The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter

February 1992

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

Life's Blood

Slowly I rose to the sun's heat-filled pull and the wind's swift push. Higher and higher I was carried, and soon, all I could see was the deep, blue sea stretching from horizon to horizon, in constant turmoil, crashing at itself. Others joined me in flight and we crowded closer and closer together. As we continued to grow in number, we were warm, but behind us was a giant wedge of cold pushing us on. Soon we could see the land, and then we were upon it, billowing up over its mountains. We became darker and closer and colder and heavier until the air could no longer hold our weight. We fell in a torrent, like thousands—no millions—of tiny bombs. We crashed into the meadows and forests and brought cleansing to all the earth. I landed in a tall pine, was bumped by a companion, and fell 200 feet to the litter below. It was a pleasure to spend time around a tree so grand. Cool lee sides of these trees had been home for me for months as winter snow. Soon, joined by more companions, we flowed just below the duff. Down, ever downwards we flowed, meeting with others, first in a silver rivulet, then into a pebble-bottomed brook, and finally into a small creek. Slower, ever slower we flowed.

On my last trip, we flowed into a gopher hole, and eventually deep within the earth. We slowed and flattened into a narrow sheet, here vertical, there horizontal, and further on at a slight incline; here 50 yards wide, there two feet wide, and further on I squeezed through a porous rock by myself (in a week's time). Slowly ever downward we traveled. Then all of a sudden, I was grabbed by capillary action, pushed by companions below, pulled to the surface, and poured out of a spring. I have done things that many do not know I have the capacity to do. Sometimes I have been held in reserve or done simple, monotonous, repetitive things, but at other times I find myself as part of some exciting, dynamic process. I have been caught by the roots of a redwood, mixed with sugar, and risen hundreds of feet only to be expelled into the air as part of a minute mist, not even a shadow, almost a spirit. That time, I returned to a cloud only to fall again. I have ended up in the core of a beautiful white flower that soon lost its petals, but I remained in its heart and grew slowly through the summer. By fall I was part of a bright, red berry, until a cedar waxwing ate us. I traveled slowly through his digestive system (but quickly through the air). I spent time circulating in his blood system, was caught in his strong wing muscles, and in the muscles of his tiny feet (I have been in the blood of countless animals, and it is here that I help ease the pain of wing muscles that ache or feet that throb by helping bring fresh oxygen to them). Finally I was deposited more than 2,000 miles away. On that trip, it was more than 25 years before I returned to my mother the sea.

Now, we flow gently through shady corridors with umbrel-

las of alders and bays. Here and there we rush through a narrow spot or fall in a sheet over a rock face, but mostly we flow slowly through crystal clear pools. In places, disease organisms join us, but as we bubble over rocky shallows, the ultraviolet rays of the sun kill, or what they don't kill they cause to be sterile. As we meander through a meadow, our peaceful sounds carry to an elk bull dozing near by. At a most beautiful pool, a deep hole, a man lifts me from the creek with his hand and drinks my companions but I remain on his lips only to be brushed off and fall back into the deep pool. A coyote comes to the pool for a drink, and I hang to his nose as he trots off. A short way from the pool, I fall to the ground, and eventually the roots of a scarlet larkspur draw me up, and I travel slowly through the plant as its internal valves stop me here and move me there. Finally I end up in the nectar of one of its flowers. With great speed and agility (and a wonderful ability to "hoover"), an Allen's hummingbird flies up to the flower with the sun reflecting off his sequined, florescent-green back and orange-gold bib—I was sucked up by his long slender beak to continue my never-ending journey.

Back to the sea again, and now I rise into a dark thundercloud. Over those same mountains I fall as hail, crashing to the ground, crushing and freezing new green grass, grass that will never see the sunlight. I continue in a torrent of mud and debris as I spill way down a steep canyon to the creek below and flow in darkness towards the beautiful pool. As we slow, we are joined by disease but find ourselves too deep for the sun to have effect. Reaching the beautiful pool, we discover things have changed, and I find myself at its very depths, hundreds of feet from the surface, part of a stagnant, black ooze, there to spend, perhaps, a thousand years. A coyote takes a drink at the water's edge, and a man sights in on him with his gun. The bullet tears through the animal's flesh, and unseen by the man, the bullet continues to travel beyond to a flowerless hillside where brilliantly colored, tiny feathers fly as the shot rips through an Allen's hummingbird. "Damn the coyote, its worth more dead than alive," the man whispered under his breath.

