



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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July 1989

Volume 4 No. 1

Position Statement on Mountain Bikes in the Peñasquitos Preserve

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve have received many reports of problems created by the increased use of mountain bicycles in the Preserve. The Friends have already observed serious damage to the environment in the Preserve caused by these bikes. Since the Friends are primarily concerned with the damage to the environment and threats to public safety caused by the proliferation of mountain bikes in the preserve, after lengthy consideration, the Friends adopted the following position at its May 24, 1989 meeting.

Environmental Damage

Riders on mountain bikes with the over-sized and large treaded tires have damaged numerous trails in the Preserve. Animal paths, infrequently used by people, are now deeply rutted from these bicycles. These bicyclists, often in organized groups of as many as 30 riders, have even cut vegetation down to widen paths for their bicycles. Their large numbers, speed, and presence in up-to-now isolated areas disturb the wildlife that lives in the canyon.

One particular series of incidents illustrates the extent of the problem and the irresponsibility of some of the bike riders. One group of riders constructed a wooden bridge across the Peñasquitos creek in front of the historic Ruíz adobe. This allowed the bikers access to a sensitive riparian habitat on the north side of the creek where they did extensive damage to the riparian habitat. Under the City of San Diego Master Plan this riparian corridor is recognized as important and fragile and closed to crossing and use. East of this crossing, on a steep slope, is one of the trails they widened by cutting down vegetation. Even after the City's Park and Recreation Department tore down the bridge, bikers returned and rebuilt it several times. They even went so far as to use lumber from the cattle corrals nearby.

Threat to the Public Safety

The speed and sheer numbers of many of these bicyclists have resulted in many complaints. Many bicyclists have been observed traveling at speeds of 25, 30 or more miles per hour, forcing people on foot and horses and their riders to hastily get out of their way. The speed and numbers of the bikers have spooked horses, endangering their riders. A bicycle traveling at even 15 miles per hour can seriously injure a person or horse. Leisurely family strolls on the main road and hiking on the trails is incompatible with speeding bicycles.

Proposals

Based on the real threat to public safety and the actual damage to the environment we have witnessed and received reports about, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve propose that the following regulations governing the use of bikes in the Preserve be adopted.

1. The maximum speed limit for bicycles shall be ten (10) miles per hour. Within 100 feet of horses or people on foot, or in approaching a blind curve or the crest of a hill, the maximum speed limit shall be 5 miles per hour.

Friends' Outing Schedule

We publicize our own hikes and outings in the preserve and those of the San Diego County Archaeological Society. Outings are free to members and the general public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call Elberta Fleming at 271-6710.

July

BIRD WALK

Saturday, July 1, 8:00 a.m.
(1-1/2 hours).

Meet at Parking-Staging area off Black Mountain Rd. Bring binoculars and bird book.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, July 1, 11:00 a.m. and Noon (1 hour each), San Diego County Archaeological Society.

NATURE HIKE

Sunday, July 9, 7:00 a.m.
(2-3 hrs.)

Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, July 15, 11:00 a.m. and Noon (1 hour each).
S.D. County Archaeological Society.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

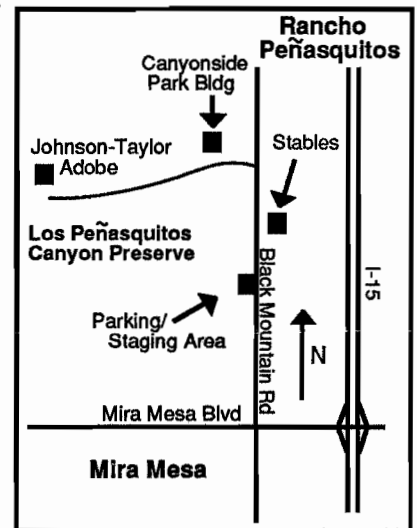
Sunday, July 22, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at Parking-Staging area.

BIRD HIKE

Saturday, July 16, 8:00 a.m. Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars and bird book.

Rain cancels all hikes



2. Bicycle use shall be restricted to the main east-west road in the Preserve, the road in López Canyon, and expressly prohibited on trails or "off-road."
3. Bicycles shall yield the right-of-way to horses and people on foot.
4. Bicycle riding shall be restricted to two (2) days of the week; one day on the weekend and one day during the week.
5. Signs listing these rules shall be posted at both entrances to the

(Bike Policy cont'd)

Preserve, appropriate fines be set to deter violators, and the appropriate authorities vigorously enforce these rules to ensure compliance.

6. The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve will work closely with other citizens groups, especially the Citizens Advisory Committee for Peñasquitos Canyon, and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Task Force, in defining and implementing these policies.
7. If these proposed regulations prove insufficient to curb the abuses, the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve believe it will be necessary to totally ban bicycles in the Preserve, just as many state parks have already been forced to do.

Leo Wilson
President, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

In Danger: The Los Peñasquitos Watershed

by Dr. Elberta W. Fleming

[Please also see the related article in this issue on Peñasquitos Creek by John Northrop, PhD—ed.]

The fresh-water marsh in the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is an important ecological link to the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Reserve. The approaching impact of infringing urbanization and the realization that coastal lagoons and wetlands were threatened, prompted the State Division of Parks and Recreation to include the Peñasquitos Lagoon with the most fragile State-owned lands such as the beautiful Point Lobos and Azalea Reserves. It has been designated as a State Reserve to be protected from the progressive destruction of coastal wetlands.

As for the destruction of coastal wetlands accelerates habitats for the preservation of waterfowl nesting areas and the nurseries of fish and shell-fish vanish.

The very future of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Reserve is now threatened because the natural boundaries do not extend upstream with the tributaries draining into the lagoon. The tops of the bordering mesas: Del Mar, Mira Mesa, and the narrow López Ridge are scheduled for extensive urban development which can be very critical for the future of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon State Reserve.

Removal of the Linda Vista Cap rock formation and the dense chaparral brush covering the canyon walls will result in erosion and the deposition of huge loads of silt in the lagoon channels. The eventual silting of the channels will accelerate the filling in of the fresh-water marsh as well as the salt-water wetlands. This will definitely upset the fragile ecosystem of the state-protected lagoon.

The lagoon's salt-marsh/fresh-water marsh complex is vulnerable to the upstream man-made modification through environmentally insensitive land development. The Los Peñasquitos Lagoon will not escape the ultimate fate of the infiltration of the accumulative sedimentation resulting from the planned extensive alternation of the natural land upstream by the developers.

This rare and fragile lagoon's future depends on the foresight and stewardship of the present generation of citizens who will determine the life span of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon State Reserve. Will it be destroyed in the next decade, or will it be preserved for future generations?

Peñasquitos Creek, Sustaining Force of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

by Mike Kelly

Both plant and animal life in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve depend upon water from Peñasquitos Creek for their very existence. Any change in the creek, either in stream discharge or stream channel, will have far reaching effects upon the Preserve. In order to assess potentially damaging changes due to development of the drainage basin, we need a basic knowledge of the area in its unspoiled, i.e. pre-development, condition. To fulfill this need, I compiled a few basic parameters from various published sources, including the Army KCorps of Engineers and California Coastal Commission (see references).

By way of introduction, it should be pointed out that in all stream erosion studies, flowing watercourses are referred to as "streams": all washouts, meanders, and downstream sediment movement are the result of "stream transport and erosion." Further, Peñasquitos Creek meets the California State criteria for a "Major Stream" because its drainage basin includes more than 50 square miles (it's 58.3 sq. miles). It has six tributaries, the best known being López, Poway, and Cypress Creeks. López Creek can't be developed because it is part of the Preserve, but the others are privately owned and will soon be developed.

Because Peñasquitos Creek is a major stream, flood gauges have been installed at two locations along its course: one in Poway and one near the Ruiz Adobe at the west end of the Canyon. Data collected from these flood gauges over the years provide the basis for much of the information concerning flooding and stream erosion of Peñasquitos Creek. Some of the important parameters are outlined below.

1. The mean discharge of Peñasquitos Creek varies from 2 cfs (cubic feet per second) in summer to 15 cfs in winter. Flood discharges are up from 600 cfs for a 5/10 year flood to 3600 cfs for a 50/100 year flood like those of 1891 and 1916. Urbanization (defined as having 45% impervious surfaces) is expected to increase these values by 25%.

2. Most of the flood damage occurs after the heavy rains, like we had in 1978 and 1982 (five year floods) when the whole west end complex was under about 5 feet of water which covered the flood plain from bank to bank. Recurring floods like these will completely inundate the new Parking/Staging area being built at the west end and wash out the access road from there to Peñasquitos Canyon.

3. The construction of numerous "storm drains" into the Preserve from developments on the surrounding ridges, including López Ridge, will concentrate the runoff from developments into the canyon increasing the runoff to more than the estimated 25%.

Flooding in Peñasquitos has long been a problem. The early ranchers tried to beat it by building flood control dams in the tributary canyons, one just west of the Johnson-Taylor Ranch (which was broken out by developers) and one just north of the Falls in the Genstar trade area. Drainage ditches were also dug in the main creek bed in two places: One that extends from about a mile below the Johnson-Taylor Ranch almost all the way to the SDG&E Power lines, and another extending from the hang glider area to the Ruiz Adobe. These old "trenches" are readily identified not only because the stream bed there is now straight rather than meandering but also because the mud dug up from the creek bed was piled along the edges of the stream and forms levees. During floods, there is water on both sides of the levees, which stand out as straight, dry trails. (It is just these levees that bicycle riders are using now.)

The problem of flooding in the Preserve is one that should be addressed by environmental groups, rather than City engineers since the latter always seem to underestimate the flood volumes by at least 50%. For example, when the "ford" at the Black Mountain Road crossing was replaced by culverts about 10 years ago, they were too small and the water backed up into Horseman's Park, which was turned into a lake every winter. Likewise, the roadway built in November 1988, connecting the west end Parking/Staging area with the Preserve, washed out with the first rains in December and had to be rebuilt. We haven't had any real rains since, or it would have washed out again and again.

These and other problems of flooding in the Preserve are going to be compounded by development of the surrounding hills. For example, two old sycamore trees in López Canyon have been drowned by water from the McKeller storm drain. The planned Miramar Lake/Cypress Canyon project will take over all of the Cypress Creek drainage basin and will contribute to flooding in the Preserve since Cypress Creek is a tributary to Peñasquitos Creek. This problem will be worsened because the rainfall increases away from the coast: Poway and Miramar getting more than Sorrento Hills, for example.

The Friends would do well to take a lead role in formulating guidelines for flood control in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Possible restraints include requiring developers to install brow ditches along the canyon rim, construction of small dams or holding ponds in tributary streams and at the outfall of storm drains, and revegetation of steep slopes.

References

1. Prestegard, K.A. "Stream and Lagoon Channels of the Los Peñasquitos Watershed, California, with an Evaluation of Possible Effects of Proposed Urbanization," California Coastal Commission Special Studies Series, Sacramento, California (1976).
2. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "Flood Plain Information, Los Peñasquitos Drainage Area, San Diego County, California" (1967).

Thanks to Rolling Hills Elementary School

[The following letter was sent to the Student Council of Rolling Hills Elementary School June 13, 1989]

Dear Members of the Student Council:

It was indeed a pleasant surprise to be chosen as a recipient of a \$200 contribution to the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

Your contribution will be used to develop new educational programs about the fascinating history and the natural environment of this interesting area of San Diego.

This year three new enrichment programs were introduced: *Introducing Nature to Kindergarteners*, *The Insect Zoo*, and *Nature Crafts*. These after-school enrichment programs were very successful.

Already parents are asking for classes that include the family. If we are to preserve our dwindling natural resources; the key to our survival is educational awareness about our natural environment. The Friends of Los Peñasquitos plan to go forward with special programs for the family.

Your generous financial support will enable the Friends to widen their educational horizons for the people off your community. Thanking you for helping to make this possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elberta W. Fleming

Educational Director

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

More on the Vernal Pools

by Mike Kelly

In our last issue we reported to you the damage done to the endangered vernal pools ecosystems. This month we reprint a letter sent to the office of Councilmember Abbe Wolfsheimer concerning the vernal pools. In contrast to our own article, which attributed the damage to a developer, the Newland Company, this letter attributes the most recent damage to "vandals." We have some excellent photographs of the damaged areas.

City of San Diego
MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 19, 1989

TO: Councilmember Wolfsheimer

FROM: Ann B. Hix, Principal Planner, EQD

SUBJECT: Protection of Vernal Pools - Route Slip Response

There are two vernal pool areas on Lopez Ridge that are protected by fencing. One is located within the 10-acre Brown parcel which is now owned by the City of San Diego. The vernal pools along the dirt road within this parcel were recently impacted by construction vehicles working on the Lopez Ridge PRD project located to the west. The applicant, Newland, agreed to stop using the road and to erect a fence at the easterly terminus of the Brown parcel to prevent vehicular use of the road. The fence was recently torn down by vandals.

Newland's biological consultant reported that the fence had been repaired within the past two weeks and that junk dumped into the pool was removed.

The other protected vernal pool area is a 6-acre fenced Caltrans vernal pool preserve located north of the Brown parcel. According to Caltrans biologists, the Caltrans fence has a long history of vandalism. Recently, 22 fence poles were knocked down by vandals. Caltrans is considering stronger protective measure such as guard rails and thicker fence poles. They will [be] placing these new measures around their parcel in the near future.

City staff is currently developing a plan for fencing and managing the Brown parcel and the vernal pool parcel located to the north which the City will be taking ownership of in the very near future as a vernal pool preserve. City staff will be reporting back to Council within about 6 weeks with a fencing plan and other measures to protect the City-owned vernal pool property on Lopez Ridge. Ms. Fleming will be kept apprised of staff's progress on this issue. Newland's consultant expects to begin the vernal pool rehabilitation this summer. City staff will be monitoring this project and coordinating with our vernal pool preserve design.

Please contact Tom Huffman at 533-3656 if you require any additional information.

Ann B. Hix, Principal Planner
Environmental Quality Division



FRIENDS OF PEÑASQUITOS CANYON PRESERVE, INC.
 P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
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 Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Other: _____

Name(s) _____

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Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. and send to:

Membership Chairperson
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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

Volunteers Still Needed

If you would like to help out on our newsletter, hikes, research, or other activities call Elberta Fleming at 271-6710 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.



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August 1989

Volume 4 No. 2

Friends To Recognize 4 at Annual Meeting

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. will recognize four individuals during our Annual Meeting, Wednesday, September 27th. Although these four have kept a low profile, they have been in the forefront of helping to protect the fragile environment of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

R. Mitchel Beauchamp, well-known San Diego botanist and author of *A Flora of San Diego County, California* was responsible for the drive to put the rare plant Mesa Mint, *Pogone abramsii*, on the Federally Protected Endangered Species list. This tiny plant is found in San Diego vernal pools and no where else in the world.

Abbe Wolfsheimer, a member of the San Diego City Council has distinguished herself as an environmentalist. Often the lone vote on environmental issues, Abbe is determined to preserve San Diego's natural resources for present and future generations. She has been particularly concerned with Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

Ellen Bauder, a member of the Friends, did her doctorate on vernal pools. Ellen has made a concerted effort to try to save some of these rare and endangered vernal pools before they are lost forever. In her research, she was involved with some of the pools on López Ridge, which have recently been purchased by the City of San Diego.

Linda Bernhardt, a former aide to Abbe Wolfsheimer, was an ex-officio member of the Board of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. She continues her interest as a Member of the organization. Linda has worked very closely with the Friends on many of the problems threatening the fragile areas and endangered species of the Preserve.

Summer Safari Update

by Mike Kelly

More and more parents are discovering the Summer Safari program of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve directed by Dr. Elberta Fleming. Many children had to be turned away this year as the classes were filled to capacity. Already there is a long waiting list for next year. Many parents whose children have been in the program for several years have requested a continuing class for youngsters who now are in Middle School.

The history of this successful program goes back a number of years to the youth activities at the Lake Erie Junior Nature and Science Center in Bay Village, Ohio. Also organized by Dr. Fleming, this program was selected as one of the four outstanding children's nature programs in the United States.

Among the many State and National awards the Nature Center received was the National Youth Conservation Award from the

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings of the Friends and the San Diego County Archaeological Society are free to members and the general public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call Nancy Willis of the San Diego County Archaeological Society at 444-5256 about ranch activities and Elberta Fleming of the Friends at 271-6710 on outings.

August

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, August 5, 11:00 a.m. and Noon (1 hour each), San Diego County Archaeological Society.

DUSK HIKE

Sunday, August 13, 6:00 p.m. (2 hours). Meet at Preserve sign on the road into Johnson-Taylor ranch. Bring flashlight. Wear shoes you don't mind getting wet. Bring water if hot. Bring insect repellent.

BIRD WALK

Saturday, August 19, 8:00 a.m. Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars, bird book, and water.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

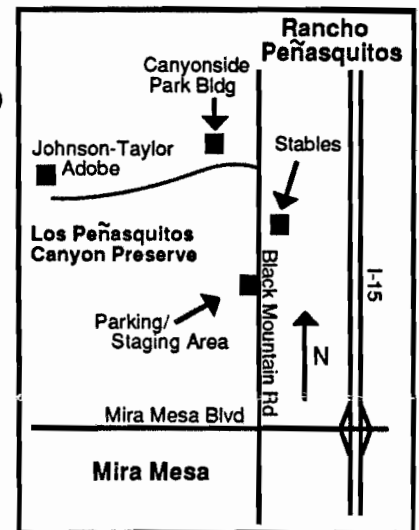
Saturday, August 19, 11:00 a.m. and Noon (1 hour each). S.D. County Archaeological Society.

NATURE HIKE

Sunday, August 20, 7:00 a.m. (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring water.

DUSK HIKE

Saturday, August 26, 5:30 p.m. (2 hrs.) Meet at Preserve sign on the road into Johnson-Taylor ranch. Bring flashlight and wear footwear you don't mind getting wet. Bring insect repellent. Bring water if hot.



Correction

In our last issue we had a serious error in the byline to an article. In the article "In Danger: The Los Peñasquitos Watershed" by Dr. Elberta W. Fleming we said: "Please also see the related article in this issue on Peñasquitos Creek by John Northrop, PhD—ed." However, Mike Kelly's name appeared as the author on the second article, whose full title was "Peñasquitos Creek, Sustaining Force of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve," when the correct name should have been John Northrop, PhD. We apologize to our long-time contributor, Dr. Northrop.

(Summer Safari cont'd)

National Wildlife Federation and the Sears and Roebuck Foundation. Ohio Bell produced a movie on the Center's Youth Program for their OHIO STORY series on the heritage and history in the State of Ohio. This movie was aired on PBS especially for schools.

The Lake Erie Junior Nature and Science Center Supplementary Environmental programs for schools, the many after school enrichment programs, and popular summer classes continue today.

For a number of years, Cuyahoga County in Ohio provided a base of operations in a historic homestead which also housed the local library. This was the home of the Nature Center until it moved into its permanent building in the Cleveland Metroparks. The City of Bay Village Recreation Board provided scholarships for the summer program which enabled many children to enjoy the classes who otherwise couldn't afford the class fee. The cooperative effort of the County and City helped to make this unusual program possible for many Ohio children.

Children "grew up" in the Nature Center's classes and became "teen-age Junior Curators." In high school they qualified as "Assistant Curators." Many came back from college as "Interns" working on college assignments. Some of these former students have developed outstanding careers in their chosen fields.

After serving as Founder-Director of the Lake Erie Junior Nature and Science Center for thirty-two years Dr. Fleming "retired" to San Diego. Her "retirement," as those who know her will testify, lasted until she discovered Los Peñasquitos Canyon "Preserve." She called it "a unique and beautiful precious gem" of a canyon, a wild canyon in the middle of the city. She saw it as the perfect setting for a program similar to the Metroparks program in Ohio and launched her "Summer Safari."

The "Summer Safari" experience in Los Peñasquitos was originally developed under a California Council of Humanities Grant utilizing the rare natural environment and historical background of Los Peñasquitos for educational experiences for area schools, after school enrichment classes, and the summer program.

This type of program is most important with the problems facing our youth today. It gives children a start in life at the age that they learn best through actual experience. It encourages their natural curiosity, develops motivation, and stimulates their creativity as they discover the world around them. Once their interest is captured, they have an outlet for their energies and they can be directed into meaningful hobbies which insulates them against pressures they encounter in their teen years.

Present intentions are to continue this successful program. Unfortunately, a new building must be found for it. The building that has been home to the Summer Safari program, located at the east end of the Preserve near the tennis courts, is being torn down by the city. Hopefully arrangements can be made with the County for a site for next summer's Safari, ideally at the newly restored Johnson-Taylor Ranch.

Recently, due to her extensive background in developing environmental education programs, Dr. Fleming has been asked to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Natural Science for Youth Foundation. This is a national organization which has founded or assisted over 200 nature centers or natural history organizations in the United States and is affiliated with the National Audubon Society. This will enable her to have direct contact with many organizations who are working directly with schools in the field of Environmental Education.

I-5 Expansion Will Impact Preserve**by Leo Wilson**

The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is currently being circulated for the I-5 freeway expansion project. As proposed, the project will expand I-5 to between 14 and 16 lanes from the junction of I-15 and I-805 to Carmel Valley Road. This expansion is said to be required because of the increased traffic volume caused by explosive population growth in North City West and the northern coastal cities.

The proposed expansion will affect Peñasquitos Preserve in two ways. First, a two-acre section of the Los Peñasquitos Creek will be "impacted" — it will lose its natural wetland quality because the freeway will either pass over it or immediately adjacent to it. As mitigation, an unspecified amount of money will be given to the Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation.

The second effect upon the Preserve will take place in the "land swap" area. In 1986 San Diego voters approved an initiative for a "land swap" in which a 166-acre parcel near the freeway was traded to Genstar Corp. (now Newland Co.) for \$953,000 and 241 acres located near the waterfall area in the center of the Preserve. The land swap contract is proceeding, but is not yet completed. Two to three acres of the 166-acre parcel will be lost. This area is north of Peñasquitos Creek and borders on I-5. The area is disconnected from the Preserve except for a small sliver of land touching the western border near I-5.

The Friends do not have a position on the impact the expansion will have on the "land swap" area. We recognize it is effectively owned by Newland Co. and is no longer part of the Preserve.

However, we are concerned with the loss of functional wetland along Peñasquitos Creek itself. Given the congestion at the I-5/I-805 junction, some sort of expansion appears inevitable, with the consequent loss of this wetland acreage. The Friends strongly believe any mitigation monies should be used in the Preserve. The western area adjacent to I-5 is badly in need of habitat restoration. The mitigation monies should be used to restore the wetland, salt marsh areas.

The Friends' position on the mitigation monies is in no way a criticism of the Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation. We have the greatest respect for the Foundation and the valuable work that it has done. In fact, Dr. Peter Navarro, a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, recently informed the Friends the Foundation voted to support the Friends' position.

Some opposition to the freeway expansion plans is expected from the residents of the Pointe Del Mar subdivision, who undoubtedly didn't contemplate a scenic view of concrete ribbons of an expanded I-5 and interchange with Route 56 when they purchased their homes. They have a point too. How long can this region's traffic problems be solved by adding miles of new concrete freeways? Isn't sixteen lanes getting a bit too much? Isn't it time for other solutions?

Last Roundup in Peñasquitos**by John Northrop, Ph.D.**

Riders in Peñasquitos Canyon will no longer see cattle grazing in the meadows along the creek bed. The prolonged drought and encroaching development forced them out.

The problem became acute in early June when the hillsides turned brown. Since the fences around the canyon have fallen into disrepair, the cattle began to forage on the mesa tops surrounding the Preserve. Some went to Del Mar Mesa, some to López Ridge, and some followed the old López Road up to what is now the Pacific Corporate Center. A few strayed from there onto Mira Mesa Boulevard. The Police then called the owner. Mr. Ray Witwer, on June 12. He chased them back down to López Canyon but the next day they were back up there again. Fearing accidents (when a speeding car hits a 1000-lb steer, the animal is propelled up over the hood and through the windshield) Mr. Witwer organized a roundup on June 24 and shipped the cattle to the stockyards in Bakersfield. About 50 riders participated in the event which was covered by TV Channels 8, 10, and 39.

As if by divine intervention, one cow and her 2 calves eluded the drovers and were seen at the West end of the Preserve, the last remnant of the vast herds that grazed there since the Days of the Dons.

Friends on the Candidates and Elections

by Leo Wilson, President of the Board of Directors

A question has arisen about the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the current City Council elections. Several of the current City Council candidates list current or past membership in the Friends in their campaign statements. In addition, several members of the Board of Directors of the Friends are playing active roles in several city council races.

As a non-profit organization under California law, the Friends are prohibited from endorsing any political candidates or participating as a group in any political campaign. In fact, the Friends are not endorsing or supporting any political campaign, nor have we in the past. However, officers and members may do so as individuals. Some clearly see it as their civic duty. Such activity, however, reflects the personal opinions and beliefs of them as individuals, and not our organization.

At least two of the city council candidates running in the upcoming September primary are ex-officio members of the Board of Directors of the Friends. Ex-officio membership on the Board of Directors is offered to local office-holders or their designated aides if their council district borders the Preserve. Several accepted this offer and played active roles on the Board. Ex-officio positions have also included representatives of Homeowner's Associations bordering the Preserve and groups with jurisdiction over the Preserve, such as the Peñasquitos Task Force and the Citizens Advisory Committee. In addition, we welcome participation and observation at Board meetings from City and County agencies whose departments oversee the Preserve. Such ex-officio participation has proven vital in helping to reduce encroachment and damage to the preserve.

In fact, the Board would like to welcome its newest ex-officio member, Marilyn Mirrasoul. Marilyn is an aide to Councilmember Abbe Wolfsheimer. She succeeds Linda Bernhardt, now a candidate for City Council. Bernhardt was formerly an aide to Wolfsheimer and her representative on our Board.

We do urge our readers to take an active interest in the upcoming elections and raise the critical environmental issues facing the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the City as a whole.

Wildlife Watch

by Mike Kelly

Two issues back we asked readers to help us track the wildlife population of the Preserve, a unique ecological area noted for its diversity of wildlife in an urban area. On page 4 we provide a checklist of birds that have been seen in recent years in the Preserve. The list was compiled by Leo Wilson, our President, who often leads our bird walks. Join him for a future walk (see our schedule) or go on your own, armed with a good bird book, binoculars, and our checklist. This is not an exhaustive list, it's only the list one person has personally seen. Let us know of additions to the list, and when and where you saw them.

Since our last article, I spotted another doe with twin fawns near the road to Yuma (the main road through the Preserve) 1/2 mile in from the eastern end. The fawns were quite young, sporting heavily spotted coats. In the same area, I've counted a total of 5 coyote pups from several litters coming together. There seem to be two sets of twin, one set accompanied by their young mother, and the second set accompanied by their dad. I've seen the twins on numerous occasions over the last month. The sets do split up and travel in different directions, so it's unlikely they're all from the same litter. Several yearlings have joined them at times. The fifth pup has been in the same vicinity as the two sets of twins, doesn't physically mix with them, and is even harassed, indicating it's not from either litter. On the two occasions I've seen the 5th pup I haven't seen an adult with it. It might be one of the numerous orphans that occur in the wild. On the other hand, mom or dad may be just parking junior there while it's still too young to hunt. The other adults do seem to be leaving the pups and yearlings together while they go off for a while, probably hunting. Such "childcare" has been observed amongst canines in the wild.

Do dead animals count? Actually, yes. We'd like to hear about carcasses you come across. If fact, give me a call at 566-6489 as soon as you can after discovering a carcass. Sometimes the dead animal may be the only indication we have that a certain species is in the area. A dead baby great horned owl (we saw it on a Friend's hike last winter) under a tree tells you there's a nesting pair of great horned owls in the area, perhaps up in that same tree (there was a nest).

One weekend friends and I were hiking up a remote Baja California canyon off the Laguna Salada when we came upon mountain lion tracks and scat. We followed the trail up the canyon more than a mile and came upon one of its kills, an old big-horn ram sheep with a fully-curved set of horns. There was no sign that scavengers such as coyotes had been at the carcass. One of my friends had worked with folks from the Mountain Lion Project and was able to identify the kill as typical of a mountain lion. Each predator tends to have its own way of killing and animal parts that it eats first from a kill. This sheep was also partially concealed under some brush, further evidence of a cat kill.

Recently, Dr. Elberta Fleming discovered a dead mule deer doe just inside the eastern end of the Preserve. I went to look. Unfortunately, we were all too late to identify how it had been killed. It was thoroughly scavenged, probably by coyotes. However, it's not too likely they killed a full-grown mule deer. There haven't been enough adult coyotes to form a hunting pack since Animal Control captured, and apparently killed, most of the adult coyote population of the Preserve this past winter. Could it have been a mountain lion? We have a tentative sighting of one in late July near the western end of the Preserve.

Peñasquitos Bird List

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ___ Great Blue Heron | ___ Yellow-breasted Chat |
| ___ Green Heron | ___ Wilson's Warbler |
| ___ Common Egret | ___ Western Meadowlark |
| ___ Snowy Egret | ___ Red-winged Blackbird |
| ___ Black-Crowned Night Heron | ___ Bullock's Oriole |
| ___ Mallard | ___ Western Tanager |
| ___ White-tailed Kite (a.k.a. Black-shouldered Kite) | ___ Black-Headed Grosbeak |
| ___ Black Phoebe | ___ Blue Grosbeak |
| ___ Say's Phoebe | ___ Lazuli Bunting |
| ___ Western Flycatcher | ___ Purple Finch |
| ___ Horned Lark | ___ House Finch |
| ___ Violet-Green Swallow | ___ American Goldfinch |
| ___ Tree Swallow | ___ Lesser Goldfinch |
| ___ Rough-Winged Swallow | ___ Savannah Sparrow |
| ___ Barn Swallow | ___ Lark Sparrow |
| ___ Cliff Swallow | ___ Field Sparrow |
| ___ Scrub Jay | ___ White-crowned Sparrow |
| ___ Common Crow | ___ Golden-crowned Sparrow |
| ___ Plain Titmouse | ___ White-throated Sparrow |
| ___ Common Bushtit | ___ Song Sparrow |
| ___ Wren | ___ Sharp-Shinned Hawk |
| ___ House Wren | ___ Cooper's Hawk |
| ___ Bewick's Wren | ___ Red-tailed Hawk |
| ___ Long-billed Marsh Wren | ___ Red-shouldered Hawk |
| ___ Mockingbird | ___ Sparrow Hawk |
| ___ California Thrasher | ___ California Quail |
| ___ Western Bluebird | ___ American Coot |
| ___ Mountain Bluebird | ___ Killdeer |
| ___ Black-throated Gnatcatcher | ___ Least Sandpiper |
| ___ Ruby-Crowned Kinglet | ___ Long-billed Dowitcher |
| ___ Water Pipit | ___ Mourning Dove |
| ___ Loggerhead Shrike | ___ Black-ch. Hummingbird |
| ___ Starling | ___ Anna's Hummingbird |
| ___ Hutton's Vireo | ___ Blue-throated Hummingbird |
| ___ Orange-crowned Warbler | ___ Belted Kingfisher |
| ___ Nashville Warbler | ___ Red-shafted Flicker |
| ___ Yellow Warbler | ___ Acorn Woodpecker |
| ___ Audubon's Warbler | ___ Downy Woodpecker |
| ___ Brown-throated Gray Warbler | ___ Nuttall's Woodpecker |
| ___ Townsend's Warbler | ___ Western Kingbird |
| ___ MacGillivray's Warbler | ___ Cassin's Kingbird |
| ___ Yellowthroat | ___ Ash-throated Flycatcher |

Bike Debate Heats Up

A spirited debate has broken out in recent weeks over the misuse of bicycles in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Interviews with officers of the Friends and its position paper (July 1989) have been covered in the *Sentinel*, *Peñasquitos News*, and the *Tribune*. In addition, Park Ranger Nancy-Dawson-Dollard was pictured on the front page of the *Peñasquitos News* in the July 20 issue examining tire tracks left by mountain bikes in the Preserve. Pam Stevens from the Citizens Advisory Committee was recently interviewed about the problem on Channel 10 news (July 31). Already mountain bike riders are writing their letters to the editor (*Sentinel*, July 27).

Recently, at the request of the Park and Recreation Dept. and the Citizens Advisory Committee, both the San Diego City Attorney and the City Manager have given written opinions on the bicycle problem in the Preserve. In effect, both said that legislation prohibiting the use of bicycles in areas such as the Preserve already exist.

Below is the letter from the City Attorney's office to the Park and Recreation Director.

DATE: June 30, 1989
TO: George I. Loveland, Park and Creation Director
FROM: City Attorney
SUBJECT: Mountain Bikers on City Park Trails

This responds to your memorandum of June 7, 1989. You asked whether the use of park trails by mountain bicyclists would be prohibited by San Diego Municipal Code section 63.02.19.

San Diego Municipal Code section 63.02(b) provides that "no person shall within any public park or plaza or public beach or beach areas within the City of San Diego do any of the acts hereinafter enumerated." Section 63.02.19 is one of the sections "hereafter enumerated" pursuant to Section 63.02, and it provides as follows:

To ride a bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle or any other vehicle on any path, bridle trail, walk or in any arcade; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the riding of any bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle or any other vehicle on roads designated and established for automotive traffic.

From your memorandum, we determine that the land within the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is considered City park land, and is operated as a "public park," notwithstanding its designation for open space park use or otherwise. Indeed, the concept of open space merely means that the property, if dedicated for park and recreation purposes, does not possess many of the same physical characteristics as exist in a landscaped and maintained neighborhood or resource type park.

It is therefore our opinion that the restrictions under Section 63.02.19 governing bicyclists within "public parks" are fully applicable within those portions of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve within the city limits of San Diego, regardless of who owns the property, so long as the area under consideration is part of the park. The provisions of that section may therefore be used to restrict access along trails used by hikers and equestrians. Violation of Section 63.02.19 would be considered an infraction because of the provisions of Section 11.12 which so provides.

If it is considered appropriate to authorize, but regulate, bicycle use within the park, then a modification to Section 63.02.19 will be required to allow such use, either within areas designated by the City Manager for such use, or through the issuance of a permit for such use.

We shall be pleased to respond to any further questions you may have on this subject.

JOHN W. WITT, City Attorney

By Rudolf Hradecky, Deputy City Attorney

In a City of San Diego Manager's Report to the Public Facilities and Recreation Committee Agenda of June 14 of this year Deputy City Manager Coleman Conrad reported, among other things, on the questions of bicycles and motor vehicles in the Preserve, as follows (excerpts):

"Mountain Bikes

With the increased popularity in bicycles suitable for riding on

rough terrain, problems with improper uses in our parks, resulting in environmental damage, have occurred.

