Small Snakes of Coe
By Joseph Belli

If I asked you to picture a snake, chances are you’d think of something fairly sizable—a rattler or gopher snake, perhaps a kingsnake. You might go exotic and come up with something from a faraway land, like a cobra, and for many, something huge—a python or anaconda—might come to mind. On the other hand, I doubt if anyone would imagine anything smaller than a garter snake, for snakes less than two feet long exist in anonymity to the general public. The consensus seems to be that a snake that small must be a juvenile of some larger species, but that’s not the case, and Coe has not one, not two, but three such species of snake, and, perhaps not coincidentally, they’re among the least-observed snakes in the park.

Ringnecked snakes (*Diadophis punctatus*) are thin, gray to olive-colored snakes featuring a thin orange band around their neck. The species has a wide geographic range, found throughout the eastern states and Midwest, and is composed of numerous subspecies. Their distribution is more limited in the West, mainly along the Pacific Coast west of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains. Though the largest individuals sometimes exceed 30 inches, most adults range between 10-18 inches. The underside is orange, suffused with black dots, and when threatened, they often expose the underside of the tail to would-be predators. Orange is associated with toxicity, a warning sign to would-be predators, and though ringnecked snakes don’t possess any toxins, they use the color to their benefit. And while they aren’t toxic, they have a venomous bite, but the venom is mild, not used for defense but to subdue small prey such as invertebrates, salamanders, and lizards. The venom poses absolutely no threat to humans, and ringnecked snakes rarely if ever bite. Your best chance of seeing one is in spring, though they may be active throughout the year on mild days. Of Coe’s three small snakes, this is the one you’re most likely to encounter, though they spend much of their time hidden. They can be found in a variety of habitats but are seen most often in forested or semi-forested areas, especially if there’s water nearby.

Common sharp-tailed snakes (*Contia tenuis*) are copper-colored snakes ranging in size from a mere 8 inches to 18 inches. They too can be found in many different habitats, but prefer moist soils, and spend much of their lives underground or beneath logs. Unlike ring-necked snakes, which take a number of prey items, sharp-tailed snakes are dietary specialists, preying primarily on slugs, though they’ve been known to eat slender salamanders as well. Their teeth are unusually long, possibly to get a firmer grasp on slimy prey. The tip of the tail contains a tiny spine that gives the creature its name. Common sharp-tailed snakes are restricted to the West Coast, from San Luis Obispo County and the southern Sierra Nevada to Washington.

Continued on page 3...
Small Snakes of Coe, continued...

For over a century, this species was known simply as sharp-tailed snake, but in the 2000s, researchers noted that populations along the coast in Oregon, northern California, and the Santa Cruz Mountains had much longer tails than those farther inland. Specimens and DNA samples were collected, and in 2010 it was determined that those coastal snakes comprised a new species, *Contia longicauda*, the Forest sharp-tailed snake. These snakes are restricted to damp, heavily-forested coastal areas and do not occur together with common sharp-tailed snakes. It’s theoretically possible that you could see a common sharp-tailed snake in Coe in the morning, and hike the redwoods of Mt. Madonna in the afternoon and see a forest sharp-tailed snake, but you have a better chance of winning the lottery, for sharp-tailed snakes are rarely seen. Your best bet is on a not-too-hot spring day following a rain. They’re not rare, however, and some researchers believe they may even be more common now than in the past, for they sometimes turn up in backyards near natural areas, where they prey on non-native slugs. Some even believe that sharp-tailed snakes prefer non-native slugs to native ones, and that their range and numbers have actually increased with the spread of suburbia. I don’t know if that’s true, but the species is doing well, and that’s a good thing.

The Western black-headed snake (*Tantilla planiceps*) is among the least frequently seen creatures in the park, in the company of ringtails and legless lizards. The species is also among the least-studied reptiles in North America, for almost nothing is known about its ecology. If you’ve ever wanted to be the world’s foremost authority on some species, the Western black-headed snake is up for grabs.

