



FRIENDS OF
LOS PEÑASQUITOS
CANYON PRESERVE

Winter 2024

What Does ‘Restoration’ Mean?

Mike Kelly, conservation chair

If you follow our newsletter or hike/event schedules you'll see restoration work parties listed every time. What you may not know is that not all of the restoration work is in City Parks. A lot of work is on properties owned outright by the Friends. The Friends own 8 parcels of land in Rancho Peñasquitos. We'll tell you about them later in this article. The Friends are organizing restoration projects in both Peñasquitos Canyon and Black Mountain Park. In addition, we are supporting the Chaparral Lands Conservancy's Master Plan for restoring the Del Mar Mesa (see an article in this issue. This lengthy article is meant to act as a record of the highlights of our work. Much other restoration work took place with many different volunteers over the decades!

But first, what do we mean by restoration?



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Girl Scout Troop 3354 Joins Friends Restoration Plantings

Three girl scouts from Mira Mesa Troop 3354 and their mothers joined the Friends restoration plantings in the Santa Luz grasslands of Black Mountain Open Space Park. The girls worked with Cindy Burrascano, board member of the California Native Plant Society. They planted a variety of native plants, many salvaged from Mike Kelly's back yard.

Also helping out were 11 people from the Del Norte High School National Honors Society who worked with Del Brooks to add cactus and coastal sage scrub plants to our Cactus Point project off the Ahwee Trail in the park. Two members of the Student Leadership Club came again and worked with Jake Bauer to put the plants he grew up himself into the ground. Also working with us were core volunteers John, Beth, and Rhys.

Some 59 cactus pads and more than 60 other plants went into the ground. More than 140 gallons of water were used on both the new and older plantings. And it was a perfect, cool day to do the work.



A Big Thanks for Our Donors and Renewing Members

by Mike Kelly, secretary

A number of our members responded to our late 2023 Fund Appeal and generously donated. Our biggest donor was our own president, Beth Mather, who donated \$1,000! A donation of this size is usually enough to get you designated as a lifetime member, but there was a problem, Beth was already a Lifetime member! So, this was a straight donation.

Others donating in the order of the size of their donation were: Neil Carlson, Rose Gustafson, Greg Vines, Howard Chen, Mike Kelly, Steve Lister, Elena Tuyays, Ronald Drees, Stacy Bermingham, and Hillary Gilson. The total raised was \$2,315.00.

Renewing members included: Patron members David Bainbridge & Laurie Lippett, Martin Banks, D. Mona Baumartel, Jonathan Beretta, Sandra Morgan, Anne Fege, Douglas Jordan, Edward Marples, & Anthony Wood; followed by sponsor members Jeff & Rose Dillon, Jim Royle, Mindy Sonen, & Douglas Wong; and next we have family members Phyllis & Paul McGuire, Cullen Blain, Hillary Gilson, Alan Sakoi; then followed by our valued senior members Steve Harden, Mary Lueking, Stephanie Shigematsu, Christina Moseman, and Velma Matuzewski for a total of about \$1,285 in renewals.

Introducing our New Board Member Del Brooks

The Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve are pleased to welcome Del Brooks as a new member of the board of directors. Del grew up in Rancho Peñasquitos and is currently a student majoring in ecology and Kumeyaay studies. He has been volunteering with the Friends for about 7 years. He started working with us when he was a high school student looking for a nature-oriented project for the club he founded. He and his club started a project in Black Mountain Open Space along the Awhee trail where their goal was to develop habitat suitable for the endangered cactus wren. In addition to continuing this project, he is a regular participant in the Friend's restoration project next to the Black Mountain Ranch Community Park.

He has played an important role helping the Friends maintain the parcels we own as well as being a major participant in the restoration projects the Friends are currently conducting in Peñasquitos Canyon, the Harrier Hill/Fennel Forest project and the Darkwood Canyon project. This year he has also started leading interpretive hikes for the Friends. He incorporates the knowledge he has gained in his studies into his hikes. If you are interested in how the indigenous people used plants, consider joining one of his hikes.

Please join us in welcoming Del to the board.



Friends to Celebrate 40 years

By Mary Lueking

The Friends of los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve was incorporated Sept. 14, 1984 as a nonprofit public benefit corporation to:

- Promote the preservation of sensitive land forms and wildlife habitat in Peñasquitos and Lopez Canyons and adjacent areas;
- Retain the integrity of the preserve; and
- Promote public awareness of the preserve's cultural and natural resources.