In 1987, after receiving citizen complaints and discovering considerable trail damage, the very popular hiking trail on Cowles Mountain in Mission Trails Regional Park was posted "no bicycles". However, bicyclists have continued to have access to the summit of Cowles Mountain, through use of the maintenance vehicle access road off Barker Way.

In recent months problems of bicycle misuse in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve have received considerable publicity. Misuse in general has consisted of riding off established trails, causing environmental damage, and racing up on and thereby endangering hikers and equestrians. In an attempt to address the misuse without totally prohibiting bicycle riding in the Preserve, the Citizens' Advisory Committee established a subcommittee to, working with established bicycle groups, prepare recommendations on bicycle use in the Preserve for consideration in establishing a long-term policy. That subcommittee is expected to present their recommendations in the near future. When this issue was discussed by the Citizens' Advisory Committee at their May 3rd meeting, representations at [sic] several bicycle groups and individual mountain bicyclists attended, and pledged their willingness to "self-regulate" and take turns at the Preserve entrances handing out flyers to educate bicyclists on how to appropriately use the Preserve.

On May 10, 1989 this issue was discussed by the Los Peñasquitos Preserve Task Force, chaired by Councilmember Struiksmma. At that time it was stated that the Citizens' Advisory Committee felt that "bicycle use is appropriate as a nature activity, but not racing."

At that meeting, the Task Force voted to post additional signs at the main entrances to the Preserve, for a period of one year, advising bicyclists to:

Please stay on main trails;
Maximum speed 10 m.p.h.
Bikes yield to horses and hikers.

At [sic] stated by Citizens' Advisory Committee Chair Pam Stevens, the committee "has recommended that the signs and educational efforts by bicycle groups be used as an interim measure for several months to determine if the 'education approach' is effective in regulating use, before a long term policy is adopted on mountain bicycles in the Preserve."

"Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles, including motorized bicycles, are not allowed on park trails. The only exceptions to this are the uses by maintenance and security personnel.

A continuing program of the Open Space Division of the Park and Recreation Department has been the installation of barriers and gates to prevent motor vehicles from accessing park lands. In some areas, such as Tecolote Canyon, this program has been quite successful. In other areas, such as Los

Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Mission Trails Regional Park, there are so many potential access points that as soon as one is barricaded, another is found. In Mission Trails Regional Park, a gate put in one day last week was found open and damaged the following day.

Enforcement of motor vehicle prohibition is also difficult. In Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, security is provided through a City contract. It has been reported by security personnel that they often see vehicles in the Preserve, which leave when sighting the security vehicle.

In Mission Trails Regional Park, increased Police Department activity along with our recently instituted Park Ranger program has had some successes and it is hoped this will improve as off-roaders become more aware that citations will be issued to those caught."

The report then goes on to cite the same provisions of the California Vehicle Code and Municipal Code that the City Attorney's office cited as the legal basis for regulating bicycle and motor vehicle use in public parks. To date the aforementioned signs regulating bicycle usage in the Preserve have not been posted.

Letters Received

Mountain Bikes in the Preserve

Dear Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve,

I *applaud* your position statement on mountain bikes in the Peñasquitos Preserve!! As a long time hiker in the canyon, I can't believe the change in the animal and bird behavior that bicyclists have caused in the Preserve. I have gone to the canyon as early as 5:30 a.m. on a weekday morning for a peaceful walk and have met bikes in there at that hour. I have tried walking on the smaller side trails in an attempt to avoid the rush on the main path. Even there I have been overtaken by a speeding cyclist, cussing me out, saying "Get out of the way, you idiot, do you want to be killed?!" (I have deleted the obscenities.) I have seen bicycle riders tearing through the canyon yelling "Look at those bunnies go?," as rabbits rush to speed out of their way. One rider even stopped to tell me how he had just chased a family of seven skunks ahead of his bicycle. He said he didn't know they could move so fast. They probably never had, before that encounter!

Peñasquitos Canyon is a Preserve, after all. What are we preserving? A bike trail? As the habitat shrinks due to encroaching development, the animals and birds are having a hard enough time as it is. Please don't make things more difficult for them.

I wish the bicycle riders would go back to wherever they rode before they discovered Peñasquitos Canyon. If that place no longer exists, perhaps they should band together to get a "bicycle park," just the way the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon did years ago to try to preserve this special place for nature. It took many years to get this preserve, and it is taking a very short time to destroy it.

Please — save a place for wildlife!

—Barbara Zepf
San Diego



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Please make checks payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos
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Membership Chairperson

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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

Volunteers Still Needed

If you would like to help out on our newsletter, hikes, re-
search, or other activities call Elberta Fleming at 271-6710 or
Mike Kelly at 566-6489.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126
(619) 271-6710 226-1339 566-6489

September 1989

Volume 4 No. 3

Vernal Pools Expert Bauder To Speak at Friends' Annual Meeting Sept. 27

Ellen T. Bauder, an expert on vernal pools, will highlight the Friends' annual meeting this September 27. The meeting is open to all members of the Friends and their guests. Bauder, who has a Ph.D. in Ecology jointly granted from the University of California at Davis and San Diego State University, will give a slide presentation on San Diego's vernal pools. Her doctoral thesis was on the ecology of these unique pools. In 1986 she did a major survey of all the vernal pools in California for the Dept. of Fish and Game.

Vernal pools are seasonal pools that form in distinct geological areas. Shallow depressions above earth strata that don't absorb water allow pools to form after the winter rains. Mrs. Bauder reports that the plant species indigenous to the pools comprise "a stunning array of species found nowhere else, not duplicated elsewhere in the world." For example, the endangered Mesa Mint is found only in vernal pools in San Diego.

She has been very active in the effort to save these pools from the rampant development occurring in their areas. Alarming, most of these pools have already been lost to the developer's bulldozer. López Ridge, which forms the northern rim of much of Peñasquitos Canyon, is home to several pools that were bought by the city and CalTrans to protect them for posterity. Even so, as we have reported in these pages, despite being fenced in, they are still subject to grave damage.

Mrs. Bauder has also been active in the California Native Plant Society and the Nature Conservancy.

➡ p.3 for more on Annual Meeting

Peñasquitos Park Day 1989

Pam Stevens

A day of family fun in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is planned for September 23, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Peñasquitos Canyon Park Day 1989. Families will get a chance to hike, view exhibits, do Indian crafts, and play nature games, as well as to tour the historic 1800's Johnson-Taylor adobe ranch house and learn something about San Diego's past.

Most of the activities at the free all-day event will take place at the Johnson-Taylor ranch at the east end of Peñasquitos Canyon, north of Peñasquitos Creek and west of Black Mountain Road.

Short nature hikes, about 30 to 45 minutes long, will be led to the area of the Eichar grave. (These are easy walks, but hikers may get their feet wet crossing Peñasquitos Creek.) The San Diego Archaeological Society will give tours of the adobe ranch house at various times during the day.

Children's games having to do with habitat and animal behavior will be led by Nancy Dawson Dollard, County Park Ranger in charge of environmental education. The games are intended primarily for 5 to 12-year-olds, but Dawson Dollard said parents are

➡ p.2 for more on Peñasquitos Day

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings of the Friends and the San Diego County Archaeological Society are free to members and the general public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call Nancy Willis of the San Diego County Archaeological Society at 444-5256 about ranch activities and Elberta Fleming of the Friends at 271-6710 on outings.

September

BIRD WALK

Saturday, Sept. 16, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars & bird book,

NATURE HIKE

Saturday, Sept. 16, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Sept. 16, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

NATURE HIKE

Sunday, Sept. 17, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Emphasis on Indian habitation & use of Preserve plants.

PEÑASQUITOS DAY

Saturday, Sept. 23, 10 am - 4:00 pm. See accompanying article for details.

NATURE HIKE

Sunday, Sept. 24, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at West end of Preserve, where Sorrento Valley Blvd. meets the Preserve's entrance.

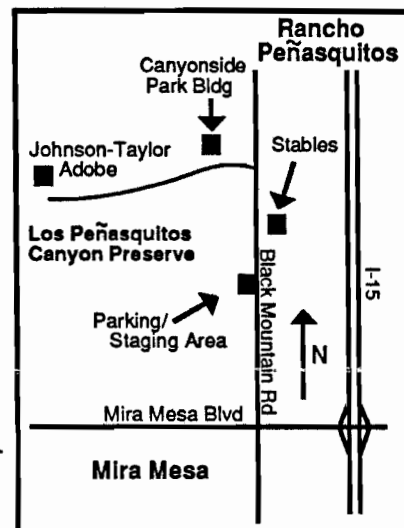
BIRD WALK

Sunday, Sept. 30, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars & bird book.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY GET-TOGETHER

Saturday, Sept. 30, series of events by S.D. County Archaeological Society, public welcome to attend any or all.
4:30 pm & 5 pm Short tours of Johnson-Taylor Ranch
5:30 - 7 pm Supper & social with Society members. Bring your own food. OK to bring small hibachi to cook your own. Refreshments supplied by Society.
7 - 7:30 pm Presentation with slides. Call Nancy Willis (444-5256) the week before for details.

➡ p.4 for more on Outings



(Peñasquitos Day cont'd)

encouraged to play along with their children."We'll be playing games such as 'Oh, Dear,'" Dawson Dollard said.

At 12:30 p.m. the County of San Diego will be joined by members of the City/County Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force and Citizens Advisory Committee in a brief dedication ceremony for the recently-restored north wing of the Johnson-Taylor Ranch house. Following the ceremony, music will be provided by a 7-piece New Orleans jazz band from 1 to 4 p.m. Hot dogs and soft drinks will be available for a small donation.

For those interested in stretching their legs and seeing the length of the canyon, a morning hike is planned from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. We will meet at the preserve's east end parking/staging area on Black Mountain Road (south of Peñasquitos Creek, opposite Mercy Road) at 8 a.m., then be shuttled by van to the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon at Sorrento Valley to begin the one-way 6-mile hike.

Those planning to do this all-morning hike must call 566-2261 in advance to reserve a space. Hikers should bring water and wear sturdy shoes. This will be a family hike on terrain that is not very steep. However, due to length, pre-schoolers should only come if their parents are prepared to carry them part of the way!

Wildlife Watch

by Mike Kelly

In our last issue we reported that observing the carcasses of dead wild animals can be important. Underscoring this point was an article in the local Sierra Club's September newsletter on the declining deer population in San Diego County. The article estimates a decline of 86% in the County's deer population since the 1940s.

How is the decline recorded? Primarily by extrapolating from the number of deer killed during the hunting season and by the number of road kills. The article estimates that 75 deer die *each* year along just one section of Interstate 8. A projected fence could eliminate this carnage that primarily involves fawns.

The hunting season may have to be shortened and the killing of does limited in order to help bring back the deer population.

Here in Peñasquitos we lost our second known deer of the summer. The latest was a 4-point buck killed on Black Mountain Road near the Parking-Staging entrance to the Preserve. He was killed by a vehicle. Unfortunately, traffic on Black Mountain Road has gone from the small number of vehicles of 5 years ago to a never-ending stream of cars and trucks around the clock. Last fall we lost one of our few bobcats on this same stretch of road.

It may be necessary to petition for deer crossing signs on Black Mountain Road and possibly the erection of a deer-proof fence that would funnel animals to the safer crossing under the new overpass.

On the brighter side, there are at least two more bucks in the Preserve. I and friends have seen these two yearlings up close. One has a darker coat than the other. The lighter-coated buck also has a distinguishing scar on his left shoulder. Neither's horns have yet split, evidence of their yearling status.

When you see the deer on your walks through the Preserve take note of their shape. Some are showing signs of inadequate feed. They are thin and their ribs clearly show. This is because their forage is scarcer in the Canyon this year. The third year of our drought and the tremendous developments on López Ridge and to the north of the canyon are sharply reducing the available forage.

These same conditions drove the cattle grazing the western end of the Preserve up onto the irrigated areas of the industrial parks bordering Mira Mesa Blvd. After several accidents the herd's owner

A Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Profile

by Dr. Elberta Fleming

How many individuals have the rare ability to work effectively with children? Especially with teenagers? For the last six years I've had the privilege to know an individual who inspires children to learn about the natural world through actual experience.

I met this rare individual when William (Bill) Jennings, a San Diego State University intern, worked with me on a California Council of Humanities Grant involving Los Peñasquitos Preserve.

Together we spent many hours in the field, exploring the wild-life corridors and tributary canyons which made Los Peñasquitos a unique ecological treasure with many diverse habitats and endangered species. We recorded hundreds of plant and animal life on film and in our field notes.

Always eager to improve his knowledge, Bill spent hours at the central library and in the City and County files reviewing old newspaper articles and records for information on the Preserve's background. He reviewed tapes of early council proceedings, and together, we attended many meetings of the Citizen's Advisory Council on Los Peñasquitos Preserve, as well as the Mira Mesa Planning Board when they were dealing with the Preserve's future.

In his research, Bill was thorough and objective. As a result he produced the most comprehensive account of the last three decades of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve history.

Bill Jennings' rare talent with children did not surface until he served as my assistant in the Summer Safari program. His ability to charm all ages of children is remarkable. Not only his knowledge of the Los Peñasquitos Preserve as a natural educational resource, but also his creative ability to transfer that knowledge to make the learning experience fun. This is the quality that makes Bill valuable as an assistant in the Summer Safari.

During the years that Bill worked closely with me the Summer Safari was based at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch. We needed a place to operate our program as the actual restoration had not started on the ranch buildings. The C wing or former Cook House was a small building in the Ranch complex. It was filthy with many years of accumulation of neglect. The floor was covered with layers of greasy, grimy film. After many hours of scraping the floor, painting the walls, and replacing the windows Bill produced a sparkling clean room which was an interim home to be used for exhibits and limited operation.

During his internship, utilizing his extensive knowledge of the Preserve, Bill developed plans for hiking trails which outlined the fragile areas that should be protected. Recently, with his scientific background in Botany, he was very helpful in the establishment of an Eagle Scout nature trail project in the Preserve.

Bill plans to further his career in Natural Resource Interpretation and Park Recreation, with a particular focus on youth involvement.

During his internship in Peñasquitos, it was William Jennings goal to help preserve the natural beauty and unique environment. He wished to follow in the footsteps of his great-aunt, Kate Sessions.

was forced to remove his animals from the canyon.

In the past month I've increasingly seen deer grazing the irrigated areas on the southern rim of the Canyon, including my own backyard. I've had from one to five deer in my unfenced backyard grazing my grass and other greenery *every* evening. They are so hungry they have tolerated our presence to within 12 - 15 feet. (One recent evening, in fact, a doe came upon one of the bucks feeding in the backyard and promptly bit his rump and chased him

(Vernal Pools cont'd)

As we reported in our last newsletter, at our annual meeting we will honor Mrs. Bauder and three other San Diegans for their contribution to protecting Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The others are:

R. Mitchel Beauchamp, well-known San Diego botanist and author of *A Flora of San Diego County, California* was responsible for the drive to put the rare plant Mesa Mint, *Pogogne abramsi*, on the Federally Protected Endangered Species list.

Abbe Wolfsheimer, San Diego City Council member has distinguished herself as often the lone vote on environmental issues. She has been particularly concerned with Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

Linda Bernhardt, a former aide to Abbe Wolfsheimer, was an ex-officio member of the Board of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. She continues her interest as a Member of the organization. Linda has worked very closely with the Friends on many of the problems threatening the fragile areas and endangered species of the Preserve.

We will also have a brief election for new officers and members of the Board of Directors of the Friends.

Refreshments will be served. The schedule for the evening is:

7 - 7:30 p.m.: Social. Free refreshments.

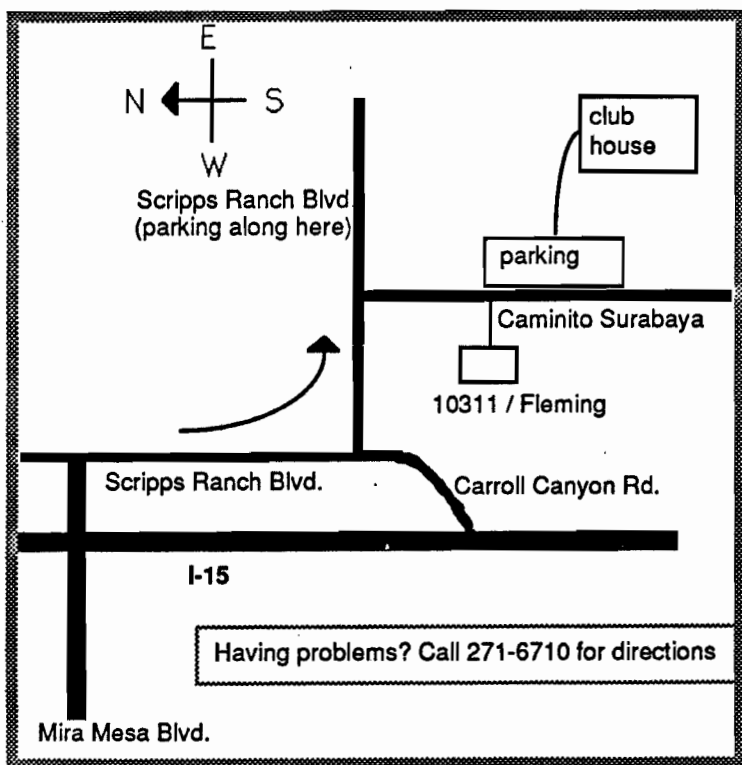
7:30 - 7:45 p.m.: Election of new officers and board.

7:45 - 8:00: Awards

8:00 - 8:45 Slide presentation and lecture on Vernal Pools by Ellen T. Bauder

8:45 - Social continues.

Our annual meeting will be held at the same location as last years', in the Club House of the Condo Association where Dr. Fleming lives. For those who haven't attended before, the Club House is opposite Dr. Fleming's house at 10311 Caminito Surabaya in Scripps Ranch. Here's a map.



off!) With two months to go until our winter rains this situation bears careful watching. Our droughts are the equivalent of the winters back east that often decimate the deer herds, requiring emergency feeding.

The Crayfish population of Peñasquitos Creek seems to be making a comeback. Their numbers had been reduced by heavy poaching by individuals who apparently consider them a delicacy. On a recent dusk hike, we were pleasantly surprised to find large numbers of these beautiful red crustaceans hurtling through the water. We even found one of their tunnels in the mud near the water's edge. It begins underwater and surfaces to the air in the mud on the bank of the creek.

If you see anything that looks like a lobster trap in the waters of the creek, please report it to the ranger station at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch house. I'm told that they confiscated a number of traps over the past few months.

On that same hike, in an area dense with trees and brush, we also found the remains of the carcass of a great horned owl. It was impossible to tell the sex or what had killed it.

Bird Alert

In our last issue we printed a list of birds observed over the years in the Peñasquitos Preserve by our President Leo Wilson. Several preminent area birders have promised to submit their bird lists so we can print a more complete list for those readers who bird watch in Peñasquitos.

In our list there were several errors that occurred as we transcribed the list from the back of Mr. Wilson's birding book. These were not his errors, but editorial errors in deciphering the various symbols he uses to code where he sees the birds. The Blue-throated hummingbird was not seen in the Preserve.

Letters Received

[Below we print excerpts from 5 letters Dr. Elberta Fleming received from a group of Japanese students who attended a Friends program.]

I was interested in your artifacts, and I am glad to feel them and wear them. And I was surprised at the thing which uses for bringing baby.

—Tomoko Tabsahashi

I think to know about ancient life style and to tell next generation is very important. It was interesting to see real old tools and clothes. I had a good time.

— Yukato Sato

Thank you for showing us Indian artifacts. I go to Yokohawa National University in Japan, and I am studying European and American culture. So I am interested in American Indian's culture. I had a nice time listening your explanation of Indian artifacts. I thought, in old days, Indians' lifestile is similar to Japan's lifestile in old days. Thank you so much.

— Motoko Kodaira

I think they have great culture, they do everything without automatic by theirselves. I am happy I can see many Indian artifacts and model of Indian village. We had a good time. Thank you for your kindness.

— Kyoko Yokata

The life of Indians (especially how to use bow and arrow) is interesting for me, and I enjoy very much.

— Tetsuro Hirata



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Membership Chairperson

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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

Outings Schedule (cont'd)

OCTOBER

BIRD WALK

Saturday, Oct. 7, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars & bird book.

NATURE HIKE

Sunday, Oct. 8, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Emphasis on Indian habitation & use of Preserve plants.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Oct. 14, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

BIRD WALK

Saturday, Oct. 14, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars & bird book.

Volunteers Still Needed

If you would like to help out on our newsletter, hikes, research, or other activities call Elberta Fleming at 271-6710 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126
(619) 271-6710 566-6489

October 1989

Volume 4 No. 4

Special Halloween Hike Set for October

A special Family Halloween Hoot Hike is planned for Monday, Oct. 30, at 6:30 p.m., the day before Halloween. This family hike will try to scare up one or more of the three species of owls found in the Peñasquitos Preserve (Great Horned, Barn, and Burrowing owls). So be prepared to try out your best hoot! We'll also visit a 19th century grave site in the Preserve and look for ghosts and other spirits that might be laying about.

Bring your flashlight to scare off the ghosts and goblins! Dress warm since there's almost always a chill in the air when ghosts are about. Wearing a garland of garlic is strictly optional — it didn't seem to work too well the last time anyway. Meet in the dirt parking lot at Canyonside Park, near the Peñasquitos Preserve sign. We'll be out for about 1-1/2 hours. It's an easy walk, no hills.

Annual Meeting Hears Bauder on Vernal Pools, Honors 4

Mike Kelly

Our annual meeting of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was held Sept. 27 in Scripps Ranch. We had a full agenda, mixing business, education, and socializing. We presented four environmental awards, were treated to a wonderful slide show on Vernal Pools by Dr. Ellen Bauder, and elected new officers for the coming year.

Awards

As we announced in our last issue, we presented our first annual environmental awards to four individuals who have made outstanding contributions to protecting Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. District 1 City Council member Abbe Wolfsheimer, District 5 City Council candidate Linda Bernhardt, and vernal pools expert Dr. Ellen Bauder all took time out from very busy schedules to come and receive their awards. R. Mitchell Beauchamp, San Diego botanist, was unable to attend, but asked Dr. Elberta Fleming to accept on his behalf.

Vernal Pools

Dr. Bauder presented a talk and slide showing on the geology, flora, and fauna of vernal (latin for springtime) pools. Since we recently wrote about the pools we won't repeat that information here. However, a fascinating part of her talk, new to most of us in the audience, focused on the unique plants that inhabit the vernal pool ecosystem.

Variability of rainfall from year-to-year in various ecosystems has led to some commonly known plant adaptations. For example, some plants adjust to scant rainfall by growing and going to seed fast to survive. Others produce bulbs or seeds that may lay dormant

➡ p.2 for more on Annual Meeting

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings of the Friends and the San Diego County Archaeological Society are free to members and the general public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call Nancy Willis of the San Diego County Archaeological Society at 444-5256 about ranch activities and Elberta Fleming of the Friends at 271-6710 on outings.

October

BIRD WALK

Saturday, Oct. 7, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars & bird book.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Oct. 7, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

NATURE HIKE

Sunday, Oct. 8, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Emphasis on Indian habitation & use of Preserve plants.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Oct. 14, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Oct. 21, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

GEOLOGY HIKE

Sunday, Oct. 22, 8:30 am (2 hours). Meet at Johnson-Taylor Ranch House.

HALLOWEEN FAMILY HOOT HIKE

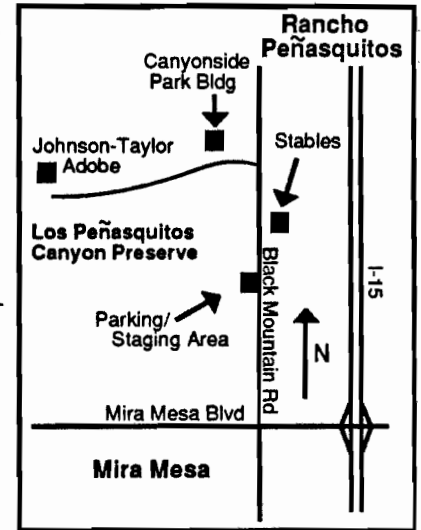
Monday, Oct. 30, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 hours). Bring flashlight to scare off the ghosts and goblins! Dress warm. Meet in the dirt parking lot at Canyonside Park, near the Peñasquitos Preserve sign. We'll hoot for owls and visit a historic grave site and ???

NOVEMBER

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Nov. 4, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

➡ p.4 for more on Outings



(Annual Meeting cont'd)

through dry years. But, the extreme variability of rainfall *within any given year* in vernal pools has led several plants to evolve unique adaptations. One such adaptation is *heterophylly*, when a plant has more than one set of leaves on the same plant! This feature led some people to wrongly classify these vernal pool plants as two different plants. The amount of rainfall determines which type of leaf the plant forms. An elongation response is also found in vernal pool plants. The stem can respond within hours to increased rainfall. Why is this important? The depth of water in a vernal pool can vary from an inch to over a foot during the rainy season. Grassland plants typical of our mesas die off under this water. Plants endemic to vernal pools, however, are *plastic*, flexible enough to allow a stem to grow an inch in a day, or form a different type of leaf to take advantage of the wet conditions. A flexible, long stem is ideal for rising water conditions, where the leaf must float on the surface of the pond.

Dr. Bauder also announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has accepted vernal pools for Wildlife Refuge status. Now all they have to do is find a suitable area. Ideally, vernal pools should have a large buffer zone around them.

New Officers

Four officers were elected to positions in the Friends for the coming year. Kathleen Zaworski-Burke is our new President. Kathleen is a college instructor and a former president of the Home Owners of Penasquitos Association and a long-time member of the Friends. Mike Kelly is the new Vice-President. Mike is the owner of a medical textbook publishing company and the editor of the Friends Newsletter this past year. Mike McCormick will continue as the Treasurer. Mike is an employee of Long's Drug store in Mira Mesa, an amateur historian, and leader of our popular Mystery Tree hikes. Les Braun, our new Recording Secretary,

Friends Recognized at Peñasquitos Park Day

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and individual members were among those recognized with awards of appreciation at Peñasquitos Park Day, September 23. During the ceremonies dedicating the recently-restored Johnson-Taylor Ranch house, County Supervisor Susan Golding gave Dr. Elberta Fleming a plaque saying, "Special Commendation presented to the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve for your consistent, comprehensive, and valuable devotion to the environmental integrity of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Your tireless efforts to share the precious history of the Preserve with others and to introduce citizens to the flora and fauna of the Canyon provide a valuable educational experience for all of San Diego County. Signed. Susan Golding, Supervisor, District 3.

City Council Member Abbe Wolfsheimer presented awards to a number of people for their work in helping to protect Peñasquitos Canyon. Friends supporters recognized included Dr. John Northrop, Allan Rothero, Dr. Elberta Fleming, and William Jennings. Others recognized included Mary Ward. Following are the texts of the presentations Councilwoman Wolfsheimer read when announcing these awards.

"Dr. John Northrop grew up in a scientific family. His father was a Nobel Prize scientist. At an early age John developed an interest in science. Later his career led to Geology, Oceanography, and Geophysics. He retired after working with Columbia University, Scripps Oceanography, and NOSC.

John has always been interested in preserving San Diego's open lands and historical background. He has worked consistently to educate the public with the value of Los Peñasquitos "Preserve." His many years of exploring the Preserve on horseback has given him an intimate knowledge of the geology and topography of its fragile terrain. His extensive scientific background in Geophysics has enabled Dr. Northrop to keep abreast of the changes wrought by development that could have serious impact on the Preserve.

San Diego is fortunate to have Dr. Northrop's scientific expertise and continual monitoring of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve."

"William Jennings is a young man with a definite goal: To follow in the footsteps of his Great-Aunt, Kate Sessions.

As a graduate of San Diego State University, William Jennings majored in Interpretation and Outdoor Recreation with an emphasis on Park Planning. He fulfilled his college internship in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. His research project included the last three decades of the background information of this first Mexican Land Grant. Over a period of several years, he surveyed the natural environment, compiling extensive field notes and a documentary slide file in an effort to save this unique natural resource for present and future generations.

William Jennings has also shared his knowledge with children in educational programs of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Preserve. [See last month's newsletter for a more in depth profile of Bill Jennings.]

"Allan Rothero. For over a period of forty years, landscape artist Allan Rothero has been capturing the natural beauty of Los Peñasquitos on canvas. His paintings are an important interpretation of this rare historical jewel found within the City of San Diego.

Allan Rothero was a friend of the last survivors of the López family who were the original Mexican settlers homesteading in López Canyon in the early 1800s. Allan has contributed his knowledge of this little-known family who lived many years in the "Preserve."

Although Allan Rothero no longer lives in San Diego, his intimate knowledge and love of Los Peñasquitos through his paintings is a rich and valuable legacy.

"Mary Ward is a dedicated historian whose full-time profession is historical preservation. As County Historian, her research on the Johnson-Taylor Ranch has revealed a fascinating and colorful background of another era. Her book, *RANCHO de Los PEÑASQUITOS ON THE ROAD TO YUMA*, opens a window on the importance of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in San Diego history. This early "highway" which passed through Los Peñasquitos Canyon was not only traversed by early Indians, Spaniards, Mexicans and Americans, but was especially important for General Kearney's troops who followed in their footsteps.

Dr. Elberta Fleming, a long-time leader of the fight to protect Peñasquitos Canyon, also received an award from Council Member Wolfsheimer. In her usual self-effacing manner, Dr. Fleming didn't want us to make a big deal of it in the newsletter and didn't give us the text of her award!

Friends New Meeting Time

Our monthly Board of Director's meeting time and place have been changed. Beginning with our October meeting we will meet the third tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. sharp in the meeting room at the Johnson-Taylor ranch. Members are invited to attend the board meetings. It's a good way to keep up on Preserve issues and perhaps become active in a committee's work.

Mule Deer in the Preserve

Mike Kelly

On your walks in Peñasquitos Canyon have you seen any deer yet? The best times to see them are in the early morning and at dusk. However, people have seen them browsing as late as 10 a.m. and as early as an hour before dusk. You'll increase your chances of seeing them if you walk and talk quietly as you hike through, and look about you constantly. It's not uncommon to see noisy hikers, joggers, or bikers so unconscious of their surroundings that they miss the doe and her twin fawns browsing just a few feet from where they pass.

The mule deer is the biggest mammal living in the Peñasquitos Preserve. When you see one up close it's obvious where they get their name from. Their ears are very big in proportion to the rest of their head and body, and look exactly like a mule's ears.

How many mule deer live in the canyon? One friend came upon a herd of more than 20 in a meadow a year ago. This past summer a neighbor saw 7 does walking together. In one evening this summer I counted two separate bucks, then two does and two fawns together. One of these fawns is male, evidenced by the bumps on his head that will later develop into antlers. So, although it's hard to be sure of the total number of deer, we seem to have a balance of males and females, critical for the future of the herd.

Bucks

The buck (male) is often described by the number of points he has on his horns. A two-point buck has small horns that haven't grown enough to fork yet. Two of the younger bucks I saw this summer, yearlings probably, are at this stage of development. The buck that was killed on Black Mountain Road this summer was a four-point buck, each horn having forked once. The number of points is not an accurate indicator of the age of a buck, since bucks shed their antlers each year, generally in January, and start a new set in the early spring. However, a more mature buck generally has more points than a yearling buck.

When they start to grow, the antlers are covered with a soft mosslike skin called *velvet*. Food and oxygen are provided to the growing antlers by the velvet that is filled with nerves and blood vessels. This blood supply is shut off as the antlers harden. Eventually the velvet dries and is rubbed off in the autumn. The antlers, now polished smooth by the rubbing, are ready for sexual display and combat with other males. This combat occurs when more than one buck competes for the privilege of assembling a group of female mule deer, a *harem*, in the fall.

The antlers are also useful against predators. This summer I saw a young buck lower his head and aim his antlers at several coyote that happened by. They quickly vanished! A week ago, my neighbor saw a buck approach a group of coyotes resting in their dirt sleeping/rest holes in the bare earth. [In the late afternoon they like to lay down there and curl up in shallow depressions they've dug in bare earth. By that time of the day the earth has been warmed by

the sun and still gives off considerable heat.] One of the coyotes was in his path. Mind you now, there was ample room to go around the coyotes, but he chose to stare directly at this one coyote and lowered his head and aimed his horns. Lickety split the coyote got up and moved out of the hole. The buck ambled through and the coyote dropped back into his hole. In the food chain of life, these grown deer are too big and aggressive for coyotes to successfully hunt. One predator big enough to successfully hunt them is the mountain lion. A single mountain lion is reported to kill as many as 50 deer in a year.

Does

The mule deer doe (female) has her young, *fawns*, by late June. A young doe will usually have a single fawn, while it's not uncommon for a mature doe to have twins, or even triplets. One doe I've seen repeatedly this summer has twins. For the first few months the fawns have spotted coats (skin). As they grow the spots gradually disappear. I have a photo of one of these fawns, taken in late August, showing just a few spots on the flanks. One protection nature has given fawns against predators is a lack of scent. When they are very young they don't give off a scent. Thus, by laying very still they can often escape detection by a predator.

