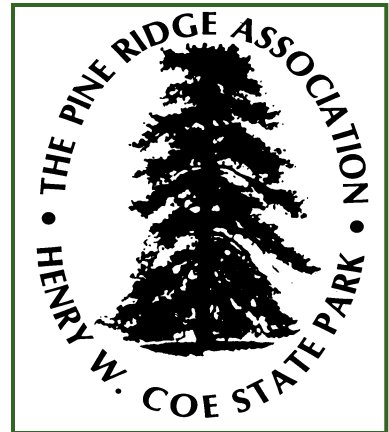


The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park



Fall 2015

Condors Visit Coe Park

By Joseph Belli



California Condor. Photo by Joseph Belli.

Editor's note: Joe has been member of the Pinnacles Condor Crew since 2010.

On August 28, California Condor #564, a five-year-old male, did something he had never done before and no condor had done in over a year: he flew north beyond San Benito County to the mountains just east of Patterson and Highway 5. On his return flight the next day, he flew over Mustang Peak on the eastern edge of Coe Park. Two weeks later, condor #405, an eight-year-old male, and condor #626, a four-year-old female, flew toward Pacheco Pass, where #405 flew over the Kickham Ranch while #626 checked out the Bell's Station area. Neither bird had ever flown that far north. Finally, condor #236, a 15-year-old female who spends much of her time at Pinnacles National Park, also flew north for the first time, soaring over the Orestimba Wilderness, spending the night on Pine Springs Hill just east of the park.

That there have been any condors over Coe Park in 2015, however infrequently, is something of a miracle given the precarious position the species was in thirty years ago. In 1985, there were fewer than two dozen condors in existence, and just ten in the wild; the rest were sequestered at captive breeding facilities. That year, the decision was made to capture the remaining free-flying birds and bring them in as well, not only to bolster the captive breeding program but also for their own safety. Despite full legal protection and considerable efforts expended by both state and federal

Inside this issue:

<i>Condors Visit Coe Park</i> by Joseph Belli	1, 2, 3
<i>The White Barn</i> by Teddy Goodrich	4
<i>Walking into the Canyon</i> below Palassou Ridge by Mike Meyer	5, 6
<i>Nominations Sought for the</i> <i>Volunteer of the Year Annual</i> <i>Award</i>	6
<i>Jeepers Creepers, Nuts are</i> <i>being Hatched</i> by Barry Breckling	7
<i>Tarantula Festival 2015</i> by Sue Dekalb	8
<i>News from the Board of the</i> <i>Pine Ridge Association</i> by Daniel Benefiel	9
<i>Time to Run for the PRA</i> <i>Board</i>	9
<i>News from the Volunteer</i> <i>Committee</i> by Manny Pitta	10, 11
<i>Park Events and Information</i>	12
<i>News from Gilroy Yamoto</i> <i>Hot Springs</i> by Laura Dominguez-Yon	13

Continued on page 2....

Condors Visit Coe Park, continued....

wildlife agencies, the population continued to plummet toward extinction. In 1987, the last free-flying California Condor was captured, and no-one knew when, or if, condors would ever soar again.

With a wingspan over nine feet and a weight of over 20 pounds, the California Condor is the largest and arguably the most spectacular bird in North America. At the time of Lewis and Clark, condors flew over a vast portion of the west coast from Vancouver, B.C. to Baja California. They occurred inland as well, along the Columbia and Snake rivers, as far east as the Rockies, and along the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Following the Gold Rush, however, condors began disappearing, first from the inland areas, then from the northwest. By 1900, condors were gone from northern California and as time passed their numbers continued to dwindle. Their final stronghold was in the mountains north of Los Angeles.



Two condors.
Photo by Joseph Belli.

What accounted for the dramatic die-off? Shooting played a major role. Ranchers shot them under the mistaken belief that condors killed the livestock they were seen feeding on (condors are strictly scavengers, feeding only on carrion). Condors were shot for sport, for their size provided a tempting target and there were no protective laws in place until the 1900s. Museums and private collectors also shot condors to add to their exhibits, and purchased eggs stolen from nests. Condors almost certainly perished after feeding on carcasses laced with strychnine, set out to kill wolves, grizzly bears, and coyotes, a widespread practice toward the end of the 19th century.

Unfortunately, condors were ill equipped to deal with the new threats that emerged as the region was settled. Being large, long-lived birds, condors reproduce very slowly. A breeding pair produces just one egg, and it takes over a year to raise that chick, so at most, a condor pair produces one chick every two years. In contrast, Turkey Vultures usually fledge two to three chicks every year. With such a low reproductive rate, condors simply couldn't make up for all the birds that were being killed.

