

The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

At the Coe Gate

By Mike Meyer

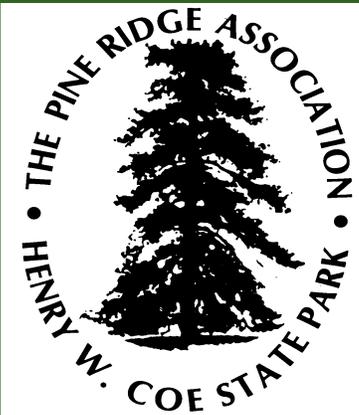
One of the reasons I volunteer is because in Coe Park the destruction of the natural world stops. All that crazy destructive stuff you see out in the world stops at the Coe gate. What is left in the natural world in this place is allowed to develop in its own time and thrive. Coe Park is a preserve, that's its purpose. I love that.

Coe is an island of health and sanity. You can put it any way you want. I see it as a nourisher of the human spirit, my spirit. In Coe, you can watch the sky and the light and the land and become aware of grace. It's possible to look across a canyon and see that there is always a space, a pause in the natural world. Reality is not the bang-bang of visible cause-and-effect, of the strictly technological this-click-gets-that mold we find ourselves in. In the natural world, reality is longer and spaced out and open and allows and is developed and develops. If you choose to reflect on it, you can see that you are a part of that.

In my training as a volunteer and through the years of being involved in various activities, it's been impressed on me that we visit the park, connect with it, enjoy it, assist visitors in it, and leave it to its own devices. Only the powers of the natural world do things in Coe Park. Out of all this region, it's the one ample tract left where this is possible.

What volunteers do is enhance the visitor experience. Lead hikes and rides, offer interpretive programs, do trail maintenance, and all the things done to get people in there. To put them in a place, and maybe a frame of mind, to allow a connection.

That's it, really. I love that.



Late Spring 2012

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Save the Date

Friday 25 May at 11:00am

Coe Park visitor center

Ceremonial handover of the first check to Ruth Coleman, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, by Dan McCranie on behalf of the board of the Coe Park Preservation Fund

This is an exciting celebration. See you there!

(More detail on page 9.)



Henry W. Coe State Park Backcountry Patrol

By Dale Combs

December 26-31, 2011, 46 miles. I thought a foot patrol with five nights out would reach the corners of the park map. The park map always pulls my eyes out to the corners: Thomas Addition, Mustang Peak, and Mt. Stakes. At Mississippi Lake, there were three nights to go where 19th century bandit Joaquin Murrieta kept a hideout. I thought about making a loop around Robison Mountain. Awake before dawn at Poverty Flat on the first morning, my toes froze numb before I could make breakfast or coffee so I had to start hiking with only a bread roll. Temperature was about 15 degrees, my cheeks hurt and my water bottles froze not quite solid but I couldn't get water out until the afternoon. I had heard but not quite believed what I learned in volunteer training.

Trying to get out there, past as many ridges as possible, I held a copy of *Shrubs of Henry W. Coe State Park* by Lee Sims and Judy Mason. Trip preparation had included nightly review of plant lists and pictures by Lee Dittmann. Before volunteer training I knew only pine, oak, manzanita, shrub, plant, or flower. Now when I see a maple or a sycamore, I put my opposing thumbs together to figure out which it was, thanks to Winslow Briggs. As a person whose outdoor consciousness has only recently been raised above counting miles and elevation gain, this was the first time I brought a printout of "The Sky this Week." I noticed that Venus set before the moon while camping, elevation 1767' on the map, above Robison Creek and also saw Pegasus to the right of the moon. I paid real close attention to the amount of red and black when trying to distinguish flicker from woodpecker.

All of this is new to me. I'm used to moleskin and fried tortillas. Now, because of volunteer training, I've learned that each typical environment is going to have its own characteristic sparrow, wren, warbler, and hawk. Just like the north-facing slope and south-facing slope when it comes to shrubs and trees. Like the east side and west side of the park. Groups and sets describe sections and make up the Coe Park mosaic. And the humans of Coe Park? Bike people bring numbers to their trail work, ornithologists share, horse people keep the spirit of the West alive, charmingly acting like each word costs them money. Talkers, listeners, doers, and thinkers. Riders, hikers, bikers, and people on horses. Men and women of all sizes and shapes, with and without distinctive field markings. Naturalists of all persuasions.

Sunset at Paradise Lake, you can hear the ducks tear through the air before you see them cup shaped; reverse footage of launching a clay pigeon. Red tail hawks perch on trees, soaring and patrolling out in the open. About every half mile or so is a pile of feathers like a pillowcase split open. Meanwhile, in Sacramento, ours is a time of difficult political economics. I'm kind of new to the game called taxa but if there's one clade that fits us all, it would be "caretakers of Coe."



Sunset at Paradise Lake
Photo by Dale Combs



News from Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

By Laura Dominguez-Yon

Volunteers are the mainstay of the success of our organization. We would like to highlight the outstanding efforts of four of them.

