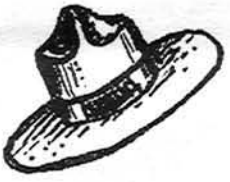
The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter

March 1991

From under My Brim



by Barry Breckling

White Eagle

It was one of those warm winter days that is not unusual for California. I was laying on my back with my eyes closed, absorbing every sound, smell, and feeling. It could almost be spring, but missing was that faint smell of blossoms—although faint, a smell that can evoke great feelings of joy. I opened my eyes to a deep blue sky, and centered above me, framed by a filigree pattern of leafless oak twigs, was an enormous white eagle. It was a beautifully shaped and near perfectly formed eagle but very ephemeral—it was formed by a cloud, and although not part of its perfect form, a large heart in its middle didn't seem out of place.

I closed my eyes again and found myself flying high above the land. My dark brown wings, nearly seven feet across, easily carried me higher as I circled on candle-lit like columns of heat rising from my mother, the earth. I could see the slowly flowing, glistening water of the Middle Fork of the Coyote Creek, but as I glided further east, the truth of the drought was apparent—none of the other creeks was flowing. This drought would have little effect on me, for after all, I didn't drink the water—all the moisture I needed I got from my food.

Below I could see manzanita bushes that were polka-dotted with new flowers—a good sight, as this is late for them to blossom; in fact, just a few weeks ago the only blossoms around were shriveled, and many flowering heads seemed dead before being able to push out blossoms. Joining me in flight was my life-time partner, a female golden eagle, dark brown as myself and also with beautiful golden brown on her head and neck but with larger wings, a full seven and a half feet across. Also near by were our two young from this past year, both as large as us but with a wash of white under their wings and a white tail except on the tip. On a steep, sheltered slope below us I could see two ponderosa pines, one with one nest and the other with two nests. The nests were made up of huge piles of branches and twigs that we had spent months collecting and years adding to maintain them. One of these pines had died this last year, and the red of the dead needles made the tree look ablaze, as if part of a crowning wildfire. Many other pines that had died in the past years of drought had lost all their needles and were less noticeable but more numerous—as many as 30 percent of the pines in this forest have died. As my eyes scanned the forest, I could see, however, that many young pines, certainly more than had died, were everywhere—the forest would replenish itself.

As we glided higher and higher, deer became the size of ants, even as seen through my 8-power eyes. In the canyon bottoms and part way up the slopes there were

many bay trees that had turned reddish-brown, and some of the live oaks were also covered with dead leaves. These leaves had died in December's heavy freeze—the coldest weather I had seen in my 25 years of life. A closer inspection of the trees did show that they still had many green leaves, and few would completely die. In the valleys where people live and plant trees from other lands, I suspected that there were also many trees with dead leaves, but many of those trees would not survive. The deciduous oaks had been spared the damaging effects of the cold and seemed no worse for wear from the drought—already, and this is quite early, the blue oaks, as seen from above, appear as a red-tinged, hazy gray as the buds begin to swell. A few buckeyes were just starting to leaf out. Next would come the black oaks with their tender red leaves; tender enough for the newly hatching insects to feed upon except that the red indicates bitter chemicals that would convince the insects differently. Just after the black oaks start to leaf out the valley oaks would begin, and finally, the ones that looked like they would bust out first, the blue oaks, would open their leaves and flowers to the world.

As the warm, rising currents took me higher and higher, the relief below became flatter and the textures softer. It was then that I tucked my wings and dove to the east. Things moved slowly at first, although the rushing air flattened my feathers tightly against my body, and my folded wings hissed a speedy whistle. As I crossed the ridges and canyons, things moved faster and faster—I was now approaching 200 miles per hour. In less than two minutes, I had flown the width of my range—a full one-third of the park. Now below I could see my favorite food, rabbits, and there were many squirrels and other small animals. Along with the deer, they seemed to be doing fine despite the drought. They knew where to find water in these dry years. Deer were more numerous than in any of the past 20 years. I have noticed that the pigs, however, have become fewer in number in the recent drought years. This has helped the deer because, with fewer pigs to eat the acorns, the fawns can fatten up and are able to survive their first winter.