Over the years, the scope of the Friends has expanded to include activities and events in Del Mar Mesa, Carmel Mountain Preserve, and Black Mountain Open Space.

As the 40-year anniversary approaches, we would like to take the opportunity to highlight some of our past accomplishments.



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Peñasquitos Canyon Has a Lot of Gall.....s

By Les Braund

When we walk through the canyon we seldom are bothered by bugs. Actually, there are thousands of bugs flying around all the time. We may find a bee hive on occasion or a swarm of bees but generally few insects. In the spring and summer there are butterflies and moths. But no other noticeable insects.

If you know where to look and what to look for, the evidence of insects abounds. What am I talking about? Plant galls. Recently Mary Lueking and I went for a walk from the Camino del Sur trailhead to the bottom of the Camino Ruiz trail on the south side of the creek. On that short walk we found a number of galls.



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Pigs in the Canyon!

This picturesque couple is the newest addition to Los Peñasquitos! Welcome Winnie, a male pink kunekune, and Dorris, a female black and white potbelly. We rescued this lovely couple from San Diego County Animal Services, and they now live behind the goat pen and love to be visited during park hours (8am-sunset). Please keep dogs away from their fence, and do not feed the pigs.

After saying hi to Winnie and Dorris, stop by the Los Peñasquitos Ranch House to visit a living piece of local history! We offer docent-led tours of the 200-year-old house on Saturday at 11am and Sunday at 1pm.



Good Mother Spider? Lynx Spiders

Mike Kelly

My boarder called me into my back yard, telling me I had to see something. She called me over to one of my Goldenbush shrubs (*Isocoma menziesii*). She pointed to a bright green spider and told me it was a lynx spider.

The spider appeared to be watching over an egg sack attached to a branch of the Goldenbush. And she watched as the eggs hatched into tiny green baby lynx spiders. We watched as she stayed by the hatchlings, protecting them, we believe! I had to dive into their world to learn about them.



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The Chaparral Lands Conservancy Webpage

The friends received this email from David Hogan of the Chaparral Lands Conservancy and want to share this important information with our readers:

From: David Hogan <director@chaparralconservancy.org>

Subject: New webpage on the Del Mar Mesa Preserve

Date: January 10, 2024 at 9:20:33 AM PST

Dear friends of the Del Mar Mesa Preserve,

This is just to share with you a new webpage about the DMMP on The Chaparral Lands Conservancy website:

<http://www.chaparralconservancy.org/projects/del-mar-mesa/>

The page includes some history of the DMMP along with a discussion of planned habitat restoration and recreation use. There's a link to TCLC's *Programmatic Habitat Restoration and Monitoring Plan for the Del Mar Mesa Preserve* as well as a linked and georeferenced official City trail map that can be downloaded to a mobile device to show one's location in relation to legitimate trails and utility roads.

In advance of planned work later this year to close and remove some unauthorized trails around a habitat restoration project, TCLC will be conducting visitor contact with City rangers to directly communicate with trail users the importance of staying on legitimate trails and roads. Please let me know if you are interested in working together on this and habitat restoration activities with TCLC.

David

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Unique City-owned Property a Hub for Horses and History

After problems with former owners, Canyonside Equestrian Center close to getting new permanent operator

By David Garrick, San Diego Union-Tribune

[Editor's note: This article is reprinted from the January 7, 2024 San Diego Union-Tribune. Most of the older dates are wrong, easy to happen with the complicated history of the acquisition of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. But it's not important to the thrust of the story, which is that control of Horseman's Park is changing once again, hopefully for the better. The story glosses over the initial acquisition of the center. When the city acquired the bulk of what we now call the Preserve, Horseman's Park was not part of the deal according to the owner, the developer, Peñasquitos, Inc. In fact, after 9 years of an almost rent-free lease, the equestrian center was given an eviction notice in March 1979. A big political fight to save the center was led by some of the equestrians such as Barbara Gerri, the then manager of the property. The fight was successful, and Horseman's Park was saved as part of the Preserve September 19, 1979. Some of my background came from the Sunday, Sept. 23, 1979 Mira Mesa edition of the community paper, the Sentinel. This and many other papers were donated to us by Nancy Yates, an early leader of the fight to save "The Peñasquitos." — Mike Kelly]



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Hike and event schedule