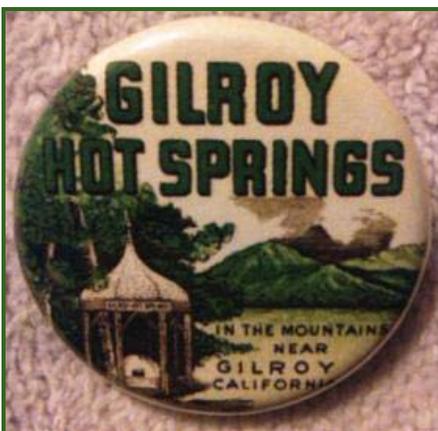
Karen Pogue, the hostess with the most-ess. Since participating in the July 2011 full moon campout with her friends, Karen is becoming the voice and experience of Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs (FoGHS). She has accepted the position of treasurer, leads many of the Saturday guided tours, has submitted her application to train as a Coe Park volunteer, and plans to attend most of the full moon campouts. Karen has a better than 90% conversion rate turning tour visitors into FoGHS members! Karen was recently interviewed for an article in *Gilroy Today* and will contribute to an article in *Out & About* magazine about Gilroy Yamoto Hot Springs (GYHS).

Newest member Dawn Drzaic says "I'll be your foot soldier; give me commands!" Best of all is that she has a wealth of ideas drawn from her extensive experience as wife, mother, community member, and volunteer. High energy and common sense combined with a compassionate heart are some of the great qualities that Dawn possesses. She may be calling on you about contributing to the FoGHS auction that will take place at a later date. And if you're looking for a delightful companion for shopping bargains and opportunities, she's the one you want to have along.

Retired brothers Jun "J.J." and Susumu "Sus" Sasaki have performed above and beyond. Their joyful energy paired with decades of knowledge and experience is returning the GYHS grounds to 1960s conditions. Adhering to Department of Parks and Recreation vegetation and environmental guidelines, plus historic preservation guidelines, they are helping to ensure that GYHS is safe from fire and erosion, and are making this a more friendly place for visitors.

We bid farewell and good luck to Craig Thomas. During his stay as camp host, Craig always had a friendly smile and was willing to lend a helping hand. Common to the camp host program, a typical stay at any location is three to six months. Know of anyone else who is interested in the camp host program? Read more on the Department of Parks and Recreation website: <http://1.usa.gov/uHYoio>.

Buttons! We've captured the 1939 color decal and put it onto a 1¼" button. Want one? We'll have them for sale at GYHS events: the music festival, the Saturday guided tours, and the full moon campouts.



For more information, please visit <http://friendsofgilroyhotsprings.org>



GYHS hotel, 1916. Photo courtesy of the McDonald & Lundblade families.

PRA Annual Meeting

By Barbara Bessey

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held in Morgan Hill on February 4th, 2012.

Board of the Pine Ridge Association

PRA board president Paul Nam opened the meeting, introduced the members of the board of directors, and reported on the results of the election of officers. The officers and members of the board for 2012 are:

Paul Nam, president
Diana Maloney, vice president
Steve McHenry, secretary
Dan McCranie, treasurer
Ron Erskine
Rob Glover
Cynthia Leeder
Paul Liebenberg
Jim Wright (chair of the uniformed volunteer committee)

- Paul provided an overview of accomplishments of the PRA during the last year. One key milestone was accomplished due to the Coe Park Preservation Fund (CPPF) and PRA treasurer Dan McCranie's leadership—enough funds were raised to keep the park open for at least three years. Paul emphasized the importance of the volunteers and staff at Coe Park and thanked them for all that they do to provide the programs and services needed to support the park and enrich visitors' experiences. He said that an important objective of the PRA for 2012 was to increase the membership threefold. He urged everyone to talk to visitors about why Coe Park matters and to support the PRA and the CPPF to help keep the park open after 2015.
- Ann Briggs (president, CPPF) described the efforts undertaken by the CPPF once the possibility of park closures was announced in February 2011. Long-time Coe Park supporter and a founder of the PRA Bob Patrie spearheaded a small group of individuals in thinking about whether enough funds could be raised to support park personnel for three years and to consider establishing an endowment for the park to insulate it from threats of closure in the future. In December 2012, the state entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the CPPF to keep the park open through June 30, 2015. Important to the group was having enough funding to support Coe Park's rangers, maintenance staff, and seasonal aides. As of January 2012, the CPPF now has its own tax-identification number and is officially a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Ann was pleased to point out that this MOU is serving as a template for other nonprofit organizations that are trying to keep their parks open.
- Ron Erskine announced that the board wanted to pursue offering outings in Coe Park for a fee. These outings would include backpacking trips, horse rides, bicycle rides, and possibly outings where individuals could drive into the park in supervised groups using their own vehicles.
- Manny Pitta provided an update on the new PRA website. With assistance from Snowtech Media, the PRA was able to get a template and a framework to facilitate updating and maintaining the site. There is now a new look across all pages of the site, including a main menu at the top and a footer with announcements. An event list is now automatically updated, so that events that are over are dropped from the list. Manny encouraged the volunteers to help flesh out some of the text in various areas on the website. The current plan is for the website to go live in mid-February. [Editor's note: the new website is now in place, www.coepark.org.]
- Dan McCranie provided an update on PRA finances.
- Libby Vincent gave a special tribute to Ann and Winslow Briggs for their 15 years of service on the board. Their terms ended in December. Paul Nam also recognized their many contributions to the board, to the PRA, and to Coe Park.