The non-native pigs are not part of the balance here. I have seen them rip apart large fields looking for and eating anything, often with no consideration for the rest of their world, gorging themselves on food other animals depend on. They quickly overpopulate areas, since they have large litters and few predators. They spread their damage into new areas. Rather than conserve the last of the water for drinking, they wallow in it. When the drought hit, they were the first to suffer—but I'm sorry to say that they will be back. The drought, the extreme cold, or even extreme heat if it should come this summer, are not the enemy of the eagle and his friends—but the heart of the white eagle fears the pigs.

Did You Know?

Henry W. Coe State Park is the second largest California State Park, and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park with 600,000 acres (almost ten times larger than Coe) is the largest. DPinion

Becoming More Environmentally Aware

by Harry Batlin
District Superintendent, Gavilan District

The observation of the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day occurred earlier this year, and that day passed, I feel, without the recognition it deserved. Earth Day was conceived as a celebration of the earth and as a way of raising public awareness about the many environmental concerns that were becoming apparent.

During the past twenty years, there has been an increasing concern about environmental issues. Those concerns were driven by dramatic events such as atomic reactor failures, oil spills and reports of pollution in the water the public drinks, the air the public breathes, and the food the public eats. There seems to be a growing awareness of the magnitude and the pervasiveness of these problems.

There is a dawning awareness that these problems are not geographically isolated but global in their effect. The destruction of a tropical rain forest to make charcoal for pig iron mills affects global warming. Locally, we are often reminded of growing population problems as our cars, stalled in the near gridlock traffic situations throughout the Bay Area, pour wasted burned fuel into the environment.

There are growing fears that the water supplies in the essentially arid west are over subscribed and, in too many cases, contaminated. Massive amounts of water have to be diverted to flush salts and contaminants from marginal farmlands that would never have been worked save for the illusion that deserts could be transformed into gardens if enough cheap water could be transported from one end of the state to the other. The wetlands where the chemicals

collect become environmental nightmares for the wildlife that attempt to find refuge there.

The air is warming as carbon dioxide from burning fuel accumulates in the atmosphere. Chlorofluorocarbons from spray cans and air conditioners deplete ozone in the stratosphere, allowing increased amounts of high-energy radiation to stream to earth. It has become increasingly apparent that environmental problems are interrelated and global.

The last ten years of the twentieth century have been called the decade of the environment. It is believed by some that many of the important issues will have to be solved before we enter the twenty-first century if there is to be a healthy future for humans on the planet.

The Department of Parks and Recreation has been a leader in the area of environmental awareness and the protection of natural and cultural values. The Gavilan District is dedicated to these traditional values and will demonstrate that commitment by developing environmental and interpretative programs with a more global view. It is not that I expect programs to be less specific to the individual parks within the district, but as far as possible, they should place the issues in a larger environmental context. I would like to see park volunteers and staff make themselves knowledgeable in the areas of these problems and to share the information with visitors. Additional training will be arranged. Two excellent books have been made available for sale at the Coe State Park visitor center. Many of the books we sell are handbooks for the use of the parks; these books are also handbooks for the use of the planet.

I hope that you will share your ideas about the kinds of things you feel we should be doing. There is a saying that if you are not a part of the solution, you are a part of the problem. I believe the role of the Department is not only to be part of the solution but part of the leadership moving toward a sustainable environment in the twenty-first century.

PRA Board Notes
by Barbara Bessey

Since the last issue of *The Ponderosa,* the Board met four times; the last meeting, which was the annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association in February, is described in a separate article below.

The Association's Board of Directors met on 13 December 1990 in Morgan Hill. Treasurer Jim Mason distributed the income statement for the Association's fiscal year ending 31 October 1990. The balance of approximately $32,000 is due primarily to savings (approximately $18,000) and inventory (approximately $10,000). Jim also indicated that the Fall BBQ, one of the Association's fund-raising events, was quite successful, raising more funds than did last year's event.

Harry Batlin reported on the plans to expand the visitor center. Several changes had been made to the architectural plans since the plans had first been made available for comment. One change was the addition of an outside emergency exit; another change is to separate the lower level into two spaces, one having a built-in screen that could be darkened separately from the other part for audio-visual presentations.