The 20th century brought with it a series of laws protecting condors, as well as the establishment of a pair of sanctuaries protecting nesting areas in the Los Padres National Forest. Shootings and poisonings tailed off, as did egg collecting, yet condors continued to decline. New hazards emerged, such as collisions with power lines. In the early 1980s, biologists began affixing transmitters to condors, to track their movements. In 1983, a condor was found dead at the base of a tree in the foothills of the southern Sierra Nevada. The body was sent to a forensics lab, which found bullet fragments in the bird's digestive tract and high levels of lead in its blood and tissues. They concluded that the bird had died from lead poisoning after feeding on the carcass of an animal shot with lead bullets. When lead bullets penetrate flesh, they fragment into numerous particles. When condors eat, they swallow large chunks, and if they happen to ingest enough lead, it can kill them. Over the next two years, three more condors were found dead of lead poisoning and that prompted the decision to bring all the wild condors into captivity.

Fortunately, the captive breeding program achieved considerable success, and condors were returned to the wild in 1992, first in southern California, their last stronghold. In 1996, a second flock was established at the Vermillion Cliffs north of the Grand Canyon, followed by their reintroduction to central California in Big Sur in 1997. In 2000, it was decided that a second central California release site be added, one that would someday merge with the Big Sur birds. The choice came down to Coe Park or Pinnacles. There were several factors weighing against Coe: proximity to a major urban area, the existence of two wind farms nearby (Altamont and Pacheco Pass; wind turbines are notorious for killing raptors, particularly golden eagles), and a lack of suitable nesting habitat. Ultimately, Pinnacles was selected, and in December 2003, six juvenile condors were released there. Since then, three to seven birds from the captive breeding program have been released there almost every year, and the population has slowly risen, but not without substantial setbacks. The years 2012-2013 were especially hard; during that time, 13 condors died, mostly from lead poisoning, while only two chicks fledged.

Continued on page 3....

Condors Visit Coe Park, continued....

All condors have numbered tags on one or both wings, allowing field crews to identify birds individually, and all have VHF radio transmitters attached to wing tags and/or tail feathers to allow us to radio-track them. Radio-tracking enables us to confirm that condors are alive, active, and moving. When a transmitter has not moved in 10 hours, it emits a signal at twice the normal speed, what we call “mort mode,” and it indicates one of two things: a dead condor, or a transmitter attached to a tail feather which has fallen off. Dead birds are recovered as quickly as possible to allow the forensics lab the best chance to determine a cause of death. In addition, about a third of the flock wear GPS transmitters, which can tell us how high they fly, where they roost, how fast they fly, where they spend their time, and more. All the information presented in the opening paragraph was taken from GPS information.



Condor on a rocky cliff.
Photo by Joseph Belli.

The technology is impressive but it has its limitations. Both the radio transmitters and GPS units last no more than two years. In order to replace them, we need to trap the birds, which we do by placing calf carcasses inside a chain-link trap built into our flight pen at Pinnacles in a closed area of the park. We also trap condors twice annually for health checks, drawing blood and testing for lead levels. Those with low levels are released; those with moderate levels are treated at Pinnacles, and those with high levels are sent to either the Oakland Zoo or the LA Zoo for treatment. During the bleak years of 2012-2013, fully half of all condors tested required treatment. Beginning in 2014, though, we saw lead levels drop. This spring, only seven of 40 condors needed treatment and so far this fall only six of 32. In addition, 2015 has seen five condor chicks fledge, a record high with only three deaths, the first time births have exceeded deaths. If that trend continues, the day may come when the population increases enough so that birds begin venturing out into new territory, such as Coe Park.

What might the future hold for condors in Coe? That's hard to answer. Condors need habitat for nesting, foraging, and roosting. For nesting, condors prefer rocky cliff faces with large cavities, features that are scarce in Coe. For foraging, they prefer open habitats such as grasslands and oak savannah, of which Coe has a fair amount. What it lacks is an abundance of large, dead mammals. The most heavily used foraging habitat exists in the ranches south of Pinnacles, where condors find an abundance of dead livestock. We also find them feeding on the remains of deer, wild pigs, coyotes, and ground squirrels, many of which were either shot or hit by a vehicle. Ironically, Coe may be too natural, for, like it or not, with the vast herds of Tule Elk and Pronghorn a thing of the past, condors today rely indirectly on humans to provide much of their food. Roosting habitat, however, is something Coe has in abundance. Condors select roost sites every evening before sunset. They prefer to roost in conifers along the tops of ridges. Pine trees, high ridges...sound familiar? Roosting sites don't necessarily need to be very close to foraging or nesting areas, either—some of the most popular roost sites lie 20 miles from foraging habitat and nests.