Continued on page 5....

PRA Annual Meeting Continued....

Volunteer Committee Meeting

The meeting of the PRA uniformed volunteers followed, cochaired by Linda Keahey (who is leaving the committee) and Jim Wright (who is the new chair of the committee). The other members of the uniformed volunteer committee were introduced: Liz Brinkman, Ken Howell, Cynthia Leeder, Mike Meyer, and John Thatcher.

There were 19 new volunteers in the fall training class; the total number of volunteers is now 125 people. These volunteers volunteered a total of 16,000 hours during 2012.

Eight people who served 50 or more hours beyond the training program advanced to full volunteer status:

Dale Combs	Paul Liebenberg
Sue DeKalb	Kenneth McDevitt
Julian Isacco	Kevin McDevitt
Chris Kangas	Phillip Strenfel

Two people who had volunteered 250 or more hours, of which at least 100 hours were spent in the visitor center, were promoted to senior volunteer status:

Manny Pitta
Joanne Rife

Thirty-eight volunteers received the visitor service award, a special flashlight embossed with the PRA logo. These volunteers spent 48 or more hours working in the visitor center or on other visitor-related activities during the past year, for example, presenting programs to visitors or leading hikes and participating in interpretive events:

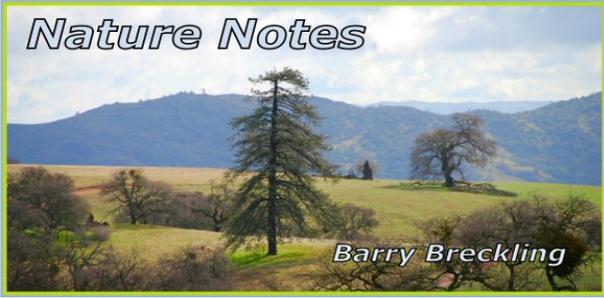
Chere Bargar	Ken Hulick	Diane Scariot
Jim Brady	Jodie Keahey	Pat Scharfe
Ann Briggs	Linda Keahey	Rosemary Schmidt
Winslow Briggs	Gary Keller	Lynne Starr
Victor Bubbett	Cynthia Leeder	Carolyn Straub
Sue Dekalb	Rick Leonard	Kitty Swindle
Dave Flack	Margaret-Mary McBride	Nancy Thomas
Bill Frazer	Steve McHenry	Nancy Valencia
Teddy Goodrich	Paul Osborn	Bev VanderWeide
Sue Harwager	Lois Phillips	Libby Vincent
Lucy Henderson	Manny Pitta	Sandy Voechting
Don Holmes	Joanne Rife	Bill Workman
Ken Howell	Don Savant	

Nine volunteers received special recognition for all the hours they have spent on Coe Park volunteer activities over the years. Between them, they have donated 40,151.5 hours of service to the park!

Nancy Thomas, more than 1,000 hours
Lois Phillips and Dick Rawson, more than 2,000 hours
Rob Sinclaire, more than 3,000 hours
Chris Weske, more than 4,000 hours
Chere Bargar and Martie Sinclaire, more than 6,000 hours
Kitty Swindle, more than 7,000 hours
Don Holmes, more than 8,000 hours

A special silver pin with the PRA logo was presented to six people who have participated in the uniformed volunteer program for ten or more years: Victor Bubbett, Daniel Lewis, Diana Maloney, Bruce Rideout, Rosemary Rideout, and Susan Stillman.

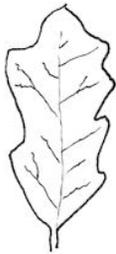
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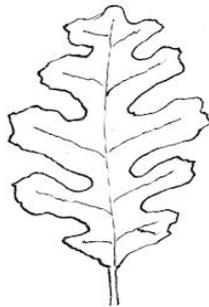
Oaks of Coe Park

Coe Park has one of the largest variety of oaks to be found in any one place, eight different species to be exact. But that's only the start to the amount of variation to be found in the oaks at Coe Park. If you walk up to Eric's Bench on the top of Pine Ridge and look down the ridge to the northwest, you'll see a large round oak standing by itself—the Lollypop Tree. If you take a closer look at the tree you might decide you've found a new species. The tree's characteristics—its general form, bark pattern, and especially leaf shape—aren't exactly like any oak you can find in a book. At best, the characteristics seem to indicate a cross between a Valley Oak and a Blue Oak, and, in fact, that's exactly what the tree is, a hybrid between the two. Oaks are notoriously promiscuous.