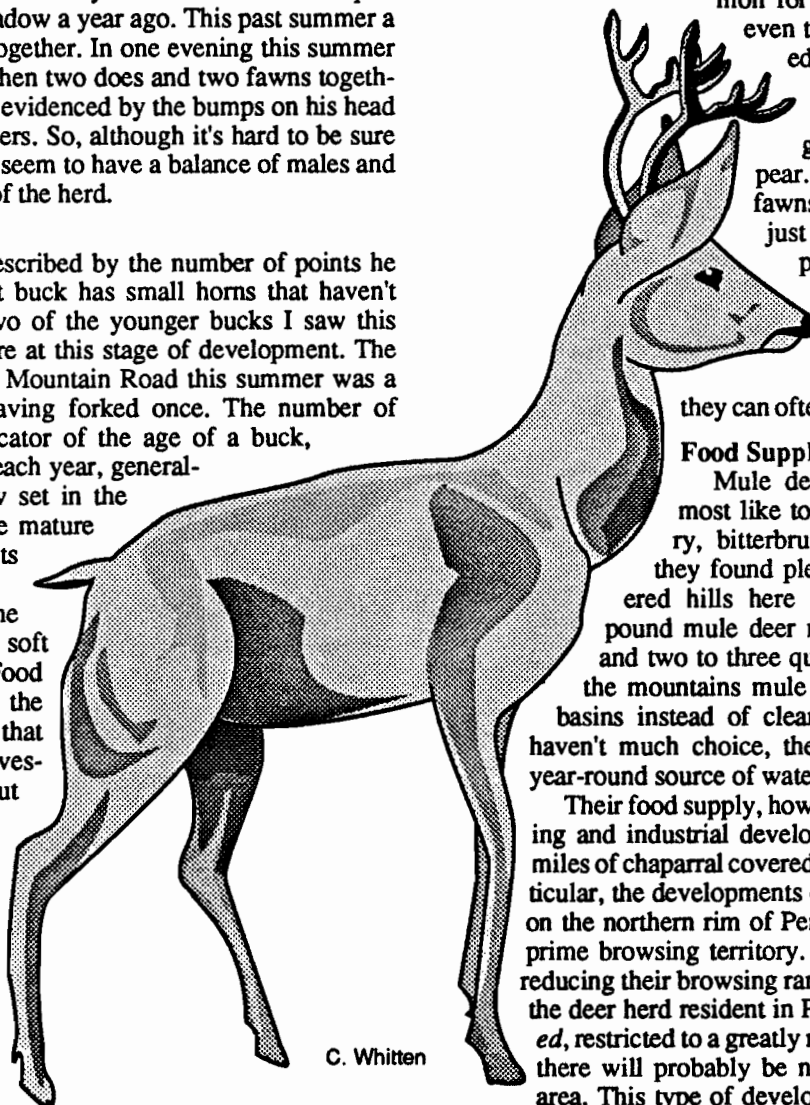
Food Supply Impacted

Mule deer browse for their food. They most like to eat huckleberry, salal, blackberry, bitterbrush, and snowbrush. Historically they found plenty to eat in our *chaparral* covered hills here in the canyon. A one hundred pound mule deer needs about two pounds of food and two to three quarts of water daily to survive. In the mountains mule deer prefer muddy water in the basins instead of clear water in a stream. Here, they haven't much choice, the Peñasquitos Creek is the only year-round source of water for them.

Their food supply, however, is steadily dwindling. Housing and industrial developments have taken many square miles of chaparral covered hills out of the food chain. In particular, the developments on López Ridge and Park Village on the northern rim of Peñasquitos Canyon have taken out prime browsing territory. Roads and fencing contribute to reducing their browsing range. What's happening now is that the deer herd resident in Peñasquitos is increasingly *isolated*, restricted to a greatly reduced feeding range. Eventually there will probably be no natural exit from the Preserve area. This type of development is what led to the famous case of the albino deer in Mission Valley, the lone survivor of the valley's deer herd, that became isolated on the southern rim of Mission Valley, dependent on residents for his water supply.

Hard Questions for the Future

What size herd can the Preserve support? Can a genetically viable herd survive? Will we watch their numbers slowly decline to nothing in the next 5 years? Can we keep any viable wildlife corridors open to other territories for movement and genetic mixing?



C. Whitten



FRIENDS OF PEÑASQUITOS CANYON PRESERVE, INC.

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- Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

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Membership Chairperson
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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

Outings Schedule (cont'd)

OLD LOPEZ ROAD HIKE

Sunday, Nov. 5, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to the Preserve.

NATURE HIKE

Saturday, Nov. 11, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Emphasis on Indian habitation and plant use in Preserve.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Nov. 18, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Nov. 18, 8:00 am (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure. Also learn about Preserve plants.

PIONEER HIKE

Saturday, Nov. 25, 8 am (2 hours). How Indians and early Pioneers survived in the Canyon. Early pioneers too. Meet at the Parking-Staging area on Black Mtn. Rd.

Volunteers Still Needed

If you would like to help out on our newsletter, hikes, research, or other activities call Elberta Fleming at 271-6710 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.



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November 1989

Volume 4 No. 5

Special Holiday Hikes Coming Up

As the holiday season approaches you'll want to reserve several dates on your calendar for some special family activities sponsored by the Friends. If you look at our calendar on this page you'll see several family walks coming up. These family outings, focusing on our ancestors and our natural heritage, are a good antidote to the heavy dose of commercialism we must endure over the holidays.

Thanksgiving weekend is an appropriate time for our annual Pioneer Hike. Saturday, Nov. 25, at 8 a.m., we'll sponsor a 2 hour family hike to explore how the Indians and early Pioneers survived in the Canyon. We'll look at how they lived, what they ate, and what they found in the canyon that aided their survival. Did you know that Indian artifacts have been dated to about 3,000 BC in the Preserve?

During December we have two holiday hikes. Our annual Christmas Holly Hike will take place Sunday, Dec. 3, at 8 a.m. and lasts about 2 hours. Our annual Mistletoe Hike is Sunday, Dec. 17, also at 8 a.m. for about 2 hours. Both these plants actually grow in the Preserve.

All three of these special hikes will be led by Dr. Elberta Fleming, the eminent Naturalist. She is one of the people most knowledgeable about the Preserve, its plants and animals, and about our ancestor's habitation in the Preserve.

In addition to these special hikes we have our monthly nature, mystery tree, and other hikes, also noted in our schedule. Join us!

What's Happening with the Peñasquitos Preserve

Mike Kelly

At the first Board of Directors meeting of the newly elected officers of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, we held a lengthy discussion of the state of the Preserve. We'd like to share this discussion with our members.

Natural Vistas Lost

1988 was a devastating year for the Preserve, and personally, for many of our officers and members. The fight to save López Ridge from development was lost to the bulldozers. In the process we lost a beautiful area adjacent to the preserve that forms much of its southern boundary. It's also the site of major animal crossings, especially for mule deer. López is also the site of the rapidly declining vernal pools. Although the pool areas are owned by the City of San Diego and CalTrans, they are now closely encircled by development and have already suffered damage. The new road coming off the western end of the ridge cuts right through a marsh that is a vital part of the unique ecology of the canyon.

➡ p.2 for more on the Preserve

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings of the Friends and the San Diego County Archaeological Society are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call Nancy Willis of the San Diego County Archaeological Society at 444-5256 about ranch activities and Elberta Fleming of the Friends at 271-6710 on outings.

November

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Nov. 4, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

OLD LOPEZ ROAD HIKE

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NATURE HIKE

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PIONEER HIKE

Saturday, Nov. 25, 8 am (2 hours). How Indians and early Pioneers survived in the Canyon. Early pioneers too. Meet at the Parking-Staging area on Black Mtn. Rd.

December

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

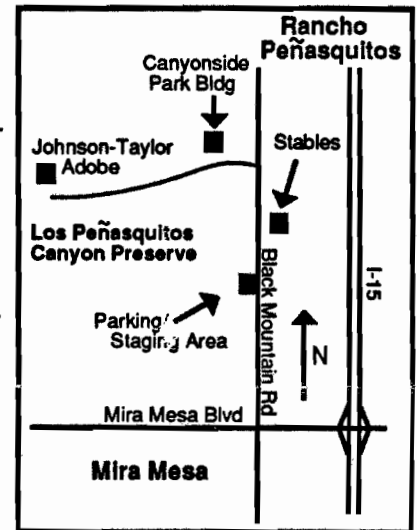
Saturday, Dec. 2, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

CHRISTMAS HOLLY HIKE

Sunday, Dec. 3, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve.

NATURE HIKE

Saturday, Dec. 9, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Emphasis on Indian habitation & use of Preserve plants.



➡ p.6 for more on Outings

(Preserve cont'd)

At the eastern end of the Preserve we saw the Park Village development flatten entire hills, destroying the natural topography of more than a mile of the northern rim. Another marsh habitat, fed by a creek from a side canyon, was obliterated. A centuries-old cactus patch, a wonderful sight to behold and thought to have been planted by early Indian inhabitants of the area, was completely destroyed. Where once we could hike or ride for 6 miles of natural vistas of trees, grasses, and chaparral, now we see houses almost everywhere we look. To culminate the year, we saw the building industry confuse enough voters to prevent passage of ballot initiatives that promised to bring some sanity to the unplanned, explosive growth that threatens what natural areas remain in the city. No wonder we, our members, and many other citizens felt discouraged!

What's Left

We have almost a year's perspective to look back upon the damage done to the Preserve (and more yet to come). What's left of the pristine and wild canyon we remember?

- With about 3,500 acres, Los Peñasquitos Canyon is still the second largest park in San Diego.
- Follow trails off the main road and you still enjoy several miles of stream, trees, and meadows without seeing buildings.
- Peñasquitos still sports an astonishing array of plants, birds, mammals, and other wildlife.
- An interesting variety of geological formations remain for the curious.
- Indian, Spanish-Mexican, and early settler ruins and artifacts may still be encountered. In fact, the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House has been restored and reopened. More nature education programs are being organized around it than ever before.

In short, we can still find much to enjoy about the Preserve. We may have to be more selective about when and where we go if we desire the beauty and solitude we once prized it for, but it's still attainable. Does this mean everything is ok with the Preserve?

Future Issues and Proposals

Peñasquitos Canyon will confront many more challenges to its status. Here are some we foresee.

- **RPOZ.** If the City Council elections produce a pro-environmental majority the Friends proposed to seek a Resource Protection Overlay Zone for Sensitive Lands for the Preserve. This wouldn't roll back the clock on Park Village or López Ridge developments, but would prevent future development on sensitive lands or hillside slopes. It would permit grading for building "footprints" only, as opposed to the current practice of massive terraforming via bulldozer. A RPOZ would also require setbacks sufficient to hide buildings from view from canyon bottoms, require low density, and reserve land for animal crossing.
- **López Ridge** developments recently changed hands. The vested subdivision isn't economically feasible as approved. The McComic Co., the new owner, is expected to seek changes from multiple-unit to single-family dwellings, with an overall lower density. A lower density should have less of an impact on the surrounding land. As the developer seeks these changes we want to do two things.

First, we want to watch that additional changes aren't snuck in that would further damage the ridge or the Preserve. Second, we want to use the occasion to push the developer for changes that would ameliorate some of the damage already done. Specifically, requiring a bigger setback of the units from the ridge's rims would make the housing less intrusive for people hiking the trails below. Reducing the proposed 4-lane road running the length of the ridge to 2 lanes would make it more of a residential road, adequate for the lower density. It would also make it less of a throughway for com-

muters outside the area to use to bypass Mira Mesa Blvd. This would help reduce animal kills on the road and generally lessen the impact of the noise and pollution on the surrounding area.

The artificial animal crossing tunnel already constructed needs to be improved by the planting of vegetation that will provide the animals needed cover around the crossing.

The western-most tip of López is the logical place for a small Ranger station. The Preserve is badly in need for increased security patrols and this site offers an excellent view of a large part of the Preserve. It would only require the donation of a small piece of land by the developer.

We favor restoring some of the wetlands at the Sorrento Valley end of López if the road is cut back to two lanes.

- **Vernal Pools** on López Ridge need continued protection. According to vernal pool expert, Dr. Ellen Bauder, buffer land is the best protection. We will campaign to have the City acquire more land adjacent to the pools. We also propose to explore with Dr. Bauder and others the feasibility of establishing educational displays at the pool sites to educate the public about them and their importance.

- **North City West.** We propose to fight for adequate setbacks and wildlife crossings on the Baldwin Properties.

- **Camino Rufz** crossing the canyon from south to north should be taken off the Master Plan and Map. It would be the most devastating blow yet to the Preserve.

- **Camino Santa Fe.** The Friends will oppose changes being proposed for this road that will adversely affect local animal crossings.

- **Peñasquitos Creek** is the proposed site for discharge from the new Poway Water District Water Treatment Plant. We propose an environmental impact survey by independent biologists to determine the impact on the Creek. We will oppose any level of discharge that will have a significant net detrimental effect on the water that is so vital to the riparian habitats along its route and to the Peñasquitos Lagoon, one of the few estuaries left in the County and an important bird habitat.

- **Bicycles** are still causing considerable damage within the Preserve. Laws prohibiting speeding which endangers people and opens the City up to liability suits must be enforced. Laws restricting bicycles to the main trails also need enforcement to prevent further enlargement and destruction of animal trails and the sensitive riparian habitats. If effective enforcement can't be achieved, the Friends will consider supporting a total ban on bicycles, a measure already taken in most state and many local parks.

- **Security.** A full-time Ranger with the power to ticket and arrest violators of Park regulations, similar to that of Mission Trails, is needed. The Preserve must be protected from further damage by off-road vehicles and bicycles and to ensure the safety of individuals and families using the Preserve.

- **Recreational Council.** We wish to discourage further development of city or county recreational facilities in the Preserve, beyond the buildings, tennis courts, and ball fields already in existence at the eastern end. The emphasis of attention on the Preserve should be to preserve it as open space for the enjoyment of nature. Further recreational facilities must be part of the housing developments under construction. It's the developers' housing that brings the people, the increased density. It is their responsibility to provide the recreational and educational facilities that each neighborhood needs.

- **Mitigation.** Now that the cattle are gone, we encourage the

➡ p.3 for more on the Preserve

(Preserve cont'd)

recovery of riparian habitat at the Sorrento Valley end of the Preserve. These expenditures should come out of mitigation monies levied for damage already done to sensitive habitats.

• **Educational Activities.** We plan to greatly increase the number of educational activities we organize. Based in our new office in the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House, we want to reach the many new residents arriving in the area, as well as current residents just discovering the Preserve. Peñasquitos Preserve is an ideal "laboratory" for teaching old and young alike to appreciate, enjoy, and defend our natural heritage.

This is a long agenda of activities. We can't do it without your help. Call and let us know which issue is of most concern to you, or what activity you'd like to help with.

My Favorite Recollections on the Wildlife in Peñasquitos Canyon

Barbara Zepf

Watching two foxes romp together in the early dawn . . . following two Great Horned Owls chasing down a bobcat . . . marvelling at the long ears on three jackrabbits that come out to feed each evening . . . the eerie thrill of hearing baby Barn-Owls screaming after dark . . . observing the biggest bullfrog I've ever seen waiting for his dinner . . . sitting amazed as I watched a very tiny baby coyote make his way down the hill to get a drink from the creek, and then back up that same hill all by himself . . . the crayfish — so big and so many . . . a skunk who followed me one evening — tail up all the way — but no "gift" of perfume for me . . . happening upon a whole family of bobcats — dad, mom, two tiny babies and an older kitten — the babies were *so* close(!) . . . the bats who silently swoop out just at dusk (does anyone know what kind they are?) . . . the ever present deer — I once saw seven of them at once . . . the stag with a huge rack of antlers watching me watching him — magnificent(!) . . . sitting one morning for fifteen minutes watching a Valley Pocket gopher run in and out of his burrow gathering "weeds" to take to his underground home . . . coming upon a female Mallard by the creek — when she stood to move, eleven newly hatched chicks scurried out from under her wings . . . watching a bridled Longtail Weasel take one of his many hunting runs along the creek . . . spending many happy hours following the progress of three Red-tailed Hawks from hatching to fledgling — what a thrill the first time I saw them fly(!) . . . surprising a coyote on a curve in the trail in the process of catching a bird . . . and oh(!) — their howling on a moonlit night — it does my heart good to know that wild things still exist . . . and my favorites — the birds(!) — I've seen over one-hundred species in the canyon so far, with each new day bringing the possibility of yet another sighting. The canyon has brought me many years of pleasure. I've watched the sun rise; I've walked in the rain; I've watched the eclipse of the moon from there. It's one of my favorite places to go to get away from it. (Or maybe to get *to* it all!)

[I've been told the bats in the preserve are brown bats. We'll try to find out more and write about them in a future article — editor.]

Bicyclist Suffers Broken Leg Riding Illegally on Horse Trails in Peñasquitos Canyon

John Northrop

A young woman cyclist suffered a compound fractured leg Sunday, October 8, while riding illegally on the horse trails below the Falls. She spent the better part of an hour there while her companion chased down the security patrol to call the paramedics. The ambulance had to travel about four miles, including a rough crossing of the creek, to reach the area from the Preserve's west entrance. After the paramedics put a splint on her leg, it required four strong men to carry the injured woman the last few hundred yards to the ambulance. She was taken to UCSD Medical Center for treatment.

This serious accident could have been avoided if cyclists observed Park regulations (San Diego Municipal Code, section 63.02.19), which restrict bicycles to the main trail. Violation of this code (excerpted below) is considered an infraction because of the provisions of Section 11.12 which so provides. One of the few reasons for implementing this code is to prevent just this type of accident in inaccessible terrain within the Preserve.

" . . . no person shall within any public park or plaza or public beach or beach area within the City of San Diego . . . ride a bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle or any other vehicle on any path, bridle trail, walk or in any arcade; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the riding of any bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle or any other vehicle on roads designated and established for automotive traffic."

I urge all Friends to advise bike riders of this code when meeting them along paths other than the main trail in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Let's help keep Peñasquitos safe!

Friends President Honored by City Council

Kathleen Zaworski-Burke, the newly elected President of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, recently received a commendation voted by the City Council of San Diego. Below we reprint the text of this resolution. The resolution was signed by Mayor Maureen O'Connor and the members of the Council.

Resolution of the City Council, City of San Diego, Oct. 30, 1989

Whereas, Kathleen Zaworski-Burke has set the standard for excellence in pursuing community goals which include the beautification of her community, and

Whereas, Kathleen Zaworski-Burke has recently been elected as President of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, after years of volunteer service involving the Preserve, and after serving on their Board of Directors since 1986, and

Whereas Kathleen was the President of the Homeowners of Peñasquitos Association, Inc., for two years, and has spent countless hours on many HOOPA committees working toward the beautification and improvement of Rancho Peñasquitos, and

Whereas Kathleen was an active and vocal member of the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board for three years, educating the public and City Council on the needs of Rancho Peñasquitos, and

Whereas Kathleen has shown continued dedication to the best interests of her community,

Now therefore, be it proclaimed that the City Council of the City of San Diego do hereby commend and congratulate Kathleen Zaworski-Burke for her outstanding efforts on behalf of the community.

Thundering Skunks

Mike Kelly

Nightfall catches us on a side trail close to the road to Yuma, about two miles out from the eastern gate. We both switch on our flashlights and quietly make our way back. (We don't talk much and try to walk softly in the Preserve — we encounter more animals that way.) Suddenly, off to our left, we hear a loud noise as something thunders through the underbrush. We stop to listen and watch.

What's coming our way? "Boy, it sounds big." "Must be a coyote, or a deer, . . . or a mountain lion." We know better than to be frightened of any of these animals, yet we feel that shiver of fear and anticipation as the adrenalin starts pumping. Hiking at night always has this delicious slice of fear of the dark. We shine our lights at the sound. It sounds so close, yet where is it?

Abruptly it's there, 15 or 20 feet away. It's a skunk. A big one. What a beautiful, big, fluffy tail. A bright white stripe runs from the tip of its tail all the way to its head. I snap some pictures with my flash. It keeps coming toward us. It doesn't seem to notice us. Uh oh! Time to retreat. We back away and watch until it disappears in the brush. We encounter several more skunks. For some reason they're out in force tonight.

I think skunks make so much noise because they don't worry about anybody noticing them. Predators have to move quietly through the brush to sneak up on their prey. Potential prey, such as deer, move quietly so as not to attract the attention of predators. Our skunks, however, neither hunt nor make a very common meal for predators. Usually it's just the young, inexperienced coyote pup, bobcat kitten, or mountain lion cub that attacks a skunk. (Or your dog or cat!) The skunk's perfume gives a quick, painful lesson to such reckless animals. My neighbor's dog got his lesson several months ago. He was let out at 11 p.m. for his nightly "duties," heard something under the car across the street, and ran to investi-

gate. He was even quicker to run back to the house! Whew, what a smell. Dr. Elberta Fleming, well-known to our readers, told me of one of her encounters. She was handling a baby skunk in her nature center one day. She wasn't worried, since babies aren't supposed to have their perfume sacks developed. No problem, right? Everything would have been fine, if only the raccoon hadn't scared the baby. Thinking it had to defend itself, it sprayed. Unfortunately, Dr. Fleming was still holding it. Look out! A photographer from a large newspaper was there to do a story and got a hilarious picture of her face at the moment she was sprayed — a picture that was widely circulated! So much for that theory about baby skunks. When you encounter skunks, keep a respectful distance and don't startle them.

The skunks we saw that night in the preserve were common skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*). Another type I haven't seen yet, but which is resident in the Preserve, is the little spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius*).

This type of skunk is smaller than the common skunk. The

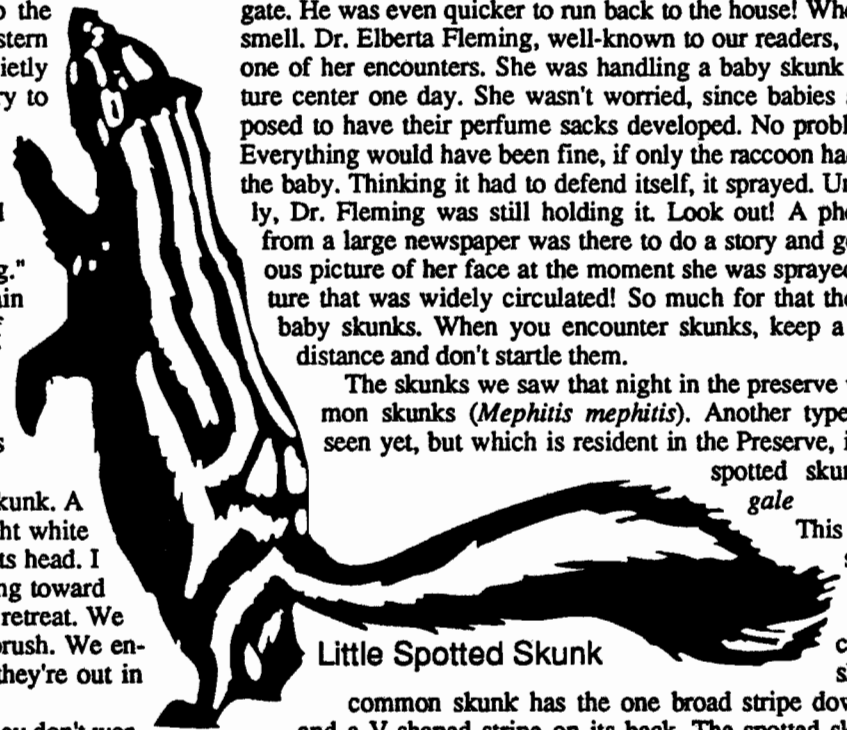
common skunk has the one broad stripe down the tail and a V-shaped stripe on its back. The spotted skunk has a number of stripes and spots on its back.

The common skunks I see are about the size of a large, fat and fluffy, house cat. The little spotted skunks can be as small as a large chipmunk, but no larger than a fox squirrel. Both varieties of skunks have five toes on their feet. Their front feet show the claws when they leave prints, but the hind feet don't. Both are "flatfooted," walking upon the soles of their feet. The little spotted skunk is pictured in our drawing in an upright position because it does have a climbing ability (Does anybody know how high it can climb?).

Both these skunks use their well-developed claws to dig for their meals, which are often grubs. They often leave shallow, round holes in the shape of a funnel where they dig.

One night, while dropping off to sleep, I heard a noise on our back deck, which faces the preserve. I turned on the light and peeked out the drapes. Three feet away, on the deck, was a common skunk. It ambled about and eventually climbed off the deck and disappeared under the deck. It's probably a good place for grubs. In the morning there wasn't even a hint of perfume on the air. This skunk seems to be visiting us every week or two, at least that's how often we hear and see it.

[Even though I like skunks, I'm not a member of the Skunk Lovers of America Association! Hey, they really exist. The newspapers wouldn't lie about it . . . would they?]



Little Spotted Skunk

Tracks, Little Spotted Skunk



Illustrations adapted by C. Whitten

Birders Take Notice

[The following is a combined list of birds seen by Barbara Zepf and Claude Edwards, both avid Birders, in the Peñasquitos Preserve. As explained by Barbara Zepf, "the birds are listed with the species arranged in the order presented by the A.O.U. (American Ornithologists' Union)." With 137 birds, this list is more complete than the one we published several months ago. Write us with your additions — editor.]

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pied-billed Grebe | <input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> California Thrasher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American White Pelican | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-chinned Hummingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> American Pipit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> Anna's Hummingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret | <input type="checkbox"/> Costa's Hummingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> Phainopepla |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Egret | <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous Hummingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> Loggerhead Shrike |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cattle Egret | <input type="checkbox"/> Allen's Hummingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> European Starling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green-backed Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> Bell's Vireo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-crowned Night-Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> Acorn Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Vireo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mallard | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-naped Sapsucker | <input type="checkbox"/> Hutton's Vireo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon Teal | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Sapsucker | <input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuttall's Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Orange-crowned Warbler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture | <input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Osprey | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Flicker | <input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Warbler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-shouldered Kite | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Wood-Pewee | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Willow Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Tanager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Hammond's Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-shouldered Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Slope Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-headed Grosbeak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Phoebe | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Grosbeak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ferruginous Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Say's Phoebe | <input type="checkbox"/> Lazuli Bunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rough-legged Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Ash-throated Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous-sided Towhee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> Cassin's Kingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> California Towhee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Kingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous-crowned Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Falcon | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> California Quail | <input type="checkbox"/> Violet-green Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> Sage Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Rail | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sora | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Coot | <input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer | <input type="checkbox"/> Scrub Jay | <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-necked Stilt | <input type="checkbox"/> American Crow | <input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Yellowlegs | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Raven | <input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandpiper | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Chickadee | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short-billed Dowitcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Plain Titmouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Snipe | <input type="checkbox"/> Bushtit | <input type="checkbox"/> Tricolored Blackbird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull | <input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Meadowlark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> California Gull | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Wren | <input type="checkbox"/> Brewer's Blackbird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Gull | <input type="checkbox"/> Bewick's Wren | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caspian Tern | <input type="checkbox"/> House Wren | <input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Oriole |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forster's Tern | <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Wren | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Oriole |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet | <input type="checkbox"/> House Finch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Goldfinch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Roadrunner | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Bluebird | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawrence's Goldfinch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Barn-Owl | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Bluebird | <input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Screech-Owl | <input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl | <input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Nighthawk | <input type="checkbox"/> American Robin | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrentit | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vaux's Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Mockingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |



FRIENDS OF PEÑASQUITOS CANYON PRESERVE, INC.
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I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. and send to:

Membership Chairperson
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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

Outings Schedule (cont'd)

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Dec. 16, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Dec. 16, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

MISTLETOE HIKE

Sunday, Dec. 17, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Preserve.

Volunteers Still Needed

If you would like to help out on our newsletter, hikes, research, or other activities call Elberta Fleming at 271-6710 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489. No particular skills are necessary.

Bird Hike Volunteer Needed

Leo Wilson, who led many of our bird walks over the last two years, is unable to continue in this role. Any birder who would like to help out would be greatly appreciated. Another member of the friends will help you lead the walk. Give us a call at the above numbers if you can help.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126
(619) 484-3219 566-6489

January 1990

Volume 4 No. 6

First Fossil Hike in January

January 21 the Friends will sponsor our first fossil hunt. Small fossils, including Belemnites, members of the cephalopod family, have been observed in the preserve. These small fossils have been found in rock of the late Jurassic period, about a 150 million years old! This rock is typical of the Santiago peak volcanics, a sea floor flow. The family of these torpedo-shaped cephalopods are represented today by squids and chambered nautilus. As we hike in from Calle Cristobal to the waterfall area of Peñasquitos Preserve, we'll learn about the fascinating geology of the area. San Diego's oldest rock can be seen from the Preserve. Did you know that Peñasquitos Canyon sits on a fault line in the earth? Or that the land we stand on was once much farther to the south, part of what is now Mexico? Our hike leader will be Don Albright, a geologist and teacher. Don was part of the team that located the epicenter of the 1956 earthquake in Baja California. This will be an interesting hike for children as well as adults. Join us.

Dr. Elberta "Bert" Fleming

Mike Kelly, Vice-President

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

[As you know by now, Dr. Elberta "Bert" Fleming died Nov. 17 of a heart attack. In this issue of our newsletter you'll find an obituary issued by her family. I think many of you will be surprised to read some of the details of her earlier life, before she moved to San Diego and "adopted" Peñasquitos Preserve. There's also an article on the outpouring of love and appreciation from many children and adults whose lives she touched. Here I'd like to tell you about things Dr. Fleming was doing in the last months of her life. There are important lessons for all of us.]

For friends who recently tramped many miles with Dr. Fleming on hikes in Peñasquitos Canyon, her death came as a shock. Her energy was unflagging to the end. But, "Bert" was suffering from high blood pressure. Doctor's advice or not, the last thing she could do was to "take it easy." There was too much she wanted to do: new places to visit, hikes to lead, elementary classrooms to visit, and encroachments on the Peñasquitos Preserve to fight off. Contrary to what a local newspaper editor wrote, she recently rededicated herself to the preservation of Peñasquitos Canyon.

After the loss of López Ridge to the developers and the ugly devastation of much of the northern rim (Park Village), many of us, including Bert, were pessimistic over the future of the canyon. We discussed the state of the canyon at our October meeting. The result was a unanimous vote in favor of the perspectives outlined in our last newsletter, "What's Happening with the Peñasquitos Preserve." Bert felt the initial report was "too pessimistic." Although the canyon was no longer the "pristine gem" we all loved, she was emphatic that we still had a wonderful laboratory for "teaching

➡ p.2 for more on Dr. Fleming

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings of the Friends and the San Diego County Archaeological Society are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends hikes. If more details are needed, or you want to organize a special hike for your group, call Mike Kelly of the Friends at 566-6489.

January

KYXY & SD COUNTY HIKE

Saturday, Jan. 6, 8-10 am
Meet at Parking-Staging area. Short nature/history hike.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Jan. 6, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

NATURE HIKE

Saturday, Jan. 13, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Indian habitation and plant use in Preserve.

FRIENDS OF LOS PEÑASQUITOS BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7:30 pm. Members are welcome to attend our monthly board of directors meeting. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Adobe ranch house.

BIRD WALK

Saturday, Jan. 20, 8 am. Meet at Parking-Staging area. Bring binoculars and bird book.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

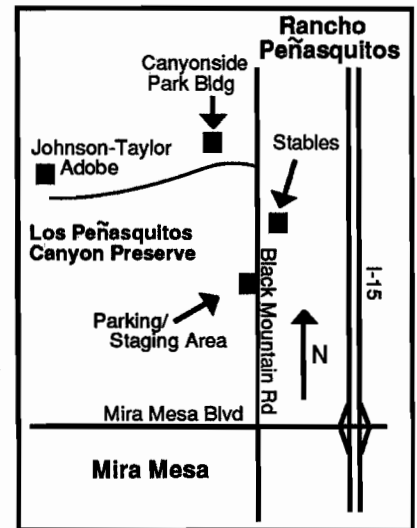
Saturday, Jan. 20, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

FOSSIL HIKE

Sunday, Jan. 21, 9:00 am (2 hours). Park and meet under the power lines on Calle Cristobal, a new street that begins at the northern end of Camino Ruiz. We will be walking up and down several hills to a site of 150 million year old fossils. Learn about Peñasquitos geology on the way.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Jan. 27, 8:00 am (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Investigate the treasure "map" carved on the mystery trees and the legend of the Mission treasure buried in the Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants.



➡ p.4 for February Outings

(Fleming cont'd)

children" about nature and our ancestors. She said there was a greater variety of plants and animals in Peñasquitos than in the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center she guided over the decades in Cleveland, Ohio. In fact, she said, she had a long list of new projects she hoped we could implement. She wanted to put even more of an emphasis on involving and educating children in nature's ways.

One recent event that heartened Bert was the outcome of the recent city council elections in San Diego. Like many of us, Bert participated vigorously in the elections to try to ensure a council more sympathetic to saving our open spaces. She drafted reports to set the record straight when candidates falsely claimed to be defenders of Peñasquitos Canyon. She was most concerned with helping Abbe Wolfsheimer win reelection in a tough first district race. Bert considered Abbe one of the few politicians who had consistently fought to preserve Peñasquitos Canyon.

Election eve I was with Bert at election central to watch the results come in. She was elated to see Linda Bernhardt's landslide win over "Bulldozer" Ed Struicksma. Anxiety over the first district outcome turned to joy as Abbe squeaked out her win against Trettin. After the election, we felt our future battles would take place in a more favorable environment.

Death caught Bert in full stride, preparing with enthusiasm for the next stage in the battle to preserve Peñasquitos Canyon. As young Erin Masters says in a letter in this issue, "That's going to take a lot of love." Bert had enough. Do we have enough to continue with the same enthusiasm? I believe so. To use a Spanish expression, "Companeros, manos a la obra."

Memorial Meeting Honored Dr. Fleming

Saturday, November 25, a memorial meeting and hike was sponsored by the family, friends, and community organizations to honor Dr. Elberta Fleming. The Johnson-Taylor Adobe ranch house was a fitting location for the meeting. Brief remarks remembering Elberta were read to the almost one hundred assembled people by Alex and members, by Kathleen Zaworski-Burke, the president of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, by Chris Dittmar, representing the Torrey Pines Docent Association, a group Dr. Fleming was also a member of, and by Marilyn Mirrisoul, an aide to City Council member Abbe Wolfsheimer. Wolfsheimer was out of the country at the time of Dr. Fleming's death and service and was unable to attend. Also in attendance at the meeting was newly elected City Council member Linda Bernhardt. After the commemoration, many of those present joined family members in hikes in the area that Bert loved so much.

On this same page is a tribute from Dr. Fleming's family distributed to all who attended the memorial.

[Excerpts from The San Diego Union, Thursday, November 23, 1989]

Elberta Fleming, 77; worked to save Los Penasquitos Canyon

Elberta "Bert" Fleming, an educator and environmentalist who had a special interest in the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, died

A Tribute to Dr. Elberta "Bert" Fleming

November 25, 1989

"Bert" — you are special and our lives have been enriched by knowing you. You have touched us in so many ways. We come together today to celebrate your spirit, your energy, your tenacity and your love of all living things. We dedicate today to remembering you and keeping your spirit alive.

At an early age "Bert" had the dream of awakening the wonders of nature in children. Her life was devoted to shaping the lives of thousands of young people and inspiring the careers of generations of future doctors, naturalists, scientists and leaders.

Through her perseverance and the support of many others, "Bert" enjoyed a very successful career and fulfilled her dream. At all times she was a champion of nature and the ecology.

The real tribute to "Bert" will be keeping her spirit alive in the San Diego Area by continuing her life work to protect our natural environment for future generations and teaching children the love of nature.

"Bert" — we love you . . . you will always be with us.

Bill, Al and Dave Fleming and Family

Friday in Sharp Memorial Hospital following a heart attack. She was 77.