Geoquiz
by Lee Dittmann

How well do you know Coe? Test your knowledge! [The answers and a scoring key are printed at the back of this issue. Don't peak until you have marked your choices! This is an open-book exam.]

1. Henry W. Coe State Park is about
   a. 160,000 acres
   b. 68,000 acres
   c. 58,000 acres
   d. 16,000 acres

2. It is located in
   a. The Mount Hamilton Range
   b. The Diablo Range
   c. Coast Ranges
   d. All of the above
   e. None of the above

3. The only state park in California larger than Coe is
   a. Anza-Borrego
   b. Yosemite
   c. Big Basin
   d. Humboldt Redwoods

4. The highest point in Coe Park is
   a. Mount Sizer
   b. The Monument on Pine Ridge
   c. Bear Mountain
   d. Mount Stakes
   e. None of the above

5. The lowest point in Coe Park, excluding the Bell Station Road right of way, is
   a. The point where the North Fork of Pacheco Creek leaves the park.
   b. China Hole
   c. The point where the South Fork of Orestimba Creek leaves the park.
   d. The point where Coyote Creek leaves the park.
   e. None of the above

6. The third largest reservoir in the park, *when filled to capacity*, is
   a. Coit Lake
   b. Kelly Lake
   c. Hoover Lake
   d. Paradise Lake
   e. None of the above

7. *Two* of the following places are *completely* outside of the park boundaries. Which? [Warning: *Park maps will*

mislead you on this one!]

a. Cold Flat
b. San Antonio Valley
c. Soda Springs Canyon
d. Gilroy Hot Springs
e. Snod
f. Bollinger Ridge
g. Booze Lake

8. If they weren't diverted, waters from Coyote Creek would flow

a. To San Francisco Bay
b. To Monterey Bay
c. To the San Joaquin Valley
d. Into southern California swimming pools

9. The three main watersheds in the park (Pacheco, Orestimba, and Coyote Creeks) meet at one point, which forms a triple divide. That point is

a. Mt. Sizer
b. Mustang Peak
c. Mt. Stakes
d. Unnamed 2,615-foot summit at north end of Willow Ridge
e. Bear Mountain

10. Only one of the following is, *strictly speaking,* partly within the boundaries of Coe Park. Which?

a. Pacheco Creek
b. Orestimba Creek
c. Coyote Creek
d. San Antonio Valley

11. Coe Park's most important attribute is

a. Solitude
b. Quiet
c. Room to roam
d. Spectacular sunsets
e. Terrific wildflower displays
f. Abundant wildlife
g. Tremendous inspiring beauty

The Air Force

by Dennis Pinion

The state parks endeavor to allow nature to run its course, without the influence of man. However, our civilization casts a long shadow—one that may extend into Henry Coe State Park.

We generally think of nature as being in balance. This notion is basically true but highly simplified. The balance is dynamic and tenuous. The fact of the matter is that each individual species is attempting to move away from equilibrium by increasing its numbers, potentially without limit. From man's perspective, sudden increases may be viewed as blight, pestilence, or epidemics. The balance can be upset by various forces, both natural and man-made, biotic and abiotic. These forces can also lead to drastic reductions in numbers, even to the demise of an entire species. This article deals with one man-made force, air pollution.

The term air pollution brings to mind freeways packed with cars, smoke stacks belching black smoke, and (if you are old enough) backyard incinerators. These are things that we generally do not associate with Henry Coe State Park. However, the effects of some pollutants can be far reaching. There are also less obvious pollutants that may have the potential to cause injury within the park—for example, road dust.