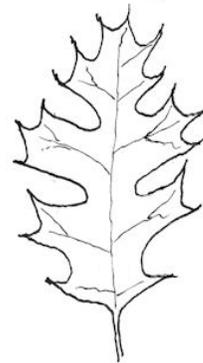
There's and even more common hybrid in the park. The books say that Blue Oaks have smooth-edged leaves (they are shallowly lobed, but without spines), but in Coe Park, many (maybe even most) Blue Oaks have some spines along the edges of their leaves. At one time, the spiny-leaved Desert Scrub Oak was found farther north than where it grows now. When it was in the area that is now Coe Park, it's believed to have hybridized with the Blue Oaks, and those hybrids have been able to successfully breed with each other, maintaining the spiny-leaf characteristic. So our Blue Oaks might more precisely be called Bluish Oaks.



Blue Oak (white)
 • Leaves shallowly lobed
 • Leaf edges not spiny (often with some spines in Coe Park)



Valley OAK (white)
 • Leaves deeply lobed
 • Leaf edge not spiny



Black Oak (red)
 • Leaves deeply lobed
 • Leaf edge spiny



Coast Live Oak (red)
 • Leaf edge inrolled
 • Leaf edge spiny
 • Tufts of hairs on main vein on bottom of leaf



Canyon Live Oak (intermediate)
 • Leaf edge smooth or spiny
 • Leaf top shiny, underside dull
 Similar to:
Interior Live Oak (red)
 • Leaf edge smooth or spiny
 • Leaf top and bottom both shiny



Scrub Oak (white)
 • Shrub to small tree
 • Leaves variable but usually with wavy edges
 • Leaf top shiny, underside dull
 Similar to:
Leather Oak (white)
 • Low-growing shrub
 • Leaf edges inrolled
 • Uncommon, growing on serpentine soils

Oaks can be divided into three subgroups, the White Oaks, the Red Oaks, and the Intermediate Oaks. You can determine which subgroup each of the Coe Park oaks falls into by looking at the information with each leaf drawing. Oaks can interbreed only with members of their own subgroup. The Valley Oak and the Blue Oak, both in the White Oak subgroup, often hybridize.

Where you find Black Oaks and Interior Live Oaks together, both in the Red Oak subgroup, you can occasionally find their hybrid, the Oracle Oak. Oracle Oaks are easy to spot in the fall since their parents consist of a deciduous tree (the Black Oak) and an evergreen tree (the Interior Live Oak). Some of the leaves will stay green through the year while others will turn brown in the fall. And although the leaves look mostly like Black Oak leaves, they are typically smaller and less lobed. In some areas, such as along Pacheco Ridge, Interior Live Oaks are quite numerous and Black Oaks are infrequent. The few Black Oaks get bombarded by large quantities of pollen from Interior Live Oaks, and it is more common to find Oracle Oaks in that area.

For more information, check out the book *Oaks of California* by Pavlik et al.

Two Amazing Coe Park Hikers

By Cynthia Leeder

You may have read Libby Vincent's article in the early spring 2012 issue of *The Ponderosa* about the two older gentlemen heading out on a *very* strenuous hike. I encountered these same two intrepid gentlemen on different occasions in the park and also found them to be amazing hikers.

The first time I met George Cooper and Carl Roberts was on one of those warm but beautiful days in the park. I was out on foot patrol, had hiked over from China Hole to Poverty Flat, and had just crossed the creek to start climbing up the road to head back to the visitor center. George and Carl were sitting on rocks at the creek crossing taking a break and I paused to say hello to them and see how they were doing. Not knowing their capabilities, I suggested they hike over to the Creekside Trail and up the China Hole Trail instead of doing the long hard slog up Poverty Flat Road that I was about to do. As I headed on up that steep hill, I felt all proud of myself and good inside about helping some park visitors.

Weeks and months passed and I had all but forgotten the encounter as I arrived to work the visitor center one gorgeous Saturday morning, when who did I see gearing up in the parking lot but Carl and George. I remembered them from that chance encounter at Poverty Flat and stopped to say hello and ask about their hiking plans for the day. I expected they might do one of the popular hikes in the park, perhaps the Middle Ridge loop or maybe even down to China Hole and back.

No, they had more ambitious plans. They were doing the Blue Ridge loop, hiking up Hobbs Road, a.k.a. the Short Cut. What!?! Oh yes. They had already done it a number of times during 2011 and were out to do the loop 10 times in the year. They liked the hike for the workout in climbing the Short Cut, and the 15-mile or so length of the hike was just perfect for a nice day out.