Mrs. Fleming, who lived in Scripps Ranch, was internationally known as the founder of Lake Erie Nature and Science Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Under her direction, the center became a multi-million-dollar complex on a 100-acre preserve.

When she and her industrial engineer husband, William Fleming, retired to San Diego in 1977, officials at the Cleveland center voted to provide an expression of community appreciation. They gave her a green minibus and a \$6,000-per-year stipend "to carry on whatever work you find to do in your new community."

Born in Salamanca, N.Y., she spent much of her life in Bay Village, Ohio. She studied seven years in the Cleveland Art Institute.

She worked her way through the unique Independent Study Program at College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, by drawing detailed sketches of marine organisms and animals for the college professors books and other publications.

She graduated in 1939. The college honored her with a doctorate of humanities in 1973.

The year after she graduated, she and William Fleming were married. He assisted her nature center by volunteering to do budget and financial planning work.

When she arrived in San Diego, she took up scuba diving and spent two years brushing up on art at Palomar Community College.

She became involved in volunteer work at the San Diego Zoo, Sea World and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

She hiked the Cleveland National Forest, became acquainted with the forestry personnel and soon was designing trail brochures for the Department of Forestry.

When she learned of the threat of development in Los Peñasquitos Canyon, she spent increasing amounts of time in defense of the preserve, appearing before City Council meetings and working in political campaigns for candidates who supported environmental causes.

Mrs. Fleming's honors include the prestigious Founders Award in 1986 and the Elsie B. Naumburg Award in 1961, both from the Natural Science for Youth Foundation. She received awards from

➡ p.3 for more on Fleming

(Fleming cont'd)

the American Sportsman Association, the Ohio Division of Wildlife and the Cleveland Audubon Society.

The San Diego City Council saluted her and closed session early Monday after learning of her death.

In addition to her husband, survivors include two sons, Alex Fleming of San Juan Capistrano and David Fleming of Sherborn, Mass., and three grandchildren.

Memorial contributions in her name may be sent to Dr. Elberta Fleming Education Fund, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc., P. O. Box 26523, San Diego, Calif. 92126.

Peñasquitos News Honors Fleming

In its November 23 edition the Peñasquitos News dedicated its issue to Dr. Elberta Fleming. The editor wrote: "The outpouring of sorrow and affectionate memories that we witnessed at the offices of the Peñasquitos News was a powerful tribute to Elberta. With thanks to two former associates whose thoughts follow, we dedicate this issue to the memory of Elberta Fleming."

The News carried two guest editorials from a former editor and writer. Both Gary Warth and Mark Larabee reminisced on their relationships with Dr. Fleming. In addition, the paper also carried an article by Julie Gallant "Naturalist leaves landmark legacy." Most touchingly, the News ran almost an entire page of letters from children, members of the class of teacher Karen O'Connor's Sunset Hills Elementary School.

Following this article is one of those letters.

Dear Editor:

Dr. Elberta Fleming died yesterday. She was in her 70s. She tried to save the canyon. Houses were being built in the canyon and they weren't even supposed to be there. She came to our class yesterday. She told us how much she loved the canyon. I hope maybe they can change the name to The Fleming Memorial. I really enjoyed her visit. I learned names of plants and animals. I hope people try to save it and love it as much as she did. That's going to take a lot of love.

**Her friend,
Erin Masters.**

Christmas Plants in Peñasquitos

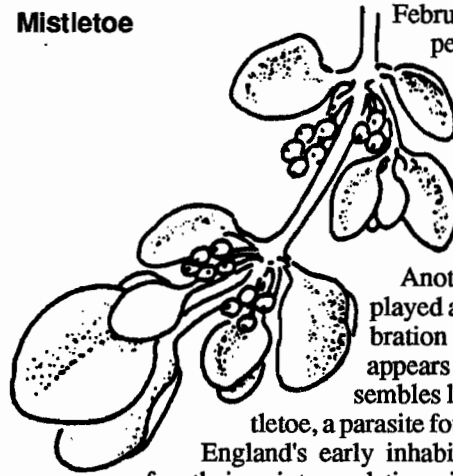
Elberta Fleming

[This is a reprint of an article by Dr. Fleming that appeared in Our December 1987 newsletter.]

In celebration of the holiday season the preserve's Christmas "holly" is resplendent with clusters of brilliant red berries. This is the Toyon, or California Christmas Berry, a chaparral bush that dots the hills of Southern California. Toyon gave Hollywood its name. Its shiny red berries resemble small apples. They accent deep green holly-like leaves. The dry, tart berries were food for Indians, Spanish Californios, and American settlers. Indians roasted the berries or tossed them into a cooking basket. The Californios and Americans made a pleasant cider from them.

Toyon berries begin to ripen in October and often last through

Mistletoe



February. They are at their peak during the Christmas season. Besides adding beauty to the landscape, Toyon is valuable in preventing erosion because it grows on slopes and in gulches.

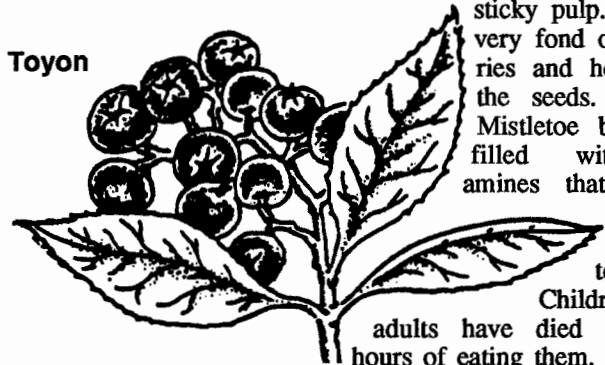
Another canyon plant has played a role in the season's celebration for centuries. This plant appears high in the trees and resembles large green balls. It's Mistletoe, a parasite found most often in oaks.

England's early inhabitants gathered Mistletoe for their winter solstice rites. Today's custom of hanging Mistletoe on Christmas Eve derives from these ancient ceremonies. Somewhere in history the ritual of kissing under Mistletoe evolved.

Mistletoe punctures a tree's bark and draws nourishment from its rich sap. In extreme cases the unwilling host tree is so impoverished that it slowly dies. The Mistletoe dies too, a victim of its own greed.

Mistletoe berries are wax-like and pinkish white, filled with a sticky pulp. Birds are very fond of the berries and help scatter the seeds. However, Mistletoe berries are filled with toxic amines that are extremely poisonous to people.

Toyon



Children and adults have died within 10 hours of eating them. Keep Mistletoe out of the reach of young children.

Deer Kills Rise in Area

Mike Kelly

Since August the Friends have received reports of six more mule deer road deaths. The week of December 18 alone saw three deer killed in two separate accidents on Mira Mesa Blvd near its western end. The week of December 11 another deer was killed in a vehicle collision on Montongo, near where it bisects part of the Peñasquitos Preserve. Earlier this fall two deer were killed on this same stretch of road. These six road kills were reported by members of the Friends. What we don't know is how many more have been killed on area roads surrounding the Preserve.

These are significant losses to the area deer population when you consider the impact development is already having in reducing their habitat. Anyone who would like to work with the Friends in reducing the road kills, possibly with deer crossing signs, deer fencing, or other measures, please contact me at 566-6489.



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Outings Schedule (cont'd)

February

NATURE HIKE

Saturday, Feb. 3, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Indian, settler habitation, history, and plant use in Preserve.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Feb. 3, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

HISTORY HIKE

Saturday, Feb. 10, 9 am (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. A look at the Indian, Mexican, and American settler history and use of Penasquitos.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Feb. 17, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

Volunteers Still Needed

If you would like to help out on our newsletter, hikes, research, or other activities call Mike Kelly at 566-6489. No particular skills are necessary.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126
(619) 484-3219 566-6489

February 1990

Volume 4 No. 7

Vernal Pools and Wildflower Walk Time

Winter is the time of the year for two special types of walks by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Now that we've had our first decent rain of the new year we are seeing increasing numbers of wildflowers displaying their colors. With three major plant habitat zones — riparian (the creek), chaparral, and coastal scrub — Peñasquitos Canyon is home to a wonderful variety of plant life, including many wildflowers. From February through June we'll have regular wildflower walks with knowledgeable leaders. Join us! Bring your camera (and macro lens) for added fun. A wildflower book will be helpful, but not necessary.

One wildflower we'll visit occurs only in one tiny microclimate in the Preserve. This is the endangered mesa mint. Several times this winter/spring we'll visit some of the area's vernal pools. It's interesting to visit them at different times to see the dramatic changes they go through. In the late summer and fall they will be empty of water or life, baked brown from the summer sun. When the winter rains arrive they fill with water and various plants and animals hatch and struggle to reach maturity in often uncertain conditions. When they lose their water, they are left with a small variety of plants, including the mesa mint and other rare plants. If the winter rains were good, we'll see a riot of color in the pools. If the rains are below average, which they were last year, we'll still see flowering plants, but not as profusely. Prepare to get down on your knees during the walk. Many of these are belly flowers best appreciated up close!

Mesa Defense League Seeks Support

Dave Hogan

[The following letter and the proposal beginning on page 3 were recently received by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The Mesa Defense League raises issues of importance to all of us concerned with the Preserve. The League, as recently reported by the local media, mobilized volunteers to excavate vernal pools on the Del Mar Mesa that were damaged and filled in by firefighting equipment during the recent fire in that area.]

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon,

As you may already know, Del Mar Mesa, forming the whole northern boundary for Peñasquitos Canyon, is totally unprotected. This huge area of open space is part of essential habitat utilized by many of the canyon's critters, especially

➡ p.2 for Mesa

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings of the Friends and the San Diego County Archaeological Society are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends hikes. If more details are needed, or you want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright of the Friends at 271-9216.

February

NATURE HIKE
Saturday, Feb. 3, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Indian, settler habitation, history, and plant use in Preserve.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR
Saturday, Feb. 3, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE
Saturday, Feb. 10, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. See wildflowers starting to come up. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

CAC BICYCLE FORUM
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7 pm, at Mason Elementary School, Mira Mesa (see article in this issue).

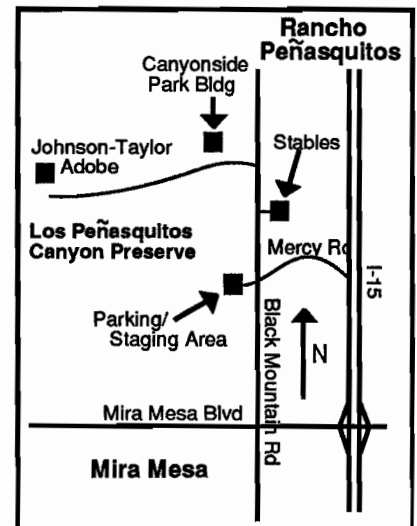
WILDFLOWER WALK
Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 am. Meet at the Parking-Staging area. We'll see which wildflowers are blooming.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR
Saturday, Feb. 17, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

FRIENDS OF LOS PEÑASQUITOS BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. Members are welcome to attend our monthly board of directors meeting. Join us at the Johnson-Taylor Adobe ranch house.

BIRD WALK
Saturday, Feb. 24, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at parking-staging area. Bring binoculars and bird book.

➡ p.6 for March Outings



(Mesa Cont'd)

now, a time when Peñasquitos Canyon is facing growing recreational use. Many animals are retreating to the quieter hills and gullies to the north. This letter will detail some of the threats to Del Mar Mesa (and Peñasquitos) and fill you in on what the Mesa Defense League is doing to create mesa-top preserves connecting to Peñasquitos Canyon.

The Mesa Defense League was formed due to the growing concern for the future of Del Mar Mesa. Off-road vehicles, dumping, and developers make up the list of current threats to the mesa top. North City West Phase III and Sorrento Hills developments will eliminate almost all habitat on the western end of the mesa. This region is home to several endangered plant and animal species as well as some severely threatened habitats. It has been speculated that a Torrey Pine woodland once graced this western Del Mar Mesa area, and today there are still a few scattered remnant pines to be seen. Vernal pools, well known from the López Ridge loss, can be found in grassland areas throughout the western and eastern ends of the mesa. However, only the pools on the eastern end of the mesa are protected, bought by CalTrans as mitigation for pools destroyed when highway 52 was put through Kearney Mesa. Western Del Mar Mesa vernal pools are slated for destruction by Pardee and Newland development firms. Newland proposes off-site mitigation. The Pardee pools were just recently discovered. An upcoming proposal from the Mesa Defense League suggests that this entire area be dedicated as Torrey Pines State Reserve, Eastern Extension, due to the fact that Western Del

Mar Mesa is similar to the existing Torrey Pines Reserve, with the red sandstone and unique flora and fauna.

The eastern Del Mar Mesa preserve proposal (Future Urban Area Reserve boundaries) includes Deer Canyon to the north and a large wildlife corridor owned by the City of San Diego (reservoir land swap) to the south, connecting the mesa-top with Peñasquitos Canyon. The CalTrans pools, soon to become part of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Vernal Pool Reserve, would be part of the greater mesa preserve.

Fire fighting equipment damaged one vernal pool complex during the recent fire, thus proving that this area needs official protection. The fire, burning about half of this eastern area, will become a fire study area, enabling us to learn more about the succession of chaparral plants after a burn. Although threats such as dumping and off-road vehicles will always exist, there are no specific developments planned for this future urban area, so we may have some time.

So, a good thing to remember . . . when Del Mar Mesa is developed, Peñasquitos Canyon will face a sharp reduction in diversity of species due to isolation, domestic animal predation, and exotic plant infestation. Folks working with Peñasquitos Friends and the Mesa Defense League shouldn't look at Del Mar Mesa and Peñasquitos Canyon as two separate areas. This region is all one part of the last, largely undeveloped, coastal mesa canyon ecosystems in Southern California. If you'd like to get involved in protecting this area, call 481-2856 for information on upcoming meetings or hikes, or, if you'd like information on the rare species and habitats, write P.O. Box 1944, Julian, CA 92036.

Del Mar Mesa/Peñasquitos Canyon

A Biological Preserve Proposal

San Diego Mesa Defense League

I. Introduction

In the past twenty years, huge tracts of environmentally sensitive lands have been wiped out by irresponsible development. Lands like Mission Valley, once supporting large populations of species that have recently been listed as endangered, are now laced with freeways and shopping malls. In response to this problem, a few relatively small pieces of land have been set aside as ecological preserves. Too often, as is the case of Peñasquitos Canyon, ecosystems are viewed as closed, with finite boundaries. In San Diego, such views have resulted in limited and inadequate preservation of canyons and vernal pools, ignoring the concept of *landscape* as an ecological unit. Preserving isolated canyons and pieces of chaparral serves only human needs and causes decline in diversity and species extinction. Wildlife left in these preserves completely disappears due to habitat isolation and predation by cats and dogs, while native plant species compete with heartier non-native plants such as eucalyptus and sea fig. See Appendix B for *A Regional Landscape Approach to Maintain Diversity*, by Reed F. Noss.

San Diego Mesa Defense League proposes the Del Mar

Mesa/Peñasquitos Canyon Biological Preserve. Including Del Mar Mesa as part of the present preserve would unite several specialized habitats critical to insuring the sanctity of a chaparral ecosystem. Del Mar Mesa is the last undeveloped coastal mesa in San Diego County. This alone seems reason enough to set it aside as a preserve. The fact that the mesa contains twenty-two rare, threatened, or endangered species, along with two threatened habitats, elevates its preservation to a number one priority.

II. Profile of Del Mar Mesa

A. Location: Del Mar Mesa, approximately 3,000 acres, is situated between Peñasquitos Canyon, a major east-west drainage of Sorrento Valley and Carmel Valley, the northern boundary of the City of San Diego. See Appendix A.

B. Natural History: Though relatively uninhabited and undisturbed, sections of Del Mar Mesa have been cultivated in the past and illegal cattle grazing continues at the present time by wandering cows permitted in Peñasquitos Canyon.

(Mesa Cont'd)

There are also two small rural settlements, one at the western end called Arroyo Sorrento and another a few miles to the east, near Deer Canyon. There are approximately 50 homes.

C. Future Urbanization Plans: The western end of Del Mar Mesa is the most endangered by future development with plans for two large residential/light industrial developments — North City West Phase III and Sorrento Hills. These two projects are in the planning and permitting stages at present. The eastern end of the mesa is termed "future urbanization area," with no specific plans for development yet. The eastern end is the most undisturbed portion of the mesa.

III. High-Interest Species and Habitats

A. Plants: There are two state or federally listed plant species on Del Mar Mesa. The California Native Plant Society and WESTEC Services, Inc. (the consulting firm responsible for preparing the environmental impact report for the Sorrento Hills Project) have determined that the following plants occur on Del Mar Mesa. Records kept by the California Native Plant Society are far more accurate when it comes to the condition of the plant species than government or consultant inventory.

The following California Native Plant Society R-E-D Code is used to determine the status of each individual species. Following this code is the list of high interest plant species on Del Mar Mesa and their corresponding R-E-D codes.

Rarity

1-Rare, but found in sufficient numbers and distributed widely enough that the potential for extinction is low at this time.

2-Occurrence confined to several populations or to one extended population.

3-Occurrence limited to one or a few highly restricted populations, or present in such small numbers that it is seldom reported.

Endangerment

1-Not endangered.

2-Endangered in a portion of its range.

3-Endangered throughout its range.

Distribution

1-More or less widespread outside California.

2-Rare outside California.

3-Endemic to California.

San Diego Mesa Mint (*Pogogyne abramisii*)

R-E-D Code: 1-3-2

This federally listed endangered species is found in and around vernal pools on the eastern end of Del Mar Mesa. These pools are owned by CalTrans, bought to satisfy mitigation measures when Highway 52 was built through Kearney Mesa's vernal pool habitat.

San Diego Coyote Thistle (*Eryngium aritulum*)

R-E-D Code: 1-3-2

This species is listed as endangered by the State of California and is under review for listing by the federal government.

It can be located in all vernal pools on Del Mar Mesa.

Spine Flower Family (*Chorizanthe: californica, orcuttiana, parryi, procumbens, staticoides*)

R-E-D Code: none

Spine Flowers are extremely rare, with most of their sandy, mesa top soil already urbanized.

Del Mar Mesa Sand Aster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*)

R-E-D Code: 3-2-3

This species is endemic to the Del Mar area and occurs only on brushy slopes and bluffs. It can be found on the western end of the mesa.

San Diego Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*)

R-E-D Code:

This species can be found throughout the mesa on dry, south-facing slopes.

Torrey Pine (*Pinus Torryana*)

R-E-D Code:

There are only a couple of specimens on the west end of Del Mar Mesa. This may have been the eastern border of Torrey Pines habitat before cattle grazing.

Del Mar Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*)

R-E-D Code:

This species occurs from Encinitas to Del Mar. It can be found in mixed chaparral throughout Del Mar Mesa.

Western Dichondra (*Dichondra occidentalis*)

R-E-D Code:

This herbaceous perennial grows beneath larger shrubs. It can be found in abundance on rocky slopes after a fire.

Coast White Lilac (*Ceanothus Verrucosus*)

R-E-D Code:

This plant is rare in California, but common elsewhere. It can be found throughout mixed chaparral on the mesa.

Sea Dahlia (*Coreopsis maritima*)

R-E-D Code:

This herbaceous perennial is found on the coast, stretching from northern Baja to southern Leucadia. It can be located on the western end of Del Mar Mesa.

Pygmy Spike Moss (*Selaginella cinerascens*)

R-E-D Code:

This moss forms a grey ground cover in openings and underneath the chaparral on the mesa top and south facing slopes.

Seaside Calandrinia (*Calandrinia maritima*)

R-E-D Code:

This species is found on rough, sandy bluff areas on the western edge of the mesa.

Other plants that may occur on Del Mar Mesa:

Shaw's Agave (*Agave shawii*)**San Diego Sagewart (*Artemesia palmeri*)****Golden Snake Cactus (*Berberocactus emori*)****Orcutt's Brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcutii*)****Lakeside Ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*)****Summer Holly (*Comarostaphylis diversifolia*)****Short Leaved Dudleya (*Dudleya brevifolia*)**

(Mesa Cont'd)

Cliff Spurge (*Euphorbia misera*)
Palmer's Grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palermi*)
Little Mousetail (*Myosurus minimus*)
Prostrate Navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*)
California Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia Californica*)

B. Reptiles: The San Diego Herpetological Society and the San Diego Natural History Museum have determined that there are two threatened and one endangered species of reptiles occurring on Del Mar Mesa. This status is according to the San Diego Herpetological Society definition.

Coast Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainuillei*)

This specie's range once spread up and down the southern California coast but rapid development and predation by domesticated species such as cats, have driven it back to very rural or totally undeveloped areas of the county. The Coast Horned Lizard can be found sparsely throughout Del Mar Mesa and adjacent Peñasquitos Canyon. **Endangered.**

Orange Throated Whiptail Lizard (*Cnemidophorus hypsiglena*)

Same as above. **Threatened.**

Two Striped Garter Snake (*Thamnophis couchi hammondi*)

This snake is found throughout the mesa in water courses, permanent streams, or damp catch basins. **Threatened.**

C. Birds: There are three rare species of birds located on or around Del Mar Mesa. One, the Least Bell's Vireo, is listed by the State of California as endangered. The other two are presently under review for listing.

Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo belli pusillus*)

Historically widespread throughout riparian areas in California and Baja California, it is now reduced to a few hundred pairs. The primary reason for its decline is due to habitat removal and modification with additional aggravation by brood parasites. Although Del Mar Mesa does not satisfy habitat requirements, Peñasquitos Creek would be eligible with riparian habitat rehabilitation and grazing elimination.

Coastal Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*)

This species is commonly found in desert areas, but the species located along the coast is extremely rare. A cholla thicket is required nesting habitat. Cholla thickets can be found throughout Del Mar Mesa, on dry south facing slopes.

Black-Tail Gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila melanura californica*)

Required nesting habitat for the Black Tail Gnatcatcher is coastal sage scrub. Cowbird parasitism and reduction of habitat are causing a severe decline in the species. This coastal sage scrub habitat can be found in abundance on both the western and eastern ends of Del Mar Mesa.

D. Habitats: There are a total of six separate habitats occurring on Del Mar Mesa, one of which is seriously endangered. Four others are threatened or rare.

Vernal Pools

Now beginning to gain media attention and growing public awareness, vernal pool preservation support is too little, too late. Only 5% of this rare habitat type remain. Protected pools in San Diego usually consist of a one acre preserve in the middle of a parking lot. Vernal pools found on Del Mar Mesa are in good condition, although pools on the western end are impacted by grazing. Pools owned by CalTrans on the eastern end of the mesa will soon be transferred to the California Department of Fish and Game for protection. The vernal pools found on the western end of the mesa are owned by developers and slated for development (i.e., destruction). In 1979, the City of San Diego developed a vernal pool preservation plan which required developers to contribute money into a fund used to purchase other pools when pools on their property are destroyed by their development plans. This fund is a total failure. No pools have been bought and very few remain to satisfy this criteria. The further destruction of vernal pool habitat cannot be allowed.

Riparian Habitat

Riparian habitat is disappearing throughout San Diego County due to rapid development. Preservation efforts in the past have been inadequate. Several species, including the Least Bell's Vireo, depend completely on riparian habitat for survival. This habitat also controls water quality and erosion. Riparian habitat can be found in Deer Canyon, on the eastern end of Del Mar Mesa but will be destroyed when and if Freeway 56 is rammed through to Poway from Interstate 5. McGonigal Canyon, on the other hand, is an overgrazed barren valley to the north and would be a more suitable site for the freeway. This should be seriously studied as an alternative.

Coastal Mixed Chaparral

This habitat type, endemic to north coastal San Diego County is in decline. Most coastal mixed chaparral can be located between Carlsbad and Torrey Pines State Park on sandy mesas and is home to several endangered species. The main reason for the declining state of this habitat is urbanization. Coastal mixed chaparral can be found throughout Del Mar Mesa in abundance and is healthiest in the eastern portion.

Coastal Sage Scrub

Coastal Sage Scrub is on a rapid decline near the immediate coast. In 1979, it was estimated that 70% of the original coastal sage scrub in the county had been destroyed. This habitat can be found throughout Del Mar Mesa in large openings in the coastal mixed chaparral.

Southern California Grassland

This habitat is on the decline also. Grassland on Del Mar Mesa is found intermixed with coastal sage scrub throughout the mesa.

Conclusion

Although the western end of Del Mar Mesa is destined for development, the San Diego Mesa Defense League feels that the eastern end should be seriously considered for immediate preservation. If the eastern end of the mesa were to be added to the already existing Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, a diverse canyon-mesa ecosystem would be established. This area

(Mesa Cont'd)

would not only serve its primary goal of being a biological preserve, but would also meet the growing population's recreational needs and serve as a field station for research and environmental education. In order for this to happen, funds from the Nature Conservancy and from Prop. 70 could be used to purchase this parcel of land. Other needed funding may be available from the City of San Diego and private donations.

Public Forum To Debate Bicycles in the Preserve

Mike Kelly

If you're at all concerned with the issue of Bicycles in the Preserve, please join us at a community forum Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. This forum is being sponsored by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. It's being held at the Mason Elementary School, 10340 San Ramon Drive (corner of Gold Coast), Mira Mesa. The central question to be debated is whether or not it is necessary to totally ban bicycles from using the Preserve because of the problems they are causing.

As our readers know, our newsletter has carried several articles concerning these problems. They fall into two categories. One problem is the danger that speeding bicycles pose to pedestrians and horseback riders. Bike riders routinely violate the speed limits and trail courtesy signs posted by the authorities. The result is frightening encounters between bicycles and these two groups. Horses are easily spooked by bicycles coming up fast from behind and become hard to handle. The overwhelming majority of bikers fail to use a whistle to warn pedestrians or riders of their approach. This has resulted in a number of pedestrian "brushing" incidents and frightening close calls. It's particularly dangerous for little children who aren't able to move as fast as adults in dodging fast-moving bicycles.

The second problem is the damage being done to different parts of the Preserve by the many bikers who ignore the signs limiting them to the main trail in Peñasquitos Canyon and the ridge road on López Ridge. These signs are prominently posted at the two entrances to the Preserve and even include maps. Most of the damage consists of numerous small animal trails being widened and rutted by the many bicycles using them. Many of these animal trails weren't even used by hikers or horses in the past. A number pass through sensitive riparian habitats and areas inhabited by the Preserve's wildlife. Already we have observed numbers of these animals, particularly the mule deer, being forced from these zones into other areas of the Preserve, or adjoining canyons. The intent of the city and county in creating Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is clearly stated as maintaining it as open space where the unique flora and fauna could be preserved. It's ironic that concerned citizens must fight encroachment from developments on the one hand and a group of users of the Preserve on the other hand. Come out and be heard at this important meeting.

How To Report Poaching

This is an opportune time to remind our friends how to report poaching they witness in the Preserve. We learned of a poaching incident over the New Year's weekend. A "sportsman" killed one of the semi-tame mule deer in López Canyon with a hi-tech bow and arrow. He was seen dragging the dead deer to his truck.

Hunting in the Preserve is illegal under a number of statutes, including the State of California. Whether it's hunting of deer, ducks, coyotes, or other animals you see, please report it to the State Department of Fish and Game. They have a special toll-free number, called Cal-Tip, you can call 24 hours a day. The number is 1-800-952-5400. If your tip results in a conviction, you may receive a \$1,000 reward from the California Dept. of Fish and Game. Don't bother to call the San Diego Police Department. They only turn around and call the state.

Other types of illegal activity, such as motorcycles, cars, or trucks in the Preserve should be reported to the San Diego Police Dept. or the County Rangers. For the police call 531-2000, not 911. 911 is for true emergencies, not routine police matters such as these. The number for the rangers at the Johnson-Taylor Adobe Ranch is 484-7504.

If possible, note down the license number and a description of any vehicle you see involved in such activities. Of course, don't put yourself into danger to do so. Please call the Friends number, 484-3219, afterwards and leave us a message about the poaching or other illegal activity.

Rare and Endangered Butterflies of San Diego County

Thanks to Les Braun, Secretary to the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, for providing this list of rare and endangered butterflies of San Diego County. Besides working with the Friends, Les is also involved in environmental issues concerning Mira Mar Lake and Otay Mesa. Investigating the potential impact of future developments in these areas led to the discovery that, in the case of Otay Mesa, at least one of our county's rare butterflies is found only on Otay Mountain. Of course, the proposed off-road vehicle reservation and other development projects would severely impact on the habitat of this butterfly.

The butterflies are:

Pima Orange Tip
Western Sulfer
Hermes Copper
Loki Hairstreak
Silver Banded Hairstreak

The Loki Hairstreak is the one found only on Otay Mountain. The caterpillar stage feeds on Tecate cypress (*Cupressus forbesii*). The Hermes Copper winters over on the stems of buckthorn (*Rhamnus crocea*) and takes nectar from California buckwheat, the caterpillars host plant, found in the Otay Mesa area. For pictures and more information on these butterflies see the Audubon Guide to Butterflies.



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Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

Hikes

Indian Culture

Educational Workshops

School, Family, Youth Programs

Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: _____

I/We would like to volunteer

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. and send to:

Membership Chairperson

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

Outings Schedule (cont'd)

March

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Mar. 3, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

VERNAL POOLS HIKE

Saturday, Mar. 10, 8 am (2 hours). Meet under the power lines on the new Calle Cristobal (see map). We'll investigate several of the vernal pools and hopefully see the beautiful, but endangered Mesa Mint and other wildflowers. Time permitting, we may visit pools on the opposite side of the canyon.

MYSTERY TREE HIKE

Saturday, Mar. 17, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Mar. 17, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

WILDFLOWER HIKE

Sunday, Mar. 18, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Let's see which wildflowers are blooming.

NATURE HIKE

Saturday, Mar. 24, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Peñasquitos Preserve. We'll look for wildflowers and other native plants in Lopez Canyon and visit two historical sites, a homestead and an indian site.

FOSSIL/GEOLOGY HIKE

Sunday, Mar. 25, 9 am (2 hours). Meet underneath the big power lines on the new Calle Cristobal road on Lopez Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruiz north until it swings west and becomes Calle Cristobal.) Visit unique fossil in a rare location in the waterfall area of the Preserve and learn about the area's geology. A steep hill to descend and ascend. Nice area for a picnic with the family after the hike if you want to bring a lunch.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

(619) 484-3219 566-6489

March 1990

Volume 4 No. 8

Vernal Pools Walks

In March the Friends will sponsor two walks to area Vernal Pools. These unique geological formations are home to a wonderful array of specially adapted plants and animals that live out their lives in or around these small pools. When there's enough rain so that the pools hold water for 1-3 months you'll see an explosion of color from wildflowers such as the endangered Mesa Mint. This flower makes no bones about its membership in the Mint family. Researchers spending hours near the pools during peak blossom time report getting woozy and feeling constrictions in their chests as they breathe in the powerful fragrance! In good years the Fairy Shrimp will be seen swimming about in the pools, a fascinating sight.

This year, with inadequate rainfall, don't expect carpets of wildflowers, Fairy Shrimps, or Pacific Tree Frogs in many pools. There should be many smaller displays of flowers and plants in and about many pools, and bigger displays in the pools holding water longer in some locales. On our walks we'll examine the damage done by off-road vehicles and construction activity, and see how the pools are recovering.

The first walk, Mar. 10, will be to the pools on López Ridge, pools surrounded by heavy construction. For the second walk, March 11, we're fortunate to have Dave Hogan of the San Diego Bio-diversity Project guiding us through the area on the Del Mar Mesa that his group proposes be added to the Peñasquitos Preserve. This area contains several of the best preserved vernal pools in San Diego, which are holding water longer than others in the area.

Debris Flow from the January 15, 1990 Flash Flood in López Canyon

John Northrop, A.B., M.A., Ph.D.
Consulting Geophysicist

The rain storm in early January of this year dropped about an inch of precipitation in Peñasquitos and caused flooding of Peñasquitos Creek, mainly at the West end of the Preserve at the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Creeks. In that area, evidence of a flash flood was readily apparent when I visited it the next morning. Much of the valuable "wetlands" was still under about a foot of water. Several dozen six-foot lengths of telephone poles, and other debris, were strewn about on the flood plain (they are still there). Further exploration showed that these poles had been washed down into the wetlands from the construction piers under the Calle Cristobal bridge over López Creek. The de-

➡ p.5 for Flood

Friends' Outing Schedule

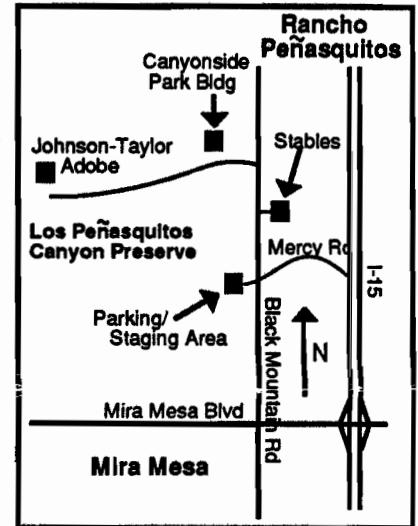
Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends hikes. If more details are needed, or you want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright of the Friends at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

March

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR
Saturday, Mar. 3, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

VERNAL POOL WALK — López Ridge

Saturday, Mar. 10, 8 am (2 hours). Meet under the big power lines on the new Calle Cristobal/Sorrento Valley Blvd. on Lopez Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruiz north until it swings west and becomes Calle Cristobal.) Investigate health of the vernal pools and hopefully see the beautiful, but endangered Mesa Mint and other wildflowers.



VERNAL POOLS HIKE — DEL MAR MESA

Sunday, Mar. 11, 10 am (2-3 hours). Take Carmel Min. Road from Black Mtn. Rd. west until it ends. Park in the Cul de Sac on the right. Hike will be led by Dave Hogan of the San Diego Bio-Diversity Project. These pools are in an area proposed by the project to be part of Peñasquitos Preserve. These pools have had more water than others in San Diego this season and promise the best plant show.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Saturday, Mar. 17, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Mar. 17, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

WILDFLOWER WALK

Sunday, Mar. 18, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. Walk will be led by Claire Brey, a docent with the Natural History Museum. We'll see which wildflowers are blooming and identify plants used by Kumeyaay Indians.

➡ p.6 for April Outings

Mountain Bikes in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve: an Historical Review

John Northrop, Founding Director

Environmental damage and vandalism from bicyclists riding in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was not a problem until the mid-1980s when mountain bikes were first introduced to the public. Before that, the rocky trails in Peñasquitos kept all but the most hardy bikers out of the Preserve. Indeed, the Interim Management and Development Plan for Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve (Ref. 1) recommended 9.4 miles of paved bicycle rails in 1980. The needs predicted to 1990 were 36.4 miles of paved bicycle trails! To date, not one of these trails has been built.