Coe rates poorly for nesting habitat, fair for foraging habitat, and ideal for roosting. But who knows? Condors are full of surprises, and the fact that we're even discussing the future for condors in Coe is something that was incomprehensible 20 years ago. So, keep your eye to the skies...you never know. And if you do happen to see a condor in the park, please report it to the Pinnacles Condor Crew (831-389-4486, ext. 276), and take a picture if at all possible.

The White Barn

By Teddy Goodrich

The white barn is one of the oldest buildings on Pine Ridge. Built in 1903, it predates the ranch house by several years. The Coe brothers knew how essential a barn is to a ranching operation. Here they would store the grain they grew in the Arnold field. There would be a place to stable their horses and keep their saddles, bridles, and harnesses. There would also be room for a wagon and mowing equipment and tools. For almost fifty years, the barn was central to the ranching operation at Pine Ridge.

Pine Ridge has not been a working ranch for over sixty years. The barn, no longer needed, has been neglected. The doors are opened in the morning so visitors can peer into its dark interior, and many of us have enjoyed Coe Thanksgiving within its walls, but not many have realized how much the barn has deteriorated. There are gaping holes in the roof that have allowed rain and weather to permanently damage the supporting beams. Ugly patchwork repairs have been done to the wall separating the barn from the lean to, and a large branch on a neighboring oak tree hangs ominously over all.

Plans are being made for repairs to the roof and supports, but they will take time, and the repairs will be expensive. The repairs call for a new roof, replacement of the damaged supports, the installation of electricity, and leveling the floor. When the repairs are completed, the barn will provide a special place for programs of all kinds—interpretive talks, evening programs, school programs. The big plus? The barn is ADA accessible, the only building at park headquarters besides the campground bathrooms that has that designation!

The old barn needs your help. A special account has been set up in the visitor center to accept donations to repair the white barn. I hope you will give generously to keep this special place available for park visitors for years to come. Donations may be mailed to the Pine Ridge Association, 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037, or they may be made in person in the visitor center.



The white barn in the snow.
Photo by Barry Breckling.



Loading hay into the barn.
Photo from Coe Park archives.

Walking into the Canyon below Palassou Ridge

By Mike Meyer

One thing that gets me really awake out walking in this park is coming down the road from Mahoney Meadows past Coit Camp and on to Coyote Creek. There is something about the big canyon with Palassou Ridge across from you that the attention gets pulled into. I don't think you ever figure anything out, you just keep coming back to it. The route goes all along the sunny and grassy side in the afternoon; but also as you go down you are coming closer to the shade side across the big canyon, the dark and thick-with-trees side, and you are always looking across the space as you are cutting across and down.

That ridge over there, Palassou, is big and high and you can see all of it, top to bottom. The grass on top is spotty, it is mostly trees or maybe chaparral. Grass comes in zebra spots or shaped like a scar that healed to a lighter color. You look across the big space, it is like a big bowl of air, it might be a thousand yards across or maybe only five hundred, it's hard to say. The trees are often backlit in the afternoon and the air sparkles between you and the face of the ridge, the air is a feature in its own right.

The face of the ridge is a sheet of trees all up and down, but if you stop to look it is a texture of small shapes through the distance, like bleachers of faces across a football field. The trees are straight up and leaning over, you notice the oaks billowing and making many puffs of different shades of green across there, it is like a scene in a painting from the 17th century. There are bay trees that also billow and are a lighter green and spikier than the oaks, and pines slanting sideways or leaning out, or they are inset deeper in the canopy and you can notice that they are jutting upright above everything in the vicinity. The wall of trees starts miles down the canyon in the south and then goes miles up the canyon north where it melds with Cordoza Ridge.

Yet, sometimes there are no trees and then it is chamise that is covering a southward facing arm that bulges from the mass. Chamise is about the height of a tall man and the width of a Fiat. Its trunk has the thickness of a man's arm and the limbs twist and the bark flakes and the needles are small and faded-green, they get under your shirt if you crawl around in it. One chamise has a gnarled look, yet when a tract of it on a hillside across the canyon from you has the light behind it so that the bushes are somewhat backlit, with the light streaming down through the millions of needles and the twisting trunks from the rear, then the face of it has the texture of a fine hide, dark green and black, on the wall of earth. When the sun is lower and a tract of the chamise is in deep shadow, then it is all black and then you will walk and look and are barely able to discern its texture. You keep looking, though, it is like trying to make out its expression.

