

* On Saturday, November 17, nearly 40 members of the California Conservation Corps worked on the China Hole Trail. a ten person crew will be returning this winter to finish the job, and will put in a new trail connecting Poverty Flat with the top of Middle Ridge & the Fish Trail.

* THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF THE PINE RIDGE ASSOCIATION will be held on December 12, 1979 at 7:30 pm at Bob Patrie's HOME (3650 Emanuel ct. near capitol expressway & US 101). phone 225-0766 for additional directions. The meeting will include election of officers, and elections for all but one Board of Director's positions.

Please plan to attend.

DEC '79
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FROM UNDER MY BRIM

The ponderosa pine is the most widely distributed pine in North America, yet we have an unusual stand here at Coe. Ponderosa pines are quite sparse in the Coast Range south of Mendocino and Lake Counties. A fairly large group can be found between Scotts Valley and Felton. A few are found near Mt. Hamilton, and there are also scattered groves further south in the Coast Range. In the area of the park these pines are found only on one ridge south of the Park (Cordoza), three ridges within the park (Pine, Middle, and Blue), and one ridge north of the park (Bollinger).

The first published account of the ponderosa pine was in 1804 from Lewis and Clark's journal. Being one of the largest pines (rivalled only by the sugar pine), they were given the scientific name of Pinus ponderosa (meaning large or heavy). A height of 232 feet and a diameter of almost 9 feet have been recorded and trees with a diameter of four feet and a height of 90 to 130 feet are not uncommon. One of the largest trees in the park is the Monument Pine, located a couple hundred feet north-west of the Monument. It is almost 140 feet tall and over 5 feet in diameter! Ponderosa pines live to be 300 to 600 years old, and one is known to have been 726 years old. They do not produce cones until they are at least 16 years old. There is an interesting natural bonsai tree growing out of a rock along the trail west of the Monument. This tree has cones, yet is barely over two feet tall!

Ponderosa pines are quite fire resistant, many areas have had a pre-history average of a fire every 8 to 10 years. This might have helped keep heavy insect infestations down by burning weak and dead infested trees. These trees are also wind resistant. Many older large trees have the tops broken out. In most cases this is from the weight of snow or because of wind damage. Occasionally this will be from lightning strikes. In this case you will see a split in the bark spiraling down the trunk.

Many animals depend on these trees. The pine nuts provide food for birds and small mammals. Insects are quite numerous, over 100 species are known to feed on ponderosa pines. These insects provide food for many birds. You might see nuthatches working down the limbs or brown creepers working up the trunks for example. Most insects do little damage to the trees but a few such as certain bark beetles, can kill the trees. Another killer is a type of shelf fungus that causes the trunk to rot. Probably the most damaging thing to these trees has been cattle, who's trampling, eating, and bedding down on these pines did not allow any new growth during the years they were found in the area. The dead snags provide homes for birds such as the acorn woodpecker who also fills the trunks of dead and living trees with worm filled acorns to be fed upon later.

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For a good self guided ponderosa pine hike, start at the Monument where you have a view of all the ridges that have ponderosa pines in the area. Here you can see the Monument Pine. Take the trail that leads back to the headquarters. On your right you will come to a pile of rocks, out of which grows the natural bonsai tree. When you come to the "Y" in the trail, go straight ahead, not toward Frog Lake or headquarters. This will take you north-west on Pine Ridge. On your right you will see many young trees. As you continue on the ridge, you can see some large old snags. Can you pick out woodpecker holes? Often hawks will be perched atop these picturesque snags. As you approach the boundary fence you can see some trees on your right with broken off tops from wind or snow damage. Turn to our right and go down the saddle. On your left you will see a tree so full of cones with acorns in them, that it seems not a four inch square is without them. As you start up the other side of the saddle, you can see a fairly large tree on your right. If you look a little closer you can see the spiraling split down the tree trunk from a lightning strike. Bear slightly to your left and you can follow the ridge down to the Little Fork near Frog Lake. As you start down the ridge you will see a group of dead trees, many with brown needles, these were killed by bark beetles, but "even in death there is life". These trees will provide food and homes for many animals and plants and new trees will sprout in the opening and rich soil made by the dead trees.

We thank you Sada Coe Robinson, and may the blessings of these mountains go with you forever.

On November 2nd, 1979 Sada Coe Robinson passed away. She will be missed by all that knew her. She spent many years on the Pine Ridge Ranch, and grew to love it. She spent time here in her childhood, as she was growing up, after she married, and finally when the ranch was her's alone. Her love for this ranch can be seen in her many stories and poems, but her love and foresight were most vividly revealed when in 1963 she gave the Pine Ridge Ranch to be a park. In dedicating the ranch to being a park she said the following: "This is Pine Ridge! For those of you who love the rugged vastness of the mountains will find it here." "I hope this park will bring happiness and pleasure to the people of the State of California for many years to come, and may the blessings of these mountains be with all of you forever".

From the quiet hill come the
Peace of one's soul,
And food for the power of thought