The Board members gave careful consideration, first to the general issue of the conditions under which the Association's mailing list would be released for use by an individual or organization, and second to a specific request by a PRA member to use the Association's mailing list for business other than that of the PRA. The Board was clear in its position that, if the list were released, it should not be used for political or commercial purposes. Because of the Association's nonprofit status, the PRA can not and will not sanction the use of the Association's membership list for political purposes. The following policy was approved by the Board.

> *Any individual who desires to use the mailing list of the Pine Ridge Association for other than political or commercial purposes should make a written request to the Board in which the purpose for the mailing is described. Accompanying the written request should be (1) a copy of the intended mailing for the Board members to review and (2) a written acknowledgement that the mailing list will be used only once. Upon approval of the Board, the mailing list will be provided in the form of mailing labels.*

The Association's mailing list was requested by a PRA member so that the membership could be informed about several hearings on a land development proposal that the PRA member felt would likely interest supporters of Coe Park. Board members felt that the prepared statement that the PRA member read to discuss the land development issue was not suitable as an informational mailing for all Association members. The Board then instructed the PRA member to make a written request, which would include a copy of a neutrally worded informational flyer he intended to distribute plus a written acknowledgement that he would use the mailing list for only a single mailing.

The Board met again on 24 January 1991 in Morgan Hill. The Board heard a proposal made by two Coe Park volunteers to consider establishing a register on selected peaks in the park. Modeled on the concept used by a number of other parks, such as Yosemite, visitors who undertake the effort to hike to a particular ridge would find a canister containing a note book and pencil for recording their accomplishment. Such a program could provide an incentive for some visitors to explore the back country more and could provide an opportunity for greater use of the eastern section of the park. After the volunteers work out some of the details with the Trials Committee, they are to return to the Board with specific proposals about how the program would be implemented.

The Board also reviewed the status of the request to use the Association's mailing list that had been made at the December meeting. Although the PRA member had not made a formal request to the Board to use the membership list, some of the Board members and a number of the Coe Park volunteers had received a communication in the mail from him that contained the statement that he had read to the Board in December. Since the letter indicated that the statement had been read to the Board, sanction by the Board could be mistakenly inferred. Furthermore, several complaints had been received from volunteers who were upset about receiving mail of such a political nature.

This issue became the topic of a special Board meeting called by Chair Celia McCormack and held on 28 January 1991 at the home of Bill Frazer. After the meeting on January 24, an article was published in a local newspaper that contained some disturbing information that some Board members felt might implicate the Board as having taken a position on the land development issue. Specifically, the purpose of the meeting was (1) to review the article to determine whether the statements contained therein might jeopardize the nonprofit status of the Association and (2) to decide on what courses of action should be taken. After extensive discussion, the Board decided on four actions. First, some statements contained in the article would best be addressed by the personnel in the Gavilan District Office, as they were district issues rather than Association issues. Second, a member of the Board would talk to the PRA member involved to better understand what actually had taken place and to inform the individual of the rules set for Coe Park volunteers. Third, *The Ponderosa* will reiterate to the membership through the summaries of these Board meetings that the PRA does not engage in political activities or make political endorsements. Fourth, an official statement will be read to the membership at the February annual meeting. This official statement is reprinted in the box at the end of the discussion of the annual meeting.

PRA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held this year in San José on 9 February 1991. The meeting of the Coe Park volunteers was held first, chaired by Bill Frazer. Recent developments concerning the park and its operation were presented to the volunteers by members of the Volunteer Committee and by Harry Batlin and Kaye Schmidt-Robinson from the Gavilan District Office of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Winslow Briggs, a distinguished member of the Pine Ridge Association, was the guest speaker. In his talk entitled *Solar Tracking Plants,* he showed how plants react to light: light stimulates some plants to grow rapidly, while the same light may cause other plants to close up to minimize the amount of light that touches their leaves. Plants, such as lupines, bend continuously to face the sun, as the sun moves across the sky during the day. Although the reason why flowering plants track the sun is not known with certainty, Winslow indicated that one possible reason is that exposing the nectar glands to the sun increases the scents given off by the plant, which might attract the pollinating bees and insects.