Coit Road slants across the face of Mahoney Meadows ridge, and in the switchbacks below Coit Camp it comes around grassy-cloaked, oaky shoulders that push the road out over the canyon. You walk along downward with the trees high up on a bank and looking down on you and the rubble of the cut bank at eye level. On the low side of the road the grass is thigh high and the sea of it drops off to sway in sheets with the wind down and out, then swells again forty or fifty yards out. It is in this area after the big switchback that you might first pick up the distant sound of water in the canyon. At first it is tin-hornish, a quiet echoing shshshsh sound that creeps into the awareness thinly. You may not notice, but at some point a picture forms in the back of the mind of the creek rushing deep in the canyon, and then you are aware of it and the air is little crisper and the leaves are twirling and slapping, the shshshsh rings a little, at a higher level, it carries up and seems to come from the mountain across from you sounding like thousands of pieces of glass rustling in the trees. As you come lower, it gains force and then, with a shiver, you realize a power is down there. The sound overcomes the sounds of the wind and trees and it grows in you as you come down the road, and you are walking with a swelling anticipation, it is like a blush that you cannot stop because you are coming nearer to something wild, and a feeling of adventure rises in your blood.

Continued on page 6....

Walking into the Canyon below Palassou Ridge, continued....

One time when the sun was glinting and sparkly at the edge of the high ridge, with streaks of light just brushing across the tips of the trees, the road came level with the creek, crossed a meadow, then started up again toward Woodcutter Spring, and I stopped for a moment to see the creek. It cut along the base of the bank below the road maybe 20 feet down and there were small oaks on the bank that rose up and blocked the view except for an opening. The steep high slope was wooly with trees and the undulating water curving and of smoothly flowing strands and also splashing and white. The creek split above a small island opposite where I stood, a parallelogram of rocks and a sycamore. The water was above and below the island, you could make out the thin sound it made rushing across the upper channel of small stones, then it hit a shoulder of trees and rocks and came down at a sudden right angle and ran straight toward the bank gaining speed, jumping and plunging then, and it shot into the main channel which itself was coming out of a tight chute of rocks and trees. The whole of it swelled just below then ripped on, the force of the main channel slashing and raging, and the sound strong and of the power of a confined thing bursting against its constraints, a wildness before you and in you all through your body. You want to be closer, seizing into it with your hungry eyes and even with an urge to get in it, but you are just you and it is way too much power and so you are good just to whisper something under your breath in admiration.

You step back and scan the different zones of the mountain face, even high up you can notice certain trees that stand out, they are hanging and leaning further out than the mass of them and seem heroically strong holding themselves against gravity, and it is as if they are showing themselves to you. I hadn't thought to be more than a second or two for a look. But the way it worked out, there was nothing else in the world but the creek and the mountain for many long moments. I had just another mile to the truck and made it to the gate before full dark, then rode down the Hot Springs road under the trees.

Nominations Sought for the Volunteer of the Year Annual Award

Each year at the PRA annual meeting held in February an award is presented to an individual (or individuals) whose efforts have preserved and enriched Henry W. Coe State Park. It is not necessary that the recipient be a member of the Pine Ridge Association or be a uniformed volunteer in the park. The recipient receives an engraved plaque, and their name is added to the large plaque that is displayed in the visitor center.

Two unofficial sets of criteria have been used to guide the selection process:

Leadership: scope, motivation, and initiative

Involvement: scope, altruism, and time contribution

Asset growth: recruiting, fundraising, and contributions

Ideas/projects: creative, innovative, follow through with personal implementation

Performance: past, sustained, future expectations

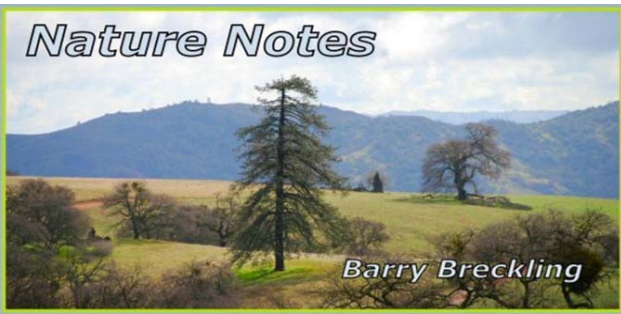
Measurable accomplishments: visible results

Has had a beneficial effect on the park's resources and activities

Has sought responsibility and has acted as a leader

Has leveraged efforts into multiplicative effects by organizing the activities of others

We are asking PRA members to supply nominations for this award by the end of November. If there is someone you would like to nominate, please write a short paragraph of reasons why that person should be considered and send it to the PRA President, Daniel Benefiel P.O. Box 1015, Morgan Hill, CA 95038 or email dbenefiel@gmail.com. A committee of the PRA board of directors will collect additional information about the activities of your nominee and will make a selection.



Jeepers Creepers, Nuts Are Being Hatched

You hear a beeping noise up in a tree and catch a glimpse of what looks like a tiny woodpecker walking down the tree trunk. **Walking down the tree trunk!** Woodpeckers don't walk down tree trunks. You thumb through your bird book and there it is, a White-breasted Nuthatch.

