small things of nature, from trees to lichens and the wildlife dependent on them. Meet in the Mercy Road staging-parking area, upper level.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (D7).

Fairy Shrimp Hike

Sunday, March 18, 3-4:30 p.m.
A hike to look for and learn about Fairy Shrimp—tiny freshwater shrimp that live on mesa tops in the ephemeral rain pools and puddles of early spring. Learn about their life cycle and behavior. See the male's humorous 1890s style handle bar mustache and the female's attached egg sac.

**Start: Carmel Mountain Trail Head,
Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).**

Tracker / Naturalist Classes (See article Pg 7)

Two-day event

Thursday, March 22, 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 24, 8 a.m.

**Beginner Tracker Naturalist Class. Two day event at the Peñasquitos Ranch House.
Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).**

Canyon Favorites Hike

Saturday, March 24, 5-7 p.m.
Join Pat for a moderately paced hike to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing, the waterfall, and back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring water and wear hiking boots.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).

April

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Saturday, Apr 7, 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 first left into Canyonside Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch.
Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.

Frog Hike

Sunday, April 22, 4-5:30 p.m.
A hike to look for frogs, toads, and tadpoles. On the way learn all about all the frogs and toads of San Diego County. Find out what is happening to them. Gain practice imitating their calls. Wear shoes that you can get wet!

**Start: Carmel Mountain Trail Head,
Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).**

FREE Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training

Saturday, April 21, 9:45 a.m.
Wildlife survey volunteers are invited to attend a free one-day training conducted by the experienced tracker/naturalists of the San Diego Tracking Team. This training includes basic track, sign, and habitat recognition, as well as details on the implementation of the survey protocol. During the months following the training, volunteers are expected to accompany a transect leader on at least one survey transect. After completing this training or equivalent (including any of the LPTT's Tracker/Naturalist Classes), Volunteers are welcome to practice their skills by assisting with future surveys.

Pre-registration is not required for individuals but requested for groups. Please bring a sack lunch, water and be prepared to spend much of the day outdoors. Also, please bring your calendar so that you can sign up for tran-

sects. Visit www.sdt.org for details.

Meet at the ranch house.

Canyon Favorites Hike

Saturday, April 28, 5-7 p.m.

Join Pat for a moderately paced hike to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing, the waterfall, and back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring water and wear hiking boots.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).

May

Lopez Canyon Flower Walk with Mike Kelly

Saturday, May 5, 9 a. m

Sponsored by the California Native Plant Society. Mike Kelly will lead a flower and plant identification walk in Lopez Canyon. Expect to see the endangered Willow monadella, Mountain mahogany, Holly-leaf cherry, hybrid oak tree, *Quercus X Acutidens*, and more. This will be a slow-paced walk with one steep dirt road on a hill to come up and down. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa.

Beginner & Intermediate Tracking Walks

Saturday, May 12, 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 first left into Canyon-side Dr., proceed to white-fenced parking lot. Park, walk west on trail to ranch.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 C7.

Directions

Carmel Mountain Trail Head

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).

Mercy Rd Parking-Staging Area

In Mira Mesa. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Rd. and straight across intersection into parking lot. Meet on upper level.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (D7).

Northern Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189 (A7-B7).

Park Village Drive Meeting Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189-1188 (J7).

Ranch House Walks/Tours

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on Black Mountain. Left at first light, Canyon-side Park Dr. Go past ball fields to the white-fenced parking lot. Left into the lot. Walk up path to the ranch house.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).

Sorrento Valley Meeting Area

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sor-

rento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Blvd in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road.

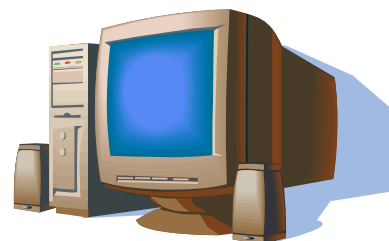
Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

West-End Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Used PCs Needed!



If you have a Pentium level PC, laptop or desktop in good working order, that you aren't using or are about to discard, consider donating it to the Friends for our surveys. Contact Mike at (858) 566-6489.

This is just as deductible as a cash donation!

California Conservation Corps Hard at Work

Autumn Acker, Park Ranger



If you are a regular trail user at Penasquitos Canyon, then you may have noticed some wonderful work being done by the California Conservation Corps (CCC), over the last year. County Parks partnered with the CCC's last summer for a few months through an NEG grant to restore the Ranch House Crossing Bridge, and to restore many sections of trail which had eroded due to water damage. Today, we have partnered with the CCC's once again to accomplish a number of projects in the can-

yon.

Starting in December of 2006, the CCC's began a new phase of restoration projects. Some of these include: installing split-rail fencing at the staging area; removing barb wire fencing; invasive plant removal; spreading fill-30

built in 1913 at the Ranch House.

The work performed here has been absolutely invaluable for all of us who share the love of this canyon, its trails, and its wildlife. After a rain, the Ranch House Crossing bridge no longer floats



sand in low areas on the trail; building culverts to drain water off some of our single-track trails; and restoring the historic Mohnike barn

away, and our trails are dryer thanks to proper sloping techniques, installed culverts, and fill-sand spread to reduce water buildup. Exotic plants, such as artichoke thistle, have been systematically removed, along with Eucalyptus seedlings at the staging area. Also, approximately ¼ mile of barb wire fencing has been taken out. The barn restoration is under way with cracks being filled, plaster re-applied, and a new coat of paint to come. This will ensure the preservation of the barn for future generations to enjoy.

The crew will remain here through the month of February, and we, the County Parks Staff, encourage you to say "thanks" to this crew should you see them hard at work in the canyon.



Botta's Pocket Gopher

Barry Martin



Thomomys bottae or Botta's Pocket Gopher is a highly variable species in both size and color since its color tends to match the soil. The skull will be found in owl pellets and has a distinctive shape and molars that angle back. A medium-sized rodent with external, fur-lined cheek pouches; the outer face of the upper incisors lacks conspicuous grooves; claws on front feet relatively small (less than 10 mm long). This animal prefers light soils but is occasionally found in clay. It occurs all over the state of California except the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges. Its range extends into Oregon, Colorado and south to northern Mexico including Baja. Perhaps one reason why they can tolerate such environmental extremes is that they spend fully 90% of their lives in underground burrows, secure from the elements.

Botta's Pocket Gopher is attracted to continuously growing root systems; it eats roots, bulbs, and the tender bases of growing plants. Breeding takes place from late winter to summer but can be prolonged if in irrigated land. They will produce from one to four litters of 2 to 12 young. Their burrow systems are often complicated structures consisting of two or

more main galleries and several side chambers. A partly excavated burrow extended more than 30 m in length, had four main forks, and averaged 6 cm beneath the surface, although the tunnel leading to the nest descended to a depth of more than 60 cm. Tunnel systems more than 150 m in length is not rare. These ramified travelways probably help the occupants to avoid predators that try to search them out; they are equally important in permitting the gopher to forage over a considerable area

without exposing itself unduly to danger. Special side branches serve as storehouses for food, others as repositories for refuse and fecal pellets.

Although pocket gophers are active the year round, they store food to carry them over periods of scarcity, especially periods of drought when food is scarce and burrowing a difficult task. Usually, only one adult animal occupies each burrow system except for a short time in the breeding period. Associated with this solitary habit is a ferocious and seemingly fearless disposition. When two gophers encounter each other, they either fight or meticulously avoid each other. Desire for companionship seems to be completely lacking in their makeup.

The nest is a compact, hollow ball of dry, shredded vegetation placed in a special chamber off the main gallery, about 30-70 cm beneath the surface of the ground. Both sexes build nests as sleeping quarters.



Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae*).
Photo by John L. Tveten. *Thomomys bottae*

(Owl cont'd from pg 1)

these cuties in San Diego County in the late 70s. Loss of habitat seems to be the common denominator in their declining numbers.

Locally, WRI developed a Comprehensive Burrowing Owl Management program (CBOMP). The rest of this article is taken from their web site (www.wildlife-research.org).

This program provides a multifaceted plan, which includes: regular science-based monitoring; the rescue and relocation of owls that are in the way (refugees) of development; a Captive Breeding Facility and the hacking of captive-bred owls; research aimed at better understanding the causes for the owl's decline; demonstrations of the most productive breeding and hacking techniques; and the identification, modification, and management of the best remaining habitat for these little owls. Because of development, the demise of fossorial (i.e. burrowing) mammals, and other causes, there are few places in San Diego County where Burrowing Owls can successfully nest. The objective of CBOMP is to create and demonstrate a workable, multi-faceted conservation approach that can be exported to other locations that are experiencing the same Burrowing Owl decline. Several aspects of this plan are already underway (see below) and we'll be keeping you posted with regular updates in future newsletters.

"Build it and they will come"

Over the last 18 months, WRI's "Volunteers for Burrowing Owls" have constructed and installed a total of 52 artificial burrows (26 breeding chambers; two burrows per breeding one has two entrances to allow for owls to escape from snakes and mammalian predators. Most of these are also constructed in a way that will ex-

clude, and allow the owls to avoid, many predators. They have a funnel-like entrance, which allows the owls to quickly rush into the burrow (vs. filing in single file) and a necked-down (6"-4") reduction in the diameter of the two burrows that will exclude the larger potential predators from even reaching the breeding chambers.