Two pests of ponderosa and gray (digger) pines, namely black pineleaf scale (Nuculaspis californica) and pine needle scale (Chionaspis pinifoliae) are frequently found in larger numbers on pines in dusty campgrounds and along dusty roads. The dust kills parasites that normally keep the scale insects under control. In sufficient numbers, the scale insects reduce the vigor of the pines, making them more susceptible to attack by primary agents such as bark beetles. Large numbers of scale insects can eventually kill trees directly.

Do you know what gladiolus and tobacco plants have in common with ponderosa pines? All three are very susceptible to certain types of air pollutants. In the 1950s, ponderosa pines growing in the mountains east of Los Angeles started dying in large numbers. Investigators, unable to determine the cause, labeled it *X*-disease. Subsequent investigations determined that it was caused by ozone, a major constituent of smog.

However, this was not the first time air pollution had caused widespread injury to plants. On the contrary, air pollution has been a problem since the industrial revolution. At the turn of the century, the vegetation in an area

roughly the size of Coe Park north of Redding was killed by sulfur dioxide emissions from a smelter. Injury due to sulfur dioxide used to be common, since it is a combustion by-product of sulfur-bearing fuels (notably coal and oil). The use of tall smokestacks has almost eliminated this type of injury by vastly diluting the emissions before they reach ground level. However, sulfur dioxide emissions still cause trouble in the form of acid rain.

Injury to ponderosa pines and other plants by fluoride emissions from several types of industrial operations, notably the production of aluminum, is well known and well documented.

Conifers in general are more susceptible to injury from air pollutants because they retain their leaves (needles) for several years. Thus their leaves are exposed to injury for a longer period than the leaves of deciduous trees. Chronic injury by pollutants causes a reduction in ability to photosynthesize and reduced leaf life. The result is a less vigorous tree with sparser vegetation and reduced growth. However, these signs are not apparent to most observers.

The Future of Parks

by Harry Batlin, District Superintendent

It was my hope that, by this time, I would be able to tell all of you about the effects of the budget crisis on Henry W. Coe State Park. As you may know, there have been rumors of closure or partial closures of many park units. However, no decisions have yet been made.

The cutbacks are a reflection of the state's financial crisis. The Department of Finance has mandated extremely deep cuts in the Park Department's operating budget to offset the revenue shortfall. We can expect these cuts to continue or go even deeper until the economy strengthens.

The real crisis in parks, however, goes beyond the immediate economic troubles of the state and the country. State and national parks have not been able to keep up with the growing recreational demands of the public. Funding for parks in relation to the intensity of use has diminished. In California, park development has not kept pace with demand, nor could it. Park facilities and resources are wearing out, and funds are not generally available for renovation or restoration. Some maintenance has to be deferred each year. Public service and interpretation have been curtailed in many units, and some facilities are being operated by concession. Staffing is generally not adequate to serve the increasing number of visitors.

The park system in California is competing for a diminishing number of discretionary dollars in the General Fund. Legislation and the initiative process have locked in much of the General Fund or special purpose funding. The remaining dollars provide for all of the governmental services of California. If legislators are forced to make hard decisions between emergency or social services and park operations, they will be hard pressed to protect parks. Without specifically designated funding, park budgets will be incrementally diminished.

The economic crisis in the state budget did not create the impacts on the park system—it merely exacerbated those impacts. Park resources, values, and service will continue to be diminished until an adequate funding base is put into place. We now need to ask ourselves if we still share the ethical values that created the park system and, if so, are we willing to support those values.

Several funding proposals have been discussed—a minuscule property add-on tax or a property transfer tax have been used by local jurisdictions and other states to operate park programs. The burden would not fall heavily on anyone, but public lands and resources would be protected, and an effective level of public service and programs could be provided. The public would realize a clear and direct benefit from these taxes.

The future of parks now rests in the hands of those who care.