Starting about 1985, mountain bikes began to use all existing trails in the Preserve, plus cow paths and deer trails, as well as making new trails of their own. The resulting ecological damage led The Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to ask the city attorney to rule on the applicability of San Diego Municipal code 63.02(b) to the Preserve. The ruling (Ref. .2) states that "no person shall within any public park or plaza or public beach . . . within the City of San Diego do any of the acts hereinafter enumerated." Section 63.02.19 is one of the sections "hereinafter enumerated" pursuant to section 63.02, and it provides as follows: "ride a bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle or any other vehicle on any path, bridle trail, walk or in any arcade . . . provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the riding of any bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle or any other vehicle on roads established for automotive traffic."

The ruling goes on to say that "Restrictions under Section 63.02.19 governing bicyclists within public Parks are fully applicable within those portions of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve within the city limits of San Diego, regardless of who owns the property, so long as the area under consideration is part of the park." This means that bicycles are restricted to the service road which runs the length of Peñasquitos Canyon, on the south side of the creek, and up López Canyon. Thus, for the first time, there is a uniform code for bike use in both the City and County owned parts of the Preserve.

The City Manager's ruling was made in June of 1989, and appropriate signage was set up at the park entrances shortly thereafter. At first there was some misunderstanding as to the exact location of approved bike trails, so the County had additional signage posted that showed a map of the preserve and the bicycle trails therein.

However, bikers continue to ride on unauthorized trails in spite of the guard force's efforts to stop them and, in fact, even tore down some of the signs. The present guard force is rather ineffectual in enforcing the rules not only because they are not empowered to give citations but also because most of the illegal bike riding is done on the north side of Peñasquitos Creek where the guards can't drive their trucks. Additionally, the current guard force, by their own admission, is not actively interested in pursuing illegal bicycles because "if we did that, there wouldn't be time for anything else." as one of them succinctly put it. This admission in itself is an indication of the magnitude of the problem.

In order to get public input regarding mountain bikes in the Preserve, the CAC conducted an open meeting Feb. 13, 1990,

at the Mason Elementary School in Mira Mesa. About 100 persons attended, including representatives from both the City and County Park & Recreation departments, as well as two from Councilmember Abbe Wolfsheimer's office. All those so desiring were given the opportunity to speak.

Of the three dozen or so speakers, there were approximately an equal number both for and against bikes in the Preserve. The bicycle advocates claimed that they didn't disobey the rules, but that there were some "bad apples" who did. Some bicyclists said that they had been practically run off the trails by other speeding bikes. Those against bikes in the Preserve cited instances where they, or their horses, had been scared by speeding bikes. Barbara Gerrior, Manager of Horsemans Park, said many of her riders had suffered accidents and near accidents from speeding bikes and that some thought the park was "no longer a Preserve," but rather a bicycle speedway. Her input was especially valuable to the committee because Horsemans Park, which lies entirely within the park boundaries, is *the* equestrian center for the entire region encompassing Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos. Many speakers deplored the environmental damage caused by bikes riding "all over the Preserve."

Speakers were allowed three minutes each, and further discussion was allowed at the end of the meeting. A spokesman from the San Diego County Park and Recreation Committee commented that his department was studying the environmental effects of mountain bikes in *all* county parks, not just Peñasquitos. He said a ruling on the matter would be forthcoming in the near future.

Panelist Dr. Marvin Gerst, in his summary remarks, then recommended a moratorium on mountain bikes in the Preserve until the County ruling was issued. As an aid in enforcement, Dr. John Northrop recommended that the Peñasquitos Task Force emulate the use of the California State Parks Volunteer Citizens Mounted Patrols, such as are utilized so effectively for Cuyamaca State Park. These patrols should be made up of local equestrians, bicycle riders and hikers. These volunteers would cost nothing, and would be valuable in aiding the park supervisory personnel to educate the public regarding trail etiquette and safety procedures, and would serve as a public relations and information resource. Although the volunteers would not be issued citation powers, they would have radio contact with the Park Rangers who could be called in case of an altercation.

In his summary remarks, Chairman Mark Labree mentioned that there were sign-up sheets available at the back of the room for those interested in the volunteer patrol. He also stated that the meeting was held primarily for information purposes and that the participants' remarks had been tape recorded for later transcription. Input from the meeting will be discussed at the next CAC meeting to be held in the Mira Mesa Library at 5 p.m., March 7, 1990. All interested persons are invited to attend.

I urge the Friends to support both the ban on mountain bikes in the Preserve and the Volunteer Citizens Mounted Patrol proposals.

López Ridge — The Next Stage

Mike Kelly

As our readers know from past issues of the newsletter, in 1988 the community lost a precious resource to development, López Ridge. The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, along with other environmental and community groups, opposed development of López Ridge. Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve isn't a dedicated park yet. Its boundaries are still open. Much of the land surrounding the Canyon — and the land so far set aside for the Preserve — is privately owned. López Ridge effectively splits the current Preserve into two parts, Peñasquitos Canyon and López Canyon. López Ridge was privately owned by the Newland Corp., who had the biggest parcel, and several other landowners. We opposed their development in favor of having the City acquire the land and add it to the Preserve. We felt it to be an integral part of the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve *open Space concept*. Newland, however, seeing the opposition growing, violated the approval process by grading without a permit and presented the city with a *fait accompli*. And the city council at that time, led by Councilman Struicksma, in whose district it fell, went along with it.

Peñasquitos Preserve — the Dream

The concept of the Preserve is to preserve a wilderness experience and resource, right here in the city — not hours or days away in some far away national park. This means preserving sensitive habitats and species. It means guarding the "view shed." You should be able to walk or ride on horseback through the Preserve without seeing buildings intruding into the scene — preserving the *natural ambience*.

Peñasquitos Preserve should be a laboratory for us and, especially, our children, to appreciate and learn about nature's wonders. Environmental destruction on a world scale threatens the health of our entire planet. Already, our species is eliminating plant and animal species from the planet at a rate many times greater than nature itself ever has. We already poison our air and water to the detriment of our own health. To stop this threat to the very viability of our planet requires intensive education about the balance of nature. This isn't like mathematics, an abstract discipline we learn from books. It's an education that requires living laboratories such as Peñasquitos. As we head toward the next millennia, as the year 2000 approaches, the decade has already been appropriately dubbed "the decade of the environment." And none too soon.

López Ridge — Vital Habitat

Where does López Ridge fit into this picture? It's one of the few remaining homes of the endangered *coastal sage scrub* habitat, which is fast being bulldozed out of existence. Coastal sage scrub habitat is associated with an endangered bird, the *California gnatcatcher* (also known as the black-tailed gnatcatcher). Several vernal pools grace the ridge top. These unique geological formations are home to several rare and endangered plant species, including the Mesa Mint. The San Diego barrel cactus, a candidate for listing on the Federal endangered list, is found here in an important colony. The Pygmy spikemoss, a ground cover on the California Native

ridge and its adjacent slopes have been grazed for centuries by mule deer and other animal species. A major animal crossing on López is still used by animals to cross from the canyons south of Mira Mesa to Peñasquitos and the Del Mar Mesa, and vice versa. The threatened San Diego horned lizard and the orange-throated whiptail are also associated with this habitat. In fact, López Ridge and its adjacent habitats count 146 bird species, 28 reptile species, and 32 mammal species among their denizens!

What's Happening Now on López

The entire top of López Ridge has been graded for future houses and a major 4-lane arterial road, with the exception of two small plots of vernal pool land owned by the City of San Diego and Caltrans. The Newland Corp. sold the bulk of its land to the NCH Partnership. The largest owner in this partnership is Barry McComic and Associates. They have renamed their project "Monarch Estates." Newland still owns a parcel approved for about 100 units in the south-east section of the ridge. Other privately-owned properties on the ridge include, in roughly descending order of importance, Canyon Country West (Fieldstone), Shaw-López Ridge, the Lusk Property, and the Pipefitters property. Currently, Monarch Estates, Canyon Country West, and Shaw-López Ridge are up for approval of their projects.

The Friends don't believe that we can turn the clock back on the development that has *already taken place* on top of López Ridge. That doesn't mean there aren't things we can do to ameliorate the impact of the development. For the properties that *haven't* broken ground, we can still oppose these because of their tremendous impact on the habitats I detailed earlier.

Monarch Mitigation

Monarch Estates Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has recently come before the Mira Mesa Planning Board and the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Task Force (CAC). The new EIR was required since they are asking for major changes in the plan already approved under Newland's ownership. They propose reducing the number of units from about 1200 on the portion of Newland's property they bought, to 521 units. They have increased the setback of the buildings from the canyon rim in most areas and reduced the height of the buildings from three to two stories. This will reduce their visibility from the canyon bottom. They are proposing to build single-family homes in place of Newland's condos. Increased setbacks also allow them to comply with the City's brush management requirements by thinning of native "fire fuel" species, rather than total elimination for a specified zone between the homes and the canyon's native vegetation.

Under the Master Plan for Peñasquitos Canyon and Mira Mesa, no buildings are allowed to impact visually on the Preserve. The EIR for this project clearly shows that Monarch Estates will still have a substantial visual impact on the Preserve, despite the improvements of this plan over Newland's.

Rodent Residents - Part I

Pamela (PJ) Piburn

Volunteer Ranger, S.D. County Parks & Recreation

[Editor's note: PJ, is also a long-time equestrian. She has enjoyed riding her horse in Pefiasquitos Canyon for the past eight years. She resides with her husband and child in the trailer house at the eastern entrance to the Preserve, where she sees many of the resident rodents she writes about. This is the first of a series of articles. The illustrations accompanying this series were electronically scanned in from a display PJ created. The display is on exhibit in the Parks and Recreation Office at the Johnson-Taylor Adobe Ranch.]

Beneath Pefiasquitos Canyon Preserve live groups of rarely seen small animals. These timid creatures develop intricate underground pathways used for nesting, seeking food, and escaping predators. Mammals of fame, rodents by name, they use their ever renewing incisors to chisel their way through the rocky earth. We'll discuss them and, by contrast, some other burrowing animals who live here.

Who are they? They're squirrels, mice, rats, moles, and voles, shrews, porcupines, rabbits, beavers, chipmunks, marmots (woodchucks), and prairie dogs. Not all are rodents, as well see, although most burrow.

Ground squirrels are the rodents visitors are most likely to see in the canyon. Mounds of loose dirt surrounding their small openings into the earth are evidence of their presence. Sharp, high-pitched chirps or barks serve as an early warning system from squirrel to squirrel as you approach.

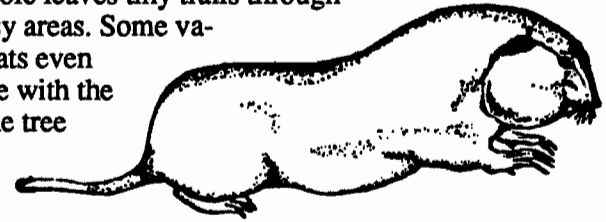
From a distance, you can see them sitting upright on the mounds around their holes, alert and watchful. Frisky scamps like their cousins, the tree squirrels, they bound across grassy fields from hole to hole.

Since ground squirrels prefer open areas, where they have a clear view of all the surroundings, you're most likely to see them in the wide open fields around the Johnson-Taylor adobe. As a matter-of-fact, they have made themselves quite at home and at times slip through the screen doors and spook the Rangers, Reneen Mowry and Nancy Dollard, as they work.

Their lives around the adobe are not without danger. One day, as I walked from my car toward the adobe, their chirps seemed louder and more urgent than usual. As I scanned the dusty field, I noticed several squirrels sitting erect on their mounds. Following their gazes, I was surprised to see a brown and black striped bobcat sitting at the edge of the field, carefully eyeing

the squirrels. They continued to bark their warnings for several minutes after the bobcat had ambled away.

Numerous varieties of mice and rats prefer the more secluded areas of the canyon where their defensive coloring and nocturnal habits make them difficult to view. If you saw a Rotta's pocket gopher you might mistake it for a ground squirrel, unless you glimpsed its hairless tail. The California Meadow vole leaves tiny trails through thick grassy areas. Some varieties of rats even share space with the birds, in the tree branches above the canyon floor.



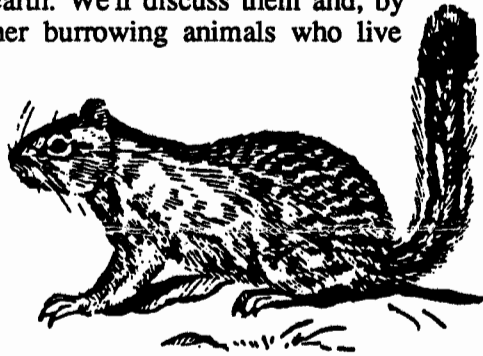
Botta's Pocket Gopher

In addition to the types of rodents I've already mentioned, porcupines, beavers, chipmunks, and tree squirrels are also found in California. It's unlikely they inhabit the preserve, but may be found at higher elevations to the northeast. Marmots, otherwise referred to as woodchucks, live in the rocky West or the grass fields of the North East. Prairie dogs are at home on the mid-western plains and lemmings are the most suited for their arctic abode. Rodents exist worldwide. South America boasts several varieties, among which are capybaras, chinchillas, agoutis, maras, and coypus. I'm sure everyone is familiar with domestic types such as gerbils, hamsters, and guinea pigs.

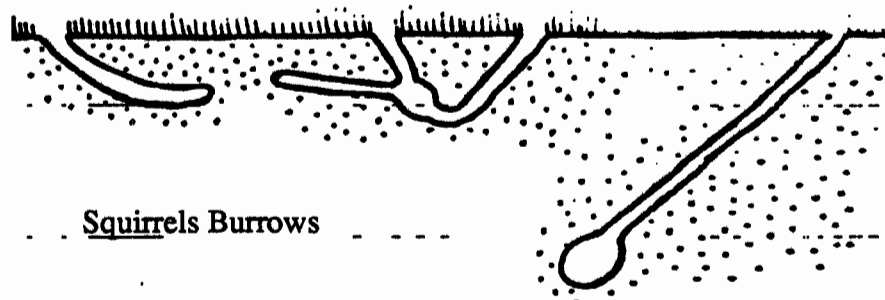
In future articles I'll point out the differences between rodents and other burrowing residents, moles, shrews and rabbits.

For further reading:

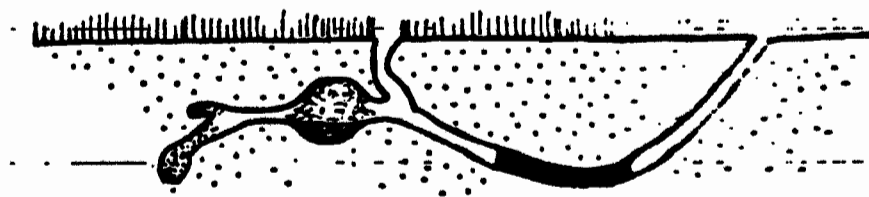
Jameson, E.W. and Peeters, Hans J., *California Mammals*; Earnest, Don and Oulahan, Richard, *Rabbits and Other Small Mammals*; *New Standard Encyclopedia*, Chicago, 1989.



Ground Squirrel



Squirrels Burrows



(Flood Cont'd)

bris flow occurred as a result of the flood waters flowing over the recently constructed service road, or causeway, connecting the Parking/Staging area with López Canyon. The causeway itself was partially eroded out.

Similar flooding, washouts and causeway erosion occurred on December 24, 1988, shortly after the causeway was built. Obviously, the culverts placed underneath this dirt roadbed are grossly inadequate, a fact that I pointed out to the authorities at the time. There are only three culverts under the roadway, and they are only about 8" in diameter. What is required there is a minimum of four large drain pipes of at least 36" diameter. In this context, one must realize that even though this is the fourth year of a record-breaking drought, the inadequate drainage beneath this causeway initially dams up the flood waters forming a small lake which later cascades over the road and washes it out. It is this washout, which is a common occurrence for earthen dams in this locale, which causes the flash flood, debris flow and subsequent situation downstream from the site. The situation in López Canyon will worsen when more and more storm drains from developments on the mesa tops surrounding López Canyon are completed.

Yearly washouts of this López Canyon causeway have serious consequences to the Preserve, besides rendering the roadway impassible. Among these are flood damage to the wetlands near the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Creeks, proliferation of unsightly debris on the canyon floor, and perhaps the most damaging, sediment deposition in the wetlands. Much of the sands, gravels and fill material eroded from the washed out roadway, for instance, settles in the wetlands when the flood subsides. The fine material is transported further downstream and eventually settles out in Peñasquitos Lagoon, which already has serious siltation problems of its own. The coarser material that settles out in the wetlands will eventually build up the area into a fan delta whose elevation will be above the local water table. Since the wetlands are fed by groundwater, this process will completely destroy the wetlands.

This scenario is but another example of how ignorant engineering and development on the canyon rims is destroying the Preserve. In the case of the López Canyon floods, the culverts installed are obviously inadequate and flood waters are ponded behind them, just as the inadequate culverts first put under Black Mountain Road caused a lake to form at Horseman's Park at the east end of the Preserve in the 1970s.

In order to prevent further damage to the valuable wetlands near the mouth of López Creek we must have more and bigger culverts installed under the service road. This must be done before Calle Cristobal is open for automotive traffic because, once complete, the contractors will simply pull out and leave us with a grossly inadequate system. It should be noted that when Calle Cristobal is completed, subject causeway will be the only access to López and Peñasquitos Canyons at the west end of the Preserve because the present gateway by the Ruíz Adobe will be blocked off. Thus, everybody, from hang-gliders to horseback riders to strollers who wish to visit the Ruíz Adobe, will have to park in the Parking/Staging area south of Calle Cristobal and traverse the service roadway across López Creek, go under the Calle Cristobal bridge,

cross López Creek again and yet again just to get to the Main Trail in Peñasquitos Canyon!

Since the service road has washed out every year since it was built, even though we are in the middle of a very serious drought, consider what would happen when the regular winter rains return? Or in the event of another 5-year flood such as we had in 1978 and 1982 when the whole area was under about 6 feet of water? Or a 50-year flood? Or a 100-year flood?

Peñasquitos Canyon has had a long history of flooding. The early settlers built about half a dozen earthen dams in the tributary canyons to help alleviate this flooding. Now, developers have destroyed all but one of these (the dam at Walden Pond north of the falls is still intact) and have instead installed myriad storm drains debouching directly onto the canyon floor. The canyon thus is getting a double whammy: increased runoff from developed land (macadem pavements and roofs increase the runoff by an estimated 25% greater than that from naturally vegetated slopes) and concentrated water discharge from storm drains that act as point sources on the flood plain.

In fact, the entire planned Parking/Staging area complex at the west end of the Preserve, including the causeway across López Creek and the Calle Cristobal Bridge, are in serious jeopardy in the case of a major flood. In the event of a 100-year flood, I suspect that the whole complex will wash out. We will have a major debris flow at the west end of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and access thereto will be completely blocked for months, leaving the Black Mountain Road entrance the sole access point for emergency vehicles.

In order to prevent such a devastating disaster, I recommend that the Parking/Staging area be relocated *east* of López Creek, that access thereto be made off Calle Cristobal east of the bridge, and that the section of López Creek, now dammed by the dirt causeway be returned to its natural state.

(López Cont'd)

As a person enters the Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to the Preserve, the western-most houses of Monarch Estates will be hard to miss. They occupy pads well below the ridge line on a knoll facing the entrance. We don't believe the proposed landscaping and pad configurations can successfully hide these houses. In addition, this knoll is a piece of land identified by the the CAC and Mira Mesa Planning Board as a location to be acquired by the City for a low visibility visitor/nature center for the preserve.

Landscaping proposals to screen some of the houses on the ridge line of Monarch Estates don't seem adequate to effectively screen the units from visually impacting on the preserve. For these reasons the Friends can't support the Monarch EIR's approval of the project.

Shaw-López Ridge

The Friends voted at its last board meeting to reject the Shaw-López Ridge project. The land in question is sensitive habitat as identified in the EIR and will have negative visual impact as seen from López Canyon bottom. The land in question is halfway down the slope of López Canyon. We believe the land should be added to the Preserve.



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Outings Schedule (cont'd)

FRIENDS OF LOS PENASQUITOS BOARD MEETING
 Tuesday, Mar. 20, 7:30 p.m. Members are welcome to attend monthly board of directors meeting. At the Johnson-Taylor Adobe ranch house.

NATURE WALK
 Saturday, Mar. 24, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Penasquitos Preserve. We'll look for wildflowers and other native plants in Lopez Canyon and visit two historical sites, a homestead and an Indian site.

GEOLOGY WALK
 Sunday, Mar. 25, 9 am (2-3 hours). See directions under Vernal Pool Hike, Lopez Ridge. Learn about the area's geology and see Preserve's only known fossil in the waterfall area of the Preserve. A steep hill to descend and ascend. Nice area for a picnic with the family after the hike if you want to bring a lunch. Bring water.

April

BIRD WALK
 Sunday, Apr. 1, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area entrance to Peñasquitos Preserve. Bring bird book, binoculars. Oriented to beginners.

MYSTERY TREE WALK
 Saturday, Apr. 7, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate legend of buried Mission treasure and the Spanish sign map on trees in Peñasquitos Preserve. Learn about Indian used plants. See wildflowers. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR
 Saturday, Apr. 7, 11 am and Noon (1 hour each), SD County Archaeological Society.

VERNAL POOL/WILDFLOWER WALK
 Saturday, Apr. 14, 8 am. See directions under Vernal Pool Hike, López Ridge. We'll check on this year's crop of wildflowers in and around the Vernal Pools, including the endangered Mesa Mint.

RANCHO PENASQUITOS TOWN COUNCIL FAIR
 Saturday, Apr. 14, 11 am - 3 pm. At Canyonside Park.

EARTH DAY ECOLOGY WALK

Sunday, April 22, 9 am. (3-4 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Earth Day and inaugurate the "Decade of the Environment." As we walk Peñasquitos Canyon we'll discuss threats to our environment, some of which we'll see in Peñasquitos, and what we as citizens can do. We'll cover 6-7 miles. Bring a visor, sunscreen, water, and a snack. Children are welcome.

GEOLOGY WALK

Sunday, April 29, 9 am. See previous description.

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
 Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
 Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Other: _____
- I/We would like to volunteer

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. and send to:

Membership Chairperson
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. BOX 26523, San Diego, CA 92126
(619) 484-3219 566-6489

April 1990

Volume 4 No. 9

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Celebrate Earth Day 1990

The 1990s has been dubbed the "decade of the environment." During April we'll see if this is to be an accurate prediction, as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the original Earth Day in 1970. The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve are holding a special pre-Earth Day hike Saturday, April 21 (see the hike schedule to the right). We'll also be participating in the Earth Day 1990 Coalitions's EarthFair, Sunday, April 22 at Balboa Park from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., with a booth (see p. 5 for a statement from the Coalition). In the weeks leading up to Earth Day 1990 there will be many more activities. See p. 5 and Watch your local newspapers for details.

EarthFair is an excellent time for the entire family to learn about environmental issues confronting the planet as a whole, as well as specific local issues. Many groups will have information and demonstrations of recycling and how you can participate in this important contribution to the environment. You'll find many environmental organizations representing many different causes, big and small, which may interest you.

Volunteers Needed!

The Friends need your help. Look at our calendar and you'll see April 14 Spring Fling at Canyonside Park, April 22 Earth Day at Balboa Park, and May 19 Peñasquitos Park Day. At all three we'll have booths and need your help, for an hour or two, in staffing them. You don't have to be an "expert" on the Preserve to help out with literature and mailing lists.

As you can see from the size of this issue, the Friends are in a very active and exciting period of fighting, not only to defend the current Preserve, but to expand it east and north. If you've thought about getting involved, now is a good time to do it. *Whether for an hour or two at one of the Fairs, or to participate on a regular basis, why not call now? Call Kathleen Zaworski-Burke at 484-5306 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.*

Friends' Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends hikes. If more details are needed, or you want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright of the Friends at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

April

BIRD WALK

Sunday, Apr. 1, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area entrance to Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Bring bird book, binoculars. Oriented to beginners.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Saturday, Apr. 7, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate legend of buried Mission treasure and the Spanish sign map on trees in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Learn about Indian used plants. See wildflowers. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, Apr. 7, 11 am and Noon (45 min. each), SD County Archaeological Society.

NATURE WALK

Saturday, Apr. 14, 8 am. Meet at Parking-Staging area. We'll look for wildflowers and other native plants that the Indians and Settler used.

RANCHO PENASQUITOS TOWN COUNCIL SPRING FLING FAIR

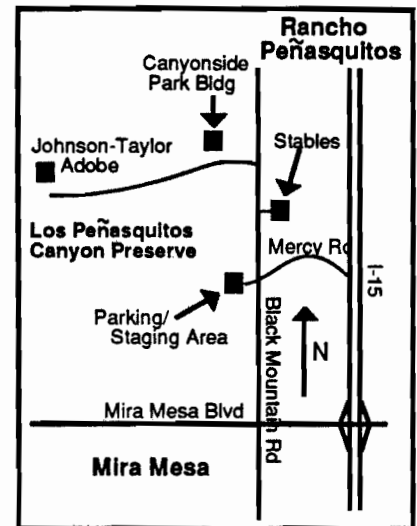
Saturday, Apr. 14, 11 am - 3 pm. At Canyonside Park. The Friends will give short walks and have a display there, along with many community organizations.

FRIENDS OF LOS PENASQUITOS BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, Apr. 17, 7:30 p.m. Members are welcome to attend monthly board of directors meeting. At the Johnson-Taylor Adobe ranch house.

EARTH DAY ECOLOGY WALK

Saturday, April 21, 9 am. (3-4 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Earth Day and inaugurate the "Decade of the Environment." As we walk Peñasquitos Canyon we'll discuss threats to our environment, some of which we'll see in Peñasquitos, and what



➡ p.10 for more

López Ridge — An Update

[In previous issues we have reported on the development issues concerning López Ridge. Here we bring you an update on three of these: 1) the flooding in López Canyon; 2) Monarch Estates project; and 3) Shaw-López Ridge project. — *editor*]

López Canyon — the Flooding Continues

Tuesday, March 27, Dr. John Northrop went out to López Canyon at the tail end of our latest rain. He wanted to follow up on his reporting in our March issue on the flooding in this canyon. He found one of the two approximately 8" culverts he described as inadequate in his article was blocked by debris. The runoff in the canyon, as he predicted, carries too much water and debris down the canyon, where it hits the too-small culverts.

The volume of water and blockage causes a "pond" to form behind the culverts. Eventually it overflows the causeway on top of the culverts. This will eat away at the causeway over

time. It also means you get a more damaging flooding of the marsh area downstream than if you either let the water through continuously or successfully "ponded" it upstream via the intended Montongo Street detention basin, and released it in a controlled manner. One short-term victim of the unintended ponding of water behind the culvert will be the century-old sycamores grove there. Sycamores can't tolerate much standing water. Dr. Northrop can point to other groves in our area that have been exterminated by similar standing water.

The issue is being brought before the CAC (Citizen's Advisory Committee) and the Mira Mesa Planning Group.

Monarch Estates EIR Objections Filed by Friends

[Following is the text of criticisms filed by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve of the Monarch Estates project scheduled for most of López Ridge.]

March 26, 1990

City of San Diego
Planning Dept.
Development and Environmental Planning Division
202 "C" St., Mail Station 4A
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: DEP No. 89-0925 Monarch Estates DEIR

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve have the following objections to the above named project:

Visual Impacts

Applicant's project will have two types of adverse visual impact on the Peñasquitos Preserve.

1. Contrary to the Mira Mesa Community Plan and the Local Coastal Program, Monarch Estates will have many units clearly visible to recreational users of the Preserve. The "natural setting" of the Preserve envisioned by community planners will be shattered, most prominently by the units on the northwestern nose area, but also by units on the northern rim. Applicant has made presentations at community meetings showing redesigned elements and landscape plantings that promise to screen some of the offending units. Such mitigation should be required to reduce visual impact of Monarch Estates to a "less than significant level." To guarantee such mitigation, a performance bond and strict timetable, such as those contained in the recent "Black Mountain Road Bridge PIP" should be required to applicant.

2. Fencing proposed for the perimeter of the project, specifically the wrought iron and column type, will have a negative visual impact when seen from the canyons. Applicant should be required to use an unobtrusive fencing type that will have a "less than significant impact" on the Preserve.

Hydrology

Hydrology impacts to Los Peñasquitos and López Canyons are underestimated as outlined in the DEIR. As with other developments in the area, applicant claims that a key element of their plan for controlling excessive runoff into these canyons is the use of the Montongo Street detention basin. Since the applicant's property is downstream of this basin, how does applicant propose to "use" this basin? More to the point, this basin has already been shown to be deficient by flooding in December 1988 and January 1990. These floods occurred after very small rainfalls, less than 1" in the case of the January precipitation. What will happen when the area is subjected to rainfalls such as the five-year floods of 1978 and 1982, when the whole area was under six feet of water, not to mention the 50-year or 100-year floods we are subjected to?

Applicant's project will increase the runoff into López Canyon and add to the problem of flooding. Damage will occur to the confluence of the two canyons, the causeway controlling ground access between López and Peñasquitos Canyons. More damage will also occur to the Peñasquitos Lagoon through the deposition of excessive silt carried by the flood waters. The increased urban pollutants contained in the runoff can be expected to further damage the fragile ecology of "one of the relatively undisturbed coastal lagoons remaining in southern California.

Photographs of the effects of the January 1990 flooding are available from this committee.

Visitor/Interpretative Center

The Friends concur with the CAC and Mira Mesa Planning Board that the 10-acre site on the western most tip of López Ridge, Unit 8 in Figure 6, is an ideal location for the visitor/interpretative center identified in the City's 20 year needs list for the Preserve. We urge that the City acquire this portion of the development for this center.

Special Assessment District for a Full-Time Ranger

A pressing need for the Peñasquitos Preserve is a full-time ranger, with citing and arrest powers and appropriate equipment and facilities.

(Monarch cont'd)

ties, to police the Preserve and reduce the damage currently being done by off-road vehicles, poachers, mountain bikes, etc. Developments in the area will also benefit from this police presence. The CAC and City Staff have identified this as an immediate, pressing need. We propose that a Special Assessment District be created with the participation of all developments bordering the Peñasquitos Preserve to fund this Ranger presence.

Landscape Maintenance District

Sorrento Valley Blvd/Calle Cristobal, the road bisecting applicant's property, will have a negative visual impact on the confluence of López and Peñasquitos Canyons in the Preserve at the western end. Extensive, maintained landscaping will be necessary to mitigate this impact. We suggest that the Landscape Maintenance District for

López Ridge be brought west and down the Ridge to include the western terminus of this road with the current Sorrento Valley Blvd.

Revegetation Mitigation

Where native plant revegetation is to occur, the Friends ask that the plants be local native plants, plants already or historically found in the Preserve. The encroachment of plants not native to the Preserve is already having an adverse impact on the flora of the Preserve.

Kathleen Zaworski-Burke, President
Michael D. Kelly, Vice-President

CC: CAC, Mira Mesa Planning Board, Councilmembers Bernhardt and Wolfsheimer, Supervisor Golding.

Shaw-López Ridge Appeal Filed by Friends

[On March 12, 1990 the Friends filed a formal appeal of a Sub-division Review Board approval of the Shaw-López Ridge Project because of unmitigated destruction of sensitive habitat and other concerns. The Sierra Club has also filed an appeal. The text of the Friends' appeal follows.]

March 12, 1990

Planning Commissioner
Planning Department
4th Floor, Administration Bldg (MS 4A)
202 "C" St.
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations for TM and PRD No. 88-0591 — Shaw-López Ridge

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc., have appealed the approval by the Sub-division Review Board concerning the above Project. After studying the EIR and having representation at presentations of revisions to the EIR made on behalf of the project at the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Mira Mesa Planning Board, we have the following objections.

1. From on-site inspection, we do not believe lowering the profiles of houses on lots 12 through 15 and the landscaping plan will be sufficient to eliminate the visual impact from López canyon. Such a visual impact is expressly prohibited under the Master Plan for the area. If the Commission and, eventually, the City Council, should approve this project, a performance bond guaranteeing no visual impact from López Canyon should be required from the applicant. Such a requirement would parallel that required for the PIP for Black Mountain Road Bridge, No. 89-0442 (Newland California).

2. The unmitigated biological impact admitted in the EIR is unacceptable. This involves the destruction of coastal sage scrub habitat. Not only is the habitat itself disappearing, but so are a series of animals species dependent on it. The endangered California gnatcatcher bird is one such example. Mitigation for this destruction is readily available from the applicant, an owner of other lands adjacent to the Peñasquitos Preserve. No approval by the Commission or the City Council should go forward without a donation of land with similar habitat adjacent to the Preserve. Such mitigation must be tied directly to any approval of this project as the applicant's representative, when speaking before the CAC, explicitly stated that

the applicant would make this land-donation mitigation only if required as a condition of approval.

3. Mitigation proposed for the endangered San Diego barrel cactus population affected by the applicant's grading is inadequate. The applicant proposes to transplant the affected specimens. A similar transplant program by Newland California on adjacent property (Monarch Estates, now under new ownership) is clearly failing. This transplanted population lies in the area bordering the animal tunnel above this applicant's project. Of 71 barrel cactus plants observed by our representatives, 17 are already dead, and most of the rest of the population is clearly in the process of decaying. Perhaps 12-15 specimens appear to be successfully surviving. And this is only one year after the transplanting. Mitigations such as this, common on other area projects, are a joke when no enforcement provisions are made to ensure viability of the mitigation. The performance bond and strict timetable included in the Black Mtn. Bridge PIP are examples of necessary enforcement needed. Better mitigation would be the donation of land populated by this same cactus adjacent to the current Preserve. Recent photographs of the transplanted barrel cactus population are available from this committee.

4. Revegetation of disturbed areas must be with plants native to the locale. Viability of the revegetation must be guaranteed by a performance bond tied to a timetable.