The really big news is that at least one pair of wild Burrowing Owls has taken up residence at one of these artificial burrows. They have chosen a burrow that is close to one of our breeding cages, which may have attracted them in the first place. This raises the potential value of captive birds (or decoys?) to play a role in the initial stages of Burrowing Owl reintroduction and management. We'll be monitoring this pair to see if they are just wintering birds or part of the potential breeding population, but at the time of this writing, the wild pair was still on site, interacting with the owls we released in February (see article below).

We also have a nearby wintering bird that shows up every year in the Ramona Grasslands, right across the street from our WRI Headquarters (an area proposed for development). Perhaps it too will stick around one of these springs to breed.

Successful captive breeding and release of burrowing owls

In 2004, we were asked by the California Department of Fish and Game, under a special Memorandum of Understanding, to remove several Burrowing Owls from the path of development. We did that and, in the absence of a safe place to relocate them, we paired these owls up in three breeding facilities at WRI. We are pleased to report that two of the three pairs produced 12 eggs and nine nestlings! On February 28, 2005 we banded and released all nine nes-

tlings, plus seven adults, into several of the 52 artificial burrows that our Volunteers had constructed around the WRI property, looking out over the Ramona Grasslands and other open areas. Staff Biologists and Volunteers are monitoring these owls several times per week. Thus far, two have been killed by vehicles, but we are delighted to report that seven owls (plus two wild owls) are regularly observed. This is encouraging since (under best case scenario) another seven individuals could be in the burrows, out of sight and, hopefully, preparing to lay eggs.

Artificial burrows installed at the city's lower Otay Lake

The Burrowing Owl breeding population in San Diego County has decreased 90 percent in the last 25-30 years and managing this species is a critical component of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The "MSCP Biological Monitoring Plan" identified this owl as one of the grassland raptor species to be monitored under the MSCP. In a pro-active mode, the City of San Diego would like to have a number of sites prepared/managed to attract and support Burrowing Owls and they have asked WRI to help them. These "Receiver Sites" would also be available for owls that needed to be actively translocated out of harm's way. Based on WRI's surveys for Burrowing Owls and other raptors, approximately a dozen city-owned parcels were identified as having some potential for attracting and/or supporting Burrowing Owls, many of which were within the geographical limits of the MSCP. Lower Otay Lake was identified as the best of the potential Receiver Sites. To start the habitat management process, WRI installed 22 burrows (11 nest

chambers) on this site and created rock piles to attract the owls and provide habitat for their prey

A Management and Monitoring Plan for the Lower Otay Lake Burrowing Owl Management Area is being created for the city, to provide recommendations and guidelines on how to improve and maintain the habitat and monitor it for Burrowing Owls. This was a really

big step forward for the city, who should be congratulated for taking this important pro-active step in the implementation of a comprehensive approach to managing these owls that are in need of assistance before they disappear completely from San Diego County.

Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at www.penasquitos.org.



Tracker/Naturalist Classes

The following classes, presented by the Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team, are scheduled throughout the year and are open to all (high-school and older, please). Classes involve one weekday evening and one Saturday. Our goal is to provide you with information and tools that will be helpful in wildlife track and sign identification and the appreciation of our rapidly disappearing native habitat, as well as in improving your powers of observation and awareness

Beginning Tracker/Naturalist Program

This class is structured to give the prospective tracker a solid base of tracking skills and strategies for developing a sharp eye for detail. We concentrate on basic mammal track and sign recognition, key gait patterns, basic wildlife physiology and taxonomy, Southern California habitat recognition and the relationship between those habitats and animal species. You will be introduced to several methods and exercises that have proven to be effective in implanting the knowledge you need to become a proficient tracker such as journaling and visual patterning.



Photo: Lee Kirchhevel



Photo: Lee Kirchhevel

Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist Program

This phase of instruction will broaden your experience giving you a chance to develop personal strategies for confident recognition and interpretation of tracks and sign on a variety of surfaces. We will help you get beyond the track identification phase and into the interpretation phase; with exercises in speculative tracking, aging, soil dynamics, debris interaction, trailing, mammal skull and dental identification, and tracking on various substrates. Gait interpretation learned in the beginning class will be expanded upon.

Advanced Tracker/Naturalist Program

The culmination of the three part series, this class concentrates on fine detail and further development of your proficiency as a tracker. Trailing animals through various difficult surfaces will allow opportunities for us to share strategies and exercises that will enable you to stay on the right track. We provide drills and exercises that will help you expand

your knowledge base, point out areas you need to work on and give you a taste for what it would be like to go through a tracker evaluation.

Those who have completed the Tracker/Naturalist series, or equivalent, are eligible to join the SDTT's **apprentice program**.

San Diego Tracking announces the following schedule of its Tracker/Naturalist Classes:
Beginning Tracker Naturalist Class. Two-day event at the Peñasquitos Ranch House.
Thursday March 22 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 24 from 8 a.m.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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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.

Friends' Directory

Officers

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

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

Walk Leaders

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

Committees

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

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

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.



Canyon News

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

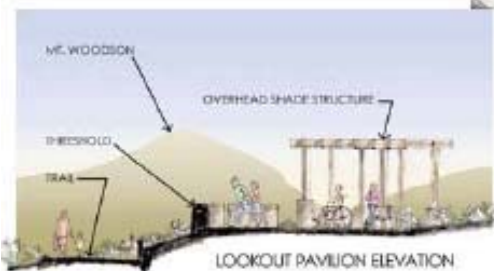
May/June 2007
Volume 21, NO 3

Your help needed Trail for ALL People

Mike Kelly

As the former Chairperson of the Black Mountain Open Space Park's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) I'm excited to introduce this new project to our Friends' members. The Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve voted to enthusiastically support this trail on Black Mountain. We also voted to act as the fiscal sponsor for any tax-deductible donations and to kick in the first donation, \$1,000.00! This project was initiated by the Black Mountain CAC.

The trail will be accessible by wheelchair and baby stroller and will sport fantastic views from



the mountain. We also plan to make it attractive and accessible to other handicapped groups. The article that follows these words is taken from the in-house newsletter — Rick Rap — of the Rick Engineering Company. My fellow CAC member, Jas Arnold, has taken the lead on this project and is an employee of Rick Engineering.

We are already receiving promises of in-kind donations of skills, site preparation, aerials, discounts on materials, etc. However, we still need to raise more

than \$100,000 to build the trail itself and the amenities along it such as handicapped parking, shade structures, and informational kiosks. The land it will be on is already slated to be a donation to the City by the Black Mountain



Ranch developers, who are supporting the project. We are in the preliminary planning stages and expect to have a detailed budget in 3-4 months.

If you would like to donate your time or money to this project, your help is definitely needed and welcome!

Highlights Inside

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The Science of Conserving Vernal Pools

Dr. Ellen Bauder

[Vernal pools are one of California's most endangered habitats. They're seasonal pools that form in certain soil types during the rainy season when there is sufficient rainfall to fill them (not this year in San Diego). It's estimated that 97% of our vernal pools are gone, lost to development or agriculture. Organisms that inhabit these pools include both animals and plants found no where else, organisms adapted to extreme fluctuations of climate (prolonged droughts), temperature, and rainfall. Some call them extremophiles and well worth studying because of this. There are vernal pools in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, both on López Ridge and on the Del Mar Mesa, the northern rim of the Preserve. Mike Kelly of the Friends leads limited public walks into vernal pools in years when they fill and function. Read this newsletter for future tours. One of the big problems in conserving vernal pools is the lack of scientific knowledge about them. Much is

See **Vernal Pools** p. 6 for more

Upcoming Hikes/Events

The summer is fast approaching. Be sure to bring adequate water and sunscreen as you prepare for your hikes. All hikes are free to the public. If you're bringing an organized group, please call (858) 484-3219 to make arrangements. Rain cancels hikes. Be sure to wear hiking boots and bring water, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail!

Every Saturday & Sunday

Historic Adobe Ranch Tour

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Ranch Santa Maria de Los Peñasquitos at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds.

May

Lopez Canyon Flower Walk with Mike Kelly

Saturday, May 5, 9 a. m

Sponsored by the California Native Plant Society. Mike Kelly will lead a flower and plant identification walk in Lopez Canyon. Expect to see the endangered Willoway monadella, Mountain mahogany, Holly-leaf cherry, hybrid oak tree, *Quercus X Acutidens*, and more. This will be a slow-paced walk with one steep dirt road on a hill to come up and down. Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa.

Tracking Walk

Saturday, May 12, 8 a.m.

Everyone is invited to join us for a free, easy tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Beginner and Intermediate levels. Meet at the historic Ranch

House on Canyonside Dr., Rancho Penasquitos. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

Tracker / Naturalist Classes Two-day event

Wednesday, May 16, 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 19, 8 a.m.