It’s the most diminutive snake in Coe, with adults ranging anywhere from 5-15 inches. Five inches—you could completely cover such a snake with a pencil. There are worms larger than that. Like ringnecked snakes, they also use venom to procure prey, which consists entirely of insects and other invertebrates—they’re too small to tackle even the smallest lizards or salamanders. Likewise, the venom is a moot point when it comes to humans, for the tiny head and minuscule teeth can’t penetrate the skin, and they don’t even try to bite.

Black-headed snakes are believed to spend much of their time in burrows, and when they do venture above ground, it’s thought to be mainly at night. They’re sometimes out during the day, though, and if you see a tiny, beige-colored snake with a black head, you might want to buy that lottery ticket after all.

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You could say that small snakes such as these are rarely seen simply because they’re small and less noticeable. But I think there’s more to it than that. All three spend most of their time hidden beneath cover, if not below ground. When they do appear on the surface, they’re subject to a whole host of predators that wouldn’t think of attacking larger snakes, such as alligator lizards and scrub jays. Worse, they have no defense—coiling and striking won’t get them anywhere, for their bites won’t deter even pint-sized predators. The best strategy seems to be to venture out as infrequently as possible. That means we see them less, and that’s our loss.
Sunsets

I wrote this From Under My Brim article for the Ponderosa many years ago.

Last night I sat outside and watched a beautiful sunset. To the southeast thunderclouds were building up over the mountains east of Hollister. There were clouds of various heights to the west and the sun shown crimson orange through the smoke of the Santa Lucia fires. Yet, this was only a B- sunset.

We Earth inhabitants are blessed with four special visual treats: Wildflowers, rainbows, butterflies, and sunsets. The variety of beauty in these special treats is seemingly endless, but wildflowers, rainbows, and butterflies have finite designs -- not so sunsets. There are as many endlessly beautiful sunsets as there are sand grains in the sea.

I like to think of myself as a connoisseur of sunsets. I rate them from A+ to C-. There are no D’s and F’s in the realm of sunsets. When you have seen a few very special sunsets, you become jaded, and what others might call a spectacular sunset, you rate as a B or B-. None the less, you should never miss even a C- sunset. So what makes up a very special sunset? There is no telling. Each one is so different, and who knows what special set of circumstances will come to make an even more special sunset than the best one you have seen so far.

The most typical type of special sunset sets up this way. It’s October or November and a weak storm front is going through. Likely it’s one of those La Niña years with some fall-time southern-influence weather building over the mountains behind you and often to the south. The clouds to the west, towards the setting sun, are a combination of two types. First there are the somewhat thick mid-level clouds with a band of clear below them along the horizon towards the sea. Secondly there is a mix of mare’s tails, herringbone clouds, patchy puffs and other high level clouds. Ironically, for prime conditions, there should be a moderate amount of smog floating above the southern Santa Clara Valley, or maybe a recent wildfire has filled the air to the west with thinning smoke. As the sun sets, a stillness starts to come over your outdoor cinema seat. The sun becomes blocked out by the mid-level clouds, but the thunderheads to the east begin to glow pink -- not just pink, but a pink that has a purplish tinge. This is the color you almost always see in the clouds to the south and north as a sunset progresses.

Finally, the sun peaks under the dark mid-level clouds, and the landscapes around you light up with an orange Maxfield Parrish glow. This glow seems especially made to magnify the beauty of oak trees. As the sun begins to set, the under side of the mid-level clouds begins to glow, and the high clouds begin to take on a variety of colors that intensifies the intricacies of their forms. Puffs of clouds will be bright white with gray shadowy areas that are almost black. Don’t forget to look over your shoulder because the clouds to the east will be putting on a show that is worthy of a good grade all by themselves.

Mixed in the myriad of reds and oranges and purples, and pinks you will see small streaks or even flecks of burning phosphorus white, and shooting beyond the tops of the clouds will be straight streak halos of light all radiating from some location below the horizon, from the very sun itself.