Ranger Barry Breckling Receives Special Recognition

At the PRA Annual Meeting, District Superintendent Harry Batlin announced that Barry Breckling, Ranger of Coe Park, had recently received the Central Coast Region Award in Excellence for Public Service. This is indeed a great honor, since he was competing with other outstanding individuals from San Francisco to Santa Barbara. This is the second year that the award has been given out. Barry received the award at a special luncheon ceremony in which Harry Batlin made the presentation. Harry told the PRA members that he believes that Barry typifies the traditional values of a ranger, which are so important in these times. While the Association values Barry's contributions to Coe Park and to the Volunteer Program (he was given the PRA award for outstanding service in 1990), it is very gratifying to learn that his efforts are also appreciated by his peers! Congratulations, Barry!

Board Notes
by Kevin Gilmartin

The Association's Board of Directors met on November 21 and again on January 14. A subcommittee presented recommended changes in the PRA bylaws, the Board considered those changes in detail, modified some of the rewordings, and then voted unanimously to support the changes to the bylaws. (The modified bylaws were subsequently ratified by ballot by the PRA membership.)

Lee Dittmann distributed a copy of his new map and stated that it could be printed and sold at the visitor center for a nominal fee. Lee was complimented on the fine workmanship in the map and was given approval to print and sell the map.

Winslow Briggs reported that the flagging of new trails in the Orestimba is now complete. (By the beginning of February, the California Conservation Corps had already started work on the Rooster Comb trail.)

Through ballots enclosed with the previous issue of the *Ponderosa,* two new members were elected to the Board of Directors: Lee Dittmann and Bill Frazer. Derek Smith has also joined the Board, since he is the new Chair of the Volunteer Committee. The Board elected Barbara Bessey to be Chair for the next year, Bill Frazer is Vice Chair, Kevin Gilmartin was appointed Recording Secretary, and Jim Mason will continue to serve as Treasurer.

Lee Dittmann brought a copy of another potential publication and requested approval to print and sell the item at the visitor center: *Animal Tracks and Using the Track Tracer,* a booklet written by Barry Breckling, with drawings by Judy Mason and Barry. Lee's request was enthusiastically approved. The booklet will be sold for less than a dollar and is well worth the price.

By unanimous acclamation and heart-felt applause, the Board expressed its appreciation to Celia McCormack for serving on the Board for two three-year terms and serving as Chair for the past year; to Margaret Enns for serving on the Board for one term and a portion of a second term and being in charge of membership activities for the past year (which role she will continue to perform); to Dennis Pinion for serving as Vice Chair for the past year; to Barbara Bessey for serving as Secretary for the past two years; to Jim Mason for performing the indispensable role of Treasurer; and to Dottie Abbott for counting the ballots during the recent Board election.

The next meeting of the Board will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10, at the Classic Square Office Building in Morgan Hill. As always, PRA members are invited to attend. If you would like to be placed on a mailing list to receive a copy of the agenda in advance of each board meeting, please let Barbara Bessey or Kevin Gilmartin know (415/493-3550 days, 415/851-7813 evenings).

Interpretive walks and programs at the park will start on March 21

PRA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held this year in San Jose on February 8. The meeting of the Coe Park Volunteers was held first. Derek Smith chaired the meeting, and recent developments concerning the park and its operation were presented to the volunteers by members of the Volunteer Committee and Harry Batlin, Superintendent of the Gavilan District. Ringbinders for the volunteer handbook were handed out, and Harry expressed special thanks to Dave Sellers, who designed the district's logo that is prominently displayed on the cover of the binders.

The keynote speaker was Ray Garcia, Regional Park Manager with the Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation. His very entertaining presentation about birds included information about eleven common birds—their behaviors as well as their calls. Under his expert tutelage, all of the audience correctly identified the birds on the final test!

This year's class of volunteers was one of the largest ever. Twenty-seven new volunteers graduated from the training program and became trainees: Michael Brookman, Bruce Camden, John Castenada, Mavis Ellis, Tim Fast, Lesley Garside, Barbara Grace, Herbert Grace, Josh Grant, Jim Gregory, Larry Haimowitz, David Hornby, Bob Kelley, Sharon Knight, Irwin Koff, Tom Luchessi, Loren Mansel, Roger McLain, Anthea Neilson, Beverly Nickol, Lois Phillips, Kyle Rennie, Sal Salas, Bob Vega, Libby Vincent, Janneá Webster, and Bill Workman.