Visit www.sdt.org for more info. Meet at the Peñasquitos Ranch House.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).

Volunteer Weed Bash on Luzardi Creek (north city)

Sat., May 19, 9 a.m.

Help protect native habitat along beautiful Luzardi Creek in Santa Luz, part of Black Mtn. Open Space Park. by removing invasive weeds such as tamarisk and arundo. Meet at the kiosk in the parking lot off San Dieguito Road, opposite Montien Rd. Contact mike at mkellysd@aol.com for more info.

Volunteer Trash Pickup

Sat., May 26, 9 a.m.

Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. This is now a regular, 4th Saturday of each month event.

Thomas Guide, p. 1208 (D5).

Herb Walk

Sunday, May 27, 5 — 6:30 p.m.

Learn to identify the different trees, plants, and shrubs of Penasquitos Canyon. Find out how they have been used for food and medicine. Start: West End Parking Staging Area.

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Geology Hike with Don Albright

Sun., May 27, 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

June

Tracking Walk

Saturday, June 14, 8 a.m.

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

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Canyon Favorites Hike

Saturday, June 16, 5 — 7 p.m.

Join Pat for a moderately paced hike to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing, the waterfall, and back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring water and wear hiking boots.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).

Volunteer Weed Bash on Luzardi Creek (north city)

Sat., June 16, 9 a.m.

Help protect native habitat along beautiful Luzardi Creek in Santa Luz, part of Black Mtn. Open Space Park. by removing invasive weeds such as tamarisk and arundo. Meet at the kiosk in the parking lot off San Dieguito Road, opposite Montien Rd. Contact mike at mkellysd@aol.com for more info.

Volunteer Trash Pickup

Sat., June 23, 9 a.m.

Meet at Lopez Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. This is now a regular, 4th Saturday of each month event.

Thomas Guide, p. 1208 (D5).

Herb Walk

Sunday, June 24, 5 — 6:30 p.m.

Learn to identify the different trees, plants, and shrubs of Penasquitos Canyon. Find out how they have been used for food and medicine. Start: 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Geology Walk with Don Albright Sun., June 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.

See Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).

Directions

Carmel Mountain Trail Head

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).

Mercy Rd Parking-Staging Area

In Mira Mesa. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Rd.

and straight across intersection into parking lot. Meet on upper level.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (D7).

Northern Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189 (A7-B7).

Park Village Drive Meeting Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189-1188 (J7).

Ranch House Walks/Tours

Located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Road. Right on

Black Mountain. Left at first light, Canyonside Park Dr. Go past ball fields to the white-fenced parking lot. Left into the lot. Walk up path to the ranch house.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).

Sorrento Valley Meeting Area

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Blvd in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road.

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

West-End Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

New Map Placards at Black Mountain Open Space

Senior Ranger Lori C. Gerbac

Aspiring Eagle Scout, Ian McFarland, recently designed, constructed and installed four map placards for the Black Mountain Open Space trails surrounding the Santaluz community. Working diligently on planning this Eagle Scout project for the last year, Ian worked with the Ranger staff on the design and specific need requirements. He obtained the pertinent approvals, designed the placards and raised funds to purchase all materials. Ian pre-fabricated the placards. He and his father, Scott, rode their bikes on the 10 mile Santaluz trail system to determine GPS map coordinates. To prepare

April 15th, the project day, Ian recruited family and friends to assist him.

Although winds were high and rain threatened, they were able to



Eagle Scout candidate Ian McFarland (center) with friends is pictured next to a map placard he designed, constructed, and installed for the Black Mountain Open Space trail.

install the placards that day. Maps were created and supplied by the Park & Recreation Department and the placards were installed at the northwest, northeast, southwest and southeast quadrants.

I hope you get an opportunity to explore the trail system and see this terrific work. I'd like to recognize and thank Ian for his leadership and project management skills; his parents Scott and Janine for their additional logistics support; Kyle McFarland (Ian's younger brother) for his hard work, and additional volunteers Greg Clark, Steve Burfield, Glenn Burfield, Matthew Schulze, and Robert Heaslet for their support, and hours of labor. It was a terrific team effort to improve our open space trails. The placards are an attractive, useful tool to help people navigate the trails and explore nature.

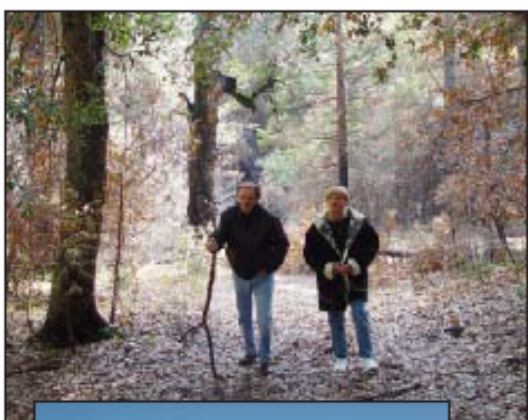
Celebrate 150 Years of Trails

in San Diego County
and *National Trails Day*

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve – Ranch House

End of Canyonside Park Drive, San Diego

Saturday, June 2, 2007 – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Bring the family and join in the fun:

- Mail Delivery Along Historic San Diego – San Antonio Stage Line
- Trail Construction Demonstrations
- Mountain Bike and Equestrian Rides
- Children's Activities
- Trails Fair with Vendors and Exhibitors
- Live Music

FREE parking and admission



For event information, please call 858-484-7504 or visit www.sdparcs.org
For vendor information or sponsorship opportunities, please call 858-966-1367

Fund Drive Results Tops \$5K Again!

Mike Kelly

The more than 60 members listed below donated \$5,235

Special thanks to Geof Smith and Camille Armstrong for their Lifetime Membership commitment of \$1,000. Geof is Chairperson of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee. He and Camille were recently celebrated in the Union-Tribune for their long-commitment to achieving Wilderness designation for large swaths of California's remaining open spaces.

Another special thanks goes out to the Anonymous Donor who contributed \$1,000 for trails work. This is the second year in a row they made this large donation. City Ranger Gina Washington

draws upon these funds when she needs fencing, materials, or tools for her volunteer trails crew.

Gary Harman and Diane Greening doubled their generous \$250 donation with a match from their employer of an equal amount, for a total of \$500!

Anonymous, 3
Donald E. Albright
Mary K. & Gerard Antekeier
Mona Baumgartel & John Debeers
Judy Bayer
Mitchel Beauchamp
Dave Bilak
Rick Botta & Liz Rozycki
Leslie C. Braund
Cheryl S. Brehme
Mark & Kathie Bulley
Mrs. Uli Burgin
Ivan & Carol Cooper
K. Crampton
Jeff & Rose Dillon
Lenore Edidin
Bruce & Lowra Eidelson

Terry Gaughen
Sharon & Ben Bebauer/Eberle
Camille Armstrong & Geoffrey Smith

Diane Greening & Gary Harman
Rick & Diane Hanson
Anne Hegwer
Linda Henning
Leo & Patricia Holland
Linda Johnson
Deborah & Brian Jones
John & Peggy Keating
Mike Kelly
Tom & Connie Komin
Fred & Linda Kramer
Jon Labaw
Bob & Linda Leiter
Steve Lister
Jim & Imelda Maniquis
Patty & Tim McFarland
Richard & Ruth Mellen
Neil & Jill Meyer
James & Linda Michael
Paul and Carol Micheletti
Edith Helen Monsees
Sara Moser
Catherine Nash
Sharon & Joel Pankey
Bill & Christi Papworth
Jim Powers
Ann & John Richards
Scott & Carole Rieker
Erwin & Mary Rose
Lisa & Bill Ross-Woolson
James W. Royle, Jr.
Virginia Sabella
Robert Schmidt & Faith Barnett
Carrie J. Schneider
Ernie Schnepf
Walt Shaw
Don Steele
Pam & Jeff Stevens
Paula & Mike Svoboda
Mary Toomey
Mario, Nancy, Alex & Tony Trejo
Greg Vines
Beth Williams
Toni & Frank Wong
Anthony & Rebecca Wood



March 18 of this year more than 20 volunteers rallied to continue our cleanup of López Canyon. Three overflowing pickups of trash were delivered to the dumpsters! The volunteers came from Poway High School (organized by their biology teacher, Ryan Moccock), Mt. Carmel High School, and the Friends. Key onsite organizers were Neil and Jill Meyer who live off López Canyon. The volunteers included: *Tori Thomas, Kristen Kapitzke, Sarah Morris, Keith Hughes, Claire Gosen, Gabrielle Sciuto, Jared Parks, Taylor Woodruff, Eric Eyer, Allison Haase, Sarah Moon (Turetto), Cassandra McLead, Kayla Acosta, Lucy Slattery, Kristen Kort, Stephanie Panlasigni, Robyn Lin, Rebecca Lee, Heidi Davis, T.J. Demo, Mike Kelly, Neil Meyer, Jill Meyer, Ryan Moccock.*

New Ranger at Black Mountain Park

Hello everyone! My name is Matt Sanford. Well, it's my second day on the job and already I've learned so much and heard so many great stories about the people and places in this area. I'm proud to be working alongside all of you and look forward to meeting you as time goes by, so if you see me out and about or on the trail please wave me down for a chat or to say hello.