5. Hydrology impacts to Los Peñasquitos and López Canyons are inadequately mitigated as outlined in the EIR and Draft Candidate Findings. As with many developments in the same area, applicant claims that a key element of their mitigation is the use of the Montongo Street detention basin. Since the applicant's property is downstream of this basin, how does applicant propose to "use" this basin? More to the point, this basin has already been shown to be deficient by flooding in December 1988 and January 1990. These floods occurred after very small rainfalls, less than 1" in the case of the January precipitation. What will happen when the area is subjected to rainfalls such as the five-year floods of 1978 and 1982, when the whole area was under six feet of water, not to mention the 50-year or 100-year floods we are subjected to? Damage not only occurs to the confluence of the two canyons, but to the Peñasquitos Lagoon, through the deposition of excessive silt carried by the flood waters. Photographs of the effects of the January 1990 flooding are available from this committee.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Zaworski-Burke, President
Michael D. Kelly, Vice-President

CC: Councilmembers Wolfsheimer and Bernhardt, Supervisor Golding, CAC, Mira Mesa Planning Board

Rodent Residents - Part II

Pamela (PJ) Piburn
Volunteer, County Parks & Recreation

What makes a rodent a rodent? All rodents have four — only four — front teeth, called incisors. Two are on the top jaw and two are on the bottom jaw. The only other teeth are molars and premolars used for chewing.

Imagine trying to dig through Penasquitos Canyon's hard rocky clay earth with *your* teeth! This is what the Botta Pocket Gopher, who rarely comes out of the ground, does every day of its life. Soft enamel wouldn't last long under that abuse.

Rodents teeth are specialized for the job. The yellow-orange enamel is extremely hard, especially on the front most edge. Ernest Walker describes rodents incisors as "self sharpening."



Skull of
Botta's Pocket Gopher

The teeth are continuously growing to replace that which is worn away. Walker says, "the tooth is a segment of a true circle." Without continuous grinding, they would grow around into the rots skull or over the lower jaw, rendering it unable to eat.

What do rodents eat? Deer mice eat orthopterans (cockroaches, crickets, earwigs, etc.) and larva. Neighbor Harvest Mouse feeds mainly on seeds of grasses and weeds. All rodents eat vegetative parts of green plants, seeds and berries. In addition, Wood Rats eat small lizards. Ground squirrels eat thick underground stems called corms and tubers, like potatoes or carrots.

The ground squirrels around my home are particularly fond of duck crumbs. Almost daily I catch sight of them scurrying away from my duck pen, cheeks bulging with duck food.

At birth, naked blind rodents receive nourishing milk from their mother's body while in their warm nests.

Most rodents maintain a nest for warmth. This nest may also be used for food storage. Many rodents even keep a separate latrine. When a nesting chamber becomes parasite infested or a latrine becomes too full, the rodent simply burrows a new one! Dirt from new chambers is used to fill old ones or as earth plugs to keep snakes out of the burrow.

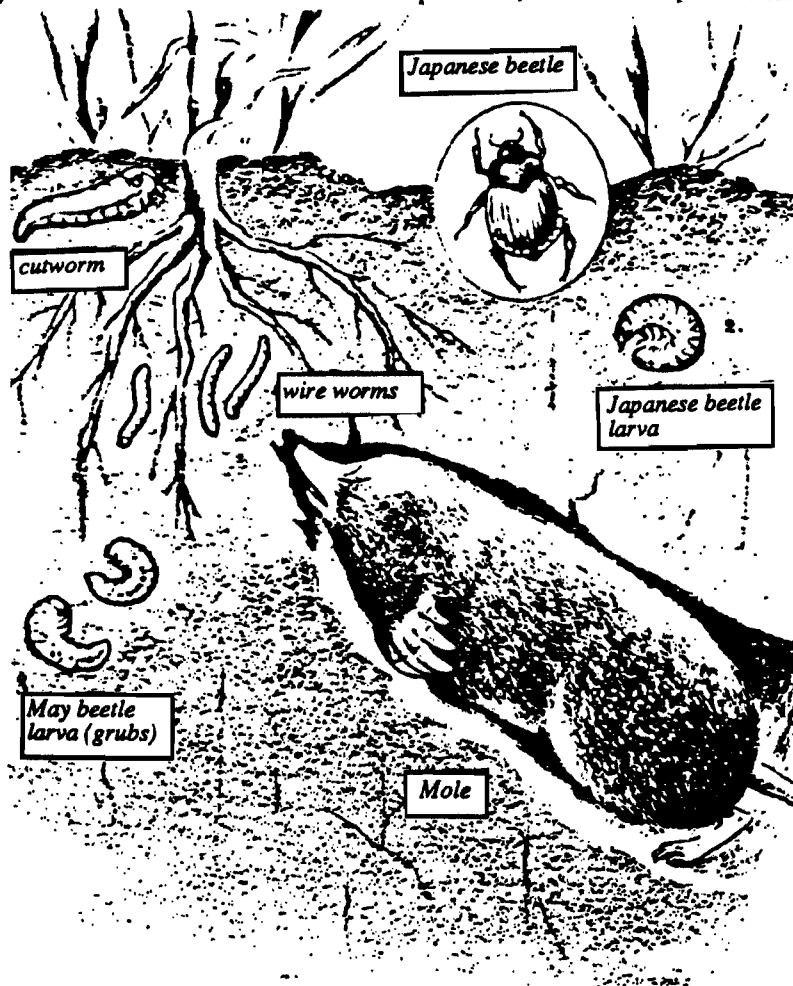
All features of rodent anatomy are adapted to their burrowing life style. Hard round heads with small ears and large jaw muscles facilitate burrowing. Rodents burrow with their teeth and push loosened dirt out with their paws. The gap between the incisors and the molars allows them to close their lips while gnawing and to avoid getting dirt in their mouth.

Another characteristic is a discerning sense of smell. Rodents use odors to navigate. They find food and identify territories and trails by homing in on particular scents. Squirrels have been known to discriminate between shells with or without nuts inside, without picking them up. They have also

proven quite resourceful in locating discarded chicken bones through several layers of plastic trash bag in my front yard

Rodents have small eyes to accommodate their large jaw muscles. This smallness doesn't hinder their capabilities for spotting predators. When our pet rat, Ginger, is alarmed or watchful, her eyes appear to bulge from her head, giving her a wider than normal field of vision. This may be an inherent trait. Possibly, rodents can withdraw their eyes to protect them while burrowing, and protrude them when out of the burrow to amplify their sight.

Many rodents hibernate for a part of each year. Species that hibernate when it's hot are said to *aestivate*. Still others may only become dormant during portions of the day. One rodent who doesn't hibernate is the pocket gopher. Named for its external fur-lined cheek pouches, this solitary creature



rarely comes out of the ground. The gopher also has larger forefeet and claws than most rodents.

The wood rat, also known as the pack rat, is a part time burrower who also is active year round. Building its nest of sticks

Empower Yourself! Earth Day 1990

[Below we reprint the statement of purpose of the Earth Day 1990 Coalition]

Think Globally — Act Locally

On April 22, 1990, millions of people around the world will launch a campaign to renew awareness of the problems that threaten life on our planet. We, in San Diego, plan to join the rest of the world to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Earth Day to show our love, concern and commitment for life on Earth.

There will be local events sponsored by many organizations during the entire week of April 16-21. The week will then culminate in a festival of celebration on April 22, with educational booths and displays, guest speakers, entertainment and food that share the common theme of environmental awareness.

All of these events are to educate, inspire and motivate people into making a personal commitment: to *be* a part of the solution. Not just for one week or day, but for the rest of our lives.

Earth Day 1990 needs community leaders and supporters. People that will make this event be an influence beyond 1990. Your participation will make a difference.

What Is Earth Day 1990?

Earth Day 1990 is Sunday, April 22, 1990 and is the 20th anniversary of the original Earth Day in 1970. On Earth Day 1970 more than 20 million people participated in events that gave birth to the modern American environmental movement. Earth Day 1990 is an opportunity to express a new generation of commitments and inspire a new decade of actions on behalf of our environment.

What Is the San Diego Earth Day 1990 Coalition?

The San Diego Earth Day 1990 Coalition is a local consor-

tium of individuals, organizations and businesses committed to facilitating and promoting events beginning January 22 for the 90 days leading up to Earth Day 1990 and the preceding week: Earth Week 1990: April 16-22, 1990.

Why Earth Day?

An annual day provides a showcase for awareness of environmental problems, solutions and controversies. The goal of the San Diego Earth Day 1990 Coalition is to reach as many groups and individuals as possible to create a renewed awareness of the environmental issues before us as we head into the 21st century.

Our planet is facing unprecedented environmental challenges. Urgent action is needed to sustain and nurture ourselves and the resources on which we are all interdependent. We have found solutions to some of the issues that gave impetus to the first Earth Day. However, we now face new (and old) problems on an international scale such as: global warming, ozone depletion, forest destruction, ocean pollution, diminishing wildlife, hazardous waste management, hunger, poverty and soaring population growth.

Although it is clear that immediate action is needed, most individuals do not know what to do, and it is easy to be overwhelmed by the size and scope of these issues. Many people conclude that there is little they can do — and therefore they do nothing at all. The San Diego Earth Day 1990 Coalition seeks to educate our residents about the concrete actions they can take, both individually and collectively, to help solve global and local environmental problems.

For more information call: **270-8477** or write San Diego Earth Day 1990 Coalition at 4901 Morena Blvd., Suite 703, San Diego, CA 92117.

Partial Schedule of Earth Day Activities

April 7 Learn about native plants and birds. Audubon Society, California Native Plant Soc. Free guided walks. Different locations. Audubon: 483-7620 or Alice DeBolt 459-8159.

April 14 Organic Garden Tours in San Diego's North Cnty. Meet at Taylor's Herb Gardens, 1535 Lone Oak Rd., Vista, CA at 11a.m. Call Kent Taylor at 727-3485 for more info.

April 16-22 Environmental Photography - Museum of Photographic Arts, Balboa Park. 239-5262 for more details.

April 18 Nuclear Teach-In - Militarism, Nuclear Weapons and the Environment. SDSU. Call Rick Nadeau, Greenpeace Action, at 298-1010 for more info.

April 20 Univ. of San Diego EcoFair. Speakers and entertainment. 10 am to 5 pm Susan Collins at 260-7521.

April 20 San Diego State University Earth Day Events. Call Ken Morris at 287-7744 for details.

April 21 Back Country Clean-up. Volunteers needed to clean up Henshaw Basin area. Warner School or Julian Town Hall, 8 am. Ecology Fair at Warner School, Hwy 79 in Warner Springs, to follow. Tamara Jasper at 782-3362.

April 21 John Muir Day. Sierra Club has hikes, bike rides & more. Call Alex Sandie at 583-8525 for details.

April 21 Celebrate Torrey Pines. Guided nature walks and exhibits, 9 am to 5 pm, North Torrey Pines Rd., Hwy 101, San Diego. Parking and admission free this day only!

April 21 Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Hikes, Wildcat Canyon Rd, 9 am - 3 pm. Gerald Cosgrove, 443-2998.

April 21 Earth Day on the Bay. Clean the Bay Boat Parade and beach clean-up. 11 am to 4 pm. Jim Ward, 465-3241.

April 21 Buena Vista Nature Center Educational Program. 10 am to 4 pm, 2202 South Hill St., Oceanside. 439-2473.

Should Del Mar Mesa Become an Open-Space Preserve?

Mike Kelly

In recent months a proposal began to circulate among environmental, city, and county groups about the Del Mar Mesa. The San Diego Bio-Diversity Project (formerly Del Mar Mesa Defense League) proposed that the Del Mar Mesa west of Peñasquitos be added to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The group identified more than twenty-two rare, threatened, or endangered species, and two threatened habitats on the Mesa. The Del Mar Mesa's 3,000 acres is the largest relatively undisturbed Mesa Top left in San Diego.

The Mesa is key to establishing a wildlife corridor north from the Peñasquitos Preserve, eventually linking up with San Dieguito River Valley. Ideally, our major open-space areas will be linked, providing a larger area for biological diversity. The measure would also add to the open-space recreational opportunities for the communities of Peñasquitos and North City West, including hiking, equestrian, bike riding, and the like. This land would also serve as a much needed buffer between the two burgeoning communities. Where does the proposal stand now?

The Friends published the entire proposal in our February 1990 newsletter and included it in our proposals to Councilman Roberts' Open-Space Bond Committee. We also brought it before the joint city/county Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Task Force at their February meeting. The Task Force approved, *in concept*, adding this land and another block of land east of I-15 to Sabre Springs, also proposed by the Friends, to the Preserve. They directed that city and county staffs conduct a study of both. However, approving a concept and making it a reality are two different animals. Who owns the land? Are they willing to sell it? Does the community see open-space for our and future generations as important enough to support a bond measure — if they're asked to vote on it?

The City's Long Range Planning Division is studying the proposal and indicates that the proposal has merit in that it is an area of highly sensitive resources (see accompanying document). They note that, since it is in the urban reserve, no major development except roads has yet been proposed for the area. Also on a positive note is the fact that CalTrans already owns and has established vernal pool reserves in the area. This was done as mitigation to make up for the endangered vernal pools they destroyed in building Route 52. The city also owns some small parcels in the area.

Residents and community groups wanting a copy of the proposal or a presentation before their group are invited to call Kathleen Zaworski-Burke at 484-5306 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

City of San Diego Memorandum

[Deputy Mayor Wolfsheimer's office was kind enough to share the following memorandum with the Friends]

DATE: March 16, 1990
 TO: Councilmember Wolfsheimer
 FROM: Mary Lee Balko, Deputy Director
 Long Range Planning Division
 SUBJECT: Del Mar Mesa Defense League Proposal

The Resource Management Section of the Long Range Planning Division is currently in the process of investigating the Del Mar Mesa Defense League's proposal for the creation of a biological habitat preserve in the future urbanizing area adjacent to Peñasquitos Canyon and west of the Rancho Peñasquitos Community. Our staff previously contacted your office by phone about this matter, and would like to update you further on our progress to date.

We have set up an informal study area in order to map and analyze the Del Mar Mesa proposal. Our study area includes lands surrounding the Del Mar Mesa, and is bounded to the north by La Zanja Canyon, to the east by the Rancho Peñasquitos community, to the south by Peñasquitos Canyon and Mira Mesa, and to the west by North City West. We are plotting existing and proposed development (including roads) in the overall vicinity, mapping open space connections and

generalized habitats, and overlaying ownership patterns.

The San Diego Mesa Defense League's proposal appears to have merit. The area is indeed a highly sensitive resource area that should be considered for acquisition by the City, the State or a combination of agencies. Although the creation of a preserve will require further study (biological surveys, long-term management plan, etc.) no major development (except roads) has yet been proposed for most parcels located in the most sensitive areas of the mesa. Most of the area is currently zoned A-1-10.

The Open Space Bond Committee has directed the Resource Management Section to compile a list of sensitive lands for placement on an acquisition/regulation list. It is likely that this area will appear as a high priority on that list. Further, it is possible that due to the creation of the "habitat mitigation fund" by the City, development occurring in the general vicinity of the mesa could fund the acquisition of parcels within the area.

The map that we have assembled at present is in draft form, and in need of additional information. Taking our workload into consideration, we estimate its completion in approximately 6 to 8 weeks. I hope this memo serves to update your office on our progress with this issue.

Please contact Tom Huffman at 533-3674 or Sandra Cleisz at 533-3649 if you have any additional questions.

(Signed) Mary Lee Balko

The Fight To Save Del Mar Mesa

John Northrop, PhD

Del Mar Mesa as a Preserve

Del Mar Mesa adjoins Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and forms an integral part of the environmental habitat sustaining its valuable flora and fauna. Adding the mesa to the preserve would greatly benefit its viability as an ecologic entity by completing the trinity of landscape (riparian habitat, grasslands, and mesa tops) as an ecological unit. I urge the Friends to endorse the concept and seek funds from open space bonds or the Nature Conservancy to acquire the property. If this valuable mesa is not saved for open space, it will be ruined by developers and will be lost forever. López Ridge was destroyed last year. We simply can't sit back and let that happen to Del Mar Mesa. Following are some of the geographic, geologic, and biologic factors that combine to make the Del Mar Mesa.

Geography

Del Mar Mesa, the last remaining unspoiled coastal mesa in San Diego, is a flat topped, east-west trending mesa on the north rim of Penasquitos Canyon. The mesa is about five to ten miles east of I-5 and south of Carmel Valley Road and is sandwiched between North City West and Rancho Penasquitos. Del Mar Mesa rises sharply about 400 ft. above the canyon bottoms and comprises most of sections 15, 16, 23, and 24, making it the largest undeveloped mesa in San Diego. The area, once frequented by the San Dieguito Indians, is largely undisturbed, having never been plowed, farmed or grazed. It's mostly covered with a dense growth of coastal mixed chaparral and is dotted with vernal pools which contain the endangered Mesa Mint. Two of the largest vernal pools, each as big as a football field, have been fenced by CalTrans to keep ORV's (off-road vehicles) from ruining them, and are soon to become part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Vernal Pool Reserve. The smaller vernal pools also need to be protected.

Geology

Del Mar Mesa is composed of about 400 ft. of sandstones and shales of the La Jolla Group of marine sediments that were deposited during Eocene time (about 40 million years ago) when the area was a shallow water marine embayment. Individual formations within this group are, from the oldest to the youngest, the Del Mar sandstone, the Ardath shale, the Scripps Formation, the Friars sand and the Stadium conglomerate. These layers of nearly horizontal sandstone and shale beds are primarily of marine origin in the lower and western sections, but become brackish-to fresh-water origin in the upper and easternmost layers. The Friars formation, for example, is a clean, fresh water sand, and the Stadium conglomerate is a fresh water stream outwash deposit formed when lands east of the area became elevated at the end of Eocene time. (Ref.1).

The rock formations crop out on the walls of Peñasquitos Canyon where they can be readily identified. These ancient sediments are overlain uncomfortably by the near-shore facies of the Linda Vista Formation deposited during the Pleistocene, or glacial epoch, about 1 million years ago. The Linda Vista formation is a ten-foot thick shoreline deposit that was formed slowly during time as the lands east of what is now San Diego became progressively more emergent, concurrent with the development of the ancestral San Andreas fault. As the emerging lands east of the mesa pushed the sea ever further west, the shoreline migrated westward too, leaving behind it an indurated beach rock made up of rounded, potato-sized pebbles that became cemented together into what is now called a conglomerate.

Further exposure to the elements caused this conglomerate to become so indurated and hardened during the last million years or so, that the formation now constitutes an erosion-resistant cap rock that forms the rim of Penasquitos Canyon (Literally, "Canyon of the Little Rim Rock"). The Linda Vista is impervious to water and that's why the vernal pools form on the mesa top. Rainfall simply has no place to go, so rainwater collects there in shallow pools during the rainy season. When full, the pools support a unique fauna, including tadpoles and fresh water shrimp. In the spring, wild flowers, including the endangered Mesa Mint, bloom and form a veritable carpet of flowers in the depressions.

Mima Mounds

The vernal pools are separated by mounds, called "Mima Mounds" or "Prairie Mounds", which rise about a foot above the level of the pools. The "Prairie Mounds" support a lush growth of chaparral and, because of their close proximity to the pools, are a favorite nesting place for birds. It is important to note that the near shore facies of the Linda Vista formation covers most of not only Del Mar Mesa, but also López Ridge (on the other side of Peñasquitos Canyon), Mira Mesa, Kearny Mesa, and Clairemont Mesa. Almost all the vernal pools on these other mesas, including López Ridge, have been destroyed by developers, leaving the Del Mar Mesa as the last remaining undisturbed area where these unique geological features still remain.

The uniqueness of the vernal pool habitat is a freak of nature that allows them to form in San Diego where rainfall is both moderate and seasonal, and, also, the near shore facies of the Linda Vista formation is impervious to water. The vernal pools form in its surface where chemical weathering of the rock surface creates "soft" spots which eventually are deflated into saucer-shaped depressions by wind erosion during the dry season, only to be refilled with water during the next rainy season. The weathering process continues to enlarge the

(Del Mar Mesa cont'd)

pool until it becomes about 6" to a foot deep. After that, water begins to seep out into the underground drainage system that underlies all vernal pool areas. No one knows for sure how the "Mima Mounds" are formed, but one school of thought is that ground squirrels can penetrate the edges of the pools and tunnel around them while digging their burrows. Dirt extracted from the burrows makes good holding ground for the roots of native chaparral, which grows in clumps on the mounds. With the passage of time, the "mounds" appear to become elevated, grass-covered, bushy clumps surrounding the "pools" which continue to deflate. The whole process takes about a million years, if the initial conditions for the formation of a pool are present. Support for this thesis has been provided by a recent experiment by CalTrans to "construct" vernal pools in the area as a mitigation effort to "replace" pools destroyed in Mira Mesa and on Lopez Ridge. The effort consisted of bulldozing small "islands" in the chaparral and scraping out a depression in the Mesa top for the collection of rainwater and, hopefully, formation of a man-made vernal pool. To my knowledge, not one of these manufactured basins has produced a true vernal pool.

The geographic limit of the vernal pools is controlled by the geology. For example, Carmel Mountain, at the west end of the mesa, is formed where the Linda Vista formation changes from a near shore deposit to a beach deposit. The beach facies of the Linda Vista is composed of marble-sized hematite nodules or concretions that are thought to have been

formed in a relatively undisturbed near shore estuary (Dr. R.P. Phillips, personal communication). The nodules constitute a 10-ft. thick layer of uniformly rounded, perfectly sorted (all same size) ironstone concretions that make up the crest of Carmel Mt. This beach facies of the Linda Vista does not support vernal pools, probably because the pebbles are not cemented together well enough to make the formation impervious to water.

Biology

The dense growth of native Chaparral on Del Mar Mesa supports an indigenous herd of mule deer, as well numerous rabbits, coyote, pack rats, and ground squirrels. Coveys of California quail abound, as well as roadrunners and other native birds like the cactus wren. Yellow bellied sap suckers inhabit the eucalyptus trees, (planted by homesteaders about 100 years ago), which also serve as perches for red-tailed hawks and an occasional eagle. A recent study (Friends Newsletter V. 4, #7) by Dave Hogan, of the San Diego Biodiversity Project, cited 17 species of rare or endangered plants, including the Mesa Mint, 4 species of endangered or threatened reptiles, and 3 species of birds, including the Least Bell's Vireo which is listed as endangered in the State of California. Bobcat and mountain lion also prowl the area, the latter having been sighted recently in both Peñasquitos Canyon and Shaw Valley.

Reference 1. Northrop, John, "Geology of Los Peñasquitos Canyon," Windsor Associates, P.O. Box 90282, San Diego, CA 92109 (1989).

(Rodents Cont'd)

piled at the base of a tree trunk, it may only have an escape burrow in the ground beneath its nest. I've seen some of these fascinating nests around dense scrub oaks. They resemble miniature beaver dams in the brush rather than the water. Sticks and twigs were intricately placed with several entrances visible at different levels. One nest was about three feet high.

Of all rodent attributes, one of the most intriguing is their vocalization. Previously, I mentioned the communal squirrel's use of barks as warning signals. Rodents use a variety of squeaks, chirps and high-pitched sounds to contact one another.

According to Peter Hanney, "The wood rat can make a rattling sound by waving its tail in a circular motion and striking it against twigs."

Other rodents produce drumming sounds with their feet.



California Meadow Mouse

Were you aware that some rodents even sing? Certain species of voles and mice can produce multi-note patterns of sounds.

Rodents are made up of many unique attributes, some common to all, some found in select individuals. In a future article, I'll discuss the relationship of these creatures to their environment and how their environment affects them.

Special thanks to George L. Jones, Consulting Field Biologist, for his assistance in observing animal trails and nests in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

Further Reading:

Hanney, Peter W., *Rodents*

Jameson, E.W. and Peters, Hans J., *California Mammals*

Spruch, Grace Marmor, *Such Agreeable Friends*

VanWormer, Joe, *Squirrels*

Walker, Ernest P., *Mammals of the World, Third Ed., Vol. II*

Who's Who on Your Board of Directors

Last October we briefly reported on the election of the Officers of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve at our September meeting. Now we'd like to tell you a little more about each of them.

Kathleen Zaworski-Burke, President

Kathleen is a 41-year resident of San Diego, the last 10 years in Rancho Peñasquitos with her husband and two kids. She's a teacher at Chapman College and a floral designer for Crystal Gardens in Poway. She's the former owner of East meets West, a silk flower custom design shop.

Kathleen brings years of community planning experience to her position with the Friends. Her past community positions included: President of HOOPA (Homeowner's of Peñasquitos Association), member of the Rancho Penasquitos Planning Board, member of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force, and member of the CPC (Community Planning Committee).

Mike Kelly, Vice-President

Mike, 45 years old, has lived in San Diego for 10 years, the last 5 in Mira Mesa, overlooking Peñasquitos Canyon. He's married to Christine E. Whitten, M.D., an anesthesiologist ("gas passer") for Kaiser Hospital on Zion Ave. in San Diego. He's a graduate in business from San Diego State and owns a business, K-W Publications, in Mira Mesa. K-W publishes medical textbooks.

Mike's a member of the Executive Board of the Mira Mesa Planning Group, a member of the Mira Mesa Town Council, and a member of the CAC (Citizens Advisory Committee). He and his wife are members of diverse environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and the Cousteau Society.

Mike edits and writes for the Friends newsletter. This is no surprise since he also writes for a living, being a free-lance editor for a regular column in a computer graphics magazine, *Verbum*, and a writer for a European computer magazine, *Electric Word*. At one time he was a free-lance photo/journalist in South America.

Les Braun, Secretary

Les is 45 and a resident of Mira Mesa since 1970, except for a one-year period. He owns a contracting business, Braun Construction, which specializes in residential remodeling.

He remembers when there was "nothing" in Mira Mesa — except plants — a state of affairs he thinks was just fine! Les is an avid birder and has been active with the Audubon Society. He's also a "plant" person (Does anybody know what the equivalent expression for "birder" is for a plant person?

Somehow "planter" doesn't seem appropriate . . .). Every chance he gets, Les is out hiking and exploring area canyons. He loves to find flowers and other plants he doesn't know and start tracking them down, often by cajoling expert friends into a hike to the same spot. Les leads the Friends monthly nature walks in Peñasquitos Canyon, where he likes to talk about the Indian history of the Canyon and the plants they used in their daily lives.

Besides a love for nature, Les brings 25 years of political activism with him to the Friends. He's walked precincts and operated phone banks for dozens of area candidates. His two most recent causes were the successful campaign of Linda Bernhardt to the City Council, and the PLAN (Prevent Los Angelization Now) campaign (still continuing).

Mike McCormick, Treasurer

Mike is 49 and a resident of 20 years in Mira Mesa, where he lives with his wife and 2 teenagers. He's worked for Long's Drug Store for 29 years and is currently a floor manager at the store at the corner of Black Mtn. Rd. and Mira Mesa Blvd. Despite a busy schedule, he attends college nights.

Like Les, Mike remembers Mira Mesa when it was just "bushes." The Fire Dept. recently made the rounds for brush clearance in Mira Mesa and pointed to the "weeds" in Mike's backyard as candidates for clearance. He quickly pointed out these were native plants and, if they had been willing to stay, could have told them the name and use of each! Like Les, Mike is an avid birder and a plant person. He leads our popular Mystery Tree Hike. On these you can be sure to examine native flowers and other plants along the way and swing your binoculars up to focus on interesting birds that pass by.

It's no accident Mike leads our Mystery Tree walks. He's an amateur historian, and buys old books on San Diego history when he comes across them. He deciphered the mystery of the spanish-era sign map on the "mystery" trees in Peñasquitos Canyon. The "map" identifies the location of a mission treasure chest (recovered back in the 19th century). The story has appeared in our newsletter and in *The Reader*.

When Dr. Elberta "Bert" Fleming, our naturalist founder, died last fall, it was Mike who took over our school education activities that she carried on for years. Now Mike, along with County Ranger Nancy Dollard, visits schools to make presentations and then conducts field trips in the Preserve with the children.

Mike's a founding member of the Friends. He met Bert Fleming at the Ecology Center at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch and helped her launch the group and has been its treasurer from the beginning.



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Outings Schedule (cont'd)

we as citizens can do. We'll cover 6-7 miles. Bring a visor, sunscreen, water, and a snack. Children are welcome.

EARTH DAY 1990 FAIR IN BALBOA PARK

Sunday, Apr. 22. Environmental organizations and businesses sponsor a full day of activities. A chance to learn about all types of recycling, environmental issues. Great for the whole family. Watch your newspaper for details. The Friends will have a booth there.

GEOLOGY WALK

Sunday, Apr. 29, 9 am (2-3 hours). Meet under the power lines on the new Calle Cristobal (go north on Camino Ruiz until it swings west (left) and becomes Calle Cristobal). Learn about the area's geology and see Preserve's only known fossil in the waterfall area of the Preserve. A steep hill to descend and ascend. Nice area for a picnic with the family after the hike if you want to bring a lunch. Bring water.

May

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Saturday, May 5, 11 am and Noon (45 min. each), SD County Archaeological Society.

NATURE WALK

Saturday, May 5, 8 am. (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Penasquitos Preserve. We'll look for wildflowers and other native plants in Lopez Canyon and visit two historical sites, a homestead and an Indian site.

VERNAL POOL WALK — López Ridge

Saturday, May 12, 8 am (2 hours). Meet under the big power lines on the new Calle Cristobal/Sorrento Valley Blvd. on Lopez Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruiz north until it swings west and becomes Calle Cristobal.) Investigate the endangered vernal pools and hopefully see the beautiful, but endangered Mesa Mint and other wildflowers.

PENASQUITOS PARK DAY

Saturday, May 19, 10 am- 3 pm at Johnson-Taylor Ranch. Music, walks, displays, handicrafts for the kids. Tour the histor-

ic Johnson-Taylor Adobe Ranch House. See the Indian and Settler artifacts.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Saturday, May 26, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish/Indian sign map on trees in the Peñasquitos Preserve. Also learn about Preserve plants. Meet at Parking-Staging area.

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10
Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100
Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
 Indian Culture
 Educational Workshops
 School, Family, Youth Programs
 Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
 Other: _____
 I/We would like to volunteer

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. and send to:

Membership Chairperson
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126



Stop Camino Ruíz!

Mike Kelly

Like a vampire that refuses to die and keeps coming back at you — the extension of Camino Ruíz across Peñasquitos Canyon rears its head once again. On May 14 or 15, the issue of extending it across the canyon will be on the City Council docket. If you want to keep the Preserve free of another highway, plan to turn out at this City Council hearing. Call the numbers on our masthead for details on the time since we understand it may change.

Whether or not you can make the meeting, pen a quick note to the City Council expressing your opposition to extending Camino Ruíz across the canyon. You can send your note to the: Clerk of the City Council, 202 C St., San Diego, CA 92101, and ask that it be distributed to all members of the council. How did an issue we in the community thought was settled revivify itself?

Historically, the City of San Diego planned several north-south roads across Peñasquitos Canyon, including: Black Mountain Rd, Camino Ruíz, and Camino Santa Fe. All were mapped in the community plans. Developer Herman Kahn of Horton Plaza fame even proposed an east-west highway down the middle of Peñasquitos Canyon.

Under Mayor Hedgecock, however, the bottom lands of Peñasquitos and López Canyons were donated to the city to be an open-space park, Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The canyons' natural resources were to be protected for future generations. Kahn's plan met a timely death. Community opposition mounted against having three north-south roads crossing this beautiful canyon. It was agreed to widen the existing Black Mountain Road to a six-lane highway (currently underway). Camino Santa Fe was dropped from the Mira Mesa Community Master Plan. City Engineering, however, wanted to retain Camino Ruíz in the Master Plan.

The Mira Mesa Community Planning Group, the Mira Mesa Town Council, the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force (joint city and county), the Friends, and other groups have all voted against Camino Ruíz being extended across the canyon. During the recent drafting of the required update to the Mira Mesa Community Master Plan, these same groups were in agreement to drop Camino Ruíz from the Plan. This update must come before the City Council for a vote. In fact, this submittal is being delayed . . . because of a traffic study that keeps being delayed by City Engineering!

It's bad enough that we have to see rows of houses lining the rims of the canyon, spoiling the "getting-away-from-it-all" experience. Camino Ruíz, however, would bisect the canyon with a huge highway bridge close to its mid-point. The damage to the canyon's natural resources would be immense. An extensive swath of trees, endangered coastal scrub habitat, and riparian (stream) habitat

➡ p. 5 for more

Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends' hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright of the Friends at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

May

NATURE WALK

Sat., May 5, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Sorrento Valley Blvd. entrance to Peñasquitos Preserve.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., May 5, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House.

VERNAL POOLS

Sat., May 12, 8 am (2 hours). Meet under the big power lines on the new Calle Cristobal/Sorrento Valley Blvd. on López Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Ruíz north until it swings west and becomes Calle Cristobal.) The Mesa Mint are blooming along with a dozen other species of flowers.

FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., May 15, 7:30 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. If you're interested in protecting the Preserve come to the meeting.

PENASQUITOS PARK DAY

Sat., May 19, 10 am - 3 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch. Music, nature walks, handicrafts for the kids. Tour the historic ranch and grounds. See the Indian and settler artifacts.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

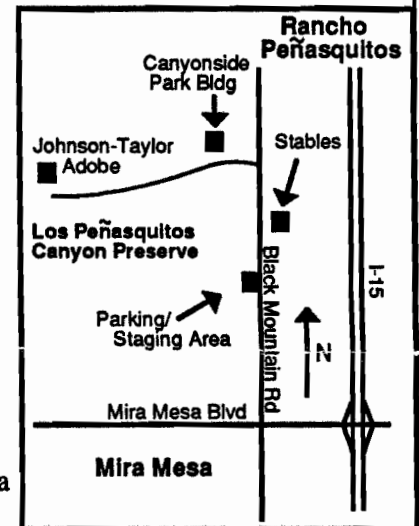
Sat., May 26, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Also learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at the Parking-Staging area.

June

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., June 2, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House.

➡ p. 8 for more



Updates on Ongoing Issues

Friends' Proposal To Expand Preserve Favorably Received

Instead of just fighting encroachment by developers on the Peñasquitos Preserve — encroachments often enshrined in decades-old "approved" maps — the Friends struck out in a new direction this past winter. We proposed adding land to the Preserve that would connect the Preserve where it currently ends on the east end at I-15 all the way to the Poway Town Line. We also supported the proposal of the San Diego Bio-Diversity Project to add land on the Del Mar Mesa to the Preserve, providing an open-space connection north to the San Dieguito River open space.

The County of San Diego was asked by the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Task Force (Councilwomen Wolfsheimer and Bernhardt and Supervisor Golding) to review a series of proposals from the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Task Force (CAC) and the Friends on land acquisitions to the Preserve. The acquisition is to be made with Proposition 70 monies earmarked for the Preserve.

I-15 Acquisition the Best

In a report dated April 30 and presented to the CAC, the County's Park Project Manager for the Canyon, Susan M. Hector, gave their conclusions. Of all the proposals, the

Friends' proposal to expand the Preserve east of I-15 was their preferred acquisition, she informed the group. While all the proposals would add land to the Preserve, the Friends proposal is the "missing link" of open-space that would provide a continuous system of open-space and trails stretching from Torrey Pines State Beach all the way through Poway into the eastern mountains. Much of the land is already publicly owned, with only one 80-acre parcel privately owned.