Two other types of nuthatches are occasionally seen in Coe Park, the Red-breasted Nuthatch and the Pygmy Nuthatch. In Europe, people saw nuthatches wedging nuts in crevices of tree bark and then hacking at them with their beaks to get the nuts open and thus they named them nuthatches. In the fall, nuthatches store seeds, insects, spiders, and other invertebrates in bark crevices to be eaten later. They often stick a piece of moss or lichen on top to hide the future meal.



Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Nuthatches are one of the few animals that use tools. They select a piece of bark and use it to pry bark off trees to uncover hidden insects. With their long claws, White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches can move up and down tree trunks with ease; they face downward when descending, a maneuver that other birds, such as woodpeckers, are unable to manage. One of the most remarkable characteristics of nuthatches is their ability to walk or hop along the bottom of limbs, seemingly defying gravity.



White-breasted Nuthatch.

Nuthatches are hole-nesters, sometimes using abandoned woodpecker holes, but more often making their own holes. White-breasted Nuthatches smear noxious smelling insects around the opening of their nest holes and Red-breasted Nuthatches smear pine sap around the entrance. They may go to the effort to reduce the chance that predators will enter their nest holes.



Brown Creeper.

Despite the similarity in climbing abilities and feeding habits of nuthatches and woodpeckers, they are not closely related. The same is the case for Brown Creepers, another bird that can walk on vertical tree surfaces. Creepers also glean invertebrates from beneath tree bark, and they also eat and stash seeds. Unlike the White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches, which often move down a tree trunk when they're feeding, Brown Creepers start at the base of a tree and work their way up. Then they fly to the base of another tree and again feed their way up the trunk. Nuthatches and creepers, by searching for food in opposite directions on a tree trunk, may find prey items that the others missed.

Creepers are more common than they might seem to be. Their speckled brown feathers camouflage them well against the background of tree bark, and when they feel threatened, they often freeze.



Pygmy Nuthatch.

Tarantula Festival 2015

By Sue Dekalb

Another successful TarantulaFest this year, thanks to all the visitors who drove the winding road through golden hills up to the park. Thanks too to the volunteers and Pine Ridge Association (PRA) members who purchased meals and raffle tickets, and made donations.

Preparation for the event starts in January and there is something happening every month through to October to make the event a success. Exhibitors are contacted and scheduled, volunteers sign up, raffle donors are sought, raffle tickets printed and mailed out, permits acquired, flyers created and distributed.

Sales were slow initially. Two and a half weeks before the event we still had more volunteers than visitors buying meals. Mike Hundt and his outreach group did a great job at the Taste of Morgan Hill event, passing out flyers to the Tfest and raffling off some meals. Marty Cheek put an article in Morgan Hill Life and gave us a free ad. Allene Liebenberg put out flyers in Hollister, Kitty Swindle and Chere Bargar put out flyers from Morgan Hill to Gilroy. It takes the support of all the volunteers to bring off a successful event.

The raffle is a big part of making the Tfest a success because every ticket sold helps the PRA generate funds for educational and interpretive activities. Thanks to Ann Briggs and Adam Escoto for handling the raffle this year. Morgan Hill's Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center brought their ambassador animals and kept the crowds fascinated all day. Shirley Keller brought her various snakes for people to enjoy and handle; so many people asked where the snakes were because they were really keen to see and touch them. Susan Blake brought all her pelts to educate visitors, and Kevin McDevitt kept the kids busy all day roping. Denice Verhoeven kept the kids activities humming all day in the interpretive room at the visitor center. RJ Adams and Monika Davis kept the visitor center packed all day with their array of tarantulas and gave visitors such good information about them. Patrick Goodrich staffed the visitor center selling everything that wasn't nailed down.

Many thanks to all the visitors to this year's event, and to the great volunteers who made the Tfest happen.



Sada Springs Jug Band.
Photo by Marty Cheek.



Handling a snake safely.
Photo by Marty Cheek.



WERC's ambassador animals and birds.
Photo by Marty Cheek.

News from the Board of the Pine Ridge Association

By Daniel Benefiel

Manny Pitta updated the board on volunteer committee efforts. Volunteer IDs to be used as parking tags while volunteering in the park are being mailed out. David Cartwright has been making good progress on cleaning up the volunteer handbook, separating out general educational material from volunteer specific information. The committee is looking at ideas to bring everyone together for a social event. Fourteen volunteers were accepted into this year's volunteer training program.

Ranger Stuart Organo, Gavilan Sector Supervisor, reported that due to medical leave and needs in other parts of the district, Coe Park is currently short staffed in terms of rangers.