I'm proud to say that I was born and raised in San Diego County (we're so few and far between these days!) and I had an early interest in exploring and having fun in the outdoors. I think this general enthusiasm led me to want to protect the environment, not only in California but also in my backyard of San Diego. So fast forward to my college years at the "Harvard of the west," San Diego



State University, where I obtained a Bachelor in Science degree in Outdoor Recreation Administration (not to mention where I met my lovely wife). While at "State" I

worked/interned as a Backcountry Ranger in Yosemite National Park, and also with the Student Conservation Corps as a Fire Education Specialist. Before working for the City of San Diego I worked at the Lake Poway Recreation Area and Blue Sky Ecological Reserve as a Park Ranger, and before that I worked as a Park-Aide at Torrey Pines State Reserve. There are so many reasons why I love being a Park Ranger, but I suppose the biggest reasons are the daily interaction it gives me with the people, the plants, and the animals. Each day always brings a new surprise and I absolutely love that about this job.

In my free time I love to play and watch soccer, work on design and music (music is a huge part of my life!), and of course hang out with my wife and our two kitty-cats by the beach.

County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department is accepting applications for VOLUNTEER DOCENT TRAINING for Rancho de los Peñasquitos Adobe

A visitor to **Rancho Los Peñasquitos** will discover, in one place, more than 8,000 years of San Diego history. Its bountiful natural resources made it ideal not only for the millennia of Native American habitation, but also for 19th-century settlers. A portion of the ranch house was built in 1823, making it one of the oldest, existing structures in San Diego. Much of the rest of this elegant ranch house was built in the 1860's. The Rancho is situated within the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve that features miles of trails through riparian and grassland habitats. Rancho los Peñasquitos is a National Register Historic and Archaeological District.

Volunteer Docents: Work with the general public and school groups to promote a greater understanding of the cultural and natural resources for the San Diego area. Volunteers may perform a variety of tasks including:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Leading tours of the historic Adobe | Helping furnish the historic Adobe |
| Coordinating special events | Creating public presentations and brochures |
| Working with school children | Building stewardship for future visitors |

Who: Potential volunteers should possess an enthusiastic attitude toward people and nature and enjoy being out-of-doors. Some prior knowledge of California history and natural history is desirable. You must be able to work independently, exercise good judgment and be willing to share your knowledge and enthusiasm with visitors. Volunteers are expected to provide a minimum of 8 hours service each month. (Please note: State law requires a background check on all volunteers placed in County Parks.)

When: The eight-week training course begins Saturday, April 28, 2007. It consists of Saturday morning lectures, a brown bag lunch, and afternoon field training.

Cost: A \$25 non-refundable materials fee is required at the first class meeting.

For information or to request an application, call Cheryl Wegner 858-966-1335

(Vernal Pools cont'd from pg 1)

still not understood about the organisms inhabiting them or how they function. Dr. Ellen Bauder, a long-time Friends supporter, has been studying them for many years. Here's what she has to say about her most recent surveys.]

For over 5 years now, Ellen Bauder (Research Professor, SDSU) and a group of vernal pool experts (the "A" Team = Assessment Team) have been working on a research contract with the Environmental Protection Agency through the SDSU Research Foundation. They are developing a draft HGM (Hydrogeomorphic) Guidebook to Southern California Vernal pools.

Guidebooks can be used to support an Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) 404 project permit and what level/kind of mitigation would be required for a loss of pools or whether a loss should

even be permitted. Guidebooks can also be used to evaluate the efficacy of a restoration effort, for monitoring purposes or to estimate the degree of disturbance to one or more pool functions. They are intended to be used by agency personnel, land managers, et al. so that the assessments must be repeatable, relatively quick and doable by people who are knowledgeable but not necessarily experts. Field testing is a critical part of developing this guidebook.

To test the draft guidebook, they visited pools in various parts of the County during the latter part of January 2007. On January 25th Ellen met with representatives of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, City of San Diego, Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, and the California Dept. of Fish & Game to look over the vernal pools on the northern edge of Los Peñasquitos Canyon to determine the best areas for testing. Given



Dr. Andy Bohonak of SDSU Biology Dept. surveys vernal pools on the Del Mar Mesa, January 2007.

the limited time for the team to collect data, they decided to focus on a group of pools (aka "bowtie") at the western edge of the preserved area.

They would like to express their appreciation to these agencies that oversee the vernal pool preserves and Mike Kelly and Cindy Burrascano of Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve who assisted in the assessment process.

Guidebooks are used to assess various vernal pool functions such as water storage and support of characteristic flora and fauna. The general methodology was developed by the ACOE. Guidebooks are being developed for all classes of wetlands in all regions of the country and the already-completed guidebooks have been used for some years now. Ellen and team are developing a guidebook tailored to the Southern California landscape and climate. None of the assessment work is destructive. Below are some of the data typically collected:

- ◆ Dimensions of the pool(s) (l x w x d)
- ◆ Determine the inlet and outlet elevations
- ◆ Locate of the pool in the landscape (headwaters, part of a network, etc.)
- ◆ Estimate the disturbance level and type in the basin, pool periphery,
- ◆ Catchments and landscape
- ◆ Verify the soil type
- ◆ Take plant species lists



Part of vernal pool assessment team, representing different vernal pool parcel ownerships on the Del Mar Mesa, left to right are: John Martin, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Refuges; Senior City Ranger Gina Washington (back to camera), Tim Dillingham (partially blocked in picture by Washington), Senior Wildlife Biologist, Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game; Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair, Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve; and City Ranger John Garwood. January 2007.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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Check Your Label

Take a moment to examine the address label on this newsletter. Check to see if your expiration date has come and gone. If so, please take the time now to send in a renewal check for your membership dues. This will enable you to keep receiving our newsletter, 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.

Friends' Directory

Officers

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

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Edward DiBella, Ann Harvey, Mike Kelly

Walk Leaders

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

Committees

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

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

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

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Email _____

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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.



Canyon News

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

Jul/Aug 2007
Volume 21, NO 4

DUSKY FOOTED PACK RAT DENS ON CARMEL MOUNTAIN, SAN DIEGO, CA **

Dr. John Northrop, PhD,
Charter Member, Friends of Los Peñasquitos
Canyon Preserve, Inc.; & John Howard Northrop II

Many Dusky-footed, or long-eared, pack rat, *Neotoma fuscipe*, dens are located 2½ miles inland from the coast on Carmel Mt., a 450 ft. high, 500,000 yr old marine terrace capped by the beach facies of the Linda Vista Formation (Qlb).¹ Most of the dens, or stick houses, are located along the north-south ridge on the East side of the mesa (Fig.1). Some of the stick houses are hundreds of years old and reach the height of over 5 ft (Fig.2), whereas the new ones that being currently built are only a couple of feet high. The huts, or dens, are mostly made from ½-inch to 2-ft long branches of the wart leaved ceanothus, *Ceanothus verrucosus*, bushes that grow there (Ref.2); but some are constructed of a mixture of

ceanothus, chamise, *Adenostoma fasciculatum*, and manzanita, *Xylococcus bicolor*, branches. The largest are built around large ceanothus bushes whose main stem and branches serve as rafters and ridgepoles for the huts. The bushes then die but their stumps continue to hold up the stick houses very well.

This general pattern of stick huts has been modified recently by several fire breaks cut E-W through the area that have left dead branches piled along the sides that the wood rats use for building their huts. Because the area has never been grazed, (cattle won't eat the chaparral

See **Pack Rat** p. 6 for more



Photo by P. L. Meserve
Mammal Slide Library
Am. Soc. Mammalogists

Dusky-footed, or long-eared, pack rat, *Neotoma fuscipe*.

Highlights Inside

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Fire Season Is Early

Mike Kelly

June 19. Early evening. I'm driving to a meeting in Kearney Mesa. I hear the radio announce that a fire is burning above Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads. I live on a ridge overlooking this intersection. I tell my meeting colleagues I have to go home. I hit the freeway, anxiously changing radio stations for the latest news on the fire. As I approach Mira Mesa, I see the smoke in the air.

I arrive at the end of my cul-de-sac on Polaris Dr where my home is on the edge of the canyon. Neighbors and TV crews crowd the canyon edge. I hurry to join them and see the flames across the canyon. Helicopters roar directly overhead and drop their loads a few hundred yards away on the opposite slope. It's burning the hill up towards Capceno Road. I think of Les Braund, Friends Board member and friend. His house is directly above the fire. I hurry to check my perimeter, check on my hoses. I have them out front and back. I have extra lengths of hose laid out on the canyon edge.

See **Fire** p. 5 for more

Upcoming Hikes/Events

Summer is here again. Be sure to bring adequate water and sun-screen as you prepare for your hikes. All hikes are free to the public. If you're bringing an organized group, please call (858) 484-3219 to make arrangements. Rain cancels hikes. Be sure to wear hiking boots and bring water, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail!