Ten trainees who had completed the requirements of the training program and had served 50 or more hours were promoted to full volunteer status at the meeting: Harry Councell, Ron Erskine, Ross Hemeon, Millicent Kellogg, Dave Perrin, Doug Reynaud, Jim Tuomey, Sandy

Voechting, Vickie Vosberg, and Don Webster. Another eight volunteers had already completed their 50 hours earlier in the year and had already received their new badges: Adrienne Bachleda, Carl Clinger, Lee Dittmann, Dave Greco, Mike Monroe, Richard Stone, Elaine Tischler, and George Van Gorden.

Specially designed T-shirts, which featured the PRA logo, were given to volunteers who worked 36 or more hours in the visitor center during the past year. Receiving awards this year were: Everett Allen, Adrienne Bachleda, Barbara Bessey, Carl Clinger, Harry Councell, Lee Dittmann, Ruby Domino, Phyllis Drake, Nancy Filice, Bill Frazer, Kevin Gilmartin, Tina Greco, Marion Grungé, Ross Hemeon, Gary Keller, Millicent Kellogg, Fred King, Don Mason, Jim Mason, Judy Mason, Dave Perrin, Dennis Pinion, Barbara Radd, Derek Smith, Richard Stone, Jane Tracey, Jim Tuomey, and Chris Weske.

Five individuals who volunteered 200 or more hours of which 100 hours were spent in the visitor center were promoted to senior volunteer. These are Bob George, Dave Sellers, Joan Toth, Paul Toth, and Jim Toumey.

Four volunteers received special pins for the tremendous numbers of hours they have spent on Coe Park interpretive activities: Bill Frazer, Teddy Goodrich, Bonnie Larsen, and Jim Mason all volunteered more than 1,000 hours of service.

The Volunteer Committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was presented to Everett Allen. Everett has been actively involved in a wide variety of park activities for many years—serving once as a park aid, helping to set up the automated cash register in the visitor center, working on trails, mapping locations of environmental campsites, and always available to answer questions visitors may have.

During the past year, volunteers spent over 3,000 hours working in the visitor center. An amazingly large number of hours—about 9,750 hours—were spent on all kinds of park activities during the past year.

Congratulations to all!

Chair Barbara Bessey opened the Association portion of the meeting. Board members made presentations about various events of the past year, the financial status of the Association, and the results of interpretive projects that had been funded during the past year.

The PRA Annual Award is given to an individual who has contributed outstanding work in furthering the mission of the association in preserving and enriching Coe Park. This year's award was presented to Roberta Wright in recognition of her years of service to the park. She has been on the Board of Directors, chaired the Volunteer Committee, and revitalized the training of new volunteers. Jim Mason, last year's recipient of the award, made the presentation of the specially engraved plaque.

After the meeting was adjourned, all members enjoyed a delicious luncheon catered by Tina Greco, Martie Sinclaire, Joan Toth, Phyllis Drake, Derek Smith, and Bill Frazer.

Geoquiz Answers

1. b. Coe Park is now about 68,000 acres, with the most recent addition the 580-acre McAllister inholding northwest of Mississippi Lake.

2. d. All of the above. Coe Park is located in the Mount Hamilton Range, which is a part of the Diablo Range (stretching from Mt. Diablo south to southwestern Fresno County, near Coalinga). The Diablo Range, in turn, is one section of the Coast Ranges running from southern California to Oregon.

3. a. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, at 600,000 acres is the only *state* park larger than Coe. Yosemite is also much larger than Coe but is a national park. Humboldt Redwoods State Park, over 51,000 acres, is the third largest. Big Basin Redwoods State Park is a mere 18,000 acres.

4. e. None of the above. Mt. Sizer at 3,216 feet in elevation is the highest in the west of the park, but the highest point overall is an unnamed spot about 3,560 feet along the north boundary of the park about a mile from Mt. Stakes. If it were in the park, Mt. Stakes at 3,804 would be highest. Anyone want to buy it and donate it to the park?