Paul Liebenberg reported on springs and trails. The road to Walsh Peak and trail down to Kaiser-Aetna Road have been cleared. This route makes an excellent loop, especially for the Coe Backcountry Weekend. Lots of work has been done on Coit Spring. The spring is producing well, but the team had to repair many leaks and replace pipe. Paul also reported on the effort to replace signs throughout the park and options of whether to buy them commercially or use the California Prison Industry.

Cynthia Leeder provided the latest balance sheet and profit and loss statement. Total liabilities and equity as of September 5 are \$345,458.01 with net income of \$11,242.

Daniel Benefiel reported on efforts to prioritize and pursue projects along with Patricia Clark-Gray, District Interpretive Specialist, and other staff members. The team has also been looking at various funding sources, including grants. Volunteer Michael Hundt has been organizing much of this effort. Michael is also working with Mike Zuccaro, Associate Architect, and Matt Bischoff, State Historian, on repair and improvements to the white barn. Without repair work, the barn is in serious risk of deterioration. Michael is preparing a grant request to the California State Parks Foundation to partially fund roof repair.

The next PRA board meeting will be at 6:30pm on Tuesday November 10, 2015 in the Gilroy Library meeting room. All PRA members are invited to attend.

Time to Run for the PRA Board

The Pine Ridge Association (PRA) will hold its annual election for the board of directors in December. The terms of two directors, Dan Benefiel and Ken Howell, expire at the end of this year. Both Dan and Ken say they will be candidates for reelection. However, if you wish to run for one of the seats on the board, now is the time to prepare your candidacy statement and send it to Steve McHenry, 439 Chateau LaSalle Drive, San Jose, CA 95111, or email a statement to me at stephen.l.mchenry@gmail.com.

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

The most important qualification for a board member is willingness to attend board meetings and participate in carrying out tasks for the association. Meetings typically take place every other month on week nights. 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 materials. However, this means that some members might not receive their newsletters or other 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 Friday, November 27. Please send your statements to me at the address above. If you plan to nominate someone else, please do so at least two weeks earlier. Your statement should be a few paragraphs and contain information such as how long you have been a PRA member, why you became interested in Coe Park, ways that you have served the park, other volunteer activities that have benefited the public, any special qualifications or experience you have, and specific plans you have for contributing to 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 email me or feel free to call me at 408-286-8858.

News from the Volunteer Committee

By Manny Pitta

Interpretive activities and outreach programs have continued to grow with numerous hikes and evening programs throughout the fall. Membership in the Henry Coe State Park Outdoors Meetup group (<http://www.meetup.com/Henry-Coe-State-Park-Outdoors-Meetup/>) now tops 330 and is still growing. Thanks to Mike Hundt for his great work on interpretive activities and outreach programs.

Remember that the 2016 PRA annual meeting will take place on Saturday, January 30! The keynote speaker will be Zara McDonald from the Felidae Conservation Fund talking about mountain lions, bobcats, and global wildcat ecosystems. Of course, there will still be the exciting PRA board and volunteer committee meetings, volunteer awards, and lunch.

New volunteer training started on September 12 with an overview of the volunteer program followed by talks and activities on volunteer duties, a tour of the Coe Park headquarters area, and emergency procedures. That was followed on September 19 by Coe Park history, the physical environment, cultural resources, and a geology hike.

An additional day of training was added this year on October 10. The day was spent on the Corral, Springs, and Forest Trails with frequent stops discussing the plants and animals of Coe Park. The new format, spending all day out in the park, went very well with great feedback from volunteers and trainees alike. Thanks to Bill Frazer, Winslow Briggs, Mike Meyer, Sue Dekalb, and Joe Belli for leading the day's activities.

The trainees had a wonderful experience during this year's ride-along weekend, October 17-18. All the volunteers were on time and well prepared for scheduled activities. Dan Healy did a great job as the "bad camper." He sported a scruffy beard, some attitude, was evasive, showed a fishing license for his hiking permit, had a bow (but no arrows) with him, etc. He really put the trainees on notice that they were in for two days of "experience." One of the trainees looped around behind the campsite to provide backup to Ken in case there was "trouble"!

Ranger Jen joined the group at Los Cruzeros on Saturday and stayed with the group through the pre-dinner excursion to Mustang Peak that she led. Don Savant led the other optional pre-dinner hike to Pacheco Falls, with the group driven back by Dave Raiman and Lynne Starr. After their return, the group had a course of appetizers and gourmet dinner (lead cooks Liz Brinkman and Dan Benefiel). After dinner, there was a nice "campfire" gathering around a bunch of lights while sharing a few thoughts, followed by Barry's rain dance led by Ken Howell. Everyone drifted off to bed by 10pm except for a few stragglers who partied on.



Meeting the "bad camper."
Photo by Dick Rawson.



Gourmet dinner served at Pacheco Camp. Photo by Paul Liebenberg.

News from the Volunteer Committee, continued....