When Hector showed the possible green-belt and trail system on a map of the county, the importance of this parcel was obvious. Ultimately it may be possible to link this system up with the San Dieguitos System at both the eastern and western ends. After a lengthy discussion of the different possible acquisitions the CAC voted unanimously to recommend to the Task Force approval of the County's choice of making the I-15 acquisition the priority acquisition.

Much still needs to be done to make the acquisition real. The Task Force must approve it. Negotiations with the landowner must be successful and the city and the county must approve the final deal.

Shaw-López Appeal Wins Land for Preserve

April 19, the full Planning Commission of the City of San Diego heard the appeal filed by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the Sierra Club of the Shaw-López Ridge project. Both groups appealed the Subdivision Review Board's approval of the project with unmitigated environmental impacts. This means that the project was being allowed to go ahead despite findings agreed to by all parties concerned that severe environmental habitat destruction would result from the project. In such cases, it's normal that the applicant compensate for the destruction by "mitigating" with habitat revegetation or with an offsetting donation in kind or money to a habitat fund or the like.

Mike Kelly, V.P. of the Friends, and Linda Michaels, Land-Use Committee Chair of the Sierra Club, detailed the environmental destruction the project would cause and denounced the lack of adequate compensation or mitigation by the applicant. It was pointed out that the applicant had stated in public meetings he was willing to make an off-site dona-

tion of other land he owns adjacent to the Peñasquitos Preserve, as mitigation for the habitat destruction. Pam Stevens spoke in favor of the project, but with a series of conditions that included the off-site donation of land.

The Commission voted to approve the project, 4-2, but with a series of conditions, including the donation of land to the Preserve with the same type of endangered coastal scrub habitat. Other conditions included a performance bond to guarantee that the landscaping and design of the lots would hide any potential visual impact on the Preserve. This latter proposal was made by Mike Kelly as a member of the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group and approved by the group as a condition on the project.

While we haven't much hope of turning the clock back on already approved maps and zoning on López Ridge, we can fight to lessen the impact of these developments on the Preserve and protect as much of its natural resources as possible.

Deer Crossing Signs Go In

Friends member Paul McGuire followed up on his and the Friends' concern with the mounting mule deer toll on roads around and through the Preserve, especially Montongo and Black Mountain Roads. City Engineering investigated the complaints we registered and installed deer crossing signs in both directions in the area of the kills. In addition, they improved the lighting at the low-point on Montongo where deer were being regularly killed in a

zone that fell between street lights. Deputy Mayor Abbe Wolfsheimer's office was also helpful with their concern and support on the issue.

While we know deer will continue to be killed on both roads, we may be able to alert drivers to the potential danger, prevent some serious accidents, and reduce the number of deer kills.

Mustard and Rattlesnakes in the Preserve

John Northrop, Ph.D.

Since the cattle were taken out of the Preserve last July, mustard plants have proliferated in the former pastures, particularly at the West end of the canyon near the Rufz Adobe. Because of the drought the cattle were ranging up on area streets creating a traffic hazard. At a distance, the yellow mustard flowers look beautiful to the uninitiated, but actually they are very harmful to the Preserve in three important ways.

First, mustard is not a native plant, but a weed that was introduced to the area by the early settlers around 1800. Like most weeds, the plant is hardy and crowds out native species that might otherwise grow there.

Second, and perhaps more importantly to those hiking in the Preserve, field mice eat the mustard seeds, and rattlesnakes feed on the mice! Therefore, particularly at this time of the year, it is extremely dangerous to walk in the mustard fields without wearing snake-proof boots. Since most hikers and joggers these days wear sneakers, there is a very real possibility that someone will be bitten. This danger is now increased over former years not only because the cattle grazing has ceased, but also because there are a lot more snakes in the canyon than previously. They have been driven there by bulldozers working on Lopez Ridge and elsewhere on the canyon rims.

Third, when the mustard plant stalks dry out in the fall, they become an extreme fire hazard. Anyone dropping cigarette ashes or not putting out a match correctly could easily start an inferno that would sweep up the canyon in a matter of minutes.

Therefore, the following steps should be taken to reduce these hazards:

1. Have City/County crews pull up mustard weeds along a 20 foot wide swath along both sides of the main trail and,
2. Place snake warning signs at the west entrance to the Preserve.

If these two steps are taken promptly, the hazards of mustard weeds growing in the Preserve will be greatly reduced. In addition, all hikers with children would warn them not to pick any flowers, because in so doing they could inadvertently place their hands right in front of a snake.

Snake bits are extremely dangerous, and unless antivenom is injected in the victim within a few hours, death may result. Hikers should keep this in mind when hiking or riding in remote areas of the canyon. Let's keep the Preserve safe!

Rattlesnake Season Is in Full Swing

Mike Kelly

As we hiked the south rim of the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, we came on a startling reminder of spring: a rattler. We were scouting for wildflowers for a Friends walk. My walk companion, Claire Brey, a docent with the Natural History Program, identified the snake as a Southern Pacific rattlesnake. Claire had seen another rattler earlier that same week down on the main trail in the Preserve.

Rattlesnakes shouldn't prevent you from venturing outside to enjoy Peñasquitos or other canyons and parks in the city. Although they can be dangerous, your chances of encountering one, not to speak of being bitten, are slim. You and your children are probably in more danger getting into your car for a trip to the corner store. Given that slim chance, however, here are some sensible precautions to take should you encounter a rattler.

Where To Look

There's no substitute for looking where you step or reach. On the main road in Peñasquitos Preserve, it's easy to see when a rattler is in the road ahead. It's tougher if you go on one of the smaller trails. Some people use their walking sticks to regularly tap the trail they're walking or the rocks they're climbing. It's said to be an old Indian practice that warns the snakes and gives them the opportunity to get out of your way.

Rocky areas near water are a common place for rattlesnakes to hang out. Three such places in Peñasquitos Canyon are the slopes around Horseman's Park and the creek, the waterfall area, the gorge west of the waterfall, and around the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House (see "Special Projects" in the article on volunteers in this same issue). Rattlers are seen more frequently in these areas than in other places. Don't reach into holes or crevices! And don't climb up rocks you haven't first scouted.

Freeze!

What can you do when you do encounter a rattlesnake! Agree with your group that when someone yells "Freeze!" you will all stop in your tracks and not push anyone into the snake ahead. Move well away from it. Stamp your feet in case it hasn't seen you. Usual, it will move off. Don't let anyone in your group approach it with a stick to poke at it, because the snake may strike back in self-defense. It can strike very fast! Give the snake a chance to move on and live. Afterall, we're visiting it in its home, not ours.

Rattlers Don't Always "Rattle"

Don't make the mistake of believing a snake is harmless

Peñasquitos Park Day 1990

[Compiled from Citizens Advisory Committee flyers]

Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come to the historic Johanson-Taylor Ranch House for a day of fun for the whole family. All activities are free. This 11th annual celebration is sponsored by the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Task Force. (The Task Force is a joint city and county group that studies and makes recommendations on issues affecting Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Task Force members are representatives from the city council and county supervisor districts bordering the Preserve. The current chairperson is Councilwoman Linda Bernhardt, while the other two members are Deputy Mayor Abbe Wolfsheimer and Supervisor Susan Golding.)

Lots of activities are planned

- Short nature hikes by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon.
- Guided tours of the historic building and grounds by the San Diego Archeological Society.
- Exhibits about the geology, history, plants and animals of this Peñasquitos Canyon preserve.
- Children's games and activities led by San Diego County Park Ranger Nancy Dawson Dollard, who is in charge of environmental education for the County.
- Live country western band music.
- Free hay ride shuttles from parking area to ranch house.
- Hot dogs, soft drinks, frozen yogurt, and souvenir T-Shirts available for a small donation.

Special all-canyon hike

A special will start at 7:30 a.m., ending before noon,

one-way the entire 6-mile length of Peñasquitos Canyon. Hikers meet at the parking/staging area on Black Mountain Road south of Peñasquitos Creek, are shuttled by county van to the west end at Sorrento Valley Blvd., and hike back to the east end to arrive at Park Day festivities. The walk will be led by an experienced nature interpreter.

For this all-morning hike, reservations are required, and can be made by calling the County Parks Dept. at 565-3600. Hikers should wear sturdy shoes, a sun visor, sun block, bring water and a snack. The terrain is mostly gentle, with a little uphill in the middle of the canyon, so it's a good hike for families. However, due to the length, preschoolers should only come if their parents are prepared to carry them part of the way!

Volunteers are needed to help with refreshments, souvenir T-Shirts, and an information table — no previous experience with the canyon is required, simply a willingness to give an hour of your time when you come to Park Day. To volunteer, call Pam Stevens, Mira Mesa Town Council CAC representative, 566-2261.

How to get there

(Between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos; from Rancho Peñasquitos, take Black Mountain Rd. south, then turn right at Canyonside Park.

For more information, call Friends of Peñasquitos Vice-president Mike Kelly, 566-6489, or any of these CAC members in your community: Bob Brooks, 484-9327, Rancho Peñasquitos Town Council; Corey Buckner, 484-0413, Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board; Park Day chair Bob Dingeman, 566-6083, Scripps Ranch Civic Association; CAC chair Mark LaBree, 271-8709, Mira Mesa Community Planning Group.

Come and enjoy a day in our "wild backyard."

Rattlesnakes (cont'd)

because it doesn't "rattle" at you. Sometimes they don't, especially the young. The Southern Pacific we encountered appeared to be freshly hatched. It didn't "rattle," despite the fact that we were only three feet away.

Don't think that because it's a baby it's harmless. Quite the contrary. It has a full dose of venom, and like many juveniles, it can be impetuous. It hasn't the maturity and control of an adult snake to differentiate dangers to it in its environment. Often an adult warns you off with its "rattle" or even a "dry" bite, with no venom delivered.

Carry a Snake-bite Kit

A good precaution is to carry a snake-bite kit with you. The Extractor is a popular small kit that fits into a pocket with ease. It's available in sporting goods stores. Study the instructions before your next hike. It uses a vacuum pump device to suck the poison out of a bite and is useful for bee and mosquito bites as well. Keep in mind, however, that

when it's a snake bite you're treating, it's not a substitute for getting the person medical help as quickly as possible. It won't get all the poison out (if it was injected with the bite), and with some people it doesn't take much poison to become seriously ill or die.

Having said all of this, do you know where you're most apt to encounter a rattler? In your back yard, if you're one of the tens of thousands of San Diegans who live on or near a canyon. In my cul-de-sac alone in the past four years, neighbors found two rattlesnakers in garages, two coming out from under the back deck, one on the front deck, and two in the treet. Last summer, I was about to step up on my redwood deck in the back when I heard a "rattle." I looked down to see a rattler two feet away. I'm convinced I broke the outdoor sideways broad-jump record in putting some distance between us. He in turn headed away — under the deck. In the warm weather I try to remind myself to take a good look as I enter the garage and as I step on the decks or walk in the yard.

Thanks to Our Many Volunteers

Only the active help of our members makes it possible to defend Pefiasquitos Canyon. We would like to thank some of these members for their recent efforts:

Earth Day 1990 Fair

The Friends had a well-staffed booth during the Earth Day celebration in Balboa Park April 21 due to the efforts of: Les Braun, Brian Swanson, Bob & Peggy Chamberlain, Don Albright, Carla Scott, Lenore Eddington, Steve Keller, Chris Whitten, Vida Bajic, and Mike Kelly. When not staffing booths, Brian also leads our monthly bird walks.

Special thanks go to Les Braun for his "before and after" aerial shots of Pefiasquitos Canyon. They were the focal point of the booth all day. Also to Chris Whitten and Mike Kelly, whose album of photos of Preserve plants and animals amazed even habitués of the Canyon.

Spring Fling in Penasquitos

The Friends booth at this festival hosted by the Pefiasquitos Town Council was staffed by: Mike McCormick, Les Braun, Vida Bajic, Chris Whitten, and Mike Kelly for staffing it. Mike McCormick also leads our intriguing Mystery Tree hikes each month, while Les Braun guides the monthly nature walks.

Newsletter

When it's newsletter time, Vida Bajic is ready to jump in

and get the newsletter out, often without any advance notice.

Deer Kills

Paul McGuire got the ball rolling on the problem of deer kills. See the article in this issue.

Bookkeeping

Thanks to Mrs. Marianne Turlington for doing the friends bookkeeping records for so many years.

Photography and illustrations

Most of the photographs of animals and plants of the preserve in the Friends' album were done by Chris Whitten. She also did all of the scanned images of animals and plants that appeared in our newsletter and flyer pages over the past year. She also did several original illustrations for our newsletter, including the mule deer buck.

Special projects

Thanks to Don Albright, long-time Friends' Board Member, who braved a Southern Pacific Rattler, along with Mike Kelly and Supervising Ranger Reneene Mowry, to cut down a damaged pepper tree at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch (to make way for a new planting, naturally). The rattler disappeared into a hole under the tree. We kept a wary eye on the hole as we brought down the tree! Don also leads our ever-popular Geology Walk.

Camino Ruíz (cont'd)

would be destroyed. The bridge would be an eyesore for the thousands of hikers, joggers, equestrians, and bikers who enjoy the Preserve. It would put additional pressure on the canyon's animal population.

If you want to get a taste of what City Engineering has in store for you, go to the new Park Village developments and work your way to the intersection of Park Village Parkway and Camino Ruíz on the north side of the canyon. Or visit the Canyon Ridge area off Calle Cristobal and Camino Ruíz on the south side and look across the canyon. As Camino Ruíz extends beyond the traffic light into the Preserve, you see a dagger pointed at the heart of the Preserve. Operating under old maps and developer agreements, City Engineering is trying to bypass the will of the citizenry by building this highway in segments. This issue only came to public attention again when it was discovered that another segment was to be built extending the current Camino Ruíz further north from its current terminus at Calle Cristobal.

Camino Ruíz isn't going to solve the area's traffic problems. Interstate 5 is being expanded to 20 lanes; Black Mountain Road to six lanes; Calle Cristobal connects Mira Mesa, Sorrento Valley and Route 5 along López Ridge; 8A will open up more routes out of Poway, 56 will open up a new east-west route; and so on. How many highways do we need? When City Engineering can't leave the citizens with a narrow six-mile by half-mile greenbelt, you know something is deeply wrong philosophically with the department.

City Engineering's attitude toward Camino Ruíz reminds me of the Bureau of Reclamation under Floyd Dominy. The Bureau was given the mandate to build dams to supply water for irrigation and power for electricity. Over time the Bureau took on a life of its own independent of who was in power in Washington. Dominy and the Bureau were distinctly uncomfortable with the whole idea of a free-flowing river that reached the ocean without several dams stretching across it. They ended up building many unwanted, useless, and even dangerous dams at tremendous cost to the taxpayers — because that was their reason-for-being. City Engineering seems to have that attitude toward roads. They're uncomfortable with the whole idea of, dare I say it, open space. After all, what's a city for — if not for buildings and roads, right?

It's time to reign in City Engineering and bring it back under the control of the voters and our representatives. Stop the "sequential seduction" of building this road in segments. Don't let the department present us with fait accompli of "we only need another mile of road" to complete it, why stop now when we've spent all this money," etc. The millions earmarked for Camino Ruíz should be spent on a real contribution to our traffic problems: mass transit. What we really need to solve our traffic problems are mass transit lines up I-15, along the coast or I-5, and along east-west corridors such as Miramar Road.

Join us in demanding that City Engineering respect the wishes of the Mira Mesa and other community planning groups. Save the Preserve — NO to Camino Ruíz!

Rodent Residents — Part III

Pamela (PJ) Piburn

Volunteer, County Parks & Recreation

The sun turns to a red-orange ball in the western sky and the creatures of the night began to stir. Some are rodents, some are not. Squirrels disappear into their burrows to rest. As you're leaving the Preserve, you may glimpse a rabbit or two hopping along the trail in the grassy field near the gate.

The nocturnal behavior of rodents and other small animals is one obstacle to observing them in the wild. Living in the Preserve, I'm fortunate to catch hints of these mammals at night. While researchers have special equipment for studying burrowers in their habitats, I can only speculate as I listen to their sounds — about the presence of moles, who rarely come to the surface, or tiny shrews, who rummage beneath leaves in the dark of night (see the following list of San Diego's burrowing mammals).

Rodents, as discussed in an earlier article, include ground squirrels, gophers, and several varieties of mice and rats. One characteristic shared by all rodents and other small burrowing mammals is they all serve as prey for hawks, owls, snakes, coyotes, bobcats, opossums, skunks, and weasels. Let's discuss some other small animals and see how they compare to rodents.

Teeth and ears, hair and hares, and . . .

First, and most closely related to rodents, are rabbits and hares. Although these furry animals have four ever-growing incisors like rodents, they also have an additional pair of small incisors behind the upper ones. A more obvious distinction is ear size. In general, rabbits ears are proportionately larger than rodents.

Rabbits spend less time underground than rodents, preferring to spend their days sunning themselves in shallow hollows called forms. They may enlarge abandoned rodent burrows for their nests.

The young of rabbits and rodents are born naked, blind, and deaf, and are nursed by the mother in the nest. Hares are born fully furred, with eyes open. All feed on grasses, but rodents have a more varied diet, including insects, seeds, and roots.

Rabbits possess a unique physiological process of re-ingesting some of their own feces. Coprophagy allows rabbits to absorb extra vitamins. The second time the stools are passed, they are not eaten. This process is similar to cattle chewing their cud.

The California meadow mouse (vole) shares the grass covered terrain with the rabbit and has a common feature of cyclical populations. Rabbit populations increase to great proportions approximately every ten years, at which time they are fed on heavily by predators. Vole populations exhibit similar increases about every three to four years.

The puffball tails of rabbits and hares are much smaller than rodents long, scantily haired ones. They are more suit-

ed to hopping. Rodents' tails are needed for balance while running and climbing. Moles are curious animals whose tails serve a very important function. Sensitive nerve endings allow moles to use their naked tails to guide themselves backward through their burrows.

Insectivores

Moles belong to a group of mammals called insectivores. They have very different tooth structures from rabbits and rodents. These teeth are well suited for grasping worms and insects that make up the moles' diet. Moles are true burrowers. Mice may use these burrows, but if caught by the mole, become its dinner.

The rodent most similar to moles is the pocket gopher. Gophers rarely come out of their burrows. Both species have super sensitive tails and hair without nap. This allows them to move forward and backward in the tunnels with ease. A quick shake of their body cleans all the dirt from the fur.

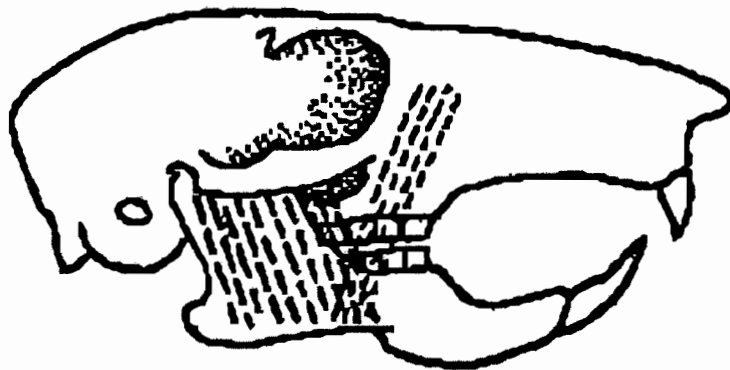
Gophers' front feet and claws are larger than most rodents. Moles share this special digging adaptation. In addition, the skeletal structure of the moles' forelimbs is designed at an angle — moles dig with a breast stroke swimming motion — and is enlarged for added strength.

Shrews, another insectivore, have tiny mouse-like feet. Their teeth are similar to moles, with one unique aspect. Shrews teeth contain a poison capable of paralyzing its victims. Since shrews are barely as big as your thumb, and their victims over half their size again, this gives them an advantage.

Smaller in stature, but with a high rate of metabolism, shrews must eat almost continually. They do not hibernate and rarely live to be two years of age. Mice and rats live a more leisurely life and may live five or more years.

Predators come in a wide variety

While there's a wide variety of creatures — including snakes, hawks, and owls that feed on rodents — I'd like to



Skull cross-section of a ground squirrel

focus on burrowing predators of rodents. Another rat-like animal which may occupy burrows and feed upon rodents is the opossum. Like the kangaroo, the opossum is a marsupial, raising its young in a pouch. It has very sharp teeth and a hairless tail. The tail differs from rodents' tails because it is prehensile and can be used to hold onto tree branches.

I have observed two of these scraggly grey creatures on different occasions. Drawn by an irritating scratching sound coming from my empty trash can, I was surprised to see two brown eyes peering back at me as I looked into the depths. Closer inspection was met with a clam opening of the opossum's jaws and a very threatening hiss! When I tipped the can to let it escape, it "played possum" and flopped to its side. Left alone, it soon crept out and wandered off towards the trees.

Skunks also hunt rodents and nest in enlarged burrows.

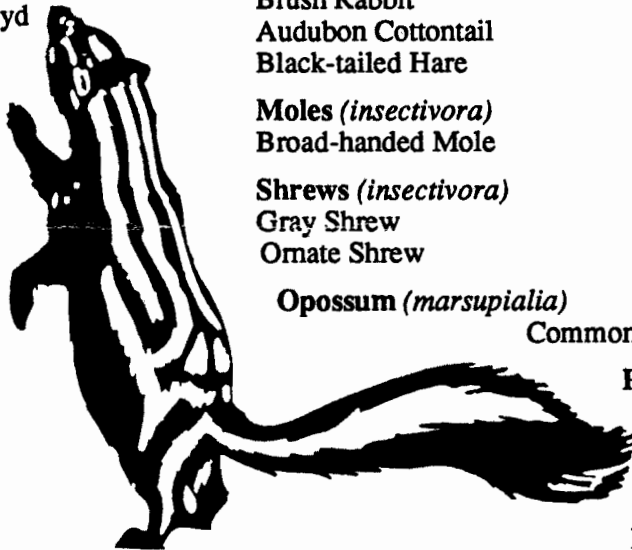
San Diego County Burrowing Mammals

[Compiled from range maps found in Lloyd G. Ingles, Mammals of the Pacific States.]

Rodents (*Rodentia*)

Nutria (introduced species found in marsh areas)

House Mouse
California Meadow Mouse (vole)
Desert Wood Rat
White-throated Wood Rat
Southern Grasshopper Mouse
Deer Mouse
Brush Mouse
Cactus Mouse
California Mouse
Western Harvest Mouse
Pacific Kangaroo Rat
California Pocket Mouse
Little Pocket Mouse
San Diego Pocket Mouse
Botta Pocket Gopher
Western Gray Squirrel
California Ground Squirrel



Skunks include rodents in their diet

Rabbits (*lagomorpha*)

Brush Rabbit
Audubon Cottontail
Black-tailed Hare

Moles (*insectivora*)
Broad-handed Mole

Shrews (*insectivora*)
Gray Shrew
Ornate Shrew

Opossum (*marsupialia*)

Common Opossum

Predators (*carnivora*)

Gray Fox
Coyote
Raccoon
Ring-tail cat
Long-tail Weasel
Badger
Striped Skunk
Spotted Skunk
Bobcat

[Recommended reading to accompany final article]

Volunteer Help Needed

The Friends need help to maintain our ambitious goals of expanding the Preserve, protecting its natural resources, continuing our grade school education reachout, maintaining a weekly nature walk program, as well as conducting guided tours for everyone from cub scout dens to visiting Japanese school children (100 on one hike alone!).

As you know, we are non-profit and have no paid staff. We're all volunteers. We appreciate the tax-deductible donations you make, but especially value the time you can give. Here are some of the things we need help with:

Peñasquitos Park Day, May 19, 10 am - 3 pm, staffing our exhibit for an hour or two.

Newsletter: writing (we'll help train you), typing (you can even use our computer, we'll train), proofing, etc.

Membership database: we need someone to maintain our database. Requires about one-half hour per week and a once-a-month run of labels. Your IBM compatible or ours.

Docents: people who want to learn about the Preserve and lead nature walks. We'll train.

Anybody who wants to help the Preserve is needed. We'll find a way you can help.

We also need a desk for our office if you have one laying unused in your garage.

Call Mike Kelly at 566-6489 if you can help.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
 P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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Special Notice to First-Time Readers

If you're someone who signed our mailing list at Earth Day or a similar activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

Outings (cont'd)

GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., June 3, 9 am (2-3 hours). Meet under the big power lines on the new Calle Cristobal/Sorrenton Valley Blvd. on López Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Rufz north until it swings west and becomes Calle Cristobal.) Learn about the area's geology and see the Preserve's only known fossil. The hike's destination, the waterfall, is a great picnic spot for those that want to bring lunch and stay.

NATURE WALK

Sat., June 9, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area. We'll look for flowers and plants that the Indians and Settlers used while living in the canyon.

DUSK WALK

Thurs., June 14, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. Bring insect lotion! This is a good time of the night to see the deer, coyotes, and other creatures of the night.

BIRD WALK

Sat., June 23, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. Bring a bird book and binoculars. This is oriented to beginners, but experienced birders welcome!

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., June 30, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Also learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at the Parking-Staging area.

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10

Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to:

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

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

Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



Summer Schedule

With summer comes hot weather and vacations. Both reduce participation on our walks. For this reason you'll note that our outing schedule has shifted to more dusk walks, when it's cooler, and more during the week, since people go away more on summer weekends.

Since it's also the time of the year when our directors and other members also go on vacation, this issue is for both June and July. This will give us a bit of a break, but also allow us to catch up and bring the August issue out on time. You should receive the August issue the last week in July.

Sensitive Lands and the Newland Land Swap

Dave Hogan, San Diego Bio-Diversity Project

In the last month, City Council members Abbe Wolfsheimer and Linda Bernhardt began a campaign to convince the city council to take away the wholesale exemptions to RPO (Resource Protection Ordinance) granted by the old anti-environment city council to developers. RPO restricts the extent and type of development permissible on steep slopes and other sensitive lands. Everything about this exemption withdrawal is good except that if it goes through, Newland-California threatens not to go through with the land swap deal approved by the voters several years ago, "Prop. C." The voters approved a swap of Newland owned land north of the waterfall area (the stock pond area) and about \$1 million in cash in exchange for city-owned land in Sorrento Hills next to I-5.

The reason Newland is now backing away from the land swap is that much of the Sorrento Hills property is undevelopable if RPO is applied to it. The San Diego Biodiversity Project feels that the land swap must go through. The Newland property around the stock pond area is much more sensitive to development than the Sorrento Hills property because it is the only open land left that could connect the CalTran vernal pool preserves to Peñasquitos Canyon. It is unfortunate that in this situation, Newland must get their way (as always).

What you can do. Write Councilmembers Wolfsheimer and Bernhardt [202 C St., San Diego 92101] and tell them you want the land swap to go through. But thank them for taking away past developer privileges.

[Editor's note: At a meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee on June 6, Jim Whelan of Newland-California said that their filing of a development map for their land-swap property didn't mean they have pulled out of the landswap deal. The filing was meant to show that they will exercise their option to pull out of the swap if they have no guarantee of the number of acres they'll be allowed to develop on the city-owned Sorrento Hills land.]

Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water and a snack for longer hikes. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends' hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright of the Friends at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

June

DUSK NATURE WALK

Thurs., June 14, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. Bring insect lotion! This is a good time of the night to see the deer, coyotes, bobcats, and other creatures of the night.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., June 16, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. See Indian & settler artifacts, authentic adobe ranch house, and more.

FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., June 19, 7 pm (note the time change) at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. If you're interested in protecting the Preserve come to the meeting.

BIRD WALK

Sat., June 23, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. Bring a bird book and binoculars. This is oriented to beginners, but experienced birders welcome!

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., June 30, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at the Parking-Staging area.

July

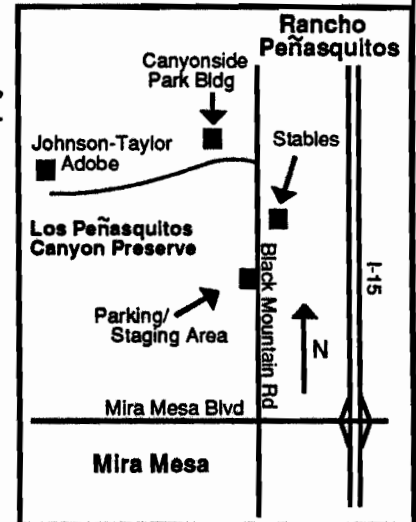
JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., July 7, 11 am & noon (45 min. each), see description above.

DUSK NATURE WALK

Fri., July 6, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Bring insect lotion! This is a good time of the night to see the deer, coyotes, bobcats and other creatures of the night.

➡ p.6 for more



Updates on Ongoing Issues

Camino Ruiz Dealt Blow by Council

May 14, the San Diego City Council dealt a blow to plans by City Traffic and Engineering to extend Camino Ruíz across Peñasquitos Canyon. As we reported this Department had recently completed a portion of Camino Ruíz from Peñasquitos that extended into the bottom lands of the Preserve. They were poised to complete another segment of the road on the south side of the canyon, by extending the road out onto a ridge overlooking the Preserve. That would have left "only" one more segment to complete, a bridge connecting these two segments across the center of the Preserve. This despite the fact that community groups on both sides of the canyon are unanimously on the record against building Camino Ruíz across the canyon.

City Council member Linda Bernhardt asked that the matter be put on the City Council agenda, since City Traffic and Engineering seemed determined to thwart the popular will and build this road/bridge across the canyon.

Speaking against the proposed road at the hearing before the full City Council were Mike Kelly for the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Pam Stevens on behalf of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Peñasquitos Task Force, Linda Michael as Land Use Committee Chair of the Sierra Club, Garrett Beaumont for the Homeowners at Canyon Ridge and Jeff Stevens as an officer of the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group. All pointed out that building the bridge would destroy a vital part of the canyon and its overall integrity as an open-

space preserve. Several speakers detailed the history of opposition to this road, opposition that includes Mayors Wilson and Hedgecock.

City Council members Bernhardt and Wolfsheimer made their support of the community's position forcefully known. Maneuvering like crazy, the city bureaucracy tried to avoid a vote on the issue. Both the City Manager and the City Attorney argued that the Council couldn't vote to take the road out of the City's Master Plan at this time. They claimed that it could only be done as part of the update of the community master plans of either Mira Mesa or Rancho Peñasquitos. Yet these very plans have been delayed because of the lack of traffic studies by City Traffic and Engineering! Meanwhile they keep building it, obviously hoping to either avoid a vote or present a *fait accompli*.

The motion that was unanimously approved by the Council directed that the City staff to not spend another dollar on Camino Ruíz in any fashion and that they work toward taking it out of the master plan at the first opportunity. While this certainly isn't the last we'll hear of Camino Ruíz, it's a step in the right direction.

Correction

In the article about Camino Ruiz in the last issue, we said that developer "Herman Kahn" had proposed an east-west highway down the middle of the canyon. He was not the one proposing this. We regret the error.

Park Day Drew Big Crowd

Peñasquitos Park Day, May 19, was well attended as hundreds of residents of nearby neighborhoods turned out for a day of nature oriented activities. Attendance was up over last year. The annual event is sponsored by the joint city-county Peñasquitos Task Force and organized by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to this task force.

San Diego County Archaeological Society volunteers wore costumes appropriate to the historical period the Johnson-Taylor ranch house is being restored to, roughly the 1860s. They also gave guided tours of the newly restored sections of the historic building and grounds. They also had exhibits showing the restoration of the building.

The Friends had several exhibits of the plants and animals of the Preserve and led a number of well-attended nature walks. Friends Board member Mike McCormick led one of the walks in a costume of a Friar of the mission period, complete with a shepherd's staff.

County Ranger Nancy Dollard organized a popular series of nature games for children. Reneene Mowry and a number of other County Rangers, both staff and volunteers, were on hand to help with the activities.

As has been the custom, a number of awards were presented to people who have been active on behalf of the Preserve. The Friends were one of the those singled out for a "Special Commendation" for their contribution to the Preserve. A special presentation was made by Task Force and City Council Member Linda Bernhardt. She announced that the Task Force had voted to dedicate the new nature trail on the south side of the Preserve in the name of Dr. Elberta Fleming, the founder of the Friends. Bill Jennings, who worked with Dr. Fleming and the Friends for many years, accepted the dedication on behalf of the Fleming family. A map detailing the route of the signed nature trail was presented to the Friends. Bernhardt told the audience that it was also the intention of the Task Force that a future interpretive center be named after Dr. Fleming.

Thanks to Dr. John Northrop, Don Albright, Les Braun, Mike McCormick, Chris Whitten, and Mike Kelly for volunteering their time. Several new members were signed up for the Friends and two people volunteered their help with the membership database and newsletter.

Vernal Pools Threatened Again

Mike Kelly

Vernal pools in Poway and Miramar are threatened with destruction through development. Recent headlines tell part of the story: "Suit halts auction at Miramar — Environmental groups claim species in danger" (*S.D. Union*, May 12), "Vernal pool sites stir environmental concern in Poway" (*Poway News Chieftan*, May 10), "Nearby 'pools' being coveted by naturalists and developers" (*Penasquitos News*, May 10). Since the mentioned pools aren't in the Peflasquitos Canyon Preserve, why are we concerned and why did our group join in the lawsuit around the pools on Navy land? Let's look at the Navy suit first.

Suit Against the Navy

The Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve joined with vernal pool biologists, including Dr. Ellen Bauder, the Audubon Society, The Herpatological Society, The California Native Plant Society, and others in a suit to delay the Navy's planned auction of vernal pools land it owns. This land lies southeast of the intersection of Route 52 and I-15. The sale came as a surprise to area biologists conducting experiments in the vernal pools on Navy land. They had been assured by the Navy that no such action was planned.

The Navy planned their sale without conducting an environmental impact statement (EIS) as required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Navy was happy to have the support of environmentalists when they were fending off a regional airport on their property, even arguing that it would have an adverse impact on the sensitive ecology of the vernal pool areas! We agree development of these parcels will have an adverse impact and we want this explored through the normal procedure of an EIS. The focus of the suit was to force a postponement of the suit and require that the Navy go through the same type of environmental review that anyone else would have to go through. In an early victory when the suit was filed May 13, the Navy agreed to delay any auction at least until August 14 and announced they would decide whether or not to conduct an EIS review.

Why Are the Navy Pools Important?