Oh man! If you have never climbed the Short Cut, it is arguably the meanest, baddest, steepest beast of a trail (or dirt road in this case) in the greater Bay Area, climbing nearly 1,500 feet in a mile-and-a-half. The Short Cut gives new meaning to the word steep. Hiking up Poverty Flat Road almost seems like a picnic in comparison.

I realized how badly I had underestimated Carl and George when I first met them at Poverty Flat. These were no day strollers, they were serious hikers! And they not only finished the Blue Ridge loop that day, they went on to complete their goal of hiking it 10 times during the year. Then for good measure they hiked it two more times, completing it 12 times in 2011, squeezing in the last hike on December 31st.

I think there ought to be a T-shirt or some recognition for achievements like that. Has anyone ever done it that often before? And wouldn't you know it, they started 2012 off right by doing it again in January. However, they are both now thinking of what other hikes they can do in the park for a little variation and I will be talking to them about that when I see them again at the visitor center. I'm thinking of some good ideas. Oh yeah, and did I mention? Carl is 75!



Carl Roberts and George Cooper. Photo by Cynthia Leeder.

Special Coe Backcountry Visitors



Photo by Dave Flack

Special visitors to the Coe Backcountry Weekend, Bernice Walsh Kiser and her son Ken Kiser. Bernice knew Coe Park as a child, before much of it was Coe Park; her family owned Walsh Cabin, which still rests in a quiet and grassy meadow beside Pacheco Creek. Bernice is now 99 years old and it was a thrill and a delight to meet her. Senior park aid Kaela Henriksen on the left, volunteer Libby Vincent on the right.

Read more about the backcountry weekend on page 14.....

News from the Uniformed Volunteer Committee

By Jim Wright

Through volunteermatch.org and now our PRA website, www.coepark.org, we are seeing an increased interest in volunteering at Henry W. Coe State Park. Some of those who contact us complete an application, some do not. Those in the second group tend to be individuals who want to “help the park,” but who balk at the time commitment required to complete the training program.

We have room for more applicants. Please keep in mind that whether you are serving in the visitor center, patrolling, or working at a park event, you may be talking with a future uniformed volunteer. Lately, our applicants have tended to be individuals who hike or backpack in the park on a regular basis.

The new PRA website greatly simplifies the application process. Anyone interested can go to “Support Coe/Uniformed Volunteer Program” where there is a link to a convenient online application form.

As always, our goal is that many of the new volunteers become familiar with visitor center procedures and experience the rewards of assisting the public in that incredibly important work.

This year’s core training dates are September 8, September 15, and October 13-14 (the ridealong). Optional but extremely helpful days are October 27 (Co-Ed Day); November 3 (visitor center training); and December 1 (visitor center training). And then there are the optional days for specialized training to carry out foot, bike, and equestrian patrols, which will be scheduled at a later date.

Coe Park Events and Information

Mark your calendars—important dates and other announcements

Also see Coe Activity Calendar at <http://www.coepark.org/calendar.html>

Friday 25 May, 11:00am—Come join us to help celebrate Coe Park staying open for three more years!

Coe Park visitor center on Pine Ridge

At the end of the road: 9000 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, California

Come join us to celebrate Coe Park staying open for three more years!

Dan McCranie will hand the first check, on behalf of the Coe Park Preservation Fund, to Ruth Coleman, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Enjoy sunshine, green hills, gorgeous wildflowers, and cake as we gather to celebrate our appreciation for Coe Park staying open through June 2015.



Take a stroll or a ride on your favorite trail, soak up those panoramas, and think quiet thoughts about the goodness of the place, these quiet hills.

See you there!



Update on Park Staff: Eddie Guaracha has been seconded to the Diablo Vista District four days a week where he will be Acting Assistant District Superintendant for several months. In Eddie's absence, contact Ranger Stuart Organo for any issues; Eddie is still available by email and cell phone.

Saturday June 9, *Hunting Hollow 5K/10K walk and fun run.* You can register for this fun event at www.coepark.org and download an entry form. For more information email kfhowell@pacbell.net

For full-moon campouts and more events at Gilroy Hot Springs visit <http://friendsofgilroyhotsprings.org>

From the journal of Wesley M King, Henry W. Coe State Park Supervisor, 1959-1961

October 2, 1960: "...considerable thought was placed on a vacation schedule - after 24 months without one, vacationitis has set in. The problem is just where to go that could possibly be better than where I am now."

PRA Annual Meeting Continued.....

A special gold pin with the PRA logo was presented to five people who have participated in the uniformed volunteer program for 20 or more years: David Hornby, Irwin Koff, Lois Phillips, Libby Vincent, and Bill Workman.

A special pin with the PRA logo was presented to Don Holmes for his thirty years of service as a volunteer.