Seventeen new volunteers graduated from the training program and became trainees, making this class one of the largest to date: Harry Councell, Mike Crowley, Robert Cupp, Lee Dittmann, Ron Erskine, Ross Hemeon, Phil Henderson, Millicent Kellogg, Steven Lynds, Dave Perrin, Doug Reynaud, Jim Tuomey, Carolyn Tucker, Sandy Voechting, Vicki Vosberg, Don Webster, and Scott Zavack.

Nine trainees, who had completed the requirements of the training program and had served at least 50 hours, were promoted to permanent status: Karl Clinger, Dave Greco, Michael Lynds, Mike Monroe, Penny Roberts, Diane Rubida, Richard Stone, Elaine Tischler, and George Van Gordon.

Decorative mugs were given to volunteers who worked 36 or more hours in the visitor center during the past year. The art work of a cougar that was included in the design for this year's mugs was by PRA member Judy Mason. (Judy also illustrated the Association's book on shrubs and was one of several who illustrated the revised edition of Winslow Briggs's trail guide.) Receiving mugs this year were: Everett Allen, Barbara Bessey, Lee Dittmann, Phyllis Drake, Margaret Enns, Bill Frazer, Carla Gershenoff, Kevin Gilmartin, Teddy Goodrich, Marion Grungé, Gary Keller, Fred King, Don Mason, Jim Mason, Judy Mason, Dennis Pinion, Barbara Radd, Penny Roberts, Richard Stone, Jeff Swindle, Marlene Testaguzza, Jane

Tracey, George Van Gordon, Jack Virden, and Rusty Virden.

Tina Greco, who had volunteered more than 200 hours of which more than 100 hours were spent in the visitor center, was promoted to senior volunteer. Five volunteers received special awards for the tremendous numbers of hours they have spent on Coe Park interpretative activities: Everett Allen, Lee Dittmann, Ruby Domino, Leif Larsen, and Joan Throgmorton had over 1,000 hours of service. The Volunteer Committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was presented to Ruby Domino.

Leif Larsen presented a graph showing the total amount of hours volunteered since 1983. In 1983, volunteers averaged approximately 25 hours of service annually; in 1990, the average volunteer contributed 75 hours during the year. By the end of 1990, Coe Park had benefitted from more than 40,000 volunteer hours since 1983! A graph of the annual and cumulative volunteer hours is shown below. These hours are spent preparing for and presenting interpretative programs to the public, preparing and training each year's new class of trainees, and assisting with many other projects directed toward the goal of enhancing the public's enjoyment of Henry Coe State Park.

Congratulations to all!

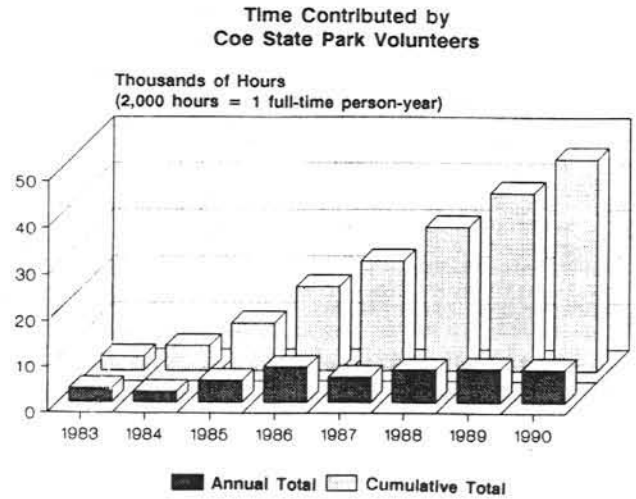
Vice Chair Dennis Pinion opened the Association portion of the meeting. He welcomed the new additions to the Board of Directors, Kevin Gilmartin and himself, and he announced the officers for this year: Celia McCormack as Chair, Dennis Pinion as Vice Chair, Barbara Bessey as Recording Secretary, and Jim Mason as Treasurer. Harry Batlin presented a State of California Certificate of Appreciation to Kathy Paivinen for her leadership and artistic skills in preparing the painted mural that covers one wall of the interpretative room downstairs at the visitor center. The PRA Annual Award for outstanding service was presented to Jim Mason in recognition of his years of service to the park and his careful devotion to details as the Association's treasurer. Barry Breckling, last year's recipient of the award, made the presentation of the specially engraved plaque. Dennis read a prepared statement, which is reprinted below, that reiterated the fact that the Pine Ridge Association does not engage in political activities or make political endorsements. After calling for any old or new business from the audience, Dennis adjourned the meeting. After the meeting, all members enjoyed a delicious luncheon catered by Roberta Wright, Tina Greco, Derrick Smith, and Bill Frazer.