The land the Navy proposes to sell is similar to other vernal pool areas. Miramar-49 as the land is called, is home to 23 species of endangered or sensitive plants, the rare San Diego coast horned lizard, the rare California gnatcatcher bird, a variety of habitats (coastal sage scrub, riparian wetlands, wildlife corridors) in danger of complete extinction, and many sensitive bird species (golden eagle, burrowing owl, great horned owl, northern harrier, American kestrel, black-shouldered kite, and others). The Mesa Mint, on the Federal Endangered Species List, is not to be found in Miramar-49 pools, although it is found in several other area pools. So this flower is not an issue in the suit. The vernal pools and surrounding areas are home to too

many important species to allow their destruction to continue. We've already lost some 93–97% of these areas in recent decades. This is because of the type of land they're found on.

Developers Covet Mesa Tops

It shouldn't surprise us vernal pools have often been in the news over the last decade. Vernal pools are found on the flat mesa tops that developers covet for their row houses, their easiest product to build. In fact, these pools were once found all over San Diego. Today, after decades of development, only 3–7% of the pools remain. Remaining pools are to be found on the Miramar Naval Air Station, Tierrasanta, the Del Mar Mesa, Otay Mesa, Poway, Peflasquitos Canyon Preserve, and Mira Mesa. Where once they numbered in the thousands, we now count them by the dozens in San Diego. Are these pools so important they should stand in the path of "progress" (read: bulldozers and profit)? Where do we draw the line on their destruction? What's the magic number?

Critical Size Versus Isolation

Although many of the species that call vernal pools and their surrounding coastal sage scrub and other habitats their home are rare or endangered, the vernal pools themselves are not on the endangered list, yet. Too often, by the time a species wins a place on some governmental entities endangered species list, it's too late. Their numbers have already passed the point of no return, of critical size. We are finding through the rapid loss of numerous species that each species has a minimum number of its kind, of genetic diversity, or a minimum amount of space of a certain type of habitat it needs to survive. We often don't know what the magic number is.

With vernal pools we don't know many of the vital connections with the surrounding habitat. We don't know how many vernal pools are necessary as a minimum survival population. Scientists have only begun to study them in recent years. To give an example of the importance of numbers and geographic dispersion, let's look at the situation of the pools in this, the fourth year of our drought.

Holding water for several months in the spring is the essence of a vernal pool. It's what keeps plants such as grasses from gaining a foothold in the pools and it's what sustains several species of unique plants endemic to the pools and certain animal species such as the fairy shrimp and Pacific tree frog. This year, however, relatively few of the pools held water for more than 1-2 weeks. We didn't see some of these species in many of the pools. They may have ceased to exist, even in a dormant form, in some of these pools. A century ago this might not have been very important. Since the pools dotted the mesa tops throughout

Problems with West End Access to the Preserve — Part I

Dr. John Northrop, Founding Director

[Editor's note: In this article Dr. Northrop discusses a number of options to solve a problem that will soon develop with access to the west entrance of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This access will change dramatically causing problems for park visitors during the rainy season. This will occur when the bridge being built across López Creek is finished this fall. It will connect Sorrento Valley Boulevard where it currently ends at the west entrance to the Preserve, to the new Calle Cristobal. Calle Cristobal runs east-west across López Ridge, connecting Sorrento Valley Blvd. to Camino Ruíz. Visitors to the west end of the Preserve currently park their vehicles on Sorrento Valley Blvd. or in the parking lots of businesses near the park entrance. Calle Cristobal will act as a bypass to Mira Mesa Blvd. during the rush hours, carrying traffic to and from the newly widened Sorrento Valley Blvd. Parking along the Blvd. will probably be prohibited. Currently, the historic "Road to Yuma" begins at the west entrance to the Preserve, on the *north* side of Calle Cristobal as it connects to Sorrento Valley Blvd. This is the road people walk in on that runs past the Ruíz Adobe ruins. Besides security or emergency vehicles, only hang gliders going to a nearby hill are allowed to drive vehicles on this road.]

When Calle Cristobal is finished, the present west entrance to the Preserve will be closed off for all but security and emergency vehicles. Park visitors will have to use the new Parking/Staging area about half a mile away on the *south* side of Calle Cristobal, southwest of the bridge across López Creek, to reach the Preserve. Access to the Ruíz Adobe from there would be impossible because the causeway from the Parking/Staging area crosses López Creek and simply ends near the manhole cover on the east side of López Creek just north of the bridge. To make matters worse, both a brow ditch and a storm drain bringing runoff from López Ridge terminate at the same location creating a mud hole. Horseback riders and fishermen wearing hip boots are the only park users that can get through in winter. The situation is compounded because a confined aquifer was tapped when the sewer line was put in and water from it flows into López Creek from the manhole just upstream from the bridge. That's why the present dirt road from the Parking/Staging area makes a sharp U-turn around that manhole.

History

The present service road from the Parking/Staging area, across López Creek and under the bridge on the east side of the Creek was made so that maintenance crews could reach the manhole just north of the bridge in case of a sewer spill. In 1989, the Park and Recreation department proposed to continue the trail from its terminus under the bridge to Peñasquitos Canyon by building "rustic bridges" over López Creek, or, alternately, filling in its channel

with gravel at the proposed bridge sites. The bridge idea was scrapped because they would be washed out every winter by floods. The Fish & Game commission shot down the gravel paths idea because they would block the movement of crayfish and other denizens of the deep pools in López Creek from migrating up- and downstream.

One of these pools, formed during the floods of 1978 and 1983, is at the base of López Ridge near where there is a large stand of beaver-tail cactus under the 100-year old eucalyptus trees. This is the deepest hole in the creek bed and blocks off the old trail that formerly linked the López Canyon trail with the service road in Peñasquitos Canyon. This "hole" was later dammed when the sewer line was put in just west of it, creating a small pool. A new stream channel then formed along the route of the '78 & '83 floodway over the roots of the eucalyptus trees and into the pasture. Discharge from this distributary has created new wetlands between López Ridge west of the hang glider area and the present channel of Peñasquitos Creek in the area that was formerly a wide stream meander. (Peñasquitos Creek presently flows west from the hang glider area in a straight trench which was dug by the Ruíz-Alverado ranchers to by-pass this meander and drain the lands for bean fields. Mud removed from the trench forms the "levees" on both sides of the channel that are now used by bikers.)

Some water from López Creek still follows its historic channel westward from the 1983 flood-created hole and enters Peñasquitos Creek near the Ruíz Adobe where it flows through culverts under the Peñasquitos service road. This distributary channel crosses the wetlands and forms a duck pond near where the SDG&E power lines come closest to the last manhole cover of the López Canyon sewer line. There is no service road reaching this manhole as such a roadway would have to cross the main channel of López Creek if approached from the south and the López Creek "duck pond" distributary if approached from the north.

In the fall of 1989, a third distributary of López Creek was formed when the Park and Recreation Department scraped out a football field-sized depression along the southern edge of the wetlands, along the base of the roadbed, as "mitigation" for wetlands lost by the construction of Calle Cristobal. During the winter rains of 1989-90, much of the water cascading down from under the Calle Cristobal bridge flowed into this depression forming the third distributary of López Creek. Since the wetlands are fed by groundwater, this area stays moist most of the year and is gradually becoming covered with vegetation.

In Part II of this article we'll look at the various trail options.

Rodent Residents — Part IV (Final)

Pamela (PJ) Piburn

Volunteer, County Parks & Recreation

Predators and Rodents

The full moon shines over Peñasquitos Canyon. Do you know where your rodents are? Chances are this time of year they're cautiously scurrying about in search of food. The recent summer-like temperatures have unearthed the rodents major predators, the snakes. Rattlesnakes, gopher snakes, and rosy boas have all been seen in the canyon.

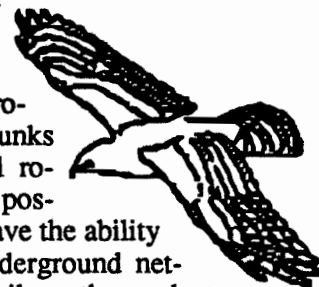
Rodents consume varieties of insects, weeds, and grasses. At the same time, they serve as food for birds, reptiles and larger mammals. They also fall prey to a large number of parasites, including lice, worms, and fleas. Although a chief food source for so many others, rodents are able to maintain their populations through short gestation (pregnancy) periods and producing large families.

People and Rodents

What effect do humans have on these rodent populations? Agricultural eradication programs reduce their numbers. Gophers are especially irritating to farmers. Their burrow mounds cause damage to farm machinery and their holes result in injuries to livestock.

As always, destruction of habitat for construction of buildings and roadways reduces populations. Rodents are quite adaptable however, and have taken to living in urban areas. This brings us to the effect rodents have on humans. Mice and rats are great carriers of disease.

Their fur and nests harbor fleas capable of spreading plague. These fleas have also infested rural varieties of rodents such as mountain chipmunks and ground squirrels. Not all rodents carry the plague, but the possibility exists. Infected fleas have the ability to remain dormant in the underground network of tunnels and nests until another rodent passes by.



Although recorded incidents of humans contracting plague from wild rodents in recent times are rare, you're cautioned not to sit on the ground near obvious squirrel colonies and to remove chipmunks from mountain cabins. You should also not handle any rodent you might find, especially if it is dead.

Balance Is the Goal

To achieve harmony in the world, humans must strive to keep in balance with nature, even with the smallest of residents, the rodents. Variations in rodent populations affect all creatures, from the control of insect pests to the survival of birds of prey and other mammals, including ourselves.

©1990 PJ Piburn

(Vernal Pools cont'd)

the area, we could expect the pools that did hold more water and sustain more life, to repopulate the other pools when the drought broke. How would this repopulation occur? Migration of those able to cross land, such as the frogs, would be one way. Birds, rabbits, other animals, and the wind would carry the seeds and cysts from one pool to the next and so on.

The geographic dispersion of the pools in many different microclimates in our area was their protection against years of extreme drought or extreme rain. Today, however, we have no such built-in safety net of dispersion. What we have are pockets of pools increasingly isolated in one microclimate and isolated by larger distances from other pools. Repopulation of species between pools after droughts is much less likely to occur than before. That's why the Friends support the lawsuit against the Navy. We don't for a minute think that the pools on López Ridge, already damaged by vehicles, can survive in isolation from other pools. Pools in nearby areas such as the Del Mar Mesa, Miramar, Tierrasanta, and even Poway are necessary for the long-term survival of "our" pools.

In a future article I'll discuss some of the problems con-

fronting citizens who try to save some of our less "glamorous" species of plants, habitats, or animals. If you would like to learn what geologic formations lead to the making of vernal pools, send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope and we'll send you, free of charge, a flyer on vernal pools.

Friends Elect New President

At their May 21 monthly meeting the Board of Directors of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve unanimously elected Mike Kelly to be the new president of the group. Kelly was the vice-president. He replaces Kathleen Zaworski-Burke who resigned for personal reasons. In accepting her resignation the Board gratefully noted her many years of support and participation with the friends. As a past president of HOOPA (Homeowners of Peñasquitos Association) the Friends could always count on her support in defense of the Preserve. She has made it clear she intends to continue this support. As president of the Friends she helped take the organization through a very difficult period after the death of Dr. Elberta ("Bert") Fleming, our founder and inspiration. She and Bert were very close personal friends.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
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Special Notice to First-Time Readers

If you're someone who signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

Outings (cont'd)

DUSK NATURE WALK

Thurs., July 12, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Bring insect lotion! This is a good time of the night to see the deer, coyotes, bobcats and other creatures of the night.

FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., July 17, 7 pm (note the time change) at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. If you're interested in protecting the Preserve come to the meeting.

DUSK NATURE WALK

Wed., July 18, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Bring insect lotion! This is a good time of the night to see the deer, coyotes, bobcats and other creatures of the night.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., July 21, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), see description above.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., July 28, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on trees in the Preserve. Also learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at the Parking-Staging area.

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10

Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

I/We are interested in the following:

- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to:

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P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.
 Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.



Help Needed for Preserve Cleanup

by Mike Kelly

Saturday, September 22, has been set as the day for a major cleanup of the Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The idea for the cleanup originated with *Outward Bound*, the outdoor survival-fitness-leadership training organization. They use the Preserve as a training area and thought it would be a good idea to give something back to the Preserve. They approached *I Love A Clean San Diego* about mobilizing their alumni for a cleanup. The City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends were asked to help organize it. At an organizing meeting it was decided to wait until the weather cools off a bit, hence the Sept. 22 date. This date coincides with a state-wide day of cleanups of beaches and parks.

I Love A Clean San Diego will supply the trash bags, pickers, and dumpster. The City will supply maps and several support people. The volunteers will come from *Outward Bound*, the Friends, and community organizations. We'll be cleaning trash, large and small, from one end of the Preserve to the other.

Any organization or individual that would like to help should call Mike Kelly at 566-6489. The more help we have the bigger an area we can cover. We expect to start about 8:30 in the morning and go until about midday. Here's a chance to help cleanup an area we all enjoy visiting.

Evenings at the Ranch Lectures

Saturday, September 29, the Friends will kick off a series of "Evenings at the Ranch Lectures." A similar program by the San Diego County Archaeological Society, to which several of the Friends also belong, has proved very interesting and successful. Our first lecture will be on the reptiles and amphibians of the Preserve. Our guest lecturer will be Richard Plock, the president of the Herpetological Society of San Diego, who will give a slide show on the subject.

The program is free to members and the public. The program will begin with an informal social from 7 - 7:45 p.m. with freshments. The program itself will run from 7:45 to about 9 p.m. and will include a question period. If you're interested in working on the publicity or organizing of this series, call Les Braun at 566-3958 or leave a message on our phone machine at 484-3219.

Future programs will feature lectures on the diverse plants and wildlife of the area, as well as its Indian and settler history. From time to time we expect to hear talks on broader environmental themes, reminding ourselves that our canyon preserve, and ourselves, are part of a much bigger struggle for survival.

Friend's Outing Schedule

Outings are free and open to the public. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water. Rain cancels. For more details call 484-3219 for recorded, updated information on Friends' hikes. If you need more details, or want to organize a special hike for your group, call Don Albright of the Friends at 271-9216 or Mike Kelly at 566-6489.

AUGUST

NATURE WALK

Sat., Aug. 4, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at Parking-Staging area.

We'll look for flowers and plants that the Indians and Settlers used while living in the canyon.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Aug. 4, 11 am and noon (45 min. each),

San Diego County Archaeological Society. Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House.

See Indian & settler artifacts, authentic adobe ranch house, and more.

DUSK NATURE WALK

Fri., Aug. 10, 6:30 pm

(1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. Bring insect lotion! Good time to see

deer, coyotes, owls, bobcats, and other night creatures.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Aug. 18, 8 am (2 hours). Investigate the legend of the buried Mission treasure and the Spanish-Indian sign map on

trees in the Preserve. Learn about plants the Indians used. See an Indian grinding station. Meet at the Parking-Staging area.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Aug. 18, 11 am & noon (45 min. each). See Aug. 4 for details.

FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., Aug. 21, 7:30 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House.

If you're interested in helping the Friends educate about and protect the Preserve come to the meeting.

DUSK NATURE WALK

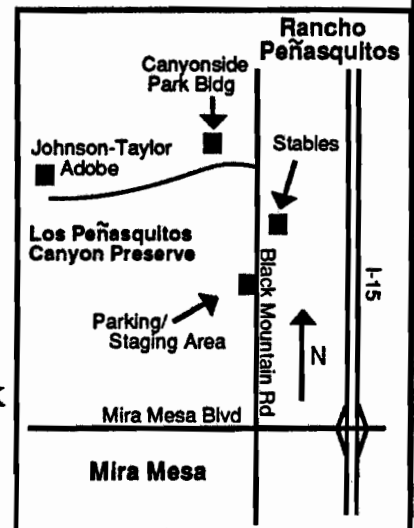
Wed., Aug. 22, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. Use Canyonside entrance off Black Mtn Rd. See Aug. 10 for more details (except location).

BIRD WALK

Sat., Aug. 25, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging

area. Bring a bird book and binoculars. This is oriented to beginners, but experienced birders welcome!

➡ p.6 for more



City Ranger & Volunteer Patrol Coming to Peñasquitos Canyon

by Mike Kelly

Cattle Damage

A new volunteer patrol promises to help solve several continuing problems in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Damage to sensitive habitats in the preserve is one of these problems. Over the last decade this has come from several sources. The cattle that were run on Preserve land leased from the city, particularly at the western end of the canyon, did great damage to the riparian (associated with a water course) habitat along Peñasquitos Creek. Their removal in July 1989 will allow some native species to come back and restoration of the riparian corridor.

Illegal Vehicles

Illegal vehicles, motorcycles, cars and 4-wheel trucks are constantly entering the canyon, knocking down fences and gates and tearing up the ground in a number of areas. Extensive damage has been done to area vernal pools by these incursions. Since a vernal pool site offers a relatively open area through the thick chapparal brush, the vehicles take this route and break up the ring of mima mounds that surround and define the water-holding area of the pools. López Ridge, Miramar, Del Mar Mesa pool sites all show this damage.

Now the Bikers

Heavy damage has been occurring over the last two years since mountain bikers discovered the canyon. Rather than stay on the main designated trails they have taken off, often in large numbers, on small animal trails and widen them into small highways. This penetration of once isolated areas has disrupted the animal population, particularly the mule deer, forcing them to move into finger canyons to the north. But development along the northern rim makes this a less and less viable alternative for the deer, one of the reasons we're seeing their numbers decline. In some cases the biking groups have cut down cactus and other plants to make their trails more comfortable for passage. This is particularly so along the northern side of the creek. They have also done extensive damage to the creek in several areas with their illegal crossings. Horses and people on foot have contributed some damage as well, although not to the extent of the bikers.

Safety Issues Too

A safety issue has also emerged in the last two years. Collisions and near collisions between speeding bikers and pedestrians or bikers and horses have increased. This stems from the fact that for many bikers, the Preserve is not the place they come for a scenic, leisurely ride, but a challenging obstacle course. The goal is to see how fast you can surmount its "challenges." Equestrians and hikers are often startled to round a bend or approach a hill only to have bikers hurtling at them above the speed limit set for the trails.

Illegal use of firearms and poaching also occur. Kids bring their rifles into the Preserve for target practice or for

harassing the wildlife. Besides the danger to the wildlife population, there's also the danger to the many people using the Preserve. In addition, adult hunters have been observed poaching. Last New Year's a hunter was observed killing one of the small number of mule deer in the canyon. Luckily, he did not shoot the person who observed him doing this.

These people pressures reflect the fact that Peñasquitos Canyon has been "discovered" to be a fine place for outings on bike, foot, and horseback, as well as a temptation for illegal off-roading. Some of the destructive behavior comes from simple ignorance of what the rules are, of which trails are approved, or of the sensitive nature of the habitats involved.

Solutions Are at Hand

The solution is two fold. First, education will help curb many abuses. Personally, I've seen a great improvement in the courtesy being shown by bikers toward hikers in recent months. On a recent dusk walk, for example, there were 22 of us on the narrow nature trail about two miles from the east entrance. We had stopped to watch a mule deer some 50 yards off. A small group of bikers came up behind us on the trail and stopped. Although I waved them to come on through, they patiently waited for this magical moment of quiet watching to pass. This is becoming typical of most bikers, in my opinion.

However, a second part to the solution is needed, a police presence for those for whom education isn't enough. For some time now the Friends and other organizations have been pushing for a full-time City Ranger in the Preserve. The County Rangers operating out of the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House aren't responsible for patrolling the Preserve and don't have citation authority or powers of arrest. Nor are they armed. The private security guard we sometimes see in the beige truck, also has no citation or arrest powers. City police will come when called, but the perpetrators are almost always long gone. Hence, there has been little effective police presence in the Preserve.

City Ranger a Reality

Thanks to the efforts of Councilwoman Linda Bernhardt and Deputy Mayor Wolfsheimer, and a concerted effort by City Parks staff, funding for a full-time Senior City Ranger has been included in the new city budget. The position will be advertised, interviews conducted, and the position filled, hopefully, before the end of the year.

Private donations are also helping to make this Ranger a reality. BCH Development, whose principal partner is R.B. McComic Company, has offered to buy a 4-wheel drive truck for the City for this Ranger. Other donations of equipment from other sources are also expected.

Problems with West End Access to the Preserve — Part II

Dr. John Northrop, Founding Director

Trail Options

Assuming that the "Rustic Bridges" and "Gravel Fill" plans have been scrapped permanently, there are four main options available to planners for providing a trail from the Parking/Staging area to the Ruiz Adobe. These are: (1) Construct a path along the north side of the Calle Cristobal road embankment; (2) Construct a path along the base of López Ridge; (3) Construct a path over the nose of López Ridge; and (4) No project. Each of these proposals has its advantages and disadvantages. The first one, proposed by the San Diego Bio-diversity Project, would provide the shortest, most easily constructed route.

1. Trail at the Base of the Calle Cristobal Road Embankment. This proposed trail would follow the existing barbed wire fence at the base of the road embankment that was installed to keep range cattle out of the construction zone and marks the limit of the right-of-way for the road. The fence passes behind the Ruiz Adobe and thus avoids the muddy area near the old cattle holding pens. However, it ends on the west side of López Creek near the Calle Cristobal Bridge where there is a deep quagmire, or sink hole. In order to join this trail to the Parking/Staging area, this "sink hole" would have to be filled in with gravel and rocks. Additionally, a ramp would have to be built from the Parking/Staging area to the west side of López Creek under the bridge. Because this ramp would go between the sycamore trees that line the west bank of López Creek and are now protected from development by a fence, such a ramp would probably not be allowed on environmental grounds. Therefore, this proposed path could not be connected with the Parking/Staging area and cannot be considered as a viable option.

2. Trail at the Base of López Ridge. Prior to the floods of 1978 and 1983, there was a trail on the east side of López Creek around the nose of López Ridge that joined the Pefiasquitos service road near the power pole that marks the location of the old Ruiz-Alvarado well. During the '78 & '83 floods, the washout, or deep swale, that eroded out at the base of the Ridge near the cactus plants closed this trail and thereafter some of the stream discharge started flowing over the roots of the sycamore trees into the pasture changing it into a wetlands. Construction of the sewer line down López Canyon in 1984 further increased this flow as water seeping down the gravel-filled trench, in which the pipes were placed, comes out along the base of López Ridge because a drainage arrestor (or underground dam) was put in the sewer-line trench at that point. If a path were to be constructed along this route, the deep hole would have to be filled in and, additionally, the trail would require a 6-8 inch gravel foundation above the present level to allow the water to seep under it. Furthermore, a "rustic wooden bridge" or causeway would have to be built over the storm drain/brow ditch outfall just north of

Calle Cristobal near where the gate is now. Even with all these precautions, portions of such a trail would not only be impassable during the rainy season but also would wash out every winter, so it is probably not a viable option either.

3. Trail over the Nose of López Ridge. This proposal would put a trail connecting the Parking/Staging area with Pefiasquitos Canyon via the nose of López Ridge. However, there is a known archaeological site on the county-owned land at the west end of the Ridge. Consequently, no trail will be allowed to pass through there without both conducting a thorough archaeological study of this important site first and, if a trail is approved, having a qualified archaeologist present during its construction. Even if these conditions were met, the trail would also require a "rustic wooden bridge" or causeway over the storm drain/brow ditch outfall immediately north of the Calle Cristobal bridge before it could be connected with the present service road under the bridge. Considering these restrictions, plus the rather large construction costs entailed, this proposed trail is probably not a viable option, especially during the present period of fiscal restraint.

4. No Project. Under this option, there would be no official trail built connecting the Parking/Staging area with the Ruiz Adobe. This option is not as bad as it sounds and, indeed, has certain advantages. For example, besides not costing the City anything, it would funnel park users into López Canyon, now a little-used part of the Preserve. Serious riders and hikers could pick their own way easily across López Ridge to reach Pefiasquitos Canyon from the current terminus of the trail head under the east side of López Creek. This would not only keep them out of the wetlands, but also reduce the number of casual visitors not equipped with proper foot gear. In this context, it should be pointed out that lunch-hour walkers from the Sorrento Valley Industrial Park, now the primary users of the west end of the Preserve, could still use the sidewalk on the north side of Calle Cristobal to reach the Ruiz Adobe and the main trail so the "no project" option would not affect them. The hang gliders could drag their equipment in over this sidewalk too, or, if they want to truck it in, use the east entrance to the Preserve.

Patrol (cont'd)

Volunteer Patrol Also Coming

The City and County Parks and Recreation Departments are organizing a volunteer patrol to assist in patrolling in the canyon. The patrol will consist of people on foot, on horseback, and on bikes. It's to be called the Los Pefiasquitos Canyon Preserve Volunteer Assistance Patrol (LOPECA).

Tips on Birding in Penasquitos Canyon

By Barbara Zepf

I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts on bird-watching in Penasquitos Canyon. I classify myself as an advanced beginner bird-watcher. I'm an avid birder (the modern term for bird-watcher). I never leave home without my binoculars, not even to go to the grocery store. You never know what you might see on the way! I've been birding for seven years, ever since the Friends of Penasquitos Canyon sponsored a series of bird walks in the canyon in the Fall of 1983. I'd never been birding before, but I've always been interested in anything to do with the canyon, every since I first discovered it about ten years ago. I was hooked from that first bird walk led by Jane McNeil.

Be forewarned. Birding is addictive! It can be done anywhere, by anyone, by any age, in any season. There are blind birders, whose sense of hearing is phenomenal. There are deaf birders who can spot the slightest movement in the tree tops. I've met some fairly good birders of preschool age, and there are excellent birders in their nineties. You don't have to be physically fit (I'm definitely not!). And the hobby doesn't require a large outlay of money. A pair of binoculars and a field identification book are a big help. Even these are not necessary, they just add to the joy of birding.

Penasquitos Canyon is an excellent place to bird. I've seen 113 species of birds there. Others have seen more. And each trip brings the possibility of adding to that list. Including a riparian habitat (located near a natural watercourse), Penasquitos Canyon attracts more birds than the commoner dry canyons in San Diego. The best times to bird, I've found, are early morning and early evening. There are fewer people around and these are the most active feeding periods for the birds.

Birding is best done in small groups. Birding done alone probably allows you to see the most birds. But birding in twos helps in the spotting and identification. It also gives you someone with whom to share the joy. Birding in large groups should best be left to shore-birding or birding in large open areas. Most birds are shy creatures, who don't seem to like much talking or movement from humans. They seem to ignore other wild creatures, unless they are their predators.

It's hard to say which is the commonest species in Penasquitos Canyon. One is the Mourning Dove. Some live in the canyon all year long. You can always see them, usually lining the telephone wires, each time you visit the canyon. They are a member of the Pigeon family. This gray-brown dove has a small head, a small black bill, a long pointed wings and a long, pointed tail with white outer feathers. They fly swiftly with a musical whistling of the wings. They get their name from their mournful low-pitched soft "oo-oh! cooo-cooo-coo" call. They're about 12 inches long and have a wingspan of about 18 inches. They have black spots on their upper wings, a small black

spot on each side of the face and a pinkish cast to their underparts. They weigh about 4-1/2 ounces. Their diet consists mainly of seeds. They pick up grit from the roadsides to help grind up the seeds in their gizzard (a muscular part of their stomach). They can breed anytime of the year in the canyon. They lay anywhere from 1 to 4 eggs, averaging 2. They normally live not more than 5 years in the wild, longer in captivity.

It's very common, as a beginning birder, to become frustrated. You think that you'll never remember which bird is which; that you'll never know a bird just from the way it flies or from its call — but you will, in time. I've found that the best way to learn birds is to really concentrate on just one bird each time you go out, and file the rest of the birds somewhere in the back of your brain. Study that bird in your field guide when you get home. If you *really* learn just one bird each time you go out, then you can eliminate that particular bird from the list of possibilities when identifying the next new bird you see. Of course there is always that one bird which will never look like the one in the field guide; but that's what makes birding fun. There is always something new to discover.

There will always be the bird that everyone saw but you. And there will always be the bird that only you saw (and no one else believes you!). But birding is fun! I've never met a birder I didn't like (well, almost never). They are willing to share their sightings, their expertise and their companionship. It's a great lifetime hobby. More next time. Good birding!

[Anyone interested in birding is welcome to join the Friends on monthly bird walks in Penasquitos Canyon. See the Outings calendar for details — editor.]



Mourning Dove. From Roger Tory Peterson's *Western Birds*, 2nd edition (Peterson Field Guides), Houghton Mifflin Co.

Santa Rosa Plateau by Les Braun

The unceasing pressure to develop our dwindling open spaces is no where more prevalent than in south western Riverside County. A spectacular area known as the Santa Rosa Plateau is threatened by development. This unique area of 15,000 plus acres, located west of Temecula, was recognized by the United Nations for its unspoiled beauty and diverse flora and fauna. The United Nations nominated this area to its "Man and the Biosphere" program.

The Nature Conservancy currently owns 3,100 acres of the plateau. The remainder is in private hands. The largest parcel, 3855 acres, is owned by a Korean developer whose project will forever change the serenity and pastoral setting of the Santa Rosa Plateau.

This proposed project will have thousands of single family homes, commercial areas and roads. Development plans call for using the obligatory golf course to provide some of the necessary open space and replacement habitat. The plan calls for the use of golf course water holes as habitat for the endangered South western pond turtle.

People from around Southern California have rallied to preserve the plateau by forming a group called "Preserve Our Plateau." Their goal is a total property acquisition. Projected costs have been determined and proposed plans have been initiated. Time and money are not on their side. Help from everyone is needed. The County Board of Supervisors has granted a one year delay to allow raising the approximately 40 to 50 million dollars needed to purchase the privately held parcels.

South western Riverside County currently lists 72 rare, threatened or endangered species. The Santa Rosa Plateau is home to 41. The plateau has various types of habitat, from native prairie and grasslands to vernal pools and beautiful oak woodlands. Streams run year round providing habitat for migrating water birds and water for deer and other wildlife. The rare Englemans oak is making its last stand on the Plateau.

Walking through the preserve one hears the tranquil whisper of the wind through the tall grass, the aroma of the chapparal and countless calls form a variety of birds which flourish here. The solitude and quiet of this last remnant of the way California once was must be preserved for future generations.

The fight to save the plateau has many similarities to the battles of The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon with developers. There is never enough money, time, or people to do all that is needed. The Friends are fortunate that a lot of people are aware of our canyon and attempts to preserve it. The plateau, however, is off the beaten path — although it is less than two miles from the massive developments at Rancho California. Few people visit the preserve.

The preserve has several historic adobe buildings and farm out buildings. The adobe buildings are situated under a magnificent spreading Live Oak tree that is reported to be 350 years old. There are picnic tables under the canopy

making a delightful spot to rest or picnic. Fresh water is provided by a still operating picturesque windmill located not far from the ranch house.

Prior to the purchase of the property by the Nature Conservancy, Rancho Santa Rosa was a working cattle ranch. The cattle were removed two years ago and now the native grasses and wild flowers are beginning to make a come back. On a recent walk (July 7, 1990) the Showy Penstemon (*Penstemon speciosus*), White sage (*Salvia apiana*) and various species of monkey flower (*Mimulus*), Leafy Daisy (*Erigeron foliosus*), and Canchalagua (*Centaureum venustum*) were still blooming.

Other interesting sightings were a Western Skink with its blue tail and several large turkey vultures that were once common in Peñasquitos Canyon and are now rarely seen.

Help is desperately needed to make more people aware of the area and to let the Board of Supervisors of Riverside County know that people from San Diego want this irreplaceable remnant of early California preserved in perpetuity for future generations. Don't allow the short sighted interests of a few forever destroy this unique part of California history.

The Friends urge everyone to visit the preserve, make a contribution of money or time and write the Board of Supervisors at:

County of Riverside
4080 Lemon Street
Riverside, CA 92501

For more information call Les Braund at 566-3958.

Directions to the Santa Rosa Plateau: Take I-15 North past Temecula and exit at Clinton Keith Road. Turn left (west) and drive 5 miles to a hard right turn and you are there.

Patrol (cont'd)

Like the Ranger, the patrol's goals are to "protect the flora and fauna of the Preserve, deter vandalism to park structures, provide information and assistance to park users, and to insure that all visitors are able to enjoy the natural beauty of the Preserve in safety and tranquility."

Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and provide their own horse, biker, or walking shoes! They must commit to patrol a minimum of eight hours per month and will undergo a four-hour training session and four training patrols. They will carry walkie-talkies and first-aid kits. They must obtain a first-aid certification as well. While on their four-hour shift they will be covered by State Workers Compensation. For detailed information on the program, call County Ranger Reneene Mowry at 484-7504.



Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
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Outings (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER

NATURE WALK

Sat., Sept. 1, 8 am (2 hours). See Aug. 4 for details.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Sept. 1, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. See Aug. 4 for details.

DUSK NATURE WALK

Sat., Sept. 8, 6:30 pm (1-1/2 - 2 hours). Meet at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. See Aug. 22 for details.

BIRD WALK

Sat., Sept. 15, 8 am (1-1/2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. See Aug. 25 for details.

JOHNSON-TAYLOR RANCH TOUR

Sat., Sept. 15, 11 am and noon (45 min. each), San Diego County Archaeological Society. See Aug. 4 for details.

GEOLOGY WALK

Sun., Sept. 16, 9 am (2 hrs). Meet under big power lines on Calle Cristobal on López Ridge in Mira Mesa. (From Mira Mesa Blvd. take Camino Rufz north To C. Cristobal. Go left, to power lines.) Learn area's geology and see Preserve's only known fossil near the waterfall. Good picnic spot for lunch for those wanting to stay.

FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

Tues., Sept. 18, 7:30 pm at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch House. See Aug. 21 for details.

CLEAN UP PENASQUITOS PRESERVE!

Sat., Sept. 22. See article in this issue for details.

MYSTERY TREE WALK

Sat., Sept. 29, 8 am (2 hours). Meet at the Parking-Staging area. See Aug. 18 for details.

EVENING AT THE RANCH — "Reptiles & Amphibians of Penasquitos Preserve" Richard Plock, president, Herpetological Society of San Diego.

Sat., Sept. 29, 7-7:30, social, refreshments. 7:30 - 9 pm, lecture, slide show & question period.

Special Notice to First-Time Readers

If you're someone who signed our mailing list on a recent walk or other activity, but aren't yet a member, this newsletter is a free sample. To keep it coming with its outings schedules, educational articles, and information on how to defend Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, join the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc. by filling out the coupon below.

Membership Application

Membership category? Circle below:

Senior (62) or Student \$7.00 Individual \$10

Family \$15 Sponsor \$25 Patron \$100

Corporate \$250 Life \$1000

Contribution \$ _____

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- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)
- Volunteer to help the committee

Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Please make checks payable to:

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P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92126

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.
Call 484-3219 or 566-6489 for more information.