Ranger John Verhoeven presented annual passes to California State Parks to 38 volunteers who had donated 200 hours or more within the past year and to couples whose combined number of hours totaled 200 hours or more. The hours include the time spent by some uniformed volunteers who volunteered time at other state parks, and the time that some nonuniformed individuals volunteered at Coe Park:

Chere Bargar	Julian Isacco	Bob Patrie
Jim Brady	Chris Kangas	Dick Rawson
Ann Briggs	Jodie Keahey	Martie Sinclaire
Winslow Briggs	Linda Keahey	Rob Sinclaire
Thomas Conrad	Tim Lantz	Dave Stoner
Sue Dekalb	Cynthia Leeder	Carolyn Straub
Ruby Domino	Rick Leonard	Kitty Swindle
Bill Frazer	Paul Liebenberg	Ted Tawshansky
Rob Glover	Diana Maloney	Libby Vincent
Patrick Goodrich	Dan McCranie	Chris Voci-Nam
Teddy Goodrich	Steve McHenry	Laura Dominguez-Yon
Don Holmes	Paul Nam	Dean Yon
Ken Howell	Sam Parker	

Ranger John Verhoeven presented free annual passes to State Parks within the Monterey District to 51 volunteers (uniformed and nonuniformed) who had donated at least 72 hours but fewer than 200 hours (and to families whose combined number of hours totaled between 72 and 200 hours):

Heather Ambler	Irwin Koff	Greg Scott
Joseph Belli	Janet Koff	Mike Slattery
Dan Benefiel	Greg Lee	Sharon Slattery
Jesse Benefiel	Jim Mason	Heike Stabenow
Barbara Bessey	Margaret Mary McBride	Reiner Stabenow
Liz Brinkman	Mike Meyer	Lynne Starr
Victor Bubbett	Matt Pauly	Dan Straus
Darryl DuBois	Lois Phillips	John Thatcher
Ron Fischler	Manny Pitta	Nancy Thomas
Dave Flack	Karen Pogue	George Van Gorden
Debbie Frederick	Bruce Rideout	Bev VanderWeide
Sue Harwager	Rosemary Rideout	Sandy Vochting
Lucy Henderson	Joanne Rife	Chris Weske
David Hornby	Don Savant	James Williams
Ken Hulick	Diane Scariot	Bill Workman
Ralph Johnson	Pat Scharfe	Jim Wright
Gary Keller	Rosemary Schmidt	Paul Yellowhorse

PRA Annual Meeting Continued.....

Golden Bear Award

The uniformed volunteer committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was given to Dick Rawson. Dick joined the volunteer program in 2006. He has worked on many association activities. Among these are providing training on grasses and ticks, providing natural resource information, maintaining the wildflower blooming section on the PRA website, participating in the fire regeneration study, and staffing the visitor center. He has volunteered more than 2,400 hours in the park in his five years as a volunteer, and he volunteered more than 700 hours in the past year.

Volunteer of the Year

The PRA volunteer-of-the-year award is given to people who have contributed outstanding work in furthering the mission of the association in preserving and enriching Coe Park. This year's award went to Diana Maloney. Diana joined the volunteer program in 2001, and she has volunteered more than 1,500 hours during this time. For many of these years, Diana has served as the coordinator of the Coe Backcountry Weekend, Coe Park's major public event of the year held in the remote east side of the park. This event requires a lot of advance planning and preparation as events are held in multiple locations in the backcountry. And the event itself is supported by almost half of the volunteers who lead hikes, walks, rides, and help with children's activities as well as assisting with logistics to help park the visitors and to see that they get shuttled to and from their planned activities during the weekend.

A delicious hot lunch was provided at the end of the meeting. Many thanks to the volunteers who worked hard in the kitchen preparing all the food.

Congratulations to everyone!



Volunteer of the year award presented to Diana Maloney by Supervising Ranger Stuart Organo



Golden Bear award presented to Dick Rawson by Ranger John Verhoeven

Photos by Rosemary Rideout

Coe Park Post-Fire Bird Study

By Barbara Bessey

The keynote speaker at this year's annual meeting was Mike Rogers of the Audubon Society. Mike reported on work done to study the responses of bird communities over time in the various habitats burned in the 2007 Lick fire at Coe Park. He and his colleagues were particularly interested in determining whether any observed changes in the bird communities could be linked to the vegetation changes caused by the fire.

Before Mike and his colleagues started planning the study, they reviewed what was known about bird communities in the park. Although there was an unpublished report of bird studies carried out in the 1950s, they relied more heavily on more recent works, such as the published *Breeding Bird Atlas of Santa Clara County* (by Bill Bousman et al, 1987-1993) and the 25 years of daily checklists prepared by Amy Lauterbach and James Yurchenco (these sightings formed the basis for the checklist of birds in Coe Park that was produced in 1992).

One study of the effects of fire on bird communities that Mike and his colleagues found useful was carried out recently in San Diego after a 2002 fire burned more than 50 square miles in central San Diego County. This study enabled them to compare results from the Coe Park observations with comparable observations in the San Diego study.