The second day of the ridealong started at 6:15am when we were all rudely awakened by a rendition of “good morning, good morning” by some of the more musical volunteers. After breakfast, the group continued on its excursion stopping at Willson Camp for a tour of the cabin and rendezvous with the Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU), Windmill Meadow to see a visitor support station in operation, Woodchopper Spring for a talk on spring maintenance, and Coit Lake dam for Bill Frazer’s fishing demo. The group finished the day with a hike down Willow Ridge Trail and drive back to headquarters.



Meeting the MAU at Willson Camp.
Photo by Dick Rawson.

Thanks to all the volunteers for their hard work in making this year’s ridealong a great success. Special thanks to Ken Hulick for managing the overall event schedule, John Thatcher for managing the drivers, and Ken Howell for managing the Pacheco Camp activities.

CoeEd Day took place on October 24 and was attended by 10 of the new trainees plus a good group of wise and experienced volunteers. Classroom sessions offered included Coe family history, introduction to GPS and using the park map, birds of Coe Park, emergency procedures and communications, archaeology of Coe, and resource management. Animal tracking and introduction to geocaching were offered outdoors. Thanks to all of the CoeEd Day presenters and Bill Frazer for managing the event.

MAU training took place on Oct 24-25 at Coit Camp. It will be followed in the next few weeks by Coe mountain bike patrol orientation, visitor center training, introduction to trails and springs work, foot patrol, and Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs training.

We look forward to welcoming the trainees into the ranks of the uniformed volunteers on January 30 at the PRA annual meeting.



Back row (left to right): Stu Nuttall, Joe Navratil, Doris Kramer, Don Clare, Philip Ambler, Rick Casey, Eric Pape, Ed Fox. Front row (left to right): Shae Collinge, Kat Levine, Ashley Austin, Pauline Wood.
Not shown: Kelly Kersten.
Photo by Patrick Goodrich.

Park Events and Information

Mark your calendars—important dates and other announcements

Also visit www.coepark.net for more information about all activities.

Thanksgiving Potluck

Saturday, November 28, 2015. Thanksgiving potluck for all friends of Coe Park, 3.30pm at the white barn near the visitor center for appetizers, then turkey and many other delicious contributions served starting at 4.00pm. For more information and to sign up with a food delight, Sue Dekalb at sue.dekalb@verizon.net.

PRA Annual Meeting

Be sure to save Saturday, January 30, 2016, for the annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association. The meeting will be held at the Morgan Hill Community Center, located at the corner of Monterey Road and East Dunne Avenue. Plenty of parking is available behind the building. Coffee and bagels will be served starting at 8:15 a.m. The official PRA meeting will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m., followed by the graduation of new volunteers and presentation of awards by the volunteer committee and state staff. The guest speaker will be Zara McDonald, with the Felidae Conservation Fund talking about mountain lions, bobcats, and global wildcat ecosystems.

Trail Work Days

Meet at Hunting Hollow, 8.30am, on:

Saturday, January 23
Saturday, February 13
Saturday, March 12

For more information, please call Chere at 408-683-2247 or visit www.coepark.net.

Raincoats and Rubber Boots

Saturday, March 5, 10.00am at the Hunting Hollow entrance, rain or shine. We'll hike down the creek, have a scavenger hunt, perhaps enjoy a boat race (toy boats furnished) or a duck race. Bring a picnic lunch. For more information, please call Chere at 408-683-2247 or Kitty at 408-842-6215, or visit www.coepark.net.

Wildflower Ride (bring your own horse)

Please visit www.coepark.net early next year for the date.

Coe Backcountry Weekend

Friday, April 29 through Sunday May 1. Check the park website, www.coepark.net in early February.

Ranch Day

Saturday, May 14 10:00am-3:00pm at Hunting Hollow. For more information, please call Chere at 408-683-2247 or Kitty at 408-842-6215, or visit www.coepark.net.

Coe Campout for Equestrians and Hikers

Please visit www.coepark.net early next year for the date.

More Trail Work Days

Lend a hand every second Saturday at 9.00am for trail work. Venues will be posted on the Coe Park website, www.coepark.net.

PRA New 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. If you have chosen to receive *The Ponderosa* electronically and, for some reason, it is undeliverable, we will send the next issue via USPS.

Jeri Allen, Gilroy
Don Clare, Morgan Hill
Ed Fox, Morgan Hill
Rich Roggia, Gilroy
Herveline Sartori, Mountain View

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



News from Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs

By Laura Domínguez-Yon

The beautiful fall weather was perfect for our October 24th event at Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs (GYHS) commemorating 20 years on the National Register of Historic Places and as a California Historical Landmark. Special thanks to the California State Parks Foundation for a grant enabling the purchase of folding picnic tables and popup canopies with wall panels and screens that allow us to more easily set up for events and extend our event season.