As the sun progress towards its destiny of being someone else’s sunset, the high ice crystal clouds will change from brightly colored wisps and patches to pastel washes. Before all the colors are gone, a special part of the sunset emerges. As you look overhead, the clouds and sky become a slowly changing veil of steely grays and blues. Your enjoyment of these subtle colors brings a close to the sunset as your sight is taken over by your hearing and you find yourself surrounded by only the sound of hundreds of crickets.

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Sunsets, continued...

After you've seen the best sunset you'll ever see, and you know the precise formula required for an A+ sunset, you can be standing at the park entrance and be surrounded by clouds that are moving in and out, and up and down and all around about. And through the breaks in the clouds the sun shines brighter than you have ever seen it. It is not a sunset of colors but rather a sunset of grays and pure light. Your feet don't seem to be touching the earth and in fact, you might as well be in heaven.

Like peering into wildflower faces or watching butterflies or rainbows, spending time watching sunsets will fill you with peace and rejuvenate your spirit. Take time to watch a sunset, even if it's only a B-.

The Wild Men of Orestimba
Adapted from the Titusville Morning Herald – November 10, 1870
By Teddy Goodrich, PRA Historian

A correspondent of the Antioch Ledger, writing from Grayson, California says: I saw in your paper an item concerning the “gorilla” which is said to have been seen . . . . in the mountains at Orestimba Creek. . . . . I positively assure you that this gorilla, or wild man, is no myth.

Last fall I was hunting in the mountains and camped for five or six days in one place as I have done for years. Several times I returned to camp to find the ashes and charred sticks from my campfire scattered about. Nothing else was disturbed. I searched the surrounding area and found one track of a bare foot of immense size. Curious, I climbed a hillside sixty or seventy feet from the fire and hid behind some brush and waited.

A long time passed. Suddenly there was a shrill whistle and I saw the object of my solicitude standing by my fire and looking suspiciously around. It was in the image of a man, but it could never have been human. I was never so benumbed with astonishment before. The creature, whatever it was, stood full five feet high, and disproportionately broad and square at the shoulders with arms of great length. The legs were very short and the body long. The head was small compared with the rest of the creature and appeared to be set upon his shoulders without a neck. The whole was covered with dark brown hair . . . quite long on some parts.

As I looked, he threw his head back and whistled again, and then stooped and grasped a stick from the fire. This he swung round and round until the fire on the end had gone out, when he repeated the maneuver. Fifteen minutes I sat and watched him as he scattered my fire about.

Eventually he was joined by another, unmistakably female. Their only object in visiting my camp seemed to be to amuse themselves with swinging lighted sticks around.

Since then I have met one person who has seen the mysterious creatures, and a dozen who have come across their tracks at various places between here and Pacheco Pass.

So dear reader, when you backpack and camp in the back country, should you be concerned or worried or afraid? Just be sure to remember what is printed on the back of your permit: no ground fires allowed, and you will be just fine!
Coe Park Tarantula Festival 2019
By Allene Liebenberg

On the first weekend of every October, Coe Park celebrates a very special event - The Tarantula Festival. The park has been celebrating the furry-legged critters since 1983. Traditional activities and new displays were enjoyed by all this year.

The tarantula hikes were once again very popular. Making the walks even more exciting was the appearance of tarantulas on the trail! Thanks to all volunteers leading the hikes.

Volunteers presented their expertise in many different activities such as geocaching, knowledge of animal pelts and animals, and their artistic abilities making cute pipe cleaner spiders and wooden planters. The talented Sada Springs Jug Band were in fine form and kept us all entertained as BBQ was served. We had the pleasure of a wonderful geology display too!

Tarantula Fest has grown over the years to include many educational displays. We had our wonderful snake display, our tarantula exhibitors, and Cal Fire giving kids the opportunity to use the fire trucks hose. W.E.R.C. brought their "ambassador" birds to show the splendor of some of our local birds. New to T-Fest this year was Felidae educating us on the big cats living in the park.

Thanks to all making Tarantula Festival a success. None of this would have been possible if not for the Coe Park volunteers and staff who always give their time, dedication, and energy to ensure a successful event.

I'm retiring as T-Fest coordinator this year and look forward to assisting the next coordinator.