The fieldwork was carried out by Bill Bousman, Rick Herder, Kristen Holmquist, Richard Jeffers, Amy Lauterbach, Rich Page, Bob Power, Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn, and James Yurchenco. They selected 24 areas in Coe Park that had been burned and 11 control areas that were not burned. They made four survey visits to each site, once each in a specific three-week period between mid-April and July. The fieldwork started each time at sunrise; the participants walked the four-mile route at one mile per hour counting all birds they detected by sight or sound. The study is currently in its fifth season. These ten individuals have volunteered more than 1,600 hours so far to carry out the study and to analyze the preliminary findings.

The bird species found in the chaparral areas of the park tend to stay low to the ground. After the Lick fire, these burned chaparral areas looked like "moonscapes," with no visible vegetation; by 2011, there had been a lot of regrowth of vegetation in these areas. Birds such as the California quail, Bewick's wren, sage sparrow, wren, and spotted towhee have showed increases in abundance over the years since the fire as regrowth occurred.

In the oak woodland areas, the tall trees were not damaged very much by the fire. Birds such as the western scrub-jay, oak titmouse, acorn woodpecker, and western bluebird showed modest changes in abundance in the burned areas but, in comparison with the changes in abundance found in the chaparral bird species, this group appeared relatively unchanged by the fire.

Mike indicated that they were still examining their data to determine the effect of rainfall on bird abundance in these areas. The San Diego study showed that both rainfall and regrowth of vegetation after a fire affected abundance of bird species.

The Coe post-fire study recorded 457 hours of surveys; these surveys recorded almost 43,000 birds (more than 120 species). The study will continue to provide valuable information on the effects of fire on bird communities at Coe Park and to serve as a resource for future studies of the effects of fire on bird communities.

Back at Coe Park

By Susan Ferry

Hello to my Coe Park friends—those I have met, and those I look forward to meeting. Many volunteers know me as one of the voices on the radio when you're communicating with Central Communications (Cencom), and also from the training that Don Irving and I have provided most volunteers. After nearly 17 years working at Cencom and almost 25 years with State Parks, I decided it was time for a change, time to get back out in the field.

My new position is Gavilan Sector Environmental Scientist in the Natural Resources Division. This position has also been known in the past as the resource ecologist. What does that mean I will be doing? Well, according to the Department of Parks and Recreation Operations Manual, "The Department's natural resource responsibility is to acquire, protect, restore, maintain and sustain outstanding and representative examples of California's natural and scenic values for the benefit of present and future generations." My main projects will be eradicating wild pigs, controlling invasive species, and continuing other ongoing projects that resource ecologists Amy Palkovic and Tim Reilly have worked on before me. Although I will be working across Monterey District on a variety of projects, Coe Park will be one of my main focuses.

Coe Park has been my favorite park since I first saw it 16 years ago. I began riding my horses at Hunting Hollow, then introduced my husband, Mike, to the park. He later became the Supervising Ranger, so we attended several of the Coe Backcountry Weekends while he staffed the park. We also continue to attend the annual PRA meeting, and have stayed in touch with many of our Coe Park friends. We are both very passionate about Coe Park and are excited to once again be part of one of the best parks in the state with the most amazing volunteer group!

So when you see *fresh* pig damage, email me.
If you notice any new invasive plant species, email me.
If you see cattle trespass issues, email me.
If you just want to say "Hi," email me!

With such a large park, I need all the extra eyes out there to let me know about any issues that arise.

Thanks, and I'm looking forward to meeting you in the park.

Susan Ferry
sferry@parks.ca.gov

New Members

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

R. Michael and L. Mary Coe, Corona, CA
Dale Combs, Pleasanton
David Crum, Santa Cruz
J.L. Dejong, Cupertino
The Falkowski Family, San Jose
John Farley, Cupertino
Steven Finney, Mountain View
Georgiana and John Flaherty, San Jose
Alan French, Salinas
Jeff Glass, San Jose
Rick and Suna Herder, Morgan Hill
Chris Howard, Gilroy

Robert Kass, San Jose
Scott Kirkman, San Francisco
Kelly Montelaro, Mountain View
Teresa Nemeth, Santa Clara
Lori Oleson, Morgan Hill
Don Potter, San Jose
Roger Reid, Fremont
Jim Rogers, Redwood City
Mark Seedall, Oakland
Carl Stoffel, Mountain View
Griffin Westland, San Jose
Roxanne White, Fremont

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you are a paid annual member, your *Ponderosa* mailing label includes an expiration date. (No expiration date for life members, electronic mailing, or organizations.) If you have any questions regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us:

Email: membership@coepark.org
US mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
Phone: 408-779-2728