NOTICE

The *California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law* prohibits the Pine Ridge Association from engaging in political activities. Accordingly, the Pine Ridge Association does not engage in political activities or make political endorsements.

During the December meeting of the PRA Board of Directors (which is open to all members), a member, acting against the wishes of the Board, read a statement to the Board. This statement was subsequently mailed to some volunteers without the knowledge or approval of the Board. The preface to this statement stated that it had been presented to the PRA Board.

The fact that this statement was read to the PRA Board should not be construed by anyone to mean that the PRA has a position on the issue or condones the mailing of this statement to members.



PRA Financial Report for 1990

by Jim Mason, Treasurer

The 1990 fiscal year, which ended on 31 October 1990, saw a continuation of the "break even" trend of the last couple of years. Although the Pine Ridge Association is still financially strong with assets in excess of $30,000, we did experience a net operational loss for the year of $167. This loss can be explained by increases in costs, particularly printing and supplies. We do not anticipate that postage, which is also a large expense, should increase significantly next year. Despite the recent increase in postal rates, we are benefiting from the use of the bulk mailing rate for nonprofit organizations each time we distribute *The Ponderosa*. Highlights from the year-end financial reports are as follows:

BALANCE SHEET AS OF 31 OCTOBER 1990

ASSETS

Cash	$22,283
Inventory	$10,237
Total Assets	$32,520

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Sales Taxes Payable	$ 763
Equity	$31,757
Total Liabilities & Equity	$32,520

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 1989 THROUGH 31 OCTOBER 1990

INCOME

Bookstore Sales	$ 8,621
Mother's Day Breakfast	$ 2,131
Fall Barbecue	$ 3,314
Donations	$ 969
Dues	$ 2,262
Trails Committee	$ 1,084
Interest and Other	$ 1,139
Gross Income	$19,520
Less, Cost of Goods Sold	$ 8,193
Total Income	$11,327

EXPENSES

Office Expenses	$ 5,274
Volunteer Expenses	$ 658
Mother's Day Breakfast	$ 575
Fall Barbecue	$ 566
Interpretation	$ 678
Equipment Expenses	$ 2,390
Equipment Replacement Costs	$ 780
Other	$ 573
Total Expenses	$11,494
NET INCOME (LOSS)	($ 167)

Did You Know?

The third largest California State Park is Humboldt Redwoods State Park. DPinion

Mother's Day Breakfast

The seventh annual Mother's Day Breakfast, organized by Lee Sims, will be held on Sunday, May 12, at Manzanita Point. Lee, together with his committee, plan to serve a delicious breakfast of freshly picked strawberries, orange juice, sausage and eggs, home-fried potatoes, biscuits, and coffee/tea/hot chocolate. Back again by popular demand, live music will be provided by *Cat and the Fiddle*.

This is an event you won't want to miss! Each of the previous breakfasts sold out soon after the tickets went on sale. Costs to attend are $7.50 for adults and $4.50 for children (six years of age or younger) and senior citizens. Only a limited number of tickets will be sold. Tickets for PRA members will be available at Coe Park Headquarters or by mail beginning *Wednesday, April 3*. Tickets will go on sale to the general public on *Wednesday, April 10*. To order tickets by mail, send (1) a check made out to the Pine Ridge Association for the correct number of Mother's Day Breakfast tickets and (2) a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Henry Coe State Park, P.O. Box 846, Morgan Hill, CA 95038. If you have questions about the breakfast or if you would like to help with the breakfast, please call Lee Sims (home (209/383-7848) or work (209/722-7467)).