Photos by: Elena Armstrong
The Snake Lady
By Sue Harwager

I thought we would be totally remiss if we did not include an article on our very own “snake lady,” Shirley Keller, in this issue of the Ponderosa.

Shirley has graciously brought her pet snakes to our annual Tarantula Festival for well over 20 years now. She is not only a wealth of information regarding each species of her snakes but will also let park visitors hold them as well! I asked her how park visitors react to her snakes. They are all over the map.” I was able to see these reactions when I assisted Shirley, her daughter (Megan) and grandson (Tommy) with the snake display this month at the Tarantula Festival. My takeaway – kids are pretty much fearless and curious, the adults not so much. “Snakes are a barometer based on who is holding them,” said Shirley.

I was curious as to why Shirley became interested in snakes as pets – her immediate reply was, “I would have one of every animal, if possible.”

As to what makes a snake a good pet: “1) they are clean, 2) easy to feed, 3) quiet, 4) imminently hand able, 5) only void 2 weeks after feeding, and 6) you can go on long vacations without worrying about their care while you are gone.” By the way, she also has two cats who were at first interested in what was in the terrariums but now totally ignore them. I asked her how her family feels about having snakes in the house – “they love them.”

When asked about how her snakes first adapted to handling by humans, Shirley answered, “At first, the snake would try to get away and did not like being handled; with time and patience that has changed.”

Shirley’s snakes are non-venomous; all four are constrictors and have never bitten anyone. Constrictors coil around and squeeze their prey until they no longer feel a heartbeat. They will then ingest their prey head first (this makes it easier to swallow as the legs will be forced to fold back).

One of the most frequent questions asked is what do the snakes eat. Each snake is fed 1 -2 live mice every month for about 7 months. The mice are about 2 inches long without a tail. Rocky (the ball python) is an exception; he is fed 4 mice. During the winter months, the snakes are fed every 6 weeks.

The other most asked question is how can you tell if the snake is male or female. If the snake is a male, it will have a “spur” on either side of the vent at the end of its tail. These spurs are meant to stimulate the female and hold her in place. Sounds a bit painful to me!

How long do snakes live? “In captivity, no one knows. Out in the wild, they are subject to many predators and will be shorter lived.” These snakes do not have many defense mechanisms – they can hiss, rattle their tail (apparently all snakes can rattle/shake their tails), use their teeth and void. Each of Shirley’s snakes lives in its own terrarium.

Snakes have a transparent scale over their eyes. They have no external ears. They do have ears, but nothing external to impede their smooth movement through grasses. They also depend on sensing vibrations. When a snake flicks its tongue (forked in appearance) in the air, it picks up tiny chemical particles. After the snake brings its tongue back into its mouth, the tongue fits into a special organ on the roof of the mouth called the vomeronasal system. This system takes those tiny chemical particles and tells the snake what they are. This way the snake “smells” things like dirt, plants and other animals. This way of smelling can help the snake avoid predators or catch food.

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The Snake Lady, continued...

Below, I have written up a brief bio on each of Shirley’s four snakes as well a picture from this year’s Tarantula Festival. If Shirley is able to bring her snakes back next year, please stop on by, as these are amazing creatures! Thank you, Keller family!!!

**Rocky**: ball python snake, 29 years old, male, tropical, at rest will curl up in a ball that you can hold in your hand

**Sylvie**: gopher snake, 31 years old, female, indigenous to Coe

**Lucky**: California common kingsnake, 12 years old, female, indigenous to Coe, found in the Keller backyard right before Gary (Shirley’s husband and 40-year uniformed volunteer at Coe) mowed her over (thus the name), only natural enemy of the rattlesnake and is immune to its venom

**Rosie**: rosy boa, 8 years old, male, tropical, (my and Mike I’s favorite!)
MAU Happenings  
By Chere Bargar

The weekend of October 19 and 20 were the dates of the annual MAU training. This event allows the group and new trainees to meet and to check out the horse and rider to make sure they are a good team and will be safe and able to carry out the MAU’s duties.