Every Saturday & Sunday

Historic Adobe Ranch Tour

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Ranch Santa Maria de Los Peñasquitos at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds.

July

Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee

Thursday, July 12, 7 p.m.

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. Note that this is a new location!

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committees

Thursday, July 19, 7 p.m.

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

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Thursday, July 19, 7 p.m.

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the historic Ranch House off Canyonside Driveway at Black Mountain Rd. Note that this is a new location!

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Night Walk from Mercy Road with Mike Kelly

Friday, July 20, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Join naturalist Mike Kelly for this first time moderately paced nighttime nature walk east of Black Mountain Road. Chance to see wildlife. Bring a flashlight and insect repellent! Meet in the equestrian center on the northeast corner of Mercy Road and Black Mountain. Roads in Mira Mesa. Park near the Ranger Station trailers. Thomas Guide p. 1189.

Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training

Saturday, July 21,

9:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.

This free training includes basic wildlife track, sign, and habitat recognition, as well as details on the implementation of survey protocol, and is required for survey volunteers. Meet at the historic adobe ranch house.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).

Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon

Sunday, July 22, 9 a.m. – 1.

Trash pickup in López Canyon. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info.

Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).

Canyon Favorites Hike

Sunday, July 22, 5 – 7 p.m.

Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at the Northern Parking-Staging Area located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Park by the kiosk.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).

Night Walking in the Canyon w/

Will Bowen

Saturday, July 28, 7:30 — 9 p.m.

A hike to explore the canyon at dusk into dark. Awaken your night vision and look for nocturnal creatures and critters such as owls, bats, and deer. Enjoy your senses in the dark. Contemplate the night sky and identify planets, stars, and constellations. Bring a flashlight. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).

August

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors

Tuesday, August 7, 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).

Night Walk in Sabre Springs with Mike Kelly

Friday, August 20, 7–9 p.m.

Join naturalist Mike Kelly for this first time moderately paced nighttime nature walk. Chance to see wildlife. Bring a flashlight and insect repellent! Meet in the equestrian center on the northeast corner of Mercy Road and Black Mountain Roads in Mira Mesa. Park near the Ranger Station trailers. Thomas Guide p. 1189.

Canyon Favorites Hike

Sunday, August 19, 5 – 7 p.m.

Join naturalist Linda King on this moderately paced loop walk to the waterfall and Carson's Crossing. Meet at the Northern Parking-Staging Area located in Rancho Peñasquitos. Park by the kiosk.

Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).

Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon

Sunday, August 26, 9 a.m. – 1.

Trash pickup in López Canyon

Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call

Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info.

Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).

Night Walking in the Canyon w/ Will Bowen

Saturday, Aug 25, 7:30 — 9 p.m.

A hike to explore the canyon at dusk into dark. Awaken your night vision and look for nocturnal creatures and critters such as owls, bats, and deer. Enjoy your senses in the dark. Contemplate the night sky and identify planets, stars, and constellations. Bring a flashlight. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Coastal Cleanup Day

Saturday, September 15.

Details in September newsletter and on web site as plans firm up. Hold the date!

Directions

Carmel Mountain Trail Head

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (C2).

Mercy Rd Parking-Staging Area

In Mira Mesa. Take Mercy Exit off I-15 west to Black Mountain Rd. and straight across intersection into parking lot. Meet on upper level.

Thomas Guide p.1189 (D7).

Northern Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189 (A7-B7).

Park Village Drive Meeting Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1189-1188 (J7).

Ranch House Walks/Tours

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

Thomas Guide p.1189 (C7).

Sorrento Valley Meeting Area

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley Blvd in Sorrento Valley, 1/4 mile east of its intersection with Sorrento Valley Road.

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

West-End Parking-Staging Area

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

Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).



Luzardi Creek Cleanup, Black Mountain Open Space Park

Left to right: Mike Kelly, J.D. Berger, Carson Blessinger, Rachele Melious, and Heidi Davis pose near Luzardi Creek on June 16th. Joined by photographer Kurt Blessinger, Carson's dad and Scoutmaster (Del Mar), the six tackled and cleaned-up a 1/4 mile section of Luzardi Creek. Despite the high heat, they cut down and treated saltcedar, tree tobacco, artichoke thistle, sweet fennel, and other weeds. One more outing should finish the cleanup on the upper portion of the creek. Then on to the lower creek! This beautiful creek runs through the Santa Fe Valley just north of Black Mountain, Rancho Peñasquitos, and Santa Luz. It cuts a gorge and boasts slopes rich with a great variety of native plant. And yes, the photographer will be urged to take his photo when everyone's eyes are open!

Why All the Fences?

Senior Ranger Gina Washington

Have you noticed all the fences going in around Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve? Why are they there? Are they working?

After looking at the various steep volunteer trails coming down from the north mesa into the Preserve, the Ranger staff decided that it was time to close them off to help prevent further erosion of the canyon walls, and to give the habitat back to the wildlife. The volunteer trails were inspected to locate the best placement of fences and signs for closure. Work began on the west end near a power line access road. The fences and signs were installed, then it began to rain and sprigs of vegetation began to grow in the erosion scar that was caused by unauthorized use.

Next, the crew moved to the two ridges off Timberbrooke and Gablewood. There is one official trail, Sidehill, to access the canyon from the mesa, though there were three trails. Two sections of fence were installed at the top of the two ridges and a sign indicating the official trail was placed in a strategic location at the top of Sidehill. Additionally, the trails were closed at the bottom using rocks, camouflage, and signs. Have these closures worked? The answer is yes. Just the other day I decided to check the fences, to see if they had been knocked down or if people had created new trails around them. No one had, and to my pleasure, as I approached the western most fence I saw two deer resting in the shade of the lemonade berry just on the other side of the fence. Had the trail users not

obeyed the signs and fences, those deer would have been scared off and not had the opportunity to get relief from the afternoon sun.

The latest fences installed have been on the north side of the waterfall. For years, people have been taking a shortcut from the bench overlook down to the waterfall steps. This is a problem because of the barrel cactus trying to hold on to that very hillside. New, more complete fences and signs were installed and the "trail" was covered with brush. So far, this has also been successful. To complete the protection of the slope north west of the waterfall more fences and signs will be installed in the coming months. Users enjoy walking down to the creek below the waterfall, however most of them are unaware of the damage they are doing to the slope and vegetation. Serious erosion is eating away at the slope and several sensitive species are being trampled, for example, Barrel cactus, San Diego Poverty Weed, and California adolphia to name a few. Unfortunately, many of the users are also unaware of the dangers of poison oak, which is abundant in this area. One trail was chosen and improved to access the creek below the waterfall, it ends at a pleasant sandy beach where people can enjoy their lunch while listening to the water cascading over the boulders, all the other trails will be closed using various methods that include fences, signs and brush cover.



Fencing is often times to protect an endangered plant species such as the *Dudleya brevifolia* and sensitive habitats such as vernal pools behind the fence in this photo on Carmel Mountain. The fencing was installed by volunteers working with the City of San Diego Rangers. Volunteers here included people from the San Diego Mountain Bike Association, the California Native Plant Society, the Friends, and the Sierra Club.

Next time you see a fence in the Preserve, take a moment to contemplate what is on the other side, you may see something exciting.

(Fire cont'd from pg 1)

Three helicopters are in the air, making quick drops then returning to Miramar Lake for more water. A quick trip. A plane flies low and drops its retardant (made from cow's blood!) on the fire now, on a house at risk, on the slope.

I see a line of CDF (California Dept. of Forestry) firefighters, prison crews I believe, fighting the edge of the fire, cutting down burning or smoking brush. The wind is moderate, not a Santa Ana level. Thank goodness.

I talk with Dick Stevens, the Park Host who lives in a trailer at the park entrance there, and who first called in the fire. He said the residents above the fire had collaborated prior to the fire on how to respond. They were out with their hoses. Some had sprinklers facing the canyon on. Firefighters told the TV cameras that the homeowners had defensible space between the houses and the brush. The homeowners association there has an outside crew come in each year to clear the weeds and trim up the brush. It pays off.



Fire spreads on the hill above the Mercy Road Parking-Staging area of the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Photo by Dick Stevens, County Park host.

I remind myself I don't have an evacuation plan. I don't have a list of what I would take if I evacuate. I plan to defend my house, but who knows? I vow to talk to my neighbors. Setting up a perimeter sprinkler system suddenly seems like a good idea. Are my eaves

boxed in against burning embers enough? I'm pretty good on the brush issue. I've worked over the years to take out most of the eucalyptus and other flammable trees from my property. I still have a couple to go. Too close to the house. I need to trim up some of the native shrubs I've encouraged or planted myself on the slope. I thought I still had time. Out of time.



Firefighter observes the spreading fire to help plan the coordination of the attack on the fire. Photo by Dick Stevens, County Park Host.

This is the second significant fire within sight of my house. The first flared up on Mercy Hill across Black Mtn. Road, which runs below my house. Do we have a firebug intent on burning this area? If so, I have to think these fires have been disappointing to him. Each fire starts near houses. Were they the target? I shudder when I think of the fall Santa Ana season.