Trails Day at Coe

The fifth annual statewide Trails Day will be held at Coe Park on Saturday, April 6, from 8 am to 4 pm. The Coe Park Advisory Trail Committee organizes Trail Days; this year's event is sponsored by Carl's Jr. on Dunne Avenue and Specialized Bicycles, Inc. of Morgan Hill. Carl's Jr. will again provide food for Saturday afternoon, and Specialized, through Linda DePriest, has donated advertising and publicity along with commemorative water bottles to be given to participants. Anyone who is interested in working on trails—no previous experience is necessary—should meet at the lower parking lot (a quarter mile before you reach the visitor center) starting at 8 am, when work crews will be organized and assigned trail work.

So that enough tools and crew leaders will be available, please register in advance with Joan Toth (408/778-6884). Bring gloves, sturdy shoes, water, and snacks, and be prepared to have a rewarding and enjoyable day. There is a possibility that trail work will be canceled due to inclement weather. Please call Leif Larsen (408/779-7785) to receive additional information and to confirm that trail work will be carried out on April 6.

See you there!

CATCH 22

For a successful interpretative program at Coe Park we need two things, public attendance and volunteers to provide the programs. We have distributed an announcement to several area publications proclaiming that we will be giving nature walks every Sunday from March 17 through May.

We currently have several *prime* Sundays available for people interested in giving a walk this year. Don't let the drought discourage you, there is still a lot you can share. We can also offer walks on Saturdays but the focus is currently on completing the Sunday schedule.

Interested? Call **Barbara Radd** at **408-779-3916** after 7:00 PM.

Puzzle

Which states are the farthest north, south, east, and west? (The answer will surprise you! We will give you a hint in the next issue.)

How to Contribute to the Newsletter

Do you have a special Coe experience that you would like to share with the readers of *The Ponderosa?* Or, do you have a question about plants or wild life in the park that you would like to have answered? Or perhaps you have a poem or essay about Coe that you would like to share? All contributions for the newsletter are welcome. Send them to the editors at 127 Glenwood Avenue, Woodside, CA 94062, or bring them to the park headquarters. Hope to hear from you soon!

Wooly Indian Paintbrush

6TH ANNUAL

HENRY W. COE STATE PARK
CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS 1991

APRIL 6, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

WANTED

All able-bodied volunteers interested in a rewarding outdoor experience.

WHAT TO BRING

- Enthusiasm and energy.
- Lunch, water, work gloves, and boots (or sturdy shoes).
- Tools will be provided, but McCleods and picks are always needed.

MISC. INFORMATION

- Complimentary BBQ and beverages served after work, courtesy of Carl's Jr. of Morgan Hill.
- Complimentary Trail Days waterbottle courtesy of Specialized Bicycle Components.
- Complimentary camping for pre-registrants, courtesy of Coe Park.
- Commemorative patches available for sale (2.50 each)

DIRECTIONS

Meet in the lower parking lot at Henry Coe State Park, Morgan Hill, between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.
Take East Dunne Avenue exit from Highway 101 and follow signs to Coe Park
(allow 30 minutes travel time from freeway to the park).

SPONSORED BY

Specialized Bicycle Components, Carl's Jr. and organized by the Henry W.Coe Park Advisory Committee

PRE-REGISTRATION

Strongly recommended! We need approximate count for tool supply and BBQ. Fill out the form below and mail to: Joan or Paul Toth 745 W. Main Ave, Morgan Hill, CA 95037 (408) 778.6884.
Registration deadline is March 30, 1991

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Camping: Yes No Group Name _____

# of Registrants _____

★Carl's Jr.

SPECIALIZED

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL HENRY W COE STATE PARK 408-779-2728

Pine Ridge Association
Henry Coe State Park
P. O. Box 846
Morgan Hill, CA. 95038
(408) 779-2728

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Jim Mason, Treasurer
Bill Frazer, Volunteer Committee Chair
Barbara Bessey, Recording Secretary
Harry Batlin, Executive Secretary
Winslow Briggs
Margaret Enns
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The Ponderosa is a periodic publication of the Pine Ridge Association. Its mission is to enhance and enrich the public's experience at Henry W. Coe State Park through education and interpretation.