



Spring 2024

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## What did the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve do in 2023?

By Beth Mather

Every year the Friends board prepares a report for San Diego City detailing our activities in their Preserves and Open Space. We thought that our loyal supporters would be interested in this information as well.

### Restoration Projects

In the last few years our major efforts have been in restoration. In 2023 we worked on 3 major projects. One of those projects has been ongoing for the last 10 years. This is the Santa Luz Grasslands in Black Mountain and Santa Luz Open Space. The project started as a small restoration just north of the Black Mountain Ranch Community Park.



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## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

By Beth Mather

This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon. We will be celebrating this event at the Los Peñasquitos Ranch House on June 22 from 4pm to 8pm. We will have some activities, some food, and will host a special speaker, Dr. Ollie Ryder, the Kleberg Endowed Director of Conservation Genetics at the San Diego Zoo. More details will follow, but please save the date so that you can join us to celebrate and to acknowledge the people that have played a role in making the canyon the wonderful place that it is.



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## Penasquitos Bird Hike – Saturday, March 23, 2024 – eBird Report

By Jeanie Anderson

Our early Spring Bird Hike in Penasquitos Canyon East rewarded us with the combination of Fall-Winter migrating birds still in the Preserve along with some early Spring-Summer migrating birds that had arrived. One of the best observations was the Yellow-rumped Warbler male in his breeding plumage perched on a branch – singing his breeding song before heading to northern climes!



Yellow-rumped Warbler male in breeding plumage from AllAboutBirds.org

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## Ranching in Los Peñasquitos Canyon

By Mary Lueking

As we have been discussing the Friends' 40-year anniversary, we started thinking about the history of the canyon before the Friends group started up in 1984. Starting in the late 1700s and continuing for over 200 years, ranching was the primary way of life in what is now Southern California.

I went into our newsletter archives to see what I could learn about that ranching era in our canyon. I found several articles that were published in our early newsletters that referenced the period and pulled four out to share here.



The old corrals and loading chute are still visible near the old El Cuervo adobe.

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## Sycamore Trees

By Les Braund

Sycamore trees, *Platanus racemosa*, abound in Penasquitos Canyon. They are found above the level of the stream where the soil retains some moisture throughout the year. In our canyon they can grow up to fifty or sixty feet high with trunks up to three feet in diameter. Our species is one of six in North America.

Sycamore trees have the largest leaves of any tree in North America. The leaves were used by local Indians to wrap food for storage.



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## Acorn Woodpeckers - Social Networking Experts

By Jeanie Anderson

*(This article was first printed in the Friend's newsletter in the Spring 2012 edition)*

In the canyons of Los Penasquitos Preserve, a uniquely social species of woodpecker thrives. They are the Acorn Woodpeckers, named after their diet of acorns. They utilize a communal granary or acorn tree to store or cache their live oak acorns from season to season.

Being skillful at drilling holes is one of their gifts. Their “social networking” group tends to the acorns, moving them to the right size holes as the acorns dry out and shrink.



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[Hike and event schedule](#)

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