(Pack Rat cont'd from pg 1)

bushes), farmed or plowed (it is shown as “useless area” on early maps of the area), and it makes an ideal location for pack rats to abide. Since they are nocturnal (only come out of their dens at night), they are safe from hawks and eagles, as well as rattlesnakes that are present there. In fact, their only natural enemy is the brush fires that destroy their stick houses.

Method

In order to accurately locate and count pack rat dens on Carmel Mt., we rode our horses along the many twisty, winding trails there last winter. When we saw a pack rat den, the junior author dismounted and, while I held his horse, hiked through the 6-ft high chaparral to the edge of the hut and keyed the location and elevation of the stick house on a GPS (Geographical Position System). After remounting, we continued riding the trail and looked for the next hut. Being on horseback, we could see over the thick chaparral to locate the huts better than a pedestrian could. We also located the USGS benchmark, “Mesquite” that marks the high point of Carmel Mt. These data points were then translated electronically to the topographic map of the area (USGS Del Mar Quadrangle, 1975) (Fig.1).



Author Jack Northrop on his horse.

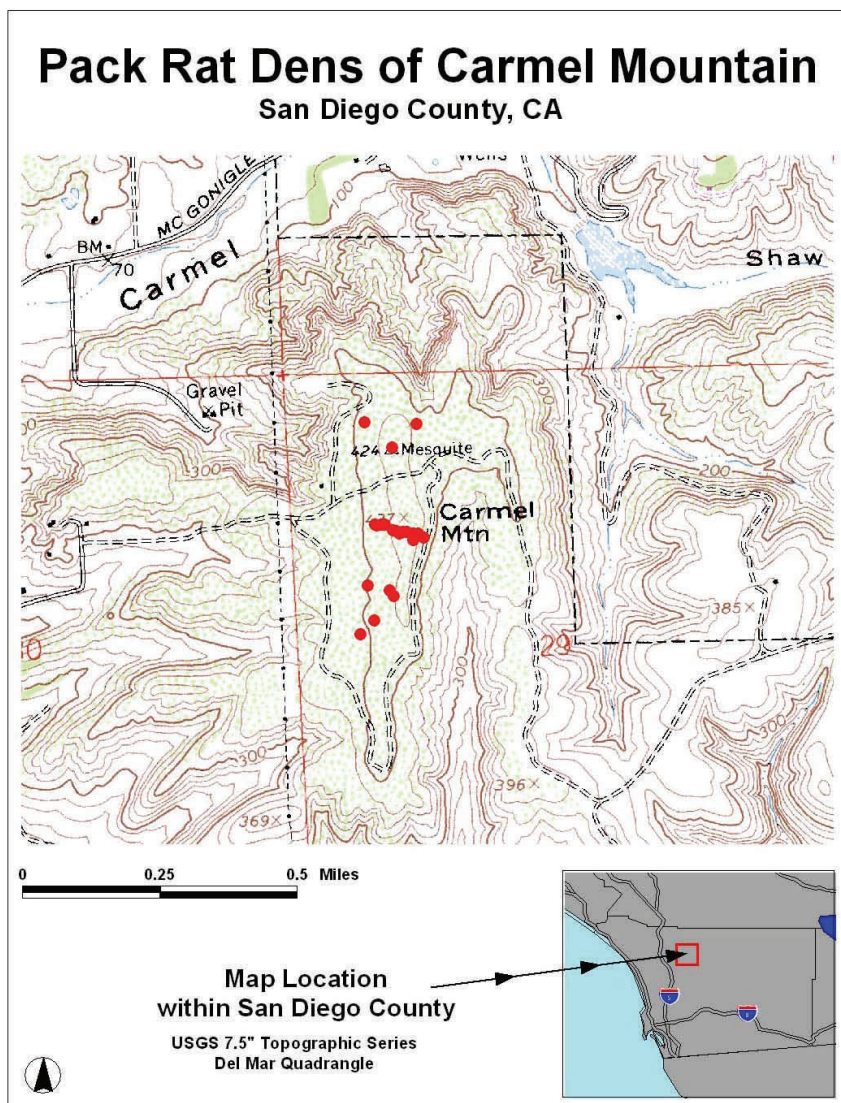


Figure 1. Map of the pack rat dens on Carmel Mt. Locations were located by using a GPS (Geographical Position System) and plotting them on a topographic map of the area.

Results

The results show that most of the pack rat dens we saw are situated along the main N-S ridge at the east side of Carmel Mt at elevations of 420 feet or greater, where the wart leaved ceanothus bushes grow, with others located along the N-S fire breaks (fig.1).²

There are probably several other huts in the chaparral that were not visible from the trails so the total number may be greater than the number we mapped. The number

is increasing annually as the animals produce about three litters per year. The breeding season lasts all year and there are usually 2-6 pups per litter.³ The pups return to their parent's huts generation after generation, so the largest huts house several generations. The new huts are built by males that are turned away by their mates who scratch them in the face with their claws and chase them away. The males then try to attract different females to their new hut!

*These wood rats are rodents about the size of a gray squirrel, have long tails and belong to the Vole family. They are called “pack rats” because they “pack” many bright objects into their dens. In the Carmel Mt. area they “pack” the marble sized red iron concretions that cover the mesa top into their dens.¹ In the gold rush days, the 49ers used to tear down the rats’ stick houses looking for gold nuggets often found there!

References

1. Northrop, J. Geology of Los Peñasquitos Canyon, Windsor Assoc. POB 90282, San Diego, CA 92169. (1989)
2. City of San Diego, Environmental Impact Report. Carmel Valley Neighborhood 8A, Development Service Dept., 1222 First Ave., San Diego, CA 92101 (1988).
3. Thompson’s Interactive Encyclopedia, CD ROM.



Figure 2. Photo of a pack rat den on Carmel Mt. Photo by J.H. Northrop



National Trails Day, June 2, 2007.

County Historian Dr. Lynne Christenson is in period attire to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first transcontinental mail delivery from San Antonio to San Diego. The unidentified cowboy pictured rode in on his horse with the mail. Peñasquitos Canyon and the historic ranch house were part of the first transcontinental mail route. The arrival of the first mail was such a big deal for the tiny little “backwater” known as San Diego that it was greeted by large crowds and a 100-anvil salute. What, you might say, is a 100-anvil salute? That’s what you do when you don’t have cannons! They would put two on top of each other, with a layer of pure black powder in-between. They then fired off the black powder, launching the top anvil vigorously into the air. We don’t know how many citizens might have been struck down by flying anvils! Photo by Mike Kelly.

At picture to right, a stagecoach typical of the settler period graced the ranch house courtyard during the National Trails Day celebration June 2. The coach was provided by Happy Trails, the concessionaire at the nearby equestrian center.





Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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Canyon News

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

Sept. / Oct. 2007
Volume 21, No. 5

Volunteers Make Black Mountain Park Jewel Shine

Dave Wenk, Pres., BMOS CAC

My first introduction to Black Mountain Park occurred in the early 1990s when I was working on my pilot's license. My flight instructor used to have me practice "engine failure" procedures over what he called one of the last remote urban open spaces in the city of San Diego. When he was satisfied that I could (if I had experienced an actual engine failure) safely land the airplane on one of the dirt roads cutting through today's park boundaries, he'd have me hit the throttle and we'd circle what is now Santaluz and Black Mountain Ranch while climbing back up to altitude.

Seven or eight years later, I began meeting friends for after-work mountain bike rides in Black Mountain Park. Portions of the park and its periphery were still like the Wild West – jeeps and motorcycles would fly past us on the trails, and it wasn't unusual to find shotgun shells here and there. Below the park near the end of the unimproved portion of Black Mountain Road was an ad hoc dump.

In early 2002, I met Sr. Ranger Lori Charett (Gerbac) for the first time. I tracked her down through the City of San Diego's Park & Recreation web site and asked her for a map and any other materials she might have describing the park. She sent them right away – along with an invitation to join her and other volunteers for a clean-up event. I, in turn, recruited other volunteers from the San Diego Mountain Biking Association (SDMBA).

During the two clean-ups Ranger

See p. 5 for more

Volunteers Needed!

Coastal Canyon Trash Cleanup in Peñasquitos Sat., Sept. 15, 9 - 12 p.m. Mercy Road Staging Area

Join I Love a Clean San Diego, Coastkeeper, the Friends, and City Parks in cleaning up the trash, big and small in Peñasquitos Canyon. Meet at the Mercy Road Parking-Staging Area, on the corner of Mercy and Black Mtn. Roads in Mira Mesa. Call Brian Swanson at bswanson@semprautilities.com for more information. **Thomas Guide p. 1189.**

López Canyon Cleanup Sunday, Sept. 23: 9-1 p.m.

López Ridge Park & Sunday, Oct. 28, 9-1 p.m.