We also refresh our skills. This year’s focus was on Search and Rescue. Michael Newburn gave a very informative talk on the Incident Command Center system and the different types of searches. (Thank you, Michael). Next was information about the psychology of a lost person. After a brief reminder on radio protocol and use of a GPS, riders split into 2 groups, each with a map of their route, a picture and description of a missing person, and a copy of a footprint. They looked for previously placed clues and took turns getting the GPS location and using the radio to call in to “Coit IC” the location and description of the item.

This year, several people were unable to bring their horses, so an area was set up so they could search for clues on foot and practice using the GPS and radio.

After everyone returned, they walked to the “crime scene” to learn about what to do and what not to do until staff or other law enforcement arrives.

Last but not least was the annual “How Well Do You Know Coe” questionnaire.

Photos were taken by Sue Dekalb during the MAU Search and Rescue (SAR) exercise held on Oct. 19  
[The first picture is of Hugh Benson, their “missing person and crime scene” victim]
Yellow Star Thistle Revisited
By Sue Dekalb

In the summer version of the Ponderosa I wrote an article about Yellow Star Thistle (YST) in Henry W. Coe State Park. This is a follow up to that article as many of the volunteers helping with the eradication asked why I didn’t include any photos with the article. Good question!

Since that article was printed, much more YST was removed from the park. Quite a few new areas were located in the hills surrounding Hunting Hollow and Coit Road. Many of those areas were too far gone by the time they were located, but we did manage to pull a sizeable amount.

I can’t reiterate how important it is for you, as volunteers, to report areas where you see YST, especially if it hasn’t flowered yet. Catching it before it has a chance to drop its seeds is the best way to help eliminate it from the park. Don’t just assume we know about the location unless you actually saw someone spraying it or pulling it.

When we stopped pulling YST in early September, we had actually pulled, bagged, and removed from the park over 100 huge bags of YST. There were still locations in the park that we didn’t get to, so you can see that this is a big job and more help is always needed. I am hoping that next year we can get a few more volunteers to help with this effort. You can always contact me at sue.dekalb@verizon.net if you are interested in helping. This effort is mostly conducted during the week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
In Memoriam - Roberta Wright

Recollections of Roberta
By Chere Bargar and Kitty Swindle

Kitty and I knew Roberta Wright for many years. She always had a smile on her face and was willing to help wherever needed.

She loved Coe Park and wore many hats as a volunteer. She used to make the rounds of the various lumber yards in the area and collect left over pieces of boards and scraps and bundle them up to be sold in the visitor center.

She and husband, Hershel, had a flatbed truck they used for a number of Coe events. Tables and supplies were hauled to the Mothers’ Day breakfast site. Then hay bales were loaded up and visitors sat on them to ride out to Ridge View.

One time it was just Roberta and I who loaded all the green and white tables and whatever else was going to Backcountry Weekend (BCW). There were no sides on the truck. We tied down everything with who knows how many feet of rope and how many kinds of knots. Roberta drove very slowly down the hill from HQ. We could hear the load shift from side to side on every curve. We finally had to stop and add more rope to the load. We made it all the way out to Orestimba Corral without losing a single thing.

Roberta was the area coordinator at BCW for a number of years. The truck was put to use again as she would set up her tent on the flatbed.

Roberta was instrumental in putting on the Coe Park garage sale. This was a huge undertaking. Coe volunteers and many others were extremely generous when it came to making donations for this event. There was lots of furniture and other large items besides all the clothing, electronics, jewelry, tools and other household items. Just finding a place large enough to store all the items was a job. Roberta arranged for volunteers with trucks to pick up donations. Then, it took many hours to price everything, find a place to hold the sale, and then transport everything to the site. A bedroom set with chipped paint was donated one year. Some people thought it wasn’t worth much. Roberta and I discussed this at length, and decided it was real wood and old. Someone would really want it. We put a $400 price tag on it and it was the first thing sold. Boy, were we happy! If memory serves me correctly, we made between $3,000 and over $5,000 profit on these garage sales for the PRA.

Roberta was also a member of the MAU (Mounted Assistance Unit) and enjoyed riding her horse on the trail and helping to prune trails and do other trail maintenance.