Among the visitors was Ruth Erickson of Hollister wearing the T-shirt she received when she attended the 1995 dedication. Ruth's husband, Ron Erickson, was a member of California State Parks staff in the area. Does anyone remember Ron? It was especially fun to see Cindy Sakata Okuji, granddaughter of H. K. Sakata (GYHS owner 1938-1967), at our October 24th event. Hope to see the whole clan for a reunion tour and picnic here! Kaz and Aiko Matsuyama were pleased to see the expanded display board featuring their father Fujio "Fred" Matsuyama's contributions to the Enomoto Cabin. We knew he was the carpenter who built the cabin and teahouse for the Sadakusu Enomoto family. We recently learned that he managed the Enomoto's Redwood City nursery from 1930-1939, until young Bill Enomoto graduated from college and learned the ropes well enough to take command of the family business. Do you know any Bay Area flower growers? Aiko and Kaz have 1930s photographs they'd like to return to the nursery growers' families; let us know if you'd like to help with that. And thanks to a recent donation from Enomoto's daughter Edith Enomoto-Watanabe to the Japanese American Citizens League, Gilroy Chapter, and with the collaboration of the Monterey Chapter and the Matsuyama family, GYHS will have a presence in the Monterey Heritage Center Museum in the form of the 1939 GYHS towel!

We thank all who helped make this annual fall event a success:

California State Parks Foundation, California Province, Society of Jesus, Lily Kawafuchi, and the Henry K. Kato family.

Brochures and printing: California State Parks Foundation, Dean and Laura Yon, and anonymous.

Volunteers: J.J. Sasaki, Robert Method, Karen Pogue, Steve Eddlemon, Annie Laurie, Stephanie Lee, Joyce Amador, Miriam Taba, David Godkin, Alan and Joy Miyamura, Laura Dominguez-Yon.

Uniformed volunteers: Dan Healy, Mark Deger, Mitsi Shine, Don Holmes, Jeremy Simmons, Dean Yon.

Exhibitors: authors Michael Brookman and Ian Saunders, USGS researchers James Thordsen and Aaron Lewis.

Information resources: Edith Enomoto-Watanabe, Karen E. Sugiyama, Arlene Damron, Aiko Matsuyama, Eleanor Villareal, Karen Matsushita Byer, San Jose State University's California History Room, California Flower Growers Association, Ditty Deamer.

Monterey District staff: Mat Fuzie, District Superintendent, Matt Bischoff, historian, Pat Clark-Gray, interpretive specialist, Randy Neufeld, Sector Maintenance Chief, Supervising Ranger Stuart Organo, Rangers Cameron Bowers, Jen Naber, John Verhoeven, Derrick Davis, and Dave Hermitte, and their support staff.

Team restoration progress: Matt Bischoff reports that stabilization and reroofing of the small Nebraska and Wyoming cabins and the large Texas cabin are largely complete. The Pennsylvania cabin is next. Known as the honeymoon suite during the 1950s, its beautiful interior of dark first-growth redwood has survived the decades. Security cameras are being upgraded or replaced at lower costs. The California Conservation Corps spent three weeks clearing undergrowth for fire protection. Funding for these projects has been via grants and from the Monterey District of California State Parks.



Ruth Erickson proudly wore the T-shirt she got at the 1995 dedication! Photo courtesy of Laura Dominguez-Yon.



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Morgan Hill, CA
Permit No. 160

Pine Ridge Association
Henry W. Coe State Park
9100 East Dunne Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

408-779-2728

PRA Board of Directors

Dan Benefiel, President
Ron Erskine, Vice President
Diana Goodwin
Steve McHenry, Secretary
Ken Howell
Peter Verbica
Stuart Organo, Supervising Ranger
Cynthia Leeder, Treasurer

PRA Volunteer Committee

Cameron Bowers, Volunteer Coordinator
Manny Pitta, Chair
Ken Howell
Mike Hundt
Allene Liebenberg
John Thatcher
Dave Waldrop

Mailing & Distribution

John Thatcher
Heather Ambler, e-distribution

Contributors for this issue

Heather Ambler, publisher
Libby Vincent, editor
Joseph Belli, author, photographer
Daniel Benefiel, author
Barry Breckling, author, photographer
Marty Cheek, photographer
Sue Dekalb, author
Laura Dominguez-Yon, author, photographer
Patrick Goodrich, photographer
Teddy Goodrich, author
Paul Liebenberg, photographer
Mike Meyer, author
Manny Pitta, author
Dick Rawson, photographer
Gena Zolotar, photographer

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: PRAnewsletter2@gmail.com

Deadline for the next issue: January 31, 2016

© 2015 The Pine Ridge Association