Join the Friends and City Rangers in cleaning up the trash, big and small in Lopez Canyon above and below Camino Santa Fe. Pickups with 4x4 needed. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Mike for more info at 858-342-8856. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (H3).**

Friends Annual Meeting Saturday, Nov. 3, 7 - 9 p.m. at Peñasquitos Ranch

As is our tradition we will hold our annual election of officers (5 minutes) with a social (free food!) and a presentation on "Cats to Bats to Rats: Mammals of San Diego & Baja" (see article to right). Social begins at 7, election at 7:25, presentation at 7:30.

Highlights Inside

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Cats to Bats to Rats

Mammals of San Diego & Baja



Scott Tremor of the San Diego Natural History Museum will discuss his experiences with mammals in the southern California and Baja California regions. Learn about cats to bats to rats and more. Investigate mammal habitat preferences, lifestyles, and protection status. Examine specimens from the Museums collections and learn how to identify these animals in the wild. □ Tremor will also discuss the San Diego Mammal Atlas project and its current status.

See p. 5 for more



Photo: Lee Kirchhevel

Bobcats like the one picture above with a lizard its just caught are one of the mammals being studied in the Mammal Atlas Project.

Photo by Lee Kirchhevel

Free Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

Even though we're entering fall season, it's still hot! Be sure to bring adequate water and sunscreen as you prepare for your hikes. All hikes are free to the public. If you're bringing an organized group, please call (858) 484-3219 to make arrangements. Rain cancels hikes. Be sure to wear hiking boots and bring water, insect repellent, and sun protection. See you on the trail!

Every Saturday & Sunday

Historic Adobe Ranch Tour

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

September

Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee

Thursday, Sept. 13, 7 p.m.

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

Coastal Cleanup Day

Saturday, Sept. 15, 9 a.m. - noon.

Everyone is invited to join the Friends, Coastkeeper, and I Love a Clean San Diego in a cleanup in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. We have several specific areas we will be cleaning up trash, trash that often ends up in Peñasquitos Creek and Lagoon. Meet at the Mercy Road Parking Staging Area at Mercy & Black Mtn. Rd. between Peñasquitos and Mira Mesa.

Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist Program

Wednesday, Sept. 19, 7 p.m. &

Saturday, Sept. 22, 8 a.m. This phase of instruction will broaden your experience giving you a chance to develop personal strategies for confident recognition and interpretation of tracks and sign on a variety of surfaces. We'll help you get beyond the track identification phase and into the interpretation phase; with exercises in

speculative tracking, aging, soil dynamics, debris interaction, trailing, mammal skull and dental identification, and tracking on various substrates. Gait interpretation learned in the beginning class will be expanded upon.

Registration: Fee: \$50 per person, per class. (\$10 discount for SDTT members). Please make check payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Mail to: Los Peñasquitos Tracking Team, PO Box 501281, San Diego CA 92150. Please note for which class(es) you are registering and be sure to include your Name, Address, Telephone number, and E-mail. If you have questions, please contact us via email at registration@sdtt.org or call (760) 715-4102.

Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee

Thursday, Sept. 20, 7 p.m.

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

Night Walk in Canyon with Will Bowen

Saturday, Sept. 22, 7-8:30 p.m.

A hike to explore the canyon from dusk into dark. Awaken your night vision and look for nocturnal critters such as deer, owls, and bats. Enjoy the heightening of your other senses in the dark. Contemplate the night sky and identify planets, stars, and constellations. Bring a flashlight. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. **Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).**

Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon

Sunday, Sept. 23, 9 a.m. - 1.

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

Canyon Favorites Hike

Saturday, Sept. 23, 5 - 7 p.m.

Join Linda King for a moderately paced hike to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing, the waterfall, and back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring water and wear hiking boots. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).**

Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at www.penasquitos.org.

October

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors

Tuesday, Oct. 2, 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).**

Tracking Walk

Saturday, Oct. 13, 8 a.m.

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

Canyon Favorites Hike

Saturday, Oct. 13, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Join Pat for a moderately paced hike to Walden Pond, Carson's Crossing, the waterfall, and back. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Meet at the end of Park Village Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Bring water and wear hiking boots. **Thomas Guide p. 1189 (J7).**

Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training

Saturday, Oct. 20, 9:45 a.m. - 4 p.m.

This free training includes basic wildlife track, sign, and habitat recognition, as well as details on the implementation of survey protocol, and is required for survey volunteers. Meet at the historic adobe ranch house. **See Thomas Guide p. 1189 (C7).**

Volunteer Weed Bash on Lizardi Creek

Saturday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Help protect native habitat along beautiful Lizardi Creek (north city) in the Santa Luz, part of Black Mtn. Open Space Park. by removing invasive weeds such as tamarisk and arundo. Meet at the kiosk in the parking lot off San Dieguito Road, opposite Montien Rd. Contact mike at mkellysd@aol.com for more info.

Sensory Awareness Hike Will Bowen Sunday, Oct. 21, 4–5:30 p.m.

A hike to explore deep immersion in the senses as a path to know nature better. We will make experiments with sight, sound, taste, fragrance, and touch: eg., contemplating the colors of the sky, the song of a bird, the fragrance of a leaf, the taste of a berry, the texture of tree bark. This practice can take one to a more profound and quiet connection to the natural world. Meet at the West End Parking Staging Area. Thomas Guide p.1208 (D5).

Volunteer Trash Pickup Lopez Canyon

Sunday, Oct. 28, 9 a.m. - 1. Trash pickup in López Canyon. Meet at López Ridge Park at 7245 Calle Cristobal in Mira Mesa. Call Ranger John Garwood at 858-538-8066 for more info. **Thomas Guide p. 1208 (D5).**

DIRECTIONS

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 del Sur. Left on Camino del Sur and park by the kiosk. Thomas Guide p. 1189 (A7-B7).

Park Village Drive Meeting Area

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

Ranch House Walks/Tours

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

Sorrento Valley Meeting Area

Meet in parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd. on the north side of Sorrento Valley 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, (D5).

New BMOS Ranger

□Mike Kelly

In our May/June 2007 issue of *Canyon News* we introduced you to a new City Ranger, Matt Sanford. He was assigned to help Senior Ranger Lori Charett manage our Black Mountain Open Space Park (BMOS). Now, we'd like to introduce you to Ed Christensen. He is replacing Lori Charett as Senior Ranger. Ranger Charett accepted a promotion to the Senior Ranger position at the City's Mission Bay Park, a big leap in responsibility for her. We wished Lori goodbye at a dinner recently, hosted by the BMOS Citizens Advisory Committee, of which I'm a member.

Ranger Christensen was raised in eastern Massachusetts and attended the University of Massachusetts, graduating in 1997. He began working for the National Park Service as a Seasonal Patrol Ranger at Lake Powell in 1997; then Rocky Mountain Nat'l Park 1998-2003; Cabrillo Nat'l Monument 2003- 2005; City of SD □ (Mission Bay Park) 2005; City of SD Water Dept. Ranger/Diver 2005-2007. He lives in Pt. Loma. His hobbies: include flying, sports, model airplanes, and flight club board of directors. He can be reached at 858-538-8082 and

eachristensen@sandiego.gov. He is pictured below.



Black Mtn. Open Space Citizens Advisory Committee. L-R back row: Dave Wenk, Victor McBride, Ranger Matt Sanford, Walter White, Mike Kelly. Front: Lori McBride, Ranger Lori Charett, David Robertson, Jas Arnold. Not pictured: Arne Johanson, Maryanne Young.



Do Plants Communicate?

Dodder Uses Chemical Cues to Find Host Plants

Ann Sixtus, Trail Guide, Mission Trails Regional Park

[Many of us have seen the gossamer threads of something orange covering native plants. It's an annual parasitic plant named Dodder or Witch's hair (*Cuscuta californica*). There are several native ones and one non-native. It's an annual that germinates from seed and finds its way to a host plant. It separates from the ground, grows over the host plant by taking water and nutrients from it. When leading a hike, I'm often asked if this plant shouldn't be controlled for this reason. My answer is that I've seen no evidence it is actually killing the natives. It dies back each year and leaves the host plant alive and able to photosynthesize. The following article, reprinted from the *Trail Talk* newsletter, Nov. 2006, of the Mission Trails Regional Park Trail Guide Program, answers another question, when it germinates, how does it find a host plant? Just dump luck if it happens to germinate under a suitable host? It seems it's more complicated than that -- Mike Kelly.]

I thought this was an interesting article in *Science* magazine about dodder and how it finds its host plant. It is more detail than you would want to tell visitors, but I thought it would be of interest to trail guides: Dodder may be the bloodhound of the plant world. A plant that parasitizes other plants, it sniffs out its victim, Justin Runyon and his colleagues at Pennsylvania State University in State College report. "This is a pretty cool example of plants behaving in a way most people think only animals behave," says Richard Karban, a community ecologist at the University of California, Davis. It's also an effective strategy: Dodder ranks among the U.S. Department of Agriculture's top 10 noxious weeds.