Coe has lost a dear friend. We will miss the sound of her soft, easy laugh and her smile.

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Barry Breckling - Besides horse patrol, Roberta took on a variety of jobs over the years. One thing we recall is that if a job needed to be done and no one else volunteered, Roberta would step up and do it; and always did a great job.

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Bill Frazer - Roberta was a Coe park volunteer from 1983 through 2004. She received the Golden Bear award for outstanding volunteer service as well as her 10 and 20 year pins. She volunteered over 5100 hours, served on the Volunteer Committee and was active during Coe Backcountry Weekend events.
New PRA Members

We are pleased to welcome the new members listed below. Thank you for your support.

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you have any questions regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us.

Karen Adamo, Concord
Jonathan Treadway, San Jose
Theodore Sledzinski and Barbara-Joan Withall, San Diego
Scott Standage, Gilroy

Email: membership@coepark.net
U.S. mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
http://coepark.net/pineridgeassociation/join

Stinkwort
By Sue Dekalb

Stinkwort is a non-native invasive annual plant that grows to about 3 feet in height. It blooms between September and December along roadsides, trails, meadows, and riparian areas. It is native to Western Europe, the Mediterranean region, and Southwest Asia. At Coe, this plant was known to exist at the Dowdy and it was recently spotted along the Jim Donnelly Trail (JDT).

Description - the plant is branched from the base of the plant with a sort of ‘Christmas tree’ shape when it is young. It has small, 1/3 to 2/3 inch wide, daisy-like flowers with yellow outer petals and yellow to reddish interiors. It has narrow grey-green leaves that are ¼ inch long with serrated edges. The leaves partially clasp the stalk and it is sticky with a strong camphor aroma. The plant can cause skin irritation.

It reproduces by seed and it is spread around in construction materials (like gravel), wind, bikes, hikers, and horses to name a few.

If you see this plant and you are positive of the identity, you should pull it out. If you are not sure, you should contact Susan Ferry at susan.ferry@parks.ca.gov with the GPS location and photos.

Image credits: The two flowering plants were taken by © 2004 Keir Morse at the Pinnacles, and the bush was taken by © 2014 Richard Spellenberg on the East side of San Jose.
A Surprising World of Color at Night
By Michael Ingrassia

I always enjoy leading night hikes. A beautiful sunset is a great way to start off a hike. A full moon is even more engaging. It's always fun to see people get excited when they realize just how much of the landscape they can see when wandering around the ridge tops under a full moon.

In the evening the park is a completely different world. Nocturnal animals can be heard, and occasionally seen. The night sky has a rich display of stars. During the summer, a night hike provides a refreshing break from the daytime heat.

The fact that the park never closes provides an incredible number of opportunities. We can offer experiences to visitors that other parks simply do not allow.

Earlier in the year I read an article in National Geographic about an artist that photographed flowers under ultraviolet light. Using a technique called ultraviolet-induced visible fluorescence photography, the photos he created were stunning. Some things in nature, like flowers, will absorb ultraviolet light and radiate visible light in a multitude of unexpected colors.

Thinking to myself, "I wonder what we have in the park that fluoresces," my curiosity raced. I got some ultraviolet flashlights and went exploring the park at night. It turns out that Coe is full of things that fluoresce under ultraviolet light. Numerous animals, plants, lichens, and fungi all glow brightly.

The most prevalent animal in the park that fluoresces is the Forest Scorpion. Walking along stretches of Coit Road at night one can encounter dozens of them. Under normal light their brown bodies easily blend into the background, but under ultraviolet light they are little balls of blue-green light. I have to admit that it's a bit weird walking along and seeing so many of them glowing brightly on the ground. They play dead when you approach them, so they're easy to photograph. Other animals in the park that fluoresce are millipedes, sow bugs, and some spiders.

There are a number of interesting plants, trees, and shrubs in the park that have sap that fluoresces. Acorns from the oak trees have innards that glow a bright turquoise. Pinecones from gray pines are speckled in sap that glows neon-green. Flowers like milkweed have seedpods with seeds that look like tiny turquoise LEDs with fine little hairs radiating from the top.