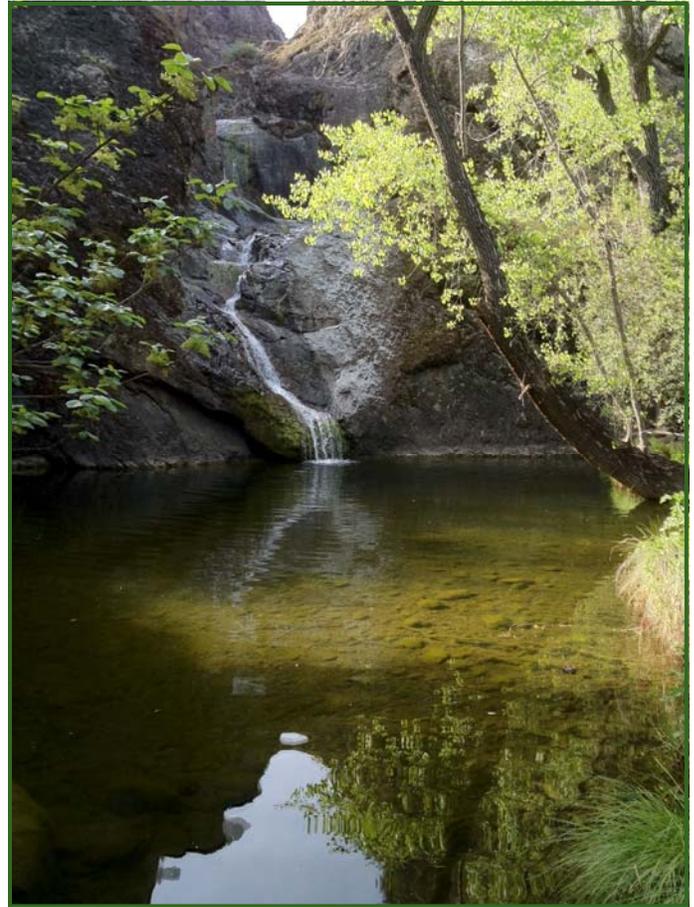
Coe Backcountry Weekend 2012

By Diana Maloney

Like last year, the weather for the Coe Backcountry Weekend event this year was spectacular. And by all accounts, hundreds of visitors will have lots of great memories of their sojourn in the remote and beautiful east side of Coe Park. The surveys are coming back with lots of thank you's to the volunteers who make this event happen.

Again this year there were no medical emergencies other than a bee sting to someone who is allergic to bees—and the bruise his friend incurred by banging the wrong end of the EpiPen and getting injected! Jim Mason, our EMT in residence, checked out both carefully but they suffered no ill effects and were truly happy campers. Thanks, Jim!

We feel privileged to have the opportunity to visit this remote area of the park that's open for access by vehicle only once a year. We're doubly blessed this year since we know our beloved park will remain open through June 2015 and we can look forward to another Coe Backcountry Weekend next year. Come back in 2013 and bring your friends and families! And please consider supporting the Coe Park Preservation Fund, which is working to keep the park open for much longer: www.coeParkfund.org.



Pacheco Falls on the 2012 Coe Backcountry Weekend.
Photo courtesy of Karl Doll.



This says it all!
Photo by Matt Pauly

Memorial Bench to Honor John Wilkinson

By Libby Vincent

John Wilkinson was a huge supporter of Coe Park in particular, State Parks in general, and wild places everywhere. For some background on John's life, contributions, and friendship see:

http://coepark.net/pineridgeassociation/documents/Fall_2010.pdf

On Saturday May 5th, a group of us helped install a memorial bench on the Monument Trail to honor John. Many thanks especially to Winslow Briggs for shepherding permissions for the bench through the system and to Eric Griggs for getting all the hardware organized and set up ready to be installed.

What a brilliant day on Pine Ridge, hillsides green and lush, wildflowers popping after late rains, and views to die for. A perfect day to install the bench with the earth soft rather than baked to hard clay by summer heat. Seven of us shuttled lengths of wood for the bench, metal supports, bags of concrete, water, and assorted tools up to the site and started digging. It took about an hour and a half, although we were in no hurry, and when we were finished it seemed like such a fitting site for a memorial to John. Visitors can pause to sit and enjoy the views and those who knew John will always think of him there. What would John have thought of the bench? He would probably have laughed shyly and felt embarrassed.

The group included, from left to right in the group photo, Mukesh Jani, who went through volunteer training with John, Winslow Briggs, long-time park supporter and volunteer, Libby Vincent, ditto, holding a photo of John that Dmitry took on Toiyabe Range Peak just a few weeks before John died, Sam Parker, long-time park supporter, Eric Griggs, park maintenance staffer, and Dmitry Nechayev, volunteer and adventurer who backpacked to amazing places with John. Bernd Meyer, friend of John's who took the photo.



Photo courtesy of Bernd Meyer



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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 Jim Wright, jimtina@yahoo.com

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: PRAnewsletter@wildblue.net.

Deadline for the next issue: July 31, 2012

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