The work bolsters the notion that plants have a chemical language, an idea that's been hotly debated for the past 2 decades. "The results go a long way toward convincing people that

plant-plant interaction via volatiles is a real phenomenon," says Eran Pichersky, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Barely able to carry out photosynthesis, dodder survives by attaching to the stems and leaves of other plants and robbing them of nutrients. A relative of morning glories, it has many names—goldthread, strangeweeder, witches' shoelaces—that aptly describe the dense, yellowish mats that blanket its



Dodder on California Buckwheat
Photo from County of Los Angeles, ACWM

hosts, reducing agricultural productivity by as much as 90%.

Runyon, a graduate student working with Pennsylvania State chemical ecologists Consuelo De Moraes and Mark Mescher, wanted to know how dodder found its mark. He placed seedlings of the dodder species *Cuscuta pentagona* in small vials fitted with a collar of filter paper on which he traced their growth and found that 80% of them headed toward a tomato plant placed nearby. He then put seedlings in an open-air chamber with two 90-degree side tunnels, one of which led to a chamber containing four tomato plants and the other to a chamber with four artificial plants; the seedlings could catch a whiff of the plants through the tunnel. About 77% of the seedlings grew toward the actual plants, the group reports. Runyon then replaced the plants with a vial of plant extract and the fakes with a vial con-

taining only solvent. Again, the dodder seedlings made the right choice.

The seedlings also grew toward touch-me-not plants (*Impatiens*) and, to a lesser extent, wheat. But when given the choice, the dodder avoided wheat, a poor host, in favor of tomato. Runyon discovered that wheat emits a chemical that somewhat repels the dodder—a finding with possible practical implications, given that dodder is so hard to control. This result, says De Moraes, "suggests the possibility of using volatiles to enhance plant defenses, either by applying repellent compounds or perhaps by engineering plants to produce them."

Past studies have indicated that plants under attack from herbivores emit signals telling nearby plants to boost their chemical defenses. But some researchers have been dubious about this evidence of plant-plant chatter, arguing that the experiments took place in closed chambers where artificially high concentrations of odors built up. Runyon's experiments were "rigorously conducted in an 'open' experimental design, so it's hard to argue that the responses they observe in the greenhouse are not occurring in the real world," says Ian Baldwin of the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Jena, Germany.

Many questions remain about how plants perceive the still-unidentified volatile signals. But there will be rapid progress, predicts Andre Kessler, a chemical ecologist at Cornell University. Runyon and his colleagues, he says, have "opened up a new door that can bring us closer to the understanding of airborne plant-plant interactions."

Pennisi, Elizabeth. 2006. Parasitic Weed Uses Chemical Cues To Find Host Plant *Science*, vol 313, pp. 1867.

(Black Mtn. Park cont'd)

County Newcomer

□ Sam Lanning

Hello friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. My name is Sam Lanning and I'm a new park attendant recently re-assigned to Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve beginning September 3, 2007. I come to this park hoping to make improvements as well as bring new ideas and assist the Ranger staff.

Over my several years of working in San Diego, I've had the chance to work for several employers who have made me the person I am today. I have a well rounded background in law enforcement, customer service and park maintenance. My previous employers currently and past are the County of San Diego as a Park Attendant (current), City of Poway as a Park Maintenance Worker (current), Port of San Diego as a Traffic Enforcement Officer (past), City of Chula Vista as a Park Ranger Aide (past) and U.S. Forest Service as a Forestry Firefighter (past).

I've worked at three County Parks: Dos Picos, Collier, and Lake Jennings and several city parks such as Lake Poway Recreational Park, Blue Sky Reserve, Mission Trails Regional Park, Rohr Park and all of the community parks within the City of Chula Vista.

I've volunteered at Mission Trails Regional Park (City of San Diego) as a Park Patrol member in the past year.

On my off time I enjoy hiking challenging trails such as Mt. Woodson and North Fortuna. I also like visiting animal shelters as abandoned pets need visitors too.

Lori organized in 2002, SDMBA members and other volunteers (para- / hang-gliders, park neighbors, etc.) helped fill several 40-yard dumpsters with trash ranging from discarded appliances to car parts to construction debris.

In April 2003, SDMBA led the first of its twice-annual trail work events in the park. Sponsored by Black Mountain Bicycles, these early events primarily involved brushing to improve sight lines and some basic erosion control on Miner's Ridge Loop Trail (MRLT). A year later, the IMBA Trail Care Crew (a team of specially trained trail building experts who work with land managers all over the United States) visited Black Mountain Park, and their recommendations were incorporated into a plan for making more amenable to becoming a multi-use trail.

SDMBA-led trail work events from 2003 - 2005 involved implementing the these recommendations by improving sight lines at various points to reduce the chance of hiker-biker conflict, armoring trail beds to permanently mitigate chronic erosion problems, reclaiming habitat on closed trails, and installing rolling grade dips to shunt water off the trail.

In early 2006, the Black Mountain CAC recommended re-designating Miner's Ridge Loop Trail as multi-use and shortly thereafter the city added its blessing. Today – because of the combined efforts of Sr. Ranger Lori Charett Gerbac, park and city staff (such as Rick Thompson, John Barone, and Tom Miller), SDMBA members, the Citizen's Advisory Committee, and scores of volunteers from the surrounding communities – MRLT is a safe, sustainable trail that can now be enjoyed by hiker and biker alike.

Work continues to make Black Mountain Park one of the city's open space jewels. On April 15, 2007, twenty SDMBA members and community volunteers cut back brush, improved some trail tread, and posted new informational signs. Besides SDMBA-led events, other community / user groups (such as the San Diego Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association) and the ranger staff also conduct regular park improvement activities. In addition, a new trail connecting the north (MRLT) and south (Nighthawk) trail systems is wending its way through the approval process and should be open soon.

Please volunteer! Visit the www.sdmdba.com or www.penasquitos.org for event sched-



**Trail and fence crew at Black Mountain Open Space Park.
Photo by Dave Wenk**



The mule deer buck and doe caught chowing down in a Peñasquitos Canyon marsh are also a study animal of the Mammal Atlas Project.
Photo by Diana Gordon, 2007.

New Trail Bridge Crosses Luzardi Creek



This new bridge crossing Luzardi Creek makes a trail connection between the north and south sides of the creek, a few hundred yards west of where the creek and trail pass under Camino del Sur. Luzardi Creek is an undiscovered treasure of the newly expanded Black Mountain Open Space Park. Visit www.penasquitos.org for a .pdf map of the park!
Photo by Mike Kelly.

(Mammals cont'd)

Scott Tremor, mammalogist, has been on the San Diego Natural History Museum's staff since 2004, following 16 years of working with the mammal collection at the San Diego Zoo. He has 20 years of experience in mammal trapping and monitoring, working with rodents, bats, and carnivores. He has overseen biological inventories, conducted studies of wildlife corridors, and taught classes in mammal identification, biology, and tracking. Since 2003 he has organized and supervised studies of the effects of wildfire on mammals in San Diego County sponsored by the Joint Fire Science Program and Cleveland National Forest. □ Tremor is also Principal Investigator on the San Diego County Mammal Atlas project which is expected to be published in 2008.

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the Mammal Atlas project. Already, volunteers with the San Diego Tracking Team have been contributing based on their local knowledge and tracking skills. Learn more about this opportunity at the meeting.



This cutie, photographed against the barn at nighttime at the historic ranch house in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is NOT a study animal of the Mammal Atlas Project. This is our Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*), a large toad as our native toads go.
Photo by Mike Kelly, 2007.

ARCH in the PARK

Saturday, October 20, 2007 • 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

The **San Diego County Archaeological Society** presents
an educational day of **Archaeology** and **Fun** at the
Ranch House in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

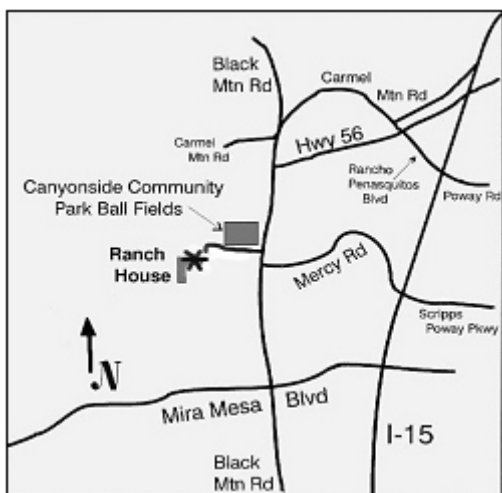
- » Find out what archaeology is all about; dig in a mock excavation; play games
- » Discover the history of the Ranch House on a tour of the adobe
- » See archaeology exhibits, demos on stone tool making, basket making, and more!



Bring a picnic lunch
to enjoy in the shade.
Fry bread, snacks, and sodas
will be available for purchase.



For more information, call: 858-538-0935
visit our website: www.sandiegoarchaeologicalsociety.com
or e-mail us at: sdcas@email.com



Peñasquitos brand

DIRECTIONS: From I-15 take Mercy Rd. west; turn right (north) onto Black Mountain Rd. Take the first left onto Canyonside Park Driveway. Follow the road all the way to the end (past ball fields) to Ranch House. Park in the Visitors lot on the left side of the road. Walk the pathway to the ranch complex.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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

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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: _____ 9/07

Name(s) _____

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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.

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