Some of the lichens and fungi we have in the park are beautiful during the day, but even more spectacular at night under ultraviolet light. Some lichens are bright pink and orange and some mushrooms glow blue-green.

Our first public Ultraviolet Night Hike on October 19th had fifty-two people in attendance. We started by watching sunset from the overflow lot, then wandered over to the visitor center. I gave a talk about the various kinds of things we might see; then we handed out flashlights and meandered along examining the trail. We found a lot of scorpions, lichens, and other things that fluoresce. Many thanks to park volunteers Rick, John, Greg, and Harry for helping with the event.

We plan on doing these night hikes monthly. Details will be posted to the park's Meetup group. Come join us and explore a surprising world of color at night. What you find will amaze you.

Continued on page 14...
A Surprising World, continued...

![Lichen](image1)

![Acorn](image2)

![Milkweed](image3)

![Milkweed](image4)

Volunteers wishing CoeEd Day [volunteer training] co-lead, Anne Sanquini, a speedy recovery!
Time to Run for the PRA Board
By Steve McHenry, Secretary, PRA Board

The Pine Ridge Association will hold its annual election for the board of directors in December. The terms of three directors—Steve McHenry, Sue Harwager, and Paul Gillot—expire at the end of this year. Steve and Paul have both indicated that they wish to run for reelection, Sue has decided not to run for another term, so that leaves her seat vacant. In addition, the board has one empty board seat with the resignation of Adam Escoto from the board because of other commitments.

If you wish to run for one of these seats, now is the time to prepare your candidacy statement and send it to Steve McHenry, 439 Chateau La Salle Drive, San Jose, CA 95111 or email, stephen.l.mchenry@gmail.com.

Any association member may run for the board. A member may also nominate another PRA member to serve on the board. To do this, send Steve a short statement explaining why you believe the person would be a good board member, and he will contact your nominee to ask the person to consider running.

The most important qualification for a board member is a willingness to attend board meetings and participate in carrying out tasks for the association. Meetings typically take place every other month on weeknights. The term of office is three years. If a board member is also a uniformed Coe Park volunteer, meetings and board-related activities count toward volunteer hours.

We use the special nonprofit bulk-rate mailing permit to send out PRA-related materials. However, this means that some members might not receive their materials for a couple of weeks after they are mailed. So that the ballots can be distributed (and received by all members) in a timely fashion, it is important that all candidacy statements be postmarked on or before Monday, November 25.

Please send your statements to Steve at the address above. (If you plan to nominate someone else, please do so at least two weeks earlier.) Your statement might be a few paragraphs long and might contain information such as how long you have been a PRA member, why you became interested in Coe Park, ways you have served the park or other volunteer activities that have benefited the public, any special qualifications or experience you have, and specific plans you have for improving the park as a board member.

If you have any questions about what it would be like to be a board member or if you would like additional guidance on putting together a candidacy statement, please call Steve at 408-286-8858.

2019 Volunteer Class Photo

Left to right: Ginny Rhodas, Madhu Nagesh, Rigmor Munkvold, Steve Sergeant, Tracy Brobst, Alex Meyer, Ric Smith, John Lyle, Nguyen Tran. Photo by: Patrick Goodrich
Follow Us On Social Media!

Henry W Coe State Park now has an official presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

- like and follow HenryWCoeSP for the latest updates
- check into the park and tag the photos you share
- mention @HenryWCoeSP in your posts about the park
- like our posts and share them with your friends
- give the park a rating and recommendation

facebook.com/HenryWCoeSP

instagram.com/HenryWCoeSP

twitter.com/HenryWCoeSP
The Ponderosa is a quarterly publication of the Pine Ridge Association. The PRA’s mission is to enhance and enrich the public’s experience at Henry W. Coe State Park through education and interpretation. Articles and artwork relating to the natural history, history, and management of the park are welcome. Also, interested in volunteering? Email Manny Pitta, mannypitta@gmail.com.

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: PRAnewsletter3@gmail.com

Deadline for the next issue: January 31, 2020

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