5. a. The North Fork of Pacheco Creek exits the park at about 710 feet elevation. The South Fork of Orestimba Creek leaves the park at about 910 feet above sea level. The southeastern border of the park near Coyote Creek gets down to about 900 feet. The elevation of China Hole is about 1,160. The Bell Station Road right-of-way extends down to about 350 feet in elevation.

6. e. None of the above. *When filled to capacity*, the third largest reservoir is an unnamed lake near the middle-east boundary about 2½ miles north-northeast of Mustang Peak.

(I call it Jackrabbit Lake because of its wonderful desolation—and presence of jackrabbits.) Mississippi Lake is largest, Coit is second, Kelly is fourth (and, is probably *usually* third largest, because it fills to capacity even in dry years, whereas "Jackrabbit Lake" seldom fills), Paradise Lake is fifth, Hoover Lake is sixth.

7. b. & d. No part of San Antonio Valley or Gilroy Hot Springs is included within park boundaries. The park does include portions of *Upper* San Antonio Valley, which is a distinct valley in a different minor watershed than San Antonio. The former is drained by tributaries of Jumpoff Creek, the latter by San Antonio Creek; a low rise separates the twin valleys. I *warned you* that park maps would mislead you: Upper San Antonio Valley is incorrectly labeled on current park maps; consult the USGS Mt. Stakes quadrangle for a clear view of the distinction. As to the other places: Cold Flat north of Mt. Sizer is partially within park boundaries, as is Soda Springs Canyon. Snod is a minor peak north of Robinson Mountain. Bollinger Ridge is partially inside the park in the Thomas Section of Coe Park. Booze Lake is the name of the reservoir in Cold Flat; a small part of it is included within the boundaries of the Thomas Section.

8. a. Coyote Creek flows out of the south end of the park, then veers north through Coyote and Anderson reservoirs, then continues north through San Jose and out to San Francisco Bay—assuming that the water isn't diverted.

9. e. Bear Mountain is at the point where the Coyote, Orestimba, and Pacheco Creek watersheds meet. The point where three watersheds meet is called a triple divide. Stand on the top of Bear Mountain, spit to the north and east, and the liquid will flow towards the San Joaquin Valley. Spit to the south and eventually your saliva will end up in Monterey Bay. Spit to the west, and San Jose will be contaminated by your deed. Keep your spit to yourself.

10. c. Coyote Creek and its forks are partly within the park. Only the *North Fork* of Pacheco Creek flows through the park; Pacheco Creek proper does not. Only the *South Fork* of Orestimba Creek is partly within the park, not Orestimba Creek proper. Refer to **7** for the story about San Antonio Valley.

11. Any and all answers are correct.

SCORE YOURSELF:

1-Answered all statements or questions with interest, intelligence, or enthusiasm, regardless of correctness: **Excellent.** Treat yourself—spend more time at Coe.

2-Answered most statements or questions with interest, intelligence, or enthusiasm: **Very good.** You deserve to spend more time in Coe Park, too.

3-Answered a few statements or questions with interest, intelligence, or enthusiasm: **Good.** But maybe you worry too much about getting the "right" answers. Coming on up to Coe Park to relax is a good remedy.

4-Answered no statements or questions with any quality resembling interest, intelligence, or enthusiasm: **Too bad.** Maybe you should do something about this attitude problem of yours. Get away from that humdrum job, that monotonous routine, that jading lifestyle. Come recreate yourself at Coe Park.

5-Did not bother to take the quiz: **Odd.** It seems strange that you would read the score section without participating in the quiz. Are you hampered by a fear of failure? Do you feel too proud to partake of this humble game? Or maybe you are having trouble managing your time? You need to spend some days up at Coe Park, do some hiking, relax, put things in perspective. Come on up before you are lost in your worries!

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

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The Ponderosa Staff

Editors:	Barbara Bessey Kevin Gilmartin	
Assistant Editor:	Barry Breckling	
Membership:	Everett Allen Margaret Enns	
Distribution:	Roberta Wright	
This Issue's Reporters:	Harry Batlin Lee Dittmann	Jim Mason Dennis Pinion
This Issue's Illustrator:	Kathy Paivinen	

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.